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Археология / Archaeology / Археология

Таймагамбетов Ж.К., Анойкин А.А., Бочарова Е.Н., Павленок Г.Д., Курбанов Р.Н., Дуванбеков Р.С.
Шығыс Қазақстандағы мезолиттік Қарасай тұрағы

Taimagambetov Zh.K., Anoikin A.A., Bocharova E.N., Pavlenok G.D., Kurbanov R.N., Duvanbekov R.S.
About the Karasai mesolithic site in East Kazakhstan

Таймагамбетов Ж.К., Анойкин А.А., Бочарова Е.Н., Павленок Г.Д., Курбанов Р.Н., Дуванбеков Р.С.
О мезолитической стоянке Карасай в Восточном Казахстане.....7

Артықбаев Ж.О., Макеев М.С., Құттыбай М.М. Ежелгі Ботай тұрғын үйі қазақ шошаласы: түрлері, қызметі, генезисі және қазіргі жағдайы

Artykbayev Zh.O., Makeev M.S., Kutybay M.M. Ancient Botai dwelling is Kazakh shoshala: types, function, genesis and current state

Артықбаев Ж.О., Макеев М.С., Құттыбай М.М. Жилище древних ботайцев - казахская шошала: виды, деятельность, генезис и современное состояние.....17

Атдаев С.Д., Маммедова Б.Ж. Түркмендердің динг мұнаралары (XIX ғасыр материалдары негізінде)

Atdaev S. J., Mammedova B. J. Towers-dings of the Turkmen (based on materials of the 19th century)

Атдаев С.Дж., Маммедова Б.Дж. Башни-динги у туркмен (по материалам XIX в.).....33

Кошман Т.В., Егінбай Ә.Е. XX ғасырдың 20-жылдарындағы Ақмола музейінің палеонтологиялық жинағын құру тәжірибесі

Koshman T.V., Yeginbay A.E. Experience of creation of the paleontological collection of the Akmola museum in the 20s of the XX century

Кошман Т.В., Егінбай А.Е. Опыт создания палеонтологической коллекции Ақмолинского музея в 20-е гг. XX в.....46

Құрманиязов Ы.С., Шарапова Қ.Ә., Альсейтова С.Ж. Арал маңы Қарақұмындағы жаңа зерттеулер

Kurmaniyazov Y.S., Sharapova K.A., Alseitova S.Zh. New studies of the Aral sea Karakum

Құрманиязов Ы.С., Шарапова Қ.Ә., Альсейтова С.Ж. Новые исследования приаральских Каракумов.....58

Султанова А.К. Түркілердің заманауи өнеріндегі материалдық және рухани мәдениеті (Қазақстан Ұлттық музейінің бейнелеу өнері экспозициясы негізінде)

Sultanova A.K. Material and spiritual culture of Turks in the modern art (based on art exposition in National museum of Kazakhstan)

Султанова А.К. Материальная и духовная культура тюрок в современном искусстве (на основе экспозиции изобразительного искусства Национального музея Казахстана).....74

Шораев Б.К., Оспанова А.К. Ұлы Жібек жолы бойындағы Қазақстандағы ортағасырлық қалалардың сауда саттықтағы рөлі

Shorayev B.K., Ospanova A.K. The role of medieval cities in Kazakhstan in the Great Silk Road

Шораев Б.К., Оспанова А.К. Роль средневековых городов Казахстана в торговле на Великом Шелковом пути.....90

Молдахмет А.А. Сырдария өзенінің төменгі ағысы бойындағы Алтын орда дәуіріндегі қалалардың зерттелу тарихы

Moldakhmet A.A. The history of the study of the cities of the Golden Horde era in the lower reaches of the Syr Darya

Молдахмет А.А. История изучения городов эпохи Золотой Орды в низовьях Сырдарьи.....105

Философия / Philosophy / Философия

Кузембаева С.Е. Ою-өрнек өнерінің философиялық танымы

Kuzembayeva S.E. Philosophical knowledge of ornamental art

Кузембаева С.Е. Философское познание орнаментального искусства.....118

Бақдәулет Ж.Ж., Кузембаева С.Е. Кілемдегі ою-өрнектердің философиялық белгілері мен идеялық мәні

Bakdaulet Zh.Zh., Kuzembayeva S.E. Philosophical knowledge of ornamental art

Бақдаулет Ж.Ж., Кузембаева С.Е. Философские знаки и идейное значение ковровых узоров.....129

Қазақстан музейлері / Museums of Kazakhstan/ Музеи Казахстана

Алманқұлова Ж.А. Отандық тарихымыздың құнды жәдігерлері сақталған – Жамбыл облыстық тарихи-өлкетану музейі

Almankulova Zh.A. Zhambyl regional museum of local lore is a place of priceless exhibits of national history

Алманқұлова Ж.А. Жамбылский областной историко-краеведческий музей – хранилище ценных памятников нашей национальной истории.....139

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MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL CULTURE OF TURKS IN THE MODERN ART (based on art exposition in National museum of Kazakhstan)

Abstract. The article analyzes the role of objects of the material and spiritual heritage of the Turks in the translation of the historical past through the use of their images on the “canvas” by modern artists and sculptors of Kazakhstan. With the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of the 20th century, in Kazakhstan, as in other post-Soviet states, the process of returning to national roots began in science and art. This “stream of history” has also embraced contemporary art.

