

Identity in Transition: Eighth Century Sogdian Architecture

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Abstract

Indigenous Sogdian culture endured an irreversible transformation when the Umayyads introduced Islam into the region. Political struggles between the local elites and the newcomers resulted in victory of Islamic forces who started to change Sogdian material culture. This change is best observable in the architecture of the area. Temples and palaces of the important urban centres of Sogdiana such as Penjikent, Samarqand and Varakhsha assumed an Islamic character as the local elite gradually gave way first to Umayyad governors and then to the rebellious forces of Abu Muslim. This study inquires how this political change reflected itself in Sogdian visual culture by following the story of architectural transformations concurrent to important political events of the time.

Key Words: Sogdia, architecture, Samarqand, Penjikent, Abu-Muslim, Varakhsha.

1. Introduction: Pre-Islamic Transoxania

Sogdiana lies in between the Amu Derya and Zarafshan Rivers in Central Asia where a language derivative of Persian was spoken. Differently from its eastern and southern neighbors, China and Sassanian Iran, Sogdiana was politically fragmented from the first or second century B.C. until the eighth century A.D., when it was conquered by the Arabs.¹ It consisted of city-states that developed their own political administration and whose ruler tended to be a first-among-equals rather than a despot.² Wealthy Sogdian merchants had their say in the administration judging from their richly decorated, large houses in Penjikent.³

Sogdian merchants were extremely active in Silk Road trade, with a very diffused but efficient network of business interaction and communication. The chief primary sources for such information are the *Sogdian Ancient Letters*⁴ of the fourth century, which are the earliest Sogdian commercial documents. Apparently, there were different Sogdian communities all over Central Asia, and a messenger would transport their letters from one community to the other like a postal agent. Some of these

letters also give some clues about the structure of these communities whose merchants operated in a certain hierarchy. Such a systematized commercial organization brought great profits to those involved, which caught the eye of the surrounding central authorities. Both Sassanians and Turks occasionally attempted to take control of the various city-states of Sogdiana, but the latter often managed to liberate themselves from total submission by paying tribute or swearing allegiance to their enemies.⁵

Great landlords called *dihqans* governed rural Sogdiana. They lived in fortified castles and collected tax from the peasants working on their lands. Yet Sogdian peasants were not dependent upon their landlord, as was the case in European feudalism. They were free peasants as they could leave the land of the *dihqan* they were working on and move to another one.⁶

The Sogdian religion was a polytheistic one influenced by Buddhism, Manichaeism, and Zoroastrianism, and on which the latter seems to have had a greater impact.⁷ The locals had a very fragmentary system of worship, as is apparent from the inner decoration of the houses excavated in Penjikent. The reception halls of most residential houses were covered with large wall paintings of the divine patrons of the owner alongside smaller images of his praying family.⁸

In researching this article, my interest in the functionality of art and architecture led me to focus on the architectural transition which had presumably taken place in the seventh and eighth centuries in Sogdiana with the arrival of Islamic culture that was religiously and politically distinct from the local one. Yet when I started my research I realized how few studies had been produced on this subject. Some of the scholars brave enough to wander into the unknown fields of Sogdian material culture are Boris Marshak, Etienne de la Vaissiere and Yury Karev, who have excavated various sites in Sogdia. One of the reasons for this scholarly gap is the scarcity of sources. The nature of written material does not always allow the historian to reconstruct spatial history. Furthermore, the study of architecture in this period and place is very much dependent on archaeological data. To access this information requires many years of field work and a considerable amount of funding, which might not always be readily available.

Yet another inconvenience was the character of the secondary sources. Most of the valuable secondary information was either out of reach, or was published in Russian. Therefore, I did not have access to a complete and up-to-date data. As a result, the study below is an attempt to collate the available information about the changing architecture of Sogdiana in the eighth century and to understand the meaning of this change through a close examination of three important cities of Sogdiana.

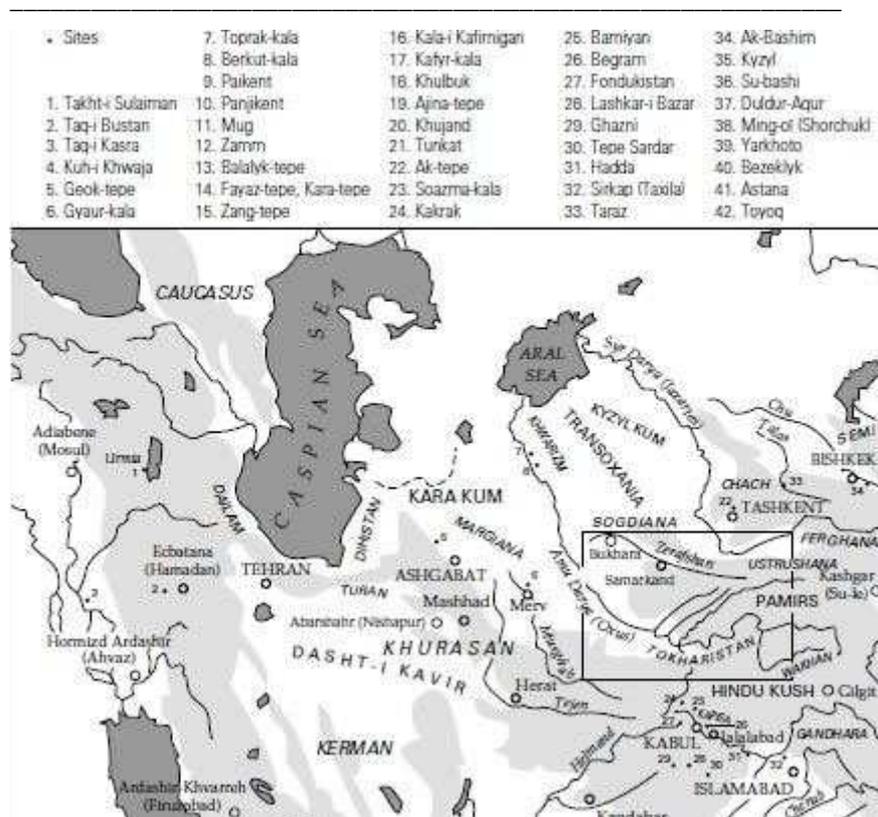


Figure 1 – General map of Central Asia (Fourth to Eighth Century)

