

Northern Art Nouveau in the Residential Architecture of Nakhichevan-on-Don*

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Abstract—Nakhichevan-on-Don is a city founded by the Russian government in 1779 on the bank of the Don River for the Armenians resettled from Crimea. Its architectural appearance reflected the trends typical of many provincial cities founded in the second half of the 18th century. stylistic trends of the 19th century came to small towns, with some delay, and the style of Art Nouveau in its purest form is rare. However, in Nakhichevan, beautiful mansions in the forms of Northern Art Nouveau were built. They were designed not by the metropolitan but by a local architect, a native of Nakhichevan. Northern Art Nouveau in the mansions of Nakhichevan is studied in the article through the prism of the cultural environment formed in the city and is revealed through the role of the architect A. Zakiev.

Keywords—Nakhichevan-on-Don; Northern Art Modern in architecture; national romanticism

I. INTRODUCTION

In the 1770s, Catherine The Great decided to resettle the Greeks and Armenians from Crimea to Russia. The Greeks were given lands on the northern coast of the Sea of Azov, at the mouth of the river Kalmyk. Armenians were given territories on the Lower Don near the fortress of St. Dmitry Rostovsky, where the city of Nakhichevan (from 1838 – Nakhichevan-on-Don) and rural settlements were laid out. The Don colony became the largest compact settlement of Armenians in the Russian Empire outside their historical territories. Nakhichevan, the administrative center of the colony, quickly became a major city in southern Russia. However, by the end of the 19th century, it had already lost the administrative privileges granted by Catherine The Great, and the economic superiority passed to the neighboring dynamically developing Rostov-on-Don, which grew out of the fortresses of St. Dmitry Rostovsky. The history of Nakhichevan as an independent city ended in 1928. It was included in the territory of Rostov and has become one of its districts.

The architectural heritage of the Don Armenians formed by the merger of architectural traditions of the Crimean

Armenians with the ideas of the architecture of the Russian Empire reflected the ethnic peculiarities of the space organization and socio-economic living conditions of the colonists, their gradual integration into Russian culture. The peculiarities of the development of the Don colony attracted the attention of the researchers. Various aspects of the architectural environment of these unique historical settlements were in their scope of the interest. Recently, there has been a tendency in the study of this problem to raise narrowly focused questions aimed at in-depth and comprehensive consideration. The result was the publication of a number of works focused on individual groups of architectural objects [1], the planning structure of the city and villages [2].

The present work can be considered a continuation of this historiographical direction of recent years. It is devoted to the architectural forms of Northern Art Nouveau in Nakhichevan-on-Don, a problem that has so far been addressed in scientific publications only superficially [3]. The lack of attention to such interesting aspects is not surprising since there are only two urban buildings erected in this style, which are the mansions of Aladzhayev and Antonov. Other buildings of Art Nouveau style either belong to other sub-styles or have weakly expressed features of National Romanticism, presented only at the level of individual details.

We see our task in studying the architectural forms of Northern Art Nouveau in the context of the history of their construction, which is inextricably linked to the development of urban cultural environment and the expansion of artistic contacts of the Don Armenians. Architectural polyphony of Nakhichevan-on-Don, which has been especially clear since the last quarter of the 19th century, testifies to the openness of this environment, which, however, had rigid borders, which did not allow to realize the features of Northern Art Nouveau in full.

II. DYNAMICS OF THE CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT OF NAKHICHEVAN-ON-DON AS A FACTOR OF ADDRESSING THE FORMS OF NORTHERN ART NOUVEAU

Nakhichevan-on-Don was dynamically developing and built up according to the Russian architectural and construction norms, according to the regular plan. At the end

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of the 18th century – the first half of the 19th century, buildings in the style of Russian Classicism were erected here according to model designs. Classicist cathedrals and five parish churches, and the Armenian Magistrate – are the architectural dominants of urban space, erected in a short period. They remained virtually unchanged until the beginning of the 20th century and have formed the hierarchy of the city's zones and its image in general. The architecture of Eclecticism did not destroy this historical urban environment, enriching with bright accents a holistic and surprisingly coherent fabric of urban space, emphasizing the relationship and interconnection of its peripheral and central areas.

