

ARTISTIC ARCHETYPAL IMAGES OF THE TURKIC UNIVERSE MODELS IN THE ART OF MODERN KAZAKH TAPESTRY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to present an artistic analysis of the works of Kazakh tapestry artists, which, based on the extensive mythological heritage of nomadic peoples, reflect the artistic archetypal images of the Turkic universe models, such as the World Mountain, the Tree of Life, Ana-Zher, Zheruyik and others. Rejecting the method of annals writing without using images, modern Kazakh tapestry masters replace it with the universal language of "iconic signs" applying compositional and figurative means. The article also discusses different aspects of the origin of archetypal symbols and prototypes of the world in the minds of ancient people. It reveals the link between the individual's knowledge of the world and the identification of its structure in the archaeo-mythical models of the universe.

Keywords: modern Kazakh art, Kazakh tapestry, archetypal models of the Turkic universe, mythology of the nomadic Turkic peoples

IMMAGINI ARCHETIPE ARTISTICHE DEI MODELLI DI UNIVERSO TURCO NELL'ARTE KAZAKA MODERNA DELL'ARAZZO

SINTESI

Questo articolo si propone di presentare un'analisi artistica delle opere di maestri arazzieri kazaki, che si basano su un ampio patrimonio mitologico di popoli nomadi e riflettono le immagini archetipe artistiche dei modelli dell'universo turco, come la montagna cosmica, l'albero della vita, la grande madre, la terra promessa e altri. I maestri arazzieri kazaki contemporanei respingono il metodo della compilazione di annali senza l'utilizzo di immagini, sostituendolo con il linguaggio universale di "segni iconici", applicando mezzi compositivi e figurativi. L'articolo discute anche di vari aspetti dell'origine di simboli archetipi e di prototipi del mondo nelle menti degli antichi popoli. Rivela il collegamento tra la conoscenza del mondo di una persona e l'identificazione della struttura della stessa nei modelli arqueo-mitici dell'universo.

Parole chiave: arte kazaka moderna, arazzo kazako, modelli archetipi dell'universo turco, mitologia dei popoli turchi nomadi

At the turn of the XX–XXI centuries, Kazakh masters of artistic textile have increasingly turned to the subject of reflecting the archetypal images of the Turkic universe models in their works. Based on the extensive mythological heritage of the nomadic Turkic peoples, who embodied and encoded the images of the World Mountain, the Tree of Life, Ana-Zher and many others in symbolism, modern artists are not only in a continuous process of ethnic self-identity, but also in search of a national idea and figurative equivalents to its archetypal embodiment.

The subject of archetype and archetypal image in art had become extremely popular by the end of the last century. The word, from Greek, means “a primary image”, an original, a prototype, ancient universal symbols, pre-images underlying myths, tales and legends.

With an amazing accuracy and insight this phenomenon was considered by a group of scientists of the Soviet period – E. Lvova, A. Oktyabrskaya, A. Salagayev – on the basis of ethnographic and linguistic materials. They reconstructed the Turkic world model in its space-time and corporeal aspects:

[...] each community is served by the needed sum of archetypal symbols. With the development of society, the need for some symbols disappeared, while others were reinterpreted and preserved by tradition. Naturally, a worldview is non-homogeneous at any stage of its evolution: some perceptions are only being formed, others – established – constitute the core of a worldview, and it is with their help that each generation interprets the picture of the world [...] (Lvova et al., 1988, 10).

The knowledge of the world was the main content of human life at all times. Nature, its ever-changing and diverse image, its mystery inspired awe, surprise, delight. All shades of these rich living emotions were to get out, and they did – in various forms of creative activity. It can be suggested that the imagination of the primal artist was little or no different than that of the modern artist, since the properties of soul and heart, temperament, as an indicator of physiology of the human body, in their basic parameters had remained unchanged. There have been changes in the quality of thinking, the level of generalization, the symbolic and metaphorical language in the conveyance of particularly bright impressions experienced. The spirit of free expression in an artistic work, always inquisitive, insatiable, ubiquitous and vital, equally active in any era, today also requires a timely exit, embodiment; then an aesthetically selected, meaningful and well-ordered, newly decorated artistic invention results in a particular unique reality – a work of art, which

[...] is particularly advantageous for the research and transformation of the world. For the artist

therein – a living prism faceted by folk life – is again drawn to folk life and the cosmic space, in which it takes place, and is building the second world. The artist comprehends the national cosmic space and creates it. A work of art is like a national structure of the world in double vision [...] (Gachev, 1988, 52–53).

