

Manifestations of Ancient and Medieval Armenian Ornamentation in the Architecture of Armenia of the Soviet Period

Mariam Arshakyan

National University of Architecture and Construction of Armenia (NUACA)

E-mail: medsarmeniamariam@gmail.com

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Abstract

The rich artistic and architectural heritage of Armenia, spanning ancient, medieval, and new periods, is renowned for its intricate ornamentation and symbolic motifs that reflect the nation's cultural, religious, and historical identity. Throughout Armenia's history, these ornamental traditions have been preserved and adapted from century to century, influencing various forms of artistic expression, including architecture. The ornamentation (ornamental patterns) and decoration (constructive elements) were widely used and occupied a large place in Soviet-Armenian architecture, having an important stylistic, compositional, and epistemological-cognitive value and significance. Therefore, the study of the ornamentation and individual architectural details that play an important role in the artistic expression of Armenian architectural structures of the Soviet period is noteworthy, especially since Soviet-Armenian architecture was the creative forge of the revival of Armenian national architecture, one of the important features of which is the unveiling of its aesthetic issues. Thus, presented article explores the manifestations of Armenian ornamentation within the architectural landscape of the Soviet period in Armenia. It examines how traditional Armenian decorative motifs were integrated, adapted, or transformed in Soviet-era architecture, reflecting a subtle relationship between national cultural identity and Soviet ideological influences. Through presentation and analysis of different architectural examples and ornamental patterns, this article highlights the persistence and evolution of Armenian architectural heritage amid socio-political shifts, offering insights into the cultural resilience and identity expression during Soviet era (1920-1990s).

Keywords: Soviet-era architecture, Armenian architectural heritage, ancient and medieval ornaments and motifs, origination of the ornamentation, artistic manifestation.

Introduction

Being one of the oldest civilizations in the world, the Armenian people have created their rich lifestyle and culture over the centuries, in which Armenian ornamentation has its special place. It is known that ornamental art is a field of fine arts, which is also used in architecture. It has a history of thousands of years. Over the centuries, it has been used in various fields and has developed along with the development of humanity. It should be stated that architecture is one of the three main fields where ornamentation continues to be used and develop along with time. The other two fields are sculpture and painting. Since ancient times, architects of different periods have ornamented the architectural buildings that were carried out with carvings, bas-reliefs, sculptures, and etc., which provided the architectural style of the building. Actually, the architectural ornament is a pattern based on repetition and variation. Any element that is integrated into the overall composition can be considered architectural ornament. Three main types of architectural ornament can be clearly distinguished: imitative (when the forms have a certain symbolic meaning), applied (which is in-

tended to impart appropriate aesthetics to the structure), and organic (characteristic of the function of the structure or the materials used) (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Matenadaran in Yerevan, 1920s (architect M. Grigoryan)

According to research data, Armenian ornamental art emerged and took on meaning still in prehistoric times, along with the life experience, accumulated knowledge, and worldview of farmers and herders. Later, it developed through stages of forming production-family, as well as various forces and phenomena understandings. In the course of time, along with the development of human society, various ornamental motifs and ideas have emerged, and those that previously emerged have sometimes been transformed or lost their meaning. In parallel, natural and technical advances have also contributed to the development of ornamental art, bringing new ornamental forms and symbols to light. In their turn, historical events have also contributed to the establishment and universal acceptance of ornamental forms, their form creation and beauty, and their semantic depths among society. In fact, being born in the depths of primitive society and having their own originality at their core, ornamental motifs were mainly the product of natural knowledge, socially influential forces and phenomena, and the ideas and beliefs of this or that people, having both religious-mystical interpretations and ethnographic subtext, as well as responses conditioned by historical circumstances.

Thus, studies reveal the image and essence of various ornamental forms, which constitute the main element of Armenian ornamental art and are present in many complex combinations as constituent parts. Actually, each image or form and understanding was based on some premise, some reality related to nature, specific semantic understandings, etc., i.e., the result of the forces of nature and human social life, in historical terms, the work, struggle, and achievements of man, and the corresponding forms of thinking and worldview (Mnatsakanyan, 1955). Therefore, first of all, the origins of the development of Armenian ornamentation should be sought in the sources of folklore, mythology, and epic in the context of ancient folk tales, conversations, fairy tales, knowledge, rituals, ancient beliefs and ideas, and other issues. In terms of Armenian ornamental art, the treasures of medieval Armenian miniatures and manuscripts, costumes, ritual crowns, staffs, hats, carpets, vessels, chandeliers, examples of sculpture, and magnificent medieval churches are of exceptional importance, the study of which has to some extent served as the starting point and guide for this article in terms of the topic in question.

