

UOT 7.08

Khazar Zeynalov
PhD (Art Study), Associate Professor
Institute of Architecture and Art of ANAS
(Azerbaijan)

khazar.zeynalov@yandex.ru

BATTLE PLOTS AND FORMS OF VISUAL EMBODIMENT OF WARRIOR MENTALITY IN AZERBAIJANI FINE ARTS

Abstract. It is stated in the article that the battle genre and warrior images have always been relevant in Azerbaijani fine arts. Paintings of battle scenes can be found in all periods of Azerbaijani fine arts. At the same time, the portraits of rulers, warlords and warriors have mutual relations with the battle genre. The article considers the development of the battle genre in Azerbaijani fine arts in five stages. These are the medieval period, the Qajar period, the beginning of the 20th century, the Soviet period and the years of independence. The author stated that the battle genre has its own peculiarities in each period. But in any case, the Azerbaijani (Turkic) warrior archetype is the ideological and artistic basis of the images of battle and warlords.

Key words: Azerbaijani fine arts, battle genre, the image of a warlord, the Qajar style, victory of Karabakh.

Introduction. There is such an opinion that battle genre didn't exist in Azerbaijani fine arts, or it existed in a very weak form. We consider that this idea is completely wrong. It is true that it was not very popular to develop the battle genre in the art of "local", especially Turkic-Muslim peoples during the Soviet period. But, our artists painted valuable works in the battle genre, and created visual images of rulers and warlords either during that period, or before or after that period.

Our study gives reason to think that battle plots, as well as the embodiment of the warrior mentality, have existed in Azerbaijani fine arts since the Middle Ages. Of course, this genre can be attributed to earlier dates. There are many images of armed people and warriors, ranging from schematism

to realistic forms of artistic expression, in archaeological monuments and material-cultural samples, which were found almost everywhere in our republic. However, we would like to approach the problem at a more concrete level in terms of time, taking the period of the Middle Ages – the period of the formation of the artistic tradition of the Tabriz miniature school as the lower boundary of the emergence of the battle genre in the Azerbaijani fine arts.

The interpretation of the main material. Recently, much attention has been paid to the issue of periodization of art in art history. This is natural, since it is difficult to substantiate the development dynamics of national art history without defining the development stages of the art of Azerbaijan and the Turkic world as a whole.

In our opinion, it is possible to divide the development of the battle genre conventionally into certain historical stages in Azerbaijani fine arts. We believe that the following distribution scheme can be important at the initial stage of solving the problem:

1. Medieval period (Tabriz and Qazvin miniature schools);
2. New period (Qajar period);
3. The period when realistic art was formed (the early 20th century);
4. The 20th century Azerbaijani fine arts (Soviet period);
5. Period of independence.

As can be seen, the proposed periodization model consists of five stages based on chronological order. Each of them differs from each other according to its theme, content, artistic and aesthetic content, relevance and influence on the development of art.

Let's review briefly the content and essence of these periods.

1. Medieval period (Tabriz and Qazvin miniature schools). As you know, Tabriz miniatures already entered the stage of high perfection since the beginning of the 16th century. The declaration of Tabriz as the capital of the Azerbaijan Safavid State, beginning of the work of talented artists, including Kamaladdin Behzad led to the beginning of fundamental development of composition, color and interpretation of Tabriz miniatures. Kamaladdin Behzad's miniature "Battle of Timur with the Sultan of Egypt" tells not only about the historical battle, but also attracts attention with dramatic plot and the expressive and emotional state of the characters. The face to face battle between Timur and the Egyptian Sultan on horseback is depicted in the center of this multi-figure composition. Timur threw his long spear with a quick

movement in the middle of the Egyptian Sultan's forehead so that the tip of the spear came out from the back of the Sultan's head. Such a spectacular, emotional battle scene is rare. The images grouped around the two rulers serve to further enhance the overall expression. The composition shows how the warriors, inspired by Timur's bravery, overwhelmed the Egyptians. Proportional placement of characters and their flexible movements enhance the dynamics of the composition. Shades of red used skillfully by Behzad and their alternation with cold colors (blue) help to give the composition a rhythmic effect. The ideological and artistic content of the work includes aspects such as heroism and battle skill (Fig. 1).

