

ZAYN AL-DĪN MAḤMŪD VĀṢIFĪ AND THE TRANSFORMATION
OF EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY ISLAMIC CENTRAL ASIA

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The *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* of Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. 'Abd al-Jalīl Vāṣifī is an early sixteenth century memoir and historical work written from a unique perspective, that of a non-elite, well-educated member of what we might refer to as “the middle class”. This dissertation will argue that if the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* is to be properly read and understood by Western scholars, then we cannot fail to acknowledge what is an essential aspect of Vāṣifī's identity – that being his identity as a devout Muslim. The present study will show that if we are to understand the author and historian Vāṣifī and his work the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* then we must not overlook or ignore this central component of his identity. Being Muslim was fundamental to Vāṣifī's worldview, his interpretation of the events, and consequently the historical narrative he produced; Vāṣifī saw the Divine as active in the unfolding of history and events, both great and small, and this is made quite apparent throughout his memoir. Bearing in mind this key aspect of Vāṣifī's identity one is then able to appreciate how he experienced, interpreted, and wrote about such politically, socially, and religiously transformative events as the Abu'l-Khayrid Uzbek conquest of Herat in 1507, the Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh seizure of the same city in 1510, and the subsequent Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh invasion of Mavarannahr in 1512, all of which are considered herein.

This dissertation also considers the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* Vāṣifī a unique and invaluable work that sheds light on processes of social, political, and religious transformation that redefined Islamic Central Asia in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. This claim will be supported via a close reading and analysis of chapters of the

Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘ that narrate events in Vāṣifī’s life that took place around the aforementioned significant historical events. It will be shown that, due to Vāṣifī’s unique perspective and the unofficial capacity in which he wrote, the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* contains information regarding the history of Islamic Central Asia found in no other source, and must be reconsidered as a work of immense importance by scholars endeavoring to reconstruct the history of the period.

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INTRODUCTION

The *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* of Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. 'Abd al-Jalīl Vāṣifī is an early sixteenth century memoir and historical work written from a unique perspective, that of a non-elite though well-educated member of what we might today refer to as “the middle class”. It contains the author’s reminiscences of the days of his youth in Herat and the surrounding region of Khurasan in the twilight of the Tīmūrīd era and a number of events, both great and small, that affected his life and the lives of many others of similar status and background. Delving into the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, the character of Vāṣifī himself began to take shape in my mind. Very often in works of history the people being written about, their actions recorded and affairs counted, are transformed into mere abstractions. Such is not the case with the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*. As a historical memoir, the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* presents the reader with an intensely personal narrative, a first-person account of life in Islamic Central Asia in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

This dissertation will argue that if the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* is to be properly read and understood by Western scholars, then we cannot fail to acknowledge what is arguably one of the most important aspect of Vāṣifī’s identity – that being his identity as a devout Muslim. Taking their cue from Soviet era scholars, Western scholars, while duly noting the unique perspective offered by Vāṣifī’s middling origins, have failed to take this aspect of Vāṣifī’s character into consideration. The present study will show that if we are to understand the author and historian Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāṣifī and his work the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, then we must not overlook or ignore this essential component of Vāṣifī’s identity. Being Muslim was fundamental to his worldview, his interpretation of

the events in which he took part and by which he was affected, and consequently the historical narrative he produced; Vāṣifī certainly saw the Divine as active in the unfolding of history and events, both great and small, and this is made quite apparent throughout his narrative. Bearing in mind this key aspect of Vāṣifī's identity, we will then be able to appreciate more fully how he experienced, interpreted, and wrote about such politically, socially, and religiously transformative events as the Abu'l-Khayrid Uzbek conquest of Herat and Khurasan in 1507, the Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh seizure of the same city and province in 1510, and the subsequent Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh invasion of Mavarannahr in 1512, all of which are considered herein.

Scholars who have worked with the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* in the West have made limited use of Vāṣifī's oeuvre. Rather than endeavoring to undertake a thorough examination of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* on its own merits and engaging with it as a valid source for the history of Islamic Central Asia at the close of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century Western scholars, with few exceptions, have cast the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* in a supporting role, using it to buttress what is stated in more widely known, commissioned historical works from the period. There is yet much that the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* can tell us with regard to such phenomena as the collapse of the Tīmūrids and the ascension of the Abu'l-Khayrids and Ṣafavids, but beyond this the work might serve as a significant source concerning the migrations and demographic shifts within the region sparked by such martial and political events, the polarization of the region's Muslim community into solidly Sunnī and Shī'ī camps, and so on. The present work will also demonstrate that a close and appreciative reading and analysis of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* serves to enhance our knowledge of the significant political, social, and religious

transformations that occurred in Islamic Central Asia in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

This dissertation should also be taken as the initial step in a greater, long-term endeavor. To date we lack a complete or even significant translation of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* in any Western language, and a critical analysis of the work as a historical source has yet to be produced. There is no significant examination of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* within the broader context of Islamic Central Asian historical literature of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. This volume marks the first time that whole chapters of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* have been translated into English, and constitutes the beginning of a project that will bring the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* of Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāṣifī into parity with such works as the *Bāburnāmah* and *Tārīkh-i rashīdī*, and properly situate it within the compendium of historical works from the period. The *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* is an important and invaluable source for the social, political, literary, and cultural history of Islamic Central Asia in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and a painstaking and thorough translation and examination of the contents of this work will ultimately contribute to our knowledge of the history of this period.

The *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* preserves for all time Vāṣifī's singular worldview; his memoir is historical, straightforward, and deeply personal. Thus, with the history of Vāṣifī one is able to examine a number of events, both momentous and seemingly insignificant, that cumulatively served to transform the social, political, and religious landscape of Islamic Central Asia during the late Tīmūrid and early Abu'l-Khayrid "Uzbek" periods from the perspective of a man, a Muslim, a scholar and poet, who grew up in and not only survived but thrived in this chaotic period.

The Plan of This Study

The present work, in addition to the introduction, consists of four chapters, a conclusion, and appendices wherein translations of four chapters of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* have been made available in English for the first time. Chapter one provides the reader with a thorough examination of the history of the historiography of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* and shows how the work has been utilized, or underutilized, to date by scholars in the former Soviet Union, post-Soviet Russia and Central Asia, and the West. The works of such renowned scholars as Aleksandr Boldyrev, Sadriddin Aynī, Jiří Bečka, and others as they relate to the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* will be reviewed sequentially.

The second chapter, entitled “The Narrative of Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāṣifī on the Abu'l-Khayrid Conquest of Khurasan,” will, as the title intimates, consider Vāṣifī's personal reflections vis-à-vis the Abu'l-Khayrid conquest of Herat in 1507. This chapter will also reveal and examine the role that Vāṣifī personally played in assisting several members of the Tīmūrid aristocracy with whom he was acquainted to avoid the snare of Uzbek invaders. This chapter will also situate the narrative of this event found in the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* among other works of history from the period. The reader will plainly see how Vāṣifī's identity as a devout Muslim, in particular a devout Sunnī Muslim, colored the way in which he interpreted the events in which he found himself embroiled and consequently left a strong imprint upon the historical narrative that he produced.

Chapter three, “There Arose the Day of Judgment: the Narrative of Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāṣifī on the Ṣafavid Occupation of Herat,” looks at the account of the Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh conquest of Herat and Khurasan in 1510 found in the thirty-second *guftār* of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* and Vāṣifī's personal experiences related to this

tumultuous event. This episode begins, however, with a flashback that speaks to the religious tensions that were present in Herat in the late Tīmūrid era, and thereby sets the scene for the sectarian religious conflict that was to accompany the coming of the Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh. Chapter three closes with a consideration of the first *guftār* of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* which finds Vāṣifī in a distressed state, having endured two years of Shī'ī rule, before departing for Abu'l-Khayrid Mavarannahr. The reader will note once again the way in which his identity as a devout Sunnī Muslim provided Vāṣifī with the lens through which he viewed the world around him and found meaning in both monumental and personal events. This being said, the narrative of the Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh capture of Herat found in Vāṣifī's memoir, when considered alongside the standard, commissioned historical accounts, contributes to our understanding of the social and cultural history of the city in the early sixteenth century.

Finally, chapter four, entitled "The Narrative of Amīr Najm-i Ṣānī and the Role of Mīr-i 'Arab," will consider Vāṣifī's recollections pertaining to the Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh campaign against the Abu'l-Khayrids in Mavarannahr in 1512. This episode is drawn from the sixth *guftār* of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*. After briefly recounting how word of the general massacre at Qarshi was received in Samarqand, and the role he played in quelling that panic, Vāṣifī recedes to the background, yielding center stage to Shaykh 'Abd Allāh Yamanī, known more generally to scholars as Mīr-i 'Arab, a prominent member the Naqshbandī Sūfī order who proved to be, in Vāṣifī's telling of it, a source of great inspiration to the Abu'l-Khayrids at this critical hour, and thus essential to the Abu'l-Khayrid defense of the province against the Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh invaders.

However, before proceeding to chapter one and thorough examination of the history of the historiography of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, it is appropriate to briefly consider both the author Vāṣifī and his work, as well as the history of the rise of two dynasties, the Abu'l-Khayrids and the Ṣafavids, that are representative of and served as catalysts for the social, political, and religious transformations in Islamic Central Asia that began in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Thus the remainder of this introduction will be devoted to these tasks. It is hoped that the reader will enjoy this work, a preliminary endeavor to properly situate the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* and Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāṣifī himself within the broader context of the history of late Tīmūrid and early Abu'l-Khayrid Shībānid Islamic Central Asia.

Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd 'Abd al-Jalīl Vāṣifī

At this point, it is appropriate to first consider the history of Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāṣifī, based for the most part on information provided in his own work. The author introduces himself on the very first page of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*: “And as to what follows, such is said by the most humble of the servants of God the Almighty, Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn 'Abd al-Jalīl, known as Vāṣifī.”¹ Vāṣifī was born in the Tīmūrid capital of Herat around the year 1485, during the reign of the last notable ruler of the Tīmūrid dynasty, Sultān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā, who presided over the final cultural flowering in Khurasan under the aegis of the Tīmūrids, a phenomenon that many have referred to as

¹ Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāṣifī, *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, Vol. I, ed. Aleksandr Boldyrev (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Bunyād-i Farhang-i Īrān, 1970), p. 3. Hereafter the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* will be referred to as *BV*, with appropriate volume indicated.

“the Tīmūrid Renaissance.”² All labels aside, the irrefutable truth is that Herat was at the height of its glory during this period, not only as a political capital, but as the literary and cultural center of the Eastern Iranian, Perso-Islamic, or Turko-Persian world before being reduced to a city of secondary significance under the Ṣafavids, Durrānids, and later Afghan dynasties.

According to the testimony of Vāṣifī himself, his father, ‘Abd al-Jalīl, seems to have been a state functionary of some sort. Aleksandr Nikolaevich Boldyrev, in his work entitled *Zainaddin Vasifi: Tadzhiiskii pisatel’*, suggests that ‘Abd al-Jalīl was perhaps a *munshī*, that is a scribe, secretary, or notary, or some sort of official functionary in the capital, though Boldyrev wisely refrained from speculating as to whether ‘Abd al-Jalīl worked within the bureaucracy of Herat or held a post within one of the Tīmūrid *dīvāns*.³ On his maternal side, Vāṣifī was related to a prominent poet of late-Tīmūrid Herat, Ṣāhib

² Subtelny states that the practice of labeling the late Tīmūrid period as a “renaissance” was once fairly common, but has been challenged by such scholars as the late Jean Aubin. See Maria E. Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition: Turko-Persian Politics and Acculturation in Medieval Iran* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2007), p. 41.

³ A. N. Boldyrev, *Zainaddin Vasifi: Tadzhiiskii pisatel’ XVIv. (Opym tvorcheskoi biografii)* (Stalinabad: Tadzhiiskoe gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1957), p. 18. Boldyrev states: “Little is known about Vāṣifī’s father, ‘Abd al-Jalīl. He had a home in Herat where he lived with his entire family. One can only guess at his occupation based upon the narrative regarding Nizām al-Mulk Khvāfī, wherein Vāṣifī relates that he himself was present with his father during his preparations for the execution of Nizām al-Mulk and his sons at the Ikhtiyār al-Dīn citadel. This took place in July of the year 1498, and Vāṣifī was at that time thirteen or fourteen years old. One might imagine that Vāṣifī was not there independently at that moment, but rather with his father, and that his father was present at such an important event at such a place as a prison for state criminals, not as a mere curious outsider but rather in an official capacity, most likely as a clerk with secretarial duties, a *munshī*, a scribe, or some such. A father might bring a young son to such an event, for example, in order to train him in his own profession. Moreover it is interesting to compare this brief reference to the presence of Vāṣifī in another castle in Herat – Nayrat in the year 912 A.H. (1506/1507), eight years later. This reference is found in the words of Amīr Yādgār... Later Vāṣifī served the function of a *munshī*, and one might suppose that he inherited the profession from his father.” This supposition proposed by Boldyrev, that ‘Abd al-Jalīl was a *munshī* or scribe and therefore Vāṣifī must also have been trained as a *munshī* or scribe, has been repeated so often it is as though it were verified fact. Soviet scholars such as N. N. Tumanovich, and Western scholars such as Maria Eva Subtelny and Maria Szuppe have echoed this supposition; see N. N. Tumanovich, *Gerat v XVI-XVIII vekakh* (Moskva: “Nauka,” Glav. red. vostochnoi lit-ry, 1989), p. 22; Maria Eva Subtelny, “Scenes from the Literary Life of Timurid Herat,” *Logos Islamikos: Studia Islamica in Honorem Georgii Michaelis Wickens* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1984), p. 139; Maria Szuppe, *Entre Timourides, Uzbeks et Safavides* (Paris: Association pour l’avancement des études iraniennes, 1992), p. 51. One must keep in mind, as Boldyrev plainly states, *mozhno dumat’*.

Dārā Astarābādī, who according to the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* was “among the noted companions and beloved associates of the Great Amīr, Amīr ‘Alī Shīr.”⁴ Vāṣifī relates in the thirteenth chapter of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* that by the age of sixteen he had “finished memorizing the words of the King of Signs,” that is to say the Qur’ān, and had therefore attained the respected title of *ḥāfiẓ*.⁵ As stated in the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, this accomplishment alone brought Vāṣifī a degree of recognition and prestige within the city of Herat.

On account of his reputation as a Qur’ān reciter, blossoming poet and master of the *mu‘ammā*, or the poetic riddle, Vāṣifī was able to gain admittance into the *majlis*, perhaps best translated in this context as the “literary salon,” of the renowned poet and statesman of the later Tīmūrid dynasty, Alī Shīr Navā’ī.⁶ Following the death of Navā’ī in 1501, Vāṣifī worked in the service of Farīdūn- Ḥusayn Mīrzā (d. 1507), one of the fourteen sons of Ḥusayn Bāyqarā listed in the *Bāburnāmah*,⁷ then as a tutor in the home of a Tīmūrid Chaghatāy amir named Shāh Valī Kūkaltāsh. Following the Abu’l-Khayrid Shībānid conquest of Herat in 1507 and the subsequent elimination of his Tīmūrid patrons, Vāṣifī taught at the Shāh Rukh madrasa until the arrival of the Shī’ī Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh in 1510. Vāṣifī endured life under the Ṣafavids for two years before he finally and reluctantly abandoned Herat for Transoxiana in the winter of 1512-1513.

⁴ *BV*, Vol. I, p. 377.

⁵ A *ḥāfiẓ* is one who has committed the Qur’ān to memory and recites from it freely. According to William Shepard, “For some, recitation becomes a profession. They will be called upon to recite at weddings, funerals, and various other religious, civic, and family occasions.” Both the *ḥāfiẓ* and his audience are said to benefit from *baraka*, divine blessing from God said to be contained within the words of the Qur’ān. One can almost imagine young Vāṣifī occasionally finding work as a professional *ḥāfiẓ* in Herat at the dawn of the sixteenth century. See William Shepard, *Introducing Islam* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 58-59.

⁶ The events surrounding this momentous occasion in the life of Vāṣifī are recounted in the thirteenth *gufiār* of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, a translation of which can be found in Appendix III of this work.

⁷ *BN*, p. 198.

As an émigré, Vāṣifī should be considered part of a phenomenon that one may term the “Tīmūrid intellectual diaspora,” an unwitting agent of cultural preservation and transference in an era of great change. Not long after abandoning Herat, Vāṣifī first found himself in Samarqand, where he continued to work as a teacher in one of the city’s madrasas,⁸ and then in Bukhara a little more than a year after that. While in Bukhara, Vāṣifī met with ‘Ubayd Allāh Sulṭān b. Maḥmūd b. Shāh Būdāq b. Abu’l-Khayr Khān (d. 1540), the nephew of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān, on three occasions. In 1515 Vāṣifī ventured to Tashkent, where he worked as the tutor of Navrūz Aḥmad (d. 1556), son of Suyūnj Khvājah Khān. However, he was compelled to leave Tashkent the following year and returned to Samarqand, where he worked this time as an *imām*. In 1518 he was essentially drafted to the court of Sulṭān Muḥammad b. Suyūnj Khvājah, also known as Kīldī Muḥammad Sulṭān, at Shāhrukhiya, and moved with the entourage of this prince to Tashkent upon the death of Suyūnj Khvājah Khān in 1525. Following the death of Sulṭān Muḥammad Khān in 1533, Vāṣifī went to the court of Navrūz Aḥmad Khān. There he was appointed tutor of Abu’l-Muzaffar Ḥasan-Sulṭān, son of Kīldī Muḥammad Sulṭān, in 1538-39. Although we have no firm date for his death, it is generally thought that he died between 1551 and 1566,⁹ as there is a posthumous mention of him made in the *Muzakkir-i aḥbāb* of Khvājah Bahā’ al-Dīn Ḥasan Nisārī Bukhārī completed in 1566, where he is referred to as Mavlānā Vāṣifī.¹⁰

⁸ Charles Ambrose Story, *Persidskaia literatura: bio-bibliograficheskii obzor*, Vol. II, trans. Yuri Bregel (Moscow: “Nauka”, 1972), p. 1123. Hereafter this work will be cited as Storey-Bregel.

⁹ Storey-Bregel, p. 1124; Boldyrev, *Zainaddin Vasifi: Tadjhikskii pisatel’*, p. 310.

¹⁰ Khvājah Bahā’ al-Dīn Ḥasan Nithārī Bukhārī, *Muzakkir-i aḥbāb* (Ḥaydarābād al-Dakan: Chāpkhānah-i Dā’irat al-Ma‘ārif al-‘Uṣmānīyah, 1969), p. 204; the entry on Vāṣifī, entered under the heading “An Account of the Fairest of the Poets, Mavlānā Vāṣifī”, runs from page 204 to page 210. Bukhārī states that Vāṣifī “is among the renowned poets and talented prosists, [and] all of the clever writers have poured over the lines of his *inshā’*,” and closes the entry on Vāṣifī by informing the reader – در بلاد تاشکند مدفونست – that is, “He is interred in the vicinity of Tashkent”; see also Boldyrev, p. 244, and Subtelny, p. 139.

As is apparent from this brief biographical sketch, Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāṣifī was a uniquely talented individual possessed of an appreciation for the literary arts of his day, a strong Muslim identity, and a desire to preserve for posterity an account of the world in which he lived. Vāṣifī was a poet and wordsmith, a master of the *mu‘ammā*, a *ḥāfiẓ* and *imām*, a teacher, a companion of princes, a *munshī* or scribe, a memoirist and a historian. An examination of Vāṣifī with regard to any of these aspects of his identity exclusively is a compelling prospect. However, insofar as a consideration of Vāṣifī’s identity will be offered herein, the focus will be on his identity as a devout Muslim, memoirist, and historian whose narrative, when examined, will add to our understanding of late fifteen and early sixteenth century Islamic Central Asia.

The *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘*

Vāṣifī began writing the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* while in Samarqand in 1517 and completed it in Tashkent, dedicating it to the aforementioned Abū’l-Muzaffar Hasan Sulṭān b. Kīldī Muḥammad Sulṭān, in 1538-39.¹¹ The work itself defies easy qualification or categorization: the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* is first and foremost a memoir, similar in many respects to the work of Vāṣifī’s contemporary, Ḥāḥir al-Dīn Muḥammad Bābur, who completed his *Bāburnāmah* in 1529. As it is a memoir, the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* is also a work of history written from Vāṣifī’s wholly unique, personal historical perspective. Whereas the histories of Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn Muḥammad Khvāndamīr, Mīrẓā Ḥaydar Dūghlāt, Iskandar Munshī, Ḥasan Rūmlū and others focused their attention on dynastic power struggles and members of the ruling aristocracies, Vāṣifī took a different

¹¹ Giorgio Rota, “Vāsefī e i suoi tempi: uno sguardo alle *Badāye‘ o’l-vaqāye‘*,” *Oriente Moderno*, Vol. XV, No. 2 (1996): p. 149; Storey-Bregel, p. 1124.

approach when crafting his narrative, which stands apart from the ordinary court histories that offer similar accounts with regard to the great events of the period and differ only slightly in their details depending upon where and for whom they were written.

Vāṣifī places emphasis on both historical events in which he himself played a role and external historical events, to which he may or may not be tangentially related, about which he has information to share. The *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, therefore, covers a range of topics and events over the course of forty-six chapters. A number of chapters are dedicated to the character of Alī Shīr Navā'ī and several of his literary *majālis*, some provide us with information on 'Ubayd Allāh Khān and a number of scions of the Abu'l-Khayrid house, and others still afford us a glimpse of the literary and cultural scene in Herat during the late Tīmūrid era and various locations in Mavarannahr in the early sixteenth century. Insofar as it is a personal memoir and history, the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* is also possessed of autobiographical elements, although Vāṣifī stops short of sharing too much information of a personal nature which one would find in a true autobiography; aside from what one can glean from a handful of individuals presented throughout the narrative, one learns very little of Vāṣifī's immediate and extended family.

The *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* is a literary artifact, a product of the late Tīmūrid school of Persian prose and verse. The style of prose presented in the work is at once ornate and straightforward. Vāṣifī's narrative style effectively conveys his history to the reader in a manner that is informative and engaging. As for verse, Vāṣifī takes every opportunity to put his talent as a poet on display for his audience. The work is peppered with a series of *bayts*, *qaṣīdahs*, *ghazals*, *lughaz*, and so on, which exhibit all of the features one might expect of Persian verse from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

Furthermore, the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* is a work imbued with a strong Islamic character, a fact which has been either overlooked or ignored by scholars who have worked with it in the past. As a learned member of the '*ulamā*' himself, being a *ḥāfiẓ* and *mullā*, Vāṣifī saw the hand of God constantly at work in the world around him. Such is ever present in the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, the text of which is laced with Qur'ānic verse and makes repeated reference to God on high, indicative of the fact that Vāṣifī observed the presence and guidance of the Divine in the everyday affairs of men. As his is a work that was voluntarily written, we have no cause to doubt the veracity of his devotion to God, his conviction as a Muslim, and the sincerity of his belief as illustrated in the narrative. When considered in this light, the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* may well add to our knowledge of popular piety in late and post Tīmūrid Herat and, more widely, Khurasan and Mavarannahr as a whole during this transformative period.

All of this will be made clear over the course of the present work, which should be received as a preliminary endeavor to properly situate the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* and Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāṣifī himself within the broader context of the history of late Tīmūrid and early Abu'l-Khayrid Shībānid Islamic Central Asia. It will commence with a thorough examination of the history of the historiography of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* and how the work has been utilized, or underutilized, by scholars to date. Following this, it will proceed to an examination of several chapters of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* in order to elucidate and support the above stated arguments. Again, this work must be taken as a preliminary endeavor, the first step in a project which will culminate with, it is hoped, a complete translation of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* into English and extensive examination of the complete work in the not too distant future. However, before proceeding to a

thorough consideration of the history of the historiography of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, it is appropriate to review the history of the rise of two dynasties that are representative of and served as catalysts for the social, political, and religious transformations in Islamic Central Asia that began in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

Origins of the Abu'l-Khayrid Shībānid Uzbeks

By the close of the fifteenth century the Tīmūrid realm of Mavarannahr was in a state of disarray. The perpetual internecine struggles and wars of the Tīmūrid mīrzās, their amīrs and various other dependents had seriously eroded the internal structures of the dynasty and had left it both militarily and politically weakened and thus increasingly vulnerable. While Khurasan and Mavarannahr had been briefly reunited under the banner of Sulṭān Abū Sa'īd Mīrzā, his campaign to check the expansion of Aq Qoyūnlū power in the west and to reclaim the lost provinces of Azarbayjan, 'Iraq-i 'Ajam, and so on, ended in disaster in the spring of 1469. The unity of the provinces proved to be ephemeral in his absence as rival claimants vied with one another for power. What remained of Tīmūr's once expansive domain was divided between the sons of Abū Sa'īd – Sulṭān Aḥmad, Sulṭān Maḥmūd, and 'Umar Shaykh – and their distant cousin Sulṭān Ḥusayn b. Maṣṣūr b. Bāyqarā b. 'Umar Shaykh b. Tīmūr. Thus, as Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā contented himself with Khurasan, and Abū Sa'īd's heirs were busy squabbling amongst themselves in their territories, there was little prospect that any one Tīmūrid prince would emerge as a centralizing force and once again unify the Tīmūrids under a single sovereign in the manner of Shāh Rukh or Abū Sa'īd, or even Tīmūr himself. Internally weakened and divided, the truncated Tīmūrid dominion was unable to

withstand the advances of the Abu'l-Khayrid Shībānids, led by Muḥammad b. Shāh Būdāq b. Abu'l-Khayr, and their Uzbek supporters when they began to show an interest in finally supplanting the Tīmūrids and assuming power for themselves south of the Syr Darya in the final decade of the fifteenth century.¹²

This challenge from the steppe had been gathering strength for some time, and the Abu'l-Khayrids had been involved in the affairs of their Tīmūrid neighbors to the south since the days of Shāh Rukh and Ulugh Beg. This line of Chinggisids, along with their nomadic Uzbek confederation, had originated in the vast Eurasian steppe known in medieval Persian sources as *Dasht-i Qipchāq*, or the Qipchāq plain. This was the region of Turkic and Mongol-Turkic nomads – tribes of pastoralists that lived in a state of somewhat perpetual migration between winter and summer pastures, and whose livelihood was based primarily upon the rearing and maintenance of herds and flocks of livestock from which a variety of products, such as meat, milk, leather, wool, etc., were extracted.¹³ The Abu'l-Khayrid khans claimed patrilineal descent from Jöchi, the eldest son of Chinggis Khān. The political and military class of the Jöchid *ulus* was originally drawn from the nomadic Mongol-Turkic tribes that had campaigned with Chinggis Khān, his sons and supporters in the initial subjugation of the greater part of the continent of Asia in the thirteenth century. Over time the Mongolian element of the ruling political-military class, which had always constituted a minority in the “Mongol Horde,” was gradually subsumed by the much larger Turkic component. The Mongols, including the

¹² Vāṣifī refers to Muḥammad b. Shāh Būdāq b. Abu'l-Khayr variably as Muḥammad Shībānī Khān, Shībānī Khān, and Shaybak Khān in the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*. Herein he will be referred to as either Muḥammad Shībānī Khān or simply Shībānī Khān, unless referred to in a quote drawn from another source.

¹³ N. Masanov, “The Economy. Production and Trade,” *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*, Vol. V (Paris: UNESCO, 2003), pp. 379-380.

Chinggisid descendants of Chinggis Khān, adopted the language of those Qipchāq Turks by whom they constantly were surrounded. Thus within a relatively short span of time the Jöchid *ulus* was for the most part Turkicized;¹⁴ the majority of those under the Abu'l-Khayrid standard were of Turkic ethnicity, and the language spoken within their ranks at all levels was some form of Qipchāq Turkic dialect. However, in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century the Abu'l-Khayrids themselves, that is men such as Abu'l-Khayr Khān, Muḥammad Shībānī Khān, 'Ubayd Allāh Khān, and so on, were still considered to be Chinggisid rulers, dynastic heirs to Chinggis Khān, possessed of Chinggisid charisma which was the basis of political legitimacy in the steppe at that time, and indeed in some quarters of Central Asia until the nineteenth century. They partook of and maintained the political and military heritage of the nomadic Chinggisid ruling class of the Inner Asian steppe. The titles *khan* and *sultan* could only be held by those of the Jöchid blood line while the title *amir* or *beg*¹⁵ was granted commonly to Uzbek military commanders, who were also very often tribal chiefs.¹⁶

With regard to the ethnic and political term “Uzbek” itself, while its origins are not precisely known, it is widely maintained by scholars that the Turks of the Jöchid *ulus*

¹⁴ Paul D. Buell, “Mongol Empire and Turkicization: The Evidence of Food and Foodways,” *The Mongol Empire and Its Legacy*, ed. Reuven Amitai-Preiss and David O. Morgan (Leiden: Brill, 1999), p. 201. Buell states: “With Turkic-speaking groups and individuals distributed so widely and so strategically within the Mongolian world order, Turkicization was almost inevitable. It was most pronounced and most rapid within the Golden Horde. Mongols were never very numerous in the Mongolian west and most of the pastoral population controlled by Batu and his successors was comprised of Qipchaqs, along with new Turkic migrants. By the end of the thirteenth century, at latest, Golden Horde culture, as the surviving literary monuments and descriptions of outsiders make clear, was predominantly Turkic.”

¹⁵ The term *beg*, meaning “lord” and rendered in various forms from one Turkic dialect to the next, ultimately derives “from the old Turkish *bäg* as seen from the Orkhon inscriptions...and the Chinese transcriptions concerning the Turks of Mongolia of the same period,” and may have entered into the Turkic lexicon from Middle Persian; see L. Bazin, “Beg or Bey,” *EI²*, (Leiden: Brill, 1960), p. 113; see also W. Bartol'd, “Beg,” *E. J. Brill's First Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1913-1936*, Vol. II (Leiden: Brill, 1987), p. 688; Peter Jackson, “Beg,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Vol. IV, Fasc. 1, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (Boston: Routledge, 1982), p. 80; Vāṣifī routinely gives the spelling *Bayk* / بیک.

¹⁶ R.D. McChesney, “Özbek,” *EI²*, Vol. VIII (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), p. 232.

were known by this name by the latter half of the fourteenth century and that the name as a moniker was ultimately taken from Özbek Khān, who ruled the Golden Horde from 1312 until 1341. Thus the *ulus* of Jöchi came to be referred to as ‘the Uzbek Empire,’ or *mamlakat-i uzbekiyan*.¹⁷

The Turkic-Uzbek tribes led by Muḥammad Shībānī Khān in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century were already a part of the *Dār al-Islām*, that is to say, the Abu’l-Khayrid rulers and their followers constituted a predominately Muslim force. Islam had made inroads into the Jöchid *ulus* as early as the reign of Berke Khān, but the conversion of the Mongols and Turks of the Golden Horde began in earnest during the reign of the aforementioned Özbek Khān. While the Khān was himself reportedly converted by Shaykh Sayyid Ata of the Yasavī Sūfī order, this event “...hardly entailed an overnight transformation of the Golden Horde or the instant elimination or repression of ‘rivals’ to Islam...Rather...the ‘work’ of Islamization at the institutional and social levels continued well after Özbek’s time.”¹⁸ One can assume that the Islam adopted by Özbek Khān and that spread among his countrymen, which according to some versions flowed from

¹⁷ Peter B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992), p. 330. Golden states: “The mass of the Jočid soldiery...was associated with the name Özbek / Özbek...by the second half of the 14th century. The origins of this political / ethnonym are not entirely clear. It has long been connected with the Xan of the Golden Horde, Özbek (1312-1341), but it surfaces only several decades after his death in the Aq Orda territories.” He continues further on: “Persian sources referred to the Jočid Ulus or Golden horde as “Uzbakiyān, Ulus-i Uzbek, Vilāyat-i Uzbek, etc.” With regard to these names, Golden cites Akhmedov’s *Gosudarstvo kochevykh uzbekov*, which ultimately points to the *Zafarnāmah* of Nizām al-Dīn Shāmī; see B. A. Akhmedov, *Gosudarstvo kochevykh uzbekov* (Moskva: Izd-vo “Nayka,” 1965), p. 38. Golden continues, “Abu’l-Gāzī says that Özbek converted his il and ulus to Islam ‘and after that they called the whole of the il of Joči “the il of Özbek.”” Golden makes an important point in stating, “It is equally unclear whether this was a designation used primarily by outsiders or a self-designation, functioning in the steppe zone as a supratribal appellation.” Lawrence Krader, although he does not agree, explains that V. V. Radloff rejected this explanation for the origin of the term Uzbek, and saw it rather as a compound of the Turkic words *öz*, meaning self, and *bek*, meaning lord or master, thus indicating that the people thought of themselves as “free” nomads. See Krader, *Peoples of Central Asia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Publications, 1966), p. 61.

¹⁸ Devin DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), pp. 95, 101.

Bukhara through the conduit of Sayyid Ata to the *Dasht-i Qipchāq*, would have been of the Hanafī Sunnī *mazhab*. The religious persuasion of the Uzbeks would later be emphasized in their confrontations with the Shīʿa Ṣafavids in the provinces of Khurasan and Mavarannahr.

Özbek Khān was succeeded by his son Jānī Bek Khān (r. 1341-1357), who was then followed briefly by his son Berdi Bek (r. 1357-59). Following the death of the latter, the Golden Horde was beset by a succession struggle from which Mamai emerged victorious. He ruled until 1380, at which point Toqtamīsh Khān, who had risen to power in the White Horde with the assistance of Tīmūr through a series of campaigns in 1377-78, advanced from the east and defeated Mamai in battle near the Sea of Azov.¹⁹ With his victory over Mamai, Toqtamīsh reunited the entire Jöchid Ulus under his rule. He later turned on his patron Tīmūr and led his forces into Mavarannahr in 1387-88, as it was the habit of the khans of the White Horde to raid the environs of Turkistan and Mavarannahr.²⁰ Toqtamīsh’s plundering expeditions into Mavarannahr forced Tīmūr to return from Fars, where he had been leading a campaign to suppress the Muẓaffarids, to deal with his northern neighbor. Tīmūr initiated three subsequent campaigns against the Golden Horde; in 1388-89 he repelled Toqtamīsh’s attempted invasion, in 1391 he defeated the forces of the Golden Horde outside of Tashkent, and in 1394 Tīmūrid forces invaded the territories of the Golden Horde and advanced to within sight of Moscow. This last campaign led by Tīmūr, during which his forces looted and plundered as they went and the capital city of Saray was destroyed, resulted in the dethronement of

¹⁹ DeWeese, pp. 406-408. Following this defeat, Mamai, “fled to Caffa in the Crimea, where he was killed somewhat treacherously by the Genoese.”

²⁰ K. Z. Ashrafyan, “Central Asia Under Tīmūr from 1370 to the Early Fifteenth Century.” *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*, Vol. IV (Paris: UNESCO, 1998), p. 328.

Toqtamış and left the Golden Horde in a state of disarray and ruin.²¹ It was from this confusion in the Qipchāq steppe that Abu'l-Khayr Khān, the progenitor of the line that would expel the descendants of Tīmūr from Mavarannahr and Khurasan, emerged in the first half of the fifteenth century.

Despite, or perhaps because of, Tīmūr's victories over the Golden Horde, nomadic incursions into Mavarannahr continually plagued his heirs. It seems that Tīmūr never aspired to incorporate the vast northern steppe into his empire, and he left rule of the Golden Horde to whoever had the wherewithal to claim it in 1395.²² It was in the year 1412, with the political situation in the steppe still unresolved, that Abu'l-Khayr b. Davlat Shaykh was born. He was a descendant of Shībān, the fifth son of Jöchi, and thus had a claim to Chinggisid sovereignty.²³ He began his own rise to prominence within the *ulus* as a supporter of the Manghīt chief Jumadiq Khān in his bid for the khanate in 1425.²⁴ Following the defeat and death of Jumadiq in 1428, Abu'l-Khayr was taken prisoner by Saryg Shiman Manghīt. However, the latter seems to have seen promise in young Abu'l-Khayr and, providing him with horses, set him free.²⁵ The following year

²¹ Beatrice Forbes Manz, *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane* (Cambridge: University Press, 1989), pp. 71-72. Manz also makes a point of mentioning the alliances which Toqtamış had formed with both the Sūfī dynasty of Khvarazm, which withdrew its allegiance from Tīmūr, and the khan of Moghulistan. Tīmūr had first to contend with subduing these parties before taking action against the Golden Horde.

²² Golden states that Tīmūr handed power to Qoyrichaq b. Urus Khān in 1395; see Golden, p. 330. Golden again cites Akhmedov's *Gosudarstvo*, which in turn draws from the *Zafarnāmah* of Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī; see Akhmedov, pp. 38-39.

²³ W. Bartol'd, "Abu'l-Khayr," *EI²*, Vol. I (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960), p. 135.

²⁴ Haidar, p. 66; Drawing from sources such as the *Tārīkh-i Abu'l-Khayr Khānī* of Ma'sūd b. 'Uṣmān Kuhistānī and the *Tārīkh-i Qipchāqī*, Haidar states that as a supporter of Jumadiq, Abu'l-Khayr would have participated in the assassination of the Manghīt chief, Ghāzī Bayk Manghīt. Following that, Haidar prefers the account in which Abu'l-Khayr, being disappointed in the leadership of Jumadiq Khān, betrays him and faces him in battle.

²⁵ Ma'sūd b. 'Uṣmān Kuhistānī, "Ta'rikh-i Abu-l-Khair-Khani," *Materialy po istorii kazakhskikh khanstv XV-XVII vekov*, ed. V. N. Nastenkov, et al. (Alma-ata: Izd-vo "Nauka" Kazakhskoi SSR, 1969), pp. 142-143; Kuhistānī's work, written for the Abu'l-Khayrid 'Abd al-Latīf and which, according to Bartol'd, was completed around 1543-44, apparently suggests that the Tīmūrids were in fact vassals of Abu'l-Khayr. This was obviously meant to justify ex post facto the march of the Abu'l-Khayrids into Mavarannahr and the subsequent elimination of the Tīmūrid dynasty; see *Materialy*, pp. 135-140; see also Yuri Bregel,

Abu'l-Khayr was proclaimed khan of Tura. He then defeated Hājji Muḥammad in 1430, after which the majority of the Qipchāq Uzbek tribes submitted to his rule.²⁶ With his forces amassed, Abu'l-Khayr Khān led the Uzbeks into Khvarazm and seized Urgench in 1431, though he subsequently abandoned the region and returned to the steppe.²⁷ In 1447 Abu'l-Khayr took several towns, most importantly the city of Sighnaq and its environs, on the northern frontier of Tīmūrid Mavarannahr. In establishing this steppe empire, Abu'l-Khayr had the support of roughly twenty four tribes of the *Dasht-i Qipchāq*, from which were drawn his amirs and military forces.²⁸

Having established his power base to the immediate north of Mavarannahr, Abu'l-Khayr Khān and his clan and Uzbek supporters came to play a direct, significant role in the affairs of the Tīmūrids in Mavarannahr. From Sighnaq, Abu'l-Khayr led plundering forays as deep into Tīmūrid territory as Samarqand and Bukhara.²⁹ Mīrzā Abū Sa'īd of the line of Mīrān Shāh b. Tīmūr appealed to Abu'l-Khayr in his struggle against his rival 'Abd Allāh b. Ibrāhīm b. Shāh Rukh in June, 1451. Abu'l-Khayr did not hesitate to seize this opportunity to plunder Samarqand and its environs. The forces of Abū Sa'īd and Abu'l-Khayr marched first from Yasi to Tashkent, then on to Khujand. The army of

"Abu'l-Khayr Khān," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Vol. I, Fasc. 3, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (Boston: Routledge, 1982), p. 331.

²⁶ Bartol'd, p. 135. See also Golden, p. 331. Tura likely refers to Chingī Tura, the center of the tribal confederation led by Abu'l-Khayr Khān from roughly 1428 until his death in 1468; see Edward A. Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks: From the Fourteenth Century to the Present* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1990), pp. 34-35. Tura could also be used to refer to Siberia in general.

²⁷ Golden asserts that the Uzbeks were driven from Khvarazm by an outbreak of the plague; see Golden, p. 331. However, Haidar, drawing from sources such as the aforementioned *Tā'rikh-i Abū al-Khayr Khānī* and the *Futuhāt-i Khānī* of 'Alī b. Muḥammad Harātī, posits that the Uzbeks abandoned Urgench due to drought and the fact that the Tīmūrids were approaching to reclaim the region, which at that time would have been a part of Shāh Rukh's domain. Thus, she concludes, "It seems that his Khorezm expedition was mainly a raid for plunder"; see Haidar, pp. 66-67.

²⁸ Kuhistānī, "Ta'rikh-i Abu-l-Khair-Khani," pp. 143-171. Kuhistānī repeatedly makes mention of specific tribal elements supporting Abu'l-Khayr Khān in his early endeavors. Working again from both the *Tā'rikh-i Abū al-Khayr Khānī* and the *Futuhāt-i Khānī*, Haidar lists the twenty-four tribes in Abu'l-Khayr's confederation, as well as the tribes from which the Uzbek commanders were drawn; see Haidar, pp. 45-46.

²⁹ W. Bartol'd, "Abu'l-Khayr," p. 135.

‘Abd Allāh retreated back towards Samarqand at the sight of the enemy. Eventually, battle was given and, although the Uzbeks were vastly outnumbered by the army of ‘Abd Allāh, they managed to carry the day and elevated Abū Sa‘īd to the throne of Samarqand in June 1451.³⁰ Of course, the alliance between Abu’l-Khayr Khān and Abū Sa‘īd was more a marriage of convenience. Relations between the two powers were at best cool; the Uzbeks under Abu’l-Khayr continued to venture into Mavarannahr on plundering expeditions, and the rebellions of Uvais b. Muḥammad b. Bāyqarā at Otrar in 1454-55 and Muḥammad Jūkī b. ‘Abd al-Latīf b. Ulugh Beg from 1461 to 1463 against Abū Sa‘īd were supported by Abu’l-Khayr and his men.

Some sources such as the *Tā’rīkh-i Abū al-Khayr Khānī* suggest that Abu’l-Khayr long harbored a desire to wrest the territories south of the Syr Darya from the hands of the Tīmūrīds. However, if such was the case, he was unable to capitalize upon his earlier successes in the region. Historically speaking, the political situation in the Eurasian steppe has always been marked by shifting fortunes, and the authority of Abu’l-Khayr was neither absolute nor universal. That being the case, the khan of the Uzbeks was forced to focus his attention on affairs north of the Syr Darya; in the sixth decade of the fifteenth century the sons of Baraq Khān, Jānī Bek and Geray, fearing for their lives, fled from Abu’l-Khayr’s dominion with those loyal to them and sought refuge in the country

³⁰ Bartol’d, p. 165. Bartol’d goes on to mention that the importance of the role played by the Uzbeks in the ascension of Abū Sa‘īd to the throne of Samarqand varies amongst the different sources. “In his biography, khan Abul-Khayr is represented as the sole hero of the expedition... On the other hand, the biographer of the holy men of Bukhara does not mention the Uzbeks at all; Abu Sa’id and his soldiers were inspired by their faith in the protection of Shaykh ‘Ubaydullah, better known as Khoja Ahrar, the Naqshbandi representative in Tashkent, and it was this faith that brought them victory over a much more numerous foe.” Bartol’d all but dismisses this latter version of events, stating, “There is no doubt that the leader of the expedition was neither Khoja Ahrar, nor Mīrzā Abu Sa’id, but the Uzbek khan.”

of the Moghul khan.³¹ These men and their followers came to be known as the Qazāqs. Not long thereafter in 1457, the Abu'l-Khayrids were bested by the Qālmūqs, Mongols from the east, led by Uz Tīmūr.³² The power and prestige of Abu'l-Khayr Khān was seriously damaged as a result of this defeat; he lost a great deal of territory to the Qālmūqs, his younger grandson Maḥmūd Sulṭān was taken as a hostage by Uz Tīmūr, and Abu'l-Khayr was forced to retreat behind the walls of Sighnaq, which to both his supporters and enemies alike was seen as a sign of weakness. At this point the historical record falls silent with regard to the exploits of Abu'l-Khayr and resumes only with narrative accounts of his abortive campaign against the khans of Moghulistan in the early spring of 1468, which came to an end with his untimely death in the environs of Aq Qishlaq.³³ Thus, much like Tīmūr at Otrar on the eve of what was to have been his great conquest of China, Abu'l-Khayr Khān died on the eve of his planned invasion of the Moghul Khānate. Although Shaykh Ḥaydar b. Abu'l-Khayr succeeded his father, he was soon done away with by a coalition of his father's enemies, and his family members were either likewise disposed of or dispersed across the steppe. The aforementioned Muḥammad Shībānī Khān, the grandson of the Abu'l-Khayr Khān, managed to elude the fate which befell many of his kinsmen and within a generation to resume the work begun by his grandfather.

³¹ Golden, p. 331. Golden places the defection of the Qazāqs before the victory of the Qalmaqs over the Uzbeks, whereas Bartol'd places the secession of the Qazāqs in 1465-66; see Bartol'd, "Abu'l-Khayr," p. 135.

³² Bartol'd, "Abu'l-Khayr," p. 135; see also Haidar, p. 68. Golden states: "Weakened by defections, Abu'l-Khayr was badly mauled by the Oirats in 1457 and forced to accept humiliating conditions for peace. Further defections followed"; see Golden, p. 331.

³³ Ibid, p. 135; Haidar, p. 68. Both Bartol'd and Haidar reference the aforementioned *Tārīkh-i Abu'l-Khayr Khānī*, while Haidar also makes use of the *Silsilat al-salātīn* of Hājjī Mīr Muḥammad S'Ālim, which is a general history completed in India in the first half of the eighteenth century at the court of Muḥammad Shāh (r.1719-1748); see Storey-Bregel, Vol. II, p. 1003.

The man who eventually reconstituted the Abu'l-Khayrid confederation, resurrected Chinggisid rule in Central Asia, and led the conquest of Mavarannahr and Khurasan, Muḥammad b. Shāh Būdāq Sulṭān b. Abu'l-Khayr Khān, was born in the year 1451, the same year his grandfather elevated Abū Sa'īd to the throne of Tīmūr in Samarqand.³⁴ Shāh Būdāq Sulṭān passed away in 1459,³⁵ and both Muḥammad, nicknamed Shāh Bakht, and his younger brother Maḥmūd Sulṭān (b. 1454) were subsequently raised by Abu'l-Khayr Khān, who doted on the *Sulṭānzādahs*.³⁶ Muḥammad b. Shāh Būdāq was not yet twenty years of age when his grandfather passed away suddenly in 1468.

The Uzbek confederation of Abu'l-Khayr Khān disintegrated quite soon after his death. The tribal chieftains, who had been loyal to the person of the khan himself and had been rewarded by him for their loyalty and efforts, quickly abandoned his heirs and tied their fortunes to his rivals in the Qipchāq steppe. Many of the tribes hastily moved to the side of the Qazāqs, Geray and Jānī Bek.³⁷ Despite the state of political confusion and conflict that followed Abu'l-Khayr's passing, his family managed to retain their loyalty to one another, and Muḥammad Shībānī made his way through the various trials of the steppe with his brother and uncles at his side. Surrounded by enemies in the open

³⁴ Hofiz Tanish Al-Buxoriy, *Abdullanoma "Sharafnomayi Shohiy" Birinchi Kitob*. Trans. (Pers.-Uz.) Sodiq Mirzaev ("Sharq" Nashriyot-Matbaa Kontserni, Bosh Tahririyati: Toshkent, 1999), p. 55. Hereafter this work will be cited as *AN*.

³⁵ Shāh Būdāq Sulṭān was "the eldest of eleven sons of Abu'l-Khair Khān"; see Annemarie Schimmel, "Some Notes on the Cultural Activity of the First Uzbek Rulers," *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (1960): p. 151; R. D. McChesney, "Shībānī Khān," *EP*, Vol. VI (Leiden: Brill, 1960), p. 426.

³⁶ *AN*, p. 55.

³⁷ *TR*, pp. 82, 272-73: "On the death of Abulkhair Khān the *Ulus* of the Uzbegs fell into confusion, and constant strife arose among them. Most of them joined the party of Karái Khān and Jānī Beg Khān. They numbered about 200,000 persons, and received the name of Uzbeg-Kazák. The Kazák Sultāns began to reign in the year 870 [1465-66] (but God knows best), and they continued to enjoy absolute power in the greater part of Uzbegistán." This narrative is reiterated on pages 272-273; see Allworth, p. 46; Bregel, "Abu'l-Khayr Khān," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Vol. I, Fasc. 3, pp. 331-332.

steppe, Muḥammad Shībānī sought refuge in Astrakhan, the center of one of the successor states to the Golden Horde which at that time was under the rule of Qāsim Khān.³⁸ However, the presence of Abu'l-Khayr's offspring in Astrakhan provoked the ire of Ibaq Khān,³⁹ the khan of Siber of a collateral Shībānid line, who subsequently laid siege to the city in an effort to capture Muḥammad Shībānī and his dependents and punish Qāsim Khān for assisting his enemies. Not long after that in 1479, Muḥammad Shībānī took part in a failed raid on the territory of Yūnus Khān, which only drove the Moghuls and Qazāqs closer together.⁴⁰ It was after this defeat that he turned his attention south of the Syr Darya. In his celebrated work, the *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī*, Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥaydar Dughlāt states:

The story is, in short, that after being dispersed and wandering a great deal, he went to Mavarannahr in despair and want. The throne had come to Sulṭān Aḥmad Mīrzā, the son of Sulṭān Abū Sa'īd Mīrzā. Thus, Sulṭān Aḥmad Mīrzā was king, and he had such a plethora of wealthy men and great amirs that, due to the extremity of their greatness, every amir had such a kingly air and high pretensions that they sought to persuade kings into their service. One such amīr was 'Abd al-'Alī Tarkhān, the governor of Bukhara. Shāhī Beg Khān was attached to him, and he was enrolled in the register of his vassals...From this one can deduce the dignity and greatness of Sulṭān Aḥmad, and as

³⁸ R. D. McChesney, "Shībānī Khān," *EP*², Vol. VI (Leiden: Brill, 1960), pp. 426-427. McChesney posits: "Karāčīn Beg, who still exercised some control over the two teenagers, took them to Astrakhān, presumably seeking the protection and patronage of the Djočid khāns there. But problems in Astrakhān soon forced the three to leave." According to Khvāndamīr, Qarā Chīn Bayk assumed responsibility for Muḥammad Shībānī and his brother, Maḥmūd Sulṭān, upon the death of their grandfather; see *HS*, p. 488; Berthold Spuler informs us that the dynasty to which Qāsim Khān (r. 1466-1490) belonged, established in Astrakhān in 1466, was "a Tatar dynasty of the Noghay princes stemming from the Tatar Khān Kūčūk Mehmed"; see B. Spuler, "Astrakhān," *EP*², Vol. I (Leiden: Brill, 1960), p. 96; Khvāndamīr adds that Qāsim Khān entrusted the two young Abu'l-Khayrid princes to his most trusted amir, Tīmūr Bayk, who was of the Noghay.

³⁹ Allworth indicates that Ibaq Khān was originally a supporter of Abu'l-Khayr, but elected to remain in Siber when Abu'l-Khayr and the bulk of his Uzbek confederates migrated to environs of Sighnaq. He goes on to state that, subsequently, "Those Uzbek tribes that had remained in northwestern Siberia rather than join Abul Khayr Khan in the vicinity of Sighnaq now coalesced around the family of Ibaq Khan and his descendants. Centering themselves around the old Uzbek capital, Chimgi Tura (Tumen), they formed the Siberian Khanate"; see Allworth, pp. 45-47. Khvāndamīr reports that Ibaq Khān and his supporters besieged Hājjī Tarkhān, and that "Muhammad Khan and his brother Mahmud Sultan, along with Qarā Chīn Beg and forty veteran attendants, hurled themselves one night at the enemy and, battling with sword, lance, and dagger until dawn, managed to escape"; see *HS*, p. 488.

⁴⁰ Akhmedov, pp. 68-69; Haidar, pp. 72-74.

long as the Mīrẓā remained in the chains of this life, Shāhī Beg Khān remained on the register of ‘Abd al-‘Alī Tarkhān’s attendants.⁴¹

His move to Bukhara around 1479 proved to be a fortuitous one. The Tīmūrid governor ‘Abd al-‘Alī saw real promise in Muḥammad Shībānī, encouraged his ambitions and by one account even appointed him to be *ataliq* to his son.⁴² With regard to ‘Abd al-‘Alī Tarkhān, Bābur comments,

His retainers numbered three thousand, and he kept them splendidly. His liberality, concern for his realm...and assembly were regal, but he was harsh, tyrannical, vicious and conceited. Although Shaybani Khan was not his overlord, he was with Shaybani Khan for a time...The direct cause for Shaybani Khan’s attaining such success and the ruin of such ancient families was this Abdul-Ali Tarkhan.⁴³

It is obvious that Bābur saw in ‘Abd al-‘Alī Tarkhān’s virtual adoption of Muḥammad Shībānī the beginning of a series of events that would bring about the ruination of the Tīmūrid dynasty and, of course, result in his own expulsion from Farghana and Mavarannahr and subsequent flight to Kabul as well. Muḥammad Shībānī passed two years in Bukhara in the entourage of Amīr ‘Abd al-‘Alī Tarkhān, and it was during this period that he entered into the study of the Islamic sciences “under the guidance of one of the best *qāre*’s...of that time and two Naqšbandī shaikhs, Jamāl al-Dīn ‘Azīzān and Manšūr.”⁴⁴ Thus, it was in this way that Muḥammad Shībānī himself became familiar with and involved in the political and military affairs of the Tīmūrids and acquainted with

⁴¹ Mīrẓā Muḥammad Ḥaydar Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī*, ed. ‘Abbāsqolī Ghaffārī Fard (Tehran: Mīrāth-i Maktūb, 1383/2004), pp. 256-257. The translation provided is mine. In this passage, Dūghlāt also illustrates the extent to which the political situation had deteriorated in Mavarannahr, insofar as he speaks to the aggrandizement of the amirs and tarkhans who considered themselves the true rulers of the realm. One might employ the term “warlord” to aptly describe such men of the late Tīmūrid era.

⁴² Haidar, p. 76. Haidar draws this reference from ‘Alī b. Muḥammad Al-Harāvī, *Futuhat-i Khānī*, IOST, No. 14/1. The term *ataliq* is of Turkic origin and refers to one who charged with the rearing of a young sultan or khan. Bregel states, “...the *atalik* was...a guardian and tutor of a young prince and, in this capacity, an actual governor of his appanage. The sovereign himself...also had an *atalik* who was his close counselor and confidant, often playing the role of first minister.” Atalīqs were drawn from among the leading begs in a sovereign’s retinue; see Yuri Bregel, “Atalik,” *EI*², Supplement, Fas. 1-2, pp. 96-98.

⁴³ *BN*, p. 26.

⁴⁴ Yuri Bregel, “Bukhara III. After the Mongol Invasion,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Vol. IV, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (Boston: Routledge, 1982), pp. 516-517. Bregel continues, “It was probably at this time that the close connections between the Uzbek Shaibanid dynasty and the Naqšbandīs of Bukhara had its beginning.”

prominent religious figures in Mavarannahr. He saw for himself firsthand both the weakened and fractious state of the Tīmūrid mīrzās and the riches which awaited the one bold and charismatic enough to undertake the conquest of the Tīmūrid realm.

Having nursed his ambitions and raised his forces in Bukhara, where he also studied Persian language and culture and acquainted himself with Tīmūrid art and methods of warfare, Muḥammad Shībānī set out to reclaim his grandfather's khanate in the *Dasht-i Qipchāq*. This was a campaign of revenge, as Muḥammad Shībānī had set himself the task of subduing all those who had opposed his grandfather and contributed to the disintegration of his steppe empire, and occupied those lands over which he had exercised authority.⁴⁵ Through such campaigns the prestige of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān rose steadily throughout the steppe, such that his father-in-law, Mūsā Mīrzā, even offered him the mantle of the Manghīt tribe. While with the Manghīts, Muḥammad Shībānī led them in repulsing the Qazāqs under the direction of Burunduq Khān. Regardless of this success, the Manghīt amirs were reluctant to accept an outsider, even the grandson of Abu'l-Khayr Khān, as their ruler, for they saw in him an autocratic streak and feared a loss of their own power if placed under his hegemony. Thus, Muḥammad Shībānī returned to Turkistan with those forces he had managed win over to his side in the steppe. Not long after his return, the Qazāqs, led by Maḥmūd Sulṭān, son of the aforementioned Jānī Bek Khān who had rebelled against Abu'l-Khayr Khān, renewed their attack on the Abu'l-Khayrids and their confederates. We are told that Qazāqs were defeated near

⁴⁵ Akhmedov, pp. 61-62; Haidar relates that the Muḥammad Shībānī's "first target" was Burke Sulṭān b. Yādgār Sulṭān, who was also a Chinggisid descendant of Shībān b. Jöchi; see Haidar, p. 77.

Sighnaq and that Maḥmūd Sulṭān perished in this encounter, while Muḥammad Shībānī Khān retired to Manghishlaq for the winter.⁴⁶

In the following year Sulṭān Aḥmad Mīrzā invited Muḥammad Shībānī and his followers to participate in his campaign against the Moghuls, as the latter were continually raiding into Mavarannahr, especially around the environs of Samarqand. The Moghuls were wreaking havoc in the towns, plundering the local inhabitants, subjects of Sulṭān Aḥmad, and making off with their livestock and other valuables. In their weakened state the Tīmūrīds were thus compelled to seek the assistance of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān. They reasoned that with his force of nomadic warriors Shībānī might be a match for the army of Sulṭān Maḥmūd Khān.⁴⁷ Sulṭān Aḥmad invoked the memory of the relationship which had existed between Abū Sa‘īd and Abu’l-Khayr Khān in 1451 and promised to Muḥammad Shībānī, in reward for his services, the dominion of the Moghul khans. Seizing this opportunity, Muḥammad Shībānī aligned his fortune with that of Sulṭān Aḥmad – or so it seemed. The Tīmūrīd army of Sulṭān Aḥmad and that of the Moghul Maḥmūd Sulṭān Khān faced each other on opposing banks of the Syr Darya for three days before battle was joined. In that time, Muḥammad Shībānī – whether he conceived of the idea or was convinced of it by agents of the Moghul khan – determined to betray Sulṭān Aḥmad in favor of Sulṭān Maḥmūd Khān. As the two armies faced off against one another, Muḥammad Shībānī suddenly turned his forces against those of Sulṭān Aḥmad. Having been caught off guard, the

⁴⁶ Haidar, pp. 78-79. Khvāndamīr refers to the son of Jānī Bayk the Qazāq as Sulṭān Maḥmūd Khān. He does not mention the death of Sulṭān Maḥmūd khan as the outcome of this engagement, but does mention Muḥammad Shībānī’s wintering in Manghishlaq; see *HS*, p. 489.

⁴⁷ *HS*, p. 489; Khvāndamīr relates that at this point, Muḥammad Shībānī made his way to Bukhara via Khvarazm; “As before, Amir Abdul-Ali Tarkhan joined him and took him to Samarkand. Sultan Ahmad Mirza, considering the khan’s arrival to be cause for his own greater overlordship, opened the gates of beneficence to him, and with the conquest of Moghulistan in mind, they set out together for Tashkent.

Tīmūrid forces were thus compelled to retreat from the field of battle.⁴⁸ Through this act of treachery, Muḥammad Shībānī Khān ensured the victory of Sulṭān Maḥmūd over his Tīmūrid rival, while the army, and thereby the authority, of Sulṭān Aḥmad was decimated.

As recorded above, Muḥammad Shībānī remained on the register of ‘Abd al-‘Alī Tarkhān’s vassals as long as Sulṭān Aḥmad lived. According to Ḥaydar Dughlāt, Sulṭān Aḥmad and ‘Abd al-‘Alī Tarkhān died around the same time, in 1494. The former took ill and passed while en route back to Samarqand from his defeat at the hands of the Moghul Khān, whereupon his brother Sulṭān Maḥmūd assumed the throne of Samarqand. Having betrayed the Tīmūrids, Muḥammad Shībānī went to Turkistan, where he “endeavored to ingratiate himself” to Sulṭān Maḥmūd Khān. For his part, and in hindsight perhaps unwisely, the khan did what he could to assist Muḥammad Shībānī. If ‘Abd al-‘Alī Tarkhān had given Muḥammad Shībānī his start, Dughlāt claims that it was with the support of Sulṭān Maḥmūd Khān that Shībānī was able to build his forces to the point that he could take Samarqand and Bukhara. He states:

...Shāhī Beg Khān took Bukhara and Samarqand with the strength of the assistance of the Khān [i.e. Sulṭān Maḥmūd Khān], and his army swelled from two hundred or three hundred to fifty thousand, nigh it reached even sixty thousand. From the time he had gone to Turkistan, with the assistance of Sulṭān Maḥmūd Khān, his power was increasing day by day, and every well-born man from among the sultans, amirs and others from the wandering cadre of Abu’l-Khayr Khān moving about in confusion in the wastes of the Qipchāq steppe joined with him.⁴⁹

Muḥammad Shībānī Khān’s first conquest of Samarqand occurred in 1499. We are told elsewhere that two years prior to this event, Mīrzā Bāysunghur b. Sulṭān Maḥmūd requested assistance from Muḥammad Shībānī in repelling an attack by Bābur and his partisans. In this first foray into Samarqand, Muḥammad Shībānī and his forces rode

⁴⁸ *TR*, pp. 115-116.

⁴⁹ *TR*, Fard, p. 257. The translation given is my own.

against Bābur's forces. Being unable to get the best of Bābur, the Uzbeks hastened to the city. This campaign proved abortive as Muḥammad Shībānī and Bāysunghur Mīrzā failed to see eye to eye as to how they ought to proceed.⁵⁰

As the power of Muḥammad Shībānī grew, so too did the political and military threat which he posed to both his adversaries and benefactors alike. The Moghul ruler, Sulṭān Maḥmūd Khān, had awarded the governorship of Otrar to Muḥammad Shībānī for his earlier assistance against the Tīmūrīds at the battle of the Syr Darya. With Shībānī appointed to Otrar, the Qazāqs came under his authority. They protested to Sulṭān Maḥmūd Khān against his granting their old adversary suzerainty over them. This led to hostility between the Moghuls and Qazāqs, and the Moghuls were subsequently bested by the Qazāqs on two separate occasions.⁵¹ Sulṭān Maḥmūd's prestige and position in the region suffered from these losses, while Muḥammad Shībānī's own star continued its ascension. Muḥammad Shībānī built up his power base in Turkistan, despite the activities of the Tīmūrīds and Qazāqs, led by Mazid Tarkhān and Burunduq Khān and supported by reinforcements from Sulṭān Aḥmad, directed at undermining his power. Throughout this time Muḥammad Shībānī was continually supported by Sulṭān Maḥmūd Khān. Still, it would seem that in this political climate loyalty was a fool's virtue, and Muḥammad Shībānī took the absence of his patron, who was campaigning against Sulṭān Aḥmad Tanbal in Farghana, as an opportunity to seize Tashkent for himself.⁵² While he did not retain control of the city and immediately returned it to the khan's possession, claiming all sorts of excuses as to why he had grabbed the city in the first place, such episodes are indicative of the appetites which Muḥammad Shībānī harbored for conquest

⁵⁰ *BN*, p. 54.

⁵¹ *TR*, pp. 118-119.

⁵² *Ibid*, p. 171.

and the lengths to which he would go to advance his goal, that being the establishment of an Uzbek dominion under a dynasty of the descendants of Abu'l-Khayr Khān.

Thus, as the fifteenth century marched toward its zenith, the truncated and divided Tīmūrid realm was in a weakened state and seemingly ripe for conquest. The various mirzas were mired in inter-dynastic power struggles and rivalries and manipulated by self-serving amirs. They noticed too late the heights to which Muḥammad Shībānī Khān had risen, through a combination of skill, diplomacy, and good timing, and had collectively failed in producing one among them on the order of Tīmūr, Shāh Rukh, or even Abū Sa'īd, who would have been able to subdue his dynastic rivals, check the increasing power of the amirs and nobles, centralize political authority and bring order to the empire. It was left to a son of the *Dasht-i Qipchāq*, to Muḥammad Shībānī or Shaybak Khān, to don the mantle of the sovereignty in Mavarannahr and, briefly, in Vāṣifi's home province of Khurasan, establish the Abu'l-Khayrid Shībānīd dynasty in the region and thereby restore Chinggisid rule in the region, and bring some semblance of order to the chaos wrought by ceaseless warfare and internal strife.

The Safavid Dynasty

While Muḥammad Shībānī Khān had been subjugating the famed cities of Samarqand, Bukhara, Balkh and Herat in the east, a new power had been gathering strength far to the west which was itself destined to have an impact on the fate of Mavarannahr and Khurasan – the Ṣafavids. The origin of the Ṣafavid dynasty, though somewhat obscure, can be traced to the city of Ardabil, located in the province of Ardabil in modern day Iran, where they began as the Safaviyya Sūfī order. The dynasty takes its

name from Shaykh Safī al-Dīn Ishāq Ardabīlī, who led the order in the fourteenth century. Although originally rooted in traditional Sunnī Islam of the Shāfi‘ī school, the Safavī Sūfis at some point converted to Shī‘ī Islam.⁵³ Their message appealed to the Turkmen tribes which wandered the steppe zone of Azarbayjan and eastern Anatolia, and they soon found strength in numbers as the ranks of their devotees grew. With the popularity of the Safavī spreading among the people of the region, the political and economic power of the order grew. In time the military strength of the Safavī and their Qizilbāsh supporters grew as well.⁵⁴ The order was transformed under the direction of Shaykh Junayd, who sought to complement his religious authority with temporal power during the reign of Jahānshāh of the Qarā Qoyūnlū.⁵⁵ Jahānshāh surely would have considered the growing power of Junayd and his Turkmen supporters as a potential threat

⁵³ R.M. Savory, “Safawids,” *EI*², Vol. VI., p. 766. The period of time stretching from the mid-thirteenth to the late fifteenth century was one of reduced tension between Sunnī and Shī‘ī Muslims. The Mongol invasion and subsequent murder of the last ‘Abbāsīd Caliph, Muta‘sim, in 1258 “threw Sunni theology and constitutional theory...into some disorder,” and ushered in an era in which Shī‘ī Islam found a pragmatic patron in the Il-Khānid ruler Ghāzān Khān and official support under his brother and successor, Öljaitū, as well as among a number of lesser, local rulers. This climate of tolerance with regard to Shī‘ī Islam persisted into the era of the Tīmūrids: “Timur...was not unsympathetic to Shi‘ism...[and] Shāh Rukh...was also sympathetic to Shi‘ism, and his wife, Gawhar-Shād, built a magnificent mosque at Mashhad adjacent to the Shrine of the Imam Ridā. The last of the Timurid rulers, Sulṭān Husayn ibn Bāyqarā...was disposed to making Shi‘ism the religion of the state, but was dissuaded from this.” Additionally, this period saw a good degree of intellectual borrowing between Sunnī and Shī‘ī Muslims, and what Momen refers to as a “pro-Shi‘i tendency within Sunni Islam”; see Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi‘i Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 91-100. However, the narrative of Vāṣifi with regard to Sunnī-Shī‘ah relations seems to suggest that either this era of accord between the two sects has been over-stated by scholars, that it was drawing to a close by time of Sulṭān Husayn Bāyqarā and the elimination of the Tīmūrid dynasty, or that this was an elite phenomenon and hostility had remained at the popular level between Sunnī and Shī‘ah throughout the Mongol and Tīmūrid periods.

⁵⁴ The term *Qizilbāsh* was used generally in reference to a number of differing Shī‘ī sects from the thirteenth century onward. In the historical context being detailed here, the term was first used by the Ottomans to refer pejoratively to the Shī‘ī Turkmen followers of the Ṣafavids, who wore a distinctive red *tāj*, a head cover (lit. crown, diadem, crest) with twelve points representing the Twelve Shī‘ī Imāms of their faith. Legend has it that Ḥaydar was instructed in a dream by Imām ‘Alī to have his followers wear the red *tāj*, and thus the name Qizilbāsh (*qizil* – red, plus *bāsh* – head). See R.M. Savory, “Kizil-Bash,” *EI*², Vol. V, pp. 243-245.

