

# БЛИЖНИЙ ВОСТОК И ЦЕНТРАЛЬНАЯ АЗИЯ

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## “THE HISTORY OF BUKHARA” AS THE MAIN SOURCE FOR THE STUDY OF THE SYMBIOTIC URBAN CULTURE OF CENTRAL ASIA FROM THE 8<sup>TH</sup> TO 12<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY\*

*Summary:* “The History of Bukhara”, written by Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Ja’far Narshakhi (943-944 CE, with some addendums from 12th c. translators) has long been used as the main source for the study of Central Asian political, economic, urban and socio-cultural life in the early medieval period. The previous research on Central Asian urbanity emphasizes the role of the sedentary population of the cities in the larger Soghdiana region. Using Narshakhi’s narrative as the main source, this paper investigates how the symbiotic relation of nomadic Turks and sedentary Sogdians impacted the emergence and the rise of pre-Islamic and Islamic Central Asian cities, and how this influence was manifest in such cities as Bukhara. By viewing Narshakhi’s narrative in the light of Byzantine and Chinese sources, and comparing the different translations of the manuscript, this new paper sheds light on the nomad-sedentary relationship of Central Asian people in the urban milieu and beyond. This new perspective on Narshakhi’s narrative will advance the readers’ understanding of that nomad-sedentary relationship which is present in the political debates between modern-day Uzbeks and Tajiks – those who have inherited the civilization of medieval Central Asia.

*Key words:* Nomadic Turks, sedentary population, the Sogdians, the Silk Road, Bukhara, symbiotic culture.

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## «ИСТОРИЯ БУХАРЫ» КАК ОСНОВНОЙ ИСТОЧНИК ИЗУЧЕНИЯ СИМБИОТИЧЕСКОЙ ГОРОДСКОЙ КУЛЬТУРЫ СРЕДНЕЙ АЗИИ С 8 ПО 12 ВЕК

*Аннотация:* «История Бухары», написанная Абу Бакром Мухаммадом ибн Джафаром Наршахи (943–944 гг. н. э., с некоторыми добавлениями от переводчика 12-го вв.), уже давно используется в качестве основного источника для изучения политических и экономических событий, городской и социально-культурной жизни Центрально Азиатских городов в раннем средневековье. Предыдущие исследования по урбанизации в Центральной Азии подчеркивают роль оседлого населения городов в регионе Согдиана. Используя манускрипт Наршахи в качестве основного источника, автор статьи рассматривает, как симбиотическое отношение кочевых Турок и оседлых Согдийцев повлияло на возникно-

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вление и рост доисламских и исламских Центрально-Азиатских городов и как это взаимовлияние отражалось в урбанистической морфологии городов Центральной Азии в примере Бухара. «История Бухары» в свете Византийских и Китайских источников проливает свет на отношения кочевников и оседлого населения в городской среде и за ее пределами. Эта новая перспектива книги Наршахи будет способствовать пониманию особенности кочевого и оседлого отношения, которое присутствует в политических дебатах между современными узбеками и таджиками – те, кто унаследовал цивилизацию средневековой Средней Азии.

*Ключевые слова:* кочевые турки, оседлое население, согдийцы, Шелковый путь, Бухара, симбиотическая культура.

*The History of Bukhara*, written by Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Ja'far Narshakhi (943–944 CE, with some addendums from 12th century translators) has long been used as the main source for the studies of Central Asian political, economic, urban and socio-cultural life in the early medieval period. The previous research on Central Asian urbanity emphasizes the role of the Sogdian population of the cities in the region.<sup>1</sup> Using Narshakhi's narrative as the main source, this paper investigates how the symbiotic relation of nomadic Turks and sedentary Soghdians impacted the emergence and rise of pre-Islamic and Islamic Central Asian cities, and how this influence was manifest in such cities as Bukhara and Samarkand. It should be stated that the relationship between the nomadic Turks and sedentary Soghdians was, on the one hand, symbiotic and provided the formation of trade-based cities and empires that equally advantaged both sides. On the other hand, the relations were hostile at times, which resulted in multilayered fortifications appearing as a unique feature of the region's cities. Also, negotiation and cooperation, rather than a hostile attitude, catalyzed the development of the most prominent cities of the region and it was the nomadic Turks that were key-players in this process. To support my argument, first, I will situate Narshakhi's narrative in the light of Byzantine and Chinese sources, as some specific historical events require a larger historical background of not only the region and neighboring countries, but the whole Eurasian continent. Secondly, I will emphasize the role of nomadic constituents of the Soghdian cities. These can be seen in Narshakhi's narrative, but have been ignored in the previous scholarship which has tended to view the sedentary population as the main and only subject of the urban milieu. Lastly, by indicating the distinction between the translations in different languages of Narshakhi's narrative, I will attempt to re-interpret the social structure of the Central Asian cities that constituted the symbiosis between nomads and sedentary people, manifested in the urban culture of the region. This new perspective on Narshakhi's narrative will advance our understanding of that nomad-sedentary relationship which is present in the political debates between modern day Uzbeks and Tajiks – the peoples who have inherited the great civilization of medieval Central Asia.

