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Framing the conquest: Bactrian local rulers and Arab muslim domination of Bactria (31-128 AH/651-746 CE)

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Chapter Six: Social Impacts of the Umayyad Control Over Bactria

The first religious blessing that is specific to Balkh is that the city was restored in the time of Islam. And its people were firm in their belief in Islam.⁹³⁶

Introduction

The previous chapters discussed the Umayyads' military expansion and political consolidation in Bactria. The Umayyads brought western Bactria under their direct control and indirectly ruled southern, eastern, and northern Bactria. This chapter aims to show the social impacts of the Umayyads' control over Bactria. It demonstrates that from the early eighth century, the Arab Muslims settled in Bactria, imposed their form of governance, collected taxes and tributes, introduced the Arabic language and culture, and spread Islamic ideology, institutions, and infrastructure in accordance with religious precepts. Living together in the same area under the Umayyad administration provided intensive social interactions between the Arab Muslims and local people, and this had significant impacts. It allowed for the rise of bilingual individuals who spoke Arabic and local languages and facilitated the expansion of the Umayyad administration in Bactria. At the same time, Arabic contributed to the development of New Persian, which was written in the Arabic alphabet and contained much Arabic vocabulary. However, it was not Arabic but New Persian that became the *lingua franca* in the east and eventually replaced the Bactrian language. Living together under Umayyad rule led to a centuries-long process of social changes that paved the way for the emergence of Islamic Balkh, in which its residents proudly identified themselves as Persian-speaking Muslims.

The current chapter discusses the social impacts of Umayyad control in Bactria in three parts. The first part explores the Arab Muslim settlement pattern in Bactria that allowed intensive social interaction between Arab Muslims and local people. The second part discusses the spread of the Arabic language and culture in Bactria. The final part explains the expansion of Islamic ideology and Arab Muslim fiscal administration in Bactria.

⁹³⁶ Al-Balkhī, *Faḍā'il-i Balkh*, 34.

6.1. Arab Muslim settlement patterns in Bactria

Before addressing the social impacts of the conquests, we should remember that the Arab Muslims faced a region that was diverse in landscapes, populations, religious traditions, and political priorities. The Bactrian geography and different climates allowed sedentary and pastoral life to coexist with nomadic populations around them. Bactria was connected to India, Iran, and China through overland trade routes passing cities like Balkh and Tirmidh. Religious communities such as Christians, Jews, Buddhists, worshippers of Iranian deities, and believers in nomadic cults lived together in Bactria. Among these communities, Buddhism had a prominent presence in the urban areas, and their *stūpas* and *vihāras* were within and outside the main cities like Balkh and Tirmidh. The Buddhist monastery of Naw Bahar had sacred relics and great statues of Buddha that were visited by people who paid homage and donations. Buddhist scholars produced commentaries (*śāstra*) on Buddhist texts and some monks called the *arhat* performed miracles. The worshippers of Iranian deities, like Wakhsh, had their image shrine (*baglan*) and performed their religious rituals. All these religions had their laws and regulations likely implemented by their religious authorities. At the political level, Bactrian local rulers controlled their areas, managed their local resources, used Bactrian as the main administrative language, performed justice among their people, and commanded their local forces. These components attest to the diverse society the Arab Muslims had to deal with.

The period between the Umayyad conquest of Bactria in 90/710 until the end of the Umayyad period in 132/750 is only forty years. This short period was not a peaceful and stable era. It was marked by the *nizak*'s uprising, the rebellion of al-Ḥārith, the Türgesh Turks invasion, the Umayyad war with the Türgesh Turks over control of the East, and the re-establishment of Umayyad rule. These political upheavals led to the movement of armies and various wars on the Bactrian ground. That must have affected particularly the cities in western Bactria, the Balkh oasis, and Tirmidh whose residents were caught between the Umayyads and their rivals. Eventually, the Umayyads captured the centres and re-consolidated their direct control over these areas. The circumstances in northern, southern, and eastern Bactria that were not under direct Umayyad control were different. These areas were overseen by different local rulers who recognised the Umayyad overlordship and paid tribute. The mountain areas in Guzgan controlled by their local king should be added. The Umayyads did not interfere in these areas' internal issues. Given the region's diversity, the slow process of the conquests, and the

political upheavals, one should not expect the Arab Muslims to have had immediate impacts on the lives of regular people. It is a truism that social changes take time.⁹³⁷

Despite being a short period, the Arab Muslims' political control impacted Bactrian society. This period marked the beginning of social changes affected by the Arab Muslims' political, linguistic, and ideological beliefs. This process continued after the Umayyad period. The Arab Muslims incorporated the eastern Iranian regions (Sasanian Khurasan, Bactria, Sogdiana, and Khwarazm) and created the Umayyad province of Khurasan. Many Arab Muslims settled in different areas in Khurasan, including Bactria. These people brought the Arabic language, Islamic ideology, their regional cultural traditions, and their tribal rivalries. The Arab Muslims authorities collected tributes and taxes, minted coins with Qur'anic verses written in Arabic script, constructed mosques, and introduced their form of governance and administration. In short, they conquered Bactria and remained there forever.

In such an environment, Arab Muslims and local people were both affected. Some learned Arabic to communicate with the new leaders, worked for the Umayyad administration, and some converted to Islam. Similarly, the Arab Muslim control of Bactria marked the beginning of a centuries-long process of social changes among Bactrians and the Arab Muslims who settled in the region. Many Arab Muslims learned local languages and integrated into the local population through intermarriage. Thus, the conquests and settlements affected the conquerors and the conquered populations.⁹³⁸

The social impacts of the conquests in Bactria have not been fully explored. The main reason for the absence of an in-depth study is the scarcity of primary sources, particularly systematic archaeological excavations. Nonetheless, what this present study has attempted to achieve so far is to see some aspects of the social impacts of the Arab Muslims' rule over Bactria.⁹³⁹ The available sources show that the conquests, followed by settlement and

⁹³⁷ A similar situation can be observed in Ghur, Sistan, and Zabulistan. See Bosworth, "The Appearance and Establishment of Islam in Afghanistan," 103.

⁹³⁸ For social changes among the Arab Muslims in post-conquest Khurasan, see Luce, "Umayyad Khurāsān," 207–253.

⁹³⁹ There are a few studies on the Islamicisation of Balkh, but they lack a systematic discussion on the social impacts of the conquests in Bactria. For instance, the edited volume on Islamisation in Central Asia includes a section on Bactria but does not really discuss the social impacts of the conquests (*Islamisation de l'Asie centrale*, 95–174). However, some other scholars attempted to discuss the process of Islamicisation in Bactria. See, for instance, Arezou Azad, *Sacred Landscape in Medieval Afghanistan: Revisiting the Faḍā'il-i Balkh* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Azad, "The Beginning of Islam in Afghanistan," 41–55; Arezou Azad and Hugh Kennedy discussed the Arab Muslim settlement in Balkh based on Arabic and Persian narratives and argued that the city of Balkh "spread with the construction of the *rabaḍ* outside the walls of the Bala Hisar at a lower elevation, and again outside the walls of the *rabaḍ*." However, they note that their argument for the expansion of urbanisation in the early Islamic period is entirely based on a limited Arabic and Persian narrative. They added that only

administrative activities, introduced changes in Bactria. This part analyses the sources to understand where and how these changes occurred.

6.1.1 Military garrisons

The Arab Muslim settlement in Bactria was the main vehicle for social changes in the region. The settlement provided space for intensive interactions between the Arab Muslims and local people and allowed them to learn about each other. The Arab Muslim settlement pattern in Bactria has not been studied; nevertheless, there are some general works on the Arab Muslim settlement in Khurasan (although excluding Bactria) that offer helpful insights into the location of Arab Muslim settlements. For instance, Pourshariati has shown that most Arab Muslim migrants settled in Outer Khurasan, namely in the Marw region.⁹⁴⁰ La Vaissière's study on the existence of large Muslim populations in Marw during the Abbasid Revolution confirms Pourshariati's view.⁹⁴¹ La Vaissière also investigated the importance of the *ribāṭ* or military settlement in Sogdiana that gradually became the "very embodiment of Muslim piety" in the region.⁹⁴² The Arab Muslim settlement significantly impacted Dennett's study on taxation, and shows that settlement paved the way for the Islamicisation of Khurasan.⁹⁴³ Kevin van Bladel took a step further, arguing that the settlement pattern was the primary factor for social changes in the conquered regions.⁹⁴⁴ Calling the settlement a 'coexistence' of Arab Muslims and local people under Arab Muslim rule, Azad maintains a similar view of the impact of settlement.⁹⁴⁵ The absence of proper research on the Arab Muslim settlement pattern in Bactria and its vital

archaeological excavation can approve or reject their argument (Azad and Kennedy, "The Coming of Islam to Balkh," 284–310).

⁹⁴⁰ For full discussion on Arab Muslim settlement in Khurasan, see Pourshariati, "Iranian Tradition in Tus," 110–146.

⁹⁴¹ La Vaissière, "The 'Abbāsīd Revolution in Marw," 120–126.

⁹⁴² Étienne de la Vaissière, "Le *ribāṭ* d'Asie Centrale," in *Islamisation de l'Asie centrale. Processus locaux d'acculturation du VIIe au XIe siècle*, ed. Étienne de la Vaissière (Paris: Association Pour L'Avancement des Études Iraniennes, 2008), 71–94; Minoru Inaba's study on Rabat-i Karwan is important to see Islamicisation process in the central parts of the Hindukush (Minoru Inaba, "Between Zābulistān and Gūzgān," 209–225).

⁹⁴³ Dennett argues that Islamicisation was far more rapid in Khurasan than in Egypt. The reason was the settlement of large Arab Muslim populations outside garrison towns in Khurasan. He also points to the poll tax as the primary motivator because converts would pay fewer taxes (Daniel C. Dennett, *Conversion and the Poll Tax in Early Islam* (1950; repr., Idarah-i Adabyat-i Delli, 2000), 106).

⁹⁴⁴ Kevin van Bladel, "Arabisering, islamisering en de kolonies van de veroveraars," in *Mohammed en de Late Oudheid*, ed. Josephine van den Bent, Floris van den Eijnde and Johan Weststeijn (Hilversum: Verloren, 2018), 12; For the English version of this article, see Kevin van Bladel, "Arabization, Islamization, and the Colonies of the Conquerors," in *Late Antique Responses to the Arab Conquests*, ed. Josephine van den Bent, Floris van den Eijnde and Johan Weststeijn (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 89–119.

⁹⁴⁵ Azad, "The Beginning of Islam in Afghanistan," 41.

importance for understanding social changes urges us to start by exploring our sources to see how and where Arab Muslims settled in Bactria.

After they conquered Bactria, the Arab Muslims did not immediately move to cities and live among local people. They established military garrisons from Marw al-Rūd to Tirmidh that were under Arab Muslim direct control. The Arabic historical narratives relating to Bactria offer limited information about the exact location of these garrisons, their populations, and how they were managed. However, they highlight three issues: a) the Arab Muslims who settled in Bactria during the Umayyad period were part of the armies sent from Iraq and Syria to Khurasan;⁹⁴⁶ b) they were stationed in military garrisons;⁹⁴⁷ and c) women and children also lived in the garrisons indicating the fact that many soldiers had their families with them.⁹⁴⁸ The garrisons hosted not only military units but also Arab Muslim government officials. The garrisons and their residents were the main devices to consolidate Umayyad authority and naturalise their rule in Bactria. The Arabic narratives clearly show that the military garrison was the first form of settlement in Bactria. They also create the impression that these garrisons were separate from the local residential areas. This leads to several questions: What was the plan and structure of a garrison? How were they built and managed?

The form and structure of the Arab Muslim garrison depended on geography and political situation; thus, it differed from one region to another. In general, a garrison is a military housing where soldiers could stay and prepare for further military advances. The garrison often has storage for food provision, drinking water, medicine, spoils of war, equipment, and other relevant components. It protects soldiers from surprise attacks. Depending on the local situation and the conditions of the army movement, sometimes soldiers are housed in the captured fortresses or put up tents in the open field where they deem it safe. These soldiers can also use houses taken by force or those deserted by their residents. The temporary camp made of tents can turn into a permanent settlement over time.

The Arabic historical narratives refer to two methods of establishing a military garrison in Khurasan. The first was to make a camp by arranging tents near each other and protecting them by digging a ditch around the camp. This can be recognised as a garrison-camp. Al-

⁹⁴⁶ See the discussion on the Arab Muslims migration to Khurasan in chapter three (3.3.2).

⁹⁴⁷ As pointed out in chapter four (4.2.2), the Umayyad forces led by Qutayba b. Muslim conquered western and northern parts of Bactria between 90–93/709–712. Qutayba established a network of garrisons to control the conquered areas. Different groups of soldiers from Iraq, Syria and the Marw region filled these garrisons.

⁹⁴⁸ See al-Ḥārith b. Surayj's take-over of Balkh and Asad al-Qasrī's decision to make Balkh as political centre discussed in chapter four (4.3.2).

Balādhurī calls it *al-fuṣṭāṭ*,⁹⁴⁹ while al-Ṭabarī calls it *khandaq*.⁹⁵⁰ The *khandaq* comes from Persian *kanda*, meaning “ditch.”⁹⁵¹ Arab Muslims widely used this technique.⁹⁵² For instance, in the tribal war between Ibn Khāzim and the tribe of Bakr b. Wā’il in 65/685 in Herat, the people of Bakr made a garrison-camp and dug a ditch around it.⁹⁵³ Later, Mūsā b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Khāzim did the same in Kish to fight the Sogdians.⁹⁵⁴ Qutayba b. Muslim was killed in his garrison-camp in Farghana.⁹⁵⁵ These reports show that the garrison-camp was made mostly during military campaigns. The garrison-camp was likely built in an open field where drinking water and food provisions could be supplied from the neighborhood. How did a garrison-camp look like?

Our sources do not discuss the structure of the garrison-camp made by the Umayyad forces in Bactria. However, there is information about the garrison-camps in other regions that can help. Al-Ṭabarī gives some details about the garrison-camp built by Abū Muslim in Marw. His description may reflect the form and structure of the garrison-camps built in Bactria in the Umayyad period. According to al-Ṭabarī, Abū Muslim’s camp was made near villages, protected by a ditch, and had several gates. The ditch protected the camp from surprise attacks. Each gate was guarded by a group of soldiers led by a commander. The soldiers dug a canal to bring water to the garrison-camp.⁹⁵⁶ Building the garrison-camp near the villages indicates the possibility of the local settlements supplying food.

The second structure possibility was to use already existing military structures. In this model, soldiers were stationed in an already constructed fortress. In 32/652, al-Aḥnaf b. Qays captured an old military fortress in Marw al-Rūd and accommodated his soldiers there.⁹⁵⁷ Mūsā b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Khāzim forcefully occupied the citadel of Tirmidh and housed his soldiers in it. The city of Tirmidh had strong defensive walls. Al-Ṭabarī reports that in 85/705, there were more than 8,000 soldiers from the Rabī’a, Tamīm, Yaman, and ‘Abd al-Qays gathered in

⁹⁴⁹ Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 424.

⁹⁵⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 7: 493.

⁹⁵¹ Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs*, 23.

⁹⁵² It was a Persian technique to protect cities from invasions. The Prophet allegedly learned this technique from his Persian companion Salmān al-Fārisī (d. 36/657) when he had to protect Medina during the ‘Battle of the Ditch.’ (al-Bal’ amī, *Tārīkh-nāma-yi Ṭabarī*, 3: 203); For details on Salmān al-Fārisī, see Savant, *The New Muslims of Post-Conquest Iran*, 61–89.

⁹⁵³ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 7: 491.

⁹⁵⁴ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 8: 1147.

⁹⁵⁵ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 8: 1297.

⁹⁵⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 9: 1968–69.

⁹⁵⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 5: 2900.

Tirmidh. Many anti-Umayyad Arab soldiers from Sistan also migrated to Tirmidh.⁹⁵⁸ It is not clear where exactly all these soldiers stayed. Occupying existing structures was not confined to those in the citadels. In Sogdiana, the Arab Muslim soldiers occupied local houses. In Bukhara, Qutayba b. Muslim forced locals to leave their houses to the Arab Muslim soldiers.⁹⁵⁹ He did the same in Samarkand and forced residents to evacuate their dwellings, after which Arab Muslim soldiers moved in.⁹⁶⁰ Apparently, this policy was not enforced in Bactria because there appear to be no records.

The Arab Muslims did not build garrison cities like those of Basra and Kufa in Bactria. If they did, then such projects would have been reported. It is reasonable to infer that the Arab Muslims built garrison-camps during military campaigns and used already existing military fortresses in Bactria.⁹⁶¹ Whether these garrisons developed into cities later is unknown because no archaeological excavations have ever been conducted to study Umayyad Bactria. In any case, the literary sources show that the Arab Muslims created a network of military settlements in Bactria. The following section will provide more details.

6.1.2 A web of military settlements in Bactria

The Arab Muslims often used existing fortresses or other fortified settlements to house their troops, even if this inevitably led to adjustments, enlargements, and additions. The number of troops dispatched to Bactria depended on the Arab Muslims' understanding of the situation in the region. Bactria had a strategic location as it was part of a great frontier region where the Arab Muslims faced local rulers who had their forces, the rebels like the *nizak* or al-Ḥārith, and other powerful rivals like the Türgesh Turks. A web of military garrisons in Bactria was vitally important to keep the Arab Muslim presence in the region. From al-Ṭabarī's narratives related to Qutayba's campaign against the *nizak*, and also the rebellion of al-Ḥārith, and other geographical reports we can understand that the Arab Muslims established their military presence in the form of garrisons. These were headed by Arab Muslim commanders on them

⁹⁵⁸ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 1148, 1152.

⁹⁵⁹ Al-Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, 66.

⁹⁶⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 1252.

⁹⁶¹ The Sasanians and the Kidarites invested in military infrastructure by building forts and defensive walls in Bactria. Therefore, when the Arab Muslims arrived there should have been many fortresses in the region for them to use.

from the Marw al-Rūd to Tirmidh.⁹⁶² The location of these garrisons and how they were organised requires some explanations.

The leading Arab Muslim garrison in Bactria was at Baruqan. It was located at two *farsakh* (12 km) from the old city of Balkh.⁹⁶³ The exact location of Baruqan, however, remained unknown to this date due to lack of archaeological excavations. Similarly, when and how this garrison was established is not clear. Al-Ṭabarī mentions that in 85/705, al-Mufaḍḍal b. al-Muhallab, the governor of Khurasan, asked his brother Mudrik, who was in Balkh at this time to mobilise his forces against Mūsā b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Khāzim in Tirmidh.⁹⁶⁴ Though al-Ṭabarī does not say it, it is possible that Mudrik and his forces were in Baruqan. In any case, it was an important location in 90/710, because Qutayba sent 12,000 soldiers led by his brother to Baruqan. He then went to Balkh with large forces from the Marw region and the local forces of Inner Khurasan to fight the *nizak*. Whether all these forces were stationed in Baruqan is not known. Baruqan allegedly contained 10,000 soldiers in 116/734 when al-Ḥārith attacked it.⁹⁶⁵ This garrison housed soldiers from the tribes of Azd, Rabīʿa, and Bakr b. Wāʿil, Muḍr, and ʿAbd al-Qays.⁹⁶⁶ Generally, the number of Iraqi forces was more than the Syrians in Bactria.⁹⁶⁷ Though the number of troops in these reports may not be certain, they indicate the relative density of occupation in Baruqan. They also show that the number of soldiers increased during political unrest. Knowing the importance of Baruqan, we should ask how this garrison was planned. How did the Arab Muslims live in it?

