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**Silk Road Cities. Documented through vintage photographs,
prints and postcards**

Paskaleva, E.G.; Berg, G.R. van den

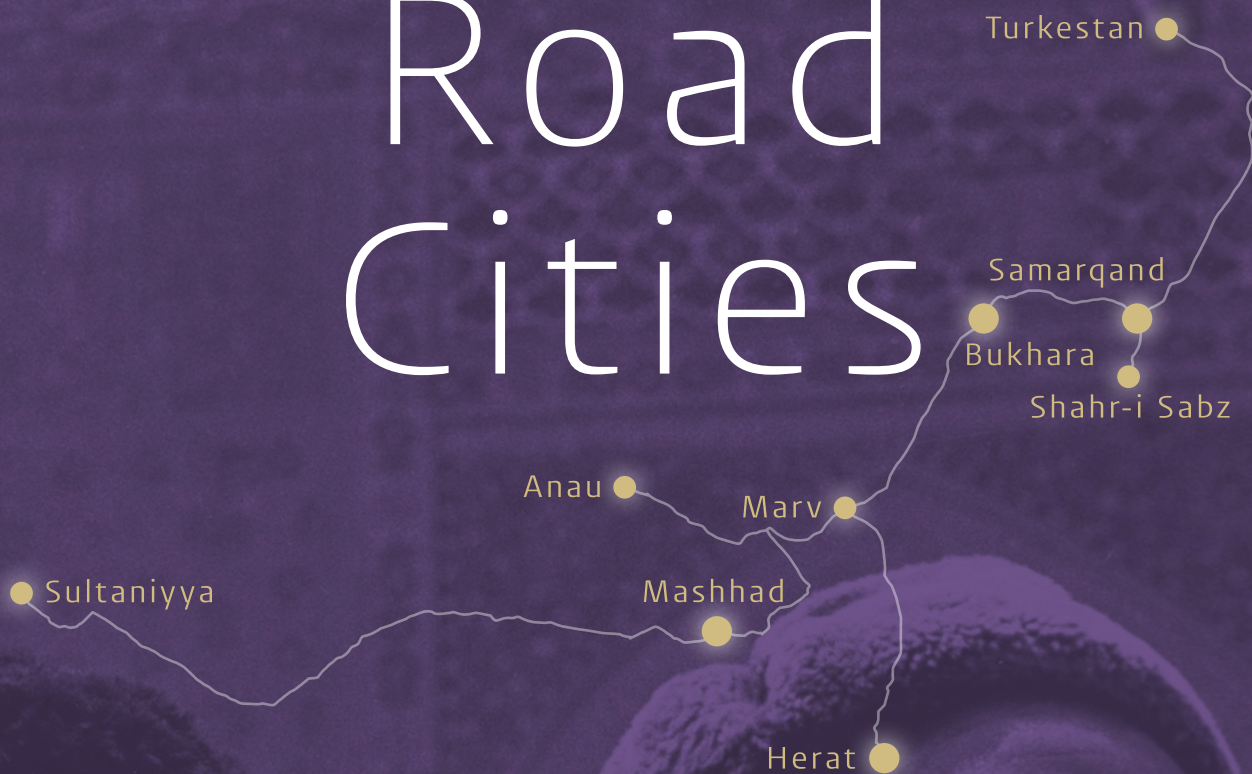
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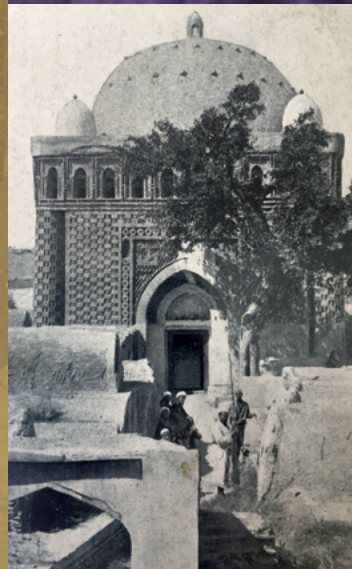
Silk Road Cities



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vintage photographs,
prints and postcards

ELENA PASKALEVA
GABRIELLE VAN DEN BERG

Two photographs taken in front of the Khwaja Ahmad Mausoleum (1350s) in the Shah-i Zinda complex, Samarkand. Below: Photograph by G. A. Pankratyev from his *Album of Historical Monuments of the City of Samarkand*, 1890. Right: Western tourists in the 1950s. Photograph taken on 2 January 1959 by Harold W. Stanfield (1898 -1973). Published on 19 December 1958.



Silk Road Cities



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ELENA PASKALEVA
GABRIELLE VAN DEN BERG

13. Арка, замыкающая узкий корридоръ между мавзолеями у могилы Шахъ-зинда.

About the Leiden University Centre for the Study of Islam and Society (LUCIS)

LUCIS was established by the Executive Board of Leiden University in 2009 as an interfaculty knowledge and networking centre that brings together academics from various faculties of Leiden University, offering a multidisciplinary and comparative view on Islam and Muslim societies.

LUCIS promotes high-quality research on Islam and Muslim societies and communicates the insights and findings of that research to the larger public. By bringing together scholars from a range of disciplines, LUCIS stimulates new perspectives on the vibrant field of Islamic studies at Leiden University.

Leiden University has a long tradition in the study of Islam as a religion and a cultural practice in its many historical manifestations across the world. The university's historical leadership in the field has resulted in unparalleled scholarly resources as well as specialty expertise in each of the regions in which Islam plays a pivotal role. Our knowledge of the languages, cultures, religions, legal systems and histories of Muslim societies provides a uniquely fruitful platform from which to understand Islam as a dynamic, global phenomenon and as reflective of its regional context.

The study of Islam in Central Asia is a case in point. While often regarded as a periphery of the Islamic world, LUCIS dedicated its annual conference in 2016 to Islamic Central Asia to highlight the historical and contemporary importance of this vast region with fluid borders and global linkages. Since 2018 LUCIS has been hosting a research programme on Islam in Central Asia, which consists of several outreach events, including the exhibition which is the subject of this booklet.

This exhibition displays a collection of fascinating photographs and postcards of Islamic architectural monuments in major Silk Road cities, thereby reflecting Central Asia's Islamic cultural heritage and material culture in all its diversity. LUCIS is grateful to Gabrielle van den Berg and Elena Paskaleva for bringing together this unique collection which will be exciting for anyone interested in Islam in Central Asia.

Nathal Dessing
Director, LUCIS

About the NWO VICI Project “Turks, Texts, and Territory. Imperial Ideology and Cultural Production in Central Eurasia”

This exhibition is part of the public outreach scheme of the research project “Turks, Texts and Territory. Imperial Ideology and Cultural Production in Central Eurasia”, funded in 2016 by the Dutch Research Council NWO in the framework of the Innovational Research Incentives Scheme Vici. At present, this project hosts two postdoctoral researchers and three PhD candidates, who work in the field of history, linguistics, architecture, heritage studies and literature on different aspects of the interaction between cultural production and imperial ideology in medieval Central Asia and Iran. The project members focus on the literary and artistic practices of Turkic dynasties with a nomadic background in the Turco-Persian world between 1000-1500. The spatial framework of the project is provided by five Silk Road cities, situated at present in different nation states: Kashgar in China, Ghazna in Afghanistan, Konya in Turkey, Tabriz in Iran and Samarkand in Uzbekistan. As capitals and nodal points of five medieval Turco-Persian empires, ruled by the Qarakhanid, Ghaznavid, Saljuq, Ilkhanid and Timurid dynasties, each of these cities represents a particular stage in the development of imperial ideology and its expression by means of literary and artistic production, as preserved in various examples of cultural heritage.

This exhibition would not have been possible without the invaluable contribution of Dr. Elena Paskaleva, a pivotal member of the “Turks, Texts and Territory” project, University Lecturer Critical Heritage at Leiden University and a specialist on the history of Timurid architecture. The items on display all come from her rich collection of photographs, postcards and prints from Central Asia and Iran. These visual sources form an important basis for her innovative research into strategies of preservation and restoration of Timurid monuments in Samarkand and other cities in Central Asia.

The organisers are grateful to NWO, LUCIS and the Old Library for their generous support.

Gabrielle van den Berg
Principal Investigator, NWO Vici Project Turks, Texts and Territory.
Professor of Cultural History of Iran and Central Asia,
Leiden University

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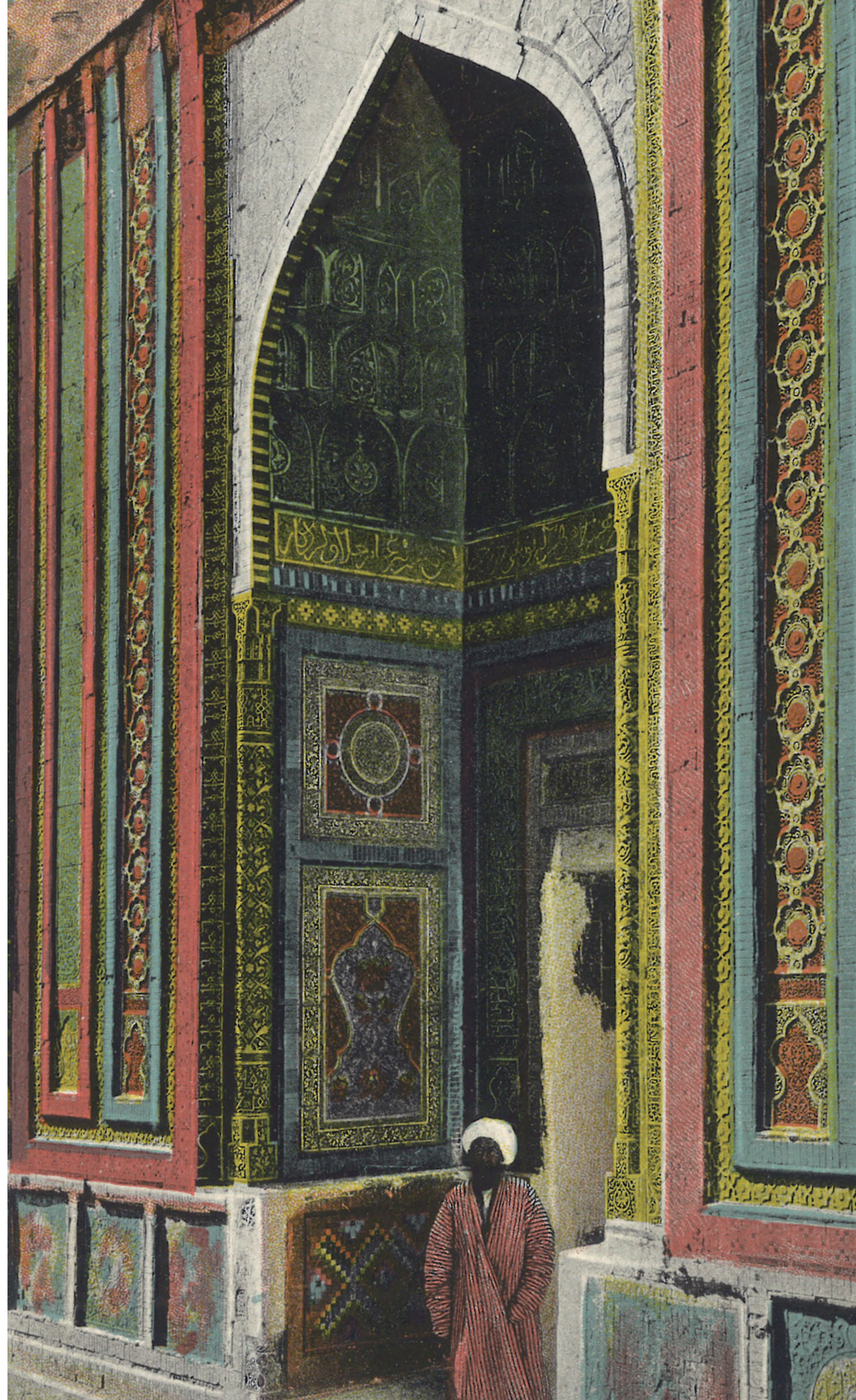
A brief historical overview

The monuments of the Silk Road cities that form the subject of this exhibition are in majority located in a vast region known as Central Asia, the cradle of great empires and the crossroads of many different cultures. Its fluid borders stretch into present-day Afghanistan, Russia, China, Mongolia, Iran and the Caucasus. The rich history of this region is closely intertwined with the so-called Silk Road, the proverbial pre-modern highway of global interaction connecting the ancient empires of East and West. Though a network of trade routes had been flourishing in this area for a long time, the term 'Silk Road' itself is a 19th century invention of a German scholar, Ferdinand von Richthofen. It was an immediate hit and the romantic connotation of the 'Silk Road' still continues to inspire travellers, traders and governments. A recent example is China's New Silk Road initiative, a trade and development strategy that started in 2013 as OBOR, 'One Belt One Road', and was renamed the Belt and Road Initiative in 2016. This initiative demonstrates the growing importance of Central Asia as a focal point of geopolitical interests and the global ambitions of world powers. Another testimony of the perennial success of the label 'Silk Road' is the 2015 bestseller of Peter Frankopan, entitled *The Silk Roads: A New History of the World*. In this work, Frankopan makes a strong case for a less Eurocentric approach to global history, following in the footsteps of a number of other historians who have argued the centrality of Central Asia in world history.

The monuments of the Silk Road cities on display here are landmarks of premodern dynasties and empires, which united realms and routes that now fall under the jurisdiction of different and separate political entities. Amongst these are the five nation states in which the historical cities of this exhibition are located, namely Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Iran and Afghanistan. The present-day borders of most of these states are, relatively speaking, quite recent. Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan acquired independence after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 and find their origin in the creation of Soviet republics in the 1920s. Afghanistan emerged in the middle of the 18th century with the rise of the Durrani Empire and has known a very tumultuous history since, especially as a zone of contest for British and Russian colonial powers, the ill-fated battle ground of the 'Great Game'. In contrast, the term 'Iran' has a very long history and has been in use since ancient times, for a territory of which the borders were subject to change, depending on those who ruled. The present-day nation state of Iran originates in the Safavid Empire (1501-1722) and found its definitive form in the 19th century. The monuments represented here on photographs, postcards and prints, captured sometime between the late 19th century and the 1970s, are now predominantly seen as part of the cultural heritage of these different nation states and as such, subject to different national discourses.

