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PECULIARITIES OF CULTURAL CENTERS' ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Abstract. *This article examines the experience of the architectural development of cultural centers during the historical period, and explores the main features of cultural centers, the prerequisites for the emergence of a cultural center as an architectural type are determined. The study explored numerous examples of historically significant cultural centers. However, the current paper focuses on several architecturally impactful pieces as part of the analysis. Examples of cultural centers' architectural development in the Ancient World and the Middle Ages of Asia were analyzed to determine the direction of further research.*

Keywords: *cultural center's architecture, temple, garden, bazaar, baths.*

Introduction

Cultural Centers are one of the obligatory urban spaces in a city that were merely part of other public centers. Although its function was embodied in other architectural typologies using different names, its evolution, and history is subject to modern scientific research. It is natural that most Cultural Centers were created according to human demands, however, the main reason behind their creation is widely discussed among urban planners and architectural academics until now. This article focuses on the evolution of cultural centers through the paradigms of historical development and current conditions.

The primary purpose of a cultural center is to promote cultural values through a historical and educational tour of cultural events, festivals, and workshops, promote cultural values. They also exhibit arts, religion, and heritage of diverse communities. As a focal point, they connect countries and regions together allowing cultural exchange. Thus, these centers play a vital role in society's development.

Finally, this research examines the development of the architecture of Cultural centers from antiquity to the present day and determines architectural features that facilitated the emergence of Cultural centers as an architectural typology.

Material and methods

This study explored the architectural transformation of cultural centers during different time periods. Methods of comparative analysis, full-scale examination, and photographic fixation were used.

Results and discussion

The first cultural centers within ancient complexes

At all times intercultural dialogue has been important for people. However, in the ancient period, there was no such architectural typology as a cultural center. Spaces for cultural exchange were located within certain typologies of public buildings, such as gymnasiums, stadiums, thermal baths or theatres, etc. [1].

During the classical period of Ancient Greek architecture (from the 7th century BC) the leading architectural typology of public buildings was peripteral. The Hellenistic era (V-II centuries) exhibited various public buildings by the peristyle typology [2].

Gymnasiums. In gymnasiums, adults studied philosophy, politics, literature, rhetoric, and dialectics. In these educational institutions, students have always had the opportunity to listen to popular politicians and philosophers. A good example is given by the gymnasium in Epidara (Fig.1a). The peristyle is surrounded by large halls for physical exercises and additional small rooms for changing and administrative needs. Much more modest gymnasiums of the peristyle type are known in Priene (Fig.1b) and Miletus (Fig.1c) [1].

The gymnasium located in Priene was comprised of a palestra - a square courtyard encompassed by a colonnade of the Doric order - and adjacent rooms. The northern portico of the gymnasia was two-nave, with several rooms situated behind it and an exedra that opened up to the space of the portico. The exedra was separated from the portico by two Ionic columns in the antae [1].

In ancient Greece, the exedra was utilized for the purpose of receiving guests and for leisurely conversations. These spaces typically featured benches arranged in a semicircle. Exedras were often built symmetrically on both sides of the courtyard, which was surrounded by columns (peristyle), or on two sides of the guest room. In the latter case, the entire room was referred to as an exedra. Greek rhetoricians and philosophers engaged in conversation within the exedras.