The symbiotic peculiarity of the Central Asian cities initiated the rise of these cities which involved their transformation from small towns to centers of trade, political and economic life. In this process, the transformation of the cities of Bukhara, Merv, Samarkand, Taraz and Shash were catalyzed by the following historical circumstances:

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<sup>1</sup> The main research on this subject include the works of the following scholars: Bartol'd V. V. *Turkestan v epokhu mongol'skogo nashestviia. Sbranie sochinenii, tom 1.* M.; Gafurov, B. G. *Tadzhiki. Drevneishaiia, Drevniaia I Srednevekovaia Istoriiia.* 1972; Negmatov, Numan Negmatovich. *Gosudarstvo Samanidov? Maverannakhr I Khorasan v IX-X Vv.* 1977.

- 1) The movement of Turkic tribes and their mass settlement in the region;
- 2) The intensification of the role of nomadic tribes in trade along the northern route of the Silk Road, which was of mutual benefit for both Sogdians and Turks;
- 3) Finally, in the context of Byzantine-Iranian rivalry, the activation of the northern trade route that connected the Mediterranean and East Asia through the Central Asian region.

It should be emphasized that the examination of both the pre-Islamic and post-Islamic history of Central Asian cities and dynasties shows that when the nomads and sedentary people negotiated, it served as the most important precondition for the existence and flourishing of Central Asian states and urbanity. If this balance were upset, the region would fall under a foreign invasion or experience a period of decline.

The narrative of Narshakhi discusses people who came from Turkistan and settled down in Bukhara, which did not yet exist as a city but rather consisted of several villages [4, p. 6]. The story of Abrui, the leader of those people who came from Turkistan, is considered as a half-legend by scholarship. However, historical facts are hidden within the legend of Abrui; in light of the Byzantine and Chinese sources this material moves beyond the scope of random episodes from the history of pre-Islamic Bukhara and becomes an important source for the history of the vast territory from the China's Great Wall to the borders of the Sasanian state. Menander, the Byzantine historian informs us that in 568, in Constantinople, an embassy of the Turks led by the Sogdian merchant Maniah was sent to the court of Justin II. He was instructed to seek the establishment of direct trade relations with Byzantium, bypassing Iran. Maniah, carrying Chinese silk and letters from the Turkic khan, Istemi, avoided countries subordinated to Persia on his journey.<sup>2</sup> The embassy of the Turks apparently successfully fulfilled its task, since there were mutual embassies established after this initial one.<sup>3</sup> The dialogue of Justin II with the Turkic ambassadors reveals the emperor's curiosity as to whether the entire Hephthalite state<sup>4</sup> was subordinated to the Turks at the time, and in what manner the Hephthalites lived – whether in villages or in cities. From the conversation, the emperor learned

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<sup>2</sup> Maniah's embassy is very important to note as the event when the Chinese silk was presented for the first time to the Emperor Justin. It should be noted that there is no earlier or later evidence of silk trading along the Silk Road in manuscripts; Tolstov notes that the same Maniah presented a silk to Khosrav, the Sassanian king, but the silk was burnt in front of the Turkic embassy as a demonstration of his disapproval. It can be assumed that Turkic aristocracy seized a significant amount of Chinese silk, and the trade with silk served a source of immediate wealth of Turkic aristocracy; Sogdians played the role of mediator for the trade of silk using the political protection of the Turkic Khaganate. See Tolstov, S.P. [10, p. 155-66].

