

2. The Guarded Domains: Khurāsān under Safavid and Afsharid Auspices

HERAT IN THE SAFAVID ERA

Sultān Ḥusain Bāyqarā's reign exemplified the height of Timurid cultural and political achievement. Yet his death in 1506 was followed by a period of wholesale destruction. The disintegration of the Timurid domain heralded a new political order and a changing territorial framework. These developments also affected the position of Herat, which was eventually incorporated into the nascent Safavid state after being exposed to a prolonged tug-of-war between the Iranians and the Uzbeks. A third force in the region were the Mughal rulers. Ṣahīr al-Dīn Muḥammad Bābur (r. 910–936/1504–1530), the founder of the Mughal dynasty, conquered the former Timurid domain of Kābul in 1504 and established himself in Delhi and Agra after defeating Sultān Ibrāhīm Lōdī (r. 923–932/1517–1526) at Pānīpat on 20 April 1526.¹

Bābur was the first protagonist to make his entry in Herat. Summoned by Sultān Ḥusain Bāyqarā from Kābul, he learned en route about the death of the Timurid ruler on 11 Dhū al-Ḥijja 911/9 May 1506 but continued on his way to Herat.² A native of Farghāna and a member of the Timurid ruling house,³ Bābur was expected to aid Sultān Ḥusain Bāyqarā's descendants in combating the Uzbeks under the Abu al-Khairid leader Muḥammad Khān Shībānī, who had recently become a powerful political force in Transoxiana.⁴ Bābur was a likely ally against the Uzbeks, as he had been driven out of Transoxiana by Muḥammad Khān Shībānī in 1501.

During his stay in Herat until Rajab 911/November–December 1506, Bābur watched the Timurid realm disintegrate as two of Sultān Ḥusain Bāyqarā's sons quarrelled over the succession rather than attend to the threat emanating from the Uzbeks. Deprived of the opportunity of forming an effective alliance against Muḥammad Khān Shībānī, Bābur returned to Kābul and enhanced his hold over present-day eastern Afghanistan parallel to the mounting Uzbek incursions into Khurāsān. When Herat fell to the Uzbeks on 7 Muḥarram 913/19 May 1507, Bābur briefly extended his sovereignty as far as Qandahār.⁵ With the battle of Marv on 1 Ramaẓān 916/2 December 1510,⁶ the Safavids entered the fray, and the balance of power temporarily shifted to the detriment of the Uzbeks. Shāh Ismā'īl I (r. 1501–1524) defeated and killed Muḥammad Khān Shībānī, thus enabling Bābur to occupy Samarqand in the name of the Safavids in Rajab 917/October 1511. Yet this state of affairs only lasted until the battle of Ghijduvān on 3 Ramaẓān 918/12 November 1512, when the Uzbeks dealt a sounding defeat to the combined forces of Bābur and the Iranian general Najm-i Thānī.⁷

Subsequently, a fluid but long-lived equilibrium developed among the three powers. Having established his hold over Qandahār in 1522, Bābur conquered northern India between 1526 and 1529 and laid the foundation of the Mughal Empire.⁸ In Transoxiana, the four major Abu al-Khairid sub-clans enforced their authority over Tāshkand, Farghāna, Samarqand, and Bukhārā. Among them, Muḥammad Khān Shībānī's

¹ Burton-Page, "Lōdīs," *E.I.*, 2 V: 784.

² HS IV: 319, 369–72; Thackston 1994: 510, 534–6.

³ On his father's side, Bābur was descended in the fifth generation from Timūr; on his mother's side, he was related in the fifteenth degree to Chingiz Khān (HS IV: 225; Thackston 1994: 465; Hajianpur 1991: 169; Harrison & Hardy, "Bābur," *E.I.*, 2 I: 847).

⁴ The Uzbeks emerged as a military force under Muḥammad Khān Shībānī's grandfather Abū al-Khair (r. 1428–1468), who made inroads into the Timurid dominions and established himself in the Sīr Daryā region. The groups which had coalesced around Abū al-Khair migrated south from the lower Sīr Daryā in the late fifteenth century. Muḥammad Khān Shībānī began his career as governor of Tāshkand under the auspices of the Chaghatai ruler of Tāshkand and Mughūlistān, Sultān Maḥmūd, in 899/1494. In the following years he gained control over Samarqand (in 907/1501, at first on behalf of Sultān Maḥmūd), Farghāna, Turkistān, and Tāshkand (907–8/1502), Ūrganj and Khīva (910–11/1504–05), and Balkh (911/1505) (McChesney, "Central Asia vi. In the 10th–12th/16th–18th Centuries," *E.Ir.* V: 178).

⁵ Ott 1974: 190, 196–7. See also Hajianpur 1991: 170–1.

⁶ Sarwar 1975: 60–63; Savory 1978: 61.

⁷ AM 148–51; Haarmann 1974: 333–9; Sarwar 1975: 66–9; Savory 1960: 95–6; Savory 1978: 66.

⁸ AM 243–6; Sarwar 1975: 93.

nephew ‘Ubaidullāh b. Maḥmūd (1476–1540) played a leading role in conducting military campaigns to Khurāsān and Khvārazm and eventually assumed the supreme office of *khān* in 1533.⁹ In Iran, the far-reaching campaigns of Shāh Ismā‘īl I targeted the entire area between the Euphrates and the Āmū Daryā until his military expansion was checked by a decisive reversal during the battle of Chāldirān on the Ottoman front in 1514.¹⁰

This chapter explores the status of Herat within the Safavid domain. The spatial framework determining the outlines of Khurāsān and the administrative arrangements within the province constitute one field of investigation. In this connection, the concepts of statehood projected and enacted by the Safavids play an important role. Thus Herat may be seen as part of the “guarded domains” (*mamālik-i maḥrūsa*) or as one segment of the “Qizilbāsh kingdom” (*mamlakat/daulat-i Qizilbāsh*). Another strand of inquiry addresses the logistic and dynamic aspects of empire, in particular the need to gain and maintain a large mounted followership in an environment of limited ecological resources. The resulting mapping of Khurāsān is based on composite considerations revolving around the notion of oasis towns as prizes, a network of pastures as the basis of sustenance, and a field of dynastic relationships and obligations as a source of legitimacy. This representation induces conceptual linkages between the Safavids and other early modern polities.¹¹ Drawing on additional sources covering the period from the fourteenth to the eighteenth century, the final part of this chapter is devoted to an investigation of the changing demographic patterns around Herat, the emergence of new elites, and a concomitant shift in spatial concepts.

THE SOURCES

In the sixteenth century, Herat and Qazvīn stand out as centers of historiographical production. The events surrounding the transition of power from the Timurids to the Uzbeks and Safavids are treated in a detailed fashion by three Herati authors. In 927/1520–21, Shāh Ismā‘īl I ordered Ibrāhīm Amīnī Haravī (d. 941/1535) to compose a chronicle of his conquests. Entitled *Futūḥāt-i shāhī*, the resultant work was presented to the Safavid court in 937/1531.¹² Khvānd Amīr (d. 942/1536) is the most celebrated author of the transitional period from the Timurids to the Safavids. His *Tārīkh ḥabīb al-siyar* covered the events up to 930/1524, the date of its completion.¹³ Around 957/1550, Khvānd Amīr’s son Amīr Maḥmūd produced a continuation of his father’s work, detailing the events from 1524 to the time of writing.¹⁴

The first work commissioned in Qazvīn by a Safavid patron was Yaḥyā b. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf Qazvīnī’s *Kitāb-i Lubb al-tavārīkh*, which was completed in 1542. Qāzī Aḥmad Ghaffārī’s *Nusakh-i jahānārā* (1564–65) and ‘Abdī Bēg Shīrāzī’s *Takmilat al-akhbār* (1570) were likewise produced during the reign of Shāh Ṭahmāsp I (1524–1576). Būdāq Munshī Qazvīnī’s *Javāhir al-akhbār* and the second extant volume of Ḥasan Bēg Rūmlū’s *Aḥsan al-tavārīkh* record the events in Iran down to the short reign of Shāh Ismā‘īl II (1576–1577).¹⁵

The Uzbek perspective is reflected by Faḫrullāh b. Rūzbihān Khunjī Iṣfahānī (1455–1521), who joined the entourage of Muḥammad Khān Shībānī in 1508 and recorded the exploits of the Abu al-Khairid leader in his *Mihmānnāma-yi Bukhārā*.¹⁶ Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāṣifī left his native town of Herat in 1512 and died between 1551 and 1566 in Central Asia. Entitled *Badāyi‘ al-vaqāyi‘*, his autobiography focuses on the literary life of Herat, to which he actively contributed until his departure. Addressed to members of the Abu

⁹ McChesney, “Shibanids”. *E.I.*, 2 IX: 428–9; Noelle 1997: 64–7.

¹⁰ Sarwar 1975: 78–82.

¹¹ For an earlier, summary treatment of these questions, see Noelle-Karimi 2008a.

¹² Aubin 1995: 249–50; Quinn, “Historiography vi. Safavid Period,” *E.Ir.* XII: 363; Szuppe 1992: 54–5.

¹³ Aubin 1995: 248–9; Szuppe 1992: 556.

¹⁴ Quinn, “Historiography vi. Safavid Period,” *E.Ir.* XII: 363; Szuppe 1992: 57–8.

¹⁵ Navā‘ī, “Aḥsan al-tawārīkh,” *E.Ir.* I: 680–1; Quinn, “Historiography vi. Safavid Period,” *E.Ir.* XII: 363.

¹⁶ Haarmann 1974: 341–52.

al-Khairid dynasty in Bukhārā and Tāshkand, his work may be seen as an introduction to Timurid cultural traditions.¹⁷

Historiography during the reign of Shāh ‘Abbās I is associated with a shift in focus from universal history to emphasis on a “distinctly Safavid past”.¹⁸ Writing in 1629, Iskandar Bēg (1560–1632) described the Safavid realm at a time when Iṣfahān had been established as the seat of power. His *Tārīkh-i ‘ālamārā-yi ‘abbāsī* records the events from Shāh Ismā‘īl I’s advent in Khurāsān to Shāh ‘Abbās I’s successful conquest of Qandahār. Mīrzā Bēg b. Ḥasan Ḥusainī Junābadī’s *Rauzat al-Ṣafavīya*, which was composed two years earlier, likewise covers the period from Shāh Ismā‘īl I’s coronation to the fortieth year of Shāh ‘Abbās I’s reign. Of a more limited focus is Maḥmūd b. Hidāyatullāh Afūshta-yi Naṭanzī’s *Nuqāvat al-āthār fī dhikr al-akhyār*, which covers the period from the last days of Shāh Ṭahmāsp I to the eleventh year of Shāh ‘Abbās I’s reign.¹⁹ Under Shāh Ṣafī (r. 1038–1052/1629–1642), Iskandar Munshī wrote a sequel (*dhail*) to his *Tārīkh-i ‘ālamārā-yi ‘abbāsī*, which depicted the events up to 1634. In 1638, the court official Muḥammad Ma‘šūm b. Khvājagī Iṣfahānī began to engage in historiography. Originally intended as a universal history, his *Khulāṣat al-siyar* furnishes a complete account of Shāh Ṣafī’s reign.²⁰

For the reign of Shāh ‘Abbās II (r. 1052–1077/1642–1666), two chronicles deserve mention. Muḥammad Ṭāhir Vahīd Qazvīnī’s ornate *‘Abbāsnāma* deals with the developments from 1642–1663 and details Shāh ‘Abbās II’s campaign to Qandahār in 1648–1649. Written around 1666, Valī Qulī Shāmlū’s, *Qīṣaṣ al-khāqānī* starts out as a general history of the Safavids and culminates in a description of the events in Qandahār until 1060/1650. Born in Herat in 1035/1625–26, the author was associated with the provincial administration of Qandahār from 1652 on. He embellishes his work by quoting the poetry of Muḥammad Ṭāhir Vahīd Qazvīnī and other authors. At the beginning of Shāh Sulaimān’s reign (r. 1077–1105/1666–1694), Muḥammad Yūsuf Vāla Iṣfahānī produced a five-volume history entitled *Khuld-i barīn*. The last two volumes of this universal history are devoted to the Safavid dynasty to 1071/1660–61 and draw on the *Tārīkh-i ‘ālamārā-yi ‘abbāsī* and the *‘Abbāsnāma* for the depiction of the reigns of Shāhs ‘Abbās I and II.²¹ The *Dastūr-i shahriyārān* by Zain al-‘Ābidīn Naṣīrī provides some impressions of the circumstances in Herat and its hinterland under the last Safavid ruler Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusain (r. 1105–1135/1694–1722) during the years 1105–1110/1694–1698.

Three Iranian authors based in India deserve mention. Muḥammad Shafī‘ “Vārid” was born in India in 1087/1677 as the son of a Tehrani ‘ālim who migrated to Hyderabad. Completed in 1142/1730, Vārid’s history of the Safavid dynasty is embedded into a larger biographical work entitled *Mir‘āt-i vāridāt*. Based on eyewitness reports by more recent emigrés, his account of the downfall of the Safavids offers valuable insights into the developments in Khurāsān. The *Mir‘āt-i vāridāt* is complemented by Vārid’s *Tārīkh-i nādirshāhī*, which picks up the historical narrative where the former leaves off.²² Two further authors sought refuge in Murshidābād in Bengal during the second half of the eighteenth century. Abū al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad Amīn Gulistāna left Iran in the 1750s. His *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* contains interesting details on the time after the death of Nādir Shāh in 1747. Muḥammad Khalīl Mar‘ashī arrived in Murshidābād in 1192/1778. A native of Mashhad, he was the grandson of Mīr Sayyid Muḥammad alias “Shāh Sulaimān II”, who briefly entered the political stage there during the disturbances unfolding after Nādir Shāh’s death in 1747. Entitled *Majma‘ al-tavārīkh dar tārikh-i inqirāz-i ṣafavīya va vaqāyi‘i ba‘d*, his work offers interesting details on the rise of the Abdālī confederacy as a political force.²³

The general accounts devoted to the apex of Safavid power in Khurāsān pay little attention to local circumstances. The three known Persian sources on administrative matters stem from the period after the

¹⁷ Rota 1996. See also Subtelny 1983.

¹⁸ Newman 2006: 67. See also Tilmann Trausch (forthcoming), *Formen höfischer Historiographie im 16. Jahrhundert: Geschichtsschreibung unter den frühen Safaviden: 1501–1578*, p. 42.

¹⁹ Naṭanzī xxi–xxiv.

²⁰ Rettelbach 1978: xi–xxxvi.

²¹ Browne 1917: 666–7; Röhrborn 1966: 142; Rota 1998: 173; Soudavar 1999: 55 fn. 84.

²² Şifātguḷ, “Muqaddima-yi muṣaḥḥih,” Vārid, *Mir‘āt*, 20–57.

²³ Noelle-Karimi, “Historiography xi. Afghanistan,” *E.Ir.* XII: 391.

downfall of the Safavid Empire. Mīrzā Rafī‘ā’s *Dastūr al-mulūk* and Mīrzā Samī‘ā’s *Tadhkirat al-mulūk* were produced to equip the Ghilzai ruler Ashraf Khān Hūtak (r. 1725–29) with insights into the Safavid mode of administration. While based on a common source, these two works reflect recent developments and complement each other.²⁴ The third text, ‘Alī Naqī Naṣīrī’s *Alqāb va mavājib-i daura-yi salāṭīn-i ṣafavīya*, was composed in 1730–31. Like *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, this work lists the emoluments and retainers at the disposal of the governors-general of Herat, Mashhad, Marv and Qandahār and the officials in charge of the component districts.²⁵

The historiography of the Afsharid period largely relies on four sources. One important contemporaneous source for the decline of the Safavids and Nādir Shāh’s early career is *Zubdat al-tavārikh*. The author, Nādir Shāh’s treasurer Muḥammad Muḥsin, composed this work in 1154/1741–42 on the order of the king, who intended it for the use of his eldest son Rīzā Qulī Mīrzā.²⁶ Nādir Shāh Afshār’s official historiographer Mīrzā Muḥammad Mihdī Khān Astarābādī completed the *Tārīkh-i jahāngushā-yi nādirī* in the 1750s. This book was translated into French and English by Sir William Jones in the 1770s. Entitled *Durra-yi nādīra*, Astarābādī’s second work contains a poetic rendering of the events described in the *Tārīkh-i jahāngushā-yi nādirī*.²⁷ Nādir Shāh’s third biographer, Muḥammad Kāzīm Marvī, likewise finished his work entitled *Tārīkh-i ‘ālamārā-yi nādirī* after 1747. This account of the Nadirid period is of particular interest because the author repeatedly assumes a critical stance towards Nādir Shāh and his policies. A native of Marv, he moved to Mashhad during his childhood, and his work includes eyewitness accounts of some of the events that unfolded from 1726 on.²⁸ Another eyewitness report is furnished by the Kashmirian ‘Abd al-Karīm, who joined Nādir Shāh’s entourage in Delhi in Ṣafar 1152/May 1739 and accompanied him to Transoxiana, Khurāsān and Māzandarān. After reaching Qazvīn in Rabī‘ I 1154/June 1741, ‘Abd al-Karīm took leave of Nādir Shāh and traveled on to Medina and Mecca. Upon his return to Delhi in Jumādā II 1156/August 1743, he composed his travelogue entitled *Bayān-i vāqī‘*, which he complemented with details on Nādir Shāh’s rise and fall.²⁹

Given the focus on Safavid chronicles, the following account of Herat in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries adopts an Iranian perspective and mirrors a discourse of Iranian dominance. Local events are structured in accordance with the imperial time frame of Safavid rule, and Herat is primarily depicted as a province embedded within the Safavid polity. This approach pays little attention to the effects of the repeated and sustained efforts of the Central Asian Shibānids to establish themselves in the region. The impact of the Uzbek presence in Khurāsān and Herat and the altercations between the Shibānid leadership and the Safavids in the course of the sixteenth century have been treated in a detailed fashion by Maria Szuppe and Robert McChesney.³⁰

SHIFTING REGIONAL ALIGNMENTS

As early as 917/1511, Shāh Ismā‘īl I fixed the Āmū Daryā as the border between the Safavid and Uzbek spheres of interest,³¹ in effect claiming Herat, Marv and Balkh as his easternmost domain. The space thus

²⁴ Floor/Faghfoory 2007; TM.

²⁵ Floor 2008: 104–12, 128–30.

²⁶ Lockhart 1938: 299–300.

²⁷ Tucker, “Historiography vii. Afsharid and Zand Periods,” *E.Ir.* XII: 367–8.

²⁸ In late 1139/early 1140, Kāzīm, then a boy of five years, witnessed Tātār depredations in Marv. His family was resettled in Khurāsān by Nādir’s brother Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Khān (Kāzīm 68–71). In the summer of 1141/1729, Kāzīm’s father accompanied Nādir on his second campaign against Herat (Kāzīm 93–9). One year later, Kāzīm watched a battle between Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Khān and an invading Abdālī force from the ramparts of Mashhad (Kāzīm 156). In 1145/1732–33, Nādir sent Kāzīm’s father to Bīrjand to rebuild a Shiite shrine (Kāzīm 206–8). Later on, Kāzīm himself entered Nādir Shāh’s service and became secretary of his arsenal (Kāzīm 1085).

²⁹ Alam/Subrahmanyam 2007: 248–95.

³⁰ Szuppe 1992; McChesney 1993.

³¹ AM 139. See also Aubin 1984: 15, 19; Sarwar 1975: 64–5; Szuppe 1992: 81.

defined as Iranian was not necessarily filled with instances of immediate or lasting control. Nonetheless the notions of territoriality projected by Shāh Ismā‘īl lived on, shaping the mental map of his Safavid successors and creating an enduring sense of entitlement that survived into the nineteenth century and beyond.³² On a practical level, Shāh Ismā‘īl’s projection of his domain as extending to the Āmū Daryā signalled a departure from the Timurid framework and reflected a new balance of power, which henceforth developed between the Mughal, Safavid and Uzbek realms and remained fairly stable until the eighteenth century.

One concurrent phenomenon of the evolving setup were regions subject to overlapping territorial claims. Thus Qandahār was contested between the Safavids and the Mughals until it eventually fell to the control of Shāh ‘Abbās II in 1649.³³ During the early Safavid period the position of Herat was equally uncertain, and it suffered a series of Uzbek incursions until 1537.³⁴ Uzbek activity in Khurāsān reached another climax between 1588 and 1598 under the last two Abu al-Khairid leaders ‘Abdullāh Khān (r. 991–1006/1583–1598) and his son ‘Abd al-Mu‘min (d. 1006/1598).³⁵ The subsequent rise of the Tuqai-Timurid line in Transoxiana likewise had repercussions for the province of Herat. In 1598, the Tuqai-Timurid leader Dīn Muḥammad (972–1007/1564–1598) occupied the region of Herat but was defeated by the troops of Shāh ‘Abbās I shortly after.³⁶

Two years later Shāh ‘Abbās I successfully incorporated Marv into the Safavid domain. Yet his attempt to impose direct control over Balkh in 1602 met with no success.³⁷ Conflicts between the Safavids and the Tuqai-Timurids continued to simmer during the seventeenth century. Nevertheless, the scope of military action diminished over time. During their two peaks of activity at the beginning and the end of the sixteenth century, the Abu al-Khairid rulers of Transoxiana had targeted the entire region of Khurāsān. From Shāh ‘Abbās I’s time on, by contrast, the disputes between the Safavids and the Tuqai-Timurids were more localized and focused on the region north and northeast of Herat.

After his setback at Balkh, Shāh ‘Abbās I adopted a new strategy. Instead of intervening directly, he fostered rival Abu al-Khairid and Tuqai-Timurid contenders for power in Balkh. This policy was not without

³² Aubin 1988: 27–8.

³³ Until the early sixteenth century Qandahār was held by the Arghūn rulers in vassalage with the Timurids of Herat. In 913/1507–08, Bābur occupied the city, but it subsequently passed back to the Arghūn princes, who ruled it in the name of Muḥammad Khān Shībānī from that point on. In 928/1522, Bābur was able to regain possession of Qandahār and made his second son Kāmran Mīrzā governor there. In 1537, Qandahār passed to Safavid control but Kāmran Mīrzā won it back shortly after. In September 1545, Kāmran Mīrzā’s half brother Humāyūn turned the city over to the Safavid prince Sulṭān Murād Mīrzā b. Ṭahmāsp I as part of his effort to regain his throne in India. After the death of Sulṭān Murād Mīrzā, Humāyūn was able to retake Qandahār in October 1545. In 965/1558, a Safavid army sent by Shāh Ṭahmāsp I established control there after a six-month siege. In 1003/1594–95, the Safavid governor Muẓaffar Ḥusain b. Sulṭān Ḥusain surrendered Qandahār to the Mughal emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605). Shāh ‘Abbās I occupied the city in 1031/1622 and held it until his death in 1629. Subsequently, the Uzbeks were able to take possession of Qandahār for a short period. In 1638, the Safavid governor of Qandahār, ‘Alī Mardān Khān, voluntarily gave up the city to the Mughal ruler Shāh Jahān (r. 1628–1658). In early 1059/1649, it finally fell to Shāh ‘Abbās II (r. 1642–1666). Shāh Jahān made three vain attempts at retrieving Qandahār in 1649, 1652 and 1653. (AM 340–2; *‘Abbāsnāma* 128–9, 132–6; Bosworth, “Qandahār,” *E.I.*, 2 IV: 537; Dasti 1998: 143–9; Ray 1948: 51–7; Davies, “Akbar,” *E.I.*, I: 316; Rettelbach 1978: 242–4; Riazul Islam 1970: 2–3, 15–18, 23–6, 41–8, 60, 82, 104, 111–112; Riazul Islam, “Mughals, 2. External Relations,” *E.I.*, 2 VII: 317; Röhrborn 1966: 13–14, 42.; Roemer 1986d: 239, 267; Sarkar 1973: 72–3; Savory 1978: 153–4; Szuppe 1992: 113).

³⁴ McChesney, “Central Asia, vi. In the 10th–12th/16–18th centuries,” *E.Ir.* V: 185.

³⁵ Herat fell to the Uzbeks in March 1588 after a ten-month siege. Mashhad was conquered by ‘Abdullāh’s son ‘Abd al-Mu‘min in September 1589 after a five-month siege and was subjected to wholesale massacre and devastation. The other regions experiencing Uzbek occupation were Sarakhs, Isfarāyin, Sabzavār, Turshīz, Khvāf, Turbat-i Shaikh Jām, Ghūriyān, Tūn and Ṭabas (Burton 1997: 58, 63–4, 69, 76, 101; Hambly 1991b: 181; McChesney, “Shibanids,” *E.I.*, 2 IX: 429; Müller 1964: 46–7, 62–5, 78; Riazul Islam 1970: 51; Vambéry 1990: 283–94). For a detailed account of ‘Abdullāh’s conquest of Herat in February 1588, see McChesney 1993 and Müller 1964: 42–44.

³⁶ Dīn Muḥammad managed to flee but was killed near Mārūchāq by the local population (IM 913–21). See also McChesney, “Central Asia, vi. In the 10th–12th/16th–18th Centuries,” *E.Ir.* V: 183.

³⁷ In August 1602, forty thousand Safavid troops arrived before Balkh but had to give up their siege of the Tuqai-Timurid leader Valī Muḥammad owing to lack of provisions and water, as well as rampant illness (IM 997–1013, 1019; Burton 1997: 116–17; Riazul Islam 1970: 87; Roemer 1986d: 267; Tumanovich 1989: 143–44).

repercussions for the northeastern fringes of the Herat province in the early seventeenth century. As a rule, the attacks carried out by Shah ‘Abbās I’s allies from their bases in Gharjistān elicited violent reactions from the ruler of Balkh, Nadhr Muḥammad Khān (r. 1015–1051/1606–1642, 1055–1061/1645–1651) and his son ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. Three sets of altercations are reported for the early seventeenth century:

- In mid-1016/late 1607, the Shāmlū contingents of Herat and troops from Gharjistān supported Yār Muḥammad, the deposed *divānbēgī* of Balkh, and the Abu al-Khairid princes Jahāngīr and Muḥammad Salīm in their unsuccessful attempt to regain authority.³⁸
- From 1611 on, the power struggle between two factions identified as “Valid” (the supporters of the great *khān* Valī Muḥammad Khān (r. 1014–1020/1606–1612) and his son Rustam Muḥammad) and “Dinid” (the supporters of Dīn Muḥammad’s sons Imām Qulī and Nadhr Muḥammad)³⁹ provided the opportunity for Safavid intervention. When Imām Qulī and Nadhr Muḥammad gained the upper hand in Bukhārā and Balkh in 1612, Rustam Muḥammad took position in Gharjistān, wherefrom he launched a total of seven offensives against the Balkh region until 1623. While most of these campaigns amounted to no more than skirmishes, Rustam Muḥammad was able to lay siege to Balkh with the help of Safavid troops in 1023/1614, devastating the surroundings of the city in the process. Three years later, a campaign by Imām Qulī and 30,000 Bukharan soldiers was beaten back by the Safavid governor Mihrāb Khān Qājār at Marv. In 1618, the interests of local Uzbek leaders and the Shāmlū governors of Herat collided at Chīchaktū and Maimana. In 1032/1622, Bālā Murghāb temporarily fell to Uzbek control until Shāh ‘Abbās I gave in to the demand to remove Rustam Muḥammad from Gharjistān.⁴⁰
- After Shāh ‘Abbās I’s death in 1629, the frontier region was engulfed in unrest. Rustam Muḥammad resurfaced at Auba and Shāfilān. Military confrontations between the Qizilbāsh and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz for the possession of Bālā Murghāb and Mārūchāq ensued in the spring of 1631.⁴¹ In early 1634, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz advanced to Kūsūya and Farāh with 20,000 troops.⁴²

The ongoing confrontations with the rulers of Balkh underlined the sense that Herat and its northeastern hinterland formed a frontier in relationship to Uzbek interests. The city retained its title of *dār al-salṭana*, “seat of government”. This longevity of imperial terminology notwithstanding, its status changed radically, as it was reduced from the heart of the mighty Timurid Empire to a provincial town in an embattled zone. With the rise of the Safavids, the center of gravity moved westward. Following the precedent set by the Qarā Quyūnlū and Āq Quyūnlū dynasties, Shāh Ismā‘īl I originally designated Tabrīz as his capital. Owing to Ottoman pressure, Shāh Ṭahmāsp I shifted his headquarters to Qazvīn in the 1540s. In 1006/1597–98, Shāh ‘Abbās I established Iṣfahān as seat of government. These three towns likewise came to be known as *dār al-salṭana*, whereas the King’s actual residence of the time carried the denomination of *maqarr al-salṭana*.⁴³

Herat was designated as the capital of Khurāsān, a province of immense proportions adjoining the provinces of Marv and Balkh in the north and east. As a rule, Safavid authority extended in the northeast as far as Mārūchāq.⁴⁴ Located further east along the trade route to Balkh, Maimana and Chīchaktū formed part

³⁸ IM 1153–5. See also McChesney, “Central Asia, vi. In the 10th–12th/16th–18th Centuries,” *E.Ir.* V: 185; Tumanovich 1989: 144–5.

³⁹ Dīn Muḥammad (d. 1598) and Valī Muḥammad were brothers.

⁴⁰ IM 1591.

⁴¹ IM 1532, 1556, 1591, 1593–4, 1628, 1637–8; Rettelbach 1978: 96–7; McChesney, “Central Asia, vi. In the 10th–12th/16th–18th Centuries,” *E.Ir.* V: 187; Tumanovich 1989: 145, 147. In the spring of 1632, 20,000 Uzbek troops under the leadership of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and Yālangtūsh Khān assembled in the vicinity of Mārūchāq but retreated soon after (Rettelbach 1978: 118–19).

⁴² Rettelbach 1978: 164. According to McChesney, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz set out from Maimana with 3,000 cavalry and marched towards Mashhad on this occasion (McChesney, “Central Asia, vi. In the 10th–12th/16th–18th Centuries,” *E.Ir.* V: 187).

⁴³ Haneda/Matthee, “Isfahan vii. Safavid Period,” *E.Ir.* XIII: 651; McChesney 1988: 109. The transferral of capitals seems to have been a gradual process. Echraqi has pointed out that the preparations for the shift from Tabrīz to Qazvīn began in 951/1544, but that it was only in 965/1557 that Shāh Ṭahmāsp I set up his royal palace (*daulatkhāna*) there (Echraqi 1996: 105, 110–11). As for the move to Iṣfahān, Roemer raises the possibility that Qazvīn and Iṣfahān simultaneously functioned as capitals for a number of years before the final transition to Iṣfahān was made. In autumn 1598, the Sherley brothers paid their respects to Shāh ‘Abbās I at Qazvīn, which Iskandar Munshī describes as *maqarr-i salṭanat-i abad-bunyān*. Subsequently, the Safavid king moved on to the *dār al-salṭana* of Iṣfahān as part of the ongoing pattern of warfare and migration (Roemer 1974: 316–20; see also TM 162; Glassen 1970: 212; Gronke 1992: 20–1). The contemporaneous Persian sources show that Iṣfahān was merely one of several destinations of the itinerant court (McChesney 1988: 106–114).

⁴⁴ IM 972, 1015, 1021, 1475; DS 158–9.

of the Uzbek domain, serving as summer quarter for the Uzbek “followers and tribes” (*ulūs va ūymāq-i uzbekīya*).⁴⁵ In the north and northwest, the authority of the governor of Marv reached as far as Abīvard and Khabūshān. Throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Khurāsān was described as covering the entire expanse between Qazvīn/Simnān in the west to the border of Qandahār in the east and the Oxus in the northeast.⁴⁶

The early eighteenth-century manual *Tadhkirat al-mulūk* views Khurāsān as an even larger geographical unit encompassing not only Herat, Mashhad and Marv but also Qandahār and Sīstān. According to this account, Herat comprised Bālā Murghāb, Mārūchāq, Panjdih, and Bādghīs in the north, Kurukh and Ghūr in the east, Farāh in the south, and Turbat-i Shaikh Jām, Khvāf and Tūn (present-day Firdaus) in the west.⁴⁷ The

⁴⁵ IM 998. See also Sarwar 1975: 65.

⁴⁶ The prevailing perceptions of Khurāsān and its dimensions are reflected in some of the contemporaneous Persian works. Writing in the middle of the sixteenth century, Amīr Maḥmūd b. Khvānd Amīr describes Muḥammad Khān Shībānī's conquests between 1507–1510 as comprising all the cities and regions of Khurāsān from the border of Simnān to the banks of the Oxus: *Tamāmī-yi bilād va vilāyāt-i Khurāsān az sarḥadd-i Simnān tā kinār-i Āb-i Āmūya (Āmū Daryā)* (AM 129). According to a number of historical accounts, Shāh Ismāʿīl I awarded the government of Khurāsān from the border (*sarḥadd*) of Simnān to the bank of the Oxus to his son Ṭahmāsp in 1515 (AM 166; AT 154; HS IV: 553; Thackston 1994: 607–8 Röhrborn 1966: 16). In the late sixteenth century, the jurisdiction of the *vazīr* of Khurāsān (*vizārat-i kull-i Khurāsān*) was described in the following terms: “from the border of Qandahār and Transoxania to Simnān” (*az sarḥadd-i Qandahār va Mā varāʾ al-nahr tā Simnān*)” (Röhrborn 1966: 112 fn 83). In 1605–06, Shāh ʿAbbās I appointed Khvāja Muḥammad Ṣafī as minister of Khurāsān and described the area under his command as extending from Qazvīn to the border of Qandahār and the Oxus (*az dār al-salṭana-yi Qazvīn tā sarḥadd-i Qandahār va Āb-i Āmūya*) (Röhrborn 1966: 103–4 fn 35).

The administrative divisions of Khurāsān during Safavid times are apparent from different rounds of gubernatorial appointments. In 1522, the Herati governor Dürmīsh Khān Shāmlū appointed local governors to the following administrative units: Zainal Khān Shāmlū to Jurjān (Astarābād), Zain al-Dīn Sulṭān to Isfarāyīn and Nīshāpūr; Būrūn Sulṭān Tekelū to Mashhad and Tūs, Šūfiyān Khalīfa Rūmlū to Turbat-i Ḥaidariya, Chakūrka Sulṭān to Sabzavār, Aḥmad Sulṭān Afshār to Harāt-Rūd, Langar-i Amīr Ghiyāth, Farāh and Isfīzār (Sarwar 1975: 93). When Herat fell to Uzbek control in February 1588, a contemporary source described Mashhad, Nīshāpūr, Sabzavār, Isfarāyīn, Qāyīn, Zāva-Maḥvilāt, Tūn, Ṭabas, Turshīz, Jām, Astarābād and Dāmghān as the remaining administrative units of Khurāsān (Müller 1964: 55–6, Persian text 41).

⁴⁷ TM 102–3. The above information is largely confirmed by Naṣīrī. As both authors list the emoluments of the governors and the number of retainers they had at their disposal, it is worthwhile summing up the particulars furnished by them.

