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TRADITIONAL CULTURAL CONTENT OF SHEBEKE AND JEWELRY ART OF AZERBAIJAN

Abstract. Shebeke and jewelry art are bearers of traditional artistic language in Azerbaijan culture. Definite traditional forms in both shapes of art are passed on the level of automatism, not affecting of substance. Some of them were preserved in jewelry art till the beginning of the 20th century, but in shebeke – up to our days.

Compositions of jewelry art and shebeke encoded by members four, six and eight are considered in the article. They reflect the model of the world belonging to the Tradition. The author indicates to their direct connection with sacral geometry and the so-called a Flower of life which are universal morphogen structure

Key words: tradition, shebeke, jewelry art, content, sacral geometry.

Introduction. Jewelry art is one of traditional kinds of artistic creation in Azerbaijan. Jewelry articles in the period of centuries were bearers of traditional forms and symbols. At one time home researchers noticed that “jewelry art was developing slower than other kinds of applied art” [3, p. 105] of Azerbaijan. But the development is change, but a slow development is a prolonged preservation of tradition. It is obvious that in some cases this or another “complicated form was not invented by jeweler and went back to symbolic representation experienced temporal stratifications” [3, p. 148]. Many traditional forms and symbols were preserved in the arsenal of jewelry art up to the XIX and even the beginning of the XX century.

The interpretation of the main material. The bearer of traditional artistic language in Azerbaijan culture is also shebeke art. In contrast to

jewelry art, the word “shebeke” speaks scarcely not only wide audience but also to professional researchers. In the translation from Azerbaijan language “shebeke” means “net” or “lattice”. Shebeke is a decorative surface, gathered from many carved wooden elements and pieces of coloured glass without the help of glue or nails. The sizes of the surface of shebeke can shake from some square centimeters up to some square meters created by masters of this kind of art. Such objects are a window, a door, a screen, a pavilion, a lamp, a chest, a cupboard as well as decorative panels on the facades of buildings, verandah, staircase-rails. The master of firm kind of the tree – box-tree, nut, beech, oak – first of all makes standard details of various forms, then according to ready picture arranges patterns. The desired form of shebeke reaches only passing through each other small alats – wooden details with projection and hollow between them which are established pieces of coloured glass. The main secret of shebeke art consists in this decorative method of cutting-passing and consists of the main secret of shebeke art.

Multi-radial stars of correct geometric form are wide-spread compositions of shebeke. The master must adhere to some types of compositions which correspond to names of figures 6, 8, 10, 12, 16 – “alty”, “sekkiz”, “on”, “on iki”, “on alty”. In addition to it, shebeke artist must also observe traditional colour palette: there are only red, yellow, dark blue and green colours at his disposal. Researches carried by us brought to the conclusion that certain traditional forms in art of shebeke are reproduced on the level of automatism, not touching upon layers of the content.

Analogous conclusions here been done by jeweler’s art. Considering adornments of the woman’s and the man’s costume, they noted that some of them were decorated by “motifs of undetermined form – which lost its initial significance” [1, p. 24]. On the contrary, we gather to concentrate on figures which have quite certain form and meaning. The question is about symbols as the World tree, ultimate cross, eventual star and others.

That’s why, it is expedient, first of all to consider those compositions in jeweler’s art which reflect the model of the world. Such compositions are very brightly presented in the décor of bronze belts. It is known that in the ancient times the belts served as a sign of high rank. “The higher is the man’s position, the better is his belt” [3, p. 55]. Rich zoomorphic décor of the man’s belt from Kedabek (II-I cc. B.C. till our era) passes three-parted model of the world where representations of animals – lions, unicorns, shakes as well as

fylfot – mark the upper, the middle and the lower worlds. Three-parted model of the world broadcasts by a tradition up to the XX century.

It is quite obvious that three-parted model of the world reflects a silver breast adornment of the beginning of the XX century fulfilled by a stamping and grain from the collection of Carpet museum in Baku. Here the composition is divided into three tiers, in one of which prevail elements having certain encoding figures. The upper tier is encoded by a number of – eight middle-medium, the lower one – four. We'll leave this composition without the explanation because it contains almost the whole totality of cultural codes which we are interested in.