The article presents the works of Kazakhstani artists from the museum collection of the National Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which are in the permanent exhibition of the Hall of Fine Arts. One of the main objects in the works of the artists were stone sculptures of the Turks, which are widely spread in the steppe space and represent the spiritual and material heritage of the Turkic Khaganate. An equally important place in the Kazakh fine arts (sculpture and painting) is occupied by the image of the legendary Korkyt ata and the goddess Umai.

The research used methods of artistic analysis and comparison, which is based on an interdisciplinary approach of study combining various sciences – archaeology, history, philosophy and art history.

Keywords: Turks, Korkyt ata, fine art, stone sculptures, painting, runic inscription, modern art.

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Introduction

After the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of the 20th century, in Kazakhstan, as in other post-Soviet states, the process of returning to national roots began in various fields of science and art. The process of decolonization of thinking began to be outlined in society. Various programs and strategies have been adopted at the State level aimed at searching, collecting, studying, preserving and popularizing historical and cultural heritage (Kulturnoe nasledie, 2004; Kulturnoe nasledie, 2007; Narod v potoke istorii, 2013; Rukhani Zhangyru, 2017).

The change in the trajectory of the development of an independent state has affected all spheres, including science and modern art. The gradual transition to the plots of historical events of Kazakhstan, the images of national heroes began in the 60s of the XXth century and continued with the process of gaining independence of the country. As noted by contemporary art historians, one of the forms of expression of modern art was the model of “neo-mythologism”, which was based on the “eternal return of the similar” and was understood by modern artists as a free manipulation of a stable system of leitmotifs. The departure from the Soviet past, which was equivalent to the history of modernity, led the artists of the Central Asian countries to rehabilitate the pre-modern traditional culture (Arheologiya aktualnosti, 2011: 21).

Along with portraits of historical figures, the most important events in the history of the country, an important place in the historical genre of Kazakh fine art is occupied by objects of material and spiritual culture, which include stone sculptures, written sources of the Turkic period, as well as images of Korkyt-ata and the goddess Umai.

The objects of material culture in painting are presented as an integral part of a holistic, complexly organized picture of the world of the Kazakh people, a descendant of ancient nomads. The above-mentioned model of “neo-mythologism” is presented in more detail and vividly in plastic art. The purpose of this study is to analyze works of fine art that broadcast material objects and the spiritual heritage of the Turks, the influence of archaeological research on the formation of the historical genre in painting and sculpture in Kazakhstan.

Materials and methods of research

The object of the study are paintings by contemporary artists and sculptors of Kazakhstan, presented in the hall of Fine Arts and sculpture exhibition, located on the second floor of the National Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Among them are works by Kazakhstani artists B. Zaurbekova, S. Ilyaev, Zh. Kayrambaev, D. Kasteev, G. Telgozieva, A. Chunchalinov and sculptors B. Abishev and K. Satybaldin. This historical period is not represented in the chart.

The research used methods of artistic analysis and comparison, which is based on an interdisciplinary approach of study combining various sciences – archaeology, history, philosophy and art history.

The degree of study

The formation of the historical genre in the visual arts of Kazakhstan, the causes of the emergence and the main parameters of the historical genre were described in the article by art historian A. Jadaibayev (Jadaibayev, 2016). An attempt was also made to highlight the main directions in the evolution of the historical picture. According to the researcher, there are three directions of the historical genre in the visual arts of Kazakhstan:

1. Works in which artists follow the traditions of classical European, Russian and Soviet painting of the 19th and 20th centuries;

2. Ethno-romanticism, characterized by a mythopoeic approach to solving a historical plot;

3. Works where historical themes are expressed in semi-abstract forms, irrational approaches to the interpretation of specific events and phenomena (Jadaibayev, 2016: 56).

The process of formation of modern art in Kazakhstan is also represented in the works of E. Reznikova, Kh. Truspekova (Reznikova, 2019; Truspekova, 2016).

The study of the material objects and images of the Turkic era is also expressed in the works of some art historians, in particular, the images of Umai and Kultegin. The article by M. Mukanov, B. Turgynbai and A. Nurbekova analyzed the importance and significance of the image of the goddess Umai in the visual arts and a brief overview of the works of some artists of Kazakhstan. According to the researchers, the embodiment of symbols and artistic images of the ancient Turkic Tengrian culture by modern artists of Kazakhstan in the visual arts reflects the desire to preserve and rethink national identity in the context of globalization processes (Mukanov, Turgynbai, Nurbekova, 2020: 63). G. Zhubanova's work also notes the process of translating the image of the goddess Umai in the works of sculptor Bakhytzhan Abishev, which is exhibited in the National Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Zhubanova, 2020).

