

To Restore or Not, a Tale of Two Sites: The Frauenkirche and Gur-i Amir

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Abstract

At what point is reconstruction a necessary option? This paper compares the motives that determine the reparation process on the Frauenkirche in Dresden, Germany, an eighteenth-century Baroque church with the Gur-i Amir in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, a fifteenth-century royal mausoleum. The latter is situated on one of the ancient Silk Road trade routes and was the capital city of warlord, Timur Lane (Tamerlane). Guidelines are used to determine the efficacy of the reconstruction and correlate with those that are adjudicated by ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) and UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). These guidelines include the support of authenticity to the original site, exposure to master workmanship, interest in restoring community heritage, and lastly, integrity to the building. These two groups ICOMOS and UNESCO have established guidelines that focus on authenticity as a determining value in conservation and refabrication schemes, its use in judgements enhances the importance of information on the cultural heritage under investigation. Consideration is also given to notions of national heritage, of which authenticity is a part, and its preservation of values in light of globalization. This paper analyses the historical backgrounds, rebuilding processes and visual analyses that support their importance and value while reflecting opposing motivations and outcomes. Consequently, these two World Heritage sites are contrasted in their twentieth- and twenty-first century socio-political contexts to distinguish a well-considered homage to restoration as exemplified by the Frauenkirche, compared to the Gur-i Amir mausoleum that had the opposing outcome of a composite intervention.

1. Introduction

At what point is reconstruction a necessary option? Scholars have been debating monument restoration and how this process affected architectural authenticity and integrity, cultural community, and historical accuracy for decades. When a high value is accorded to a monument due to its historical importance, like the Frauenkirche, society wants to protect and take care of the structure for the edification of future generations, believing the monument's value will continue.¹ Sometimes the worth of the monument increases over time as the cultural significance rises and reflects, over generations, a thriving community that takes pride in its artistic accomplishments and period buildings, preserving what best mirrors that culture. Conversely, over several generations, the historical significance can wane through disinterest, social unrest or war, with the end result of an edifice in disrepair. In the case of the Gur-i Amir, the edifice needed an intervention but was not accurately restored.

This paper analyzes the motives that influenced the reconstruction of the Frauenkirche (1993-2005), located in Dresden, Germany, a successful reconstruction, in contrast to the Gur-i Amir mausoleum (early 1400s), in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, because of a less successful restoration. Historical information is given on each site placing that monument in cultural context, contemporary usage, and significance. The reconstruction process of both sites is discussed. A comparative visual analysis is presented for examination of the validity and success or failure of the refabrication. The buildings are compared to one or more guiding principles established by ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) and UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). Consequently, the political effects of each respective governmental entity will be presented as they impact the restoration process. Lastly, critical opinions of each site before, during, and/or after restoration is given.

This study in restoration adopts the following guidelines in order to ascertain the validity of each project. First, the historic building is recognized by ICOMOS and UNESCO's World Heritage List, whose comparable guidelines read:

- All civilizations are grounded in tangible and intangible articulation which composes their heritage and as such needs to be respected.
- Cultural heritage is the responsibility of the society that started it.
- Authenticity plays a pivotal role in the accumulation of knowledge of cultural history in conservation and restoration schemes and its use in judgements could enhance diverse origins of facts.
- Heritage, as a part of authenticity and its values must be preserved and protected from the negative effects of globalization.²
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Other guidelines are set forth as follows: "The restoration supports the structure's authenticity."³ Second, "original material will be utilized, if that is an option."⁴ Third, "knowledge will be gained through exposure to old and/or lost workmanship."⁵ Fourth, "the monument's replacement will restore a community's heritage, thought to be lost."⁶ And finally, "the use of technology will enhance the structure's integrity."⁷

Additionally, in this paper, the following questions are addressed. What are the politics behind the push to rebuild or not, and what do these politics mean to the larger social and economic framework, not just to the culture?⁸ Finally, what are the opinions of scholars and historians before the work begins and/or after completion of the restoration?⁹

2. Comparative Reconstruction Sites

These two sites were selected not only for their divergent reconstruction outcomes but also for how their commonality piqued further investigation. That is, both were sacred edifices and symbolized power through their large-scale architecture. The two works also had completely decorated interiors including their domes. Externally they were visually arresting with their world-renown architecture and covered in tile mosaic. These sites were strongly affected by Socialist ideology either by leaving the sacred building in ruins or reclassifying it as secular. Another similarity is that they are World Heritage sites still in use, one as a church, the other as a form of museum.

The Frauenkirche was built in the early eighteenth century in Dresden, Germany on the site of a much older mission church.¹⁰ Dresden is the capital of the county of Saxony in the east-central part of Germany. As stated by German archeologist and heritage specialist, Ariane Buschmann, "Dresden's cultural, architectural, and historical significance makes it the cultural capital of Germany."¹¹ The German culture nurtured and patronized the flourishing arts of ceramics, painting, and music. Architecture was in the form of the ornate Late Baroque, and the church's historical significance rests on the fact that this site was a place of worship for hundreds of years.

A comparative example of an unsuccessful reconstruction is the Gur-i Amir mausoleum, built in the early fifteenth century under Timurid rule. The site is located in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, a city acknowledged as the Crossroads of Culture by UNESCO through its unique placement on the intersection of ancient cultures. This city started out being a huge oasis located on the Silk Road, one of the ancient trade routes between China and Europe. As an oasis, surrounded by desert, it provided water and a place of rest, attracting traders from many cultures selling their wares. The city of Samarkand, became the capital city of the military leader Timur Lane, known in the West as "Tamerlane" (1336-1405), conqueror and ruler of a vast empire. He moved all the master craftsmen into his capital as each area was brought under his control. They were to design, build, and decorate his monumental buildings in order to reflect Timurid power. Through the blending of the artistry from many different cultures, new, magnificent structures using multicolored tile mosaics were developed. According to scholar Elena Paskaleva, the style is renown today as Timurid architecture, believed to be the only architecture named after an individual.¹² These tile creations covered not only tomb buildings but Islamic schools and other royal structures in Timur's capital. The Gur-i Amir's historical significance is that Timur commissioned this mausoleum for his grandson and he is buried there also. Its cultural contribution is in its mammoth construction and allover decoration internally and externally, hiding structural organization. This area is seismically active, common to central Asia, causing many historic buildings overtime to deteriorate, leaving them in ruins. The politics of the Soviet government in Uzbekistan heavily influenced this site's reconstruction as part of its nation building ideology.