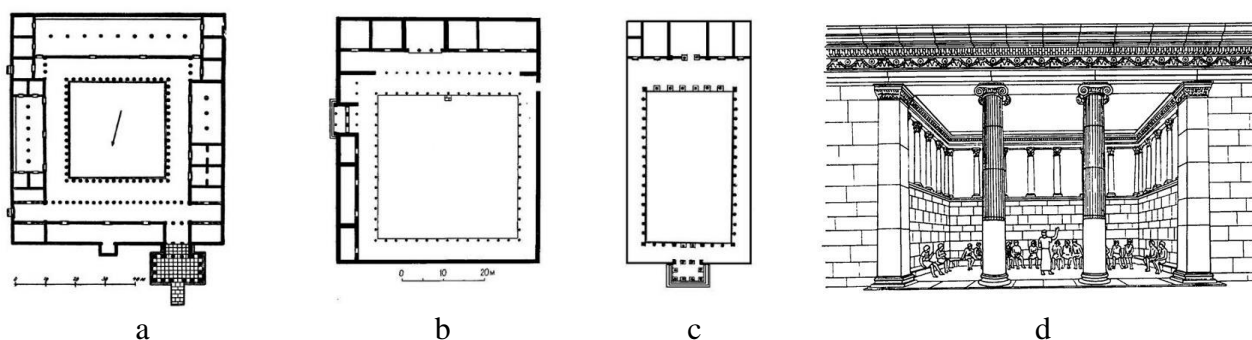


Figure 1 – a) gymnasium in Epidaurus [1]; b) gymnasium in [1]; c) gymnasium in Miletus [1]; d) reconstruction of the exedra in the gymnasium in Priene [1].

Baths. of the peristyle type are well-represented in Pompeii, particularly in the Stabian thermae (Fig. 2a). These baths are distinguished by separate areas for males and females, as well as designated rooms for specific functions. The swimming pool is located adjacent to a large courtyard surrounded by colonnades on both sides [2].

Theater Buildings. Peristyles were often attached to other public buildings, but this was not possible for structures with a specific purpose, such as theaters and meeting halls. During the Hellenic era, theater buildings were ubiquitous, with virtually every significant city boasting its own. This type of public structure was regarded as one of the most prominent. The architectural organization of a theater building (Fig. 2b) was designed with careful attention to the proportionality of its constituent parts in order to ensure optimal visibility, audibility, and high artistic and architectural qualities of the overall composition. Such considerations were incorporated into the establishment of a regular construction plan for these structures, as described by Vitruvius [3].

Stadiums. Stadiums have traditionally been used as a place of intercultural dialogue, performing the functions of entertainment and sports. The stadium in Miletus (Fig 2.c), built in the II century BC has, unlike the stadium in Priene (Fig 2.d), rectangular stands for spectators, located not on one, but on two sides of the field for competitions [1]. Olympia and Athens Stadiums designed for running competitions are the most famous stadium built according to the type of theater [1].

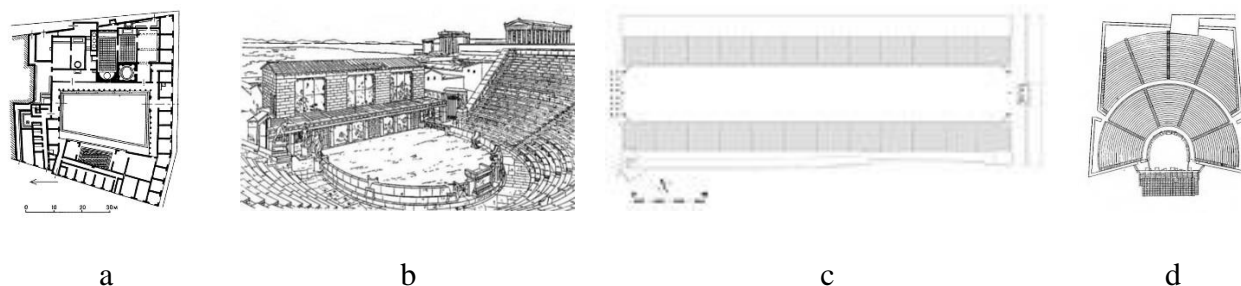


Figure 2 –Ancient buildings as a place of intercultural dialogue: a) Stabian Baths, plan, Pompeii [4]; b) Theatre in Priene, reconstruction of general view with skene; c) Theatre in Priene, plan. [5]; d) the stadium in Miletus, plan [1]

