

1. The Seat of Government: Herat during the Timurid Period

In the fifteenth century Khurāsān was located in the center of the vast empire conquered by Tīmūr Lang between 1366 and 1401. Tīmūr Lang's successors settled in the city of Herat, which henceforth served as the capital (*dār al-salṭana*) of the empire, while Samarqand and Shīrāz functioned as important regional centers.¹ In 1414 the Timurid ruler Shāh Rukh (r. 811–850/1409–1447) commissioned a local author to write a geographical account of the region in Persian. This author, to become known by the title of Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, underlined the mighty proportions of Khurāsān, which extended from Biṣṭām in the west to Ghaznī in the east, and from Sijistān [Sīstān] in the south to the Oxus [Āb-i Āmūya] in the north.² A native of Khvāf in Khurāsān, Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū emphasized the centrality of his province and its unique location. Placed in the middle of the fourth clime and comprising both warm and cold zones, it was blessed with a uniquely balanced and healthy climate and protected from the outbreak of epidemics. Within this setting, Abrū ascribed a pivotal role to the city of Herat, the status of which was further enhanced by the benign effects of Shāh Rukh's rule: "Under the auspices of the [present] august and fortunate reign the affairs of Khurāsān, and Herat in particular, have been blessed with an utmost degree of splendor and order."³

The situation in Herat and its position within Khurāsān during Timurid times provides the focus of this chapter. Particular attention will be paid to the manner in which this space was structured and perceived by authors of the time. The rich material available for this period allows for a detailed account of the administrative divisions and economic setting. The administrative divisions around Herat displayed a high degree of constancy ever since they were recorded by the Kartid historiographer Saif al-Haravī in the early fourteenth century. This holds true in particular for the smaller units of administration which corresponded to segments of the irrigation system. Of course, the extent and number of requisite channels rose and fell along with political stability, or lack thereof. The irrigation system of Herat suffered massive destruction during the Mongol, Timurid and Safavid invasions but rebounded within decades. The internal makeup of the subdivisions grouped around the oasis proper was likewise characterized by great longevity. While the province of Herat expanded and shrank over time and was subject to different sets of rulers, the component subdivisions were hardly affected by these changes.⁴

Timurid authors particularly emphasized the economic activities in the region. Their descriptions of the rich ecological setting and the varieties of fine fruit it produces simultaneously suggest that this abundance is largely contingent on the benign policies of the Timurid overlords. Sensory experiences are part and parcel of this economic perspective. Statements concerning the great variety of local fruits like Herat's proverbial hundred kinds of grapes enhance the notion of a favored and temperate oasis.⁵ What is more, impressions of the sights, tastes and sounds characteristic of the region conveyed by some of the sources enrich the local texture with a sense of seasonal change, adding a tangible dimension to the physical outline of the terrain. Notions of space were also shaped by landmarks. These could be military strongholds enforcing royal claims to authority or religious institutions creating fields of spiritual authority. The interaction between nomadic conquerors and oasis towns produced an intermediate space: splendid residential gardens serving as seat of

¹ Krawulsky 1982: 14. In awarding a title to their capital, the Timurids followed well-established historical precedents. Since the later Abbasid period, Islamic metropolises were adorned with honorifics. Baghdad was known as *dār al-salām* or *dār al-khilāfa*. From the Ilkhanid period on, the term *dār al-salṭana* was associated with Tabrīz (Fragner 2006: 74–5). See also *Mukhtaṣar-i Mufīd* 4. Early Timurid sources referred to Herat as *dār al-mulk* (Roemer 1956: 77 (f. 103a), 92 (f. 131a), 116 (f. 161b), 123 (f. 168b)).

² Krawulsky 1982: 11; 1984: 17.

³ Krawulsky 1982: 14; 1984: 18.

⁴ Among the dependencies of Herat (*khiṭṭa-yi mahrūsa-yi Harāt*) Saif al-Haravī mentions Jurzivān [Gurzivān], Farāh, Garmsīr, Darra (Jaza in Isfizārī I: 462) and Qal'agāh in addition to the provinces listed by Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, but he omits Kurūkh, Bādghīs, Murghāb, Khvāf, Bākharz, and Jām (Saif al-Haravī 1943: 612). See also Isfizārī I: 462.

⁵ Krawulsky 1982: 18; 1984: 21; *Irshād al-zirā'a* 113–16.

government and the pastures necessary for gathering and maintaining troops represented vital nodes on the mental map of contemporaneous observers.

SOURCES ON TIMURID KHURĀSĀN

The following discussion relies in great part on the information furnished by Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū and Muʿīn al-Dīn Muḥammad Zamchī Isfizārī. These two authors represent different eras and are set apart in terms of literary temperament. Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū's career coincided with the reign of Shāh Rukh, and his geography mirrors the circumstances prevailing in and around Herat during the early Timurid period. The particular value of this work lies in the systematic treatment of Khurāsān and its component regions. In each entry, Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū consistently pursues a number of related topics. Beginning with a few geographic generalities, he goes on to list the constituent subdivisions and their location in relation to one another. In this manner, he sketches their boundaries and lays out a rough map of the region. The geographic aspects mentioned by Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū give a basic idea of the terrain and shed light on the economic setting. The mode and extent of cultivation as well as the number of settlements of a particular region are of primary concern and convey an impression of the relative wealth of the area discussed. In this context, he distinguishes between different types of cultivation – agriculture in open fields (*zirāʿat*) and intensive garden and orchard cultivation in walled plots of land (*bāghistān*),⁶ which in turn foster different settlement patterns – hamlets (*mazraʿa*) and villages (*qarya*).⁷ Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū also refers to other sources of wealth like iron and gold mines. The resulting picture is rounded off by information on the impact of the Mongol invasion and Timurid policies on the prosperity or decline of specific locations.

Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū's work begins with an outline of the basic facts concerning the province of Khurāsān: Its extent, its climatic properties, popular ideas of its genesis and etymology. He further quotes two poems which attest to the unique position of Khurāsān and enumerate its four major cities: Herat, Balkh, Nīshāpūr, and Marv.⁸ Among these four coordinates, Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū assigns a central role to Herat. He introduces his treatise on the constituent parts of Khurāsān with a description of this city and its dependencies (*tavābiʿ*). Taking the city of Herat as point of reference, his account moves from center to periphery. After describing the urban setting, he sketches the districts (*bulūk*) forming the oasis proper and the outlying provinces (*vilāyāt*) under the authority of Herat. The same sequence will be followed in the discussion below.

Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū's account of Herat is complemented by Isfizārī's *Rauẓāt al-jannāt fī auṣāf madīnat Harāt*. Writing at the time of Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā (r. 873–911/1469–1506), Isfizārī describes the region at a point when Timurid rule had reached the height of its grandeur. His vivid account of the delights of Herat and its environs is ornate where Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū is concise. It reads as sort of a travel guide, lavishing an abundance of details on the regions the author has visited himself. In this context he conveys a number of sensual impressions, including the taste of the locally produced melons and grapes, the beauties of the landscape, and the inaccessibility of local forts. More remote areas, by contrast, receive a more sparing treatment.

As the title suggests, Isfizārī's book is subdivided into 26 chapters entitled “gardens” (*rauza*), each of which consists of a certain number of meadows (*chaman*). The first five chapters are devoted to a detailed description of Herat and its environs. The remainder of the book is concerned with the historical events in the region since the Samanid period and pays particular attention to the circumstances in Herat during Kartid and Timurid times. In his description of Herat, Isfizārī proceeds in a similar fashion to Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū. He begins

⁶ Krawulsky 1984: 12 fn. 17; Subtelny 1993: 185, 192.

⁷ According to Petrushevsky, the term *qarya* stood for long-standing village communities with collective structures. The term *mazraʿa* (pl. *mazāriʿ*), by contrast, designated rural settlements devoid of such structures, which were possibly created by local rulers in order to reclaim wastelands. Krawulsky raises the possibility that the distinction between these two terms was determined by ecological factors and the agricultural setting. Villages (*qarya*) were characterized by a relatively high population density and intensive agriculture. Translated as “hamlet”, the term *mazraʿa* stands for settlements grouped around the villages in regions with less fertile soil (Krawulsky 1984: 11–14). See also Schwarz 2000: 32.

⁸ Krawulsky 1982: 11–13.

with the city of Herat and then offers a short overview of the districts (*bulūk*). In his subsequent discussion of the *vilāyāt* he projects an “inner” and an “outer” ring of provinces.⁹

In addition to the general data furnished by Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū and Isfizarī, there exists a detailed account of the irrigation system of the oasis of Herat. Written in the early 10th/16th century, Qāsim b. Yūsuf’s *Risāla-yi ʿarīq-i qismat-i āb-i qulb* is a tax register which considers the districts of Herat, their constituent villages, and the amount of water apportioned. This account shows that the division of water designed by the Timurid ruler Abū Saʿīd (r. 855–873/1451–1469) was based on a settlement made by the Kartid ruler Muʿizz al-Dīn Ḥusain (r. 732–772/1331–1370) as early as 738/1337–38. Apart from shedding light on the local patterns of settlement and irrigation, Qāsim b. Yūsuf’s work thus reflects the continuity of local administrative arrangements.¹⁰ Another important contribution by the same author is *Irshād al-zirāʿa*, a manual on agriculture.¹¹ The sacred space around Herat was documented by Aṣīl al-Dīn ʿAbdullāh Vāʾiẓ (d. 883/1478–79) during the reign of Abū Saʿīd. His *Maqṣad al-iqbāl sulṭānīya* commemorates 209 religious figures of the region.¹²

An important source for pre-Timurid times is Saif al-Haravī’s *Tārīkh-nāma-yi Harāt*. Completed in 1321, this book describes the situation in Herat subsequent to the Mongol conquest of the city and discusses the policies of the Kartid rulers (1245–1389).¹³ The *Mujmal-i faṣīḥī* by Faṣīḥ-i Khvāfī (d. 1442), which consists of short entries on military campaigns, dynastic matters and saints of the region, provides useful insights into the early Timurid period.¹⁴ Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū’s *Zubdat al-tavārikh* was elaborated on by ʿAbd al-Razzāq Samarqandī (d. 1482) in the late fifteenth century.¹⁵ Two important authorities on the conditions in Herat during Timurid and early Safavid times are Mīr Khvānd (1433/34–1498) and his grandson Ghiyāth al-Dīn Khvānd Amīr (1475–1535/36). Enjoying the patronage of the famous Timurid minister ʿAlī Shīr Navāʾī (844–906/1441–1501), Mīr Khvānd wrote the first six volumes of a universal history entitled *Rauzat al-ṣafā*, which covers the events up to 1469. A seventh volume concerning the reign of Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā and his sons up to 1522 was later appended by Khvānd Amīr.¹⁶ Khvānd Amīr, who witnessed the beginnings of Safavid domination in Herat and joined Mughal service in 1520, was a prolific writer. Two of his works are of particular relevance for the purposes of this chapter. Completed in 1499, his *Khulāṣat al-akhbār* provides information on the major buildings and important personages in and around town. Even more valuable is his *Tārīkh ḥabīb al-siyar*, which was written in honor of the Safavid official Karīm al-Dīn Ḥabībullāh in 1524 and deals with the events in Herat down to the early Safavid period.¹⁷

THE CITY OF HERAT

Timurid accounts of Herat cast the city as the focal point of a nested continuum of spheres. From this perspective, Khurāsān represents a uniquely favored spot within the seven regions of the world, known as climes (*iqḷīm*). Informed by the Greek concept of “klīma”, this world view divided the inhabited world into seven zones, among which the fourth and central region represented “moderation in all things”.¹⁸ According to Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, Herat was favored by a nearly perfect balance of natural factors owing to the fact that it was

⁹ The fourth “garden” deals with Harāt-Rūd, Shāfilān, Isfizar, Fūshanj, Kūsūya, Bādghīs, and Kurūkh. The fifth “garden” enumerates a number of “more distant” *vilāyāt*: Jām and Bākhraz are categorized as part of the western regions and are mentioned under the heading of Mashhad, whereas Ghūr and Gharjstān are mentioned under the heading of Quhistān and Qandahār.

¹⁰ *Qismat-i āb* 15. See also Allen 1981: 4.

¹¹ Jakobi 1992; Subtelny 1993.

¹² Saljūqī 1967, “Muqaddima,” pp. jīm, dāl, vāv.

¹³ Paul, “Herat V. Local Histories,” *E.Ir.* XII: 218.

¹⁴ Manz 2007: 64–7. See also Naṣrābādī, “Muqaddima,” *Mujmal-i faṣīḥī*, 1386/2007.

¹⁵ Manz 2007: 57–61; Szuppe, “Historiography v. Timurid Period,” *E.Ir.* XII: 358.

¹⁶ A. Beveridge—[Beatrice Forbes Manz], “Mīr Khvānd,” *E.I.*, 2 VII: 126–7.

¹⁷ H. Beveridge—J. T. P. de Bruijn, “Khwandamir,” *E.I.*, 2 IV: 1020–22; Quinn 1996: 3–6.

¹⁸ Miquel, “Ikḷīm,” *E.I.* 2 III: 1076–7. For a general discussion of the concept of climes, see Naṭanzī 247–8.

located “in the middle of the fourth clime... It enjoys the best weather of all climes. In Khurāsān, cholera and plague rarely occur. It has both warm and cold regions but neither [temperature] reaches extremes. It comprises mountains and plains, but mountains predominate.”¹⁹

Within this realm, a central position is accorded to Herat. This notion was by no means a purely Timurid phenomenon. The often-quoted poem characterizing the world as the sea, Khurāsān as a shell and Herat as the pearl in its midst dates back to Kartid times. Another popular image employed by foreign invaders and locals alike alluded to the world as a body, identifying Khurāsān as its breast, and Herat as the heart which endowed the entire being with spiritual life. When Tīmūr Lang crossed the Oxus in 1381, he referred to Khurāsān as the “breast” of the world.²⁰ To illustrate the high rank Herat enjoyed in their time, Isfīzārī and Khvānd Amīr quoted a poem by the early Timurid author Tāj-i Salmānī:

Heraut is the eye—the lamp, which gives light to all other cities,
Heraut is the soul, of which this world is but the body,
and if Khorassaun be the bosom of the world,
Heraut is allowed to be the heart.²¹

In the construction of the local space different emphases may be discerned. Within the pull generated by the city of Herat, Isfīzārī focuses on the Friday Mosques (*masjid-i jāmi*) within and without the city as points of gravity. In his opinion, the greatness of the Timurid capital is embodied by these religious institutions and their beneficial impact on the spiritual knowledge and religious awareness (*‘ilm va intibāh*) of the local population. The centrality of Herat’s Friday Mosque in Isfīzārī’s universe is reflected by the fact that he devotes an entire chapter to it at the beginning of his book. The description of this sacred building comes in the third place, following immediately upon a treatise on Herat’s greatest personage, the poet Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 898/1492), and the requisite eulogy of the royal family and their entourage. In Isfīzārī’s opinion, Jāmī personifies the spiritual excellence fostered by the religious environment of Herat and in turn enhances its importance. Apart from extolling the insights emanating from Jāmī’s rich work, he draws attention to his reputation as a Sufī master, which radiates to the remotest corners of the world and attracts to Herat disciples from distant places:

His attainments as a saint (*vilāyatī*) even caused the rebellious within the realms of knowledge and gnosis hailing from the extreme end of India (*Hind*) to the furthest limits of Anatolia (*Rūm*) and Palestine, from the frontiers of China (*sarḥadd-i Khatā va Chīn*) and Indochina (*Māchīn*) to the territories of Bulgaria (*Bulghār*) and *Saqsin*²² to bow their foreheads in devotion.²³

Hāfiz-i Abrū, on his part, praises Shāh Rukh for the construction of a *khānaqāh* and a *madrasa* next to the citadel, which have turned the Timurid capital into “the seat of rulers, the sunrise of the knowledgeable, the

¹⁹ Krawulsky 1984: 17.