The miniature "The Battle of Tahmarz with Giants" painted by Soltan Mohammad to Ferdowsi's "Shahnameh" (1526–1527) reflects the fantastic plot of the poetic work [1, p. 113]. However, the spirit of fighter and determination to fight is clearly evident in this miniature. Tahmarz, attacking on horseback, struck one of the giants and knocked him down; now he swings his mace in the air and stabs it on the head of the second giant. The third giant in fear tries to escape. Soltan Mohammad depicted Kamaledin Behzad's fighting style in a somewhat simple and compact form in this miniature.

The battle scenes in the 16th century Tabriz miniatures were mostly drawn as illustrations for literary works, and in some cases had a fantastic character. Nevertheless, the fighting prowess and heroic ideology are reflected in bright colors in those compositions. Later, this tradition was continued and developed in Qazvin miniature school. Battle scenes in Tabriz and Qazvin miniatures are significant on the ideological and artistic level because they reflect the Turkic battle tradition (Kamaledin Behzad). In other cases, the battle scene was created by Azerbaijani artists (Sultan Muhammad).

2. New period (Qajar period). This period covers the period from the end of the 18th century to the end of the 19th century. Already miniature art lost its previous importance with the widespread spread of book printing in the East at the early 18th century, and an artistic style was formed, reflecting rulers, courtiers and household scenes, based from European painting and classical miniature art. This style is known as the Qajar style in the history of art, although its first manifestations began to appear long before the Qajars came to power. The battle genre in Azerbaijani fine arts underwent a complex and contradictory path of development from the idea-artistic point of view in this period. At that time, the tradition of national statehood in Azerbaijan disappeared, Northern Azerbaijan was occupied by Russia. The

battle genre developed on the basis of classical traditions and plots in such conditions. Wall painting began to develop in the 18th century, and battle scenes took an important place on the basis of its composition. The battle scenes in the Sheki Khan's Palace are quite characteristic in this respect [5]. Especially the battle scenes painted on the cornice and frieze of the second floor hall attract more attention. The Turkic fighting tradition was reflected on the wall paintings of the Sheki Khan's Palace at the time when political differences were expanding. Battle flags with a half-moon (crescent) on them attract attention in these compositions (Fig. 2). The perfection of martial art is emphasized by interesting elements. You can see artillery and cavalry here, besides spears, the long barrels of rifles attract attention, army commanders observe the enemy through binoculars and give appropriate orders... The battle scenes on the wall paintings of the Sheki Khan Palace were a powerful and effective artistic tool that preserved the blood memory of the people and strengthened historically formed martial traditions in the public consciousness during the country's political chaos and disintegration, on the eve of the Russian invasion. "It is obvious that the theme of the paintings in the palace originates from the events that took place in the life of the Shaki Khans during the 18th–19th centuries – the battles fought by Huseyn Khan, the customer of the palace. It should be stated that the stories in the book "Brief History of Shaki Khans" by Karim Agha Fateh, Fatali Khan's son, one of the last rulers of Sheki, coincide with the attractive plots of the wall paintings..." [6].

On the other hand, battle scenes referred traditionally to works of classical poetry. From this point of view, the dramatic plot of Ferdowsi's poem "Shahnameh" – Rustam's unwittingly killing his son Zohrab was more popular. Works of wall painting reflecting this plot decorated the interior of nobles' houses and public buildings (caravanserais, hammams, prisons).

Finally, we can mention the portrait-panels by Mirza Gadim Irevani (1825–1875) for the Irevan Sardar Palace in the middle and second half of the 19th century. "The works "Sarkarda" ("The Warlord") and "Fatali Shah", which are currently preserved in the Georgian State Art Museum, are among the portraits that the artist painted for the Sardar Palace..." [4]. The fact that Irevani (Mirza Gadim was two years old when the Russians occupied Irevan), a Russian citizen, painted portraits of the Qajar rulers, who were originally Azerbaijanis, was an evident proof that the national spirit and martial tradition were not lost at all even during the occupation. His tempera work "Atlı"

(“The Equestrian”) (Turkish Pasha), painted in the easel genre, is another manifestation of the Turkic fighting tradition.