In the second half of the 19th – early 20th centuries, an increase of size and refinement of decorative elements' details on the facades took place. Accents shift from the center to the edges, attics of complex shapes start to spread, and the corners of buildings begin to be built rounded and accentuated by domes. The three-dimensional composition becomes more complicated, and asymmetry becomes a characteristic of both newly designed and rebuilt buildings. The vast majority of buildings of this period can be attributed to Eclecticism, gravitating towards the academic styles.

There are not many buildings, fully consistent with the principles of Art Nouveau architecture, in Nakhichevan-on-Don, and the decorative features of many of them to a greater or lesser extent are borrowed from academic styles, which made buildings' external forms familiar to customers, allowing to consider the Art Nouveau style as a modern continuation of Eclecticism. Therefore, mansions, the facades of which were made in the style of Northern Art Nouveau, is a very interesting phenomenon in the architecture of the city. Designed by architect A. H. Zakiev – a graduate of the Riga Polytechnic Institute, they seem to be random at first glance – as they are not born from growing interest in the forms of Northern Art Nouveau, and are the works of a native Nakhichevan citizen, who returned to his city after studying in Riga, coming at the time of the establishment and blossoming of Art Nouveau there. Besides, both mansions, which will be discussed in this article, were built not far from each other – on the 1st Georgievskaya Street (today's Zakrutkina Street), in the neighborhood of the architect's house. In other words, the customers were probably those who knew him well from childhood, which in the city with traditional culture should have been a significant argument in favor of commissioning Zakiev.

At the same time, the entire cultural and historical context of Nakhichevan's architectural development and the general trend of the history of urban development quite assumed the appearance of the Northern Art Nouveau, already firmly established in the capital. Since its foundation, Nakhichevan, like the newly built Russian cities of the 18th century, faced the inevitability of following the St. Petersburg's model. There are enough scientific works addressing the significant role of St. Petersburg architecture in the formation of the images of provincial cities of Russia have been written, and Nakhichevan, in addition, tried to emphasize this similarity by various means, as we have already written in detail [4].

Most of Nakhichevan's architects were brought up in the St. Petersburg environment and remained committed to the spirit of the capital's architectural school throughout their professional life. However, as a rule, they introduced the principles of Eclecticism, comprehending the legacy of academic styles – Renaissance, Baroque, Classicism, and the vast majority of citizens continued to prefer such Eclecticism, as the short-lived Art Nouveau did not have time to capture the minds of the provincials. In this regard, it becomes clear that the decision of customers to implement the projects of A. H. Zakiev can hardly be considered an accident or explained by simple good-neighborly relationship, although the personal nature of the interaction between the architect and customers has played a certain role.

The first of the customers was the State Counselor V. Antonov, who served as a history teacher at the Catherine Women's Gymnasium [5] – a prestigious educational institution of the city. We do not know much about his biography, but it was certainly a man of education who entered the narrow circle of the intellectual elite of the Nakhichevan. The customer of another mansion – Aladzhalov – was the owner of a very common surname in Nakhichevan and, probably, not all of its bearers were relatives of each other. Representatives of this surname were respectable and wealthy citizens, were members of the City Administration, occupied the post of mayor, were famous artists – Emmanuil Khristoforovich (1862 - 1934), Konstantin Ivanovich (1900 - 1987) and possibly other artists, whose biography indicates contradictory information. According to the will of A. P. Aladzhalova in the 1870s, the Surb Karapet Church was built in the city cemetery, which became the first attempt to revive the Armenian national style in Eastern Europe. Some of the Aladzhalovs owned neighboring plots of land located on the northern and southern sides of 1st Georgievskaya Street within the boundaries of 15th and 17th line streets. One of these homeowners – artist Luka Aleksandrovich Aladzhalov – was, for example, a member of the city government. The owner of the mansion of interest to us – Iosif Tseronovich Aladzhalov, perhaps, was also a city councilor [5]. O. H. Khalpakhchyan points out that he was the manager of the "S. Gench-Oglueva and I. Shaposhnikova" Trade House [6].