Indeed, the medieval period is marked by the promotion of monasteries and churches, gospels and manuscripts, clergy clothing and utensils, Christian symbols and paintings, and therefore

their great importance. Medieval flourishes (i.e., medieval painters), sculptors, and those engaged in ornamental art, imitating ancient forms, reproduced and developed them with great skill, bringing them to a high level and creating magnificent combinations and compositions, which have become widespread everywhere, being perfected throughout the medieval period and reaching our days through inheritance. In fact, Armenian ornaments were created as a historically necessary and inevitable consequence of the life, struggles, and thinking of the Armenian people. Formed in the depths of history, they have been enriched over time, simultaneously undergoing changes that were conditioned by events taking place in social and political life and, on the other hand, by natural, technical reasons, giving meaning to knowledge, worldview, lifestyle, etc. According to studies, the formation and evolution of ornamental art is not uniform or identical in terms of temporal depth, because time has given them varied meanings and significance, influencing the purposes of their application (Figure 2). As a result, the issues of ornamental art include the circumstances of understanding the internal regularities and essence of their forms, including stylization, generalizations, symmetrical compositions of ornaments, form, and content. Over time they received new interpretations and manifested in the architectural structures of the Soviet period (Arshakyan, 2018).



Figure 2. Yerevan Opera Theatre, 1933-1939-1953 (architects A. Tamanyan, G. Tamanyan)

It should be stated that in the case of the Armenian people, the ornamental system has an ideological content, combining the semantic depths of the origin of ornamental forms and the creation of forms. Therefore, we can say that all areas of Armenian ornamental art reveal a series of decorations that have types, essence, important features, separate elements, relationships, roles, and meanings. Therefore, it is worthwhile to start any study from the simplest elements, from the most complex and intricate ornamental compositions. It is also worth noting that the ideas expressed through ornaments are, in turn, the simplest and most intricate in terms of interpretation and analysis (Mnatsakanyan, 1955).

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, descriptive-analytical approach to explore the manifestations of ancient and medieval Armenian ornamentation within Soviet-era architecture in Armenia. Current study involves comprehensive visual analysis of architectural structures, comparative analysis of ornamental motifs across different historical periods, and contextual interpretation of the cultural significance of ornamentation practices. Data collection includes field visits to relevant architectural sites, photographic documentation, and review of archival materials

such as historical photographs, architectural plans, and scholarly publications. Additionally, the study incorporates a literature review of existing research on Armenian ornamentation and Soviet architectural policies affecting traditional motifs. The primary materials include photographs and detailed visual records of selected architectural monuments from the Soviet period in Armenia, focusing on structures that exhibit ornamentative elements. Archival documents such as plans, photographs, and texts about Soviet architectural directives were also used. Secondary materials comprise scholarly articles, books on Armenian art and architecture, and previous research on medieval and ancient Armenian ornamentation. These resources collectively facilitate a comparative analysis of ornamentation styles and their evolution or adaptation during the Soviet era. Thus, the study includes both the critical analysis of theoretical materials attributed to the Soviet period as well as the accumulated results of experts and local visits. In fact, in the context of theoretical provisions, the types of ornaments in the composition of the building and the methodology of building analysis from the point of view of decoration were presented.

Reflection of different types of ornamental motifs in architectural buildings

Referring to the presentation of the motifs of ornamental art, we need to take into account that their creators had vast life experience (farming, animal husbandry, work), endowing those basic motifs with a certain meaning and practical significance. Indeed, their material basis was, first and foremost, nature.

Vegetal motifs (plant, fruit, floral): Floral, berry-fruit, berry-seed (i.e. pomegranate, apple), tree of life (a mythical plant in paradise to grant immortality to the gods and the righteous), etc. The most prominent expression of vegetal motifs in ornamental art is the tree of life, which appears in a variety of forms, but what is characteristic are the highly stylized and generalized motifs for these trees, which are found in miniatures and ancient manuscripts (Mnatsakanyan, pp. 1-2).