3. History of Frauenkirche, Dresden, Germany

The Frauenkirche, German for “Church of Our Lady,” according to cultural scholar Jurgen Paul, “had been one of the outstanding landmarks of Dresden with its monumental dome, a chief element of the famous architectural riverfront and this church is the most important church building of Lutheran Protestantism.”¹³ The church was a landmark for Dresden’s ornate Baroque architecture on a scale that surpassed most, if not all, neighboring buildings. The grandeur prompted city planners to create a wide-open surrounding plaza so nothing would seem insignificant nearby. This plaza would also allow large numbers of people access to the church for services. The church’s importance to Lutheran Protestantism, manifested in how it best reflected Lutheran ideology. Salvation was gained through faith in the saving grace of Christ. To enable the greatest transmission of Lutheran values, the worship service in the Frauenkirche was in the vernacular. This practice was in contrast to Roman Catholicism that offered salvation through the process of selling “indulgences,” which is the practice of paying money to the church to have one’s sins pardoned.¹⁴ Moreover, the Catholic services were heard in Latin, a language not understood by all. In the Frauenkirche, the worshippers sat in a centralized designed building artistically rendered in pastel colors, natural lighting and soft architectural curves that allowed all to see and hear the pastor, enhancing their experience through the senses.

The Frauenkirche is known as a significant example of Baroque church architecture. The Baroque which started in Italy, drew artists and architects from northern countries to go there and apprentice themselves, learning this emerging style. Consequently, they would take those ideas back to meld with the local interests and craft-guilds and develop a style that was unique to Central Europe.¹⁵ Architectural history scholar Leland M. Roth states that “Baroque church architecture is so complex that much time is needed to appreciate what is being seen.”¹⁶ This style displays variety in the form of ornate carved stucco, details in gold accents, all complimenting and pointing to the altar area where heaven and earth are depicted, evoking a secretive quality and mystery.¹⁷ The interior of Baroque churches include side walls that have no square edges and tend to curve and blend into the ceiling. The side chapels of Medieval or Renaissance styles which were simple and practical, are now opened up and the multi-storied walls extended toward the nave, increasing the inside space. This design results in interiors that are circular but seem to undulate as they follow the curvature of the centralized church. Serenity is displayed through the use of soft pastel colors. Clear glass in classical window frames allows more natural light to enter the church, differing from the stained glass and ornate windows of the Gothic period that gave a dark and mysterious aura to the interior. The Baroque decoration is bright and open containing many golden accents within the church.



Figure 1. Photo from 1939 with the Frauenkirche in the middle of Neumarkt, the historic City Center.

http://www.hms.civil.uminho.pt/events/historica2001/page%20167-186%20_Jager_.pdf.

Dresdeners believe their city to be fabled and legendary. They envision its environment as one that appreciates art, architecture and music thus enveloping a noble cultural history unique to its residents since the founding of the church.

The church was also a part of important events in and around Dresden that reflect its cultural history. In the published letter the “Call from Dresden,” 1990, to solicit funding for the Frauenkirche reconstruction, the author mentioned famous people who were familiar with Dresden and its Baroque church: “architect George Bahr, musicians/composers Johann Sebastian Bach and Richard Wagner, organ builder Gottfried Silbermann, and composer/organist Heinrich Schutz.”¹⁸ All these accomplished artists thrived in this culturally infused environment.¹⁹ Scholars Jason James and Robert Marshall write about Bach’s strong connection to Dresden.²⁰

Both Dresden and the church enjoyed this reputation of being a cultural centerpiece during the next few centuries and they were spared any kind of mass destruction until two months before the end of WWII. The people of Dresden were beginning to think that since they had no military importance their city would not be destroyed but would continue as a large city of Baroque architecture, culture, and fine arts. This idea ended in February 13-14, 1945, when the Allies unexpectedly dropped tons of incendiary armaments on Dresden, killing tens of thousands through the ensuing firestorm. Much of Dresden’s historic urban environment was leveled and interspersed with mounds of burnt rubble.

4. Frauenkirche: Under Soviet Governance

After the war, the ruins of Frauenkirche were untouched under Soviet occupation (1945-1989), while important secular buildings were restored or rebuilt. The Soviets wanted Dresden to become a Socialist city that would reflect modern architecture with limited lifespans, trading long-standing permanent structures for the less expensive, mass-produced housing that was being used in Socialist Germany. This was also a time of increased industrialization that fostered mass-production.²¹ At the same time the Frauenkirche rubble came to be known by the Socialist’s occupiers as the result of capitalist cruelty through the demolition by UK and American bombers, of an unarmed city, filled with thousands of refugees. Dresdeners cherished their history, while socialism wanted nothing to do with the past.²²

After decades of authoritarian governance in East Germany, 1989 introduced major changes to the Soviet Union’s foreign and domestic policy under Mikhail Gorbachev. According to political science scholar Karl Kaiser, this change was the most important force “that brought about the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the East German regime.”²³

Spring of 1990 brought more positive changes. East Germany voted for the first time and elected pro-unification candidates, ushering in the beginnings of a democratic government.²⁴ In September 1990, Allied powers signed the Treaty on the Final Settlement, that gave up their rights of occupation, which made possible the unification of East and West Germany, leading Germany to sign their own treaty of unification a month later.²⁵