Consequently, our deep roots – our mythological past – are a major and inexhaustible source of creativity, which helps the artist to draw themes and forms of expression of his ideas, but on an indispensable condition that it is given in the context of modern times and its knowledge, as well as newly used artistic means of expression. This path is not easy, because it requires both a huge intellectual and emotional tension of the individual who creates it, his or her total commitment and involvement in the subject of artistic research, in other words, the phenomenon of human nature, which is the main content of art. Different stages of similar artistic studies show the relentless agony of spirit and matter of human existence, and the deeper it is possible to penetrate into their meaning, the more obvious it becomes that the human world rests on a strict order and harmony of life. Art, like litmus paper, accurately reflects the state of the world. In periods of stagnation (century cataclysms), creativity fades with an increasing category of plotless material feeding and its ugly contents. In periods of prosperity, the human soul and body attract the most attention of contemporaries.

Equilibrium in conjunction with disharmony, their constant interaction, as one might say, a hidden “game”, is the condition upon which the skill of the ancient artist was formed and perfected. Then – the search for meanings and values of the visible world, their generalization and symbolic notation, conclusion in an art form. This resulted in the creation of amazing myths and legends, parables and songs as well as decorative art forms.

It is believed that the world of ancient myths and their inherent forms of the holistic worldview has been lost today. They are replaced with the scientific and logical way of thinking. In other words, the left hemisphere of the brain took on the entire incredible intense mental activity of man. Is it so? Of course not, because only equivalent and harmonious work of both hemispheres is the guarantee of development, and we do not tend to think that life is at a stop.

Although myths, in general terms, have really gone out of our lives, but tales, songs and paintings continue to be created, and artists, as before, are in a constant strict and stress state searching for the original, whole image of the world, a new myth.

In mythological texts of the Turkic peoples, the created world is a world of harmony, light, peace, warmth, and finally – Life. This is the world for man. The unity of the worldview is combined with the constructivism of its content: the universe is always represented by

individual worlds, cardinal points, the layers of heaven and earth that make the world fundamentally knowable. Overall, the picture of the world corresponds to

[...] the plot scheme, in which the movement is carried out in the following directions: from the past to the present, from the divine to the human, from the cosmic and natural to the cultural and social, from elements to artifacts (things and relevant institutions), i.e. from the outside and distant to the inside and close [...] (Toporov, 1982, 161–162).

The ancient mythology of different peoples has brought us some images-archetypes, which are uniform in their structure and contents. According to C. Jung, archetypes are structural elements of the human psyche – the collective unconscious, common to all mankind. It is inherited in the same way as the human body, and emerges in the consciousness when waking up the creative activity of the individual (Jung, 1953).

It follows that an archetype is the presence of the past in the present, the universal base for images, passing from generation to generation. In Turkic mythology, these are such images as Tengri, Umai, the World Mountain, the Tree of Life, Temir Kazyk, Ana-Zher, Zher-Uyyk and many beautiful ancient images, popular in the art of our time more than ever before. To sufficiently explain the appeal of archetypal images in Kazakh modern art, particularly in the works of tapestry artists, first consider one of them – “The Tree of Life” or “The World Tree”.

It is an artistic image characteristic of the mythopoetic consciousness, embodying the universal concept of the world. The image of the World Tree is fixed throughout the traditional culture of nations in different versions and transcriptions - “the tree of life”, “the tree of fertility”, “the tree of center”, “the tree of rise”, “the tree of heaven”, “the shaman tree”. In Kazakh mythology and traditional applied culture, it is known as “Baiterek”.

