

Far East Kingdoms

Central Asia

The ancient province of Sogdiana (or Suguda to the [Persians](#)) lay largely within the easternmost quarter of modern [Uzbekistan](#), along with western Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The River Tanais (otherwise known as the Jaxartes/Iaxartes or Syr Darya), traditionally formed the boundary between Sogdiana and [Scythia](#). In fact, Sogdiana and its western neighbour, [Chorasmia](#), formed the northern edge of civilisation in the ancient world. Beyond them was the sweeping steppeland and marauding tribes of barbarians.

This ancient region had also formed the northern border in [Transoxiana](#) for one of the oldest series of states in Central [Asia](#), the indigenous Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex, or Oxus Civilisation, and [Indo-European](#) tribes had soon integrated into it around the start of the second millennium BC. Forming an [Indo-Iranian](#) group of tribes in later centuries, it is these very same people who, within half a millennium, were to be found entering [India](#). Those who remained behind appear to enter the historical record around the sixth century BC, when they came up against their western cousins of the rapidly-expanding Persian empire.

The earliest-known rulers for the region are placed in the 600s BC, with clear links being shown between them and the earliest rulers of Persia (possibly before the latter had fully settled in Persia). In fact, the resemblance between Old Persian and Sogdian languages is one of the supporting pillars for the theory of Persian migration into [Iran](#) from Central Asia. The Persians themselves were of Indo-Iranian stock, and it is probably the case that the Sogdian tribes shared that same origin. The large and warlike tribe or confederation of the [Massagetae](#) were recorded as bordering the area to the north in 530 BC, less closely-related cousins of the Sogdians and their ilk.

Sogdiana was conquered by the Persians in the mid-sixth century BC during a sweeping wave of conquest by Cyrus the Great. A satrapy or governorship was created to command it from a capital at Marakanda (modern Samarkand). The Persian and [Greek](#) satrapy of [Suguda](#) and [Sogdiana](#) respectively was situated with the sweeping steppeland of Central Asia to its north which, in the Persian period, was peopled by various tribes and groups such as the aforementioned Massagetae, plus the Scythians, with [Ferghana](#) to the east, [Bactria](#) to the south, [Margiana](#) to the south-west, and Chorasmia to the west.

(Information by Peter Kessler, with additional information by Edward Dawson, from Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus: Books 11-12, Volume 1, Marcus Junianus Justinus, John Yardley, & Waldemar Heckel, from The Persian Empire, J M Cook (1983), from The Histories, Herodotus (Penguin, 1996), and from External Links: the Ancient History Encyclopaedia (dead link), and [Zoroastrian Heritage](#), K E Eduljee, and [Talesman's Atlas](#) (World History Maps).)

7th century BC

Later myth ascribes a dynasty of [Indo-Iranian](#) rulers to this period, as described in the Shahnameh (The Book of Kings), a poetic opus which is written down about AD 1000 but which accesses older works and perhaps elements of an oral tradition.



Following the climate-change-induced collapse of indigenous civilisations and cultures in Iran and Central Asia between about 2200-1700 BC, Indo-Iranian groups gradually migrated southwards to form two regions - Tūr (yellow) and Ariana (white), with westward migrants forming the early Parsua kingdom (lime green), and Indo-Aryans entering India (green) (click or tap on map to view full sized)

The earliest of these mythical Indo-Iranian rulers is Fereydun, king of a 'world empire'. His subjects are the Indo-Iranian tribes of the region while his kingdom of [Turan](#) is apparently in the land of Tūr (or Turaj). This can be equated to territory in the heartland of Indo-Iranian southern Central [Asia](#) and South Asia, focused mainly on the later provinces of [Bactria](#) and [Margiana](#). His main opponents are the Kayanian dynasty of kings of the early [Parsua](#).

c.546 - 540 BC The defeat of the [Medes](#) opens the floodgates for Cyrus the Great with a wave of conquests, beginning in the west from 549 BC but focussing towards the east of the [Persians](#) from about 546 BC. Eastern Iran falls during a more drawn-out campaign between about 546-540 BC, which may be when [Maka](#) is taken (presumed to be the southern coastal strip of the [Arabian](#) Sea).

Further eastern regions now fall,

namely [Arachosia](#), [Aria](#), [Bactria](#), [Carmania](#), [Chorasmia](#), [Drangiana](#), [Gandhara](#), [Gedrosia](#), [Hyrcania](#), [Margiana](#), [Parthia](#), Saka (at least part of the broad tribal lands of the [Sakas](#)), and [Thatagush](#) - all added to the empire, although records for these campaigns are characteristically sparse. The inference is very clear - whatever control of [Turan](#) the Persians may have enjoyed following the death of Afrasiab, it did not last and the lands now have to be conquered properly.



Modern Iran's Makran Coast formed the southern edge of the ancient province of Gedrosia, on what is now the border with south-western Pakistan

The heartland of Sogdiana is also drawn into the empire as the province of [Suguda](#), while it is also named [Huvarazmish](#) in some Persian inscriptions. The neighbouring region of [Ferghana](#), which gains a defensive fort or city of its own is administered from the Sogdian capital, Marakand. These areas form the north-eastern corner of the Achaemenid empire, with nothing beyond but uncharted wastes full of tribal barbarians.

Persian Satraps of Suguda (Sogdiana / Huvarazmish)
Incorporating the Satraps of the Dyrbaeans

Conquered in the mid-sixth century BC by Cyrus the Great, the region of [Sogdiana](#) (sometimes referred to as Huvarazmish) was added to the [Persian](#) empire. Before that it was populated largely by [Indo-Iranian](#) tribal groups, the most numerous of which in this particular area were the [Sogdians](#) themselves. Under the Persians, the region was formed into an official satrapy or province which, according to the Behistun inscription of Darius the Great, was called Suguda or Sugda (Sogdiana is a Greek mangling of the name).

These eastern regions of the new-found empire were ancestral homelands for the Persians. They formed the Indo-Iranian melting pot from which the [Parsua](#) had migrated west in the first place to reach Persis. There would have been no language barriers for Cyrus' forces and few cultural differences. Although details of his conquests are relatively poor, he seemingly experienced few problems in uniting the various tribes under his governance. He was the first to exert any form of imperial control here, although his campaign may have been driven partially by a desire to recreate the semi-mythical kingdom of [Turan](#) in the land of Tūr, but now under Persian control. Curiously the Persians had little knowledge of what lay to the north of their eastern empire, with the result that Alexander the Great was less well-informed about the region than earlier Ionian settlers on the Black Sea coast had been.

Suguda's capital was Maracanda, although little else about Persian-era Suguda is known for certain. The central minor satrapy of Suguda had its southern border along the River Oxus (Amu Darya). The River Polytimetus (the modern River Zeravshan, which feeds into the Oxus from the north of [Samarkand](#)) presumably supplied the western border, across which were the nomadic [Massagetae](#). The rest of the

western border is uncertain. To the north-east, Suguda was bordered by the territory of the [Amyrgians](#) (a Saka grouping), and part of the frontier was marked by the River Jaxartes (Syr Darya).

In the east of Suguda, a subordinate minor satrapy seems to have been that of the Dyrbaeans (Ptolemy's Drybactae). Cyrus the Great placed Spitaces, son of Spitamenes, in charge of the Dyrbaeans, although when writing about them Ctesias mistook them for the Derbicans to the east of the Caspian Sea who were not part of the Achaemenid empire under Cyrus. Stephanus Byzantinus recorded that the Drybaean territory (or Dyrbaioi, to use his phrase) bordered [Bakhtrish](#) and [Hindush](#) - a pretty broad and vague definition. The only suitable location for these 'eastern Derbicans', the Dyrbaeans, is the modern [Afghan](#) province of Badaḵṣān in the far north-eastern corner of the country. Here, in the Monjan Valley, was the only source of lapis lazuli to be exploited at that date. In that case, the minor satrapy of the Dyrbaeans bordered Suguda to the north, Bakhtrish to the west, and [Gadara](#) to the south. It lay largely within the arc of the River Panj (or Pyandzh), which feeds into the headwaters of the Oxus to the east of Dushanbe (and today provides part of Afghanistan's border with Tajikistan).

(Information by Peter Kessler, with additional information from *The Persian Empire*, J M Cook (1983), from *The Campaigns of Alexander*, Arrian of Nicomedia (Aubrey De Sélincourt, Ed, Penguin, 1971), from *From Democrats to Kings: The Brutal Dawn of a New World from the Downfall of Athens to the Rise of Alexander the Great*, Michael Scott, from *The Histories*, Herodotus (Penguin, 1996), from *Anabasis Alexandri*, Arrian of Nicomedia, from *Persica*, Ctesias of Cnidus (original work lost but a section is repeated by Photius in ninth century AD Constantinople), and from External Links: [The Geography of Strabo](#) (Loeb Classical Library Edition, 1932), and [Encyclopaedia Iranica](#).)

c.546 - 540 BC During his campaigns in the east, Cyrus the Great initially takes the northern route from [Persis](#) towards [Bakhtrish](#) and Suguda to reassure or subdue the provinces. This route probably involves the 'militaris via' by Rhagai to [Parthawa](#). At some point Cyrus builds a line of seven forts to defend his frontier in Suguda and the neighbouring region of [Ferghana](#) against the tribal [Massagetae](#) to the north, the strongest of these being Kyra or Kyreskhata (Cyropolis - the Greek form of its name).



Cyrus the Great freed the Indo-Iranian Parsua people from Median domination to establish a nation that is recognisable to this day, and an empire that provided the basis for the vast territories that were later ruled by Alexander the Great

Then he takes the more difficult southern route, destroying Capisa along the way (possibly Kapisa on the Koh Daman plain to the north of Kabul - which is possibly also the Kapishakanish named at Behistun as a fortress in [Harahuwatish](#)).

When Cyrus realises he is close to death around 530 BC (according to the somewhat unreliable Ctesias), he appoints Cambyses as his successor. He also makes two appointments to satrapies, placing Spitaces in command over the Dyrbaeans and his brother Megabernes over the [Barcanians](#). Events concerning the Barcanians means that a more realistic dating for this event would be about 515 BC, so Cyrus cannot possibly be the instigator.

fl c.530
BC

Spitaces

Son of Spitamenes. Satrap of the Dyrbaeans.

516 - 515 BC [Achaemenid](#) ruler Darius embarks on a military campaign into the lands east of the empire. He marches through [Haraiva](#) and [Bakhtrish](#), and then to [Gadara](#) and [Taxila](#). By 515 BC he is conquering lands around the Indus Valley to incorporate into the new satrapy of [Hindush](#) before returning via [Harahuwatish](#) and [Zranka](#). Along the way the [Sakas](#) are largely defeated and conquered, but probably only along the borders.

One of the three Saka 'nations' is that of the Saka Paradraya. This name breaks down into 'para' and 'draya', the first part meaning 'across' and the latter almost certainly being 'darya' or 'river'. When [Persian](#) ruler Darius the Great boasts of the limits of his empire he gives as the north-eastern corner the 'Sakaibish tyaiy para Sugdam' - the Sakas across/beyond Sugdam (Sogdiana), on the other side of the River Tanais (otherwise known as the Jaxartes/Iaxartes or Syr Darya, which forms the boundary between Suguda and [Scythia](#)).



Saka Tikrakhauda (otherwise known as 'Scythians' who in this case can be more precisely identified as Sakas) depicted on a frieze at Persepolis in Achaemenid Persia, which would have been the greatest military power in the region at this time

fl 500 BC Artabanos Brother of Darius I. Satrap of [Baktrish](#) (& Suguda?).

fl 480 BC Masistes Brother of Xerxes I. Satrap of [Baktrish](#) (& Suguda?).

? - 464 BC Hystaspes Son of Xerxes I. Satrap of [Baktrish](#) (& Suguda?).
Killed?

465 - 464 BC Artabanus the [Hyrcanian](#) kills Xerxes in collusion with the eunuch of the bedside and subsequently takes control of the empire, ostensibly as a regent for Xerxes' three sons. Artabanus has the murder pinned on the eldest of these, Darius, and has him killed by the youngest son, Artaxerxes. Artaxerxes accedes to the throne before Artabanus attempts to murder him too. In the end, it is Artabanus who dies, but Artaxerxes is forced to defeat the second of Xerxes' sons, Hystaspes, satrap of [Baktrish](#) (and presumably Suguda too) and his own brother. This brief civil war is ended when Artaxerxes defeats the forces of Hystaspes in battle during a sandstorm.

360s/350s BC Artaxerxes II is occupied fighting the 'revolt of the satraps' in the western part of the empire. Nothing is known of events in the eastern half of the [Persian](#) empire at this time, but no word of unrest is mentioned by Greek writers, however briefly. Given the newsworthiness for Greeks of any rebellion against the Persian king, this should be enough to show that the east remains solidly behind the king. It seems that all of the empire's troubles hinge on the Greeks during this period.



The River Oxus - also known over the course of many centuries as the Amu Darya - was used as a demarcation border throughout history and was also a hub of activity in prehistoric times - but during this period it flowed right through the heart of the region that was known as Bactria while also providing a sizeable part of Suguda's southern border

? - 329 BC Bessus / Artaxerxes V

Satrap of [Baktrish](#) & Suguda.
Murdered [Achaemenid](#) Darius III.

330 - 328 BC In 330-329 BC Suguda becomes part of the [Greek](#) empire despite the efforts of Bessus, self-styled 'king of Asia', to retain at least some of the Persian territories. His claim is legal, since [Baktrish](#) is traditionally commanded by the next-in-line to the throne, but Persia has already been lost and his loose collection of eastern allies provides nothing more than a sideshow to the main event - the fall of Achaemenid [Persia](#). Still, it takes Alexander the Great two more years to fully conquer the region. One of Bessus' allies is Oxyartes, father to the Roxana whom Alexander marries in 327 BC.

During his conquest of Suguda, following the fall of Bakhtrish, Alexander focuses on the largest and best-defended of seven towns in the region, this being Cyropolis in the [Ferghana](#) region (the Kyreskhata of Cyrus the Great). While he takes the other towns, he sends Craterus to pin down the defenders of Cyropolis. Following the quick fall of the other towns, the storming of Cyropolis is led in person by Alexander. Both he and Craterus are wounded but the town and its central fortress are taken. Suguda and Ferghana now belong to the Greeks.

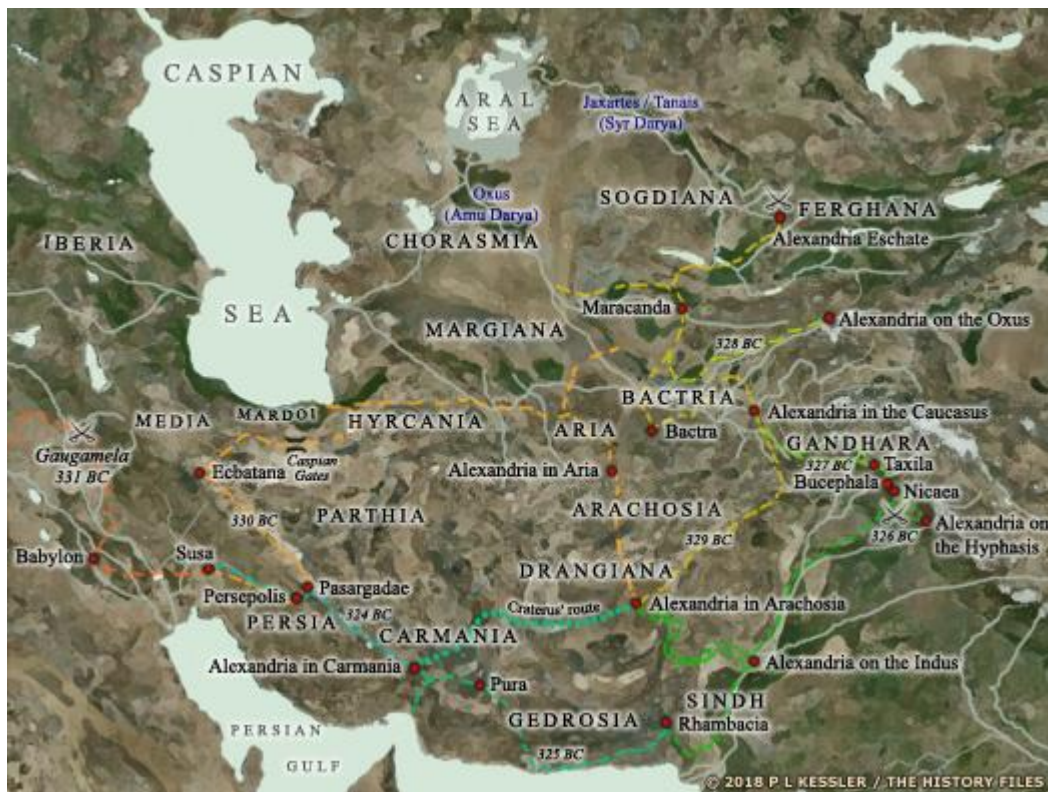
Argead Dynasty in Sogdiana

The Argead were the ruling family and founders of [Macedonia](#) who reached their greatest extent under Alexander the Great and his two successors before the kingdom broke up into several Hellenic sections. Following Alexander's conquest of central and eastern [Persia](#) in 331-328 BC, the [Greek](#) empire ruled the region until Alexander's death in 323 BC and the subsequent regency period which ended in 310 BC. Alexander's successors held no real power, being mere figureheads for the generals who really held control of Alexander's empire. Following that latter period and during the course of several wars, Sogdiana was left in the hands of the [Seleucid](#) empire from 305 BC.

