



Architectural Decorations And Ornaments Of Central Asia

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ABSTRACT

This article delves into the rich and intricate history of architectural decorations and ornaments in Central Asia, tracing their evolution from ancient times to the present day. Central Asian architecture is renowned for its elaborate and symbolic ornamentation, which reflects the region's diverse cultural and historical influences. The article provides a comprehensive analysis of the development of these ornaments, detailing the stages of their evolution and the underlying symbolism that has shaped their designs. Through an exploration of various architectural styles and notable examples, the article highlights the unique characteristics and significance of Central Asian ornamentation. Readers will gain insights into the techniques, materials, and artistic traditions that have contributed to the region's distinctive architectural heritage. By uncovering the stories behind these intricate decorations, the article aims to deepen the appreciation of Central Asian architectural art and its enduring legacy.

Keywords:

Art, design, local conditions, national characteristics, analysis, decoration, form, ornament, symbolism, pahsa, terracotta, knock carving, stone carving, majolica, mosaic, tile, monument.

Introduction

Cultural heritage is something that evokes a special and wonderful feeling in the heart of every person who hears this word. Each of us understands cultural heritage in our way. For tourists it is the ancient architecture of countries, a variety of costumes and food, for people working in the art world it is the brilliance of colours and individuality, and for

most people, it is a reflection of customs and traditions. Of course, all this is equally interesting and valuable for all of us. Each country has its own culture. To find out, we must look to history. As our ancestors say, "There is no future without the past," and the history of cultural heritage sites began far BC. National ornaments are the basis of any type of cultural

heritage. The history of their origin dates back to BC. [3].

The centuries-old history of Central Asia has a rich and deep meaning, and historical events here have repeatedly influenced the changes and development of world history. The history of Central Asia is full of important events. During this period in history, there is a lot of information about the people's side with their slaves and their struggle to free them. From the same period, the development of symbols and ornaments began, which formed the basis of the culture of Central Asia. It is known that the peoples of Central Asia showed strong resistance to the armies of Alexander the Great. In every country that Alexander the Great conquered, he destroyed all the wealth associated with the culture of this people. In the period after the October incident, thanks to archaeological discoveries, the level of knowledge about the culture of the peoples of Central Asia and Central Asia increases, and its place among other ancient cultures is determined [4].

Archaeological research carried out in the territories of the Central Asian republics in recent years shows that the culture of the peoples of Central Asia has developed in independent forms since ancient times, and information about this proves the uniqueness of the culture of the peoples of Central and Central Asia. The art and culture of Central Asia were greatly influenced by neighbouring peoples: Iranians, Chinese, Hellenistic Greeks, Mongols and Arabs. In turn, the peoples of Central Asia made an incomparable contribution to the culture of other countries, China and Iran [4].

Materials and methods

The art of the peoples of Central Asia has an ancient history dating back many centuries. The interfluves of Central Asia occupied the fertile valleys of the Oxus and Jaxartes, and many ancient sedentary and nomadic tribes lived in these territories. In Zarautsoy, Teshik-tash, Sarmishsay, and Aman Kutan, rock paintings of Kutans dating back to the period of primitive society were found. The "Amu Darya Treasure," now stored in the National Museum, confirms the presence in this territory of a high level of fine art of the Bronze Age [1].

These works of art use complex semantics of an ornamental, anthropomorphic and zoomorphic nature. The unique artistic image of the world that has developed in the worldview of the peoples of the East is reflected. The coexistence of various religions and cults, including Zoroastrianism, had a strong influence on the formation of the national identity of the peoples of Central Asia [4].

The architectural decoration of buildings in Central Asia in the feudal era was very diverse. As cladding here, as in Khorasan and other parts of Iran, burnt-facing bricks were used, which were laid out in patterns. Such brick ornamentation took place in this era and in the territory of present-day Afghanistan. Excavations were carried out in Turkmenistan in the area of Nessa, the ancient Parthian capital. Excavations were also carried out at the site of ancient Samarkand - Afrosiab, which gave very good and excellent results. In Tajikistan, the most valuable information was obtained during excavations of a fortress of the 8th century. Buildings in Central Asia are built mainly from dried (wet) or baked bricks. Almost all buildings built in Central Asia and preserved to this day are built and faced with brick [4].

