

<http://doi.org/10.58225/sw.2024.1-5-11>

ARTISTIC EXPRESSIVENESS OF DECOR ON THE EXTERIORS OF BUILDINGS BUILT IN THE CITY OF BAKU: 19th-20th CENTURIES

Abdulahimova Tarana Ramiz- PhD in architecture, department of Design, AzUAC,
tarana.abd@mail.ru

Abstract. The work reveals and studies the peculiar decorative and artistic features of the exteriors of public and religious buildings built in the 19th and early 20th centuries in Baku. The influence of decorative features of Turkic-speaking peoples, Islamic countries, as well as European and Russian classical architecture is clearly put forward here. The article reveals the patterns and characteristics of the decorative and artistic formation of the compositional expressiveness of exterior elements, their stylization and classification. The work on a specific example reveals the perception of the decorative elements of monuments depending on various objective factors.

Keywords: decor, composition, style, symbol, sign, visual perception, character

BAKI ŞƏHƏRİNDƏ TİKİLMİŞ BİNALARIN FASADLARINDA DEKORUN BƏDİİ İFADƏLİLİYİ: XIX-XX ƏSRLƏR

Əbdülrəhimova Təranə Ramiz qızı– m.ü.f.d., Qrafik və media dizaynı kafedrası, AzMİU,
tarana.abd@mail.ru

Xülasə. Məqalədə, Bakıda XIX-XX əsrin əvvəllərində ucaldılmış ictimai və dini binaların eksteryerinin unikal dekorativ-bədii xüsusiyyətləri araşdırılır. Məqalədə, bu dekorativ elementlərin türkdilli xalqlara, islam ölkələrinə, Avropa və rus klassik memarlığına xas olan təsirini aydın görmək mümkündür. Məqalədə, xarici elementlərin kompozisiya ifadəliliyinin dekorativ-bədii formalaşmasının naxışları və xüsusiyyətləri, onların stilizasiyası və təsnifatı ətraflı şəkildə açıqlanır. Burada konkret nümunələr də verilir ki, onlar müxtəlif obyektiv amilləri nəzərə almaqla abidələrin dekorativ elementlərinin qavranılmasını təhlil etməyə imkan verir.

Açar sözlər: dekor, kompozisiya, üslub, simvol, işarə, vizual qavrayış, xarakter

Introduction. In the era and civilization, the architectural vocabulary and mechanisms have always played an important role in connecting architecture with culture, expressing the character of the city to reflect the culture of its society. Therefore, embellishments are the main components of the architectural vocabulary, which allow the architecture to combine with culture.

The natural and geographical conditions of Baku, Azerbaijan, the historical development of the city and the "oil boom" of the 19th and early 20th centuries provided the basis for rapid development of buildings and structures with extraordinary architectural and artistic composition, with various volumetric solution and skyline. The architectural appearance of the city was formed in a short time, for several decades due to the creativity and skill of many local and visiting architects. The city of Baku is distinguished by unique architectural and planning development and individual appearance, as well as by dimensional and spatial peculiarities of architecture embodying the artistic system of various architectural traditions. Along with the national traditions of various local architectural schools of Azerbaijan, the existing architectural directions of Islamic and Turkic-speaking countries greatly influenced the formation and development of architectural identity of

Baku. In the following years, this process was supplemented and developed by different styles of European and Russian architecture [7].

Methods. The study reveals the patterns and characteristics of decorative and artistic formation of compositional expressiveness of exterior elements, stylization and classification. Features of various movements forming architectural decor of Baku buildings during the period under review are revealed. The influence of the national architectural heritage on the formation of decorative features of exteriors, as well as the peculiarities of symbols and signs emphasizing the originality of the ornamental decoration of architecture in Baku are investigated.

8-10 thousand years ago, in the south of Baku, in a place called Gobustan, tribe engaged in hunting, fishing and stockbreeding created the first outline picture, and sometimes silhouette drawings of people, individual animals, boats, scenes of joint hunting, group dances etc. on the rocks and on the surface of the cave walls. Gobustan cave paintings dating from the 10th to the 2nd millennium B.C., obviously, are material culture and heritage of the people, and their unique drawings reveal the first artistic and decorative composition of the fine arts of our ancestors [5].