Region	Title	Emoluments	Retainers
Herat	<i>bēglerbēgī</i>	15,277 <i>tūmāns</i> , 6,034 <i>dīnārs</i> (TM 102) 15,412 and odd <i>tūmāns</i> (Floor 2008: 103)	2,682 (TM 102) 2,696 (Floor 2008: 103)
Mārūchāq	<i>sulṭān</i>	3,267 <i>tūmāns</i> , 5,531 <i>dīnārs</i> (TM 102) 3,419 <i>tūmāns</i> , 8,000 and odd <i>dīnārs</i> (Floor 2008: 104)	97 (TM 102) 737 (Floor 2008: 104)
Farāh	<i>sulṭān</i>	4,989 <i>tūmāns</i> , 6,873 <i>dīnārs</i> (TM: 102) 4,645 <i>tūmāns</i> , 2,000 and odd <i>dīnārs</i> (Floor 2008: 105)	603 (TM 102) 603 (Floor 2008: 105)
Khvāf	<i>sulṭān</i>	1,434 <i>tūmāns</i> , 2,624 <i>dīnārs</i> (TM 102) 1,000 <i>tūmāns</i> , 4,000 and odd <i>dīnārs</i> (Floor 2008: 104)	271 (TM 102) 200 (Floor 2008: 104)
Jām		..1,682 <i>tūmāns</i> , 220 <i>dīnārs</i> (TM 102)	500 (TM 102)
Bālā Murghāb	<i>sulṭān</i>	883 <i>tūmāns</i> , 3,466 <i>dīnārs</i> (TM 102) 868 <i>tūmāns</i> , 3,000 and odd <i>dīnārs</i> (Floor 2008: 106)	100 (TM 102) 160 (Floor 2008: 106)
Panjdiḥ	<i>sulṭān</i>	958 <i>tūmāns</i> , 4,673 <i>dīnārs</i> (TM 102) 958 <i>tūmāns</i> , 4,000 and odd <i>dīnārs</i> (Floor 2008: 106)	150 (TM 102) 161 (Floor 2008: 106)
Bādghīs	<i>sulṭān</i>	109 <i>tūmāns</i> , 6,151 <i>dīnārs</i> (TM 102) 30 <i>tūmāns</i> , 3,000 and odd <i>dīnārs</i> (Floor 2008: 107)	30 (TM 102) 30 (Floor 2008: 107)
Kurukh (and Jamshīdī)	<i>sulṭān</i>	442 <i>tūmāns</i> , 3,737 <i>dīnārs</i> (TM 102) 442 <i>tūmāns</i> , 6,000 and odd <i>dīnārs</i> (Floor 2008: 106)	199 (TM 102) 194 (Floor 2008: 106)
Dürmī Zūrī	<i>sulṭān</i>	450 <i>tūmāns</i> , 7091 <i>dīnārs</i> (TM 102) 177 <i>tūmāns</i> , 6,000 <i>dīnārs</i> (Floor 2008: 106)	500 (TM 102) 500 (Floor 2008: 106)
Ghūr Ghūrī	<i>sulṭān</i>	103 <i>tūmāns</i> , 1,600 <i>dīnārs</i> (TM 102) 103 <i>tūmāns</i> , 1,000 and odd <i>dīnārs</i> (Floor 2008: 105)	30 (TM 102) 48 (Floor 2008: 105)
Tūn		1,290 <i>tūmāns</i> , 3,100 <i>dīnārs</i> (TM 102)	300 (TM 102)
Nahababad	<i>sulṭān</i>	109 <i>tūmāns</i> , 6,000 and odd <i>dīnārs</i> (Floor 2008: 104)	30 (Floor 2008: 104)

subdivision of Mashhad was likewise of impressive proportions. It consisted of Sarakhs, Abīvard, Nasā and Durūn in the north, Turbat-i Ḥaidarīya and Turshīz in the south, Nīshāpūr and Sabzavār in the west, and Isfarāyīn and Āzādvar in the northwest.⁴⁸ Qandahār is described as embracing the regions of Zamīndāvar, Ghūriyān (?) and Kushk.⁴⁹ The inclusion of Qandahār in the Safavid administrative system reflects facts created in 1649. Prior to this time, Qandahār had mostly formed the frontier (*sarḥadd*) between Safavid and Mughal interests, falling into the Iranian orbit only during two distinct periods (1558–1595, 1622–1638). The late eighteenth-century chronicle *Majmaʿ al-tavārīkh* assigns more generous proportions to the province of Qandahār under the last Safavid governor Gurgīn Khān, including Qalāt-i Ghilzai in the northeast, Shāl (present-day Quetta), Mastūng, Pishīn and Qalāt-i Balūch in the south, as well as Zamīndāvar, Bust and Girishk up to the border of Farāh and Isfizār in the west.⁵⁰

Assuming the title of *bēglerbēgī*, the governor of Herat enjoyed a position superior to the other local governors of Khurāsān. In the early sixteenth century, he was in charge of appointing the governors of Mashhad, Isfarāyīn and Astarābād. The first religious supervisor (*ṣadr*) assigned to Khurāsān in 1515 had his seat in Herat, and his jurisdiction over religious affairs covered the entire area from the borders of Persian Iraq and Azerbaijan to Ṭukhāristān, i.e. the region bounded by the upper and middle course of the Oxus.⁵¹ In the 1690s, the governor of Herat still carried the prestigious title of “governor general of all of Khurāsān”

Qipchāq	<i>sulṭān</i>	49 <i>tūmāns</i> , 3,000 and odd <i>dīnārs</i> (Floor 2008: 105)	unknown (Floor 2008: 104)
Harāt-Rūd, Shāfilān		1,405 <i>tūmāns</i> , 4,000 and odd <i>dīnārs</i> (Floor 2008: 107)	440 (Floor 2008: 107)

⁴⁸ The two authors apportion Jām and Tūn to different beglerbegships. According to Mīrzā Samīʿā, these two *vilāyat* form part of Herat (TM 102), whereas Naṣīrī lists them under the heading of Mashhad (Floor 2008: 108, 112).

Region	Title	Emoluments	Retainers
Mashhad	<i>bēglerbēgī</i>	7,443 <i>tūmāns</i> , 9,195 <i>dīnārs</i> (TM 102) 6,041 <i>tūmāns</i> , 4,000 and odd <i>dīnārs</i> (Floor 2008: 108)	670 (TM 102) 2,696 (Floor 2008: 103)
Sarakhs (and Zūrābād)	<i>sulṭān</i>	2,099 <i>tūmāns</i> , 3,024 <i>dīnārs</i> (TM 102) 1,795 <i>tūmāns</i> , 4,000 and odd <i>dīnārs</i> (Floor 2008: 111)	437 (TM 102) 561 (Floor 2008: 111)
Nīshāpūr	<i>khān</i>	2,170 <i>tūmāns</i> , 8,300 <i>dīnārs</i> (TM: 102) 2,213 <i>tūmāns</i> , 1,000 and odd <i>dīnārs</i> (Floor 2008: 110)	719 (TM 102) 500 (Floor 2008: 110)
Turshīz		994 <i>tūmāns</i> , 2,972 <i>dīnārs</i> (TM 103)	616 (TM 103)
Abīvard	<i>khān</i>	3,588 <i>tūmāns</i> , 7,828 <i>dīnārs</i> (TM 103) 3,805 <i>tūmāns</i> , 5,000 and odd <i>dīnārs</i> (Floor 2008: 109)	550 (TM 103) 613 (Floor 2008: 109)
Āzādvar (and Faryūmad)	<i>sulṭān</i>	139 <i>tūmāns</i> , 3,533 <i>dīnārs</i> (TM 103) 176 <i>tūmāns</i> , 5,000 and odd <i>dīnārs</i> (Floor 2008: 110)	21 (TM 103) 21 (Floor 2008: 110)
Nasā	<i>sulṭān</i>	2,812 <i>tūmāns</i> , 337 <i>dīnārs</i> (TM 103) 3,228 <i>tūmāns</i> , 7,000 and odd <i>dīnārs</i> (Floor 2008: 112)	555 (TM 103) 161 (Floor 2008: 106)
Sabzavār	<i>khān</i>	1,302 <i>tūmāns</i> , 1,151 <i>dīnārs</i> (TM 103) 1,843 <i>tūmāns</i> , 3,000 and odd <i>dīnārs</i> (Floor 2008: 111)	272 (TM 103) 277 (Floor 2008: 111)
Isfarāyīn	<i>sulṭān</i>	918 <i>tūmāns</i> , 7,208 <i>dīnārs</i> (TM 103) 858 <i>tūmāns</i> , 8,048 <i>dīnārs</i> , ½ <i>dāng</i> (Floor 2008: 109)	130 (TM 103) 131 (Floor 2008: 109)
Ḥvrūz-va y.sākū [sic] Pasākū	<i>sulṭān</i>	216 <i>tūmāns</i> , 7,353 <i>dīnārs</i> (TM 103) 216 <i>tūmāns</i> , 7,353 <i>dīnārs</i> , 2 <i>dāng</i> (Floor 2008: 110)	45 (TM 103) 45 (Floor 2008: 110)
Durūn (Khabūshān)	<i>khān</i>	2,923 <i>tūmāns</i> , 3,329 <i>dīnārs</i> (TM 103) 3,738 <i>tūmāns</i> , 9,000 <i>tabrīzī dīnārs</i> (Floor 2008: 111)	1,320 (TM 103) 844 (Floor 2008: 105)
Turbat Turbat-i Ḥaidarīya	<i>sulṭān</i>	379 <i>tūmāns</i> , 4,701 <i>dīnārs</i> (TM 103) 362 <i>tūmāns</i> , 2,000 and odd <i>dīnārs</i> (Floor 2008: 108)	55 (TM 103) 67 (Floor 2008: 108)
B.zāvandaq Bazandavandaqan	<i>sulṭān</i>	117 <i>tūmāns</i> , 1,287 <i>dīnārs</i> (TM 103) 117 <i>tūmāns</i> , 2,000 and odd <i>dīnārs</i> (Floor 2008: 109)	50 (TM 103) 55 (Floor 2008: 109)
Jām	<i>sulṭān</i>	1,547 <i>tūmāns</i> , 2,000 and odd <i>dīnārs</i> (Floor 2008: 108)	570 (Floor 2008: 108)
Tūn and Ṭabas	<i>sulṭān</i>	290 <i>tūmāns</i> , 6,000 and odd <i>dīnārs</i> (Floor 2008: 112)	300 (Floor 2008: 112)

⁴⁹ TM 103, 168.

⁵⁰ *Majmaʿ al-tavārīkh* 4. See also Röhrborn 1966: 13.

⁵¹ Röhrborn 1966: 16–17.

(*bēglerbēgī-yi kull-i Khurāsān*) despite the fact that Herat was far removed from the concerns of the central government during the time of the last Safavid ruler Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusain.⁵²

Its change of status notwithstanding, Herat continued to enjoy a special position within the framework of the Safavid government and served as the seat of the crown princes for most of the sixteenth century. These princes were often extremely young at the time of their appointment. Real power, therefore, rested with the Qizilbāsh *amīrs* assigned as their tutors (*lala*). The first Safavid prince appointed governor of Herat was Ṭahmāsp Mīrzā, who arrived in Rabīʿ I 922/April 1516 at the age of two and held his position under the tutorship of Amīr Khān Mauṣillū until 1521.⁵³ The last crown prince to hold Herat was ʿAbbās Mīrzā, who was barely one year old at the time of his appointment in 980/1572–73, which lasted for eight years. In the course of his own reign, Shāh ʿAbbās I abolished the practice of appointing royal princes to provincial governorships as part of his endeavor to enhance his control over the provinces and to break the power of the Qizilbāsh aristocracy.⁵⁴

Over time, Herat gradually lost its privileged position within Khurāsān. From the late sixteenth century on, the area administrated by the *dār al-salṭana* began to shrink, while Mashhad in western Khurāsān steadily gained gravity in political and economic terms. This development is reflected by the official terminology employed. Under Shāh Ismāʿīl II (r. 984–985/1576–1577), the governor of Mashhad assumed authority over “half of Khurāsān”, implying a partition of this immense province.⁵⁵ Mashhad owed its name and growing importance to the fact that it housed the grave of the eighth Imām ʿAlī b. Mūsā al-Riżā, who had died here on his way from Marv in 818. During the Timurid period, Mashhad began to outgrow the former metropolis of Ṭūs, which had suffered irreparable damage during a punitive expedition by Mīrān Shāh b. Tīmūr in 1388.⁵⁶ In the early fifteenth century, Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū described Mashhad as one of the “great cities” (*shahrhā-yi muʿazzam*) of Khurāsān and reported that it attracted pilgrims from as far as Egypt and Syria. One of the most important Timurid patrons of the shrine during this period was Gauhar Shād, who endowed a *masjid-i jāmiʿ* in 821/1418–19.⁵⁷ Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū’s otherwise terse account grows lyrical when he describes the size and artistic quality of the mosque containing the tomb of Imām Riżā, avowing that its “sky-high arch and *īvān*-hall” are unrivalled even in Paradise.⁵⁸

Like Herat, Mashhad was affected by the Uzbek incursions at the beginning and the end of the sixteenth century.⁵⁹ Following the Uzbek occupation of 1589–1598, the town received a considerable boost under

⁵² DS 80, 119.

⁵³ HS IV: 553–4; Thackston 1994: 607–8; AM 165–67; Sarwar 1975: 86; Savory 1978: 75; Szuppe 1992: 87–93; Szuppe 1993: 280.

⁵⁴ Haneda 1984: 54–7; Savory 1986: 366; Savory, “ʿAbbās I,” *E.I.*, 2 I: 7; Savory, “Safavids,” *E.I.*, 2 VIII: 769–70. The other princes appointed to Herat were Sām Mīrzā b. Ismāʿīl I under the tutelage of Dürmīsh Khān Shāmlū and his brother Ḥusain Khān Shāmlū (1521–1528/29), Bahrām Mīrzā b. Ismāʿīl I under the tutelage of Ghāzī Khān Tekelū (1530–1533), Sām Mīrzā under the tutelage of Āghzīvār Khān Shāmlū (1533–1535), Sulṭān Muḥammad Mīrzā b. Ṭahmāsp I under the tutelage of Muḥammad Khān Sharaf al-Dīn Tekelū (1537–1556), his son Qazāq Sulṭān Tekelū (1556–1564/65) and Shāh Qulī Sulṭān Chāvushlū Ustājilū (up to 1571–72) (AM 218, 269, 277–8, 327–8; Röhrborn 1966: 42–3, 100–101; Roemer 1986b: 234, 237–9; Savory 1978: 108, 155, 189–90; Szuppe 1992: 93, 99–100; Szuppe 1993: 280–1).

⁵⁵ *Ḥākim-i Mashhad-i muqaddas va amīr al-umarā-yi niṣf-i Khurāsān* (IM 224). See also Röhrborn 1966: 15.

⁵⁶ Aubin 1963: 116.

⁵⁷ For the date of completion, see *Mujmal-i faṣīḥī* III: 234. The “Masjid-i Gauharshād”, as it later became known, was located to the south of Imam Riżā’s grave and measured 53 by 48 yards (*dharʿ*). In the late nineteenth century, Iʿtimād al-Salṭana described this mosque as “unique in terms of architectural attainment, firmness and elegance”. The northern of its four *īvāns* led to the Imam’s grave. The southern *īvān* had a high cupola topped by two minarets (*guldasta*) (MSh II: 138–9). For the anecdote concerning the origin of the adjacent “Mosque of the Old Woman,” see *Glory of the Shia World*: 261–2.

⁵⁸ Krawulsky 1982: 96–99. Shāh Rukh added a golden candelabrum to the shrine and built a palace to the east of the town (*Mujmal-i faṣīḥī* III: 234; *Glory of the Shia World*: 239; C. E. Yate 1900: 317–18). Another generous benefactor to the shrine was Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā’s chief minister Mīr ʿAlī Shīr Navāʿī, who built an *īvān* and a minaret on the northern side of the complex. According to Iʿtimād al-Salṭana, ʿAlī Shīr Navāʿī also started building the northern courtyard later completed by ʿAbbās I (MSh II: 129).

⁵⁹ In 1507, Mashhad was conquered by the troops of Muḥammad Khān Shībānī; in 1525, Muḥammad Khān Shībānī’s nephew ʿUbaidullāh besieged and occupied Mashhad. Ṭahmāsp I made several efforts to establish authority over Mashhad. After an

Shāh ‘Abbās I, who paid numerous visits to the shrine and, in 1601, even demonstrated his reverence by walking from Iṣfahān to Mashhad.⁶⁰ Under his auspices, a large and beautifully ornamented courtyard (*ṣaḥn*) lined with pilgrims’ lodgings and jeweled doors were added to the northern portion of the shrine.⁶¹ The attention Shāh ‘Abbās I lavished on the shrine was understood by the traveler Tavernier and the missionary Sanson as an attempt at redirecting the stream of pilgrims—as well as the funds spent on road tolls, accommodation and donations—from the Hedjaz to Khurāsān. Shāh ‘Abbās I’s acts of devotion and his building activity at the shrine were emulated by his entourage, and effectively contributed to the rising fame of the grave and the belief in its miraculous powers.⁶² On the occasion of his visit in 1601, Shāh ‘Abbās I also constructed the main thoroughfare (*Khiyābān*) of Mashhad, and the canal flowing in its center.⁶³ In 1621, he built or rebuilt the shrine of ‘Alī’s contemporary Khvāja Rabī‘ (d. ca. 63/682–83) four miles north of the city.⁶⁴

Herat’s role within the administrative setup of Khurāsān was also affected by the incorporation of Qandahār into the Safavid domain in the middle of the seventeenth century. Qandahār’s key position in the trade with India implied an eastern shift of Safavid commercial interests. In the early eighteenth century, the Polish Jesuit Father Krusinski described the wealth this region generated for the Safavid kingdom until it broke away in 1709:

It was a Place of the more Importance to this [the Safavid] Kingdom, because it cover’d the Frontiers towards the *Indies*; and there was none so strong in all of *Persia*, it having been fortified by *European* Engineers [sic], whom Chah-Gehan [Shāh Jahān] the great Mogul employed there, while he was a master of it [1638–1649]. As ‘tis the great Thorow-Fare of the Caravans that go from *Persia* to the *Indies*, or that return thither from thence, it has enrich’d it self by the Stay which the Caravans make there, and which the Governors had the Art of protracting. One may form a Judgment of its Wealth, by the Tribute it paid to the King, which was twelve Pound Weight of Gold for every Day in the Year, exclusive of many other Duties, Fines, and Forfeitures.⁶⁵

The governor of Qandahār initially communicated with the court of Iṣfahān via Herat.⁶⁶ Later on, the province of Qandahār was placed on the same footing as Herat. In 1725, the *Tadhkirat al-mulūk* reported that

initial conquest in 1528, Mashhad had to be given up again because the fortifications were too weak to hold out against Uzbek pressure. In 1530, Mashhad passed to Safavid control and, thanks to improved walls and bastions, withstood a siege by ‘Ubaidullāh in 1535. In 1589, Mashhad fell to the Abu al-Khairid leaders ‘Abdullāh and ‘Abd al-Mu‘min. Their Uzbek troops plundered the shrine of its gold, silver, and jeweled candlesticks, as well as its lamps, carpets, china, and books. ‘Abd al-Mu‘min removed a gold pillar that had been erected by Shāh Ṭahmāsp I over the dome of the shrine and a diamond of the size of a fowl’s egg originally presented to the shrine by Quṭb Shāh (r. 1580–1612) of Golkonda. This diamond was later on returned to Shāh ‘Abbās I, who sold it in Turkey and placed the proceeds gained at the disposal of the administrators of the shrine (*Glory of the Shia World*: 239; C. E. Yate 1900: 318–19).

⁶⁰ C. E. Yate 1900: 319; McChesney 1981b; Melville 1996.

⁶¹ In the nineteenth century, the court endowed by Shāh ‘Abbās I was designated as the “Old Court” (*ṣaḥn-i ‘atīq*) to distinguish it from the new one built by Fath ‘Alī Shāh in 1818. At the time, this courtyard had four porches, two of which framed the gates leading west and east to the upper and lower boulevard (*khiyābān-i bālā*, *khiyābān-i pāyīn*). The northern *ivān* built by Shāh ‘Abbās I was ornamented with exquisite tilework and was known as *ivān-i ‘abbāsī*. The *ivān* on the southern wall of the courtyard originally endowed by ‘Alī Shīr Navā‘ī was repaired by Nādir Shāh in 1732 and was henceforth called “The Golden Iwan of Nādir” (*ivān-i ṭalā-yi nādirī*). The other three gates led to the great bazaar, the cloth market (*bāzār-i bazzāzān*), and the execution grounds (*qatlghāh*) respectively (MSh II: 129; see also C. E. Yate 1900: 319; Ferrier 1857: 125). In the late nineteenth century, the Iranian pilgrim Nūrallāh b. Muḥammad Ḥusain Iṣfahānī described the “Old Court” in the following manner: “[I]f I tell you that the court was some ninety by sixty metres, with four great porches, and that it was covered with tiles of many colours which not only cannot be made except by Persians, but require the sapphire blue of the sky of Iran to show them in their perfection, you may faintly imagine its beauty. It is paved with hewn stones, and underneath lies the dust of thousands of pious Mussulmans. The court is two-storied, the upper row of chambers being occupied by the high officials of the Shrine. The lesser officials, such as the carpenter, the goldsmith, and the repairers of the holy Korans, occupy the lower chambers, some of which have even been converted into tombs” (Sykes, P/Khan Bahadur Ahmad Khan (1910), *The Glory of the Shia World*: 243–44).

⁶² Tavernier 1679 I: 588–9. See also Sanson 1694: 171–3.

⁶³ C. E. Yate 1900: 319; Streck, “Mashhad,” *E.I.*, 2 VI: 713–16.

⁶⁴ Ḥusainī 2008. In 1652, Shāh ‘Abbās II reportedly adorned the façade of the shrine with glazed tiles (C. E. Yate 1900: 319).

⁶⁵ Krusinski’s account of Qandahār is in part based on Tavernier (Krusinski 1973 I: 144–5).

⁶⁶ Tumanovich 1989: 154.

Herat, Marv, Mashhad and Qandahār enjoyed an equal status and were governed by *bēglerbēgīs*.⁶⁷ This division into four administrative centers was also retained by Nādir Shāh later in the eighteenth century.⁶⁸ We thus see a shift in points of gravity during Safavid times. While Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū had assigned a central role to Herat, Balkh, Nīshāpūr, and Marv,⁶⁹ Qandahār and Mashhad assumed a central position on the mental map of the Safavids from Shah ‘Abbās I’s time on. This process coincided with the diminishing status of Herat within the province of Khurāsān.

THE SAFAVID ADMINISTRATION

The Qizilbāsh tribes (*ūymāq*) represented an essential component of the “new order” introduced by Shāh Ismā‘īl I. Drawn from the Turkmen tribes of eastern Anatolia and Syria, they were bound to the Safavid rulers as adherents of a supreme spiritual leader (*murshid-i kāmil*). Given their proximity to the ruling house, the Qizilbāsh played a formative role in the maintenance of power within the newly founded state. Their impact in shaping the concept of the Safavid domain is reflected by the terminology employed well into the seventeenth century. Thus Iskandar Munshī alternately referred to the Safavid territory as the Qizilbāsh “realm” (*qalamrau-yi Qizilbāsh*), “state” (*daulat-i Qizilbāsh*), and “kingdom” (*mamlakat-i Qizilbāsh*).⁷⁰ During Shāh Ismā‘īl I’s rise to power, the Ustājilū, Shāmlū, Rūmlū, Tekelū, Dhū al-Qadr, Qarāmānlū, Afshār and Qājār confederacies figured most prominently in the military forces.⁷¹ Of special importance were the *ahl-i ikhtiṣāṣ*, a small group of trusted adherents who had accompanied and protected the future king during his early career.⁷²

Over time, the relationship between the Qizilbāsh elite and their Safavid masters changed from one of unquestioning loyalty to the tenuous bond that typically united the interests of the local aristocrats with those of the royal family.⁷³ Loosely tied into a system of service grants, the Qizilbāsh soon became an entrenched elite with hereditary claims to the revenues of certain districts (*ulkā*) as a source of income. The Safavid rulers, on their part, tried to curtail their power by assigning them to regions distant from their original grazing grounds and playing off the various Qizilbāsh subdivisions against one another.

The first round of gubernatorial appointments in Khurāsān reflects such a shift of power, in this case to the detriment of Shāh Ismā‘īl I’s original entourage. The men dispatched to the Safavid outposts of Marv, Balkh and Herat in 1510 had previously held much more prestigious offices in the core regions of the empire. The first Safavid governor of Marv, ‘Abd al-‘Alī Bēg, had earlier served as *qurchībāshī* (commander of the royal guard)⁷⁴ and governor of Hamadān and central Kurdistān. The appointee to the government of Balkh, Bairām Bēg Qarāmānlū, looked back on an illustrious career as master of the royal stables (*amīr ākhūrbāshī*). Most significant was the fall of Shāh Ismā‘īl I’s erstwhile tutor, Ḥusain “Lala” Bēg Shāmlū, who had recently been deprived of his posts of viceregent (*vakīl*) and commander-in-chief (*amīr al-umarā*) and now became governor of Herat.⁷⁵

The division of power at this time also indicates some of the concepts of space the early Safavids entertained in their administration of Khurāsān. Ḥusain Bēg Shāmlū’s control over the province was by no means absolute, as its important western districts were apportioned to rival Qizilbāsh confederacies. Thus

⁶⁷ TM 44.

⁶⁸ Ferrier 1857: 120.

⁶⁹ Krawulsky 1982: 11–13.

⁷⁰ IM 152, 206, 523 quoted in Savory, “Qizil-Bāsh”, *E.I.*, 2 V: 244.

⁷¹ Aubin 1984: 7; Braun 1969: 183; Haneda 1987: 31–44; Roemer 1985: 230–1; Savory 2002: 5.

⁷² Aubin 1984: 3–4. Savory has also referred to this inner circle of the power elite as the Safavid “Politburo” (Savory 1980a: 21–22, 32, 268).

⁷³ Savory 1960: 91.

⁷⁴ For the evolution of the *qurchī* corps in the Safavid polity, see Haneda 1984/1989.

⁷⁵ Aubin 1984: 4–5, 15, 19, 22. According to Savory, Ḥusain Bēg’s tenure as *vakīl* and *amīr al-umarā* lasted until 1508 and 1509–10 respectively (Savory 1960: 94, 100; Savory 1986: 359). Aubin is of the opinion that Ḥusain Bēg lost both posts in 1508 (Aubin 1984: 12).

Sarakhs, located at the border of the “two Khurāsāns”, and Nīshāpūr were awarded to prominent Afshār leaders.⁷⁶ Mashhad formed the domain of the Ustājīlū leadership.⁷⁷ This state of affairs lasted, roughly speaking, up to the battle of Ghijduvān in November 1512, which was followed by a period of Uzbek advancement in Khurāsān.⁷⁸ During Shāh Ismā‘īl I’s second campaign to Khurāsān in spring 1513, a reshuffling of local governorships took place. Balkh and the northeastern territories were awarded to Dīv Sulṭān Rūmlū. Herat was administered by Zainal Khān Shāmlū, while Zāva was held by his relative Dūrmīsh Khān Shāmlū. Astarābād fell to the control of the Tālīsh confederacy.⁷⁹

In the course of the sixteenth century, some of the Qizilbāsh groups gained a lasting foothold in the regions assigned to them. Thus the Ustājīlū successfully enforced their claims to Mashhad until the beginning of Shāh ‘Abbās I’s reign.⁸⁰ The Afshārs, who had previously held *tuyūls* in Isfizār and Farāh,⁸¹ gained the governorships of Astarābād and Bisṭām at this time.⁸² The control of Sabzavār rested with Qājār leaders.⁸³ In 1011/1602, the major governorships of Khurāsān were distributed among the Shāmlū, Ustājīlū, Qājār and Alplū leadership.⁸⁴

As part of the endeavor to cut back the influence of the Qizilbāsh aristocracy, Shāh ‘Abbās I created a new standing army drawn from the ranks of Georgian and Circassian slaves.⁸⁵ Many of these *ghulāms* gained administrative posts and effectively displaced the Qizilbāsh elite. A case in point is Astarābād, which was governed by men of Circassian, Georgian and Armenian background during the first half of the seventeenth century.⁸⁶ Another important element in the policy of Shāh ‘Abbās I was his effort at “cossackization” of the northeastern frontier of Khurāsān,⁸⁷ which caused Khabūshān to become a Kurdish domain under the leadership of Yūsuf Sulṭān Chamishgazak.⁸⁸

In practical terms, the first thirty years of Safavid rule proved pernicious for Herat and its environs. After the battle of Chāldirān, Shāh Ismā‘īl I left Khurāsān more or less to its own fate. Aubin has characterized the situation of the region in this period as one of “demi-autonomie, ou [...] demi-abandon”.⁸⁹ Until 1537, Herat was exposed to Qizilbāsh misgovernment on the one hand and ongoing military pressure exerted by the Uzbeks on the other. This combination of war, neglect and abuse caused the region to suffer a scale of destruction reminiscent of the earlier Mongol and Timurid invasions. Preoccupied with the necessity of providing the means of survival for themselves and their troops, the conquerors focused on the short-term exploitation of local resources. While the control over the proceeds from caravan trade formed an immediate concern, the agricultural lands were neglected and destroyed.⁹⁰ This state of affairs is summed up by Khvānd Amīr’s dramatic description of the devastating two-year famine that broke out in early 1514 “due to the

⁷⁶ Aubin 1984: 19; Aubin 1988: 84; Junābadī 335.

⁷⁷ Aubin 1984: 19; Szuppe 1992: 81–2.

⁷⁸ Sarwar 1975: 68–9; Ḥusain Bēg Shāmlū was already deprived of the government of Herat in 1512, prior to the battle of Ghijduvān (Aubin 1984: 21).

⁷⁹ Junābadī 279; AM 166, 172; Aubin 1984: 22; Aubin 1988: 70.

⁸⁰ Falsafi 1990: 155; Müller 1964: 51, 117; Röhrborn 1966: 31.

⁸¹ IM 372, 376.

⁸² Müller 1964: 49–50, 115; Savory 1986: 361.

⁸³ Müller 1964: 27, 117.

⁸⁴ Ḥusain Khān Shāmlū was based in Herat, Najaf Qulī Shāmlū in Qāyin, Biktash Khān Ustājīlū in Marv, Mihrāb Khān Qājār in Khvāf and Bākharz, Yūsuf ‘Alī Khān b. Būdāq Khān in Mashhad (IM 999). Subsequent to his campaign to Balkh in 1602, Shāh ‘Abbās I appointed Yūsuf ‘Alī Khān b. Būdāq Khān and his brother Bairām ‘Alī Khān to Mārūchāq. Mihrāb Khān received the vacant governorship of Mashhad (IM 1015). According to Savory, Mihrāb Khān Qājār successively held the governorships of Ṭabas (1002/1593–94), Khvāf and Bākharz (1007/1598–99), Mashhad (1011/1602–3) and Marv (1017–18/1608–10) (Savory 2002: 25). See also IM 1324–5; Junābadī 830; Tumanovich 1989: 146–7.

⁸⁵ Savory 1986: 364–5.

⁸⁶ The governorships of Astarābād from 1606 to 1661 can be fairly well reconstructed from Persian sources. They are listed in the section on Astarābād in Chapter 6, footnote 67.

⁸⁷ Perry 1975.

⁸⁸ IM 973, 1812; Rettelbach 1978: 236, 500; TM 17.

⁸⁹ Aubin 1988: 120.

⁹⁰ Aubin 1988: 81–2.

passage of armies, constant strife, inattention to agriculture, dispersal of the peasantry, and the lack of both divine grace and royal attention”.⁹¹

During this period, the oasis of Herat as well as the surrounding country suffered extensive damage. It was in this context that Qāsim b. Yūsuf Abū Naṣrī Haravī composed his detailed works on the agriculture of Herat and its irrigation system. It indeed seems as though this Herati author attempted “to fix in writing the agricultural traditions of the Herat region that were in danger of being lost” in the upheaval that accompanied the advent of the Safavids.⁹² Other regions struggling with lacking resources at the time were Ghūr and Gharjistān. The recipients of land grants in these two regions reported that they yielded no revenues to speak of, let alone provisions for their troops. At the same time, some pockets were less affected by destruction. The regions around Nīshāpūr, Zāva, Qāyin, and Bākhār continued to flourish even in early Safavid times.⁹³

In the early Safavid era, the governors of Herat operated from an extremely limited base of power. This is reflected by their inability to establish a lasting foothold in Gharjistān, which continued to be controlled by Timurid and Uzbek leaders until 1548. Between 1514 and 1518, Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā’s grandson Muḥammad Zamān Mīrzā b. Badī’ al-Zamān held the region.⁹⁴ Qizilbāsh authority in Gharjistān remained ephemeral up to the middle of the sixteenth century. From the 1520s on, the Uzbek leader Bairām Ughlān governed the region on behalf of the Abu al-Khairid ruler of Balkh, Kīstān Qarā b. Jānī Bēg (r. 932–ca. 954/1526–1547). The relative weakness of the Qizilbāsh administration outside Herat allowed the chiefs of Gharjistān to extend their raids as far as Harāt-Rūd east of Herat.⁹⁵ In 941/1535, Bairām Ughlān invaded Harāt-Rūd and advanced as far as Tūniyān, deporting the local herds and tribes (*amvāl va aḥshām va ūymāqāt*) and denuding the population (*ra’āyā va ‘ajaza*) of its possessions. In the summer of 955/1548, he renewed his attacks on the local tribes who, according to Amīr Maḥmūd, had been revenue-paying subjects of Herat since ancient times.⁹⁶ He was beaten back by the Safavid governor of Herat, Muḥammad Khān Sharaf al-Dīn Tekelū, who advanced into Gharjistān.⁹⁷ In 1551, Muḥammad Sharaf al-Dīn dispatched another military expedition to the region under his son Qazāq Sulṭān.⁹⁸

The relatively insecure position of the Safavids in Herat in the early sixteenth century is also reflected by a rapid succession of governors following Ḥusain Bēg Shāmlū’s tenure in 1510–1512, many of whom also belonged to the Shāmlū confederacy.⁹⁹ These governorships were punctuated by the frequent campaigns the Abu al-Khairid leader ‘Ubaidullāh conducted against Herat until shortly before his death in 1540.¹⁰⁰ The Uzbek incursions had a grave impact on the pasture grounds and fields around Herat. The city itself suffered

⁹¹ Thackston 1994: 607–8. See also AT 150.

⁹² Subtelny 1993: 205–7.

⁹³ Aubin 1988: 30, 88.

⁹⁴ Muḥammad Zamān Mīrzā spread his activities as far as Shibarghān and Balkh in 1516. Around 1518, he was taken prisoner by the Mughal governor of the region but was reinstated as governor of Balkh after marrying a daughter of Bābur (AM 165, 172–6, 185; Sarwar 1975: 90). Muḥammad Zamān Mīrzā in turn re-appointed the former Timurid governor of Gharjistān, Saif al-Mulūk, who was displaced by the Safavid army in 1519 (AM 175, 185; Sarwar 1975: 90).

⁹⁵ In the early sixteenth century, both Muḥammad Zamān Mīrzā and Saif al-Mulūk engaged in incursions into this province (AM 171, 185).

⁹⁶ *Bisyārī az ūymāq va aḥshām ki az qadīm al-ayyām dar ‘idād-i ra’āyā-yi ān vilāyat būda va ba-dīvān-i ḥukkām-i dār al-salṭana-yi Harāt bāj va kharāj mīdādand īshān-rā girifta ba-jānib-i Gharjistān kūchānīd* (AM 411).

⁹⁷ AM 291–2, 410–14. See also Junābadī 524–5.

⁹⁸ Tumanovich 1989: 119–20.

