

completion of the age of nine lunar years the only criterion of *bolūg* in women, whereas for men he states the following three: completing the age of fifteen lunar years, growing rough pubic hairs, and having wet dreams.

Those who have not attained the age of *bolūg*, as in Roman law, are divided into two categories: 1. Those younger children who can be termed as pupils and have no power to enter into any contract whatsoever and 2. young persons under the age of *bolūg* who can be termed minors and who have the capacity to be a party to a contract from which they benefit, e.g. by accepting an offer of gift gratuitously (article 1212 of the Iranian Civil Code). Apart from this distinction pupils and minors have no contractual capacity under Shi'ite law. Thus any contract which purports to have been made by a pupil or minor is, as a rule, void and therefore unenforceable with the possible exception that if necessities are supplied to a pupil or a minor, he or his guardian must pay a reasonable price for them. Article 212 of the Iranian Civil Code states that a contract made by a person who had not reached the age of *bolūg* is void. Nevertheless, a minor's estate, but not a pupil's, is liable for tort ('A. Šāyegān *Hoqūq-e madanī-e Īrān*, 3rd ed., Tehran, 1324 Š./1945-46 p. 225).

Usually the age of majority is discussed by Shi'ite jurists for four purposes. First, and most importantly, for the sake of *taklīf*, i.e., full capacity in the eyes of God for performing all *wājehs* (ritual obligations such as saying daily prayers and keeping fast in Ramaẓān). Secondly for purposes of entering into contractual obligations and in particular the contract of marriage (cf. Koran 4:5, which states that orphans should be looked after until they reach the age of marriage; then if they are mentally mature one is to give them all their estate. Thirdly, for purposes of criminal responsibility as there is a presumption in Islamic law that a pupil is incapable of committing crime; thus *bolūg* is a major criterion in the definition of a criminal under Islamic law. Under the 1982 Iranian Law of Retribution (pars. 138-58), children below the age of *bolūg* who engage in adultery or sodomy cannot be punished. Lastly, a person who has not reached the age of *bolūg* cannot sue or be sued, although a minor (not a pupil) can sue his guardian for failure in the provision of support (article 96 of the Iranian Law on Guardianship).

Orthodox Islamic law imposes no age qualification whatever for marriage, and there is thus no bar to the marriage of minors concluded by their guardians. Indeed the father's permission is considered essential for the marriage of any bride by many Emāmi jurists (including Ayatollah Komeynī) as well as under article 1042 and 1043 of the Iranian Civil Code 1313-14, although the latter article allows the registration of civil marriage by a female without her guardian's approval if the guardian having been given notice of the proposed marriage fails to satisfy the registrar why the marriage should not be registered. However, as stated by Sayyed Moḥammad-Kāẓem Yazdī (d. 1337/1918-19), it is prohibited to consummate the marriage with a minor wife

under the age of nine whether she is "free, a slave, permanent wife, or temporary wife" ('*Orwat al-wotqā*, 2nd ed., 1392/1972, p. 99). Such an "arranged marriage" can be set aside by the husband only after he reaches *bolūg*. Thus Āqā Sayyed 'Alī Ṭabāṭabā'ī (d. 1231/1815-16) states that divorce by a youth is not valid until he has had a venereal dream (*Rīāz al-masā'el*).

The age of majority under secular, civil law (Articles 1208-10 of the Iranian Civil Code) which was in force in Iran prior to the revolution of 1358 Š./1979 was eighteen for both men and women. Articles 1209 and 1210 of the Iranian Civil Code imply that anybody, male or female, who is under the age of eighteen years, is a minor under Iranian law and as such lacks any legal capacity to administer his own estate by Article 1207 (S. Ḥ. Emāmi, *Hoqūq-e madanī* I, Tehran, 1333 Š./1954-55, pp. 166).

Under article 1180 of the Iranian Civil Code, a minor is subject to the legal authority of the father and paternal grandfather. Article 1041 of the Iranian Civil Code disallowed the marriage of girls below the age of fifteen and boys below the age of eighteen, but authorized the court to grant exemption from this age limit in exceptional circumstances to girls over thirteen and boys over fifteen. Under article 1168-72 of the Civil Code the custody of the children rests with the father but the mother has priority to take custody of male children less than two years old and of female children under the age of seven. By the Custody of Children Act 1982, children whose fathers died were allowed to remain under the custody of their mothers.

*Bibliography:* Shi'ite law: Shaikh Abu'l-Qāsem Najm-al-Dīn Ja'far Moḥaqqueq Ḥelli, *Šarāye' al-Eslām fī masā'el al-ḥalāl wa'l-ḥarām*, ed. 'Abd-al-Raḥīm, n.p., 1928. Abū 'Abd-Allāh Moḥammad Šahīd, *al-Lom'a al-demašqīya*, ed. M. A. Āqā Rafī'ī, 2 vols., Tehran, 1961. Sayyed 'Alī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Rīāz al-masā'el*, n.p., n.d. Sayyed Moḥammad-Kāẓem Yazdī, *Orwat al-wotqā*, n.p., n.d. Ayatollah Rūḥ-Allāh Komeynī, *Tawzīḥ al-masā'el*, Tehran, n.d. Iranian civil law: S. H. Amin, *Middle East Legal Systems*, Glasgow, 1985. Idem, *Commercial Law of Iran*, Tehran, 1986. Idem, *Islamic Law in the Contemporary World*, Tehran, 1985.

(S. H. AMIN)

**BALK**, a town and province in northern Afghanistan.

- i. *Geography.*
- ii. *From the Arab conquest to the Mongols.*
- iii. *From the Mongols to modern times.*
- iv. *Modern town.*
- v. *Modern province.*
- vi. *Monuments.*

(For the ancient history of Balk see BACTRIA.)

#### i. GEOGRAPHY

The city of Bactra, later Balk, owed its importance to its position at the crossing of major routes: the west-east

route along the foot of the Khorasan and Hindu Kush mountains from Iran to Central Asia and China, and the route by left bank tributaries of the Oxus and passes through the mountains of central Afghanistan to north-western India. The river of Balk (Balkāb, q.v.) gives easy access by the valley of its tributary the Dara-ye Šūf and the Qarā Kotal pass to the Bāmīān basin and thence to Kabul. This route has the advantage of being the westernmost of the roads over the Hindu Kush and thus the shortest for travelers from the west, as well as one of the easiest. Its existence must have been the main reason why a great city arose in the area where the Balkāb debouches into the plain.

Within this area and on the irrigated alluvial fan, at a distance of about 12 km from the mountains, the city was built on a site (the Bālā Heṣār of today) which was probably coextensive with a slight rise in the plain and perhaps adjacent to an old arm of the river. This is only a supposition, because adequate archeological exploration has not yet been carried out. In any case, the site subsequently grew higher through the gradual accumulation of the debris left by successive human occupants.

*Bibliography:* A Foucher, *La vieille route de l'Inde de Bactres à Taxila*, MDAFA I, 2 vols., Paris 1942-47.