<sup>3</sup> After the embassy of Maniakh, the embassy of Zemarkh from Byzantium took place to the yabgu of Western Turkic Khaganate, which followed the embassy of Turks. In 576 Valentine, and later Herodien and Paul Sicilian, represented the Byzantine Empire in dealings with the Turkic Khaganate. Central Asia for the first time was involved in the larger political, military and diplomatic game/relationship between Persia and Byzantine [10, p. 266].

<sup>4</sup> The Hephthalites were a confederation of nomadic and settled people in Central Asia and beyond; by 479 they conquered Sughd.

that the Hephthalites live in cities, and that the Turks were now the masters of these cities [10, p. 265–266].<sup>5</sup>

This embassy was quintessential for the rise of Central Asian trade cities, as the establishment of international trade relations between the Byzantium and the Turkic Khaganate have resulted the shift of the trade roads through Sughd. As Tolstov notes, in the 570s, the Turkic Khaganate had a very favorable international environment with the West. The mutual struggle between two powerful neighboring powers, Byzantium and Iran, diverted attention of both from the rapid growth of the Turks' young semi-nomadic state and resulted in the reconsideration of the role of the Turks in overland trade with the East [10, p. 266]. Besides, the temporary political crisis in China brought about plundering by Turks in that area. However, the consolidation of power of the Sui Dynasty established stability in China and prevented further raids from nomadic neighbors. The tenth-century Chinese source, the *Tangshu*, provides information about the Sui army's defeat of the Turks. The Sui Dynasty's victory over the Turks was apparently very significant, since the Chinese chronicler states that after their defeat, the Turks suffered from famine from which many people died [1, p. 278].

With that information in mind, we will turn our attention back to Narshakhi's description of Bukhara's rise:

“People gathered from all sides and were happy there. Some people came from Turkistan, for there was much water, many trees, and plenty of game here. They were pleased with this area and settled down. They first set up tents and pavilions where they dwelled, but in time more people assembled and they erected buildings. Their number increased and they chose one of whom they made amir. His name was Abrui. The city (of Bukhara) did not yet exist, but there were several villages... [4, p. 6–7]”

As was mentioned, the information seems semi-legendary.<sup>6</sup> But it can be assumed that the defeat of Turks by the Sui Dynasty and subsequent starvation required the migration of lower class nomads to the Zarafshan valley and resulted in the changing of their lifestyle to a sedentary one. The *Tangshu* tells us that some 100,000 nomads from

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<sup>5</sup> Menander, *Fragm.hist.graec.* IV, p.205,225, and 226; cited in Tolstov, *Drevniy Khorezm*, [10, p. 255–56]. Procopius, who also wrote a mainstream military history and a toadying description of the monuments which Justinian built, had to keep his most acute writing for posthumous publication. In his *Secret History*, he describes Justinian as corrupt, immoral, and plain evil. Even though the account sounds fantastic and not necessarily accurate, it is considered authentic by modern historians. Interestingly enough, he blames Justinian for negotiating with the Huns: “After armies of the hostile Huns had several times enslaved and plundered inhabitants of the Roman Empire, the Thracian and Illyrian generals planned to attack them on their retreat, but gave up the idea when they were shown letters from the Emperor Justinian forbidding them to attack the barbarians on the ground that alliance with them was necessary to the Romans against the Goths, forsooth, or some other foe.” see: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/proc/shp/shp24.htm>. The Hephthalites, and later the Turks, might have been seen as Huns from the Byzantine perspective and Procopius probably meant the same alliance of Justin II with the Turks mentioned by Menander. It is not clear when exactly the trade relations were established with the Turks in the time of Justinian I (527–565 r.) or in the time of his successor Justin II (565–574).

<sup>6</sup> Marquart, *Eronshahr*, 308, first suggested that Abrui and the people from Turkistan were Hephthalites. Tolstov, in “Tiranniya Abruya,” p.266–268, advanced arguments that this story was historical. According to him, Chinese sources mentions him as Abo Kaghan and he was one of the unofficial members of the ruling Hephthalites and fought to regain the former dominion of his ancestors. However, in Soviet textbooks Abrui was praised as the leader of a common people's movement against the rich.

