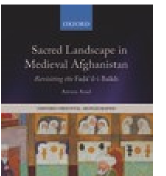

Sacred Landscape in Medieval Afghanistan: Revisiting the Faḍāʾil-i Balkh
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CHAPTER

Introduction: The Discourse of Landscape, Balkh and its History

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Abstract

The introduction contextualizes the book within relevant historical fields, such as 'place studies'. It expounds on the pros and cons of focusing on one city in order to understand the history of a place, and introduces the book's main source, the earliest surviving local history of Balkh known as *Faḍāʾil-i Balkh*, written by a local Balkhī in 1214 AD. It offers a working definition of landscape with a subjective viewer's perspective of space, distinguishing it from the topographical understanding of space. The chapter introduces the book's argument that an understanding of medieval sacred landscape—one that is largely focused on shrines—can provide important clues to the Islamisation of the lands integrated into the *dār al-Islām*. The chapter also provides a brief background on Balkh's history beginning in the Bronze Age and reaching its height during the Kushan era in the early centuries of this millennium, through to the medieval period.

Keywords: Local history, cities, place studies, Islamic history, Islamisation, shrines, Afghanistan, Central Asia

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> *[p]lace itself has no place.*
>
> *How shall there be a place*
>
> *for the Creator of place,*
>
> *a heaven for the Maker of heaven himself?* [1]

Place is not a static thing; it is created and re-created over time. Place tickles our imagination and curiosity —we want to know where people were born, to visit distant places, to find out how places were in the past.

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The ways in which places are conceptualized depend on the persons imagining or constructing them. There are those who visit places that are foreign to them; there are those who ‘live’ them. To the visitor, the lure of a place may be its epic past, natural landscape, or monumental attractions. To the resident, place is where rationality rules. The eyes of the visitor are untrained and uninitiated, scanning a new landscape, eagerly searching for familiar markers, while using the known landscape from home as a reference point. The challenge for visitors to ‘see’ the way local inhabitants perceive their home is significant. The visitor needs to step out of the ‘expatriate mind’ and learn about the landscape that the resident inhabits and navigates, and to appreciate how he or she relates specific places to the past.

To put it differently, place might be conceptualized in one of two ways. There is the place that is lived, ‘a p. 2 dynamic location where different people, social agents, or powerful actors come together in ↳ unpredictable and ever-shifting ways’.[2] We can also think of place as a location imbued with spiritual and cultural meaning, produced, in part, through the ways in which people imagine the past. These imaginations of the past may take physical form in shrines or public monuments, or they may encapsulate wider tracts of land, such as an entire city. The conception of the landscape impresses itself on people’s notions of their history, and by extension, gives power to the place in the present.

The Implications for a History of Afghanistan

Considering place in this way produces a different kind of history for Afghanistan from what we can usually read about—namely, a political history of major events and people. These studies—although extremely useful—tend to focus on Afghanistan’s more recent past with limited space left for considering the earlier events that shaped what was to come. Moreover, they are often heavily focused on the Afghan capital of Kabul. Important as Kabul may be to Afghan history it often bears limited, if any, relation to what happens in the rest of Afghanistan (or lands that are now part of Afghanistan).[3] There are also well-researched books on specific places and regions in Afghanistan. These are useful guides to the topography of Afghanistan, written from the modern observer’s perspective, mapping and visualizing places according to Western methods and conventions.[4]

p. 3

This book offers a different story of Afghanistan: that of a particular place called Balkh, situated in the north of the country. The story is told through the eyes of a medieval Balkhī scholar. It should be added that I realize that I am part of a new trend in the history-writing of the Near and Middle East (if we can provisionally include Afghanistan in this regional category). ‘Critical place studies’ are increasingly viewed by historians as making it ‘possible to answer larger questions regarding power, politics, and social change from the perspective of complex local life’.[5] In order to answer these questions, this book not only focuses on place but views it from the local, time-specific perspective.

The challenge is to ‘reconstruct’ the medieval city and district of Balkh in northern Afghanistan through the eyes of a local and a contemporary, rather than projecting modern views of space onto the past. One anthropologist put it well when he stated: ‘How a culture maps its world says much about its way of thinking about its environment, about how its soul and the soul of the world, the *anima mundi*, interact.’[6] Being able to obtain a more accurate reading of how things were centuries ago is an asset. On the other hand, this approach produces less of the critical mass of falsifiable, hard ‘facts’ needed to ascertain the topography and physical layout of this important, little-understood city. Such data would certainly provide complementary and crucial evidence for understanding how Balkh was affected by major socio-cultural and political developments following the Islamic conquests and throughout the medieval period.

The desire to ‘find’ the ancient city of Balkh has inspired scholars and researchers for the better part of a century. Alfred Foucher was the first foreign Orientalist to start digging up the ancient site of Balkh in the 1920s. Excavation works have continued until this day, albeit with lengthy intermissions, sometimes lasting

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years, due to the massive upheavals that have befallen the country, such as the Soviet intervention (1979–88), two civil wars (1989–96), and Taliban rule (1996–2001). Apart from its great walls, and some scattered remnants p. 4 ↳ of buildings, little of the old, early Islamic city has been unearthed to enable us to reconstruct the physical city. And yet the many written accounts tell us much about the grand, ancient, powerful and beautiful city of Balkh.

The challenge of reconstructing this medieval city is compelling to any historian of the region. Balkh is the missing link between the western and eastern Iranian worlds, at the crossroads between the 'Iranian' and 'Turkic' peoples of the north, at the western fringe of Buddhism, the mythical death place of Zoroaster (or Zarathustra, the prophet of the ancient Iranian Zoroastrians), and the cradle of Sufism, the mystical, 'friendlier' version of Islam as people like to consider it today. This is an impressive legacy for one place, and yet how it all happened remains a mystery. Since 2011, the 'Balkh Art and Cultural Heritage' project, run by the University of Oxford together with colleagues in Afghanistan and funded by the Leverhulme Trust, has been working towards unveiling some of Balkh's secrets. The results are not yet available, but there are great expectations that answers to the questions of Balkh's urban history will be found. For example, the project plans to produce detailed historical maps of Balkh and its surroundings, something that has not been attempted so far.