⁹⁹ The governors of Herat up to 1537 were Zainal Khān Shāmlū (1513–1516), Amīr Khān Mauṣillū (1516–1521), Dürmīsh Khān Shāmlū (1522–1526), Ḥusain Khān Shāmlū (1526–1528/29), Ghāzī Khān Tekelū (1530–1533), Āghzīvār Khān Shāmlū (1533–1535), Khalīfa Sulṭān Shāmlū (1535), Šūfiyān Khalīfa Rūmlū and Khīzr Chilībī Rūmlū (1535–1536).

¹⁰⁰ After the battle of Ghijduvān, the Uzbeks under Jānī Bēg (d. 920/1514) and ‘Ubaidullāh occupied Tūs and Mashhad and forced the Qizilbāsh officials to abandon Herat. The following Uzbek campaigns against Herat were led by ‘Ubaidullāh Khān, who besieged Herat from 28 May to 11 June 1521, in the winter of 1525–26, and in 1528. The Uzbek troops occupied Herat from the winter of 1528–29 until August 1530. In 1533, the Uzbek forces conquered large parts of Khurāsān. ‘Ubaidullāh’s final occupation of Herat lasted from August 1536–January 1537 (AM 153–4, 189–203, 228–33, 249–76, 279, 310–23; Junābadī 334–7; Roemer 1986b: 217, 236–9; Sarwar 1975: 69–70, 92; Szuppe 1992: 84–7, 94, 99, 108–9, 115).

most during ‘Ubaidullāh Khān’s final occupation from August 1536 until January 1537, during which he destroyed the central bazaar and removed the treasury from the citadel of Ikhtiyār al-Dīn.¹⁰¹ The subsequent return of Herat to the fold of Safavid administration ushered in a period of stability, which is reflected by the twenty-year tenure of the appointed governor, Muḥammad Khān Sharaf al-Dīn Tekelū (1537–1557).¹⁰² Muḥammad Khān Sharaf al-Dīn Tekelū’s governorship inaugurated a switch from the previous Safavid policy of depletion to one of urban development.

Unfortunately, the sources offer hardly any details on the routine aspects of urban life. One kind of event found to be repeatedly mentioned is that of “illumination” (*ā’in bastan*) on this or that festive occasion. After the battle of Marv, the population of Herat greeted the victorious Shāh Ismā‘īl I by decorating their city.¹⁰³ In 1516, Amīr Khān Mauṣillū’s brother Ibrāhīm Sulṭān Mauṣillū ordered the markets within and without the city to be illuminated on the occasion of the arrival of Prince Ṭahmāsp. This earned him the appreciation of his contemporary Amīr Maḥmūd b. Khvānd Amīr, who flatteringly observed that the Mauṣillū leader had infused the city with new life and had changed “each shop into a mine... replete with jewels of all kinds” and “each market into a rose garden surpassing the garden of Iram in pleasantness and quietude”.¹⁰⁴ In 1537, Muḥammad Khān Sharaf al-Dīn Tekelū celebrated Shāh Ṭahmāsp I’s conquest of Qandahār by decorating the markets with “colored fabrics and fine cloth from Yazd and Europe” to a similar effect. The population of Herat lit so many candles and torches that “the darkness [of night] was swallowed up as if it were high noon”.¹⁰⁵ The resources of the Safavid administration in Herat are also highlighted by the instructions Shāh Tahmāsp sent to Muḥammad Khān Sharaf al-Dīn with regard to the entertainment of the deposed Mughal ruler Humāyūn b. Bābur (r. 937–950/1530–1543, 962–963/1555–1556), who passed through Khurāsān on his way to Qazvīn in 1544.¹⁰⁶

Muḥammad Khān Sharaf al-Dīn Tekelū was to become known for his attention to the wellbeing of his subjects (*ra’īyat parvarī*). What is more, he undertook lasting efforts at rebuilding. In the 1540s, he restored the deteriorated mosques, *madāris* and charitable buildings to a state of perfection.¹⁰⁷ During the same period, the square north of the Bāgh-i Shahr built by Dūrmīsh Khān was widened and equipped with shops. The markets held there on Fridays served as a focal trading point for artisans and merchants from the city and its environs (*balda va bulūkāt*).¹⁰⁸

Muḥammad Khān Sharaf al-Dīn Tekelū’s governorship signalled a phase of territorial consolidation. In 944/1537–38, Shāh Ṭahmāsp I briefly expanded his realm as far as Qandahār. Another campaign in that direction followed in 952/1545, on behalf of Humāyūn. By 958/1551, Muḥammad Khān Sharaf al-Dīn Tekelū had incorporated Gharjistān into his domain.¹⁰⁹

Another powerful Herati governor was the *bēglerbēg* Ḥusain Khān Shāmlū (1598–1619), who revived Safavid authority in Khurāsān subsequent to the ten-year intervention by the last Abu al-Khairid and the first Tuqai-Timurid rulers of Transoxiana.¹¹⁰ He was succeeded by his son Ḥasan Khān Shāmlū (1619–

¹⁰¹ Szuppe 1992: 115.

¹⁰² Savory 1978: 108; Szuppe 1996a: 81–3.

¹⁰³ AM 138.

¹⁰⁴ AM 168–9.

¹⁰⁵ AM 345–8.

¹⁰⁶ Floor 2008: 96–103; Ray 1948: 68–74. Humāyūn, the eldest son of Bābur, assumed kingship in 1530. In 1539–1540, he was repeatedly defeated by Shīr Khān Sūr, an Afghan commander based in eastern India. After withdrawing to Sind, Humāyūn set out for Qandahār in July 1543 and traveled onward to Herat and Iran, where he solicited the assistance of Shāh Ṭahmāsp I. In 1545, he gained control over Qandahār and spent the next nine years reestablishing his authority in the regions west of the Indus. In the summer of 1555, Humāyūn brought the Sūrī interregnum to an end and regained the throne. His second reign lasted until his death in January 1556 (Digby, “Humāyūn,” *E.I.*, 2 III: 575–7; Ray 1948).

¹⁰⁷ Junābadī 502–3. See also Szuppe 1992: 115–16, 139; Szuppe, “Herat iv. Topography and Urbanism,” *E.Ir.* XII: 214–15.

¹⁰⁸ AM 357–8.

¹⁰⁹ AM 410–14; Junābadī 524–5.

¹¹⁰ IM 922, 1155, 1475, 1556.

1638/1641),¹¹¹ whose name is linked with the erection of a large domed cistern immediately southeast of the Chahār Sū.¹¹² In 1845, Ferrier recounted the folklore surrounding the construction of this building which commemorated the conflict between Ḥasan Khān Shāmlū and his architect, contrasting the Safavid governor's impetuosity and impatience with the architect's concern for the construction of a stable and durable edifice.¹¹³

The establishment of the Safavid mode of administration in Herat was accompanied by the influx of western and central Iranian concepts. On their arrival in Herat, the Qizilbāsh acted as bearers of *ithnā-‘asharī* Shiism and brought along their own administrative personnel. This shift of power occurred in an environment that had been predominantly Sunnī so far. Even so, the clash of interests between the local elite and the new masters should not strictly be seen in doctrinal terms. At this point in time, Qizilbāsh religious practice primarily consisted of an amalgam of Turkmen tribal customs and beliefs that had evolved in eastern Anatolia.¹¹⁴ Moreover, the doctrinal differentiation between the realms of Sunnism and Shiism had not assumed a clear profile yet. Therefore, Szuppe argues that the introduction of Shiism as state religion did not foster religious delineations so much as it added contours to political divides. Thus the strategic alignments emerging within the field of Safavid-Uzbek competition generally coincided with religious affiliations. While the allies of the Safavids were apt to identify themselves as Shī‘ī, the proponents of Uzbek rule emphasized their Sunnī leanings. The concurrence of political and religious identities is also reflected by the fact that soldiers deserting to either side readily took on the religion of their new overlords.¹¹⁵ In the context of the frequent shifts of power between Safavids and Uzbeks up to 1537, the denunciation of Herati citizens as either Sunnī or Shī‘ī became a favorite ploy for settling personal scores or availing oneself of the property of wealthy families. Amīr Maḥmūd b. Khvānd Amīr recounts the case of a man who was blackmailed during ‘Ubaidullāh Khān’s occupation of Herat from August 1536 to January 1537. Accused of Shī‘ī leanings, he was forced to take refuge in Fūshanj-Ghūriyān and to leave his family and his house at the mercy of the local bandit who had cooked up this allegation in collusion with the men of one of ‘Ubaidullāh Khān’s *amīrs*. As a result, the remaining members of the poor man’s family were abducted, their possessions seized, and the house deprived of its most valuable components, namely its wooden door and window frames.¹¹⁶ The sad

¹¹¹ IM 1556. See also Riazul Islam 1979: 95; Rettelbach 1978: 96–7, 163, 249, 413; Rota 2009: 166–8, 249–50, 384–5, 418; Tumanovich 1989: 147–8. After Ḥasan Khān Shāmlū’s death in 1050/1641, Shāh Ṣafī appointed his eldest son ‘Abbās Qulī Khān as governor of Herat (Rota 2009: 249–50, 418).

¹¹² Najimi 1982.

¹¹³ “This dome, according to tradition, was constructed by command of Shah Abbas the Great, and after it was partially built the governor of the town, a violent, overbearing man, commanded the architect to finish it within a very brief space of time. In vain the artist expostulated and informed him that it was impossible to do this in the time specified; the despot would listen to no reason or explanation, and the unfortunate man, to avert the consequences that might be perhaps fatal to his life, took the first opportunity of leaving Herat. A year elapsed, the building remained unfinished, for no other person could be found who had the talent to complete the work; at length the architect reappeared, and the governor, finding himself in a difficulty and anxious to have the edifice finished, consented, though unwillingly, to remit the sentence of death, but ordered him to be bastinadoed. Before, however, the punishment was inflicted, the governor, at his earnest request, accompanied him to the reservoir, and the architect, directing his attention to the walls, which were a considerable height above the earth, said, ‘Do you not see that the foundations of this building have sunk at least a foot in the ground since I left the city? If at that period I had refused to erect the cupola you would have cut my head off, or the same fate would have probably awaited me had it fallen down after it was finished. You refused to hear me, and I ran away to save my life. The time has arrived when I can successfully terminate my labours, and I have returned to do so.’ A free pardon followed this explanation, and the architect, filling the reservoir with chopped straw pressed into sacks, and heaping them up to the requisite height and form to make his centre, constructed over them one of the most elegant cupolas ever built” (Ferrier 1857: 174). This contrast between imperial ambition and the prudence of builders is a recurrent theme. Sulṭān Muḥammad Durrānī, for example, recounts a parallel anecdote in connection with Aḥmad Shāh’s construction of a new capital in Qandahār. The Indian engineer in charge of the magnificent dome to be erected over the central market square (*chahār sūq*) fled to Nīshāpūr for six months in order to allow the supporting walls to settle (T Su 143–4; see also Singh 1981: 271).

¹¹⁴ For a characterization of Qizilbāsh Shiism, see Aubin 1970b: 237–8.

¹¹⁵ Szuppe 1992: 122–3, 131–2, 161–2.

¹¹⁶ AM 318–19.

fate of this family highlights a moment in the history of Herat when the establishment of Safavid authority was by no means certain yet. It also bears testimony to the introduction of religio-political denominations that henceforth played an increasing role in shaping local identities.

A GLIMPSE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY: THE TRAVELOGUE OF IBN VALĪ

Aside from the chronicles and the imperial framework they reflect, there are few alternative voices reporting on the circumstances in Herat. A notable exception is Maḥmūd b. Amīr Valī, who visited Herat in July 1631 on his way from Bust and Farāh and onwards to his native city of Balkh. With his return to Balkh in August of the same year, he concluded a journey of six years, which had taken him as far as Orissa, Hyderabad, and Ceylon. By the order of the local Tuqai-Timurid ruler Nadhr Muḥammad, Ibn Valī described his adventures and the geographical knowledge he accumulated in a work entitled *Baḥr al-asrār*.¹¹⁷ This book provides some snippets of information on Herat during the reign of Shāh Ṣafī. At that point in time, Safavid rule still profited from the territorial gains made by Shāh ‘Abbās I. Qandahār, which had been conquered by Shāh ‘Abbās I in 1622, was still under Safavid control and did not pass to Mughal authority before 1638.

The northeastern reaches of Khurāsān, by contrast, had been subject to rivalries between Herat and Balkh throughout the early seventeenth century. While only a short period had passed since the conclusion of Shāh ‘Abbās I’s powerful reign, Ibn Valī detected various signs of deterioration in the eastern dominions of the Safavid realm. In his view, Qandahār had suffered depopulation and economic decline since the Safavid conquest. Gharjistān fell within the orbit of the Tuqai-Timurid rulers of Balkh. The adjacent region of Bādghīs had experienced large-scale destruction owing to Nadhr Muḥammad Khān’s frequent military campaigns to the region. None of the twelve irrigation channels which had sustained the province of Murghāb in Timurid times was in use any longer. The only sizeable settlements were Mārūchāq and Panjdih, whereas all the other villages had deteriorated. In Kurukh, the number of productive villages had been reduced from eighty in Timurid times to the current figure of forty.¹¹⁸

PASTURES AND TRADE ROUTES: PATTERNS OF MOVEMENT AND CONTROL

During the Safavid period, Herat witnessed the introduction of new administrative cadres from western and central Iran that were tied to the Qizilbāsh military elite in a dynamic of dependence and rivalry. However, certain continuities in the mode of organization stand out. While the new overlords were strangers to Khurāsān, the ecological and economic constraints determining the patterns of military action and local control did not change radically. As in earlier times, the interaction between tribal conquerors and oasis towns produced a specific force field. In their ambition to “open up” the inhabited quarter of the world (*rub ‘-i maskūn*),¹¹⁹ the early modern conquerors focused on urban centers as reservoirs of wealth and seats of worldly power. Meanwhile, the need to provide for an army heavily dependent on cavalry provided a constant impetus for onward movement. Like their Timurid predecessors and their Abu al-Khairid contemporaries, the early Safavids drew their military force from tribal elements and had to maintain a network of loyalties crucial for the exercise of power. The resulting arrangements were largely dictated by

¹¹⁷ Akhmedov 1977: 83; Riazul Islam 1979b: 87–8, 95, 115, 119.

¹¹⁸ Akhmedov 1977: 20, 84–5; Khān 1993: 16.

¹¹⁹ This concept can also be found in the historiography of the early Islamic period. According to Daniel, the Buyid historian Ḥamza b. Ḥasan Iṣfahānī (d. 360/970) produced a “comparative calendrical history” of the seven great regions making up the inhabited world (*al-maskūn min rub ‘ al-‘arḍ*): China, India, the Sudan, the Berbers, the Romans, the Turks, and the Aryans (Daniel, “Historiography iii. Early Islamic Period,” *E.Ir.* XII: 336). The early Safavid historian Khvānd Amīr informs us that the idea of a “quarter” is to be taken literally. While half of the earth is covered by a great sea, only half of the other half protruding from the sea is cultivated: *Hukamā-yi daqīqa-shinās va fuḍalā-yi khirad-iqtibās bar īn ma ‘nā ittifāq dārānd ki niṣfī az kurra-yi zamīn dar baḥr-i a ‘zam ki ān-rā ūqiyānūs khvānand mastūr ast va niṣfī dīgar dar ‘ālam nimāyish va zuḥūr ba-ṣūrat-i baiḍa-ī ki dar āb afkanand. Va az īn niṣf ke makshūf ast niṣfī ki dar jānib-i janūb uftāda vīrān ast. Pas az chahār bakhsh-i zamīn yak bakhsh ‘imārat dārād ki ān-rā rub ‘-i maskūn khvānand* (HS IV: 619).

the necessity to feed the available troops in an environment where agricultural resources were limited and subject to seasonal fluctuations. The dynamic of movement involved suggests that the invasions giving rise to the great empires of the time were not so much an end in themselves as the by-product of the imperative to gain and maintain a growing retinue. While forming a routine aspect of the early modern mode of government, military campaigns followed cyclical and seasonal patterns resembling nomadic migrations.¹²⁰

The sieges of the great oasis towns provided the opportunity to siphon off mobile property as well as agricultural resources. The far-flung possessions acquired in this process could only be controlled by repeated exertion of military pressure, which in effect required further movement. This phenomenon is captured by Khunjī's account of Muḥammad Khān Shībānī's exploits in the early sixteenth century. About to claim the future territory of the Abu al-Khairid dominion against the Timurids in the south and the Qazāqs in the north, Muḥammad Khān Shībānī reacted to the exhaustive list (apparently offered by Khunjī) of all capitals recorded in history with the following words:

It is the divine will that the inhabited quarter in its entirety shall be placed under my command, that my world-traversing steed shall extend its conquering hooves over all cultivated tracts of land, and that no spot should remain unvisited by the high-tempered horse of my world-embracing ambitions. In order to establish control over the face of the earth, I must settle in the saddle and treat the mount of my ambition as a throne of repose and tranquility. Hence, my saddle shall serve as my capital.¹²¹

Interestingly, the need to establish a hold over the oasis towns simultaneously served to confirm the nomad ethos and glorified the restless life in the saddle it engendered. The orientation towards the cities as the most desirable assets of conquest was held in common by all pre-modern and early modern generals. Aubin has demonstrated that the primary goal of Tīmūr's far-reaching campaigns in the 1380s and 1390s was to collect the available urban resources, if possible in the form of ransom. Typically, the arrival of Timurid troops before the target-city was followed by negotiations with the local elite. One way to avoid a prolonged siege and the threat of wholesale massacre was to submit an impost termed "protection fee" (*māl-i amān*) or "hoof money" (*na' l bahā*), which consisted of all portable property and slaves. In the meantime, the besieging army denuded the countryside surrounding its encampment in search of provisions. These requisitions targeted not only the agricultural wealth of the villagers but also the livestock of the local nomads, in particular sheep and beasts of burden as means of transportation for the acquired goods. As a rule, the depletion of agricultural resources accompanying troop movements spelled famine for the local population. This is reflected by Zāhir al-Dīn Mar'ashī's statement that after the passage of Tīmūr's army through Māzandarān, not a single cock survived to crow, nor a hen to lay eggs.¹²² In the early sixteenth century, the prolonged tug of war between Uzbeks and Qizilbāsh had a disastrous effect on the population of Herat. The Uzbek siege of the city in 1587–88 once again depleted the food stocks in a dramatic manner and caused a scarcity of grain.¹²³

While the cities bore the brunt of the waves of conquest, the major lines of communication linking them were quickly restored to order. In contrast to his vindictive attitude towards the towns, Tīmūr immediately installed a functional postal system and saw to the security of the highroads. To this end, he stipulated that any merchandise stolen en route be returned twofold to its erstwhile owner, while five times its value had to be submitted to the royal treasury by the district concerned. In order to illustrate the protection Tīmūr afforded to trading activities, Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū resorts to a standard story projecting an ideal state of security, even for women. He recounts the case of a Qandahārī merchant's widow who travelled unmolested from Simnān to Diyārbakr, where she sold twenty-seven bales of precious cloth.¹²⁴ The Safavids were likewise

¹²⁰ For the seasonal movement among the early Mongols, see Andrews 1999 II: 1291–7.

¹²¹ *Mihmānnāma* 54; Ott 1974: 74–5. See also Gronke 1992: 20; Roemer 1974: 318.

¹²² Zāhir al-Dīn Mar'ashī, *Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān*, quoted in Aubin 1963: 103. See also pp. 97, 99–105, 121. Herat weathered the first Timurid invasion in April 1381 unscathed thanks to the decision of the local population not to attempt a defence. An uprising in 1383 was followed by the imposition of *māl-i amān*, which involved the destruction of the bazaar and the deportation of a great part of the male population (Aubin 1963: 95, 113).

¹²³ McChesney 1993: 101.

¹²⁴ Aubin 1963: 91.

concerned with the need to safeguard traffic along the commercial arteries. As early as 1505, Shāh Ismāʿīl I effectively cleared the trade route linking Shīrāz, Yazd, Ṭabas Gīlakī and Herat from brigandage. On the road between Shīrāz and Iṣfahān, by contrast, problems continued to persist. Towards the northeast, traffic along the trade route to Transoxiana did not cease despite the ongoing conflicts with ʿUbaidullāh Khān in the early sixteenth century. In 1522, merchants on their way across the Oxus received tax exemptions.¹²⁵ The long distance trade routes and the proceeds to be gained from the circulation of goods thus formed an integral part of the mental map of the Timurids and Safavids alike.

During the transition to a more established state of empire, the cities once subject to a ruthless extraction of wealth were allowed to recover, and some of them assumed a central position as seats of government. In 1370, Tīmūr chose Samarqand as his capital and began to construct a second metropolis in his birth place of Kish in 1373–74. Despite the focus on urban embellishment, government activity was centered in the royal camp (*urdū-yi humāyūn*) and did not shift to the citadel. In Tīmūr's time, the camp was moved on a weekly basis and was frequently pitched in one of the royal gardens in the outskirts of Samarqand. Under Shāh Rukh, Herat was designated capital of the Timurid Empire and likewise experienced a considerable revival. Nonetheless, Shāh Rukh adhered to a seasonal pattern of movement, preferably spending his summers in Bādghīs and winters in Māzandarān.¹²⁶ Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā likewise chose his summer quarters at Bādghīs. His contemporary Isfizārī identified Marv as the winter camp of the Khurasanian rulers.¹²⁷ In the meantime however, the aforementioned account of Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā's favorite springs near Harāt-Rūd and Fūshanj suggests a shrinking radius of movement. Within this scheme of migration, the great residential gardens on the outskirts of Herat constituted focal points of attraction. This dual existence of camp and palace continued under the Safavids until the time of Shāh ʿAbbās II, with the difference that their migrations gravitated towards locations in western Iran.¹²⁸ It was in this region that Tabrīz, Qazvīn and Iṣfahān successively figured as capitals. The fact that the choice of this or that city as capital only receives cursory treatment in the contemporaneous sources attests to the continuing centrality of the mobile court as factual seat of government.¹²⁹

The forceful extraction of urban resources typical of the early periods of domination receives a romantic gloss in later accounts and is transformed into a portrayal of the city as a miraculous supplier of all the goods required for the maintenance of sturdy armies. At the height of the Timurid empire, Isfizārī illustrated the wealth of Herat by pointing out that the prices for bread and slaves, the two main indicators of economic welfare, remained stable even at times when large numbers of soldiers had to be entertained: "If an army of 200,000 to 300,000 men were to enter and leave it, this would result neither in surplus nor deficiency."¹³⁰ The image of the city as a generous host ready to shelter and feed hungry armies is also invoked by Khunjī in his description of Muḥammad Khān Shībānī's winter camp at Bukhārā in 1508–09:

¹²⁵ Aubin 1988: 81–4.

¹²⁶ Thackston 1994: 313, 321, 326.

¹²⁷ Isfizārī I: 173–5.

¹²⁸ Shāh ʿAbbās I stayed in Iṣfahān less than two months a year on average, and Shāh Ṣafī did not visit the capital at all between 1631 and 1636. The presence of the royal camp in Iṣfahān caused great demographic fluctuations. In the later seventeenth century, Dutch observers noted that the population increased by 60,000 when the king arrived in the city. In times of scarcity, the arrival of the king and his entourage could exacerbate economic problems. This was the case in 1668 when the newly crowned Shāh Sulaimān returned to Iṣfahān without securing the requisite provisions beforehand (Haneda/Matthee, "Isfahan vii. Safavid Period," *E.Ir.* XIII: 651, 654).

¹²⁹ Roemer 1974: 317–19. See also Gronke 1992: 20–1.

¹³⁰ Isfizārī I: 23–4: *Har sāl qarīb ba bist hazār barda az Turkistān va Hindūstān va ghairu humā badīn madīna-yi dīn-panāh miyāvarand va hama ba-bahā-yi tamām furūkhta mīshavad ki na qīmat-i barda arzān mīshavad va na nirkh-i nān girān. Va agar lashkarī divīst u sīṣad hazār mardum dar vay darāyand va bīrūn ravand na ziyādatī paidā va na nuqṣān [paidā mīshavad].* This statement was understood by Subtelny to refer to population figures: "Determining the population of Herat at the end of the 15th century seems an almost impossible task... Isfizārī who states, for example, that if an army of 320,000 [sic] were to enter the town and then come out again, 'neither an increase or a loss would be detected' (Subtelny 1993: 182)." My interpretation is that the expression "increase or loss" refers to the supplies available and not to the population figures.

On Saturday, 22 Sha‘bān (914/16 December 1508) they made camp in the glorious city of Bukhārā and remained there until the end of Ramaẓān (24 December 1508–22 January 1509)... During these days many strange and wonderful things occurred... Ten famous *sulṭāns* and powerful rulers, each with a retinue of 10,000 cavalry besides *amīrs* and young heroes, converged on one city. Even though winter was not over yet and provisions tended to be expensive and scarce, there was an abundance of grain available in all markets. Not a single person was heard to complain about scarcity or price increases, and no animals suffered damage due to lack of fodder.¹³¹

The need to provide for large bodies of cavalry also determined the rhythm and direction of military campaigns. Aubin has noted that Timurid and Safavid armies alike adhered to logistic patterns reminiscent of nomadic movement. Major campaigns typically started in late spring and proceeded along the summer pastures located in the high mountain valleys rather than following the trade routes in the plains.¹³² Thus it was the northern mountain ranges that served as the main military conduit between Khurāsān and Azerbaijan. One important assembly point for armies heading west were the pasture grounds (*ulang, chaman*) around Rādkān northwest of Mashhad.¹³³ The meadows of Kālpūsh, Kharqān (close to Biṣṭām), Sulṭān Maidān (near Dāmghān), Fīrūzkūh, and Ray served as major stations on the way to Azerbaijan.¹³⁴

In reverse order, this also was the favorite route the Safavid kings adopted on their eastern campaigns. When Shāh Ismā‘īl I left his winter quarters in Iṣfahān in spring 1513 to expel the Uzbeks from Mashhad, Tūs and Herat, he moved via Sāva, Fīrūzkūh, Sulṭān Maidān, Kālpūsh, Ulang-i Rādkān into the heartlands of Khurāsān.¹³⁵ Shāh Ṭahmāsp I “always skirted the great desert by first going north from Isfahan towards Firuzkuh enjoying a beautiful view of the snow-covered top of Mt. Demavand, then east along the well-established Simnan-Damghan route.”¹³⁶ The route via Ṭabas Gīlakī to Yazd, by contrast, was far less attractive. Passing for the most part through barren deserts devoid of any natural streams of water, it was, moreover, subject to violent gales of wind from May to October.¹³⁷ Shāh Ṭahmāsp I followed this route only upon his return from Khurāsān to Iṣfahān in 937/1530.¹³⁸ Shāh ‘Abbās I also approached Khurāsān by the southern route from Iṣfahān not more than once. During his campaign to Qandahār in 1031/1621–22 he entered the region via Ṭabas. After holding winter camp in the environs of Mashhad, Nīshāpūr and Turshīz, the Safavid troops continued on their way to Farāh and Qandahār in spring.¹³⁹

North of Herat, the extensive grazing areas of Bādghīs alternatively functioned as mustering grounds and resting areas. Junābadī specifically mentions Shāh Ismā‘īl I’s stay at Ulang-i Bābā Khākī during his campaign to Herat in 1513 and extols its meadows for their “freshness, verdure and pleasantness”.¹⁴⁰ In 1011/1602, Shāh ‘Abbās I spent two months in Bādghīs while assembling his army for a pending campaign against Balkh.¹⁴¹ Towards Qandahār, the region of Ghūr provided summer pastures.¹⁴² For the immediate vicinity of Herat, Szuppe enumerates five pasturages ready to accommodate large bodies of men approaching the city or leaving it. To the east and northwest of the city, the meadows of Kahdistān and Saq Salmān were

¹³¹ Ott 1974: 196–7.

¹³² Aubin 1971: 107, 117; Aubin 1988: 29. See also Junābadī 278.

¹³³ AT 138; Seddon 1934: 65; Junābadī 277; *‘Abbās-nāma* 138; *Qīṣaṣ al-khāqānī* I: 515. See also Boyle 1968: 338; Manz 2007: 23.

¹³⁴ Aubin 1971: 118–19; Aubin 1988: 70. See also HS 4: 534; Thackston 1994: 601; *Qīṣaṣ al-khāqānī* I: 515. In his description of Muhammad Khān Shībānī’s campaign to Astarābād and Khurāsān in 914/1508, Khunjī specifically mentions the “meadow” (*ulang*) of Biṣṭām (*Mihmānnāma* 189; Ott 1974: 196). See also Smith 1999: 52–4.

¹³⁵ *Futūḥāt-i shāhī* 396; AM 158; Sarwar 1975: 70. Shāh Ismā‘īl I spent the spring of 1520 at *ulang-i Rādkān* (Sarwar 1975: 90). For a detailed description of Kālpūsh and its role in history, see MSh I: 99–108. Kālpūsh is mentioned in connection with Faṭḥ ‘Alī Shāh’s campaign to Sabzavār in 1214–15/1800 (*Dhū al-qarnain* 138; TRSN IX: 364). In 1218/1803, the first Qājār governor of Mashhad, Muḥammad Valī Mīrzā, entered Khurāsān via the meadows (*marghzār*) of Sulṭān Maidān and the *yailāqs* of Bām and Jahān-Arghiyān (*Ashraf al-tavārikh* 82).

¹³⁶ Mazzaoui 1977: 521–2.

¹³⁷ For a description of the trade route between Yazd and Herat in 1839, see Forrest 1906: 3–17.

¹³⁸ Junābadī 409.

¹³⁹ Junābadī 879. See also Mazzoui 1977: 521;

¹⁴⁰ Junābadī 278. See also AM 411; Sarwar 1975: 70; Szuppe 1992: 37–8; Thackston 1994: 313, 321.

¹⁴¹ IM 999.

¹⁴² HS IV: 237; Thackston 1994: 470.

both fed by the Jūy-i Nau. Other prominent gathering places were Šūfiyān to the west and the meadows of Hazār Jarīb and Nishīn south of the Harī Rūd.¹⁴³

Part and parcel of the seasonal nature of troop movements was the need to provide for the soldiers and their animals in winter. Muḥammad Khān Shībānī's campaigns in the early sixteenth century were cast in contemporaneous sources as a cyclical movement between summer camp (*yailāq*) in Herat and winter camp (*qishlāq*) in Marv and Bukhārā.¹⁴⁴ During roughly the same period, Shāh Ismā'īl I relied on a mobile court and solved his logistic concerns by allowing his troops to disperse to their respective *ulūs* at the conclusion of each major military campaign.¹⁴⁵ As the northern arch of Khurasanian mountains became impassable during the cold season, the low regions along the Caspian gained crucial importance both as winter camps and strategic link to Azerbaijan. Other important winter quarters were located in Darra Gaz and Abīvard on the northeastern slopes of the Kopet Dagħ Mountains and the plains beyond.¹⁴⁶

The problem of feeding the troops in times of military inactivity was solved by means of service grants, assignments of land made to the military leaders in exchange for the maintenance of a stipulated number of soldiers. During the Timurid period, such assignments were commonly known as *suyūrghāl*. These land grants of varying sizes were hereditary and inevitably enhanced the political independence of their holders vis-à-vis the court. Initially a prerogative of the military elite, this sort of grant also became accessible to religious personages, such as ulama and Sufi dignitaries, as the fifteenth century wore on.¹⁴⁷ The Safavids likewise relied on a system of land grants. In the early sixteenth century, the Qizilbāsh leadership received control over the revenues of certain districts (*ulkā*) in exchange for supplying a fixed number of soldiers. Known as *tuyūl*, these awards were designed to be temporary, in effect allowing for a greater amount of government control. One such award was the fertile district of Bākharz, which was expected to sustain 700 soldiers.¹⁴⁸

In addition to the obvious obstacles posed by cold temperatures, snow and lack of resources, the early modern armies had to contend with further natural factors. Aside from deserts, the major rivers in the region constituted a seasonal impediment to the movements of troops and merchants alike. With the thaw in spring, the Hilmand (Hīrmand), the Adraskan, Farāh Rūd, Harī Rūd, and Murghāb river typically rose to such an extent that they became impassable.¹⁴⁹ This circumstance added to the strategic importance of solid bridges. The two most important bridges in the Herat region were the Pul-i Mālān and the Pul-i Sālār. The former provided a vital connection via the Harī Rūd to the south and the trade route to Qandahār. The Pul-i Sālār afforded a crossing of the Jūy-i Kārtabār on the road leading west to Mashhad.¹⁵⁰

Another much-frequented crossing over the Harī Rūd was the Pul-i Khātūn located at its confluence with the Kashaf Rūd. This stone bridge spans the river at a point where it is about to leave the hills and enter the plain of Sarakhs. This crossing was of critical importance in the spring when the lower reaches of the Harī Rūd tended to be flooded.¹⁵¹ The Kushk Rūd could be crossed at Chihil Dukhtarān, where Sulṭān Ḥusain

¹⁴³ Szuppe 1992: 39–40. See also Allen 1981: 77, 80, 83, 88; Hāfiẓ-i Abrū, *Činq opuscles*, 65; Isfizārī II: 41; HS III: 431, Thackston 1994: 246; AM 346, 411; Junābadī 335; IM 1475; Thackston 1996: 237; Kāẓim 776; *Ashraf al-tavārīkh* 400; Za'farānlū 1968: 30. In the nineteenth century, Saq Salmān was guarded by a fort (T Su 111).

¹⁴⁴ Ott 1974: 190–200.

¹⁴⁵ Aubin 1988: 29.

¹⁴⁶ Aubin 1971: 117.

¹⁴⁷ Fragner 2005: 149–50; Subtelny 1988b.

¹⁴⁸ Aubin 1988: 29–30. During the governorship of Muḥammad Khān Sharaf al-Dīn Tekelū in Herat, Bākharz was controlled by his eldest son Qazāq Sulṭān (AM 415). Junābadī 527 describes this grant as *iqṭā'*. See also Szuppe 1992: 37; Szuppe 1996a: 83.

¹⁴⁹ In his account of 'Abbās II's campaign to Qandahār in December 1648, Valī Qulī Shāmlū describes the difficulties the Safavid troops encountered in carrying the artillery across the Hilmand. He compares the river to the Oxus in terms of width and the amount of water it carries: *Rūd-i jaiḥūn-namūd-i Hīrmand ki az anḥār-i 'aẓīm va dar bisyārī-yi āb mashhūr-i rūzgār ast* (*Qiṣaṣ al-khāqānī* I: 343–4). See also Ferrier 1857: 261; Lal 1977: 170, 174, Lessar 1883: 3–4.

¹⁵⁰ Junābadī 337. See also Isfizārī II: 335; Allen 1981: 43.

¹⁵¹ According to popular belief, Pul-i Khātūn was built by “Khātūn”, the sister of Shāh Rukh's wife Gauhar Shād Āqā (*Safarnāma-yi Rukn al-Daula* 71). In the first half of the sixteenth century, Pul-i Khātūn formed the southernmost extension of the district of Sarakhs (Junābadī 527; see also Fūfalzā'ī 1967: 430–1). The bridge consisted of twelve arches. By 1260/1844, the formerly firm

Bāyqarā had erected a bridge of burnt bricks. It was at these vital points of passage and in the infertile stretches of desert that trade routes and military itineraries coincided.

