HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

EPIGRAPHIC MONUMENTS IN THE ARCHITECTURE OF KHIVA: THE INSCRIPTIONS OF THE QAZI KALON MADRASAH

Djabborova Adolatkhon Kazakbayevna
Lecturer, Department of History
Urgench State Pedagogical Institute
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0002-2326-9662
E-mail: ajabborova70@gmail.com
Tel.: +998 97 511 60 10
doi:https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23311822

Abstract. This article analyzes the inscriptions, ornamental patterns, and architectural features of the Qazi Kalon Madrasah in Khiva. Particular attention is paid to the epigraphic inscriptions found on the architectural elements of the monument, their decorative characteristics, and their historical and cultural significance. The study examines how inscriptions and ornamental designs contribute to understanding the architectural heritage and cultural traditions of Khiva.
Keywords: Khiva, ornament, Ichan-Kala, Qazi Kalon, epigraphic inscriptions, blue patterns.

Introduction. Like several other countries of the world, Uzbekistan has an ancient history, with the origins of many of its cities dating back thousands of years. Following the independence of our country, new opportunities emerged for conducting more comprehensive studies of its history. In this process, auxiliary historical disciplines have played an important role. Archaeology, ethnography, numismatics, epigraphy, linguistics, chronology, anthropology, and other fields have contributed significantly to the study of our historical heritage.

Archaeology focuses on the excavation and study of ancient cities and states, while ethnography examines the origins, traditions, and customs of peoples. Epigraphy, in turn, is the field of historical research concerned with ancient inscriptions and written texts.

The city of Khiva is world-famous for its architectural monuments. The ornamental designs found on its mosques, minarets, mausoleums, and palaces continue to attract both local residents and visitors because of their distinctive artistic qualities. In order to preserve the historical character of Khiva's monuments, restoration and conservation works were also carried out during the early years of independence.

There are several legends associated with the foundation and development of Khiva. The city is also distinguished by the unique beauty of its architectural heritage. In particular, the epigraphic inscriptions found on architectural monuments provide valuable historical information. Some inscriptions contain construction dates recorded according to the abjad numerical system, making them important sources for determining the chronology of monuments. They also include the names or references to craftsmen who constructed the buildings, as well as words of praise dedicated to rulers and poetic verses and rubaiyat composed by writers and poets of the period.

In the study and interpretation of these inscriptions, the contribution of the respected scholar and teacher Komiljon Khudayberganov has been particularly significant. Similar epigraphic inscriptions can be found at the Shergazi Khan Madrasah, Matniyoz Devonbegi Madrasah, the Old Ark, the Pahlavon Mahmud Complex, the Sayyid Islam Khoja Madrasah and Minaret, Ata Darvaza, the

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

Bog‘bonli Mosque, Juma Mosque, Musa Tura Madrasah, Uch Avliyo Mausoleum, Tash Hauli Palace, Qutlug‘ Murad Inoq Madrasah, Muhammad Amin Khan Madrasah, Kalta Minor, and Qazi Kalon Madrasah.

The architecture of these buildings embodies the spiritual and cultural values of the period in which they were constructed. Their inscriptions, ornamental patterns, and architectural forms provide valuable evidence for understanding the historical, artistic, and cultural development of Khiva.

Analesys. In Khiva, madrasahs were regarded as important centers of education and scholarship during their respective historical periods. At the corners of the Qazi Kalon Madrasah, decorative guldasta structures were constructed as supports to prevent the walls from collapsing. These guldasta elements were decorated with glazed tiles in green, blue, and white. The use of these colors also indicates their symbolic significance. White traditionally symbolizes purity, blue represents grandeur and nobility, while green is recognized as the color associated with Islam. Throughout the architectural monuments of Khiva, these colors can be seen harmoniously combined in ornamental patterns, decorative elements, and epigraphic inscriptions, demonstrating the artistic character of Khivan architecture.

On the façade of the madrasah, laudatory poetic verses in Persian were written in ta'liq script within three square panels. The backgrounds of the panels were blue, while the inscriptions were rendered in white. After entering the madrasah through a double-leaf door, visitors passed through a covered area consisting of three domed sections. Beyond the domed passage was the inner courtyard of the madrasah.

Madrasahs contained hujras, or student cells, which served as living and study spaces for students. As educational institutions, madrasahs played an important role in the intellectual life of society. The Qazi Kalon Madrasah in Khiva had 16 hujras. The windows of the cells faced the veranda, and each room had a hearth. Thus, the cells also served as dormitories for students.

After entering the madrasah, a mosque was located on the right side, while a classroom (darskhana) was situated on the left. The veranda of the madrasah also contained a well, which provided drinking water for students and teachers. The well was approximately 8–10 meters deep.