⁵⁵ R.M. Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids* (Cambridge: University Press, 1980), pp. 16-17. Junayd was the first Ṣafavid to adopt the title *sultan*, and act which is considered to be indicative of his temporal aspirations. On the Qarā Qoyūnlū, see F. Sümer, “Karā Koyunlu,” *EI*², Vol. VI (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960), pp. 587-588; H. R. Roemer, “The Türkmen Dynasties,” *CHI*, Vol. VI (Cambridge: University Press, 1986), pp. 147-188.

to his rule and at the very least a nuisance to be dealt with swiftly and accordingly. In the face of such hostility, Junayd and his supporters were forced to abandon Ardabil for eastern Anatolia, where they came under the protection of Ūzūn Ḥasan and the Aq Qoyūnlū. With the victory of Ūzūn Ḥasan over Jahānshāh in 1468, the Ṣafavids were permitted to return to Ardabil under the leadership of Ḥaydar b. Junayd. Ya‘qūb b. Ūzūn Ḥasan succeeded his father as ruler of the Aq Qoyūnlū in 1478, but unlike his father he harbored no love for Ḥaydar and his followers.⁵⁶ Before he was murdered on the order of Ya‘qūb who, much as Jahānshāh had, feared the growing power of the Ṣafavids, Ḥaydar fathered three sons by ‘Alamshāh Baygum, a daughter of Ūzūn Ḥasan – namely ‘Alī, Ibrāhīm and Ismā‘īl.⁵⁷ According to official Ṣafavid history, ‘Alī declared that Ismā‘īl would succeed him as leader of the Safavī order prior to his death in 1494.⁵⁸ After spending several years in hiding, young Ismā‘īl returned to Ardabil in 1499, where the Qizilbāsh began to rally around him. In 1501 Ismā‘īl led the Qizilbāsh against a larger force of Aq Qoyūnlū troops and delivered them a sound defeat at the battle of Shahrur. Shāh Ismā‘īl and his forces captured the capital city of Tabriz, where coins were minted and the *khutbah* was read in the name of the young shah and, in the fashion of the Shī‘ah, in the name of the Twelve Imāms.⁵⁹ Over the course of the next nine years, the Ṣafavids expanded their domain. Shāh Ismā‘īl and his followers eliminated the power of the Aq Qoyūnlū and seized the provinces of Fars and both ‘Iraq-i ‘Arab and ‘Iraq-i Ajam from

⁵⁶ V. Minorsky, “Ak Koyunlu,” *EP*², Vol. I., p. 311. According to Minorsky the Aq Qoyūnlū, who were Sunnī, felt threatened by the popularity of the Shī‘ī Ṣafavids amongst the Turkmen tribes within Aq Qoyūnlū territory. Enmity also arose between Ya‘qūb b. Ūzūn Ḥasan and Ḥaydar over the wearing of the distinctive Ṣafavid *tāj*, addressed below.

⁵⁷ Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids*, pp. 18-20. As Savory notes, the mother of ‘Alamshāh Baygum was one Despina Khātūn, who was herself the daughter of the Christian Emperor of Trebizond, Calo Johannes.

⁵⁸ Savory, “Safawids,” pp. 765-766.

⁵⁹ Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids*, p. 26. Savory deems that the most significant step taken by Shāh Ismā‘īl upon entering Tabriz was declaring Ithnā ‘Asharī, or Twelver Shī‘ism, as the state religion as it set Iran on a very different trajectory from the rest of the Islamic world.

them.⁶⁰ Thus by the year 1510, having subdued the whole of Persia, the Şafavid Empire shared its eastern border with the province of Khurasan – that is the recently acquired territory of the Muḥammad Shībānī Khān and his kinsmen and Uzbek supporters.

The Encounter of the Abu'l-Khayrid Shībānids and Şafavid-Qizilbāsh

The Abu'l-Khayrid Shībānids with their Uzbek confederates conquered the capital of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā and established themselves as the rulers of Khurasan in 1507. Perhaps with a plan to push the borders of their domain further to the west, or even to reconstruct a grand Chinggisid state stretching from the Syr Darya to the Aras, the Abu'l-Khayrids launched several forays into the region of the newly erected Şafavid state of Shāh Ismā'īl I.⁶¹ The fateful encounter of these two powers set in motion a series of events that would have both immediate and far-reaching consequences, transforming the region in social, political, and religious terms and (re)defining Islamic Central Asia – Khurasan and Mavarannahr – for centuries to come. The *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* records the beginning of these processes of transformation set in motion at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

Writing a century after the fact, Iskandar Beg Munshī states in his renowned history of the early Şafavids, *Tārīkh-i 'Ālam-ārā-yi 'Abbāsī*, that,

As his [Muḥammad Shībānī's] powers increased, so did his arrogance and ambition, and he held any other powerful prince in low esteem. He began to show hostility toward Shah Esma'īl, and in the year that the Shah led his second expedition to Shirvan (915/1509-10), Mohammad Khan Shibani sent a detachment of troops across the desert to Kerman, plundering, killing and

⁶⁰ Savory, “Safawids,” pp. 767-768. The last Aq Qoyūnlū prince, Murād b. Ya'qūb, died in Diyar Bakr in 1514.

⁶¹ Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥaydar Dughlāt, *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī*, ed. 'Abbāsqolī Ghaffārī Fard (Tehran: Mīrāth-i Maktūb, 1383/2004), p. 363. My translation of Dughlāt reads: “When the borders of Shāhī Beg Khān's kingdoms were adjoined to Iraq, the Uzbeks invaded the part that is joined with Khurasan.”

destroying.⁶²

In redress for the territorial transgressions of the Abu'l-Khayrid Uzbeks, young Shāh Ismā'īl sent an envoy with a message to the elder Muḥammad Shībānī Khān, which according to Dughlāt read: “Prior to this time the dust of rancor has never settled upon the margins of the minds of either side to the extent that the cloud of enmity be raised. Let the way of the father be observed from that side, and from this side the ties of a son will be extended.”⁶³ To this seemingly polite message Muḥammad Shībānī Khān sent off a more offensive reply, denigrating Shāh Ismā'īl's parentage and encouraging him to take up the begging ways of his darvish ancestors rather than play at games of war and power. Thus, according to both Dughlāt and Munshī, the root of the Ṣafavid-Uzbek conflict lay in the aggression and hubris of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān. Vāṣifī makes no mention of this exchange of missives between Muḥammad Shībānī Khān and Shāh Ismā'īl I in the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*.

Munshī wrote his definitive work on the early Ṣafavid dynasty during the reign of Shāh 'Abbās the Great, and in recounting the events of this period he was very hostile in his treatment of the Uzbeks in general and of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān in particular. In his history of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, completed in Kashmir around 1546, Mīrzā Ḥaydar Dughlāt was equally hostile towards Muḥammad Shībānī Khān, his Abu'l-Khayrid kinsmen, and their Uzbek horde; like his cousin Bābur, Dughlāt was an exile of the Abu'l-Khayrid conquest of Mavarannahr and Farghana.⁶⁴ Given his long struggle against the Abu'l-Khayrids, the account of Bābur, while certainly

⁶² Iskandar Beg Munshī, *History of Shah 'Abbas the Great*, trans. R.M. Savory (Boulder: Westview Press, 1978), p. 58.

⁶³ *TR*, p. 363. The translation given is my own.

⁶⁴ Eiji Mano, “The *Baburnama* and the *Tarikh-i Rashidi*: Their Mutual Relationship,” *Tīmūrid Art and Culture*, Lisa Golombek and Maria Subtelny, eds. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), pp. 44-45.

remarkable for what it represents with regard to Chaghatāy literature, cannot be read as an impartial historical narrative. The work of Khvāndamīr is also far from impartial as it was completed under the auspices of the *vazīr* of Shāh Ismā‘īl I in Herat, Karīm Khān al-Dīn Khvājah Habīb Allāh Sāvajī, in 1524.⁶⁵ These four works all portray Muḥammad Shībānī Khān as the aggressor, first against the Tīmūrīds and then, once this dynasty had been swept aside, against the Ṣafavīds.⁶⁶ In order to construct a more balanced historical narrative, one should consider, both in conjunction with and in contrast to these sources, works such as Vāṣifī’s *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’*, the *Zubdat al-āthār* of ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad Naṣrallāhī, and the *Sharafnāmah-i Shāhī*, or *‘Abdallāhnāmah*, of Ḥāfiz Tanīsh al-Bukhārī. This last work was completed at the court of the Abu’l-Khayrid Shībānīd ruler ‘Abd Allāh Khān b. Iskandar Khān in Bukhara around the year 1590, and thus it looks at the initial conflict between the Ṣafavīds and the Uzbeks over the province of Khurasan from a vantage point not as often considered in western historiography. Bukhārī provides a wholly different account of this initial contest between the Abu’l-Khayrids and Ṣafavīds, stating,

The short account of this tragic calamity is this, that this just sovereign [Muḥammad Shībānī Khān] having always struggled and waged holy war against infidels and braggarts, and having cleared out the irreligious enemies [the Tīmūrīds], had set out against the sect of Satan [the Ṣafavīds] in order to pull these masters of oppression out by the root. At the same time the minister of the corrupted and godless and the leader of all the villainous ones, Shāh Ismā‘īl, had erected his standard in the province of Khurasan. The sovereign of the repulsive Shī‘ah had never been honorable and glorious. Shībānī Khān had always sent word to this effect [to Shāh Ismā‘īl] via ambassadors: “Either accept the habits of your ancestors, who were part of the Sunna and society, or prepare for war, make war and battle and go forward on the road of error.”⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Sholeh A. Quinn, “The Dreams of Shaykh Safī al-Dīn and Safavid Historical Writing,” *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1/2 (Winter-Spring 1996): p. 132.

⁶⁶ Except the *Bāburnāmah*, which has no account of events occurring between 1508-09 and 1519.

⁶⁷ *AN*, p. 57. The translation given is my own.

For Bukhārī, the conflict between the Abu'l-Khayrids and the Ṣafavids is understood as a conflict between the forces true Islam and the enemies of Islam, including the Shī'ah, between orthodoxy and heresy, between the companions of the right hand and those of the left, and indeed even between good and evil. The contempt felt by the author of this passage for the Shī'ī "heresy" and those who adhered to it is palpable. In this court history, written on the other side of the Amu Darya, Muḥammad Shībānī Khān is portrayed as the champion of true Islam and the defender of the Sunna in a land where, under besotted and debauched Tīmūrid princes such as Badī' al-Zamān and Muẓaffar al-Dīn, their Tīmūrid forebears and other infidels of Persia, schismatic and heretical Shī'ī elements had been allowed to take root and thrive since the time of the Il-Khānids. In Bukhārī's account Muḥammad Shībānī Khān, without insult or character assassination, urges Shāh Ismā'īl to abjure the Shī'ī heresy and return to proper Islam. While the language employed by Bukhārī in his descriptions of the Tīmūrids and Ṣafavids most certainly betrays his own biases, he expresses to his audience quite strongly, almost convincingly, that Muḥammad Shībānī Khān was motivated to conquer Mavarannahr and Khurasan not by some avaricious lust for plunder, power and prestige, but by a desire to weed out what he perceived to be the heresies of the Shī'ah and to ensure the survival of Sunnī Islam in the region. Certainly modern scholars might be quick to, or even feel themselves required to, consider Bukhārī's account of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān's primary motive for quarreling with the Ṣafavids – that being his proclaimed devotion to orthodox Islam and the Sunna of the Prophet Muḥammad – with skepticism, and to discount the notion that sincere religious conviction could legitimately serve as a motive for war.

The strong words and harsh language employed in the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* when discussing the “heretic” Šafavids and Qizilbāsh, as will be examined below, convey Vāṣifī's own intense dislike of Shī'ī Islam and those who practiced it. The distinction is that whereas Bukhārī was writing roughly a century after the fact, Vāṣifī was a contemporary of the events in question; he lived in and was a product of the religious milieu of Khurasan and Mavarannahr in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. There is absolutely no reason to doubt either the sincerity of Vāṣifī's own religious convictions as expressed in his work or the religious tension that his work portrays. The loathing which Vāṣifī harbored for the Shī'ah is well conveyed, not only in the most directly relevant portion of his memoir that will be considered in this work, but throughout the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* whenever the topic is addressed. If one accepts the sincerity of Vāṣifī's religious beliefs and convictions, the question becomes – do the sentiments expressed by Vāṣifī with regard to the Shī'ah adequately mirror the religious beliefs and convictions of a good number of Vāṣifī's contemporaries not only in Herat but throughout Khurasan and Mavarannahr at this point in history, from the lowest laborer to the middling merchant to men such as Muḥammad Shībānī Khān himself? The other possibility might be that Vāṣifī was simply pandering to his prospective audience – a predominantly Sunnī audience in Abu'l-Khayrid Mavarannahr.

In any event, whether motivated by heartfelt and sincere religious conviction or more base concerns and interests – a thirst for land, resources, and plunder – it may be safe for one to conclude that in reality both sides were merely posturing and in fact accepted and even welcomed a contest against the other and the rewards that victory would surely bring. Thus, a peaceful solution to the Khurasan contest was never even a

viable possibility; Muḥammad Shībānī Khān and Shāh Ismā‘īl continued to send subtly insulting letters to one another, with the former declaring his intentions to go on the Hajj to Mecca – and teach the young Shāh Ismā‘īl some manners while en route, and Shāh Ismā‘īl retorting that he harbored a desire to visit the holy city of Mashhad and the shrine of Imām ‘Alī al-Rizā and that he would meet Muḥammad Shībānī there.⁶⁸ The die thus being cast, Shāh Ismā‘īl marched with his forces into Khurasan in the summer of 1510. Munshī’s account corresponds to that of Khvāndamīr: upon the entry of Shāh Ismā‘īl into the province,

The Uzbek governors of the various districts of Khurasan did not stay to oppose him, but abandoned their seats of government and fell back on Herat. Shahi Beg Khan...who was in Herat, was frightened by the boldness and audacity of Shah Esma’īl, and by the fearless way in which he was advancing into Khurasan...Every day his fear of Shah Esma’īl increased. When he heard the news that the Safavid army had reached the neighborhood of Mashhad, he decided that he did not have the strength to withstand Esma’īl, and he withdrew to Marv-e Sahijan...⁶⁹

In his account, Khvāndamīr simply paints Muḥammad Shībānī Khān as a coward, fleeing to Marv as soon as Ismā‘īl set foot in Khurasan. Munshī likewise claims that Shībānī was fearful of Shāh Ismā‘īl, but at least gives him credit for being logical enough to realize that he could not defeat the Qizilbāsh with the number of men he had available to him and that the best course of action was to retreat to Marv.

Shah Esma’īl arrived with the main Safavid army. He pitched his tents near the citadel, and Shahi Beg Khan, filled with even greater terror than before, walled himself up in the citadel and devoted strenuous efforts to putting the defenses of the city in order.⁷⁰

In *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī*, the account given of the showdown at Marv between Muḥammad Shībānī Khān and Shāh Ismā‘īl I is somewhat more balanced:

Shāh Ismā‘īl came out from the rough terrain. When the sentinels of the Uzbek army saw this event, they reported it, and the Uzbek supposed that they [the Safavids] were

⁶⁸ Ghulām Sarwar, *History of Shāh Ismā‘īl Safawī* (Aligarh: Muslim University, 1939), pp. 59-60.

⁶⁹ Munshī, p. 60.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

sorry for coming. He [Muḥammad Shībānī] came out; those among his army that were prepared numbered around 20,000. Some of his advisors, like Amīr Qanbar and Amīr Rāy stated, “Combat should be stopped for the day. ‘Ubayd Allāh Sultān and Tīmūr Sultān have encamped one farsekh from here and have 20,000 men with them. Let them join us. Furthermore, it is clear that in this very about face the enemy has retreated, or it is the beginning of battle. If it is the beginning of battle, it would be better as a group...” The khan declared [to this advice], “War against him [Shāh Ismā‘īl] is a great holy war. In addition, there is great plunder, and it would be of benefit in the next life if I shared with the sultans. We must be brave.” He [Muḥammad Shībānī] set out, and when they had crossed the broken ground and arrived to the plain, they saw that he [Shāh Ismā‘īl] had stopped, and they estimated his army numbered 40,000.⁷¹

From a reading of Dughlāt’s account, the most one can fault Muḥammad Shībānī Khān with is being perhaps a bit overzealous or imprudent in his assessment of the situation and his odds for success. The picture painted by Bukhārī differs slightly in its details:

Shāh Ismā‘īl, in order to make war, assembled his blasphemous and submissive (that is to say, infidel and misguided) forces, and his horse-like and imprudent armies, and having prepared his people with attention, he marched from ‘Iraq-i Arab and ‘Ajam in the direction of Shībānī Khān, and he reached this honorable one in the province of Marv. At the same time, several of the accounted men and other warring soldiers were not present in the blessed service of the khan; in honor of holy war...he launched himself in the enemy’s direction. The enemy intended to retreat, and the khan’s troops caught up with them. The troops of both sides formed lines opposite one another – on one side the army of Islam, on the other the army of infidels, such as the wall of Iskandar. The assemblage of the army of Islam and the innumerable infidel troops raged like ocean waves and collided, and they sighed at the heart of destiny. The pen of fate had written the sign of martyrdom upon the forehead of that world-conquering sovereign [Muḥammad Shībānī Khān], the erroneous ones were victorious in the war and struggle, and the benevolent sovereign, along with many men, were delivered to the ranks of martyrdom. The plow of Shāh Ismā‘īl dispersed the Islamic forces of the warriors of faith and blessed ones, and scattered them...Shāh Ismā‘īl returned from his victory, went to Marv and slaughtered the people. Having destroyed its fortified citadel and walls, he went in the direction of Herat.⁷²

Thus, in Bukhārī’s account, as opposed to the work of Iskandar Beg Munshī in which it is Muḥammad Shībānī Khān who is portrayed as arrogant and impudent, it is clearly Shāh Ismā‘īl who is cast as the villainous and duplicitous aggressor. Muḥammad Shībānī Khān and those who fell with him in battle, meanwhile, died as martyrs in a vain and valiant struggle against the Shī‘ī infidel. For Bukhārī and his readers, Muḥammad Shībānī Khān was not an uncouth rampaging nomad and braggart who ultimately showed

⁷¹ *TR*, p. 365. Translation given is my own.

⁷² *AN*, p. 57. Translation given is my own.

his cowardice, but rather a brave soldier-general and *ghāzī* in the army of Islam fighting to reclaim the territories of the Tīmūrids and Ṣafavids for the *Dār al-Islām*.

All biases aside, the forces of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān and Shāh Ismā‘īl met in battle on December 2, 1510.⁷³ As seen above, the forces of Shāh Ismā‘īl feigned retreat and Muḥammad Shībānī Khān, for whatever reason, led his men out of the city of Marv in pursuit. The trap set by the Shāh worked perfectly. The Uzbek forces, though outnumbered by roughly two to one, by all accounts fought bravely. Shāh Ismā‘īl led the charge on the Uzbek position in person, and the Uzbek lines collapsed. The Uzbeks sounded a retreat and fled in the direction of Marv. Muḥammad Shībānī Khān himself was overtaken and slain by one Būrūn Sulṭān, his skull was fashioned into a drinking cup and his head, stuffed with straw, was sent as a warning to the Ottoman Sulṭān Bāyazīd II, implying that he would share the fate of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān should he be unwise enough to move against Shāh Ismā‘īl and the Ṣafavid Empire.⁷⁴ The Uzbeks are reported to have lost roughly ten thousand men; ‘Ubayd Allāh Sulṭān and Tīmūr Sulṭān, having received word of the battle’s outcome, withdrew with their men north beyond the Amu Darya. The city of Marv was sacked by the Qizilbāsh and its inhabitants subjected to a

⁷³ *HS*, p. 594. Khvāndamīr states “Friday morning...the shah stationed Amir Beg Musullu Muhrdar with three hundred horsemen at the bridge over the Mahmudi canal while he himself took troops to the village of Talkhtan,” and the forces of Ismā‘īl I and Muḥammad Shībānī met in combat later that same day. Thackston reckons this Friday morning to have been December 2, 1510. However, according to Ḥaydar Dūghlāt, the fateful contest between the Ṣafavids and Uzbeks at Marv occurred on the “*ruz-i shak* of Ramazān in the year 916.” The *ruz-i shak*, or “day of doubt”, may correspond to either the last day of Sha’ban or the first day of Ramadan. Therefore, it seems that if we consider the fact that the month of Sha’ban typically has 29 days, in the year 916 the battle of Marv may have occurred, according to Dūghlāt, on either the first or second of December in the year 1510. However, as Khvāndamīr specifically states “Friday”, if we are to look the nearest Friday would have in fact been 27 Sha’ban 916, which would have been neither the *ruz-i shak* nor the first of Ramadan. The next Friday would have been 5 Ramadan 916, three days after Thackston’s reckoning. Thus, for the sake of convenience, the date of December 2, 1510, or 1 Ramadan 916, despite the fact it was not a Friday but a Monday, is given herein. See <http://www.oriold.uzh.ch/static/hegira.html>.

⁷⁴ Sarwar, pp. 62-63.

general massacre.⁷⁵ Shāh Ismā‘īl then rode into Herat on December 21, 1510; the *khutbah* was read in the name of Shāh Ismā‘īl and of the Twelve Imāms.⁷⁶ The victorious Şafavid ruler then passed the winter in Khurasan, and the following year a treaty was signed with the Abu'l-Khayrids recognizing the Amu Darya as the divide between their respective empires. This treaty held until 1512 when, in support of Zāhīr al-Dīn Muḥammad Bābur in his bid to reclaim the throne of Tīmūr in Mavarannahr, the Şafavids were once again drawn into a contest with the Abu'l-Khayrid Uzbeks from which the latter were to emerge victorious.

⁷⁵ *TR*, pp. 365-366.

⁷⁶ Khvāndamīr gives the date 15 Ramadan 916, which equates to December 21, 1510; see *HS*, p. 593.

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORY OF THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE *BADĀYI' AL-VAQĀYI'* OF ZAYN AL-DĪN MAḤMŪD VĀŞIFĪ

Before entering upon an examination and consideration of several sections of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, it is appropriate that one first review the extent to which past scholars have utilized this great work of Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāşifī in their own learned endeavors. The impetus for this is two-fold. First, in order to determine what ground has been trodden vis-à-vis Vāşifī's opus, lest we simply reiterate what has already been stated, potentially a number of times, in the last century and a half. Second, in order to gain some insight with regard to how the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* has been assessed by those scholars who have accessed it since the nineteenth century, it is necessary to review such works in detail. This brief historiographical essay will commence by first focusing attention on the interaction of scholars from the Russian Imperial, Soviet, and post-Soviet periods. Following this, the focus of the essay will shift to consider the works of several western scholars who, building upon the work of their colleagues in to the east, have mined the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* for its valuable resources.

Aleksandr Boldyrev and Sadridin Aynī

The most prolific among Russian or Soviet scholars with regard to the work of Vāṣifī is undoubtedly the late Aleksandr Nikolaevich Boldyrev (1909-1993). By his own account, Boldyrev began laying the groundwork for a critical edition of the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* in 1935, while he was with the Academy of Science of the U.S.S.R. in Tajikistan. He continued his work on the critical edition at the State Hermitage in Leningrad, and finally completed this labor in 1949 at the Oriental Institute of the Academy of Science of the U.S.S.R. with the support of the Tajik branch of the Academy of Science of the U.S.S.R., after enduring the hardships of the Leningrad Blockade during the Second World War.⁷⁷

In one of his own works, *Zainaddin Vasifi – Tadzhikskii pisatel’ XVI v.*, Boldyrev provides his readers with a list of scholars who had examined and commented upon the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* before him, as well as succinct and useful summaries of the extent to which these scholars themselves had delved into the narrative of Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāṣifī. Boldyrev reports that among Russian orientalists it was P. I. Lerkh who first procured a copy of the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘*, in “Uzbek”, that is Chaghatay translation in the city of Khiva in the year 1858. Lerkh thoroughly familiarized himself with this copy of the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* and extracted a good deal of information from it while compiling notes for his report on the archeological expedition to Central Asia in 1867.⁷⁸ According to Boldyrev, Lerkh also used information taken from the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* to date the construction of *sardoba* and *kariz* in Turkistan sponsored by the famed Sūfī

⁷⁷ A. N. Boldyrev, *Zainaddin Vasifi: Tadzhikskii pisatel’ XVIv. (Opym tvorcheskoi biografii)* (Stalinabad: Tadzhikskoe gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1957), p. 9. On his experiences during wartime, see A. N. Boldyrev, *Osadnaia zapis’: blokadniy dnevnik* (Sankt-Peterburg: Fond regional’nogo razviti’i a Sankt-Peterburga: Evropeiskii dom: Evropeiskii universitet v Sankt-Peterburge, 1998).

⁷⁸ Boldyrev, pp. 5-6.

leader Mīr-i ‘Arab,⁷⁹ as well as other ruins which were still visible in the late nineteenth century.⁸⁰

Boldyrev next informs his readers that the first copy of the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* obtained and made available for examination in its original Persian entered into the possession of Konstatin Petrovich von Kaufman, the first governor-general of Russian Turkistan, who sent it to St. Petersburg in 1871, at which point it was examined by the aforementioned P. I. Lerkh.⁸¹ Subsequent to this Kaufman sent a second Persian manuscript of the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* to St. Petersburg, which was examined in 1874 by B. A. Dorn. Seemingly unaware of Lerkh’s examination of the first manuscript sent by Kaufman to the public library in St. Petersburg, Dorn, who was himself the director of the Asian Museum of the Academy of Sciences until his death in 1881, opined that the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* was a potentially valuable source of information regarding the history of late fifteenth and early sixteenth century Central Asia. As Boldyrev relates, “Dorn expounds on the contents of some sections of the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘*, listing separately the most noteworthy and remarkable persons mentioned in them...adding that ‘the book deserves to be made accessible in one of the European languages in a proper treatment.’”⁸²

⁷⁹ Sayyid ‘Abd Allāh Yamānī, referred to in the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* as Mīr ‘Arab, was an influential member of the ‘*ulamā*’ in Mavarannahr under the early Abu’l-Khayrid Shībānids; for the role played by Mīr ‘Arab in the defense of Mavarannahr in 1512, see chapter four and appendices.

⁸⁰ A *sardoba*, from Persian سرد آبه (*sardāba*, *sardābeh*), is a subterranean cistern or well, or as defined by Steingass, “A place where water is kept cool”; see Steingass, p. 673. The word кяриз (*kīariz*) in Russian is derived from the Persian word کاريز (*kārīz*), and is synonymous with *qanāt*, which is a type of subterranean canal which has been used throughout Iran and Central Asia from antiquity to the present.

⁸¹ Boldyrev, p. 6.

⁸² Ibid, p. 6. On B. A. Dorn, see Muriel Atkin, “Soviet and Russian Scholarship on Iran,” *Iranian Studies*, Vol. XX, Nos. 2-4 (1987), p. 227; N. L. Luzhetskaya, “Dorn, Johannes Albrecht Bernhard,” *Encyclopedia Iranica*, Vol. VII, Fasc. 5 (1995), pp. 511-513.

One learns from Boldyrev that the highly renowned and respected V. V. Bartol'd also made some use of the manuscripts of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* that had found their way to St. Petersburg, especially a third copy which had arrived at the Asian Museum in 1890, in a handful of his own works; according to Boldyrev, Bartol'd first used the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* in the work "Otchet o komandirovke v Turkestan" ("Report on an Expedition to Turkestan"), which was concerned primarily with the history of the Abu'l-Khayrid Shībānids.⁸³ It was through his examination of the relevant portion of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* that Bartol'd determined 1525 to be the year of the death of Suyūnj Khvājah Khān.⁸⁴ Boldyrev also relates that reference was made to the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* by Bartol'd in "Ulugbek i ego vremia" ("Ulugh Beg and His Era") with regard to the appointment of one Muḥammad Khvāfī to the position of *mudarris*, as well as in his book *K istorii orosheniia Turkestana (On the History of Irrigation in Turkestan)*, and a glancing reference in "Mir-Ali-Shir i politicheskaia zhizn'" ("Mīr 'Alī Shīr and Political Life").⁸⁵

Boldyrev makes mention of two additional Russian scholars, namely A. M. Belenitskii and B. L. Viatkin. The former was able to garner a good deal of information from the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* with regard to the topography of Herat, while the latter extracted information from Vāṣifī to include in his history of Samarqand and its

⁸³ Ibid, p. 6; the work referred to here, "Otchet o komandirovke v Turkestan", which translates as "An account of a mission to Turkestan," may be found in *Sochineniia, Vol. VIII* (Moscow: 1973), pp. 119-210.

⁸⁴ Suyūnj Khvājah Khān, or 'Abd al-Nāsir Kamāl al-Dīn Suyūnjuq Bahādur, was one of the four principal sons of Abu'l-Khayr Khān and an uncle of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān. His mother was Rābī'a Sulṭān Baygum, a daughter of Ulugh Beg. Suyūnj Khvājah was allotted the appanage of Tashkent following the surrender of Andijan to the Abu'l-Khayrids in 1504. Suyūnj Khvājah held the Tashkent appanage until his death in 1525, at which point it passed to his oldest son, Kildī Muḥammad Sulṭān, his first "Suyūnjuqid" successor; see Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont, "Une liste ottomane de princes et d'apanages Abu'l-khayrides," *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Jul.-Sep., 1970), p. 445; H. H. Howorth, *History of the Mongols from the 9th to the 19th Century. Part II. The So-Called Tartars of Russia and Central Asia. Division II* (London: 1880), p. 701.

⁸⁵ Boldyrev, pp. 6-7.

environs.⁸⁶ Boldyrev then states unequivocally that a thorough study of the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* “as an outstanding monument of the Tajik literature” only began with Sadriddin Aynī, whose work with the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* will be considered herein in greater detail following a review of the contributions made by Boldyrev himself.⁸⁷

The first published work addressing the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* by Boldyrev was an article entitled “Memuary Zain-ad-dina Vosifi kak istochnik dlia izucheniia kul’turnoi zhizni Srednei Azii i Khorasana na rubezhe XV-XVI vekov” (“The Memoir of Zayn al-Dīn Vāṣifī as a Source for the Study of the Cultural Life of Central Asia and Khurasan at the Turn of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries”), included in the journal *Trudy Otdela Vostoka* in 1940. The purpose of the work, as Boldyrev himself stated quite plainly, was to provide “a detailed description of a source [i.e. the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘*] that is very important to the history of sixteenth century Central Asia, which up to the present time has been left unstudied and is available only in a few, comparatively rare manuscripts.”⁸⁸ Running seventy-one pages, this piece is practically a book unto itself, wherein Boldyrev put forward the notion that the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* was in fact a legitimate historical source with regard to the late Tīmūrid and early Uzbek eras. According to Boldyrev, “The memoirs of Vosifi provide a colorful tableaux of life and the mores of his epoch,” and was yet in need of the same scholastic attention that had been afforded other works from that period. Boldyrev further opines:

The keenness of Vosifi’s observation and the at times remarkable candor with which he recounted the details of events, typically entering into the story in an indirect manner,

⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 7.

⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 7.

⁸⁸ A. N. Boldyrev, “Memuary Zain-ad-dina Vosifi kak istochnik dlia izucheniia kul’turnoi zhizni Srednei Azii i Khorasana na rubezhe XV-XVI vekov,” *Trudy Otdela Vostoka*, Tom II (Leningrad: Gosudarstvennyi Ermitazh, 1940), p. 204.

assign to his work a particular value. No less interesting than this, the work tells of Vosifi's personal association with various well-known historical figures.⁸⁹

Historical figures encountered by Vāṣifī include such famed individuals as Mīr ‘Alī Shīr Navā’ī, with whom Vāṣifī had a personal audience not long before the death of this esteemed poet-statesman in 1501; ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān, the man who in many ways drove the Abu’l-Khayrid reconquest of Mavarannahr following the death of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān in 1510 and laid the foundations for an Abu’l-Khayrid Chinggisid Uzbek state; Kīldī Muḥammad Sultān, son of Suyūnj Khvājah Khān, the governor of Tashkent and important prince among the Abu’l-Khayrid Shībānids of Mavarannahr; and a myriad of erudite men – poets and scholars, mullas and shaykhs, bureaucrats and bazaaris – many unknown to us but certainly known in their time and no less important in Vāṣifī’s estimation.

After reviewing briefly the works of Dorn, Teufel, Bartol’d and Viatkin which make mention or limited use of the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’*, much of which was subsequently repeated in the introduction to the aforementioned *Zainaddin Vasifi – Tadzhikskii pisatel’ XVI v.*, Boldyrev then listed and remarked on extant manuscript copies of the work then available in the archives of “Leningrad, Tashkent, and Stalinabad.”⁹⁰ Upon finishing his review of the manuscripts, Boldyrev laments:

Citing the manuscript copies of the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* only emphasizes the fact that despite the relatively high number of sufficiently authoritative copies which might lay the basis for a critical edition, as of yet one does not exist.⁹¹

It would in time, of course, be Boldyrev himself who would see to the completion of not one, but two critical editions of the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’*, both of which will be discussed in

⁸⁹ Boldyrev, “Memuary Zain-ad-dina Vosifi,” p. 205.

⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 208.

⁹¹ Ibid, p. 211. Boldyrev lists all of the manuscript copies of the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* he had consulted.

greater detail below.⁹² For the remainder of the article, Boldyrev provides brief summaries of each chapter of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, giving the titles in Persian with Russian translation and, for the first few chapters, Russian translations of brief extracts as well. In another article published in 1940, “Tezkire Khasana Nisori, kak novyi istochnik dlia izucheniia kul'turnoi zhizni Srednei Azii XVI v.” (“The *Tazkira* of Ḥasan Nisārī as a New Source for the Study of the Cultural Life of Central Asia in the Sixteenth Century”), Boldyrev tells of the aforementioned reference to Vāṣifī in Ḥasan Nisārī’s *Muzakkir-i aḥbāb* completed in 1566, alongside Ḥāfiẓ Abahī and Rūzbihān al-Iṣfahānī, “author of a quite interesting historical work, the *Mihmānnāmah*.”⁹³

In 1946 Boldyrev contributed to a collection of essays published under the title *Alisher Navoi: Sbornik statei*, edited by A. K. Borovko. In his offering “Alisher Navoi v rasskazakh sovremennikov” (“Alī Shīr Navā’ī in Stories of His Contemporaries”), Boldyrev worked all but exclusively from the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, paying particular attention to chapters thirteen through sixteen, in which Vāṣifī addressed the character and nature of ‘Alī Shīr Navā’ī, the literati and others of Herat that flocked to his side, and the interesting events which occurred around him. As Boldyrev himself stated:

In the present work there are provided translations of several stories concerning Alisher Navoi, narratives in the words of his contemporaries, who were in close contact with Navoi and communicated with him directly... In the portion of Vasifi’s memoirs which is concerned with the Herat period of his life, a number of stories about Alisher Navoi warrant particular attention. These stories are housed in four separate chapters devoted specifically to Navoi...The stories of Vasifi depict certain features of Navoi’s character, manifested within the narrow confines of his private life. Within them Vasifi tells not only about the positive qualities of his character, but also about a few other features, his

⁹² Regrettably I have not, as of yet, had an opportunity to examine for myself any of the extant manuscripts of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*.

⁹³ A. N. Boldyrev, “Tezkire Khasana Nisori, kak novyi istochnik dlia izucheniia kul'turnoi zhizni Srednei Azii XVI v.,” *Trudy Otdela Vostoka*, Tom. III (Leningrad: Gosudarstvennyi Ermitazh, 1940), p. 296. In a footnote, Boldyrev directs the reader to “Memuary Zain-ad-dina” for more information on Vāṣifī. Boldyrev also mentions that the *Muzakkir-i aḥbāb* was dedicated to Iskandar Khān, who reigned as *khāqān* from 1561 until his death in 1583.

rancor, his vindictiveness, which may only serve to increase our confidence in the rest of the information.⁹⁴

Meticulous as always in his detail, Boldyrev informed the reader, either within the text itself or in a footnote, which manuscript copies he was working from to first create a complete, coherent narrative in Persian, and then to render that Persian prose into Russian. Furthermore, the publication of this work marked the first time in which a number of large excerpts from the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* were translated into a European language. The following year Boldyrev's lengthy article "Ocherki iz zhizni Geratskogo obshchestva na rubezhe XV-XVI vv." ("Sketches from the Life of Herātī Society at the Threshold of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries") was published in the journal *Trudy Otdela istorii kul'tury i iskusstva Vostoka Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha*.⁹⁵ Running over one hundred pages in length, much if not all of the commentary on small translated excerpts of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* was included *Zainaddin Vasifi: Tadzhikskii pisatel'*.

Published in 1957, Boldyrev's work entitled *Zainaddin Vasifi: Tadzhikskii pisatel', XVI v. (Zayn al-Dīn Vāṣifi: Tajik Writer of the Sixteenth Century)* is thus far one of only two works of any great length which consider the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* as a reliable primary source for the history of the late-Tīmūrid and early Abu'l-Khayrid Shībānid eras. This work is quasi-biographical in nature; Boldyrev provides Russian translations of a number of extracts drawn from Vāṣifi's memoir and blends them with interpretation and commentary. Unlike the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* itself, which begins with Vāṣifi's flight from Ṣafavid Herat, Boldyrev attempts to place the episodes and events described by Vāṣifi in chronological order. With regard to structure, the work consists of an introduction and

⁹⁴ A. N. Boldyrev, "Alisher Navoi: Sbornik statei," *Alisher Navoi v rasskazakh sovremennikov*, ed. A. K. Borovko (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk SSSR, 1946), pp. 121-123.

⁹⁵ A. N. Boldyrev, "Ocherki iz zhizni Geratskogo obshchestva na rubezhe XV-XVI vv.," *Trudy Otdela istorii kul'tury i iskusstva Vostoka Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha* (1947).

seven chapters, with each chapter being devoted to a distinct span of time in the life of Vāṣifī.⁹⁶ While *Zainaddin Vasifi: Tadjhikskii pisatel' XVI v.* is a work of great importance and familiarity with it is quite essential for the scholar wishing to learn more about Vāṣifī and his times, it is not a complete translation and should not be approached as such, and offers up for consideration only those episodes in Vāṣifī which Boldyrev deemed to be the most interesting or most important.

Finally, in 1961, came the realization of what must have been one of Boldyrev's long held ambitions, that being the publication of the first critical text edition of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*.⁹⁷ This critical edition begins with a very informative introduction, forty five pages in length in which, much as in 1940's "Memuary Zain-ad-dina Vosifi," Boldyrev provides extensive descriptions of the various manuscripts from which the critical edition was created, everything from place of origin to remarks made in colophons or in margins to their physical state, as well as in some instances which scholar or scholars had handled and made use of the manuscripts. Upon encountering the text itself one discovers that this is a lithograph edition. This critical text edition is comprised of two volumes, with indices located at the end of the second volume. Following the completion of this monumental project, Boldyrev penned a brief piece, four pages in length, entitled "The 16th Century Tajik Writer Zainiddin Vasifi and His 'Remarkable Tales' (Badai'al-vaqai')," which was published in *New Orient* in 1962.⁹⁸ As near as can

⁹⁶ The contents of the chapters are as follows: "Chapter one: youth, 1485-1512"; "Chapter two: in Samarkand, 1512-1513"; "Chapter three: in Bukhara, 1513-1514"; "Chapter four: wandering, 1515-1517"; "Chapter five: once more in Samarkand, 1517-1518"; "Chapter six: Shahrūkhiia – Tashkent"; "Chapter seven: the main features of the ideological content of Vāṣifī's work."

⁹⁷ Vāṣifī, Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd, *Badāi' al-vaqāi': kriticheskii tekst, vvedenie i ukazateli, Pamiatniki literaturny narodov Vostoka: teksty. Bol'shaia seriia*, 5, ed. Aleksandr Nikolaevich Boldyrev (Moscow: Izd-vo vostochnoi lit-ry, 1961).

⁹⁸ A. N. Boldyrev, "The 16th Century Tajik Writer, Zainiddin Vasifi and His "Remarkable Tales" (Badai'al-vaqai')," *New Orient*, Vol. III (1962): pp. 75-78.

be determined, this is the first time Boldyrev wrote anything pertaining to the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* clearly intended for western, English-speaking scholars.

In 1970 and 1971 were published volumes one and two, respectively, of the second critical text edition of the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘*.⁹⁹ Unlike the edition published in Moscow a decade earlier this edition, published in Tehran by the *Bunyād-i farhang-i Irān*, is a typeset print edition, making it much easier to read. The first volume is fronted with a brief note on the editor, Aleksandr Boldyrev, penned by Kamāl Aynī, son of Sadriddin Aynī, detailing some of the particulars of both his personal and academic life and how he came to be so enamored of and interested in the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* of Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāṣifi. Following this is a brief synopsis of the life of Vāṣifi and the production of the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘*, written by Boldyrev himself. The second volume begins with yet another brief note from Kamāl Aynī, before proceeding to the text itself. Both volumes contain their own index, which have been expanded beyond the single index provided in the second volume of the 1961 Moscow edition.

As indicated above, Boldyrev esteemed Sadriddin Aynī above all other scholars who had examined and worked with the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* from the mid-nineteenth to the twentieth century. As related by Boldyrev in the aforementioned *Zainaddin Vasifi: Tadzhikskii pisatel’*, it is to Aynī that we must credit the popularization of Vāṣifi’s work, as well as the recognition of the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* as an early masterpiece of the literature of “the Tajik people”. Boldyrev states: “Aini first examined the memoir of Vasifi in his anthology *Obraztsy tadzhikskoi literatury*. Along with some general characteristics of the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* and brief data regarding its author, the anthology

⁹⁹ Vāṣifi, Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd, *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘*, ed. Aleksandr N. Boldyrev (Tehran: The Cultural Foundation of Iran, 1970-71).

provided the first examples of Vasifi's poetry."¹⁰⁰ Boldyrev goes on to relate that Aynī, like those who had encountered the work of Vāšifī before him, was quick to realize the unique character of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, its potential historical and literary value, and that it needed to be examined thoroughly and published in a critical text edition.

According to a quote from Aynī delivered to us by Boldyrev, it was in fact Aynī who first recognized the use to which the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* and its author Vāšifī could be put as he and others were endeavoring to create a new and distinct Tajik nation:

‘The significance of this work,’ writes Aini, ‘as opposed to other ancient books, lay in the fact that its author presents things plainly, openly, and with a great deal of candor.’ ‘To the extent that we,’ Aini continues a bit further on, ‘have accomplished the great social revolution, and are entering into a new cultural life, the publication of this book seems quite essential.’¹⁰¹

According to Boldyrev, the idea of enshrining Vāšifī as a Titan in the pantheon of great Tajik writers of old and making the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* “accessible for the wide mass of readers of Soviet Tajikistan” remained with Aynī until his death. To this end, Aynī began to publish articles on the topic of Vāšifī in more popular literary journals in the Tajik SSR in 1940: “In these articles Aini introduced a wide circle of Tajik readers to the life and works of Vasifi, recounting the main contents of his memoir, providing larger excerpts from the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*.”¹⁰² In 1948, Aynī completed the work *Alisher*

¹⁰⁰ Boldyrev, *Zainaddin Vasifi: Tadzshikskii pisatel'*, p. 7. According to Boldyrev, this was published in *Namūna-i adabiyāt-i Tājīk (Namunai adabiyoti tojik)* in the year 1926; “All of the nine poems published by Aini are either fragments or a selection of distinct verses from Vasifi's work.” Aynī provided very little biographical information on Vāšifī, however he did contextualize several of the selected poems. See Šadr al-Dīn Aynī, *Namūna-i adabiyāt-i Tājīk: 300-1200 Hijrī* (Moscow: Chāpkhānah-i Nashriyāt-i Markazī, 1926), pp. 105-112.

¹⁰¹ Boldyrev, p. 7; Boldyrev draws this quote from S. Aynī, *Namunai adabiyoti tojik*, p. 112.

¹⁰² Ibid, pp. 7-8. Boldyrev states that an article entitled “Yak simoi nomashhuri adabiyoti tojik – Vosifi,” or “An unknown face in Tajik literature – Vāšifī,” was published in four parts in the journal *Bo rohi Lenīn* over the course of 1940-1941. A second article mentioned by Boldyrev, “Vosifi va asari ū Badoe-ul-vaqoe,” was published in *Sharqi surkh* in 1946. Regrettably, I have been unable to obtain copies of these articles.

Navoi, which was based in large part upon information gleaned from the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘*.¹⁰³

Although Sadriddin Aynī died in 1954, his most important work concerning the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* and Vāšifī, *Vosifī va khulosai Badoe‘-ul-vaqoe‘*, was published posthumously in 1956.¹⁰⁴ As the title indicates, this is not the complete *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘*, but rather an abridgement with limited commentary. Reworked in Tajik, one might consider this work as the Tajik companion to Boldyrev’s *Zainaddin Vasifī: Tadzhikskii pisatel‘*. With regard to structure, Aynī adopted much the same approach as Boldyrev, rearranging the contents of the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* and placing episodes of the vitae of Vāšifī in chronological order. The body of the work is divided into two parts, subdivided into fifteen sections in total. Part one begins with those narratives of Vāšifī that revolve around his life and experiences in Herat and greater Khurasan, and closes with his exodus to Mavarannahr in 1512. Part two resumes the tale of Vāšifī’s life, telling of his peregrinations and encounters in Mavarannahr under the early Abu’l-Khayrid khans and sultans and concludes with a narrative relating to Kīldī Muḥammad Khān and “some scattered recollections of Vosifī.”¹⁰⁵ This work constitutes essentially a recasting of portions of the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* in modern Tajik; Aynī has rendered many of the more ornate and florid passages of Vāšifī in language that makes it more intelligible for the intended audience, the average Tajik reader or student of the mid-twentieth century. All of the longer *qašīdahs* have been omitted, while shorter *bayts* and

¹⁰³ Ibid. p. 8.

¹⁰⁴ Sadriddin Aynī, *Vosifī va khulosai Badoe‘-ul-vaqoe‘* (Dushanbe: Nashriyoti “Irfon”, 1985). Although first published in 1956 by the Nashriyoti Davlatii Tojikiston in Stalinobod, the copy available to me was published in 1985. In English, the title may be rendered *Vāšifī and the Essence of the Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘*, or *Vāšifī and an Abridgement of the Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘*, etc.

¹⁰⁵ Aynī, *Vosifī*, p. 307.

other bits of verse have been included throughout the text. While the work lacks an index, Aynī did provide subtitles within each section as well as a corresponding table of contents. As Boldyrev has stated,

The name Sadriddin Aini is affiliated with the popularization of Vasifi's work in our time, as well as with the act of drawing the attention of Tajik scholars to the need to thoroughly study and, moreover, publish the work of Vasifi – a remarkable writer of the classical period of Tajik literature who had long languished in oblivion.¹⁰⁶

Vasifi in Soviet and Tajik Historiography

Thus it was primarily thanks to the works of Aleksandr Boldyrev and Sadriddin Aynī that Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. ‘Abd al-Jalīl Vāṣifī and his memoirs were brought to the attention of Soviet scholars at large, and that the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* was assigned a place among the early works of Tajik national literature and historical sources.

Following in the wake of these scholars, Vāṣifī began to find regular mention in anthologies, literary primers and historical works, of both a general and specific nature, published not only in the Tajik SSR but in various locales within the Soviet Union.

We have, for example, the work penned by A. Belenitskii, entitled “K istorii feodal’nogo zemlevladiiia v Srednei Azii i Irane v Timuridskuiu epokhu (XIV-XV vv.),” published not long after Boldyrev’s “Memuary Zain-ad-dina Vosifi.” Belenitskii’s article itself deals primarily with the form of land grant known as *suyūrghāl*, which has been examined extensively by several scholars in the West as well as in the Soviet Union. The reference made to Vāṣifī is brief, coming only on the second-to-last page of the work, and indirect, as the citation made is to Boldyrev’s above-mentioned work.¹⁰⁷ Some

¹⁰⁶ Boldyrev, p. 8.

¹⁰⁷ A. Belenitskii, “K istorii feodal’nogo zemlevladiiia v Srednei Azii i Irane v Timuridskuiu epokhu (XIV-XV vv.). (Obrazovanie instituta “suiurgal”), *Istoriik marksist*, Vol. 4 (1941): p. 57.

years after this came B. G. Gafurov's work, *Istoriia Tadjhikskogo naroda v kratkom izlozhenii*, published in 1955. Gafurov ranked the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* as one of the few works of significance from its era, opining that with regard to "the development of Tajik literature and learning the pronouncements of Vāṣifī are of particular importance."¹⁰⁸ Gafurov then proceeds to provide a brief biography of Vāṣifī – a practice that would become common among scholars both within and outside of the Soviet Union. Of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* itself Gafurov states that it is a fascinating work within which Vāṣifī "vividly portrays figures contemporary to himself, and depicts the literary habits and tastes of Herat under Navā'ī as well as the life of court poets under the Shībānids." He goes on to laud Vāṣifī for his wit, powers of observation, and thinly veiled satirical form with which he "exposes many of the vices which emerged under the regime of the khans."¹⁰⁹ Regrettably as it would have been interesting to know specifically to which vices he was referring, Gafurov ends his analysis of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* here, proceeding then to briefly mention the works of the poet and historian Kamāl al-Dīn Banā'ī, the poet Hilālī, and others.¹¹⁰

In 1960, roughly three years after the publication of *Zainaddīn Vasifī – Tadjhikskii pisatel' XVIv* and a year before the publication of the first critical edition of Vasifī's work, the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* comprised the sole entry under the heading "Memuary" in volume five of *Sobranie vostochnykh rukopisei akademii nauk Uzbekskoi SSR*. The authors then proceed to thoroughly describe each of the seven manuscript

¹⁰⁸ B. G. Gafurov, *Istoriia Tadjhikskogo Naroda v kratkom izlozhenii, tom. 1: s drevneishikh vremen do Velikoi Oktiabr'skoi sotsialisticheskoi revoliutsii 1917 g.* (Moscow: Gos. Izd-vo polit. lit-ry, 1955), p. 377.

¹⁰⁹ Gafurov, pp. 377-378.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, p. 378. Of these literary figures, including quite possibly Vāṣifī, Gafurov states: "All of these writers grew and flourished in the late fifteenth century. In the works of the poets of the sixteenth century an intentionally florid and insipidly bombastic style and formalism triumphed, oddly enough reflecting the beginning of the general process of the decline of feudalism. Only beginning in the late sixteenth century do we observe some enlivening of Uzbek and Tajik courtly literature."

editions of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* housed at the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR: their report tells that several manuscript copies include the names of the scribes responsible for their production, while it is estimated that all were copied between the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries, the latest date given being 1907.¹¹¹

Excerpts from the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* pertaining to Abu'l-Khayrid campaigns undertaken against the Qazāqs were rendered into Russian for inclusion in *Materialy po istorii Kazakhskikh khanstv XV-XVIII vekov*, edited by S. K. Ibragimov and published in 1969. Working from Boldyrev's *Zainaddin Vasifi: Tadzhikskii pisatel'*, Ibragimov provides the usual biographical summary of Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāṣifī, recounting when and where he was born, his peregrinations and diverse resume, and reiterating for good measure Vāṣifī's other names – Asīr al-Dīn Kamāl, Kamāl al-Dīn, and “a second *nisbah* – Ansārī.”¹¹² It is of interest to note that Ibragimov disagrees with Boldyrev's claim that Vāṣifī “laid the foundation of a new literary style, rejecting traditional rhetoric, drawing on the linguistic resources of the national vernacular spoken language of the Tajiks.”¹¹³ In response, Ibragimov argues that, while certainly Vāṣifī was and remains an important figure in the history of Persian-Tajik literature, “Simplicity of language and the transparency of the literary dialogue is inherent to a number of works which preceded Vāṣifī,” such as hagiographies which were read not only in Sūfī circles, but “also among broad sectors of the laity, including artisans, traders, peasants, the lower

¹¹¹ A. A. Semenova, et al., *Sobranie vostochnykh rukopisei akademii nauk Uzbekskoi SSR*, Vol. V (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk Uzbekskoi SSR, 1960), pp. 97-99.

¹¹² S. K. Ibragimov, et al., ed.; Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāṣifī, “Rasskaz, voskhvaliaiuschii vazira khazrat Ubaidallah-khana,” *Materialy po istorii Kazakhskikh khanstv XV-XVIII vekov* (Alma-ata: Izd-vo “Nauka” Kazakhskoi SSR, 1969), p. 172; Ibragimov here references Boldyrev, *Zainaddin Vasifi: Tadzhikskii pisatel'*, pp. 18, 315.

¹¹³ Ibragimov, *Materialy*, p. 174.

clergy.”¹¹⁴ This being said Ibragimov concludes: “Thus the style, the structural base of which is the spoken language of Persians and Tajiks, did not begin with, was not created by, and has not ceased since Vāṣifī. That being stated, Vāṣifī’s work served to rejuvenate it, raising it to new heights. This is Vāṣifī’s special accomplishment.”¹¹⁵ One should not, therefore, overstate the role played by Vāṣifī in the formation of a simple style of Persian-Tajik prose. From here, Ibragimov goes on to proclaim that the real value of the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* rests in the unique perspective of its author, who “hails from the urban middle class,” as well as in the historical information on Khurasan and Mavarannahr contained within the work.¹¹⁶

The *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* finds honorable mention in *Literatura narodov SSSR* by L. I. Klimovich, published in 1971. In providing a brief biography of Vāṣifī, Klimovich describes him as “a prominent poet and memoirist and a native of Herat,” whose literary activities began “in the poetic circle which gathered around ‘Alī Shīr Navā’ī,” before becoming “a court poet of several khans of the Shībānid dynasty.”¹¹⁷ Klimovich, perhaps echoing his academic forebears, labels Vāṣifī “quite progressive” due to his favorable opinion regarding Abū ‘Alī ibn Sīnā, or Avicenna, whose memory had been attacked by more conservative men such as Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī.¹¹⁸ That

¹¹⁴ Ibid, p. 174.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, p. 174.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, pp. 174-175.

¹¹⁷ L. I. Klimovich, “Vasifi,” *Literatura narodov SSSR* (Moskva: Prosveshchenie, 1971), p. 306. Michael Kemper refers to Liutsian Klimovich as “the most influential Soviet Marxist author on Islam.” Klimovich was himself a virulent critic of not only Islam, but of religion in general; he maintained that Muḥammad had never existed, but was rather the invention of eighth and ninth century Muslim scholars, and that the Qur’ān was produced by a number of authors over a period of time. See Michael Kemper, “The Soviet Discourse on the Origin and Class Character of Islam, 1923-1933” *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol. 48, Issue 1 (2009): pp. 28-34.

¹¹⁸ Klimovich, p. 307.

being stated, Klimovich also opines that Vāṣifī was “the typical student of medieval rhetoricians.”¹¹⁹

Of the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* – which he relates may be rendered in Russian as *Udivitel’nie sobytiia*, *Redkostnye sobytiia* or *Kur’ezy sobytiia* – Klimovich states that while it is certainly an invaluable work of “remarkable interest,” it also often defies translation due to the fact that “about half of text of his prose-work is comprised of complex syntactic turns, heaps of rhyming epithets and other verbal ornaments.”¹²⁰ After thusly introducing the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* and providing some information about its author, Klimovich provides an excerpt in Russian translation drawn from chapter two of the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘*, which finds Vāṣifī in Samarqand shortly after his flight from Herat.¹²¹

B. A. Akhmedov made use of information provided in the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* in several of his works, chief among which are his *Istoriia Balkha (XVI – pervaiia polovina XVIII v.)*, published in 1982, and *Istoriko-geograficheskaia literatura Srednei Azii XVI-XVIII vv. (Pis'mennye pamiatniki)*, published in 1985. The first work, as the title clearly indicates, examines the history of Balkh, once a very important city located along the now-dry Balkh river, which was gradually overshadowed from the early sixteenth century on by the town of Mazar-i Sharif, situated further to the east.¹²² Akhmedov begins by classifying the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* as one of a number of works among the broad category of “anthologies, memoirs, and the accounts of travelers and ambassadors,” a category which also includes the works of Davlat Shāh Samarqandī, Khvājah Ḥasan Nisārī,

¹¹⁹ Ibid, p. 307.

¹²⁰ Ibid, p. 307. The Russian titles translate roughly as *Astonishing Events*, *Miraculous Events*, *Rare Events*, *Curious Happenings*, and so on.

¹²¹ Ibid, p. 307.

¹²² R. N. Frye, “Balkh,” *EF²*, Vol. I (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), p. 1000.

Muḥammad Mutribī Samarqandī, Francois Bern, Anisim Gribov, the Pazhukhin brothers, and so on.¹²³

Following this, Akhmedov calls upon Vāṣifī to provide testimony while discussing the governorship of Kistin Qarā Sulṭān over Balkh and various events which occurred not only in the district of Balkh but also in neighboring districts within the province of Khurasan in the early sixteenth century – the numerous campaigns undertaken by the Shībānids south of the Amu Darya, their besiegement and capture on a number of occasions of the cities of Herat, Merv, Balkh, the loss of these cities, and so on. In particular, Akhmedov cites Vāṣifī in relation to the campaigns of Kīldī Muḥammad in Khurasan from 1528 to 1529 in which he led Uzbek forces to capture the city of Merv.¹²⁴ The next reference to the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* comes some eighty pages further in Akhmedov's work, as part of his brief explication of the term *mudarris*, “the highest ranking instructors in a Muslim religious school, or *madrasa*, treated to the patronage and protection of the khans, the feudal rulers.” Akhmedov goes on to state that the number of *mudarrisūn* typically assigned to a *madrasa* would have been from four to ten, and defers to Vāṣifī's testimony on the matter:

Thus, according to the account of Zayn al-Dīn Vāṣifī, under Kūchkūnjī Khān (918/1512 – 937/1531), ten *mudarrisūn* taught at the celebrated Ulugh Beg *madrasa* in Samarqand, chief among them, in charge of all affairs pertaining to education, was Mavlānā Amīr Kalan, but in another – the *madrasa* of Shībānī Khān – there were four *mudarrisūn*, the oldest of which was Mavlānā Khvājagī, the child of the not-unknown Mavlānā Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Khvāfī (d. 1441), head of the Ulugh Beg *madrasa* in the year 1427.¹²⁵

¹²³ B. A. Akhmedov, *Istoriia Balkha (XVI – pervaiia polovina XVIII v.)* (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo “Fan” Uzbekskoi SSR, 1982), p. 11. The footnote given for the reference to Vāṣifī's work cites the introduction and notes *en masse* to the 1961 critical edition of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, and instructs the reader to consult Boldyrev's *Zainaddin Vasifi – tadjhikskii pisatel'* “with regard to the work and its author.”

¹²⁴ Akhmedov, p. 80. The text reads: “The nomadic Uzbeks disturbed the Qizilbāsh in the years that followed. Thus, Zayn al-Dīn Vāṣifī tells of the campaign of Kīldī Muḥammad, the Shībānī ruler of Tashkent, into Khurasan in the year 935/1528-29, and of his taking of Merv.” The citation provided is *BV*, Vol. II, pp. 1230-1231 (Moscow).

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 166.

This short passage, drawn from the memoirs of Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāṣifī and paraphrased as it has been by Akhmedov, suggests that, with regard to reconstructing the history of education within Khurasan and Mavarannahr in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century – an important component in the reconstruction of the social history of any region – the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* may prove to be an unparalleled source of solid, factual information.

In his second work being considered here, *Istoriko-geograficheskaia literatura Srednei Azii XVI-XVIII vv.*, Akhmedov treats the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* and the historical figure of Zayn al-Dīn Vāṣifī a bit more thoroughly.¹²⁶ As is the case with most scholars who have made mention of Vāṣifī, Akhmedov begins with the standard information on Vāṣifī before moving into what is essentially an abridged version of Boldyrev’s *Tadzhikskii pisatel’*. He provides a concise summary of Vāṣifī’s peregrinations to the year 1518, at which point he settled in Shahrukhiyya and took his place at the court of Kīldī Muḥammad. Akhmedov notes, with interest the unique character of chapter eleven of the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘*, stating:

The period of ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān’s rule and, specifically, the internal struggles which occurred within his country, were not well enough covered in the narrative sources, and therefore the information provided by Vāṣifī is invaluable. Within the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘*

¹²⁶ B. A. Akhmedov, *Istoriko-geograficheskaia literatura Srednei Azii XVI-XVIII vv. (Pis'mennye pamiatniki)* (Tashkent: Akademiia Nauk UzSSR “Fan”, 1985), pp. 155-156. Akhmedov quotes at length from the introduction to Boldyrev’s *Zainaddin Vasifi. Tadzhikskii pisatel’ XVI v.*; the segment reads as follows: “The fundamental significance of the memoirs of Vāṣifī lay in the fact that they represent a unique document, presenting before us an everyday life, the way of life of the middle class of society within the towns of Central Asia and Khurasan at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries. Well-known historiographical works from this epoch such as, for example, the voluminous works of Mīrkhvānd and Khvādamīr, or the *Sharafnāma-yi shahi* of Ḥāfīz-i Tanīsh, containing fundamental detailed accounts of foreign political events and bound up with the activities of the highest representatives known and persons in their near entourage... the memoirs are not a panegyric history of any reigning house, but rather a detailed account of the events of Vāṣifī’s own life and people close to it. These people – the simple, insignificant city inhabitants among whom Vāṣifī is himself at center – are also the genuine heroes of the memoirs. The surprising adventures they experienced are played out in the bazaars and the public squares, in the madrassas and the private homes of townspeople.”

these issues occupy a good portion of the eleventh chapter – “A narrative on the *vazīr* of his highness, ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān.”¹²⁷

Working from Vāṣifī’s narrative, Akhmedov reports *in breve* that the internal political struggle referred to was waged between those who wished to see this Abu’l-Khayrid Shībānid state in Mavarannahr become more centralized – a common trend the world over during this era – led by one Khvājah Nizām, the chief financier of the *dīvān*, and those who wished to maintain the status-quo, with the latter party consisting of “senior amirs and the pillars of ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān’s state.” This struggle, we are told, was not confined to the capital alone, but was fought in provincial centers, such as Sauran, as well.¹²⁸ Other political events covered in the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* which, in Akhmedov’s opinion, merit further consideration include the Abu’l-Khayrid Shībānid invasion of Khurasan in 1528, and the joint campaign of the Shībānids and the Moghuls, the latter under ‘Abd al-Rashīd Khān (r. 1530-1570), launched against the Qazāqs in 1537. Interestingly, Vāṣifī himself participated in each of these campaigns, in the former as a member of the retinue of Kīldī Muḥammad, and the latter among the party of ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān.

Further on, Akhmedov provides a brief description of chapter forty-six of the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’*, which is comprised of a number of letters, *fathnāmah*, *khuṭbah*, and so on. An examination of this chapter might be revealing with regard to Vāṣifī’s role as a state-functionary or *munshī* in Mavarannahr under the Abu’l-Khayrids. Akhmedov opines that within this chapter, “The declaration of victory over the Qazāqs...is a

¹²⁷ Akhmedov, p. 159.

¹²⁸ Ibid, pp. 159-160. This internal struggle is reminiscent of that which took place in Khurasan between Sultān Husayn Bāyqarā’s finance minister, Khvājah Majd al-Dīn Muḥammad, and his supporters who wished to see a greater degree of political centralization in the Tīmūrid state and those who had a vested interest in maintaining the status-quo and preferred loose political organization, first examined at length by Subtelny in “Centralizing Reform and Its Opponents in the Late Timurid Period” in 1988, and revisited in her 2007 work, *Timurids in Transition*, and is deserving of further investigation.

significant historical document, revealing the political relationship between the Shībānīd state and the Yarqand Khanate in the first half of the sixteenth century.”¹²⁹ He also makes quick references to chapters four and six which, respectively, tell of the brutal winter in Samarqand in the year 1504 and the invasion of Mavarannahr led by Ṣahīr al-Dīn Muḥammad Bābur and Amīr Yār Aḥmad Iṣfahānī, i.e. Amīr Najm-i Ṣānī, in the year 1512, which will be examined herein.¹³⁰

Toward the end of the Soviet era the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* proved to be of use to the late Nataliia Nikolaevna Tumanovich of the Institute of Oriental Studies in Leningrad. In her informative and unique work on the urban history of Herat, *Gerat v XVI-XVIII vekakh*, published in 1989 – the same year Soviet forces withdrew from Afghanistan – Tumanovich refers to the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* several times. After providing the usual biographical information on “Zayn al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd b. ‘Abd al-Jalīl, who bears the sobriquet of Vāṣifī,” that he was the son of a mid-level bureaucrat, born in Herat in 1485, and that he “received a good education in the humanities.”¹³¹ Parroting Aleksandr Boldyrev, Tumanovich suggests that Vāṣifī’s father was perhaps preparing the young poet to assume his position in the bureaucracy of the Tīmūrīds, “as such official positions were hereditary.”¹³²

Tumanovich, following yet again Boldyrev, Aynī, and others, contrasts the historical account of Vāṣifī with those of his contemporaries, namely Khvāndamīr; while both witnessed the transition of power in Herat from the descendants of Tīmūr to the Abu’l-Khayrīds under the leadership of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān and the subsequent

¹²⁹ Ibid, p. 160.

¹³⁰ Ibid, p. 161. See Appendix II for my translation of chapter six in its entirety.

¹³¹ N. N. Tumanovich, *Gerat v XVI-XVIII vekakh* (Moscow: “Nauka”, 1989), p. 22.

¹³² Tumanovich, p. 22.

arrival of the Şafavid-Qizilbāsh forces three years later, Vāşifī’s account is unique insofar as he “perceived these changes as an ordinary citizen.”¹³³ Given the intent of her work, nothing less than a virtual reconstruction of Herat at its apogee, Tumanovich fully appreciates Vāşifī’s singular perspective, that is of a man “a few rungs lower on the social ladder.” She continues:

Such a perspective on life in Herat, as though from within, helps to present more vividly the atmosphere, dominant ideas and moods which prevailed in the city in the first decade of the sixteenth century. In addition, the memoirs of Vāşifī provide an opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge regarding the topography of Herat in that era.¹³⁴

Tumanovich succeeded in taking advantage of Vāşifī’s perspective, and employed his memoirs in a way no scholar had until that time. Throughout his narrative, Vāşifī often informs the reader as to the exact location where certain events that he was party to unfolded, providing a level of detail not often encountered. One example would be his mention, recounted by Tumanovich, of a specific street name – “Peach Street” – in the quarter where many of the city’s *ħuffāz* resided, and which intersected with “Qipchāq Street.”¹³⁵ Despite only citing the work of Vāşifī a handful of times, the way in which Tumanovich employed the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* is certainly among the most unique.

As a result of the work done by scholars such as Sadriddin Aynī, Aleksandr Boldyrev, and so on, Vāşifī came to be regarded as a significant figure in the history of Tajik literature, and information regarding the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* and its author came to be routinely included in texts intended to introduce Tajik students at the secondary level to the national literature of Tajikistan. One such work published the same year as Akhmedov’s *Istoriko-geograficheskaia literatura Srednei Azii XVI-XVIII vv.* is that of

¹³³ Ibid, p. 22.

¹³⁴ Ibid, p. 22.

¹³⁵ Ibid, p. 55. Vāşifī’s mention of Peach Street is made in chapter thirty two of the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’*, as he recounts his flight from a murderous mob of enraged Shī’ah; see Appendix IV.

Usmon Karimov, entitled *Adabiyoti tojik dar asri XVI*. Karimov provides a brief treatment of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* and details of Zayn al-Dīn Vāšifi's life.¹³⁶ In the introduction to this work Karimov chronicles the development of the study of Tajik literature over the course of the twentieth century, acknowledging the debt owed by students of Tajik literature to such renowned *adabiyotšinosoni tojik* as Aynī, Mirzoev, Mirzozoda, and of course Aleksandr Boldyrev.¹³⁷ With regard to the work of Vāšifi and its stature among other works of Tajik history and literature from the same period, Karimov states unequivocally,

One of the important sources in the study of the social, political, cultural and literary life of Khurasan, Mavarannahr and part of Iran in the first half of the sixteenth century which is of significant academic importance is the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* of Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn 'Abd al-Jalīl Vāšifi...The *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* is invaluable among literary sources with regard to the study of society and politics in Khurasan and Mavarannahr in the first half of the sixteenth century.¹³⁸

From here Karimov goes on to recount Vāšifi's movements throughout Mavarannahr, provide brief synopses of several chapters of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, and finally echo Boldyrev, Akhmedov, and others in stating:

Thus with regard to the study of learned and urbane life in and the people of Mavarannahr and Turkistan, the information provided by Vāšifi holds great scientific value; we cannot access such information in any other literary or historical sources...this information is not found in other literary and historical sources.¹³⁹

Karimov closes his summary of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* with some observations regarding what he terms Vāšifi's poetic inheritance. The various examples of original verse sprinkled throughout the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* serve collectively to illustrate which poets were being consumed in the literary salons of late Tīmūrid Herat, and which

¹³⁶ Usmon Karimov, *Adabiyoti tojik dar asri XVI*, (*Sarčašmahoi adabiyu ta'rikhī va inkišofti raviyahoi asosī*) (Dushanbe: Nashriyoti "Donish", 1985), pp. 32-40.