The most famous river in the region, the Āmū Daryā, represented a formidable physical barrier during the warm season. Ruy Gonzáles de Clavijo (d. 1412), the ambassador of Henry III of Castile, passed this river near Tirmidh in August 1404. He reported that it varied in width, reaching its furthest extent during the spring flood:

It is a league in width, and flows through a very flat country, with great and wonderful force, and it is very muddy. It is lowest in winter, because the waters are frozen in the mountains, and the snow does not melt: but in the month of April it begins to increase, and goes on increasing continually for four months; and this is because the summer melts the ice and snow. Last summer they said that it had swollen much more than usual; for it increased so much that the water reached a village, near the banks, and destroyed many houses, doing great damage.¹⁵²

At other times of the year, the stream was reduced to an inner bank or formed a series of separate channels. The great amount of seasonal variation precluded the erection of permanent bridges over the middle course of the river. This was the case in Chārjūy (present-day Türkmenabat), the name of which reflected the fact that the Āmū Daryā separated into several streams there. Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū reports that this town, known as Āmūya since Samanid times, constituted the most important crossing and hence, caused the river Jaiḥūn to be named after it.¹⁵³ Located three miles from the left bank of the river at the intersection of the highroads connecting Herat and Mashhad with Bukhārā and Khīva, Chārjūy was an important strategic and commercial outpost in early modern times.¹⁵⁴

‘Abd al-Karīm passed through Chārjūy in Nādir Shāh’s retinue on the way to and from Khīva in Sha‘bān and Shavvāl 1153/October and December 1740. He observed that the river’s depth decreased along its course to Khvārazm:

The Jaiḥūn flows from south to north. At Chahārjūy, the amount of water appears much reduced in comparison with the region of Balkh. Near Khvārazm, its quantity is [again] reduced by more than half and it becomes quite shallow in the winter. The reason for the reduction and dearth of water is that it is diverted by large canals en route. Thus, it is entirely expended in watering the fields in the Dasht-i Qipchāq and Qarā Qalpāq. If, in certain seasons, the volume of water increases it flows a little further before being absorbed by the sand... My contention in writing these words is that the [other] great rivers I have seen, [namely] those of Sind and Hindūstān, the Euphrates and Tigris, debouch into salty seas. Contrary to the other rivers, all the water of the Jaiḥūn and Saiḥūn is used up for agriculture.¹⁵⁵

construction of the bridge had fallen into disrepair. The author of the *Safarnāma-yi Bukhārā* predicted that it would be entirely ruined unless major repairs were undertaken within the next two years (*Safarnāma-yi Bukhārā* 29; see also *Gaz. Iran* II: 548–9). In 1299/1882, Muḥammad ‘Alī Munshī reported that the bridge consisted of five big and a number of small arches. According to his account, the bridge was 60 *dhar*’ long, 5 *dhar*’ wide and twelve *dhar*’ high. At this time, the bridge had further deteriorated. The central and largest arch had fallen down and could not be crossed (*Safarnāma-yi Rukn al-Daula* 70–1).

¹⁵² De Clavijo 1859: 118. See also De Clavijo 1993: 96; Nagel 1993: 395.

¹⁵³ Krawulsky 1982: 11; 1984: 17. The medieval geographers also referred to this town as Āmul Zamm, Āmul Jaiḥūn, or Āmul al-Shaṭṭ (Streck, “Āmul,” *E.I.*, 2, I: 459).

¹⁵⁴ ‘Abd al-Karīm Kashmīrī reported that Balkh was located at a distance of twelve stages to the south of Chārjūy and that Uzbek caravans took eight days to reach the border (*sarḥadd*) of Khvārazm from there (*Bayān-i vāqi*’ 81). Until the nineteenth century, travelers crossed the river by means of ferries at this point. In the summer of 1844, a Persian envoy to Bukhārā reported that the fort of Chārjūy was formidable but dilapidated. The same author gives impressive figures concerning the dimensions of the Āmū Daryā and the oasis of Chārjūy. In his opinion, the Āmū Daryā was one *farsang* (four miles) wide at this point. The oasis took up a stretch of land along the river which was sixteen *farsang* (64 miles) long and two *farsang* (eight miles) wide (*Safarnāma-yi Bukhārā* 30–1). In the early twentieth century, the ferry at Chārjūy was “nearly 700 yards across low water, with several branches formed by sand banks”. Further ferries across the river were available at Kilīf, Kirkī and Khvāja Šāliḥ (Hamilton 1906: 108–9). Today, the traffic across the river is conducted by means of a pontoon bridge, and the railway bridge spanning it since the late nineteenth century is of enormous dimensions.

¹⁵⁵ *Bayān-i vāqi*’ 81–2. See also Gladwin 1788: 54–5; Alam/Subrahmanyam 2007: 266. For a contemporaneous description of the source of the Āmū Daryā as well as its course and tributaries, see Kāẓim 1132. The observation that the volume of water decreased along the course of the river continued to hold true in the early twentieth century. In the summer, many segments of the river were not deep enough for the steamer flotilla operating between Chārjūy and Petro-Alexandrovsk, which required a depth of four feet. The journey to Petro-Alexandrovsk on the border of the khanate of Khīva took seven days and was “spent in

The available accounts create the impression that large armies easily traversed the Oxus. There are numerous instances of boats being tied together to form floating bridges.¹⁵⁶ For the crossing at Tirmidh, Clavijo reports that Tīmūr used a pontoon bridge to enter Khurāsān:

The lord Timour Beg, as soon as he had gained the government of Samarcand [Samarqand], desired to pass over this great river, to conquer the land of Khorassan. He therefore caused a great bridge of timber to be made, supported by boats; and when his army had crossed, the bridge was destroyed, but, on his return to Samarcand, he ordered it to be made again, for the passage of himself and his host... and they said that the lord had given an order to destroy the bridge, as soon as all his host had passed over.¹⁵⁷

The transitory nature of the bridges spanning the river highlights the fact that the Āmū Daryā presented a physical obstacle and a geographical divide throughout early modern times. Campaigns in either direction required the creation of the necessary infrastructure for conveying large groups of people across. Interestingly, the Persian sources of the time hardly dwell on the manner in which the river was traversed. This also holds true for most accounts of Muḥammad Khān Shībānī's invasions of Khurāsān. The sixteenth-century author Khvānd Amīr briefly mentions Muḥammad Khān Shībānī's first passage across the Oxus at Kirkī in the fall of 909/1503.¹⁵⁸ In his description of the events leading up to the decisive Abu al-Khairid victory over the last Timurid ruler, Badī' al-Zamān b. Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā, on 7 Muḥarram 913/19 May 1507, the same author establishes a link between Muḥammad Khān Shībānī's movements and the paths of celestial bodies. He likens the *khān* ferrying across the Āmū Daryā to the progress of the crescent of Muḥarram across the green sea of heaven.¹⁵⁹ In a similar vein, Khvānd Amīr's contemporary Faḡlullāh b. Rūzbihān Khunjī Iṣfahānī compares the Uzbek army on its way across the Oxus to Marv in late 913/spring 1508 to the bright star of Sirius (*shī'rā*) passing through the Milky Way (*majarra*).¹⁶⁰ While adhering to conventional cosmological imagery, Khunjī offers some practical insights into Muḥammad Khān Shībānī's passage across the Āmū Daryā in the same direction in 915/1509. He reports that the Khan requisitioned all boats available "up and down" the river (*javānib-i baḥr-i Jaiḥūn ṭaraf-i 'ulyā va suflā*). Furthermore he conveys a sense of the natural setting by contrasting the swift passage over the river at Burdaliq (Burdalyk) with the arduous crossing of the desert adjoining its western bank. In his portrayal, the boats ferrying the army across the Āmū Daryā seemed to fly across the waves effortlessly, their billowing sails resembling the wings of a phoenix.¹⁶¹ Yet, after reaching the other bank of the river, Muḥammad Khān Shībānī and his men had to traverse the seemingly endless desert extending towards Marv. Khunjī devotes ample space to the hardships brought about by the six-day march at the height of summer (*tammūz*): The fire-like breath of the desert was so intense as to cause the constellation of Pisces to die of thirst in the green sea of heaven.¹⁶²

The comparative facility of Muḥammad Khān Shībānī's entry into Khurāsān notwithstanding, there was a clear sense of stepping across a physical border and penetrating into a geographically distinct realm. Khunjī describes the Āmū Daryā as the eastern limit of Iran and the regions making up Khurāsān:

running off one sandbank onto another". Traditional sailboats negotiating the river upstream took two months to convey freight from Petro-Alexandrovsk to Chārjūy (Pahlen 1964: 162–5).

¹⁵⁶ This was the case when the Saljūq ruler Alp Arslān b. Chaghri Bēg (r. 455–465/1063–1072) crossed the river on a campaign against the Qarakhanids of Sogdia, which ended with his death in 1072 (Bosworth 1968: 65). After carrying his conquests up to the Indus in 1221, Chingiz Khān passed the eastern section of the Oxus on a bridge of boats on his way back to Mongolia in October 1222. In 1255, his grandson Hülegü (d. 1265) employed the same method to cross the river on his way from Central Asia to Iran (Boyle 1968: 341). As late as 1740, Nādir Shāh had 1,100 boats built by Indian craftsmen to ease the passage of his army at Chārjūy (JN 454–5; see also Gladwin 1788: 34–5; Lockhart 1938: 187).

¹⁵⁷ De Clavijo 1859: 119; see also De Clavijo 1993: 96–97.

¹⁵⁸ HS IV: 296. See also *Mihmānnāma* 167; Ott 1974: 171.

¹⁵⁹ *Chūn hilāl-i Muḥarram al-ḥarām... bar baḥr-i akhḡar-i sipihr 'ubūr farmūd khabar-i gudhashtan-i Muḥammad Khān Shībānī az ma'bar-i Kirkī va tavajjuh ba-ṭaraf-i Khurāsān mutavātīr gasht* (HS IV: 374). See also Thackston 1994: 537; *Mihmānnāma* 174; Ott 1974: 190).

¹⁶⁰ *Mihmānnāma* 187; Ott 1974: 194.

¹⁶¹ *Har yak gūyī... 'anqā-st ki bā bāl-i bādbān bar-farāz-i Qāf-i amvāj parvāz girifta* (*Mihmānnāma* 322).

¹⁶² *Ḥūt-i falak bā vujūd-i istighrāq dar baḥr-i akhḡar-i āsmān az tishnigī mīmurd* (*Mihmānnāma* 324).

On Wednesday, 13 Muḥarram 915[2 May 1509], his exalted Excellency the Khān boarded a boat and, conjoined with everlasting power and glory, passed the Jaiḥūn safely. Once again the country of Iran and the regions of Khurāsān which adjoin the Jaiḥūn in the west were honored by the footsteps of the leader of the time and were thus purified and blessed beyond bounds.¹⁶³

The Turkish Admiral Sīdī ‘Alī Ra’īs, who crossed the Āmū Daryā at Chārjūy in early August 1556, likewise emphasized the fact that he was entering a separate domain. Having traversed the river by boat, he reported that he “touched Iranian soil, namely Khorasan”.¹⁶⁴ As mentioned above, the Safavids invoked the river as a political border as early as 1511. On the basis of his observations in 1740, ‘Abd al-Karīm viewed the Oxus as a geographical and political border: “To the east of the Jaiḥūn is the country (*mulk*) of Mā varā’ al-nahr, which consists of Bukhārā, Samarqand, Tāshkand, Ḥiṣār-i Shādmān, Kish (Shahr-i Sabz), and Nakhshab (present-day Qarshī)... To the west of the aforementioned river is the boundary (*sarḥadd*) of Khurāsān, because Balkh belongs to Khurāsān.”¹⁶⁵

The distinction between Khurāsān and Transoxiana remained tangible even when the two units were politically united. Timur’s conquests obliterated the division between the Ilkhanid dominion and the Ulūs Chaghatai and might therefore be seen to have reduced the importance of the Oxus as border between Iran and Tūrān.¹⁶⁶ Even so, there are indications that the Āmū Daryā continued to be perceived and to function as a political boundary in Timurid times. Clavijo noted that travelers leaving Transoxiana for Khurāsān were subject to strict controls. In his opinion, Tīmūr’s stringent measures were primarily occasioned by the need to prevent the numerous deportees to Samarqand from returning to their homelands:

The custom which the lord causes to be observed at this great river is, that when he has passed from one side to the other, the people have to break the bridge, and afterwards no one can cross over; but there are boats in this river, which convey people from one side to the other, and no one is permitted to pass over in these boats, without showing a letter stating whence he comes, and whither he goes, even when he is a native of the land. When, however, any one wishes to enter the land of Samarcand, this letter is not required. The lord has a great guard placed at these boats, who take heavy tolls from those who use them. This guard is also placed, because the lord has brought many captives into Samarcand, from the countries which he has conquered, to people the land, and enrich and ennoble it; so as to prevent them from escaping, and returning to their own land.¹⁶⁷

There is also evidence that individuals faced restrictions in their movement across the Āmū Daryā in the late Timurid period. The letters Khvāja Aḥrār (d. 1490) and his associates in Samarqand directed to the Timurid court at Herat bear witness to the fact that travel between Khurāsān and Transoxiana was no easy matter. Seeking for the return of family members in the service of the court at Herat, a number of petitions highlight constraints in the mobility across provincial boundaries in general, and across the Āmū Daryā in particular.¹⁶⁸

But let us return to the patterns of military movement as highlighted by the Persian chronicles. Unless they had to hurry through inhospitable stretches of desert like the Qara Qum, the armies usually assumed a more leisurely pace, grazing their way from one point of conquest to another. This phenomenon is highlighted by ‘Abbās II’s campaign to Qandahār in the late summer–winter of 1648. The timing of this expedition in fall and winter was unusual and motivated by the idea of attacking Qandahār during the cold season when it was cut off from its Mughal hinterland by snow. Even so, the route taken and the relatively slow progress coincide with earlier precedents. After assembling his troops in Bisṭām, Shāh ‘Abbās II gradually moved through Khurāsān, gathering an increasing followership and beasts of burden along the way. The movements of the royal camp were interrupted by prolonged periods of rest devoted to hunting

¹⁶³ *Rūz-i chahārshanba sīzdahum-i māh-i muḥarram sana-yi khamṣa ashrata va tis’i mi’atin haẓrat-i khalīfat al-raḥmān khān-i ‘ālī-makān ba-kishtī rākib gashta va ‘izz-i sarmadī va daulat-i abadī-rā muṣāḥib shuda dar ‘ain-i ṣiḥḥat u salāmat az āb-i Jaiḥūn ‘ubūr u murūr farmūdand va mujaddidan bilād-i Īrānzamīn va Khurāsānāt ki ‘ibārat az nāhiya-yi gharbī-yi Jaiḥūn ast ba-‘izz qudūm-i haẓrat-i khalīfa-yi zamān va imām-i ayyām ṣafā’i tāza va barakatī bī-andāza yāft (Mihmānnāma 323). See also Ott 1974: 296.*

¹⁶⁴ Vámbéry 1899: 78.

¹⁶⁵ *Bayān-i vāqi* ‘82. See also Gladwin 1788: 55–6. In his description of the events of 1747, ‘Abd al-Karīm’s contemporary Kāẓim Marvī also conveys the notion of the Āmū Daryā as the divide between Turkistān and Khurāsān (Kāẓim 1133).

¹⁶⁶ Nagel 1993: 187.

¹⁶⁷ DeClavijo 1859: 120. See also De Clavijo 1993: 97; Nagel 1993: 395.

¹⁶⁸ Gross/Urunbaev 2002: 43–5.

expeditions. An important stop on the way was Imām Rīzā's shrine in Mashhad, to which Shāh 'Abbās II paid his respect both on his way to and from Qandahār. At Herat, the king encamped in the garden of Ḥasan Khān (Shāmlū?) for eight days and visited the shrine at Gāzargāh. Another three days were spent hunting in the reeds along the Harī Rūd near Pul-i Mālān. The available dates convey an impression of the moderate pace adopted by the king and his troops. After leaving Iṣfahān on 4 Rabī' I 1057/4 April 1648, Shāh 'Abbās reached Bistām on 9 Jumādā I 1058/1 June 1648. The king made camp at Kālpūsh on 3 Rajab 1058/24 July 1648 and performed his pilgrimage to the shrine of Imām Rīzā around 7 Sha'bān 1058/27 August 1648. On 2 Ramaẓān 1058/20 September 1648, he continued on his way to Qandahār via Herat and Farāh, and laid siege to the city on 12 Dhū al-Ḥijja 1058/28 December 1748. Thus the entire march from Iṣfahān to Qandahār took up nine lunar months.¹⁶⁹

One important aspect of the rhythm of movement was its ceremonial character. The hunting expeditions, visits to holy graves and court rituals served to reenact and to confirm a vital web of patronage and allegiance. It is in this setting that the chronicles capture and project an ideal state of cohesion. The royal movements recorded in the *'Abbāsnāma* present a case in point. This work lavishes great detail on the pleasures of hunting and on the delights the pastures have to offer, the purity of the air and water, and the abundance of flowers. Yet if we take a closer look at the young king's recreational pursuits we notice that they serve to conduct important business. While in camp, he organizes provisions for his army, negotiates with Central Asian and Ottoman envoys, and, most importantly, receives a steady flow of military leaders who join his court to furnish troops. Shāh 'Abbās's gradual approach on Qandahār served to gather all major military leaders of his realm for a major military undertaking. The author of the *'Abbāsnāma* captures the ongoing arrival of army contingents in the royal camp by using the image of "brooks and streams joining the endless sea."¹⁷⁰

This image of a natural and effortless union is complemented by the portrayal of highly formalized court procedures which seemingly "freeze" the elastic relationship between the ruler and the military elite into set arrangements reflecting rank and proximity. Contemporaneous accounts devote much space to lists of all the officers present during a particular military campaign and their exact position in the battle order. The importance of this sort of map is reflected by the fact that the positioning of the leadership in warfare corresponded to the ceremonial configurations at court. Among the fifteenth-century Āq Quyūnlūs of western Iran, the sitting arrangements at the banquet table replicated the deployment of military units in the army.¹⁷¹ As depicted by the chronicles, the comings and goings at court and the ups and downs of battle unfold like a choreography. What is more, they mirror the ability of the early modern leader to activate and maintain a following requisite for the upkeep of power. Immediate strategic considerations apart, these accounts serve to map the king's realm, which is brought into relief by the presence of all major tribal leaders and their commitment to engage in military action on his behalf.¹⁷²

The above examples of military campaigns illustrate the complex field early modern leaders had to negotiate on an ongoing basis. On the physical level, their field of vision was determined by the terrain and its ecological constraints. In the commercial domain, the trade routes and cities formed vital assets. In the political realm, their success hinged on their ability to maintain a web of personal loyalties, the vitality of which was immediately related to the income generated on the basis of the first two factors. In the chronicles, mobility and its ceremonial aspects take on added meaning and serve to represent royal authority. The emphasis is on the court in motion, with the lands of Iran and Tūrān mainly figuring as a backdrop for

¹⁶⁹ *'Abbāsnāma* 92–115. See also Tumanovich 1989: 153–4; Melville 1996: 218.

¹⁷⁰ *'Abbāsnāma* 96–7, 102, 108–9.

¹⁷¹ Woods 1999: 57–9.

¹⁷² Further examples for Qizilbāsh battle orders are furnished by Haneda 1987: 31–44, 55–60. McChesney's analysis of 'Abdullāh Khān's siege of Herat from June 1587–March 1588 highlights the importance the chroniclers accorded to the positions the prominent military officers took up around the city. These accounts were subject to revision. Thus Maḥmūd b. Amīr Valī modified earlier accounts of this siege in a manner to enhance the authority enjoyed by 'Abdullāh and his son 'Abd al-Mu'min (McChesney 1993: 84–91). In Mongol times, all major Chingizid lines were represented during military expeditions (Aubin 1969; Jackson 1999: 22–3).

its pageantry. In these accounts, mobility is detached from immediate ecological exigencies and nomadism is stylized in such a way as to turn it into an “artform”.¹⁷³ The sources depict different scopes of movement, ranging from the shuttling between residential gardens and other recreational settings to full-fledged military campaigns. In sum, the Persian sources reinforce the notion of a spatial division between the nomadic and sedentary spheres. In this setting, the image of the tent symbolizes the royal camp and alludes to the superiority of the nomad ethos.¹⁷⁴

THE LOCAL POPULATION

There is little information concerning the local population of the Herat oasis and the surrounding provinces during the Safavid period. The Persian sources offer insights into the dynamic between the rulers of Herat as military employers and the influx of tribal groups, as well as changing local textures. But we learn little about the settled inhabitants. In Kartid times, there is passing mention of the “subjects” (*ra'āyā*) living in the villages and dependencies in the vicinity of the city of Herat.¹⁷⁵ Another generalizing term applied to the inhabitants of the region was “*tājik*”, which intended the sedentary Persian-speaking population, both urban and rural, as opposed to the tribally organized and warlike Mongols. Saif al-Haravī reports that Toluy b. Chingiz Khān (d. ca. 1240) instructed his troops not to let any Tājik escape alive during his first campaign against Herat in 1221.¹⁷⁶ Recounting an anecdote on the religious policies of the Great Khān Ögedei (r. 1229–1241), the same author equates Tājiks with Muslims.¹⁷⁷ The formula *Turk u Tājik* came to capture the distinction between the military aristocracy (*ahl-i saif*) on the one hand, and the urban tradesmen and bureaucrats (*ahl-i qalam*) on the other hand.¹⁷⁸ As the term Tājik embodied the antithesis of martial pursuits, it was often used in a derogatory sense. In battle, it was a favorite ploy to denigrate the opposing army as *tājik*, implying that victory should be an easy matter.¹⁷⁹ At the same time, this group was praised as skilful and intelligent. In 636/1238–39, a Mongol official described them in the following manner: “The Tājiks are shrewd craftsmen; they know how to overcome difficulties and doubts; in particular the Tājiks of Herat show great resolve and vigilance in their undertakings, and they are accomplished at war and banquet alike.”¹⁸⁰

Mongol rule triggered the emergence of new ethnic configurations. The military organization devised by Chingiz Khān entailed the breaking up of existing tribal alignments and the coalescence of new ones. The troop contingents created on the basis of decimal units from ten to ten thousand were composed of soldiers of various tribal extractions. This setup also implied that the commanders had no common background with their soldiers. They were of a different origin, *az nasl-i dīgar*, as the Mongol historian Rashīd al-Dīn puts it.¹⁸¹ The arrival of the Mongol troops in eastern Khurāsān set a layered process of ethnogenesis into motion: The initial merging of Mongols and Central Asian Turks was followed by the amalgamation of local elements, such as the Indo-Mongols, Khalaj, Afghāns etc. This process of ethnic admixture also resulted in the creation of new entities. The Mughūlbāsh, literally “Mongol heads”, who will be mentioned below, may have been the outcome of such a process.¹⁸²

¹⁷³ Paul 2002: 42, 51.

¹⁷⁴ This sort of mapping is illustrated by Khvānd Amīr's account of Bābur's decision to pitch his tent “high enough to touch sun and moon”, on the roof of Ulugh Bēg's *madrassa* in the center of Samarqand, while his followers occupied the cells below (HS IV: 290; see also Paul 2002: 42).

¹⁷⁵ Saif al-Haravī 1943: 696.

¹⁷⁶ Saif al-Haravī 1943: 66–7.

¹⁷⁷ Saif al-Haravī 1943: 95–99.

¹⁷⁸ Fragner, “Tājik,” *E.I.*, 2 X: 63. The expressions “*Turk u Tājik*” and “*Turk u Tāt*” were used until the nineteenth century to denote the population in its entirety. See, for instance, ‘Alī Qulī I’tizād al-Saltāna's description of Aḥmad Shāh's siege of Herat in 1750, which caused hardship for “*Turk u Tāt*” (*Vaqāyi' va savānīh* 38).

¹⁷⁹ Saif al-Haravī 1943: 705.

¹⁸⁰ Saif al-Haravī 1943: 117.

¹⁸¹ Rashīd al-Dīn I, edited by Alizade, 151; quoted in Aubin 1969: 75.

¹⁸² Aubin 1969: 69.

Saif al-Haravī's description of the army of Herat during the Kartid period bears witness to its heterogeneous composition. According to his portrayal, Malik Fakhr al-Dīn made the following comment on the chequered nature of his military outfit at the beginning of his reign in 697/1298: "Some Sanjarī, the Balūch tribe (*tāyifa*), a clan (*qaum*) of Khalaj, a group (*gurūh*) of Mughūlbāsh, and a faction (*firqā*) of Abīvardīs and Sarakhsīs."¹⁸³ Towards the end of his reign in 707/1308, "Ghurid stalwarts" (*dilīrān-i ghūrī*), "Herati fighters" (*mubārizān-i haravī*), "Sajzī vagabonds" (*ayyārān-i sajzī*), as well as Balūch and Khalaj were employed for the defence of the city.¹⁸⁴ In subsequent years, the Nikūdarīs formed an additional component of the Kartid army. For the year 719/1319 the employment of Afghān troops for the defense of Herat is also mentioned.¹⁸⁵

Designations such as "Abīvardī", "Sarakhsī", "Herati" and "Ghurid" are clearly of a geographical nature and do not readily lend themselves to further exploration. The origin of the Sajzī has not been examined so far. The history of some of the other groups, by contrast, displays a certain spatial dynamic that can be traced over time. In the following, I will take a short look at the groups known as Khalaj, Balūch, and Nikūdarī.

The Khalaj were a tribe of Turkic origin which nomadized in Zābulistān and Zamīndāvar and parts of Khurāsān in the ninth and tenth centuries.¹⁸⁶ The tenth-century authors Iṣṭakhrī and Mas'ūdī place them on the middle course of the Hilmand. The Ghaznavid historian Abū Naṣr 'Uṭbī (d. ca. 1036) and the Mongol author 'Ālā al-Dīn Juvainī (d. 1283) mention the Khalaj alongside the Afghāns. This combined evidence leads Minorsky to conclude that the southern branch of the Khalaj gradually expanded from the Hilmand river to Ghaznī and Pishāvar.¹⁸⁷ The assimilation of the Khalaj Turks into the Afghān environment is possibly linked to the ethnogenesis of the Pashtu-speaking Ghilzai.¹⁸⁸

The available sources yield a few more details concerning the Balūch. This group lived in the area southeast of Kirmān at the time of the Muslim conquest and was pushed eastwards subsequent to the arrival of the Saljūqs in Kirmān in the fifth/eleventh century.¹⁸⁹ According to Saif al-Haravī, the Balūch were flockholders in Qahdistān (probably Kahdistān), a village and important grazing area east of Herat.¹⁹⁰ In 721/1321–22, the Balūch were also present among the population of Farāh.¹⁹¹

The Nikūdarīs (Negūderi) became a significant factor in terms of number, dispersion and military clout in the late thirteenth century and made their influence felt throughout Timurid times. The emergence of this group as a noticeable entity coincided with the competition between different Mongol factions for the control of Khurāsān's eastern frontier with India. The 1240s–1250s were characterized by intense military activity in the region comprising Ghaznī, the Salt Range, Multān, Lahore and Kashmīr. These campaigns were conducted by military leaders dispatched there on behalf of the Great Khān, the Chaghataids, and the Golden Horde. Around 1260, the representatives of the Golden Horde and Ilkhanid Iran vied for influence in this region and sought to strengthen their diplomatic ties with the Sultans of Delhi. The rivalry between the first Ilkhanid ruler Hülegü b. Toluy (r. 654–663/1256–1265) and Berke b. Jochi (r. 1256–1267), *khān* of the Golden Horde, also affected some of the old Mongol hands active in eastern Khurāsān. Among them was

¹⁸³ Saif al-Haravī 1943: 424.

¹⁸⁴ Saif al-Haravī 1943: 506.

¹⁸⁵ Saif al-Haravī 1943: 643, 692–3, 695–7, 783–4. For the most part, Saif al-Haravī's account of the "Afghāns" and "Afghānistān" concerns military activities in the easternmost portion of the Kartid realm around Mastūng and Dūkī (Saif al-Haravī 1943: 205, 212, 221, 267). Dūkī and Mastūng were located southeast of Qandahār, on the trade routes to Bhakkar and Multān respectively (Habib 1982: 2 A–B).

¹⁸⁶ The region designated as Zābulistān in early Muslim times roughly coincides with the modern provinces of Ghaznī and Zābul in eastern Afghanistan. (Bosworth, "Zābul, Zābulistān," *E.I.*, 2 XI: 371). Zamīndāvar comprised the region of the upper reaches of the Hilmand and Arghandāb rivers north of their confluence at Bust (Bosworth, "Zamīndāvar," *E.I.*, 2 XI: 439).

¹⁸⁷ Minorsky 1978: 430–2.

¹⁸⁸ Bosworth, "Khaladj, 1. History," *E. I.*, 2 IV: 917–18; Doerfer 1987: 413–18; Minorsky 1978: 433. See also Aubin 1969: 68; Raverty 1876: 88–9.

¹⁸⁹ Bosworth 1968: 86; Spooner, "Balūchistān, i. Geography, History, Ethnography," *E.Ir.* III: 599.

¹⁹⁰ Saif al-Haravī 1943: 695–6. See also Aubin 1969: 89; Krawulsky 1984: 26, 98.

¹⁹¹ Saif al-Haravī 1943: 695–6, 783–4. Without indicating a time frame, Isfizārī reports that the finely worked pulpit of the Friday mosque of Farmakān in his home *vilāyat* of Isfizār was burnt by a group of Balūch as firewood (Isfizārī I: 117).

Nikūdar (Negüder), a military leader of the Golden Horde, who had taken part in a campaign to Kashmīr in 1253 and was subsequently appointed commander of Shibarghān. Nikūdar's removal from the Murghāb region by Ilkhanid troops in 1261, combined with subsequent events in Iran, triggered the genesis of a new entity that soon came to be identified with his name, as the following details will show.¹⁹²

In 1262, Ilkhanid Iran witnessed a rebellion of Jochid contingents, which had entered Iran together with Hülegü. While some of the mutinous troops managed to return to their original *ulūs* by crossing the Caucasus, others made their way across Khurāsān to the region of Ghaznī. On the basis of Rashīd al-Dīn's account of these events, Boyle reaches the conclusion that the Mongol soldiers who opted to move eastward did so under the leadership of Nikūdar.¹⁹³ Aubin, on the other hand, provides conclusive evidence that Nikūdar had already moved to Ghaznī after his removal from Murghāb and was joined by the Jochid troops there.¹⁹⁴ It is an established fact that the new arrivals and local groups coalesced around the person of Nikūdar. While Ilkhanid sources alternatively identify these groups as Nikūdarī or Qarā'unās, the Nikūdarīs in fact were one section of the latter. The Ilkhanid authors placed them in "Sīstān", an expansive territorial designation which in medieval times covered a space extending far beyond the modern entity known by that name. According to these accounts, Sīstān comprised the entire Hilmand basin, Qandahār and Ghaznī in addition to the southern coastal regions. Rashīd al-Dīn's contemporary Vaṣṣāf even included Ghūr within its scope. The Nikūdarīs continued to adhere to their nomadic way of life. At the turn of the fourteenth century, they reportedly spent the summers in Ghūr and Gharjīstān, and the winters in the region of Ghaznī. At this time, they furnished the Chaghatai leader Qutlugh Khvāja with 50,000 troops. Qutlugh Khvāja's sphere of influence included Badakhshān, Ṭāliqān, Darra-yi Sūf, Fīrūzkūh, Balkh, Shibarghān, Jūzjān, Andkhūd, Fāryāb, Mārūchāq, Panjdih, and Marv.¹⁹⁵

The scope of Nikūdarī forays extended beyond the area of present-day Afghanistan into India and Iran. This high degree of mobility enhanced their reputation for ferocity but also opened up opportunities for employment. During the 1270s and 1280s, the Nikūdarī winter raids reached as far as Kirmān and Fārs. In 1272, Marco Polo (1254–1324) narrowly escaped capture during a Nikūdarī assault on Rūdbār south of Kirmān. In 1282, the Nikūdarīs moved into Fārs, depriving the local Turkmens of their sheep and the sedentary population of their children. During this period, the population of Fārs came to look upon winter as the season of Nikūdarī attacks.

In the meanwhile, some bands of Nikūdarīs entered the military service of the Ilkhans and gained fame for their exceptional courage as the "most daring among the Mongols", as Vaṣṣāf puts it. The second Ilkhanid ruler Abaqa b. Hülegü (r. 663–680/1265–1282) employed a *tūmān* of Qarā'unās troops (*lashkar-i qarā'unās*), who wintered in the vicinity of Baghdad and migrated to Siyāh Kūh in Azerbaijan in summer. In 1295, Ghāzān (r. 694–703/1295–1304) installed loyal Nikūdarī segments in Sarakhs.¹⁹⁶ Four years later, however, Ghāzān's endeavor to tie the Nikūdarīs into a system of service grants and to ensure their obedience backfired. Isfizārī reports that 3,000 of the Nikūdarīs affected by Ghāzān Khān's policy moved to Quhistān and onwards to Herat, where they took refuge with Malik Fakhr al-Dīn Kart. After their arrival in Herat, the Nikūdarīs continued to raid Quhistān, Farāh, Sijistān and Khurzuwān (?).¹⁹⁷ Other groups, such as the Sajzīs and Ghūrīs likewise contributed to the insecurity of eastern Khurāsān. For this reason, Ghāzān dispatched an army against Herat in 699/1299–1300. On this occasion, the Heratis were able to resolve the dispute about the Nikūdarīs by submitting 30,000 *dīnārs*.¹⁹⁸ In 1308, Ūljāitū (r. 703–716/1304–1316) mounted another campaign against Herat, citing Malik Fakhr al-Dīn's disrespectful attitude and his

¹⁹² Aubin 1969: 70, 73–4, 81.

¹⁹³ Boyle 1968: 362.

¹⁹⁴ Aubin 1969: 80–1.

¹⁹⁵ Aubin 1969: 84–7.

¹⁹⁶ Aubin 1969: 87–8.

¹⁹⁷ Kh-R-Z-V-Ā-N/J-Z-R-V-Ā-N (Isfizārī I: 435).