Baths are an interesting type of structure that served not only their direct purpose but also as a sort of local club. Frequent visits to the baths were considered "a sign of the Roman way of life." The Baths of Caracalla (3rd century AD), constructed by the Severus dynasty emperor, are renowned for their grandeur and vast scope (Fig. 3) The planning of these colossal thermal baths took into account the features of the allotted area on the hillside. A massive reservoir was established at the high point, attached to the Marcian aqueduct, ensuring a constant and abundant water supply to the bathhouse. The slope of the site also provided support for the spectator seats of the stage for gymnastic games, which were arranged at the foot of the reservoir. Libraries were located on the sides of the stage. Below stretched a parking area intended for sports, entertainment, and recreation, with greenery, statues, and fountains of nympheries, as well as halls of large semicircles adjacent to the nymphaeums for meetings and conversations.

In the main half of the baths, various ablution rooms were concentrated, ranging from small, private baths for individuals or families to vast and magnificent halls in the main building. Along the walls were offices and shops.

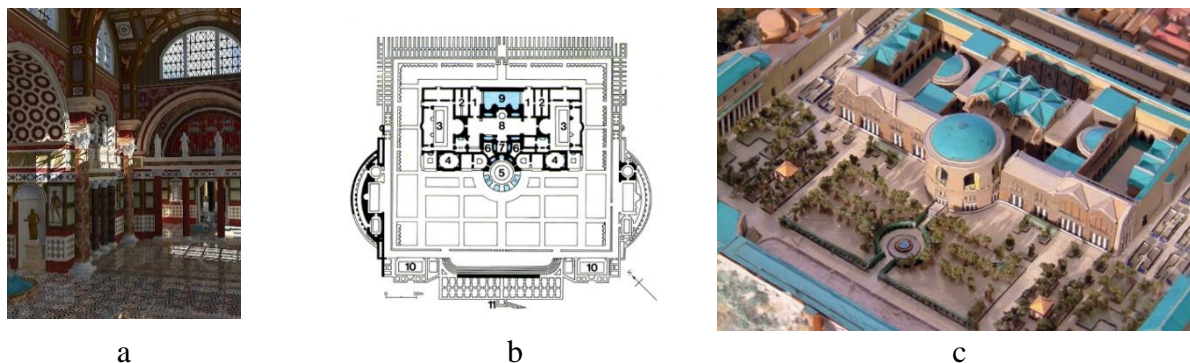


Figure 3 – Baths of Caracalla: a) Interior view, reconstruction [6]; b) plan, [7]
c) reconstruction of general [6]

Religious buildings as spaces for cultural exchanges

If we consider a city as a social space, a temple as a cultural and spiritual institution carries certain moods and messages to people, and parishioners seek peace and spiritual balance by visiting the temple. Certain cultural and historical codes associated with religion unite people, instilling patriotism and love for the homeland into their consciousness." The development process of architecture provides an idea of the development of spaces with cultural functions as part of religious buildings. In temples of different religious denominations, there were spaces for religious and philosophical discussions and exchange of information. At the same time, religious rites and rituals were often accompanied by special public events, such as memorial dinners, banquets, and joint gatherings on days of worship, which contributed to the spiritual and cultural cohesion of the community. Spaces for various functions such as education - libraries, reading rooms; the sale of religious literature and items of religious attributes; education of the younger generation and organization of their leisure time, among others, reflect the realization of cultural functions as part of temples.

The architecture of temples has always stood out in urban development, contrasting with it in terms of its size, silhouette, and plasticity. Spaces for cultural exchange and education as part of a temple always had direct connections with the main (prayer) spaces or were solved in the volume of other buildings as part of the temple complex.



Figure 4 – a) Orange courtyard of the mosque in Cordoba, Spain [8]; b) Interior of the refectory chamber of the Valdai Iversky Monastery, Valdai, Russia [9]; c) Ivolginsky datsan in Buryatia, Russia [10]

Bazaar (market) as cultural center

There are historical documents that indicate the concept of the Bazaar in Iranian cities dating back to 3000 B.C. (Kermaniand and Luiten, 2009). Bazaars were commonly used as cultural centers in Iran. The article "Role of bazaars as a unifying factor in traditional cities of Iran" presents an interesting idea, in which the authors demonstrate the role of bazaars in functioning as cultural centers. Bazaars offer interconnection between different parts of cities, such as residential areas, trade centers, and socio-political regions. They perform two main roles in the city: first, they unite the spaces of the city, and second, they provide economic and social functions in the city [11].

