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DYNASTIC POLITICS AND THE SAMANID MAUSOLEUM

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Samanid Mausoleum, view from
northeast, Bukhara, Uzbekistan,
10th century

Abstract

Although the Samanid mausoleum in Bukhara is regularly featured in surveys of Persian and Islamic architecture, the building has never been fully related to the historical circumstances of its foundation or thoroughly analyzed in relation to regional architectural traditions. This article establishes the political and social contexts surrounding its construction, thereby shedding light on its patronage as well as its role in a broader Samanid effort to consolidate dynastic authority and promote Persian culture in tenth-century Bukhara. The structural and decorative features of the building are reconsidered in light of these historical circumstances, revealing the particular ways in which the monument synthesized key architectural models from the Persian and Central Asian past and articulated an innovative message of Samanid identity for the people of tenth-century Bukhara.

THE SAMANID MAUSOLEUM IN BUKHARA (modern Uzbekistan) is one of the canonical buildings of Islamic architecture, well known from its appearance in virtually every survey of the field.¹ These surveys celebrate the building as one of the earliest extant funerary monuments anywhere in the Islamic world. Recognized as a masterpiece of brick architecture, it is seen as the culmination of a long, local tradition of construction in this medium. The surveys also note the similarities between its plan and that of the *chahar taq* (the Zoroastrian fire temple of Iran) as well as the continuity of the mausoleum's decorative motifs with pre-Islamic models. Robert Hillenbrand dubbed it "a fire temple in Islamic dress,"² and it is widely viewed as a building that sets the tone for the domed square mausolea constructed for later secular rulers, from Sultan Sanjar to Uljaytu to Timur and beyond. However, its historical and geographic context has rarely been addressed in more than a perfunctory way. In this article, I contextualize the building by examining Samanid chronicles, literary patronage, and the evidence of the building itself, and argue that the mausoleum was built by Ismail, the first Samanid ruler (died 907), to impress the presence of his new dynasty upon the urban landscape of the capital.

The building is a domed cube measuring nearly ten meters per side, with slightly battered walls (fig. 1). It is offset from the cardinal directions and has an entrance on each side, giving it the shape of a *chahar taq*. It is composed of baked bricks, which are not only the material of construction but also the primary material of decoration, arranged in such a way as to give a basket-weave texture to the building's surface. The corners are defined by engaged columns, which nearly, but not exactly, correspond to four small domes that surround the main dome. Between the columns and the domes there is an arcaded gallery that encircles the building but is

not accessible from it. The colonnettes of the arcade are among the few parts of the building decorated with a stucco revetment.

The interior walls are built with a similar basket-weave brick pattern in the lower part and another textured pattern comprised of squares and diamonds in the upper section. The dome is connected to the cube below it by means of squinches, which form an eight-sided zone of transition. The squinches are divided by a band down the middle, creating two triangular sections, an idea that later gave rise to the multitudinous divisions known as *muqarnas* (fig. 2).

One of the mausoleum's most unusual aspects is its almost total lack of inscriptions; the only epigraphy associated with the building is on a wooden lintel that was found over the eastern doorway during excavations in the 1930s. The Soviet Arabist V. I. Belyaev read this inscription as "Nasr b. Ahmad b. Ismail," and hence the building usually is dated to the reign of the Samanid emir Nasr II (reigned 914–43).³ Nasr's rule is considered the golden age of the Samanid dynasty, another reason expounded by Western scholars in support of this attribution. However, popular memory attributes the building to Ismail, the grandfather of Nasr II and founder of the Samanid dynasty. According to Soviet scholars, further evidence for an attribution to Ismail's reign is found in a sixteenth-century copy of a tenth-century *waqf* document (a charter that discusses the organization of a charitable foundation), which mentions that Ismail endowed land in Bukhara's cemetery of Naukanda for the grave of his father Ahmad.⁴ Excavators found the remains of three male bodies inside the mausoleum; the inscription on the lintel clearly names one of them as Nasr II, but the identities of the other two never have been definitively established.

Ismail and the Founding of the Samanid Dynasty

The Samanids were descended from a noble Central Asian family who originated in the area of Termez and Balkh.⁵ Saman converted to Islam in the 720s while the Arabs were still struggling to expand into Transoxiana; he subsequently named his son Assad after the Arab governor of Khorasan. Around 819, Assad's four sons were appointed by the 'Abbasid governor of Khorasan to rule over Samarqand, Ferghana, Shash (modern Tashkent), and Herat. Rule over Transoxiana was later consolidated in the hands of Nasr and Ismail, two of the sons of Ahmad b. Assad, who had been appointed over Ferghana. In 875, Nasr was awarded a diploma of investiture from the 'Abbasid caliph, who ostensibly reigned over the whole Islamic world. When Nasr died in 892, Ismail was already the *de facto* ruler, and he received caliphal recognition a year later.

Ismail was a strong leader who expanded the Samanid domains in all directions, governing an area that encompassed the provinces of Khorasan and Transoxiana and indirectly controlling an even larger part of Central Asia through the vassal-

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Squinch, Samanid Mausoleum,
Bukhara, Uzbekistan, 10th century

age of local dynasties. He established Bukhara as his capital, and the city flourished and expanded under his rule, as his court became a magnet for scholars and literati as well as traders and craftsmen. Ismail became known to both contemporaries and subsequent generations as the epitome of a just ruler,⁶ and even today Uzbeks pay homage to him at the Samanid mausoleum. The dynasty he founded, which was one of the first Iranian dynasties to be completely independent of the 'Abbasid caliphate in practice, is known for the conscious promotion of Persian, rather than Arabic, language and culture. It was under Samanid tutelage that New Persian came into its own as a literary language; this was the language of the Sasanian court written in the Arabic alphabet and newly enriched with loan words from both Arabic and Sogdian, the language that had been spoken in the Bukhara region for centuries. Samanid independence and the promotion of Persian, categorized as a Persian Renaissance by literary historians, began with Ismail.

