

## **Refreshing the Architectural Design of Urban Centers in Tabriz Based on Historical Documents: A Case Study in Saheb Abad, Shanb Ghazan, and Alishah Mosque**

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### **Abstract**

Understanding the design and architectural style prevalent in different historical periods of Azerbaijan, especially the city of Tabriz, because of its geographical location can play an important role in understanding the architectural style of Iran. In addition to written resources in this area, illustrated plans remained from ancient times can be used as a valuable cultural and architectural document. The purpose of this study was to refresh the architectural design of the urban centers of Tabriz illustrated and written in the historical documentation. To accomplish this goal, the comic books and the history of the buildings have been studied and finally, the design of urban centers of Tabriz is refreshed using a comparative study (semiotics).

**Keywords:** Illustrated Historical Documents, Metraqchy miniature, readout of architectural design, Tabriz

### **Introduction**

Understanding the history of art and culture of each country is a step towards understanding human evolution of any country because national culture and art indicates their way of thinking, emotions, desires and belongings. Iranian culture and art that now we are elated about and we wear the ornament of its inheritance in the civilized world is not the brainchild of one century, rather this culture and art is the legacy of thousands of years of endless efforts and sacrifices. The works remained from this great civilization indicates the creators' knowledge of the world around and its founders knowing the criteria and principles of their environment during previous centuries could have created artistic and architectural works.

With regard to readout of Tabriz architecture, there are two research and information resources. Some illustrative resources are old plans, paintings and pictures of buildings. These pictures which show their contemporary architecture and buildings indicate painters and photographers' understanding of architecture and designs of that time and when put together, not only displays the spirit of the time rather by completing each other facilitates readout of design and architecture applied in buildings.

### **Statement of the problem**

Azarbaijan is at the top of Iran's architecture because three methods of Iranian architecture (Persian, Azari and Isfahani) were derived from there.

By studying local structures in each land, the point becomes clear that all local structures are designed based on climate and for maximum use of natural energies and to deal with annoying cold and heat which is in line with culture of each zone and is defined as native architecture.

According to definition by national library of Iran all documents that are more than 40 years old are considered as historical documents.

Due to devastating earthquake in 1193 AD of the late Zand and Qajar era, Tabriz completely razed and except a few popular buildings including Alishah Arg and (Blue) Kaboud Mosque, no

other structure remained from previous eras. In architectural readout of this city, some historical documents especially pictures, plans and illustrative documents bear valuable information about urban context and common architectural styles during different historical periods have been less taken into account and can be used for readout of certain urban centers in Tabriz like Metrqihi miniature (eighth century AD), Painting by Eugene Pascal Fnlandn and casts (seventh century AH), travelogues Chardin (seventeenth century) and black and white photos taken during Qajar period.

### **Research methodology**

The method used for this research is descriptive-analytical and semiotics (comparative). For the conceptual analysis of paintings, historical semantics and semiotic method were used. These paintings were categorized according to the time of creation and the validity of their architectural content and historically analyzed. Stages of paintings' analysis are as follows: paintings' date determination and re-drawn architecture date specification, internal and external validation of paintings as a historical document; attention to the written version of content, assessment of the paintings' conformation with architecture reality by observations obtained from that period's architectural match with other paintings of the same version or school, finding parts of architecture representation and their readout.

### **Readout of ancient Tabriz city centers**

#### ***Saheb Abad complex***

##### *Written documents*

The start of building this complex goes back to Abagha Khan period at the time of Sheikh Mohammad Joveini presidency (the owner of Divan) his first minister. And by building this complex, Tabriz developed up to north Mehran Chaiee River. At the time of Gharaquionlo Jahan Shah, Iran's house of government was transferred from Sheshgolan to this area and the vast square of Iran government was completed there. The remainings of this complex known as Saheb-Ol-Amr complex is a valuable complex of Iran which has been ruined because of ignorance and earthquake in 1193 AH.