Turkistan joined Abrui [1, p. 278]. While the Chinese sources are silent on the matter, Narshakhi hints at what happened next: “After the lapse of some time, as Abrui grew powerful, he exercised tyranny such that the inhabitants of the district could not stand it. The dihqans and the rich (merchants) fled from this district and went to Turkistan and Taraz where they built a city [4, p. 7].” If we contextualize Narshakhi’s information within the social reality at the time, it can be posited that Abrui and those who came with him were refugees of various social classes from Turkistan and that their low social status may have contributed to the climax of ‘Abrui rebellion of “faqirs and darvishs.”<sup>7</sup> Indeed this may have been motivating factor for the immigration of the Sughdian elite to the Talas valley – that is, to Taraz.<sup>8</sup> Narshakhi continues, noting that then those people who had remained in Bukhara sent a man to their nobles and asked for assistance against the oppression of Abrui, while the nobles in turn asked for help from the ruler of Turks, Qara Churin Turk [4, p. 7–8].<sup>9</sup> The rest of the story reveals that Abrui was seized in Baikand, imprisoned, and put to death by the Turks [4, p. 7–8]. The Sogdian elite, both in Bukhara and Taraz, were not interested in war with the elite<sup>10</sup> of the Turkic Khaganate as they stood to lose all their privileges in both international and local trade if they were to wage war. While the details of the rise of the Sogdian cities cannot be fully explained here, I want to note a number of details of importance to the current paper: The importance and growth of Bukhara just before the Arab invasion was because of trade.<sup>11</sup> Both nomads and sedentary inhabitants inside and outside of the Sogdiana mutually benefited from this trade, but it was the nomads who played a dominant and organization role in this situation.

As was mentioned, the relations between city-dwellers and nomads were unstable. The rulers of small city-states reminiscent to Hellenistic poleis, as Gibb termed them, were equally afraid of the neighboring Turkic plunderers and foreign conquerors. The fear of constant plundering was the main reason for the process of fortification building. While great empires such as China defended themselves by building great and long walls against nomads, each Central Asian city had to defend itself separately, as there was no centralized government. Being located among the greatest empires of the world and having such hostile neighbors compelled the city governors to negotiate with different political powers. The dialog between the locals and the Arabian invaders under the leadership of Kutayba ibn Muslim, found in *The History of Bukhara*, sheds light on the interdependence of the nomadic and sedentary cultures and the devastation of the region when this unity was broken:

“Among the villages of Bukhara, between Tarab, Khunbun, and Ramitin, many troops gathered and surrounded Qutaiba... Tarkhun, the ruler of Sughd, came with many

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<sup>7</sup> Meaning: poor and homeless.

<sup>8</sup> There are number of Chinese sources that discuss the Sughdian trade colonies in the Talas valley.

<sup>9</sup> The name of Qara Churin Turk is also mentioned in the Chinese *Tangshu*. See: Bichurin, *Sobraniye...*p.278.

<sup>10</sup> I am consciously using the word “elite” in reference to the Turkic Khaganate, as Abrui-Abo khagan is identified by Tolstov as a descendant of the Hephthalites who fought for the lost power of his ancestors.

<sup>11</sup> Frye assumes that Bukhara obtained a hegemony over the oasis only shortly before the Arab conquest at the end of the seventh century [10, 15–16].

troops... The armies gathered and the lot of Qutaiba grew worse. Haiyan al Nabati told Qutaiba, "I myself will seek out (the enemy) so give me time till tomorrow." When it was morning, Haiyan Nabati sent a person to the king of Sughd saying, "I have some counsel for you. We two should convene somewhere." Tarkhun agreed. When the battle became fierce Haiyan al-Nabati saw Tarkhun and said, "Your kingdom has slipped away from you and you don't know it" Tarkhun asked, "How?" He replied, "We can only remain here for a short time when it is warm. Now the weather is cold and we shall have to go. While we are here the Turks will fight against us, but when we leave they will fight much against you, for the district of Sughd is very pleasant. Do you think they will leave Sughd to you and return to Turkistan? You will remain in difficulty, and they will take your kingdom away." Tarkhun asked, "What course should I follow? [4, p. 45–46]"

The rest of the story reveals that Tarkhun was manipulated by treacherous advice from the Haiyan al-Nabati.

