

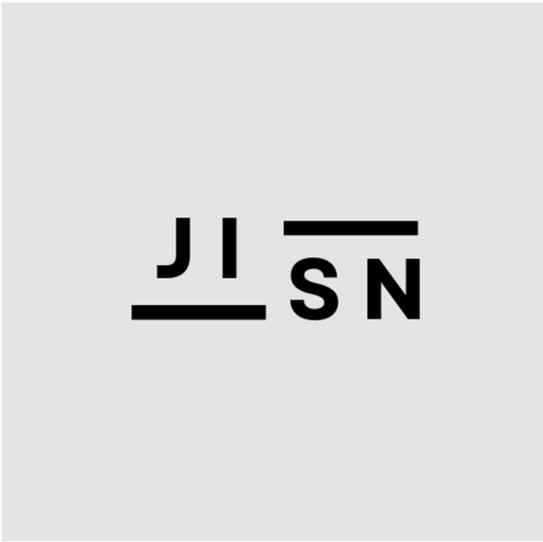
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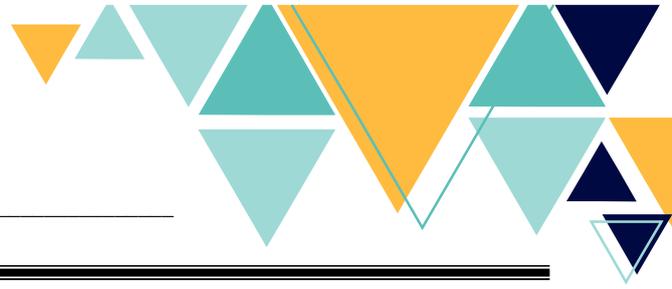
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THE ROLE OF THE AFROSIAB MONUMENTS IN THE HISTORY OF URBAN CULTURE IN UZBEKISTAN AND ITS STUDY

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Abstract:

The urban culture of Uzbekistan boasts a rich and diverse history, reflected in its architecture, urban planning, and cultural monuments. The ancient city of Afrosiab, the capital of Sogdiana, plays a significant role in understanding the development of urban culture in the region. This article explores the historical, architectural, and cultural significance of Afrosiab and its impact on the evolution of urban culture in Uzbekistan. It delves into the relationship between the physical remnants of Afrosiab and the broader historical context of city planning, societal structure, and cultural exchange in ancient Central Asia.

Keywords:

afrosiab, urban culture, sogdiana, architecture, ancient cities, uzbekistan, urban planning, cultural heritage, history, archaeology.

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Introduction

Uzbekistan, strategically located at the crossroads of Central Asia, has long been a center of urban development, cultural exchange, and historical significance. The country's cities, such as Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva, are renowned for their historical monuments, which reflect a rich and diverse cultural heritage. Among these, the ancient city of Afrosiab, located near modern-day Samarkand, stands out as a key site for understanding the urban culture of ancient Central Asia.

Afrosiab, the capital of Sogdiana, was one of the most important cities of the ancient world. Its remains offer valuable insights into the early stages of urbanization in Central Asia and the role that cities played in shaping regional culture, society, and politics. By studying the Afrosiab monuments, scholars gain a deeper understanding of the development of urban culture in Uzbekistan, particularly in terms of urban planning, architecture, and the socio-economic organization of ancient cities.

1. Afrosiab's geographical and historical significance

Afrosiab's location, situated along the ancient trade routes between the East and West, made it an important center of commerce, culture, and politics. As the capital of Sogdiana, one of the most influential regions in Central Asia, Afrosiab was at the heart of the Silk Road trade network. This strategic position facilitated the exchange of goods, ideas, and cultures, contributing to the city's growth and prosperity.

The city itself was a microcosm of the complex interactions between different cultures and civilizations. Afrosiab's position along the trade routes not only connected it to other Central Asian cities but also to Persia, China, India, and beyond. As a result, the city's urban culture was shaped by a mixture of Persian, Greek, Turkic, and Indian influences, reflecting the cosmopolitan nature of ancient Sogdiana.

2. Architectural and urban planning features of Afrosiab

One of the most remarkable aspects of Afrosiab is its architecture, which offers key insights into the urban culture of ancient Central Asia. The city's urban planning, including its layout, structures, and construction techniques, provides evidence of the advanced nature of city development in the region.

