



# BUKHARA V. ARCHAEOLOGY AND MONUMENTS

---

## BUKHARA

### v. Archaeology and Monuments

According to new archeological data, the earliest settlement levels at Bukhara can be dated to the 5th-2nd centuries B.C. (Askarov and Usmanova, p. 10; Mukhamedzhanov, p. 39). During this period Bukhara consisted of a citadel (*arg*; ca. 2ha) on a hill and a large, sprawling settlement across a wide ditch to the east. In about the 3rd century B.C. the citadel was reinforced with walls up to 6-7 m thick. At the end of the 1st millennium B.C. and in the immediately succeeding centuries Bukhara was an autonomous territory within the domain of the K'ang-chü dynasty; its rulers bore the Aramaic title MR'Y "sovereign" and minted coins on the model of the tetradrachms of the Bactrian king Euthydemus (d. ca. 189 B.C.; Tarn, pp. 82-83), with gradual evolution of both image and inscription (Rtveladze and Musakaeva, pp. 35-38).

Probably at the time of the Boḡārḡodāt Bīdūn (d. ca. 61/680; Balādorī, *Fotūh*, p. 413) the citadel, which had long been in ruins, was enlarged to cover an area of about a hectare; new outer walls were constructed, and the earlier walls were incorporated into a platform 16-18 m high; a new, inner wall was built on this platform, with only a narrow ledge around its base. There were two gates connected by a street: the Ġūrīān and Rīgestān gates, on the eastern and



western sides respectively. The latter took its name from the large open square in front of it. Bīdūn's palace, which was among the most important constructions in the citadel, was built on seven stone piers arranged in the same pattern as the stars in the constellation of the Great Bear (Naršaḳī, pp. 33-34; Naršaḳī, tr. Frye, p. 24; Barthold, *Turkestan*<sup>3</sup>, p. 100); there was also a pagan temple. The Boḳārḳodāts had another palace on the Rīgestān, apparently still in their possession in the 2nd/8th century (Naršaḳī, pp. 36, 89; tr. Frye, pp. 25, 65).

The city (*šahrestān*) had grown up east of the citadel. In the 5th-6th centuries it had consisted of two independent walled sections, separated by a dried-up riverbed, which served as a defensive ditch; the northern section covered an area 8-11 ha, the southern 7-8 ha (Mukhamedzhanov and Mirzaakhmedov, pp. 101-02). At the beginning of the 8th century the two parts were gradually merged and the ditch replaced by a main street. The result was a rectangular walled town (30-35 ha), which was divided into quarters by two main cross streets (*ibid.*, pp. 101-02, fig. 1). There were seven gates in the fortified wall (see Naršaḳī, pp. 73-91, who names only six; Naršaḳī, tr. Frye, pp. 54-58; Eṣṭaḳrī, p. 306; cf. Barthold, *Turkestan*<sup>3</sup>, p. 101; Belenitskiĭ et al., pp. 233-34 and 237 plan): 'Aṭṭārān (Bāzār; Eṣṭaḳrī: Madīna "city"), Banū Sa'd, Banū Asad (Mohra), Kandīz (Eṣāṭaḳrī: Qohandez; in some Naršaḳī manuscripts: Gabriya "Magians," tr. Frye, p. 55 n.), Ḥadīd "iron" (Eṣṭaḳrī, omitted in Naršaḳī), Ḥaḳra (Ḥofra), Now (Nūn, Nūr). Within the town stood the fire temple, the Māk *bāzār*, where idols were sold (Naršaḳī, p. 29; Naršaḳī, tr. Frye, pp. 20-21), and the residences of the nobility. Under an agreement with Qotayba b. Moslem (49-96/669-715) the inhabitants of Bukhara were forced to cede half the houses in the walled city to the Arab conquerors (Naršaḳī, p. 73; Naršaḳī, tr. Frye, p. 53). To the northeast of the city, at a place called Kūšk-e Moḡān rich merchants erected 700 castles with living quarters for servants (Barthold, 1965, p. 384). There were fire temples there also, and at the beginning of the 9th century the *Ḳarqān bāzār* was constructed (Naršaḳī, pp. 43, 79).

