



## Formation of Ancient Sculpture on the Territory of Uzbekistan

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### **Abstract**

This article examines the process of formation of ancient sculpture in Uzbekistan, the analysis of its historical development stages, creative traditions and artistic features, the connection of sculpture with socio-cultural life, common aspects of folk arts, ancient fine arts, detailed information on its role in development.

**Keywords:** *Sculpture; Monumental Sculpture; Plastic; Treatment of Light and Shade; Form; Volume; Composition; Traditional Direction; Stage; Art Interpretation; Stylistic Approach; Image*

### **Introduction**

The wide development of folk handicrafts, applied decorative arts, architecture and especially fine arts plays an important role in the historical and cultural civilization of the people of the world. For example, in the past, the sculptural type of fine arts as an effective source of creativity has become an integral part of the artistic culture of many peoples and nations. In particular, the sculpture of Uzbekistan has examples of creativity that echo from distant historical times, which are a rare heritage of our ancient past.

The scientific study of the artistic and creative values of our cultural heritage, which reflects our long past, is currently considered a topical issue. Therefore, the state pays great attention to this area and many decrees and resolutions are adopted. For example, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev dated May 26, 2020 PD-6000 “On measures to further enhance the role and influence of culture and art in public life”. The approval of the Concept of further development of national culture in the Republic of Uzbekistan in accordance with the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev dated November 28, 2018 No PD-4038 “On approval of the Concept of further development of national culture in the Republic of Uzbekistan” also plays an important role.

Scientists of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, the Institute of Art History have conducted and are continuing a number of scientific studies on the fine arts of Uzbekistan.

Expanding the scope of scientific research and increasing the weight of the results obtained on the basis of today's new requirements, which pay great attention to the development of arts and culture in our country, poses serious challenges to art historians. To this end, although sculpture occupies a large place among our ancient fine arts, we have always aimed to study it more extensively in this article, due to the lack of quality research in a particular field.

After all, in the history of art of ancient Uzbekistan, the weight of sculpture is high. Many of the material and cultural monuments that have survived to the present day are these works of art. Even among the oldest finds, there are those made according to sculptural technology. However, in the educational literature on the history of art in Uzbekistan, the field of sculpture is recognized in the general background of the fine arts, in contrast to the fact that it is considered in the context of a separate creative development. With this in mind, we aimed to highlight the creative development of sculpture in the history of art in Uzbekistan for use in the competition "Art of Uzbekistan" in the field of Fine Arts and Engineering Graphics in higher education. Since the history of sculpture covers a long historical period, in this article we have considered it necessary to limit ourselves to the analysis of the processes that took place in ancient times, from its earliest formation. [1].

If we pay attention to the historical formation of sculpture in Uzbekistan, we can see the following creative stages: the first - the emergence of the first examples of sculpture (copper or bronze period of the primitive social order); the second - the end of the IV century BC, the ancient and ancient sculpture of the IV century AD (the period of the Achaemenid, Greek, Kushan artistic culture). Below we discuss the first of these stages and partly the period of the first conquest (Achaemenid rule). The discovery of primitive cultural sites of the Stone Age in Uzbekistan, such as Obirahmat, Khojakent (Tashkent), Zarautsoy (Surkhandarya), Suratsay, Soymali Tash (Fergana), Taka Tash (Jizzakh), means that the creative abilities of the Uzbek people in ancient Central Asia have long been formed.

The first works of art of that period consisted of plates depicting hunting scenes on cave walls, bone surfaces, and depictions of various animals. As a result of the emergence of emotions in the artistic thinking of our ancestors, the concept of depicting reality also emerged. It is noteworthy that among the images in the rocks and caves above, there are also those in which the stone is made by burning and scratching by means of solid objects. Although these are manifested in the form of primitive mural painting of fine art, it must be admitted that they also have a partial connection to the sculptural method of depiction. For example, sculptures are made by scraping and scratching hard objects, and by cutting and gluing soft objects. [2].

It must be admitted that at the heart of the above images is sculpture, a technique of working with solids. On this basis, it can be said that the first signs of the emergence of sculptures in the territory of Uzbekistan were based on these images. During the Mesolithic period of the Stone Age, sculptural techniques reached the stage of formation in such primitive settlements as Obisher (Fergana), Bozsuv (Tashkent), Machoy (Boysun), which existed in the territory of Uzbekistan. Over the course of thousands of years of historical development, the ability to shape hunting ornaments, work ornaments and figurative symbols has been formed. Our ancestors began to consciously express their inner feelings in forms consistent with reality. The image of the "Two-headed Snake" (tumor) found in the Fergana Valley, which dates back to about two thousand years BC, is one of the oldest examples of sculpture. On the one hand, this amulet is a material evidence of the formation of a culture of using jewelry and ornaments in everyday life, on the other hand, it confirms that our ancestors at that time had artistic skills in sculpture, sufficient creative ability and methodological experience.

The image in the tumor has been brought to the level of a rare example of ornamental sculpture with skillful carving and decoration of black stone. It is obvious that the first sculptures in the territory of Uzbekistan, in addition to polishing the household items needed for the daily needs of our ancestors, were also used as ornaments for various ornaments. Although sculpture was part of household items at the time and served as an artistic decoration, other findings indicate that sculpture was considered an independent art. For example, the statue of “Erkak Bashi” from the II millennium BC found in Surkhandarya (Mirshodi village) can be mentioned here. This work shows that sculpture has been created in the genre of portraiture since that time.

