



Peculiarities of Central Asian Architecture in The 9th-12th Centuries

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Abstract: This article talks about the constructions built in Central Asia in the 9th-12th centuries, including caravanserais, minarets, mosques-mausoleums, madrasas, and their structure and uniqueness..

Key words: caravanserai, rabati malik, mosque, minaret, minarai kalon, mausoleum, mausoleum of the somanites.

I want to start my speech with the words of Amir Temur: "If anyone doubts our power, let them look at the buildings we have built." The 9th-12th centuries are considered to be important periods in the history of Central Asia, and are recognized by historians as the First Renaissance. This period is distinguished by its unique style of architecture. We will consider this in the example of caravanserais, ensembles, mosques, mausoleums and madrasas. First of all, let's talk about caravanserais. It is known that during this period, the cities of Central Asia, in addition to trading in each other's territories, also communicated with countries such as Asia Minor, China, and India. The development of trade demanded the construction of caravansary on caravan routes. Caravanserai have a certain style and are distinguished by their location and other characteristics. In particular, the caravansaries built near the cities did not have special protective equipment because they were not very dangerous. Caravanserai in the countryside are surrounded by thick protective walls. Some of these caravanserais even had towers. Caravanserai mainly consisted of 2 courtyards: in the first courtyard there was a guardhouse, a stable, a stable, a storeroom, and in the second courtyard there were only rest rooms, bedrooms, and a kitchen. In order to make sure that the caravansary has a solid architectural structure, we will stop at the Bileuli caravansary built in Khorezm. Bileuli Caravanserai is a wonderful monument of Khorezm architecture and monumental decorative architecture. Obida is made of large stones aligned squarely. It contains all the architectural elements characteristic of a caravanserai. The entrance to the building is arched, separated from the side walls by a high pediment, and its two ends are bordered by a minaret. The image of a lion on the roof of the Bileuli caravanserai also gives the building a solemn spirit. The caravanserai has a courtyard, surrounded by two-story rooms and halls. S. P. Tolstov, an expert in the history of Central Asia, said that in addition to the fact that this site is the oldest of the monuments of this type in Central Asia, it is not inferior to the ancient "royal road" of the Persians in terms of the scale of the Khorezmshahs, the "big royal road" leading to the Volga. ", and it was determined that it belongs to the period when the powerful Khorezm-Khazar Empire was established in the beginning of the 10th and 11th centuries.

The famous traveler and scientist Vamberi noted that there is a special way to relax in caravanserais. He said that when the caravan approaching the shed in the desert, the people in the caravan were running around to collect dry grass and gravel. After coming to the shed, they made tea with the collected firewood and sat for a long time drinking tea, while the camels grazed far away from the shed. [1]

As a result of the development of trade and science in Central Asia by the 11th century, caravan palaces with amazing architectural art were built around the caravan routes. These include Akhchaqala between Sarv and Amul, Doya Khotun between Amul and Khorezm, i.e. on the banks of Amudarya, and Raboti Malik caravansary between Samarkand and Bukhara.

The Raboti Malik Caravansera, a unique masterpiece of Karakhanid era architecture, is located in Navoi region, along the Karmana-Bukhara highway - an ancient caravan road that has been restored today. The historical complex was built in the 70s of the 11th century by Shamsulmulk Nasr ibn Ibrahim, the Karakhanid sultan. In the first quarter of the 12th century, it was rebuilt by Arslan Khan Muhammed ibn Sulaiman (1102-1130), one of the Karakhanids. It is known that in the past this structure was used not only as a camp for caravans, but also as a border guarding fortification.

The most advanced engineering ideas of the XI-XII centuries are presented here. Based on the pair of columns at the corners of the octagon, it can be seen that it is unparalleled in syncretic architecture. This miracle of engineering technology shows that it was one of the largest domes of the Middle Ages East. And not only the dimensions of the dome, but also the precisely calculated structure - the foundation of the dome on pairs of columns of different diameters is amazing - this is an engineering idea that has not been repeated anywhere else in Central Asia.[2]

Architecture made great progress in its development during the Somonites period. According to written sources, many mosques of the Samanid period were built on the basis of adaptation of pre-Arab temples to mosques. They had one room, and the roofs of the mosque rested on pillars. The roof of mosques is usually dome-shaped. In the mosques, especially, the mihrabs are decorated with bricks cut into shapes and inscriptions, carved ganches and even golden fountains. Childukhtaran mosques in Shahrستان can be mentioned. These monuments provided an opportunity to observe the development of religious architecture in Central Asia.

