



## ARCHITECTURE ON THE SILK ROAD

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### Abstract

*At all universities in the world, the history of architecture is more or less studied according to the historical scale (architecture in prehistory, architecture of ancient civilizations - Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, China, India, Japan - architecture of the Islamic world, early Greek architecture, Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, neo-historical styles, Modern and Postmodern, contemporary architecture). Rarely is a student able to understand architecture as a whole, both spatially horizontally and historically vertically. The range of architectural achievements presented in this work could be (and was) processed in the already mentioned 'classical way' - following the historical scale. The treatment of architecture according to the title of this work is a significant shift in relation to the 'classical way', since the historically significant metaphor 'Silk Road' is introduced, which connects a vast geographical space, a long time-historical scale, various peoples and their civilizational and cultural traditions. This approach aims to present architecture (to which other dimensions of society and man-individual are also connected) as the achievement that is the 'framework of human life' and thus paves the way to understanding man as a being who possesses the 'Human code', so significant today and in the future.*

**Keywords:** The Silk Road, Connecting civilizations and cultures, Architecture

### 1. Introduction

The word 'silk' comes from: Old English 'sioloc', from Ancient Greek: σηρικός (Romanized: sērikós = 'silk'), from the Chinese word 'sī', from the Manchurian word 'sirghe', from the Mongolian word 'sirkek', for example <sup>[1]</sup>. Silk is a natural thread produced by the salivary glands of silkworms, which are a type of moth that feeds on the mulberry bush. Silkworms are caterpillars, not worms. They spin their cocoons using a complex set of mechanisms inside their bodies when they turn from larva to pupa. Thai silk is produced by Thai caterpillars grown on the leaves of the Thai mulberry tree, primarily on the Korat Plateau in the northeastern region of the country. The silk of Thai caterpillars varies in color from light gold to very light green. The cocoon consists of one thread 500-1500 meters long. One filament is too thin to use alone, so many strands are combined to make a thicker, more practical fiber. Weavers wash those raw silk threads, bleach them, and then soak them in vats of hot dyes. After that, the silk thread is washed again, stretched and placed in the final dyeing process. When this is done, they wind the thread onto reels or drums in preparation for weaving. Silk is a natural protein fiber, some forms of which can be woven into textiles. The protein fiber of silk consists mainly of fibroin and is produced by the larvae of certain insects in the form of a cocoon. The most famous silk is obtained from the cocoons of larvae of the mulberry silkworm, *Bombyx mori*, bred in captivity

(sericulture). The shimmering appearance of silk is due to the triangular, prism-like structure of the silk fiber, which allows the silk fabric to refract incoming light at different angles, creating different colors. Silk production originated in China in the Neolithic period (Yangshao culture, 4th millennium BC), although it will eventually reach other places in the world. Silk production remained confined to China until the Silk Road opened sometime in the latter part of the 1st millennium BC, although China maintained its monopoly on silk production for another thousand years (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Woven silk textile from tomb no. 1 at Mawangdui in Changsha, Hunan Province, China, Western Han Dynasty, 2nd century BC

Source: <https://www.pinterest.ie/pin/479070479096158978/>, Accessed: 24 May 2024.

The traditional making of fairy cloth is shown in Figures 2 and 3.



Figure 2. Weaving with silk

Source: <https://www.geni.com/projects/Silk-Weavers/17816>, Accessed: May 25, 2023.



Figure 3. Cloth woven from silk

Source: <https://www.indiamart.com/proddetail/pure-raw-silk-fabric-20929089888.html>, Accessed: May 24, 2023.

Source: [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-04/01/c\\_137941130\\_2.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-04/01/c_137941130_2.htm), Accessed: May 24, 2023.

The silk generated by the silkworm consists of two main proteins, sericin and fibroin; fibroin is the structural center of silk, and sericin is the adhesive material that surrounds it. Fibroin consists of the amino acids Gly-Ser-Gly-Ala-Gly-Ala and forms beta-pleated sheets. Hydrogen bonds form between the chains, and side chains form above and below the plane of the hydrogen bond network. The high proportion (50%) of glycine enables a tight packaging. This is because the R group of glycine is only hydrogen and is therefore not sterically constrained. The addition of alanine and serine makes the fibers strong and resistant to breakage. This tensile strength is due to the many intercalated hydrogen bonds, and when stretched, force is applied to these many bonds and they do not break. Silk is resistant to most mineral acids, except for sulfuric acid, which dissolves it. Chlorine bleach will also destroy silk fabrics.

The absorbency of silk makes it comfortable to wear in warm weather and while the person is active. Its low thermal conductivity ( $\lambda$ ) keeps warm air close to the skin during cold weather. It is often used for clothing such as shirts, ties, blouses, formal dresses, haute couture, lining, underwear, pajamas, robes, suits, sundresses and oriental folk costumes (Figure 4). For practical use, silk is excellent as clothing that protects against the many bites of insects that would otherwise pierce clothing, such as mosquitoes and horseflies. Fabrics often made from silk include charmeuse, habutai, chiffon, taffeta, crêpe de chine, dupioni, noil, tussah, and shantung, among others. The attractive luster and drape of silk make it suitable for many furniture applications. It is used for upholstery, wall coverings, window treatments (if mixed with another fiber), rugs, bedding and wall hangings (Figure 4). Silk had many industrial and commercial uses, such as parachutes, bicycle tires, stuffing for blankets, and artillery gunpowder bags. A special manufacturing process removes the outer coating of sericin from the silk, making it suitable as non-absorbable surgical sutures. This process recently led to the introduction of specialist silk underwear, which was used for skin conditions including eczema. New uses and manufacturing techniques have been found for silk to make everything from disposable cups to drug delivery systems and holograms.





Figure 4. Silk as clothing material (left) and silk as furniture decoration material (right)

Source: <https://www.quora.com/Where-can-I-get-female-ethnic-wear-in-pure-silk-fabric>, Accessed: May 24, 2023.

Source: <https://in.pinterest.com/pin/482518547559430317/>, Accessed: May 24, 2023.

## 2. Silk Road

The Silk Road was an extensive network of interconnected trade routes across the Asian continent that linked East, South and West Asia with the Mediterranean world, including North Africa and Europe (Figure 5). These trade routes allowed people to transport and trade goods, especially luxuries such as silk, satin, musk, rubies, diamonds and pearls from different parts of the world. The trade routes of the Silk Road stretched over 8,000 kilometers. Trade on the Silk Road was a significant factor in the development of Chinese, Indian, Egyptian, Persian, Arab, Greek, Roman and Byzantine civilizations. It helped lay the foundation for the modern world in several aspects. Although the term Silk Road implies a continuous journey, very few travelers traveled the route from end to end. Goods were mainly transported by a number of agents on different routes, and trade took place in the busy trading markets of the oasis cities<sup>[2]</sup>. The Central Asian part of the trade route was initiated around 114 BC by the Han Dynasty (ruled China from 206 BC to 220 BC) mainly through the missions and explorations of Zhang Qian, although earlier trade across the continents already existed. In the late Middle Ages, use of the Silk Road declined as maritime trade increased. The Silk Road provided a channel not only for silk, but also offered a very important route for cultural, religious and technological transmission, connecting thousands of traders, pilgrims, monks, soldiers, nomads and urban dwellers from

China to the Mediterranean Sea. The first person to use the terms 'Seidenstraße' and 'Seidenstraßen' or 'Road(s)' and 'Silk Road(s)' was the German geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen (1833 - 1905) in 1877.



Figure 5. Silk Road (shown in red)

Source: <https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/china-to-extend-silkroad-to-afghanistan/3849736.html>. Accessed: May 25, 2023.

## 3. Architecture on the Silk Road

Architecture is the 'framework of life', which with its physical appearance reflects the natural and social environment and the man who created it. In this way, architecture, more than any individual knowledge, philosophy, art and wide range of practical activities, unites the nature of man in a concrete environment. This paper will present architectural programs that are directly related to the Silk Road, but also those programs that are built anywhere in the world in accordance with human needs. The Silk Road is the 'link' that connects a wide variety of architectural programs (appearances of architecture) into a unique whole that helps us better understand the essence of architecture.

**Caravanserai and inns (khans) on the Silk Road.** Caravanserai were roadside inns where travelers (caravans) could rest and recover from the day's journey. Built in the countries of the Silk Road from the western edge of the Ottoman Empire to China, they provided not only a regular opportunity for merchants to eat well, rest and safely prepare for their further journey, but also to exchange goods, trade with local markets and meet other merchant travelers and while exchanging cultures, languages and ideas. As such, caravanserais were much more than mere stopping places along the Silk Roads; they developed as sites for cross-fertilization of cultures along these routes. Relatively little is known about the origin of the caravanserai. Etymologically, the word is a compound of the Persian 'kārāvān', meaning 'caravan' or 'group of travelers', and 'sara', meaning 'palace' or 'closed building', with the addition of the Turkish suffix - 'yi'. One of the earliest examples of such a building is found in the oasis city of Palmyra in Syria, which developed from the 3rd century BC as a place of refuge for travelers crossing the Syrian desert. Its spectacular ruins still stand as a monument to the crossroads of trade routes from Persia, India, China and the Roman Empire. As trade routes developed and became more lucrative, caravanserais became increasingly necessary, and their construction appears to have intensified throughout Central Asia from the 10th century onwards, particularly during periods of political and social stability, and continued well into the 19th century. This resulted in a network of caravanserai that stretched from China to the Indian subcontinent, Iran, the Caucasus, Turkey and all the way to North Africa, Russia and Eastern Europe, many of which still exist today<sup>[3]</sup>. Very often,

the terms 'caravansaraj' and 'inn' are equated. Inns are places similar to inns and hotels, where for a fee you can get not only accommodation, but also food and other benefits. Inns are mostly located within urban or rural areas, provide more complex accommodation and are much smaller than caravanserais. One of the most impressive sites in the entire Central Asian region, Tash Rabat is probably Kyrgyzstan's most famous monument (Figure 6); its presence is in stark contrast to the popular perception that Kyrgyzstan is more about landscapes than historical sites. This small but perfectly formed 15th-century caravanserai once sheltered a line of traders and travelers along one of the wild stretches of the Silk Road, but its location is even more significant than its structure: hidden from view, half-buried in a hillside, along a valley on 3530 m above sea level <sup>[4]</sup>.



Figure 6. Tash Rabat in Kyrgyzstan

Source: <https://www.bradtguides.com/our-favourite-silk-road-sights/>, Accessed: 24 May 2023.

Source: [https://www.orexca.com/kyrgyzstan/tash\\_rabat.htm](https://www.orexca.com/kyrgyzstan/tash_rabat.htm), Accessed: May 24, 2023.

Dayr-e Gachin Caravanserai is located eighty kilometers northeast of Qom (Figure 7). It is known as the 'mother of Iranian caravanserai'. This monument of ancient Iran was built along the Silk Road and the historic road from Raya to Qom. Today it is located in the center of the Kavir National Park. The structure of Dayr-e Golchin dates back to the Sassanid era and was repaired during the Seljuk, Safavid and Qajar periods. Historical texts prove that he was also mentioned as Ardeshir, Day-r ol-Jas, Day-re Kaj. Among these names, Ardeshir makes it more likely that this building belongs to the Sasanian king, Ardeshir I (Ardashir the Unifier, 180 - 242). It should not be overlooked that there are other

historical buildings such as the Rock Castle of Mohammadabad Kaj, Qal-e Goli located near Dayr-e Gachin.

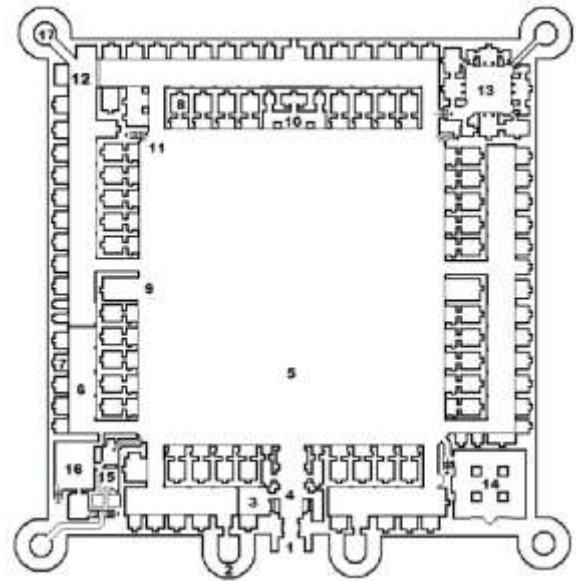


Figure 7. Caravanserai in Dayr-I Gachin, Iran

Source: [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Caravanserai-at-Dayr-IGachin-Iran\\_fig2\\_235279583](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Caravanserai-at-Dayr-IGachin-Iran_fig2_235279583), Accessed: May 24, 2023.

Source: <https://www.destinationiran.com/persian-caravansary-robatsabat-tim.htm>, Accessed: May 24, 2023.

Zein-o-Din Caravanserai is located in Zein-o-din, Yazd, Iran (Figure 8). The caravanserai dates back to the 16th century and is located on the ancient Silk Road. It is one of 999 such inns that were built during the reign of Shah Abbas I (1571 - 1629) to provide travelers with convenience. Of them, Zein-o-din is one of the two caravanserai built with circular towers. After the renovation, it worked as an inn. A similarly built caravanserai near Isfahan is in ruins.



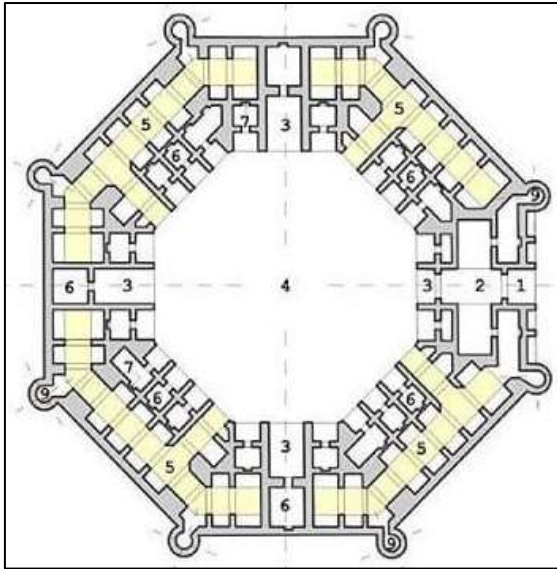


Figure 9. Saruhan caravanserai in Cappadocia

Source:

<https://www.discovercappadocia.com/place/saruhan-caravanserai/>, Accessed: February 3, 2023.



Figure 8. Zein-o-Din Caravanserai in Zein-o-din, Yazd, Iran

Source: <https://www.irandestination.com/accommodation/zein-o-dincaravanserai-yazd/>, Accessed: February 3, 2023.

