In order to shorten the journey and to see something of the mountains which separate the Hissār tract from the plains of Bokhāra westwards I chose the route which leads from Sar-i-jū past Tāsh-kurgān to Shahr-i-sabz. I thus missed seeing the greater portion of the ancient high road which passes from Termez on the Oxus through Shīrābād and 'Darband' towards the old centres of Sogdiana, Samarkand, and Bokhāra, and which Hsüan-tsang had followed through the 'Iron Gate'. The ascent through the narrow cañon-like gorges below Sangardak village (Fig. 450) was difficult in places, and this, together with the height of the Karkhush pass beyond, about 11,000 feet above sea-level and already under snow, sufficiently explains why traffic from the Hissār side makes the detour by the high road past Baisun and Darband. There was abundance of tree-growth on the picturesque mountain slopes, up to a height of about 7,000 feet, and this and the rich grazing on the downlike plateaus descending beyond the pass towards the village of Tāsh-kurgān both attested the favourable climatic conditions that here also prevail, in spite of the comparative nearness of the arid steppes of Bokhāra. After crossing another fine plateau, that of Kinnak, which nomadic Özbegs, known as Kongrad, from the tracts north of the Oxus frequent for its grazing, we reached the town of Shahr-i-sabz, in the wide and abundantly irrigated valley draining towards Karshi, on October 20th. Thence on the following day a long and dusty drive carried me across the Takhta-karacha pass and the wide peneplain overlooking the Zarafshān valley to Samarkand.

The extensive repairs that our baggage and kit needed after three months of rough travel in the mountains, together with other work, detained me for two days in this great busy city. Its Russian part appeared to have grown greatly since my first visit in 1901 and looked even more than before like a town of Eastern Europe. Having previously visited the noble monuments of Timūr's period, I employed my present stay to inspect the plateau of Afrāsiāb, covered with debris mounds, to the east of the present city. It marks the site of the ancient capital of Sogdiana, the K'ang-chū or Sa-mo-chien of the Chinese records and the Maracanda of Alexander's historians. Digging for antiques in these huge accumulations of debris appeared to have been discouraged by the Russian authorities during recent years. It was perhaps a consequence of this wholesome restriction that local dealers' shops could show me no antiques beyond a few fragmentary terracotta figurines curiously recalling Yōtkan ware and priced at exorbitant rates.

On October 25th I left by the Transcaspian railway for Bokhāra, the other famous centre of ancient Sogdiana, the An or Pu-ho of the Chinese Annals. On my former passage, in 1901, access to this city as to other parts of the Khanate had been denied me. Now a short stay enabled me to convey in person my very sincere thanks to the Khushbāghi, the representative of the Amir's Government, for all the help and attention I had enjoyed on my journey through Bokhāra territory. Before that visit to the historic 'Ark' I had taken occasion at the Russian Cantonment of Kāghān to express my warm gratitude also to Monsieur N. A. Shulga, the officiating Consul, for the kind recommendation of the Russian political authorities to which very friendly reception had been due. My visit to Bokhāra, brief as it had to be, allowed me to see the monuments of its mediaeval greatness and to gain some impressions of the busy trade which probably since very early times has been centred in this chief terminal oasis of Western Turkestan. When on the evening of October 28th I said good-bye to Bokhāra, and with it to Sogdian soil, there was nothing to foreshadow in my mind the manifold convulsions and calamities which their people were doomed to pass through during the next few years.

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12 For excellent photographs of Afrāsiāb, see Rickmers, 
_Duab of Turkestan_, Figs. 22, 57.

13 For specimens acquired in 1901, see _Ancient Khotan_, 
i. Pl. LXXXVIII.