Before the reader becomes too disappointed at the lack of hard data, let it be asked if it is not interesting that the medieval authors who wrote about their city did not tell us what we want to know today. Does that not mean something in itself? Perhaps it did not matter to them where the congregational mosque or a particular shrine was physically located. Or perhaps everyone knew, so why mention it? And so we get to the crux of this book. What is it that the local contemporaries tell us about their city, in how much detail, and to what purpose?

Period, Location, and Connotation

Historical Balkh is an important place to study for three main reasons. First, it has survived over more than four millennia; secondly, it has an untarnished reputation as a city of great scholarship and mysticism; and thirdly, it is noted for an exceptional level of mercantile achievement. Bactra—the Greek name under which pre-Islamic p. 5 ↳ Balkh was known—encapsulated Bronze Age settlements around 2,000 BC when its ancient water systems were built.[7] It was a province of the Achaemenid Empire (sixth century BC),[8] the capital of the Hellenistic kingdom of Bactria,[9] and a part of the Kūshān Empire that flourished in the first to the third centuries.[10] The Sāsānian King Ardashir I (r. ca. AD 220–40) vanquished the Kūshān king of Bactria. The Iranian dynasty ruled over Bactria until the Muslim conquests in the early eighth century, usually indirectly through resident élites.[11]

After the Muslim conquest, Balkh, along with Merv (in today's Turkmenistan), became one of the main centres of Arab settlement in p. 6 ↳ north-eastern Iran in the eighth century.[12] During the early ʿAbbāsid caliphate (eighth-ninth centuries), Balkh was celebrated as the original home of the Barmakid family of viziers, whose fore-fathers had run the Naw Bahār Buddhist temple-monastery complex.[13] Balkh acquired grand epithets, such as, 'the mother of cities' (Ar. *umm al-bilād*) and 'the dome of Islam' (*qubbat al-Islām*) as well as the more sinister 'city of blood',[14] and became one of the foremost Islamic historical cities in Central Asia. From the coming of Islam until the Mongol conquest in 618/1220–1, Balkh was a major centre of commerce, learning and culture. The city experienced a renewed flourishing of its arts and culture under the Tīmūrids after Tamerlane's conquest of Balkh in 771/1370 (see Plate 1), although never quite reaching the same importance it had enjoyed before.

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The main period of focus in this book concerns the eighth to the twelfth centuries. During this time, Balkh was ruled by the Umayyad and ʿAbbāsid caliphs through their provincial governors, as well as various regional dynasts who professed their allegiance to the caliphate, while enjoying a significant amount of autonomy. The following regional dynasties ruled over Balkh: Ṭāhirids and Banījūrids (205/821–257/871), Ṣaffārids (257/871–287/900), Sāmānids (287/900–382/992), Ghaznawids and Qarakhānids (389–435/999–1043–4), Saljūqs and Oghuz-Ghūrids (435–548/1043–1153), and Qarakhitāy and their Qarakhānid and Ghūrid vassals (560/1165–601/1205).[15] The p. 7 ↳ main source of this book, the *Faḍāʾil-i Balkh* (*FB*),[16] must have been written during the rule of the subsequent dynasty, the Khwārazmshāhs (602–617/1205–20), and it was during this time that the family of the poet-mystic Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn [al-Balkhī] al-Rūmī is said to have emigrated from Balkh (the poet's father, Bahāʾ al-Dīn Walad al-Balkhī, is depicted on the cover of this book).[17] This 'pre-Mongol' period—Chinggis Khan entered Balkh himself in 618/1221—is still many centuries before the name 'Afghanistan' came into being. Historians refer to this part of the world during this period as 'the eastern Islamic world' or 'the eastern Iranian world'. The former irks those people who see the word 'Islamic' as assuming that the population at the time was fully converted to Islam (when it clearly was not). Others, rather, consider the term merely to refer to the 'Islamic caliphate', which ruled, if only nominally, over Balkh. Yet Balkh was a major city that had been part of a region known since antiquity as Khurāsān ('land to the east'). The term 'eastern Iranian world', on the other hand, antagonizes those who see it as part of the modern, nationalist Iranian narrative, which holds that the Persian-speaking world (or 'Persianate') is really just a part of the long defunct but per- petually present 'greater Iran': a vast area comprising the northern Iranian plateau from the Caspian Sea to the Oxus and up to the Pamir Mountains on the western borders of China. This book uses both terms, simply because they are well established in the scholarly literature and are conveniently short. Frankly, no better terms exist.

If we situate ourselves on a modern-day map for a moment, we can find Balkh in the north-western part of Afghanistan (see Map 2). The region is at the fringe of Afghanistan, and, as fringes go, it is not easily accommodated in one or another of the major areas of the present or the past. One scholar, Richard Foltz, clearly situates Balkh (together p. 8 ↳ with Mā warāʾ al-nahr, 'the land across the river', i.e. the Oxus, but not the rest of Afghanistan) within Central Asia, which seems perfectly plausible to me as well.[18] According to *FB*, Balkh came into direct or indirect contact with places, such as Badakhshān (shared today between Afghanistan and Tajikistan and bordering the Pamir Mountains); China (*chīn wa mā-chīn*); Tirmidh, Bukhara and Samarqand (in today's Uzbekistan); the generic area of 'Turkistān' which includes places like Ferghana (in today's Kazakhstan); the Bamiyan Valley and *al-hind*/*hindūstān*; and to a lesser extent with Kuhistan (in today's Iran) and Merv (Turkmenistan). (see Maps 1–3)[19] Seen in this light, early Islamic Balkh can be securely placed within a Central Asian context, with significant links to South Asia. We need to bear this regional context in mind when considering the influence of Islam and other religions on Balkh.