Little seems to be known about Persian-era [Suguda](#) (Sogdiana), other than the fact that its capital was Maracanda. Located at the north-eastern edge of the empire, and subject to raids across its border by the nomadic [Sakas](#) beyond, its borders are known in general terms. Its southern border followed the line of the River Oxus (Amu Darya). The River Polytimetus (the modern River Zeravshan, which feeds into the Oxus from the north of [Samarkand](#)) presumably supplied the western border, across which were the nomadic [Massagetae](#). The rest of the western border is uncertain. To the north-east, Sogdiana was bordered by the territory of the [Amyrgians](#) (a Saka grouping), and part of the frontier was marked by the River Jaxartes (Syr Darya). Once conquered by Alexander the Great (perhaps only loosely) it was merged in administrative terms with [Bactria](#), while Alexander would soon marry Roxana, the daughter of one of the region's most powerful warlords.

(Information by Peter Kessler, with additional information from Ancient Samarkand: Capital of Soghd, G V Shichkina (Bulletin of the Asia Institute, 1994, 8: 83), and from A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology, William Smith (London, 1873), from Alexander the Great, Krzysztof Nawotka (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), from The Persian Empire, J M Cook (1983), from The Histories, Herodotus (Penguin, 1996), from The Cambridge Ancient History, John Boardman, N G L Hammond, D M Lewis, & M Ostwald (Eds), from Sogdiana, its Christians and Byzantium, Aleksandr Naymark (doctoral thesis, Indiana University, 2001), and from External Links: [Encyclopædia Britannica](#), and [Encyclopaedia Iranica](#).)

- 328 - 323 BC Alexander III the Great King of [Macedonia](#). Conquered [Persia](#).
- 323 - 317 BC Philip III Arrhidaeus Feeble-minded half-brother of Alexander the Great.
- 317 - 310 BC Alexander IV of Macedonia Infant son of Alexander the Great and Roxana.
- 328? BC Orepius Satrap of Sogdiana at the 'gift of Alexander'.
- 328 BC Following the resignation of Artabazus, satrap of [Bactria](#), Clitus is given the post along with command of 16,000 Greeks who had formerly fought under the [Persians](#) as mercenaries. He sees this posting as a reduction of his influence and position with Alexander and, at a banquet in the satrap's palace at Maracanda (the capital of the satrapy of Sogdiana, modern Samarkand), the two get into a drunken quarrel. Enduring gross insults from Clitus, in his rage Alexander runs him through with a spear. Almost immediately he deeply regrets the death of his former friend (the scene is well depicted in the feature film, Alexander (2004), although the location is transferred to [India](#)).



The route of Alexander's ongoing campaigns are shown in this map, with them leading him from Europe to Egypt, into Persia, and across the vastness of eastern Iran as far as the Pamir mountain range (click or tap on map to view full sized)

328 -
323? BC

Amyntas Nikolaos

[Greek](#) satrap of [Chorasmia](#), [Bactria](#), & Sogdiana.

328 -
323? BC

Scythaeus

[Greek](#) satrap of [Chorasmia](#), [Bactria](#), & Sogdiana.

327 BC

Against the vehemently strong opinions held by his generals, Alexander proceeds to marry Roxana (Roshanak in her native tongue). She is the daughter of Oxyartes, a [Sogdian](#) warlord who had supported Bessus in his attempt to resist Alexander in the east in 329 BC. Oxyartes himself had been one of the defeated defenders of the fortress known as the 'Sogdian Rock' in 328 BC, close to the Sogdian capital at Marakanda. Oxyartes himself is made satrap of [Gandhara](#).

323 - 321
BC

Following the death of Alexander the Great, some changes come to [Chorasmia](#), Sogdiana, and [Bactria](#). The end of the term of office for Amyntas Nikolaos and his subordinate, Scythaeus, is often given as 325 BC, and sometimes as 321 BC. However, Philip is certainly in place by 323 BC, so this date is used here.

323 - 321
BC

Philip / Philippus

[Greek](#) satrap of [Chorasmia](#), [Bactria](#), & Sogdiana, then [Parthia](#).

321 BC

With Philip being reassigned to [Parthia](#), his replacement in the east is Stasanor the Solian, former satrap of [Aria](#) and [Drangiana](#). This new satrap is the brother to Stasander, his replacement in Aria and Drangiana. Perhaps he also has more of a focus towards the [Northern Indus](#) territories than the eastern coast of the Caspian Sea, as later suggested by events. His territory initially extends as far north as [Ferghana](#), which contains the city of Alexandria Eschate ('the Furthest'), while Stasander also has ambitions.



Eumenes of Cardia, Macedonian general and one of Alexander the Great's 'successors' between whom a series of wars were fought

321 - 312 BC Stasanor the Solian [Greek](#) satrap of [Chorasmia](#) to Sogdiana, & [Nth Punjab](#) (316 BC).

320s BC Like the [Persians](#) before them, the Greeks under Alexander place the Amyrgian [Sakas](#) beyond Sogdiana, across the River Tanais (otherwise known as the Iaxartes, Jaxartes, or Syr Darya, which forms the boundary between Sogdiana and [Scythia](#)). This is thanks to their having encountered them after crossing Sogdiana and the Syr Darya in the approximate region of Alexandria Eschate in the [Ferghana](#) region ('Eschate' meaning 'the Furthest', possibly modern [Khojend](#), but see the Ferghana introduction). It is generally accepted that they control all of Ferghana (immediately to the east of Sogdiana) and the Alai Valley. Indeed, they may have been relocated onto the plain following their conquest by the Persians.

316 - 312 BC The Wars of the Diadochi decide how Alexander the Great's empire is carved up between his generals, but the period is very confused, especially in the east. These provinces appear to be invaded and controlled by the [Antigonids](#) for a period, with General Antigonus being responsible for the death of Eudamus. However, at some point in 316 BC, Stasanor the Solian, satrap of [Chorasmia](#), [Bactria](#), and Sogdiana (with [Ferghana](#)) seizes the [Northern Indus](#) while his brother

seizes [Parthia](#). Clearly the two are either working in unison with Seleucus of [Babylonia](#) from the beginning or are attempting to stamp their own independent authority on much of the east. Unfortunately, Stasander is removed from office in 315 BC.

312 - 301 ?
BC

Unknown [Greek](#) satrap of Sogdiana.

312 - 306
BC

[Bactria](#) is taken by the [Seleucids](#) around 312 BC. During the break-up of the empire, it appears that parts of the area become independent, but much of it remains under the control of the Greek satrap of Bactria and Sogdiana. Sophytes is satrap of Bactria, so could he possibly also govern Sogdiana too? Furthermore, given the tradition of Sogdiana's satrap also governing [Chorasmia](#), that too could remain under the control of a single satrap.



The Battle of Ipsus in 301 BC ended the drawn-out and destructive Wars of the Diadochi which decided how Alexander's empire would be divided

305 - 301
BC

During the Fourth War of the Diadochi, the diadochi generals proclaim themselves king of their respective domains following a similar proclamation by Antigonus the year before (306 BC). Following the death of Antigonus at the Battle of Ipsus in 301 BC, his territories are carved up by the other diadochi. All of the eastern territories, including Sogdiana, go into forming the empire of the [Seleucids](#).

Macedonian Sogdiana

During the last of the Wars of the Diadochi, Seleucus was able to expand his holdings with some ruthlessness, building up his stock of Alexander's far eastern regions as far as the borders of [India](#) and the River Indus ([Sindh](#)). Appian's work, *The Syrian Wars*, provides a detailed list of these regions, which included [Arabia](#), [Arachosia](#), [Aria](#), [Armenia](#), [Bactria](#), 'Seleucid' [Cappadocia](#) (as it was known) by 301 BC, [Carmania](#), [Cilicia](#) (eventually), [Drangiana](#), [Gedrosia](#), [Hyrcania](#), [Media](#), [Mesopotamia](#), [Paropamisadae](#), [Parthia](#), [Persis](#), Sogdiana, and [Tapouria](#) (a small satrapy beyond Hyrcania), plus eastern areas of [Phrygia](#).

Once safely under [Seleucid](#) control after the conclusion of the [Greek](#) wars, Sogdiana was supposedly governed by Macedonian satraps from Bactria (see below). The capital was at Marakanda (later [Samarkand](#)). The descendants of many of these satraps became independent kings, after Bactria had been cut off from the Seleucids by [Parthian](#) incursion into central Persia. The Bactrian kingdom consisted of the core provinces of Bactria and Sogdiana. Located in one of the richest and most urbanised of regions, it quickly blossomed into a large eastern Greek empire, but continual internal discord and usurpations saw it progressively fragmented and vulnerable to outside conquest. The eastern section was almost permanently separated from Bactria and came to be known as the [Indo-Greek](#) kingdom.

The chronology of the Indo-Bactrian rulers is based largely on numismatic evidence (coinage). There are few written accounts, and other records are relatively sparse, while frequent internecine conflicts makes the facts even harder to pin down, so dates are rarely reliable. Some possible kings are known only from a few coins, and the interpretation of these can sometimes be very uncertain. The word 'supposedly' is used above in connection with Sogdiana being governed from Bactria simply because there is very little evidence to prove it. Sogdiana is indeed included in the list of eastern provinces that were secured by the Seleucids in the campaign of 305 BC. It may well have remained an administrative division during the early years of post-Alexandrine governance of the east, but a campaign in 283-281 BC and a lack of mentions afterwards paint a distinct picture of a lost region, and perhaps one that was not particularly secure beforehand.

(Information by Peter Kessler, with additional information by David Kelleher, from *The Impact of Seleucid Decline on the Eastern Iranian Plateau*, Jeffrey D Lerner (1999), from Sogdiana, its Christians and Byzantium, Aleksandr Naymark (doctoral thesis, Indiana University, 2001), and from *External Links: the Ancient History Encyclopaedia* (dead link), and [Encyclopædia Britannica](#), and *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus*, Marcus Junianus Justinus (Rev John Selby Watson, Trans, 1895), via [Corpus Scriptorum Latinorum](#), and Appian's *History of Rome: The Syrian Wars* at [Livius.org](#). Where information conflicts regarding the Indo-Greek territories, Osmund Boppearachchi's *Monnaies Gréco-Bactriennes et Indo-Grecques*, *Catalogue Raisonné* (1991) has been followed.)

c.294 - Demodamas [Seleucid](#) satrap (governor-general) of [Bactria](#) & 293 BC Sogdiana.

c.294 - A former general under [Seleucid](#) rulers Seleucus I Nicator and Antiochus I Soter, Demodamas 293 BC serves twice as satrap of [Bactria](#) and Sogdiana. During this time he undertakes military expeditions across the Syr Darya to explore the lands of the [Sakas](#), repopulating Alexandria Eschate ('the furthest', possibly modern [Khojend](#)) in [Ferghana](#) in the process following its earlier destruction by barbarians.

His journeys of exploration take him farther than any other Greek, barring perhaps Alexander himself, and his records of what he finds provide an important platform for later [Roman](#) writers.



The kingdom of Bactria (shown in white) was at the height of its power around 200-180 BC, with fresh conquests being made in the south-east, encroaching into India just as the Mauryan empire was on the verge of collapse, while around the northern and eastern borders dwelt various tribes that would eventually contribute to the downfall of the Greeks - the Sakas and Greater Yuezhi (click or tap on map to view full sized)

c.293 -
c.281 BC

?

One or more unknown [Seleucid](#) satraps.

283 - 281
BC

During his time campaigning and exploring the lesser-known lands to the north of [Bactria](#), Demodamas directs his attentions towards nomads who are inhabiting the lands to the north of Sogdiana. These would be [Sakas](#) (quite possibly related to the [Massagetae](#) of Cyrus the Great's time), often unruly and hard to govern effectively while they occupy the sweeping steppe to the north of the Syr Darya.

Whether Demodamas has to direct any efforts towards securing Sogdiana itself remains unclear. It seems to fall off the historical record after this point, at least as far as the Greeks are concerned, suggesting that it is largely lost or abandoned while the Greeks focus on far more lucrative and promising expansion to the south. However, some events later in the century seem to point towards Sogdiana still being connected to Greek events in Bactria, however loosely.

c.281 -
280 BC

Demodamas

[Seleucid](#) satrap for the second time.

c.280 -
256 BC

?

Unknown [Seleucid](#) satraps.

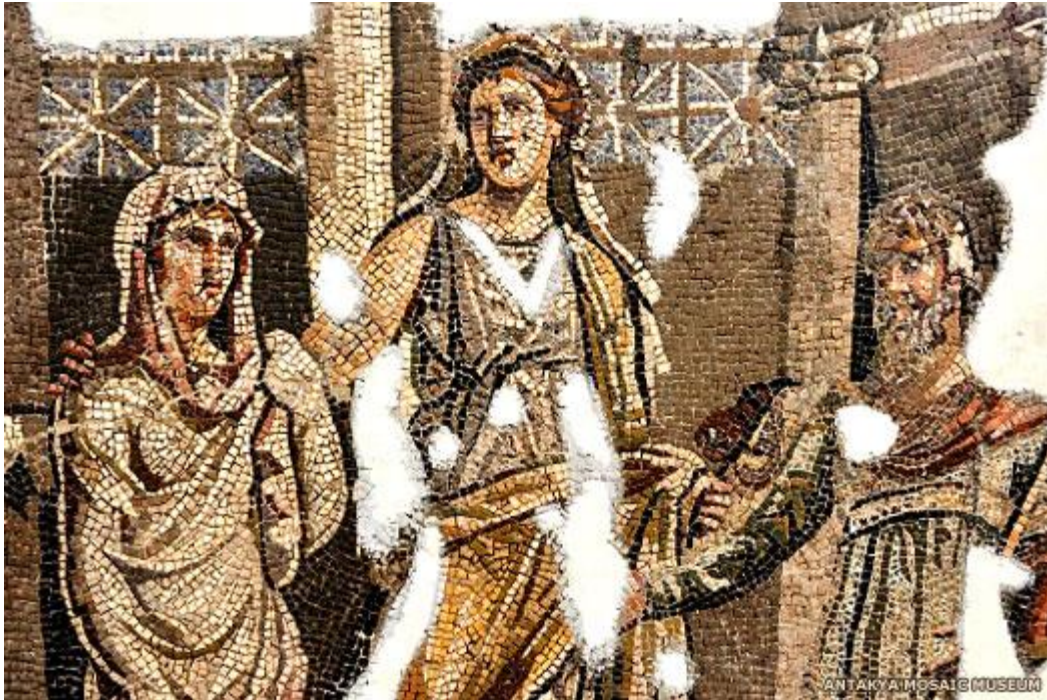
256 - 248
BC

Diodotus I Soter

[Seleucid](#) satrap. Declared the [Bactrian](#) kingdom.

256 BC

Diodotus declares independence from [Seleucid](#) Greek rule at the same time as the satrap of [Parthia](#). It may even be the actions of Andragoras of Parthia which force the hand of Diodotus I Soter, since there is little immediate chance of Seleucid retaliation. However, although the written evidence is confused and somewhat contradictory, it is more likely to happen the other way around. [Bactria](#) declares independence and Parthia follows. Diodotus now rules the former provinces of Bactria (to the south), Sogdiana, [Ferghana](#) (modern eastern [Uzbekistan](#)), and [Arachosia](#) (modern Kandahar). It is Strabo who confirms that Sogdiana at this time remains a Greco-Bactrian possession.



Although the mosaics exhibited today in the Antakya Mosaic Museum in Turkey generally date to the first to fifth centuries AD, Seleucid Antioch of the third to first centuries BC would have been just as grand a city

248 - 235
BC

Diodotus II

Son. King in [Bactria](#).

c.235/23
0 BC

Diodotus II of [Bactria](#) is overthrown by Euthydemus, possibly the satrap of Sogdiana. The date is uncertain and Strabo puts forward 223/221 BC as an alternative, placing it within a period of internal Seleucid discord.

