

ARCHITECTURE OF ALMATY IN THE 20TH CENTURY: IN SEARCH OF CULTURAL IDENTITY

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Abstract. *This article outlines the findings of a study focused on uncovering the sources of Almaty's identity, which have evolved over time through various architectural ideas. The Soviet era was particularly influential in shaping the city's architectural development. The study examines the current urban environment, including buildings and structures within Almaty's historical district. The research methodology employs a comprehensive approach, incorporating several methods. These include gathering projects and illustrative materials (such as drawings, photographs, and plans) from archives, scientific publications, and digital resources; conducting field surveys of buildings and elements of the urban environment constructed in Almaty during the 20th century; and performing chronological, compositional, and comparative analyses, along with generalizing the findings. The study revealed that the cultural identity of Almaty's architecture in the 20th century stemmed from a blend of architectural trends prevalent across the Soviet Union, yet adapted to the regional context of Kazakhstan. Within the framework of a socialist economy, Almaty's architecture reinterpreted traditional motifs to establish a link between the built environment and the local cultural heritage. In the 21st century, understanding cultural identity is crucial for crafting a compelling image of a city. It plays a key role in developing strategies for socio-cultural and economic transformation, and can be instrumental in attracting investment and tourism*

Keywords: *architecture of Almaty, regional architecture of Kazakhstan, regional identity, cultural identity*

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XX ҒАСЫРДАҒЫ АЛМАТЫ СӘУЛЕТ ӨНЕРІ: МӘДЕНИ БІРЕГЕЙЛІКТІ ІЗДЕНУ ЖОЛЫНДА

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Аңдатпа. Мақалада әртүрлі сәулеттік идеялар арқылы Алматының уақыт өте келе қалыптасқан бірегейлігінің көздерін анықтауға бағытталған зерттеудің қорытындылары ұсынылған. Қаланың сәулет өнерінің дамуына кеңестік дәуір айтарлықтай ықпал етті. Зерттеу қазіргі қалалық ортаны, сондай-ақ Алматының тарихи ауданындағы ғимараттар мен құрылымдарды қарастырады. Зерттеу әдістемесі кешенді тәсілдерді қамтиды. Бұл әдістерге мұрағаттардан, ғылыми басылымдардан және цифрлық ресурстардан жобалар мен иллюстрациялық материалдарды (мысалы, сызбалар, фотосуреттер және жоспарлар) жинау; 20 ғасырда Алматыда салынған ғимараттар мен қала ортасының элементтеріне далалық зерттеулер жүргізу; сондай-ақ қорытындыларды жалпылау арқылы хронологиялық, композициялық және салыстырмалы талдаулар жасау кіреді. Зерттеу 20 ғасырдағы Алматы сәулетінің мәдени ерекшелігі Кеңес Одағында кең таралған, бірақ Қазақстанның аймақтық контекстіне бейімделген сәулет тенденцияларынан пайда болғанын көрсетті. Социалистік экономика жағдайында Алматының сәулет өнері дәстүрлі мотивтерді қайта интерпретациялап, салынған орта мен жергілікті мәдени мұра арасындағы байланысты орнатуға ұмтылды. 21 ғасырда мәдени бірегейлікті түсіну қаланың тартымды бейнесін қалыптастыру үшін аса маңызды. Бұл фактор әлеуметтік-мәдени және экономикалық қайта құру стратегияларын әзірлеуде негізгі рөл атқарады, сондай-ақ инвестициялар мен туризмді тартуда маңызды рөл ойнайды.

Түйін сөздер: Алматы сәулеті, Қазақстанның аймақтық сәулеті, аймақтық бірегейлік, мәдени бірегейлік.

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АРХИТЕКТУРА АЛМАТЫ XX ВЕКА: В ПОИСКАХ КУЛЬТУРНОЙ ИДЕНТИЧНОСТИ

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Аннотация. В данной статье представлены результаты исследования, посвященного выявлению источников идентичности Алматы, сформировавшихся в разные годы на основе различных архитектурных концепций. Наиболее активным развитием архитектуры города отмечен советский период его истории. Объектами исследования являются сложившаяся городская среда, здания и сооружения исторической части города Алматы. Методология исследования основана на комплексном подходе. В частности, в работе над статьей использовался ряд методов: сбор проектов и иллюстративных материалов (чертежи, фотографии, рисунки), представленных в архивах, научных публикациях и электронных ресурсах; натурное обследование зданий и фрагментов городской среды, возведенных в Алматы в XX веке; хронологический, композиционный и сравнительный анализ и обобщение результатов. Исследование показало, что источником культурной идентичности архитектуры Алматы в XX веке являлся комплекс сочетаний архитектурных течений, характерных для всего Советского Союза, но получивших локальное преломление в региональных условиях Казахстана. Архитектура Алматы в условиях социалистической экономики в определенных пределах интерпретировала традиционные мотивы, устанавливающие связь между архитектурой и культурой народа, проживающего на данной территории. В XXI веке изучение культурной идентичности – важный фактор создания привлекательного облика города, и может быть использовано для развития стратегий социокультурных, экономических преобразований, привлечения инвестиций и туристов.