Even in the post-Tīmūrid period, Balkh has been at the dividing line between Central and South Asia. For three centuries it was under Uzbek rule, becoming the second most important city of the Bukhara Emirate (after Bukhara). Then, in the mid -nineteenth -century Balkh was permanently integrated into Durrānī Afghanistan, with Russian influence weighing in more heavily than British during the so-called Great Game rivalry. The Soviets had a major presence there when they intervened in Afghanistan in 1979–88. Previously, the different Mongol lands or *ulus*es exchanged hands in Balkh, frequently involving violent warfare between the Mongol houses, notably the Ilkhānids from the west, the Chaghadaids in the north-west and the Golden Horde of the north.[20]

Balkh's history is illustrious to say the least, and we find mentions of it in the Zoroastrian holy book, the *Avesta*, as well as in Greek and Roman chronicles of antiquity,[21] and in Sasanian rock inscriptions in p. 9 ↳ Fārs, Iran. Balkh's Buddhist past is described by Chinese and Korean pilgrims in the seventh and eighth centuries, such as Hsiuen Tsang and Hye Ch'o.[22] Other documentary evidence points to Balkh's multicultural and multi-religious medieval social fabric, including not only Buddhists and Muslims, but Christians,

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Manichaeans, and Jews, amongst others.[23] The list of sources is long, and there is no need to inventory them all here. The point is that Balkh is a major historical site, but about the place itself we know very little.

The name of Balkh may not conjure up a clear image to many Westerners. But ask anyone from the region—Iran, Afghanistan or Uzbekistan, for example—and you will most likely get a twinkle in your counterpart's eye, and a smile of nostalgia. 'One of the great cities of our past', 'the birthplace of some of our greatest Persian poets and Sufi masters' are typical comments. The first Balkhī in this rubric to be mentioned is usually the Mawlānā al-Rūmī (or al-Balkhī, as he is better known to people from the region, referring to his alleged birthplace rather than the place of his death in *rūm*, i.e. Turkey). Everyone claims Balkh as theirs—not in geostrategic, pragmatic or economic terms, but on a wider, cultural and, yes, metaphysical scale.

It is not just the people of the region who love Balkh. If you speak to a foreign visitor who has come into contact with it, say a 1960s/1970s hippie trailer, you are bound to hear a story about an encounter with a Sufi master in Balkh. Days would be spent sipping tea with the wise mystic, usually with a view over and around the imposing ancient walls of Balkh that provide testament to an impressive, built-up landscape that existed once here. The ancient site of Balkh is p. 10 ↳ a special place imbued with an 'other-worldly' character—or so such accounts go. One might wonder whether it is the ruins of the ancient city wall, dotted like awkwardly jutting rock formations across the now largely unbuilt mountainous landscape that give Balkh its 'Martian' appeal (see Plates 2 and 3 for example). Or might Balkh's reputation as a spiritual haven hinge on ancient traditions, continued and recounted, reshaped and compacted until this day? When standing in the old site of Balkh and its surroundings today it is appealing to believe that the landscape shapes imaginings of specialness and holiness. However, few people have a chance to experience this place today, and thus, Balkh's specialness seems firmly rooted in historical memory.

The Source and Its Context

The question is, then, how and when was this historical memory formed? Who developed it, and why? The reader may now pause and wonder whether I am questioning the validity of the statements on Balkh's grandeur. Is she claiming that Balkh was actually not great, that it did not produce some of Afghanistan's most influential thinkers and feelers? Rest assured that this quest has nothing to do with such a reassessment. As mentioned before, I am not intending to recount 'the history' of Afghanistan or even that of Balkh in the first instance. This is rather a search for the source of a narrative that has become a part of the history of Afghanistan. This narrative considers Balkh to have a special spiritual quality. The question as to whether or not this is true is secondary, and will not concern us here. What interests me is how Balkh's reputation as a spiritual centre became generally established. Did it arise out of the mainstream ideas of the day? Or did the notion merely live on by happenstance—say, because the narrative was enshrined in a particular document or text that survived. Why would such a particular text persist, and not others? In this regard, a quote by the novelist Julian Barnes comes to mind: 'History is that certainty produced at the point where the imperfections of memory meet the inadequacies of documentation'.[24] This p. 11 ↳ book tries to outline a particular historical memory and analyse the source, in order to attain a more accurate history.[25]

Let us take a closer look at the source that forms our testimonial. It is known as the *Faḍāʾil-i Balkh*, or the 'Merits of Balkh'. This little-studied work was completed in Arabic in 610/1214, and then adapted into Persian in 676/1278. The Arabic author is the Shaykh al-Islām Abū Bakr ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad b. Dāwūd al-Wāʿiẓ al-Balkhī. The *Faḍāʾil-i Balkh* was edited in full by the Afghan scholar ʿAbd al-Ḥayy Ḥabībī in 1971. It is just now being translated into English, and only parts have been adapted into French in an unpublished doctoral thesis by the influential Iranian activist of the 1960s and 1970s Ali Shariati at the Sorbonne.[26] A few scholars of religious history have used the text, but this book represents the first attempt to use it as a historiographical and broader historical source.

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Of particular importance to this study are the book's timing and its attention to detail about places within the city. *Faḍāʾil-i Balkh* is the earliest existing written narrative on and from Balkh, and it dates back to the early thirteenth century. Incidentally, this is precisely the time when the Mawlānā Balkhī/Rumī's family would have been leaving Balkh (Mawlānā was just a child then), never to come back, eventually settling in faraway Konya, Anatolia. The composition of the *Faḍāʾil-i Balkh* coincides with the lifetimes of other famous poets and mystics (and their predecessors) with whom Balkh is intimately associated, and from whom Balkh is said to receive its special aura, such as the early Sufis, Shaqīq al-Balkhī and Ibrāhīm b. Adham. (Or perhaps it was the place that imbued these men with their special qualities? More on this later) Moreover, the *Faḍāʾil-i Balkh* is written during a time when other cities and places of the eastern Iranian world are producing their local histories as well: Bukhara, Nishapur, Samarqand, and Isfahan, among others.[27] What is the background to the writing of p. 12 ↳ local histories? Who patronized them? Who wrote them? What do they say that we do not find in the general histories of the time? These are all important questions and comparanda for our study.

Besides its timing, the *Faḍāʾil-i Balkh* has a second, very important feature; one that has been overlooked by historians until now, and that provides the crucial evidence for our study: the text is filled with detailed anecdotes and stories that reveal a perception of sacred landscape. At first glance, these little snippets of information may seem random and insignificant, but, in fact, they provide us with a rare insight and contemporary perspective on place. The reason why historians have ignored these details so far is that the *Faḍāʾil-i Balkh* was predominantly known as a work on the developments of Islamic legal and political thought in Balkh. The author of the *Faḍāʾil-i Balkh* did not help himself by applying an unimaginative writing style.