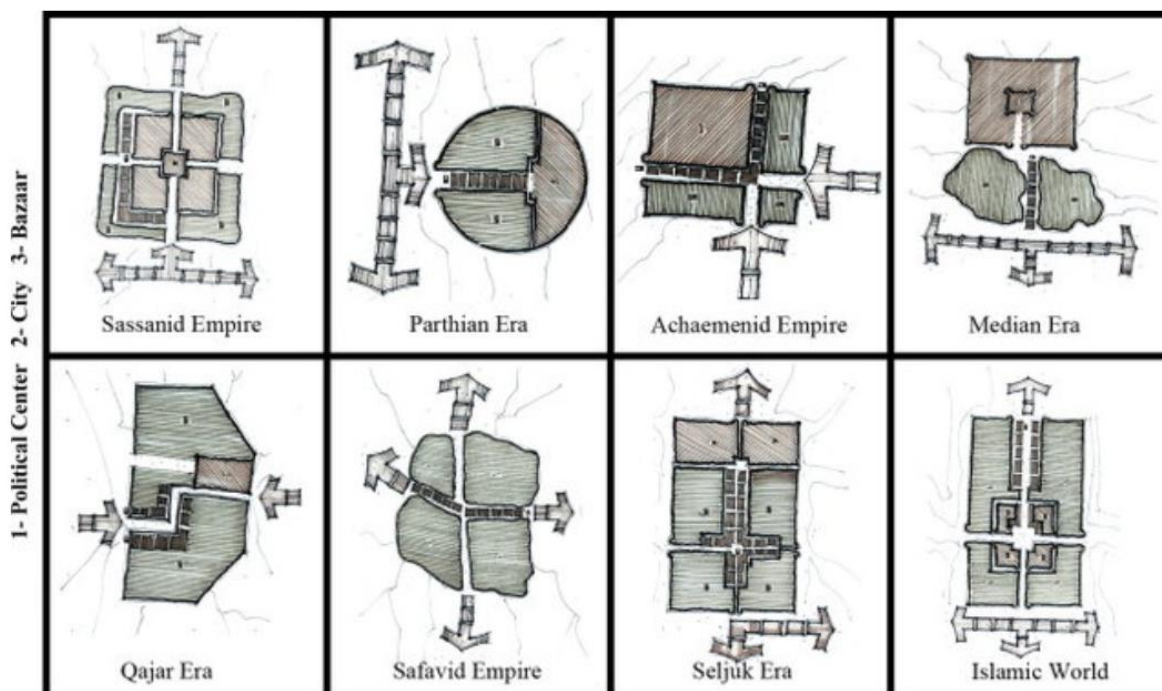


Figure 5 – Bazaar structure in different periods in Isfahan- Iran [11]

Considering the above-mentioned roles of bazaars and taking into account their physical structure and location during most of the periods, they were located it is possible to conclude that they were located in the middle of two main land uses - political centers and city centers. This indicates that one of the main reasons for the emergence of cultural centers in the city was due to the location of bazaars.

Bazaars, being a place of intercultural dialogue, were usually located in prominent places, often next to the port (Fig.5). Various functions were combined here, including trade, prayer, and information exchange. It is interesting to note how researchers describe the choice of the location of the bazaar, which was a multifunctional space [11].

Architects in the Hellenistic era interpreted market squares as cultural centers which presented a variety of functions for the exchange of goods and information, as comprehensive peristyles. [2].