2.1. City layout and urban planning

Afrosiab's urban design reflects the typical characteristics of ancient Central Asian cities. The city was divided into distinct sectors, including residential, administrative, and commercial areas. The central part of the city housed the royal palace and temples, while the surrounding areas were dedicated to residential buildings, markets, and public spaces.

The city's layout also included a well-developed water supply system, which was essential for sustaining the urban population. The presence of large cisterns, channels, and wells indicates the advanced level of hydraulic engineering and urban infrastructure in





Afrosiab. This urban organization suggests a high degree of planning and coordination in managing the city's growth.

2.2. Architecture and construction techniques

Afrosiab's architecture reflects both the local and foreign influences that shaped the region. Excavations at the site have uncovered remnants of fortified walls, gates, and residential buildings, as well as palaces and religious structures. The use of mud brick and other local materials in construction indicates the practical and resource-efficient nature of the city's architecture.

The most significant architectural feature of Afrosiab is the discovery of large, decorated murals and frescoes, which provide a glimpse into the artistic and cultural life of the city. These murals, which depict scenes from daily life, royal ceremonies, and religious rituals, demonstrate the cultural richness and artistic sophistication of Afrosiab. The integration of such artworks into the urban landscape highlights the importance of cultural expression in shaping the city's identity.

3. Socio-economic structure and cultural heritage

Afrosiab's urban culture was not only reflected in its architecture and urban planning but also in its social and economic structures. The city was home to a diverse population, including merchants, artisans, farmers, and soldiers. Afrosiab's role as a trading hub along the Silk Road facilitated the exchange of goods such as textiles, spices, and precious metals, which helped sustain the local economy.

The city's social structure was also influenced by its position as the capital of Sogdiana. Afrosiab was a political and administrative center, with a powerful ruling class that controlled the city's wealth and resources. Archaeological findings, including inscriptions and artifacts, suggest that the city's elite class had strong ties to the Persian and Central Asian aristocracy, and their influence extended throughout the region.

3.1. Trade and commerce

The economic life of Afrosiab was deeply interconnected with trade. Located along the Silk Road, the city was a major commercial center for goods traveling between the East and West. Artifacts such as coins, ceramics, and textiles found at the site suggest that Afrosiab was involved in long-distance trade, facilitating cultural and economic exchanges between various civilizations.

The presence of a vibrant marketplace in the city indicates the central role of commerce in Afrosiab's daily life. These markets were not only spaces for the exchange of goods but also for the exchange of ideas and cultural practices, contributing to the cosmopolitan character of the city.

3.2. Religious and cultural exchange

Afrosiab was a melting pot of various religious and cultural traditions. Archaeological evidence suggests that the city was home to multiple religious



communities, including Zoroastrians, Buddhists, and local Central Asian deities. The presence of temples, shrines, and religious artifacts reflects the city's role as a center of spiritual life in the region.

The murals and frescoes discovered in Afrosiab also depict religious and cultural scenes, offering insights into the religious practices of the people who lived there. These artworks serve as a testament to the diversity and religious tolerance that characterized Afrosiab, as well as the cultural syncretism that took place in the city.

4. Afrosiab and the study of urban culture in Uzbekistan

The study of Afrosiab is essential for understanding the broader history of urban culture in Uzbekistan. As one of the most significant archaeological sites in the region, Afrosiab provides valuable insights into the development of urban centers in Central Asia. The city's urban planning, architecture, and socio-economic structures offer a blueprint for understanding the complexities of urban life in ancient Uzbekistan.

The study of Afrosiab also contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of cities in shaping regional culture and identity. By examining the monuments and artifacts left behind by the people of Afrosiab, scholars can gain a better understanding of the cultural exchanges that took place along the Silk Road and the impact these exchanges had on the development of urban culture in the region.

Conclusion

Afrosiab stands as a crucial monument in the history of urban culture in Uzbekistan. Its unique archaeological findings provide a window into the advanced urbanization, social structure, and cultural diversity of ancient Central Asia. The study of Afrosiab allows for a deeper understanding of the development of urban culture in Uzbekistan, highlighting the city's role in shaping regional architecture, trade, and cultural exchange. Through the preservation and study of such monuments, we are able to gain a greater appreciation for the historical and cultural heritage of Uzbekistan and its pivotal role in the broader history of Central Asia.

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