At the same time, however, these monuments stand as witnesses of a shared imperial history of a premodern cultural space that is often referred to as the Turco-Persian world. Dynastic rulers, usually with a nomadic Turkic background, established large empires over sedentary and nomadic peoples in an area covering present-day Iran, Central Asia, Afghanistan, Asia Minor and Northern India. In this huge area, Persian language and culture dominated or was adopted, creating a political and cultural Turco-Persian symbiosis that thrived from the 10th to the 18th century. The emergence of colonial powers in the Mughal Empire of the Indian subcontinent and in Central Asia heralded the end of this Turco-Persian imperial age.

Right: Samarqand, Shah-i Zinda complex, Mausoleum of Shad-i Mulk (1371-1383).
Postcard from the series Union Postale Universelle Russie.



The rise to importance of Persian as a language of culture and administration can be connected to the House of the Samanids in the city of Bukhara. The Samanids (819-1005) were a dynasty of Iranian descent, probably from around the city of Balkh in present-day Afghanistan, who had become powerful as governors for the 'Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258). The 'Abbasids, and before them the Umayyads (661-750), had brought Islam as far north as Transoxiana, 'the lands beyond the Oxus': in Arabic and Persian famous as Mawara an-Nahr. The Samanids were loyal governors and ruled over a semi-independent large emirate in the regions of Transoxiana, Khorasan and Khwarezm (see map 1). They had acquired immense wealth through slave trade and transported Turkic nomads as slave soldiers to Baghdad, the capital of the 'Abbasid Caliphate. The Samanids were the first dynasty to foster and promote Persian, or rather New Persian: a language that had risen from the proverbial ashes of the Islamic conquest in Transoxiana. Persian had been the language of the empire of the Sasanians, whose dynasty in Iran and beyond had fallen during the Islamic conquests in the 7th century. The Persian that emerged at the Samanid court was a new kind of Persian, written in Arabic script and with many new words originating from Arabic, fitting very well into the context of Islamic rule. The court of the Samanids attracted scholars and poets, who composed their works in Persian – the language of the poets - and Arabic, the language of religion and science. Rudaki was the first poet who left a legacy of any substance in Persian. He came from the mountains near the ancient city of Panjakent, in present-day Tajikistan. His name is forever linked to the Samanid amir Nasr ibn Ahmad II, for whom he composed the following famous verses, beckoning him home to Bukhara from his summer camp:

'The jú-yi Múliyán we call to mind,
 We long for those dear friends long left behind.
 The sands of the Oxus, toilsome though they be,
 Beneath my feet were soft as silk to me.
 Glad at the friend's return, the Oxus deep
 Up to our girths in laughing waves shall leap.
 Long live Bukhárá! Be thou of good cheer!
 Joyous towards thee hasteth our Amír!'¹

Nasr ibn Ahmad ruled from 914-943 and was the grandson of Isma'il (r. 892-907), one of the most celebrated rulers of the Samanid dynasty whose mausoleum still stands in the Samanid capital of Bukhara. The slave trade, key to the success of the Samanids, also caused their downfall: Turkic military slaves took over power at the end of the 10th century and established a new and very powerful dynasty in the city of Ghazna in present-day Afghanistan. Their empire was reduced in size after 1040, when they were defeated by another group of Turks, coming from the north: the Saljuqs (1038-1194), who had converted to Islam at the end of the 10th century. Though in name subservient to the 'Abbasid caliph, they were all-powerful rulers and staunch champions of Sunni Islam. Their empire rapidly grew and by the end of the 11th century stretched far beyond the eastern parts of the Islamic caliphate into Asia Minor, Iraq and the Levant, and across the Persian Gulf into Oman (see map 2). Their sultan Alp Arslan defeated the Byzantines at Manzikert in 1071: an important point in time, as this event initiated Turkic rule over Anatolia and the rest of Asia Minor. The Saljuqs were avid patrons of art and architecture and contributed to the development of several large urban centres, such as Isfahan, Nishapur and Marv. In Marv (Mary) the mausoleum of Sultan Sanjar (r. 1118-1157), the last of the so-called Great Saljuqs, is located.

In the year 1167, while the Saljuqs still ruled firmly over large parts of the Middle East and Central Asia, in distant Mongolia an as yet unsurpassed future ruler was born. Named Temüjin, he became famous as the ruthless and charismatic 'Oceanic Ruler' – Chinggis Khan (1167-1227). He united the Turkic and Mongolian tribesmen from the Asian steppes and conquered on horseback most of the sedentary peoples surrounding him. The Mongol Empire established by Chinggis Khan, his sons and grandsons in its heyday stretched from Eastern Europe to the Korean peninsula, and from the Indus valley up to Siberia, including present-day China, Iran and Russia (see map 3). This immense empire offered new opportunities for cultural and diplomatic exchange, and for trade and travel, exemplified by the missions of Marco Polo and William of Rubruck.

¹ Translation E.G. Browne, *Chahár Maqála*, p. 54.



Map 1 (top). From: Roolvink, Roelof. *Historical Atlas of the Muslim Peoples*. Amsterdam: Djambatan, 1957.

Map 2 (middle). From: Cagman, Filiz, Nazan Olcer and David J. Roxburgh. *Turks: A Journey of a Thousand Years, 600-1600*. London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2005.

Map 3 (bottom). From May, Timothy. *Central Asia: The Mongols 1206-1405*. In Masselos, Jim (ed), *The Great Empires of Asia*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2010.



The Mongols stood thus at the centre of a new era of globalisation. This continued also after the Mongol Empire had fallen apart in four khanates, each ruled by a descendant of Chinggis, at the end of the 13th century. One of these khanates was established by Hülegü around 1260. Hülegü and his troops brought an end to the 'Abbasid Caliphate in 1258, leaving the Islamic world in turmoil. The Ilkhanids, as Hülegü and his descendants were named, ruled over Iran, Iraq, the Caucasus and Anatolia until 1335. The Ilkhanids soon adopted Islam as their new religion and Persian as their language. They resided in the north-west of present-day Iran, in Tabriz, Maragha and Sultaniyya, where the mausoleum of the Ilkhanid ruler Öljeytü (r. 1304-1316) is situated.

In this period, Sufis or mystics played an important role in the conversion to Islam of Turkic and Mongolian steppe peoples and rulers. Already during the Saljuq period, Sufis and Sufi institutions, such as *khanaqahs* or lodges, were often patronized by rulers. This practice continued and intensified in the centuries to follow. Timur (Tamerlane, d. 1405), the Turco-Mongolian emperor who rose to power at the end of the 14th century, commissioned the building of a mausoleum for the Sufi shaykh Ahmad Yasawi (d. 1166), founder of the Yasawiyya brotherhood, in present-day Turkestan (Kazakhstan). Timur's son Shahrukh, who ruled from Herat in present-day Afghanistan, initiated the building of a magnificent mausoleum complex for Shaykh 'Abdallah Ansari (d. 1089) in Gazurgah near Herat. These initiatives demonstrate a new trend of sanctifying Sufis, for both the elite and the common people.

Timur (r. 1370-1405), the founder of the Timurid dynasty, aimed to recreate the former Mongol Empire and a large part of his life was devoted to campaigning both eastwards and westwards from his capital city Samarqand. His life is very well documented in a variety of Persian and Arabic historical sources. His fame reached far and long: his defeat of the Ottoman Sultan Bayazid in the Battle of Ankara in 1402 served as material for Georg Friedrich Händel's opera *Tamerlano* (1724) and Christopher Marlowe's play *Tamburlaine the Great* (1587). Timur started his career as amir, commander, for the Chinggisid khan of the Chaghataid khanate, one of the four khanates that emerged from the Mongol Empire. Since Timur, born in Kesh (today Shahr-i Sabz, Uzbekistan) was a member of the Turkic Barlas tribe and not a descendant of Chinggis, he could not claim the title khan. To solve this, he married a Chinggisid princess, Bibi Khanum, immortalised by the majestic mosque named after her in Samarqand.

Under the Timurids, the successful connection between Turco-Mongolian rulership and Persian culture was further developed into one of the richest examples of a Persianate society, in which not only Persian, but also the Turkic language Chaghatay was promoted. This was made possible through the generous patronage of art, architecture, scholarship and literature by the successors of Timur, especially the rulers Shahrukh (r. 1409-1447), Ulugh Beg (r. 1409-1449) and Husayn Bayqara (r. 1470-1506), but also Timurid princes such as Baysunghur (d. 1434) and Ibrahim Sultan (d. 1435), sons of Shahrukh. By the time of Husayn Bayqara, the Timurid Empire was greatly reduced in size: Husayn Bayqara could only hold on to Khorasan and his capital Herat. Transoxiana in the north was taken over by a new power, the Uzbek Shaybanids; in the former western territories of the Timurids, Turkmen dynasties rivalled with each other for power, but they soon had to give way to the Safavids (1501-1722).

The founder of the Safavid dynasty, Shah Isma'il, had gathered a considerable following in Anatolia and the north-west of Iran at the end of the 15th century. A Sufi shaykh as well as a Shi'i messianic leader, he became victorious in 1501 and in Tabriz he proclaimed Twelver-Shi'ism as the new religion of his realm. His conquests laid the foundations of modern Iran. From this time onwards, the territories of Central Asia and Iran were never more united under one ruler. Iran in due course became in majority Shi'ite, while Central Asia, including present-day Afghanistan, remained mostly Sunni. Isma'il's son Tahmasp (r. 1524-1576) and grandson Shah 'Abbas (r. 1588-1629) greatly contributed to urban development in Iran. In Mashhad the Safavid rulers continued the Timurid initiatives on the expansion and embellishment of the shrine complex of 'Ali al-Riza, the eighth imam of the Twelver-Shi'a, who had died in 818 on his way from Marv to Iraq, entangled in 'Abbasid politics.

Right: Samarqand, Bibi Khanum Mosque (1398-1405), northern mosque as seen from the Siyob Bazaar. Photograph taken on 3 July 1969. Published on 20 July 1969 with John T. Wheeler's Samarqand APN story on The Golden Road to Samarqand. AP Newsfeatures Photo.



The Timurids soon disappeared from the scene. In the 16th century, the new players in the field were the Safavids and the Shaybanids (also called Uzbeks, 1500-1598), together with the Ottomans in the west and the Mughals - descendants from the Timurids - in the east. The Shaybanids were descendants from Jochi, son of Chinggis Khan and had formed a tribal confederation in the Qipchaq steppe in the 15th century. They had moved south towards Transoxiana and successfully conquered Samarqand and Bukhara. Their ruler Muhammad Shaybani Khan conquered Herat and Khorasan in 1507. Khorasan fell victim to disputes between the Safavids and the Shaybanids. Herat was taken by the Safavids in 1510 and mostly remained under Safavid control until 1716, often as a military base against the Shaybanids and the later Uzbek rulers, the Janids (1599-1785).

Though the idea is often expressed that the end of the Timurids heralded an era of decline and poverty in Transoxiana and Khorasan, ultimately resulting in the marginalisation of Central Asia, during Shaybanid and Janid rule the cities of Transoxiana thrived. Especially in Bukhara and Samarqand many mosques and *madrasas* were built and alliances with Sufi leaders as well as *'ulama* were cherished, notably under the Janid ruler 'Abd al-'Aziz Khan (r. 1645-1681). Bukhara became a centre of learning, known as *Bukhara-yi sharif*, 'the noble Bukhara'.

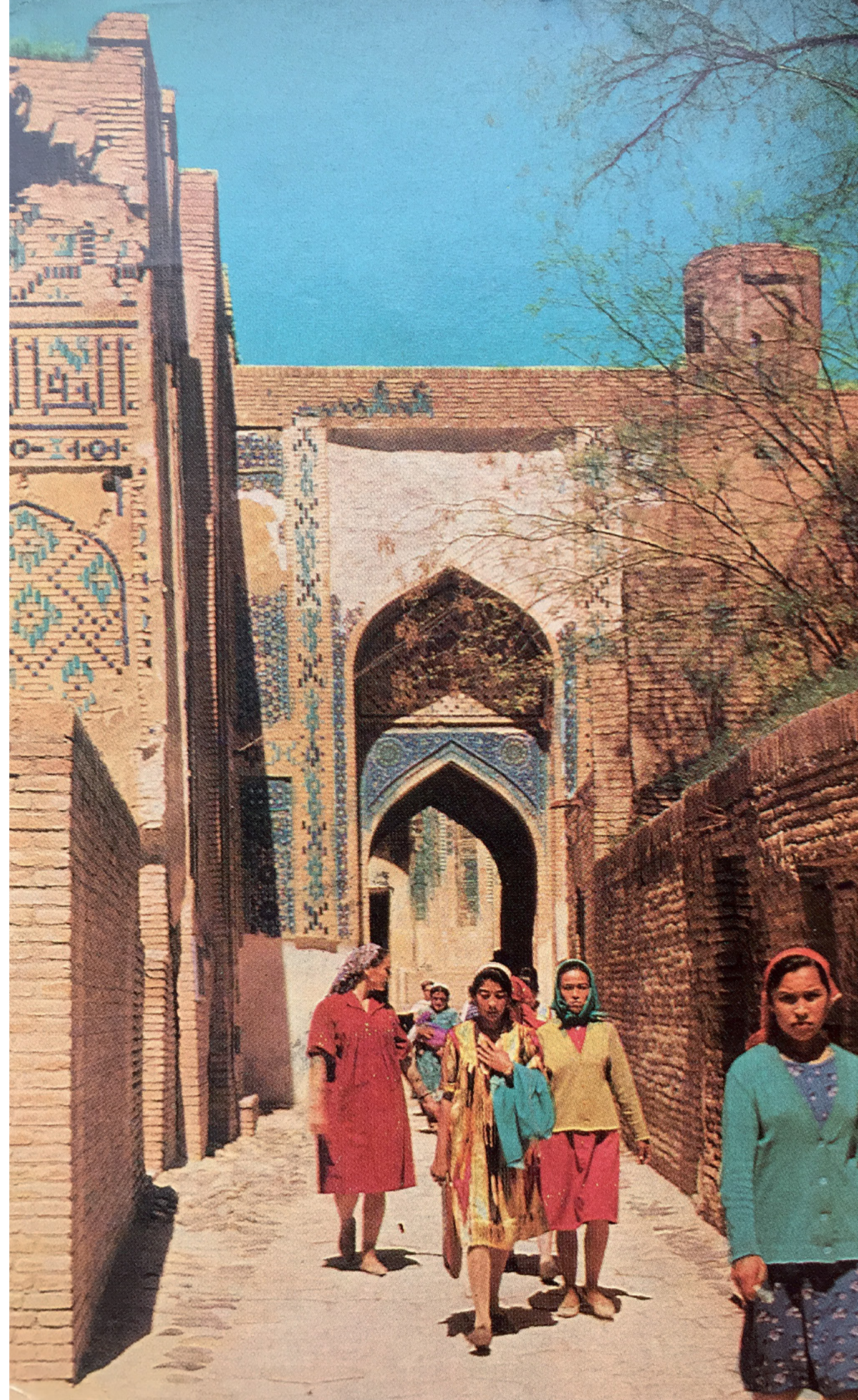
At the end of the 18th century however, the power of the Uzbek Janid dynasty came to an end. Non-Chinggisid Uzbek tribes took over and established separate khanates in Khiva, Bukhara and Khuqand. Central Asia fell victim to political turmoil, fragmentation and stagnation. Patterns of global commerce had changed: maritime routes that bypassed Central Asia were now favoured. The adoption of military technological inventions lagged behind and there was a brain drain to Mughal India. Imperial Russia approached slowly from the north, establishing fortresses and Cossack colonies from 1740 onwards; Britain and Qing China also became more active in the region.