And yet, if we look beyond all that, what emerges is a description of the sacred sites that made up the geography of Balkh. Therein lies a history untold: the history of a legend that is a city, a city that is holy more than anything else. What exactly makes this place holy, and how its sacredness is retained and respected will form the central theme of this book.

Sacred Space

The notion of sacred space is not new, and has been outlined and explained by scholars from various fields. One of the early theoreticians of the 'spirit of place' was the nineteenth-century German theologian Rudolf Otto. He suggested that sacred places had a mystical quality called *numen*, or divine power. This sense of a spirit of place, a *genius loci* (or, *numen loci*) was the origin of humanity's association of selected places with holiness. More recently, anthropologists (and historians to a much lesser degree) have studied the 'spirit of place' as a human, cognitive process rather than an independent divine power. p. 13 ↳ The concept has been developed and explained most fully by anthropologists.[28] The importance of this perspective for historians is aptly expressed by anthropologist Roger Keesing writing about the Solomon Islands community of the Kwaio:

> The landscape of the Kwaio interior appears, to the alien eye, as a sea of green, a dense forest broken periodically by gardens and recent secondary growth, and an occasional tiny settlement … To the Kwaio eye this landscape is not only divided by invisible lines into named land tracts and settlement sites; it is seen as *structured by history* [emphasis added].[29]

Explained in another way, the term 'landscape' derives from the Dutch renaissance paintings that were depicting the '*landschap*', which was not an objective mirror image of the environment, but a subjective representation with codes and points of emphasis. Narratives perpetuate the idea that particular places—natural and man-made—have a sacral quality. Often such places already have a historical significance. The

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impetus that originally ‘empowered’ a place in Tibet, for example, argues Charles Ramble, ‘was not a particular saint or magician, but probably the historical importance of a site’ that may have been the cradle of civilization and the ancient home of the place’s dynastic rulers.[30] To the *Faḍāʾil-i Balkh*’s author, too, Balkh is above all a pure and sacred city (*khāk-i pāk*). What made the city sacred and pure, and how the *Faḍāʾil-i Balkh*’s narrative linked Balkh’s sanctity to the past, will be explored in this book.

The narratives on sacred landscape around the world are found in written and oral historical accounts, as well as legal documents and letters, and they find their confirmation (or not) in the archaeological evidence. On the basis of these studies we can categorize sacred sites as either natural landscape features that are identified as holy (such as mountains, trees, caves and waters), or where sensory and mythic relationships with the environment are established. The former have existed since the earliest days of human interaction p. 14 with place. The latter developed as humans ‘improved upon’ the environment, with ↳ devices such as petroglyphs, wall paintings and *simulacra* (that is, the resemblance of a natural feature to some other form —anthropomorphic, animal or iconic). In this category, places also became holy as a result of a particular scent or sound that existed there (others might argue that the causality is reversed, i.e. that the scent or sound existed because of the place’s sacredness). Within this second category we can include places like Jerusalem which are theorized as conceptual centres, or Mount Kailash in Tibet which is understood as a symbolic centre for Tibetan and South Asian communities. Another notion is that of the ‘middle place’, i.e. that of a centre from which things radiate in the four directions. Human interaction with sacred spaces reaches its height during pilgrimage. Visits to shrines and similar interactions with sacred spaces are accompanied by a set of standard rituals, such as circumambulating a space a designated number of times and in a particular direction, and at a specific, auspicious point in time. Pilgrims pay their respects to the site, and ask its spirit for intervention when faced with a particular problem in life.[31]

Reflected here are two different senses of place, a distinction of which the ancient Greeks were keenly aware. The Greeks spoke of a *chora*, which denoted place as something expressive, as a repository of memory and of mythic presence. Then there was *topos*, which signified place as we understand it today: a simple location—the objective, physical features of a locale. Modern Western historians started to be interested in the *chora* in so far as the conversion of sites to Islam told us about the impact of Islam on the West. The fundamental question here is why were sites that were considered sacred to one religion not destroyed by the conquerors who brought with them a new religion. What happened to the *numen loci*, the spirit of the place, as a result of the conversion? Was it retained, or did the new powers that be reconfigure it so that it bore attributes that emanated from the new religion? Such questions interested scholars such as F. W. Hasluck who identified Christian and Islamic religious sites in Turkey that displayed the remnants of previous religions and spirituality. These were sites that had changed hands multiple times during their history.[32]

p. 15 The process of blending religious symbols, belief systems and practices has been frequently labelled as ‘syncretism’. Without dwelling on the criticisms of this concept, it is worth recalling that modern scholars tend to avoid this term due to its abuse by previous Western historians and anthropologists. Their assumptions—now superseded and proven false—were that Western Christianity was a pure religion while the religions of the non-Western world, say the Santería of Cuba or the Xangoists of Brazil, were ‘contaminations’ of Christianity. Today, these newer faiths are understood as religions in their own right with a foundation in local belief systems. Moreover, we are aware that Christianity is not a monolith but is itself a result of a blending pro-cess, and that it existed in many forms (and still does). Thus, in this book we will treat syncretism as a process of fusion without any of the hierarchical connotations that used to mark this term.

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Islamization and Sacred Landscape

In the Balkh area, religiosity up to the time of the Islamic conquests and for at least two centuries thereafter p. 16 seems to have been centred on the worship of a set of local deities,[33] together with Buddhism[34] ↳ and Zoroastrianism. The syncretic process is probably best connoted by the term, 'Islamization' given that by the time we reach the period of the *Faḍāʾil-i Balkh*—the early thirteenth century—Balkh is a well-established centre of Islamic learning and mysticism, and a major participant in the *dār al-Islām*. The question is how did the Islamization process happen in Balkh, i.e. how much of the old reli-giosity was retained and melded into Islam? How was the Buddhist-dominated city of Balkh transformed into a centre for Islamic scholarship within just a few centuries after the advent of Islam? Until recently, much scholarship has tended to focus on the caliphal centres further west (Syria, Iraq, and Egypt) when considering questions on early conversions to Islam.[35] We know now that Islamization (and Arabization) did not reach the same extent in the east. Iranian and Central Asian centres and cities did not adopt Arabic but Persian, and large-scale conversions to Islam occurred much later in the east than in the west. The reasons for this difference are still not fully understood. Balkh was the easternmost province of the Central Asian lands of the caliphate, which makes it a particularly interesting test case for such an investigation.