The World Tree is one of the most popular embodiments of the universal set of archetypal images of the ancient Turkic peoples on the structure of the universe, and is expressed in the so-called ternary model or triagram. As a space root, growing from the umbilical cord of the planet, it penetrates into all three worlds from the bottom to the top, to the heavens. The mighty trunk, roots and branches of this wonderful mythological tree compositionally combine all three worlds – Upper, Middle, Lower, turning it into a single structure. The archaic fairy consciousness of ancient peoples was characterized by an image of the great tree, whose roots go deep into the earth, and the top reaches the high heavens. The legends and myths of most nations of the world have a description of such a majestic Tree of Life as well as many of its images:

In almost every historical period of nomadic peoples, including the Kazakhs, we find different images or designs of the World Tree. For example, among the finds near the Issyk kurgan, belonging to the Saka period of Kazakh history, the World Tree with a bird on its very top is depicted on gold plaques, and among the gold objects, found in the Altai, the World Tree is depicted with two tops and two symmetrical dragons with their heads looking out from under the ground. We find the image of the World Tree, drawn in Kazakh household ornaments, everywhere [...] (Zhanaydarov, 2004, 42).

In the philosophical and cultural sense, the image of the World Tree is connected by an allegorical context (i.e. in a figurative comparison) with the theme of absolute perfection and, in general, any dynamic process involving emergence, development and completion. There is also a so-called concept of “the order among the chaos”. In this embodiment, the image of the World Tree becomes a self-sufficient and complete model of culture in general – the macrocosm, a kind of “the tree of civilization” among the natural chaos.

Similarly, the concept of the World Tree is reflected in language and all sorts of verbal texts, poetry, art and architecture. Today it also covers the social and economic structures, where the processes of “branching” from a uniform “center” are considered. For an example, in the circuit images of management, subordination and dependence of power structures, social relations, the composition of the parts constituting the State or a corporation. They all date back to the scheme of the World Tree. But perhaps, currently, the most famous and common transcription of the World Tree image is a “genealogical tree”, symbolizing and schematizing both the family line of a specific person and his or her generation as a whole.

In 2001, Alibay and Saule Bapanovs created a tapestry called “The Sacred Tree” (“Киелі ағаш”) (Figure 1). In this tree, they referred to the artistic image of the World Tree, which is interpreted through the image of the tree sacred to all proto-Turkic peoples – “киелі ағаш”. People tied up colored strips to the branches of such trees, referring to the blessing of their ancestors and nature deities.

It is necessary to make a digression here and explain some of the facts that are important for our artistic analysis. The fact is that the Bapanovs have two original versions of the tapestry “The Sacred Tree”. In the first one, a light trunk and branches of the tree form an intricate maze of stitches on a dark background. Later, they created a second version, in which the tonal relations of visual appeal are solved in a diametrically opposite pattern – a dark trunk and branches of the tree are located on a light sandy background. This tapestry is part of the exhibition of the works of Kazakh masters of artistic textile adorning the interiors of the residence of



Figure 1: Alibay and Saule Bapanovs: *The Sacred Tree*, 2001 (Bapanov & Bapanova, 2001, 26)

the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan “Ақ Орда” in Astana. We will consider the early version of “The Sacred Tree” because its figurative solution is characterized by both a concise presentation and integrity of the compositional and visual structure.

The monumentality of the Bapanovs’ tapestry is predetermined by a relatively simple compositional scheme, where the main figurative emphasis in the form of a patterned silhouette of the tree is located in the center of the work. Numerous lace branches intertwine with each other, occasionally merging with a black and blue background of the tapestry, covered with blossoming buds of flowers, stylized silhouettes of leaves and tied colored ribbons. Like streams, figuratively personifying spring awakening and an insatiable thirst for life, they flock to the left and right sides of the composition, merging into a single channel – the trunk of the tree, thereby focusing the viewer’s attention on it. Its confident vertical, dissecting the work in half and ending with a small figure of a sacred bird, Samruk, sitting at the very top, symbolizes an unshakeable axis of the World Tree. According to the myths and legends of ancient Turkic-Tengrian culture, the trunk of the World Tree is a pillar uniting three levels of the universe - the upper, middle and lower worlds. In

the tapestry, this mythical three-tiered world is inhabited by the figures of people and animals living their own mysterious life, known only to themselves, and in full harmony and balance with the surrounding nature. As written in the vast collective work of Kazakh researchers:

This conceptual space Oecumene, a set of spatial protoforms, has a pronounced vertical orientation. In the conventional consciousness, this world is present in the form of long-formed spatial representations, the most famous of which is the triad “Paradise – People’s world – Hell (Sabitov et al., 2000, 17).