It is interesting to note how the design of Simpang Lima as a prototype of alun-alun incorporates various functions that were traditionally associated with bazaars. According to Sadono (1992), Soekarno designed it as an area for governmental,

cultural, religious, and educational purposes that should be able to contain a million people. The presence of a mosque and museum indicates a focus on cultural and religious activities, while the planned shopping center and gymnasium suggest economic and social functions. The Gajahmada cinema, which brought up the embryo of the night bazaar, shows how the space can evolve and adapt to new cultural practices and activities. Overall, the design of Simpang Lima reflects the historical and cultural significance of bazaars as places of intercultural exchange and activity [12].

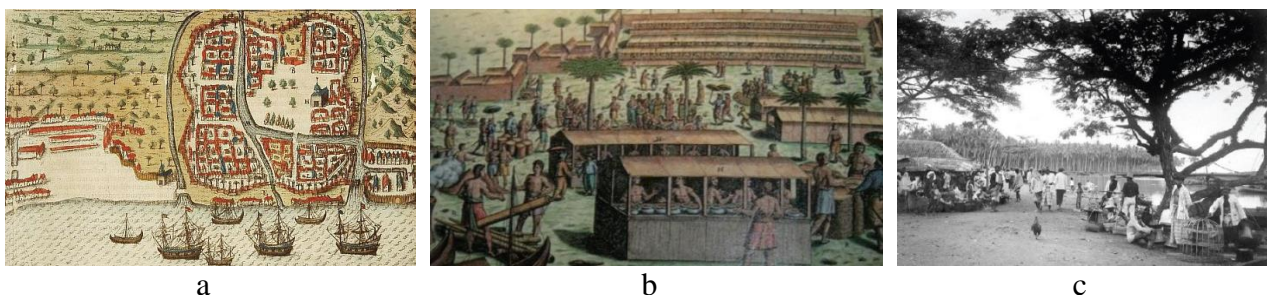


Figure 6 – a) Early map of Bantam [12] ; b) Market in Karangantu Bantam [12];
c) Market in Bantam (Banten), Indonesia [12].

The marketplace typically operates on a weekly basis, with the urban open space serving other purposes on remaining days. The placement of bazaars is carefully chosen to occupy strategic locations, often in close proximity to ports or shores (Fig.6), to facilitate visibility to traveling merchants and sailors seeking to trade in spices. Scholars have speculated that the emergence of bazaar activities may have contributed to the development of early governmental structures, which are often co-located with mosques as defining features of urban centers [12].

The garden as cultural center

During the eras of Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire, when man began to view nature more artistically and sought to maximize his enjoyment. In contrast, Islamic gardens are based on the concept of paradise and are created to symbolize everlasting beauty. Paradise, in Islamic belief, is a place of pleasure, rest, beauty, and a sense of belonging to God, where one can find inner peace within a magnificent garden. References to paradise in Islamic scriptures are often accompanied by images of lush gardens filled with fruits and waterways, providing an endless supply of water, milk, honey, and wine that would continue to flow for eternity, bringing joy to devoted Muslims [13].

Chahar Bagh

The Quran mentions the existence of two identical gardens that are similar in every way, which theologians understood to represent the arrangement of the paradisiacal garden into four square quadrants separated by four steadily flowing rivers, known as chahar bagh to the Persians (Fig.7a). As noted by Ettinghausen & MacDougall, many Islamic royal gardens later adopted this model as a way to construct a more accurate representation of paradise on earth [13].

The architectural design of the Patio de las Doncellas in Seville is closely linked to the structure of the court, but its significance and origins are rooted in the Persian traditions of Islamic gardening, particularly the concept of Charbagh. The court is divided into four sections, with each one representing a different part of the world. These sections are irrigated by water channels that symbolize the four rivers of Paradise. This design reflects the Islamic belief in the importance of gardens as a representation of paradise and their function as a place of peace, tranquility, and spiritual reflection [14].

The Alhambra in Granada serves as a remarkable illustration of Islamic garden design. Situated in a strategic location with a panoramic view of the entire city, it shares similarities with medieval Christian fortresses in its three-part construction as a castle, palace, and residential annex for subordinates [14].