According to studies conducted, this complex was the center of ruling system of Iran and headquarters of kings such as Jahānšāh, Uzun Hasan, Shah Ismail and Shah Tahmasb for four centuries. Parts of the complex include Hassan King Square, Jafar Pasha Complex - Darolmsakin - Nsryeh Garden - Nasryeh school or King Hassan Mosque (Figure 3), Eight Heaven mansion - St. Helena Church- Shah Tahmasb Mosque (current Mosque of the Saheb-Ol-Amr) in Tabriz. The palace was located in the middle of the garden with Mstbhay. Inside the Palace on top of Great Hall, scenes of the numerous battles between Uzun Hasan and also Bab Ali' agents visit to Uzun Hasan and other events were drawn in gold, silver, and blue colors. The garden itself has three entrances towards north, south and east.

Except a small palace that Agh Ghoionlo kings watched matches from its porch or foreign ambassador gathered there, there was also a large hospital that only a wall separated it from Ozun Hasan Mousque. At Ozun Hasan and Yaqub region according to Venizian merchants, more than a thousand poor and patients lived in this hospital whose large rooms covered with carpet. In the nearby restaurant, which was devoted to the poor, they were fed at the expense of the court. This field can be generally categorized among the administrative-ruling fields with social functions.

And, on the other hand, very close relationship with the market and economy of the city emphasizes the social role of the field.

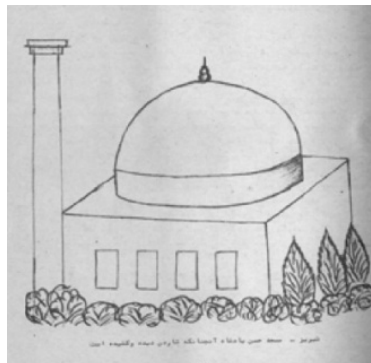
*Historical illustrative documents*



**Figure 1: Saheb-Ol-Amr Square**



**Figure 2: Saheb-Ol-Amr Mosque and Haj Mohammad Amin Bridge**



**Figure 3: King Hasan Mosque**



**Figure 4: A part of Sahr-Ol-Amr Square**

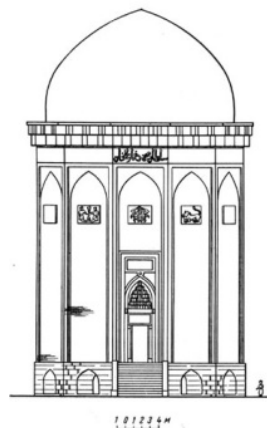
### ***Shanb Ghazan Complex***

Shanbe' Khazan, Ghazanyeh and Sham Ghazan is one of the historic neighborhoods in Tabriz. The neighborhood is more famous because of its independent and glorious history. Arghun Khan in 673 AH in Sham village in the west of Tabriz built up complexes called Arghvnyh. He built up a Shemny temple according to his religion on whose walls his portrait was painted and was considered as one of the most beautiful contemporary Shmny temples. At that time, Sham had the best climate and was geographically the best place in Tabriz that had a grassy land called Sham plain during Ghazani period was. In 699 AH, since Mahmood Ghazan Khan became Muslim ordered all non-Muslim temples to be ruined in that village. Also, Arghonieh temple that was built in his father's order was ruined and a mosque was built in its place. He built a mausoleum for himself and since then the village was called Sham Kazan or Shsnbe Ghazan. Ghazan Khan's tomb was larger than what Sultan Sanjar's built in Merv and had taller domes than it. Next to this building, a mosque and two schools for Shafeie and Hanafi tutors, hospital, library, bathroom, central office, observatories and other constitutions were built. One of the magnificent buildings of Shanbe Ghazan is Bosan Sara and Ghasde Alieh visited by Tavernier (French tourists) in the year 1045 AH (1635 AD) and mentioned the monument. And, with regard to decorations and ornaments of the palace there were hips, Icicle, gold and silver candlesticks that were unparalleled in his time that on plasters and walls the names of Allah were written in Koran and mufflers. In Babe-O-Seir and Vasaf history on a smooth a 12-sided prism was introduced that each side of it built in the form of a tower within which the Ghazan Khan's tomb is located. Ghazan Khan's building was destroyed by an earthquake in 1062 AD [7] (Fig. 5).

