

Holy Shrines are An Important Part of The Historical Topography of The City of Bukhara

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Abstract

This article discusses various aspects related to the formation of Bukhara, including its urban composition, arch and rabad structures typical of medieval cities, the development of guzars, and the historical topography of sacred shrines. It also analyzes the involvement of these holy shrines in the establishment of guzars, their spatial relationships, and their evolution as crucial elements in the historical topography of Bukhara.

Keywords: topography, spirituality, society, community, architecture, cemetery, mausoleum, shrine, education, development, rabat, guzar.

1. Introduction

The socio-economic, cultural, and educational transformations witnessed globally at the turn of the 21st century have highlighted significant opportunities for scientific advancement. The historical and geographical significance of sacred shrines, central to cultural life worldwide, particularly in the Eastern hemisphere, underscores their pivotal role in shaping new guzars and adapting to territorial shifts and identifications, which remain pressing concerns. Hence, it is crucial to precisely locate these shrines based on topographical data, safeguard them as cultural heritage sites, and ensure their transmission to future generations[1].

2. Research Method

Bibliography of research.

In the early 18th to 19th centuries, scholars such as N. Khanikov, A. Burns, L. Kostenko, A. Vamberi, I. Poslavsky, P. Shubinsky, and A. Semenov contributed valuable insights into the historical narrative of Bukhara's sacred shrines.

The second group, that is, during the Soviet period, orientalist including I.I.Umnyakov, M.Saidjonov, V.A.Shishkin, O.A. Sukhareva, V.V. Bartold, A.R.Muhammadjonov, L.I.Rempel, G.A.Djurayeva, Y.G.Nekrasova created special historical and topographical monographs on the topography of the city of Bukhara[2].

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In their post-independence research, historians such as R.L. Gafurova, H.H. Torayev, R.V. Almeyev, E.V. Rtveladze, Y.G. Nekrasova, Sadriddin Salim Bukhari, and N. Yoldoshev have provided a fresh perspective on national and religious values, offering objective insights into the history of Bukhara's sacred shrines[3]. Their studies not only analyze the socio-economic and spiritual dynamics of Bukhara but also delve into the topography, architecture, and transformations of these shrines. Particularly noteworthy are the extensive creative endeavors undertaken at these sites following independence[4].

3. Results and Discussion

The scientific exploration and investigation of Bukhara's historical topography has long been a focal point of scholarly inquiry. Researchers have contributed some insights into the history of holy shrines while analyzing key issues such as medieval rabats, the city's territorial extent before the Arab conquest, the development of guzars, and the topography of landmarks like squares and market complexes, as well as the positioning of city walls and gates. However, the dynamics surrounding the formation and proliferation of guzars and the pivotal role played by holy shrines in the city's expansion remain largely uncharted territory[5].

Bukhara's sacred shrines serve not only as invaluable cultural monuments but also as integral components of the city's medieval urban fabric, embodying its architectural styles, construction techniques, urbanization processes, and the socio-religious ethos of its inhabitants. They hold significant value in elucidating crucial historical insights about the city's topography and are indispensable sources for understanding its cultural and spiritual significance[6].

It is known that the residence of Bukhara rulers has two gates of the Ark, the western gate of which is called "Registon" and the eastern gate is called "Goriyan" ("Cemetery Gate"). The creation of the Ark fortress is associated with the name of Siyovush and some authors Afrosiyab [7], they note that there was a tomb of Siyovush behind its eastern gate. To the southeast of this gate is the city. In the future, this part of the city expanded and population was influenced by the Siyovush cult. Because, on the one hand, the eastern gate, where Siyovush's tomb is located, gained socio-economic importance, on the other hand, it was in the spiritual attention of the population as a shrine. Such a situation had a significant impact on the formation of the city of Bukhara, or its regular expansion.

Later, during the Arab era, the city of Bukhara was surrounded by an 18-meter thick wall. The foundation of the town (13 hectares) on the eastern side of the castle is connected with the name of the Turkish ruler Sheri Kishvar [8]. In the south of Shahristan, trade and craft stalls appeared, and Bukhara was formed in the composition of shahristan, ark and rabad, typical of medieval cities.