²⁰ When Tīmūr Lang reached Andkhūd, the local saint Bābā Sangū threw the breast piece of a slaughtered animal at him. Tīmūr Lang took this as an auspicious sign and exclaimed, “God will bestow Khurāsān on me, which is called the breast of the world!” (Mīr Khvānd VI: 114–15; HS III: 543; see also Algar, “Bābā Sankū,” *E.Ir.* III: 295; Nagel 1993: 158; Subtelny 2007: 116). Jāmī’s nephew Maulānā ‘Abdullāh Hātifī Haravī (d. 927/1520–21) has rendered this incident in the following manner:
Nakhustīn zi Sangū-yi yazdān parast kilīd-i khurāsānī āmad ba dast;
ba tuhfa yak sīna-yi gūsfand firistādāsh īn wāqif-i arjumand;
shah az sīna-yi gūsh t īn fāl zad ki murgh-i safar sū-yi mā bāl zad;
Khurāsān zi rū-yi zamīn sīna ast, bar ān zi āsmān nām-i dīrīna ast;
ba mā dādāsh īnak khudā-yi jahān, nigāranda-yi āshkār u pinhān.
(Matīn-i Andkhūy 1999: 23).

²¹ *Harāt chashm u chirāgh-i jāmi‘-i buldān ast; jahān tanī ast, ba-nisbat Harāt chūn jān ast; shuda-ast sīna-yi rū-yi zamīn Khurāsān, līk Harāt az rah-i mā‘nī dil-i Khurāsān ast* (Isfīzārī I: 21). I have followed Price’s translation of the same verse quoted in Khvānd Amīr’s *Khulāṣat al-akhbār* (1821 III: 641). Tāj-i Salmānī joined Tīmūr’s court in Samarqand in 800 (24 September 1397–12 September 1398). In 1410, he was part of Shāh Rukh’s entourage (Roemer 1956: 12). See also Hinz 1936: 367–73; Storey 1953: 1275–6; Woods 1987: 88.

²² A city located in Western Eurasia, most probably in the lower Volga basin (V.F. Büchner-[P.B. Golden], “Saksīn,” *E.I.*, 2 VIII: 896–7).

²³ Isfīzārī I: 26–7.

qibla of the righteous, the *ka'ba* of the noble and the learned, the halting-place of the just and the pious, the refuge of ascetics and devotees, the residence of the poles (*aqṭāb*) and the pillars (*autād*) [of sainthood]”.²⁴ Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū and Isfizārī also pay homage to the worldly aspects of Timurid power and give detailed accounts of the defensive works and commercial quarters of the city as reflections of the strength of their Timurid overlords. In these descriptions, the Friday Mosque, the citadel, the city's fortifications and the market place constitute focal points within the urban space.²⁵

THE FRIDAY MOSQUE (MASJID-I JĀMI')

Isfizārī describes the Friday Mosque as a building of mighty proportions mirroring the beauty of the world. Moreover, the intense devotion of the worshippers gathered there provides a linkage with the unseen:

Its five gates rival the seven blue skies, its four halls (*suffa*) resemble the eight gardens of Paradise. The reach (lit. *kamand*, “lasso”) of imagination falls short of capturing the height of the domed sanctuary (*maqṣūra*); its Saturn-approaching *ivān* gives shadow to heaven and earth alike, the humming of those withdrawing for *dhikr* in its *ka'ba*-like spaces make the pillars of heaven vibrate, the murmur of rosaries and the call to prayer uttered in its sky-high cupola (*tāq*) resound in the ears of the worshippers of the heavenly sphere.²⁶

Isfizārī attributes the construction of the Friday Mosque to the Ghurid ruler Sulṭān Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad (r. 558–599/1163–1203) in 597/1200–1201.²⁷ Yet later in his work he mentions that the original building was destroyed by an earthquake as early as Jumādā I 495/February 1102, thus acknowledging its existence in previous times.²⁸ Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū traces the foundation of the Masjid-i Jāmi' to a slightly earlier period than Isfizārī and ascribes its construction to the *vazīr* of the Khvarazmian ruler 'Alā al-Dīn Tekish (r. 567–596/1172–1200).²⁹

The fate of the Friday Mosque in subsequent times mirrors the ebb and flow of destruction and construction Herat and its environs experienced over time. After being destroyed by the Mongols, the mosque was repaired twice during the Kartid era. When Malik Ghiyāth al-Dīn I (r. 707–729/1308–1328/29) set out to restore the building in 720/1320–21 for the first time since the Ghurid era,³⁰ no trace remained of its east and south halls (*suffa*), its vaults and columns. Apart from rebuilding the mosque “better and stronger than before”, Malik Ghiyāth al-Dīn ordered a college, the Madrasa-yi Ghiyāthīya, to be constructed along its northern side.³¹ His successor Malik Mu'izz al-Dīn Ḥusain Kart repaired the damages a severe earthquake had inflicted on the *maqṣūra* of the Friday mosque in 765/1364.³²

²⁴ Krawulsky 1982: 17; 1984: 20–1.

²⁵ The Chinese envoy Ch'en Ch'eng, who visited Herat in late 1414, likewise mentions the residence of the ruler, the market place, and a *madrasa* as vital points of interest in the Timurid capital (Richtsfeld 1985; Rossabi 1983). The fact that Ch'en locates a big wok-like copper vessel in the courtyard of the *madrasa* leads Hecker to conclude that his description in fact intended the Friday mosque (Hecker 1993: 90).

²⁶ Isfizārī I: 31. Isfizārī's fondness for images linking the grand Herati architecture, both sacred and profane, to cosmological phenomena fits into literary molds of the time. Around 1560, 'Abdī Bēg Shīrāzī resorted to similar hyperbole in his celebration of Shāh Ṭahmāsp's palace complex of Sa'adatābād near Qazvīn (Losensky 2003: 11).

²⁷ Isfizārī I: 32–33; *Qismat-i āb* 7. See also Khvānd Amīr's *Khulāṣat al-akhbār* as quoted in Price 1821 III: 642.

²⁸ According to Isfizārī, the earthquake hit on the night from Thursday to Friday, 8 Jumādā I 495/28 February 1102. It destroyed the western section of the Friday mosque and a great part of the northern and southern sections. Fortunately, this earthquake occurred at a time of night when there were few worshippers at the mosque, otherwise it would have cost many lives. In gratitude for God's mercy, the population of Herat began to rebuild the mosque on the next day (Isfizārī II: 55). Isfizārī's description of the earthquake is probably based on the account of 'Abd al-Raḥmān Fāmī Haravī (1079–1152), who apparently witnessed this event (Fāmī 135). Fāmī also provides us with an eyewitness account of the inscription the Sīmjurīd Amīr Abū al-Ḥasan (d. 378/989) affixed to the *mihrāb* of the Masjid-i Jāmi' during one of his tenures as governor of Khurāsān (345–349/956–961, 350–371/961–982, 376–378/986–989 (Fāmī 102–3). See also Allen 1981: 103; Golombek 1983: 95.

²⁹ Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, *Cinq opuscles*, 48, quoted in Muḥammad Kāẓim Imām's appendix to his edition of Isfizārī (Isfizārī II: 398–99). See also Allen 1981: 103.

³⁰ *Mujmal-i faṣīḥī* III: 31.

³¹ Saif al-Haravī 1943: 746–7; Isfizārī I: 505; *Qismat-i āb*, 6. See also Allen 1981: 105, 131; Golombek 1983: 96.

³² Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, *Cinq opuscles*, 48; *Qismat-i āb*, 11–12. See also Allen 1981: 105; Golombek 1983: 96.

The Masjid-i Jāmi‘ apparently survived the Timurid conquest in 1381 unscathed. During the reign of Shāh Rukh, the only person to engage in repairs was the *amīr al-umarā* Jalāl al-Dīn Fīrūzshāh (d. 848/1444–45).³³ Towards the end of the fifteenth century, Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā’s adviser ‘Alī Shīr Navā’ī undertook a major restoration and decoration of the mosque. Between Ramaẓān 903/April–May 1498 and 14 Sha‘bān 905/15 March 1500, this famous patron actively participated in the construction of a new *maqṣūra* dome, the decoration of the vaults and arcades and the addition of a marble pulpit.³⁴

Rather than standing in the center of town, the Friday mosque was constructed in its northeast quarter between the Khush and Qipchāq Gates. According to Isfizarī, this location was chosen because of the availability of flowing water (supplied by the Jūy-i Injīl canal) and its pleasant climate. Its excellence was established by a simple method: Sheep heads (*kalla*) were placed in each quarter and the center (*chahār sū*) of town in order to find out where they lasted the longest. In all other sites these heads rotted four days earlier than in the northeastern corner of town. Therefore, this area was chosen as the proper spot for the construction of the Friday mosque.³⁵ Isfizarī also informs us that the Masjid-i Jāmi‘ lost its unique position over time. While it had been the only mosque to fill the purpose of a Friday mosque for Herat and its environs prior to the Timurid era, the patronage extended by Shāh Rukh’s wife Gauhar Shād and Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā encouraged the foundation of similarly large mosques. Thus Gauhar Shād constructed an “exceedingly pure, spacious, and elegant” Friday mosque without the city bounds in the area that subsequently became known as the Muṣallā. Later on, Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā endowed the city and its environs with as many as ten congregational mosques large enough to hold the population of “Cairo” (*Miṣr*).³⁶

THE CITADEL OF IKHTIYĀR AL-DĪN (QAL‘A-YI IKHTIYĀR AL-DĪN)

For Isfizarī, the second most important sight is the citadel of Ikhtiyār al-Dīn located in the northern section of the city of Herat. Again, he treats the reader to a lyrical description concerning the strength of this fortress and its dimensions. Such is the height of its sky-scraping turrets (*kungra-yi falak-farsā*) that the signs of the zodiac seem within reach. Thus one may conveniently pluck the constellation of the hyacinth (*sunbula*, the sign of Virgo) off the sky, and the sign of the Eagle (*nasr*) has made itself a nest in the battlements of its towers. By the same token, the soldiers manning the towers run the risk of being assaulted by the sign of Leo. The moat surrounding the fort is of equally baffling dimensions. It is so wide that not even a strong-winged eagle can pass it and so deep that the cow of the earth visible in its bed will reach for the greenery growing along its edges.³⁷ Assuming a more sober note in the later narrative, Isfizarī reports that the moat is about twenty *gaz* wide but is not very deep because it has not been dug out for a while.³⁸

Allen identifies Ikhtiyār al-Dīn as a noble in the service of the early Kartid rulers.³⁹ But according to Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, it was the Kartid ruler Fakhr al-Dīn (r. ca. 697–707/1298–1308) himself who erected the citadel.⁴⁰ Around 699/1299–1300, Fakhr al-Dīn also rebuilt the city wall and constructed the quarter “below

³³ Khvānd Amīr, *Khulāṣat al-akhbār* as quoted in Price 1821 III: 642. See also Golombek 1983: 96.

³⁴ Khvānd Amīr, *Khulāṣat al-akhbār* as quoted in Price 1821 III: 642–5. See also Allen 1981: 106; Golombek 1983: 97–98.

³⁵ Isfizarī I: 79. See also Tumanovich 1989: 55. According to Qāsim b. Yūsuf Abū Naṣrī Haravī, the part of the Masjid-i Jāmi‘ known as “Bādghīsak” was built with the help of invisible beings (*rijāl al-ghaib*) (*Qismat-i āb*, 8–9).

³⁶ Isfizarī I: 34–5. Apart from the Friday mosque in Ziyāratgāh (Isfizarī I: 82–3), Isfizarī does not specify the other large mosques constructed by Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā. Besides Ziyāratgāh, Allen lists four congregational mosques built in the environs of Herat in the time of Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā. Three of these, the Friday mosque of the Ikhlāṣiyya complex, as well as the Masjid-i Jāmi‘-i Pul-i Darqarāh on the Jūy-i Alanjān, and the Masjid-i Jāmi‘-i Pul-i Kārtabār south of the city, were founded by ‘Alī Shīr Navā’ī. A further congregational mosque was constructed by Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā’s *vazīr* Khvāja Afzal al-Dīn Muḥammad Kirmānī (d. 910/1504–5) to the west outside the ‘Irāq Gate (Allen 1981: 94–6, 98, 112, 116).

³⁷ Isfizarī I 36–38.

³⁸ Isfizarī I: 79.

³⁹ Allen 1981: 34.

⁴⁰ Krawulsky 1982: 18; Krawulsky 1984: 23;

the citadel” (*pā-yi ḥiṣār*), including a square and a bazaar.⁴¹ In 707/1308 the Ilkhanid army intervened in the affairs of Herat and terminated Fakhr al-Dīn’s rule. Subsequently, his brother and successor Ghiyāth al-Dīn I rebuilt the audience hall of the citadel which had been destroyed during the Ilkhanid campaign. In addition, he extended the bazaar constructed by Fakhr al-Dīn to the center of the city and added two caravanserais.⁴²

Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū reports that the Timurid ruler Shāh Rukh re-erected the citadel of Ikhtiyār al-Dīn with burnt bricks in 818/1415.⁴³ Despite their building activity, all of Timūr Lang’s descendants preferred palaces located in suburban gardens to the inner-city citadels as places of residence. In Herat, Samarqand and Shīrāz, court life revolved around these residential gardens, while the fortified citadels primarily served as treasury and prison.⁴⁴ In the early part of his reign, Shāh Rukh settled in the Bāgh-i Shahr built by Fakhr al-Dīn Kart at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Located within the ramparts of Herat and immediately north of the citadel, this residence was ideally suited to ward off internal and external enemies. From 814/1411 on, the suburban Kartid estate of Bāgh-i Zāghān gradually assumed a central position in the affairs of the state.⁴⁵ Eventually the court was moved there, and the Bāgh-i Shahr was only used in times of danger.⁴⁶ In Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā’s time the Bāgh-i Jahānārā became a focal point of government activities. Even so, the Bāgh-i Zāghān continued to be used for important official ceremonies well into the early Safavid period.⁴⁷

THE CITY WALLS (BĀRA) AND MARKETS (BĀZĀR)

The walls enclosing the city of Herat were already described by the tenth-century Arab geographers Iṣṭakhrī, Ibn Ḥauqal and Muqaddasī.⁴⁸ A peculiar feature was their quadrangular shape coinciding with the four points of the compass. Internally, the city was structured by two axes which intersected in the center. Immediately to the north, the mound known as Quhandiz-i M-S-R-Q and later referred to as Tall-i Bangiyān,⁴⁹ represented the most ancient part of the city.⁵⁰

⁴¹ Saif al-Haravī 1943: 440. See also Allen 1981: 228; Szuppe, “Herat iv. Topography and Urbanism”, *E.Ir.* XII: 212.

⁴² Saif al-Haravī 1943: 747–50. See also Allen 1981: 229.

⁴³ Krawulsky 1982: 19; Krawulsky 1984: 23. Mīr Khvānd confirms this date and reports that Shāh Rukh employed 700,000 workmen to rebuild the fortress (Price 1821 III: 530). See also Allen 1981: 34. During his visit to Herat in late 1414, the Chinese envoy Ch’en Ch’eng observed that Shāh Rukh lived in a brick building located in the northeast of the city and noted the interior decoration: “His house is square and resembles a high platform and is without beams or tiles. There are several dozen rooms in the house, and the walls and windows are adorned and painted with golden and green glass. The doors are carved with flower patterns inlaid with bone and horns” (Rossabi 1983: 49). See also Richtsfeld 1985: 3. Hecker places the building in the northwest sector of the city and identifies it as the “great citadel of Herat” (Hecker 1993: 89).

⁴⁴ Gronke 1992: 19–20.

⁴⁵ Szuppe 1993: 279–80. According to Allen, some of the bureaucracy remained in Bāgh-i Shahr until 825/1421–22 (Allen 1981: 209, 211).

⁴⁶ Allen 1981: 209; Szuppe 1993: 279–82.

⁴⁷ In the early Safavid period, the Bāgh-i Shahr regained its former status as seat of government (*masnad-i salṭanat*) (Szuppe 1993: 279–3).

⁴⁸ Gaube 1977: 217; Hambly 1991c: 582.

⁴⁹ KR 64, 167, 226; Patterson 1988: 26; NT 682, 713. In 1845 Ferrier describes the Tall-i Bangiyān as an “artificial elevation of ground... about forty feet in height, and 650 yards in length; this is crescent-shaped, the horns inclining towards the city, while the centre sensibly recedes: from the nature of the materials mixed with the earth, it is evident that this mass was once the site of extensive buildings.” (Ferrier 1857: 181).

