

Maylyuda Yusupova

Evolution of Architecture of the Sufi Complexes in Bukhara

Sufism (*al-tasavvuf*) is a mystic, ascetic, and philosophical school of thought within Islam. Sufi teaching aimed at the cognition of God under the supervision of a experienced teacher (*shaykh, pir, murshid*), who taught his followers the techniques and theory of Sufism. The architecture of the Sufi complexes of Maverannahr is represented most impressively and in the greatest variety in the post-Timurid capital of Bukhara. There were the *rabats* intended for the Sufis, *khanqahs* or *zawiyas*, and *takiyyas* which appeared at a later time.

The genesis and nature of these establishments have not been properly studied. The research that has been carried out to define the functions and architecture of different types of construction has led to disputes between specialists and researchers (1,2). Current research can be found in the publications of G. A. Pugachenkova (3, 4 and others), V. L. Voronina (5) and L. Yu. Mankovskaya (1).

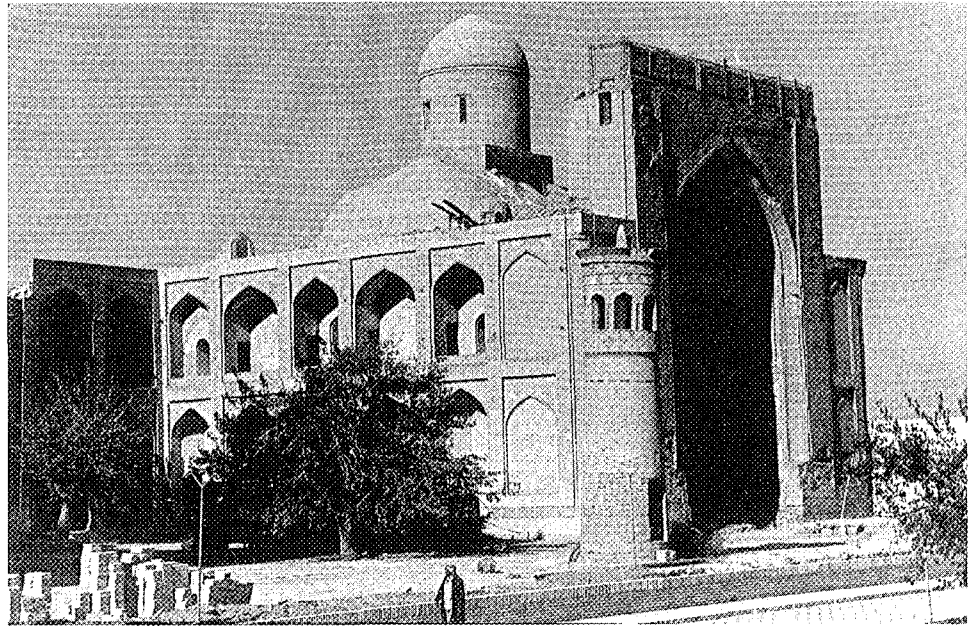
Here I will try to provide a more comprehensive and detailed view of all the types and kinds of Sufi prayer complexes. Some of the data not known earlier now allow us to add to our knowledge, or to clarify certain features, of these constructions in the context of the evolution of Sufism itself.

It should be noted that the evolution of the architecture of the Sufi complexes is a complicated and multi-faceted process that has to be considered within the context of the time and the factors that transformed Sufism as an ideology. The development of Sufism had four phases, the first two of which coincide with the periods defined by J. S. Trimingham (6). It should be also mentioned that in this proposed periodization the phases are not clearly demarcated chronologically, as each new period was generated by and developed within the previous one, and the periods themselves only provided the basic trends for the future development of the Sufi complexes.

Phase 1: The first phase, which lasted from the eighth through the ninth century, was the time of the formation of Sufism and formulation of its basic postulates. The first Sufi complexes variously called *rabat*, *zawiya*, and *khanqah*, were constructed all over the Muslim world. Through different routes, by the end of the period they had acquired a similar structure and use everywhere.

Rabats were initially a certain type of Arabic military fortified structure. In Central Asia over the course of time, they became trade and hostel complexes of the caravanserai type and sometimes were used as Sufi prayer centers. In the ninth century, special *rabats* were built for Sufi