The architecture of Azerbaijan is developing, mainly based on architectural traditions of local architectural schools, which play a guiding role in civil and religious construction. The rich heritage of the 19th and early 20th centuries are engaged by the historical center of the city and Icharyshahar (Inner City). The most significant building of Icharyshahar is Gyz Galasy (Maiden Tower) a grand, seven-altar and eight-story tower of the fire temple built in the 5th-7th centuries. Along with the ritual purpose, Gyz Galasy (Maiden Tower) served for defensive purposes, and served as a tower for observing the stars. In the early 12th century, the city of Baku is surrounded by fortification walls, strengthened by towers and gates all around. In the meantime, caravans, mausoleums etc. were built on a large scale in Baku. Following Gyz Galasy, the most ancient monument preserved in Icharyshahar is the mosque of Mohammad ibn Abu Bakr, built in 1079. Along with these structures in these years, several public hamams (baths) were built in Icharyshahar, reiterating the typical principles and planning structures of hamams existing in Islamic countries. In general, the core components of the town-planning structure of Icharyshahar were developed by the end of 13th and early 14th century.

Results. The medieval period was an important stage in the development of decorative art in Azerbaijan, which in general influenced the development of artistic forms of ornamental art. The images of the human head and face, as well as the sculptures of individuals were prohibited during the period of strengthening the Islamic religion. This also influenced the stone-cutting art of Absheron region, due to this more attention was paid to the ornament. The stone was processed in various forms, and improved, displacing visual subjects depicting people. The architectural and artistic expressiveness of the exterior decor was enriched and developed gradually: first applied drawings of different figures, then introduced floral, morphological, geometric forms, etc., and subsequently, with the transition to three-dimensional elements of décor, appeared bas-reliefs, full reliefs and sculptures. Exteriors with their own decorations and features carrying certain information and ideas reveal the architectural significance of the building and are vividly represented by a variety of different art movements.

Residential, public and religious buildings, built in the 19th and early 20th centuries in Baku, are distinguished by a peculiar architectural appearance, which concentrates various stylistic directions. The diversified direction of the styles has created a variety of architectural characters of decorative exterior elements successfully complemented the unusual signs and symbols. That complex combination of architectural forms also contributed to the emergence of a new direction called eclecticism.

An analysis of the architectural appearance of the buildings of this period shows that the artistic and aesthetic quality of the decorative elements used in the exterior of buildings was closely connected with the effective use of materials, mainly local limestone. That natural building material after a certain processing, acquiring a special flavor, was used as a cladding material that adorns the building facades. The artistic and aesthetic expressiveness of all kinds of ornamental elements is perceived unusually beautiful against this smooth lining. Stone carving developed in tandem with

the advancement of applied and monumental decorative art [1]. It should be noted that stone carving is the most ancient type of folk art of Baku-Absheron region. Stone-cutting art was characterized by a combination of different shapes and motifs in the ornament. High and low reliefs, the so-called bas-reliefs, full reliefs, and sculptural elements were created by wide techniques of stone carving. The flat relief, with the treated surface of the facade, the socle, mold, cornices and carved horizontal and vertical lines forming the basis of rusticated masonry, were carefully processed with great skill [13].

Discussion. Buildings with combined masonry limestone and burnt brick were also built. Such a combination of white ashlar with red and yellow bricks added complementary artistic expression to the buildings. In addition, the use of bricks also facilitated the technology of erecting the elements of the structure - arches, vaults, domes and other curved surfaces. In the early 20th century, reinforced concrete structures, glass, stained glass windows, and other new materials and constructions were implemented [4]. This provided an opportunity to the emergence of new supporting structures of large-span ceilings, domes, vaults, arches and portals, enriching and providing additional expressiveness to the architectural composition of buildings. The harmonious distribution of architectural and decorative elements over the facade, differing in forms, materials, as well as lining, color and bricklaying method characterized the architectural style and significance of buildings.