As mentioned above, the relatively modest size of the madrasah can also be observed from the dimensions and number of its hujras. The Qazi Kalon Madrasah differed from many other madrasahs in terms of its educational specialization. Students studied Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), Sharia law, taxation, zakat, legal studies, and religious sciences.

The madrasah was built in 1905 by Salim Akhun, who served as the Qazi Kalon (Chief Judge) of the Khanate of Khiva and was one of the most highly respected judicial figures of his time. Salim Akhun became the chief judge of Khiva at the age of 30. The position of qazi was considered a highly honorable profession. Only educated, honest, and capable individuals who successfully passed a series of examinations could be appointed to this position by the khan.

Just as every state had its own collection of legal rules, the Khanate of Khiva also had legal and religious compilations that regulated religious and judicial affairs. These included works such as Hidaya, Sharh al-Wiqaya, and Jami‘ al-Fatawa. Religious and judicial matters were administered under the authority of the Qazi Kalon. The principles of justice in the khanate were regulated through the activities of the chief judges, who issued judgments on the complaints brought before them according to the principles of the Qur’an and Sharia.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

In each beklik (administrative district) of the khanate, four judges served. In order to maintain peace and justice throughout the country, the khan frequently reassigned judges and required them to undergo examinations. Therefore, judges continuously sought to deepen their knowledge of Sharia law. Qazis also possessed personal seals, and they obtained the right to use such seals only after successfully passing the khan's examination.

Discussion. Thanks to the independence of our country, legal and regulatory documents have also been adopted to protect, preserve, and improve architectural monuments and cultural heritage sites [1][2].

The main façade of the madrasah faces the city street. This relatively small structure connects the transverse axes of the western and eastern gates. Four guldasta structures were built externally at the corners of the madrasah walls as supporting elements. The guldasta are decorated with white, blue, and green glazed tile coverings.

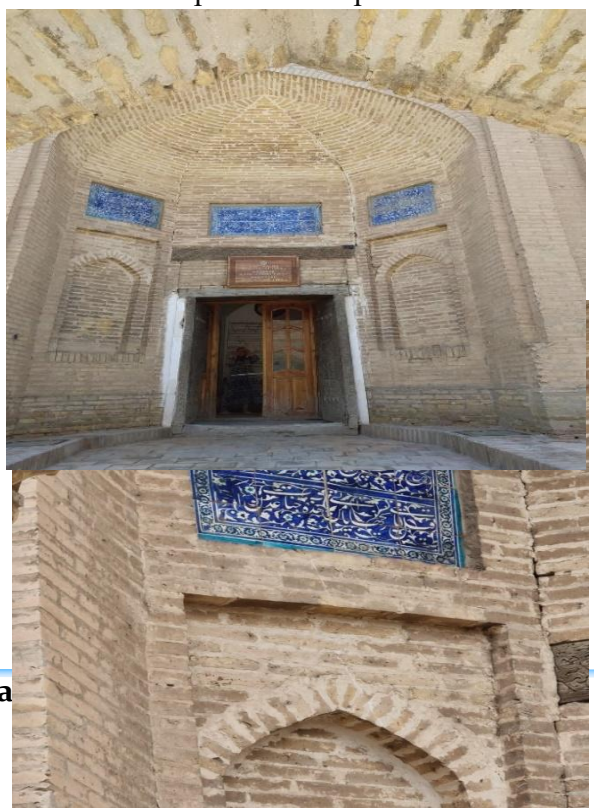
Through a small entrance beneath the tall pishtaq, featuring a carved double-leaf door, visitors enter the miansarai, a covered passage consisting of three domed sections. The exterior and interior pishtaqs of the madrasah contain inscriptions in the Arabic alphabet expressing philosophical ideas and meanings.

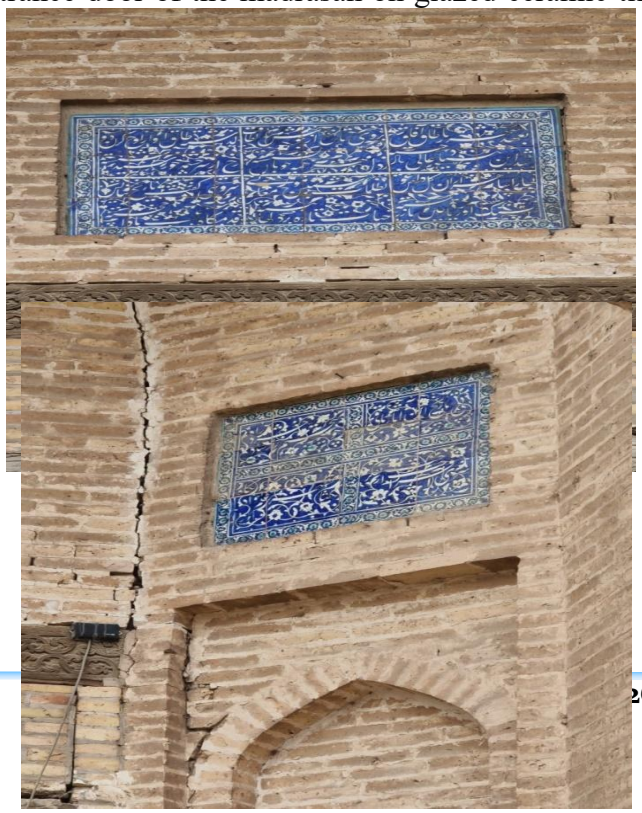
Although the madrasah is relatively modest in size and appearance, as well as in the dimensions of its courtyard, it differed from other madrasahs in terms of its educational specialization. In addition to religious knowledge, students were taught Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), Sharia law, the collection of various forms of zakat and taxes, and other aspects of legal studies [3, p. 89].