It was considered a building material back in the 9th-10th centuries. This is a great result in the development of the economic life of many countries. Initially, baked brick was used only in the domes of buildings. Since ancient times in Central Asia, such buildings have been used for practical purposes, to protect the structural mass of the building from rain and wind, as well as for decorative purposes [8].

Brick is one of the most ancient building materials; the history of its creation goes back to ancient times. Scientists have been able to establish that the first brick buildings began to be erected in Mesopotamia, between the Tigris and Euphrates. Why were ancient buildings discovered in these places? The region is dominated by an abundance of water, clay and straw. It was these components that residents used to build their homes. Residents built houses using simple technology. The straw was laid and coated with clay, and under the scorching rays of the sun, the structure quickly dried, becoming strong and preventing

moisture from penetrating inside. Over time, the technology was improved and houses began to be built from piece material - moulded bars, which were made from sticky clay and cut straw. Hardening under the sun, such masonry was even more durable and reliable than stone. This is how they began to artificially create clay brick or raw brick, which reached Central Asia [1].

In 9th - 12th centuries. Art bricks were made from shaped bricks in the interior and exterior of mosques and mausoleums. In the composition of the interiors, bricks are laid on the surface of the walls in the form of an arch, a chessboard, or a pair (for example, in the Samanid tomb). Stylized plant and floral patterns predominate in Central Asian exterior mosaics; in many cases, polychrome ornaments of a festive mood are created on a blue background [1].

Cladding the walls of buildings with carved knock as architectural decoration is the most favourite and widespread type of wall decoration in countries throughout the Middle East, especially in Iran, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. Carved knock cladding finds its main application in the interior walls of buildings, but exterior walls are sometimes decorated with the same material. The method of attaching this

type of cladding to the wall surface is very simple. A wall made of baked (first sun-dried) brick is covered with a layer of stucco, on which a pattern is cut out; sometimes the knock is applied to a wall that is previously covered with a layer of clay. The pattern is cut by hand using the still-wet knock [7]. Giving an outline of the development of this type of architectural decoration in Central Asia, we consider it necessary to dwell in considerable detail on the most important examples of knock carving in Iran, starting with the oldest monuments that have reached us, since their historical past Iran and Central Asia were constantly in close communication, what causes the inevitable mutual influences. In other eras, they were parts of the same state, revealing therefore significant closeness in the manifestations of their culture and art. In the types and styles of architectural decoration, in particular in knock carving, related features are found in both Iran and Central Asia [7]. The discovery of the Varakhsh fragments, which are the first examples of knocking carved or relief decoration in Central Asia in the era before the Arab conquest, forces us to draw parallels between this type of architectural decoration in Iran and Mesopotamia [1].

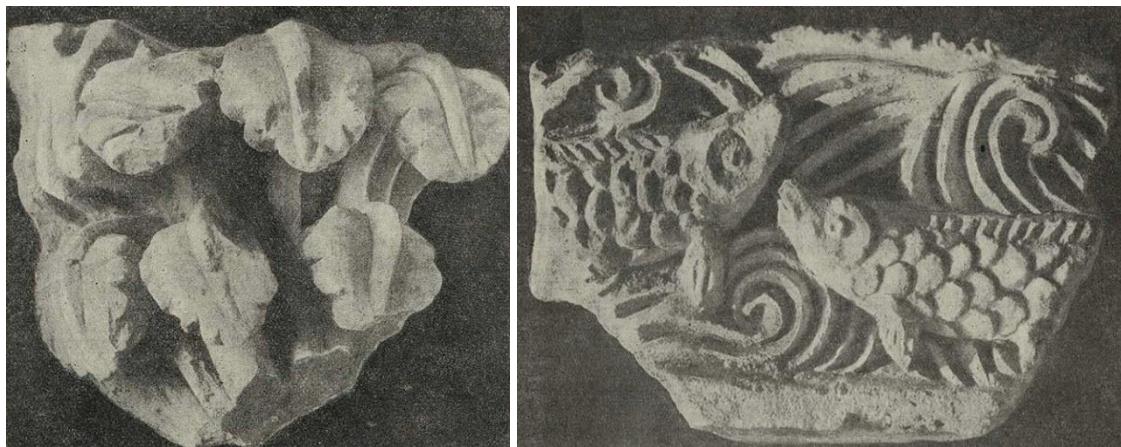


Figure 1. Varakhsh. Carved knock.