¹³⁷ Karimov, pp. 6-17. From page fourteen on Karimov provides a brief summary of the historical circumstances in which many of the works considered therein were written.

¹³⁸ Ibid, pp. 32-33.

¹³⁹ Ibid, p. 38.

consequently influenced Vāšifī as he developed his own talents as a poet. According to Karimov, in examining the various *qaṣīdah*, *ghazal*, and *qit'a* of Vāšifī, it is to be noted that he wrote portions of them in clear imitation of the *qaṣīdahs*, *ghazals*, and *qit'as* of Persian poets such as Kamāl Ismā'īl, Salmān Sāvajī, Kātibi Nishāpūrī, and so on.¹⁴⁰ In short, according to Karimov, in the study of the poetic inheritance bequeathed to Vāšifī and his contemporaries, as well as those who have since followed, the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* is a source of immeasurable value in great need of thorough examination.

Another example of a text clearly intended to introduce secondary-level students to the academic study of the national literary heritage of the Tajik SSR is *Adabiyoti Tojik, baroi sinfi X*. In this work, originally published in 1983 and republished in 1990, the authors make wide use of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, and portray Vāšifī as one of the fathers of modern Tajik literature. Within this work a full twenty-eight pages are devoted to Vāšifī and the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*. In comparison, Vāšifī's more renowned contemporaries, Mīr 'Alī Shīr Navā'ī, Badr al-Dīn Hilālī, and Nūr al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī are covered in nine, twenty-five, and thirty-one pages respectively. The text weaves biographical information on Vāšifī culled from his memoirs, or likely offerings of Boldyrev, Aynī, and others regarding the author and his works, together with excerpts from the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* and bit of light historical and literary analysis in a Tajik which is clear, concise and easy to read – a characteristic which the authors would no doubt attribute to Vāšifī's literary legacy. Young readers are thus given a window into

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 39.

the literary past of the Tajik nation and wider Persianate world, with Vāṣifī being presented as one of the prime icons of that past.¹⁴¹

The *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* is well treated quite literally from the second page of the work: “In the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, Vāṣifī provides an interesting story about the sad life of Mavlānā Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn, one of the famed scholars of the fifteenth century.”¹⁴²

This is immediately followed by the explanation that Mavlānā Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn was actually a classmate of [Nūr al-Dīn] ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (*yaki az sharīkdarsoni Abdurahmoni Jomī*), and a passage from the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* detailing the precarious situation in which he had found himself.¹⁴³ While discussing the development of the arts in fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in general, the authors refer to the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* with regard to painting in Mavarannahr, and go so far as to include a passage in which Vāṣifī has provided invaluable information on an artist by the name of Mavlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Yūsufī Naqqāsh. Based on the testimony provided by Vāṣifī, the authors conclude that “in the fifteenth century the art of painting had advanced not only in Khurasan, but had developed and progressed in Mavarannahr as well.”¹⁴⁴

The *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* continues to be referenced every few pages as the work proceeds until one arrives at the section expressly devoted to Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāṣifī and his memoirs. This section, which in its entirety runs approximately twenty-eight pages, begins with an excerpt from the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* recounting Vāṣifī’s encounter with Mīrzā Bayram and Shāh Qāsim, among others, that serves to immediately

¹⁴¹ Khodzade Rasul, Negmatzade Tursun, and Tuychi Mirov, *Adabiyoti Tojik: Baroi Sinfi X. Vazorati Maorifi halqi RSS Tojikiston tavsiia kardast. Nashri IV* (Dushanbe, “Maorif,” 1990), pp. 95-123.

¹⁴² Rasul, Kh., et al. *Adabiyoti Tojik baroi sinfi X*, p. 4.

¹⁴³ Ibid, pp. 4-5; the passage drawn from the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* begins as follows: “The *mudarrisūn* and ‘*ulamā'* of the age were fed up with him and, having deliberated amongst themselves, they determined to spread the rumor that he was crazy amongst the *ummah*; they humiliated him, and therefore he guarded his honor as an erudite from their aggression and hostility.”

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 7.

familiarize the reader with the style of Vāṣifī's prose and verse. As in other works, the authors then provide a brief biography of Vāṣifī, from his middling origins in the Tīmūrid capital of Herat and his flight to Mavarannahr and arrival at Samarqand to his subsequent wanderings in the region and experiences at the court of various Abu'l-Khayrid sultans. Following this, we are provided with an analysis of the work, ranging from matters of style to topics covered.

Another scholar who worked a good deal with the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, not within the Soviet Union but rather within the former Soviet Bloc, was the eminent Persian scholar and historian Jiří Bečka, of the Oriental Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences.¹⁴⁵ According to Bečka, from the latter half of the fifteenth century on poetry continued to be the predominant literary form consumed in the wider Iranian world – of which Central Asia was a part – followed by prose. He names Vāṣifī, spelling his name as Vosifī, as one of “a narrow circle of intellectuals” whose domain was prose writing.

Bečka is quick to mention Vāṣifī again when he relates:

Soviet historians of literature and primarily Tajik scholars themselves – through the study of the works of such authors as Bīnoī, Vosifī, Mushfiqī, Saīdo, Donish and others, as well as of the *tadhkiras* written in that period – have recently shown that the literature of the 16th to the 19th centuries not only was not a “rehash of old” as even some prominent scholars had maintained, but that it was often an original literature with many new features, one which was definitely worth studying and deserving of being known.¹⁴⁶

To put it another way, or rather to tease out or extrapolate a thought from what Bečka has stated, it was mainly due to the efforts of post-revolutionary Soviet Tajik scholars, for example men such as Sadriddin Aynī, that works such as the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* of Vāṣifī became well-known, or at the very least marginally known, to the wider scholastic

¹⁴⁵ For a brief vitae of Bečka (1915-2004) and details reading his works and academic accomplishments, see http://www.obecprekladatelů.cz/_ftp/DUP/B/BeckaJiri.htm, and Jān Marek, “Za dr. Jiřím Bečkou, 16. 10. 1915 – 21. 12. 2004 (Nekrolog),” *BÚSTÁN: Oficiální čtvrtletník Česko - iránské společnosti*, Roč 8, č 1 (27), 2005: pp. 2-3.

¹⁴⁶ Jiří Bečka, “Tajik Literature from the 16th Century to the Present,” *History of Iranian Literature*, ed. Karl Jahn (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1968), pp. 489-490.

community outside of the Central Asian lands in which they originated and the Soviet Union as a whole.

Traditionally, the period in which Vāṣifī wrote his memoir, i.e., the first half of what one might call the Abu'l-Khayrid Shībānid century, is considered to have been one of general decline. Repeated conflicts, political instability, and the decentralization of authority in the Abu'l-Khayrid appanages of Mavarannahr, as well as their nigh incessant aggression towards the Ṣafavids in Khurasan – due in large part to the zeal of ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān – hampered both the construction of new irrigation works and the upkeep of already established systems, leading to a downturn in agricultural production. This, coupled with the development of “European” seaborne trade routes – even if often overstated – contributed to the general decline of trade and prosperity in Central Asia. However, Bečka references Vāṣifī with regard to a certain degree of “economic recovery” as the authority of the Abu'l-Khayrids took root south of the Syr Darya. He writes that while some land which had previously been cultivated and agriculturally productive had been converted into pastureland for nomadic flocks and horses,

On the other hand there was some development of the crafts and trade with India began to grow, just as with Siberia and, in the second half of the 16th century, also with Russia...At the same time, however, commercial contacts with Iran had sharply dropped. The influx of new population, the nomadic Uzbeks, and the development of crafts brought about a growth of towns. This process is aptly described by Vosifi in his *Badoe 'ul-vaqoe'*, where he indicates that Bukhara, Samarqand and Tashkent had grown into densely populated cities, true centres of lively economic and cultural activities.¹⁴⁷

Bečka reminds us that Vāṣifī had been part of the great exodus of literati from Herat, still basking somewhat in the glow of its Tīmūrid legacy, following the Ṣafavid conquest of the city in 1510, with Vāṣifī himself taking flight in 1512 north to Mavarannahr. In Bečka’s estimation, Vāṣifī and his literary peers were the bearers of the literary tradition

¹⁴⁷ Bečka, p. 493. Bečka here references B. G. Gafurov, *Istoriia tadzhikskogo naroda*, Vol. I (Moscow, 1955), p. 360.

begun in the times of Shāh Rukh and Ulugh Beg at Herat and Samarqand respectively, transmitted via such famed men as ‘Alī Shīr Navā’ī and Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī. Of said literary tradition and Vāṣifī’s place in it, Bečka opines,

Even though it lived off older traditions, the 16th-century period in literature should not be considered one of decadence. In addition to a number of lesser authors, three important representatives of the Herat school were still writing in the first quarter of that century: Binoī, Hilolī, and Vosifī. The second half of their lifetime coincided with the period of upheaval during the struggle for Herat between the Timurid, Shaībanī and Safavid dynasties...A period of relative peace was instituted under the firm rule of Khon Abdullo...under whose rule literature to some extent flourished...However, the poetry of the second half of the 16th century did not attain the level of that Herat group.¹⁴⁸

Thus we can safely conclude, from what is stated above, that in Bečka’s opinion the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* could be considered a literary cultural artifact, one of the last products of the high-Tīmūrid literary tradition which was continued under the aegis of the Abu’l-Khayrid Shībānids in the sixteenth century, with Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāṣifī – whom Bečka elsewhere refers to as “representative of the East Iranian cultural branch, a pupil of the Herat school”¹⁴⁹ – serving as one of this literary tradition’s final, and finest, representatives. While this could perhaps be argued, Bečka may overstate his argument when he writes:

Sixteenth-century prose attained its peak in Vosifī’s *Badoe’-ul-vaqoe’*, ‘Remarkable Tales’. The book was written in the form of memoirs and contains fairy-tales; but in conformity with the views and customs of the day it also includes letters and official decrees, in which at the time a high literary standard was required. This of course corresponded to the contemporary taste, namely for a style overabundant in figures of speech and epithets which were often in bad taste and unintelligible.¹⁵⁰

Certainly Vāṣifī’s opus represents an important part of the literary output of the early Abu’l-Khayrid Shībānid era, but to claim that the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* is the pinnacle of

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 494. In the notes to this section, to support the positioning of Vāṣifī in the pantheon of important poets and authors of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, Bečka opines that “...Browne’s view that only Jomī, Hotifī, and Hilolī were of any importance as poets is no longer valid (E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, vol. IV, 25)”; see Bečka, p. 537, n. 34.

¹⁴⁹ Jiří Bečka, بدایع الوقایع تألیف زین الدین محمود واصفی تصحیح الکساندر بلدروف , (*Badāye’ ol-vaqāye’* of Zaynuddīn Maḥmūd Vāsefī, ed. by Aleksandr Nikolayevič Boldyrev) Enteršārāte bonyāde farhange Īrān (Iranian Cultural Foundation) Tehrān, 1349 (1972 A.D.), Vol. 1, 22-5333 p.; Vol. II, 15-448 p.” *Archīv Orientālñī*, Vol. 43 (1975): p. 276 (Book Review).

¹⁵⁰ Jiří Bečka, “Tajik Literature from the 16th Century to the Present,” p. 495.

prose-writing in sixteenth century Central Asia may be refuted. Of course, this all depends on the parameters within which one is coming to such a determination. On the other hand, one might take exception to Bečka's use of the term "fairy-tales" in describing the contents of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*.

Finally, Bečka provides a brief, two-page biography of Vāṣifī which is itself based primarily on earlier writings of both Aynī and Boldyrev.¹⁵¹ Bečka again restates his contention that Vāṣifī should be ranked among the chief representatives of the Central Asian literary tradition of the late-fifteenth and early sixteenth century when he states unequivocally that Vāṣifī "...must be praised primarily as the author of the aforementioned important document of his times, the voluminous *Badoe' -ul-vaqoe'*...a book written in prose...remarkable for its comparatively clear and simple language – in contrast to other classical works."¹⁵² Further down, Bečka outlines precisely the reason why Vāṣifī's work is important, stating: "It should be pointed out that the value of Vosifī's work does not lie in its historical exactness or in its information on various personages, but mainly in the fact that it shows how serious political events of the day were reflected in the minds of the people," while additionally lending "insight into the cultural life of the craftsmen and artisans living in towns."¹⁵³ Of course, given the time in which Bečka penned his addendum to Rypka's work, and that of the authors whose work he cites repeatedly, it is little surprise that Vāṣifī is anachronistically portrayed as a champion of the proletariat, critical of the society in which he lived and of the elites – men of the cloth as well as the sword. A Czech living and working in the post-war Soviet

¹⁵¹ Bečka, pp. 501-502.

¹⁵² Ibid, p. 502.

¹⁵³ Ibid, p. 502. Here Bečka is working from Boldyrev's assessment found in *Zainaddin Vasifi: Tadzhiiskii pisatel'*, p. 117; see Bečka, p. 538, n. 83.

Bloc, Bečka would himself have been compelled to conform to certain historiographic ideologies and standards then current which often sought to project the struggle of the proletariat into the past when and wherever possible. Finally, taking his cue undoubtedly from his predecessors, Bečka mentions Vāṣifī's use of "purely Tajik words" as opposed to those found in Dari, or Eastern Persian, thereby placing Vāṣifī squarely at the forefront of a "Tajik literary tradition" emerging, it would seem, in the early sixteenth century. The identification of a Tajik literary tradition in the sixteenth century was of course part of the more general effort, following the October Revolution and the eventual creation of a distinct "Tajik" people, to project Tajik national identity into the past in an order to create a national history for, and thereby contribute to the justification of the existence of, what was essentially the manufactured Tajik SSR. The tendency or need to project Tajik national identity into the past in order to provide a national history for the citizens of post-Soviet Tajikistan remains strong to this day.

Further on Bečka brings into the discussion a work of Evgenii Eduardovich Bertel, entitled plainly enough *Persidskaia literatura*, in which the latter first brought attention to the development of a literary tradition among "representatives of the middle classes, individual craftsmen, wandering singers, etc.,"¹⁵⁴ and how Boldyrev expanded on this thought in his own work *Zainaddin Vasifi: Tadzhikskii pisatel' XVIv.*, positing that Vāṣifī not only chronicled this development in late fifteenth and early sixteenth century Central Asia, but was himself a participant in it. As Bečka states, "In his *Badoe 'ul-vaqoe'* Vosifi offered most valuable evidence of this development, and it was precisely Vosifi and Saïdo who best manifested the active participation of the ordinary

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 508. Bečka points us to Bertel's work, *Persidskaia literatura*, p. 219; Boldyrev, *Zainaddin Vasifi: Tadzhikskii pisatel'*, pp. 129, 253, 301.

townspeople in literary work.”¹⁵⁵ Discussing further the development of a literary tradition which reflected the daily lives the non-elites and Vāṣifī’s role in it, Bečka continues,

The poetry of these authors is permeated with the ideology of the middle urban classes, which determines such stylistic qualities as a trend towards a realistic reflection of the world in themes and poetic images, abandonment of the rhetorical verse of the court poets, and simplicity of language. This is shown, for example, by a lexical analysis of Vosifī’s work.¹⁵⁶

Bečka goes on to suggest that, as the Central Asian literary tradition of the sixteenth century, a tradition of which Vāṣifī was a founding member, continued to blossom, court poets were increasingly irrelevant to the point that, as Bečka declares, “Court poetry had completely lost its significance. The only poets living at the courts were panegyrists who knew nothing else but to laud their masters in fantastically overwrought metaphors.”¹⁵⁷

Bečka maintains that, as attention returned to the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* in the nineteenth century, Vāṣifī’s work served as a basis for that of Aḥmad Makhdūm Dānish (d. 1897), the *Navādir al-vaqā’ir*, written between 1875 and 1882.¹⁵⁸ Dānish, alternatively rendered as Donish, was himself a frequent agent of the Amīr of Bukhara, and was sent as an envoy to the Russian Tsar on three different occasions.¹⁵⁹ Bečka states that Dānish’s prose work, much like that of Vāṣifī, “...provides an excellent picture of the material and cultural standard of Central Asia during the author’s lifetime, and contains many progressive ideas on which his followers and successors built their own

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 508. See page 199 of the Moscow edition of *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* for Vāṣifī’s coverage of events. Bečka mentions further the opinion of Mirzoev, that “from the 15th century on, anti-feudal trends are increasingly apparent among the craftsmen and members of other lower classes.”; see, as noted in Bečka, A. Mirzoev, “Saifii Bukhorī...”, *Izv.Tadzh.*, 7 (1955), 3.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 508. Bečka here cites (p. 540, n. 126) Boldyrev, *Zainaddin Vasifi: Tadjhikskii pisatel’*, p. 301.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 508.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, pp. 530-531. Bečka covers Dānish / Donish from page 529 to 532. He provides no citation when suggesting that the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* served as a basis for Dānish’s own work, leaving us to conclude that this is Bečka’s own opinion on the matter.

¹⁵⁹ Nasr Allāh Bahādur Khān (r. 1826-1860) or Muẓaffar al-Dīn (r. 1860-1885).

work.”¹⁶⁰ Dānish is thus described by Bečka, here again as in the case of Vāṣifi, anachronistically, as “progressive” – insofar as one could be in the Emirate of Bukhara in the nineteenth century – for the fact that he advocated such ideas as government reform, public education, and so on. Elsewhere we read that Dānish “...was the representative of novel attempts to renew a moribund and outdated state structure in Bukhara...[and] was the man who gave concrete expressions to the ambience that was in the air at the turn of the century.”¹⁶¹ Much of Dānish’s own progressive thought, as far as Bečka is concerned, can be traced to the progressive influences of Vāṣifi, who flourished roughly four-hundred years earlier.

While considering the topic of Tajik literature since the October Revolution and the subsequent establishment of an independent Tajik state (1924, 1929), Bečka contends that the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* of Vāṣifi, alongside other works of Central Asian and Indian provenance, continued to exert an influence on the development of Tajik prose works. Specifically mentioned by Bečka is the work entitled *Yod doshto*, i.e. *The Memories*, by Sadriddin Aynī. Much like the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘*, this multi-volume work, published between 1949 and 1954 – the year of Aynī’s death – is itself episodic in nature. Bečka opines: “This quite original work also shows traces of the influence of such classics as Nizāmī ‘Arūdī’s *Chahār maqāla*...Sa‘dī’s *Gulistān*, Vosifī’s *Badoe‘-ul-vaqoe‘*, and Ahmad Donish’s *Navodir ul-vaqoe‘*.”¹⁶² Insofar as the works of such a renowned scholar, educator and prolific author as Sadriddin Aynī, both fictional and non-fictional,

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 530.

¹⁶¹ Suchandana Chatterjee, “The Emirate of Bukhara in the 19th and 20th Centuries: Reflections on Transition,” *Central Asia on Display: Proceedings of the VIIth Conference of the European Society for Central Asian Studies*, (2004): p. 41.

¹⁶² Bečka, pp. 550, 562. As suggested above, Sadriddin Aynī is widely regarded as a monumental figure not only in the establishment of Tajik literature, but in the very establishment of Tajik ethnic or national identity and an independent Tajik SSR in the Soviet era.

in verse and prose, portrayed the lives and deeds of ordinary Tajiks and significantly influenced the evolution of Tajik literature in the twentieth century, one may agree with Bečka's assessment that Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāšifī and his work have continued to directly and indirectly inspire later generations of Tajik authors and poets.

With regard to Vāšifī's treatment at the hands of scholars such as Aynī, Boldyrev, and Bečka, the thought which may spring to mind is, 'Vāšifī was born in Herat,' followed by the question, 'How is it that they consider him a forerunner of Tajik literature?' Without getting too deeply involved in the history of building national consciousness in the former Soviet Union, consider what is perhaps the most succinct justification provided for the inclusion of not only Vāšifī, but also his contemporaries and those who came before him, among the ranks of Tajik literary heroes. Bečka states:

Though the term "Tajik literature" is relatively recent, this literature is in fact very old. Included in it are works of Persian or New Persian literature (called usually Persian-Tajik in Tajikistan), written since the 9th century. The Tajiks conceive as their cultural heritage all works originating in the Dari language on the territory of Central Asia, e.g. those by the first personality of Persian-Tajik poetry, Abū 'Abdullāh Rūdakī, because he was a citizen of Rūdak situated on the territory of today's Tajikistan, as well as many other authors over the centuries in Samarqand, Bukhara, Tirmiz, Khojent, and all other cultural centres on the territory of Māvarānnahr. For a long time already the Tajiks have been inhabiting also the area of today's Afghan Khorasan. For this reason, Tajik literature is conceived of as comprising also the writings by the oldest authors whose names, such as Šahīdī Balxī, Abu'l-Mu'ayyad Balxī, etc., testify to their origin. And this is why also the writings by men of letters of the Ghazna region are included in the Tajik literary heritage, as well as those who were connected with Herat, either in the 11th century, like 'Abdullāh Ansārī (1006-1084), or a number of literati and artists active there --- especially under Ḥusayn Bāyqarā --- in the second half of the 15th century, such as Jāmī, Navāī, Vāšifī, Bināī, Hilālī, Bihzād, etc.¹⁶³

Thus, in accordance with the principles of territorial historiography, and a little bit of anachronistic labeling, Vāšifī, his literary progenitors and his peers are quickly transformed into the forerunners of Tajik literature.

¹⁶³ Jiří Bečka, "The New and Traditional in the Writings of Sadridin Aīnī," *Archív Orientální*, Vol. 48 (1980): pp. 285-286.

Western Scholarship

At this point, attention will be given to scholars in the West who, building upon the work of their Eastern colleagues, have examined and utilized the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* in their own scholastic endeavors. Somewhat out of chronological order with regard to who among Western scholars was the first to draw upon the work of Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāṣifī, the first to be considered here is Maria Eva Subtelny, currently of the University of Toronto. Over the course of her academic career, both as a student and as a scholar and researcher, Maria Eva Subtelny has repeatedly turned to the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* as a valuable source pertaining to the late Tīmūrid and early Uzbek periods. According to an early note which refers back to her dissertation, Subtelny has been acquainted with the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* since at least the time of her candidacy. In her dissertation, entitled “The Poetic Circle at the Court of the Timurid, Sultan Husain Baiqara, and Its Political Significance,” Subtelny included many references to the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* and included several brief translations of excerpts drawn from Vāṣifī’s opus in appendices.¹⁶⁴

Outside of her dissertation, in which she devotes several pages to Vāṣifī and the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, Subtelny first made substantial use of Vāṣifī’s narrative in “Art and Politics in Early 16th Century Central Asia.” With this article Subtelny endeavored to show that, although the Tīmūrids had been largely displaced politically by the Abu'l-Khayrid Shībānids and their Uzbek confederation by 1507, this event “did not...signal the end of the cultural tradition – often dubbed the ‘Timurid Renaissance’ by Western scholars – that had been developed at their courts,” and that the early Abu'l-Khayrid rules

¹⁶⁴ Maria Eva Subtelny, “The Poetic Circle at the Court of the Timurid, Sultan Husain Baiqara, and Its Political Significance,” Unpublished Dissertation, 1979.

of Mavarannahr, conscious of their perceived cultural inferiority, sought to perpetuate and participate in the cultural florescence of the late fifteenth century through imitation, i.e., they patterned their rule on that of the Tīmūrīds, patronizing many of the same poets, artists and scholars as their predecessors.¹⁶⁵ Subtelny goes on to posit that this was not simply a case of the scions of the house of Abu'l-Khayr patronizing cultural activities out of genuine interest or affinity, but rather that their "...real motivation was political and was intimately linked to their quest for legitimacy as a new Islamic power in what was for them a new cultural sphere."¹⁶⁶ If we take this to be a correct interpretation of early Shībānīd political motivation in Mavarannahr, and we can be fairly confident in sharing Subtelny's pragmatic assessment, then we can be confident of the fact that, as one often patronized by and in the employ of the early Abu'l-Khayrid princes, Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāṣifī was a part of this process whereby the likes of 'Ubayd Allāh Sulṭān, Kīldī Muḥammad Sulṭān, Navrūz Aḥmad, and so on, first acquired the cultural cache necessary to rule a vast territory in the Perso-Islamic world.

Subtelny first refers to Vāṣifī with regard to the friendship that existed between Mīr 'Alī Shīr Navā'ī and one Ṣāḥib Dārā Astarābādī, a relative of Vāṣifī on his mother's side.¹⁶⁷ Paraphrasing Davlat Shāh's comment regarding the exclusivity of Navā'ī's *majālis*, she then states, "Vāṣifī...described his own efforts to gain admittance to such an audience," and quotes from chapter thirteen of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* which recounts the first time he was summoned before Navā'ī, and in which Vāṣifī attests to the fact that

¹⁶⁵ Maria Eva Subtelny, "Art and Politics in Early 16th Century Central Asia," *Central Asiatic Journal*, Vol. 27, No. 1-2 (1983): pp. 122-123.

¹⁶⁶ "Art and Politics," p. 123.

¹⁶⁷ Ṣāḥib Dārā Astarābādī was a prominent poet of late-Tīmūrīd Herat who according to Vāṣifī was "among the noted companions and beloved associates of the Great Amīr, Amīr 'Alī Shīr." Of his relationship with Ṣāḥib Dārā, Vāṣifī simply states, "This contemptible *faqīr* has a close kinship to Mavlānā Ṣāḥib Dārā through his mother." See Vāṣifī, *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, Vol. II, ed. A. N. Boldyrev (Tehran: The Cultural Foundation of Iran (Intishārāt bunyād-i farhang-i Irān), 1970-71), pp. 377, 386.

anyone who aspired to greatness aspired to be among the associates of Mīr ‘Alī Shīr Navā’ī.¹⁶⁸ Here Subtelny utilized the first-hand account of the lesser-known Vāṣifī to buttress and support the testimony of the far better-known Davlat Shāh which attests to the fame and renown of Navā’ī amongst learned individuals throughout the Tīmūrid realm.¹⁶⁹

Subtelny next references the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* with regard to events which occurred in and around Herat following the Uzbek conquest of the city in 1507, more specifically to the appointments made by Muḥammad Shībānī Khān and to the state of the literary community both post-Navā’ī and post-conquest. On Vāṣifī’s authority she relates that Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ, who had been appointed *amīr al-umarā’* and *malik al-shu‘arā* by Shībānī Khān, “oversaw the cultural life of Uzbek Herat.”¹⁷⁰ Subtelny also refers to Vāṣifī’s memoir in order to support her assertion that – despite the death of Navā’ī in 1501, the central figure around which many of the literati in late Tīmūrid Herat revolved – the literary *majālis* continued in Herat during the early days of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān’s reign. Subtelny writes,

Almost all of those who took part in one of the *majlises* held regularly by the poet, Bannā’ī, at the cathedral mosque of Herat after the Friday prayer, had been members of the poetic circle of ‘Alī Shīr Navā’ī: Aṣafī, Muḥammad Badakhshī, Riyāzī Turbatī, Hilālī, Ahlī and Faḏlī. Faṣīḥ al-Dīn Ṣāhibdārā...who had been one of ‘Alī Shīr Navā’ī’s closest companions and had written an elegy on him when he died in 1501, and who had become the *dārūgha*...of Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā’s *kitāb-khāna*, wrote a panegyric on Muḥammad Shībānī Khān when he first entered Herat.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ These events are recounted in chapter thirteen of the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’*; a complete translation of this chapter, less the verse, based on the 1970-71 text edition produced in Tehran, is provided in Appendix III of this work.

¹⁶⁹ “Art and Politics,” p. 125. From her notes we learn that Subtelny referenced the 1961 Moscow edition of the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* in this and subsequent articles. See again Appendix III.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 134.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, p. 135.

This passage, with the exception of the reference to Şāhib Dārā having ascended to the office of *dārūgha* within the administration of Ḥusayn Bāyqarā,¹⁷² is drawn entirely from the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*. From it we learn that the literary salons which had been led by 'Alī Shīr Navā'ī had survived, led by Banā'ī in his stead,¹⁷³ and that for the most part life for the poets, and we might presume other artists and literati as well – including Zayn al-Dīn Vāşifī – continued unchanged regardless of the political disturbances of the time and the change in ruling houses.

The situation seems to have transformed dramatically following the Şafavid conquest of Herat in 1510 and the near-complete expulsion of the Uzbeks from Khurasan. The people of Herat, the majority of which were most assuredly Sunnī, chafed under the militant Shī'ī Islam of the Şafavids and their Qizilbāsh supporters.¹⁷⁴ While considering the Şafavid-Qizilbāsh conquest of Herat, and its social and political impact on Khurasan, Subtelny writes,

...the establishment of the Shi'ite religio-political ideology in Khorasan under the Safavids and the unforgivable climate that initially ensued for cultural and intellectual life, resulted in a gradual emigration of cultured elements – scholars, poets, and artists – from Khorasan to western Iran, India and to Central Asian cities controlled by Sunnites

¹⁷² This information is taken from Khvādamīr's *Habīb al-siyar*. Thackston's translation reads: "Mawlana Fasihuddin Sahib-Dara. Possessor of a keen mind and good character, he was outstanding among the learned men of Astarabad. He was also a great chess player. [350] His qasidas and enigmas are most eloquent, and he spent most of his time in the company of Amir Nizamuddin Ali-Sher. After the amir's death he joined the Victorious Khaqan's retinue and was made the darughā of the royal library, by virtue of which office he joined the ranks of *ichkis*...Mawlana Sahib died in 917 [1511-12] in Astarabad." See Khvādamīr, *Habibu's-siyar*, Tome Three, Part Two, trans. W. M. Thackston (Cambridge: The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University, 1994), p. 525.

¹⁷³ Muḥammad Shībānī Khān awarded the title *malik al-shu'arā* to Bannā'ī as well. According to Khvādamīr, Bannā'ī had poor relations with Navā'ī, and lived outside of Herat, in both Iraq, "where he was attached for a time to Sultan Ya'qub Mirza's retinue," and Samarqand, "where he enjoyed Sultan-Ali Mirza's favor." He joined the court of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān following the Uzbek conquest of Mavarannahr, and consequently returned to Herat in 1507. He was slain in the general massacre following the Şafavid capture of Qarshi, led by Zahīr al-Dīn Muḥammad Bābur and Najm-i Şānī (Amīr Yār Aḥmad Işfahānī, *vakīl* of Shāh Ismā'īl I), in 1512. See Khvādamīr, *Habibu's-siyar*, p. 524.

¹⁷⁴ Shī'ī Islam was by no means foreign to the province of Khurasan in general nor to the city of Herat in particular prior to the sixteenth century, but the brand of extreme militant Shī'ī Islam promulgated by the Şafavids and their Qizilbāsh Turkmen supporters seems to have been out of the ordinary. A description of life in Herat under the Şafavids, according to the account given by Vāşifī, will be provided below.

Uzbeks. These émigrés represented the chief medium through which the cultural traditions of Timurid Herat were transmitted to the Uzbeks, now cut off from the cultural heartland of Khorasan.¹⁷⁵

Subtelny then identifies “Zain ad-Dīn Maḥmūd ‘Abd al-Jalīl Vāṣifī” as one such émigré through which the cultural legacy of late Tīmūrid Herat was carried north of the Amu Darya to Uzbek-controlled Mavarannahr. She then provides the reader with a brief account of the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* and the extent of its coverage, the circumstances under which it was written and Vāṣifī’s peregrinations in Mavarannahr. All of this information seems to have been culled from Aleksandr Nikolaevich Boldyrev, to whom Subtelny rightly acknowledges our enormous debt. While she does give credit to Vāṣifī for the role he played in acculturating the early Abu’l-Khayrid sovereigns and in transforming them into suitable Perso-Islamic rulers in Bukhara, Samarqand, Tashkent and Shahrukhiyya, and also for the significance of his memoirs, she also at times, one might say, judges Vāṣifī a bit harshly when referring to him as a “mediocre poet” and pointing out the fact, almost mockingly, that much of his information regarding Navā’ī and other literati, and “the cultural life of the court of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā was derived second-hand.”¹⁷⁶ The fact remains that Vāṣifī lived and worked in the times about which he wrote and had, if not direct contact, at the very least tangential contact with many of the personages about whom he has written. Vāṣifī was connected to the Tīmūrid dynasty in a number of ways. His writings on ‘Alī Shīr Navā’ī alone, when thoroughly examined, will serve to add new dimensions and perspective to the historical personality of the oft-

¹⁷⁵ “Art and Politics,” p. 137.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 139. Subtelny’s assessment of Vāṣifī as a “mediocre poet” is a far cry from that of Jiří Bečka, who considers Vāṣifī an “excellent medieval Asian writer and poet of the 16th century.” See Jiří Bečka, “بدايع الوقایع تالیف زین الدین محمود واصفی تصحیح الکساندر بلدروف” (*Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* of Zaynuddīn Maḥmūd Vāṣefī, ed. by Aleksandr Nikolayevič Boldyrev) Enteršārāte bonyāde farhange Īrān (Iranian Cultural Foundation) Tehrān, 1349 (1972 A.D.), Vol. I, 22-5333 p.; Vol. II, 15-448 p.” *Archīv Orientālīnī*, Vol. 43 (1975): p. 276 (Book Review).

lionized symbol of Tīmūrid high-culture and father of Chaghatāy literature, while his work *en masse* will be an invaluable source for the study of the social history of the late Tīmūrid and early Abu'l-Khayrid Shībānid epochs.

Subtelny draws almost exclusively from the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* throughout the remainder of the article, detailing several of the *majālis* held at various Tīmūrid and Uzbek courts at which Vāṣifī was present, what transpired at these literary soirees, and so on. She then considers Vāṣifī's treatment of Mīr 'Alī Shīr Navā'ī, stating that while several chapters claim to address "aspects of his character and personality, what they demonstrate in effect is the tremendous authority he exercised in cultural matters at court." Of course, as stated above, the narratives contained within the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* which describe the manner in which Navā'ī dealt with those around might yet surrender to us a great deal of information with regard to the true character of the *Amīr-i Kabīr* if we take the time to examine them thoroughly.

The next work of Subtelny in which Vāṣifī figures prominently is "Scenes from the Literary Life of Tīmūrid Herat," published in a collection of articles under the title *Logos Islamikos: Studia Islamica in Honorem Georgii Michaelis Wickens* in 1984. Therein she characterizes the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* in greater detail than in her just considered previous work: seeing that the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* clearly lies outside the category of official or commissioned histories, comprised of the historical works of such men as 'Abd al-Razzāq Samarqandī, Mīrkhvānd and his grandson Khvāndamīr, hagiographies, represented by Jāmī's *Nafahāt al-uns*, or biographical works such as the *Majālis al-nafā'īs* of 'Alī Shīr Navā'ī himself, Subtelny assigns it to the category of autobiography – a limited category for the period which the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* shares

with one other work – that widely renowned and highly regarded work in Chaghatāy, the *Bāburnāmah*, penned by the Tīmūrid prince and Vāṣifī’s contemporary, Ṣahīr al-Dīn Muḥammad Bābur (fl. 1483-1531). Subtelny then proceeds to qualify this assessment still further, maintaining that while neither the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* nor the *Bāburnāmah* would be classed as autobiographical works in the modern sense, they occupy a place on the literary spectrum belonging to an ill-defined genre that also includes travel narratives and political memoirs, both of which often possess autobiographical elements, somewhat echoing Akhmedov’s conclusion regarding the categorization of the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’*, provided above, delivered two years prior.¹⁷⁷

In line with assessments put forth by Soviet predecessors such as Aleksandr Boldyrev, Sadriddin Aynī, and so on, regarding the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’*, Subtelny maintains that the work constitutes “an excellent source for the cultural history of Khurāsān and Transoxiana of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.” According to Subtelny, who is again parroting the assessments of the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* made by earlier scholars, what makes this work unique is the perspective of Vāṣifī, “a typical product of the Khurāsānian cultural milieu of the late fifteenth century.”¹⁷⁸ The remainder of the article is occupied with the presentation of translated excerpts – drawn from chapters thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, seventeen, and twenty-nine of the *Badāyi’ al-*

¹⁷⁷ Maria Eva Subtelny, “Scenes from the Literary Life of Tīmūrid Herāt,” *Logos Islamikos: Studia Islamica in Honorem Georgii Michaelis Wickens* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1984), pp. 138-139.

¹⁷⁸ Subtelny, p. 139; Subtelny here cites Boldyrev, *Zainaddin Vasifi: Tadzhiiskii pisatel’ XVIv.*, pp. 17-18. Even earlier in the introduction to this work, Boldyrev states, “The fundamental significance of the memoirs of Vasifi lay in the fact that they represent a unique document, presenting before us an everyday life, the way of life of the middle class of society within the towns of Central Asia and Khurasan at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries. . . . Vasifi, with regard to his origins and education, belonged to . . . the middling, urban class, that is to the class of shopkeepers, handicraftsmen, dealers, lower officials and scholars, mullas, and so forth. It was in this environment of city dwellers that Vasifi moved, in Herat prior to his migration to Central Asia in 1512, and after that in Samarkand and Bukhara.” See Boldyrev, *Zainaddin Vasifi: Tadzhiiskii pisatel’*, pp. 10-11.

vaqāyi – each followed by Subtelny’s explanation and analysis of what she has translated. She focuses a great deal of attention, again, on narratives concerning various *majālis* as they are recounted by Vāṣifī, declaring “No other source for the Tīmūrid period provides more vividly detailed descriptions of the medieval institution of the *majlis* than does the *Badāyi* ‘al-*vaqāyi*’.”¹⁷⁹ Subtelny closes this piece by reaffirming what she and others have repeatedly stated, and which bears repeating yet again – that the *Badāyi* ‘al-*vaqāyi*’ contains a good deal of historical information pertaining to the late Tīmūrid and early Abu’l-Khayrid periods not found in any other source.¹⁸⁰

Subtelny continued to make good use of the *Badāyi* ‘al-*vaqāyi*’ in “A Taste for the Intricate: The Persian Poetry of the Late Tīmūrid Period,” published in 1986.¹⁸¹ While expounding on the role of Persian poetry in courtly life during the Tīmūrid era, as well as the literary opinions of Navā’ī, Jāmī and Davlat Shāh regarding such esteemed poets as Rūdakī,¹⁸² Salmān Sāvajī¹⁸³ and Amīr Khusrav Dihlavī¹⁸⁴ – whom she refers to as the “darling of the age” – Subtelny turns her attention to an examination of poetic

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 144.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, pp. 150-151.

¹⁸¹ Maria Eva Subtelny, “A Taste for the Intricate: The Persian Poetry of the Late Tīmūrid Period,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft*, Vol. 136, No. 1 (1986): pp. 69, 70, 73, 74, 76, 77.

¹⁸² Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ja‘far b. Muḥammad b. Ḥakīm b. ‘Abd al- Raḥmān b. Ādam al-Rūdakī al-Shā‘ir Samarqandī (d. 940-41) was a renowned poet connected to the court of the Sāmānid ruler Nasr II (r. 914-43), “author of the earliest substantial surviving fragments of Persian verse”; see F.C. de Blois, “Rūdakī,” *EI*², Vol. VIII, p. 585. According to Davlat Shāh, by way of Subtelny, the success of Rūdakī’s poetry – given its plain style and lack of embellishment – owed itself to the fact that he was an accomplished musician and he therefore must have sung his verse. “Davlat Shāh then appeals to his readers not to reject Rūdakī simply on the basis of this poem [i.e. a *qaṣīdah* provided in the text], because he was also well-versed in various sciences and possessed many other virtues besides.” See Subtelny, “A Taste for the Intricate,” pp. 58-59.

¹⁸³ Jamāl al-Dīn Salmān b. Muḥammad-i Sāvajī (d. 1376) was a fourteenth century poet patronized by the Jalāyirid ruler Ḥasan-i Buzurg (d. 1356) and his son and successor Shaykh Uways (d. 1374). See M. Glünz, “Salmān-i Sāvajī,” *EI*², Vol. VIII, p. 997. Subtelny relates that Jāmī was not a fan of Sāvajī’s work, finding it to be plagued by artificiality (*takalluf*); see Subtelny, “A Taste for the Intricate,” pp. 59-60.

¹⁸⁴ Amīr Khusrav Dihlavī, or Abu’l-Ḥasan Yamīn al-Dīn Khusrav (fl. 1253-1325) was connected to various courts of the Sultanate of Dehli; regarding his origins and works, see P. Hardy, “Amīr Khusraw Dihlavī,” *EI*², Vol. I, p. 444. Subtelny opines that Amīr Khusrav served as “one of the chief models for the poets of the late Timurid period.”

norms and practices of the time. She first references Vāṣifī's memoir while considering the practice of Persian poets of the late Tīmūrid era of imitating and elaborating upon the poetical works – the *masnavīs*, *ghazals*, *qaṣīdahs*, and so on – of a collection of highly revered masters. She states:

Poets naturally responded to this challenge to imitate the “inimitable” by trying to outdo the originals themselves and thereby dazzling their audience and critics. They set complicated goals for themselves that soon went beyond mere rhetorical embellishment – the very essence of Persian poetry – and that focused chiefly on elaboration of technical requirements. Poets would not only retain the actual rhyme words or *radīfs* used in the original, but would add additional, non-obligatory, rhymes to it (*iltizām*). Not only would they repeat key words used in the original, but they would also add words of their own to these. Thus, for example, in his imitation of Kātibī's *qaṣīdah*, *Shutur hujrah*, the poet, Vāṣifī (author of the autobiographical (*Badāyi' al-vaqā'i'*)), not only matched Kātibī's technique of repeating the word “camel” (*shutur*) and “room” (*hujrah*), representing two entirely disparate items, in every hemistich but, in addition, he mentioned the four physical elements (*khāk, āb, bād, ātish*) in every single line!¹⁸⁵

Subtelny here intimates that Vāṣifī was one such poet who rose to “this challenge to imitate the ‘inimitable’”, despite the fact indicated above that she had previously labeled him a “mediocre poet.” In fact there are a number of points within the narrative of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* at which Vāṣifī, through the mouths of others, mentions his propensity towards mimicry as well as the praise he often received from those who witnessed his recitations. Subtelny next refers at length to the description of a *majlis* found in the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* which had been attended by most of the highly regarded poets of late Tīmūrid Herat and at which – by his own account – Vāṣifī readily put his own talent for verse on display, responding to the assertion that the eloquence and adornment of the

¹⁸⁵ Subtelny, “A Taste for the Intricate,” p. 69; Subtelny cites the Moscow edition of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, Vol. I, pp. 134, 146-149. Of Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh Kātibī, the poet who was the object of Vāṣifī's mentioned imitation, Iraj Dehghan states, “Notwithstanding Navā’ī's lavish praise of Kātibī, and the lengthy accounts of him given by Dawlatshāh and Browne, he is a mediocre poet. Djāmī rightly describes (in his *Bahāristān*) his verses as *shutur gurba*, “camels and cats”, *i.e.*, uneven and unequal in quality. His poetry is characterized by excessive use of rhetorical artifice, imitation (mainly of Amīr Khusraw and Hasan of Dihlī), commonplace and bizarre ideas, and clumsy and immature diction”; See I. Dehghan, “Kātibī,” *EP*, Vol. IV, p. 762. Kātibī is first mentioned in the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* with regard to Khvājah Yūsuf Malāmatī, who served as a *vazīr* to Kūchkūnjī Khān. Vāṣifī writes: “When that Khvājah [Yūsuf Malamati] was named as a chancellor [a keeper of the seal, مهرداری], he recited a response to a *qaṣīdah* of Mavlānā Kātibī, in the *radīf-i angushtarīn*, which had been in the panegyric of Mīrzā Bāysunghur.” See Vāṣifī, *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, Vol. I (Tehran), p. 51.

style of the aforementioned Kātibī was inimitable. Subtelny states: “Thus it was at a *majlis* that Vāṣifī responded to the challenge to imitate Kātibī and he did so not only by repeating the same key words used by Kātibī in his poem, but by writing five separate imitations of it.”¹⁸⁶

Turning her attention to other innovative poetical forms which gained currency in the Tīmūrid realm over the course of the fifteenth century, such as the chronogram¹⁸⁷ and the *mu‘ammā*, Subtelny next references the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* with regard to the intricate response written by Vāṣifī to a *qaṣīdah* entitled *Chār dar chār* by the poet ‘Abd al-Vāsi‘ Jabalī, who flourished during the late Saljūq era in the province of Khurasan.¹⁸⁸ Whereas no less a master than Jāmī himself had declared in his *Baharistān* that none had ever composed a suitable imitation of this *qaṣīdah*,

Vāṣifī later wrote a *javāb* to it from which, in his own words, by means of the device by which all words with a common or pseudo-common root are assembled (*ishtiḳāq*), a *ghazal* could be extracted; from this, by means of the same device, a *rubā‘ī* and *matla‘* could be extracted, every hemistich of which was also a *mu‘ammā*, this hemistich containing another hemistich which was also a *mu‘ammā*, while the hemistichs of the *ghazal* contained an acrostic which yielded the name of the poet’s patron.¹⁸⁹

The complexity of such poetic innovation seems to us almost beyond belief. If Vāṣifī had truly been a mere mediocre poet as Subtelny had earlier declared and was yet capable of

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, pp. 70-71. Subtelny again cites the Moscow edition, pages 138-139, for the *majlis* narrative leading up to the text of Vāṣifī’s five *ghazals*, and pages 140-143 for the *ghazals* themselves, which correspond to pages 97-98 and 98-101 respectively in the Tehran edition. Both this and the previous citation of the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* draw from chapter five of the work, entitled “A description of the Virtuous One’s examination of this humble one in the art of composition and the solving of *mu‘ammā*.”

¹⁸⁷ Known in Persian as *mādda tārikh*, the chronogram is a poem of varying length which records in verse the date of an important historical event – such as the birth and death dates of a ruler or prominent person, the date of a significant military victory, the construction of a building, and so on. As a poetic form, chronograms became increasingly popular in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Ṣafavid Iran, Mughal India, and of course in the Uzbek Khanates. For more, see Paul Losensky, “Mādda Tārikh,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online*, November 15, 2006, available at www.iranicaonline.org.

¹⁸⁸ See Huart, Cl. And H. Massé, “‘Abd al-Wāsi‘ Djabalī b. ‘Abd al-Djāmi‘,” *EI²*, Vol. I, p. 94.

¹⁸⁹ Subtelny, “A Taste for the Intricate,” pp. 72-73. Subtelny cites the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘*, 1961, pp. 134-135 for the mention of Jabalī and pp. 149-153 for Vāṣifī’s reply to *Chār dar chār*, corresponding to pp. 95-96 and 107-109 respectively in the Tehran edition.

composing verse of such intricate complexity, one can only imagine the poetic talents of a true master.

The next reference to Vāṣifi's memoir concerns the elegy written by Ṣāhib Dārā Astarābādī on the occasion of the death of 'Alī Shīr Navā'ī in 1501. Given in its entirety in chapter thirteen of the *Badāyi 'al-vaqāyi'*, this elegy was also, as Subtelny has explained in other works and reiterates here, a chronogram "in which the first hemistich of every line constituted a chronogram of Navā'ī's birth, while the second hemistich of every line was a chronogram on his death."¹⁹⁰ Vāṣifi's inclusion of several chronograms throughout the course of his memoir attests to the popularity of this type of intricate verse form in Iran and Central Asia during the Tīmūrid era.¹⁹¹

After briefly considering Astarābādī's elegy-chronogram as given in the *Badāyi 'al-vaqāyi'*, Subtelny turns her attention once more to the *mu'ammā*, proclaiming that "Nothing, however, expressed the poetical tendency of the late Tīmūrid period better – indeed epitomized it – than did the *mu'ammā*."¹⁹² Of course, anyone familiar with Vāṣifi's work to any degree would be aware of his self-proclaimed expertise in the art of the *mu'ammā*. While a detailed discussion of the *mu'ammā* is not appropriate at this

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 74. The text of the chronogram is found on pages 493-497 of the Moscow edition, as reported by Subtelny, which corresponds to pp. 378-382 of the Tehran edition. In a chronogram one utilizes the system of *abjad*, an alpha-numeric system in which each letter of the alphabet is assigned a set numeric value. The first couplet of the eulogy chronogram reads: *Ay falak, bīdād o bīrahmī bed insān kardeh – vay ajal molk-e jahān rā bāz vayrān kardeh*, which translates "O, Heaven, you have been unjust and merciless to mankind – O, Death, you have laid waste the kingdom of the world." The numeric value of the words in the first hemistich (11+130+6+21+270+177+229) add up to 844 hijrī (1440-41 A.D.), while the second hemistich (16+34+90+59+201+10+216+51+229) adds up to 906 hijrī (1500-01 A.D.); the former is the year of the birth of Mīr 'Alī Shīr Navā'ī, and the latter that of his death. This is the first of two chronograms found in chapter thirteen; the second, which consists of thirty-five couplets in all, commemorates the invasion of Khurasan and the siege and capture of the city of Herat by the Uzbeks under the leadership of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān.

¹⁹¹ De Bruijn states, "Only in the 9th/15th century did the construction of chronograms become a very popular genre...cultivated both for practical purposes (especially in epigraphy) and as an exercise of poetic skills." See J. T. P. De Bruijn, "Chronograms," *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online*, December 15, 1991, available at www.iranicaonline.org.

¹⁹² "A Taste for the Intricate," p. 75.

juncture, it is enough to say that it was popular as a poetical form in the late Tīmūrid period, especially in Herat.¹⁹³ Thus, while on the topic of the *mu‘ammā* Subtelny first references chapter thirteen again, which narrates Vāṣifī’s introduction at the *majlis* of Navā’ī, followed by chapter eight in which Vāṣifī tells us of the passion that the Abu’l-Khayrid ruler ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān harbored for the *mu‘ammā*.¹⁹⁴ Finally, Subtelny uses the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* to corroborate the fondness of ‘Alī Shīr Navā’ī for the *mu‘ammā* as attested to by Dawlat Shāh, relating Vāṣifī’s statement that it was widely known in Herat that the best way to attract the attention of Navā’ī was by displaying one’s expertise in the *mu‘ammā*. Of course, much of what Subtelny has to say regarding this and other aspects of chapter thirteen had already been presented in “Scenes from the Literary Life of Tīmūrid Herāt.”¹⁹⁵

Subtelny turned once again to the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* in two articles published in 1988, respectively entitled “Centralizing Reform and its Opponents in the Late Timurid Period” and “Socioeconomic Bases of Cultural Patronage under the Later Timurids.” In the former, after briefly outlining the process whereby the Tīmūrid rulers’ customary practice of granting *suyūrghāls* to loyal supporters among the Chaghatāy Turkic military elite gradually alienated large amounts of tax revenue from the central treasury and consequently undercut the political authority of said Tīmūrid rulers, she proceeds to narrate the struggle undertaken by Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā and his financially adept, and

¹⁹³ Briefly, the *mu‘ammā* is a riddle poem or logogriph from which a word, often a personal name, could be extracted. While Subtelny and many modern scholars see the *mu‘ammā* and its popularity as being indicative of a low point in Persian poetry, Losensky maintains that although this poetic form was indeed popular during the late Tīmūrid era, its prominence has been somewhat overstated by modern scholars. See Paul Losensky, *Welcoming Fighānī* (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 1998), pp. 154-157.

¹⁹⁴ Subtelny, “A Taste for the Intricate,” p. 76. Subtelny cites the Moscow edition, first p. 490 which corresponds to p. 376, chapter thirteen in the Tehran edition, then Moscow pp. 306-314, corresponding to Tehran pp. 240-248.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 77. In two footnotes Subtelny cites Moscow, Vol. I, p. 486 and pp. 491-506, corresponding to Tehran, Vol. I, p. 373 and pp. 377-390 respectively.

therefore ill-fated *vazīr*, Khvājah Majd al-Dīn Muḥammad,¹⁹⁶ to enact some reform in order to rectify the situation. While progress was made early on under the direction of Majd al-Dīn, the intrigues, infighting, and jealousies which plagued the *dīvāns* and court of the late Tīmūrid era, and the threat which Majd al-Dīn's reforms – endorsed as they were by Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā – posed to the wealth and privilege then enjoyed by the Turkic amirs, 'Alī Shīr Navā'ī included, ensured his reform endeavors would ultimately come to naught.

Subtelny first references the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* with regard to “an entertainment” put on by Majd al-Dīn “at which Ali Shir himself and a group of great amirs and notables were supposed to be present.”¹⁹⁷ Her next reference to Vāṣifī's memoirs speaks to Majd al-Dīn's character, as Vāṣifī reported that Majd al-Dīn was both “renowned for his love of jesting and practical jokes,” and “something of a gastronome who enjoyed commissioning new dishes.”¹⁹⁸ The next reference to the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* is made with regard to the relationship that existed between Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā and Darvīsh 'Alī Kūkaltāsh, the governor of Balkh and brother of 'Alī Shīr Navā'ī, who led the smear

¹⁹⁶ Maria Eva Subtelny, “Centralizing Reform and its Opponents in the Late Tīmūrid Period,” *Iranian Studies*, Vol. XXI, No. 1-2 (1988): pp. 131-136. Regarding Khvājah Majd al-Dīn Muḥammad, who was Persian (Tajik), Subtelny reports, “In late 876/spring 1472, he [Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā] appointed Khwaja Majd al-Din Mohammad to the office of *parwāna* and *risālat*, which was one of the highest administrative posts in the Tīmūrid government, with the right to affix his seal on all orders pertaining to matters of state and finance (*parwānajāt-i molkī wa māli*). The son of Khwaja Giyath al-Din Pir Ahmad Khwafi, who had headed Shahrokh's finance office (*dīwān*) and later served a long line of other Timurid princes, Majd al-Dīn had started his career as an official in the chancellery of Abu Sa'īd where he shared the office of *monshī* (*chancellor*) with Nizam al-Din Abd al-Hayy Monshi, later the famous physician of the Timurid court at Herat.” This information was gleaned from both Bābur and Khvādamīr. Subtelny relates further on that despite his being Persian, “The powers that Majd al-Din wielded were unprecedented for a Tajik in the dual administrative structure of the Timurid government which was based not only on a clear distinction between the prerogatives of the ruling Turkic military elite and the bureaucratic duties of the Tajik intelligentsia, but also on the clear superiority of the status of the former.” Seemingly autocratic in nature, Majd al-Dīn Muḥammad essentially ran Khurasan on behalf of Ḥusayn Bāyqarā, which of course earned him the resentment of both the Turkic amirs and many envious Persian bureaucrats.

¹⁹⁷ Subtelny, p. 139. Subtelny here cites Moscow, Vol. I, p. 531.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 142. Subtelny cites Moscow, Vol. I, p. 528.

campaign against Majd al-Dīn Muḥammad.¹⁹⁹ In her final reference to Vāṣifī, Subtelny simply instructs her readers to refer to the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* for the “popular perception” of the downfall of another Tīmūrid *vazīr*, Qavām al-Dīn Nizām al-Mulk.²⁰⁰

In the latter article, Subtelny illustrates the apparent relationship between increased alienation of tax revenue from the state, the fragmentation and decentralization of political authority and the emergence of multiple centers of cultural patronage in the Tīmūrid realm in the latter half of the fifteenth century. Therein, while first considering the topic of ‘Alī Shīr Navā’ī’s vast personal fortune, the many sources from which it may have been derived, and how he chose to dispense of it, she refers to Vāṣifī’s memoirs with regard to the pricing of various luxury items in Herat during the later reign of Ḥusayn Bāyqarā.²⁰¹ She next cites the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* regarding one Nizām al-Dīn Shaykh Aḥmad Suhaylī [Suhīlī], an amir of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā and intimate of ‘Alī Shīr Navā’ī.²⁰² Some pages later she references her earlier aforementioned work “Scenes” in which she provided a translated excerpt from chapter fifteen of the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* that recounts the story of a *majlis* held by one Khvājah Majd al-Dīn

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 144; Moscow, Vol. I, p. 632.

²⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 150; Moscow, Vol. II, pp. 1205-1213.

²⁰¹ Maria Eva Subtelny, “Socioeconomic Bases of Cultural Patronage under the Later Timurids,” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 20 (1988): p. 491.

²⁰² Subtelny, 492. Suhaylī, referred to as Amīr Shaykhūm Suhaylī (امیر شیخ سہیلی) by Vāṣifī, is listed as being “among the poets, boon companions and *majlis* attendees” (از جماعہ شاعران و ندیمان و مجلس آرایان) in chapter fifteen, where he is also consulted by Navā’ī; see *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘*, Vol. I (1970-71): pp. 405, 431, 439. According to Bābur, Suhaylī was the *takhallus* of “Shaykhīm Beg,” an amir of Sulṭān Husayn Bāyqarā: “Because his pen name was Suhayli, he was called Shaykhīm Suhayli. He composed some fantastic poetry in which he used ferocious words... He has put together a *dīvān* and has written mathnawis also,” *BN*, Thackston, p. 207, f. 174). Bābur ranks Sulayhī among three of the most outstanding poets who frequently adorned the court of Sulṭān Husayn Bāyqarā – the other two being the renowned Mavlānā Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī and one Husayn ‘Alī Jalāyir, whose *takhallus* was Tufayli (*BN*, p. 214, f. 179b; the latter’s father had apparently been patronized by Mīrzā Abu’l-Qāsim Bābur; Bābur states: “In 917... when I took Samarkand, he joined me and remained with me for five of six years. He was an insouciant and extravagant individual. He kept catamites. He always played backgammon and was an inveterate gambler,” *BN*, p. 208). Mīr Husayn ‘Alī Jalāyir (میر حسین علی جلایر) is also named, immediately after Shaykhūm Suhaylī (this time his title was shortened to “Mīr”) among the deputies in attendance at Navā’ī’s *majlis* in chapter fifteen of the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘*.

Muḥammad which was attended by Navā'ī himself. The last reference made to Vāṣifī's work in this article is made with regard to Khvājah Shihāb al-Dīn 'Abd Allāh Marvārīd, who served as *muhtasib*, *ṣadr*, and *mutavallī* under and was an *īchkī* and *muqarrib* of Ḥusayn Bāyqarā, and was also “the author of a collection of chancellery documents entitled *Sharafnāmah* and a poet writing under the pen name, Bayānī.”²⁰³ Ultimately all of these references are derived from the fifteenth and twenty-ninth chapters of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, and the points of reference are moreover identical to those utilized by Subtelny in many of her previous works.

Subtelny cites the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* one time in “The Curriculum of Islamic Higher Learning In Timurid Iran in the Light of the Sunni Revival under Shāh-Rukh,” co-written with Anas B. Khalidov and published in 1995. According to the authors, Vāṣifī reports that the same works treating grammar and rhetoric found on Abu'l-Fayz Muḥammad b. Mardhānshāh al-Dashtbayādī's reading list, drawn up in 1425, “are mentioned as still being in use in Herat at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries.”²⁰⁴ That texts of an authoritative nature on such subjects such as grammar and rhetoric would still be in use seventy-five years on should come as no great surprise.

Prior to Subtelny, however, it seems that it was in fact the renowned Italian scholar of Persian literature and history, Angelo Piemontese, who was the first among his peers in the West to recognize the value of Vāṣifī's work as not only an entertaining if daunting narrative, but also as a rich source of information pertinent to the social history

²⁰³ Ibid, pp. 493-494.

²⁰⁴ Maria Eva Subtelny, et al., “The Curriculum of Islamic Higher Learning In Timurid Iran in the Light of the Sunni Revival under Shāh-Rukh,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 115, No. 2 (1995): p. 223; the citation is to Moscow, Vol. II, pp. 715-717.

of the late-Tīmūrid and early-Abu'l-Khayrid periods.²⁰⁵ His career now spanning roughly five decades, Piemontese has examined a wide variety of topics, from the occult in Medieval Persia and the state of Italo-Persian relations in the modern era to the works of 'Umar Khayyām and Farūgh Farrukhẓād.²⁰⁶ Early in his career Piemontese's interest turned to the history of sport – particularly to *la lotta*, or wrestling – in the medieval Iranian world and to the related history of the *zūrkhānah* which we may translate as gymnasium.²⁰⁷ In 1966 Piemontese's article entitled "Il capitolo sui pahlavān delle *Badāyi 'al-Waqāyi' di Vāsefi*" was published in the journal *Annali*.²⁰⁸ Therein Piemontese provides a partial translation of the text of chapter nineteen of the *Badāyi 'al-vaqāyi' – I racconti straordinari* in Italian – interspersed with commentary, which aside from providing information on the *zūrkhānah*, the organization of *pahlavāns*,²⁰⁹ their costumes, customs and technical jargon,

...presents us with the vitae of several noted *pahlavān*, among whom stands out Muḥammad Abū Sa'īd, a musician and literary, who attest as to how wrestling was an art cultivated not only by fanatics of physical strength or acrobats by profession, but rather also by men of respect and "intellectuals," presumably attracted by the practice of a

²⁰⁵ For a brief biography of Angelo M. Piemontese and a bibliography of his published works, visit <http://w3.uniroma1.it/dso/?m=Biografia&id=5>.

²⁰⁶ See Angelo Piemontese, "Un manuel persan d'oculistique du XIVE siècle," *Ex Oriente. Collected Papers in Honor of Jirí Bečka*, ed. Adéla Krikavová and Ludek Hřebíček (Prague: Czech Academy of Science, Oriental Institute, 1995), pp. 137-150; "Profilo delle relazioni italo-persiane nel XIX secolo," *Il Veltro*, Vol. XIV (1970): pp. 77-85; "Omar Khayyām in Italia," *Oriente Moderno*, Vol. LIV, No. 4, Dedicato a Francesco Gabrieli nel 70° anno (1974): pp. 133-155, and "Omar Khayyām," *Dictionnaire Universel des Littératures*, Vol. II: pp. 2634-2635; "La vita nuova nel diario romano di Forugh Farrozzad," *Oriente Moderno*, Vol. XXII (LXXXIII) (2003): pp. 159-167.

²⁰⁷ زورخانه.

²⁰⁸ Angelo Piemontese, "Il capitolo sui pahlavān delle *Badāyi 'al-Waqāyi' di Vāsefi*," *Annali*, Vol. XVI (1966): pp. 207-220.

²⁰⁹ Steingass defines the term *pahlavān* / پهلوان as follows: "A hero, champion, brave warrior, strong athletic man; rough, rugged in figure or in speech"; see Steingass, p. 261. As it is used by Vāṣifī, and therefore also by Piemontese in this instance, *pahlavān* should be translated as wrestler. For additional information on the use of the term *pahlavān* as it pertains to the environment of the *zūrkhāneh* and wrestling, see Piemontese's article, "La moderna terminologia della lotta tradizionale persiana," *Oriente moderno*, Vol. XLV, No. 1 (1965): pp. 796-797; for a recently written, brief overview of the *zūrkhāneh*, see Houchang E. Chehabi, "ZUR-KĀNA," *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online*, August 15, 2006, available at www.iranicaonline.org.

certain gentlemanly ideal and by the obligatory ethic dictated by the *futuvva* rule which organized and ennobled that art-form.²¹⁰

Piemontese relates that the watching of wrestling spectacles and various other contests and feats of strength were favorite pastimes amongst the scions of both the Mongol and Tīmūrid houses especially.

As indicated above, the history of one of the wrestlers, Pahlavān Muḥammad Abū Sa‘īd, is especially interesting. Working from Vāṣifī, Piemontese learned and shared with his readers that none other than Mīr ‘Alī Shīr Navā’ī himself, the great poet-statesman and acclaimed father of Chaghatay literature, was not only a “fan of wrestling,” but was even quite good friends with Pahlavān Muḥammad. Piemontese states, “There existed such a close friendship between ‘Alī Shīr and Pahlavān Muḥammad Abū Sa‘īd that – to judge by the lengthy account of Vāṣifī – they were tied to one another by an ancient pact of mutual assistance.”²¹¹ This pact, we discover, prompted Navā’ī to intervene on behalf of the Pahlavān when the latter found himself in trouble with Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā. Piemontese continues further down: “Certainly it was this close bond of friendship, quasi-fraternal, which drove ‘Alī Shīr to immortalize the multiplicity of Pahlavān Abū Sa‘īd’s talents in music, extemporaneous poetry, and wrestling, with a brief biographical *risāla* in Chaghatāy.”²¹² Piemontese continues with translations and paraphrasing of short extracts from the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’*, interspersed with commentary, which recount the adventures of Pahlavān Muḥammad Abū Sa‘īd and

²¹⁰ Piemontese, pp. 207-208. The term *futuvva* (*futuwwa*) possesses a long and complex history. Presumed to originally imply those characteristics which were typical of young men, hence in Persian *futuvva* has been at times translated as *javānmardī*, it is also associated with artisanal guilds and Sūfī organizations. See Cl. Cahen and Fr. Taeschner, “Futuwwa,” *EL²*, Vol. II (Leiden: Brill, 1960), p. 367.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

²¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 211-212.

two others, Pahlavān Muḥammad Mālānī and Pahlavān Darvīsh Muḥammad,²¹³ at court. In sum, Piemontese made good use of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* with regard to a particular topic – wrestling – which was itself a component of the social history of the city of Herat, and one may surmise countless other towns and cities as well throughout the Turko-Persian world, during the last days of Tīmūrid rule that has been overlooked by the more conventional or official historical sources that have come down to us from that period which are so often cited. While certainly he ought to be esteemed for his literary works in both Persian and Chaghatay, the mere fact that such a renowned historical figure as 'Alī Shīr Navā'ī was a “fan of wrestling” somehow makes him more human, more accessible and, consequently, more interesting.

Another Italian scholar who has studied the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* and used it as a resource with which to make contributions to Italian orientalist scholarship vis-à-vis Islamic Central Asia is Giorgio Rota. Currently with the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Rota wrote his thesis on Vāṣifī, “Le “Mirabilia” dell'umanesimo timuride nell'autobiografia di Mahmud Vāsefī (sec. XVI),”²¹⁴ and published an article entitled “Vasefī e i suoi tempi: uno sguardo alle *Badāye'o'l-vaqāye*” in *Oriente Moderno* 1996. The former considers the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* within the historical context of the Tīmūrid century, and offers several translated excerpts. The latter offers up little that is new for consideration, and seems rather to have been intended to introduce the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* to a wider, Italian speaking, academic audience. Rota is somewhat critical of what he terms the “anachronistic” efforts of some Soviet historians to find in the historical Vāṣifī

²¹³ A nephew of Pahlavān Muḥammad Abū Sa'īd / خواهرزاده پهلوان محمد ابوسعید که درویش محمد نام داشت/; see, Vāṣifī, *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, Vol. I (Tehran), p. 504.

²¹⁴ Giorgio Rota, “Le “Mirabilia” dell'umanesimo timuride nell'autobiografia di Mahmud Vāsefī (sec. XVI),” unpublished thesis, Universtia di Bologna.

a late Tīmūrid social activist and prominent “Tajik” author.²¹⁵ In both works Rota provides the obligatory information regarding Vāṣifī’s biography, describes the structure of the work, and reviews some of the literature that has been produced with regard to the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’*.

With regard to European scholars, aside from Angelo Piemontese and Giorgio Rota, Maria Szuppe of France has also made limited use of Vāṣifī in a handful of her works, chief among them being *Entre Timourides, Uzbeks et Safavides*, and concludes that while Vāṣifī does not cover political events like Khvāndamīr, he provides valuable information not found in the official, commissioned histories. Szuppe obligingly provides the standard introductory information on Vāṣifī: he was born in Herat 1485; the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* is a collection of personal memories, “and a story, presented in the form of anecdotes, of the life that the author lead in Herat and also in Central Asia”; written for Kīldī Muḥammad khan, and dedicated to his son Ḥasan Sulṭān (d. 1538/9); Vāṣifī was of middling origins, his father a scribe (*munshī*); “He nevertheless frequented the gathering of poets of Tīmūrid amirs and Heratī dignitaries.”²¹⁶

Szuppe does make an interesting note regarding Vāṣifī’s early employment as a tutor: “Later, or concurrently [with working as a scribe, embracing his father’s career], he became the private tutor of the son of a Tīmūrid amir, Shāh Vālī Kūkaltāsh, probably between 906 and 913 / 1500 and 1507, who he served loyally and at risk to his own life at the moment of the arrival of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān’s Uzbeks to the city.”²¹⁷ In a

²¹⁵ Giorgio Rota, “Vāsefī e suoi tempi: uno sguardo alle *Badāye’ o’l-vaqāye’*,” *Oriente Moderno*, Vol. XV, No. 2 (1996): pp. 139-163.

²¹⁶ Maria Szuppe, *Entre Timourides, Uzbeks et Safavides: questions d'histoire politique et sociale de Hérat dans la première moitié du XVIe siècle* (Paris: Association pour l'avancement des études Iraniennes, 1992), p. 51.