⁵⁰ Another town to match this spatial arrangement was the pre-Islamic town of Marv. The combination of an elevated citadel adjoined on one side by a town (*shahristān*) was typical of medieval Central Asian cities. According to Chmelnizkij, the citadel (*ark*, *quhandiz*) represented the most ancient part of the city. As a rule, the layout of the adjacent *shahristān* was regular. In pre-Islamic times, the city of Bukhārā was rectangular in shape. The external layout was mirrored by the internal structure, that is, a number of straight roads intersecting at right angles. The main arteries led to four gates in the western wall, while each of the other walls had one gate each (Chmelnizkij 1989: 19–25). During the Samanid period (263–395/875–1005) Bukhārā consisted of the citadel, the walled city, and an inner and an outer suburb (*rabaḥ*) (Pugachenkova, Rtveladze, “Bukhara v. Archeology and Monuments,” *E.Ir.* IV: 525). Samarqand was likewise made up of a citadel (*quhandiz*), the town proper (*shahristān*, *madīna*), and a suburb (*rabaḥ*) (Bregel 2003: 82).

The Kartid author Saif al-Haravī comments on the strength of Herat's fortifications. He quotes an eyewitness account of a siege of Herat by the Mongol commander Būjāy b. Dānishmand Bahādur in 1307: "This city cannot be taken by assault [even] after one and a half year of siege and blockade, as it is well fortified and stands firm. It has a deep moat and solid walls. It can only be conquered through the gates, particularly at harvest time."⁵¹ Subsequently the Kartid ruler Mu'izz al-Dīn Ḥusain further strengthened the city by erecting an additional protective wall (*shahrbandī*) to defend the northern suburbs. According to Isfizārī, this outer wall was of "great extent", covering an area of one by two *farsang* (four by eight miles).⁵² In 1381 Tīmūr Lang destroyed both the outer and the inner walls, and removed the city gates to his home in town of Kish (Shahr-i Sabz). While the outer wall was never rebuilt, Shāh Rukh ordered the reconstruction of the inner city walls after the death of Tīmūr Lang in 807/1405 in order to ward off rival contenders for the throne.

According to Ḥāfiz-i Abrū, Shāh Rukh reinforced the fortifications of Herat to such an extent that the building activity of previous rulers was negligible by comparison.⁵³ He describes the development of the city wall in the following manner:

At the time of its construction the wall was 60 *gaz* wide and 30 *gaz* high. Subsequently an outer wall (*faṣīl*) and battlements (*muqātila*) were added to the glacis (*khākriṣ*). Each wall is a bit more than 2,000 *gaz* long. The outer circumference comprising the moat measures one *farsang* [four miles]. Between the gates and the corners of the wall towers have been added. It has four large bastions on its four corners. Among the two bastions located in the eastern wall, the one in the north [on the northeastern corner] is called Burj-i 'Alī Asad and the one in the south [on the southeastern corner] is called Burj-i Kh-R-Q. Among the two bastions located on the western wall, the one in the north [on the northwestern corner] is called Burj-i Sham'āniyān and the one the south [on the southwestern corner] is called Burj-i Khākistar.⁵⁴

In the late fifteenth century, Isfizārī specifically mentions a building (*manzil*) located on top of the Burj-i 'Alī Asad, which offers an excellent view of the gardens and reservoirs located within and without the city.⁵⁵ He ascribes the following dimensions to the fortifications:

The city wall consists of two separate walls (*faṣīl*) separated by a gap of ten *gaz*. At the time of writing... there are 149 towers. The circumference of the city wall measures 7,300 paces (*qadam*). The diameter of the city between the Malik and Fīrūzābād Gates and the Khush and 'Irāq Gates respectively is 1,900 paces. The moat around the city wall is twenty *gaz* wide. But as it has not been dug out for a while, it is not very deep at present.⁵⁶

Ḥāfiz-i Abrū and Isfizārī note the even distribution of commercial arteries within the city and their location in relation to the city gates. Thus Isfizārī states,

In keeping with the idea of five [as a magical figure warding off the evil eye] the city wall has five gates:

1) the Malik Gate in the north[west];⁵⁷

⁵¹ *Bar dar-i shahr-i Harāt qurb-i yak sāl ū nīm ba-muḥāsira va darbandān va ḥarb-i rūzgār burda īn shahr-rā ba-ḥarb natawān girift chi bas ḥaṣīn ū matīn ast, va khandaq-i zharf va bandhā-yi ustuvār dārad. Ammā ba-darbandān ba-zūdi fath tavān kard khāṣṣa... hangām-i raf'-i ghalla va ḥaṣd-i mazrū'āt...* (Saif al-Haravī 1943: 682). For the historical context, see Boyle 1968: 401; Potter 1994: 94.

⁵² Isfizārī I: 81; Mīr Khvānd VII: 517. The northern part of this wall seems to have followed the Jūy-i Injīl but the exact location of its other components has not been established (Ḥāfiz-i Abrū, *Cinq Opuscules*, 40, 63–4; Allen 1981: 31; Gaube 1977: 220–1; Szuppe, "Herat iv. Topography and Urbanism", *E.Ir.* XII: 214). Such "long" walls protecting the suburbs were a regular feature in early medieval Central Asia. Famous examples are the Dīvār-i Qiyāmat and the Dīvār-i Kundalang in Samarqand and the Kampir Dīvāl in Bukhārā (Bregel 2003: 82; Chmel'nizkij 1989: 20).

⁵³ Krawulsky 1982: 14; Krawulsky 1984: 19.

⁵⁴ Krawulsky 1982:19; I differ slightly from Krawulsky's translation (1984: 22). According to Saif al-Haravī, the proper name of the Burj-i Khākistar was *burj-i khāk bar sar* (Saif al-Haravī 1943: 80). See also KR 226, margin. Sixteenth-century sources differ substantially on the names of the towers in question. While they confirm the name of the southwestern Burj-i Khākistar, they list the southeastern tower as Burj-i Gulshan-i Bahrām and the northwestern tower as Burj-i 'Alī Sultān (McChesney 1993: 85).

⁵⁵ Isfizārī I: 80–81.

⁵⁶ Isfizārī I: 78–9. For a similar statement, see Mīr Khvānd 7: 517. See also Allen 1981: 28.

⁵⁷ According to Ḥāfiz-i Abrū, the Malik Gate was also known as Barāmān and Maidān Gate (Krawulsky 1982: 18; Krawulsky 1984: 21).

- 2) the 'Irāq Gate in the west;
- 3) the Fīrūzābād Gate in the south
- 4) the Khush Gate in the east
- 5) the Qipchāq Gate in the northeast.⁵⁸

It is not entirely clear which gates Tīmūr Lang removed during his invasion in 1381. Isfīzārī reports that the invader ordered

the ancient fortifications to be destroyed like enemies, the gates to be torn away like the fundament of the opponents, the sky-scraping turrets and towers to be thrown into the deepest depths of the moat, and the valuable iron gates ornamented with the titles of the Kart Malikis to be borne away ... to Shahr-i Sabz.⁵⁹

In Timurid times, the gates consisted of a series of entrances. According to Ḥāfīz-i Abrū, all city gates were reinforced by several iron gates separated by a “camel’s neck” (*ushtur gardan*), a zigzag-shaped alley designed to make hostile approaches difficult.⁶⁰ Isfīzārī notes that each of the city’s entrances was made up of three consecutive gates. The Malik Gate, consisting of only two gates, was an exception in this respect.⁶¹

The five gates corresponded to a number of highroads radiating out from Herat. The Malik Gate connected the city with the western and northern trade routes, the Qipchāq Gate provided a vital link to the northeast. The road issuing from it ran to Kurūkh and onward through the eastern section of Bādghīs to Maimana. The Fīrūzābād Gate in the south led to the Pul-i Mālān and onwards to the highroad to Qandahār. The roads leaving the Khush and 'Irāq Gates proceeded along the valley of the Harī Rūd. To the east, the highroad ran upstream to Auba and onwards to Kābul via the Hazārajāt. The road from the 'Irāq Gate headed west and served as the main route between Herat and Ghūriyān.⁶²

Isfīzārī furnishes information on the main commercial arteries linked to the city gates. He grants special importance to the Malik market in the northwestern part of the city:

Within the city wall there are four markets, with one market extending from each gate to the central bazaar (*chahār sū*) and bearing the name of the respective gate. The Qipchāq Gate is an exception, as there is no market all the way to the central bazaar.⁶³ The Bāzār-i Malik is built with burned brick [all the way] from Pā-yi Hišār to the central bazaar. It has numerous

⁵⁸ Isfīzārī I: 77–8. The tenth-century geographers Iṣṭakhrī, Ibn Ḥauqal and Muqaddasī merely describe four gates corresponding to the four city walls: the Sarāy Gate in the north, the Fīrūzābād Gate in the south, the Ziyād Gate in the west, and the Khushk Gate in the east (Le Strange 1905: 408). Nevertheless Allen supposes the existence of a fifth, northeastern gate, which was not mentioned at the time because it did not lead to one of the thoroughfares or to a major market (Allen 1981: 36). Szuppe raises the possibility that two gates were constructed on the northern wall in order to circumvent the Quhandiz located immediately north of the city (Szuppe, “Herat iv. Topography and Urbanism,” *E.Ir.* XII: 211). At any rate, the Sarāy Gate was situated off center in the western section of the north wall. According to Ibn Ḥauqal, it was made of iron, whereas the other three gates were built in wood (Le Strange 1905: 408). For the Kartid period, the existence of five gates is well documented. While the available accounts point to a remarkable continuity in the names and locations of the gates leading west, south and east, the information concerning the northern gates is somewhat contradictory and possibly implies the application of new names in the Timurid era. In the context of a number of military engagements between Malik Ghiyāth al-Dīn I Kart and the Chaghataid prince Yasa'ur in 719/1319, Saif al-Haravī mentions the following gates: The western 'Irāq Gate leading to the gardens of Sainān (a village located in the Injīl district), the southern Fīrūzābād Gate leading to the Jūy-i Kārtabār (in the Alanjān district), the eastern Khush Gate leading to Bād-i Murghān (a village located in the Injīl district). On the northern side of town, he distinguishes the western Barāmān Gate leading to Pul-i Injīl and the environs of Quhandiz and the eastern Malikī Gate leading to Bāgh-i Safīd and Quhandiz (Saif al-Haravī 1943: 712–13; see also p. 440).

⁵⁹ Isfīzārī I: 41. See also Ḥāfīz-i Abrū, *Cinq opuscles*, 65; HS III: 431; Thackston 1994: 246; Mīr Khvānd 7: 517; Nagel 1993: 159. Similar statements by Ḥāfīz-i Abrū, Khvānd Amīr and Mīr Khvānd, combined with information furnished by Ibn Ḥauqal that there were no iron gates in Herat except the Sarāy/Malik Gate, lead Szuppe to conclude that this was the only gate dismantled by Tīmūr Lang (Szuppe, “Herat iv. Topography and Urbanism,” *E.Ir.* XII: 214).

⁶⁰ Krawulsky 1982: 19; 1984: 21–2. For an illustration of such a “camel’s neck”, see Samizay 1981.

⁶¹ Isfīzārī I: 78.

⁶² C. E. Yate 1885: 1164.

⁶³ The Qipchāq Gate led to the quarter containing administrative offices, as well as the Masjid-i Jāmi' and several *madāris* (Szuppe 1992: 27).

commercial compounds (*tīm*), each of which equals a bazaar [in size]. Outside of each gate, there is a market extending to the outer limit of the suburbs, covering a distance of close to one *farsang* (four miles)...⁶⁴

Isfizārī's account of the city of Herat revolves around the Friday mosque and the citadel as expressions of Timurid attainments in the domains of spiritual and worldly power. In addition, Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū emphasizes Shāh Rukh's contribution to the development of Herat's commercial quarters in the old city core:

In former times, the alleys in the market were not entirely covered. Traders and customers were vexed by clouds of dust whirled up... [Shāh Rukh] decreed to build up the foundations of the markets with plaster and brick and to erect high cupolas. Everywhere skylights were added for the sake of proper illumination. The shops with their high halls and chambers are arranged in a manner most pleasant to behold... The central market perfectly coincides with the proportions of a geometric square...⁶⁵

THE IMMEDIATE ENVIRONS OF HERAT

In Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū's opinion, the Harī Rūd,⁶⁶ which traverses the Herat valley from east to west until it turns north near Kūsūya, formed the artery of the oasis: "This river has a remarkable trait. No matter how much water you divert—and even if you were to irrigate the entire country with it—it will carry abundant water further downstream."⁶⁷ In the late fifteenth century, the valley of Herat was well-cultivated and -peopled. According to Isfizārī, Timurid rule had allowed the region to prosper even more than during the Kartid period despite the destruction wrought by Tīmūr Lang in 782/1381. He reports that the entire region between the Darra-yi Dū Barādarān in the north and Pul-i Mālān in the south (a distance of two *farsang* or eight miles) and from Auba in the east to Kūsūya in the west (a distance of 30 *farsang* or 120 miles) was covered by buildings, orchards, villages, and districts adjoining each other. Like Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, he attributes the wealth of the oasis to the spring inundations and the irrigation system deriving from the Harī Rūd, which was known as Rūd-i Mālān at its point of passage south of Herat.⁶⁸

The oasis proper was divided into ten *bulūk*, "districts",⁶⁹ on the basis of the major irrigation channels branching off from the Harī Rūd. The outlines of these districts were determined by the amount of land fed by a particular channel or a part thereof and thus resembled "long strips, curving along the contours of the valley from the water sources to the east, past the walled city, to the *dasht* (unwatered land) west of the city, where the canal water gives out."⁷⁰ The number of channels in use and the amount of land cultivated were affected by the political framework. While war entailed the destruction of irrigation channels and a reduction of arable land, the patronage extended by Mongol, Kartid and Timurid rulers brought about a restoration and expansion of the irrigation system and caused agricultural production to rebound. Outward circumstances thus caused the external outlines of the districts to fluctuate. At the same time, these units retained their validity as territorial entities, as their internal structure, being constituted by the irrigation channel, was not

⁶⁴ Isfizārī I: 78. See also Akhmedov 1977: 82; Allen 1981: 49.

⁶⁵ Krawulsky 1982: 16. My translation slightly differs from that of Krawulsky 1984: 19. The streets leading inwards from the northern gates converged at an open space in front of the citadel and opposite the main street leading to the Chahār Sū. Ch'en Ch'eng corroborates Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū's description of the structural elements of the markets in Timurid Herat: "Buildings are constructed on both sides of the market place, and on the top covered awnings are placed. They are encircled by means of bricks and stones and then a hole for a sky light is bored" (Rossabi 1983: 50). See also Hecker 1993: 90; Richtsfeld 1985: 3.

⁶⁶ The name of the Harī Rūd derives from Old Iranian *harayu*, "with velocity" (Vogelsang, "Herat ii. History, Pre-Islamic Period," *E.Ir.* XII: 205).

⁶⁷ Krawulsky 1984: 24.

⁶⁸ Isfizārī I: 82. For a discussion of the general success of Timurid agricultural policies see Subtelny 1993: 186–9.

⁶⁹ The original meaning of the term *bulūk* is "group", "army contingent", or "district". On the basis of sources from the Timurid and Safavid era, Doerfer defines *bulūk* as an administrative subdivision of a province (*vilāyat*), which was awarded to high ranking officers as service grant (Doerfer 1965 II: 323–6). According to Thackston, the term signified "agricultural and pasture lands surrounding a city" in the Ilkhanid and Timurid periods (Thackston 1994: 639). See, for instance, the expression *balda va bulūkāt*, intending the city of Herat and its surrounding districts in the works of Amīr Maḥmūd (AM 357–8) and Ḥasan Beg Rūmlū (AT 264). Among the Durrānī nomads of present-day western Afghanistan, the term *bulūk* designates a subdivision of a herd (*rama*) of sheep (Personal communication from Bernt Glatzer, 14 March 2005).

⁷⁰ Allen 1981: 4.

altered even in adverse times. The oasis of Herat thus presents an interesting interplay between outer limits and space as defined from within. On the one hand, one may say that the irrigated lands formed a fairly compact island of fertility delimited by the surrounding deserts and mountain ranges. Yet the availability and distribution of water also created an internal structure, which shaped Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū's and Isfizārī's perception of the oasis and its constituent parts in a fundamental manner.