Terracotta- a type of unglazed ceramics, products made from ferruginous clay, which after initial firing acquires a characteristic red-brown or yellowish-brown color. Terracotta products have a matte, slightly porous surface. Terracotta was used to make facing slabs with reliefs, religious vessels and figurines, and

sarcophagi. The ancient Etruscans made order details of their architecture from red terracotta, connecting them with the wooden structure of supports, entablature and roof, and painted them with mineral dyes: white, blue and black paints. Tanager figurines of the 4th-2nd centuries are known in the history of art. BC e.,

also made of terracotta, painted in white, blue, pink and yellow, sometimes with partial gilding. They are masterpieces of ancient art. They depict everyday scenes, women busy with housework, sewing, and playing with children. The beauty and delicate plasticity of these figures gave rise to the name "Tanagryanka" in the history of art [7].

Small sculptures made from red clay were common in almost all ancient cultures. Small sculptures and architectural details from terracotta were made in Ancient Greece, Ancient China, Ancient India and Ancient America. A striking example of ancient terracotta sculpture is the terracotta army of the first emperor of the Qin dynasty, Shi Huangdi [8].

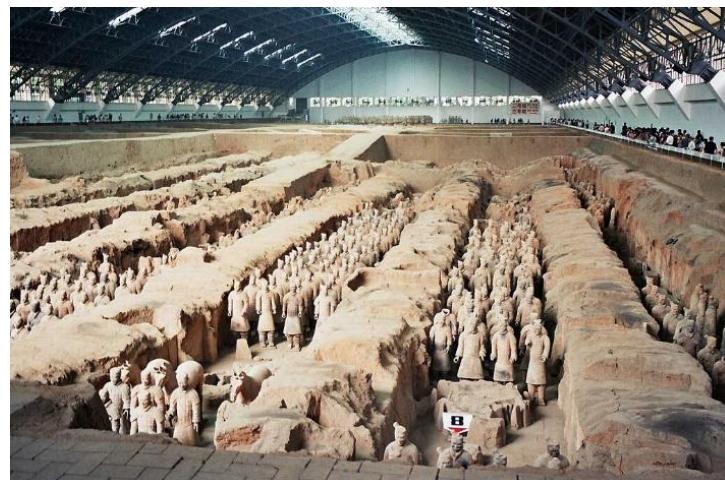


Figure 2. China. Terracotta Army.

The oldest examples of the use of fired clay terracotta tiles decorated with reliefs in the architectural decoration of Central Asia date back to the Parthian era of the 3rd century BC e. They were found during excavations carried out since 1930 in the village of Bagir near Ashgabat in Turkmenistan by the Turkmen Research Institute. Isidore of Charak also mentions the tombs of the Parthian kings in Nessa, and the location of Nessa, the ancient capital of Parthia,

was supposedly indicated in this place by academician V.V. Bartold. The use of this decoration technique, as far as can be judged from the surviving monuments, was resumed in Central Asia only in the era after the Arab conquest [1]. But, starting from this time, the decoration of buildings with carved terracotta tiles, either hand-cut or stamped, became predominantly widespread in Central Asia [5].