The monumental and poetic image of harmony of the primordial world in the work is largely enhanced by the confrontation of cold blue and warm red-brown color tones, occasionally flaring on the branches, the figures of people and animals.

When contemplating “The Sacred Tree”, there arises a sense of contact with something archaic and original, presenting a closed complex system, something like a highly organized chaos, which has its own unwritten laws. The harmonious coexistence of small characters on the woven fabric with the Sacred Tree and the surrounding space creates a picture of the Tengirchilik Cosmos in which the existentialism of nomadic existence is determined by the category of “the similarity of the time” and the wise balance of light and dark elements.

The similarity of the times in Tengrianism generates the similarity of the worlds and their inhabitants. Kazakh demonology against other cultures is not rich, and does not boast any particular difference in the inhabitants of various worlds. This is the feature of Tengrianism itself and the consequence of its relations with other religions. Tengrianism neither confronted them nor sought to overthrow or discredit their gods, turning them into demons, devils, and so on, which enriched demonology before Christianity. Calmly allowing different religious systems exist side by side with itself and sometimes borrowing some of their elements, Tengriism did not alter its essence, the original basis of which is the harmony of the times, the harmony of the worlds (Mukhambetova, 2002, 41).

In 2007, Kazakh artists Malik Mukanov (one of the co-authors of this study) and Aydar Zhamkhan presented their own interpretation of the artistic image of the World Tree, creating a tapestry called “Steppe arabesque”, the size of which is 140 x 140 cm (Figure 2).

In contrast to the Bapanovs’ work “The Sacred Tree” with a triumphantly epic color range of opposing cold and warm colors, a coloristic set of “Steppe arabesque” is emphatically concise and built on sober and soft combinations of cream, turquoise, olive and other colors.



Figure 2: Mukanov, Aydar. Zhamkhan, *Steppe arabesque* (2007)

Another fundamental difference is expressed in the fact that the composition of the tapestry “Steppe arabesque” has not one, but two completely symmetrical trees. Having the same root, they grow together and coexist. Only while considering them closely, one might see that their difference consists in the color of large petals of the flower, crowing each tree in a very special way. One of them is white, and the other is black. By this color-composite solution through comparison the authors tried to express the duality of confrontation, and the simultaneous continuity of many philosophical and

physical aspects of human existence – life and death, good and evil, day and night, man and woman, sun and moon, fire and water, heaven and earth, etc.

The tree branches in the tapestry are fancily bent, creating the impression of an arabesque ligature, resembling a weave of letters in the art of Islamic calligraphy. This circumstance was decisive in choosing the name for the work. Mukanov and Zhamkhan do not conceal the fact that they borrowed the figurative style of creating trees with numerous rich branches, twisted into a spiral, from the creative heritage of Austrian painter-modernist



Figure 3: Kurasbek Tynybekov. *Steppe ballad* (1974)

Gustav Klimt (1862–1918). In 1904–1910, he created a monumental mural for the interior of the dining room of the Palais Stoclet in Brussels (Belgium) by order of the owner – banker Adolphe Stoclet, which had a stylized image of a tree (Collins, 2001). It was his iconic motif that served as an inspiration source for the young artists while working on “Steppe arabesque”.

Referring to the artistic image of the World Tree and using the schematic-design features of its depiction with the figurative elements of Kazakh nomadic culture, the artists create an allegory of the macrocosm of ancient primordial culture, transforming it into a modern artistic and figurative sign – symbol. At the same time, there is no narrative or storyline in a set of compositional techniques. This circumstance is fully compensated by the philosophical depth of the content of the work and the metaphorical character of the figurative structure that arises when the artist embodies his idea in an ambiguous allegorical manner. This particular approach implies the nature of educational background of artists-muralists, since an organic and purposeful transition from the concrete figurative structure to the aesthetically emotional poetic image constitutes a defining feature of monumental arts.