Of the ten districts (*bulūk*) listed by Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū,⁷¹ seven were located north of the Harī Rūd, viz. Tūrān-Tūniyān, Ghūrvān-Pāshātān, Sabqar, Khiyābān, Injīl, Alanjān, and Parvāna-Havādashtak. With the exception of Parvāna-Havādashtak, these districts were fed by three long-established irrigation channels branching off from the Harī Rūd. These were, from east to west, the Jūy-i Nau, the Jūy-i Injīl, the Shāh Jūy, and the Jūy-i Alanjān. The district of Parvāna-Havādashtak already existed in Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū's time but was greatly enhanced with the opening of the Jūy-i Sulṭānī in 1468, which derived its water from the Rūd-i Pāshātān. The most important irrigation channels south of the Harī Rūd were the Jūy-i Naṭara-yi Malik (which split into the Jūy-i Ziyāratgāh and the Jūy-i Mālān), and, further to the west, the Jūy-i Tizān, and the Jūy-i Udvān.⁷²

THE DISTRICTS NORTH OF THE HARĪ RŪD⁷³

Injīl (Injūr)

This district contained the city of Herat and was of particular strategic importance. It was named after its major canal which supplied the northeastern quarter of the city with water. This part of town also contained a number of wells and thus commanded the greatest and most secure water supply. A fixed portion of the water entering the town in the northeast was in turn allotted to the quarters in the northwest, southeast and southwest.⁷⁴ Saif al-Haravī reports that the Jūy-i Injīl was repaired between 635/1237–38 and 638/1240–41 as part of the restoration of the irrigation system of Herat subsequent to the Mongol invasion.⁷⁵ Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū notes that the villages along the lower course of the Injīl canal were known as the “lower city” (*shīb-i shahr*). Because of its proximity to the city, this district boasted many buildings, palaces and orchards.⁷⁶ During the Kartid era, two residential gardens, the Bāgh-i Safīd located northeast of the city and the Bāgh-i Zāghān west of the Kūcha-yi Khiyābān, were created in this *bulūk*.⁷⁷

Alanjān

The space to the southwest of the city of Herat and north of the Harī Rūd was taken up by the Alanjān district. The name of its most important irrigation canal is alternately recorded as Jūy-i Kārtabār or Shāh Jūy. This canal separates from the Harī Rūd southeast of Herat, passes south of the city walls and expends itself in the west.⁷⁸ Like the neighboring Injīl canal, the district of Alanjān, including the village of Sham'ān, was cultivated again in 638/1240–41.⁷⁹ According to Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, the Alanjān district lent itself to intensive

⁷¹ In the late fifteenth century, Isfizārī enumerates nine districts coinciding with those named by Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū: Injīl, Alanjān, Khiyābān, Sabqar, Ghūrvān-Pāshātān, Tūrān-Tūniyān, Kamīrān (Kamburāq), Gudāra, and Udvān-Tizān. He omits Parvāna-Havādashtak (Isfizārī I: 84). The *bulūk* listed by Ibn Valī in the early seventeenth century agree with those described by Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū (Akhmedov 1977: 83–4).

⁷² Allen 1981: 17; *Qismat-i āb* 44.

⁷³ The following list of *bulūk* deviates from the sequence adopted by Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, who does not distinguish between the districts north and south of the river.

⁷⁴ Najimi 1982: 38. Isfizārī reports that this quarter enjoyed “flowing water” (*āb-i ravān*) (Isfizārī I: 79).

⁷⁵ Saif al-Haravī 1943: 111, 123, 127. See also Szuppe, “Herat iv. Topography and Urbanism,” *E.Ir.* XII: 212.

⁷⁶ Krawulsky 1982: 23–4; 1984: 25. See also Allen 1981: 7; 1983: 12; *Qismat-i āb* 19–29.

⁷⁷ Allen 1981: 192, 205–7, 211–15. See also Szuppe 1993: 277, 282–3; Szuppe, “Herat iv. Topography and Urbanism,” *E.Ir.* XII: 214.

⁷⁸ Allen 1981: 8, 16; *Qismat-i āb* 33–9.

⁷⁹ Saif al-Haravī 1943: 127.

cultivation in walled gardens and orchards (*bāghistān*) as well as agriculture in open fields (*zirāʿat*) and contained more villages than any other district in the Herat valley. He estimates the entire district to extend to a length of five *farsang* or twenty miles.⁸⁰

Ghūrvān-Pāshtān

This district was located east of Herat and consisted of two distinct units. The villages making up the subdivision of Ghūrvān were located along the uppermost part of the Jūy-i Nau and the northern bank of the Harī Rūd. Pāshtān was situated further north at the point where the Rūd-i Pāshtān draining the mountains north and east of Herat enters the valley.⁸¹ According to Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, this district was characterized by agriculture in open fields rather than horticulture. In keeping with the hilly environment on the northern rim of the Herat basin, the irrigation in Pāshtān was based on subterranean water channels (*kārīz*).⁸²

Tūrān-Tūniyān

This easternmost district north of the Harī Rūd depended on irrigation by *kārīz*.⁸³

Khiyābān

The Khiyābān district was bounded by the Jūy-i Injīl in the west and the Jūy-i Nau in the east. According to Saif al-Haravī, the Jūy-i Nau, then known as Jūy-i Sabqar, was reopened subsequent to the Mongol invasion in 637/1239–40.⁸⁴ By the early fourteenth century, it had apparently fallen again into disrepair. Malik Ghiyāth al-Dīn I extended the Sabqar canal and appointed water keepers to the Pul-i Bābā Kamāl, later to become known as Pul-i Tūlakī.⁸⁵ Along this canal he designated the village of Badallū and seven water mills as endowments for the newly repaired Madrasa-yi Ghiyāthīya. The village of Taghārī was assigned to the upkeep of a *madrasa* recently built by Malik Ghiyāth al-Dīn.⁸⁶

The districts of Khiyābān and Injīl were traversed by a road known as the (Kūcha-yi) Khiyābān. It extended from the northwestern Malik Gate to the Jūy-i Nau. Immediately north of the channel, it branched into the main caravan road via Tīr Pul to Mashhad and the northern route leading to Parvāna and onward to the Kushk valley. At the confluence of the Kushk Rūd and Murghāb river, the northern route trifurcated into a western road to Sarakhs, a northern road to Yolotan and Marv, and an eastern road to Mārūchāq.

South of the Jūy-i Nau, the Khiyābān presented a stately approach to the city. According to Isfīzārī, this boulevard dating back to pre-Islamic times was dotted with great shrines and resplendent edifices. Isfīzārī claims that he himself witnessed a major increase of development in the Khiyābān district during his lifetime. While there had been no construction to speak of north of the Jūy-i Injīl prior to Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā's accession in 1469, the entire region between this canal and the hills bounding the Herat valley in the north was covered by costly buildings and paradise-like gardens at the time of writing in the early 1490s.⁸⁷ In fact, the development of the Khiyābān district as a residential quarter of Herat had already begun

⁸⁰ Krawulsky 1982: 25; 1984: 25.

⁸¹ Allen 1981: 2, 6; *Qismat-i āb* 77–8.

⁸² Krawulsky 1982: 25–6; 1984: 25–6.

⁸³ Krawulsky 1982: 26; 1984: 26. See also Allen 1981: 6; *Qismat-i āb* 73–4; KR 171.

⁸⁴ Saif al-Haravī 1943: 123.

⁸⁵ Isfīzārī II: 100.

⁸⁶ *Qismat-i āb* 6, 10–11. See also Allen 1981: 7, 150. Taghārī was located near Saq Salmān (Allen 1981: 18, 83; Krawulsky 1984: 130).

⁸⁷ Isfīzārī I: 85–6. See also Allen 1981: 20, 46.

in the early fifteenth century. Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū notes that it served as a favorite burial ground for the notables (*buzurgān*) of Herat at the time of Shāh Rukh.⁸⁸

A major site was the Bāgh-i Jahānārā, which Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā began to construct in 873/1469. It comprised an area of 440 *jarīb* and extended from the Jūy-i Nau so far south into the Injīl district that the Jūy-i Injīl flowed through its center.⁸⁹ In the 1530s, that is, in the early Safavid period, the former Timurid official Amīr Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm Amīnī drew attention to the fact that the Bāgh-i Jahānārā owed its existence to Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā's exertions and expertise. Adhering to conventional imagery, he described it as a "pleasant garden" with meadows as fresh and buildings as high as those of the legendary garden of Iram.⁹⁰

The Ikhlāṣīya complex built by Ḥusain Bāyqarā's chief minister Mīr 'Alī Shīr Navā'ī between 881–886/1476–82 was located on the northern bank of the Jūy-i Injīl, close to the Kūcha-yi Khiyābān.⁹¹ Building activity also went on south of the Jūy-i Injīl, where Shāh Rukh's wife Gauhar Shād Āqā constructed a *madrasa* and mosque between 1417 and 1437. Together with the *madrasa* built by Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā in 1477–1486, this ensemble was to become known as the Muṣallā later on.⁹²

Sabqar (Sabaqar)

Located east of the *bulūk* Injīl, the Sābqar district derived its water from the upper parts of the Jūy-i Nau and the Jūy-i Injīl.⁹³ Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū reports that the district allowed both for horticulture and agriculture in open fields.⁹⁴

Parvāna-Havādashtak

The district of Parvāna-Havādashtak was apparently located in the foothills north of Gāzargāh. The fact that it is only mentioned by Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū and does not appear in later land registers leads Allen to conclude that it may have been tax-exempt.⁹⁵ Subsequent to Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū's description of this district, the area was upgraded by the construction of a new canal conducting water from the Rūd-i Pāshtān along the northern rim of the Herat valley to the village of Gāzargāh and beyond. Built under the auspices of Sulṭān Abū Sa'īd, this canal was completed in 872–73/1468 and came to be known as Jūy-i Sulṭānī. The construction of this canal contributed to the development of the region north of the Jūy-i Injīl mentioned by Isfīzārī. While the city itself had few trees and gardens to boast of, the water provided by the Jūy-i Sulṭānī turned the northern foothills into lush orchards and meadows.⁹⁶

Among the areas affected by this increase of irrigation and cultivation, Isfīzārī specifically mentions the grave of Khvāja 'Abdullāh Anṣārī (d. 1089) at Gāzargāh, which had already been patronized by the Kartid rulers.⁹⁷ While furnishing comparatively little information on the appearance and the state of this shrine during his own time, Isfīzārī describes its origins in the historical section of his work. He reports that this

⁸⁸ Krawulsky 1982: 27; 1984: 26. Khanikoff recounts an anecdote according to which the region between Herat and Gāzargāh was entirely covered with buildings in Ilkhanid times, so that a dog could make his way from the city to the shrine by running across house roofs (Khanikoff 1864: 362).

⁸⁹ Isfīzārī II: 317–19; HS IV: 136; Thackston 1994: 421; Khvānd Amīr, *Khulāṣat al-akhbār*, as quoted in Price III. 653–4; Allen 1981: 195–8; Ball 1981; Szuppe 1993: 272–4.

⁹⁰ *Futūḥāt-i shāhī* 356. For a poetic description of the Bāgh-i Jahānārā, see Abīvardī 66–67.

⁹¹ Allen 1981: 92–7, 113–15; 122–9; Subtelny 1988b, 1991; Szuppe, "Herat iv. Topography and Urbanism", *E.Ir.* XII: 214.

⁹² Isfīzārī I: 34; Fisher 1978b: 380. See also Golombek 1983: 96–99; Quade-Reutter 2003: 513–14.

⁹³ Allen 1981: 27.

⁹⁴ Krawulsky 1982: 27; 1984: 27.

⁹⁵ Allen 1981: 7. In 1845, the French traveler Ferrier reported Parvāna to be situated three *farsang* (twelve miles) north of the city of Herat "across the mountains; soil sometimes clayey, sometimes flinty" (Ferrier 1857: 188).

⁹⁶ Isfīzārī I: 84–5.

⁹⁷ Gāzargāh was among the seven shrines where Malik Fakhr al-Dīn Kart had the Koran read and looked after the needs of the poor (Saif al-Haravī 1943: 441).

location already served as a place of pilgrimage during the eleventh century and that it was one of Anṣārī's favorite spots during his lifetime. In Isfizarī's view, the word Gāzargāh properly denoted *kārzārgāh*, the site of a violent battle which had taken place in the 3rd/9th century. The seven large pits (*haft chāh*) in which the victims were buried afterwards attracted numerous devotees and developed into a shrine, which in turn encouraged the agricultural development of its environs.⁹⁸

The Gāzargāh experienced an unprecedented development under the Timurids. Shāh Rukh began this process by erecting an enclosure around Anṣārī's tomb in 829–30/1425–27. By the time Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā built a family memorial there in 882/1477–78, Gāzargāh had become a large complex.⁹⁹ The shrine, as well as the area between Jūy-i Nau and Jūy-i Injīl were affected by a flood in Jumādā II 898/April 1493.¹⁰⁰ The damage was repaired by 'Alī Shīr Navā'ī, when he held the prestigious post as "sweeper" of the shrine complex in 904/1499.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, this great Timurid poet and patron is credited with having built the Bāghcha-yi Gāzargāh, a garden located on the Jūy-i Sulṭānī.¹⁰²

THE DISTRICTS SOUTH OF THE HARĪ RŪD

*Gudāra*¹⁰³ (*Guzāra*, *Ghudhara*)¹⁰⁴

Located south of the city of Herat, the district of Gudāra derived its water from two long canals known as Jūy-i Mālān and Jūy-i Ziyāratgāh.¹⁰⁵ Subsequent to the devastation caused by the Mongol invasion, the Jūy-i Mālān was repaired together with the Jūy-i Sabqar and Jūy-i Injīl in 637/1239–40.¹⁰⁶ Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū describes Gudāra as a wealthy district, the agriculture of which was partly based on *kāriz*. Its most important town was Mālān, where a "mighty" bridge originally built by the Saljūq ruler Sulṭān Sanjar (r. 511–552/1118–1157) in 505/1111–12 crossed the Harī Rūd.¹⁰⁷ Connecting Herat with the southeastern trade route to Isfizar, Farāh, Girishk and Qandahār, this bridge was frequently destroyed and rebuilt in the course of history.¹⁰⁸

Another major town in the district of Gudāra was Ziyāratgāh.¹⁰⁹ Isfizarī describes it as "city-like" trade mart containing 2,000 shops of all kinds. He is even more impressed with the learning and the piety of the local population, which found its expression in the 700-fold daily reading of the Koran. On Fridays the main mosque could not accommodate all of the believers, and many had to pray in the alleys and markets outside. This state of affairs was amended when Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā erected a spacious and pleasant Friday mosque there.¹¹⁰ Another village Isfizarī considers worth mentioning is Siyāvushān, which reportedly yielded a harvest of 30,000 donkey loads of grapes in good years.¹¹¹

⁹⁸ Isfizarī II: 49–50. See also Golombek 1969: 79. A fourteenth-century copy of the *Tārīkh-i Harāt* by 'Abd al-Raḥmān Fāmī (d. 1151–52) gives two different spellings for this location: Gāzyārgāh and Gāzārgāh (Fāmī 116, 132, 152).

⁹⁹ Allen 1981: 20, 177; Golombek 1969: 82–5; Subtelny 1993: 190–2; Subtelny 1994a: 386–9. For the dates of Shāh Rukh's building activities in Gāzargāh, see *Mujmal-i faṣīḥī* III: 260, 262.

¹⁰⁰ Isfizarī II 99–100. See also Golombek 1969: 86.

¹⁰¹ HS IV: 240–42; Thackston 1994: 472–3; *Khulāṣat al-akhbār* (I'timādī), 22–23; Golombek 1969: 88; Subtelny 1994a: 394–9.

¹⁰² Golombek 1969: 87.

¹⁰³ Krawulsky 1982: 23; Isfizarī I: 84.

¹⁰⁴ *Mazārāt-i Harāt* 156.

¹⁰⁵ *Qismat-i āb* 43–50; Allen 1981: 9.

¹⁰⁶ Saif al-Haravī 1943: 123.

¹⁰⁷ Krawulsky 1982: 23; 1984: 24. See also Szuppe, "Herat iv. Topography and Urbanism," *E.Ir.* XII: 212.

¹⁰⁸ Allen 1981: 42.

¹⁰⁹ Allen 1981: 85; *Qismat-i āb* 50.

¹¹⁰ Isfizarī I: 82–3. The Friday mosque of Ziyāratgāh is also briefly mentioned in Khvānd Amīr's *Khulāṣat al-akhbār* (I'timādī) 23. See also Allen 1981: 116; Samizay 1981: 42–5.

¹¹¹ Isfizarī I: 83. See also Allen 1981: 82; *Qismat-i āb* 49.