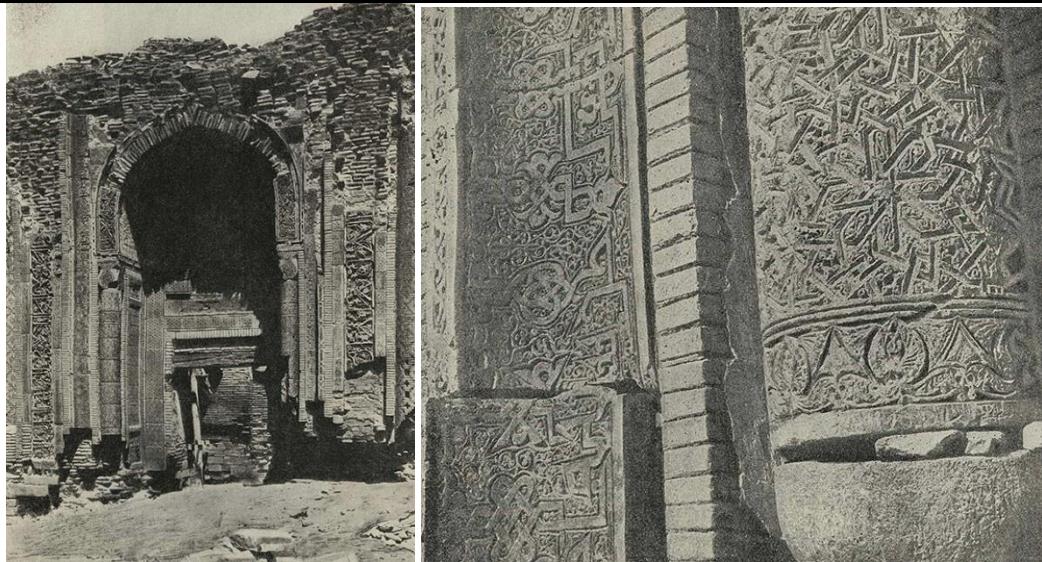


Figure 3. Southern mausoleum in Uzgen. 1187

Only in the last decade has it been possible to establish the presence on the territory of Central Asia of buildings from the period before the Arab conquest, lined with artistically processed stone. Known since the 60s of the 19th century. The ruins of Akhyr-Tash, about which it has been suggested that these are the ruins of a building of the pre-Muslim period, perhaps a Buddhist monastery, do not yet lend themselves to precise chronological determination. From the story about him by the Chinese traveler Chang-Chun it is clear that already in 1221 AD. e. Akhyr-Tash lay in ruins, but this does not clarify the question of the time of its construction. Akhyr-Tash was built from slabs of ferruginous sandstone of a dark brown colour; some slabs are ornamented or designed as cornices and half-columns [3].

In the architecture of Central Asia in the period after the Arab conquest, panels were decorated with carved stone, gratings, entrance platbands, tombstones, tombstones were made from stone, and column bases were often carved from stone [1]. Particularly early examples of stone carving have not reached us. The earliest ones date back to the XIV-XV centuries. We will focus on the most striking examples. Timur's cathedral mosque in Samarkand, known as Bibi-Khanym, was richly decorated with stone cladding, construction began in 1399 and was completed in 1404 AD. e. Stone played an unusually large role in Bibi-Khanym, much larger than in other buildings of this era, in which the main building material was baked brick [3].

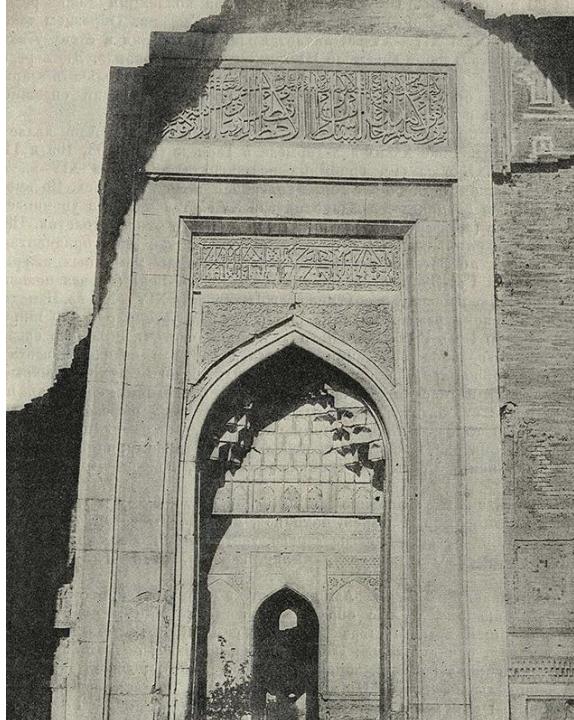


Figure 4. Bibi-Khanym Mosque in Samarkand. XIV-XV centuries

Now let's move on to decorating buildings with carved wood, to examining wooden columns, carved doors, ceilings, mihrabs, mosques, and the walls of wooden tombstones. Local types of wood used for architectural decoration of buildings are the following: walnut, plane tree, elm, juniper and, in later times, poplar. Wood carving in Central Asia reached very high skill. The oldest examples of it that have come down to us go back to the end of the first millennium AD. Masters decorated with carvings both columns in mosques and other buildings, and parts of houses: doors, jambs, grilles; carved wooden tombstones, sometimes of the finest workmanship, have been preserved; Even a carved mihrab from the pre-Mongol era have

survived. One of the oldest monuments of carving are columns: Kurut and from Oburdon. Particularly archaic in the nature of the ornament and carving technique are two wooden panels from Oburdon in mountainous Tajikistan (now located in the Tashkent Museum) [8].