The most famous caravanserais in Turkey are: Saruhan, Sultanhan of Aksaray, Karatay and Sultanhan of Kayseri. Saruhan Caravanserai is located in Cappadocia (Figure 9). Although it seems to be outside the popular tourist spots of Cappadocia, it is only a 10 minute drive from the towns of Avanos or Urgup. In addition to the well-done restoration of this historical complex, once or twice a day, whirling dervish shows are organized in this place.

Han Aksaray Sultan is located in the city of Sultanhan, on the Konya-Aksaray road, 40 km from Aksaray and 94 km from Konya (Figure 10). The town of Sultanhan is about 3 km south of the main highway. The inn is visible from the modern highway, which passes nearby. Han Aksaray Sultan lies in the heart of the main caravan road that formed the most important trade network of the era and connected the ports of Antalya and Alanya with Iran and Georgia via Konya, Aksaray, Kayseri, Sivas, Erzincan and Erzurum. This has been a busy road since antiquity and was heavily used by the Seljuks, who built substantial inns along it. Ibn-i Bibi<sup>1</sup> states that a messenger sent by the Abbasid caliph Lidinillah to Alaeddin Keykubad used this road and stayed in inns along it. Near the inn is the historical cemetery of those who died in the war. Helmuth von Moltke the Elder (1800-1891), a famous German field marshal, visited Aksaray in the fall of 1838, six months before the Battle of Nizip against the Egyptian rebels (June 24, 1829, near Gazientep) where he served as a military adviser to the Ottoman army.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Bibi was a Persian historiographer (in the period 1192-1280) and the author of the primary source for the history of the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum during the 13th century. He served as the head of the sultanate's office in Konya and reported on contemporary events. His most famous book is „Selçukname“.

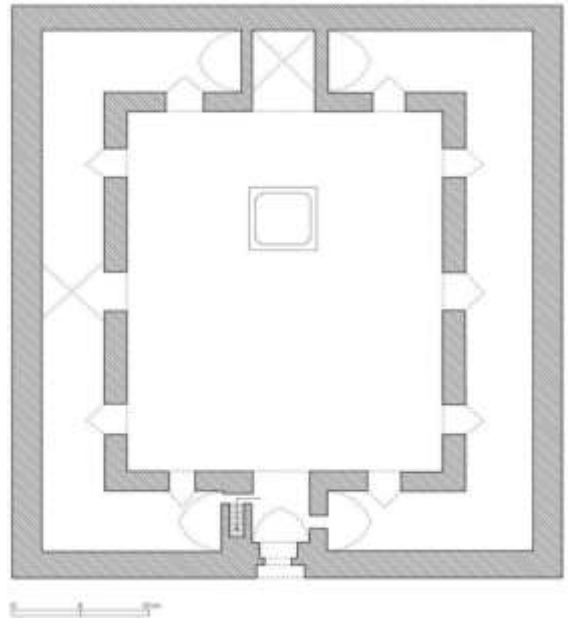
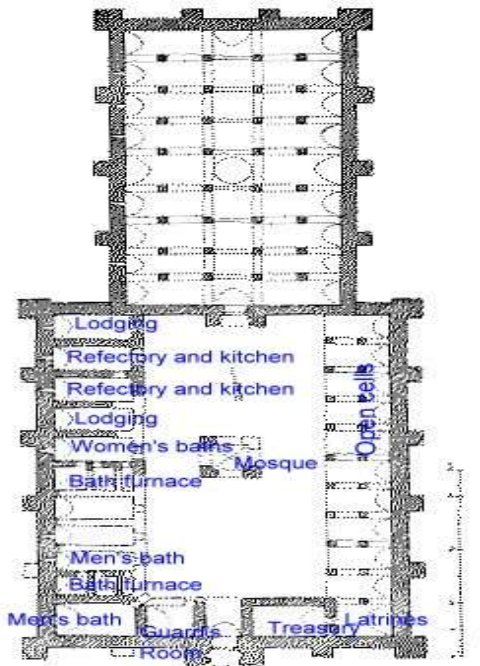


Figure 10. Aksaray Sultan Han in the city of Sultanhan

Source: <http://www.turkishhan.org/sultanaksaray.htm>, Accessed: May 24, 2023.

On the main route between Damascus and Homs is an attractive historical building known as Khan al-'Arus commissioned by Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi (Saladin). The caravanserai (inn) was built in 1182. Khan al-'Arus is a building with a square base, sides of 40 m. The layout of Khan al-Arus is similar to other neighboring and contemporary khans, such as Khan al-Qusayr. Nevertheless, careful attention was paid to the impressive appearance of this khan, as evidenced by the superior masonry construction, no doubt, because its patron was Salah al-Din (Saladin) himself. The building was restored in the second half of the 1980s (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Khan al-'Arus in Syria

Source: [https://islamicart.museumwnf.org/database\\_item.php?id=monument;ISL:sy;Mon01;36;en](https://islamicart.museumwnf.org/database_item.php?id=monument;ISL:sy;Mon01;36;en), Accessed: May 24, 2023.

Source: <https://www.archatlas.org/journal/ctavernari/caravanseraissyria/>, Accessed: May 24, 2023.

The Silk Market (Turkish: Koza Han) was built (1491) according to the project of the architect Abdul Ul Bin Pulat Sah, and by the order of Sultan Bayazit II (1447-1512). It is located between the Ulu Mosque and Sultan Orhan Mosque in Bursa. It was built as an important place of trade on the famous Silk Road. The inn has 95



rooms, each with a fireplace, whose chimneys on the sloping roof and smaller domes enrich the entire complex (Figure 12).

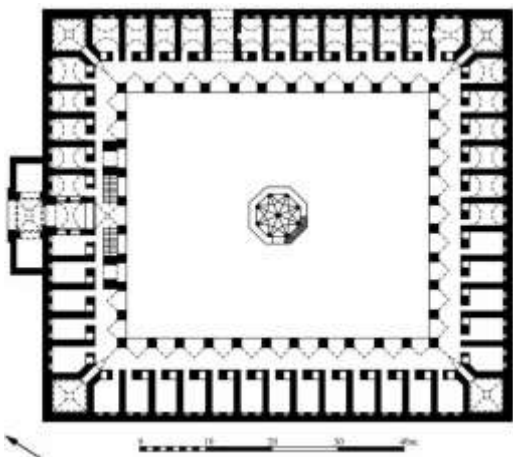


Figure 12. The Silk Market in Bursa

Source:

[http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database\\_item.php?id=monument;isl;tr;mon01;15;en](http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database_item.php?id=monument;isl;tr;mon01;15;en), . Accessed: May 24, 2023.

Source:

<https://plus.google.com/photos/photo/100882466087298583177/5816909980221623634>, Accessed: May 24, 2023.

Source: <http://www.tourmakerturkey.com/silkmarket.html>, Accessed: May 24, 2023.

The Shah-Abbasi caravanserai in Karaj (Iran) is one of the most valuable buildings of the Safavid period. It was built in 1698. It was used as a resting place for caravans during the Safavid period

(1501-1736). It was also used as a caravanserai during the Afsharid and Zand periods. This complex has two Shah Neshin (the room is bigger and cooler than all the rooms), 22 rooms for travelers to rest and five Bar Andaz (it is a place to evacuate bars and maintain animal caravans). The Shah Abbasi caravanserai in Karaj now includes parts such as a handicrafts museum and a traditional restaurant. This historical caravanserai was included in the List of National Heritage of Iran in 1976 (Figure 13).



Figure 13. Shah-Abbasi caravanserai in Karaj, Iran

Source:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shah\\_Abbasi\\_Caravansarai,\\_Bisotun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shah_Abbasi_Caravansarai,_Bisotun), Accessed: May 24, 2023.

Source: <https://www.irantravelingcenter.com/iran-caravansarai/>, Accessed: May 24, 2023.

[https://www.tripadvisor.com/Restaurant\\_Review-g1642853-d2217800-ReviewsShah\\_Abbasi\\_Caravansarai\\_RestaurantMeybod\\_Yazd\\_Province.html#photos;aggregationId=101&albumid=101&filter=7&f=415131008](https://www.tripadvisor.com/Restaurant_Review-g1642853-d2217800-ReviewsShah_Abbasi_Caravansarai_RestaurantMeybod_Yazd_Province.html#photos;aggregationId=101&albumid=101&filter=7&f=415131008), Accessed: 24 May 2023.



Orbelian's caravanserai is located in the Armenian province of Vayots Dzor (Figure 14). It was built in 1332 by Chesar Orbelian along the Vardenyats mountain pass (also known as the Selim mountain pass). Located on the southern side of the Vardenyats mountain pass at an altitude of 2410 meters above sea level, Orbelian's caravanserai is the best preserved caravanserai in the whole country. The ruins of the small chapel can still be seen next to the lobby, across the street from the spring. This 14th-century caravanserai in the Vardenis Pass served as a boarding house for merchants crossing the Silk Road through Armenia. The length of the caravanserai is 35.5 m, and the area is 298 m<sup>2</sup>. There is a three-room hall with 7 pairs of pedestals, divided into middle and side naves, and one stone pool. The stables were built to accommodate 64 horses. At the end are two guest rooms. On both sides of the portico are images of animals: the coats of arms of the Orbel government, a bull in the east, a lion in the west with a human face on the crown of a snake attacking him.



Figure 15. Multani Caravanserai in Baku, Azerbaijan

Source: <https://www.atelier-pummer.com/en/projects/detail/multanikaravansaray-131/>, Accessed: May 24, 2023.

Kursumli Khan in the Old Bazaar in Skopje is an Ottoman caravanserai located in the old town of Skopje. Kursumli Khan was built in the 15th or 16th century. There were stables for 100 horses. The walls of the han are square, and the roof consists of domes in the form of pyramids. The domes were originally covered with lead, which is how the inn got its name. The rooms on the ground floor were used for storage, and the upstairs for sleeping (Figure 16).



Figure 14. Orbelian's caravanserai in Armenia

Source: <https://busvoyage.am/en/sightseeings/sightseeings-ofarmenia/orbelians-caravanserai/>, Accessed: May 24, 2023.

Multani Caravanserai is located in the old city of Baku - Icherisheher. It was built in the 14th century for Indian merchants, worshipers of fire, who came from the city of Multan in India, the territory of present-day Pakistan (Figure 15).





Figure 16. Kursumli Khan in Skopje

Source: Prof. Ph.D. Ahmet Hadrovic (June 14, 2008)

Source: Prof. Dr. Neriman Rustempasic (June 14, 2008)

Kapan-han in the Old Bazaar in Skopje. It was built in the middle of the 15th century by the Bosnian general Isa-beg Ishakovic (1439-1470), ruler of the Skopje region, in order to provide a regular source of income for his endowment (vakuf). Kapan han has an area of 1086 m<sup>2</sup>. The building has two entrances, ground floor and first floor. There were 44 rooms for guests and merchants with their caravans. On the east side of the inn was a space for horses. The area around Kapan Khan was known as Kapan (Figure 17).



Figure 17. Kapan-han in Skopje

Source:

<http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?t=1656988>,  
Accessed: May 24, 2023.

Source:

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f0/Kapan\\_an.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f0/Kapan_an.jpg),  
Accessed: May 24, 2023.

Source: Prof. Dr. Neriman Rustempasic (June 14, 2008)

Khan Al Harir in Aleppo (Syria) is one of the most important ancient khans in Aleppo (Figure 18). Khan al-Harir is a two-story building built in the middle of the 16th century. It has one entrance and a square yard. It houses shops and facilities for the trade and sale of textiles, silks and various types of fabric produced locally in Aleppo, and has long been known for this type of industry and is the capital of Syrian industry and commerce.







Figure 18. Khan Al Harira in Aleppo, Syria

Source: <https://www.archnet.org/sites/2868>, Accessed: May 24, 2023.

Source: <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2021-10-03/Shops-in-Syria-s-Khanal-Harir-reopen-after-restoration-143jx8xa7e0/index.html>

Accessed: May 24, 2023.

Rustem Pasha's caravanserai is located in Edirne (formerly Hadrianople). It is the endowment of the Ottoman statesman-grand vizier Rüstem Pasha (1505-1561). The caravanserai is the work of the court architect Mimar Sinan (1490-1588), and was built in 1561. The building is now used as a hotel with 110 rooms after two years of renovation. It is a two-story rectangular building with a courtyard and a hammam. There are 21 shops in the front part. There was a well and mescita in the yard. It was demolished during the Russian siege in 1877/1878. For centuries, the trading yard was the place to sell domestic silk moths that were grown in the area of Edirne. The building was renovated in 1972 and turned into a hotel (Figure 19).

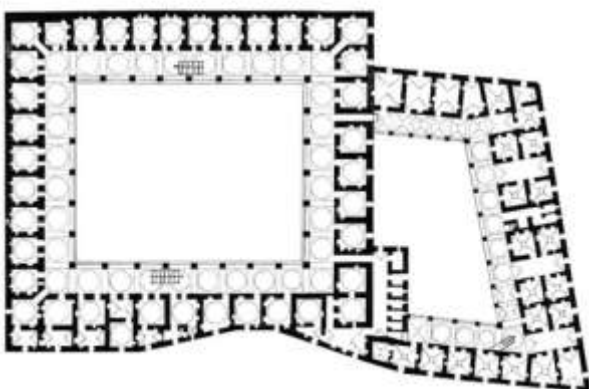


Figure 19. Rustem Pasha's caravanserai in Edirne, Turkey

Source: <https://hiddenarchitecture.net/rustem-pasa-caravanserai/>, Accessed: May 24, 2023.

Cinci Han (Turkish: Cinci Han) is located in the historical center of the city of Safranbolu. The Khan was erected (1645) by Kazasker Huseyin Efendi. It is developed through the ground floor and the first floor with a total of 63 rooms. In its time, it was one of the most richly decorated hans in the Ottoman Empire (Figure 20).



Figure 20. Cinci Khan, Safranbolu, Turkey

Source: Prof. Ph.D. Ahmet Hadrovic (July 11, 2012)

The historical complex "Caravanserai" in Sheki are two magnificent caravanserai that have reached the present day and are traditionally called "Yukhary" and "Ashaghy" caravanserai, which in translation from Azerbaijani to English means "Upper" and



“Lower” caravanserai (Figure 21). The construction of these caravanserais dates back to the 18th and 19th centuries. The “Lower” caravanserai has a rectangular base with a large inner courtyard, in the center of which is a swimming pool. The total area of the caravanserai is 8000 m<sup>2</sup>, and the dimensions are 55 x 85 meters. Four entrances led to the courtyard from all four corners of the buildings. There are 242 rooms in the lower caravanserai. The first floor was intended for guests to whom the rooms were rented. Each room had a shaft that was connected to the ground floor by a ladder and was very comfortable for merchants who wanted to control the safety of their products at all times. Since 1988, the Lower Caravanserai has been used as a hotel complex for tourists, city guests and local residents. There is a restaurant of national cuisine with 100 seats in the area of the complex. The hotel has luxury apartments in accordance with international standards. The “Upper” caravanserai is located in a more complex terrain (near the caravanserai flows the river Gurjan) and has the shape of a trapezoid. The total area of the building is 6000 m<sup>2</sup>. The front part of the building facing the street has a height of 14 meters, and the interior part is 8 meters. There are about 300 rooms and storerooms in the upper part of the caravanserai. Unlike the lower caravanserai, the upper one is not used as a hotel. It attracts tourists as a historical and architectural monument and a local landmark.



