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THE SYMBOLIC MEANINGS OF SOME GEOMETRIC ORNAMENTS IN THE CREATIVITY OF THE GENIUS OF ARCHITECTURE, AJAMI NAKHCHIVANI

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Abstract: The article is devoted to the symbolic meanings of some from the geometrical ornaments used in the works of the genius of Azerbaijani architecture, Acemi Abubakr oglu Nakhchivani, expressed in different nations. It is shown that the genius architect skillfully used geometric ornaments with different meanings in his works. The symbolic ornaments made on the surfaces of the architectural monuments built by Ajami Nakhchivani form a joint unity of Eastern and Western ornamentation. Each of these geometric ornaments has a deep symbolic meaning. The article talks about the many meanings of some of these ornaments in the Eastern and Western world.

Key words: architect, monument, ornament, symbolic meaning, work of art.

Introduction. Ajami Nakhchivani, the founder of the Nakhchivan architectural school, created significant monuments distinguished by rich ornamentation. These architectural monuments, symbols of Nakhchivan, feature ornaments with profound symbolic meanings. By predominantly using Turkic mythological ornaments, the great architect Ajami demonstrates to the world the antiquity of our history through these monuments.

In his works, Ajami Nakhchivani created a unified composition combining geometric and vegetal ornaments. Architect, on the his monuments used geometric ornaments such as points, straight lines, curved lines, polygons with 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, and 13 sides, rhombuses, rectangles, squares, and cubes. From these polygons drawn inside and outside a circle, girih geometric patterns were formed. From the harmonious combination of girih patterns,

stars with 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, and 13 points emerged. Thus, the Jafari shabaka system was established. The symbolic meanings of some of the geometric ornaments used are as follows.

The interpretation of the main material.

1. The Symbolic Meaning of the Dot in Ajami Nakhchivani's Ornaments.

The simplest form of geometric ornament worked on the surfaces of the architectural monuments constructed by Ajami Nakhchivani, the dot, carries the symbolic meaning of the beginning. Scientific research proves that the origin of the universe starts from a point. The universe originated from a singular state that rapidly expanded, leading to its formation [1, p. 7]. It is stated in the Qur'an (Surah Al-Anbiya, 30; Az-Zariyat, 47) that the Allah brought every being into existence from a single point, separated them from one another, and later multiplied their numbers [2, p. 428, 721].

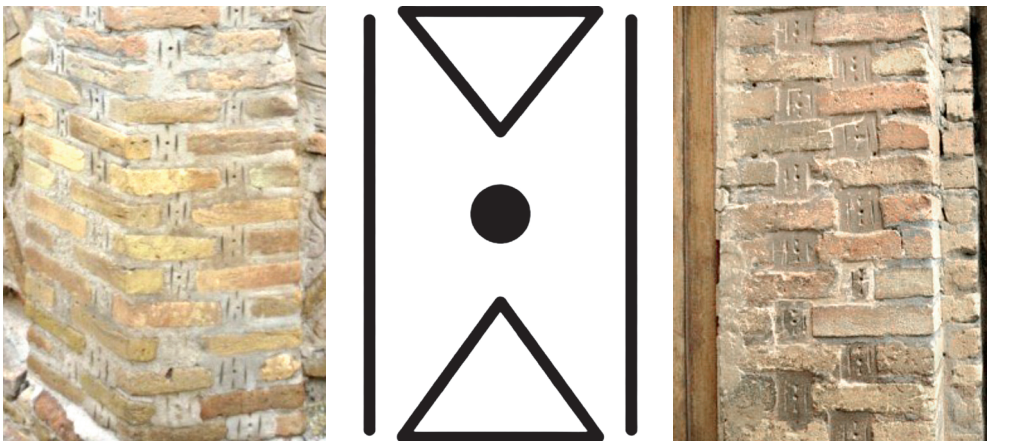

Fig. 1. The dot ornament on the Yusif Kuseyir oglu and Momine Khatun Tombs

If the dot is placed at the center when forming other figures, its symbolic meaning is Allah. One of the first Greek philosophers, Pythagoras, explained this idea by stating that the dot represents the number one. This number is considered the beginning and the foundation of everything. According to the philosopher, the dot, that is, the number one, symbolizes Divine power, that is, God [13, p. 26-33].

2. The Symbolism of Lines, Water, and Dual Forces in Ornamentation.

A straight line, connecting two points, symbolizes the true path of Allah in the Qur'an, while curved lines represent deviation from this path (Al-Fatiha 1:6; Al-An'am 6:153) [2, p. 1, 187].