Ключевые слова: архитектура Алматы, региональная архитектура Казахстана, региональная идентичность, культурная идентичность.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors state that there is no conflict of interest.

АЛҒЫС / ҚАРЖЫЛАНДЫРУ КӨЗІ

Зерттеу Қазақстан Республикасы Ғылым және жоғары білім министрлігі Ғылым комитетінің IRN AP19680138 "Жаһандану жағдайында тәуелсіз Қазақстан сәулетінің тұрақты дамуының факторы ретінде аймақтық бірегейлік" гранттық қаржыландыру шеңберінде жүргізілді.

МҮДДЕЛЕР ҚАҚТЫҒЫСЫ

Авторлар мүдделер қақтығысы жоқ деп мәлімдейді.

БЛАГОДАРНОСТИ / ИСТОЧНИК ФИНАНСИРОВАНИЯ

Исследование проводилось в рамках грантового финансирования Комитета науки Министерства науки и высшего образования Республики Казахстан IRN AP19680138 "Региональная идентичность как фактор устойчивого развития архитектуры независимого Казахстана в условиях глобализации".

КОНФЛИКТ ИНТЕРЕСОВ

Авторы заявляют, что конфликта интересов нет.

1 INTRODUCTION

Architecture as a reflection of the ideas and values of society is an integral part of the cultural identity of any nation. In the twentieth century, in an era of significant changes, architectural solutions became not only a way to reflect technological progress, but also a tool for expressing the values of society. The idea of cultural identity has become a key aspect influencing the formation of urban space and architectural solutions. This was especially evident in the architecture of cities, where traditions and innovative approaches collided and intertwined, creating a unique look and visual heritage.

Kazakhstan holds a special place in the world of architecture due to its rich cultural heritage, which is closely linked to the history and traditions of this country. In the twentieth century, Kazakhstan experienced several significant historical events, including the Soviet period and independence. In recent decades, significant changes have taken place in the country, including in architecture, emphasizing not only its modern development, but also the preservation and respect for national values and traditions.

It is known that cultural identity is formed on values, relevant norms, traditions and is identified with the material heritage of a given society, concentrated in priceless architectural monuments, the study of which will reveal the potential for a methodology for determining identity in architecture (Erikson, 1996).

Almaty, formerly Alma Ata, the capital of Kazakhstan, is the cultural and historical center of the region. The city, inhabited since ancient times, has undergone many transformations throughout its rich history, intensive construction, which gave the settlement its unique appearance. During the twentieth century, the city turned from a modest commercial settlement into a major educational, economic and political center of the country, and became an important symbol of its cultural heritage. The dynamics of the architectural development of this city during the twentieth century are closely linked to historical events, socio-cultural trends, economic transformations and the aspirations of the local population to preserve their unique identity. The article provides a detailed analysis of the architectural objects of the twentieth century of Almaty, demonstrating the directions of the search for the identity of this unique city.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The work devoted to identifying the sources of Almaty's identity is based on valuable and convincing research by Soviet and Kazakh scientists. The results of the analysis and study of the problems of architecture of Kazakhstan and the city of Almaty were highlighted in the works of Kazakhstani researchers of the period of Independence of the country, such as Abilov A.Zh., Abdrassilova G.S., Azimov I.M., Basenov T.K., Glaudinov B.A., Ibraeva K.T., Isabaev GA., Kamalova G.M., Kuspangaliyev B.U., Ordabaev A.B., Tatygulov A.Sh., Tuyakbayeva B.T. and many others.

The subject under consideration is widely represented in the works of archaeologists and historians who explored Almaty in the pre-war and post-war years. In the book "The Past of the Alma-Ata district", A.N. Bernshtam presented the initial stage of the city's history, the issues of its composition and cultural and historical ties, the peculiarities of the sedentary and nomadic population of southern Kazakhstan and Semirechye, including Almaty (Bernshtam, 1948).