235 -
200/195
BC

Euthydemus I Theos

Satrap of Sogdiana? Overthrew Diodotus.

c.220 BC

The realm of Euthydemus of [Bactria](#) is a large one, perhaps still including Sogdiana and [Ferghana](#) to the north (although this is highly questionable), and [Margiana](#) and [Aria](#) to the west. There are indications that from Alexandria Eschate in Ferghana the Greco-Bactrians may lead expeditions as far as Kashgar (a little under three hundred and twenty kilometres due east of

Ferghana), and Urumqi in [Chinese](#) Turkestan. There they would be able to establish the first known contacts between China and the West around 220 BC.

Even more remarkably, recent examinations of the terracotta army have established a startling new concept - the terracotta army may be the product of western art forms and technology. An entire terracotta army plus imperial court are manufactured using five workshops and a form of human representation in sculpture that has never before been seen in China. Archaeologists today continue the process of discovering new pits and even a fan of roads leading out from the emperor's burial mound, one of which, heading west, may be a sort of proto-Silk Road along which Greek craftsmen may be travelling (Marakanda being a key location along the Silk Road from the moment of its establishment).



Marco Polo's journey into China along the Silk Road made use of a network of east-west trade routes which had been developed since the time of Greek control of Bactria

208 - 206 BC Euthydemus repulses an effort at the re-conquest of [Bactria](#) by the [Seleucid](#) ruler, Antiochus III. Following defeat at the Battle of the Arius, Euthydemus successfully resists a two year siege in the fortified city of Bactra before Antiochus finally decides to recognise his rule in 206 BC. He offers one of his daughters in marriage to Euthydemus' son, Demetrius, but it may also be at this time that Euthydemus refers to great hordes of nomads accumulating on the northern borders, possibly meaning that Sogdiana has been removed from his control, and posing a threat to both their domains - Bactria and the Seleucid empire.

fl c.160s
BC?

Hyrcondes

Known from a few coins only. King in Sogdiana?

167 BC

Under Mithradates the [Parthians](#) rise from obscurity to become a major regional power, although a precise chronology is not possible. Their first expansion takes the former province of [Aria](#) (now northern [Afghanistan](#)) from the Greco- [Bactrian](#) kingdom. It seems possible that Aria (and possibly a rebellious [Drangiana](#) too) had already been conquered once by the Arsacid Parthians, with the Greco-Bactrians recapturing it, probably during the reign of Euthydemus I Theos. During the reign of Eucratides I the Greco-Bactrians are also engaged in warfare against the people of Sogdiana, showing that they have lost control of that northern region too (and by inference [Ferghana](#)).

The last statement raises the question of who in Sogdiana is standing against Eucratides. There exist a few coins which are minted under the command of one Hyrcondes, an otherwise unknown individual (although the name may not even be that of a ruler). There is much speculation about whether 'he' is based in Bactria or in Sogdiana (possibly at Marakanda, modern Samarkand), and whether he commands in the second or first century BC.



The successor to Antimachus I of Bactria was Eucratides I, with this silver tetradrachm being minted in his image at some point during the twenty-six years or so of his reign

Equally unknown is whether he is an [Indo-Greek](#) himself, or possibly a [Saka](#) with Greek influences, although Sogdiana's drift towards following nomadic culture in this period would suggest the former - an Indo-Greek who is opposing his peers in Bactrian from a position of relative isolation and safety in the north. Despite another claim that he may even be a [Greater Yuezhi](#) leader or vassal of the later decades of the second century BC, the Indo-Greek theory makes the most

sense. The result is that Hyrcodes is unlikely to survive the imminent Saka and Greater Yuezhi invasions of Sogdiana.

Post-Greek Sogdiana

Following the final termination of [Greek](#) rule in [Bactria](#) around 130 BC - and seemingly for at least some decades before it too - Sogdiana's history becomes very hazy. Scholars have not particularly been able to reach a consensus about what was happening in the region even during the Greek kingdom period, let alone afterwards. Very often the only evidence at all is primarily numismatic, with some regional coins being produced bearing the name or likeness of minor tyrants, usually in the Greek style which remained the one to follow for some centuries.

In numismatic terms, very few Greco-Bactrian coins have been found in Sogdiana. The quality of these and regional imitations gradually reduced between the first century BC and the fourth century AD, with the silver content worsening. Architecturally, there seems to be very little monumental Greek architecture, despite neighbouring Bactria enjoying a boom in construction. In fact, despite there remaining an element of Greek influence, previously established [Indo-Iranian](#) tradition seems to have enjoyed a revival. Sogdian script was used in place of Greek, developed out of [Achaemenid](#) courtly Aramaic. Sogdian fortifications which were erected during this period also followed established Indo-Iranian styles, and Sogdian clothing was traditional Central [Asian](#) in style rather than Greek. In fact, while Bactria experienced a mix of these traditions along with [Indo-Greek](#) influences, Sogdian style seemed to have been influenced only by nomadic styles.

Two main views remain possible: that the Greco-Bactrian kingdom included Sogdiana at least during the third century BC before barbarian incursions removed it from their sphere of control; or that Sogdiana was lost to the Greeks very soon after the death of Alexander, with the Greeks in Bactria focussing on that satrapy and with close integration with the Indo-Greek territories both during the period of [Mauryan](#) ascendancy (from 305 BC) and during its decline (seemingly from 256 BC when the Greco-Bactrians declared independence from the [Seleucid](#) empire). The latter view sees Sogdiana largely abandoned by Greek control but still heavily influenced by its culture, and politically splintered amongst several minor principalities such as those of [Bukhara](#) and [Vardana](#).

There is simply not enough evidence available to decide either way, but a vague picture can be discerned. Holt suggests quite reasonably that Alexander never really consolidated his conquest of Sogdiana, instead relying on local concessions and the taking of a Sogdian bride (Roxana) to settle the situation there so that he could move on with his campaigns. After his death, the unstable situation there simply dissuaded the Bactrian satraps from taking much of an interest - even if their abilities were (sometimes) equal to the task. The reign of Eucratides I in Bactria can certainly be taken as a final cut-off point thanks to confirmation that the kingdom

is engaged in warfare against the people of Sogdiana, showing that they have lost control of that northern region too (and by inference [Ferghana](#)).



(Information by Peter Kessler, with additional information from Sogdiana, its Christians and Byzantium, Aleksandr Naymark (doctoral thesis, Indiana University, 2001), from Alexander the Great and Bactria: The Formation of a Greek Frontier in Central Asia, Frank L Holt (1989), from The Cambridge History of Iran, Volume 3, E Yarshater (Ed), from The Impact of Seleucid Decline on the Eastern Iranian Plateau, Jeffrey D Lerner, and from External Links: Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus, Marcus Junianus Justinus (Rev John Selby Watson, Trans, 1895), via [Corpus Scriptorum Latinorum](#), and [Kidarites](#) (Encyclopaedia Iranica), and [Turkic History](#), and [Iron Gates of Sogdiana](#) (Uzbekistan Travel).)

c.165 BC Defeated by the Xiongnu, the [Greater Yuezhi](#) are forced to evacuate their lands on the borders of the [Chinese](#) kingdom. They begin a migration westwards that triggers a slow domino effect of barbarian movement.



The Greater Yuezhi were defeated and forced out of the Gansu region by the Xiongnu, and their migratory route into Central Asia is pretty easy to deduce from the fact that

they chose to try and settle in the Ili river valley below Lake Balkhash (click or tap on map to view full sized)

c.155 BC The [Sakas](#) (in the form of the Amyrgian branch) are displaced from [Ferghana](#) by the [Greater Yuezhi](#). They are undoubtedly pushed towards neighbouring Sogdiana, where they are dominant enough to take control of the region, displacing whichever regional tyrants may have arisen or becoming their overlords. This is an event that is connected with the migration of the Greater Yuezhi across Da Yuan (the [Chinese](#) term for Ferghana), following another defeat, this time by an alliance of the [Wusun](#) and the Xiongnu. The Greater Yuezhi are forced to move again, causing other tribes also to be bumped out of position.

These mass migrations of the second century BC are confused and somewhat lacking in [Greek](#) and Chinese sources because the territory concerned is beyond any detailed understanding of theirs. Whatever the reason, the Saka king transfers his headquarters to the south, across the Hanging Passage that leads to Jibin. This is part of a southwards trend for the Sakas, and by approximately the mid-first century BC, Saka kings appear in [India](#).

140 - 130 BC [Sakas](#) have long been pressing against [Bactria](#)'s borders. Now, following a long migration from the borders of the [Chinese](#) kingdoms, the [Greater Yuezhi](#) start to invade Bactria from Sogdiana to the north. Initially, Saka elements who are already in Bactria become vassals to the Greater Yuezhi.

[Suvars](#) (or Subars), a horse husbandry tribe known from the environs of [Sumerian Mesopotamia](#) (if in fact they are the same group - doubtful given the time span involved), now gain renewed prominence when they join the 'Tokhars' ([Tokharoi](#)) and Ases ([Asioi](#)) in the nomadic conquest of Sogdiana and Bactria about this time. The Ases have been equated with the [Ases](#) of the Pontic-Caspian steppe in the sixth century. They may be the same group, although this is debatable. A case can be made, however, by this nomadic group returning northwards to be swept up in early [Turkic](#) migrations towards the Caspian Sea - the Suvars seem to follow the very same course.

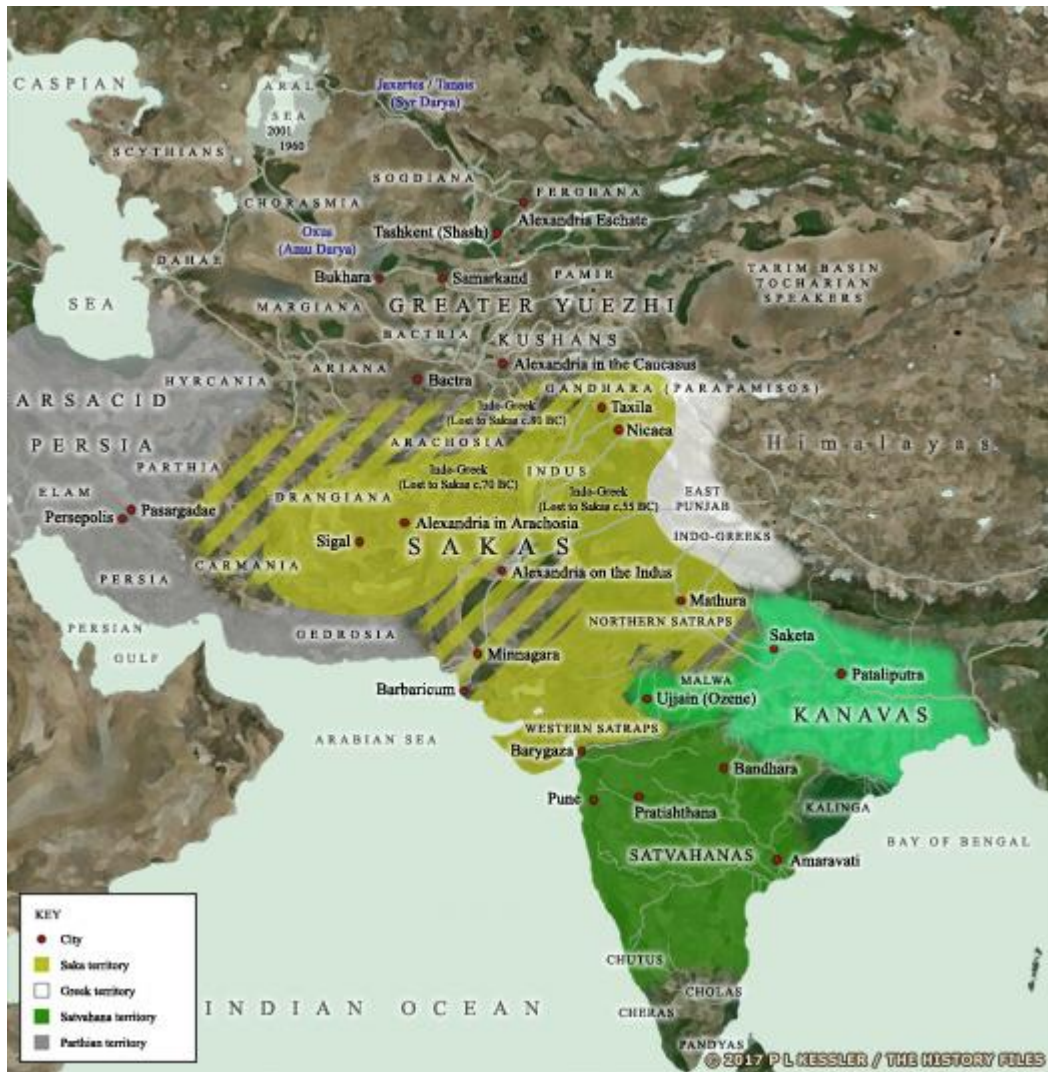


The kingdom of Bactria (shown in white) was at the height of its power around 200-180 BC, with fresh conquests being made in the south-east, encroaching into India just as the Mauryan empire was on the verge of collapse, while around the northern and eastern borders dwelt various tribes that would eventually contribute to the downfall of the Greeks - the Sakas and Greater Yuezhi (click or tap on map to view full sized)

At around the time of the death of the [Indo-Greek](#) King Menander in 130 BC, the Greater Yuezhi overrun Bactria and end Greek rule. Heliocles may possibly invade the western part of the Indo-Greek kingdom, as there are strong suggestions that the Eucratids continue to rule there, especially in Heliocles' presumed son, Lysias.

Following the Greater Yuezhi invasion and conquest of Sogdiana and Bactria, the city of Ai Khanum (its modern name) on the Amu Darya in Bactria goes into unrecoverable decline. Founded (if the identification is correct) as the city of Alexandria on the Oxus, its modern Uzbek name means literally 'Lady Moon'. On the northern bank of the river the fortress religious centre of Takht-i Sangin (now in southern Tajikistan) survives and flourishes until the late [Kushan](#) period.

126 BC The [Chinese](#) envoy, Chang-kien or Zhang Qian, visits the newly-established [Greater Yuezhi](#) capital of Kian-she in Ta-Hsia (otherwise shown as Daxia to the Chinese, and [Bactria-Tokharistan](#) to western writers) and the rich and fertile country of the [Bukhara](#) region of Sogdiana. His mission is to obtain help for the Chinese emperor against the Xiongnu, but the Greater Yuezhi leader - the son of their leader who had been killed about 166 BC - refuses the request. Kian-she can reasonably be equated with Lan-shih or Lanshi, but the question of whether this is the Bactrian capital of Bactra (modern Balkh) seems to be much more controversial. It does seem to be likely though, despite scholarly objections.



By the period between 100-50 BC the Greek kingdom of Bactria had fallen and the remaining Indo-Greek territories (shown in white) had been squeezed towards Eastern Punjab. India was partially fragmented, and the once tribal Sakas were coming to the end of a period of domination of a large swathe of territory in modern Afghanistan, Pakistan, and north-western India. The dates within their lands (shown in yellow) show their defeats of the Greeks that had gained them those lands, but they were very soon to be overthrown in the north by the Kushans while still battling for survival against the Satvahanas of India (click or tap on map to view full sized)

115 - 100 BC With [Parthian](#) territory having been harried for years by the [Sakas](#), King Mithridates II is finally able to take control of the situation. First he defeats the [Greater Yuezhi](#) in Sogdiana in 115 BC, and then he defeats the Sakas in Parthia and around Seistan (in [Drangiana](#)) around 100 BC. After their defeat, the Greater Yuezhi tribes concentrate on consolidation in [Bactria-Tokharistan](#) while the Sakas are diverted into [Indo-Greek Gandhara](#). The western territories of [Aria](#), Drangiana, and [Margiana](#) would appear to remain Parthian dependencies.

c.50 BC Having settled in Sogdiana and [Bactria](#), the [Greater Yuezhi](#) have effectively rechristened these provinces as [Tokharistan](#). Now, a century-or-so-later they have united under a single leadership, that of the [Kushan](#) tribe. Around this time they capture the territory of the [Sakas](#) in what will one day become [Afghanistan](#), and have probably already caused the downfall of [Indo-Greek](#) King Hermaeus, conquering [Paropamisadae](#) in the process.

fl 1st cent AD Phseigaharis? Known only on coins. Local ruler in Sogdiana. [Greater Yuezhi?](#)

1st century AD A few coins have been found which are minted (probably) in the first century AD by one Phseigaharis. The coins all come from the prosperous Kashka Darya valley of the western Pamir mountain range immediately south of Marakanda (Samarkand, with the valley now being in the region of Qashqadaryo in eastern [Uzbekistan](#)). Most of the coins do not permit any especially accurate dating, or even an accurate location, as they are generalised Greek types.

