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The Mosques in Uzbekistan: History and Typology

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Abstract: The history of mosque architecture in Central Asia and their description, typology and decorations are discussed in this paper. During the spread of Islam in Central Asia between the 9th and 12th centuries, a variety of Muslim structures were built. The functional distinctions of three architectural types of mosques are outlined. These include the small guzar mosques for everyday prayer "namaz", the djuma "Friday" mosques, and the suburban mosques "*namazgah*", where public prayers are held in the celebration days of the main Muslim feast, "the kurban", and during the month of Ramadan. The special typology of these three types of mosques, which reflected their functions, is described. The description and history of some mosque examples are given in this report.

Introduction

The period between the 9th and 12th centuries witnessed a variety of architectural typology of Muslim architecture in Central Asia. The most important among them belongs to the place of collective prayers - the mosques. The Arabs in Maverannakhr built the first mosques during the conquest of the separate regions in Central Asia, to spread the new faith. They were sometimes built in place of the pre-Islamic cultural structures. The functional distinctions of the three architectural types of mosques during the penetration of Islam in Central Asia are outlined. There were small "*guzar*" mosques for everyday prayers "*namaz*" of the local communities in the big blocks-guzar. The village mosques were mostly similar - and usually one such mosque is constructed for the whole village. And the last, is the suburban mosque "*namazgah*" where public prays by the whole neighbourhood people on the days of the celebration the main Muslim feast-Kurban and Ramazan take place.[1-4]

Mosque Typology

The typology of mosque architecture depends on their functions, which are reflected in three varieties of mosques. The architecture of mosques is described below.

The Djuma Mosques

The Bibi-Khanum Mosque in Samarkand

This Djuma mosque, also called Timur's mosque is known as the mosque of the legendary Bibi-khanum, which was built in 1399 after Timur's return from his Indian campaign. From this campaign, Timur brought huge riches and elephants in order to use them for the noble cause of constructing the djuma mosque in his capital. According to the ruler's idea, this

mosque must excel in its size and magnificent attire above all djuma mosques of the world. The construction was completed in 1404, but Timur was not satisfied with the dimensions of the main portal and ordered to reconstruct it. He also ordered to put to death the administrative persons who were responsible for the construction.

The Bibi-Khanum mosque was of the courtyard type (Fig. 1). Its rectangular shape was enclosed by high walls, and the three minarets were located in the corners. The spacious rectangular courtyard was enclosed by a gallery with numerous circular marble columns, which supported small arches and domes. The entrance contained arched *peshtaks*, flanked by round towers and vaults from the sides of the courtyard. Opposite to that is the building of maskur, with its flanked minarets on the octahedral pedestal, and crowned with a high dome on the drum along the main axis. In addition, it contained two portal domes on the drums along diametrical axis. They were covered with glazed bricks, *majolicas*, and mosaics. Ornamental paintings were used in the interior. This mosque was destroyed by an earthquake one year after its completion. Only some of its majestic ruins were retained. The restoration of this mosque has started a few years ago, and it is still in progress.

The Kalyan Mosque in Bukhara

At the beginning, this mosque was a small djuma-mosque in the town and was located at the Ark of Bukhara. It did not meet the needs of Karakhanid's capital. At the end of the 11th century, a new vast mosque with a courtyard enclosing the multi pillars domed galleries was erected on the Shakhristan territory. In the period of the Mongol invasion, it came to a decline, and at the end of the 15th century, restoration works began. When the common level was raised, the facing of the *majolica* plates of the panels were laid out in *maksur*, and *mikhrab*. The mosque was rebuilt in 1514 and again in the middle of the 16th century (Figs. 2 & 3). The general perimeter of the walls, the vast courtyard enclosing galleries, based on the square-shaped were extended. There were arched *iavans* along the axes of the courtyard, the iavan of marsur was especially magnificent. It was crowned by a blue dome on the left drum. The mosque has no minarets. The minaret Kalyan (1127) which was adjacent to it carried out this function (Fig. 4).

The Kok-Gumbaz Mosque in Shakhrisyabz

This djuma-mosque was built in 1434 by Ulug-bek. It took its name from his father Shakhrukh. It was part of a complex of other buildings, which belonged to the Shakhrisyabz Timurid Dorut-Tillyavat family. The main volume is a portal-domed maksur, along two sides of that are two wings, which formed arch-domed galleries on brick pillars. They were enclosed from three sides by walls but were ajar to the courtyard. The mosque was named 'Kok-Gumbaz' because of its cladding with blue bricks. The dome and drum carried the large-scale inscriptions. Glazed bricks and majolica decorated the mosque portals (Fig.5).

