

QARAKHANID WALL PAINTINGS IN THE CITADEL OF SAMARQAND: FIRST REPORT AND PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

“...many were the painted palaces and charming gardens which they created and embellished, but which today are levelled with the ground and indistinguishable from the desert and ravines!”¹

—Nizami-i ‘Aruzi al-Samarqandi, twelfth century

The discovery in 2000 by the French-Uzbek Archeological Mission of mural paintings of the second half of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth century in Samarqand has contributed considerably to our knowledge of pre-Mongol painting traditions, a field of great importance but with a scarcity of material data. Each newly discovered image truly requires its own detailed study, which would be impossible to include in one article. Because restoration will take many years, a series of articles on particular subjects is required, in anticipation of a final publication. In that context our goal in this first, preliminary article is threefold: to present the main results of the excavation between 2000 and 2003 concerning architecture and painting; to propose a first interpretation of the artistic program and style (with particular regard to the pre-Islamic tradition) and of the archeological evidence related to the preservation of mural decoration in the pre-Mongol period; and to discuss some historical issues connected with the Qarakhanids. In other words, we present here the main framework of a study that will be elaborated in further publications.

THE QARAKHANIDS

The history of pre-Mongol Central Asia and Iran after the arrival of Islam can be roughly divided into three major periods: first, the Arab conquest, which marks the turning point in the political and cultural evolution of the local society (seventh and eighth centuries); second, the ascendance to power, under Abbasid rule, of local dynasties (the Tahirids and Samanids among others) and the formation of a new identity, with Islam as the dominating ideology (ninth and tenth centuries, with, from the mid-eighth century, the rising influence

of the oriental nobility in political affairs of the central caliphate); and third, the coming to power, by the end of tenth century, of Turkic dynasties, some originating from Turkic slaves involved in the military system of the state (the Ghaznavids and Khwarazmshahs), and others (Qarakhanids and Seljuks) from the chiefs of the large migration of Turkic tribes from the steppes of Central Asia toward Transoxiana (*Mā warā’ al-nahr*), the Iranian plateau, and the Mediterranean. Even if the quotidian life of the Iranian-speaking populations was not immediately affected, the process of interaction of the two different ethnic groups, particularly in the context of the political domination of one of them by the other, had a deep impact on the history of the region.

The Qarakhanids belonged to one of the Turkic tribes of the Qarluq Confederation. Islamized in tenth century, they arrived by the end of that century in Transoxiana and took power from the Samanids, ending their rule.² In contrast to the Samanids, whose single head of state had more problems with generals than with relatives (not only in court intrigue but in the possession of domains and military power), the Qarakhanid state system was based on archaic Turkic principles of partitioning state territory among members of the reigning family. The head of the dynasty, the Khan, represented above all supreme authority in terms of kin hierarchy, which, being extremely sophisticated, was in permanent dynamism. The titles given to a prince changed according to his current position in the family structure, in which the death of one member could affect the status of another. This respect for family hierarchy and tribal discipline made the Qarakhanids particularly strong at the beginning of their conquests, but after their final installation in Transoxiana the partition system caused permanent rivalries between powerful princes. For this reason, by the eleventh century the Khaqanate of the Qarakhanids was already divided into two parts—the western, with Samarqand

as its capital, and the eastern, ruled from Balasaghun and Kashghar. By the end of the eleventh century, and until the mid-twelfth, the Great Seljuks imposed their formal supremacy on the Qarakhanids, but the latter did not lose their power in Transoxiana. After the battle in the Qatwan steppe in 1141, supremacy over the region was gained by a people migrating from the East—the Kitans known as the Qara Khitays. Their Gurkhan leader did not aim to organize a large migration and occupy Central Transoxiana, and for that reason he treated the Qarakhanids as his vassals, obliging them to continue collecting taxes and paying tribute. The situation was delicate because the Qara Khitays were not Muslim. Domination of “infidels” over countries of Islam by definition created a certain ideological tension that was purposefully used by the great Muslim sovereigns in international affairs. The Qarakhanids were obliged to maneuver between the Khitays on the one side and, by the end of the twelfth century and the beginning of the thirteenth, the growing power of the rulers of Khwarazm, the Khwarazmshahs, on the other. Finally, the last Qarakhanid, ‘Uthman b. Ibrahim, failed in managing his alliances with these opposing forces and in 1212–13 was executed in Samarqand by the Khwarazmshah Muhammad b. Tekish, ending the dynasty.

The discovery of paintings made under Qarakhanid rule gives us a new opportunity to address questions related to Transoxanian culture of this period.

WALL PAINTINGS: ARCHEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE AND PROBLEMS

Mural paintings from the Islamic East dating between the eighth and thirteenth centuries are known from very few examples, among which human representations are even rarer. In northeastern Iran, and in large parts of Afghanistan and Central Asia (a territory roughly equivalent in the eighth century to the administrative region of Greater Khurasan), the sites where such murals have been found can be easily enumerated: Nishapur, Lashkar-i Bazar, and Hulbuk. In addition, some small fragments, currently exhibited in the Metropolitan Museum, are thought to come from Rayy.³ All of these are presumed to date from the tenth to the twelfth century. One cannot help being struck by the almost total lack of specimens from the transitional period of the formation of figurative art after the spread of Islam in the eighth to the tenth century, despite the relatively high number of mural

paintings of the pre-Islamic period discovered by Soviet archeologists at several sites in Central Asia.

An important factor, sometimes not taken into consideration by art historians, is the stratigraphical “biography” of a site and the physical state of preservation of monuments due to the historical situation at the time. During the long period of Islamization, sites like Penjikent, in which not only the temples and the palace but the majority of the private houses were decorated with paintings, or the palaces of Afrasiab, Varakhsha, and later Shahristan (seventh to ninth century) were simply abandoned—either forever or for a period of time long enough to ruin the buildings and cover their ground floors with fill or collapsed architecture that preserved the wall decorations. Thus, the longer the period of abandonment, the better and higher was the level of wall conservation. In most cases later construction activity, if it occurred, took place over the leveled remains of previous structures. In general terms, after the Arab conquest, Central Asia did not experience such widespread abandonment, reoccupation, and transformation of the urban and suburban fabric again until the Mongol invasion.

The conservation of Islamic paintings depended, obviously, on the same factor of construction intensity. In an old city like Samarqand, limited by ancient walls and with more or less continuous occupation of living spaces, buildings dating from the ninth to the thirteenth century are usually less well preserved than those of the pre-Islamic period, due to permanent reconstruction activity in the same place, without long periods of abandonment. When new rulers, for example the Qarakhanids, decided to change their architectural environment because it was obsolete or simply associated with the previous dynasty (i.e., the Samanids), old buildings could be razed to the ground. Sometimes, by chance, those remains are partially preserved, but rarely to more than one meter of stratigraphy. Of course, in their everyday life the citizens were not concerned with the change of dynasties, and when one of them decided to erect a new house, he leveled the old one on the site in the same manner. This can be seen particularly clearly at Afrasiab, the site of old Samarqand, which was destroyed and completely abandoned only after the disaster inflicted by the Mongol troops.

A different situation prevailed at sites founded after the Arab conquest that for various reasons were vacated by the population, the largest example being Samarra, in Iraq. In the eastern Islamic world, the most charac-

teristic such site is the palace of Lashkar-i Bazar, still standing in the desert. It is worth noting that the site associated with the famous city of Nishapur seems not to have had Sasanian or even Umayyad levels,⁴ being occupied only since the Abbasid period, particularly under the Tahirids in the ninth century. Although four excavated zones had all been occupied at more than one level (the largest, Tepe Madrasa, for three important periods, besides repairs),⁵ parts of the buildings were apparently destroyed during an earthquake in 1145 and never rebuilt.⁶ The impact of the Mongol invasion was similar to that on Samarqand.

The palace of Hulbuk, the capital of Khuttal, was preserved as a separate architectural complex of the ninth to the eleventh century, and after the abandonment formed a long, high tepe.

As we can see, all the known monuments where Islamic wall paintings have been found belong to the same group of relatively well-preserved sites. There is no doubt that those three are not the last.

To another group belong the existing mausoleums and mosques in which some traces of paintings are preserved (relatively well in one mausoleum of Kharraqan,⁷ and badly damaged in the mausoleum of Sultan Sanjar in Marv,⁸ for example). In any case the paintings in the religious buildings apparently never represented humans, although some contain images of birds, plants, and objects. By definition, there is a distinctive type of wall decoration related to the new religious outlook.

These short field observations show that the history of architectural remains can vary depending on many geographical and historical factors. To some extent, archeological evidence can throw light on the gap in which we are interested, but it goes without saying that the particularities of site formation from the eighth century to the thirteenth do not explain the entire issue of the imbalance of extant paintings.

The most important factor was the transformation of society. While there is no room here for discussing this problem in detail, one point should be stressed: whatever period we study, whether before or after the coming of Islam, generalizations may be made only if each case is analyzed within its local context, especially the extent to which the monumental pictorial tradition had been developed previously. In any case, the first questions are who commissioned the wall paintings, for what milieu, and why?

Sogdian wall paintings, for example, represent particular and complex phenomena distinguishable from

what we know elsewhere. If in Afghanistan some sites preserve the remains of paintings that are significantly different from the Sogdian examples yet have points of comparison, in central Khurasan (Marv and Nishapur) we know almost nothing of the pre-Islamic period.

One of the factors that determined the efflorescence of this type of wall decoration in Sogdia was a remarkable increase in wealth due to the Sogdians' position in international trade, and thus the will and available means to decorate their houses richly. This means that wall paintings were in demand and the artists in a favored position. There is no doubt that after the Arab conquest their situation changed dramatically: no orders, no jobs, no paintings. The artists probably could have fled to those regions less affected by the military struggles, such as Ustrushana or Shash, but there is no clear evidence that they did. The question is who produced such work following the stabilization of the region in the ninth century, when painted wall decorations once again came into demand? Had the tradition been completely disrupted, or were knowledge and technique somehow transmitted from old masters to a later generation? More probably, the painters directly copied the images on the walls of old, abandoned buildings and the pages of unburned books in order to create their own "database" of images; according to G. V. Shishkina, the faces of the personages in the Red Hall in Varakhsha, for instance, seem to have been carefully cut from the wall after the palace was abandoned and were not all intentionally damaged.⁹

On the other hand, new rulers could invite painters from other regions, and thus the question should be asked differently, in terms of so-called influence and of importation. As always, the true situation cannot be interpreted with only one approach, but lack of information still poses the main problem, which the scant material in the textual sources may help but does not resolve.

Since there are no transitional-period wall paintings and no miniatures that correspond with Samanid rule in Transoxiana in the ninth and tenth centuries, we cannot go beyond the level of conjecture. We can only state that decorative painting was still in fashion in the palaces of rulers and probably less so in the houses of ordinary citizens, as had been the case before Islam. The old traditions were transformed as the fund of mythological images was affected by the long process of Islamization. The population increased; social groups became more diversified and urban life

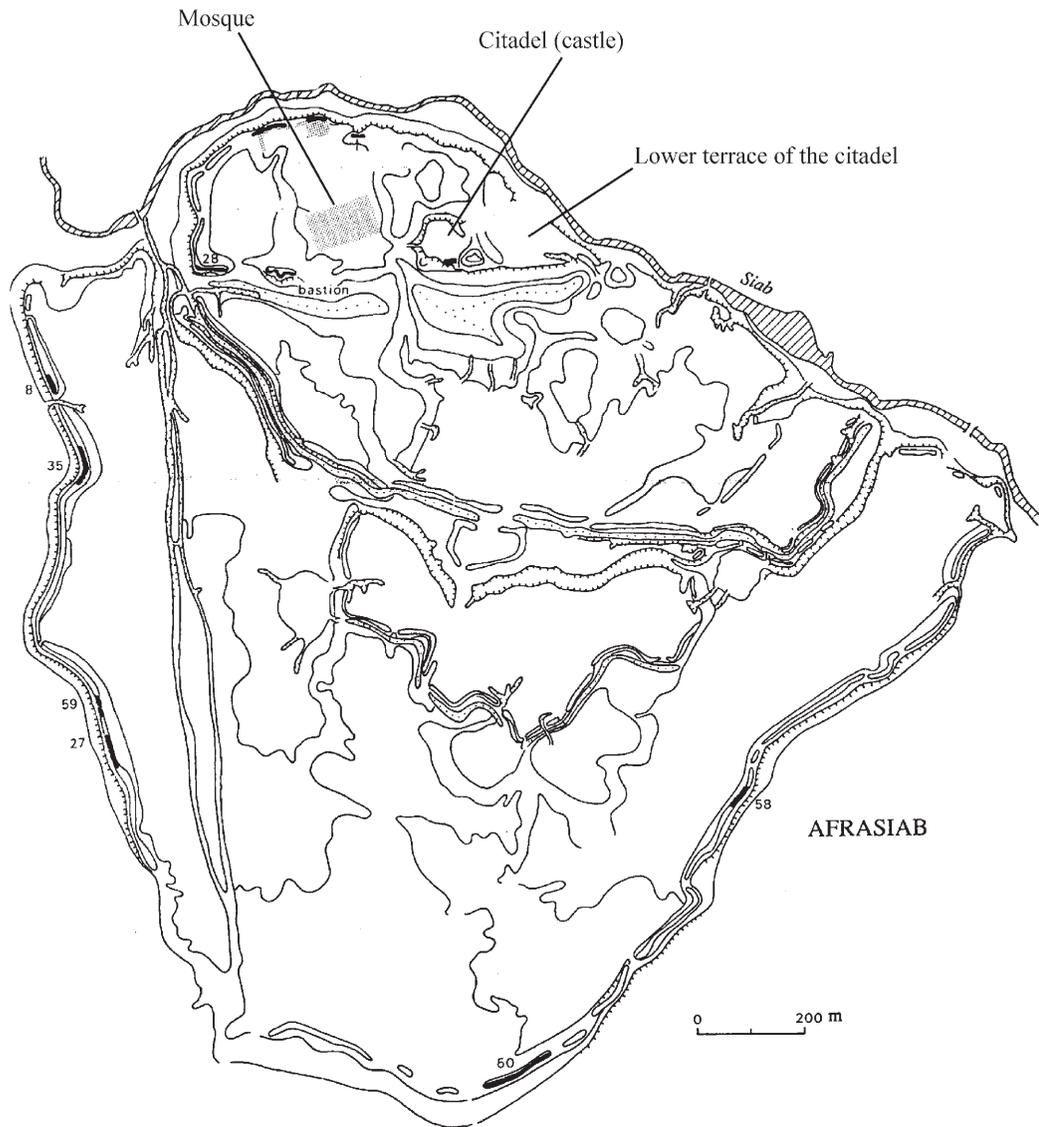


Fig. 1. General plan of the site of Afrasiab, based on the 1885 plan of Vasiliev and Kuzmin. (Drawing by G. Lecuyot, "Fouilles de la mission franco-soviétique à l'ancienne Samarkand (Afrasiab)," *CRAI* [1990]: 357)

more complex; wall painting probably became more expensive, and hence a range in the quality of paintings can be seen, depending on the wealth of the patron. One can mention Nishapur, the only site where mural paintings were found in buildings in different areas and of different function, but nevertheless in the same urban milieu. It seems that paintings were increasingly becoming an art of the upper-class elite.