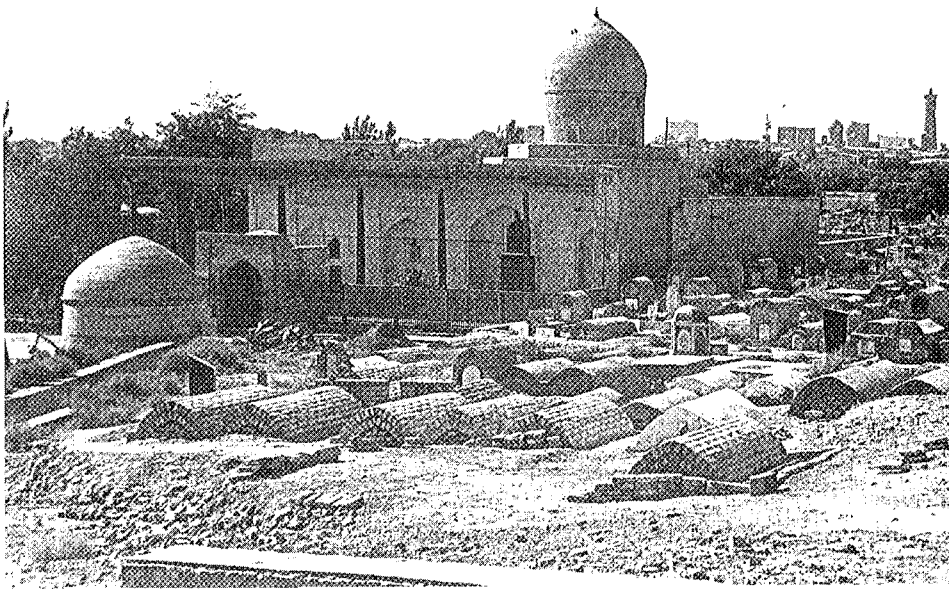
A view of
Char Bahr



complexes of the caravanserai type and sometimes were used as Sufi prayer centers. In the ninth century, special *rabats* were built for Sufi followers. Samani mentions several of them: Muazza ibn Ya'quba (834) in Nasafa, al-Amir (9th century) and al-Murabba (9th century, at the time of Ismail Samani) in Samarqand, and many others (7, pp. 85, 127-28). It is possible that *rabats* were built by the Samanids in their capital at Bukhara, but there is no evidence for it. Those constructions may have been of a courtyard type, as they were genetically connected with the military fortified *rabats* and caravanserais, which characteristically did have that type of construction.

Khanqahs were initially a type of building for wandering Sufis, a place for religious ceremonies, discussions, and sometimes training. Beginning in the tenth century, while still preserving their earlier functions, they became Sufi centers with the formation of a Sufi institution that followed a scheme instruction using a teacher-student (*pir-murid*) method. During the first period of their development, the *khanqahs* varied in their construction and followed no specific type. The *khanqahs* of Maverannahr and Khurasan from the ninth and tenth centuries were of the monastery type, that is, rooms constructed around an inner court. They were often erected over the grave of a renowned Sufi, or a shaykh would start a *khanqah* in his own or somebody else's house and later be buried near it. The mausoleum of the Sufi Shaykh Hakim ibn Muhammad al-Zaimuni (d. 1025) on al-Sufa street (7, p. 61) in Bukhara, for example, belongs to that category - at least it is believed that his *khanqah* was once his private house. The domed mausoleum located on the opposite side of the street was a *chillakhana*, a place for meditation (8, p. 79).

The names of the buildings and the quarter changed over time. In the



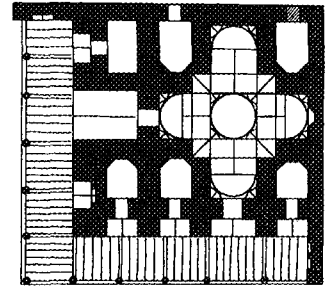
*Khanqah Hazrati
Imam. 16th Century*

fifteenth century, the grave of the Sufi saint al-Damuni is mentioned as on Kui-Sufa street; by the beginning of the twentieth century the Sufi *khanqah* and opposite it the Mazar Khwajah Halim are located in the quarter with the same name, close to Taq-i Sarrafon at the beginning of the street leading to the Karshi Gates (8, pp. 78-79).

The *zawiya* is another type of Sufi complex that spread over Muslim countries. Initially the *zawiya* was a certain part of a mosque or a room placed close to it used for teaching the Koran and reading and writing. Later it referred to the residence for the Sufi priest who preached and taught the *murids*.

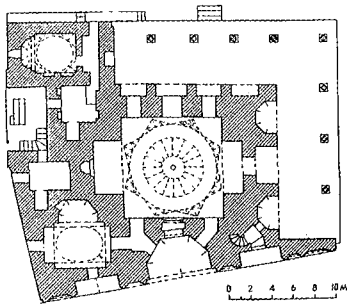
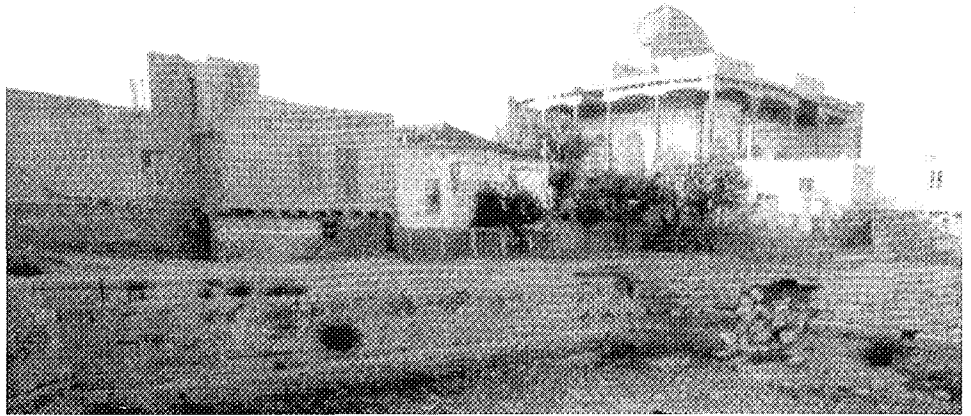
Phase 2: The second phase lasted from the eleventh to the fourteenth century. With the formation and spread of Sufi orders and the more active integration of pre-Muslim saints' cults into Islam, the graves of the Sufi shaykhs became places of pilgrimage, and gradually large Sufi complexes were formed around these burial sites. This was the time when the *rabat*, *khanqah*, and in some muslim countries, *zawiya* became a complex of buildings that included a saint's tomb, a small mosque, a dwelling for the shaykh and his family, rooms for reading the Holy Koran and teaching pupils (*murid*), cells for the pupils, and a free hostel for travelers and pilgrims. Often a cemetery was established nearby where members of the order or even ordinary people could be buried if they wished (11, p. 72).