The Tillya-Kari Madrassa Mosque in Samarkand

This mosque was attached to the Tillya-Kari madrasah between 1641 and 1660. By the 17th century, the major mosques of Timur and the Aleck Kukeldash came to decline. Thus, during the construction of the Tillya-Kari madrasah, Yalangtush Bakhadur decided to add the djuma-mosque to it. It has vast maskur and lateral arch-domed galleries on the pillars ajar to the courtyard. Muslims of Samarkand came to pray in this mosque on Fridays. The

mosque is covered by refined decorations in its exterior. The name "Tillya-Kary' means "gild" which was used extensively as the ornamental pictorial in the maskur (Fig. 6).

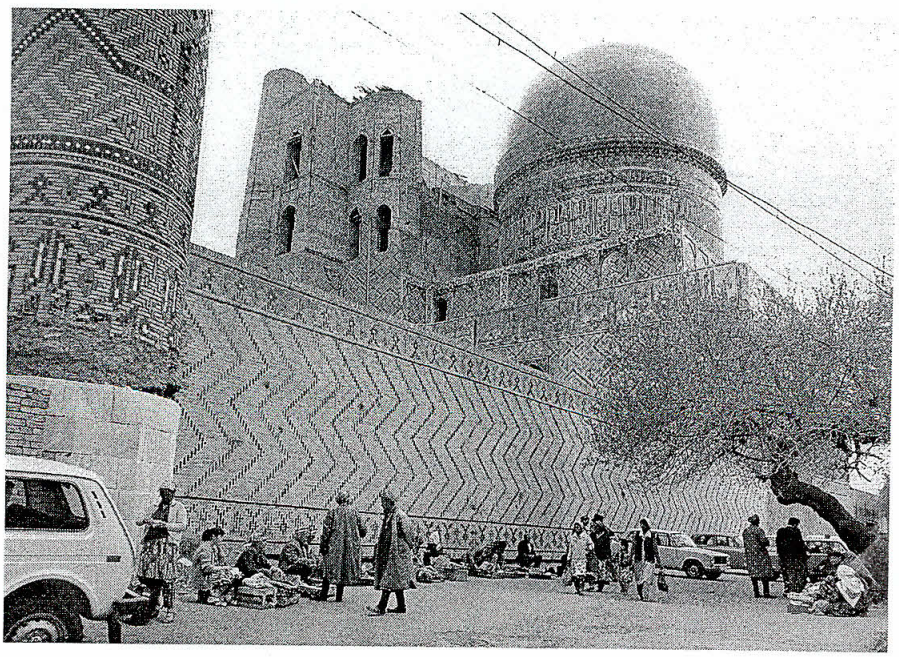


Fig 1: The Bibi – Khanum Mosque, Samarkand.