In the historical literature, there is information that in 1405 Mirzo Ulugbek (1394-1449), who became famous as a scientist from the Timurid dynasty, and his nephew Abdulla ibn Ibrahim Sultans stayed in Bukhara for a short time, during which they carried out defense and construction works in the Ark. It is also noted that there were two gates of the Ark fortress during this visit [9]. Subsequently, the eastern gate of the Ark appears to have been permanently closed. Indeed, there is no reference to this gate in any historical sources dating from the Timurid period onwards.

It is plausible that Mirzo Ulugbek, who settled near this gate, paid homage to the tomb of Siyovush, the legendary founder of Bukhara. This reverence likely influenced Ulugbek's profound respect for Bukhara, evident in his subsequent endeavors. This sentiment is

underscored by Ulugbek's establishment of a madrasa in Bukhara in 1417 and another in Abdukholiq Gijduvani's land in 1433, which strongly supports our interpretation.

During the reign of Abdullah Khan II, a prominent figure of the Shaybani dynasty, Bukhara thrived as a capital city. He commissioned the construction of numerous architectural marvels and socially significant buildings. Interestingly, historical records from that era do not mention the Eastern Gate (Darvozai Guriyan) of the Ark fortress.

Considering that Abdullah Khan II also sponsored the building of madrasas near the Ark fortress, it appears that the western gate of the Ark gained heightened political and spiritual importance during this period. While historical sources indicate repairs to the western gate during Abdullah Khan II's reign, there is a notable absence of information about the eastern gate. It is plausible that the eastern gate remained closed throughout the reign of the Shaybani dynasty.

Consequently, the closure of the eastern gate led to the formation of a guzar known as Arki Basta (Closed Ark) behind it. This guzar name is documented in sources dating back to the 18th century [10]. As the Ark expanded its boundaries and closed off the eastern gate, Bukhara's rulers, out of reverence for Siyovush, left his tomb undisturbed in its original place, relocating it only after sealing the eastern gate and shifting it towards the western gate.

Historian Muso Saidjonov emphasized the presence of Siyovush's tomb in a small courtyard just inside the eastern entrance of the Ark, after passing through a narrow passage on the left side (passing through four arches on the roof) [12, -C.17]. Therefore, even at the beginning of the 20th century, rulers continued to believe in the legendary founder's mythical role, lighting candles and offering prayers at Siyovush's tomb in homage to his spirit [11].

Professor R.R. Rakhimov also notes that a candle is burning in the tomb of the legendary hero Siyovush [12]. Thus, in the social and spiritual life, in the people's thinking, Siyovush lived as the legendary founder of the city.

During the 10th century, the Registan area extended north-westward from the western foothills of the Ark to what is now known as the Gate of Hazrat Imam. In that era, Arab historians referred to this gate as Darwazai Ma'bad in their writings [13]. Subsequently, the vicinity surrounding the Abu Hafs Kabir tomb and Hazrat Imam Gate became densely populated with residential areas. By the 15th century, this area had developed into the bustling guzar known as Hossa Polot Guzar [14]. In the following centuries, especially after the 16th century, settlements and guzars continued to be formed in the area extending towards Hazrat Imam Gate, and the registon expanded to the southwest and took on a similar appearance to today. The conducted studies show that the formation of new guzars continued in the following centuries. Orientalist scholar O.A. Sukhareva notes that until the 16th century, the shrine of Abu Hafs Kabir, located in the north of the city of Bukhara, was famous as an important object of pilgrimage in the spiritual life of the society [15].

After the 16th century, in particular, at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, the guzars of Nazarcha, Hossa Polod, and Qazi Mir Hashim appeared around the shrine of Abu Hafs Kabir. Thus, the shrine became integral to both the social and spiritual ethos of the population, influencing the city's architectural development.