In Greek mythology, curved lines symbolize waves. Straight and wavy lines represent flowing water. The "S"-shaped water element in the circular meander ornament expresses infinity and eternity. Water is considered the most essential condition for life.

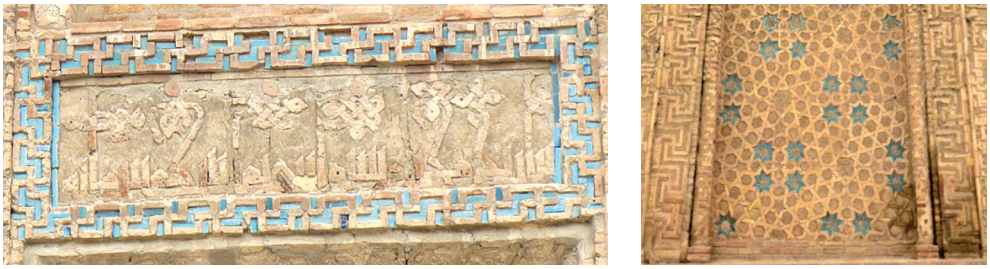

Fig. 2. The meander ornaments on the Momine Khatun Tomb

The meander ornament can also appear as a cross known as the swastika. Derived from Sanskrit meaning "well-being," it symbolizes holiness, benevolence, success, and is also associated with a "wheel" [11, p. 11]. The number two, represented by a straight line, is often seen as the unity and conflict of opposing forces like good and evil that shape existence.

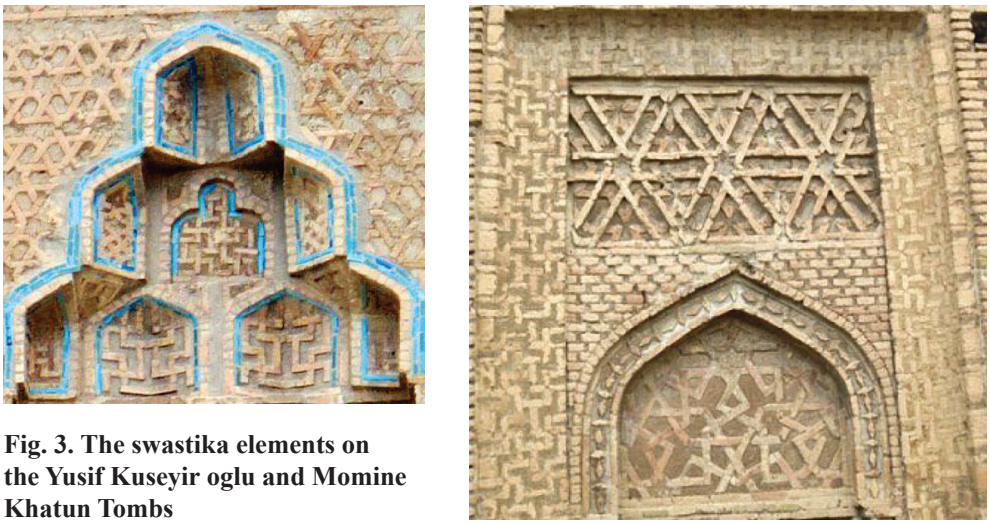

Fig. 3. The swastika elements on the Yusif Kuseyir oglu and Momine Khatun Tombs

3.The Symbolism of the Circle in Ajami Nakhchivani's Works.

In Ajami Nakhchivani's works, the circle is formed by one fixed point and another rotating around it. The central point symbolizes Allah, while the moving point represents angels and all created beings. Their motion reflects the cosmic order, where all existence revolves around Allah. In the Qur'an, the circle symbolizes Tawhid - unity and oneness - expressed in Surah Al-Ikhlas [2, p. 887]. The whirling dervishes draw circles in worship to reflect Sufi beliefs, seeking closeness to Allah. The area of a plane enclosed by a circle carries various mythological meanings. In ancient Turkic mythology, the circle symbolized eternity and perfection, and was reflected in funeral rites where people gathered in circular formations around kurgans, representing the order of the world. Ancient Turkic tribal unions represented the sun with a circle. Since a circular ornament depicts the sun, it is considered an astral ornament. The sun is regarded as a symbol of fire. In Azerbaijan, depictions of the sun in the rock art of Gobustan and Gamigaya are shown with a circle and rays extending from the circle [4, p. 146, 150].