One more recent find carries an Aramaic legend behind the ruler's head on the obverse as well as a Greek legend. This pinpoints the mint to that at Marakanda, while the ruler's hair style and 'ethnic' characteristics strongly suggest a first century AD date. Otherwise unknown except for these coin finds, Phseigaharis can be classed as a local ruler in Sogdiana, possibly a member of the [Greater Yuezhi](#) or one of their regional vassals.



The Pamir Mountains in the east of modern Tajikistan became a border region for the post-Greek regions of Sogdiana, and have produced some interesting archaeological finds over the years

c.30 - 50 The unity in coinage designs across the [Greater Yuezhi](#) territories has been relatively short-lived. The rise of the [Kushan](#) tribe and its formation of an empire based in [Bactria-Tokharistan](#) seemingly replaces this with its own new monetary style. As a result coinage in Sogdiana declines steeply while that of Bactria remains prosperous. Apparently lying outside the empire, for the next two centuries the coinage of the Zaravshan Valley around Marakanda (Samarkand) imitates the Alexander style used in the Ashtam group (second century AD) and by Hyrcodes (of Macedonian [Sogdiana](#), perhaps circa 160 BC?).

Ceramic production and sophistication also declines, apparently quite abruptly, leaving Sogdiana an under-developed backwater supported only by 'pre-Silk Road' trade with the [Han](#) kingdom. Cities decay in the Zaravshan Valley, close to Marakanda, including Afrasaib-Samarkand, Kuldor tepe, Durmen tepe, Kurgan tepe, and Varaksha. Large sections of their territory which had previously been inhabited are now abandoned, dwellings left empty. Only the Kashka Darya basin to the south of Marakanda escapes the decline, probably acting as a cultural refuge for Sogdiana as a whole.

At the founding of the Kushan empire, a long corridor of territory is seized by the Kushans between Bactria-Tokharistan and the middle course of the Amu Darya. This serves to create a Kushan barrier along the entire southern and western Sogdian border. The inference that can be drawn from the lack of Kushan empire coinage in Sogdiana (extremely rare), and the lack of any other apparent benefits of empire, is that Sogdiana is isolated deliberately or otherwise by this barrier, cut off from the [Parthian](#) empire and the west. A Kushan fortification wall which shuts the Iron Gates would suggest that the barrier is deliberate.



The Iron Gates (shown here), are part of a narrow but popular linking route between Sogdiana and Bactria in the Baba-tag Mountains (close to modern Derbent) (click or tap on image to view full sized)

fl 2nd
cent AD

?

Unnamed ruler in Marakanda known only from coins.

2nd
century

The coins of the Ashtam group are minted in Marakanda (Samarkand) during this century. They continue the tradition of imitating Alexander styles, with a representation of an archer on the reverse. Unfortunately the identity of the local ruler shown on them cannot be ascertained.

Sogdiana's decline continues throughout this century, reaching its lowest point in the third century.

c.260 The vassal kingdom of [Margiana](#) is formally annexed to the [Sassanid](#) crown by Shapur I. The name of the vassal king here is unknown (unless Ardashir is still alive). Now Shapur places his own son, Narseh, as governor of the province of Hind, Sagistan, and Turgistan. Margiana is part of this broad territory, falling within the Sagistan section which itself is named for the [Saka](#) groups which formerly dominated here.

This could also be the point at which Shapur seizes Sogdiana and makes it part of the empire. Much of it is occupied for a time (Marakanda, for instance - modern Samarkand), while part is occupied for a longer period ([Bukhara](#) especially). It seems that the new masters of Iran have, at the same time as [Kushan](#) power is on the wane, broken through a Kushan barrier that has until now isolated Sogdiana.

fl ? Unnamed 'ruler' in south-western Sogdiana.
200s/300s?

c.200s/300s In Sughd (Sogdiana) some time between the second and fourth centuries AD, a local ruler in the south-western region mints his own coins. They derive from imitations of early [Seleucid](#) drachms of the Alexander type, with the derivation coming via the reverse and its highly stylised depiction of Zeus bearing an eagle. The lettering includes the title 'ruler', but only a handful of these coins have been discovered and the ruler's name is not known.



The successor to Antimachus I of Bactria was Eucratides I, with this silver tetradrachm being minted in his image at some point during the twenty-six years or so of his reign - such coins would remain in circulation for several more centuries, often being over stamped with the initials of new, more local rulers

312 - 313 The 'Ancient Sogdian Letters' form the first documentary evidence to show that things are changing in Sogdiana. The recent rise of the [Sassanids](#) in Iran and the subsequent eclipsing of the [Kushans](#) may have something to do with this. These letters show the existence of a large network of merchants from the cities of Sogd (Sogdiana) now in the Tarim Basin (home of the [Tocharians](#)) and beyond. With the removal of the Kushans, Sogdians have been able to force their way into the trade routes which have already been established between [India](#) and [China](#) via the Tarim Basin.

c.350/375 Having been subjugated by the [Gupta](#) kings, the rump eastern [Kushan](#) state is soon conquered by the invading [Kidarites](#). They, in turn, claim to be the rightful successors of the Kushans and [Kushanshahs](#) (to the south of [Bactria](#)). Any possible survivors in the west are probably displaced by the [Hephthalites](#).

It is probably not coincidental that the style of regional coins in Sogdiana suddenly changes in the second half of the fourth century, or towards the end of it. Coins which have imitated [Greek](#) types for over four centuries - especially the tetradrachms of Euthydemus I, former Greek satrap of [Sogdiana](#) - are no longer issued, being replaced with coins of quite a different appearance.

These are small silver coins with a head-and-shoulders representation in the [Transoxianan](#) style of a ruler in a diadem on the obverse, and on the reverse an altar with a blazing fire and a circular legend in Sogdian in which only the title MR'Y can be read. Similar coins are issued in copper. Both are ancestors of a new generation of coins which are linked to [Bukhara](#) right up to the seventh century (possibly due to the rise there of a ruling elite which survives until the [Islamic](#) invasion).

fl c.350s? MR'Y Initials on a coin of a ruler in Sogdiana.

With the opening of the trade routes to [India](#) and [China](#) (the latter undoubtedly including the Tarim Basin [Tocharians](#)), the once shrunken and backward Sogdiana is booming again. A sudden

and rapid improvement in development take place, with the surviving cities growing rapidly, and new defensive lines being put up that demonstrate the gaining of significant new territories.



This example of the Tarim Basin mummies had the usual distinctive European features, along with a full head of red hair which had been braided into pony tails, and items of woven material which match similar Celtic items

441 - 457 A [Kidarite](#) conquest of at least part of Sogdiana seems to be safely attested by coins from Samarkand, bearing on the obverse the schematised portrait of a ruler with the Sogdian legend kyδr. On typological and metrological grounds these coins can be assigned to the fifth century. Similar coins also begin to be issued from nearby [Bukhara](#).

fl c.441? ? Unnamed and unrecorded [Kidarite](#) (?) ruler in Sogdiana.

fl c.450? ? Unnamed and unrecorded [Kidarite](#) (?) ruler in Sogdiana.

fl c.457? ? Unnamed [Kidarite](#) (?) ruler in Sogdiana.

fl c.470s? ?

Unnamed [Kidarite](#) (?) ruler in Sogdiana. The last (by 509)?

457 - 509



Hypothetically this conquest can be connected with the interruption of Sogdian embassies to [China](#) between 441 and 457, and with a piece of information in the Weishu (formerly dated to 437, but actually referring to 457) mentioning an earlier capture of Samarkand by the Xiongnu. The ruler of this captured part of Sogdiana in 457 is the third of the new dynasty. This (possibly) [Kidarite](#) dynasty maintains its hold over Samarkand until 509, after which date embassies from Samarkand are incorporated into [Hephthalite](#) ones.

Post-Greek Principalities (Sogdiana)
Incorporating Kish, Nasaf, & Vardana

The view of [Post-Greek Sogdiana](#) and neighbouring post-Greek [Ferghana](#) remains confused. It seems likely Sogdiana was largely abandoned by the [Greeks](#) very soon after the death of Alexander the Great, with the Greeks in [Bactria](#) focussing on that satrapy, more interested in closer integration with the [Indo-Greek](#) territories both during the period of [Mauryan](#) ascendancy (from 305 BC) and during its decline (seemingly from 256 BC when the Greco-Bactrians declared independence from the [Seleucid](#) empire). Even so, Sogdiana remained heavily influenced by Greek culture, while being politically splintered amongst several minor principalities such as those of [Bukhara](#), [Varakhsha](#), plus several others, all of which barely enter the historical record.

The [Sassanid](#) ruler, Shapur I, seems to have conquered Sogdiana around AD 260 while subjugating a good many eastern regions as the [Kushans](#) in [Bactria](#) waned. If not then, it certainly happened not much later. Much of Sogdiana was occupied for a time (Marakanda, the capital, for instance), while part was occupied for a longer period (Bukhara especially). How long this situation endured is unknown (around 375 and the [Kidarite](#) invasions seems likely), but Sogdiana was not in Sassanid hands by the time the Sassanids were conquered by [Islam](#) in the seventh century.

The principality of Vardana (or Wardana) lay in the northern part of the Bukharan oasis, which [Chinese](#) sources sometimes referred to as Lesser Bukhara. Vardana was independent of Bukhara in the second quarter of the seventh century AD (part of the reason for assuming that Sassanid power no longer held sway here). It minted its own coins, which carried the sign of a cross on the reverse. The cross corresponds to the Nestorian Christian cross of Central [Asia](#), making this principality a Christian one. The

general style was a regional one which had first appeared in the late fourth century AD, albeit without the cross, replacing the previous Greek types.

Other independent towns included at least two separate principalities to the east of Samarkand, those of [Penjikent](#) and [Ustrushana](#), both of which also became wealthy through trade with China. Then there were [Paikand](#) and [Maimurgh](#), while Kish (Kash, Kesh, or Keš) and Nasaf were relatively politically minor, if prosperous, cities on the central Sogdian plain between the Hissar Mountains to the south of Ustrushana and the Oxus. Nasaf was the largest town in Sogdiana at the start of the fifth century, but was soon surpassed. Both cities were notable for being allied to Bukhara in the coalition of 676, which was quickly defeated by the Arabs. Penjikent and Varakhsha are relatively unusual in having been subjected to detailed archaeological examination. Many other sites have only been surveyed, not excavated.

At the end of that period, around the middle of the seventh century, the Bukharan mint switched to the Chinese cash model and started casting coins. This was very close in time to China's short-lived partial occupation of Transoxiana which ended in 665. The initial coins were simple imitations of the Kaiyuan Tongbao coins which were minted between 621-907, but then a Bukharan tamgha was added to the reverse and later two types were issued carrying Sogdian inscriptions - the Bukharan tamgha and the sign of a cross. The latter is highly suggestive of the badge of a realm, that of Vardana. The 'coin language' being used here suggests that the previously independent principality was now united with Bukhara under the sway of one ruler. Written sources plainly state that Vardan Khuda had seized power in Bukhara by pushing aside the legitimate heir, usurping the throne and occupying it for twenty years until Qutaiba ibn Muslim, [Umayyad](#) governor of [Greater Khorasan](#), expelled him in 708/9, ending regional independence.



(Information by Peter Kessler, with additional information from ONS No 206 (Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society, Winter 2011), from The Cambridge History of Iran, Volume 3, E Yarshater (Ed), from History of Humanity: from the seventh century BC to the seventh century AD, Joachim Herrmann, Erik Zürcher, & Ahmad Hasan Dani (International commission for a history of the scientific and cultural development of mankind, History of Mankind, Unesco, 1994), from Tārik-e Boḳārā, Abū Bakr Ja'far Naršaḳī (M-T Modarres Rażawī (Ed), Tehran, 1972), from History of Civilizations of Central Asia (Volume 3), Ahmad Hasan Dani (Motilal Banarsidass, 1999), and from External Links: [Bukhara History Part 5: Bukhara under the Arabian Conquest](#) (Advantour), and [The Silk Road](#), and [Encyclopaedia Iranica](#).)

552

The [Western Göktürks](#) expand their dominion towards [Chorasmia](#) and Sogdiana, right up against the borders of [Persia](#)'s eastern territories ([Ferghana](#) is also taken). The [Hephthalites](#) are defeated in [Kushanshah](#) territory in what one day will become [Afghanistan](#) by an alliance of Göktürks and [Sassanids](#), and a level of Indo-Sassanid authority is re-established in the region for the next century. The western khagans set up rival states in Bamiyan, [Kabul](#), and Kapisa under the authority of the viceroy in [Tokharistan](#), strengthening their hold on the Silk Road.



As was often the case with Central Asian states that had been created by horse-borne warriors on the sweeping steppelands, the Göktürk khaganate swiftly incorporated a vast stretch of territory in its westwards expansion, whilst being hemmed in by the powerful Chinese dynasties to the south-east and Siberia's uninviting tundra to the north (click or tap on map to view full sized)

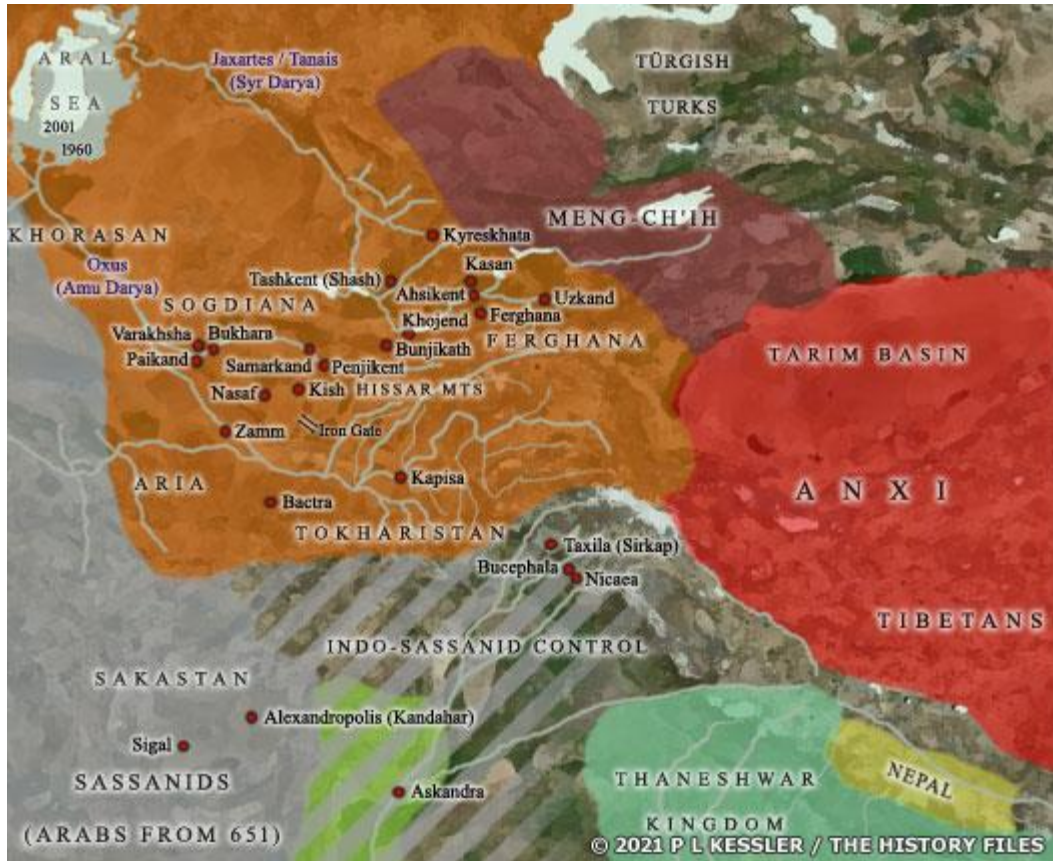
581 - 590

The [Western Göktürks](#) are now following their own westwards expansionist policy. As part of that policy, they are able to cross the Amu Darya, where they come into conflict with their former allies, the [Sassanids](#). Much of [Tokharistan](#) (former [Bactria](#), including Balkh) remains a Göktürk dependency until the end of the century. By inference, Sogdiana to the north of Bactria is also theirs.

The western Göktürk period is of particular importance in Sogdiana and for the Sogdians. The Göktürks destroy local dynasties such as the dynasty of [Paikand](#), but the integration of the Sogdians into the Göktürk state allows for an expansion of Sogdian culture and commercial activities. The Sogdians start to colonise regions further to the east, including Semirech'le, thereby setting up their expansion into [China](#)'s western periphery while also enriching the Göktürk empire.

The western extension of the same trading networks allows silk to be exchanged with the Sassanids from China where it has been received as tribute from the Tang due to Göktürk military successes. This also allows for the opening of the Khurasan Road, creating an integration of the Sogdian network into a Sassanid one.