Qazi Kalon Madrasah (1905): Laudatory and poetic verses written in Persian in ta'liq script within three square panels on the wall. Photograph taken by Djabborova Adolatkhon Kazakbayevna during field research. 2026-YIL.[4. – B 24]

Among the most renowned master craftsmen who participated in the construction of the madrasah were Khudoybergan Haji, Qalandar Kochim, Bog'bek Abdurahmonov, Boltaev Matchon, Vais Kulol, and others.

Three inscriptions were placed above the entrance door of the madrasah on glazed ceramic tiles.





HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

The inscriptions above the entrance are written in Persian in ta'liq script. Their translation is as follows:

During the reign of the ruler of this world, This magnificent building was constructed. It attained glory through goodness And settled with affection in the hearts of all. Its portal rose as high as the heavens, Washing its face with the waters of the Fountain of the Sun. Thousands of flowers blossomed in its embrace like spring, And the fragrance of sweet basil seemed to emanate from its stones. It dispelled the darkness of the nights And brought a new and pure life to human hearts. The angel Sirrush, recording the history of the building, Declared: "May you become an unparalleled and wondrous place."

ق د م ک ا ه ع ج ب ب ا د ا خ ج س ت ه

5+400+60+3+600+1+4+1+2+2+3+70+5+1+20+40+4+100=1321

This place is the abode of those endowed with wisdom and understanding, where the complex laws of religion are explained. Having overcome all difficulties, you shall recognize the noble name of this place as the Gardens of Eden. I dedicated the history of this eternal monument to the foundation of the path of knowledge. Through reflection, it was conceived as a creation of Paradise, and it declared: "The abode of knowledge and good manners."1324–1906.

Today, the Museum of the History of Khorezm Music is located in this madrasah [3, p. 93].

Today, more than 140 archaeological and architectural monuments dating from different historical periods have been preserved in Khiva. Their unique beauty continues to attract the attention of tourists. The Ichan-Kala part of Khiva was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List on December 12, 1990, by a special decision of the 14th session held in Canada, becoming the first site in Central Asia to be included on the World Heritage List. In 1967, the Ichan-Kala State Museum-Reserve was officially granted the status of an "Open-Air Museum" [5, p. 208].

The architectural monuments of Ichan-Kala in the city of Khiva, recognized by UNESCO as part of the world cultural heritage, number more than one hundred. Most of these monuments contain epigraphic inscriptions written in Arabic—primarily passages from the Qur'an and Hadith—as well as in Persian and Turkic languages [6, p. 5].

The city of Khiva was constructed with remarkable beauty through the financial support of ruling khans, wealthy officials, and ordinary craftsmen, while local artisans carried out the actual construction work. Each monument stands today as an outstanding example of Eastern architecture, impressing visitors from around the world with its grandeur and artistic excellence [6, p. 202].

The belief that poetry and music possess divine power has existed in popular thought since ancient times. The connection between these sacred forms of art and architecture demonstrates that monuments elevated to the level of art were also regarded as possessing a sacred character. Their similarities can be observed not only in decorative elements and architectural divisions but also in spatial planning. This is evident in the transition from a corridor to the main hall, the sequential arrangement of rooms in an enfilade, and the rhythmic repetition of spatial environments [7, p. 61].

The turquoise-blue color was traditionally believed to repel envy and return the negative intentions of those who looked upon it with ill will [7, p. 145]. Therefore, the use of turquoise in the architecture of Khiva's historical monuments carries a distinctive symbolic meaning.

Master craftsmen of the past were highly educated and knowledgeable. They studied at madrasahs and acquired knowledge of literature, history, music, mathematics, and chemistry. The technology and techniques of ornamental painting were transmitted from generation to generation. In ancient times, craftsmen did not record the secrets of creating ornamental patterns in written form;

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

instead, these techniques were known only to their apprentices. After becoming masters themselves, the apprentices passed their knowledge on to their own students. In this way, ornamental craftsmanship developed as a traditional profession.

