

# Shahizinda: The Architectural Jewel of Samarkand

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## **Abstract:**

The Shohizinda architectural monument is a significant historical and cultural site located in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. This abstract provides an overview of the monument's historical background, architectural features, and cultural significance. The Shohizinda complex is a necropolis that houses a series of mausoleums and other structures dating back to the 9th and 14th centuries. The architectural design reflects the evolution of Islamic art and features intricate tilework, geometric patterns, and ornate domes. The site holds religious and spiritual importance as it is believed to be the burial place of a cousin of Prophet Muhammad. Additionally, the monument serves as a symbol of the rich cultural heritage of the region and attracts tourists and scholars interested in Islamic architecture and history. This abstract aims to provide an insight into the historical and cultural significance of the Shohizinda architectural monument.

**Keywords:** Shohizinda, architectural monument, Samarkand, Uzbekistan, necropolis, mausoleums, Islamic art, tilework, geometric patterns, domes, Prophet Muhammad, cultural heritage, Islamic architecture, history, tourism.

## **Introduction.**

If tourists who have seen the ancient site of Samarkand Afrosiab walk along its southern side, they will stumble upon the Shahizind Ansanbml, located on the hillside and whose blue domes shine in the sunlight. This great monument, which has become a sacred place of pilgrimage for Samarkand residents, is always a favorite place of pilgrimage for tourists from near and far abroad.

The Shahizinda ensemble, called the “Pearl of Samarkand,” is not only a historical and architectural monument, but also the eternal resting place of famous scientists, saints, queens and military leaders. Despite the fact that each mausoleum here is covered with unique decorations, they all form a single composition, a complete architectural work. Another valuable aspect of Shahizinda is that it embodies the almost three thousand-year history of Samarkand. After all, the area where the Shahizinda ensemble is located belongs to the southern regions of Afrosiab, and if you excavate this land, archaeological materials of the 6th-1st centuries BC will be found. According to historians, the formation of the Shahizinda ensemble began in the 11th century AD. The meaning of the word Shahizinda is “living king”, and this name has been living among the people for more than a thousand years. According to the writings of Muslim historians, this is the title given to Qusam ibn Abbas, the living king and cousin of our Prophet Muhammad. According to the Samarkand historian Abul Hakimi, Kusam ibn Abbas was the last person to see the blessed faces of our Prophet. According to Muslim historians, Kusam ibn Abbas arrived in Samarkand as part of the Arab army in the 8th century and was engaged in the spread of the religion of Islam. One day, Kusam ibn Abbas was praying when he was attacked by infidels, he grabbed the severed head in his hands and fell through the cave.

He will live until the resurrection. In front of the cave where Kusam ibn Abbas entered, a tomb was built for him, and in the 11th century a mausoleum was erected above him. In addition to the mausoleum, there was also a luxurious shrine, a mosque and cool houses. The Mongol invasion in 1220 also played a tragic role in the fate of the Shahizinda mausoleum. The Mongols destroyed many buildings and tombs here. However, they were also afraid to touch the tomb of Kusama ibn Abbas. However, due to neglect, this tomb also turned into ruins. By the beginning of the 14th century, through the efforts of Samarkand religious leaders and figures, a mausoleum was built over the grave of Kusam ibn Abbas, and the tomb and refrigerator were repaired. After the accession of Amir Temur to the Samarkand throne, great changes took place in the life of the Shakhizinda ensemble. Amir Timur built a new one here on the site of most of the destroyed buildings, repaired many of them, and installed a luxurious tombstone on the grave of Kusama ibn Abbas. Also, by order of the owner, a new mosque was built here. It should be said here that the architectural ensemble of Shahizin is a complex monument consisting of mausoleums, mosques and madrassas, built by various rulers and officials in different periods. We believe that it is better to see Shahizinda, which deserves special attention in the history of architecture of Central Asia, than to hear it a hundred times. Dear tourist, listen to the silence here as you carefully step on the steps of Shahizinda. On this sacred land the great people of Great Turan will forever be remembered. Since the time of Mirzo Ulugbek, this square has been the main square of the inhabitants of Samarkand. Decrees of the rulers of Samarkand are published here. The brave warriors who entered the battle of freedom against the beast took an oath and received a blessing from the elders on this field... According to archaeological excavations carried out on the Registan field, during the times of the primitive community there was a huge forest, and the oldest hunters hunted all kinds of wild animals in the forest animals. During excavations in the lowest layers of Registan, hunting weapons of primitive people were discovered. In ancient times, a large canal was built from the current Registon Square to the city of Afrosiab. In the 8th-10th centuries, many buildings began to appear on the site of Registan Square, as the Arabs who conquered Samarkand forcibly resettled several thousand local residents from Afrosiab. It was during these periods that artisan workshops and shopping arcades were built here. In the 11th-12th centuries, the site of the current Registan Square and the adjacent quarters were surrounded by an external defensive wall and began to be called the “outer city”. After Afrosiab was destroyed by Genghis Khan in 1220, it was no longer possible to live here, and the surviving people moved to the current old city, i.e., to the area of Registan Square.