He was also a generous patron of the arts, and under his rule Bukhara was transformed into a center of culture to rival Baghdad.⁷ He patronized architecture in particular, and the Samanid historian Narshakhi tells us that Ismail constructed a *ribat* (small fortress) by the Samarqand gate in Bukhara, which he endowed by purchasing a village with his own money⁸; courts and gardens in the Juy-i Mulian suburb associated with the estates he purchased from the heirs of the pre-Islamic rulers of Bukhara, known as the Bukhar Khodahs⁹; a Friday mosque in the Juy-i Mulian area, endowed with the proceeds of agricultural land he purchased¹⁰; and a mosque with a courtyard near the citadel of Bukhara.¹¹ He also enlarged the Friday mosque of Bukhara by one-third.¹² His attachment to the city was famous: Narshakhi relates that Ismail truly loved Bukhara and called it "my city." He moved to Bukhara from Ferghana in 874 when he was appointed governor and made the city his base until his death in 907.¹³ Even when his brother Nasr died in 892, he did not move to Samarqand, which had been the capital, but made Bukhara the main capital instead. Ismail's identity was very much connected with Bukhara: he allowed the

outer walls of the oasis, built to fend off the Turkic nomads to the north, to fall into disrepair, famously declaring, “While I live, I am the wall of Bukhara.”¹⁴

Ismail was known to care for the denizens of the city as well as its urban fabric. His architectural patronage, as described by Narshakhi, shows the extent to which he utilized the institution of *waqf* (a type of Islamic endowment often linked to a building and the institutions it housed) for the benefit of those subjects. He also used *waqf* without associated buildings for charitable purposes and to provide for his own progeny: he purchased the village of Barkad and endowed the proceeds, with one-third going to the descendants of the Shi’ite imams ‘Ali and Ja’far, one-third to the poor, and one-third to his own descendants.¹⁵ Hence the sixteenth-century *waqf* document that refers to his endowment of land in the cemetery of Naukanda for his father’s tomb should not be lightly dismissed.

On the one hand, it seems unlikely that Ismail would disinter his father’s body and move the remains to Bukhara. Ahmad was most likely buried in Ferghana, the city from where he ruled as governor, and disinterring and moving his remains a decade after his death would have been contrary to Islamic practice. On the other hand, Ismail may have felt more pressing needs than observing the niceties of religious law. Roy Mottahedeh has shown how political legitimacy in this period was based upon the establishment of contractual, personal bonds between a ruler and his subjects and the continual calculation of the benefit derived from that relationship.¹⁶ The establishment of a dynastic mausoleum in Bukhara would have visually symbolized these bonds and the links between the dynasty and the city.

It is possible that Ahmad’s remains were not moved, and that the mausoleum was only a symbolic grave until the death of Ismail. Narshakhi relates that the grave of the legendary hero Afrasiab was located inside the city by one of the gates,¹⁷ while the tomb of another legendary figure, Siyavush, was next to another gate¹⁸; clearly these were symbolic graves only. The tomb of Siyavush was venerated by the Zoroastrians, who sacrificed roosters there for their New Year’s celebrations, while Bukharans (not specifically Zoroastrians) held lamentations for the death of Siyavush at the site.¹⁹ Afrasiab, despite being ostensibly buried in Bukhara, was associated more with Ramitan, a town in the oasis where the Bukhar Khodahs previously had their winter residence. Siyavush and his eponymous burial site, however, were closely connected to Bukhara. It is my contention that Ismail constructed the Samanid mausoleum as a new focus for the identity of Bukharans and their loyalty to the Samanid dynasty.

Samanid Political Legitimacy

In his seminal study on loyalty and leadership in the realm of the Buyids, who were Samanid contemporaries ruling in western Iran and Iraq, Mottahedeh describes

the composition of Buyid society as a multilayered conglomerate of ties of loyalty.²⁰ Beneath the level of the ruler and his subjects, a rich medley of overlapping, and at times conflicting, relationships bound together a complex agglomeration of classes and interests. Formal institutions were few, so that a network of informal commitments determined an individual's place in society. The job of the ruler was to remain detached from all this, so that he could ensure that each group (and by implication each individual) received what was appropriate, and that no single group imposed its own interests upon society as a whole. Kingship had its own interests, to be sure, but these were separate from those of the rest of the populace. The king was obligated to the army, but in this period, the army was separate from the populace and heavily reliant on imported slaves and elite and racially distinct groups. The king and his military enforcers were outside the system, yet connected to it through ties of benefit. Hence the ruler was able to arbitrate among the different groups and factions; a ruler who performed this task with fairness and equanimity was said to be just.

Although Mottahedeh was primarily concerned with the Buyids, most of his analysis is applicable to the Samanids as well. After all, the Samanids were the Buyids' neighbors and rivals and participated in the same political and cultural milieu that accompanied the demise of the 'Abbasid caliphate as a meaningful political force. This period between the decline of the caliphate and the emergence of the Saljuq empire was one of exceptional fluidity. Religious positions had not yet hardened and were being debated. The proliferation of smaller courts in the eastern Islamic world also provided a unique opportunity for patronage, so that an architect, artist, poet, geographer, or historian could move easily from one center to the other, seeking the most congenial position possible. Borders were also fluid, as bonds of loyalty between the major regional powers and the smaller courts shifted and battles ensued. The notion of the separateness of kingship is a useful one for understanding how cultural and economic life could have flourished concomitantly with the bewildering array of military conflicts described in the chronicles.

The Buyids, who came from the region of Dailam, south of the Caspian Sea, were clearly outsiders in the realms they ruled, even generations after their initial conquests; the Samanids were likewise outsiders in Bukhara. Before the Arab conquests, the city had been populated by Sogdians and ruled by the Bukhar Khodahs. In the early eighth century, the Arabs struggled to conquer and maintain their hold on the city and finally managed to do so only by ruling in conjunction with the Bukhar Khodah family. In effect, the oasis had a somewhat nominal Arab governor who reported to the governor of Khorasan, while *de facto* local power was still in the hands of the Bukhar Khodahs, who remained in their palace at Varakhsha

(a city about forty-five kilometers west of Bukhara). They enjoyed local autonomy provided they did not plot or rebel against the Arab regime; however, they inevitably did rebel and were then executed for this disobedience. The last execution, in 782, ended the formal power of the Bukhar Khodahs, but the family continued to be locally and regionally prominent. They still owned a great deal of property in Bukhara and presumably enjoyed prestige and influence as well. The city at that time had a unique status in Transoxiana; while other provinces were ruled by the Samanids under the aegis of the Tahirid dynasty of Abbasid governors, the administration of Bukhara came under direct Tahirid supervision. The fall of the Tahirids to the Saffarids and subsequent rebellions left the city adrift, without official ties to either the Saffarids or the Samanids.