(X. de PLANHOL)

## ii. HISTORY FROM THE ARAB CONQUEST TO THE MONGOLS

Information on the process of the Arab conquest of Balk is somewhat vague. According to Balādorī (*Fotūh*, p. 408), Aḥnaf b. Qays raided Balk and Toḳārestān in 'Abd-Allāh b. 'Āmer b. Korayz's governorship of Khorasan during the caliphate of 'Otmān (32/653), but further attempts at controlling the city were not possible until Mo'āwīa had restored a measure of peace and stability to the troubled Arab empire. In 42/662-63 'Abd-Allāh b. 'Āmer nominated Qays b. Hayṭam over Khorasan, who in turn sent 'Abd-al-Raḥmān b. Samora into Khorasan and Sistān, conquering Balk and, allegedly, Kabul. But the people of Balk renounced their peace agreement with the Arabs, and in 51/671, Rabī' b. Zīād had to reappear at Balk; it is clear that no firm or enduring Arab control over the city was ever established in the early Omayyad period. It was, however, during these raids under 'Otmān and Mo'āwīa that the great Buddhist shrine of Nowbahār, situated in the *rabaž* (suburb) of the city according to the classical Arabic geographers, was despoiled and destroyed, although it long remained a sacred site; the northern Hephthalite prince Ṭarḳān Nizak (q.v.) went to pray there and to derive blessing when he rebelled in Gūzgān and lower Toḳārestān against the Arab governor Qotayba b. Moslem Bāhelī (q.v.) in 90/709 (Ṭabarī, I, p. 1205), necessitating Qotayba's despatching 12,000 men to Balk.

From its strenuous opposition to the Arabs on various occasions, and the latter's vengeful reprisals, Balk is described as being largely ruinous in the mid-

Omayyad period, so that the Arabs built for themselves a new military encampment two *farsaks* away, called Barūqān, where what was normally a comparatively small Arab garrison (at least in comparison with that of Marv) was installed, until in 107/725, after an outbreak of feuding amongst the Arab troops at Barūqān (represented in such sources as Ṭabarī, perhaps misleadingly, as a tribal clash of Qays and Yaman), the governor Asad b. 'Abd-Allāh Qasrī (q.v.) restored Balk on its former site, employing as his agent for this Barmak, the somewhat shadowy father of the early 'Abbasid minister Kāled Barmakī (Ṭabarī, II, pp. 1490-91); Barūqān now drops out of mention. A few years later, Asad temporarily transferred the capital of Khorasan from Marv to Balk, giving the latter city an access of prosperity.

The last Omayyad governor in Khorasan, Naṣr b. Sayyār Kenānī (q.v.), built Balk up into a significant military base. In 116/734, according to Ṭabarī, II, pp. 1566-67, he had there an army of 10,000 men, composed of the Arab tribesmen of Khorasan and also probably of Syrian forces, which he used against the rebel Ḥāreṭ b. Sorayj. During the 'Abbasid *da'wa* in Khorasan led by Abū Moslem (q.v.), Balk was strongly defended for Naṣr and the Omayyads by Zīād b. 'Abd-Allāh Qoṣayrī. Abū Moslem sent against him and against other loyal government forces of Toḳārestān, including the local Iranian princes, his lieutenant Abū Dāwūd Kāled b. Ebrāhīm Bakrī. Possession of the city oscillated between the Omayyad defenders and Abū Moslem's commanders Abū Dāwūd and 'Otmān b. Kermānī, until it was secured for the revolutionaries at the third attempt (130/747-48). See for this early period of the consolidation of Arab control and of islamization, Markwart, *Ērānšahr*, index s.v.; J. Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom and Its Fall*, Eng. tr., Calcutta, 1927, index s.v.; P. Schwarz, "Bemerkungen zu den arabischen Nachrichten über Balkh," in *Oriental Studies in Honour of Cursetji Erachji Pavry*, London, 1933, pp. 434-43; M. A. Shaban, *The 'Abbasid Revolution*, Cambridge, 1970, index s.v.

Little is heard of Balk during the early 'Abbasid period, but it was a base for Hārūn al-Rašīd's commander 'Alī b. 'Īsā b. Māhān in the operations against the rebel Rāfe' b. Layṭ b. Naṣr b. Sayyār, and the fact that Balk suffered from a violent earthquake in 203/818-19 is mentioned. Soon afterwards, it came within the vast governorship of the East held by the Taherid family from the 'Abbasid caliphs. But with the seat of the Taherids' power at Nišāpūr, 500 miles to the west, Balk seems to have been left, according to the general pattern of Taherid overlordship in the east, to local princes. These were from the Abu Dawudid or Banijurid family, most probably of Iranian stock. Dāwūd b. 'Abbās b. Hāšem b. Banijūr was governor in Balk from 233/847-48 onwards, in succession to his father, and was the builder of the village and castle of Nowšād or Nowšār near Balk. He was still there when the Saffarid Ya'qūb b. Layṭ destroyed Nowšād and temporarily captured Balk before going on to Kabul (in 256/870 according to

Gardīzī, ed. Nazim, p. 11, in 257/871 according to Ebn al-Aṭīr, ed. Beirut, VII, p. 247). Dāwūd fled to the Samanids in Samarqand, returning to BalĶ and retaking it soon afterwards and dying there in 259/873. His kinsman (nephew ?) Abū Dāwūd Moḥammad b. Aḥmad ruled in BalĶ from 260/874, and was involved in the complex power struggle between rival condottieri for control of Khorasan after the Taherids' loss of Nišāpūr to the Saffarids in 259/873. Abū Dāwūd was immediately besieged in BalĶ by 5,000 troops under Abū Ḥafṣ Ya'mar b. Šarkab, and then soon afterwards was again attacked by Abū Ḥafṣ's brother Abū Ṭalḥa Maṣṣūr after the latter had been expelled from Nišāpūr (see Ebn al-Aṭīr, VII, pp. 296, 300, giving the data for the second attack as 265/878-79 or 266/879-80). This Abū Dāwūd also controlled Andarāb and Panjīr (qq.v.) in Badaḳšān (q.v.), where he minted coins from the local silver, and was still ruling in BalĶ in 285/898 or 286/899, when the Saffarid 'Amr b. Layl summoned him and the other local potentates of northern Khorasan and Transoxania to obedience. 'Amr's plans of extending his control to these regions were of course speedily dashed by his defeat near BalĶ, after fortifying that city with a moat and rampart, at the hands of the Samanid Esmā'il b. Aḥmad (q.v.) (287/900). See for these events, Gardīzī, ed. Nazim, pp. 11-19; Naršakī, *Tārīk-e Bokārā*, tr. Frye, pp. 87ff.; Markwart, *Ērānšahr*, pp. 301-02; Barthold, *Turkestan*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 77-78, 224-25; C. E. Bosworth "Banīdjūrids," in *EI*<sup>2</sup>, Suppl.