3. The period when realistic art was formed (the early 20th century). The battle tradition in national art is weakened in this period. Art tradition, which was close to realistic European art in terms of composition and style at that time, was formed. This tradition manifested mostly in portrait and household genres. However, that period cannot be characterized as “Danabash period”. First of all, let’s remember Mir Mohsun Navvab (1833–1918). Although the classic battle scenes painted by him with watercolors, as well as his portrait of Timur had a somewhat simple effect in the new era, they were very valuable as an artistic manifestation of the Turkic fighting tradition living in the national consciousness.

At the same time, we must not forget the art of immigrant painting. Usually, the term *mühacirət* (leave one’s homeland and move to another country, either forcibly or voluntarily, for political, economic or religious reasons) is used for politicians, public figures, writers and publicists. However, this expression can also be applied to fine arts. The first to be mentioned is Alibey Huseynzadeh (1864–1940). Of course, his socio-political and ideological work was superior to his painting. But he was also an artist. Realistic images of Ataturk and Sheikh Shamil were created in a number of works by Alibey Huseynzadeh. It is also associated with heroism and military art in the national consciousness. At the same time, the artist was the author of an emotional composition depicting the attack of Turkic soldiers.

Ibrahim Safi (1898–1983), an Azerbaijani artist who lived and worked in Turkey, is known mainly for his city landscapes. However, he also created portraits of the great Ataturk, and this creates an association of the image of a victorious general in the national consciousness.

4. The 20th century Azerbaijani fine arts (Soviet period). It was a long period (over 70 years), rich in numerous works of creativity. Everyone knows that the Soviet period, especially the 50s and 70s, were the years of great progress in the history of national culture. Even critics of Soviet art do not deny the significance of beautiful works of art created during that period.

How was the situation about military theme? The first sentence of the article comes to mind: battle genre didn’t exist in Azerbaijani fine arts, or it existed in a very weak form. But let’s repeat our opinion once again – it’s not so. A lot of paintings and graphic works on the military theme were created not only in the 70s and 80s, but also in the 30s and 40s during the Soviet period.

In the Soviet era, the battle genre and the image of a warrior were mainly in three directions – folklore plots, national-historical heroism, and the war of 1941–1945, which some still call the Great Patriotic War. Also, these three thematic directions developed in interaction with each other. For example, the beginning of the 1941-1945 war became a kind of impetus for the heroic past to become a topical theme in painting. The staging of Uzeyir Hajibeyli's opera "Koroglu" in 1937 increased the interest in the images of historical heroes such as Koroglu, Babek and Javanshir. In fact, even before that, the images of historical heroes and knights were manifested in fine arts. Taghi Taghiyev's work Koroglu, painted in graphic technique in 1943, played an important role in the development of the iconography of this image (Fig. 3). Sattar Bahlulzadeh's "Babək üsyanı" ("Babek's Uprising"), Ayyub Mammadov's "Atropatın Makedoniyalı İsgəndərlə görüşü" ("Atropat's Meeting with Alexander the Great"), Tahir Salahov's "Koroğlu döyüşdən qabaq" ("Koroglu Before the Battle") were proud works of the image of a national-historical hero created during the Soviet era.

The development of folklore plots in fine arts was mainly due to the widespread of book printing. The repeated publication of the "Koroglu" epic led to the creation of a wide network of illustrations on this theme since the 30s and 40s. The publication of the "Dada Gorgud" epic, Azerbaijani tales also gave impetus to the creation of images of folklore characters. People's heroism and valor of the brave men are glorified in the illustrative paintings drawn by Gazanfar Khaligov, Salam Salamzadeh, Mikhail Vlasov, Taghi Taghiyev, Mikayil Abdullayev and others.

The main source of ideas for the battle genre and the image of a warrior in the Soviet era was undoubtedly World War II. Valuable works of painting with a monumental spirit were created on this theme during the war years and in the following years. The theme of war in the paintings by Tahir Salahov, Mikayil Abdullayev, Kazim Kazimzadeh [2, p. 98-99], Vidadi Narimanbeyov, Baba Aliyev, Hafiz Mammadov and many others was interpreted in the context of patriotism and heroism. Mainly, the war between Germans and Russians is not taken as a basis at all in these works. The main artistic and ideological content of these works was the Azerbaijani soldier and his heroism. The national character was very vividly reflected in the monumental terms in these paintings. We can safely say that the paintings were worthy predecessors of the works created in the battle genre during the period of independence.