The spiritual culture of the Turkic period is also represented in the work of E. Reznikova, who describes the process of transformation of the image of a shaman as one of the constituent motifs of the worldview of the ancient Turks (Reznikova,

2023).

In Western historiography, the modern interpretation of the archaeological cultural heritage, including the Turks, is considered not only by art historians, but also by archaeologists and historians. The book "Visual Culture, Heritage and Identity: using Rock Art to reconnect past and present" carefully reveals the reasons, ways of transmission of ancient art through the restoration of archaeological finds and their impact on modern art (Rozwadowski, Hampson, 2021).

Analysis

The process of colonization of the Russian Empire in the 18th and 19th centuries, the creation of the Soviet state in the 20th century led to the destruction of the traditional nomadic way of life, which led to a change in the social, political, economic structure of society, as well as the culture and religion of the Kazakh people. In search of identity, returning to their own national roots, modern artists turned to the historical genre, which occupies a special and dominant place in the visual arts of Kazakhstan.

The self-identification of modern artists mainly takes place through four main historical periods: the Early Iron Age, the Turkic era, the flourishing period of the Great Silk Road and the period of the Kazakh Khanate. By presenting objects and images related to these periods, the artists focus on the continuity of cultures. Recreating the image of the past, modern artists are trying to rethink their own cultural identity, to find sources of inspiration. Material traces of the past, such as aforementioned prehistoric stone stelae and various forms of ancient art, including rock art, started to play an important role in their search for a foundation in reference to which they could construct their cultural

identity in the new sociohistorical situation (Rozwadowski, Hampson, 2021:52).

Stone sculptures of the Turkic period are one of the important objects, combining the material and spiritual culture of the Turks. The originality of the culture and art of the ancient Turks of Kazakhstan is due to the extensive steppe landscape, the cattle breeding system of the producing economy, the nomadic way of life, which determined the structure of society, the spiritual sphere and the forms of ideology. The ancient Turkic art culture is represented by a concrete material world, traditions and norms based on a syncretic conscience associated with myth-making. In the culture of the Turks, it is important to note Tengrianism, language and writing, folklore monuments and works of art

(Eleukenova,1999:17).

Research shows a deep connection of ancient Turkic monumental sculpture with cosmogonic representations and with the cult of the ancestors of medieval nomads of Central and Central Asia. The cosmogonic system served as the basis for the formation of not only religious buildings, but also sculptures, in a clear vertical composition in which the idea of communion of the soul of the deceased to heaven through a certain axis is enclosed (Eleukenova,1999: 21-22).

Stone statues are not only objects of the cosmogonic system of the Turks, but also objects of special worship and veneration. They were built next to the graves of ancestors, which were places of collective memorial rites, which is a clear demonstration of the unity of the tribal