The late 3rd/9th- and 4th/10th-century geographers expatiate with enthusiasm on the amenities and the flourishing state of BalĶ at that time, calling it *Omm al-belād* "the greatest of the cities of Khorasan" from the populousness of the region (Ya'qūbī, *Boldān*, p. 287; tr. Wiet, p. 100) and *BalĶ al-bahīya* "Splendid BalĶ" (cf. Moqaddasī, p. 302); it was equal in size to Marv and Herat, and according to Moqaddasī again, rivaled Bukhara in size. It stood on a river, the BalĶāb (or as Ebn Ḥawqal, ed. Kramers, p. 448, names it, the Dah-ās "[turning] ten mills"), which came down from the Hindu Kush but which did not, in Islamic times, actually reach the Oxus, petering out in the sands. The BalĶāb divided at the city into twelve branches to irrigate the surrounding countryside; among the products of this agricultural area are mentioned citrons, oranges, water-lilies, and grapes, in sufficient quantities for export, whilst the nearby open steppes were used for rearing an excellent strain of Bactrian camels. Outside these domains, however, lay salt marshes and deserts. The ruins of Nowbahār were apparently still impressive, and the author of the *Ḥodūd al-'ālam* (372/982) mentions wall-paintings and other wonders there; by his time, construction of the original building was attributed to the Sasanian emperors. BalĶ had the usual tripartite plan of an inner citadel (*qohandez*), an inner city (*madīna* or *šahrestān*), and an outer city or suburb (*rabaẓ* or *bīrūn*). There were mud brick walls (mud brick being also the normal material for the houses of BalĶ) around both the *madīna* and the *rabaẓ*, with a ditch beyond the outer wall; in earlier times, there had been a

wall twelve *farsaks* long, with twelve gates, enclosing both the city and adjacent villages, as a protection from nomads and other marauders, but by the 3rd/9th century this no longer existed. In the next century, the *rabaẓ* seems to have had seven gates and the *madīna* four, the latter a number characteristic of a number of other Persian cities. The seven *rabaẓ* gates included the Bāb Hendovān, attesting the presence nearby of a colony of Indian traders, and the Bāb al-Yahūd, showing the existence of a Jewish community also (both these groups were still of significance in BalĶ at the end of the nineteenth century, despite the complete eclipse of BalĶ as a trading center; see C. E. Yate, *Northern Afghanistan or Letters from the Afghan Boundary Commission*, Edinburgh and London, 1888, p. 256). The *Ḥodūd al-'ālam*, indeed, describes BalĶ as the emporium (*bārkaḍa*) of India. The markets were mainly situated in the *madīna*, where stood the main Friday mosque; according to Ya'qūbī, there were forty-seven mosques with *menbars* in the moderate-sized towns of the BalĶ region. See for the information of the Arab geographers, Le Strange, *Lands*, pp. 420-22, to which should be added the Persian *Ḥodūd al-'ālam*, tr. Minor-sky, p. 108; Barthold, "Istoriko-geograficheskiĭ obzor Irana," in his *Sochineniya* VII, Moscow, 1971, pp. 41-44, 47-49, tr. S. Soucek, *Historical-Geographical Survey of Iran*, Princeton, 1983, pp. 25-26; Barthold, *Turkestan*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 76-79.

This commercial and economic prosperity was reflected in BalĶ's role in nurturing ulema (*'olamā*) and other scholars, whom Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, ed. Hyderabad, II, pp. 303-35, describes as innumerable. In fact, these included such figures as the early Sufi Abū Eshāq Ebrāhīm b. Adham (d. 161/778), who stemmed from BalĶ before he went westwards to Syria (cf. Ebn al-Aṭīr, VI, p. 56), the geographer and astronomer Abū Zayd Aḥmad BalĶī (d. 322/934), and the Mu'tazilite philosopher Abu'l-Qāsem 'Abd-Allāh BalĶī (d. 319/931). Scholars like these, and especially traditionists, theologians, and religious lawyers, were surveyed and classified in the local histories and *ṭabaqāt* books on the notable men of BalĶ, one of which, a *Ketāb faẓā'el BalĶ*, was apparently written by Abū Zayd BalĶī himself (see Bibliography).

Thus under the Samanids, BalĶ was especially flourishing, although the warfare of rival military factions in the last decades of the emirate affected it on certain occasions. The Ḥājeb Fā'eq Kāṣṣa was governor there during the ascendancy of the Simjūrīs in the 370s/980s, and in 381/991 he was besieged in BalĶ by Abu'l-Ḥasan Ṭāher b. Faẓl, of the Muhtajid family of Čāgānīān; the latter was, however, killed, and Fā'eq was confirmed in the governorship of BalĶ and Termed in 382/992 by the Qarakhanid invader of Transoxania, Boğra Khan Hārūn. When Maḥmūd of Čazna and the Qarakhanids partitioned the Samanid empire between themselves, the lands north of the Oxus fell to the former, although the Qarakhanids for long coveted also northern Khorasan. Hence in 396/1006 the Ilig Khan Naṣr sent his general Čāgritigin or Ja'fartigin into Ṭoḳārestān. The

population of Balk resisted fiercely, and the city was plundered before Čağritigin was forced to retreat to Termed on Maḥmūd's return from India, the Ilig's ambitions here being finally quelled by Maḥmūd's overwhelming victory at Katar, 12 miles from Balk, in 398/1008. It was during Čağritigin's occupations of Balk that the Bāzār-e 'Āšeqān or "Lovers' market" built there by the sultan himself was destroyed; Maḥmūd later censured the people for resisting the enemy and so causing the loss of his lucrative property. We have other information about Ghaznavid constructions in the city, including mention of a fine garden laid out by Maḥmūd, whose upkeep was a burden on the local people until the sultan grudgingly transferred the onus to the local Jewish community. We also learn that the *ra'īs* or civic head of Balk, Abū Eshāq Moḥammad b. Ḥosayn, supplied money to Maḥmūd for his campaigns when the flow of taxation revenues from Khorasan dried up after the exactions of the vizier Esfarā'enī; doubtless these subventions were made by the Balk merchant community as a whole. See on this period, Barthold, *Turkestan*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 253-54, 259, 272, 276, 280, 288-89, 291; M. Nāzīm, *The Life and Times of Sultān Maḥmūd of Ghazna*, Cambridge, 1931, pp. 31, 39, 42-43, 48-50, 154, 166; Bosworth, *Ghaznavids*, index s.v. Balkh.

Although threatened by the incursions of the Saljuqs during the latter years of Mas'ūd of Ġazna's reign, Balk did not, like Nišāpūr and Marv, fall immediately into the Turkmen's hands, even after Mas'ūd's disastrous defeat at Dandānqān (q.v.) in 431/1040. There seems nevertheless to have been a disaffected element in the city's population who probably wished to reach an accommodation with the Saljuqs, for Mas'ūd's vizier reported the presence of large numbers of "corrupt persons, evil-wishers and malevolently-inclined people" there, and at one point it was in fact briefly occupied and plundered by the Turkmen. But Balk was a key point in the Ghaznavid defence system for northern Afghanistan, protecting the capital Ġazna itself, and resistance there was organized against Čağri Beg Dāwūd by the local *šāheḥ-e barīd* Abū'l-Ḥasan Aḥmad 'Anbarī, called Amīrak Bayhaqī (q.v.).

Despite his efforts, Balk seems to have passed definitely to the Saljuqs early in Mawdūd of Ġazna's reign, for in 435/1043-44 Čağri Beg's son Alp Arslān, based on Balk, fended off a Ghaznavid attempt to reconquer northern Afghanistan. Alp Arslān was now formally invested with the governorship of all north-eastern Khorasan, including Balk and Toḳārestān, as far as the Oxus headwaters, the day-to-day running of administration here falling to Čağri Beg's vizier Abū 'Alī Šādān; and on his accession in 451/1059 the sultan Ebrāhīm b. Mas'ūd of Ġazna made a peace treaty with Čağri Beg at last recognizing Saljuq control of these regions. During Alp Arslān's reign, the governor here was the sultan's son Ayāz, who was momentarily ejected from Balk in 456/1072 by the Qarakhanids when his father died and was soon afterwards succeeded by the new Saljuq sultan's other brother Tekiṣ (466/1073-74).