²¹⁷ Szuppe, pp. 51-52.

footnote she remarks: “Shāh Vālī was the ‘frère de lait’ (*kukeltāsh*) of Khadija Begom, wife of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Mīrzā.”²¹⁸ She failed, however, to cite her source for this information. The source is, in fact, the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’*.

Szuppe also notes, à la Boldyrev, that among Vasifī’s friends and relatives, “there were artists, poets, and calligraphers.” In a footnote to this, she continues, “among his friends were the *ḥāfiẓ* Sulṭān ‘Alī, of the village of Kusa, and the calligrapher Khwāja Nāzīr of Mashhad; among his relatives, he counted the poet Amānī, and another, Ṣāhib Dārā Astarābādī (Mavlānā Ṣāhib).”²¹⁹

Szuppe continues in her brief biography of Vāṣifī, stating how he witnessed firsthand the arrival of the Abu’l-Khayrids and Ṣafavids in Herat: “He observed the history on the inside, with the eyes of the ordinary Herātī that he was. He provides the popular version of the facts, opinions and sentiments of Herātīs such as they were known to him. To these he adds his personal impressions.”²²⁰ Szuppe points out that, unlike his contemporary the commissioned court historian Khvāndamīr, Vāṣifī does not dwell on political or military events, but what he does provide is “information absent from the grand, official chronicles,” for example, his own personal revulsion at the conduct of the Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh Shī‘a and their local supporters in Herat.²²¹ Szuppe ends her short biography of Vāṣifī by recounting his escape from Herat and his encounter with Khvāndamīr on the road to Samarqand. All of the information provided by Szuppe comes either from Boldyrev or Vāṣifī himself.

²¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 52. This information is drawn from chapter thirty two of the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’*.

²¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 52.

²²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 52.

²²¹ *Ibid*, p. 52.

Szuppe turns again to the *Badāyi ‘al-vaqāyi‘* while discussing the various segments of society in Herat during the late Tīmūrid era. She begins by stating that, ultimately, our knowledge with regard to the true make-up of Herat’s social fabric up to the point of her writing was next to nothing. She then establishes the fact that most sources present an essential division between “the ‘notables’ and the ‘people’,” with the former being designated by such titles as “*arbāb, a ‘yyān, kabīr, buzurgān, khavās*” and the latter by “*ra ‘āyā, saghir, mardum.*” Among the grandees of the city, there were “local Herātī dignitaries, and Tīmūrid, Uzbek, or Šafavid dignitaries, depending on the era, representing the administrative, religious, and politico-military domains.”²²² Khvāndamīr’s *Nāmah-yi nāmī*, which provides information on various classes of people, serves as a point of departure for Szuppe’s exploration of social classes in Herat.²²³

According to Szuppe, Herat’s social structure was reflected in its very topography, which was divided into quarters by profession. “We have seen that the two principal avenues intersected one another at a right angle, and divided the city into four principle bazars around which were situated various quarters, separated in turn by an orthogonal network of streets.”²²⁴ Szuppe goes on to recount information drawn from Tumanovich.²²⁵ It is while considering the quarters of the middling class that Szuppe cites Vāšifi:

The men of the bazar, the artisans, who were at the same time the traders of their production, and the great merchants constituted an important group from the economic point of view, however without a political role. This group must no longer be considered as completely homogenous; we know, for example, that the poet Amānī, a relative of Vāšifi, had a sale stall and it was through this activity that he earned his living.²²⁶

²²² Ibid, p. 61.

²²³ Ibid, pp. 61-62.

²²⁴ Ibid, p 62.

²²⁵ Ibid, p. 62.

²²⁶ Ibid. p. 62.

She continues in the footnote to relate that Amānī's shop was located close to the citadel, and he was involved in the trade of "roasting peas."²²⁷

Szuppe next refers to the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* with regard to the rapaciousness of the Abu'l-Khayrids' Uzbek warriors upon their initial conquest of Herat in 1507. She makes mention of the fear harbored by many of the Tīmūrid elites and notables in the face of the expected pillaging and rapine that would occur once Herat had been surrendered to the Abu'l-Khayrids, and briefly cites the portion of Vāṣifī's narrative that recounts how he and his cousin, Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn Muḥammad, assisted his patron, the aforementioned Amīr Shāh Valī, in concealing his fortune from the ravenous marauders.²²⁸ Vāṣifī is also utilized by Szuppe as a source on the Ṣafavid conquest of Herat. She states: "The arrival of the Qizilbāsh in Herat, in 916/1510, presented itself in circumstances externally similar to those which accompanied the arrival of the Uzbeks three years prior. However, everything suggests that this conquest was accompanied by a strong emotional shock for the Herātīs."²²⁹ This event will be considered in greater detail below.

Much like Subtelny, Szuppe also looks to Vāṣifī to support the contention that, at least under the Abu'l-Khayrids, the cultural life of Herat continued much as it had during the reign of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Mīrā Bāyqarā, guided by men such as Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ, who was granted the title "King of the Poets", *Malik al-shu'arā*, by Muḥammad Shībānī Khān, and Banā'ī, who "regularly held *majālis* at the Jāma mosque on Friday afternoons," and that literati such as Vāṣifī were responsible for the movement of late

²²⁷ Ibid, p. 72; Szuppe here cites the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, Chapter thirty two (Moscow), p. 1136. See Chapter Two and Appendix V for more information on Mavlānā Amānī.

²²⁸ Ibid, p. 72.

²²⁹ Ibid, pp. 77-79.

Tīmūrid court culture to Abu'l-Khayrid Mavarannahr in the early sixteenth century: “The cultural ambiance of the new, post-Tīmūrid courts, above all in Bukhara, but also in Samarqand and Tashkent, is that which this drainage of talents towards Mavarannahr made possible.”²³⁰ Szuppe returns to the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* one last time to illustrate that there was, in fact, resistance in Herat to the Şafavid-Qizilbāsh on the part of the a number of pro- Abu'l-Khayrid nobles and notables of the city.²³¹

Among more recent works written in English in which the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* is cited is *Central Asia in the Sixteenth Century* by Mansura Haidar of India. Throughout the book Haidar makes fairly extensive use of Vāşifi's work. In the year 1515 Vāşifi was affiliated with the court of Suyūnj Khvājah Khān, where he was employed as a tutor to the sovereign's son and future supreme khan, Navrūz Aḥmad. As an acquaintance of Suyūnj Khvājah and a witness to life at his court in Tashkent, Vāşifi's account of this son of Abu'l-Khayr Khān is invaluable. Haidar first refers to Vāşifi with regard to the role played by Suyūnj Khvājah in the rise of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān, his nephew, in the Dasht-i Qipchāq prior to the Abu'l-Khayrid-Shībānid invasion of Mavarannahr. Her note indicates that Vāşifi expounded on the benevolent nature of Suyūnj Khvājah.²³²

Haidar next references Vāşifi while summarizing the Abu'l-Khayrid conquest of Herat under Muḥammad Shībānī Khān in 1507, specifically concerning the lack of support given by the '*ulamā'*' and nobles of the city to the sons of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā, Badī' al-Zamān Mīrzā and Muẓaffar Ḥusayn Mīrzā, stating that “...the nobles shirked the responsibility, reminding the queen mother of the reign of terror and

²³⁰ Ibid, p. 138.

²³¹ Ibid, p. 151.

²³² Mansura Haidar, *Central Asia in the Sixteenth Century* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 2002), pp. 75, 87.

maladministration perpetrated by her sons.”²³³ It bears repeating that Vāṣifī, while not a member of the court per se, was of course an eyewitness to not only the Abu’l-Khayrid conquest of Herat in 1507, but to the later Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh conquest of the city in 1510, and that among his contemporaries his historical perspective regarding these and other events is unique in that it is of the “common man,” concerned with narratives of ordinary people in which the political upheaval of the era serves as backdrop. Both narratives will be considered herein.

Haidar again returns to the account of the virtues of Suyūnj Khvājah Khān in the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’*, stating that Vāṣifī, “...who visited Tashkent in the first quarter of the sixteenth century admired the efficiency, justice and generosity of Sewinch who had converted Tashkent into a beautiful and prosperous town.”²³⁴ Further on in her work, while expounding on the situation in Khurasan and Mavarannahr following the death of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān in 1510, Haidar cites Vāṣifī’s narrative to describe the disposition of the people of Samarqand towards Bābur following his re-conquest of the city in October, 1511, which had been executed with the blessing and support of Shāh Ismā’īl I and a large Qizilbāsh force. As is known, due to the Shī’ī trappings of Bābur’s conquest – the reading of the *khuṭbah* in the name of the revered Twelve Imāms and Shāh Ismā’īl, the issuance of coins in the name of Ismā’īl, the behavior of the Qizilbāsh towards the inhabitants of the city, etc. – popular opinion began to turn against Bābur not long after he had taken the city. What Haidar gleans from Vāṣifī, however, is the notion

²³³ Haidar, pp. 112, 126. Bereft of support, Muẓaffar Ḥusayn fled Herat, subsequently reuniting with Badī’ al-Zamān in the region of Gurgan (Astarabad). “Sultan Muẓaffar died after six months, and Badī’uzzaman ruled over the territory, though he spent his time in pleasures,” (pp. 117-118). Muḥammad Shībānī Khān, unsettled with Badī’ al-Zamān in the vicinity, launched a campaign against Gurgan as well. Having lost the will to fight, Badī’ al-Zamān Mīrzā fled to the court of the young Shāh Ismā’īl in Tabriz. From there he went on to Istanbul, where he died not long after.

²³⁴ Ibid, pp. 134, 158. Haidar cites Vāṣifī, *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’*, pp. 384-403.

that not all were so quick to abandon the last great scion of the house of Tīmūr, noting that the more orthodox among the population were reluctant to believe that Bābur had truly embraced the “Shī‘ī heresy” and accepted the role of vassal to the Shāh.²³⁵ The following year Bābur was compelled by the Abu’l-Khayrids to abandon his ancestral homeland once and for all, and on this account Haidar – drawing from Vāṣifī – opines, “...thanks to the disunity among Babur’s soldiers, the lack of uniformity in methods of warfare, and the Uzbek *tulughma*, Babur was outmanoeuvred and outgeneralled by the Uzbeks easily.” Following Bābur’s defeat and retreat to Hisar, ‘Ubayd Allāh entered Bukhara in triumph in the summer of 1512.²³⁶ Vāṣifī’s recounting of the campaign of the Persian general, Amīr Najm-i Sānī, in support of Bābur and of the final Abu’l-Khayrid victory over the Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh at Ghijduvan is cited by Haidar as well.²³⁷

Being a memoir and history unlike any other, the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* provides a good deal of information regarding the day-to-day character of such renowned figures from this period in Central Asian history as Sultān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā, ‘Alī Shīr Navā’ī, Muḥammad Shībānī Khān, ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān, Suyūnj Khvājah Khān, and so on. When considering the ascension of the aforementioned Navrūz Aḥmad to the position of Khān in 1551, Haidar looks to the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* yet again. While Vāṣifī may or may not have been alive to see his former pupil assume the supreme throne of the Abu’l-Khayrid khanate,²³⁸ the section of his work which tells of the time he spent with Navrūz Aḥmad

²³⁵ Ibid, pp. 142, 159.

²³⁶ Ibid, pp. 145-146, 159

²³⁷ Ibid, pp. 148-150, 160. The narrative of these events found in the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* will be examined in greater detail below.

²³⁸ It is generally held that Vāṣifī died sometime between 1551 and 1566. Vāṣifī completed the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* in 1538-39.

serves as a unique testimony, speaking to the positive characteristics and virtues of this sovereign as Vāṣifī knew him.²³⁹

Like Bečka, Haidar also cites Vāṣifī with regard to the “economic recovery” of Mavarannahr under the early Abu’l-Khayrid Shībānids, mentioning specifically that Navrūz Aḥmad had, in accordance with Sharī‘ah, granted one Sayyid Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad the right to all proceeds derived from the “revivification” of fallow lands via a tax exemption (presumably such lands were transferred from the state to the possession of the Sayyid and then converted into *vaqf* holdings).²⁴⁰ This amounts to what we might today call a sixteenth-century version of an “economic stimulus program,” for while Haidar tells us that “the state only partly benefitted from such ventures,” we might imagine that the impact of such activities – that is in exempting such holdings from taxation – if common practice in this case and others, would have served to invigorate local economies as the proceeds would have been, in theory, injected back into local markets or re-invested into already established holdings, thereby expanding demand and production, boosting employment, and so on.

In the more widely known histories dating from the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries the early Abu’l-Khayrid conquerors of Mavarannahr and Khurasan are commonly portrayed as unlettered, uncouth, belligerent nomads riding in from the steppe to steal the Tīmūrid legacy through a campaign of war and subterfuge, possessing little care for statecraft, matters of social or economic concern, and displaying a general disregard for the welfare of the peoples they conquered. This view with regard to the

²³⁹ Haidar, pp. 188, 204. Haidar writes: “Nauroz Ahmad (1551-5) (commonly called Buraq Khan) had received his education from a famous scholar, Maulana Kamaluddin Wasifi, who considered him a promising student. Apart from his mastery of various styles of writing, he was skilled in warfare and archery and was also a good musician.”

²⁴⁰ Ibid, pp. 300, 303; see Vāṣifī, *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘*, Vol. I (Moscow), p. 85.

Abu'l-Khayrids came to be adopted by many later historians in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as exhibited in such oft-cited works as *The Cambridge History of Islam*. Furthermore, the period of time which saw the ascension of the Abu'l-Khayrids has commonly been considered one of “decline” in the history of Central Asia, almost as though this last nomadic conquest of Mavarannahr precipitated the ruination and stagnation of the entire region. As Haidar states, “It is surprising, that not only many world historians of different fields but even specialists on Central Asian history have often referred to... Central Asia of the sixteenth century as ‘living on the margins of world history.’”²⁴¹ However, according to Haidar, the Abu'l-Khayrid Shībānids were not the barbarians they were made out to be by many contemporary sources. In the final chapter of her work, “Cultural Life in Shibanid Times,” Haidar asserts that, contrary to their portrayal in period sources biased towards the Tīmūrīds and the Şāfavīds, as well as many secondary works, the descendants of Abu'l-Khayr Khān had an “...insatiable predilection for scholarly attainment and a deep fascination for the fine arts,” and furthermore “...were particularly eager to restore normalcy and smooth functioning of administration once they conquered an area.”²⁴² As opposed to decline and stagnation, Haidar contends: “A comparative view of sixteenth-century Turan and other coeval states of the Islamic world reveals a more plausible similarity in cultural standards.”²⁴³ In order to substantiate her claim, Haidar relies on the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* of Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāşifī in her final chapter more so than at any other point throughout her work.

Haidar first turns to the portion of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* in which Vāşifī recounts his own flight from his native Herat, then under Şāfavid rule, to Mavarannahr as part of a

²⁴¹ Ibid, pp. 306, 356. Haidar is here quoting Bertold Spuler, *Al Alimul Islami*, p. 8.

²⁴² Ibid, p. 304.

²⁴³ Ibid, p. 306.

caravan of some five-hundred “poets, scholars, men of fine arts, musicians and dancers, calligraphers and painters.” Drawing directly from Vāṣifī, Haidar informs the reader,

The migrant artists included such experts and specialists as Qasim Ali Qunani, the *sazinda* (musical performer); Chikar Changi, a woman renowned for her instrumentalist skill on the harp; the singer Saiyid Ahmad Ghujki’s son, for whom Jami has written a ghazal; Ustad Husain, the player of the *ud* (harp); Ustad Husaini Kuchak, the *nai* (fluteplayer), and Maqsud Ali, the dancer. Later Mulla Hajati Haravi, who was famous for his combat and boxing skills (*jadāl o mushtzani*), migrated to Transoxiana from Khurasan for fear of sectarian persecution.²⁴⁴

If Vāṣifī is to be believed, and we have no reason to doubt the veracity of his account, these talented individuals fled Ṣafavid dominated Herat to escape persecution in one form or another. We might safely imagine, although no other sources from the period attest to the fact, that this was not the only such caravan of men of talent and skill to head north in order to escape life under the Qizilbāsh. Haidar is correct in concluding that the movement of such individuals as those listed above, who carried with them the cultural legacy of Central Asia as it had developed during the Tīmūrid period, would have served enrich the newly conquered realm of the Abu’l-Khayrid Shībānids.

In order to refute Bābur’s disparaging portrayal of his arch-nemesis, Muḥammad Shībānī Khān, as little more than a savage with no redeeming qualities, Haidar looks to Vāṣifī’s account in which is mentioned a *qaṣīdah* written by none other than Mavlānā Ṣāhib Dārā, a distinguished member of and regular fixture at the literary *majālis* of ‘Alī Shīr Navā’ī, in honor of the ill-fated sovereign which recounted his virtues and fine qualities.²⁴⁵ Haidar reinforces her defense of the acuity of the early Abu’l-Khayrids with

²⁴⁴ Ibid, pp. 307-308, 356. Haidar here draws from Vāṣifī, *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* (Moscow), pp. 17, 23.

²⁴⁵ Ibid, pp. 309, 356. Haidar places the reference to the *qaṣīdah* on pp. 377-387. According to Vāṣifī the author of the *qaṣīdah*, Mavlānā Ṣāhib Dārā Astarābādī was “among the noted companions and beloved associates of the Great Amīr, Amīr ‘Alī Shīr... distinguished and honored among the rest of the servants of the Amīr” [Vāṣifī, *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* (Tehran), pp. 377-378, my translation – RWD]. Mavlānā Ṣāhib Dārā, to whom Vāṣifī was related on his maternal-side, proved to be a very important relation, as it was he who first brought Vāṣifī’s poetic talents to the attention of Navā’ī, and introduced him at Navā’ī’s *majlis*.

regard to matters of culture and the arts by referencing the *Tuhfa-yi sāmī* of Sām Mīrzā, third son of Shāh Ismāʿīl I, who according to Haidar expressed his admiration not only for Muḥammad Shībānī Khān, but for his contemporary and enemy, ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān, as well.²⁴⁶ While Haidar does admit to a degree of cultural stagnation following the death of ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān (d. 1540) and the turmoil which thereafter ensued, she maintains that the patronization of the literary and graphic arts was never eliminated, and rebounded once political stability returned and the economy recovered. In her estimation, the cultural level of the more erudite Abu’l-Khayrid princes compared favorably to their Tīmūrid and Ṣafavid counterparts.

Like most sovereigns in the Islamic world, the Abu’l-Khayrids well understood the role played by the patronization of men of letters, artists and architects in augmenting their standing, not only vis-à-vis one another, but in the eyes of their beks and supporters, the ‘*ulamā*’, and their subjects as well. Haidar notes, for good measure, that Vāṣifī was himself patronized from time-to-time by various members of Abu’l-Khayr Khān’s family, telling, for example, of how Vāṣifī was “bestowed 500 Ubaidi coins and saddled and bridled horses” by ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān, and so on.²⁴⁷ Illustrating the Abu’l-Khayrid Shībānids’ understanding of the need to promote cultural pursuits, Haidar cites Vāṣifī’s account of Kīldī Muḥammad Khān issuing a decree,

...to amirs, sadrs, wazirs, qazis, the high and the low, and to men of learning and scholarship...in the form of verse informing all and sundry that his court was a

Ṣāhib Dārā also penned a chronogram in honor of Navāʿī upon the latter’s death in 1501, which is provided by Vāṣifī, *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* (Tehran), pp. 378-382.

²⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 309. Abū Nasr Sām Mīrzā b. Shāh Ismāʿīl I served as governor of Khurasan, seated in Herat, from 1521 to 1535 during the reigns of both his father and older brother, Shāh Tahmāsp I (r. 1524-1576). Given his being stationed in Herat “...he was able...to experience the reverberation of a peak of Persian culture at the court of Ḥusayn Mīrzā Bayḡara,” although he managed to lose the city to the Uzbeks in 1535. He is best known for his *Tuhfa-yi sāmī*, which he wrote under the *takhallus* Sāmī, completed around 1560. See B. Reinert, “Sām Mīrzā,” *EP*², Vol. VIII, p. 1012.

²⁴⁷ Ibid, pp. 315, 357.

rendezvous of scholars and men of talent. Such persons were as Mulla Matlai who had applied for help were to receive every assistance and favour. Men of talents were, therefore, invited to approach him.²⁴⁸

With such an open invitation to the lettered and erudite men scattered throughout the realm of the Abu'l-Khayrids, it is clear that Kīldī Muḥammad fully intended to augment his prestige and his court with regard to his brothers and cousins by drawing such men to his territory. Just as their Tīmūrid predecessors had done, the Abu'l-Khayrid princes, elites, and men of erudition held *majālis* which were attended by poets, authors and artists, their patrons and aficionados of the arts and cultural pursuits. Such *majālis* served as a forum for cultural dialogue and, as Haidar puts it, "...a source of inspiration and social sustenance to the commonality and ordinary folk."²⁴⁹ This conclusion echoes those of Soviet era historians such as Sadriddin Aynī and Aleksandr Boldyrev, Jiří Bečka, and others considered herein, who maintained that the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* is itself a testament to the cultural phenomenon of the later Tīmūrid and early Shībānid eras which saw the popularization of literary culture among the middle-classes and, consequently, the increasing participation of merchants, traders, craftsmen, artisans and so on in literary activities.

Finally Haidar provides her readers with some biographical information on Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāṣifī himself, and in so doing also relates some interesting facts with

²⁴⁸ Ibid, pp. 314, 357. *BV*, Vol. II, pp. 110-111.

²⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 317. Haidar mentions a particular *majlis*, the details of which are related in the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, at which Kīldī Muḥammad expressed his admiration for scholars, and "...emphasized that men of learning and scholarship, the talented and the wise, particularly the experts in sharia, should be nicely clad and properly dressed not for the sake of displaying their status but simply for securing respect from the common people whose eyes could see only the superficial things." The words of Kīldī Muḥammad serve to further support the notion that the Shībānid princes were every bit as aware as the Tīmūrids of the role played by men of learning and culture in society as a whole, and of their obligation to support such individuals whose pursuits were little understood or appreciated by the masses; see Haidar, pp. 318, 357; Haidar references Vāṣifī, *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* (Moscow), p. 194.

regard to the state of education and a handful of unique individuals involved this field in early sixteenth century Mavarannahr. She relates that Vāṣifī,

not only acquired extraordinary position in Tashkent but also received invitation from all quarters which could be termed as centres of learning... Wasifī was so much in demand in Samarqand that he could not comply with Sultan Muhammad Bahadur's invitation to him to go to Shahrukhiā.²⁵⁰

The names of other men involved in education mentioned in Vāṣifī, such as Mīrzā Khvārazmī and Mavlānā Hājji, as well as details regarding the staffing *madrasahs* and the appointment *mudarris*, are provided by Haidar as well.²⁵¹

²⁵⁰ Ibid, pp. 321, 357; Vāṣifī, *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* (Moscow), p. 422.

²⁵¹ Ibid, pp. 321-322, 324-327, 358-359.

CHAPTER II

THE NARRATIVE OF ZAYN AL-DĪN MAḤMŪD VĀṢIFĪ ON THE ABU'L-KHAYRID CONQUEST OF KHURASAN

Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāṣifī came into the world in the Tīmūrid capital of Herat some six years after Muḥammad Shībānī Khān first came to Bukhara and entered into the service of the aforementioned ‘Abd al-‘Alī Tarkhān. Vāṣifī had the good fortune of being born during a time of peace and prosperity for the city of Herat and its inhabitants. While minor conflicts had erupted or were ongoing in adjoining regions, the Tīmūrid capital of Herat had known peace since the second and final ascension of Sulṭān Abu'l-Ghāzī Ḥusayn Mīrzā, more commonly referred to as Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā, in 1470-71. With this peace came economic growth and, for Herat, geographic expansion. Peace and prosperity also brought the growth of what one might appropriately label a “middle class,” the ranks of which were occupied by mid-level bureaucrats employed in the business of city and state, merchants of all sorts, shopkeepers, men working in book ateliers, and so on.²⁵² With their modest wealth, enough to know some of the comforts

²⁵² Terry Allen, *Timurid Herat* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1983), pp. 36-45; Allen provides a concise sketch of the social and economic conditions of Herat during the late Tīmūrid era: according to Allen, “the continuous economic expansion of Herat during the Timurid age” was “based on continued expansion of the cultivated zones of Herāt and other velāyats.” With regard to bureaucrats and civil functionaries, Allen states that they would have been members of the ‘*ulamā*’, who “supplied the *vazīrs* of the Soltāns and staffed the ministries and madrasas; in short, they ran the municipal affairs of Herāt.” This trend carried over into the early Abu'l-Khayrid era, as exemplified by Vāṣifī himself. While acknowledging Herat’s robust economy under Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā, Subtelny is quick to remind us that “...the Herat of Husain Baiqara would not have been possible had it not been for the solid groundwork laid for it by preceding rulers who, in their patronage of cultural activities, established the basis for further developments”; see Maria Eva Subtelny, “The Poetic Circle,” pp. 10-11. Rulers such as Shāh Rukh, his sons and grandsons, and princes from collateral Tīmūrid lines such as Abū Sa’īd and Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā, set the tone for cultural patronage in the Tīmūrid realm, and their behavior was widely imitated by the amirs and bureaucrats serving under them. While recognizing this debt owed to earlier rulers and their underlings, scholars continue to see the reign of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā as the period in which Herat reached its apogee; with regard to the arts, Blair and Bloom state: “Under the munificent patronage of Husayn Bayqara...Herat once again became the center of literature and book production in the Iranian world”; see Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, *The Art and Architecture of Islam, 1250-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 63.

with which the upper echelons of society had long been acquainted, came leisure time, and it is Vāṣifī who provides us with an insider’s view with regard to how members of Herat’s middle classes passed this leisure time. It is to this Herat that Vāṣifī looks back in his memoirs with an almost nostalgic reverence, like any man regarding his youth fondly and the dreams which once occupied his mind before the challenges and drudgery of adult existence cast them asunder.

Inevitably every peace is broken, and the peace that Herat had known during Vāṣifī’s youth was not to last. Vāṣifī lived through the death of Mīrzā Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā and the disintegration of the dynasty to which he belonged, as well as to the subsequent conquest of his city by the Abu’l-Khayrid Chinggisids and their Uzbek confederates and the expulsion of these same Chinggisids just three years later by the zealous Qizilbāsh forces of Shāh Ismā‘īl, sovereign of the nascent Ṣafavid state that had been proclaimed far to the west in the city of Tabriz in the summer of 1501.²⁵³ While Vāṣifī himself was not directly involved in the political and military events surrounding either the Abu’l-Khayrid or the Ṣafavid conquest of Herat and its environs, as an inhabitant of the city and a man loosely affiliated with the ancien régime of the Tīmūrīds he was by his own account tangentially involved. These two events had a significant impact upon the direction that his life was to take, and on the transformation of Islamic Central Asia. Included in the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* are narrative accounts of Vāṣifī’s own

²⁵³ Sarwar, pp. 37-39. Shāh Ismā‘īl entered the city of Tabriz following his victory over the Āq Qoyūnlū ruler, Alvand b. Yūsuf b. Ūzūn Ḥasan, at Sharūr, or Shurūr, near the Aras River. There is some contention in the sources with regard to the precise dating of Ismā‘īl’s coronation, but Sarwar places it “in the beginning of 907 / middle of 1501.” On the establishment of the Ṣafavid state, Savory opines: “Coins were minted in Ismā‘īl’s name, but his most important action was to pronounce that the official religion of the new Ṣafavid state would be Ithnā ‘Asharī, or “Twelver”, Shi‘ism”; see Roger Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 26. On the coins struck to mark this event, Sarwar provides the marginal inscription on the obverse: لا اله الا الله محمد الرسول الله و على ولي الله. The pronouncement of Twelver Shi‘ism as the state religion of Ṣafavid Persia would have a profound impact on Vāṣifī when the Ṣafavids acquired dominion over Herat in 1510, as will be discussed further in this work.

adventures set against the backdrop of both of these momentous events in the history of the region. Vāṣifī's narratives provide us with a unique opportunity to consider how these political and military events impacted daily life in and around Herat, and how they were received, interpreted, and navigated by ordinary, non-aristocratic residents of Herat – *imāms*, poets, teachers, shopkeepers, merchants, that is to say men such as Vāṣifī and his relations and associates.

The narrative of Vāsifī regarding the Abu'l-Khayrid seizure of Herat

With the advent of the sixteenth century the Abu'l-Khayrid Shībānids occupied the place of their predecessors, the Tīmūrīds, the former overlords of Islamic Central Asia, and assumed some of the political traditions, economic relations, and cultural achievements of those polities that had followed one after another in succession since late antiquity. Mavarannahr had finally and conclusively passed into their hands with the expulsion of Zāhīr al-Dīn Muḥammad Bābur in 1501. With Muḥammad Shībānī Khān in possession of the realm north of the Amu Darya, the death of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā in 1506 shuttled what remained of the Tīmūrīd realm in Khurasan into a state of near political anarchy. Two of his sons, Badī' al-Zamān and Muẓaffar Ḥusayn, backed by their respective supporters, agreed to share power as co-rulers in Herat, with the former as senior partner as the eldest of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā's surviving sons. By all accounts, the brothers did very little to endear themselves to the nobles, notables, and grandees of their father's kingdom, nor were they well-liked by the people at large. Bābur, who had already established himself as the ruler of Kabul in 1504 prior to the death of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā and who had at first hoped that together with his cousins he would be able to turn the advancing tide of the Abu'l-Khayrids and their Uzbek confederates and perhaps expel them from Mavarannahr, quickly lost confidence in them and turned his attention southward, first to pacify rebellious elements in Kabul and conquer Qandahar and its immediate environs before finally vanquishing the forces of Ibrāhīm Lōdī at the battle of Panipat and advancing into northern India in the spring of 1526.

We are told by Khvāndamīr that, prior to leading his forces into Khurasan, Muḥammad Shībānī Khān had sent an emissary to Badī‘ al-Zamān Mīrzā and Muẓaffar Ḥusayn Kūrkān to remind them of the “obeisance” shown by their Tīmūrid forebears to the Abu’l-Khayrids, and encourage them to follow history’s example.²⁵⁴ When it was discovered that the forces of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān were laying siege to Balkh, word was sent throughout Khurasan summoning the mirzas and amirs to assemble on the banks of the Murghab River in order to check the Uzbek advance south of the Amu Darya.²⁵⁵ Many Tīmūrids answered this call, including the young Ṣahīr al-Dīn Muḥammad Bābur. This compelled Muḥammad Shībānī Khān to abandon Balkh, having already taken the town, and withdraw to Mavarannahr for the winter. The year was 1506.

By May of 1507, Muḥammad Shībānī Khān had renewed his incursion into Khurasan, taken Andkhud, and arrived in the region of Badghis where, according to Khvāndamīr, Badī‘ al-Zamān and Muẓaffar Ḥusayn had reunited.²⁵⁶ The account of Vāṣifī differs slightly from that of Khvāndamīr with regard to what happened next. It is stated in the *Habīb al-siyar* that, “When Muhammad khan reached the vicinity of Badghis, a torrent of terror swept the sultans and amirs of Khurasan into rout and...once again they turned to council.” Tīmūr Sulṭān b. Muḥammad Shībānī Khān and ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Maḥmūd Sulṭān led the Uzbek charge against the Tīmūrids, seemingly under the command of Badī‘ al-Zamān and Muẓaffar Ḥusayn. Amīr Zu’l-Nūn Arghūn, who had

²⁵⁴ Ghiyath al-Din ibn Humam al-Din Khwandamir, *Habibu's Siyar, tome three: the reign of the Mongol and the Turk*, trans., ed. W. M. Thackston (Cambridge: Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations Harvard University, 1994), p. 534. Muḥammad Shībānī would have been referring to the military and political relationship that had existed between his grandfather and the Tīmūrid ruler Abū Sa‘īd Mīrzā, as reviewed above.

²⁵⁵ The headwaters of the Murghab are located in the Safid Kuh mountain range of what is today central Afghanistan. It flows in a westerly direction before turning to head roughly north-northwest before finally disappearing into the sands of the Qara Qum desert.

²⁵⁶ *HS*, p. 537. Andkhud, now known more commonly as Andkhoy, is located roughly one-hundred miles west of Balkh, in the province of Faryab, Afghanistan, not far from the border with Turkmenistan.

become a virtually independent ruler at Qandahar in the late days of the reign of Sultān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā, was slain in this battle, and the Abu'l-Khayrid Uzbeks emerged victorious. It was only after this that the Tīmūrid mirzas and amirs scattered and the armies dissolved.²⁵⁷

The date provided by Vāṣifī for the arrival of the Abu'l-Khayrids in the vicinity of the Tīmūrid capital is the day of Ashura in the year 913, which corresponds to May 22, 1507. This date differs slightly from that given by Khvāndamīr, 7 Muharram 913, or May 19, 1507.²⁵⁸ Vāṣifī does not specify as to which of the Abu'l-Khayrid commanders led the charge on this occasion, most likely because he would not have had to recount such a detail had he ever told this tale for the delight of one of the khans or sultans of the Abu'l-Khayrid dynasty. With regard to the location of the battle, Khvāndamīr implies that it occurred somewhere between the caravansary of Amīr 'Alī Shīr Navā'ī and Manzil-i Maral,²⁵⁹ whereas Vāṣifī, as stated above, places the battle one farsang from Childukhtaran at a place called Tarnab.

As Vāṣifī recounts in the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, he was in attendance at a *majlis* being hosted by his Tīmūrid patron, Amīr Shāh Valī, when word of these events arrived.

According to Vāṣifī:

At that moment, unexpectedly, a fellow entered by the door and declared: “O, Mīr, rise up and flee while you have a chance! For word has just come to Khadījah Baygum; Shāh Badī' al-Zamān and Muẓaffar Mīrzā had arranged a *majlis* at the summer encampment of Childukhtaran²⁶⁰...when word arrived that Shaybak Khān, having sacked the city of Nasaf, which is to say Qarshi, [crossed the Amu and] has arrived [in this country]. Amīr

²⁵⁷ Ibid, pp. 537-538.

²⁵⁸ <http://www.oriold.uzh.ch/static/hegira.html>.

²⁵⁹ *HS*, p. 538; Khvāndamīr states that, “...the victory-laden breeze of divine favor blew from Amir Ali-Sher's caravanserai and Manzil-i Maral through Muhammad Khan Shaybani's banners, Sultan Badi'uzzaman Mirza and Muzaffar Mirza Kūrāgān, along with most of the great amirs and soldiers...fled in route in a different direction.”

²⁶⁰ The place name of Childukhtaran, or Chihil Dukhtarān / چهل دختران given by Vāṣifī, literally “Forty Maidens”, had been the location of one of the summer encampments of Sultān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā. There are a number of locations which bear this name within what is today Afghanistan.

Zu'l-Nūn Arghūn, who is a *Sipāhsālār* and a *Bahādur* of that house, rode out to skirmish with ten thousand armed and ready soldiers, who on the day of battle were in search of repute and mortal honor in a life of bold enterprise. They arrived in the district of Tarnab, which is one farsang from Childukhtaran, and battle ensued. The army of Shaybak Khān, like a scythe cutting down grass, eradicated the men of Zu'l-Nūn Arghūn. He was slain in that battle, and the army of the khan, having taken his head, has stuck it upon the head of a lance, and is now advancing. The princes [Badī' al-Zamān and Muẓaffār Mīrzā], upon hearing this – *As if they were affrighted asses, fleeing from a lion*.²⁶¹ – disbanded and the khan, with fifty-thousand men, arrived in the vicinity of the city.”²⁶²

This passage raises a number of questions and requires perhaps a bit of explication. We can only begin to speculate as to the identity of the messenger, the unidentified fellow who interrupts the *majlis* of Amīr Shāh Valī, although he seems to have been sent by Khadījah Baygum to warn him of the arrival of the Uzbeks to the environs of Herat. The fact that Khadījah Baygum would have been quickly apprised of events at Tarnab and the subsequent flight of the mirzas should come as no great surprise given the fact that she was the mother of Muẓaffar Ḥusayn Kūrkān and a Tīmūrid lady of high rank, actively involved in her son's political career.²⁶³ We can surmise that Muẓaffar Ḥusayn would

²⁶¹ Qur'ān, 74:50-51.

²⁶² *BV*, Vol. II, p. 275.

²⁶³ Sources attest to the fact that Khadījah Baygum played a prominent role in both her son's career and in Herat as events unfolded following the death of Sultān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā. As Khvāndamīr recounts, there was a good deal of debate as to whether Badī' al-Zamān Mīrzā should alone inherit his father's throne and placate his younger brother, Muẓaffar Ḥusayn Mīrzā, with rule over some province, or whether both princes ought to be elevated to the throne as co-rulers. Khvāndamīr then states, “Much debate was held in this regard. The Royal Mother Khadija Begi Agha, Muẓaffar Ḥusayn Mīrzā's extremely influential mother, and Amir Shujā'uddīn Muhammad Burunduq Barlas's sons...absolutely would not agree that Badi'uzzaman should have the rule independently. Since at that time most of the army were followers of Khadija Begi Agha and the Barlas amirs, the partnership faction won the day”; see *HS*, p. 532. Clearly, with the support of a good portion of the military, Khadījah Baygum wielded a great deal of power during this period. Ḥasan Rūmlū indicates, without expressly stating, that Khadījah Baygum played a role in securing co-ruler status for Muẓaffar Ḥusayn Mīrzā upon the death of Sultān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā: “Following the death of that *haẓrat*, the amirs and pillars of state deemed it prudent that they elevate Badī' al-Zamān Mīrzā as absolute *Pādishāh*. Some maintained that the name of Muẓaffar Ḥusayn Mīrzā should also be admitted to the *sikah* and the *khuṭbah* so that he would not trod the path of discord. Conversation on this matter was protracted. Khadījah Baygī Āghā, who was the mother of Muẓaffar Ḥusayn Mīrzā, possessed all importance. Accordingly, those in favor of a partnership found preference, and on *jum'ah*, in the Herat mosque, they read out the *khuṭbah* in the name of both princes”; see Ḥasan Bīg Rūmlū, *Aḥsan al-tavārīkh*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Navā'ī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Bābak, 1978), pp. 119-120. The translation provided is my own. On the role played by women and the power they possessed in Tīmūrid court life, see Beatrice Forbes Manz, “Women in Timurid Dynastic Politics,” *Women in Iran from the Rise of Islam to 1800* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), pp. 121-139.

have dispatched one of his retinue to bring word to his mother regarding the arrival of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān and his forces, the defeat and death of Amīr Z̤u'l-Nūn Arghūn, and the decision of the mirzas and their supporters to flee before the Uzbek horde.

Vāṣifī's mention of the titles *Sipāhsālār* and a *Bahādur* with regard to Z̤u'l-Nūn Arghūn is also of note. Some work has been done to flesh out the historical character of Amīr Z̤u'l-Nūn Arghūn, and he is mentioned in various sources, including Mīr Khvānd's *Ravzāt al-Safā*, Khvāndamīr's *Habīb al-siyar*, the *Bāburnāmah*, and so on. Additionally, aside from this particular reference, there are additional episodes featuring Amīr Z̤u'l-Nūn Arghūn in the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*. Amīr Z̤u'l-Nūn Arghūn, also referred to as Z̤u'l-Nūn Bayk Arghūn,²⁶⁴ initially entered into the service of the Tīmūrīds as a young warrior among the retinue of Sulṭān Abū Sa'īd Mīrzā around 1451, and served this sovereign faithfully until the latter's death in 1468. Following this, he entered into the service of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā Mīrzā. In time, he was granted the governorship over a great deal of the Tīmūrīd realm in what would today be central and southern Afghanistan, specifically Sistan and Baluchistan. Portrayed as a man of high ambitions and a great soldier and leader in the field, the sources also speak to his piety, and that as a ruler he was as harsh as he was just. The *Tārīkh-i rashīdī* presents a favorable assessment of Amīr Z̤u'l-Nūn Arghūn. While recounting some events which took place at Kabul and providing some biographical information on Shāh Bayk b. Z̤u'l-Nūn Arghūn, Dūghlāt states:

Shāh Beg was the son of Zunnun Arghun, who was one of the greatest Amirs of Mīrzā Sulṭān Husain, under whom he had, during thirty years, conducted the affairs of Kandahār and Zamindāwar...he was a brave and intelligent man, yet by denying himself everything, he amassed great wealth...When Shāhi Beg Khān attacked Herat, he alone

²⁶⁴ C. Collin Davies, "Arghūn," *EP²*, Vol. I (Leiden: Brill, 1960): p. 627. (627-628)

went out to oppose the advance of the Uzbek army, and in the engagement which ensued, he was slain.²⁶⁵

Of course other sources, the *Bāburnāmah* in particular, are more critical in their assessment of Zu'l-Nūn Arghūn, and we are told that, having established a base of power for himself in Qandahar, Zamindavar, and so on, his loyalty to Ḥusayn Bāyqarā might be characterized as fickle at best, and he often had to be cajoled into fulfilling his obligations to Herat.²⁶⁶ Amīr Zu'l-Nūn threw his support to Badī' al-Zamān Mīrzā when he rebelled against his father in 1497,²⁶⁷ going so far in solidifying their alliance as to wed his daughter to the young mirza.²⁶⁸ Bābur relates that Zu'l-Nūn Arghūn was the “steward” of Badī' al-Zamān during the period of co-rule with Muẓaffar Ḥusayn, and opines that although he was courageous and outwardly pious, “...he was also a bit of a fool,” and that it was this foolishness and hubris that ultimately led to his earthly undoing at the hands of the Uzbeks in 1507.²⁶⁹

With regard to the titles affixed by Vāṣifī to Zu'l-Nūn Arghūn: the first, *Sipāhsālār*, is rather generically defined by Steingass as “General of an army,” being synonymous with both *Sipāhkash* and *Sipāhdār*, literally one who either leads or

²⁶⁵ *TR*, p. 202.

²⁶⁶ M. Saleem Akhtar, “The Origin of the Arghuns and Tarkhāns of Sind and the Rise and Fall of Dhu al-Nun Arghun under the Tīmurids of Harāt,” *Islamic Culture*, Vol. 59, No. 4 (1985): pp. 340-356.

²⁶⁷ According to Khvāndamīr, Badī' al-Zamān rebelled in the spring of 1497 on account of the removal of his son, Muḥammad Mū'min Mīrzā, from the governorship of Gurgan in favor of Muẓaffar Ḥusayn, and the fact that he had felt insulted by Muẓaffar Ḥusayn during operations at Qunduz; see *HS*, pp. 456-457.

²⁶⁸ *HS*, p. 459. Following the death of Amīr Zu'l-Nūn Arghūn his eldest son, Shāh Bayk, swore fealty to Muḥammad Shībānī Khān upon his capture of Herat in 1507, and managed to fend off both Shāh Ismā'īl and Bābur for some time before finally yielding Qandahar to the latter in 1522 and relocating the house of Arghūn to the region of Sind; see Davies, “Arghūn,” p. 627.

²⁶⁹ *BN*, pp. 205-206. Bābur tells a story of how Amīr Zu'l-Nūn Arghūn was seduced by the flattery of “several shaykhs and mullas” who, claiming to be representing the Qutb, i.e. al-Insān al-Kāmil or the most perfect human being who sits atop a saintly hierarchy and serves as a sort of conduit to the Divine, stated that Zu'l-Nūn Arghūn had been declared the “Lion of God” and that he would conquer the Uzbek horde. According to Bābur, this accounts for Zu'l-Nūn Arghūn riding out against the Uzbeks with such a small force. On the notion of the Qutb, see F. de Jong, “al-Ḳuṭb,” *EP*², Vol. V (Leiden: Brill, 1960), pp. 542-546.

possesses an army.²⁷⁰ According to Hayyim, *Sipāhsālār* ought to be defined as “the commander (-in chief) of an army”, signifying that individual who is not only a general, but the supreme general.²⁷¹ Dehkhodā similarly defines the term as general or chief of the army, and lists synonyms such as *Sālār-i lashkar* and *Ra‘īs-i lashkar*.²⁷² The title itself has a long history of use throughout the greater Iranian world. The eleventh century historian, Abū Sa‘īd ‘Abd al-Hayy Gardīzī, relates that *sipāhsālār* was the title granted, “From the time of Afīrdūn to that of Ardashīr Bābakān,” to the supreme military commander in the Persian empire.²⁷³ The term *Spāhsālār*, from which *Sipāhsālār* is ultimately derived, is found in Middle Persian, and was “transmitted from Pahlavi to Avestan script” in the ninth century, while “The use of the term *Ispahsālār* became widespread in the 4th/10th century.”²⁷⁴ Under the Būyids, renowned for their use of pre-Islamic Persian titles and pageantry, *Sipāhsālār* came to distinguish any commander, although it remained a highly esteemed title in neighboring regions. For example, according to Nizām al-Mulk, an Ismā‘īlī conspiracy was foiled during the late Sāmānid era thanks to the endeavors of one Alptegīn, the Turkic military commander of Khurasan who held the title of *Sipāhsālār*.²⁷⁵ During the Ghaznavid era the title continued to denote supreme commander, and under the Saljūqs *Sipāhsālār* alternated “...with such expressions as *Amīr al-‘umarā’*, *Amīr-i amīrān*, *Amīr-sālār*...etc.”²⁷⁶ While the title fell out of use somewhat during the Mongol period, its use is attested to during the Ṣafavid

²⁷⁰ Steingass, p. 651.

²⁷¹ Hayyim, Vol. II, p. 28.

²⁷² <http://www.loghatnaameh.org/dehkhodaworddetail-2d309daadac944afb14e404a5e1f6991-fa.html>.

²⁷³ C. Edmund Bosworth, trans., *The Ornaments of Histories: A History of the Eastern Islamic Lands AD 650-1041: The Persian Text of Abu Sa‘id ‘Abd al-Hayy Gardizi* (London: I. B. Taurus & Co., Ltd., 2011), p. 13.

²⁷⁴ C. E. Bosworth, “Ispahsālār, Sipāhsālār,” *EF²*, Vol. IV (Leiden: Brill, 1960), p. 208. (208-210)

²⁷⁵ A. C. S. Peacock, *Medieval Islamic Historiography and Political Legitimacy: Bal‘amī’s Tārīkh-nāma* (Routledge: London, 2007), p. 25.

²⁷⁶ Bosworth, “Ispahsālār Sipāhsālār,” p. 209.

period, and was bestowed by Shāh ‘Abbās I upon Allāhvirdī Khān, the Georgian *ghulām* and prominent advisor to the court.²⁷⁷ The title *Sipāhsālār* continued to be granted by Shāh ‘Abbās and his successors. Of course, given that Shāh ‘Abbās I reigned from 1571 to 1629, and Vāṣifī penned his work much earlier, the fact that he used the title of *Sipāhsālār* in connection with Amīr Zu’l-Nūn Arghūn suggests that it was already coming back into use by the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century.

Vāṣifī states that Amīr Zu’l-Nūn Arghūn was “...a *Sipāhsālār*...of that house,” thus the question becomes, was the title of *Sipāhsālār* one that had been formally bestowed upon Amīr Zu’l-Nūn Arghūn, most likely by his son-in-law and ally, Badī‘ al-Zamān, or does Vāṣifī simply mean to say that Zu’l-Nūn was the *generalissimo* of the Arghūnid house? Furthermore, if he had been formally invested with the title of *Sipāhsālār*, does this mean that Amīr Zu’l-Nūn Arghūn had been appointed supreme commander of Tīmūrid forces in Khurasan prior to the Abu’l-Khayrid invasion? The number of times Amīr Zu’l-Nūn Arghūn was called upon by Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā and Badī‘ al-Zamān Mīrzā, as recounted in the *Habīb al-siyar*, indicates the extent to which these scions of Amīr Tīmūr – especially Badī‘ al-Zamān – depended upon his continued support, and that he might have indeed been considered a *Sipāhsālār*, the supreme commander of Tīmūrid forces in Khurasan.

The second title used by Vāṣifī in relation with Amīr Zu’l-Nūn Arghūn, that of *Bahādur*, is of Turko-Mongolic provenance. Both Steingass and Hayyim provide the most popular definitions: brave; valiant; courageous; a champion; a hero, etc.²⁷⁸ Sinor maintains that this title is common to all Altaic languages, being “equally well

²⁷⁷ David Blow, *Shah Abbas: The Ruthless King Who Became an Iranian Legend* (London: I. B. Taurus & Co., Ltd., 2009), p. 39.

²⁷⁸ Steingass, p. 209; Hayyim, Vol. I, p. 292.

represented in Turkish, Mongol and Tunguz dialects,” and that its use is attested to in Chinese chronicles dating to the seventh century.²⁷⁹ Fleischer adds that,

As an honorific formally conferred upon an individual by a ruler, *bagātur*...was given currency by Jengiz (Čengīz) Khan...who awarded this designation to those members, reportedly one thousand in number, of his personal forces whom he wished to recognize for outstanding valor and service. This use of *bagātur/bahādor* was continued in the Mongol successor states.²⁸⁰

As is the case with regard to the use of *Sipāhsālār*, the question becomes precisely what statement was Vāṣifī making in appending the honorific *Bahādur* to Amīr Zu’l-Nūn Arghūn? Had the formal title of *Bahādur* actually been granted to Zu’l-Nūn Arghūn? Did Vāṣifī employ this term simply in order to convey the amir’s heroic character, or did he use this title specifically to point to Zu’l-Nūn’s Mongol roots as a member of the house of Arghūn?²⁸¹ It is known that in Tīmūrid India, “the title was commonly conferred upon major men of state whose ties were primarily to the dynasty.”²⁸² Had such been the case in Tīmūrid Khurasan as well, prior to Bābur’s emigration? Fleischer makes mention of the continued use of *Bahādur* as an official title in the Ulus Chaghatāy, so it is quite possible it was thusly used in the Tīmūrid realm as well.²⁸³

The figure of Vāṣifī’s Tīmūrid patron, Amīr Shāh Valī, is also of interest. Of his benefactor, Vāṣifī states, “Amīr Shāh Valī...was the *kākalāsh* of Khadījah Baygum and...was without equal in greatness, esteem, and authority amongst the line of Chaghatāy at the court of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Mīrzā.”²⁸⁴ With this statement Vāṣifī seems to hold Amīr Shāh Valī in respect, but shortly thereafter he goes on to expose his patron’s

²⁷⁹ D. Sinor, “Bahādur,” *EP*², Vol. I (Leiden: Brill, 1960), p. 913.

²⁸⁰ C. Fleischer, “Bahādor,” *Encyclopedia Iranica*, Vol. III, Facs. 4 (1988), pp. 436-437.

²⁸¹ The Arghūnids traced their ancestry to Hulāgū Khān through his grandson, Arghūn Khān, son of Ābāqā Khān; see C. Collin Davies, “Arghūn,” *EP*², Vol. I (Leiden: Brill, 1960), p. 627.

²⁸² Fleischer, p. 437.

²⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 437.

²⁸⁴ *BV*, Vol. II, p. 273.

more human side, narrating how he was “beyond intoxicated” when word of the Uzbek victory arrived and how he flew into a rage and nearly cut down the messenger.²⁸⁵

The information provided by Vāṣifī with regard to Amīr Shāh Valī aptly illustrates the political decentralization that characterized the reign of Mīrzā Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā as the fifteenth century drew to a close, a phenomenon which has been convincingly argued by Subtelny and others and need not be elaborated upon here.²⁸⁶ Vāṣifī recounts that, like many other amirs under the last great Tīmūrid sovereign, and largely as a result of the latter’s beneficent favor and the fact the he was the *kūkalṭāsh* of the said sovereign’s favorite wife, Amīr Shāh Valī had managed to build a significant power base for himself. According to Vāṣifī’s narrative, Shāh Valī harbored such delusions of grandeur that he conducted his affairs as a virtually independent lord, and had become so prideful that he openly flouted the authority of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā. Vāṣifī states:

“...one time, when a certain individual had slain someone and had concealed himself in his [Amīr Shāh Valī’s] home, Sulṭān Ḥusayn Mīrzā sent someone to him three times [with the message] ‘Send that murderer to me so that I may ascertain the truth.’ He [Amīr Shāh Valī] sent word back, ‘I have ascertained the truth regarding this man: it [the charge] is slander!’”²⁸⁷

At one point in the narrative Amīr Shāh Valī, while imploring Vāṣifī to come to his aid, confesses his transgressions, speaking of his “ill-mannered and evil-natured disposition,”

²⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 275.

²⁸⁶ Maria Eva Subtelny, “Centralizing Reform and Its Opponents in the Late Tīmūrid Period,” *Iranian Studies*, Vol. XXI, No. 1-2 (1988): pp. 123-151; Subtelny’s study here focuses on the attempts of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā to regularize taxation “when the problem of fiscal and political decentralization had become acute for the central government.” Of course it is argued elsewhere, by Subtelny and others, that the political decentralization which in part defined the later Tīmūrid period also gave rise to multiple rival centers of patronage which, in competition to outshine one-another, contributed to the historical phenomenon scholars refer to as the Tīmūrid Renaissance; see Maria Eva Subtelny, “Socioeconomic Basis of Cultural Patronage under the Later Tīmūrids,” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 20 (1988): pp. 479-505.

²⁸⁷ *BV*, Vol. II, p. 277.

and his utter failure to submit to his king.²⁸⁸ One might read the narrative of the calamitous fall of Amīr Shāh Valī and his fellow “Chaghatāy” amirs as an example of divine retribution, and Vāṣifī certainly seems to have interpreted the events of 1507 as such. In his insolence and arrogance Amīr Shāh Valī had on at least one occasion, and one may safely assume on other occasions as well, defied the authority of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā, and in so doing had defied the divinely set order of things. If he was so full of pride that he could not humbly and rightly submit to his sovereign on earth, how could he possibly be a good Muslim, a member of the *ummah* in good standing, living in submission to the will of God?

The notion that the collapse of the Tīmūrid-Chaghatāy dynasty in the face of the Abu’l-Khayrid invasion was a form of divine retribution, the unavoidable consequence of their excessive arrogance and lack of humility, may have been a popular interpretation of the event at the time. That it was is supported by a work contemporary to the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’*, namely the *Zubdat al-āthār* of ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad Naṣrallāhī.

Completing his work in 1525 on the order of Sulṭān Muḥammad b. Suyūnj Khvājah Khān, who is known in the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* as Kīldī Muḥammad Khān, Naṣrallāhī states:

...when too much delight and wealth reach them [a ruling dynasty and their retinue] as to exceed the limits of perfection, and when pride and arrogance find their way into their minds, they rise up to acts of rebellion and they forget the commands of the Lord...Consequently...retaliation will ensue and their fortunes will perish. Even if the mind is adorned with brilliance and learning, every thought or good intention would result in punishment because of their arrogance, and fortune will pass from them to another family. The affairs of the Chaghatay kings serve as confirmation of these words. During their later rule, the pillars of their state were proud and marked by conceit; they would not implement the Lord’s commands, and this rendered the kings weak and poor. Then, the Glorious Lord took away their fortune and gave it to Shīban Khan’s descendants who were heirs to their property.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 276.

²⁸⁹ ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad Naṣrallāhī, Ron Sela (trans.), “*Zubdat al-athar: The Beginnings of the Shībanid State*,” *Islamic Central Asia: An Anthology of Historical Sources*, eds. Scott C. Levi and Ron Sela

Naṣrallāhī, like Vāṣifī, clearly saw the fall of the Tīmūrīds as the realization of divine justice, the penance due for their excessive pride and arrogance. What better examples of proud and conceited “pillars of their state” than the amirs Zu’l-Nūn Arghūn and Shāh Valī?

The *majlis* having been disrupted and Shāh Valī’s initial drunken rage having subsided, “the sound of the hooves of the galloping horses at the head of the street,” heralding the arrival of the Abu’l-Khayrid Uzbeks, “made itself known,” and a great wave of panic washed over those in attendance at the home of Shāh Valī. Vāṣifī here employs the Qur’ānic language of the *Yawm al-dīn* – the Day of Judgment – in an effort to adequately convey the degree of terror experienced by the people. So great was the tumult, Vāṣifī recalls, “that you would say – *For the convulsion of the Hour of Judgment will be a thing terrible!*²⁹⁰ – had been made manifest, and the arch of the celestial dome from the sound – *the trumpet will be blown*²⁹¹ – had shattered.” The *majlis* broke up as the attendees scattered to secure their possessions and their lives in the face of the Uzbek onslaught. By his own account, Vasifī and his cousin, Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn Muḥammad, were the only men to remain at the side of Amīr Shāh Valī and his household.²⁹²

(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), p. 205. The *Zubdat al-āthār* is a general history which runs to the year 1525; it is apparently claimed within the narrative that the work was based on Uyghur texts. Hofman tells us that the works cited by the author himself are those of Yazdī, Mīrkhvānd, Khvāndamīr and Shāh Maḥmūd Zangī ‘Agham. Hofman further asserts that the title *Zubdat al-āthār* was actually attributed to the work by Bartol’d “from his sources.” As for the author, Naṣrallāhī was a native of Balkh, born in the later Tīmūrīd era, and began his career in the employ of the Tīmūrīds before later entering into the service of the Abu’l-Khayrids. Hofman adds that “The work gives interesting details of the author’s own age. It has had a long life. . . in CA. [Central Asia], remaining fairly celebrated among its different peoples and populations”; see H. F. Hofman, *Turkish literature; a bio-bibliographical survey* (Utrecht: Library of the University of Utrecht, 1969), pp. 256-258.

²⁹⁰ Qur’ān, 22:1.

²⁹¹ Qur’ān, 18:99.

²⁹² *BV*, Vol. II, p. 276.

The “divine retribution” sent in the form of a marauding Uzbek horde from the *Dasht-i Qipchāq* compelled Amīr Shāh Valī, fearing at that moment not only for his own life, but for the lives of his family members as well, to honestly consider and admit to his faults and to beseech his client – the poet, the tutor of his son, the *ḥāfiẓ* and humble servant of God, Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāṣifī – to save him and his loved ones. One might ask the question – why would an amir of Shāh Valī’s stature presume that Vāṣifī would be able to save him and his household? Of course, one can only speculate as to his reasoning, but it seems plausible that Shāh Valī might have thought that, by staying close to a young man in his employ, albeit a respected and learned member of the community at that point, he might be better able to maintain a low profile and thereby evade capture and extortion by the Uzbeks. In any event, Vāṣifī very eloquently conveys the tension and high emotion of the moment, as well as the desperation of his patron:

Amīr Shāh Valī, touching the cloak of this *faqīr* and weeping, said: “O, Maḥmūd, it’s been a period of seven years that you have been an exemplar and model for me, and in this time I have bestowed upon you gold and jewels. Despite my ill-mannered and evil-natured disposition, and that I did not submit to our kings, with heart and soul I myself have endeavored to emulate your fealty and fidelity, and to my son, who is your pupil, I have often said, ‘heed to the injunction of Hazrat Amīr al-Mū‘minīn ‘Alī, may God be pleased with him, which goes: *Anyone who teaches a word to another becomes his lord and master.*’ He is your servant. We rely upon you, that in this nightmarish event you will aid and protect us! May you not spirit yourself and your brother, Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn Muḥammad, away from us! If I emerge alone from this terror, I wish your forgiveness!” *Verily Allāh will not suffer the reward of the righteous to perish.*²⁹³

For Vāṣifī the repentance and supplication of Amīr Shāh Valī, forced as they were by the circumstances of the hour, is nothing short of a miracle. Vāṣifī recalls his own amazement at that moment: “*Subhān Allāh!* How excellent is the Great Lord that he has made such an arrogant one [as Amīr Shāh Valī] so wretched and contemptible, as in the

²⁹³ Ibid, p. 276; the last sentence is drawn from the Qur’ān, 11:115. Throughout the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* Vāṣifī refers to himself self-deprecatingly as *īn faqīr*, literally “this poor fellow,” “this humble one,” “this mendicant,” etc.; see Hayyim, Vol. II, p. 489; Steingass, p. 935; *Loghatnāmeḥ-ye Dehkhodā*, <http://www.loghatnaameh.org/dehkhodaworddetail-395e339f84bd4660a3920f699bebe5d2-fa.html>.

saying, *a drowning man will clutch at straw*.²⁹⁴ Furthermore, this seeming conversion of Shāh Valī's heart served to reaffirm Vāṣifī's own faith that God would see them all through that a dark period, for surely the God capable of such an impossible feat as humbling the proud Amīr Shāh Valī would be able to preserve them.²⁹⁵

Assenting to assist Amīr Shāh Valī and his family and attendants, Vāṣifī and Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn Muḥammad gathered them all together and swore an oath on the Qur'ān that they would not abandon them in their hour of need. Taking charge of the situation, Vāṣifī led the company to the estate treasury and instructed all present to gather the gemstones and monies and to make ready for their escape under the cover of darkness. Entering Herat proper through the *Darvāzah-yi Malik*²⁹⁶ at the time of *namāz-i khuftan*, or the last prayer of the evening, they made for Vāṣifī's home where they would hide until the following day. Vāṣifī had managed to lead this party of Tīmūrid refugees to safety for the moment, but finding them a safe-house and securing their persons from the depredations of the Uzbeks would prove a far more daunting task.

If Vāṣifī considered the conquest of the Abu'l-Khayrids and the scattering of the Tīmūrids to be the manifestation of divine retribution or the divine arrangement of circumstances which resulted in the miracle of Amīr Shāh Valī humbling himself, it seems that others simply welcomed the fall of the Tīmūrids, or paid it no mind. In his endeavor to assist his patron and those attached to him, Vāṣifī looked to those he considered to be dear friends for aid. As Vāṣifī remembers it, "Twelve people came to

²⁹⁴ Ibid, pp. 276-277. The saying in Arabic given in the text is: الغريق يتعلق بكل حشيش, conveying the notion that a drowning man will cling to anything, even straw floating on the surface of the water, in order to stay afloat. This proverb or some variation of it still spoken today when one will resort to any action out of desperation.

²⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 277.

²⁹⁶ The *Darvāzah-yi Malik* was located on the northern wall of Herat proper, to the immediate west of the Bāgh-i shahr and the Ikhtiyār al-Dīn fortress; see Allen, pp. 13, 64, Herat Map 2.

mind, and I turned to them. Some hid and some made excuses: ‘I would give you a place in the blink of an eye, but that lot you speak of, harboring them would be cause for the captivity and devastation of any town or quarter they were in.’²⁹⁷ What Vāṣifī soon realized was that there was very little sympathy on the part of the people for the Tīmūrid elites – referred to as Chaghatāy in the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* – and that his friends and acquaintances, either out of fear of becoming victims of the Uzbeks themselves or a general antipathy or hostility felt toward the Tīmūrid-Chaghatāy mirzas and grandees, were unwilling to provide Amīr Shāh Valī and his family with any form of assistance. One of Vāṣifī’s acquaintances informed him that the well-known poet Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ had actually composed a *rubā‘ī* regarding the twist of fate that had befallen the Chaghatāy which had become quite popular throughout Herat.²⁹⁸

Despondent over his inability to find any safe place for Shāh Valī and his dependents, Vāṣifī proceeded home to report back to his patron. The amir and all those present were greatly saddened by his news, but just when it seemed that all hope had been lost Vāṣifī returned to the one thing that he knew would get them all through their harrowing ordeal – faith. He exclaimed to his companions, “*Never give up hope of Allāh’s soothing mercy: truly no one despairs of Allāh’s soothing mercy, except those who have no faith!* Do not lose hope that the Lord is the Causer of causes and the Key to

²⁹⁷ Ibid, pp. 278-279.

²⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 279. This *rubā‘ī*, attributed to Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ and preserved by Vāṣifī is in Chaghatāy, translates as follows:
Poor Chaghatāy, for whom the day has become night – His circumstances are a tumult, his day is black. Proudful, he did not fit upon the face of the Earth – Now for him the rat hole is one thousand gold pieces. Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ was the son of Nūr Sa‘īd Beg (himself of the line of Amīr Shāh Malīk, a powerful and influential amir under both Tīmūr and Shāh Rukh) who governed the countryside from Charjuy to Adak, and was himself a powerful figure at the Tīmūrid court of Abū Sa‘īd. According to Jāmī, Ṣāliḥ’s father was also a poet, as well as an associate of ‘Alī Shīr Navā‘ī. Ṣāliḥ left Herat in 1500 and eventually entered the service of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān. He was granted the title *malik al-shu‘arā*, or king of the poets, by Muḥammad Shībānī Khān following the Abu’l-Khayrid conquest of Herat, and went on to pen the *Shībānīnāmah*, a history of his patron in verse. Ṣāliḥ died in Bukhara in the year 941/1534-35.

many gates! He will manufacture a cause, and He will open a door!”²⁹⁹ Taking inspiration from the words of the Qur’ān, Vāṣifī’s faith in God, His divine mercy, and ultimately in a favorable outcome, was yet again reinvigorated.

Although still somewhat downhearted despite having found renewed strength in his faith, Vāṣifī resumed his mission the next day when something seemingly miraculous occurred. As Vāṣifī tells it, he was making his way past the citadel when a man approached him in recognition; this man remembered Vāṣifī from a *majlis* that had been held seven years prior, and praised his masterful and heartfelt recitation of some poetic works of Mavlānā Ḥusayn Vā‘iz Kāshifī.³⁰⁰ After a brief conversation and a bit of catching up, Vāṣifī mentioned to him that he had “some kinsmen” in town visiting from Sabzivar, but had been unable to find them a suitable place to stay given the ongoing disturbances associated with the coming of the Abu’l-Khayrids. As it happened, the man had constructed a house for his son in the hope of arranging a marriage for him at some point, but as the boy was still young and the house was not occupied at that moment, he

²⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 279. The text in italics was drawn from the Qur’ān, 12:87.

³⁰⁰ Vāṣifī studied under Kāshifī, and mentions him several times throughout the *Badāyi’ al-waqāyi’*. Mavlānā Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī al-Vā‘iz, more commonly known by his *takhalluṣ*, Kāshifī, was a polymath of the late Timūrid era, patronized by Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā and ‘Alī Shīr Navā‘ī, among others. A native of Sabzivar (Bayhaq), Kāshifī also spent time in both Nishapur and Mashhad before settling in Herat in 1470. Subtelny informs us that it was his bent towards mysticism which initially led him to Herat: “In 860/1456, he allegedly had a dream vision in which he was summoned to Herat by the spirit of the recently deceased Naqshbandī Sufī master Sa‘d-al-Dīn Kāshgari.” Kāshifī’s only son, Fakhr al-Dīn ‘Alī Safī (d. 1532-33), states in the *Rashahāt ‘ayn al-hayāt*, a hagiographic work from the early sixteenth century, that once in Herat Kāshifī became a devotee of Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, and was initiated into the Naqshbandī Sūfī order. Kāshifī was highly regarded within his lifetime, renowned for his eloquence, melodious voice, and prose work in Persian, writing on topics as varied as *tafsīr* and magic to ethics and wrestling; see Gholam Hosein Yousofi, “Kāshifī,” *EP*, Vol. IV, p. 703; M. E. Subtelny, “Kāshifī,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Online Edition, 15 December 2011, available at www.iranicaonline.org/articles/kasefi_kamal; Maria E. Subtelny, “A Late Medieval *Summa* on Ethics: Kāshifī’s *Akhlāq-i Muhsinī*,” *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (2003): pp. 601-614; Kristin Zahra Sands, “On the Popularity of Husayn Va‘iz-i Kashifī’s *Mavāhib-i ‘aliyya*: A Persian Commentary on the Qur’an,” *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (2003): pp. 469-483; Pierre Lowry, “Kashifī’s *Asrār-i Qāsimī* and Timurid Magic,” *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (2003): pp. 531-541; Angelo Piemontese, “L’organizzazione della ‘Zurxāne’ e la ‘Futuwwa’,” *Annali dell’Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli*, Vol. XIV (1964): pp. 453-473; Angelo Piemontese, “Il capitolo sui pahlavān delle *Badāyi’ al-Waqāyi’* di Vāṣefī,” *Annali dell’Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli*, Vol. XVI (1966): pp. 208-209.

graciously and enthusiastically offered it to Vāṣifī and his “relatives.” Vāṣifī describes the place almost as a paradise, stating, “whosoever would set foot in it would not wish to leave.”³⁰¹ His faith in God’s mercy having been thusly rewarded in the generous act of kindness of an old acquaintance, Vāṣifī hastily made his way home, informed Amīr Shāh Valī and his family and attendants of the good news, saw that they were all prepared with disguises, and conducted them to their new safe haven.