The structure of the Baruqan garrison followed the Basra model. This comes from Ṭabarī's report on Asad al-Qasrī after Asad decided to transfer all inhabitants of the garrison to the city of Balkh.⁹⁶⁸ In this model, the garrison was divided into five parts (*akhmās*), each given to a particular group of people. Shaban mentions that this division was a component of Ziyād b. Abī Sufyān's re-organisation programme. Ziyād allocated these five sections to people from the tribes of Tamīm, Azd, Bakr, ʿAbd al-Qays, and *ahl al-ʿāliya* respectively.⁹⁶⁹ In 51/671, Ziyād sent 50,000 soldiers with their families to Khurasan, who settled in the Marw

⁹⁶² Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, 8: 1206–1207, 1218; Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, 9: 1566–67; Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm*, 303.

⁹⁶³ Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, 9: 1490.

⁹⁶⁴ Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, 8: 1161–63.

⁹⁶⁵ Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, 9: 1567.

⁹⁶⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, 8: 1461–77.

⁹⁶⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, 9: 1590.

⁹⁶⁸ Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, 9:1490.

⁹⁶⁹ The second model was called the *arbāʿ* or four Arab tribal division and used in Kufa (Shaban, *The ʿAbbāsīd Revolution*, 31).

region.⁹⁷⁰ Most probably, after the conquests of Bactria, the Basra model already implemented in Marw was brought to Bactria. As the *akhmās* model military required, Baruqan's garrison must have had defensive walls with different gates and various living quarters connected by streets and Arab Muslim soldiers and their families lived there. This sounds like a city structure, but the Baruqan garrison was separate from the city of Balkh and did not replace it. We will see later that the residents of Baruqan abandoned it and moved to the city of Balkh. Baruqan remained as military base.

These were smaller garrisons with lesser populations in other areas. Unlike Baruqan, which is known from the sources, there is no information about the structure of these garrisons. From al-Ṭabarī's report relating to the rebellion of al-Ḥārith, we learn that the garrison at Andkhud allegedly housed 4,000 soldiers belonging to the tribes of Tamīm and Azd. In 119/737, there was a garrison in Jizza in Guzgan whose commander was a certain Farrafis. The exact location of this garrison is unknown. Another garrison was located in Shaburghan containing fighting forces (*muqātila*).⁹⁷¹ Al-Muqaddasī mentions that the people from the tribe of Azd were settled in Khulm, and the people from the tribe of Tamīm lived in Samangan.⁹⁷² It is unclear when the Tamīm people settled in Samangan because the narratives related to Umayyad Bactria do not show if the Umayyads established any garrisons beyond the Pass of Khulm. These are all the garrisons mentioned in Arabic reports relating to Bactria.

The number of Arab Muslim troops in Bactria is not known. The Arabic narratives often refer to figures that their accuracy cannot be trusted.⁹⁷³ For instance, al-Ṭabarī mentions that smaller garrisons like Andkhud had about 4,000 soldiers, Baruqan had 10,000 and could host even 12,000. Tirmidh had 8,000 soldiers. However, soldiers were lost in war, died of illness, and could have been transferred from one area to another. Thus, we do not know how many soldiers were stationed in Bactria. What these numbers can tell us is that many Arab Muslims were settled in Bactria. The Arabic narratives that refer to these smaller garrisons create an impression that all these smaller garrisons were separate from the local populations. That means interaction between them and the local people was also limited. Moving to the cities and living with local people began later. The following section will address it.

⁹⁷⁰ Pourshariati, "Iranian Tradition in Tus," 110–146.

⁹⁷¹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1612, 14.

⁹⁷² Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm*, 303.

⁹⁷³ For discussion on number of soldiers in Arabic historiography, see Lawrence I. Conrad, "Abraha and Muhammad: some observations apropos of chronology and literary *topoi* in the early Arabic historical tradition," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 50, no. 2 (1987): 239–240.

6.1.3 Moving into the main cities to live among the locals

There are two short reports about the Arab Muslims moving from the garrisons into the cities of Bactria. Both come from al-Madā'inī preserved by al-Ṭabarī, and relate to the city of Balkh. The first report mentions that Asad al-Qasrī the governor of Khurasan undertook the restoration of Balkh after he led military campaigns to the Namrun area in Gharchistan and Ghur in 107/725. The second report is related to the year 118/736 when Asad was appointed as the governor of Khurasan for the second time. While the case of Balkh is mentioned, there is no information about moving from other garrisons into the cities in other parts of Bactria. Thus, we remain only with one example to study. In any case, reviewing the reports about Balkh helps us understand how and why this happened.

The first report describes the process of moving Arab Muslims into the city of Balkh. According to al-Ṭabarī, Asad transferred whoever was part of the army (*man kāna bi al-Baruqān min al-jūnd*) into the city. Anyone who had a house (*maskan*) at Baruqān was allowed to have one in the city. He first decided to settle the Arab Muslims in the city the way they were at the Baruqān garrison. In Baruqān, members of each tribe lived in a separate quarter (*akhmās*). He wanted to settle them separately according to their quarters, but some unidentified people advised him not to do that because the Arabs had their tribal prejudice (*innahum yuta'aṣṣibūn*) that would lead to internal conflicts. Thus, Asad mixed them (*fakhalata baynahum*). Al-Ṭabarī adds that Asad appointed the *barmak* on this project, and the labour (*fa'ala*) paid by local rulers was used to restore the city. The city was likely restored first, and then the Arab Muslims moved there. Though the report does not say it, the Arabs were possibly given space to build their houses, or there were empty houses in the city. Al-Ṭabarī does not mention if they removed local people and took their domiciles. If that happened as it occurred in Bukhara and Samarkand, where Qutayba forced local people to leave their houses for the Arab Muslims discussed in chapter four (4.1.4), then our report should have included it. Al-Ṭabarī ends the first report by referring to an Arabic poem from a certain Abū al-Barīd in which the city of Balkh was called *al-mubāraka* (the blessed).⁹⁷⁴

The second report related to 118/736 gives information confirming Asad paid more attention to Balkh. At this time, Asad shifted the political centre of Khurasan from Marw to Balkh. He transported the official registers to Balkh and invested in developing the irrigation system that was essential for agricultural activities in the oasis.⁹⁷⁵ Re-settling the Arab Muslims

⁹⁷⁴ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1490–91.

⁹⁷⁵ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9:1591.

and making Balkh the political centre of Khurasan poses an important question. Why did Asad do that? Why did he not keep Arab Muslims in their garrisons?

To understand the reasons behind moving the Arab Muslims into the city we need to look at the circumstances in which it happened. In 107/725, when Asad moved the Arab Muslims into the city of Balkh, the region of Sogdiana was under the pressure of the Türgesh Turks. As discussed in chapter four (4.3), Asad faced the Türgesh Turks, who rivalled the Umayyads over control of the East. The Türgesh forces defeated the Umayyads and forced them to withdraw from Sogdiana. The pressure was to the extent that many Arab Muslim soldiers refused to go to Sogdiana to fight the Türgesh even after they received their salaries. For instance, in 106/724, the Arab Muslim soldiers of Baruqan rebelled against their commander, who forced them to fight the Türgesh. Their mutiny rapidly became a tribal conflict because the troops were originally from different tribes, lived in separate quarters, and already had internal rivalries.⁹⁷⁶ The Umayyad governor of Khurasan had been said to have forced his soldiers to take an oath not to run away from the war. The oath was to divorce (*ṭalāq*) their wives if they fled.⁹⁷⁷ Therefore, when Asad arrived in Khurasan he had to stay close to Sogdiana and also reduce the possibility of tribal conflicts among the Arab Muslims in Balkh. The solution was to move Arab Muslims into the city and mix them with local people. Similarly, in 117/735, Asad arrived in Khurasan to secure the region from al-Ḥārith and the Türgesh Turks who put pressure not only on Sogdiana but also Bactria. Thus, transforming Balkh as the capital of Umayyad Khurasan signified the Umayyads' position that the region belonged to them and they would remain there.

Living in the garrison and then moving into the city was a significant change. The Arab Muslims, who were previously isolationist, now lived with the local people in the same place. This must have led to an intensive social interaction between them. Living together allowed Arab Muslims and local people to know each other and learn each other's languages and cultural traditions. Local people could convert to Islam and create ties with the Arab Muslims. Living together also naturally would lead to intermarriage and form a mixed society. Making Balkh the capital and transferring the registers would also allow some local people to learn Arabic and work for the Umayyad administration. However, we should keep in mind that the Umayyad authorities did not consciously plan for social changes among the local people, but their activities gradually affected the lives of them. We also need to know that these reports are

⁹⁷⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫh*, 9: 1473–77.

⁹⁷⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫh*, 9: 1481–82.

only about the cities, and whether the Arab Muslims settled in the countryside is unknown. Speaking about intensive social interaction that leads people to learn about each other languages and cultures, we should explore our sources to see what they say about linguistic and cultural exchanges in Bactria. The following part will do that.

6.2. Spread of Arabic language and culture in Bactria

Logically, the coexistence of different groups with various languages and cultural traditions in the same place leads to linguistic and cultural exchange. Bilingualism, forming creole languages,⁹⁷⁸ and cultural synchronisation⁹⁷⁹ are the most visible impacts of this coexistence. These elements can be observed in Bactria as well. The evidence for these processes comes on the one hand, from documents which record written (as opposed to spoken) linguistic preferences, and on the other, from anecdotes in historical sources written not contemporary but several centuries after the hybrid period in which these linguistic changes took place. This part provides examples of the spread of the Arabic language and culture by focusing on bilingualism, locals' adopting Arabic personal names, the influence of Arabic in the Sogdian and Bactrian writing system, and Arabic as an administrative language in Bactria. A brief discussion on the contribution of Arabic to the development of New Persian comes at the end of this part.

6.2.1 Bilingualism

Let us start with bilingualism. A bilingual is a person who is able to speak two different languages. Its definition varies from a minimal proficiency in oral communication to an advanced level, in which one can speak two languages as a native-like speaker and read and write in both languages. Bilingualism happens by virtue of growing up learning two languages at the same time (simultaneous bilingualism), or acquiring it after learning the first language (sequential bilingualism). The first can happen at home and the second at school, the workplace, or interaction with people who speak a different language.⁹⁸⁰ In all cases, intensive

⁹⁷⁸ See Donald Winford, "Processes of Creole Formation and Related Contact-Induced Language Change," *Journal Language Contact-THEMA* 2 (2008): 124–145.

⁹⁷⁹ A simple definition of cultural synchronisation is the harmony between diverse groups of people due to intensive interaction. For more detail on this process, see Dierdre Glenn Paul, "Rap and Orality: Critical Media Literacy, Pedagogy, and Cultural Synchronization," *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 44, no. 3 (2000): 246–252.

⁹⁸⁰ For a definition and types of bilingualism, see for instance Ben Rampton, "Displacing the "native speaker": Expertise, affiliation and inheritance," *ELT Journal* 44 (1990): 97–101; Carol Myers-Scotton, "Multiple Voices:

contact is *the* key to learning a language. The Arab Muslim conquests, their settlement and political control in Bactria brought them into contact with local people, providing space for the rise of bilinguals who spoke Arabic and other local languages. Many examples of bilinguals who worked for the Arabs or local rulers are reported in the Arabic narratives. However, these reports do not talk about the bilinguals' level of language proficiency. It is reasonable to infer that these bilinguals were able to communicate, and many of those who worked in the Umayyad or local rulers' administration could also read and write.

Most of the relevant reports on Bactria and Sogdiana are preserved by al-Ṭabarī. According to him, in 85/705, the Sogdian merchant leader Thābit, who settled in Tirmidh, employed a spy from the tribe of Khuzā'a who spoke Arabic and Sogdian and sent him to Mūsā's camp to collect information.⁹⁸¹ Qutayba had a spy called Tundar who spoke Sogdian and Arabic. He also had a Persian *mawlā* called Siyāh who guarded Qutayba.⁹⁸² Qutayba also had a local advisor (*al-nāsiḥ*) called Salīm, who spoke both Arabic and Bactrian. Salīm knew the *nizak* and negotiated with him on behalf of Qutayba.⁹⁸³ The *nizak* was related to 'Uthmān b. Mas'ūd a leader of Tamīm by marriage. The Arab leaders of Khurasan called the *nizak* Abū al-Hayyāj. He had a servant named 'Alī b. Muhājir, who represented the *nizak* before the king of Samarkand.⁹⁸⁴ How 'Alī b. Muhājir came to serve the *nizak* is unknown but he was able to speak for the *nizak* indicating he knew Sogdian.⁹⁸⁵ Not only these characters, but also the *qaghān* of the Türgesh had an Arabic translator in his camp who was associated with al-Ḥārith.⁹⁸⁶ Hence, there were bilinguals serving both Umayyad governors and local rulers.

6.2.2 Adopting Arabic personal names

The second issue to pay attention to is that some local people selected Arabic personal names. For instance, some local Khurasani people named their sons after Salm b. Ziyād, the governor of Khurasan, supposedly because he treated people with respect.⁹⁸⁷ Many people also called their sons Yaḥyā to commemorate the memory of Yaḥyā b. Zayd, who was killed at the age of

An Introduction to Bilingualism," *Applied Linguistics* 28, no. 1 (2007): 155–158; François Grosjean and Ping- Li, ed., *The Psycholinguistics of Bilingualism* (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell/John Wiley & Sons 2013).

⁹⁸¹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 1155.

⁹⁸² Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 1178.

⁹⁸³ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 1184, 1220.

⁹⁸⁴ Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī, *Futūḥ*, 7: 142–143.

⁹⁸⁵ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1159.

⁹⁸⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1537; Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī mentions that Qutayba communicated in Badghisi language with the *nizak* (Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī, *Futūḥ*, 7: 150). However, no other sources refer to that.

⁹⁸⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 7: 488.

28 by the Umayyad forces in 125/743 in Guzgan. His father Zayd was the famous ‘Alid leader who rebelled against the Umayyads in Kufa in 122/739.⁹⁸⁸ Arabic documents produced in eighth-century Rob reflect that some locals selected Arabic personal names. For example, ‘Abd Allāh b. Ṭarkhān,⁹⁸⁹ Khālid b. Sīkyān,⁹⁹⁰ Qutayba b. Khudewuy,⁹⁹¹ and al-Ḥasan b. Warāzān.⁹⁹² These men were all adults when they witnessed and sealed Arabic documents; therefore, their parents (or themselves) must have chosen these names earlier. The *barmak* of Balkh named his son Khālid, and the *Sāmān-khudā* who converted in the hand of Asad al-Qasrī named his son Asad.⁹⁹³ These are the examples mentioned in our sources, but adopting Arabic names that appealed to people could have been much more than these reports.⁹⁹⁴

Another interesting phenomenon is the use of Arabic titles as personal names. The evidence comes from a Bactrian document.⁹⁹⁵ It is produced in Kadagstan in 490 of the Bactrian calendar equal to 750 CE, that is to say, around the same time when the Abbasids took over Bactria. It mentions that Kamird-far had a son who was called Khamir (*χαμυρο*). Kamird-far was a priest and is known from an earlier Bactrian document.⁹⁹⁶ This is the only Bactrian document in which Khamir is mentioned as a personal name. Khamir is attested also in Sogdian, which Pavel Lurje argued is the equivalent of the Arabic *amīr*.⁹⁹⁷ It seems likely that Khamir is equally a Bactrian loanword from the Arabic *amīr*. Some Arab leaders named their children after their birthplace. For instance, Juday‘ b. ‘Alī, a leader from the tribe of Azd had the *nisba* al-Kirmānī because he was born in Kirman.⁹⁹⁸ Adopting Arabic personal names must have appealed to local people and could encourage them to interact with Arab Muslims further.

⁹⁸⁸ Madelung, W. “Yaḥyā b. Zayd,” *Encyclopedia of Islam, Second Edition*, available online, https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/yahya-b-zayd-SIM_7957 (accessed on 1 August 2022); Al-Dahabī, *Sīyar ‘alām al-nubalā’*, 5: 391.

⁹⁸⁹ Arabic document no. 29 in Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 152–53.

⁹⁹⁰ Arabic document no. 25 in Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 141.

⁹⁹¹ Arabic document no. 31 in Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 158.

⁹⁹² Arabic document no. 1 in Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 92.

⁹⁹³ Al-Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, 70.

⁹⁹⁴ Choosing Arabic personal names is also reported from Sogdiana. The Sogdian brothers who helped Mūsā b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Khāzim in Tirmidh had Arabic names. They also had some Arab Muslim clients associated with them. This means having clients (sing., *mawlā*) was not confined to Arabs. Ghūrak, the king of Samarkand, had a son named Yazīd. Ṭughshāda, the ruler of Bukhara, named his son after Qutayba b. Muslim, it was claimed because he owed his throne to Qutayba’s support.

⁹⁹⁵ Bactrian document no. X in Sims-Williams, *BDI*, 136–141.

⁹⁹⁶ See Bactrian document no. T in Sims-Williams, *BDI*, 98–103.

⁹⁹⁷ Pavel Lurje, “Khamir and Other Arabic Words in Sogdian Texts,” in *Islamisation De L’Asie Centrale*, ed. Étienne de la Vaissière, Chier 39 (Paris: Association Pour L’Avancement Des Études Iraniennes, *Studia Iranica*, 2008), 29–57.

⁹⁹⁸ Ibn A‘atham al-Kūfī, *Futūḥ*, 8: 309.

6.2.3 Influence of Arabic letter writing formulae on Bactrian

The third issue to discuss is that some local rulers and Arab authorities preferred to write letters in the addressees' language. This must have been done by the bilingual scribes who understood both languages and the writing system. For instance, an Arabic document (P. Kratchkovski) from Mount Mugh in modern Tajikistan provides details. Dewāshṭīch (d. 102/721), the ruler of Panjikent and then the king of Samarkand was an Umayyad ally. Before becoming the king of Samarkand, he issued letters in Arabic in 99–101/718–719 to al-Jarrāḥ al-Ḥakamī, the governor of Khurasan (d.111/730) asking the governor to do him a favour by returning the sons of Ṭarkhūn, the king of Samarkand who was killed in an internal plot. His Arabic letter indicating Dewāshṭīch had scribes at his disposal who were well-versed in current Arabic epistolary formularies. After he became the king of Samarkand, the Arabs preferred to write to him in Sogdian. In 102/721, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ṣubḥ, an advisor to Sa'īd b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, the governor of Khurasan issued a letter in Sogdian to Dewāshṭīch. Conversely, Sa'īd issued letters in Sogdian when addressed to the Zoroastrian chief priest of Samarkand. This means that Sa'īd and 'Abd al-Raḥmān had scribes who knew Sogdian. Apart from knowing languages, these bilinguals were familiar with different social and cultural traditions.⁹⁹⁹

Arabic formulae were adopted in the local letter-writing system. The evidence comes from Bactria and Sogdiana. The Sogdian letter (Mount Mugh Document 1. I) was issued by 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ṣubḥ to Dewāshṭīch, probably in 102/721, uses phrases for the opening and greetings that were not known in the Sogdian letter-writing system but that reflect Arabic epistolary expressions.¹⁰⁰⁰ A Bactrian letter produced in Kadagstan in 549 of the Bactrian calendar corresponding to 772 CE, shows Arabic influence on the Bactrian letter-writing system. It is a protection letter issued by the king of Kadagstan for Mir son of Bek, the resident of Rob region. Unlike all other Bactrian letters, this protection letter opens with the formula "In the Name of God" (πιδο ναμο ιεζιδασο).¹⁰⁰¹ This opening formula is the Bactrian equivalent for the Arabic *bismallah*. The document shows that Arabic penetrated as far as Kadagstan's local administration and influenced the Bactrian administrative letter-writing system. All these letters show bilinguals' importance and the interaction between Umayyad and local administrations. Speaking about the Umayyad administration, it is crucial to see how Arabic became an administrative language in Bactria.

