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## ARCHITECTURE OF THE FERGHANA VALLEY AND THE HISTORY OF ITS STUDY IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Khasanova M.

Independent Researcher Department Of The History Of Uzbekistan, National University Of Uzbekistan

### ABSTRACT

The article examines the development of architecture in the Ferghana Valley and the history of its scholarly study during the first quarter of the 20th century. Particular attention is given to the architectural heritage of Kokand and other cities of the valley, including madrasahs, mosques, palaces, and mausoleums. The author analyzes archival materials, historical sources, and surveys conducted by architects and ethnographers in the 1930s–1950s. The research highlights the influence of regional isolation on the formation of unique architectural styles, the challenges of preservation during the Soviet era, and the destructive impact of the anti-religious campaign. The article emphasizes the importance of systematic study and protection of cultural monuments as part of Uzbekistan’s historical and cultural heritage.

**KEYWORDS:** Ferghana Valley; Kokand; architecture; madrasah; mosque; cultural heritage; preservation; Uzbekistan; 19th–20th centuries.

### INTRODUCTION

The Ferghana Valley at various periods of history was part of different state formations. From the beginning of the 18th century until February 19, 1876, it constituted the larger part of the Kokand Khanate, serving as its significant economic and political center. Numerous historical monuments of different epochs have been preserved in the valley. Within the territory of the khanate, several ruler’s residences-fortresses, palaces, citadels, as well as mausoleums of Kokand khans and their wives were constructed.

Despite the fact that Soviet literature and statistics often cite information stating that “before the Great October Revolution, only 2 percent of the population of Uzbekistan was literate” [1], contrary to these claims, it can be noted that in the Ferghana Valley alone in 1875 there were 182 madrasahs, 1709 schools, 235 women’s monasteries, and 6154 mosques. By 1917, there were 20 thousand mosques in Turkestan [2]. Similar data can be cited for many other towns and districts of our republic. For instance, on November 21, 1897, one of the issues of the newspaper Turkestan Regional Gazette published a list of Kokand madrasahs compiled by the correspondent Yusufjon Mirzo. Reviewing this list, the reporter enumerated 38 madrasahs by name. Another source provides slightly different information: at the end of the 19th century in Kokand there were 52 madrasahs, more than 120 schools, over 10 mosques, 44 caravanserais, 20 markets, and more than

10 banks. By the 1890s of the 20th century, 64 such historical monuments were still preserved, though their condition was dire. In our view, according to the estimates of experts in this field, the number of madrasahs in Kokand regularly increased, and in the 1920s there were more than 50 of them [3].

The architecture of the Ferghana Valley took shape during the period of the region's isolation from other areas of Central Asia, and this influenced the further development of architecture in the region. Here, a distinct type of mausoleums, mosques, madrasahs, and other structures—both religious and civil—was developed. This isolation at the formative stage of architecture also affected the architectural style of the masters of the Ferghana Valley in the 19th–20th centuries. From a compositional perspective, these features are clearly revealed in the decoration of neighborhood mosques. The principle of dividing walls with narrow strips into separate planes, filled with carved panels, circles, or scalloped arches, was strictly maintained. As construction material in Margilan, as in other districts of the Ferghana Valley, brick was widely used [4]. For the construction of large, unique structures, craftsmen employed square-shaped fired brick. For smaller buildings, rectangular adobe brick was used, which was significantly larger in size than the modern variety. In the last quarter of the 19th century, after the conquest of Central Asia by Russia, these bricks were replaced and eventually completely supplanted by the rectangular Russian-type brick, which continues to be used in construction to this day [5].

It should be noted that the city of Kokand, as a major economic center, underwent reconstruction on a social basis. At the same time, new construction did not exclude the opportunity to examine and make use of a number of issues of building practice, drawing on past experience both in architecture and construction techniques. This would have been facilitated by the study of such historical monuments as the former Kokand Palace, the Sultan Muradbek Madrasah in Chorsu, and the Mir Madrasah in Yangi Chorsu, which were in a ruined condition. It was planned to transfer the Mir Madrasah to the use of a House of Collective Farmers, while the Sultan Muradbek Madrasah was considered necessary to be financially supported by Uzkomstaris [6].

According to the materials of Izvestiya of Uzkomstaris [7], a group of Uzkomstaris researchers upon arrival in Kokand met with engineer Shvyrov, who undertook to supervise restoration works in Kokand. In fact, 1,500 rubles were allocated, and together they inspected: the Palace of Khudoyarkhan (on the list of state protection), the Narbutabiy Madrasah (on the list of local protection), the Hazrat Madrasah with its mausoleum, the Dastarkhanchi Madrasah, the Dahma-i Shahan Mausoleum, the Chalpak Madrasah, and the Jami Madrasah (both on the list of local protection). The conclusion was that many architectural monuments had been leased out; in particular, among the protected sites, the Urda was in operation, and the Narbutabek Madrasah was occupied by private tenants [8].

Surveys of the monuments of the Ferghana Valley continued in subsequent years. In 1938–39, they were carried out by architect V.L. Voronina [9] and ethnographer A.K. Pisarchik [10], covering all the cities of the Ferghana Valley. In 1948, the monuments of the Namangan region were surveyed by architect A.A. Balaev [11].

In October 1954, in connection with the development of the topic “Preparation of the State List of Protected Architectural Monuments of Uzbekistan,” a survey was conducted of architectural

monuments of the Ferghana Valley not under state protection, in order to select the most valuable among them. The survey was carried out by art historian I. Borodina and photographer E. Polyakov, who produced descriptions and photographic documentation of the monuments. The survey primarily covered monuments previously studied, registered with the Department of Architecture, and preliminarily selected in 1953 as the most interesting and valuable.

In earlier surveys, considerable attention had been given to planning, materials, and construction, especially by architect Balaev, who in his report focused in detail on building materials, structures, and descriptions of sites, without giving characteristics of decoration.

Therefore, in the surveys of 1954, much greater attention was devoted to decoration, while the description of site planning and materials was omitted for monuments already described earlier [12].

In many respects, the work of the regional departments of Uzkomstaris was not carried out at the proper level. The problems lay in the shortage of craftsmen, the insufficient survey of monuments, and also the negligent attitude towards cultural monuments on the part of Kokkomstaris, Ferganastaris, and others, which were subsequently abolished, and the protection of monuments was transferred to the Main Directorate. On July 8, 1964, this was liquidated as an independent institution, and the responsibility for the protection of cultural monuments was assumed by the Department for the Protection of Monuments of Material Culture, established as a division of the Ministry of Culture of the Uzbek SSR.

However, it should be noted that despite all efforts to preserve historical and cultural heritage, throughout the Soviet rule Ferghana, like the whole of Central Asia, experienced a general socio-cultural crisis, exacerbated by the policy of struggle against religion. During these years, many architectural monuments, under the slogan of combating religion, were barbarously destroyed.

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