Portals are one of the widely used dominant architectural tools that emphasize the compositional appearance of buildings. With their decorative composition, they were used as protruding from the surface of the facade framing the entrance of the building and on the same surface with the façade [8]. Along with a wide ornamental palette and pictorial epigraphy on the portal surfaces, there is an amazing artistic execution of stone carving (Fig.1). An integral part of the portal is the arches, which are widely used as an important architectural element in the Azerbaijani national architecture [2]. A peculiar architectural character used in various styles was ogival, semicircular, horseshoe and bow-shaped arches consisting of a rather complicated profile, enveloping door and window openings, as well as the entrance portal part of buildings.



Figure 1. The architectural and compositional solution of the entrance portals of some buildings in Baku [2]

Summarizing the above it is possible to tell that the architectural elements of exterior decor with unique beauty and tenderness used from a rich arsenal of Azerbaijani and world architecture were skillfully applied in architectural composition of the residential, public and religious buildings built during the considered period.

During various periods of time, there was a permanent link with the architecture of the Turkic-speaking people including Iran and other Islamic countries of the Middle East in the development of architecture of Azerbaijan. The historical development of post-nomadic life of the Turkic-speaking people revived, ranging from Central Asia to Balkans. The conversion to Islam and the development of the trade and economic relations facilitated interaction between the countries stated above and formed a basis for convergence in culture and architecture. Analyzing the

interaction of characteristic compositions, forms and separate details, there is a stylistic similarity between the architectural monuments of these countries. Comparison and attempt to identify the interaction of decorative features of the Turkic-speaking people and the Islamic countries on formation and development of an architectural decor of Azerbaijan and architecture of the capitalist period of construction of Baku are provided below. The mass movement of Seljuk Turks into Central Anatolia has been observed since the 11th century [10]. Amazing portals, consisting of similar stalactite decorative elements, were built in Divankhana, on other buildings of the Palace of Shirvanshahs, as well as in many public buildings built in the 19th and early 20th centuries in Baku. All of them take the bases of an architectural and composite form from above-mentioned portals of Islamic, Central Asian and especially Seljuk architectural structures. However, at the same time, new forms are observed with modernized architectural decorative details of European architectural movements of various times in the portals of Baku-Absheron region. Glazed brick has been widely used in patterns in the decoration of interiors and exteriors of religious, palace and other public buildings since the 11th and 12th centuries in Azerbaijan, in Central Asia and Iran. Such ornamental finishing clearly shows itself in the mausoleums by Ajami Nakhchivani erected in Nakhchivan (Fig.2). In the following years, mosaic finishing is applied in Azerbaijan, as well as in Isfahan, Samarkand, Khiva and other cities of Turkic-speaking countries, and especially on architectural monuments of the Timur period of the 13th and 14th centuries [11]. For centuries, in the Middle East and Central Asia, a type of landscape gardening composition was formed, with picturesque alleys, in the center of which there was a summer palace with a light luxurious architecture, having a pool-type water factor in front [9].

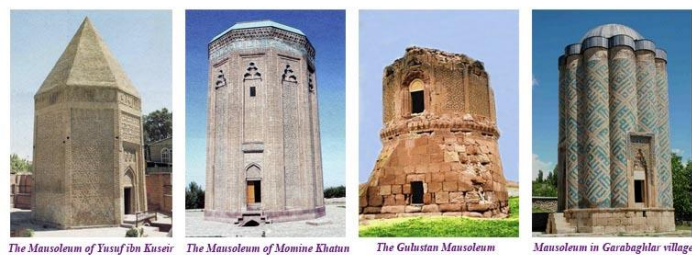


Figure 2. Mausoleums of Nakhchivan [9]

European architectural styles strongly influenced the formation and development of the architectural decor of capitalism in Baku. Jointly with local architects and masters, many guest architects from various European countries and from Russia did not always adhere to the canons of a single style in their works. Local customers of various buildings insisted that foreign architects had to provide decorative elements of the national architectural composition of Azerbaijan in all projects [12]. These architects turned to the heritage of Azerbaijani architecture, and at the same time they used the foundations of Islamic architecture in the design of exteriors. The oriental style, consisting of a collection of these styles mostly reflected in the buildings of Baku, marked the beginning of the development of a national and romantic movement in the architecture of the city.