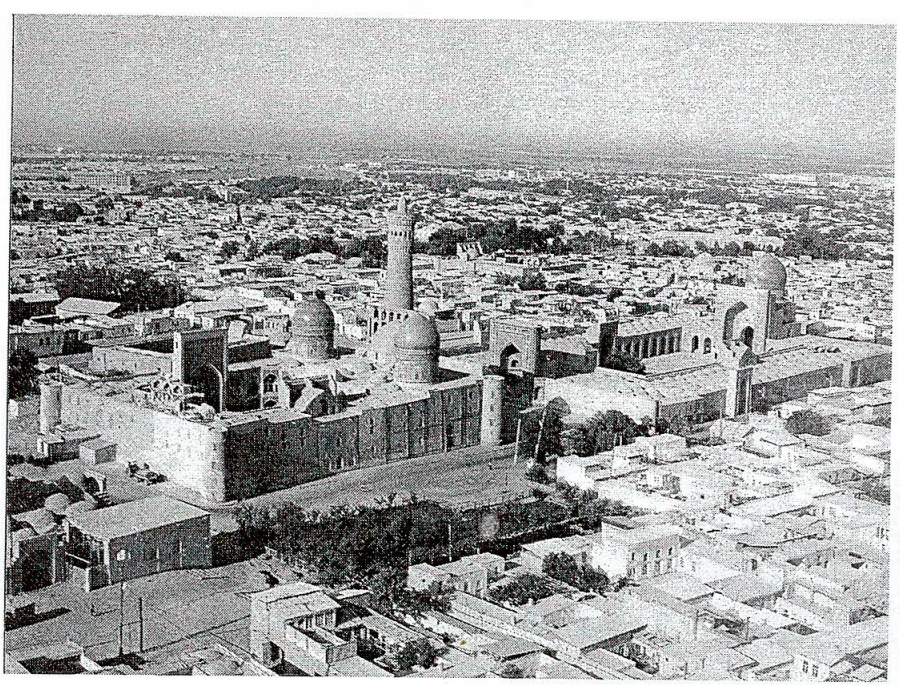


Fig2: The Kalyan Mosque, Bukhare

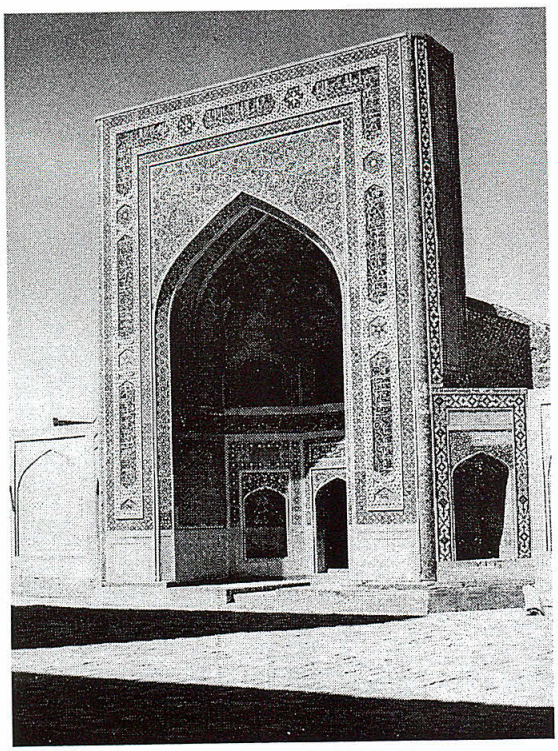


Fig 3: The Kalyan Mosque Gate, Bukhara.

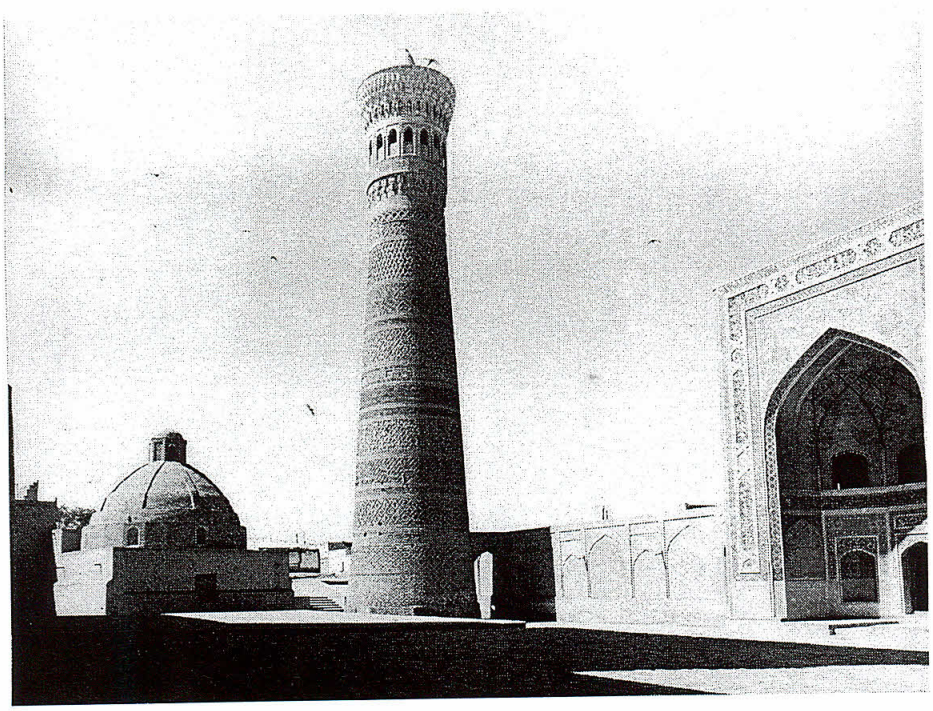


Fig 4: The Kalyan Mosque Minaret , Bukhara.