Vāṣifī’s association with the family of Amīr Shāh Valī did not end here: not long thereafter word arrived that Shāh Valī’s father, Amīr Yādgār Kūkaltāsh, whom Vāṣifī describes as a well-respected figure in Herat, had honored Muḥammad Shībānī Khān following the formal surrender of the city – despite the entreaties of Khadijah Baygum to the contrary, which will be discussed below. Relieved to learn that his father was alive and well, Shāh Valī entrusted Vāṣifī with the task of meeting with the elder amir in order to let him know that his family members were safe and sound, and had thus far managed to avoid the snare of the Uzbeks. Disguised as a ragged slave or beggar, Vāṣifī made his way to Kahdistan, where Muḥammad Shībānī Khān had encamped and the formal ceremonial surrender of the keys to the city had been held. Upon being recognized by one of the amir’s attendants, Vāṣifī was ushered into Yādgār’s tent. “Amīr Yādgār entered and saw me; he smiled greatly then came to tears and inquired as to the state of his family. I spoke in great detail.”³⁰² Clearly nervous with regard to the surety of his own position, the elder amir informed Vāṣifī of two facts which were to consume the life of the latter for the weeks that followed and ultimately lead to his having to temporarily flee his beloved Herat: the first was that Khadijah Baygum was anxious to move her

³⁰¹ *BV*, Vol. II, p. 280.

³⁰² *Ibid*, p. 284.

treasures in order to safeguard them from the plundering hands of the Uzbek conquerors, and the second that many of those same conquering men had come to have designs on a maiden by the name of Māhchūchūk, the intended of Sulṭān Muḥammad Valī, the son of Shāh Valī and the pupil of Vāṣifī.

Vāṣifī recalls: “We were in the midst of this *tête-à-tête* when they announced: ‘Behold! The Baygum has come!’” Clearly acquainted with Vāṣifī, Khadījah greeted him warmly, addressing him as *Mullā*, and inquired as to the state of her *kūkaltāsh*, Shāh Valī. Khadījah clearly held Vāṣifī in high regard, for she subsequently conducted him to her own pavilion where she begged his advice regarding how she should go about safeguarding her wealth from the Uzbeks, which she had concealed in a number of trunks.³⁰³

Ever the wise yet humble servant of others, Vāṣifī volunteered his and Ghiyās al-Dīn’s assistance in moving her fortune in jewels and treasure to a safe location, namely Vāṣifī’s family home. Vāṣifī describes in fine detail how he and Ghiyās al-Dīn Muḥammad wrapped themselves in jewel-studded robes and tucked away finery of every sort in the creases and folds of their clothing before donning their tattered disguises once more to move freely to and fro with Uzbek warriors standing about. At one point the pair even made a spectacle of it: “We passed by the *Āb-i Kahdistan*; I was groaning while Ghiyās al-Dīn Muḥammad was saying to the Uzbeks: ‘For God’s sake, have mercy upon this broken *faqīr*! He is a *hājjī* and *sayyid*, and his hand is shattered!’ The Uzbeks gave us money and *tangah*.”³⁰⁴ Working virtually nonstop, this endeavor took them an entire

³⁰³ Ibid, p. 285.

³⁰⁴ Vāṣifī writes *pūl va tangah* / پول و تنگه, clearly differentiating between ordinary coins or monies and the *tangah*, or *tanga*, a distinct silver coin minted during the Tīmūrid era; “After 792/1390 Tīmūr had a new silver coin struck throughout the territories of Iran. At first it was introduced obviously only into

week to accomplish, which is in itself indicative of the vast personal fortune that Khadījah Baygum had been able to amass as the favorite wife of Mīrzā Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā.³⁰⁵

When Vāṣifī and Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn Muḥammad returned the next day, they found Amīr Yādgar despondent, dressed in ragged garments; it was evident his good fortune had reached its limit. He informed them of Khadījah Baygum’s botched seduction of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān and the latter’s expulsion of the former from his presence, and worse still the fate of the maiden Māhchūchūk who, without the protection of Khadījah Baygum, was seized and dragged off by an Uzbek amir by the name of Ḥusayn Qungrāt. Vāṣifī and his cousin quickly returned to Amīr Shāh Valī, presumably still at the safe haven Vāṣifī had secured for him, to tell him of the fate of Khadījah Baygum, his father Amīr Yādgar, and Māhchūchūk. Two days later Vāṣifī happened upon his pupil, Sulṭān Valī, wracked with grief at the loss of his beloved and on the verge of suicide. Seeing this young man, who for seven years had been in his charge, and with whom he must surely have forged bonds of friendship and fraternity beyond those which exist between a master and a student, in such a state compelled Vāṣifī to action. After consulting with

Transoxiana and Khurāsān. This was the *tanga-yi nuqra* or silver *tanga*, a word which seems to be of Indian origin... Tīmūr’s *tanga-yi nuqra*... weighed exactly half the *tanga* of Delhi, i.e. 5.38 gm... Under Shāh Rukh the weight of this silver *tanga* was reduced to 4.72 gm, which in his day was the weight of one misqāl... this Tīmūrid *tanga* at one misqāl was minted also in gold, although very rarely, and was called *tanga-yi tillā*.” To give some sense as to what a *tangah* was worth, both Ḥasan Rūmlū and Sām Mīrzā Safavī relate a story in which ‘Alī Shīr Navā’ī gifts a *farjī*, or overcoat, to Khvājah Majd al-Dīn Muḥammad worth either eleven or thirteen *tangahs*. Additionally, under the early Abu’l-Khayrids, according to Vāṣifī, the annual salary of a *tarkhān* was five-hundred *tangah*; see Bert Fragner, “Social and Internal Economic Affairs,” *CHI*, Vol. 6, ed. Peter Jackson, et al. (Cambridge: University Press, 1986), pp. 558-559; Subtelny, “Centralizing Reform and its Opponents in the Late Timurid Period,” p. 135; Boldyrev, “Memuary Zain-ad-dina Vosifi kak istochnik dlia izucheniia kul’turnoi zhizni Srednei Azii i Khorasana na rubezhe XV-XVI vekov,” p. 251.

³⁰⁵ *BV*, Vol. II, pp. 286-287.

Ghiyās al-Dīn Muḥammad, the two resolved to rescue the maiden and restore her to Sulṭān Valī.³⁰⁶

Vāṣifī recounts: “We set off in the direction of the *Darvāzah-yi Malik*. Outside the *darvāzah* some people had brought grapes by camel to sell; he [Ghiyās al-Dīn Muḥammad] bought two baskets of grapes, tied one to my back and one to his back, and we set off in the direction of the outskirts of Dinaran.”³⁰⁷ They made their way into the estate that had been seized and occupied by Amīr Ḥusayn Qungrāt and, catching sight of Māhchūchūk in a far portico, cast off their burdens and flung themselves at her feet, assuming a posture of subservience. As part of their ruse, they claimed that she was their mistress, and they her ploughmen, and that her presence was needed to oversee the grape harvest before all the produce went to rot. Taking them at their word – for who would have dared to lie boldfaced to an Uzbek amir just days after the conquest of Herat? – Amīr Ḥusayn Qungrāt, assuming at that point that whatever belonged to this maiden now surely belonged to him, informed Vāṣifī and Ghiyās al-Dīn that they were now in his employ, and commanded them to return to the vineyard to begin crafting wine. Vāṣifī distributed grapes among the Uzbeks as a distraction before making his way back to Māhchūchūk, who was then instructed to quickly get into one of the grape harvesting baskets. Their human cargo secured, Vāṣifī and Ghiyās al-Dīn made their exit and returned to the side of Amīr Shāh Valī and his family where they found Sulṭān Valī just as Vāṣifī had left him. As Vāṣifī tells it: “I said: ‘Do not grieve, for your desire and wish has come to pass!’ Ghiyās al-Dīn Muḥammad placed the basket on the ground.

Māhchūchūk, like the sun when it emerges from behind a cloud, came out of the basket,

³⁰⁶ Ibid, p. 288.

³⁰⁷ Ibid, pp. 288-289.

and a great exclamation and uproar arose from those assembled.”³⁰⁸ Celebrated and rewarded by the family of Shāh Valī as heroes, Vāṣifi and Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn decided it would be best to leave Herat until the dust of that tumultuous time had settled and life for the people of the city and its environs returned to some semblance of normal.

Here an issue arises with regard to the dating of all of these events. Boldyrev suggests that, due to the mention of grapes being harvested and Vāṣifi and Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn’s use of grape harvesting baskets to smuggle Māhchūchūk out of the Uzbek camp, that the events recounted in chapter thirty-two must have taken place in the autumn of 1507, and could not have taken place in May-June when the Abu’l-Khayrids captured Herat.³⁰⁹ However, it seems that Boldyrev came to this conclusion without taking several important factors into consideration: one must consider the grape varietal being harvested; the precise elevation of the vineyard, which Boldyrev could not have known; the condition of the soil in which the vines were rooted; the purpose for which the grapes were being cultivated – wine, fresh consumption, to be turned into raisins – and so on. For instance, in California’s southernmost grape growing region, the Coachella Valley, just north of the border with Mexico, the grape harvest begins in the late spring and continues until roughly mid-July. Here growers cultivate a variety of table grapes which are consumed locally and shipped throughout the United States, Mexico, Canada, and so on. The climate of southern California, which is often described as Mediterranean, might be compared to that of the region of Khurasan; in fact, according to information provided by UC Davis, supported by the USDA, Herat province, like many other regions in

³⁰⁸ Ibid, pp. 289-290.

³⁰⁹ A. N. Boldyrev, *Zainaddin Vasifi: Tadjhikskii pisatel’ XVIv. (Opym tvorcheskoi biografii)* (Stalinabad: Tadjhikskoe gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1957), p. 58.

Afghanistan, has “California-like conditions.”³¹⁰ Is it possible therefore to say beyond the shadow of a doubt that grapes are harvested in Herat only in the autumn, and that therefore Vāṣifī’s chronology is wrong? Certainly not. Nothing definitive can be said without, again, taking the above-mentioned factors into consideration. Obviously, not anticipating any controversy, Vāṣifī did not provide us with this information. Today, more than seventy grape varieties are harvested in and around Herat, and it is not difficult to imagine that an equal number of varieties may have been cultivated and harvested in the region in the early sixteenth century.³¹¹ The grapes purchased by Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn outside the *Darvāzah-yi Malik* may very well have been a variety that is harvested in the late-spring or early summer, which would in fact lend support to the assertion that the events recounted by Vāṣifī occurred at the time of or shortly after the Uzbek conquest of Herat.

At this point the cousins Vāṣifī and Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn Muḥammad parted company; the latter conducted his family members to a village called Ubah where Vāṣifī and his kin, presumably laden with treasure, were to meet them later on. Vāṣifī returned to the city and called on another cousin by the name of Mavlānā Amānī who, we are told, was a celebrated poet in Khurasan. According to Vāṣifī, this Mavlānā Amānī “had a roasted pea shop in *Pā-yi Hisar*, and above the shop he had built a chamber which was a gathering place for poets and learned men.”³¹² It was while passing a few days with Mavlānā Amānī, preparing for his move, when Vāṣifī learned of the ignoble fate of first Amīr Yādgar and then that of Amīr Shāh Valī; the former seems to have wound up living as a beggar wandering the streets of Herat, in such dire straits that Vāṣifī gave the man

³¹⁰ <http://afghanag.ucdavis.edu/Province-agriculture-profiles/hirat-herat>.

³¹¹ <http://www.wadsam.com/inauguration-of-grapes-exhibition-in-herat-9879/>

³¹² *BV*, Vol. II, p. 291.

his own cloak and shoes, while the latter, on account of a vicious act, was betrayed to the Abu'l-Khayrids by his own unwed daughter. Obviously aware of the *kūkaltāsh* relationship that existed between Amīr Shāh Valī and Khadījah Baygum, the Uzbeks pressed him to divulge the location of her now hidden treasure. In the end, Shāh Valī repaid the loyalty and kindness of Vāṣifī with betrayal and led the Uzbeks to his home. However, as they were unable to find the treasure on account of the fact that Vāṣifī and Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn had hidden it in a secret grotto, the Uzbeks tortured Shāh Valī until he cried out, “Torturing me is of no use unless you find *Mavlānā Vāṣifī!*”³¹³ Vāṣifī, now a fugitive in his own native land, decided to skip town immediately, leaving the treasure behind. He declared to Mavlānā Amānī, “Everyone in this city knows of our relationship and friendship. My being here, or perhaps even my being in this city, is imprudent. I think I ought to head to Kusu; I have friends there who can look out for me.”³¹⁴ Vāṣifī soon realized his mistake in sharing his intended destination with Amānī; fearing that his cousin would, under torture, simply send the Uzbeks on to Kusu, he stopped to reconsider his options. As Vāṣifī relates it:

I was considering where I should go when suddenly I heard a voice and a man was asking: “O Ḥasan, tell Naṣrallāh we are going to Sistan. If you are going, you will find us at the head of the *Pul-i Mālān* the day after tomorrow.” I thought to myself: This was a voice from Heaven, and my mind settled on going to Sistan. Among the interesting things I heard in Sabzivar was that, having taken Mavlānā Amānī into custody, they plundered his home, and he conducted the Uzbeks to Kusu, and not having found me, they tortured him greatly. Allāh knows best!³¹⁵

Clearly, Vāṣifī saw this as some sort of divine intervention, as though God himself had prevented his humble servant from proceeding to Kusu, sending him on the road to Qandahar instead. Throughout the tumultuous days of the Uzbek conquest and all that

³¹³ Ibid, p. 292.

³¹⁴ Ibid, p. 293.

³¹⁵ Ibid, p. 293; Ar.: *الله تعالى أعلم*

they had entailed – the search for a safe haven for Amīr Shāh Valī and his household, moving the treasure of Khadījah Baygum, rescuing the maiden Māhchūchūk, and finally the betrayal of his patron – the faith of Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāṣifī, though certainly tested, never wavered. Vāṣifī continued to believe that God would reward his virtues – his unflinching fidelity to his patron, his kindness towards others, his willingness to risk his own life for others, would preserve him and keep him safe, and conduct him along the path. To overlook the religious and supernatural elements of the memoirs of Vāṣifī, which has been done in the past, is to eliminate entirely an integral component of the personality of the author which still, after nearly five-hundred years, shines through to us today. The *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* speaks directly to the state of popular piety in Khurasan in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Vāṣifī’s worldview was governed and informed by his religious convictions, and it is incumbent upon scholars considering the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* to bear this in mind.

The narrative of Vāṣifī is unique among primary sources that chronicle the Abu’l-Khayrid conquest of Herat in 1507. Whereas the histories of Khvāndamīr, Dūghlāt, Munshī, Rūmlū and others focus their attention on dynastic power struggles and elite historical actors such as Badī‘ al-Zamān, Muẓaffar Ḥusayn Mīrzā, Zāhīr al-Dīn Muḥammad Bābur and Muḥammad Shībānī Khān, and so on, Vāṣifī took a different approach when crafting his narrative. Despite its at times complex and ornate prose and verse, the historical narrative penned by Vāṣifī endows us with a better understanding of the degree to which the lesser-elite, non-elite, middling and ordinary inhabitants of Herat were affected by the social and political transformations that accompanied the Abu’l-Khayrid conquest. While the standard court histories offer similar accounts with regard

to the events surrounding the conquest of Herat by the Abu'l-Khayrid Shībānids in 1507, often differing only slightly in the details, the historical, autobiographical account provided by Vāṣifī is wholly unique. Historical actors who are the main focus of attention in the standard works recede into the background, while Vāṣifī and his peers take center stage. That being said, the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* does not ignore the former. Those who would be considered “pillars of state” – Khadījah Baygum, Amīr Shāh Valī, Amīr Yādgar – are given an all-too-human visage by Vāṣifī, and are thereby rendered as something more than mere historical abstractions. Vāṣifī's narrative illustrates that on this occasion men such as the Tīmūrid-Chaghatāy Amīr Shāh Valī found their comfortable world turned upside-down, and were severely and negatively impacted by the change in regime, while men such as Vāṣifī, being certainly affected and temporarily inconvenienced by the arrival of the Abu'l-Khayrids, were in the long run better able to adjust to changing socio-political circumstances. For such people, the toppling of the old Tīmūrid order and rise of the Abu'l-Khayrids did not bring a great degree of political or social change.

As a historical work, the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* both complements the standard narratives of the period and serves to flesh them out, providing a fresh perspective on significant historical events and a great degree of personal detail and information that works like the *Habīb al-siyar* of Khvāndamīr lack. Of all the other primary sources which chronicle the history of Khurasan and Mavarannahr in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, with regard to the personal flavor of much of its narrative, is overall most similar to the *Bāburnāmah*. Much like his contemporary and fellow memoirist, Bābur, Vāṣifī provides information such as where he was and his own

personal thoughts and feelings at any given time, as well as his own interpretation of the historical events and personalities of his day. However, despite their similarities, what sets the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* apart from the *Bāburnāmah* is the perspective of its author; whereas Bābur was a Tīmūrid prince and a participant in the dynastic struggles of the era and the battles that he wrote about – one of the elites writing from an elite perspective – Vāṣifī was a teacher, an *imām*, a *ḥāfiẓ*, a poet of some local renown, a member of the ‘*ulamā*’ of middling origins possessed of an entirely different perspective on the world than Bābur.

CHAPTER III

THERE AROSE THE DAY OF JUDGMENT: THE NARRATIVE OF ZAYN AL-DĪN MAḤMŪD VĀŞİFĪ ON THE ŞAFAVID OCCUPATION OF HERAT

In May of 1507 the Abu'l-Khayrid Shġbānids and their Uzbek confederates rode into Khurasan, defeated what resistance the Tġmšrids had to offer, and seized the city of Herat from the sons of Sulţān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā. While there were certainly many hardships associated with this shift in political power, most notably for the Chaghatāy, as has been seen, and Vāşifġ himself had to leave town out of fear for his own personal safety, any oppression visited upon the people of Herat and Khurasan by the Uzbeks would pale in comparison to that which accompanied the Şafavid-Qizilbāsh occupation of the city.

While the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* does not provide an account of the battle of Marv, the death and dismemberment of MuḤammad Shġbānġ Khān, or the massacre that ensued thereafter, what it does provide is Vāşifġ's narrative account of the Şafavid-Qizilbāsh entry into the city of Herat, the reaction and fear of the townspeople as the Qizilbāsh asserted their authority, and what life was like for the people of Herat living during the Şafavid occupation. However, before delving into the narrative detailing the arrival of the Şafavids and the events which followed, Vāşifġ first offers up a brief story set some time before which serves almost to foreshadow the coming of the "heretics" as well as to illustrate the sentiment presumably shared by many in Herat with regard to Shġ'ġ Islam.

The narrative of Vāṣifī regarding the Safavid seizure of Herat

In this episode another of Vāṣifī's acquaintances by the name of Mīrzā Bayram, whom Vāṣifī had assisted in escaping the lecherous intentions of one Ruqaiyah Baygum, also known as Mahd 'Uliya, had accompanied Vāṣifī to the madrasa of Gauhar Shād Baygum.³¹⁶ Here they were present at the reading of a eulogy by one Ḥasan 'Alī Maddāḥ. As Vāṣifī recounts, "All of a sudden words of blasphemy cursing one of the companions of the prophet danced upon his tongue. *Mīrzā Bayram* became enraged and said: 'I will kill this infidel, or work on his murder!'"³¹⁷ Vāṣifī endeavored to console his friend, assuring him that although it seemed that heresy was all about and that Shāh Ismā'īl had just emerged victorious in 'Iraq, the Sunnī were still in the majority and he should not trouble himself with such matters. Mīrzā Bayram refused to accept such an argument and leapt into action: "...he [Mīrzā Bayram] seized him [Ḥasan 'Alī Maddāḥ]; others joined him and they brought him [Ḥasan 'Alī Maddāḥ] before the *Shaykh al-Islām*

³¹⁶ The madrasa-yi Gauhar Shād Baygum was situated north of Herat proper along the western side of the khiyābān, not far from the Bāgh-i Zāgān. It, along with the maṣjid-i jāmi' -i Gauhar Shād, formed part of the famed musallā complex; see Terry Allen, *Timurid Herat* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1983), pp. 35, 73, map. Wilson informs us that, "The term musallā was applied to a mosque located outside the walls of a city where the citizens and inhabitants of the outlying districts congregated for the great religious festivals"; see R. Pinder-Wilson, "Timurid Architecture," *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. VI (Cambridge: University Press, 1986), p. 747. Of the madrasa, all that remains is the mausoleum of Gauhar Shād, which was attached to the madrasa's westernmost corner.

³¹⁷ *BV*, Vol. II, p. 247. Vāṣifī does not tell which companion of the Prophet was cursed, nor does he get into detail regarding the nature or extent of the abuses hurled at this unnamed companion. Traveling through Persia and Afghanistan more than two and a half centuries later, the Englishman George Forster, a civil servant in the East India Company, observed firsthand the practice of Shī'ah in Khurasan defaming Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthmān; Forster's description provides some idea of the practice: "But in what light... will you view a numerous and civilized people... in solemn and deliberate expression, imprecate God's wrath five times a day, on the souls and ashes of three men who never did them any injury, and who in their day, advanced the empire of Mahomet to a high pitch of glory and power. Not appeased with uttering the keenest reproaches against the memory of these khaliphs, they pour a torrent of abuse on every branch of their families, male and female, lower even than the seventh generation. I have seen their imagination tortured with inventing terms of reproach on these men and their posterity, and commit verbally every act of lewdness with their wives, daughters, and progeny down to the present day"; see George Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England through the Northern part of India, Kashmire, Afghanistan, and Persia, and into Russia by the Caspian Sea*, Vol. II (London: R. Faulder, 1798), pp. 130-131.

and, proving him guilty of heresy, they hung him by his neck from the *Darvāzah-yi Malik*.”³¹⁸ Overall, this incident at the Gauhar Shād madrasa serves to illustrate a couple of points. First, it suggests that with regard to religion Herat was, at that point in history, still a diverse, cosmopolitan place. Second, that despite the diversity of Herat’s religious landscape, there was still to be found a degree of intolerance towards and dislike of the Shī‘ah on the part of Sunnī Muslims, and one can only assume that the Shī‘ah were likewise not overly fond of the Sunnī.³¹⁹ The immediate reaction of Vāṣifī’s companion, Mīrzā Bayram, attests to a religious hostility that seethed just below the surface and illustrates how quickly such intensely felt and barely contained hostility could erupt into violence. The question is, had this hostility and animosity ever abated at the popular level in the way that scholars maintain that it had in the upper echelons of society, that is amongst intellectuals and cultural elites?³²⁰

Mīrzā Bayram, who had been very lax in the observance of his religious obligations prior to coming under the direction of Vāṣifī, possessed all the zeal of a fresh convert. His outrage at the denigration of one of the companions of the Prophet so consumed him that he felt compelled to seek the death of the eulogist Ḥasan ‘Alī, and he was not alone on this endeavor. That there were others in the madrasa that day who were like-minded and quick to join Mīrzā Bayram in dragging Ḥasan ‘Alī before the highest ranking member of the ‘*ulamā*’ in Herat in order to secure his execution indicates that this was a moment when emotions were running high for many, perhaps due in part to the

³¹⁸ Ibid, p. 247.

³¹⁹ With regard to the Shī‘ah population in Herat, Allen states: “Certainly the ‘*ulamā*’ in Herāt were Sunnī. There were many Šī‘ites in Herāt, but they do not figure largely in its chronicles. They were not a political force, although they caused occasional disturbances, most notably at the time of Soltān Hoṣein’s ascension in 873, when a Šī‘ite ascended the minbar of the ‘Īdgāh during ‘Īd prayers and touched off a riot”; see Allen, *Timurid Herat*, p. 39.

³²⁰ Momen, p. 91.

fact that word of the successes of Shāh Ismā‘īl to the west had spread. In any event, this episode certainly illustrates that tensions between the Sunnī and Shī‘ah in the city had been on the rise for some time prior to the Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh victory at Marv and their subsequent occupation of Herat.

It seems that the victory of the Ṣafavids and the arrival of the Qizilbāsh to Herat occurred some weeks or months after the hanging of Ḥasan ‘Alī Maddāḥ.³²¹ Vāṣifī recounts that he was sitting around, relaxing one evening with some friends and discussing the rumors surrounding Shāh Ismā‘īl I when word arrived of the horrible events that had occurred at Marv:

One watch of the night had passed when someone rapped upon the door knocker. I answered the door. Mīrzā Bayram, fearful and trembling, came in and said: ‘Have you not received word that Shāh Ismā‘īl brought Shaybak Khān low and slew him. Qulī Jān, the nephew of Amīr Najm-i Ṣānī, has brought the *fathnāmah* of Shāh Ismā‘īl!’³²²

Word spread quickly throughout the city as Vāṣifī and his companions raced to check on their students at the madrasa of Amīr Fīrūz Shāh.³²³ Finding them in a panic, Vāṣifī did

³²¹ We read in the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’*, “From this date fifteen years passed” [از این تاریخ پانزده سال گذشت], however this seems unlikely as the remainder of the narrative takes place in 1510, at the time of the Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh entry into Herat following the defeat of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān at Marv. Had a period of fifteen years actually elapsed, Vāṣifī would have been only ten years of age when the event at the Gauhar Shād madrasa occurred. Furthermore, Vāṣifī mention of the rise of Shāh Ismā‘īl in conversation with Mīrzā Bayram renders the date of 1495 impossible. It seems more likely that this discrepancy is the result of an error in copying of the text at some point, and that either five or fifteen months or five years had passed between the incident at the Gauhar Shād madrasa and hanging of Ḥasan ‘Alī Maddāḥ and the coming of the Ṣafavids to Herat in 1510.

³²² *BV*, Vol. II, p. 247.

³²³ The madrasa-yi Amīr Jalāl al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh is located to the north of Herat proper along the khiyābān, as Vāṣifī states “at the head of the crossroads of Mīrzā ‘Alā’ al-Dīn,” specifically on the northwest corner of the intersection where the khiyābān and the approach to the Bāgh-i Zāgān crossed. The madrasa in question, which Allen estimates to have been constructed around 1434, would have been on the right as one approached the Bāgh-i Zāgān. Amīr Jalāl al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh (d. 1444-45) was “one of the highest of Šāh Roḥ’s officials and consequently one of the wealthiest.” In addition to the madrasa mentioned by Vāṣifī, he also funded the building of a mosque and *khānaqāh*; nothing remains of these structures today. As a very prominent figure during the reign of Shāh Rukh, he also funded a number of restoration projects throughout Khurasan, such as the restoration of the Masjid-i Jāmi’-i Harāt. However, Golombek opines that these repairs were superficial; see Terry Allen, *Timurid Herat* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1983),

his best to assuage fears of the students, once again turning to the Qur’ān for an appropriate passage with which to reassure them at what must have been an extremely unsettling moment.³²⁴ Vāṣifī and his companions remained with the students at the madrasa that evening. This is quite different from the account offered by Khvāndamīr, who states in the *Habīb al-siyar* that when Qulī Jān Bayk arrived at Herat on the evening in question, “it was amidst great rejoicing by the population.”³²⁵ Given Khvāndamīr’s intended audience, one might here consider the narrative of Vāṣifī to be the more honest or accurate of the two, at least with regard to the reaction of the majority of the population of Herat, who were not Shī‘ī.

The following morning it was proclaimed “that the distinguished men and nobles, the inhabitants, men of high rank and servants should assemble at the Masjid-i Jāmi’-i Malikān-i Harāt.”³²⁶ It was here that the Qizilbāsh were to begin the assertion of their authority over the bodies and souls of the people of Herat. Vāṣifī lists a number of important personages who were in attendance that day, including the *Shaykh al-Islām*, and one Amīr Muḥammad Amīr Yūsuf, who will be mentioned further below. Members of the ‘*ulamā*’ and all of the distinguished men of the city were standing beside the *minbar*, while the bulk of those in attendance were crowded all about the ground floor, upper level and even the roof of the mosque. Vāṣifī relates that one Ḥāfiẓ Zayn al-Dīn was given the task of reading the *fathnāmah* of Shāh Ismā‘īl to the crowd. As Vāṣifī recalls, “They positioned a table full of pure gold beside the minbar, and atop that they

p. 74, map; Lisa Golombek, “The Resilience of the Friday Mosque: The Case of Herat,” *Muqarnas*, Vol. I (1983): pp. 96-97.

³²⁴ Qur’ān, 5:23: *Therefore put your trust in Allāh if you are truly believers.*

³²⁵ *HS*, p. 592.

³²⁶ *BV*, Vol. II, p. 248.

placed a *chārqaḅ* with gold buttons, for the *khatīb*.³²⁷ Apparently this was to have been his reward for condescending to proclaim the inception of Ṣafavid Shī‘ī authority in Herat. Khvāndamīr makes no mention of a financial inducement being offered in return for Ḥāfiẓ Zayn al-Dīn’s cooperation.³²⁸

According to Vāṣifi, when the *fathnāmah* finally came to be read after some petty squabbling, it began by invoking the Qur’ān – *Say: O, Allāh! Lord of the kingdom, Thou givest power to whom Thou pleasest and Thou strippest off power from whom Thou pleasest.*³²⁹ The message intended for the people of Herat was clear: the defeat of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān at the hands of Shāh Ismā‘īl and the establishment of Shī‘ī rule in Herat was in accordance with the will of God. However, a problem arose when Ḥāfiẓ Zayn al-Dīn came to the point in the *fathnāmah* where he was to curse seventeen of the companions of the Prophet Muḥammad.³³⁰ Vasifi states:

Ḥāfiẓ Zayn al-Dīn looked in the direction of the Shaykh al-Islām and the assembled distinguished men. The Shaykh al-Islām said: “O, Ḥāfiẓ, neither provoke strife nor shed the blood of the people! Whatever they have commanded, say it!” However, Ḥāfiẓ Zayn al-Dīn skipped about ten lines wherein the cursing was found.

Qulī Jān became agitated and demanded: “Who is this man, that misrepresents the decree of the Shāh?”³³¹

³²⁷ Ibid, p. 248; A *chārqaḅ* is a robe of honor, “a garment especially of the sultans of Turan”; see *Loghatnāmeh-ye Dehkhodā*, <http://www.loghatnaameh.org/dehkhodasearchresult-fa.html?searchtype=0&word=2obYp9ix2YLYqA%3d%3d>; Steingass defines the *chārqaḅ* similarly, stating it was “A garment peculiar to the kings of Turan”; see Steingass, p. 385. According to Ḥasan Rūmlū, the *chārqaḅ* was seldom bestowed upon Tajiks, i.e. Persians, in the Tīmūrid era. This trend seems to have continued among the Tīmūrids in India; as late as the eighteenth century the *chārqaḅ* was a garment “worn only by members of the Chaghatai house descended from Timur”; see Maria Eva Subtelny, *Tīmūrids in Transition* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), p. 85, and S. R. Sharma, *Mughal Empire in India* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 1999), p. 714.

³²⁸ *HS*, p. 592. Khvāndamīr simply states that “Ḥāfiẓ...climbed the pulpit to read the proclamation.” One might assume that Khvāndamīr, also a Herāfi, was at the Masjid-i Jāmi’ that day, but he does not provide that information.

³²⁹ Qur’ān, 3:26.

³³⁰ As before, Vāṣifi does not mention which seventeen companions were to be cursed, and we are left to speculate. Certainly the names of Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Uthmān would have been among those cursed, along with any number of companions who had failed to support ‘Alī upon the death of Prophet Muḥammad.

³³¹ *BV*, Vol. II, p. 248.

At this point the situation began to unravel. The various assembled grandees and clerics began to bicker with one another as to what the *khatīb* should do next, cooperate with the Qizilbāsh and read the remainder of the *fathnāmah*, including the portion renouncing the Prophet’s companions, or resist and face the consequences. Losing his patience with the situation, the shah’s envoy, Amīr Qulī Jān, literally took matters into his own hand:

Amīr Qulī Jān rose up and sent Ḥaydar ‘Alī Maddāḥ up to the minbar. Seizing him by his beard and collar, he [Ḥaydar ‘Alī Maddāḥ] said: “Hey, you heretic! Be quick about it! Curse!” He did not give him a chance to speak, and pulled him down from the minbar. His [Ḥāfiẓ Zayn al-Dīn’s] feet had not yet touched the ground when one of the Qizilbāsh struck him upon his head with his sword, splitting him between his eyebrows. Around ten Qizilbāsh then cut him to pieces at the foot of the minbar. There arose that morning in the Masjid-i Jāmi’ the Day of Judgment!³³²

Men scattered in all directions, and the description of the scene at the Masjid-i Jāmi’ provided by Vāṣifī is one of absolute confusion and chaos. Khvāndamīr offers only a brief mention, simply stating Ḥāfiẓ Zayn al-Dīn “did not intone the curse on the opponents of Ali ibn Abi Talib,” the penalty for which was immediate death by the sword of Amīr Qulī Jān, after which those who witnessed the murder, “Gripped with fear and trepidation, poured out of the mosque.”³³³ In contrast to this, the narrative of Vāṣifī contains a number of interesting details with regard to this melee. For example, one group of men, when they were about to be massacred by the rampaging Qizilbāsh, offered their would-be assailants a bribe. This was readily accepted by the Qizilbāsh, and that party was apparently allowed to go on their way. The question becomes, what did Vāṣifī intend to say, if anything, about the strength of the conviction of the Shī‘ī Qizilbāsh if they could be bought off with a bribe? Vāṣifī also makes note of the fact that one Khvājah Ziyā‘ al-Dīn Yūsuf, the only son of the famed poet and close friend of ‘Alī

³³² Ibid, p. 249.

³³³ *HS*, p. 592.

Shīr Navā'ī – Mavlānā Nūr al-Dīn 'Abd al- Raḥmān Jāmī – to survive to adulthood who would have been around thirty-three at the time, was at the Maṣjid-i Jāmī' that day; he fainted from all of the excitement and had to be dragged from the mosque to safety.³³⁴

When Vāṣifī, Mīrzā Bayram, and their companions finally managed to escape the slaughter at the mosque, they had no sense of what they were doing or where they were going until they finally reached the madrasa and *khānqāh* of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Mīrzā. In grisly detail Vāṣifī recalls: “From the time we left the Maṣjid-i Jāmī' until arriving there we saw around fifty heads on spears that they [the Qizilbāsh] were carrying around, exclaiming: ‘Hey, you heretical Sunnī dogs, take warning!’”³³⁵ It seems that this was the hour of the Shī'ah in Herat, for just as Mīrzā Bayram had been seized by religious fervor at the moment when Ḥasan 'Alī Maddāḥ had blasphemed and cursed a companion of the Prophet Muḥammad, now the Shī'ah of Herat were to give vent to their own hostility and exact vengeance upon the Sunnī of the city. In this suddenly volatile climate, favorable as it must have been for members of Herat's Shī'ī community, Vāṣifī relates that in no short order one Mīr Shānah Tarāsh, who was “a famous heretic”, managed to quickly gather around himself one-thousand men chanting slogans of the Shī'ah. This mob

³³⁴ Born in 1477, Ziyā' al-Dīn Yūsuf was the third son born to Jāmī and a granddaughter of his spiritual mentor, Sa'd al-Dīn Kāshgharī; see Paul Losensky, “Jāmī,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Vol. XIV, Fasc. 5 (New York: 2008), p. 470.

³³⁵ *BV*, Vol. II, p. 250. The term rendered here as “heretical” is خارجی, a singular form which might also be rendered as “rebel,” “secessionist,” “foreign” or “outsider”. The context seems to imply, however, that the term ought to be translated as heretical, and suggests that the Qizilbāsh were drawing an analogy between the Sunnī inhabitants of Herat and the Kharijites or Khavārij (plural form of Khārijī); while initially supporting the position of 'Alī b. Abī Tālib vis-à-vis the first three caliphs, the Kharijites later rejected the leadership 'Alī, the last of the Rāshidūn and first Imām according to all Shī'a, when he entered into arbitration at the request of Mu'āwiyah b. 'Abī Sufyān at the Battle of Siffin in 37 A.H. / 657 A.D. It is interesting that Vāṣifī here states that the Shī'ī followers of Shāh Ismā'īl Safavī were referring to the Sunnī of Herat as “Khārijī” en masse as most Kharijites would have rejected the beliefs of both Herat's Sunnī populace and Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh Shī'ah. That the Shī'ah would use Khārijī perjoratively in reference to their opponents on this occasion suggests that the term was perhaps used as an insult by both Sunnī and Shī'ah in reference to one another. In modern parlance the term *Khārijī* is often used disparagingly to refer to those of a fanatical or extremist disposition.

swelled in number as it coursed down the *khiyābān* with spears held high, many adorned with the heads of their unfortunate victims, before finally coming to the shrine of Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al- Raḥmān Jāmī. They turned to ransacking the surrounding neighborhood for all that was flammable – doors, window frames, stools, and so on – which they then piled over the tomb of Jāmī and set on fire. So great was the inferno, states Vāṣifī, that “when the fire really took no one was able to go nearer to it than an arrow shot. It brought to mind the fire of Nimrūd.”³³⁶ Vāṣifī does not explain why a Shī‘ī mob would have wanted to set fire to and desecrate the shrine of Jāmī, and one is left to speculate as to their motives.

It is well known that Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al- Raḥmān Jāmī, who died in 1492, was among the most renowned poets of the late Tīmūrid period. His poetic works earned him high praise within his own lifetime, and his fame spread well beyond the borders of the Tīmūrid realm. Bābur comments that among the learned men who were associated with Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā, Jāmī was without peer “in esoteric and exoteric knowledge,” and that of the poets residing in Herat at that time, Jāmī was unmatched.³³⁷ Khvādamīr extols the poetical virtues of Jāmī as well: “The rays of his perfect learning light up the world like the sun, and his innumerable works in every category are too well known to

³³⁶ Ibid, p. 250. This appears to be a reference to the fire of king Nimrūd, also rendered Namrūd, the legendary ruler of Mesopotamia, who corresponds to Nimrod in the Bible. Muslim exegetes have traditionally assigned the name Nimrūd to the unnamed adversary of Ibrāhīm, that is Abraham, in the Qur’ān. As the story goes Ibrāhīm, the champion of monotheism, had so confounded King Nimrūd, the defender of polytheism, that the latter ordered the former be cast into an inferno. As he was protected by God, Ibrāhīm emerged from the fire unscathed; see the Qur’ān, 21:67-69; 29:24; 37:97-98; on the legends surrounding Nimrūd in the Muslim and Jewish traditions, see B. Heller, “Namrūd,” *EP²*, Vol. VII (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), p. 342, and Nahum M. Sarna and Haïm Z’ew Hirschberg, “Nimrod,” *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, Second ed., Vol. 15 (Detroit: Macmillan, 2007), pp. 269-270.

³³⁷ Ṣāḥīr al-Dīn Muḥammad Bābur Mīrzā, *The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor*. Trans. W.M. Thackston (New York: Modern Library, 2002), pp. 212-214.

need introduction.”³³⁸ The fame of Jāmī was such that the Ottoman Sulṭān Mehmed II (r.1451-1481)³³⁹ and Ūzūn Ḥasan of the Āq Qoyūnlū (r. 1457-1478) both tried to entice Jāmī to join their courts and grace their respective capitals with his presence.³⁴⁰

With regard to Jāmī it is also known that in the relatively tolerant and cosmopolitan setting of late Tīmūrid Herat he became acquainted with and was subsequently greatly influenced by the works and epistemological ruminations of Muhyī al-Dīn ibn al-‘Arabī, known more commonly as Ibn al-‘Arabī.³⁴¹ While Ibn al-‘Arabī was a prolific writer, and is reported to have penned more than two-hundred works on a variety of topics including Sufism,³⁴² he is more importantly widely regarded as “the founder of the doctrinal formulation of gnosis in Islam,” whose thoughts had an influence on “nearly all the masters of Sufism in Persia,” including Jāmī.³⁴³ In his role as a Naqshbandī Sūfī shaykh, theologian, philosopher and metaphysician, Jāmī devoted two volumes to the promulgation and exploration of the thought of Ibn al-‘Arabī. William C. Chittick observes that Jāmī adopted the theology of Ibn al-‘Arabī *en masse*, and preserved it in situ without changing a thought or suggesting a different line of reasoning,

³³⁸ Khvāndamīr, *Habīb al-Siyar*, Tome Three, Part Two, trans. W.M. Thackston (Cambridge: The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations Harvard University, 1994), p. 519.

³³⁹ Edward G. Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, Vol. 3, 1266-1502 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1964), p. 507.

³⁴⁰ F. Hadland Davis, *The Persian Mystics: Jami* (London: John Murray, Ablemare Street, 1908), p. 19; see also Losensky, p. 470.

³⁴¹ Scholars estimate that Ibn al-‘Arabī flourished from 1165-1240.

³⁴² A. Ateş, “Ibn al-‘Arabī,” *EI²*, Vol. III (Leiden: E.J Brill, 1960), p. 707. Ibn al-‘Arabī was a native of Murcia, located in south-eastern Spain, but resided in Damascus at the time of his death in 1240. With regard to his output, Ateş remarks, “Ibn al-‘Arabī himself did not know how many works he had written.” Ateş gives the estimate of Brockelman, that being two hundred thirty nine, though cautions this is probably inaccurate.

³⁴³ S. H. Nasr, “Spiritual Movements, Philosophy and Theology in the Safavid Period,” *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. 6, ed. Peter Jackson, et al. (Cambridge: University Press, 1986), p. 659. According to Nasr, Ibn al-‘Arabī’s gnosticism went on to have a great deal of influence on Shī‘ī theology as it emerged in the early Ṣafavid era. Paul Losensky posits that the ideas of Ibn al-‘Arabī “played a central role in Naqšbandī teachings,” and that it was after coming under the influence of Khvājah ‘Ubayd Allāh Aḥrār that Jāmī composed his first commentaries in Arabic on his works; see Losensky, p. 469.

and concludes that Jāmī is an extremely important historical figure not only for his poetry or his standing among the Naqshbandī order, but for the fact that “no subsequent representative of Ibn ‘Arabī’s school can be compared to Jāmī in terms of fame and influence in the Islamic world.”³⁴⁴

Finally, as indicated above, Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al- Raḥmān Jāmī was also a very important and influential member of the Naqshbandī Sūfī order. According to Bartol’d, Jāmī was considered “the head of the Herat Naqshbandis” and “the representative of religious authority” in the capital.³⁴⁵ The Naqshbandī order, or *Naqshbandīyah*, is historically rooted in the region of Mavarannahr and takes its name from the legendary Sūfī saint, Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband, who died in 1389.³⁴⁶ As a Sūfī order, the Naqshbandī are set apart – or perhaps set themselves apart – from the majority of other orders by a number of their tenets and practices. Perhaps most important when

³⁴⁴ William C. Chittick, “The Perfect Man as the Prototype of the Self in the Sufism of Jāmī,” *Studia Islamica*, No. 49 (1979): p. 139. Chittick states: “Jāmī’s longest philosophical work is his Arabic commentary on the *Fusūs* of Ibn ‘Arabī...and offers practically no detailed theoretical elaborations or digressions. *Naqd al-nusūs* consists of some 255 pages of commentary upon a ten page text and includes a 65 page introduction in which Jāmī deals with most of the major teachings of Ibn ‘Arabī’s school in a detailed manner which is not to be seen in any of his other works.”

³⁴⁵ V.V. Bartol’d, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia. Vol. III – Mīr ‘Alī-Shīr: A History of the Turkmen People*, trans. V. & T. Minorsky (Leiden: Brill, 1962), pp. 33, 53. In his capacity as leader of the Naqshbandī in the Timūrid capital, Jāmī was also a prominent political force in his own right, having the ear of both Mīrzā Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā and his most trusted amir and confidant, Mīr ‘Alī Shīr Navā’ī. Working from Khvādamīr and others, Subtelny recounts how Jāmī spoke with Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā on behalf of Khvājah Majd al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Khvājah Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn Pīr Aḥmad Khvafī when the latter had been slandered by a pair of Chaghatāy amirs and dismissed from his post as chief *vazīr*; see Maria Eva Subtelny, “Centralizing Reform and its Opponents in the Late Timurid Period,” *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 21, No.1-2 (1988): p. 145. Based on the account of ‘Abd al-Ghaffūr Lārī, a devoted student of Jāmī, Algar reports that while Jāmī was initially reluctant to enter the order, he was eventually brought into the Naqshbandī fold by Sa’d al-Dīn Kāshgharī; see Hamid Algar, “The Naqshbandī Order: A Preliminary Survey of Its History and Significance,” *Studia Islamica*, No. 44 (1976): p. 141. His reluctance to enter into the order may have stemmed from his arrogance and supreme surety in his own abilities, which was well covered in the mid-nineteenth century by Lees. However Lees also admits that, “if he has been chary in acknowledging his obligations to men of letters, he was by no means so with regard to his spiritual teachers, or men of known piety”; see W. Nassau Lees, *A Biographical Sketch of the Mystic Philosopher and Poet Jami* (Calcutta: W. N. Lees’ Press, 1859), pp. 4-7.

³⁴⁶ Hamid Algar, “Bahā’ -al-Dīn Naqshband,” *Encyclopedia Iranica*, Vol. III, Facs. 4 (1988), pp. 433-434. Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband was born in the environs of Bukhara. According to sources, he was initiated into the Khvājagānī fold by Khvājah Amīr Kulāl, himself a disciple of Khvājah Muḥammad Bābā Sammāsī (d.1354).

considering why a Shī‘ī mob would chose to ransack and desecrate the *mazār* of Jāmī is the fact that the Naqshbandī traced their spiritual ancestry not to Muḥammad’s cousin and son-in-law, ‘Alī b. ‘Abī Tālīb, as did many other Sūfī orders, but rather to Abū Bakr al-Siddīq who, according to orthodox sources, was not only one of the Prophet’s most trusted companions, one of his earliest and staunchest supporters, and his father-in-law through Aisha, but was also the man who was selected to lead the *ummah*, over the Prophet’s cousin and son-in-law ‘Alī, following Muḥammad’s death in 632 – the very event which marked the beginning of the schism between the Sunnī and Shī‘ah.

According to Hamid Algar, this harkening back to Abū Bakr as opposed to ‘Alī served to insulate the Naqshbandī from many Shī‘ī influences; “We may indeed say that the Naqshbandīya is unique among Sufi orders in its explicit hostility to Shī‘ism...[due to] the fact that the first diffusion of the Naqshbandīya in the Sunnī world coincided with the rise of a militant Shī‘a state in Iran.”³⁴⁷ Thus it seems that not only were the Naqshbandī not taken in by the religious permissiveness which characterized the Mongol and Tīmūrid periods, but they would also have been opposed to and hostile towards heterodox or schismatic beliefs, including Shī‘ī Islam. One might reasonably argue that the Shī‘ah of Herat, given the prominent position held by Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al- Raḥmān Jāmī among a Naqshbandī Sūfī order that traced its origins to Abū Bakr, would have identified the otherwise renowned figure of Jāmī a representative of Abū Bakr, one of the most despised men in the Shī‘ī tradition. By extension the shrine of Jāmī would have been seen by the Shī‘ah as a blight on the landscape of the *Dar al-Islām*, a concrete, physical insult to ‘Alī ibn ‘Abī Ṭalīb, the *ahl al-bayt*, and Shī‘ī Islam as a whole, as well as a

³⁴⁷ Hamid Algar, “A brief history of the Naqshbandī order,” *Naqshbandī: cheminements et situation actuelle d’un ordre mystique musulman*, (Actes de la Table Ronde de Sèvres, 2-4 mai 1985), ed. Marc Gaborieau, et al. (Istanbul/Paris: Éditions Isis, 1990; Varia Turcica, v. 18), p. 5.

symbol of orthodox religious authority and oppression. This would explain why the *mazār* of Jāmī served as a focus for the pent-up rage and hostility of Herat’s Shī‘ī inhabitants once the forces of their coreligionists, the Ṣafavids, had captured and occupied the city.³⁴⁸

The harrowing ordeal in which Vāṣifī found himself was not to end here. After becoming separated from Mīrzā Bayram at the shrine of Jāmī, Vāṣifī presumably fled and found himself in the middle of a throng of cursing Shī‘ah in the Muqriyān district.³⁴⁹ He spotted an acquaintance of his from the madrasa, a fellow “student of the sciences.” Presuming that this student had, like himself, been swept up in events and was simply trying to make his way to some safe harbor without getting his head lopped off, Vāṣifī approached him, imploring the man to accompany him away from the crowd of angry protestors. To Vāṣifī’s astonishment, the man cried out to those around him, “Come, my friends! Behold, an infidel!” Vāṣifī continues: “As soon as the words left his lips the crowd jostled against one another, and I immediately put my head down and ran into the crowd and put some distance between myself and that bastard.”³⁵⁰ Vāṣifī was pursued by

³⁴⁸ The *mazār* of Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, referred to as Sarakh-e Tanki Mawlawi today, is situated directly north of Herat proper on the west side of the *khiyābān*, and is still frequented by the people of Herat. The structure has been rebuilt since being severely damaged by Soviet shelling in 1984; see Allen, *Timurid Herat*, p. and maps; Paul Clammer, *Lonely Planet Afghanistan* (London: Lonely Planet Publications, 2007), p. 139. Bābur states that he visited the shrine and tomb of Jāmī, accompanied by one Yūsuf ‘Alī Kūkaltāsh, when he was in Herat in 1506; see *BN*, pp. 229-230. I have not at this point been able to ascertain whether or not the structure damaged in 1984 and subsequently repaired was the original structure, or whether the *mazār* of Jāmī had been either damaged and repaired or destroyed and rebuilt at some earlier point in time. Certainly, Vāṣifī’s account seems to indicate that there should have been at least minimal damage done to what must have been, in 1510, the original structure or structures of the shrine.

³⁴⁹ مقری (pl. مقریان) is one who recites, pronounces, or reads the Qur’ān. It may also be construed as one who gives instruction in the Qur’ān; see *Loghatnāmeḥ-ye Dehkhodā*,

<http://www.loghatnaameh.org/dehkhodaworddetail-767a80c3896e45169cb4c38fcf6db06b-fa.html>.

Tumanovich locates the Muqriyān district, or “кваргал ученых мужей – Чтецов Корана,” in the ‘Alī Asad sector, situated in the north-east, which she describes as having been “a very comfortable area, irrigated above all by urban channels, where the wealthy and famed of Herat lived”; see N. N. Tumanovich, *Gerat v XVI – XVIII vekakh* (Moskva: “Nauka”, 1989), pp. 54-55.

³⁵⁰ *BV*, Vol. II, pp. 250-251. The precise term used here as a noun is حرامزاده, which could be construed as a bastard, illegitimate one, villain, rogue, etc.; see Steingass, p. 415; Hayyim, p. 631.

this mob of angry Shī‘ah, hurling rocks as well as abuses in his direction as he ran down *kūcha-yi shaftālū* – Peach Street – which he describes as long and narrow.³⁵¹ Making it to the end of this street and past another man, Vāṣifī hurled himself into a stream in an attempt to throw off the pursuing Shī‘ī mob. According to Vāṣifī’s description, the stream was quite large, “the water of which flowed into a garden through an earthen water-pipe.” Vāṣifī found his escape route obstructed by some wooden stakes inside the pipe which, seized with panic as he must have been, he found the strength to break before clawing himself out of the irrigation ditch, now inside the garden.³⁵²

Having wounded his foot while trying to escape his pursuers, Vāṣifī bandaged it up and made his way to a ruined building on the premises of the garden estate on which he now found himself. Venturing inside, Vāṣifī discovered a room full of piled up lumber or timber of some sort beneath which he quickly hid. From his hiding place Vāṣifī could hear his former acquaintance encouraging the rage of the crowd:

That student of the sciences said to that mob: “O, my dear friends! If you were, for example, to slay Yazīd, it is unknown whether or not you would find that such meritorious deed! This man is the very man who has lampooned Shāh Ismā‘īl and his entire line! There would be no better gift for the Shāh than he!”³⁵³

The reference made here to Yazīd, yet another man reviled in the Shī‘ī tradition, is of note. Yazīd, a prominent and controversial figure from the early history of Islam, was the son of Mu‘āwiyah b. ‘Abī Sufyān. Yazīd and his forebears were members of the Banū

³⁵¹ Tumanovich has located this street in the above mentioned quarter of the city where many *huffaz* – or reciters of the Qur’ān, مقريان, or قرآن خواننده ها, etc. – resided, and states that it intersected with Qipchāq Street; see Tumanovich, p. 55. I have been unable to locate a map of the city of Herat as it existed in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries with the level of detail necessary, such as street names, district or quarter labels, and so on, to determine the precise path Vāṣifī took on this day. Furthermore, as Tumanovich’s work makes clear, many places mentioned in various works, including the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’*, as being located within the city of Herat have been built atop of, renamed, destroyed, etc.

³⁵² *BV*, Vol. II, p. 251. The compound term آب مورئی is rendered here as “earthen water-pipe”, according to Steingass, موری by itself translates as: “An earthen pipe joined to an aqueduct; a water-course, channel, gutter”; see Steingass, p. 1343. It is not exactly clear as to whether this bit of irrigation work was covered or exposed to the open air, although I am inclined to interpret it as the former.

³⁵³ *BV*, Vol. II, p. 252.

Umayyah, also referred to as the Banū ‘Abd Shams which, like the Banū Hāshim to which the Prophet Muḥammad belonged, was a clan within the greater tribe of the Quraysh at Mecca. According to tradition, it was ‘Abī Sufyān, the grandfather of Yazīd, who led the Meccan opposition to Muḥammad, and it was only after the Muslims’ seizure of Mecca in 630 that ‘Abī Sufyān, Mu‘āwiyah, Yazīd, and the Banū Umayyah, with questionable sincerity, entered into Islam. In his turn Mu‘āwiyah, father of the Yazīd whose memory was invoked above to stir the Shī‘ī mob to bloodlust, after being appointed governor of Syria by Caliph ‘Umar around 640 A.D., emerged as the most formidable opponent of ‘Alī b. ‘Abī Tālib – the first Imām of Shī‘ī Islam – during the First Fitna. Furthermore, upon founding the Umayyad Caliphate following the assassination of ‘Alī in 661, Mu‘āwiyah dispensed with the notion of appointing a *shura* to determine succession and declared Yazīd his intended heir, thereby blocking the sons of ‘Alī and Fatima – Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, the grandsons of the Prophet Muḥammad – from the office of Caliph. Finally, it was while battling against the forces of Yazīd that Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī b. ‘Abī Tālib and most of his family and companions were martyred at Karbala. Yazīd had assumed the office of Caliph upon the death of Mu‘āwiyah, and as Moojam Momen puts it: “If the rule of Mu‘āwiyah, the son of the Prophet Muhammad’s most powerful enemy in Mecca, had been offensive to some pious Muslims, the ascension of Yazīd, a drunkard who openly ridiculed and flouted the laws of Islam, was an outrage.”³⁵⁴ If the narrative of Vāṣifī is any indication, this outrage continued to be felt well into the early modern era, and could be tapped with a few terse words in order to enflame and motivate the Shī‘ah to social and political action.

³⁵⁴ Momen, p. 28.

Ḥusayn, considered the third Imām by the Shī‘ah, had remained mostly quiet during the reign of Mu‘āwiyah and while his brother Ḥasan, the second Imām, was alive. With the ascension of Yazīd, Ḥusayn was persuaded by the supporters of *ahl al-bayt* to revolt and headed toward Kufa. Yazīd’s agent in Kufa, ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Ziyād, quashed any signs revolt there and effectively eliminated Ḥusayn’s base of support. Ḥusayn, his family and most loyal followers were compelled to encamp at the plain of Karbala, in modern-day Iraq, where, after negotiations for a peaceful resolution failed, they were slaughtered by an Umayyad army on 10 Muharram, 61 A.H. From this massacre the legend of the martyrdom of Ḥusayn was born. Momen opines that the Tragedy of Karbala,

...of all the episodes of Islamic history...has had a greater impact than any on the Shi‘a down the ages...Although it was the usurpation of ‘Ali’s rights that is looked upon by Shi‘is as the event initiating their movement and giving it intellectual justification, it was Husayn’s martyrdom that gave it its impetus and implanted its ideas in the heart of the people. To this day it is the martyrdom of Husayn that is the most fervently celebrated event in the Shi‘a calendar. During the first ten days of Muharram, the whole Shi‘i world is plunged into mourning.³⁵⁵

By merely mentioning Yazīd b. Mu‘āwiyah b. ‘Abī Sufyān, who is hated and despised by the Shī‘ah to this day, the theology student-cum-leader of the Shī‘ī mob in pursuit of Vāṣifī recalled for his fellows this entire history – from the hostility of ‘Abī Sufyān in Mecca to the murder of Ḥusayn at Karbala. The utterance of this vile name would bring to the fore all of the opposition proffered by the Banū Umayyah to the Prophet Muḥammad and the *ahl al-bayt*, whom the Shī‘ah considered to be the rightful heirs to the mantle of the Prophet, and rekindle the desire of the most zealous of the Shī‘ah for revenge against the egregious wrongs perpetrated against Muḥammad and his family. Yazīd was thus a choice term at that moment meant to fuel a fanatical bloodlust in the

³⁵⁵ Ibid, pp. 31-33.

hearts of Vāṣifī's pursuers. Having with a word generated this rage within the mob, the young man then directed it against Vāṣifī, the poet who in satirizing Shāh Ismā'īl mocked not only the man who was for partisans of 'Alī throughout the region the symbol of a resurgent Shī'ī Islam and the sign of their liberation from orthodox oppression, but also the line of Ismā'īl's spiritual ancestors tracing back through the centuries to the Imāms Ḥusayn, Ḥasan, and 'Alī and, ultimately, to the Prophet Muḥammad himself.

Of course, Vāṣifī did not see it this way. Rather from his perspective, he was being hounded by a group of fanatical, crazed heretics bent upon his personal destruction. Frightened and no doubt exhausted and in pain from his ordeal, Vāṣifī hid beneath the wood piles as a group of Shī'ah approached the room and peered inside. They were about to set fire to the timber when shouts from outside the building proclaimed that they had captured the heretic: "The mob ran after him, caught him, cut off his head and, having stuck his head on the point of a spear, exclaimed loudly: 'Behold, we got him!' The group that had been at the door of the timber room all turned around and left the estate."³⁵⁶ After some time had passed Vāṣifī scampered out of his hiding spot and made his way out of the ruined building in a daze, still not knowing where he was or in which direction to head.

Seemingly out of nowhere a woman motioned to Vāṣifī from a house on the grounds of the garden-estate, beckoning him to come and take refuge. As Vāṣifī relates:

I headed over to her. That woman said to me: "Dear one, miraculously you were saved! Come, get in the house!" She brought me into the house, prepared some bread and curds for me from what was on hand, and continued: "Dear one, eat this, and hide yourself in the closet."³⁵⁷ My husband is Sabzivārī. God forbid he see you, for it would be impossible to save you again!"³⁵⁸

³⁵⁶ *BV*, Vol. II, p. 252.

³⁵⁷ The term used here is قَزْنَان, and while it is not present in Steingass, Hayyim, or Dekhoda, it seems that in Uzbek there is a cognate, *qaznoq* or *qaznoqcha*, which means "a small storage room."

³⁵⁸ *BV*, Vol. II, p. 252.

In recounting this event, Vāṣifī makes it a point to mention that the husband of the woman who had come to his aid was a native of the city of Sabzivar. Why would Vāṣifī have made mention of this fact unless it was of some significance? While discussing the state of Shī‘ī Islam in Khurasan towards the end of the Būyid period, Momen notes that within this predominantly Sunnī province the cities of Nishapur and Sabzivar had become important Shī‘ī centers, and that among the most prominent members of the Twelver Shī‘a ‘*ulamā*’ who died between the years 1106 and 1202 A.D., thirty-four were counted as natives of Sabzivar.³⁵⁹ On the eve of Tīmūr’s subjugation of Khurasan, the city had come to be dominated by the Sarbadārids, identified by some as a Shī‘ī movement, which quickly acknowledged the hegemony of the Ṣāhib Qirān who, although a Sunnī, “was not unsympathetic to Shi‘is.”³⁶⁰ Thus, in mentioning that the husband of this woman was Sabzivārī, Vāṣifī would have been informing his audience that the man was Shī‘ī without expressly stating that this was the case. Furthermore, the fact that her husband was Sabzivārī, and that Vāṣifī had been hidden by this man’s kind wife in a closet in what one

³⁵⁹ Momen, pp. 83, 91. With regard to the figure given, Momen extracted this information from the third volume of Āghā Buzurg Tihrānī’s *Tabaqāt a’lām al-shī‘a*, published in 1970; see Hamid Algar, “Āqā Bozorg Ṭehrānī,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Vol. II, Fasc. 2 (London: Routledge, 1985), p. 170; Momen, p. 329.

³⁶⁰ Momen relates that with the disintegration of the Il-Khanate following the death of Abū Sa‘īd in 1336, “a number of Shi‘i states were established. At Sabzivār in Khurāsān, Ḥasan Jūrī, the head of the Shaykhiyya-Jūriyya, a Shi‘i Sufī order, helped the Sarbadārids to establish a small Shi‘i state which existed from 1337 to 1386,” at which time the Sarbadārids capitulated to Tīmūr, who “allowed the Shi‘i Sarbadārids to continue as his vassals,” and “favoured ‘Alids, descendants of ‘Alī, and was lenient towards them even when they rebelled against him”; see Momen, pp. 93, 98. Melville states: “The Sarbadārid régime has been variously viewed as a robber state, a social revolutionary movement animated by a strong Mahdist impulse, and a type of Shī‘ī ‘republic’... It can most usefully be seen as an attempt at self-government among the indigenous population of western Khurāsān, faced with the disintegration of Mongol rule.”; see C. P. Melville, “Sarbadārids,” *EP²*, Vol. IX (Leiden: Brill, 1960), p. 1727. With regard to the submission of the Sarbadārids to and their alliance with Tīmūr, as well as their rebellion following the death of Tīmūr in 1405, see Beatrice Forbes Manz, *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane* (Cambridge: University Press, 1989), pp. 70, 95, 137.

may assume was their home, makes it clear that although he had managed to evade that angry mob of Shī‘ah, Vāṣifī was still in danger of quite literally losing his head.

Vāṣifī remained out of sight as his savior’s husband returned home, excitedly recounting the day’s events for his wife. According to Vāṣifī, he first declared, “‘I was at the *mazār* of that heretic,’” the reference here being to that of Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī. With this, Vāṣifī illustrates yet again that Jāmī was not held in high esteem by the Shī‘ah of Herat. The man continued: “‘They burned a number of heretics, and I heard that in this very estate they captured and killed a heretic! What a shame, that I was not honored to be part of this great deed!’”³⁶¹ Once again Vāṣifī gives expression to the hostility felt by the Shī‘ah of Herat, at least at the popular level, toward the Sunnī majority. What must have been some hours later Mīrzā Bayram, having heard that Vāṣifī had been slain after they had been separated from one another at the shrine of Jāmī, led a group of women comprised of Vāṣifī’s family and friends, including his sister, to the garden estate in order to reclaim what they thought would be the headless body of Vāṣifī. However, upon discovering the grisly remains Vāṣifī’s sister proclaimed that it was not in fact the body of her brother, as it lacked a certain telltale mole or birthmark, and the women at once fanned out in search of their missing loved one. The woman who had saved Vāṣifī heard people about and called the women over to the house, where she reunited Vāṣifī with his family and Mīrzā Bayram. Showering the woman with praise and what valuables they had in gratitude, Vāṣifī finally returned home at the time of *namāz-i khuftan* after what must have been one of the most harrowing days of his life to that point.

³⁶¹ BV, Vol. II, p. 253.

Finally, after living under the Şafavid occupation of Herat for a little over two years, Vāşifî had enough and resolved to take some action. One morning in mid-spring while walking about seemingly in a state of utter despair, Vāşifî happened upon one Khvājah Abu'l-‘Alā Khvārazmī, a *murīd* of Sayyid Zayn al-‘Abadīn Amīr Murtāz, to whom he stated:

“O, beloved companion, friend of the two worlds, today I have left the house verily with the intent to do something, to partake of an action that will certainly bring about my ruination. I no longer have the strength to listen to the cursing of the Noble Companions, to hear the abuse of the Companions of the Prophet, peace be upon him: I want to say something or take some action such that these people [the Qizilbāsh] will make me imbibe the draught of martyrdom, and cause me to reach that elevation – *Indeed, they live nourished by the grace of God’s presence! They rejoice in the splendor of knowing God.*”³⁶²

Although he was unaware of it at the time, this encounter was to change the course of Vāşifî’s life irrevocably. Recognizing Vāşifî’s anguish and distress over the continued rule of the Shī‘ah and his powerlessness to rectify the situation, Khvārazmī, rather than assisting Vāşifî in concocting some foolhardy plan which would have surely led to the death of them both, instead advised Vāşifî – without any explanation as to why – to call on a certain mysterious Andalusian mendicant by the name of Abu’l-Jūd. According to Khvārazmī, Abu’l-Jūd was “an accomplished master of the arcane sciences and marvelous arts,”³⁶³ such that his own *murshid*, Murtāz, had cause to consult with this visitor from Iberia. Khvārazmī then recounted Abu’l-Jūd’s curriculum vitae for Vāşifî – his mastery of *kīmiyā*, *līmiyā*, *hīmiyā*, *sīmiyā* and *rīmiyā*, as well as his apparent clairvoyant abilities. Adequately convinced, Vāşifî consented to walk up the *khiyābān* with the Khvājah in order to meet this renowned and exceptionally talented character.

³⁶² *BV*, Vol. I, p. 5; the portion in italics is from the Qur’ān, 3:169-170.

³⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 5.

Upon arriving at the abandoned tower in which this venerable master had taken up residence, Khvārazmī came to a halt, declaring he was too fearful to continue.

Undaunted, Vāṣifī entered the tower alone and made his way to Abu'l-Jūd. As Vāṣifī recounts the tale:

When his eye fell upon me, he spoke: “O, Vāṣifī – Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd is your name, and the conclusion of your work will also be worthy of praise!³⁶⁴ Before you there are many marvelous vicissitudes and extraordinary events: before long you will go to Mavarannahr, and you will move in the company of and hold *majālis* with magnificent sovereigns and potentates, and resplendent nobles. Of the line of Chingīz in the province of Turkistan there is a sovereign, just and clement, and loving in the extreme toward his subjects. Suyūnj Khvājah Khān is his name, and he will honor and favor you as is befitting. He has two sons, each of which is a pearl in the sea of equity and a brilliant star in the heavens of His Royal Majesty. One bears the name Sultān Muḥammad, and you will receive the utmost consideration from him, and he will make of you his master, his *imām*, and the chief judge of his kingdom. After his death, his brother Navrūz Aḥmad Khān will bestow the same offices upon you.³⁶⁵

Abu'l-Jūd went on to predict that the son of Sultān Muḥammad b. Suyūnj Khvājah Khān, Abu'l-Muẓaffar Ḥasan Sultān, would come under the guidance and tutelage of Vāṣifī, live a long and glorious life, and pass away having ascended to the throne of Baghdad. Having completed his predictions, Abu'l-Jūd receded into the shadows while Vāṣifī fled from the tower, terrified and bewildered. Not long thereafter Vāṣifī encountered a group of acquaintances from among the poetic community of Herat gathered by the *jūy-i injīl*, who informed him of a decree issued by Shāh Ismā'īl commanding “that the poets of Khurasan should thoroughly study the *qaṣīdah* entitled *Tan tarānī* of Kamāl Ismā'īl Iṣfahānī... and the *qaṣīdah* called *Rāyiya 'bahāriya'* of Salmān.”³⁶⁶ Vāṣifī continues:

³⁶⁴ Here we have a play on Vāṣifī's name, Maḥmūd, which may be translated as praised, laudable, praiseworthy, etc. The sentence is: ای و اصفی نام تو زین الدین محمود است و عاقبت کار تو نیز محمود خواهد بود; see Steingass, p. 1190; Hayyim, Vol. II, p. 838.

³⁶⁵ *BV*, Vol. I, p. 6.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p. 8. Kamāl al-Dīn Ismā'īl Iṣfahānī (fl. 1172-1237) was a poet patronized by Rukn al-Dīn Abu'l-'Alā' Sa'īd, a man of prominence from a local Hanafite family in Isfahan, which was nominally under the suzerainty of the Khvārazm Shāhs from 1194 until the arrival of the Mongols around 1226. Kamāl al-Dīn Ismā'īl has been “noted for his mastery of the panegyric” in particular. As A. H. Zarrinkub relates, his reputation as a panegyrist overshadowed that of his father, Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Iṣfahānī, who was also a highly esteemed poet; “*Kamāl* devoted a large part of his work to the praise of the leaders of two patrician

When I heard this, it occurred to me...that it would be apropos that I should pen a reply to these two *qaṣīdah* in praise of the two sons of Suyūnj Khvājah Khān, so that there would be a pretext for my entering into the attendance of those two high ranking *pādishāh*; I bid farewell to the crowd and began those two *qaṣīdah*. The response to the *qaṣīdah* called *Tan tarānī* was adorned and arranged in praise of the magnanimous *pādishāh* of the fortunate sultanate...Muẓaffar al-Dīn Sulṭān Muḥammad Bahādūr, while the *qaṣīdah* entitled *Rāyiyā ‘ bahāriyā ‘* of Salmān was arranged in praise of the grand sultan...Abū al-Ghāzī Navrūz Aḥmad Bahādūr Khān.³⁶⁷

Contained within the text of the *Badāyī ‘ al-vaqāyī ‘* are the replies penned by Vāṣifī to the above mentioned *qaṣīdahs*; the first, dedicated to Muẓaffar al-Dīn Sulṭān Muḥammad Bahādūr, otherwise referred to as Kīldī Muḥammad Khān in the *Badāyī ‘ al-vaqāyī ‘*, runs one-hundred lines while the second, written in honor of Navrūz Aḥmad Khān, runs for fifty-six lines.