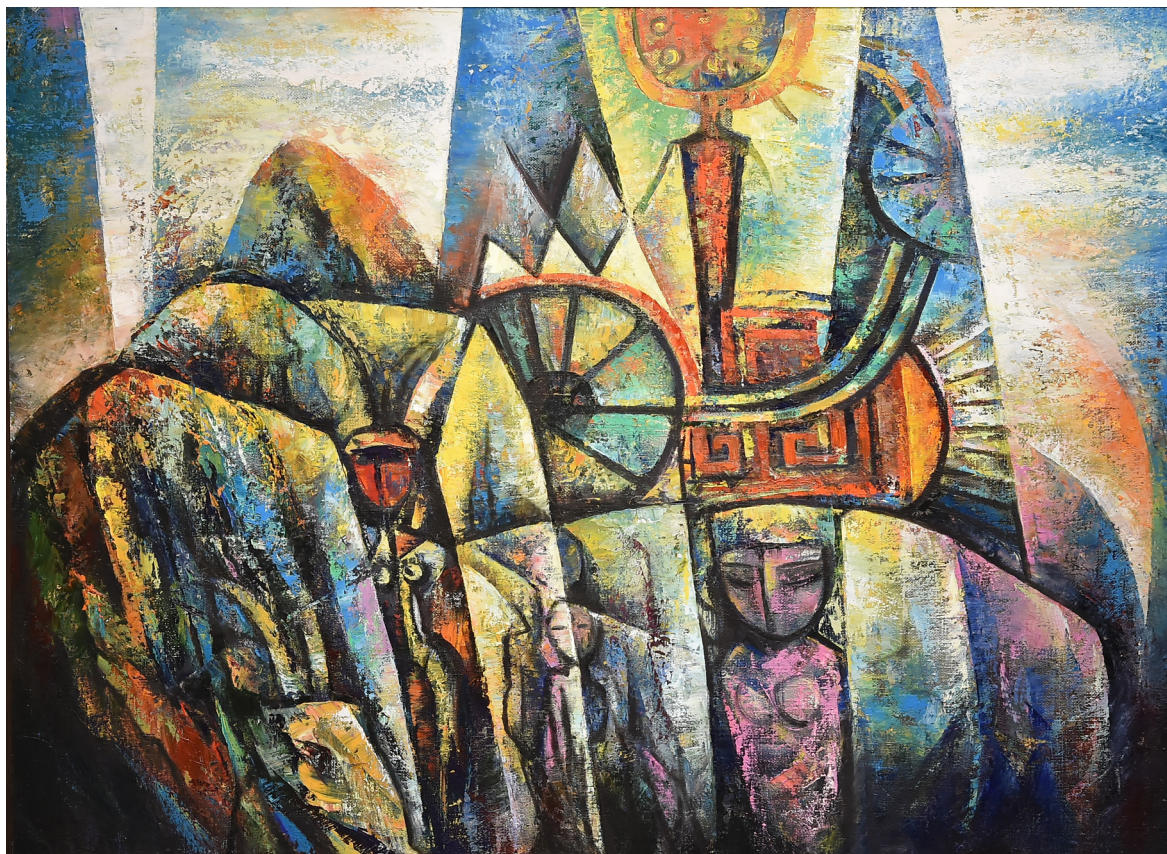


Fig. 1. Batima Zaurbekova "Sounds of centuries". 1998

organization of the ancient Turks.

In fine art, taking into account all the functions and features of the monumental sculpture of the Turks, stone statues represent to the viewer the flow of time, the inevitability of the end, but at the same time, the beginning of a new one. Therefore, the images of stone statues are not the central object, but form a mosaic of the historical process that takes place continuously. It is important to note the space in which the stone sculptures are located: climatic and natural conditions in the space of the Eurasian steppes have formed a traditional nomadic culture. Unlike Eurocentrism, in which nomadic culture was considered barbaric, modern artists, based on archaeological finds, confirm the originality of the formation of

a nomadic civilization.

As in the work of Zhumakyn Kayrambayev, the painting by Batima Zaurbekova "Sounds of centuries" depicts a female stone statue. As art historians note, "the work of Batima Zaurbekova is deeply national and at the same time, very modern. She is one of the Kazakhstani artists who tries to look deep into history and discover ancient ethnic symbols in a new way." (Ayazbekova, Nurfeizova, 2013:21). In the work of Batima Zaurbekova, the image of a woman is fundamental. For the author, the national ideal of female beauty is external attractiveness, kindness, modesty and chastity. But in the work "Sounds of centuries", the artist was able to professionally combine two areas of her activity, depicting a female stone statue



Fig. 2. Zhumakyn Kayrambaev "Time"

as a symbol of the feminine and national identity.

The semantics of female statues presents many difficulties in determining their purpose. It is known that since ancient times all female sculptures have been associated with the cult of the mother. Of particular interest is the semantic meaning of three-horned headdresses, about which there are also a number of hypotheses. It is noted that such headdresses with three triangles existed not only in the Turkic period, but also much earlier - in the Eneolithic era in the space of settlement of Siberian and Central Asian peoples (Rozenfeldt, 1974).

Some researchers believe that this headdress is an attribute of shamanic attire: "Shamanic images of humanoid creatures with three-horned heads are widely represented in the fine arts of the Fino-Ugric peoples of Western Siberia and the Caspian region" (Rozenfeldt, 1974). Several stone sculptures with a "three-horned" tiara have been discovered in the south of Kazakhstan. S.M. Akhinzhanov

believed that they are associated with the arrival of Kimak-Kipchak tribes in Zhetysay in the 10th-11th centuries. He also shared the opinion of previous researchers about the shamanic character of the "three-horned" tiaras. In his opinion, the statues could carry a double semantic load: the veneration of the cult of the ancestor in the female line and the image of shamans worshipped by the tribes of the Kimako-Kipchak tribe (Akhinzhanov, 1978).

One of the striking monuments depicting a woman with a three-horned headdress is the Kudyrge plot. According to researcher L. Kyzlasov, the goddess Umai is depicted on a stone boulder. In his opinion, this is one of the first monuments to convey images of ancient Turkic deities as they were presented to the ancient Altai Turks. The main central figure of the whole scene is a seated woman in rich, ornamented clothes, with earrings in her ears and a three-horned tiara on her head. The three-horned headdress is not a symbol of the exceptional nobility and privileged position of this woman, but of