The latter generally include a variety of plant and floral ornaments (included in a circle, separately, in pairs, or in bunches). In general, the symbolism of the tree of life is expressed in various ways, including plant, geometric, and animal motifs, the multifaceted manifestation of which is the product of people's knowledge about life. With their ideological content and generalizing power, the vegetal ornaments are considered the most complex motifs in ornamental art, which have various combinations. Indeed, they are the outcome of people's life experiences and knowledge, as well as natural forces and patterns.

The motif of paired flowers, which is very common in architecture, is also noteworthy (e.g., the sculptures on the capitals of the twin columns of Zvartnots temple) (Mnatsakanyan, p. 9). Generally, in ancient times, floral decorations were made on the domes of temples and the upper parts and facades of sacred structures, with trees of life, berry-fruit symbols, and grain and other conceptual shapes (Mnatsakanyan, p. 17). Manifestations of floral ornaments have survived to this day in secular architecture. In fact, from ancient times to the present day, the depiction of flowers or floral sculptures has been one of the most popular decorative motifs in architectural structures: on the columns, walls, fences, doors, ceilings, windows, and other parts of buildings, not only among Armenians, but also among other peoples. They all express the idea of fertility. It should be noted that initially, churches were decorated with pistil-shaped ornaments (Latin: pistillum means flowering plant). The pistil contains the seed primordia within it, and later, in the creation of the pediments of buildings of the 20th century, they were manifested as elements of Armenian ornamental architecture. The pistil-shaped ornamented belts of altars and semi-altars were also decorated with ribbon-shaped ornaments.

After studying a number of motifs in ornamental art, it becomes possible to easily understand the meaning of ornamental series created from symmetrical repetitions (flower-foetus or flower-

grain combination). It condenses the idea of the eternity of life. It is one of the most beloved and widespread motifs in the arts of Armenians. Often these series form not a straight line, but a semicircle. As a typical example of an ornamental stable form that generates endless variations, which is a very common artistic ornament in general and has found its special application in architecture, is the plant trifoiliated motif, which, with generalizing features, probably reproduces the vine (Mnatsakanyan, p. 59). The use of the trifoiliated and three-leafed ornaments are characteristic of Armenian medieval architecture, which also found its manifestations in Soviet Armenian architecture.

Over time, flower garlands, floral scrolls, and plant-leaf sculptures were formed, as well as manifestations of symbols resembling the acanthus-ornated or bear's breech leaf ornament, pomegranate and its fruit-bearing branches, grape bunches, apricots, apples, wheat spikes, leaves, leafy-ornated branches, laurel leaves, and bunch-shaped ornaments. They found their unique expressions in architectural buildings or sculptural creations. Let's note that grain-seed motifs in ornamental art, such as the apple and pomegranate, have deep roots. Their inner grains symbolize vegetation, being associated with fertility, immortality, and other symbolic ideas. In essence, Armenia, being an ancient country with an agricultural and horticultural culture, has provided inexhaustible material for the ornamental motifs of its people. At the same time, Armenia, due to its geographical location along the Silk Road, has been influenced by several cultures and has served as a source of inspiration for many others, including in terms of ornamental decoration.

It is known that all peoples of the world have ritual trees, and Armenian historians report that the sacred tree of the Armenians was the plane tree, although studies of miniatures and archaeological sources lead to the conclusion that the cult trees were the pomegranate and the grape. Therefore, among vegetal images, particularly grapevines and pomegranates, are widespread and popular ornaments in medieval Armenian sculpture and, more broadly, in Armenian culture and are perceived as a national symbol, manifesting themselves also in the field of architecture (both religious and public). Indeed, grape and pomegranate ornate carvings were widespread and reached unparalleled perfection in the art of their depiction in the Zvartnots Temple (VII century). Thus, these ornaments manifested in various fields of Armenian culture (fine arts, sculpture, architecture) and have been used in prehistoric, ancient, and medieval periods for household and ritual purposes, obtaining symbolic importance based on the symbolism of the tree of life. Studies show that the motifs of pomegranates and grapes had significant cultural and symbolic value in the Armenian heritage of the modern period as well, especially manifesting themselves in the architectural landscape of Soviet Armenia. Thus, for centuries, the widespread distribution of grapes and pomegranates in Armenia became the motive for their transformation into symbols with artistic character, which are still used today in various fields of art in all their manifestations, only undergoing morphological changes over time. So, being among the most common fruits growing in the Armenian highlands, both of these are used to make wine. Both of them, being berry-like fruits and grouped under the same peel or on a bunch, are considered symbols of Christianity, due to which they appeared in various styles in different spheres of Armenian culture, particularly in architecture, thus manifesting in the artistic decoration of architectural structures of both the pre-Christian and Christian periods. During the Soviet era, these motifs resurfaced, and they were not merely decorative: they carried deep-rooted meanings that reflected national pride and cultural stability in the face of political upheaval. Their manifestation in architecture transcended mere aesthetics, embodying a history of continuity and adaptation, as architects integrated these motifs into public buildings, monuments, memorial fountains, and elsewhere (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Manifestation of vegetal and animal images in the Soviet buildings of Yerevan Republic square