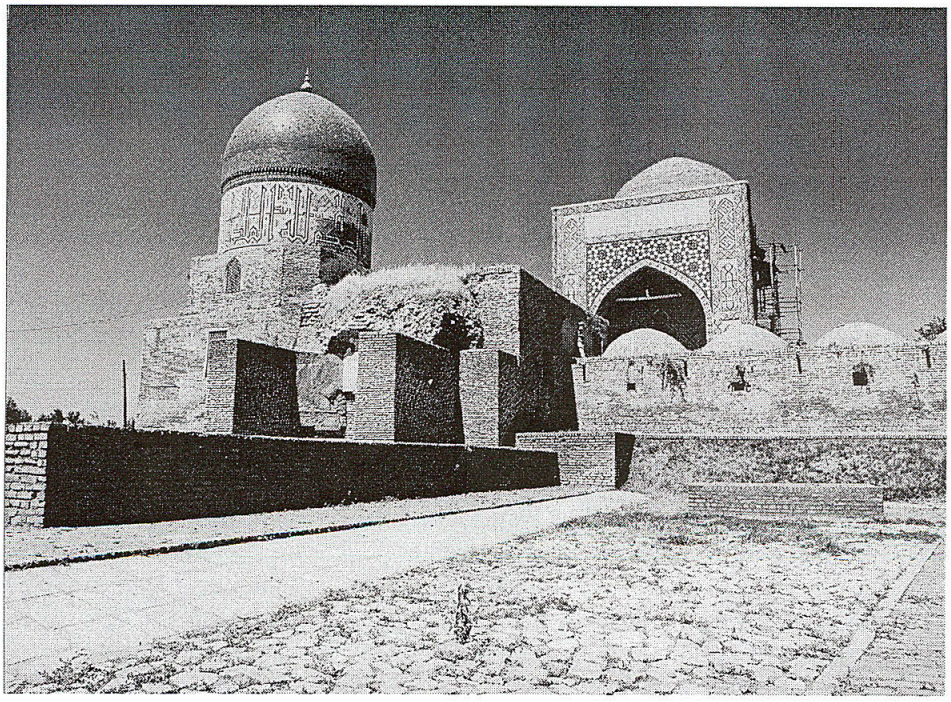


Fig 5: The Kok – Gumbaz Mosque – Shakhrisyabz

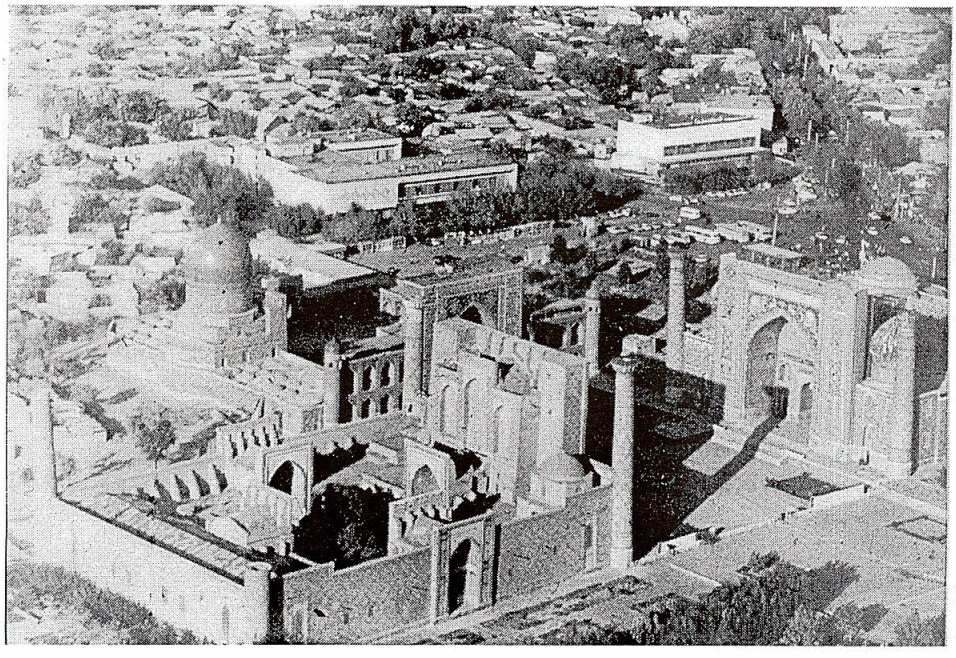


Fig 6: The Tillya Kari Mosque – Samarkand.