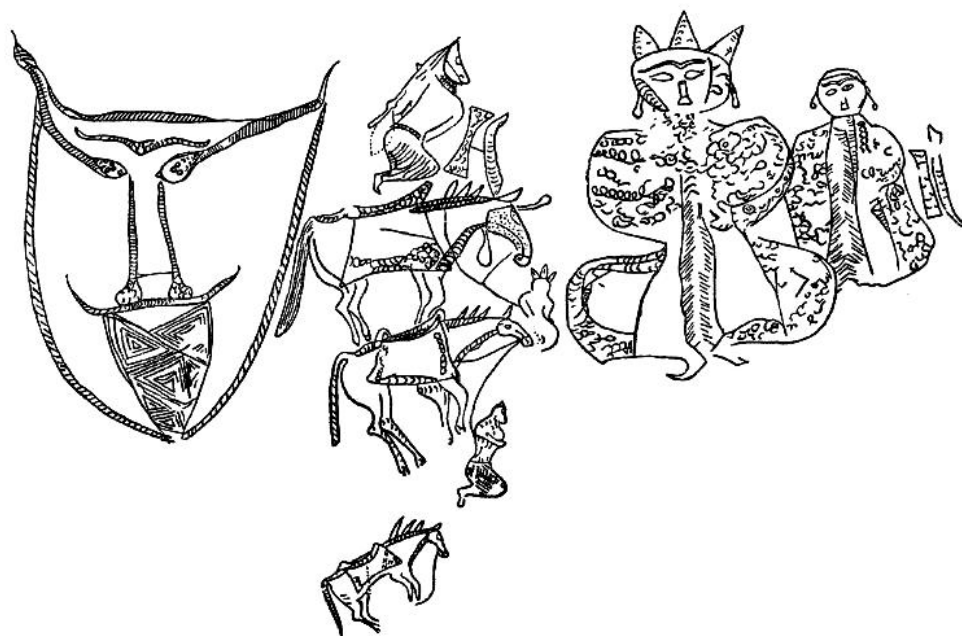


Fig. 3. A drawing placed on a boulder from the burial in Kudyrge. (Kyzlasov, 1949:48)

her divinity. Umai is a female deity revered by shamanists, the patroness of children and fertility (Kyzlasov, 1949: 52).

Therefore, the Kazakh sculptor Bakhytzhan Abishev depicts the goddess Umai with a three-horned tiara on her head. This sculpture is also in the National Museum. The interest of the creative cohort of the Kazakh society in the archaic-mythological past did not arise immediately. Since the time of the Khrushchev thaw, the sphere of interests of Soviet society, including scientists, has significantly expanded. Many historians, archaeologists and ethnographers purposefully studied the culture and way of life of the nomads of the ancient world, in particular, Tengriism, which was the basis of the national identity and worldview of the Kazakh people before the period of its Islamization (Mukanov, Turgynbai, Nurbekova, 2020:57).



Fig. 4. Bakhytzhan Abishev "Umai". 2000

A special place in the series of paintings depicting the material culture of the Turks is occupied by the work of Sultan Ilyayev. Unlike the works of B. Zaurbekova and Zh. Kayrambaev stone statue occupies a central place in the artist's painting, although it is also one of the stages of the historical process. Considering the work of Sultan Ilyayev, it is worth noting the individual style through which he discovered new ways of self-expression, creating works of an allegorical plan. As noted by the art historian K. Mukazhanova, "these are not elementary formulas with a pre-understandable answer, but some complex or simple semantic systems, with their own internal inconsistency or even "uncertainty" of meaning, which is provided by the artist himself and also has a meaningful character" (Sultan Ilyayev, 2013:4). The components of Kazakh decorative and applied art with ethnocultural characteristics are constantly traced in his works, serving as markers of national culture.

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Ilyayev, 2013:4). The components of Kazakh decorative and applied art with ethnocultural characteristics are constantly traced in his works, serving as markers of national culture.

Sultan Ilyayev in the work "Heritage" demonstrates a stone statue as a central object, next to which there is a small image of a turtle. Probably, this image is a reference to the written stelae, in particular, to the Terkhin inscription, located on a pedestal in the form of a turtle. The image of a turtle is also present in Dauren Kasteev's painting "Little Emperor". The connection of this work with the Turkic written monuments is confirmed by the images of the tamga of some runic signs of the Turks.

The Terkhin inscription in honor of Il Etmish Kagan, a copy of which is also on display in the National Museum of the

Republic of Kazakhstan, is an important source of research on the state system of power of the ancient Turks. The remains of this monument were first discovered by the Mongolian archaeologist Ts. Dorzhsuren in 1957, and later were investigated by S.G. Klyashtorny, N. Sir-Ordzhav, V. Volkov in 1960-1970. (Pismennaya civilizaciya, 2023: 155-157).

The monument was discovered in the Doloon Mod area in the Archangei region of Mongolia. The stele is partially stored in the warehouse of the laboratory of the Institute of Archaeology of Mongolia. The stele was made of light gray granite. There are 30 lines of inscription carved on the four sides. The turtle pedestal was made of gray granite. There is a hole on the turtle's back. There is a tamga (sign) and 1 line of inscription carved on the right back of the



Fig. 5. Sultan Ilyayev "Heritage". 2021



Fig. 6. Dauren Kasteev "Little emperor". 2015

turtle (Klyashtorny, 1980:82).