2. The Arrival of the Arabs

Yury Karev suggests that the expansion of Islam differed in pace and in extent according to two important features of the country to be conquered: Its wealth and its religion. In the seventh and the first half of the eighth centuries, Transoxania was one of the wealthiest regions of Asia and was home to an amalgam of various pagan religions that definitely strengthened its position as a potential target.⁹

The Arabs first arrived in Transoxania from Khurasan under the leadership of the Umayyad general 'Ubaidallah b. Ziyad in 673. They raided Bukhara, which was ruled by a *Khatun* (a female ruler) as the regent of her son Tughshada. She made peace with Ziyad by paying him a considerable amount of tribute. A second considerable attack came from the new governor of Khurasan, Sa'id b. 'Uthman, who reached Samarkand in 676. All his

attempts to capture the city failed and he was killed soon after on his way to Medina. Apart from these two major incidents, minor Arabic raids continued to disturb the inhabitants of Sogdiana until the end of the seventh century.

However, on the eve of the new century, Arabic incursions assumed a more aggressive character, as a result of the eastern-oriented policies of the Umayyad caliphate. In 706, Qutayba b. Muslim, the new governor of Khurasan for the Umayyads in Merv, began his attacks against Paikent, a small town in Bukhara. Defeated initially by the collective resistance of Sogdians and Turks, he returned to Merv, and it was only after three years and by mass persecutions of rebellious Sogdians, that he was able to capture the Bukhara oasis and the Khwarizm region. In his remaining years, Qutayba managed to capture Samarkand after a month long siege in 712, in addition to the Chach and Ferghana, where he was killed in 715 by his own soldiers on losing caliphal favor with the accession of Suleiman to the Caliphate. From the 720s onwards, until the arrival of Abu Muslim, Sogdian rulers rebelled against the Umayyad authorities in Central Asia, putting up a persistent resistance. The only exception to the offensive policies of the Khurasan governors against these uprisings were the peaceful policies of intermarriage of Nasr b. Sayyar, governor of Khurasan between 738-748, which started a process of mixture between the local Sogdian elite and the Arabic rulers of Central Asia. Yet this conciliatory approach could not stop the growing discontent against Umayyad government and its elitist attitudes, which had already taken root in Khurasan and Transoxania.¹⁰

By the mid-eighth century, the social status of non-Arabic Muslims had changed a great deal. Many entered into the service of Arabic families and became their clients. Powerful as they were, they disliked the exclusive policies of Umayyad dynasty. The primary force behind the Abbasid movement was Abu Muslim, a client of Abbasid family who was made leader of the movement and governor of Khurasan by Ibrahim b. Muhammad, a member of the Abbasid family. In a very short period of time, Abu Muslim defeated the forces of Nasr b. Sayyar and established himself in Marv. In 750, the last Umayyad caliph, Marwan b. Muhammad, was also defeated, and the rule of Abbasids over the Muslim world officially started.¹¹

The material impact of these social and political transformations brought about by Muslim intervention was tremendous. The rest of this article is devoted to a discussion of the architectural impact of the above mentioned social changes. The transition of Sogdian architectural identity is best observed in three central Asian cities: Penjikent, Samarqand and Varakhsha.

3. The Period of Architectural Transition

I. Penjikent

The archaeological site of Penjikent is situated in the east of Samarkand, near the Zarafshan River, in today's Tajikistan. The site has been known since the nineteenth century but it was first surveyed and excavated in 1930s when the castle of Mug and a basket full of documents related to it were discovered accidentally by a shepherd. Only the documents written in Arabic have been deciphered so far, within which Dēwāštič, the last local ruler of Penjikent, has been identified.¹² The richest information about the structure of the pre-Islamic Sogdian city comes from Penjikent, which was founded in fifth century A.D., and survived until 770s before being abandoned for the fertile valley below the city.¹³

i. The Two Temples

There were two temples situated at the north of the citadel. Their architectural structure is very similar to each other and seems to have been influenced by the Hellenistic tradition of Bactria. Each temple stood in the middle of a large yard and had a central building with a courtyard in front of its entrance. The central hall did not have a wall so that anybody standing in the courtyard could directly see the altar of the temple. At the end of the hall, there was a door opening to the *cella*, which had two niches in both sides containing the clay statues of the Goddesses. Boris Marshak states that these two buildings experienced various reconstructions at the beginning of the eighth century.¹⁴ It is probable that the raids of Qutayba and the harsh reaction of Umayyad governors to various rebellions caused the need for the reconstruction of the temples.

ii. The Palace

Dēwāštič's palace was situated at the western side of the site. It represents the typical Sogdian palace with several reception halls which were connected to an even bigger rectangular room ending with a large niche meant to contain the throne (See Fig. 2, Room No. 5). The corridors at the back of the structure are another recurrent feature of Sogdian architecture.