The culmination of the development of wood carving was the Timurid era. From this era, several excellent doors have come down to the most remarkable monuments of the Timur era: in the Khoja-Ahmed-Essevi mosque in Turkestan (two doors), in Shah-i-Zinda in Samarkand, in Gur-Emir (transported to the Hermitage in pre-revolutionary times) [1].



Figure 5. Detail of the mihrab of the 12th-13th centuries. in Iskodar. Tajikistan

It remains to say a few words about one more type of carving used to decorate buildings - clay carving. We know it mainly from the patterns of country houses in the vicinity of Samarkand. Unfortunately, this material has not yet been sufficiently studied it has not even been properly recorded. Meanwhile, it has already been noted that these monumental ornamentations are of significant interest in understanding the evolution of ornament in the art of Islam [1].

The surface of adobe walls is usually dissected by columns or half-columns embedded in the thickness of the wall and decorated in various ways with the simplest tools: the pattern is sometimes squeezed out with a wooden stick, sometimes scratched, sometimes cut with a knife. Sometimes this is a pattern from the simplest elements of an ornament: the wall is covered with a continuous row of in-depth parallel stripes with triangles in the top row of this decoration [3].

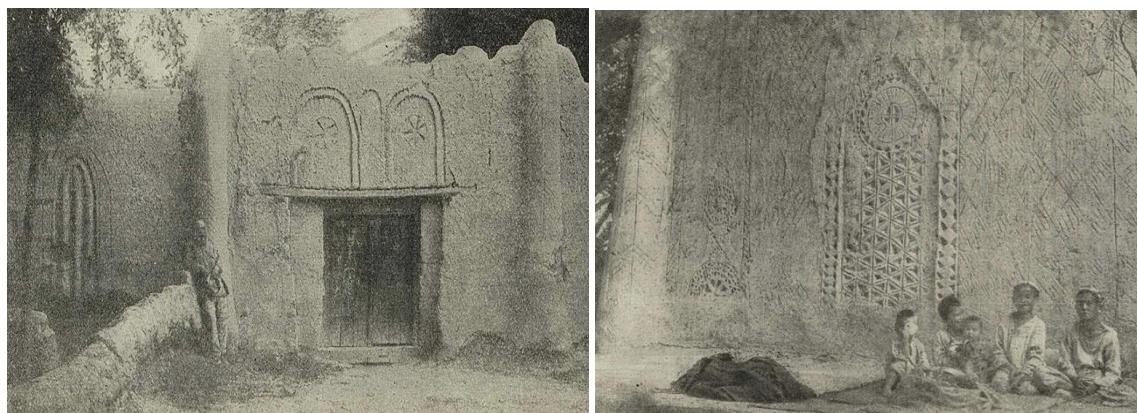


Figure 6. Ornamented clay wall of a country house. Samarkand. XIX century

The complexity of the pattern sometimes increases: the decoration of the walls includes large triangles with rosettes inside - a motif vaguely reminiscent of the division of the wall in

the Mshatta palace; the columns are divided by narrow vertical friezes with geometric patterns; sometimes the wall field is dissected by symmetrically located rosettes and squares

filled with carvings. In the carvings of these walls and columns, often recent in execution (dates from the second half of the 19th century are found), one can sense an ornamental tradition that was not retained in cult monuments, dating back to the first centuries after the Arab conquest and continuing to live in folk art [8].

The appearance of glaze in the architectural decoration of Central Asia, judging by the examples that have come down to us, dates back to the 12th century. According to Yakut, the dome of the mausoleum of Sultan Sanjar in Merv (mid-12th century) was decorated with blue glaze. Covered with a blue glazed frieze with a relief inscription, which was on the Kalyan minaret in Bukhara [6].

Now we move on to majolicas (painted tiles), he divides them into three types: "The first, the most valuable and beautiful in technique and colours, is the same as the tiles from which the mosaics were cut. Their support is fragile and soft, light in colour, with a large admixture of sand. Paints are limited to ultramarine, turquoise, white and black; yellow tone is not found at all. The black tone serves only as a contour applied to the surface of the sublayer to distinguish between different tones and to determine the pattern of the ornament. The indicated tones were applied over the contour and gave a merging, indefinite pattern, which, of course, was inevitable during firing" [1]. "The second type of tiles differs from the first only in that part of the design is applied to an already fired background - most often a red outline and white places of the ornament. Green is added to the tones; the glazes are somewhat cloudy, and their colours are not so clean and transparent.