600s - 682 While Sogdians have become the high administrators of the [Western Göktürk](#) state, the Sogdian language has also become the lingua franca of the Göktürk empire. It expands far into the east towards [China](#), even lending its script to Old [Turkic](#) and many subsequent Turkic and [Mongolian](#) languages. In turn, the Göktürk nobility has become part of Sogdian society, with marriages between the families of the kings of Samarkand and that of the Göktürk khagan. [Penjikent](#) has a Turkic ruler at the beginning of the seventh century.



By the beginning of the seventh century AD, Göktürk power in southern Central Asia was waning while the Sassanids had established a degree of control over the southernmost parts of this region, and various city states had emerged in Sogdiana (click or tap on map to view full sized)

It appears that, by now at least, there are several local lords in the [Bukhara](#) oasis, especially in the towns of [Samarkand](#), [Paikand](#), Vardana, and [Varakhsha](#). Both Paikand and Varakhsha are mentioned in the *Tārīḳ-e Boḳārā* by Abū Bakr Ja'far Naršaḳī as residences of the rulers, but whether they are local rulers only or rulers of the entire oasis is still unknown. Some form of unity in the oasis is implied by the coinage, the extensive irrigation system, and the long protective walls around the settled and cultivated areas.

Samarkand (Sogdiana)

Samarkand was occupied (possibly) as early as the eighth century BC, probably as a consequence of a change in the course of the River Oxus and the abandonment of former settlements. The same circumstances, during a period of climate change, had ended the Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex along the River Oxus between 2000-1700 BC and resulted in large-scale migrations. Following this, the region was occupied largely by [Indo-Iranian](#) tribes which remained independent until their sixth century BC conquest by fellow Indo-Iranians, the [Achaemenid](#) Persians. They formed the satrapy of [Sogdiana](#), which was inherited by the [Greeks](#).

The city of Samarkand gained its name from the Sogdian phrase, 'rock town', which refers directly to a stone fort. This was probably one of the earliest solid structures to be erected on the site, possibly by the Persians. The original form of the name was adopted or adapted by the Greeks of [Macedonian Sogdiana](#) as Marakanda. Subsequently, during the gradual infringement of [Turkic](#) tribes into the region, Marakanda became Samarkand, with the town of [Maimurgh](#) on its immediate south-eastern flank. In Uzbek the name is shown as Samarqand, with Samarcand as another variation. Today the city sits in a large oasis in the valley of the River Zerafshan, within the borders of [Uzbekistan](#).

The historical section of modern Samarkand consists of three main parts. To the north-east there is the site of the ancient city which was destroyed by the [Mongol](#) armies of Chingiz Khan in the thirteenth century AD. This is preserved as an archaeological reserve with excavations that have revealed the ancient citadel and fortifications, the ruler's palace, and residential and craft quarters. There are also remains of a large mosque built between the eighth to twelfth centuries. To the south are architectural ensembles and the medieval city of the Timurid era, at which time Samarkand was at the height of its achievement.

(Information by Peter Kessler, from *The Impact of Seleucid Decline on the Eastern Iranian Plateau*, Jeffrey D Lerner (1999), the *Guidebook to the History of Samarkand, from Sogdiana, its Christians and Byzantium*, Aleksandr Naymark (doctoral thesis, Indiana University, 2001), from ONS No 206 (*Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society*, Winter 2011), from *Place Names of the World: Origins and Meanings of the Names for 6,600 Countries, Cities, Territories, Natural Features and Historic Sites*, Adrian Room (Second Ed, London, 2006), from *The Cambridge History of Iran, Volume 3*, E Yarshater (Ed), from *History of Humanity: from the seventh century BC to the seventh century AD*, Joachim Herrmann, Erik Zürcher, & Ahmad Hasan Dani (International commission for a history of the scientific and cultural development of mankind, *History of Mankind*, Unesco, 1994), and from *External Links: the Ancient History Encyclopaedia* (dead link), and [Encyclopædia Britannica](#), and [Bukhara History Part 5: Bukhara under the Arabian Conquest](#) (Advantour), and [Unesco World Heritage Convention](#), and [The Silk Road](#), and [Encyclopaedia Iranica](#)).

- ? - c.640 Shishpin Ikhsid of Samarkand.
- c.650s Samarkand is certainly the largest [Sogdian](#) town at this time, and its princes now start claiming the title of 'king' (malek, eḵšid). It remains surrounded by many independent principalities which send their own ambassadors to the [Chinese](#) court, such as [Bukhara](#), Eštikan, Kabudān, [Kish](#), and [Panjikent](#).
- c.640 - 670 Varkhuman / Vargoman Ikhsid of Samarkand.
- 659 - 665 A seemingly partial occupation of Transoxiana by [Tang](#) dynasty Chinese is effected in 659, but is ended in 665. This is part of a Tang effort to defend its western approaches after centuries of barbarian incursions and also to provide buffer districts between it and the strife that is engulfing Central Asia. The protectorate of [Anxi](#) remains in command of the Tarim Basin and probably also the approaches into China to the basin's immediate north.
- 654 Following the [Islamic](#) conquest of [Sassanid](#) Persia in 651, initial raiding parties have been sent out into the eastern territories on a regular basis. The idea is to sow disruption, force weaker states or cities to reveal themselves as being ripe for conquest, and to exact tribute and plunder freely. In this year one such raid strikes the city of [Maimurgh](#). The attack, and probably others of the same year, prove to be the final straw for the natives. They rise together against the invaders and virtually drive them back into Persia proper. It may be the seemingly unnamed king of [Kabul](#) who is amongst the leaders of the retaliation against Islam.
- 676 The brief [Umayyad](#) governorship of [Greater Khorasan](#) by Sa'id ibn Uthman is largely marked by one of the few major expeditions of the post-Abdallah ibn Rabi period. He strikes into [Sogdiana](#) to defeat a coalition of city states there, which includes [Bukhara](#) (still under the regency leadership of the khatun), [Kish](#), and [Nasaf](#), plus an alliance of nomadic [Turks](#). The Arab general goes on to occupy Samarkand and take fifty noble sons hostage, only later to have them executed in Medina.
- 682 The [Western Göktürk](#) empire has disintegrated rather quickly after gaining its initial quick successes, losing power in the middle of the seventh century and, by 682, ceasing to exist. Even before that, the [Tang](#) of China have started to establish a protectorate in Central Asia, known as the protectorate of [Anxi](#) which expands westwards out of its initial focus in the Tarim Basin from 640.
- Despite a restoration of [Turkic](#) power at the beginning of the eighth century, the Tang hold nominal power in the region until 751. However, the region is coming under ever-increasing

attacks by the [Umayyad](#) governorate of [Greater Khorasan](#), especially in the 670s onwards. [Bukhara](#) is subdued in 674, although subsequent governors fail to follow up with their own conquests.

c.688 [Bukhara](#) would appear to be seized at this time by the ruler of its chief rival in the region, the city state of [Varakhsha](#). Any unity between the principalities in Sogdiana also vanishes around this time, perhaps due to this act or prompting it. Alliances form and are abandoned, and inter-dynastic marriages are obtained. The picture is one of small states vying openly for superiority.

708/709 Qutaiba ibn Muslim, [Umayyad](#) governor of [Greater Khorasan](#), expels Vardan Khuda from [Bukhara](#). The same governor is also claimed as the conqueror of Chach, [Ferghana](#), and [Khojend](#), presumably during this same period.

? - [Tarkūn / Tarkhun](#) Ruler of Samarkand. Overthrown for being pro-[Islam](#).
709/710

c.710 - Qutaiba ibn Muslim, [Umayyad](#) governor of [Greater Khorasan](#), confirms in his position the new [Sogdo-Turkic](#) ruler of Samarkand, Ghurak. This individual has usurped the throne after killing Tarkhun, creating family feuds which drive Tarkhun's sons to the court of Dewashtich (or Divasti), son of Yodkhetak and sur or ruler of [Penjikent](#). Dewashtich, like other [Sogdian](#) princes, has claimed to be ruler of Samarkand, and this makes his claim a stronger one.

Along with Karzanj, ruler of [Paikand](#), Dewashtich is mentioned as the leader of an anti-[Islam](#) rebellion in [Sogdiana](#) in 720. Together the pair liberate Samarkand, holding it in the face of relatively weak attempts to regain it. Dewashtich has a famous last stand in 722 from his mountain fortress of Mugh, whose details are known from the very vivid accounts given in the Documents of Mugh Mountain.

The defeat of Dewashtich marks the beginning of the formal accession of Transoxiana into the Islamic empire, and soon results in the increasing Islamic control of the eastern regions as well. Among other things, this causes the break-up of the Sogdian commercial network, and ultimately an integration of Sogdiana into the Islamic empire.

709/710 - [Ġūrak / Ghurak / Ughrak](#) Ruler of Samarkand. Approved by [Islam](#). Driven out.
c.712

c.712 Probably frustrated by the endless bickering regarding superiority between the [Sogdian](#) principalities, Qutaiba ibn Muslim, [Umayyad](#) governor of [Greater Khorasan](#), launches

a pacification campaign into Sogdiana which delivers him and Islam a wave of submissive acknowledgements. Samarkand is occupied by Arab troops and Ghurak is temporarily driven out.

- 720 Dewashtich of [Penjikent](#), along with Karzanj, ruler of [Paikand](#), are mentioned as leaders of an anti-[Islam](#) rebellion in [Sogdiana](#). Together they liberate Samarkand, holding it in the face of relatively weak attempts to regain it. Said Abd al-Aziz ibn al-Hakam, [Umayyad](#) governor of [Greater Khorasan](#), is removed from office for his failure to regain the city.
- 722 Dewashtich of [Penjikent](#) has a famous last stand against [Islam](#) from his mountain fortress of Mugh. That marks the beginning of the formal accession of Transoxiana into the Islamic empire, and soon results in the increasing Islamic control of the eastern regions as well. Among other things, this causes the break-up of the [Sogdian](#) commercial network, and ultimately an integration of Sogdiana into the empire.
- 729 - 731 The ikhshid of northern [Ferghana](#) aids his Türgish overlords at the siege of Kamarja. Two years later the Türgish are aided again from Ferghana during the Battle of the Defile (which allows Ġūrak to recover control over [Samarkand](#)). The Türgish leader, Sulu of the [Western Göktürks](#), enjoys over a decade of success in his battles against the [Umayyads](#) until he is murdered in 737/738, ending any remaining vestige of western Göktürk power.
- 731 - 737/8 Ġūrak / Ghurak / Ughrak Restored on a semi-independent basis. Died.
- 737/8 - ? Turgar / Tu-ho Ruler of Samarkand. 'King of Sogdia',
- 747 - 749 The [Abbasids](#) under Abu Muslim begin an open revolt in [Greater Khorasan](#) against [Umayyad](#) rule. They are supported by the vassal states of [Sogdiana](#), and notably by Qutayba of [Bukhara](#). Khorasan quickly falls under their command and an army is sent westwards. Kufa falls in 749 and in November the same year Abu al-Abbas is recognised as caliph.
- Sogdian records seem to fade away from around this time. Even the names of the rulers of Bukhara - one of the biggest cities - are unknown from the fourth quarter of the century onwards.
- 775 - 785 The [Abbasids](#) under Muhammad al Mahdi record several minor rulers across Transoxiana who pay nominal submission to the caliph. In effect they remain independent but largely careful not to

annoy their distant overlords. The unnamed afshin of [Ustrushana](#) is mentioned as one of these rulers.

c.800 - 821 The region is gradually absorbed into the [Islamic](#) empire as it takes [Persia](#). Governors, or emirs, are appointed to control the Islamic emirate of [Khorasan](#) in the name of the caliph. A seemingly partial occupation of Transoxiana by Tang dynasty [China](#) is effected in 659, but is ended in 665. Previously independent [Ferghana](#) gains a [Samanid](#) governor in 819, ending its independent existence.

Samanid Emirate (Samarkand)

AD 820 - 1000

The Samanids (or, more correctly, Sāmānids) took the Transoxiana region from the Tahirid governors of [Khorasan](#) in 820. From there they controlled the trade between Central Asia and the central [Islamic](#) caliphate, and these included the trade in [Turkic](#) slaves. The state grew to cover most of eastern [Persia](#) while the [Buwayid](#) amirs gained control of western Persia.

Their capital was the once-independent, post-Greek [Sogdian](#) city of [Bukhara](#). The Persian tongue spoken by the Samanids gradually replaced the native Sogdian of the locals even while the region's strong traditions of mercantile independence were being supported. It was this Persian dialect that became today's Tajik language although some Sogdian dialects do survive, notably amongst the Yaghnoobi Sogdians who fled Islamic control of the region to live in an isolated valley. Sogdian religions gradually vanished too, despite centuries of use of even the latest of them - Nestorian Christianity - while Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Manichaeism were also fading across all of the now-Islamic lands to the east of Iran.

It was the Samanid lands of eastern Khorasan that were by far the chief supplier of dirhams (Islamic silver coins) to the lands of northern and Eastern Europe during the Viking period in the ninth and tenth centuries. Starting around AD 900 and continuing into the late tenth century, millions of these coins were carried north-westwards through the Pontic-Caspian steppe by Muslim merchant caravans from Samanid cities and mints. Initially this was via the dominant Khazars of the Pontic steppe and then [Rus](#) merchants. After about 965, it was via the Rus themselves ([Swedish](#) Vikings and native [Slavs](#) who combined to form the grand principality of [Kiev](#) and several other small Slav states around this time). The Rus were forced out of the lower Volga by the Volga [Bulgars](#) around 980, with them taking over ownership of regional trade. From Volga Bulgaria, most of these coins were subsequently exchanged in commercial transactions and were re-exported further west or north-west by Rus merchants, and then even further west into the Baltic basin and beyond.

(Additional information from Viking-Rus Mercenaries in the Byzantine-Arab Wars of the 950s-960s: the Numismatic Evidence, Roman K Kovalev, and from Global Security Watch: Central Asia, Reuel R Hanks (Santa Barbara, Denver, Oxford, 2010).)

819 - 851 Saman Khoda

819 Previously independent [Ferghana](#) gains a Samanid governor in the form of Ahmad ibn Asad, ending its independent existence. The appointment is made by the [Abbasid](#) governor of [Greater Khorasan](#).

821 The eastern province which includes [Persia](#) and [Khorasan](#) has lost Transoxiana to the Samanids, so Caliph al-Mamun appoints Tahir ibn al-Hussein, the successful commander of the campaign which had defeated the caliph's main rival (al Amin), as the new governor, beginning the [Tahirid](#) period of rule in the east. Tahir effectively declares independence in 822 in his new domains by failing to mention the caliph during a sermon at Friday prayers.

828 - 839 While in office as the [Tahrid](#) governor of Khorasan, Abdullah ibn Tahir ibn al-Hussein takes steps between 828-830 to improve the strength of the Samanids, his vassals in Transoxiana. In his role as governor of the east, Abdullah also claims Tabaristan as a dependency and insists that the tribute owed by Ispahbad Mazyar ibn Qarin, a recent convert to Islam, to the caliph should pass through him. Mazyar disagrees, planning to expand his domains, but in 839 he is captured and executed, securing Tahirid control over Tabaristan. This effectively ends the career of Afshin Ḥaydar ibn Kāwūs of [Ustrushana](#) as a supporter of Mazyar.

851 - 864 Ahmad ibn Asad Former governor of [Ferghana](#).

864 - 892 Nasr I

865 - 873 Having already secured his capital of Zaranj at the heart of his small kingdom, the [Saffarid](#) leader, Yaghub, expands eastwards to capture al-Rukhkhadj and Zamindawar followed by Zunbil and [Kabul](#) by 865. Some of his conquests even further east, towards Balk, encompass non-[Islamic](#) tribal chiefdoms. [Harev](#) (Herat) is taken in 870. Then he expands his borders greatly in 873 by ousting Emir Muhammad of the [Tahirids](#). Khorasan is captured, giving the Saffarids a great swathe of new territory which may also include cities such as [Ustrushana](#) to the north of [Samarkand](#).

892 - 907 Ismail I

900 The [Saffarid](#) emirs in formerly Tahirid-controlled [Khorasan](#) are defeated by the Samanids and reduced in territory to Seistan in [Persia](#), where they remain Samanid vassals. The Samanids install

their own governors in the Khorasan region, as well as in recently-captured [Bukhara](#) and [Ustrushana](#) (both taken in the 890s).



Two sides of a typical Abbasid-era coin, with this one being nineteen millimetres in diameter issued in Samarkand, which was soon taken by the Samanids

907 - 914 Ahmad II

914 - 943 as-Sa'id Nasr II

943 - 954 Hamid Nuh I

954 - 961 Abdül-Malik I

961 - 976 Mansur I

962 Zabulistan is seized by a rebellious Samanid governor and a semi-independent [Afghan](#) kingdom is formed with its capital at Ghazni. Although the rebel, Alptigin, establishes his independent rule of Ghazni, coins from the era show that he nominally acknowledges Samanid overlordship, always a useful ruse for avoiding an attack by former masters.