During the reign of the Samanids (263-395/875-1005), Bukhara developed into a large town, consisting of the citadel, the walled city, and an inner and an outer suburb (*rabaḏ*; Belenitskiĭ et al., pp. 240-53; Barthold, 1965, pp. 380-81). The area of the citadel was 3.5 ha (not 9.2 ha, as in *EI*<sup>1</sup>, s.v. Bukhārā, pp. 809-16, and *EI*<sup>2</sup>, pp. 1293-96). Inside it there were a castle (*qal'a*) containing the governor's palace, a prison, administrative offices, and the treasury (Moḡaddasī, p. 280; Barthold, 1965, p. 381). In this period most commercial and



administrative functions were transferred from the walled city to the *rabażes*. The southern part of the inner *rabaż* was entirely occupied by *bāzārs*. The great mosque, the Samanid palace, and all the court *dīvāns* were located between the walled city and the Rigestān. In the outer *rabaż* there were many castles, villas, and gardens. According to Eṣṭakrī, the area of the outer *rabaż* of Bukhara was approximately one square *farsak* (p. 305). Scholars disagree about the dating of the walls of the *rabażes*. Some consider the inner wall to be from the time of Abū Moslem (fl. between 128/745-46 and 136/753-54) and the outer wall from the reign of the Taherids (235/849-50), but others date the inner wall to the Taherids and believe the outer wall to have been built over a long period of time and completed under the Samanids. The wall of the outer *rabaż* had eleven gates: Maydān, Ebrāhīm, Rīū (Rīv), Mardaqaša (Mardkān), Kallābād, Nowbahār, Samarqand, Faḡāskūn, Rāmīṭanīya (Rāmīṭān), Ḥadšārūn, and Ġoşaj (Ġoşendis). The inner wall had twelve gates: the Iron gate, Ḥossān bridge gate, two gates at the Māk mosque, Rokna gate, a gate by the Kenānī castle, Fārjek gate, Darvāzja gate, a gate at the street of the Magians, the inner Samarkand gate, Ma‘ābed (sanctuaries) gate, and the gate at the Sawayqa bridge (Eṣṭakrī, pp. 306-07; Moqaddasī, p. 280; Ebn Ḥawqal, pp. 483-84, tr. Kramers, pp. 464-65).

Qotayba built the first great mosque in the citadel in 95/713, on the site of the old pagan temple. The wooden doors, which were taken from castles of local feudal lords, bore traces of sculptural decoration that had been destroyed. In 154/770 a new congregational mosque with a minaret was erected outside the citadel; it was repeatedly rebuilt and enlarged after destruction by fire and earthquake up to the 5th/11th century. In the Samanid period two more mosques were built (in 290/902 and 340/951), and in the 4th/10th century *madrasas* are known to have existed at Bukhara (one, the Fārjek *madrasa*, was mentioned in connection with a fire in 325/937). Memorial structures were also built near the graves of eminent shaikhs, for example, beside the hill where Abū Ḥafş was buried, “where many mosques and cells stood” (Narşakī, p. 80; tr. Frye, p. 58). One of the earliest known secular mausoleums, the dynastic tomb of the Samanids, was built near Bukhara at about the turn of the 4th/10th century and is still preserved. Its structure is austere but expressive, a simple cube with a hemispherical dome and four identical facades, each with a central arched entrance and engaged columns at the corners. Both exterior and interior are dominated by brick patterns. In this monument the structural and decorative potential of baked brick was fully exploited for the first time in central Asian architecture (Pugachenkova and



Rempel', pp. 65-67; Pugachenkova, pp. 120-23).