⁹⁹⁹ Huseini, "Thinking in Arabic, Writing in Sogdian," 75–84.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Huseini, "Thinking in Arabic, Writing in Sogdian," 75–78.

¹⁰⁰¹ Bactrian document no. Y in Sims-Williams, *BDI*, 142–143.

6.2.4 Arabic as an administrative language in Bactria

The concrete evidence for Arabic being used as an administrative language in Bactria comes from the Arabic document produced between 147–158/764–774 in Rob region.¹⁰⁰² When these documents were issued, not the Umayyads but the Abbasid-controlled Bactria. They are mostly land tax (*kharāj*) receipts issued for the family of Mir b. Bek, whose name is known from some Bactrian documents.¹⁰⁰³ It is unclear when exactly Arabic began to be used as an administrative language in Bactria. However, issuing land tax receipts in Arabic for local Bactrians should have been the gradual outcome of the Umayyad's decision of using Arabic in the administration, known as Arabicisation of the administration (*ta'rib al-dawāwīn*).¹⁰⁰⁴ A brief overview of this policy helps to comprehend the relation between them.

Arabicisation of the administration began around 81–82/701 in Syria during the reign of caliph 'Abd al-Malik. He commissioned an Arab Muslim secretary named Sulaymān b. Sa'īd to translate the official registers into Arabic.¹⁰⁰⁵ The caliphal policy included his reformed coinage, in which mono-lingual silver dirhams were minted in Arabic script with Islamic legends.¹⁰⁰⁶ Then, around the same time during the governorship of al-Ḥajjāj in Iraq, this policy was followed in Kufa and Basra. In Iraq, the Umayyad administration had two registers. The first one was called *dīwān al-jund* related to the army and kept the records of the soldiers who received stipends. The records of this *dīwān* were in Arabic. The second one was called *dīwān al-kharāj* related to financial issues like taxes and tributes (*li wujūh al-amwāl*) and its records were in Middle Persian. Under al-Ḥajjāj's patronage, Ṣāliḥ b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān, an Iranian bilingual *mawlā* of Banū Tamīm, who was already working in the administration directed by a

¹⁰⁰² See Khan, *Arabic Documents from Early Islamic Khurasan*.

¹⁰⁰³ Bactrian documents no. X, Y in Sims-Williams, *BDI*, 136–141, 142–143.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Muḥammad al-Bu 'Alī and Sa'īd Khanāfira Mawaddat, "Junbish-i Ta'rib wa Naqsh-i Irāniyān dar ān," *Faṣlnāma-yi Tārīkh-i Naw* 17 (1395/2017): 111–132; Kyle Longworth, "Islamic Bureaucratic in Late Antiquity: Administration and Elites During the Umayyad Caliphate (ca. 661–750)" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2022), 96–147.

¹⁰⁰⁵ For further information on 'Abd al-Malik's reforms, see Robinson, *'Abd al-Malik*; In his PhD dissertation, Nicholas Kyle Longworth has explained Arabicisation of the *dīwān* in Syria and Iraq in full detail. Hence, repeating the same discussion is unnecessary (see Longworth, "Islamic Bureaucratic in Late Antiquity," 102–118).

¹⁰⁰⁶ There is a rich bibliography on 'Abd al-Malik's coinage. See for instance, Michael Bates, "The 'Arab-Byzantine' Bronze Coinage of Syria: An Innovation by 'Abd al-Malik," in *A Colloquium in Memory of George Carpenter Miles (1904–1975)* (New York, 1976), 16–27; Robinson, *'Abd al-Malik*, 71–75; Luke Treadwell, "Abd al-Malik's Coinage Reforms: the Role of the Damascus Mint," *Revue numismatique* 6, no. 165 (2009) 357–381; Jere L. Bacharach, "Signs of Sovereignty: The 'Shahāda,' Qur'anic Verses, and the Coinage of 'Abd al-Malik," *Muqarnas* 27 (2010): 1–30; Stefan Heidemann, "Numismatics," in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, Volume 1: *The Formation of Islamic World Sixth to Eleventh Century*, ed. Chase Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 648–663.

certain Iranian Zādān Farrūkh translated the Middle Persian registers into Arabic.¹⁰⁰⁷ Probably, Khurasan had similar *dīwān*, but the policy of turning the registers into Arabic was not immediately introduced to Khurasan. Unlike Syria and Iraq, Khurasan was a contested military frontier region, and imposing the central government's policies there was difficult.

Administration in the Umayyad province of Khurasan supervised by the governor of Khurasan. As pointed out in the previous chapter (5.1.2), Khurasan was a frontier region and treated as a *separate* province in times of peace when the caliph directly appointed its governor, and as a *dependent* province being part of Iraq in times of political unrest and the governor of Iraq appointed the governor of Khurasan. The governor of Khurasan resided in Marw and had the authority to appoint the commanders of the garrisons, head of the offices related to war (*al-ḥarb*), tributes (*al-kharāj*),¹⁰⁰⁸ prayers (*al-ṣalāt*),¹⁰⁰⁹ and jurisprudence (*al-qaḍā*).¹⁰¹⁰ He could also appoint the chief of the police (*al-shurṭa*) and the bodyguards (*al-ḥaras*).¹⁰¹¹ Most of these officers were from the Arabian tribal elites of Khurasan. However, when Qutayba was appointed in Khurasan he arrested, tortured, or removed all earlier key administrators appointed by the Muhallabids and replaced them by his men. This harsh attitude became common, as any governor who came to Khurasan did the same to his predecessor's appointees.¹⁰¹² It created unrest among Arabian tribal leaders of Khurasan (*a'yān al-balad*). Therefore, as al-Ṭabarī recorded, these elites decided to keep some official positions, including financial office, in their hands and even warned the governor about it.¹⁰¹³ They introduced their administrators called *'umāl al-'uzr* to the governor, who confirmed their appointment without any objections. They also imposed their control over provincial incomes and refused to send the caliphal share arguing that Khurasan is the frontier region and needs money to safeguard it against the enemies.¹⁰¹⁴ All this time, the local Iranian administrators, including bilingual *mawālī* like Sulaymān b. Abī al-Surī managed most of the administration, particularly financial issues.¹⁰¹⁵

¹⁰⁰⁷ Abī 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. 'Abdūs al-Jahshiyārī, *Kitāb al-wuzarā' wa al-kuttāb*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Siqqā, Ibrāhīm al-'Abyārī and 'Abd al-Ḥafīz Shibli (Cairo: Maṭba'a Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa Aulāduhu, 1357/1938), 38; Longworth, "Islamic Bureaucratic in Late Antiquity," 27–36.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, 7: 178, and see 9: 1307.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, 9: 1307.

¹⁰¹⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, 9: 1485, and 9: 1505.

¹⁰¹¹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, 9: 1609.

¹⁰¹² Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, 8: 1253, 1412.

¹⁰¹³ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, 9: 1460, 1481.

¹⁰¹⁴ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, 9: 1461–77, 1481.

¹⁰¹⁵ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, 9: 1253, 1421; Sulaymān has worked in different capacities in Sogdiana and Bactria. His name is mentioned in the Arabic letter from Mount Mugh.

Hence, the situation did not provide an opportunity to expand the Arabicisation of the *dīwān* in Khurasan. It had to wait for some more time.

The conditions for Arabicisation of the administration in Khurasan became appropriate after the Umayyads subdued al-Ḥārith rebellion and defeated the Türgesh Turks. As said in the previous section (6.2.3), in 118/736, Asad al-Qasrī made Balkh his capital and transferred the official registers from Marw to Balkh. However, once the war with the Türgesh ended and the Umayyad reestablished their control over the region, Naṣr b. Sayyār shifted the capital back to Marw and returned the official registers there. The political stability allowed Naṣr to undertake his fiscal reforms in 121/738 in Marw. After his reforms, the Muslim landowners were asked to pay the *‘ushr*, one-tenth of their yield, and those who converted to Islam were exempted from paying the *jizya* but paid their land tax. Non-Muslim chiefs were asked to pay the annual tributes based on their peace treaties.¹⁰¹⁶ It is plausible that implementing the reforms and arranging all relevant records should have taken some years. Around the same time in 124/741, Yūsuf b. ‘Umar al-Thaqafī (d. 126/744), the governor of Iraq, ordered Naṣr b. Sayyār to convert the official registers into Arabic. A certain Khurasani bilingual named Ishāq b. Ṭulayq completed the task. Whether there was a relation between Naṣr’s reforms and Yūsuf’s order is not understood. However, despite this change, most secretaries were Iranians and continued their job.¹⁰¹⁷ That implies these administrators were bilingual and could remain in their jobs using Arabic they already knew.

The policy of Arabicisation of the *dīwān* in Marw in 124/741 expanded to Bactria by the end of the Umayyad period. This suggestion can be supported by a land sale contract produced in Rob in 525 of the Bactrian calendar, equal to 747 CE. It is six years after the Arabicisation of the *dīwān* in Marw. According to this document, the Arab Muslims imposed land tax and poll tax on the local households and a family had to sell their land to pay their taxes. The document mentions that the land properly belongs to the buyers and no one can claim its ownership by showing any other contracts. It then has a specific formula saying that no one, not the people of Rob, Bamiyan, or those among the Turks and Arabs can claim it (*ναγο ρωβιγο οδο ναγο βαμοιανιγο ναγο τορκο ναγο ταζιγο*). This formula does not refer to any individuals identified as a person from Rob, Bamiyan, Turk or Arab. Instead, it shows that there were local, Turkic, and Arab administrations around that could issue legal documents. Moreover, referring to Arabs here means that the Umayyad administration was expanded to

¹⁰¹⁶ Athamina, “Taxation reforms,” 279–281.

¹⁰¹⁷ Al-Jahshiyārī, *Kitāb al-wuzarā’*, 67.

Rob in 747. They could levy taxes on locals and also issue documents.¹⁰¹⁸ Certainly, they would issue documents in Arabic. This idea becomes more real because two decades later, all land tax receipts issued for the Mir family who lived in Rob are in Arabic. Hence, four decades after the Arabicisation of the *dīwān* in Iraq, this policy was enforced in Marw and then by the end of the Umayyad period, it expanded to Bactria. How long Arabic continued as an administrative language in Bactria is unknown. Whatever it may have been, Arabic was used as an administrative language in the region and contributed to the rise of New Persian in Khurasan, which gradually replaced Bactrian. This will be explained next.

6.2.5 The rise and spread of New Persian

One of the most significant impacts of the Arab Muslim conquests was linguistic, in that New Persian came to being. The New Persian generally considered to refer to the language as it is written in Arabic script and contains a large portion of Arabic vocabulary. New Persian became the *lingua franca* in the eastern Iranian regions and gradually replaced local languages like Bactrian and Sogdian. Scholars have intensively discussed the origin of the New Persian language.¹⁰¹⁹ There is an agreement that literary New Persian written in Arabic script developed in post-conquest Khurasan under the patronage of local Iranian dynasties such as the Samanids. Involvement in this debate is beyond the scope of this thesis. What is relevant

¹⁰¹⁸ Bactrian document no. W in Sims-Williams, *BDI*, 126–135.

¹⁰¹⁹ There is a rich bibliography on this subject. An insightful discussion in Persian language can be found in Muḥammad Taqī Bahār, *Sabk Shināsī yā Tārīkh-i Taṭawwur-i Nathr-i Fārsī*, 3rd ed. (Tehran: Kitābhā-yi Parastū, 1349/1970), 1: 101–208; Gilbert Lazard has intensively studied this topic since 1960s and published several works. See three of his main works, “The Rise of the New Persian Language,” in *The Cambridge History of Iran IV. The Period from the Arab Invasion to the Saljuqs*, ed. Richard N. Fry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 595–632, *La Formation de la Langue Persane* (Paris: Universite de la Sorbonne-Nouvelle Paris III, Institut d’etudesi, 1995), and “Du pehlevi au persan: diachronie ou diatopie?” in *Persian Origins: Early Judaeo-Persian and the Emergence of New Persian: collected papers of the Symposium, Göttingen 1999*, ed. Ludwig Paul (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003), 95–102. Discussion on the origin and expansion of New Persian continued by other scholars based on new documentary and inscriptional evidence. See, for instance, Ludwig Paul, “Early Judaeo-Persian in a Historical Perspective: The Case of the Prepositions *be*, *u*, *pa(d)* and the Suffix *rā*,” in *Persian Origins – Early Judaeo-Persian and the Emergence of New Persian. Collected Papers of the Symposium, Göttingen 1999*, ed. Ludwig Paul (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003), 177–194. For a quick review, see Ludwig Paul, “Persian Language i. Early New Persian,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, <https://iranicaonline.org/articles/persian-language-1-early-new-persian> (accessed on 29 August 2022); Carlo G. Cereti, “From Middle to New Persian: Written Materials from Northern Iran and Khorasan,” *Vicino Oriente XXIII* (2019): 95–107; Mauro Maggi and Paola Orsatti, ed., *Persian Language in History* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2011); John Perry, “The Origin and Development of Literary Persian,” in *A History of Persian Literature, Vol. I: General Introduction to Persian Literature*, ed. J. T. P. de Bruijn (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 43–70; Mauro Maggi and Paola Orsatti, “From Old to New Persian,” in *Oxford Handbook of Persian Linguistics*, ed. Anousha Sedighi and Pouneh Shabani-Jadidi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 7–51; Khodadad Rezakhani, “Navigating Persian: The Travels and Tribulations of Middle Iranian Languages,” in *Navigating Languages in the Early Islamic World*, ed. Antione Borrut, Manuela Caballos and Alison Vacca (Turnhout: Brepols, 2023, forthcoming).

to our discussion is that our sources show that the New Persian language was spoken in western Bactria in the Umayyad period. Equally important is that the earliest evidence of New Persian written in Hebrew script (known as Judeo-Persian) was also found in early Abbasid Khurasan. Before discussing them, some remarks about the New Persian language can help us understand this development better.

In the late Sasanian period, different languages were spoken in the empire. Though the Sasanians used Middle Persian for their coins and inscriptions, they did not impose one single language all over the empire. The Sasanian empire was a multilingual empire. From the narratives of early Abbasid scholars like Ibn al-Muqaffa' (d. 757), we realise that two varieties of the Middle Persian language were common in late Sasanian Iran. The first was called *pārsī*, which referred to Persian proper spoken in southern Iran and “formed the basis of the written religious and literary language”.¹⁰²⁰ The second one was *darī*, a more innovative and prestigious variety spoken in the capital of the Sasanian empire and the northeastern regions.¹⁰²¹ Inscriptions from Sasanian Iran support this idea. Carlo Cereti has argued that the Middle Persian inscriptions show different dialectal variants. The Middle Persian dialect of the southern regions reflected in the inscriptions was *pārsī*. The one used in the northern and northeastern regions like Khurasan was *darī*. Later, people from the north and eastern regions -where *darī* was the common dialect- gathered at the Sasanian court and spoke their dialect. The *darī* variant soon became dominant in the East and developed into classic Persian. In sum, *pārsī* and *darī* were variants of the same language, Persian, a southwestern Iranian language that later evolved into classic Persian.¹⁰²²

The Arab Muslim conquests accelerated the expansion of the *darī* variant of Persian. As John Perry has argued, the Arab Muslim conquests led to “full Persianisation” of the eastern Iranian regions. Many Persian-speaking people who lived in Iraq and around the Sasanian capital and northern parts of Sasanian Iran joined the conquerors and moved to Khurasan with them. Many of them were *darī* speakers and served the new empire by joining the military and administration, and settled in conquered regions like Bactria and Sogdiana. Many people from the southern regions, like Khuzistan and Arab Muslims who settled in Khurasan, learned Persian.¹⁰²³ The mixture of people and intermarriage between Persians and Arabs created a

¹⁰²⁰ Mauro and Orsatti, “From Old to New Persian,” 26.

¹⁰²¹ Mauro and Orsatti, “From Old to New Persian,” 26.

¹⁰²² Cereti, “From Middle to New Persian,” 96, 103.

¹⁰²³ Perry, “The Origin and Development of Literary Persian,” 52–53; Also, see Mauro and Orsatti, “From Old to New Persian,” 31.

space for New Persian to rise and adopt different elements from Arabic, eventually emerging as a language written predominantly in the Arabic script. It gradually dominated the region by replacing other local languages like Bactrian. While the *darī* dialect of Middle Persian was expanding, its *pārsī* dialect continued for Zoroastrian religious texts in the southern regions, as well as administration, coinage, and some monumental buildings in areas such as Tabaristan.¹⁰²⁴

The Arabic narratives related to the conquests show that Persian was spoken in western Bactrian, particularly Balkh, where the Arab Muslims settled among local people. At least two relevant reports from al-Madā'inī are preserved in al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rikh*. Both are from the Umayyad period. The first report is related to the rebellion of al-Ḥārith in 116/734. According to that account, after al-Ḥārith's defeat in Marw, most of his local supporters deserted him. Still, an Arab Muslim supporter of al-Ḥārith wished to fight the Umayyad forces and when he asked for a combatant, a man from Talaqan (in western Bactria) responded. Being very surprised by seeing not an Arab but a Talaqani man, he cursed him in Persian, proclaiming: "O donkey phallus" (spelt in Arabic as *ay kir-i khar*).¹⁰²⁵ This report does not identify these men. Whether the Talaqani man was a native of Talaqan or was settled there after the Arab conquests is unknown. In any case, the report shows that the Arab supporters of al-Ḥārith knew Persian and people who spoke this language were present in western Bactria.

The second report is related to the year 119/737. On the authority of al-Madā'inī, al-Ṭabarī mentions that the Türgesh forces defeated Asad in 119/737 in Khuttal. The Turks killed and captured many Arab Muslim soldiers and looted Asad's logistics train. Asad returned to Balkh and stayed outside for a while and then entered the city (*wa maḍā Asad Balkh fa'askara fī murjihā...wa dakhala al-madīna*) where people mocked him in Persian (*qīla lahū bi-l-fārsīyya*): "[he] returned from Khatlan [Khuttal], may damage come on him, he returned a fugitive, he returned barren and lamenting" (*az Khatlān āmadiya, bar ū tabāh āmadiya, ābāra bāz āmadiya, khushk u nizār āmadiya*).¹⁰²⁶ This report shows that Persian-speaking people lived in Balkh during this period and composed poems in Persian

Al-Ṭabarī preserved another report about the same event that can expand our view about Persian spoken in the region. He refers to Abū 'Ubayda, who believed that Asad's

¹⁰²⁴ Cereti, "From Middle to New Persian," 97. Examples are Middle Persian documents from Tabaristan, Arab-Sasanian coins minted in the early Abbasid period, and the tomb tower at Lajim.