The Alhambra is adorned with numerous gardens that served various purposes, such as providing spaces for social gatherings and cultural events. Here, we shall highlight some of these gardens to gain a deeper understanding of their significance.

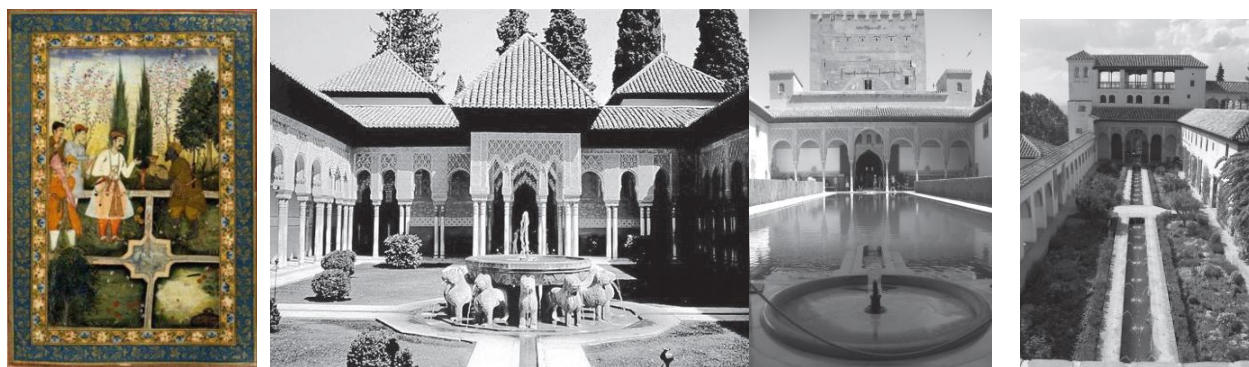
The hall of Ambassadors in Alhambra. The Hall of Ambassadors in the Alhambra served as the symbolic center of Nasrid's rule during the 13th to 14th centuries. This palace was used for throne and ceremonial receptions and is adorned with intricate ornamentation, showcasing the sophistication and beauty of the Nasrid dynasty. As the largest room in the Alhambra, the sultan would preside over the grand council, which included the mayor and captains. Moreover, the hall was also utilized for receptions of envoys or other senior persons [15]. Last but not least, interior design was based on a deep understanding of the geometrical harmonization of the space. The architects were able to manipulate the space of the Hall of Ambassadors based on mathematical knowledge inherited from the Greeks and enhanced by them. This space dazzled visitors and instilled fear in the ambassadors, emphasizing the greatness of the sultan, seated on his throne against the backdrop of the Granada panorama.

The Garden of the Court of the Lions. The Garden is regarded as the most accurate representation of the heavenly garden, as it embodies the two primary elements of Paradise according to Islamic interpretations, namely water and plants [12]. Scholars suggest that in addition to its symbolic significance, the Court of Lions (Fig.7b) also served as a venue for hosting and entertaining guests, known as majalis, which played a crucial role in Islamic social life (Foret, 2009) [13].

The Court of the Myrtles. The central feature of the Court of the Myrtles (Fig.7c) is an elongated pond that is flanked by myrtle trees on both sides. This design element is one of the most recognizable characteristics of the garden and is intended to create an illusion of Paradise. In Islamic theology, the combination of water, plants, and architecture used in the garden represents the ideal concept of celestial paradise. This is in line with the aim of referencing the garden to paradise and fulfilling the objective of providing beauty and quality, as mentioned in the Quran [16].