Animal themes and motifs manifested in architectural culture (natural, fantastic, and mythical animals, as well as totemism expressions) are more than just decorations; they also have ideological connotations or content. For example, the depiction of a pair of birds and their chicks is common, which expresses birth and fertility. Images of birds represent the idea of fecundity in both the animal and plant worlds (Mnatsakanyan, p. 28). Armenian ornamental art includes depictions of other animals as well, including heads of bulls, lions, and oxen (starting with Urartian ornamental art; while oxen were rarely found later, they are considered the symbol of Luke the Evangelist), eagles (Khorenatsi, 1913), falcons, peacocks, deer, goats, rams, lynxes, foxes (the fox was one of the Armenian totems as a victor over the evil forces of nature, but since Christianity it has acquired the opposite meaning), etc., (Mnatsakanyan, pp. 264-266) whose depictions are found both separately in a natural way and together with plant attributes (Figure 4). In addition to these, depictions of fantastic animals are also found (e.g., in the bas-reliefs of the Akhtamar church).



Figure 4. The image of a fox on the exterior wall of the current "Noy" wine, wodka, brandy factory and the image of a bird on the building of the Yerevan Government House, together with vegetation (Soviet architects R.Israelyan, A. Tamanyan)

Geometric ornaments (Figure 5): Armenian medieval culture is a treasure trove of ornamental manifestation, as seen in sacred and public architecture, stone and wooden carvings, and textile decorations. All of them include vivid, varied, and often geometric patterns. The latter often appear with stylized depictions of native Armenian flora that were used in decorative elements in architecture. Geometric patterns (such as symmetrical triangle geometric motifs, for example) are geometric designs derived from traditional Armenian art that are distinguished by their symmetry and precision and are intended to express a sense of harmony and order. From window frames to wall decoration, geometric shapes add visual interest and cultural depth to structures (Erbudak, Kyurkchyan, 2022). Consequently, they were widely used in the exteriors of Soviet-era Armenian buildings. It should be stated that the manifestations of geometric rhombuses, squares, circles, triangles, circles, quadrilateral or four-sided ornaments, as well as octagonal and oval ornamentations, trilobated combinations are noteworthy (they appear in manuscript miniatures, on textiles, embroidered fabrics, altars, semi-altars, memorial fountains, public buildings and elsewhere).



Figure 5. Various ornamental manifestations in the Soviet architectural compositions

Thus, the Armenian geometric forms of ornamental art are saturated with rich ideological content and have been developed over a centuries-long process. Based on studies, we can state that while there is essentially no geometric motif devoid of content in decorative art (repetitions and interweaving of triangles, quadrilaterals, circles, and rhombuses), they all have their source and material basis in their knowledge of the ancestors of Armenians and nature, including the animal and plant world.

Wine and brandy decanters, jars (Figure 6), and other *objects* were commonly depicted on the exteriors of Soviet-era Armenian buildings as well (RA NAS Institute of Arts, 2008, p.52; Arshakyan, 2019).