Hence, Ismail was definitely an outsider when he arrived in Bukhara as governor in 874. Narshakhi relates that he was reluctant to enter the city without an army, and did so only once he was assured of his position, which he achieved by making the previous emir his deputy.²¹ The populace welcomed him rapturously, and he did not disappoint them. In addition to removing the last remnant of the Tahirids, he defeated a ring of thieves who were plaguing the city and squelched a rebellion by local Sogdian nobles. By allowing the walls of the oasis to fall into disrepair, he not only freed the populace from the onerous burden of maintaining them, he also identified himself as the protector of Bukhara in a very tangible way. Later, as the ruler of the entire Samanid realm, he embarked on campaigns to enlarge his kingdom and thereby further preserve the security of his capital: he defeated the Turkish ruler of Taraz in 893 and the Saffarid 'Amr b. Laith in 900. He skillfully balanced the multitude of vassal states on the fringes of his realm and brought additional kingdoms into his purview. Safety along the northern borders greatly enhanced the economy, which profited hugely from the slave trade. In fiscal administration too he was known for his fairness: he is said to have returned excess taxes in Rayy after problems with weights were discovered, and archaeological excavations have uncovered weights guaranteed by his personal seal.²² He created the conditions for peace and prosperity and fulfilled the obligations of the ideal ruler of the time. He mediated between different factions, kept each group in its place, and ensured that each party received its due. As Narshakhi described it, he "chastised whoever showed tyranny to his subjects . . . and allowed no favoritism in affairs of state."²³

The chastising of tyrants seems to have coincided with Ismail's consolidation of his own position. He purchased the Juy-i Mulian estates of the Bukhar Khodah family, built palaces and gardens, and gave these as *waqf* to his own clients.²⁴ He also expropriated the Bukhara property of the Bukhar Khodahs. This was justified on the basis of a family member's conviction for apostasy a century earlier, but Ismail nonetheless compensated the grandson with a stipend equal to the income

from the estates.²⁵ Therefore, the most notable Sogdian family in the city did not suffer financial losses but did lose one of their main bases in Bukhara. Naturally, the Sogdian aristocracy did not take kindly to this treatment: as Narshakhi relates, “There was no respect in their eyes and their gathering together did not portend good for him.”²⁶ So Ismail sent the Bukhar Khodah family and other prominent Sogdian nobles as emissaries to his brother Nasr, with whom he had been engaged in another power struggle. He wrote to Nasr asking him to imprison them, which Nasr did. Later, when Ismail felt more secure in his position, he had Nasr release them, and upon their return to the city, he ensured their allegiance by “fulfilling their just dues.”²⁷

Ismail’s moves against the Bukhar Khodah family were not always so successful, however. He decided to transform the palace at Varakhsha into a mosque and donated funds and construction materials (in this case, wood) for the necessary modifications. The populace refused, ostensibly on the grounds that the mosque would be too grand for the small number of local inhabitants who would attend, and Ismail’s plans were abandoned; the palace stood intact until the reign of his great-great-grandson, Ahmad b. Nuh.²⁸ Generally, though, he did manage to decrease the standing of the old Sogdian aristocracy, and even his abandonment of the defenses of Bukhara can be seen at least in part as a populist move against these potential rivals. The walls of the oasis had been started around 775 at the behest of a group of Sogdian nobles; they were not completed until 830. Although the walls protected the population from nomadic incursions, the annual maintenance required an enormous amount of time and money, both of which were levied from the populace.²⁹ Hence Ismail’s famous declaration, “As long as I live, I am the walls of Bukhara,” can be seen as a rejection of the *ancien régime* as well as an assertion of his own strength.

This assertion also embodied Ismail’s own identification with his adopted city and underlined the personal nature of his rule and the loyalty of Bukharans to him. Clearly they derived enormous benefit from the relationship from the moment he entered the city as governor. By refusing to move to Samarqand (long considered Transoxiana’s leading city) after the death of his brother Nasr, Ismail not only cemented his own relationship with the city’s inhabitants, he also began the process of linking the city with the Samanid dynasty as a whole. It was already an economic center, thanks to his military and fiscal policies, and now it became a cultural center as well, thanks to his patronage. Literary men and other intellectuals migrated to the Samanid court, and Ismail engaged in his enthusiastic building program.

We have already seen that Ismail’s constructions in Juy-i Mulian were connected to his appropriation of power and prestige from the Bukhar Khodah family; his subsequent transferal of many of these estates to his own allies would have

consolidated their ties of loyalty to him. The fact that he built palaces and gardens on land before he gave it away indicates the importance of these bonds. His constructions for the public at large, including the *ribat*, the Friday mosque at Dashtak, the mosque near the citadel, and the expansion of the Friday mosque of Bukhara likewise can be seen as ways to cement his ties with the city's population. The dynastic mausoleum, also accessible to the general populace, made visible the dynasty's grandeur and its close relationship to the city. This is the only one of Ismail's foundations to have survived through the ages, and unfortunately we do not know what the others looked like. The mausoleum, however, visually embodies the new identity that Ismail was constructing and the new traditions of the Samanid-sponsored Persian Renaissance.

Eric Hobsbawm, in his seminal work on invented traditions, claims that this phenomenon happens most often during times of abrupt and rapid change,³⁰ and the aftermath of the Arab conquest of Transoxiana in the early eighth century definitely fits this description. Not only did the political leadership change, but the prolonged fighting in every major city caused massive demographic upheavals, with many Sogdians fleeing or being killed in battle and both Arabs and Muslim Persians moving in. Central Asia transformed from an assortment of fragmented city-states to a region of an enormous Arab empire. Arabic became the language of government, and Persian the spoken language of the cities. The majority of the population converted, at least in the cities, from Zoroastrianism to Islam, so that public ceremonies, feasts, and holidays also changed. The old festivals were still present,³¹ but were directly relevant to a diminishing number of people. The topography of the cities evolved, as properties were expropriated for the Muslim newcomers, fire temples and churches were transformed into mosques, and new mosques were constructed. Both politically and religiously inspired rebellions ensured that upheaval continued into the ninth century.