5. Period of independence. The groundless land claims of our disgraced neighbors even on the eve of independence, in 1988 made themes such as war, history and heroism relevant in most areas of artistic culture, including fine arts. However, the fact that we suffered serious losses in the first Karabakh war led to the formation of an existential mood on the theme of Karabakh, which developed along with the battle theme. However, it should be stated that honorable, proud military-heroic themes have always been in the center of artists' attention. The painting "Şərəfli insanlar" ("Honorable People") by Vagif Ujatai became a visual embodiment of creating great optimism and faith in victory in the society even when the defeat syndrome was ingrained in minds.

The theme of Karabakh in fine arts can be divided into two stages. These are the periods before and after 2020. If the existential mood prevailed in the works created on this theme before, the context changed radically after the Victory battles of 2020. Now, the battle genre and the image of a warrior are presented in the context of Victory in Azerbaijani fine arts.

The multi-figure, emotional composition "Şuşanın azad edilməsi" ("Liberation of Shusha"), created by talented artist Jamaladdin Ismayilov in 2020, when the battles for the liberation of Shusha were not yet over, is one of the first manifestations of this Victory in fine arts. The painting depicts Azerbaijani brave men climbing precipitous cliffs and dealing a sudden crushing blow to the enemy in a very realistic way and in an emotional mood. "The method of realistic image, attention to historical details allowed J. Ismailov not only to embody the events of the distant past in his paintings, but also to create a confident heroic epic of the liberation of Shusha in November 2020" [3, p. 301].

The painting "Azərbaycanın dirçəlişi" ("The Revival of Azerbaijan") (2021) by the well-known brush master Fikret Ibrahimli has interesting compositional features. The image of a warrior is presented in realistic and symbolic forms here. The rich and contrasting color plan of the work makes it more effective for viewing (Fig. 4).

Conclusion. Finally, let us emphasize once again that the battle genre and the warrior mentality were prominently reflected at all stages of the historical development of Azerbaijani fine arts. An important point is that the archetype of the image of the Azerbaijani (Turkic) warrior is the ideological-artistic basis of the images of war and warlords in all periods. This was embodied in the context of the superiority and triumph of Turkic military art in medieval

period miniatures. On the other hand, Azerbaijani artists always kept the theme of heroism relevant by devoting space to battle plots in their works. It was one of the main supports of the Azerbaijan Safavid State at the artistic and ideological level.

The classical tradition was continued through poetic images during the Qajar period and later. National tradition and blood memory did not allow the disappearance of battle plots even in periods of the decline of the psychology of national statehood, political fragmentation and finally, in a period of no independence, on the contrary, these plots were a reliable artistic and spiritual repository for the reflection of the nation's identity in art.

Although realist art developed under the influence of enlightened and democratic ideas at the beginning of the 20th century, but battle plots were almost absent. Therefore, the artistic tradition and the creativity of Azerbaijani artists who lived and worked abroad, mainly in Turkey, played a key role in preserving the image of a warlord-fighter.

Valuable works were painted and perfect works of the national warrior character were created despite the lack of political independence during the Soviet period. This tradition developed further and found its rich embodiment in the context of Victory later, during the years of independence.

REFERENCES

1. Əfəndiyev R. Azərbaycan incəsənəti. – Bakı, 2001.
2. Sadıq Şərifzadə, Kazım KazıMZadə. Sərvət (mətnin müəllifləri T.Əfəndiyev, G.Quliyeva). – Bakı, 2013.
3. Salamzadə Ə., Zeynalov X. Təsviri sənət və elm. XX sərgi // Filologiya və sənətsünaslıq, № 2, 2023. – s. 298-304.
4. Mirzə Qədim İrəvaninin yaradıcılığı / Memorial.az (Ziyadxan Əliyevin yazısı) [Elektron resurs] / URL: <https://www.kaspi.az/az/mirze-qedim-irevaninin-yaradicilii/>
5. Şəki irs reyestri; maddi-mədəni irs // [Elektron resurs] / URL: <https://sheki.heritage.org.az/heritage/1>
6. Şəki Xan sarayı rəsmlərinin estetikası haqqında // Mədəniyyət qəzeti, 26-07-2019 (Ziyadxan Əliyevin yazısı) [Elektron resurs] / URL: <https://medeniyyet.az/page/news/49412/Seki-Xan-sarayi-resmlerinin-estetikasi-haqqinda.html>