Valuable information about the architectural heritage of the city of Almaty, with a step-by-step analysis of the origin and development of the historical core of the settlement, is revealed in the work of Tuyakbaeva B.T. (Tuyakbaeva, 2008). The detailed illustrated book by Kapanov A.K. and Baimagambetov S.K. highlights complete information about the construction and architecture of the city during the Soviet period (Kapanov & Baimagambetov, 2013). Extensive information about the origin of architecture in Kazakhstan since antiquity and its development during the Soviet period is

contained in the works of B.A. Glaudinov, who studied the inclusion of traditional elements of Kazakh architecture in modern projects to maintain cultural ties (Glaudinov, 1974).

The works of E.G. Malinovskaya, aimed at studying and preserving the architectural heritage of the modern national architectural school of Kazakhstan, contain an analysis of the architecture of the 1920s and 1950s and its relationship with national traditions, the rationale for creating their own "national style" (Malinovskaya, 2017).

The works of modern researchers present an extensive overview of the topic of architecture in Almaty and its connection with cultural identity, covering both historical aspects and current challenges and development prospects. The article by Ordabaev A.B. "The history of architecture of the city of Almaty" (Ordabaev, 2018) examines the evolution of the architecture of the city, from ancient times to the present. Special attention is paid to the influence of historical events and cultural traditions on the formation of the architectural appearance of the city and its cultural identity.

The work of G.M. Kamalova examines the problems of preserving historical heritage in the context of the development of modern architecture of the city, analyzes examples of both successful and unsuccessful reconstruction of monuments (Kamalova & Sailauova, 2022). The influence of the architectural image on the cultural identity of the city of Almaty and modern trends in architecture are considered in the article X. Truspekova's "Architecture of Almaty and issues of identity" (Truspekova, 2016), where, based on the analysis of architecture from different historical periods, the author explores the issues of perception by residents of new architectural projects. Today, we can note the active conduct of a number of studies by Kazakhstani scientists on the topic of regional identity (Abdrasilova & Danibekova, 2021, Kozbagarova et al., Baitenov, et al., 2019, Abdrasilova & Murzagaliyeva, 2020, Abdrasilova & Murzagaliyeva 2018).

3 MATERIALS AND METHODS

The materials for the study were books, articles on a given topic, projects and illustrative materials (drawings, photographs, drawings) presented in scientific publications and electronic resources; a full-scale survey of buildings erected in Almaty in the twentieth century. The research methodology is based on an integrated approach used in art history cases.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The favorable natural and climatic conditions of the northern slopes of the Trans-Ili Alatau, where the city of Almaty is located, have led to the existence of semi-settled and settled peoples here since ancient times. The products found during archaeological excavations in large numbers at different times on the territory of the city indicate that since the X-VIII centuries BC, tribes leading a nomadic and semi-sedentary lifestyle lived in this territory (Glaudinov, 1999).

Almaty, formerly known as the settlement of the local Almalyk tribes, was an important trading center on the Great Silk Road connecting China and Europe, and the mixing of cultures is reflected in its unique history.

The period of the XIX-XX centuries. In the middle of the XIX century, after the annexation of the region to tsarist Russia, the fortress city of Verniy was founded in the foothills of Alatau as an outpost of the Russian Empire. Since 1867, Verniy has been the center of the Semirechensk region of the Turkestan General Government of the Russian Empire. One of the key aspects of this period is the predominance of the role of merchants in shaping the architectural appearance of the city. At the same time, the development of the extractive industry at the end of the 19th century led to an increase in the population of Verniy and the expansion of its infrastructure through the construction of public buildings and structures such as schools, gymnasiums, orphanages, etc.

Almaty's strategically advantageous location at the intersection of ancient trade routes linking Central Asia with Russia and China attracted merchants, merchants and entrepreneurs, stimulating economic growth and development of the city. Merchants built luxurious houses, shops and mansions reflecting their wealth and social status. Architectural solutions often combined elements of local

traditions with the predominance of architectural forms typical of Persian, Turkish and Russian architecture, creating their own unique style.

The architects of the XIX century turned to Art Nouveau, eclecticism, Art Nouveau, and the buildings of Verniy-Almaty of this period was distinguished by its majestic palace facades, which were refined by large windows, high ceilings and often encountered wooden cornices, balconies, architraves, carved decor and ornament. Built mainly from local materials - brick or wood, the structures demonstrated the wealth and status of their owners and are still an important source for studying the history of the city and its cultural heritage (Auezov & Chulakova, 2010).

