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### THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARCHITECTURAL ORNAMENT IN KAZAKHSTAN ARCHITECTURE OF THE LATE 19TH — EARLY 21ST CENTURIES (THROUGH THE EXAMPLE OF ALMATY CITY)

**Abstract.** The peculiarities of form-making with the use of ornamental compositions in Kazakhstan architecture have been considered and the characteristics of the ornamented architectural forms development process in the late 19th — early 21st centuries have been identified.

**Keywords:** architectural ornament, ornamental composition, decorative panels.

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### РАЗВИТИЕ АРХИТЕКТУРНОГО ОРНАМЕНТА В ЗОДЧЕСТВЕ КАЗАХСТАНА КОНЦА XIX — НАЧАЛА XXI ВВ. (НА ПРИМЕРЕ Г. АЛМАТЫ)

**Аннотация.** Рассмотрены особенности формообразования с использованием орнаментальных композиций в казахстанской архитектуре, выявлены характерные черты процесса развития орнаментированных архитектурных форм конца XIX — начала XXI вв.

**Ключевые слова:** архитектурный орнамент, орнаментальная композиция, декоративное панно.

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The relevance of studying the development of ornament as a distinctive phenomenon of Kazakhstan architecture during the last century has been determined by significant diversity in applications of ornament during different periods of the domestic architecture development from the late nineteenth to the early twenty first centuries. This diversity was expressed not only through the extent of application in general together with the saturation of building facades, but also through the level of pattern configuration's similarity to some or other architectural archetypes of the previous periods or traditional forms of monumental decorative art and applied arts. At present, the ornamentation is widely reapplied in decoration of individual buildings and constructions after almost twenty-year period of occasional use, becoming the significant phenomenon of modern Kazakhstan architecture.

Kazakh ornament constitutes an essential part of the world ornamental culture. Peculiarity of the issue is reflected in the fact that architectural ornament represents a specific phenomenon of synthesis of arts.

A considerable part of ornamental motives was widely applied in various elements of a nomadic dwelling, having turned a yurt into an integrated work of all arts [1, 2]. Application of ornamental composition in Kazakhstan architecture of the twentieth century was, to a large extent, related to both spontaneous aspiration of the authors of the projects, and the recommendations being sometimes of directive nature in order to accent national and regional imagery of architecture. Thus, a significant part of the issue should be formed by researches investigating genesis and development of national form in architecture in general as well as in terms of ornament interpretation as a sign of national and regional identity of a form [3].

Studies on Kazakh ornament being for the first time persistently carried out as early as the beginning of the century before last, became more intense in the twentieth century and had created a peculiar constantly extending sphere of knowledge still relevant to the beginning of the new century [4]. This is proved by intensive research on the issue not only deepening the previous study on

the historically developed forms but also analyzing new works constantly coming into existence.

The sphere is composed of both highly specialized works concerning subject of patterns, features of their application for products of various forms and sizes, configurative and texture signs determined by the production material, and generalizing researches on a role of ornament in decorative and applied arts and architecture.

The specific group comprises works devoted to form-making, conceptual filling of space and artistic decoration of yurts.

A special place is taken by the works devoted not only to interpretation of the most popular motives from decorative and applied arts being used in buildings and constructions of diverse typological identity, but also to manifestations of architectural ornament itself.

Nevertheless, despite the significant level of previous study on the issue in general, some problems of application of ornamental compositions in architecture are still demanding more in-depth study and sometimes even re-thinking. This particularly concerns the second part of the twentieth and the early part of the twenty first centuries.

Ornamentation in its various forms had emerged in Kazakhstan architecture since nearly the time of its origin. As immobile above-ground man-made structures became dominating in architecture, the patterns' symbolical functions applied in their architectural and artistic solution became increasingly intermingling with material and design features of the surfaces being ornamented [4].

Both figured brickwork and combination of multicolored blocks became widely applied in order to increase spatial stiffness of walls and vaults. Moulded bricks as a part of ornamental compositions gradually came into existence.

Application of multi-colored glazed bricks had gained widespread acceptance. Their combinations had formed fragmentary ornamented bricking or solid patterned coating of wall elements and domes. A specific group was formed by terracotta tiles of various shapes and sizes with the relief ornament on anthropomorphic, zoomorphic, floral or cosmogonic themes and also by tiles with the epigraphic patterns.

Commemorative architecture of West Kazakhstan became an impressive evidence of domestic architecture since the end of the eighteenth century [5]. Carving, multicolored and combined ornaments performed on a masonry surface had created a peculiar domestic phenomenon which later significantly influenced the development of architectural ornament throughout Kazakhstan.

As ethnic and social ties were broadening, Kazakh ornament was enriched by motives and shapes specific to patterns of other countries on the one hand, and began to transnationalize on the other hand, with its

forms gradually becoming a part of patterns used in the surrounding regions.

Nowadays known as Almaty, the city established in the middle of the nineteenth century was quickly transferred into a regional metropolis with multi-ethnic population, which architecture naturally reflected its cultural diversity expressed *inter alia* through variety of forms and motives of architectural ornament.

Due to the prohibition on constructing stone and brick buildings after a severe earthquake, most of building activities in the period from 1890 to 1920 were concentrated on one-storey, hardly ever two-storey wooden or framed reed-fiber buildings with plastered walls [6, 7]. Therefore, the primary field of ornament development became wood-carved (in individual cases — sheet metal) details of cornices and bands, trims and frames.

The period from 1930 to 1940 was significant due to considerable growth of building activities, since constructional improvements made it possible to apply extensively reinforced concrete and brick that enabled wide-scale increase in number of stories in buildings. This fact defined a new qualitative condition of ornamental compositions being used, which not only considerably extended the space occupied but also were used at a greater height.