The allocation of this northeastern corner of the Saljuq empire to princes of the ruling family not infrequently led ambitious princes into rebellion against the sultan in distant western Iran. Thus in 490/1097 Berk-Yaruq (Barkīāroq) had to spend seven months at Balk suppressing the outbreak of a Saljuq claimant, Moḥammad b. Solaymān b. Čağri Beg, called Amīr-e Amīrān, whose father had at one time been governor of Balk and who had received military help from the Ghaznavids.

During the first half of the 6th/12th century, Balk came within the extensive sultanate of the east held by Sanjar (q.v.). The city remained flourishing, not least intellectually; a Neẓāmīya *madrasa* had been built there, either by the great vizier Neẓām-al-Molk himself or with his encouragement, and in the later part of the century, the poet Anwarī (q.v.; d. 585/1189-90?) spent his last decades there. Towards the end of Sanjar's reign, however, Saljuq power in Khorasan was challenged by external rivals such as the K'ārazmšāhs and the Ghurids, and by the internal malcontent element of the Oghuz nomads who pastured their flocks in the upper Oxus region and who chafed under the heavy hand of Saljuq taxation and officialdom, including that of Sanjar's governor in Balk, 'Emād-al-Dīn Qamāč. In 547/1152 the Ghurid 'Alā'-al-Dīn Ḥosayn occupied Balk for a while with Oghuz help. In the next year the Oghuz offered conciliatory terms to Qamāč, which he shortsightedly rejected; he attacked them outside Balk, but was routed by them and had to flee to Sanjar's capital at Marv, leaving Balk to be plundered by the Oghuz, with considerable destruction of public buildings. The Oghuz now installed themselves at Balk, offering their obedience to Sanjar's nephew, the Qarakhanid Maḥmūd Khan, and held the city for several years. Later, suzerainty over it passed to the Qarā Ketāy of Transoxania, until in 594/1198 the Ghurid Bahā'-al-Dīn Sām b. Moḥammad of Bāmīān occupied it when its Turkish governor, a vassal of the Qarā Ketāy, had died, and incorporated it briefly into the Ghurid empire. Yet within a decade, Balk and Termed passed to the Ghurids' rival, the K'ārazmšāh 'Alā'-al-Dīn Moḥammad, who seized it in 602/1205-06 and appointed as governor there a Turkish commander, Čağri or Ja'far.

In summer of 617/1220 the Mongols first appeared at Balk. It seems that the city surrendered peacefully to the incomers, but in spring 618/1221 Jengiz Khan himself arrived there, and Balk was subjected to a frightful sacking, conceivably after a revolt of the populace against the Mongol garrison. Whether Balk did indeed have a population of 200,000 before the Mongol massacres, which last involved a large part of the populace, is unconfirmed, but certainly the agricultural and commercial activities on the eve of the invasion described by Yāqūt (*Mo'jam al-boldān* I, p. 713), when Balk supplied produce to Khorasan and K'ārazm, was dealt a severe blow, from which the city did not recover till Timurid times. See, for the Saljuq period and after, the standard sources for Saljuq and Mongol history (Bondārī, Rāvandī, Ebn al-A'fīr,

Jovaynī, etc.); of secondary literature see Barthold, *Turkestan*; Bosworth and Boyle, in *Camb. Hist. Iran*, V; and Bosworth, *Later Ghaznavids*.

*Bibliography:* This is substantially given in the article. It should be noted that Balk, like other cities of Khorasan, seems to have had a lively genre of local histories and works on the excellencies and merits of the city, many of these being biographical in approach. Virtually all of these are apparently lost, but material from several of them was used by the Šaykal-Eslām Abū Bakr ‘Abd-Allāh b. ‘Omar Balkī for his *Ketāb fażā’el Balk* (610/1214), of which a Persian translation by ‘Abd-Allāh b. Moḥammad Ḥosaynī was made at Balk in 676/1278 (ed. ‘Abd-al-Ḥayy Ḥabībī, *Fażā’el-e Balk*, Tehran, 1350 Š./1971; cf. Storey, I, pp. 1296-97).

(C. E. BOSWORTH)

### iii. FROM THE MONGOLS TO MODERN TIMES

The medieval and modern history of Balk, which has been filled with breaks and recoveries, offers a prime opportunity for a new approach to the study of the post-Mongol period in arid Central Asia. The political history and ethnic evolution of the Balk oasis have essentially shared with Mā Warā’ al-Nahr (Transoxania) frontier and population movements that can be traced until the middle of the nineteenth century. The final integration of Balk into the Afghan domain was then hastened by the Anglo-Russian accord of 1873, which established the Amu Darya as the boundary between the zones of influence of the two empires.

Balk belonged to the Mongol Empire after its surrender to Jengiz Khan in 617/1220 and, with Bactria, formed the southern part of what became the khanate of Chaghatay. The destruction resulting from the Mongol conquests was very severe at Balk, and the city remained in ruins for more than a century (Ebn Baṭṭūṭa, p. 299); for some time, however, hypotheses about the long-term consequences of this destruction have been debatable, for Balk did recover some prosperity in the course of the eighth/fourteenth century. Subsequently it was a valued appanage in the territorial system of the different Jengizid ruling houses until the twelfth/eighteenth century. Thus a long period of conflicts began, on the background of the disputes over the succession and revolving around real or nominal control of these appanages. In this way the Mongol princes of the khanate of Chaghatay vied with one another, whether directly or indirectly through the intermediary of local dynasts, like the Kart rulers (*maleks*) of Herat, who were involved on several occasions.

The territorial changes brought about by the formation of Timūr’s (Tamerlane’s) empire initiated long periods of stability, which, however, began with the devastation caused by the Balk campaign in 771/1369. The city was included successively in Timūr’s, Šāhrok’s, and Oloḡ Beg’s possessions, then, after more than twenty years of internal struggle, belonged to Sultan Ḥosayn Bāyqarā, who ruled southern Turkestan be-

tween 872/1468 and 911/1506 and established his brother Bāyqarā at Balk. The former died in combat against the Uzbek, who were ultimately victorious, after the short reigns of two of his sons, and established themselves permanently as far as the Hindu Kush. The period of Timūr and his descendants, the Timurids, was recognized from the beginning as favorable to the development of urban civilization (Clavijo, pp. 141-48).

The subsequent Uzbek period lasted three centuries, the longest in the post-Mongol history of Balk. The establishment of the Uzbeks was reflected in major construction activity at Balk (Mukhtarov, pp. 17-97), which became the third or fourth most important city of their empire. The written reports on Shaibanid and Janid Balk are quite numerous, and many contemporary authors came from this center of power or lived there (Akhmedov, pp. 3-14; Mukhtarov, pp. 8-16). The position of Balk in relation to Bukhara improved in the eleventh/seventeenth century: It became the second most important city in the Bukharan domain and the capital of the heirs to the Janid throne. This important position, however, attracted invaders and led to redefinition of international frontiers in the region.