The turtle is important in archaic ideas about the universe. Turtles, like frogs and snakes, had a special vitality in the mythology of different countries: it was believed that these animals were extremely long-lived and almost possessed the secret of eternity (Evsyukov, 1988: 65). In addition, in the legends of some Turkic-speaking peoples, the turtle is the mainstay of the universe. For example, the Tuvans have a myth about the master of the lower world, which is a predatory, lazy, sedentary beast on four paws – Melkhi, which lived in the center of the underground ocean surrounded by fish and marine animals. According to legend, it possessed gigantic strength and held the Earth on its back. There is no doubt that this beast is a giant turtle, since in the languages of the Mongolian group “melkhi” means “turtle” (Evsyukov, 1988: 67).

Dauren Kasteev has a lot of works in the historical genre, so among his paintings there is a work dedicated to the Turkic period. In this work, the image of the emperor is shown as a child sleeping peacefully on the back of a turtle. This shows the special role of the ruler in the Turkic system of power. This is confirmed by the inscription itself, calling Il Etmish khagan “born by the Sky”, confirming the holiness of the kagan in the Turkic society.

Ancient Turkic written monuments are the heritage of the Turkic-speaking peoples who belong to the early Middle Ages (7th-8th centuries) (Zholdasbekov, Dosymbaeva, 2013:23). They have been studied for a long time by scientists from the West and the East – archaeologists, historians, ethnographers, Turkologists, linguists.

The painting by Gulmira Telgozieva shows the second stanza from the written stele of Kul Tigin. The monument to Kul

Tigin was opened in 1889 in the Koshoo Tsaidam tract on the banks of the Komnin-Orkhon river in Mongolia. In 1890-1891, the written monuments were explored by a Finnish expedition led by archaeologist A. Geikel, and in 1891 by the expedition of the Russian Turkologist Vasily Radlov (Thomsen, 2011:5). The deciphering of the text of the stele of Kul Tigin by V. Thomsen opened the possibility of entering into the circle of the most important sources of the history of Central Asia a large number of original texts of the most diverse content. In 1894, V. Radlov presented to the scientific world the first translation of a written monument (Tekin, 2014: 2).

Kul Tigin was a political and military figure of the Second Turkic Khaganate, co-ruler of Bilge Kagan, son of Kutlug-Elterish



Fig. 7. Stele of El Etmish Bilge Kagan, 8th c

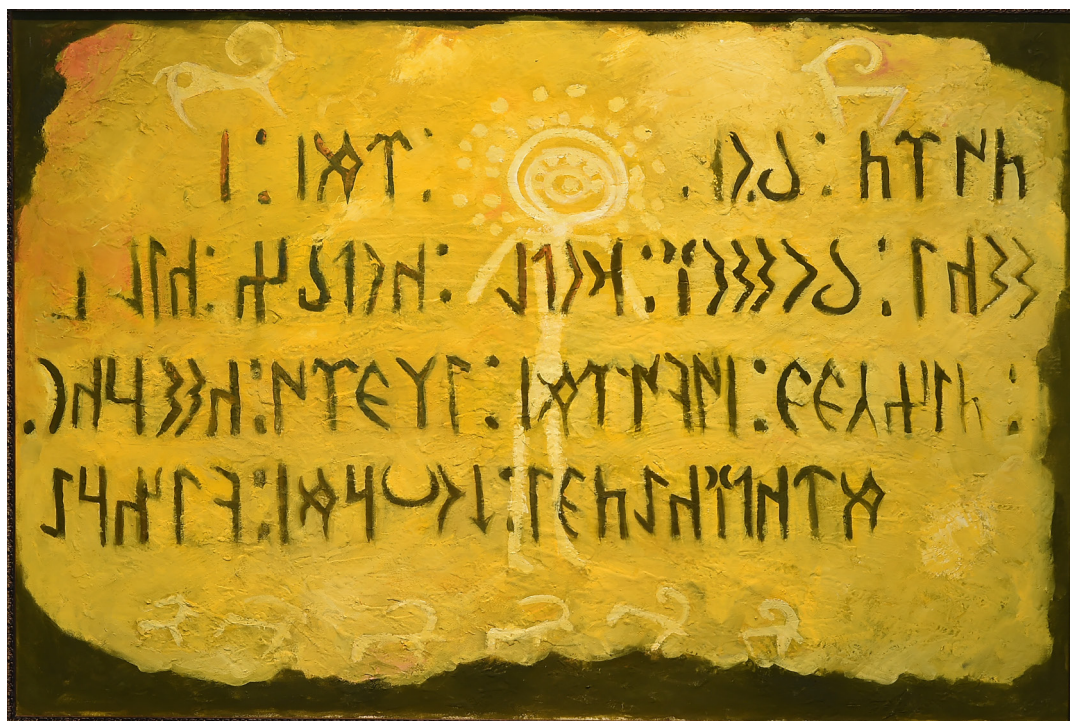


Fig. 8. Gulmira Telgozieva "In the stream of history". 2007

Khagan. He became famous as a heroic warrior and participant in many military campaigns, who ensured the hegemony of the Turks in Central Asia (Zholdasbekov, Sartkozhauly, 2006: 117-120). The heritage of the Turkic runic script of the 8th century consists of 76 stanzas written in the ancient Turkic alphabet and 14 stanzas in Chinese, and contains valuable historical information and rich linguistic material.