Figure 21. Historical complex “Caravanserai” in Sheki, Azerbaijan

Source: <https://uncorneredmarket.com/shaky-math-in-sheki/>, Accessed: May 24, 2023.

**Hindu temples on the Silk Road.** Hinduism is an Indian religion or dharma, a religious and universal order or way of life adhered to by its followers. As a religion, it is the third largest religion in the world, with over 1.2 - 1.35 billion followers, or 15–16% of the world's population, known as Hindus. The word 'Hindu' is an exonym, and while Hinduism has been called the world's oldest religion, many practitioners call their religion Sanātana Dharma ('Eternal Dharma'), a modern usage that refers to the idea that its origins lie outside of human history, as revealed in Hindu texts. Another endonym is Vaidika Dharma, a dharma associated with the Vedas <sup>[5]</sup>. Mandir or Hindu temple is for Hindus a symbolic house, seat and body of the deity. It is a structure designed to bring together human beings and deities, using symbolism to express the ideas and beliefs of Hinduism. The symbolism and structure of the Hindu temple is rooted in the Vedic tradition, the arrangement of circles and squares. The spiritual principles symbolically represented in Hindu temples are given in the ancient Sanskrit texts of India (Vedas and Upanishads), while their structural rules are described in various ancient Sanskrit treatises on architecture (Brhat Samhita, Vastu Sastras). The layout, motifs, plan and construction process speak of ancient rituals, geometric symbolism and reflect the beliefs and values innate within the various schools of Hinduism. A Hindu temple is a spiritual destination for many Hindus, as well as landmarks around which ancient arts, community celebrations and economies flourished. Hindu temples are built in many styles, are located in different locations, use different construction methods, and are adapted to different deities and regional beliefs, but almost all share certain key ideas, symbolism, and themes. They are found in South Asia, especially in India and Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, in Southeast Asian countries such as Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia and the islands of Indonesia, and in countries such as Canada, Fiji, France, Guyana, Kenya, Mauritius, Netherlands, South Africa, Suriname, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, United Kingdom, USA and other countries with significant Hindu population. The present condition and exterior appearance of Hindu temples reflect the art, materials and design that have evolved over two millennia. A Hindu temple reflects the synthesis of art, dharma ideals, beliefs, values and ways of life cherished in Hinduism. It is the connection between man, the deities and the Universal Purusa in the sacred space. It represents the threefold knowledge (trayi-vidya) of the Vedic vision by mapping the relationship between the cosmos (brahmanda) and station (pinda) with a unique plan based on astronomical numbers. The American-Indian computer scientist, Subhash Kak (1947-), sees the form of the temple and its iconography as a natural expansion of the Vedic ideology associated with recursion, change and equivalence <sup>[6]</sup>. The 9 x 9 'Parama Sayika' grid plan (81) is found in large ceremonial Hindu temples (Figure 22). It is one of the many webs used to build Hindu temples. In this structure of symmetry, each concentric layer has significance. The outermost layer, Paisachika padas, denotes asura and evil aspects; while the inner Devika padas denote the Deva and good aspects. Between good and evil is the concentric layer of Manusha pada which signifies human life; all these layers surround the Brahma padas, marking the creative energy and the place for the temple's primary idol for darsana. Finally, in the very center of Brahma pada is the Garbhagriha (space of the Purus), which signifies the universal principle present in everything and everyone.





Buddhist ethics and meditation, with the intention of breaking the cycle of death and rebirth (samsāra). Other widely noted practices include: monasticism; 'taking refuge' in Buddha, dharma and saṅgha; and cultivating perfection (pāramitā) [8]. It was along the Silk Road that Buddhism began to spread to China from India as early as the first century AD. With him came the idea of building temples and holy places by hollowing out rocks: Buddhist caves and wall art spread throughout China in this way. Hundreds of these magnificent cave art sites are still found on mountainsides and rock faces across China, featuring impressive sculptures and colorful murals dating back thousands of years. Not only are these sites a testament to their creators' devotion to their faith, they also offer a fascinating insight into a multicultural society that thrived for a thousand years along the once-powerful Silk Road trade route that connected East and West [9].

Buddhist caves in China are scattered in the far west, mainly in Xinjiang, Gansu, and the Yellow and Yangzi River regions. Many are listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, featuring unique sculptures and murals in varying degrees of preservation. What connects them all is their important place in the story of Buddhism and multiculturalism in China. They are among the world's greatest monuments of faith and the way people always share and transmit new ideas. There are many caves and cave art throughout the country that are open to the public.

The Maijishan Caves are a series of 194 caves cut into the side of Maijishan Hill in Tianshua, Gansu Province, northwest China (Figure 24). This example of rock-hewn architecture contains more than 7,200 Buddhist sculptures and over 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> of murals. Construction began in the later Qin era (384-417). He was the first to properly investigate them in 1952-1953. a team of Chinese archaeologists from Beijing, who devised a numbering system that is still used today. Caves no. 1–50 are located on the western side of the cliff; caves 51–191 on the eastern cliff face. They were later photographed by Michael Sullivan and Dominique Darbois, who later published the primary work in English on the caves listed in the notes below. The name Maijishan is composed of three Chinese words which literally translates as 'Mountain of Stacks', but since the term 'mai' is a generic term in Chinese used for most grains, such translations can also be seen as 'Corn Mountain'. Mai means 'grain', 'Ji' means 'mound', 'Shan' means 'mountain'. The mountain is formed from crimson red sandstone. They are just one of a series of Buddhist caves to be found in this area of northwestern China, lying more or less on the main roads connecting China and Central Asia. These sites, along with other archaeological sites along the eastern Silk Road, were inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2014 as part of the „Silk Roads: Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor Route Network“ site [10].

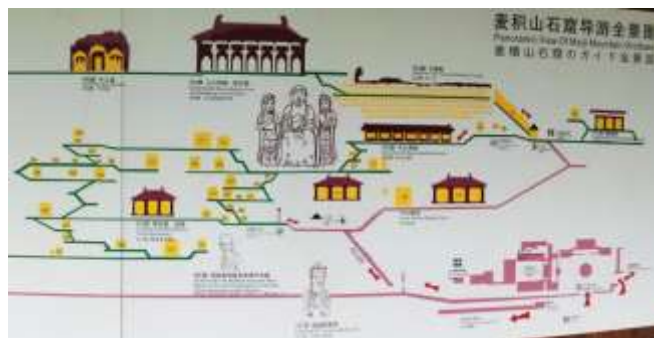


Figure 24. Maijishan Caves

Source: <https://www.chinadiscovery.com/gansu/majjishan-grottoes.html>, Accessed: May 9, 2023.

Carved into the eastern slope of a mountain near Dunhuang in Gansu Province, the Mogao Caves are one of the most important collections of Buddhist art in the world. Located at a strategic point along the Silk Road, at the crossroads of trade as well as religious, cultural and intellectual influences, the caves were first begun to be carved in 366 AD by a monk named Yue Seng. Artwork here reached its creative peak during the Tang Dynasty (618-907), when there were 18 monasteries in the area, more than 1,400 monks and nuns, and countless artists, translators, and calligraphers. About 500 cave cells and shrines survive today, and are prized for the statues and wall paintings that span 1,000 years of Buddhist art preserved within them. Protected under UNESCO World Heritage status, the Mogao Caves show the evolution of religious art along this part of the Silk Road and provide a literally vivid picture of medieval politics, economy, culture, art, religion, ethnic relations and daily costumes in western China [11]. Carved into the cliffs above the Dachuan River, the Mogao Caves southeast of Dunhuang Oasis, Gansu Province, comprise the world's largest, most richly endowed, and longest-used treasury of Buddhist art (Figure 25). They were built for the first time in 366 and represent a great achievement of Buddhist art from the 4th to the 14th century. Currently, 492 caves are preserved, in which there are about 45,000 m<sup>2</sup> of murals and more than 2,000 painted sculptures.





Figure 25. Mogao Caves

Source: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/440/>. Accessed: February 4, 2023.

The Bezeklik Caves are vivid evidence of the history of Buddhism in Turpan, and although many of them were devastated at the time, today they are still one of the most beautiful architectural works belonging to the era of the development of Buddhism in China <sup>[12]</sup> (Figure 26).



Picture 26. Bezeklik Caves (Buddhist sanctuary in Turpan) - a famous cave monastery, located in the mountains 45 km from Turpan on the slopes of the Fiery Mountains

Source: <http://dsr.nii.ac.jp/rarebook/01/o/bez03.jpg>, Accessed: February 8, 2023.

Source: <https://www.audleytravel.com/us/china/places-to-go/turpan>, Accessed: February 8, 2023.

The Borobudur temple complex is one of the largest Buddhist monuments in the world, and was built in the 8th and 9th centuries AD during the reign of the Syailendra dynasty (Figure 27). The monument is located in the Kedu Valley, in the southern part of Central Java, Indonesia. The main temple is a stupa built in three levels around a hill that was the natural center: a pyramidal base with five concentric square terraces, a cone tree with three circular platforms and, at the top, a monumental stupa. The walls and balustrades are decorated with fine low reliefs, with a total area of 2520 m<sup>2</sup>. Around the circular platforms are 72 open stupas, each containing a Buddha statue. The vertical division of the Borobudur temple into base, body and superstructure is perfectly in line with the conception of the universe in Buddhist cosmology. The universe is believed to be divided into three interconnected spheres, kamadhata, rupadhata and arupadhata, which represent the sphere of desire where we are bound to our desires, the sphere of form where we abandon our desires but are still bound to name both form, and the sphere of formlessness in which there is no more name or form. In the Borobudur temple, kamadhata is represented by a base, rupadhata by five square terraces, and arupadhata by three circular platforms as well as a large stupa. The entire structure shows a unique blend of the central ideas of ancestor worship, associated with the idea of a terraced mountain, combined with the Buddhist concept Read more about this site on the UNESCO World Heritage website <sup>[13]</sup>.





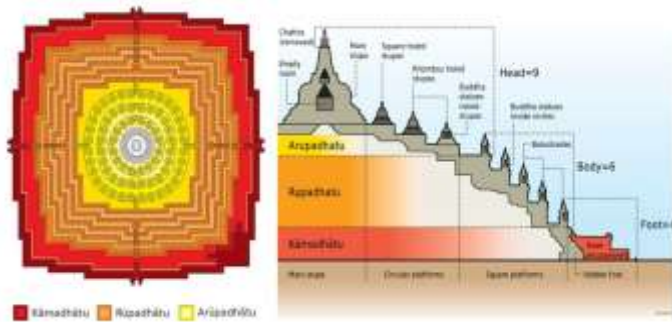


Figure 27. Borobudur temple complex, Indonesia

Source: <https://snoozehostelindonesia.com/borobudur-and-the-surrounding-area-everything-you-need-to-know-before-visiting-the-temple/> Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/714172453382046438/>, Accessed: May 25, 2023.

Located near the Selenga River in the Iven Valley, at the foot of Buren-Khaan Mountain in the center of the country, Amarbayasgalant Monastery is one of the three largest Buddhist centers of the Tibetan Gelugpa school in Mongolia (Figure 28). In 2014, the Amarbayasgalant monastery was included in the UNESCO list of world cultural heritage<sup>[14]</sup>. The monastery was founded and funded by order of Emperor Yongzheng (and completed under his successor, Emperor Qianlong) of Qing China to serve as the final resting place of Zanabazar (1635-1723), the first Jebtsundamba Khutuktu. Tradition says that while the research group was looking for a suitable place to build a monastery, they came across two boys, Amur and Bayasqalangtu, playing in the steppe. They were inspired to build a monastery on that very spot and name it after their two children, Amur-Bayasqalangtu.



Figure 28. Amarbayasgalant monastery in Mongolia

Source: <https://www.mongolia-trips.com/10-monasteries>. Accessed: February 5, 2023.

Source: [https://www.titudorancea.com/z/amarbayasgalant\\_monastery\\_mongolia.htm](https://www.titudorancea.com/z/amarbayasgalant_monastery_mongolia.htm). Accessed: February 5, 2023.

**Jewish temples (synagogues) on the Silk Road.** Judaism is an Abrahamic (Ibrahmic), monotheistic and ethnic religion consisting of the collective religious, cultural and legal tradition and civilization of the Jewish people. It has its roots as an organized religion in the Middle East during the Bronze Age. Modern Judaism developed from Yahwism, the religion of ancient Israel and Judea, by the late 6th century BC, and is therefore considered one of the oldest monotheistic religions. Religious Jews consider Judaism to be an expression of the covenant that God established with the Israelites, their ancestors. It includes a wide body of texts, practices, theological positions and forms of organizations<sup>[15]</sup>. The Torah, as it is commonly understood by Jews, is part of a larger text known as the Tanach. The Tanakh is also known to secular scholars of religion as the Hebrew Bible, and to Christians as the 'Old Testament'. A synagogue (Ancient Greek: συναγωγή - synagogē = assembly, Hebrew: בית קנסף - beit kneset = assembly house) can also have classrooms, a social hall and offices. Some have a separate room for Torah study, called בית מדרש - beth midrash = lighted, house of study. Synagogues are sacred spaces used for prayer, reading the Tanakh (the entire Hebrew Bible, including the Torah), study and gathering. However, a synagogue is not required for Jewish worship. The Halakha holds that communal Jewish worship can be performed wherever ten Jews gather (minyan). The prayer can be performed individually or with less than ten people gathered.

According to legend, the El Ghriba Synagogue in Djerba, Tunisia was first built in 586 BC or 70 BC, which would make it the oldest synagogue still in existence and in continuous use in the world (Figure 29). Among the oldest buildings built as synagogues are the Old Synagogue in Erfurt, Germany, which was built around

1100, and the Santa María la Blanca Synagogue in Toledo, Spain, which was built in 1190. However, neither was used as a synagogue for centuries. The oldest active synagogue in the world is the Prague Old Synagogue in the Czech Republic, built in the 1270s. The Ben Ezra Synagogue in Cairo is the oldest synagogue in the world, serving continuously from 1025 to the middle of the 20th century. Thanks to the migration of almost all Egyptian Jews to Israel, the synagogue today functions as a museum.