Subsequent account is easier to build in the order of the growth of numerical row. Avoiding the banalities of 4 sides of the world, 4 seasons and at once we'll determine that the number 4 – it is the incarnation of eventual cross, the symbol of tengrism, the faith to Tengri. All other well-known senses don't contradict, on the contrary, eventual cross is a point of assembling or rather, the figure of assembling.

Metallic and jewelry articles with four-parted structure are widely presented in Azerbaijan beginning since deep antiquity. For example, such are bronze pins of the II–I cc. B.C. from Mingechaur with pinheads having four shoots. Open-work medallions of disc form of the same period from Khanlar are classical tengrian cross inserted in a circle. Such a form have golden earrings from Mingechaur of V–VII cc. This list can be continued. But it is far better to throw the bridge of tradition in the XX century and consider metallic amulet with an engraving and blackening.

Amulet is decorated by a composition in the form of even cross where each element, in its turn, has that form. Semantic layers of representation don't exhaust. Elements from those are gathered the composition represent cruciform structures whose sides in form repeat contours of shamrock. The shamrock according to Murad Adji, it is Altai lotus. In other words, jewelry article created in Azerbaijan more than 100 years ago reproduces Altai Turkic tradition on all levels of sense-formation.

The most widespread pattern shebeke is a composition built in combination with complimentary to each other of traditional colours – dark blue, red, yellow or green. The compositions of such type decorate window and door apertures of Shah Abbas mosque in Ganja (1606), Shakikhanov's house in Shaki (XVIII c.) and many other cult, palace and dwelling buildings of Azerbaijan.

Exactly the discussing type of composition with the largest evidence discovers peculiarities of artistic language of shebeke art. Its essence consists of the flatness of representation can develop limitless, striving for endlessness. In any point the work over production can be stopped, in any point it can be renewed. But the composition is always ready and doesn't lose artistic full-value. We noted [5] not once that compositional structure of shebeke where endless reproduction of initial elements is connected with the world outlook of the Turkic shamanism and tengrism with the presentation about the point "Eternal at Present" where the heaven and the earth meet. In any point of the surface of shebeke the Existence is alike to himself, like as it is self-identity in immense space "Eternal at Present".

It is very interesting that S.Sadykhova discovered analogous properties of artistic language of jewelry art. Considering relief adornments of silver belts manufactured mainly in Baku in the XIX – beginning the XX centuries, she notes: "Plastic completion of decorative design of majority of articles served carpet composition. The representation sprawls and spreads on the surface of adorning, it is impossible to establish, where and whence moves this motley – patterned colour stream. There is spontaneity, it is like the creation of the nature" [6, p. 97]. All of it speaks about that we have cause with universal artistic language born and lived in the forms of traditions and up today functioning in visual culture of Azerbaijan.

It is not enough that analogies between shebeke and jewelry art not only in the sphere of aesthetics, but also in the technology of manufacture. Analyzing medallions in the central part of compositions of necklaces of the XIX century, the specialists are writing: "These medallions fulfilled in the technique of shebeke, presented in the form of eight – or ten-radial star of various modification placed on the necklace as far as the size from up to down" [4, p. 218]. At last two aspects interested us finds the reflection in the sphere of terminology: one of aspects of artistically cultivated precious belts received the name "shebeke-belbagy" in Azerbaijan [1, p. 6]. So parallelism of shebeke and jewelry art is observed on all levels, it has only one explanation – both forms of art primordially belong to the world of Tradition.

The following level of encoding as ascending of the level of the number six. It will be mistaken to tie a cultural code of 6 with Islam and tengrism. There is a foundation to suppose that hexagonal structures and their cultural significance ascend to more than ancient tradition. On these pages it is expedient to appeal only to one of compiling this tradition which is a sacral