Figure 1 shows the buildings of the late XIX- early XX centuries, reflecting the style of the era. This is an important layer of the historical and cultural heritage of the city, which includes: merchant I. Gabduvaliev's trading house (1911, architect A. Zenkov, now the Kyzyl-tan store); G. Kolpakovsky city Real School (1890, architect P. Gurde, now Kazrestavratsiya); Vernensky Orphanage (1892, architect P. Gurde, now the Museum of Almaty), etc.

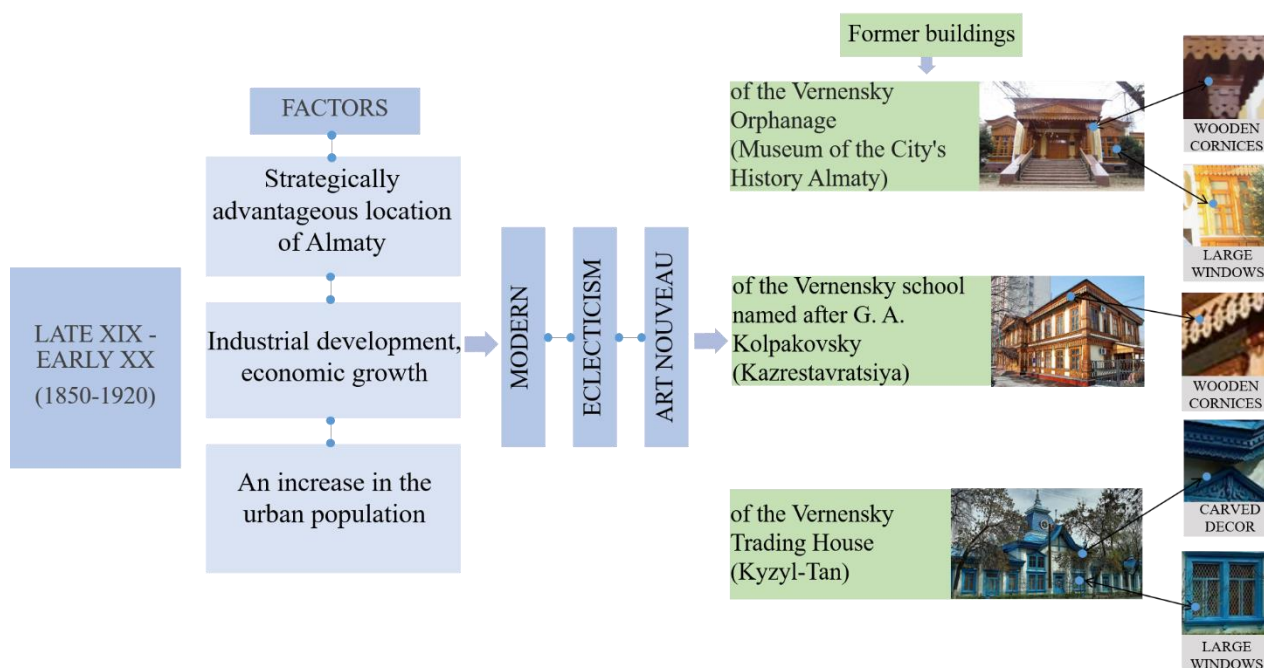


Figure 1 – The formation of originality in the architecture of Verniy – Almaty in the late XIX- early XX centuries (author's material)

This period brought a variety of styles and traditions that shaped the current image of the city. The preservation, study of this integral part of cultural heritage and the challenges associated with the adaptation of architectural monuments to modern needs are important for understanding the past and creating a sustainable future for Almaty.

The period of the beginning of the XX century. With the establishment of Soviet power, a period of intensive industrial and cultural development began in the 1920s, which significantly influenced the appearance of Verniy, which in 1921 was renamed Alma-Ata. In 1929, after Alma-Ata was declared the capital of Kazakhstan, the city became a place of active construction and modernization. The serious status of the city provided architects from various parts of the Soviet Union with a favorable space for their creative realization, which affected the variety of styles and trends in architecture. During this period, numerous facilities were built here, which served as symbols of the power and prosperity of the Soviet state.