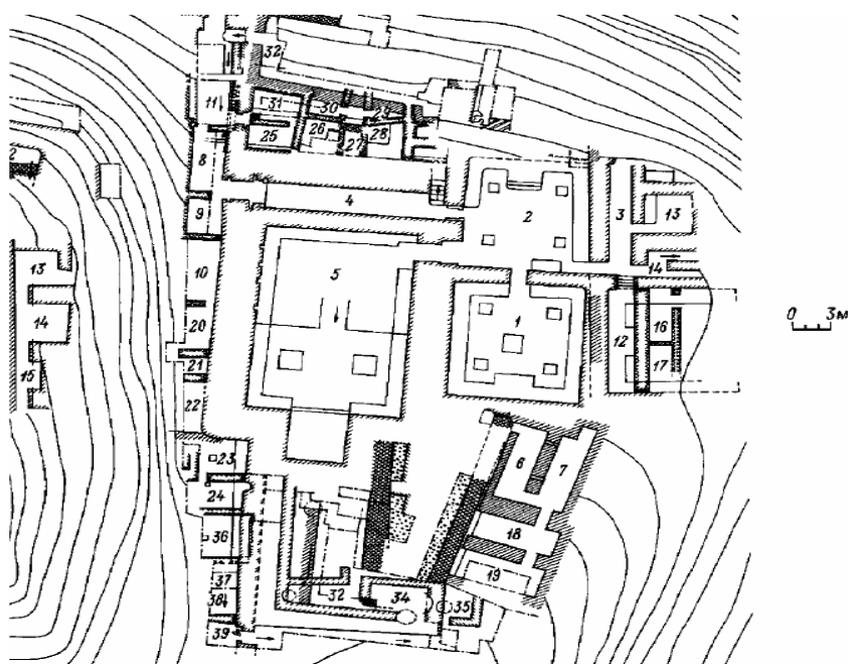


Figure 2 – Palace in Penjikent

iii. Residential Area

This area covers the eastern and the southern part of the citadel. In the fifth and sixth centuries, the most magnificent buildings of the site seem to be the temples, yet in seventh and eighth centuries, many of the residential houses started to look like small versions of a Sogdian palace.¹⁵ For example, rooms number one and two of the Palace in Fig. 2 can be compared to the various small rooms of the citadel in Fig. 3. The fact that they are all supported by four columns and that they are tied to each other by straight passage ways is illustrative of this resemblance.

All three types of dwelling mentioned above contained mural paintings on the walls of their reception halls. The murals consisted of the images of different divinities, the owner of the house and his family, and the stories of famous heroes. While classifying the dwellings of Penjikent, Valentina Raspopova emphasizes the fact that there was no great difference between the houses of the ruling elite and of the local population, suggesting that this means there were no clear boundaries of social class within society.¹⁶

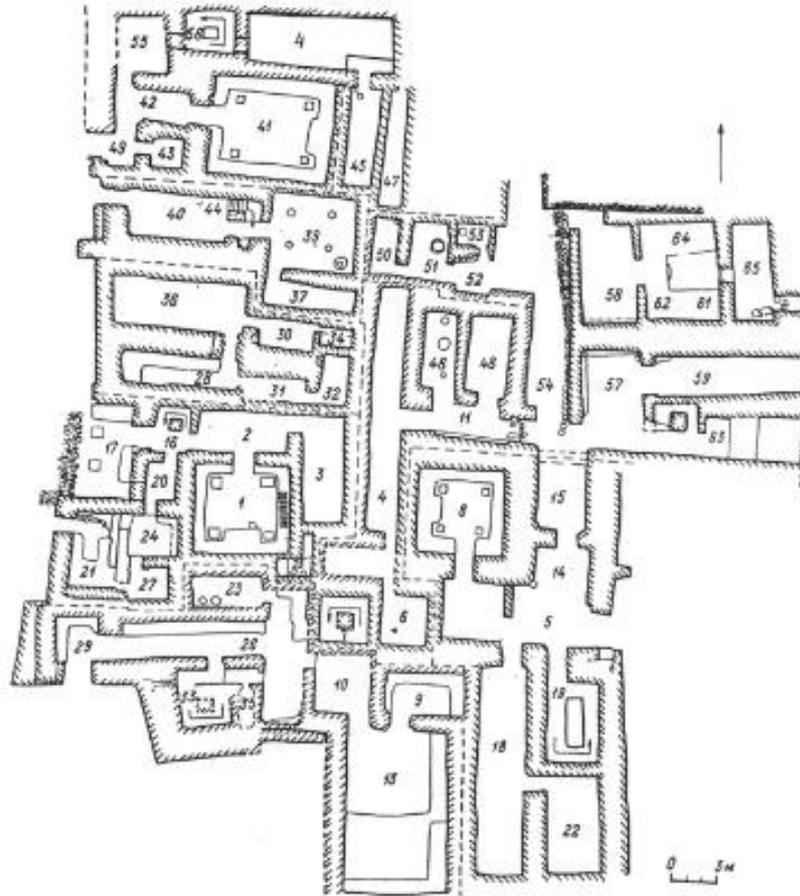


Figure 3 – Residential Area of Penjikent

In the year 720, the Sogdian local rulers engaged in a wide-scale rebellion led by Dēwāštič, which turned out to be an unsuccessful one. The Umayyads crushed the movement savagely in the year 722 and burned down the palace of Dēwāštič together with one of the temples and the majority of the rich dwellings probably belonging to the local elite of prosperous merchants.¹⁷

II. Samarqand:

The site of Samarqand can easily be considered as the best studied excavation of Sogdia in terms of architectural transition from the pre-Islamic to the