¹⁹⁸ Isfizārī I: 435–7. According to Khvānd Amīr, the sum paid by the Heratis amounted to one hundred thousand *kapakī dīnārs* (HS III: 150–1; Thackston 1994: 84–5).

continued support of the Nikūdarīs.¹⁹⁹ Five years later, he annexed their territories in present-day southern Afghanistan.²⁰⁰

During the Timurid period, the Nikūdarīs continued to figure on the eastern and southeastern fringes of the Herat province. Tīmūr encountered them in the Garmsīr-i Hirman, that is, at the river Hilmand.²⁰¹ Later Timurid historians mention them along with another ethnic entity, the Hazāras. Ghūr, Garmsīr, Isfizār, Farāh and Zamīndāvar in particular were subject to repeated incursions by these two groups. The power balance shifted in 884/1479–80 when Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā appointed the military leader Amīr Shujāʿ al-Dīn Dhū al-Nūn Arghūn as governor of Ghūr and Zamīndāvar. The Arghūn leader successfully imposed his authority on the Hazāras and Nikūdarīs and extracted revenue payments from them. In the subsequent years, he widened his sphere of authority in such a way as to include the neighboring provinces of Qandahār, Farāh, Sākhar-Tūlak, as well as the southern territories of Shāl, Mastūng, and Sībī. Simultaneously, he assumed an increasingly independent bearing towards the capital of Herat. Aside from apportioning Qandahār, Ghūr and Sākhar-Tūlak to his own sons without any reference to the court, he also began to skip revenue payments to the center. When Badīʿ al-Zamān b. Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā rebelled in 1498, Dhū al-Nūn supported him and made a brief attempt to take Herat while Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā was away campaigning in Astarābād. Among his troops were Hazāras, Nikūdarīs and Qipchāqs.²⁰²

In Safavid times, new groups appear on the ethnic tableau around Herat. This is apparent from two meetings of local representatives arranged by the Shāmlū governors in the late sixteenth century. Around 1580, ʿAlī Qulī Khān Shāmlū held a “great assembly” (*majlis-i ʿālī*) to which he summoned the “general population, both soldiers and subjects” (*sipāhī va raʿīyat*), as well as the “commanders of the tribes” (*amīrān-i ūymāq*) and the “leaders of Balūch and Qipchāq and the like” (*sarkhēlān-i balūch va qipchāq va ghairuhum*).²⁰³ At the end of the Uzbek interregnum of 1588–1598 a number of local groups entered the fold of Shāh ʿAbbās I’s government: “The people of Herat, the tribal commanders (*mīrān-i qabāyil*) and the contingents (*hazārajāt*) of the Qipchāqs, Tīmūrīs, Tāhirīs, and Jamshīdīs received the honor of joining the noble service and gaining royal benevolence.”²⁰⁴

However, certain continuities may be detected. Following the Mongol precedent, the Safavid sources use the term *hazāra* or *hazārajāt* to designate tribal contingents of one thousand.²⁰⁵ In combination with the Nikūdarīs, the Hazāras as a distinct social entity continue to appear in Uzbek and Safavid military contexts well into the sixteenth century. In 1509–10, Muḥammad Khān Shībānī enumerated Nikūdarī and Hazāra contingents among the troops poised to extend Uzbek influence in Khurāsān.²⁰⁶ In 1544, the Nikūdarīs and Hazāras are mentioned among the troops at the disposal of the Safavid administration of Herat.²⁰⁷

The groups that figure most prominently in the Safavid sources concerning Herat and Khurāsān are the Qipchāqs, Jamshīdīs, Tīmūrīs and Fīrūzkūhīs. The Qipchāqs were located in a field of overlapping Safavid and Uzbek interests. From the 1520s to the 1540s, this group is mentioned among the followers of the Uzbek governor of Gharjistān, Bairām Ughlān.²⁰⁸ At the end of the Uzbek interlude in 1598, the Qipchāqs reportedly supported the reemergent Safavid government of Herat. As the wounded Tuqai-Timurid leader Dīn Muḥammad tried to make his way back to Transoxiana after his defeat before Herat, he was cut down by

¹⁹⁹ Isfizārī I: 442–52.

²⁰⁰ Boyle 1968: 401, 405, 489.

²⁰¹ Weiers 1972: 23.

²⁰² Isfizārī I: 118, 343–4; HS IV: 170–1, 235, 237, 247–8; Thackston 1994: 438–9, 470–1, 475–6; Thackston 1996: 169, 216. In Bābur’s time, there were also Hazāras and Nikūdarīs in the mountains of Ghaznī (Thackston 1996: 172).

²⁰³ IM 376.

²⁰⁴ IM 921. See also Singer 1972: 152.

²⁰⁵ Aubin 1969: 78, 88; IM 913, 921. See also Paul 2002: 45.

²⁰⁶ Sarwar 1975: 58–9.

²⁰⁷ Floor 2008: 99.

²⁰⁸ AM 410–11, Junābadī 525.

the leader of the Qipchāq population of Bādghīs.²⁰⁹ During Shāh ‘Abbās I’s campaign to Balkh in 1602, the Qipchāqs of Chīchaktū and Maimana, by contrast, sided with the Uzbeks.²¹⁰

Closer to Herat, the Jamshīdīs and Tīmūrīs represented a sizeable segment of the local population. Between the 1520s and 1540s, they figured mainly as victims of Bairām Ughlān’s raids on Harāt-Rūd. Both Amīr Maḥmūd b. Khvānd Amīr and Junābadī give graphic descriptions of such an incursion in 955/1548, when a great number of Uzbeks and Qipchāqs descended on the local population of Jamshīdīs, Mīshmast (Arabs), and Tīmūrīs. These groups, which had belonged to the revenue-paying population of Herat “since ancient times”, were forcefully removed to Gharjistān.²¹¹ Concerning the events of 1014/1605–06, Iskandar Munshī reports that the Jamshīdīs held *ulkās* and forts in Gharjistān.²¹² About a decade later, the Jamshīdī fighters defended their fort at Kurukh against Uzbek intruders.²¹³ In 1030/1621, a number of Jamshīdī “hypocrites” reportedly aided the Uzbeks of Balkh in an attack on Bālā Murghāb.²¹⁴

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, the Jamshīdīs and Fīrūzkūhīs appear as military actors in the region northeast of Herat. Around 1107/1695–96, Jānī Khān, the *bēglerbēgī* of Herat, brought over “a great number” of Jamshīdīs and Fīrūzkūhīs of Chīchaktū and Maimana to the Safavid domain of Khurāsān. By settling them in Takht-i Khātūn east of Bālā Murghāb,²¹⁵ Jānī Khān hoped to protect Bādghīs against Uzbek incursions. In 1110/1698–99, he ordered these “newly obedient” (*tāza īmān*) Fīrūzkūhī and Jamshīdī groups to assist Naurūz ‘Alī Jamshīdī, then governor of Kurukh, in a campaign against the Uzbeks.²¹⁶ During the same period, Jānī Khān stationed Urūmī, Mīshmast, Tīmūrī, and Ṭāhirī troops in Farāh and Sīstān in order to protect these regions from Balūch incursions.²¹⁷

While the Persian sources contain no data on the whereabouts of groups labeled as Urūmī, Mīshmast or Ṭāhirī, the presence of the Jamshīdīs in Kurukh is fairly well established for most of the seventeenth century. This group also seems to have controlled a great part of the lands along the highroad to Maimana, which passed by Kurukh and continued on to Naratū, Bālā Murghāb and Mārūchāq.²¹⁸ Yet a snippet of information concerning the early eighteenth century indicates a much wider dispersion. The author of the *Majma‘ al-tavārīkh* mentions that the environs of Qandahār were inhabited by steppe dwellers (*sahrā nishīn*) belonging to the “factions” (*firqa*) of the Ṭāhirīs, Jamshīdīs, Khusravīs, and Tīmūrīs until the rise of the Ghilzai leader Mīr Vais Khān in 1709.²¹⁹

The available evidence concerning the Fīrūzkūhīs is less conclusive. Their name associates them with the ancient Ghurid capital of Fīrūzkūh.²²⁰ This assumption is borne out by the fact that Shāh ‘Abbās I’s troops had to contend with Fīrūzkūhīs while traversing Ghūr in the summer of 1622.²²¹ In 1638, we hear about Uzbek attacks on the Fīrūzkūhīs, which would possibly place them further north and within easier reach of the Uzbeks.²²² This would also help to explain the existence of Fīrūzkūhīs in the province of Balkh as indicated by the aforementioned attempt by the *bēglerbēgī* of Herat to resettle them within his realm in the late seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century, the Jamshīdīs, Fīrūzkūhīs, Tīmūrīs, Ṭāhirīs, and Qipchāqs were to become part of a military and administrative arrangement known as *chahār ūymāq*, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

²⁰⁹ The motivation for Dīn Muḥammad’s murder apparently derived not solely from political considerations. The Qipchāq chief in question reportedly also desired to avail himself of his horse and accoutrements (Junābadī 745).

²¹⁰ IM 998.

²¹¹ Junābadī 525. See also AM 410–11.

²¹² IM 1154.

²¹³ IM 1475.

²¹⁴ IM 1591.

²¹⁵ Ball 1982: 265; *Gaz. Afghanistan* III: 421.

²¹⁶ DS 158–9, 280–1.

²¹⁷ DS 85.

²¹⁸ Holdich 1910: 236–7.

²¹⁹ *Majma‘ al-tavārīkh* 17.

²²⁰ Aubin 1969: 92 fn 4; Frye, “Fīrūzkūh,” *E.I.*, 2 II: 928.

²²¹ IM 1618–20.

²²² Rettelbach 1978: 249.

THE MULTĀN CONNECTION: THE ABDĀLĪ AFGHĀNS BETWEEN MUGHAL AND SAFAVID INTERESTS

In the seventeenth century, European authors noted that certain groups around Qandahār rendered doubtful allegiance to the Safavid overlords. The French traveller Thevenot, who visited India in 1666, briefly mentioned Qandahār in his travel memoirs and indicated that the overlapping Mughal and Safavid interests opened a wide field of political and military opportunities for the local elite: “There are some small Rajas in the Mountains, who are suffered to live in liberty, paying some easie Tributes; And these Gentlemen have always stuck to the strongest side, when the Country came to change its Master.”²²³ In the 1690s, Sanson identified these groups as “Afghan” and indicated that they interacted both with the Mughals and the Safavids:

The [Safavid] King maintains a large garrison in the Province of Kandahar for fear of an attack by the Baluch and the Afghans inhabiting the mountains. These people live in tents (pavillons) in the manner of the first human beings. They are bellicose and skilled in the use of bow and arrow, but they [also] are bad thieves and have no mercy on caravans. They inhabit Scythia and are subjects of the Mughal emperor (Mogol). He is not really their master, and they only serve whoever offers them most. Persia treats them with caution and grants them such great privileges and advantages that even if she cannot attach them fully to her cause, she at least reduces their inclination for doing harm. They make the sign of the cross. They like Christians and harbor aversions to Muslims. They are Armenians from Torkmenia and the environs of the Caspian Sea, who were removed from their homeland and resettled in Scythia by Tamerlane. They have forgotten the Christian religion...²²⁴

In this section, I will trace the fortunes of the Abdālī Afghāns from the sixteenth century on. On the basis of the information gleaned from the available Persian sources, I will attempt to show how the strategic linkages with the Mughal and Safavid overlords translated into social and spatial mobility for the tribal elite. The following account will demonstrate that the Abdālī leadership positioned itself in a network comprising the cities of Herat, Qandahār and Multān. Before proceeding to the narrative of events, I will briefly assess the merits of the Persian sources and discuss the commercial importance of Qandahār and Multān.

In the imperial Safavid narrative, the Afghāns, also known as Pashtūn or Patān/Paṭhān, are mainly mentioned in the context of Mughal India. In the *Khulāṣat al-siyar*, they figure as the unruly subjects of Bābur during his early days in Kābul.²²⁵ Iskandar Munshī refers to them as the rebellious troops who expelled the Mughal ruler Humāyūn to Persia in 950/1543,²²⁶ and as the “unfortunate” (*tīrabakht*) elements in the power struggle that followed Emperor Akbar’s death in 1605.²²⁷ Qazvīnī reports that the citadel of Qandahār was manned by Afghāns in Mughal service when ‘Abbās II besieged the city in the winter of 1648–49.²²⁸ For the year 1107/1695–97, the author of *Dastūr-i shahriyārān* refers to the Mughal army as a combination of “Balūch, Afghān, Rājpūt, and Patān”.²²⁹ Within the Safavid realm, Zamān Khān Afghān and Ghāzī Khān Balūch are identified as the most powerful tribal leaders in the environs of Qandahār at the time.²³⁰

For the Safavid chroniclers, Zamān Khān “Afghān” only figures as one of several local actors, and his fellow Abdālī tribesmen appear as a strictly localized and politically marginal phenomenon. In the Afghan historiography, however, Zamān Khān Sadūzai and his ancestors are cast as key political players who prepared the way for the foundation of the Abdālī/Durrānī kingdom in 1747. The history of the Abdālīs, therefore, needs to be pieced together and projected against the uneven coverage this group has received in

²²³ Sen 1949: 80.

²²⁴ Sanson 1694: 164–5. Father Krusinski, whose twenty-year residence in Iran coincided with the reign of Shāh Sultān Ḥusain, traces the origin of the Afghāns to a region between the Caspian Sea and “Mount Caucasus”. He also adheres to the notion that they were Armenians forcefully settled in Qandahār by Tīmūr, who hoped that “when they were once out of Sight of their own Country, they would at the same time lose that Love of Liberty and Independence which had engaged him in so many Rebellions, and which had given him so much Trouble and Fatigue” (Krusinski 1973 I: 137–8).

²²⁵ AM 244.

²²⁶ IM 150.

²²⁷ IM 1161.

²²⁸ ‘Abbās-nāma 117.

²²⁹ DS 105.

²³⁰ DS 120.

the Persian sources, ranging from the geographical and conceptual distance enunciated by the Safavid chronicles to the construction of a “royal” Sadūzai lineage and its entitlement to power by the nineteenth-century Afghan authors. As seen above, Qazvīnī’s *‘Abbās-nāma* mentions the circumstances in the eastern part of the empire only in connection with the military campaign of 1648–49. Valī Qulī Shāmlū’s *Qīṣaṣ al-khāqānī* displays a similar slant. Their contemporary Muḥammad Mufīd includes the city of Qandahār in his geographical dictionary, but, adhering to the customary geographers’ focus on urban topography, tells us little about the actual inhabitants of the region.²³¹ In the late eighteenth century, Muḥammad Khalīl Mar’ashī describes the Abdālī Afghāns from the perspective of his erstwhile hometown of Mashhad and produces a more differentiated account.

The histories produced by Afghan authors in the nineteenth century credit the Abdālīs with a clear political profile and emphasize their central role in the imperial setting. Correlating the establishment of the Afghan state with the progression of genealogy, two authors of Abdālī descent seek to identify early historical precedents heralding the ascent of the Sadūzai lineage. Based in Multān, ‘Alī Muḥammad Khān Khudakka Sadūzai produced a detailed account of the Abdālīs in Safavid/Mughal times and traced the fortunes of various Sadūzai lineages in Khurāsān and India. Entitled *Tadhkirat al-mulūk-i ‘ālīsha’n*, this source provides a narrative grid for the local events that took place between the late sixteenth and the late seventeenth centuries. It also gives some insights into the career of the Sadūzai Abdālīs as a military elite both under Mughal and Safavid auspices.²³² Of equal value is Sulṭān Muḥammad b. Mūsā Durrānī’s *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī*, which was composed in 1865 and covers the history of the Afghāns from their genealogical beginnings to the incorporation of Herat into the Muḥammadzai state in 1279/1863. Both sources focus on Sadū (Asadullāh I, 1558–1627), the forefather of this illustrious lineage, and delineate a logical progression beginning with Sadū’s political career, continuing with the fortunes of his descendants in Qandahār, Multān and Herat, and culminating in the successful Sadūzai bid for royal power in 1747. Combined with the imperial Safavid narrative, these sources allow us to place the subsequent rise and political dominance of the Abdālīs in a wider context. From the perspective of Afghan historiography, the Abdālīs did not evolve in the periphery, or at the interstices of overarching patterns of authority; instead, they were embedded within them. The emigration to Mughal India from the middle of the seventeenth century on allowed the Sadūzais to position themselves strategically within a wider cosmopolitan network linking Multān, Qandahār and Herat.

Writing in the late eighteenth century, Mar’ashī casts the Afghāns as an integral component of the Mughal and Safavid states and emphasizes their long-standing relationship of service with both sides:

The Afghāns (*firqa-yi afāghina*) are a people inhabiting the lands between Khurāsān and Hindūstān. Their land extends from the Rūd-i Nīlāb... [upper Indus] in the east to the dependencies of Herat in the west. In the north it comprises the surroundings of Bājaur and the Hindu Kush adjoining the border of Ghūrband and Kahmard, which belong to the dependencies of Badakhshān and Balkh; in the south it includes the towns of Sīvī [Sībī] and Dahādhar [?], which belong to the dependencies of Bhakkar and Sivistān in Sind. In recent times, the majority [of the Afghāns] have been obedient to Kābul and Multān, which are a part of Hindūstān. A minority are obedient to Qandahār and Herat, which are a part of Iran. Among the two foremost Afghān tribes, the Abdālīs dwelling around Herat are the greatest. The second strongest group are the Ghilzais residing in the environs of Qandahār. One of the leaders (*sardārān*) of these two tribes has always served the government of the King of Iran and has been addressed as *sulṭān*. This was also the case at the time of Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusain.²³³

The state of affairs described by Mar’ashī indicates that the Afghān territories extended far beyond the region between Ghaznī and the Indus characterized as “Afghānistān” during Kartid/Ikhanid times.²³⁴

²³¹ *Mukhtaṣar-i mufīd* 284.

²³² The *Tadhkirat al-mulūk-i ‘ālīsha’n* was completed on 7 Muḥarram 1251/5 May 1835. Unfortunately, I have not been able to peruse this work in its original but had to rely on the information reproduced by Kamal Khan 1999 in English, and Durrānī 1999 in Urdu.

²³³ *Majma’ al-tavārīkh* 2–3.

²³⁴ The eastward movement of Afghān groups engaging in war, trade and animal husbandry can be traced even further back into history. In the tenth and eleventh centuries, groups from the Sulaimān Mountains east of Ghaznī interacted with the Ghaznavids (977–1186) and their Hindū Shāhī antagonists based in the region between Laghmān, Multān, and the southern foothills of Kashmīr (Bosworth, “Hindū-Shāhīs.” *E.I.*, 2 III: 460). A subdivision of Ghilzais, who entered the service of the Hindū Shāhīs

Of special concern for the developments in Herat is the Sadūzai subdivision of the Abdālīs and the ties it forged with the Mughal governors of Qandahār and Multān in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. From the imperial Safavid perspective, individual Sadūzai leaders, and their Multān connection, only figure immediately after Shāh ‘Abbās II’s conquest of Qandahār in 1649. The authors of the *‘Abbāsnāma* and the *Qīṣaṣ al-khāqānī* mention the precipitous departure of the local Abdālī leader Shāh Ḥusain Sulṭān from Qandahār and adduce religious arguments for his rebellion. In his description of the new administrative arrangements under Safavid auspices, Muḥammad Ṭāhir Vaḥīd Qazvīnī tersely remarks that Shāh Ḥusain Sulṭān Abdālī fled to India on account of his “absurd Sunni fanaticism” (*ta’aṣṣub-i madhhab-i bāṭil-i tasannun*) and the unwillingness of the newly appointed Georgian *bēglerbēgī* Mihrāb Khān Charkhchībāshī (d. 1649) to deal with this troublemaker. Subsequently, the Abdālī leader indeed lived up to Safavid apprehensions by instigating Shāh Jahān (r. 1037–1068/1628–1658) to undertake the first of a rapid succession of military campaigns against Qandahār.²³⁵ Valī Qulī Shāmlū reverses the sequence of events. According to his account, Shāh Ḥusain was recognized as chief of the Abdālīs after the Safavid conquest,²³⁶ and only decided to join the Mughals when he heard that 400,000 Indian troops were approaching Qandahār. In a pun on the name of the Safavid governor, Shāmlū accuses the Abdālī leader of turning away from the “prayer niche” (*mihrāb*) of Shiism.²³⁷

The orientation of the Sadūzai Abdālīs towards Multān can be attributed to strategic and commercial factors. Besides serving as an outpost for the Mughal thrust towards Qandahār, the city constituted a vital coordinate in the overland trade with India and thus presented a natural next link in the chain of Abdālī activities. Located four miles from the left bank of the Chināb (Chenab), Multān was the eastern entry point to the trade route crossing the Sulaimān range and continuing on to Qandahār via Dūkī and Pishīn.²³⁸ Given its central position within the riverine system of Panjāb, it also served as a conduit for merchandise shipped down on the Indus past the island of Bhakkar and onwards to the Arabian Sea ports of Ṭhaṭṭa and Lāhūrī Bandar. In the 1620s, the Dutch East India agent Pelsaert gave the following account of the city and its trade relations:

Multan is the capital of the province by that name... The province is exceedingly productive, and commands the route to Persia, which runs by way of Kandahar. The Persian trade is extensive, because the city is conveniently served by three great rivers, the Ravi ..., the Behat [Jhelum] and the Sind [Indus]... Very much sugar is produced, which is carried by water to Tatta in large quantities, and also to Lahore; gallnuts²³⁹ and opium are also produced; sulphur is obtained in large quantities, as well as the best camels in India; the finest and most famous bows are made here, also large quantities of white cotton goods and napkins, which are exported to Kandahar. All these goods come by way of Lahore to Agra, and are thence distributed in all directions. From Agra or Lahore, Multan receives large quantities of cotton, coarse yarn, Bengal cotton goods, turbans, prints, red *salu* from Burhanpur, and small quantities of spices.²⁴⁰

In 1666, Thevenot observed that the Indus had ceased to function as a commercial thoroughfare due to shifts in its course and silting.²⁴¹ This disadvantage notwithstanding, he noted that the city of Multān and the

and established themselves in the region extending from Laghmān to Multān, eventually gave rise to the Lōdī dynasty in the middle of the fifteenth century. Another sizeable influx of Afghān soldiery into India occurred when Ghaznī passed to a branch of the Ghurid dynasty under Shihāb al-Dīn (later Mu’izz al-Dīn) Muḥammad (r. 1173–1206), who emulated the Ghaznavid policy of expansion into India (Bosworth, “Ghūrīds,” *E.I.*, 2 II: 1101).

²³⁵ *‘Abbāsnāma* 132–3; *Khuld-i barīn* 481.

²³⁶ *Imārat-i īl-i afghān-i Abdālī ba-Shāh Ḥusain nām shakhṣī ki az jumla-yi malikān-i jamā’at-i madhkūr [būd]... mufavvaḥ va marjū’ shud* (*Qīṣaṣ al-khāqānī* I: 424–5).

²³⁷ *Rū-yi niyāz az mihrāb-i madhhab-i tashayyu’ bartāft va rāh-i farār pīsh girifta ba-istiqbāl-i urdū-yi mukhālīf shītāft* (*Qīṣaṣ al-khāqānī* I: 436–7).

²³⁸ Bābur describes the mountains around Dūkī as “very low, with little grass and scanty water—treeless and ugly” (Thackston 1996: 182–3). In the early seventeenth century, Dūkī was guarded by a Mughal citadel (Wheeler 1975: 64).

²³⁹ The galls of the *farash* tree (*Tamarix orientalis*) were used for dyeing and produced various shades of khaki, or greyish brown (*Gazetteer of the Mooltan District*, 1883–84: 10).

²⁴⁰ Pelsaert 1925: 31.

²⁴¹ See also Levi 2002: 113; Singh 1991: 188–9, 230–1.

extensive province linked to it still enjoyed an important role in the overland trade. This trade was largely operated by Hindu merchants:

The Commanders and Officers of these Towns [of the province of Multān] are Mahometans and by consequence, it may be said, that most of the Inhabitants are of the same Religion: But it contains a great many Banians also, for Multan is their chief Rendezvous for Trading into Persia, where they do what the Jews do in other places...²⁴²

Based on locally grown cotton and raw silk imported from Bukhārā, Multān's textile industry flourished well into the nineteenth century.²⁴³ A great part of the cotton produced in Panjāb and Sind was exported by the overland route to Iran.²⁴⁴ Another important Indian export item was indigo.²⁴⁵ During Mughal times, the indigo exported to Iran and Central Asia mostly originated in Bengal, Agra, Gujarat, and Lahore.²⁴⁶ In Multān, it only became a cash crop under the auspices of the local Sadūzai Abdālīs in the course of the eighteenth century.²⁴⁷

The following observations by Forster concerning the trading community in Qandahār in the 1780s convey an impression of the patterns of exchange and Qandahār's position as the next link in the chain along the trade routes towards Kābul and Bukhārā on the one hand, and Herat on the other:

At Kandahar, are established many Hindoo families, chiefly of Moultaun and the Rajepoot districts, who by their industry and mercantile knowledge, have essentially augmented its trade and wealth. The Turcoman merchants of Bochara and Samarkand, also frequent this mart, whence they transport into their own country a considerable quantity of indigo, with which commodity Kandahar is annually supplied from various parts of upper India. This city is more abundantly supplied with provisions and at a cheaper rate, than any place I have seen on the west side of the Indus.²⁴⁸

The influx of Indian trade items into Iran and Central Asia was counterbalanced by the steady need for war horses in India. This demand was met by a regular supply of horses bred on the pastures of Central Asia and Iran. Popular for its strength and stamina, the Turki breed brought in from the region north of the Hindu Kush made up the backbone of the Mughal army. Before reaching their destination, these horses passed through several stages. They were purchased at Bukhārā, Balkh and Herat and then fattened in the pastures around Kābul and Qandahār before embarking on their journey to India.²⁴⁹ Forster mentions them as one of the primary export items of Kābul:

This quarter of Afghanistan, possessing but few Indian productions, receive [sic] sugars and cotton cloths, chiefly from Peshour [Pishāvar], whither it sends iron, leather and tobacco. To Kandahar it exports iron, leather and lamp oil, whence there turns are made in sundry manufactures of Persia and Europe, with a large supply of melons of an excellent sort. The Tartars of Bochara, bring to Kabul the horses of Turkistan, furs and hides,... the amount of which is applied to the purchase of Indigo, and other commodities of India.²⁵⁰

The Iranian horses bred in Dāghistān, Kāzarūn and Shīrāz were brought to India either along the overland route through Qandahār or across the Arabian Sea to Surat.²⁵¹ Along the highroad to India, the rich grazing areas in the vicinity of the town of Qaşūr in Panjāb were an important entrepôt for the horse trade. The local Khvīshgī Afghāns brought in horses from present-day Afghanistan and Iraq and sold them in Agra, Gujarat and Deccan.²⁵² Estimates of the horses arriving in India on a yearly basis vary, yet they indicate impressive proportions. In the middle of the seventeenth century, Bernier calculated that at least 25,000 horses of the

²⁴² Sen 1949: 77.

²⁴³ Dasti 1990: 251; Dasti 1998: 294–5; Pandey 1992: 17; Raza 1980: 90, 92, 94, 108–9.

²⁴⁴ Singh 1991: 216–17.

²⁴⁵ Steensgaard 1999: 68–9.

²⁴⁶ Pelsaert 1925: 13–15. See also Levi 2002: 49–51; Singh 1991: 105, 217–18.

²⁴⁷ *Gazetteer of the Mooltan District*, 1883–84: 165, 167. See also Ross 1970: 98.

²⁴⁸ Forster 1798 II: 103.

²⁴⁹ Gommans 1995: 79, 87; Levi 2002: 57.

²⁵⁰ Forster 1798 II: 72.

²⁵¹ Savary 1723: 1111. In 1802, Waring noted that the “most advantageous trade for the [Persian] merchants is probably in horses; of which numbers are sent by every vessel to the different ports in India” (Waring 1807: 77).

²⁵² Shafi 1929: 452–5. Qaşūr was located 34 miles southeast of Lahore on the right bank of the middle course of the Satlij (Sutlej).

Turki breed entered the country, not counting the horses originating in Iran and Africa.²⁵³ In the 1770s, the French visitor Comte de Modave estimated the total annual influx of Central Asian and Iranian horses at 45,000 to 50,000.²⁵⁴ Owing to the warfare accompanying the decline of the Mughal Empire and the emergence of regional courts in the early eighteenth century, the horse trade to India reached a final peak before being rendered obsolete by the British colonial order.²⁵⁵

Another trade item entering India on a continuous basis were precious metals, in particular gold and silver.²⁵⁶ Comte de Modave observed that Multān formed a nodal point in the web of trade routes linking India with the west throughout the eighteenth century, despite the turbulences accompanying the decline of the Mughals and the advent of Nādir Shāh:

The Multanis handle almost all of the Indian trade with Persia. Their city is the meeting point for the caravans coming from Persia to India and going from India to Persia... The trading connection between Persia and India is both ancient and natural. At times of disruption, [as after the death of Nādir Shāh] Persia would suffer a shortage in the fabrics provided by the Indians. As soon as communication was reestablished, the Persian merchants would return to Multan in droves and great numbers of Multanis would go to Isfahan, the Persians carrying gold and silver, the Multanis loaded with fabrics.²⁵⁷

It is difficult to determine the volume of trade between Multān and Iran. Certainly the frequentation of the trade routes fluctuated along with the ebb and flow of peace and conflict in the wider region. Yet the data furnished by European observers are too scattered to allow the delineation of clear patterns. In 1615, the English traveller Richard Steel reported that 12–14,000 laden camels passed along the trade route from Multān via Dūkī, Pishīn and Qandahār every year. However, this figure reflects only a short-lived phenomenon related to the 1613 war between the Mughal Empire and the Portuguese and the Iranian pressure on Hurmūz in 1614, which rendered sea travel difficult. Under ordinary circumstances, a yearly traffic of 3,000 camel loads seems to have been the norm. In 1639, representatives of the Dutch East India Company estimated that 20–25,000 camel loads arrived in Iṣfahān each year, most of them conveying cotton of Indian provenance. But in 1644, the Indian imports to the Safavid capital only reached a total of 6,000 camel loads.²⁵⁸

The Safavid takeover of Qandahār in 1649 was followed by a number of Mughal campaigns. Shāh Jahān's third son Aurangzīb, who governed Multān from 1648–1652, was deputed to Qandahār in 1649 and 1652. A third, equally fruitless siege was conducted by Shāh Jahān's eldest son Dārā Shukūh (d. 1069/1659) in 1653.²⁵⁹ As a result of the conflict over Qandahār in the early 1650s, the Mughal government encouraged the export trade by way of Surat.²⁶⁰ Even so, there is evidence that the trade to Qandahār continued. Parallel with his military endeavors, Aurangzīb attempted to enhance the security along the highroad between Multān and Qandahār and to establish a postal system.²⁶¹ These efforts notwithstanding, Tavernier reported around 1661 that the route from Qandahār to Multān was much less frequented than the highroad leading into India via Kābul.²⁶²

Locally, the Mughal-Safavid competition produced a field of shifting alliances, opening up strategic opportunities to the Abdālī elite and preparing the road to Multān. The first person to figure in the historical

²⁵³ Levi 2002: 57.

²⁵⁴ De Modave 1971: 326–7.

²⁵⁵ Gommans 1995: 85, 87; Levi 2002: 57–9. See also Dasti 1990: 248–9. As late as 1863, Vámbéry observed the fine quality and comparatively low price of the horses sold at Maimana. Many of the horses for sale continued to be exported to India via Herat, Qandahār, and Kābul at the time (Vámbéry 1864: 251).

²⁵⁶ Levi 2002: 47–8.

²⁵⁷ De Modave 1971: 336–7.

²⁵⁸ Steensgaard 1999: 62–72. See also Dasti 1998: 297; Sarkar 1973: 72; Steensgaard 1974: 410.

²⁵⁹ The three Mughal sieges of Qandahār took place in the summer months when the passes to India were open. Aurangzīb's first and second sieges of Qandahār lasted from 16 May–5 September 1649 and from 2 May–9 July 1652. Dārā Shukūh encamped before Qandahār from 28 April–27 September 1653 (Sarkar 1973: 77–95).

²⁶⁰ Steensgaard 1999: 71.

²⁶¹ Dasti 1998: 145.

²⁶² Tavernier quoted in Raza 1988: 79; Steensgaard 1999: 71.

narrative presented by the *Tadhkirat al-mulūk-i ‘ālīsha’n* is “Sadū” (Asadullāh I, 1558–1627), the forefather of the Sadūzai branch of the Abdālī Afghāns.²⁶³ According to their own accounts, the Abdālīs had inhabited the region near Qandahār since the time of Shāh Rukh and were locked into power struggles with the neighboring Ghilzai Afghāns and Hazāras in the sixteenth century.²⁶⁴ Sadū’s achievement lay in the fact that he enhanced the position of the Abdālīs with respect to the other local groups and assured a leading position for his own family within the Abdālī confederacy. The early part of his career coincided with the weakening of Safavid power in the aftermath of Shāh Ṭahmāsp I’s death in 1576 and the Uzbek interregnum in Khurāsān from 1588–1598. When the Mughal emperor Akbar (r. 963–1014/1556–1605) incorporated Qandahār into his domain in 1595, Sadū entered Mughal service as tax collector. In 1598, the reestablishment of Safavid authority in Khurāsān allowed the Abdālī leader to widen his political options. It is said that he visited ‘Abbās I in Herat and impressed him with his accomplishments in archery.²⁶⁵ In 1622, Sadū rendered material assistance to the Safavid king in the conquest of Qandahār. In exchange for his services, he received the title of *sulṭān* and control over the citadel at Shahr-i Ṣafā, as well as the revenues of the surrounding country. Located in the lower Tarnak valley seventy miles northeast of Qandahār, Shahr-i Ṣafā was conveniently situated along the trade route to Kābul.²⁶⁶ Sadū’s close interaction with the imperial powers affected local relationships of power. The Abdālī confederacy became stronger with respect to the neighboring Ghilzais. In addition, the fact that Sadū stood as a Mughal or Safavid representative granted his own family a leading position within the Abdālī confederacy.

Over the next generation, Qandahār reverted to Mughal rule, while the local leadership stayed in place. Shāh ‘Abbās I’s appointee ‘Alī Mardān Khān b. Ganj ‘Alī Khān governed Qandahār well into the reign of Shāh Ṣafī until charges of embezzlement put an end to his relationship with Iṣfahān. Encouraged by the governor of Multān, he handed the citadel of Qandahār over to the Mughals on 21 Shavvāl 1047/8 March 1638.²⁶⁷ For this period, the Safavid sources mention the Abdālīs briefly in connection with the rebellion of the Afghān governor of Pishīn, Shīr Khān Tarīnī, against ‘Alī Mardān Khān in 1038–1040/1628–1631. Iskandar Munshī reports that Shīr Khān Tarīnī disrupted the trade between Multān and Qandahār and raised trouble with the Afghān tribes obedient to Safavid government, in particular the Abdālīs.²⁶⁸ ‘Alī Mardān Khān, still loyal to the Safavid court at the time, defeated Shīr Khān Tarīnī twice, conquered Pishīn, and restored order to the vital commercial artery between Qandahār and Multān in 1040/1630–1631.²⁶⁹ While the Safavid sources do not name any Abdālī actors, the *Tadhkirat al-mulūk-i ‘ālīsha’n* emphasizes the close

²⁶³ According to *Tadhkirat al-mulūk-i ‘ālīsha’n*, the dates of Sadū’s birth and death are 18 Dhū al-Ḥijja 965–1 Rajab 1036/1 October 1558–18 March 1627 (Kamal Khan 1999: 44, 58). The author of *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī* claims that he reached the age of 75 (T Su 59).

²⁶⁴ Kamal Khan 1999: 47, 87.

²⁶⁵ Kamal Khan 1999: 52–5.

²⁶⁶ Kamal Khan 1999: 55–8. The *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī* differs from the *Tadhkirat al-mulūk-i ‘ālīsha’n* in terms of Sadūzai genealogy, the scope of action of the Sadūzai leaders, and the sequence of events. The two sources do concur concerning the list of Sadū’s sons: Four sons from a Ḥabībzai mother, Khvāja Khiṣr (Ramaḥān 990—Muḥarram 1037/September–October 1582—September–October 1627), Maudūd (b. 15 Shavvāl 992/20 October 1584), Kāmran (b. Rajab 994/June—July 1586), Bahādur (b. 998/1589–90); one son from a concubine, Za’farān (b. 1010/1601–02) (Durrānī 1990: 10; Kamal Khan 1999: 58–9; T Su 59). Yet the *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī* makes no mention of Sadū’s interaction with the imperial powers and merely describes his efforts to enforce authority among the Bārakzai and Alakūzai Abdālīs and to reconcile the Ghilzais in the environs of the Arghastān valley (T Su 59).