Kamburāq (Kamīrān)

The district of Kamburāq adjoined Gudāra in the east. In Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū's time, this district was mostly known for its production of grain on the basis of river water and *kārīz*.¹¹²

Udvān-Tīzān

This district was fed by the two westernmost canals south of the Harī Rūd.¹¹³ According to Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, it derived its water both from the river and *kārīz* and lent itself to agriculture and horticulture.¹¹⁴

THE PROVINCE OF HERAT

Beyond the oasis proper, Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū names a number of provinces (*vilāyāt*) which fell under the administration of Herat. The eastern part of the Harī Rūd valley was taken up by the provinces of Kurūkh and Harāt-Rūd. To the west, the provinces of Fūshanj and Kūsūya were located on the final east-west stretch of the Harī Rūd, which then headed north, cutting through two mountain ranges, passing Sarakhs, and eventually losing itself in the sands of the Qara Qum desert. To the north, the valley of Herat was bounded by a mountain range termed "Paropamisus" by European writers. The mountain spurs advancing as far west as the source of the Kushk Rūd formed the final part of the Band/Kūh-i Bāba range which extended across central Afghanistan and fanned out in a northwesterly and southwesterly fashion. A British account gave the following characterization of the geological setting and the ridges determining the landscape north of Herat:

The Koh-i-Baba, just before entering the Herat province, breaks up into three main ranges, which trifurcate like the prongs of a pitchfork. The northern one is the Band-i-Turkistan, the southern is called Band-i-Baian [Bayān], and the central one... the Koh-i-Baba. North of Herat and to the eastward of that place, the hills of this range are of some considerable height, the peaks rising to a height of over 5,000 feet above the valley. The known roads over this part of the range are rough and somewhat difficult... Westward of the meridian of Herat the hills become lower and the passes easier, till in fact they become a series of downs. West of the Khumbao pass the range is split into two by the Chilgazi [Chihilgazi] stream, and the two spurs thus formed end abruptly on the Hari Rud after that river has taken its great bend to the north.¹¹⁵

The region between the Kushk Rūd and the northbound stretch of the Harī Rūd is taken up by a northwesterly chain of lower mountains called Kaitū or Siyāh Būbak. Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū names three provinces north of these mountains. The most westerly was Bādghīs, for which he cites the popular etymology of *bādkhīz*, "a place where the wind rises", alluding to the origin of the northerly winds consistently blowing in Herat during the summer months. The predictability of this wind allowed the Heratis to equip their houses with ventilation shafts (*bādgīr*) that were uniformly oriented to the north.¹¹⁶

Accounts from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries bear witness to the fact this wind could be quite violent. In Rabī' I 1153/May–June 1740 mighty gusts of wind prevented Nādir Shāh from erecting his spacious royal tent in the meadow of Kahdistān near Herat.¹¹⁷ On the same occasion, 'Abd al-Karīm, a member of Nādir's retinue, noted that the prevailing winds had two advantages: They allowed the use of windmills which produced flour superior to that of water mills. Furthermore, they prevented the outbreak of

¹¹² Krawulsky 1982: 28; 1984: 27. See also Allen 1981: 8; Isfizarī I: 84; *Qismat-i āb* 79–83.

¹¹³ Allen 1981: 9, 21–22.

¹¹⁴ Krawulsky 1982: 28–9; 1984: 28.

¹¹⁵ *Gaz. Afghanistan* III: 31. The western portion of the Band-i Bayān was known as Safid Kūh (*Gaz. Afghanistan* III: 45).

¹¹⁶ Krawulsky 1982: 18; 1984: 21. See also Le Strange 1905: 414. Another theory concerning the origin of this wind was put forward by the nineteenth-century traveler Boukhary, who located its source in a pit in the Kaitū Mountains, which emitted such a violent air current that even mighty stones thrown into it were hurled out again (Boukhary 251, Persian text 111).

¹¹⁷ Kāzim 777. See also Lockhart 1938: 186.

epidemics during the summer months.¹¹⁸ Roughly a century later Ferrier observed that the summer wind was sometimes strong enough to unroof houses and uproot trees.¹¹⁹

According to Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, Bādghīs embraced the entire region between Sarakhs and Jām in the west and the province of Murghāb in the east. In the south it extended all the way to Fūshanj and Herat. The vastness of the province is underlined by Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū's statement that it covered a territory of 100 *farsakh* (400 miles) in circumference. Bounded by the middle course of the Harī Rūd in the west, Bādghīs was characterized by a hilly country through which the Kāshān river and Kushk Rūd descended towards the Murghāb river. The neighboring province of Murghāb comprised the areas watered by the lower Murghāb river all the way down to its confluence with the Kushk Rūd. It adjoined the territory of Balkh and thus formed the northern border of Herat. The region around the upper reaches of the Murghāb river was known as "Gharjistān", which, according to Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, derived from *gharsh*, "mountain". Characterized by steep mountains and deep canyons, this region was said to be impassable for camels.¹²⁰

To the south, the Harī Rūd watershed is bounded by the Siyāh Kūh mountains, which extend from the rugged central highland of the Kūh-i Bāba almost all the way to Herat. The area beyond this mountain range is watered by three rivers descending into the Sīstān basin, viz., from east to west, the Khāsh Rūd, the Farāh Rūd and the Adraskan. The mountainous region around the sources of the Khāsh Rūd and the Farāh Rūd was known as Ghūr. This region was separated from Gharjistān by the Harī Rūd, and equally difficult of access. It was characterized by five high mountains and was known for its cold climate (*sardsīr*). Located between the upper reaches of the Farāh Rūd and Adraskan, the provinces of Sākhar-Tūlak and Azāb were likewise categorized as part of the *sardsīr*. The province of Isfizār extended further south, along the middle course of the Adraskan river. Its capital by the same name was located half-way between Herat and Farāh along the trade route to Qandahār. In the west, Isfizār was bounded by a stretch of desert reaching as far as the region of Quhistān, which comprised the oases of Ṭabas Gīlakī, Tūn, Qāyin, Bīrjand, and Ṭabas Masīnā.¹²¹

The western provinces of Herat were located beyond the lower course of the Harī Rūd. The southernmost among these was Khvāf, which, according to Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, had formerly been a dependency of Nīshāpūr but had been incorporated into the administration of Herat for a "lengthy period". Immediately to the north, the province of Bākharz adjoined. The focal point of the northernmost province of Jām was the grave of the twelfth-century saint Aḥmad-i Jām (Turbat-i Shaikh Jām), which was located halfway along the trade route to Mashhad.¹²²

KURŪKH (KURUKH)¹²³

Kurūkh was located seven *farsang* from Herat beyond the northern slopes of the Davandar mountain. It formed the first stage along the highroad leading through the eastern section of Bādghīs to Maimana via Naratū and Bālā Murghāb.¹²⁴ According to Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, the climate of the Kurūkh valley approached the

¹¹⁸ *Bayān-i vāqi'* 60. See also Gladwin 1788: 25; Alam/Subrahmanyam 2007: 264. For a description of the horizontal windmills of western Afghanistan see Ferdinand 1963.

¹¹⁹ Ferrier adds that the "climate is nevertheless one of the most delightful in Asia, the average heat in summer being about 28° of centigrade in the shade; in winter the thermometer is rarely as low as 2° above zero" (Ferrier 1857: 182).

¹²⁰ Krawulsky 1984: 28–32. See also Le Strange 1905: 415–16.

¹²¹ Krawulsky 1982: 33–6; 1984: 31–34. See also Fischer 1967: 154.

¹²² Krawulsky 1982: 37–41; 1984: 34–36. See also Meier, "Ahmad-i Dījām," *E. I.*, 2.

¹²³ Krawulsky employs the spelling of Kurūkh (1982: 29; 1984: 28–29, 101). In Sayyid Muḥammad Kāzīm Imām's edition of Isfizāri both spellings occur (K-R-Kh, K-R-V-Kh) (Isfizāri I: 133, 151–52). The vowel employed in nineteenth-century Persian sources indicates that the pronunciation was Kurukh (*Riyāz al-siyāḥat* 481; KR 62).

¹²⁴ Holdich 1910: 236–7, 248; KR 62, note on margin; Samizay 1981: 50. British reports from the early twentieth century describe the valley of Kurūkh as a thinly populated valley mostly producing wheat and barley. The town of Kurukh is characterized as follows: "Elevation 4,340 feet. The principal place in the Karokh district, distant 27 miles from Herat. It consists of some eight or ten villages and hamlets, which extend from the celebrated ziarat of Khwaja Islam for about three quarters of a mile to the edge of the slope forming the north side of the hollow in which the Karokh stream flows, and down the latter, for a quarter of a mile more, to the bank of the broad shingly watercourse" (*Gaz. Afghanistan* III: 254–5. See also Holdich 1910: 236–7).

cool temperatures typical of summer pastures (*yailāq*). Yet, he primarily notes symptoms of deterioration. Without hinting at the immediate cause of the decline, he reports that the number of villages and hamlets maintaining themselves by means of irrigation by river water (drawn from the Kurūkh stream) and underground channels (*kārīz*) has dropped from 500 to 89. He further expresses the hope that the region will prosper again under Shāh Rukh's auspicious rule.¹²⁵

In the late fifteenth century, Isfizārī describes the boroughs of Kurūkh and Pāshtān near Herat as one unit. According to his account, the region was characterized by a pleasant climate, good fruit and fine crops. A point of focal interest was the shrine of Khvāja Muḥammad 'Abbās, which mostly attracted pilgrims from Herat.¹²⁶

HARĀT-RŪD

Hāfiz-i Abrū describes Harāt-Rūd as a province well provided with water and notes *mushkān* apples, *ṭāyifī* grapes, nuts and almonds in particular among its produce. Further income derived from iron and lead mines as well as the production of antimony.¹²⁷ The most important town (*qaṣaba*) of the region was Auba, which was located south of the Davandar mountain and comprised 60 hamlets. Further up the Harī Rūd, the village of Chisht is mentioned as the shrine of Khvāja Quṭb al-Dīn Maudūd Chishtī (d. 527/1132–33) and the seat of his descendants.¹²⁸

Isfizārī adds that the fruit harvested in Harāt-Rūd was for the most part sent to Herat for sale. The local apples in particular were appreciated for their extended harvest and availability. Other local products were grape syrup (*dūshāb*), thin-skinned walnuts with large kernels (*jauz-i pur maghz-i tang-pūst*) as well as almonds (*bādāmhā-yi dastmāl*). Isfizārī further notes a nearby mountain yielding white, marble-like stone used for the manufacture of pillars, grave stones and tombs. This material was also employed for the plate adorning the grave of Khvāja 'Abdullāh Anṣārī at Gāzargāh.¹²⁹ Of particular attraction was a hot spring located at the foot of the mountain (Chashma-yi Kūbān), which was regularly visited by the Timurid rulers Abū Sa'īd and Ḥusain Bāyqarā, as well as the population from all over the region, for salutary purposes. Sultān Ḥusain Bāyqarā enlarged the small building his predecessor Abū Sa'īd had erected over the spring and added gardens in its vicinity. The favorite season for excursions to the hot spring was harvest time in fall, which allowed the visitors to enjoy the fine water, pleasant climate and local fruit simultaneously.¹³⁰

¹²⁵ Krawulsky 1982: 29–30; 1984: 28.

¹²⁶ Isfizārī I: 151. In the early nineteenth century, Kurukh figured in the Persian literature as the seat of the Naqshbandī *pīr* Šūfī Islām, who reportedly drew a large following from all over Khurāsān until he met with a violent death in battle during a confrontation between Herati and Qājār forces in 1222/1807. These developments will be discussed in Chapter 5.

¹²⁷ In 1833, Lal reported that this region was "celebrated for numerous mines of different metals, namely, sulphur, iron, copper, lead," which were worked until the early nineteenth century. The iron was used in Herat for the production of cooking utensils (Lal 1977: 167).

¹²⁸ Krawulsky 1982: 30–31; Krawulsky 1984: 28–9; Samizay 1981: 50. Chisht is already mentioned as a place of pilgrimage by the Kartid chronicler Saif al-Haravī (Saif al-Haravī 1943: 680). The *khānaqāh* was established by Abū Ishāq Shāmī (d. 329/941), who is said to have made a local Sufi, Abu Aḥmad Abdāl (d. 355/966), his successor (Böwering, "Češtīya," *E.Ir.* V: 333; Potter 1994: 86). For a description of the shrine complex of Chisht in the late eighteenth century, see T Hu 424–30, 447–55.

¹²⁹ Isfizārī I: 103. See also Ferrier 1857: 178. In 1858 Khanikoff visited a quarry located near Auba on the left bank of the Harī Rūd. He describes the local marble deposit as inexhaustible and praises the perfect whiteness and the fine grain of the huge slabs extracted there. Local villagers informed him that grey marble of inferior quality could be found throughout the mountain ridges south of the Harī Rūd, which also yielded iron, lead, vitriol, and sulphur. The range to the north of the river, by contrast, only contained copper mines (Khanikoff 1864: 370–2).

¹³⁰ Isfizārī I: 101–4. For descriptions of the thermal springs see also Khanikoff 1864: 373, Lal 1977: 165.

BĀDGHĪS

Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū notes the ample pastures of Bādghīs ready to feed a mighty confederacy (*ulūs*) and its numerous cattle. The region was replete with springs, rivers and irrigation channels.¹³¹ While Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū lists a number of villages in Bādghīs, including Langar-i Amīr Ghiyāth, Chihil Dukhtarān and Mārūchāq, he also points out that the Mongol invasion spelled disaster for the region. Alleging that Chingiz Khān's troops eradicated several towns numbering 20,000 to 30,000 inhabitants, he concludes his entry with the remark that Bādghīs has in part regained its former prosperity under the auspicious rule of his overlord Shāh Rukh.¹³²

In his usual ornate style, Isfizārī extolls Bādghīs for its beauty and fertility. Its rich soil yielded a hundredfold return even in regions lending themselves only to dry farming (*daimcha*). The yearly revenue assessment in grain amounted to 40,000 *kharvār*, in addition to other taxes in kind. Bādghīs served as the breadbasket of Herat and provided the entire city with a seemingly endless supply of wood for construction and heating purposes. Local cypresses (*āvars*) provided a light and durable variety of wood ideal for the production of beams. The pistachio tree was primarily used as fire wood, while its delicate pistachios (*pista-yi nuqlī*) were a coveted item of consumption among the city population.¹³³

Among the towns of Bādghīs, Isfizārī notes Langar-i Amīr Ghiyāth, which was founded by the Herati saint and confectioner (*halvā-furūsh*) Amīr Ghiyāth (d. 1421).¹³⁴ In Isfizārī's time the town contained two flourishing bazaars (*chahār sū*) with a total of 300 shops, which generated a revenue of 50,000 *kapakī dīnārs* annually. The local melons (*kharbuza-yi bābā shaikhī*) were highly esteemed for their sweetness and delicacy (*nāzukī*). Their great value can be estimated from the fact that they served as special gifts (*tuhfa va tabarruk*) to the notables (*akābir*) of Herat.¹³⁵ The second town mentioned by Isfizārī was likewise connected with a shrine founded or expanded upon in the Timurid period. Located on the left bank of the Kushk Rūd, the shrine of Chihil Dukhtarān attracted visitors from all over "that desert" (*ān bādīya*). As the spring floods made it dangerous to cross the river, Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā erected a bridge of burnt bricks to ease the passage.¹³⁶

Closer to Herat, Isfizārī describes the fort of Naratū located at the Zarmast Pass on the trade route from Herat to Marv via Bālā Murghāb as an important strategic position and the most secure fort in Khurāsān:

This fortress made of burnt bricks has been erected on a mountain peak of granite. A narrow path leads up to it, allowing no more than one passenger at a time. Apart from this path of half a *farsakh* (two miles) from the bottom of the mountain, there is no other

¹³¹ *Dar Bādghīs marā'ī bisyār ast chinānchi ulūsī mu'tabar bā chahārpāy-i bisyār dar-anjā tavānad būd va chashmasār va rūdkhāna va qanavāt-i bisyār dārad* (Krawulsky 1982: 31; Krawulsky 1984: 29). The fertility of the region and its ability to maintain a large army was already commented upon by Nizāmī 'Arūzī in the early twelfth century: "Bādghīs is the most lush pasture ground of Khurāsān and 'Irāq. There are about one thousand brooks yielding water and pasture, any one of which would suffice for an army." (*Bādghīs khurramtarīn-i chirā-khvārhā-yi Khurāsān va 'Irāq ast. Qarīb hazār nāv hast pur āb u 'alaf ki har yak lashkarī-rā tamām bāshad*) (*Chahār maqāla* 145; see also Browne 1921: 33).

¹³² Krawulsky 1982: 31–2.

¹³³ Isfizārī I: 133–6.