### ***Historical documents***



**Figure 5: Assumed plan of Sanb Ghazan complex**



**Figure 6: Assumed plan of Ghazani tomp or Ghobeh Ali**

### *Ali Shah Mosque*

This mosque whose ruins is known as Alishah Arq at center of the city was built between 736 -715 AH. By Taj-Ol-Din Alishah Gilani Tabrizi the minister of Soltan Mohammad Khoda Bandeh Loo Oljaito and was considered as the Great Mosque of Tabriz in the past. It has a large porch 30.15 m. wide that was a glorious building decorated with marble, tile and beautiful inscription ruined over time. The walls of this building were 25 meters tall made by brick and 10.4 meters thick were previously covered by marble but currently is completely ruined. Ibn-Batoteh a Moroccan tourist wrote about this mosque: "then we arrive a mosque built by Alishah minister known as Jilan and outside to the right of school and from the left there is an angle which is covered by marbles and the walls is covered by Zlikh tiles and a stream passes through it and different trees." according to writings of Hamd-Ol-ah Mostofi apparently Khajeh Alishah to avoid incomplete building before his death hurried in building the ceiling and so the structure ruined ( for non-solid and fragile foundation). However, others such as Nader Mirza in their writings mentioned it as unshelled mosque and in the meanwhile some tourists described its height and arc of this mosque. Among them the Egyptian youngster that accompanied Egypt ambassador who visited Tabriz referred to this mosque with two towers with 70 meters height and 5 meters width but he did not mentioned the location of towers. This mosque had three doors only two of them were used. Each door has a ceiling 4 meters wide and 20 meters long.

The columns around the doors is not made of marble rather made of colorful stones, the rest of the ceiling is decorated with plaster and mogharnas .

What remained from this mosque is its Altar. In fact the remained walls form a Taq covering and huge cylindrical Hamal Taqi created by the space was considered as the main element of Alishah Mosque. As it is said, under this building there are three underground corridor a branch of it goes to Shanbe ghazan and another branch goes to current BaghMisheh i.e. the previous location of Rbe' Rashidi and another branch pass through previous marget, after passing through Aji Chai under river goes to outskirts of airport. At the time of Abbas Mirza Ghajar turned in to Ghor Khaneh army depot so they named it Arg. In early Reza Shah Pahlavi Monarchy, a part of its whereabouts was changed into a national park and a theatre was built (figure 11). Khajeh Alishah, the chancellor of Ghazan Khan whose center of kingdom was Tabriz was buried in this place.



**Figure 7: 1850 AM. The oldest picture of Arg**



**Figure 8: 1850 AD. Ali Shah Arg and Zobeideh Khatoon Palace**



**Figure 9: 1280 AD. Urban context around Ali Shah Arg**



**Figure 10: 1966 Ad. A part of historical site known as Bala Bagh**



**Figure 11: 1971 AD. Lion and Sun (Aslan and Gonesh) located in Arg Ali Shah Enclosure**

### **Conclusion**

After analysis and study of historical texts about Tabriz architecture and historical documents the following results are obtained:

1. Saheb Abad Square in its current situation and in the historical context of Tabriz is an Square built after earthquake of 1993 (AH) and this square is located at a part of the main square and its current direction is east-west, however the direction of main square is northwest-southwest.

2. Shanbe Ghazan is an area with fresh climate in the west of Tabriz. This neighborhood which was developed at the time of Ilkhanan in form of a village called Sham was first called Arghonieh and then in the name of Ghazanieh changed into an surrounding city for Tabriz. This complex includes a dodecagon charter whose sides are in form of a tower and Ghazan Khan Tomb is within it. Ghazan Khan building ruined by earthquake of 1062 AH and today nothing remained of it.

3. Arg Ali Shah building of Tabriz is the remaining of a mosque that was built during 716 to 724 (AH). This historical building which is a sample of Ilkhani architecture and a beautiful complex of tore, tiling and decorative stone arts that ruined as a result of repeated earthquake over time especially in Ghajar period and was changed into a barn and garrison and damaged a lot during

Mashrofeh Revolution. Now, only a part of huge walls and tall alter of south bedchamber of this mosque remained. The present walls in fact forms arch cover porch and column was a huge cylinder which the space is considered as the bedchamber and main element of Ali Shah mosque.

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