In this context, the recent discovery of palatial wall paintings in Samarkand has not added any direct infor-

mation about the "beginning" of Islamic wall painting in Transoxiana but does give us priceless data about the outcome, just before the Mongol invasion, of the evolution of this type of art.

GENERAL BACKGROUND OF THE EXCAVATION

The famous site of Afrasiab, old Samarkand, occupied a surface area of almost 220 hectares from the time of its foundation in the seventh-to-sixth century BC



Fig. 2. Northern part of the Afrasiab site. 1. “Sacred area” with the eighth-century architectural complex and the mosques above it. 2. Citadel (donjon or castle). 3. Lower terrace of the citadel with the *dār al-imāra* from the mid-eighth century. (Franco-Uzbek Archeological Mission in Samarkand, different plans unified by C. Rapin)

(fig. 1). Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the northern part of the site has been considered the administrative and religious center of the old city (fig. 2). This part was protected by a special line of walls, and the existing topographical relief clearly indicated one particularly high structure with steep slopes, which without doubt functioned as a citadel castle. The western half of the northern part of the city, in front of the castle, consists of a huge plateau with remains, as was established by further excavations, of the main mosque of the ninth-to-thirteenth century.

Despite more than a hundred years of intensive Russian and Soviet archeological investigations at many key areas of Afrasiab, an important zone of the lower terrace, situated at the eastern side of the castle and forming with the latter a two-part citadel, surprisingly did not attract particular attention. The situation changed with the creation by Frantz Grenet and Muxamadzhon Isamidinov of the French-Uzbek Archeological Mission in Samarqand in 1989. The entire northern part, with the “sacred” mosque area and citadel, became a main object of the archeological activities of the Mission. In 1991, the author of this article and his Uzbek colleague Anvar Atakhod-

zhaev were charged with leading the excavations on the lower terrace of the citadel, which was conjecturally interpreted by Olga Inevatkina and Paul Bernard as a zone of royal palaces.¹⁰ This idea was overwhelmingly confirmed by further excavation.

A number of architectural elements have been discovered, dating between the eighth century and the thirteenth, when the city was destroyed by Chingiz Khan’s troops. The architectural structures are sufficiently well preserved to enable us to understand the construction principles of the citadel during two of the phases of occupation after the Arab conquest: the Abbasid period (the eighth to the beginning of the ninth century) and the Qarakhanid period (the eleventh century to the beginning of the thirteenth).

A particularly important discovery was a huge administrative building, a *dār al-imāra* of the mid-eighth century, which occupied considerable space on the lower terrace (75.5 × 65 m). During the first ten years of excavation, the palace—which represents the first excavated example of early Islamic civic architecture in Iran and Central Asia—was the main object of our study.¹¹

From the year 2000 until the 2002 season, ongoing

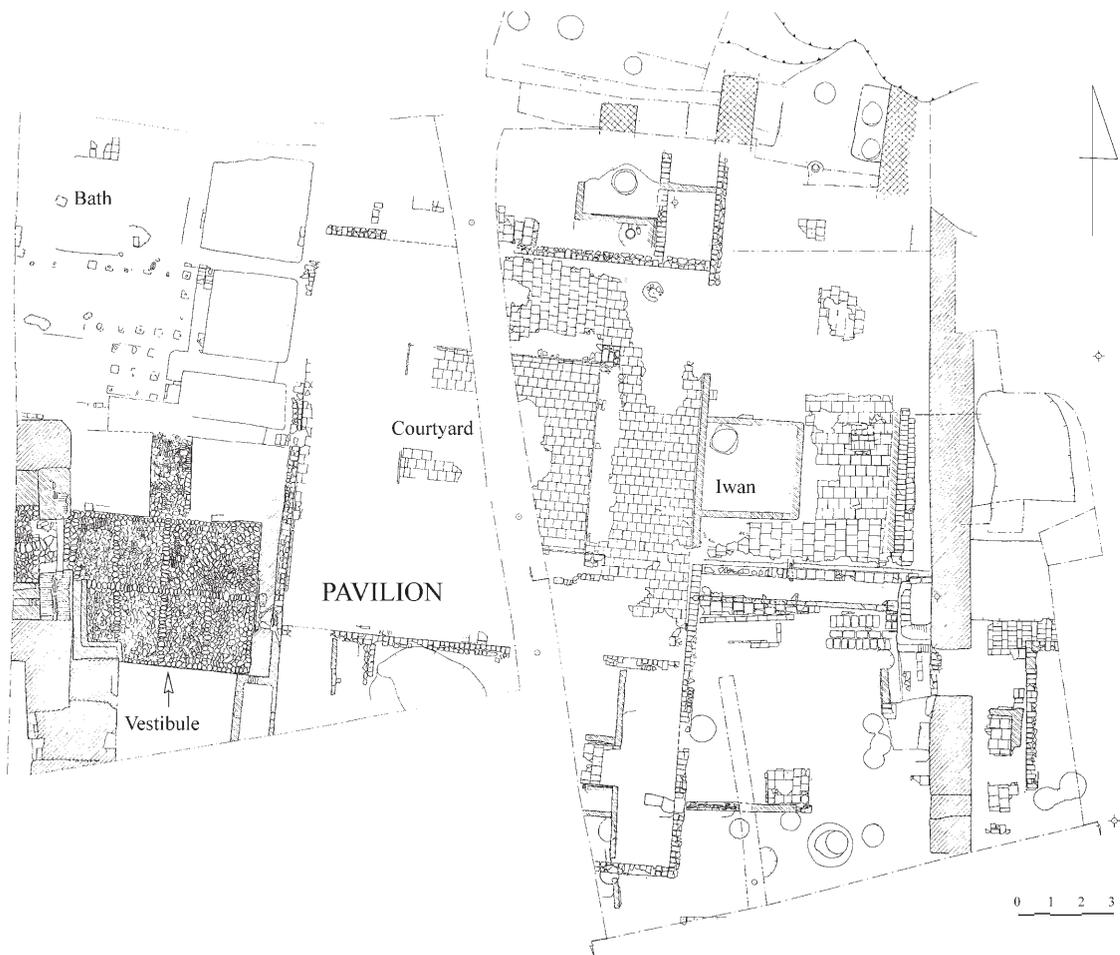


Fig. 3. Plan of the pavilion with neighboring structures. (Drawing by E. A. Kurkina with additions by T. Nikitina and O. Zaitseva)

research of the *dār al-imāra* was made possible thanks to the Max Van Berchem Foundation in Geneva.¹² Its support allowed us to organize large-scale excavations in many different zones. In 2000, when we started excavating in the northern section of the lower terrace with the aim of finding remains of the eighth-century palace, the first, utterly unexpected, fragments of painted plaster were uncovered. These finds completely changed our fieldwork strategy.

They include a number of fragments (over 500 so far) of wall paintings found in the layer of destruction of a twelfth-century pavilion-like building that had itself been built on the abandonment layer of the Abbasid palace, which had been razed to its foundations in the tenth century.

ARCHITECTURE

A spatial analysis of this area, which was carried out in 2000 and 2001, enabled us to propose a reconstruction, and afterwards to confirm archeologically the initial plan of the pavilion where the paintings were found. The plan of the building is as follows (figs. 3, 4, 5): Four iwans open onto a square courtyard (6 × 6 m) entirely paved with square baked bricks of excellent quality (27.5–28 × 28 × 3.5–4 cm). The gallery of each iwan, three meters wide, was separated from the courtyard by a border of cut bricks, placed one alongside the other on their side. The overall size of the pavilion, centered on the inner courtyard, is thus 12 × 12 m.

The roof of the iwans must have been carried on

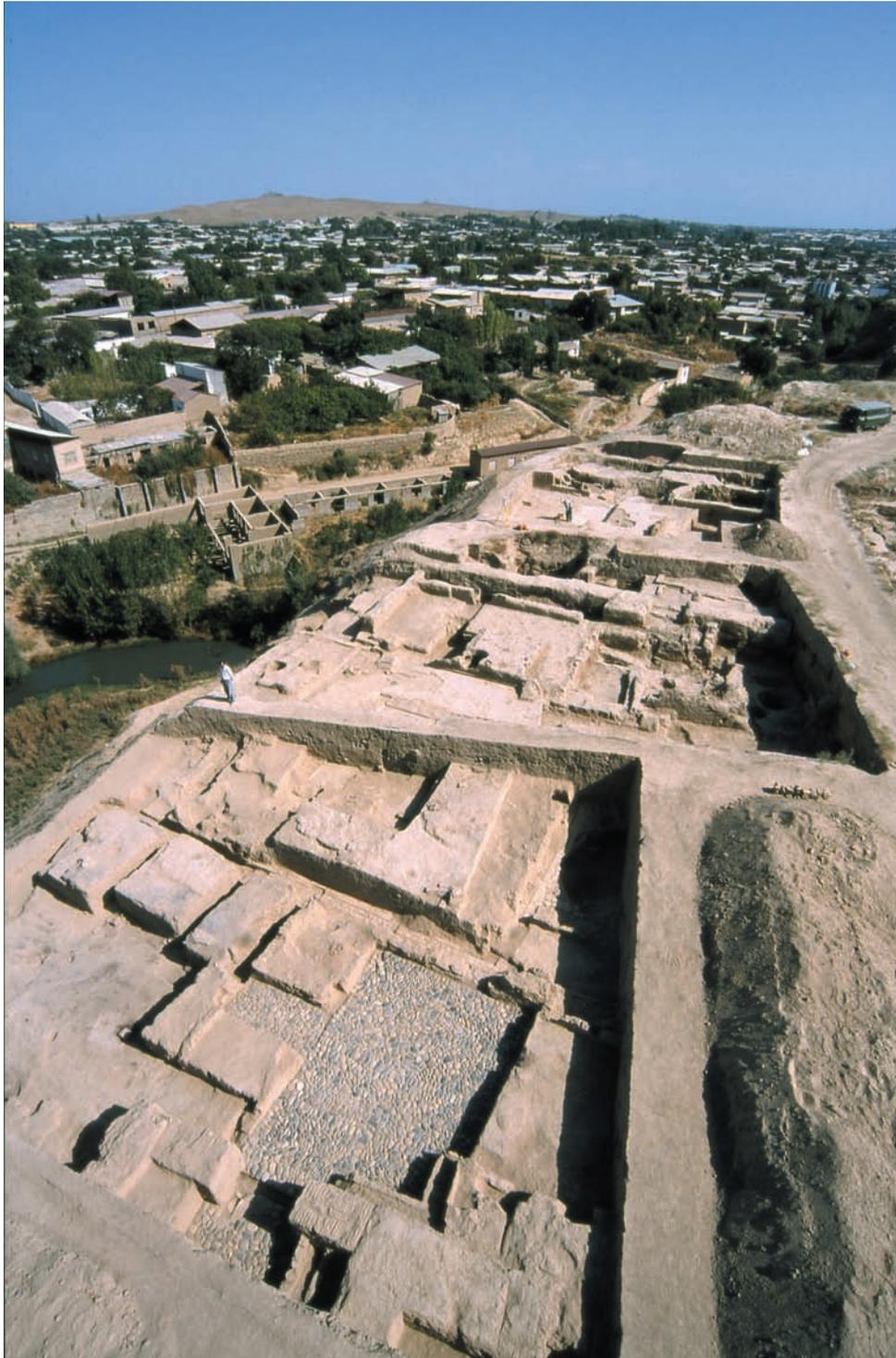


Fig. 4. Aerial view of the excavated zone, with the pavilion in the center. (Author's photo; all subsequent photos also by the author)



Fig. 5. Eastern half of the pavilion with remains of the niche-iwan in the background.

columns situated at the four corners of the courtyard. Unlike paintings of the pre-Islamic period in Central Asia, the twelfth-century examples were executed on a relatively weak support: the walls were very thin, one or two rows of bricks in thickness (about 30 cm); their foundations were made of one or two rows of reused baked bricks; and the rest of the walls were built in mud bricks. As the discovery of a few broken pieces of wood indicates, the walls were built in so-called framework technique: the bricks were laid out between vertical or horizontal beams. This technique was widespread in Central Asia until modern times, which proves that despite their apparent lightness buildings constructed in this manner were sufficiently solid, at least for the anticipated period of their duration.

A construction resembling a podium (3.2 × 3.2 m), was added to the outer side of the eastern wall. The most plausible interpretation is that this was a niche, or more likely a little iwan, built into the eastern wall and looking out onto the portico gallery and the court-

yard. The fact that it was constructed only in the eastern wall indicates that it had a particular function, which can be interpreted as a place of honor where the ruler could sit during a reception or feast.

To the north, outside of the pavilion, remains of a fireplace formed by the body of a reused jug were found, as were some small service rooms. Similar auxiliary rooms were also found on the southeast side. The excavations of 2002 showed that baths were situated to the west of the pavilion. The complex included a number of rooms as well as a sort of vestibule completely paved with cobblestones. The entrance to the pavilion from the west was situated on the side of the vestibule, which functioned as an intermediary space between the baths to the north, the paved street to the west, a large *suffa* (elevated platform) to the south, and the pavilion itself to the east.