976 - 997 Nuh II

- 977 The Afghan city of Ghazni comes under the rule of the Yamanid dynasty, which becomes fully independent of Samanid control as it forms its own [Ghaznavid](#) sultanate, although it still pays lip service to its former masters.
- 994 Nuh II faces internal uprisings, as the emirate becomes more unstable, and the [Ghaznavid](#) ruler comes to his assistance. The rebels are defeated at Balkh and then Nishapur.
- 995 Usually under the influence of [Persia](#), if not its direct control, the emirate of [Khwarazm](#) is initially centred on [Samarkand](#) and [Bukhara](#). At its height, it extended to encompass almost all of modern [Iran](#) (except the western border area), eastern [Azerbaijan](#), modern western [Afghanistan](#), all of [Turkmenistan](#), most of [Uzbekistan](#), western Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, and the southern areas of Kazakhstan.
- 997 - 999 Mansur II Deposed.
- 997 Mahmud of [Khwarazm](#) campaigns against the [Qara-Khitai](#) in Central Asia, but is ultimately defeated. His failure is a harbinger of problems to come where the Qara-Khitai are concerned.
- 999 The [Turkic](#) Karakhanids depose Mansur II, allied with the [Buwayids](#) who are supreme in south-western Persia and Mesopotamia. The Karakhanids take possession of areas of [Southern Khorasan](#).
- 999 - 1000 Abdül Malik II
- 1000 Samanid power swiftly declines in the face of [Buwayid](#) supremacy, while the revolt of the [Ghaznavids](#) brings the emirate to an end.
- 1000 - 1005 Ismail II al-Muntasir Assassinated.
- 1005 Ismail II, the last Samanid ruler, is assassinated after a five year struggle against the Qarakhanids (Karakhanids) from the north. They, in turn, are immediately ousted by the [Ghaznavids](#) but hold on in Bukhara. The termination of the Samanids is almost immediately expressed in archaeological terms by the end of Samanid coin circulation to Eastern Europe via the Volga Bulgars.
- fl 1025 ? Qarakhanid prince of Bukhara.

- c.1016 - 1025 The military leaders of the [Turkic](#) Oğuz tribes, Alp Arslan, Chaghri-Beg, and Toghril-Beg, leave the Jand region around the Syr Darya to enter Transoxiana shortly before 1016. In 1025 they enter the service of the Turkish Qarakhanid prince of Bukhara. Defeated by Maḥmūd of [Ghazna](#) in the same year, all of them take refuge in [Khwarazm](#).
- 1125 - 1218 In the 1120s China's [Liao](#) dynasty is ousted by the Manchurian Jurchen, which themselves become the ruling [Jin](#) dynasty of Tartars in the country. The Liaos, or Khitans as they are also known, are driven west into Central Asia where, after defeating the [Seljuq Turks](#) under Sultan Sanjar in 1141, they found the [Qara-Khitai](#) empire with [Samarkand](#) as its capital.
- The start of the thirteenth century spells the end of the empire. [Khwarazm](#) rapidly expands its rule, taking Samarkand in 1210 and making the city its capital. In 1218, [Mongol](#) Great Khan Chingiz sends his general, Chepe, westwards to overthrow the Qara-Khitai and annexe their remaining territory. This defeat also opens the way towards Mongol interaction with Khwarazm and [Persia](#).
- 1220 - 1221 After the shah of [Khwarazm](#) decapitates the [Mongol](#) ambassador from Chingiz Khan, the emirate is attacked twice by the Golden Horde, along with [Ghurid Southern Khorasan](#). Khwarazm is reduced to its western section covering northern Mesopotamia and western Persia. [Bukhara](#) and then [Samarkand](#) are captured by the Mongols and chaos results, with thousands being massacred or sold into slavery. Ala ad Deen flees west and dies a fugitive.
- The subsequent rise of Jalal al-Din Mingburnu in Khwarazm poses a challenge for the Mongols. The two sides come together at the Battle of the Indus and Jalal ad-Din is defeated. Khwarazm is occupied between Samarkand and the Indus, and [Persia](#) also falls. Jalal al-Din Mingburnu is an exile for a time, but returns to reclaim a reduced Khwarazm which is based around northern Mesopotamia, western Persia, and the lower Caucasus, and is centred on modern [Azerbaijan](#) - the 'safe' side of the Caspian Sea. From this point onwards, the bulk of Khwarazm is ruled by the [Il-Khans](#).
- 1335 Abu Said Ala ad Dunya wa dDin is the last of the [Il-Khans](#) to be descended from Hulegu, the first Il-Khan ruler in 1256. His death in 1335 (or 1336) weakens the khanate, but the same date is sometimes used to mark the birth of a [Turkic](#)-Mongol by the name of Tîmûr-i Lang (Tamerlane). This [Chaghatayid](#) prince will one day attempt to reform the Mongol empire as a [Timurid](#) possession, although his birth most likely takes place in the late 1320s.

- c.1359 'Abdullah of [Il-Khan](#) Khwarazm retains [Samarkand](#) as his capital, but the local Barlas and Suldus tribes are vehemently opposed to this Qara'unas presence. The leaders of these tribes, Hajji Beg and Buyan Suldus, revolt and drive out 'Abdullah. He dies in his own tribal lands soon afterwards. Buyan Suldus is installed as the amir of the ulus, giving him effective control over the [Chaghatayids](#).
- 1363 - Tughlugh Timur's attempts to quell the tribes of Transoxiana are eventually unsuccessful, despite
1370 two invasions of the region. His death ends [Chaghatayid](#) hopes of restoring control of western Mughulistan. Instead, two tribal leaders, Amir Husayn and Tīmūr-i Lang contest for control of Transoxiana. The latter is ultimately successful, taking Transoxiana and [Khwarazm](#) in the name of the Chaghatayids, but effectively forming his own [Timurid](#) khanate. [Samarkand](#) falls in 1366, Balikh (Balkh) in 1369, and Timur is recognised as the region's ruler in 1370. He places a figurehead [Mongol](#) on the throne to legitimise his rule while he governs from behind the throne as amir.

Timurid Transoxiana (in Samarkand & Greater Khorasan)
AD 1363 - 1505

The great eastern imperial lands of Persia were the location for a long period of unrest between about 1336-1387. This was while the surviving [Il-Khans](#) were being used as puppets by the Chobanids and the [Jalayirids](#) for the right to claim control of all of Persia. [Chaghatayid](#) khans attempted to quell the tribes of Transoxiana but were eventually unsuccessful, despite two invasions of the region in the 1360s. The death of the khan ended Chaghatayid hopes of restoring control of western [Mughulistan](#) which included Transoxiana. Instead, two tribal leaders, Amir Husayn and Tīmūr-i Lang, contested for control of Transoxiana. The latter was ultimately successful.

From 1363, Timur began to conquer large areas of Transoxiana and Khorasan, supposedly in the name of the Chaghatayid khans of Mughulistan. Samarkand fell in 1366, and [Herat](#) (in the west of modern [Afghanistan](#)) by 1381. Timur was recognised as the region's ruler in 1370, by which time Khabul Shah had already been put in place by Amir Husayn, and Timur had executed him and defeated Amir Husayn. Notably, this puppet had been a member of the Ögedeids (descendants of the former great khan, Ogedei), not the Chaghatayids themselves. His two successors between 1370-1402 were of the same branch, and both were entirely puppets of Timur's making.

From 1380, Timur extended his new-found empire by taking southern and western [Persia](#). He entered Persia proper in 1382, and an ambitious attack on the Chobanids and the disputed Caucasus region by the [Golden Horde](#) allowed Timur to fill the subsequent power vacuum and found the Timurid dynasty. In 1405, the Timurid empire split in two (or even three), with the western, Persian, half being ruled from Herat, while the eastern portion was governed from Samarkand (technically also in what was known as Greater Khorasan, but the regional name of Transoxiana is usually used to distinguish the two Timurid divisions). The 'rightful' ruler, Pir Mohammad, was opposed by all of the others.

(Additional information by Abhijit Rajadhyaksha, from Timurids, The Columbia Encyclopaedia (Sixth Ed, Columbia University), from The Encyclopaedia of War: Timur ('the Lame') (1336-1405), Timothy May, from The Art of War: Great Commanders of the Ancient and Medieval World: Tamerlane, Justin Marozzi (Andrew Roberts, Ed, Quercus Military History, 2008), and from External Link: [Encyclopaedia Britannica: Timur.](#))

1364 - Khabul Shah [Chaghatayid](#) puppet for the western khanate.
1370 Executed.

1370 - Soyurghatmish Khan / Suurgatmish Son of Danishmendji of the [Chaghatayids](#). Puppet
1384 khan.

1382 - Having secured his conquests around [Transoxiana](#), Timur has begun the expansion of his territory
1383 into Southern Khorasan and [Persia](#). He forces the [Kartid](#) dynasty of Herat into submission and demands a hostage from Seistan to symbolise the subservience of the [Mihrabanids](#). Malik Qutbuddin sends a relative named Tajuddin.

However, in 1383, despite agreeing a hostage, Timur still turns up at Seistan with his army. The two sides fail to come to agreement so Timur defeats the Mihrabanids in open battle. Qutbuddin is soon captured, imprisoned, and deported to [Samarkand](#). He is executed three years later. Timur appoints Shah-i Shahan as governor of Seistan and proceeds to ravage the province.

1384 - Sultan Mahmud Son. [Chaghatayid](#) puppet khan.
1402

1390s Khwarazm and its vast irrigation system are destroyed by Timur. It seems to be hard to find any detail of this destruction but Timur's ongoing battle for supremacy against Toqtamish Khan of the [Golden Horde](#) is probably the reason.



Timur effectively recreated the ancient Persian empire through his various conquests over the course of almost forty years, subduing many competing clans and khanates that would begin competing again after his death (click or tap on map to view full sized)

- 1402 The death of Sultan Mahmud in Transoxiana marks the end of the puppet (western) [Chaghatayid](#) khans here. In [Mughulistan](#), (eastern) khans continue to be appointed, perhaps dominated by the [Timurids](#). Many of them are entirely unknown, although one of them, Satuk Khan, attempts to establish the independence of Mughulistan, without success. The Chaghatayids survive as a minor state until they are annexed by the [Chinese](#) Qin dynasty in the eighteenth century.
- 1402 - 1405 Tîmûr-i Lang / Tamerlane [Mongol](#) conqueror of [Persia](#) from [Mughulistan](#).
- 1405 After Timur's death, none of the [Timurid](#) royalty accepts his successor, Pir Muhammad, splitting the empire in two (or even three). Timur's viceroy in [Ferghana](#) asserts his own independence and rules from [Samarkand](#) as if he is the new ruler of the empire. Technically, this half of the empire is also known as Greater Khorasan, but the regional name of Transoxiana is usually used to

distinguish the two Timurid divisions. The western portion is ruled by Shah Rukh from [Herat](#) (now in [Afghanistan](#)).

- 1405 - Khalil Sultan Grandson. Former viceroy of [Ferghana](#). Died 1411.
1409
- 1409 Unpopular with the people and only supported by his father and brother in [Azerbaijan](#) (on the opposite shore of the Caspian Sea), Khalil Sultan's reign ends when Shah Rukh enters the city on 13 May. Shah Rukh gives Transoxiana and Khorasan to his son as viceroy while he rules the reunited [Timurid](#) empire from [Herat](#). Khalil Sultan is given governorship of Ray, where he dies in 1411.
- 1409 - Ulugh Beg Son of Shah Rukh. Viceroy, and [Timurid](#) ruler (1447-
1449 1449).
- 1449 Ulugh Beg's death at the hands of his rebel son, Abd al Latîf, leaves a power vacuum. This is filled in central [Persia](#) by Sultan Muhammad, while Abd al Latîf rules in [Samarkand](#), now one of three Timurid claimants to overall control (the third being in [Herat](#) in [Southern Khorasan](#)).
- 1449 - Abd al Latîf Son. In Transoxiana. Murdered by the princes after 6
1450 months.
- 1450 - Abdallah / Abdullah Son of Ibrahim of [Herat](#). In Transoxiana. Executed.
1451
- 1450 - Abu Sa'id, nephew of Ulugh Beg, is one of the claimants for the [Timurid](#) crown, along with
1451 Abdallah, who seizes [Samarkand](#) in 1450. After failures in Samarkand and [Bukhara](#), Abu Sa'id conquers much of Turkestan in 1450, and in June 1451 takes Samarkand with the aid of the [Shaibanid](#) Uzbeks. Abdallah is removed from power and is executed.
- 1451 - Sultan Abu Sa'id Gurgan In Transoxiana & [Herat](#) (and later in [Persia](#) too).
1469 Executed.
- 1454 Babur Ibn-Baysunkur invades Transoxiana from [Herat](#) in retaliation for Abu Sa'id's seizure of Balkh (now in northern [Afghanistan](#)). The two Timurid rulers agree a border on the River Oxus, with that agreement remaining in force for the remainder of Babur's lifetime.



The River Oxus - also known over the course of many centuries as the Amu Darya - had long been used as a demarcation border, and now was used again to mark the border between two opposing Timurid rulers, Babur Ibn-Baysunkur and Abu Sa'id

- 1457 - In 1457, Abu Sa'id has Queen Goharshad, the power behind the [Timurid](#) throne, executed on 19 July. By now she is well past the age of eighty, but had exercised control over her son, Ulugh Beg, and his successor until Timurid control of Persia had been swept away in 1451.
- 1459 In the same year, while Khorasan is locked in a power struggle, Abu Sa'id invades. Balkh is occupied but he is unable to take [Herat](#) until a [Black Sheep](#) invasion defeats the ruler, Ibrahim, and then withdraws. Khorasan is taken by Abu Sa'ad, reuniting the remaining Timurid provinces. An attempt by Ibrahim to unite with another Timurid prince, Sultan Sanjar, is defeated at the Battle of Sarakhs in March 1459. Sanjar is executed. Ibrahim dies in 1460, and 'Ala' al-Daula dies in 1461, ending all opposition to a sole Timurid ruler in Transoxiana.
- 1461 Abu Sa'id completes his conquest of much of Khorasan and eastern Iran from his centre of operations in [Herat](#), agreeing with the [Black Sheep](#) emir, Jahan Shah, to divide Iran between the two of them.
- 1467 - Following the death of the [Black Sheep](#) emir at the hands of the [White Sheep](#) emir, the son of the former emir is supported by Abu Sa'id. Despite this, in 1468, the Black Sheep emirate is conquered, and the following year Abu Sa'id is captured in the [Azerbaijan](#) mountains whilst on
- 1469

campaign against the White Sheep emirate. He is subsequently executed. Timurid rule of Transoxiana and Khorasan again fractures.

A weakened Transoxiana is now watched over with interest by the [Shaibanid](#) Uzbeks who are migrating into the northern regions, especially as Transoxiana is now sub-divided into [Samarkand](#), Badakshan, and Ferghana by Abu Sa'id's sons. Sultan Ahmad Mirza, strong in Transoxiana, briefly holds [Herat](#) but does not (or cannot) remain there).

- | | | |
|----------------|--|---|
| 1469 -
1494 | Sultan Ahmad Mirza | Son. In Transoxiana (Samarkand & Bukhara).
Lost Herat . |
| 1494 | Sultan Ahmad is returning from an expedition to Ferghana where he has been attempting to defeat the twelve year-old Babur, son of Sultan Ali Murza. Ahmad dies on the journey and leaves no heir, so his brother takes command. | |
| 1494 -
1495 | Sultan Mahmud Mirza | Brother. In Transoxiana. Died due to illness. |
| 1494 | Far to the east of Khorasan, the Bengal sultan, Shamsuddin Muzaffar Shah, is assassinated by his wazir, Alauddin Husain Shah, the son of the Afghan Sharif of Makka in Khorasan. Husain is subsequently elected shah by the leading nobles. | |
| 1495 -
1500 | Sultan Baysonqur / Baysunqr | Son. In Transoxiana. |
| 1495 -
1500 | Masud | In Transoxiana. |
| 1495 -
1500 | Sultan Ali Murza / Mirza | In Ferghana . |
| 1495 -
1504 | Babur | Son. In Ferghana . Expelled by Shaibanid conquest. |
| 1500 -
1507 | The Timurids are overthrown by the Shaibanids , who conquer Transoxiana and now threaten Southern Khorasan at Herat . The remnants of Khwarazm become an independent Muslim Uzbek state, known as the khanate of Khiva . The Timurid prince, Babur of Ferghana makes many attempts to recapture Samarkand from Khorasan, without success. The Shaibanids now hold much of former Khwarazm, effectively ending Timurid rule of Transoxiana. | |



The Mongol empire created by Chingiz Khan gradually broke up over the course of three hundred years until, by around AD 1500, it had fragmented into several more-or-less stable khanates that each vied with the others for power and influence, while having to fend off the growing power of the Ottoman empire to the south and Moscow Sate (Muscovy) to the north - in the end it was an unwinnable fight (click or tap on map to view full sized)

1511 Following the death of the [Shaibanid](#) ruler, Mohammed Shaibani, Babur is able to recapture Samarkand with [Safavid](#) Persian help from his base in [Kabul](#). However, he is unable to retain it and the Persian governing class there is largely unpopular with the city's inhabitants. Urged on by the local population, the Shaibanids re-conquer the city just eight months later but political control of the region as a whole is fracturing. Towards the west, a new khanate is formed which eventually bears the name [Khiva](#), while Persia holds onto part of its recent conquests from which is formed the province of [Khorasan](#).