Yet this massive disruption also paved the way for the creation of a new Muslim-Persian identity under the Samanids. The groundwork had been laid by the literary movement known as the *Shu'ubiyya*, which exhibited pride in Persian history and culture, albeit expressed in Arabic. Iranian dynasties such as the Saffarids were already promoting Persian poetry. Now the Samanids, starting with Ismail, began advancing Persian in a much broader way, as a language of general use for the educated classes instead of Arabic. It was Ismail who decreed the use of Persian as the language of government; his son and heir, Ahmad, was assassinated for reverting to Arabic, so clearly this move had great resonance with the populace. The Central Asians had chafed under Arab dominance from the beginning, as their multiple rebellions attest. Now they regained an identity of their own, but not the Sogdian identity of the past; instead, it was a newly forged identity with its own invented

traditions, firmly Muslim but just as firmly Iranian. In this way Ismail, who had initially entered Bukhara as an outsider, connected himself to the local populace and created a *raison d'être* for the dynasty he founded.

As we have seen, leadership during this period was personal and based on direct ties forged between the leader and the led.³² Legitimacy for such leadership was divinely granted and was to some extent self-evident based on the ongoing calculation of benefit and events on the battlefield. This concept of kingship arose in response to the realities of the period, when the 'Abbasid caliphs retained religious authority but lost virtually all political power. Divine approbation was theoretically symbolized by caliphal investiture, but in reality this was a formality, and the caliphs merely acknowledged the *de facto* situation. The Saffarid leader Ya'qub b. Laith made this clear when, in response to a query about his caliphal investiture, he drew his sword and claimed that it was the source of his legitimacy. The Samanids were never so brutally honest and always maintained cordial relations with the caliphate. The caliph's name was mentioned in the Friday prayer, tribute was sent to Baghdad in the form of textiles from Bukhara's official factories, and the early Samanids never arrogated a title higher than *emir*. Narshakhi stresses that Ismail was always "obedient" to the caliph³³; he received his patent of investiture in 893, one year after the death of his brother Nasr. After his defeat of 'Amr b. Laith in 901, he received an expanded patent for Transoxiana, Khorasan, Turkestan, Sind, Hind, and Gurgan. Clearly he did not control the far reaches of Turkestan and Hind, an excellent example of how caliphal investiture often included an element of wishful thinking.

Since the caliph embodied religious authority, albeit remotely, the concept of kingship was necessarily secular. Mottahedeh has pointed out that virtually all the regimes of this period were based upon ethnic groupings, which were in turn based primarily upon language.³⁴ By this time, the language of the pre-Islamic Sasanian rulers of Iran had evolved into New Persian and was widespread throughout the cities of the Iranian-speaking world, which enabled a much greater territory than the region of Fars, synonymous with Persia, to be considered as *Iran-zamin*, the land of Iran. This designation was not at all synonymous with the territory of the former Sasanian empire but was based instead on the contemporary linguistic situation. Hence, the cities of Transoxiana, where the Sasanians had never ruled, could be considered *Iran-zamin* while the predominantly Arab-speaking cities of modern Iraq, where the Sasanian capital had been located, were not. Although *Iran-zamin* was a specific territory where Persian and other Iranian languages were spoken, it was not considered important for it to be unified under a single ruler. Instead security and the maintenance of harmony among conflicting groups in society were the main criteria of good government.³⁵

Although the Saffarids were the first of the independent Iranian dynasties, their reliance on force as a justification for their rule meant that they had no need for invented traditions. In other areas, remote from the reach of Baghdad due to geography or distance or both, the old traditions were strong, and genuine continuity from the past was evident. Regions such as Tabaristan, Chaghaniyan, Ustrushana, and Guzgan fell into this category, and the rulers of these regions were descended from those of the pre-Islamic era. Ironically, Fars belongs to this category as well, despite its relative proximity to Baghdad and its early fall to Arab rule. This was the Sasanian homeland and a region that held tightly to the past in spite of all obstacles. The inhabitants frequently revolted against the Arabs in the century after the conquest,³⁶ and the majority still refused to convert even as late as the tenth century. This was the region where Zoroastrian literature in Middle Persian experienced its heyday, just at the time that New Persian literature was flourishing in Transoxiana. After their takeover of this region, the Buyids also attempted to construct an identity based upon the Sasanian past, but this was too heavily inflected by the actual past to succeed in the same way the Samanids had done.

The Samanids were supremely effective in forging a dynastic identity that would link them to their capital. The Sogdian aristocracy of Bukhara was weakened when Ismail came to power, and he took measures to reduce their influence even further. Ismail was a member of the Central Asian aristocracy, but almost certainly of Bactrian rather than Sogdian stock. Unlike the Saffarids and Buyids, who also claimed Sasanian descent, Ismail was believable as a descendant of the Sasanians (or more precisely of the rebellious Sasanian general Bahram Chubin),³⁷ and he had impeccable Muslim credentials as well. Bukhara had undergone sufficient dislocation in the century and a half since the Arab conquest for an aristocratic outsider to shape its traditions anew, and Ismail was just the person to achieve this. His promotion of Persian as a language of government was a rejection of the Sogdian past and Arab dominance, and pointed the way forward toward a new cultural synthesis. His dynastic mausoleum visually embodied this new synthesis as well as the ties of the Samanids to the city.

Ismail's Mausoleum

In choosing to construct a mausoleum, Ismail opted for the funerary practice associated with prominent Muslims; in the Zoroastrian past, bodies had been exposed and the bones placed in ossuaries. Ismail ensured that the prominence of his own family was emphasized by selecting the best artisans and materials available. The building embodied his connection to Bukhara in the most dramatic way possible: not only did he conspicuously choose to remain in Bukhara for all eternity, but by interring his father there, he also established a dynastic presence in the city. This ret-

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Fire temple, Niasar, Iran, 6th century

respective connection would have been another way of challenging the established aristocracy. It also is quite likely that Ismail was competing with the cult of Siyavush; since mourning at the grave of this legendary figure was a long-standing tradition in Bukhara, Ismail probably intended to replace it with pilgrimage to the dynastic mausoleum. As Narshakhi reported, he was successful, and the tomb did indeed become a focus of pilgrimage for Bukharans.³⁸ It is possible that Ismail was emulating the dynastic mausoleum of the 'Abbasid caliphs, although housing the remains of a family in a single structure, called a *naus*, was also a Central Asian tradition.