Xəzər Zeynalov (*Azərbaycan*)

**AZƏRBAYCAN TƏSVİRİ SƏNƏTİNDƏ BATAL SÜJETLƏR
VƏ DÖYÜŞÇÜ MENTALİTETİNİN VİZUAL TƏCƏSSÜM
FORMALARI**

Məqalədə qeyd olunur ki, batal janrı və döyüşçü obrazları Azərbaycan təsviri sənətində hər zaman aktual olmuşdur. Azərbaycan təsviri sənətinin bütün inkişaf mərhələlərində döyüş səhnəsi təsvirlərinə rast gəlmək olar. Eyni zamanda hökmdarların, sərkərdə və döyüşçülərin portretləri də batal janrı ilə müəyyən əlaqələrə malikdir. Məqalədə Azərbaycan təsviri sənətində batal janrının inkişafı beş mərhələdə nəzərdən keçirilir. Bunlar orta əsrlər dövrü, Qacar dövrü, XX əsrin əvvəlləri, Sovet dövrü və müstəqillik illəridir. Müəllif qeyd edir ki, batal janrı hər dövrdə özünəməxsus xüsusiyyətlərə malik olmuşdur. Lakin bütün dövrlərdə döyüş və sərkərdə təsvirlərinin ideya-bədii əsasında Azərbaycan (Türk) döyüşçü arxetipi dayanır.

Açar sözlər: Azərbaycan təsviri sənəti, batalı janrı, sərkərdə obrazı, Qacar üslubu, Qarabağ zəfəri.

Хазар Зейналов (*Азербайджан*)

**БАТАЛЬНЫЕ СЮЖЕТЫ И ФОРМЫ ВИЗУАЛЬНОГО
ОТОБРАЖЕНИЯ ВОИНСКОГО МЕНТАЛИТЕТА
В ИЗОБРАЗИТЕЛЬНОМ ИСКУССТВЕ АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНА**

Статья посвящена истории развития батального жанра в изобразительном искусстве Азербайджана. В ней говорится, что батальный жанр и образы воинов всегда были актуальны в азербайджанском изобразительном искусстве. Картины батальных сцен можно встретить на всех этапах исторического развития азербайджанского изобразительного искусства. Портреты правителей, полководцев и воинов также имеют отношение к батальному жанру. В статье выделены пять периодов развития батального жанра. Это средневековье, Каджарский период, начало 20 века, советский период и годы независимости. Автор отмечает, что каждый период имеет свои особенности. Но при этом во всех периодах архетип азербайджанского (тюркского) воина является идейно-художественной основой батальных сцен и образов полководцев.

Ключевые слова: изобразительное искусство Азербайджана, батальный жанр, образ полководца, каджарский стиль, Карабахская победа.

FIGURES



Fig. 1. Kamaleddin Behzad. “Battle of Timur with the Sultan of Egypt”.
A miniature of the “Zəfərnəmə” (“Ode to victory”) manuscript. The early 16th century.



Fig. 2. Local battle scene. The view from the cornice on the second floor
of the Sheki Khan Palace. The end of 18th century.

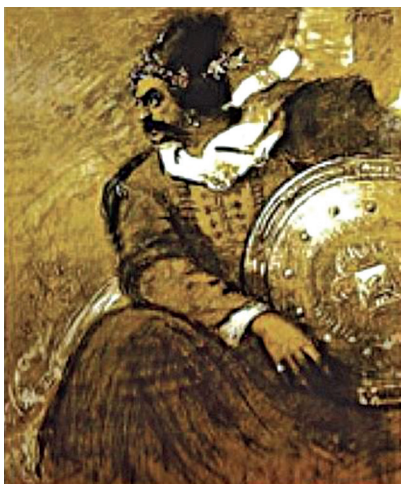


Fig. 3. Taghi Taghiyev. "Koroglu".
Paper, pastel. 1943.



Fig. 4. Fikret Ibrahimli. "Revival of Azerbaijan".
Canvas, oil paint. 2021.