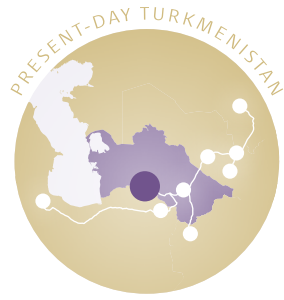
In 1865, Tashkent was conquered by the Russians and soon after, the khanates were abolished or turned into protectorates. In 1889 the conquest of Central Asia, named Turkestan, was completed. Turkestan was incorporated into the Russian Empire and was effectively ruled by governor-generals who were answerable to the tsar in St Petersburg. The most famous of these governor-generals was General Konstantin von Kaufmann (1818-1882). Central Asians were regarded as a kind of second-class citizens in Imperial Russia and the lands of Central Asia as a supplier for raw materials. As Central Asia was an area of economic but also strategic importance, railways and telegraphs were built and many agricultural colonists brought in from Russia. Central Asia was parachuted into modernity.

In order to organize imperial administration and to manage the natives (*inorodtsy*), ethnographers, artists and scientists were put to work. Von Kaufmann commissioned the creation of the *Turkestan Album*, a huge enterprise for which 1,200 photographs, alongside with architectural plans, drawings and maps were made between 1865 and 1872. These efforts to 'map' Central Asia and its inhabitants ultimately resulted in the formation of Soviet republics after the fall of the tsar in 1917. As Central Asia had been for a long time a heterogeneous society, in which people phrased their identities on multiple levels, the creation of socialist republics between 1920 and 1929 on the basis of perceived nationalities was bound to be problematic. A unified Turkestan, on the basis of the imperial colonial situation, was deemed too big and too pan-Turkic to continue.

The photographs and prints on display here were made between the last quarter of the 19th century and the third quarter of the 20th century. They capture moments from a past that does not seem so far away, even though the appearances of the buildings may have drastically changed between then and now. At the same time, however, the photographs portray buildings that are witnesses of a much more distant past, and form keys to stories of ages long gone by, but not forgotten, and revived continually in the cultural memories of a great variety of people across the world.

**Right: Samarqand, Shah-i Zinda complex, main corridor view to the north.
Photograph by D. Smirnov. Postcard published in Moscow, 1967.**





Anau

Shrine of Shaykh Jamal al-Din (1455-1456)

The shrine of Shaykh Jamal al-Din (1455-1456) is situated 14 km southwest of Ashkhabad, the capital of present-day Turkmenistan. The Timurid town was erected during the reign of Abu'l-Qasim Babur Bahadur Khan (1447-1457) on the remains of a settlement destroyed by the Mongols in the 13th century. The complex consisted of a mosque and two domed structures, most likely a *khanaqah* (Sufi lodge) and a *madrasa* (Islamic religious school) arranged around a courtyard. The presumed tomb of the shaykh was situated in the courtyard in front of the mosque. The tile decoration of the mosque was most remarkable as it depicted a pair of dragons in the spandrels of the entrance *iwān* (monumental gate). The large square panels of mosaic faience were fastened by lead pins to a thick layer of gypsum mortar. The portal was crowned by a three-level arcade consisting of seven arches. It was flanked by *guldasta* (corner towers) typical of monumental Timurid structures.

The mosque was erected on a hill comprising the remains of the old city wall of Anau (Fig. 1). The main sanctuary with the prominent *iwān* was joined at right angles to two large multi-storied buildings on each side. Both of these had rooms arranged in two levels around a central domed chamber (Fig. 2). The galleries on the second floor were open to the central space and served as zones of transition. It is likely that these ambulatories could accommodate large groups for Sufi *dhikr* ceremonies (sessions of uttering invocations and commemorative prayers). The many windows of the mosque were decorated with plaster grills and encrusted with coloured glass.

Unfortunately, the ensemble was destroyed by a devastating earthquake in 1948 and further damaged by another tremor in 1966. Galina A. Pugachenkova managed to record the site in 1947 and her study published in 1959 constitutes the most comprehensive report we have to date.



Anau, Complex of Shaykh Jamal al-Din (1447-1457).

Fig. 1 (top). Mosque to the left, destroyed by an earthquake in 1948. Photograph published in 1924.

Fig. 2 (bottom). Mosque from the west. Photograph published in 1924.



Bukhara

The city of Bukhara

One of the major cities along the Silk Roads, Bukhara has long been a centre of religion and trade. The first archaeological evidence of urban settlements along the Oxus (Amu Darya) and expansion towards the oasis of Bukhara date back to the Kushan Empire (30-375 AD). The city became the centre of the oasis sometime around the 5th century. The inhabitants of Bukhara were primarily traders, as well as landlords and peasants. Trade with China was a very important source of wealth for them. Because of its favourable geographical location, agricultural richness and trading potential, the city attracted Indian and Jewish merchants. After the Arab conquest and the advent of Islam in the 7th century, Bukhara gradually emerged as a great centre of Islamic learning across Central Asia. The Arab tribal warriors were settled in the city quarters and mingled with the local multi-ethnic and multi-religious population, who converted to Islam sooner than other regions of Central Asia. The first mosque was built in the citadel in 712, on the site of a former Buddhist and later Zoroastrian temple. Bukhara was also in the centre of the Sogdian trading routes that stretched from China to Byzantium. The Sogdian merchants brought prosperity to the Bukhara oasis.

The 'Golden Age' of Bukhara was as capital of the Samanid Empire (819-1005) when it was rivalled only with Baghdad. The city attracted Islamic scholars, poets and artisans, and became the cultural centre both for Arabic learning and for New Persian literature under the patronage of the Samanid amirs. As trade expanded and Bukhara became a populous metropolis, craft guilds developed and certain quarters became known for the bazaars and residences of various craftsmen. The Mongol conquest of 1220 interrupted this rapid economic and cultural development. In 1370 the city was captured by Timur. Under the Timurids, Bukhara had a secondary role compared to Samarqand. However, major Timurid monuments were built that still define the main urban axes of the city (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2). After the Uzbek dynasty of the Shaybanids (1500-1598) defeated the Timurids, Muhammad Shaybani Khan (d. 1510) established the Khanate of Bukhara; the city became its capital after 1533 (Fig. 3).

The second climax of economic and political prosperity took place in the second half of the 16th century and in the 17th century, when the influential Juybar shaykhs bought villages and large plots of arable land around the city. In particular, they expanded their building activity to the west of the *shahristan* (the town proper). In the second half of the 18th century the non-Chinggisid Manghit dynasty (1753-1920) took over the khanate which became known as the Emirate of Bukhara. The last amir of Bukhara, Muhammad 'Alim Khan, was ousted by the Russian Red Army in September 1920 and fled to Afghanistan.

During the Soviet period, the Islamic architectural monuments were rebuilt throughout numerous restorations campaigns led by Russian archaeologists and architects. Bukhara was transformed into a 'museum in the open' and celebrated as an architectural oasis along the Silk Roads. Recent regeneration initiatives in the name of tourism have completely changed the urban scape of the city and have had a detrimental effect on its unique architectural fabric.



Fig. 1 (top). Bukhara, street along the Mir-i Arab Madrasa (1530s). Taq-i Zargaran (Bazaar of the Goldsmiths, built in 1569) in the distance. Postcard published by A.S. Suvorin & Co., Moscow, 1914.



Fig. 2 (right). Bukhara, ruins of a caravanserai. Madrasa of Ulugh Beg (1417) to the left and Madrasa of Abdul Aziz Khan (1652) to the right. Postcard published by the Cooperative Association of Photographers, Moscow, 1920s.

Fig. 3 (bottom). Bukhara, southern minaret of the Mir-i Arab Madrasa (1530s). View to the south. Postcard published by the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union, Moscow, before 1938.



Samanid Mausoleum (892-943)

The Samanid Mausoleum (Fig. 4) is the oldest surviving domed mausoleum in the Islamic world. Built between 892 and 943 as the resting place of Isma'il Samani (r. 892-907), it is widely celebrated as a masterpiece of Islamic architecture. Albeit considered as one of the canonical buildings of the Muslim world, the Samanid Mausoleum reflects the complex artistic and religious influences of the region. Based on a simple square plan with arched shallow recesses in the middle of each side, its layout is typical of Zoroastrian fire temples. Yet, its architecture has become a standard for subsequent mausoleums of Islamic rulers such as Sultan Sanjar (12th century, Marv), Öljeitü (early 14th century, Sultaniyya) and Timur (early 15th century, Samarqand).

The massive cube with a side of 10 m is covered with a central dome and four smaller domes in each corner. The corners are marked by four load bearing engaged columns that act as buttresses. The mausoleum is constructed with baked brick, which is used not only as the main building material but also as the primary material for decoration. The brick forms basket-weave patterns that cover the mausoleum's surface. An arcaded gallery runs along the whole circumference. Each side of the arcade consists of ten arched openings with slender colonnettes accented with carved stucco. The interior walls are adorned with similar basket-weave brick patterns. The dome is connected to the cube of the mausoleum by means of four elaborately decorated squinches, which form an eight-sided zone of transition.

The Samanid Mausoleum was restored in the 1930s by Boris N. Zasytkin (1891-1955), who worked together with local craftsmen such as the Bukharan master Shirin Muradov (1880-1957). Although the main mausoleum was part of a larger cemetery in the middle of a residential area, all graves were removed and the adjacent houses were demolished in 1937. Between 1937-39 Zasytkin meticulously tried to preserve all authentic details by removing recent plaster layers, by reusing original bricks discovered during the archaeological excavations and by re-appropriating pieces of old mortar.

Ulugh Beg Madrasa (1417-1420)

The Ulugh Beg Madrasa (1417-1420) in Bukhara (Fig. 5) is contemporary with his madrasa in Samarqand. However, it is smaller in size and has only two *iwans* (monumental gates) along the main longitudinal axis. The open courtyard is surrounded by two storeys of barrel-vaulted *hujras* (student cells). The main entrance leads to a complex vestibule with two lateral dome chambers: a mosque (to the west) and a lecture room (to the east) used currently as a museum. The domes have complex structures consisting of polygonal drums with 16 arched bays.

The exterior of the *madrasa* is covered in patterns created by alternating glazed and unglazed brick in light and dark cobalt blue. This technique is widely used in Timurid architecture and is known as *banna'i* (builder's bond) or *hazar baf* (thousand-weave). The blue glazed brick forms texts in square Kufic Arabic script that spell the names of the Prophet Muhammad and Allah. The technique was very effective for creating monumental inscriptions that covered the large exterior surfaces from top to bottom. These could be read from afar and were meant to underline the monumentality of the structures.

The entrance portal is framed by a spiral column covered in polychrome tile mosaic assembled from thousands of pieces cut from monochrome glazed tiles. The predominant colours are cobalt blue, brown, green, black and white. In addition, the columns surrounding the *iwan* in the inner courtyard are covered in polychrome underglaze *haft rangi* (seven colour) tiles with considerable gilding that is still visible today. The signature of the builder is recorded in a *haft rangi* tile above the main entrance portal (Fig. 6) and it reads: "Work of Isma'il ibn Tahir ibn Mahmud al-banna' al-Isfahani".

The *madrasa* was restored in the 1950s and in the 1970s when the main epigraphic band around the entrance portal was fully reconstructed.

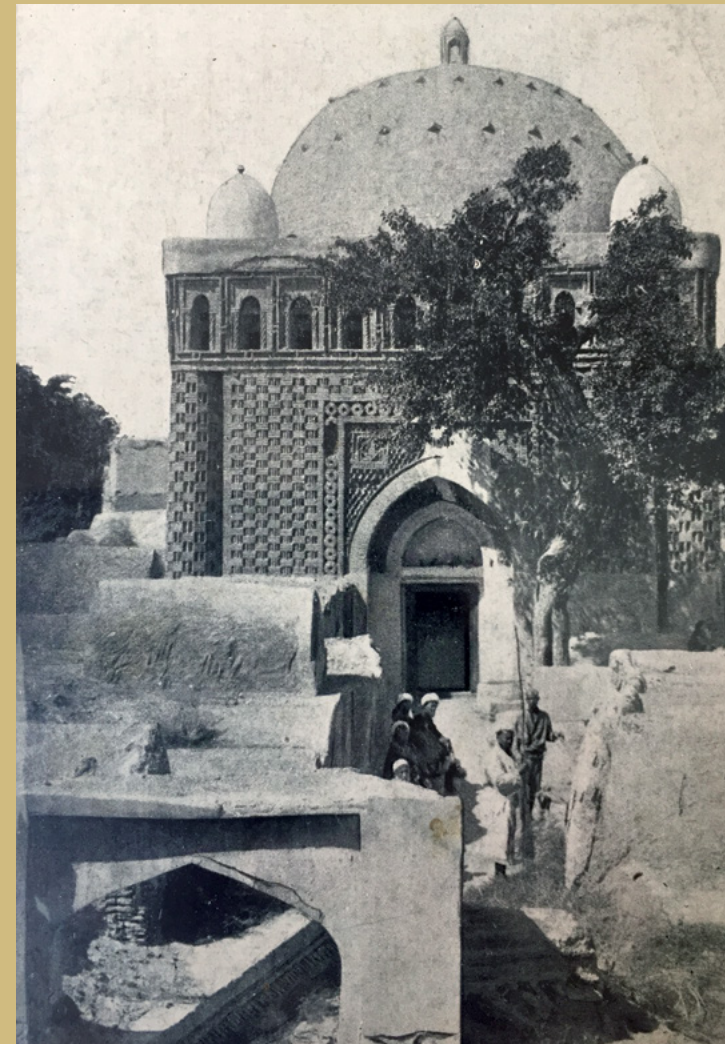


Fig. 4 (top). Bukhara, Samanid Mausoleum (9th-10th century). Postcard published by the Topography House named after Ivan Fedorov, taken between 1922-1934.

