

3. Herat as an Afghan Dominion

On the night of 10–11 Jumādā II 1160/19–20 June 1747, Nādir Shāh met a violent death at the hands of a group of Persian, Afshār and Qājār officers in Fathābād near Khabūshān. This assassination occurred against the backdrop of political and military disintegration. Caught in a vicious circle of rebellion and retaliation, Nādir Shāh had employed increasingly cruel means to raise funds and command obedience. Apart from his exorbitant tax demands, his general distrust and ferocious manner towards his subjects indicated that his mind was unravelling along with his bid at state building. The spiral of violence was halted by the mutiny of Fathābād. The participating officers decided to move against Nādir Shāh to forestall their impending arrest and execution at the hands of his Afghān guards under the leadership of Aḥmad Khān Sadūzai Abdālī.¹ Immediately after Nādir Shāh's death his camp was reduced to tumult: The Qizilbāsh troops plundered the royal arsenal; others denuded each other of their possessions; the various army contingents mounted the "steed of disobedience" and took off to their respective homelands. By the fourth hour of the next morning not a trace was left of Nādir Shāh's royal camp.²

Nādir Shāh's military campaigns had covered a vast territory extending from the Caucasus and Ottoman Mesopotamia in the west to the remains of the Mughal Empire in the east. After his death, this immense space was claimed by a number of emergent dynasties. Bereft of their former patron, the Afghān troops departed for Qandahār, where Nādir Shāh had assigned liberal service grants to them. Here they elected Aḥmad Khān Sadūzai as their leader and crowned him shortly afterwards.³ Qandahār thus became the heartland of the nascent Durrānī Empire, while Khurāsān turned into an embattled zone. Further to the west, Karīm Khān Zand (r. 1751–1779) established himself in Shīrāz and gained control over the area between the Caspian coast and Azerbaijan in the north and Kirmān and Lār in the south.⁴

Aḥmad Shāh Sadūzai (r. 1747–1772) claimed Nādir Shāh's legacy by adopting the Iranian system of administration and delineating the territory of his kingdom along precedents set in the Afsharid era. Lasting until the turn of the nineteenth century, the Sadūzai empire proved to be of greater stability than the realm opened up by Nādir Shāh's decade-long fervent military activity. Until his natural death in 1772, Aḥmad Shāh maintained his authority by successfully channelling the material demands of his fellow tribesmen into an ongoing endeavor at territorial expansion.

Most of Aḥmad Shāh's military campaigns were directed against northern India, and his territorial gains there provided him with the bulk of his revenues. Parallel to the British occupation of Bengal, the Sadūzai ruler conquered Delhi on 8 Jumādā I 1170/29 January 1757. The following territorial concessions on the part of the Mughal ruler even exceeded those gained by Nādir Shāh. After his victory at Karnāl on 15 Dhū al-Qa'da 1151/24 February 1739, Nādir Shāh had established control over the territories west of the Indus as well as the province of Sind in exchange for reinstating Muḥammad Shāh Mughal (r. 1719–1748) as king of India.⁵ Following this precedent, Aḥmad Shāh entered a contract with 'Ālamgīr II (r. 1754–1759) on 17 Jumādā I 1170/7 February 1757, whereby he gained possession of Sirhind, Lahore, Multān, and Kashmīr, in addition to the lands previously ceded to Nādir Shāh.⁶

¹ Aḥmad Khān Sadūzai was Nādir Shāh's personal attendant (*yasāvul-i ḥuḏūr-i nādirī*) at that time (*Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 21). 'Alī Qulī Mīrẓā I'tizād al-Saltāna depicts him as Nādir Shāh's deputy chamberlain (*nā'ib īshīk āqāsī bāshī*) or *yasāvul-i suḥbat* (*Vaqāyī' va savānīh* 31). Sulṭān Muḥammad merely describes him as a *yasāvul* (T Su 122).

² *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 19–21. See also Lockhart 1938: 257–63.

³ Singh is of the opinion that Aḥmad Shāh assumed kingship as early as July 1747 (Singh 1981: 31). According to the *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī*, Aḥmad Shāh was crowned in 1161/1748 (T Su 124).

⁴ Perry, "Zand," *E.I.*, 2 XI: 443–4.

⁵ Fraser 1742: 223–6; Jones 1771 I: 461–2, II: 31; Kāzīm 752. See also Dasti 1998: 189–90; Perry, "Nādir Shāh Afshār," *E.I.*, 2 VII: 854.

⁶ TA (Humāyūn): 269–71; TA (Maulā'ī): 327; Mann 1898: 349.

Considering the Oxus as the northern border of his dominions, Aḥmad Shāh in essence adhered to the treaty Nādir Shāh had imposed on the Bukharan ruler Abū al-Faiẓ Khān on 15 Rajab 1153/6 October 1740.⁷ In Khurāsān, he found a *modus vivendi* with Nādir Shāh's grandson Shāh Rukh Afshār b. Rīzā Qulī Mīrzā, who had regained control of Mashhad on 11 Rabī' II 1163/20 March 1750, after a prolonged power struggle involving various strands of Nādir Shāh's family, as well as the *mutavallī* of Imām Rīzā's shrine, the Khuzaima Arabs of Qāyin, and the Za'farānlū Kurds of Khabūshān. After incorporating the city into his realm in late 1754, Aḥmad Shāh reinstated Shāh Rukh Afshār as governor of Khurāsān and formally bestowed the kingship of Iran (*pādshāhī-yi vilāyat-i Īrān*) on him in Rajab 1168/May 1755.⁸

In this chapter I will examine Aḥmad Shāh's effort at state building. Particular attention will be paid to the ideological underpinnings of the Sadūzai state, the scope of Aḥmad Shāh's military campaigns and their implications for the position of Herat and Mashhad. Of notable interest are the resources he tapped and the forces he negotiated in order to create sufficient momentum for his military ventures. Apart from the pecuniary incentives he had to offer, one important factor for his success were "soft skills", such as generosity, kindness and an egalitarian attitude towards his fellow fighters (*ghāzīs*), which enhanced his standing among his followers. Another legitimizing factor was the narrative surrounding his appointment as supreme leader, which already gained currency during his lifetime and was expanded upon in later historiography.

THE SOURCES

The density of information concerning the situation in Khurāsān during the Sadūzai era is uneven at best. The available Persian chronicles focus on the person of Aḥmad Shāh and yield few data on the circumstances in the late eighteenth century. Furthermore, there are notable regional disparities in the coverage of the events in Khurāsān. While the events in Mashhad and the western reaches of Khurāsān receive a fairly detailed treatment, the circumstances in Herat are only touched upon in the context of gubernatorial appointments and local rebellions.

A major source for the Sadūzai period is Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī's *Tārīkh-i aḥmadshāhī*. As seen in the previous chapter, Aḥmad Shāh Sadūzai's perceptions of space were shaped early on by his family's mobility between Multān, Qandahār, and Herat. In the course of his military service under Nādir Shāh from 1738 on, his scope of movement increased considerably, and there is anecdotal evidence that he accompanied the Afshār king during his campaigns to Delhi, the Central Asian khanates, Khurāsān, and Māzandarān.⁹ Apart from the territorial notions acquired on the basis of military motion, the future Afghān ruler was also influenced by Nādir Shāh's ideas concerning the administration and representation of the conquered realm. Thus, he consciously emulated Nādir Shāh's efforts at commemorating his bid at state building. After the conquest of Mashhad in 1167/1754, he entrusted Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī with the task of producing a chronicle of his career equal to Muḥammad Mihdī Astarābādī's *Tārīkh-i jahāngushā-yi nādirī* in terms of lucidity, simplicity, and liveliness. According to his own words, Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī enthusiastically commenced his work and diligently recorded the events of Aḥmad Shāh's entire reign up to the king's death in 1186/1772 on the basis of his own observations, information gathered from trustworthy court officials, and written documents.¹⁰ Quite contrary to his avowed abstinence from exaggerations, the author followed the literary conventions of his time. His *Tārīkh-i aḥmadshāhī* brims with ornate descriptions highlighting Aḥmad Shāh's personal attainments and his glorious political and military exploits. Given his former residence in Mashhad,

⁷ Jones 1771 II: 16–17. See also Lee 1996: 80; Lockhart 1938: 189.

⁸ TA (Humāyūn): 197–9; Mann 1898: 328. See also Perry 1971: 66; Perry 1979: 2–9, 126.

⁹ Aḥmad Khān Sadūzai joined Nādir Shāh's service as personal attendant (*yasāvul*) after the conquest of Qandahār in March 1738 (*Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 73, (Raḡavī) 59). At the conclusion of Nādir Shāh's Indian campaign in 1153/1740–41, Aḥmad Khān was assigned the post of commander (*sar-askar*) over the Afghān troops and moved to Mashhad and Māzandarān (Fūfālzā'ī 1967 26–7). Aḥmad Khān's elder brother Dhū al-Faqār Khān Sadūzai was entrusted with the government of Māzandarān (Singh 1981: 18; see also Lockhart 1938: 120).

¹⁰ TA (Humāyūn) 4–8, 231. See also Mann 1898: 102, 104, 339–40; Saidmuradov 1974: 79–83; Singh 1981: 416–17.

the author provides first-hand information on the circumstance in Khurāsān after Nādir Shāh's death and maps the most important tribal groups and their respective spheres of influence.

Another important source on the developments in the region around Mashhad is the *Mujmal al-tavārīkh pas az Nādir*, which Abū al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad Amīn Gulistāna completed in Murshidābād in Bengal in 1195–96/1780–82. Before fleeing to India in late 1169/1756, Gulistāna had assisted his paternal uncle Mīrzā Muḥammad Taqī, an Afsharid appointee, in maintaining authority in Kirmānshāh.¹¹ The first part of *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* relies heavily on the final chapters of Astarābādī's *Jahāngushā-yi nādirī*. The remainder of this work reflects Gulistāna's personal involvement with the affairs in Kirmānshāh, and contains a lively account of the developments in Iran until the time of his departure. The provenance of the material for the chapters on Shāh Rukh Afshār's reign and Aḥmad Shāh's military activities in Khurāsān is not quite clear. This part bears great resemblance to Mar'ashī's *Majma' al-tavārīkh*, which was likewise produced in Murshidābād eleven years later and was possibly based on the same primary sources.¹² Contrary to Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī, Gulistāna and Mar'ashī assume a highly critical attitude to the policies implemented by Shāh Rukh Afshār and Aḥmad Shāh.

Abū al-Ḥasan Ghaffārī Kāshānī, who served as secretary and administrator at the Zand court in Shīrāz, produced a voluminous history of his Zand overlords around 1206–07/1791–93. Entitled *Gulshan-i murād*, this work sheds light on the events in Khurāsān from a western perspective.¹³

Imām al-Dīn Ḥusainī witnessed the events at the Sadūzai court during the final decade of the eighteenth century. He joined Shāh Zamān (r. 1793–1800/01) in Lahore in 1211/1796–97, accompanied him to Pishāvar, and composed the *Tārīkh-i ḥusainshāhī*, a history of the Durrānīs until Shāh Zamān's reign, in Lucknow in 1213/1798.¹⁴ Given his affiliation with the Chishtī order, Imām al-Dīn Ḥusainī pays special attention to the shrine complex located in Chisht.¹⁵ Another work to be discussed below are the memoirs of Muḥammad Rizā Barnābādī. Although they do not fit into the framework of official historiography, the reminiscences of the member of a saintly lineage based west of Herat provide some interesting insights into the situation of Herat in the late eighteenth century.

Two further sources relevant for the understanding of the Sadūzai period were produced in the nineteenth century. In 1246/1830–31, Mīr 'Abd al-Karīm b. Mīr Ismā'īl "Boukhary", the head scribe of a Bukharan mission to Istanbul, produced a work about the developments in Central Asia after the death of Nādir Shāh. Based on material collected in 1233/1817–18, the first part of this book is devoted to the Sadūzai sphere of influence and the political developments under Aḥmad Shāh and his successors up to the final years of Shāh Maḥmūd's second reign (1809–1818). The second part includes a description of the most important sites of Herat. Translated into French by Charles Schefer in 1876, it became known as *Histoire de l'Asie Centrale*.

The *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī* was begun in 1280/1865 and was published in Bombay in 1298/1880. Its author, Sulṭān Muḥammad b. Mūsā Durrānī Bārakzai, aimed at providing a comprehensive history of the Afghāns and the events surrounding their leadership. This endeavor reflected new notions of territoriality which began to take hold in the nineteenth century. By reconstructing the early history the Afghān tribes, the author endowed them with historical depth and located them in a clearly defined territory. Sulṭān Muḥammad was

¹¹ Mīrzā Muḥammad Taqī had been appointed governor of Kirmānshāh by Nādir Shāh but managed to hold on to this position under Nādir Shāh's nephews 'Ādil Shāh and Ibrāhīm Shāh, as well as under the Afghān commander Āzād Khān Ghilzai (Mann 1891: 6–8; Perry 1979: 305).

¹² Mann 1891: 10–20; Mann 1898: 106–7; Mudarris Razavī, Introduction to *Mujmal al-tavārīkh*.

¹³ John R. Perry, "Golšan-e Morād," *E.Ir.* XI: 108–9.

¹⁴ Imām al-Dīn Ḥusainī states that he completed the *Tārīkh-i Husainshahi* in Lucknow on 10 Jumādā I 1213/20 October 1798 (T Hu 472; see also T Hu 19, 353, 386–7, 440). The mention of the year 1215 (25 May 1800–14 May 1801) may be attributed to the fact that copies of Durrānī correspondence were appended later on (T Hu 359, 476). The author devoted the book to his *pīr* Khwāja Abū Muḥsin Husain Chishtī, after whom it is named (T Hu 430–5, 447, 472). See also Singh 1981: 417; Noelle-Karimi, "Historiography XI. Afghanistan," *E.Ir.* XII: 390. Parts of this work have been reproduced by Fūfalzā'ī in his account of Tīmūr Shāh's reign (Fūfalzā'ī 1967). See also "Chand safḥa az Tārīkh-i ḥusainshāhī," in: *Āryānā* 25 (4) (1346/1967): 26–33. I am grateful to Andreas Wilde for sharing his copy of the *Tārīkh-i ḥusainshāhī* with me.

¹⁵ T Hu 424–30, 447–55.

the first Afghan author to employ the term “Afghānistān” for the modern polity evolving at the time. Fittingly, his book begins with a description of the boundaries of Afghanistan, its geographical features, agricultural products, army and major cities. While he attributes the introduction of the term “Afghānistān” to the Sadūzai dynasty, he projects the existence of this political entity into a distant political past, and traces the history of the Afghāns to their mythical origins in preislamic times. The *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī* ends with a summary description of the political circumstances in Herat between 1818 and 1863.¹⁶

While written at different times and from different perspectives, the sources named above contain a number of crucial elements informing the narrative of the formation of the Sadūzai Empire. One important element is the legitimization of Aḥmad Shāh’s rise to power and the construction of the Durrānī Afghāns as state supporting elite. Aḥmad Shāh’s tribal pedigree and his impromptu coronation on the impulse of a Sufī *shaikh* became key themes in the historiography of Afghanistan and continue to form cornerstones of Afghan historical identity at the present time.

THE FORMATION OF THE SADŪZAI STATE

IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Oriented towards the northern Indian resources, the Afghan state operated within a new territorial framework which had been opened up by Nādir Shāh’s conquests and reflected the horizon of the Sadūzai leadership. At the same time, certain concepts underpinning this effort at state building were informed by Safavid and Afsharid precepts. As in Safavid times, the territorial components making up the realm were cast as *mamālik-i maḥrūsa*, implying that they were blessed with royal protection.¹⁷ In keeping with this notion, the foundation of Qandahār as the Sadūzai capital exemplified the security Aḥmad Shāh provided for his subjects. Like his Safavid and Afsharid forebears, Aḥmad Shāh had to negotiate a complex tribal environment. His relationship with the new state supporting elite of the Durrānīs found its spatial expression in the new capital, the layout of which mirrored the genealogical relationships within the confederacy.

What is more, Aḥmad Shāh sought to legitimize his rule and to endow the new state with a distinct identity. He achieved the requisite degree of internal cohesion by turning his fellow Abdālī tribesmen into the state supporting elite in charge of all major military and administrative positions. This process of incorporation was enhanced by the coinage of new tribal designations. Having assumed the title of *durr-i durrān*, “pearl of pearls”, Aḥmad Shāh designated his followers as “Durrānī”.¹⁸ This renaming apparently did not entail any changes of internal organization but signified a change of political identity. The term *durr*, while not a common indicator of royal legitimacy, symbolized a leap from tribal to imperial politics. Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī endowed Aḥmad Shāh’s followers with the additional attribute of *ghāzī*, (religious) “warrior”, and thus enhanced their profile as a military elite set apart from the remaining soldiery.¹⁹ The creation of the Durrānīs as the backbone of Aḥmad Shāh’s empire was accompanied by the invention of other overarching tribal units among the Pashtūns. Thus, Aḥmad Shāh subsumed the eastern Pashtūns under the term *bardurrānī*, “upper Durrānī”.²⁰ The Ghilzai confederacy and its powerful Hūtak and Ṭūkhī subdivisions that had played a leading role in the events of the early eighteenth century, by contrast, hardly figure in the historical narrative produced at the time.

¹⁶ T Su 2–15. Written in 1835, ‘Alī Muḥammad Khān Khudakka Sadūzai *Taẓkirat al-mulūk-i ‘ālīsha’n* is more limited in scope. It begins with the origin of the Afghāns and ends with Aḥmad Shāh’s coronation (Kamal Khan 1999).

¹⁷ TA (Humāyūn) 92, 137, 234, 456.

¹⁸ TA (Humāyūn) 9; T Hu 23–4.

¹⁹ TA (Humāyūn) 17, 105, 199, 206.

²⁰ TA (Humāyūn) 92. According to Elphinstone, the Bardurrānīs comprised the Yūsufzais, Utman Khēl, Tarklanrīs, Khaṭaks, Bangash, as well as the tribes of Pishāvar and the Khyber Pass (Elphinstone 1992 II: 2). Burnes is of the opinion that the Bardurrānīs were removed from eastern Afghanistan to Herat by Nādir Shāh upon his return from India in 1740 (Forrest 1906: 35).

The portrayal of Aḥmad Shāh's imperial role in the Persian chronicles rests on the assumption that his rise to power was preordained. His leadership qualities are attributed to a unique conjunction of genealogical predisposition, divine will, and laudable personal characteristics. Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī emphasizes genealogical precedents. By pointing to the political careers of Aḥmad Shāh's father Zamān Khān Sadūzai and his brother Dhū al-Faqār Khān Sadūzai prior to Nādir Shāh's rise, he constructs a seamless sequence of Sadūzai control over Herat.²¹ In keeping with this notion, the kingship eventually assumed by Aḥmad Shāh is described as "hereditary". A second ingredient Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī identifies in Aḥmad Shāh's career is divine predestination communicated by saints. Even prior to Nādir Shāh's death, a religious mendicant by the name of Darvīsh Šābir (Šābir Shāh) predicted Aḥmad Khān Sadūzai's future role as king.²² Abū al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad Amin Gulistāna's *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* likewise informs us that a *darvīsh* with a woollen cap approached Aḥmad Khān near Khabūshān and informed him that he had detected signs of kingship in his countenance. He requested a piece of linen and proceeded to sew ten miniature tents and a royal pavilion while constantly repeating prayers. Three days later, Nādir Shāh was assassinated.²³ Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī reports that the same saint expedited Aḥmad Khān's election as king. When the Sadūzai leader hesitated to accept the kingship offered to him by his fellow tribesmen, Darvīsh Šābir intervened, plucked a green plant (*giyāh-i sabzī*), approached Aḥmad Shāh and affixed it at the corner of his turban in lieu of the customary royal ornament (*jīgha*). Then he proceeded to recite the *fātiḥa* on behalf of the victoriousness and longevity of Aḥmad Shāh's kingdom.²⁴

Almost all accounts of Aḥmad Shāh's nomination mention Šābir Shāh's intervention and the impromptu coronation by means of a plant picked from the wayside.²⁵ Moreover, they assign a passive role to Aḥmad Khān Sadūzai in the election process. Yet there are some variations concerning the parts Šābir Shāh and the other nobles played during the council leading to Aḥmad Shāh's selection. Interestingly, the later versions dealing with this event devote much greater detail to the proceedings and insert a number of dramatic elements. According to Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī, it was the seasoned Durrānī fighters themselves who insisted on Aḥmad Shāh's leadership. "How can it be that the victorious Durrānī *ghāzīs*, who by the force of their swords... have endowed the Afsharid kingdom with splendor and order will bow [in obedience] to someone other [than Aḥmad Shāh]?"²⁶ Gulistāna reports that the Afghān leaders held a council (*mashvarat*) three stages from Khabūshān and decided that they needed a leader to protect them from the hostile Qizilbāsh troops and to ensure their safe arrival in Qandahār. The ballot (*qur'a*) for Aḥmad Shāh was unanimous: All of the leaders accepted the *khān* as their leader (*sardār*), affixed a handful of grass (*dasta-yi 'alafī*) to his turban and awarded the title of Aḥmad Shāh to him. In this version of events, Šābir Shāh is accorded no role in the decision making process.²⁷

Writing in the 1860s, Sulṭān Muḥammad Durrānī elaborates on the process leading to Aḥmad Shāh's election and adds an element of tension to it. We learn about the major political players present, the stalemate created by their rivalry for the supreme leadership, and its resolution thanks to Šābir Shāh's dramatic intervention. The author also alerts us to the fact that Aḥmad Shāh's accession signals the departure from the Afsharid frame of power. In the first phase after Nādir Shāh's death we find the Uzbek and Afghān

²¹ TA (Humāyūn) 9–10.

²² TA (Humāyūn) 18.

²³ *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 74, (Raḥavī) 59. See also T Hu 22–3. The *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī* contains a different version of this anecdote, according to which Darvīsh Šābir set the stage for Aḥmad Shāh's conquest of Lahore. After his arrival in Lahore, he constructed small linen tents to prepare the scene for Aḥmad Shāh's assumption of power. Angered by these open acts of defiance, the local Mughal governor Shāh Navāz b. Zakariyā Khān put Šābir Shāh to death (T Su 123).

²⁴ TA (Humāyūn) 18.

²⁵ The only exception to this rule is Yūsuf Riyāzī, who limits his description of the beginnings of the Sadūzai state to the following terse account: "After Nādir Shāh's death], the late Aḥmad Shāh attained the Abdālī kingdom. Much of Hindūstān, Afghānistān, Zābulistān, and Balūchistān belonged to his dominion. He made Qandahār his capital and built a new city there." KR 60–1 (Patterson 1988: 14). For a slightly more detailed statement, see KR 80 (Patterson 1988: 78–9).

²⁶ TA (Humāyūn) 17.