German reunification did have a very positive side effect through initiating a project that would bring the new nation together with a common goal and peace between the two sides. The idea of rebuilding/reconstructing the Frauenkirche would be the embodiment of all they wanted to accomplish. A debate went on for years after the reunification of West and East Germany when the project of reconstructing the Frauenkirche was suggested. James asserts that “journalists and academics joined some Dresdeners in lamenting the replacement of the ruin with a structure that they insist will never evoke loss as vividly.”²⁶ Conversely, supporters of the project saw the proposal as cathartic, accommodating, and the embodiment of European culture in a restored Dresden.²⁷ Some scholars and a member of the clergy, exercising a new experience of being able to voice their true feelings, clamored for the church’s re-creation. Opponents, however, wanted the money spent on welfare programs. No one in the government or associated with the church wanted to be financially responsible for the rebuilding.²⁸

As mentioned earlier, the published letter, “Call from Dresden,” written by members of the citizens’ initiative for the construction of the Frauenkirch, lamented that each day the ruins of the Frauenkirche declined further. Soon, attempting to preserve them would be beyond what Dresden or Germany could afford. They claimed the church’s design was exceptional and full of wonder, more than worthy to represent peace in a world recovering from a devastating war. To rebuild the Frauenkirche would return to the culture of the world an “architectural work of art of unique importance.”²⁹ The letter also stresses the inclusion of its notable dome which was a major part of Dresden’s impressive cityscape. This call was answered through a world-wide response that contributed to the significance of the building and brought peace between former enemies.³⁰

5. History of Gur-i Amir, Samarkand, Uzbekistan

Gur-i Amir, means “Tomb of the Emir” in Persian, the language spoken in this area during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.³¹ Samarkand started out as a large oasis in the desert on one of the famous Silk Road trade routes and was used by travelers and merchants heading west from China or east from present-day Constantinople. Timur, known in the West as Tamerlane was of Mongol heritage and had converted to Islam. Early on he proved to be an excellent military leader, cunning and intelligent, but brutal. He eliminated outside threats to his rapidly expanding empire by conquering their territory. Soon his empire covered eastward from the border of Turkey, across northern India to the western border of China and as far north as the Aral Sea and south to the Arabian Sea. Timur, according to scholar Mark Dickens, took advantage of the access the Silk Road trade route afforded to put these areas under his control and then used this asset to his advantage controlling East-West commerce.³²

Timur used one of the Silk Road trade routes to do battle with the Ottoman Turks in Central Turkey. That army was destroyed and their sultan taken captive, thus “delaying the fall of Constantinople for fifty years. This was due to the ensuing internal unrest within the Ottoman Empire,” according to scholar Marcus Hattstein.³³ The European rulers showed their gratitude of how Timur had handicapped the Ottoman Turks from harassing their merchants returning from the East, by establishing diplomatic relations from countries such as France, England, and Spain. They also hoped that by having this kind of relationship, he would not turn on them.³⁴ The Spanish Ambassador, de Clavijo, sent by the king of Castile, as asserted by architectural historian Elena Paskaleva, saw and reported the monumental construction of several sacred and secular buildings and the orderly layout of the city, while he was in Samarkand in the early 1400s.³⁵ Additionally Timur demanded that existing arches be torn down and replaced with new ones that would be either taller or wider to better represent the vastness of his power.³⁶

By now Samarkand was the capital of Timur’s vast empire. He brought back all the master craftsmen, architects, artists as well as scholars, scientists, and historians from all the conquered cities and settled them in his capital. This blending of art and architecture from a vast array of disciplines brought about innovations in scale, design and adornment of Timur’s monumental buildings. Despite his despotic ways, he was not an uneducated barbarian Lord of his empire. According to Hattstein, “He mastered the Persian language and discussed in depth the works of scholars, scientists and poets of his court.”³⁷

Timur took the knowledge gained from master craftsmen and turned it into architecture unique to this area. He wanted his buildings to be enormous for they would forever represent him. Nothing of this size and scale had been built in central Asia before this period or since. Timur built a huge palace, now in ruins, in his nearby birthplace. The entry arch was more than seventy feet across with supporting pylons that once stood more than 160 feet. Historian S. Frederick Starr compares this edifice with the “nave of Amiens France Cathedral that was 220 feet above the floor and built during Timur’s lifetime,” indicating similar knowledge simultaneously displayed in the same timeframe in two culturally divergent civilizations.³⁸

Some of the architectural innovations that came about through the blending of master craftsmen were the expanding of interior spaces, exterior ribbed domes that stood high above interior ones, and cornices filled with muqarnas (plaster stalactites) that disguised the transition between dome, drum, and brick vaulting. The exteriors were covered with brilliant, multicolored tile work. Timur’s decorative tile work stood in contrast to brickwork two hundred years prior, exposed and of the same color as the desert, creating a uniform exterior appearance. In spite of all these exterior innovations, Starr indicates that within the structure itself the unseen buildings were conventional. Hattstein claims that the design of the dome’s supporting structure was altered in such a way that allowed them to better withstand the seismic circumstances in the area. The interiors were also completely covered in paintings and wall paneling sheathed in glazing, while dome interiors were filled with gilt, molded relief.³⁹

Something else unique to Timurid Architecture are the tall domes in dazzling blue tile and minarets (lighthouses) covered in tile which could be seen for many miles in the desert. These lighthouses called caravans of merchants, not only by their sheer height, but also through the large epigraphs that announced the name of *Allah* and/or sometimes the prophet Muhammad. The weary traveler, invited in, would be refreshed by cool waters and lovely courtyards with walls festooned in glorious mosaic tile flowers, evoking a paradise. They would also find rest for their souls, all in stark contrast to the monochromatic, arid desert.

The sphere of influence of this architecture did not remain localized but migrated out and was incorporated into designs found in India and Iran. The Taj Mahal reflects this in the form of onion-shaped domes and throughout Iran, in the form of huge iwan entrance portals to the multi-columned mosques, which were the Islamic houses of prayer.⁴⁰

6. Reconstruction and Visual Analysis of Both Buildings

This section first introduces the motives behind the reproduction of Frauenkirche with its visual analysis and details the tedious process that went into its rebuilding, reflecting a successful reconstruction. No procedure was unimportant in order to restore this building to be in conformity to the original architect's plans. What follows is a comparison and contrasting with the second site, the Gur-i Amir, an unsuccessful reconstruction which did not utilize established guidelines other than what was expedient to capitalize on the power exuded by its architecture. A side effect of this is a prosperous tourist trade. A visual analysis is also included.