Fig. 5 (bottom). Bukhara, main façade of the Ulugh Beg Madrasa. Photograph by Elena Paskaleva, March 2019.

Fig. 6 (below inset). Bukhara, Ulugh Beg Madrasa, tile with the name of the builder. Photograph by Elena Paskaleva, March 2019.



The Ulugh Beg Madrasa is situated along the main horizontal axes of the medieval *shahristan* (the city proper). It forms an ensemble with the 'Abd al-'Aziz Khan Madrasa (1652). Several bazaars and caravanserais were built around this main commercial area to accommodate the booming trade. Taq-i Zargaran (the Bazaar of the Goldsmiths, 1569) is still housing small workshops to the west of the ensemble. However, in recent years the surrounding area has been overcrowded with private hotels and restaurants, virtually attached to the exterior walls of the Ulugh Beg Madrasa. This continuous construction has changed the urban axis and does not allow for direct access to the monuments.

Bukhara Ark

The Ark of Bukhara is a massive fortress located in the citadel to the northwest of the city. Initially built around the 3rd century BC, the Ark has been home to the rulers of Bukhara for over a millennium. The structure was last known as the seat of the amir of Bukhara. Situated on an elevation of 15-18 m, the Ark has an irregular rectangular shape and covers an area of about 3 hectares. The northwestern corner is flanked by a prominent entrance. Archaeological excavations have shown that the Ark was constructed on a natural plateau covered by forest that occupied a smaller area of 1-2 hectares and was surrounded by a defensive wall assembled of mud brick and reed. The first fortress to be documented by local historians was built in the 7th century by the Bukhar Khudas, a local Sogdian dynasty that ruled Bukhara until the Samanids. The first mosque in Bukhara was built in the citadel in 712, on the site of a former Buddhist and later Zoroastrian temple.

The Ark began to take its present form in the 16th century under the Uzbek Shaybanids and all its present buildings date from the last three centuries. By this time, the Ark had grown to house not only the amir, his family and retinue, but also the whole range of governmental offices organized in a complex of over 3,000 inhabitants providing a palace, harem, throne room, reception hall, office block, treasury, mosque, gold mint, dungeon and slave quarters. The present gateway was built by Nadir Shah in 1742 and consists of two towering bastions linked by a balcony of six porticoed windows (Fig. 7).

During the Russian Civil War (1917-1922), the Ark was severely damaged by the troops of the Red Army under the command of Mikhail Frunze during the Battle of Bukhara in August-September 1920. Frunze ordered the Ark to be bombed by an aircraft, which left a large part of the structure in ruins.

At present, the Ark houses the collection of the Bukhara History Museum.

The Kalan Complex

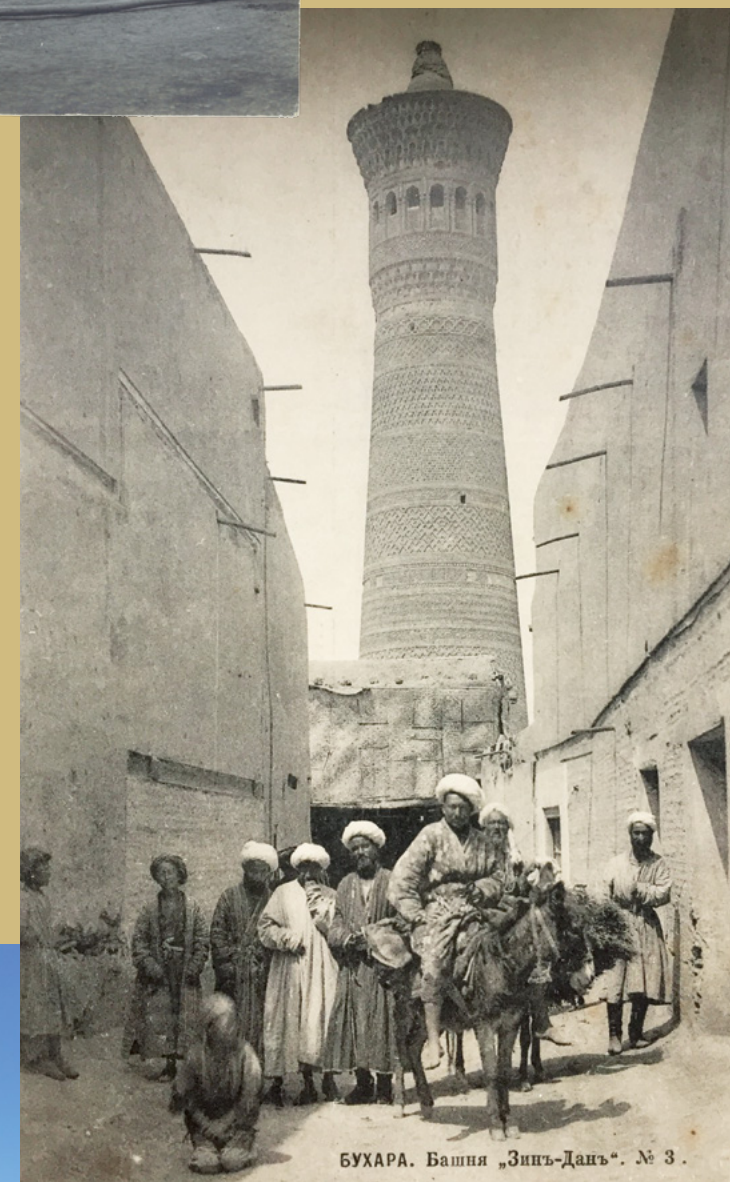
The Kalan Minaret (12th century) rises 45 m above the city (Fig. 8). It was built under the Qarakhanid ruler Arslan Khan in 1127 together with a new mosque outside the walls of the citadel. Initially, the tomb of the founder and other secular buildings were erected in the vicinity of the minaret but they have disappeared. The Qarakhanid mosque has been replaced by a Timurid Congregational Mosque from 1430 which was later extended by the Shaybanids in 1514. Widely known as the Kalan Mosque (the Great Mosque), it has a large open courtyard (78 m x 127 m) with four *iwans* in the middle of each wall (Fig. 9). The main domed sanctuary housing the elaborate *mihrab* (prayer niche) of mosaic faience is situated to the west. The Mir-i Arab Madrasa was erected across the Kalan Square in 1535. It was the only functioning *madrasa* in Soviet Central Asia. The tomb of the founder Shaykh 'Abdallah of Yemen (known as Mir-i Arab) is situated behind the main façade. The Kalan Complex forms the major urban axis in Bukhara. Several bazaars were established in its vicinity such as Taq-i Zargaran (Bazaar of the Goldsmiths, built in 1569).



Fig. 7 (top). Bukhara, Registan Square. The Ark was the residence of the amir of Bukhara. Men praying towards the Bolo Hauz Mosque. Photograph taken before 1903.

Fig. 8 (right). Bukhara, Kalan Minaret (1127). Postcard published by A.S. Suvorin & Co, Moscow, taken after 1912.

Fig. 9 (bottom). Bukhara, Kalan Mosque (15th century). Photograph by Elena Paskaleva, June 2019.





Herat

The city of Herat

Herat is situated in north-western Afghanistan. The ancient city became the capital of the Timurid Empire under Timur's son Shahrukh (1377-1447) at the beginning of the 15th century. Being a centre of a large oasis along the valley of the Hari Rud river, Herat was established as an outpost of the Achaemenid Empire, the first Persian empire based in Western Asia, founded by Cyrus the Great (600–530 BC). Conquered by the Arabs in the 7th century, the city was not fully subdued until the early 8th century. The urban plan is an orthogonal square with four main roads along the cardinal points, dividing the city into four identical quadrants. Each road stretched from a *darvaza* (gate) situated in the middle of the eastern, western and southern city walls. In the northern wall, there were two gates, one in the middle of the wall, and one extra gate in the northwestern quadrant that provided direct access to the strong citadel. Beginning at each gate, a bazaar led into the centre of the city. In the 12th century Herat was developed by the Ghurids (9th-13th century), who established the Great Mosque to the east (Fig. 1). The Mongols sieged and devastated Herat in the 13th century but the city was rebuilt throughout the 14th century. The ancient orthogonal city plan and the complex system of water canals influenced the architecture of Timurid Herat. The dry climate and the lack of strong timber and stone have resulted in the usage of mud and baked brick as the main building materials (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3). In 1380 Timur entered Herat, which was a large provincial town in the second half of the 14th century. The province of Khorasan was first given by Timur to his son Miranshah (1366-1408). However, trying to lessen the power of his sons, Timur transferred Miranshah to Azerbaijan in 1396 and awarded Khorasan to Shahrukh a few months later. After Timur's death in 1405, the war for his succession was resolved by Shahrukh establishing Herat as the new capital of the Timurid Empire and entrusting the former capital Samarqand into the hands of his son Ulugh Beg (1394-1449). This was the beginning of Herat's greatest period of literary and artistic achievements that flourished under Shahrukh (r. 1409-1447) and his wife Gawharshad (d. 1457), reaching its apogee under the widely celebrated patron of the arts Sultan Husayn Bayqara (1438-1506), the last Timurid ruler of major importance in Khorasan. The Timurid period ended with the Uzbek conquest in 1507.

Although very few Timurid structures survive in Herat, their architecture, plans and locations have been reconstructed based on Timurid histories, royal decrees, legal documents, biographical collections, and epistolographic literature. The main Timurid buildings include the refurbishment of the Great Mosque, the Gawharshad Mosque, her *madrassa* and mausoleum, and the famous shrine of Gazurgah. The Great Mosque situated in the northeastern quadrant was established under the Ghurids in 1200 and contains the tomb of the Ghurid ruler Sultan Ghiyath al-Din. Built on a four-*iwan* plan with a central courtyard, the main longitudinal axis is oriented east-west. Although a few traces of 12th century stucco decoration remain, the mosque was considerably restored and modified under the Timurids.



Fig. 1 (top). Herat, Congregational Mosque.

Fig. 2 (middle). Herat, Citadel after reconstruction.

Both photographs by Elyas Pirasteh, taken in 2009.

Fig. 3 (bottom). Herat, Citadel. Print published in *Le Monde Illustré*, No 2023, 4 January 1896.



The main architectural activities of Gawharshad (r. 1409-1447) in Herat were concentrated around the *musalla* (open air prayer area), situated to the north of the walled city along the new Timurid *khiyaban* (avenue). The Gawharshad Mosque was built between 1417-1438 on a four-*ivan* plan with a central courtyard measuring 116 m by 64 m and an enlarged western *ivan*, flanked with twin minarets, which served as the main prayer hall. The main sanctuary had two domed chambers in line of the *qibla* (indicating the direction to Mecca), which is rather unusual. The court was surrounded by a two-storey arcade and there were tall minarets in each corner (Fig. 4). The whole complex was entirely decorated with polychrome tiles.

The *madrasa* and tomb of Gawharshad from 1432 formed part of the same *musalla* ensemble. The main monumental entrance *ivan* of the *madrasa* was to the east, following the *khiyaban*, and it was flanked by two corner towers. The inner court was built around four *iwans*. The mausoleum of Gawharshad, which has been preserved, has a cruciform plan with the centre covered by a shallow convex dome supported by a network of pendentives and semi-domes (Fig. 5). The second dome strengthens the tall cylindrical drum that supports the third outer dome. Similar to Gur-i Amir, the Timurid dynastic mausoleum in Samarqand, this ribbed dome is covered with polychrome tiles on a blue background (Fig. 6). The mausoleum had most likely an underground crypt. The *madrasa* and tomb complex may have been envisaged as the dynastic burial site of the Gawharshad family.

As part of the revival of Sunni orthodoxy, Shahrukh, his viziers, and Sultan Husayn Bayqara erected a series of *madrasa-khanaqah* ensembles in Herat. Of particular importance is Shahrukh's *madrasa-khanaqah* complex built in 1410-1411 to the east of the citadel and Sultan Husayn Bayqara's ensemble from 1492-1493 to the north of the *musalla* along the *khiyaban*. The construction of *khanaqahs* with royal patronage exemplifies the ever increasing power of Sufism in the Timurid Empire at the beginning of the 15th century. Furthermore, the *madrasas* and bazaars of Herat were a gathering place for preaching Sufis, a place for solving disputes in front of the city elite and a stage for the Sufi *sama'* (performance of Sufi music and/or dance to attain a state of mystical ecstasy).