The Djuma Mosque in Khiva

This mosque was apparently built in 1788-1789 on place of the older one, but with a new layout. Its vast rectangular space was filled with 212 wooden columns decorated by carving, which was typical in the Khorezm style. Square-shaped skylights were used in the ceilings. The columns were partially borrowed from medieval constructions. Deep carvings with abstract ornaments and inscriptions of the *kufi* style were used in the 10th and 11th century pillars. More plane carvings, geometrical and stylized floral ornaments were used in the 11th and 12th century pillars. Deep carvings of small floral design and inscriptions by *neskhi* script were used in the pillars of the 15th and 16th centuries. Floral ornaments of Khiva style were used on the pillars of the 18th and 19th centuries. The minaret was erected near the mosque (Fig. 7).

The Djuma Mosque in Kokand

The main mosque of the capital of Kokand, Khanate was built in 1815. It is an oblong construction with the winter section in the center and long column iavan in the front. The columns are well proportioned, with cut-boles and stalactite capitals. Stylistic floral inscriptions cover the ceilings. There is a large circular minaret with an octo-arched lantern.

The Namazgah Mosques

The Namazgah Mosque in Bukhara

This Namazgah mosque was constructed in 1119. It served for performing the two yearly Muslim feasts, *Kurban* and *Ramazan*. All citizens of Bukhara and its neighborhoods attended these prayers. And that is why it was located in the suburban area. A vast space was completed by high brick walls with arches and the mikhrab in the center, which was formed by bricklaying, and refined design unglazed terracotta plates. The restoration of the mosque was done in the 14th century. The facings of the carved glazed terracotta plates were covered above the original layers of the walls. And in the 16th century, the arch-domed gallery with portals in the center was constructed, and a pavilion-shaped minbar for the preacher was built.

The Kok-Gumbaz Namazgah Mosque in Karshi

This namazgah mosque was erected in 1590-1591. A high dome and portals formed the central section with lateral quadrangular sections along the sides. A panel and mikhrab of the main premise are covered by majolica tiles. The external decorations contained simple ornamental sets from glazed brick.

The Guzar, Suburban Mosques

The Diggaron Mosque in Bukhara Oblast

This is the *guzar* suburban mosque in the village of Khazara. It was built in the 9th and 10th centuries. The square-shaped structure had four round brick columns along a small square-shaped premise. These columns supported scallops arches and a central dome. Small arches

between the columns and walls, four small domes, and intermediate arches "*balkh*" were used in the ceilings. The entrance was from the East side, and the mikhrab on the opposite one. The construction from the two sides was enclosed by the awning on the wooden columns, and the space between them serviced as a summer mosque. It had a recent origin and it was probably a repetition of an earlier form.

The Maghoki-Attari Mosque in Bukhara

This mosque was built in place of the Zoroastriean temple Mokh. The original layout of the mosque, which contained four circular pillars, was discovered by excavations. The level of floor which covered the remains of the pillars was risen and the construction formed a rectangular layout with six pillars. The front façade contained an asymmetricall entrance and various architectural decorations using ornamented bricklayings, filled by carved terracotta. N*eskhi* inscriptions marked by blue glazed tiles were used on the arches. The interior of the mosque was subjected to some alterations in the 16th century (Fig. 8).

The Balyand Mosque in Bukhara

This mosque was built between the end of the 15th century and the first half of the 16th century. It is a *guzar* mosque in one of the richest districts of the city. Its name *Balyand* "The Tall" was connected to its common proportions of the outward volume. The rectangular-shaped construction had the most refined decorations, a mosaic mikhrab, luxurious floral paintings with gilding on the walls, blue caissons wooden ceiling covered by geometrical ornaments. From the outside, the mosque is enclosed by a late awning on the well-proportioned wooden columns, using it as a summer mosque.

The Bala-Khaus Mosque in Bukhara

This mosque is a large *guzar* mosque built in 1712 near the Bala-Khaus pond. It contains a winter building dome. The awning of the summer mosque was constructed in the beginning of the 20th century. It has two rows of well-proportioned columns with stalactite capitals and a small minaret, which was designed by Usto Shirin Muradov in 1917.