6.1. Focus on Restoration of Frauenkirche

In 1994 the Frauenkirche Dresden Foundation was formed, as a non-profit organization and proprietor and sponsor of the building. Once the paperwork and funding were in place, the reconstruction began.⁴¹ They started out by establishing a few guiding principles: "1) Built with as much original material as possible following Bahr's plan, 2) blend modern and 1700s technology and building construction, 3) integrate twenty-first century building requirements to meet current codes and laws."⁴²

In order to satisfy the first guiding principle, the existing rubble that laid in place for over forty-five years was removed and documented according to the careful directives of an archaeological excavation. For example, the site was overlaid with a grid pattern in which each square was numbered or labeled. All artifacts were marked and numbered while dimensions and locations were recorded before being archived. Almost 2,000 original altar fragments were identified during the sifting and recording process while carefully clearing away the rubble. These fragments, now back into their original positions compose about eighty percent original material within the altar. All movement of material was recorded through photogrammetry.⁴³ Photogrammetry, as defined by restoration specialists Romero Diego "is a three-dimensional measurement process using photography to obtain the location of features in common from multiple photographs to build a three-dimensional model.⁴⁴ The process is to photograph the object in question with overlapping shots, upload to computer software that then processes all the information. Thus, a solid three-dimensional mesh object is created.⁴⁵ This technology helped not only to catalog and document artifacts but also assisted in re-creating broken and missing parts in order to have as much authenticity to the original as possible. This process intrinsically adds to the knowledge gained from studying the craftsmanship of the original artifact pieces.

The disharmonic exterior would be acceptable as part of the restoration, for the positive qualities far outweigh any negative structural ones. The darkened sandstone blocks are from the rubble of the bombed-out church at the end of WWII. By utilizing burnt stone block from the rubble one can readily read the history of the church. The blackened stones symbolize a form of defiance to defeat, to never forget what the church originally meant to the community, its culture, and the arts. The new yellow sandstone blocks also bring to mind that cherished past, the hope of a bright future while defying modernist approaches in the rebuilding done after the war, encouraged by socialist ideology in the face of industrialization.⁴⁶ The rebuilding defies a sense of Nazi despotism which brought the war to Dresden and the Allies who perpetrated the destruction.⁴⁷



Figure 2. Rubble of the Frauenkirche after WWII. Dresden, Germany.
<http://moimir.org/poslevoennoe-vosstanovlenie-drezdена-iz-ruin>

True to its original plans, great care was taken to make the Frauenkirche follow the original design as technically possible. One of the many characteristics of Baroque architecture is its considerable scale and the Frauenkirche church personifies this aspect through George Bahr's original plans. The church is 298 feet tall by 138 feet wide (north to south) by 164 feet (west to east). The upper dome is seventy-nine feet tall and eighty-five feet in diameter.⁴⁸ The church has seven entrance doors admitting people to freely come from any direction, unlike the conventional design of Catholic churches that have only one main entrance. The church is double domed, the upper one is made of sandstone with a lantern that sits atop this 12,000-ton dome. Above the original lantern the Pinnacle Cross was mounted. While documenting artifacts retrieved from the rubble, the heavily damaged cross with its boss was discovered, preserved and mounted in a place of honor within the sanctuary, bringing to mind remembrance and reflection.⁴⁹

Another characteristic of Baroque architecture is spatial complexity and curvilinearity. The base of this structure is a tall and long undulating plinth or platform that is octagonal in shape. Centered on three long sides of the façade are pairs of pilasters topped with ornate capitals that frame tall multi-storied windows. Above this is an entablature containing a round segmented window within a broken pediment. These pilasters protrude, matching the plinth footprint. The four corner areas, with short but ornate spires, house the internal access stairs to the upper four levels, one of which is enclosed. Externally, the corner areas follow the architecture of the three sides of pilasters that frame the segmented and multi-storied windows. These internal access towers differ slightly in that their pediments are segmented and have ornamented spires. The apse occupies the entire fourth façade and extrudes in a semi-circular shape. Its exterior three sides have multi-storied segmented pediments and a round window within the entablature. The external ashlar comprising the apse is totally of burnt, dark-colored stone since this section of the building and the tower across from it were the only two parts of the church's exterior that remained mostly intact and standing at the time of Frauenkirche's destruction in 1945.



Figure 3. Original Stair tower. Frauenkirche restoration. Dresden, Germany.
<https://www.askideas.com/beautiful-exterior-view-of-the-frauenkirche-dresden/>

The reconstruction process of the church is in step with the attention to detail of the Baroque. Scholars and restoration specialists were commissioned to oversee the tedious process that took more than ten years to complete, with the support of the Frauenkirche Foundation.⁵⁰ Internally there are more than sixteen hundred seats occupying the four galleries and nave. All seats have an unobstructed view of the altar and pulpit due to the centralized shape. There are no right angles but a plethora of curves in the arches, seating configuration, round-topped windows and the inner dome with its oculus. The inner dome with a background and borders of pastel yellow, peach and cream, as viewed from the seats, has four roundels between the images of the four apostles with their symbols.⁵¹ These were painted by theater artist Johann Baptist Grone.⁵² Between the seating sections from floor to supporting arch above are wall-pillars. They too are decorated in pastel colors of yellow, blue and tan with white accents facing the nave. The same color scheme with the addition of sculpted motifs covers all the balcony fronts.

The reconstructed altar artistically reflects the Baroque qualities of mystery, emotional impact and variety. The pastel colors with much gold embellishment give a sense of heavenly presence. The altar area has three registers occupying the entire apse from floor to ceiling. The lower register is level with the pulpit area. Above that, built by sculptor Johann Christian Feig, is the focal point, a sculpture of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane praying, with a backdrop of Roman soldiers approaching from the town.⁵³ The columns on this middle register hold up an entablature that supports a huge organ that occupies the entire upper third register.⁵⁴



Figure 4. Interior of reconstructed Frauenkirche facing altar. Dresden, Germany.
<https://www.frauenkirche-dresden.de/en/architecture/>

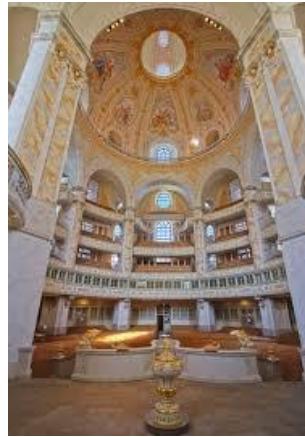


Figure. 5. Interior of reconstructed church, altar view.
<https://www.osmo.de/osmo/news/holzschutz-auf-hoechstnivean>.