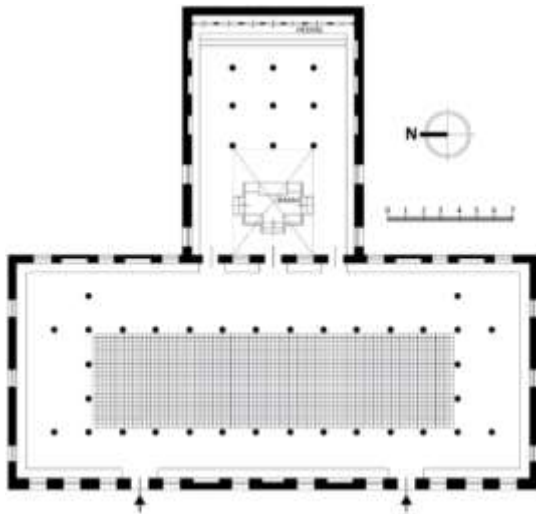


Figure 29. El Ghriba Synagogue in Djerba, Tunisia

Source: [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Plan-of-the-Ghriba-Synagogue-based-on-Pinkerfelds-plan-1957-C-Nesrine-Mansour\\_fig3\\_329156313](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Plan-of-the-Ghriba-Synagogue-based-on-Pinkerfelds-plan-1957-C-Nesrine-Mansour_fig3_329156313)

Source: <https://www.journeysinternational.com/destination/africa/tunisia/el-ghriba-synagogue/>. Accessed: February 10, 2023.

Accessed: February 10, 2023.

Probably as early as the first few centuries of our era, large Jewish trading settlements could be found along the eastern Silk Road, reaching as far as Kaifeng in China. Early trade documents in the area's unique form of Hebrew dating from around 400 AD have been found in China suggesting that the community not only existed but thrived at the time. The remains of a large synagogue were also found in Kaifeng and are dated to the 11th and 12th centuries (Figure 30).

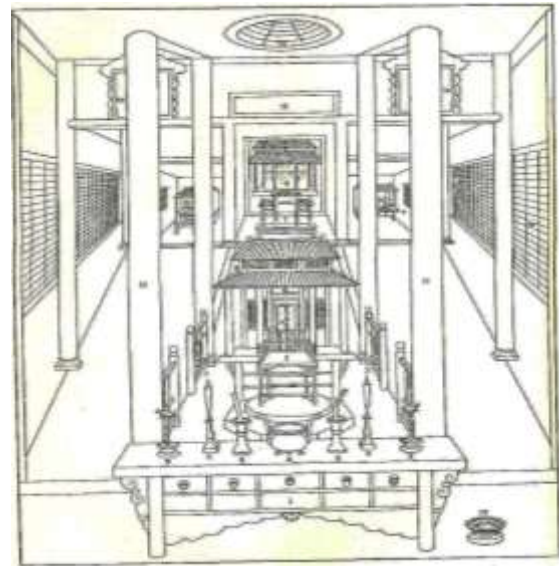


Figure 30. Kaifeng Synagogue. Left: Model of the Kaifeng Synagogue in the Diaspora Museum in Tel Aviv. Right: Interior of the Kaifeng Synagogue, 18th century

Source: <https://silkroadgourmet.com/the-jews-of-the-great-silk-road/>, Accessed: February 10, 2023.

**Monasteries and churches on the Silk Road.** Along with the growth of Buddhism, the Silk Road nurtured minority groups from other major religions. The Assyrian Christians, or more accurately the Church of the East, were one such group. Often misidentified simply as Nestorianism, the Church was strongest in eastern Syria, where it gained recognition as part of the Persian Empire and later flourished after the arrival of Islam. In Syria, this tradition is visible to this day, testifying to the lasting influence of the Eastern Christian tradition in the region. Assyrian Christians played a crucial role in creating an important intellectual center at Jundishapur, where the studies of philosophy, astronomy, medicine and astrology directly influenced Muslim learning. Doctrinally, they shared with other Christian groups the belief in the fundamental and redemptive role of Jesus Christ, but they also taught that Jesus Christ had two distinct natures, divine and human, a view that led the then Patriarch of Constantinople, Nestorius (Ancient Greek: *Νεστόριος*; c. 386- around 451) in conflict with those who held to the doctrine of the inseparability of the two natures of Jesus. Subsequently, Nestorius' followers were excommunicated and eventually became a separate church with its own distinct hierarchy, liturgy, and theological tradition. In Central



Asia, the Assyrian Christians influenced the Sogdians, who, due to their strategic location, had already become the trade masters of the Silk Road and its cultural transmitters. Sogdian became the lingua franca of the Silk Road, spreading Christianity further east to China and north among the Turks. Eastern Christians succeeded in three major mass conversions of the Turks in Central Asia from the 7th to the 11th century. Despite being seen as the religion of foreign traveling merchants, Eastern Christianity gained recognition in China as a 'brilliant religion', with Christian saints called Buddhas and their treatises sutras.

Sümela Monastery (Greek: Μονή Παναγίας Σουμελά = Moní Panagías Soumelá, Turkish: Sümela Manastırı, English: Sümela Monastery) was built in 386. It is dedicated to the Virgin Mary. It was built on Mount Melá (Sou Melá = Black Plan), or Karadağ (which is a direct Turkish translation of the Greek name of the mountain), on a steep rock cliff (at about 1,200 m above sea level), about 50 km south of Trabzon. Today, the monastery is located within the Altındere National Park (Figure 31).



Figure 31. Sümela monastery near Trabzon, Turkey

Source: Prof. Ph.D. Ahmet Hadrovic (July 6, 2012)

Mor Hananyo Monastery is an important Syrian Orthodox monastery located three kilometers southeast of Mardin, Turkey, in the Syrian cultural area known as Tur Abdin (Figure 32). It is better known by its nickname 'Saffron Monastery', which is

derived from the warm color of the stone from which it was built. Syriac Orthodox culture was concentrated in two monasteries near Mardin (west of Tur Abdin), Mor Gabriel and Deyrulzafaran [16]. Mor Hananyo Monastery is one of the most famous and oldest buildings in Upper Mesopotamia and the religious center of the Süryani Kadim Community (Syrian Orthodox). The origin of this imposing monastery dates back to the 5th century; the mosaics left over from that period are still present. From 1293 to 1932, it was the official seat of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and the entire East.



Figure 32. Mor Hananyo Monastery in Mardin (Turkey)

Source: <https://www.mynet.com/deyruzafaran-manastiri-neredenasilgildir-deyruzafaran-manastiri-hikayesi-giris-ucreti-ziyaretsaatleri-190101252933>. Accessed: February 9, 2023.

Source:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20070927142956/http://www.syrianchurch.org/ch/SaffronMonastery.htm>. Accessed: February 9

2023, Accessed: February 9, 2023.

Monastery of St. Bernabea (Greek: Μονή Αγίου Βαρνάβα, Turkish: St. Barnabas Manastırı, English: St. Barnabas Monastery). Saint Barnabas is the patron saint of Cyprus, and the church dedicated to him was built in 1756. The church was built on the foundations of a basilica from the 5th century. There is also a gallery of frescoes in the church (Figure 33).



Figure 33. Monastery of St. Bernabea in Constantia, Northern Cyprus

Source: Prof. Ph.D. Ahmet Hadrovic (February 22, 2007)

In the 9th century, monks moved to the island of Sevan and began to live there. The Sevanavank religious complex was built by hermit monks at the end of the 8th century with the support of Princess Mariam from the Bagratuni royal family (Figure 34). At that time, the peninsula was not connected to the mainland and was a rugged area a little more than 250 meters long, and to get to it, it was necessary to overcome 3 kilometers of water. Today,

Sevanavank is one of the main attractions of the country. Another monastery on the shores of the beautiful Lake Sevan is the Airavank monastery. The monastery was founded in the 9th century and consists of churches, chapels, built in the 10th century, and a porch attached to the church in the 12th century. After some time, chapels were built on the eastern side of the church. Around the monastery there are a number of tombstones and khachkars, which are part of the ancient cemetery. The complex is located on a rock with a beautiful view of the lake. The main entrance to the monastery is framed by many crosses, which were placed on the monastery walls for hundreds of years.



Figure 34. Ancient monasteries on the shore of Lake Sevan

Source: <https://www.airpano.com/360video/vr-sevan/>, Accessed: February 8, 2023.

Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/fengwei888/49892872551> Accessed: February 8, 2023.

Noravank is one of the most interesting monasteries in Armenia. It is located 122 kilometers from the capital Yerevan and dates back to the 13-14th century. The monastery complex is located on the edge of the gorge. On its territory there are several ancient khachkars, as well as the Surb Astvatsatsin church, unique in its architecture, with narrow cantilever stairs. Noravank was also the residence of the Armenian princes Orbeljanov. The place is unusually beautiful, as is the neighborhood. The interesting thing about this place is that ancient footwear was found in the red rocks there, the oldest shoe that has survived to our days (Figure 35).





Picture 35. Noravank Monastery

Source: <https://www.iarmenia.org/noravank/>. Accessed: February 8, 2023.

Source: <https://armenia-tour.com/en/destinations/noravank>. Accessed: February 8, 2023.

The Greek Orthodox church dedicated to Saints Sergius and Bacchus in Constantinople (today's Istanbul) was built between 532 and 536 and converted into a mosque during the Ottoman Empire (Figure 36). It was turned into a mosque around 1510. This Byzantine building with a central dome was built by Justinian in the sixth century. It is one of the most important early Byzantine buildings in Istanbul. The Church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus in Istanbul was another influential Byzantine church that Islamic architects studied and perfected. It was probably the model for the Hagia Sophia, but its size made it a more stable design. The most important discovery made by Byzantine architects was the method of 'smooth transition' from the square floor plan of the church to the circular dome. The Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (690) and the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus (714) are among the first Islamic buildings to show the direct influence of this new technique. They established the mosque design that can still be found throughout North Africa and Arabia. But it was the perfection of the dome in Persian Islamic design that most influenced architecture along the Silk Road to Asia.

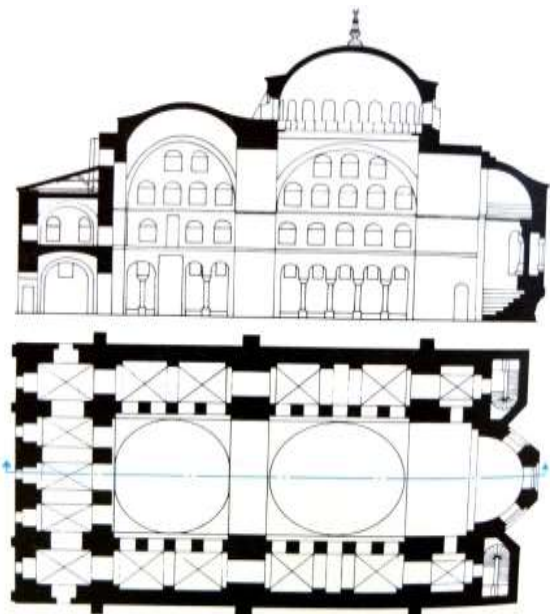


Figure 36. Church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus in Istanbul

Source: <https://arsartisticadventureofmankind.wordpress.com/tag/church-of-the-saints-sergius-and-bacchus/>. Accessed: February 4, 2023.

Source: <https://www.viator.com/Istanbul-attractions/Kucuk-Ayasofia-Camii-Church-of-the-Saints-Sergius-and-Bacchus/d585-a8870>

Accessed: February 4, 2023.

The current Hagia Sophia was built by Emperor Justinian in 532 and was the largest Christian church in the world for more than 1000 years (Figure 37). The dome of Hagia Sophia is 54,864 meters high, which is still impressive today. Four minarets were added to the new mosque, setting the template for future Ottoman architecture, especially mosques, and most notably the nearby Sultan Ahmed Mosque, which dates from 1616. Today's Hagia Sophia was originally built as a Greek Orthodox church that lasted from 360 until the conquest of Constantinople (today's Istanbul) by the Ottoman Empire in 1453. It served as a mosque until 1935, when it became a museum. In 2020, the place became a mosque again. The current structure was built by the Byzantine emperor Justinian I (Justinian the Great, 482-565) as a Christian cathedral in Constantinople for the Byzantine Empire between 532 and 537, and was designed by the Greek geometers Isidore of Miletus and Anthemius of Tralus. It was officially called the Church of Holy

Wisdom (Greek: Ναός τῆς Ἁγίας τοῦ Θεοῦ Σοφίας, Romanized: Naós tēs Hagías toû Theoû Sophías) and after its completion it became the largest interior space in the world. It is considered the pinnacle of Byzantine architecture.

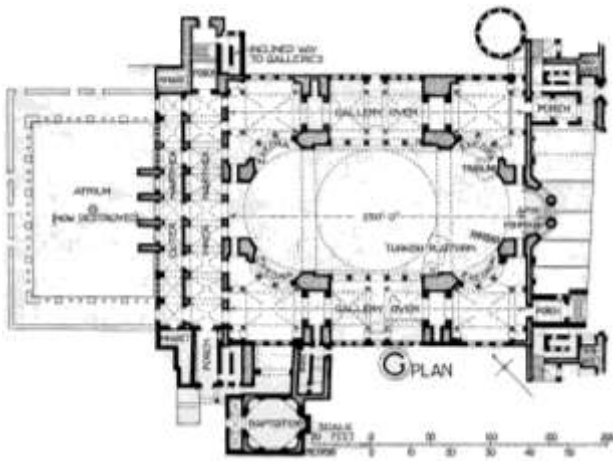


Figure 37. Hagia Sophia

Source: <https://www.pallasweb.com/deesis/hagia-sophia-buildingplans.html>. Accessed: February 9, 2023.

Source: [https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/istanbuls-hagia-sophiareopens-to-worship-as-mosque-after-top-administrative-courtpeals-](https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/istanbuls-hagia-sophiareopens-to-worship-as-mosque-after-top-administrative-courtpeals-1934-decree/news)

1934-decree/news. Accessed: February 9, 2023.

Sveti Naum Monastery in Ohrid, Macedonia, was founded (895) by St. Naum, associate of St. Kliment of Ohrid (Figure 38). The monastery church (built in 900) is dedicated to St. Archangels Michael and Gabriel. St. Naum spent the last years of his life here, where he died (910) and where he was buried. Over time, the church and other buildings of the monastery were rebuilt, and the church got its present appearance in the 16th century. The monastery, as a cultural heritage, is remarkably complemented by the nearby sources (30 underwater and 15 surface) of the river Crni Drim, whose yield is  $7.5 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$ .

Figure 38. Monastery of Saint Naum in Ohrid, Macedonia (founded in 895)

Source: Prof. Ph.D. Ahmet Hadrovic (June 16, 2008)

Source: Prof. Dr. Neriman Rustempasic (June 16, 2008)

The Patriarchal Cathedral Basilica of Saint Mark (Italian: Basilica Cattedrale Patriarcale di San Marco), known as the Basilica of Saint Mark (Italian: Basilica di San Marco), is the cathedral church of the Catholic Patriarchate in Venice (Figure 39); it became the episcopal seat of the Patriarch of Venice in 1807, replacing the earlier cathedral of San Pietro di Castello. It is dedicated to and keeps the relics of Saint Mark the Evangelist, the patron saint of the city. The church is located at the eastern end of Saint Mark's



Square, the former political and religious center of the Venetian Republic, and is connected to the Doge's Palace. Before the fall of the republic in 1797, it was the chapel of the doge and was under his jurisdiction, with the consent of the procurator of Saint Mark de Supra for administrative and financial affairs. The current building is the third church, probably begun in 1063 to express the growing civic consciousness and pride of Venice. Like the two earlier churches, it was modeled after the 6th-century Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, although adjustments were made to adapt the design to the constraints of the physical site and meet the specific needs of Venetian state ceremonies. Middle Byzantine, Romanesque and Islamic influences are also visible, and later Gothic elements were incorporated.