¹⁰²⁵ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1572.

¹⁰²⁶ This poem is mentioned three times in al-Ṭabarī (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1602–03).

campaign in Khuttal happened in 108/726. According to Abū ‘Ubayda, Asad fought the Turks but the Turks defeated him (*hazamu Asad*). He returned vanquished from Khuttal, and the people of Khurasan (*ahl Khurāsān*) mocked him in Persian. He gives a shortened version of the same poem mentioned by al-Ṭabarī. In another place, Abū ‘Ubayda adds that children mocked Asad. However, al-Ṭabarī indirectly rejects Abū ‘Ubayda’s report by saying that al-Madā’inī clarifies that the *qaghān* met Asad but did not fight him in 108/726.¹⁰²⁷ From al-Madā’inī’s detail of Asad’s campaign in Khuttal and the fact that Asad returned to Balkh to prepare to fight the Turks and al-Ḥārith, we can infer that Abū ‘Ubayda mixed the events. Nevertheless, his report shows that Persian was spoken in Khurasan. A report by al-Dināwarī reflects that some Arab Muslim leaders like Juday‘ b. ‘Alī al-Kirmānī communicated in Persian with local people in Marw.¹⁰²⁸ All these narratives echo the fact that Persian was already spoken in Marw, Talaqan, and Balkh, which were part of Umayyad Khurasan. However, they do not tell us if New Persian was a written language at this time.

When and where New Persian began to be written in Arabic script is unknown. The earliest evidence for the emergence of New Persian dates to the eighth century.¹⁰²⁹ Early New Persian was written in various scripts, including Hebrew. There are shreds of evidence showing that the Hebrew script was used for writing New Persian in early Islamic Khurasan. This is attested from the Judeo-Persian inscriptions of Tang-i Azao in modern-day western Afghanistan dated 753 CE,¹⁰³⁰ and some letters from Dandan-Uiliq near Khotan exchanged between Jewish families. The letters were produced in the late eighth century.¹⁰³¹ Using Hebrew for writing New Persian continued up to the Mongol period, as testified by the Judeo-Persian documents from Bamiyan.¹⁰³² However, all Judeo-Persian inscriptions and documents from Khurasan and Khotan are related to Jewish families. That means using Hebrew script for New Persian was likely limited to the Jewish community (at least in these cases). Instead, the

¹⁰²⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 9: 1492–94. It is worth noting that al-Ṭabarī’s detail on this topic is nine pages in print, while Abū ‘Ubayda’s report is very short and less than a page.

¹⁰²⁸ Al-Dināwarī, *Kitāb al-akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, 335.

¹⁰²⁹ Cereti, “From Middle to New Persian,” 97.

¹⁰³⁰ W. Henning, “The Inscriptions of Tang-I Azao,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 20, no. 1 (1957): 335–342; They are short graffities and resembles the graffities in the Hijaz, see Abdullah Alhatlani, “Descendants and Ancestors: A Study of Arabic Inscriptions from the Arabian Peninsula (1st–4th c. AH/7th–10th c. CE)” (PhD diss., Leiden University, 2021).

¹⁰³¹ Different scholars translated and discussed these Judeo-Persian documents. See, for instance, D. S. Margoliuth, “An Early Judeo-Persian Document from Khotan in the Stien Collection with other early Persian Documents,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (1903): 735–761; Bo Utas, “Jewish-Persian Fragment from Dandān-Uiliq,” *Orientalia Suecana* 17 (1968): 123–136; Zhan Zhang, “Judeo-Persian Document from Khotan,” *Journal of Dunhuang and Turfan Studies* XI (2008): 71–99.

¹⁰³² See Haim, “What is the ‘Afghan Genizah’?”; Also, see Ofir Haim, “Landlords and Tenants Under the Ghaznavids: The Hinterland of Eleventh-Century Bamiyan,” *Atiqot* 112 (2024): 201–224.

Arabic alphabet became the main script for writing New Persian, which has since continued to the present. With time, New Persian written in the Arabic script and containing many Arabic words, became the second most important language in the Islamic world.

While Arabic and New Persian were utilised in the region, the Bactrian language continued as the primary administrative language in the areas controlled by Bactrian local rulers. Bactrian documents from Guzgan, Rob, and Kadagstan produced during the Umayyad period confirm its continuation. The last preserved Bactrian document was written in Kadagstan in 772, showing that local rulers of this area had their administration in place during the early Abbasid period.¹⁰³³ It is unknown how long Bactrian continued, but, likely, the rise of New Persian and its popularity did not leave room for Bactrian to continue. So far, no bilingual document in Arabic and Bactrian has ever been found. That suggests two separate linguistic worlds existed: the Arab Muslims used Arabic in their controlled areas, and the local Bactrian rulers used Bactrian in their spheres of influences. Travelling across these monolingual chanceries, however, would have been bilingual individuals, for as was mentioned above, the two languages also influenced each other wherever they interacted.¹⁰³⁴ The conquests and settlements allowed not only the infiltration of the Arabic script, but also other aspects of the expansion of the Arabic language, culture, and administration to spread to Bactria. The settlement also provided space for the spread of Islamic ideology. The following part will discuss that.

6.3. Spread of Islamic institutions and infrastructures in Bactria

It is reasonable to argue that the Arab Muslims introduced their Islamic institutions and infrastructures to Bactria during the Umayyad period. The Arab Muslims were not empty bowls to be filled by the local traditions, but they had their form of governance, cultural traditions and belief system. After founding the garrisons filled by Arab Muslim soldiers, they established different offices and enforced a series of regulations to manage them. Once they moved from the garrisons into the cities, they did not abandon their system of governance but expanded it to the cities. They commissioned the construction of physical infrastructures. They built an office of the governor (*dār al-imāra*), its relevant offices, and a mosque (*masjid*). Equally, they expanded their institutions like the judiciary system (*al-qaḍā*) into the cities. Though what the

¹⁰³³ Bactrian document no. Y in Sims-Williams, *BDI*, 142–43.

¹⁰³⁴ Examples are the Bactrian letter Y, the Arabic document (P. Kratchkovski), and the Sogdian document (I. I) discussed in this part.

governor and his administrators have done may not necessarily have been based on Islamic regulations, their presence reflected the Islamic rule in the region. Likewise, their community now living within the cities, their mosques and institutions were physical signs of the existence of Islam.

The Arab Muslim presence was significant in expanding Islamic ideology in Bactria. Our sources show that the Arab Muslims constructed mosques and government offices in the areas they controlled. However, they do not provide many details about the exact locations of the offices and how they relate to local people. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to infer that local people saw the mosques, witnessed Arab Muslim traditions, visited their offices, and interacted with them. This part will focus on building mosques, individuals' conversion, expansion of Islamic regulations, and extension of the Arab Muslim fiscal system that are reflected in our sources.

6.3.1 Building mosques in Bactria

The construction of mosques left many traces in our written sources and archaeological records. The mosque is the beating heart of the Islamic community. It is the most visible sign of Muslim presence in a region. Special attention was paid to its location, construction plan and materials that made them last longer than regular buildings.¹⁰³⁵ The construction of a mosque had an evident and public Islamicising impact on the diverse religious landscape of Bactria, where Buddhist stupas and viharas, image shrines of the Iranian deities and other religious buildings existed. A mosque was a space for multiple functions. It was not only the space where religious rituals were performed but also an obvious political arena. Arab Muslim authorities addressed their dependents with public speeches on special occasions such as the arrival of a new governor, at the outset of a military campaign or during religious festivals and other festivities.¹⁰³⁶ The Arab Muslims and local converts could meet in a mosque for congregational prayers. Participating in congregational rituals would create social and religious cohesion among co-religious followers. Hence, the mosque was both a political platform and a landmark representing the existence of a Muslim community. However, when and where were the earliest mosques built in Bactria?

¹⁰³⁵ For a detailed discussion on the designs and functions of mosques in the Islamic world, see Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture: Form, Function and Meaning* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994).

¹⁰³⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta' rīkh*, 9: 1458; See Sijpesteijn, "Closing Ranks," 469–499.

Information about building mosques in Bactria is reflected in Arabic reports related to the conquests, local histories, and Muslim geographical reports. They show that the earliest mosques were built within the garrisons where the Arab Muslims stayed. They needed a mosque to perform their religious rituals, particularly congregational prayers. Then, with the move of Arab Muslims to the cities, mosques arose there as well. For instance, al-Balkhī mentions that Qutayba b. Muslim built a mosque in Baruqan in 89/710 for the Arab Muslims. Later, in 108/726, Asad al-Qasrī moved the Arab Muslim population from Baruqan to the city of Balkh and commissioned a mosque for them within it.¹⁰³⁷ Al-Balkhī's source is unknown, but his narrative suggests that the earliest mosque was built in the garrison and then in the city. Al-Balkhī's narrative about the mosque in Baruqan is not mentioned in other Arabic chronicles. However, it does not mean the Arab Muslims did not build a mosque in the garrison for their daily prayers.

Al-Balkhī's report about Asad's building a mosque in the city can be attested by al-Ṭabarī's narratives relating to 116–118/734–736. According to al-Ṭabarī, Asad prepared to fight the Türgesh and al-Ḥārith b. Surayj. To create a strong force, he called on the people of Balkh, and many people, including villagers who may not have been Muslims responded to his call. Arab Muslims and local people gathered in a mosque where Asad prayed and stepped on the *minbar* to deliver his speech. The *minbar* is often near the mosque's prayer niche (*mihṛāb*). Subsequently, he asked people to prostrate and sacrifice animals. Then, he mounted to fight the enemies. This report indicates that the mosque in Balkh had a big space like a courtyard for people and a *minbar* for speech.¹⁰³⁸ However, its exact location is not mentioned.¹⁰³⁹

Asad was not the only one who commissioned the construction of a mosque. The anti-Umayyad Arab Muslim rebel al-Ḥārith, who was famous for his emphasis on establishing the government based on the Qur'an (*al-kitāb*) and the Prophet's tradition (*al-sunna*), built (*banāhu*) a mosque in the Tabushkan fortress in Tukharistan. The fortress was given to al-Ḥārith by the *yabghu* of Tukharistan. When he gifted that to al-Ḥārith is unknown. In any case, al-Ḥārith settled some of his Arab and non-Arab supporters in that fortress.¹⁰⁴⁰ In 171/788, as

¹⁰³⁷ Al-Balkhī, *Faḍā'il-i Balkh*, 30–31.

¹⁰³⁸ Al-Ṭabarī does not use the word *masjid* but *al-minbar*. However, *al-minbar* was located within a mosque and often made of wood, breaks or stones. In any case, Asad's resettlement of Arab Muslims within the city should have brought the idea *masjid* and its *al-minbar* from the garrison of Baruqan to the city of Balkh (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1603).

¹⁰³⁹ Based on literary sources, Azad and Kennedy concluded that the mosque was located within Bala Hisar in Balkh. However, only archaeological excavations can show where the mosque was located (Azad and Kennedy, "The Coming of Islam to Balkh," 293).

¹⁰⁴⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1591.

al-Balkhī mentions, Ja‘far b. Muḥammad b. al-Ash‘ath (d. 173/791), the Abbasid governor of Khurasan, constructed a mosque in Kunduz.¹⁰⁴¹ If Kunduz in this report refers to modern Kunduz, then it means there was a Muslim population in eastern Bactria in the late eighth century. However, Kunduz also means “old fortress” in Persian (*kuhan diz*), and if al-Balkhī used Kunduz for the old fortress, then the mosque should have been constructed in the old city of Balkh.

With the increase of the Muslim population, they required a grand mosque. Again, it is al-Balkhī, who knew his city well, mentions that the grand mosque (*masjid-i jāmi‘*) of Balkh was built in 125/743. That is seven years after Asad built his mosque. No specific person is identified as commissioner but it is said that Mutawakkil b. Ḥamrān, Muqātil b. Hayyān, and Muqātil b. Sulaymān suggested the building. All these characters lived in the second/eighth century and were famous for their religious scholarship.¹⁰⁴² Al-Balkhī is the only source that recorded the narrative about this mosque. Whether these scholars were behind building the mosque or not, al-Balkhī’s connecting the grand mosque of Balkh with some of the earliest and the most famous Muslim scholars in Khurasan could have been aimed at attaining more prestige for his city. Al-Balkhī does not speak about the exact location of the grand mosque.

Arabic and Persian reports from the fourth/tenth-century describe more mosques being built in Bactria in the third/ninth century and later. Building new mosques suggests an increase in Muslim populations in the region. According to al-Balkhī, Dāwūd b. al-‘Abbās (in office from 233–257/848–871), the governor of Balkh, contributed to the congregational mosque (*masjid-i ādīna*) in 255/869. Then, his wife (*khātūn*) spent more money on expanding the mosque further.¹⁰⁴³ However, the exact location of the mosque is not mentioned.¹⁰⁴⁴ Al-Istakhri and Ibn Ḥawqal describe the grand mosque of Balkh they saw when they visited the city. They

¹⁰⁴¹ Al-Balkhī, *Faḍā‘il-i Balkh*, 31.

¹⁰⁴² Al-Balkhī, *Faḍā‘il-i Balkh*, 30–31.

¹⁰⁴³ Al-Balkhī, *Faḍā‘il-i Balkh*, 35–36.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Dāwūd is also known for spending twenty years constructing the Naw Shad. It was located outside of the city of Balkh. Whether it was a palace or a religious monument is not known. In any case, the Naw Shad was an important building with rich decorations that attracted the attention of the Saffarid ruler. Ibn al-Athīr and Gardīzī’s reports show that Ya‘qūb b. Layth (r. 247–265/861–879), the founder of the Saffarid dynasty in Sistan, demolished it in 257/871 (Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-kāmil fī al-ta‘rīkh*, 6: 232; Gardīzī, *Zayn al-akhbār*, 306–307). Even after its demolition, the decoration of the Naw Shad was still visible because they were mentioned in many fourth/tenth-century Persian poems (Muḥammad Qazvīnī, “Gughrāfiyā-yi Tārīkhī: Naw Shad kujā būda ast?” *Yādgār* 9/10 (1327/1948): 8–30). Ya‘qūb is the first post-conquest Persian ruler who is known for his iconoclastic acts in Buddhist shrines in Kabul and for sending Buddhist statues to the caliph in Baghdad (Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-kāmil fī al-ta‘rīkh*, 6: 232); For discussion on early Islamic iconoclasm in Kabul and Bamiyan, see Finbarr Barry Flood, “Between cult and culture: Bamiyan, Islamic iconoclasm, and the museum,” *The Art Bulletin*, 84, no.4 (2012): 641–659; Said Reza Huseini, “Destruction of Bamiyan Buddha: Taliban Iconoclasm and Hazara Response,” *Himalayan and Central Asian Studies* 16, no. 2 (2012): 15–50).

both mention that the grand mosque was located within the city, and the markets were around it.¹⁰⁴⁵ Furthermore, Ibn Ḥawqal mentions that the mosque was in an ideal situation and filled by local people.¹⁰⁴⁶ It is not sure whether this mosque was the same as the one commissioned by Dāwūd and expanded by his wife.

Tirmidh was the second Bactrian city with a grand mosque, but it is not reported when precisely it was constructed. Al-Istakhrī and Ibn Ḥawqal mention the presence of a mosque in Tirmidh. They say that the mosque was located in the city (*al-madīna*), and the praying place (*al-muṣallā*) was within the defensive wall (*al-sūr*).¹⁰⁴⁷ Archaeological excavations in Tirmidh unearthed the remains of a small mosque known as Chor Sutun that may have been constructed in the early Islamic period. This mosque had round columns and was covered by domes.¹⁰⁴⁸ A small mosque with a similar layout was found within the citadel of Hulbuk in Khuttal that is said to have been built in the ninth-tenth century.¹⁰⁴⁹ Ibn Ḥawqal mentions that the city of Faryab had a grand mosque. He noticed the mosque had no minaret, while the mosque in the neighbouring “Jewish” city (*al-yahūdīyya*) in Guzgan had two.¹⁰⁵⁰ This means there were no fixed roles about the presence of the minaret in the mosque. Over time, the Muslim community increased and when al-Balkhī wrote his book in the seventh/thirteen-century, he mentioned that there were 1,848 mosques in the entire region of Bactria. Though this number is not verified, it shows that mosques were abundant in the region.¹⁰⁵¹

The above-mentioned reports show that the idea of building mosques spread to the city from the garrison. It was built for the Arab Muslim soldiers who stayed in the garrison and then in the cities after the garrisons’ populations moved to the cities. However, the exact location of these mosques is unknown. So far, no systematic archaeological excavation has been conducted within the old city of Balkh or other places in southern parts of the Amu Darya to search for early Islamic remains. Thus, the planning and structure of the mosques mentioned

¹⁰⁴⁵ Al-Istakhrī, *Al-masālik wa al-mamālik*, 155.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb Ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 373.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Al-Istakhrī, *Al-masālik wa al-mamālik*, 167; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb Ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 394.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Thérèse Bittar, “La mosquée de Tchour Soutoun à Termez. Sa place dans l’architecture islamique,” in *La Bactriane au carrefour des routes et des civilisations d’Asie centrale*, ed. Pierrre Leriche, Chakir Pidaev, Mathilde Gelin, and Kazim Abdoullaev (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2001), 385–397.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Pierre Siméon, “Hulbuk: Architecture and Material Culture of the Capital of the Banijurids in Central Asia (Ninth-Eleventh Centuries),” *Muqarnas* 29 (2012): 385–421; For excavations at Hulbuk, see Pierre Siméon, *Étude du matériel de Hulbuk (Mā wārā’ al-nahr-Khuttal) de la conquête islamique jusqu’au milieu du XIe siècle (90/712–441/1050). Contribution à l’étude de la céramique islamique d’Asie centrale* (Oxford: British Archaeological Report, 2009).

¹⁰⁵⁰ Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb Ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 370.

¹⁰⁵¹ Al-Balkhī, *Faḍā’il-i Balkh*, 37.

in those narratives are unknown. Only one mosque survived in its original shape in Balkh, which requires particular attention.

This mosque is known as Masjid-i Haji Piyāda (trekking pilgrim) among locals of Balkh. It is located 3.5 km away from the city of Balkh. It is also known as Nuh Gunbad (nine domes) because it originally had nine domes that all collapsed over time. It is likely that the mosque was first built in the early second/eighth century and then restored in the late eighth century. Its chronology, suggested commissioner, and location make it especially important for discussing the spread of Islamic infrastructure in post-conquest Bactria. However, before discussing these issues, we need a description of the mosque in its present condition.