In the mythology of Turkic nomadic cultures no less important than the World Tree is the monumental image of the World Mountain. It is directly linked to the sacral beliefs of ancient peoples about the structure of the universe, according to which the World Mountain is the

World Center (the World Axis) – a cosmogonic point of intersection of space and time, where the primordial act of creation was fulfilled. In another sense, for example, in Saka and Wusun ancient nomadic civilizations, the World Mountain was as a kind of channel serving for

[...] space communication of people with supreme deities who lived on the mountain tops, connected to the Upper world. And researchers are right to argue that the very surrounding nature and landscape of Semirechye with white tops of the “golden mountains of the world” are the realities of life, defining nomadism from the steppe to the mountain foot and tops, from wintering grounds to summer pastures, which contributed to the creation of mythological traditions, representing the universe in the form of a grand mountain or stone. The firmament was imagined as stony, mountains – consisting of the material of the firmament (Baypakov, 2007, 403).

One of the most famous works in modern Kazakh art textile, depicting the image of the World Mountain, is the tapestry made by Alibay and Saule Bapanovs called “The World Mountain – II”, created in 2007.

In many ways, this work is a milestone in the development of the entire national school of Kazakh tapestry. Through the memorable plot and figurative solution, the authors were able to turn their interpreted image of the



Figure 4: Gaziz Eshkenov. *Zheruyik* (2003)

World Mountain to the “iconic sign” – a kind of highly artistic figurative standard, which serves as a reference for other Kazakh tapestry artists.

Another very valuable and intimate symbol for each Kazakh artist is the image of the native land – Ana-Zher. The compositions of similar works glorify the beauty of natural spaces and the cosmic thinking of nomads, living side by side in harmony and equilibrium with their environment. And in this sense,

[...] the steppe is the basis on which, like on a foundation, there is an architectural marvel of nature, the harmonious and inexplicable, mathematically precise Sky. The cosmism of thinking, the breadth of the worldview, the openness and kindness of the soul of steppe nomadic Kazakhs are genetically inherited through an enormous scale of the steppe land and sky. The cosmic and astronomic nature of human thinking is caused by the way of life in the steppe, constant movements in space and time. In the mind of the nomad, the Sky above the Earth and the Earth itself – Steppe – are equal (Zhanaydarov, 2004, 42).

The cosmic balance of spiritual, material and natural components of human existence in the culture of the Tur-

tic peoples allowed the picture of the universe, perfect in the absolute of its content, to be built in the mind of the nomad. Therefore, within the meaning of the nomad, “The Promised Land – Zheruyik” does not exist somewhere in the real world, for which he and his soul should strive, but always surrounds him, no matter at which point of intersection of space and time he was. This principle of the nomadic life based on self-sufficiency and the ecological-philosophical relation to the reality of life is reflected in the works of artists, when they turn to the subject of revealing the artistic image of Ana-Zher.

One of the first masters of art textile, who turned to the mytho-poetic image of the native land, is Kurasbek Tynybekov. In 1974 he presented his work entitled “Steppe ballad” (200 x 300 cm) (Figure 3).

The core strength of this work is its pictorial and color qualities, the assertive expression of colors, and the vibrant distinctiveness of an individual manner of weaving. Here, the emphatic decorativeness and locality of the color palette is occasionally complemented by a light shading, somewhat mitigating the graphics of strict color combinations, which in turn reinforces the sense of poetry.

Compositionally this work is completely different from his other works – it lacks human and zoomorphic characters, and we can barely guess the silhouette of



Figure 5: Malik Mukanov, Aydar Zhamkhan. *Steppe mosaic* (2010)

a mythical bird Karakus, whose outstretched wings are perceived as a continuation of the reddish-brown hilly land, and a pair of birds on the tree. The rest of the fabric plane is built on material and natural details.

The peculiarity of this tapestry is perhaps most clearly expressed in its generalizing triumphant rhythms filled with the poetics of Kazakh traditional culture. It is through them that one can see something common, which unites modern and medieval tapestries. As far as any artistic technique or method obeys the universal law – to give the consistent visible representation of the topic under consideration, the artist has the right of freedom to choose the method or technique of revealing the contents of his future work. This is the true synthesis of all the terms of artistic works.