The functions and kinds of buildings called *rabats*, *khanqahs*, and *zawiyas* of the fourteenth century are so similar that it is nearly impossible to find any distinction between them in either use or architectural form. The only distinguishing feature is in the use of the terms themselves. A *waqf* document of 1326 in which Shaykh Yahya, a grandson of the renowned Sufi shaykh Saif al-Din Bukhari, states that he "donates to the memorial

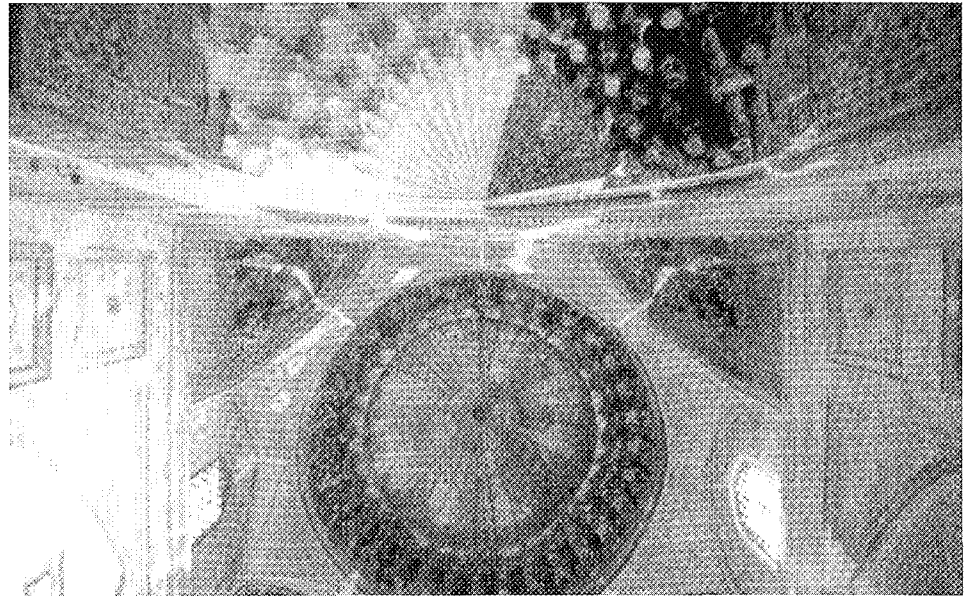


*Khanqah Hazrati Iman.
Plan*

The Khanqah
Khwajah Zainutdin,
16th century.
Above: Exterior
view from the tank
Below:
Interior
with dome
and mihrab

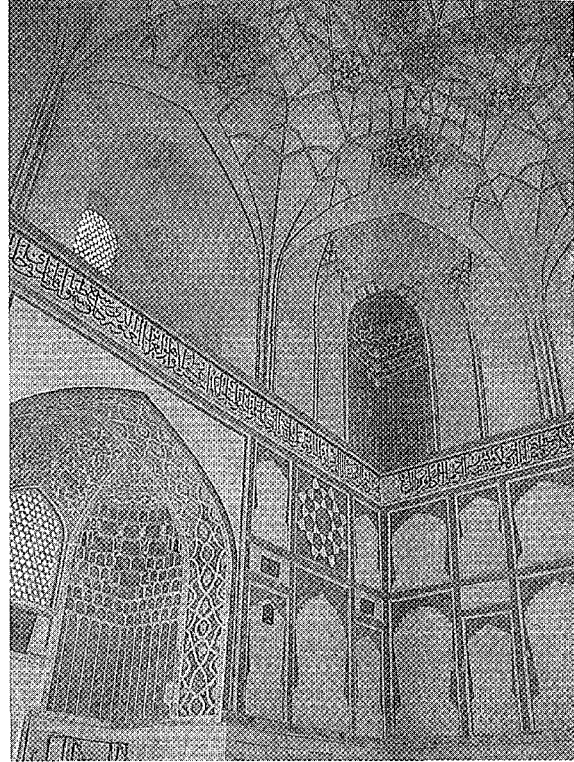
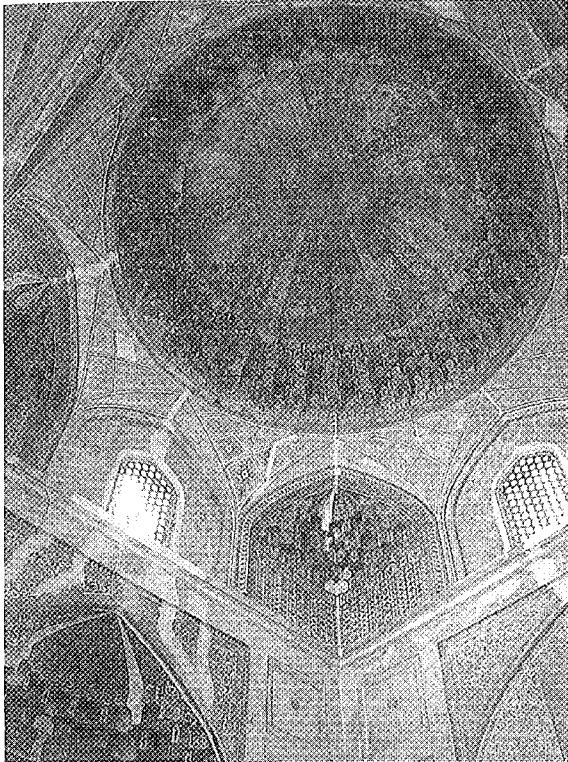


Plan of Khanqah
Khwajah Zainutdin.



complex of his grandfather and the benefit of those who permanently live in this holy place and for the poor, his real estate numbering 11 villages." In this document, a *khanqah* is mentioned as a structure standing next to the Bukhari mausoleum to its south and is described as a complex spread along the perimeter of the courtyard (9, p. 167). The Moroccan traveler Ibn Battutta, who visited this *khanqah* complex in 1333 and witnessed the last years of Khwajah Yahya's life (d. 1335-36) uses the term *zawiya* for exactly the same structure. He writes: "The *zawiya* which bears the name of Shaykh Saifaddin Bokhari, where we stayed is very large and possesses huge *waqfs*; the income from these allows them to serve meals free to all arriving visitors"(10, p. 82). Like Ibn Battutta, other foreigners who visited the *khanqahs* of Central Asia called them *zawiyas*.