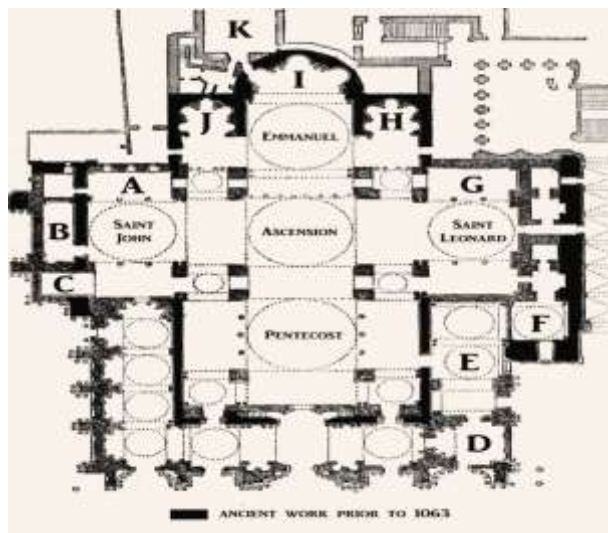


Figure 39. St. Mark's Basilica in Venice

Source: [https://www.tuscanynowandmore.com/discover-italy/museumsunmissable-sights/5-things-you-didnt-know-about-basilica-disan-](https://www.tuscanynowandmore.com/discover-italy/museumsunmissable-sights/5-things-you-didnt-know-about-basilica-disan-marco)

marco, Accessed: February 9, 2023.

**Mosques and madrasahs on the Silk Road.** By the 8th century, Muslims stopped thinking about religion geographically and began looking for converts along the Silk Road (Figure 40). The advantages of converting to such a widespread religion were numerous, as Muslims preferred to trade with other Muslims. Islamic scientific and medical advances also had a significant impact on Silk Road travelers. Chinese Buddhist merchants adopted Islamic medical knowledge (in wound healing, urinalysis).

Muslims brought to India their insights into astronomy, including skepticism towards a geocentric Universe.



Figure 40. Cave of Hira in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. In this cave, Prophet Muhammad s.a.w.s. began to receive revelation - the Qur'an

Source: <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/variety/2017/02/07/The-Cave-of-Hira-in-photos-Islam-sstarting-point-to-the-universe-.html>

Source: <https://www.islamiclandmarks.com/makkahother/jabal-hira>, Accessed: August 26, 2018.

The Great Mosque (Arabic, Romanized: Al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, English: The Great Mosque of Makkah), which is mostly called the Kaaba and the most important building in the city of Mecca and the most important building in the world for Muslim believers (Figure 41 ). This is the point towards which all Muslim believers turn during prayer. During the Hajj rites, pilgrims first visit this place and circumambulate it (Arabic, romanized: Ṭawāf, English: Circumambulation) seven times, in a counter-clockwise direction. According to Islam, the Kaaba was founded by the first man on Earth, Adem (Adam), and is the oldest place of reverence for God on planet Earth.





Figure 41. The Great Mosque (Al-Masjid al-Ḥarām)

Source: <https://architectenweb.nl/nieuws/artikel.aspx?ID=41224>, Accessed: August 26, 2018.

Source: <https://www.britannica.com/media/full/254837/227608>, Accessed: August 26, 2018.

The Great Mosque of Diyarbakır (Turkish: Cami-i Kebîr, Kurdish: Mizgefta Mezin a Diyarbakır, English: Great Mosque of Diyarbakır) was built (1092) by Seljuk Sultan Malik Shah I (1055-1092). The mosque was built on the site of the church of St. Thomas, which is considered to be one of the oldest churches in history<sup>2</sup>. When the church was converted into a mosque, it was still used by Christians to perform their prayers. It is considered to be the fifth most important mosque in the world. With regard to its architecture, some similarities with the Great Mosque in Damascus (built in 715) can be observed. In the spacious courtyard of the mosque, there is a šadrvan (Ottoman construction from 1849), arranged as a place for prayer and a place for rest for visitors to the mosque<sup>118</sup> (Figure 42). The walls of this mosque are made of alternating black stone-basalt and white stone-limestone.

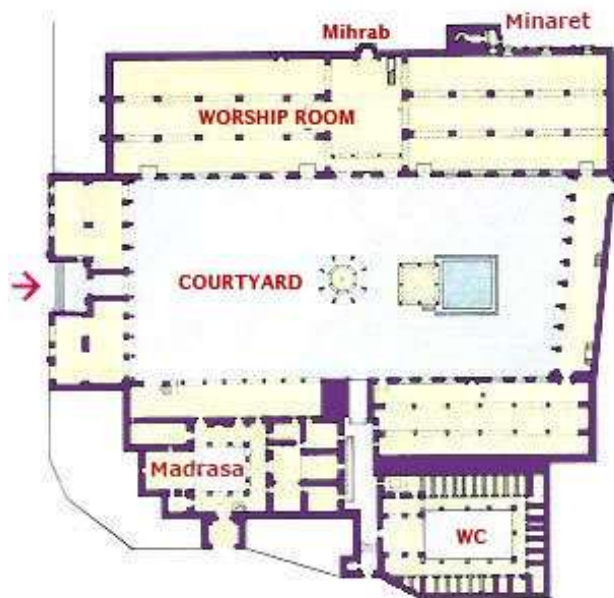


Figure 42. Great Mosque in Diyarbakır

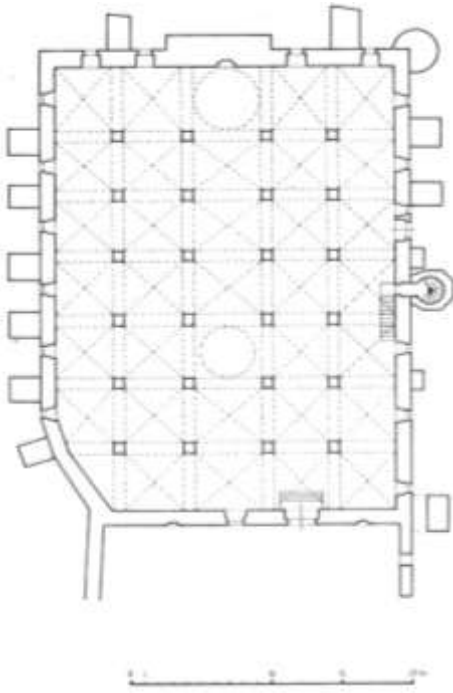
Source: [https://www.ne.jp/asahi/arc/ind/2\\_meisaku/35\\_diyarbakir/diy\\_eng.htm](https://www.ne.jp/asahi/arc/ind/2_meisaku/35_diyarbakir/diy_eng.htm). Accessed: February 13, 2023.

Source: Prof. Ph.D. Ahmet Hadrovic (July 6, 2011)

The Great Mosque of Niksar (Turkish: Ulu Camii, English: The Grand Mosque) was built (1145) outside the fortress. It is a very stable construction, basilica-style, with walls of dark gray granite (Figure 43).

<sup>2</sup> At the time when the Author visited this mosque (July 6, 2011), its extensive reconstruction was underway.





The Şehidiye Madrasa (Turkish: Şehidiye Medresesi, English: Şehidiye Medrese) was built (1214) at the same time as the Şehidiye Mosque built by Melik Mansur Nasreddin Artuk Aslan. Şehidiye madrasa has been used as a mosque since it lost its function as a madrasa, and is popularly called 'Şehidiye mosque'. The building has undergone a large number of repairs, which can be seen from the stylistic differences in today's floor plan. The first recorded repairs begin in the seventeenth century and continue with many practices throughout the Republican period. Through various repairs, the original plan of the madrasa was constantly changed (Figure 44).



Picture 44. Şehidiye madrasa in Mardin

Source:  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/104767765@N07/25101708866>,  
 Accessed: February 10, 2023.

Source: Prof. Ph.D. Ahmet Hadrovic (July 6, 2011)

The Great Mosque (Turkish: Ulu Cami) is the largest mosque in Bursa, and a representative example of Seljuk period mosque architecture. The mosque was built (1396-1400) by the order of Sultan Bayazit I (1360-1403), and according to the project of the architects Ali Neccar and Hacı İvaz Paşa. The mosque has a rectangular base of dimensions 58 m x 56 m divided into twenty fields (4x5 fields), where each of them is defined by columns of square section and covered by a dome, so that the mosque as a whole has twenty domes (Figure 45).



Figure 43. Great mosque in Niksar

Source: <https://www.yenisafak.com/ramazan/sade-veiddiasiz-uncuniksar-ulu-camii-2487471>. Accessed: September 4, 2018.

Source:  
<https://plus.google.com/photos/photo/114017149722577180147/6586107192991826770>. Accessed: September 4, 2018.

Source: Prof. Ph.D. Ahmet Hadrovic (July 8, 2012)

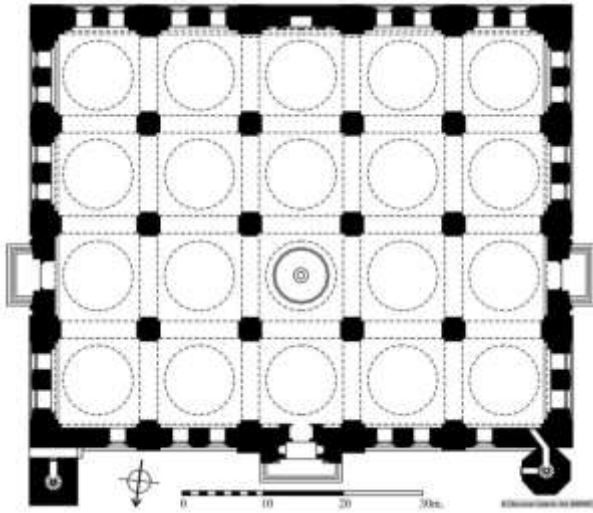


Figure 45. Ulu Mosque/Great Mosque in Bursa, Turkey

Source: [http://www.gateofturkey.com/section/en/59/3/cities-of-turkeybursa#prettyPhoto\[mixed\]/4](http://www.gateofturkey.com/section/en/59/3/cities-of-turkeybursa#prettyPhoto[mixed]/4). Accessed: February 10, 2023.

Source: Prof. Ph.D. Ahmet Hadrovic (August 11, 2007)

Po-i-Kalan, or Poi Kalan is an Islamic religious complex located in Bukhara, Uzbekistan. The complex consists of three parts: the Kalan mosque (Masjid-i Kalan), the Kalan minaret (Minâra-i Kalân) to which the name refers, and the Mir-i-Arab madrasa. The positioning of the three structures creates a square courtyard in the center, with the Mir-i-Arab and the Kalan Mosque standing at opposite ends. In addition, the square is surrounded by a bazaar and a series of baths connected to the minaret at the northern and southern ends. The congregational mosque in the complex is one of the largest mosques in Central Asia, behind the Bibi Khanum Mosque in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, and the Great Mosque in Herat, Afghanistan (Figure 46). Both the Kalan Mosque and the Minaret were originally commissioned by Arslan Khan in 1121, and the famous Kalan Minaret was completed in 1127. Genghis Khan destroyed the original mosque in 1220, leaving only the Kalan minaret intact. Today's Kalan Mosque and Mir-i Arab Madrasa were commissioned in 1515 and 1535 respectively by Shibani Kahn's nephew Ubaydullah Khan after he and his father Mahmud Sultan gained power over Bukhara. The mosque itself bears similarities to the Bibi Khanum Mosque in Samarkand, and the layout of the complex that joins the mosque and madrasah creates a 'kosh', a unique square layout used in 16th-century Central Asian architecture defined by the space between both mosques and madrasahs. The 'kosh' created by the geometric spacing between the mosque and the madrasah magnifies the ornate facade of the Kalan Mosque and the grandeur of the



opposing madrasah to imbue individuals with a sense of grandeur that reflected Ubaydullah's power.

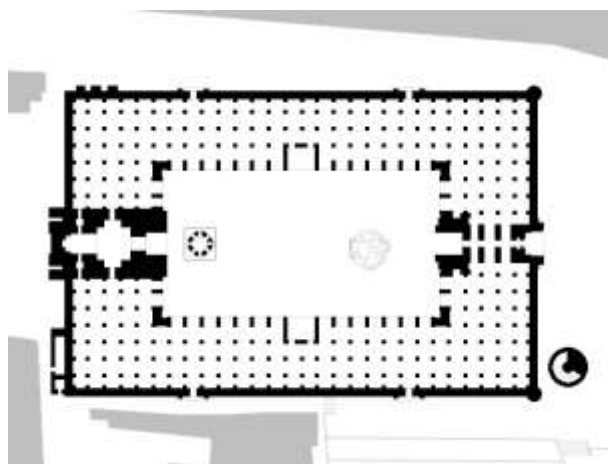


Figure 46. Congregational mosque in Bukhara

Source:

<https://www.orientalarchitecture.com/sid/1323/uzbekistan/bukhara/kalyan-mosque>. Accessed: February 4, 2023.

Source: <https://www.kayak.com/flight-routes/United-States-US0/Bukhara-BHK>. Accessed: February 4, 2023.

The Masjed-e Shah (Royal Mosque), known as the Imam's Mosque since the Islamic Revolution, is located on the south side of the square and was completed in 1629 (Figure 47). The blue tiles of its dome and four minarets are associated with water, a rich treasure for the Arabs, and the sky. This bright blue exterior is a feature of Persian domes that still stand out to travelers on the Silk Road. The calligraphy that adorns the facade of the mosque was written by Reza Abbasi, whose art has since been copied by many artisans, but has rarely been surpassed. His work also adorns the main gate of the Bozorg Bazaar on the northern part of the square, which the mosque was built to balance.