By the same token, it is worth exploring the extent to which life after Islam in Balkh may have stayed the same, or was perhaps only made to *look* different. Questions that arise are: did the Arab conquerors really destroy all remnants of the previous religions in Balkh, as the Arab historians such as al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892) and al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) would have us believe?[36] Was the religion of early Islamic Balkh a direct, unaltered import from the Ḥijāz and Iraq, or was it rather a syncretic blend of pre-existing religions and Islam? These questions are difficult to answer, and we may not always find the evidence for them, but this book provides at least a starting point for looking at the question of Islamization in Balkh. The case of Balkh may serve as an additional prism for understanding Islamization at a more general level.

p. 17 Shrines have dominated the discourse on sacred landscape amongst historians of Islamic history, with a particular focus on the shrines of Syria and Palestine in the early Mamluk Sultanate. However, the study of sacred landscape is still in its infancy amongst historians of the Middle East and Central Asia. Yehoshua Frenkel considered the *Realpolitik* of the Mamlūk ruler Baybars (r. 658–76/1260–77) to be the motivating force behind his shrine-building policies: it aimed at Islamicizing the *bilād al-shām*. Other studies have focused on shrines as well, probably because they feature so prominently in the Arabic and Persian works, including the source of this book, the *Faḍāʾil-i Balkh*.[37] While these studies look at shrines as individual structures, they do not necessarily consider them in the context of the wider landscape. A notable exception is Devin DeWeese's (2000) work on the saints and sacred landscape of Sayrām (modern-day southern Kazakhstan, known in medieval times as Isfījāb) based on narratives from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which attribute to Sayrām a sacrality that manifests itself both spatially and temporally.[38]

On the whole, historians have tended to see *Realpolitik* as the driving force for shrine conversions. How better to send the message across to the conquered peoples about the new order of things than to expropriate and reconfigure the most iconic and central monuments of the city? While such postulations appear reasonable and tell us a lot about conversions, they do not enlighten us about the importance of p. 18 shrines in a landscape that is not dominated by conversion. This ↳ would apply to a place that has long been converted, say, and co-exists with pre-existing shrines. How much knowledge of the previous history of the shrine is retained? Does it feature in the pilgrims' relationship with the site? If so, is it a positive, integrative element, or does it live on as a reminder of the bad religion that should not be revisited?

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Other Research Gaps Addressed in this Book

Besides the research gap on sacred landscape in the Islamic world discussed above, this book attempts to fill two further lacunae. First, the historiographic context is partial. Our best literary source on pre-modern cities such as Balkh are Persian local histories, notably the little-studied *Faḍāʾil-i Balkh*, which is the earliest surviving local history of the city. Other local histories from the region that have already been studied include Narshakhī's *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, examined by Richard Frye in the 1950s, and the histories of Nishapur analysed by Richard Bulliet in the 1970s.[39] Written originally in Arabic, these local histories have often been treated as mere translations, while modern scholars have glossed over the fact that they reflect a cobbling together of texts stemming from various genres and periods, often going back to the time of the Arab conquests. We will consider how the Persian versions represent adaptations, rather than literal translations, bringing into the narrative familiar codes that are parti-cular to Persian literary and oral traditions.

Second, the social aspect of the *ʿulamāʾ* (religious scholars) as both authors and subjects of local histories is largely neglected in scholarly literature (a notable exception is Bulliet's *Patricians of Nishapur*). Here I am referring to biographies contained in the local history of Balkh and those of other cities in the region. Hermione Lee states that, 'for the biographer, who himself represents the social world, the social self is the real self; the self only comes to exist when juxtaposed with other people. p. 19 ↳ The solitary self is a pressure upon the social self, or a repercussion of it, but it has no independent life'.[40] Biographies are a part of social history, and in this book I will bring them into the study of Balkh's history.

Terminology

Regional terminologies, such as 'eastern Iranian world', 'eastern Islamic world' and 'Central Asia' have been described earlier. A few conceptual terms that run through the book need explanation. This book applies the terms 'medieval' and 'pre-modern' interchangeably to denote the pre-Mongol period only (with no implications of a value-ridden concept of 'backwardness' or 'primitiveness'). The beginning of the medieval period will be taken as the eighth century. The Mongol and post-Mongol period begins in the thirteenth century after the conquest of Balkh in 618/1220–1.

Sets of terms that are often erroneously confused are the Greek 'Bactra', 'Bactria', 'Bactriana' and the Perso-Arabic 'Balkh'. In this book, Bactra is the capital of the cultural area of Bactria/Bactriana, which at its height included the 'eastern Iranian lands' as well as the lands south of the Hindukush and northern India (modern-day Pakistan and the north-west frontier). Bactra and Bactria/Bactriana together became known in the Muslim sources as 'Balkh'. Another set of terms, 'Islamic world' or 'Islamicate', which often appear in secondary sources, may be used to refer to the countries that were incorporated into the *dār al-Islām* in the medieval period. Finally, the term 'Persianate', which also appears in Western scholarly writing, refers to the Persian-speaking lands of the medieval period.

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Structure of the Book

This book is divided into three chapters. Chapter 1 sets the scene by telling us first about the text in question. p. 20 Who wrote it, when, where ↳ and to what purpose? Much original material from the manuscripts that survive of the *Faḍāʾil-i Balkh* is provided, in order to give the reader a flavour of the tone, writing style (which can occasionally become florid and entertaining) and content of the book. This chapter also situates the text within its historiographical context, identifying the books the author used to give his history authenticity and scholarly credibility. Most of these source texts are largely unknown to the scholar of the western Islamic world, whereas they clearly had a strong appeal in the eastern Islamic region. Much like other local histories of the region (notably, Bukhara and Nishapur), it is difficult to place the *Faḍāʾil-i Balkh* neatly within one defined genre of Islamic historiography, while one finds a number of genres represented in it.