The second stanza of Kul Tigin's inscription was deciphered by scientists as follows: "From all four sides there were enemies. They sent there lance-bearing armies to conquer all those people in the four quarters of the world and made them still. They made bow those, who had heads and made kneel those, who had knees. To eastwards up to the Kadyrkhan mountain forests and westwards as far as the Iron Gate they went on campaign" (TURK BITIG, electronic resource). It is possible that this stanza was chosen by the artist

not by chance: the geopolitical location of Kazakhstan in the formation of its own state was dangerous, but these words express hope for the future of the country. It is also worth noting some inaccuracies in the image of the runic inscription – the words in the lines are mixed up, some words are only half written.

In the central part of this painting there is an image of a sun-headed deity from the Tamgaly valley, overlapping part of the Kul Tigin inscription, as well as symbols of mountain goats, which repeat the image of this animal on a written stele of the 8th century. This once again demonstrates the desire of modern artists to show the continuity of different cultures that were located on the territory of Kazakhstan in different eras.

A number of images of the Turkic era, inspiring artists of Kazakhstan, are completed by the legendary hero Korkyt ata. The museum fund of the National

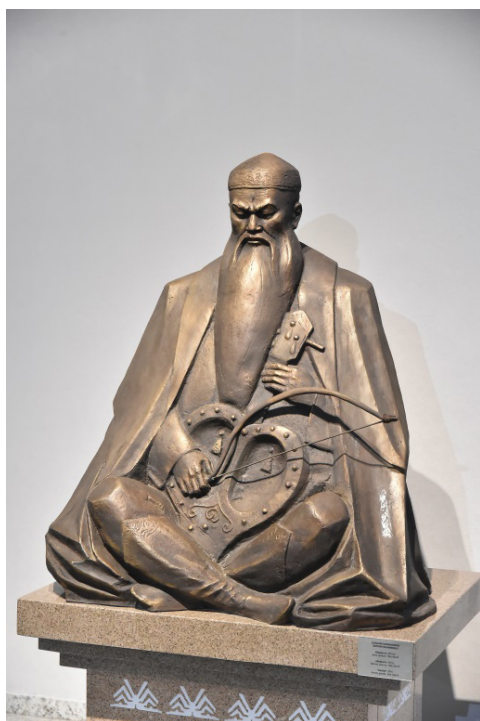


Fig. 9. Kazbek Satybaldin "Korkyt ata". 2016

Museum has 10 paintings depicting Korkyt ata or symbols representing him. The exhibition features works by artist Abai Chunchalinov and sculptor Kazbek Satybaldin.

The image of Korkyt, famous throughout the Turkic space of myths and legends, is well known as a saint, mentor of all baksy (shamans), masterly kuishi (performer of musical compositions on kobyzy or dombra), as a man who sought eternal life (Aymukhambet, 2016: 60). In the works of art, Korkyt appears in the image of a white-bearded old man with a kobyzy in his hands. In the work of Abay Chunchalinov, Korkyt appears in the image of an old man with a white beard in the steppe space with flying swans in the background. Emphasized sharp shapes, deep colors convey the intensity of the playing music, similar to the cries of flying birds. Sculptor Kazbek Satybaldin depicted the legendary hero in proud calmness, expressed by the static of



Fig. 10. Abay Chunchalinov "Korkyt ata". 2013

his face and hands. Despite the differences in the materials used and the methods of demonstration, the image of Korkyt ata in the two works is very similar. Painting, unlike sculpture, has more possibilities in depicting the emotional state of an object. Sculpture is limited by the difficulty of application, the ways of expressing the surrounding space.

Results

Political and social changes after the collapse of the Soviet Union influenced the final formation of the historical genre in the visual culture of Kazakhstan, which dates back to the second half of the XXth century. In search of visual markers for self-identification in globalization, the artists turned to archaeological finds, ethnographic and linguistic research, demonstrating the continuity of different cultures with the help of various symbols.

During the study, 8 works of

Kazakhstani artists were identified, depicting the material and cultural heritage of the Turks in their works. The exposition of the National Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan lacks the abstract vision of the artists of the Turkic era; paintings broadcasting the cultural heritage of the Turkic period are represented in landscape, symbolic painting and portrait.