A detailed observation shows that the mosque is about 20 x 20 m in dimension and consists of an older and a newer part. The old part is a square structure built with ramped soil (*pakhsa*) reinforced by mud bricks. It had a small round niche (*mihrāb*). Probably, the whole building was covered by a wooden roof. Wooden pillars carried the roof. There are no remains of any decorations in the old part. The new part is built within the old part. It consists of massive brick pillars and arches covered with a thick layer of decorated stuccos. The pillars were built to hold nine domes that replaced the wooden pillars and the roof.¹⁰⁵² A new decorated *mihrāb* was also added. The investigation conducted by Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan (DAFA) confirms this observation. They found out that the mosque was constructed in three different phases. First, a simple building was made with compacted soil, and then the decorated pillars, arches, domes and a decorated *mihrāb* were added. Subsequently, an external *mihrāb* was made on the main façade of the building.¹⁰⁵³ The external *mihrāb* could have been used in the summertime as it is common nowadays in Balkh.¹⁰⁵⁴ The pair of pillars standing against the old wall recall the Sasanian palace architecture at Ctesiphon. The pillars, arches, and walls have rich plaster decorations. Each arch is decorated by two large lotus flowers made of stucco. The remains of blue and red pigments are visible in the decoration. The interior of the mosque had been richly decorated

¹⁰⁵² The late Chahryar Adle shared this idea with me in 2007 when he showed me his excavations in the mosque. There are three mosques with similar planning in the region: Chor Sutun in Tirmidh, Digaron in Bukhara, and Hulbuk in Khuttal. All these mosques had nine domes and rich stucco decorations. Adle informed me that this type of planning developed in the region.

¹⁰⁵³ See the complete report in Philippe Marquis, Julio Bendezu Sarmiento, Thomas Lorain and Nader Rassuli, "Haji Piada/Noh Gonbad: Works Carried out by the French Archaeological Delegation," in *The Nine Domes of the Universe: The Ancient Noh Gonbad Mosque, the Study and Conservation of an Early Islamic Monument at Balkh* (Kabul/New York/Lurano/Bergamo: Aga Khan Trust for Culture/Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan (DAFA)/World Monuments Fund/Associazione Giovanni Secco Suardo/Bolis Edizioni, 2016), 49–59.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Many of the mosques in Balkh have two *mihrāb* and the second one is used in the summertime.

and painted. Interestingly, the mosque had no Qur'anic verses in its decorations (Figures 23–26).

Different chronologies are suggested for this mosque.¹⁰⁵⁵ Lisa Golombek argued that this mosque was an early Abbasid structure and, thus, the extension of the Samara style.¹⁰⁵⁶ Pierre Siméon suggested that the mosque may have been constructed in the ninth/tenth century. His argument is based on a stylistic comparison between the mosque at Hulbuk in Khuttal with that of Nuh Gunbad in Balkh and Chor Sutun in Tirmidh. All these mosques had similar plans and were richly decorated.¹⁰⁵⁷ Chahryar Adle, who excavated the mosque's front part and made the C14 examination, proposed 178–179/794–795 to be the date of construction of the decorated brick pillars and the nine domes. He attributed the construction of the mosque to Faḍl b. Yaḥyā, the great-grandson of the *barmak* and the minister of the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 170–193/786–809).¹⁰⁵⁸ DAFA's investigation supports Adle's chronology. The investigation shows that the older part may have been made contemporary to the Arab Muslim settlement in Balkh, and the second part could have been constructed in the late eighth century.¹⁰⁵⁹ Likewise, Golombek now agrees with Adle's chronology saying that this monument is an Islamic monument constructed by Faḍl to show his access to the “most esteemed resources of the capital to build his reputation.”¹⁰⁶⁰

Adle's proposal for the mosque is highly significant. It shows there had been a mosque even earlier, albeit a simple one. Then, Faḍl, the great-grandson of the famous *barmak* of Balkh, who now was a Muslim minister serving a Muslim caliph, commissioned the second part to be built. Equally important, La Vaissière and Philippe Marqui showed that the mosque is located in the left corner within the enclosure of Naw Bahar. The stupas and the monasteries

¹⁰⁵⁵ Galina A. Pougatchenkova, “Les monuments peu connus de l'architecture medievale de l'Afghanistan,” *Afghanistan XXI*, no.1 (1968) 1–71; Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, “La plus ancienne mosuqe de Balkh,” *Arts Asiatiques XX* (1969): 3–20; Siméon, “Hulbuk,” 402; Philippe Marquis, Julio Bendezu Sarmiento, Thomas Lorain and Nader Rassuli, “Haji Piada/Noh Gonbad,” 54–57.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Lisa Golombek, “Abbasid Mosque at Balkh,” *Oriental Art* 15, no. 3 (1969): 173–189.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Siméon, “Hulbuk,” 402.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Chahryar Adle, “La mosquée Haji-piyadah/noh-gunbadan à Balkh (Afghanistan), un chef d'oeuvre de Fazl le Barmacide construit en 178–179/794–795 ?” *CRAI* (2011): 566–625.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Philippe Marquis, Julio Bendezu Sarmiento, Thomas Lorain and Nader Rassuli, “Haji Piada/Noh Gonbad,” 57–58.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Lisa Golombek, “Abbasid Mosque at Balkh,” *Oriental Art* 15, no. 3 (1969): 173–189. Lisa Golombek, “Between Balkh (Noh Gonbad) and Isfahan,” in *The Nine Domes of the Universe: The Ancient Noh Gonbad Mosque, the Study and Conservation of an Early Islamic Monument at Balkh* (Kabul/New York/Lurano/Bergamo: Aga Khan Trust for Culture/Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan (DAFA)/World Monuments Fund/Associazione Giovanni Secco Suardo/Bolis Edizioni, 2016), 44.

were located within an enclosure with the dimensions of 1,255 x 2,220 m.¹⁰⁶¹ The chronology and the location of the mosque highlight two crucial points. The first issue is that Faḍl wanted to make a statement that though his great-grandfather the *barmak* was the custodian of Naw Bahar and protected the Buddhist community, his great-grandson promoted the Muslim community by commissioning the mosque within the enclosure of the Buddhist complex. Al-Balkhī's narrative that in 178/794, Faḍl gathered the scholars of Balkh and said to them that his great-grandfather was famous for being the keeper of Naw Bahar and that bothered him because it was associated with non-Muslim faith (*qibla-yi mughān*) support this idea. According to al-Balkhī, he wished to achieve something that could distinguish him from his great-grandfather.¹⁰⁶² By constructing the new part of the mosque with such splendid decoration, Faḍl projected a change in the *barāmika*'s tradition: moving from Buddhism to Islam.¹⁰⁶³

The second point is that the mosque has been located within the Naw Bahar's enclosure, but no evidence shows that it replaced any earlier religious monument.¹⁰⁶⁴ Instead, it is built adjacent to the main religious landmark of the region: the Naw-Bahar. This supports the idea that the Arab Muslims did not destroy local religious monuments in Bactria, but it also indicates that Muslims worshipped next to Buddhists. If the old part of the mosque was indeed built in the early eighth century, it represents the coexistence of Muslims and Buddhists in Balkh. An issue was reported by the Korean Buddhist monk Hye Ch'o, who visited the region in 725–726. He mentions that while the Arabs controlled the region, the local people and their chiefs were Buddhist.¹⁰⁶⁵ It is not clear how long the Buddhist community of Balkh continued. The

¹⁰⁶¹ For discussion on the Naw Bahar's enclosure, see La Vaissière and Marquis, "Nouvelles recherches sur le paysage monumental de Bactres," 1155–1171; Also, see Philippe Marquis, Julio Bendezu Sarmiento, Thomas Lorain and Nader Rassuli, "Haji Piada/Noh Gonbad," 57.

¹⁰⁶² Al-Balkhī does not refer to the construction of the mosque but mentions that Faḍl commissioned a canal to be made to bring water to the city. Probably, making the canal was more important for him to mention and not a small mosque that was already in ruin in his time (al-Balkhī, *Faḍā'il-i Balkh*, 35–36); Ibn Baṭṭūṭa says that when he visited Balkh, the mosque was already ruined (Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Rahla Ibn Baṭṭūṭa Tuḥfat al-nuẓẓār fī gharā'ib al-amṣār wa 'ajā'ib al-asfār*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mun'im 'Uryān and Mustafā al-Qaṣṣās (Beirut: Dār al-Iḥyā' al-'Ulūm, 1407/1987), 387.

¹⁰⁶³ According to al-Narshakhī, Faḍl built mosques in Sogdiana as well. He was the first person who funded the making of large lustres for the mosques to be sued during the month of Ramadan (al-Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, 69).

¹⁰⁶⁴ Philippe Marquis, et al., "Haji Piada/Noh Gonbad: Works Carried out by the French Archaeological Delegation," in *The Nine Domes of the Universe*, 49–59; Julio Bendezu-Sarmiento, "Haji Piyada in Afghanistan: a new Stage of Research," in *Traces of Empires: Culture of Central Asia from Alexander the Great to the Timurids*, ed. Ruslan Muradov (Kabul, Bishkek: DAFA, 2018), 201–209.

¹⁰⁶⁵ *The Hye Ch'o Diary*, 52.

faith of the Naw Bahar complex is also not known. In any case, this great Buddhist complex was in ruin in the seventh/thirteenth century when al-Balkhī was writing his book.¹⁰⁶⁶

The Masjid-i Haji Piyāda built by Faḍl, the great-grandson of the *barmak*, shows that a profound social change happened in post-conquest Bactria. The progenies of the custodian of Naw Bahar promoted an Islamic infrastructure in Balkh. What would cause such a significant change? This brings us to the issue of individuals' conversion to Islam, a crucial element of Islamicisation that allowed the *barmak*'s descendants to reach such a high position in the Abbasid administration.

6.3.2 *Individuals' conversion to Islam*

Information on the conversion of local people to Islam in Umayyad Bactria is very scarce. The Arabic narratives on Umayyad Khurasan record the conversion of a few Bactrian elites. They do not speak about regular people's conversion. However, some Bactrian and Arabic documents produced in Rob during the early Abbasid period show the conversion of a regular Bactrian individual and the problem his conversion created for his family. This part will discuss these narratives and documents. Before that, we should keep some issues in mind about conversion in the East to prevent making any generalisations and overestimations.

The first issue is that the Umayyads did not have a policy of forced conversion.¹⁰⁶⁷ They did not force the local population to convert or commit violence against local religious places in Bactria.¹⁰⁶⁸ The Arab Muslims had enough power to demolish Naw Bahar or other religious places in Bactria after they suppressed the *nizak*'s uprising and stationed military

¹⁰⁶⁶ Al-Balkhī mentions that in 124/742, before Faḍl's governorship in Khurasan, some people added three iron gates (*darvāza-yi āhanīn*) to Naw Bahar. The gates were positioned one after another. One of these gates was removed, possibly by Ḥamza b. Mālik al-Khuzā'ī the Abbasid governor in 177/793, who used it for his house. However, Naw Bahar was still impressive even after it was abandoned. The *Hudūd al- 'ālam* shows that the wall paintings and decorations of Naw Bahar were still remarkable in 372/982 (*Hudūd al- 'ālam*, 61). Eventually, the last iron gate of Naw Bahar was removed in the seventh/thirteenth century, and probably with that, the whole Buddhist complex was left to fall into ruin (al-Balkhī, *Faḍā'il-i Balkh*, 31–32).

¹⁰⁶⁷ Barthold also noticed that the conquerors were not interested in the spread of their religion in the East (Barthold, *Turkestan*, 183).

¹⁰⁶⁸ Al-Balādhurī's report about the Arab Muslim attack on the Buddhist monastery of Naw Bahar in 42/662 seems to have been a political act. His report shows that the elites of Balkh refused to pay tribute, which motivated the Arab Muslims to punish them by attacking Naw Bahar (al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 409). Except for this event, no other report mentions Arab Muslims targeting local religious places in Bactria. The Naw Bahar was restored, and an octagonal structure was added to the complex. A similar octagonal structure with a *stūpa* within it was constructed in Siahgird, an area located to the northeast of the city (Étienne de la Vaissière et Philippe Marquis, "Nouvelles Recherches sur le Paysage Monumental de Bactres," *CRAI* 3 (2013): 1155–1171).

forces in Balkh. However, they did not do that.¹⁰⁶⁹ The non-Muslim populations kept their religious traditions but paid taxes. Their conversion would reduce the government's income.¹⁰⁷⁰ Having no governmental policy for conversion makes us think about why people still converted.¹⁰⁷¹ What would motivate elites and regular people to convert? Did conversion create stronger relations with the Muslims, or did they do so because they found Muslim rulers more inclined towards supporting converts? Or did conversion create a high symbolic value for a person and allow him to be promoted in the Umayyad political system? The second concern is how people converted. Did their previous religion allow conversion? Were there any specific rituals for conversion?

Another issue to remember is that Islam and Islamic identity were in their formative period when the Arab Muslims arrived in the eastern regions. In this period, the details of executing Islamic duties and rituals were largely still being fixed.¹⁰⁷² In addition, certain practices that were later inseparably connected to Islam were not imposed on converts at this time. The religious practices were still loose and people shared and used across religious boundaries. Therefore, it is no surprise to hear that in early eighth-century Sogdiana, converts had no idea about circumcision or how to pray in Arabic and read the Qur'an. They were paid to gather in the mosque and prayed in the Sogdian language even after they went there.¹⁰⁷³ Moreover, the switch from local religions to Islam was not absolute. In Umayyad Sogdiana, a convert could easily reconvert to his earlier religion if the Arab Muslims left his region. He would switch again to Islam if the Arab Muslims re-controlled his region. In both cases, the

¹⁰⁶⁹ As Andrew Magnusson argued when discussing post-conquest Iran, the Arab Muslims were aware of the negative consequences of desecrating religious places. He adds that the reports related to the desecration of religious places, especially the fire temples mentioned in local histories, are not "reliable indicators of Islamisation", but they "represent a sort of collective memory of the triumph of Islam over Zoroastrianism. They preserve the story of Islamisation as Iranian Muslims *chose* [my emphasis] to remember it." (Andrew Magnusson, "Zoroastrian Fire Temples and the Islamisation of Sacred Space in Early Islamic Iran," in *Islamisation: Comparative Perspectives from History*, ed. Andrew C. S. Peacock (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 112); It should be mentioned that Qutayba b. Muslim violent act against Sogdian religious places is a different issue beyond this dissertation's scope.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ*, 9: 1507–58.

¹⁰⁷¹ Azad suggested that it might have been precisely the absence of force that facilitated conversion, as the Arab Muslims allowed religious freedom and the coexistence of religions in their domains (Azad, "The Beginning of Islam in Afghanistan," 41). Khalil Athamina mentions that the Umayyads did not have any "well-defined policy" regarding the spread of Islam in Khurasan, and thus, the non-Muslim motivations for conversion were shaped by their own socio-political interests (Athamina, "Taxation reforms," 272). However, these scholars did not conduct any systematic study of conversion in Khurasan.

¹⁰⁷² See Webb, "Identity and Social Formation in the Early Caliphate," 129–158.

¹⁰⁷³ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ*, 9: 1507–10; Al-Narshakhī, *Tāriḫ-i Bukhārā*, 56–59; Whether the converts performed circumcision for their newborn sons is also not clear; For more detail on how Islam was understood in this early period in Sogdiana, see Petra Sijpesteijn and Étienne de la Vaissière, "Shifting Frontiers: Current issues in the history of early Islamic Central Asia held on December 17–18, 2010 at Leiden University," *Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology* 7 ([2016] 2017): 207–288.

Arab Muslim authorities did not bother them.¹⁰⁷⁴ That means the longevity of Arab Muslim rule was an important factor for individuals to convert. Hence, before discussing people's conversion in Umayyad Bactria, we should remember that Islam was not a fixed tradition in this period, and the Umayyads did not have a forced conversion policy. On this notice, let us turn to our sources to see what they say about conversion in Bactria.

The Arabic reports relating to Bactria show the conversion of a few high-profile Bactrian individuals. These are the *barmak* of Naw Bahar and his grandson Khālid, the *Samān-khudā*, and the chief of Namrun in the territory of the king of Gharchistan. The first two persons received a lot more attention in the sources belonging to the same family. Undoubtedly, their significant presence in the sources is due to their symbolic status as heads of the leading Buddhist institution in the region, whose conversion was at the same time politically hugely significant and symbolically very conspicuous, and because of the vital role this family would play later on in Abbasid politics. Similarly, the *Sāmān-khudā*'s grandsons served the Abbasids and their progeny established the Samanid empire.¹⁰⁷⁵ The circumstances for the conversion of each of these figures were different. Some words about each case show how and why they converted.

Conversion of the *barmak* is reported by Ibn al-Faḳīh, who preserved the reports of Azraq al-Kirmānī on the *barāmika*.¹⁰⁷⁶ According to these reports, the *barmak* was a man of dignity, and his religion was worshipping idols (*ibādat al-awthān*). However, when the Arab Muslims arrived in Balkh, he went and visited the caliph 'Uthmān, willingly converted to Islam (*aslama*), and then returned to Balkh. The news of his conversion reached the *nizak*, who disliked it. The *nizak* urged the *barmak* to return to his ancestors' religion. The *barmak*'s denial led to his death and that of most of his sons by the *nizak*. His wife could save only one son whom she took to Kashmir, her land of origin. This is the only case of a member of the Bactrian elite who paid with his life for his conversion. Why did the *barmak* convert?

Ibn al-Faḳīh claims that the *barmak* willingly converted because he found Islam superior to his religion. In other words, Islam was greater than Buddhism. He does not clarify

¹⁰⁷⁴ Al-Narshakhī mentions that the people of Bukhara used to become Muslim when the Arab Muslim forces were around, and with their departure, people returned to their old religion (al-Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, 56). Reconversion of Sogdian converts to their pre-Islamic faith was not objected by Naṣr b. Sayyār, the last Umayyad governor of Khurasan, and even the caliph Hishām allowed it (al-Ṭabarī, *Ta' rīkh*, 9: 1718).

¹⁰⁷⁵ For the rise of the Samanids, see W. L. Treadwell, "The Political History of the Sāmānid State" PhD diss., University of Oxford, 1991).

¹⁰⁷⁶ For the importance of Azraq's narrative about the Barmakids, see Clifford Edmund Bosworth, "Abū Ḥaḳḳ 'Umar al-Kirmānī and the rise of the Barmakids," *BSOAS* LVII (1994): 268–82.

how the *barmak* understood the superiority of Islam over Buddhism nor how he came to this conclusion. It sounds like an apologetic argument produced later because he may not know why the *barmak* converted. Considering the apparent personal risk that the *barmak* took by converting, we may consider his personal conviction as the main motive for his conversion.¹⁰⁷⁷ According to Ibn al-Faqīh, the *barmak* was a respected person and had a friendship with the rulers of Kabul and India. Apparently, he was not under political pressure to convert. If it was driven by pressure, then his son also called the *barmak* should have converted to gain the Arab support. However, his son did not follow his father in conversion. He returned from Kashmir – the Buddhist epicentre of the time – to Balkh to become chief of Naw Bahar.¹⁰⁷⁸ While keeping his faith, he supported the Umayyad and even named his son Khālid. Once it appeared that the Umayyads could not keep stability in Khurasan anymore, Khālid turned away and supported the Abbasids, and he and his family became a notable imperial elite family at the heart of the Abbasid court. The case of the *barmak*, his son and his grandson show that conversion varies from person to person, even within a family. The *barmak* willingly converted but lost his life, then his son groomed to be a hard-core Buddhist in Kashmir and then in Balkh, while *his* sons Khālid (and his brothers, who all had Arabic names) grew up within increasingly encroaching Arab Muslim rule in which they saw opportunities and at the same time a diminishing influence for locals.