²⁶⁷ *Khuld-i barīn* 260–5; Rota 2009: 220–8, 408–10.

²⁶⁸ *Bā sāyir-i afghānān ki muṭī’ va munqād-i īn daulat va ṭābi’-i ḥākim-i Qandahār khuṣūṣan ṭāyifa-yi Abdālī ki mūr-i ‘ashīrat va sarkhēl-i ‘alāhidda dārand sulūk-i nāhanjār mikard* (IM, Dhail 73–4). Muḥammad Yūsuf Vāla Iṣfahānī, whose account largely coincides with that of Iskandar Munshī, also seems to imply that Shīr Khān Tarīnī assumed a hostile attitude to the Abdālīs and the other Afghān tribes in the service of the Safavid government: *Ba īn khiyāl-i dūr az kār sāyir-i afghānina ba takhṣīṣ ṭāyifa-yi Abdālī-rā dar ḥayyiz-i gumān-i ‘iṭā’at va inqiyād kashīda bā īshān nīz sālik-i ṭarīq-i bad sulūkī gardīd* (*Khuld-i barīn* 89).

²⁶⁹ IM, Dhail 73–6; *Khuld-i barīn* 89–92. Bījan places ‘Alī Mardān Khān’s conquest of Pishīn in the year 1041/1631–32 (Rota 2009: 121–2, 366).

relationship between ‘Alī Mardān Khān and Sadū’s second son Maudūd Khān Sadūzai (1584–1644), who is said to have sided with the Mughal forces after they took control of Qandahār in 1638.²⁷⁰

After Maudūd Khān Sadūzai’s death, the continued conflict between the Safavids and the Mughals for the possession of Qandahār translated into – and was enhanced by – the rivalry between two of Sadū’s grandsons. This internal competition expanded into an imperial conflict and opened the door for a first wave of migration to Multān. As the paternal cousins Shāh Ḥusain b. Maudūd and Khudādād (“Khudakka”, “Khudakī”) b. Khiḥr contended for control over Shahr-i Ṣafā, each of them sought out imperial partners to bolster his cause. When Shāh Ḥusain Khān managed to evict Khudādād Khān from Shahr-i Ṣafā with the assistance of the Mughal governor of Qandahār, the latter turned to the Safavid court for help. According to *Tadhkirat al-mulūk-i ‘ālisha’*n, Khudādād Khān played an important role during the Safavid siege of Qandahār, which began on 16 December 1648 and ended with the capitulation of the Mughal governor on 11 February 1649. If we are to believe this account, Khudādād Khān even induced Shāh ‘Abbās II to embark on the military campaign to Qandahār and later proved his loyalty to the Safavid cause by defending the citadel of Qandahār during the Mughal sieges of 1649 and 1652. In return for his services, he gained the title of *ṣulṭān*, and the Georgian *bēglerbēgī* Miḥrāb Khān Charkhchībāshī placed him in charge of the entire territory outside of the gates of Qandahār. This gave him the opportunity to incorporate the neighboring Arghastān valley into his domain before his death on 22 Ṣafar 1074/25 September 1663.²⁷¹ This version of events is not borne out by the Safavid chronicles, which state that Miḥrāb Khān Charkhchībāshī died of natural causes ten days before the Mughal withdrawal on 5 September 1649.²⁷² Yet there are indications that Khudādād Khān enjoyed a certain prominence in the Safavid politics of Qandahār in the 1650s.²⁷³

Meanwhile, Khudādād Khān’s rival Shāh Ḥusain Khān entered Mughal service and accompanied the princes Aurangzīb and Dārā Shukūh on their campaigns to Qandahār. Subsequently, he participated in Aurangzīb’s military activities in Deccan. Shāh Jahān acknowledged his services by bestowing the title of “Vafādār Khān” on him and granting him an estate in Rangpūr (in the modern district of Muḥaffargarh).²⁷⁴

²⁷⁰ Kamal Khan 1999: 64–6. See also Braun 1971: 6; Dastī 1998: 127–9; Durrānī 1990: 12; de Modave 1971: 364; Riazul Islam 1979b. I: 251. Once again, the two Afghan sources disagree. While the *Tārīkh-i ṣulṭānī* portrays Khvāja Khiḥr as Sadū’s successor and claims that he headed the Abdālīs for seventy years, the *Tadhkirat al-mulūk-i ‘ālisha’*n shortens Khvāja Khiḥr’s career to several months and emphasizes the role of Maudūd Khān Sadūzai. Maudūd Khān, by contrast does not figure at all in the narrative presented by the *Tārīkh-i ṣulṭānī* (T Su 59–60; Durrānī 1990: 11–12; Kamal Khan 1999: 63). In the Mughal context, Maudūd Khān Sadūzai is mentioned as Malik Ma’dūd Abdālī (Athar Ali 1985: S4613, S5210).

²⁷¹ Durrānī 1990: 13; Kamal Khan 1999: 69–92. See also Dastī 1998: 148–9. An alternative date given for Khudādād Khān’s death is 2 Ṣafar 1076/14 August 1665 (Durrani 1981: 195). The *Tārīkh-i ṣulṭānī* differs from the narrative given in the *Tadhkirat al-mulūk-i ‘ālisha’*n in several respects. According to the *Tārīkh-i ṣulṭānī*, Ṣulṭān Khudādād b. Khiḥr ruled over the Abdālīs without any particular connection to either the Safavids or Mughals. Among his accomplishments was a treaty of peace with the Ṭūkhī Ghilzais, whereby the valley of Garmāb was stipulated as the boundary line between the Abdālī and the Ghilzai lands. The competition between rival Sadūzai cousins and the concomitant Safavid and Mughal involvement only unfolds during the leadership of Khudādād’s brother Shīr Khān Sadūzai (not mentioned in the *Tadhkirat al-mulūk-i ‘ālisha’*n), who is pitted against his cousin Shāh Ḥusain Khān (b. Maudūd). While Shāh Ḥusain Khān initially sides with the Safavids, he eventually decides to depart for India. Shīr Khān, who seeks out the support of Shāh Jahān after altercations with the Safavid governor of Qandahār in the early part of the narrative, eventually remains in the vicinity of Qandahār and cooperates with the Safavid government. In effect, the two sources only agree on the fact that Shāh Ḥusain Khān migrated to India. In the *Tārīkh-i ṣulṭānī*, the timeframe remains vague. Khudādād Khān and Shīr Khān are initially described as contemporaries of Shāh ‘Abbās II (r. 1642–1666) and Aurangzīb (r. 1658–1707). Yet a few pages later, Shīr Khān seeks out the support of Shāh Jahān (r. 1628–1658) (T Su 60–5). Shīr Khān b. Khiḥr Abdālī should not be confused with the aforementioned Shīr Khān Afghān b. Ḥasan b. ‘Abd al-Qādir Tarīnī, who was a contemporary of Shāh ‘Abbās I (r. 1587–1629) and Shāh Ṣafī (r. 1629–1642) (IM, *Dhail* 73–77; *Khuld-i barīn* 89–92).

²⁷² ‘Abbās-nāma 122–3, 127, 132–3, 137–8; *Khuld-i barīn* 489.

²⁷³ According to the ‘Abbās-nāma, Khudādād “Ṣulṭān” Abdālī was killed by Ūtār Khān (Dhū al-Faqār Khān), who governed Qandahār from the second Mughal invasion of 1652 until his death in 1073/1662–63 (‘Abbās-nāma 151, 166, 237, 319–20). This would indicate that Khudādād figured in local politics (‘Abbās-nāma 151, 166, 237, 319–20). Once again, it is difficult to reconcile vital dates. If we are to believe the Abdālī sources, Khudādād died *after* Ūtār Khān.

²⁷⁴ Durrānī 1990: 13. See also *Ḥayāt-i afghānī* 139–41. The Safavid author Valī Qulī Shāmlū reports that Shāh Ḥusain Khān received the title “Vafādār Khān” when he joined Aurangzīb’s troops before Qandahār in 1649 (*Qīṣaṣ al-khāqānī* I: 438). Athar

When Aurangzīb became emperor (r. 1068–1118/1658–1707), he conferred further *jāgīrs* in Multān, Siyālkōṭ and Lahore on the Sadūzai noble. Shāh Ḥusain Khān's family retained a highly influential position in Multān throughout the Mughal period and eventually served as the governors (*nā'ib nizām*) of the province from 1738 on.²⁷⁵

The migration to Multān continued among the next generation of Sadūzai Abdālīs. According to *Tadhkirat al-mulūk-i 'ālīsha'n*, Khudādād Khān's son Ḥayāt (d. 1728) assumed the leadership of the Abdālīs in 1667. His efforts to eliminate rival contenders for power caused a number of his relatives, foremost among them descendants of Sadū's sons Kāmran and Bahādur Khān, to depart for Multān.²⁷⁶ While Ḥayāt Sulṭān profited from the decline of Safavid power under Shāh Sulaimān during the early part of his career, he himself was forced to leave for Multān in the aftermath of a military confrontation with the Safavids. In 1091/1680–81, his repeated attacks on the towns located along the highroad between Qandahār and Herat sparked a military campaign to the region. The Abdālīs were defeated near Auba, and Ḥayāt Sulṭān decided to withdraw to Multān.²⁷⁷

In the Abdālī frame of reference, Herat initially figured in the construction of identity. Following a well-established formula for the projection of authority, the Abdālīs claimed that the founder of their confederacy owed his standing among the greater group of Pashtūns to saintly sanction. According to this view, 'Arif b. Tarīn sought the guidance of the Chishtī saint Abū Aḥmad of Herat (d. 355/966), who allegedly conferred his own title of “Abdāl” on him. Reflecting Abū Aḥmad's rank within the hierarchy of saints and being closely associated with the Chishtī shrine of Herat, this title was understood to have enhanced the standing of Abdāl's lineage among the Pashtūns.²⁷⁸

The Abdālīs' economic and political role in Herat is documented from the late sixteenth century on. Mar'ashī reports that they extended their migrations to the region in 1000/1591–92, when “a number of incidents” (*ba'zī az ḥavādith*) caused them to leave the “Kūhistān” of Kābul. Following a nomadic way of life (*ba-tarīq-i sahrā nishīn*), they moved back and forth between their summer camps (*yailāq*) in Bādghīs and their winter camps (*qishlāq*) in Shāfilān and Auba east of Herat, as well as Isfizār 80 miles to the south.²⁷⁹ The *Tadhkirat al-mulūk-i 'ālīsha'n* reports that Ḥayāt Sulṭān's maternal ancestors belonged to the Nūrzai tribe and had moved to Auba and the Dū Shākh mountain west of Herat at some point in the past.²⁸⁰

Mar'ashī confirms the account of the clash between Ḥayāt Sulṭān and the Safavid authorities but portrays it in less dramatic terms. According to this account, the Abdālīs were merely caught in a typical conflict with the Safavid administration concerning the payment of revenues:

I have heard that in the time of Shāh Sulaimān and Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusain they [the Abdālīs] amounted to approximately 60,000 families. The Safavid kings have always addressed their leaders as *sulṭān*, as was the case among the Ghilzais. Towards the end of Shāh Sulaimān's era, the leadership of the Abdālīs rested with Ḥayāt Sulṭān Sadūzai... He happened to have an argument with one of the revenue collectors (*muḥaṣṣilān*) of the governor of Herat. This dispute turned into a fight, the revenue collector was killed, and the affair dragged on with the governor of Herat. Ḥayāt Sulṭān and his brother Lashkar Khān feared punishment for the murder and the stern justice (*siyāsāt*) of the Qizilbāsh governors, who tended to beat and dishonor the grand army leaders on account of the slightest offence. They fled to Multān along with 5,000–6,000 related families.²⁸¹

Ali mentions “Malik Ḥusain Abdālī” as *manṣabdār* in 1059–1063/1649–1653 (Athar Ali S4613, S5210, S5740). According to some sources, Shāh Ḥusain Khān also received a *jāgīr* in Siyālkōṭ from Shāh Jahān (*Gazetteer of the Mooltan District*, 1883–84: 26; Kamal Khan 1999: 78).

²⁷⁵ Dastī 1998: 162–3. See also Nabi Khan 1983: 112.

²⁷⁶ Durrānī 1990: 15; Kamal Khan 1999: 102.

²⁷⁷ Durrānī 1990: 16–17; Kamal Khan 102–7. The *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī* gives a different version of events: Ḥayāt Sulṭān acted as leader of the Abdālīs on behalf of the young Daulat Khān b. Sarmast b. Shīr Khān Sadūzai but had to give up his position after foolishly entering a marriage arrangement with the governor of Qandahār involving the exchange of seven women (T Su 65–6).

²⁷⁸ T Hu 5–7. See also Fūfalzā'ī 1967: 303–4.

²⁷⁹ *Majma' al-tavārīkh* 19.

²⁸⁰ Kamal Khan 1999: 141.

²⁸¹ *Majma' al-tavārīkh* 19. According to the *Tadhkirat al-mulūk-i 'ālīsha'n*, Ḥayāt Sulṭān Sadūzai was accompanied by 500 adherents. After Ḥayāt Sulṭān's departure, the leadership of the Abdālīs passed to his cousin Ja'far Khān Abdālī (d. 1106/1694–95), who made peace with the Safavids and spent the thirteen-some years of his tenure at the Abdālī stronghold of Shahr-i Ṣafā.

After his flight from the Herat region, Ḥayāt Sulṭān arrived in Multān on 14 Shavvāl 1093/16 October 1682 and was immediately confirmed as a member of the local elite. Aurangzīb granted him a large *jāgīr* in addition to a monthly cash stipend of 10,000 rupees.²⁸² Thus two rival Sadūzai clans, the descendants of Shāh Ḥusain and Khudādād Khān, came to play a preponderant role in the economic and political life of Multān. Both branches of the family built their own palaces and cultivated famous mango groves in the vicinity of the city.²⁸³ Some of the Multānī Abdālīs gained a reputation as camel-traders.²⁸⁴ With the decline of the Mughal Empire, the administration of Multān passed into Sadūzai hands. The first Sadūzai Abdālī to gain the governorship of Multān was Zāhid Khān, a grandnephew of Shāh Ḥusain. His governorship from 1738 to 1748 was contested by Ḥayāt Sulṭān's son 'Abd al-'Azīz Khān (b. 1107/1695–96).²⁸⁵ During their tenure as governors, the Sadūzai Abdālīs were able to enhance their standing even further. Zāhid Khān preferably recruited his kinsmen into the army and distributed the fertile lands on the left bank of the Chināb River south of Multān among his relatives.²⁸⁶ Around the middle of the eighteenth century, this area was upgraded by the digging of irrigation channels and the introduction of indigo as a cash crop.²⁸⁷

When Ḥayāt Sulṭān Sadūzai left for Multān in 1682, he was accompanied by his son 'Abdullāh Khān Sadūzai and his paternal relative Zamān Khān Sadūzai. This fact is noteworthy in the light of the fact that Zamān Khān Sadūzai's son Aḥmad, who was born in Multān in the palace of Shāh Ḥusain Khān and was brought up in the house of Zāhid Khān, later went on to found the Durrānī empire.²⁸⁸ The Sadūzai Abdālīs thus furnish a prime example for the formation of a military and economic elite under the auspices of Mughal rule. This was by no means a unique phenomenon.²⁸⁹ Yet it was their convenient location at the outposts of the Mughal and Safavid polities which eventually allowed the Sadūzai Abdālīs to make the leap from a local aristocracy to an imperial elite. Spanning the region between Multān, Qandahār and Herat, they were in the best possible position to develop into an independent regional force parallel to the crumbling of the encompassing state structures.

There is no evidence concerning the scope of Sadūzai commercial activities. Nor do we know whether they formed trade networks similar to those of the *pūyanda* traders, Pashtūn nomads who provided the commercial linkage between the markets in northern and central India and those in Central Asia.²⁹⁰ But it is certain that the Sadūzai elite maintained regular contact and exchange with their kinsmen in their homelands. Thus 'Abdullāh Khān Sadūzai returned to Shahr-i Šafā in 1107/1695–96 and took over the leadership of the Abdālīs with the consent of the Safavid governor of Qandahār. In 1116/1704–05, he relocated to Multān in order to mend his ruptured relationship with his father Ḥayāt Sulṭān Sadūzai. During this time, Zamān Khān Sadūzai acted as the leader of the Abdālīs. Around 1709, 'Abdullāh Khān Sadūzai again moved to Shahr-i Šafā and played an active role in the events surrounding the death of the Safavid governor Gurgīn Khān.²⁹¹

During his time, the Abdālīs occupied the lands south of the Arghandāb and along the Hilmand river (Kamal Khan 1999: 108, 111–13).

²⁸² Dasti 1998: 168–9; Kamal Khan 1999: 109; Nabi Khan 1983: 112.

²⁸³ Dasti 1998: 163. Ḥayāt Sulṭān Sadūzai's son Bāqir Khān (b. 1682) had a mango plantation at Šadrpūr, ten miles north of Multān proper. Shāh Ḥusain Khān's nephew 'Ābid Khān planted a mango grove at Shujā'ābād, twenty miles southwest of Multān (Dasti 1998: 248).

²⁸⁴ Gommans 1995: 35.

²⁸⁵ Zāhid Khān was a grandson of Shāh Ḥusain's brother Allāhdād Khān. 'Abd al-'Azīz Khān b. Ḥayāt Sulṭān gained the governorship of Multān in 1748–1749. After that, the control over the affairs of Multān passed to Zāhid Khān's son Shākir Khān until 1751 (Dasti 1998: 187, 192, 195, 197–200). His brother Shujā' governed Multān under Tīmūr Shāh Sadūzai. He was succeeded by his son Muẓaffar Šafdar Jang, who held this post under Shāh Zamān (T Hu 376–7).

²⁸⁶ Dasti 1998: 187. For the landholdings of the four elite groups in Multān, the Afghāns, the Balūch, the Sayyids and the Quraishīs, see Roseberry 1987: 3.

²⁸⁷ *Gazetteer of the Mooltan District* 1883–84: 165, 167.

²⁸⁸ Dasti 1998: 197; Kamal Khan 1999: 108.

²⁸⁹ Another example are the Khvīshgī Afghāns, who accompanied Bābur to India and received *jāgīrs* including expansive grazing areas in Qaṣūr in exchange for their military services under the Mughals (Shafi 1929: 454–5). See also Gommans 1995: 109–10.

²⁹⁰ Noelle 1997: 282.

²⁹¹ Kamal Khan 1999: 114–17.

This shows that the members of this family were equally at home in their eastern and western strongholds. In this context, it comes as no surprise that Aḥmad Shāh eventually carved out his kingdom around the commercial centers of Herat, Qandahār and Multān. These places had developed into fixed coordinates on the political horizon of the Sadūzai Abdālīs in the previous generations and offered the greatest scope for advancement within the shifting configurations of power. The Sadūzai elite may have been far removed from Imperial Safavid concerns, but they had clearly become a force to be reckoned with by the turn of the eighteenth century.

CONCLUSION

The Safavid period ushered in a significant change in the territorial setup of Khurāsān. Most significantly, Herat lost its previous status as imperial capital. While retaining the prestigious title of *dār al-salṭana*, it became part of an embattled domain exposed to prolonged military pressure of varied intensity exerted by the Abu al-Khairid and Tuqai-Timurid dynasties of Central Asia. During the early phase of Safavid rule, the incorporation into the newly emerging Qizilbāsh domain proved a painful transition for Herat and its environs. Locked into a military tug-of-war with the Uzbek rivals and preoccupied with their own economic survival, the Safavid rulers depleted the local resources rather than administered them and brought about a devastating famine in 1514–1516.

In the course of the sixteenth century, there developed a new sense of embeddedness. Herat became part of the “guarded domains” and assumed a privileged position as capital of Khurāsān and as the seat of the Safavid crown princes. This process coincided with the entrenchment of Qizilbāsh interests, as actual control lay with the powerful Shāmlū, Tekelū and Ustājilū tutors of the underage princes. Other supreme officers with extensive duties, like the religious supervisor (*ṣadr*) were likewise appointed to Herat.

At the same time, the fluid hierarchy of the Safavid administration circumscribed the scope of authority emanating from the provincial capital. The component regions of Khurāsān were assigned to rival Qizilbāsh leaders, who were apt to stake out separate domains for themselves and their followers. The preponderant role this group played in the maintenance of the Safavid state is reflected by the designation of Iran as “Qizilbāsh kingdom”. Their great political and military clout notwithstanding, the Qizilbāsh were embedded into a larger framework of authority based on the notion of royal legitimacy. The Safavid polity derived its cohesion from the overarching notion of a ruling “house” entitled to leadership. In spite of their influential position, the Qizilbāsh were in no position to challenge the spiritual and political authority wielded by the members of the Safavid lineage. In the Central Asian setting, the Chingizid “constitution” focusing on the descendants of Chingiz Khān through his eldest son Jochi and his grandson Shībān provided a similar basis for legitimacy.²⁹²

In terms of representation, time-honored territorial concepts retained their validity and viability. In tune with established conventions, the sixteenth-century author Ibrāhīm Amīnī Haravī referred to the Safavid realm as “Īrān” or “Īrānzamīn” and thus employed a territorial designation which had been coined by the Sasanians, had vanished after the Muslim invasion, and was reinvented by the Ilkhanids.²⁹³ Typically, the concepts of “Īrān” and “‘Ajam” were juxtaposed with those of “Tūrān”²⁹⁴ and “Turkistān”.²⁹⁵ Closely linked to this delimitation was the idea of Iran as extending from the Oxus in the east to the Euphrates in the west.²⁹⁶ This notion of boundedness and territorial compactness coincided with the delineation of stable internal subdivisions. One important geographic and political consideration was that of a bifurcation of Iran into a western and an eastern segment. Although the Safavids may be said to have unified western and eastern Iran, the distinction between ‘Irāq and Khurāsān as separate political units remained tangible. The

²⁹² McChesney 1993: 74–5.

²⁹³ Fragner 2006: 72–3.

²⁹⁴ See, for instance, *Futūḥāt-i shāhī* 242.

²⁹⁵ See, for instance, HS I: 185.

²⁹⁶ See, for instance, Vārid, *Nādirshāhī* 4.

divide into a western and an eastern domain is reflected in Amīnī's report that Shāh Ismā'īl I did not content himself with the possession of the "two 'Irāqs" and Azerbaijan but was poised to reach for Khurāsān, Iran and Tūrān and, to the extent possible, for the entire inhabited world (*rub '-i maskūn*).²⁹⁷ Coined in Saljūq times, the dual "'Irāqain" stood for the combined regions of Iraq "proper" ('Irāq-i 'Arab, Mesopotamia) and the largely mountainous region of present-day western Iran, which corresponded to the ancient Persian region of "Media" and was referred to as "Jibāl" by the early Islamic geographers.²⁹⁸

There also existed a perceptible division within Khurāsān. In the early Safavid period, the region was thought to consist of two constituent parts, with Sarakhs on the Harī Rūd/Tejend representing the border of the "Two Khurāsāns". This echoes circumstances in the Mongol period, when there was a definite separation between Herat and the northwestern region centering in Nīshāpūr.²⁹⁹ From the late sixteenth century on, this bifurcation into an eastern and a western section also manifested on the administrative level. Thus the governor of Mashhad was thought to be in charge of "half of Khurāsān". Considered one of the "great cities" of Khurāsān in Timurid times, Mashhad outgrew Herat in the early seventeenth century owing to the patronage Shāh 'Abbās I extended to the shrine of Imām Rizā. To the east, the incorporation of Qandahār into the Safavid realm in 1649 likewise diminished the weight of Herat in administrative and economic terms.

As for Herat, we learn little about the urban population, be it the notables or the people working on the lands outside the city gates. But there is some scattered information concerning the tribal groups living at a distance from Herat. Among these *ūymāq*, the Jamshīdīs figure most prominently. Based in Harāt-Rūd and Kurukh east of Herat, this group was considered to number among the "ancient" revenue payers of Herat and controlled the lands along the first stages of the highroad to Maimana. The available sources describe a volatile setting in which depredations and forceful deportations by neighboring tribes were the order of the day. These fluctuations and insecurities notwithstanding, the Jamshīdīs and the other groups mentioned in Safavid times form part of the ethnic make-up of Herat to the present day. One new element in the tribal setting around Herat were the Abdālī Afghāns, who apparently arrived in the late sixteenth century and began to make their presence felt from the 1680s on. While the rise of the Abdālī Afghāns hastened the downfall of Safavid authority in the Herat region in the early eighteenth century, the existing administrative framework and the corresponding conception of space survived. In their quest for power, the Abdālīs adopted the territorial notions of their erstwhile overlords and sought to establish authority over the same space known as the province of Herat during the late Safavid period. The following narrative will show that their activities focused on a number of key positions and thus served to reiterate and confirm the constituent elements of the province.

THE AFSHARID PERIOD

The decline of Safavid authority fostered the rise of regional powers on the fringes of the empire. In present-day Afghanistan, the early eighteenth century witnessed the emergence of two local polities, the Hūtak Ghilzais in Qandahār and the Sadūzai Abdālīs in Herat. In 1709, the Hūtak leader Mīr Vais (d. 1715) successfully challenged Safavid rule over Qandahār by killing the Georgian governor Shāhnavāz Khān, also known as Gurgīn Khān.³⁰⁰ In 1722, Mīr Vais's son Maḥmūd Hūtak (d. 1725) dealt a final blow to the Safavid

²⁹⁷ Amīnī describes the motivation for Shāh Ismā'īl I's campaign to Ṭabas in early Sha'ban 910/January 1505 as follows: *Khvāst ba-nūk-i tīgh-i ābdār-i ātash-fishān nigāshta-yi šafaḥāt-i khavāṭir-i ahālī-yi Khurāsān gardānad ki dā'iyā-yi kishvar-sitānī na hamīn munḥašir dar 'Irāqain va Ādharbāyyjān ast, balki khing-i daulat-i jahāngushāy(-i) mutavajjih-i sair-i Īrān va Tūrān va ānchi az rub '-i maskūn tašarruf-i ān dar ḥīṭa-yi imkān ast, ba-qavāyīm-i 'ālamgīrī gāman-i sāḥat-i tang-masāḥat-i ān ast (Futūḥāt-i shāhī 241–2).*

²⁹⁸ Bosworth, "'Erāq-e 'Ajam(i)," *E.Ir.* VIII: 538. See also Fragner 2001b: 346.

²⁹⁹ Personal communication from Beatrice Manz.

³⁰⁰ One of the most detailed accounts of Mīr Vais's career is furnished by the Jesuit missionary Judas Thaddaeus Krusinski (1675–1757), who lived in Ganja and Iṣfahān between 1707 and 1726 (Tardy 1982: 318; see also Matthee, "Jesuits in Safavid Persia," *E.Ir.* 2009). In Krusinski's version of events, Mīr Vais was a tax collector (*kalāntar*) "in one of the chief Stations at Candahar"

when Gurgīn Khān took control of Qandahār in the summer of 1704 (Krusinski 1740 I: 153). Fearing Mīr Vais's influential position, Gurgīn Khān sent him to Iṣfahān, "not indeed as a Prisoner, but caused so strict an Eye to be kept on him, that he could not easily escape. At the same Time he sent Word to the King, that if he had a Mind to secure that Province, he should take not to suffer Myrr-Weis ever to return to Candahar" (Krusinski 1740 I: 154). At Iṣfahān, Mīr Vais conciliated all factions at court, including the supporters and enemies of Gurgīn Khān. He convinced the leading court circles of his loyalty and obtained permission to make a pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. Mīr Vais utilized his journey to Arabia to solicit a legal opinion on the illegitimacy of the exercise of power by Shiites and Georgian Christians over the Sunnī population of Qandahār (Krusinski 1740 I: 167, 171–2). After his return to Iṣfahān, he successfully cast doubt on Gurgīn Khān's loyalty and soon gained a reappointment to the administration of Qandahār with greater powers than before. After his arrival in Qandahār in late 1709, the Hūtak leader initially convinced Gurgīn Khān of his loyalty but assassinated him soon after (Krusinski 1740 I: 173–83; see also Tardy 1982: 322–6).

A number of Armenian and Georgian sources provide additional information on the events after Gurgīn Khān's arrival in Qandahār. Writing in 1723, Joseph Abisalamian, the Armenian secretary to the French consul in Iṣfahān, was of the opinion that Gurgīn Khān removed Mīr Vais from Qandahār immediately after his arrival there and sent him in chains to Iṣfahān (Lang 1952: 529–30; Lang 1957: 99). Two Georgian sources report that Mīr Vais initially cooperated with Gurgīn Khān and "chastized" the local Hazāra leader in his name. According to these accounts, Gurgīn Khān officially dispatched Mīr Vais on an errand to the Safavid court as late as 1706, and intimidated simultaneously to Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusain that the Hūtak leader should not be allowed to return to Qandahār (Prince Wakhusht in Brosset II,1 (1856): 101; Sekhnia Chkheidze in Brosset II,2 (1857): 26).

While Krusinski does not elaborate on the manner in which Gurgīn Khān was killed, the other sources offer two scenarios. The first, that of the murder of Gurgīn Khān and his entourage during a banquet organized by Mīr Vais, is advanced by Joseph Abisalamian and another French memoir based on information collected by the Turkish embassy to Persia in 1720 (Lang 1952: 528, 532). The second scenario of a surprise attack by Mīr Vais a short distance from Qandahār is corroborated by the aforementioned Georgian reports and the Persian accounts at our disposal. Sekhnia Chkheidze places the action two stages from Qandahār: Gurgīn Khān deputed his nephew Alexander against Afghān rebels and was thus left defenceless. Mīr Vais used this opportunity to attack him on the break of dawn of 21 April 1709. The governor defended himself single-handedly by means of bow and arrow and a sword until he was killed by a bullet. Thereupon, Mīr Vais occupied the citadel of Qandahār, plundered Gurgīn Khān's treasury and killed his followership (Sekhnia Chkheidze in Brosset II, 2 (1857): 29–30). Prince Wakhusht places this event on Ash Wednesday, 1709, and opts for a more dramatic account. According to his version of events, Mīr Vais played off Gurgīn Khān's Abdālī guards against their master. As part of this ruse, the Hūtak leader first killed the Abdālī *sulṭān* on the pretense of acting by the order of Gurgīn Khān. He then led the Abdālīs to believe that he had killed Gurgīn Khān and induced them to plunder the governor's camp and to flee. Having isolated Gurgīn Khān in this manner, Mīr Vais and his troops closed in on him and killed him by making his tent collapse over him (Prince Wakhusht in Brosset II,1 (1856): 102–3).

The narrative of the enmity between Gurgīn Khān and Mīr Vais is enriched further in the Persian sources. Writing in 1730, Vārid paints a vivid picture of the abuses committed by the Georgian troops: They desecrated mosques and violated young boys and girls of low and high families alike. Vārid's version of events is particularly interesting in that it firmly incorporates the population of Qandahār in the Iranian, Shiite realm. In his quest for justice, Mīr Vais in vain turned to the Safavid court, and eventually received assistance from Imām Riḏā at Mashhad. The shrine of the eighth Imam figures both at the beginning and the end of Mīr Vais's mission. As a first step, he visited Imām Riḏā's shrine at the same time as Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusain and obtained a *farmān* from him ordering Gurgīn Khān to restrain his followers. When this order went unheeded, Mīr Vais again left Qandahār, this time to travel to Iṣfahān and Mecca. As his complaints fell on deaf ears in Iṣfahān, he decided to seek justice at the *ḥaramain*. One night at Medina, he received a revelation from the Unseen that his homeland belonged to Imam Riḏā's domain. He returned to Khurāsān, and after forty days of prayers at the shrine of the eighth Imam, he was graced with tidings granting victory over the irreligious Georgians to him and his group on the condition that they kept up their veneration for the family of the Prophet. Upon his return to Qandahār, Mīr Vais staged a local rebellion to lure Gurgīn Khān and his troops out of the city. The same night he and his followers killed Gurgīn Khān and all his followers, donned Georgian uniforms and occupied the citadel (Vārid, *Mir'āt* 108–14). Subsequently, Mīr Vais warded off two punitive Safavid campaigns under the leadership of Gurgīn Khān's nephew Khusrau and the governor of Mashhad, Maṣṣūr Khān Shāhseven. According to Vārid, Mīr Vais henceforth formally acknowledged Mughal sovereignty by performing *sikka* and *khuṭba* in the name of the Mughal rulers Bahādur Shāh I (r. 1707–1712) and Farrukh Siyar (r. 1713–1719) (Vārid, *Mir'āt* 115–16).

A decade later, Muḥsin likewise attributes the conflict to the abuses perpetrated by the Georgian troops. He reports that the abduction and violation of Mīr Vais's bride by a group of drunk Georgians caused the Hūtak leader to nurture an inveterate hatred of Gurgīn Khān. Muḥsin offers a different sequence of events than Krusinski. According to his account, it was Mīr Vais who sought permission to perform the *hajj* two years after Gurgīn Khān's arrival in Qandahār. On his way back, he spent some time at the royal court in Iṣfahān and vainly sought redress for the oppression suffered at the hands of Gurgīn Khān and the Georgian military. When petitions from Gurgīn Khān complaining about Mīr Vais arrived in Iṣfahān, the Hūtak leader bribed the courtiers and obtained permission to depart for Qandahār. After his return, he feigned loyalty to Gurgīn Khān until the latter sent out his troops under the command of his nephew Alexander in order to quell an Afghān rebellion. Accompanied by a small group

empire by conquering Iṣfahān and obliterating the greater part of the ruling family and the Persian nobility. The nightmare of Hūtak rule over Persia came to an end in late 1729 when Ṭahmāsp Qulī (to become known as Nādir Shāh in 1736) put Maḥmūd Hūtak's cousin Ashraf Khān Hūtak to flight and reconquered Iṣfahān in the name of Ṭahmāsp II. Three years later, Herat became part of the Afsharid domain; Qandahār was incorporated after a year-long siege in March 1738.³⁰¹

Nādir's career coincided with that of the Hūtak Ghilzais and, while later much larger in scope, also focused on the former Safavid province of Khurāsān in the beginning. The stages of his ascent are reflected by the use of different names and titles. Born among the Qirqlū Afshārs³⁰² in the region of Darra Gaz in 1099/1687–88,³⁰³ he initially carried the name of Nadhr Qulī in memory of his grandfather. He began his career in the service of the Safavid governor of Abīvard. After the fall of Iṣfahān to the Hūtak Ghilzais in 1722 and Malik Maḥmūd Sīstānī's assumption of control in Mashhad in spring 1723, Nadhr Qulī initially cooperated with the Sīstānī leader and simultaneously widened his sphere of influence around Abīvard. Within a year, however, he rejected Malik Maḥmūd's claims to royal authority over Khurāsān and raided the suburbs of Mashhad for the first time. In December 1726, Nadhr Qulī wrested Mashhad from Malik Maḥmūd on behalf of Shāh Ṭahmāsp II, whose ranks he had recently entered. His formal subordination to the Safavid cause is reflected by the adoption of the title "Ṭahmāsp Qulī". Only during his coronation on 24 Shavvāl 1148/8 March 1736 did he choose the name of Nādir Shāh.³⁰⁴

of local retainers and guards, Gurgīn Khān moved to a garden near the citadel. At this garden, Mīr Vais used the change of guards to attack and kill Gurgīn Khān and his retainers. He then entered the citadel of Qandahār, where he did away with five hundred Qizilbāsh and Georgians and availed himself of Gurgīn Khān's property (Muḥsin 167–8).

