

Architectural monuments of Kashkadarya region - the heritage of millenniums

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ABSTRACT: This article is devoted to the preservation of cultural heritage, historical architectural monuments, which are not all preserved to this day in their genuine form. First of all, we are talking about the preservation of the monuments of the Kashkadarya region, in particular the historical monuments of medieval Kesh (Shakhrisabz), as they are not only the heritage of Uzbekistan, but also the world heritage of all mankind, which must be preserved for future generations.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Kashkadarya Region is located in the southern part of Uzbekistan. It covers the area of 28,570 km². In the southeast the region is adjoined by the high mountains of the Gissar Range, and in the northeast by the Zarafshan Range with its numerous spurs and foothill plains. The main agricultural lands of the region are river and foothill valleys formed by the Kashkadarya River with left-hand tributaries of the Aksu-Darya, the Tankhizy-Darya, the Yakkabag and the Guzar-Darya rivers, which are sourcing from the above mentioned mountains. Those lands have been irrigated by these rivers since ancient times.

The spurs of the Nuratau Mountains in the northeast and the Gisar Mountains in the southeast shield the Kashkadarya Valley from the cold winds blowing from the north. Almost all year round above-zero temperature on irrigated lands in river valleys facilitated the processes of agriculture development, settlements and cities emergence in the region.

The territory of the river valley was a part of Sogdia in ancient times and had a prominent position in the Central Asian interfluvial area.

Shakhrisabz is a city with a long history and it takes its rightful place. Fig.1. The historical part of the city of Shakhrisabz. View from the full palace of Ak-Saray.



The history of Medieval Shakhrisabz, the hometown of Amir Timur, extends over 2700 years. Due to the landscaping and reconstruction, the city has radically changed its appearance. Many scientists noticed that the historic environment and topography of the city have been violated due to excessive urbanization.

The eastern city seems to be frozen, became sparsely populated, which caused a negative reaction from specialists, scientists and UNESCO.

In this regard, the UNESCO Heritage Committee called on the leadership of Uzbekistan to adhere to established rules and regulations of Uzbekistan and the recommendations of international organizations.

The right approach in urban regeneration of Shakhrisabz city center, i.e. the use of a number of free premises of monuments for trade outlets of folk crafts (carpet weavers, ceramists, wood carvers, jewelers, artisans), would recreate the spirit of past centuries. Shakhrisabz would become even more attractive for the lovers of antiquity, local and foreign tourists and become a point of dialogue between peoples, once connected by the caravan routes of the Great Silk Road.

Another important measure is the need to merge residential and historical parts of the city; otherwise they seem to be fragmented. In addition to the fact that the city used to be divided into four parts, there were also streets that led to the city center. Nowadays, those streets are out of sight as they are behind artificial fences. It is necessary to open roads and streets that lead directly to the center of the historical part. In certain areas, most probably, it will be necessary to remove the existing fences.

In order to further preserve our historical heritage, it is necessary to single out historical sites, where historical urban planning structures, buildings, landscape as well as archaeologically valuable occupation debris have been conserved. One of the actual areas of the comprehensive reconstruction of historical cities is the creation of conditions for maximum accessibility to architectural masterpieces and its historic environment by the broad masses of citizens of Uzbekistan and foreigners, through the active development of tourism infrastructure as part of the general program of reconstruction and restoration.

At the same time, urban planning activities should not violate the historical appearance of the ancient city, its topography, should not introduce a sharp dissonance into the traditional way of life of local population.

II. SYSTEM ANALYSIS

Archaeological survey of the Kashkadarya River basin depicted hundreds of ancient human settlements, fortresses, irrigation facilities and a number of cities that had been there from the First Millennium B.C. until the Late Medieval Period [2], [3], [4], [5].

A well-known archaeologist S.K. Kabanov [6] has greatly contributed to the discovery of ancient monuments in the Kashkadarya region. Due to his numerous studies, the main types of monuments of the Kashkadarya region were identified. He discovered and systematized more than 120 ancient and medieval castles, settlements, ancient urban structures.

A.A. Zimin has also made certain contribution to the studies of the monuments of this area. From the primary written sources he found out the cities of Oasis.

Led by M.E. Masson, [7] the Kesh Archaeological and Topographic Expedition (KATE) of the Tashkent State University made a significant contribution to the studies of the monuments of Kashkadarya. Based on his own archaeological observations and the studies of ancient historical primary sources of medieval and later works, as well as modern scientific literature, M.E. Masson published a book on the ancient capital cities in the lower reaches of Kashkadarya and, therefore, he laid the foundation for an in-depth study of the urban formations of this land.

Noteworthy that in the studies of the issues of the monuments of the Kashkadarya region, a great contribution was made by scientists from the Institute of Archeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan under the leadership of R.Kh. Suleymanov [8]. On the basis of numerous surveys of the territory of the ancient Karshi oasis, known from the sources as Nakhshab, as well as the results of the excavations of the first capital of the oasis - Yerkurgan settlement, - the structure of ancient settlements, their typology, the dynamics of the development of the Kashkadarya River valley, the processes of urbanization, the development of residential and monumental architecture were identified. The issues of the development of crafts and the achievements of visual arts also were considered in the studies.