The location of the pavilion, namely the lower terrace of the citadel of the capital city of Samarqand, leaves no doubt that only members of the royal Qarakhanid family could have lived here. The citadel of

a city by its nature is designed to protect, first and foremost, the ruler and his family, and after that, his administrative apparatus. The relatively small size of the pavilion, the general “lightness” of its construction despite the rich decoration of its walls with paintings, and the presence of baths, kitchen, and auxiliary rooms clearly indicate the private character of the complex, which was provided with all needed services. There was simply no space for public official receptions. The main palace would probably have been situated in the castle (donjon) if not elsewhere on the lower terrace in the still unexcavated area, or outside the citadel altogether. We know, for instance, that some fragments of wall paintings and carved glazed tiles were found in the castle.¹³ The receptions that undoubtedly took place in the pavilion thus may have involved the closest members of the court and special guests.

The pavilion with its paintings has become the key to understanding the overall situation in the zone. It is now possible to reconsider all the plans drawn since 1991 and to clarify the type of occupation of the lower terrace of the citadel during the Qarakhanid period, in particular for the second half of the twelfth century.

Remains of baked brick pavements have been found in six different areas of our excavations (fig. 6). Further excavations and a reexamination of the previous plans clearly show that a number of pavilions existed in this area. These could be with or without iwans but always included an inner courtyard at the center of which was a *tashnāu* (water drain). Auxiliary rooms and presumably living rooms were built around each pavilion. Each architectural unit was focused upon a small courtyard. These units were linked together, thus forming a group of buildings separated by large carrying walls. It is worth noting that only one pavilion among those excavated was decorated with paintings.

These observations enable us to conclude that, during the Qarakhanid period, the overall plan of architectural construction on the lower terrace differed radically from that of the Abbasid period, which was characterized by the monumental *dār al-imāra* (with walls 3.5 m thick as compared with the mere 30-cm thickness of the pavilion walls) that occupied the central space within this area. In fact, we are dealing for the first time with archeological data that afford us precise knowledge of how the Turkic dynasty of the Qarakhanids, the rulers of Transoxiana from the eleventh to the beginning of the thirteenth century, orga-

nized living space in their seat of power. It is difficult to say whether this type of pavilion had some connection with the nomadic past of the Qarakhanids, but what is clear is that there was not, at least in this case, a preoccupation with building something “eternal.” The realization of these “light” construction projects did not require a long period of time, and, as shown by remains of a previous, first-period pavilion below the pavilion with the paintings, they could be easily replaced by new ones if necessary.

THE PAINTINGS

All the fragments were treated in situ by the restorers of the Institute of Archeology of Samarqand—M. Reutova, the chief of the laboratory, and J. Soukasjan, G. Akhatova, and G. Pulatova—who in 2003 worked in collaboration with V. Fominykh, a restorer at the State Hermitage Museum of St. Petersburg.

In most cases these fragments were small or medium-sized pieces of plaster (from 5 × 10 to 10 × 20 cm), some painted and some not; in some cases larger fragments (up to 2.6 × 1.6 m) were also found. The colors were applied on a fine layer of plaster (*gançh*) placed over a thicker layer (2–4 cm) of loess mixed with straw. There were three main stages in the development of the pavilion paintings (see below), the final specifications of which can be made later. The second layer of paintings was covered over with another layer of plaster well before the destruction of the pavilion.

The walls were destroyed and the context indicates that the pavilion was purposely razed to the ground. For this reason the various parts of the wall fell differently from place to place (figs. 7, 8). In some areas the fragments of plaster lie, layer by layer, very densely, whereas in other areas some fragments appear to be out of context. Fragments of plaster sometimes fell right side up, and sometimes upside-down.

After four years of excavation it is now possible to place some fragments within their original context. The different elements no longer appear unconnected, and the overall program of the artist is becoming decipherable, although the lacunas still remain very significant. The majority of fragments published here still require a detailed and definitive restoration. The photographs show the paintings in situ after discovery or after the first treatment, in the Institute of Archeology in Samarqand, of the most important and purposefully chosen fragments. A significant number of them are covered by layers of plaster that make the

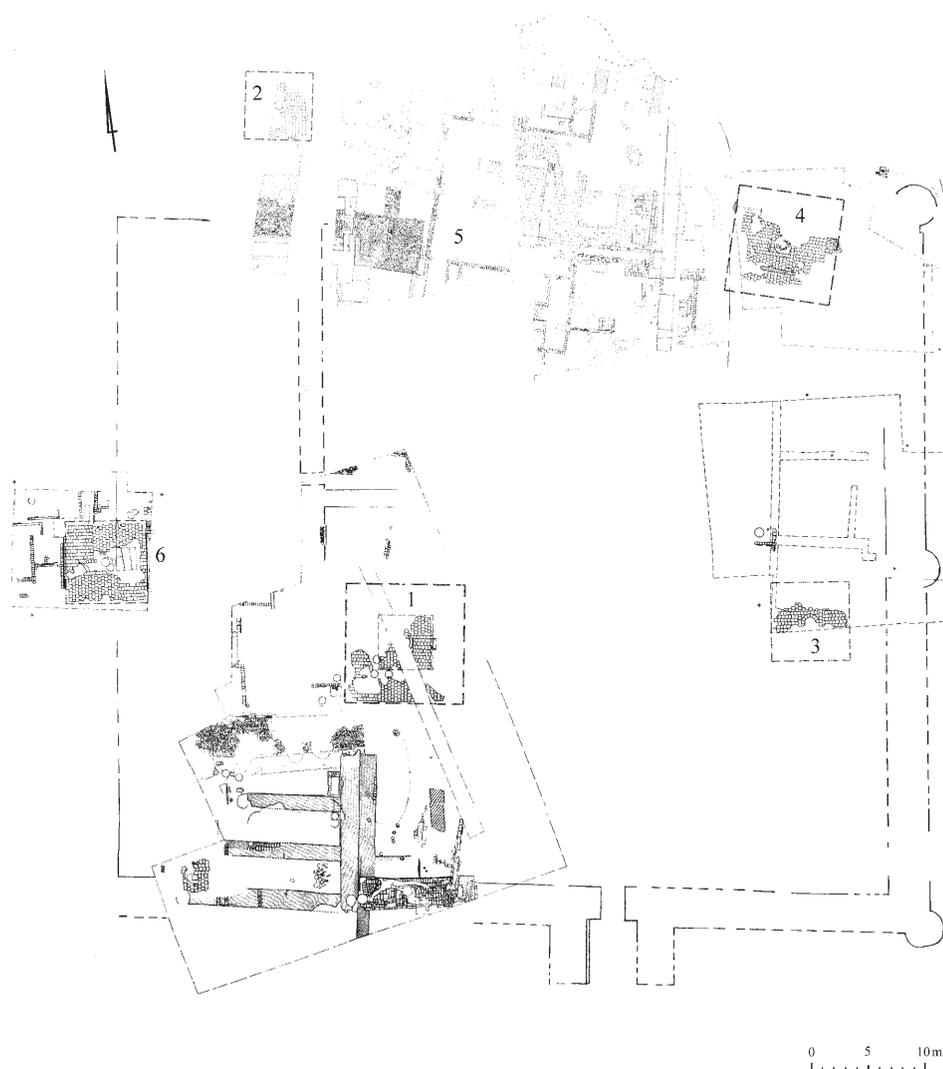


Fig. 6. Six Qarakhanid pavilions. Plan of the excavated zone on the lower terrace of the citadel, at the level of the twelfth to the beginning of the thirteenth century. The eighth-century palace is shown in broken lines. (Drawing by E. Kurkina)

subject matter of the drawing barely discernible. For this reason some details of the drawing, even on the preliminarily restored pieces, may be revealed later. One should note that about a third of the pavilion surface is still unexcavated. Nevertheless, it is time to present the excavated paintings in a succinct manner. Since many fragments raise a number of questions about context and subject matter, topics that need to be seriously treated after the end of field and resto-

ration work, we will try in this preliminary report to address only the most important questions related to the painting program.

In some cases, which wall a painting fell from is conjectural. If for some fragments there is no doubt about provenance, many others cannot be classified with certainty. The eastern part of the pavilion, which was the first to be entirely excavated, is also the first to have been reconstructed.



Fig. 7. Fragment with dogs, in situ.



Fig. 8. Fragment fallen from the eastern wall.



Fig. 9. Preliminary drawing of the arrow bearer in his frame (Drawing by M. Reutova, with additions by Y. Karev)



Fig 10. Arrow bearer, contoured image after the first preliminary treatment.



Fig. 11. Arrow bearer. Detail of hand with arrow.

The Eastern Wall

The monumental representation of a Turkic warrior holding a bow and arrow provides the key to calculating the overall proportions of the eastern wall. The size of the fragment is about 2.6×1.6 m. Having fallen as a single piece and broken into five only after landing on a spot directly in front of the left (northern) end of the eastern wall, it represents a rare instance in which a fragment clearly had not landed far from its initial position.

The figure, about 130 cm in height and positioned in the center of the fragment, is about three-quarter life size (figs. 9, 10). He is presented in full stature, with face turned, both hands visible, and his left leg raised to his left (the spectator's right). Judging from the rest of his badly damaged face—there remain only fragments of the forehead with the right eyebrow, cheek, and ear—his head is undoubtedly shown in three-quarter view. There is no trace of a halo. Three long black plaits enhance a visual effect of movement.

On his head the warrior wears a medium-sized black toque, probably felt, topped with a small pointed peak

that ends with a thin aigrette. The toque is adorned with a band of embroidery around the perimeter and is slightly curved towards the top. The band consists of small elements resembling reversed commas or drops, painted in white.

The figure delicately holds an arrow with a peculiar kind of head, apparently double pointed, which is unfortunately half damaged (fig. 11). The last five centimeters of the shaft before the arrowhead are painted red. On his right shoulder hangs a composite bow, which he hugs against his chest with his right arm, while his right hand holds the arrow feather, painted in black.

The warrior is dressed in a yellow caftan richly decorated with sophisticated motifs consisting of white, curved bands with three-cusped endings, the space between them densely filled up with bright yellow foliate ornaments. The lines defining the dress and objects are drawn in black and gray, while the exposed parts of the body are contoured in red and painted in light yellow. The inside lining of the caftan, visible at the lapels and the bottom hem, is depicted in gradations of blue. Brassards (*tirūz*) with damaged lettering (this

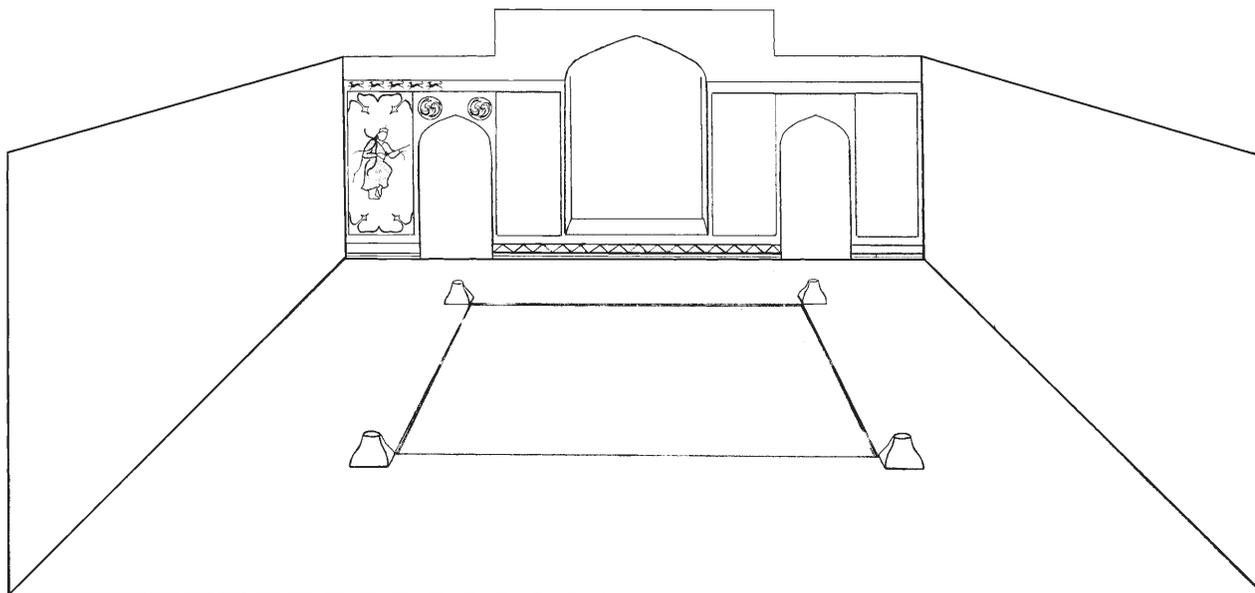


Fig. 12. Reconstruction of the pavilion, with view of the eastern wall. (Y. Karev)

needs further cleaning), encircle the warrior's upper arms. Black boots complete his attire. Only after the final restoration will it be possible to discern some details, such as the long, hanging strap—certainly a depiction of leather encrusted with round metal (?) pieces, probably attached to a belt.

The sure, fine hand, apparent not only in the delicacy of line but also in the technique of rendering volume, is that of an experienced master painter. The artist did not limit himself to the use of black to contour, for instance, the arrow, but added bright gray lines in order to give the impression of volume. When it was needed he used the technique of color gradation.

It should be noted that the man holding the arrow is represented alone within the frame, enhancing his position. The frame is made of blue geometric and vegetal motifs and as a whole would have measured 3×1.5 m. Its great size has enabled us to sort out the fragments according to their initial position and to determine the architectural plan of the pavilion (fig. 12: the figure appears on the left side of the reconstructed eastern wall).

It is quite clear that the eastern wall was divided into a number of horizontal registers, starting from the decorative baked-brick plinth and reaching to the roof. The central register included, according to our calculations, four rectangular frames, two to

a side, each about 3×1.5 m and representing a different human figure, moving in from the side toward the central frame. Probably square, this frame, corresponding to the iwan, was certainly the place of highest rank in the pavilion. It is possible that the walls inside the iwan were also painted, probably with a representation of the sovereign. But it might also be the case that four painted attendants "served" the real ruler himself, sitting within the iwan.