Figure 6. Combination of the depicted objects with vegetal and geometric ornamental patterns (Previously “Ararat” Winery, at present “Noy” wine, vodka, brandy factory building)

Christian symbols (cross, four gospels, four evangelists, four-sided throne, nimbus, twelve apostles, etc.). The image of the cross, or khachkars, as the most significant symbols of Armenian culture, as monuments of small architectural form, and as architectural ornaments (also boundary stones, monuments symbolizing victory, etc.), which, originating from ancient times, were formed and perfected, took their permanent place among the monuments of medieval Armenia, reaching the 19th century (Martirosyan, 1957, p. 124) and going beyond it (in the process, quadrangular early medieval monuments ending in a cross and winged crosses followed). They contain the main Christian idea: the salvation of Jesus. According to studies, the khachkars have been erected (from the IV to V centuries) separately as a monument or built into the wall of a church as an architectural ornament. They were erected to immortalize military victories and important historical events, to mark temples, churches, memorial fountains, bridges, and other buildings, to award large donations to monasteries, and on other occasions. Already in the X-XIII centuries, all the main types of khachkar art were formed and reached stylistic perfection. It was during this period that khachkars already contained the main artistic symbolic elements: the cross, decorated with grape bunches at the top and with acanthus leaves at the bottom. The khachkar also symbolizes the holy altar, so it was often framed by an arched or rectangular border. In the medieval period, various woven motifs were spread in both miniature painting and especially in the decorative art of khachkars and architecture:

a cornice was added to the cross, which formed a separate decorative motif—pomegranate fruits with branches—and sometimes the decorative motif of the cornice, forming a stylistic contrast, differed from the decoration of the flowering cross itself. Deeply carved ribbon-shaped letters were created at the top and bottom of the friezes. (Safaryan, Muradyan, 2024) Thus, khachkar art and its manifestations in various fields are considered a symbolic art, completely imbued with the meaning of salvation. It has been constantly improved and applied in its execution formulas, reaching our days, when numerous stone masters and sculptors continue to create them, according to already developed traditions (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Khachkar-shaped spring monument in Yeghvard, Armenia, 1985

In general, Armenian architecture, sculptures, and khachkars have preserved the ornaments coming from the depths of centuries, which have their own unique compositional style and features characteristic only of Armenian sculptural art. So, in Soviet architecture, elements inspired by khachkars were often incorporated into facades and public spaces. The monuments, memorials, and memorial springs created during this period are the best manifestations of the revival of khachkar art. In essence, the repeating cross motifs not only pay tribute to Armenian history but also symbolize endurance and faith.

Results and Discussion

Thus, the origination (regularity, ideological basis) and formation (patterns, generalizations, symmetrical composition) of all ornamental forms are linked with the pre-Christian and Christian ideas and aspirations of the Armenian people. Over time (ancient, medieval, new, and the newest), the meanings of many ornamental forms have been developed in accordance with the historical development of society. This is why ornamental motifs are enduring, because they are based on historical reality, a unique reproduction of the people's life, struggle, religious-mystical ideas, worldview and thinking, and their understanding of the ideas of various forces and phenomena. In fact, having been transformed and processed over time, they have reached our days as expressions of beauty and ornamental motifs with specific meanings, with new combinations and complexities. Their purposeful and relentless use has been observed for centuries and is especially noteworthy in the context of the Soviet Armenian architectural culture, which is national in form but socialist in content.

Of course, it should be stated that all the motifs and forms of ornamentation, their peculiarities, execution techniques, and other issues have a rather wide scope. The buildings created during the Soviet era (built in the 1920s-1990s) vividly demonstrate the ornamental and decorative manifestations, which, having passed a long historical path, have successively found their place in the Armenian architecture of the 20th century (in public, industrial, residential, and other buildings), giving new meaning and significance to their creation in a period when there were repressions against national history, identity, and, in general, the centuries-old cultural heritage (Dolukhanyan, 1980).

It is worth noting that all types of vegetal, floral, animal, geometric, object, and symbolic ornamental patterns and motifs, with their origins (classical and medieval heritage), compositional, stylistic, and form-creation depth, and manifestations of artistic expression, have found their way into the built environments of Soviet Armenian settlements, including the capital Yerevan. Among these buildings, the Government Building, the "Armenia Marriott" Hotel, the History Museum, the Ministry of Communications building, as well as the "Ararat" Winery (at present the "Noy" wine, vodka and brandy factory), the Academic Theater of Opera and Ballet, the Cascade Complex, and other buildings are noteworthy, which, in addition to magnificent architectural solutions and expressions of decorative elements, amaze with their rich and diverse manifestations of ornamental art, inspired by the national ancient and medieval heritage. These buildings, considered Soviet architectural heritage, demonstrate that, as one of the world's oldest civilizations, the Armenian people have developed a distinct culture over the centuries, including architectural traditions with admirable decoration and magnificent ornamental art, which are among the oldest and most vibrant areas of their created art. Therefore, it is undeniable that Armenia is an ancient country with its own architectural style. Over the centuries, Armenian architects have achieved the artistic expression of the structure through architectural and constructively precise forms, rich decoration (decorative relief, bas-relief, ornamental motifs, etc.), artistic synthesis (sculpture), and the created proportions and mutual arrangements of individual parts and details of buildings both in relation to each other and to the overall composition (Figure 8).