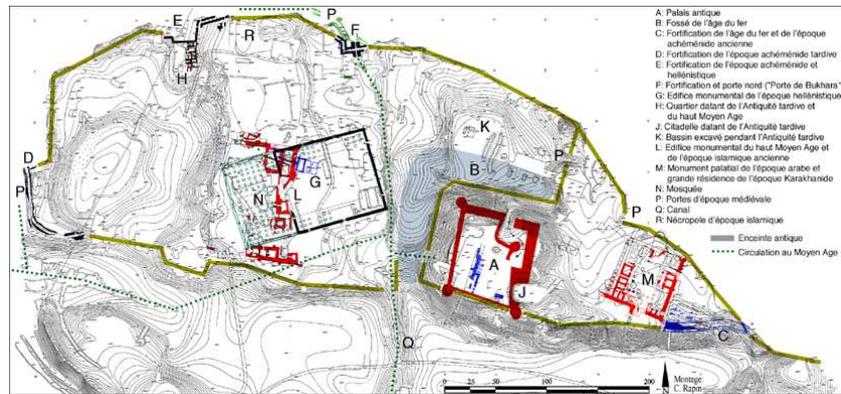


Figure 4 – General plan of the site¹⁸

Islamic period. Samarqand has been excavated since the nineteenth century, but systematized research only started as late as the 1960s. It was in 1989 that the *Mission Archeologique Franco-Ouzbeke* began to finance the excavations of the site conducted by Paul Bernard, Frantz Grenet, and Muxammadzhan Isamiddinov, which still continue today.

The history of the site goes back to the seventh-sixth century B.C. and ends with the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century. Yet the above mentioned team, focusing mostly on the seventh and eighth centuries A.D., have started a very promising research into the transition of the buildings in Samarqand from a pre-Islamic to an Islamic tradition. Although their findings remain rather limited in extent, one can still hope that new information will come to light in the coming seasons of the excavation.

i. Legendary First Mosque of Qutayba b. Muslim

The great Persian historiographer, Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (d. 923), mentioned that Qutayba b. Muslim had erected a Friday mosque as soon as he captured Samarqand in 712 and that he had burned all the idols the 'pagans' had worshiped. The archaeologists, however, could not find any convincing proof that any of the remains from the 'sacred area' of the site actually belonged to a Zoroastrian temple or to an early mosque. Karev suggests that until the 740s, the Arab invaders could not focus on serious construction activities because they were under the threat of Sogdian rebellions and Turkish raids. It was only after 740s, when the Sogdian population had begun to be integrated within Arabic social system as clients, that they started to build and change the established architectural patterns.¹⁹

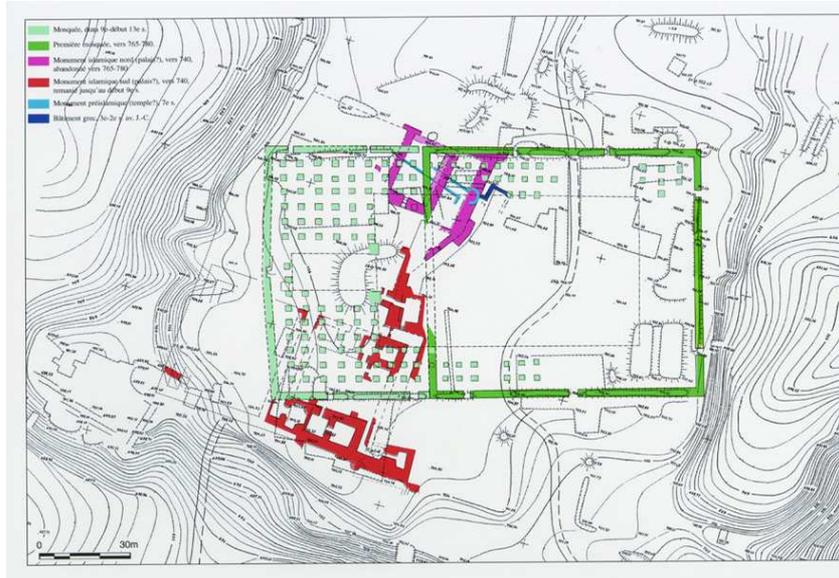


Figure 5 – Sacred Area of Afrasiab²⁰

ii. A Possible Early Islamic Palace

This building dates to the years between 738 and 750 at the earliest. This date is defined according to a coin of Turghar, the last ruler of Sogdia who managed to mint his own coin. The complex had two distinctive parts, one to the north and one to the south (see Fig. 5, purple and red sections). Although the building has been only partly excavated, it seems that it was organized around a central courtyard. The parts that have been excavated seem to have been built at different times. The plan reveals that it is a complex of different units reinforced by massive walls and towers, which were built at the same level. The four-meter wide external walls and the two similar towers at the corners were the only indication for archaeologists to hypothesize that the northern and southern half of the building actually forms a single unit.

The importance of the structure for this study is that it contains elements both foreign and familiar to Sogdian architecture. The construction of the walls is a traditional technique of Sogdiana, employing two courses of mud-bricks embedded between two courses of rammed earth. Furthermore, the large rectangular room of the northern side of the building has proportions (20 x 11.5m) very similar to the typical gala hall of Sogdian palaces. On the other hand, all the rooms of the complex were paved with burned bricks, which are very unusual for local architecture. The burned

bricks had also stamps on them with Arabic inscriptions that could not be deciphered. Another foreign element is the plausible presence of a central courtyard which was frequently used by Umayyad architects.²¹ Overall, different construction techniques, the absence of symmetry and the different leveling of the parts of the structure suggest that this complex was built in a hybrid architectural style, pointing to a transition between Arabic and Sogdian traditions.