Based on the *waqf* documents (9, p. 167) and travelers' descriptions (10, pp.



82, 92-93), the majority of Central Asian *khanqahs* of that period were constructed around a shaded courtyard with a pool. Examples are the *khanqah* of the Kusam ibn Abbas mausoleum in Samarqand, and the *Khanqah* Saif al-Din Bukhari in Bukhara, one of the largest and most highly praised among many others.

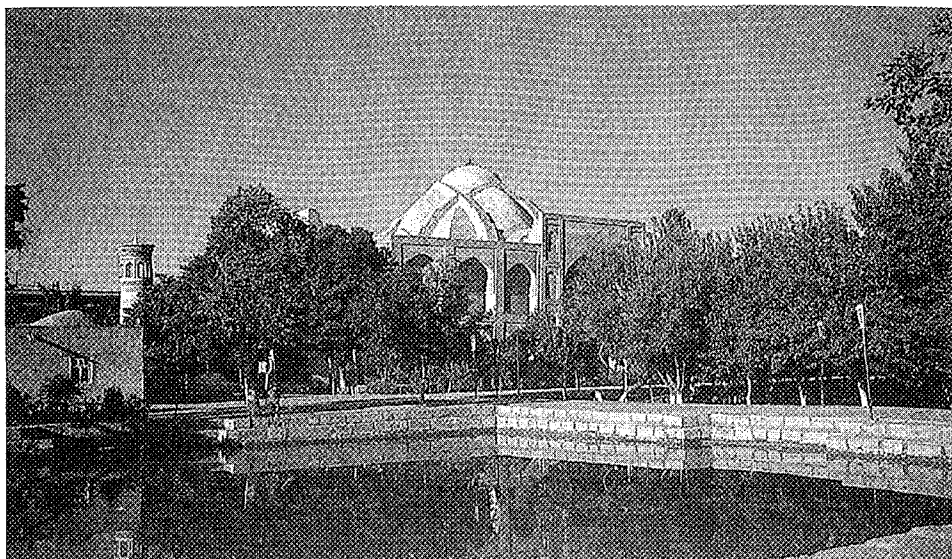
Phase 3: The third phase lasted from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century. During this time, Sufism, ascetic and democratic at the beginning, underwent considerable change. The Sufi priests began an increasingly active cooperation with the authorities and were enriched by donations. Now the former mausoleum *khanqahs* of the courtyard type were transformed into memorial religious centers (often with *dakhm* burials). The notion of the *khanqah* now referred, not to the whole complex, but to a certain group of structures with ceremonial space. Those buildings were monumental and sumptuous, built with funds supplied by wealthy donors, often the ruler.

By the end of the fourteenth century, Timur's architects put many of the functions of the former *khanqah* courtyard complexes into one multichambered portal cupola construction. The *khanqah* of Ahmad Yassavi in Turkestan can be cited as an example. This huge building erected with an archaic double dome was not suitable for the highly earthquake-prone zone of Maverannahr. It remained a grand experiment; its construction was never used again.

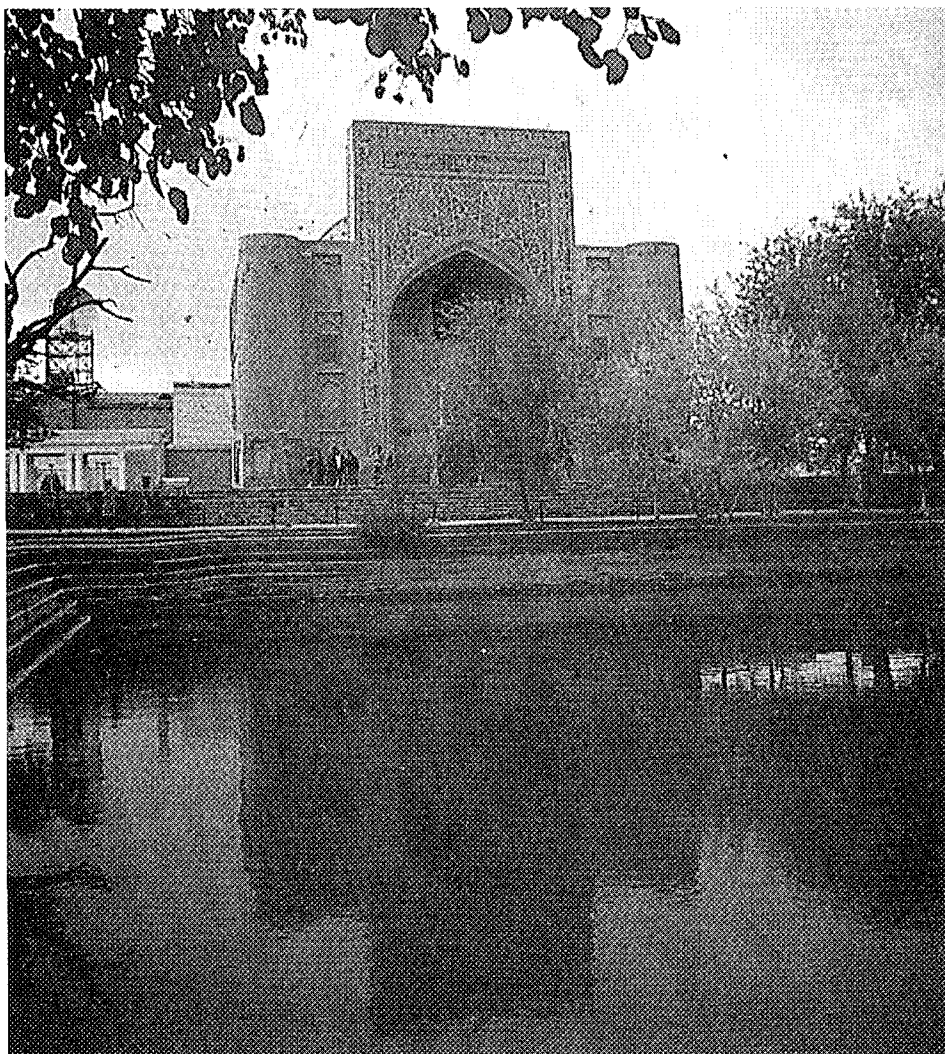
The most traditional buildings were the Sufi complexes with a small courtyard in which was a *hauz* (pool), trees, and flowers. A *khanqah* hall