In the first decades of the twentieth century, constructivism and modernism prevailed in the architecture of the city, reflecting the desire for modernity and innovation. Significant examples of the manifestation of this synthesis were the buildings shown in Figure 2: the Central Post Office –

now the House of Communications (1931, architect G. Gerasimov), the Government House of KazASSR – now the Academy of Arts named after T. Zhurgenov (1931 Architect M. Ginzburg, with the participation of F. Milinis), the Club of GPU Workers – now the Uyгур the theater (1932, architect V. Burovtsev), built in the style of constructivism. Despite pronounced constructivism, the theme of the "living East" is particularly subtly expressed in the building of the KazASSR Government House: a synthesis of the logic of shaping characteristic of constructivism with the traditions of architecture in Central Asian countries has been achieved - the composition of the image is based on the contrast of the geometry of solid volumes of walls, transparent planes of windows, the presence of deep loggias, an inner courtyard, covered passages connecting separate buildings, etc. (Auezov & Chulakova, 2010, Glaudinov et al., 1987).

Thus, the search for an expressive image personifying the new era of socialism has determined an unconventional approach to incorporating traditional techniques of Central Asian architecture into planning and compositional solutions (Abdrasilova & Murzagalieva 2018).

Since the 1930s, during the reign of "Soviet classicism", simultaneously with the embodiment of the principles of Soviet ideology, architects were tasked with combining modern trends with national culture and traditions. Architectural, planning and imaginative solutions of numerous buildings in Almaty in the 1930s and 1950s were based on traditional techniques or contained elements of national decor. This created a special synthesis between Soviet modernism and national traditions, reflecting the cultural identity of the country in the context of political and social changes.

The result of an intensive search for national identity based on the synthesis of classical European and traditional Central Asian styles can be seen in **Figure 2** - in the architecture of the Kazakh Opera and Ballet Theater named after Abai (1941, architect N. Kruglov, N. Prostakov). The theater building captures an important urban planning node, being its compositional focus. The introduction of national motifs into the overall composition of the building in the form of a redesigned, stylized order and characteristic ornamental elements emphasized the regional affiliation of the theater. This visually connected the building, built according to the canons of classical architecture, with local cultural traditions.

As a result of the study of regional architecture, the period 1930-1950 is seen by scientists from Central Asia and Kazakhstan as: "East plus classics" of the 1930s and 1950s (Askarov, 1988); "Kazakh classics" of the 1940s and 1950s (Abdrasilova, 2015). Through forms and symbols in the architecture of the first half of the twentieth century, the architects expressed their desire to preserve uniqueness and originality, where tradition and innovation merged into a single whole, reflecting the spirit of the times and the cultural heritage of the region.

During the pre-war and post-war decades, there was an active construction of not only unique public buildings, but also industrial facilities. In the 1950s, the development of standard residential building designs was developed, requiring typification and standardization due to the need to introduce large volumes. During this period, projects of single-storey brick houses were developed, the first urban ensembles began to take shape (Kapanov & Baimagambetov, 2013). Architectural and urban planning solutions considered the uniqueness of the location in the conditions of mountain-valley circulation. The system of irrigation ditches supplying the city with water (according to the plan of the first general plan of 1869, Verny was supposed to be supplied with water from the Malaya Almatinka River) in the early 1950s supplemented with cast iron intake columns (Titenev, 2001).

The architecture of Almaty in the middle and late twentieth century reflects a period of intense cultural and economic development in the history of the city. In accordance with the socialist course of society, monumental structures reflecting the ideological principles of the existing state system began to prevail in the architecture of Almaty. However, even in these exemplary Soviet buildings, elements of cultural identity can be found. Architectural symbols embodying the history and culture of the people have already become key elements of the urban landscape, capturing epochs and changes. The appeal of traditional construction techniques, the use of national ornaments and decorative motifs, refer to the object to the cultural heritage of the region, not only as architectural monuments, but also as symbols of cultural identity.

After the Second World War, the intensive development of industry and agriculture in the country led to the migration of the population to cities and the expansion of their borders. The urgent need for infrastructure required the construction of a wide range of public buildings - educational institutions, medical institutions, cultural and administrative facilities, as well as new principles of urban planning with an emphasis on ensemble construction (Glaudinov, 1974, Basenov et al., 1973).

This period from the second half to the end of the twentieth century is characterized as a fruitful stage in the work of architects, considering the cultural, historical and environmental context of the "... new way ..." search for regional identity and national identity (Glaudinov, 1974). At the same time, K. Samoïlov calls this time "... highly technical and far from mechanical reproduction of old forms and techniques ..." (Glaudinov & Samoïlov 1997). Due to the fact that the architecture of famous public buildings in Almaty is characterized by the search for associativity of images and forms, compliance of architectural and planning solutions with the required principles of environmental organization. Kazakh scientist G. Abdrasilova attributes this period to "critical regionalism" (Abdrasilova, 2015).