¹³⁴ The exact location of Langar-i Amīr Ghiyāth is not certain (Krawulsky 1984: 104). It possibly corresponds to the present-day village of Langar (34° 52' N 63°29' E). Bābur passed through Langar-i Amīr Ghiyāth after leaving Herat for Bādghīs in December 1506 (Thackston 1996: 239–40). This location is also mentioned in accounts of the early Safavid period (AM 186). Holdich depicts "Langar" as a settlement along the trade route from Herat to Marv via Kurūkh, Naratū, Bālā Murghāb and Mārūchāq (Holdich 1910: 248).

¹³⁵ Isfizārī I: 136–44.

¹³⁶ Isfizārī I: 145. See also Krawulsky 1984: 78–9; Yate 1900: 23. In December 1839, Abbott gave the following description of Chihil Dukhtarān, "A couple of mud huts near the left border of the valley were shewn me as the residence of forty Oozbeg virgins, and a little rude altar or tomb under the hills, as the place of worship to which they had resorted, when surprised by a force of some neighbouring tribes. In this extremity the virgins prayed for death, and were instantly translated" (Abbott 1843 I: 13–14).

access to the fort across the granite slopes. Located at a convenient distance of 1,000 yards (*gaz*), its battlement is situated comfortably beyond the harmful reach of arrows and catapults.¹³⁷

Isfizārī further illustrates the inaccessibility of the fort of Naratū by pointing to a siege which lasted for seven years despite the fact that all the inhabitants of the fort had succumbed to some illness at an early stage: A single cock crowing on the ramparts was sufficient to keep the entire enemy party at bay. The altitude and cool temperatures of Naratū are underlined by the fact that this region continued to supply the Timurid court with flowers well into summer, when the flowering season was long past in the lower regions.¹³⁸

While later authors briefly mention the strategic importance of the summer pastures (*yailāq*) in Bādghīs,¹³⁹ Isfizārī devotes ample place to the description of the favorite destinations of the Timurid court. Among them were the Yailāq-i Bābā Khākī, a meadow “rivalling the gardens of Paradise in freshness”, and Yailāq-i Hazār Mīsh, which turned into a “garden of tulips” in spring. Another area of recreation was located in Takht-i Malik, a pleasing meadow surrounded by snow-clad mountains. Isfizārī, who accompanied the royal camp to this pasture one summer, reports that one donkey load (*kharvār*) of snow, “untainted by the impurities of the world,” sold for five *dāng* or even less among the retinue.¹⁴⁰

MURGHĀB

According to Ḥāfīz-i Abrū, the province of Murghāb owed its prosperity in great part to Tīmūr Lang, who ordered numerous irrigation channels to be dug in the area after his conquest of Khurāsān. Panjdih and Mārūchāq on the Murghāb river are listed as the most important towns of the province. Ḥāfīz-i Abrū also mentions the flourishing market and gardens located at the Pul-i Tābān, which spanned the river south of Bālā Murghāb. The local agriculture was based on the cultivation of grain and on cattle breeding.¹⁴¹

Isfizārī’s description of the province of “Murghāb and Mārūchāq” is likewise concise: While the cattle, grain and sesame produced locally supplied the markets of Herat, the rice of Murghāb was appreciated all over Khurāsān for its whiteness and cleanness.¹⁴²

¹³⁷ Isfizārī I: 146. British observers described Nārātū as a flat-topped hill “crowned by an ancient fortress, with a scarp all round like the Mahratta forts on the trap hills of Deccan. The entire circuit of the top has been surrounded by lofty walls and towers, of which considerable remains are still standing. Looking from below... they appear to be of burnt brick, but a great part of them are of stone” (*Gaz. Afghanistan* III: 317).

¹³⁸ Isfizārī I: 147.

¹³⁹ HS III: 565, 579; Thackston 1994: 313, 321.

¹⁴⁰ Isfizārī I: 148–9. Takht-i Malik is a mountain located 15 miles north of the Harī Rūd (*Gaz. Afghanistan* III: 421; Krawulsky 1984: 130).

¹⁴¹ Krawulsky 1982: 32; Krawulsky 1984: 30–1.

¹⁴² Isfizārī I: 172. See also Krawulsky 1984: 109–10. In Nādir Shāh’s time, Mārūchāq is mentioned as a well peopled town, considering the poor quality of the water obtained in its environs (*Bayān-i vāqi* 64; Gladwin 1788: 29). In the 1820s, the British traveler Stirling was impressed by the fertility of the Murghāb valley: “The general appearance of the valley watered by the Moorgab[Murghāb river] is that of well cultivated but unenclosed fields, the soil being very prolific, and where the ground is not cultivated (which very seldom arises except from natural obstacles) it is covered by good grass which, from the vicinity of water, remains verdant for the whole year. The plain of the valley is studded by clusters of tents, and flocks of camels, sheep, goats, cows and oxen, feed on the pastures of the plains or ascend the clay hills where a scanty, but perhaps a sweet, herbage is found. Horses and ponies are also frequently seen pasturing. Winding irregularly through this fertile valley is seen the swift Moorgab which carries along a muddy stream which, however, in the higher parts of the valley, becomes somewhat clearer. This river washes or runs near the only places which show that man had made something like a permanent habitation in the erecting of walls from external offence. These are Bala Moorgab [Bālā Murghāb], Marchagah [Mārūchāq] and Panjdeh [Panjdih]...” (Stirling 1991: 248) Furthermore, Stirling reports that the Murghāb valley was avoided in summer, as the hot and humid climate there gave rise to fever and ague (Stirling 1991: 253–4). In January 1840 Abbott described the confluence of Murghāb and Kushk Rūd north of Panjdih in the following manner: “My route lay along the left bank of the Moorghaub, and I crossed by a bridge the dry channel of the Khooshk, at its junction with the former river... The Moorghaub is here a deep stream of very pure water, about sixty feet in breadth, and flowing in a channel, mined to the depth of thirty feet in the clay soil of the valley. The banks are very precipitous, and fringed with tamarisk and a few reeds. The valley itself is, at Punj Deeh [Panjdih], about nine miles in breadth, but narrow[s] as we advance. Here it is about three-fourths of a mile in breadth. On the east bank are sloping sandy hills, about 600 feet higher than the valley. On the west is the desert, a high, sandy plain overrun with low bushes and

GHŪR

According to Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, the first settlers in this mountainous region were the descendants of the mythical tyrant Žahhāk and gave rise to the Ghurid dynasty. While Ghūr contained no major town, Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū points to the existence of 100 inhabited villages, as well as 200–300 hamlets. This mountainous area did not lend itself to irrigation but was rich in springs.¹⁴³

Isfizārī comments that Ghūr has seen better times. In the days of old, the region claimed high buildings, beautiful castles and inaccessible forts. From the vantage point of a member of the urban elite, the remote position of Ghūr had proven both advantageous and disadvantageous. On the positive side, Isfizārī cites the fact that this province was never contaminated by unlawful innovations or indecency in the course of its history. As a drawback, he notes the stupidity and ignorance of the local population, which he considers a common characteristic of mountain dwellers. Isfizārī describes two points of interest in Ghūr: a spring, which only began to flow when the call to prayer was sounded, and a popular local shrine called Masjid-i Lūpāch. This mosque was famous for two baffling features. While the building was located on perfectly level ground, the ceiling inside seemed to be higher than the roof outside. What is more, the exact number of pillars, hovering around the number of 40, could not be fixed with certainty, no matter how often they were counted.¹⁴⁴

In Isfizārī's opinion, the most strategic point in Ghūr was held by the fort of Khaisār, which had proved impenetrable even to the Mongol army. He reports that Chingiz Khān's courtiers counseled their sovereign against attacking the fort, as the path leading up to it was as "narrow as the eye of a Turk" and as "tight as the critical gaze of a quibbler".¹⁴⁵ Fearing that a defeat might shatter his reputation of invincibility, Chingiz Khān allegedly refrained from a military confrontation and decided to award the government of Ghūr to the local ruler Rukn al-Dīn (d. 643/1245–46), the maternal grandfather of the founder of the Kartid dynasty Malik Shams al-Dīn (r. 643–675/1245–1276).¹⁴⁶

From the middle of the fifteenth century on, Ghūr and the adjacent regions of Garmsīr, Farāh and Isfizār suffered repeated incursions by Hazāras and Mongol freebooters called Nikūdarī. The situation improved in 884/1479–80 when Sultān Ḥusain Bāyqarā appointed the military leader Amīr Shujā' al-Dīn Dhū al-Nūn Arghūn as governor of Ghūr and Zamīndāvar. The Arghūn leader succeeded in bringing the Hazāras and Nikūdārīs to heel and widened his sphere of authority so as to include the neighboring provinces of Qandahār, Farāh, Sākhar-Tūlak, as well as the southern territories of Shāl, Mastūng, and Sībī.¹⁴⁷

In the early seventeenth century, the Safavid historian Iskandar Munshī describes Ghūr as the backdrop for the passage of the victorious army of Shāh 'Abbās I (r. 996–1038/1587–1629). One month after the conquest of Qandahār in Sha'bān 1031/June–July 1622, the royal army set out for Herat at the height of summer. In order to avoid the intense heat of the plains, the Shāh opted to move through Ghūr instead of using the highroad via Garmsīr and Farāh. Iskandar Munshī's account of this journey conveys vivid impressions of the terrain the Safavid army had to cope with. He depicts Ghūr as a place known in the entire world for the height of its mountains, the narrowness of its paths and its heavy fortifications. He attempts to capture the remoteness and inaccessibility of this region with the following verse:

It is a stony place with ascent following descent,

camel thorn, and extending to the mountain barrier of Persia. The valley of Moorghaub has once been well cultivated, but is now from Punj Deeh to Yoollataun [Yolotan] utterly deserted, owing to the distractions of the country" (Abbot 1843 I: 30).

¹⁴³ Krawulsky 1982: 33–4; 1984: 31–2.

¹⁴⁴ Isfizārī I: 357.

¹⁴⁵ *Rāhī dārad chūn chashm-i turkān tang va chūn nazar-i khurdabīnān bārīk* (Isfizārī I: 358). Ferrier, who visited the region in 1845, reports that a fort by this name was located "a few parasangs" northeast of Taivāra. He describes the citadel as "built of burnt brick, and situated on the top of a small hill, the side of which is so steep that there would be little chance of taking it by escalade" (Ferrier 1857: 250).

¹⁴⁶ Isfizārī I: 355–60. See also HS III: 368; Thackston 1994: 213.

¹⁴⁷ Isfizārī I: 343–4. See also HS IV: 170–1; Thackston 1994: 438–9.

And not even the bird of dread dares to fly there.¹⁴⁸

As the narrow paths barely allowed for one rider at a time, Shāh ‘Abbās was forced to split his army into several divisions. En route, his troops reduced the forts of some Fīrūzkūhī rebels, who, trusting the strength of their position, had assumed an independent bearing towards the Safavids. The difficulty of this passage is also reflected by the fact that it took the army from 24 Sha‘bān–12 Ramaẓān 1031/4–21 July 1622 to cover the distance between Qandahār and Herat.¹⁴⁹

Ibn Valī, who visited Herat in 1631, describes Ghūr as one of the four provinces (*vilāyāt*) of Herat. The region produced apples, figs, grapes, walnuts and almonds. It was famous for its figs, which, similar to the pistachios of Bādghīs and the pine nuts of Ghaznī, had a unique flavor and could not be found in like quality in any other country.¹⁵⁰

GHAJRISTĀN

Both Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū and Isfīzārī comment on the difficult terrain of Gharjistān. Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū reports that only the even surfaces of mountain tops allowed for the cultivation of grain in dry farming. Besides the trees planted by the local population on every other scratch of level land, there were numerous kinds of wild trees yielding pears (*amrūd*) and small apples (*dūlāna*). Moreover, the canyons of Gharjistān abounded with nut trees, while countless fig trees grew on the banks of the upper Murghāb river. This region formerly contained gold mines which were worked up to the time of the Saljūq ruler Sulṭān Sanjar.¹⁵¹

Isfīzārī, who lavishes detailed descriptions on the delights of the immediate environs of Herat, only offers a sparing account of Gharjistān. He describes the region as a

secure province with mighty mountains, as well as strong fortresses and borders. It has good fruit, such as apples, pears, figs, pomegranates and walnuts. The local population, hardy mountaineers of harsh disposition, are given to hunting.¹⁵²

The first Mughal emperor, Bābur, noted the local pastures as an important strategic feature of Gharjistān. Furthermore, he commented on a peculiarity that this region held in common with Gurzīvān and Darra-yi Sūf further to the northeast. In all these regions, the forts were located in the valleys rather than on the mountain tops:

The grasslands are mostly in the glens, but unlike that on other mountains, the grass is a single type—suitable for horses and sheep. There are not many trees or much juniper covering, but there is a lot of game. The mountaintops, where planting is done, are flat enough that one can run a horse on them. The ravines are valley strongholds, most precipitous and inaccessible from above. It is odd that mountain strongholds are generally located in high places, but in these mountains they are in the low-lying areas.¹⁵³

In the early seventeenth century, when Gharjistān served as an area of withdrawal and as a source of soldiers for the Tuqai-Timurid princes vying for the control of Balkh, this region was described as a “well protected place with sturdy forts”.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁸ *Sanglākhī ast pur nishīb u farāz, tāyir-i vahm kam kunad parvāz* (IM 1619).

¹⁴⁹ IM 1619–20. See also Tumanovich 1989: 149–50.

¹⁵⁰ Khan 1993: 14–15. Akhmedov does not mention the figure “four” but merely describes Ghūr as “one of the districts of Herat” (Akhmedov 1977: 63).

¹⁵¹ Krawulsky 1982: 33–5; Krawulsky 1984: 31–2.

¹⁵² *Vilāyatī ast matīn bā kūhhā-yi muḥkam, va ḥuṣūn va thughūr-i ustuvār dārad, va mīvahā-yi khūb az sīb va amrūd va anjīr va anār, va jauz bisyār az ānjā hāṣil mīshavad Va mardum-i anjā ba-ghāyat sakht jān va kūhrau va durushtkhūy bāshand, va nakhchīr-i bisyār said mīkunand* (Isfīzārī I: 365).

¹⁵³ Thackston 1996: 182.

¹⁵⁴ IM 1153–55. See also Tumanovich 1989: 144–5.

SĀKHAR-TŪLAK

Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū mentions the strong fortress located in this *vilāyat*, which he considers equal to that of Khaisār in Ghūr. Like Khaisār, this fortress served as a stronghold of the Kartid dynasty. Among the dependencies of this region, Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū refers to thirty to forty significant villages (*dih*) and five hundred hamlets (*mazraʿa*).¹⁵⁵

ISFIZĀR (SABZAVĀR-I HARĀT, PRESENT-DAY SHINDAND)

Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū describes Isfizār as a province well supplied with water drawn from the Adraskan river and conducted by *kārīz*. In addition to the main town of Isfizār (also known as Sabzavār and Sabzār later on), Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū mentions 30–40 villages and 50 hamlets. Among the products of the region he lists pomegranates and the wood and berries yielded by the ash-tree (*dirakht-i banafsh*).¹⁵⁶

When Isfizārī depicts his hometown almost a century later, he notes that the entire province has undergone considerable destruction during the Nikūdarī and Hazāra incursions of 1447–1470 and a period of unrest preceding the composition of his work in the early 1490s.¹⁵⁷ He observes that the town of Isfizār was founded earlier than Herat and estimates it to be 3,000 years old. Prior to its decline, Isfizār reportedly boasted 1,200 shops and a citadel. Isfizārī praises the district (*bulūk*) of Zāval¹⁵⁸ for the abundance of irrigation water, which fed 80 *kārīz* carrying no less than one mill (*āsiyāvār*) of water each: “On every one of these *qanāts* there is a flourishing village and a guarded fort, some of which have fallen into disrepair while others are inhabited.” Among the local specialties he mentions the jujube trees (*unnāb*) grown all over the region, a species of winter pears (*nāshpātī-yi zimistānī*) unrivalled in its delicacy, and the thin-skinned *ṣāhibī* grape, which split into parts if accidentally dropped to the ground.¹⁵⁹

SHĀFILĀN (SHĀHFĪLĀN), AZĀB, DĀMAN-I KŪH

Combining the regions of Shāfilān, Azāb, Dāman-i Kūh and Yaḥyābād,¹⁶⁰ this province was located east and south of Herat. According to Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, it produced apples (*sīb*) and walnuts (*jauz*).¹⁶¹ Isfizārī mentions “Karūkha” as a flourishing market in this region,¹⁶² as well as an iron mine supplying the needs of Herat. A major resort was a hot spring known as Chashma-yi Safid, over which Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā had erected a “pleasing building”. In the springtime, it attracted visitors from the entire region: “Some come to enjoy the gardens and ponds, while others seek relief from ailments. [The favorite season] is spring, when the abundance of greenery and fragrant herbs excites the jealousy of the gardens of Paradise.” Another important characteristic of the region was the horticulture yielding fine fruit, such as apples (*sīb*), apricots (*zardālū*), two varieties of pears (*nāshpātī*, *amrūd*), and peaches (*shaftālū*).¹⁶³

KHVĀF

Among the industries of Khvāf, Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū lists an active iron mine. Another source of income was sericulture based on the mulberry trees (*dirakht-i tūt*) thriving in the region. The local agriculture relied mostly on *kārīz*, and the region was known for its production of cotton (*panba*) and pomegranates.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁵ Krawulsky 1982: 35; 1984: 33.