The conditions of the conversion of the *Sāmān-khudā*, another member of the Bactrian elite, are different from that of the *barmak*. Al-Narshakhī narrates that the *Sāmān-khudā* was a fugitive from Balkh seeking asylum with Asad al-Qasrī, the governor of Khurasan. The *Sāmān-khudā* converted (*īmān āvard*) and named his son after Asad al-Qasrī. The sons and grandsons of the *Sāmān-khudā* entered Abbasid service and played a vital role in keeping Sogdiana for the Abbasids but then turned away and formed the Samanid empire. So, just like the first *barmak*'s grandson's conversion opened up the road for his sons to play a role in Abbasid high politics, the *Sāmān-khudā*'s move established a line of highly influential administrators who could even found their own successful dynasty several generations later. Unlike the first *barmak*, however, who opted perhaps his own choice for conversion, *Sāmān-khudā* was likely

¹⁰⁷⁷ Personal motive for conversion is not strange because some people really looked at personal salvation and would move to any religion if they would have been convinced. For discussion on this issue, see Arietta Papaconstantinou, "Introduction," in *Conversion in Late Antiquity: Christianity, Islam and Beyond, Papers from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Sawyer Seminar, University of Oxford, 2009–2010*, ed. Arietta Papaconstantinou, Neil McLynn and Daniel L. Schwartz (Ashgate, 2015), 207–288.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Ibn Faqīh, *Mukhtaṣar Kitāb al-buldān*, 322–324.

unable to resist conversion as he was entirely under the influence or even at the mercy of the Arab Muslim rulers under whose protection he lived.

The case of Namrun in Gharchistan differed from that of the *barmak* and the *Sāmān-khudā*. There is only one report about it from al-Madā'inī preserved by al-Ṭabarī. According to al-Ṭabarī, in early 107/726, Asad al-Qasrī raided the mountains of Namrun in the territory of the king of Gharchistan. The people of Namrun submitted to and converted at the hands of Asad (*aslama 'alā yadihi*).¹⁰⁷⁹ Al-Ṭabarī ends this report by saying that those who converted now live in Yemen. This report is very short (two lines), and it is not possible to understand whether the ruler of Namrun converted or the regular people. It is also unknown how they converted and ended up in Yemen. In any case, al-Muqaddasī mentions that there was a Muslim community in fourth/tenth-century Gharchistan that followed two different *madhhab* and during Eid, the king prayed twice according to each *madhhab*.¹⁰⁸⁰ Putting these reports together, we can see the chief of Namrun acknowledging military defeat, followed by people's conversion as a sign of complete submission to the Arab Muslim commander. Over time, Islam became the religion of the king and many people of Gharchistan.

Apart from these cases, no other case of conversion is reported which means conversion was not popular among ordinary people in Bactria.¹⁰⁸¹ Equally, the Umayyads were reluctant towards it because there is no evidence showing they supported it in Bactria.¹⁰⁸² That includes

¹⁰⁷⁹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 9: 1489.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm*, 323.

¹⁰⁸¹ In contrast, the *Faḍā'il-i Balkh* depict a different image. The *Faḍā'il* wants us to believe that Balkh was empty and filled by the Muslims. It says that some Companions of the Prophet (*al-ṣahāba*) and their Companions (*al-tābi'īn*) speared the Islamic teachings in Balkh (al-Balkhī, *Faḍā'il-i Balkh*, 30–31); However, Muḥammad b. Ḥebbān al-Bustī (d. 354/964), who recorded names of Companions who visited Khurasan before the *Faḍā'il* does not mention any Companions who visited or lived in Balkh (Muḥammad b. Ḥebbān al-Bustī, *Kitāb Mashāhīr al-'ulamā' al-amṣār*, ed. Manfred Fleischhammer (1959; repr., Cairo: Maṭba'a Lajna, 1379/1959), 59–62). It is important to know that local histories like the *Faḍā'il* are mostly translated and edited in Persian. That decreases their reliability to be taken at face value for Islamicisation in Khurasan. These local histories attempted to make prestige for their cities by connecting them to the Prophet, his Companions or other important Biblical characters (this is Jürgen Paul's argument given in an online presentation on 02/02/202). Hence, the picture of an Islamic Balkh reflected in the *Faḍā'il* cannot be taken as evidence for conversion in Umayyad Bactria. For Islam in Balkh, see Azad, "The Beginning of Islam in Afghanistan," 41–55.

¹⁰⁸² In contrast, the Umayyads encouraged conversion in Sogdiana. The reason behind it was to prevent locals from joining the Türgesh. The Türgesh Turks put enormous pressure on the Arabs. The Umayyads announced that anyone who converts will be exempted from the *jizya*. As a result, many people converted to Islam. Although this policy had a negative impact on their incomes, the Umayyad authorities hoped that conversion would lead to political support. At the same time, many people hoped that they would be released from the *jizya*. However, the local Sogdian rulers went against this strategy and tried to stop it, as increasing converts could reduce their autonomy. Therefore, they forced the Umayyads to reimpose the *jizya* on the converts, which not only led to their protests but pushed them towards the Türgesh to save them from the Umayyads (Huseini, "The Rebellion of al-Hārith b. Surayj," 522–23, 528–30).

most local Bactrian rulers who did not embrace Islam even in the early Abbasid period.¹⁰⁸³ Thus, even amongst high-profile political rulers and elite members who were more likely to be exposed to Arab Muslim influence and whose acts of conversion had political-military consequences, conversion rates were limited. This was more so for regular Bactrian individuals. Bactrian documents show that worshipping deities like Wakhsh, Ram-set, and Zhun continued among locals.¹⁰⁸⁴ Besides, Buddhism remained popular in the region, as reported by Hye Ch'o.¹⁰⁸⁵ Archaeological excavations show that the great Buddhist complex at Ajina Tepe in northern Bactria that flourished in the seventh century remained an important centre in the eighth century.¹⁰⁸⁶

A case of conversion for a local Bactrian well-to-do family is known from a group of Bactrian and Arabic documents produced after 750 in southern and eastern Bactria. This is the only example of its kind known from the documentary sources and requires some elaboration. It provides insights about conversion that was used to solve an old familial dispute but then dismantled a Bactrian family and divided them between the Muslim and non-Muslim authorities. The case under discussion is related to the family of Mir b. Bek.¹⁰⁸⁷ They were residents of Rob region that came under Arab Muslim control around 747 CE.¹⁰⁸⁸ As I have discussed elsewhere,¹⁰⁸⁹ there were four brothers in the family named Kamird-far, Mir, Wahran, and Bab. The brothers lived together and jointly owned the family properties. Bactrian tradition required brothers to live together (*βραδο αλο βραδο αβδδινιδο*) and manage the household properties. Mir, Wahran, and Kamird-far possessed a free woman named Zeran together. However, the brothers disputed joint ownership and complained against each other.

¹⁰⁸³ Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 17.

¹⁰⁸⁴ The name of Wakhsh (*ωαχβο*), the god of the Amu Darya River, is mentioned in the opening of legal documents, e.g., Bactrian documents no. O, R, S, Ss, Tt, Uu, V, U in Sims-Williams, *BDI*, 80–83, 92–93, 94–95, 96–97, 104–105, 112–15, 116–125, and see Bactrian document no. ji in Sims-Williams, *BДИ*, 138–39. Wakhsh is called the “king of gods” (*βαγαβο βαβο*) in Bactrian documents no. O and Tt in Sims-Williams, *BDI*, 80–83, 104–105. Apart from them, Ram-set is mentioned in documents produced in 660 CE and in 671 CE, at Marogan market in Samingan (Bactrian documents no. P and Q in Sims-Williams, *BDI*, 84–87, 88–91). To worship the images of these deities, Bactrians built temples called *baglan* and *nishalm* to worship them (Bactrian documents no. P, Q, Tt, V, W in Sims-Williams, *BDI*, 84–87, 88–91, 112–15, 116–125, 126–135).

¹⁰⁸⁵ *The Hye Ch'o Diary*, 52.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Litvinsky and Zejmal, *The Buddhist Monastery of Ajina Tepe*, 181–84.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Several scholars have discussed this family. See François de Blois, “Du nouveau sur la chronologie bactrienne post-hellénistique: l'ère de 223–224 ap. J. –C.,” *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 150e année, n. 2 (2006): 991–997; Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 20–22; Nicholas Schindel, “The era of the Bactrian Documents: A reassessment,” *Gandhāran Studies* 5 (2011): 1–10; Nicholas Sims-Williams and François de Blois, *Studies in the Chronology of the Bactrian Documents from Northern Afghanistan*, 33–39; Patricia Crone, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran: Rural Revolt and Local Zoroastrianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 400–405; Azad, “Living happily ever after,” 33–56.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Bactrian document no. W in Sims-Williams, *BDI*, 126–135.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Huseini, “Between the Arabs and the Turks,” forthcoming.

Nevertheless, they realised that their quarrel would eventually destroy their household, and thus, they visited the court of the Turkic ruler of Kadagstan and made a contract that obliged them to live together and manage the family property together. They agreed that if any one of them broke the contract, then that person would be guilty and should “go from the house without a share of the property” (*ασο χανο αβηιοβαγο βοαδο*) and pay fines to the government and other brothers.”¹⁰⁹⁰ Nonetheless, their agreement did not last.

Although they signed a resolution, the brothers continued their dispute. Apparently, Kamird-far disagreed with his brothers over their joint ownership of Zeran. Kamird-far, who fathered four children with Zeran, apparently wanted to end joint ownership with his brothers over the women.¹⁰⁹¹ However, Bactrian law did not allow this and he could not one-sidedly and single-handedly act against the Bactrian law. Conversion to Islam and his association with a Muslim *mawlā* offered a solution. He converted, took the Arabic name of Sa‘īd, which means “fortunate” and echoed a similar meaning to his Bactrian name Kamird-far “whose fortune is (from the god) Kamird.”¹⁰⁹² He also associated himself as a client (*mawlā*) to an Arab Muslim lord named Ghālib b. Nāfi‘ in 138/755. The socio-political position of Ghālib is unknown, but he was able to issue a legal letter of emancipation (*‘itq*) for Zeran. Conversion to Islam and association with Ghālib helped legal support to deal with the Bactrian law. Ghālib’s letter of emancipation for Zeran and her children provided the solution, and we can imagine that Sa‘īd had asked him for it. The conversion brought them to the fold of the Muslim community, where Islamic law did not allow Bactrian customs of brothers possessing a woman.

Kamird-far’s conversion was not limited to removing Zeran and her children from the household properties. It had a far more destructive impact on the household. It led to the division of family properties between the brothers. That was against the Bactrian law of joint ownership. Seeing this situation, Bab, another brother, left the household and later received his share of properties. This put Mir in a difficult situation. He is now faced with some people who dispute his right to his properties. Some other people who had disputes with Bab now put pressure on Mir. Being helpless, he decided to appeal to Kera-tonga, the Turkic ruler of Kadagstan. He travelled from Rob to Kadagstan, visited the king’s court, presented his petition, and received a protection letter for himself, his family, and his properties.¹⁰⁹³

¹⁰⁹⁰ Bactrian document no. X in Sims-Williams, *BDI*, 136–141.

¹⁰⁹¹ All four children had Arabic names (Arabic document no. 29 in Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 152–153).

¹⁰⁹² Sims-Williams and de Blois, *Studies in the Chronology*, 37–39.

¹⁰⁹³ Bactrian document no. Y in Sims-Williams, *BDI*, 142–143; Also, see Huseini, “Acts of Protection Represented in Bactrian Documents,” 107–24.

Kamird-far's conversion threatened the foundation of Bactrian social-economic life, namely the household. Bactrian law and tradition sanctioned cohabitation and joint ownership of household properties. Conversion to Islam made it impossible to uphold these customs, forcing the division of properties among male siblings and destroying the foundations of the household. As with the cases of high-profile individuals from Bactrian political life deciding to convert to Islam for possible ulterior motives beyond personal conviction presented above, Kamird-far's motives to convert to Islam seem to have been inspired by self-interest that extended beyond personal religious conviction. Conversion to Islam served a short-term interest in his personal situation, namely taking possession of Zeran and her children, manumitting and marrying her as a free woman.

The case of the Mir family also shows that the pattern of Arab Muslims entering local conflicts at the request of one of the parties occurred at the highest political level (local rulers) to the most modest level of the household. The dispute within this family over household properties created quarrels among these four brothers, dividing them with resulting invasive economic, social, and political consequences. Kamird-far found support with the Muslims motivating his conversion to Islam. Mir on the other hand, turned towards the Turkic authorities for help.

The Arab Muslims operated not only at the highest political level as yet another player in local power games but also at the lowest level of the family unit. As with the military-political support offered by Arab Muslim commanders to local rulers, the Arab-Muslim support on the level of this family in exchange for conversion had far-reaching effects. The conversion of Kamird-far solved his problem but dismantled a Bactrian household. It associated Kamird-far with Muslim authority and the Muslim community. In this sense, it is another example of how an individual's interests for political, economic or personal gain led to long-term and profound social changes in the region under the Arab Muslim rule.

The cases discussed so far show that circumstances and motivations for conversion varied from one person to another. While the *barmak* was personally interested in Islam, the *Sāmān-khudā* needed protection and help. The chief and people of Namrun converted as a sign of total submission to Arab military power, and Kamird-far found conversion as an effective solution to deal with the Bactrian law of cohabitation and joint ownership. Ghālib's letter of emancipation issued in Arabic reflects that the Islamic legal regulations were expanded to the areas controlled by the Umayyads. The following section will briefly discuss this issue.

6.3.3 Influence of Islamic legal regulations

The Arab Muslims settlements and coexistence of Muslims and non-Muslim populations under Muslim rule led to the spread of Islamic legal regulations in the areas they controlled. The Arabic documents from the early Abbasid Rob show that Muslims issued legal documents for the local people of Rob. Altogether, eight legal documents have been preserved, they are issued in Arabic, witnessed by Muslim and non-Muslim men who left their fingernail impressions on small clay sealings attached to the documents. Two of them are emancipation letter (*itq*),¹⁰⁹⁴ two others are manumission documents (*mukātaba*),¹⁰⁹⁵ three documents are related to the dowry of a certain woman named Ḥamrā,¹⁰⁹⁶ and the last one is related to a quarrel.¹⁰⁹⁷ The documents show that Arab Muslims freely applied their own established legal instruments. The emancipation and the manumission documents stand for particular importance. Just like the Bactrian laws, the Islamic laws allowed slavery, but they had more to offer the slaves. This section explains this issue.

Let us begin with the manumission documents. They are related to the manumission of a certain Qiyā, a weaver (*al-ḥā'ik*), who worked for Būya b. Muḥammad. Būya is an Iranian name, but it is not seen in any Bactrian document. Likewise, Qiyā is not a Bactrian name, but it could be a Turkish name.¹⁰⁹⁸ The background of these two persons and how they ended up in Rob is unknown. The first document was produced in 146/763. It records the agreement between Qiyā and Būya. The former should pay the latter thirty dirhams in advance and one hundred dirhams in a year's time. If he fails to pay his price, he will be made to remain in slavery (*fahuwa abqā fi al-rraq*), and whatever he paid should be accepted as his dues to his owner. The document was witnessed by thirteen men whose names are mentioned. Four other men, including Qiyā, sealed it. The clay sealing has the fingernail impression of the witnesses, which is adopted from the Bactrian tradition.¹⁰⁹⁹ The second document is written in 148/765–

¹⁰⁹⁴ Arabic documents no. 29 and 30 in Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 152–54, 155–57.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Arabic documents no. 31 and 32 in Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 158–165.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Arabic documents no. 26, 27, 28 in Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 145–151.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Arabic documents no. 25 in Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 141–43.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 150; The famous Būyid dynasty taken its name from a fisherman called Būya.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Arabic documents no. 31 in Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 158–161; Validation of a legal document by thumbnail impression on clay sealing was known in Bactria. It is attested in a legal Bactrian document dating to 712 from Rob and in a document dating to 726 from Khash, an area between Bamiyan and Kabul (Bactrian document no. Vv in Nicholas Sims-Williams and Étienne de la Vaissière, “A Bactrian Document from Southern Afghanistan?” *Bulletin of Asia Institute* 25 (2011): 39–53; Bactrian document no. U in Sims-Williams, *BDI*, 106–111). This tradition found its way to Arabic legal documents. Khan observed that the use of the star image travelled from Bactria to the western parts of the Islamic empire, such as Egypt (Geoffrey Khan, “Newly Document Discovered from Early Abbasid Khurasan,” in *From al-Andalus to Khurasan: Documents from the Medieval Muslim World*, ed. Petra Sijpesteijn et al., (Leiden; Brill, 2007), 206–7. Also, Petra Sijpesteijn has argued that the personal participation of witnesses, them leaving a personal touch on the document can be traced to this practice of the

66. It explains that Qiyā had paid 116 dirhams to Būya, and thus, he is released from the obligation of his contract (*bari`a Qiyā al-ḥā`ik `an mukātibatihi*).¹¹⁰⁰ Twenty-one witnesses witnessed the second document. The exact number of fingernail impressions can be seen on the sealings attached to the document. Hence, these two documents show that Qiyā decided to purchase his freedom. However, he did not have money to pay the total price. Therefore, he made the first contract. Later, he paid what he had promised earlier and completed his obligation. Finally, his owner issued this document and declared Qiyā's freedom.

The case of Qiyā shows some similarities and differences to the Bactrian practice of slavery.¹¹⁰¹ Bactrian laws allowed a slave to purchase his freedom only if he paid the full price to his owner. He was obliged by the law to pay his full price and receive his manumission document from the court. In contrast, as the case of Qiyā shows, Islamic law obliged Qiyā by God's bound (*'ahd Allāh wa-dhimmatuhū*) to keep his word and fulfil his obligation. He also could pay his price in several instalments over time. Equally important, the slave and the owner sealed the same document, a tradition unknown in Bactrian documents.

The two emancipation letters also reflect important changes in Bactria. Both letters are issued by Muslims for two women and their children. They are freed for the sake of God (*li wajh-i-allāh*) that was unknown in Bactrian laws. In Bactrian tradition, slaves were treated as personal property and their owners could set them free only if they paid their full prices or performed good service. The emancipation documents indicate that while Islam allowed slavery, it introduced some regulations opposite the Bactrian laws.

The above-mentioned documents (including three documents related to Ḥamrā) show a different administrative practice. In Bactrian tradition, the local ruler's court was considered the court of law. People visited local authorities, presented petitions, and accepted fair judgment.¹¹⁰² Administrative authorities issued legal documents in the court of law. Most of the legal documents were made in the form of double contracts, and their records were kept in

fingernails (Petra Sijpesteijn, "Seals and Papyri from Early Islamic Egypt," in *Seals and Sealing Practice in the Near East. Developments in Administration and Magic from Prehistory to the Islamic Period*, ed. Ilona Regulski, Kim Duistermaat, and Peter Verkinderen (Louvain: Peeters, 2012), 171–182.

¹¹⁰⁰ Arabic document no. 32 in Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 162–65.