In the 1950s and 1970s. Alma-Ata, like many other cities of the Soviet Union, underwent an intensive process of modernization, being influenced by social, political and cultural transformations. During this period, architectural solutions not only reflected the principles of socialist aesthetics, but also became symbols of a new cultural identity. Basically, the buildings had the characteristic features of the Stalinist Empire style: monumentality, stylized columns, towers and decor. At the same time, Soviet modernism was actively developing, which was characterized by using modern materials and structures, as well as experiments with forms. The buildings in the Modernist style were more modern and abstract compared to the Stalinist Empire style with simple shapes, convenient for mass production and with moderate decorativeness.

However, to demonstrate that the Soviet government recognized and respected the diversity of cultures of the peoples of the USSR, the architects were given another task – to emphasize the geographical and cultural area, as well as ethnic identity. Thus, in residential buildings (depending on local characteristics), the planning solution could be adapted to the climatic conditions of the region, and in public buildings the influence of the Kazakh tradition was manifested in the details of the decor, in the use of traditional materials and forms.

One of the iconic public buildings of this period is the former building of the Government House of the Kazakh SSR (1957, architect B. Rubanenko, T. Simonov, P. Mamontov, G. Kalish), which plays an important city-forming role and reflects the Soviet style of that time with its architecture. At the beginning of the XXI century, the administrative purpose of the building of the former Government House of the Kazakh SSR was replaced by the function of scientific and educational (now the Kazakh-British Technical University is in the building).

The composition of the main facade of the classical administrative building, corresponding to its purpose, uses a synthesis of the traditional ornament "qoshkar muyiz" in the form of a ram's horn, stylized under the order system. The metrorhythmic composition from the series "qoshkar muyiz" has become the dominant motif in the culture of the steppe peoples, recalling the famous "meander", widespread since the Paleolithic period, including the ancient Greek civilization.

However, the "qoshkar muyiz" ornament is an independent basis of Kazakh culture, conditioned since ancient times by nomadic and semi-nomadic cattle breeding, the conquest of the vast steppe expanses. The way of life and beliefs have left their mark on the nature of the visualization of the Kazakh worldview. Thus, animal products made life easier for him in harsh conditions such as food (meat, milk), clothing and shelter (hide, wool). In this regard, animals, mainly sheep, were equated with deities and depicted with exaggeratedly large horns, which gradually became fundamental in traditional visual art.

Striking examples of the architecture of educational institutions, due to the mixture of classical and national styles, are the central parts of the main buildings of the building of the Women's Pedagogical University (1939, architect V. Bychkov) and the Agrarian University (1954, V. Biryukov) in Almaty. The porticos of the main entrances of the university buildings are built in classic stylistic characteristics and national decor is used: in the piers of the facades of the agrarian university

there are multi-faceted paired and single semi-columns with ornamented capitals and developed bases. The arches of the "oriental type" have a complexly ornamented archivolt. The developed cornice has two tiers of curly brackets. **Figure 2** shows the facade of the main portal of the Women's Pedagogical University with eastern pointed arches also contains the traditional ornament "qoshkar muyiz".

An important aspect of the architecture of Almaty in the 1950s and 1970s was the further development of the urban environment. New buildings and districts changed the appearance of the city, as well as interacting with existing buildings, creating a unique cultural landscape. This process has also facilitated dialogue between different cultures and traditions, forming a rich and multi-layered cultural heritage of the city. Many buildings erected during this period have become symbols of progress and innovation. New residential complexes, public and cultural centers, as well as industrial facilities reflected the country's desire for economic and cultural development. These buildings not only provided residents with comfort and convenience, but also served as a kind of monument of the era.

In this period, the core of the central part of the city is formed between Zheltoksan and Furmanova streets, where unique public buildings are concentrated. Reconstruction of the northern part of the Central Market is underway (within the boundaries of Gogol Street, Rayymbek Avenue, Ilyich Street and Vesnovka River) with the demolition of dilapidated housing and the construction of residential buildings with panel 5-storey buildings designed considering seismic conditions (**Kapanov & Baimagambetov, 2013**). The city is developing in a westerly direction - new neighborhoods are beginning to appear, built up with panel residential buildings of mass series (**Tuyakaeva & Murzabayeva, 2019**). Industry is developing and new industrial facilities are being built.