Did these events actually occur? It is, of course, impossible for one to answer this question with any degree of certainty. While we have no reason to doubt the word of Vāṣifī and dismiss this tale out of hand, it does seem too fantastic a story to accept at face value. Might Vāṣifī have met with some mysterious medium who forecast his future for him, or who may have indeed planted the idea of emigrating from Khurasan to

families of Iṣfahān, the *Shāfi‘ī Āl-i Khudjand* and the *Ḥanafī Āl-i Ṣā‘id*. Among other patrons to whom he dedicated panegyrics are: ‘Alā al-Dīn Tekish (568/1172-596/1199) and Sultan Djalāl al-Dīn (617/1280-628/1230) of the Kh‘ārazmshāhs.” David Durand-Guédy notes that, “Kamāl al-Dīn paid tribute to the older masters of the Persian panegyric, such as Sanā‘ī and Anwari,” and also makes mention of the fact that he “wrote verses praising the family of the Prophet Mohammad and deploring the killing of the Prophet’s grandson Hosayn,” although Durand-Guédy does not consider Kamāl al-Dīn to have been devoted to the Shī‘ah. Vāṣifī was clearly acquainted with Kamāl al-Dīn’s poetic works, and the fact that he finds mention in the *Tazkirat al-shu‘arā‘* of Davlat Shāh indicates that his works were in fact widely known in the Tīmūrid era; see A. H. Zarrinkub, “Kamāl al-Dīn Ismā‘īl,” *EP*², Vol. IV (Leiden: Brill, 1960); David Durand-Guédy, “Kamāl-al-Din Eṣfahānī,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Vol. XV, Fasc. 4 (New York: 2008), p. 416. As noted in the historiographic essay, the poet Jamāl al-Dīn Salmān b. Muḥammad-i Sāvajī (d. 1376), often referred to simply as Salmān Sāvajī, was patronized by the Jalāyirid sovereigns of the late fourteenth century. Glünz states that Salmān Sāvajī followed in the footsteps of Anvarī and Kamāl al-Dīn Ismā‘īl Iṣfahānī, and that he “was taken as a model by following generations of Persian and Turkish poets.” Furthermore, while considering the *qaṣīdah* and its use in panegyrics, Ehsan Yarshater relates: “From the 14th century we find also a considerable amount of poetry written in praise of the Shī‘ī Imāms,” and that Salmān Sāvajī, to whom he refers as a “sturdy panegyrist,” was among the most prominent Shī‘ī poets of the Tīmūrid era; see M. Glünz, “Salmān-i Sāvajī,” *EP*², Vol. VIII, p. 997; Ehsan Yarshater, “Persian Poetry in the Tīmūrid and Safavid Periods,” *CHI*, Vol. 6, ed. Peter Jackson, et al. (Cambridge: University Press, 1986), pp. 967-968.

³⁶⁷ Ibid, pp. 8-9.

Mavarannahr in Vāṣifī's mind? Without a doubt this is a distinct possibility.

Furthermore it is also possible, if not almost certain, that Vāṣifī embellished the narrative regarding this life-changing encounter, perhaps in order to curry favor with his patrons in Mavarannahr, or perhaps just to entertain. Regardless of the veracity of this particular tale, the fact remains that Vāṣifī did resolve to set out for Mavarannahr in the spring of 1512, leaving behind all of his friends and loved ones, the dreams and expectations of his youth, and above all his beloved Herat – the only home he had ever known.

Once again the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* provides a unique perspective from which to consider a well-known event in the history of Islamic Central Asia. The historical narrative of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* is distinctive with regard to the Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh occupation of Herat that occurred December of 1510. No other source recounts with such vivid detail what was undoubtedly one of the most dramatic events in the long history of Herat, nor captures so poignantly the mood of the inhabitants of the city, both Sunnī and Shī'ah, at this particular moment and place in history. One must appreciate the fact that no other work written in Persian provides such a personal narrative related to this well-known historical event. The autobiographical elements and Vāṣifī's unique perspective vis-à-vis the historical events through which he lived as an individual connected to but not wholly a part of the Tīmūrid or Abu'l-Khayrid ruling elite render his narrative both compelling and captivating and, moreover, very important to scholars endeavoring to reconstruct the history of late fifteenth and early sixteenth century Islamic Central Asia.

CHAPTER IV

THE NARRATIVE OF AMĪR NAJM-I ŠĀNĪ AND THE ROLE OF MĪR-I ‘ARAB

As related above, Shāh Ismā‘īl I Safavī entered the city of Herat on December 21, 1510, at which time he “stopped in the Bāgh-i-Jahanara and mounted the victorious Khaqan’s throne to dispense royal justice to the population and put an end to tyranny and injustice.”³⁶⁸ The *khutbah* was read in the name Shāh Ismā‘īl I and in those of the Twelve Shī‘ī Imāms. Portraying the contest between the Šafavids and the Abu’l-Khayrid Uzbeks in sectarian terms, Khvāndamīr continues: “The creed of the Imams was proclaimed throughout Khurasan, and the erroneous customs of the heretics were abrogated.”³⁶⁹ Husayn Bayk Lahlah was installed as governor of Herat, and Amīr Ghiyās al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Amīr Yūsuf, known to Vāṣifī as Amīr Muḥammad Amīr Yūsuf, was appointed “chief justice,”³⁷⁰ while Muḥammad Zamān Mīrzā b. Badī‘ al-Zamān was sent to govern Damghan.³⁷¹ Upon passing the winter in the former capital of Mīrzā

³⁶⁸ *HS*, p. 593. The Bāgh-i Jahān Ārā, or the Garden of the World-Adorner, occupied approximately one hundred seventy-three acres of land located to the north-east of Herat proper not far from the slopes of the Gazurgah, and served as the seat of government beginning with Sulṭān Husayn Bāyqarā sometime after his second capture of Herat. Allen states that construction “was begun in 873, as soon as the Soltān took the throne,” and that unlike the Bāgh-i Zāgān, the Bāgh-i Jahān Ārā did not have a close connection to the life of the city as it was removed from the khiyābān. It was bounded in the north-east by the jūy-i nau, and bisected by the jūy-i injīl. It was at the Bāgh-i Jahān Ārā that Bābur was welcomed by Badī‘ al-Zamān when he visited Herat in 1506. Little remained of the structures of the Bāgh-i Jahān Ārā in the late 1970s, and Ball relates that, regrettably, the site was extensively shelled in March, 1979; see Allen, *Timurid Herat*, pp. 26, 29, 33, 35; map 2; Warwick Ball, “The Remains of a Monumental Timurid Garden Outside Herat,” *East and West*, Vol. 31, No. 1/4 (December, 1981): pp. 79-85; Haneda Masashi, “The Pastoral City and the Mausoleum City,” *Islamic Urbanism in Human History: Political Power and Social Networks*, ed. Sato Tsugitaka (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 152.

³⁶⁹ *HS*, p. 593.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. 593.

³⁷¹ Sarwar, p. 64. Sarwar pulled this information from British Museum MS., Or. 3248, f. 196b; check Rieu. Damghan was situated roughly two-hundred miles east of Ray along the main route leading to Nishapur, Mashhad, Herat and so on. The town was relinquished by the Timūrīds in 1508 to the Abu’l-Khayrids, and subsequently passed into Šafavid possession in 1510; see Chahryar Adle, “Dāmḡān,” *Encyclopædia Iranica*, Vol. XV, fasc. 3, pp. 632-638; available online at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/damghan-persian-town> (accessed online at 8 March 2013).

Sultān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā and celebrating Navrūz with a lavish banquet, the shah gathered his forces and marched toward Mavarannahr in the spring of 1511, intent on battle with the Abu'l-Khayrids and their Uzbek confederates. When word of the Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh advance reached the Abu'l-Khayrids, Muḥammad Tīmūr Sultān and Jānī Bayk Sultān sent representatives to express their fealty and subservience to the young shah.³⁷²

Following a visit to Mavarannahr by one Khvājah Kamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd, the envoy of Shāh Ismā'īl, it was agreed that the Amu Darya – the natural boundary that has since antiquity served as a symbolic divide between the sedentary and nomadic worlds – would act as the border separating the Ṣafavid realm from that of the scions of the house of Abu'l-Khayr Khān.³⁷³

This treaty held until 1512 when, in support of Zāhīr al-Dīn Muḥammad Bābur in his bid to reclaim the throne of Tīmūr in Mavarannahr, the Ṣafavids were once again drawn into a contest with the Abu'l-Khayrid Uzbeks from which the latter were to emerge victorious.³⁷⁴

³⁷² According to Iskandar Munshī, the Uzbek envoys entered into the presence of Shāh Ismā'īl in the vicinity of Maymana and Faryab, which Savory explains is situated roughly midway from Herat to Balkh; see Munshī, pp. 63-64.

³⁷³ *HS*, p. 594.

³⁷⁴ Munshī states that it was the Abu'l-Khayrids who broke the peace: “The Uzbek sultans, however, did not remain loyal to the treaty and to their sworn oaths; as soon as the Shah’s back was turned, they began to raid the periphery of the Safavid empire.” Munshī goes on to relate that at this point Bābur seemingly requested a *farmān* or some such from Shāh Ismā'īl to the effect that he would be “confirmed in the possession of whatever areas of Transoxania he might conquer by his own efforts,” and having received such assurances he set out from Kabul; see Munshī, p. 64.

The Safavid-Qizilbāsh Campaigns in Mavarannahr

The standard history of the Safavid-Qizilbāsh campaign against the Abu'l-Khayrid Shībānids in support of Bābur has been included in a handful of sources dating from the sixteenth century or later. Chief among these sources stand once more the *Habīb al-siyar* and the *Tārīkh-i rashīdī* which, along with the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, were penned closest in time to these events. According to the *Tārīkh-i rashīdī*, Bābur received a letter in Kabul from one Mīrzā Khān, known in the *Habīb al-siyar* as Sulṭān Vays Mīrzā, not long after the defeat of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān “in the early part of Ramazān of the year 916,” or early December of the year 1510, informing him that the Uzbeks had withdrawn to the other side of the Amu, and that should Bābur hasten to Qunduz, Mīrzā Khān would join with him in recovering Mavarannahr.³⁷⁵ Seizing upon this opportunity, Bābur set out during the height of winter for Qunduz, “where he was received by Mīrzā Khān, and by the Moghuls who had been with the Uzbek.”³⁷⁶ Khvādamīr states that it was not until 917 A.H., or 1511-1512, that Bābur headed north for Qunduz.³⁷⁷ This delay seems unlikely, given that 1 Muharram 917 corresponds to March 31, 1511, which would not have been the dead of winter, but rather very early spring. Regardless of the exact timing of Bābur’s initial march from Kabul to Qunduz, Dūghlāt relates that the allies set out against Hisar-i Shadman not long thereafter and, having accomplished nothing, returned to Qunduz. It was upon returning to Qunduz that

³⁷⁵ *TR*, Dennison-Ross trans., p. 237. Munshī clears up any confusion with regard to the identity of this individual, stating that “Sultan Oveys Mīrzā, known as Kān Mīrzā b. Solṭān Maḥmūd Mīrzā b. Solṭān Abū Sa‘īd Gūrakān” had come from Badakhshan to congratulate Shāh Ismā‘īl on his victory over Muḥammad Shībānī Khān, and was rewarded for his professed loyalty with authority over Hisar-i Shadman and Badakhshan; see Munshī, p. 63.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p. 238.

³⁷⁷ *HS*, p. 596.

Bābur was reunited with his sister, Khānzādah Baygum, and received “tenders of friendship” from Shāh Ismā‘īl.³⁷⁸

For whatever reason, whereas Dūghlāt goes into great detail regarding this initial foray against Hisar-i Shadman, this episode is entirely absent from the narrative of Khvāndamīr. Rather, the account crafted by Khvāndamīr moves right from the initial arrival of Bābur in Qunduz to the defeat and elimination of Hisar-i Shadman’s Abu’l-Khayrid defenders, Hamza Sulṭān and Mahdī Sulṭān,³⁷⁹ men referred to in the *Tārīkh-i rashīdī* as “two of the most eminent of the Uzbek sultāns.”³⁸⁰ Alternatively, Dūghlāt relates that it was after the return of Khānzādah Baygum that Bābur “despatched Mīrzā Khān to Shāh Ismail laden with presents, and charged with protestations of submission, good faith, and entreaties for support and assistance.”³⁸¹ According to Dūghlāt, it was after the return of Mīrzā Khān, accompanied by Qizilbāsh reinforcements, that Bābur embarked upon the second campaign against Hisar-i Shadman, defeated Hamza Sulṭān and Mahdī Sulṭān, and had them executed.³⁸² Dūghlāt states further on that additional forces were sent by Shāh Ismā‘īl in support of Bābur following this victory.³⁸³ Ghulām Sarwar plainly states that Dūghlāt was mistaken, and that in fact Mīrzā Khān returned to Bābur without reinforcements from Shāh Ismā‘īl. Differing with regard to the precise sequence of events, Khvāndamīr relates that Hamza Sulṭān and Mahdī Sulṭān, hearing of Bābur’s approach, marched out from Hisar-i Shadman to meet him head-on, and were

³⁷⁸ *TR*, p. 238.

³⁷⁹ *HS*, p. 596.

³⁸⁰ *TR*, p. 238.

³⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 239.

³⁸² *Ibid*, p. 245.

³⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 245.

defeated and slain in the vicinity of the Vakhsh River.³⁸⁴ Following this victory, “The province of Hisar Shadman, Khuttalan, Qunduz, and Baghlan thus came under the control of Babur, the heir to the Timurid dynasty,” and it was then that Bābur sent word to Shāh Ismā‘īl to the effect that if he, the shah, would condescend to dispatch forces to assist in the conquest of Mavarannahr, that he, Bābur, would have the *khuṭbah* read and coins minted in the name of the shah. It was at this point, states Khvāndamīr, that Shāh Ismā‘īl agreed and sent Aḥmad Bayk Sūfī Ughlū and Shāh Rukh Bayk Afshār to assist Bābur in driving the Abu’l-Khayrids from Mavarannahr.³⁸⁵

Whether the Qizilbāsh forces arrived before the capture of Hisar-i Shadman, as Dūghlāt maintains, or afterward as professed by Khvāndamīr, the sources clearly agree that Bābur would have been unable to occupy Mavarannahr without the consent and military support of Shāh Ismā‘īl I. Dūghlāt relates that from Hisar-i Shadman Bābur set out with a force of sixty-thousand in the direction of Bukhara in order to draw ‘Ubayd Allāh out from Qarshi and compel him to array his forces for battle. Apparently, although ‘Ubayd Allāh was able to occupy Bukhara ahead of Bābur’s arrival, “The pursuers drove the Uzbek out of Bokhárá into the deserts of Turkistán, plundering as they went.”³⁸⁶ When word of the humiliation of ‘Ubayd Allāh reached Samarqand, the remainder of the Abu’l-Khayrids “were suddenly filled with terror and fled, scattered and

³⁸⁴ *HS*, p. 596. Seemingly synthesizing both accounts, Sarwar states: “On Khān Mīrzā’s return, but without the expected reinforcements, Bābur marched once more against the Uzbeks, and (early in 1511 A.D.) succeeded in dispersing their ranks: Hamza Sulṭān and Mahdī Sulṭān were taken captive and put to death as traitors for they had once been in Bābur’s service and had deserted him to join the cause of Shaybānī Khān”; see Sarwar, p. 67. Sarwar turned to Erskine’s *A History of India* with regard to the prior service rendered by Hamza Sulṭān and Mahdī Sulṭān to Bābur; however, Erskine failed to identify the source of his information; see William Erskine, *A History of India under the Two First Sovereigns of the house of Taimur, Báber and Humáyun*, Vol. I (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1854), p. 145.

³⁸⁵ *HS*, p. 596. Munshī refers to this pair as Aḥmad Sulṭān Sūfī-Ughlū and Shāh Rukh Sulṭān Murhdār Afshār; see Munshī, p. 65.

³⁸⁶ *TR*, p. 245.

dismayed, to different parts of Turkistán.”³⁸⁷ After securing Bukhara, Bābur rewarded the Qizilbāsh for their assistance and released them to return to Shāh Ismā‘īl “while he himself, victorious and covered with glory, proceeded to Samarqand.”³⁸⁸ Differing slightly yet again, Khvāndamīr reports that Muḥammad Tīmūr Sulṭān and ‘Ubayd Allāh evacuated Mavarannahr for Turkistan upon receiving word of Bābur’s victory at Hisar-i Shadman, and that Bābur, entering Samarqand with ease, “once again mounted the throne of his fathers,” after which “Ahmad Beg Sufi-oghli and Shahrukh Beg were rewarded with appropriate gifts, horses, and purses of gold and jewels and given permission to withdraw, laden with regal gifts and *peshkash* for the shah.”³⁸⁹ Both Denison-Ross and Erskine were of the opinion that for Bābur to have dismissed the Qizilbāsh from Bukhara would have been premature, and therefore concluded that Dūghlāt must have been mistaken. Khvāndamīr and Munshī are also in agreement that it was not until after Bābur had assumed the Tīmūrid throne in Samarqand yet again that the Qizilbāsh commanders were rewarded and given leave to depart.

Neither Khvāndamīr nor Munshī provide a precise date with regard to Bābur’s entry into Samarqand. Dūghlāt comes closest to providing an exact date, stating simply that “The Emperor entered the city in the middle of the month of Rajab in the year 917,”³⁹⁰ which we might estimate as the seventh or eighth day of October in the year 1511. According to the *Tārīkh-i rashīdī*, Bābur held Samarqand for roughly eight months, until May of 1512,³⁹¹ and in that time his authority extended throughout

³⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 245.

³⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 246.

³⁸⁹ *HS*, p. 596.

³⁹⁰ *TR*, p. 246.

³⁹¹ Ibid, p. 260.

Mavarannahr, from the Amu Darya to Tashkent.³⁹² Not surprisingly there is some discrepancy amongst the sources with regard to what happened next.

Khvāndamīr reports that Tīmūr Sultān and ‘Ubayd Allāh were emboldened by news of the rapid departure of the Qizilbāsh and determined to launch an offensive against Bābur and his loyalists: “Making a pact with Jani-Beg Sultan and their other relatives, they opened their purses to the other leaders of the Uzbek nation and gathered a fierce army. Around the beginning of 918 [March 19, 1512 – March 8, 1513] they marched to Bukhara, and their vanguard attacked the area.”³⁹³ The account found in the *Tārīkh-i rashīdī* differs slightly here, with Dūghlāt relating that the bulk of the Uzbek force was directed against Tashkent while ‘Ubayd Allāh moved against Bukhara.³⁹⁴ Bābur, unwisely in Khvāndamīr’s estimation, hastened to meet this threat to his newly recreated Tīmūrid state in the environs of Bukhara. He was defeated, withdrew to Samarqand to gather his household, and set out for Hisar-i Shadman.³⁹⁵ The account given by Munshī essentially parrots that found in the *Habīb al-siyar*, that the Uzbeks became aware of the fact that the Qizilbāsh had left Bābur and went on the attack. As Dūghlāt explains the details surrounding the Abu’l-Khayrid offensive against Bābur in the spring of 1512 and the ease with which they managed to drive the Tīmūrid from Mavarannahr, he emphasizes this important fact – that Bābur’s association with Shāh Ismā‘īl had cost him popular support and undermined the legitimacy of his rule, thereby

³⁹² Two statements made by Dūghlāt confirm that Bābur’s authority extended to Tashkent. First, Dūghlāt states: “When the Emperor conquered Mávará-un-Nahr, he gave Tāshkand [in charge] to Mir Ahmad Kāsim Kuhbur.” Dūghlāt relates elsewhere that when the Abu’l-Khayrids set out to take Mavarannahr back from Bābur their attack was two-pronged; one offensive was directed against Tashkent, which had been fortified by one Amīr Aḥmad Qāsim Kuhbur, while the other, led by ‘Ubayd Allāh, thrust southward in the direction of Bukhara. Bābur sent reinforcements to Amīr Aḥmad Qāsim Kuhbur, indicating that this amir had remained loyal to Bābur for the entirety of the eight months that he reigned in Mavarannahr.

³⁹³ *HS*, p. 596.

³⁹⁴ *TR*, p. 259.

³⁹⁵ *HS*, pp. 596-597.

rendering his position in the region ultimately untenable. Dūghlāt does not blame Bābur, per se, for allying himself with Shāh Ismā‘īl for the sake of political expediency:

The people of Mávará-un-Nahr, especially the inhabitants of Samarkand, had for years been longing for him to come, that the shadow of his protection might be cast upon them. Although, in the hour of necessity, the Emperor had clothed himself in the garments of the Kizilbāsh...they sincerely hoped, when he mounted the throne of Samarkand, (the throne of the Law of the Prophet) and placed on his head the diadem of the holy Sunna of Muhammad, that he would remove from it the crown of royalty...whose nature was heresy and whose form was the tail of an ass.³⁹⁶

He plainly states, however, that when Bābur failed to disassociate himself from his Şafavid-Qizilbāsh allies, “the learned men and nobles of Mávará-un-Nahr were indignant at his attachment to Sháh Ismail and at his adoption of the Turkomán style of dress.”³⁹⁷

Thus, the continuing association of Bābur with the Şafavids, regardless of the reasons for it, cost him the support of the people of Mavarannahr as a whole and Samarqand in particular and made it that much easier for the Abu’l-Khayrids to re-assert their authority – as legitimate Islamic rulers and defenders of true Islam – throughout the region.

When word of Bābur’s defeat at the hands of the Abu’l-Khayrids reached Shāh Ismā‘īl – according to Dūghlāt, Bābur sent a series of envoys requesting assistance – the shah sent his highest ranking official, the *vakīl-i dīvān-i a’lā*, Amīr Yār Aḥmad Işfahānī, known to Vāşifī and other historians more commonly as Amīr Najm-i Şānī, with reinforcements to assist Bābur in his hour of need. Dūghlāt states:

Sháh Ismail...sent Mir Najm, his commander-in-chief, with 60,000 men, to his [Bābur’s] aid. Thus at the beginning of the winter succeeding that spring, [the allies] once more marched against the Uzbeg. On reaching Karshi, they found that Shaikham Mirzá, the uncle of Ubaid Ullah Khán, had strengthened the fort at Karshi. They, therefore, began by laying siege to the fort, which they quickly reduced. Then they put to death Shaikham Mirzá, and massacred the whole of the people of the fort, killing both high and low – the sucklings and the decrepit.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁶ *TR*, p. 246.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 259.

³⁹⁸ *TR*, p. 260.

According to the *Habīb al-siyar*, Najm-i Ṣānī was initially dispatched to Khurasan for an entirely different reason: Khvāndamīr relates that Bābur had shown a lack of respect toward one Muḥammad Jān Ishīk Qasī, the envoy of Shāh Ismā‘īl who also happened to be a son of Amīr Najm-i Ṣānī. Returning to the shah with his ego bruised, Muḥammad Jān reported that Bābur was in rebellion against Ṣafavid suzerainty, and on account of this Shāh Ismā‘īl sent Najm-i Ṣānī to Khurasan in order to bring Bābur to heel.

Khvāndamīr states further that it was while en route to reprimand Bābur that Najm-i Ṣānī received word of Bābur’s expulsion from Mavarannahr. Thus without the express authorization of Shāh Ismā‘īl, Najm-i Ṣānī determined to crush the Abu’l-Khayrids himself.³⁹⁹ He was joined in this adventure by Ḥusayn Bayk Lahlah, the Qizilbāsh governor of Herat, and Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Amīr Yūsuf. Najm-i Ṣānī sent the latter off to Hisar-i Shadman to secure Bābur’s assistance while he crossed the Amu Darya. Khvāndamīr gives the date of the crossing only as Rajab, 918, which equates to sometime between September 12 and October 10 of the year 1512.⁴⁰⁰ Like Dūghlāt, Khvāndamīr also mentions the resistance put up by Shaykhim Mīrzā at Qarshi and the subsequent slaughter exacted by Najm-i Ṣānī as punishment, although he adds that prior to events at Qarshi the invaders had secured the surrender of the town of Khuzar.⁴⁰¹

While Khvāndamīr maintains that Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Amīr Yūsuf implored Najm-i Ṣānī to rescind his call for a general massacre, Munshī states that it was Bābur who endeavored to intervene on behalf of the inhabitants of Qarshi, and that it was this

³⁹⁹ *HS*, pp. 597-598. Khvāndamīr relates that Najm-i Ṣānī, “without obtaining his sovereign’s leave, undertook to conquer Transoxiana and battle the Uzbeks.” Munshī expressly states that Najm-i Ṣānī “resolved on the subjugation of Transoxania” without the order or approval of Shāh Ismā‘īl; see Munshī, p. 65.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 596-597. For date conversion, see <http://www.oriold.uzh.ch/static/hegira.html>.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid*, p. 598. The pacification of Khuzar is mentioned by Munshī as well; see Munshī, p. 65.

incident that caused a break in relations between Bābur and Najm-i Ṣānī.⁴⁰² In his assessment of these events, Boldyrev remarks: “The campaign of Najm-i Sani was designed to forcibly annex the territory of Central Asia to Safavid Iran, and Babur was compelled to play the unenviable role of accomplice to the politically aggressive Safavids in this enterprise.”⁴⁰³ However, upon consideration of the primary sources with regard to the events that occurred in Khurasan and Mavarannahr during the years 1511 and 1512, it is very difficult to see Bābur as a reluctant accomplice to the campaigns of Najm-i Ṣānī, or anything other than an ambitious claimant to the throne of Samarqand willing to do whatever was required in order to conclusively inherit his dynastic patrimony. Boldyrev’s appraisal of the situation is too kind to Mīrzā Bābur. Vāṣifi makes no mention of Bābur with regard to what one might call the joint Tīmūrid-Ṣafavid campaign against the Abu’l-Khayrid Uzbeks in the latter half of 1512 and, as will be seen presently, focuses his attention on several other strong historical personalities involved in the conflict.

⁴⁰² Munshī, p. 66.

⁴⁰³ Boldyrev, *Tadzhikskii Pisatel*, pp. 115-116.

The narrative of Vāṣifī regarding Najm-i Sānī and the Safavid-Qizilbāsh
campaign of 1512

In the chapter entitled *An account of the events which occurred in Samarqand and the coming of Najm-i Sānī*, which is the sixth *guftār* of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, Vāṣifī provides a narrative chronicling a final chapter of the Şafavid-Qizilbāsh campaign led by Najm-i Sānī in the year 1512. The essential historical details provided by Vāṣifī correspond to those of Khvāndamīr and Dūghlāt, but as is often the case with the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, such details serve as a backdrop before which the hitherto unknown details of the history are revealed. In this particular instance, Vāṣifī provides us with valuable insight with regard to the disposition of the Abu'l-Khayrids as the Qizilbāsh forces advanced, the role of a particular member of the '*ulamā*' in the defense of Mavarannahr, the general view of Amīr Najm-i Sānī, and how he and others might, theoretically, pass their time during a protracted siege. Thus, the history of the Şafavid-Qizilbāsh campaign found within the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* is not simply another standard narrative or retelling of a military campaign, nor of the comings and goings of this or that amir, grandee or force from one location to another. Rather, what Vāṣifī offers for consideration is, yet again, a history that is wholly unique.

Before considering the narrative provided in the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* detailing the culmination of the Şafavid-Qizilbāsh campaign one should, insofar as this is possible, first consider information presented in other primary and secondary sources with regard to the more prominent historical characters mentioned by Vāṣifī, such as Amīr Najm-i Sānī and Mīr-i 'Arab. As related above, Najm-i Sānī was the title bestowed upon Amīr Yār Aḥmad Işfahānī, a nobleman from the city of Isfahan, by Shāh Ismā'īl I when he was

appointed to the office of *wakīl* sometime in Autumn of 1509 while the shah was in the vicinity of Tabriz.⁴⁰⁴ This title, literally meaning “Second Star,” was given to Amīr Yār Aḥmad Iṣfahānī due to the fact that he had succeeded Najm al-Dīn Ma‘ṣūd, who had been granted the title Najm-i Avval, that is “First Star,” in the office of *wakīl*.⁴⁰⁵ According to Iskandar Beg Munshī, “Emir Najm Ṣānī, the *wakīl-e dīvān-e a‘lā*... was appointed to set in order the affairs of Khorasan and to deal with the Uzbek menace.”⁴⁰⁶ With regard to the office of the *wakīl* to which Amīr Najm-i Ṣānī, third in the line of *wakīls* of Shāh Ismā‘īl I, had been elevated, Savory states: “With the appointment of Najm-i Thānī... the shorter term *wakīl* is used... instead of the intensely personal *wakīl-i naḥs-i naḥs-i humāyūn* ‘viceroys.’”⁴⁰⁷ It is noted in the sources that Najm-i Ṣānī, like his predecessor, did not come from among the Turkmen Qizilbāsh supports of the Safaviyya, as had the first man to hold the office of *wakīl*, Ḥusayn Bayk Lahlah Shāmlū.⁴⁰⁸ Rather, it seems that both Amīr Yār Aḥmad Iṣfahānī and Najm al-Dīn Ma‘ṣūd were ethnic Persians, referred to derisively as “Tajiks” by the Qizilbāsh.⁴⁰⁹ According to Sarwar and Savory, Shāh Ismā‘īl’s elevation of “Tajiks” to the post of *wakīl* was not well received by the Qizilbāsh: “the *qizilbāsh* considered it a dishonour to be ordered to serve under an Iranian officer.”⁴¹⁰ The Qizilbāsh, as Savory puts it, were “men of the sword,” whereas the Persians, in their estimation, were suited to do little more than “look after accounts and

⁴⁰⁴ Savory gives his name as Amīr Yār Aḥmad Khūzānī, the *nisbah* here being derived from “Khūzān, a district of Iṣfahān.” Savory does not mention in which source the *nisbah* Khūzānī is given for Amīr Yār Aḥmad; see R. M. Savory, “The Principal Offices of the Safawid State During the Reign of Isma‘īl I (907-30/1501-24),” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. XXIII, No. 1 (1960): p. 95; see also Sarwar, p. 56.

⁴⁰⁵ Sarwar, pp. 56, 104.

⁴⁰⁶ Munshī, p. 65.

⁴⁰⁷ Savory, “Principle Offices,” pp. 95-96. The title *wakīl-i naḥs-i naḥs-i humāyūn* translates roughly as “Minister of the Exquisite Imperial Person”, “Viceroy of the Exquisite Imperial Self”, and so on.

⁴⁰⁸ Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids*, p. 32.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 32.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid, p. 32.

administrative matters generally.”⁴¹¹ The fact that Najm-i Sānī was of Persian provenance was perhaps not the only reason that the Qizilbāsh chafed under his command. According to Khvāndamīr, the *vakīl* was possessed of a disagreeable and arrogant manner. Khvāndamīr relates that, while Amīr Yār Aḥmad Iṣfahānī had proven himself to be and served as an effective minister upon being appointed the shah’s viceroy, his appetite for luxury and propensity for self-indulgence matched those of a sovereign:

Since during those years the nobles and grandees of the world resorted to his court, he attained the heights of status and magnificence and amassed such a fortune that he surpassed not only all of the great amirs but even some of the princes. His personal retainers numbered nearly five thousand armed horsemen, and his treasures and possessions were beyond calculation. Every day nearly a hundred sheep were placed on his table, and the number of chickens, geese, and ingredients of stews can be extrapolated therefrom. On the...expedition, although not all of his luxury utensils were sent across the river, every day thirteen silver cauldrons were used for cooking in his kitchen, and the various foodstuffs were served on gold and silver platters and china plates.⁴¹²

Taking into account any potential hyperbole, such an ostentatious display of wealth on a military campaign must have rankled the Qizilbāsh and done little to dispel the widely held stereotype of the effete Persian addicted to finery and luxury. As Khvāndamīr opines, with the following he had acquired and the wealth he had attained, Najm-i Sānī “grew conceited of his grandeur.”⁴¹³ Ultimately, the conceit of Amīr Najm-i Sānī would contribute to his final undoing in Mavarannahr in 1512. As will be seen below, Vāṣifī, like his contemporary Khvāndamīr, put the hubris of Najm-i Sānī on display, much as he had in the narrative pertaining to the Tīmūrid Amīr Shāh Valī already considered.

However, the first bit of information provided by Vāṣifī, that being the date of Najm-i Sānī’s crossing of the Amu Darya, sets his narrative at variance with that of Khvāndamīr. According to Vāṣifī, “It was on the first day of the lunar month of Rabī’ al-

⁴¹¹ Ibid, p. 32; see also Sarwar, p. 56.

⁴¹² *HS*, p. 597.

⁴¹³ Ibid, p. 598.

ākhar in the year 918 that Amīr Najm [Sānī] crossed the waters of the Amu with eighty-thousand Qizilbāsh rabble.”⁴¹⁴ The date provided by Vāṣifī corresponds to Wednesday, June 16 of the year 1512.⁴¹⁵ As mentioned above, Khvāndamīr states that it was in the month of Rajab in the year 918, or sometime between Sunday, September 12 and Monday, October 10, 1512, that Amīr Najm-i Sānī led a combined force of Qizilbāsh and Khurāsānīs across the Amu Darya at Tirmiz. What is one to make of this discrepancy? Boldyrev suggests:

It is likely that the chronology of Vasifi’s narrative may be explained only by the potentiality that he wrote this chapter of his memoirs much later, when his memory had already grown hazy, and in such circumstances that the author was not required to be historiographically accurate.⁴¹⁶

Thus, Boldyrev simply ascribes the perceived inaccuracy of Vāṣifī’s dating of events to a failing memory and an unexacting audience. He claimed that the date of 1 Rabī’ al-ākhar 918 “is not confirmed by other sources, which give the month of Rajab in the year 918 (September, 1512).”⁴¹⁷ This is partially correct: while Khvāndamīr states the crossing took place in Rajab 918, no date is provided by Dūghlāt in the *Tārīkh-i rashīdī* with regard to the crossing of the Amu Darya by Najm-i Sānī, nor does he provide a date for the Battle of Ghijduvan. The only bits of information provided by Dūghlāt as to the time of year when all of the events surrounding the Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh campaign in Mavarannahr occurred are that Bābur was defeated by ‘Ubayd Allāh in Safar of 918, i.e.

⁴¹⁴ The term translated here as “rabble” is اوباش *aubāsh*, which Steingass defines as “The common people, the mob; ruffians; mixed multitudes of every class; -- also اوباشه / *aubāsha*, A dunder-headed, ignorant, vulgar, self-opinionated, obstinate, unmanageable”; see Steingass, p. 118.

⁴¹⁵ See <http://www.oriold.uzh.ch/static/hegira.html>.

⁴¹⁶ Boldyrev, pp. 117-118.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid, p. 116. In an endnote pertaining to this date, Boldyrev cites four sources: the *Habīb al-siyar*; the *Tārīkh-i rashīdī*; Ḥasan Bayk Rūmlū’s *Ahsan al-tavārīkh*; and the *Musakhir al-bilād* of Muḥammad Yār b. ‘Arab Qatghan. With regard to Rūmlū’s *Ahsan al-tavārīkh*, Sarwar states that although Rūmlū “followed a strict chronological order” in his reporting of events, he “does not mention his authorities, but he has consulted possibly all the previous works, and has copied from *Habību’s-Siyar* and Bījan’s history without adding facts of real importance,” and ultimately opines that “in the presence of these earlier and more important works its value is not great”; see Sarwar, p. 11.

May 1512, and that “at the beginning of the winter succeeding that spring, [the allies] once more marched against the Uzbek.”⁴¹⁸ Munshī endorses the date of 3 Ramadan 918 / Friday, November 12, 1512 provided by Khvāndamīr for the decisive battle, but states unequivocally that the siege of Ghijduvan had been a protracted one, lasting four months – so long in fact that “food supplies in the *qezelbāš* camp began to run short,” and rationing had been called for.⁴¹⁹ If we assume this to be an accurate statement, then the Qizilbāsh siege of Ghijduvan, which began following the massacre at Qarshi, would have begun sometime around the beginning of Jumada al-thani of 918, or mid-August of the year 1512 – at least one month prior to the date of Najm-i Ṣānī’s crossing of the Amu Darya according to Khvāndamīr. The question now becomes, from where did Munshī derive the information that the siege of Ghijduvan lasted four months? Furthermore, if we accept this four-month siege, then we must accept that Najm-i Ṣānī led his forces across the Amu Darya sometime in the summer of 1512 in order for there to have been enough time for him to secure the surrender of Khuzar, then march to, reduce, and order the massacre at Qarshi, and then finally lay siege to Ghijduvan before being routed by the Abu’l-Khayrids on November 12, 1512.

If we assume Vāṣifī to be in error, the only other potential explanations that might account for this and other discrepancies with regard to the dates provided surrounding the Ṣafavid campaign in Mavarannahr in 1512 could be that scribal errors crept in among early copies of the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* and were perpetuated in future copies, with no one realizing from then on that the dates were in error, or that the dates were changed

⁴¹⁸ *TR*, p. 260. Boldyrev again acknowledges the *Tārīkh-i rashīdī*, relating only that Dūghlāt stated it was “v nachale zimy,” and makes no further comment on the matter.

⁴¹⁹ Munshī, p. 66.

purposefully by some later copyist for reasons unknown, and again were thereafter accepted as accurate and perpetuated in future copies.

Regardless of the dates provided in the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* with regard to the crossing of the Amu Darya by Najm-i Sānī and subsequent events, Vāṣifī, more than any of his contemporaries, effectively conveys the arrogant air surrounding the Ṣafavid *vakīl* and vividly conveys the feelings of dread and terror that gripped the people upon hearing of the arrival of Najm-i Sānī and the despised Qizilbāsh in Mavarannahr. Vāṣifī states:

Word came to Samarqand that Amīr Najm had said: “When I take Samarqand, having leveled the city, I will plant a melon field, and I shall send its melons to Shāh Ismā‘īl as a gift, after which I will turn my attention to Khitāy.” When the inhabitants of Samarqand heard this speech, their hands and feet went as limp as vines in a melon field, and they saw their heads fallen like watermelons upon the desert of despair.⁴²⁰

Vāṣifī does not mention whether this declaration made by Najm-i Sānī of his intention to visit ruin upon Samarqand before heading on to conquer points further to the east arrived at the capital before or after the massacre at Qarshi. Regardless, Vāṣifī skillfully gives expression to the boastful and bellicose nature of Najm-i Sānī, so sure in his cause and certain that his efforts would culminate in a glorious victory over the infidels and the sowing of Shī‘ī Islam throughout Mavarannahr, and poetically conveys the sense of hopelessness that seized the people of Samarqand, with “their hands and feet... as limp as vines”, the imposition of Shī‘ī doctrines and rule under the banner of Bābur still fresh in their collective memory.

Apparently, the fear generated by the rumored proclamation of Najm-i Sānī created such a panic in Samarqand that even highly placed and respected individuals contemplated abandoning the city to its fate rather than live through another Shī‘ī occupation. As Vāṣifī recounts, fear even gripped his teacher in Samarqand, Mavlānā

⁴²⁰ *BV*, Vol. I, pp. 112-113.

Hājji Tabrīzī, who declared the words of Amīr Najm-i Sānī to portend the coming of “the judgment of greatest darkness,” and recommended flight to Hindustan in order to “search for the water of life and sustenance in that darkness”⁴²¹ – implying that it would be better to migrate to India and maintain the *sunna* surrounded by Hindus than to remain in Mavarannahr under either the loathsome and heretical regime of Shāh Ismā‘īl Safavī and his fanatical Qizilbāsh supporters or his new, favorite client-king, Mīrzā Zāhīr al-Dīn Muḥammad Bābur. Tabrīzī and his companions were dissuaded from this desperate course of action upon interpreting a dream had by Vāṣifī:

On the very night that these events occurred, the hidden and infallible bearers of good news in the mirror of this *faqīr*’s dream spoke thusly: “the stars of the sky are as the udders of sheep, milk is rain, and the alleys and bazaars are as flowing streams of milk.” In the morning, having come into the company of that honorable one, I recounted this event. He rejoiced and declared that “the milk consisted of the light of the religion of Muḥammad and the purity of the *Sharī‘ah* of the Muslim realm, which had descended from the heavens to the center of earthly matters.”⁴²²

This dream assuaged their fears and fortified their faith that in the end the Abu’l-Khayrids would emerge victorious over the heretics and “be received in the garden of paradise.”⁴²³

The people of Samarqand were not the only ones to be seized by fear and panic at the approach of Najm-i Sānī and his force of eighty-thousand. Whereas Khvādamīr reports that ‘Ubayd Allāh and Jānī Bayk Sulṭān were together in Bukhara with the bulk of the Uzbek forces and intended to meet the Qizilbāsh in battle,⁴²⁴ Vāṣifī states that initially “‘Ubayd Allāh Khān and Jānī Bayk Sulṭān were in the environs of Karmina, while Kūchkūnchī Khān and Tīmūr Khān were in Miyankal with the rest of the sultans, all of

⁴²¹ Ibid, p. 113.

⁴²² Ibid, p. 113.

⁴²³ Ibid, p. 113.

⁴²⁴ *HS*, p. 598. Khvādamīr gives no indication that the Abu’l-Khayrids were on the verge of flight.

them [according to the verse] – *and let not your own hands throw you into destruction*⁴²⁵ – had resolved to flee.”⁴²⁶ Thus, as Vāṣifī relates it, the Abu’l-Khayrids had quickly decided to withdraw from Mavarannahr even before word arrived of the massacre that had been perpetrated at Qarshi.

According to Vāṣifī, it was at this critical moment that ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān, apparently having made his way to Bukhara, was visited by “his Excellency of excellencies...the great Axis of axes, the Sultān of saints, the Exemplar of the pious, the Succor of Islam and friend of all Muslims, the Sultān of chiefs and Chief of sultans, Amīr Sayyid ‘Abd Allāh, otherwise called Amīr ‘Arab.”⁴²⁷ Vāṣifī is here referring to Shaykh ‘Abd Allāh Yamanī, also known as Mīr-i ‘Arab, a highly respected member of the Naqshbandī Sūfī order who is known to have served as a spiritual advisor to ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān. Not much has been written about Mīr-i ‘Arab, a figure whom Bakhtyar Babajanov referred to only as “the well-known spiritual dignitary from the circle of ‘Ubaydallāh Khān.”⁴²⁸ Certainly no work aside from the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’* ascribes to Mīr-i ‘Arab an important or pivotal role in the defense of Mavarannahr against the Qizilbāsh in 1512. Mīr-i ‘Arab is, of course, most often simply associated with the famed madrasa that bears his name, part of the Pā-yi Kalān complex in Bukhara. It has been held for some time that construction of the madrasa commenced around 1530, but recent work suggests that in fact construction began not long after the Abu’l-Khayrid victory at

⁴²⁵ Qur’ān, 2:195; Boldyrev cites 2:191. In the Qur’ān this verse instructs believers not to work against the will of God, i.e. not to partake of sinful or evil actions which might serve to condemn them to the fire. The next line exhorts believers, *But do good, for Allāh loves those who do good.*” Taken out of context, the verse seems to be used as justification to flee in the face of certain destruction.

⁴²⁶ *BV*, Vol. I, p. 115. Karmina is located between Samarqand and Bukhara.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 115.

⁴²⁸ Bakhtyar Babajanov, “Biographies of Makhdūm-i A’zām al-Kāsānī al-Dahbīdī, *Shaykh* of the Sixteenth-Century Naqshbandīya,” *Manuscripta Orientalia*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (June 1999): p.8.

Ghijduvan.⁴²⁹ Might the madrasa have been a reward bestowed upon Mīr-i ‘Arab by ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān for his loyal service and crucial support during the final Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh campaign in Mavarannahr?

What follows is an interesting and telling exchange between Mīr-i ‘Arab and ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān, who was undoubtedly already recognized as the true power within the Abu’l-Khayrid house. Having come before ‘Ubayd Allāh, Mīr-i ‘Arab upbraided the crestfallen warrior:

He saw ‘Ubayd Allāh, who had so completely lost heart and let the reins of authority slip from his hand, and said: “Oh, child, what is happening to you? Almighty God, glorious and exalted, has sent rarities and gifts for you, and has bestowed high rank upon you in this world and the hereafter – do you want to reject them, to decline them?”⁴³⁰

First, it is interesting to note here the way in which Amīr ‘Arab immediately addresses ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān as *farzand*, or child, and by the informal second person *tu*; addressing ‘Ubayd Allāh thusly is indicative of the close, intimate relationship that is purported to have existed between Amīr ‘Arab and ‘Ubayd Allāh. Given his association with both figures, Vāṣifī was undoubtedly privy to the degree of intimacy that existed between Mīr-i ‘Arab and ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān. The view taken on worldly authority is also worthy of note; it is not earned through the courage or ability of the individual alone, but rather it is ultimately bestowed upon the individual by God who has gifted to certain men among his creation the proper set of talents to rise above their brethren and assert their authority – men, according to Amīr ‘Arab, such as ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān. Insofar as Vāṣifī has set these words in the mouth of Amīr ‘Arab, one presumes that Vāṣifī would have shared such sentiments, lending itself to the contention that Vāṣifī in fact saw God’s intentions

⁴²⁹ http://archnet.org/library/sites/one-site.jsp?site_id=3172;

⁴³⁰ *BV*, Vol. I, p. 115.

for humanity coming to fruition in events of great and seemingly insignificant importance.

Throughout the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* one gets the sense that, by Vāṣifī's reckoning, God was not indifferent to but was rather playing an active role in historical events as they unfolded in accordance with his Divine will.

Amīr 'Arab's initial entreaty, however, failed to penetrate the cloak of despair in which 'Ubayd Allāh Khān had wrapped himself. As Vāṣifī relates, 'Ubayd Allāh Khān answered Amīr 'Arab in the manner of a child making excuses to a parent for failing at some task, replying: "Oh, master! This truth is evident: the number of fighting men of this army is greater than eighty-thousand, while the number of our soldiers is known to you!"⁴³¹ Undaunted, Amīr 'Arab endeavored yet again to prod 'Ubayd Allāh to seize the moment and fulfill his divinely appointed destiny as defender of the *sunna*, imploring him to put his faith in God. Amīr 'Arab urged 'Ubayd Allāh Sulṭān: "*Take refuge with God from the accursed Satan!*," for Satan, according to the next verse in the Qur'ān which 'Ubayd Allāh may well have known, has no power *over those who believe and put their trust in their Lord*.⁴³² Amīr 'Arab continued to press the Abu'l-Khayrid prince, calling to mind the Battle of Badr: "*How often has a small force overcome a great force by God's will? For God is with those who are patient in adversity!*"⁴³³ Amīr 'Arab's intention in calling to mind the Battle of Badr is clear: just as the Abu'l-Khayrids were outmanned in the face of the Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh force that had invaded Mavarannahr, so Muḥammad and his followers had been greatly outnumbered by the Meccans at Badr.

⁴³¹ Mīrzā Ḥaydar Dūghlāt states that Najm-i Ṣānī brought a force of sixty-thousand, and that Bābur's force was added to this number; see *TR*, p. 132.

⁴³² *BV*, Vol. I, p. 115; Amīr 'Arab is invoking here the Qur'ān, 16:98; Boldyrev cites 16:100.

⁴³³ *Ibid*, p. 115; Qur'ān, 2:249; Boldyrev cites 2:25.

The Muslims were victorious at Badr because they had faith in their cause, and more importantly, they maintained faith in God and His providence in a seemingly hopeless situation. Amīr ‘Arab was pleading with ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān to hold onto his faith in God and that He would elevate their righteous cause and grant them victory over the forces of the heretical Ṣafavids. In Amīr ‘Arab’s estimation, that is to say in Vāṣifī’s estimation as well, ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān and the Abu’l-Khayrids were at that moment clearly “fighting in the cause of Allāh,” whereas the Ṣafavids represented the party of the enemies of God.⁴³⁴

Even with this reference to the Prophet Muḥammad and the Muslim victory at Badr, Amīr ‘Arab still could not convince ‘Ubayd Allāh to stay and fight off the Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh invasion. Vāṣifī relates that it was at this very moment, in the middle of this dialogue, with the fate of Mavarannahr and its Sunnī inhabitants hanging in the balance, that word reached them of the massacre that had taken place at Qarshi. Vāṣifī states that this plunged the Abu’l-Khayrid further into despair: “‘Ubayd Allāh Khān wept and said: Oh, master! How is one to resist such a force as this?!” Vāṣifī here inserts a *bayt*, seemingly attributing it to ‘Ubayd Allāh – “*If taking refuge is not for one reason or another permissible, why did the best of men flee from Mecca to Yathrib?*”⁴³⁵ With this response Amīr ‘Arab became infuriated, berated ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān further, and all but

⁴³⁴ The Battle of Badr is one of a few military engagements mentioned in the text of the Qur’ān, in 3:13, 123-125, and 8:7, 41, 44, 48, 71, although the Battle of Badr must be read into 3:13 and the Āyat from Sūrat 8. According to tradition, it was at the Battle of Badr in the year 624 that Muḥammad led a small Muslim force to victory over a numerically superior Meccan army. This victory was seen as a sign of God’s favor. On the Battle of Badr, Syed Ameer Ali eloquently opined: “What the victory of Bedr was for Islām, the victory of the Milvian Bridge was for Christianity...For the Moslems the victory of Bedr was indeed most auspicious. It was not surprising that they, like the Israelites or Christians of yore, saw the hand of Providence in their success over the idolaters. Had the Moslems failed, we can imagine what their fate would have been – a universal massacre.” See Syed Ameer Ali, *The Life and Teachings of Mohammed, or the Spirit of Islam* (London: W. H. Allen & Co., Ltd., 1891), pp. 152-153.

⁴³⁵ *BV*, Vol. I, pp. 115-116

commanded him as a parent or superior might to stop making excuses, see to the task at hand, and defend what God had given him:

Rouse yourself in this moment, for that force will be vanquished, for when oppression and tyranny have reached their zenith, their end is near; and it is the apex of oppression which they have wrought. Rise, o child, and place the foot of good fortune in the stirrup of prosperity! Take command over all and attack! Strike the ball of the victory – for *those foremost in faith will be foremost in the Hereafter, these will be those nearest to Allāh*⁴³⁶ – with the head of the polo stick of ambition, and spread the branches of destruction over that contemptible lot!⁴³⁷

With this last effort Amīr ‘Arab was finally able to snatch the cloak of despair from the shoulders of ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān and embolden him to take action against the forces of Najm-i Šānī. Having thus roused ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān to live up to his obligations to his fellows and, most importantly, to God and the *ummah*, they set out. En route to Ghijduvan, ‘Ubayd Allāh and Amīr ‘Arab halted, according to Vāšifī, in order to attach Jānī Bayk Sulṭān and his forces to their army. As was the case with ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān, this took some cajoling on the part of Amīr ‘Arab. Vāšifī states:

When they had advanced one or two *farsang*, Mīr-i ‘Arab commanded: “Do not cross from this spot until I go and add Jānī Bayk Sulṭān to your force. When Mīr-i ‘Arab came before Jānī Bayk Sulṭān, he realized that if he delayed a moment longer that army would disband. He [Mīr-i ‘Arab] scolded him [Jānī Bayk Sulṭān] and said: “Have you no shame, that with all of your claims to valor and bravery your mind turns to retreat? ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān, who is your child,⁴³⁸ knows this is a gift from God, and states: ‘How excellent the fortune and glory that I am risking my own life in the way of the religion of Muḥammad and the dominion of the people of Muṣṭafa, the blessings of God and peace be upon him!’” From such an exhortation he [Mīr-i ‘Arab] inflamed and provoked him [Jānī Bayk Sulṭān] to battle.⁴³⁹

Thus according to Vāšifī’s narrative, although the charge to relieve Ghijduvan and to repel the Šafavid-Qizilbāsh force from Mavarannahr was led by such fighting men as ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān and Jānī Bayk Sulṭān, the real hero of the Battle of Ghijduvan was

⁴³⁶ Qur’ān, 56:10-11.

⁴³⁷ *BV*, Vol. I, pp. 116. Here the Qur’ān addresses the inevitable final judgment, the moment when those who were “foremost in faith” will gain entry into Paradise, while those condemned to Hell will face a sundry of torments and be compelled to eat of the Tree of Zaqqūm which grows at the bottom of Hell.

⁴³⁸ ‘Ubayd Allāh was a nephew of Jānī Bayk Sulṭān.

⁴³⁹ *BV*, Vol. I, pp. 116-117. At a distance of one or two *farsangs*, the camps of ‘Ubayd Allāh and Jānī Bayk Sulṭān in Bukhara were located roughly three to seven and a half miles from one-another.

Mīr-i ‘Arab, a member of the Naqshbandī *silsilah*. Clearly in the estimation of Vāṣifī, Mavarannahr would have been lost to the heresy of the Shī‘ah and the slaughter he had witnessed personally and fled before in Herat would have been visited upon the cities and towns of Mavarannahr had it not been for the timely intervention of this venerated holy man who, when all seemed to be lost, entered into the fray, reminded ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān and Jānī Bayk Sulṭān of their obligations to each other, to their clan, to those they ruled, and to God himself, and salvaged victory for not only the Abu’l-Khayrid Shībānids, but for the religion of Islam. Vāṣifī relates that, in the end, the Abu’l-Khayrids decimated “those puny, repugnant *Ḥaydarīs*,” and their general, Najm-i Ṣānī, “to the blissful music of the blessed army’s rain of arrows. *Praise Be to God who confirms his promises, makes his servants victorious, and puts partisans to flight.*”⁴⁴⁰

Vāṣifī informs us that it was on the twentieth of Dhū al-qa‘dah in the year 918, or Thursday, January 27, 1513, that the Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh force led by Amīr Najm-i Ṣānī laid siege to the fortress at Ghijduvan “like the circle of a ring.”⁴⁴¹ Amīr Najm-i Ṣānī was certain that his forces would emerge victorious in the coming contest with the Abu’l-Khayrids and their Uzbek confederates and that Mavarannahr would be appended to the Ṣafavid empire. Vāṣifī describes him as arriving on the eve of battle “upon a celestial orb of grandeur and heroism... such that the world-warming sun of the azure heavens would be rendered less than dust at the sight of him.”⁴⁴² Sometime after the Battle of Ghijduvan Vāṣifī encountered the aforementioned Amīr Muḥammad Amīr Yūsuf, who had been

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 114. With the reference to the “blessed army’s rain of arrows,” Vāṣifī seems potentially to be drawing another allusion to the Battle of Badr; it is written in Bukhārī, Book 4, Volume 52, Hadīth 149, Narrated Abu Usaid: “On the day (of the battle) of Badr when we stood in rows against (the army of) Quraish and they stood in rows against us, the Prophet said, “When they do come near you, throw arrows at them”; see <http://quranexplorer.com/Hadith/English/Index.html>. The term *ḥaydarī* / حیدری is one used to refer to Shī‘ī Muslims; see Steingass, p. 435.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid, p. 117. For the date conversion, see <http://www.oriold.uzh.ch/static/hegira.html>.

⁴⁴² Ibid, p. 117.

among those present at the camp of Amīr Najm-i Ṣānī during the siege, at a *majlis* in Samarqand; there, Amīr Muḥammad recounted for Vāṣifī what had transpired in the camp as the siege was underway, just prior to the Abu'l-Khayrid attack.⁴⁴³

Convinced that victory was just a matter of time, Najm-i Ṣānī sought to distract himself from the boredom that accompanied the siege and held a *majlis* which was attended by two poets in particular, Dūstī and Burnāchah. According to Vāṣifī, these men were renowned at the time not only for their mastery of a wide variety of poetical forms but also for their skill at playing *nard* and *shaṭranj*, or backgammon and chess.⁴⁴⁴ As the two poets – who had also become Amīr Najm-i Ṣānī's constant companions – squared off against one another in a backgammon match, each endeavored to trump his opponent in the recitation of appropriately themed verse. As Amīr Muḥammad related to Vāṣifī:

Burnāchah began a *lughaz* about *nard*; Amīr Najm, hearing and listening to that, was enthralled, and when the *takhallus* was stated, he asked: “Who is this Vāṣifī? When in Khurasan I heard that he drafted a petition on behalf of the men of a *ziyāratgāh*, and that this letter had been very successful. We searched for him a bit but didn't find him. Now, I heard this *lughaz*, and I am convinced that he is a talented individual who has woven verses of such charm and prose of such high quality!”⁴⁴⁵

Amīr Muḥammad at this point recounted a list of Vāṣifī's virtues and almost super-human abilities for Amīr Najm-i Ṣānī. While this of course constitutes a bit of self-adulation placed by Vāṣifī in the mouth of Amīr Muḥammad and as such there is a degree of embellishment to be found with regard to Vāṣifī's talents, the reader discovers at this point that Vāṣifī was a student of the famed and highly respected polymath Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn Kāshifī, referred to in the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* as Mavlānā Ḥusayn Vā'iz. Of his pupil Vāṣifī, Kāshifī is said to have commented: “Between him and me, in delivering the

⁴⁴³ Ibid, p. 118.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 118.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 119.

sermon, the difference is that he is sonorous whilst I am not.”⁴⁴⁶ This remark is somewhat ironic considering the fact that Kāshifī was himself known for his eloquence and melodious voice as a *ḥāfiẓ*.⁴⁴⁷

Upon hearing all about Vāṣifī, his talents, and his virtues, Amīr Najm-i Ṣānī demanded to know where he was residing. Amīr Najm-i Ṣānī had just given the order that a rider be sent to Samarqand to safeguard Vāṣifī’s life when the Uzbeks fell upon the Ṣafavid camp. According to the *Badāyi’ al-vaqāyi’*, Amīr Najm-i Ṣānī thought little of the threat posed by the Abu’l-Khayrid attack. He declared, “Take ‘Ubayd alive so that I may send him to the Shāh! As for the others, do with them what you like!”⁴⁴⁸ Vāṣifī reports, here still paraphrasing the account of Amīr Muḥammad, that Najm-i Ṣānī had to be cajoled to mount his horse and ride out to meet the enemy: “With the utmost insistence we persuaded him to mount his horse in his shoes and a shirt, without his helmet. He kept saying: ‘They’re not worth it, that one ride out to them!’”⁴⁴⁹ Within short order, the head of Amīr Najm-i Ṣānī adorned the tip of an Uzbek spear, and the Abu’l-Khayrid Shībānids were victorious.

The narrative pertaining to the Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh invasion of Abu’l-Khayrid Mavarannahr led by Amīr Najm-i Ṣānī in 1512, like that which chronicles the Abu’l-Khayrid conquest of Herat in 1507, is both an informative historical piece and an instructive morality tale for the reader. Amīr Najm-i Ṣānī may be seen in much the same light as Amīr Shāh Valī – the great man who had it all and lost it due to his own tragic character flaws. Once again the message is that excessive pride and arrogance, embodied

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 120.

⁴⁴⁷ Yousofi, p. 703.

⁴⁴⁸ *BV*, Vol. I, p. 121.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 121.

here by the figure of Amīr Najm-i Ṣānī, will inevitably lead one to disaster and despair. Conversely, one who maintains his pious hope in the face of adversity and hopelessness and his faith in God and His divine justice, exemplified in this episode by Amīr ‘Arab and, by extension, the scions of the Abu’l-Khayrid house, will be rewarded in this life and the life to come in the hereafter.

CONCLUSION

The late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries constitute a time of significant upheaval in the history of Islamic Central Asia. This period witnessed the elimination of one dynasty, the Tīmūrīds, and the rise of the Abu'l-Khayrid Shībānīds and the Ṣafavīds in their stead. What had once constituted the core of the Tīmūrīd realm, the provinces of Khurasan and Mavarannahr, was transformed into a battleground upon which the struggle between the two nascent powers was to be decided. The contest between the Abu'l-Khayrīds and the Ṣafavīds brought with it important social, political, and religious transformations. The rise of the Ṣafavīd dynasty represented the union of political power and Shī'ī Islam, while that of the Abu'l-Khayrīds rejuvenated the Chinggisid ideal. Combatants and non-combatants alike were on the move, encouraging and contributing to demographic shifts throughout the region. The influx of nomadic Uzbeks into Mavarannahr during this period accelerated the process of Turkicization that had been ongoing since pre-Islamic and early Islamic times, while the arrival of the Ṣafavīds in Herat and other quarters of Khurasan spurred the migration of many artists, musicians, and men of letters out of that province, northward to Abu'l-Khayrid Mavarannahr. The period of religious permissiveness that had accompanied Mongol and Tīmūrīd rule came to an end as more rigid forms of orthodox Sunnī and Shī'ī Islam asserted themselves, and the theological and ideological divide between these two branches of Islam once again became a *casus belli* readily invoked by both the Ṣafavīds and Abu'l-Khayrīds, and succeeding Persian and Uzbek dynasties, from that time forward. In its capacity as both a memoir and work of history, the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* serves as a first-person record

attesting to the processes of social, political, and religious transformation that redefined Islamic Central Asia which began in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

The *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* is unique among sources pertaining to the history of the late Tīmūrid and early Abu'l-Khayrid and Şafavid period, and provides an unparalleled perspective from which to consider the significant political, social, and religious transformations that occurred in Islamic Central Asia during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. This has been illustrated via a close reading of those portions of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* pertaining to the Abu'l-Khayrid conquest of Herat and Khurasan in 1507 and the Şafavid-Qizilbāsh capture of the same city and province in 1510, as well as the Şafavid-Qizilbāsh invasion of Mavarannahr in 1512. While other sources attest to the size of the force led by Muḥammad Shībānī Khān in his campaign against and victory over the Tīmūrids, the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* offers scholars and historians an idea as to how the Abu'l-Khayrid conquest of the capital impacted not only the Tīmūrid nobles and elites, the Chaghatāy in Vāşifī's narrative, but also members of the middling class such as Vāşifī himself and those around him. The narrative provided in the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* presents the reader with a personal history that is very real and in which one can imagine beign a participant.

As the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* is, again, a historical memoir, the entire episode surrounding the Abu'l-Khayrid conquest of Herat – the tale of Amīr Shāh Valī Kūkaltāsh and his kin, and the role played by Vāşifī and Ghiyāş al-Dīn Muḥammad – is presented in the form of an intimate and personal history that also serves as a morality tale, a dire warning to the reader. Thus, Vāşifī has provided an historical narrative that is both informative and instructive; while delivering an exclusive account of historical events

related to the Abu'l-Khayrid capture of Herat, Vāṣifī's narrative also serves to remind the reader of the age-old lesson that excessive pride and arrogance leads to a calamitous fall, such that by the end of this story we see the father of Amīr Shāh Valī, Amīr Yādgar, reduced to begging on the streets of Herat while he himself is humbled by the Uzbek conquerors, clearly considered by Vāṣifī and, we may presume, some of his contemporaries, as agents of God's corrective justice let loose upon a society that had strayed from the path. Vāṣifī's sense of history is informed by his faith, and indeed all that has transpired in his estimation is simply a part of the gradual unfolding of God's grand design.

Certainly the Abu'l-Khayrid conquest heralded a degree of political transformation – a transition from one dynasty to another and the concomitant shift in the political and economic fortunes of men such as Amīr Shāh Valī and women like Khadījah Baygum. One should also consider Amīr Ḥusayn Qungrāt's seizure of the estate from which Vāṣifī and Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn rescued the maiden Māhchūchūk as indicative of the extent to which the conquering Abu'l-Khayrids and their Uzbek confederates displaced the nobility and aristocracy of the *ancien régime*. Such political transformations are a typical accompaniment to violent military conquest, and history is replete with examples of this phenomenon well into the modern era. Nevertheless this event constituted a shift in the political order that Vāṣifī and his peers had known their entire lives; the rule of Mīrzā Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā had provided nearly four decades of relative peace and prosperity in the city of Herat and its environs. The Abu'l-Khayrid conquest of Herat in 1507 brought a swift end to this Tīmūrid *Belle Époque* and marks the beginning of the city's eclipse as a political and cultural capital in Central Asia. Furthermore this

conquest caused Vāṣifī and one can only imagine how many others to abandon the city for a time, and although he did eventually return to Herat, this event had already set his life along a path that he had very likely never considered.

The historical narrative pertaining to the Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh conquest of Herat is likewise an intensely personal history, full of vivid detail found in no other extant source available to scholarship that addresses the changes occurring at the time. The *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* alone speaks to the level of violence that accompanied the entry of the Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh into the city of Herat: the chaos and slaughter at the Masjid-i Jāmi', the rioting of the city's Shī'ī inhabitants, and the sacking of the shrine of Nūr al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī as recorded in the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* betrays a deep-seated rage that must have been building for some time. The hostility and anger of the Shī'ah, no doubt encouraged by the arrival and presence of the Shāh Ismā'il's forces, exploded in an orgy of violence and terror that sent Vāṣifī and his friends literally scurrying for their lives through the narrow, crooked alleys of Herat. This great violence directed at the city's Sunnī residents and institutions, as indicated by the numerous personal attacks alluded to by Vāṣifī, the author's own ordeal, and the desecration of the tomb of the most highly regarded member of the Naqshbandī Sūfī order to have resided in Herat – a spiritual heir to Abū Bakr al-Siddīq – was part and parcel of the Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh military conquest and assumption of political power. If the conquest of the Abu'l-Khayrids marked the end of an era of relative peace and prosperity, it must have seemed to Vāṣifī and those around him as though Herat had been cast into the inferno with the arrival of the Ṣafavids and their Qizilbāsh forces. The Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh conquest of 1510 contributed to the

process of political transformation set in motion by that of the Abu'l-Khayrids three years prior, but seems to have had a greater impact on the people at large.

The continued Şafavid imposition of Shī'ī doctrines and practices upon the population of Herat and more widely Khurasan that ultimately compelled Vāşifī to emigrate must be considered within the broader context of the Şafavid campaign to forcibly convert their subjects to Shī'ī Islam and thereby transform the social and religious landscape of their nascent empire. Obviously within the portions of late medieval Khurasan that are now part of the Islamic Republic of Iran, this campaign of conversion to Twelver Shī'ī Islam was greatly successful, and although the portion of Khurasan that now constitutes northwestern Afghanistan has changed hands a number of times within the past five-hundred years, to this day there is a sizeable population of majority Shī'ī Persians, referred to by their Pashtun neighbors as *Farsiwan*, in the city and province of Herat. This population of Twelver Shī'ah was undoubtedly nurtured by the Şafavids as the city and province remained solidly in Persian hands from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century.

The historical narrative that addresses the 1512 Şafavid-Qizilbāsh invasion of Mavarannahr is structured in much the same way those pertaining to the Abu'l-Khayrid and Şafavid conquests of Herat. Vāşifī first provides the broader historical context, in this case the invasion led by Amīr Najm-i Şānī, the subsequent flight of the Abu'l-Khayrid princes, and the fear that spread among the people *en masse* as a result both. Having done this, Vāşifī then focuses on a number of smaller histories within the meta-narrative. As with other narratives within the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, it is both informative and morally instructive.

Faced with the prospect of annihilation at the hands of the Shī'ī Ṣafavid commander and his Qizilbāsh forces, the rulers and their subjects were in a state of panic, and one learns that even members of the *'ulamā'* in Samarqand, led by Mavlānā Hājī Tabrīzī, were set to flee from the violent red waves surging up from the south until Vāṣifī himself came forward with a dream which, when interpreted by the *qadvat al-'ulamā'*, portended an Abu'l-Khayrid victory and, consequently, a victory for true Islam. Vāṣifī then jumps to the disposition of the Abu'l-Khayrids at the time that they received word of the massacre at Qarshi and had resolved to abandon Mavarannahr once more. The situation was salvaged only thanks to the intervention of yet another member of the *'ulamā'*, "his Excellency of excellencies...the Exemplar of the pious, the Succor of Islam and friend of all Muslims...Amīr Sayyid 'Abd Allāh, otherwise called Amīr 'Arab,"⁴⁵⁰ who descended like a divinely appointed champion from Turkistan to alight by the side of Sulṭān 'Ubayd Allāh at Bukhara. Although the hard fighting was done by the Abu'l-Khayrids and their Uzbek forces, it is clear that in Vāṣifī's estimation Amīr 'Arab of the Naqshbandī order deserves a great deal of the credit for rectifying the situation and inspiring the Abu'l-Khayrids to victory over the Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh army at Ghijduvan by reminding 'Ubayd Allāh and Jānī Bayk of their obligations to their subjects, themselves, and most importantly to God. Vāṣifī then provides an account of what transpired in the camp of Amīr Najm-i Ṣānī as his forces besieged the Abu'l-Khayrid defenses; within this account Vāṣifī portrays the Persian aristocrat in an unflattering light, as the impious and arrogant heretic who brings about his own ruination.