²⁷ *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann 74–5), (Raḥavī) 60.

troops under the command of Nūr Muḥammad Khān ‘Alīzai, who had gained the appointment as *sardār* of the Abdālīs after the death of ‘Abd al-Ghanī Alakūzai. At the time of their arrival near Qandahār, the Abdālī nobles decided to elect a new commander: “From now on the kingdom of Iran no longer furnishes the livelihood (*ma‘āsh*) of our tribe. Therefore we had better select a man from among our own ranks who is worthy of leadership and entitled to high rank.” Nūr Muḥammad Khān was not considered fit for this position and deposed.²⁸ A protracted council (*majlis-i mushāvirat*) ensued at the shrine of Shīr-i Surkh Bābā at Nādirābād. As none of the representatives of the major Abdālī subdivisions (Ḥājī Jamāl Khān Bārakzai, Maḥabbat Khān Fūfāzai (Pūpalzai), Mūsā Khān Ishāqzai, Nūr Muḥammad Khān ‘Alīzai, Naṣrullāh Khān Nūrzai) was ready to acknowledge the supremacy of any of the other leaders present, the negotiations dragged on for several days. Aḥmad Khān Sadūzai quietly listened to the ongoing disputes without advancing any claims of his own. Finally, Šābir Shāh intervened and said, “Why do you indulge in vain discussions? The [only] one worthy of and entitled to kingship is Aḥmad Khān Sadūzai.” After that he brought forth an ear of wheat (*khūsha-yi gandum*) and affixed it to Aḥmad’s head by way of a crown.²⁹

The power and splendor of the Durrānī Empire is generally viewed as a reflection and extension of Aḥmad Shāh’s flawless personality. Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī repeatedly refers to his “innate high-mindedness” (*muruvvat-i jibillī*) and his “compassionate nature” (*raḥm-i fiṭrī*) that cause him to treat enemies and rebellious governors with leniency and to close his eyes on the shortcomings and machinations of his officials.³⁰ Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī also adduces these qualities to explain Aḥmad Shāh’s conduct during the first siege of Nīshāpūr in the winter of 1750–51. The author acknowledges that the decision to withdraw was in great part caused by physical factors like intense cold and lack of provisions. At the same time, he attributes the course of events to Aḥmad Shāh’s generous and kind character. Rather than punishing the Nīshāpūrīs for past instances of rebellion and deception, the king decided to desist from further bloodshed at a moment when the city population was about to submit. When approached by a delegation of Nīshāpūrīs asking for a ceasefire, Aḥmad Shāh forgave their (reprehensible) actions (*raqam-i ṣafḥ bar jarāyid-i a‘māl-i ānhā kashīda*) and ordered his troops to refrain from all military action. This act of benevolence thus becomes a central ingredient in the plot of Aḥmad Shāh’s departure, while the logistic problems afflicting the Durrānī army recede to the sidelines and form the backdrop of the narrative.³¹

Later accounts also point to the hardships experienced during the siege of Nīshāpūr to illustrate Aḥmad Shāh’s magnanimity. The *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī* uses this event to emphasize the shah’s mild disposition and modesty that caused him to place his soldiers on an equal footing with himself. According to this account, the Durrānī soldiers were driven by destitution to plunder the royal treasury. When the treasurer attempted to beat them back Aḥmad Shāh severely rebuked him with the following words:

Oh you ignorant fool, [don’t you know that] I am one of them. It is by their assistance and the force of their swords that I have gained this kingdom. How could I deny [their role as] partakers of this wealth? If I refuse their demand for a share of my property, which in reality is the result their efforts, I will be disgraced both before God and His creation.

Among Aḥmad Shāh’s accomplishments as ruler, the author of the *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī* cites the law (*yāsā*) he issued, which gave widows the right to inherit and rejected the divorce of lawfully married wives (*mankūḥa*). Aḥmad Shāh’s emphasis on egalitarian values and his piety are once again highlighted by the advice he reportedly gave to his sons. He enjoined them not to allow their courtiers to greet them with a salutation

²⁸ The Abdālī leaders deposed Nūr Muḥammad Khān because of his decreasing mental faculties (*khushkī-yi dimāgh*) (T Su 122).

²⁹ T Su 122–3. See also Ferrier 1858: 68–9; Singh 1981: 25–6. According to the *Tārīkh-i ḥusainshāhī*, an eyewitness underlined the great influence Šābir Shāh exerted over Aḥmad Shāh prior to his violent death in Lahore later in the same year: “One day I went to the royal court... [There] I saw Aḥmad Shāh sitting on the throne and a *darvīsh*, naked from head to foot, with his body covered with dust, had stretched out next to him. He continuously touched Aḥmad Shāh’s ear and nose and, pulling them towards himself, said, ‘O Afghan, are you aware that I have made you a king?’ And Aḥmad Shāh, assuming a respectful demeanor, talked to him with his head bowed. When I asked the courtiers about the name and background of the *darvīsh*, they told me that his name was Šābir Shāh” (T Hu 26). See also Singh 1981: 28; T Su 123.

³⁰ TA (Humāyūn) 16, 90, 456, 460.

³¹ TA (Humāyūn) 126.

(*kūrnish*) resembling a prostration (*sijda*). Furthermore, they were to seek the company of ulama and religious mendicants, to entertain religious dignitaries on Thursday nights, to participate in the Friday prayers, and to observe divine law in all their policies. Sultān Muḥammad Durrānī ends his account of Aḥmad Shāh's accomplishments with the observation that the king adhered to these precepts throughout his life.³²

Apart from dwelling on Aḥmad Shāh's unique leadership qualities, the available sources also point to pragmatic reasons for his choice as supreme commander. Sultān Muḥammad Durrānī reports that the Abdālī chiefs approved of Aḥmad Shāh's election on the grounds that the Sadūzais represented a comparatively small faction among their confederacy, which meant that Aḥmad Shāh would have to comply with their wishes in order to stay in power: "They knew that he would take the *amīrs*' ideas into account. If, on the contrary, he chose to rule according to his own obstinate mind it would be an easy matter for the Durrānī tribes to destroy his kingdom."³³ Indeed, Aḥmad Shāh maintained a close relationship with the chiefs of the leading Durrānī lineages and heard their opinions in all political and military matters.

QANDAHĀR AS DURRĀNĪ CAPITAL

The complex nature of Aḥmad Shāh's relationship with his fellow tribesmen is also highlighted by the narratives concerning his decision to erect his capital in Qandahār. Once again the events are communicated from different angles. Thus, Aḥmad Shāh's chronicler and eulogist Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī characterizes the construction of the new city called *ashraf al-bilād aḥmadshāhī* as the apex of his patron's achievements in state building. Writing one century later, Sultān Muḥammad Durrānī focuses on the opposition Aḥmad Shāh encountered among the Alakūzai and Bārakzai Durrānīs during his negotiations over the choice of a proper site for the new city.

Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī draws a parallel between the protection God extends to creation and the guardianship great kings offer to their subjects as God's shadow on earth. Just as this world may be likened to a sky-high fortress, the rulers of the time function as a stronghold guaranteeing the safety and repose of the population. The protective field extended by a king finds its physical manifestation in mighty fortifications affording shelter to the inhabitants of the region. Within this framework, the erection of a central citadel in the heartlands of the empire is essential for the maintenance of royal authority. In Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī's opinion, the dynamic aspects of kingship and the imperative of far-ranging movement call for the construction of a well guarded capital ensuring the requisite degree of security at the center of the kingdom. By conforming to this pattern, Aḥmad Shāh follows time-honored and well-proven precedents:

[While] the founders of empires keep moving across the expanse of their kingdom and are always driven on by the resolve to subjugate other countries, they have to ensure the safety of the original parts of their dominion... Otherwise there is the danger that if the king is away campaigning in a distant quarter... and a powerful enemy rears his head from a certain direction, the honor of the subjects will be plundered before the king is informed and can return to render assistance. Therefore, the farsighted rulers and the experienced emperors have secured the edifice of their government by erecting solid forts and impregnable castles... so that during such times [of crisis] the inhabitants (*sakana*) and subjects (*ra'āyā*) will be protected from calamities, while the ruler himself is at ease to concern himself with the subjugation of territories (*vilāyāt*)... Driven by high ambitions and the desire for conquest, the victorious ruler [Aḥmad Shāh] has always aimed at gaining regions and districts (*aqālīm va vilāyāt*) and is more accustomed to travelling than to settled life. [Simultaneously,] the intention to construct a strong fortification and to lay a lasting foundation in Qandahār (*sarzamīn-i dār al-qarār*) formed and became ingrained in his penetrating and radiant mind.³⁴

Aḥmad Shāh's choice of a new capital fell on Qandahār, which was the encampment (*yūrt*) and dwelling (*maskan*) of the "glorious Durrānīs". Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī attributes Aḥmad Shāh's decision to construct a new city to recent military upheavals and their impact on the urban layout. Thus Nādir Shāh had destroyed the ancient citadel of Qandahār which had been "situated in the midst of a lofty mountain" and had erected a

³² T Su 147. See also Ferrier 1858: 93.

³³ T Su 123.

³⁴ TA (Humāyūn) 212–13.

“contemptible fort” instead, which merely took up one-fourth of the space of the former citadel. A forceful resettlement of the urban population from their accustomed quarters to the new fort called “Nādirābād” had followed. For the first years of Aḥmad Shāh’s ascendancy this fort served as a scarcely adequate residence for the king. During this time, abundant rains and spring floods caused the weak fortifications to crumble further. Aḥmad Shāh began to construct a new city in the tenth year of his reign. As there was dissension among the nobles whether it was better to restore the ancient citadel or to construct an entirely new town, the king and his entourage inspected all possible sites. The idea of rebuilding the ancient citadel was soon rejected for the lack of water which afflicted the inhabitants in the summer. Instead, Aḥmad Shāh settled on the village of Dih-i Khvāja, which was watered by the Pātāb (Patāb), a canal from the Arghandāb, throughout the year.³⁵ After the outline of the new fortifications, including towers, gates and walls had been marked by banners, the *munshī bāshī* Sa‘ādat Khān and the court astrologers fixed Sunday 1 Rabi‘ II 1169/4 January 1756 as an auspicious date for the official beginning of construction.³⁶ Upon its completion, the new city contained royal buildings, spacious gardens, mosques, baths, and caravanserais. The four main roads converging in the central market (*chār sūq*) were each half a *farsakh* (two miles) long and were lined by tree-shaded water channels (*jūy*) carrying clear water.³⁷

Sultān Muḥammad Durrānī likewise praises the magnificent proportions of the newly constructed capital, which covered a space of twelve *qulbas*. Apart from the citadel, the dome spanning the central market square was a major attraction.³⁸ These splendid results notwithstanding, Aḥmad Shāh had to overcome a number of obstacles before implementing his plans. The *Tārīkh-i sultānī* informs us that obtaining the required space for the future capital was not an easy matter. Indeed, the major Durrānī tribes were unwilling to give up their land and objected to the idea of a new city being constructed in their immediate neighborhood. Aḥmad Shāh’s initial plan to secure the water supply of the new capital by conducting a canal from the western bank of the Arghandāb river met with the opposition of the Alakūzais, in particular the kinsmen of his maternal uncle ‘Abd al-Ghanī Khān.³⁹ Aḥmad Shāh’s next attempt to use the water of the Tarnak river for a site west of the village of Mard Qal‘a was forestalled by Sultān Muḥammad’s Bārakzai relatives. A man of gentle disposition (*mard-i ḥalīm*), Aḥmad Shāh did not force the issue but was greatly relieved when his fellow Pūpalzai tribesmen offered him free choice of their lands. Thus the selection of the site for the new capital was not solely guided by logistic or strategic considerations but also reflected the importance of genealogical maps. The decision of the Pūpalzais to cooperate with the king was based on notions of tribal proximity (*rag-i hamqaumī*) and affinity (*ṣila-yi raḥim*). The spatial arrangement within the new capital likewise reflected tribal considerations. According to Sultān Muḥammad Durrānī, the city was divided in a “brotherly fashion” among the Durrānī tribes (*aqvām-i durrānī*).⁴⁰ The creation of the new capital furthered the reputation of Qandahār as the heartland of the Durrānī Empire. The transferral of the *khirqā-yi mutabarrika* from Badakhshān in 1768 served to bestow legitimacy on Aḥmad Shāh’s reign and added gravity to Qandahār as his seat of government.⁴¹ Yet this state of affairs only lasted until the death of the first Durrānī king. Tīmūr Shāh’s removal of the royal capital to Kābul in 1775 bore testimony to the strength of the Durrānī elite but also showed his desire to place his relationship with this group on a new footing.

³⁵ The village of Dih-i Khvāja was located just outside the Kābul Gate of Qandahār in the nineteenth century (*Gaz. Afghanistan* V: 132, 382). In addition to the Pātāb, Aḥmad Shāh ordered a large irrigation channel to be dug from the Arghandāb River over a distance of four *farsang* (16 miles) (TA (Humāyūn) 214–16).

³⁶ TA (Humāyūn) 213–15. Nineteenth-century authors place the actual foundation of the new city in the year 1761. According to Sultān Muḥammad Durrānī, Aḥmad Shāh devoted himself to the construction of Aḥmadshāhī after his return from his fifth Indian campaign, which lasted from October 1759–April 1761 (T Su 135–42). *Sirāj al-tavārīkh* mentions 1174 (13 August 1760–1 August 1761) as the date of its foundation (ST 25–6; McChesney/Khorrami I: 39. See also Singh 1981: 270–1).

³⁷ TA (Humāyūn) 216.

³⁸ This dome measured thirty by thirty *dhar* ‘ (T Su 143).

³⁹ The only building activity the Alakūzais agreed to was the construction of a shrine (*rauza*) for Aḥmad Shāh’s deceased Alakūzai mother (T Su 142–3).

⁴⁰ T Su 143.

⁴¹ TA (Humāyūn) 487; T Su 144.

AḤMAD SHĀH'S SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī styles Aḥmad Shāh as the ruler of Iran, Turkistān and Hindūstān.⁴² Aḥmad Shāh's campaigns indeed covered large portions of these territorial entities. Yet the frequency of military activity in each of these regions varied greatly. The western part of Khurāsān was formally incorporated into the Durrānī kingdom under Shāh Rukh Afshār, who held Mashhad as a vassal of Aḥmad Shāh and was pretty much left to his own resources. To the north, the cis-Oxus regions formed a field of overlapping Durrānī and Bukharan interests. Meanwhile, the focus of Aḥmad Shāh's military thrust lay on the revenue-rich Indian provinces. As the control over these resources had to be reestablished on an ongoing basis, most of his energies were spent on campaigns to the North Indian plains.

The Events in Western Khurāsān

After Nādir Shāh's death, Mashhad became the scene of a fierce power struggle that involved a number of Afsharid contenders and a puppet propped up by a faction of the tribal leadership. First of all, Nādir Shāh's rebellious nephew 'Alī Qulī Khān Afshār b. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Khān gained the upper hand. He was crowned on 27 Jumādā II 1160/6 July 1747 and assumed the royal title of Sulṭān 'Alī 'Ādil Shāh.⁴³ Less than a year later, in Jumādā II 1161/June 1748, he was defeated and blinded by his younger brother Muḥammad 'Alī Bēg, whom he had appointed as military governor (*sardār*) of Iṣfahān. Muḥammad 'Alī Bēg, alias Ibrāhīm Shāh, successfully extended his authority in western Iran to include Tabrīz, but his claims to kingship were challenged by Nādir Shāh's grandson Shāh Rukh Afshār b. Rizā Qulī Mīrzā in Mashhad. When Ibrāhīm ascended to the throne in Tabrīz in early December 1748, Shāh Rukh Afshār had already been king in Mashhad for two months. The following spring, he was defeated by Shāh Rukh Afshār's troops, and was executed along with his brother.⁴⁴

Apart from brief interludes in 1750 and 1778–79,⁴⁵ Shāh Rukh Afshār (1734–1796)⁴⁶ was officially in charge of the affairs in Khurāsān from his coronation on 8 Shavvāl 1161/1 October 1748⁴⁷ until the Qājār takeover in 1796. This seeming stability was occasioned by his relative weakness with regard to the powerful tribal factions, the foremost players among which were the Bayāts of Nīshāpūr, the Mīshmast Arabs of Turshīz, the Khuzaima Arabs of Qāyin, the Chamishgazak Za'farānlū Kurds of Chinārān, and the Jalāyirs of Kalāt-i Nādirī. In January 1750, Mīr 'Alam Khān Khuzaima and Ja'far Khān Za'farānlū replaced Shāh Rukh Afshār with Mīr Sayyid Muḥammad, a grandson of Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusain Safavī and superintendent of Imām Rizā's shrine, who assumed the title of Shāh Sulaimān II.⁴⁸ Although the Khuzaima leader attempted to cement this state of affairs by blinding Shāh Rukh Afshār, a rival group led by Yūsuf 'Alī Khān Jalāyir successfully returned Shāh Rukh Afshār to the throne on the eve of Naurūz 1163/1750.⁴⁹

Shāh Rukh Afshār's ascension in October 1748 occasioned a revival of his family's ties with Aḥmad Shāh and enabled the Afghān king to gain a foothold in Herat. In order to secure his eastern front, Shāh Rukh Afshār allowed Aḥmad Shāh's family, who had been held in Mashhad since Nādir Shāh's death, to return home.⁵⁰ One of Aḥmad Shāh's wives, the mother of his eldest son Tīmūr Mīrzā, moved to the citadel of

⁴² TA (Humāyūn) 8.

⁴³ *Majma' al-tavārīkh* 85. According to the *Tārīkh-i aḥmadshāhī*, 'Alī Qulī Khān Afshār was crowned on 10 Rajab 1160/18 July 1747 (TA (Humāyūn) 61).

⁴⁴ Lockhart 1938: 264–5; Perry, "Afsharids," *E.Ir.* I: 588.

⁴⁵ Fūfalzā'ī 1967: 263–6.

⁴⁶ Lockhart 1938: 80; Perry, "Afsharids," *E.Ir.* I: 588.

⁴⁷ TA (Humāyūn) 66. See also Mann 1898: 350; Perry 1979: 5.

⁴⁸ Shāh Sulaimān II seized power on 20 Muḥarram 1163/30 December 1749 and was crowned on 5 Ṣafar 1163/14 Januar 1750 (*Majma' al-tavārīkh* 114; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 56–7 (Raḥavī) 46). See also Mann 1898: 350–1.

⁴⁹ Perry, "Afsharids," *E.Ir.* II: 587–8. See also TA (Humāyūn) 76–81.

⁵⁰ TA (Humāyūn) 66. According to the *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī*, Tīmūr Mīrzā was given up to Aḥmad Shāh at the time of the first siege of Mashhad in late 1163/autumn 1750 (T Su 129).

Ikhtiyār al-Dīn and assumed the government of Herat in the name of Tīmūr Mīrzā, who still was an infant.⁵¹ After his coronation in Mashhad in January 1750, Shāh Sulaimān II challenged the Sadūzai hold over Herat. In a condescending letter to Aḥmad Shāh, he flaunted his Safavid ties and reminded the Sadūzai ruler of the loyalty traditionally due to Iranian kings.⁵² Aḥmad Shāh, on his part, showed no inclination to comply with Shāh Sulaimān II's order to vacate Herat. Shortly after, Sulaimān II forcefully displaced the Afghān forces from Herat and installed Bihbūd Khān Tātār as *bēglerbēgī* there.⁵³

Shāh Sulaimān II's deposal and blinding in March 1750 tilted the scales in Aḥmad Shāh's favor again. Later in the same year, he conquered Herat after a prolonged siege.⁵⁴ He then directed his attention to Mashhad, where he lingered until *ʿīd al-aẓḥā* 1163/10 November 1750 before moving on to Nīshāpūr.⁵⁵ This first siege of Nīshāpūr in the winter of 1750–51 spelled disaster for the Afghān troops. They sustained great losses during the military encounters with the governor Jaʿfar Khān Bayāt and his son ʿAbbās Qulī Khān Bayāt and were further decimated while struggling back to Herat in intense cold.⁵⁶

Aḥmad Shāh's second campaign to Khurāsān began in Rajab 1167/May 1754.⁵⁷ Subsequent to the conquest of Tūn in Ramaẓān 1167/June–July 1754,⁵⁸ the Durrānī king took position before Mashhad on 2 Shavvāl 1167/23 July 1754. More than four months later, on 16 Ṣafar 1168/1 December 1754, Shāh Rukh Afshār submitted. Three days later, the Friday sermon was read in Aḥmad Shāh's name. Before marching against Nīshāpūr in the following spring, the Durrānī ruler formally installed Shāh Rukh Afshār as the “king of the province/region of Iran” (*pādshāh-i vilāyat-i Īrān*).⁵⁹

When the Afghān army arrived before Nīshāpūr on 7 Ramaẓān 1168/17 June 1755, ʿAbbās Qulī Khān Bayāt “saw the boat of his life endangered by four waves of annihilation”. He quickly submitted to Aḥmad Shāh and sought pardon for the resistance he and his townsmen had put up against the Afghān army during the previous siege. Shortly after, however, the news of the defeat of an Afghān contingent at the hands of Qājār troops near Sabzavār encouraged the Nīshāpūris to rebel and to close the gates on Aḥmad Shāh's

⁵¹ According to Fūfalzāʿī, Tīmūr Shāh was born in 1160/1747–48 and stayed in Mashhad until 1162 (22 December 1748–10 December 1749) (Fūfalzāʿī 1967: 25–8). See also ʿIṣmāʿī 1986: 12.

⁵² *Majmaʿ al-tavārīkh* 123; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 58–9; (Raẓavī) 47–8. See also Perry 1971: 65, 1979: 7.

⁵³ *Majmaʿ al-tavārīkh* 124–8; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 59–61; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Raẓavī) 48–9. See also Fūfalzāʿī 1967: 62–4.

⁵⁴ There is contradictory information concerning the length of the siege. The *Tārīkh-i aḥmadshāhī*, Iʿtizād al-Saltāna's *Tārīkh-i vaqāyiʿ va savānīh-i Afghānistān*, and the *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī* speak of four months, Boukhary of six months, and the *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* of nine months. According to Ferrier, the siege lasted for fourteen months. *Majmaʿ al-tavārīkh* posits that the *bēglerbēgī* Bihbūd Khān Tātār and the *tūpchībāshī* Amīr Khān Mīshmast submitted to Aḥmad Shāh voluntarily and accompanied him in his onward journey to Mashhad. According to Iʿtizād al-Saltāna, Amīr Khān died during the final battle leading to the Afghān conquest of Herat (TA (Humāyūn) 104; *Majmaʿ al-tavārīkh* 138; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 77, (Raẓavī) 61; Boukhary 16 (Persian text 9); *Vaqāyiʿ va savānīh* 38; T Su 128; Ferrier 1858: 74).

⁵⁵ TA (Humāyūn): 114–19. According to the *Tārīkh-i aḥmadshāhī*, Aḥmad Shāh gave up the siege of Mashhad after Imām Rīzā had appeared to him in a dream and instructed him to return three years later (TA (Humāyūn) 119–21). Ferrier is of the opinion that the siege of Mashhad continued for four months and was raised when Shāh Rukh Afshār handed over Aḥmad Shāh's youngest son Sanjar Mīrzā, who had remained in Mashhad until then (Ferrier 1858: 76). Iʿtizād al-Saltāna also reports that the siege of Mashhad lasted for four months, but he claims that it was on this occasion that Aḥmad Shāh's son Tīmūr Mīrzā was allowed to leave for Herat (*Vaqāyiʿ va savānīh* 38–9). *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* does not mention this siege of Mashhad at all (*Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 85, (Raẓavī) 67–8).

⁵⁶ *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 86–90, (Raẓavī) 68–71; TA (Humāyūn) 124–6; see also Perry 1979: 8. Iʿtizād al-Saltāna reports that some of the officers survived the intense cold at Kāfir Qalʿa by disembowling camels and huddling in their bellies. Others froze to death while attempting to cross the Harī Rūd (*Vaqāyiʿ va savānīh* 39). This account was taken up by *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī* and *Sirāj al-tavārīkh* (T Su 129; ST 15; McChesney/Khorrami 2013 I: 21–2; see also Ferrier 1858: 77–8).

⁵⁷ According to the *Tārīkh-i aḥmadshāhī*, Aḥmad Shāh left Qandahār for Farāh on 8 Rajab 1167/1 May 1754 (TA (Humāyūn) 171). Given the density of data corroborating the presence of the Afghān troops before Mashhad in July–August 1754, this information seems more trustworthy than the accounts furnished by the *Tārīkh-i vaqāyiʿ va savānīh* and the *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī*, which place the second campaign to Khurāsān in the year 1165/1751–52 (*Vaqāyiʿ va savānīh-i Afghānistān* 40, T Su 130). Singh follows the events as described in the two latter sources (Singh 1981: 93–5).

⁵⁸ TA (Humāyūn) 172, 178.