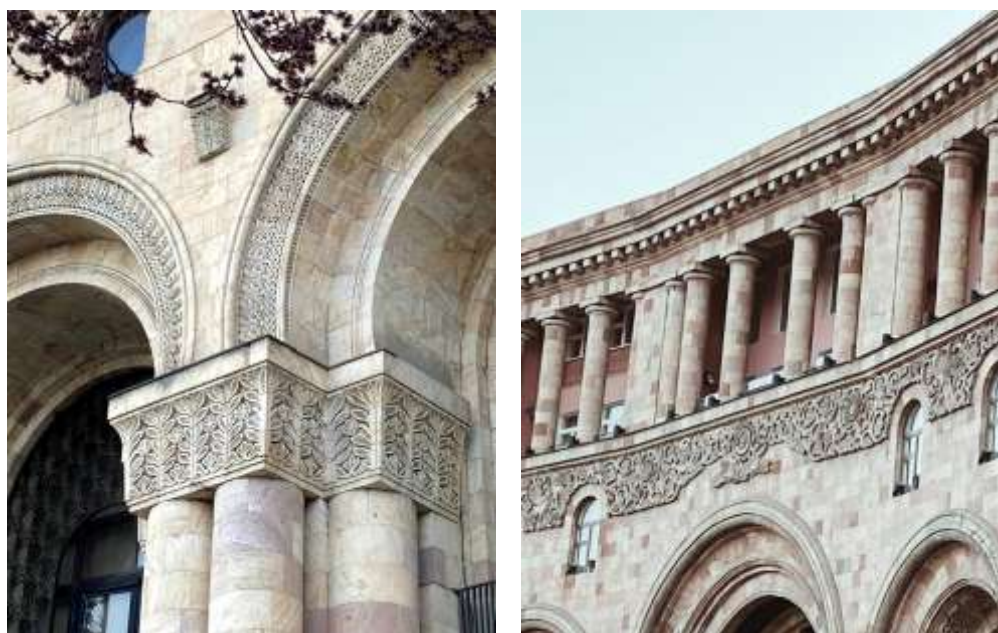


Figure 8. Manifestation of decors and ornaments in the Soviet-era buildings of Republic square ensemble

According to studies of the formation of pre-Soviet architecture and the appearance of ornamental and decorative art in it, already in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the classical forms coexisting in Armenian architecture were revealing unique artistic manifestations. European trends that penetrated Armenia during this period, intertwining with national traditions, found their echoes in buildings (columns and ornamental sculptures decorating facades), the study of which shows that Armenian architects preferred the preservation of classical forms and their artistic reinterpretation. The architectural works of those years, in the composition of which antique colonnades are used, are of great interest with a variety of compositional solutions, in which the harmony of the structure, the general splendor of details and facades, and the uniqueness of the buildings, along with the logic and expediency of architectural forms, are combine (Gasparyan, 2003).

Already in the 1920s, it had become evident that architects and planners had sought ways to integrate national elements into modern architectural forms. After World War II, a new interest in monumental architecture was observed in the Soviet Union, and Armenia was no exception. The resulting mix of styles led to the emergence of a distinctly Armenian Soviet architecture, characterized by bold forms, public spaces, and the use of ornaments and motifs. It is evidence of the influence of traditional Armenian arts (imitated from ancient churches and monasteries). The main decorative elements include intricate stone carvings, khachkars, depictions of crosses, fruits, floral motifs, and geometric patterns (Arshakyan, 2021, pp. 95-97). These elements were consciously revived and integrated into Soviet-era architecture, serving to connect modern buildings with a sense of historical continuity and cultural identity while aligning them with the socialist realism aesthetic promoted by the state.