The successful restoration of the church fostered the desire to rebuild the nearby “historic City Center,” to complete the area. This term was used to describe the historical architectural value of a large area located in the heart of Dresden. It was called by either *Neumarkt* or *Altmarkt* and it surrounded the Frauenkirche church.⁵⁵ As a result, the *Neumarkt* and the Frauenkirche reflect the grace and elegance of a former rich and romantic culture previously destroyed in 1945.

6.2. Gur-i Amir: Layered Reconstructions in Contrast to Frauenkirch

The Russian Empire, in its western expansion, annexed much of Central Asia in the mid-1800s and Samarkand in 1868.⁵⁶ Soon after, European travelers came to the area drawn by the monumentality of the Gur-i Amir as the formal symbol of Timur and his empire’s capital city. They did not come as pilgrims honoring Sufi saints but as seekers of knowledge. Russians, in order to legalize their political agenda, supported funding for the Gur-i Amir which reflected immense power. Timurid ruins were still awe inspiring. Descendants of Timur did not hold the empire together which opened the way for a new power to come from the north, the Uzbeks to take over what was left of the Timurid Empire and plundered Samarkand. This, combined with seismic activity, left Timurid architecture in ruins.⁵⁷



Figure 6. Entrance to the Gur-i Amir 1905-15. Taken by S.M. Prokudin-Gorskii
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/prok/>.

As discussed earlier, the Frauenkirche's single reconstruction embraced many, if not all, the guiding principles for a successful reparation. These included original material used, structure rebuilt to the original plans, the community's heritage restored, and technology enhanced the building's integrity. The preservation on Gur-i Amir was a series of layered reconstructions starting in the form of interventions. According to scholar Stamatios Zografos "if the integrity [of the monument] is threatened, allow interventions to take place."⁵⁸ In other words, if the structure's creator intended the building to stand permanently, then restoration is allowed to revive the edifice. In the instance of intervention, the Gur-i Amir's importance was political when Samarkand became part of the Russian Empire's westward expansion. The Russians desired to become the legal descendent of Timurid patrimony and the Gur-i Amir represented the power and legacy of Timur and his capital.⁵⁹

A decorative fence was built around it, rubble cleared away, and the monument was stabilized. Holes in the roof were patched and vegetation was cleared out to link this site as a representative of the old Islamic town as it opened up to the new European one nearby, a result of Russian urban development. The previously discussed reconstruction of the Frauenkirche was not politically motivated but was a desire to recapture the culture that was stripped away by war followed by the Soviet government. At Gur-i Amir however the preservation efforts were a political ploy to portray the Russians as the legal heir of the Timurid architectural legacy and show the inhabitants their upmost respect for their traditions and values.⁶⁰

Starting in 1895, a private group of Russian elites and scholars, who called themselves "The Circle of Amateur Archaeologists" formed when the local government could no longer support monument upkeep. This group was to participate in an archaeological assessment of Samarkand for the first time, according to Paskeleva.⁶¹ Ten years later, they produced, from their studies, a luxurious manuscript titled *Mosques of Samarkand*. It was composed of architectural particulars and monument inspections of the Gur-i Amir. This folio, the only one of its kind, was given to the tsar to prompt further funding. This politicized prototype started a novel way of Timurid architectural study. These monuments would be the genesis of an all-encompassing learned investigation. Furthermore, the manuscript indicated the importance of this monument to the Russians. Presenting the manuscript to the tsar, inferred that he was the heir of Timur's cultural legacy, and had become a form of propaganda equating power. This process therefore labeled the Gur-i Amir a political tool and deprived this monument of any religious connotations.⁶²

This Circle of Amateur Archaeologists assumed, actually elitists, justified their elevated position by explaining the ruined state of the monuments was due to seismic activity and poor conservation applications used by succeeding shahs (rulers). They were successful during their study in saving the Gur-i Amir's dome from caving in and reinforced the floors with brick piers. Charles Shaw, scholar in Soviet and Central Asian history, reports that "photographs taken between 1905 – 1915 by S.M. Prokudin-Gorskii showed the entrance gate iwan on the verge of collapse, the main hall beset with cracking and most of the blue tile fallen away from the dome and central edifice."⁶³ In 1917 the revolutionaries in Russia overthrew the autocratic government, followed by civil war which ended in the formation of the Soviet Union in the early 1920s. Fortunately, because of its location, the Gur-i Amir avoided any new structural compromise.⁶⁴

6.3. Gur-i Amir: Socialists led Reconstruction in Turkistan [modern day Uzbekistan]

In Russia, the new leader of the Soviet government Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, signed paperwork October 1918, that stressed the significance of preserving cultural artifacts of importance to science. From this, museums and conservation organizations of architectural traditions were initiated. Two years later in Samarkand, the first authorization for preserving architectural monuments was started. This led to the establishment of a committee that oversaw museums and the conservation of ancient structures. In order to garner increased funding, the committee leader phrased a letter of request in such a way that the prestige of the Soviet government was at stake. He went on to claim that if the Timurid monuments were allowed to deteriorate further, the West would view the Soviet leadership as being irresponsible of an important asset. As another way to garner funding, a proposal was made by him to allow outside museums the ability to purchase some removable artifacts.⁶⁵