⁵⁹ Shāh Rukh Afshār was installed on 27 Rajab 1168/9 May 1755 (TA (Humāyūn) 182, 190–3, 197). See also Mann 1898: 325–8; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 90–1, (Raẓavī) 71–2; NT 18; Perry 1979: 9; Shahshahānī 1958.

army. A violent seven-day siege followed, in the course of which the constant onslaught of artillery and mines perforated the citadel like a “wasp’s nest”, as Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī puts it. The final submission of Nīshāpūr on 14 Ramaẓān 1168/24 June 1755 was followed by wholesale destruction. Aḥmad Shāh ordered the citadel to be leveled, the eminent buildings to be burned, and the major irrigation channels to be blocked.⁶⁰ With this conquest, Aḥmad Shāh’s activities in the western reaches of Khurāsān ceased for the next fifteen years. The only tangible effect of the formal incorporation of Mashhad into the Durrānī Empire was the stationing of a Durrānī chief assisted by 2,000 to 3,000 *ghāzīs*.⁶¹

Aḥmad Shāh’s Military Activities in India

Most of Aḥmad Shāh’s military enterprises focused on the eastern domains. Between 1747 and 1767, he mounted a total of nine campaigns to India:

- During the first campaign, from October 1747—March 1748, Aḥmad Shāh conquered Kābul,⁶² Lahore,⁶³ and Sirhind⁶⁴. After being defeated by the Mughal troops at Mānūpūr near Sirhind on 17 March 1748, Aḥmad Shāh retreated to Qandahār, and the control of Panjāb and its capital Lahore reverted to the Mughals.⁶⁵
- At the end of 1161/Nov.–Dec 1748, Aḥmad Shāh returned to Panjāb and consolidated his claims to the territories and revenues previously controlled by Nādir Shāh. The local Mughal governor, Mu‘īn al-Mulk, popularly known as Mīr Mannū, undertook to submit the revenues of the Chahār Maḥāll of Gujrāt, Aurangābād, Siyālkōt, and Pasrūr to him.⁶⁶
- The third Indian expedition, from November 1751—April 1752, was triggered by Mīr Mannū’s failure to pay the revenues of the Chahār Maḥāll. After a four-month siege, Aḥmad Shāh conquered Lahore on 4 March 1752. On this occasion, he incorporated the Mughal provinces of Lahore and Multān into his empire.⁶⁷ In addition, he obtained Kashmīr as pawn for the payment of one *kurūr* rupees.⁶⁸ Mīr Mannū was reinstated as governor of Lahore, Navvāb ‘Alī Khān Khūgiyānī was appointed governor of Multān.⁶⁹
- The fourth Indian campaign, from December 1756—March 1757, was occasioned by Mughal efforts to reclaim control over Panjāb after Mīr Mannū’s death in November 1753. Aḥmad Shāh reached Lahore in late December and displaced the Mughal appointee Ādina Bēg. On 28 January 1757, he entered Delhi and plundered the city. The towns of Mathura, Brindaban and Agra were likewise pillaged. Sirhind, Lahore, Multān, and Kashmīr were formally annexed to the

⁶⁰ TA (Humāyūn) 200–3. See also *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 92–3, (Raẓavī) 73–4. The *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī* once again follows I’tizād al-Saltāna’s account, which reverses the sequence of events during the second campaign to Khurāsān. According to the *Tārīkh-i vaqāyī* ‘*va savānīh*’, Aḥmad Shāh’s primary goal was to wreak revenge on Nīshāpūr. For this purpose, he ordered each of his cavalymen to carry one *mann* of cast metal (*chūdan*) to Nīshāpūr. Upon their arrival before Nīshāpūr, Indian artisans used this metal to cast a cannon of magnificent proportions, the projectiles of which weighed forty *mann* each. The first shot fired by this cannon traversed the entire city like an arrow through dough, pierced the opposite wall, and finally hit the ground another quarter *farsang* (one mile) further. This demonstration of firing strength caused the Nīshāpūrīs to surrender (*Vaqāyī* ‘*va savānīh*’ 40; see also T Su 130; Singh 1981: 93–4). Aḥmad Shāh returned to Herat on 21 Dhū al-Ḥijja 1168/19 September 1755 and departed for Farāh on 1 Muḥarram 1169/7 October 1755 (Mann 1898: 334).

⁶¹ TA (Humāyūn) 199.

⁶² Kābul fell to the Durrānī troops in October 1747 (Singh 1981: 54).

⁶³ Lahore was occupied by Aḥmad Shāh on 12 January 1748 (Singh 1981: 51). See also T Hu 31–3.

⁶⁴ Sirhind was conquered on 13 Rabī‘ I 1161/13 March 1748 (Singh 1981: 58).

⁶⁵ Sarkar 1988: 114; Singh 1981 (59–71). See also TA (Humāyūn) 46–53, 55; T Su 127.

⁶⁶ TA (Humāyūn) 55–6. See also C. Collin Davies, “Aḥmad Shāh Durrani,” *E.I.*, 2 I: 295; Sarkar 1988: 208–9; Singh 1981: 101. On the contradictory information concerning the dates of Aḥmad Shāh’s second Indian campaign, see Singh 1981: 73 fn 4. Aḥmad Shāh returned to Kābul and Qandahār in the spring of 1162/1749 (TA (Humāyūn) 56).

⁶⁷ Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī characterizes the incorporation of Multān into Aḥmad Shāh’s domain as the payment of “hoof money to the victorious [Durrānī] warriors: *Ṣūba-yi Multān ba-ṭarīq-i na’l bahā-yi ghāziyān-i nuṣrat-nishān az mamālik-i Hindūstān vaẓ’ va ba-mamālik-i maḥrūsa-yi barakat-ma’nūsa inẓimām [yābad]*” (TA (Humāyūn) 137; TA (Maulā’ī) 186).

⁶⁸ *Va sabīl-i īṣāl-i vajh ān ki tā adā-yi īn zar khiṭṭa-i Kashmīr-i bihisht-naẓīr ta’ alluq ba-umanā-yi daulat-i khadīv-i āfāq-gīr dāshta bāshad. Va ba’d az vuṣūl-i zar-i qarārdād bāz muvāfiq-i dastūr-i sābiq ṣūba-yi Kashmīr ba-daulat-i bahīya-yi kūrgāniya vāgudhāshtā shavad* (TA (Humāyūn) 137; TA (Maulā’ī) 186–7). In the Indian context, one *kurūr* was equivalent to 100 *lak* (100,000), that is, 10 million. According to Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī, this sum corresponded to 500,000 Tabrīzī *tūmān* (TA (Humāyūn) 136).

⁶⁹ TA (Humāyūn) 126–38; Dasti 1998: 200–1; Davies, “Aḥmad Shāh Durrani,” *E.I.*, 2 I: 296; Sarkar 1988: 217; Singh 1981: 126.

Durrānī Empire.⁷⁰ Before his departure in March 1757, Aḥmad Shāh entered a dual marriage arrangement with the ruling Mughal family. He married his son Tīmūr Mīrzā to ‘Ālamgīr II’s daughter Zuhra Bēgum and took Muḥammad Shāh’s daughter Ḥaẓrat Bēgum for himself. Tīmūr Mīrzā was appointed as viceroy of Panjāb.⁷¹

- From October 1759—April 1761, Aḥmad Shāh engaged in his fifth campaign to India to re-establish his authority against Ādina Bēg and the Marāṭhās, who had expelled the Afghāns from Panjāb in 1758 and had advanced as far as Pishāvar. On his way to India, Aḥmad Shāh marched through Balūchistān to regain the loyalty of Naṣīr Khān Balūch. During the battle of Pānīpat on 7 Jumādā II 1174/14 January 1761, the Durrānī troops dealt a decisive defeat to the Marāṭhās.⁷²
- Aḥmad Shāh’s sixth expedition to India, from February—December 1762, aimed at curtailing the growing strength of the Sikhs. On 11 Rajab 1175/5 February 1762, the Durrānī troops defeated the Sikhs near Gūjarvāl (Gujrānvāla) and inflicted heavy losses on them.⁷³ In 1763–64, the Sikhs scored a number of military successes against Aḥmad Shāh’s officials and occupied Lahore.⁷⁴ The next three military campaigns between 1764 and 1769 had only a short-lived impact and in effect highlighted the growing Sikh presence.
- In the course of his seventh campaign, from October 1764—March 1765, Aḥmad Shāh tried to reinforce his hold over Lahore and made vain attempts to suppress the Sikh forces.⁷⁵
- The eighth campaign to India, from November 1766—May 1767, again served to raise revenues and to re-establish control over Lahore. While the Durrānī troops occupied the city on 21 December 1766, they were unable to maintain a steady presence there.⁷⁶
- In late 1768/early 1769, Aḥmad Shāh mounted a final and short-lived expedition to India, which had little effect on Sikh dominance.⁷⁷

The quick succession of Aḥmad Shāh’s campaigns to northern India fits into the early modern mold of military organization. The wide ranging military movements primarily served to maintain his troops and to invigorate his alliances with the Pashtūn leadership that formed the backbone of his empire. Aḥmad Shāh’s administrative hold over the Indian provinces was tenuous and mediated by the local elites. Lahore was controlled by Mughal governors until 1756.⁷⁸ Tīmūr Mīrzā’s tenure there only lasted from May 1757–April 1758.⁷⁹ Subsequent to the Marāṭhā incursions in 1758–1761, the Sikhs became the dominant force in Panjāb, rendering Lahore a precarious island of Durrānī authority.⁸⁰ Kashmīr likewise experienced a number of upheavals until 1762, when it passed to a Bāmīzai Durrānī governor.⁸¹ Despite this low degree of

⁷⁰ Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī again categorizes the submission of these fertile regions to Aḥmad Shāh as “hoof money” (*na’l bahā-yi multazimān-i maukib-i vālā*) (TA (Humāyūn) 269; TA (Maulā’ī) 328).

⁷¹ Davies, “Aḥmad Shāh Durrani,” *E.I.*, 2 I: 296; Sarkar 1991: 36–8, 47–76; Singh 1981: 187. See also TA (Humāyūn) 244–82; T Su 131–3.

⁷² Davies, “Aḥmad Shāh Durrani,” *E.I.*, 2 I: 296; Sarkar 1991: 192–218. See also TA (Humāyūn) 307–413; T Su 133–42.

⁷³ Sarkar 1991: 289; Singh 1981: 276–82, 288; see also TA (Humāyūn) 419–29.

⁷⁴ In November 1763, the Sikhs defeated the Durrānī general Sardār Jahān Khān near Siyālkōṭ. On 14 January 1764, the Sikhs conquered Sirhind from the Afghān governor Zain Khān. Lahore fell to them in February 1764 (TA (Humāyūn) 445, 460; Singh 1981: 290–5, 409).

⁷⁵ Sarkar 1991: 295–6; Singh 1981: 297–307. See also Aḥmad TA (Humāyūn) 462–9.

⁷⁶ Singh 1981: 311–18. On 17 January 1767, Aḥmad Shāh’s general Sardār Jahān Khān was defeated by the Sikhs near Amritsar. Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī devotes little space to this confrontation and portrays Sardār Jahān Khān’s troops as victorious (TA (Humāyūn) 475–8)).

⁷⁷ During this campaign, Aḥmad Shāh advanced as far as the Jhīlam (Jhelum) river. Shortly after, the Sikhs displaced the Durrānī troops from the fort of Ruhtās (Rohtas) (TA (Humāyūn) 488–90; Gupta 1991: 222–3; Singh 1981: 320).

⁷⁸ Mīr Mannū’s death in November 1753 was followed by a power struggle between his wife Mughlānī Bēgum and her maternal uncle Khvāja ‘Ubaid Khān (d. 1764). Khvāja ‘Ubaid Khān held the governorship of Lahore for short periods in 1755, 1756, and 1761 (Singh 1981: 143–4, 150, 190, 267, 294).

⁷⁹ Sarkar 1991: 39.

⁸⁰ From 1762 on, Lahore was governed by a Hindu known as Kābulī Mall (Singh 1981: 288, 294, 309, 340, 346).

⁸¹ At the time of Aḥmad Shāh’s first expedition to India, Kashmīr was governed by the Mughal *nā’ib* Afrāsiyāb Bēg Khān, whose death in 1751 was followed by political turmoil. In May 1752, Ishīk Āqāsī ‘Abdullāh Khān annexed Kashmīr in the name of Aḥmad Shāh, but stayed there only for six months. At the time of his departure, he assigned the management of the province to Sukh Jīvan, a Hindu official in Aḥmad Shāh’s services. Shortly after, Sukh Jīvan expelled his deputy Khvāja Kichak from

administrative penetration, the Indian venture was a financial success for Aḥmad Shāh. The prospect of the booty to be gained in the rich provinces east of the Khyber caused large armies to assemble around him. The opportunities for plunder reached their apex during the occupation of Delhi in early 1757. Contemporaneous sources estimate the value of the goods carried away by the Afghāns to reach 30, 40, 90 or even 120 million rupees.⁸² One report of the time highlights the dimensions of the transfer of mobile resources:

The Abdali's own goods were loaded on 28,000 camels, elephants, mules, bullocks and carts, while two hundred camel loads of property were taken by Muhammad Shah's widows who accompanied him, and these too belonged to him. Eighty thousand horse and foot followed him, each man carrying away spoils. His cavalry returned on foot, loading their booty on their chargers. For securing transport, the Afghan king left no horse or camel in any one's house, not even a donkey. The guns he had brought for taking the Jat forts he abandoned because their draught cattle had to be loaded with his plunder.... In Delhi not a sword was left with anybody.⁸³

The Indian provinces yielded the bulk of the Sadūzai revenues. Kashmīr, Pishāvar, Dēra Ghāzī Khān, Dēra Ismā'īl Khān submitted a much greater total amount of revenues than the western provinces of the Durrānī empire. Moreover, a greater percentage of the taxes collected locally found their way into the royal coffers.⁸⁴ According to Boukhary, the provinces east of the Khyber Pass yielded a total of 9.3 million rupees as compared with the 2.1 million rupees furnished by the western provinces.⁸⁵

In the course of his Indian campaigns, Aḥmad Shāh traversed the Indus and penetrated deeply into the northern Indian territories known as Hindūstān. As seen above, his claims to overlordship, no matter how tenuous on the ground, embraced the Mughal provinces of Kashmīr, Lahore, and Multān, and even included Sirhind, which formed the northwestern subdivision of the Delhi province. At the same time, the repeated forays into Indian territory did not affect the view of the Indus as a natural border between Khurāsān and Hindūstān, an idea which had also been invoked by the Pashtūn poet Khushḥāl Khān Khaṭṭak (d. 1689) a century earlier.⁸⁶ While Aḥmad Shāh claimed both regions as his own, there remained the notion of a division between the Pashtūn homeland and the regions beyond the Indus as alien territory.

The Position of Turkistān

Given his preoccupation with Northern India, Aḥmad Shāh developed few ambitions in Central Asia. In comparison with the riches of India, the Uzbek principalities of Turkistān apparently had little wealth to offer, and Aḥmad Shāh is said to have described them as a "hive without honey".⁸⁷ The regions south of the Āmū Daryā, often referred to as "Lesser Turkistān" (*Turkistān-i ṣaghīr*), were loosely incorporated into Aḥmad Shāh's domain from 1750 on. The *Tārīkh-i aḥmadshāhī* reports that this process was initiated by the local leadership at the time of Aḥmad Shāh's siege and impending conquest of Herat. At that time, Ḥājī Bī

Kashmīr and had coins struck in the name of the Mughal emperor 'Ālamgīr II (r. 1754–1759). In 1762, Sukh Jivan was defeated by Aḥmad Shāh's general Nūr al-Dīn Khān Bāmīzai, who held the government of Kashmīr for three times during the next seven years (1762 (three months), 1765–1766, 1768–1769). Further governors were Buland Khān Bāmīzai (1763–1765), Khurram Khān (1766–1767, 1770), and the Qizilbāsh leader Amīr Khān Javānshīr (1770–1772). At the beginning of Tīmūr Shāh's reign, Sardār Ḥājī Karīmād Khān Bāmīzai Pūpalzai 'Arzbēgī was in charge of Kashmīr. He was succeeded by his rebellious son Āzād Khān. After Āzād Khān's execution, the government of Kashmīr was awarded to Mīr Hazār Khān Alakūzai, who held this post until Tīmūr Shāh's death in 1793 (Fūfalzā'ī 1967: 253–60; Mann 1898: 171–2, 342; Parmu 1969: 348–9, 353–63; Singh 1981: 101, 103, 283–5, 334, 350, 356; TA (Humāyūn) 237–8, 433–5; T Su 157–9).

⁸² Sarkar 1991: 74–5.

⁸³ Selections from the Peshwa's Daftar ii 71 quoted in Sarkar 1991: 76.

⁸⁴ Gankovsky 1981.

⁸⁵ Boukhary 6–7.

⁸⁶ See, for instance, a poem by Khushḥāl Khān as translated by Caroe & Howell 1963: 45,

"Who fares on the royal highway, the road from Hindustan,
Must come to the Father of Rivers, ere to win to Khorassan
Must cross by the Attock ferry, trembling the while with fear,
For Indus takes his tribute from pauper, prince and peer."

⁸⁷ Elphinstone 1992 II: 247.

Mīng, the “governor” (*ḥākīm*) of Maimana, and a number of elders (*āq saqālān*) and nobles (*a’yān*) joined Aḥmad Shāh’s court and sought protection from the oppressive policies of the *atālīq* Raḥīm Bī Manghīt (r. 1747–1758), who had initially ruled Bukhārā in the name of a Chingizid puppet but had assumed sole control of the government after Nādir Shāh’s death. Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī portrays Turkistān as a territory in need of royal protection and makes it clear that Raḥīm Bī’s claims to the region are not legitimate. According to his version of events, one of the greatest grievances of the Turkistani nobles against Raḥīm Bī was his usurpation of the throne of Bukhārā. While his ancestors had risen in the service of the Chingizid *khāns*, Raḥīm Bī had forgotten all bonds of loyalty and had killed two members of the Tuqai-Timurid dynasty, Abū al-Faiz and his son ‘Abd al-Mu’min. Aḥmad Shāh, by contrast, is depicted as the just ruler ensuring the prosperity of the regions within his domain.

Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī constructs the notion of a concrete boundary in the north. In his account, the Turkistani nobles allegedly asked for the appointment of a military governor (*sardār*) who would guard the border (*sarḥadd*) of Turkistān. Given his natural inclination for dispensing justice (*ma’dalat gustarī*), Aḥmad Shāh promised to attend to the affairs of Turkistān after the successful conquest of Herat. This promise was fulfilled in due course. The king awarded the title of *khān* to Ḥājji Bī Mīng, appointed him governor (*vālī*) of Balkh and placed him in charge of the revenue collection (*ṣāhib ikhtiyārī-yi māliyat-i Turkistān*). This generous assignment in part reflected the existing political balance in western Turkistān: Ḥājji Bī Mīng was confirmed in the leading position he had assumed previously. At the same time, Aḥmad Shāh’s intervention served to strengthen Ḥājji Bī Mīng’s hand against his Qaṭaghan rivals in Qunduz. The Durrānī representatives accompanying Ḥājji Bī Mīng on his homeward journey consisted of a *sardār*, a commander-in-chief (*sipahsālār*), and a number of Afghān, Kābulī and Qizilbāsh troops. These formally established control over the cis-Oxus regions of Chīchaktū, Maimana, Andkhūd, Balkh, Khulm, Qunduz, and “Qipchāq”.⁸⁸

The thin presence of Durrānī troops proved particularly problematic in the northeastern region of Qunduz, where repeated rebellions called for additional military assistance from the center. For the year 1755, Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī reports that Suhrāb Bī (d. 1756), the Qaṭaghan leader of Qunduz, “plugged the ears of wisdom with the cotton of ignorance” and refused to submit revenues. The following summer, Aḥmad Shāh sent his general Sardār Jahān Khān from Kābul to Qunduz. Accompanied by Afghān and Qizilbāsh troops, Sardār Jahān Khān entered the Qaṭaghan plain along the course of the Surkhāb river. On 25 Shavvāl 1169/23 July 1756, he dealt a sounding defeat to Suhrāb’s son and successor Mīzrāb Bī and re-established Durrānī authority in Qunduz and Ṭāliqān.⁸⁹

During the following years, the political landscape of Turkistān was characterized by rivalries between Ḥājji Bī Mīng and local Durrānī appointees. Ḥājji Bī Mīng, who had gained the appointment as *sardār* of Turkistān during a visit to Kābul in 1757, soon found his powers curtailed by the designation of a Durrānī *dārūgha* (Sayyid ‘Aṭā’ullāh Khān) and another *sardār* (Navvāb Khān Alakūzai). As part of this rivalry, separate spheres of influence emerged, with Ḥājji Bī Mīng residing in Maimana and the Durrānī officials being based in Balkh. The weakness of the Durrānī hold over local affairs was highlighted by a rebellion in Shibarghān which the Afghān troops were unable to subdue, while Ḥājji Bī Mīng’s allegiance was uncertain.⁹⁰ This environment of insecurity allowed Bukhārā to intervene militarily in the regions south of the Āmū Daryā. In the Year of the Snake/1761, a Bukharan general by the name of Khvāja Mūsā occupied the town of Āqcha located west of Balkh and temporarily joined forces with the rebels of Shibarghān.⁹¹

Aḥmad Shāh’s efforts to establish control over the cis-Oxus regions continued throughout the 1760s. According to the *Tārīkh-i aḥmadshāhī*, Sardār Jahān Khān engaged in a renewed military campaign “to

⁸⁸ TA (Humāyūn) 107–10, 140, 165. See also Lee 1996: 44, 72–4, 79–82, 85; McChesney 1991: 220–1. In 1750, Aḥmad Shāh appointed ‘Aṭā’ullāh Khān Turkmān (d. 1175/1761–62) as *sipahsālār* and Mukhlīsh Khān Fūfalzā’ī Durrānī as *sardār*. After Mukhlīsh Khān’s death in 1165/1751–52, Aḥmad Shāh designated Mīr Hazār Khān Alakūzai as *sardār* of Turkistān.

⁸⁹ TA (Humāyūn) 226–7, 236–7.

⁹⁰ TA (Humāyūn) 289–92; TA (Maulā’ī) 349–50. See also Lee 1996: 86–7; McChesney 1991: 221.

⁹¹ TA (Humāyūn) 414–16. See also Lee 1996: 87–9; McChesney 1991: 222.

collect the revenues and the troops of Qunduz, Imām [Imām Ṣāhib], Baghlān, Balkh, and Badakhshān and to suppress the mischief-makers and abject (leaders) of Turkistān” in 1766.⁹² Two years later, in Muḥarram 1182/May 1768, Aḥmad Shāh despatched his *vazīr* Shāh Valī Khān Bāmīzai from Chārīkān to Badakhshān with the order “to punish Sulṭān Shāh, the *vālī* of Badakhshān, and the other ignorant [leaders] of Turkistān.” The successful establishment of Durrānī authority in the region north of the Hindu Kush was symbolized by the transferral of the *khirqā-yi mutabarrika* (*mubāraka*), a piece of Prophet Muḥammad’s cloak, from Badakhshān to Qandahār.⁹³

This campaign is embellished and enlarged upon in later historiography. The *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī* and *Sirāj al-tavārīkh* dwell in great detail on Aḥmad Shāh’s military activities and emphasize that they served to fix the Āmū Daryā as the border between the Bukharan and Afghān spheres of influence. In this context, the acquisition of the *khirqā-yi mutabarrika* is recounted to illustrate Aḥmad Shāh’s superiority vis-à-vis the Bukharan rulers. Sulṭān Muḥammad Durrānī reports that the Durrānī *vazīr* Shāh Valī Khān Bāmīzai was ordered to proceed against Balkh and Badakhshān with 6,000 troops. Shortly after, Aḥmad Shāh received word from Shāh Valī Khān that Shāh Murād Bī, the son of the Bukharan ruler Dāniyāl Bī (r. 1758–1785),⁹⁴ was actively backing the population of Balkh against the Durrānī forces. Therefore the king assembled another army and proceeded to Turkistān himself. After setting out from Herat, he crossed the Marv Rūd (Murghāb river) and occupied Maimana, Andkhūd and Shibarghān. Meanwhile, Shāh Valī Khān headed the military operations in Qunduz and Badakhshān. When Aḥmad Shāh advanced towards Balkh, Shāh Murād Bī assembled his troops at Qarshī, located two hundred miles north of the Āmū Daryā. Aḥmad Shāh is said to have deliberately desisted from a military confrontation. Instead, he contented himself with a peace agreement whereby the Āmū Daryā was designated as border (*ḥadd*) between the two powers and the Prophet’s mantle passed to the Durrānīs. In Sulṭān Muḥammad’s version of the events, at the time, the *khirqā* was in the possession of Uzbek guardians in Bukhārā who, resenting the transferral of this precious relic to Aḥmad Shāh’s domain, secretly removed the part of the garment thought to have covered the Prophet’s shoulders. Aḥmad Shāh transported the *khirqā* to Kābul, where he displayed it to the local population, and eventually deposited it in the old Friday mosque of Qandahār located south of the Bardurrānī quarter. After Aḥmad Shāh’s death, Tīmūr Shāh transferred the mantle to a newly constructed building adjacent to his father’s grave, its present location.⁹⁵ Faiẓ Muḥammad follows the account given in the *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī* and places these events in the year 1182/1768–69.⁹⁶

Thus the limits of the realm claimed by Aḥmad Shāh may be described in the following manner: In the east, Panjāb and Kashmīr were reckoned as part of the Durrānī sphere of influence. Towards the south, the principality of Qalāt-i Balūch was loosely associated with the Durrānī kingdom.⁹⁷ In the north, the Oxus was projected as the border of the Durrānī Empire. Towards the west, Pul-i Abrīshum, located seventy miles west of Sabzavār on the trade route between Mashhad and Tehran, was considered the limit of the Durrānī Empire.⁹⁸ In the early 1780s, Ṭabas was described as the border (*sarḥadd*) between Khurāsān and the Zand

⁹² TA (Humāyūn) 475.