The most renowned building in the vicinity of Herat, fostered by the Timurid dynasty, is the *hazira* (open-air shrine complex) of the Hanbali traditionalist and Sufi poet Khwaja 'Abdallah al-Ansari (d. 1089) at Gazurgah. After the 11th century, the tomb became a major pilgrimage centre and was widely venerated in Khorasan. Khwaja 'Abdallah al-Ansari was also celebrated as the patron saint of Herat, known as Pir-i Herat or Pir-i Ansar. In Sufi circles, Herat had been also famous as 'the little garden of Ansaris'. Constructed during the reign of Shahrukh, more than three centuries after the death of al-Ansari, the shrine became an important part of Shahrukh's venerating routine and every Thursday he paid his respect to the Khwaja and his descendants, who were buried in the main four-*ivan* courtyard. The only entrance to the shrine is through the western *ivan*; according to the inscription the renowned court architect Qawam al-Din Shirazi (d. 1438) completed the work in 1425. The sanctuary, i.e. the eastern *ivan*, is 30 m high and is the most impressive part of the shrine providing a backdrop for the tomb of the Sufi poet (Fig. 7 and Fig. 8). However, it does not have any other function or a dome chamber behind the screen wall. It is linked to the north and south *iwans* only by means of a curtain wall. This modified solution is unique to all existing four-*ivan* compounds, in which the axial *iwans* are usually interconnected with arcades. The niches and the *iwans* at Gazurgah are decorated with glazed and unglazed tilework in the *banna'i* (builder's bond) or *hazar baf* (thousand-weave) technique. Later during the rule of Sultan Husayn Bayqara, the site was used for several Timurid burials. There are two other structures at Gazurgah - the Namakdan, a two-storied twelve-sided garden pavilion with an octagonal interior dated to the 17th century, and a *khanaqah* from the late 15th century. In 2005 the shrine and the Namakdan were partially restored by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

Following the heritage of Timur's extramural pleasure gardens and pavilions in Samarqand, Shahrukh built several royal gardens in Herat based on the *chahar-bagh* (four-fold) garden plan. Initially, Shahrukh lived in the Bagh-i Shahr (City Garden), north of the citadel, where Timur had built a palace in 1398-1399. Between 1410-1412 Shahrukh transferred his royal residence and seat of the Timurid government to the reconstructed Bagh-i Zaghan (Raven's Garden), a *chahar-bagh* to the north of the inner walled city. He restored the existing Bagh-i Safid (White Garden) and built new pavilions within it. The layout of these four-fold gardens was divided by water channels and was crowned by a pavilion at the centre of the intersecting orthogonal axes.

Fig. 4 (top right). Herat, Musalla showing detail of minarets.

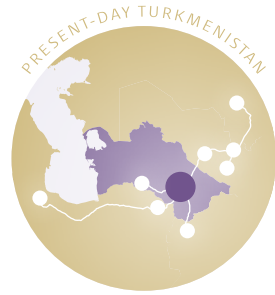
Fig. 5 (below left) and Fig. 6 (below right). Herat, Gawharshad Mausoleum, showing interior and exterior views.

Photographs by Elyas Pirasteh, taken in 2009.



Fig. 7 (left) and Fig. 8 (above). Herat, Gazurgah main sanctuary *ivan* and detail view of the tile mosaic.

Photographs by Elyas Pirasteh, taken in 2009.



Marv

The city of Marv

Marv is an ancient city along the Silk Roads situated in the delta of the Murghab river, which flows northwards from Afghanistan and forms an oasis at the southern edge of the Karakum Desert. Archaeologists have found remains of settlements that date back to the 3rd millennium BC. In the 4th century BC the eastern territories ruled by Alexander the Great became part of the Seleucid Empire (312-63 BC). In the 3rd century BC Antiochus I (281-261 BC) began a massive expansion of the city. The earliest settlement of Erk Qal'a was converted into a citadel and a new walled city Antiochia Margiana was laid out. This Hellenistic city, called today Gavur Qal'a, had two orthogonal axes oriented along the cardinal points; there were four main roads dividing it into four quadrants. The citadel Erk Qal'a (Fig. 1) was situated at the northern edge within the city wall, which was 10 m wide and had 100 bastions. In the southwestern corner, the Raziq canal flowed through a vaulted tunnel.

The Parthians (247 BC-224 AD) and then the Sasanians (224-651) developed Marv as a major administrative, military and trading hub. After the 7th century Marv became the base for the Arab expansion to the east. During the late 7th century the first mosque, the Bani Mahan, was built exactly in the centre of the Gavur Qal'a, at the intersecting points of the two orthogonal roads. In the 740s Abu Muslim took control of Marv to proclaim the start of the 'Abbasid expansion. Baghdad was soon established as the capital of the new empire, but Marv's status as the capital of Khorasan had grown and now the eastern 'Abbasid Caliphate was administered from here. Abu Muslim (718-755) commissioned a new mosque to be built alongside the Majan canal, about 1 km to the west of the Gavur Qal'a city wall; the old Bani Mahan Mosque had become too small for the increasing number of Muslim worshippers. Between 813-818 Marv became Caliph al-Ma'mun's (786-833) residence and thus the second capital of the 'Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258). Although there are no remaining architectural monuments from that time, we know that the Bani Mahan Mosque was restored. The departure of Caliph al-Ma'mun to Baghdad led to the gradual decay of the Gavur Qal'a. However, Marv grew to the west.

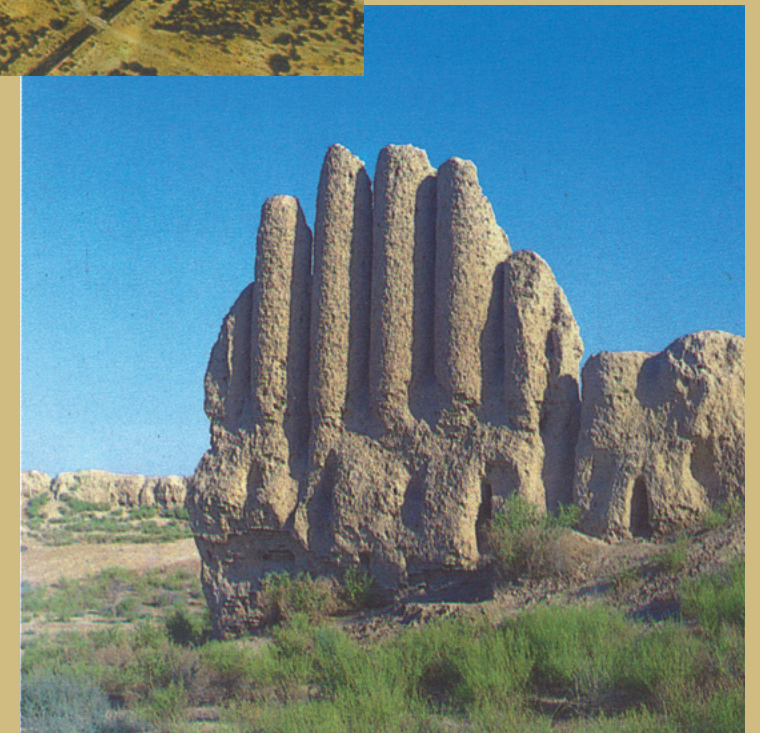
By the 11th century Abu Muslim's mosque was at the heart of the new city of Marv the Great, known today as Sultan Qal'a. Sultan Qal'a continued to expand and develop under the Saljuqs (1038-1194) in the northern and southern directions along the Majan canal. During the reign of Sultan Malik Shah (1055-1092), the central square part of the Sultan Qal'a was built and the city was surrounded by a new wall with 200 semi-circular towers. In that period, life also continued in the old *shahristan* (the Gavur Qal'a). Marv became the imperial capital of Sultan Sanjar (r. 1118-1157) and the largest town in Central Asia, with an area of 1,800 hectares and a population of 150,000 people. Under Sultan Sanjar, a new citadel was erected in the northeastern corner of the Sultan Qal'a for the administrative and military needs of the new ruler (Fig. 2).



Fig. 1 (top). Marv, Erk Qal'a, 1990s.

Fig. 2 (middle). Marv, remains of the Ark, 1990s.

Fig. 3 (bottom). Marv, tombs of companions of the Prophet Muhammad. Postcard published by Granbergs Brefkort, Stockholm, early 1900s.



In 1221 Marv was fully destroyed by the Mongols. 200 years after the Mongol invasion Marv was restored by Timur's son Shahrukh (1377–1447), who issued orders to rebuild the city in 1418 (Fig. 3). Due to a shortage of water in the area, the new town was moved 2 km to the south of the Sultan Qal'a. The remains of Timurid Marv are known as 'Abdallah Qal'a.

The Saljuq Palace (11th century)

The ruins of the Saljuq Palace (11th century) are situated in the centre of the citadel in the north-eastern part of Sultan Qal'a. The site is known as the Shahryar Ark and it was constructed around 1080. The palace was probably later used by Sultan Sanjar. The relatively small building measuring 45 m by 39 m had single-storey rooms surrounding a central courtyard with four axial *iwans* (monumental gates). Low areas nearby indicate the existence of a large garden with an artificial lake.

Mausoleum of Sultan Sanjar (12th century)

The mausoleum of the Saljuq ruler Sanjar (r. 1118-1157) occupies the centre of the ruined walled city of Sultan Qal'a in Marv (Fig. 4). It is believed that Muhammad ibn 'Aziz from Sarakhs in Khorasan built it soon after the Khwarezmshahs deposed the Saljuq dynasty. The mausoleum was part of a larger religious and palatial complex; none of the ancillary buildings survive. The structure is noted as a rare example of Saljuq commemorative architecture dedicated to a non-religious and political figure. It also marks a significant shift from the typical vertically-accentuated Saljuq tomb tower towards domed mausoleums with elaborate interior spaces.

The mausoleum consists of an enormous brick cube, approximately 27 m square crowned by a large double-shell dome nearly 18 m in diameter. Arched corner galleries run along the upper story. The gallery façade's alternate pointed-arch and triangular-arch bays create solid-void compositions that harmonize with two rows of blind arches along the dome's base. The mausoleum's square brick mass has two gateways in the east and west elevations (Fig. 5). The brick exterior is decorated with plaster carved to simulate brick bonds and embellished with terracotta panels. The elevations also exhibit traces of stucco treatment and holes left behind by scaffolding erected for repeated restoration efforts. The galleries are elaborately adorned with terracotta patterns and alternate panels of carved brickwork. The outer dome was once embellished with turquoise tiles, but only its interlaced structural ribs exist today.

The mausoleum is much revered and has been restored several times. The dome was restored in 1911, and the galleries were largely rebuilt in recent decades. Unfortunately, much of the 12th century terracotta ornament is feared to have been lost in insensitive reconstruction projects during the 1990s. The monument and the cultural park of ancient Marv were jointly declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999.



Two postcards illustrating the Mausoleum of Sultan Sanjar (12th century) in Marv.

Fig. 4 (top). Postcard from the series Monuments Antiques, Turkestan Russe, early 20th century.

Fig. 5 (bottom). Postcard from the series Union Postale Universelle Russie. Publishing House Glushkov & Polianin, early 20th century.



Mashhad

Gawharshad Mosque at the Imam 'Ali al-Riza Shrine (1416-1418)

The shrine of the eighth imam of the Twelver-Shi'a in Mashhad is one of the largest and wealthiest pilgrimage sites in the world (Fig. 1). The golden dome mausoleum of Imam 'Ali al-Riza (d. 818) stands amidst a large complex of courts, monumental gateways, Islamic religious schools, museums, libraries, bookshops, and offices that cater to thousands of pilgrims each year. The city is seen as one of the most important spiritual centres not only in Iran but also across Central Asia, as heir to Persianate high culture and Timurid artistic excellence. The shrine attests to 'Alid piety widely spread across the Turco-Persian sphere. The *ziyarat* (pilgrimage) transcends Shi'a-Sunni sectarianism and religious affiliations (Fig. 2).

Gawharshad Begum (d. 1457) was the primary wife of Timur's youngest son Shahrukh (1377-1447) and mother of his famous sons Ulugh Beg (1394-1449) and Baysunghur (1397-1434), both eminent scholars and patrons of the arts. Even though in 1409 Gawharshad and Shahrukh moved the Timurid capital from Samarqand to Herat, their building activities were not limited only to Herat; they built extensively across the historical province of Khorasan. In Mashhad, Gawharshad erected a mosque and three *madrasas* (Islamic religious schools). The mosque is based on the four-*iwan* plan, with four arched gates situated in the middle of each courtyard wall. The main domed sanctuary consists of a deep *iwan* flanked with two minarets springing from the level of the court. The side walls are decorated with four tiers of arched niches. The green tiled dome is situated just behind the main sanctuary screen. All surfaces are clad with mosaic faience of the finest quality (Fig. 3). Baysunghur, who was a very talented calligrapher, created the epigraphic band that surrounds the main sanctuary. We know from literary and epigraphic sources that during the reign of Shahrukh (r. 1409–1447), Qawam al-Din Shirazi was the most distinguished Timurid court architect. He built several ensembles in Herat, the Gawharshad Mosque in Mashhad and worked on other royal commissions after 1410 until his death on 21 February 1438 at Khargird, Iran.

The Imam 'Ali al-Riza shrine was considerably expanded during the reign of Shah 'Abbas (r. 1588–1629) as part of his urban renewal of Mashhad. Through a series of architectural additions it was transformed into one of the leading spiritual centre in the Safavid Empire (1501–1722). The Safavid shahs regarded Mashhad as a venerable arena for piety displays and dispensation of charitable acts through endowments. The new artistic promotion of the shrine reinforced the shahs' kinship with the Shi'i imams and boosted their political claims as guardians of the imamate.

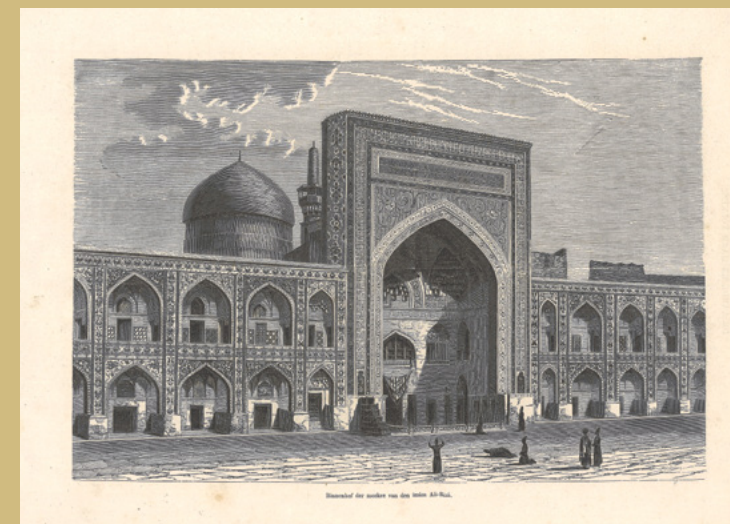


Fig. 1 (top). Mashhad, inner courtyard Imam 'Ali al-Riza Shrine. Print by Alexandre de Bar (1821-1908), from *Narrative of a Journey into Khorasan* (1858) by Nicolas de Khanikoff (Nikoilai Khanykov 1819-1878), illustration from *Il Giro del mondo (World Tour)*, *Journal of geography, travel and costumes*, Volume VI, Issue 1, 5 July 1866.