The *chahar taq* form already had been used for mausolea in Central Asia, but it was not the only available plan. Ismail could have selected a plan with four deep niches, which was reminiscent of a type of *naus*; a plan with a mausoleum and a room for pilgrims connected by a three-sided barrel vault (*ayvan*), which was characteristic of the region where the Samanid family had their origins; or a plan with two entrances, found in the region where Ismail was born and raised. In choosing the Zoroastrian fire temple, just as in choosing a language of government, he opted for the Persian import rather than local Central Asian traditions. The *chahar taq* was also similar in form to some Byzantine martyria and early Islamic mausolea. Like the plan with the connecting vault, the *chahar taq* as a mausoleum was found in the Samanid homeland, but unlike that plan, it was not exclusively connected to that region. Instead, it must have resonated as a Persian form: a substantial number of *chahar taqs* dot the Iranian landscape even today, and in the early tenth century, when Zoroastrians were still a majority in Fars, Tabaristan, and the countryside of Iran generally, there were a large number of fire temples in use. Geographers at the time noted both operational fire temples and important ruined temples of the past.

In his dissertation, Yuri Karev argued that the eighth-century palace at Samargand took the form of a Sasanian rather than a Sogdian palace, evidence of a wave of Persian influence concomitant with the migration of Muslim Persians into

Central Asia.³⁹ The adoption of the mausoleum, and the clear change in funerary practices that this entailed, is symptomatic of Muslim immigration as well as Central Asian conversion. But the particular choice of a Persian form, instead of the other available models, for the Samanid mausoleum had to be a deliberate decision on Ismail's part. It corresponds to his promotion of the Persian language written in Arabic characters; as we have seen, this was not a straightforward revival of the language of the Sasanian court, but was instead a version of that language transformed with a new alphabet and enriched with loan words from both Arabic and Sogdian. The Samanid mausoleum is likewise not a "fire temple in Islamic dress," as it was termed by Hillenbrand.⁴⁰ It is a version of the *chahar taq*, adapted for use as a mausoleum, incorporating local elements and local traditions in its design and decoration.

Although the Samanid mausoleum emulates the basic plan of the Persian fire temple, it is not identical (fig. 3). Extant examples in Iran are much more open than the mausoleum, as befitted their respective functions: in the fire temple, the fire was meant to be visible, so that wide, arched openings were appropriate; the mausoleum was meant to cover and contain burials, and its comparatively narrow openings suited this purpose. In addition, an ambulatory passage for the circulation of the faithful surrounded the *chahar taq*, but the practice of pilgrimage entailed entering the mausoleum. Because of this enclosing ambulatory passage and because only the priest entered the actual chamber, neither the exteriors nor interiors of *chahar taq* chambers were given extra adornment. The Samanid mausoleum, however, was lavishly decorated both inside and out, so that the message of the building would be conveyed to passersby as well as to those who entered. Moreover, the mausoleum's squinches, with their bisecting ribs, firmly place the building in the tenth century; it is not a mere copy of a Sasanian *chahar taq*. The gallery and the corner domes are also unknown in the Sasanian examples.

The use of the fire-temple form for a mausoleum shows how disconnected this plan was from its Persian origins. Central Asian Zoroastrians had never known this type of building as a fire-temple plan, while Persian immigrants to Central Asia were Muslims and therefore would not have been intimately familiar with the *chahar taq*. Central Asians who ventured south during this period would have seen *chahar taqs*, both ruined examples without their ambulatories and functioning ones that they almost certainly were not allowed to enter. Hence the *chahar taq* without an ambulatory would have evoked Persian associations without necessarily evoking Zoroastrian ones.

Most of the Sasanian *chahar taqs* were composed of rubble and mortar covered with a thin layer of stucco; only Takht-i Suleiman, which was still a functioning fire temple in the tenth century, was composed of baked brick. The Samanid

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Window grille, Samanid Mausoleum,
Bukhara, Uzbekistan, 10th century

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Arcade, north side, Samanid
Mausoleum, Bukhara, Uzbekistan,
10th century

mausoleum, therefore, was innovative in this respect as well. Baked brick denoted importance, and it was used to an unprecedented degree in this building. Previously, important buildings in this region (namely palaces and temples) had been constructed of unbaked brick and covered with a decorative revetment of stucco, a much cheaper option than baked brick yet still aesthetically effective. In the mausoleum, brick comprised both the building material and the decorative material. One contemporary mausoleum, in Tajikistan,⁴¹ also was constructed in this way, although there the decoration was relatively simple by comparison, even though some of the motifs are the same. But what really makes the Samanid mausoleum exceptional is not just the quality and quantity of the decoration, but the fact that brick imitates and replaces other materials that were cheaper and more readily available. The motifs around the doorways, the window grilles, the roundels in the spandrels of the arches of the zone of transition, and the bands of decoration at the base of the dome are elements that usually would be composed of stucco (fig. 4). Soviet scholars have long noted the resemblance of the brick colonnettes of the zone of transition to contemporary wooden columns, citing this as an example of a local tradition.⁴² But the local tradition was precisely to use *wooden* columns, as evidenced by the Friday mosque at Khiva, discoveries in mountainous regions in Tajikistan, and textual references to the use of wood.⁴³ Both wood and stucco were used in the Samanid mausoleum to a very limited degree: the ribs of the squinches and the colonnettes of the exterior arcade are accented with carved stucco, and the entrances of the building have wooden lintels. The relative lack of these materials indicates that the intention was also to luxuriate in the conspicuous use of that expensive and esteemed material—baked brick—as well as to differentiate the building from the prominent constructions of the past, especially the nearby palace of the Bukhar Khodahs at Varakhsha. This resulted in the creation of a monument fitting for the Samanid dynasty and for Bukhara, with its new status as a capital and as one of the most illustrious cities in the Islamic world.