Composed in 1792, the *Majma' al-tavārīkh* corroborates Muḥsin's account that the Georgians' "violations of the honor of men and women alike" (*dast-dirāzī bar nāmūs-i ānhā az unāth va dhukūr*) triggered Ghilzai resistance. In Mar'ashī's portrayal, Mīr Vais (here "Amīr Uvais") was not immediately affected by the abuses but sought to shield his fellow tribesmen from them. When Gurgīn Khān did not listen to his complaints, the Hūtak leader turned to the court in Iṣfahān and then performed *hajj*. On his return to Iṣfahān, he witnessed the military weakness of the Safavid government. After his arrival in Qandahār, he secretly collected an army among his kinsmen and among other Afghān groups. The Hūtak leader brought about the final military confrontation by luring Gurgīn Khān out of Qandahār to put down a purported rebellion by the Kākars of Pishīn. At the valley of Dih-i Shaikh in the Arghastān valley, Gurgīn Khān sent his nephew Alexander Mīrzā ahead with the troops and retained the important tribal leaders, including Mīr Vais, in his camp. This provided the opportunity for Mīr Vais to summon his own troops, to have Gurgīn Khān murdered, and to occupy Qandahār in a surprise coup (*Majma' al-tavārīkh* 3–8).

Among the Afghan sources, the *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī* reproduces the progression of events given by the other Persian sources, with a few minor differences. Sulṭān Muḥammad reports that Mīr Vais visited Iṣfahān three times. His first journey to the capital coincided with the early phase of cooperation with Gurgīn Khān. In this version of events, Mīr Vais went to Iṣfahān in person to tender his submission to the Safavid government and was awarded the leadership of the Ghilzais (*riyāsāt-i afāghina-yi Ghiljā'ī*). After his return to Qandahār, he assisted Gurgīn Khān in collecting the taxes in the outlying regions of the province. Subsequently, Gurgīn Khān, fearing his great influence, removed Mīr Vais from office. The Hūtak leader sought redress from the Safavid court in vain, proceeded to Mecca and Medina before returning to Qandahār and defeating Gurgīn Khān at Dih-i Shaikh in Ṣafar 1121/April–May 1709 (T Su 71–2).

The *Tadhkirat al-mulūk-i 'ālīshā'n* accords an important role to the Abdālīs in the conflict with Gurgīn Khān. According to this version, Mīr Vais requested help from Ḥayāt Sulṭān Abdālī at Multān against Gurgīn Khān after his return from Iṣfahān. Ḥayāt Sulṭān complied and sent his son 'Abdullāh and his twelve-year old grandson Asadullāh to Shahr-i Ṣafā. During the ensuing military confrontation, 'Abdullāh and Mīr Vais routed Gurgīn Khān's troops in unison. In the aftermath of this battle and Gurgīn Khān's death, Mīr Vais deprived 'Abdullāh of his share of power by assigning him to guard the highroad to Herat while taking possession of Qandahār himself. This caused 'Abdullāh to cooperate with the Safavid army under Gurgīn Khān's nephew Khusrau Khān against Mīr Vais at Qandahār until the Qizilbāsh troops met with a violent end at the hands of the Ghilzais in October 1711 (Kamal Khan 1999: 119–31). According to the *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī*, 'Abdullāh Khān and Asadullāh Khān Abdālī only left Multān to join (Kai) Khusrau Khān's siege of Qandahār. This siege lasted for a year and ended when the Georgian leader was killed by a bullet fired from the citadel (T Su 72, 98). The view that 'Abdullāh Khān only entered the conflict to assist Khusrau Khān is seconded by Mar'ashī (*Majma' al-tavārīkh* 14–18, 19–20).

³⁰¹ Minorsky 1934: 6–7, 19.

³⁰² For Nādir's tribal affiliation, see Sümer 1972: 155.

³⁰³ Kāzīm 7, 824.

³⁰⁴ Lockhart 1938: 10–13; Minorsky 1934: 3–5; Perry, "Nādir Shāh Afshār." *E.I.*, 2 VII: 853.

NĀDIR SHĀH AND THE ABDĀLĪS

Given its proximity to his native region, Nādir chose Mashhad as logistical base from 1726 on. In the following years, the Afshār leader consistently enhanced the strategic weight of Mashhad by resettling tribes from other regions of Iran in its vicinity, a total of 56,000 families by late 1730.³⁰⁵ In order to secure his Khurasanian possessions, Nādir conquered Qāyin and moved against the Abdālī Afghāns of Herat.

The Abdālīs had become a strong force around Herat by the late seventeenth century. The crumbling of Safavid authority in the early eighteenth century further strengthened their position. They evicted the last Safavid governor from Herat in 1717 and occupied a territory roughly corresponding to the Safavid province of Herat. At the same time, the rivalry between two sets of cousins brought about an internal division among the Abdālīs, in which ‘Abdullāh Khān Sadūzai and his sons Asadullāh II, Allāhyār and Muḥammad Khān Sadūzai were pitted against Zamān Khān Sadūzai and his son Dhū al-Faqār Khān Sadūzai.

Following the termination of Safavid rule over Qandahār in 1711, ‘Abdullāh Khān Sadūzai and his son Asadullāh assumed a leading position in the affairs of Herat. They became dangerous antagonists of the last two Safavid governors, ‘Abbās Qulī Khān Shāmlū and Ja‘far Khān Ustājilū.³⁰⁶ Mar‘ashī reports that ‘Abdullāh decided to move to the environs of Herat after assisting Gurgīn Khān’s nephew Khusrau in his unsuccessful campaign against Mīr Vais at Qandahār in October 1711. The news of his arrival was greeted by the local Safavid governor with apprehension:

‘Abdullāh Khān and his son entered [the region of] Herat. As [‘Abdullāh] belonged to the leading lineage of the tribe (*buzurgzāda-yi qaum*), all the Abdālī leaders (*sarkhēlān*) assembled around him. At that time, ‘Abbās Qulī Khān Shāmlū was entrusted with the government of Herat. This *khān* began to fear the great number of Abdālīs congregating around ‘Abdullāh Khān because he detected signs of rebellion and the desire to evict him in the demeanor of father and son. At any rate, the Abdālīs exceeded the Ghilzais in terms of number, troops assembled and fighting strength.³⁰⁷

In the light of subsequent events, ‘Abbās Qulī Khān Shāmlū’s premonitions were certainly justified. But his attempt to remove ‘Abdullāh Khān Sadūzai and his son from the political arena proved to be of little avail. When father and son entered the city to pay their respects to the Safavid governor, he had them arrested. Shortly after, however, ‘Abbās Qulī Khān himself suffered imprisonment at the hands of rebellious Qizilbāsh leaders, who reported his “misbehavior” (*bad sulūkī*) to Iṣfahān and requested the appointment of a new governor to Herat. ‘Abdullāh Khān Sadūzai and his son used the turmoil to escape with the help of some kinsmen present in the city, and made their way to the Abdālī winter camp near the Dū Shākh mountain. With the assistance of the troops assembled there, ‘Abdullāh conquered Isfīzār and gained further support among the Abdālīs of Bakvā and Farāh.³⁰⁸ This allowed him to move against Herat. The Abdālī forces defeated the newly appointed Safavid governor of Herat, Ja‘far Khān Ustājilū, outside of the city. Herat fell after a lengthy siege on 26 Ramaẓān 1129/3 September 1717, and was plundered by the Abdālīs.³⁰⁹

After conquering Herat, the Abdālīs routed two armies sent from Iṣfahān under the leadership of Faṭḥ ‘Alī Khān Afshār and Ṣafī Qulī Khān Turkistān Ughlī.³¹⁰ Ṣafī Qulī Khān’s defeat at Kāfir Qal‘a (present-day Islām Qal‘a) in particular left a lasting impression on the Iranian army. When the Afsharid troops prepared to fight the Abdālī Afghāns in the same region roughly a decade later, the entire area between Kāfir Qal‘a and Bād-i Ṣabā was still strewn with the pale bones of Iranian warriors which appeared like narcissus blooming

³⁰⁵ Minorsky 1934: 9.

³⁰⁶ Kamal Khan 1999: 119–31; T Su 72, 98.

³⁰⁷ *Majma‘ al-tavārīkh* 20. Vārid only mentions the arrival of “Sa‘dullāh” (Asadullāh) Abdālī in Herat (Vārid, *Mir‘āt* 116–17).

³⁰⁸ *Majma‘ al-tavārīkh* 20.

³⁰⁹ *Majma‘ al-tavārīkh* 20–1; Kāzīm 20–22; T Su 98. See also Tumanovich 1989: 158.

³¹⁰ *Majma‘ al-tavārīkh* places the campaigns conducted by Faṭḥ ‘Alī Khān Afshār and Ṣafī Qulī Khān Turkistān Ughlī in the years 1128/1715–16 and 1129/1716–17 respectively (*Majma‘ al-tavārīkh* 21–8). According to *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī*, the battle between the Abdālīs and Faṭḥ ‘Alī Khān Afshār at Kūsūya took place before the battle of Dilārām in 1132/1719–20. The confrontation with Ṣafī Qulī Khān Turkistān Ughlī at Kāfir Qal‘a occurred roughly one year later (T Su 99–100). Kāzīm places both battles in the environs of Kāfir Qal‘a and reports that they took place in 1129/1716–17 and sometime between 1132–1134/1719–1722 (Kāzīm 22–3). See also Vārid, *Mir‘āt*, 117–18; Tumanovich 1989: 158–9.

in the steppe. The collective memory of the defeat suffered here, combined with the notion of the invincibility of the Abdālī Afghāns, discouraged the weakhearted among the Iranian soldiers and caused their complexion to change from ruddy (*arghavānī*) to sickly yellow (*za'farānī*).³¹¹

Even prior to the last-ditch efforts at reasserting Safavid authority in Herat, the Abdālīs conquered all the former dependencies of this province, thus adhering to and invigorating existing conceptions of space: “Within a short time... they occupied Auba, Shāfilān, Kūsūya, Ghūriyān, Pūriyān (?), Turbat-i Shaikh Jām, Langar, Khvāf, Bākharz, Zūzan, Maimand (Maivand) and Farāh, [that is, all the regions] to the border (*sarḥadd*) of Sīstān [in the south] and Bādghīs up to the vicinity of the Murghāb river in the north.”³¹²

The following events in the province of Herat were characterized by frictions with the Hūtak Ghilzais of Qandahār, the rivalry between two lineages of the Multānī Sadūzais for leadership among the Abdālīs, and Nādir’s repeated efforts to establish authority between 1727 and 1732. The conflict between the Abdālīs and Hūtak Ghilzais focused on the possession of Farāh, which had fallen to the Abdālīs shortly after the conquest of Herat in September 1717.³¹³ Despite the fact that the Safavid administration had been eradicated in Qandahār in 1709 and in Herat in 1717, both the Hūtak Ghilzais and the Sadūzai Abdālīs sought to legitimize their quest for power by claiming to act on behalf of Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusain. Thus the campaign by Gurgīn Khān’s nephew Khusrau Khān against Qandahār in 1711 provided ‘Abdullāh Khān Sadūzai with an opportunity to cause trouble for Mīr Vais Hūtak in Qandahār, in the name of the Safavids. Mīr Vais’s son Maḥmūd Hūtak likewise kept up the pretence of representing Safavid interests despite the fact he had assumed the title of “Shāh” when he succeeded his paternal uncle ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Khān Hūtak to the government of Qandahār in 1717. He portrayed the confrontation with Asadullāh Sadūzai over the possession of Farāh as part of his endeavor to defend the Safavid domain against the rebellious Abdālīs. In the ensuing battle at Dilārām in 1132/1719–20, Maḥmūd Hūtak’s forces were unable to gain control over Farāh. Asadullāh Sadūzai’s death in combat nevertheless provided the Hūtak leader with an opportunity to underline his loyalty to the Safavid government: He cut off Asadullāh’s head and sent it to Iṣfahān.³¹⁴

While the battle of Dilārām did not affect the scope of Abdālī power, it had an impact on the internal structure of the Abdālī leadership. Struck with grief for his deceased son, ‘Abdullāh Khān Sadūzai was no longer considered fit to command authority among his fellow tribesmen. His deposal was followed by a quick succession of leaders, among whom his son Allāhyār Khān Sadūzai, brought in from Multān in 1138/1725–26, played a central role. Allāhyār Khān Sadūzai’s position was repeatedly challenged by his cousin Dhū al-Faqār Khān Sadūzai b. Zamān, the elder brother of the future Aḥmad Shāh. Dhū al-Faqār Khān enjoyed the support of his maternal uncle ‘Abd al-Ghanī Khān Alakūzai, whom Nādir was to appoint as leader of the Abdālīs subsequent to his conquest of Herat in 1732.³¹⁵ The ongoing rivalry among the leading Sadūzai clans occasioned a great amount of segmentation, with Mārūchāq, Farāh and Bākharz functioning as alternative seats of power. These events coincided with the last phase of Safavid rule in Mashhad, the subsequent reign of Malik Maḥmūd Sīstānī from spring 1723 to December 1726, and, finally, Nādir’s assumption of power. Their internal rivalries and shifts of power notwithstanding, the Abdālī leadership challenged Nādir’s authority in Khurāsān and even reached for the citadel of Mashhad in 1135/1722–23 and 1143/1730. Nādir’s first two efforts to occupy Herat in the summer of 1139–40/1727 and 1141/1729 hardly affected the local power structure. Only after a third and lengthy campaign lasting from Ramaḥān 1143 to Ramaḥān 1144/March 1731 to February 1732 was Nādir able to incorporate Herat into his administration. The sequence of events may be summed up as follows:

³¹¹ Kāzīm 93–99.

³¹² *Majma‘ al-tavārīkh* 21. See also Muḥsin 175; T Su 99.

³¹³ T Su 98–9.

³¹⁴ Muḥsin 169; *Jahāngushā-yi nādirī*, ed. ‘Abdullāh Anvār, Tehran 1341/1962: 11–12; *Majma‘ al-tavārīkh* 29; T Su 73, 99–100. Boukhary wrongly attributes the assassination of Asadullāh to Maḥmūd’s brother Ḥusain, who held Qandahār from the late 1720s to 1738. According to his account, the efforts of the Hūtak leaders to ingratiate themselves with the Safavid court caused them to be derided as “dogs of the king of Iran”. Thus a popular poem commented on Asadullāh’s death in the following manner: *Asad-rā sag-i shāh-i Irān darrīd* (Boukhary 11–12; Persian text 6–7).

³¹⁵ T Su 100–1.

- In 1132/1719–20, Zamān Khān Sadūzai succeeded ‘Abdullāh Khān Sadūzai and imprisoned him. His tenure lasted for two years and five months.³¹⁶
- In 1135/1722, Muḥammad b. ‘Abdullāh Sadūzai gained the leadership of the Abdālīs. Around the time of the Hūtak conquest of Iṣfahān on 25 October 1722, Muḥammad set out for Mashhad and besieged the citadel for four months.³¹⁷
- From 1136—1137/1723—1724/25, Dhū al-Faqār Khān Sadūzai b. Zamān held the chiefship until the Abdālīs sent him to Bākharz.
- In 1138/1725–26, the Abdālīs summoned Allāhyār b. ‘Abdullāh Sadūzai from Multān and offered the government of Herat to him. A six-month war with Dhū al-Faqār Khān Sadūzai (backed by ‘Abd al-Ghanī Khān Alakūzai) ensued. In order to defuse this conflict, the Abdālīs decided to appoint Dhū al-Faqār Khān Sadūzai to the government of Mārūchāq and Allāhyār Khān Sadūzai to the government of Farāh.³¹⁸
- From 17 Dhū al-Ḥijja 1139—9 Ṣafar 1140/5 August 1727—26 September 1727, Nādir engaged in his first campaign against the Abdālīs of Herat. The approach of the Afsharid troops caused the Abdālīs to summon Allāhyār Khān Sadūzai to Herat and appoint Dhū al-Faqār Khān Sadūzai to the government of Farāh. Nādir occupied and destroyed the citadel of Sangān-i Khvāf. In a violent two-day battle during which “blood flowed in the battlefield like the Oxus, and hands and heads of the valiant fighters were scattered about as if in a butcher’s shop,” the Khurasanian troops defeated the Abdālī Afghāns and put them to flight.³¹⁹
- From 4 Shavvāl—4 Dhū al-Ḥijja 1141/3 May—1 July 1729, Nādir undertook his second campaign to Herat in response to Abdālī raids on Turshīz and Qāyin. Dhū al-Faqār Khān Sadūzai sent reinforcements for Allāhyār Khān Sadūzai from Farāh. The Afsharid troops defeated the Abdālī Afghāns in two battles at Kāfir Qal’a and Bād-i Ṣabā. Nādir advanced to Herat but contented himself with an indemnity of 12,000 *tūmān* because Ashraf Khān Hūtak’s military pressure on Simnān required his immediate attention. Allāhyār Khān Sadūzai was reinstated as governor of Herat.³²⁰
- On 16 November 1729, Nādir conquered Iṣfahān from Ashraf Khān Hūtak.³²¹
- On 3 Shavvāl 1142/21 April 1730, Dhū al-Faqār Khān Sadūzai assumed authority in Herat with the backing of an Abdālī faction in favor of an attack on Mashhad while Nādir was busy in western Iran. Allāhyār Khān Sadūzai was ousted, left for Mārūchāq, and subsequently joined Nādir’s brother Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Khān in Mashhad.³²²
- On 13 Muḥarram 1143/29 July 1730, Dhū al-Faqār Khān Sadūzai defeated Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Khān before Mashhad and besieged the citadel for 31 days.³²³
- From 15 Ramaẓān 1143—1 Ramaẓān 1144/24 March 1731—27 February 1732, Nādir engaged in his third campaign to Herat and besieged the city from May 1731 on.³²⁴ The Abdālīs received reinforcements from Qandahār under the command of Saidāl Khān Nāṣirī Ghilzai.³²⁵
- In Ṣafar 1144/August 1731, Dhū al-Faqār Khān Sadūzai gave up the governorship of Herat because Saidāl Khān had returned to Qandahār and Abdālī support dwindled in the hardships endured under Nādir’s tightening siege. Herat and its environs found themselves enclosed like a “gem in a ring”.³²⁶ Dhū al-Faqār Khān Sadūzai and his younger brother Aḥmad moved to Farāh and Qandahār, where they were confined by Ḥusain b. Mīr Vais Hūtak until Nādir Shāh’s conquest of Qandahār on 2 Dhū al-Ḥijja 1150/23 March 1738.³²⁷

³¹⁶ T Su 100.

³¹⁷ T Su 100.

³¹⁸ T Su 101.

³¹⁹ Kāẓim 81–7. See also *Durra-yi nādira* 197–202; T Su 101–2; Minorsky 1934: 5–6.

³²⁰ Muḥammad Mihdī Astarābādī, *Tārīkh-i jahāngushā-yi nādirī*, ed. Anvār, 95; Kāẓim 93–101. See also T Su 102–6; Fraser 1742: 92–4; Lockhart 1938: 32–4; Minorsky 1934: 6.

³²¹ Fraser 1742: 94–102; Lockhart 1938: 39–42. After his defeat, Ashraf Khān Hūtak tried to return to Qandahār but was attacked and killed by Balūch tribesmen en route.

³²² Kāẓim 151–2.

³²³ Muḥammad Kāẓim Marvī reports that Dhū al-Faqār Khān Sadūzai left for Herat in Ṣafar 1143/August–September 1730 (Kāẓim 152–7). See also *Durra-yi nādirī* 730; TA 10; T Su 107; Lockhart 1938: 51; Minorsky 1934: 8.

³²⁴ Durrani 1981: 23; Lockhart 1938: 53.

³²⁵ Kāẓim 176; T Su 109–18.

³²⁶ Kāẓim 188. See also T Su 114.

³²⁷ Durrani 1981: 23; Lockhart 1938: 119–20.

- On 18 Šafār 1144/22 August 1731, Allāhyār Khān Sadūzai, who had sided with Nādir from the beginning of the campaign, assumed authority in Herat but closed the city gates on the Afsharid army. Nādir's troops seized Allāhyār Khān Sadūzai's stronghold of Mārūchāq.³²⁸ Meanwhile in Herat, Allāhyār Khān Sadūzai withstood Nādir's siege until 1 Ramažān 1144/27 February 1732, when he obtained permission to return to Multān.³²⁹ Farāh fell to the forces of Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Khān. Nādir visited his new possessions on 19 Ramažān 1144/17 March 1732.³³⁰

NĀDIR SHĀH'S MODE OF GOVERNMENT AND ITS LOCAL EFFECTS

Between 1737 and 1740, Nādir Shāh expanded his domain to include the “countries of Iran, India and Balkh up to the banks of the river Oxus”.³³¹ In this enterprise he relied on the assistance of his close relatives and brothers-in-arms. The most important players were Ṭahmāsp Khān Jalāyir, Nādir Shāh's brother Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Khān, and his sons Rizā Qulī Mīrzā and Naṣrullāh Mīrzā I. Another important official was Pīr Muḥammad Khān Marvī, who was affiliated with the administration of Herat during the early Afsharid period.

Ṭahmāsp Khān Jalāyir “Vakīl al-Daula” was intimately linked with Nādir's rise to power, and his career more or less coincided with that of his Afshār master. Ṭahmāsp Khān joined Nādir's cause as early as 1137/1724–25 in response to Malik Maḥmūd Sīstānī's claims to kingship over Khurāsān. During the early phase of Nādir's career, he lent crucial support to his efforts at establishing control over northeastern Khurāsān and the Atek region, in particular the trade routes linking Mashhad with the area beyond the Kopet Dagħ mountains.³³² On the night of 10–11 December 1726, Nādir gained entry to Mashhad with the help of Malik Maḥmūd's commander-in-chief Pīr Muḥammad Khān Marvī, to whom he awarded the government of Herat in 1732.³³³ In September 1732, Nādir forced his Safavid protégé Ṭahmāsp II to abdicate in favor of his infant son, ‘Abbās III, and appointed Ṭahmāsp Khān Jalāyir as governor of Iṣfahān.³³⁴ Up to his death in 1747, Ṭahmāsp Khān played a crucial role in all of Nādir's military campaigns. In 1150/1737, he accompanied Nādir Shāh's eldest son Rizā Qulī Mīrzā to Andkhūd and Balkh.³³⁵ In February 1739, he assisted Nādir Shāh in the conquest of Delhi.³³⁶ In the following year, he was assigned to the North Indian territories. Officially designated as “supreme commander of the revenues and warriors of all the countries of India”, he was put in charge of the former Mughal province of Kābul up to the border (*sarḥadd*) of the province of Lahore and commanded 12,000 troops.³³⁷ During a campaign to Sīstān in spring 1747, Ṭahmāsp Khān was poisoned by Nādir Shāh's rebellious nephew ‘Alī Qulī Khān Afshār b. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm.³³⁸

From 1729 on, Nādir's brother Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Khān “Zahīr al-Daula” governed Mashhad.³³⁹ Immediately after Nādir's coronation in March 1736, Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Khān was appointed commander-in-chief (*sipahsālār va šāhib-i ikhtiyār*) of Azerbaijan, which Kāzīm describes as the “gateway to Anatolia” (*dahana-yi mamālik-i Rūm*). On this occasion, Nādir ordered his second son Naṣrullāh Mīrzā I to accompany

³²⁸ Lee 1996: 63.

³²⁹ *Durra-yi nādīra* 288; Kāzīm 191–8; T Su 115–17. See also Elphinstone 1992 II: 280; Lockhart 1938: 53–4.

³³⁰ Minorsky 1934: 9.

³³¹ *Mamālik-i Īrān va Hindūstān va umm al-bilād-i Balkh tā kināra-yi rūd-i Jaiḥūn* (Kāzīm 784).

³³² Avery 1991: 19–23; Lockhart 1938: 22.

³³³ Kāzīm 66–7; Muḥsin 147. See also Avery 1991: 27; Lockhart 1938: 27.

³³⁴ *Durra-yi nādīra* 734–5; Avery 1991: 31; Axworthy 2006: 122–4; Lockhart 1938: 61–2. Ṭahmāsp Khān's cousin Qāsim ‘Alī Khān Jalāyir served as governor at Nādir Shāh's stronghold in Kalāt (TA (Humāyūn) 79).

³³⁵ Avery 1991: 42; Axworthy 2006: 191–2; Lockhart 1938: 102, 163–7.

³³⁶ Vārid, *Nādirshāhī* 176, 187–8. See also Avery 1991: 40; Axworthy 2006: 198, 208; Lockhart 1938: 143–4, 146, 150.

³³⁷ Ṭahmāsp Khān's full title was *farmānravā va šāhib-i ikhtiyār-i māliyāt va vujūhāt va ghāziyān-i kull-i mamālik-i Hindūstān* (Kāzīm 787). In 1742, Ṭahmāsp Khān was described as “commander of the realm [comprising] Kābul, Pishāvar, Jalālābād, and Multān up to the banks of the Indus” (*sardār-i mamlakat-i Kābul va Pishāvar va Jalālābād va Multān ilā kināra-yi rūd-i Atek*) (Kāzīm 1018). See also Vārid, *Nādirshāhī* 187, 252–3; Gladwin 1788: 46–7; Avery 1991: 43.

³³⁸ Axworthy 2006: 276–7; Lockhart 1938: 260.

³³⁹ Kāzīm 108, 150–1, 169.

Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Khān with 12,000 cavalry.³⁴⁰ Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Khān held this post until his defeat and death during a campaign against the Lazgīs in autumn 1738.³⁴¹

Nādir's eldest son Riżā Qulī Mīrzā assumed a nearly equally important position in the affairs of state. In March 1736, immediately prior to his coronation, Nādir appointed him as governor (*vālī*) of Khurāsān and instructed him to engage in a military campaign against Andkhūd and Balkh.³⁴² Meanwhile, Nādir Shāh conquered Qandahār and Kābul in March and June 1738 respectively, and advanced on Jalālābād. Riżā Qulī Mīrzā joined him in his camp near Jalālābād in November of the same year. On this occasion, Nādir Shāh designated him as the viceroy of Iran (*nā'ib al-iyālagī-yi mamālik-i Īrān*).³⁴³ Riżā Qulī Mīrzā thus occupied a position in northeast Iran which was analogous to that of his uncle Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Khān in the northwest, with the exception that he was not in charge of military matters, the command of which initially rested with Ṭahmāsp Khān Jalāyir.

As Nādir Shāh embarked on his campaign to Delhi, Riżā Qulī Mīrzā returned to Mashhad, where he warded off the threat of an invasion by the Khān of Khīva, Īlbārs Khān (r. 1140–1153/1728–1740), who had advanced as far as Abīvard.³⁴⁴ On Nādir Shāh's return from northern India to Bādghīs in June 1740, Riżā Qulī Mīrzā was deprived of his post of viceroy and the command over his contingent of 12,000 splendidly accoutred troops. Nādir Shāh's decision to strip Riżā Qulī Mīrzā of all official functions was occasioned by his murder of Ṭahmāsp II in late 1739, and rumors that he had harbored separate claims to kingship during Nādir Shāh's prolonged absence in India. In his stead, Naṣrullāh Mīrzā I gained the position of viceroy.³⁴⁵ In the autumn of 1742, Nādir Shāh had Riżā Qulī Mīrzā blinded amid suspicions that he had been involved in a failed attempt on his life in May 1741.³⁴⁶

There is relatively little information on the administration of Herat during the Afsharid period. After the conquest in 1732, Nādir appointed the aforementioned Pīr Muḥammad Khān as governor and placed the local Qizilbāsh leadership under his command.³⁴⁷ In order to secure his access to Qandahār, Nādir Shāh dispatched Pīr Muḥammad Khān at the head of 12,000 soldiers against the Brāhū'ī leadership of Balūchistān in November 1736. Although this campaign was largely successful, false reports alleging an imminent rebellion by Pīr Muḥammad Khān caused Nādir Shāh to order his execution there in early 1738.³⁴⁸ In 1741–42, Pīrān Khān is mentioned as the *bēglerbēgī* of Herat, and Muḥammad Qāsim Bēg Afshār was second in command. In an apparent attempt to evoke the Timurid legacy, Nādir Shāh formally assigned the province of Herat to his grandson Shāh Rukh Afshār b. Riżā Qulī Mīrzā and appointed Pīrān Khān as his viceregent (*nā'ib*).³⁴⁹

Afsharid rule had a decisive impact on the demographic composition of Herat and weakened the Abdālī hold over local affairs. Like other regions within Nādir's purview, Herat experienced a number of resettlements. Subsequent to Nādir's second campaign in 1729, the Persian-speaking population occupying the forts around Herat and the Jamshīdīs of Bādghīs were removed to Jām, Langar, and the surroundings of

³⁴⁰ Kāzīm 458. See also Lockhart 1938: 104, 169.

³⁴¹ Axworthy 2000: 194–5; Lockhart 1938: 172–3.

³⁴² During Riżā Qulī's absence, Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Khān's eldest son 'Alī Qulī was placed in command of the affairs of Mashhad (Kāzīm 483, 626; Lockhart 1938: 102, 163–7).

³⁴³ Kāzīm 571, 623–5. See also Avery 1991: 39.

³⁴⁴ *Durra-yi nādīra* 750.

³⁴⁵ Kāzīm 785–6. See also Avery 1991: 42; Lockhart 1938: 169, 174–81.

³⁴⁶ Kāzīm 835; Axworthy 2006: 238–47; Lockhart 1938: 199, 207–9.

³⁴⁷ Kāzīm 171, 180, 189, 198. See also Vārid, *Mir'āt* 196.

³⁴⁸ Kāzīm 515–16, 522–5; Lockhart 1938: 113, 117. For three edicts by Nādir Shāh concerning the affairs of Herat, see Navā'ī 1989: 456–7, 464–5, 469–71. According to British sources, Muḥammad Bābā Chāpushlū of Darra Gaz served as governor of Herat between 1736 and his death in 1737 (*Gaz. Iran* II 139). But this information is not borne out by the available Persian sources (Kāzīm 599; Lockhart 1938: 165).

³⁴⁹ In 1741–42, Muḥammad Qāsim Bēg Afshār acted as *vazīr* of Herat (Kāzīm 827–8, 835). In 1743, he is described as *nā'ib ishīk āqāsibāshī* and *nā'ib al-saltāna* of this province (Kāzīm 935).

Mashhad.³⁵⁰ When Herat fell to the Afsharid forces in 1732, these groups were allowed to return. There is conflicting information on the local configurations of power during this period. Kāẓim reports that the Hazāra leader Mīr Khūshā Bēg was appointed *sultān* of the local Hazāra and Jamshīdī *ūymāq* and joined Nādir's service together with 3,000 Hazāra, Jamshīdī, Rāvatī (?) and Qīpchāq troops.³⁵¹ Yet a later Jamshīdī account claims that the Jamshīdīs enjoyed a superior position in the affairs of Herat and that their principal leader Maḥmūd Khān was placed in charge of the *chahār ūymāq* of Herat during this time.³⁵²

A more incisive measure was the removal of the entire Abdālī population, that is, 60,000 families, to different parts of western Khurāsān.³⁵³ Like the other groups of Khurāsān, the Abdālīs readily entered Nādir's service. From 1732 on, 12,000 Abdālī soldiers accompanied Nādir Shāh on all his military campaigns. 'Abd al-Ghanī Khān Alakūzai was appointed as their supreme commander and rendered vital assistance in the military encounters of Baghdad in 1733, Dāghistān in 1734–35, Qandahār in 1737–1738, and Kashmīr in 1739.³⁵⁴ Between 1741 and 1743, 'Abd al-Ghanī Khān was once again active in western Iran and engaged in military campaigns to Shīrvān and Dāghistān.³⁵⁵ From 1740 on, his son Ḥājji Khān Alakūzai was in steady attendance on Nādir Shāh with 12,000 troops.³⁵⁶ In 1744, Hanway estimated that there were as many as 50,000 Afghāns in Afsharid service.³⁵⁷

The composition of Nādir Shāh's army was commented on by a number of contemporaneous observers. 'Abd al-Karīm Kashmīrī, who witnessed the campaign to Bukhārā and Khīva in 1740, noticed the preponderance of tribal contingents:

In the periphery of Iran (*aṭrāf va javānib-i mamlakat-i Īrān*), there are an infinite number of *īlāt*. The army of Nādir Shāh was chiefly composed of *īlāt*, such as the Akrād, who comprise the Kurdish groups (*fīrqahā-yi kurd*), the Afshārs, the Jalāyirs, the Qarāchlūs, the Qarādāghlīs, the Shāmlūs, the Chamishgazaks, the Bakhtiyārīs, the Nakh'īs (?), the Lūlū'īs (?), and so forth. Most of them are in the desert (*barr u biyābānhā*). They depend on goats, sheep, horses, cows, camels, mules, and donkeys for their livelihood. Like the Arabs of the desert, these tribes dwell in black tents. It is their custom to stay wherever they find pasturages with good water and forage. After grazing [the pasture], they move on to another place that matches the same characteristics, pitch their tents and busy themselves with animal husbandry.³⁵⁸

While possibly giving inflated figures, Kāẓim's account of a royal review of troops in 1155/1742–43 conveys an impression of its regional components. The troops of Khurāsān numbered 65,000 men and included contingents of Afshār, Kurd, Bayāt, Qīlīchī, Baghāyirī, 'Arab, Heratī Shāmlū, Hazāra, Jamshīdī, Tāymanī, Abdālī, Ghilzai, Lazgī and Balūch troops.³⁵⁹ The army raised in Iraq amounted to 45,000 men. The

³⁵⁰ Muḥammad Mihdī Astarābādī, *Tārīkh-i jahāngushā-yi nādirī*, ed. Anvār, 95. See also Semenov 1923: 166; T Su 105; Minorsky 1934: 6. Perry places this resettlement in the year 1728 and erroneously identifies the resettled groups as Abdālī (Perry 1975: 209, fn 22).

³⁵¹ Kāẓim 198.

³⁵² Semenov 1923: 166.

³⁵³ In a *fatḥnāma* sent to all provinces of Iran and a letter to Muḥammad 'Alī Khān, the *bēglərbēgī* of Fārs, Nādir reported that he had ordered the majority of 60,000 Abdālī families to be scattered and sent to the "dominions of Khurāsān" (*mamālīk-i Khurāsān*) as far as Khvār [Khār] and Shahriyār [near Tehran] (Navā'ī 1989: 198–9, 210–11; see also Malcolm 1811: 533–9). Lockhart places the Abdālīs around Mashhad, Nīshāpūr and Dāmghān (Lockhart 1938: 54). Aḥmad Shāh's chronicler Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī reports that the Abdālīs of Herat were settled in Nīshāpūr, while the Ghilzais were deported to Varāmīn, Khār and Tehran. The leadership was held hostage in Mashhad (TA (Humāyūn) 11; TA (Maulā'ī) 51. According to Minorsky, the Abdālīs were resettled in the large region between Abīvard and Simnān (Minorsky 1934: 9).

³⁵⁴ Kāẓim 293, 397, 486–8, 730; Lockhart 1938: 61, 114.

³⁵⁵ Kāẓim 837–41; Lockhart 1938: 185–6, 201, 211. After 'Abd al-Ghanī Khān's death, the command of the Abdālī contingents passed to Nūr Muḥammad Khān 'Alīzai (T Su 122; *Vaqāyi' va savānih* 34).

³⁵⁶ Kāẓim 765.

³⁵⁷ Hanway 1754: 171.

³⁵⁸ *Bayān-i vāqi'* 64. See also Gladwin 1788: 29–30.