⁹³ TA (Humāyūn) 487; TB 46–8. See also Fūfalzā’ī for the transferral of the cloak to Qandahār and the endowment created by the Sadūzai kings (1967: 164–5, 277, 294–301).

⁹⁴ Dāniyāl Bī formally acted as the *atālīq* of the Janid prince Abū al-Ghāzī (Bregel, “Central Asia vii. In the 12th–13th/18th–19th Centuries,” *E.Ir.* V: 195).

⁹⁵ T Su 144–5. According to Fūfalzā’ī, this shift took place in Ramaẓān 1190/October 1776 (Fūfalzā’ī 1967: 297); Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī reports that Aḥmad Shāh was buried next to the building housing the *khirqā-yi mutabarrika* (TA (Humāyūn) 518).

⁹⁶ ST 27; McChesney/Khorrami 2013 I: 42.

⁹⁷ Singh 1981: 214–15.

⁹⁸ Sykes 1930 II: 277. See also Elphinstone 1992 II: 287. Pul-i Abrīshum was a bridge over the Abrīshum/Kāl-i Shūr-i Jājarm river. The Kāl-i Shūr-i Jājarm is fed by several streams draining the plains of Isfarāyīn and Juvain and then turns south. After passing under the Pul-i Abrīshum, it expends itself in the Dasht-i Kavīr. Spooner characterizes it as “for the most part of the year sluggish, meagre and highly saline” (Spooner 1965: 98). The Pul-i Abrīshum divided Khurāsān from Qūmis in medieval times and was referred to by Isfīzārī in the late fifteenth century (Isfīzārī II: 142, 145, 353). There is mention of construction/repairs undertaken by Shāh ‘Abbās I, Nādir Shāh, and the Qājārs. Qājār sources refer to the Pul-i Abrīshum as entry point to Khurāsān (*Dhū al-Qarnain* 112; TRSN IX: 354; TRSN X: 327). In the 1870s, the Kāl-i Shūr-i Jājarm stream and the Pul-i Abrīshum were

sphere of influence in 'Irāq.⁹⁹ Aḥmad Shāh's successors Tīmūr Shāh and Shāh Zamān found it increasingly difficult to maintain even nominal authority over this vast expanse. During the final years of the eighteenth century, the eastern dominions were incorporated into the nascent Sikh state headed by Ranjit Singh. Simultaneously, the newly established Qājār dynasty was making its influence felt in the west.

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS

There is conflicting information concerning the exact number and the status of the provinces which made up the Sadūzai Empire. For Aḥmad Shāh's period, Singh enumerates a total of 23 subdivisions, eight of which he characterizes as "provinces" (*vilāyat*).¹⁰⁰ The other fifteen units fall into the category of *ḥukūmat-i a'lā* ("supreme government").¹⁰¹ In the early nineteenth century, Elphinstone produced a list of Sadūzai provinces that differs somewhat from Singh's account. Possibly reflecting the shrinking scope of the Sadūzai rulers, Elphinstone omits a number of subdivisions, such as Maimana, Mazār-i Sharīf, Khurāsān, Badakhshān, Panjāb, and Balūchistān. He further subsumes both the categories of *vilāyat* and *ḥukūmat-i a'lā* under the heading of "most important provinces," of which he enumerates a total of eighteen.¹⁰² What is more, he mentions a further administrative category consisting of nine tribal regions located at the core of the Durrānī Empire, the revenues of which were assigned to Durrānī leaders (*sardārs*).¹⁰³

Contemporaneous sources indicate that both Aḥmad Shāh and Tīmūr Shāh accorded special importance to the four central provinces of their empire and distributed them among their sons. Gulistāna reports that Aḥmad Shāh divided his realm among his four principal sons two years prior to his death. Thus Herat was awarded to Tīmūr Mīrzā, Qandahār to Sulaimān Mīrzā, Kābul to Parvīz Mīrzā, and Panjāb to Iskandar Mīrzā.¹⁰⁴ Tīmūr Shāh likewise reserved the four provinces of Qandahār, Herat, Kābul, and Pishāvar for his immediate family.¹⁰⁵ Among these provinces, Qandahār and Herat were subdivided into four *bulūk* each, an arrangement that was apparently inherited from Safavid times.¹⁰⁶ Sadūzai decrees describe the province of Herat as the "four western *bulūk* of Khurāsān".¹⁰⁷ This designation raises the possibility that Qandahār was understood to represent the four eastern subdivisions of Khurāsān. These administrative arrangements seem

regarded as the provincial boundary between Khurāsān and Shāhrūd-Bisṭām (*Gaz. Iran* II: 548). For a photo of the bridge taken in the winter of 1889–90, see Curzon 1966 I: 279.

⁹⁹ *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 139.

¹⁰⁰ According to Singh, the *vilāyat* comprised a larger area and was of greater political importance than the *ḥukūmat-i a'lā*. He lists the *vilāyat* of Qandahār, Herat, Kābul, Mazār-i Sharīf, Khurāsān, Badakhshān, Panjāb (Lahore), and Kashmīr (Singh 1981: 353–4).

¹⁰¹ The subdivisions of Farāh, Maimana, Balūchistān, Ghaznī, Laghmān, Pishāvar, Dēra Ismā'īl Khān, Dēra Ghāzī Khān, Shikārpūr, Sībī, Sind, Chhachh Hazāra, Layya, Multān, and Sirhind are categorized as *ḥukūmat-i a'lā* (Singh 1981: 353–4).

¹⁰² According to Elphinstone, Herat, Farāh, Qandahār, Ghaznī, Kābul, Bāmiyān & Ghūrbānd, Jalālābād, Laghmān, Pishāvar, Dēra Ismā'īl Khān, Dēra Ghāzī Khān, Shikārpūr, Sībī, Sind, Kashmīr, Chhachh Hazāra, Layya, and Multān fall under the category of "most important provinces". Reflecting in part the shrinking scope of authority of the last Sadūzais, this list does not contain several *vilāyat* (Mazār-i Sharīf, Khurāsān, Badakhshān, Panjāb) and *ḥukūmat-i a'lā* (Maimana, Balūchistān, Sirhind) (Elphinstone 1992 II: 255–7).

¹⁰³ Elphinstone lists the following subdivisions: Ghilzai (including the Afghān parts of Laghmān and Jalālābād), Šāfī and Tagāb, Bangashāt (including the Jājīs and Tūrīs), Dāman (up to Bannū and Davar), Chakhānsūr, Ghūrāt (the Hazāras), Siyāhband (the Ūymāq), Isfizār, Anār Darra and Pusht-i Kūh (Elphinstone 1992: II: 255–7).

¹⁰⁴ *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 147–8.

¹⁰⁵ There is conflicting information on the mode of distribution. According to *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī*, Tīmūr Shāh assigned his eldest son Ayūb [Humāyūn Mīrzā?] to the government of Qandahār, his second son Maḥmūd Mīrzā to Herat, his third and favorite son Zamān Mīrzā to Kābul and reserved the government of Pishāvar for himself (T Su 160). Ferrier lists the following governorships: Humāyūn Mīrzā was in charge of Qandahār, Maḥmūd Mīrzā of Herat, 'Abbās Mīrzā of Pishāvar, Zamān Mīrzā of Kābul, Shujā' al-Mulk of Ghaznī and Kuhandil Mīrzā of Kashmīr (Ferrier 1858: 108; see also T Hu 251; Fūfalzā'ī 1967: 398–400).

¹⁰⁶ Brentjes 1983: 209. The Safavid province of Qandahār consisted of the following districts: Bālā Bulūk, Miyān Bulūk, Pāyīn Bulūk and Julga (Rawlinson 1871: 866) See also Qaišar Mīrzā's letter to the *khāns* of the Chahār Bulūk in 1208/1793–94 and Shāh Zamān's letter to his son Sulṭān Ḥaidar in Šafar 1209/August–September 1794 (Fūfalzā'ī 1967: 35, 300).

¹⁰⁷ Fūfalzā'ī 1967: 65, 111, 521.

to have survived until the nineteenth century. Thus British observers referred to the “Chahār Vilāyat” (rather than *bulūk*) grouped around Herat, which consisted of the districts of Kurukh, Auba, Isfizār and Ghūriyān.¹⁰⁸

The creation of administrative units made up of four subdivisions was by no means a unique phenomenon. Among the most celebrated precedents was the division of the Sasanian Empire into four parts, the easternmost of which was Khurāsān.¹⁰⁹ During the Arab period Khurāsān was divided into four quarters (*rubʿ*) named after the four great cities of Nīshāpūr, Marv, Herat, and Balkh.¹¹⁰ This territorial concept proved to be of great longevity and was quoted, among others, by the seventeenth-century traveller Ibn Valī.¹¹¹ Besides Herat and Qandahār, there are further examples of administrative units organized on the basis of four constituent parts in Sadūzai times. The region between the Murghāb river and Balkh was known as the Chahār Vilāyat and comprised the towns of Maimana, Andkhūd, Shibarghān and Sar-i Pul. This administrative division possibly harked back to the Tuqai-Timurid era.¹¹² Similar units are reported for the eastern part of Aḥmad Shāh’s domain. Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī repeatedly mentions the Indian subdivision of Chahār Maḥāll in the province of Lahore, which consisted of the districts of Gujrat, Aurangābād, Siyālkōt, and Pasrūr.¹¹³

During the early Sadūzai period, the spatial concept of “Khurāsān” assumed several overlapping meanings. In broad terms, it stood for the westernmost part of Aḥmad Shāh’s dominion. In the administrative context, however, new entities evolved under this heading. As seen above, the province of Herat was conceptualized as consisting of the four western *bulūk* of Khurāsān. At the same time, both the terms of “Khurāsān” and “Iran” continued to be applied to the region controlled by Shāh Rukh Afshār until the establishment of Qājār authority in 1796. Like in Safavid times, Khurāsān was split up between Herat and Mashhad, with the difference that Aḥmad Shāh’s policies worked to the detriment of Mashhad. When the Sadūzai ruler formally reinstated Shāh Rukh Afshār as ruler of “Iran” in Rajab 1168/May 1755, he separated the districts of Turshīz, Turbat-i Ḥaidarīya, Turbat-i Shaikh Jām, Bākhaz, and Khvāf from his jurisdiction and incorporated them into the province of Herat.¹¹⁴ Shāh Rukh Afshār’s sphere of authority was bounded by the deserts of Dasht-i Kavīr and Dasht-i Lūt in the southwest, and the Qājār domain of Astarābād in the northwest. It included the towns of Bīrjand and Ṭabas in Qūhistān, the Bayāt stronghold of Nīshāpūr, as well as the Kurdish domains of Khabūshān and Bujnūrd. The regions further west fell to Karīm Khān Zand, who occupied Isfahān in 1750 and made Shīrāz his capital in 1765.¹¹⁵

HERAT AS A SADŪZAI PROVINCE

In eighteenth-century accounts, the province of Herat figured among the “dominions situated in Khurāsān” (*mamālik-i mauzūʿa-yi Khurāsān*). Within this realm, the city of Herat was considered to possess great strategic importance: It formed the gateway to Khurāsān and ‘Irāq (*dahana-yi ‘Irāq va Khurāsān*) and was conveniently situated at the border of Turkistān (*sarḥadd-i mamlakat-i Turkistān*).¹¹⁶ As mentioned above,

¹⁰⁸ Daud Khān 1873: 7; *Gaz. Afghanistan* III: 253; Forrest 1906: 36; Lal 1834: 10; Takki Khān 1885: 1241–52; Todd, October 1839, LPS/20/G10/3 No. 4 pp. 7–8. See also Kakar 1979:77.

¹⁰⁹ Frye 1983: 154; Morony, “Sasanids,” *E.I.*, 2 IX: 77.

¹¹⁰ Le Strange 1905: 382–3.

¹¹¹ Akhmedov 1977: 40.

¹¹² Lee 1996: 44. Another famous example of the creation of four administrative entities is Chingiz Khān’s distribution of his realm among the four sons by his principal wife. According to Jackson’s critical assessment, however, the division of the Mongol empire into four units was not the result of administrative arrangements made by Chingiz Khān but rather a retrospective justification of the political realities that had come about by the early fourteenth century (Jackson 1999: 12–17, 35). Even so, this precedent was followed by Tīmūr, who divided his realm into four sections (Manz 2000: 141).

¹¹³ TA (Humāyūn): 52, 55–6, 212, 221. See also T Su 133–4; Singh 1981: 101; Davies, “Aḥmad Shāh Durrani,” *E.I.*, 2 I: 295.

¹¹⁴ Ferrier 1858: 81; T Su 131. See also Fūfālzāʾī 1958: 319. Bākhaz formed part of Tīmūr Shāh’s domain in 1199/1785. In 1204/1790, Tīmūr Shāh incorporated Tūn and Ṭabas in his jurisdiction by placing them under the government of Muḥammad Khān Hazāra, the *bēglerbēgī* of Herat (Fūfālzāʾī 1958: 332–3; Fūfālzāʾī 1967: 712–13).

¹¹⁵ Perry 1979: 205–7. See also *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann): 139.

¹¹⁶ TA (Humāyūn) 432.

Turshīz, Turbat-i Haidarīya, Turbat-i Shaikh Jām, Bākharz, and Khvāf constituted the westernmost districts of the province. In the east, it was bounded by the river Hilmand.¹¹⁷

The province of Herat was formally assigned to Aḥmad Shāh's eldest son Tīmūr Mīrzā in 1749. Tīmūr Mīrzā, who was two years old at the time of his appointment, seems to have spent a great part of his childhood and young adulthood in Herat. In 1750, he was temporarily displaced by the troops of Shāh Sulaimān II but was reinstalled later the same year when Aḥmad Shāh regained control of the city. Tīmūr Mīrzā's second tenure as governor of Herat apparently lasted until Aḥmad Shāh's fourth campaign to India from December 1756 to March 1757, during which he gained the government of Panjāb for a year.¹¹⁸ In Rabī' I 1173/October–November 1759, Tīmūr Mīrzā was reappointed to Herat.¹¹⁹ He continued to govern this province until Aḥmad Shāh's death on 2 Rabī' I 1186/3 June 1772.¹²⁰ In spring 1184/1770, he joined his father on a military campaign against Shāh Rukh Afshār and his rebellious son Naṣrullāh Mīrzā II.¹²¹ The government of Herat seems to have been endowed with a special prestige within the Durrānī Empire, and all sources agree that Tīmūr Shāh was groomed to become Aḥmad Shāh's successor.¹²² While the available sources contain little information about the routine aspects of government, they allow certain conclusions concerning the tribal texture around Herat and the role the local leadership assumed in the military affairs of the province. One noteworthy phenomenon is that of the *chahār ūymāq* as a unit of military administration. Another important aspect is the great amount of social and spatial mobility displayed by a number of tribal leaders. The career of Darvīsh 'Alī Khān Hazāra under Aḥmad Shāh and the rise of Qilich Khān Tīmūrī under Shāh Zamān are cases in point.

The Chahār Ūymāq

The division of Herat province into four *vilāyat/bulūk* apparently generated matching military units. Brentjes notes that the Safavid rulers had designated the pasture lands northeast of Herat as one of four military districts.¹²³ In Sadūzai times, the military contingents raised around Herat and Mashhad were labelled as *chahār ūymāq*. These troops were made up of 12,000 soldiers of different tribal backgrounds. According to Fūfalzā'ī, the *chahār ūymāq* were a standing army in charge of the protection of Herat. They included a mixture of local tribes, such as Qizilbāsh, Hazāra, Fīrūzkūhī, Tāymanī, as well as another group generically

¹¹⁷ TA (Humāyūn) 417. Nineteenth-century sources describe the Khāsh Rūd as the border between the provinces of Qandahār and Herat (Forrest 1906: 36).

¹¹⁸ Fūfalzā'ī 1967: 62–6, 72, 98.

¹¹⁹ Barnābādī f. 48a; see also Tumanovich 1989: 175–6. According to Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī, Tīmūr Mīrzā's reappointment to the government of Herat took place in the Year of the Snake/1761–62 (TA (Humāyūn) 417).

¹²⁰ TA (Humāyūn) 515. This date is confirmed by records quoted by Fūfalzā'ī, which indicate that Sulaimān Mīrzā b. Aḥmad Shāh assumed power on 23 Rabī' I 1186/24 June 1772 and was deposed by Tīmūr on 19 Jumādā I 1186/18 August 1772. On the basis of *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī*, Singh fixes Aḥmad Shāh's death on 20 Rajab 1186/17 October 1772 (T Su 147; Singh 1981: 326). See also Mann 1898: 172.

¹²¹ Elphinstone 1992 II: 297–8; Fūfalzā'ī 1967: 111–12; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 133–47. This campaign took place during the 24th year of Aḥmad Shāh's reign, which corresponds to 1184/27 April 1770–15 April 1771. Aḥmad Shāh left Qandahār on 1 Muḥarram/17 April 1770 and went on to Herat, where he was lavishly entertained by Tīmūr Mīrzā. The siege of Mashhad lasted for 120 days. On 5 Jumādā I 1184/27 August 1770 a Durrānī contingent under the command of Sardār Jahān Khān and Naṣīr Khān Balūch gained a decisive victory over Shāh Rukh Afshār's ally 'Alī Mardān Khān Zangū'ī at Turshīz. After re-establishing Sadūzai authority in Mashhad, Aḥmad Shāh retreated quickly to Herat and Qandahār because of the approaching winter (TA (Humāyūn) 493–502). Gulistāna confirms that Aḥmad Shāh's campaign to Mashhad was concluded shortly before the onset of winter (*Mujmal al-tavārīkh* 143). *Gulshan-i murād* and *Maṭla' al-shams*, by contrast, report that Aḥmad Shāh left Mashhad for Qandahār at the height of summer, that is, on 8 Šafar 1184/3 June 1770 (*Gulshan-i murād* 638; MSh II: 343–5; see also Mann 1898: 355; Fūfalzā'ī 1967: 126, 131; Raḥavī 1999: 190; Singh 1981: 323).

¹²² It is difficult to identify the exact date of Tīmūr Mīrzā's appointment as heir apparent. A chapter heading in the *Tārīkh-i aḥmadshāhī* suggests that he gained this position as early as 1754 (TA 170). Fūfalzā'ī is of the opinion that Aḥmad Shāh nominated Tīmūr Mīrzā as heir apparent subsequent to his last campaign to Mashhad in 1184/1770 (Fūfalzā'ī 1967: 112, 126).

¹²³ Brentjes 1983: 209.

labelled as *ūymāq*.¹²⁴ This lack of specificity points to different usages of the term *ūymāq*. Originally signifying ‘a group of people, a tribe’, it had also come to denote territorial and administrative subdivisions in the sense of “district”. The above information indicates that this dual connotation still carried weight in the Sadūzai era and that the term *ūymāq* served both as a tribal and a military denomination.¹²⁵

The available evidence of the organization of the *chahār ūymāq* is inconclusive. The eighteenth-century historian Imām al-Dīn Ḥusainī mentions the fact that Shāh Zamān incorporated the *chār a‘māq* into his tribal militia (*lāt-i khāṣṣa*) in 1797.¹²⁶ The modern historian Fūfalzā‘ī informs us that they were under the command of Durrānī *sardārs* carrying the title of *qullarāqāsī*, which indicates their military character.¹²⁷ Yet a number of sources identify the military subdivisions with distinct tribal groups. Imām al-Dīn Ḥusainī describes the Fīrūzkūhī, Tāymanī and Jamshīdī leaders as the *sardārs* of Khurāsān and as the representatives of the *chār a‘māq*.¹²⁸ Writing in the 1860s, Muḥammad Ḥayāt Khān names four original constituent groups:

Āymāq is a Tātār word meaning part of a tribe (*qaum*), lineage (*khēl*), or branch (*shākh*)... The *āymāq* are generally also called *chār āymāq*... Originally they were made up of as many parts. But now there are a lot of branches among them. The original constituent groups (*qaum*) are the Tāymanīs, Hazāras, Tīmūrīs, and Zūrīs.¹²⁹

British accounts of the time likewise attempt to reconstitute the “original” elements of the *chahār ūymāq* and often point to the Jamshīdīs, Fīrūzkūhīs, Tāymanīs and Sunnī Hazāras of Qal‘a-yi Nau as the essential “four tribes”.¹³⁰ Other accounts include groups like the Tīmūrīs, Zūrīs, Qipchāqs, Chingizīs, and Ṭāhirīs. This reveals the arbitrary nature of the endeavor to fit the complex population patterns of the region around Herat into a supposed framework of four distinct entities. Instead, it is more appropriate to view these four units as an administrative grid imposed by the government in order to absorb and organize heterogeneous tribal groups for military purposes.

Among the *ūymāq* of Herat, the Sunnī Hazāras of Qal‘a-yi Nau played a preponderant role during the early Sadūzai period. Their most prominent leader was Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān, whose career sheds some light on the circumstances prevailing around Herat during Aḥmad Shāh’s reign.

Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān Hazāra

During the interval between Nādir Shāh’s death in 1747 and Aḥmad Shāh’s assumption of authority in 1750, the environs of Herat drifted into anarchy. Although Afsharid officials formally maintained the administration of Herat, they were mostly left to their own limited resources. The power struggle that engulfed the former capital of Mashhad precluded any sustained military assistance for Herat. The resulting political and military vacuum gave free rein to local *ūymāq* chiefs. Immediately after Nādir Shāh’s death, marauding Jamshīdī and Hazāra contingents roamed the countryside west of the city in search of mobile resources.¹³¹ At the time of Shāh Rukh Afshār’s assumption of power in Mashhad in Shavvāl 1161/October 1748, Ghulām ‘Alī Khān, the Afsharid military governor of Herat, found himself threatened by Tāymanī forces.¹³²

¹²⁴ Fūfalzā‘ī 1958: 300.

¹²⁵ Centlivres 1979: 33; Doerfer I: 182, 185; Janata 1962–63: 149.

¹²⁶ T Hu 351.

¹²⁷ Fūfalzā‘ī 1958: 300; Fūfalzā‘ī 1967: 412. According to Fūfalzā‘ī, the tribal contingents of the army of Khurāsān were recruited among the leaders of the Shāmlūs, Tīmūrīs, Tāymanīs, Chahār Ūymāq-i Fīrūzkūhī, Qarā‘īs, Jamshīdīs, Surkh Kamāns, Qipchāqs, Qarācha Dāgh, Qarā Bayāts, and Qarā Tātārs (Fūfalzā‘ī 1967: 65).

¹²⁸ T Hu 310, 315. The leaders mentioned are Bahrām Khān Fīrūzkūhī, Muḥammad Khān Tāymanī, ‘Aṭā Muḥammad Khān Tāymanī, and Yalangtūsh I Jamshīdī. See also Fūfalzā‘ī 1958: 78–9.

¹²⁹ *Ḥayāt-i afghānī* 457.

¹³⁰ Janata 1962–63: 141; Mihrabān 1983: 34; Schurmann 1962: 50–5.

¹³¹ Barnābādī ff. 42a–b.

¹³² Amīr Khān Mīshmast, who was sent to Ghulām ‘Alī Khān’s succour, acted as military governor of Herat until the town was conquered by Aḥmad Shāh in 1750. Amīr Khān’s valiant efforts to defend the city notwithstanding, he finally had to submit to the Durrānī leader because military assistance from Mashhad was not forthcoming (TA (Humāyūn) 71–2, 95–106).