Soviet scholars have seen the arcade on the mausoleum's exterior as a reflection of the arcades depicted on some Sogdian ossuaries, such as those from Ishtikhan and Mulla Kurgan (fig. 5).⁴⁴ This does seem plausible, particularly since a popular plan for mausolea of this era, the one with four deep niches, likely was derived from a type of *naus*.⁴⁵ The Samanid mausoleum does reflect some vestiges of local pre-Islamic funerary practices, namely in its lack of inscriptions, which is exceedingly

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Detail of portal, north side, Samanid
Mausoleum, Bukhara, Uzbekistan,
10th century

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7
Detail of portal, north side, Samanid
Mausoleum, Bukhara, Uzbekistan,
10th century

unusual in an Islamic building. The only inscription is the small and unimpressive one squeezed onto the lintel that names Nasr II, no doubt added at the time of his burial in 943. In its original conception, in my opinion, this elaborate construction did not have any inscriptions. Neither *nauses* nor ossuaries recorded the names of the deceased, and this tradition continued with the early Islamic mausolea of Central Asia. Some ossuaries, however, were given lavish decoration of high artistic quality. Likewise, the Samanid mausoleum conveyed its intended messages through the quality of its material and the choice of decorative motifs.

Mehrdad Shokoohy has argued that the triangular motif over each door of the mausoleum is a simplified and stylized version of a Sasanian crown.⁴⁶ He points out that the scarf (or wings) and crescent, which form elements of most Sasanian crowns, can be found surmounting arches with royal associations, such as that at Taq-i Bustan. A more stylized version of the fluttering scarf surmounts arches carved on the walls of churches constructed by post-Sasanian Persian Christian emigrants in the south of India. Although it is difficult to be conclusive, this does indeed bear some resemblance to the even more stylized terracotta motif of the Samanid mausoleum (fig. 6). The greater stylization was inevitable given the reinterpretation of the motif in terracotta rather than stucco. Its appearance on the exterior of the mausoleum above the entrance arches fits with the Samanid claim of descent from the Sasanians. The components of Sasanian crowns were well known in the early Islamic period and were used as far west as Jerusalem in the late seventh-century Dome of the Rock. In Central Asia, Sasanian-style silver dishes depicting the shahs with their crowns were produced throughout the eighth century and later.⁴⁷ Even in the pre-Islamic era, elements of the crowns were emulated in Central Asian ossuary decoration and in the décor of Sogdian palaces, albeit removed from their Sasanian context.⁴⁸ This origin was recognized, however, as some pre-Islamic and early Islamic Central Asian coinage closely emulated the Sasanian style.⁴⁹ Early Islamic examples of coinage, silver dishes, and crown motifs in architecture show that the original context was understood.

The geometric motif in the spandrels of each doorway arch likewise recalls very similar motifs executed in stucco on the façade of the Parthian palace at Assur (fig. 7). The ruins of Assur were near Baghdad, close to the enormous Sasanian palace at Ctesiphon. As these impressive ruins and their association

with the Sasanians were well known, it is possible that a Bukharan craftsman could have visited the site. It is also possible that the same motif occurred on Parthian ruins closer to home, in Khorasan. Although the Parthians ruled over a territory roughly similar to that held by the Sasanians, they were a Central Asian dynasty. However, whether the ruins of their palaces were known to be specifically Parthian is doubtful; it is much more likely that they were vaguely associated with the kings who had ruled Persia in the past. The motif therefore would be useful for recalling the glories of earlier Persian kings and associating the Samanids with them, and its prominence on the four sides of the mausoleum indicates its importance as a component of the building's message. Its reinterpretation in terracotta instead of stucco underlined the expense inherent in constructing wholly from baked brick.

The pearl motif likewise appears here in baked brick for the first time. It is used repeatedly: in the frames of the geometric motifs in the spandrels, in the frame around the exterior and interior doorways, in a band running around the building above the arcaded gallery, interspersed around each arch of the arcade, interspersed between segments of the arcade at the corners of the building, in bands running down the center of some of the semidomes of the arcade, in bands down the center of two of the ribs that divide the squinches (the other two bear bands of diamonds), and in a band around the base of the interior of the dome. The small pearls framing the geometric motifs on the façade and those adorning the semidomes of the arcade are solid, whereas the others are all hollow in the center. Pearls were a very popular motif for centuries in both Iran and Central Asia; they can be seen on Sasanian silver, Sasanian and Sogdian textiles, stucco decoration from both regions, and the Nishapur-style pottery of the tenth and eleventh centuries. Their presence on this style of pottery indicates that they were recognized as a motif linked to the Persian past. In the pottery, the pearls can be found in bands but also as an all-over background motif. They are used in a similar fashion on the Samanid mausoleum, usually in framing bands but also dispersed around the exterior arcade. The bands correspond to the pre-Islamic usage of this motif, while the scattered effect reflects a new aesthetic.

This new aesthetic can be readily seen by comparing the decoration of the Samanid mausoleum with that of the Bukhar Khodah family's nearby palace at Varakhsha. The pearl motif is used heavily there, both in stucco and in wall painting, but it is always found in framing bands. Few other motifs can be found in both buildings at all. Much of the stucco is quite realistic, depicting flowering trees, scrolling vines heavy with grapes, and acanthus leaves. Many of the floral motifs are somewhat stylized and are enclosed within pearl bands, and the tenth-century stucco designs from the palace at Samarqand are clearly drawn from this ele-

ment of the Varakhsha repertoire. The architect of the Samanid mausoleum just as clearly rejected this readily available model, as the few decorative elements found in common are attested in Sasanian art as well.

Conclusion

The decoration of the Samanid mausoleum is composed of a few local elements interwoven with a majority of motifs associated in a nonspecific way with the royal past of Persia. The building is neither the culmination of the pre-Islamic architectural tradition of Central Asia nor a straightforward copy of an Iranian *chahar taq*. It is instead a clever synthesis of motifs reinterpreted in baked brick. This material had been used exclusively in some of the mausolea that preceded the Samanid mausoleum, but the extent of its use in this building for lavish decoration as well as construction was unprecedented. The richly textured surface and its amalgamation of royal Persian motifs hints at the local funerary tradition in a genre of architecture that was thoroughly Islamic. This mausoleum embodied the identity of Ismail's new dynasty and linked it to the city of Bukhara for posterity.