¹⁵⁶ Krawulsky 1982: 35–6; 1984: 33.

¹⁵⁷ Isfizārī I: 118, 343–4.

¹⁵⁸ Zāval (33° 22' N 62° 17' E) was located nine miles northeast of the town of Isfizār (*Gaz. Afghanistan* III: 433).

¹⁵⁹ Isfizārī I: 115–17.

¹⁶⁰ According to Adamec, Yaḥyābād (34° 13' N 62° 46' O) was located six miles west of Mārva (*Gaz. Afghanistan* III: 429).

¹⁶¹ Krawulsky 1982: 36; 1984: 34.

¹⁶² According to Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, this town was called Karūkha (Krawulsky 1982: 36; 1984: 34, 101).

¹⁶³ Isfizārī I: 104–5.

¹⁶⁴ Krawulsky 1982: 37; 1984: 34–5.

According to Isfizārī, the pure ground of Khvāf had always brought forth great worldly and spiritual leaders: “It seems as though this noble place has given rise to the art and the rules of rhetoric.”¹⁶⁵ Among the great *shaikhs* of Khvāf, he mentions the Naqshbandī Zain al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Khvāfī (d. 838/1434–35), who counted 30,000 learned men (*dānishmand*) among his disciples.¹⁶⁶ Another important Timurid personage was Khvāja Ghiyāth al-Dīn Pīr Aḥmad, who served as Shāh Rukh’s *vazīr* from 1417–1447. Isfizārī notes Pīr Aḥmad’s charitable deeds, in particular the Madrasa al-Ghiyāthiyya he built in the village of Khargird¹⁶⁷ and the mausoleum he erected at the grave of Zain al-Dīn Tāybādī (see below).¹⁶⁸

BĀKHARZ

Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū and Isfizārī dwell on the natural setting of Bākharz and establish a connection between the unique environmental properties of the region and the inimitability of its products. According to Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, Bākharz had a pleasant climate and flourishing villages, such as Tāybād, Kārīz, and Riza. Relying on *kārīz* and river water for irrigation, its orchards yielded all sorts of fruit. One specialty was *dūshāb-i āfiābī*, a grape syrup indistinguishable in taste from honey.¹⁶⁹ Isfizārī adds melons (*kharbuza*), walnuts (*jauz*), almonds and pears (*nāshpātī*) to the list of local products. He particularly praises a local specialty called *ḥalvā-yi nāṭif* for its delicacy and sweetness. According to Isfizārī’s enthusiastic description, this sweet dish was unique to the village of Riza: Even if the local ingredients were exported to other areas any *ḥalvā* produced outside of Riza could not reach the quality of the original.¹⁷⁰

Later authors likewise attest to the excellence of the local produce. In the early seventeenth century Ibn Valī of Balkh reports that the melons of the village of Kārīz were “famous all over the world” and were even exported to India. Like Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, he mentions the syrup produced locally.¹⁷¹ In 1615, the Mughal Emperor Jahāngīr (r. 1014–1037/1605–1627) praised the melons of Kārīz as the best in Khurāsān.¹⁷²

The second local “product” the Timurid authors elaborate on are the great men hailing from the region. Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū singles out the Saljūq *vazīr* ‘Alī b. Ḥasan Bākharzī (d. 467/1075) and the *shaikh al-mashāyikh* Saif al-Dīn Bākharzī (d. 659/1261) as exemplars of achievement.¹⁷³ Isfizārī enlarges upon Saif al-Dīn Bākharzī’s saintly standing. A disciple of Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 1221), he had a wide following in Transoxiana and was buried in Bukhārā.¹⁷⁴ Another “saint of this region”¹⁷⁵ was Zain al-Dīn Abū Bakr

¹⁶⁵ Isfizārī I: 187.

¹⁶⁶ Isfizārī I: 207–8.

¹⁶⁷ Khargird is located two miles southeast of the present-day town of Khvāf on the Mashhad-Herat road. The Madrasa al-Ghiyāthiyya was built in 848/1444 (O’Kane 1976: 79).

¹⁶⁸ Isfizārī I: 218–19. The mausoleum was finished in 848/1444 (O’Kane 1979: 94).

¹⁶⁹ Krawulsky 1982: 38; 1984: 35.

¹⁷⁰ Isfizārī I: 227–8.

¹⁷¹ Akhmedov 1977: 20.

¹⁷² *Tuzuk-i Jahāngīrī* I: 270, quoted in Dale 1994: 14. The melons of Kārīz continued to enjoy considerable fame well into the nineteenth century. Arthur Conolly, who traveled from Mashhad to Herat in September 1830 but did not visit the village itself, reported that it was “remarkable for the excellence of melons grown there, two of which, we were assured by many persons, were not a bad load for a mule, and which, a man protested to us, were so full of juice, that if a rider galloped his horse within two miles of the ground in which they were cultivated they would burst!” (Conolly 1834 I: 415). In 1845, the French traveler Ferrier, however, observed that the once-famous variety of melons had ceased to exist: “The melons of this locality were in ancient days considered the best in Asia, and were reserved for the courts of Teheran, Kabul and Delhi: but the village having been destroyed at the close of the last century, and consequently deserted, the seed was lost, or degenerated from change of soil. Kariz has recently been repopulated by Hazarāhs [Hazāras], who are taking pains to re-establish the reputation of its melons—judging by the two I ate, they have not yet succeeded (Ferrier 1857: 138).”

¹⁷³ Krawulsky 1982: 38. According to Faṣṭḥ-i Khvāfī, Saif al-Dīn Bākharzī was born in Sha‘bān 576/December 1180–January 1181 (*Mujmal-i faṣṭḥī* II: 763).

¹⁷⁴ Isfizārī I: 223–5.

¹⁷⁵ *Az ahl-i vilāyat-i ān vilāyat* (Isfizari I: 225).

Tāybādī (d. 791/1389).¹⁷⁶ According to Isfizārī, he commanded the obedience of his contemporary Tīmūr Lang, who personally swept the threshold of his convent and professed to feel the same kind of awe in his presence other saints (*buzurg*) typically experienced when meeting him, the worldly leader.¹⁷⁷ Zain al-Dīn Abū Bakr Tāybādī owed his spiritual development to his connection with another saintly family of the region, Aḥmad-i Jām (see below) and his progeny. He received instruction from Aḥmad-i Jām's descendant Khvāja Mu'īn al-Dīn Jāmī (d. 783/1381–82)¹⁷⁸ and attained his spiritual rank by walking barefoot from Tāybād to pray at a distance from Aḥmad-i Jām's grave for more than seven years, drawing a bit closer to the tomb with each pilgrimage.¹⁷⁹

KŪSŪYA (PRESENT-DAY KUHSĀN)

Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū reports that the orchards and vineyards grouped around the town (*qaṣaba*) of Kūsūya derived their water from the final part of the westerly stretch of the Harī Rūd. Depending on *kārīz* for their water supply, the more distant hamlets (*mazāri*) produced grain, which was ground in the local windmills.¹⁸⁰

In his description of Kūsūya, Isfizārī mentions historical and economic features. The first part of his account focuses on the heroic resistance the local population put up against the Transoxianan troops under the leadership of the Chaghatai sovereign Du'ā b. Burāq (r. 1282–1306/7) in 695/1295–96.¹⁸¹ Such defiance bewildered the Mongol general, who found himself unable to take the “decrepit four walls” of the fort of Kūsūya with his army of 90,000 men. At the height of his frustration, Du'ā attempted to smoke out the inhabitants of Kūsūya by gathering all the available wood in a radius of five *farsakh* (20 miles), piling it up around the walls, and setting it on fire. When even this conflagration failed to secure the desired result, Du'ā turned his back on Kūsūya and directed his steps to Fūshanj.¹⁸²

In the late fifteenth century Kūsūya stood out for its abundant production of melons (*kharbuza*, *hindivāna*). Isfizārī illustrates the unique quality and quantity of melons produced there by stating that they were exported 100 *farsang* (400 miles) in every direction and supplied the demand of the whole of Khurāsān. Another specific quality of the melons produced in this region was their impressive size, deliciousness and wholesomeness. According to Isfizārī, it was quite possible for an assembly to consume an entire donkey load of them, the sound of the ongoing cutting of the ripe fruit filling the night air:

This piece of earth has been blessed by God in a way that defies description. For example, it produces a sufficient amount of melons to supply all of Khurāsān year after year. The next melon harvest arrives shortly afterwards so that no shortage occurs. Its *kharbuza* weigh 10 *mann* each, its watermelons (*hindivāna*) 20 *mann*. [Both kinds are] of perfect deliciousness and sweetness... The *kharbuza* is exported in every direction to a distance of 100 *farsang*. It is clear that no fruit is consumed in greater amounts than the *kharbuza*, as there is nobody who would not fancy this delicious and sweet fruit... I have heard about people who eat an entire *kharvār* of *kharbuza* a day. Those who have spent the night there say that the sound of cutting and splitting of the melons is at times so loud that it is impossible to sleep. As far as the eye can reach, the desert is covered with *kharbuza* which look like

¹⁷⁶ According to Faṣṭḥ-i Khvāfī, Zain al-Dīn Abū Bakr Tāybādī died on 30 Muḥarram 791/29 January 1389 (*Mujmal-i faṣṭḥī* III: 131).

¹⁷⁷ *Va amīr-i buzurg bā khavāṣṣ-i khud farmūda ki har buzurgī-rā ki kinār giriftam ū larzīd va maulānā Saif al-Dīn [Zain al-Dīn?] Abū Bakr-rā ki kinār giriftam man larzīdam* (Isfizārī I: 226).

¹⁷⁸ For details on Khvāja Mu'īn al-Dīn Jāmī (d. 783/1381–82) see Khvānd Amīr (HS III: 386; Thackston 1994: 223).

¹⁷⁹ Isfizārī I: 226–7. Faṣṭḥ-i Khvāfī recounts an anecdote on an exchange between Zain al-Dīn Abū Bakr Tāybādī and the last Kartid ruler Ghiyāth al-Dīn II Pīr 'Alī (r. 772–791/1370–1389) in the year 780/1378–79, according to which the saint predicted Tīmūr Lang's conquest of Herat. When Zain al-Dīn Abū Bakr Tāybādī learned that Ghiyāth al-Dīn II was building fortifications to ward off Tīmūr Lang, he warned him that God-sent afflictions could not be averted by means of walls (*Mujmal-i faṣṭḥī* III: 113).

¹⁸⁰ Krawulsky 1982: 38–9; Krawulsky 1984: 35.

¹⁸¹ For these events at the beginning of Ghāzān Khān's reign (r. 694–703/1295–1304) see HS III: 146–7; Thackston 1994: 82. Khanikoff reports that Tīmūr Lang gave Kūsūya to his sixth wife (d. 844/1441), who erected a *madrassa* and mosque there (Khanikoff 1864: 358).

¹⁸² Isfizārī I: 121–30.

herds of sheep asleep on the ground. If the seeds of this melon are sown anywhere outside the region of Kūsūya and its environs... the melons do not attain the same delicious flavor and sweetness.¹⁸³

FŪSHANJ (PRESENT-DAY ZINDAJĀN)

According to Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, Fūshanj was an ancient city, perhaps even older than Herat. Apart from Fūshanj, which he describes as a “big town with a market”, he also mentions Qūriyān (later Ghūriyān), Barnābād and Shakībān as major settlements. Located six *farsakh* (24 miles) west of Herat, the oasis of Fūshanj drew its irrigation water from the Harī Rūd. Its numerous gardens yielded various kinds of fruits, in particular grapes which were dried to produce raisins (*kishmish*, *mavīz*). The region was also rich in pine trees (*nāzhū*) and cypresses (‘*ar*’-‘*ar*’). A peculiar attraction was a mountain near the shrine called Ribāt-i Pay, which produced bird-shaped stones of various sizes.¹⁸⁴

Isfizārī traces the foundation and name of Fūshanj to one of the sons of the legendary Turanian king Afrāsiyāb.¹⁸⁵ He describes Ribāt-i Pay as a point of pilgrimage located on the nearby Dū Shākh mountain, which owed its existence to marks in the rock venerated as Abraham’s footsteps.¹⁸⁶ Isfizārī confirms Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū’s account of the bird-shaped stones to be found there, but he also mentions two further attractions. The river skirting the Dū Shākh mountain lent a special freshness to the region. In the spring, many visitors came to enjoy the scenery created by an abundance of blooming tulips (*lāla*), poppies (*shaqāyiq*), Judas-trees (*arghavān*) and fragrant plants (*rayāhīn*), the beauty of which conveyed the impression of a delicate Chinese painting or even the meadows of Paradise. In addition, the purgative properties of the local water invited the health-minded to indulge in a three-day internal cleansing in spring and early summer.¹⁸⁷

In the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Fūshanj lost its position as a local administrative center and was increasingly eclipsed by the neighboring town of Ghūriyān, located at a ten-hour ride or ten *farsang* away from Herat.¹⁸⁸ This shift in political gravity is discernable from the middle of the sixteenth century on. Writing in 1550, Amīr Mahmud b. Khvānd Amīr uses the term Fūshanj-u-Ghūriyān.¹⁸⁹ A Safavid document of 1580 designates the region as “Fūshanj-i Ghūriyān”.¹⁹⁰ When Shāh ‘Abbās II (r. 1052–1077/1642–1666) passed through this area during his military campaign against Qandahār in the fall of 1648, Ghūriyān was mentioned as the last major station before Herat. According to the author of the *‘Abbās-nāma*, this location was distinguished by the pleasantness of its climate, the sweetness of its water, the freshness of its meadows, and the abundance of wild animals suitable for hunting.¹⁹¹

JĀM

Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū notes the pleasant climate of Jām and the great variety of fruit produced there. Its agriculture was primarily based on *kārīz* but some water was derived from the local river.¹⁹² Of central importance was the shrine of Aḥmad-i Jām (d. 536/1141), which had already enjoyed the patronage of the Kartid rulers.¹⁹³

¹⁸³ Isfizārī I: 131–2.

¹⁸⁴ Krawulsky 1982: 39–40; 1984: 35–6.

¹⁸⁵ Isfizārī I: 119. See also Mīr Khvānd VII: 507.

¹⁸⁶ The twelfth-century author ‘Abd al-Rahmān Fāmī quotes a *hadīth* which ascribes two mosques to Abraham, viz., the *masjid-i ḥarām* in Mecca and Ribāt-i Pay (Fāmī 153). In the fourteenth century, Saif al-Haravī describes Ribāt-i Pay as a place of pilgrimage (Saif al-Haravī 1943: 172). Ribāt-i Pay continues to enjoy popularity as a point of pilgrimage today but is now understood to represent the footprints of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (Krawulsky 1984: 119; Samizay 1981: 36–7).

¹⁸⁷ Isfizārī I: 119–20.

¹⁸⁸ *Tārīkh-i ‘abbāsī* quoted in Roemer 1939:11; the distance between Herat and Ghūriyān is variously described as eight or ten *farsang* (*Dhū al-qarnain* 265; KR 62; ST 74; McChesney/Khorrami 2013 I: 121; Taylor 1858c: 934).

¹⁸⁹ AM 318.

¹⁹⁰ Tumanovich 1989: 188–9. Le Strange is of the opinion that Ghūriyān was built on the ruins of Fūshanj subsequent to its destruction by Tīmūr Lang in 783/1381 (Le Strange 1905: 411).

¹⁹¹ *‘Abbās-nāma* 108.

¹⁹² The Jām Rūd is a tributary of the Harī Rūd.