Having introduced the beast that is the *Faḍāʾil-i Balkh*, one can now attempt a forensic analysis of its content. Chapter 2 describes the sacred sites that are mentioned in the text. It will become apparent that a large number of them are tombs and shrines. Here, again, much of the language from the *Faḍāʾil-i Balkh* is given so that the reader can form his or her own opinion of the contemporary perspective. In order to provide corroborating evidence for the sites in the medieval account of the *Faḍāʾil-i Balkh*, I shall occasionally offer parallel evidence from other Persian (and Arabic) textual, medieval sources, and possible confirmation from the archaeological testimony. In this chapter the important observation will be made that the sites on which the shrines lay were already sacred before the arrival of Islam: they are the burial places of important figures from Balkh's pre-Islamic (mythical) past.

Having established the pre-Islamic origins and general features of Balkh's sacred sites, we will consider who was buried in them after the sites were 'converted' to Islam. The Muslims turned Balkh into an Umayyad city in the early eighth century. Chapter 3 reveals the identities of the people who the *Faḍāʾil-i Balkh* claims were buried at these sacred sites between the eighth and the late twelfth centuries. The author identifies the shrines as belonging to pious and religious men, or '*shaykh*s'. They were the early 'Islamic scholars', the *ʿulamāʾ* of Balkh, and they are depicted as the agents of good within society; an agency that lent them the *gravitas* required to become saints. But, who were they? Where did they come from? And, what exactly was it that made them so special? The evidence also casts a sidelight on the development of Islamic p. 21 scholarship, or ↳ 'ulamology', to quote Roy Mottahedeh, and the early legal schools (*madhhabs*).[41]

This study will close with the observation that the study of the *Faḍāʾil-i Balkh* and its depictions of Balkh's *shaykh*s and their shrines is a story of the survival of sacredness. The powers associated with this holy place may have been pacified and they may have been tamed by cultural and linguistic means; but they were never removed.

Notes

1 Sanāʾī, *The First Book of the Ḥadīqatu ʾl-Ḥaqīqat or the Enclosed Garden of the Truth*, tr. J. Stephenson (New York: Samuel Weiser, 1972), 7–8.

2 Amy Mills, 'Critical Place Studies and Middle East Histories: Power, Politics, and Social Change', in *History Compass* 10/10 (2012), 778 10.1111/j.1478-0542.2012.00870.x .

3 Robert McChesney wrote a useful review of four such books. Robert McChesney, 'Recent Work on the History of Afghanistan', *Journal of Persianate Studies* 5 (2012), 58–91 10.1163/18747167-12341238 . The works discussed in this article are: V. S. Boiko (Boyko), *Vlastʾ i oppozitsiya v Afganistane: osobennosti politicheskoi borʾbyi v 1919–1953 gg.* (English title: *Government and Opposition in Afghanistan: the Features of Political Fighting in 1919–1953*) (Moscow-Barnaul: Institut Vostokovedeniia, Rossiiskaia Akademiia Nauk, 2010); Shah Mahmoud Hanifi, *Connecting Histories in Afghanistan: Market Relations and State Formation on a Colonial Frontier* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011) (Originally published

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as an e-book by Columbia University Press, 2008); B. D. Hopkins, *The Making of Modern Afghanistan* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, Cambridge Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies, 2008); May Schinasi, *Kaboul 1773–1948: Naissance et Croissance d'une Capitale Royale* (Naples: Universita degli Studi di Napoli 'L'Orientale', 2008).

4 See, for example, Schinasi, *Kaboul*.

5 Mills, 'Critical Place Studies', 778 10.1111/j.1478-0542.2012.00870.x .

6 Paul Devereux, *Sacred Geography: Deciphering Hidden Codes in the Landscape* (London: Gaia, 2010), 9.

7 Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 77–9, 743–54; Eric Fouache *et al.*, 'Palaeochannels of the Balkh River (Northern Afghanistan) and Human Occupation since the Bronze Age Period', *Journal of Archaeological Science* 39 (2012): 3416 ff.

8 The first surviving textual mention of ancient Bactria is in the Vendīdād section of the *Avesta*, the Zoroastrian Holy Book. *Avesta – Die heiligen Bücher der Parsen*, tr. Fritz Wolff (Strassburg: Karl J. Trübner, 1910), 317–18. Bactria (Bāxtri) is mentioned in the trilingual inscription of the Emperor Darius I (r. 522–486 BC) at Bisutūn and Persepolis as one of the Achaemenid satrapies (provinces). A. Shapur Shahbazi, 'Darius', *EIr*, VII (1994), Fasc. 1, 41–50.

9 Alexander the Great overwhelmed the Achaemenids and their eastern territories including Bactria in 327 BC. In this year, Alexander married Roxana, the daughter of the Bactrian Oxyartes, at the Rock of Ariamazes in Sogdiana. In 256 BC, Bactria was turned into an independent Hellenistic kingdom. John Boardman, Jasper Griffin, and Oswyn Murray (eds), *The Oxford History of the Classical World: Greece and the Hellenistic World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 311, 314–15.

10 In the second century BC, nomadic peoples from the north conquered Bactria. Amongst these new rulers the Kūshāns achieved supremacy. By the first century their empire extended far beyond Bactria, across much of northern India and to the borders of Sogdiana in Central Asia. Nicholas Sims-Williams, *New Light on Ancient Afghanistan: The Decipherment of Bactrian. An Inaugural Lecture Delivered on 1 February 1996* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1997).

11 Roman Ghirshman, *Les Chionites-Hephtalites*, Cairo, 1948; Robert Göbl, *Dokumente zur Geschichte der iranischen Hunnen in Baktrien und Indien* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1967; Édouard Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-Kiue (Turcs) occidentaux, recueillis et commentés, suivi de notes additionnelles … avec une carte* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, [1942]); Arthur Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides* (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1944); Sims-Williams, *New Light*, 5--6; Étienne de la Vaissière, 'Is There a 'Nationality' of the Hephthalites?' *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 17 (2003), 119–32; Frantz Grenet *et al.*, 'The Sasanian Relief at Rag-i Bibi (Northern Afghanistan)', in Joe Cribb and Georgina Herrmann (eds), *After Alexander: Central Asia Before Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 243–67.