After the Qarakhanids captured Samarkand and Bukhara (389/999; Bartold, *Turkestan*<sup>3</sup>, p. 268), Bukhara seems to have undergone a period of stagnation, but a revival is discernible toward the end of the 5th/11th century. In the first half of the 6th/12th century Bukhara was for a time the center of the semi-independent, quasi-theocratic state founded by the *šadrs* (Hanafite legal scholars) *Āl-e Borhān*. In 535/1141 the city was captured by the Qarā Ketāy, but the *šadrs* continued to play an important role. During this century the walls of the inner *rabaž* and the citadel were repaired, and in 560/1164-65 the wall of the outer *rabaž* and portions of the citadel walls and towers were riveted with baked brick. In 515/1121-22 a new great mosque was built, incorporating some of the woodwork from the old mosque (Naršaķī, pp. 70-71; tr. Frye, p. 51). The adjacent minaret very soon collapsed, however, destroying two-thirds of this mosque. The sanctuary was rebuilt, and in 521/1127 a new minaret, Menār-e Kalān (Kalyan), was erected. Its sharply tapering circular shaft (48 m) is patterned with bands of ornamental brick and topped by a lantern; it still dominates the skyline of Bukhara (Nil'sen, pp. 183-91; Pugachenkova and Rempel', pp. 67-70). In 513/1129 a small open prayer hall (*namāzġāh*) was built on the site of the old Šamsābād garden. The surface of its long brick *qebļa* wall was patterned with geometric designs highlighted with carved terracotta; the central *mehṛāb* was redecorated with glazed tiles in the 8th/15th century; in the 10th/16th century a facade with arched entrances was added (Nil'sen, pp. 61-70). Aside from the Kalyan minaret the only preserved element of the 6th/12th-century mosques in Bukhara is the facade of the small Maġak-e 'Aṭṭārī mosque. Its arched portal, flanked by engaged quarter-columns, is faced with ornamental brickwork; the inscription was carved from blue-glazed terracotta (Nil'sen, pp. 70-83). The interior of this mosque was completely rebuilt in the 10th/16th century under the Shaibanid ruler 'Abd-Allāh I (see below).

New palaces are mentioned in various sources; for example, at Šamsābād near the Ebrāhīm gate "there were many splendid buildings," including a walled park containing a palace, a pigeon house, and a zoological garden (Naršaķī, pp. 40-41; tr. Frye, p. 29). The governor's palace was near Jūybār, and two others were located in the (A)bū Layṭ district and beside the Sa'dābād gate respectively. Splendid royal baths and *madrasas* are also mentioned (Naršaķī, pp. 40-42; tr. Frye, pp. 29-30).

In 604/1207 Bukhara fell to the K̄vārazmšāh Moḡammad b. Takaš, who repaired the citadel and erected new buildings there. In 616/1220 the city was



destroyed by the Mongols. It began to revive only in the second half of the 7th/13th century, when, for example, two large *madrasas* were built, the Mas'ūdīya and the Kānīya. The former was destroyed in 671/1273 but was apparently later rebuilt; neither building has survived.

Two monuments survive from the [Chaghatayid](#) period (624-771/1227-1370): the mausoleum complex of Boyānqolī Khan (one of the last Chaghatayid khans of Transoxania; d. after 760/1358) and Sayf-al-Dīn Bākarzī (second half of the 8th/14th century, facade rebuilt in the 9-10th/15-16th centuries), on the outskirts of the city. It is a variant of the two-chamber mausoleum with portal; in the earlier tomb chamber panels of richly carved glazed terracotta decoration have been preserved (Pugachenkova and Rempel', pp. 72-75).

In 781/1380 Tīmūr built the Ūšma-ye Ayyūb mausoleum, a complex structure dominated by a tall, conical dome (ibid., p. 75). The only known building of the later Timurids at Bukhara is the *madrasa* of Oloḡ Beg (built 819/1417), the first of three such buildings that he commissioned and the oldest preserved in Central Asia. The *madrasa*, which was built by the architect Esmā'īl b. Ṭāher Eṣfahānī, is of the traditional courtyard type with two facing *ayvāns* on the longitudinal axis. The sides of the courtyard consist of two stories of domed chambers (*hojras*), with a classroom (*dars-kāna*) and a mosque in the corners. The facade is characterized by a tall framed portal (*pištāq*) and small corner towers. This *madrasa* was restored in 993/1585, and there is also glazed-tile decoration from the 11th/17th century (ibid., pp. 76-78).