Depending on our own styles, we can observe common features of the works of Batima Zaurbekova, Zhumakyn Kayrambaev and Sultan Ilyaev. The central object of these paintings is stone sculptures. Not only the objects represent the main motives of the artists, but also the names of these works – “Sounds of Centuries”, “Time”, “Heritage”, expressing stone sculptures as witnesses of historical phenomena and events.

The artist Gulmira Telgozieva also turned to the archaeological monument to express the originality of her work – to the stanzas of the written stele of Kul Tigin and the rock carvings of the stele itself and the Tamgaly valley.

The works of Abay Chunchalinov, Kazbek Satybaldin, Bakhytzhan Abishev and Dauren Kasteev are based on literary and linguistic research, depicting

mythological heroes, thereby expressing the spiritual heritage of the Turks.

Conclusion

Archaeological finds on the territory of Kazakhstan, linguistic, literary and philosophical research have become a visual reference point for contemporary artists of Kazakhstan, who sought inspiration not only in the surrounding objects, historical events and phenomena, which they witnessed themselves. The interconnection of scientific research actively conducted after independence, changes in methodological approaches to the study of these finds are reflected in the visual arts of modern Kazakhstan.

Ancient monuments of the past have become a way of expressing the self-identification of modern artists for the present, the main objects of continuity of different cultures on the territory of Kazakhstan for present and future viewers. The paintings located in the exhibition halls get acquainted with both archaeological finds and paintings and sculptures depicting these finds as objects not only of self-identification, but also representations of the past and interpretation by modern artists.

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ТҮРКІЛЕРДІҢ ЗАМАНАУИ ӨНЕРІНДЕГІ МАТЕРИАЛДЫҚ ЖӘНЕ РУХАНИ МӘДЕНИЕТІ

(Қазақстан Ұлттық музейінің бейнелеу өнері экспозициясы негізінде)

Аңдатпа. Мақалада Қазақстанның заманауи суретшілері мен мүсіншілерінің «кенептегі майлы бояу» бейнелерін пайдалану арқылы түркілердің материалдық және рухани мұра объектілерінің тарихи рөлі талданған. XX ғасырдың соңында Кеңес Одағының ыдырауымен посткеңестік кеңістіктегі басқа мемлекеттердегі сияқты Қазақстанда да ғылым мен өнердің түрлі салаларында ұлттық құндылықтарға қайта оралу үрдісі басталды. Бұл тарих ағыны заманауи өнерді де қамтыған болатын.

Мақалада Қазақстан Республикасы Ұлттық музейінің Бейнелеу өнері залында тұрақты көрмеге қойылған музей қорындағы қазақ суретшілерінің туындылары ұсынылған. Түрік қағанатының рухани және материалдық мұрасын білдіретін дала кеңістігінде кең таралған

түріктердің тас мүсіндері суретшілердің шығармашылығындағы басты нысандардың бірі болды. Аты аңызға айналған Қорқыт ата мен Ұмай тәңірінің бейнесі қазақ бейнелеу (мүсін және кескіндеме) өнерінде ерекше маңызды орын алады.

Зерттеу барысында археология, тарих, философия және өнертануды біріктіретін пәнаралық зерттеуге негізделген көркемдік талдау және салыстыру әдістері қолданылды.

Кілт сөздері: түкілер, Қорқыт ата, бейнелеу өнері, тас мүсіндер, кескіндеме, руникалық жазбалар, заманауи өнер.

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МАТЕРИАЛЬНАЯ И ДУХОВНАЯ КУЛЬТУРА ТЮРКОВ В СОВРЕМЕННОМ ИСКУССТВЕ

**(на основе экспозиции изобразительного искусства
Национального музея Казахстана)**

Аннотация. В статье анализируется роль предметов материального и духовного наследия тюрок в трансляции исторического прошлого посредством использования их изображений на «холсте» современными художниками и скульпторами Казахстана. С распадом Советского союза в конце XX века в Казахстане, как и в других государствах постсоветского пространства, в разных сферах науки и искусства начался процесс возвращения к национальным корням. Этот «поток истории» охватил также и современное искусство.

В статье представлены работы казахстанских художников из музейной коллекции Национального музея Республики Казахстан, находящиеся в постоянной экспозиции зала Изобразительного искусства. Одними из главных объектов в работах художников стали каменные изваяния тюрок, которые широко распространены в степном пространстве и представляют духовное и материальное наследие Тюркского каганата. Не менее важное место в казахстанском изобразительном искусстве (скульптуре и живописи) занимает образ легендарного Коркыт ата и богини Умай.

В процессе исследования были использованы методы художественного

анализа, сравнения, которые основаны на междисциплинарном подходе изучения, объединяющем различные науки – археология, история, философия и искусствоведение.

Ключевые слова: тюрки, Коркыт ата, изобразительное искусство, каменные изваяния, живопись, рунические надписи, современное искусство.

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