From the west the Safavids installed themselves in Khorasan; the Uzbeks recaptured Balk from them in 922/1516. From the southeast came the Mughals; their occupation of Balk, from 1051/1641 to 1057/1647, under the command from 1056/1646 of Awrangzēb, who then became emperor, represented a last attempt to restore the old domain of Bābor. The episode of Nāder Shah a hundred years later was equally transitory. On the other hand, the birth of Dorrānī Afghanistan turned the Amu Darya into a frontier, where first *ataliks*, then Mangit amirs of Bukhara struggled with the Sadōzay and Moḥammadzay rulers of Afghanistan for a century. In 1164/1751 Aḥmad Shah incorporated Balk into a political entity unconnected with Mā Warā’ al-Nahr for the first time since the Mongol conquest. In 1257/1841 the Afghans permanently recaptured the city from the Bukharans, who had reestablished themselves there in 1241/1826 (Ivanov, pp. 107ff.). The suzerainty of the latter did not come to an end, however, until Bukhara itself lost its sovereignty in 1285/1868. Balk, which had shrunk to a large village during the twelfth/eighteenth century, finally lost its status as an administrative center in 1282/1866, in favor of Mazār-e Šarīf. Reduced to 500 households by the beginning of the twentieth century, the population of Balk has since increased but is still only one tenth that of its neighbor.

The conditions of recent decline at Balk show that standard explanations of the frequent periods of crisis in the history of the Central Asian oases must often be revised. At Balk, both the population and the number of canals have diminished since the twelfth/eighteenth century, the latter dropping from eighteen to eleven. These facts, along with the importance of nomads around Balk and the supposed drying up of the Balkāb (q.v.), could all be taken as evidence of the evolution of a typical post-Mongol Central Asian city. "It is only within the last 750 years that Balkh has fallen on evil

days" (Toynbee, p. 95). The decline of Balk in favor of Mazār-e Šarīf must be viewed aside from the question of the so-called tomb of 'Alī, within the framework of solidarities resulting from the irrigation networks: The two cities form part of the same oasis and depend on the same supply line through the canals from the Balkāb. It thus seems more significant for the history of the development of the oasis to emphasize the migration of urban population from there to Mazār-e Šarīf, via Takta Pol, rather than contrast the modern village with the large ancient city. In fact, with about 30,000 inhabitants in 1295/1878 and 100,000 today, Mazār-e Šarīf demonstrates the capacity of the irrigation system in the oasis, where present population density is between 30 and 100 inhabitants per square kilometer (*Tübinger Atlas*, A VIII 3), to continue to support the largest city in Afghan Turkestan, as it has done in the past.

The cultural character of the Balk oasis today reflects the ethnic and political shifts in its post-Mongol history. The Turkish populations, especially the Uzbeks but also the Turkmens, predominate over the Tajiks. There are also colonies of Pashtun, though fewer than in the Maymana and Tāšqorġān oases; one Jewish community; and some Arabic-speaking villages (*Tübinger Atlas*, A VIII 16). The linguistic picture is differentiated, including an important component of the Fārsī of Balk, but it corroborates the profound Uzbekization of the region (*Tübinger Atlas*, A VIII 11).

See also BALKĀB.

*Bibliography:* An initial attempt to make use of the Arabic geographers to follow the continuous course of the history of Balk was that of V. V. Barthold. *Istoriko-geograficheskiĭ obzor Irana I: Baktriya, Balkh i Tokharistan*, Sochineniya 7, Moscow, 1971, pp. 39-59. In this article Barthold throws doubt on the assertion that in antiquity the Balkāb flowed into the Oxus. For a history of Balk on the eve of the Mongol conquest see Abū Bakr Wā'ez Balkī, *Fazā'el-e Balk*, Pers. tr. 'Abd-Allāh Moḥammad Ḥosaynī Balkī, ed. 'A. Ḥabībī, Tehran, 1351 Š./1972. The situation of Balk after the Mongol conquest is described by *Ebn Battūta* (Paris) II, pp. 299. The ruling dynasties of the khanate of Chaghatay have been reconstructed from the Chinese and Islamic lists by L. Hambis, "Le chapitre VII du Yuan Che," *T'oung Pao* 38, supplement, 1945, pp. 57-64. A report on the prosperity of Timurid Balk is furnished by Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo, *Embajada a Tamerlan*, ed. by F. Lopez Estrada, Madrid, 1943, pp. 141-48. A history of the Timurid period is the *Maṭla'-'e sa'dayn*, by 'Abd-al-Razzāq Samarqandī. Since the first great Uzbek chronicles were published by A. A. Semenov, more and more works of commentary and editions of Shaibanid and Janid texts have been issued. Particularly noteworthy is *Baḥr al-asrār fī manāqeb al-akḡyār*, a work by Maḥmūd b. Amīr Walī, prepared on the orders of the Janid governor of the town, Nāder-Moḥammad, translated by Riazul Islam, Karachi, 1980; and the publication of part of the eighteenth-

century *Tarīk-e raḥīmī*, of which only two of the many manuscripts, mss. D. 710 and C. 1683, contain the list of the eighteen medieval and modern irrigation canals; cf. M. A. Salakhedinova, "K istoricheskoĭ toponomike Balkhskoi oblasti," *Palestinskii sbornik* 21/84, 1970, pp. 222-28; the most recent bibliographies of the published and unpublished Timurid, Uzbek, and Afghan sources on Balk can be found in B. A. Akhmedov, *Istoriya Balkha*, Tashkent, 1982, and A. Mukhtarov, *Pozdnesrednevekoviĭ Balkh*, Dushanbe, 1980. The former work also represents the most thorough study on the Uzbek khanate of Balk and the latter provides the most complete description of the evolving topography of the city and the transition from the Timurid to the Uzbek period; it also gives a list of the eighteen *nahr* and the *jūy* connected with each, cf. pp. 99-109. For the entire Uzbek period in central Asia, see I. P. Ivanov, *Ocherki po istorii Srednei Azii*, Moscow, 1958. For the historical ethnography and Uzbekization of the area, see B. K. Karmysheva, *Ocherki etnicheskoi istorii yuzhnykh rayonov Tadzhikistana i Uzbekistana*, Moscow, 1976. For geography, see J. Humlum, *La géographie de l'Afghanistan*, Copenhagen, 1959; and *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients*, Section 9, Series A, Wiesbaden, 1984. See also A. Toynbee, *Between Oxus and Janna*, London, 1961.

(V. FOURNIAU)

#### IV. MODERN TOWN

The crisis in Balk's urban evolution came in the mid-13/19th century. Great damage was done to the town and the surrounding area in the troubled times following its destruction by the amir of Bukhara in 1840 and its recapture by the Afghans of Dōst Moḥammad in 1850, which gave rise to an exodus of many of its Uzbek inhabitants. A further cause of decline was lack of maintenance of the irrigation canals. One of the results was that Balk became a very unhealthy place, and it is therefore not surprising that the Afghans, when again in control after 1850, preferred to base their governorate of Turkestan at Takta Pol near Mazār-e Šarīf, later at Mazār-e Šarīf itself. The exact date of the move from Balk is uncertain (in 1866, according to Barthold, *EP* III, p. 430; during Moḥammad-Afzal Khan's governorship of Afghan Turkestan, according to Peacocke, in *Gazetteer of Afghanistan* IV, p. 110; after 1878, according to Grodekoff, *Ride from Samarcand to Harat*, London, 1880, p. 80, quoted by Centlivres, p. 124). It may be that at first only a temporary move was intended. In any case the transference was complete and final when the British frontier delimitation commission passed through in 1886. Balk's population was then reckoned to be some 600 families of Tājiks, Uzbeks, and Arabs, of whom 100 were old local families, together with 40 Jewish families and a community of 20 Hindu families originally from Shikarpur in Sind. All lived in the southeastern quarter of the old town inside the wall. The *bāzār* then had 60 shops. In addition to the

permanent inhabitants, there was a floating population of about 1000 Pashtun families in the town and outside the wall. Another source, however, speaks of only 200 Tājik families (*Gazetteer of Afghanistan* IV, p. 112; cf. C. E. Yate, *Northern Afghanistan*, Edinburgh and London, 1888, pp. 255ff.). The decline continued in the following decades. The sketches of Balk in the first world war by Niedermayer (p. 48) and in 1924 by Foucher (I, p. 59) depict a mean village of hovels situated to the south of the citadel with a still existing Jewish quarter to the west.