Under the Shaibanids (905-1007/1500-98) and the Janids (1007-1199/1599-1785) there was an expansion of trade between Bukhara and Russia. It was a period of active building, in which especially *bāzārs*, caravansaries, and underground reservoirs (*sardābas*) proliferated. There was a *čārsū* in the center of Bukhara already in the 10th/16th century (Boldyrev, p. 134). Sayyed Mīr 'Abd-Allāh, the Sufi shaikh known as Mīr-e 'Arab, had come to Bukhara from Esfijāb (Sayram) sometime after 921/1515. In 942/1535-36 he constructed the *madrasa* that bears his name across from the Masjed-e Kalān, the main congregational mosque of Bukhara (see above); by 947/1539 the mosque itself had been completely rebuilt, with six piers, stone columns, and 289 vaulted bays. The two buildings and the Menār-e Kalān thus formed a unified group, known as Pā-ye Kalān (Pugachenkova and Rempel's, pp. 79-82). Under ['Abd-Allāh Khan](#) (r. 991-1006/1583-98) the western wall of Bukhara was extended to bring within the city boundary lands owned by the influential Jūybāri shaikhs; the main avenue (*kābān*) of the city started from there. Among the other public



building erected in Bukhara under the Shaibanids, the most prominent were the Qūš Madrasa, a complex including Mādar-e Kān *madrasa*, built by ‘Abd-Allāh Khan’s mother in 974/1566-67, and facing it the *madrasa* of ‘Abd-Allāh Khan himself, built in 998/1589-90; the *madrasa* built by Qol Bābā Kūkeldāš, an amir of ‘Abd-Allāh Khan, in 986/1578-79, three domed structures (*tāq*, or *čārsū*) at the intersections of the main commercial streets, as well as Tīm-e ‘Abd-Allāh Khan, a domed caravansary for textile merchants (all four usually dated 995/1586-87; cf. McChesney, who argues that the caravansary and one of the *tāqs* were probably built ten years earlier); Ûār Bakr (966-76/1559-69), a complex including a *madrasa*, mosque, and *kānaqāh* about four miles west of Bukhara, in the Sumītan district, that belonged to the Jūybāri shaikhs; and the *kānaqāh* of Fayzabād (1007/1598-99) outside the eastern city wall (Pugachenkova and Rempel’s, pp. 91-93). Several mosques (e.g., in Baland) and *kōānaqāhs* (Sufi monasteries), like those of Zayn-al-Dīn and Bahā’-al-Dīn, also survive from this period.

The Janid ‘Abd-al-‘Azīz Khan (q.v.; r. 1057-91/1647-80) rebuilt the walls of the *rabaž*. Many monumental structures survive from this period (*ibid.*, pp. 78-79, 93-95). They are characterized by a consistent typology of plan and spatial composition, a rich array of domes and vaults, and colorful tile decoration. Public buildings, domed *bāzārs*, and baths are particularly noteworthy, as are such large religious and memorial complexes as Lab-e Ḥawż, which includes a *kānaqāh*, a *madrasa*, and a reservoir (*hawż*), built by Nadr (or Naḍr) Dīvānbeḡī Arlāt in 1029-32/1619-23; and the *madrasa* of ‘Abd-al-‘Azīz Khan himself, built in 1062/1651-52 opposite the *madrasa* of Oloḡ Beg (see above).

After the city came under the control of the Manḡit dynasty (1170-1338/1757-1920) a fortified wall 12 km long with twenty-six towers was built around Bukhara, but its line did not take account of existing building rights and privately owned lands. There were eleven gates flanked by towers: Tāl-e Pač, Ogīlān, Ḥažrat-e Emām, and Samarkand in the north; Mazār and Kavola in the east; Salla-kāna-ye Ebrāhīm (Namāzgāh), and Shaikh Jalāl in the south; and Karakol and Šīrgarān in the west (see Sukhareva, 1958).