geometry. Sacral geometry is “a morphogenic structure lying on the basis of its reality”. “Sacral geometry has one peculiarity – it is irreproachable. There doesn’t occur failures. It will become apparent while the creation of Universe won’t be finished” [7, p. 68, 71]. Figures of sacral geometry are the so-called fish-bubble, tree-life, egg-life, pyramid, octahedron, octagonal star and some others. Figures of sacral geometry are connected with each other by certain mechanism of mutual transformation. The initial figure of sacral geometry is a Flower of life. All other figures are turning upside-down from it, they are removing to it. The Flower if it is more exact, represents matrix of all possible manifestations of the form. In harmony to tradition about which the question is, “The Flower of life” is the source of all languages. It is primary language of the Universe, pure form and proportion [2, p. 65]. Slightly simplifying, one can tell that graphic representation of the Flower is seen as a hexagon, joined in a circle. The inner structure of the Flower also makes up hexagons joined in circles. Each of such elementary hexagons within of its contour contains the reflection of the “Flower” with six petals of correct geometric form. Wonderfully, but the world art there are known absolutely exact reflections of the Flower of life. One of them is imprinted on the wall of the temple of Osiris in Abidos in Egypt and is dated approximately in the IV millennium B.C.

On the pages of the present work there is no possibility to comment all schemes of development and reduction of the Flower and the process of gemmation of all even main derivative figures. We’ll be interested, first of all, the so-called the egg of life, but not only because that basic element of configuration of the Flower but also because this structure got wide spreading in ornaments, shebeke and jewelry art. “The egg of life represents itself eight spheres, the eighth sphere is behind the central one” [7, p. 83], indeed this is three-dimensional figure. On the flat representation we observe six circles of the same size, disposed around the seventh, central one. Such a form on the level of ordinary consciousness can be perceived as contours of the flower with six petals.

As a matter of fact, the perception of work of art happens exactly so. But some details in this or that case help to determine, if banal representations of flowers or figures of sacral geometry. If to assume jewelry adornment reflects the model of the world and contains hexagonal elements, it is possible to affirm that they are symbolizing the egg of life. That’s why we put aside the interpretation of cultural codes of silver breast ornament mentioned at first. Here general context of artistic solution of articles serves as a leading thread.

For the comparison let's pay attention to artistic design of architectural space of Nasir ol-Molk's (1888) mosque in Shiraz. It is important that the customer of the building was Mirza ol-Molk from Turkic dynasty of Kajars who was ruling in that period in Iran. This fact explains why compositions of shebeke created here reflect symbolism perceived by Turkic traditions. In the peoples and in literary sources this monument of architecture is more famous under the name as Rosy mosque or the mosque of Roses. It is considered that for the second name of the mosque is obliges that in Shiraz "more than 300 forms of roses are cultivated" [12]. Judging to all appearances, this opinion is mistaken, ignoramus. We'll see, why.

The yard of the mosque is framed in perimeter by the arched gallery. All surfaces going out to the yard of door apertures in the upper part are decorated with compositions of shebeke taking part of hexagonal elements. It is especially accentuated that petals of these hexagonal roses are drawn so that as they are presented in traditional representation of the Flower of life. That is to say, each of these hexagonal is none other than, as the image of the Egg of life. Totality of all images of hexagonal elements, probably, had to create multi-measure image of the Flower of life in the space of considered architectural structure. This structure probably was named "the mosque of the flower" or "flower mosque".

At last the level of the number – 8. Eight-final stars – one of the most widespread designs, shebeke and jewelry art. The stamp of eight elements carry on them open-work medallion with 8 triangles turned downward (Chovdar, II–I cc. B.C.), golden belt with incisions (Uchtepe, VIII c. A.D.), Shah Ismail's golden belt buckle (1507), golden pendent with enamel (Baku, XIX c.) and others. But two-tier breast adornment (XIX c.) and breast adornment from the collection of Carpet museum, to which we return the third time, combine cultural codes 8 and 6.

The same can be told about compositions shebeke, too. On the picture of V.Vereshagin "The hall in Tatar's house in Shusha" (1865) it is evident that main compositions of window shebeke are framed with the border of eight-finally stars. Eight-finally stars structuriral entire ornament of surfaces of window shebeke of Juma mosque (XVII–XVIII cc.) in Nakhchyvan. Eight-finally stars became the main element of compositions of shebeke of the mosque Shah Abbas (1606) in Ganja etc. Really masterpiece of shebeke art is the Palace of Shaki khans (1762). Designs of shebeke here not simply cover surfaces of window openings and doorways, but create their surroundings,

the world of shebeke, full of light and sense. As in Shiraz prevailing in Shaki palace hexagonal structures come forward. The analysis carried out by the author showed these figures, they symbolize the World tree. So the combination of cultural codes 4, 6 and 8 represent one of main peculiarities of artistic language of shebeke, its traditional content. Genius, but anonymous jeweler at the beginning of the XX century combines these cultural codes in the composition of silver breast decoration.