Fig. 4. The circular ornament on the Momine Khatun Tomb

Fig. 6. The funeral ceremony of ancient Turks

In Hinduism and Buddhism, the circle is known as a mandala, a symbol of the universe. In Sanskrit, "mandala" means "circle," and in Buddhism it reminds believers of the universe's sacredness and their inner spiritual potential [10, p. 50].

4.The Symbolism of the Triangle in Ajami Nakhchivani's Architecture.

The triangular shapes depicted on the architectural monuments constructed by Ajami Nakhchivani carry various symbolic meanings. In the Qur'an, the triangle can be interpreted through the concept of three essential virtues - faith, righteous deeds, and truthfulness with patience (Al-Asr 103:1-3), contrasted with negative states symbolized in three forms (Al-Mursalat 77:30) [2, p. 827, 878].

Fig. 7. The triangular ornament on the Yusif Kuseyir oglu and Momine Khatun Tombs

According to ancient Turkic beliefs, triangles symbolize sacred mountains, representing ancestry and elevation. Mountains were worshipped as dwellings of protective spirits; in Altai mythology, they were once heroic beings transformed into mountains. Revered as sources of happiness and protection, this belief was widespread among Turkic peoples, including Azerbaijanis. [5, p. 14-23]. According to ancient Turkic mythological thought, triangular amulets called tumar were used to protect against the evil eye, diseases, and malevolent forces. These objects had a protective function and were considered symbols of fire. In Anatolia, however, tumar amulets were sometimes worn for the fulfillment of wishes. In Ottoman art, the chintemani ornament, composed of three circles arranged in a triangular formation, served as an artistic expression of this belief [7, p. 11]. The chintemani motif was also a principal element on the flag of the Timurid state.

Fig. 8. Tumars

Fig. 9. Chintemani ornament

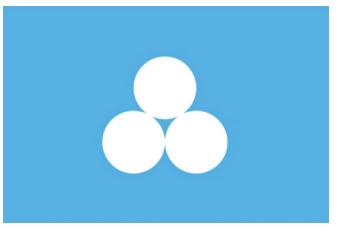

Fig. 10. The flag of the Timurids

According to Greek mythology, the triangle symbolizes shelter. The pyramids, which are triangular in shape, exemplify this. The word "pyramid," derived from Greek meaning "fire in the middle," is linked to the concept of sacred hearths (pirs), whose names were later associated with revered individuals and their holy graves [3, p. 49]. According to Pythagoras, the triangle is the cause of birth and the creation of everything. The number three is considered the number of perfection. Within this number lie the concepts of beginning, middle, and end. Therefore, the number three signifies variability [13, p. 26-33].

5. The Symbolism of the Square and Cube in Ajami Nakhchivani's Architecture.

Among the geometric ornaments on the surfaces of Ajami Nakhchivani's works, the quadrilateral symbolizes the deeds a person has performed in the past and present, as well as the reward they will receive in the afterlife for those deeds. It signifies the protection of a person from Satan on all four sides. The four-pointed star represents a person's period of struggle, that is, the period of striving to resist Satan's temptations. According to the Qur'an (Al-A'raf 7:17), Satan approaches humans from four directions - front, behind, right, and left - thus the square symbolizes protection from all sides [2, p. 191, 192].

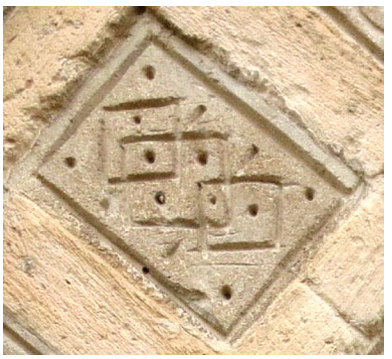

Fig. 11. The quadrilateral ornament

Fig. 12. The quadrilateral and four-pointed on the Yusif Kuseyir oglu Tomb star ornaments on the Momine Khatun Tomb

The four main directions of the horizon - north, south, east, and west - are symbolically represented by a square. Ancient Turkic tribes lived in tents called "yurd," where spatial organization reflected mythological beliefs: the south symbolized an auspicious beginning, the north authority, the east the female principle, and the west the male principle, shaping the seating arrangement.

A square has numerous symbolic meanings. Pythagoras combined these four elements with four geometric solids in his interpretation of numbers. According to the Greek philosopher, earth is represented by the cube, fire by the tetrahedron, air by the octahedron, and water by the icosahedron. These four elements describe the universe [13, p. 31]. The number four is seen as a manifestation of divine order, reflected in the four seasons. The square, extended into a cube, symbolizes stability and strength. Quadrilateral residential houses were believed to protect against evil. The Kaaba, built as a cube, represents this idea, signifying protection from Satan.