This work is noted for harmony and completeness – the net ratio of white, dark red, terracotta red, orange, brown and dark-brown colors with a minimum of intermediate shades and a little blueness create simplicity and consonance similar to a folk song. This is evidenced by a uniform rhythm of movement, penetrating the entire composition, a subtle interrelation of color patches. In the tapestry “Steppe ballad”, as in medieval tapestries, “[...] all art forms are subject to some universal unity for

uplifting the whole. This constitutes the truly synthetic understanding of art” (Bazazyants, 1983, 157).

The artist drops all the random details to clearly identify the leading rhythm of the song narrative. As it should be in the ballad genre, it has a limited number of elements: a flowering tree (life) and mazar (its logical end), strictly frontally located on the left and right side of the tapestry. Between and near them human life passes, hidden from the eyes by rampant hills and wind energy, and only a huge multi-colored sun, rushing like a ball on the field of the picture, eloquently says that in fact, there is no end, that life goes on.

In 2003, Kazakh muralist Gaziz Eshkenov referred to the art of tapestry and created the first work – “Zheruyik” (“The Promised Land”), 150 x 240 cm in size (Figure 4). Later, this work was acquired by the exhibition fund of the A. Kasteyev State Art Museum of Kazakhstan, and currently adorns the exhibition dedicated to the art of modern Kazakh tapestry.

“Zheruyik” consists of two parts (a rectangle in a rectangle) balanced in both the volume the occupied plane and color combination.

With an artistic and stylistic point of view, this work can be related neither to Bapanovs’ aesthetics of mini-

malism nor to Tynybekov's style. Tapestry is a hybrid – a stylistic “mestizo”, which may have figurative qualities of both directions. Certainly, Tynybekov's tapestry is characterized by richly ornamented rims and bright local colors. Bapanovs' tapestry has a strict, aesthetically logical linearity of the picture, stylized silhouettes of figures and isometric perspectives, creating a simultaneous diversity and multi-layering of the world space depicted by the artist.

The work's central part, which can be called “the main content”, is a composition on the subject of the nomadic life of cattle breeders. Its framing part resembling a flower fringe is a clear citation of the traditional Kazakh carpet, made in chain stitch. However, unlike the latter it has no clear dividing line, so that both sides kind of interpenetrate, support and are equalized with each other.

The main part of the tapestry is a reflection of the quiet measured rhythm of everyday life. In the background, the author gives the picture of a hilly landscape with the use of lines only, a woman sitting right in the middle of the hearth, and a man lying next to her. They are also made in a linear manner, so that part of the steppe landscape can be read over their figures. Right next to them, there is a tree (possibly Baiterek); somewhere in the distance, one can notice a lonely figure of the rider, grazing sheep and horses; the shapes of a camel and a shepherd can be seen in the foreground. All this corporeal world is given by, though broken, but steady lines, and in some places – by local color spots.

The work's clear lightsome central part can be interpreted as the Day, and the “frame” heavily saturated with cold blue, red and green colors presents the Night. Together they are seen as a world caught up in one breath of harmony and peace.

This work was highly appreciated by Kazakh art critic S. Shklyayeva:

[...] solid broad strokes that create the improvised figures of people, animals of the central field, and the elements of the border ornament say about the bold search of the artist of modern times (Shklyayeva, 2011, 125).

In 2010, Malik Mukanov and Aydar Zhamkhan offered their own interpretation of “The Promised Land” as an artistic pre-image of the nomadic world model, which is ruled by harmony, wise calmness and contemplation, in the form of a tapestry called “Steppe mosaic”, 130 x 210 cm in size (Figure 5). They admit that the plot and figurative concept of their work was borrowed from the creative work of Kurasbek Tynybekov. More specifically, the source of their inspiration is one of the most famous works of the founder of the Kazakh national tapestry school called “Steppe ballad”.

In the tapestry, the artists express the cosmism and mentality of the nomad's consciousness in his or her

relation to the outside world through the temporary category of “always”, thereby filling the work with the philosophical content and sacred connotations.