Classical architecture, combined with several architectural styles, is represented by various classical columns, decorated pediments, at times broken cornices, but also enriched with profiled archway, pediments, entablaments and balustrades in the architecture of Baku. Neoclassicism emerged as alternatives to the rococo style and was perceived as a return to the classical principles of the architecture of ancient Greece and Rome in the background of classical architecture. The Baroque style, distinguished by its lush and luxurious design, along with the design of exteriors widely used to decorate the interiors of palace and some of the apartment houses in Baku. Rococo is a modification of Baroque and can be characterized by its lightness, dynamism and asymmetry of architectural compositions [14].

The forms and motifs of the Italian Renaissance were generally preferred in the decorative design of Baku. The architectural composition of city buildings reflects the best principles of the

Renaissance style, which are dominated by the beginning of the logical balance of the linearity forms of the contours, and austere simplicity of proportion.

Revealing rationalistic tendencies, the Art Nouveau style led the architects to take a fresh and comprehensive look at the architectural and constructive structure of buildings. For the first time, the search of forms of the building with their decorative elements corresponding to modern materials started during the development of the Art Nouveau style in Baku. The monumentality and completeness of the architectural appearance of the Art Nouveau style in Baku were mainly emerged due to the cladding and finishing local material - white ashlar. The construction of buildings in the neo-gothic style developed mainly in the best traditions of the German and French Gothic and played an essential role in the development of the monumental and stately structures of the city. Enriching the architectural expressiveness of the city it gave a high artistic quality.

The basic planning structure of the city center of Baku, laid down in those years, is divided into small neighborhoods with narrow streets. Density of construction, sometimes turbulent terrain, as well as uneven streets negatively affect the perception of the decorative features of the architecture of buildings in Baku. Narrow streets are also an obstacle to the normal perception of the upper surfaces of the exterior of two and three-storey buildings. The construction of multi-storey architectural houses was carried out in these confined spaces. The above-mentioned local conditions, as well as the nature of the layout of urban neighborhoods with a limited area of plots, do not contribute to the full disclosure of the beautiful volumetric and spatial composition of buildings. Therefore, the decorative elements of the upper floors, the eaves elements, and the attic floor are often out of the perception zone. These factors not only prevent the normal vision of the entire volume but also distort the form of elements and details in perception, depriving the viewer of three-dimensional volumetric vision. The plasticity and capacity of the richly designed decorative elements of the exterior of the monuments of Baku are also highly dependent on natural light. The plasticity and dynamism of the perception of the decorative elements of the facade increase, in the game of chiaroscuro, on a sunny day, and the building is perceived more planar and the volume of the facade looks like getting smaller in cloudy weather. The exterior of the building dissolves in the dark, and finally looms against the horizon at nightfall. The shading of the facades from the surrounding building, at certain hours of the day, does not have a favorable effect on the optimal visual perception of the decor of the facades. In the development of capitalism in Baku, part of the decoratively ornate facades of the buildings are either oriented towards the north side of the light or throughout the year, while remaining in the shade, they barely see direct sunlight. In a deep shadow, the decorative element loses its contour and the contour breaks in transitions from shadow to light.