The cleaning of fragments found in this zone has also revealed a hand delicately holding reins, painted in blue (fig. 13), and at least two fragments of a horse (fig. 14), which suggests that there was a representation of a horseman or, probably, of the ruler himself on horseback. The decoration of his dress, although densely drawn like that of the arrow bearer, is different and consists of white stylized flowers and leaves on a black background. On the left part of the fragment one can distinguish a brassard with no inscription but a sophisticated ornament of roundels.

For the moment there is no solid evidence to associate these fragments with an initial position on the eastern wall. Moreover, considering their smaller size, we cannot be sure they come from that wall, having possibly fallen from another.

The image of part of a human face in three-quarter view represents another personage (fig. 15). Since the fragment is too small, we cannot discern if the gilded bands alternating with deep blue above the

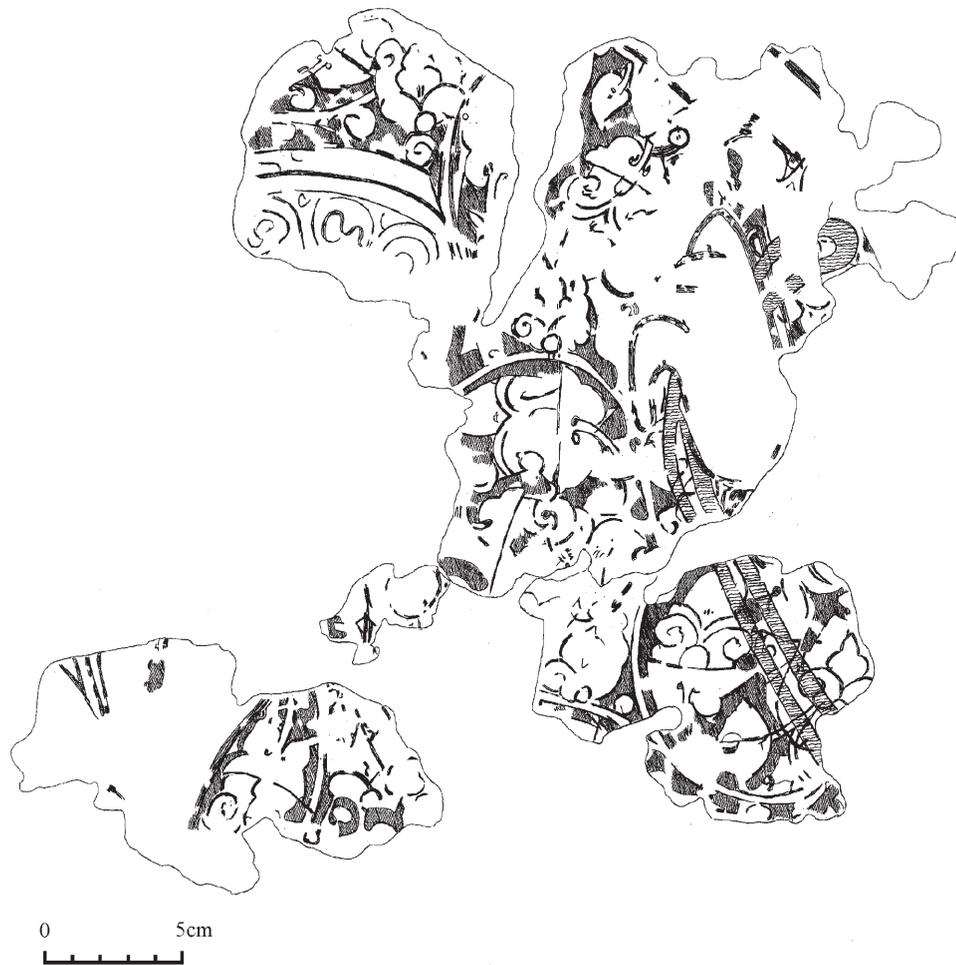


Fig. 13. Hand holding a rein. (Drawing by V. Fominykh)

face is a halo or something else. However, the use of gold color, rarely found in the pavilion, undoubtedly indicates the personage's particular role.

Another register of the eastern wall may have been situated above the main human figures. It included animals in procession: a snow leopard, a panther, and probably some fantastic beasts. The most beautiful fragment of this register represents two hunting dogs of different kinds—a yellow Afghan-like hound with long ears, and a red dog whose muzzle is damaged (figs. 16, 17). Each dog has a collar with a ring for tethering. The good state of preservation of the fragment permits us to better appreciate the ability and skill of the painter, his technique of rendering small details, and his range of colors. The muzzle of the yellow hound

is very naturalistic and seemingly imbued with a sense of humor and amazement. The volume, again, is suggested by slight touches of bright gray.

Their representation in a round medallion shows that two fighting birds must have been specifically placed (fig. 18); it is possible that such medallions filled the spaces outside the straight registers in the tympana above the arc of two doorways in the eastern wall. The reversed symmetry of the birds in "yin and yang" position is noteworthy; usually it is associated with a bird of prey attacking another one, while here the birds, while equally matched, are of different kinds. Their types are distinguished by their heads, but their bodies and tails, probably for the sake of symmetry, have the same form and differ only in color. The

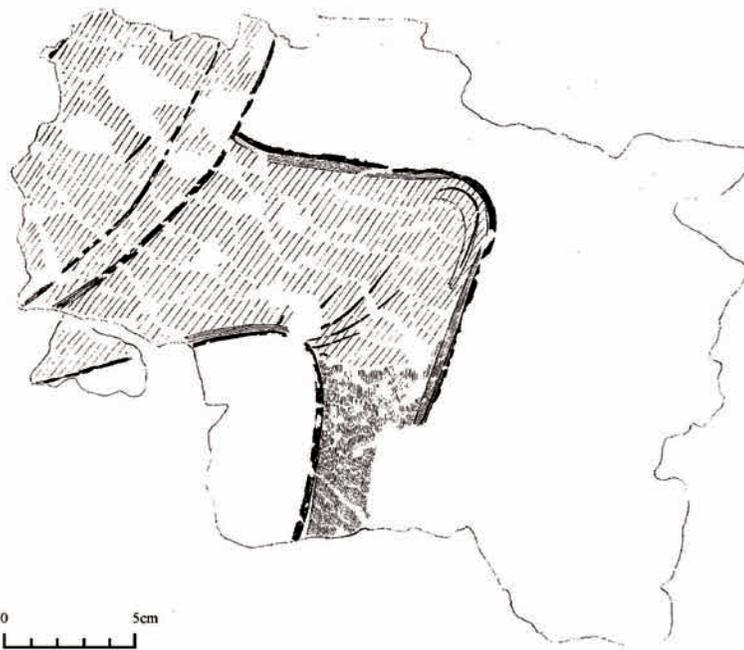


Fig. 14. Horse's leg. (Drawing by V. Fominykh)



Fig. 15. Human face with gilded bands (Drawing by V. Fominykh)



Fig. 16. Fragment with dogs, after cleaning in situ.



Fig. 17. Fragment with dogs (detail): head of a hound.



Fig. 18. Medallion with fighting birds.



Fig. 19. Boots of the figure from the western wall, and part of the bottom of his frame.

band that encircles them is filled with pearls, a clear echo of Sogdian painting tradition. Some small fragments of medallions containing other kinds of birds were also uncovered.

The Western Wall

It seems possible that the western wall had similar representations of large human figures, but there is less evidence for this than is provided by the arrow bearer from the eastern wall. In 2002, the boots of a figure of great size (fig. 19) and part of his caftan, alas badly preserved, and, on another piece, some sort of armor or instrument were also found. The framing blue ornament of these figures differs from the framing of the figures on the eastern wall. In addition, the boots are not simply poised on the top line of the bottom frame but cross it, while the arrow bearer is shown, as far as we can state at this point, confined within the frame, not touching it. The size of the register with court attendants on the western wall was probably smaller, at least in height. The register above that consisted, not of animals in procession, but of an inscription in Arabic script, unfortunately

cut horizontally in the middle of the letters (fig. 20). The letters are painted in light yellow or white on a deeper yellow background. The blue band of the frame is separated from the inscription by a row of pearls. In painting the pavilion, a stencil was apparently never used for these pearls, or for the geometric-repeat ornament.

In the next register, probably at the top of the western wall over the inscription, was a flying peri-like figure (fig. 21). There are fragments of a profile of her face and the upper part of her body, which apparently was shown naked save for a large upper-arm bangle, resembling a brassard. A detail over her head, only partially preserved, might be interpreted as a high hat with a trapezoidal form enlarging to a flat top, but we cannot exclude the possibility that this represents the top of an element behind her head, such as a wing. No similar figure has yet been found. Her meaning seems to be symbolic, akin to that of the female genii depicted flying over rulers in miniature paintings (such as, among many others, the famous frontispiece of the seventeenth volume of the *Kitāb al-Aghānī*).¹⁴



Fig. 20. Fragment with the upper left corner of one of the frames from the western wall, with a band of inscription at the top.



Fig. 21. Peri-like figure flying above a band of inscription (probably *Mas'ūd*).

The Northern Wall

The subject matter of the northern wall is still not clear. A recently discovered eagle is depicted sitting on a rock, in front of which is represented a fantastic creature with a female head, which clearly shows that the overall artistic program was not limited to scenes from the prince's everyday life but also had mythological components, which we will discuss in a future article.

Some of the registers from the northern wall consist of small human figures—so-called whirling dancers, who seem to have been represented not just in one row but on different levels.

On only one fragment was such a figure's head found intact, apparently that of a woman, her face turned in three-quarter view (fig. 22). A curl of hair projects from her hat on either side of her head, covering her ears. Her hat appears to be a gray-colored toque with a toothed band. Her elongated black brows and eyes, like her round facial contours, small mouth, and medium-sized nose, correspond to the ideal of general human beauty prevailing at the time, but the hairstyle, according to what we have observed on other fragments, can be associated with female representation. This figure appears to be extending her right hand, which probably holds a round object.

The painter made three semicircles, one above her head that looks like a halo and two others, symmetrically placed, apparently around her hands, which are stretched out in opposite directions. The fragment is small but possibly includes a representation of stylized trefoil arches with human figures in the span. This interpretation is reinforced by the fact that in the space that is presumably a tympanum between arches and above a column, we find the representation of a bird that appears to be a decorative element of the architecture represented—in other words, a wall painting in the wall painting. In any case, there is a top limit to this register of small humans. It is at present difficult to say whether the woman's head belongs to the register of dancers (see below), or whether the latter were represented separately. The size is similar and the small human figures, even if separated by registers, could be part of the same artistic program on the northern wall. A similar facial type characterizes the man with a pendant "shadow" moustache and small tuft of beard beneath his lip (fig. 23).

On another fragment, a person wears a blue dress, much more modest than that of the arrow bearer but also including an ornamental brassard (fig. 24). The

treatment of the folds of the dress, rendered by gradation of blue color, is remarkable. Judging from the preserved bottom of the face, the figure's head was turned to his right (the spectator's left), in the direction opposite his arms, which are bent at the elbow with forearms horizontal and hands turned in a manner that evokes a dancing position. The figure's movement seems to be accentuated by his fluttering plaits. On the same fragment can be seen a section of blue sleeve, ornamented by red dots and a brassard indicated in simple parallel lines—part of another dancer situated lower than the first.

Another painting fragment suggests how the lower part of such dancers looked (fig. 25). The background is painted in yellow. The dresses of two people, blue and bright yellow, cover their bodies to the knees, and voluminous white trousers with many folds appear beneath the dresses. Both dancers are shown barefoot. They are turned in opposite directions, each with one leg raised. One dancer's left foot is even turned so that the sole faces the spectator, leaving no doubt about the interpretation of the scene as a dance. Between the dancers is drawn a highly stylized, tulip-like flower. Although no complete figure has been found preserved, one can calculate that the height of the dancers would not have exceeded 30 cm. Like that of the arrow bearer, the bodies of all the small figures are outlined in red.

Small figures of horses with armed horsemen, very badly damaged, belong to another register, which was apparently painted on the edge of the cornice or the doorway, as were the inscriptions on the yellow background. We cannot at the moment define the original position of this architectural element on the northern wall.

The Southern Wall

Only three meters of the space along the southern wall were excavated. In comparison with other parts of the pavilion, few fragments were found. Only one, which we will mention below, seems to be from this wall, the pictorial program of which remains to be clarified by further excavations.

INSCRIPTIONS

A number of fragments bearing inscriptions, a fundamental source of information, have been found. The inscriptions are in both small and large sizes with a few legible letters in Arabic script, and they belong



Fig. 22. Fragment with a female face, probably represented in the span of a stylized trefoil arch.



Fig. 23. Male face with moustache.

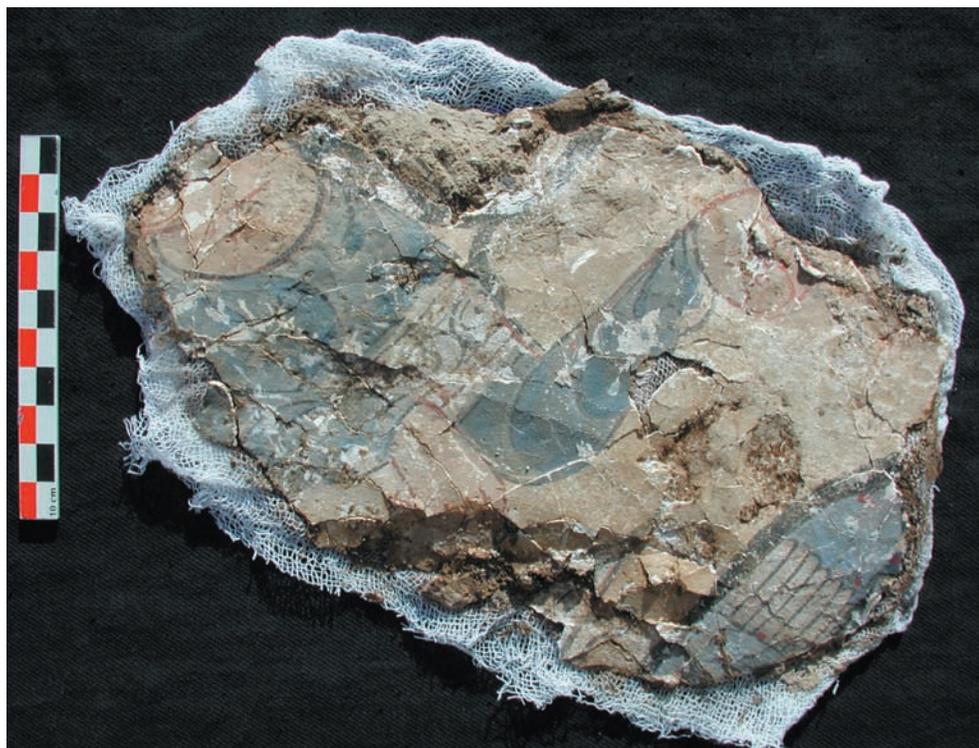


Fig. 24. Dancing figures.