Left
The dome of the
Khanqah
Khawajah
Zainuddin. Right:
Khanqah in the
complex of Bahauddin
Nahshibandi,
16th century.
Interior of the hall.

*The Khanqah of Bahaud-
din Bliss Bukhari seen
from the tank.*



*Khanqah of Nadir Divan
Begi (17th century)
on Labi Hauz
square at
Bukhara.*



dominated the elements built along the perimeter of this courtyard. We can distinguish two types of hall and, within each type, two or three subtypes. This type of building remained dominant in Sufi architecture up to the twentieth century.

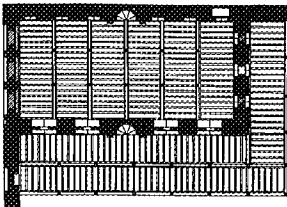
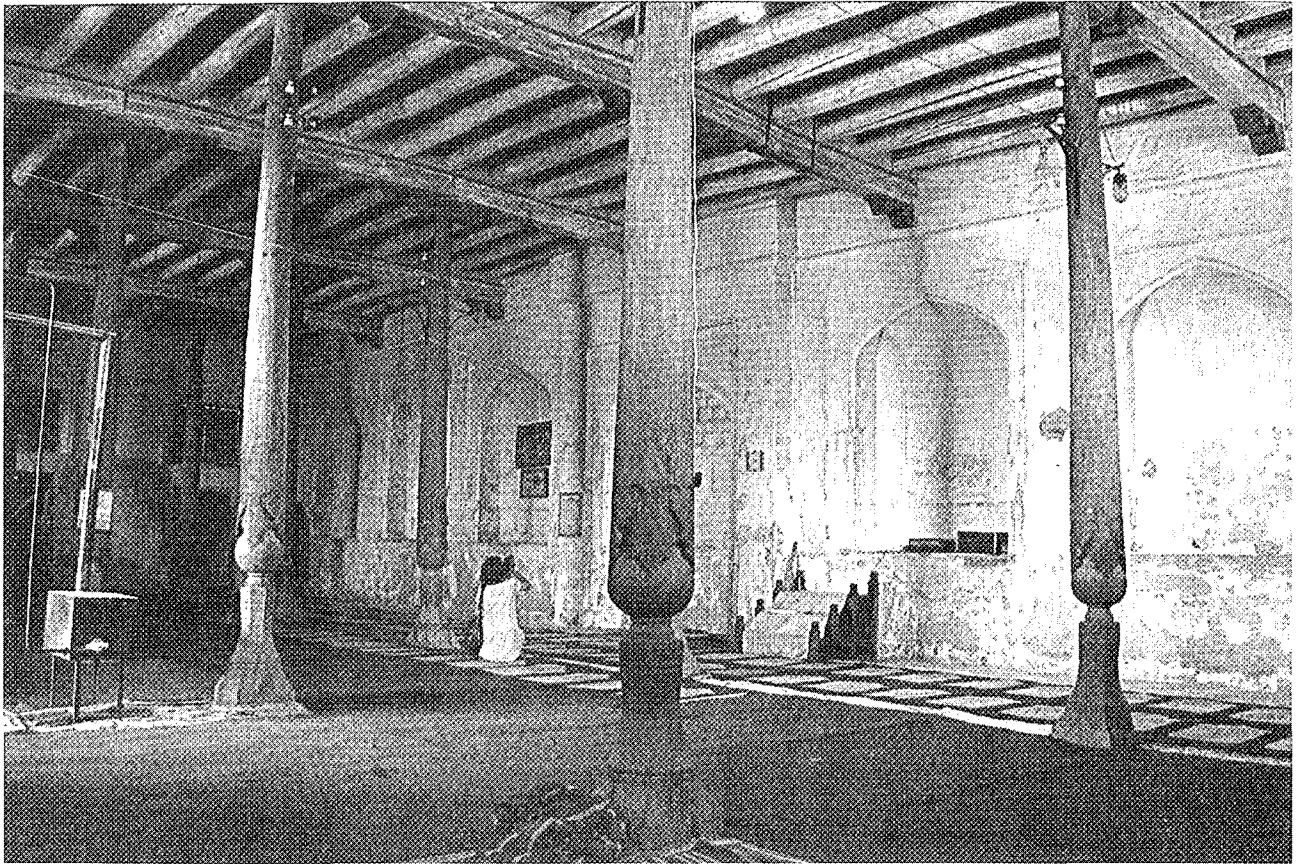
In Bukharan architecture of the fifteenth-seventeenth century, we can identify the second type of monumental *khanqah* construction. This building had a domed hall, often with *hujras* in the corners of the building or by the sides, surrounded on two or three sides by a terrace, with a roof supported by columns - an *iwan*. This type of *khanqah* is generically linked to the dwellings in which the Sufis established their cloisters in the earliest period of the development of their teaching. As a result of evolution, by the early fifteenth century *khanqahs* of this type came to have a more magnificent appearance. According to the *waqf* documents, the Muhammad Khwajah Porso *khanqah*, built in Bukhara between 1407 and 1408, included "a colonnaded *iwan* on the northern, eastern and southern sides. This *khanqah* is built of fired brick, *ganch* (a kind of gypsum), and rock (*sangi-kuli*)," and was in all probability a domed structure (1). It was the first time in the history of medieval Central Asian architecture that such a building was erected, but it became a widespread architectural form during the second period, and survived in Central Asia up to the twentieth century.