? - 1534 Abu'l-Ghazi Ubaidullah / Ubaydullah Son of [Shaibanid](#) Shah Budagh. First 'Khan of [Bukhara](#)'.

- 1529 Ubayd Allah Sultan Khan of Bukhara (known as Ubaidullah) is at war against Shah Tahmasp of [Iran](#), and the Uzbeks of [Khwarazm](#) support Bukharan attacks by advancing to Pil Kupruki. The border cities of Khodjend (in Khorasan) and Asferain (near Astarabad) are also stormed. As Tahmasp also has to face the [Ottomans](#), he negotiates with the Khwarizmi Uzbeks and effectively hands them Khwarazm.
- 1534 The [Shaibanid](#) empire has already been divided into fiefdoms around 1510-1511, although the senior khan has retained at least nominal command over them. Muzaffaruddin Abu-Sa'id is the last of them to have his capital elsewhere other than Bukhara or not to have a permanent capital at all. His successor, Abu'l-Ghazi Ubaidullah, very much favours Bukhara, and it can be said that during his reign the khanate of [Bukhara](#) truly is born.

Khanate of Bukhara (Bukhoro)
AD 1534 - 1785

The [Turkic Shaibanids](#) were Özbegs (Uzbeks or Uzbegs) who had formerly been subsumed within the vast [Mongol](#) empire under the control of the [Golden Horde](#). By the fifteenth century this particular branch of the disintegrating empire had only recently migrated from western Siberia and the khanate of Sibir (which they had temporarily controlled) to what would become the region of Turkestan (covering eastern [Scythia](#), [Transoxiana](#), and Greater Khorasan). Today the heartland of this region is formed by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, [Turkmenistan](#), and [Uzbekistan](#).

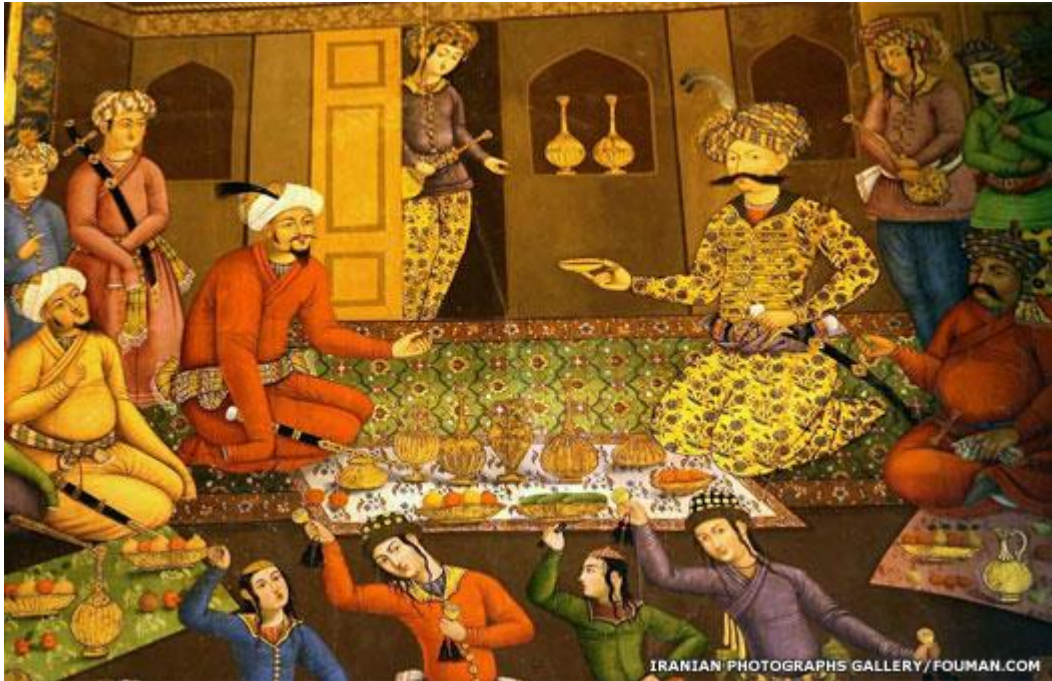
The Shaibanid (or Shaybanid) Uzbeks quickly formed a much smaller but still powerful empire in the lands that they settled, especially when they captured [Samarkand](#) and the Timurid crown in 1501. Another branch of the clan captured [Khwarazm](#) in 1511, but their great leader, Mohammed Shaibani, was now dead, and the empire began to fracture into fiefdoms that could not always be controlled by one khan. In fact, the khanate was more of a federation that contained a number of minor khanates. The supreme khans listed below had theoretical power over the entire region but in fact they were largely limited to their own immediate domain and depended upon the solidarity of other clan members to support them, which usually only became manifest in cases of extreme emergency. That factionalism also led to the occasional civil war.

There is no set date for the end of the Shaibanid empire and the beginning of the khanate of Bukhara (once the independent medieval principality of [Bukhara](#)). It was a gradual transition, with the empire fading and fragmenting following the death of Mohammed Shaibani, and his grandson, Abu'l-Ghazi Ubaidullah, shifting the capital of the empire's core holdings to Bukhara (Bukhoro or Bokhara), his favoured city. There it stayed, with the city blossoming under his rule and surviving as a stronghold under the reigns of his successors. The city was ancient, having formed part of the heartland of the Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex, or Oxus Civilisation, of [Bactria](#) and [Margiana](#) about 2200-1700 BC into which the more sedentary [Indo-Iranian](#) tribes had become integrated. Since then its fortunes had waxed and waned, one of its higher points being the capital of a city state called [Bukhara](#) in the [Post-Greek](#) world of early medieval [Sogdiana](#). It later

formed a key town in the old emirate of [Khwarazm](#) from the eleventh century, before being conquered by the Shaibanids.

(Information by Peter Kessler, with additional information from the Encyclopaedia Britannica, from History of the Mongols: From the 9th to the 19th Century, Henry H Howarth (1880), from A History of Inner Asia, Svat Soucek (2000), from The Russian Conquest of the Bukharan Emirate: Military and Diplomatic Aspects, A Malikov (Central Asian Survey, Volume 33, Issue 2, 2014), from A Turkic Medical Treatise from Islamic Central Asia, László Karoly, from The 'Ancient Supremacy': Bukhara, Afghanistan, and the Battle for Balkh, 1731-1901, Jonathan L Lee, and from External Links: [History of Khiva](#), and [The Ashtarkhanid Rulers of Bukhara](#), Iraj Bashiri.)

- | | | |
|----------------|--|---|
| 1534 -
1539 | Abu'l-Ghazi Ubaidullah / Ubaydullah | Shaibanid governor of Bukhara. Gained khanate leadership. |
| 1539 -
1540 | Abdullah I | Son of Shaibanid ruler, Kochkunju Muhammad. |
| 1540 -
1552 | Abdul-Latif | Brother. |
| 1552 -
1556 | Nawruz Ahmad | Grandson of Shaibanid ruler, Abu'l-Khayr Khan. |
| 1552 -
1556 | Pir Mohammed of the Jani-Begids has already attempted to claim Bukhara for himself and his clan in 1551. This has led to the formation of an anti-Jani-Begid confederacy amongst the other Shaibanid khans which forces the Jani-Begids to abandon their appanage rights which had been established by the Shaibanids under Abu'l-Khayr Khan. In 1556, Abdullah, son of Iskander, governor of Mainmana, captures Bukhara for the clan and Pir Mohammed is appointed as khan. Abdullah eventually rules the city himself from 1583. | |



The reign of Shah Abbas was one that involved a restoration of Iranian regional greatness, although he did have to wait eleven years to be able to retake the city of Mashhad where he is pictured in this illustration (click or tap on image to view full sized)

- 1556 - Pir Mohammed I Son of Janibeg Sultan, former [Shaibanid](#) regent.
1561
- 1561 - Iskander Brother.
1583
- 1564 - Uzbek princes who had been part of the [Timurid](#) forces which had invaded [India](#) with Babur and
1566 who are descended from Mohammed Shaibani himself, support a rival claimant to the [Moghul](#) throne and as a result are defeated and killed.
- 1583 - Abdullah II Son. Former governor of Mainmana.
1598
- 1588 - In the name of Abdullah, his son, Abdul-Mu'min, leads his Uzbek forces in an attack on the
1598 important Persian city of Mashhad (Maixhad). After four months of being besieged, the city surrenders and the systematic looting that follows does not spare the sacred tombs. These

Uzbek [Shaibanids](#) retain the city for almost a full decade, but Shah Abbas I regains it for the [Safavids](#) upon Abdullah's death in [Samarkand](#).

1593 - 1596 Abdullah launches an attack on [Khwarazm](#) and captures the khanate in two swift campaigns. The second takes place in 1595 when Abdullah has a much greater force at his disposal. However, the region is in a near-constant state of to-and-fro battles and victories, and Haji Muhammad recovers his domains by 1596.

1598 Abdul-Mu'min / Abd al-Mumin Son. Murdered.

1598 Pir Mohammed II Usurper? Not always included in a list of rulers.

1598 The Shaibanid empire of [Samarkand](#) has effectively come to an end, but the khanate created by them at Bukhara continues under the Janid dynasty with the support of the nobility. Otherwise known as the Astrakhanids or Hashtarkhanids, much of this nobility are refugees from [Astrakhan](#) who had fled when the city had fallen to the [Russians](#). Their titular head, Janibeg Sultan (Janibek) had quickly married into Bukhara's ruling family, thereby cementing the claim of his offspring to rule. They are now the last Genghisid family to govern Bukhara.



Bukhara remains the most complete example in Central Asia of a medieval city with an urban fabric that has remained largely intact, and monuments of particular interest which include the famous tenth century tomb of Ismail Samani of the former Samanid emirate

- 1599 - Baqi Muhammad Khan Son of Janibeg Sultan, former [Shaibanid](#) regent.
1605
- 1605 - Vali Muhammad Khan Brother. Former governor of Balkh. Killed.
1611
- 1606 - Vali Muhammad Khan is opposed by the merchants and the landlords who support their own
1611 candidate for the throne, Imam Quli Khan. Learning that the nobles have been plotting to assassinate him, Vali Muhammad and his two sons flee to [Iran](#) to seek the support of Shah Abbas. Recognising the gravity of the situation, Shah Abbas equips Vali Muhammad with an army and sends him back to Bukhara. Vali Muhammad is killed in Bukhara during the course of the conflicts that follow.
- 1611 - Imam Quli Khan / Imomqulikhan Son of Din Muhammad Khan. Abdicated due to
1642 blindness.
- 1613 Imam Quli Khan captures Tashkent by defeating the restive Kazakh tribes. He appoints his own son, Iskandar, as governor for the region. Iskandar, however, is not accepted by his new subjects. Unable to carry the burden of his heavy taxation, they rebel and kill him. Angered by the murder of his son, Imam Quli Khan gathers a large army composed primarily of Badakhshanis and Balkhis (Balkh is currently ruled by his brother, Nadir Muhammad (Nodirmuhammad)). Tashkent is devastated by this army, while the Oirat and Karakalpak tribes are routed after having encroached on Transoxiana for quite some time.
- 1642 - Nadir Muhammad Khan Brother. Former governor of Balkh. Deposed.
1645
- 1645 - Abdul Aziz Khan Son. Proclaimed khan in father's absence. Forced
1680 abdication.
- 1646 - The unpopular Nadir Muhammad Khan is effectively replaced by his son following a dramatic few
1648 years on the throne. Refusing to give up without a fight, Nadir Muhammad seeks help from the [Moghul](#) emperor, Shah Jahan. The emperor instead defeats Nadir Muhammad and annexes Balkh for two years having already gained [Ghazni](#) in 1638. Abdul Aziz eventually dislodges him from Balkh in the same year in which he is ejected from Ghazni.



The Taj Mahal was built for Shah Jahan's beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal, but he was later laid there himself, in 1666

- 1650 - Very little is recorded by contemporary sources regarding Bukhara during this period. The reign of
1680 Abdul Aziz Khan is one of relative stagnation, with him failing to subdue the rival [Khivans](#). His
successor brings a very different air to the court, one of intrigue. His first major alert sees one of
his troublesome sons marching against him. He is forced to invade Balkh, put down the rebellion,
and kill the errant son. His subsequent attempts to reduce the status of the secondary court at
Balkh to a mere governorship results in a final break by the time the new khan dies in 1702.
- 1680 - Subhan Quli Khan Son. Former governor of Balkh.
1702
- 1702 - Ubaidullah Khan Relationship unknown. Killed by Uzbeks?
1711
- 1711 - Abu'l-Faiz Khan / Abulfayz Khan Last Janid. Murdered by Ataliq Muhammad Rahim Bi.
1747

- 1715 The Kazakhs can be divided into three clans, or hordes, and each of these has its own territory. Now the Kazakh Lesser Horde begins acting independently of the others within its main base of operations in western Kazakhstan. Its leaders are descendants of Sultan Uziak, brother to Yadik Khan, and they are mentioned for the first time in 1717 when, together with Kaip Khan, they asked for help against the [Russian](#) Kalmuks. Having consolidated the Lesser Horde, Tiavka Khan is now dead. Abu I-Khayr (son of Adia, who is probably to be identified with Atiak, a contemporary of Tiavka Khan) fights for supremacy with Kaip Khan and wins. Abu I-Khayr becomes the first independent khan of the Lesser Horde.
- 1740 - [Khiva](#) is occupied by [Afsharid](#) ruler Nadir Shah and Bukhara is forced to submit. For Khiva, Bukharan dominance is replaced by even greater Iranian dominance. Nadir Shah appoints his own ruler there but he is almost immediately sidelined by the Kazakh Lesser Horde which gains the support of Uzbeks and Aralians who are within the khanate. For Bukhara the submission soon ends in the murder of the khan and the end of Genghisid rule.
- 1747



Nadir Shah rose spectacularly from his early life as the son of a maker of sheepskin coats to the leading general and then ruler of the Persian empire, although he showed little compassion towards the poor people who formed part of his origins

Increasing paranoia blights Nadir Shah's later years. His blinding of courtiers who had witnessed his hasty and regretted decision to blind Reza Qoli Mirza for his supposed part in the attempted assassination of 1741 seems to have set him on a downward spiral. Now Nadir Shah is assassinated in 1747. In Bukhara, the non-Genghisid Manghit (or Mangit) descendant of Uzbek

Emir Khudayar Bi - in the form of Muhammad Rahim Bi - murders the Janid khan and his son and begins to rule directly through the post of ataliq (effectively a prime minister or governor).

1747 - 1753	Muhammad Rahim Bi	Former ataliq who usurped power from the Janid throne.
1747 - 1753	Muhammad Ubaidullah II	Puppet khan under Muhammad Rahim Bi's control.
1753 - 1758	Muhammad Rahim Bi	Former ataliq, now emir. Khan from 1756.
1758 - 1785	Daniyal Bey	Ataliq, and true power in Bukhara.
1758 - ?	Shir Ghazi	Puppet khan under Daniyal Bey's control.
? - 1785	Abu'l-Ghazi Khan	Puppet khan under Daniyal Bey's control. Died.
1785	The new Manghit ataliq, Shah Murad, son of Daniyal Bey, assumes complete control of Bukhara and adopts the title of emir as he is not directly descended from Chingiz Khan (and is therefore not a Genghisid, a vital qualification for the higher position of khan). The former khanate now becomes the emirate of Bukhara .	

Emirate of Bukhara (Bukhoro) AD 1785 - 1920

Located in central [Sogdiana](#), between the rivers Syr Darya and Amu Darya, Bukhara had started out as an [Achaemenid](#) city. From around the sixth century AD it was the heart of the independent medieval principality of [Bukhara](#). It had been a possession of the [Mongol](#) empire, and then of its splinter group, the [Golden Horde](#). By the fifteenth century this had further splintered, with the [Shaibanids](#) now controlling the Bukhara region as part of their own newfound empire. As ever, even this empire fractured and became divided, so that by the mid-sixteenth century its rulers were little more than khans of Bukhara itself, plus some (usually) allied outlying groups. The Shaibanid empire can be said to have ended in 1598, by which the khanate of [Bukhara](#) was already established.