Such concepts as structure, proportionality ratio, modular system of elements, the relationship between the individual constituent elements, etc. should be considered in detail by the observer in the process of studying the perception of exterior decor. For the observer to comprehend the visual perception of the exterior more deeply, it must be redundant to the extent necessary. It achieves on the game of repeated volumes, in the rhythm of structural and decorative elements, symmetrical repetition of volumes. Thus, it is possible to achieve significant expressiveness of the architectural composition within the same building, as well as repeating individual volumetric decorative elements of structures within the same ensemble. One can observe the redundancy of the decor in individual buildings, as well as in the form of an ensemble of a building located in separately formed city streets in the development of Baku in the period under review. The plasticity and capacity of the richly designed decorative elements of the exterior of the monuments of Baku are also highly dependent on natural light. The plasticity and dynamism of the perception of the decorative elements of the facade increase, in the game of chiaroscuro, on a sunny day, and the building is perceived more planar and the volume of the facade looks like getting smaller in cloudy weather. The exterior of the building dissolves in the dark, and finally looms against the horizon at nightfall.

I have analyzed the perception from various points of observation of the facade of a building with a peculiar architecture. For this purpose, the building of the Men's Gymnasium located along Fizuli Street, built in 1911 according to the design of architect K. A. Borisoglebsky, was chosen as

an example. The monumental volume, a relatively elongated facade with four floors, differs by classical forms in the order system. The central protruding part of the building, breaking the general symmetry of the facade, is emphasized by a pediment, a powerful eaves and an entablature on the two upper floors of the Ionic order. The façade of the building is facing parallel to the side facades of Heydar Aliyev Palace, which is located 28 m from the specified building. The total building height including a cornice is 18.5 m and the length is 58.0 m. To analyze the perception of the exterior, three observation points were taken, which were on the same line at 25 m from the facade of the building. Points "A" and "B" are calculated for the perception of the building at an angle, and the point "B" for the case of central vertical perception of the building (Fig.3).

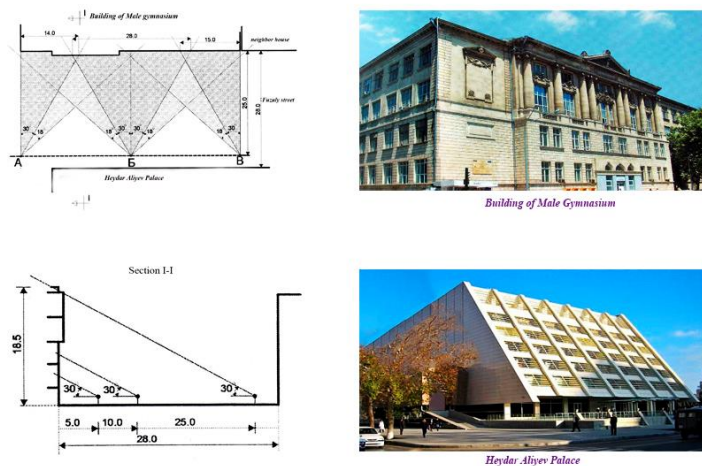


Figure 3. Analysis of the visual perception of the building [9]

At points "A" and "B", due to flank observation, a clear perception occurs at an angle of 30° , covering on each side an overview of the facade on average 14.0 m. Peripheral vision with additional angles, aiding the central perception Peripheral vision with additional angles, aiding the central perception, is 48° on each side, and the survey of the facade at the same time in points is 32.0 m. In this case, the perception of the decorative features of the facade, and especially the central part of the monument, is distorted because of what the full perception of the decor is missing. Moving to the center, and finally, being at the point "B" at an angle of 60° , frontal perception takes place, covering the surfaces of the facade with a length of 28.0 m, allowing to fully perceive the saturation of the decorative exterior elements. The review at an angle of 96° , covering the entire facade while giving a distorted perception of the side surfaces of the building. As can be seen from the section, at 5 m from the facade, the observer perceives the basement at an angle of 30° , at 10 m the first and partially the second floor of the building. At the maximum distance (about 25 m), almost the entire height of the facade is perceived. The table presents the perception of individual architectural elements of the exterior, depending on the distance between the observer and the building façade. The sequence of perceived architectural elements at 5.0, 10.0 and 25.0 m from the surface of the facade is described.

