

Madrasas at Isfahan : From Architectural Features and their Distributions

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This Paper treats 97 madrasas constructed at Isfahan from the eleventh century to the twentieth century. They consist of two groups. First, there are 35 examples of the existing madrasas through investigations in 1994 and 1995. Secondly, there are 62 of the non-existing ones from literal sources.

With considering existing ones, Isfahan's examples of the fourteenth century are the early ones of two storied or adjoining a tomb of the founder among Iranian and Central Asian Madrasas. And the architecture of madrasa came to gain a standard plan from Timurid period in Central Asia. Succeeding them, some reforms based on their utility, for example of the flow planning of the first floor and the arrangement of rooms at the corner of the court, appeared on the Safavid period at Isfahan.

From their locations, they are divided into two categories, or madrasas around the grand bazar and ones in the residential area. Because of their scales and facilities, the former, big or small, is solely for the dormitory and the space for lectures. Though the most of the latter is so small scale with large prayer room or holy tombs, it would be added some different functions.

To put up non-existing madarasas, the construction of madarasas is concentrated from 1645 to 1720. To presume their locations on the map, many madrasas constructed along the grand bazar or neighborhood successively but on the other hand the vast residential area was studded with some madrasas.