

## THE ARCHITECTURE - UNITE OF VARIOUS CULTURES

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### Abstract

Human civilization has passed a long way of development which is especially demonstrated by creations in art and architecture. Beginning from handcrafts expressing the attraction of surrounding world until the colossal structures exposing the strength and power of the rulers, the cultural heritage of every nation represents its history and reflects all the events that have taken place during many centuries.

The architecture is the main sphere which considers to realize the building possibilities and traditions of different times from one side and to find the means of contact between various religions from the other. It contains very important and careful details to demonstrate the significance of the conservation of townscapes and landscapes.

Especially it concerns the places with conflicts of two or more religions. Probably in the past there were insoluble or unsolved problems of superlative existence on one territory. In this case destroying or covering somehow the cultural memories of other nation was the only way for survival. Such was on the borders of Armenia with the neighbors who tried to destroy the Armenian culture since our days. Many thousands of grave cross-stones were demolished from Jugha (modern Azerbaijan), many inscriptions on the grave stones or structures were rub off on the territory of modern Georgia.

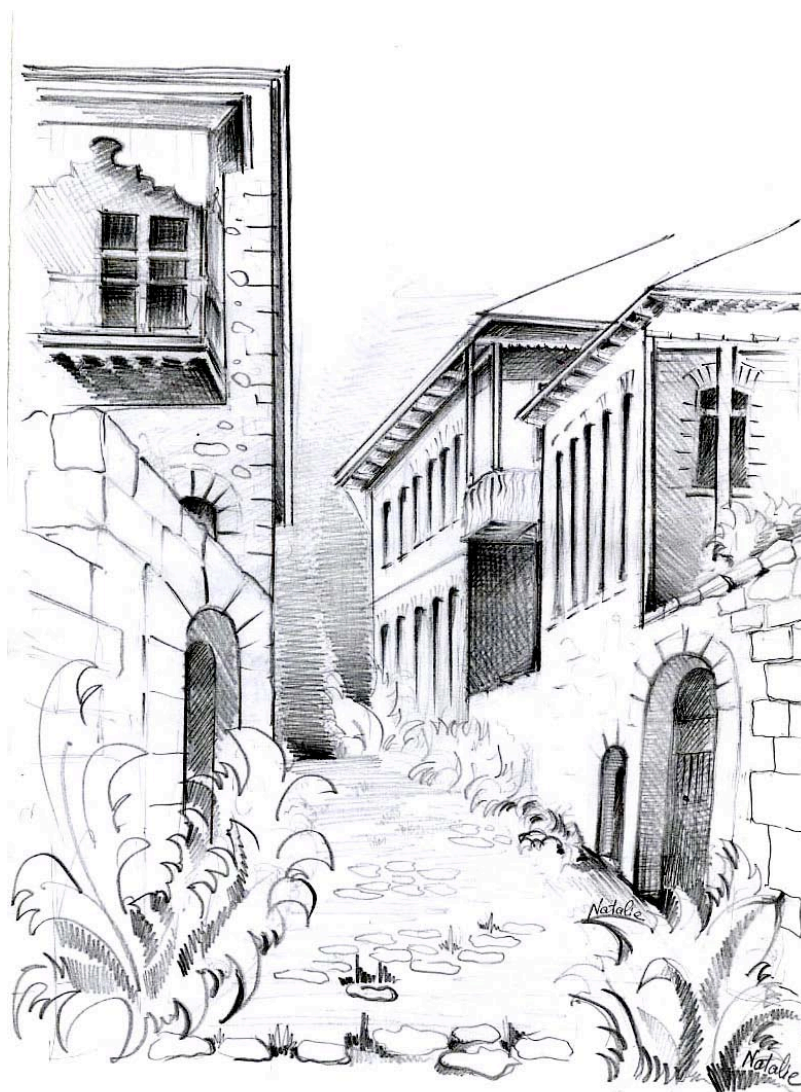
Modern civilized countries has real notion how two or more religions can exist nearside demonstrating their art and architectural traditions. In fact the architectural forms of Christian churches and Islamic mosques are different, but the faith that gathers the people for unit purpose is the same.