The Ismail Somoni mausoleum and its environs were incorporated into the city's territory in the 16th century. By the early 18th century, settlements and neighborhoods had emerged in this area, historically known as Naukand. Hence, this shrine played a pivotal role in the expansion of the north-western sector of the city.

Located outside the walls of the old city fortress, the shrine of Chashmai Ayyub was surrounded by a vast cemetery in its prime. Situated to the northeast of the Shergiron Gate in the western part of the city, and to the south of the Oglan Gate, the cluster of Chashmai Ayyub tombs encompasses the Chashmai Ayyub mausoleum, Zinda Fil Ahmadi Jami mausoleum, and Sharabad mausoleum. Over the centuries, the surroundings of these shrines became crowded with people, and there appeared such guzars as Khoja Gunjari, Havzi Chobin, Kalmoq. Historical maps indicate that the new guzars that developed around these shrines were integrated into the city during the 16th century.

The Gate of Sheikh Jalal was constructed during the reign of Shaybani Sultan Abdulaziz Khan ibn Ubaydullah Khan (1540-1549). Sultan Abdulaziz Khan held Sheikh Jalal in high esteem, being his disciple. Sheikh Jalal passed away in 1548 at the age of 70, and his tomb is situated in the Mirakon quarter of Bukhara.

Shaybani Sultan Ubaydullah Khan had a great devotion to the Sheikh, and Sheikh Jalal was the mentor of the ruler.

Also, Ashtar Khan ruler Abdulaziz Khan (1645-1680) built a mausoleum over the tomb of Sheikh Jalal. This historical data underscores Abdulaziz Khan's profound reverence and admiration for Sheikh Jalal.

Adjacent to the Gate of Sheikh Jalal, Abdulaziz Khan constructed a residence in honor of his esteemed teacher. However, during Bukhara's semi-colonial period, this house fell into disrepair and became a ruin due to neglect. Between 1803 and 1894, Russian authorities dismantled this splendid architectural monument and utilized its bricks to construct various buildings nearby, including a post office, telegraph office, and regional hospital. So, the shrine of Sheikh Jalal near the gate was also demolished during this period.

In 1954, the Sheikh Jalal gate was repaired by the state. The gate of Sheikh Jalal and his tomb are no longer extant today, but the shrine bearing his name near the gate played a pivotal role in the development of the Sahibzada and Mirakon guzars. This influence led to the emergence of Sahibzada, Mirakon, and Khoja Chorshanba guzars in the southwestern part of the city, expanding from the vicinity of Sheikh Jalal guzar due to increasing population density.

During the 19th century, the Sahibzada guzar was established in the southern part of the city near the Sheikh Jalal gate. Like other guzars, it featured a mosque, ablution facilities, a school, and a pool, serving as a communal hub for its residents. There were stones of the mountain in the shrine called Guzar, located near the cemetery named after Shah Arab. At the same time, public buildings were built on this place in the southwestern part of Bukhara. Guzar has moved away from his historical appearance and entered a modern appearance. The shrine of Sahibzoda has not been preserved.

Turki Jandi district in the south of the city, Mirakon guzar belonging to Kosagaron quarter is also adjacent (to the north) of Sahibzoda guzar, which was formed in the southern expanded area of the city after the Bukhara wall was moved after the 16th century. This quarter is called Guzari Sheikh Jalal due to its proximity to Sheikh Jalal Gate, and there was also a madrasah and a mosque of the same name here.

According to the source scholar O. D. Chekhovych, the Mirakon mosque and madrasa were built in 1607-1608 and when the quarter was formed, it was called Kalta Manor. Thus, the establishment of Sahibzada and Mirakon guzars followed the construction of the Sheikh Jalal Gate, highlighting its significant role in their formation.

Despite topographical alterations implemented in the mid-20th century, the layout and streets of Sahibzada, Mirakon, and Khoja Chahorshanbe, adjacent to the Sheikh Jalal neighborhood, remained largely unchanged. Today, the historic Sheikh Jalal quarter, which once enriched the city's architectural landscape, has transformed into a hub housing a medical institution, a women's advisory council, and a regional hospital.