¹¹⁰¹ For slavery in Bactrian society, see Said Reza Huseini, "Slavery Represented in Bactrian Documents," in *Textual Sources and Geographies of Slavery in the Early-Islamic Empire, ca. 600-1000 CE*, ed. Jelle Bruning and Said Reza Huseini, Special Issue, *Journal of Slavery & Abolition* 44, no. 4 (2023): 682–696; The Arab Muslims practised slavery in Khurasan as well. For instance, the city of Balkh had a slave market in 116–118/734–736, and Asad al-Qasrī sold Muslim and non-Muslim women and children of al-Ḥārith's supporters there (Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī, *Futūḥ*, 7: 283).

¹¹⁰² Huseini, "Acts of Protection Represented in Bactrian Documents," 107–24.

the government archive. The documents have details about the identity of the attending parties, the subject of dispute, agreements, guarantee statements, and fines that one should pay in case of breaking the contract.¹¹⁰³ In contrast, the Arabic documents are short and without any details. From their contents, we can infer that they may not have been made in the court of law before a judge but were written by individuals who knew Arabic, Islamic legal regulations, and the legal phraseology for writing the document. In this situation, some local people turned to Muslims to regulate their interactions and someone like Mir b. Bek preferred to visit the court of the Turkic king to solve his problem.¹¹⁰⁴ The presence of Bactrian and Islamic systems side by side shows that the Arab Muslims and their institutions, their language, and their documents operated as one of many parties in the region to solve issues. They also reflect a significant interaction and cooperation between Muslim and non-Muslim inhabitants of Bactria. Such interaction and shared practice lead to increasing Islamicisation as practices introduced by the Arab Muslims spread further through exposure and example. Actual conversion of individual Bactrians remained as we saw, however, limited. This leads us to Muslim taxation.

6.3.4 Expansion of Umayyad fiscal system in Bactria

Taxation is evident in the expression of Islamic rule in Bactria. Detailed information on the expansion of Umayyad fiscal administration in Bactria is not reflected in Arabic or Persian narratives. Modern scholarship on taxation in Umayyad Khurasan offers some generalised views and often refers to the fiscal reforms undertaken by the governors of Khurasan Ashras al-Sulamī and Naṣr b. Sayyār.¹¹⁰⁵ The first fiscal reform was initiated by Ashras in 110/728 in Sogdiana when the Umayyads faced the attacks of the Türgesh Turks. They hoped to increase local support among Sogdians by reorganising the taxation policies. However, the reforms failed, and the Sogdian converts who were forced to pay the *jizya* revolted. Naṣr enforced the second fiscal reform in 121/738 in the Marw region.¹¹⁰⁶ The modern scholarship relating to these reforms does not discuss taxation in Bactria separately. Instead, they give an incomplete

¹¹⁰³ See Sheikh, *Studies of Bactrian Legal Documents*, 7–10.

¹¹⁰⁴ Khan has suggested that Bactrian local rulers retained their jurisdictional authority (Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 19). His proposal can be supported by the Bactrian protection document issued by the Turkic ruler for Mir b. Bek.

¹¹⁰⁵ Gibb, *The Arab Conquests*, 69–70; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 190; Wellhausen, *The Arab-Kingdom*, 456–458, 476–482; Dennett, *Conversion and Poll Tax*, 106–113; Shaban, *The ‘Abbāsīd Revolution*, 109–111, 129–130; ‘Abdal ‘Aziz Duri, “Notes on Taxation in Early Islam,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 17, no. 2 (1974): 136–144; Athamina examined all earlier studies on taxation in Khurasan (Athamina, “Taxation reforms in early Islamic Khurasan,” 272–281); Sayed Maḥmūd Samānī, “Dastgāh-i māli Umaviyān bā takya bar qalamrau-i sharqi Khilāfat,” *Tārīkh dar Ā’īna-yi Pazhūhish* 6 (1384/2005): 113–134; Haug, *The Eastern Frontier*, 131.

¹¹⁰⁶ Athamina, “Taxation reforms,” 281.

picture of Khurasan and use it as an umbrella term for the entire region, including Bactria and Sogdiana up to Khwarazm. However, these regions were not under one single political rule, nor did they have one single taxation system. Nevertheless, these studies serve as a foundation for further investigations on taxation in the eastern regions of the Umayyad empire.¹¹⁰⁷ This section builds on these studies and takes a step further to discuss taxation in Bactria. It includes Bactrian and Arabic documents in the discussion.

To begin with the Umayyad taxation in Bactria, we must remember that the fiscal reform conducted by Ashras and Naṣr led to a new taxation policy in Umayyad Khurasan.¹¹⁰⁸ Before the reforms, the Arab Muslims imposed tributes on local rulers, who then raised this money through their own administrative system according to the models that had been in place in the region. The Arab Muslims did not interfere in the collection process. The confusion began after local people converted and Arab Muslims settled in the villages. In Sogdiana, the converts were forced to pay the *jizya*, which was against the Islamic laws. Even some Arab Muslims argued that the governor of Khurasan left them to the local rulers.¹¹⁰⁹ All these people

¹¹⁰⁷ These studies often highlight the Sasanian taxation system in Iraq. See, for instance, Michele Campopiano, “Land Tenure, Land Tax and Social Conflictuality in Iraq from the Late Sasanian to the Early Islamic Period (Fifth to Ninth Centuries CE),” in *Authority and Control in the Countryside From Antiquity to Islam in the Mediterranean and Near East (6th–10th Century)*, ed. Alain Delattre, Marie Legendre, and Petra Sijpesteijn (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 464–499; Dennett maintains that the *kharāj* and the *jizya* were collected from these regions. The Arab Muslims followed the same tradition in Iraq and collected taxes from locals but let the Khurasani local chiefs collect taxes and pay tributes to the Arab Muslims. He also assumed that Khurasan and Sogdiana had identical taxation systems. He does not reveal his sources for such a proposal. Nevertheless, he highlights two kinds of taxes paid by people: the *kharāj* and the *jizya* (Dennett, “Conversion and Poll Tax,” 106); Shaban rejected Dennett’s suggestion on a similarity of taxation in Khurasan and Sogdiana. He argued that the *jizya* was collected within the Sasanian territory, and Sogdiana was not part of it. Instead, the land tax and merchandise tax were collected in Sogdiana (Shaban, *The ‘Abbāsīd Revolution*, 111–112). The same issue is discussed by Athamina as well (Athamina, “Taxation reforms,” 274). ‘Abdal ‘Aziz Duri agrees with Dennett on the two kinds of taxes collected in Sasanian Khurasan. However, he argues that the tributes paid to the Arab Muslims did not include the land tax. The *jizya* was individual payment, and the *kharāj* was the total sum of tribute taken from the region (Duri, “Notes on Taxation in Early Islam,” 142–143). Van Vloten suggested that only one kind of tax was paid in cash in Khurasan (mentioned in Athamina, “Taxation reforms,” 274). Like Shaban, Athamina disagrees with Dennett’s suggestion on the similarity of taxation in Khurasan and Sogdiana. Still, he maintains that the bases of taxation in Khurasan were land and human. He agrees with Wellhausen’s idea on the difference between the *kharāj* and the *jizya*. Athamina adds that the tribute collected from Sogdiana was called the *jizya*. The land tax was not imposed in Sogdiana, and the governors of Khurasan had the authority to negotiate the amount of the *jizya* (Athamina, “Taxation reforms,” 275–277).

¹¹⁰⁸ The *kharāj* and the *jizya* were not separate taxes in the eyes of the Arab Muslim governors in Khurasan. Duri attributes the distinction between these taxes to the caliph ‘Umar II. He mentions that the governors of Khurasan did not follow the caliph’s view (Duri, “Notes on Taxation in Early Islam,” 144). Athamina rejected this proposal. He argues that the distinction between the *kharāj* as land tax and the *jizya* as poll tax appeared only around 121/738 after Naṣr b. Sayyār’s fiscal reform. In this reform, Muslim landowners were asked to pay the *ushr*, one-tenth of their yield, and those who converted to Islam were exempted from paying the *jizya* but paid their land tax. Non-Muslim chiefs were asked to pay the annual tributes based on the peace treaties they had. The tribute came from the land tax and the poll tax. Naṣr abolished all additional payments to the amount of money promised by the local chiefs to pay (Athamina, “Taxation reforms,” 279–281).

¹¹⁰⁹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 9: 1420–21.

had to pay taxes but there was no precise mechanism to distinguish between them. Hence, the new system differentiated between the land tax (*kharāj*) and the poll tax (*jizya*). Muslim and non-Muslim landowners paid different amounts of the *kharāj*, and non-Muslims also paid the *jizya*. Those who converted to Islam were exempted from paying the *jizya* but paid their land-tax. The additional payments taken from the local rulers earlier were also abolished. They paid tributes according to the agreements allegedly made between them and the Arab Muslim authorities in the past. The local chiefs either had the original documents or their records.¹¹¹⁰ Was Bactria part of this reform? Did people pay the *kharāj* and the *jizya*? The answer is positive.

The new policy was enforced in Bactria as well. The evidence comes from a Bactrian land sale contract produced in 525 of the Bactrian calendar corresponding to 747 CE, in Gandar, Rob region. That is to say, nine years after Naṣr's fiscal reforms. It is related to two kinds of taxes the Arab Muslims imposed on local households. According to the documents, a family had to sell their land because they had to pay their poll tax (*γαζιτο*) and land tax (*βαριτο*) imposed by the Arabs (*ταζιναγγο*).¹¹¹¹ They sold the land for 60 Umayyad silver dirhams to be able to pay their taxes. This document has several layers of information that should be unveiled to understand the whole process.

The first issue is that the taxes are imposed not on individuals but on households. This was following the Bactrian taxation policy that taxes levied on household (*καδγο*). This means the Umayyads continued the Bactrian tradition, at least in the Rob region, because we do not have information about other areas. The second issue is that this family had to sell their land to be able to pay their taxes and other debts they had. They received Umayyad silver dirham and most likely paid their taxes from that money. That means the Umayyad coins were minted and widely circulated in Bactria. However, selling land to pay taxes was not new. People also sold their ancestral land to pay taxes during the Hephthalite and Turkic domination.¹¹¹²

Another issue to consider is the terminology used in this document. This land sale document does not use the old Bactrian terms for taxes, namely *tog* (*τογο*) or poll tax and *harg* (*βαργο*) or land tax.¹¹¹³ Instead, it uses the terms *gazit* and *barit* in the same formulary fashion to refer to *tog* and *harg* collected for the Turks. For instance, a land sale document produced

¹¹¹⁰ This supports al-Ya'qūbī's report about the descendants of the *kanārang* of Tus and Māhūy of Marw, who had old agreements signed with Arabs Muslims. See chapter three, 3.2.1, 3.2.2.

¹¹¹¹ Bactrian document no. W in Sims-Williams, *BDI*, 126–127.

¹¹¹² Bactrian documents no. I, J, Nn in Sims-Williams, *BDI*, 44–47, 48–55, 74–79.

¹¹¹³ For etymology of the *harg*, see Sims-Williams, *BDII*, 272.

in 436 of the Bactrian calendar equal to 569 CE, from Guzgan, refers to *qaghān*'s tax and the lord's dues (*χαγαναγγο τωγο οδο χοηοαγγο ναργο*).¹¹¹⁴ The land sale document from Rob uses the same formula but just replaces *tog* and *harg* with *gazit* and *barit* (*ταζιυαγγο γαζιτο οδο βαριτο*). In both cases, the sellers declared they had nothing else to give for taxes and thus had to sell their lands. It is uncertain, but the *gazit* could have been based on the Arabic *jizya* or poll tax.¹¹¹⁵ The *barit* seems to have been the Bactrian equivalent for the Arabic *barā'a* "acquittance".¹¹¹⁶ Possibly, these two terms entered the Bactrian land sale document after people heard that the Arabs imposed poll tax and land tax and issued the receipt called *barā'a*. Moreover, all Arabic receipts related to the land tax from Rob use the term *barā'a* for the land tax. Hence, our land sale document indicates that despite the expansion of the taxation reforms to Rob, the Umayyad authorities enforced it within the Bactrian tradition of charging taxes on households. It is likely that they issued Arabic receipts for families who paid their taxes.

The Bactrian document relating to Arab Muslim taxation reveals a meaningful political change. It mentions that the land sellers were servants of the *khar* of Rob. That means the political authority of the *khar* must have been significantly decreased; otherwise, the Arab Muslims could not have directly imposed taxes on families who served the king of Rob (or lived under his political jurisdiction). It also confirms that non-Muslim landowners paid both land tax and poll tax to Arab Muslim authorities. Whether other parts of Bactria paid the land tax and poll tax to Arab Muslims is not known. Nevertheless, if Rob paid these taxes, western and northern Bactria, which came under Umayyad authority earlier, should probably have paid them too.

The Arabic documents produced between 147–158/764–774 in the Rob region provide detailed information on taxation. Although they confirm that the collection of the *kharāj* from the landowner continued into the Abbasid period, they do not hint at the collection of the *jizya*. Probably, the receipts for the *jizya* were issued separately. So far, no Arabic receipt for the *jizya* has ever been found from Bactria. The Arabic documents relating to the *kharāj* show the discontinuation of taxing households in Bactria.¹¹¹⁷ Unlike the land sale contract from Rob that shows that the Arab Muslims imposed taxes on a household, the Arabic documents are issued

¹¹¹⁴ Bactrian documents no. Nn in Sims-Williams, *DBI*, 74–79.

¹¹¹⁵ Thomas Benfey has informed me that the Middle Persian *gazīdag* is mentioned in document no. Berk.67 (667–8CE) from Qum. He argued that the Middle Persian *gazīdag* as poll tax was developed in the early Islamic period (Thomas Benfey, "Land Taxes in Middle Persian Documents from Early Islamic Iraq," Paper presented at Conference "A Hard Row to Hoe," Corpus Christi College, Oxford University, 13 December 2022).

¹¹¹⁶ Cited in Sims-Williams, *BDII*, 185.

¹¹¹⁷ Azad also reached the same conclusion (Azad, "Living happily ever after," 46–47).

in the name of individuals who had farming land. Many of these Arabic receipts are issued for different members of the same family. The taxation system reflected in the Arabic documents has already been studied in detail by Geoffrey Khan.¹¹¹⁸ Here, I will only provide a summary of the issues related to taxation as highlighted by the documents as an element of social change in post-conquest Bactria.

Altogether, twenty-four tax quittances (sing., *barā'a*) issued by Muslim authorities between 147–158/764–774 in Rob are extant. They are issued for Mīr b. Bek al-Bāmiyānī (Mīr of the Bactrian documents) his brother Bāb and Mīr's son Qārwal. A certain Miham is also mentioned, but his relation to Mīr's family is unknown. These individuals regularly paid their land tax to the Muslim authorities in Rob. The first significant issue represented in these Arabic documents is the Arab Muslim fiscal administration. The region was divided into several fiscal administrative units called the *kūra* "consisting of a collection of towns and villages."¹¹¹⁹ The *amīr* resided in the main town, and his administrators (sing., *'āmil*) served in different areas within the *kūra*. The administrators received taxes and issued receipts for taxpayers. The financial administration was not a complex system, and the administrators often changed with the governor's change.¹¹²⁰

Probably, payment of taxes was based on the measurement of land (*misāḥa*). A document dating to 154/771 mentions that three people measured land in Gandar in Rob. Cultivated land (*arḍ*) and uncultivated orchards (*al-kurūm al-ghāmira*) were measured.¹¹²¹ Once the harvest was collected, the landowner was obliged to pay his taxes. Anyone who had more considerable land had to pay more taxes. Taxes were received in cash, which creates the impression that the landowners had to sell their yields in the market to provide cash. However, payment of taxes was not regular, and sometimes, people paid their taxes in several instalments.¹¹²² Two kinds of taxes are mentioned: the land tax (*kharāj*) and the supplementary tax (*qism*). The *kharāj* is often followed by the word *sana* "year", and the *qism* is followed by *shahr* "month".¹¹²³ This creates an impression that the *qism* was assessed monthly. The amount mentioned for the *kharāj* is always more than the *qism*. Two documents dating to 148/765 and 158/774 explain that the *qism* was spent for the governor's and his administration's expenses.

¹¹¹⁸ Khan, "Arabic Documents from Early Islamic Khurasan," 6–53.

¹¹¹⁹ Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 22.

¹¹²⁰ Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 25.

¹¹²¹ Arabic document no. 24 in Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 138–39.

¹¹²² Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 33.

¹¹²³ Arabic documents no. 3, 6, 8, 13, 15, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23 in Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 96–97, 102–103, 106–107, 116–117, 120–121, 124–125, 126–127, 132–133, 134–35, 136–137.

The *qism* was also spent “for pack animals used for corvée duty, to the portion for the expense of the substance of al-Mahdi”,¹¹²⁴ and for the “expenses of the *amīr*, captives and slaves who join al-Mahdi.”¹¹²⁵

The Arabic tax receipts bear dates that may create confusion. The dates mentioned at the end of the receipts differ from the years related to the taxes. For instance, the receipt issued for Mīr in Dhul Qa‘da of the year 147 mentions that he paid ten dirhams *khāraj* for the year 146.¹¹²⁶ Similarly, the document issued for Mīr in Dhul Ḥijja of the year 148 mentions that he paid ten dirhams *khāraj* for the year 147.¹¹²⁷ One may think the Muslim authorities were oppressive and taxed Mīr several times in one year. However, the reality is different. The tax receipts are based on the Islamic calendar (*hijri*), which is a lunar-based calendar. Bactrian taxpayers had solar-based calendars that were appropriate for agricultural activities.¹¹²⁸ Khan has argued that the officials who assessed the land tax based their assessment on the solar calendar but recorded the payment in the *hijri* calendar.¹¹²⁹ This shows that the Arab Muslims who brought their lunar calendar to Bactria did not simply leave it for the Bactrian calendar even after they mixed with the local population.¹¹³⁰ Change in the taxation system from household to individual, issuing Arabic documents with *hijri* dates for the local Bactrian taxpayers depicts the conquests’ gradual social impact.

The taxation system discussed so far informs us that the Arab Muslim rule expanded to southern Bactria. While they left the local structure in place, they imposed new rules like taxing individuals instead of households, issuing Arabic documents and introducing a new calendar. All this indicates the continuity and change that happened from the beginning of the conquest to the end of the Umayyad period.

6.3.5 Bactria and Arabicisation and Islamicisation discourse

The social and political changes discussed so far recall ‘Arabicisation’ and ‘Islamicisation’ that are widely used in modern scholarship to explain the spread of the Arabic language and Islamic

¹¹²⁴ Arabic documents no. 3 and 6 in Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 96–97, 102–103.

¹¹²⁵ Arabic document no. 21 in Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 132–33.

¹¹²⁶ Arabic document no. 2 in Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 94–95.

¹¹²⁷ Arabic document no. 4 in Khan, *Arabic Documents*, 98–99.

¹¹²⁸ Sims-Williams and François de Blois, *Studies in the Chronology*, 21–29, 109–114.

¹¹²⁹ Khan, “Arabic Documents from Early Islamic Khurasan,” 15.