A new phase set in when work on the construction of a new town began in 1934. It was laid out geometrically in concentric circles around a central square with eight radial arteries. The initial plan was overambitious, providing for 1,270 houses together with a large *bāzār* of some 400 shops and 32 *sarāys* (K. Ziemke, *Als deutscher Gesandter in Afghanistan*, Berlin, 1939, p. 229). Actual achievement fell far short; in 1973 (according to Grötzbach, p. 105) only 430 houses had been built and demand for them was weak, the attraction of Mazār-e Šarīf still being dominant throughout the region. According to the preliminary returns of the 1979 census, Balk then had only 7,242 inhabitants (communication from D. Balland). Even so, its economic role was by no means negligible. It became an important market for agricultural produce (cotton, melons, almonds, karakul pelts). Buyers from Mazār-e Šarīf came on the market days (Monday and Thursdays) to take advantage of the lower prices, and two-way business with Mazār-e Šarīf grew after the start of a

regular bus service. Four cotton firms, two of which had ginneries, were located in Balk and its outskirts. After the opening of the asphalted Mazār-e Šarīf-Šebergān highway with a 2 km branch to Balk in 1970, Balk began to attract tourists. From 1972 onward it had the benefit of electricity generated by gas from fields in the region. It also possessed a good primary school and a small hospital. Though only 20 km from Mazār-e Šarīf, Balk ranked as a small independent center.

*Bibliography:* L. W. Adamec, ed., *Gazetteer of Afghanistan* IV, 1979, pp. 98-112. O. von Niedermayer and E. Diez, *Afghanistan*, Leipzig, 1924. A. Foucher, *La vieille route de l'Inde de Bactres à Taxila*, MDAFA 1, 2 vols., Paris, 1942-47. M. Le Berre and D. Schlumberger, "Observations sur les remparts de Bactres," in B. Dagens et al., *Monuments préislamiques d'Afghanistan*, MDAFA 19, Paris, 1964, pp. 61-105. P. Centlivres, "Structure et évolution des bazars du Nord Afghan," in E. Grötzbach, ed., *Aktuelle Probleme der Regionalentwicklung und Stadtgeographie Afghanistans*, Afghanische Studien 14, Meisenheim am Glan, 1976. E. Grötzbach, *Städte und Basare in Afghanistan: Eine stadtgeographische Untersuchung*, Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients, series B, no. 16, Wiesbaden, 1979. A. Mukhtarov, *Pozdnesrednevekoviĭ Balkh (Materialy k istoricheskoĭ topografii goroda v XVI-XVIII vv.)*, Dushanbe, 1980. B. A. Akhmedov, *Istoriya Balkha (XVI-pervaya golovnia XVIII v.)*, Tashkent, 1982.

(X. DE PLANHOL)

Table 16  
POPULATION OF BALK PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN (1978-79)

Name of district	1 Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	2 Total sedentary population (1979)	3 Density (Inhab./km <sup>2</sup> )	4 Urban population (percent)	5 Wintering nomads (tents)	6 Number of tents in summer 1978 (all semi-nomads)
Mazār-e Šarīf (center of province)	48	103,400	2,154	100	—	—
<i>Woloswālī:</i>						
Balk	481	70,000	145	10	—	283
Čārbōlak	511	45,500	89	—	—	—
Čemtāl	1,732	50,000	29	—	28	1,070
Dawlatābād	864	65,400	76	9	—	—
Nahr-e Šāhī (1)	1,771	32,000	18	—	45	—
Šōlgara	1,663	73,300	44	8	110	1,095
Šōrtapa	1,284	25,000	19	—	—	—
<i>'Alāqadārī:</i>						
Čārkent	1,445	29,500	20	—	—	—
Deh Dādī	233	32,500	140	—	—	—
Kešendeh	1,801	42,700	24	—	—	1,135
Total of province	11,833	569,300	48	22	183 (2)	3,583 (3)

Sources: Columns 1 to 4, *Natāyej-e moqaddamātī-e noqostūn saršomārī-e nofūs*, Kabul, 1359 Š./1981. Figures have been rounded. Columns 5 to 6, D. Balland and A. de Benoist, *Nomades et semi-nomades d'Afghanistan*, forthcoming. Notes: (1) In 1363 Š./1984 this *woloswālī* was shrunk by the establishment of the Mārmol 'alāqadārī for which no statistics are available. (2) These nomads spend summer in northern Hazārajāt (q.v.). (3) Local migrants; most claim to be Uzbek (1, 180 tents, i.e., 33, percent), Arab (1,040 tents: 29 percent) or Hazāra (820 tents: 23 percent). Only 140 tents claim a Pashtun descent.

Table 17  
LAND USE IN BALĶ PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN (1967)

Name of district	Cultivated lands (ha)			Forests (ha)	Percent of irrigated land under				Water mills (units)
	Irrigated ( <i>ābī</i> )	Non-irrigated ( <i>lalmī</i> )	Fallow		Canals	Springs	<i>Kārēz</i>	Wells	
Mazār-e Šarīf	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Woloswālī:</i>									
BalĶ	40,186	—	8,038	—	100	—	—	—	69
Čārbōlak	47,706	—	9,592	—	100	—	—	—	54
Čemtāl	30,810	6,858	9,540	—	100	—	—	—	45
Dawlatābād	62,584	—	12,516	—	100	—	—	—	121
Nahr-e Šāhī	21,858	3,778	6,262	11,492	99.8	0.2	—	—	160.
Šōlgara	6,098	19,074	10,752	58,592	99.7	0.1	—	0.2	139
Šōrtapa	2,572	—	514	126	100	—	—	—	56
<i>‘Alāqadārī:</i>									
Čārkent	18	26,516	13,262	234	67	22	11	—	90
Deh Dādī	11,368	1,388	2,968	—	98.8	1	—	0.2	133
Kešendeh	1,300	31,072	15,796	456	99.9	0.1	—	—	45
Total of province	224,500	88,686	89,240	70,900	99.9	0.1	<0.1	<0.1	912

Source: *Natāyej-e ehšā’iyāgīrī sarwē-ye moqaddamātī-e zer’atī sāl-e 1346 Š.*, Kabul, n.d., 7 vols. The figures are only very rough estimates; the reliability of some of them may be questionable.

#### V. MODERN PROVINCE

BalĶ is a province (*welāyat*) of northern Afghanistan which covers 11,833 km<sup>2</sup>. In 1363 Š./1984 it was divided into seven districts (*woloswālī*) and four subdistricts (*‘alāqadārī*). The main town and provincial capital is Mazār-e Šarīf (q.v.) and three more localities within the province have urban status (BalĶ, Dawlatābād and Šōlgara or Boynaqara).

