

Theme 2

Architectural Ceramics

CERAMIC DECOR IN THE EUROPEAN PART OF THE GOLDEN HORDE

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Despite their long history the cities of Golden Horde have produced significant pieces of material culture. Its noticeable element is the buildings with rich architectural decor. European parts of the Golden Horde are mostly famous with ceramics as the main component of the decor. It was present mainly on the religious buildings (mosques and mausoleum) and on the palaces. Buildings decorated with ceramics are found not only in all the big cities, but also in towns and even far in the steppe away from the large settlements.

Architectural decor was a research issue of A. Voskresenskiy, L. Galkin, L. Noskova and others.

The rarest and most valuable type of architectural decor was mosaic. Its details were carved from colorfully glazed cashine blocks. Large fragments of mosaic panels came from the cities of Lower Volga (Saray, Saray-al-Jedid, Ukek) where they were produced. Thus, Saray was the home-city of a tondo-panel with a Persian inscriptions. Its major elements as well as small fragments can be found on all the large monuments and even on some of the remote mausoleums. Ornamentation included inscriptions, highly stylized floral ornamentation, geometric ornamentation with star-like figures. The following colors prevailed: turquoise, ultramarine, white, sometimes yellow, red, brown and green.

A more popular and cheaper type of decor was represented by cashine tiles. Tiles with relief white angobe decoration on the ultramarine ground with grayish-green highlighting of the details were mostly widespread. Floral ornamentation was prevailing while inscriptions were

less common. Tiles of other types are less widespread. Among them are the tiles with overglaze enamel decoration and anthropomorphous ornamentation.

Ceramic decor on terra-cotta base was less common. It was represented mainly by white-clay tiles with relief floral ornamentation under the thick layer of turquoise glaze.

The most widespread type of decor is represented by figured bricks (triangular, hexagonal) which was the structure element of decorative columns. Figured brickwork and lining was