The Generalife. Generalife is a magnificent garden located on the hillside above the Alhambra palace, considered one of the most beautiful gardens. The Quranic description of the gardens of Paradise has inspired its location. Generalife is one of the rare examples that embodies all the requirements of the ideal celestial paradise

garden(Fig.7c), including running water, trees and plants, architecture, Arabic epigraphy, fragrant scents, and precious stones [16].



a

b

c

d

Figure 7 – a) Char Bagh. [13]; b) Alhambra- The Court of the Lions [16]; c) Alhambra- The Court of the Myrtles [16]; d) Alhambra- The garden of the Court of the Generalife [16]

Prerequisites for the emergence of a cultural center as an architectural type

Objective processes and the emergence of cultural policies that implied a set of government practices intervening in the sphere of culture facilitated the emergence of the cultural center as a building type. The first attempts at meaningful implementation of these practices into government activities can be chronologically defined within the framework of the early 19th to the end of the 20th century. This period saw the formation of the so-called social state in Germany and France [17].

At the end of the 19th century, France introduced a new idea with the creation of cultural institutions abroad. The Alliance Française, sometimes known as the "French Alliance," was the first cultural institution to appear in France in 1883. The new "tool" of culture was proposed as a center for dialogue between countries and regions, as a resource for the world and for fairly developing societies, and finally, as an instrument of public diplomacy [17], [18].

During the 20th century, other Western countries adopted this idea and created their own cultural institutions. These organizations provided an opportunity to influence the local residents of the host countries by representing their best interests (6). The Soviet Union was the first country to institutionalize this government practice by establishing the world's first Ministry of Culture at the state level in 1953. The French now consider themselves the pioneers in this field, but they organized their Ministry of Culture much later, in 1959. Despite this, French researchers ignore this fact. Nevertheless, evidence can be found in archives that French specialists from the De Gaulle government visited and studied the Soviet experience, how the Ministry of Culture was organized, what competencies it had, and so on [17].

Cultural centers abroad serve various functions, primarily aimed at the local community. The main functions include language learning, library services, and cultural events (Fig.8). Some of these centers are often located within libraries. They are also presented as social spaces for the community, where people can participate,

discuss and debate mainly about culture and everyday objects, and participate in educational events and training programs aimed at preserving traditions, etc. To achieve these goals, they go beyond the boundaries of their physical structure [18].

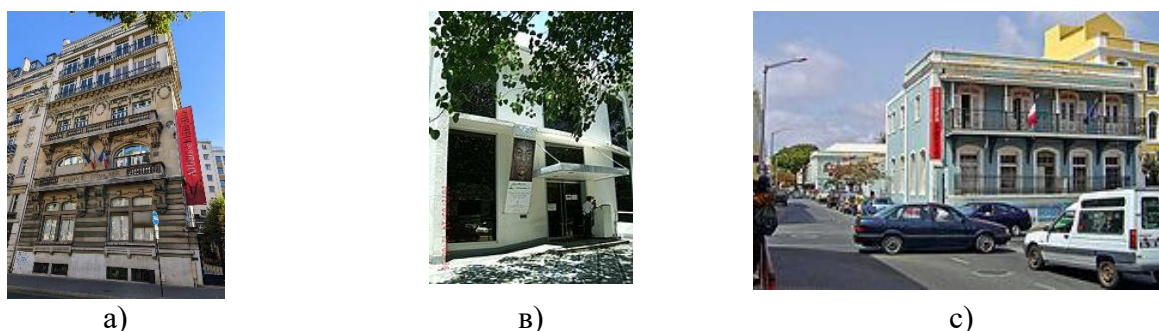


Fig.8: a) The administrative center of the French Alliance in Paris [19];
b) the oldest office of the French Alliance in the Far East, Makati, Philippines;
c) Alliance française office in Mendelo, Sao Vicente Island.

Conclusions

By studying the historical experience of the development of cultural centers, we can draw conclusions about the main features of the development of their architecture:

1. Cultural centers, since ancient times, functioned as spaces of cultural exchange, providing the exchange of news and knowledge, and were centers of education, nourishment, and increasing awareness of communities.

2. The creation of spaces for cultural exchanges a long time took place as part of other types of public buildings and spaces.