Fig. 2 (middle). Mashhad, pilgrims in the inner courtyard of the Imam 'Ali al-Riza Shrine. Photograph by Elena Paskaleva, October 2016.

Fig. 3 (bottom). Mashhad, Gawharshad Mosque, detail of mosaic faience decoration. Photograph by Elena Paskaleva, October 2016.



Samarqand

The city of Samarqand

Down through the centuries, Samarqand has inspired poetic superlatives for the richness of its location, its flourishing economic and cultural life, and its dazzling architecture. Samarqand is one of the oldest cities in the world, situated in the Zarafshan Valley in the heart of the Silk Roads. During the time of the Achaemenid Empire (c. 550–330 BC) Samarqand was the capital of the Sogdian governors and merchants, who continued to control the trade routes from Imperial China to Byzantium until the 11th century. In 329 BC Samarqand was conquered by Alexander the Great and adopted the Greek name of Marakanda. Subsequently, the city was ruled by a succession of Iranian and Turkic dynasties until the Mongol invasion by Chinggis Khan in 1220. Even though the city's history is very ancient, much of what attracts us to Samarqand traces its origins in the era when Timur/Tamerlane (d. 1405) built his capital there around 1370. Timur's successors, notably starting with his grandson Ulugh Beg (r. 1409–1449), continued to adorn the city with major buildings. By the 19th century, when we begin to get foreign travel accounts, drawings and photographs to document the state of the monuments, most of the great buildings were in ruins. Plans to rebuild or restore some of them were developed as early as the first Soviet years, but the most significant projects were not implemented until the last third of the 20th century beginning in the years prior to Uzbekistan's declaration of independence in 1991.

The Shah-i Zinda Necropolis (12th-15th century)

The Timurid necropolis of Shah-i Zinda (The Living King) commemorates the Muslim martyr, and companion of the Prophet, Outham ibn 'Abbas (d. 677) who allegedly died in Samarqand (Fig. 1). The complex is situated north of the city, on the southern slope of Afrasiyab (Fig. 2), the oldest occupied hillside with archaeological layers dating back to the middle of the first millennium BC. The necropolis is one of the most sacred pilgrimage sites across Central Asia. The first structures at Shah-i Zinda including mausoleums and a royal *madrasa* date back to the Qarakhanid dynasty (840–1212). The current complex consists of several mosques and mainly one-chamber mausoleums built after 1350, most of them dedicated to Timur's *amirs* (military commanders) and female family members (Fig. 3). The ensemble comprises three groups of mausoleums: lower, middle and upper connected by four-arched domed passages locally called *chartaq*. All facades along the main corridor (Fig. 4) are covered with lavish revetments employing ornaments executed in different techniques: carved majolica, glazed terracotta, polychrome overglaze and monochrome glazed ceramic, and tile mosaic. In particular, mosaic faience was perfected under the Timurids after the 1390s and some of the most exquisite examples are found at Shah-i Zinda. These tile revetments also protect the structures erected with baked brick from constant temperature fluctuations (very hot summers and cold winters), rain and damp.

Fig. 1 (right). Samarqand, Shah-i Zinda complex, prayer niche in the Outham ibn 'Abbas Mosque (1430s). Postcard published in the series Union Postale Universelle Russie.



Fig. 2. (below). Samarqand, Shah-i Zinda complex, view from the south with entrance gate and first terrace. Photograph published on 2 January 1971. Intourist Photo.

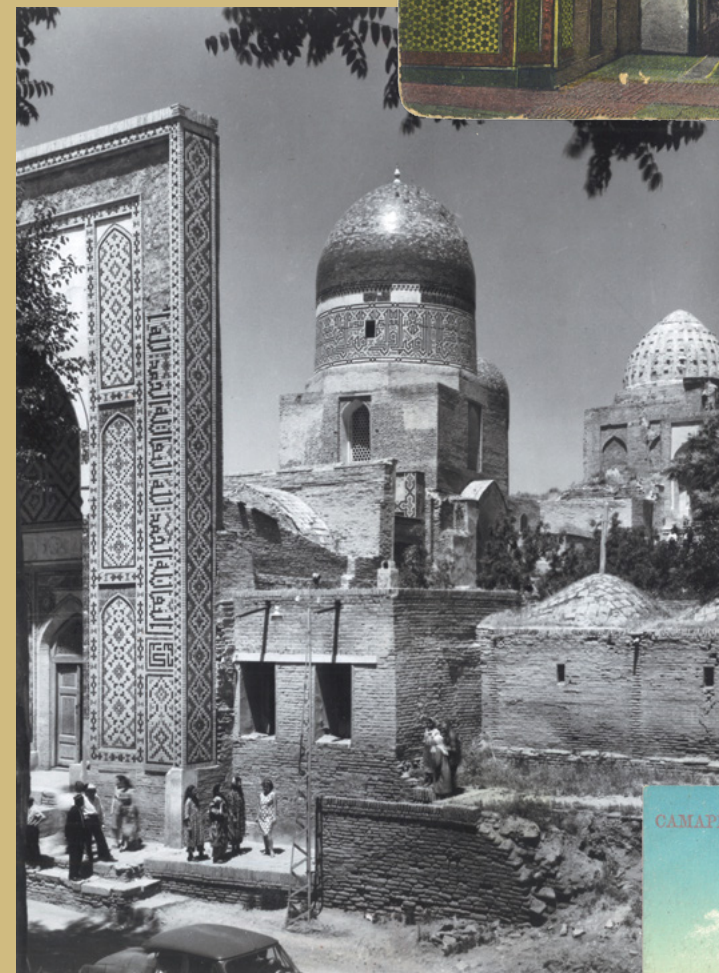
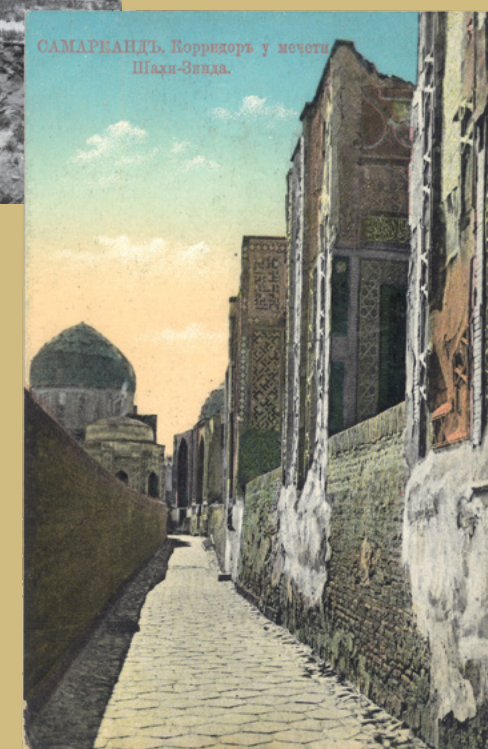


Fig. 3 (bottom left). Samarqand, Shah-i Zinda complex, pilgrims. Postcard published by Scherer, Nabholz & Co, Moscow, 1908-1909.

Fig. 4 (bottom right). Samarqand, Shah-i Zinda complex, main corridor towards the south. Postcard from the series Union Postale Universelle Russie. Publishing House Eckel & Kallach, Moscow.



The earliest images of Shah-i Zinda are recorded in the *Turkestan Album* (1872) commissioned by Konstantin Petrovich von Kaufmann (1818-1882), the first governor general of Russian Turkestan. Excavations of the site started in 1922 and continued until 1925. However, a systematic approach to the study of its architecture, archaeological layers and history did not begin until 1957 when the excavations were led by Nina B. Nemtseva, who worked at Shah-i Zinda until 2001.

After 2005 Shah-i Zinda underwent a massive restoration campaign throughout which new mausoleums were built. Original Timurid tile work was substituted by modern mass-produced tiling. The remains of the portal to the 11th-century Qarakhanid Madrasa (1066) were demolished. Several Qur'anic texts (3:169, 3:170) were added to the main entrance portal originally built in 1435.

The Gur-i Amir Mausoleum (late 14th-early 15th century)

The Timurid dynastic mausoleum of Gur-i Amir (early 15th century) was commissioned by Timur in August 1404 for his beloved grandson and heir presumptive Muhammad Sultan (d. 1403). The mausoleum was erected in the southwestern part of Samarqand, adjacent to the pre-existing complex of Muhammad Sultan (late 14th century) consisting of a two-storey *madrasa* (Islamic religious school) to the east and a domed *khanaqah* (Sufi lodge) to the west. All three structures are arranged around a central open courtyard with a main entrance portal to the north. The octagonal mausoleum is covered with a ribbed dome decorated with turquoise tile mosaic (Fig. 5). The interior space is adorned with a dado of octagonal onyx tiles, crowned by a cornice. The upper walls are decorated with papier-mâché details in gold and blue. The cenotaphs of Timur, his sons Shahrukh and Miranshah, his grandsons Muhammad Sultan and Ulugh Beg, and Timur's spiritual consort Sayyid Baraka (Fig. 6), are situated in the centre of the main mausoleum, surrounded by a carved marble screen. The actual burials and tombstones are in the crypt below, closed to the general public in accordance with Islamic burial rituals, in which the sanctity of the deceased should not be disturbed.

In 1424 Ulugh Beg erected a gallery to the east, which serves as the main entrance to the mausoleum. Most likely, this enlarged compound included another gallery to the south, of which only a few arches remain, and a monumental complex to the west with a central domed space (Fig. 7). By the end of the 17th century, the *madrasa* had been abandoned and the dome of the *khanaqah* had collapsed. The two remaining minarets were also destroyed; the southeastern one collapsed after a major earthquake in the autumn of 1868 and the southwestern one was ruined on 18 May 1903.

The systematic study of Samarqand's monuments was initiated in 1895 when the Archaeological Commission sent an expedition under the supervision of Nikolai Iv. Veselovskii. The expedition resulted in the publication of the only volume of the lavishly decorated catalogue *The Mosques of Samarqand* (1905), solely dedicated to Timur's dynastic mausoleum of Gur-i Amir and financed by Empress Aleksandra Fedorovna (1872–1918). This prototype of an officially politicized edition on Timurid architecture depicted Gur-i Amir as an idealized work of art, stripped of any religious or socio-cultural importance.

During the Soviet period, Gur-i Amir was remodelled in a series of restoration campaigns. The central southern façade was completely rebuilt, the remains of the Muhammad Sultan complex were reconstructed and the entrance portal to the north was renovated with reinforced concrete. During the celebration of Timur's 660th jubilee in 1996, the whole ensemble was refurbished; the minarets were erected anew, new epigraphy was added to the central courtyard façade and many original Timurid tiles were substituted with modern majolica reproductions.

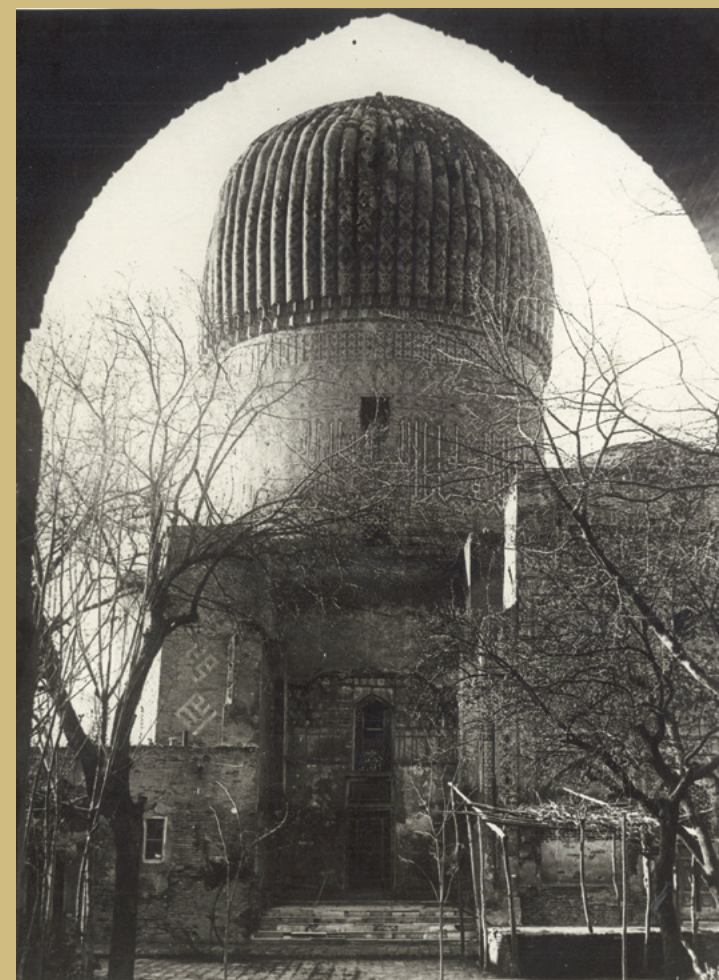
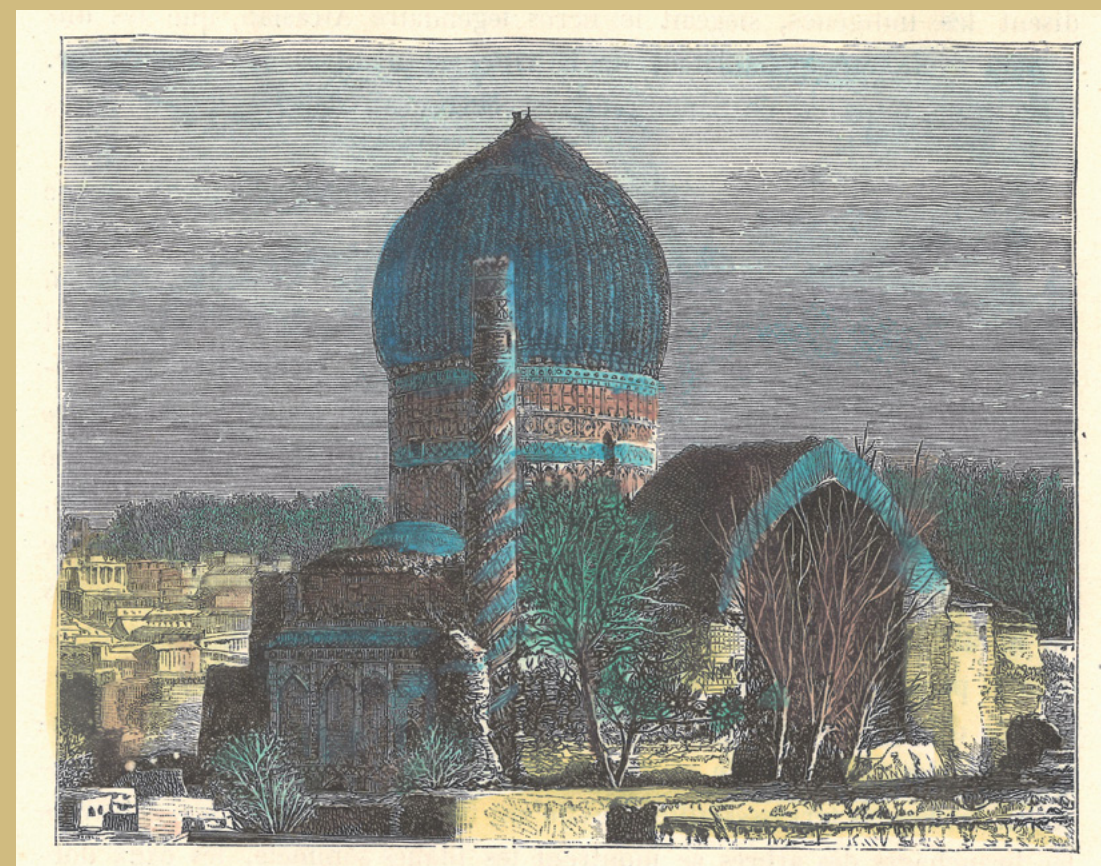
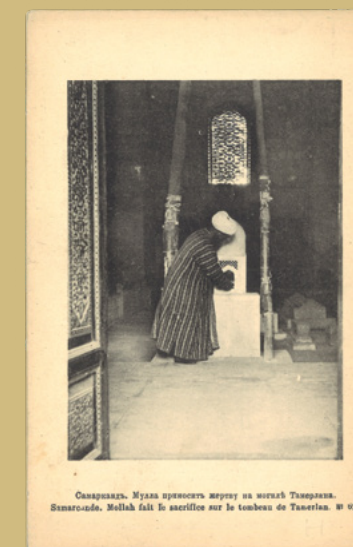