The delicate geographical situation that placed sedentary people among the nomads forced urban dwellers to build multi-layered fortification systems. The following information about *ribats*, i.e. the fortified constructions, shed light on the infrastructure of Central Asian cities. But additionally, it reveals the unstable relationship between the nomadic people and city dwellers: "There were many ribats around the gate of Baikand till the year 240/854–5. Muhammad ibn Ja'far in his book asserted that Baikand had more than a thousand *ribats* corresponding to the number of villages (qishloq) of Bukhara. The reason for this is that Baikand is an exceedingly lovely place. The people of every village built a *ribat* there and settled a group. They sent them their living expenses from the village. In the winter, when the attacks of the infidels occurred, many people from every village gathered there to attack (the infidels). Every group went to its own *ribat* [4, p. 18]"

It can be interpreted that besides their walls, the economically important centers of the region (and in some cases villages, since there is information about *ribats* surrounding the village Nur) were surrounded by the secondary fortifications – the clusters of *ribats*. Notably, in Central Asia, indigenous people called these constructions 'kal'a'; the word *ribat* only came to be applied after the Arab conquest. Both Likoshin and Frye, the translators of the manuscript into Russian and English respectively, interpret the word *ribat* to mean a location or place for the "fighters for the faith" who guarded the borders of Muslim lands to halt the invasion of the country by infidels [6, p. 9; 4, p. 18].<sup>12</sup> However, the existence of *ribats*, i.e. *kal'a*, should be viewed as something stemming from sedentary-nomadic hostility, as opposed to Muslim-infidel (kafir) interaction.

Nonetheless, the relationship between nomadic and sedentary peoples was not always hostile. Nomads could be a dangerous force in conflict periods, but their steppe was the most valuable and immense market for craft and trade centers. The sedentary people erected walls, fortifications, and *ribats* against the nomads, but at the same time, they also built trading posts located either outside of the city walls or at the edge of the city gates. Narshakhi names several places with distinguished large trading posts/bazaars outside of the borders of the city of Bukhara- Isfijkat, Zandana, and Tavois [4,

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<sup>12</sup> According to Likoshin's later interpretation, the word means simply a hotel or a caravanserai.

p. 14–15]. Also, primarily because of the city’s trading purposes, Bukhara’s gates was referred to as “the gate of spice sellers,” “the gate of the forage sellers,” etc. Given the evidence of Narshakhi, we can conclude that the trade between nomadic Turks and sedentary Sogdians probably took place in the gates of Bukhara or in the specially equipped fortresses or villages such as Zandana, Isfijkat, and Tavois. The wealth of the trade cities like Baikend, and later Bukhara and Samarkand, was based on the stability of the trade routes of Central Asia. Since these roads were controlled by the nomads, it was less than likely that the relationship between nomads and Sughdian traders was always hostile. Step and sown needed each other, and trade played a crucial role in this relationship.

The Arab invasion apparently ruined the balance between these two entities, but the century-long stagnation in economic life came to an end by the time of Ismail Samani, the founder of the first local dynasty after the Muslim conquest. It is important to note that the state founded by this ruler was the result of a reorganization of space, order, and power relative to the nomadic neighbors. As *The History of Bukhara* reveals, Ismail invaded the frontier cities of Taraz and Isfijab immediately after the defeat of his primary political rival, his brother Nasr ibn Ahmad [4, p. 86]. According to Narshakhi, Ismail experienced great difficulty subjugating Taraz. Finally, the amir of Taraz came out with many dihqans and accepted Islam, and Ismail transformed a large church into a grand mosque. Also, thirty thousand men from Turkistan in addition to Mansur Qaratekin, the nomad-originated ruler of Isfijab,<sup>13</sup> were present on the bank of the Oxus to support Ismail in defeating another important political rival – Amr-ibn Laith, the Saffarid [4, p. 89]. The numismatic sources reveal that the Samanid state was not as centralized as was believed up to the present; the city of Isfijab had its own coin minting system – a reflection of political power and formal dependence of its local rulers, nomadic in origin, in the state of the Samanids.<sup>14</sup> Although the political administrative structure of the Samanid state and the numismatic sources lie beyond the scope of this paper, Narshakhi’s narrative reflects the negotiations and possible reunion of the two power structures in the region. There is information about the complaints of Bukhara’s population to the amir of Khurasan about nomadic plundering raids and the construction of the wall Kampirak in old times; according to Narshakhi, Ismail freed the people of Bukhara from this heavy burden [4, p. 34].<sup>15</sup> Ismail’s famous announcement, “While I am alive, I will be the walls of Bukhara, [4, p. 34]” was not just magniloquent, empty words; it was motivated in the context of reunification, negotiation, and balance between nomadic and sedentary powers. Of course, there is no need to mention how Bukhara and other Central Asian cities flourished under the Samanids.