During the early Sadūzai period, Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān Hazāra became a central figure in the administration of Herat. Relatively little is known about his previous career except that he initially defied Nādir Shāh’s authority when he occupied Herat in 1732.¹³³ In early 1750, Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān apparently cooperated with the Qizilbāsh troops that conquered Herat under the orders of Shāh Sulaimān II.¹³⁴ When Aḥmad Shāh regained control of Herat later in the same year, he placed the fiscal affairs and administration of Herat (*zabt u rabṭ-i māliyāt va iyālat-i Harāt*) in Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān’s hands. This position seems to have corresponded to that of governor, as Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān Hazāra is subsequently described as *bēglerbēgī* of Herat.¹³⁵ The military command rested with one of Aḥmad Shāh’s trusted generals, Anzala Khān Fūfalzai Durrānī.¹³⁶ Although Tīmūr Mīrzā was formally in charge of Herat, these two men actually controlled all fiscal and military matters and looked towards Aḥmad Shāh rather than the young prince for orders.¹³⁷ Aḥmad Shāh may have intended the appointment of a local leader as governor and a fellow Durrānī tribesman as military governor (*sardār*) as a system of checks and balances. At any rate, the relationship between the two men was characterized by a fierce rivalry which culminated in Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān’s rebellion in the early 1760s.¹³⁸

Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī takes a dim view of Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān’s character and accuses him of an innate proclivity towards oppression, which caused him to “close the doors of compassion and generosity” (*abvāb-i raḥm va muruvvat*) on his helpless subjects as soon as Aḥmad Shāh turned his back. He attributes the estrangement between the Hazāra *bēglerbēgī* and the Durrānī *sardār* to the latter’s vain attempts to restrain Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān’s violent ways. In the Year of the Snake/1761–62, Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān decided to “scratch the face of loyalty with the fingernails of rebellion” (*chihra-yi ikhlāṣ-rā ba nākhun-i ‘iṣyān kharāshīd*). He left Herat for his stronghold in Qal‘a-yi Nau, collected numerous followers among his fellow Hazāras and (other) *ūymāq*, and took position at Kurukh near Herat. In the spring of 1762, in an effort to evade a punitive expedition led by the Durrānī vanguard general (*charkhchībāshī*) Shāh Pasand Khān Ishāqzai Durrānī, Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān left Aḥmad Shāh’s dominions in a northerly direction with the intent to settle in Marv. Yet this quest for independence was cut short by his followers, who soon became homesick and demanded to return to their homelands (*yūrt-i qadīm*). Given his enmity with Anzala Khān Fūfalzai, Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān decided to enter direct negotiations with Aḥmad Shāh and his *vazīr* Shāh Valī Khān. The minister sided with Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān and convinced Aḥmad Shāh to remove Anzala Khān Fūfalzai from the government of Herat and to allow the Hazāra leader to resume his position as *bēglerbēgī* of Herat.¹³⁹

After his return from Marv, Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān initially cooperated with the new Durrānī *sardār* of Herat, Shāh Bēg Khān Fūfalzai. Eventually, however, he returned to his old ways and assumed an arrogant bearing towards the Sardār. Tīmūr Mīrzā also detected signs of rebellion in Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān’s demeanor and decided to imprison him in the fort Ikhtiyār al-Dīn.¹⁴⁰ The conflict between Tīmūr Mīrzā and Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān dragged on for several years. In the Year of the Monkey/1764–65, after a renewed rebellion, Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān submitted to Aḥmad Shāh in Qandahār.¹⁴¹ During Aḥmad Shāh’s campaign to Khurāsān in 1770, Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān was kept under guard in Aḥmad Shāh’s army and then returned to Tīmūr Mīrzā’s safekeeping.¹⁴² In the spring of 1771, Tīmūr Mīrzā’s troops defeated a Hazāra-Jamshīdī confederacy under the leadership of Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān’s sons Islām Khān Hazāra and Anzala Khān Hazāra, both of whom were

¹³³ Kāzīm 197. See also Singer 1972: 152.

¹³⁴ *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 60; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Raḥavī) 48.

¹³⁵ TA (Humāyūn) 114, 140. See also Singh 1981: 86. According to Faiḏ Muḥammad, Aḥmad Shāh appointed Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān after the conquest of Herat in 1750 but dismissed him shortly afterwards on his return from his campaign to Nīshāpūr in the winter of 1750–51 (ST 14–15; McChesney/Khorrami 2013 I: 21–2).

¹³⁶ TA (Humāyūn) 430.

¹³⁷ Fūfalzā’ī 1967: 66.

¹³⁸ Possibly on the basis of Ferrier, Sulṭān Muḥammad places Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān’s deposal in the year 1751. On his return from his first campaign to Khurāsān, Aḥmad Shāh detected “signs of rebelliousness” on Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān’s forehead, deposed him and replaced him with Tīmūr Mīrzā (T Su 130; see also Ferrier 1858: 78; Singh 1981: 92).

¹³⁹ TA (Humāyūn) 429–431.

¹⁴⁰ TA (Humāyūn) 432.

¹⁴¹ TA (Humāyūn) 451–4.

¹⁴² Barnābādī 46b–47b; TA (Humāyūn) 502–3.

killed in battle.¹⁴³ In 1772, when Tīmūr Mīrzā departed for Qandahār to claim the Durrānī throne with the support of his Afghān troops, he imprisoned Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān in the citadel of Herat and put him to death.¹⁴⁴ Apart from the career of Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān, relatively little is known of the configurations of power in the region around Herat during the Sadūzai period. The circumstances in Mashhad, by contrast, are covered in much greater detail by a number of sources, some of which view the events there from the perspective of the Zand court.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN SHĀH RUKH AFSHĀR’S REALM

In the western reaches of Khurāsān, the relative weakness of Shāh Rukh Afshār encouraged the formation of a number of powerful factions which were locked into an ongoing power struggle accompanied by repeated rounds of coalition making and breaking. These machinations reached their climax with the deposal and blinding of Shāh Rukh Afshār in January 1750. The events and the political alignments that triggered them have received varying interpretations in the available eighteenth-century accounts. Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī identifies major tribal confederacies like the Khurāsānian Arabs, Kurds and Turks as the main political actors. Gulistāna and Muḥammad Khalīl Mar‘ashī, by contrast, view the power struggle between Shāh Rukh Afshār and Mīr Sayyid Muḥammad, the influential guardian of Imām Riżā’s shrine, as the root cause of the conflict. These two authors adopt a dynastic argument: As both protagonists traced their maternal descent to Safavid forebears, their claims to royal authority enjoyed the same degree of legitimacy. Shāh Rukh Afshār’s mother Fāṭima Sulṭān Bēgum was the daughter of Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusain (r. 1694–1722).¹⁴⁵ Mīr Sayyid Muḥammad’s mother Shahr-bānū Bēgum was a daughter of Shāh Sulaimān (r. 1666–1694) and the sister of Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusain.¹⁴⁶

Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī’s characterization of the affairs of Khurāsān on the eve of the conquest of Mashhad in late 1754 bears the message that the imposition of Durrānī authority would bring about a more equitable government and rescue the population from the state of insecurity and impoverishment caused by the shifting dominance of various tribal leaders. Thus, Aḥmad Shāh observed that Mashhad had been subject to constant warfare during the seven years which had elapsed since Nādir Shāh’s death:

The entire population, nobles and subjects alike, as well as the attendants of the holy shrine, cannot breathe freely due to oppression exercised by evil elements and bandits. Every year one of the powerful tribal leaders abuses the agricultural land around this holy city to secure pasture for his tyrannical troops. During the past two years, Mīr ‘Alam Khān [Khuzaima], pursuing the path of enmity and war with the Chamishgazak [Za‘farānlū] *khāns*, has raised the banner of oppression and has subjected all men of wealth to extortions beyond comparison.¹⁴⁷

In a message to the local leadership, the Durrānī ruler promised to bring Mashhad within the fold of royal protection and to undo the evil caused by corrupt local leaders:

Since Mīr ‘Alam Khān’s [recent] flight, this area [has become even more fragmented]: Everyone has availed himself of a district (*bulūkī az bulūkāt*) or a city quarter (*maḥalla’ī az maḥallāt*) and has assumed royal authority. As the population cannot endure these impositions any longer, my justice-spreading troops have entered the region (*ulkā*) of Khurāsān in order to ease the burden borne by the subjects and to extend patronage to the attendants of the exalted tomb.¹⁴⁸

Aside from advertising the beneficial effects of Aḥmad Shāh’s government, Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī’s account also contains some important information on the balance of power in and around Mashhad. According to his

¹⁴³ TA (Humāyūn) 502–3. See also Tumanovich 1989: 175–6.

¹⁴⁴ Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān was killed by Āqā’ī (Āqāsī) Khān, the son of his paternal cousin Muḥammad Shāh Khān (TA (Humāyūn) 507–8; see also Fūfālzā’ī 1967: 712; Ferrier 1858: 97).

¹⁴⁵ *Gulshan-i murād* 632; *Majma‘ al-tavārīkh* 86. See also Lockhart 1938: 335; Perry 1971: 65; ST 13; McChesney/Khorrami 2013 I: 20.

¹⁴⁶ *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 45; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Raḥavī) 37; *Majma‘ al-tavārīkh* 91–2. See also ST 13; McChesney/Khorrami 2013 I: 20.

¹⁴⁷ TA (Humāyūn) 176.

¹⁴⁸ TA (Humāyūn) 177.

portrayal, Shāh Rukh Afshār was at the mercy of a number of powerful tribal leaders who represented different categories within the ethnic make up of Khurāsān. The ruler of Mashhad was confronted with three powerful factions: the Persian-speaking Arabs and Tājiks (*ilāt-i a'rāb-i fārsīzabān va jamā'at-i tāzīkīya*), the “brave” Kurds (*akrād-i jalādat nīzhād*), and the “intrepid” Turks (*atrāk-i bībāk*).¹⁴⁹ These three groups enhanced their control over the affairs of Mashhad and the remnants of Nādir Shāh's treasure by securing Shāh Rukh Afshār's coronation there and forestalling any political or military activity directed towards the western parts of Iran. According to Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī, they dissuaded the Afshār ruler from his plans to travel to 'Irāq and Azerbaijan by pointing to the dangers lurking on the eastern borders of his dominion:

The Kurds and Turks of Khurāsān are caught between two turbulent flood waves, that is, the Uzbeks and the Afghāns of Qandahār. These two valiant groups will continue to bring about war, enmity, and insecurity. If we embark on a long and distant journey [to 'Irāq], these two powerful enemies will avail themselves of the opportunity to swiftly attack Khurāsān, to plunder the pastures and cattle of the local population, to destroy their property, and to occupy the region (*mamlakat*).¹⁵⁰

Shortly after, Mīr 'Alam Khān Khuzaima convinced Shāh Rukh Afshār to nominate leaders for the three major ethnic categories. Painting a gory picture of the unruliness of the Kurds, he reasoned that the appointment of paramount chiefs would allow the king to establish greater control over them and the other tribal groups:

The Kurds are a numerous tribe, and they constantly move about within and without the city. They are accustomed to robbery and murder. As they have no singular leader of sound judgment, they continuously imbibe the drink of impudence and unrestraint and do not bow to any authority. The appointment of a supreme leader who will always be present at the threshold of the royal palace will enable [you] to identify, summon, and punish any Kurd who has committed a crime. [This leader] will also represent tribal concerns at the royal court. In the same manner, it is necessary to elect for the Turks and Arabs distinguished leaders (*sardārān*) who are well enough acquainted with the internal affairs of their tribes to administer punishment and to look after their concerns. Ja'far Khān [Ja'far Khān Za'farānlū] should be placed in charge of the affairs of the Kurds; Yūsuf 'Alī Khān Jalāyir should attend to all matters concerning the Turks; and I, this servant of the royal court, should be entrusted with the administration of the Arabs and the Tājik community (*jamā'at*).¹⁵¹

While reflecting the prevailing configurations of power, this seemingly harmonious agreement did not create the sort of stability Mīr 'Alam Khān had projected. During the late 1740s and early 1750s, the three prominent tribal leaders jockeyed for influence and repeatedly called Shāh Rukh Afshār's authority into question. The information contained in the *Tārīkh-i aḥmadshāhī* allows us to profile the prominent men involved and to reconstruct their political strategies. The Khuzaima Arabs of Qāyin rose to preeminence under Nādir Shāh, who awarded the government of Qāyin and Farāh to Ismā'īl Khān Khuzaima in 1731. After Ismā'īl Khān's death, his young son Mīr 'Alam Khān continued to enjoy Nādir Shāh's patronage and accompanied him on all military campaigns.¹⁵² At the time of Shāh Rukh Afshār's coronation in Shavvāl 1161/October 1748, Mīr 'Alam Khān began to reside in Mashhad with six to seven hundred followers and soon gained the support of a sizeable faction at court. Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī reports that Shāh Rukh Afshār fostered the young Khuzaima leader because they were both fifteen years of age and because he hoped to employ him as a counterweight to the powerful Turkish and Kurdish leaders. To this end, he awarded the military governorship of Khurāsān (*sardārī-yi mamlakat-i Khurāsān*) to him.¹⁵³ Mīr 'Alam Khān's standing at court rose to such a degree that he eclipsed the other tribal leaders: When the entire population, “provincial governors and officials, people from near and far, including Kurds, Arabs, Turks and Tājiks, became aware that Mīr 'Alam Khān alone held the key to the king's mind and that the lock of their claims could only be opened by his mediation, they all turned to him.”¹⁵⁴ Mīr 'Alam Khān's Kurdish counterpart Ja'far Khān Za'farānlū “Vakīl al-Daula” of Chinārān was a veteran of the Afsharid period and had served in the

¹⁴⁹ TA (Humāyūn) 69.

¹⁵⁰ TA (Humāyūn) 68.

¹⁵¹ TA (Humāyūn) 72–3; TA (Maulā'ī 118).

¹⁵² *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 81; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Raḡavī) 64.

¹⁵³ TA (Humāyūn) 68–9.

¹⁵⁴ TA (Humāyūn) 71.

campaign to Andkhūd and Balkh in 1737–38.¹⁵⁵ At the time of Shāh Rukh Afshār's coronation he was appointed as viceregent (*vakīl*).¹⁵⁶ The third protagonist, Yūsuf 'Alī Khān Jalāyir of Kalāt-i Nādirī, was a cousin (*banī a' mām*) of Nādir Shāh's trusted general Ṭahmāsp Khān Vakīl al-Daula.¹⁵⁷

Mīr 'Alam Khān's influence at court tempted him to dispose of Shāh Rukh Afshār's authority altogether. To this end, he entered a plot with Ja'far Khān Za'farānlū Kurd, which was carried out in the early morning hours of 1 Šafar 1163/10 January 1750. Shāh Rukh Afshār was forced to abdicate, and his emblems of royal authority (*tāj va kulāh-i farmāndihī*) were passed over to Mīr Sayyid Muḥammad, who assumed the title of Shāh Sulaimān II. While the conspirators initially intended to keep Shāh Rukh Afshār well and alive as a pawn for future political exigencies, they changed their mind in the face of continued support for the Afsharid king and blinded him.¹⁵⁸

According to Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī, Shāh Sulaimān II's reign lasted a total of two months and was put to an end by Yūsuf 'Alī Khān Jalāyir, who assembled his troops in Mashhad under the pretext of calling the roll. When Ja'far Khān Za'farānlū and his Kurdish troops departed for their home territories, Yūsuf 'Alī Khān Jalāyir attacked the royal residence at Chahār Bāgh, swooped down on Shāh Sulaimān II like "a falcon on a finch" and blinded him. He then replaced Shāh Rukh Afshār on the throne and assumed a central position at court. As Shāh Rukh Afshār's representative (*vakīl al-saltāna*), Yūsuf 'Alī Khān took care of all government affairs and did his best to obscure Shāh Rukh Afshār's blindness. By informing the king of all external details of his visitors, such as their bearing, their dress, and their adornments, he enabled him to react in a manner which conveyed the impression that he was able to see after all. To cement this impression, Yūsuf 'Alī Khān spread the rumor that the surgeon in charge of blinding Shāh Rukh Afshār had spared one of his eyes.¹⁵⁹

While Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī hardly mentions Shāh Sulaimān II's qualities as a ruler, Gulistāna and Mar'ashī clearly prefer him over Shāh Rukh Afshār and portray his rise to power as occasioned by general sentiment. According to Mar'ashī, the tribal leaders who assembled at Mīr Sayyid Muḥammad's residence on 20 Muḥarram 1163/30 December 1749 had little positive to say about the Afsharid leader:

We have only raised Shāh Rukh to the throne of the kingdom of Iran because his mother belongs to the noble Safavid lineage. If the Iranian people had any confidence in or affection for Nādir Shāh's descendants we would have girded our loins in the service of anyone of his sons or nephews. The sole reason for our [erstwhile] loyalty to Shāh Rukh was his noble [Safavid] descent. [But] now there is no one in the Safavid lineage who is more qualified in terms of ability, distinction and genius to assume kingship and control over the kingdom of Iran (*mulk-i Īrān*) than you. Compared with a person of your standing, [Shāh Rukh Afshār] seems like an undiscerning child, and you are like a father in relation to him.¹⁶⁰

Mar'ashī, who was a grandson of Mīr Sayyid Muḥammad, alias Shāh Sulaimān II, provides us with more detailed information concerning his grandfather's background and his early career. Mīr Sayyid was born into an illustrious line of government officials in 1114/1702–03. His father, Mīrzā Muḥammad Dāvud, served as trustee at Imām Rizā's shrine in Mashhad. After the death of his father in 1121/1709–10, he was brought up in the royal household of his maternal uncle Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusain. During the Hūtak Ghilzai invasion of Iṣfahān in 1722–29, he joined Ṭahmāsp II's cause and later married one of his sisters. In 1156/1743–44, Nādir Shāh appointed him as trustee to the shrine of Imām Rizā (*Sulṭān-i Khurāsān*). At the time of Nādir Shāh's assassination in June 1747, he also was in charge of the citadel of Mashhad. Later on, he entered the service of the Afsharid rulers 'Ādil Shāh and Ibrāhīm Shāh.¹⁶¹

The narrative of Mīr Sayyid Muḥammad's rise after the death of Ibrāhīm Shāh b. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Khān in spring 1749, as reproduced by Gulistāna and Mar'ashī, is largely identical and focuses on two

¹⁵⁵ Kāzīm 483.

¹⁵⁶ TA (Humāyūn) 66, 68, 73.

¹⁵⁷ TA (Humāyūn) 79.

¹⁵⁸ TA (Humāyūn) 74–8.

¹⁵⁹ TA (Humāyūn) 78–82.

¹⁶⁰ *Majma' al-tavārīkh* 111. See also *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 54–5; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Raḡavī): 44.

¹⁶¹ *Majma' al-tavārīkh* 91–6; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 45–6; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Raḡavī) 37. See also Perry 1971: 65.

elements. Both authors emphasize the fact that the Sayyid enjoyed a great degree of influence in the western regions of Iran as well. The second element concerns his reluctance to assume paramount leadership. Despite his previous political involvement, he consistently postured as a religious leader who shunned all worldly aspirations. This attitude is exemplified by his reaction to the offer of the governors of 'Irāq, Fārs and Azerbaijan to elevate him to the throne after Ibrāhīm Shāh's death. Mīr Sayyid Muḥammad, who resided in Qum at the time, allegedly answered: "I do not desire kingship. I consider being a sweeper at the holy threshold [of Imām Rizā's tomb] superior to the kingship of both worlds."¹⁶² Subsequently, he demonstrated his loyalty to Shāh Rukh Afshār by transporting Ibrāhīm Shāh's baggage-train from Qum to Mashhad.¹⁶³ Instead of rewarding Mīr Sayyid Muḥammad for this service, Shāh Rukh Afshār feared him as a powerful rival and undertook several unsuccessful attempts on his life. The pressure Shāh Rukh Afshār exerted on his courtiers to rid him of the Sayyid eventually led to the aforementioned mutiny of 20 Muḥarram 1163/30 December 1749. Mīr 'Alam Khān and fifteen other nobles entered Mīr Sayyid Muḥammad's residence, ignored his plea to withdraw to the Shiite shrine cities of 'Irāq ('atabāt), and escorted him to the royal palace. According to Mar'ashī, Mīr Sayyid Muḥammad's assumption of power was not backed only by the tribal leadership but by the entire population: Turks, Tājiks, Arabs, Kurds, Nakhī (?), Lālū, Tāymanī, as well as the urban population, amounting to a total of 80,000 persons, accompanied his entry at the Chahār Bāgh.¹⁶⁴ Alerted by the sound of military music and volleys of cannon and musket fire, Shāh Rukh Afshār hurried to the harem and strangled Ibrāhīm Khān Afshār's remaining five sons for fear that the ongoing coup aimed at elevating them to the throne.¹⁶⁵

Gulistāna's and Mar'ashī's account of the events subsequent to the crowning of Shāh Sulaimān II on 5 Šafar 1163/14 Januar 1750¹⁶⁶ again differs strongly from the interpretation offered by Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī. According to the *Tārīkh-i aḥmadshāhī*, it was Shāh Sulaimān II who instigated Shāh Rukh Afshār's blinding by threatening to resign.¹⁶⁷ In Gulistāna's and Mar'ashī's portrayal, however, the newly crowned king was most solicitous for Shāh Rukh Afshār's well-being from the beginning of his reign.¹⁶⁸ In their opinion, Mīr 'Alam Khān Khuzaima is to blame for the blinding of Shāh Rukh Afshār, which he undertook on his own account while Shāh Sulaimān II was away on a hunting expedition to Rādkān.¹⁶⁹ Shāh Rukh Afshār's subsequent comeback was engineered by his Jalāyir wife,¹⁷⁰ who managed to convince a number of tribal leaders, foremost among them Yūsuf 'Alī Khān Jalāyir, that the news of his blinding had been fabricated. Subsequent to their successful plot against Shāh Sulaimān II, the conspirators were dismayed to find out that the Afsharid ruler was indeed blind.¹⁷¹

The parallel fates suffered by Shāh Rukh Afshār and Shāh Sulaimān II make it clear that they were relatively weak elements within a force field that was determined by the interests of a number of powerful tribal leaders. Even so, the above pattern of king-making and breaking was influenced by long-standing dynastic considerations. While both men were reduced to pawns in the political game, their kingship was formally legitimized by their Safavid descent. After his return to power, Shāh Rukh Afshār remained a

¹⁶² *Majma' al-tavārīkh* 87. See also *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 46; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Raḡavī) 38.

¹⁶³ *Majma' al-tavārīkh* 88, 104–5; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 48; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Raḡavī) 39.

¹⁶⁴ *Majma' al-tavārīkh* 106–12. See also *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 50–5; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Raḡavī) 40–5; Perry, "Afsharids", *E.Ir.* I: 588.

¹⁶⁵ Due to Mīr Sayyid Muḥammad's intervention, two of Nādir Shāh's young nephews survived. Their names are variously given as Ḥasan Mīrzā and Raḥīm Mīrzā (*Majma' al-tavārīkh* 113) or Ḥasan Mīrzā and Ḥusain Mīrzā (*Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 57; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Raḡavī) 45).

¹⁶⁶ *Majma' al-tavārīkh* 114. The lunar year given by Gulistāna (5 Šafar 1162/25 January 1749) is certainly not correct. The author also mentions the Year of the Horse, which refers to the solar year of 1750–51 (*Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 57; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Raḡavī) 46).

¹⁶⁷ TA (Humāyūn) 77.

¹⁶⁸ *Majma' al-tavārīkh* 113; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 56; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Raḡavī) 45.

¹⁶⁹ *Majma' al-tavārīkh* 128–9; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 62–4; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Raḡavī) 50–51.

¹⁷⁰ Shāh Rukh Afshār's wife was the daughter of Mīrzā Khān Sulṭān Jalāyir (*Majma' al-tavārīkh* 133; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 66; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Raḡavī) 53).

