

RELIGIONS BUILDINGS OF APSHERON

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A small territory of Apsheron near Baku is rich with monuments of defence architecture, civil, memorial and religions buildings. Monuments of architecture of the XII and early XX centuries can be met everywhere, on the territory of historical villages and surrounding places.

These buildings organically are an integral part of the general architectural-planning structure of historical villages and the system of Apsheron settlements. Some monuments are included in the system of the building as local sections of the general process of the development of Apsheron architecture, the others as active and dominant which determine the architectural-planning peculiarities of buildings of different periods with their stylistic directions.

Erections of defence architecture and social buildings become the main buildings determining the subject-spacial environment of one-two-storeyed buildings. In the town-planning system of villages they are buildings with noticeable volume, scale and compositional solution.

Most social buildings occupy one or another plot of the district and introduce stimulus into the planning and volumetric system of environment which wrecks the monotony of blank fences of estates. Arrangement of mosques, bahts, ovdans or caravanserais in different districts enriches their architecture. They have rich information about the socio-economic condition of development of the populated place, historical data about costumers and what is very important about the masters who have left their names on the epigraphic vignettes of the buildings.

Among the erections which have influenced upon the general character of the building of historical villages, religions buildings are of great volumetric and architectural importance.

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Religious buildings are more ideological according to their content and more ponderable in architectural and structural aspect. Occupying more important places in the structure of villages as the elements of the first rate, religious buildings play significant role in the planning of town-building systems of districts as the functions of the second rate and thus extend the sphere of influence upon such civil buildings as baths and ovdans. Because also these erections according to the character of muslim traditions are closely interconnected with each other.

Ritual peculiarities of Islamic worship and social-living conditions of the local population make it necessary to have a bath-house and water near the mosque. In the East on laying the foundation of the populated area, a fortress or a district, the main rules of the town-planning are always taken into consideration. When creating the social centre of the city and the centre of the district Juma-mosque, a bath-house a pool and stalls were built.

Thus in historical villages of Apsheron the social and religious buildings have in peculiar form determined their volumetric and compositional settling.

Juma-mosques and surrounding buildings being transformed into the main social centre of the village were closely connected with small centres of districts and together formed the structural frame of social buildings. Besides their main functions in the structure of villages the religious have some disciplining element in the planning system of the villages, unite the isolated districts in the plan of regulation of town building principles in the existing situation.

Owing to historical development each village of Apsheron allocated certain places for religious buildings which became the main elements of creating and forming not only social centres but also for planning organization of important town-building complexes.

It is difficult to overrate the role and significance of religious buildings in volumetric-spatial and architectural planning structure of villages. Besides their social character they are architectural dominants, more visual landmarks in multiplanned system of the village, actively perform their functions in the subject-spatial environment.

The arrangement of religious erections is not simple. They are situated among the ordinary buildings of the village, in the centre of the district, perform an independent volumetric-spatial function, but in all variants survive a leading position in the building of the street, in

compositional solution of planning complexes and in the silhouette of the village. Having a great emotional supply religions buildings fill a gap between the picturesque planning and mass dwelling, social buildings.

The social character of religions buildings has played its positive role in the formation of district squares which promoted the creation of new forms of spatial organization. Being an integral part of the village the religions buildings have become catalysts for appearing of civil buildings (bath-houses, ondans and commercial rows), as a result of which are formed the social centres on the scale of villages.

Depending on socio-economic development of villages appeared the social centres with religions buildings. In big villages as Mashtagha, Bilgakh, Buzovna, Nardaran, Amirjan, Balakhany and others preponderated the centress with a dominant mosque but in small populated areas there was a single social centre with a mosque surviving the function of commercial and religions centre.

A mosque as a religions building in Apsheron existed since the VIII century with appearing of Islam in these places and in the process of long evolution are determined general objective laws in architectural-planning and in volumetric-spatial aspect. There are such ancient mosques as the mosque of Mahammed or Synykgala (1078/79), Lazghi-mosque (1169), Khydir-mosque (XIIIc.), Gilak-mosque (1309) and others in the territory of Icheri-shher in Baku where the main principles of religions building were put forward at the earliest period of arising and forming of social buildings in Apsheron.

As the territory of Icheri-sheher is limited, religions building including mosque are situated among residential houses except some of them as volumetric elements are distinguished for nothing in the system of the street excepting their simple portal compositions.

In this town-building environment were created the planning typological groups which were the basis of the further development of religions buildings in Icheri-sheher and Apsheron. Religions buildings in Apsheron are preserved since the XIV century. They sprang up on the basis of the most ancient buildings which directed the development of architectural-planning character of the following periods.

Chronologically the religions buildings have passed a long way of their development before are created certain typological groups of buildings of social character. Analysing the material it is discovered

that the religious building of Apssheron chronologically may be divided into 5 periods: 1. XIV-XV c., 2. XVII-XVIII cc., 3. XIX c., 4- the second half of the XIX c., 5- the beginning of the XX c.

Each period is presented by the monuments of architecture, when the typological group has independence and continuity of architectural-planning solution and its structural features.