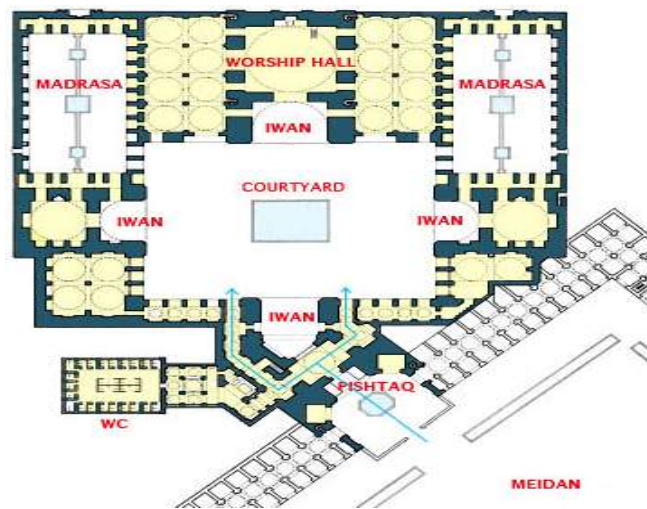


Figure 47. Masjed-e Shah (Royal Mosque) in Isfahan, Iran

Source:

[https://www.ne.jp/asahi/arc/ind/2\\_meisaku/55\\_shah/sha\\_eng.htm](https://www.ne.jp/asahi/arc/ind/2_meisaku/55_shah/sha_eng.htm). Accessed: February 4, 2023.

Source:

<https://www.tappersia.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Shah-Mosque-4-Isfahan-TAPPersia-1.jpg>. Accessed: February 4, 2023.

At first glance, the Great Mosque of Xi'an (or Huajuexiang Mosque) has little to do with Persian or any other Western design, unlike many other mosques in China (Figure 48). It was founded in 742, which makes it one of the oldest in the world, but this building was originally built no later than 1395 and has been thoroughly restored since then. The design owes much to Buddhist temples and is made of wood using local techniques and styles, with a three-story octagonal pagoda serving as a minaret. Even the Arabic calligraphy has a Chinese feel. The turquoise blue roof of the Prayer Hall is reminiscent of the domes of Isfahan and Samarkand. Guesthouses, madrasahs, baths, halal food vendors and a grand bazaar are spread around the mosque in a manner familiar to anyone who has been to Istanbul, Isfahan or Samarkand.

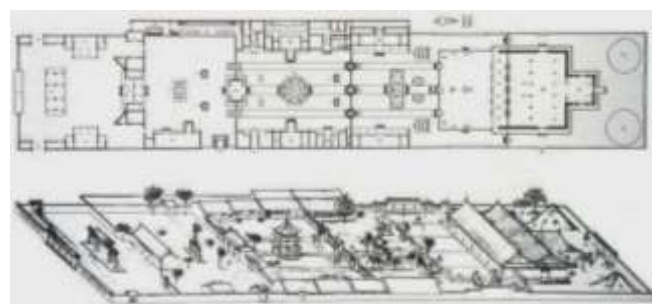




Figure 48. The Great Mosque in Xi'an

Source: <http://islamic-archcorner.blogspot.com/2013/12/the-principlesof-islamic-architecture.html>. Accessed: February 4, 2023.

Source: <https://catbirdinchina.files.wordpress.com/2015/06/p4183561.jpg>. Accessed: February 4, 2023.

The Suleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul is an Ottoman imperial mosque located on the Third Hill in Istanbul (Figure 49). The mosque was built by Suleiman the Magnificent (Suleiman the Magnificent, 1494-1566), and designed by the imperial architect Mimar Sinan (Koca Mi'mâr Sinân Âğâ, 1488-1588). The inscription gives the foundation date as 1550 and the inauguration date as 1557. Behind the qibla wall of the mosque is an enclosure containing separate octagonal mausoleums of Suleiman the Magnificent and his wife Hurrem Sultan (Roxelana). The Sulejmania Mosque was the largest mosque in Istanbul for 462 years, until it was surpassed by the Çamlıca Mosque in 2019. The Suleymaniye Mosque is one of the most famous sights of Istanbul, and from its location on the Third Hill, it offers wide views of the city around the Golden Horn.

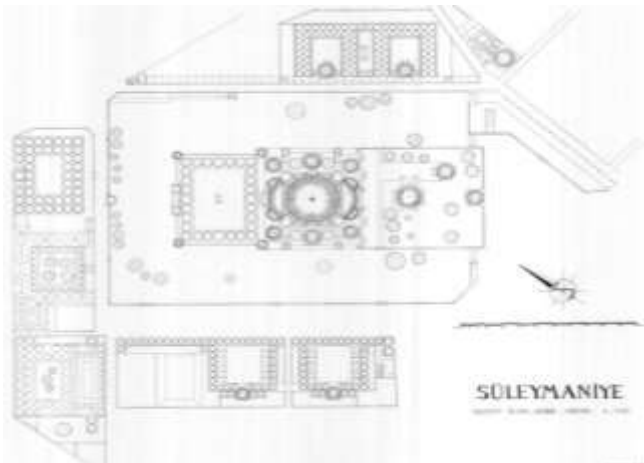


Figure 49. Suleymaniya Mosque in Istanbul

Source: <http://aroomnearthebazaar.ca/istanbul-1/beyond-beyazit-square/>, Accessed: February 5, 2023.

Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/login/>, Accessed: February 5, 2023.

The Selimi Mosque was built in Edirne (Jedren). Mimar Sinan built this mosque in 1568-1574. The building consists of three types of functions: religious, commercial and educational (Figure 50). The complex has a mosque, two madrasahs (one is a hadith school and the other is a school for studying the Qur'an), a bazaar and an elementary school. The prayer hall has a large central dome supported by eight columns. The Selimiye complex consists of a rectangular floor plan with two madrasahs behind the mosque.

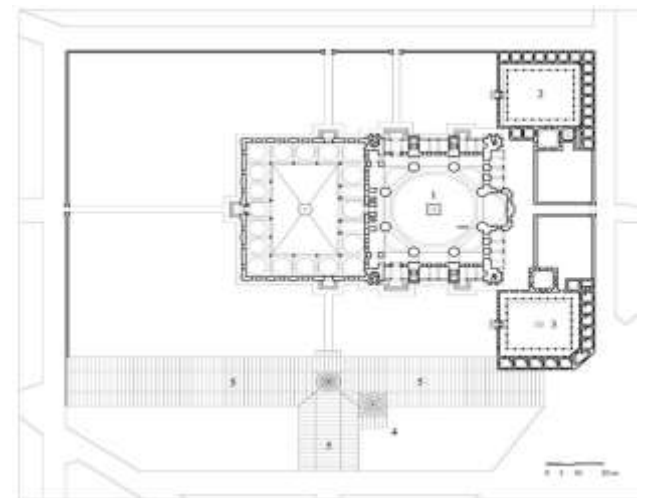




Figure 50. Selimi Mosque in Edirne

Source: <https://toobaijaz.medium.com/detailed-analysis-of-thearchitecture-of-selimiye-mosque-6ddb1abb4e18>. Accessed: February 5, 2023.

Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/225672631303635298/>, Accessed: February 5, 2023.

The Blue Mosque of Istanbul, also known by its official name, Sultan Ahmed Mosque, is a historic Ottoman-era imperial mosque located in Istanbul (Figure 51). It was built between 1609 and 1616 during the reign of Sultan Ahmed I (1590-1617). Its Külliye contains Ahmed's tomb, a madrasa and a hospice. Hand-painted blue tiles (20,000 handmade İznik ceramic tiles) decorate the interior walls of the mosque. It is located not far from Hagia Sophia, the main mosque in Istanbul until the construction of the Blue Mosque. In 1985, the Blue Mosque was included in the UNESCO list of world heritage sites under the name "Historic Areas of Istanbul"<sup>[17]</sup>.

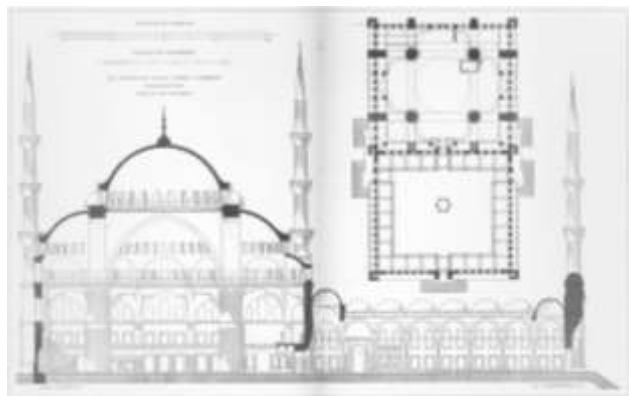


Figure 51. Sultan Ahmed Mosque (Blue Mosque) in Istanbul

Source: <https://dome.mit.edu/handle/1721.3/65840>. Accessed: February 4, 2023.

Source: <https://www.adventurerfamily.com/sultanahmet-mosque-inistanbul-turkey/>. Accessed: February 4, 2023.

Masjid-i-Jehan-Numa ('The Mosque that Reflects the World'), also known as Jama Masjid in Delhi, is one of the largest mosques in India. It was built by the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (Shihab-ud-Din Muhammad Khurram, 1592-1666) between 1650 and 1656, and opened by the first imam, Syed Abdul Ghafoor Shah Bukhari (Figure 52). Located in the Mughal capital Shahjahanabad (now Old Delhi), it served as the imperial mosque of the Mughal emperors until the fall of the empire in 1857. Jama Masjid was considered a symbolic hub of Islamic power throughout India, deep

into the colonial era. It was also a place of political importance during several key periods of British rule. It is still actively used and is one of the most picturesque places in Delhi, closely identified with the ethos of Old Delhi.

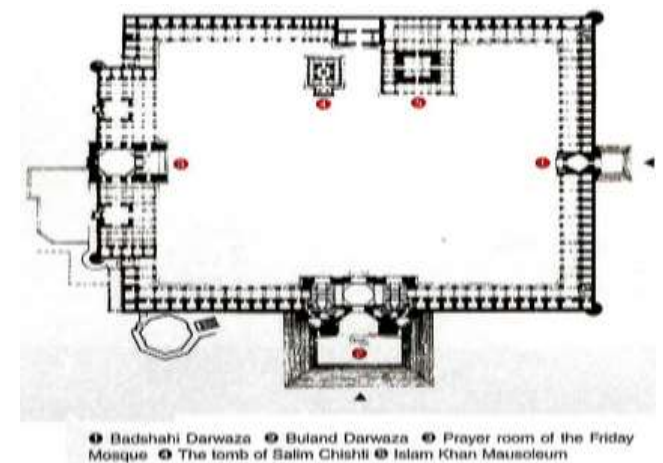


Figure 52. Masjid-i-Jehan-Numa ('The Mosque that Reflects the World') in Delhi

Source: <http://islamicarchitectureinindia.weebly.com/jami-masjid-atfatehpur-sikri.html>. Accessed: February 10, 2023.

Source: <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/eid-ul-fitr-2020-strikingaerial-photo-shows-a-different-eid-at-delhis-jama-masjid-2234803>

**Temples of various religions on the Silk Road.** Göbekli Hill (Turkish: Göbekli Tepe, English: Göbekli Hill) is the oldest known temple in the world, which was built around 11,500 years before Christ (Figure 53). The archaeological site is located about 12 km from Şanlıurfa, northeast. The diameter of the temple complex is about 300 m, and its height is 15 m. The temple was discovered (1996) by a German archaeological team led by Klaus Schmidt (1953-2014).





Figure 53. Göbekli Tepe was founded about 11,500 years ago. It is probably the oldest known temple in the world

Source: <https://www.experiencesofthepast.com/copy-of-dana-island?lightbox=dataItem-kh68zd2>, Accessed: May 25, 2023.

<https://ozhanoturk.com/2019/10/06/gobeklitepe-veya-gobekli-tepe/>, Accessed: May 25, 2023.

The Zoroastrian Fire Temple or Yazd Atash Behram, also known as Atashkadeh-e (Yazd Fire Temple) is a 21 meter high building with a beautiful pool in the middle of the courtyard (Figure 54). This place is the main temple of Zoroastrians in Iran. According to the inscriptions in the shrine, we can say that the construction of the Zoroastrian fire temple dates back to 1934. The Parsi Zoroastrian Association of India financed this shrine, and Jamshid Amanat was the person who led its construction. The fire itself is much older. It is said to have been burning since around 470 during the Sassanid dynasty. Then the fire was at the Pars Karyan Fire Temple in the southern district of Pars Larestan. After that, it was moved to Aqda for another 700 years, and then it was moved to the Nahid-e Pars temple near Ardakan in 1173. Finally, after 300 years, it was moved to the house of the high priest in Yazd, and in 1934 the present one was built for it.



Figure 54. Zoroastrian fire temple or Yazd Atash Behram

Source: <https://www.trip.com/travel-guide/attraction/yazd/zoroastrianfire-temple-10547792/>, Accessed: May 25, 2021.

Source: <https://apochi.com/iran-tours/yazd-day-tour-ancient-fire-templepersian-garden-more/>, Accessed: May 25, 2021.

**Memorial architecture on the Silk Road.** Habib al-Najjar Cave (Turkish: Habib-i Neccar, English: Habib al-Najjar Cave) is the place where, according to the belief of many Muslims, the body of Habib-i Neccar/Habib Al-Najjar is buried (Figure 55). Habib Carpenter (Habib Al-Najjar, 5-(30-40)) was, according to the belief of some Muslims, a Muslim martyr who lived in Antioch at the time of Jesus. This assumption is usually based on Sura XXXVI (Ya Sin) of the Qur'an, although no name is mentioned here. In Muslim tradition, Habib believed that the message of Jesus' disciples was sent to Ya-Sin's people. He was tortured for this belief. Some sources have identified Habib with Saint Agabus of the early Christian era who was martyred in Antioch in the time of Jesus. This connection is disputed, because Christian tradition holds that Agabus was martyred in Jerusalem, not in Antioch.



Figure 55. Habib al-Najjar cave in Antakya, Turkey

Source: <http://antioch-on-the-orontes.blogspot.com/2013/05/habib-al-najjar-and-st-george.html>, Accessed: May 25, 2018.



Şeyh Mahmut's turbe (Turkish: Şeyh Mahmut Türbesi) is located in the village of Kırkdirek, about 55 km north of Mardin, Turkey. Şeyh Mahmut is a Sufi scholar who has many followers. He came to the area of Mardin (the city of Sason) during the time of the caliph Omer (580-644, caliph 634-644), and then moved to the village of Yukarı Kıratlı in the Batman district, where he died (698). His turbe is one of the most beautiful buildings of its kind in the world. This place is visited every year (on the second Friday of May), in just two days, by over a hundred thousand people from the regions of Mardin and Diyarbakir, to pay their respects to Şeyh Mahmut (Figure 56).



Figure 56. Şeyh Mahmut's turbe in the village of Kırkdirek near Mardin, Turkey

Source: <https://ilkha.com/news/binlerce-kisi-seyh-mahmut-turbesiniziyaret-etti-36171>, Accessed: February 10, 2023.

An important capital for 2,500 years, Merv (in present-day Turkmenistan) was one of the most important oasis cities on the Silk Road and is one of the main archaeological sites of Central Asia (Figure 57). Declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999, Merv first became an important center under the Achaemenid Empire, and through the millennia that followed was a regional capital for a series of ruling dynasties. Merv consists of five separate but close neighboring towns.