BalĶ province was created in 1343 Š./1964 out of the former and much larger province of Mazār-e Šarīf.

See Tables 16 and 17 for compilation of main available data about population and land use in the province, districts, and subdistricts.

(D. BALLAND)

#### VI. MONUMENTS OF BALĶ

*The successive city-walls.* The mud ramparts of BalĶ which still survive, superimposed one upon the other, at an impressive length and height, more than 20 m at the citadel (Bālā-Hešār) and on the southern side, are the most substantial remains of the ancient periods of the “Mother of Cities.” Archeological examination of these ramparts has provided the key to the successive stages of the topographical development of the town (see Le Berre and Schlumberger). The initial limit is represented by the Bālā-Hešār (“BalĶ I”); its circular plan is probably inherited from the Achaemenian period, while its present Timurid circuit-wall largely re-

uses the massive Greek rampart which, in 208-06 B.C., withstood the attack of the Seleucid Antiochus III. From the Greek period also dates a gigantic wall built against the nomadic incursions along the northern edge of the oasis, where its remains have been traced for a length of 60 km (Kruglikova; Pugachenkova, 1976); it is mentioned as still in use by Ya’qūbī (fl. 276/889), and it sheltered other important towns, mainly Delbarjīn (Greek-Kushan period) and Zādīān-Dawlatābād (Saljuq period).

The development of a southern suburb of BalĶ along the caravan-road to India led to a first extension of the walled city (“BalĶ IA”: late Greek or Kushan period). At some time between the Kushans and the Islamic conquest it was further enlarged to the east (“BalĶ II”). These walls with square towers remained in use until BalĶ was thoroughly destroyed in 617/1220 by the Mongols of Jengiz Khan.

In 765/1363 the Bālā-Hešār was reoccupied by Amir Ḥosayn, after which Tīmūr and his successors completely refortified the whole city while slightly moving it to the west, probably because the eastern part had become marshy after the destruction of the irrigation system. This last rampart (BalĶ III), made of heterogeneous materials extracted from the ruins left by the Mongols, had semi-circular towers, and was adorned at its southern side by the monumental Bābā-Kōh gate (or Nowbahār gate; now destroyed) and by the Borj-e ‘Ayyārān, an eight-arched belvedere (Foucher, p. 164, pl. VI; Mukhtarov, pp. 21-42).



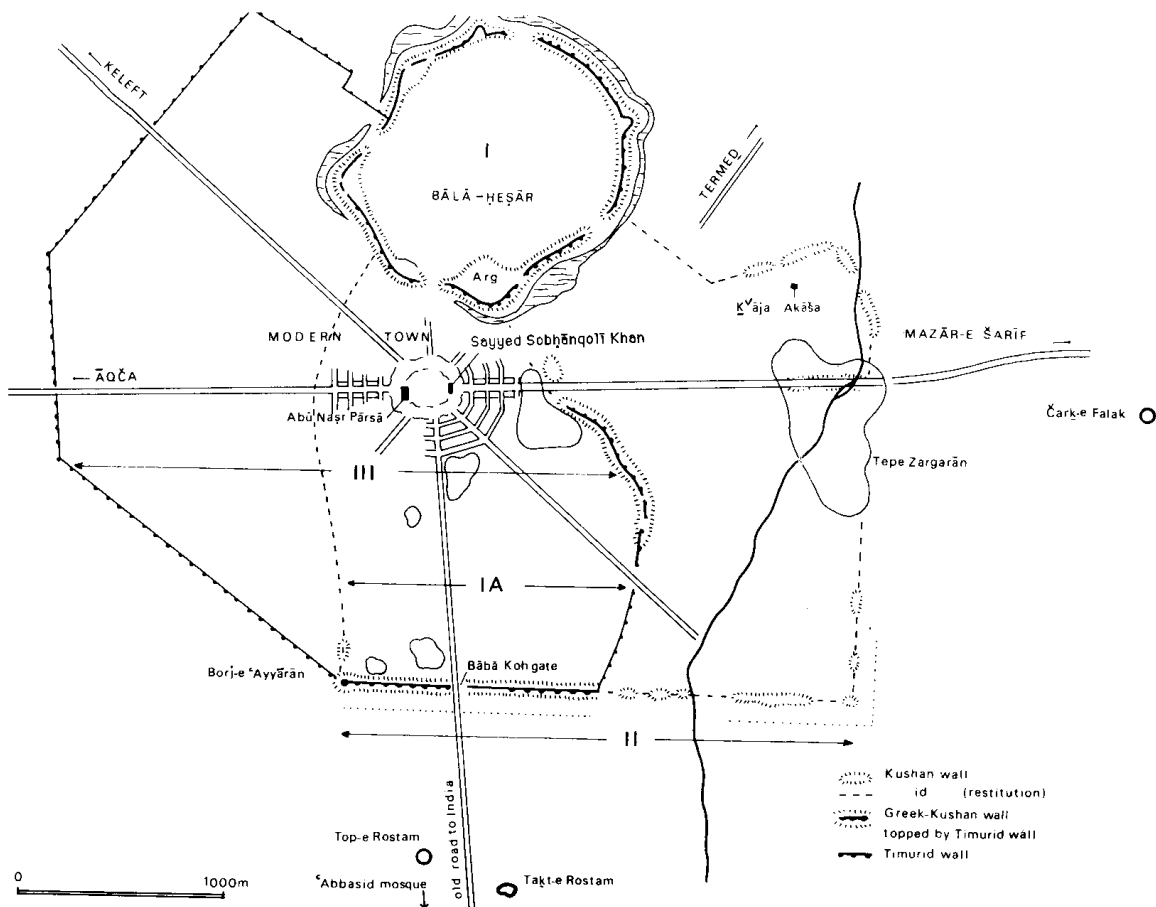


Figure 15. Monuments of Balk

*The Buddhistic remains.* Apart from the ramparts, the only monuments which have survived from pre-Islamic Balk are Buddhistic *stūpas*, which owed their preservation to the massivity of their mud-brick masonry. Four, all standing along the roads on the outskirts of the city, were identified by A. Foucher in 1924-25; the Top-e Rostam, in the south, was the only one he excavated. Although greatly ruined and stripped of all its decoration, it can be reconstructed as the most monumental *stūpa* witnessed north of the Hindu Kush (dimensions: square platform 54 × 54 m, cylindrical dome 47 m in diameter, total height probably ca. 60 m). Its location and size correspond to those of the "New Monastery" described in the 7th century by the Chinese pilgrim Hsüan-tsang (Th. Watton, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India* I, London, 1904, pp. 108-09); otherwise known as the Nowbahār (from Sanskrit *nava-vihāra*), it is renowned in the Islamic sources because the Buddhist ancestors of the Barmakids had been its administrators. But the neighboring Takt-e Rostam, a steep mound sometimes considered the remains of the convent itself, looks rather like the mud platform of an early medieval manor (*kōšk*). Two other *stūpas*, the Čark-e Falak and the Āsīā-ye Kohnak, have mosques grafted onto their remains, a clear indication of the continuity of cult-

places (Foucher, pp. 83-98, 168-69, pls. XIX-XXII; Mélikian-Chirvani, 1974).