¹⁷¹ *Majma' al-tavārīkh* 134–6; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 68; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Raḡavī) 55).

political nonentity, while the local chiefs resumed their intrigues and produced the highly segmented environment Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī describes for the year 1754.¹⁷² The conflict between the three tribal factions of the Kurds, Arabs and Jalāyirs reached its climax in 1166/November 1752–October 1753 when Mīr ‘Alam Khān Khuzaima occupied Mashhad and had Yūsuf ‘Alī Khān Jalāyir and Ja‘far Khān Za‘farānlū blinded.¹⁷³ A year later, he himself suffered a similar fate. During the siege of Mashhad in autumn 1754, Aḥmad Shāh apprehended Mīr ‘Alam Khān near Sabzavār and handed him over to his former victims, who blinded and executed him.¹⁷⁴

The incorporation of Mashhad into the Durrānī Empire was formalized by the appointment of Nūr Muḥammad Khān Durrānī Khavgānī as *sardār*.¹⁷⁵ However, the Durrānī presence in the western reaches of Khurāsān seems to have been marginal. Nūr Muḥammad Khān’s successor Amīr Khān Qarā’ī was unable to establish direct control over Mashhad. Gulistāna reports that Shāh Rukh Afshār ignored Amīr Khān Qarā’ī’s investiture and raised a *ghulām* by the name of Farīdūn Khān Gurjī to the office of viceregent (*nā’ib*). The Durrānī appointee Amīr Khān Qarā’ī only managed to gain access to Mashhad on the pretext of performing a pilgrimage to Imām Riżā’s shrine and was expelled soon afterwards. Farīdūn Khān, on his part, was murdered by Shāh Rukh Afshār’s eldest sons Naṣrullāh Mīrzā II and Nādir Mīrzā Afshār.¹⁷⁶ In the late 1760s, these two Afsharid princes entered center stage in the politics of the day and vied with each other for the control of Mashhad.

The most detailed and reliable report of the events in western Khurāsān during this period is furnished by Abū al-Ḥasan Ghaffārī Kāshānī, whose *Gulshan-i murād* otherwise mainly focuses on the events at the court of Karīm Khān Zand in Shīrāz. His account confirms the impression of Shāh Rukh Afshār’s realm as a sort of “no-man’s land” between the Sadūzai and Zand spheres of influence, in which the Afsharid rulers had to fend for themselves in an environment of competing tribal interests.¹⁷⁷ Kāshānī and Gulistāna agree that Shāh Rukh Afshār’s eldest son Naṣrullāh Mīrzā II showed the greatest promise of promoting Afsharid interests. He was popular among the population of Mashhad, having earned himself the sobriquet of “Valī Nī‘mat” by virtue of the impetuosity and bravery he had shown at a young age.¹⁷⁸ Yet Shāh Rukh Afshār,

¹⁷² Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī mentions the following developments:

- In 1164/1751, Yūsuf ‘Alī Khān Jalāyir engaged in military activities in Maihana; ‘Alī Naqī Khān Qājār, the *bēglerbēgī* of Marv entered the conflict and displaced the Jalāyirs from Mashhad; subsequently Ja‘far Khān Za‘farānlū and Mīr ‘Alam Khān Khuzaima assumed control over Mashhad (TA (Humāyūn) 139).
- In the spring of 1165/1752, Mīr ‘Alam Khān Khuzaima displaced Ja‘far Khān Za‘farānlū from Mashhad and entered a coalition with Yūsuf ‘Alī Khān Jalāyir; four months later Ja‘far Khān Za‘farānlū regained control of Mashhad; Mīr ‘Alam Khān withdrew to Qāyin; Yūsuf ‘Alī Khān returned to Kalāt-i Nādirī (TA (Humāyūn) 140, 164–5).
- In 1166 (November 1752–October 1753), Mīr ‘Alam Khān Khuzaima occupied Mashhad, imprisoned and blinded Ja‘far Khān Za‘farānlū, Yūsuf ‘Alī Khān Jalāyir and Muḥammad ‘Alī Khān Qarā’ī. Amīr Khān Qarā’ī and the Kurdish leadership turned to Aḥmad Shāh for assistance (TA (Humāyūn) 164–9; for an abridged version of the events see *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 82–5; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Raḥavī) 65–7).

¹⁷³ TA (Humāyūn) 168–9. Gulistāna is of the opinion that Yūsuf ‘Alī Khān Jalāyir was killed at this time (*Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 82; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Raḥavī) 65).

¹⁷⁴ According to the *Tārīkh-i aḥmadshāhī*, the population of Sabzavār submitted Mīr ‘Alam Khān to Ja‘far Khān Za‘farānlū Kurd’s brother Naqd ‘Alī Khān. After depriving him of one eye, Naqd ‘Alī Khān sent Mīr ‘Alam Khān to Khabūshān, where he was executed in revenge for the earlier blinding of Ja‘far Khān Za‘farānlū (TA (Humāyūn) 186; see also Mann 1898: 184; Tumanovich 1989: 173–4). Gulistāna reports that Mīr ‘Alam Khān was first brought to Mashhad, where he was blinded by Shāh Rukh Afshār in revenge for his own blinding and then suffered death at the hands of Ja‘far Khān Za‘farānlū (*Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 85; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Raḥavī) 67; see also Mann 1898: 184–5).

¹⁷⁵ According to the *Tārīkh-i aḥmadshāhī*, Nūr Muḥammad Khān Durrānī Khavgānī retained this post until 1175 (2 August 1761–21 July 1762) (TA (Humāyūn) 199, 417). Gulistāna creates the impression that Aḥmad Shāh recalled Nūr Muḥammad Khān soon after his return to Qandahār in 1755 and replaced him with Amīr Khān Qarā’ī (*Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 114; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Raḥavī) 89).

¹⁷⁶ *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 114–16; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Raḥavī) 89–91.

¹⁷⁷ Perry 1971: 66.

¹⁷⁸ *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 117; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Raḥavī) 91. See also *Gulshan-i murād* 632. According to Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī, Aḥmad Shāh awarded this title to Naṣrullāh Mīrzā at the conclusion of his siege of Mashhad in 1770 (TA (Humāyūn) 501).

who only interfered with administrative issues at irregular intervals, preferred Nādir Mīrzā Afshār as governor of Mashhad and sought to remove Naṣrullāh Mīrzā II from Mashhad. In the spring of 1181/1767, he sent Naṣrullāh Mīrzā to the court of Karīm Khān Zand at Shīrāz with the purported aim of soliciting aid against an impending military campaign by Aḥmad Shāh. Kāshānī reports that a member of his retinue intimated to Karīm Khān Zand that the real reason behind Naṣrullāh Mīrzā's mission was Shāh Rukh Afshār's desire to keep the young prince away from Mashhad for an indefinite period. After a pleasant six-month stay at the Zand court, Naṣrullāh Mīrzā returned to Mashhad with friendly assurances by Karīm Khān Zand concerning Shāh Rukh Afshār's authority over Khurāsān but without any tangible commitment to military assistance.¹⁷⁹

Next we hear of Naṣrullāh Mīrzā II's heroic efforts to defend Mashhad during Aḥmad Shāh's last campaign to Khurāsān in the summer of 1770. Though vastly outnumbered by the Durrānī forces, Naṣrullāh Mīrzā II mounted a number of effective attacks on them, and even managed to enter Aḥmad Shāh's encampment without being caught. The result of the 120-day siege was inconclusive. From the Afghan vantage point, the Durrānī ruler "forgave" Shāh Rukh Afshār for his disobedience and confirmed him in his old position. In fact, Aḥmad Shāh's willingness to overlook Naṣrullāh Mīrzā's refusal to submit in person indicates that his position was not strong enough to dictate the terms of peace. The agreement with the Afsharid rulers was rounded off by a symbolical tribute and a marriage alliance.¹⁸⁰

After Aḥmad Shāh's departure, Naṣrullāh Mīrzā II was practically left to his own, if meagre devices. The time before the advent of the Qājārs in 1796 was characterized by a continuing rivalry between Naṣrullāh Mīrzā and his brother Nādir Mīrzā Afshār, and a precarious economic base. The fragility of the Afsharid princes' position in Mashhad is reflected by the fact that both laid hands on the wealth deposited in Imām Rizā's shrine in order to pay their tribal levies. The state of the shrine thus highlights the changed political circumstances as compared to the Afsharid period. While their great-grandfather had lavished a portion of the wealth accumulated during his sweeping campaigns on the grave of Imām Rizā, Naṣrullāh Mīrzā and Nādir Mīrzā found their sphere of influence reduced to the environs of Mashhad and depended on the mobile assets of the shrine for their immediate economic survival. Kāshānī reports that Naṣrullāh Mīrzā was induced by his courtiers to requisition the precious metals stored in the shrine. They argued that the investments made by Nādir Shāh entitled him to take out certain precious items as a "loan":

During his reign, your ancestor Nādir Shāh spent an enormous amount of gold, silver and precious jewels to restore and to embellish the lofty and pure building [containing the grave] of the Imām of all beings, 'Alī b. Mūsā al-Rizā. If you, who are the heir to the crown and one of the offspring of that noble king, borrow some of those golden and jeweled items from the holy grave to maintain your troops, you can return this debt twofold as soon as the pearl of royalty has become firmly embedded in the shell of your lineage...¹⁸¹

Heeding his courtiers' advice and ignoring Shāh Rukh Afshār's protest, Naṣrullāh Mīrzā II requisitioned a number of precious lamps, vessels, and candlesticks from the shrine and used their precious metals to mint coins.¹⁸² He also seized part of his father's possession in order to pay the salaries due to his followers. In reaction to Naṣrullāh Mīrzā's high handed manner, Shāh Rukh Afshār set up his younger brother Nādir

¹⁷⁹ *Gulshan-i murād* 289–91, 633. See also Perry 1979: 207.

¹⁸⁰ TA (Humāyūn 496–501. See also Raḡavī 1999: 186–90. According to Kāshānī, the lengthy siege of Mashhad implied a severe challenge to Aḥmad Shāh's authority. His soldiers were overawed by Naṣrullāh Mīrzā's military prowess. What is more, the Sadūzai ruler felt that, in the long run, the protective spiritual aura Imām Rizā extended over the city would weaken his own claims to power (*jalāl va istiqlāl*). Among the presents Aḥmad Shāh received was Naṣrullāh Mīrzā's valuable horse. The marriage arrangement foresaw that Sulaimān Mīrzā b. Aḥmad Shāh was to marry one of Shāh Rukh Afshār's daughters and Shāh Rukh Afshār's son Yazdānbakhsh was to marry one of Aḥmad Shāh's daughters in Qandahār. Kāshānī reports that Shāh Rukh Afshār undermined this agreement by sending a daughter of Farīdūn Khān Gurjī instead of his own. The marriage arrangement between Aḥmad Shāh's daughter and Yazdānbakhsh did not take place because the princess in question deceased prior to Aḥmad Shāh's return to Qandahār. Yazdānbakhsh returned to Mashhad after Aḥmad Shāh's death (*Gulshan-i murād* 637–8).

¹⁸¹ *Gulshan-i murād* 638–9.

¹⁸² *Gulshan-i murād* 639. According to Malcolm, Naṣrullāh Mīrzā removed the golden railing from Imam Rizā's tomb (Malcolm 1829 II: 216–17).

Mīrzā Afshār as heir apparent and thus fostered the rivalry between the two brothers. In the early phase of this conflict, Naṣrullāh Mīrzā had the upper hand. He displaced Nādir Mīrzā from Mashhad and was able to enforce his authority over the Kurds of Khabūshān. Shortly after, however, his cruel behavior towards the Qarā'ī leader of Daulatābād caused his Kurdish supporters to turn away from him.¹⁸³ Meanwhile, Shāh Rukh Afshār summoned Nādir Mīrzā from Ṭabas to Mashhad and shut out Naṣrullāh Mīrzā. In early 1775, Naṣrullāh Mīrzā again sought assistance from Karīm Khān Zand, this time against his father and his younger brother.¹⁸⁴

After his arrival in Mashhad, Nādir Mīrzā Afshār adopted the same policies as his elder brother. Once again the riches of Imām Rizā's shrine fell prey to the ruler's desperate efforts to create a cash flow sufficient for the maintenance of his troops. Among the precious items seized by Nādir Mīrzā were a golden ball adorning the top of the dome, its jewel-encrusted gate, and a priceless carpet that was burnt to retrieve its gold and silk threads.¹⁸⁵ Nādir Mīrzā sought to bolster his rule by maintaining a friendly relationship with the Kurds of Khabūshān and the Bayāts of Nīshāpūr, but was eventually displaced by his inveterate enemy Mīr Muḥammad b. 'Alī Mardān Khān Zangū'ī of Ṭabas. In revenge for abuses Nādir Mīrzā had committed during his earlier exile in Ṭabas, Mīr Muḥammad Khān abducted him there and installed Mamish Khān Za'farānlū of Chinārān as governor of Mashhad.¹⁸⁶

Nādir Mīrzā Afshār's removal from Mashhad provoked two interventions by the Sadūzai army. During a first engagement, Tīmūr Shāh's general Madad Khān secured the release of Nādir Mīrzā, who joined Tīmūr Shāh's son Maḥmūd Mīrzā in Herat. In the meantime, Naṣrullāh Mīrzā II used the prevailing power vacuum to seize control of Mashhad. Shortly after, he defeated Nādir Mīrzā who sought to fight his way back in with the assistance of Sadūzai troops.¹⁸⁷ These events took place during the 1780s and thus fell into the reign of Tīmūr Shāh.¹⁸⁸ As will be seen below, the focus of Tīmūr Shāh's activities lay on the eastern territories of the Sadūzai Empire, thus rendering the western reaches of Khurāsān an unlikely target for intervention.

THE CONFIGURATIONS OF POWER UNDER AḤMAD SHĀH'S SUCCESSORS

Before assuming power in Qandahār on 19 Jumādā I 1186/18 August 1772, Tīmūr Shāh had to break up a powerful coalition that had formed around his younger half brother Sulaimān Mīrzā and Aḥmad Shāh's influential minister Shāh Valī Khān Bāmīzai, who was also Sulaimān Mīrzā's father-in-law. After Shāh Valī Khān's execution, Tīmūr Shāh sought out new allies among the Durrānīs. Foremost among these were the Muḥammadzai Bārakzai leader Pāyanda Khān b. Ḥājji Jamāl, who received the honorific title of "Sarfarāz Khān", and the Ishāqzai leader Dilāvar Khān, who received the title of "Madad Khān" and was appointed as

¹⁸³ Kāshānī reports that Naṣrullāh Mīrzā first entered a marriage alliance with Amīr Khān's brother Ḥasan Khān Qarā'ī but then wrongly accused him of treason, executed him, and confiscated his property (*Gulshan-i murād* 639–40).

¹⁸⁴ *Gulshan-i murād* 641–2. See also Perry 1979: 207.

¹⁸⁵ *Gulshan-i murād* 634; Malcolm 1829 II: 216–17.

¹⁸⁶ *Gulshan-i murād* 639–40, 645. During his earlier stay in Ṭabas, Nādir Mīrzā had forcefully married Mīr Muḥammad Khān's sister.

¹⁸⁷ *Gulshan-i murād* 645–7. Raḥavī 1999: 191–2. For another, more warbled account of the power struggle between Naṣrullāh Mīrzā II and Nādir Mīrzā, see *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Mann) 116–22; *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (Raḥavī) 90–5.

¹⁸⁸ There is contradictory information concerning the dates of these events. According to *Gulshan-i murād*, Naṣrullāh Mīrzā II spent six years in Shīrāz, which leads to the conclusion that he left for Khurāsān in 1781 (*Gulshan-i murād* 644). Some sources mention that Naṣrullāh Mīrzā left Shīrāz for Iṣfahān after Karīm Khān Zand's death in 1779 and returned briefly to Shīrāz before departing for Khurāsān (Perry 1979: 207; Raḥavī 1999: 191). This would suggest that the confrontation between Naṣrullāh Mīrzā and Nādir Mīrzā took place in 1780–81. According to Fūfalzā'ī, however, the Sadūzai campaign to Ṭabas, Mashhad and Nīshāpūr began on 8 Dhū al-Ḥijja 1199/12 October 1785 and lasted until 1 Jumādā I 1201/19 February 1787. Moreover, Fūfalzā'ī is of the opinion that Naṣrullāh Mīrzā returned to Mashhad only after Tīmūr Shāh's death (Shavvāl 1207/May 1793) and that Nādir Mīrzā resided in Herat from 1199/1784–85 until 1206/1791–92. (Fūfalzā'ī 1967: 263–70). This assumption is backed by Malcolm and Ferrier, who furnish the information that Mamish Khān's government in Mashhad lasted for five years (Ferrier 1858: 101–2; Malcolm 1829 II: 217). According to Ferrier, Tīmūr Shāh mounted a total of three campaigns against Khurāsān. The first two were headed by Madad Khān and were directed against Mamish Khān. The third campaign to Khurāsān was commanded by Aḥmad Khān Nūrzai (Ferrier 1858: 101–2).

commander-in-chief (*sipahsālār*). Faṭḥullāh Khān Sadūzai Kāmrankhēl, who had recently arrived from Multān, became Tīmūr Shāh's confidant (*nadīm-i khāṣṣ*). In addition, Tīmūr Shāh favored a number of Persian speakers with high government positions. Thus Shaikh 'Abd al-Laṭīf Khān Vakīl, a descendant of Aḥmad-i Jām, was placed in charge of the revenue collection (*akhḍh-i manāl-i dīvānī*). Mullā 'Abd al-Ghaffār, a Hindu by origin, became the chief revenue officer (*mustaufī-yi salṭanat*).¹⁸⁹ The transferral of the capital from Qandahār to Kābul in 1189/1775–76 further weakened the hold of the Durrānī elite on the affairs of government, although the reasons Tīmūr Shāh officially gave for the shift to Kābul were its central position in relation to the important eastern provinces and its favorable climate.¹⁹⁰ In general, his court alternated between summer camp (*yailāq*) in Kābul and winter quarters (*qishlāq*) in Pishāvar.¹⁹¹

The thrust of Tīmūr Shāh's military activities followed the territorial precedents set by Aḥmad Shāh. Sulṭān Muḥammad Durrānī reports that Tīmūr Shāh emulated his father's policies with regard to Turkistān and declared the Āmū Daryā as the border (*ḥadd*) between the Afghān and Bukharan spheres of influence in the summer of 1204/1790.¹⁹² Tīmūr Shāh directed most of his military campaigns at the Indian provinces. Compared with Aḥmad Shāh's reign, however, his military activities were much reduced both in terms of scope and intensity. In 1192–93/1778–80, he mounted successful campaigns against the Sikhs in Multān and the 'Abbāsī dynasty of Bahāvalpūr.¹⁹³ In addition, Sardār Madad Khān was entrusted with all important military activities in Balūchistān and Sind (in 1193/1799–80),¹⁹⁴ Kashmīr,¹⁹⁵ and Khurāsān.

The distribution of power in and around Herat apparently did not change significantly during Tīmūr Shāh's reign. Upon his accession in 1772, Tīmūr Shāh nominated his eight-year old son Maḥmūd Mīrzā as governor of Herat.¹⁹⁶ Once again, the administration of the province was split up among the Hazāra leadership and Durrānī officials. The office of *bēglerbēgī* went to Darvīsh 'Alī Khān Hazāra's paternal cousin Muḥammad Shāh Khān Hazāra, who had remained loyal to Tīmūr Shāh during Darvīsh 'Alī Khān's rebellion and was instrumental in bringing about his death.¹⁹⁷ Muḥammad Shāh Khān Hazāra was succeeded by his sons Āqā'ī Khān and Muḥammad Khān.¹⁹⁸ In Dhū al-Ḥijja 1199/October 1785, Tīmūr Shāh awarded the government of Bākhaz to Muḥammad Khān Hazāra Bēglerbēgī, who constructed its chief town Shahr-i Nau.¹⁹⁹ Muḥammad Khān Hazāra retained his influential position until the early nineteenth century. Under the first Qājār governor of Mashhad, Muḥammad Valī Mīrzā (1803–1816), he figured among the foremost military leaders (*amīrs*) of Khurāsān.²⁰⁰ His brother Bunyād Khān was associated with the government of Bākhaz and Turbat-i Shaikh Jām until the early 1830s.²⁰¹

As in previous times, the military command of Herat rested with a Pūpalzai Durrānī, namely Sardār Islām Khān. A number of high government positions likewise were the prerogative of members of the Durrānī confederacy.²⁰² Apart from the Durrānīs, the Bardurrānīs and Ghilzais are recorded as distinct groups within

¹⁸⁹ Ferrier 1858: 98; T Hu 354–5; T Su 152.

¹⁹⁰ T Su 154. According to Fūfalzā'ī, the construction of the new capital began in 1189/1775–76 (Fūfalzā'ī 1967: 193–5).

¹⁹¹ Ferrier 1848: 98; T Su 155.

¹⁹² T Su 156–7. According to Fūfalzā'ī, Sardār Barkhurdār Khān conducted two military campaigns to Turkistān as early as 1186/1772–73 (Fūfalzā'ī 1967: 163, 168, 270).

¹⁹³ Ferrier 1858: 99; T Su 153–5. See also Fūfalzā'ī 1967: 220, 247, 263.

¹⁹⁴ T Su 155. See also Fūfalzā'ī 1967: 233–6.

¹⁹⁵ T Su 157–8. See also Fūfalzā'ī 1967: 257.

¹⁹⁶ Ferrier 1858: 97.

¹⁹⁷ TA (Humāyūn) 451, 507–8. Fūfalzā'ī is of the opinion that Muḥammad Shāh Khān was the son of Darvīsh 'Alī Khān and died in 1203/1788–89 (Fūfalzā'ī 1967: 712).

¹⁹⁸ TA (Humāyūn): 507.

¹⁹⁹ Fūfalzā'ī 1967: 270; Yate 1900: 136. On 18 Dhū al-Ḥijja 1204/29 August 1790, Tīmūr Shāh addressed Muḥammad Khān Hazāra as "*bēglerbēgī* of Herat and the chief (*ḥākim*) of the Hazāra tribe and bestowed the government of Tūn and Ṭabas on him (Fūfalzā'ī 1958: 332–3).

²⁰⁰ *Ashraf al-tavārikh* 74, 150–1, 155–6, 203, 239, 246, 432.

²⁰¹ KR 63, 68 (Patterson 1988: 24, 38); NT 316, 429; Bāmdād 1992 I: 373, III: 130.

²⁰² Sardār 'Abd al-Shakūr Khān Fūfalzai served as *dīvānbēgī* (officer in charge of justice and finances) and Raḥmdil Khān Ishāqzai as *amīr ākhūrbāshī* (master of the royal stables) (Fūfalzā'ī 1967: 399).

the population of Herat.²⁰³ These three groups were present in the crowd that reportedly assembled at the Gāzargāh after Aḥmad Shāh's death to vouch their support for Tīmūr Shāh.²⁰⁴ Another sizeable component of the population of Herat were "migratory" tribes that had been removed by Aḥmad Shāh from the western reaches of Khurāsān. During his second campaign to Nīshāpūr in the summer of 1755, the Afghan ruler was so impressed with the courage of the local Bayāt population that he decided to take a group (*jam'ī*) of them into his service and to settle them in Kābul.²⁰⁵ According to Fūfalzā'ī, some tribes of western Khurāsān, including Bayāts, Kurds, Tātārs, Afshārs, Göklen Turkmens, Hazāras and Tāymanīs arrived in Herat under Aḥmad Shāh's auspices and received land grants which they held until 1212/1797–98. In the political landscape of Herat, these groups formed a counterpoise to the Afghān groups residing there.²⁰⁶

The reign of Tīmūr Shāh's successor Shāh Zamān, from 1207–1215/1793–1800/01,²⁰⁷ was characterized by increasing internal struggles. At the time of Shāh Zamān's accession, all crucial provinces of the Durrānī Empire were held by his brothers, some of whom were senior to him in age.²⁰⁸ Among these, Tīmūr Shāh's eldest sons Humāyūn Mīrzā at Qandahār and Maḥmūd Mīrzā at Herat proved to be Shāh Zamān's most formidable antagonists. Maḥmūd Mīrzā consistently undermined the Shāh's efforts to maintain a military presence in the Panjāb and rebelled whenever the king entered the regions east of the Khyber Pass. Each of Shāh Zamān's four campaigns in that direction was cut short because of unrest in Herat and Qandahār. On Shāh Zamān's side, the Durrānī leaders Pāyanda Khān "Sarfarāz Khān Amīr al-Umarā" Bārakzai and Aḥmad Khān Nūrzai rendered crucial military assistance.