Fig. 25. Lower part of dancing figures.

to different epigraphic bands that apparently were present on all the walls. They are in the process of being classified and studied; the main problem in this endeavor comes from the above-noted fact that, during the destruction of the pavilion, pieces of wall sometimes landed very far from their initial position and became mixed up with other wall fragments.

The fragmentary nature of the inscriptions makes it difficult to propose an interpretation of them, with two possible exceptions. One of the large fragments (about 60 × 80 cm), found near to the southern wall, carries an inscription in monumental *naskh* script on a background representing spiraling plant motifs with small red flowers, in which two facing birds are nearly hidden (fig. 26). A number of letters can be made out, but the phrase is too short to decipher fully; tentatively it is part of a poetic text in Persian, probably including the phrase [...(?)]*ūr-i kām-i dīl bar ā[yad (?)]*.¹⁵ Surprisingly, the two words *kām-i dīl*, or “heart’s desire,” are enough to allow us to understand the character of our building.

Another epigraphic fragment, found in 2003 in the northwestern sector, belongs to a similar register with birds, but the phrase it contains seems to be in Arabic (fig. 27). Two last words could be read as *wa l-baqā’ li-sāhibihi*, “long life to its master,”¹⁶ a familiar well-wishing formula that usually appears on small objects rather than buildings.

In the eastern wall zone, many fragments of another inscription band composed of blue letters were discovered (fig. 28). We would suggest that the original position of this register on the eastern wall was either around the niche-iwan or within the iwan itself. Until other inscribed fragments are cleaned, we will not be able to verify our proposal.

The fragment on which the peri-like figure (see fig. 21) is represented is particularly important. The flying peri is touching an inscription band of which three letters can be read with certainty: *‘ayn*, *wāw*, and *dāl*, the *‘ayn* being preceded by one tooth, and the beginning of the curve of another, of the previous letter—very likely a *sīm*. This combination of letters has a limited number of corresponding words in Arabic and Persian; one of the most likely seems to be the name Mas‘ud (*[Mas]s‘ūd*).¹⁷ If this is the case, it probably provides a clue to the patron of the paintings, which we will discuss below.

The presence of Persian inscriptions on the architecture is not surprising, since Persian was the language of a significant part of the population of Transoxi-

ana and of the literature and poetry of the Qarakhanid court. Since the eleventh century, the language had been used frequently in Qarakhanid foundation inscriptions on monumental architecture; it appears, for example, on the 1079 portal of the Rabat-i Malik near Karmina, between Samarqand and Bukhara;¹⁸ in the long Kufic inscription (datable to 1020–60, accordingly to V. Nastich and B. Kochnev)¹⁹ on the Safid Buland Mausoleum in the Farghana Valley in modern Kyrgyzstan, and on the northern mausoleum of 1152 in Uzgen (Uzkand), where the expression is in Tadjik dialect: *aghāz karda āmad banā-i dawlat khāna ruz-i...*²⁰

As skillfully wrought as the figurative paintings, the inscriptions were made by an experienced master of calligraphy. The *naskh* script was the only one chosen for the artistic program. The script style corresponds well to that of ceramics and coins found in the pavilion, which are not earlier than the second half of the twelfth century. There are close parallels with the *naskh* inscriptions on both dated Uzgen mausoleums, the northern one of 1152 and the southern one of 1186–87, but the clearest stylistic resemblance is to five fragments of curved terracotta plaques discovered in the mosque area near the citadel of the Afrasiab site. Mikhail Masson, who has published the inscription on the terracottas, interpreted it as belonging to the mausoleum of the penultimate Qarakhanid sovereign of Samarqand, Ibrahim b. Husayn,²¹ who ruled until 599 (1202–3).²²

DATING

The dating of the wall paintings relies on ceramics and on numismatic data—Qarakhanid coins from the second half of the twelfth century (among them a dirham of Mas‘ud b. Hasan of a type minted in 558–59 [1162–64] or 566 [1170–71] in Samarqand, Bukhara, or Binkat).²³ Small shards of monochrome vessels glazed in turquoise blue and some rare fragments in artificial paste with the same type of glaze, which was very fashionable until the thirteenth century, as well as others with a semi-transparent bright green glaze, were found in the layer of the pavilion fill. (Stratigraphically, these specimens did not come from the occupation layers of the pavilion, where the brick pavement was cleaned regularly and had almost no accumulated layers of fill). There are no inscriptions or figural designs on these ceramics. There were also no finds in the pavilion of so-called *mīnā’ī* ceramics,



Fig. 26. First inscription.

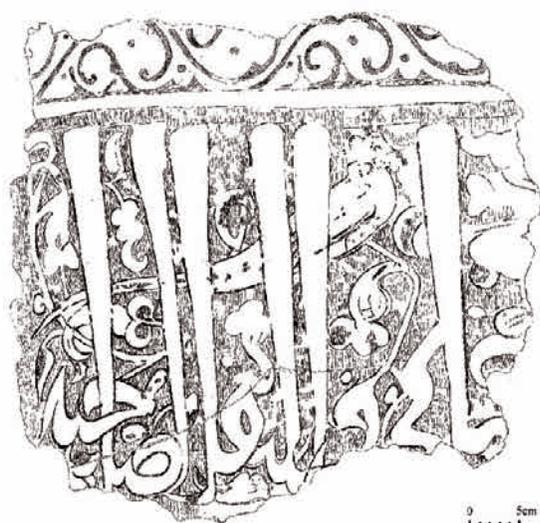


Fig. 27. Second inscription.



Fig. 28. Fragment of inscription in blue letters.

usually very rare in Samarqand, a fact that leads to the conclusion that this type of ware was imported. Luster ceramics were imitated in Samarqand but also imported: one whole luster pitcher was also found in a *tashnāu* built after the destruction of the pavilion.

This description of the paintings is, of course, preliminary in character, and many fragments discovered cannot be interpreted easily. The situation becomes even more complicated given that there are at least three layers of paintings, the first of which can be characterized as obviously less elegant (fig. 29, a small fragment with the hand of an archer grasping a bow and shooting an arrow). The fragments of the first paintings, accidentally uncovered from the second layer, are not numerous but will represent an interesting subject of future study.

As mentioned, a significant number of fragments still await cleaning, and the whole southwestern part of the pavilion remains intact. But even now we can state that, taking into consideration the space of walls that could have been decorated (roughly 150 sq. m), most of the paintings are completely lost.²⁴ Once again, the continuous occupation of the zone played an essential role in the destruction of the pavilion,

whatever were the concrete historical reasons for it. Only by chance was about one meter of layer formed after the destruction of the pavilion preserved. Some very modest structures from the beginning of the thirteenth century were built on the top of the leveled space.

MEANING AND STYLE

There is evidence that Qarakhanid painting, despite its particularities of style, was not foreign to the general evolution of pictorial art in the Islamic world, particularly in the eastern parts. The forms of geometric and floral decoration, whether in the frames around the great figures or the backgrounds of the animals and inscriptions, have parallels in stucco, paintings, and ceramics from many sites and monuments from Kashan to Balasaghun. Monumental *naskh* script, so highly developed under the Qarakhanids, also experienced a period of efflorescence under the Seljuks in Iran, and there is no reason to separate them completely. The widespread fashion for caftans with brassards, a distinct type of robe of honor, did not bypass the Qarakhanid court. Judging from the manner of rep-



Fig. 29. Hand grasping a bow and shooting an arrow. Probable first layer of paintings.

representing human faces and plaited hairstyles and the evident predilection for burly and portly forms rather than the slender ones so popular in Sogdian art, one can surmise that the artists of the Qarakhanid court actively participated in the creation of a new image of beauty that became common in Iran and Central Asia after the arrival of the Turkic dynasties from the east in the eleventh century.

Despite the fragmentary character of the Samarqand paintings and the diversity of images there are some clear indications of how to interpret the main subject matter of the artistic program in the pavilion. The arrow bearer is key for the understanding of the paintings, as he is for the calculation of architectural modules and reconstruction of the eastern wall.

Two connected but distinct issues are the iconographic source of this image and its meaning. As a first step in the interpretation, the question of mean-

ing is more important. Why is the warrior holding the arrow thus? The delicacy of his grasp clearly indicates that he is showing or presenting it. The fact that he is represented alone, within an ornamental frame, clearly indicates the importance of his official position.

Apart from a few important but meager indications in the written sources, we have no detailed information about the Qarakhanid court, let alone images of it. This forces us to seek analogies, although not necessarily iconographic sources, elsewhere. A similar manner of representing figures can be seen in miniatures, as well as on metalwork and ceramics, of different historical periods in various parts of the Muslim world. Occurring especially but not exclusively in throne scenes, these representations can be extremely varied, ranging from scenes of official reception to sporting competitions: they show a number of court dignitaries, each carrying an individual emblem of the sovereign power, be it a sword, a bow with or without arrows, a pen box, or a cup.

The figure shown carrying the bow is represented in various ways: extending only a bow towards the sovereign,²⁵ offering a bow and a quiver of arrows,²⁶ holding a bow in one hand and an arrow in the other,²⁷ carrying a bow on the shoulder,²⁸ holding forth a bow and three arrows,²⁹ and so on. Sometimes the bow or arrow or both can be held by the sovereign himself, as in a miniature from Rashid ad-Din's *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, where the Iranian king Hushang, seated on the throne, holds an arrow with his fingers in exactly the same position as represented in the pavilion (fig. 32a; see also 32b).³⁰ One could also mention one of the famous frontispieces of the *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, depicting a seated Badr al-Din Lu'lu',³¹ or the throne scene on a splendid Mamluk metalwork basin in the Louvre.³²

The famous *Kutadgu bilig*, the "Mirror for Princes" written in Turkic for a Qarakhanid ruler in the eleventh century, although theoretical in genre, reflects important elements of Turkic court hierarchy and ceremony. The prince (*beg*), vizier, army commander (*sū baši*), grand chamberlain (*uluğ hāğib*), gatekeeper (*qapūğ baši*), envoy (*yalawač*), royal secretary (*bitigčī*), treasurer (*ağičī*), chief cook (*aš bašči*), cupbearer (*iđiščī*) and servants (*tapuğčılar*) all had their specific functions and activities, described in the book. The duty of the gatekeeper was "furthermore, to supervise the cupbearer, bedmaker, cook, and standard-bearer; also the falconer, quiver-bearer, and archers: they must be kept ready at the gate each day."³³ Concerning their sym-

bols, the author mentions in one passage two offices that are “equally important. Each has its emblem: that of the vizier is the pen, that of the commander the sword. These two are the bond and the tether of the state.”³⁴ Over the years this tradition evolved and developed variations, particularly when the Turkic princes came into contact with the populace in Transoxiana and Khurasan. The symbols and ceremonies might change, becoming more sophisticated, but the main framework remained the same.

There is a noteworthy passage in the chronicle of Abu 'l-Fida' on an event that took place after the death of Khwarazmshah Muhammad b. Tekish in 617 (1220–21), when dignitaries were arriving at his funeral. The description of emblems borne by the court attendants corresponds exactly to the subject matter on the Eastern wall of the pavilion in Samarqand:

There also came his superintendent of stores (*tishtdār*), stirrup holder (*rikābdār*), armor bearer (*silāhdār*), master of the robes (*jāmdār*) and others from them among the masters of official functions (*arbāb al-wazā'if*), all of them kings (*mulūk*). Their distinguishing emblems were black. And the emblem (*'alāma*) of the secretary (*dawādār*) is the penbox, and of the armor bearer the bow, and of the superintendent of stores the ewer, and of the master of the robes the napkin, and the emblem of the marshal (*amīr akhūr*) is the horseshoe, and the emblem of the herald's office (*jāwāshiyya*) the gold cupola (or tent: *qubba dhahab*), etc.”³⁵

If in some later miniatures the armor bearers seem to be ghulams or official attendants but not high-ranking dignitaries, the passage mentioned above leaves no doubt about the importance of that function in the Khwarazmshah court and very plausibly in all Turkic courts of the pre-Mongol era. The masters charged with displaying the symbols of supreme power in the presence of the sovereign belonged to the rank of the *mulūk*, in other words to the members of submitting royal families showing allegiance.

The event described in this passage took place at most fifty to sixty and possibly as little as fifteen years after the construction of the Samarqand pavilion. The organization of the ceremonial of the Turkic dynasties of the Khwarazmshahs, Seljuks, and Qarakhanids must have had similar characteristics and not have differed considerably. It is interesting to note the particular importance of the bow and arrow in Turkic mythological tradition: it was one of the most important symbols of power—in some representations, as mentioned, held by the ruler himself. We might also

note representations of the bow and arrow, as well as of other types of armor, on Qarakhanid coins³⁶—a tradition not alien to such other dynasties as the Ghaznavids, Seljuks, and Khwarazmshahs.