Armenia is a country on the border of Christian and Islamic cultures. Mainly it is known that Islamic had no appearance in this region. But to be more correctly the city Shushi (in Gharabagh district) once was a wonderful cultural and educational centre on the trading crossroads from east to west. In the case of peaceful co-existence we'd have an excellent townscape with two cultures. Such was the period from 19-th to the beginning of 20-th centuries. The churches and mosques together with the public structures made a special architecture and flourishing city site style.

The military actions in 90-s of the last century had destroyed more than 80% of building fond in the city. The architecture of these houses is uncial according to the general plan and urban conditions. By the local geographical properties the city was survived only by natural citadel. It is surrounded with deep gorges from 3 sides and high fortifications from one side. The main 2 entrance gates protected it from the enemies' attacks. That is why it had developed during several centuries.

Now it is clear that a country has richer cultural heritage if all the values of a long historical period have been preserved. The various religions with their different arts make deeper the realizing of human history.

Unfortunately we have almost lost the only remarkable city of Shushi. It was a cultural, educational and trading centre with survived citadel and uncial architectural and historical constructions. From the 19-th century two religions were, „living together” and their joint live was lasted until the end of the 20-th century. The military actions caused ruins and destruction for once flourishing citadel-city. The rich cultural heritage and especially immovable history and architecture are damaged.



Who and how it can be preserved and protected? – That is the big question!

Now several reconstruction projects are going to be realized on this territory. How and what methods will be used in this process by the local or international groups are not clear yet. Human attitude is deeply needed for the surviving of historical and cultural heritage which had strongly damaged. And in the point of well thinking people and preservation of historical monuments it must be „recovered” for the future generations for not losing the uncial city on the corner and with two religious cultural heritage.

Armenia considered being one of the ancient countries once boasting great and heroic history. With widen borders between three seas (Mediterranean, Caspian and Black), its preserved culture now is mainly opened for investigations.

Beside the cyclopean fortresses and ancient archeological cities, many medieval structures have been preserved on this territory. More than 30.000 historical and architectural monuments have been taken into account and placed under national protection. They include religious (Christian churches and monasteries), from public (palaces) and engineering (bridges, canals, baths) structures until thousands of grave cross-stones. These all are stony testimony of a historic (created from 4-th to 18-th centuries) civilization with conserved cultural and educational centers.

Great attention was given for the preservation of historical and architectural monuments on their native landscapes. All the outstanding and famous medieval complexes in

contemporary have preserved their remarkable condition. For many centuries they considered to be educational and protection centers for many generations.

The architectural images of such sites were in close contact with the surrounding nature. Now the historical sites are perceived together with the architectural monuments. They have become the parts of the nature and it is difficult to imagine the site without them.

In the results of great efforts and measures that were realized by restorations during the last 50-60years the architectural heritage was protected.

Unfortunately it is not the same in modern cities. The first and main damages in townscapes were caused to the historical and architectural heritage in the beginning of 20-th century during the, socialism building” when many public and especially religious structures were destroyed. Now, they are suffering” from the modern designer’s urban projects. Only 20% monuments in Yerevan and less than 25% in Gyumry (after earthquake in Leninakan) have been preserved. These structures are the only carriers of history and culture. If we lost them we’ll have a great break in our age-old cultural heritage.

In fact there is no reconstruction process for preservation. On the contrary, the buildings of 19-th century are being destroyed for modern ideas. In future Armenia will be demonstrated as a country with medieval but not remarkable architecture with building culture of 19-20-th centuries.

The important success in preservation of cultural heritage must to be the healthy and careful relation to the monuments and opportunity to get modern methods of conservation and practice results from other countries.



Autor of the sketches: Natalie Tadevosyan