In 1740, neighbouring [Khiva](#) (to the west) was occupied by [Afsharid](#) ruler Nadir Shah, and Bukhara was also forced to submit. However, Iranian rule of the region was never very strong. The competing Uzbek interests

included the regionally-powerful Kazak Lesser Horde, and it was these interested parties who were able to influence events on Khiva and Bukhara. Following the assassination of Nadir Shah, the Manghit (or Mangit) descendants of Uzbek Emir Khudayar Bi ruled Bukhara through the post of ataliq (effectively a prime minister or governor). In 1785 they were confirmed in their position, but under the lesser title of emir as they were not descendants of Chingiz Khan. The emirate of Bukhara survived for less than a century and-a-half before greater external powers took over and Bukhara suffered occupation and annexation. The [Soviet](#) civil war immediately following the First World War saw Bukhara's territory divided between modern [Uzbekistan](#) (for the most part), plus [Afghanistan](#), Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and [Turkmenistan](#).

(Information by Peter Kessler, with additional information from History of the Civilisations of Central Asia - Towards the Contemporary Period: From the Mid-Nineteenth to the End of the Twentieth Century, Chahryar Adle (Ed), Chapter 9 Uzbekistan, D A Alimova & A A Golovanov, Unesco, from The Russian Conquest of the Bukharan Emirate: Military and Diplomatic Aspects, A Malikov (Central Asian Survey, Volume 33, Issue 2, 2014), from History of the Mongols: From the 9th to the 19th Century (Part 2), Sir Henry Hoyle Howorth (1880), and from External Link: [BBC Country Profiles](#).)

1785 - 1800 Shah Murad bin Daniyal Bey Assumed direct control of khanate of [Bukhara](#) as emir.

1785 Almost as soon as Shah Murad has become emir of Bukhara, an attempt is made on his life by one of his brothers, Toktamish. He is left with a scar which reaches from mouth to ear and the would-be assassin is executed, while Toktamish is exiled.



Despite the best intentions of the emirs of Bukhara to retain their independence in the face of Russian expansionism they succumbed to Russian money, notably in 1888

when the Trans-Caspian railway was built through Bukharan territory, with the emir receiving a vast cash sum and allowing a new station to be built at Kagan, 'only' sixteen kilometres from the capital - the new palace at Kagan (shown here) was built using the cash

In the same year, Shah Murad determines to capture Merv, a centre of the hated Shias (and the former capital of the satrapy of [Margiana](#)). Ruled by Bairim Ali Khan, a relative of the [Astrakhanids](#), Merv's forces are markedly inferior to those of Bukhara. However, Bairim Ali Khan is able to harry Shah Murad's forces like 'a wolf among a flock of sheep'. Bukhara is only able to win the day and kill the intransigent Bairim Ali Khan by a ruse which lures him into an unequal battle against four thousand Bukharan horsemen. The region around Merv is laid waste as a warning to the rest of its people.

- 1800 - Haydar Tora bin Shah Murad Son.
1826
- 1824 - William Moorecroft, of the East India Company, arrives in Peshawar, [Afghanistan](#), while en route
1825 to Bukhara, east of [Khiva](#) (and now in [Uzbekistan](#)), to trade for horses. He is killed in Balkh in 1825 while returning to India. The [British](#) in India turn an eye towards [Afghan](#) affairs and the lack of central authority there.
- 1826 - Hussain bin Haydar Tora Son. Died after two months on the throne.
1827
- 1827 Umar bin Haydar Tora Brother.
- 1827 - Nasr-Allah bin Haydar Tora / Nasrulla Brother. Died.
1860
- 1839 - [Russia](#) under Czar Nicholas I pursues a renewed policy of pressuring the [Ottoman](#) empire
1840 and [Britain](#) for control of southern Central Asia. He sends an expedition to [Khiva](#), purportedly to free slaves who had been captured from areas of the Russian frontier and sold by Turkmen raiders. Britain is already involved in the First Anglo-Afghan War in [Afghanistan](#) but, despite sending over five thousand infantry, the Russian force stumbles into one of harshest winters in living memory. It is driven back by the weather and by its losses in early 1840.



William Moorecroft of the British East India Company is seen here on the road to Lake Mansarowar in Tibet, dressed in native style, prior to his death in Balkh in 1825

Britain decides that Russian (and also [Persian](#)) intrigues pose a threat to its control of [India](#). To counter that perceived threat, it is decided that Afghanistan will be used as a buffer state and the slave situation in Khiva will be solved without military intervention. The khan is convinced to free all Russian subjects under his control and to outlaw any further slavery of Russians.

At the same time, in 1839, Nasr-Allah serves to weaken the defensive situation in the region by declaring war on Kokend. The excuse is the building of the Pishgar fort near the Bukharan border, and Kokend is swiftly conquered, albeit briefly. It has to be conquered again in 1842, with Bukhara securing overlordship of Kokend and executing its khan, but Nasr-Allah's forces are expelled during a revolt in the same year.

1842 -
1843

Nasr-Allah achieves an unwanted level of notoriety in early Victorian [England](#) after he has imprisoned and now executes the British envoys, Charles Stoddart and Arthur Conolly. He also imprisons Joseph Wolff, who enters Bukhara in 1843 in search of the missing envoys. Amused by Wolff openly wearing his full ecclesiastical garb, the emir performs a rare act of leniency by allowing Wolff to leave safely.

1848

Undeterred by previous setbacks, [Russia](#) builds Fort Aralsk at the mouth of the Syr Darya. From here the empire begins a steady process of encroachment upon the lands of Bukhara, [Khiva](#), and Kokend. Russia meets stiff resistance all the way but its resources far exceed those of its opponents.



The First Afghan War (1839-1842) pitted British forces in India against the multiple clans and factions of Afghanistan to the south of Bukhara, but close enough to be of vital interest - elements of the British forces are shown here at Urghundee

1860 -
1886

Muzaffar al-Din bin Nasr-Allah

Son. [Russian](#) vassal from 1868.

1865 -
1868

[Russia](#) takes Bukhara, Tashkent, and Samarkand in 1865 (all of which go into forming [Uzbekistan](#) in 1924). Tashkent is made the capital of a new state of the same name, incorporating vast areas of Central Asia into its territory. Following a further defeat in 1868, the emirate at Bukhara is permitted to continue as a vassal, governing only its immediate territory.

1873

Weakened by attacks from Kokend and Bukhara and losing control of the right bank of the Syr Darya, [Khiva](#) is finally conquered by [Russia](#) on the third attempt. Russian General von Kaufman leads 13,000 infantry and cavalry, taking the capital, Khiva, on 28 May 1873. The city's fall is recorded by artist Vasily Vereshchagin. A treaty of August of the same year establishes Khiva as a

Russian protectorate which retains its own rulers but only with nominal independence. Bukhara's remnants, too, become a Russian protectorate.

1886 - Abdul-Ahad bin Muzaffar al-Din Son.
1910

1910 - Muhammad Alim Khan bin Abdul-Ahad Son. Deposed. Emirate replaced by [Soviet](#) republic.
1920 Died 1944.

1918 - A reorganisation of Central Asian [Soviet](#)-controlled states along ethnic lines means the end of the
1921 khanate of [Khiva](#), the Turkestan Krai, and the emirate of Bukhara (the latter being ousted by the
Tashkent Soviet in 1920). All of these formerly independent territories are merged into the newly-
formed 'Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic', which is formed as a self-governing
entity of the early Soviet Union. However, in the same year, the Islamic Council and the Council of
Intelligentsia declare the rival 'Turkestan Autonomous Republic', and set about fighting against
the Bolshevik forces who start closing down mosques and persecuting Muslim clergy as part of
their secularisation campaign.



Although initially a reformer in his own right, Emir Muhammad Alim Khan bin Abdul-Ahad eventually realised that this path would lead to the termination of his own position, so he became increasingly reactionary, not that it helped him remain emir in 1920

1921 - The Turkestan Autonomous Republic has gradually lost ground to the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks themselves have been divided into two groups over the region's future, but the idea of a pan-[Turkic](#) state is jettisoned in place of several smaller states. In 1924 the Turkestan ASSR is divided into the [Uzbek](#) SSR, the [Turkmen](#) SSR, the Kara-Kirghiz Autonomous Oblast (Kyrgyzstan), and the Karakalpak Autonomous Oblast (modern Karakalpakstan, an autonomous republic of Uzbekistan). Initially, the Tajik ASSR is also adjoined to the Uzbek state.

Modern Uzbekistan
AD 1924 - Present Day

Positioned on the ancient Silk Road between Europe and Asia, majestic cities such as [Bukhara](#) and [Samarkand](#), famed for their architectural opulence, once flourished here as trade and cultural centres. The former emirs of [Khwarazm](#) had their capital at Urgench (pronounced oorgench), and Uzbekistan inherited this city, now known as Kunya-Urgench, as the capital of its Khorezm region. The modern republic of Uzbekistan is the most populous Central Asian state with the largest armed forces. Kazakhstan lies to the north, [Turkmenistan](#) is to the south, and Tajikistan and [Afghanistan](#) lie to the east and south-east.

Southern Uzbekistan has a long and chequered history. It once formed part of the [Persian](#) satrapy of [Bactria](#), with [Sogdiana](#) to its north (now also largely within Uzbekistan's borders). These satrapies were invaded by Alexander the Great's [Greek](#) empire, and became independent in 256 BC. Following that, the region was occupied by [Sakas](#) and [Greater Yuezhi](#), and was controlled by the [Kushans](#) and then the Persian [Sassanids](#). With the collapse of the [Samanids](#) in the ninth century AD the region became a battleground for vying factions of [Turkic](#) tribes. From the end of the tenth century it was part of the emirate of Khwarazm, before being divided between the [Mongol Il-Khanate](#) and [Mughulistan](#). [Timurid Transoxiana](#) claimed it next, and then it formed part of the region of Turkestan which was ruled by the [Shaibanid](#) empire in the sixteenth century.

Uzbekistan in the modern sense was formed in 1924, when its [Soviet](#) masters divided the former khanate of [Khiva](#) and its short-lived successor, the Tashkent ASSR, and joined the Uzbek part to the former emirate of [Bukhara](#). The Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic survived in that form until the collapse of the Soviet empire. In 1991 Uzbekistan became fully independent, with its capital at Tashkent. Rather than follow its western peers down the road towards democracy, it instead maintained a highly authoritarian one-party state in which

opposition was (and is) not at all welcome. Since independence, the country has faced sporadic bombings and shootings, which the authorities have been quick to blame on Islamic extremists.

(Information by Peter Kessler, with additional information from History of the Civilisations of Central Asia - Towards the Contemporary Period: From the Mid-Nineteenth to the End of the Twentieth Century, Chahryar Adle (Ed), Chapter 9 Uzbekistan, D A Alimova & A A Golovanov, Unesco, and from External Links: [BBC Country Profiles](#), and [Ex-president's daughter sent to prison](#) (The Guardian).)

1929 - In 1929 the Tajik ASSR, attached to the Uzbek SSR since 1924, is now removed to form a separate
1930 Tajik SSR. In the following year the [Soviet](#)-controlled Uzbek SSR suffers from Stalin's purge of independent-minded Uzbek leaders. They are replaced by Moscow loyalists and the capital is moved from Samarkand to Tashkent.



This tinted photo may date from the 1960s, but it looks in part a good thirty years older and shows mid-twentieth century Tashkent with its Soviet-imposed monumental building style

1937 - Undaunted by his failures to date, Stalin directs a massive purge of the Bolshevik party, the armed forces (decimating the officer class), government and intelligentsia. Millions of people, labelled enemies of the state, are killed or imprisoned, with the notoriously harsh gulags in Siberia being used to deposit many thousands of his victims. In the Uzbek SSR, many alleged nationalists are arrested, including the state's first prime minister, Faizullah Khojaev.

1940 - As part of the Second World War, the [Soviets](#) invade [Poland](#) from the east on 17 September 1940. About 1,433,230 Uzbek citizens are incorporated into the Red Army in the subsequent battles against Nazi [Germany](#). A certain number also fight for the Germans against the Soviets. In 1944, around 160,000 Meskhetian [Turks](#) are deported from [Georgia](#) to Uzbekistan by Stalin. Other ethnic groups are also imported into the Uzbek SSR, especially Russians and [Ukrainians](#) as the empire's industrial war efforts are moved farther east to remove them from the threat of German attacks.

1950s From this decade until the 1980s, Uzbek cotton production is greatly boosted thanks to [Soviet](#) irrigation projects that draw water from the Amu Darya and, ultimately, from the Aral Sea. Within three decades the sea is almost completely sucked dry, creating a semi-desert.



Joseph Stalin, who was born in Georgia, led the Soviet Union away from its initial idealistic concept of equal citizenship for all and instead instituted a brutal regime of fear

- 1966 A devastating earthquake virtually destroys much of Tashkent. The subsequent [Soviet](#) rebuilding works pays little attention to the city's cultural heritage or its important position on the ancient Silk Road. Instead brutalist concrete structures fill the city.
- 1989 - 1991 Islam Karimov becomes the head of the Uzbek Communist Party. In the following year, 1990, the Party declares economic and political sovereignty and Karimov becomes president, a position he maintains for several decades. In 1991, Karimov initially supports the attempted anti-Gorbachev coup by conservatives in Moscow. The Uzbek SSR declares independence from the [Soviet Union](#) as the republic of Uzbekistan and, following the USSR's subsequent collapse, joins the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). During this period, violent attacks take place against the Meskhetian [Turks](#) and other minorities in the Fergana Valley. As a result a nationalist political movement called Birlik is founded (and is banned in 1992).
- 1989 - 2016 Islam Karimov 'President', but without observing any election rules.
Died 02.16.
- 2001 Terrorist attacks take place in the [USA](#) on 11 September when four passenger planes are hijacked. In [Afghanistan](#), the Taliban refuse to hand over terrorist leader and overall organiser of the attack, Osama bin Laden, who is taking refuge there. An invasion is launched, with some US forces being allowed the use of a base in Uzbekistan. By November 2001 the Taliban have been pushed out of Kabul and into the eastern fringes of the country by US and [British](#) air strikes and a resurgent native northern alliance.
- 2005 In May 2005, troops in the eastern city of Andijan open fire on protesters who are demonstrating against the imprisonment of people charged with Islamic extremism. Witnesses report a bloodbath with several hundred civilian deaths. The Uzbek authorities state that fewer than 190 people have died. Opponents of President Karimov blame the authorities' brutal determination to crush all dissent while the president blames fundamentalists seeking to overthrow the government and establish a Muslim caliphate in Central Asia.



With people protesting against President Karimov's policy of imprisoning people on charges of Islamic extremism, the army was called out, and with brutal effect

The government's reaction to the Andijan unrest prompts strong criticism from the West, and relations cool. In response, Uzbekistan expels [US](#) forces from their base and move closer to [Russia](#), with Karimov at one point describing it as Tashkent's 'most reliable partner and ally'.

2008 -
2009

Ties with the West begin to improve again, spurred on by the search by European countries for alternative energy sources in Central Asia, and Uzbekistan's strategic importance for the anti-Taliban operation in [Afghanistan](#). The EU eases sanctions that had been imposed after the Andijan killings, the World Bank reverses a decision to suspend loans to Uzbekistan, and the [US](#) is allowed limited use of the Temez air base. In 2009 the EU lifts its arms embargo. At the same time, relations with Moscow cool off, with Uzbekistan in 2009 criticising plans for a [Russian](#) base in neighbouring Kyrgyzstan.

2016

Karimov's death after more than two decades in control sees his successor selected by the supreme assembly and rubber stamped by an election with sees him 'pitted' against three very minor candidates. His win of 88.6% of the vote is largely seem as resulting from a sham election, but the Uzbek claim is that strong, authoritarian leadership may be the only option apart from Islamic radicalism, with some justification.

2016 -
Present

Shavkat Mirziyoyev

'President' following a potentially arranged election.

2017 -
2019

Gulnara Karimova, socialite eldest daughter of the late president - described in 2010 by a US embassy cable as a 'robber baron' who had considered herself above the law - is reported to fall foul of the new regime. With no external confirmation, it is claimed that she is now convicted of embezzlement and money-laundering charges. It is unclear where she serves her sentence, but in 2019 she is reported to be taken forcibly from her home after violating the terms of her house arrest and is escorted to prison.



Gulnara Karimova, daughter of the late President Karimov, apparently broke her house arrest rules by accessing the internet