In this context, the interpretation of the arrow bearer from Samarqand as the *silāhdār* (armor bearer) of the Qarakhanid ruler seems both plausible and justified. It is not surprising that the main figures on the Samarqand paintings should be associated with court ceremony. In the preliminary reconstruction (fig. 12), the three empty rectangular frames to the right of the Turkic warrior could contain the representations of each of the other court dignitaries charged with specific symbolic objects as described in the passage from Abu 'l-Fida', or as represented in metalwork, ceramics, or miniatures. There are obvious variations, but this seems to be the main principle.

It is interesting to note the differences between the representations of the Turkic guard in the reception hall of Lashkar-i Bazar and those in the pavilion in Samarqand. Although both have to do with the manifestation of sovereign power, the different character of the buildings—one an enormous palace and the other a private reception pavilion—may have determined in each case a particular artistic program. At Lashkar-i Bazar a line of about sixty warriors (of which the traces of forty-four are preserved) was painted on four sides of the reception hall (figs. 30 and 31).³⁷ They were placed in the lower horizontal register, 1.5 m in height, between the floor and the decorative brickwork with inscriptions and stucco decoration. Apparently all the figures were wearing richly decorated caftans and carrying maces. Their disposition in the official reception hall evokes the alignment of the sovereign's guard of ghulams during ceremonies, and their large number and position at the bottom of the composition highlight their status in the hierarchy. Representations of dignitaries of the court bearing particular symbols of sovereign power have not yet been found in Lashkar-i Bazar. As mentioned, in Samarqand the dignitaries, and probably even the princes (*mulūk*), were painted as symbolic portraits whose role was enhanced by “personal” decorative frames.

The overall program of the Samarqand pavilion should be directly or indirectly related to the manifestation of sovereign splendor. We can expect to find a set of common iconographic topics related to court life, such as a throne scene or a depiction of the sovereign on his mount, and scenes of banqueting, hunting, and—much less probably—battle. All of these



Fig. 30. Wall paintings depicting aligned guards, Lashkar-i Bazar. (After D. Schlumberger, *Lashkari Bazar*, fig. 122a)



Fig. 31. Two guards, Lashkar-i Bazar (After D. Schlumberger, *Lashkari Bazar*, fig. 122b)



a



b

Fig. 32a. Hushang, second king of the legendary Pishdadian dynasty. Fig. 32b. Tahmuras, third king of the legendary Pishdadian dynasty. Two miniatures from Rashid al-Din's *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*. (After D. T. Rice, *The Illustrations to the "World History" of Rashīd al-Dīn*, 44, fig. 3 and 46, fig. 4)

except the first would not be of great size. We also cannot exclude some particular themes—mythological or family-related—important only to the Qarakhanids.

The subject of the iconography of the arrow bearer is more complicated than it first appears. The majority of comparable examples known in Islamic miniatures and metalwork belong to the post-Mongol period, although there is no doubt of the existence of this iconographic figure not only before the Mongols but before the Arabs as well. An ossuary from

Yakkabag depicts the Sogdian god Tishtrya holding an arrow,³⁸ but the most surprising parallel is found in Chinese representations of one of the guardians or kings of the cardinal directions, a popular mythological figure in eastern Turkestan and China over the centuries. Extant examples are numerous. The hand position of a Tang-period *lokapāla* holding and presenting an arrow is identical to that in our Qarakhanid example (fig. 33).³⁹ In at least two examples the arrow has a double head.⁴⁰ Since resemblance must



Fig. 33. The Southern *Lokapāla*, Dunhuang Yulin Grottos. (After Tang Changdong, *Magnificent Frescos from the Great Tang Dynasty*, 116, fig. 109)

be considered systematically and in the larger context, a simplistic conclusion in terms of “direct influence” and “borrowing” is inappropriate here. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the Qarakhanids were “Turkestanis” very close to the Chinese border, and the possible consequences of this proximity should be taken into account.

Judging from the fragments discovered, the character of painting in twelfth-century Samarqand had undergone important changes vis-à-vis the pre-Islamic tradition. After the arrival of Islam, the role of written texts, whether religious, poetic, or narrative in content, became crucial. In contrast, Sogdian painting, although in rare instances bearing a few words of explanation on the figures (sometimes added later to explain an already-forgotten meaning), transmitted the narration only by images. In other words, Sogdian wall painting was a book without text. Visual language sufficed: the manifestation of the might of gods, heroes, and kings did not require parallel large-scale written comments, for either semantics or aesthetics. Hence scholars are now obliged to search for missing explanations in the traditions where the texts are preserved, from the *Mahābhārata* to the *Shāhnāma*.⁴¹ In certain cases the paintings represented recent historical events—the Arab siege of a town (presumably of Samarqand in 712), for example, or a coronation (Penjikent Palace),⁴² or the whole story, still not completely deciphered, of the international relationships of the Samarqand court (Afrasiab).⁴³ Such paintings thus played the role of an illustrated report.

Although books existed before Islam, the role of oral transmission of myth and epic, one of the greatest sources of inspiration for painters, seems to have been predominant. The passage from collective memory to picture and back, as from picture to picture, could be accomplished without any written medium. There was no need for the evolution of monumental script as it was developed after the coming of Islam, nor was there a place for such a phenomenon as poetry written on the walls.

In the Samarqand pavilion, by contrast, the bands of inscriptions had an important place in the overall program of the paintings. Despite the damaged state of the inscriptions discovered, two of the fragments mentioned above give a clear indication of the character of the texts on the walls. The Persian poetry and Arabic good wishes were related to court life, to the living environment of the sovereign. There were two distinguishable purposes for adding inscriptions: the

first was the meaning of what was written, and the second was the beauty per se of monumental *naskh* script, which played an integral role in the set of visual elements especially elaborated for decorating architecture. The starting point was directly related to the spread of the Arabic language and script and to the value of the written word in Islam. For the population of Transoxiana, long before the arrival of the Qarakhanids by the end of the tenth century, inscriptions were an entirely new way of visually transmitting an artistic program. The relationship between the text and the figurative image could also vary. Even if Mas‘ud of Ghazna, the son of Mahmud the Conqueror, could have had, accordingly to Bayhaqi, “the whole book” of *Alfiyya* (The Persian version of *Kāma Sūtra*), with images, stories, and words (*jumla-i ān kitābrā šūrat va hikāyat va sukhan naqsh kardand*),⁴⁴ painted in his rest house near Herat, or if verses from the *Shāhnāma* could accompany images on walls as on glazed tiles, in the case of monumental script the text could not play a role of direct description. Instead, the meaning of the message on the wall may have created an initial image in the mind and thus contextualized the pictorial “support.” It is too early to affirm this for the Samarqand pavilion, but it may well have been the case.

The second question is that of pictorial symbolism. Painting is always charged with symbolic connotations, but their degree can differ. In Samarqand, the place—namely, a royal residence—determined the program, which does not have images related to religion. Were there a religious component, the most plausible place for it would be not in the figures but in inscriptions that would invoke the name of the Creator and the Prophet, but in the form of a blessing on the patron. The pavilion also shows a clear difference from pre-Islamic houses and palaces, in which the world of gods and their deeds is a predominant subject of the paintings (with the probable exception of the famous Afrasiab reception hall paintings).

Compared with the Sogdian tradition, Qarakhanid paintings seem to have less place for narration as such, either of concrete events or of epic scenes, although some mythological themes were present in the pavilion. The narrative aspect is not entirely absent, however. The discovery of a single new fragment with such “telling” scenes would be enough to change this preliminary appraisal, but the present impression is that the significance of the majority of drawings is symbolic or decorative, and that their primary aim is not the vivid transmission of a factual or invented “story.”

In connotation, Qarakhanid painting is markedly different from Sogdian. The Turkic warrior is above all a bearer of function and not an acting figure in a developed “story.” The ultimate evolution and simplification of such representation can be seen in blazons on Mamluk metalwork, where the symbol of a cup or an arrow transmits the whole idea of a dignitary’s official status and function.

The dancing figures, although very poorly preserved, probably belonged to a register whose function was not so different from that of the animals in procession. Even the horsemen of uniform size could have formed a similar row of decorative rather than narrative meaning. Obviously, the small figures can hold different symbolic objects, act differently from one another, and perhaps have some specific story as background (a bird fight, a hunt, etc.), but their place in the general partition of the painted wall space would nevertheless be determined more by the aesthetic needs of decoration than by a message addressed to the spectator. In other words, they could belong to the set of repeated figural motifs used by medieval painters for different programs. Although some of them, like the animals in procession, were very ancient and not completely alien to Sogdian art, the tendency towards abstraction in figural representations seems to be one of the lines of evolution of the Islamic art of images. This tendency obviously does not exclude the depiction of concrete events or epic episodes on various media, from wall paintings to ceramics and numerous miniatures (including the famous *mīnā’ī* plate from the Freer Gallery depicting a siege scene;⁴⁵ mural *Shāhnāma* episodes known from textual references and from the example in the Metropolitan Museum of Art; or, from the later period, the account of the Indian campaign of Timur depicted in one of his palaces near Samarqand).⁴⁶ In the case of the Samarqand pavilion, some narrative scenes may have coexisted with the figurative registers and the proclamative “portraits” of court dignitaries, but for the moment we do not have clear evidence for this.⁴⁷

What is striking in this context is the realism of the painting style, achieved by other means and expressed differently than that of the Sogdian tradition, particularly the outstanding Afrasiab paintings of the seventh century. The Qarakhanid painter, although paying serious attention to detail, was not trying to transfer onto the wall a meticulous reproduction of the real object, cloth, or flesh. He achieved delicacy of execu-

tion through the main contour lines and the sense of proportion. Inside the contoured figure, he also gave priority to defining lines, whether of human facial traits or dogs’ muzzles. There was no need to paint each hair or the precise design of jewelry and fabric, which had been so well documented in the pre-Islamic Afrasiab paintings. In the pavilion, the space within the contours of figures can also be densely decorated, particularly in the case of the clothing of great personages, but the rich pattern of the brocaded material is nevertheless rendered with a sense of abstraction and generalization. In other words, there was a distance between the painter and the drawn object that sometimes gives the impression of an almost loose manner of treating the subject, but that is in reality the characteristic of a new style—in artistic terms a step from documentation toward interpretation.

However many painters participated in the decoration of the pavilion, they all followed the same tradition. (It is too early to speak about individual “hands” visible in the paintings.) The human figures, whether small or large, are rendered by smooth lines that stress elegance of movement. Their statures are never stiff and rigid, as in the Nishapur and Lashkar-i Bazar paintings. The visual effect of the figures’ delicacy is accentuated by the manner of representing their hands and particularly their fingers, which are drawn with precision in every position. The faces, as far as we can judge by one medium-sized and several small figures, maintain an idealized image of beauty and apparently are not personalized, an approach common in medieval art (but not the case in the pre-Islamic Afrasiab paintings). This *māhrū* (“moon-face”) representation was widespread in the Islamic East at the time.⁴⁸ The serenity of the facial expression is perfectly rendered by a few simple and elegant lines—red for eyelids, nose, and mouth, and black for the elongated, arched eyebrows, eyes, and pupils. Considering the observations made above about the artistic program, it would be surprising to find a face expressing anger or joy. The general impression gained from the fragments is one of purposeful equilibrium in the expression of mood, whether of humans or animals, with a slight, almost intangible, touch of humor. There are very probable traces of an eastern Turkistan tradition particularly related to Buddhist art. We have already mentioned in the description of the fragments some of the singularities of technique, such as the gradation of color and the evident attention to the rendering of volume.

It is difficult to find any direct analogies with the style of the Samarqand paintings, which probably belong to a previously unknown school of Transoxiana. Certainly this kind of art could not have appeared out of nowhere, and the Sogdian heritage seems not to have been completely forgotten. Once again, we do not have any examples of Samanid painting on which to ground our conclusions, but what the pre-Islamic and Qarakhanid paintings seem to have in common, putting aside such evident features as pearl-surrounded medallions, is a mastery of drawing as such, very different one from the other, but characterized in both cases by perfect possession of a dynamic line and a sense of delicacy and elegance: a graceful hand.

In light of the preliminary and brief appraisal of the pavilion paintings presented above, one would say that, in terms of artistic evolution, the Qarakhanid example can be seen as a product of the development of the previous pre-Islamic tradition over at least three centuries (ninth to twelfth). Meanwhile, there remains the question of what happened during that very long period of time in terms of intercultural relations in a new historical context that was in a constant process of change. The painter of twelfth-century Samarqand lived in a completely different social, political, and cultural environment, the study of which exceeds the limits of the present article. Some preliminary remarks are nevertheless called for.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The main problem for historians of the eleventh and twelfth centuries in Central Asia is the scarcity of written sources; numismatic data therefore play an essential role in reconstructing the history of Transoxiana at that time. Under the influence of the eminent Russian orientalist V. V. Bartol'd, many scholars have held that, after the fall of the local Samanid dynasty and the ascent to power of the Turkic dynasty of the Qarakhanids by the end of the tenth century, Transoxiana experienced a period of cultural decline.⁴⁹ The latest discoveries and new studies provide evidence that it is time for a serious reconsideration of that view.⁵⁰

There is no room here for a detailed historical description, but one point should be stressed: social and cultural life in major cities like Bukhara and Samarqand was in full efflorescence, and the change of dynasty did not immediately affect the life of the local society. General "know-how" in many domains

of art and craft did not disappear and was quickly demanded by the new rulers.

At the same time these new rulers brought with them an elaborated doctrine of princely power and old nomadic cultural traditions, which had their roots in the pre-Islamic period of splendor of the first Turkic Khaqanate (sixth and seventh centuries), and of which the aforementioned eleventh-century *Kutadgu bilig* constitutes a famous compendium.

It is true that in the medieval period the patronage of art and literature depended mainly on the sovereigns, but to the same extent, the taste of the ruler changed in relation to the intellectual milieu in which he lived: there was a process of mutual exchange between the new conquerors and the local population. Many elements brought in after the migration of the Turkic tribes were adapted and integrated into the local culture. At the same time, if the first rulers preserved the nomadic mode of life and the customs of the Great Steppe, their descendants adapted themselves to the style of city life. In terms of cultural background, there was an enormous difference between Bughra Khan Harun, the first conqueror of Transoxiana (d. 993–94) and the last Qarakhanid ruler, 'Uthman b. Ibrahim (executed by the Khwarazmshah in 1212–13).