According to Frantz Grenet, this structure could have been the first administrative building of the new Arabic elite, the palace of Nasr b. Sayyar, the governor of Khurasan from 738 to 748.²² When Nasr b. Sayyar first came to Tansoxania he was charged with the difficult duty of subduing the Sogdian rebels; a task in which he succeeded first by military power, then by trying to come to terms with them. He tried to establish a fixed pattern for the collection of taxes and formed alliances with the local elite.²³ Apparently, while he was trying to secure his military position as the ruler of Sogdiana, he needed an immediate place from which to conduct his administrative and political affairs, and it was at this time that the dual complex was built for him.

iii. *Dar al-Imara*

This building was discovered at the lower terrace near the donjon of the site, and has been excavated since 1991. The first thing that was noticed was that a previous building had been destroyed and the surface was prepared for the construction of this new one. Two phases have been identified: the first one being between 740s and 750s and the second being dated to a period between 755 and 770s. The primary architectural elements of this early phase are two massive pillars which form a spectacular entrance, three towers on the eastern wall that have only decorative purposes, symmetrical corridors leading to the center of the building, and the colonnades at the western side which probably led to another courtyard. The plan of the building was so well calculated that it was enough for the archaeologists to simply use the principles of symmetry to reconstruct the rest of the structure. The scholars excavating the building named it *Dar al-Imara* (governor's house). The impressive plan and the protected location of the building, guarded by the castle, suggest that the building hosted the governors of the city.²⁴



Figure 6 – *Dar-al Imara*. Plan and Reconstruction by E. Kurkina

Alien as it seems to the local culture, one wonders what the origin of this structure was. The suggested owner of *Dar al-Imara* is again the governor of Khurasan, Nasr b. Sayyar. It has already been mentioned that he secured his position in Transoxania through several peaceful means. Apparently, a few years after his arrival, he started the construction of this new palace which was built according to contemporaneous Umayyad palatial architecture. One such example is the palace complex of Walid II in Jericho called Khirbat al-Mafjar (Fig. 7) built between 740 and 750.²⁵ The resemblance between these two plans is striking. The shape of the building, the placement of the columns and the tower-like additions in the corners are among some of the common features between *Dar-al Imara* in Samarqand (See Fig. 6) and the main palatial area of the Khirbat al-Mafjar in Jericho. (See Fig. 7) This suggests that Umayyad rule was finally beginning to take root in Transoxania, since the rulers found time and resources to devote to artistic production instead of military needs.

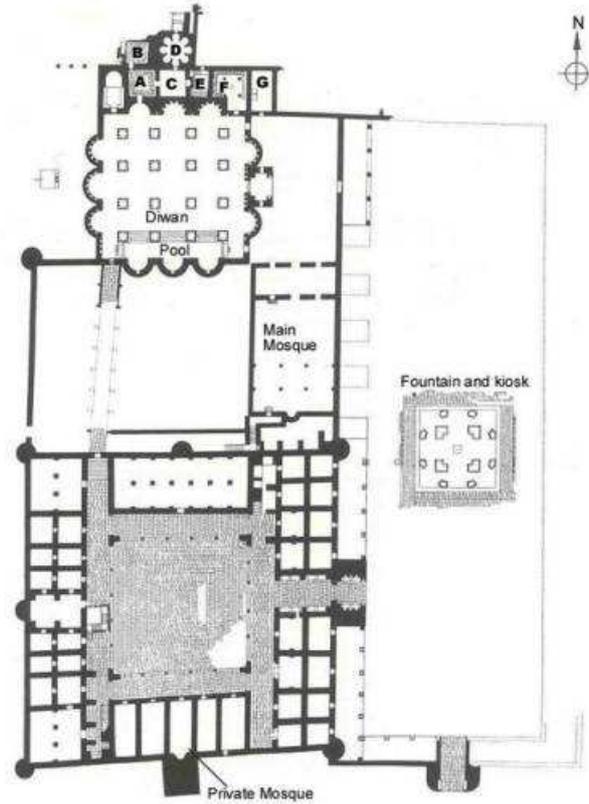


Figure 7 – Plan of Khirbat al-Mafjar Palace

The second phase was dated to a period between 755 and the 770s on the basis of the first coins of Abu Muslim in Samarqand. Apparently, certain events had prevented the continuation of construction activities. Then, at a slightly later date, the new owners decided to finish the building with materials readily available to them. This new building lacked the sophistication of the earlier one since the new builders did not exactly follow the old plan.²⁶

What had disrupted the construction was no doubt the Abbasid revolution. According to al-Tabari's account, already in 747, Abu Muslim had sent his generals to different cities in Khurasan, both to spread the cause and to fight against any possible resistance. One year later, Siba'b. an-Numan al-Azdi was sent to Samarqand as governor of the city. Apparently, he

expelled Nasr b. Sayyar from the region, yet we do not know exactly what happened to him.²⁷

Abu Muslim came to Samarqand in 751 or 752 in order to suppress a rebellion which was started in Bukhara in 750 by a certain Sharik b. Shayh al-Fihri against both the Abbasids and the local authorities who sided with them. At the same time, the Chinese emperor sent a big army in order to help the local ruler of Fergana against the King of Shash. This direct intervention in a conflict within the newly Abbasid territories resulted in a diplomatic crisis. In the war of Taraz in 751, one of the generals of Abu Muslim, Sa'id b. Humayd, defeated Chinese army in several battles and brought many of the remaining soldiers to Samarqand as prisoners.²⁸ Yet another move of Abu Muslim in Transoxania was the suppression of the rebellious activities of the local nobles. According to T'ang Chou, from mid-eighth century onwards, the local kings of Transoxania asked the Chinese emperor to attack the Abbasids and in return they offered to become their vassals. Yet it had never become a collective movement until 752, when eleven kings got together to ask for the emperor's help. In that year, Abu Muslim was in Samarqand, and very plausibly it was him who sent Abu Dawud to a campaign against Kish where he killed the king of Kish and other *dihqans* of the region with him. Also in the same period, many other kings and rulers disappeared from Chinese sources.²⁹ Thus, Abu Muslim probably initiated the construction of the second building, but it was interrupted again by his death. That is why the builders could not pursue the old plan and had to be content with whatever local builders could make out of it.