A master usually took his own son or a close relative as an apprentice. Children began apprenticeship at the age of seven or eight, and their education and practical training continued for seven to twelve years. Apprentices worked during the day and learned literacy in the evening under the guidance of their master. They also studied geometry and chemistry. When an apprentice reached the level of being able to work independently, the masters evaluated his work and, after discussion, granted him the title of master. The son of a craftsman traditionally learned his father's profession from an early age, creating a foundation for him to become a skilled artisan in the future. If a master had no son, he taught the craft to the children of his closest relatives [8, p. 11].

There were between one and four qazis in each beklik. They were highly educated individuals and were regarded as knowledgeable experts in the principles of Islamic Sharia law. When seeking appointment to a new position, qazis submitted their candidacy and took examinations in Khiva. Many candidates failed the examinations. Those who passed were confirmed by the khan's decree and began their duties after obtaining an official personal seal [9, pp. 54–55].

Before appointing a qazi to office, the khan required the candidate to pass an examination. After successfully completing the examination, an official yorliq (appointment decree) was prepared confirming the candidate's assumption of office.

For example, the yorliq of Sayyid Muhammad Rahim Khan concerning the appointment of Domla Murod, together with Domla Mulla Abdukarim Makhdum, as qazi and rais in the Hazorasp district contains the following instructions:

"...They shall enforce the provisions of Sharia, teach Muslims the principles of religion, examine mullahs, imams, and muezzins, ensure that children are sent to school, encourage those negligent in prayer to perform their prayers, punish those who act contrary to Sharia, inspect the weights and measures used by market traders, and arrange for the repair of damaged bridges and mosques together with the appropriate craftsmen. Henceforth, the people of the Hazorasp district may bring any kind of dispute or problem before this qazi and rais through a written petition. In matters concerning marriage, after paying the required marriage fee, they shall have their affairs resolved in their court..." [10]

Conclusion. The architectural monuments of Khorezm represent a harmonious combination of architectural art and cultural heritage. The history of their construction was recorded not only through calligraphic inscriptions but also through dates encoded using the abjad numerical system.

The abjad system, in which Arabic letters correspond to numerical values, was also taught as part of the educational system in madrasahs. The study of calligraphy required considerable talent and artistic ability. Similarly, the creation of ornamental designs and epigraphic inscriptions on architectural monuments required a high level of craftsmanship and professional mastery.

The Qazi Kalon Madrasah is particularly significant because of the epigraphic inscriptions preserved on its façade. These inscriptions provide important historical information and demonstrate the close relationship between architecture, calligraphy, education, religion, and cultural traditions in the historical and cultural development of Khiva.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

References.

1. O‘zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidentining 2017-yil 4-maydagi “2017 — 2021-yillarda Xorazm viloyati va Xiva shahrining turizm salohiyatini kompleks rivojlantirish Dasturi to‘g‘risida”gi farmoni //https://lex.uz/acts/-4876081
2. Ўзбекистон Республикаси Президентининг 2018 йил 16 январдаги Ф-5181- сонли “Моддий маданий ва археология мероси объектларини муҳофаза қилиш ва улардан фойдаланишни такомиллаштириш тўғрисида”ги фармойиши. // https://lex.uz/docs/3506332
3. Худайберганов К. Хива дунёдаги энг кўҳна қалъа. – Тошкент. Хоразм маъмун академияси. 2012. – Б. 348.
4. Djabborova A. Xorazm vohasi me‘moriy yodgorliklarida belgi va ramzlar albom. – Buxoro. Durdona. 2026. - B 24.
5. Xiva – sharq me’morchiligining tengsiz javohiri. bibliografik ko’rsatkich / bosh muharrir U. Teshabayeva ; tuzuvchi F. Ro’ziyeva ; muharrirlar Sh. Rahimova, M. Xidoyatova. - Toshkent: Alisher Navoiy nomidagi O’zbekiston Milliy kutubxonasi, 2022.-208 b.
6. Худойберганов К. Хоразм хонлари. - Тошкент: Akademnashr, 2019. - 224 б.
7. Nozilov. D. Orta osiyo me’morchiligida odatlar, qoidalar va ramziy ifodalar. Тошкент. San’at nashryoti. 2011. -B. 81.
8. Bulatov S., Muxtorov A. Ganchkorlik san’ati. Musiqa. Toshkent 2002. – S 11.
9. Калмыков А. Хива. Протоколы заседаний и сообщений членов Туркестанского кружка любителей археологии. Т. XII 1908, - с.54-55
10. ЎзРМДА И-125-ж., 2-р., 21-йиғма жилд.