From the mid-1920s to 1930s, the organization that was handling the monument preservation was re-organized and now had two central responsibilities: to undertake architectural repairs and prevent added ruin. This new organization, called Central Asian Committee, was involved in more than fifty monument conservation and restoration projects in the country of Turkistan. This led to a premier complete scientific investigation on Timurid architecture by the Russian participants of this organization. These scholars were the first to draw detailed plans of the structures. They conducted an inquiry on historical sources of their assembly, interpreted the inscriptions of the main Timurid sites and lastly, proceeded to do excavation and restoration efforts.⁶⁶

In the late 1930s, a new restoration school was started in Samarkand that specialized in teaching Timurid building and decoration methods. A Russian architectural scholar, working with local craftsmen put together a handbook on Timurid construction processes and included hundreds of images. Both Shaw and Paskaleva assert that this was a political move to exploit the traditional building knowledge of the craftsmen, under the guise of being benevolent, imparting knowledge, and working hand-in-hand with the people. The Russians needed this traditional knowledge of restoration but maintained a paternalistic posture.⁶⁷

In 1941, Joseph Stalin, leader of Russia, added a nationalist character to Soviet citizenship among the Uzbek people. This process was through glorifying their chronicled cultural achievements as well as Timur Lane being defined as a heroic leader. Science was harnessed to select this new national hero for the people and to bestow the appropriate definition upon old structures. Stalin ordered at this time the exhumation of Timur's grave in Gur-i Amir. A forensic anthropologist, Mikhail Gerasimov, was sent to prove the truth of Timur's internment. This undertaking blatantly reflected Soviet anti-religious polities, violating Muslim religion and defiled Timur's burial. The Soviets further added to the desecration taking not only Timur's skull but his son's and grandsons' skulls. Ulugh Beg, a grandson was part of the group. Upon inspection of the four skulls, through physiognomy, it was revealed that Timur had "Mongoloid" features, his son, European characteristics, while his grandsons, Ulugh Beg and Muhammad Sultan had European with a mix of Mongoloid. The Soviet discourse associated Timur's features as ignorant and unintelligent while comparing Ulugh Beg with refinement and culture.⁶⁸

Originally, both Frauenkirche and Gur-i Amir were sacred edifices. Although Frauenkirche is still a monument to Lutheran ideology, Gur-i Amir has been converted for a secular purpose in line with Soviet dogma. Ulugh Beg, Timur's grandson became the forefather of Soviet state propaganda in regards to Central Asian tradition and cultural excellence. Ulugh Beg, not displaying any military attributes, fit well within the ambitions of the Soviet government to improve, and therefore modernize the locals. Manufacturing and artistic development of this area was very important to the USSR's political agenda. As part of their agenda, Ulugh Beg was an intelligent ancestor and whose features melded into official Soviet race accounts. Portrayed as an atheistic free-thinker, history tells of his murder by the clergy because of his scientific passions.⁶⁹ Because Ulugh Beg's convictions, the Gur-i Amir became a place of royal veneration and burial in the Soviet mindset. Now, centuries later, under the Soviets, this monument is where modern kings are created.⁷⁰

The excavation around and restoration on the Gur-i Amir during the time between 1943 -1956 resulted in the accurate dating of the entire complex composed of the mausoleum, on the south, the foundations of the madrasa (religious school) on the east, and the Khanga (hospice or Sufi pilgrim devotion) on the west side of a central courtyard. On the North side of the courtyard was installed a new steel-reinforced foundation beneath the huge entrance gate. On this gate was found the name of the architect who designed it and where he was from. Within the entrance gate's half-dome are muqarnas (stalactites) made from marble, which were also restored.⁷¹ Between the inner and outer domes of the mausoleum, an eight-sided pyramid composed of thick wooden boards was inserted to better withstand earthquakes. The brick piers that were installed in the 1890s were removed. The outer dome's shape was restored but scholar Shaw did not elaborate further on the physical shape of it before this reconstruction. He does mention that the bare patches where tiles had fallen off the dome were filled with turquoise majolica tiles made only for this dome at a local ceramics shop. Majolica tiles are earthenware tiles covered with an opaque tin glaze and decorated before firing. Scholar Mark Dickens asserts that during the 1950s, Gur-i Amir's dome was reconstructed and refurbished because most of it had fallen away.⁷²

Shaw continues with the reconstruction, writing about the mausoleum's exterior paneling being mostly restored as well as the green onyx within the tomb's interior. There was also a provisional mosaic border on the bottom portion of the southwestern minaret that was added in an effort to recreate the color that used to be there.⁷³ He also notes that the conservation work on this complex conformed to modern 1950s urban planning laws. The architect-in-charge, Boris Zasyipkin, enlarged the existing fence that was erected in the late 1800s, to encompass the entire complex. He also replaced nearby private homes and a small mosque with new landscaping, allowing better, more open views of the complex and keeping this grouping separated from the busy Soviet city. Shaw goes on to write on how the most up-to-date technology in the field of chemistry was used to match the original blue and yellow tile glazes. Zasyipkin wanted these tiles to be installed by hand and found craftsmen proficient in preservation to do the work. His philosophy and actions were similar to the diligence in restoration applied to Frauenkirche. He was the last Soviet restorer who paid attention and desired to replicate the original craftsmanship. The difference between Zasyipkin's and his successor's work ethic could not be greater. He insisted on the preservation of the original material and technique of authentic building methods. Typical of Soviet division of labor, the Russians were doing the guiding/directing while the decoration was in the hands of the Uzbek craftsmen. However, these craftsmen started to become acknowledged for their uncompromised contribution in producing a Soviet work of art.⁷⁴ Architectural scholar Igor Demchenko writes that during this time a new influential Soviet restorer headed the Central Asia projects. This leader Konstantin

Kriukov was a student of Zasyipkin and took his place when he died. Kriukov initiated a completely different approach to architectural restoration. He advocated that the firm adherence to the general image was more important than authenticity of monuments, their trappings or building methods. His methodology was based on the belief that if the structure's value depended on original materials, then their loss over time greatly diminished the structure's beauty and deformed the original color palette. With this as his course of action, he pushed for the replacement of original tilework with mass-produced ones. Also, since the tourist does not see what is beneath the tiles, he endorsed the use of reinforced concrete frames in order to withstand the damage caused by earthquakes. In this way, Kriukov, single-handedly destroyed authentic buildings in order to create shiny and colorful copies.⁷⁵ This policy influenced reconstructions for decades afterward.