Fig. 5 (top). Samarqand, Gur-i Amir Mausoleum (1400s), main courtyard, southern niche before the restorations in the 1950s. Photograph taken on 4 June 1930. Associated Press Photo.

Fig. 6 (middle). Samarqand, Gur-i Amir Mausoleum (1400s)), offering at the cenotaph of Mir Sayyid Baraka (early 15th century). Photograph published by Scherer, Nabholz & Co., 1903.

Fig. 7 (bottom). Samarqand, Gur-i Amir Mausoleum (1400s). Unsigned. From *Elisee Reclus The Universal Geography, the Earth and its inhabitants*, edited by E.G. Ravenstein, London: Virtue & Co Ltd, 1885.



Bibi Khanum Mosque and Mausoleum (1398–1405)

The Bibi Khanum Congregational Mosque (1398–1405) was conceived as the most significant architectural expression of Timur's rule. The mosque was the most ambitious building project initiated during his lifetime and can be visited today in a 20th-century restoration. It is very likely that the construction was never completed, which can explain the dilapidated state of the monument at the end of the 19th century (Fig. 8). At the nadir of its decay, it had been reduced to a core of the main sanctuary, its dome having collapsed and the *iwan* (monumental gate) of its façade reduced to a perilously suspended fragment. The small northern and southern mosques facing on the large open courtyard were also in ruins and without their domes. Of the huge entrance *iwan* only the side pillars remained. Nothing was left of the domed galleries that connected all these elements; only the northwestern minaret had survived. The large Qur'an stand of Ulugh Beg (r. 1409-1449) is situated in the centre of the courtyard (Fig. 9).

The Bibi Khanum Mosque was comprehensively studied by Shalva E. Ratiia in the 1940s. Ratiia drew up the first restoration plans based on its ruins and produced reconstruction watercolours. The renowned Soviet architect Galina A. Pugachenkova finalized the restoration plans for the mosque at the beginning of the 1950s. Further archaeological research was performed by Liia Iu. Man'kovskaia in 1967. After 1974 the restoration project was led by the architect Konstantin S. Kriukov, one of the most influential restorers in the Soviet period, who initiated the replacement of all brick loadbearing structures with reinforced concrete frames. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s the collapsed domes of the side mosques were rebuilt with reinforced concrete and new tiling was inserted along the domes' ribbed outer shells. After 1985 the main sanctuary was adorned with massive pylons, decorated in mass-produced tiles. By the end of the 1990s the epigraphic programmes were executed anew.

During the urban regeneration of Samarqand prior to the 2007 celebrations of the city's 2750th anniversary, the whole square between the Bibi Khanum Mosque and the Bibi Khanum Mausoleum (early 15th century, Fig. 10) was completely refurbished. In 2005–6, the octagonal mausoleum, which had been reduced to ruins, was adorned with a new pseudo-Timurid dome on a high drum and rebuilt facades with arched portals. The outer wall of the Bibi Khanum Madrasa was built up above ground level with modern brick to replicate the presumed position of the original *guldasta* (corner towers). Although no traces of the *madrasa* remain, Soviet scholars have stylistically compared it to the Ulugh Beg Madrasa on Registan Square.

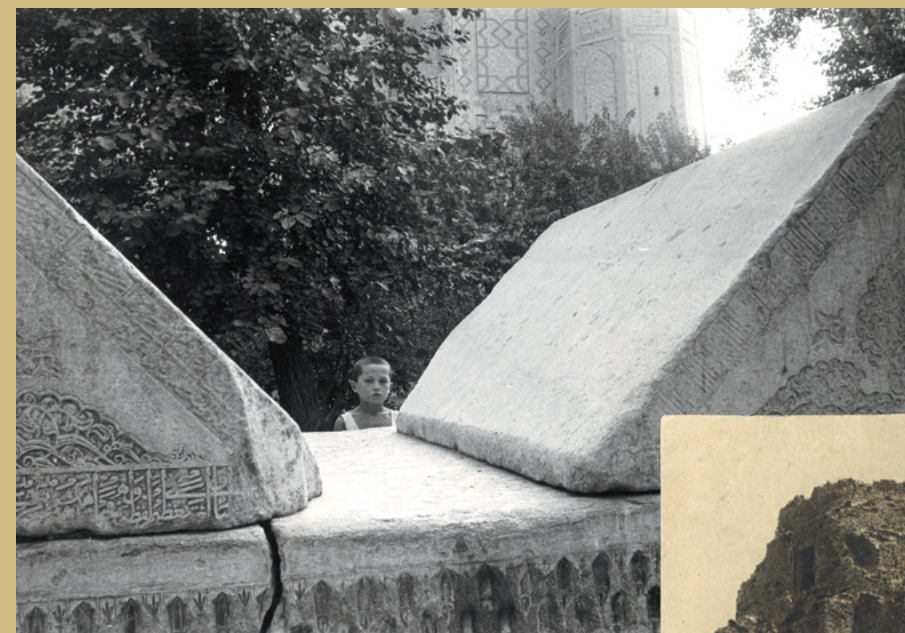


Fig. 8 (top). Samarqand, Bibi Khanum Mosque (1398-1405), view from the east. Postcard published by Fr. Raupach, Hirschberg-Schlesien, 1905.

Fig. 9 (middle). Samarqand, Bibi Khanum Mosque (1398-1405), Qur'an stand of Ulugh Beg (r. 1409-1449). Photograph taken on 24 October 1964. United Press International Photo Service.

Fig. 10 (bottom). Samarqand, Bibi Khanum Mausoleum (early 15th century). Postcard published by the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union, Moscow, before 1938.

The Registan Square (15th-17th century)

Although the present layout of the Registan Square evolved during the 15th–17th centuries, the current state of the *madrasas* (Islamic religious schools) is the product of numerous restoration campaigns. The northern and southern facades of the Ulugh Beg Madrasa (1417–1420), the oldest surviving monument on the square, were piles of rubble at the beginning of the 20th century, as testified by the photographs of Friedrich Sarre, published in 1901. Thus, its entire courtyard had to be rebuilt and the epigraphic program designed anew. The characteristic *hauz* (water tank) to the southeast was destroyed. One of the western minarets collapsed in 1870. In the autumn of 1918 it was observed that the northeastern minaret of the Registan façade had started to tilt. As a result, a lot of engineering effort went into the straightening of the original minarets along the Registan. The first reconstruction project was initiated in 1920 by Mikhail F. Mauer, the chief architect of Samarqand since 1917. After a decade of preparations, the northeastern minaret was straightened in 1932 by the Moscow engineer Vladimir G. Shukhov. In the 1950s E. O. Nelle produced the drawings for the straightening of the southeastern minaret, the work was executed by the engineer E. M. Gendel in 1965.

The earliest restoration work at the Shir Dar Madrasa (1616–1636), the second oldest monument on Registan Square (Fig. 11), was carried out by Boris N. Zasytkin and started in 1925. Unlike his later Soviet colleagues, in the 1920s Zasytkin was pleading for: “preservation of the monuments in the same manner as they came down to us.” He insisted on collaboration with local craftsmen and masons, and on the usage of materials already found in the monuments themselves such as the original brick and locally produced alabaster (Fig. 12).

What had been little more than a shell with a facade of the Tilla Kari Madrasa (1646-1660, Fig. 13), the new Shaybanid Congregational mosque in the 17th century, was completely re-built. The much-photographed dome one sees today was added during a long restoration campaign that ended in 1975. There are no existing photographs or drawings of the original dome that collapsed after a major earthquake in 1818. One of a very few published prints is presented in this exhibition (Fig. 14).

In 1982 the Registan was revealed to the Soviet public in its presumed former glory, and the restoration team lead by Konstantin S. Kriukov honoured. The later Soviet restorations focused mainly on the rebuilding of the three Registan *madrasas* with reinforced concrete. The main scientific adviser, Kriukov, believed that the exterior decoration was a sheer garment worn by the construction itself. Thus the refurbishment of all Registan *madrasas* with newly manufactured glazed tiling was merely a question of efficiency. The reinforced concrete dome shells were a manifestation of Soviet technological progress that would ensure the longevity of the *madrasas* beyond the frequent tremors of Central Asian earthquakes.



Fig. 11 (top). Samarqand, Shir Dar Madrasa (1619-1636), main entrance, view from the west. Postcard published in the series Union Postale Universelle Russie, 1920s.

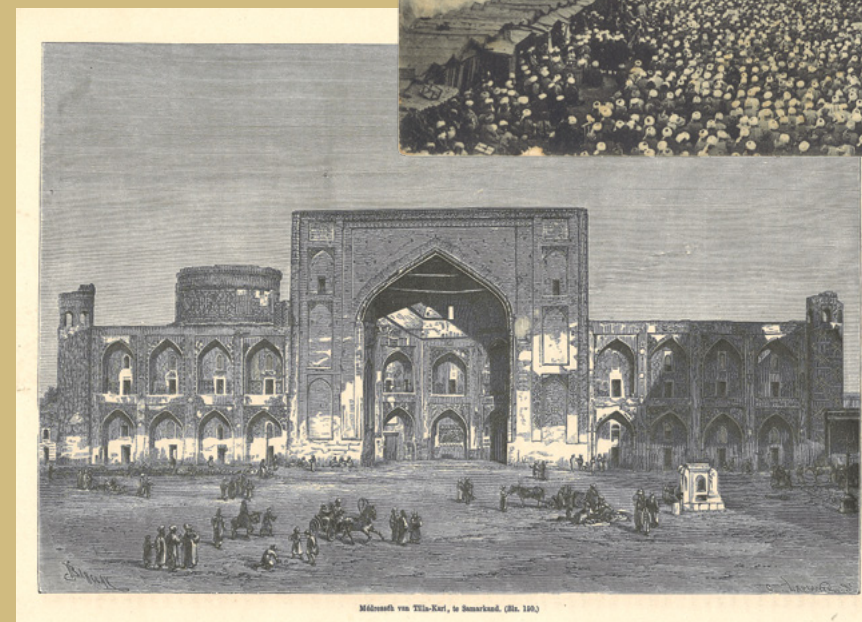


Fig. 12 (left). Samarqand, Shir Dar Madrasa (1619-1636), master restorer Khalin Khakimov, view towards the Bibi Khanum Mosque. Photograph taken on 17 May 1962. United Press International Photo.

Fig. 13 (right). Samarqand, Registan Square, prayer. Tilla Kari Madrasa (1646-1660) to the right, Shir Dar Madrasa (1619-1636) to the left. Postcard published in the series Union Postale Universelle Russie, 1911.



Fig. 14 (bottom). Samarqand, Tilla Kari Madrasa (1646-1660), main entrance, view from the south. Print first published in *De aarde en haar volken*, Haarlem, late 19th century.





Shahr-i Sabz

The city of Shahr-i Sabz

The historic city of Shahr-i Sabz (Verdant City) is situated some 80 km to the south of Samarqand in the upper Qashqadarya valley beyond the Zarafshan Mountains. The older settlement named Gava Sugda was one of the centres of Achaemenid Sogdiana where Alexander's general Ptolemy overtook the usurper Artaxerxes V, who had previously killed King Darius III, for which he was executed by the order of Alexander in 329 BC. Under Greek authority the city was called Nautaca. The Hellenistic citadel Kalandatepa is located 5 km to the north of Shahr-i Sabz; the early medieval city of 40 hectares has been found nearby. By the beginning of the Common era, Kesh was the centre of a small but rich state. The city grew further to become a capital of Sogdiana. Between 567 and 658 the rulers of Kesh paid taxes to the Western Turkic khaganates. The Chinese histories bear witness to the political importance of early medieval Kesh (called Shi, and later Ke-shuang-na). The Sogdian ruler Dizhe mentioned between 605 and 615 is said to have erected the city and proclaimed his vassalage to China. A later ruler, Hubiduo, sent an envoy to the Chinese court in 727. In 710 the city was conquered by the Arabs and in 740 the local prince of Kesh started to issue coins with Arabic legends. Kesh became the last bastion of the insurrection of 'people in white robes', followers of al-Muqanna' (d. 779), who claimed to be a prophet, and founded a religion which was a mixture of Zoroastrianism and Islam. In the Samanid period, Kesh is described as a small town with a citadel, an inner city, suburbs, and an outer city. The citadel and the inner city were already in ruins and had become unpopulated before the 9th century. From the 12th century onwards, a small settlement was located on the site of present-day Shahr-i Sabz.