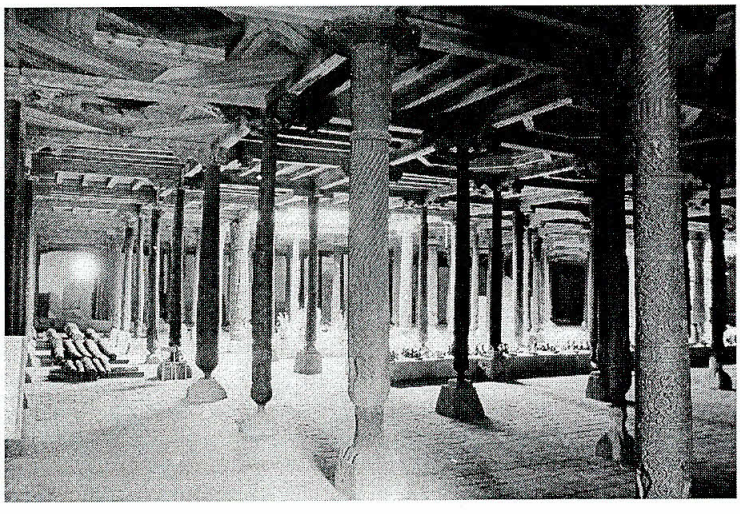


Fig 7: The Djuma Mosque – Khiva

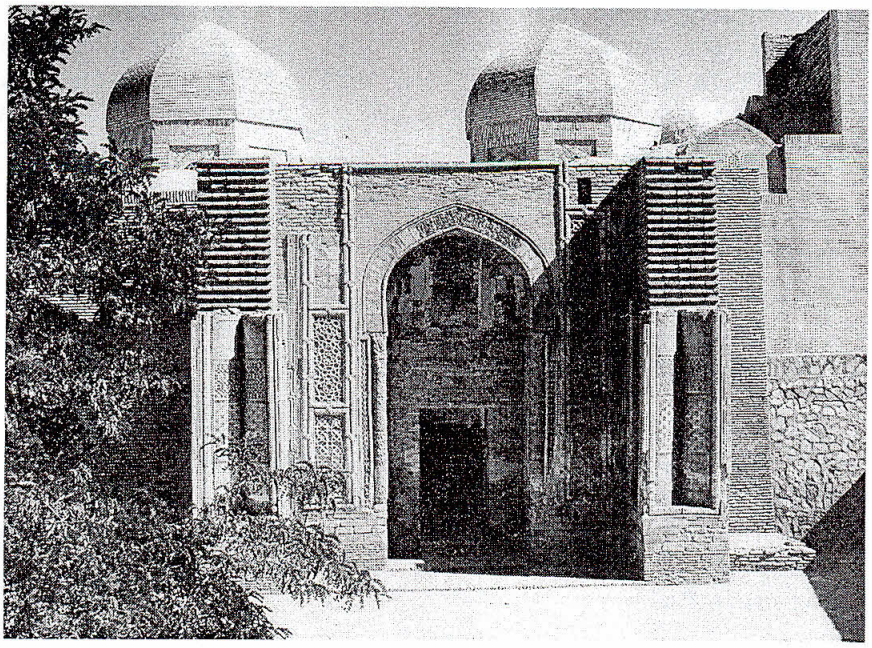


Fig 8: The Maghoki-Attare Mosque, Bukhara.

The Khazret-Khizr Mosque in Samarkand

This mosque is located on the slope of the ancient settlement Afrasiab. It was built on the foundation of a very old mosque in the period between 1854-1919. The construction is asymmetrical and includes the portal entrance and a ribbed dome hall, the premises of the mosque and awning columns. There is a carved *gunch* and ceiling paintings. The mosque has the pattern of the free architectural composition of the folk architecture of the Samarkand school of the 19th century.

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المساجد في أوزبكستان: تاريخها و أنماطها

فيروز أشرفي

الأكاديمية العالمية للعمارة في الدول الشرقية

طاشكند, أوزبكستان

ملخص البحث: لقد تم بناء العديد من المساجد المختلفة خلال انتشار الإسلام في آسيا الوسطى بين القرنين التاسع والثاني عشر الميلادي. تناقش هذه الورقة تاريخ عمارة المساجد في آسيا الوسطى عن طريق وصف نوعياتها وأنماطها المختلفة. تم التطرق لثلاثة أنواع من هذه المساجد في أوزبكستان، وهي تشمل المساجد الكبيرة التي تقام فيها صلاة الجمعة بالإضافة إلى الصلوات الخمس، مساجد الأحياء الصغيرة التي تقام فيها الصلوات الخمس فقط، ومصليات العيد الكبيرة التي تنشأ في ضواحي المدن. وقد تم وصف عدد من المساجد ضمن هذه الأنواع الثلاثة.