Despite the overall lack of information, particularly for the second half of the twelfth century, the existing sources relate that the Qarakhanids, from the mid-eleventh century onwards, patronized the construction of religious, public, and palatial buildings: mosques in Bukhara, the palaces of Shamsabad and Juybar near the city,⁵¹ the palace of Tamghach Khan Ibrahim b. Husayn in Samarqand,⁵² the Rabat-i Malik,⁵³ and the Uzgen (Uzkand) mausoleums, among many others. According to the sources, some of these were finely decorated with carved-and-painted wood and paintings (*chūbhā-i naqqāshī va durūdgarī*),⁵⁴ although this does not mean that the others mentioned merely by name did not have such decorations. The *maqūra*, minbar, and mihrab of the Bukhara mosque ordered by Khan Shams al-Mulk (r. 1068–80) were "carved and decorated (*tarāshidand va munaqqash kardand*) in Samarqand and brought to Bukhara,"⁵⁵ a fact difficult to explain by anything other than the high artistic reputation of the craftsmen in Samarqand.

Qarakhanid ceremonial customs, which were relatively modest at the time of the famous meeting of Mahmud of Ghazna and Qadir Khan in the early elev-

enth century (about 416 [1025–26]),⁵⁶ were transformed during the century into a magnificent manifestation of sovereign splendor. Only about fifty years later, at the time of Khizr b. Ibrahim (r. 473–79 [1080–87]), when “the power of the Khaqanis was at its most flourishing period,” one detail “of the splendor maintained” by the khan “... was this, that when he rode out they [the attendants] carried before his horse, besides other arms, seven hundred maces of gold and silver.”⁵⁷

The reign of the Qarakhanids, as in other royal courts, was praised by many poets, who competed in the presence of khan. The same Khizr, “a great patron of poets,” would richly reward his favorites; according to one account, “In Transoxiana it is the custom and practice to place in the audience-chambers of kings and others gold and silver in trays....” In one of Khizr’s audiences, “there were set for largesse four trays of red gold, each containing two hundred and fifty dinars; and these he used to dispense by the handful. One day he ordered [that a poet] Rashidi... receive all four trays, so he obtained the highest honour, and became famous.”⁵⁸

We know the names of at least ten poets of the Qarakhanid court, but only one *divān* (poetry collection), that of Suzani, written in the third quarter of the twelfth century, is preserved;⁵⁹ it is dedicated to Mas‘ud b. Hasan (r. 1160/61–1170/71). Although the literature produced under the Qarakhanids in Transoxiana is less abundant than that of the Ghaznavid or Seljuk dynasties in Khurasan, this literature—in Arabic, Persian, and Turkic—was appreciated at the court. Still-preserved works include the politico-historical *A‘rād al-Siyāsat* (Examples of Diplomacy in the Aims of Government), and the *Sindbādnāma* (Book of Sinbad), both written by Muhammad b. ‘Ali Zahiri Samarqandi, the *shāhib al-inshā’* (head of the chancery) of Mas‘ud b. Hasan. Among works that have unfortunately perished are Alma‘i’s *History of Kashghar* (eleventh century) and his *Mu‘jam al-Shuyukh* (Compendium of Shaykhs) as well as *The History of Turkestan* and *The History of Khitay*, written for the Qarakhanid Ibrahim b. Husayn (r. 1178–1202/3) by Taj al-Din Muhammad b. ‘Adnan.⁶⁰ The Turkic language also found expression in literature, particularly in the Eastern Khaqanate.⁶¹ Yusuf of Balasaghun composed the already-mentioned *Kutadgu bilig* in Turkic, and Mahmud of Kashghar compiled the first extensive scientific treatise on the Turkic language, *Divān lughāt al-Turk*, in Arabic.

Samarqand and Bukhara were major centers of

Islamic learning during this period, and many treatises of law (*fiqh*) and theology were composed there. In the twelfth century, histories and dictionaries of learned men of Samarqand and Bukhara were expanded and rewritten, which shows the particular interest at this time in local historiography.

We know almost nothing about the life of painters in Samarqand and Bukhara in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but, as is shown by the new discovery at the Afrasiab site, the Qarakhanids were active patrons of painting, a fact that is in perfect accord with accounts of their love for poetry and beautiful buildings and that implies that they financially supported the painters and gave them new commissions, creating a favorable situation for artistic activity and evolution. The same situation must have obtained for the architects and other craftsmen who depended on the court’s patronage.

A remaining question is the identity of the patron of this residential complex with its wall paintings. It is unfortunately archeologically impossible at the moment to give a date for the pavilion more precise than the second half of the twelfth to the beginning of the thirteenth century. The best hope for gaining more precision lies in the paintings themselves. During this period, Samarqand was the capital of the Western Khaqanate of the Qarakhanids, and a number of names can be proposed as the patron. The problem is that, historically speaking, we do not have any information about these rulers that pertains to the paintings in Samarqand themselves, hence no adequate criterion for identification. It would be all too easy to fall into the trap of associating the materials that have been discovered with a historical personage about whom the textual sources give certain information. For example, among the eight Qarakhanid rulers in the second half of the twelfth century, three individuals are most remarkable: Qilij Tamghach Khan Mas‘ud b. Hasan (r. 556–66 [1160/61–1170/71]),⁶² Ibrahim b. Husayn b. Hasan, the first to bear the title *ulugh sultān al-salāṭīn* (r. 574–599 [1178/79–1202/3]), and ‘Uthman b. Ibrahim, also *sultān al-salāṭīn* (r. 599–609 [1202/3–1212/13]), after whom the dynasty ended. The bits of information concerning the two first rulers (for example, the literary works dedicated to them, mentioned above) can be enumerated on the fingers of one hand: as V. V. Bartol’d put it, “...we know nothing of the events which took place in Transoxiana at the end of the twelfth century.”⁶³ However, there is an extensive account about ‘Uthman, since

his was a dramatic story of the political maneuvers of a young sovereign playing off the weakening Qara Khitays against the growing power of the Khwarazmshahs. The story turns into personal tragedy, a fact particularly stressed by the sources, since ‘Uthman paid dearly—in fact, with his life—for his preference for one wife, the daughter of the Gurkhan, and his spurning of the second, Kwarazmshah Muhammad b. Tekish’s daughter, who had her father execute him after he finally took Samarqand in 1212–13. There is even mention of the Samarqand citadel (*qal‘a*) where, at the time of the revolt against the Khwarazmians, Muhammad’s daughter shut herself up, as did ‘Uthman later on, when he was besieged by the Khwarazmian troops.

On the one hand, this information confirms that at that time the citadel was occupied and in use as a protected area of the Qarakhanids and their families, which perfectly fits the archeological data. On the other, there no evidence—direct or indirect—for addressing our problem of who ordered the paintings. It is also true that ‘Uthman was—according to ‘Awfi, who knew him personally—an extremely handsome, refined, and highly educated person, even a poet himself. But ‘Awfi also reports that Ibrahim b. Husayn, ‘Uthman’s father, composed poems in his youth.⁶⁴ Historically, this shows the high aesthetic standards and refinement of these rulers, which the pavilion paintings would have met. But again, any of them could have commissioned the paintings. What we do know from the archeological evidence is that the pavilion had been occupied for a relatively long period before its final destruction.

From stratigraphical data, one can determine that there were three main stages in the development of the pavilion paintings: the first stage of “rough” painting (which needs further confirmation); the second, to which the majority of paintings belong; and the third, when these paintings, which show traces of long exposure to the open air, were partially covered by a layer of plaster and partially repainted with new images, apparently not figurative. It was probably at this time that the faces of the large-scale figures were intentionally damaged. We cannot exclude the possibility that the covering of the paintings with plaster was due to the Khwarazmshah’s reaction to their “Qarakhanid” content, and that the building was destroyed later, just before 1220, when Muhammad b. Tekish, facing the approaching Mongols, hurriedly launched the reinforcement of the citadel (*diz* and *qal‘a*)⁶⁵ and the city

wall (*hiṣār*, corresponding to the site of Afrasiab), as archeologically attested. Otherwise, we are told that, after the execution of the last Qarakhanid in 1212–13, Samarqand became the capital of the Khwarazmshah and that he “built a Friday mosque there and began the construction of other fine buildings.”⁶⁶ But there is no mention of his precise activity in the castle before he added the strengthening works of 1219–20.

The archeology too evidences the reconstruction of the Friday mosque at that time, but we can affirm that no new “fine buildings” (*‘imārāt-i ‘āliyya*) were built on the lower terrace of the citadel after the destruction of the Qarakhanid residences. On the contrary, the remains of the last constructions over the razed pavilions are very modest. This can be explained with sufficient probability by the need for space in the castle for the newly reinforced garrison. Evidently it was not the time for embellishing palaces and even less for constructing them. The army gathered by the Khwarazmshah in the city attained a minimum of 40,000 men and a maximum of 110,000, and a portion of them would have been organized to protect the citadel. Although we do not know precisely how many, at least a thousand men fought in the Friday mosque, which is situated, with the castle, in the northern enclosure of the city. In addition to that, it seems very probable that a portion of the 30,000 forces of Muhammad b. Tekish executed with their twenty chief commanders by the Mongols after they took the city (*hiṣār*)⁶⁷ participated in the defense of the citadel itself, or at the last moment took refuge there.

In any case, we have no indisputable proof for the moment that the pavilion was reoccupied and repainted by the Khwarazmians. It could have happened before 1213, but the final destruction should have taken place between 1213 and 1220, before the arrival of the Mongols.

If the name “Mas‘ud” was in fact written in the inscription band (see above), perhaps this gives a first indication of the identity of the patron of the paintings. However, we do not know where “Mas‘ud” occurs in the name, that is, whether it is the given name or the patronymic. (For example, Mas‘ud b. Hasan’s son Muhammad b. Mas‘ud occupied the throne of Samarqand from 566 to 574 (1170/71–1178/79). As for the building activity of Mas‘ud b. Hasan, the patron of the poet Suzani, we know that he ordered the construction of a new wall of the *rabad* (outskirts) of the city of Bukhara.⁶⁸ In Samarqand, where he resided, he might have also built the pavilion with the paint-

ings, but this hypothesis requires confirmation. Identification depends on the inscriptions and elements of official titlature that we may expect to discover; finding the words *sultān al-salātīn*, for example, would be enough to limit the possibilities to two persons, Ibrahim and his son ʿUthman.

CONCLUSION

Before our excavations at Afrasiab, Qarakhanid painting, apart from painted stucco and a few very small, ornamental fragments found in Kyrgyzstan and on the site of Afrasiab itself, was almost unknown. The discovery of the mural paintings in Samarqand adds to our knowledge an important element—visual art as it existed at the court of the Qarakhanids. For the first time, we have images of men and women of different social levels, precious details about their dress and weapons and the trappings of their horses; we also have depictions of both wild and domestic animals and the mythological beings that lived in the imagination of people of that period. It would be interesting to try to analyze the development of poetry and literature before the Mongol invasion of Transoxiana and Khurasan or, in another vein, to assess the impact of the general set of old and new images at that time on the art of painting. Future research is needed before we can determine to what extent the pavilion paintings may illuminate the relationship between wall paintings and later miniatures.

The great importance of this unexpected discovery for the study of the history of Islamic art means that we must pay special attention not only to the search for more fragments but also to their preservation. It will be particularly important to find the best means for removing, cleaning, restoring, interpreting, and finally displaying these remarkable paintings.

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NOTES

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1. Nizāmi-i ʿArūzi, *Revised Translation of the Chahār maqāla ("Four Discourses") of Nizāmi-i ʿArūzi of Samarqand... by E. G. Browne*, "E. J. W. Gibb Memorial" Series, vol. 11, pt. 2 (Leiden: E. J. Brill and London: Luzac & Co., 1921), 30.

2. V. V. Bartol'd, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, 3rd ed., (London: Luzac, 1968), 254ff.
3. A. U. Pope, ed., *A Survey of Persian Art*, 6 vols. (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1939), vol. 5, pl. 554, A and B.
4. Charles Wilkinson, *Nishapur: Some Early Islamic Buildings and Their Decoration* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1986), 39–40.
5. Wilkinson, *Nishapur*, 45.
6. Wilkinson, *Nishapur*, 188, fig. 2.2 shows a skeleton discovered under a mass of fallen wall in one of the rooms of the Vineyard Tepe.
7. D. B. Stronach and T. C. Young, "Three Octagonal Seljuq Tomb Towers from Iran," *Iran* 4 (1966): 1–20; see also A. Daneshvari, *Medieval Tomb Towers of Iran: An Iconographical Study* (Lexington, KY: Mazda, 1986), 41–64.
8. N. M. Bachinskij, *Arkhitekturnye pamiatniki Turkmēni* (Moscow and Ashgabat, 1939), 17–31; Yüksel Sayan, *Türkmenistan'daki mimari eserler (XI–XVI. yüzyıl)* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1999), 385–86, figs. 166–67.
9. G. V. Shishkina expressed this opinion in conversation in 1988 on the site of Varakhsha, where she directed the archeological expedition of the Museum of the Orient (Moscow). See also A. Naymark, "Returning to Varakhsha," *The Silk Road Foundation Newsletter* 1, 2 (2003): 9–22.
10. P. Bernard, F. Grenet, M. Isamidinov, et al., "Fouilles de la mission franco-soviétique à l'ancienne Samarkand (Afrasiab): Première campagne, 1989," *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres: Comptes rendus des séances de l'année* (henceforth *CRAI*) (1990): 356–80, 368; O. N. Inevatkina, "Chantier (4A)," in P. Bernard, F. Grenet, M. Isamidinov, et al., "Fouilles de la mission franco-ouzbèque à l'ancienne Samarkand (Afrasiab): Deuxième et troisième campagnes (1990–1991)," *CRAI* (1992): 281–82.
11. Y. Karev, "Le palais du VIIIe siècle à Samarkand," *Studia Iranica* 29, 2 (2000): 273–96; idem, "La politique d'Abū Muslim dans le Māwarāʾannah: Les nouvelles données textuelles et archéologiques," *Der Islam* 79 (2002): 1–46.
12. The Max van Berchem Foundation was established in 1973 in honor of Max van Berchem (1863–1921), the founding scholar of Arabic epigraphy as its own discipline. The goal of the foundation is to promote the study of Islamic and Arabic archeology, history, geography, art history, epigraphy, religion, and literature. See the first short report: Y. Karev, "Nouvelles recherches dans la citadelle de l'ancienne Samarkand: Entre les Abbassides et les Qarakhanides," *Bulletin de la Fondation Max van Berchem* 15 (Dec. 2001): 1–4.
13. O. N. Inevatkina, "Fragment syuzhetnoi zhivopisi kontsa XII–nachala XIII vv. iz tsitadeli Samarkanda," *Material'naia kul'tura Vostoka* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennyi muzei Vostoka, 1999), 83–90. A small fragment with the representation of a female figure evidently belongs to the same period and style as the paintings from the lower terrace of the citadel. The fragment was found in a mass of *pisé* (rammed earth) of the last citadel wall constructed by the Khwarazmshahs before 1220. In other words, it was removed from a destroyed building of the Qarakhanid period after the reconstruction of the citadel before the Mongol invasion. It is difficult to say what kind of building this fragment came from, whether palace or pavil-