Mosques in the villages Nardaran (Pir Seyid, 1307, 1363/64), Amirjan (mosque of Nizamaddin, 1329/30, 1855/56, 1866/67, 1876), Ramana (mosque near the fortrees, 1323/24, 1636/37), Mardakan (Tubashi mosque, 1372/73, 1482/83), Balakhany (mosque in the cemetry, 1385), Dudakh (mosque 1430/31, 1843, 1852, 1862/63, 1874), Mashtagha (mosque of Pirargutay, 1414/15), Kurdakhany (mosque 1444/45, 1897) date from the first period.

Apart from the fact that the first period has a rich information about the religious buildings of Apsheron where certain types and forms begin to develop, the aspect of development of settlements and the beginning of their town-planning formation from the point of view of planning structure on the basis of religious buildings draw attention.

The main architectural - structural principles of religious buildings, their graphic solution, the inner system of interiors, the structure of architectural masses according to principles of stone architecture which have their specific peculiarities are formed just in this period.

Most of these buildings in the course of long existence were repaired, reconstructed, widened, but preserved the ancient parts which give more reliable information in planning and architectural respect. It is very important for drawing the designs of restoration. In that period were created two main planning types of Apsheron mosque : one-chamber mosque rectangular in plan covered with a monumental vault and a mosque with four pillars covered with dome.

The second period in the development of religious buildings is presented by the mosques in the villages Bilajari (1658/59, 1741/42, 1850/51), Nardaran (mosque-school 1686/87, the mosque of Haji Bakhshy, 1663/64), Gala (XVIII c.), Novkhany (the mosque of Shah Sultan Hyseyin, XVIII c.), Mashtagha (the mosque of Haji Aslan Bay, 1765/66, Karbalai Jafar, 1796/97), Buzovna (Ashaghi - mosque, 1776/77, 1838, 1875), Hokmaly (XVIII c.), Zabrat (XVIIIc., 1883/84). Owing to social economic conditions of Shirvan, there are no religious buildings dating from XVI century in Apsheron. In the XVII-XVIII

centuries took place the new architectural-planning methods and compositional forms which were used in religions buildings. These buildings actively take part in transformation of surrounding buildings.

If to compare with the first period is extended not only the sphere of planning typology of religions buildings but other populated areas of Apsheron as Bilajari, Keshla, Gala, Novkhany, Buzovna, Hokmaly, Zabrat are drawn into this erection. Perhaps there were mosque of the first period in these villages, then in their places were built the new and large ones more convinient from the point of view of planning methods of the second period.

Religions buildings of this period are the new stage in their development. The construction of volumes, interpretation of facades, architectural methods in the composition of mosques consist of structural possibilities of stone architecture under strong influence of building traditions.

In that period there were original religions buildings which occupied the town-planning complexes of developing villages but as regards the volumetric-spatial and compositional solution,platics and form-making the mosques in the cemetry of Balakhany (1385) and Tuba-shahi (1372, 1482/83) in Mardakan are the classic examples of Shirvan-Apsheron architecture.










The third period when all the planning types of religions buildings in Apsheron were completely developed and was going a process of correction and appearing of varieties which didn't play a special role in typology. At that time a critical moment came in the formation of religions buildings. It seems that nothing has changed neither in the methods of planning nor in architectural-building forms. Nevertheless many changes have taken place in volumetric-spatial interpretation, in solution of facades and in building of the internal system of volumetric masses.

The fourth period is characteristic for great social-economic changes in the life of the population of villages when the oil industry began to develop, the movement of the population from villages to Baku and its oil districts became more intensive and means for building including religions buildings were found. Surviving the former planning methods in religions buildings appeared big praying halls which were not met in previous periods. Three-passaged mosques became dominant, but five-passaged ones were also met. Such a planning solution of the praying hall from perfectly new angle opens the architectural-constructive structure of the interior space with

numerous columns which carry arches with cruciform vaults of the ceiling of wide passages. At the same time in the constructive system of the interior appear the semicircle vaults and arches which shatter the established building tradition but do not bring any discordant note to the stone structure of the building. These architectural forms do not violate the general planning and volumetric interpretation.

The fifth period is remarkable for not only traditional typological groups which survive the principal schemes of planning but also with big bay opening stone dome which takes part in the solution of the praying hall. Here a square hall with the system of angle vertical cruciform arches develops into the conic dome which floats high over the hall. It was a new architectural - constructive system in Baku-Apsheron. Up to that time such domes were not built neither in Baku nor in the villages of Apsheron.

During all periods of development of religious buildings nine planning types which contain the great potential resources of typological group of social buildings were determined. Not a type has lost. Its significance passing all the periods of formation and transforming into the original classical schemes. They appeared as a result of the historical development of religious buildings and set in the basis of this or that building taking place in the town-planning system of this or that village of Apsheron. All the planning types can be presented as a table which more colourfully reflects the typological evolution of religious buildings.

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
								
1482- 1902.	1663- 1912	1658- 1905	1685- 1911	1806- 1914	1813- 1902	1818-XIX XIX	1878- 1899	XIX- 1916