12 Accounts on the timing and rapidity of the conquest of Balkh by the Muslim troops vary. A final conquest is generally agreed to have occurred under General Qutayba b. Muslim in 89/707–8 or 90/708–9 when the Hephthalite rebel Nīzak Ṭarkhān was vanquished. The *futūḥ* writer Ibn Aʿtham al-Kūfī sets Balkh's conquest in this period [*Kitāb al-Futūḥ* (c. 204/819) (Hyderabad: Maṭbaʿat Majlis Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1974), VII, 234–5], and he is generally considered to be more accurate on Khurāsān than others. Al-Balādhurī refers to earlier conquests, but also emphasizes that the final conquest happened with the killing of Nīzak Ṭarkhān [*Futūḥ al-buldān,* tr. Francis C. Murgotten (New York: Columbia University Press, 1924), II, 164–7]. The writer of the local history of Balkh, the Shaykh al-Islām al-Wāʿiẓ, follows a similar chronology to that of al-Balādhūrī [*FB*, ed. AḤḤ, 30–6], and of al-Yaʿqūbī, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1860), 287, as does al-Ṭabarī [*Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, ed. M. J. de Goeje, I, 156; II/3, 1472–3]. See also H. A. R. Gibb, *The Arab Conquests in Central Asia* (New York, 1970 [1923]), 8–9.

13 V. Barthold and D. Sourdel, 'al-Barāmika', *EI*[2], I (1960), 1033; *FB*, ed. AḤḤ, 19, 46.

14 *FB*, ed. AḤḤ, 28, 43.

15 For brief surveys of this period in Balkh, see V. Barthold, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion* (London: Luzac, 1968 [1928]), 77–8, 272, 288–9, 331–5; and C. E. Bosworth, 'Balkh – ii. History from the Arab Conquest to the Mongols', *EIr*, III (1989): 588–91. For the local account, see *FB*, ed. AḤḤ, 19, 38–9, 40–1, 52–3, 200, 377. On the Ṣaffārids, see Deborah Tor, 'Historical Representations of Yaʿqūb b. al-Layth al-Ṣaffār: A Reappraisal', *JRAS* 12/3 (2002), 247–75 10.1017/S1356186302000317 . On the Ghūrid conquests of Balkh, see Ḥamīd al-Dīn Balkhī (d. 559/1164), *Maqāmāt-i Ḥamīdī*, ed. Rid.ā Anzābī Nizhād (Tehran: Markaz-i Nashr-i Dānishgāhī, 1365/1986). On the Qarakhānids in Balkh, see Michael Fedorov, 'Qarakhanid Coins of Tirmidh and Balkh as a Historical Source. New Numismatic Data on the History of the Qarakhanid Dominions of Tirmidh and Balkh', *Numismatic Chronicle* 163 (2003), 261–2.

16 Shaykh al-Islām Ṣafī Allāh wa-l-Dīn Abū Bakr ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad b. Dāwūd al-Wāʿiẓ al-Balkhī, *Faḍāʾil-i Balkh*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥayy Ḥabībī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Bunyād-i Farhang-i Īrān, 1350/1971).

17 Aflākī, *The Feats of the Knowers of God: Manāqeb al-ʿārefīn* (completed in 754/1353–4), ed. John O'Kane (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 7–13, 56.

18 Richard Foltz, *Mughal India and Central Asia* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998), xxi. Shirin Akiner surveys the various definitions of Central Asia, each with 'its own chronology, 'geography' or spatial dimensions'. See her 'Conceptual Geographies of Central Asia', in *Sustainable Development in Central Asia*, ed. Shirin Akiner, Sander Tideman, and Jon Hay (Richmond: Curzon, 1998), 3–62.

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19 *FB*, ed. AḤḤ, 15–18, 24, 48, 52.

20 Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh*, ed. Muḥammad Rawshan and Muṣṭafā Mūsawī (Tehran: Nashr-i Alburz, 1373/1994), I, 163; Maḥmūd b. Amīr Wālī, *Baḥr al-asrār*, fol. 132a; Michal Biran, *Qaidu and the Rise of the Independent Mongol State in Central Asia* (Richmond: Curzon, 1997), 57.

21 See references above, and, for example, Ctesias of Cnidus, 'Persica' in Photius, *Bibliothèque*, ed. René Henry (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1959–91).

22 Hsiuen Tsang, *Si-Yu-Ki*, tr. Samuel Beal (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co, 1906), I, 43–8; '*Huei-ch'ao*s Pilgerreise durch Nordwest-Indien und Zentral-Asien um 726', ed. Walter Fuchs, *Sitzunsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Klasse 22* (1938), 426–69; *The Hye Ch'o Diary*, ed. Han-Sung Yang *et al.* (Berkeley, CN: Asian Humanities Press, 1984), 52.

23 For example, a Nestorian-Chinese stele bearing a Chinese-Syriac inscription erected in Chang'an in 781 AD states that it was made by churchmen, one of whom was Mār Yazdbozid, whose father was from Balkh. A Manichaean fragment from Balkh indicates that there was a Manichaean community here too. Nicholas Sims-Williams, 'The Bactrian Fragment in Manichaean Script (M1224)', in Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst, Christiane Reck, and Dieter Weber (eds), *Literarische Stoffe und ihre Gestaltung in mitteliranischer Zeit* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2009), 245–68. The recent discovery of pre-Mongol Jewish documents (in press by Shaul Shaked in *Journal of Persianate Studies*) points to the presence of a medieval Jewish community.

24 Julian Barnes, *The Sense of an Ending* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2011), 17.

25 Zayde Antrim in her recent study also takes a text-based approach on understanding the depictions of place in the western Islamic lands of the ninth to the twelfth centuries. Zayde Antrim, *Routes & Realms: The Power of Place in the Early Islamic World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

26 Ali Mazinani-Shariati, 'Faḍâïl-i Balkh—"Les Mérites de Balkh"—Notes, correction, et traduction abrégée'. Thèse de doctorat d'université, Paris, Institut d'études iraniénnes library at the Université de la Sorbonne-Nouvelle (Paris III), 1963.