In the 14th century Shahr-i Sabz was the stronghold of the Turkic Barlas tribe. The Turco-Mongol ruler Timur was born in the vicinity of the city around 1336. Shahr-i Sabz was regarded as Timur's summer residence. In addition, the city became the burial ground for the male members of the Barlas tribe. Two sons of Timur, Jahangir (d. 1376) and 'Umar Shaykh (d. 1394), are buried in Shahr-i Sabz and not in the dynastic Timurid mausoleum of Gur-i Amir in Samarqand. Most likely Timur also planned to be buried there as the remains of his crypt were discovered in the early 20th century. In the Uzbek period, Shahr-i Sabz was controlled by a *beg* (local ruler) more or less under the nominal suzerainty of Bukhara. The city was captured by the Russians in 1870.

In 2002, the 2700th anniversary of Shahr-i Sabz was celebrated. Between 2014-2016 the city underwent a massive regeneration campaign during which many residential buildings were demolished between two of the major Timurid monuments: the Aq Saray (second half of the 14th century) and the K k Gunbad Mosque (1435-1436). As a result of these recent urban changes, the city was put on the UNESCO List of World Heritage in Danger in 2016.



Fig. 1. Shahr-i Sabz, Aq Saray (White Palace, 14th century). Postcard from the series Monuments Antiques, Turkestan Russe, early 20th century.

Aq Saray (second half of the 14th century)

The Aq Saray (White Palace, 1379-1396) was the most monumental structure erected by Timur in his lifetime. The 'white' colour reflected in the name may refer to the aristocratic nature of the compound and not necessarily to its colour, after all, the whole portal is covered in blue tile revetments. Although the construction started in 1379 after Timur's campaign in Khwarezm, according to the existing inscriptions, the revetments were built in 1395-1396. In the 16th century the Shaybanid ruler 'Abdallah Khan systematically demolished the Timurid monuments in Shahr-i Sabz and the Aq Saray may have been destroyed in one of his campaigns. That is why, we cannot be certain about the actual plan of the building, its scale and potential date of completion.

The only remaining structure is the massive entrance portal to the north with a vault of 22 m (Fig. 1). It is composed of two nested *iwans* flanked by enormous pylons with round towers resting on engaged twelve-sided shafts. Several craftsmen from different parts of Central Asia worked on the palace portal. On a moulded cable decorated with delicate tile mosaic, the name of Muhammad ibn Yusuf al-Tabrizi is recorded. According to other sources, Timur deployed many masters from Urgench (Khwarezm) to Shahr-i Sabz. The palette and many of the vegetal and arabesque designs can be found in mid-14th century illuminations and textiles. Large areas of the side towers and the adjoining arches are covered in brick mosaic with huge geometric patterns in light and dark blue spelling the names of Allah, Muhammad and 'Ali in square Kufic script.



Sultaniyya

The city of Sultaniyya

The Mongol city of Sultaniyya in present-day Iran was founded around 1285 by the Ilkhan Arghun (1258-1291) and dedicated as the capital by his son, Sultan Öljeytū in 1313. Öljeytū probably began building his tomb at the time of his accession at the beginning of the 14th century. He also constructed a Congregational Mosque in a *kosh* (pair) across from the *madrasa* (Islamic religious school) of his favourite wife. According to the descriptions by the 17th century travellers Adam Olearius (d. 1671) and Jan Janszoon Struys (d. 1694), the mosque was based on the four-*iwan* plan (four monumental gates around an open courtyard) and had a domed sanctuary along the main longitudinal axis (Fig. 1). The main entrance was flanked with polygonal minarets, drawn by François Préault in 1808 (Fig. 2). It is possible that Timur (ca. 1336-1405) was inspired by Öljeytū's Congregational Mosque and used its design as the basis for his monumental mosque of Bibi Khanum in Samarqand (late 14th century). In 2005 Sultaniyya was listed as a World Heritage Site.

Mausoleum of Sultan Öljeytū (early 14th century)

The Mausoleum of Sultan Öljeytū (1304-1313) is one of the most colossal monuments of Islamic architecture (Fig. 3). Upon converting from Sunnism to Shi'ism, the Sultan decided that the large mausoleum would be a shrine for Imam 'Ali and Imam Husayn, whom he planned to transfer from their resting places in Iraq. This decision resulted in modifications to the building during construction. After reconsideration, the scheme was abandoned and the building eventually became Öljeytū's own tomb, as originally intended. The complex around Öljeytū's mausoleum was organised according to the four-*iwan* plan, whereby the *iwans* were connected by arcades around the open courtyard; the tomb was situated in the southern *iwan*. Öljeytū's tomb complex followed the four-*iwan* plan of the Tabriz tombs of his brother Ghazan (1271-1304) and the renowned vizier and court historian Rashid al-Din (1247-1318).

The plan comprises a massive octagon with a rectangular burial chamber protruding from the southern side. Triple arches play an important role in the exterior composition of Öljeytū's mausoleum: the octagonal plan is carried up to the dome's base and each segment of the eight-sided gallery supporting the dome is divided into three open arches. The dome rests on the upper terrace, carried on the interior by the corbels of a thick wall. Eight minarets rise from the upper terrace at each of the eight corners. Western scholars have explained the existence of these minarets with Öljeytū's striving for broader

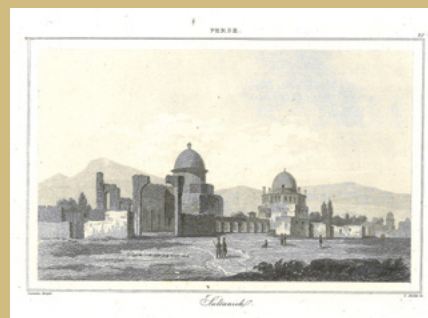
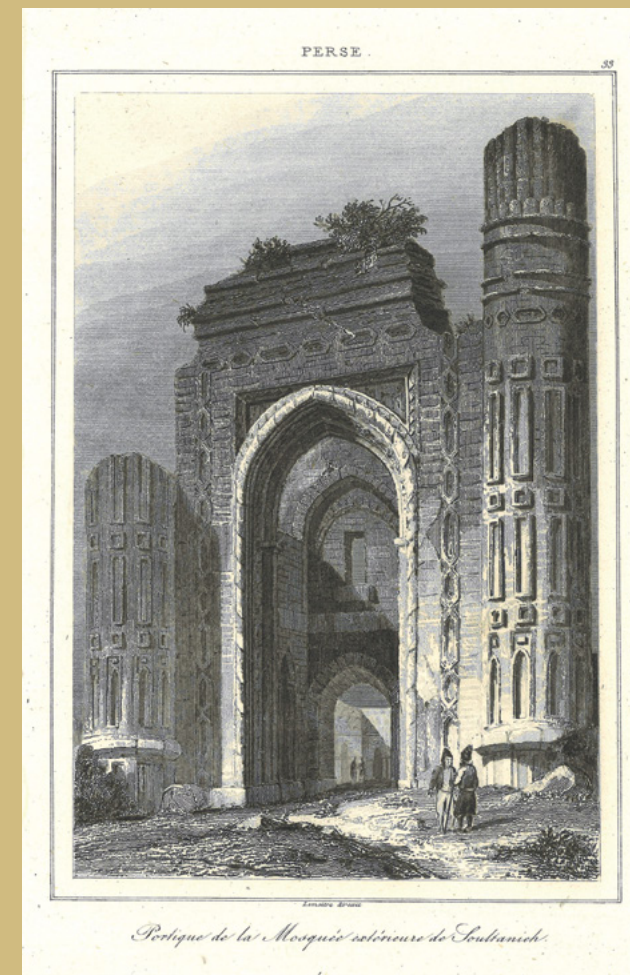


Fig. 1 (above). Sultaniyya, Friday Mosque (1300s), main sanctuary. Print from Dubeux, Louis. *La Perse*. Paris: Firmin Didot, 1841, plate 29.

Fig. 2 (right). Sultaniyya, Friday Mosque (1300s), main entrance. Print from Dubeux, Louis. *La Perse*. Paris: Firmin Didot, 1841, plate 33.

Fig. 3 (below). Sultaniyya, Mausoleum of Sultan Öljeytū (1302-1312). Print from Dubeux, Louis. *La Perse*. Paris: Firmin Didot, 1841, plate 30.



power and authority as a protector of the Holy Cities and a leader of the Islamic world, whereby multiple minarets were interpreted as a reference to the holiest sanctuaries of Islam in Mecca and Medina. The interior is divided into two stories of eight-bay arcades. A third arcade runs below the base of the dome, opening to the exterior and not the interior.

Öljeytū's religious intention for the structure, as the shrine of the Imams, is demonstrated by the presence of the funerary sanctuary beyond the southern wall; a *mihrab* (prayer niche) included on the *qibla* wall (indicating the direction to Mecca) in the burial chamber and externally, the prioritization of the exterior wall facing Mecca, with more opulent decoration. The two phases of interior decoration may also reflect the change in purpose of the structure. The earlier decoration, intended for a religious monument, made extensive use of brick laid in common bond and Kufic inscriptions formed with turquoise glazed squares. The second phase may reflect the need to convert the structure into a space considered more appropriate for secular use. A dado of hexagonal glazed tile was installed, above which the entire interior surface, including the dome, was covered with a coat of plaster. The plaster was painted with decorative patterns and inscriptions, partially in relief.

The exterior decoration was apparently not changed during the conversion from a religious monument. The exterior of the uppermost gallery is decorated with glazed and unglazed terracotta and mosaic faience, the interior surfaced with exquisite painted plaster, visible from the outside. The structure's cornice and the minarets were patterned with dark and light tile. The dome was covered entirely with turquoise glazed brick.



Turkestan

Yasawi Shrine (late 14th-early 15th century)

The mausoleum of Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi was commissioned in the 14th century by Timur (ca. 1336-1405). It was constructed to commemorate the Sufi shaykh and poet Ahmad Yasawi, who died in 1166. Yasawi is credited with the conversion of the Turkic people to Islam. The building stands within the remains of a citadel. The Timurid shrine comprises 8 main chambers, 27 smaller rooms and some 12 passages, all enclosed within a single building and spread over two floors. The complex includes a mosque, a tomb chamber, a sacred well, a refectory, meeting rooms, a library space and a *kazanluk* (large assembly hall) (Fig. 1).

The core of the building was constructed by 1394. During the second stage (1397-99), the upper parts of the mausoleum, including the tile revetments and the domes, were completed. Yet the gigantic portal that dominates the front elevation of the shrine was never finished (Fig. 2). The Shaybanid ruler 'Abdallah Khan made significant additions to the mausoleum in 1591 but the bulk of it remained without any ceramic or other decorative features. The massive walls of exposed baked brick can be still seen today.

However, the dating of the Yasawi shrine to 1394-1399 based only on historiographic and epigraphic evidence is rather problematic. The variety and complexity of the vaulting (transverse arches, recumbent arches, as well as tunnel vaults), the sparse interior decoration (plaster painted with geometrical designs, limited use of mosaic faience only in the borders of the dado, graphic linear decoration in cobalt blue, etc.) are completely different from other Timurid constructions built in the second half of the 14th century such as the mausoleums of Shah-i Zinda in Samarqand. The latter have simple single-chamber square plans and their facades are covered with lavish revetments in tile mosaic. It is more plausible to attribute the completion of the Yasawi shrine to the 1430s and not to the end of the 14th century.

Parts of the mausoleum's external walls were severely damaged during the bombardment of Russian Tsarist troops in 1864 when the terrified population sheltering inside the shrine surrendered and the region came under Russian rule. Subsequently, the shrine was used for many years as a military depot. During this period, the Russian army also virtually destroyed the adjacent mausoleum of Rabi'a Sultan Begum (the daughter of Ulugh Beg), and reused the bricks for military purposes. In 1884 Russian engineers started to survey the damage to the building. These efforts continued irregularly until 1930 but without any serious interventions. Between 1951 and 1989 the shrine was studied by Soviet archaeologists and architectural historians, the most prominent of them being Liia Iu. Man'kovskaia, who wrote her dissertation on the Yasawi complex in 1963. The monument was stabilized, original tile revetments were restored and the excavations revealed that it was built above an earlier Qarakhanid mausoleum from the 12th century. The most recent restoration effort was financed by the Turkish government and was carried out between 1992 and 2000, when a joint team of Kazakh and Turkish experts completed the restoration. The project attracted considerable public attention and the Yasawi shrine was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2003.



Fig. 1 (top). Turkestan, Yasawi Shrine (late 14th-early 15th century), view from the south, central domed space. Postcard published by Scherer, Nabholz & Co., Moscow, 1914.

Fig. 2 (bottom). Turkestan, Yasawi Shrine (late 14th-early 15th century), monumental entrance portal from the east. Postcard published by Scherer, Nabholz & Co., Moscow, 1916.

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Below: Registan Square, Samarqand. Photograph taken by M. Speranskii in 1929.

Front cover: Samarqand, Bibi Khanum Mosque (1398-1405), two men in front of the remains of the main sanctuary. Photograph by Louis Lucchesi, 1960s.

Back cover: City gate, Jalalabad, Afghanistan. Photograph early 20th century.

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Silk Road Cities

The most unexpected innovations and fusions of world's religions and material culture have taken place along the trade and communication networks known today as the Silk Roads. The aesthetic vibrancy of the empires that stretched from China to Byzantium was reflected in their sophisticated cultural production. The artistic excellence of the Islamic monuments was the product of continuous exchanges, mixing and melding of traditions.

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