Fig. 13. The Nakhchivantepe settlement

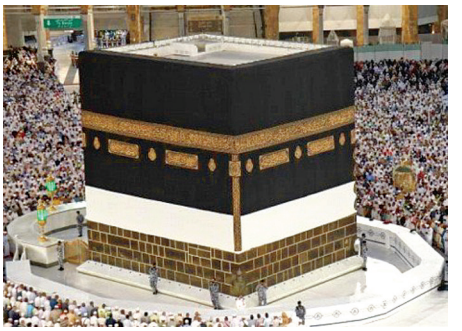

Fig. 14. Kaaba

6. The Symbolism of the Pentagon and Pentagram in Ajami Nakhchivani's Architecture

Among the geometric ornaments engraved on the monuments created by Ajami Nakhchivani, the pentagon carries various meanings in different religions. In Islam, the symbolic meaning of the pentagon is to have faith. In the Qur'an (An-Nisa 4:136), belief in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the Hereafter is emphasized, symbolically associated with the five-pointed form representing faith [2, p. 124].

Fig. 15. The pentagonal ornament

Fig. 16. The pentagonal and five-pointed star on the Yusif Kuseyir oglu Tomb ornaments on the Momine Khatun Tomb

In the Western world, the pentagram is a regular five-pointed astral symbol. In ancient mythology, days were linked to the sun, moon, and five planets, and the pentagram - sometimes within a circle - was associated with the goddess Ishtar. In Greek mythology, the pentalpha represents the five elements - air, water, fire, earth, and spirit - and was believed to have magical power, while Pythagoras saw five as the number of humans [8, p. 26]. In early Christianity, the pentagram symbolizes the five sacred wounds of Jesus Christ received during the crucifixion. These wounds, known as stigmata, represent marks of suffering and sacrifice [12, p. 301-321].

7. The Symbolism of the Hexagon in Ajami Nakhchivani's Architecture.

The hexagonal ornament in Ajami Nakhchivani's monuments symbolizes destiny in the Qur'an. Alongside the five pillars of faith, belief in divine decree - Allah's predetermined plan for each person - is also essential. This concept is mentioned in the Qur'an (Surah Al-Ma'idah, 48) [2, p. 143]. The number six, represented by the hexagon in Turkic mythology, symbolizes the six days of the world's creation. In the Altai creation epic, God created the universe in six days and rested on the seventh. Therefore, the hexagon is seen as a symbol of cosmic unity and completeness in Turkic belief.

Fig. 17. The hexagonal and six-pointed star

Fig. 18. The hexagonal and six-pointed star ornaments on the Yusif Kuseyir oglu Tomb ornaments on the Momine Khatun Tomb

In Indian tradition, the hexagon (Anahata) symbolizes the heart chakra, representing balance, unity, and compassion, while in the Near East it was associated with the goddess Astarte [10, p. 100-122].

In Jewish tradition, the six-pointed star is associated with King David and symbolizes divine protection, as reflected in the Psalms where God is described as his shield. The Star of David, or Magen David in Hebrew, means "protector" or "defender." It is formed by two interlaced triangles, as the Hebrew letter Dalet resembles a triangle. In Kabbalah, the Magen David symbolizes the Sephiroth, representing the divine structure through which the universe is created and governed [6, p. 460, 461, 680].

8. The Symbolism of the Octagon in Ajami Nakhchivani's Architecture.

The octagonal figure, frequently found on the surfaces of Ajami Nakhchivani's architectural monuments, carries various symbolic meanings. The number eight is referenced in several Qur'anic verses (e.g., Al-Haaqqa; Az-Zumar; Al-Qasas) [2, p. 521, 627, 797]. In Islamic belief, Paradise has eight levels and gates. The octagon, formed by two squares rotated 45°, symbolizes protection from Satan, covering all eight directions-cardinal and intermediate-to safeguard humans. In Turkic mythology, the octagonal ornament is associated with the feminine principle, while the eight-pointed star derived from it is considered an astral ornament connected to the sun and is referred to as the "Turkic sun." This symbol was widely used on Turkic

Fig. 19. Octagonal and eight-pointed star ornaments

flags. In Yakut (Sakha) beliefs, the world is understood to have eight directions. In Altai epics, the idea that the sun is located in the eighth layer of the sky provides a basis for associating the eight-pointed star with the sun and the planet Venus (Zohra).

The eight-pointed star appears in Sumerian texts and Babylonian cave art, inspired by the motion of Venus. In Akkadian mythology, it symbolizes the goddess Ishtar (Inanna), representing divine power, while the lion signifies her strength [9, p. 5].

