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ARCHITECTURAL POLICY AND THE URBAN TRANSFORMATION OF BUKHARA DURING THE REIGN OF ABDULLAH KHAN II

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ABSTRACT. The reign of Abdullah Khan II occupies a significant place in the political, cultural, and architectural history of Central Asia. During the second half of the sixteenth century, the ruler succeeded not only in restoring the political unity of the Shaybanid state but also in transforming Bukhara into one of the major Islamic, scientific, and urban centers of the region. This article analyzes the role of Abdullah Khan II in the architectural development of Bukhara and examines the relationship between political centralization and urban construction during his reign. The study is based on historical-comparative, chronological, and source-analytical methods. Primary and secondary historical sources, including chronicles, historiographical works, and modern scholarly studies, were comparatively examined. The research demonstrates that the architectural policy of Abdullah Khan II served not only aesthetic or religious purposes but also functioned as an instrument of political legitimacy and economic consolidation. Large-scale construction projects, including madrasas, trade domes, bridges, caravanserais, and religious complexes, significantly reshaped the urban appearance of Bukhara and strengthened its role as the capital of the Shaybanid state. The article concludes that Abdullah Khan II continued the urban traditions of earlier Central Asian dynasties while simultaneously creating a distinct model of Shaybanid architectural patronage that contributed to the long-term cultural prestige of Bukhara.

KEYWORDS: Abdullah Khan II; Bukhara; Shaybanid architecture; urban development; Islamic architecture; Central Asia; architectural patronage; madrasas; political legitimacy; urban transformation.

INTRODUCTION. The second half of the sixteenth century occupies a special place in the political and cultural history of Central Asia. This period was characterized by intense struggles for political dominance among the Shaybanid rulers, attempts to restore centralized authority, and the rapid development of urban culture in the major cities of Movarounnahr. Among the rulers of the period, Abdullah Khan II played a decisive role in the consolidation of the Shaybanid state and in the transformation of Bukhara into one of the most influential political and cultural centers of the Islamic East. His reign marked not only a period of military and political stabilization but also an era of extensive architectural and urban development that significantly influenced the historical image of Bukhara.

After the death of Muhammad Shaybani Khan, the Shaybanid state experienced a prolonged period of political fragmentation and rivalry among regional sultans. Various branches of the dynasty struggled for authority over strategically important territories such as Samarqand, Bukhara, Tashkent, and Balkh. In this unstable political environment, Abdullah Khan II gradually strengthened his position through military campaigns, diplomatic activity, and administrative reforms. By the middle of the sixteenth century, he succeeded in establishing political supremacy over most of Movarounnahr and officially transformed Bukhara into the capital of the khanate. The strengthening of centralized authority created favorable conditions for large-scale urban and architectural projects that later became symbols of the Shaybanid cultural renaissance.

The architectural activity carried out during the reign of Abdullah Khan II reflected broader political and ideological objectives. Construction projects were not limited to religious buildings alone; they also included markets, trade domes, bridges, caravanserais, reservoirs, roads, and educational institutions. Such structures played a significant role in strengthening economic integration, supporting trade routes, and increasing the political prestige of the ruling dynasty. Architectural patronage became one of the principal instruments through which the ruler demonstrated political legitimacy and continuity with earlier Islamic and Timurid traditions.

Particular attention was given to the development of religious and educational architecture. Madrasas, mosques, khanqahs, and memorial complexes constructed during this period contributed to the growth of Bukhara as an important center of Islamic scholarship and spiritual authority. The cooperation between Abdullah Khan II and influential religious circles, especially the Juybor sheikhs, further strengthened the ideological foundations of Shaybanid rule. As a result, architecture acquired not only practical and aesthetic functions but also political and symbolic significance within the state system.

LITERATURE REVIEW. The historiography of Abdullah Khan II's reign and the architectural development of Bukhara occupies an important place within both classical oriental studies and modern Central Asian historical scholarship. A significant contribution to the study of the cultural and educational environment of Bukhara was made by A. K. Jumanazar in his work Buxoro ta'lim tizimi tarixi, where the author thoroughly examined the formation of educational institutions, madrasa traditions, and the intellectual environment of Bukhara during different historical periods. The study is especially valuable for understanding the relationship between religious education and architectural patronage in the Shaybanid era [1].