The first two years of Shāh Zamān's reign were taken up with the effort to displace Humāyūn Mīrzā from Qandahār.²⁰⁹ The years between 1795 and 1799 were characterized by alternating efforts aiming at controlling the Sikhs in Panjāb and containing Maḥmūd Mīrzā's military activities in the provinces of Qandahār and Herat:

- Shāh Zamān's first campaign to Panjāb in 1210/1795 was cut short by the news that Maḥmūd Mīrzā had assembled troops in Herat and was about to cross the Hilmand river in order to make a bid for Qandahār. Although Shāh Zamān defeated Maḥmūd Mīrzā at Khākriẓ near Maivand, his relative weakness in the core regions of the Durrānī Empire is

²⁰³ Mullā Muḥammad Khān and Khanjar Khān are mentioned as the representatives of the Bardurrānīs living in Herat. Maulā Dād Khān was in charge of the 'Alīzai Durrānīs (Fūfalzā'ī 1967: 399)

²⁰⁴ Fūfalzā'ī 1967: 130–2.

²⁰⁵ T Su 130.

²⁰⁶ Fūfalzā'ī 1958: 105–6; Fūfalzā'ī 1967: 121.

²⁰⁷ Most sources agree that Shāh Zamān was crowned in 1793. According to Imām al-Dīn Ḥusainī and Sulṭān Muḥammad Durrānī, he ascended to the throne in Kābul one day after Tīmūr Shāh's death on 7 Shavvāl 1207/18 May 1793 at the age of 23 (T Hu 253, T Su 161–2). Fūfalzā'ī is of the opinion that Shāh Zamān was crowned on 11 Shavvāl 1207/22 May 1793 (Fūfalzā'ī 1967: 299–300; see also Elphinstone 1992 II: 307). The Persian sources differ on the date of Shāh Zamān's deposal. The surrounding events suggest that he was blinded in the winter–spring of 1215/1800–1801. Fāzlullāh Shīrāzī reports that Maḥmūd Mīrzā deposed Shāh Zamān subsequent to Fath 'Alī Shāh Qājār's second campaign to Khurāsān, which lasted from 9 Dhū al-Ḥijja 1214–14 Rabī' II 1215/8 May–4 September 1800 (*Dhū al-qarnain* 135–6, 139, 172; see also TRSN IX: 383; Elphinstone 1992 II: 320–5). A letter addressed by Shāh Zamān to Fath 'Alī Shāh on 18 Jumādā II 1215/6 November 1800, indicates that he was still in power at the time (Fūfalzā'ī 1958: 140–3). The Afghan sources place his deposal in the following year. According to Sulṭān Muḥammad Durrānī, Shāh Zamān was ousted in 1216 (14 May 1801–3 May 1802) (T Su 170, 173; see also Fūfalzā'ī 1958: 182–3 and footnote 219 below). Faiz Muḥammad mentions 1216 and 1217 (4 May 1802–22 April 1803) as recorded dates for Shāh Zamān's blinding (ST 62; McChesney/Khorrami I: 100). Shāh Zamān died in 1260 (22 January 1844–9 January 1845) and was buried in Sirhind (Fūfalzā'ī 1958: 467; Fūfalzā'ī 1967: 34).

²⁰⁸ See footnote 105.

²⁰⁹ In 1793, Shāh Zamān defeated Humāyūn Mīrzā near Qalāt-i Ghilzai and forced him to flee to Balūchistān. A year later, Humāyūn Mīrzā gave battle to Shāh Zamān's officials outside of Qandahār, seized the Shāh's seven-year old son Qaiṣar Mīrzā and thus forced his entry into Qandahār. Humāyūn Mīrzā's rule over Qandahār came to an end shortly afterwards, when a great part of his army defected to Pāyanda Khān Bārakzai. After fleeing to Balūchistān and Multān, he was apprehended by the governor of Layya in 1795 and thus fell into the hands of Shāh Zamān, who had him blinded (T Su 161–5. See also Boukhary 27–8 (Persian text 13–14); Elphinstone 1992 II: 311).

reflected by the fact that he refrained from an onward campaign to Herat and reinstated Maḥmūd Mīrzā as governor of Herat province including Farāh, on condition that he acknowledged his suzerainty.²¹⁰

- In Jumādā II 1211/December 1796, Shāh Zamān embarked on his next Indian campaign.²¹¹ A month later, in January 1797, he gave up his occupation of Lahore because of yet another attempt by Maḥmūd Mīrzā to gain control of Qandahār. On this occasion, Maḥmūd Mīrzā was less fortunate: His troops dissolved en route to Qandahār, he found himself locked out of Herat by the military governor Qilich Khān Tīmūrī, and was forced to seek asylum at the Qājār court.²¹² In the autumn of 1797, Shāh Zamān arrived in Herat and appointed his son Qaiṣar Mīrzā as governor.²¹³ Shāh Zamān's campaign to Herat occurred at a time when Qājār presence in Khurāsān was weakened owing to Āqā Muḥammad Shāh's assassination on 21 Dhū al-Ḥijja 1211/17 June 1797. Shāh Zamān availed himself of this opportunity to re-install Shāh Rukh Afshār's son Nādir Mīrzā Afshār as governor of Mashhad.²¹⁴
- While Shāh Zamān was busy with his third campaign to Panjāb in early 1798, Maḥmūd Mīrzā made a vain attempt to regain Herat with the help of Mīr Ḥasan Khān Zangū'ī of Ṭabas and Mīr 'Alī Khān Khuzaima of Qāyin. Shāh Zamān once again proceeded to Herat and confirmed Qaiṣar Mīrzā as governor.²¹⁵
- During his fourth campaign to Panjāb in November 1798–January 1799, Shāh Zamān gave up the idea of maintaining direct control over Lahore and formally appointed Ranjit Singh as governor there.²¹⁶

Shāh Zamān's military successes against Maḥmūd Mīrzā became undone around 1800 when he decided to weaken the position of his chief ally Pāyanda "Sarfarāz Khān" Bārakzai and to replace him with Raḥmatullāh b. Faṭḥullāh Sadūzai Kāmrankhēl as chief minister.²¹⁷ Seeing his influence at court dwindle, Pāyanda Khān joined other disenchanted chiefs in a plot to depose Shāh Zamān in favor of his brother Shujā' al-Mulk (later Shāh Shujā'). The revelation of this plan gave Shāh Zamān a pretext to execute Pāyanda Khān and his fellow conspirators, thus freeing his court from a number of prominent Durrānī and Qizilbāsh leaders.²¹⁸ This measure, however, dissolved a number of long-standing loyalties and ultimately cost Shāh Zamān dearly. Pāyanda Khān's eldest son Faṭḥ Khān and his brothers formed an alliance with Maḥmūd Mīrzā, and conquered Qandahār while Shāh Zamān was in Pishāvar. Maḥmūd gained control of Kābul, had Shāh Zamān blinded, and was crowned in the spring/summer of 1216/1801.²¹⁹

During the following two decades, the Durrānī empire fell apart amid the rivalry between Shāh Shujā' on the one hand and Shāh Maḥmūd and his son Kāmran Sadūzai on the other. The unfolding game of constantly changing coalitions was dominated by Faṭḥ Khān Bārakzai "Shāhdūst" b. Pāyanda Khān, who was Shāh Maḥmūd's strongest ally. In 1803, a Sunnī-Shī'a riot fanned by Faṭḥ Khān's rivals in Kābul forced Shāh

²¹⁰ T Hu 303–21; see also Fūfalzā'ī 1958: 78–9. Up to that time, Maḥmūd Mīrzā had performed the striking of coins and the Friday sermon in the name of Tīmūr Shāh (Boukhary 1876 30–31 (Persian text, 14)). See also ST 50–2; McChesney/Khorrami I: 79–82; T Su 165–6.

²¹¹ ST 52; McChesney/Khorrami I: 83.

²¹² Maḥmūd Mīrzā was accompanied by his son Kāmran, his brother Fīrūz al-Dīn, and his nephew Malik Qāsim (Boukhary 35 (Persian text 16)).

²¹³ T Hu 343–9; Boukhary 32–5 (Persian text 15–16); T Su 166, 173; NT 92. The dates of these events have been pieced together on the basis of several sources. Sulṭān Muḥammad Durrānī reports that Shāh Zamān began his second campaign to Panjāb by crossing the Indus on 12 Jumādā II 1211/13 December 1796 (T Su 166). According to Singh, he entered Lahore on 3 January 1797 (Singh 1990: 27). Elphinstone is of the opinion that Shāh Zamān left Qandahār for Herat on 8 September 1797 (Elphinstone 1992 II: 316–18). Shāh Zamān returned to Kābul in Rajab 1212/December 1797–January 1798 (T Hu 351; T Su 167; ST 55; McChesney/Khorrami 2013 I: 88).

²¹⁴ T Hu 349–50; ST 55; McChesney/Khorrami 2013 I: 87–8).

²¹⁵ Maḥmūd Mīrzā, his son Kāmran and his full brother Fīrūz al-Dīn Mīrzā were once again forced to flee. Fīrūz al-Dīn and Kāmran went directly to the Qājār court, while Maḥmūd Mīrzā briefly joined Shāh Murād Bī Manghīt (r. 1785–1800) at Bukhārā before rejoining Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh Qājār (NT 105; T Su 167, 175). According to Elphinstone, these events took place in 1799 (Elphinstone 1992 II: 318–19).

²¹⁶ T Su 167–8; Singh 1990: 28–30.

²¹⁷ T Hu 354–55.

²¹⁸ Faiz Muḥammad Kātib places this event in 1214 (5 June 1799–24 May 1800) (ST 60; McChesney/Khorrami 2013 I: 97). According to the *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī*, Pāyanda Khān was executed in 1215 (25 May 1800–13 May 1801) (T Su 169).

²¹⁹ According to the *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī* Maḥmūd was crowned on 13 Rabī' I 1216/24 July 1801 (T Su 168–172, 176–9; see also footnote 207).

Maḥmūd to cede power to Shāh Shujā'.²²⁰ Shāh Maḥmūd, who regained power in 1809, eventually undid his reign by repeating Shāh Zamān's mistake. In 1818, he executed his most important ally Faṭḥ Khān, thus triggering a rebellion by Faṭḥ Khān's remaining twenty brothers that eventually spelled the demise of the Sadūzai Empire. In this process, Faṭḥ Khān's Muḥammadzai Bārakzai lineage established itself as new ruling dynasty in Kābul. Herat passed to the control of Shāh Maḥmūd and Kāmṛān and thus became a last enclave of Sadūzai authority that increasingly drifted into the orbit of Qājār interests.

Maḥmūd's immediate association with the government of Herat began in 1772 and lasted until January 1797. For the remainder of Shāh Zamān's reign, Qaiṣar Mīrzā acted as governor of Herat and was assisted by the *nā'ibs* Zamān Khān Bāmīzai (1797–1798) and Mīr Afzal Khān b. Dilāvar Khān Ishāqzai "Madad Khān" (1798–?).²²¹ Upon Shāh Maḥmūd's assumption of power in 1801, Mīr Afzal Khān Ishāqzai expelled Qaiṣar Mīrzā and invited the king's full brother Fīrūz al-Dīn from Yazd to take control of Herat.²²² Fīrūz al-Dīn's government in Herat proved to be of a fairly stable nature. Located at a distance from the power struggles engulfing Kābul, he maintained his position in Herat throughout the reigns of Shāh Maḥmūd and Shāh Shujā' and was only removed by Shāh Maḥmūd's minister Faṭḥ Khān in the spring of 1233/1818.²²³ Shortly after, Shāh Maḥmūd himself was displaced from Kābul and took up residence in Herat, which he ruled, in name at least, until his death in 1244/1828–29 or 1245/1829–30.²²⁴ Sadūzai authority in Herat ended with Kāmṛān b. Shāh Maḥmūd's violent death in 1257/1842.²²⁵

Qilich Khān Tīmūrī

Maḥmūd Mīrzā Sadūzai's political career coincided with that of his tribal counterpart Qilich (Qilich) Khān Tīmūrī. The late part of Qilich Khān's career, however, was characterized by ongoing friction with the Sadūzai prince. In 1797, he was instrumental in Maḥmūd Mīrzā's eviction from Herat and in turn suffered from his political comeback in 1800–01. These political changes implied migration and resettlement for Qilich Khān's Tīmūrī followers. Under the leadership of Qilich Khān's father Ḥājji Khān Tīmūrī, the Tīmūrīs had formed a powerful group in Bādghīs.²²⁶ In connection with the events of 1797, Qilich Khān is described as the head of Tīmūrī *ūymāq*, which numbered 30,000 families.²²⁷ During the 1790s, he served as

²²⁰ Elphinstone, who visited Pishāvar in 1809, places these events in June–July 1803 (Elphinstone 1992 II: 337). Ferrier merely mentions that Shāh Maḥmūd's government lasted for two years and six months (Ferrier 1858: 132). According to Sulṭān Muḥammad Durrānī and Faiẓ Muḥammad, Shāh Maḥmūd was overthrown in 1219 (12 April 1804–31 March 1805), in the third year of his reign (T Su 181; ST 66–7; McChesney/Khorrami 2013 I: 107–8).

²²¹ T Su 166–7, 172–5, 179.

²²² Fīrūz al-Dīn Mīrzā accompanied Maḥmūd Mīrzā to Iran in 1797. Later on, he performed the pilgrimage to Mecca and engaged in trading activities in Yazd (Boukhary 82; T Su 180–1). Ferrier is of the opinion that Ḥājji Fīrūz al-Dīn settled in Turshīz, where he "occupied himself in the purchase and sale of horses, camels, and other beasts of burden" (Ferrier 1858: 131).

²²³ *Dhū al-qarnain* 802–3; NT 293. Fīrūz al-Dīn joined the court of the Qājār governor of Mashhad, Ḥasan 'Alī Mīrzā Shujā' al-Saltāna (1816–1827). He made two brief attempts at regaining control over Herat in 1822 and 1824 (Ferrier 1858: 165–9). Fīrūz al-Dīn was killed near Turshīz owing to a misunderstanding in 1247/1832 (*Dhū al-qarnain* 803–4; NT 460; see also Fūfalzā'ī 1967: 523–4). According to *Kulliyāt-i riyāzī*, Fīrūz al-Dīn was murdered at the instigation of Kāmṛān. Upon Fīrūz al-Dīn's death, his son Malik Qāsim took up residence in Mashhad (KR 71 (Patterson 1988: 48)).

²²⁴ According to Faẓlullāh Shīrāzī, Shāh Maḥmūd died in Farāh in 1245 (3 July 1829–22 June 1830) (*Dhū al-qarnain* 803). Sulṭān Muḥammad and Faiẓ Muḥammad place his death in the year 1244 (14 July 1828–2 July 1829) (T Su 208, 282; ST 113; McChesney/Khorrami 2013 I: 187). All sources agree that he died of natural causes.

²²⁵ According to British sources, Kāmṛān Sadūzai was murdered in early 1842 (Sykes 1981 II: 62; Yapp 1980: 376). This information is corroborated by Iranian sources, which indicate that Kāmṛān Sadūzai was alive and well in May 1841, conducting correspondence with the Qājār court (Ittiḥādīya 1975 (125): 34). The Afghan authors Sulṭān Muḥammad Durrānī and Faiẓ Muḥammad, however, place Kāmṛān's death in the year 1256 (5 March 1840–22 February 1841). They report that Kāmṛān tried in vain to wrest control from Yār Muḥammad Khān at the time. After finding himself besieged in the Qal'a-yi Ikhtiyār al-Dīn for fifty days, he surrendered to Yār Muḥammad Khān. Shortly after, he was killed by the *vazīr*'s men in Kuhsān and was buried in Rauẓa Bāgh (T Su 285; ST 190; McChesney/Khorrami 2013 I: 325–6).

²²⁶ *Gaz. Iran* II: 115.

²²⁷ Boukhary 33 (Persian text, p. 15).

the commander (*qal‘a bēgī*) of the citadel of Ikhtiyār al-Dīn and thus played a crucial role in the military matters of Herat.²²⁸ Boukhary reports that Qilich Khān commanded a fighting force of 1,000 cavalry.²²⁹ At the time of Maḥmūd Mīrzā’s first tenure as governor of Herat under Tīmūr Shāh, Qilich Khān was charged with the protection of the northwestern border from Turkmen incursions and erected a total of twelve watchtowers in the region bordering on Pul-i Khātūn.²³⁰ In the early nineteenth century, by contrast, his followers were concentrated around the Qājār possessions of Khvāf, Bākharz and Jām.²³¹

Despite his long-standing association with the government of Herat, Qilich Khān Tīmūrī opted to collaborate with Shāh Zamān in 1797.²³² According to Boukhary, this decision reflected the internal power structure of Herat. The Tīmūrī leader opposed Maḥmūd Mīrzā’s close association with two “Qizilbāsh” officials, namely his *vazīr* Ḥusain ‘Alī and his chief secretary (*munshī bāshī*) Mīrzā Hāshim Khān. This resentment was shared by a number of other *ūymāq* as well as the Afghān nobles, who offered their support to Shāh Zamān after Maḥmūd Mīrzā’s second campaign to Qandahār. While Maḥmūd Mīrzā assembled his troops outside of Herat to meet Shāh Zamān’s approaching army, Qilich Khān occupied the citadel and opened artillery fire on the city of Herat and the governor’s quarters. Unable to regain control of the citadel, Maḥmūd Mīrzā consented to Qilich Khān’s demand that the two Qizilbāsh officers be handed over to him. The conflict between the different factions in Herat is summed up by the manner in which the Tīmūrī leader allegedly addressed his two prisoners, “[Look at my] low status as the leader of one thousand *ūymāq* [fighters] as compared to you who have become minister (*vazīr*) and superintendent of finances (*daftardār*) [despite the fact] that you are of a foreign religion, of no consequence, and Qizilbāsh.” From Boukhary’s vantage point, the lines of conflict are conceptualized on the basis of an inherent opposition between “local” tribes, Afghān and *ūymāq*, of Sunnī persuasion on the one hand and Shiite groups of Iranian descent on the other.²³³ Barnābādī, however, attributes the general disenchantment with Maḥmūd Mīrzā’s government to the oppressive policies of his tax officials, who imposed excessive taxes and, to make things worse, embezzled them.²³⁴

During Qaiṣar Mīrzā’s governorship of Herat, Qilich Khān Tīmūrī retained his post as commander of the citadel of Ikhtiyār al-Dīn.²³⁵ With the return of Ḥājji Fīrūz al-Dīn in 1801, both Qaiṣar Mīrzā and Qilich Khān Tīmūrī found themselves expelled from Herat and left for Mashhad and Tehran.²³⁶ Qilich Khān rendered vital military services to the first two Qājār governors of Khurāsān, Muḥammad Valī Mīrzā (1803–1816)²³⁷ and Ḥasan ‘Alī Mīrzā Shujā‘ al-Saltāna (1816–1827). He played a leading role in the campaigns against Herat in June 1807 and May 1817.²³⁸ Furthermore, he participated in Muḥammad Valī’s effort to suppress a rebellion of the tribal elite of Khurāsān in the summer of 1231/1816.²³⁹ Based in the district of Khvāf, Qilich Khān constructed its chief town and provided for the security of caravans travelling between

²²⁸ Fūfalzā‘ī 1958: 89, 92. According to Imām al-Dīn Ḥusainī, Qilich Khan and his kinsmen occupied the lands adjoining the citadel during this time (T Hu 422).

²²⁹ Boukhary 33 (Persian text, p. 15).

²³⁰ Fūfalzā‘ī 1967: 430–1; Lumsden, LPS/8/A53/pt. 3 pp. 11–12; Stewart 1883: 11.

²³¹ Boukhary 82 (Persian text, p. 40).

²³² T Hu 343–7.

²³³ Boukhary 32–5, 82 (Persian text, p. 15–16, 39). See also Fūfalzā‘ī 1958: 45, 89–94. Imām al-Dīn Ḥusainī does not portray the encounter along Sunnī-Shi‘ī demarcations. He merely reports that Qilich Khān requested the mediation of two important officials, Šādiq Khān (*sipahsālār-i lashkar*) and Mīrzā Ibrāhīm Khān (*mukhtār-i kār-i sarkār*), and then imprisoned them (T Hu 346–7).

²³⁴ This revenue demand stipulated that a poll tax (*sar shumār*) of 2,000 *dīnār* was to be levied from all individuals with no exceptions (Barnābādī f. 76b).

²³⁵ T Hu 348. See also Fūfalzā‘ī 1958: 96–7. According to *Kulliyāt-i riyāzi*, Qilich Khān again rebelled during Maḥmūd Mīrzā’s exile in Iran and established control over the environs of Herat (KR 61; see also Patterson 1988: 15).

²³⁶ Boukhary 82 (Persian text 39–40); Ferrier 1858: 130–1.

²³⁷ *Ashraf al-tavārīkh* 150, 155–6, 203, 205, 239, 246, 335.

²³⁸ *Ashraf al-tavārīkh* 390–1; Boukhary 1876: 83–4 (Persian text 40); NT 162–3, 282–5, 360–1.

²³⁹ *Dhū al-qarnain* 422, 448; NT 272; Bāmdād 1992 III: 130.

Mashhad and Sarakhs.²⁴⁰ He gradually widened his sphere of influence to include the districts of Zūrābād, Jām, and Bākharz.²⁴¹ In 1235/1819–20, Shujāʿ al-Saltāna awarded Bākharz and some of the dependencies of Jām to him after forcefully displacing Bunyād Khān Hazāra from the region.²⁴² In Ramaẓān 1237/May 1822, Qilich Khān was killed during a failed attempt to depose Shāh Maḥmūd and Kāmran Sadūzai from the government of Herat and to reinstate Ḥājī Fīrūz al-Dīn instead.²⁴³

Qilich Khān's Tīmūrī followers remained in the service of the Qājār government throughout the nineteenth century.²⁴⁴ Between 1240/1824–25 and 1839, Qilich 'Alī Khān's son Naṣrullāh Khān Tīmūrī was the leader of the Tīmūrīs in Iranian Khurāsān and resided in Khvāf.²⁴⁵ In the early 1850s, Lady Sheil estimated the Tīmūrī population of Khvāf at four thousand tents and houses; another group of two thousand lived near Herat.²⁴⁶ The number of the Tīmūrīs in Iran did not change significantly until the late nineteenth century.²⁴⁷ From the 1860s on, 'Alī Mardān Khān Tīmūrī served as chief of the Tīmūrīs and as governor of the frontier districts of Turbat-i Shaikh Jām, Zūrābād, Bākharz and Khvāf. In 1867, he received the title of "Nuṣrat al-Mulk" from Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh (r. 1848–1896) for services he had rendered against the Turkmens on Iran's northeastern frontier. In 1885, he was deported from Mashhad by the governor of Khurāsān, 'Abd al-Vaḥhāb Khān Shīrāzī (1884–1886).²⁴⁸ Subsequently, the governorship of Turbat-i Shaikh and Zūrābād passed to another Tīmūrī leader by the name of Mīr Asadullāh Khān "Shaukat al-Daula".²⁴⁹

In 1894, the British official Charles E. Yate left the following account of the modern town of Khvāf:

The town of Khaf, consisting of the citadel, avenue, bazar, bath, &c., was said to have been built Amir Kilich Khan, Timuri, the powerful and semi-independent chief who ruled these frontier districts in the early part of the nineteenth century. It contained about eight hundred houses, and the people were all Sunnis. There were numbers of windmills, and the gardens produced all sorts of fruit, which was sold very cheap. The silk industry had almost entirely died out owing to disease, and the cultivation of opium had taken its place. Tobacco also was largely cultivated, 2000 kharwars being exported annually.²⁵⁰

The Local Perspective: Muḥammad Riẓā Barnābādī

The changing fortunes affecting Herat and its environs are highlighted by the memoirs of Muḥammad Riẓā Barnābādī (1751–1815). Born into a wealthy family based in the village of Barnābād, the author suffered impoverishment when his family fell from royal grace in 1793. In order to preserve the memory of his family's past grandeur, he compiled his *Tadhkira* between 1806–1811 and included copies of documents attesting to his ancestors' close relationship with the Safavid and Sadūzai rulers.²⁵¹ The leading Barnābādīs traced the beginnings of their settlement to the establishment of a convent (*khānaqāh*) in the early Timurid period. Muḥammad Riẓā attributes its foundation to Maulānā Vahīd al-Dīn Muḥammad, a disciple and son-

²⁴⁰ Fraser 1825: 524, 528.

