

Пугаченкова, Галина Анатольевна. *Самарканд, Бухара: По Древним Памятникам*.

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ABSTRACT

Ancient Monuments of Samarkand and Bukhara

Самарканд, Бухара: По Древним Памятникам

Galina Pugachenkova is one of the most celebrated academics specialising in Central Asian architecture. In this book she aims to make accessible her scholarly knowledge for visitors to Samarkand and Bukhara. Pugachenkova invites the readers to 'walk' through many monuments of the two 'living museums', and, once having established the outline of the vista, she illustrates the architectural detail through description, like a true artist.

Her encyclopaedic knowledge of architecture and urban planning of the two cities forms an intricate narrative. Her academic background reveals itself on more than one occasion, and some descriptions of the architecture also incorporate a great deal of archaeological investigations and written sources. The composition of these overviews makes the book even more valuable for researchers in the twenty-first century. Pugachenkova also punctuates her account with local legends related to the monuments whilst the book is richly illustrated with photographs of the buildings and associated finds.

Being a Soviet era publication there is a certain emphasis on aspects of class struggle but there is equally a good deal of credit accorded to the creativity of past rulers and artisans of the cities. Pugachenkova highlights the role of religious buildings as symbols of the greatness of Islamic education and art, and explains that this served as justification for the effort invested in building such exceptional architectural ensembles. She also manages to demonstrate the complex development of Islamic art in this region, through comparison of decorative techniques and building materials, whilst drawing on both monumental and more minor structures.

Although this synthesis avoids complex plans and measurements, Pugachenkova's ability to describe the architectural detail, art and culture of historical Samarkand and Bukhara makes the book valuable for everyone interested in the cities. This book prompts the reader to imagine the grandeur of these magnificent historical cityscapes.

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