

# **Eastern Zeravshan valley in Transition from the Sogdian to the Arab Rule: New evidence from the Sanjar-Shah Excavations**

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## **Abstract**

Recent excavations at the Sogdian site of Sanjar-Shah near Panjikent have brought to light evidence of a large scale building activity, expansion of the town and of construction of monumental public buildings during the 740s. These activities can be attributed to the policies of the last Umayyad governor of Khurasan Naṣr b. Sayyār (738-748). In addition, it seems that unlike in the neighbouring Panjikent and other smaller settlements in the region, which were mostly abandoned in 770s-780s, life at Sanjar-Shah continued until the 9th century thus providing a rare example of a transition of a Sogdian urban space from 8th to 9th century.

This paper discusses the evidence for the changes in the settlement patterns in the region of the eastern Zeravshan valley emphasizing continuities and important cultural shifts in the early Islamic period based on the new data from Sanjar-Shah, on historical and archaeological sources and on what is known about the transformation of the Sogdian urban society as a result of the Arab conquest of the 8th century.