At the place of the Magoki Attori mosque, before the Arab invasion, there was a Mokh (Moon) market, where idols, medicines and spices were traded, and there was also a temple of fire worshipers. The famous historian of Bukhara, Muhammad Narshahi, states the following in his book History of Bukhara: There was a bazaar in Bukhara, which was called Bazari Mokh Roz, where there was a bazaar twice a year and idols were sold. The built mosque was named magok, that is, deep, because at that time the cultural layers reached half of the mosque. Before the Arab occupation, there was a moon market in front of the mosque, and because of the trade in medicines and spices, the mosque was named Attori, and because it was located in a depth, it was called magok, that is, deep. Over the course of ten centuries, cultural layers appeared around the architectural monument, and the mosque remained six meters deep.[3]

According to Narshahi, Amir Nasr ibn Ahmed built a huge palace for himself in Bukhara Registan and spent a lot of money on its construction. This palace was very beautiful. In front of the palace, buildings for devans were built. The palaces of governors and governors were also in Nishapur, Marv, Samarkand and other cities. These palaces are distinguished by their size and beauty. In many cases, such palaces were built in beautiful places, in gardens.[4]

By the 10th century, the construction method began to change. During this period, buildings with a roof covered with a dome and made of baked bricks were of great importance. The mausoleum of Ismail Samoni is a clear proof of this.

The Somonites' mausoleum is the oldest architectural monument in the Bukhara region and the first brick-built building in Central Asian architecture. The building has four facades, all four sides are the same, decorated like the front side, that is, there is no front and back side of the building. This mausoleum is built in the shape of a cube, and a large dome covers the roof of the building with small domes at the four corners. A scientist who studied the drawings of the Somonites' mausoleum writes: leaving behind their studies, they achieved high results in this art".[6] Because the building is calculated so correctly that no matter which side you divide it in two, it will be divided into the same plane. I would also like to confirm this statement with the opinion of scientist Bulatov: "The proportionality of the forms of the mausoleum is based on the square under the dome and the outer square, as well as the golden ratio derived from the semi-square and the modular system".[7]

One of the defining features of Central Asian architecture is the presence of minarets. These vertical buildings serve different purposes and represent the symbol of strength and dignity in the architectural style of the region. They served as beacons of faith, observatories, and even observatories. Minarets have long been associated with Islamic architecture. It was built near the mosques and served as a means of reading the adhan and calling believers to prayer. Also, minarets are considered a symbol of supreme authority, and the rulers tried to express the power of their authority with the strength of minarets. When talking about minarets, the first thing that comes to mind is Minorai Kalon in Bukhara.

Kalon Tower was built by Amir Arslan Khan Muhammad ibn Sulaiman, the last ruler of the Karakhanids, in 1124-1127. According to historical sources, in one of the courtyards around Minorai Kalon, there is the grave of master Baqo, the builder of the tower. The reason why the grave of the master is located here is written in his will: "Bury my body in the yard next to the minaret, if the minaret falls, let it fall on my grave and crush my bones." But, God is a witness, the minaret will not fall until the doomsday" [8] .

I did not know how close these facts are to the truth, but the minaret is still standing today, for almost 900 years. As for the minaret itself, it is 9 meters deep from the ground level, and its height is 47 and a half meters (50 meters with the base). The foundation of the tower was completed in 2 years. Master Baqo Minorai used camel's milk and egg white instead of water to build the tower. In the special mixture prepared for raising the tower, they use yulgun powder, grape juice, black hen's egg, camel hair and milk. It is not surprising if this served to make the minaret strong [9].

In the 9th-12th centuries, the architecture of Central Asia was not only important in the architecture of the East, but also amazed the West. I would like to conclude my speech with the words of Frederick Starr, the chairman of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute: "It would not be an exaggeration to consider that Central Asia was the cultural center of the world region in 800-1100."

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