In contrast to the Western principle of “here” and “now”, the East, in life and in art, prefers the total way of thinking, generalizing extensive communications. Belonging to eternity is valued in a volatile instant [...]. The space of a particular landscape is appreciated with regard to communication with the person inhabiting it and the length towards the universe infinity. Life is puzzled about the idea of continuation, the need for immortality, not in a personal context of rather western searches, but in the extended sense of national, human and natural immortality (Ergaliyeva, 2011, 120).

The compositional structure of “Steppe mosaic” is made in a monumental style and filled with numerous different-scale suprematist elements, styled on the images of horses, camels, yurts, the figures of people, trees, and mountains with rolling foothills. Subject to the author's intention, they add up to a single panorama like a mosaic panel, in which every detail is involved in creating a unified and complete picture of the Turkic nomadic universe model. The visual effect of mosaic structure is also enhanced by a variety of techniques of smooth weaving, when some woven passes are imperceptible, while others, on the contrary, are rudely accentuated. Not applying art definitions for image stylistics, one may describe this tapestry composition as “an organized artistic chaos”. It was a deliberate approach, a kind of experiment – an attempt to breach the laws of composition for “creating” the order among the chaos.

To complete our review in the context of this article, we can distinguish the following aspects. Drawing on a vast mythological heritage of nomadic peoples, art textile masters of the XXI century have increasingly begun to turn to the subject of revealing the archetypal images of the Turkic universe models, such as the World Mountain, the Tree of Life, Ana-Zher, Zheruyik and many others. This artistic trend is determined by the overall process of transition “from the epic to the metaphysical” (Ergaliyeva, 2011), characteristic of Kazakh fine arts at the turn of the XX-XXI centuries. In textile art, it has been expressed in the change of narrative and figurative aesthetics and in the achievement of a new level of professional skills of tapestry artists.

According to art critic R. Ergaliyeva, fine arts of Kazakhstan of the XX century entered the third millennium being intellectually and spiritually mature.

They digested and interpreted the ancient roots of Kazakh nomadic culture. Its universal human values are disclosed by artists in dialogue with the traditions and innovations of the world art, the latest phenomena of philosophy and culture

of the XX century. The comprehension of the foundations of national culture gives rise to new creative concepts in the art of Kazakhstan. As a result, modern Kazakh art, which arose on the basis of innovation less than a century ago, could not only preserve its own spiritual identity, but also create its unique figurative language (Ergaliyeva, 2002, 172).

Although the above quotation refers to fine arts of Kazakhstan as a whole, the opinion of one of the most authoritative masters inspires us, tapestry artists, as well. We know that such a high evaluation is based on an impartial, long-term, painstaking study of a number of processes that have occurred over half a century in a living, thinking, searching and vibrant body such as art with all its sections.

UMETNIŠKE ARHETIPSE PODOBE TURŠKIH UNIVERZALNIH MODELOV V MODERNI KAZAHSTANSKI TAPISERIJ

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POVZETEK

Na prelomu iz 20. v 21. stoletje so se v delih kazahstanskih mojstrov umetniškega tekstila začele odražati arhetipske podobe turških univerzalnih modelov. Ob koncu prejšnjega stoletja je postalo področje arhetipov in arhetipskih podob v umetnosti zelo popularno. Z družbenim napredkom je potreba po simbolih postopoma izginila, medtem ko so drugi doživeli nove interpretacije in se ohranili po zaslugi tradicije. V vseh časih je bilo razumevanje sveta eden osrednjih motivov človeškega življenja. Narava, njena neprestano spreminjajoča se podoba in njena skrivnostnost je navdihovala strah, presenečenje in veselje. Vsi obrisi teh živih čustvovanj so morali priti na plan in tudi so – v različnih oblikah kreativnosti. Posledično so naše globoke korenine – naša mitološka preteklost – največji in neusahljiv vir kreativnosti, ki pomagajo umetniku, da na različne načine izrazi svoje ideje, vendar s predpogojem, da jih poda v kontekstu sodobnosti in njenega znanja, kot tudi najnovejših umetniških načinov izražanja. Različne faze podobnih umetniških študij kažejo na neusmiljeno agonijo duha in materije človeškega obstoja, ter skušajo priti do njegovega najglobljega pomena.

Ključne besede: moderna kazahstanska umetnost, arhetipski modeli turške univerzalnosti, mitologija nomadskih turških ljudstev

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