Melanie Michailidis (1966–2013), PhD (MIT), 2007, was a scholar of medieval Islamic art and architecture and specialized in the region of Central Asia. At the time of her death, she was the Korff Postdoctoral Fellow in Islamic Art, a position cohosted by Washington University in St. Louis and the Saint Louis Art Museum (SLAM). In addition to teaching, she was completing the reinstallation of the SLAM collection of Islamic art, which opened in summer 2013. Dr. Michailidis previously taught as a visiting faculty member at the University of California, Davis, and as a Mellon postdoctoral fellow at Carleton College. From 2001–2 she held a predoctoral curatorial fellowship at the Harvard University Art Museums during which she curated the exhibition *Glory & Prosperity: Metalwork of the Islamic World*. Her honors and awards included an Ittleson Fellowship at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts at the National Gallery of Art, and a Fulbright Fellowship to Uzbekistan. Her published work appeared in the journal *Medieval Encounters*, and other essays are being prepared for publication by the Melanie Michailidis Legacy Project, a group of friends and colleagues collaborating to preserve her scholarship and complete her works in progress.

NOTE: This essay was edited by Alicia Walker, assistant professor of medieval art and architecture at Bryn Mawr College, and Glaire Anderson, associate professor of Islamic art and architecture at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, two of the founding members of the Melanie Michailidis Legacy Project. *Ars Orientalis* gratefully acknowledges their assistance in bringing this article to its final published form.⁵⁰

NOTES

- 1 J. Rosintal and E. Schroeder, "N. Squinches, Pendentives, and Stalactites," in *A Survey of Persian Art from Prehistoric Times to the Present*, ed. Arthur Upham Pope (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1939), vol. 2, 125e; B. V. Veimarn, *Iskusstvo Srednei Azii* (Moscow and Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1940), 25–28; David Talbot Rice, *Islamic Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1965), 48–49; Richard Ettinghausen and Oleg Grabar, *The Art and Architecture of Islam 650–1250* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), 217–20; Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture: Form, Function and Meaning* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), 275–76, 288–90; Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Art and Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 101.
- 2 Hillenbrand, *Islamic Art and Architecture*, 83, 289–90. K. A. C. Creswell was probably the first to connect the mausoleum with the plan of Sasanian fire temples: see K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932), 371.
- 3 B. P. Denike, *Arkhitekturny ornament Srednei Azii* (Moscow and Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Vsesoiuznoi akademii arkhitektury, 1939), 8. Sheila Blair has cast doubt on this reading, asserting that the inscription is illegible. See Sheila Blair, *The Monumental Inscriptions from Early Islamic Iran and Transoxiana* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 25.
- 4 B. N. Zasiipkin, "Mavzolei Ismaila Samanida," *Arkhiv Glavnogo Upravleniya po Okhrane Pamyatnikov Material'noi Kul'turii i Muzeev Ministerstva Kul'turii Uzbekskoi SSR*, Inv. No. 1792/3–36 (1959), 1; M. E. Masson, "K Issledovaniyu tak Nazimaemogo Mavzoleya Ismaila Samani v Bukhare," *Obshchestvennye Nauki v Uzbekistane* 11 (1979), 26–33. Narshakhi also mentions that Ahmad b. Ismail was interred in Naukanda cemetery: see Abu Bakr Mohammad b. Ja'far al-Narshakhi, *Tarikh-i Bukhara* (Tehran: Bunyad-i Farhang-i Iran, 1351 [1972]), 129; Abu Bakr Mohammad b. Ja'far al-Narshakhi, *History of Bukhara*, trans. Richard Frye (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1954), 95. Blair, despite calling the legibility of the wooden inscription plaque into question, still believes that the mausoleum was built by Nasr II; see Blair, *The Monumental Inscriptions from Early Islamic Iran and Transoxiana*, 27.
- 5 Richard Frye, *The Cambridge History of Iran, Vol. 4: From the Arab Invasion to the Saljuqs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 136.
- 6 See, for example, Nizam al-Mulk, *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings: The Siyasatnama or Siyar al-Mulk*, trans. Hubert Darke (London: Routledge, 1960), 14–22, 61.
- 7 Richard Frye, "The New Persian Renaissance in Western Iran," in *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honour of Hamilton A. R. Gibb*, ed. George Makdisi (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 42–43.
- 8 Narshakhi, *Tarikh-i Bukhara*, 21; Frye trans., 15.
- 9 Narshakhi, *Tarikh-i Bukhara*, 39; Frye trans., 27–28.
- 10 Narshakhi, *Tarikh-i Bukhara*, 39–40; Frye trans., 28.
- 11 Narshakhi, *Tarikh-i Bukhara*, 71; Frye trans., 5.
- 12 Narshakhi, *Tarikh-i Bukhara*, 69; Frye trans., 50.
- 13 Narshakhi, *Tarikh-i Bukhara*, 128; Frye trans., 94.
- 14 Narshakhi, *Tarikh-i Bukhara*, 48; Frye trans., 34.
- 15 Narshakhi, *Tarikh-i Bukhara*, 22; Frye trans., 16.