In all of the episodes considered Vāṣifī presents himself as *īn faqīr*; while this expression may simply be read as "I, the author", it seems to have a deeper meaning in

⁴⁵⁰ BV, Vol. I, p. 115.

the case of Vāṣifī, and should be understood to mean this poor, humble *darvīsh* and servant of God. Vāṣifī clearly saw himself as a man of great faith, and indeed his *curricula vitae* supports this conclusion. In the portions of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* pertaining to the conquests of Herat, the historical Vāṣifī presents himself as the archetypal pious Muslim who never loses his faith even in times of great adversity. Vāṣifī is the Muslim possessed of *sabr*, living the phrase *al-hamdu lillahi 'ala kulli hal* in that he patiently endures, trusting in God and the notion that all that transpires is in accordance with His will.⁴⁵¹ In these and other narratives Vāṣifī continually places a great deal of emphasis upon the importance of maintaining one's faith in the face of adversity and trusting in the will and mercy of God. When Vāṣifī himself is not an actual participant in the history he recounts, another of God's humble servants, such as Amīr 'Arab, assumes the role of pious exemplar.

The *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* is an important historical source for and literary artifact of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Similar to the way in which the *Bāburnāmah* has conveyed the hopes and fears of its author while providing historical information pertaining to a number of events from Bābur's singular perspective, the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* has preserved the hopes, fears, pleasures and anxieties of its author, Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāṣifī, and will continue to provide scholars with an unmatched first-hand account of significant transformative events in the history of Islamic Central Asia. The preservation of Vāṣifī's distinct perspective within the pages of the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* enables scholars to reconsider the history of such momentous occurrences as the Abu'l-Khayrid Shībānid' capture of Herat in 1507, the Ṣafavid seizure of the same city in 1510, and the failed Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh campaign against the Abu'l-Khayrids in

⁴⁵¹ الحمد لله على كل حال; Praise be to God in all circumstances.

Mavarannahr in 1512, and to look at these events and others from an atypical, non-aristocratic point of view which is found in no other source. Despite the fact that Vāṣifī was not a major player in the transformative events of his day, he was nevertheless a part of the history recounted in the pages of his oeuvre, the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, and as such was himself personally affected by the events about which he has written. The memoir penned by Vāṣifī is replete with information one will not find in the pages of any other source from the period. Thus, with the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* one is able to examine a number of events, both momentous and ostensibly inconsequential, that served to transform the social, political, and religious landscape of Islamic Central Asia during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries from the perspective of a man, a scholar and poet, who grew up in and not only survived but thrived in this chaotic period. With its compelling narrative, the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'* stands as an important primary source which must be taken into consideration by any scholar endeavoring to understand and relate the history the political, social, and religious changes that were taking place in Central Asia in the late Tīmūrid and early Abu'l-Khayrid and Ṣafavid eras.

APPENDICES

A Note on Translation Formatting:

Translated chapters from the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* herein were rendered from the two volume Tehran edition, edited by Aleksandr N. Boldyrev and published between 1970 and 1971. Bracketed numbers indicate the pagination of the Tehran edition. The translator has endeavored to stay as true to the Persian of the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* as possible, and has at times provided bracketed alternative phrasing to clear up any ambiguities that have come through into English from the Persian. Pertinent footnotes from the Tehran edition have been retained and translated, with additional footnotes provided by the translator, when deemed appropriate. Passages from the Qur’ān, proverbs, and other such phrases have been herein italicized. Erroneous Qur’ānic citations made in the Tehran edition have been corrected whenever encountered. Overly lengthy portions of verse found within the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘* have been omitted from the following translations.

Appendix I – Selected Translations from the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘*:

Chapter One:

Untitled [The story of the Herat Under the Şafavids from Vāşifî’s perspective]

Infinite praise and boundless gratitude is owed to the *Pādishāh* [i.e. God] who has entrusted to the record keeping scribes,⁴⁵² for *kind and honorable are those who write, who know that which you make,*⁴⁵³ the marvelous events [بدایع وقایع] from among the affairs of the sons of Adam, and may the blessings of God’s creation spread itself upon the tomb, fragrant and luminous, of the Most Excellent Prophet, the fragrant nature of which has immortalized our solace, on the divine pages, of which it is not licit to doubt, the deeds and events of the prophets of the past, for *with all that We relate to thee of the stories of the messengers, We make firm thy heart: in them there cometh to thee the Truth, as well as an exhortation and a message of remembrance to those who believe,*⁴⁵⁴ and the marvelous stories of the sons and of the daughters of Adam, accordingly *there is nothing lush nor withered that is not inscribed in the Book of Truth.*⁴⁵⁵ The peace and benediction of God be upon Him, upon his family, and upon his just and pure Companions.

And as to what follows, such is said by the most humble of the servants of God the Almighty, Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd bin ‘Abd al-Jalīl, known as Vāşifî – God pardon both. At the particular time when in the province of Khurasan – God protect it from misfortune and accidents – the clashing of the swelling and tumultuous waves of the seas had reached to the summit of the dome of celestial sphere and the throng of armies of

⁴⁵² A: به روزنامهچہ نویسان

⁴⁵³ Qur’ān, 82:11-12; Sūrat al-Infitar.

⁴⁵⁴ Qur’ān, 11:120; Sūrat Hud.

⁴⁵⁵ Qur’ān, 6:56; Sūrat al-An‘ām.

clouds on high, lashing the world-illuminating sun, drew the shroud of oppressive darkness upon peace and tranquility, pure blood was pouring from the blood-raining eyes of the inhabitants of the world as from a goblet, and overturned fortune sifted the dust of grief and anguish through the sieve of heaven on the heads of those poor souls with the hand of calamity, as a reflection of the bloodshed of the Qizilbāsh and the symbol of the redness of their crown, every evening prayer the violet field of the firmament took on the color of a tulip bed, and upon the page of the time the pen of judgment wrote the exposition of the āyat – *wilt thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?* [Bayt]:

*Every corner of the world in which the Qizilbāsh take root –
Fortune finds it as a field of tulips.*

Everyone always harbored the ambition and was constantly thinking of casting themselves out from that whirlpool of destruction and desert of peril, and from that bloodthirsty abyss raising the standard upon the shore of salvation; however, as the proverb goes – *everything in its time* – for a long age the countenance of that desire had remained concealed in a shroud of hesitation, and the maiden of despair was brought forth from the heart of the bridal chamber of frustration. The phrase constantly repeated by all was this:

*O, Muslims, alas for the cruelty of the celestial sphere,
For the oppression of Mercury,
The intentions of the Moon,
And the disposition of Jupiter.
If I laugh, let it be a laugh of sorrow in every age,
If I cry, let there be tears of blood every day,
The heavens give two things to the ship of my life,
Sometimes joy is a sail,
Sometimes grief is an anchor.*

One day among those days, in complete impotence and utmost impatience, I had come out of the house and was ambling about, turning myself in all directions, until I happened to encounter one of the companions of the Brethren of [5] Purity and Companions of Good Faith, by the name of Khvājah Abu'l-‘Alā’ Khvārazmī, who was one of the disciples of the illustrious⁴⁵⁶... Sayyid Zayn al-‘Abadīn Amīr Murtāz, and who was versed in the greater part of the arcane sciences. He saw this wretch staggering and dejected, and inquired as to my circumstances. I replied: “O, beloved companion, friend of the two worlds, today I have left the house with the intent to do something, to partake of an action that would certainly bring about my ruination. I no longer have the strength to listen to the cursing of the Noble Companions, to hear the abuse of the Companions of the Prophet, peace be upon him: I want to say something or take some action such that these people [i.e. the Qizilbāsh] will make me imbibe the draught of martyrdom, and cause me to reach that elevation – *Indeed, they live nourished by the grace of God’s presence! They rejoice in the splendor of knowing God.*”⁴⁵⁷ That dear one said: “O, my friend, I am also in this very same state! However, I have heard that at the head of the *khiyābān*, in the round tower of Darvīsh Mūnis... a holy man by the name of Abu’l-Jūd, setting off from Andalus-i maghrib, has alighted, and that he is an accomplished master of all of the arcane sciences and marvelous arts. His Excellency, *Amir Murtāz*,⁴⁵⁸ has stated: ‘I had a great deal of difficulty with the occult sciences, [and] in order to resolve these I put forth a great deal of effort and strain over the years, as one ought to do: however, my difficulties did not abate, and I found not a soul qualified to whom I might put my questions. Merely upon meeting, he said: “O, *Zayn al-‘Abadīn Murtāz*, why do

⁴⁵⁶ عالی جناب.

⁴⁵⁷ Qur’ān: Sūrat 3, Āyat 169-170.

⁴⁵⁸ حضرت امیر مرتاض.

you not purify your heart and shine the mirror of your inner self, so that the appearances of things no longer seem so arduous to you?” I was struck at that moment by a powerful convulsion, trembling greatly, to the point that I lost my senses, and when I returned to myself he was gone, and all of the knots of my difficulties had been undone.’

They also recount many miraculous facts about him, and reckon him among the great saints. This is one from among his wonders [6], that in a house in which he had himself been sitting, some men had blocked the door, and when they reopened it they no longer found him in the house. Whosoever comes near to him, he will, without a moment’s delay, declare their name and patronym, their parentage and tribe, and their profession and pursuits. With regard to the sciences, each of which is indicated by a letter of the phrase *everything is secret*⁴⁵⁹: *kāf* indicates the science of *kīmiyā* [alchemy], which consists of transforming some mineral bodies into others; *lām* stands for *līmiyā*, which is the science of numbers, arithmetic, astronomy, and the science of music; *hā* stands for *hīmiyā*, which alludes to algebra, geometry, mechanics, and to the science of celestial alignments and almanacs; *sīn* indicates the science of *sīmiyā* [magic], which is famous and well-noted; *rā* stands for *rīmiyā*, which concerns talismans and incantations – he knows them all very well.”

Abu’l-‘Alā’ said: “Come, let us go to him and we will see what he has to say to us!” When we reached the rotund tower, Abu’l-‘Alā’ declared: “I can go no further, for the terror and fear that I have in my heart!”

I went alone into that round tower. When his eye fell upon me, he spoke: “O, Vāṣifī – Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd is your name, and the conclusion of your work will also be

⁴⁵⁹ كلمة كله سرا

worthy of praise!⁴⁶⁰ Before you there are many marvelous vicissitudes and extraordinary events: and you will move in the company of and hold *majālis* with magnificent sovereigns and potentates, and resplendent nobles. Of the line of Chingīz in the province of Turkistan there is a sovereign, just and clement, and loving in the extreme toward his subjects. Suyūnj Khvājah Khān is his name, and he will honor and favor you as is befitting. He has two sons, each of which is a pearl in the sea of equity and a brilliant star in the heavens of His Royal Majesty. One bears the name Sulṭān Muḥammad, and you will receive the utmost consideration from him, and he will make of you his master, his *imām*, and the chief judge of his kingdom. After his death, his brother Navrūz Aḥmad Khān will bestow the same offices upon you. From Sulṭān Muḥammad, the august and felicitous scion of the noble heavens, the *Bahrām*⁴⁶¹ [7] of warring valor, as *Birjīs*⁴⁶² in appearance, the *Nāhīd*⁴⁶³ of joy, the *Khurshīd*⁴⁶⁴ of high birth, the *Jamshīd* of the aristocracy, the *Farīdūn* of regal fortune, the *Kaykhusrau* of the throne, the *Dārā* of wisdom, the *Manūchihr* of politics, the *Mihr*⁴⁶⁵ of the heaven of sovereign power and conquest, star of the constellation of justice and of kingship, chosen by the Grace of the Benevolent Sovereign, Abu'l-Muzaffar Ḥasan Sulṭān, will sit upon the throne of power from the age of six months. From the outset the rays of regality will shine from his auspicious face, the lights of glory will beam from his luminous forehead, the decree of his fortune will be adorned with the shining *tughra* of – *We gave him wisdom even as a*

⁴⁶⁰ Here we have a play on Vāṣifi's name, Maḥmūd, as it may be translated as praised, laudable, praiseworthy, etc.; see Steingass, p. 1190; Hayyim, Vol. II, p. 838.

⁴⁶¹ Mars.

⁴⁶² Jupiter, Jove.

⁴⁶³ Venus.

⁴⁶⁴ Sun.

⁴⁶⁵ Sun.

*youth*⁴⁶⁶ – and the proclamation of his splendor will be embellished by the seal – *He hath made me Blessed wheresoever I be.*⁴⁶⁷ The prudent *mutafarris*, by the morning light of his elegance, will demonstrate upon the brilliance of the sun of the world of splendor the good fortune – *You honor whomsoever You please.* The certain wise man, by his dignified and magnificent smile, will cast the eye of discovery upon the opening of the flower of desire – *You grant power to whomever you please.*⁴⁶⁸

[Omitted verse]

The joy of his advent will cast apprehension from hearts with an outburst of joy, and the cheerfulness of his appearance will hoist a banner of delight in hearts with a swell of joy. His illustrious paternal uncle, at the proper time, will provide him with an education, and will raise him as a tree – *he made him grow in purity and beauty*⁴⁶⁹ – and, when he has reached six years of age, you will become his master and teacher. You will teach him the word of the Divine and that revealed by God, and compose a book, entitled the *Badāyi' al-vaqāyi'*, dedicating it to his illustrious name and to his venerated titles, which he will relish and appreciate, and which many sagacious sultans and khaqans will covet. The horoscope of the fortune of that prince, step-by-step, like a horse that places his hoof in the impression of the horse that preceded him, will follow that of Alexander son of Phillip, and he will conquer and govern the better part of the inhabited world. At the age of twelve, a sovereign from among the khaqans of the regions of the east will prevail upon him [8] and be victorious. He will capture him, and make haste to his own country. However, shortly thereafter he will find salvation and reunite with his uncle. At the age

⁴⁶⁶ Qur'ān, 19:12.

⁴⁶⁷ Qur'ān, 19:31.

⁴⁶⁸ Qur'ān, 3:26

⁴⁶⁹ Qur'ān, 3:37.

of twenty-seven, he will become the governor of the province of Khurasan. He will live to the age of ninety-four, roughly a century, and in his sixty-fifth year he will become the lord and governor of Baghdad, and the carpet of his life will be rolled up in the niche of the wall of the west.”

He pronounced these words and then disappeared from view. Such fear and terror took hold of me that I went rounding down the steps of the staircase of the tower and, as the proverb says, *first find a companion, then set out on the journey*, I set myself to searching all parts for a companion in order to go to Mavarannahr: I bid farewell to Khvājah Abu'l-‘Alā’, and headed toward the city. By chance my way went by the *Jūy-yi Injīl*,⁴⁷⁰ and there on the bank of the waterway sat a group of poets conversing with each other. When they saw me they quickly ran toward me and said: “Have you heard?! Shāh Ismā‘īl has decreed that the poets of Khurasan should write responses to the *qaṣīdah* entitled *tan tarānī* of Kamāl Ismā‘īl Iṣfahānī, the first verse of which is this:

Oh! In the sea of your love the point of the heart is bewildered!
Ah! From the beauty of your countenance the center of the flower is delighted.

and the *qaṣīdah* called *Rāyiya ‘bahāriya’* of Salmān, the first verse of which is this:

The winter season departed, spring came and the meadow bloomed.
The fruit and herb gardens became verdant, and the mountain and desert
abounded with tulips.

When I heard this, it occurred to me, self-determination attending such kings, and this ruler having commanded such, that it would be apropos that I should pen a reply to these two *qaṣīdah* in praise of the two sons of Suyūnj Khvājah Khān, so that there would be a pretext for my entering into the attendance of [9] those two high ranking *pādishāhs*; I bid farewell to the crowd and began those two *qaṣīdah*. The response to the *qaṣīdah* called

⁴⁷⁰ The *jūy-yi injīl* intersected the *khiyābān* near the *Bāgh-i Mirghānī*, north of Herat proper.

tan tarānī was adorned and arranged⁴⁷¹ in praise of the magnanimous *pādishāh* of the fortunate sultanate...Muzaffar al-Dīn Sulṭān Muḥammad Bahādūr, while the *qaṣīdah* entitled *Rāyiya ‘ bahāriya‘* of Salmān was arranged⁴⁷² in praise of the grand sultan...Abū al-Ghāzī Navrūz Aḥmad Bahādūr Khān. The response to the *qaṣīdah, tan tarānī*, is this:

*Oh gem, your pleasant soul is the currency of the heart’s treasury
From that currency there is naught for us aside from the harvest of blood tears
From those two lips when each is a live ember of your speech
As the flame appears, it sets fire to a hundred hearts*

[The remainder of the text of this *qaṣīdah* has been omitted; see *BV*, 1970, pp. 9-14. On p. 12, Vāṣifī inserts the name Sulṭān Muḥammad, i.e., Kīldī Muḥammad Sulṭān, while he inserts his own name into the *qaṣīdah* on p. 13.]

The response to the *qaṣīdah, Rāyiya ‘ bahāriya‘*, is this:

*Oh cup bearer, as the lovely flower in springtime
Do not hold the golden chalice from the rose colored, sanguinary wine
It is smoke from the blazing, radiant fire
Without seedling your stature, the lofty cypress in the field of tulips*

[The remainder of the text of this *qaṣīdah* has been omitted; see *BV*, 1970, pp. 14-16.

Vāṣifī inserts the name of Navrūz Aḥmad Khān on p. 15.]

[16] When these two *qaṣīdah* were completed, word arrived that His Excellency ...Sayyid Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad [Kūrtī], who – as one of the faith of Muḥammad and the creed of Aḥmad had withdrawn [17] behind the door of the veil of concealment, and hearing naught except the cursing and abusing of the companions of Muṣṭafa, may God send upon him greetings and peace! – left the monastery of Amīr Ghiyās with his brother,

⁴⁷¹ The term given here is موشح / *muwashshah, muwashshah*; this is a technical term, it seems, which Steingass defines as follows: “(verses) arranged so that the initials of each line being put together form some word or verse, an acrostic; odes with varied rhymes.”; see Steingass, p. 1345.

⁴⁷² The term given here is توشيح / *tavshih, taushih*; seemingly synonymous with the above mentioned term, it may according to Steingass be translated as follows: “adorning; (in poetry) arranging the verses so that the initial of each line being put together may form some word or verse; an acrostic”; see Steingass, p. 336.

Sayyid Amīr Ḥusayn, and came to the side of some mendicants who were crying out “Justice! Justice!” and were taking refuge in the palace of redress. The forlorn ones stood silent in a remote field of thorns, like birds affected by autumn, then began this song and melody:

*Many thanks that the word of union arrived to me!
If you killed me with separation, who would ask?*

The prisoners of the curser of separation and the sorrowful ones of the bed of seclusion thusly wailed:

*By the mercy of God that we did not die and we saw
the face of our dear ones, and we attained our desire.*

When it became impossible for that esteemed one to reside in that province due to the enmity and hatred of the enemies of religion, for a great crowd and innumerable mob had formed with the intention of killing him, and night and day they were lying in wait and plotting his murder, looking for a way to eliminate him, in accordance with the maxim, *retreat from that which one cannot endure is an expedient to which even the prophets have turned*, he resolved to escape and decided to begin his journey.

One fortunate event that occurred in those times was that roughly five-hundred souls from the province of Khurasan resolved to set out for the kingdom of Mavarannahr, and they received permission from Lahlah Bayk, who was the governor of the province of Khurasan. From among that group three people were prevented from undertaking the journey: Khvājah Muḥammad Ṣarrāf, who was from among the grandees and aristocrats of the province of Khurasan, Khvājah Ikhtiyār, who was from among the class of good men of Azerbaijan – both of who were leaders of that party of travelers – as well as one other individual who was a member of the aristocracy. The names of this *makhdūm*, his

brother, and this wretched soul were put in place of those three individuals on the list of those traveling. It was near the end of [18] the month of Muharram in the year 918⁴⁷³ that, at the head of the avenue, the tents of that departing group were assembled. This trek occurred in the springtime, when the *Farīdūn* of Farvardīn had put the forces of *Bahman* and *Dey* to flight, and the whole world had been thrown into confusion by the trumpets and the tumultuous drums, and by the clash of thunder and lightning, and the camel drivers of the age had clothed the mountain humped camels with a garment of pistachio green cloth. [The remainder of page eighteen and verse on page nineteen are here omitted].

[19] Some beautiful ones who were as a thousand wandering caravans in the wastes of their love, [and in the desert of their desire were as a bell in groans and lamentations], were with many people of the *sāz* and masters of song. Qāsim ‘Alī Qānūnī was a player of the *sāz*, such that it were as if the moon in the heavens had brought forth a coil of silver from its halo for the strings [20] of his dulcimer, and as if the black-eyed *houris*, for the tuning pegs of that instrument, had brought the buds of the rosebushes of the garden of paradise to the maker of his dulcimer, and as if the Angel Gabriel, hearing his life sustaining melody, had cut a branch off of the lote tree of paradise to serve as his *sāz*, and plucked out the longest of his own feathers to use as a pick. [*Bayt*]

*The lamentation of his dulcimer was of the conjury of Nargis
Such that he did not groan when all the arrow heads were next to him*

⁴⁷³ Sometime around mid-April, 1512.

Another, Chikar Changī, was a cantatrice,⁴⁷⁴ such that whenever she would place her harp in her lap, Venus, in the midst of a heavenly banquet, would hurl her own instrument to the ground and, descending from the heavens, would make strings for her harp of her own braided hair. [Bayt]

*The sweetheart of the harp whose captivating saz makes the melody
Scattered the strings of my soul and the strings of the harp*

The most distinguished of the musicians was the son of master Sayyid Aḥmad Ghijakī, such that Fortune would find the golden goblet of the sun of the East suited to be the bowl of his *ghijak*,⁴⁷⁵ and the *houris* of the eternal paradise would bring before him their own amber scented tresses to serve as the bowstring of his *ghijak*; his Excellency...Mavlānā Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, the sanctity of God be upon his sublime tomb, composed a *ghazal* for him, the opening couplet of which is this [Bayt]:

*The beauty of that, your ghijak, silenced the sound of that, my ghijak,
when the commotion of the majlis became enamored of your tunefulness.*

Muḥib ‘Alī Balabānī was a youth who had previously been bound and attached to the Imām of the Age and Merciful Caliph, [21] Muḥammad Shībānī Khān, and he composed this *matla*⁴⁷⁶ for his honor: [Bayt]

*With sugared lips such that you bring me to the verge
With your lips you bring my soul to the edge*

One of the remarkable musicians of this world was Ustād Ḥasan ‘Udī, such that the spirit invigorating singers would be naught but curved tambourines to his ears...

⁴⁷⁴ The exact term used is مغنیه; see Hayyim, Vol. II, p. 947.

⁴⁷⁵ عَجَك or عَجَك, a lute, guitar or violin; see Steingass, p. 881.

⁴⁷⁶ The first distich or couplet of a *ghazal*.

The musical compositions of Ustād Ḥusaynī Kūchik Nāyī, who was peerless in elegance and manners, reached the pinnacle of fame throughout ‘Irāq-i ‘Arab and ‘Ajam...

Another was Mīr Khvānandah; it is well known that Ḥāfiẓ Baṣīr, would become extremely restless and lose all sense of himself at the moment of his [Mīr Khvānandah’s] singing, and it is widely held that after Ḥaẓrat-i Dāvud, peace be upon our Prophet and upon him, that no one could sing like Ḥāfiẓ Baṣīr. It is whispered that four men at a singing *majlis* held by Ḥāfiẓ Baṣīr lost consciousness.⁴⁷⁷ It is recounted that on the day of mourning for Khvājah Ṭāvus an audience of the great and noble men was convened, and they requested that Ḥāfiẓ Baṣīr sing; the Ḥāfiẓ recited the *ghazal* entitled *Khvājū*, from which is taken this hemistich: [*Misra* ‘]

Death would be better than would be your faithlessness

[22] Then he arrived at this couplet [*Bayt*]

*I cast into the fire that heart that in your sorrow does not burn,
I release to the wind that soul which in your song was not*

And they say that from the corner of the portico a finch took wing, landed beside the Ḥāfiẓ and lost consciousness, and that that day forty men fainted and they carried them out of the *majlis*, unconscious, on their shoulders. In sum, at the palace of *Chihil Dukhtarān*,⁴⁷⁸ which was the location of one of the *aylāq* of the late sovereign Sulṭān Ḥusayn Mīrzā Bāyqarā, Khvājah Muḥammad Ṣarāf made a rousing discourse and planned a celebration, and he assembled all of the great men of the caravan together.

⁴⁷⁷ قالب تهی کردن ; this verb may be rendered as either “to die” or “to lose consciousness”; see Steingass, p. 948.

⁴⁷⁸ There is a place called *Chihil Dukhtarān* (Chehil Dukhtaran) today, in the province of Herat north of the city of Herat proper on route A-77, not far from the border with Turkmenistan, which seems a possible place for a palace or fort to have been constructed.

When all had taken their places, those present at the *majlis* requested a *ghazal* of Ḥāfiẓ Mīr and a bit of flute music from Ustād Ḥusaynī Kūchik. Ḥāfiẓ Mīr began to recite a *ghazal* which Mavlānā Binā’ī had improvised for Ustād Shaykhī Nāyī, the first hemistich of which is this [*matla* ‘omitted].

Maqṣūd ‘Alī Raqqāṣ was a young man who, whenever he would begin to dance, one would surrender in payment the sun of the East and the resplendent moon, and when he would cease his dancing, he would find those present at a *majlis* in a circling around his head. One time when this youth was dancing, this wretched soul, from the *ghazal* of Mavlānā Binā’ī and the recitation of Ḥāfiẓ Mīr, was brought to such a state, and it occurred to me that in response to that *ghazal* perhaps one might be able to improvise a *ghazal* for that young dancer. Placing such shimmering pearls of incomparable eloquence in front of him, that youth still did not cease his dancing. That *ghazal* was completed, and its initiatory hemistich is this [*ghazal* omitted].

[23] When that youth stopped his dancing, that *ghazal* was recited for the members of the *majlis*, and it was adorned with a shower of applause and gifts of blessings. One of my friends who harbored the intention publicizing the reputation of this *haqīr* and meant to declare the merits of this *faqīr*, stated: “This one here knows the science of music quite well and recites *ghazal* of the highest quality.” When those present at the *majlis* heard this, they took it as an exaggeration, and they requested that Nāyī play his flute.

When the young *Nāyī* played a piece, he turned to this wretched soul and said: “Why aren’t you reciting and granting this grace to the *faqīrān*?”

I replied: “O exalted cypress! O my friend, the soother of hearts! Though I consult the pages of my mind and I am gazing at the register of my life, I cannot find the form of a single *bayt*, nor even a single written word.”

He smiled and said: “You, who are possessed of such talent and strength in this regard that you can improvise a *ghazal* to the white hot sun and a couplet to some lovely, what need have you to the verse of another?” When his words reached my ear, the source of inspiration opened before me, and a divine event occurred.

I told him, “take up your flute!” and I recited a *ghazal*.

[24] There was one youth who was prominent among the youths at that soiree, such that to compare the others to him would be like comparing the stars to the sun. They called him *Shāh Qāsim*. When those in attendance at the *majlis* saw the heart of this beloved inclined to introduce this poor soul, they made haste, as was fitting, into the valley of benediction and praise. Mavlānā Khvādamīr the chronicler, who was one of the renowned and revered scholars of Khurasan and who was reckoned as one of those nearest to Amīr ‘Alī Shīr, declared: “We have heard that your skill and practice of the art of *mu‘ammā* are esteemed, that you can solve any *mu‘ammā* one might recite without the name being stated and crack it with little hesitation. However, this story before us seems improbable, and without being witnessed it will not be accepted.” He recited this *mu‘ammā*:

*From the bright hued cheeks of your radiant soul,
heat reaches my wounded heart.*

Immediately I said: “‘Azīz!”

He was astonished, and said: “It seems to me that [25] you’ve memorized this *mu‘ammā*. However I, from the time I departed from the city until I arrived here, have

composed five *mu‘ammā*, and I have not recited them to a soul. If you solve these, we will be convinced.” Four of them I solved at once, while one called for some deliberation for the fact that its veracity was questionable and I stated as much. The author of the *mu‘ammā* entered into dispute; however, at the *majlis* there was a large crowd, all of who possessed deep knowledge of the art of *mu‘ammā*, and with their assistance he realized that the calculation of that *mu‘ammā* was in error. After that, that young man with another group of youths engaged me in the study of a treatise on *mu‘ammā* by Amīr Ḥusayn Nishāpūrī.

[At this point Vāṣifī addresses some tensions that had arisen in the caravan, and how he had sought to rectify the situation with some entertainment in the form of a *qaṣīdah*. The text of the *qaṣīdah* runs for a little over four pages. Following this, the caravan arrived at the Amu Darya, where a *majlis* was held for the enjoyment of those in the caravan before they finally entered into Mavarannahr and reached the city of Samarqand.]

Appendix II – Selected Translations from the *Badāyi ‘ al-vaqāyi ‘*:

Chapter Six:

An account of the events which in occurred Samarqand and the coming of Najm-i Sānī.

It was on the first day of the lunar month of Rabī’ al-ākhar in the year 918⁴⁷⁹ that Amīr Najm [Sānī]⁴⁸⁰ crossed the waters of the Amu with eighty-thousand Qizilbāsh rabble.⁴⁸¹ Upon the summit of fleet-footed Arabian horses, with their *tāj* and riding cloaks,⁴⁸² you would say that from the dashing of winds a fire had fallen upon a reed-bed, and that from the abundance of mail and armor there appeared a mountain of iron, and that blessed verse – *and you will see the mountains, which to you seemed so firm, pass away as clouds pass away*⁴⁸³ – would come to your mind at the time of witnessing it, or that from the blow, the magnificence of the grandeur and greatness of ‘*Ubaydallāh Khānī* the mountain of iron had liquefied, (27a) [and] a lustrous river appeared upon which a hundred-thousand creature-imbibing sea monsters were manifest. Word came to Samarqand that Amīr Najm had said: “When I take Samarqand, having leveled the city, I will plant a melon field, and I shall send its melons to Shāh Ismā‘īl as a gift, after which I will turn my attention to *Khitāy*.” [113] When the inhabitants of Samarqand heard this speech, their hands and feet went as limp as vines in a melon field, and they saw their heads fallen like watermelons upon the desert of despair. The highly distinguished *qadvat al-‘ulamā’*, Mavlānā Hājji Tabrīzī, [with a group of like-minded theologians] agreed, “The judgment of a great darkness [the greatest black] is upon you all! You

⁴⁷⁹ *To’qquz yuz o’n sakkiz* was repeated in the Chaghatay translation.

⁴⁸⁰ See the information provided on Najm-i Sānī in Chapter Four.

⁴⁸¹ The term translated here as “rabble” is اوباش *aubāsh*, which Steingass defines as “The common people, the mob; ruffians; mixed multitudes of every class; -- also اوباشه / *aubāsha*, A dunder-headed, ignorant, vulgar, self-opiniated, obstinate, unmanageable.” See Steingass, p. 118.

⁴⁸² A: رماج, B: رياج, B₂: راج.

⁴⁸³ Qur’ān: Sūrat 27, Āyat 88; Sūrat al-Naml {Boldyrev cites 27:90}.

must look to Hindustan, and you must search for the water of life [and] sustenance in that darkness.” On the very night that these events occurred, the hidden and infallible bearers of good news in the mirror this *faqīr*’s dream spoke thusly: “the stars of the sky are as the udders of sheep, milk is rain, and the alleys and bazaars are as flowing streams of milk.” In the morning, having come into the company of that honorable one, I recounted this event. He rejoiced and declared, “the milk consists of the light of the religion of Muḥammad and the purity of the *Sharī’ah* of the Muslim realm, which had descended from the heavens to the center of earthly matters.”

“This occurrence is a vine of good news and a good auger, evidence and proof testifying to the good fortune of this clan [i.e. the Abu’l-Khayrid Shībānids] – *a corrupt tree, torn up by the root onto the face of the earth, wholly unable to endure*⁴⁸⁴ – in the tumult of the violent gales, and – *in the presence of He who determines all that is*⁴⁸⁵ – will lie upon the earth of humiliation,⁴⁸⁶ and the good sapling, the admirable example of the religion of the most excellent *sayyid* – *like a good tree, rooted firmly, reaching skyward with its branches*⁴⁸⁷ – will be received in the garden of paradise, the fountainhead of the lush and verdant world.” Following this, he said: “On many occasions we have tested the circumstance of the dream of such a man, having never gone astray, and that, having been interpreted to such a degree, should not be dismissed.”

⁴⁸⁴ Qur’ān: Sūrat 14, Āyat 26, Sūrat Ibrāhīm [Boldyrev cites 14:31]. An alternative rendering of 14:26, that of Abdullah Yusuf Ali, gives us “And the parable of an evil Word is that of an evil tree. It is torn up by the root from the surface of the earth: it has no stability.” This Sūrat is couched within a broader discussion of good and evil; the evil word is contrasted with the good word, i.e. heresy and falsehood is contrasted with the truth of the oneness of God, the latter being embraced by those who believe and persevere in the face of adversity.

⁴⁸⁵ In the Qur’ān we have 54:20, *كَأَنَّهُمْ أَعْجَارٌ نَّخَلٌ مُنْقَعِرٍ*, ...*as though they were palm-trunks uprooted*, and 54:55, *عِنْدَ مَلِكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ*, ...*in the presence of a Sovereign who determines all things* [Boldyrev cites 54:56, whereas Sūrat 54 in fact consists of 55 Āyat].

⁴⁸⁶ A: *مزلت*.

⁴⁸⁷ Qur’ān: Sūrat 14, Āyat 24 [Boldyrev cites 14:29].

He, with his group of companions, gave up the idea of traveling to [114] India, and they placed themselves at the foot of the cloak of security. It was the morning of the thirtieth day when they beat out – *Oh, the sudden calamity, how great the sudden calamity*⁴⁸⁸ – upon the gold leafed war drum of the eastern Shāh, and the bearers of the drums, *as the dawn softly breathes*,⁴⁸⁹ along with the clamoring and echoing sound of the flutes of the crying⁴⁹⁰ roosters, blew hauteur into the fair trumpet of dawn. Such a clamor and din arose that it was as if those puny, repugnant *Haydarīs* had tuned a grand *sāz* from Iraq. The circular surface of the world having closed in right tightly upon the Arabs and Persians like the hearts of abandoned lovers, they vanquished that Iṣfahānī chieftain Najm-i Sānī to the blissful music of the blessed army’s rain of arrows. *Praise be to God*⁴⁹¹ *who confirms his promises, makes his servants victorious, and puts partisans to flight.*

[*Qit’a*]

The nature of the conquest and triumph is as follows, when the Qizilbāsh besieged the city of Nasaf [115], which is also known as Qarshi, ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān and Jānī Bayk Sulṭān⁴⁹² were in the environs of Karmina, while Kūchkūnchī Khān and Tīmūr Khān⁴⁹³ were in Miyanakal with the rest of the sultans. All of them [according to the verse] – *and let not your own hands throw you into destruction*⁴⁹⁴ – had resolved to flee, when his Excellency of excellencies returning, the great Axis of axes, the Sulṭān of saints, the Exemplar of the pious, the Succor of Islam and friend of all Muslims, the

⁴⁸⁸ Qur’ān: Sūrat 101, Āyat 1, 2.

⁴⁸⁹ Qur’ān: Sūrat 81, Āyat 18.

⁴⁹⁰ B², C: آوازی.

⁴⁹¹ الحمد لله.

⁴⁹² B, C, and T: خان.

⁴⁹³ P, T: تیمور سلطان.

⁴⁹⁴ Qur’ān: Sūrat 2, Āyat 195 {Boldyrev cites 2:191}.

Sulṭān of chiefs and Chief of sultans, Amīr Sayyid ‘Abd Allāh, otherwise called Amīr ‘Arab, came from the province of Turkistan to Bukhara.⁴⁹⁵ He saw ‘Ubayd Allāh, who had so completely lost heart and let the reins of authority slip from his hand, and said: “Oh, child, what is happening to you? Almighty God, glorious and exalted, has sent rarities and gifts for you, and has bestowed high rank upon you in this world and the hereafter – do you want to reject them, to decline them?”

‘Ubayd Allāh Khān replied: “Oh, master, this truth is evident, that the number of fighting men of this army is greater than eighty-thousand, while the number of our soldiers is known to you.”⁴⁹⁶

Amīr ‘Arab declared: “*Take refuge with God from the accursed Satan,*⁴⁹⁷ *how often has a small force overcome a great force by God's will? For God is with those who are patient in adversity.*⁴⁹⁸ Keep the events of the Battle of Badr in mind and be steadfast of heart!” It was during this story that word came to the effect that they [the Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh force under Najm-i Ṣānī] had taken Qarshi and perpetrated a general massacre, such that not a living thing remained alive.⁴⁹⁹

‘Ubayd Allāh Khān wept and said: “Oh, master, how is one to resist such a force as this?”

[116][Bayt]

*If taking refuge is not for one reason or another permissible,
why did the best of men flee from Mecca to Yathrib?*⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁵ Vāṣifī is here referring to Shaykh ‘Abd Allāh Yamanī, also known as Mīr-i ‘Arab, who served as a spiritual advisor to ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān, and for whom the famed Mīr-i ‘Arab madrasa in Bukhara was constructed.

⁴⁹⁶ Ḥaydar Dūghlāt states that Najm-i Ṣānī brought a force of sixty-thousand, and that Bābur’s force was added to this number; see *TR*, p. 132.

⁴⁹⁷ Qur’ān: Sūrat 16, Āyat 98 {Boldyrev cites 16:100}

⁴⁹⁸ Qur’ān: Sūrat 2, Āyat 249 {Boldyrev cites 2:25}

⁴⁹⁹ Written also: متنفسی خلاص نشد.

⁵⁰⁰ A: چرا برفت.

Becoming enraged, Amīr ‘Arab declared:

*Until the child of the confectioner cries,
why would the sea of generosity roil?*

“Rouse yourself in this moment, for that force will be vanquished, for when oppression and tyranny have reached their zenith, their end is near; and it is the apex of oppression which they have wrought. Rise, o child, and place the foot of good fortune in the stirrup of prosperity! Take command over all and attack! Strike the ball of victory – for *those foremost in faith will be foremost in the Hereafter, these will be those nearest to Allāh*⁵⁰¹ – with the head of the polo stick of ambition, and spread destruction over that contemptible lot!” As a result, he compelled ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān to mount up, and the restive bridles of that army and the chief of those soldiers turned in the direction of the army of the Qizilbāsh. When they had advanced one or two *farsang*, Mīr-i ‘Arab commanded: “Do not cross from this spot until I go and add Jānī Bayk Sulṭān to your force.” When Mīr-i ‘Arab came before Jānī Bayk Sulṭān, he realized that if he delayed a moment longer that army would disband. He [Mīr-i ‘Arab] scolded him [Jānī Bayk Sulṭān] and said: “Have you no shame, that with all of your claims to valor and bravery your mind turns to retreat?⁵⁰² ‘Ubayd Allāh Khān, who is your child,⁵⁰³ knows this is a gift from God and states: ‘How excellent the fortune and glory that [117] I am risking my own life in the way of the religion of Muḥammad and the dominion of the people of Muṣṭafa, the blessings of God and peace be upon him!’” From such an exhortation he [Mīr-i ‘Arab] inflamed and provoked him [Jānī Bayk Sulṭān] to battle. However, Najm-i Sānī has displayed himself upon a celestial orb of grandeur and heroism in such a way

⁵⁰¹ Qur’ān: Sūrat 56, Āyat 10-11, Sūrat al-Waqia.

⁵⁰² به خاطر می گذرانی

⁵⁰³ ‘Ubayd Allāh was a nephew of Jānī Bayk Sulṭān.

that the world-warming sun of the azure heavens seemed less than dust in his sight. The force of Qizilbāsh, thinking – *and by the stars they guide themselves*⁵⁰⁴ – were rapidly running and striving through the valley of sedition and error, and had cast into the palace of the dome of the world the drumbeat and proclamation – *it is we who will certainly win*.⁵⁰⁵ It was on the date of the twentieth of Dhū al-qa‘dah in the year 918⁵⁰⁶ that they laid siege to the fort of the town of Ghijduvan like the circle of a ring. Dūstī and Burnāchah were singular and unique in the arts of *nard* [backgammon] and *shaṭranj* [chess]; in their skill at *nard* they were of such high degree that ten-thousand or even more from among the masters of the art of *khānagīr* would be conquered by them. If the *narād* [players of *nard*], Abū Zayd, Līlāj, and Qahramān – three who were phoenixes of their age, incomparable in their time – were contemporaries with them, they would be as their followers, and would themselves have sought tactics from their strategies. Regarding the art of *shaṭranj*, both came quickly to the chessboard of acclaim; on level ground they reduced Pāl Hindī, who had sat high upon the back of the elephant⁵⁰⁷ of excellence, to a pawn. Like the queen who is not far from the companionship of her king, Najm-i Šānī did not allow these two to leave his side.

Amīr Muḥammad Amīr Yūsuf, who was among the renowned princes and learned men of Khurasan, in the time of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Mīrzā and Muḥammad Shībānī Khān, had brought the kettle drum of pretension – *Surely I know that which ye know not*⁵⁰⁸ – to bear upon the dome of the celestial sphere. During the reign of Shāh Ismā‘īl [118], on account of his ambition, he fell into the well of deception, proclaimed Shī‘a Islam, and obtained

⁵⁰⁴ Qur’ān: Sūrat 16, Āyat 16, Sūrat an-Nahl.

⁵⁰⁵ Qur’ān: Sūrat 26, Āyat 44; Sūrat al-Shuara

⁵⁰⁶ Thursday, January 27, 1513; see <http://www.oriold.uzh.ch/static/hegira.html>.

⁵⁰⁷ Equivalent to a bishop in modern chess.

⁵⁰⁸ Qur’ān, Sūrat 2, Āyat 30; Sūrat al-Baqara.

the post of vicegerent in his dynasty. At the time when Tīmūr Sulṭān sent him from Khurasan to Samarqand, he recounted the following story to this humble soul at a *majlis*: “In my life I’ve enjoyed and attended three *majālis*, such that my mind will not permit a fourth. At one *majlis*, Mavlānā Khvājah Iṣfahānī and Mavlānā Binā’ī were speaking extemporaneously while playing *shaṭranj*, stringing pearls of marvelous elegance, their words inclining towards in satire. The obscene terms and filthy expressions they emitted were such that no one could long endure hearing them, and would come near to fainting from laughter.”

“At another *majlis*, that of Mavlānā Khvājah Gūyandah and Amīr Khalīl Khvānandah, while these two men were setting out a chessboard, they placed a gleaming knife and a tambourine before all and swore a rude and vehement oath; ‘Should anyone from among this crowd of onlookers and spectators enter into our game and give advice to either, we will take up this knife and run it into him up to the hilt!’ The tambourine was for when, if for instance all of the pawns were swept, one would take up the tambourine, break into a dance, and begin to jeer or make faces and move all about such that the guests of the *majlis* came near to fainting from laughter. Meanwhile the other would be downcast as though in mourning, as if they had slaughtered his entire family and tribe. Watching him brought even more laughter. The dancer, in middle of the dance, would stick his head and feet in his opponent’s face and move about to such an extent that the latter would stand up and the two would grapple with one another, [119] tear at each other’s robes, clobber each other, and smash each other in the head and face. Those attending the *majlis*, in extreme of anxiety, would pull them apart and they would resume play. In sum, the match went on like this till the end of the board. Every game

when they wanted, they made novel movements until the end of the game. When victory or defeat arrived, the winner would pull his garment up over his head and peer out at his opponent from one corner of his garment, and he would unleash the choicest novelties such that a cry would arise from those present at the *majlis*.”

“Another was the *nard* and *shaṭranj* match of Dūstī and Burnāchah, when these masters of recitation recalled a boundless and innumerable collection of *lughaz* and *ghazal*, *qaṣāyid* and *muqaṭṭa ‘āt*, *masnavīyāt* and *rubā ‘yāt* on the topics of *nard* and *shaṭranj*, and throughout their play they would recite such verse. One day they were sitting around the fortress at Ghijduvan; Dūstī and Burnāchah were playing *nard*, and reciting apropos verse. Burnāchah began a *lughaz* about *nard*; Amīr Najm, hearing and listening to that, was enthralled, and when the *takhalluṣ* was stated, he asked: ‘Who is this *Vāsiḥī*? When in Khurasan I heard that he drafted a petition on behalf of the men of a *ziyāratgāh*, and that this letter had been very successful. We searched for him a bit but didn’t find him. Now, I heard this *lughaz* of his, and I am convinced that he is a talented individual who has woven verses of such charm and prose of such high quality!’”

Amīr Muḥammad stated: “I said, ‘He is unique and unparalleled in ten fields: he is possessed of a dauntless strength that a ferocious lion would humble himself on the ground before him. In Khurasan not one strongman can beat him or break his powerful right hand. His endurance in running and walking [120] is of such a degree, that from the Mashhad of ‘Alī Mūsā Rizā to Khurasan – that is to say Herat – which is the equivalent of sixteen *farsang*, he made it on foot in two days along what is some very rough road. In swimming, he is so strong that once, when Farīdūn Ḥusayn Mīrzā ordered that he be

thrown in the pool in the Bāgh-i Zāgān,⁵⁰⁹ his hands and feet tied so that he was like a ball, he floated in that pool from the time of midday prayers [*namāz-i pishīn*] to the time of evening prayers [*namāz-i sham*]. He is a sweet-voiced *ḥāfiẓ* and recites the Qur’ān in such a melodious way that not one single professional reciter is able to recite one-tenth as well as he can. He is a student of Mavlānā Ḥusayn Vā’iẓ [Kāshifī], who in describing him has thus remarked, “Between him and me, in delivering the sermon, the difference is that he is sonorous whilst I am not.” He is a mimic such that, in sticking close to the truth, there has never been one comparable to him in this art. In the cracking of *mu’ammās* he has attained such a level of perfection that he solves any difficult *mu’ammā* which is read without any clues being given. He is such a swift writer that in one day wrote the *kāfiyeh* [كافيه], *shāfiyeh* [شافيه] and the *shamsiyeh* [شمسيه] in such a fashion that not one error was to be found. In the ability to endure hunger he is so great that he is able to observe a complete fast for ten days and nights. His talent in composing impromptu verse is such that should any of the master poets write a *qaṣīdah* of fifty to sixty *bayt*, in one night he will compose an answer to it in such a way that every one of his *bayts* will not be devoid of some special meaning, special idea, or a particular simile.’

“Amīr Najm inquired: ‘Where does this peerless scholar and unique individual among the sons of Adam currently find himself?’

“I replied: ‘He is currently residing in Samarqand.’

“He commanded: ‘Of course. Send someone to search for him so that in the general massacre [121] of Samarqand he will not be slain.’

⁵⁰⁹ The Bāgh-i Zāgān, literally “the Ravens’ Garden” or “the Ravens’ Estate,” is located along the *khiyābān* to the north-northwest of Herat proper. According to Terry Allen, working from the *Bāburnāmah*, the Bāgh-i Zāgān had been adopted as the royal residence by Shāh Rukh sometime between 812 and 814 A.H.; see Terry Allen, *Timurid Herat* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1983), pp. 18, 78, map.

“We were in this middle of this exchange when, from all sides, there arose a clamour, the sound of trumpets, and the cries of war, and they exclaimed: ‘The army of the Uzbeks has arrived!’

“Amīr Najm declared: ‘Take ‘Ubayd alive so that I may send him to the Shāh! As for the others, do with them what you like!’

“They said to him: ‘It’s already past that point! If you are to talk so, get on your horse!’”

Amīr Muḥammad said [further]: “With the utmost insistence we persuaded him to mount his horse in his shoes and a shirt, without his helmet. He kept saying: ‘They’re not worth it, that one ride out to them!’

“It ended thusly: they pulled him down from his horse at that moment and, having taken his head, they stuck on the point of a spear, while they [i.e. the Qizilbāsh] plucked ruin from vanity.”⁵¹⁰

[Bayt]:

*One who ascends to the throne through hubris,
Becomes as cobblestone underfoot.*

Amīr Muḥammad asked me in Samarqand about the *lughaz* on *nard* that he had heard from Burnāchah, along with several other *lughaz*, and I wrote them down for him.

[At this point, Vāṣifī proceeds to an exposition of his talent as a poet with a series of *lughaz*, the titles and pagination of which are: *Lughaz-i nard*, pp. 121-123; *Lughaz-i shaṭranj*, pp. 123-125; *Lughaz-i āftāb*, pp. 125-126; *Lughaz-i sham*’, pp. 127-129; *Lughaz-i shamshīr*, pp. 129-131; *Lughaz-i tangah*, pp. 132-133; *Lughaz-i angushtarīn*,

⁵¹⁰ Other translations of *rūzgār*, rendered here as vanity, might be fortune or opportunity, the world, and so on. I have elected to go with vanity so the following bayt is made more appropriate.

pp. 113-134; *Lughaz-i shaftālū*, pp. 134-135; *Lughaz-i haykal insānī*, pp. 135-136; and *Lughaz-i qalam*, pp. 136-137. Boldyrev informs the reader in a footnote that *Lughaz-i haykal insānī* is only found in the Chaghatāy manuscript of the *Badāyi ‘ al-vaqāyi ‘i.*]

Appendix III – Selected Translations from the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘*:

Chapter Thirteen:

On the Wondrous Stories and Excellent Policies of Amīr ‘Alī Shīr [Navā’ī], the Excellence and Elegance of his Character and the Virtue of His Composition, the Man of Learning and Master of Excellence.

It was on the tenth day of the month of Muharram in the year 927 [21 December 1520] when his exalted majesty of the sultanate, the cup-bearer of governance, the elevator of security and safety, the provider of the foundations of justice and beneficence, the one who raises the sign posts of mercy and justice, the repressor of the sons of tyranny and oppression, the apex of the character of the pillars of the sultanate, the summation of the elements of high station and honor, [the late Muẓaffar al-Dīn] Sulṭān Muḥammad⁵¹¹ [may God comfort his soul] sat in the palace upon the throne of the fortunate sultanate, and the pillars of [373] the conquering dynasty and the honorable ministers in his splendid presence had each of them taken their places of honor and seats of respect; when the highly esteemed one [Sulṭān Muḥammad] addressed this low-born, humble one [Vāṣifī]:

“Thus, to the ears of splendor [it arrived] and continues to arrive that you had opportunity to be familiar with and be in the company of the leader of the leaders of religion and state, the elite of those endowed with dominion and wealth, the prosperous and benevolent founder of charities, Amīr ‘Alī Shīr; and you have committed to memory marvelous stories and wonderful narratives regarding the delicate nature and elegance of

⁵¹¹ Vāṣifī is referring here to Kūchkunjī Muḥammad b. Abu'l-Khayr Khān, who was awarded the nominal title *Khān* due to his seniority amongst the Abu'l-Khayrid Uzbeks upon the death of his nephew, Muḥammad Shībānī Khān, at Merv in 1510. Kūchkunjī Muḥammad ruled his territory from Samarqand, which he shared with Shībānī Khān’s son, Muḥammad-Tīmūr, until the death of the latter in 920/1514.

that esteemed one. Should the letters of the pages of our *majlis* be adorned with a splendid account of that good natured one, it would not be bizarre or strange.”

It is offered that:

This humble one, in his sixteenth year – when I had finished memorizing the words of the king of signs [God – Qur‘ān] and, having tightly fastened the belt of aspiration on obtaining the sciences, was continually was putting forth great effort – was one day going along with a group of poets and scholars in the King’s Bazaar in Herat when a seditious, riotous and dishonorable character, Ḥāfīz Ḥusayn arrived. [Bayt]:

*He is nicknamed Ḥāfīz-i Ghamza*⁵¹² *His manner is that of a bent hamza*’.

In his hand was a book. This *faqīr*⁵¹³ asked:

“What manuscript is that?”

He said, “It’s a pamphlet of *mu‘ammā*⁵¹⁴ by Mavlānā Sayfī Bukhārā’ī.”

Since at that time farthest aim and highest aspiration of all men of learning and erudition were confined and limited to falling under the alchemic gaze of Amīr ‘Alī Shīr, and as there was no better way of accessing his Excellency [Amīr ‘Alī Shīr] than these riddles, it was asked of Ḥāfīz-i Ghamza’ that he might show generosity and [374] let me borrow and copy that pamphlet. Smiling, Ḥāfīz replied,

“What is rosewater to a mouse hole? What is the *ribāk* to the deaf ear?”

On account of this taunt, the world became as tight and dark as a mouse hole for me; tears of rosewater rained from the rosewater dispenser of my eyes upon the pages of

⁵¹² *Ghamza*’ translates as “an amorous glance,” the name thus being rendered “Ḥāfīz of the amorous glance.”

⁵¹³ *Vāṣīf* is here referring to himself, as he does repeatedly throughout the text, as *faqīr*, which can be translated as “poor one,” “humble one,” “mendicant,” “miserable wretch,” “beggar,” etc.

⁵¹⁴ *Mu‘ammā* was a particular type of riddle which gained in popularity in literary circles of the late Tīmūrid era. For more on *mu‘amā*, see Maria Subtelny’s “Scenes from the Literary Life of Timurid Herat,” *Logos Islamikos*, pp. 137-155, and Paul Losensky’s *Welcoming Fighani*, pp. 154-160.

my face. The minstrel of my pride twisted the envious tuning pegs of the *ribāk*. The veins of my soul started to play as the shrill cry of the strings of the *ribāk*. Tearful and weeping, I turned towards home. I sat on a corner, closed off from the world. I went to the mosque for afternoon prayer. Following prayer, I saw an individual in the corner of the mosque, leaning and clutching a hat to his face, weeping miserably. I went over to him and removed the felt hat from his face. It seemed as if the sun had appeared from behind a curtain of clouds. It was a youth, extremely fair and handsome; however the color of his face broken and dusty. The dust of forlornness receded, and his face settled. You would have said that his face was as the sun of the east which at sunset turned yellow, or as the evening moon of the fourteenth night which is eclipsed in mischief.

[Bayt]:

The full moon having turned a crescent,

the cypress having turned a toothpick

I sat down next to him and asked about his situation. He said:

“I am a child of Tabriz. They call me ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Chalabī. I intended to journey to Khurasan. My father was not pleased. Without his permission or allowance, I set out for this country with some cash. When we arrived at the dry river, *Saq-i Salmā* – which is one farsakh from Khurasan – the men of the caravan rejoiced and said: “Thank God we are free of fear and the dangers of the road; we have found refuge from the dangers of highwaymen and brigands.” The men of the caravan set aside all caution and turned towards the abode of leisure and tranquility [i.e. they grew complacent and let their guard down]. [375] Perchance on that very night, a group of assassins – who’d been lying in wait, waiting for an opportunity since Tabriz – fell upon us; the group of

merchants, who were gathered together as the Pleiades, dispersed like the constellation of the bear. All of a sudden, on that battlefield, an arrow struck my arm, such that the broker of calamity and disaster put the goods of my life on the balance, and suffering and disaster came to pass. Most of the caravan was a field of ruin. I, so that things not get any worse, carried myself here, creeping and crawling.”

Having gone to tears, I went home, brought a stretcher, and carried him to the house. There was a surgeon in my neighborhood...I brought him, and we showed the wound to him. In a short time, he patched it up.

One day that youth was expressing his debt and thanks [to me] and said: “In the city of Tabriz I raised the banner of uniqueness and the standard of success in two sciences – and those are the sciences of *mu‘ammā* and astronomy, and among the men of learning I claimed, ‘I know what you know not’; It comes to mind that in order to fulfill my obligation for your benevolent act – in accordance with the maxim: Is there any reward for good other than good? – [376] I will inscribe those two sciences upon the pages of your mind and erect a memorial of myself at your side.” When I heard the word “*mu‘ammā*,” I imagined that a page with my name on it had come down from heaven.

“My good friend,” I said, “I must study the science of *mu‘ammā*! If you try to render it, so that I will achieve perfection in that science, this would be an act of extreme kindness and benevolence. Having retrieved a pen and ink-well in order to bless our success, He wrote in an illustrative manner a *mu‘ammā* by the commander of the faithful and chief of the Muslims, the conquering lion of Allāh, ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, Allāh have mercy upon him, that is known by the title *Muḥammad*, and he taught it to this poor soul. That *mu‘ammā* is thus: [*Mu‘ammā* omitted].

Thus, having written the regulations and technicalities of the science of *mu‘ammā* in complete detail, he made a memorandum book. Just then, some men from Iraq came, and with the utmost decorum and great care they carried that *Khvājāzādah* in the direction of Iraq, and thereby consigned the soul and the heart of this distressed one to the hand of the viceroy of calamity and anguish. However, through the exertions of that mighty lord, this humble one accrued such a measure of ability and skill in the science of *mu‘ammā* that the majority of riddles he heard, name unspoken, he would crack. This became widely known in the city of Herat amongst the riddlers [the experts of *mu‘ammā*]. It got to the point that great assemblies and immense crowds would gather and wager and bet with each other, and they would win the wagers on behalf of this poor one. In this way, a Roman (Anatolian) master of *mu‘ammā* came from the west to Khurasan, and he recited many difficult *mu‘ammā*. [377] One of his *mu‘ammās* was this: [*Mu‘ammā* omitted].

One of the companions of this *faqīr* bet that *mu‘ammā* master the sum of one hundred *tangah* that a certain individual would crack this *mu‘ammā* without the name being said. Thus, they came with a group to the home of this poor one. As it happened, it had been five days I had gotten the measles, and I was bed-ridden. When this group had gathered at the foot of my bed, they said: “Really, we were unaware of this situation.” One of the group explained the situation [to me].

This poor one said, “Recite the *mu‘ammā*.”

They said: “Is this the time? Excessive thought will cause the illness to progress.”

This poor one exerted himself, and I swore that group to an oath on the reading of that *mu‘ammā*. When it was read, I said looking at them:

“The name “Sayfī” is derived from this *mu‘ammā*, (though) I don’t know who this is, or anything aside from this.” The *mu‘ammā* master was dealt a wondrous surprise, and he surrendered the sum he had wagered on the spot, and this poor one received a *khānī* worth fifty *tangah*.

Mavlānā Ṣāhib Dārā was among the noted companions and beloved associates of the Great Amīr...Amīr ‘Alī Shīr, spirit of God be upon him; when the sun of the life of that Great Amīr was on the verge of departing, and the bird of his purified spirit had broken the cage of his heart, it alighted upon the top of the parapet of the exalted citadel: great and small, [378] amir and vazir were made to wail and cry to the heights of heaven and the palace of Saturn from the distress of this calamity; and by way of their eyes they let the blood tears of their hearts fall in drops as the rain of spring clouds. Since the aforementioned Mavlānā was distinguished and honored among the rest of the servants of the Amīr, who was the refuge of guidance due to his greater proximity, and was continually surrounded by the unswerving affection of that great man [Navā’ī], in reflecting on the situation and his own state, he had heard this couplet from the wondrous works of that Great One, which is:

He who is first a comrade and lord to me,

is night and day a friend and companion.

He strung the chronogram and the eulogy of the Amīr of Fortunate Disposition on the thread of verses, which are peerless in their excellence; one can perhaps say that since the time of the death of Adam up to our day that a poem such as this has not registered upon the page of note from any learned man, and from now until the end of the world it is among the multitude of impossibilities that one such as this will appear. In the first

hemistich, all of the letters will add up and give the date of the most honorable one's birth, and the second hemistich the year of his death. This poem, which turned out to be sweeter than the water of life, give the dates of his birth and his death.

[and this is the light of his tomb]

O Heaven, you have been unjust and merciless to mankind

O Death, you have laid waste the kingdom of the world

[Chronogram continues to p. 382, and renders the years 844/1440-41 and 906/1500-01.]

[382] In praise of his Excellency, the Great Khāqan, the Khān who spreads justice, the hero of the sultans of the age, the holder of the life of the most powerful khaqans, most powerful king of kings in the world's four corners, ruler of the kingdoms by birth and right, the worthy Khāqan, son of the Khāqan, who strengthens the caliphate, the world and religion – Muḥammad Shībānī Khān – the exemplar of the age and caliph of the merciful, though with the speed of Rakhsh his unwieldy undertaking was made lame, filled the battlefields of the world with the pavilions of his glory, in the last ten days of Zi-l Hijra [383] of the year 912 (April, 1507), having traveled from the city of Nakhshab, which they also call Qarshi and Nasaf, and traversed many stages in 14 days, rose like a full moon from the horizon of the capital of the Sultanate of Herat – he [Şāhib Dārā] recited a *qaṣīdah* which, in its outward form, is a prayer for the celestial throne, but at its core records the turning towards and the descending upon the palace of the Sultanate of Herat. All of the letters of the first hemistich, reckoned by *abjad*, [equal] the date of the [his] setting out, while all of the letters of the last hemistich exhibit [the date of] the encampment and victory of the Khān of the celestial throne. It seemed fitting that we adorn and illustrate this book with these graceful verses.

[Chronogram translated but omitted, renders the years 912/1506-07 and 913/1507-08.]

[386] This contemptible *faqīr* [Vāṣifī] has a close kinship to Mavlānā Ṣāhib Dārā through his mother. One day I went to his house with my father. Many of the gentlemen and learned men were present. They said to my father, “It’s been rumored for some time and a long season that your son has become a student-authority on and guardian [387] of the recitation, and a champion poet, and it is reputed that he can crack, name unspoken, any tricky *mu‘ammā* which one might recite.” Thus, they recited this *mu‘ammā*:

From the wounded hearts of all, that fair shah

sees a great destitute army on all sides.

“Pāyandah,” I said with little hesitation. Those present at the soiree were amazed and shocked.

Mavlānā Ṣāhib stated, “I’ve dreamt of this *mu‘ammā*, and I have recited it to no one, and if not for that I’d have suspected that he’d overheard it. And so, one must accept the sagacity and extremely bright nature of this one.”

When we returned home, Mavlānā Ṣāhib’s messenger came and said: “My master is looking for you.”

When I arrived in his presence, his honor the Mavlānā said, “I’d gone to the audience of Amīr ‘Alī Shīr, and every day it is his custom and habit to ask of me, ‘What wonders and marvels did you see or hear in the city today?’ I said, ‘Today I saw an individual who is at the age of perhaps sixteen or seventeen, and every complex *mu‘ammā* that one recited he solves without the name being mentioned, and who as a student, poet and reciter of the Qur’ān is also quite renowned.’ The Mīr was quite surprised and asked, ‘Did you examine him?’ I said, ‘I recited a difficult *mu‘ammā* for

him, and he solved it at the mere reading of it.’ His honor the Mīr asked of me, derisively, ‘Why didn’t you bring him here?’ At this point, I was so ashamed, for the Mīr’s speech was both amazing and horrifying; for example, if he asks someone’s name at a soiree, it’s possible that no one can say it; God forbid a *mu‘ammā* is recited and not cracked! My requisite shame and modesty manifest, [388] prepare for a time and be ready here at daybreak, as his magnificence the Mīr is very interested in meeting you.” On the eve of my going to the house, a strange mood came over me; I was rolling from side-to-side like a slithering serpent and could not rest.

My father understood my restlessness and said: “O, dear one of thy father, what’s troubling you? Why are you so restless?”

“O father, what do you ask?” I replied. “Tomorrow I will go into the circle of Amīr ‘Alī Shīr, and I don’t know in what manner my state will be accepted.”

My father cried and said: “O, father’s dearest one, fear and dread are with you from your polished speech, and O, by my soul, on the day of resurrection, when in the presence of the great Creator they hand us an account of our deeds, and the great Lord of lords arrives and proclaims, ‘Read off your own account! You are sufficient to present it this day!’, such that his own secret *mu‘ammā* will manifest itself...”

To sum up, I was ready at Mavlānā Şāhib’s house in the morning. Aside from myself there were three other students in the presence of Mavlānā Şāhib. He said: “You have arrived. I will also present these three. One of them is a master of *mu‘ammā* such that he is a rival of Mavlānā Ḥusayn Nishāpūrī, and this is his *mu‘ammā*, called “Elyās.”

What a pleasure it is that two lovely faced women

once or twice kissed out of affection.

And another is renowned in the recitation of *qaṣīdah*, and this *matla'* is his:

The turquoise of heaven upon your signet ring

upon the Earth, all is beneath your ring

And the last composes and recites *masnavī* very well, and this couplet is a *Tahwīd* from among his recitations:

The Illuminator of the heavenly spheres

is the shining of the resplendent Sun.

When we arrived at the great *majlis* and exalted assembly, the companions and favorites of the Great Amīr were all present. His Excellency the Mīr looked in my direction, nodded to this poor one and said: “Is this the fellow who solves the *mu‘ammā*, name unspoken?”

Mavlānā Ṣāhib responded: “Yes, Lord, this is the one.”

Mavlānā Muḥammad Badakhshī said: “O Lord, O Prince, your solving of the *mu‘ammā* has no comparison to his *mu‘ammā* solving.”

The Mīr stated: “From looking into his eyes, I find that the sign of thought is manifest within him.” After that, he recited this *mu‘ammā*:

Behold the garden, from autumn without splendor becomes a cypress

the nightingale confused, his beak speechless

As it happened, I remembered this *mu‘ammā*. I carefully considered whether to feign ignorance and dupe the *majlis* or to tell the truth. In the end, the correct path was preferable. I said: “My Lord, I know this *mu‘ammā*.”

The Great Amīr bent his head a while, [390] then said: “Dear friends, do you know what his words mean? He proves his strength and says, ‘If not this one, then

another!” The Great Amīr did not recite another *mu‘ammā* at that *majlis*. He was very gracious and said to Mavlānā Şāhib, “We are satisfied with his response.”

Appendix IV – Selected Translations from the *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘*:

Chapter Thirty-Two:

The tale of Ghiyās al-Dīn Muḥammad Khurāsānī

[The story of the Ṣafavid-Qizilbāsh conquest of Herat from Vāṣifī’s perspective]

[244] It has been reported that, in the province of Khurasan, during the time of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Mīrzā, there was a youth whose name was Mīrzā Bayram, of the utmost elegance and pleasantness, of boundless beauty and excellence. Despite the fact that he had become destitute, at any assembly where the celebrated youth of Khurasan gathered with him, everyone took note of him, and they chanted the words of this song:

[*Misra*]: *Where you are, what does one do with another?*

He wrote the *haft qalam* in such a manner that in the seven climes have not issued one to resemble or equal him, and he played the dulcimer such that Venus the Lutenist would hurl her own lute to the ground out of envy. Khvājah ‘Abd Allāh Marvārīd, who in these two arts was unequaled and unmatched, on a number of occasions took his hand and kissed it; he would rub his eyes and say: “Never have I seen nor imagined one with the aptitude of this youth in these two arts.” He knew the science of book-keeping quite well, and on account of that he had entered into the *dīvān* of Ruqaiyah Baygum, who was one of the wives of Sulṭān Abū Sa‘īd Mīrzā. Mahd ‘Uliyā was a talented one who in verse spoke in such a manner that Mavlānā Banā’ī and Khvājah Āsafī would say: “Every time we attend a *majlis* of Mahd ‘Uliyā, we depart from it thoroughly ashamed.” A great desire for Mīrzā Bayram had manifested itself within her; at times she, having adorned herself, would present herself to him, and he would withdraw and refuse [her flirtations]. This *bayt* of Abū ‘Alī sums it up: [245]

*Beware the older women and her effect,
it is naught but the poison of spotted snake.*

Five times he fled Khurasan; he went to Nishapur and Astarabad, to Balkh and Sistan, and finally to Qandahar. Mahd ‘Uliyā sent someone to go and retrieve him each time, then she would slander him, saying “You’ve taken three-hundred thousand *tangah* of my money!”

One day he came to the home of this *faqīr* and said: “O, dear friend, you resolver of the vicissitudes of the men of this world, you guide and alleviator of difficulties of the lineage of Adam, never do you have any concern for me, nor do you give my circumstances a thought! This obscene old woman, this *Farhādkush* has turned me into a simpering *effete* and hurled me into an oven of despair! It is absurd that I am mixed up with her, and that I long to shed my own blood!”

*Stirring up lust without desire is to shed one’s own blood willingly.*⁵¹⁵

I said: “O, brother! The remedy for this disease is this – feign illness! Throw yourself [246] into an ailment! Proceed to eat less and perform the onerous mortification of fasting more, perform evening prayers and read the word of God⁵¹⁶ to the point that your body becomes weak and lean. It is certain that her profane love will be left at the door of decay.”