An important place in the historiography belongs to A. Zamonov's research Buxoro xonligi tarixi: metodik qo'llanma. The author analyzed the political history of the Bukhara Khanate, the administrative system of the Shaybanid state, and the process of political centralization under Abdullah Khan II. The work provides important information regarding the transformation of Bukhara into the permanent capital of the khanate and explains the political foundations of urban development during the sixteenth century [2]. The diplomatic and geopolitical dimensions of the Shaybanid state were deeply investigated in I. Nizomiddinov's study XVI–XVIII asrlarda O'rta Osiyo–Hindiston munosabatlari. The author examined the political, economic, and cultural relations between Central Asia and India, including diplomatic contacts between Abdullah Khan II and the Mughal ruler Akbar Shah. This work is important for understanding how the strengthening of Bukhara increased the international prestige of the Shaybanid state and expanded its foreign relations [3].

Research devoted to relations between Central Asia and the Ottoman Empire was extensively analyzed by Z. Rahmonqulova in her dissertation concerning socio-political and cultural interactions between the two regions from the sixteenth to the early twentieth centuries. The study highlights diplomatic correspondence, Sunni political solidarity, and geopolitical cooperation against the Safavid state. This research contributes significantly to understanding the ideological environment surrounding the reign of Abdullah Khan II and the broader Islamic legitimacy of the Shaybanid dynasty [4]. One of the most authoritative classical scholars of Central Asian history, Vasily Bartold, provided extensive information about the political geography, urban culture, and historical development of Movarounnahr in his multi-volume Sochineniya. Bartold's works remain fundamental for the analysis of medieval Central Asian cities and Islamic civilization. His

observations regarding urban development and regional political transformation are especially important for evaluating the historical significance of Bukhara during the Shaybanid period [5].

Among the primary historical sources, a particularly valuable place belongs to Muzakkiri ahbob by Hasanxoja Nisoriy. This biographical and historical work contains important information about the cultural atmosphere of Bukhara, scholarly circles, literary life, and court patronage during the reign of Abdullah Khan II. The source also reflects the intellectual prestige achieved by Bukhara in the second half of the sixteenth century [6]. Another essential primary source is Sharafnoma-yi shohi (commonly known as Abdullanoma) written by Hofiz Tanish Bukhari. This chronicle represents one of the principal narrative sources concerning the political activity, military campaigns, administrative reforms, and architectural patronage of Abdullah Khan II. The work provides detailed descriptions of state policy and urban transformation during the Shaybanid period [7].

The chronicle Musaxir al-bilad by Muhammad Yar ibn Arab Qatagan also occupies an important position among historical sources related to the Shaybanid state. The author described political events, military campaigns, and dynastic struggles within Movarounnahr, while also preserving valuable information about regional governance and social conditions during the reign of Abdullah Khan II [8]. Modern Western scholarship has additionally contributed to the study of the Bukhara Khanate and Shaybanid political culture. Audrey Burton's work The Bukharans: A Dynastic, Diplomatic and Commercial History 1550–1702 examines the diplomatic, economic, and dynastic dimensions of the khanate and emphasizes the importance of Bukhara within international trade and interstate relations. The study is especially useful for understanding the economic context of urban growth and architectural expansion [9].

A broader historical context for Central Asian civilization is presented in Svat Soucek's A History of Inner Asia. The author analyzes the political and cultural evolution of Inner Asia from antiquity to modern times and pays considerable attention to the role of Islamic urban centers in regional development. The work provides comparative historical perspectives necessary for understanding the place of Bukhara within the wider history of Central Asia [10].

International organizations have also contributed to the scholarly understanding of Bukhara's architectural heritage. Materials prepared by UNESCO concerning the Historic Centre of Bukhara emphasize the global cultural significance of the city's architectural monuments and their preservation as part of world heritage [11]. Similarly, studies conducted by ICOMOS analyze the architectural characteristics and conservation problems of Central Asian Islamic monuments, including structures associated with the Shaybanid period [12].

MATERIALS AND METHODS. This study is based on a комплекс historical approach aimed at analyzing the architectural and urban transformation of Bukhara during the reign of Abdullah Khan II. The research applies chronological, comparative-historical, source-analytical, and historiographical methods in order to examine the relationship between political centralization and architectural development in the Shaybanid state. The chronological method was used to reconstruct the main stages of Abdullah Khan II's political activity and construction policy during the second half of the sixteenth century. Particular attention was devoted to the period following the consolidation of power in Bukhara, when the city gradually transformed into the political and cultural center of the khanate. Through chronological analysis, the study identifies the sequence of architectural projects and their connection with the strengthening of centralized authority.