¹¹³⁰ Lionel Casson has shown that the same phenomenon of a discrepancy of two years between the year of the taxes and the year in which the taxes are paid happened in Egypt (Lionel Casson, “Tax-Collection Problem in Early Arab Egypt,” *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 69 (1938): 274–91).

ideology by the conquerors in the conquered regions.¹¹³¹ These terminologies are derived from the terms ‘Arab’ and ‘Islam’. It is said that the conquests were carried out by the Arabs who believed in Islam, and thus, they spread the Arabic language and Islamic ideology among the conquered people. However, this simplifies a highly complex issue, just like the conquest itself, which has been simplified and idealised for a long time.¹¹³² Like Arab and Islam, there is no single definition for Arabicisation and Islamicisation.¹¹³³

Generally, Arabicisation is said to have been related to the spread of the Arabic language, and Islamicisation is taken for the spread of Islam, and in many cases, they are viewed as an interrelated process occurring simultaneously.¹¹³⁴ In other words, adopting the

¹¹³¹ There is a rich scholarship about social and political changes as a result of the conquests in different regions. For instance, changes in administration and social and economic mobility have been discussed by various scholars. See, for example, Cecilia Palombo, “The View from the Monasteries: Taxes, Muslims and Converts in the ‘Pseudepigrapha’ from Middle Egypt,” *Medieval Encounters* 25/4 (2019): 297–344; Luke Yarbrough, *Friends of the Emir: Non-Muslim State Officials in Premodern Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Marie Legendre, “Islamic conquest, territorial reorganization and empire formation: A study of 7th Century movements of population in the light of Egyptian papyri,” in *The Long Seventh Century: Continuity and Discontinuity in an Age of Transition*, ed. A. Gnasso, E. Intagliata, T. MacMaster, & B. Morris (Peter Lang, 2015), 235–250. Marie Legendre, “Aspects of Umayyad Administration,” in *The Umayyad World*, ed. Andrew Marsham (Routledge, 2020), 133–157; Eugenio Garosi, *Projecting a New Empire: Forms, Social Meaning, and Mediality of Imperial Arabic in the Umayyad and Early Abbasid Periods* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022); Federico Morelli, *Documenti del primo periodo arabo dall’archivio di Senouthios “anystes” e testi connessi*. Corpus Papyrorum Raineri 36 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022). Further detail on changes after the conquests in Egypt can be found in Sijpesteijn, *Shaping a Muslim State*. As we can see, most of the existing literature is about Egypt, which had more documentary and literary sources. Other regions are less studied compared to Egypt. See, for instance, Jack Tannous, “Arabic as a Christian Language and Arabic as the Language of Christians,” in *Medieval Encounters: Arabic-Speaking Christians and Islam*, ed. A. S. Ibrahim (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2022), 1–93; Corisande Fenwick, *Early Islamic North-Africa: A New Perspective* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020); Vacca, *Non-Muslim Provinces under Early Islam*. The scholarship about the social and political changes in Khurasan is even less compared to Iraq and North Africa. For instance, see Étienne de la Vaissière, ed., *Islamisation de L’Asie Centrale* (Paris: Association Pour L’Avancement des Études Iraniennes, 2008); Deborah Tor, “Islamization of Central Asia in the Sāmānid era and the reshaping of the Muslim world,” *Bulletin of SOAS* 72, no. 2 (2009): 279–299; Azad, “The Beginning of Islam in Afghanistan,” 41–55; Luce, “Frontier Process,” 112–253, Haug, *Eastern Frontier*, 99–169.

¹¹³² The very terms ‘Arab’ and ‘Islam’ are intensively debated, and there are different interpretations of these terms and whether the people who carried out the conquests should be called Arab or Muslim. Similarly, should we call the conquests an ‘Arab conquest’ or ‘Islamic conquest’? The discussion on the identity of the conquerors gets further complicated if we consider that the people who achieved the conquests were not all Arabic-speaking people, did not identify themselves as ‘Arab’, and many of them were not followers of Islam. The Arab identity and Islamic ideology were not fixed but developed during and after the conquests in different temporal and spatial circumstances. This summary is based on the work of some scholars of Islamic studies, namely, Wellhausen, Kennedy, Donner, Hoyland, Crone, Cook, Webb, and van Bladel. We have learned from the previous chapters that the Arab Muslims who entered Bactria in 32/652 included a group of former Sasanian cavalry. Qutayba formed his conquest army out of many different groups, including troops from Iraq, Syria, Inner Khurasan, Bactria and Khwarazm. Al-Ḥārith army had fighters from Bactria, Sogdiana and different Arab tribes. Asad al-Qasrī had Iraqi, Syrian, and Bactrian forces under his command. Not all these people spoke Arabic, and not all of them were Muslim.

¹¹³³ A quick search about these terms shows that there is even no consensus on whether to call it Arabicisation or Arabisation, Islamicisation or Islamisation.

¹¹³⁴ G. H. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam: The Umayyad Caliphate, 661–750*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 9; Van Bladel suggests that Islamicisation followed Arabicisation for the war captives who became Muslim because of its benefits (Van Bladel, “Arabising,” 16).

Arabic language automatically led to conversion and conversion facilitated Arabicisation. However, this is not accurate. Learning Arabic does not necessarily require a person to convert or lose his mother language and cultural tradition. Conversion to Islam (though it requires some Arabic for daily prayers and reading the Qur'an) does not make a person an Arab. Thus, Arabicisation and Islamicisation should not be viewed as one single phenomenon but as separate things occurring differently in various regions.¹¹³⁵ A brief explanation of these phenomena helps to see if the socio-political changes in Bactria explained in this chapter respond to the discussion on Arabicisation and Islamicisation.

Arabicisation is a process in which non-Arabic-speaking people adopt Arabic for communication. As van Bladel argued, the process begins by the “adoption of Arabic language as the medium of communication in public space and increasingly even in the homes of population not originally Arabic-speaking, and the concomitant abandonment of languages hitherto used in these domains.”¹¹³⁶ Though this definition considers linguistic elements only, it must be mentioned that choosing Arabic names, terminologies and practices associated with the Arabs was part of this process as well.¹¹³⁷ To van Bladel, the process of Arabicisation was directly linked to the Arab Muslim settlement pattern in the conquered regions and “regional variation in settlement pattern is probably the primary and original factor in the different rate of Arabicisation.”¹¹³⁸ In other words, Arabicisation happened faster anywhere the Arab Muslim people settled throughout the country alongside locals. Because of intensive contact, local people adopted Arabic quickly. In contrast, Arabicisation happened slower when Arab Muslims lived separately from the locals.

Van Bladel's explanation is helpful, but it has some limits. The adoption of the Arabic language for communication in public domains like offices cannot be called Arabicisation. The reason is that using Arabic for certain domains of writing or speaking did not immediately or

¹¹³⁵ See for example, Petra Sijpesteijn and Lennart Sundelin, ed., *Papyrology and the History of Early Islamic Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

¹¹³⁶ Van Bladel, “Arabisering,” 4; Van Bladel's definition has another problem. He does not explain how this ‘adoption’ happens. Did people willingly adopt Arabic, or did the government enforce it? How frequent should the use of Arabic be, and how deep should the application and knowledge of the language spread into society? Moreover, can Arabic be used alongside other languages for it to be called ‘Arabicisation’?

¹¹³⁷ Andrew C. S. Peacock, ed., “Introduction: Comparative Perspectives on Islamisation,” in *Islamisation: Comparative Perspectives from History* (Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 3–4; Daniel Beben maintains similar points. He distinguishes between conversion as an individual decision to accept religion and Islamicisation as “a broader and more gradual process of social change.” (Daniel Beben, “Islamization on the Iranian Periphery,” in *Islamisation: Comparative Perspectives from History*, ed. A. C. S. Peacock (Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 319).

¹¹³⁸ Van Bladel, “Arabisering,” 12.

even entirely end the use of local vernaculars.¹¹³⁹ A local person could use Arabic while working in the office but switch to his mother language at home. This local person could also use his mother language when speaking to his colleague in the office if that colleague came from the same linguistic background. Learning Arabic as a second language does not make one lose his mother language.¹¹⁴⁰ However, the second part of van Bladel's definition is plausible. If Arabic becomes one's mother language or the only language one can speak, then we can talk about Arabicisation.

The case of Bactria shows that Arabicisation, in the sense that Arabic becomes *the* first language and replaces local languages, did not happen. This form of Arabicisation discussed by van Bladel did not happen anywhere in the eastern Iranian regions despite the Arab Muslim settlements among local people that created intensive social contacts. Instead, the Arabic language and culture enriched local linguistic and cultural traditions. The case of Bactrian bilinguals who learned Arabic to communicate with Arabs or work for the Umayyad administration and Arabic documents from Rob show that Arabicisation, in the sense that one adopts Arabic for communication in public space happened in Bactria. However, this form of Arabicisation was limited to the administration. The state initiated a series of administrative work to benefit the state without having any deliberate policy to change people's language or religion. However, the state's decision to improve administration led to some social changes in the long term. Though Arabic was used as an administrative language, it did not become the leading language in Bactria.

Van Bladel's suggestion about settlement patterns as the principal forerunner of Arabicisation applies to regions like Syria, Iraq, Egypt, and North Africa. Arab Muslims established garrisons and settled among local people creating intensive contact between them. Eventually, Arabic became the dominant language in these regions.¹¹⁴¹ However, this

¹¹³⁹ Greek and Coptic languages continued after the conquests in Egypt. See Maria Mavroudi, "Greek Language and Education Under Early Islam," in *Islamic Cultures, Islamic Contexts: Essays in Honor of Professor Patricia Crone*, ed. Behnam Sadeghi, Asad Q. Ahmed, Robert Hoyland, Adam Silverstein (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2014), 295–342; Petra Sijpesteijn, "Arabic-Greek Archives," in *The Multilingual Experience in Egypt, from the Ptolemies to the 'Abbasids*, ed. Arietta Papaconstantinou (Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), 105–126. Like Greek, the Coptic language was used in Umayyad Egypt too (see Eline Scheerlinck, "Protective Interventions by Local Elites in the Countryside of Early Islamic Egypt" (PhD diss., Leiden University, 2023); Berber language continued in North Africa (see Fenwick, *Early Islamic North-Africa*); Armenian language was still in use in post-conquest Armenia (see Vacca, *Non-Muslim Provinces under Early Islam*); Iranian leagues like Middle Persian, Sogdian and Bactrian continued as we have actual documents in these languages.

¹¹⁴⁰ For example, if a person from India learns the English language at school, that does not make her 'English'.

¹¹⁴¹ Van Bladel also suggests the same model for the spread of Islam in the conquered regions. He argues that there were two models for Islamicisation. The first model was individuals' association with Arab Muslims. It happened during the conquest when local people willingly attached themselves to the Arabian tribes among the

framework does not apply to the East. The Arab Muslims established a web of military garrisons from Marw to Samarkand. They settled Arab Muslims in the garrisons in Bactria and then moved them into the main cities like Balkh to live among local people. Despite intensive social contacts, these areas did not lose their local languages in favour of Arabic. Nevertheless, Arabic had an impact on the region. It contributed to the rise and expansion of New Persian written in the Arabic alphabet. Instead of Arabic, New Persian became the *lingua franca* in the post-conquest eastern Iranian regions. Arabic contained the position of being the language of religion, sciences, inscriptions of Islamic monuments and legends on coins.

Islamicisation is about the spread of Islam by the Arab Muslim conquerors in the conquered regions. However, the existence of different interpretations makes the process more complicated.¹¹⁴² One interpretation limits Islamicisation to conversion,¹¹⁴³ while another takes Islamicisation as an outcome of learning Arabic.¹¹⁴⁴ Apart from these, Islamicisation is also said to be an overall process with broad social impacts beyond individuals' conversion and adoption of Arabic. The advocate of this broad view, Andrew Peacock argues that Islamicisation should be taken as an umbrella term covering several elements, including political changes to the Muslim's benefit, the spread of the Arabic language, conversion, the

conquerors. These people who came to be known as the *mawāli* may not have known Arabic or about Islam but gradually adopted them. The second model was a settlement in which non-Muslims and Muslims lived together. The children who lived in the Arabic-speaking Muslim areas quickly learned Arabic but did not convert. Later, in their adult age, they converted to Islam and their children were born as Muslims, who had Arabic names and spoke Arabic. This means the third generation of a non-Muslim family became Muslim Arabic-speaking (Van Bladel, "Arabising," 16).

¹¹⁴² Both Hawting and Van Bladel recognised this difficulty. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, 9; Van Bladel argued that Islamicisation was a "complex and multi-dimensional process" that took many centuries to happen (Van Bladel, "Arabising," 13).

¹¹⁴³ See Nehemia Levtzion's works, "Towards a Comparative Study of Islamization," in *Conversion to Islam*, ed. Nehemia Levtzion (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1970), 1–23, "Conversion to Islam: Some Notes towards a Comparative Study," in *Actes de 29e congrès international des orientalistes: Études arabes et islamiques*, ed. C. Cahn (Paris: L'Asiathèque, 1979): 125–129, and, "Aspects of Islamization: Weber's Observations on Islam Reconsidered," in *Max Weber and Islam*, ed. T. B. Huff and W. Schluchter (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers 1999), 153–61; Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, 1–9; Nimrod Horvitz, Christian C. Sagner, Uriel Simonsohn and Luke Yarrow, ed., *Conversion to Islam in the Premodern Age: A sourcebook* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2020); Van Bladel, "Arabising," 14; In a series of articles, Richard Bulliet has argued that adopting Arabic names represents conversion in post-conquest Iran. These are: Richard W. Bulliet, "A Quantitative Approach to Medieval Muslim Biographical Dictionaries," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 13, no. 2 (1970): 195–211, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), *Islam the View from the Edge* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), "Conversion-based Patronage and Onomastic Evidence in Early Islam," in *Patronage and Patronage in Early and Classical Islam*, ed. Monique Bernard and John Nawas (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 246–262, and "The Conversion Curve Revisited," in *Islamisation: Comparative Perspectives from History*, ed. Andrew C. S. Peacock (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 74.

¹¹⁴⁴ Though Van Bladel observed that conversion to Islamic does not necessarily leads to Arabicisation, he mentions that knowing Arabic leads to Islamicisation (Van Bladel, "Arabising," 16); See also Uriel Simonsohn, "Conversion to Islam: A Case Study for the Use of Legal Texts," *History Compass* 11, no. 8 (2013): 647–662; Peacock, "Introduction," 1–20.

increase of the Muslim population, the spread of Islamic ideology and institutions such as the sharia laws, and Islamic culture attested by the construction of mosques, adaptation of Arabic religious texts like the Qur'an and the *ḥadīth*.¹¹⁴⁵ He adds that this process includes non-Islamic cultural elements that take Islamic veneer, such as the Persian idea of kingship. In Peacock's definition, Islamicisation had a different course in different regions depending on the context. Therefore, it should be understood in the different regions' political, social, and cultural contexts.¹¹⁴⁶

The process of Islamicisation in its broader definition occurred in Bactria. It was slow but effective. The Arab Muslims changed the political situation to their benefit through conquests and negotiations, settled first in military garrisons and then moved to the cities, established their rule in the region, minted monolingual coins in Arabic with the Qur'anic verses, imposed tributes and taxes over local rulers and regular people, and some people found Arab Muslims as legitimised authority for judgment. Though the Arab Muslims did not encourage conversion in Bactria as they did in Sogdiana,¹¹⁴⁷ Bactrian individuals converted to Islam. Although the conversion rate remained low in the Umayyad period, maintenance of Islamic rule in long term in the form of the Abbasid caliphate and other Muslim dynasties ensured the continuation and increase in conversion in Bactria. Eventually, Bactria became a major Muslim region, and many of its inhabitants identified themselves as part of the Muslim community.

Islamicisation could not alienate people from their pre-Islamic past in the East, and people preserved their pre-Islamic culture even after they became Muslim.¹¹⁴⁸ It is likely that this strong cultural link prevented the domination of the Arabic language and culture in the

¹¹⁴⁵ Peacock, "Comparative Perspectives on Islamisation," 3–4; Beben maintains similar points (Beben, "Islamization on the Iranian Periphery," 319).

¹¹⁴⁶ Peacock, "Introduction," 1–2.

¹¹⁴⁷ For instance, Qutayba encouraged people of Bukhara to become Muslim and even paid them to perform daily prayers. But the Bukharis prayed in Sogdian language and many of them pretended to be Muslim but secretly worshipped their idols (al-Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, 65–71). Similarly, the Umayyads encouraged Sogdians to convert to Islam to increase local support to counter the threat of the Türgesh Turks (Huseini, "The Rebellion of al-Ḥārith b. Surayj," 526–30).

¹¹⁴⁸ See Clifford E. Bosworth's articles, "The Appearance and Establishment of *Islam in Afghanistan*," in *Islamisation de L'Asie Centrale*, ed. Étienne de la Vaissière (Paris: Association Pour L'Avancement des Études Iraniennes, 2008), 241, and "The Persistent Older Heritage in the Medieval Iranian Lands," in *The Rise of Islam: The Idea of Iran volume IV*, ed. Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis and Sarah Stewart (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 30–43. For the slow process of Islamicisation in Iran, see I. P Petrushevsky *Islam in Iran*, trans. Hubert Evans (London: Athlone, 1985).

eastern Iranian regions.¹¹⁴⁹ Al-Balkhī -who wrote his book in Arabic about the merits of Balkh five centuries after the conquests of Bactria and attempted to create an Islamic identity for Balkh by connecting it to cities like Mecca and Medina- was still unable to break away from the pre-Islamic cultural ties that were alive in the region. Hence, post-conquest Bactria became part of the Islamic community while preserving its cultural identity expressed in the Persian language.

Conclusion

The early eight-century Arab Muslim conquests of Bactria impacted the region. The Arab Muslims expanded their military and political control over most parts of Bactria and added them to the Umayyad province of Khurasan. They first settled in the garrison and then moved into the cities. Their settlement among local people provided intensive social interaction between them and the local inhabitants. They expanded their form of administration in Bactria and received taxes and tributes. They introduced Arabic language, culture, and Islamic ideology in Bactria. Living together under the Arab Muslim rule allowed the rise of bilinguals, who spoke Arabic and local languages and worked for the administration. Some local Bactrians turned to Arab Muslim authorities to solve their problems, received legal documents from them, and some converted at their hands. The Arab Muslims constructed mosques first in the garrisons for the Arab Muslims, and then within the main cities. Building mosques represented the presence of Islam in the diverse religious landscape of Bactria. Later, Bactrian Muslim elites made the mosque an indispensable part of the Bactrian landmark. By the end of the Umayyad period, the Umayyad administration expanded to almost all parts of Bactria. Arabic was used as an administrative language in the areas directly controlled by the Arab Muslims. Although Arabic did not become the primary language in the region, it played a significant role in rise and expansion of New Persian that eventually replaced local languages like the Bactrian and Sogdian. In short, Bactria was Islamicised but not Arabicised. All these marked social and political changes affected by the Arab Muslims' conquests.

¹¹⁴⁹ The situation differed in the western parts of the Islamic empire. In Egypt, Christianity had cut the ties with the pharaonic past and allowed Islam to create a new identity for the region. See Michael Cook, "Pharaonic History in Medieval Egypt," *Studia Islamica* 57 (1983): 67–103.