Historical city topography reveals that in the 16th century, the Turki Jandi guzar, nestled among densely populated neighborhoods, experienced minimal expansion, with its surroundings evolving into a sprawling cemetery.

The Turki Jandi cemetery, located south of Shahristan, features prominent mounds due to the layering of tombs over centuries. Turki Jandi remains a significant shrine in Bukhara, situated on Turki Jandi Street in the city.

The historical importance of the cemetery is evident from the remnants of sagana structures found on the rear walls of houses numbered 13, 15, and 17 on Namozgoh Street, Bukhara. These sagana walls reach a height of 3-4 meters, indicating that this cemetery was the largest in the city during its time.

During the Soviet era, the Turki Jandi mausoleum and cemetery were neglected, and a store selling hunting goods operated on its northern side. The road passed through the front facade of the mausoleum on the west side. Hamid Olimjon street of Bukhara city is located after this road. During the time of the former Union, there were ablution rooms belonging to the mausoleum at the place of houses 15, 17, 19 of this street.

In 2017, the northern section of the cemetery was flattened and today, a three-story kindergarten is under construction at that site. Only the mausoleum remains preserved, with residential areas now occupying what was once a vast cemetery.

During the late Middle Ages, guzars continued to proliferate along the fortress wall between the gates of Karshi, Mazar, and Samarkand. Qazi Nuriddin, Imam Qazi Khan, Karakamol, Mir Tahuri Devan, and other guzars emerged in this area, contributing to the city's urban development.

Between the Imam and Oglan gates on the north-western side of the city, residential areas such as Hossa Polad, Nazarcha, Kofar-Rabad, Khoja Qurban, Qazi Mir Hashim, Askariby have been formed.

On the western side of the city of Bukhara, near the Talipoch gate, there was the tomb of the Samanis, tomb of Saffari imams in the area of Oglan Gate, in the area of the Shergiron gate, the tomb of Gunjor al-Hafiz, the Chashmai Ayyub tomb, and on the north side of the Karakol gate, there was the tomb of the Ismaili imams, the tomb of the Khojabor Khojas, and the Solori Haj tomb.

Muddao, Havzi Baland, Ahmadi Jam, Qabul-ota, Uzbek Khoja, Takiya, Ahmad Dodho, Khoja Gunjori, Kalmokhan, Charmgaron, Dastorbandan, Janafaran, Shahri nav were later formed in these areas.

Besides their establishment, the naming of guzars often reflects their association with holy figures. Guzars where renowned sheikhs, saints, pirs, eshans, and guardians lived and practiced were frequently named after them. This resulted in numerous instances of guzar names changing over time in historical records. Sometimes, the original name of the guzar persisted alongside the name of the prominent religious leader associated with it. For instance, in early 20th-century Bukhara, guzars such as Khoja Bulgor, Imam Qazi Khan, Eshoni Pir, Jafar Khoja, Babayi Nonkash, Khoja Halim, Sheikh Rangrez, Khoja Avliyoi Garib, Sheikh Jalal, Khanaqohi Joybor, Khalifa Khudoidad, Eshoni Imla, Zinda Fil Ahmadi Jami,

Chashmai Ayyub, Podshahi Ismail Somani, Shah Akhsi, Maulana Sharif, Makhdumi Azam, Shermuhammad Zhuvozkash, Khoja Kalon, and Turki Jandi bore the names of order leaders, sufists, and saints.

4. Conclusion

The above-mentioned tombs initially consisted of the graves of famous people, sufists, and theological scientists, and later their surroundings were expanded due to the addition of new graves. This process highlights the profound influence of religious faith on the spiritual and societal life of the community. Common belief held that burying the deceased near these saints ensured blessings in the afterlife, leading to the proliferation of such cemeteries both within and outside the city walls. As settlements began to form around these cemeteries, social life flourished, populations grew denser, and new guzars, neighborhoods, and districts emerged. Consequently, holy shrines became integral components of the city's topography, significantly shaping and expanding its territory.

5. References

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