At the same time, the Department of Archeology at the Tashkent State University had been dealing with the studies on the emergence and development of cities in the north-eastern part of the Kashkadarya region. Later, the teachers from the Department headed by M.E. Masson took an active part in the expedition. Among them: S.B. Lunina, Z.I. Usmanova, N.I. Krashennikova, G.Ya. Dresvyanskaya [9], A.S. Sagdullayev [10], N.P. Stolyarova.

In some years, E.V. Rtveladze took part in the expedition.

In the same years, the employees of the Research Institute for the Restoration of Cultural Monuments, particularly Kh.T. Sultanov [11], conducted the architectural and archaeological researches in Shakhrisabz. The work was carried out in the context of solving common scientific challenges. Owing to that work, completely new data on the history of the city and its neighborhoods was obtained. It also became possible to reveal the patterns of city development, to identify historical topography and urban structure, as well as the dynamics of the formation of Shakhrisabz from ancient times. The history of formation and dynamics of the development of architectural structures, urban planning and construction stages were comprehended in a new way. Numerous inscriptions on architectural monuments and individual marble tombstones were read and translated. This research work is currently ongoing.

Referring to historical and archaeological data, the Candidate of Architecture, painter N. Gilmanova [12], made a virtual version of the Ak-Saray palace that belonged to the era of Amir Timur. The works on a visual reconstruction of the ancient Uzunkir and Sangirtepa settlements (the original settlement in the future Shakhrisabz) are still in process.

Nowadays, preservation of cultural heritage and historical architectural monuments, which are not presented in their genuine form these days, is of particular importance in world architecture.

The main goal is to preserve and popularize cultural heritage monuments, taking into account their historical past and pristine condition.

Globally, the attention to historical and cultural heritage preservation has been significantly increased. UNESCO and ICOMOS (ICOMOS - International Council on Monuments and Sites) provide certain assistance in the preservation, restoration, conservation of cultural heritage sites of all mankind.

During the years of sovereignty of our republic, great opportunities have been created to preserve and revive the architectural and artistic traditions laid down by our great ancestors. There are newly built large-scale architectural buildings, mosques, landscape gardening facilities, restored monumental complexes. Protection of cultural heritage sites is one of the state policies in our republic. Historically, our land, located at the crossroads of the Great Silk Road, has been one of the centers of high civilization and culture since time immemorial. During its centuries-long history our republic has accumulated the greatest values, which are necessary for science and bringing people to knowledge. Almost throughout the entire territory of Uzbekistan, our predecessors left evidence of the rises and falls of great cultures. The contribution of Uzbek scientists in the field of archeology, architecture and art is enormous, but it will still take many more years for the ancient cultural heritage to become the property of the entire humanity.

“Today, relying on the invaluable heritage of our people, we can rightfully say that we have every opportunity to create the foundation of a new Renaissance in Uzbekistan” [1].

These words of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev are by far the most discussed topic by many scientists, including the issues of preserving the cultural heritage of Uzbekistan.

Recently, our President adopted the Resolution "On measures to further improve the system of public administration in the fields of tourism, sports and cultural heritage". According to the document, carrying out capital construction works and activities that are causing harm to the zones of protection of cultural heritage sites is prohibited. This imposes a great responsibility on us in terms of preserving cultural monuments of past centuries.

Given that we have a task to preserve monuments of architecture and arts, nowadays there is a need for proper restoration and conservation of the architectural heritage of Uzbekistan, training architectural heritage restoration and protection specialists.

Furthermore, restoration should be an exceptional measure that is not applicable to all cultural heritage sites. When carrying out the restoration of an architectural monument, it must have authenticity, i.e. correspond to the original appearance of the monument: in proportions, details and materials, without altering structures and destructing the remains of decor.

While Uzbekistan is undergoing the process of modernization of social spheres, fundamental social, economic and spiritual changes are taking place. In this regard, the challenges of historical and cultural heritage preservation are important and becoming an integral part of these ongoing transformations. It carries centuries-long spiritual values which preserve the country's national identity, connects generations with traditions, which is the backbone of our society.

Scientists from Uzbekistan are successfully developing cooperation with foreign countries, including international organizations.

Protection of the historical and cultural heritage of Uzbekistan has a century-long history. During 1920-80s, heritage protection legislation had been formed,

the state protection system and the fundamental methodological principles for

the heritage protection had been developed. Due to that, it became possible to preserve the centers of historical cities: Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva.

Outstanding architectural ensembles and complexes have been conserved and restored. Nowadays, measures to preserve the historic environment are being taken.

III. RESULTS

Under such conditions, we will preserve the urban planning culture, outstanding cultural monuments, turning them into the centers of pilgrimage. Monuments of history and culture contribute to increase of highly educated people in modern society. Even in periods of generational change, this problem will always remain relevant, inspired by the new ideological needs of a human being. In that sense, the role of researchers, archaeologists, architects, art critics becomes important and even more honorable.



IV. CONCLUSION

We make a huge contribution to the enrichment of our history and the development of architecture and arts by revealing the historical and cultural heritage of Uzbekistan, reviving the national culture of Uzbekistan, discovering and recreating the architectural monuments and archaeological sites lost over the centuries.

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