In the 1960s, Nikita Khrushchev, Soviet leader of Russia, wanted to educate the Central Asian labor class through the monument's new inscriptions halfway completed that incorporated predictive sayings about the preciousness of knowledge. The Soviets in the mid to late 1960s through the 1980s incorporated steel, reinforced concrete and mass-produced polychrome tile as the pinnacle of progress for Socialist technology when blended with teams of expert local craftsmen, archaeologists, architects, and engineers. Timurid architecture enhanced the country's image as the centerpiece of cultured socialism in Central Asia.⁷⁶ By 1970 Samarkand's Timurid buildings had become outstanding examples of a flourishing tourist enterprise and at the same time, reflected to foreign Muslim Diplomats that Soviets took care of their fellow Muslims' culture.⁷⁷ The Gur-i Amir was the pivotal point that shaped ideology.

Independence from Russia was achieved for Uzbekistan in 1991, and Timur Lane replaced Ulugh Beg as the new national hero, the father of Uzbekistan. The Gur-i Amir again became the pinnacle of architectural legality, reflecting power through majestic buildings. Being the property of all Uzbeks, the maintenance of the monuments was the responsibility of the state. As such, they no longer had a political connotation but re-acquired the sanctity accorded them. Timurid cultural heritage was understood as a formal statement to effect change through his humanistic achievements in order to develop the collective memory, new state policy and inspire pride in the eminence of this new nation. Numerous restoration programs and new urban development undertakings reflected the new status of Timurid sanctuaries.⁷⁸

The reconstruction plans for the Gur-i Amir after independence were to start where the Soviets had stopped. There was a re-thinking of the epigraph development and plan to add new texts through the process of using templates. These would save time and money in the reconstruction process. Uzbek pride is reflected in their monument preservation efforts. They are at this time blanketed in tiling. Paskaleva indicated that with so much tiling, "there is an illusion of authenticity that has been consciously created and carefully crafted."⁷⁹

Under urban development, streets were widened thirty-six feet which led to demolishing traditional homes that were in the way. These projects came about to impress the crowds of world travelers pouring into Samarkand. UNESCO added to this by labeling the city as "Crossroads of Culture," (its location since ancient times was on the convergence of silk Road routes) which labeled it as a place for tourists to visit.⁸⁰ However in 2013 UNESCO, in its capacity of managerial role, encouraged a management plan that was urgently needed to counteract the detrimental impact on the monuments caused by traffic vibrations and fumes. With the yearly increase of tourism, time will tell when there will not be any original tilework left to see.⁸¹



Figure 7. Evidence of replacement tiles on nearby Timurid monument
<https://www.bestourism.com/items/di/8013?title=Manchac-Swamp&b=357>.

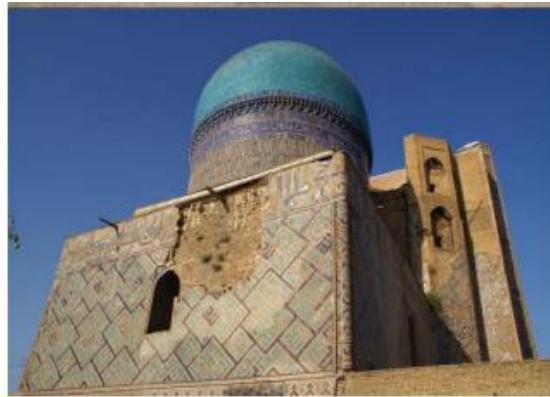


Figure 8. Missing Kufic script due to broken gutters
<https://www.silkroadfoundation.org>

Elena Paskaleva visited Samarkand at this time and wrote of the damage that she observed. There was severe damage caused by rainwater reacting with the reinforced concrete exposing large gaps between building joints. Cracks in the mortar caused, in part, by traffic vibrations and broken gutters allowed water to run behind the mosaic work, popping off chunks of tiling with epigraphy on it, allowing parts of history to disappear.⁸²

6.4 Visual Analysis of Gur-i Amir

One approaches the Gur-i Amir complex through the monumental open-ended forty-foot-tall entrance gate. Whereas, Frauenkirche's exterior is composed of new and burnt yellow sandstone, being open to the scrutiny of everyone, the Gur-i Amir, in contrast, is encapsulated in tile mosaic. This mosaic conceals architectural shortcuts, as in the use of an internal wooden pyramid to support the dome. This façade is covered in azure tile mosaic with arabesque, vegetal, and geometric patterns. The overall structure is a tall, three-sided iwan (a vaulted hall opening to a courtyard). The interior of this gateway contains a lower register with a smaller arch access to the mausoleum. The three interior sides of the gate are also covered with the same tiles patterns as the façade. Above the arch keystone is a cartouche that according to architectural historian Roya Marefat, contains the name of the architect and where he came from, in elegant Kufic script.⁸³ Above is a border separating the lower portal area with a muqarnas vault of stucco occupying the arch area above. Most of this upper arch area has been restored.

Across the open courtyard to the south is the Gur-i Amir mausoleum. Its exterior base is octagonal in shape, which brings to mind the undulating Baroque base of Frauenkirche. The entrance is another iwan with a honeycomb ceiling of cascading muqarnas. These stalactites, according to Islamic belief, represent the elaborate layout of the heavens.⁸⁴ Over the main chamber is a tall drum covered in geometric-patterned tile with the names of *Allah* and *Muhammad* in dark and light blue tile. This drum supports a dome with sixty-four ribs and has a cross-section in the shape of a pointed arch. The tile pattern on this is the same as on the drum reflecting a cohesive impression of a vast expanse of sky.⁸⁵ The overall coloring of the exterior tiles ranges from pale turquoise to a deep, rich lapis, all symbolic of sky and water. Scholar Marefat goes on to assert that the innovative binary dome made possible the achievement of greater height. In this case it is 123 feet from ground level. Continuing with external features, the complex once displayed four minarets. It was from these "lighthouse" towers that the devout were called to prayer.⁸⁶



Figure 9. Entrance gate to Gur-I Amir mausoleum.