In the course of the third phase, *khanqahs* of the earlier type were used less frequently. However, one can distinguish two subtypes based on the type of roof that covered the hall:

1. *Khanqahs* with *iwans* surrounding a domed hall which is square in plan, like the Khwajah Porso *Khanqah* in Bukhara, the Sufi Dehkon (15th century) in the Bukhara region, Khwajah Zaineddin, and Hazrati Imam (16th century) in Bukhara.
2. Buildings with *iwans* in a columned hall which is rectangular or square in plan, such as the Shoyahsi *Khanqah* (16th century) and Mawlana Sharif (17th century) in Bukhara.

From the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, a new, more exuberant and magnificent second type of *khanqah* dominated the architecture of Sufi complexes. In the second half of the fifteenth century certain changes in the architecture of the *khanqah* were brought about by features in the development of Sufism. First, the strengthening of the saint's cult turned the *khanqahs* near mausoleums into shrines. That led to the change in application of the term *khanqah* that limited it to the ritual structure in the hall - a *zikrkhana* with cupola sometimes surrounded by cells (*hujra*).

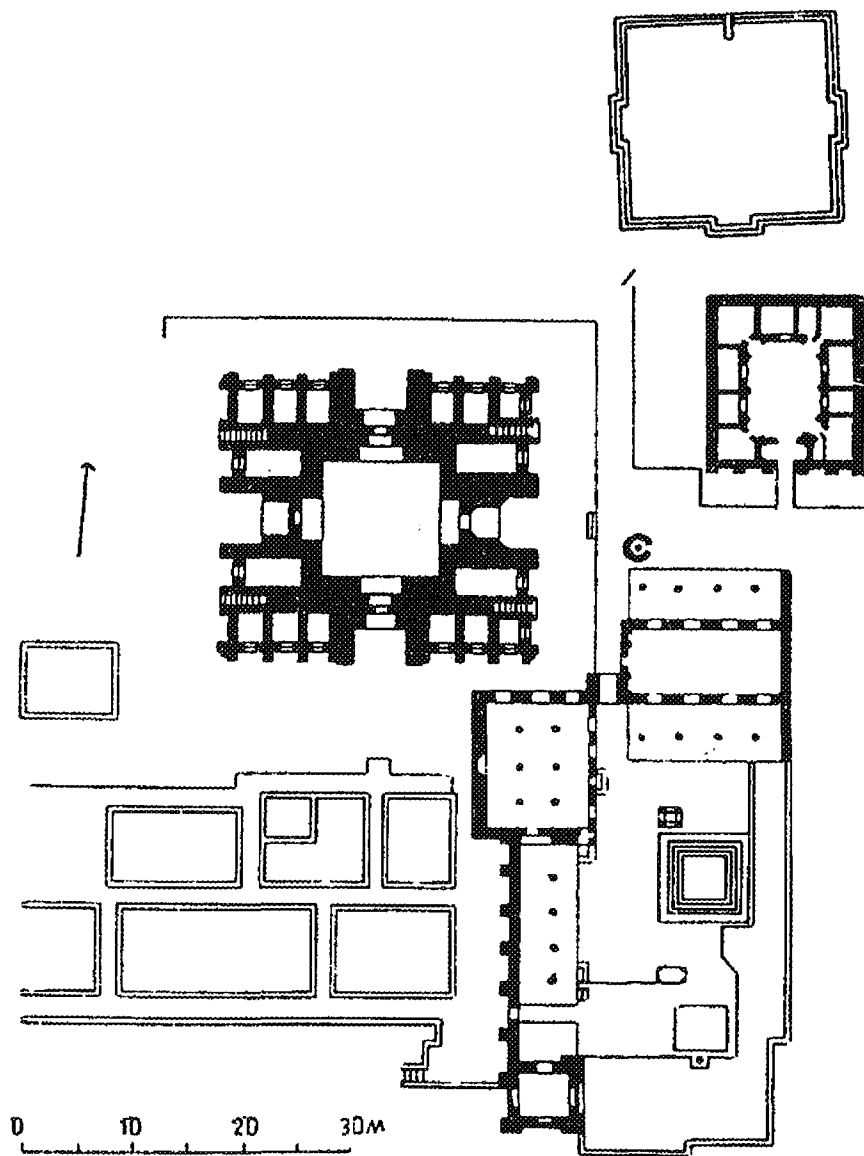
Second, the increasing strength of the Nakshbandi order in Central Asia had its influence. The *pirs* did not approve of the erection of mausoleums over their graves, and the towns did not provide a great number of dwellings and hostels with services. The *pirs* therefore encouraged the idea of giving up the pilgrimage for a low *zikr* more characteristic of the rich and respected *murids* in the society. Their slogan was "Hands are for labor, and hearts are with the God," or, in other words, be productive in life and retain the desire to recognize God. Among the followers of this movement



*Khanqah Soyansi.
Interior view and plan.*

were not only artisans and merchants but also wealthy citizens, the nobility, sometimes even rulers, and renowned poets and scholars. The members of the order were able to live with their families and only meet for prayer, sermons, evening prayer, and sometimes for training and ritual meals, for which purpose there was no need for a large building for housing and services. Some *khanqahs* served as cloisters for the Sufis. They were erected in the city's center as isolated buildings with no facilities for other functions and no other structures.