The drawing is somewhat rougher and careless. Some parts of the ornament are covered with cold-applied gilding" [7]. "The third type of majolica is rougher. He has a large number of glaze colours - yellow and ocher-red are added to the ones already mentioned, but these glazes are cloudier, less transparent and pure in tone. The underlayer is yellow or red, contains a lot of clay and is therefore much stronger than that of the first type of tiles. Most tiles of this type bear traces of gilding along a white pattern." In addition to these types of tiles, there is another type - relief tiles; they come in two types: hand-carved and stamped. The first ones are either covered with one blue glaze or glaze of two or three tones: white (mostly for the letters of the inscriptions), turquoise and ultramarine[8].

In other parts of Central Asia, the 14th century gives a picture of the bright flowering of the decoration of this technique. In the pre-Timur era, we find glazed bricks, painted majolica, and relief glazed tiles; mosaics appear only in the Timur era. The main monuments of this architecture were located in Samarkand, the capital of the Timurid Empire [7].

Almost nothing is known about the painting of Central Asia before the Arab conquest. The only monument known to us, apparently, of Buddhist art is a fresco excavated in 1913 on Afrasiab. In one room, during excavations, a fresco was discovered with three figures: a seated young man and two warriors on either side; the central image was framed with birds drawn in it. This fresco, left in the air, died overnight from the curling of the lagging paint layer; on the day of its opening, a watercolour copy was made of it, which is currently stored in the Hermitage [1].



Figure 7. Fresco found in Afrosiab.

Timurid architecture was the starting point for the formation of the architecture of three newly formed states in the 16th-18th centuries in Central Asia, India and Iran, in which several common development trends were observed. Developing trade and diplomatic ties and the exchange of craftsmen played a significant role in this. Thus, in the middle of the 17th century, the interiors of the Abdulaziz Khan madrasah in Bukhara were decorated with murals with landscapes of Indian architecture, and two stone carvers from Bukhara and one specialist in the construction of the dome top from Samarkand took part in the construction of the famous Taj Mahal mausoleum in Agra. Lancet niches up to 9 meters high are not uncommon in the interior. Carpets, felts and weapons were hung on the walls. The windows were decorated with stained glass with coloured glass and openwork panjar grilles. For artificial lighting, candles in bronze wall sconces and golden ceiling chandeliers were used. The ornament is varied. Calligraphic is represented by Kufic script. Geometric - weights, medallions, spirals, rhombuses and hexagons. Floral ornament - intertwining stems and flowers [1]. The predominant colour is "turquoise-blue", and the ornament is "blue-gold". The Timurid poet Alisher Navoi distinguishes the colours *kuk* (sky blue) and *nil* (blue, indigo). The design also includes green, red (cinnabar), yellow (ochre),

black and white (ganch). Surfaces free of tiles can be covered with alabaster. Among other types of architectural decoration, wall paintings are of significant interest [1].

Since the 18th century, The use of painting in religious buildings in Central Asia has been significantly reduced and its quality is declining. But painting does not die, and its role in decorating living spaces should be noted. Reproducible Fig. 210 shows a good example of a painting from the first years of the 20th century, carried out by the best Uzbek craftsmen of that time in a house now occupied by a training and production plant in Tashkent. Here, at the plant, masters of this type of folk art of Uzbekistan are experimenting with the reconstruction of painting and its application in modern conditions and sharing their experience with young people [9].

Conclusions

The history of architecture is the greatest heritage of mankind, which has reached our days through centuries and millennia. The architectural structures of ancient cultures amaze the imagination with their technological effectiveness and originality of styles. From those times when rock paintings depicted important moments in the life of primitive man, to the present day, people have striven not only to decorate but also to make their habitats as durable and significant as possible. We know

about many ancient cultures, including Central Asia, only thanks to their architectural structures, built from various types of stone, which were able, at least partially, to survive to this day.

Studying the history of the appearance of architectural ornaments, I decided that ornaments are an integral part of every architectural object. Ornaments are the element that shapes folk cultures; for this reason, in many countries of Central Asia, architectural ornament is included in the culture of folk heritage. To know our present, we need to start studying history. It is in history that the very foundation of science and all of humanity is hidden.

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