The channel flowing from here widens and becomes shallow. After this, a new channel bed is dug and bordered. Due to the large amount of sand accumulated in the old canal bed, this place received

the name Registon, that is, “sandy place.” During the reign of Amir Temur, the central bazaar was located on Registan Square, covered shopping arcades were built here, built by Tuman-aga, the wife of Jahongir. The architectural formation of Registan Square began during the reign of Mirzo Ulugbek. The great astrologer Mirzo Ulugbek, who ruled Samarkand for 40 years (1409-1449), spared nothing for the improvement of this city. By order of Mirzo Ulugbek, the construction of a luxurious madrasah begins on the western side of Tuman Aga Timi. Shohizinda is an architectural monument located in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. It is a necropolis, which is a burial place containing a collection of mausoleums. The site is one of the most significant and well-preserved examples of Islamic art and architecture in the region. The complex is known for its stunning tilework, featuring intricate geometric patterns and vibrant colors. The use of blue and turquoise tiles creates a mesmerizing visual effect that is characteristic of Islamic art. The domes of the mausoleums are also adorned with intricate designs and calligraphy, showcasing the craftsmanship and attention to detail that went into their construction. Shohizinda is a place of great religious and cultural significance. According to legend, it is the burial place of a cousin of the Prophet Muhammad, and as such, it is considered a sacred site by many Muslims. The historical and architectural significance of Shohizinda has led to its inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List, recognizing its importance as a testament to the rich history and cultural heritage of the region. The site attracts tourists and visitors from around the world who come to admire the beauty of its architecture and learn about its historical significance. It serves as a testament to the enduring legacy of Islamic architecture and the rich cultural history of Uzbekistan. Shohizinda stands as a living testament to the artistic and architectural achievements of the Islamic world, offering a window into the history and culture of the region.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Shohizinda stands as a remarkable testament to the rich cultural and historical heritage of Uzbekistan and the wider Islamic world. Its stunning architectural beauty, intricate tilework, and religious significance make it a truly unique and captivating site. The mausoleums and monuments within the complex are not only exquisite examples of Islamic art and architecture but also serve as a powerful reminder of the enduring legacy of the region's cultural and religious traditions. Shohizinda's inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List underscores its global importance and recognition as a site of outstanding universal value. As a place of pilgrimage for many Muslims and a source of inspiration for visitors from around the world, Shohizinda continues to play a vital role in preserving and promoting the historical and artistic achievements of the Islamic world. By offering a glimpse into the rich history and cultural heritage of Uzbekistan, Shohizinda serves as a living testament to the artistic and architectural achievements of the Islamic world. Its enduring legacy will continue to inspire and captivate future generations, ensuring that its significance remains cherished and celebrated for years to come.

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