As can be seen from this analysis, the perception of the facade and individual decorative elements changes depending on the distance between the viewer and the building. The rhythmic perception of the facade is inferior to the spacious one at a considerable distance of the observer from the facade. The clearest perception of a rhythm occurs at 10-40 m. In this case, the perception of the first floor begins after 5 m distance from the facade. When the observer is at 10 m and more, along with the perception of the first floor, at the same time he sees the rhythm of the decorative exterior elements. With the subsequent removal of the observer, and finally, being at 25 m, along with the rhythm of the observer, the total volume of buildings is perceived. The study of the visual perception of the architectural monuments of Baku during the period under review is an important

step, revealing the artistic significance of the decorative elements that form the basis of the architectural composition of the monument.

Conclusion. Summarizing the above, we can say that the historical and socio-economic development of Baku in the 19th and early 20th centuries served as the basis for the rapid construction of buildings with an unusual architectural and artistic composition. The architectural elements of the exterior decoration with unique beauty and tenderness, used from the rich arsenal of Azerbaijani and world architecture were skillfully applied in the architectural composition of residential, public and religious buildings. The historical formation and development of the architecture of Baku-Absheron region, on the eve of the 19th and early 20th centuries, embodying the development of the architectural heritage of various traditions and architectural schools, rose to a high-grade artistic peak. At the same time, the entire arsenal of functional and aesthetic tasks of architecture was aimed at creating sets of bold engineering solutions, applying rational designs, identifying expedient spatial composition and developing decorative elements for the exterior of buildings for various purposes.

References

1. Abdulrahimov, R.H. 2010. Constructions and materials used in town-planning of medieval cities in Azerbaijan. Paper presented at the international scientific conference on the ancient and medieval Azerbaijani cities: Archeological heritage, history and architecture. Azerbaijan, Shamkir
2. Abdulrahimov, R. H. 2012. The architecture of the palaces built in Azerbaijan in the Change Period. Turkey: The book of engineering, architecture and urbanization of the Turkish world
3. Abdulrahimov R., Abdullayeva N. 2013. Architecture of Azerbaijan: Architecture in the Early Period of Capitalism (the XIX - beginning of the XX C.C.). Baku: East-West Publishing
4. Abdullayeva, N. 2004. The history of the industrial architecture of the Baku oil region in the middle of 19th and the early 20th centuries. Baku: Elm Publishing
5. Ashurbeyli, S. 1992. History of Baku. Baku: Azerneshr Publishing House
6. Baranovsky G. 2018. Architectural encyclopedia of the second half of the 19th century: Public buildings. St. Peterburg: Stroitel
7. Elgohary A. 2018. New Ornaments' Influence on the Character of Modern Cities. Cities' Identity through Architecture and Arts
8. Prina F. 2010. Architecture: Elements. Materials. Form. Encyclopedia of Art
9. Hattstein M., Delius P. 2007. Islam Art and Architecture of Istanbul. Turkey: Literatur Yayincilik
10. Karpuz H. 2008. Anatolian Seljuk Architecture. Turkey
11. Karimov V. 2013. Building art of the oldest tribal unions and states on the territory of Azerbaijan. Baku: Union of Architects of the Republic of Azerbaijan
12. Maharamov O. 2005. Baku interior of public, palace, cult and residential buildings at the end of the 19th and the early of 20th centuries. Doctoral Dissertation, Azerbaijan University of Architecture and Construction
13. Mamedzade K. 2013. Building Art of Azerbaijan. Baku: Elm Publishing
14. Sharonov V. 2009. The architecture of the world. An Encyclopedia of architectural styles. St. Petersburg: Kristal Publishing

Məqaləyə istinad: Abdulrahimova T.R. Artistic expressiveness of decor on the exteriors of buildings built in the city of Baku: 19th-20th centuries. Elmi Əsərlər/Scientific works, AzMIU, s. 5-11, N1, 2024

For citation: Əbdülrahimova T.R. Bakı şəhərində tikilmiş binaların fasadlarında dekorun bədii ifadəliliyi: XIX-XX əsrlər. Elmi Əsərlər/Scientific works, AzUAC. p.5-11, N1, 2024

Redaksiyaya daxil olma/Received 14.09.2023

Çapa qəbul olunma/Accepted for publication 15.12.2023