Conclusion. The problem of appearance of tradition of shebeke finally turns on the question of the beginning of production of the coloured glass. It is considered that the glass was invented in Mesopotamia or Ancient Egypt near 2750 y. B.C. But “the first written description of the production of coloured glass is dated by 650 y. B.C.” [8]. For the definition of historical co-ordinate of shebeke art it is important that “the first glazed window appeared in the location of the Greek bath in Pompey” [9]. The production of leaf glass was mastered by Germans in the XI century, by Italian masters – in the XIII century [10]. Primordially the glass was used only for décor and adornments. “It was very rare and expensive material, technology of manufacture was adhered in a secret. That’s why to allow herself to wear beads or ear-rings could only very rich people” [11]. In other words, expensive materials and secrets manufacturing of articles – it is materially-mixed, but hard soil on which could arise the community of traditional content of shebeke and jewelry art.

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ŞƏBƏKƏ VƏ AZƏRBAYCAN ZƏRGƏRLİK SƏNƏTİNİN ƏNƏNƏVİ KONTENTİ

Şəbəkə və zərgərlik sənəti Azərbaycan mədəniyyətində ənənəvi bədii dilin daşıyıcılarıdır. Hər iki sənət növündə müəyyən ənənəvi formalar mənə qatlarına toxunmadan avtomatik səviyyədə ötürülür. Bunlardan bəziləri zərgərlik sənətində 20 əsrin əvvəllərinə qədər, şəbəkədə isə günümüzdə qədər qorunub saxlanılmışdır.

Məqalədə dörd, altı və səkkiz rəqəmlərlə kodlaşmış zərgərlik və şəbəkə sənətlərinin kompozisiyaları nəzərdən keçirilmişdir. Müəllif onların müqəddəs həndəsə və Həyat çiçəyi ilə birbaşa əlaqəsini qeyd edir.

Açar sözlər: ənənə, şəbəkə, zərgərlik sənəti, kontent, müqəddəs həndəsə.

Əртегин Саламзаде (Азербайджан)

ТРАДИЦИОННЫЙ КУЛЬТУРНЫЙ КОНТЕНТ ШЕБЕКЕ И ЮВЕЛИРНОГО ИСКУССТВА АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНА

Шебеке и ювелирное искусство являются носителями традиционного художественного языка в культуре Азербайджана. Определенные традиционные формы в обоих видах искусства передаются на уровне автоматизма, не затрагивая пластов содержания. Некоторые из них сохранились в ювелирном искусстве до начала XX века, а в шебеке – вплоть до наших дней.

В статье рассматриваются композиции ювелирного искусства и шебеке, кодированные числами четыре, шесть и восемь. Они отражают модель мира, принадлежащую Традиции. Автор указывает на их прямую связь с сакральной геометрией и так называемым Цветком жизни, которые являются универсальной морфогенной структурой.

Ключевые слова: традиция, шебеке, ювелирное искусство, контент, сакральная геометрия.

FIGURES



Fig. 1. Silver breast decoration. Beginning of the XX century.