In the second millennium BC in the Surkhandarya region of southern Uzbekistan were formed ancient urban settlements. Such primitive settlements include Shakhristans such as Sopollitepa and Jarkuton. Residential, farm and craft buildings were built on the ceramic hill. The production of various household items is well developed in the workshop of potters, which also includes items using sculptural elements. They depicted animals as ornaments, and jars used human-shaped bands. Among the Sopollitepa finds, the image of the animal is clearly elaborated. Although the image is expressed in a somewhat conditional form, it has a realistic external structure. In the ancient period of Uzbek sculpture, there are also finds that express views related to religious views, ceremonies and traditions. Such creative works that have survived are more likely to reflect Zoroastrian religious views and rituals. It is known that Zoroastrianism, which was formed in Khorezm in the VII century BC, was absorbed into the life, socio-cultural customs of the people, as well as influenced the art and culture. An object associated with the Zoroastrian rite - embossed sculpture was used on the ostads. Ostadons are of various shapes, the most common type being rectangular, and the surfaces are embossed.

This character can be observed in the ostadon found in Mullakurgan, Samarkand region. The relief on the outside of the ostadan in the sample depicts two men wearing masks on their faces. It interprets Zoroastrian practices. In particular, it is shown that people throw firewood and herbs that emit a pleasant odor into the fire, which burns in an embossed form. The image of people covering their mouths with a mask expresses the belief that fire is sacred in this religion and should not be touched by human breath. Even in the VI centuries BC, when the ancient states of Uzbekistan were part of the Achaemenid Empire, there are unique creative aspects of sculpture. In the art of that period, it is felt that the local school merged with the traditions of Iranian art culture.

On the basis of this harmony, as in other fields of fine arts, perfect works of art have been created in sculpture of particular importance in this regard are the sculptural samples used in the palace of Kallalikir (VI-V centuries BC) in Khorezm. Eagle-headed griffins on the capital part of the palace column are typical examples of sculpture of that period. [3].

Archaeologist S. Tolstov conducted research in the territory of ancient Khorezm and found many sculptures belonging to the Kanguy culture. In particular, it was found in Jonbosqala. These include the Statue of Man, The Little Head of the Horse, as well as the Kushan Statue of the Priest, The Sitting Man, The Guard's Feet, The Red Head, The Head of the Vazamir, and The Crown of Vazamar.

The findings of the “Treasures of the Amudarya” of the VI-IV centuries BC provide important information about the sculpture of the Achaemenid period. These finds include ornaments and sculptures of ancient Uzbekistan. “These monuments, now housed in the British Museum in London, include gold statues, various jugs, bracelets, rings, seals, coins, gold chariots and weapons”. Images such as the Golden Carriage, the Warrior-sak, and the Golden Bracelet are somewhat conditional in terms of design, with some focusing on decorative features, but the creative technique of sculpture predominates. The gold wrist ring is particularly elegant and artistically crafted. The ornament resembles a horned mountain goat, but skillfully depicts a mythical figure with an eagle beak. Influenced by Achaemenid art and culture, the ruins of the city of Dingilja (Khorezm) also contain monuments based on the traditions of embossed

sculpture. “Here was found an image of an archer found at the Achaemenid settlement in Susa, engraved bronze ring-shaped power symbols, and a seal with the image of a roaring lion typical of the Achaemenids”.

The peak of the development of ancient sculpture in the territory of Uzbekistan dates back to the period of the formation of Hellenistic art and culture in the country after the Greek invasion (the period of Alexander the Great and later rulers). “On the southern borders of Uzbekistan, namely Sogdiana and Bactria, formed after the death of Alexander of Macedon, the Seleucids (306 BC) later separated from them, the Greco-Bactrian (250 BC) and finally the Kushan, formed in the early AD. The influence of this culture is clearly felt in the countries of the world”. [4].

From the emergence of Hellenistic culture in the territory of southern Uzbekistan to the IV century AD, there was a creative activity in sculpture. The traditions created in these periods clearly show the traditions of ancient Greek art. This is also reflected in the embossed images on the coins minted at that time. The image of the rulers reflected in the embossed images on the surface of the coins is a vivid example of this. “The portraits of the ruler on the coins are also individual ... Reality, the authenticity of the image, the spiritual fullness created the portrait in Roman sculpture. These coins sometimes show us a mental gallery, sometimes a rough but always bright individual portrait gallery”. [5].

Most of these coins date back to the Seleucid and Greco-Bactrian periods. The obverse of the coins depicts the rulers of the period - Euthydemus, Demetrius, Euclidite, and the reverse depicts the legendary figures - Zeus, Apollo, Dionysus, Hercules, Poseidon. The creative activity of the portrait and especially monumental (monumental) type of sculpture flourished during the Kushan period. The sculptures of this period are said to have preserved the ancient Greek traditions and blended with the creative direction of India's Gandhara. For example, “Gandhara, the largest Hellenistic center in India, had a significant impact on the development of Kushan art traditions and led to the re-emergence of Hellenistic features in the iconography of Buddhist images”. Such sculptures of creative and stylistic character were found in Dalvarzintepa, Kampirtepa, Kholchayon, Fayoztepa and Ayritom, the centers of urban culture of that time, located in Surkhandarya region. “These statues, created in the beginning of the present century, are mostly used to decorate architectural buildings, to express religious and mythological images, as well as to demonstrate the power of rulers”. [6].

At present, most of the sculptures excavated from these archeological sites are kept in the collection of the Art Expedition of the Art Research Institute of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan.

The above-mentioned examples of ancient sculpture testify to the fact that this type of fine art in Uzbekistan has achieved a high level of creative development in the distant past. The sculpture of our past has a rich artistic and cultural significance, and the very specimens that have survived to the present day mean that in ancient times our ancestors had great creative experience in this field. It also serves as a national school for our contemporary artists, as it is a solid root of our modern sculpture, which today has a rising national status. In addition, there are many artists who have made a significant contribution to the development of 20th century Uzbek painting. [7]. It is also present in their work.

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