- 16 Roy Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 51–78.
- 17 Narshakhi, *Tarikh-i Bukhara*, 23–24; Frye trans., 17.
- 18 Narshakhi, *Tarikh-i Bukhara*, 32; Frye trans., 23.
- 19 Narshakhi, *Tarikh-i Bukhara*, 33; Frye trans., 23.
- 20 Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership*.
- 21 Narshakhi, *Tarikh-i Bukhara*, 108; Frye trans., 79. As soon as Ismail entered the city, he imprisoned this deputy, ridding himself of this rival.
- 22 Frye, *Cambridge History of Iran*, 140.
- 23 Narshakhi, *Tarikh-i Bukhara*, 127; Frye trans., 93.
- 24 Narshakhi, *Tarikh-i Bukhara*, 39; Frye trans., 27–28.
- 25 Narshakhi, *Tarikh-i Bukhara*, 15–16; Frye trans., 11–12.
- 26 Narshakhi, *Tarikh-i Bukhara*, 112; Frye trans., 82.
- 27 Narshakhi, *Tarikh-i Bukhara*, 112–13; Frye trans., 82.
- 28 Narshakhi, *Tarikh-i Bukhara*, 24–25; Frye trans., 17–18.
- 29 Narshakhi, *Tarikh-i Bukhara*, 48; Frye trans., 34.
- 30 Eric Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 4–5.
- 31 Narshakhi mentions the mourning of Siyavush, the slaughter of roosters at No Ruz at the grave of Siyavush (Narshakhi, *Tarikh-i Bukhara*, 33; Frye trans., 23), and the annual idol fair at the bazaar of Makh (Narshakhi, *Tarikh-i Bukhara*, 29–30; Frye trans., 20–21). Of these, only the mourning of Siyavush was still celebrated by Bukharans generally rather than by the Zoroastrian minority.
- 32 Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership*, 61–62.
- 33 Narshakhi, *Tarikh-i Bukhara*, 127; Frye trans., 93.
- 34 Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership*, 167–68; and Roy Mottahedeh, “The *Shu’ubiyah* Controversy and the Social History of Early Islamic Iran,” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 7 (1976), 172–74.
- 35 Mottahedeh, “The *Shu’ubiyah* Controversy,” 181–82.
- 36 Jamsheed Choksy, *Conflict and Cooperation: Muslim Elites and Zoroastrian Subalterns in Medieval Iranian Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 34–40.
- 37 Abd al-Hayy Gardizi, *Tarikh-i Gardizi* (Tehran: [s.n.], 1327 [1949]), 9.
- 38 Narshakhi, *Tarikh-i Bukhara*; Frye trans., 93.
- 39 Yuri Karev, “Le palais du VIII^e siècle à Samarkand dans le contexte de l’architecture palatiale préislamique et des premiers temps de l’Islam: fouille et essai d’interprétation historique” (PhD diss., École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris, 1999).
- 40 Robert Hillenbrand, “Architecture,” in *The Arts of Persia*, ed. R. W. Ferrier (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), 83; see also Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture*, 289–90.
- 41 *Editors’ note*: Michailidis did not identify this monument specifically, but a parallel passage in her dissertation refers to a ninth-century mausoleum that was part of the Khaja Mashhad complex in the village of Sayat in the Kafirnigan hills in southwestern Tajikistan, which may be the building she mentions here. See M. Michailidis, “Landmarks of the Persian Renaissance: Monumental Funerary Architecture in Iran and Central Asia in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries” (PhD diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2007), 65–68, 224–25, and 233–34, with additional bibliography and discussion of debates surrounding the monument’s chronology.
- 42 B. N. Zasipkin, *Arkhitektura Srednei Azii* (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo Akademii arkhitektury SSSR, 1948), 41; see also Zasipkin, “Mavzolei Ismaila Samanida,” 5; Galina Pugachenkova and L. I. Rempel’, *Vydaiushchiesia pamyatniki akhitektury Uzbekistana* (Tashkent: Izdatel’stvo Khudozhestvennoi literatury UzSSR, 1958), 66, 68; Sergei Khmel’nitskii, *Mezhdū Arabami i Tiurkami: ranneislamskaia arkhitektura Srednei Azii* (Berlin and Riga: Continent, 1992), 135–36.
- 43 In Narshakhi, *Tarikh-i Bukhara*, see 20, 24, 70–71; Frye trans., 14–15, 17–18, 50–51.
- 44 L. I. Rempel’, “The Mausoleum of Isma’il the Samanid,” *Bulletin of the American Institute of Persian Art and Archaeology* 4 (1936), 199–209, esp. 203–4; see also B. A. Litvinskii, “Sredneaziatskii tsentrisheskii mavzolei: Problema genezisa,” *Etnografiya i Arkheologiya Srednei Azii* (Moscow: Nauka, 1979), 65–70; Zasipkin, “Mavzolei Ismaila Samanida,” 1.
- 45 *Editors’ note*: In her dissertation, Michailidis defines a *naus* as a Zoroastrian funerary structure that housed ossuaries or bone pits. Unlike the monumental mausolea that developed in the Samanid period, which were dedicated to a single, prominent individual, the *naus* was “a diminutive building, as well as communal and anonymous.” Michailidis, “Landmarks of the Persian Renaissance,” 318, 226; for a fuller discussion of *naus* typologies and morphology, see pp. 131–32. On the meaning of the word *naus* and its use in modern scholarship, see A. Ia. Borisov, “O znachenii slova ‘naus,’” *Trudy Otdela Vostoka Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha* 3 (1940).

- 46 Mehrdad Shokoohy, "Sasanian Royal Emblems and Their Reemergence in the Fourteenth-Century Deccan," *Muqarnas* 11 (1994), 65–78. His main argument is that the fourteenth-century Bahmani sultans in the Deccan used a similar motif on their mausolea to claim descent from the Sasanians.
- 47 See V. P. Darkevich, *Khudozhestvennyi metall Vostoka* (Moscow: Nauka, 1976), 75–85; Boris Marshak, *Sogdiiskoe srebro* (Moscow: Nauka, 1971), 21–23.
- 48 At the Sogdian palace at Kesh, for example, a typical scarf and set of wings adorned a wall, but with the head of a goat emerging from the wings instead of a crescent moon or a sun. The horns of the goat do form reversed crescents, but clearly the original significance of the image was lost or, more probably, subverted here. See L. I. Rempel, *Arkhitekturnyi ornament Uzbekistana* (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo Khudozhestvennoi literatury UzSSR, 1961), 97, nos. 5 and 6.
- 49 The coins found at Panjikent, for example, are divided between a Sasanian style and a Chinese style. *Editors' note*: Michailidis provided an incomplete reference in this note: "Smirnova 1958, pp. 218–26." The same abbreviated citation appears in her dissertation: Michailidis, "Landmarks of the Persian Renaissance," 265, n. 694. Unfortunately the full reference was not included in the bibliography. It has not been possible to identify the source, but Michailidis gathered a substantial number of rare scholarly articles in Russian from libraries in the United States and Uzbekistan, and her original note may refer to materials in her personal archive, which is now housed (and available for consultation) at the Aga Khan Documentation Center at MIT. Similar material is also discussed in O. I. Smirnova, *Katalog monet s gorodishcha Pendzhikent (materialy 1949–1956 gg.)* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Vostochno Literaturi, 1963).
- 50 Alicia Walker, PhD (Harvard), 2004 has written for *The Art Bulletin*, *Ars Orientalis*, *Muqarnas*, *The Medieval History Journal*, *Studies in Iconography*, and *Gesta*. Her first book, *The Emperor and the World: Exotic Elements and the Imaging of Middle Byzantine Imperial Power* was published by Cambridge University Press in 2012. Glaire Anderson, PhD (MIT), 2006, conducts research on the caliphal period, especially in Iberia and North Africa, and on cultural interchanges in the western Mediterranean. Her book *The Islamic Villa in Early Medieval Iberia: Aristocratic Estates and Court Culture in Umayyad Córdoba* was published by Ashgate in 2013.