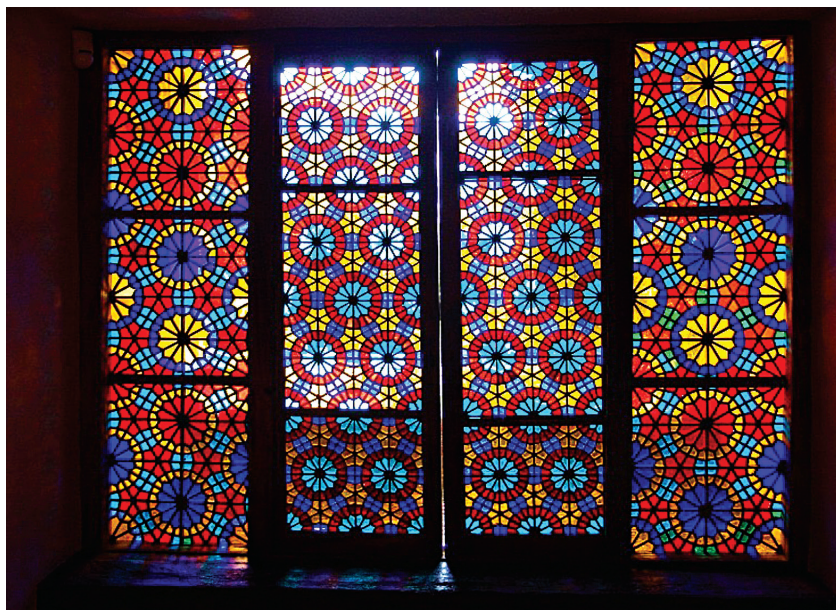


Fig. 2. Shebeke of Palace of Shaki khans. 1762.

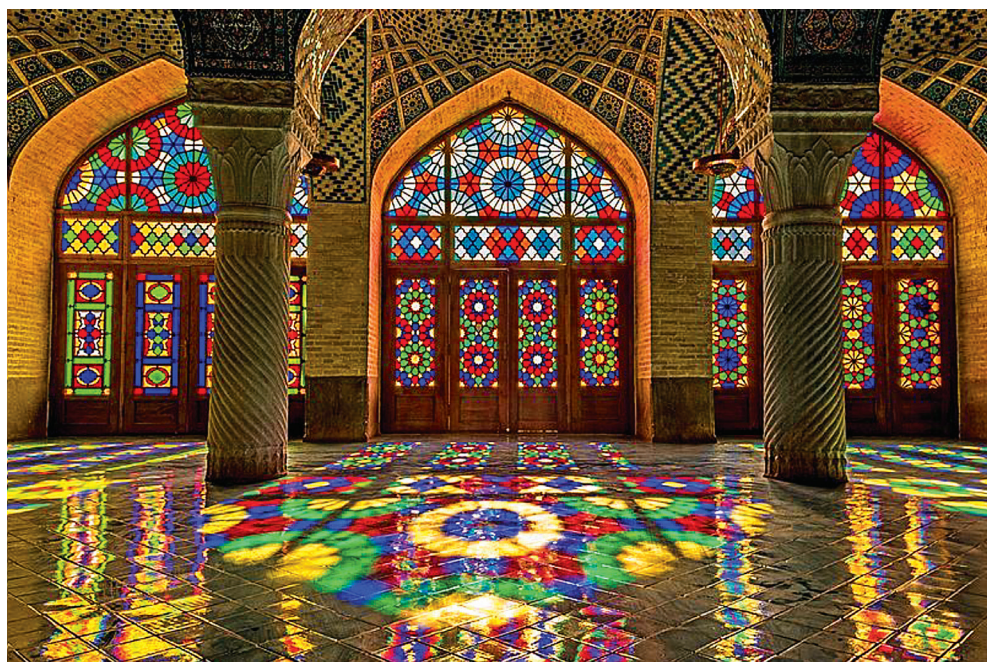


Fig. 3. Shebeke of the mosque Nasir-ol-Molk in Shiraz. 1888.

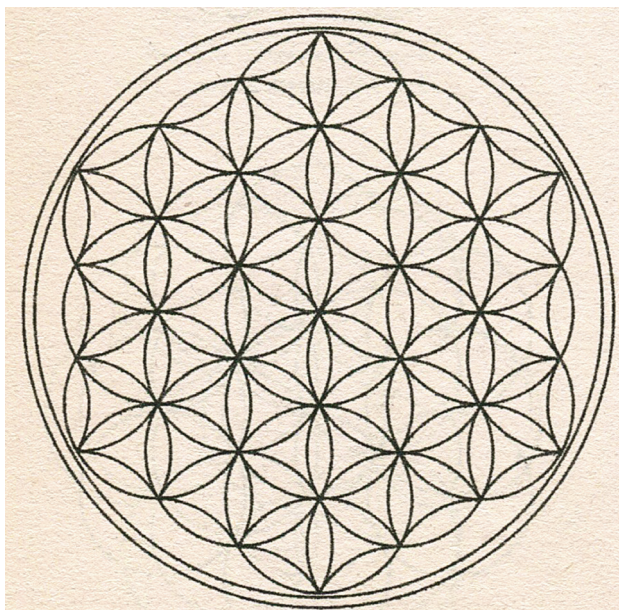


Fig. 4. Traditional representation of the Flower of Life.