3. In the ancient period, the functions of cultural centers were included in other public buildings such as gyms, baths, stadiums, theaters, and others. The architecture of cultural centers during this period corresponded mainly to the specific types of public buildings in which these functions were located. In ancient Greece, the basis of the plan of public buildings in the classical era was the peripteros, and in the Hellenistic era, the peristyle. The peripteros had active connections with the external space, while the internal space of the building was understood as part of the space of nature. The peristyle was surrounded by solid walls, and its space was turned inward.

4. In the medieval period, the functions of cultural exchanges were actively represented as part of palace complexes, baths, gardens, bazaars, and others, which had great urban planning value in the settlement, being centers of political, social, and economic life. Bazaars occupied a central place in the urban structure, while palace complexes had rooms for various cultural functions (gardens - for rest and meditation, reception halls - for receiving delegations and musical performances, etc.) organized according to high-quality standards.

5. In the cult architecture of all confessions, multifunctionality is observed, in which there are spaces for cultural exchanges (disputes, education, trade, book publishing, etc.). The architecture of temples has always stood out in urban development, contrasting with it in terms of its size, silhouette, and plasticity. Spaces

for cultural exchange and education as part of a temple always had direct connections with the main (prayer) spaces or were solved in the volume of other buildings as part of the temple complex.

6. The prerequisites for the appearance of a cultural center as a specific architectural type were created at the beginning of the 19th century. This was created as the implementation of a set of government practices of developed countries, intervention in the cultural sphere, and an instrument of public diplomacy, which required the creation of specific institutions in countries that are under its influence.

7. Cultural centers are actively built for the purpose of cultural exchange, enlightenment, getting acquainted with the history, art, and culture of regions, preserving the identity of the community. They contain places for discussion and information exchange, entertainment and educational centers, a place for creativity and innovation, and, above all, a productive space for serving the community.

8. The architecture of the first cultural centers was executed in the spirit of classical patterns and also demonstrated local regional features of the receiving country. The architecture of the early cultural centres featured solutions executed in styles that were part of the general current of eclecticism, with an interpretation of classical and baroque elements, as well as demonstrated local regional traditions of the host country.

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МӘДЕНИ ОРТАЛЫҚТАРДЫҢ СӘУЛЕТТІК ДАМУ ЕРЕКШЕЛІКТЕРІ

Аңдатпа: Бұл мақалада мәдени орталықтардың тарихи кезеңдегі сәулеттік даму тәжірибесі қарастырылып, сәулет түрі ретінде мәдениет орталықтарының негізгі ерекшеліктері қарастырылған. Зерттеу барысында тарихи маңызы бар мәдени орталықтардың көптеген мысалдары зерттелді. Дегенмен, қазіргі құжат талдау бөлігі ретінде бірнеше сәулеттік әсерлі бөліктерге назар аударады. Ежелгі дүние мен Азияның орта газсырла-рындағы мәдени орталықтардың сәулет өнерінің даму үлгілері әрі қарайғы зерттеулердің бағытын анықтау үшін талданды, мәдени орталықтың сәулет түрі ретінде пайда болуының алғы шарттары айқындалады.

Түйін сөздер: мәдени орталық сәулеті, ғибадатхана, бақ, базар, монша.

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**ОСОБЕННОСТИ РАЗВИТИЯ АРХИТЕКТУРЫ
КУЛЬТУРНЫХ ЦЕНТРОВ**

Аннотация. *В данной статье рассматривается опыт архитектурного развития культурных центров в исторический период, исследуются основные черты культурных центров как архитектурного типа. В ходе исследования были изучены многочисленные примеры исторически значимых культурных центров. Тем не менее, текущая статья фокусируется на нескольких важных элементах как части архитектурного анализа. Для определения направления дальнейших исследований проанализированы примеры архитектурного развития пространств культурных обменов Античности и средневековой Азии, определены предпосылки появления культурного центра как архитектурного типа.*

Ключевые слова: *архитектура культурного центра, храм, сад, базар, бани.*