Isfizārī devotes ample space to a description of “Zhanda Pīl” Aḥmad-i Jām’s illumination, his stature as a saint, and his spiritual connection with another famous Sufi of the region, namely Abū al-Sa‘īd b. Abī al-Khair (d. 1049) of Maihana. Abū al-Sa‘īd is said to have foreseen Aḥmad-i Jām’s unique spiritual accomplishments and to have reserved his cloak – worn by 22 shaikhs and representing his sainthood (*vilāyat*) – for this tall and blue-eyed youth from Jām.¹⁹⁴ Isfizārī depicts the shrine complex around Aḥmad-i Jām’s tomb as “formidable and blessed beyond comparison”.¹⁹⁵

Another famous person from Jām was the great Persian poet and Isfizārī’s contemporary ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī.¹⁹⁶ Isfizārī claims to have been inspired and assisted by this celebrated personage in the composition of his work. During the night following his first effort at writing, Jāmī appeared to him in his sleep and encouraged him by placing two big watermelons in his arms and feeding him with the flesh and juice of a third one. Of the agricultural produce of Jām, Isfizārī praises the local “bābā shaikhī” melon (*kharbuza-yi bābā shaikhī*), the sweetness of which was not even matched in Paradise and inenarrable: *Tā kasī nakhurad nadānad*. Its high quality attracted the sultans and notables (*akābir*) of Herat, who traveled to Jām in camel litters at harvest time. Another local product was woollen cloth (*pashm-i kupankī*), which sold for “two hundred to three hundred *ḍīnār*” and was exported to other regions. One of the peculiarities of the region was a spring which froze in the summer and stayed warm in the winter.¹⁹⁷

ZĀVA-MAḤVILĀT

Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū sketches the extent of the westernmost province of Timurid Herat as follows: It was bounded by Jām and Bākhār in the east, by Quhistān in the west, by Nīshāpūr in the north, and Khvāf in the south. It consisted of flourishing villages (*dih*) and had numerous orchards, which produced all kinds of fruit.¹⁹⁸ The major town (*qaṣaba*) in this *vilāyat* was Zāva. Among its 39 dependencies, Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū mentions the village at the “holy tomb of Shaikh Quṭb al-Dīn Ḥaidar” (d. ca. 613/1216–17).¹⁹⁹

CONCLUSION

Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū’s and Isfizārī’s descriptions of the subdivisions of Herat provide insights into a specific instant of mapping. Not only do these authors portray the basic lay of the land; they unfold a vivid tapestry combining different strands of information concerning the Timurid realm. The portrayal of the natural setting is interwoven with data reflecting royal intervention. The discussion of the climate, the local water and its

¹⁹³ Krawulsky 1982: 40; 1984: 36. Saif al-Haravī described the grave as a place of pilgrimage in Kartid times (Saif al-Haravī 1943: 172, 553, 688). For an overview of the structural history of the shrine, see Golombek 1971.

¹⁹⁴ Isfizārī I: 231–2.

¹⁹⁵ Isfizārī I: 241. Looked after by the descendants of Aḥmad-i Jām, this grave continued to attract pilgrims well into the nineteenth century. In the summer of 1267/1851, an Iranian envoy to Herat reported that the grave was sought out for asylum by the local population to protest against depredations committed by neighboring tribes (Za‘farānlū 1968: 27). During his visit in September 1858, Khanikoff noted that the shrine complex was in a state of ruin but he also noted the impressive dimensions of the shrine: “A beautiful entrance portal, surmounted by a square tower of great height and flanked by two mosques, called Goumbezi Sefid and Mesjidi Kirmani respectively, leads into an elongated courtyard extending from north to south... Opposite the entrance, close to [yet another] mosque and in the shade of an immense pistachio tree, there is the resting place of the shaikh. His grave is surrounded by those of his descendants, and each of these funerary monuments is encircled by a balustrade. A large and lofty mosque adjoining the northern wall of the courtyard separates it from an enclosure of equal size, which was formerly lined with all kinds of pious establishments, such as hospices, lodgings for pilgrims, etc. But now it is no more than a heap of ruins. Outside of the first court, next to the southern wall, there is a small Khanaka [*khānaqāh*], or dervish convent, the only building which was erected in the lifetime of the shaikh... (Khanikoff 1864: 354).”

¹⁹⁶ For a later account of Jāmī’s life and attainments, see Khvānd Amīr (HS IV: 337–8; Thackston 1994: 519).

¹⁹⁷ Isfizārī I: 235–42.

¹⁹⁸ Krawulsky 1982: 41; 1984: 37. In the early twentieth century, Sykes described Maḥvilāt as a fertile district, “the centre of a thriving silk industry, and... famous for its melons” (Sykes 1906: 564).

¹⁹⁹ Krawulsky 1982: 41; 1984: 37. There is conflicting information on Quṭb al-Dīn Ḥaidar’s date of death (Tahsin Yasici, “Qoṭb-al-Dīn Ḥaidar Zāvi,” *E.Ir.*). Faṣīḥ-i Khvāfī reports that he died in 613/1216–17 at the age of 110 (*Mujmal-i faṣīḥī* II: 288).

properties is linked to a depiction of irrigation methods and the resulting agricultural production. In a more immediate sense, the landscape figures as backdrop for courtly activities. Water is mentioned in terms of its healthiness (hot springs, water cures), and the local produce (notably melons, grapes and flowers) is referred to in terms of gift giving and conspicuous consumption among the elite. The same process of incorporation may also be seen at work in the description of other aspects of the scenery. The local meadows are cast as strategic zones and as a verdant setting for the display of court life. While Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū primarily views the pastures in terms of military logistics, Isfizārī focuses on their delights and their suitability for royal pastimes. The concurrence of natural factors and acts of royal patronage is further exemplified by the linkage between the inherent strength of mountain fastnesses and the maintenance of equally sturdy forts. This creates the impression that Timurid rule matches, and in effect enhances, the advantageous topography of Herat and its provinces.

Isfizārī's lyrical account of the rich agricultural production as exemplified by huge ripe melons establishes a direct connection between Timurid rule and the peace and prosperity prevailing in the province of Herat. While the sheep-sized melons of Kūsūya and their abundant harvest illustrate the rich culinary tableau of the Herat region, they also provide a powerful image of the fertility of the soil and the affluence fostered by Timurid rule. As employed by Isfizārī, this agricultural crop symbolizes the wealth arising in the well-governed realm of the Timurids and thus also becomes productive in literary terms. Bursting with sweetness, the *kharbuza* itself signifies profusion and thus fits into a larger narrative scheme contrasting the destruction wrought by invading armies with the protection afforded by the established dynasty. The association of benign rule with the prolificacy of nature and a general state of harmony can also be observed in other literary settings. Losensky has interpreted 'Abdī Bēg Shīrāzī's celebration of the fruits produced around Shāh Ṭahmāsp I's palace complex near Qazvīn as an "ideological program" to create a linkage between the symbols of worldly rule and the fecundity of the natural environment. In the light of the mapping of Herat and Khurāsān by Timurid authors, it comes as no surprise that 'Abdī Bēg's *Jannat al-athmār* includes a 120-verse poem that describes 19 melon varieties by name and enumerates the melon-growing areas in Iran.²⁰⁰

From the perspective of the two Timurid authors, Herat represents a point of gravity within the wider setting from several points of view. Firstly, there is the relation between space and worldly power. The status of Herat province is reflected by impregnable fortifications, which physically convey dominion and reflect the military control exerted by the Timurid rulers. The most obvious symbol of royal power was the Kartid citadel of Herat, the Qal'a-yi Ikhtiyār al-Dīn, which was reinforced by Shāh Rukh in the early fifteenth century. Isfizārī demonstrates the grand proportions of this building by placing its sky-scraping turrets in immediate vicinity of the signs of the zodiac. Yet royal authority also radiates out in a horizontal fashion and manifests itself in an outer ring of smaller but equally invincible fortresses guarding the access to Bādghīs, Ghūr and Gharjistān. Secondly, Herat is pictured as a seat of piety and learning. The spiritual repute of its great sons extends far beyond the Timurid realm and in turn develops a gravitational pull, attracting scholars from all over the world.

The nexus of royal power and space was generally articulated in terms of protection. As seen above, one recurrent theme is the security the rulers provide for the cities, whereby they enhance the economic well-being of the region. A second, related theme highlights the beneficial role of the rulers as patrons of piety and learning. Both aspects find their expression in the construction of mighty buildings: Impregnable fortifications shield the population from physical harm, while lofty mosques and *madāris* enhance contact with the divine and foster the religiosity of the population. This complex of royal protection serves to cast the ruler as God's shadow on earth: The guardianship great kings offer to their subjects fulfils a function parallel to the protection God extends to creation. The protective field produced by the beneficial activities of a just ruler was already captured in Kartid times by the term *khiṭṭa-yi maḥrūsa*, "protected region". From Safavid

²⁰⁰ Losensky 2003: 1–3, 17–19.

times on, the term *mamālik-i maḥrūsa*, the “guarded domains” gained currency. This term survived well into the nineteenth century and was employed to denote the territories forming part of a royal domain.²⁰¹

Aside from projecting the space around Herat as a function of royal power, Timurid accounts display a pronounced awareness of sacred realms. From this perspective, Herat’s favorable climate derives from its proximity to Heaven, and this proximity is in turn enhanced by the religiosity of its population in general and the erudition of the religious leadership in particular. To this purpose, Isfizārī quotes a *ḥadīth* according to which Herat is closest to Heaven among the cities of Khurāsān, and consequently enjoys the most favorable natural conditions, a temperate climate with little putrefaction, pleasant fruit, wholesome water, as well as deeply-rooted and flourishing trees.²⁰² This type of reasoning is brought to full circle by the conclusion that Herat per se is the source of the religious sciences and attracts seekers of knowledge and truth from all over the world.²⁰³ Contact between the sacred and worldly realms was negotiated by the Timurid rulers, who afforded military protection to the population in general, patronized local shrines and *madāris*, and gave shelter to the pious. Within this force field, the greatest pull was once again exercised by Herat. Another focal point on the Timurid “map” was Imām Riżā’s shrine in Mashhad, which, according to Hāfiz-i Abrū, was one of the “great cities” of Khurāsān and attracted pilgrims from as far as Egypt and Syria.²⁰⁴

In the countryside, a number of holy places, such as Abraham’s footprint near Fūshanj and the shrine of Chihil Dukhtarān in Bādghīs, represented nodes on the map of sacred realms.²⁰⁵ Of particular relevance was the authority wielded by local saints and their graves. Sufi manuals, such as the oldest Persian treatise, *Kashf al-maḥjūb* by Hujwīrī (d. 1073), described the saints as governors of God’s kingdom.²⁰⁶ Their spiritual authority translated into claims to territorial authority. Sainthood, denoted by the term *vilāyat*, (divine) “friendship”, was associated with the term for worldly rule over a given region (*vilāyat*) and thus implied the jurisdiction over a specific territory.²⁰⁷ Within the network of shrines around Herat, the graves of Khvāja ‘Abdullāh Anṣārī (d. 1089), Khvāja Maudūd Chishtī (d. 1132–33), Aḥmad-i Jām (d. 1141), and Zain al-Dīn Abū Bakr Tāybādī (d. 1389) constituted important coordinates. The saintly map sketched by Isfizārī was informed by notions of spiritual relatedness and legacy transcending time. He explained the relationship between Abū al-Sa‘īd b. Abī al-Khair (d. 1049) of Maihana, Aḥmad-i Jām and Zain al-Dīn Abū Bakr Tāybādī in terms of spiritual succession. Nevertheless, this transmission of authority also involved a physical dimension. Aḥmad-i Jām assumed his position by traveling to Maihana and donning Abū al-Sa‘īd’s cloak, Zain al-Dīn Abū Bakr Tāybādī was instructed by Aḥmad-i Jām to seek salvation on his grave.

The influence exercised by holy men was not only measured by the number of disciples they attracted; it clearly comprised a territorial component. Traveling *shaikhs* had to seek permission (*dastūr*) before entering the realm of the local saint. The language employed to describe the scope of spiritual leadership at times mirrored military usage, including a figurative change of guards or the planting of banners.²⁰⁸ In Timurid times, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī highlighted the connection between saintly power and territorial authority by recounting an anecdote on Khvāja Maudūd’s reaction to Aḥmad-i Jām’s visit to his base in Chisht, which

²⁰¹ See, for instance, *Durra-yi nādīra* 288; Kāzīm I: 195, II: 787, III: 1194; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 59; *Safarnāma-yi Bukhārā* 60; Sāravī 282, 285; TA (Humāyūn) 68, 71–2, 92, 212–13, 234; TRSN X: 479.

²⁰² *Va chūnīn gūyad ‘Abd al-Razzāq ki nazdīktarīn-i shahrhā-yi Khurāsān ba-āsmān Harāt ast va az ān sabab havā-yi ān mu’tadil ast va ‘ufūnat-i ū kam. Va mīvahā-yi ū khūsh va ābhā-yi ū guvāranda va dirakhtān-i ū bīkh-āvar va bālānda* (Isfizārī I: 98).

²⁰³ *Va ḥālā sharaf va maziya-i īn shahr... ān ast ki manba’-i ‘ulūm-i dūniya va maḥall-i zuḥūr va istikshāf-i qavānīn-i yaqīniya ast. Chinānki az tamāmī-yi rū-yi zamīn ṭullāb-i ‘ilm va ḥaqāyiq va suyyād-i funūn va faẓā’il rūy badīn nuqta-yi pākīza dārānd* (Isfizārī I: 99–100).

²⁰⁴ Krawulsky 1982: 96–99.

²⁰⁵ Isfizārī II: 78–9.

²⁰⁶ Hujwīrī 1911: 213.

²⁰⁷ Simon Digby notes that such claims were “actively and vigorously [sic] pursued by Shaikhs in Khurasan in the eleventh and twelfth centuries” (Digby 1986: 63).

²⁰⁸ Meier 1976: 414.

showed that local saints or their followers resorted to the force of arms to keep rivals out of their home territory.²⁰⁹

While Timurid sources yield considerable detail concerning the economic setting and grand buildings as expressions of royal power, the local population of Herat and its hinterland tend to be reduced to a non-entity. This phenomenon is most pronounced with Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, who largely focuses on “hard facts”, such as the geographical conditions, the number of villages and the prevailing agricultural technique in a given district or province. Isfizārī is less concerned with minute data although he also furnishes some insights into the economic setting. His lavish description of court life and of the acts of patronage extended by Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā conveys impressions of elite pastimes and the favored items of consumption. Information concerning the inhabitants of the province tends to be merely incidental. Thus we learn from Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū that the locals of Khvāf are devout Sunnīs (*sunni va pāk madhhab*) and that the mountain dwellers of Gharjistān, Ghūr and Sākhar-Tūlak are hardy villagers (*rūstā'ī šifat*).²¹⁰ Isfizārī seconds the view that the Ghurid population is religious but stupid. Furthermore, he endows the inhabitants of some other regions with specific characteristics. He cites the religiosity of the inhabitants of Ziyāratgāh, the braveness of the people of Kūsūya, the high moral standing of the Khvāfis, and the harsh disposition of the Gharjistānis, as well as their fondness for hunting.²¹¹

²⁰⁹ This rivalry unfolded as Aḥmad-i Jām arrived in Herat and began to attract followers in what Khvāja Maudūd considered his domain. The conflict came to a head when Aḥmad-i Jām set out for Chisht and performed miracles along the way, for instance by transporting his disciples across the swollen Harī Rūd. Khvāja Maudūd, on his part, initially assembled 2,000 disciples and prepared for an armed confrontation but eventually recognized Aḥmad-i Jām's spiritual superiority. Aḥmad-i Jām used this confrontation to illustrate the different meanings of *vilāyat*: ‘If [the term] *vilāyat* signifies these villages, they are the property (*mulk*) of the people, and neither belong to me nor to him [Khvāja Maudūd]. If [the term] *vilāyat* signifies these people, they are the subjects (*ra'āyā*) of [Sulṭān] Sanjar. In that case Sanjar would be the greatest *shaikh* (*shaikh al-shuyūkh*). If [the term] *vilāyat* reflects my understanding and that of the friends of God (*auliyā-yi khudā*), I will show him [Khvāja Maudūd] tomorrow what constitutes and characterizes it’ (*Nafahāt al-uns* 326–9). See also Golombek 1969: 81; Potter 1994: 87.

²¹⁰ Krawulsky 1982: 33, 37; 1984: 31, 34.

²¹¹ Isfizārī I: 82–3, 121–30, 188, 356, 365.