Figure 57. Mausoleum of Sultan Sanjar in Merv, Turkmenistan

Source: <https://mapcarta.com/W294258369>, Accessed: February 4, 2023.

Source: <https://www.keepravel.com/turkmenistan/attraction/mavzolejsultana-sandzhara#lg=1&slide=5>, Accessed: February 4, 2023.

The Taj Mahal is an Islamic ivory marble mausoleum located on the right bank of the Yamuna River in the Indian city of Agra (Figure 58). It was commissioned (1631) by the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (reigned 1628-1658) to house the tomb of his favorite wife, Mumtaz Mahal; it also houses the tomb of Shah Jahan himself (Shihab-ud-Din Muhammad Khurram, 1592-1666). The tomb is the central part of the 17-hectare complex, which includes a mosque and a guest house, and is located in landscaped gardens surrounded by a wall on three sides. The construction of the mausoleum was mostly completed in 1643, but work on the other phases of the project lasted another 10 years. It is believed that the Taj Mahal complex was completed in 1653. About 20,000 craftsmen were engaged in the construction project under the leadership of a committee of architects led by Ustad Ahmad Lahauri (?-1649), the emperor's court architect. Various types of symbolism were used in the Taj Mahal to reflect the natural beauty and divinity. The Taj Mahal was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1983 because it was „a jewel of Muslim art in India and one of the universally admired masterpieces of world heritage“ [18]. Many consider it the best example of Mughal architecture and a symbol of India's rich history.

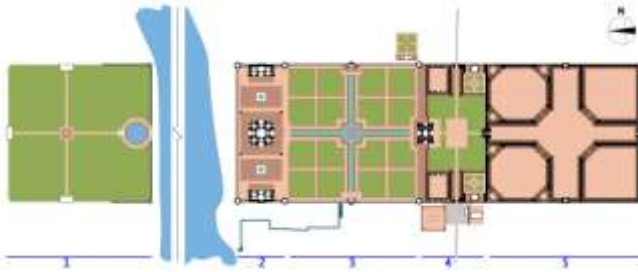


Figure 58. Taj Mahal in Agra (India)

Source:

<https://ohiostate.pressbooks.pub/exploringarchitectureandlandscape/chapter/taj-mahal/>. Accessed: February 5, 2023.

Source: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/252/>. Accessed: February 5, 2023.

**Forts on the Silk Road.** A fort is a military structure or building intended for the defense of a territory in war, and it is also used to establish authority in a region during peacetime. From very early history to modern times, defensive walls were often necessary for cities to survive in an ever-changing world of invasion and conquest. Some settlements in the Indus Valley Civilization were the first small towns to be fortified. In ancient Greece, large stone walls were built in Mycenaean Greece, such as the ancient site of Mycenae (famous for the huge stone blocks of its 'cyclopean walls'). The Greek phourion was a fortified collection of buildings used as a military garrison, equivalent to the Roman castellum. These buildings mainly served as an observation post, to guard certain roads, passes and borders.

The Citadel of Aleppo (Arabic: Qal'at Ḥalab) is a large medieval fortified palace in the center of the old city of Aleppo, Syria (Figure 59). It is considered one of the oldest and largest castles in the world. The citadel dates from at least the middle of the 3rd millennium BC. Occupied by many civilizations over time - including the Armenians, Greeks, Byzantines, Ayyubids, Mamluks and Ottomans - most of the structures that stand today are thought to date from the Ayyubid period. In the 2000s, the Aga Khan Foundation for Culture in collaboration with the Aleppo Archaeological Society carried out extensive conservation work. Dominating the city, the Citadel is part of the ancient city of Aleppo, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1986 <sup>[19]</sup>.



Figure 59. Citadel in Aleppo, Syria

Source:

[https://d1zah1nkiby91r.cloudfront.net/s3fspublic/Publications/2008\\_aktc\\_aleppo.pdf](https://d1zah1nkiby91r.cloudfront.net/s3fspublic/Publications/2008_aktc_aleppo.pdf), Accessed: February 12, 2023.

Source:

[https://yandex.com/maps/org/aleppo\\_citadel/152017123336/?ll=37.159557%2C36.198111&z=15](https://yandex.com/maps/org/aleppo_citadel/152017123336/?ll=37.159557%2C36.198111&z=15), Accessed: February 12, 2023.

The city of Gaziantep is located in the upper part of the basin of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, an area that was the cradle of one of the oldest and richest civilizations in the world, Mesopotamia. From about three thousand years before Christ until today, traces of many peoples and their cultures have been found in this area, many of which have been preserved on the spot, and many of which have been transferred to museums to be accessible to all people. Gaziantep Fortress (Turkish: Gaziantep Kale) is located in the center of the city and is its symbol. The fortress dates from the Bronze Age, from the period of Hittite rule (1600-1178 BC), (Figure 60).



Figure 60. Gaziantep Fortress, Turkey

Source: <http://mejaketak.blogspot.com/2011/11/vacation-to-oldcity-ofgaziantep.html>, Accessed: September 1, 2018.

Source: <http://www.belkishan.com/>, Accessed: September 1, 2018.

Şanlıurfa Fortress overlooks the city center of Şanlıurfa (formerly Edessa), Turkey. The fortress was built by the Osroenes in



antiquity, and the current walls were built by the Abbasids in 814. Today, the fortress functions as an open-air museum. Ibrahim's (Abraham's) cave in Şanlıurfa (Turkish: Şanlıurfa'daki İbrahim Mağarası, English: Abraham's Cave in Sanliurfa) is, according to legend, the place where Ibrahim (Abraham) was born, and where his mother kept him for seven years, being the king Nimrud wanted to kill him, considering him a threat to his kingdom. The cave is accessed from the harem of the Mevlid-i Halil mosque (Figure 61).



Figure 61. Complex of holy places related to Ibrahim (Abraham), the forefather of Jews, Christians and Muslims: 1. Şanlıurfa fortress, 2. Ibrahim (Abraham) cave, 3. Ibrahim (Abraham) pool, 4. 'Ayn Zeliha lake, 5. Gölbaşı Park, 6. Mevlid-i Halil Camii, 7. Rızvaniye Camii

Source: Google Earth, Accessed: May 25, 2023.

Source: <https://www.vecteezy.com/video/6526714-aerial-rising-view-historical-sanliurfa-castle-site-in-urfa-city-famous-travel-destination-in-turkey>, Accessed: May 12, 2023.

Erbil (known in Kurdish as Hewler, 'seat of the gods') and today home to a million people, is one of the fastest growing cities in Iraq and the Middle East (Figure 62). The seat of government and power in Kurdistan, it is being modernized and developed as a regional capital. The city has been transformed and with its cleanliness and modernity is an example to the rest of Iraq. It is a round building built on a historical mound 26 meters high, with several layers of historical settlements dating back to ancient times. Inhabited more than 6,000 years ago, the Erbil Citadel is considered one of the longest continuously inhabited places in the world. The first village was created here around the 6th millennium BC and has been continuously inhabited since then. The citadel was ruled by many historical civilizations, including Sumerian, Akkadian, Babylonian and Assyrian. Other powers, including the Achaemenids, Greeks, Parthians, Seljuks and Sassanids, also dominated the citadel before it was finally conquered by the Ottomans.



Figure 62. Erbil in Iraq

Source: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1437/gallery/>, Accessed: February 4, 2023.

Source: [https://www.topworldimages.com/Erbil\\_Citadel.htm#images-11](https://www.topworldimages.com/Erbil_Citadel.htm#images-11), Accessed: February 4, 2023.

**Trade facilities on the Silk Road.** A bazaar (also: souk, bezistan) is a market consisting of several small stalls or shops, especially in the Middle East, the Balkans, North Africa and India<sup>[20]</sup>. However, temporary open markets elsewhere, such as in the West, could also be labeled bazaars. Those in the Middle East were traditionally located in covered streets that had doors at each end and served as the city's central market. Street markets are the European and North American equivalents. The term 'bazaar' originates from Persian, where it referred to a city's public market quarter. The term 'bazaar' is also sometimes used to refer to 'the network of traders, bankers and artisans' who work in the area. The term 'souk' comes from Arabic and refers to markets in the Middle East and North Africa. Evidence of the existence of bazaars or souks dates back to around 3000 BC. The Bazaar of the Syrian city of Aleppo (Arabic, Romanized: Sūq al-Madīna) is a covered 'souq' market located in the heart of the Syrian city of Aleppo within the walled ancient part of the city (Figure 63). With its long and narrow streets, al-Madina Souq is the largest covered historical market in the world, with an approximate length of 13 kilometers. It was the center of the economic and social life of the city for hundreds of years. Most of the souqs date back to the 14th century.





Figure 63. Bazaar in Aleppo, Syria

Source: [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-12/01/c\\_138596203\\_9.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-12/01/c_138596203_9.htm), Accessed: February 12, 2023.

Covered market (Turkish: Kapalı Çarşı) in Bursa is a complex founded by Orhan Gazi (1281-1362). The bazaar was extended and renovated over time. Kapalı Çarşıja was completely destroyed in a fire (1958), after which it was rebuilt with similar constructions and materials (Figure 64).



Picture 64. Covered market (Turkish: Kapalı Çarşı) in Bursa

Source: Prof. Dr. Faruk Mekic (August 11, 2007)

The Grand Bazaar is a historical market located in Isfahan, Iran, also known as QeySariyeh Bazaar, Qeysarie Bazaar or Soltani (Figure 65). The main commercial activity in QeySarie Bazaar is selling carpets. The Bazaar was one of the largest and most luxurious shopping centers during the Safavid era. It was built in 1620 on the northern side of Naqsh-e Jahan square. It connects Naqsh-e Jahan Square with Kohneh Square and the Senjukid part of Isfahan. QeySarie Bazaar includes these parts: Orian Bazaar, Harounie, Nimavard-e Golshan, Makhlas, Samavarsazha (Samovarmakers), Maqsubbeyk. There are many historical buildings in Qeysarie Bazaar such as Nimavar School, Sadr School, Khayyatha Mosque, No Mosque, Zolfaghar Mosque, Shishe Mosque and Jarchi Mosque <sup>[21]</sup>.







Figure 65. Grand Bazaar in Isfahan, Iran

Source: <https://www.s-travels.com/en/blog/38-the-grand-bazaar-ofisfahan>, Accessed: March 31, 2018.

The Kapali Bazaar in Istanbul is located in the Fatih district, near the mosques of Sultan Bayazıt II and the Nurosmaniye mosque (Figure 66). It was founded in 1461. The historic shopping area with 60 streets and over 3,600 shops covers a total area of 30,700 m<sup>2</sup>. The Kapali bazaar complex is divided into 15 separate units. Kapali bazaar is considered the first shopping center built in the world (Fig. 10.3.28). Kapali bazaar (İç Bedesten) has a rectangular plan (43.30 m x 29.50 m). Two rows of stone pillars, four in each row, support three rows of bays, five in each row. Each bay is surmounted by a brick dome with a blind drum. 44 cellars, vaulted rooms without external openings were built in the inner and outer walls. Sunlight enters the covered bazaar from rectangular windows placed exactly under the roof [22].



Figure 66. Kapali Bazaar in Istanbul

Source: <http://habermerkezi.se/tag/istanbul/>, Accessed: July 3, 2018.

Source: Prof. Ph.D. Ahmet Hadrovic (28.08.2008)

The Old Bazaar in Bitola dates back to the 15th century. Bezistan has 86 stores and four entrances and exits. Its restoration began in 2014 as part of the activities of its inclusion on the UNESCO list of world cultural heritage (Figure 67). This covered bazaar is a donation of Begler-Bey of Rumelia, Grand Vizier and famous donor Kodzha Daut Pasha Uzuncarsili.



Figure 67. Old bazaar in Bitola

Source: <https://bitola.info/bezisten-bitola/>, Accessed: March 31, 2018.

Source: <https://cineculture.online/en/bezisten/>, Accessed: February 10, 2023.

**Hygiene facilities on the Silk Road.** Hamam (Muslim-oriental bath) is a public bathing place associated with the Islamic world. It is a prominent feature in the culture of the Muslim world and was inherited from the model of the Roman baths (Figure 68). Muslim baths (hammams) can be found in the Middle East, North Africa, Al-Andalus (Islamic Spain and Portugal), Central Asia, the Indian subcontinent and in Southeastern Europe under Ottoman rule [23]. In Islamic cultures, the significance was religious and civil: it provided for the needs of ritual ablutions, but it also provided for general hygiene in the age before private water supply. Archaeological remains testify to the existence of bathrooms in the Islamic world as early as the Umayyad period (7th to 8th centuries), and their importance continued to emerge in modern

times [24]. Their architecture developed from the appearance of Roman baths and contained a regular sequence of rooms: a changing room, a cold room, a warm room and a hot room. Heat was generated in furnaces that provided hot water and steam, while smoke and hot air were channeled through ducts under the floor [25]. Unlike the Roman baths, bathers usually wash themselves with running water, rather than immersing themselves in standing water, as this is a requirement of Islam. Although hammams, in general, function in a similar way, there are some regional differences in both use and architecture.

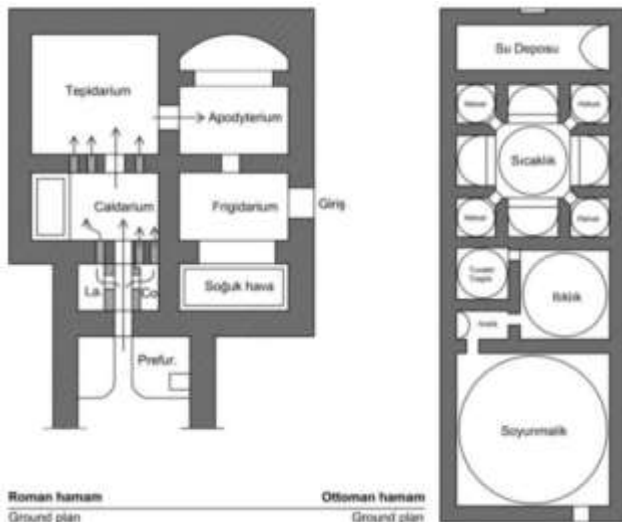


Figure 68. Left: schematic view of the Roman baths. Right: schematic representation of a simpler hammam

Source: [25] Sabanovic, N., Numan. İ. (2019). Cultural Heritage Related to the Water Case Study: Hammams in Bosnia and Herzegovina,

SAR Journal. Volume 2, Issue 2, Pages 68-76, ISSN 2619-9955, DOI: 10.18421/SAR22-04 June 2019.

Among the unique features of Islamic architecture preserved in the Alhambra, the Hammam Comares stands out, until recently called the Royal Bath because it was reserved for the personal use of Catholic monarchs. The hamam was built (1314-1325) by Ismail I (Abu'l-Walid Ismail I ibn Faraj, 1279-1325). Today we know that each palace of the Alhambra had its own hammam, but this is the only Islamic medieval bathhouse in the West that has been practically completely preserved (Figure 69).