iv. Urban Structures

During the mid eighth century, the layout of the residential area of Afrasiyab started to change. Just like the original plan of *Dar al-Imara*, the quarters began to include central courtyards which were not part of the urban tradition of pre-Islamic Sogdia.³⁰

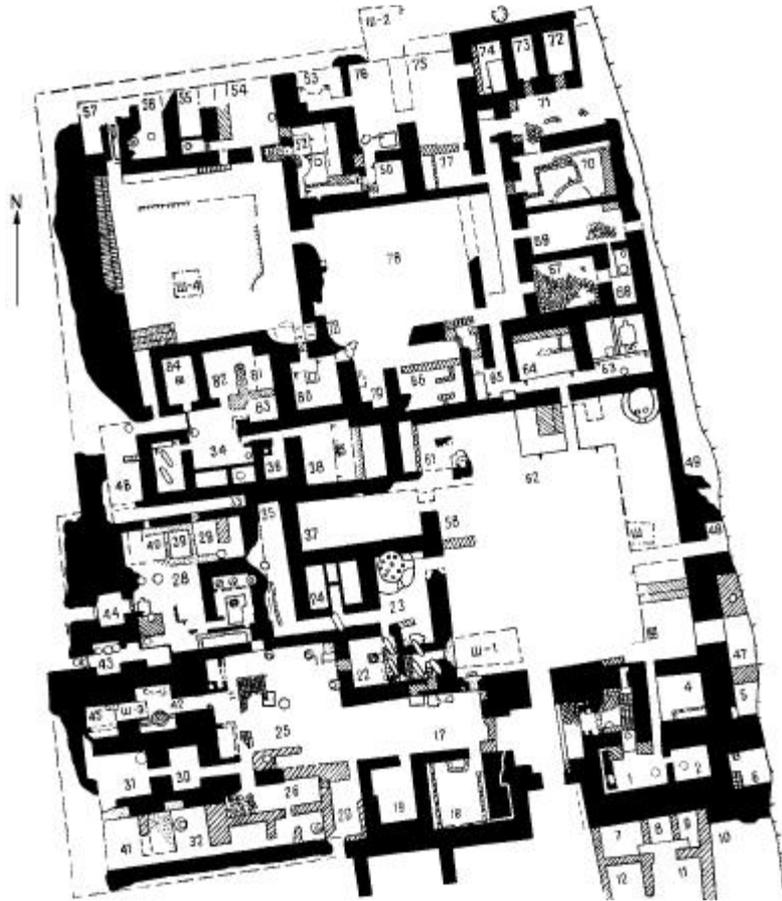


Figure 8 – Residential quarter in the western part of Afrasiab

III. Varakhsha:

The first archaeologist of Varakhsha was Vasilii Shishkin, who started his expeditions in the early 1950s. He unearthed one of the rooms of the famous palace which was full of stucco decorations. Although his discovery made a huge sensation in the world, the excavation was stopped in 1954, and restarted at different intervals.³¹

The architectural development of the palace of Varakhsha is somewhat different from what we see in Samarqand, where architectural transformation happened through the patrons of the buildings. Sogdian rulers

disappeared from the scene in Samarqand, and Arabic governors themselves shaped the new style of architecture in the city according to their taste and needs. Yet in Varakhsha, one can observe a different pattern. Local rulers continued to govern the city, though they were vassals first to the Umayyad and then to the Abbasid government. One can observe the reluctance with which this new culture had been appropriated by Sogdian *ikshids* (kings), not so much in the architecture, but certainly in the decoration, of the palace.