<http://uzbek-travel.com/about-uzbekistan/monuments/gur-e-amir-mausoleum/>

The lower interior layout of the tomb chamber is square with a deep niche in each side. The square form sits within an octagonal outer perimeter. The ceiling area of the side niches is a muqarnas vault and is highly decorated. The interior height of the tomb area to the lower dome is seventy-five feet. The middle area between the square footprint to round dome is called the transition zone. It is octagonal and above the four corners of the base is a squinch composed of an arch with a recess that converts this level to accommodate the dome.⁸⁷

The lower part of the interior wall to a height of about six and a half feet are green hexagonal onyx tiles with a cornice decorated with small muqarnas feature. Topping this is a green epigraphic band of gold lettering. Six feet above this is a second band emphasizing painted geometric patterns on a plaster base. In the transition zone, the walls and bays, originally covered in a technique called wall-painting were of gold and blue pressed paper in a star pattern. Also, the inner dome was covered in elaborate patterns of *papier-mâché*. Over time all the pressed paper deteriorated but the plaster base pattern remained to allow a re-creation to be made.⁸⁸ The bodies of Timur and his descendants lie below this chamber in an underground cruciform crypt. Timur's monument, as stated by architectural scholar Mark Dickens, "is the largest slab of nephrite, (dark green jade), in the world," and was brought to the Gur-i Amir by his grandson Ulugh Beg.⁸⁹



(Preceding Page) Figure 10. Part of lower wall, transition zone, and inner dome.

<http://souvenirchronicles.blogspot.com/2018/04/samarkand-uzbekistan-gur-e-amir-aka.html>

7. Conclusion: Opposing Methods of Restoration at the Two Edifices

Restoration is a topic of contention by many scholars. What was long ago the purview of learned men who desired to protect historic buildings and locations has somewhat recently captured the interest of people of all ages thereby supporting the development of international organizations that foster these structures' architectural significance and preservation. In the past, critics had issues with the interpretation of the part(s) that were replaced during a historic preservation, due to the fact that copies most often were imperfect.

The Frauenkirche restoration fulfills several of the qualifications emphasized in this examination, the first being authenticity. Even though it has forty-five percent original material, in this situation the level of authenticity is not as important as reclaiming identity and a continuance of cultural heritage. As an important aspect of a successful restoration, heritage conservation specialists Stephen J Kelley supports this idea arguing "historical reconstructions have been a driver in the reclamation of national identity of states following war and are essential to reclaiming identity."⁹⁰ Here he cites the Frauenkirche as an example and how it was left in ruins after WWII for decades and only reconstructed in the late 1990s. German archaeologist Arianne Buschmann exercised caution, not wanting to cause harm to any part of the design through emphasizing the length of time taken to go through the rubble that took almost a year and a half to clear and document.⁹¹ Through the diligent care and effort utilized in this process a wealth of information most certainly was gained, thus meeting another guiding principle that had a positive effect on the restoration process. In contrast, the Gur-i Amir fulfills few of the guiding principles listed herein. The restoration was not a single event but a series of layers directed by the politics and ideologies of the Soviet government as well as the priorities of the architect-in-charge. This started with the Russian empire that wanted to capitalize on the power and authority personified by Timurid architecture, through their claim to be heir of his legacy. Any knowledge gained through exposure to old workmanship when the dome was saved from collapse was disregarded and not applied to this reconstruction.

Buschmann, however raises an important question concerning the Frauenkirche, "if a building looks like it was built in the eighteenth century but has modern improvements, can it still be considered as having historical significance?"⁹² She elaborated that heritage can have several interpretations such as through the amount of original material utilized, if knowledge is gained and if its cultural climate or its age adds value to it. The Frauenkirche, having had a beginning as a small church for hundreds of years before this one was built, over time the small church had morphed and grew in cultural significance as the community expanded. So, this church has a long history in Dresden.

In 2005, the reconstruction of Frauenkirche was completed, becoming a powerful symbol of national heritage and German reunification. The church evoked both the cultural legacy of Germany and reflected a time before the turmoil of the twentieth century. This church also symbolizes a recovery of a national heritage that identified it with old Germany and the reversal of loss with an inspiring image of a whole and living culture. This raised Dresdeners' spirits and gave them hope in direct contrast of what they had experienced all the years after the war.

Under Soviet governance, the Gur-i Amir monument and others, became secular and as such their conservation was important to science. The next layer of reconstruction over the next three decades was based on preserving the original material of the monument, using the latest technology blended with fifteenth-century craftsmanship. The 1950s saw a radical approach to architectural restoration that determined preservation methods for decades to come. The influential restorer, Konstantin Kriukov, advocated the importance of building image and ignored authenticity. He pushed for mass-produced tilework and reinforced concrete for the end result of creating appealing "old building" copies. Soon the epigraphs were replaced to advertise secular ideology. These extremist measures have resulted in building joint separations and missing tiles. Consequently, heritage was not respected nor was authenticity a priority, and little, if any original material was used. After the 1940s, exposure to old workmanship was not appreciated. The community's heritage was altered to reflect Soviet ideology and the use of technology became a detriment to the monument thus, compromising its integrity. Soviet, then Uzbek ideology presented mass-produced, fictional works of art for the lucrative tourist trade.

According to architecture scholar Anvar Safarov Normatovich, "Many heritage buildings with areas that [are] partially and[or] fully crumbled were reconstructed based on new designs and models by changing and altering the structure, style, form, facings and finishing, [thus] improving the building."⁹³ He categorizes this process as re-facing. As voiced by architectural theorist Inez Weisman and historic preservationist Jorge Otero-Pailos "Monuments are turning into copies of themselves."⁹⁴ They question the monument's authenticity given today's technology that can make digitally flawless duplications that voids the craftsman's hand that was so desirous in historic architecture. In conclusion, the Gur-i Amir exemplified a reconstruction that had not adopted any of the guidelines put forth by

ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) or UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Therefore, this re-creation became nothing more than a tourist attraction and a political pawn

8. References

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