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<sup>13</sup> Frye assumes that he was the ruler of Isfijab, based on Ibn al Athir [4, 151].

<sup>14</sup> Some considerations include: the copper Isfijabi coins in the context of the role of Isfidzhab in the system of the Samanid state and its political weight as the frontier against the Turks; the fact of an informal independence of the local Turkic dynasty that ruled until the 10th century; the significance of the city for trade between agricultural and nomadic population. All of these have been studied by Russian scholar Davidovich who reached the conclusion that the city had its own minting, separate from that of the Samanids [2, 94].

<sup>15</sup> The wall, according to Narshakhi, was completed in the year 215/830. Every succeeding amir ordered more construction and took care of it.

Although Ismail Samani established peace, tensions and resentments remained. The relocation of *namazgah* – a space or building designed to hold the mass celebration of two main Muslim holidays- Id Al-Fitr and ‘Id Al-Adha- is reflective of the complicated interaction between nomadic Turks and sedentary Soghdians. According to Narshkakhi, “Inside the city, in a place called Registan, he (Qutaiba ibn Muslim) made a place for the holiday prayer, to which he brought out the Muslims to perform the prayers for festivals. He ordered the people to bring their arms with them because Islam was still new, and the Muslims were not safe from the infidels [4, p. 52].” It should be mentioned that by the time of the Arab conquest of Central Asia, the Arabs already had a tradition of arranging a festive place for prayers outside of the city or village, and yet it is quite understandable why in 705 CE, Qutayba went against tradition and located the festive place inside the city. But it is interesting that after two hundred years neither Ismail Samani, nor his successors, had dared to move the *namazgah* outside the citadel, despite the fact that at the beginning of the Samani dynasty, the Muslim community was outnumbered because of both demographic growth and the political situation. The change happened only in the time of Mansur ibn Nuh ibn Nasr (961–77): “... the amir Sadid, Mansur ibn Nuh ibn Nasr, bought enclosures and lovely gardens on the Samatin road for a high price, and he spent much money on them. He made it a place for the holiday prayers...From this place of prayer to the gate of the citadel of Bukhara was half a parsang. It was all full of people (at prayer time), and for many years the holiday prayers were held here [4, p. 52]” It can be interpreted that even though, during the reign of Ismail Samani, many Turkic tribes far and near to Bukhara were converted to Islam, these new converts were not yet considered a true part of the Muslim community. Later, when the urban Muslim community accepted the Turks as a result of their increasing role in political and economic life, then the *namazgah* moved out of the city walls. At the same time, the word *ribat* lost its original meaning as a “place for guarding the borders of Muslim lands.” From the middle of the 10th century, the word meant simply karavanserai, a roadside inn for traders and travelers. And the word *mawali*, which will be discussed in the next paragraph, completely changed from its original meaning as well.

We should consider the fact that there are different translations of *The History of Bukhara* and they have been made based on different copies of the original. Although the differences between the translations are small, sometimes they play a crucial role – the original meaning can be lost in translation and thus affect the impression of the modern day reader. For example, the English and Russian translations of the following information at some level contradict the Uzbek translation and the Persian original of the same information: “In ancient times the estates of Juy-i Muliyon belonged to the king, Tug’hshada. The amir Ismail Samani bought these estates...; built courts and gardens in Juy-i Muliyon, and gave most of them as endowments to his clients” [4, p. 27–28]. Richard Frye interprets the word clients to mean “the doctors of law.” Narshakhi comments on clients saying that Ismail always was showing concern for his clients; that he had a dream to buying the estates of Juy-I Muliyon and could endow them to his clients; God the Exalted made it his fortune to buy all; he gave them to his clients, so that it was called Juy-i Mawaliyan, but the common people called