*Pre-Mongol Islamic monuments.* A building of outstanding interest is an 'Abbasid suburban mosque known locally as Noh Gombad or Hāji Pīād, which was discovered in 1966, at a short distance south of the Top-e Rostam. Built of baked bricks, it consists of four round pillars standing in the center of a square (20 × 20 m) formed by three curtain walls and an open façade which is articulated on two more pillars; the pillars were linked to each other and to coupled columns attached to the walls by perpendicular arcades, the inner space being thereby divided into nine equal squares, each of which originally supported a dome. A deeply carved stucco ornamentation still covers the capitals, imposts, and bases of the pillars, as well as the spandrels and soffits of the arches; the motifs include grape leaves, freely moving vine-scrolls, fir-cones, palmettes, rosettes, set in interlacing straps and thickly packed so as to fill up the panels almost entirely. Neither the architectural composition nor the decoration have their direct origin in the Central-Asian tradition (which, for example, ignored the open arcatures); they rather represent the direct transposition of a model which took shape in the heart of the 'Abbasid empire and from

there spread both east and west (where the clearest examples now surviving are to be found, especially some religious monuments of Tulunid Egypt). The stucco ornament has its closest parallels in the styles A and B of Samarra, which indicates the first half of the 9th century as the most probable date of construction (Pugachenkova, 1968; Golombek; differently Mélikian-Chirvani, 1969).

The only other monument which can be ascribed to the pre-Mongol Islamic period is the plain, single-chambered, domed mausoleum known as Bābā Rōšnāy (at the southwest of the Bālā-Heṣār; first half of the 11th century; Pugachenkova, 1978, pp. 31-32).

*Timurid and Ashtarkhanid monuments.* 3 kms to the east of the outer wall stands the mausoleum locally known as Mīr-e Rūzadār, surrounded by ornamented brick burial enclosures. The mausoleum preserves an elaborate interior decoration (angular interlacing ribbed design on the dome and niches, enhanced by painting); but the outer dome and exterior facing are lacking, which has led to the supposition that the monument remained unfinished because of the political troubles of the 1440s (Pugachenkova, 1978, pp. 33-35; Mukhtarov, pp. 75-83). Its architectural composition expresses the Timurid taste for the octagonal tomb-chamber, with external vaulted niches hollowed in the facets and angles, and projection entrance-room. The same composition is repeated, with variations, at the later mausoleums of K̄'āja Bajgāhī (eastern edge of the town; 17th cent.) and K̄'āja Akāša; it is also to be found, in a more sophisticated form, at the funerary mosque of K̄'āja Abū Naṣr Pārsā, perhaps the most famous monument of Balk. It was erected in 867/1462-63, shortly after the death of the theologian, who is buried in the platform which lies in front. The usual entrance-room is replaced here by a tall *pēštāq* flanked by two minarets, each of which is preceded by slender corkscrew pillars. The whole of the façade and the fluted outer dome were veneered in *kāṣī* whose predominant tint is a cold silvery blue; their manufacture was of the best quality, but due to an inadequate mode of fixation large surfaces have collapsed. The interior, lighted by sixteen lattice openings at the basis of the drum, is richly ornamented by a well-preserved angular interlace of stucco, completed by painted floral motives (Pugachenkova, 1970). Together with the contemporary mosque at Anau (Turkmenistan), this monument represents one of the finest examples of late Timurid memorial architecture.

Balk had a late flourish under the Ashtarkhanid dynasty, when it formed the apanage of the heirs to the throne of Bukhara (1007-1164/1599-1751). From this time dates the *madrasa* built by the Sayyed Sobhānqolī Khan in the last years of the 11th/17th century; only the tiled entrance *ayvān* remains, facing the mosque of Abū Naṣr Pārsā in the garden which is now the center of the town. The ruins of the governor's palace, including a small mosque, which were excavated by Foucher in the Arg of the Bālā-Heṣār, cannot be precisely dated but obviously belong to the late Islamic period also

(Foucher, pp. 98-112, 165-66, pls. XI-XVIII).

*Bibliography:* The successive phases of the archaeological exploration of Balk are described in: O. von Niedermayer and E. Diez, *Afghanistan*, Leipzig, 1924, pp. 204-05 (brief description of the main Islamic monuments); A. Foucher, *La vieille route de l'Inde de Bactres à Taxila*, MDAFA 1, vol. 1, Paris, 1942, pp. 55-121, 163-70, pls. V-XXVI (general survey; excavations at the Top-e Rostam and at the citadel); M. Le Berre and D. Schlumberger, "Observations sur les remparts de Bactres," in *Monuments préislamiques d'Afghanistan*, MDAFA 19, Paris, 1964, pp. 61-105 pl. XXXII-XLV, figs. 10-19 (study of the successive city-walls; supersedes R.S. Young, "The South Wall of Balkh-Bactra," *American Journal of Archaeology* 59, 1955, pp. 267-76; completed by J. Cl. Gardin, *Céramiques de Bactres*, MDAFA 15, Paris, 1957). The wall of the oasis is studied by I. T. Kruglikova, *Dil'berdzhin* [II], Moscow, 1974, pp. 9-15, and by G. A. Pugachenkova, "K poznaniyu antichnoi i rannesrednevekovoi arkhitektury Severnogo Afganistana," in *Drevnyaya Baktriya* I, ed. I. T. Kruglikova, Moscow, 1976, pp. 137-41. On the Nowbahār/Top-e Rostam see also A. S. Mélikian-Chirvani, "L'évocation littéraire du bouddhisme dans l'Iran musulman," *Le monde iranien et l'Islam* 2, Geneva and Paris, 1974, pp. 10-23 (discusses the Islamic sources); K. Fischer, *Indische Baukunst islamischer Zeit*, Baden-Baden, 1976, p. 131. The Islamic monuments have been seriously studied for 20 years only. On the 'Abbasid mosque: G. A. Pugachenkova (Pougatchenkova), "Les monuments peu connus de l'architecture médiévale de l'Afghanistan," *Afghanistan* 21/1, 1968, pp. 17-27; A. S. Mélikian-Chirvani, "La plus ancienne mosquée de Balkh," *Arts Asiatiques* 20, 1969, pp. 3-19; L. Golombek, "Abbasid Mosque at Balkh," *Oriental Art* 25, 1969, pp. 173-89. On the mosque of Abū Naṣr Pārsā: G. A. Pugachenkova, "A l'étude des monuments timourides d'Afghanistan," *Afghanistan* 23/3, 1970, pp. 33-37; eadem, *Zodchestvo Tsentral'noi Azii XV vek*, Tashkent, 1976, pp. 30 and 61. On other monuments recently discovered: Eadem, "Little Known Monuments of the Balkh Area," *Art and Archaeology Research Papers*, London, June, 1978, pp. 31-40. A. Mukhtarov, *Pozdnesrednevekovyi Balkh*, Dushanbe, 1980.

(F. GRENET)

**BALKĀB** (Bactros of the classical authors), the river of Balk (locally pronounced Balkaw). This perennial river is a major feature of the geography of northern Afghanistan. The 4th/10th-century geographers Eṣ-ṭakrī (p. 278) and Ebn Hawqal (p. 488, tr. Kramers, p. 433) call it the Dah-ās (ten-mills) river, because a total of ten mills were driven by its waters. The name Dah-ās was still in use in the 13th/19th century (J. P. Ferrier, *Caravan Journeys and Wanderings in Persia, Afghanistan, Turkistan, and Beloochistan*, London, 1857, repr. Westmead, 1971 and Karachi, 1976, p. 224),