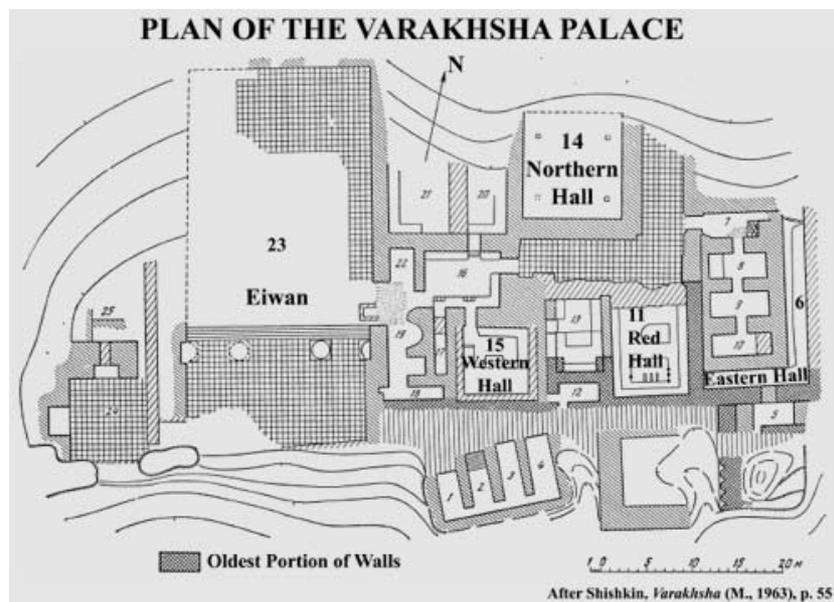


Figure 9 – Plan of the Varakhsha Palace

The palace must have been built sometime before the seventh century. It is claimed that that it had been ‘abandoned’ and was in ruins when it was rebuilt again.³² Archaeologists have defined five different phases for the building. The first one belongs to Khnk Khuda, and is dated between the years 689 and 709-710. According to Abū Bakr Muhammad ibn Jafar Naymark, Khnk Khuda was none other than Vardan Khuda, the ruler of Vardana who, according to Narshakhi, usurped the throne from Togshada in late-seventh century until 709, when Qutayba b. Muslim restored the rule to its rightful heir, Togshada.³³

Since we have very little information about the layout of this early phase, it is more convenient to start with the second one, which belongs to the king Togshada b. Bidun (709-732). The walls of the Eastern, Western and

Red Hall, together with a wall painting from the Eastern Hall, date to this period. The 'Zoroastrian' connotation of this specific wall painting clearly contradicts Narshakhi's statement that Togshada became Muslim with the help of Qutayba.³⁴ Naymark suggests that this painting must have been ordered after Qutayba died, as it seems unlikely that Togshada had showed any hard evidence of his allegedly secret Zoroastrian faith before that. According to Chinese sources, Togshada turned to the Chinese emperor for help again in 719 and took part in the uprisings of 720s. It is plausible that this painting belongs to this later period of Togshada's reign, when he decided to rebel against Arab rule. In 722, however, the Arabs regained political control of the region. One is therefore inclined to think that the repainting of the Red Hall might be related to the later years of Togshada's rule, from 722 to 738. Although we do not know the content of the earlier images, it is likely that when his attempt to liberate himself from Arabic dominance failed, he had to change the iconography of the paintings. Naymark proposes that the surviving upper part of the images includes a 'secret code' which hides the presence of Sogdian deities under the appearance of simple "zoomorphic ornaments".³⁵

Nevertheless, another rupture in the loyalty of Sogdian rulers is reflected in the fourth stage of the building. Archaeologists found traces of a great fire, which probably ended this phase. After Togshada, his son, Qutayba b. Togshada, started to rule Varakhsha. Narshakhi states that Qutayba was a Muslim, but that he returned to the beliefs of his forefathers in Abu Muslim's time, and this is why the Abu Muslim killed him, his brother and his followers.³⁶ The fire was probably the result of such a conflict between Qutayba b. Togshada and Abu Muslim which resulted in Qutayba's death.³⁷

Only in the fifth stage is it possible to see the integration of some Arabic architectural elements into the pre-existing structure. This last phase is attributed to Buniyat b. Togshada, who replaced his brother Qutayba upon his death in 753. After the huge fire, Buniyat seems to have repaired his palace. The architect used some new materials and added new spaces to the old structure. He placed an *eiwan* with huge columns to the western side of the complex and covered the pavement of the *eiwan* and the corridor around the northern hall with baked bricks. (See Fig. 9 Room no: 23) None of these elements existed in pre-Islamic Sogdian architecture.³⁸

It seems that after 750s, the cultural influences of Arabic rule had finally started to change Sogdian society in a permanent way. The customs and manners of the politically dominant culture became a symbol of power for inferior rulers who wanted to imitate them. For the members of the *Bukhara Khudah* family, the rulers of Bukhara, this change started to show itself physically, when they fully recognized Abbasid dominance, after the death of Qutayba b. Togshada in 753.

4. Conclusion

The eighth century was a crucial period for the history of Sogdiana since it saw political and cultural turmoil within the region. It took a lot of uprisings and diplomatic effort before the newcomers had completely established themselves. It is possible to observe the material implication of this phenomenon in two different cities. In Samarqand, the authority changed hand in the early years of the century, and the city became the center of Arabic government in Sogdiana. Therefore, one can observe the architectural outcome of an amalgam of the two traditions already in the second quarter of the century, with the hybrid palace of Nasr b. Sayyar and with *Dar al-Imara* in the middle of the century, after the Abbasid revolution. On the other hand, in Varakhsha, where local kings continued to rule in the eighth century, the transformation followed a different path. They saw every weak moment of their masters as an opportunity to rebel and revive their own religion and political power. Yet this dream had to come to an end when, after a short period of confusion, Abu Muslim managed to consolidate Arabic rule even further throughout Sogdiana. The fifth phase of the Varakhsha palace demonstrates this firm presence of Abbasid rule as a superior authority.

Notes

¹ Boris I Marshak, "Sugd and Adjacent Regions" in *History of Civilizations of Central Asia: VOL III, The Crossroads of Civilizations: A.D. 250 to 750*, ed. B.A. Litvinsky, Zhang Guang-Da, R. Shabani Samghabadi, (Fontenoy: UNESCO Publishing, 1996), 233.

² Melanie Dawn Michailidis, *Landmarks of the Persian Renaissance: Monumental Funerary Architecture in Iran and Central Asia in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries*, (Ph. D. diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2007), 122.

³ Marshak, *Legends, Tales, and Fables in the Art of Sogdiana* (New York: Bibliotheca Persica Press, 2002), 14.

⁴ The Sogdian Ancient Letters were first quoted in Hans Reichelt, *Die Soghdischen Handschriftenreste des Britischen Museums* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1928-1931).

⁵ Etienne de la Vaissiere, *Sogdian Traders : A History*, trans. James Ward, (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 42-51.