³⁵⁹ Kāẓim enumerates the following Khurāsānī troops: the Afshār fighters (*ghāziyān*): the residents of Abīvard, Darra Jaz [Darra Gaz], Nasā, Durūn, Rāz, Qūshkhāna, Chahchaha, Mahana [Maihana], Pīsh Bulūk, the *dār al-ithbāt* of Kalāt; the soldiers of Mashhad, Marv, Sarakhs, Zūrābād, Darband, Muzdūrān; the Kurdish fighters of Khabūshān and Āla Dāgh; the Bayāt fighters of Nīshāpūr, the Qīlīchīs, the Baghāyirīs; the residents of Sabzavār and Isfarāyīn, Juvain, Kūmīsh [Kūh-i Mīsh]; the Arabs of

army of Fārs consisted of 50,000 men and another 60,000 men were furnished by the northwestern territories around Tabrīz. The region of Kirmānshāh and Hamadān supplied 25,000 men. The troops brought along from the various areas of Turkistān numbered 60,000 men, while the former Mughal provinces sent in 70,000 men.³⁶⁰

The Abdālīs profited in several ways from their association with Nādir Shāh. In the course of his sweeping campaigns, they became acquainted with the wider region and added to their cosmopolitan experience. This eventually allowed them to stake out their own realm in the eastern part of Nādir Shāh's dominion. Nādir Shāh also provided the Abdālīs with their future political center in Qandahār. The Afsharid leader used the conquest of this city in March 1738 to impose his own stamp on the region, located conveniently along the trade route to India. The old city was razed, and Nādir Shāh began the construction of a new one called "Nādirābād", four miles to the south.³⁶¹ Furthermore, he removed the local Ghilzai elite and apportioned their possessions to the Abdālīs, placing them in command over the western portion of the former Mughal province of Qandahār. 'Abd al-Ghanī Khān Alakūzai was appointed to the government and supreme command over the regions of Qandahār, Zamīndāvar and Garmsīr. According to Kāzīm, 'Abd al-Ghanī Khān Alakūzai controlled the fate of 200,000–300,000 families of Abdālīs, Ghilzais and other Afghāns.³⁶² A land settlement instituted by Nādir Shāh at the time allowed the greater group of Abdālī Afghāns to move from their exile in western Khurāsān to the Qandahār region.³⁶³ The choice lands around the city were designated as service grants (*tuyūl*) and apportioned to the various Abdālī tribes in exchange for the supply of 6,000 cavalry. In addition, they received lands known as *khushkāba* (dependent on an uncertain supply of water) in the valleys of the Tarnak, Arghastān, Kadanai and Dūrī rivers. These lands were assessed at one-tenth of their produce and independent of military service.³⁶⁴

IMPRESSIONS OF KHURĀSĀN IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Aside from Astarābādī's *Tārīkh-i jahāngushā-yi nādirī*, two important voices on the situation in Khurāsān during the Afsharid period are provided by 'Abd al-Karīm and Muḥammad Kāzīm Marvī. These two authors view the space at stake from different angles. 'Abd al-Karīm, a native of Kashmīr, joined the Iranian army in Delhi, accompanied it on its return to Qandahār and Herat, and witnessed the ensuing campaign to Turkistān. A foreigner to the region, he records immediate impressions concerning the economic situation of the towns along his itinerary, and his account bears witness to shifts in economic and political gravity. Kāzīm, who spent his childhood in Marv and Mashhad and joined Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Khān's service at the age of sixteen, by contrast, was intimately acquainted with the territory in question.³⁶⁵ Yet, while he offers graphic and detailed accounts of the political events and military encounters, his description of the terrain around Herat at times assumes fantastic dimensions and tends to project a mythical and timeless Iranian space.

Bīchāra (?), Miyān Dasht, and Pasākūh; the Shāmlū soldiers of Herat, the Hazāras (*hazārajāt*), Jamshīdīs, Tāymanīs and all *ūymāq*; the Abdālī, Ghilzai and Lazgī [?] fighters of Farāh and Qandahār (Kāzīm 887).

³⁶⁰ Kāzīm 887–8.

³⁶¹ The relative importance of Qandahār in Nādir Shāh's scheme is reflected by the fact that the artisans who accompanied him on his departure from Delhi in May 1739 were to be employed in the construction of Nādirābād for three years (Fraser 1742: 221).

³⁶² In his account of the events in 1738, Kāzīm describes 'Abd al-Ghanī Khān as in charge of the *ḥukūmat va farmānravā'ī-yi dār al-qarār-i Qandahār* (Kāzīm 552). In May 1740, he reportedly acted as *ḥākim-i ba al-infirād va shāhib-i ikhtiyār-i divīst sīṣad hazār khānavār-i jamā'at-i Abdālī va Qalījī [Ghilzai] va ghaira Afghāniyān* (Kāzīm 765). After 'Abd al-Ghanī Khān's death, Nādir Shāh appointed Nūr Muḥammad Khān 'Alīzai as the governor of Qandahār and as the chief of the Abdālī/Durrānī confederacy (*sardār-i il-i jalīl-i Durrānī va shāhib-i ikhtiyār-i mulk-i Qandahār*). Nūr Muḥammad Khān was executed in 1747 after an aborted rebellion against Aḥmad Shāh (TA (Humāyūn): 16–17, 22–25; TA (Maulā'ī) 57–58, 63–66). See also Singh 1981: 24, 81.

³⁶³ T Su 121.

³⁶⁴ Rawlinson 1871: 823–4. According to the *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī*, it was 'Abd al-Ghanī Khān who distributed the environs of Qandahār among his fellow tribesmen "in a brotherly fashion" (T Su 121).

³⁶⁵ Kāzīm 68, 152–7.

‘*Abd al-Karīm: The Centers of Afsharid Power*

‘Abd al-Karīm passed through Qandahār and Herat in May–June 1740, was present during the conquests of Bukhārā and Khīva in September and November of the same year, and visited Marv and Mashhad in early 1741. In his portrayal, the region around Herat was in the clutches of decline, and this state of degradation was highlighted by the abundant evidence of former greatness. It is perhaps not without irony that the incomparable taste of the local melons represents the only continuity between the present situation of the region and its more glorious past:

[After leaving Qandahār, Nādir Shāh and his troops] forded the Arghandāb and crossed the Girishk river [Hilmand] by boat and on foot. Here, a small part of the wealth accumulated in India was lost in the water. By continuous marches, they reached the city of Farāh... Farāh itself is in ruins; but the adjacent country is delightful. On the 5th of Rabī‘ al-Avval [1153/31 May 1740], they arrived in Herat and made camp below the Gāzargāh. From Qandahār to Herat, most of the villages (*dīhāt*) and towns (*qaṣabājāt*) are utterly ruined. You will meet with some that resemble cities (*bilād*); but only at a distance of five to seven *farsakh* [20 to 28 miles]. To be fair, Herat was truly a fine city; but, because of the extreme oppression exercised by ill-fated governors, it is now in such a state of desolation that the [former] courtyards of the houses are used for agriculture. The other affairs are in a similar state. Even so, it is proverbial for its fine fruits. The melons (*kharbuza*) of Kārīz [near] Herat are inimitable in fragrance, sweetness, juiciness and fleshiness (*pur gushtī*). A good melon should have these characteristics. The former princes and wealthy men (*umarā va aghniyā-i salaf*) have built enormous, magnificently ornamented and lofty mosques and graves for the pious (*maqābir-i ṣalāhā*). But the majority of these buildings are decaying because their walls and roofs have not been repaired and their attendants have been harassed. In the summer, there are strong gales of wind. Therefore, the wise men of the region have built windmills, which produce flour of higher quality and greater use than that of water mills. The windmills are like high buildings to the top of which wide sails (*bādgīr*) are attached. According to the wise men, the excessive wind is a blessing, as lack thereof would give rise to putrefaction, flies and gnats, cholera and plague.³⁶⁶

This poor state of affairs did not prevail all over Khurāsān. In the early 1740s, Mashhad was a bustling trade mart and clearly eclipsed Herat both in wealth and size. While no figures are available for Herat during this period, Mashhad was estimated to contain 60,000 houses.³⁶⁷ In ‘Abd al-Karīm’s opinion, the distinguishing features were the shrine of Imām Rīzā embellished by Nādir³⁶⁸ and the main boulevard or Khiyābān originally created by Shāh ‘Abbās I.³⁶⁹

Mashhad is not without its curiosities. Contrary to other citadels, its walls are formed of triangular bastions. When a bastion is attacked, the men stationed in those on each side can assist in its defence. This is certainly an astonishing measure. The luminous grave and holy shrine of the Imam of both jinns and humans, Imām ‘Alī Mūsā Rīzā, may God be satisfied with him, is in the center of the city. Its blessed dome is grand, lofty, and finely ornamented. The mosque, the other buildings and workshops are spacious and well contrived. The great market was formerly opposite the luminous shrine, but is now within the enclosure, and

³⁶⁶ *Bayān-i vāqi* ‘59–60. See also Gladwin 1788: 24–5; Alam & Subrahmanyam 2007: 264.

³⁶⁷ Malcolm 1829 II: 218n; Lockhart 1938: 197.

³⁶⁸ Kāzīm reports that Nādir embarked on major works subsequent to the conquest of Herat in 1732, in compliance with a vow he had made at the onset of this campaign. His repairs of the shrine followed upon acts of plunder committed by the two Safavid generals sent against the Abdālī Afghāns in Herat between 1715 and 1722 (see footnote 310). Both Faṭḥ ‘Alī Khān and Ṣafī Qulī Khān Turkistān Ughlī had declared their campaigns as a *jihād* and deprived the shrine of its gold and silver chandeliers, candlesticks, aloe wood censers (*ūd sūzhā*), and chafing dishes (*manqal*), melted them down and minted them so as to pay their troops (*Majma‘ al-tavārīkh* 26–7). In 1732, Nādir embellished the southern porch (*īvān*) in the courtyard originally endowed by ‘Alī Shīr Navā‘ī by panelling it with white marble and covering the walls with tiles cased in gold (*Glory of the Shia World*: 244–5). This *īvān* was henceforth called “The Golden Porch of Nādir” (*īvān-i ṭalā-yi nādirī*) (MSh II: 129). Furthermore, Nādir replaced the existing reservoir (*ḥauḏ*) with a new one brought along from Herat, erected a pavilion with a gilded roof, and secured its water supply by means of a canal. In Kāzīm’s view, it was at this time that Nādir decided to add a second gilded minaret which was referred to as *guldasta-yi nādirī* (Kāzīm 201–3). The reservoir installed by Nādir later became known as ‘Fountain of Nādir’ (*saqqā khāna-yi ṭalā-yi nādirī*) (MSh II: 129). In the late nineteenth century, the Iranian pilgrim Nūrullāh b. Muḥammad Ḥusain Iṣfahānī reported that it “is formed from a single block of white marble decorated with exquisitely chiselled flowers; it is octagonal in shape, three feet in height, and eighteen feet in circumference. The top is hollowed out, and copper cups are suspended for drinkers; above is a gilded cover (*Glory of the Shia World* 247).” Lockhart dates the first round of improvements undertaken by Nādir Shāh between 1726 and 1730 (Lockhart 1938: 27. See also Ferrier 1857: 125). In January 1741, Nādir Shāh endowed the shrine with a jeweled lock, embroidered curtains, fourteen chandeliers of pure gold, and silk carpets (Kāzīm 826–7). See also Lockhart 1938: 197.

³⁶⁹ Streck, “Mashhad,” *E.I.*, 2 VI: 713–16.

has two large gates. The market on the west, where the royal palace is situated, is called *Khiyābān-i Bālā*, and the road through the eastern market is called the *Khiyābān-i Pā'īn*. As a water canal runs along the street through the great market, it also passes through the enclosure of the holy shrine. The luminous shrine of this great leader and protector of religion is surrounded by three screens... The story told in many countries that the dome is constructed of gold bricks is without foundation. The [seemingly] golden bricks consist of gilt copper *tangas* which have been affixed to the dome... Nādir Shāh has repaired many of the old buildings, and built some new ones.³⁷⁰

The third important element in the layout of the city was the mausoleum Nādir Shāh erected for himself in the *Khiyābān-i Bālā*.³⁷¹ 'Abd al-Karīm reports that, immediately after the completion of the building, a witty person adorned one of its walls with a poem lamenting the empty state of the grave:

There is not a song without your tune,
The world is full of you, but your [own] place is empty.

At first, those who read it had a good laugh, but then [perceiving the force of the satire] they feared that, if it came to the ears of the Shāh, he would have many people killed; and therefore effaced it quickly.³⁷²

As part of his effort to project his native region as the new center of empire, Nādir Shāh constructed a second magnificent mausoleum at the mountain stronghold of Kalāt. Located between Darra Gaz and Sarakhs, this inaccessible valley had fired the imagination of earlier conquerors as well.³⁷³ 'Abd al-Karīm reports that the Afsharid leader used the fort he had constructed there to store some of the riches he had accumulated in India, Turkistān, and Khurāsān:

Kalāt is a town surrounded by high mountains. [It appears] like a fortress, the outer walls of which skillful masons have constructed with the help of God in such a manner that not even birds, let alone animals or human beings can set foot on them. On the road to Marv a large gate has been erected, and reliable guardians have been assigned to monitor the comings and goings of good and bad people, day and night. Like the citadel, the valley outside this gate is one of the wonders of the time. The high mountains on both sides meet at the top in a way most puzzling to the onlooker. The horsemen have to move cautiously and in a single line through this valley:

[The mountains] obscure the circle of the sun,
The path is so narrow that an ant will lose its skin.³⁷⁴

...The canal feeding the settlement follows the same route, entering [the town] along the road from Mashhad and leaving it through the valley leading to Marv... In this strong fortress, [Nādir Shāh] deposited the treasury and jewelry which he did not need immediately, and set out for holy Mashhad by way of Maulūdghāh.³⁷⁵

Situated between Kalāt and Abīvard, "Maulūdghāh" enjoyed prominence as Nādir Shāh's birthplace, and witnessed considerable building activities as long as his reign lasted. Formerly an insignificant village, the spot now served to commemorate and glorify the beginnings of Afsharid rule and thus represented a counterpart to the mausolea in Kalāt and Mashhad. There, Nādir erected a mosque but, noting the stark contrast between his humble beginnings and the richly ornamented building, refrained from inscribing his date of birth on it:

On the spot where [Nādir Shāh] was born a magnificent dome (*gunbad*) has been erected, on which three golden vessels (*kūza*) are placed on top of each other, as is usual. Above the vessels, he affixed a golden sword, implying that the sword issued from there. When the vessels and the golden sword were completed, [Ḥasan 'Alī Bēg Bisṭāmī] Mu'ayyir al-Mamālik³⁷⁶ hesitated whether to inscribe the date of [Nādir Shāh's] birth or the present date. Finally he addressed the question to the fortunate son (*maulūd*) [of the village] himself. The *sulṭān* smiled and said, 'Oh Mu'ayyir! At the time of my birth, there was not so much gold in Abīvard

³⁷⁰ *Bayān-i vāqi* ' 97–8. See also Gladwin 1788: 74–5; Alam & Subrahmanyam 2007: 269–71.

³⁷¹ According to Kāzīm, the mausoleum, built of "bricks and plaster" (*khisht va gach*) was completed in 1145/1732–33 (Kāzīm 204).

³⁷² *Dar hīch parda nīst nabāshad navā-yi tū, 'ālām pur ast az tu vu khālist jā-yi tū* (*Bayān-i vāqi* ' 100–101). My translation closely follows Gladwin 1788: 75–6.

³⁷³ For a description of Kalāt during Muḥammad Khān Shībānī's conquest in 1509, see Ott 1974: 266–7.

³⁷⁴ *Natābīda-and rūy az charkh-i hūr, zi tangī-yi rah-ash pūst kanda zi mūr*.

³⁷⁵ *Bayān-i vāqi* ' 94–5 (Gladwin 1788: 70–1). See also Kāzīm 824, 826–7.

³⁷⁶ Ḥasan 'Alī Bēg Bisṭāmī, who held the title of "chief assayer", was one of Nādir Shāh's close associates (Ernest Tucker, "Ḥasan 'Alī Bēg Bisṭāmī," *E.Ir.*).

and Kalāt together, what then must have been the state of my family? Why don't you write the present date, which is closest to truth and honesty?"³⁷⁷

In this location, Nādir Shāh built a city on the same plan as Shāh Jahānābād (Delhi) but a quarter of its size. It later came to be known as Khīvaqābād, reflecting the fact that it was peopled with seven thousand prisoners taken in Khīva.³⁷⁸

Kāẓim Marvī: Herat and Its Periphery

While Kāẓim Marvī briefly mentions the newly constructed town of Maulūdghāh/Khīvaqābād,³⁷⁹ he devotes more detailed descriptions to the outlying districts of the Herat province, in particular Mārūchāq and Gharjistān. His account of these regions projects a wild and open space endowed with a magical quality. In connection with Nādir's attempt to repopulate Bādghīs in 1145/1732–33, Kāẓim describes not only the devastation wreaked by wild boars (*gurāz*) but also, in an obvious pun on Mārūchāq, the terror inspired by a man-devouring snake (*mār-i chāq*). He reports that in order to secure the "gateway of Balkh" (*dahana-yi Balkh*), Nādir ordered tax officials to assemble the former inhabitants of Mārūchāq scattered among the local tribes and around Herat, Jām, Khvāf and Bākharz, and to resettle them in their original homeland. Nādir's officials duly collected 1,500 families from the region among the *ūymāqāt* of Herat and moved them to the fort of Mārūchāq. Another group dispersed in the region of Sarakhs and Zūrābād was induced to proceed to Panjdih. In addition, agriculturists (*zāri'in*) and 500 pairs of oxen were sent from Herat to cultivate Mārūchāq and its surroundings. The efforts to develop the region were stifled by an abundance of wild boars which imposed a literal state of siege on the local colony: The settlers could only venture out of the fort of Mārūchāq to collect firewood if protected by an armed escort.

In Kāẓim's view, this state of affairs called for the exertion of a true Iranian hero. When Nādir's first choice, Ismā'īl I Khuzaima, procrastinated, Luṭf 'Alī Khān Sīstānī of ancient Kayanid descent stepped forward and volunteered to free the Muslims of Mārūchāq from the onslaught of these wild animals. Nādir's reaction was enthusiastic: "Verily you are made of the same dust (*khāk*) as the legendary Rustam and Sām, and are a worthy recipient of Bīzhan's heritage." The allusion to Bīzhan's epic boar hunt and the resulting romance with Manīzha allows Kāẓim to elevate the events at Mārūchāq to the same plane as the exploits detailed in the *Shāhnāma*. Fitting this scheme, Luṭf 'Alī Khān Sīstānī fully lives up to the precedents set by his mythical ancestors: Mounting wind-like steeds and wielding rock-shattering clubs, he and his men eradicate all wild boars haunting the region within a month. Luṭf 'Alī Khān Sīstānī then proceeds to annihilate the man-devouring snake hiding in the vicinity: Parrying its initial charge, he effortlessly chops it in two like a fresh cucumber.³⁸⁰ After the successful conclusion of this momentous task, Luṭf 'Alī Khān Sīstānī descends into the real world, and rejoins Nādir in Mashhad, to gain the appointment to the government of Sīstān as a reward for his services.³⁸¹

In his account of Nādir Shāh's confrontation with the Tāymanī leader Dilāvar Khān, Kāẓim transports the reader into the mountain fastnesses of Gharjistān and once again invents a mythical yet deeply Iranian space.

³⁷⁷ *Bayān-i vāqi'* 95–6. See also Gladwin 1788: 71–2.

³⁷⁸ *Bayān-i vāqi'* 89, 96. See also Gladwin 1788: 64, 72; Lockhart 1938: 194–6, 277.

³⁷⁹ Kāẓim refers to Maulūdghāh as *maulūdkhāna-yi nādirī* (Kāẓim 16, 824–5).

³⁸⁰ In a different context, Faẓlullāh Shīrāzī also uses the image of slicing cucumbers to underline the superior military skills of the protagonist (*Dhū al-qarnain* 446).

³⁸¹ Kāẓim 204–5. Kāẓim turns the order of events around to suit the purposes of his anecdote. In fact, Luṭf 'Alī Khān already held the government of Sīstān when he set out for Mārūchāq in 1732. The efforts to repopulate Mārūchāq seem to have continued after Luṭf 'Alī Khān's activities there. In 1734, Nādir ordered part of the population of Garmsīrāt to be resettled in Mārūchāq (Kāẓim 356). 'Abd al-Karīm also reports that the woods around Mārūchāq abounded with wild beasts. When Nādir Shāh's army encamped there on its way to Turkistān, Ṭahmāsp Khān Jalāyir was attacked by a wild boar. Alluding to the short and stout stature of his general, Nādir Shāh jokingly referred to the aggressive boar as Ṭahmāsp Khān's little brother: *Barādar-i kūchik nisbat ba-barādar-i buzurg shūkhī balki bī-adabī karda-ast* (*Bayān-i vāqi'* 65–6; Gladwin 1788: 30–1; see also Lockhart 1938: 274).

Dilāvar Khān Tāymanī is first mentioned in connection with Nādir's efforts to summon the support of the *ūymāqāt* of the region for his third campaign against Herat. While all tribal representatives readily professed their allegiance to the Afsharid leader, Dilāvar Khān, who represented a greater group than the other tribes combined, remained aloof and ignored his letters. Fearing that Dilāvar Khān might side with the Abdālīs, Nādir decided to woo him by sending him a royal robe of honor, a jeweled dagger, an accoutred horse and a letter full of compassion (*raqam-i marḥamat-āmīz*). This lavish show of benevolence indeed induced the Tāymanī chief to submit along with all local leaders and elders.³⁸² After the conquest of Herat in February 1732, Nādir ordered Dilāvar Khān to furnish 2,000 royal attendants (*mulāzim-i dīvānī*).³⁸³

The loyalty enforced from the Tāymanī leader apparently dissolved soon after. By 1147/1734–35, Nādir dispatched Ṭahmāsp Khān Jalāyir and 4,000 Kūhgīlū troops on a punitive expedition against the Tāymanīs, who had “turned away from the path of obedience”. At Herat, Ṭahmāsp Khān received a reinforcement of 7,000 Khurāsāni soldiers and was joined by the local Hazāra, Jamshīdī and Qipchāq leadership. Meanwhile, Dilāvar Khān sent his fellow tribesmen (*īlāt va aḥshāmāt-i khud*) into the inaccessible heartlands of Gharjistān, while he and a number of foot soldiers and riflemen took control of the strategic points of passage. Upon their arrival in Gharjistān, the Afsharid troops stumbled around in the valleys and mountains for ten days without finding a trace of the Tāymanī leader. Finally, Ṭahmāsp Khān Jalāyir was informed by his vanguard that they had detected a group of men reciting the quatrains of ‘Umar Khayyām on the pinnacle of a formidable mountain.

Ṭahmāsp Khān's efforts to displace Dilāvar Khān from these heights were to no avail. Most of the Bakhtiyārī riflemen sent up to the mountains were picked off by Tāymanī fire and toppled down the precipice like rocks and clods of earth. Subsequently, Dilāvar Khān and his men withdrew to an even more forbidding snow-encrusted mountain high enough to touch the Milky Way. In the ensuing battle, 10,000–12,000 Qizilbāsh were killed. Yet eventually, the Abdālī troops and a contingent from Marv were able to displace Dilāvar Khān and to pursue him further into the wilderness. After a month of continuous altercations, the Tāymanī leader went to Qandahār to solicit the aid of the local ruler, Ḥusain b. Mīr Vais Hūtak. Reinforced by 12,000 Qandahārī troops under the command of Saidāl Khān, Dilāvar Khān dared to engage in a confrontation with Ṭahmāsp Khān Jalāyir in the open field. In combat, the blood of the valiant fighters was shed so copiously that the battlefield turned crimson like the blossoms of tulips and the *arghavān* tree, and even the bloodthirsty planet Mars applauded in the indigo sky. In the end, the Qizilbāsh troops prevailed and forced Saidāl Khān to return to Qandahār. Dilāvar Khān first sought shelter in the firm mountains of Gharjistān but then fled to Bangash in the Mughal province of Kābul. His sons Shīrīn Bēg and Āqā Mīrzā joined Nādir's service and formed part of his retinue during the failed attempt on the king's life in May 1741, in which one of Dilāvar Khān's former servants was implicated.³⁸⁴

Kāzīm Marvī's account of the events in Gharjistān conveys the difficulties the Iranian army contended with in a terrain characterized by maze of mountain ridges surpassing one another in elevation and inaccessibility. The confusion and bewilderment of the Qizilbāsh troops in this alien environment is contrasted with the effortless and swift movements of the mountain dwellers, who were at ease to spend their time reciting classical Persian poetry on the mountain tops while the Iranian troops stumbled around below. The allusion to ‘Umar Khayyām's quatrains again allows Kāzīm to invent a space impenetrable and yet deeply embedded in the Iranian experience. In the attempt to explain the adeptness of the Tāymanīs in negotiating the terrain, Kāzīm enters a more fantastic realm:

They ride on donkey-like animals whose shoes are made from deer antlers. As soon as they are mounted and given the spur, these beasts start up swift as the cold wind (*bād-i šaršar*), a panther or a dragon and descend from the top of the mountain to the bottom within a minute or so. There their riders dismount, fire two or three shots, remount, and fly back to the top of that

³⁸² Kāzīm 185. Kāzīm identifies Nādir Shāh's emissary as Muḥammad Riżā Bēg Jilaudārbāshī. According to other accounts, Nādir Shāh sent his general Ja'far Qulī against Dilāvar Khān Tāymanī. Dilāvar Khān initially defeated Ja'far Qulī and took him prisoner but eventually agreed to submit to Nādir Shāh (*Gaz. Afghanistan* III: 398).

³⁸³ Kāzīm 198.

³⁸⁴ Kāzīm 436–40, 835, 1020.

mountain like the golden-winged bird of the sun with a celerity that is beyond human comprehension. While neither fast infantry crawling on all fours nor Syrian, Iraqi and Arabian horses are able to ascend these heights at all, the native mounts negotiate the environment with great agility and nimbleness. But as soon as they leave the mountains they are indistinguishable from [regular] donkeys and are no different in their behavior or the burdens they carry.³⁸⁵

CONCLUSION

The events around Herat immediately before and during the Afsharid period point to the stability of regional concepts of space. By occupying the regions of Bākharz, Turbat-i Shaikh Jām, Ghūriyān, Bādghīs, Mārūchāq and Farāh, the Abdālīs followed a firmly established notion of the extent of the Herat province and its vital components. On a larger scale, however, Nādir Shāh's policies pointed to a profound reshuffling of territorial configurations. Designating Mashhad and, by extension, Khurāsān as political center, Nādir Shāh not only departed from the recent Safavid order of things; he also challenged a more deeply rooted concept of Iran and its internal force fields, which dated back to the thirteenth century. Aside from reviving the idea of Iran as a political and territorial unit, the Ilkhanids (1256–1335) had chosen Tabrīz as its constitutive element.³⁸⁶ Tabrīz also served as the seat of government for the following dynasties of the Jalayirids (ca. 1330–1380), the Qarā Quyūnlūs (1380–1469) and Āq Quyūnlūs (1396–1508), and may therefore be described as Iran's most stable capital in pre-modern times. In the late fifteenth century, it was considered to be one of the four "thrones" of the Islamic world, along with the Mamlūk capital Cairo, the Ottoman capital Istanbul and the Timurid capital Herat.³⁸⁷ Nādir Shāh's endeavor to create a new center of gravity in Khurāsān thus signaled a decisive break with the past.

Nādir Shāh's military campaigns were characterized by an "eastward pull" that also became a central element in the Durrānī effort at state building. According to Kāzīm's portrayal, Nādir Shāh's decision to invade India took shape after the conquest of Qandahār, which, "in this era, represents the limit of Khurāsān and the beginning of the region of Hindūstān".³⁸⁸ Citing the unruliness of the Afghāns of Kābul and Ghaznī and the "indolence" and "negligence" of the Mughal court in responding to his diplomatic missions, Nādir Shāh resolved to attack the Mughal domain. In a speech addressing his military leaders, he made it known that his endeavor to enforce obedience among rebels and idolaters placed him on an equal footing with Alexander and Amīr Tīmūr.³⁸⁹

It may indeed be argued that Nādir Shāh's thrust towards India was inspired by historical precedents. The progression of campaigns and the course of action adopted may well have been modeled on Tīmūr. Kāzīm Marvī reports that the Afsharid leader repeatedly claimed Tīmūr's legacy. Thus he was said to have obtained the financial wherewithal and the inspiration for his early career from Tīmūr himself, who had deposited a vast treasure of gold coins for him in a cave near Kalāt, along with a message engraved on a white slab of stone advising him to engage in similarly sweeping conquests.³⁹⁰ Nādir Shāh's decision to destroy Delhi and to spare Bukhārā would seem to fit the historical precedent set by Tīmūr. After obtaining the submission of the Bukharan ruler Abū al-Faiẓ Khān (d. 1160/1747) in the summer of 1740, he refrained from occupying the city and contented himself with large-scale requisitions in grain, fodder and soldiers. While *sikka* and *khutba* were performed in his name, he subsequently entrusted Abū al-Faiẓ Khān with the government of Transoxiana (*mamālik-i Mā varā' al-nahr*). On the symbolic level, Nādir Shāh's supremacy was underlined by the gifts he received from the Tuqai-Timurid *khān*: the sword (*shamshūr*) and breastplate (*chahārāyina*) of

³⁸⁵ Kāzīm 438.

³⁸⁶ Fragner 2006: 72–5.

³⁸⁷ Ḥusain Abīvardī Faiẓī, "Chār takht," ed. Īraj Afshār, *Farhang-i Iranzamīn* 15 (1347/1968).

³⁸⁸ ...*ki dar īn 'ahd u zamān intihā-yi mamālik-i Khurāsān va ibtidā-yi iqlīm-i Hindūstān ast* (Kāzīm 552).

³⁸⁹ *Iskandar-i Dhū al-Qarnain va Amīr Tīmūr-i Gūrkan hīch yak az navvāb-i humāyūn-i mā afzaltar va bihtar nabūdand ki jamī'-i mamālik-i maḥrūsa-rā ba-ḥauza-yi taṣarruf-i khud darāvand* (Kāzīm 553). For further examples of the comparison between Alexander, Amīr Tīmūr and Nādir Shāh, see also Kāzīm 556, 558.

³⁹⁰ Kāzīm 14–16.

Timūr, as well as the helmet (*mighfar*) and coat of mail (*zira*) of Chingiz Khān.³⁹¹ To make his victory complete, Nādir Shāh ordered Timūr's tombstone and the bronze gates of the *madrasa* of Samarqand to be removed to Mashhad. However, he subsequently changed his mind and returned these trophies to their original location.³⁹²

As narrated by Kāẓim Marvī, the history of Nādir Shāh combines two fateful strands. On the one hand, the career of the Afsharid leader seems to unfold effortlessly and to follow a certain logic. Nādir Shāh fulfills his destiny as a great conqueror by following in Timūr's footsteps. On the other hand, the dramaturgy of Marvī's account rests on the projection of impending doom. Halfway through his chronicle of Nādir Shāh's exploits, Kāẓim hints at the possibility that the recently accumulated power may be ephemeral. Recounting the precautions Nādir Shāh took to secure his camp on one of the first stages of his campaign to Transoxiana in June 1740, Kāẓim conveys a deep sense of threat:

On our departure from the Chahārbāgh of Chaman-i Bīd, which is located two or three stages away from Herat, I noticed a fort that had been erected around [the camp of] the victorious troops on the previous evening. It was five yards high and had many towers, ramparts and sturdy gates. I posed the following question to one of the trusted servants of the lofty court: 'The countries of Iran, Hindūstān and Balkh, the Mother of Cities, [that is, all the territories] up to the Oxus have been incorporated into Nādir Shāh's realm, what then is the reason for erecting such massive fortifications around the army and placing guards on the banks of the Murghāb river?' He answered, 'Whenever [Nādir Shāh] moves into hostile regions (*vilāyat-i mukhālīf*)... he does not show any apprehension. [But] as soon as he enters his own realm (*vilāyat-i khud*) he devotes much more attention to military questions and employs greater caution than in hostile regions, for internal enemies are more dangerous than external ones.'³⁹³

As Kāẓim completed his work in 1166/1752–53, his alleged premonitions concerning the fragile internal balance of Nādir Shāh's kingdom gained additional meaning in the light of the cataclysmic end of the Afsharid Empire, which collapsed with the death of its founder in 1747. A powerful image of the disintegration which befell the Afsharid realm is furnished by the fate of the royal tent Nādir had made up in Herat while he was away campaigning in Turkistān. After lavishing a detailed description on its enormous size and its many-faceted and precious ornamentation, 'Abd al-Karīm tersely remarks that this unique emblem of the extensive Afsharid domain did not survive its creator. Pressed for money, Nādir Shāh's successors, his nephew 'Alī Qulī Afshār b. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Khān "Ādil Shāh" and his grandson Shāh Rukh Afshār, cut up the priceless cloth to secure their immediate political survival.³⁹⁴

In the long run, however, Nādir Shāh's sweeping conquests had profound implications for the wider region, as they obliterated the old balance of power between the Safavids and Chingizids of Central Asia and India. The military machinery he created in the course of his ceaseless campaigns gave rise to new elites, such as the Manghīts of Bukhārā and the Abdālīs of Herat. The incorporation of the local leadership into Nādir Shāh's army had far-reaching consequences. In the case of the Pashtūns, one effect was their wide dispersion as military actors. By assimilating them in his military establishment, Nādir Shāh enlarged their regional orientation and introduced them to Iranian administrative techniques and court culture. This development is exemplified by Āzād Khān Ghilzai, who joined Nādir Shāh after the conquest of Kābul in 1738 and rose to rank of Second in Command of Azerbaijan. After Nādir Shāh's death, Āzād Khān Ghilzai carved out a realm for himself in Tabrīz and Urmīya, which lasted until 1757.³⁹⁵ Under Nādir Shāh's auspices, the Abdālī Pashtūns likewise widened their regional horizon to include western Khurāsān. For all their avowed respect for Nādir Shāh's descendants, they considered Mashhad an integral part of their realm. Another important factor in creating the new framework of action were Nādir Shāh's schemes of

³⁹¹ Kāẓim 794, 796.

³⁹² Gladwin 1788: 44–5, 74; Lockhart 1938: 188–9, 198.

³⁹³ Kāẓim 784. See also Lockhart 1938: 186–7.

³⁹⁴ *Bayān-i vāqī* 60–3. See also Gladwin 1788: 26–8. According to Kāẓim Marvī, the first version of this tent, presented to Nādir Shāh at the time of his arrival in Herat in May 1740, was 25 yards (*dhar*) high, twelve yards wide and 200 yards long. It had 14 supporting beams (*dīrak*) and 440 half-beams (*nīm dīrak*). It was fastened to the ground with 14,000 pegs (*mīkh*). The jeweled domes on top of each beam were two and a half yards high. 4,000 workers as well as 4,000 assistants were required to pitch it (Kāẓim 777).

³⁹⁵ Perry 1979: 48–50, 58, 61, 64, 66–78, 82–3; Perry, "Āzād Khān," *E.Ir.* III: 173–4.

resettlement and land grants. While his attempts to people the region of Mashhad proved short-lived, the service grants he awarded to the Abdālī Pashtūns in Qandahār served as a stepping stone for the subsequent creation of the Sadūzai Empire.