27 C. A. Storey and Yuri Bregel's bibliographies of Persian literature list local his-tories of Qum, Isfahan, Nāʾīn, Kāshān, Yazd, Fārs, Shabānkāra, Khurāsān, Herat, Kirmān, the Caspian provinces (Ṭabaristān, Rūyān, Ṭabaristān-Rūyān-Māzandarān, Gīlān, Gīlān-Daylamistān), Sīstān, Khūzistān, the Bakhtiyārīs, Azerbaijan, Bukhara, Badakhshān, Nishapur, Khiva, Merv, Samarqand, Ferghana, and Kashgār [cf. Storey, I/1, 348–93; I/2, 1291–1302, and Stori/Bregel', II, 1008–1208]. Medieval local history-writing is not limited to Iranian cities, but grows in cities and regions throughout the Islamic world.

28 Eric Hirsch, 'Introduction: Landscape: Between Place and Space', in Eric Hirsch and Michael O'Hanlon (eds), *The Anthropology of Landscape: Perspectives on Place and Space* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 1–2.

29 Robert Keesing, *Kwaio Religion: The Living and the Dead in a Solomon Island Society*, New York, 1982; cited in Hirsch, 'Introduction', 1–2.

30 Charles Ramble, 'The creation of the Bon Mountain of Kongpo', in Alexander Macdonald (ed.), *Mandala and Landscape* (Delhi: D. K. Printworld, 1997), 134.

31 Devereux, *Sacred Geography*, 52, citing Simon Coleman and John Elsner in their *Pilgrimage: Past and Present in the World Religions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 100: 'Pilgrimage is as concerned with taking back some part of the charisma of a holy place as it is about actually going to the place'.

32 F. W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929).

33 Bactrian documents—in the Bactrian language, written from the fourth to the eighth centuries—consistently evoke the names of local deities, such as Kamird and Wakhsh, for example, as witnesses to contracts. The documents seem to come from an area between Balkh and Bamiyan, which is part of Bactria, in a placed called Rōb, 50 miles south of Samangān (see Map Section). They are identified with the Rōb Khān who helped the Umayyad general Qutayba to defeat Nīzak Ṭarkhān. They have been edited and translated by Nicholas Sims-Williams, *Bactrian Documents from Northern Afghanistan – 1. Legal and Economic Documents*, rev. ed. (London: Nour Foundation in association with Azimuth Editions, 2012). Geoffrey Khan edited Arabic language documents from the same corpus of Bactrian documents in *Arabic Documents from Early Islamic Khurasan. Studies in the Khalili Collection; V. 5* (London: Nour Foundation in association with Azimuth Editions, 2006). See also C. E. Bosworth, 'Review of Geoffrey Khan, *Arabic Documents from Early Islamic Khurasan* (Studies in the Khalili Collection, Volume V)', in *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 55/2 (2010), 618–20 10.1093/jss/fgq025 .

34 Buddhism was practised widely in Balkh in the 630s AD when the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Hsiuen Tsang travelled there. Hsiuen Tsang, *Si-Yu-Ki*, I, 43–8. Equally, a century later around 726 AD the Buddhist monk from Silla (now Korea) named Hye-Ch'o wrote of his visit to 'Pactra', the 'capital city' of Tokharistan that: 'the king [who is in exile in Badakhshan at present], the chiefs, and the common people respect the Three Jewels [of Buddhism, i.e. the Buddha, the *dharma* and the *sangha*]. There are many monasteries and monks. Hīnayāna Buddhism is practiced here. They eat meat, onions, and leeks. They do not profess any other religions. All men cut their beards and hair, but women keep their hair. The land is mountainous'. *The Hye ch'o Diary*, 52.

35 Some examples of such studies, are: Yehoshua Frenkel, 'Baybars and the Sacred Geography of *Bilād al-shām*: a Chapter in

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the Islamization of Syria's landscape', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 25 (2001), 153–70; Paul Cobb, 'Virtual Sacrality: Making Muslim Syria Sacred before the Crusades', *Medieval Encounters* 8 (2002), 35–55 10.1163/157006702320365931 ; and Stephennie Mulder, 'The Architecture of Coexistence: Sunnis, Shiʿis, and the Shrines of the ʿAlids in the Medieval Levant', University of Pennsylvania, 2008, unpublished doctoral thesis.

36 Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1866), 409; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1879–1901), II/1, 156.

37 We should not forget that shrine veneration and pilgrimage are common to both Abrahamic and Indic religions throughout history. See Josef Meri, 'The Etiquette of Devotion in the Islamic Cult of Saints', in James Howard-Johnston, Paul Hayward, and Peter Lamont Brown (eds), *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 263–86. Christopher Taylor's finding on Muslim shrine veneration as a cross-sectarian phenomenon supersedes Grabar's contention that it was a predominantly Shīʿī phenomenon that had a Sunnī response. Christopher Taylor, 'Reevaluating the Shiʿi Role in the Development of Monumental Islamic Funerary Architecture: the Case of Egypt', *Muqarnas* 9 (1992), 1–10 10.2307/1523131 ; and by the same author, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous: Ziyāra and the Veneration of Muslim Saints in Late Medieval Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 1999); Oleg Grabar, 'The Earliest Islamic Commemorative Structures', *Ars Orientalis* 6 (1966), 7–46;

38 Devin DeWeese, 'Sacred History for a Central Asian Town – Saints, Shrines and Legends of Origin in Histories of Sayram, 18th to 19th Centuries', in Denise Aigle (ed.), *Figures mythiques des mondes musulmans* (Aix-en-Provence: Édisud, 2000), 245–95.

39 Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, ed. Mudarris Raḍawī ([Tehran]: Intishārāt-i Bunyād-i Farhang-i Īrān, 1351/1972–3); *The History of Bukhara*, tr. Richard Frye (Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1954); Richard Bulliet, *The Patricians of Nishapur: A Study in Medieval Islamic Social History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972); also Habib Jaouiche, *Register der Personen- und Ortsnamen* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1984).

40 Hermione Lee, *Biography. A Very Short History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 101.

41 Cited in Stephen Humphreys, 'A Cultural Elite. The *ʿUlamāʾ* in Society', in *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1991), 187.

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