Essentially, the distinctive features of decorative and ornamental art forms in Soviet Armenia lie in their integration with Soviet ideology. Although architectural decoration of this era was not merely decorative, it was imbued with ideological significance. That is, the decoration of Armenian Soviet architecture was developed to demonstrate themes of progress, unity, and strength, while simultaneously acknowledging the local context. As a result, it is noticeable that the designs of buildings from the Soviet period often include motifs reminiscent of Armenian folk art, churches, and historical monuments. In effect, with this approach, Soviet architects and craftsmen sought to connect the new socialist ideals with Armenia's ancient cultural heritage, symbolizing the continuity of the Armenian spirit and tradition, which were often displayed in public and administrative buildings, embodying the fusion of craftsmanship and architecture.

A study of monumental and public buildings shows that public buildings in Soviet Armenia, including schools, cultural centers, and administrative buildings, which were often adorned with decorative elements, essentially conveyed messages of hope, progress, and human empowerment. The grand scale of these structures was complemented by oversized decorative elements, such as friezes depicting allegorical figures from Armenian mythology or historical scenes from the nation's past. This choice of form was deliberate, aiming to inspire pride and a sense of belonging among citizens, even in a historical period such as the Soviet system. Thus, in the architectural composition of Soviet Armenia, decorative sculptural and ornamental art demonstrates a unique mixture of cultural heritage, artistic expression, and political ideology that emerged during the Soviet years. The works of many major architects of the Soviet period are rich in manifestations of ornamentation, including A. Tamanyan, M. Grigoryan, R. Israelyan, J. Torosyan (Figure 9), and others. Those Armenian architects and artisans continued to draw inspiration from their ancestral ornamentation, integrating ancient and medieval motifs into modern construction. This synthesis created a distinctive architectural aesthetic that embodied national heritage within a contemporary Soviet framework.



Figure 9. Cascade complex in Yerevan, 1970-1980s

Thus, ornamental art forms have gradually evolved over the centuries, reaching the fields of urban planning and architecture, giving meaning and role to the life stories of their creators and disseminators, imparting new ideological and substantive thinking to their designs and paintings, and reworking, developing, and perfecting what has been inherited. In fact, the distinct culture of Armenian ornamental art, in all of its forms and inventions, has found expression in the Soviet architecture system today as a testament to the biography and history of the creative Armenian people, as well as a unique heritage that has continued to find eternal existence, particularly in the design of architectural administrative and public buildings of the last century.

Conclusion

Indeed, the Soviet period was a significant transformation for Armenia, affecting all aspects of society, including architectural culture. In this context, the legacy of ancient and medieval Armenian church ornaments found unexpected expressions in the architectural composition of buildings of the Soviet period in Armenia. While the secular architecture was heavily influenced by socialist symbolism, ornamental art maintained a stylistic connection with the country's profound national, and why not, Christian roots and cultural history, which were resurfaced in the external and internal images of structures of the time.

Considering local and regional studies, it is noteworthy that the manifestations of national ornamental arts and medieval church decoration were not limited to the capital, Yerevan, but found their echoes in different regions of Armenia. Both in rural and urban areas, structures were exhibited in which architects revived traditional decorative arts and constructive decorative elements, often using building materials of local origin. Although Soviet architectural policy emphasized utility and functionality (utilitarian buildings), architects and builders of the time nevertheless succeeded in integrating aesthetic elements. In fact, there was a tendency to decorate Soviet buildings with elements reminiscent of medieval Armenian decorations (e.g., stylized crosses, fruit and animal compositions, floral patterns and geometric shapes, and decorative elements derived from ancient churches, vaulted/arched ceilings, and sculptures). And despite the ideological demands and building trends, the Armenian architecture of that period adopted a unique approach, integrating traditional Armenian ornamentation into the dominant Soviet style.

Finally, it should be noted that the architecture of the Soviet period in Armenia, ancient and medieval Armenian ornamentation, manifested as a testament to the enduring cultural identity of the Armenian people. By incorporating traditional motifs and decorative elements into new structural forms, architects maintained a connection to Armenia's historical artistic legacy while navigating the demands of Soviet modernity. This fusion not only enriched the visual landscape of Soviet Armenian architecture but also served as a subtle assertion of national pride and cultural continuity amidst a period of significant socio-political change.

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