Fig. 20. Eight-pointed star on the Yusif Kuseyir oglu and Momine Khatun Tombs on the Akkadian seal

9. The Symbolism of the Decagon in Ajami Nakhchivani's Architecture.

In Ajami Nakhchivani's work, the ten-pointed star symbolizes the ten virtuous deeds from the Qur'an (Surah Al-An'am 151-153) that guide one on the straight path, helping a person overcome the ego and resist Satan while striving toward Paradise [2, p. 186, 187]. The decagon relates to the sacred number ten in Turkic mythology, linked to the legend of the Göktürks, where a she-wolf gives birth to ten sons, symbolizing the origin of the Turkic people as "descended from the wolf."

In Pythagorean theory, the number ten is analyzed as follows: the digit 1 represents God, while 0 represents the unknown. Thus, God created the universe from the unknown, from chaos. The universe arises from and breathes through this infinite and eternal void. According to Pythagoras, the number

ten symbolizes the perfect combination of the Divine and the void [13, p. 26-33].

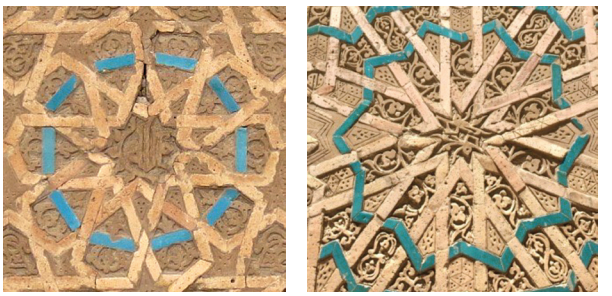

Fig. 21. Decagonal and ten-pointed star ornaments on the Momine Khatun Tomb

Conclusion. The study shows that Ajami Nakhchivani did not use ornaments merely for decoration. Each of the this ornament carried a specific symbolic meaning, primarily rooted in Turkic mythology, while also reflecting a synthesis of Eastern and Western traditions.

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Brilliant Cəfərli ***(Azərbaycan)***

MEMARLIQ DÜHASİ ƏCƏMİ NAXÇIVANİNİN YARADICILIĞINDA BƏZİ HƏNDƏSİ ORNAMENTLƏRİN RƏMZİ MƏNALARI

Məqalə Azərbaycan memarlığının dahi nümayəndəsi Əcəmi Əbubəkr oğlu Naxçıvaninin əsərlərində istifadə olunan bəzi həndəsi ornamentlərin müxtəlif xalqlarda ifadə olunan rəmzi mənalarına həsr edilmişdir. Göstərilir ki, dahi memar öz yaradıcılığında müxtəlif məna yükünə malik həndəsi ornamentlərdən məharətlə istifadə etmişdir. Əcəmi Naxçıvaninin inşa etdiyi memarlıq abidələrinin səthlərində işlənmiş rəmzi ornamentlər Şərq və Qərb ornamentikasının vəhdətini təşkil edir. Bu həndəsi ornamentlərin hər biri dərin rəmzi məna daşıyır. Məqalədə həmin ornamentlərin bəzilərinin Şərq və Qərb dünyasında daşıdığı çoxşaxəli mənalardan bəhs olunur.

Açar sözlər: memar, abidə, ornament, rəmzi məna, sənət əsəri.

Бриллиант Джафарли ***(Азербайджан)***

СИМВОЛИЧЕСКИЕ ЗНАЧЕНИЯ НЕКОТОРЫХ ГЕОМЕТРИЧЕСКИХ ОРНАМЕНТОВ В ТВОРЧЕСТВЕ ГЕНИЯ АРХИТЕКТУРЫ АДЖАМИ НАХЧЫВАНИ

Статья посвящена символическим значениям некоторых геометрических орнаментов, использованных в произведениях гениального представителя азербайджанской архитектуры Аджами Абу-Бакр оглы Нахчывани, выраженным у различных народов. Показано, что выдающийся архитектор мастерски применял в своём творчестве геометрические орнаменты с различной смысловой нагрузкой. Символические орнаменты, выполненные на поверхностях архитектурных памятников, возведённых Аджами Нахчывани, образуют единство восточной и западной орнаментики. Каждый из этих геометрических орнаментов обладает глубоким символическим значением. В статье рассматриваются многочисленные значения некоторых из этих орнаментов в восточном и западном мире.

Ключевые слова: архитектор, памятник, орнамент, символическое значение, произведение искусства.