- ion, but in any case it is a clear indication that the Qarakhanids intensively occupied the castle and its lower terrace in the second half of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century, and that they decorated their buildings with figurative paintings.
14. Richard Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting* (Geneva: Albert Skira S. A., 1962), 65. There are numerous parallels in Islamic art as well as in paintings from eastern Turkestan. Further study is required, particularly of the small fragments found around the one depicting the peri; these may help to complete the missing elements).
 15. My thanks to Prof. B. Babadzhanyov, with whom I discussed this reading.
 16. This reading was first discussed with Prof. Thérèse Bittar, to whom I express my thanks.
 17. I wish to express my gratitude to Prof. Yasser Tabbaa, who, during a discussion on Feb. 20, 2004 at the College Art Association Conference in Seattle, was the first to indicate the possibility of this reading.
 18. I. Umniakov, "Rabāṭ-i Malik," in A. E. Schmidt and E. K. Betger, eds., *V. V. Bartol'du turkestanskīe druž'ia, ucheniki i pochitateli* (Tashkent, 1927), 179–92.
 19. B. Kochnev and V. Nastich, "K atribucii mavzoleia Shaykh-Fazil (epigraficheskie i numizmaticheskie dannye)," *Epigrafika Vostoka* 24 (1988): 68–77.
 20. A. Yakubovskij, "Dve nadpisi na severnom mavzolee 1152 g. v Uzgene," *Epigrafika Vostoka* 1 (1947): 27–32.
 21. M. Masson, "Fragmenty nadpisi karakhanidskogo mavzoleia s gorodishcha Afrasiab," *Epigrafika Vostoka* 20 (1971): 77–84.
 22. B. Kochnev, "Zametki po srednevekovoi numizmatike Srednei Azii, chast' 8," *Istoriia material'noi kul'tury Uzbekistana* 21 (1987): 167–68.
 23. All the coins were read and are currently being studied by Dr. A. Atakhodzhaev.
 24. 12 × 12 m—the size of the pavilion—provides 48 m of wall length; multiplied by at least 4 m of wall height, this gives a maximum of 192 sq. m of wall. Allowing for doorways and other areas that were probably not decorated, we can estimate a rough minimum of 150 sq. m of paintings.
 25. B. Gray, "An Unknown Fragment of the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* in the Asiatic Society of Bengal," *Ars Orientalis* 1 (1954): 65–75, fig. 21, fol. 53r: Feast of Qubilay Khan in 662 (1263–64); the manuscript is not earlier than 1430.
 26. R. Hillenbrand, *Imperial Images in Persian Painting: A Scottish Arts Council Exhibition* (Edinburgh: Scottish Arts Council Gallery, 1977), 30–31, no. 48: from a manuscript of Sa'di, *Gulistān*, Bukhara, 1567–68, in the British Library (London), Or. 5302, fol. 30a. The sovereign represented seems to be the Mughal Sultan Akbar.
 27. David Talbot Rice, *The Illustrations to the "World History" of Rashīd al-Dīn*, ed. Basil Gray (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1976), 46, no. 4.
 28. Douglas Barrett, *Islamic Metalwork in the British Museum* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1949), no. 23 (a well-known brass salver, Syria, second half of the thirteenth century).
 29. Stuart Cary Welch, *A King's Book of Kings: The Shah-Nameh of Shah Tahmasp* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1972), 128, fol. 67v: Zal receives Mihrab's homage at Kabul; Iraida Borodina, *Central Asia: Gems of 9th–19th-Century Architecture* (Moscow: Planeta, 1987), 45, no. 44: The artist Mani presenting a sketch to King Bahramgur, 1521–22, Alisher Navoi Collection, Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.
 30. Rice, "World History" of Rashīd al-Dīn, 44, no. 3.
 31. Ettinghausen, *Arab Paintings*, 65.
 32. *L'Islam dans les collections nationales* (Paris: Édition des musées nationaux, 1977), cat. no. 263, basin signed by Ibn al-Zayn, Egypt or Syria, end of the thirteenth to the beginning of the fourteenth century, Louvre, MAO 331.
 33. Yūsuf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib, *Wisdom of Royal Glory: A Turko-Islamic Mirror for Princes = Kutadgu bilig*, trans. Robert Dankoff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 124.
 34. Yūsuf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib, *Wisdom of Royal Glory*, 119.
 35. L. A. Mayer was the first to pay attention to this episode: L. A. Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), 4; Abū 'l Fida', *Abulfedae annales muslimici arabice et latine*, ed. J. J. Reiske, 5 vols. (Copenhagen: F. W. Thiele, 1789–94), vol. 4, 378 (Arabic), 379 (Latin).
 36. My thanks to Dr. A. Atakhodzhaev, who provided me with this information.
 37. D. Schlumberger et al., *Lashkari Bazar, une résidence royale ghaznévide et ghovide*, 2 vols. (Paris: Diffusion de Boccard, 1978, orig. publ. 1963), vol. 1A, 61ff. (text), figs. 120–24 ("planches").
 38. F. Grenet and B. I. Marshak, "Le mythe de Nana dans l'art de la Sogdiane," *Arts asiatiques* 53 (1998): 10–11, fig. 6.
 39. Changdong Tang, *Da Tang bi hua = Magnificent Frescos from the Great Tang Dynasty*, comp. Guozhen Li (X'ian: Shanxi Tourism Publishing House, 1999), 116, fig. 109: "The Southern Lokapala, Tang Dynasty (7th–9th century). On the south side of the east wall in the 15th cave. Height 91 cm, width 68 cm." Note also the twelve guardians in the upper left corner of a huge fourteenth-century wall painting from Shanxi province, representing an assembly of the Buddha of Medicine (Bhaishajyaguru). The painting is currently on exhibition in the Metropolitan Museum. (Kathleen Howard, ed., *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Guide*, 4th ed. [New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987], 97, fig. 48.)
 40. Jaques Giès et al., *Les arts de l'Asie centrale: La collection Paul Pelliot du Musée national des arts asiatiques Guimet*, 2 vols. (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1996), vol. 2, figs. 78: 1.2 and 79.
 41. See the recent book by B. I. Marshak, *Legends, Tales and Fables in the Art of Sogdiana* (New York: Biblioteca Persica Press, 2002); see also Guitty Azarpay, *Sogdian Painting: The Pictorial Epic in Oriental Art, with Contributions by A. M. Belenitskii, B. I. Marshak, and Mark J. Dresden* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981). The bibliography on Sogdian painting is huge and growing rapidly. The four most important archeological sites, the discovery of which by Soviet archeologists in the mid-twentieth century opened a completely new field of art history, are Varakhsha near Bukhara, Samarqand, Penjikent, and Shahrīstan (Bundjikath) in the region of Ushrushana. The basic publications are V. A. Shishkin, *Varakhsha* (Moscow, 1963), and L. I. Albaum, *Zhivopis' Afrasiaba* (Tashkent, 1975); for the other two sites, see the references in B. I. Marshak and N. N. Negmatov, "Sogdiana," in *History*

- of *Civilizations of Central Asia*, vol. 3, *The Cross-roads of Civilizations*, ed. B. A. Litvinsky (Paris: UNESCO, 1996), 233–80. See also the bibliography of B. Marshak, whose studies concern all key questions on the subject: *Webfestschrift Ērān und Anērān: Studies Presented to Boris Ilich Marshak on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday*, ed. P. Raffetta and G. Scarzia, electronic version: http://www.transoxiana.org/Eran/index_eran_ud_ameran.html See also F. Grenet, “The Self-Vision of the Sogdians,” in *Les Sogdiens en Chine*, ed. E. de la Vaissière and E. Trombert (Paris: EFEO, forthcoming).
42. A. M. Belenizki, *Mittelasien: Kunst der Sogden* (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 1980), 124, fig. 64; A. M. Belenicki and B. I. Marshak, “Drevneyshee izobrazhenie osadnoi mashiny v Srednei Azii,” in V. G. Lukonin, *Kul'tura Vostoka: Drevnost' i Srednevekov'e* (Leningrad, 1978), 215–21.
 43. B. I. Marshak, “Le programme iconographique des peintures de la ‘Salle des Ambassadeurs’ à Afrasiab (Samarqand),” *Arts asiatiques* 49 (1994): 1–20.
 44. Abū 'l-Faḍl Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh-i Mas'ūdī*, ed. Sa'īd Nafīsī, 3 vols. (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Kitābkhāna-i Sanā'ī, 1980), vol. 1, 131.
 45. E. Atıl, *Ceramics from the World of Islam* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1973), 112–13, no. 50.
 46. Zāhīr al-Dīn Muḥammad Bābur Mirzā, *Bāburnāma*, transcr., trans., and ed. W. M. Thackston, 3 vols. (Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures 18 [Cambridge, MA]: Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University, 1993), pt. 1: Fergana and Transoxiana, 94–95.
 47. This evidence was confirmed by our excavation in 2004, when some scenes with at least three figures were found.
 48. E. Esin, “Turk-i Māh Chihrah (The Turkish Norm of Beauty in Iran),” *Akten des VII. Internationalen Kongresses für iranische Kunst und Archäologie, München 7.–10. September 1976* (Berlin, 1979), 449–60.
 49. Bartol'd, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, 17, 88.
 50. See *Cahiers d'Asie centrale* 9 (2001), almost entirely dedicated to Qarakhanid studies.
 51. Muḥammad b. Ja'far Narshakhī, *The History of Bukhārā*, ed. and trans. R. N. Frye (Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1954), 29–30; Muḥammad b. Ja'far Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, trans. Abū Naṣr Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Qubāwī, ed. Mudarris Raḥavī (Tehran: Tūs, 1351 [1973], 2nd ed. 1363 [1984]), 40–42.
 52. V. V. Bartol'd, *Turkestan v epokhu mongol'skogo nashestviia* (St. Peterburg: Nauk, 1898), pt. 1 (texts), 87.
 53. Bartol'd, *Turkestan v epokhu mongol'skogo nashestviia*, pt. 1, 132.
 54. Narshakhī, *History of Bukhārā*, 51; Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, 71.
 55. Narshakhī, *History of Bukhārā*, 51; Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, 70.
 56. Gardīzī, *Zayn al-Akhhbār*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥayy Ḥabībī (Tehran, 1348 [1969–70]), 187–89.
 57. Nizāmī-i 'Arūzī, *Revised Translation of the Chahār maqāla*, 52; Aḥmad b. 'Umar b. 'Alī al-Nizāmī al-'Arūzī al-Samarqandī, *Chahār Maqāla* (“The Four Discourses”), ed. Mirzā Muḥammad Qazwīnī, “E. J. W. Gibb Memorial” Series, vol. 11, pt. 1 (Leiden: E. J. Brill and London: Luzac, 1910), 46–47.
 58. Nizāmī-i 'Arūzī, *Revised Translation of the Chahār maqāla*, 53.
 59. Muḥammad b. 'Alī Sūzanī [d. 1173–74], *Dīwān*, ed. Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh Ḥusaynī (Tehran: Amīr-i Kabīr, 1338 [1959]).
 60. Bartol'd, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, 17–18.
 61. Robert Dankoff, “Qarākhānid Literature and the Beginnings of Turco-Islamic Culture,” in *Central Asian Monuments*, ed. Hasan B. Paksoy (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1992), 73–80.
 62. The numismatic information on the dates of the reign of the Qarakhanid rulers follows B. D. Kochnev, *Numismaticheskaya istoriia karakhanidskogo kaganata (991–1209)* (Moscow, forthcoming).
 63. Bartol'd, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, 353.
 64. Ibid., 365–66; for Ibn al-Athīr, see C. J. Tornberg, ed., *Ibn al-Athīr Chronicon, quod perfectissimum inscribitur*, 15 vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1851–76), vol. 7, 178; 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Atā Malik Juvaynī, *The History of the World-Conqueror*, trans. J. A. Boyle, 2 vols. (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 1958), vol. 2, 392–96; Muḥammad 'Awfī, *Matn-i kāmil-i Lubāb al-albāb*, ed. Sa'īd Nafīsī (Tehran, 1333 [1954–55]), 43, 45–46.
 65. 'Alā' ad-Dīn 'Atā Malik al-Juvaynī, *Tārīkh-i Jahān-gūshā'i*, ed. Mirzā Muḥammad Qazwīnī, 3 vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill and London: Luzac, 1912), vol. 1, 91; Juvaynī, *History of the World-Conqueror*, vol. 1, 117.
 66. Juvaynī, *Tārīkh-i Jahān-gūshā'i*, vol. 2, 162; idem, *History of the World-Conqueror*, vol. 2, 396.
 67. There is some confusion in the accounts of Juvaynī in using the term *hiṣār*, which is frequently translated as “citadel” (see Bartol'd, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, 411ff). Nevertheless, the words *qal'a* and *diz*, also used by the author, without doubt refer to the castle or citadel, whereas the translation of *hiṣār* depends on the context and the archeological evidence.
 68. Narshakhī, *History of Bukhārā*, 35; Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, 49.