it Juy-i Muliyon [4, p. 28]. The word “client” can lead to confusion regarding social strata. So while Frye interprets the word client as the “doctors of law,” the author of the Uzbek translation states that the word ‘mawoliylar’ could be interpreted as a liberated Turkish slave and further adds that the ‘mawoliylar’ (or Turkish gulams) served in the army of Ismail Samani. The Persian version of the word “mawaliyon” موالیون is made from the Arabic “mawali” and the addition of the Persian plural suffix.<sup>16</sup> Hadi Jorati, a specialist in the field of the Arabic and Persian languages, explained that it is the plural form of “ghulam” or “slave”; non-muslims after Muslim conquest had been called “موالیون” – mawali. It was later that the term also came to be used for Islamic lawyer too.

Based on this, we might conclude that Frye probably used a later version of translation of the word, but in the time of Ismail Samani the word was used to denote Turkish ghulams. Therefore, one small difference regarding interpretation can change the whole conception of the social structure of the Samanid court. One can interpret the information that Ismail Samani dared to build imperial residence outside of Bukhara’s walls partly because of his negotiation and close relationship with the nomadic world, as we see reflected in his usage of Turkish ghulams- servants of nomadic birth. By endowing houses and places to his freed slaves in Juy-i Muliyan, he surrounded himself with a figurative wall. As Narshakhi and later emendators inform us, after the amir Ismail, whoever became amir among his descendants built gardens and villas for himself in Juy-i Muliyan because of its loveliness, pleasantness, and cheerfulness [4, p. 28]. This information can be seen as evidence once more that the Samanid state was built and flourished upon the cooperation of the two contradictory societies: the nomadic and the settled. When this cooperation was ruined, the whole region experienced political and economic decline which was seen first of all in the architecture and urban planning: “Juy-i Muliyan and Karak-i Alawiyan were occupied until the end of the rule of the Samanids when their dominion was lost and those courts went to ruin. In Bukhara there was no fixed imperial residence, but only the citadel, until the time of King Shams al-Mulk Nasr ibn Ibrahim Tamghaj Khan who built Shamsabad” [4, p. 28–29].

Narshakhi also describes Bukhara and the places adjoining it. According to him, Ramitin had a large citadel and the village itself was well-protected. It was older than the city of Bukhara and in some books it was even mentioned as Bukhara itself. In ancient times it was the residence of rulers, but when the city of Bukhara was founded the rulers passed only the winters in this village [4, p. 16]. As we know, most nomadic dynasties that formed in the Eurasian steppes had two capitals- winter and summer-based on the mobile character of their tribes and cattle. Based on the above, one can say that having both summer and winter capitals was common for the Bukharan rulers. Whether it was a necessity or merely synchronization of the nomadic tradition is unclear. But, the custom was long-standing, as Narshakhi writes that it continued into Islamic times [4, p. 16]. Also according to him, Ramitan was built by Afrasiyab, and every time

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<sup>16</sup> I was able to check the Persian copy of the book through Tajik translation of “*The history of Bukhara*”. Except the Tajik translation, the book contains the printed Tehran edition of Mudarris Razavi, which Richard Frye considers as the best edition of the text and uses as the basis of his translation into English [6, 54–55].

he came to this district he only stayed in this village [4, p. 16]. If we take into account that Afrasiyab was the king of the eponymous Turan and hero of the Turks, the nomadic constituents of the city of Bukhara and surrounding places become evident. This helps explain why it is that Narshakhi writes that “the city (of Bukhara) did not yet exist, but there were several villages.”

There are many other direct and indirect indications in Narshakhi’s narrative regarding the symbiotic urban culture of Central Asia. The location of *bazaars*, villages, roads, *namazgah* and other religious buildings and imperial residences prove the point that the unique feature of the region was its geography that situated sedentary people among the nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes. In conclusion, it is clear that the great urban civilization along the trade routes of the Silk Road came into being not only because of the settled Sogdians, but also because of the unity and cooperation of the two neighboring cultures- the nomadic Turks and settled Sogdians. An investigation of Narshakhi’s work does not just elucidate the history of the cities and cultures, but it has an important message for modern day states of the region: the only way for prosperity is cooperation.

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