The 1970s and 1980s were a time of active construction and modernization, with important attention paid not only to economic and social development, but also to the cultural sphere. During this period, structures were erected, which later became significant architectural monuments of that time. In pursuance of the Decree of the legislative bodies of the republic "On the integrated development of main streets, exit highways and the central part of Almaty" (1972), the construction and reconstruction of Seifullin and Abai Avenues, the highway from Rayymbek Avenue to the airport, Zheltoksan str., the central part of the city; at the same time, several of the largest unique buildings and structures were built (**Kapanov & Baimagambetov, 2013**). An example of a comprehensive reconstruction and development of Dostyk Avenue, connecting the central core of the city with the main southern recreation area in the mountains of the Trans-Ili Alatau, is indicative. The compositional expressiveness of the avenue is achieved by the rhythm of high-rise buildings alternating with developed courdonnaies, landscaped squares and skillful use of relief. High-rise buildings along Dostyk Avenue, in an area of high seismic activity, were built using progressive earthquake-resistant structures.

The growth in the construction of cultural and educational structures, palaces, and hotels favored the appearance of buildings unique in architectural and artistic design, reflecting the social, political, and cultural aspects of the era. These objects not only corresponded to their functional tasks, but also became icons and symbols of modernization and national identity. These include the buildings in Almaty shown in **Figure 2**: The Wedding Palace (1971, architect M. Mendikulov, A. Leppik); circus (1972, architect V. Katsev, I. Slonov); hotel "Kazakhstan" (1977, architect Y. Ratushny, L. Ukhobotov, A. Anchugov, V. Kashtanov); hardware and studio complex (1983, architect A. Korzhempo, M. Ezau, V. Panina); hotel "Otyrar" (1981, S. Kokhanovich, M. Kabylbayev); medical and wellness complex "Arasan" (1983, architect V. Khvan, M. Ospanov); the Republican Palace of Schoolchildren (1984, architect V. Kim, A. Zuev, T. Abilda); the Central State Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan (1985, architect Y. Ratushny, Z. Mustafina, P. Rzagaliev) and many others.

These architectural structures together form the unique appearance of the city and reflect its history, embodying with their appearance and unique style the period of the Soviet era in the history of the country. Each object uses several techniques, forms and elements of traditional Oriental

architecture that complement the expressive image. The combination of elements of Kazakh national culture with modern components represents the desire to preserve and pass on the rich heritage and history of Kazakhstan to future generations.

The synthesis of traditions and modernity in the silhouettes of buildings is manifested in the form of references to the traditional dwelling of Kazakhs – yurts - in the three-dimensional characteristics of the Wedding Palace and circus; stylized forms of the citadel of the feudal city of Central Asia, caravanserai or memorial and cult architecture - in the figurative solutions of the Arasan medical and wellness complex, the Republican Palace of Schoolchildren, The Central State Museum, where domed coverings, arched openings, transitional galleries, towers enhance their regional affiliation and cultural identity.

Components such as ornamental sunscreens on the facades of a few objects, including the Wedding Palace; cornices – Asian "stalactites" on the facade of the hardware and studio complex; Central Asian arches - semicircular forms of balcony fences and the main portal of the Otyrar hotel; the unique antiseismic structural basis of the Kazakhstan hotel also played a key role in the formation of cultural identity the cities of Almaty of the XX century.



Figure 2 – Architecture of Almaty XX – beginning XXI century. (author’s material)

In the 1970s and 1980s, the traditional rectangular grid of streets for the city, oriented in the meridional and latitudinal directions, was developed in the western direction in the form of an enlarged grid of new neighborhoods, preserving the continuity of the planning structure.

The attraction of the city of Almaty is its green outfit. The master plan provides for the further development of the system of green spaces by creating parks in floodplains and a forest park in the eastern part of the city. It is becoming urgent to create a continuous interconnected system of green spaces that would effectively affect the improvement of the environment and recreation for the city's population, connecting the city with its unique environment at the foot of the picturesque Trans-Ili Alatau (Kapanov & Baimagambetov, 2013.). In this regard, park lanes and landscaped connections of the latitudinal and meridional directions are organized, which form the basis of the natural and ecological framework.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, Almaty felt a wave of political and cultural changes and faced the challenge of preserving and developing its cultural identity in new conditions. It was a time when the country was striving to define its new role on the world stage. This period brought with it the opportunity to freely experiment with new architectural styles and technologies, forms reflecting a variety of cultural influences and trends.

The architecture of the residence of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, built in 1995 (architects K. Montakhaev, S. Baymagambetov, O. Tsai) using modern building materials and technologies, indicated the desire of Kazakh society for change. The appeal to modernity and innovations in solving such classical monumental forms as pylons, as well as the use of the principle of contrasting ratios, eventually led to a reflection in the architecture of the 1990s of the cultural changes that took place in Kazakhstan at the beginning of the Independence period.