The comparative-historical method allowed the architectural policy of Abdullah Khan II to be examined in relation to earlier urban traditions of Central Asia, especially the Timurid period. Comparative analysis made it possible to identify both continuity and innovation in the

construction of religious, commercial, and public buildings. This approach also helped to evaluate the distinctive characteristics of Shaybanid architecture within the broader context of Islamic urban development. Source analysis constituted one of the principal methodological foundations of the research. Medieval chronicles, memoirs, and biographical works were comparatively studied in order to extract information regarding construction activity, political ideology, and the cultural environment of the period. Special attention was given to descriptions of madrasas, trade domes, caravanserais, mosques, bridges, and urban infrastructure associated with Abdullah Khan II. The analysis of narrative sources was combined with the examination of modern historiographical studies devoted to the history of the Bukhara Khanate, Central Asian diplomacy, and Islamic architecture.

The research also employed elements of urban historical analysis. Architectural monuments were studied not only as isolated structures but also as components of a broader urban system connected with trade, education, religion, and political representation. Such an approach made it possible to evaluate how architectural projects influenced the economic and social development of Bukhara and contributed to the formation of the city's political image.

RESULTS. The reign of Abdullah Khan II marked an important stage in the architectural and urban development of Bukhara. After establishing centralized authority within the Shaybanid state, the ruler transformed Bukhara into the political and cultural capital of Movarounnahr. Large-scale construction projects played a significant role in this process. Madrasas, mosques, trade domes, caravanserais, bridges, and reservoirs improved both the economic and social infrastructure of the city.

Among the most important monuments constructed during this period were Abdullaxon madrasasi, Modarixon madrasasi, Toqi Sarrofon, and Abdullaxon timi. These structures reflected the continuation of Islamic and Timurid architectural traditions while also strengthening the political prestige of the Shaybanid dynasty. Commercial buildings stimulated regional trade and connected Bukhara with important international trade routes. Religious and educational institutions contributed to the growth of Islamic scholarship and increased the intellectual importance of the city. Urban development during Abdullah Khan II's reign also strengthened diplomatic and cultural relations with neighboring states. Merchants, scholars, and artisans from different regions participated in the economic and cultural life of Bukhara, transforming the city into one of the leading urban centers of Central Asia.

DISCUSSION. The architectural policy of Abdullah Khan II demonstrates that architecture functioned not only as artistic activity but also as an important political instrument. Through monumental construction, the ruler strengthened centralized authority and created a symbolic image of political stability after decades of internal conflict. Bukhara gradually replaced Samarqand as the primary political and religious center of the region, which reflected broader changes within the Shaybanid state.

An important feature of Shaybanid architecture was the integration of commercial, religious, and educational buildings into a unified urban system. Trade domes, caravanserais, and markets supported economic development, while madrasas and mosques reinforced Sunni Islamic identity and legitimized political authority. Cooperation between the state and religious elites further strengthened the ideological foundations of the khanate.

The results of the study also indicate that the construction policy of Abdullah Khan II preserved the urban traditions of earlier Timurid rulers while introducing new political and economic priorities. Architectural monuments created during this period later became central elements of Bukhara's historical identity and Islamic cultural heritage.

CONCLUSION. The reign of Abdullah Khan II occupies a significant place in the political and architectural history of Central Asia. His successful policy of state centralization created favorable conditions for large-scale urban development in Bukhara. Architectural projects carried out during this period strengthened the economic, religious, and political importance of the city and transformed it into the capital of the Shaybanid state.

The study confirms that architecture under Abdullah Khan II performed multiple functions, including political legitimization, economic organization, and cultural representation. Madrasas, trade domes, caravanserais, and religious complexes became symbols of state authority and Islamic civilization in Movarounnahr. At the same time, urban development stimulated scientific and cultural growth, attracting scholars and merchants from different regions. Thus, Abdullah Khan II should be regarded not only as a political leader and military commander but also as one of the most important architectural patrons in the history of Central Asia. His urban reforms and construction policy left a lasting influence on the historical development and cultural image of Bukhara.

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