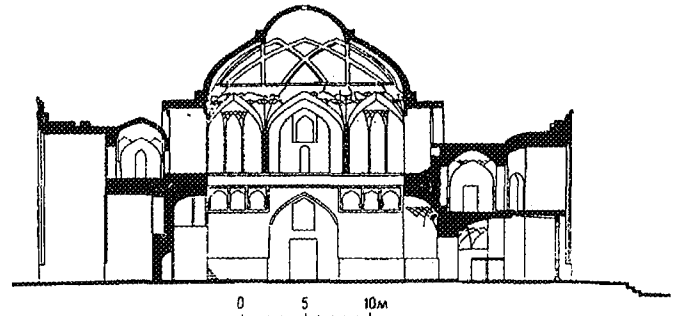
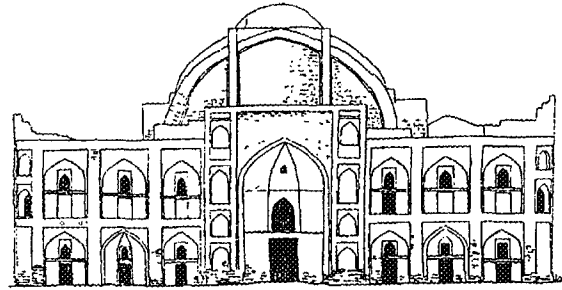
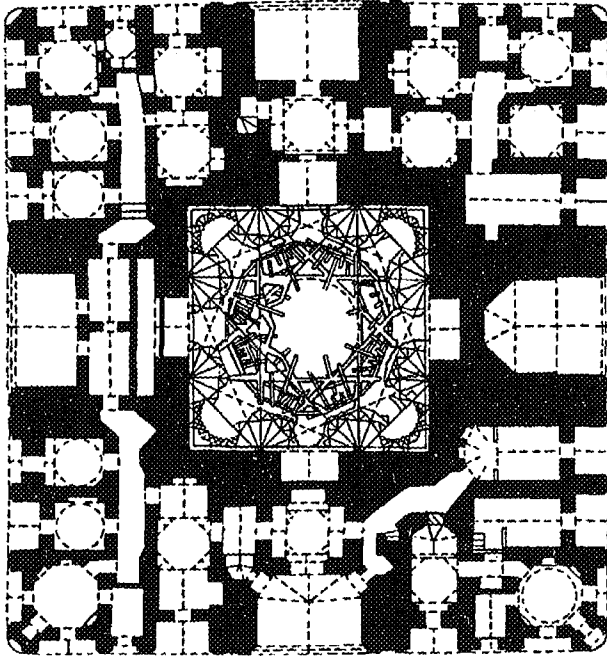
One further innovation was in the plan and construction of the *khanqah*. A new type of earthquake-proof reinforcement was introduced at that time which involved crossing pendentives, which served as the basis for the cupola construction, and smaller shield-shaped pendants that added to the strength of the building. They were introduced during the Timurid period in the second half of the fifteenth century, and afterwards were successfully developed in Bukhara constructions of the sixteenth century, especially in the domed *khanqahs*. According to the new system, four powerful arches overlapped the space, leaving some distance in the corners. They rested on eight massive buttresses located on the side of each axis of the construction. This made deep niches in the hall axes at the sides that gave the structure of the building its cross shape and enlarged its square. This new construction also allowed for additional cells or blocks of



*Khanqah of
Bahauddin Bliss
Bukhari, 16th
Century.
General plan of
the complex*

cells on two levels in the corners of the building in place of the massive walls and buttresses. The cupola soffit was crossed by four powerful load-bearing arches and the space between was covered by shield-shaped pendentives with a small dome. As a result, the size of the dome was reduced, and the weight of the reinforcement was also reduced. Sometimes in the Bukhara *khanqahs* built in the sixteenth century, the four crossing arches are used as stiffening ribs reinforcing the dome (e.g., the Khanqah Bahauddin) or a dome of medium size was carried on a high and well-composed barrel vault (Khanqah Kasim Shaykh, Hazrati Imam, and the Char-Bahr).

From the fifteenth to the seventeenth century in Central Asia, most *khanqahs* had this portal-cupola construction built with a large ceremonial



*Khanqah of
Bahauddin
Bliss Bukhari,
16th century.
Plan and
sections.*

hall, a domed *zikrkhana* with a square or cross-shaped plan in the center, and a cell or a group of cells on two levels in the massive corners. The stairs leading to *hujras* and to the roof also began in the corner of the main hall. This type of construction belongs to the *khanqah* of the second type. It was mainly used in Bukhara for structures with rich donors near the graves of Sufi saints. Examples dating from the sixteenth century are the *khanqahs* of Bahauddin Nakshbandi, Abu Bakr Sa'ada, and Hakim Mulla Mir, not far from Bukhara.

There are also some rare examples in Maverannahr where *khanqahs* of the second type were built in the central town square, like the *khanqah* of Ulugh Beg (15th century) in the Registan Square at Samarqand and the *khanqah* of Nadir Divan Begi (17th century) on Labi-Hauz Square in Bukhara.

Among the *khanqahs* of the second type in the Bukhara region three main compositional variants can be identified: One is based on a central-plan composition: examples from the sixteenth century are the *khanqah* of Kasim Shaykh, in the seventeenth century, Bahauddin Nakshbandi (the second-phase construction), Yar-Muhammad Atalyk and a *khanqah* in Peshku. Another uses a longitudinal axial or deep-plan composition: examples from the sixteenth century are the Hakim Mulla Mir and from the seventeenth Nadir Divan Begi in Bukhara.