He replied: “What a marvelous suggestion! I miss a lot of prayers and my lapsed fasts are innumerable!” He then became occupied with fasting and prayer, and with reading the Qur’ān. As it happened, during this stretch of time general ill-health gripped him, akin to the onset of dropsy. The matter came to such a point that the physicians were unable to treat him and they abandoned all hope for his life, and his illness gave

⁵¹⁵ This *bayt* is drawn from Sa’dī’s *Bustan*.

⁵¹⁶ كلام الله, i.e. the Qur’ān.

way to hectic fever and chills. Maḥd ‘Uliyā saw him in this state, she gathered up her pieces and rolled up the board of her love and affection. After one year she convened another *dīvān*, and she removed Mīrzā Bayram entirely from the register of love. As a result, his health improved and he found liberation from that malady, and he vowed that were he delivered from this perdition he would do naught except devote himself to the pursuit of knowledge, and he recited these verses in perpetuity:

*Strive in the acquisition of knowledge, for with training a dog
emerges from rest of the dogs.*

*There was no better refuge for you than the corner of the madrasah,
from this epoch replete with calamities and the celestial sphere full of
revolt.*

[*Fard:*]

*An uncivil man is worth nothing, my dear.
Acquire learning that you be beloved of the world.*

We were constantly with one-another and traversed the valley of companionship; one day when we were walking about the madrasa of Gauhar Shād Baygum,⁵¹⁷ Ḥasan ‘Alī Maddāḥ had taken the arena [247] and was reading a eulogy. All of a sudden words of blasphemy cursing one of the companions of the prophet danced upon his tongue. Mīrzā Bayram became enraged and said: “I will kill this infidel, or work on his murder!”

I replied: “O, my friend, there are many ill-fated ones such as him in this city. Orthodox Sunnī men like you and I are also innumerable. What need is there that you

⁵¹⁷ The madrasa-yi Gauhar Shād Baygum was situated north of Herat proper along the western side of the khiyābān, not far from the Bāgh-i Zāgān. It, along with the masjid-i jāmi‘-i Gauhar Shād, formed part of the famed musallā complex; see Terry Allen, *Timurid Herat* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1983), pp. 35, 73, map. Wilson informs us that, “The term musallā was applied to a mosque located outside the walls of a city where the citizens and inhabitants of the outlying districts congregated for the great religious festivals”; see R. Pinder-Wilson, “Timurid Architecture,” *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. VI (Cambridge: University Press, 1986), p. 747. Of the madrasa, all that remains is the mausoleum of Gauhar Shād, which was attached to the madrasa’s westernmost corner.

and I should exert ourselves in killing this heretic?⁵¹⁸ In any event, this is the season when Shāh Ismā‘īl has emerged in Iraq; prudence demands that in affairs such as these no one prevails.”

He said: “This is a brand of weak Islam, and a deferral of hope.” Saying this, he [Mīrzā Bayram] seized him [Ḥasan ‘Alī Maddāḥ]; others joined him [Mīrzā Bayram] and they brought him [Ḥasan ‘Alī Maddāḥ] before the *Shaykh al-Islām* and, proving him guilty of heresy, they hung him by his neck from the *Darvāzah-yi Malik*. From this time fifteen years passed.⁵¹⁹ One night I was sitting around at home with a group of my friends, and the conversation turned to Shāh Ismā‘īl. One watch of the night had passed when someone rapped upon the door knocker. I answered the door. Mīrzā Bayram, fearful and trembling, came in and said: “Have you not received word that Shāh Ismā‘īl brought Shaybak Khān low and slew him. Qulī Jān, the nephew of Amīr Najm-i Sānī, has brought the *fathnāmah* of Shāh Ismā‘īl!” Having gathered with a group of companions, we came to the madrasa of Amīr Fīrūz Shāh,⁵²⁰ which is at the head of the

⁵¹⁸ The term used here is رافضی / *rāfiẓī*, a term that denotes a certain Shī‘a sect but which here seems to more generally mean “heretic”; see Steingass, p. 564.

⁵¹⁹ Vāṣifī states literally, از این تاریخ پانزده سال گذشت, however this seems unlikely as the following narrative takes place in 1510, at the time of the Ṣafāvid entry into Herat following the defeat of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān at Marv; had a period of fifteen years actually elapsed, Vāṣifī would have been only ten years of age in the preceding narrative. It seems more likely that this discrepancy is the result of an error in copying of the text at some point, and that either fifteen months elapsed, or five years.

⁵²⁰ The madrasa-yi Amīr Jalāl al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh is located to the north of Herat proper along the khiyābān, as Vāṣifī states “at the head of the crossroads of *Mīrzā ‘Alā’ al-Dīn*,” specifically on the northwest corner of the intersection where the khiyābān and the approach to the Bāgh-i Zāgān crossed. The madrasa in question, which Allen estimates to have been constructed around 1434, would have been on the right as one approached the Bāgh-i Zāgān. Amīr Jalāl al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh (d. 1444-45) was “one of the highest of Šāh Roh’s officials and consequently one of the wealthiest.” In addition to the madrasa mentioned by Vāṣifī, he also funded the building of a mosque and *khānaqāh*; nothing remains of these structures today. As a very prominent figure during the reign of Shāh Rukh, he also funded a number of restoration projects throughout Khurasan, such as the restoration of the Maṣjid-i Jāmi’-i Harāt. However, Golombek opines that these repairs were superficial; see Terry Allen, *Timurid Herat* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1983), p. 74, map; Lisa Golombek, “The Resilience of the Friday Mosque: The Case of Herat,” *Muqarnas*, Vol. I (1983): pp. 96-97.

crossroads of *Mīrzā ‘Alā’ al-Dīn*. We saw that the students there were in a state – *there he will neither die nor live*⁵²¹ – from receiving the news.

I said: “O, friends, do not fear!”

*Though the sword of the cosmos moves,
it severs no arteries until God wills.*

*Therefore put your trust in Allāh if you are truly believers.*⁵²² That evening we were in the madrasa. In the morning [248] they proclaimed that the distinguished men and nobles, the inhabitants, men of high rank and servants should assemble at the Masjīd-i Jāmi’-i Malikān-i Harāt. They placed the minbar of the *khatīb* to the side of the small *ayvān* on the north side, and the *Shaykh al-Islām*, Amīr Muḥammad Amīr Yūsuf, Sayyid ‘Abd al-Qādir, Amīr Ībrāhīm, Amīr Khalīl, Amīr Jamāl al-Dīn, Amīr Khaṣāl al-Dīn, Amīr Ībrāhīm Musha‘sha’, Amīr Murtāz, Qāzī Ikhtiyār, Mavlānā ‘Aṣām al-Dīn Ībrāhīm, Amīr ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, and the rest of the lords and grandees took their place at the side of the minbar, while there were so many people upon the roof and on the ground that were one to toss a needle it would not have hit the ground. Ḥāfiẓ Zayn al-Dīn, who was among the descendants of Mavlānā Sharaf al-Dīn Ziyārat Gāhī,⁵²³ had been appointed to read the *fathnāmah*. They positioned a table full of pure gold beside the minbar, and atop that they placed a *chārqaḅ* with gold buttons, for the *khatīb*.⁵²⁴ However, a dispute arose

⁵²¹ Qur’ān: Sūrat 20, Āyat 74; Sūrat Ta-Ha.

⁵²² Qur’ān: Sūrat 5, Āyat 23; Sūrat al-Maeda.

⁵²³ Also referred to as *Mavlānā Sharaf al-Dīn ‘Alī Ziyārat Gāhī*.

⁵²⁴ A *chārqaḅ* is a robe of honor, “a garment especially of the sultans of Turan”; see *Loghatnāmeḥ-ye Dehkhodā*, <http://www.loghatnaameh.org/dehkhodasearchresult-fa.html?searchtype=0&word=2obYp9ix2YLYqA%3d%3d>; Steingass defines the *chārqaḅ* similarly, stating it was “A garment peculiar to the kings of Turan”; see Steingass, p. 385. According to Ḥasan Rūmlū, the *chārqaḅ* was seldom bestowed upon Tajiks, i.e., Persians, in the Tīmūrid era. This trend seems to have continued among the Tīmūrids in India; as late as the eighteenth century the *chārqaḅ* was a garment “worn only by members of the Chaghatai house descended from Timur”; see Maria Eva Subtelny, *Tīmūrids in Transition* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), p. 85, and S. R. Sharma, *Mughal Empire in India* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 1999), p. 714.

between Ḥāfiẓ Ḥasan ‘Alī and Ḥāfiẓ Zayn al-Dīn; more of the grandees were on the side of Ḥāfiẓ Zayn al-Dīn and some endeavoring on the side of Ḥāfiẓ Ḥasan ‘Alī. Finally, Ḥāfiẓ Zayn al-Dīn climbed the minbar and began to read the *fathnāmah*: “*Say: O, Allāh! Lord of the kingdom, Thou givest power to whom Thou pleasest and Thou strippest off power from whom Thou pleasest.*”⁵²⁵

Khvājah ‘Abd Allāh Ṣadr would remark: “Never had we heard such a bombastic style of letter.”

When the *fathnāmah* reached this point: “They have commanded that seventeen individuals from among the companions of the Prophet be cursed!”⁵²⁶ Ḥāfiẓ Zayn al-Dīn looked in the direction of the *Shaykh al-Islām* and the assembled distinguished men.

The *Shaykh al-Islām* said: “O, Ḥāfiẓ, neither provoke strife nor shed the blood of the people! Whatever they have commanded, say it!” [However] Ḥāfiẓ Zayn al-Dīn skipped about ten lines wherein the cursing was found.

Qulī Jān became agitated and demanded: “Who is this man, that misrepresents the decree of the Shāh?”

Ḥāfiẓ Ḥasan ‘Alī declared: “How can he pronounce such a curse [249] when his own name is Zayn al-Dīn Abū Bakr, and his grandfather’s name was Sharaf al-Dīn ‘Uṣmān?!”

Amīr Muḥammad Amīr Yūsuf said: “Ay, Ḥāfiẓ, you unfortunate soul, why are you lying? His name is Zayn al-Dīn ‘Alī!”

Mullā Yādgār Astarābādī retorted: “O, Amīr Muḥammad, who are you lying to?! Ḥāfiẓ Ḥasan ‘Alī is speaking the truth!”

⁵²⁵ Qur’ān: Sūrat 3, Āyat 26.

⁵²⁶ Vāṣifī does not mention which seventeen companions were to be cursed.

Amīr Qulī Jān rose up and sent Ḥaydar ‘Alī Maddāḥ up to the minbar. Seizing him by his beard and collar, he [Ḥaydar ‘Alī Maddāḥ] said: “Hey, you heretic! Be quick about it! Curse!” He did not give him a chance to speak, and pulled him down from the minbar. His [Ḥāfiẓ Zayn al-Dīn’s] feet had not yet touched the ground when one of the Qizilbāsh struck him upon his head with his sword, splitting him between his eyebrows. Around ten Qizilbāsh then cut him to pieces at the foot of the minbar. There arose that morning in the Masjid-i Jāmi’ the Day of Judgment!

Ḥāfiẓ Hūsh, a respected man, one of the *murīdān* of Mavlānā Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, stated: “The humble Ḥāfiẓ Zayn al-Dīn was martyred!” They also wanted to cut him down. One group begged for mercy; they [the Qizilbāsh] accepted four-thousand *khānī* and they were liberated. The son of his Magnificence, the glorious Mavlānā Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, Khvājah Ziyā‘ al-Dīn Yūsuf, fainted in the *Masjid-i Jāmi’*; they carried him outside on their shoulders, and the *Shaykh al-Islām* and a few of the other distinguished men present were carried out in a like state. Ḥaydar ‘Alī Maddāḥ put on the *chārqaḥ* and scooped up the gold coins. Of the people who were on the roof, many of them threw themselves off, breaking their hands and feet, and roughly seven individuals perished. Mīrzā Bayram, I myself, and many others were so overwhelmed [250] that when we reached the door of the mosque not one bit of common sense remained that we might realize we should not have gotten out there! We spun around and headed to another door but the situation was the same! From the upper level of the mosque a group of Qizilbāsh was scattering gold coins down upon the heads of the people, but not a soul paid this any mind, nor picked them up from the ground. One of our companions turned up, and he spirited us away from that place. None of us knew

where we were heading. Finally, we reached the vicinity of the madrasa and the *khānqāh* of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Mīrzā,⁵²⁷ and we knew where we were. From the time we left the Masjid-i Jāmi’ until arriving there we saw around fifty heads on spears that they [the Qizilbāsh] were carrying around, exclaiming: “Hey, you heretical Sunnī dogs, take warning!”⁵²⁸ Mīr Shānah Tarāsh was a famous heretic, and made up a song cursing the Companions to the tune “Iraq.” Nearly one-thousand men had flocked to him. They were singing that song and turned in the direction of the head of the *khiyābān*, and anyone who fell in with them was unable to leave. They were continuously hoisting heads on spears until they reached the *mazār* of Mavlānā Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī. Nearly ten-thousand people had assembled. They threw every door and window, every stool and board that there was in that district – all of it – atop the tomb of that *mavlavī*, and the height of that pile was equal to that of the *ayvān* of the *mazār*. After that they set it on fire; when the fire really took no one was able to go nearer to it than an arrow shot. It brought to mind the fire of Nimrūd. Mīrzā Bayram and I became separated, while in the *Muqriyān* district there was a large crowd cursing.

A student of the sciences with whom we had been acquainted for years and who we had considered to be a Sunnī and resolute Muslim, appeared, and I said to him: “O, my friend! What are we doing here? How long must we hear listen to this ridiculousness? Come on, let’s get out of here!”

⁵²⁷ Located...

⁵²⁸ The term rendered here as “heretical” is خارجی, a singular form which might also be rendered as “foreign” or “outsider”. The context seems to suggest that the term ought to be translated as heretical, as though the Qizilbāsh were drawing an analogy between the Sunnī inhabitants of Herat and the Kharijites; the latter rejected the leadership ‘Alī ibn ‘Abī Ṭālib, the last of the Rāshidūn and first Imām according to the Shī’a, when he entered into arbitration at the request of Mu‘āwiya b. ‘Abī Sufyān at the Battle of Siffin in 37 A.H. / 657 A.D.

That misguided soul cried out: “Come, my friends! [251] Behold, an infidel!” As soon as the words left his lips the crowd jostled against one another, and I immediately put my head down and ran into the crowd and put some distance between myself and that bastard. They searched around for me. At the head of that quarter there was a long, narrow street which they called “Peach Street”. No sooner had I entered that street than that bastard saw me and cried out: “Behold, my friends – it’s that infidel!” All of the people were on my tail; rocks and clods of earth rained down upon my head, and I ran down that street.

All of a sudden someone appeared at the head of the street. Shouts came from behind, crying “Grab him!” He stretched his arms out to the walls on either side, and I reached under my cloak. Thinking that I had a knife and seized with fear, he pressed his chest against the wall and cried: “I have no business with you! Go wherever you want!” I moved past him and came to very large stream, the water of which flowed into a garden through an earthen water-pipe. I threw myself into that irrigation canal and entered the pipe. There were stakes inside the pipe which made it impossible to pass; I pressed my chest against one and pushed on it. The wood broke! I climbed out and dragged myself to the bank of the canal. When I threw myself into the water there was a bone at the bottom of the stream, and it pierced the bottom of my foot. Blood was flowing from it, and it occurred to me that this would be as a roadmap for the party that was pursuing me. [Misra]:

In the end, when my own blood led me to captivity.

I immediately took off my pants, tightly bandaged the wound, and took off. A ruined building came into view. I entered there [252]; there was a room full of timber of

all different sorts. I hid myself beneath all of this timber. That student of the sciences said to that mob: “O, my dear friends, if, for example, you were to slay Yazīd, it is unknown whether or not you would find that such meritorious deed! This man is the very man who has lampooned Shāh Ismā‘īl and his entire line! There would be no better gift for the Shāh than he!” Having encouraged and inflamed that mob to thoughts of killing me, he led them into that estate.

They arrived at the door of this timber room. They were saying to one another, “is it possible that he has crawled beneath all of this lumber?” Some thought it unlikely. Still another said: “If he’s not beneath this timber, I’m not a slave of ‘Alī!” They resolved to set fire to the lumber. Someone went to get some fire. Meanwhile, there arose a clamor because someone was in the estate. He was frightened when this mob entered and took off. The mob ran after him, caught him, cut off his head and, having stuck his head on the point of a spear, exclaimed loudly: “Behold, we got him!” The group that had been at the door of the timber room all turned around and left the estate.

After some time I got out from underneath the timber, but I did not know in which direction I should head. I saw that in one corner of the estate there was another building, and a woman was motioning to me. I headed over to her. That woman said to me: “Dear one, miraculously you were saved! Come, get in the house!” She brought me into the house, prepared some bread and curds for me from what was on hand, and continued: “Dear one, eat this, and hide yourself in the closet.⁵²⁹ My husband is Sabzivārī. God forbid he see you, for it would be impossible to save you again!”

⁵²⁹ The term used here is قۇرئان; in Uzbek, the cognate *qaznoq* or *qaznoqcha* means “a small storage room.”

I stood up and said: “O, mother, hide me! I am dying from fear!” [253] She led me to the closet. Inside there were some baskets stacked up, and she hid me beneath these baskets.

When she exited the closet her husband arrived, and said: “I was at the *mazār* of that heretic. They burned a number of heretics, and I heard that in this very estate they captured and killed a heretic! What a shame, that I was not honored to be part of this great deed!” That woman recounted the event in its entirety for her husband. After a while, that fellow left the house. However, Mīrzā Bayram, when being separated from this *faqīr*, heard in the *mazār* of the venerable *darvīsh* that they had sent me to my death in that *chahār-bāgh*. Wailing and rending his collar, he sent word to my home. Having gathered nearly fifty women together, he led them to that estate. When they saw that the murdered man had been beheaded they all cried out, tore at their clothing and fell upon the body. The man’s body had fallen face down. My sister exclaimed: “This body is not my brother, because between my brother’s shoulders there was a black mole, and on this body there is no such mole!” With this she put their minds at ease. They ran all about the environs of that estate, enquiring, until they arrived at that house. That woman took notice of them and brought them in the house. Hearing the voices of that group, I exclaimed aloud and ran out of the closet! One by one they embraced me, kissed my face, and rejoiced. My sisters and relatives showered that woman with whatever rings and jewels they had in their possession. It was the time of *namāz-i shām*, when the head of the resplendent sun had been carried into the lands of the west upon spears of light, and the maidens of the celestial sphere had cast the rings and signets of the constellations upon the cloak of the firmament, that we set out on the direction of the city, and it was

the hour of *namāz-i khuftan* when we reached our home – with good health and happiness, in safety and security.

[254] After several days a group of visitors came to my home; together they prepared *halīm*, and my moustache became stained with *halīm*. One of the guests pointed this out. I immediately picked up a pair of scissors and cut my whiskers short. Those present declared: “This is not good, what you have done, unless you do not intend to leave the house for some time!” Of course, after a couple days some need arose such that I had to go out, so I covered my mouth with my sleeve and I went.

When ordered to do so, I took my hand away from my mouth, and a Qizilbāsh took notice of that and said: “Hey, Yazīd! You’ve cut your mustache!”

In reply, this bit of improvisation came to mind, and I said: “*Ghāzī*, you’ve arrived just in time! I’ve come out in search of someone like you! Praise be to God, I have succeeded! Surely you know that there is a group of *khvājazādah* of the shrine that occupied a house; I was among these men. Thinking it something clever, they grabbed me and shaved off my moustache! That group consists of ten individuals; one could get the sum of one-thousand *tangah* at least from each of them. Should you deign to follow me, I will show you to every saray I have ever entered.

Appendix V – Selected Translations from the *Badāyi ‘ al-vaqāyi ‘*:

Chapter Thirty-Two:

The tale of Ghiyās al-Dīn Muḥammad Khurāsānī

[The story of the Abu'l-Khayrid conquest of Herat from Vāṣifī's perspective]

[273] In the year 913 on the day of Ashura⁵³⁰ there was a gathering at the estate of Amīr Shāh Valī, who was the *kūkal-tāsh* of Khadījah Baygum and who was without equal in greatness, esteem, and authority amongst the line of Chaghatāy at the court of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Mīrẓā [274]. That *pādishāh* used to say: “The *kūkal-tāsh* children around me are dearer to me than my own children.” All of the great and important amirs obeyed him and depended on his good favor. It was such a gathering that no one had seen such an assembly beneath the blue dome. Sulṭān Maḥmūd the singer was singing this *ghazal*:

*What majlis, what paradise, what place is this here?
Eternal life, the countenance of the page, the rim of the chalice is here!
Were a good fortune to outstrip all, it would not pass this door!
If a joy were to flee all, it is here a slave.*

To this melody another trilled:

*We drink wine, and the adversaries the misery of the world!
A fare is ordained to each man according to his ambition!*

And all were heedless that every moment this proclamation comes from the court of the unknown:

*Merrily the adversaries would seize upon the ringlets of the page,
If the firmament allows them repose.*

Another recited this *bayt*:

⁵³⁰ The day of Ashura, i.e. 10 Muharram, in the year 913 A.H. corresponds to May 22, 1507; see <http://www.oriold.uzh.ch/static/hegira.html>.

*When the liquid world bears grief from out the heart,
We have not grief if the water carries off the world!*

Amīr Shāh Valī eloquently replied with this delightful *bayt*: [275]

*I myself, a chalice of wine, and a beautiful face.
If Jamshīd comes, beckon – come!*

At that moment, unexpectedly, a fellow entered by the door and declared: “O, Mīr, rise up and flee while you have a chance! For word has just come to Khadījah Baygum, that Shāh Badī‘ al-Zamān and Muẓaffar Mīrzā had arranged a *majlis* at the summer encampment of Childukhtaran...when word arrived that Shaybak Khān [Shībānī Khān], having sacked the city of Nasaf, which is to say Qarshi, [crossed the Amu and] has arrived [in this country]. Amīr Zu’l-Nūn Arghūn, who was a *Sipāhsālār* and a *Bahādur* of that house, rode out to skirmish with ten thousand armed and ready soldiers, who on the day of battle were in search repute and honor and preferred death over life. They arrived in the district of Tarnab, which is one *farsang* from Childukhtaran, and battle ensued. The army of Shaybak Khān, like a flood carrying off the brush, eradicated the men of Zu’l-Nūn Arghūn. He was slain in that battle, and the army of the khan, having taken his head, has stuck it upon the head of a lance, and is now advancing. The princes [Badī‘ al-Zamān and Muẓaffar Mīrzā], upon hearing this – *As if they were affrighted asses, fleeing from a lion!*⁵³¹ – disbanded and the khan, with fifty-thousand men, arrived in the vicinity of the city.”

Mīr Shāh Valī was beyond intoxicated. When he heard this speech, you would say it were as though one had poured a brazier upon his head. Flying into a rage, he said: “Ay, panderer of bad news, black tongued with an ugly face! What sort of dreadful tale

⁵³¹ Qur’ān: Sūrat 74, Āyat 50-51, Sūrat al-Muddaththir.

and unpleasant words are these are that you have brought that you have frozen my *majlis*? How is it possible that Shaybak Ūzbek to fall upon the heads of our sovereigns!” He [Amīr Shāh Valī] drew his sabre to cut him to pieces. This *faqīr* and the others who were familiar with him stayed his hand, for we said: [276]

*To bring the hand quickly to the sword out of anger -
is to bite the back of the hand out of regret.*

“Wait a moment, your honor. Ascertain the truth of this. If this man proves to be a liar, killing him will be easy enough.” We were in the midst of this exchange when the sound of the hooves of the galloping horses at the head of the street was heard, with such a tumult that you would say – *For the convulsion of the Hour of Judgment will be a thing terrible!*⁵³² – had been made manifest, and the arch of the celestial dome from the sound – *the trumpet will be blown*⁵³³ – had shattered. Within half an hour of this arising, of the one thousand men that were at the estate of Amīr Shāh Valī, aside from this *faqīr*, Ghiyās al-Dīn Muḥammad, Mīr Shāh Valī and the inhabitants of his *haram*, not a soul remained.

Ghiyās al-Dīn Muḥammad and I fortified the door of the gate, and Amīr Shāh Valī, touching the cloak of this *faqīr* and weeping, said: “O, Maḥmūd, it’s been a period of seven years that you have been an exemplar and model for me, and in this period I have bestowed upon you an innumerable amount of gold and jewels. Despite my ill-mannered and evil-natured disposition in that I did not submit to our kings, in your fealty and fidelity I have tried with soul and heart to elevate myself, and to my son, who is your pupil, I have often said, ‘Heed the injunction of *Ḥaẓrat Amīr al-Mū‘minīn ‘Alī*, may God

⁵³² Qur’ān: Sūrat 22, Āyat 1, Sūrat al-Hajj.

⁵³³ Qur’ān: Sūrat 18, Āyat 99, Sūrat al-Kahf.

be pleased with him,⁵³⁴ which goes: *Anyone who teaches a word to another becomes his lord and master.*’ He is your servant. We rely upon you, that in this nightmarish event you will aid and protect us! May you not spirit yourself and your brother, Ghiyās al-Dīn Muḥammad, away from us! If I emerge alone from this terror, I wish your forgiveness!” *Verily Allāh will not suffer the reward of the righteous to perish.*⁵³⁵

This *faqīr* said to himself – “Glorious is God!⁵³⁶ How excellent is the Great Lord that He has made such an arrogant one [277] – who one time [when] a certain individual had slain someone and had concealed [himself] in his home, Sulṭān Ḥusayn Mīrzā three times sent someone to him [with the message] ‘Send that murderer to me so that I may ascertain the truth,’ and he sent back word, ‘I have ascertained the truth, [that] regarding this man, it is slander.’ – so wretched and contemptible, as in the saying – *a drowning man will clutch at straw.*⁵³⁷ If to this humble wretch, who is the weakest of God’s servants, He is doing that measure of work, then He will extricate us.” His son, wife, daughters and dependents, who in the inhabited quarter of the world were unmatched in elegance, beauty, and grace, gathered themselves together and, taking my hem and that of Ghiyās al-Dīn Muḥammad, joined in with such crying and wailing that the angels of the Highest Teacher would weep blood upon them from the eyes of the stars, and his young maidservants and house girls, who numbered ten also cried and lamented greatly in this manner. Picking up the Qur’ān, we took an oath that we would not willingly separate from them. This *faqīr* said: “From the ready money and valuables you have, that may be transported, that portion which it is possible you must get together.” We arrived at the

⁵³⁴ *Razī Allāhu ‘anhu* / رضي الله عنه; a stock phrase typically uttered following the name of any one of the companions of the prophet Muḥammad.

⁵³⁵ Qur’ān: Sūrat 11, Āyat 115, Sūrat Hud.

⁵³⁶ *Subhān Allāh* / سبحان الله.

⁵³⁷ الغريق يتعلق بكل حشيش.

treasury of the estate, where there were ten trunks stored. We opened their lids; five trunks were full of cash, and two were full of gold coin [*ashrafi*]; another was filled with a number of knives, daggers, and swords, and two more with rubies, topaz, sapphires, emeralds and pearls. I said [to myself]: “Aside from the taking the gemstones, this is useless.” We emptied satchels of *tangah* and filled them full of gemstones, and those that were left we filled with gold coin and a bunch of jewels, and those individuals from among the men and women with a measure of strength were made ready. This *faqīr* stated: “If we leave the estate now, it is impossible that we will be able to get to the city; we must wait until the hand of night falls over us.” [278] Ghiyās al-Dīn Muḥammad and I piled dirt half-way up the door in the gate. It was the time of evening prayer when, the maidens of *banāt al-na‘sh*,⁵³⁸ having filled the satchel of the galaxy with the jeweled stars [*nuhūm*] and the gold coins of the constellations [*kavākib*], our company prepared themselves and, having made it to the roof of the neighbor’s house, we arrived at the door of his house. It was the time of *namāz-i khuftan*⁵³⁹ when we arrived at the *Darvāzah-yi Malik*.⁵⁴⁰ The gate-keeper was an acquaintance; he opened the gate and we entered the city.

Amīr Shāh Valī said: “Going to our house and dependencies is highly impracticable. Although your home is under the same rule, you are dearer to the grandees and the *Shaykh al-Islām*, so clearly your home remains safe, guarded and preserved.” In any event, they made their way to the home of this *faqīr*. Two night watches had passed when we arrived, and we brought them to the guest house. We hid them inside a cauldron, which was extremely large, and then this *faqīr* and Ghiyās al-Dīn

⁵³⁸ The constellation Ursa Major.

⁵³⁹ The prayer performed before going to sleep.

⁵⁴⁰ The gate on the northern wall of Herat proper; literally “the King’s Gate.”

Muḥammad buried it in such a manner that even if, for instance, the Uzbek army knew it to be concealed in that home they would be unable to remove it. Amīr Shāh Valī said:

“Our being in this house is not prudent.”

This *faqīr* thought, “Of companions who frequently praise friendship, unity, and collaboration, they used to say”:

*Do not count as a friend one who knocked on the door of prosperity –
boasted of friendship and professed brotherhood,*

*A companion is one who takes the hand of a friend –
In sadness and despair.*

Twelve people came to mind, and I turned to them. Some hid and [279] some made excuses: “I would give you a place in the blink of an eye, but that lot you speak of, harboring them would be cause for the captivity and devastation of any town or quarter they were in.” Upon returning we arrived below the upper story of a house; a great many were sitting there, and it was most likely a wine *majlis*. One stated: “Amīr Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ composed a good *rubāʿī* about the Chaghatāy, and it goes like this:

*Poor Chaghatāy, for whom the day has become night –
His circumstances are a tumult, his day is black,
Prideful, he did not fit upon the face of the Earth –
Now for him the rat hole is one thousand gold pieces.*

I committed this *rubāʿī* to memory. Weeping greatly, despondent, I came to the house.

Amīr Shāh Valī asked: “What is the cause of these tears?”

I replied: “This *rubāʿī* has brought the tears,” and he and all of his dependents also wept greatly, and I recounted the circumstances to my companions. They became extremely downhearted, and I said: “*Never give up hope of Allāh’s soothing mercy: truly*

*no one despairs of Allāh's soothing mercy, except those who have no faith!*⁵⁴¹ Do not lose hope that the Lord is the Causer of causes and the Key to many gates! He will manufacture a cause, and He will open a door!" In the morning with the maxim – *he who seeks something and strives for it receives it, and he who knocks and knocks on the door will be received*⁵⁴² – I came out of the house.

I happened to be passing through the *Pā-yi Hisar*⁵⁴³ when a man came up to me and said: "I see that you are upset and perceive that you are vexed. What is the reason?"

I replied: "First, you tell me how you feel."

He said: "Before this, one night seven years ago we were in the home of Ḥāfiẓ Nūr Abrīshumkār, in the Malikiyan district. You imitated Mavlānā Ḥusayn Vā'iz [Kāshifī] in such a manner that all of us at that *majlis* were all moved to tears and exclaimed: 'At the *majlis* of Mavlānā Ḥusayn Vā'iz we have never experienced such quality!' From that [280] time on I have been your slave, adherent, and servant."

I asked: "Where are you these days and what are you doing?"

He said: "I had a son; he was a student of the sciences and an exceptionally well-voiced *ḥāfiẓ*. I wanted to arrange his marriage; on account of this I constructed a house that was reminiscent of the palace of Heaven. Then the Lord bound him to a beauty of the beauties of Heaven and transported him off from this world." He then said to me: "Explain your own circumstances."

I said: "Some kinsmen have come from the province of Sabzivar, and with all these disturbances I have no place for them to stay."

⁵⁴¹ Qur'ān: Sūrat 12, Āyat 87; Sūrat Yūsuf.

⁵⁴² Ar.: من طلب شيئاً وجدَّ وجد، ومن قرع باباً ولجَّ ولج. This is apparently a well-known maxim in Arabic meant to encourage hard work.

⁵⁴³ Literally the "base of the fortress," this term today indicates a portion of Herat proper located directly to the east and south of the Hisar.

He said: “Behold – this house! I have a young son, so until he is upon the verge of becoming a married man, let your relatives stay there! I consider it a great honor! I would be extremely pleased!” I went with him to the house. Thus, I saw a place that whosoever would set foot in it would not wish to leave.

I returned home and informed *Amīr Shāh Valī*, “Thanks to this gentleman and his son I found a unique place!” Everyone fixed their turban with the strap of completion upon their head; the men took book satchels under their arms and the women put on some old chadors. We set out and I said: “We must make our way scattered from one another.” In this manner we made it to that house.

Meanwhile, Khadījah Baygum arrived at the Bāgh-i Shahr⁵⁴⁴ and, having summoned all of the distinguished and exalted men, the lords and ladies, nobles, grandees and chiefs of Herat, stated: “For years all of you have seen wealth in the kingdom of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Mīrzā, and you have lived in comfort. Never has a king shown to people like you the honors and kindness that he has shown to you all. Now this unfortunate calamity has fallen upon his sons. [281] Although they have retreated, because it was advisable, they will return and march to the head of this city, and it is expected that all of you honor the truth and take into consideration your obligation to their father and protect this city, and that you do not cast the wives and children of the men of Herat to the hand

⁵⁴⁴ The Bāgh-i Shahr dates back to the Kartid era and is located in the northwest quadrant of Herat proper, adjacent to the citadel. Allen informs us that while the Bāgh-i Shahr served as Shāh Rukh’s initial residence in Herat, he later took up residence at the Bāgh-i Zāgān which then replaced the Bāgh-i Shahr as the seat of government. Allen states elsewhere that the Bāgh-i Shahr comprised part of the royal residence in the time of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā. According to Subtelny, the *vaqf-nāmah* of Afaq Baygum, one of the wives of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā, lists properties located in the Bāgh-i Shahr. See: Terry Allen, *Timurid Herat*, Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1983: pp. 47, 52, map; Maria Eva Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition: Turko-Persian Politics and Acculturation in Medieval Iran*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2007: p. 184. Malleson mentions visiting the site of and seeing the Bāgh-i Shahr in his travel narrative. See: G. B. Malleson, *Herat: the Granary and Garden of Central Asia*, London: W. H. Allen & Co., 1880: p. 41. Nothing remains of the Bāgh-i Shahr today.

of that horde of Uzbeks who, it is well known, live off the people of Samarqand and indeed all of Mavarannahr!”

The *Shaykh al-Islām*, Amīr Muḥammad Amīr Yūsuf, Qāzī Ikhtiyār and Amīr Sa‘īd ‘Abd al-Qādir and the remainder of the distinguished men replied: “O Bilqīs of the age! O Zubaydah of our times! You speak the truth, [however] this is based upon the supposition that any hope may be derived from the *shāhzādah*; you yourself are aware how Shāh Badī‘ al-Zamān and your son, Muẓaffar Ḥusayn Mīrzā, ruled upon the death of their father, and that the people derive no hope of any kind from the likes of them! A certain poet has even composed a *qit‘a* which all of the people are constantly reciting:

*Sulṭān Ḥusayn, the shah of the world, due to his exalted dignity –
The summit of the turquoise dome was his palace,
Gone! And there remains from him in the celestial sultanate –
Like the sun and the moon, two shahs of the asylum of the world,
However, to both was allotted a portion of kingliness –
As the title of shah bestowed upon one or two wooden chess pieces.*

Furthermore, they have suffered such defeats that it is not possible for them to return! The majority of their amirs have been slain, and they have lost the entirety of their armaments! Shaybak Khān is a sovereign very attuned to matters of honor; if we were to revolt after the victory, we would not be long for this world and he would enslave and pillage the entire city. [282] Do you claim that it would be advantageous for us, that we undertake this task for ten days or a month, when this would be the outcome?”

Khadījah Baygum wept and declared: “You speak the truth!” and sought the pardon of the great men and allowed them to leave. These men of distinction then headed to the madrasah of the *Shaykh al-Islām*, assembled there, and resolved to send the

keys of the city to the khan. At the point of mid-day a tailor by the name of Sulṭān ‘Alī burst into the madrasa and said:

“O, my shaykh and my lords, good news and glad tidings upon you! Behold, Abū al-Muhsin [Mīrzā] and his brother Kīpak Mīrzā have marched from Mashhad and arrived with fifty-thousand armed and ready horsemen! I was at the head of the *khiyābān*, near the Band-i Qārūn when this expedition from the direction of Sāq Salmān⁵⁴⁵ appeared:

*From the hooves of horses in the broad steppe –
The Earth became six, the sky became eight.*

I ran forward, and a rider galloped over to me and asked: ‘Who are you?’

“I replied: ‘I’m that so-and-so, alas for Khurasan, alas for Khurasan!’

He said: ‘Come forward!’ He handed me a bit of candy and continued, “I am Muḥammad Valī Bayg. Bring these candies to the *Shaykh al-Islām* and tell him: Do not grieve! Mīrzā Abū al-Muhsin and Mīrzā Kīpak have arrived with fifty-thousand horsemen!”

The *Shaykh al-Islām* smiled and declared: “The falsity of this speech is clearer than the sun and of more vibrant color than a large cup of wine!”

That individual replied: “My lord, tie me up and observe for yourself! If what I have said is untrue, then may you cut me to pieces!” They sent the grandson of the *mullāzādah* of Mavlānā ‘Uṣmān Samarqandī to the head of the *khiyābān* to bring word; he went, came back and [283] declared: “The entire *khiyābān* is filled with Uzbeks. There isn’t a trace of the others.”

The *Shaykh al-Islām* asked the man: “Now what do you have to say?”

⁵⁴⁵ A town located to the northwest of Herat proper.

The man replied: “At the *Darvāzah-yi Malik* this man swore to me with great vehemence and agitation and handed me this candy. I believed him.” Those present struck him and kicked him out.⁵⁴⁶ It was decided that in the morning the keys to the city, along with precious rarities and gifts as were customary, would be brought before the khan. The khan, for the wife of Muẓaffar Ḥusayn Mīrzā, who was the daughter of one of the Uzbek princes, and who in beauty and goodness was renowned throughout the word, composed a *ghazal* and had it sent. When night fell, Khadījah Baygum fortified herself in the fortress of Ikhtiyār al-Dīn, and the wife of Muẓaffar Ḥusayn Mīrzā did not come.⁵⁴⁷ When the morning arrived, the distinguished men of the city sent the keys of the city, along with *pīshkash*,⁵⁴⁸ to the head of the *khiyābān* and the camp of the khan.

The khan respected and paid homage to the *Shaykh al-Islām*, more than can be imagined, and inquired as to the wife of Muẓaffar Ḥusayn Mīrzā. They said to him: “Her husband is still alive, and this woman part of his household.⁵⁴⁹ What will happen?” The khan became greatly disturbed. Amīr Muḥammad Amīr Yūsuf and Qāzī Ikhtiyār attested that Muẓaffar al-Dīn has divorced her. This information was true, but he had once again

⁵⁴⁶ This episode seems to correspond to information provided elsewhere; Mansura Haidar states that, in desperation, “the two nobles of Badi uz-Zaman spread the rumor in the city that Muhammad Muhsin Mirza had arrived with an army and would repel the Uzbeks immediately. Encouraged by this news the inhabitants started looting and killing the Uzbeks.” See Mansura Haidar, *Central Asia in the Sixteenth Century*, Delhi: Manohar, 2002; p. 112.

⁵⁴⁷ Bābur refers to this wife of Muẓaffar al-Dīn by the name of Khānzāda Khānum, and Khvādamīr relates, “Her Highness Khanzada Khanīm, the daughter of Ahmad Khan, niece of His Late Majesty, and wife of Muẓaffar-Husayn Mirza Kūrāgān, found favor in Muhammad Khan’s eyes, and he proposed marriage to her. The khanīm claimed that Muẓaffar-Husayn Mirza had divorced her two years previously, and a number of religious people testified on behalf of her claim so that she could be legally married to the khan.” However, Mansura Haidar states, “The women of the house of Badi uz-Zaman and Muẓaffar Husain were sent to Shaibani. From amongst them, Khanzada Khanum, the daughter of Ahmad Khan, and the wife of Muẓaffar Husain, were taken in marriage by Shaibani himself.” See *BN*, p. 246; *HS*, pp. 539-540; Haidar, p. 113.

⁵⁴⁸ According to Steingass, *pīshkash* may be defined as “a magnificent present, such as is only presented to princes, great men, superiors, or sometimes to equals.” He also defines it simply as “tribute.” See: Steingass, p. 267.

⁵⁴⁹ این زن در نکاح وی است.

made her lawful and had married her. This they concealed from the khan. His Excellency the khan encamped in the green meadow of Kahdistan, which is one *farsakh* from the city of Herat on the side of the *Darvāzah-yi Khūsh*,⁵⁵⁰ on the east side, and at the appointed hour married the Baygum with pomp and pageantry, who had arrived with an assembly of her dependents and followers to the bank of Kahdistan canal. Mīr Yādgār Kūkaltāsh, who was the father of Mīr Shāh Valī, honored him, and in the palace of the Baygum [284] he was greatly respected and a man of power.

When Amīr Shāh Valī heard that Amīr Yādgār was honored before the khanum, he said to this *faqīr*: “You go and convey word of our greetings to him.”

I said to myself: “It is not appropriate to go without a change of clothes,” and I went to the home of one of my relatives. I donned the dirty and ragged garments of a servant, put on the tattered covering of a slave with a fillet that fit upon the head just above the brow, grabbed a broken staff, and determined to test my disguise: “I will go to my house; if the people there do not recognize me, then my going is fortunate and blessed, and if they recognize me, then my going is outside the circle of reason and wisdom.”

When I returned to the house, everyone there exclaimed: “Who is this beggar that so brazenly enters this house?!” The servant girls grabbed some clubs, beat me around the head and face, and drove me from the house!

I returned and exclaimed: “Speak the truth, did you recognize me or not?!”

Now that they knew, they laughed so much that they rolled on the floor and asked: “What are these coverings for?”

⁵⁵⁰ The district of Kahdistan is located roughly ten miles directly east of Herat proper; there is a small village there today. The *Darvāzah-yi Khūsh* is located in the center of Herat’s eastern wall. See: Allen, p. 13.

I replied: “It is best you do not know.” With that I ventured to Kahdistan and sat down near the palace of Amīr Yādgār Kūkaltāsh.

Amīr Yādgār’s gaze fell upon me when it was time for supper. He said: “Send something to this beggar.”

They placed a piece of meat on a plate and brought it to me; I recognized the man who had brought me the food and asked him: “Do you know me?”

He responded: “Allāh! Mullā, what state is this?!”

I said, “Quietly and slowly tell the Mīr that someone has come and brought word of his kin.” They cleared the tent and brought this *faqīr* inside. Amīr Yādgār entered and saw me; he smiled greatly then came to tears and inquired as to the state of his family. I spoke in great detail.

He expressed his thanks to God and said, “O, Mavlānā, our cup [285] is floating upon the water. I do not know when our end will be. The Baygum remembers you well and inquires about you. Moreover, I have learned that she wants to move her treasure out from under the Uzbeks, as well as that girl who is the intended⁵⁵¹ of our Sulṭān [Muḥammad] Valī, whom she conceals in a corner for the fact that so many men have designs on her.”

*Her beauty is a garden full of fruit, and as delicate porcelain to the voluptuous –
O, God! Keep her in your shelter from the devastation of his violence.*

We were in the midst of this *tête-à-tête* when they announced: “Behold! The Baygum has come!”

⁵⁵¹ *Dastūzah* / دستوزه .

When she saw me in the tent, she smiled and said: “O, *Mullā*, where were you, and what news do you have from Kūkam [i.e., Amīr Shāh Valī Kūkaltāsh]?” She listened to a summary of their circumstances and became happy. She stood up, took my hand, and led me to the pavilion. Trunks in great magnitude were stacked high, and in a corner of the pavilion was seated a girl with the face of a fairy, such that the sun [and moon] would be rendered devoid of light by the radiance of such terrestrial beauty. The Baygum said: “You recognize that this girl is a servant of Sulṭān Valī, son of Kūkam; they will carry this girl off at any moment, placing such a sorrow upon my beleaguered heart that no physician or surgeon will be able to remedy it, and these trunks that you see are for the most part filled with treasures and jewels. God forbid⁵⁵² the khan or one of the Uzbeks learn what is in these trunks. What do you think about all of this?”

I said: “I will take these, with the assistance of Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn Muḥammad; my father has built a subterranean chamber⁵⁵³ in his home, and he has positioned its door such that only if they approached the house along the route of the water [286] would it be apparent.”

We were in the middle of this discussion when a house girl came in and said: “A beggar has arrived and says, ‘I have influence with the lady here.’”

I remarked: “I say, this is wondrous! He is Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn Muḥammad.” I asked the house girl, “That beggar, does he have a saffron colored beard?”

She replied: “Yes.”

I said: “Bring him in without delay!”

⁵⁵² معاذ الله.

⁵⁵³ سرداب ای; a grotto; a subterranean room or vault typically used for storage; a cellar, crypt, or tunnel.

When he entered the tent, Baygum was weakened by laughter and said: “O, thief,⁵⁵⁴ what happened to you that you do not come to our pavilion?”

He said: “O, Baygum, the reason is plain to see.” In any event, I told him my thoughts. He replied: “Well done! You are correct.” I instructed them to bring a piece of canvas and to sew satchels and bags.

Baygum said: “Allow no one near this pavilion,” and opened the top of one of the trunks. [Forty small boxes were removed, each full of jewels, which I placed in the satchels and bags.

They opened the clothing trunk] and removed a garment; it was studded from top to bottom with gemstones. Mīr Yādgar said: “This garment cost thirty-thousand *tangah*.” I got out of my own clothes and put that garment on; I cinched the hem of it to my waist, and then tied a satchel of jewels to my waist above that. I also had an old book satchel⁵⁵⁵ that, having filled with a gold-embroidered clothing and golden trinkets from among the bracelets, anklets, rings and earrings, I stuffed under my arm. I wrapped my left arm in canvas from my wrist to my underarm, stuffing jewels in all of the folds. Tying a dirty kerchief around my head, I slid it down around my neck and made it a sling for my arm, and filled what room there was with jewels. I donned my old clothing over all of this. Ghiyās al-Dīn Muḥammad made up in this manner also, except [287] he did not make a sling.

We passed by the *Āb-i Kahdistan*; I was groaning while Ghiyās al-Dīn Muḥammad was saying to the Uzbeks: “For God’s sake, have mercy upon this broken *faqīr*! He is a *hājji* and *sayyid*, and his hand is shattered!” The Uzbeks gave us money

⁵⁵⁴ *Sāriq* / سارق.

⁵⁵⁵ *Juzvadān* / جزودان.

and *tangah*. Night and day we were occupied in this manner; after seven days the task was completed. On the eighth day when we went we saw Amīr Yādgār; he had an filthy headdress upon his head and wore an unsown garment in tatters and rags and some outlandish robe over that, and Ghiyās al-Dīn Muḥammad said: “The heavens have struck!”

We went over to him and inquired into his state, and he said:

*“Do not inquire from me as to the circumstances in that house –
Look to the blood on the threshold and do not ask!
O, dear ones!
What shall I say that is better than my silence? –
The tongue in the mouth is the sentinel of the head!”*

The Baygum has done a shameful thing, such that if they were to sift this calamitous world through the sieve of annihilation they would not find a remedy for it! It occurred to her to sift the seeds of the sunflower, shelled in the mortar of love by the pestle of desire, through the sieve of pleasure. Whores, during intercourse, make a movement which their “associates” explain as “the sieve”. The Baygum imitated them, and the khan replied to her: “Am I fucking you or are you fucking me?” He called her a whore, left her, and did not return. What’s more, an Uzbek seized the intended of Sulṭān Valī, and she was brought to the city along with her mother.

I exclaimed: “May God destroy the Baygum’s womb! What a loathsome act this is that she has done!”

Mīr Yādgār said: “*Makhādīm*, why [288] are you standing around? Go and conceal yourselves in some corner!” We returned despondent, came before Amīr Shāh Valī, and explained the situation. It was Judgment Day!

With chests torn and eyes full of blood --- we went out from this saray.

After two days I went before Amīr Shāh Valī and I saw Sultān Valī, his collar torn, a knife in his hand, weeping to such an extent that his eyes had swollen. When he saw me he cried out: “*Makhdūm*, absolve me, for I am taking my life!”

“For me, [it is better] to die one-hundred times than to live one moment without her! I am powerless to stop the departure of Māhchūchūk.”

I said: “O, child, aside from patience and forbearance there is no remedy. Should Ghiyās al-Dīn Muḥammad turn-up, we’ll consider what is advisable with him.” The next day I saw Ghiyās al-Dīn Muḥammad at the market; I recounted this story for him and asked: “What do you think?”

He replied: “I heard talk that Ḥusayn Qunkrāt has taken Māhchūchūk, and she is on the outskirts of Dīnārān. Her mother’s foot was broken when, while on the road to Kahdistan, she fell from her horse. That girl, having grabbed a knife, screamed ‘If anyone comes near me, I’ll kill them and myself!’ I have devised a plan to rescue that girl. Perhaps a favorable destiny will come of it.”⁵⁵⁶

*Whatever endeavor it is, I will pursue it –
This is destined to be, and one cannot change fate.*

He [Ghiyās al-Dīn Muḥammad] proclaimed: “*Time is a sword that cuts!*”⁵⁵⁷ Now is not the time to delay!” We set off in the direction of the *Darvāzah-yi Malik*. Outside the *darvāzah* some people had brought grapes by camel to sell [289]; he bought two baskets of grapes, tied one to my back and one to his back, and we set off in the direction of the

⁵⁵⁶ This last sentence might also be read, “Perhaps apt praise will come,” “Perhaps a favorable outcome is ordained,” etc. The Persian reads, شاید که موافق تقدیر آید; see *BV*, Vol. II, p. 288.

⁵⁵⁷ Ar.: الوقت سيف قاطع.

outskirts of Dīnārān. We arrived at the door of an estate and a group of Uzbeks were coming and going. We inquired and they replied: “This is the estate of Amīr Ḥusayn Qungrāt.” We entered into the courtyard and saw a man seated upon the terrace, and before him stood fifty subordinate Uzbeks. In the front of the portico was a room, and in that room there was a woman, reclined and whimpering. Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn Muḥammad and I placed the baskets of grapes on the ground before that Uzbek, ran to the room and fell at the feet of that woman: “O, Baygum, our benefactor, what sort of state and condition is this? O, would to God that our eyes go blind rather than see you in such a state!”

Amīr Ḥusayn asked: “Who are you people?”

We replied: “We are the ploughmen of this Baygum. She has a garden in Ghūslān to which, with regard to excellence and beauty, there is neither equal nor comparison in all of Khurasan. She has roughly five-hundred maunds of grapes, and those grapes are all currently going to rot.”

Amīr Ḥusayn said: “Don’t be troubled, for that garden now belongs to us, and you are also connected to us. I will protect and support you. Make the grapes from that garden into wine for us.” We noticed the Baygum regarded us strangely and knew that we had come with a particular purpose.

This *faqīr* came out of the room, distributed one basket of grapes to the Uzbeks, and brought the other basket of grapes to the room and said: “You all keep these grapes until tomorrow when we bring [more] grapes.” [290] Māhchūchūk was wailing in the corner of the room. I said: “Get up and get in this basket! What is the point in crying? Sultān *Valī* has perhaps killed himself.” She got into the basket and I tossed some vines over her.

Ghiyās al-Dīn Muḥammad said: “Give me this basket, for you do not have the strength to lift it, and take the empty basket upon your back.” We did such, and from the midst of the Uzbeks we made our exit. It was the time of evening prayer when we came to Amīr Shāh Valī. We saw Sulṭān Valī, wailing uncontrollably, his collar torn, his chest lacerated.

I moved nearer to him and spoke:

*Glad tidings, O, Heart, for one with a breath like the Messiah is coming,
from whose fragrant words the scent of someone is coming.*

I said: “Do not grieve, for your desire and wish has come to pass!” Ghiyās al-Dīn Muḥammad placed the basket on the ground. Māhchūchūk, like the sun when it emerges from behind a cloud, came out of the basket, and a great exclamation and uproar arose from those assembled.

*How sweet it is when after long anticipation,
one who hopes achieves his hope.*

The wife of Amīr Shāh Valī had an amber necklace, which was unlike any in Khurasan; this she removed from her neck and gave to Ghiyās al-Dīn Muḥammad. The daughters of Amīr Shāh Valī gave of their own rings and earrings to this *faqīr*. After all of this, I remarked to Ghiyās al-Dīn Muḥammad: “I do not think it prudent that we be in this city with such appurtenances and accessories.” We have built such a fire that, since the day that fire pushed forth from stone and iron – *So it shall be!*⁵⁵⁸ – none has shone nor blazed with such intensity. Let us pack-up our loads and treasures, and send our wives and children to the village of Ubeh.”

⁵⁵⁸ Qur’ān: Sūrat 3, Āyat 47; Sūrat al-Imrān. Boldyrev cites a number of other passages in the Qur’ān which employ the same phrase, كُنْ فَيَكُونُ, which expresses creation through the will of God.

He replied: “A splendid thought [291] has come to your mind!”

[*Misra*]

What for you was on the tongue was for me in the heart.

Immediately we came to our estate and brought the buried treasure that was in the guest house and added it to that of Khadījah Baygum in the underground chamber. Then Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn Muḥammad, having borrowed some small horses, loaded-up his mother and sisters, his kin and near relations from among his aunts, uncles, and cousins – all of them – and pointed them in the direction of Ubeh. I dragged the clothing and household possessions to the homes of [my] kinsmen. Mavlānā Amānī, who was among the celebrated poets of Khurasan, had a roasted pea shop in *Pā-yi Hisar*, and above the shop he had built a chamber which was a gathering place for poets and learned men.

I went there and said: “Reserve the upper chamber for this wretched soul for several days, and roll out the rug for guests in the front room of the shop.” Straightaway, he took the key to the upper chamber out of his turban and gave it to me. I went there, shut the door to the room behind me, and sat by the window. It was nearly the time of midday prayer when a certain individual, with a ragged *tāqiya-i tūpī* upon his head, wearing an old, filthy, short knee-length garment, and bare feet, passed by the door of the shop. It occurred to me that he resembled Amīr Yādgar [Kūkaltāsh], and I yelled down to Mavlānā Amānī, telling him: “A man of this description just passed the door of the shop! Run after him and see who he is!”

He went and returned weeping, saying: “It was Mīr Yādgar!”

I caught up to him; he embraced me and wept uncontrollably. I gave him my over cover, shoes, and another garment. As I began to weep, he [Amānī] said: “O, Mavlānā

Vāšifi, see the treachery and viciousness of the world! Last year when you were in the fort at Nirahtū and I had come there, he had one-thousand armed and ready *nūkars*, and he raised the head of pride and neck of arrogance to the pinnacle of [292] the heavens. One-thousand pair of oxen tilled for him, and he made the verdant meadow of the firmament a humble field among his holdings. Now look – what have his deeds come to? Where has his importance ended?!”

*This world of ruin is the same mansion –
which has seen the palace of Afrāsiyāb
This far off desert is the same mansion –
wherein the army of Salm and Tūr was lost.⁵⁵⁹*

It was mid-morning the next day when a clamour and tumult arose from *Pā-yi Hisar*; I saw a man upon a mixed-breed horse, his two hands bound before him and a man seated close behind him. When I got a good look I saw that it was Amīr Shāh Valī, together with roughly three-hundred Uzbek riders. Mavlānā Amānī followed them, and after some time he came back, quite transformed, and said: “A strange event has occurred; Amīr Shāh Valī had an unwed girl, extremely beautiful and elegant. However, she had a beloved, and she had brought to the room at night. Amīr Shāh Valī, having become aware of this, commanded thusly: they made a flat-iron red-hot in a fire, and they pressed the collar of her red velvet garment. That unwed girl ran outside and screamed:

⁵⁵⁹ Reference is here being made to pre-Islamic stories such as those found in the *Avesta* and the *Khvadāynāmak*, as well as in Firdawsī’s *Shāhnāmah: Afrāsiyāb*, identified as Frangrasiyan the Turanian in the *Avesta* and *Frāsiyāb* in Pahlavi, is the archetypal king of Turan, constantly warring with his Iranian counterparts. In the *Shāhnāmah* he is cast as a Turk, and many Turkic peoples have claimed him as their legendary progenitor. In the *Shāhnāmah* Salm and Tūr were the first and second sons of the legendary king of the world, Farīdūn, respectively, while Farīdūn’s third son was called Iraj. Salm and Tūr, envious their younger brother and the kingdom gifted to him by their father, plotted against and slew Iraj. This fratricide was later avenged by Iraj’s own grandson, Manūchihir, who in-turn murdered both of his great-uncles; see S. M. Stern, “*Afrāsiyāb*,” *EP²*, Vol. I (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960); D. Davis, “*Tūrān*,” *EP²*, Vol. I (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960); A. Shapur Shahbazi, “*Iraj*,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Online Edition, 15 December 2004, available at www.iranicaonline.org/articles/iraj.

‘Behold! Amīr Shāh Valī Kūkaltāsh is in this estate!’ Amīr Ūrūs, the brother of Amīr Jān Vafā,⁵⁶⁰ was passing by, seized Amīr Shāh Valī and his wife while the others escaped. They asked Amīr Shāh Valī: ‘Where are the possessions of Khadījah Baygum?’ He replied: ‘I’ll bring you to the treasure,’ and he brought those Uzbeks to your home, and I followed them. Then, they busted down the door of the house’s embankment with battle-axes and [293] they went inside. They scoured the guest house, found nothing, and tortured *Amīr Shāh Valī*. He cried: ‘Torturing me is of no use unless you find *Mavlānā Vāṣiftī*!’ And now, house-to-house and street-to-street they are searching for you! What are we going to do?!”

I said: “Everyone in this city knows of our relationship and friendship. My being here, or perhaps even my being in this city, is imprudent. I think I ought to head to Kusu; I have friends there who can look out for me.” I waited until the time of evening prayers. I bid farewell to Mavlānā Amānī, wished him well, and said:

*We left, and carried your mark, a memory –
May you also preserve our memory in your heart.*

As I set out on the road, I was reminded of the hadith of the prophet, may Allāh honor him and grant him peace:⁵⁶¹ *mind your path, your fortune, and your faith.*⁵⁶² I was

⁵⁶⁰ Amīr Jān Vafā, also referred to as Jān Wafā Bī, Jān Wafā Mīrzā, etc., in various sources, served as the governor of Samarqand following the Abu'l-Khayrid conquest and escaped following Bābur’s reconquest of that city. According to Ḥaydar Dughlāt, it was Amīr Jān Vafā who advised his father, Muḥammad Ḥusayn Kūrkān, to leave Khvarazm ahead of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān’s plan to eliminate the Moghul chieftains and who, for his service to Muḥammad Shībānī Khān, received one of the daughters of Muḥammad Ḥusayn Kūrkān as a bride for his own son, Amīr Yār. Amīr Jān Vafā was later appointed *dārūgha*, i.e. governor, of Herat upon the Uzbek conquest of the city. Jān Vafā served as one of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān’s wing-commanders at Marv in 1510, and was executed following the Ṣafavid victory; see *BN*, pp. 98-99; R. G. Mukhminova and A. Mukhtarov, “The khanate (emirate) of Bukhara,” *History of Civilizations of Central Asia: Volume V: Development in contrast: from the sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth century* (Paris: UNESCO, 2003), p. 36; *TR*, pp. 191-193; Sarwar, pp. 61-62.

⁵⁶¹ Ar.: *صلى الله عليه وسلم*.

⁵⁶² Ar.: *استر ذهابك و ذهبك و مذهبك*.

mistaken when I told Mavlānā Amānī that I was going to Kusu. There was no doubt that if, God forbid,⁵⁶³ they grabbed him and tortured him a little, he would break and throw me to the hands of the Uzbeks. I was considering where I should go when suddenly I heard a voice and a man was asking: “O, Ḥasan, tell Naṣrallāh, we are going to Sistan. If you are going, you will find us at the head of the *Pul-i Mālān* the day after tomorrow.” I thought to myself: “This was a voice from Heaven,”⁵⁶⁴ and my mind settled on going to Sistan. Among the interesting things I heard in Sabzivar was that, having taken Mavlānā Amānī into custody, they plundered his home, and he conducted the Uzbeks to Kusu [and not having found me, they tortured him greatly]. Allāh knows best!⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁶³ Ar.: نعوذ بالله; this phrase may be alternatively rendered as “let us fly to God”, or “we seek refuge in God,” “God protect us”, etc., but God forbid seems to fit better in this instance; see Steingass, p. 1412.

⁵⁶⁴ Ar.: لسان الغيب; also translated as “revelation” or “oracle”; see Steingass, p. 1121.

⁵⁶⁵ Ar.: الله تعالى أعلم.

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- **Adjunct Lecturer in Religious Studies**
Spring 2011, Spring 2013, St. John Fisher College, Rochester, NY:
 - Course: *Introduction to Islam*: Examined the evolution of Islam from its beginnings in Arabia in the seventh century C.E. through the Umayyad and 'Abbasid caliphates to the present day. Students became acquainted with the religious and cultural environment out of which Islam emerged and learned about both the spread of Islam and various theological and social developments which have occurred within the Islamic world. Overall, this course aimed to engender within students a respect for and basic understanding of the religion of Islam and its adherents.
- **Adjunct Lecturer in Religious Studies**
Fall 2012, St. John Fisher College, Rochester, NY:
 - Course: *What Is Religion?*: Introduced students to religious studies and its auxiliary disciplines and explored the various aspects of religion in the human experience. This course considered a variety topics, including the nature and types of religious experience; religious texts and mythology; and religious ritual, doctrine, ethics, social organization, and development. Examples from various world religions

were routinely utilized in order to illustrate these dimensions of the sacred.

- **Adjunct Lecturer in Religious Studies**

- **Spring 2012, St. John Fisher College, Rochester, NY:**

- Course: *Studies in the Qur'ān*: familiarized students with the Qur'an, focusing on its major themes. Topics considered include God and the nature of divinity; creation and the role of men and women; the Prophet Muhammad and other prophets; the physical world and the afterlife; concepts of good and evil, etc., as well as the historical context in which the Qur'an and Islam emerged. Through their study of the Qur'an students begin to understand the religion of Islam and the role that the Qur'an continues to play in the daily lives Muslims throughout the world.

- **Adjunct Lecturer in Peace and Social Justice Studies**

- **Spring 2012-Spring 2013, St. John Fisher College, Rochester, NY:**

- Course: *Global Issues*: explored current global issues, from conflict to the production, trafficking and abuse of illegal narcotics, terrorism, corruption, human rights, ethnicity/race and gender issues, poverty and economic development from an international perspective. Many regions of the globe grappling with similar problems were considered and compared in order to gain a more complete picture of the issues facing humanity in the early 21st century.

- **Adjunct Lecturer in Peace and Social Justice Studies**

- **Fall 2011, St. John Fisher College, Rochester, NY:**

- Course: *Global Issues – Understanding Afghanistan*: this course examined many of the issues confronting the country of Afghanistan, from chronic and endemic war to the drug trade and drug abuse, unemployment, poverty and terrorism. Students first became familiar with the basics Afghanistan's history and that of surrounding regions before considering current issues in order to develop a better appreciation for the origins of the problems facing the country today.

- **Adjunct Lecturer in Peace and Social Justice Studies**

- **Spring 2011, St. John Fisher College, Rochester, NY:**

- Course: *Global Issues – Introduction to Iran*: introduced students to the culture and history of Iran (Persia) and its people(s), and provided a forum in which students could objectively consider Iran's social, economic and political roles in World History and current events. Students learned that Iran has been and is today confronted by with many of the same issues as most other countries throughout the world, from drug abuse and unemployment to social inequality, separatist movements and education.

- **Adjunct Lecturer in History**
Spring 2009, St. John Fisher College, Rochester, NY:
 - Course: *Caliphs, Khans, and Communists*: an introduction to the region of Central Asia – the modern states of Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, as well as portions of Afghanistan and Iran. This survey familiarized students with the geography of the region and acquainted them with important figures and events in the history of Central Asia.
- **Adjunct Lecturer in Sociology and Anthropology**
Spring 2013, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY:
 - Course: *Iran: Past and Present*: Familiarized students with the country of Iran, its people and culture, history, and issues confronting the country in the twenty-first century. Topics covered included the ancient Persian kingdoms, the Islamic conquest and conversion of Persia and the Perso-Islamic Renaissance, the era of Turko-Mongolian ascendancy, the reassertion of Persian dynasties and Persia's international relations in the early modern and modern eras, and the formation of the modern nation-state of Iran in the twentieth century, as well as ongoing events and developments in Iran, from the nuclear crisis to the Green movement.
- **Adjunct Lecturer in History**
Spring 2012, Nazareth College, Rochester, NY:
 - Course: *The History of Afghanistan*: this course introduced students to the major figures, events and trends in the history of Afghanistan, focusing heavily on the 18th to the late 20th century and present day. Students also became acquainted with the geography and diverse ethno-linguistic communities of Afghanistan and surrounding regions.
- **Adjunct Lecturer in History**
Spring 2011, Nazareth College, Rochester, NY:
 - Course: *Introduction to Central Asian History*: introduced students to Central Asia as a discrete topic of study. The course began with an introduction to the geography of the region and went on to examine Central Asia's social, economic and political roles in relation to other historical and current centers of population and power, and concluded with the emergence of ethnic and national consciousness among various Central Asian peoples in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Students became familiar with important figures and events in the history of Central Asia from the pre-Islamic era through the Mongol and Russian conquests to the establishment of the USSR and its dissolution in the late twentieth century.

- **Adjunct Lecturer in History**
Summer / Fall 2010, 2011, Brockport College (SUNY), Brockport, NY:
 - Course: *Modern World*: familiarized students with major historical themes and trends from the fifteenth century to the present which have shaped the development of the modern world. Major topics included the expansion of global empires and conflict, industrialization and modernization, and global commerce not only with regard to Western powers, but to other regions of the world as well – namely the Middle East, Latin America, Asia, and Africa.
- **Lecturer in History**
Fall 2008, Wells College, Aurora, NY:
 - Course: *History of Islam in Central Asia*: this course is essentially the same as those listed above, *Introduction to the History of Central Asia* and *Caliphs, Khans, and Communists*, the main difference being that here more emphasis is placed on the role of Islam in the history of Central Asia.
- **Adjunct Lecturer, CEUS Teaching Semester,**
Spring 2006, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN:
 - Course: *Communists, Conquerors, and Presidents for Life*: introductory course on the history of Central Asian and Iran which covered from the Persian Achaemenid era to the Russian conquest of Central Asia in the nineteenth century.
- **Head Librarian, Denis Sinor Institute for Inner Asian Studies Library,**
CEUS,
July 2006 – June 2008, Bloomington, IN:
 - Duties included acquiring and cataloging relevant scholarly literature, maintaining the library collection consisting of publications written in English, French, Persian, Russian, Uzbek, etc., and assisting library patrons in their research and writing.
- **Librarian, Denis Sinor Institute for Inner Asian Studies Library,**
CEUS,
November 2003 – July 2006, Bloomington, IN
- **Research Assistant to Dr. Christopher Atwood,**
Spring 2006 – Spring 2007, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN:
 - Translated portions of Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* from Persian/Farsi to English in support of the forthcoming volume *The Campaigns of Chinggis Khan and the Veritable Records of the early Mongol Emperors*.

Relevant Languages:

- Persian / Farsi – Advanced
- Uzbek – Advanced
- Azerbaijani – Intermediate
- Italian – Intermediate
- Spanish – Intermediate
- Russian – Research Language
- French – Research Language
- Arabic – Research Language

Honors and Awards:

- Graduate Assistantship, CEUS, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, 2003 – 2008
- Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowship for Azerbaijani, Bloomington, IN, Summer 2004
- Phi Alpha Theta, National History Honor Society, Inducted 2001
- Academic Fellowship, SUNY Brockport, Brockport, NY, 2000 – 2002

Presentations and Works:

- “The Historical Image of Tīmūr as Derived from the Narrative of Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo,” Twelfth Annual Central Eurasian Studies Conference, Indiana University, April 9, 2005.
- Draft translation of portions of Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh* pertaining to the history of Chinggis Khān in support of the forthcoming volume “The Campaigns of Chinggis Khan and the Veritable Records of the Early Mongol Emperors.”
- “The *Badā‘i‘ al-vaqā‘i‘* of Zayn al-Dīn Mahmūd Vāsifī – A Preliminary Analysis,” Fourteenth Annual Central Eurasian Studies Conference, Indiana University, April 1, 2007.
- “Shī‘a Muslim Enslavement in 19th Century Bukhara,” Sixteenth Annual Central Eurasian Studies Conference, Indiana University, February 28, 2009.
- “Understanding Afghanistan,” a presentation given at the Brighton Public Library in Rochester, New York.

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