Thus, the information that we managed to find out about the owners of the houses we are interested in, is evidence of their belonging to the number of educated citizens, the circle of which has expanded significantly to the turn of the 19th – 20th centuries. By this time, a group of talented architects and artists had formed in Nakhichevan. Many of them had a good education and taught in the educational institutions of the city themselves, others moved to the capital cities, keeping in touch with their native city. Adherence to art, at least at the level of amateurism, becomes an important attribute of an educated and wealthy citizen. Various societies of art lovers, whose administrative and trusteeship councils include the noblest Nakhichevan citizens, have become a feature of that time. Mansions built in Romanticist manner unusual for the city reflected these new trends in urban culture, their artistic appearance was designed to demonstrate the progressive tastes of the owners. The

primary importance of the appearance of the buildings is confirmed by the layouts of the mansions studied, which repeat the internal space organization the typical for Eclecticism.

III. THE ARCHITECT A.H. ZAKIEV AND HIS WORK

Northern Art Nouveau, though it was brought to Nakhichevan from the architectural environment of Riga, fully matched the spirit of the capital. It is enough to compare the facades of the Aladzhhalovs' mansion with the facades of, for example, the revenue house of T. N. Putilova in St. Petersburg, built a few years earlier, to make sure that this statement is true. The only thing that testifies in favor of the Riga origins of the architect's creative method is his biography.

Arutyun Khachaturovich Zakiev (1874-1945), a native of the Nakhichevan bourgeoisie, graduated as an engineer-architect from the Riga Polytechnic Institute in 1908 [7]. He studied during the period of establishment and flourishing of Riga Art Nouveau, the principles of which he learned as a manifestation of progressive architecture. Along with Zakiev, well-known representatives of the romantic Art Nouveau – Eugene Laube, Alexander Vanags, Konstantin Pekshen, who developed the traditions of Riga Jugendstil, studied at the Polytechnic Institute. Among the most recognizable details of the latter are the gables, crowning the facades, beveled windows, merlons on cornices, minimal decor, and bay windows of various shapes. One of the early buildings characterizing this direction was a house 26 on the Alexander Chaka street designed by E. Laube and K. Pekshen. The main decoration of the excavated facade is a rounded gable and windows of different sizes with beveled top corners. Smooth plane of a wall is broken only by the wave-like merlons at the basis of window apertures, and the stylized ornaments occupying the insignificant area.

A. H. Zakiev has also accepted the ideas of his teacher – the famous architect Wilhelm Bockslaff. The features of the buildings on Kalkyu Street, 6 (1898), on Pils Street, 11 (1901), etc. were reflected in his projects. Besides, the work with the outstanding Riga architect R. Schmaeling, though it was short, has certainly left its mark on the professional development of the architect. It should be emphasized that A. H. Zakiev has clearly mastered the very idea of Art Nouveau, each time adapting it to his tasks, as evidenced by his work.

The architect lived in Nakhichevan until 1928, then moved to Yerevan, where he worked for the rest of his life. During the Nakhichevan period, he designed a number of objects both in Nakhichevan and in neighboring Rostov-on-Don. The facades of the four- and five-story apartment buildings of Shirman, Srabionov, the building of the Commercial Club, etc., erected according to his designs in Rostov-on-Don in the 1910s, are built in the forms of the Neoclassical variant of Art Nouveau, and reflect the gradual evolution of the architect to Neoclassicism as such. But the Northern Art Nouveau occupies a very insignificant place in his work, which can be explained by its unpopularity among local customers, and their commitment to other forms and images.