Attempts to regain one's own identity and culture include an increase in the number of religious buildings in the settlements of the young state. The architecture of the central cathedral mosque in Almaty (1999, architects S. Baymagambetov, J. Sharapiev, K. Zharylgapov) has become a new embodiment of oriental traditions using a dome, portal arch, arched gallery, corner towers and a high minaret. Thus, the revival of religion and religious architecture has become an indicator of the state's desire to preserve cultural identity in conditions of rapid development.

Even though in 1997, the capital of Kazakhstan was moved to Astana, Almaty remains a cultural, scientific, educational, financial and business center, the largest metropolis in the country, which is supported by its status as a city of republican significance ([Decree N 3698, 1997](#)).

Intensive construction, reconstruction and urban development over the years of the capital's functions have provided a unique appearance of the city of Almaty. The city has developed interesting urban-planning ensembles and urban-planning nodes: Republic Square, Square named after Abay, buildings in the circus area and the Kazakh Drama Theater, etc. A number of unique objects and structures have been erected: the building of the Abai Opera and Ballet Theater, the building of the Government House (later the Akimat of the city Almaty), the main building of the Academy of Sciences, the complex of the Central Republican Stadium, the complex of the Medeu ice stadium, the building of the Kazakh Drama Theater named after M. Auezov, the Circus, the Wedding Palace, the House of Friendship with Foreign Countries, the complex of therapeutic baths "Arasan", the Palace of Culture of the AKHBK (later the TYUZ named after N.Satz), the Republican Palace of Schoolchildren, the District House of Officers (later the Central House of the Army), the former house of Political Education, buildings of railway stations, air terminals, bus stations, the Palace of the Republic, the Residence of the President, the 25-storey hotel "Kazakhstan", the Dostyk hotel, 5-star hotels "Ankara" (subsequently, the InterContinental Almaty Hotel), Rahat Palace, etc., residential areas of Almaty grew ([Kapanov & Baimagambetov, 2013](#)).

In the last decades of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Kazakhstan, like many other countries, actively carried out the construction of modern buildings and complexes. In this context, for the progress and prosperity of the region, it is necessary to preserve historical monuments and traditional architecture as part of the material heritage. The architectural structures of the city of Almaty of the XX century are not only its symbols, but also represent important elements of the heritage of Kazakhstan, which reflect the desire to find a synthesis between traditions and modernity. Taken together, they are an example of how architecture can become an important tool for expressing and strengthening the cultural identity of a society.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The study revealed that the cultural identity of Almaty architecture in the 20th century was formed through a combination of architectural styles inherent in the entire Soviet Union but adapted to the local conditions of Kazakhstan. Within the framework of the socialist economy, the architecture of Almaty to a certain extent rethought traditional motifs, creating a link between architecture and the culture of the local population.

The inclusion of traditional motifs in the design of modern buildings gives the architecture of Kazakhstan a bright individuality and originality, creating a complete regional image. The combination of modern technologies with elements of traditional Kazakh architecture and respect for historical heritage forms a unique architectural environment that can develop and attract the attention of both locals and tourists. Thus:

1. The analysis of theoretical research and practical implementation of architectural objects in Almaty shows that currently the search for cultural identity can be expressed in architecture in several ways:

- visual expression of the territory's connection with the Kazakh national culture (facade decoration, archetypal forms – arches, domes, etc.)

- the formation of new symbols of identity in the architecture of Almaty, which combines reliance on previous experience and the inclusion of modern innovative approaches in shaping.

2. The architectural heritage of the early twentieth century is an important element of the urban culture of Almaty. The buildings of this period remind of the rich history and material heritage of the region, continue to inspire modern architects, residents and visitors of the city. Every building and structure in this city carry a piece of its cultural identity, embodying the richness and diversity of its heritage.

3. Intensive construction, reconstruction and urban development over the years of the capital's functions have provided a unique appearance for the city of Almaty. Interesting urban planning ensembles and urban planning nodes have been formed in the city, residential areas have grown, reflecting the unique spirit, history and atmosphere of this place.

4. The unique location of the city along the foothills of the Trans-Ili Alatau has left its mark on the picturesque appearance of the city, in the silhouette of which the panorama of the mountains plays an important role, this also contributes to the connection with the natural environment, providing it with the image of a "garden city".

5. In the XXI century, Almaty continues its path of searching for cultural identity in architecture. On the one hand, the city is becoming more and more open to modern architectural trends and technologies, on the other hand, there is an interest in national traditions and cultural heritage. The modern architecture of the city reflects a mixture of traditional and modern styles, while maintaining its uniqueness.

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