A third subtype is the *khanqah* with a frontal composition. Not far from Bukhara are two of these buildings: the sixteenth century *khanqah* in Faizabad, and the first phase of construction of the *khanqah* of Bahauddin

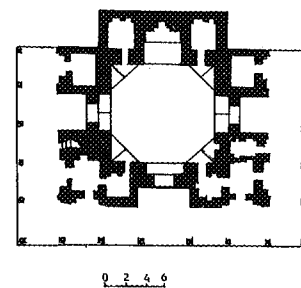
erected between 1540 and 1551 by Abdu'l Aziz Khan. In 1642-45, Nadir Khan surrounded this latter building with cells placed in two rows, turning the frontal composition into its final central composition. Another example of a *khanqah* with a frontal composition can be found in a drawing by an unknown sixteenth century Uzbek architect.

Phase 4: The fourth period lasted from the eighteenth century through the nineteenth. It was a period of decline in Sufism, and combined with economic development caused an equal decline in the construction of *khanqahs*. In the Bukhara oasis, they were mainly small-domed and sometimes flat-roofed constructions decorated with columns and a two-sided iwan with columns often combining the functions of the *khanqah* and the local mosque. This type of *khanqah*, together with one-storied *hujras*, *darvazakhana*, *takharatkhanas*, and other elements formed the perimeter construction of the courtyard that comprised the town *khanqah* type - a hostel for Sufis. The *khanqah* of Khalif Hudaidat, Khalif Niyazkul, Maulana Sharif, the mosque-*khanqah* of Kui, *Khanqah* Shayahsi, and others in Bukhara are examples of this type of construction.

In the muslim world of the early thirteenth and the fourteenth century, a Turkish type of *khanqah*, the *takiyya* or *tekke* appeared, which flourished in the sixteenth century, spreading through all the regions of the Arab east (11, p. 272). They were impressive Sufi complexes (2 pp. 277-78). *Tekkes* appeared in Central Asia later, were not so large as elsewhere, and had a different meaning and structure. In Bukhara in the nineteenth and early twentieth century *tekkes* had the same form as the courtyard hostels for Sufis and served not only as a shelter for pilgrims and paupers, but as hostels for traveling artisans seeking employment. These were built by the town's crafts guilds (1, p. 126). Each guild constructed its *tekke* in the quarter where that particular trade was located; its guests were considered to be members of the local guild and were obliged to participate in all kinds of religious ceremonies and civil events (weddings, funerals, etc.) of the mahalla where it was located (8, p. 116).

To sum up, the Sufi cloisters in Maverannahr and, in particular, in Bukhara were mainly complexes with a *khanqah* hall dominating the architectural elements around the perimeter of a courtyard. The *khanqahs* were principally of two types, each further divided into two or three subtypes. The heyday of the Sufi complexes in Bukhara was in the sixteenth - seventeenth centuries, when architects developed efficiency and compactness in plans and earthquake-proof constructions and schemes, expressive and well planned for the *khanqah* type that developed in the Timurid period.

The most rational features of the *khanqah* of the first type, with a columned *iwan*, were developed in the Bukhara *khanqah* built near the tombs of the renowned Sufi shaykhs Khwajah Zainutdin, Hazrati Imam, and others; the specific features of the second type, which was more monumental, were developed in Bukhara's *khanqahs* erected near the tombs of the renowned Sufis like Bahauddin Nakshbandi, Kasim Shaykh, Hakimi Mulla Mir, and others.



*Khanqah of
Peshku.
16th Century.*

It should also be stated that the *khanqah* of Khwajah Zainutdin, dating to the beginning of the sixteenth century, was considered to be the earliest construction of the columned type in Bukhara. Based on the *waqf* document for the Khwajah Porso khanqah in Bukhara, which has a three-*iwān* plan, it may be stated that the *iwān* type of *khanqah* already existed in Central Asia a century earlier, by 1407, in the reign of the first Timurids. Later on, in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the *khanqahs* of the first, earlier kind became dominant in Bukhara: they were domed *khanqahs* (Khalif Khudaydat) or columned *khanqahs* with a flat roof (Khalif Niyazkul) with *iwāns* on two sides. These buildings frequently combined the functions of a *khanqah* and a local mosque or were a part of a Sufi courtyard complex.

REFERENCES

1. L. Yu. Mankovskaya, *Tipologicheskiye osnovy zodchestva sredniej (IX nach. XX vv)* (Tashkent, 1980).
2. T. U. Starodub, "Srednevekovaja arhitektura, svjazannaja a sufizmom: hanaka, zavija, takija" *Sufizm v kontekste musulmanskoj kultury* (Moscow, 1989), pp. 268-80.
3. G. A. Pugachenkova, *Zodchestvo centralnoj Azii, XV v* (Tashkent, 1976).
4. G. A. Pugachenkova, "Qhanaqah Baha al-Din," *Maskan* 7-8 (1993), pp. 5-7.
5. B. L. Voronina, "Arhitektura Sredniej Azii, XVI-XVII," *Vseobshchaja istorija arhitektury, vol. VIII* (Moscow, 1969).
6. J. S. Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 90.
7. Sh. S. Kamaliddinov, "Kitab al-Ansab," *Abu Sa'ad Abdulkarim ibn Muhammad as-Sam'ani kak istochnik po istorii i istorii kul'tury Srednej Azii* (Tashkent, 1993).
8. O. A. Sukhareva, *Kvartal'naja obshchina pozdnefeodal'nogo goroda bulary* (Moscow, 1976), pp. 116.
9. O. D. Chekhovich, *Bukharskie dokumenty XIV veka* (Tashkent, 1965).
10. N. Ibraghimov, *Ibn Batutta* (Moscow, 1988) pp. 69.
11. "Islam," *Enciklopedicheskij slovar'* (Moscow, 1991), pp. 72.
12. Central Archives of Uzbekistan, Fond I-323, no. 1291/16 (30).