IV. THE ARCHITECTURE OF ANTONOV'S AND ALADZHALOV'S HOUSES

The Antonov's mansion (1905-1910) was one of the first projects implemented by A.H. Zakiev for the Don cities. It was erected on the 1st Georgievskaya Street, 22 (today's Rostov-on-Don, Zakrutkina Street, 22). Today, only its street facade, to which a new residential building is attached, is preserved. Unfortunately, its significant accent – a bright red roof covered with rhombic scales with a crest was also lost [8]. The plane of the surviving facade with corner avant-corps completed with gables is cut-through with rhythmically arranged rectangular windows and door openings of different widths, the latter coming out to two balconies with forged metal railings (lost) [8]. The window sills and originally treated pediments with keystones contrast with the smooth surface of the outer walls.

It's no doubt, that the appearance of the building has distinguished it from the surroundings, but at the same time, the architect introduces this new direction of Art Nouveau carefully, referring the customer to the already known elements and images of architecture. This is a kind of new reading of pediments, keystones and generally recognizable structure of the frontal composition. Even the gables, which are unusual for the urban environment and which considerably protrude from the main volume of the building, appear to be a kind of analog of the domes and attics loved by Nakhichevan residents, which are designed to distinguish the buildings from the surroundings.

The organization of the internal space of the house, still reflected the techniques of Art Nouveau, though not on a full scale. On the first floor, two apartments were rented out. The owners lived on the second floor. The front rooms were enfiladed and oriented towards the street. The outbuildings were located in a separate wing adjacent to the center of the courtyard facade.

Aladzhhalov's mansion (1910-1912) was built on the corner of 1st Georgievskaya Street and 15th line (modern Rostov-on-Don, corner of Zakrutkina Street and 15th line). The corners of the building are also decorated with slightly protruding avant-corps crowned by gables. Smooth plastered facades are practically devoid of decoration; triangular frames of beveled window apertures on the ground floor, decorative inserts in the form of squares with blue ceramic tiles arranged in a row correspond them a certain expressiveness. Small semicircular bay windows on the second floor are combined with balconies. Here we see a more confident appeal of the architect to the images of Northern Art Nouveau, as he is already avoiding traditional elements in the organization of the facade plane.

As noted above the influence of Art Nouveau in the layout of the interior of the mansion, is not so obvious as in the design of facades. Centric plan and the rejection of enfilades and corridor system typical for the Art Nouveau style have been reflected here only partially. In the u-shaped building with a somewhat elongated wing, the front rooms were located in the center of the second floor and oriented to the street, to which a staircase arranged in the center of the

building led. Most of the rooms in the house were enfiladed along the corridor.

Nakhichevan residents' commitment to the arrangement of summer premises (terraces, verandas) was reflected in the Aladzhalovs' mansion, where the main volume of the building is adjoined by an independent block of summer premises included in the composition of the street facades. Terrace on cast iron columns with forged cast-iron fencing decorates the building, enriching its composition [9].

V. CONCLUSION

Northern Art Nouveau or National Romantic Style was not widespread in the architecture of Nakhichevan-on-Don, which is not surprising, because in the previous period Nakhichevanians did not use medieval motifs in the residential architecture. In addition, the phenomenon of Northern Art Nouveau is a regional phenomenon, which in general had little impact on the architecture outside its native region.

Not all architects of the Russian province clearly understood the Art Nouveau program features, and not all customers were ready to accept the new style in its purest form. In Nakhichevan, the appearance of the described mansions reflected the architect's attempt to prepare the citizens for understanding the new style through the elements of the architecture familiar to them. However, it happened already at the end of the Art Nouveau era, on the eve of serious social upheaval, which was an obstacle to the consistent assimilation of Northern Art Nouveau. Planning solutions of the houses of Aladzhalov and Antonov testify that external novelty of facades hid the former style of life with the settled principles of the organization of inhabited space.

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