⁶ Michailidis, *Landmarks of the Persian Renaissance*, 112.

⁷ Nikitin Chengini and A. V. Nikitin, "Sasanian Iran – Economy, Society, Arts and Crafts" in *The Crossroads of Civilizations: A.D. 250 to 750*, Vol. 3. *History of Civilizations of Central Asia* (Fontenoy: UNESCO Publishing, 1996), 253.

- ⁸ Marshak, *Legends, Tales and Fables in the Art of Sogdiana*, 18.
- ⁹ Yury Karev, “Samarqand in the Eight Century: The Evidence of Transformation” in *Changing Social Identity with the Spread of Islam Archaeological Perspectives*, ed. Donald Whitcomb (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 2004), 51.
- ¹⁰ Chengini and Nikitin, “Sasanian Iran – Economy, Society, Arts and Crafts”, *The Crossroads of Civilizations: A.D. 250 to 750*, 457-462.
- ¹¹ Karev, “La Politique d’Abu Muslim dans le Mawara’annah. Nouvelles Données Textuelles et Archeologiques”, *Der Islam* 79 (2002): 2-6.
- ¹² Gregory Semenov, “Mugh, Mount” in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, (<http://www.iranica.com/articles/mugh-mount>). Accessed 16th March 2010.
- ¹³ Boris Marshak, “Panjikant” in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, (<http://www.iranica.com/articles/panjikant>). Accessed 16th March 2010.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Marshal, *Legends, Tales and Fables in the Art of Sogdiana*, 1-14.
- ¹⁷ Marshak, “Panjikant”.
- ¹⁸ I am grateful to Frantz Grenet who kindly granted me the right to use some of the images he published in his personal website. Furthermore, it should be emphasized that all plans regarding the site of Afrasiab excavated by Yury Karev and Frantz Grenet are part of an ongoing project.
- ¹⁹ Karev, “Samarqand in the Eight Century”, 53.
- ²⁰ Translation of the colour key, from top to bottom: Mosque from 9th to early 12th century; first mosque around 765-780; north of possible Islamic palace around 740 and abandoned around 765-780; south of possible Islamic palace around 740 and observed until the beginning of 9th century; pre-Islamic monument (temple?), 7th century; Hellenistic building 3rd-2nd centuries BC.
- ²¹ Especially, there seems to be a great resemblance between the plans of the eight century Umayyad palace Khirbat al-Mafjar in Jericho and of *Dar-al Imara*.
- ²² Karev, “Samarqand in the Eight Century”, 55-6.
- ²³ Chengini and Nikitin, “Sasanian Iran – Economy, Society, Arts and Crafts”, 461.
- ²⁴ Karev, “Samarqand in the Eight Century”, 58-9.
- ²⁵ Richard Ettinghausen, “The Throne and Banquet Hall of Khirbat al-Mafjar” in *Early Islamic Art and Architecture*, ed. Jonathan M. Bloom (Great Britain: Ashgate, 2007), 283.
- ²⁶ Karev, “Samarqand in the Eight Century”, 59.
- ²⁷ Karev, “La Politique d’Abu Muslim”, 3-5.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 11-5.
- ²⁹ Ibid., 16-9.

- ³⁰ Karev, "Samarqand in the Eight Century", 64.
- ³¹ Aleksandr Naymark, "Returning to Varakhsha", in *The Silk Road Newsletter*, VOL I 2 (December 2003) <http://www.silk-road.com/newsletter/december/varakhsha.htm>. Accessed 15th March 2010
- ³² See, Abū Bakr Muhammad ibn Jafar Narshaki, *The History of Bukhara*, trans. Richard N. Frye, (Cambridge: The Medieval Academy of America, 1954), 17.
- ³³ Naymark, "Returning to Varakhsha," *The Silk Road Foundation Newsletter* I, 2 (2003): 9-22.
- ³⁴ Narshakhi, *The History of Bukhara*, 10.
- ³⁵ Aleksandr Naymark, "Returning to Varakhsha", 18.
- ³⁶ Narshakhi, *The History of Bukhara*, 10.
- ³⁷ Naymark, "Returning to Varakhsha", 20.
- ³⁸ Ibid.

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- Figure 2. Boris I. Marshak, "Legends, Tales, and Fables in the Art of Sogdiana", with an Appendix by Vladimir A. Livshits, (New York: Bibliotheca Persica Press, 2002), 6.
- Figure 3. Boris Marshak, "Panjikant" in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, (<http://www.iranica.com/articles/panjikant>).

Figure 4. Frantz Grenet, "Fouilles Sur Le Site De Samarqand." Frantz Grenet Page Personelle. December 12, 2007.
<http://frantz.grenet.free.fr/index.php?choix=afraziab>.

Figure 5. Frantz Grenet, "Fouilles Sur Le Site De Samarqand." Frantz Grenet Page Personelle. December 12, 2007.
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Figure 6. Yury Karev, "Samarqand in the Eight Century: The Evidence of Transformation" in *Changing Social Identity with the Spread of Islam Archaeological Perspectives*, ed. Donald Whitcomb (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 2004), 60.

Figure 7. FTSC Limited, "Khirbat Al-Mafjar, Palace (740-750)", 09 December, 2004.
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Figure 8. Yury Karev, "Samarqand in the Eight Century: The Evidence of Transformation" in *Changing Social Identity with the Spread of Islam Archaeological Perspectives*, ed. Donald Whitcomb (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 2004), 65.

Figure 9. Aleksandr Naymark, "Returning to Varakhsha", in *The Silk Road Newsletter, VOL 1 2* (December 2003) <http://www.silk-road.com/newsletter/december/varakhsha.htm> .

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