Unlike the previous period interpreting a subject of an ornamental decision loosely as “Central Asian style”, an important change-over to a purposive interpretation of precisely Kazakh patterns was made with broad application practice promoted by sudden activation of studying on this layer of national culture in decorative and applied arts and architectural monuments.

The 1950s were a time of the broadest application of ornamental compositions. Moreover, if there was usually one, rarely two and in individual cases three types of ornamental composition in each group (columns and pilasters, cornices and belts, trims and frames, inserts and panels) during the previous period, at that time each group comprised two or three types of composition, while one type became a rare case [8].

Small architectural forms with ornamentation had become an integral part of the urban composition.

The development of ornamental composition in architecture of Almaty at the beginning of the second part of the twentieth century had some specific features including considerable decrease of its application of columns and pilasters, cornices and belts, trims and frames in regard to the 1950s [9]. At the same time, the quantitative indices in the field of ornamented panels and inserts had considerably increased not only on a variety of patterns, but also on frequency of their application.

The size of widely applied ornamental panels, which were a height of a multi-storied building in most cases, had considerably enlarged. The module size had significantly increased as well; in most cases it was a wall panel, which was a constructional module of a house.

A new tendency was represented by application of repeating blind or grid module compositions with a single-row arrangement of plates on balconies' and loggias' balustrades. In rare cases the monotony of a uniform modules row was interrupted by a plate with other pattern, which was usually placed in the middle of a balcony.

The dominating elements of the period from the 1970 to the 1980 were ornamented inserts and panels, which were blind, of high or low relief, bossed or stamped, grid or translucent, mono- or polychrome, one- or multi-textured and also combined.

During the period from 1990 to 2000, the variety of ornamental solutions specific to the 1950s was gradually revived, being however considerably more diverse in colors of compositions.

A distinctive feature of the period became widespread interpretation of the ornamental themes incorporated into the national symbols of the state.

Development of architectural ornament in architecture of Almaty during the late previous and early present centuries has a number of specific features. The most intense thereof is the clearly expressed waviness in quantitative saturation of a particular part of buildings and constructions with patterned elements.

Comparison of quantity of ornamented elements to amount of surveyed objects has allowed to reveal the average degree of a saturation of buildings and constructions with ornamental compositions, which differs quantitatively according to the periods. Thus, the role of the ornamental compositions in the general formula of buildings and constructions has been changing due to the periods as well.

During the period from 1890 to 1920, there were mainly two ornamented elements (usually cornices and belts, trims and frames) being used in compositions. Patterns in the form of wooden and metal carved compositions generally expressed a geometrical theme with accent inserts of a S-shaped curve in various combinations with petals. Low-relief compositions of mainly floral theme could be encountered either. Ornament enriches the plastic of common elements of an architectural composition.

During the period from 1930 to 1940, two or three ornamented elements were equally applied in compositions (usually trims and frames, columns and pilasters as well as cornices and belts). Mostly stucco patterns were presented in all variety of the theme, using predominately the dual plane approach and emphasizing the traditional equivalence of a pattern and background. It is indicative what exactly during this period the tendency of synthesis of a traditional spiral curve with the Ionic volute was evident for the first time. Ornamented stucco pilasters interpreting a form of a traditional carved wooden "Central Asian column" were widely adopted. Foliate palm-leaf

capital with ornamental inserts and ornamented belts on a joint of a column's or pilaster's shaft with a base became widespread to the end of the period. Ornament enriches the plastic of accents and common elements of an architectural composition.

Over the period of the 1950s, predominately four ornamented elements were used in compositions (columns and pilasters, trims and frames, panels and inserts, cornices and belts). Maintaining the thematic variety of the previous period, stucco patterns were most frequently applied in the form of a high-relief or even sculptural composition though the dual-plane approach remained to be dominating. The synthesis of a spiral curve with the Ionic volute had gained widespread application. The ornamental saturation of foliate palm-leaf capitals became even greater. An ornament enriched the plastic of centerpieces, accents and common elements of architectural composition.

In the 1960s there was predominately one ornamented element used in compositions (mostly panels and inserts). Patterned compositions of panels, being equal in their height to the facades, generally became multicolored, while spacing was still of ow-relief. Ornament emphasized the key role of a panel in architectural composition.

During the period from 1970 to 1980, one ornamented element of compositions was dominating (mostly panels and inserts). A variety of pattern themes was concentrated in monochrome compositions of low and high relief, applied mainly on balcony fencing. Ornamented grills became widely acceptable. Ornament enriched the plastic of common elements of architectural composition.

Over the period from 1990 to 2000, there were predominately two ornamented elements being used in compositions, tending to 2 or 3 elements (cornices and bands, panels and inserts, trims and frames). A specific feature of the period was the revival of an epigraphic ornamented decoration, as well as wide-spread application of laid-on laced compositions. Unlike the previous periods, the S-shaped curve in its various combinations became the dominate pattern interpreting the ornamental compositions incorporated into the national symbols of the state. Ornament enriched the plastic of architectural composition.

Ornamented small architectural forms have been applied as a peculiar environmental addition to the spatial compositions created by ornamented elements of buildings and constructions.

According to the revealed data, the average compositional saturation of buildings' and constructions' facades will remain at the level of two (rarely three) ornamented elements in the short term. Ornament will enrich plasticity of both dominants and accents of architectural composition.

Thus, due to intense town-planning development of Astana city, which naturally became a center of

architectural innovations between two ages, an analysis on ornamental composition distribution in the built-up environment of the capital is of considerable scientific and practical importance.

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