Modern Bukhara is one of the most attractive foci of international tourism. The historic center of the city has been declared a state reserve; its architectural monuments are under government protection and are being restored. Traditional handicrafts—stucco and wood carving, repousse, work in metal, gold embroidery and other needlework, and modeling of terracotta figurines—are also practiced there.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

I. Askarov and Z. I. Usmanova, *Novye dannye k istorii Bukhary. Istoriya i arkheologiya Srednei Azii*, Ashkhabad, 1978.

V. V. Bartol'd (Barthold), "Bukhara," in his *Sochineniya* III, 1965, pp. 378-94.

Idem, *Histoire des Turcs d'Asie centrale*, Paris, 1945; repr., Philadelphia, 1977.

Idem and R. N. Frye, "Bukhara," in *EI*<sup>2</sup> I, pp. 1333-36.

A. M. Belenitskiĭ, I. B. Bentovich, and O. G. Bol'shakov, *Srednevekoviĭ gorod Srednei Azii*, Leningrad, 1973, pp. 232-56.

A. N. Boldyrev, *Zaĭnaddin Vasifi, Tadjihskii pisatel' XVI v. (Opyt tvorcheskoi biografii)*, Stalinabad, 1957.

E. A. Davidovich, "Diskussionnye voprosy v knige A. M. Belenitskogo, I. B. Bentovich i O. G. Bol'shakova *Srednevekoviĭ gorod Srednei Azii*," pt. 1, in *Drevnost' i srednevekov'e narodov Srednei Azii (istoriya i kul'tura)*, Moscow, 1978, pp. 103-16; pt. 2, in *Kul'tura i iskusstvo narodov Srednei Azii v drevnosti i srednevekov'e*, Moscow, 1979, pp. 131-48.

Henning, "Mitteliranisch," p. 53. *Istoriya Bukhary s drevneishikh vremën do nashikh dneĭ*, Tashkent, 1976.

V. A. Livshits, K. V. Kaufman, and I. M. D'yakonov, "O drevnei sogdiĭskoi pis'mennosti Bukhary," *VDI* 1, 1954, pp. 150-63.

R. D. McChesney, "Economic and Social Aspects of the Public Architecture of Bukhara in the 1560's and 1570's," *Islamic Art* 2, 1987, pp. 217-42.

A. R. Mukhamedzhanov, *Rezultaty arkheologicheskikh issledovaniĭ no territorii goroda Bukhary. Obshchestvennye nauki v Uzbekistane* I, 1984, pp. 36-44.

Idem, D. K. Mirzaakhmedov and Sh. T. Adylov, "K izucheniyu istoricheskoi



topografii i fortifikatsii Bukhary,” in *Istoriya material'noi arkhitektury Uzbekistana*, Tashkent, 1986.

V. A. Nil'sen, *Monumental'naya arkhitektura Bukharskogo oazisa*, Tashkent, 1956.

G. A. Pugachenkova, *Samarkand, Bukhara (Po drevnim pamyatnikam)*, Moscow, 1968, pp. 115-19; Germ. tr. *Samarkand, Buchara*, Berlin, 1975, pp. 47-79.

Idem and L. I. Rempel', *Vydayushchiesya pamyatniki arkhitektury Uzbekistana*, Tashkent, 1958, pp. 55-97.

L. L. Rempel', “Iz istorii gradostroitel'stva na Vostoke (materialy po planirovke staroi Bukhary),” in *Iskusstvo zodchikh Uzbekistana*, Tashkent, 1952, pp. 211-66.

Idem, *Dal'ekoe i blizkoe, Bukharskie zapisi*, Tashkent, 1981.

E. V. Rtveladze, “La circulation monetaire au nord de l'Oxus à l'époque grecobactrienne,” *Revue numismatique*, 6th ser., 26, 1984, pp. 61-76.

Idem and A. Musakaeva, “K istorii denezhnogo obrashcheniya v Zapadnom Sogde (Klad podrazhaniya tetradrahmam Evtidema iz Bukhary),” *Obshchestvennye nauki v Uzbekistane* 6, 1984.

V. A. Shishkin, *Arkhitekturnye pamyatniki Bukhary*, Tashkent, 1936.

O. A. Sukhareva, *K istorii gorodov Bukharskogo khanstva*, Tashkent, 1958.

Idem, *Pozdnefeodal'nyi gorod Bukhara kontsa XIX-nachala XX veka*, Tashkent, 1962.

W. W. Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, Cambridge, 1951.