Figure 69. Hamam Comares in the Alhambra, Spain

Source: <https://www.spain.info/en/discover-spain/granada-arab-baths/>, Accessed: February 10, 2023.

Source: <https://www.alhambra-patronato.es/en/edificios-lugares/bano-decomares>, Accessed: February 10, 2023.

Mustafa Bey Hamam was built (1436) by Mustafa Bey, son of Yörgüç Pasha. The hammam has two separate units, for men and women, each covered by a dome (Figure 70).

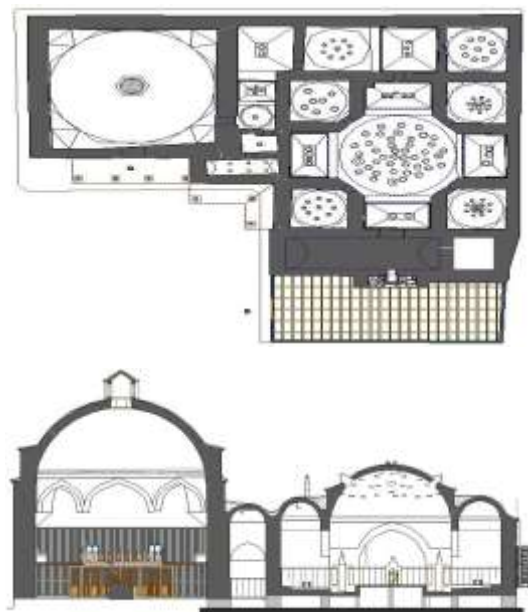


Figure 70. Mustafa Bey Hamam in Amasya, Turkey





Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/sinandogan/35537873964>, Accessed: August 30, 2018.

Source: Prof. Ph.D. Ahmet Hadrović (July 10-14, 2012)

Suleymaniye Hamam in Istanbul was designed and built (1550-1557) by the famous architect Mimar Sinan, and is one of his most famous works. This hamam was a place regularly visited by Sultan Suleiman (Suleiman the Magnificent, 1494-1566), and many sultans after him. This is a traditional bathroom consisting of three parts: cold, warm and hot. It is the only hammam in Istanbul that serves exclusively for couples and families (Figure 71).



Figure 71. Suleiman's Hammam in Istanbul

Source: [https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction\\_Review-g293974-d1631821-Reviews-Historical\\_Suleymaniye\\_Hamam\\_R\\_Since\\_1550-Istanbul.html#/media-atf/1631821/?albumid=-160&type=0&category=-160](https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g293974-d1631821-Reviews-Historical_Suleymaniye_Hamam_R_Since_1550-Istanbul.html#/media-atf/1631821/?albumid=-160&type=0&category=-160), Accessed: February 10, 2023.

Istanbul.html#/media-atf/1631821/?albumid=-160&type=0&category=-160, Accessed: February 10, 2023.

Gazi Husrev-beg Hamam in Sarajevo is the last preserved public bath in this region. It was built after 1537. It has not been used as a public bath since 1914. It was heavily damaged during the war (1992-1995), and after the war, the Bosniak Institute of Adil-bey Zulfikarpašić was arranged there (Figure 72).



Ghazi Husrev-Bey hamam in Sarajevo  
Ground plan



Figure 72. Gazi Husrev-beg's hamam in Sarajevo

Source: <https://porukevremena.wordpress.com/2014/10/09/hamami-utradiciji-bosnjaka/>, Accessed: 5/25/2023.

Hamam Deboj in Bitola is located in the Old Bazaar, near the Haydar Kadi mosque. There are no reliable sources about the time of its construction. It belongs to the developed type of hammam with independent lines of use for women and men (Figure 73).



Figure 73. Hamam Deboj in Bitola (16th century)

Source: <http://wikimapia.org/32761514/Turkish-bath>, Accessed: May 25, 2023.

Ćifte-hamam in Skopje (literally: 'Double Hamam'), located in the center of the Old Bazaar. It was built in the 15th century by Isa-beg Ishaković (1439-1470). The building is divided into two wings (hence the name), one for men and one for women. The appearance of both sections is almost identical. Ćifte-hamam in Skopje was used as a public bath until 1915. After it was damaged during the 1963 earthquake, it was repaired and since then the Gallery of Contemporary Art has been arranged there (Figure 74).



Picture 74. Ćifte-hamam in Skopje

Source: Prof. Ph.D. Ahmet Hadrović (June 14, 2008)

The Ali Pasha Bath (Turkish: Ali Pasha Hammam) is located next to the Ali Pasha Mosque as part of a unique complex (külliye). It is a developed type of hammam with differentiated sections for men and women. The central areas of the hammam are covered with domes. The hammam was built in 1572 (Figure 75).



Figure 75. Ali Pasha's Hammam in Tokat, Turkey

Source: Prof. Ph.D. Ahmet Hadrović (July 9, 2012)

**Garden architecture on the Silk Road.** Persians have loved formal gardens since the time of Cyrus the Great (576-530 BC) and their designs strongly inspired Timur's gardens in Samarkand. Shaded pavilions and flowing water stand out strongly, evoking paradise. Historians attribute the Safavids (around 1501 - the last ruler of the Abbas III dynasty, 1732-1736) as the first rulers, who laid the foundations of national consciousness in Iran, a country inhabited by different ethnic and linguistic groups. They established Shia Islam as the state religion, promoted Sufism, and established state capitalism to support broad political and social goals.

The Persian garden style developed after the Egyptian style of gardening. This marked the beginning of 'Modern Garden Architecture'. The Persian garden was a response to the dryness of

the local climate where a garden with high walls and shady trees with air-cooled streams and fountains was a simple recipe for paradise. Mediterranean, and thus all Western gardens, originate from Egypt three to four thousand years ago. Since Egypt is a natural desert that depends on the Nile for its fertility, its gardens are planted along reservoirs and irrigation canals.

The Flower Garden of Isfahan was one of Iran's major green space projects, which was completed in the 1990s in Isfahan. The garden has multiple purposes. It is a recreational, cultural, educational and research center. The buildings in the garden have Iranian traditional elements (Figure 76).



Figure 76. Flower Garden of Isfahan in Isfahan, Iran

Source: <https://www.visitouriran.com/blog/irans-religious-sites-thebeauty-of-the-mosques/>, Accessed: February 14, 2023.

Source: <https://en.mehrnews.com/photo/115997/Isfahan-Flower-Garden>, Accessed: February 14, 2023.

While the lovely dome shape of the Taj Mahal is the most obvious link to Istanbul, Isfahan and Samarkand, its gardens are at least as



important. At the Taj Mahal, the garden was divided into four quarters and each was originally thought to have 16 beds with 400 plants each. Its trees bore fruit - representing life, or cypress - representing death, and were similarly arranged in the geometric and numerical patterns favored by Islam. While the mausoleum is in one corner of the garden instead of in the center, the pool of water in the center reflects the shining white building to complete the symmetry (Figure 77).

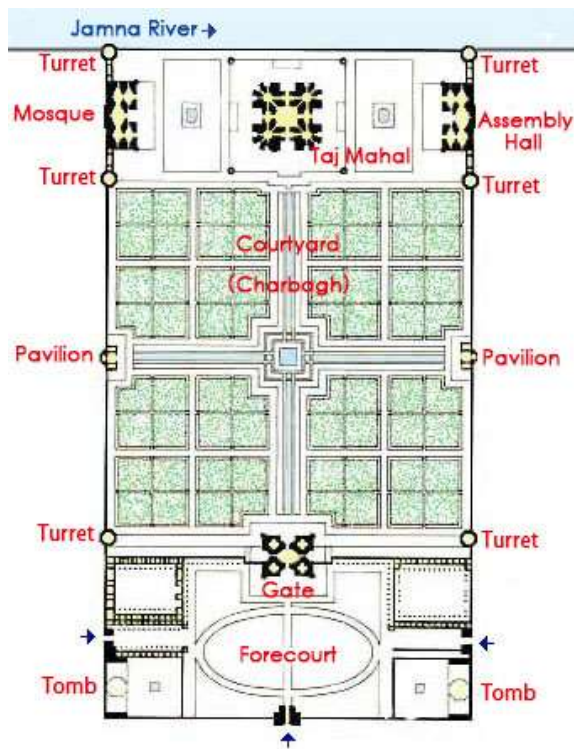


Figure 77. Garden of the Taj Mahal in Agra, India

Source: [http://www.kamit.jp/02\\_unesco/15\\_tajmahal/taj\\_eng.htm](http://www.kamit.jp/02_unesco/15_tajmahal/taj_eng.htm), Accessed: May 14, 2023.

Source: <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/wander-the-gardens-of-the-taj-mahal/EwVhiYc9WvQN3g>, Accessed: February 14, 2023.

The garden next to the Ak-Saray Palace (White Palace) in Shakhrisabz, Uzbekistan. Ak-Saray (White Palace) was a huge palace, but all that remains today is the monumental entrance (Figure 78). Of this, only about 50 m remained of the towers on either side, but when it was complete, the gate was more than 73 m long. After capturing Kunya Urgench in 1379, Tamerlane sent

craftsmen to his hometown to build his largest a palace, similar in structure to the Bibi Khanum mosque in Samarkand, begun twenty years later, but unmatched in size and decoration. The name Ak-Serai (White Palace) symbolizes its noble origin, not the dominant color, because blue, green and gold are the patterns on the huge mosaics.



Figure 78. Garden next to Ak Sarai (White Palace) in Shakhrisabz, Uzbekistan

Source: <https://uzbek-travel.com/about-uzbekistan/monuments/ak-saraypalace/>, Accessed: February 14, 2023.

Source: <https://travelornament.com/ak-saray-palace>, Accessed: February 14, 2023.

Dolmabahçe Palace (Turkish: Dolmabahçe Sarayı) is located in the Beşiktaş district of Istanbul, on the European shore of the Bosphorus (Figure 79). It served as the main administrative center of the Ottoman Empire from 1856 to 1887 and from 1909 to 1922 (Yıldız Palace was used in the meantime). It is the largest palace in Turkey with an area of 45,000 m<sup>2</sup>. It contains 285 rooms, 46 halls, 6 baths (hammams) and 68 toilets. The design of the palace includes eclectic elements from the Baroque, Rococo and Neoclassical styles, mixed with traditional Ottoman architecture to create a new synthesis. The layout and decor of the palace reflects the increasing influence of European styles and standards on Ottoman culture and art during the Tanzimat period (1839-1876).

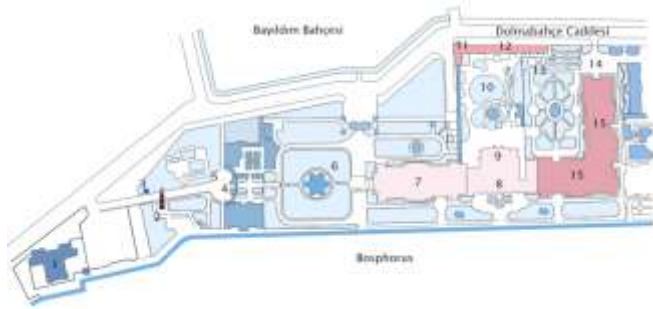


Figure 79. Dolmabahçe Palace (Turkish: Dolmabahçe Sarayı) in Istanbul

Source:

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b2/Dolmabahce\\_Palace\\_plan.svg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b2/Dolmabahce_Palace_plan.svg), Accessed: February 14, 2023.

Source: Prof. Ph.D. Ahmet Hadrović (August 12, 2007)

## Perspectives (Conclusion)

In 2012, China launched a platform for pragmatic cooperation with sixteen countries of Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe (called “16+1” cooperation): Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Serbia, Slovenia, Slovakia and Romania. In 2013, after the unveiling of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), “16+1” was repurposed as one of the mechanisms to implement the Silk Road vision. President Xi Jinping's visits to Prague, Belgrade and Warsaw in 2016 reinforced the impression that China considers these countries to play an important role in the implementation of the BRI. In Europe, the main questions about the “16+1” cooperation revolve around its potential effects on the relationship between the European Union (EU) and China (eleven out of sixteen are EU member states). However, China's cooperation with the other five countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia) also raises important questions regarding China-EU relations. In order to understand the prospects for Sino-Balkan relations and the Silk Road in the Balkans, it is necessary to first understand the context in which these relations develop [26]. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), therefore, comes to the Balkans at a time when there is a sense of incompleteness and disappointment in the mainstream paradigm of the past 25 years. It is, in fact, based on a very different set of principles compared to those in the West. The Chinese keyword about the Balkans is 'unused economic potential'. The cooperation spans different policy areas, but is called 'pragmatic', meaning that political issues are not considered. Cooperation is aimed at designing and implementing specific projects, encouraging 'cooperation of industrial capacities', along with encouraging trade and investment. Slowly but steadily, China

is delivering results: highways, power plants, steel mills and other projects are under construction or have already been completed – although even more projects are still under discussion. However, what is important to note is that while Beijing recognizes the different status of EU and non-EU countries (holding that the latter have more 'flexibility' in cooperation with China), this does not extend the orientalization of the Balkans or the 'Western Balkans' as inherently a different group based on historical and cultural specificities. Instead, it treats the Balkan states as a subset of the larger region based on structural similarities and geographic proximity. Chinese mental geography, therefore, does not see the Balkans as a European hinterland, but as a bridge between different regions. The BRI therefore envisages major projects, such as the China-Europe land-sea express railway, which runs from Budapest to the port of Piraeus in Greece (now 67% owned by COSCO) through Serbia and Macedonia, gaining both EU and non-members EU countries involved. This also contrasts with a history of division and dispute, and encourages much-needed intra-regional cooperation, allowing the Balkans to reassert their agency and have some degree of ownership of their own development agenda. Cooperation within the BRI framework is an open process, there are no conditions, and the results it brings (in the form of investment in infrastructure or trade flows) are easily measurable. However, the BRI in the Balkans has yet to mature. China does not seek to replace the EU and the United States of America as the main external actor in the region, nor does it have the potential to do so. Data from elsewhere has shown that intensifying Chinese economic diplomacy can indeed spur better economic outcomes; but the benefits of China's presence come at a price, as Beijing indirectly influences local debates about domestic policy models and principles, often providing inspiration to leaders who want to create heavily armed states with free economic zones. The European Union started the so-called Berlin Process on the Western Balkans in 2014, merging it with its Balkan Connection Agenda (BCA) in 2015, putting a strong emphasis on economic development – emphasizing connectivity, infrastructure building and economic renewal for the first time. Given the change in tone, some see the BCA as Europe's 'answer' to the BRI in the Balkans. More than 2,000 years ago, the people of Eurasia explored and established land and sea routes that connected the great civilizations of Asia, Europe and Africa. The 'Silk Road' is the name given to these roads by later generations. Back in September and October 2013, during his visits to Kazakhstan and Indonesia, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed the construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. It was the beginning of the 'Belt and Road' initiative <sup>[27,28,29,30]</sup>.

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