²⁴¹ Ferrier 1857a: 142; *Gaz. Iran* II: 309; Mīr Niyā 1990: 50; *Safarnāma-yi Rukn al-Daula* 89.

²⁴² *Dhū al-qarnain* 516; NT 315–16; KR 68 (Patterson 1988: 38). See also Bāmdād 1992 I: 373, III: 130. This award was only temporary. In Ramaẓān 1236/June 1821, Shujāʿ al-Saltāna bestowed the government of Bākharz and Shahr-i Nau on Ibrāhīm Khān Hazāra (TRSN IX: 589; NT 323).

²⁴³ The battle took place on 1 Ramaẓān 1237/22 May 1822 (Ferrier 1858: 165–6; KR 68 (Patterson 1988: 39)).

²⁴⁴ Za'farānlū 1968: 21, 60, 112; Napier 1875: 224–5.

²⁴⁵ NT 360–1; Forrest 1906: 37; Lal 1977: 126; Todd, Oct 1839, IOL, L/PS/20/G10/3 No. 4 p. 9. Todd describes Naṣrullāh Khān Tīmūrī as the grandson of Qilich Khān. In 1844, Qilich Khān's other son Dūst Muḥammad Khān Tīmūrī and two hundred Tīmūrī families lived in Qūrhūn located four *farsakh*/16 miles from Mashhad (*Safarnāma-yi Bukhārā* 26–7).

²⁴⁶ Lambton, "Īlāt," *E.I.* 2 III: 1107.

²⁴⁷ In 1893, Yate reported that the Tīmūrīs of Iran numbered about 6,000 families. Another 2,000 families lived around Herat, Farāh and Isfīzār (Yate 1900: 38).

²⁴⁸ According to Yate, 'Alī Mardān Khān Tīmūrī was deported from Mashhad as late as 1895. In the light of the fact that Āṣaf al-Daula's tenure as governor of Mashhad ended in 1886, it seems more likely that 'Alī Mardān Khān Tīmūrī's deposal occurred in 1885 (Yate 1900: 38, 45–6. See also Migeod 1990: 64).

²⁴⁹ Mīr Asadullāh was the head of approximately 300 Tīmūrī families who resettled in Khurāsān subsequent to Ḥusām al-Saltāna's siege of Herat in 1856 (Yate 1900: 46).

²⁵⁰ C. E. Yate 1900: 131.

²⁵¹ Māyil Haravī 1969a: 55–70.

in-law of the local Sufi saint, Zain al-Dīn Abū Bakr Tāybādī, who in turn was “the contemporary and spiritual preceptor (*murshid*) of the “Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction” (*ṣāhib qirān*) Amīr Tīmūr.”²⁵² The convent and Friday mosque built by Maulānā Vahīd al-Dīn Muḥammad constituted the nucleus of the village which would later become known as Barnābād. The origin of Muḥammad Rizā’s family was also associated with the early activities at this convent and its attractiveness as a spiritual center. In the early fifteenth century, a man from Mecca by the name of Sirāj al-Dīn ‘Alī joined Maulānā Vahīd al-Dīn Muḥammad’s circle. After the death of his teacher, Sirāj al-Dīn ‘Alī became the administrator of his grave, which became a nodal point in the sacred realm around Herat. Henceforth, this prestigious and lucrative post rested with Sirāj al-Dīn ‘Alī’s descendants, who formed the leading lineage of Barnābād and interacted closely with the rulers of Herat.²⁵³

Barnābād was conveniently located. Situated close to the highroad leading to western Khurāsān, it could be reached from Herat within a day. The next large settlement in the region was Ghūriyān, at a distance of one *farsang*. Barnābād thus served as an important staging post en route to and from Mashhad where merchants and pilgrims could acquire accommodation, horses, and provisions.²⁵⁴ Muḥammad Rizā makes only general mention of the patronage Timurid rulers like Sulṭān Ḥusain Bāyqarā extended to his ancestors, the *khvājas* of Barnābād. For the sixteenth century, by contrast, he adduces evidence that considerable growth occurred in this settlement. Sirāj al-Dīn ‘Alī’s grandson Muḥammad Ṭāhir I (915–990/1509–1582) is credited with having enhanced the agricultural potential of Barnābād. His major contribution to the welfare of his village was the extension of an irrigation channel which had formerly passed by the village of Barnābād at a distance towards the north. Muḥammad Ṭāhir I conducted this channel towards the center of Barnābād, where most of his landed property, either inherited or recently purchased, was located. This channel became the artery of the settlement and caused later generations to consider Muḥammad Ṭāhir I as the founder of Barnābād.²⁵⁵

Among the seven contributions attributed to Muḥammad Ṭāhir I, three more were immediately linked to the increased water supply of Barnābād. Muḥammad Rizā mentions a water reservoir (*ḥauṣ-i Khvāja Ṭāhir*) the location and water of which were unsurpassed in pleasantness. Even more impressive was the bath (*ḥammām*) filled with “flowing water in the same way as the human body is pervaded by the soul”. Muḥammad Ṭāhir I completed the Friday mosque begun by Vahīd al-Dīn Muḥammad and added a water dispensary (*siqāya*), which drew its water from the Barnābād channel. He also embellished the grave of Vahīd al-Dīn Muḥammad with an *ivān* and secured its maintenance with a generous endowment. For this purpose, he set aside a plot of seventy *jarīb* for a plantation of trees (*nihālistān*), lined it with pine trees and secured it with a wall.²⁵⁶

The privileged position of the Khvājas of Barnābād is reflected by a number of decrees the Safavid rulers issued on their behalf. In 1580, a royal document recorded the fact that Muḥammad Ṭāhir I used the occasion of the death of his son to bestow all his moveable and immoveable property²⁵⁷ on his grandson ‘Alī Akbar b. Muḥammad Hāshim (987–1084/1579–1673). The lands passed on to ‘Alī Akbar were of sizeable proportions. Among nine villages located in the region of Barnābād, he received three in their entirety, two-thirds of two, and half of four settlements. The list of the properties awarded also included the village of Barnābād itself, two-thirds of which belonged to ‘Alī Akbar. All the estates given to ‘Alī Akbar were declared tax-exempt: “The counsellors, headmen and tax-collectors of this region are to consider the

²⁵² Barnābādī f. 4a. See also Māyil Haravī 1969a: 2; Tumanovich 1989: 179. On Zain al-Dīn Abū Bakr Tāybādī, see Chapter 1.

²⁵³ Tumanovich 1989: 180–3.

²⁵⁴ Tumanovich 1989: 233–4.

²⁵⁵ This irrigation channel has been maintained up to present times (Māyil Haravī 1969a: 2, 5).

²⁵⁶ Barnābādī f. 3b–4a. See also Tumanovich 1989: 184–6.

²⁵⁷ [Z]irā ‘āt va amlāk va asbāb va jamī‘-i ashyā’ ī ki ba taṣarruf dāshta (Barnābādī f. 4b).

aforementioned quarters separate from the collective assessment and are not to raise one *mann* in kind nor one *ḍīnār* in cash under any heading whatsoever.²⁵⁸

There is evidence that ‘Alī Akbar b. Muḥammad Hāshim acquired more land in the *vilāyat* of Fūshanj and in the vicinity of Herat during his lifetime. A deed issued by Shāh Ṣafī (r. 1038–1052/1629–1642) during his visit to Herat in 1638 stipulated that the recently purchased property of eleven *zauj* (ploughs) was to enjoy the same tax privileges as the lands inherited from Muḥammad Ṭāhir I.²⁵⁹ This acquisition seems to have enhanced ‘Alī Akbar’s hold over the property of Barnābād even further: Four *zauj* of the eleven *zauj* were located in Barnābād itself.²⁶⁰ Without giving a date or other particulars, Muḥammad Riẓā also refers to another decree rendering 80 *zauj* of ‘Alī Akbar’s landed property a tax-free assignment (*suyūrghāl*).²⁶¹

Further decrees cited by Muḥammad Riẓā reflect the fact that the Barnābādī family continued to enjoy a close relationship with their Safavid overlords up to the late seventeenth century and managed to preserve the tax-free status of their lands. ‘Alī Akbar’s sons Muḥammad Ṭāhir II (1027–1099/1617–1687) and Maḥmūd Barnābādī (1030–1087/1620–1676) were mainly known for their charitable works, which included two water reservoirs. The water reservoir constructed by Muḥammad Ṭāhir was known as the “domed” reservoir (*ḥauṣ-i khanba*). Located four and a half *farsang* (18 miles) from Herat along the highroad to Mashhad, it served to refresh the travellers passing by. Maḥmūd Barnābādī built a reservoir near Shabash [Shāhbāsh?].²⁶²

In 1688, Shāh Sulaimān issued a decree on behalf of ‘Alī Akbar’s grandson Abū Ṭālib “Māyil” (1051–1130/1641–1718) confirming the tax-exemptions granted by his royal ancestors to ‘Alī Akbar b. Muḥammad Hāshim and ‘Alī Akbar’s grandfather Muḥammad Ṭāhir I. Shāh Sulaimān refers to Abū Ṭālib’s private property and an endowment (*vaqf*) ‘Alī Akbar had made on behalf of his male descendants. The Safavid king freed Abū Ṭālib’s lands from all royal impositions (*māliyyāt va ‘avārīzāt va kull-i takālīf-i dīvānī*) including a fee on beasts of burden, sheep and cows known as *vajh-i chūpānbēgī*.²⁶³

A final glimpse of the position of the leading Barnābādī lineage under the Safavids is provided by a document of 1713. At this point in time, Abū Ṭālib decided to withdraw from worldly affairs and to settle in the so-called Chahār Bāgh of Barnābād. The subsequent division of his property among his two sons Muḥammad Arshad II (d. 1769–70) and Abū al-Faṭḥ II (d. 1740) and one daughter reflects the scope of his possessions. Apart from the Chahār Bāgh, this deed concerned a combined property of 17 *jauz*. Another important category were plots of land used for intensive and specialized agriculture. These included vineyards, as well as mulberry and pine plantations (*tūtistān, nāzhūstān*). Further assets were institutions catering to the needs of travellers: a guest-house (*mihmānkhāna*), a stable (*ṭavīla*) providing horses and beasts of burden, and a bathhouse (*ḥammām*).²⁶⁴

²⁵⁸ *Arbāb va kadkhudāyān va ‘ummāl-i vilāyat-i madhkūr jam’ va bunicha-yi mahāll-i fauq-rā az kull-i jam’-i vilāyat-i mazbūra mauzū’ dānista yak mann bār va yak ḍīnār ba-hīch ism va rasm ḥavāla va īqlāq nadārānd* (Barnābādī f. 4b; See also Tumanovich 1989: 187).

²⁵⁹ In his copy of this decree, Muḥammad Riẓā mentions ‘Alī Akbar’s grandson Abū Ṭālib (1641–1718) as the beneficiary of Shāh Ṣafī’s decree. As Abū Ṭālib was not born yet when this document was issued, Tumanovich concludes that ‘Alī Akbar was more likely the addressee (Barnābādī f. 26a–b; Tumanovich 1989: 194–5).

²⁶⁰ Of the remaining property, one *zauj* was located in the village of Shāda (in the *vilāyat* of Fūshanj). The present-day village of Shāda (34° 24’ N 61° 39’ E) is located west of Shakībān on the northern bank of the Harī Rūd (*Gaz. Afghanistan* III: 359). Another six *zauj* of land were purchased in Kundrau. This place is not included in Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū’s list of settlements in Fūshanj (Krawulsky 1982: 39; 1984: 36). The closest approximation to this name is Kundur, which was located in the *bulūk* of Kamburāq (Tumanovich 1989: 195–6; see also Krawulsky 1984: 102).

²⁶¹ Barnābādī f. 6a. See also Tumanovich 1989: 188, 193–4.

²⁶² Barnābādī ff. 23b–24a. See also Māyil Haravī 1969a: 45–6; Tumanovich 1989: 197. Shāhbāsh (34° 29’ N 61° 23’ E) is located on the right bank of the Harī Rūd (*Gaz. Afghanistan* III: 358).

²⁶³ Barnābādī ff. 26b–27a. See also Tumanovich 1989: 201–202.

²⁶⁴ The property was distributed in the following manner: Abū Ṭālib retained the Chahār Bāgh and his possessions in the hamlets (*mazra’a*) of Mushkarān (two *zauj*) and Kundrau (six *zauj*) for his own upkeep. Muḥammad Arshad received lands in the hamlet of Jangān (two *zauj*) and the villages of Rūj (one *zauj*) and Barnābād (one *zauj*), a portion of a farm (*muḥavvaṭa*) known as Kishmishkhāna, a portion of a mulberry plantation, half of the living quarters and guest house, and half of the living quarters in the fort, bathhouse and stables. Abū al-Faṭḥ’s portion included lands in the hamlet of Jangān (two *zauj*) and in the villages of Rūj

Muḥammad Riẓā also provides some information about the female members of the Barnābādī family. Many of these belonged to the lineage itself. A number of marriages were concluded among cousins in order to prevent an increasing fragmentation of property over generations. A case in point is Abū Ṭālib, who married the younger daughter of his paternal uncle and teacher Muḥammad Arshad I b. ‘Alī Akbar (1025–1114/1616–1703). Among the assets she brought into the family was a watermill.²⁶⁵ Endogamous marriages remained a noticeable feature during the following generations.²⁶⁶ At the same time, strategic marriage alliances were formed with other leading families of the Herat region and were reinforced at intervals. One such alliance was maintained with the prominent “Shahriyārī” family that furnished the *kalāntars* of Herat under the Safavids and owned mansions in the Mazār-i Nau quarter within the city and in the fashionable Khiyābān *bulūk* north of the city walls. This relationship reached back to the early seventeenth century and was renewed in the early eighteenth century when Abū al-Faṭḥ II Barnābādī married the sister of Mīrẓā Ja‘far “Shahriyārī”, whose grandfather Mīrẓā Maṣṣūr Shahriyārī had been a maternal cousin and brother-in-law of Muḥammad Arshad I.²⁶⁷ Abū al-Faṭḥ II’s second wife also stemmed from a prominent Herati family based in the wealthy quarter adjoining the Friday mosque. Her brother Mīrẓā Muḥammad ‘Alī held the post of head scribe (*munshī*) of the *dār al-salṭana* of Herat until the decline of the Safavid government and the rise of the Abdālīs forced him to seek employment with Muḥammad Ḥasan Qājār in Astarābād.²⁶⁸

Muḥammad Riẓā repeatedly mentions the artistic achievements of his ancestors in the fields of poetry and calligraphy. He provides a number of samples from the work of Muḥammad Arshad I, who wrote, among other things, a *mathnavī* entitled *Abr-i gauharbār* and corresponded with the Safavid governors of Herat, Ḥasan Khān Shāmlū (r. 1619–1638) and his son ‘Abbās Qulī Khān, as well as a number of other great personages of his time. Furthermore, he produced eight copies of the Koran, two of which included a commentary (*tafsīr*). In the early nineteenth century, Muḥammad Riẓā estimated that 10,000 verses (*fard*) of Muḥammad Arshad’s poetry had survived the ravages of time.²⁶⁹ Muḥammad Arshad adopted the pen name of “Māyil”. This precedent was followed by his nephew Abū Ṭālib, who also was his disciple and son-in-law. Despite a recent depletion of the library of Barnābād, Muḥammad Riẓā had about 5,000–6,000 of Abū Ṭālib’s verses at his disposal.²⁷⁰

Up to the early eighteenth century, the Barnābādīs primarily defined their position as guardians of the grave of Vahīd al-Dīn Muḥammad. Their interaction with the Safavid overlords apparently remained limited to occasional odes to the rulers-that-be and the endeavor to safeguard the tax-free status of their property. Overall, they showed little inclination to assume an active role within the Safavid administration. His friendly relationship with a number of courtiers notwithstanding, Muḥammad Arshad I turned down an offer by the *vazīr* of Khurāsān to assume a post in the administration of Herat.²⁷¹ With the decline of Safavid power and the rise of the Abdālī leadership, the relationship of the Barnābādīs with the lords of Herat changed significantly. Rather than being pampered with tax-exemptions, they found themselves subjected (probably along with other landlords of the regions) to unprecedented fiscal demands. In 1718, Asadullāh Khān Abdālī demanded a contribution of one thousand *tūmān* from Abū al-Faṭḥ II b. Abū Ṭālib, who was in charge of the affairs of Barnābād at the time. This sum was exorbitant by the local standards of the time and

(two *zauj*) and Barnābād (one *zauj*), a portion of a big orchard (*bāgh-i buzurg*) along with pine and mulberry groves, half of the living quarters in Barnābād and the guest house, a portion of the farm known as Bāghcha-yi Mīr Sayyid Muḥammad, half of the living quarters in the fort, bathhouse and stables, the dyer’s shop (*dukān-i šabbāghī*), and half of a water-mill (*tāhūna-yi dāyira-yi Khvāja Mihdī*). Abū Ṭālib’s daughter was entitled to a unit of land (*fard*) in the village of Barnābād, and a portion of a vineyard and a mulberry plantation (Barnābādī ff 27b–28a; see also Tumanovich 1989: 202–5, 231–2). Rūj (Rūch, 34° 24’ N, 61° 34’ E) is located on the northern bank of the Harī Rūd (*Gaz. Afghanistan* III: 341).

²⁶⁵ Barnābādī f. 28a.

²⁶⁶ For a description of the lives and accomplishments of Muḥammad Arshad’s daughters, see Barnābādī f. 35a.

²⁶⁷ Barnābādī ff. 7a, 40a. See also Māyil Haravī 1969: 14–15; Tumanovich 1989: 212.

²⁶⁸ Barnābādī f. 37a. See also Māyil Haravī 1969a: 46; Tumanovich 1989: 216.

²⁶⁹ Barnābādī ff. 6b–22a. See also Māyil Haravī 1969a: 6–45; Tumanovich 1989: 25, 69, 194, 197, 203, 206–12.

²⁷⁰ Barnābādī ff. 22b, 24a–25a, 28b–33a, 34b. See also Māyil Haravī 1969a: 46–51.

²⁷¹ Barnābādī f. 7a–b. See also Māyil Haravī 1969a: 13–14; Tumanovich 1989: 197.

roughly corresponded to one-fifteenth of the revenues the Safavids had raised in all of the *vilāyāt* belonging to the province of Herat. As the amount collected by Abū al-Faṭḥ II fell short by 300 *tūmān*, he sent his 77-year old father Abū Ṭālib to the “godless khān” (*khān-i khudā nāshinās*) Asadullāh Abdālī to plead with him for a reduction of this heavy imposition. While Abū Ṭālib managed to convince Asadullāh to lower his demand to 650 *tūmān*, he found himself confronted by another member of court, who, with the “importunity of an Afghān” (*az taḥmīl-i afghānī*) insisted that Abū Ṭālib’s case be investigated further. After being insulted in this manner, the elderly Barnābād leader fell ill with fever and died shortly after his return to Barnābād.²⁷²

Given the troubled circumstances in the province of Herat during the first interlude of Abdālī power, it comes as no surprise that the chiefs of Barnābād looked for alternatives. As soon as the future Nādir Shāh appeared on the scene in 1727, Abū al-Faṭḥ II joined his ranks and accompanied him on his return to Mashhad along with ten Barnābādī families and their followers. Henceforth, he was present during most of Nādir’s military campaigns. Subsequent to Nādir’s conquest of Herat in 1732, Abū al-Faṭḥ II was appointed as *vazīr* of Bādghīs (allegedly against his will), and was awarded a *tuyūl* of two *zauj* of water and land in the village of Sabūl in the province of Ghūriyān.²⁷³ He held this post until his death in 1740 and was succeeded by the author’s paternal uncle and namesake Muḥammad Riẓā I (d. 1747). Muḥammad Riẓā’s loyalty to Nādir Shāh was so great that he did not hesitate to visit him in person and render accounts even during the last phase of his reign, which was characterized by increasing violence towards all courtiers.²⁷⁴

The political turmoil which engulfed Khurāsān after the death of Nādir Shāh found its local expression in repeated depredations by the *ūymāq* and Uzbek tribes which in turned caused general famine. According to Muḥammad Riẓā, the population of Ghūriyān, which had formerly amounted to 70,000–80,000 families, was reduced to thirty families who had been lucky enough to find refuge in the fort of Barnābād. Muḥammad Riẓā I was killed shortly after Nādir Shāh when he vainly sought to defend Barnābād against an attack by 150 Jamshīdī and Hazāra cavalry.²⁷⁵

Despite these disruptions, some members of the Barnābādī lineage could point to a continuous and lengthy career in the administration of Herat. Thus, Muḥammad Riẓā reports that his father Muḥammad Kāẓim (1726–1792), Abū al-Faṭḥ II’s youngest son, served in the chancellery of Herat for 35 years and under a variety of kings, such as Nādir Shāh, ‘Alī Shāh (Nādir Shāh’s nephew ‘Alī Qulī Khān Afshār alias ‘Ādil Shāh), Shāh Rukh Afshār (October 1748–December 1749), and Aḥmad Shāh (1750–1772).²⁷⁶ Muḥammad Kāẓim’s relationship with the Sadūzai court is reflected by three decrees issued in Rabī‘ I 1173/October–November 1759, Rajab 1174/March 1761, and Rajab 1184/October–November 1770. The first two decrees document the fact that Aḥmad Shāh respected and fostered the existing elite of Herat. In 1759, Aḥmad Shāh renewed a decree he had initially issued at the time of the conquest of Herat in 1750. The reason given for the renewal is that the previous decree had become worm-eaten and was about to decay. On the occasion of a visit to Kābul, Muḥammad Kāẓim presented the original decree, as well as those issued by the Safavid rulers to his ancestors in order to demonstrate the long-standing nature of his family’s privileges. Aḥmad Shāh indeed acknowledged the tax-free status of the “service grants and private property” (*tuyūlāt va suyūrghāl va amlāk*) at the disposal of Mīrzā Muḥammad Kāẓim and his brother Muḥammad Bāqir in Jangān and Barnābād. Herds of up to 200 sheep and five cows were to be exempt from the imposition of the tax categories of *sar galla* and *shākh shumārī*.²⁷⁷ The mulberry plantations located in Ghūriyān were likewise

²⁷² Barnābādī ff. 33b–34a. See also Tumanovich 1989: 159, 214–16. Abū Ṭālib died in Ramaẓān 1130/August 1718 (Māyil Haravī 1969a: 47).

²⁷³ Sabūl (34° 24’ N 61° 32’ E) is located on the northern bank of the Harī Rūd (*Gaz. Afghanistan* III: 342).

²⁷⁴ Barnābādī ff. 36a–b. See also Tumanovich 1989: 205, 215–18.

²⁷⁵ Barnābādī ff. 42a–b.

²⁷⁶ Barnābādī f. 44a.

²⁷⁷ Barnābādī f. 48b. There is little information on the tax categories of *sar galla* and *shākh shumārī*. In Qandahār, Aḥmad Shāh imposed *sar galla* as a tax on flocks on non-Durrānī and non-Farsīvān shepherds and settlers, at the rates of one *shāhī* for a sheep, four *shāhīs* for a cow, five for a mare, and six for a camel (Rawlinson 1871: 827). See also Strachey, *Memoir Chiefly on the Revenue and Trade of the Kingdom of Caubul*, Elphinstone Collection, India Office Library, F 88 13 Hn, f. 8.

freed from the tax called *māliya-yi filja*. The Sadūzai ruler also confirmed Muḥammad Kāzīm in his position as “secretary of the province of Herat” (*khidmat-i inshā-yi iyālat-i dār al-salṭana-yi Harāt*) and promised to render it hereditary among his descendants. Moreover, he exhorted the local officials and powerbrokers, such as the “present and future governors and tax-collectors” (*ḥukkām va ‘ummāl-i ḥāl va istiqbāl*) and the “Durrānī and Bardurrānī fighters” (*ghāziyān-i durrānī va bardurrānī*) to respect Muḥammad Kāzīm’s prominent and privileged status. Muḥammad Kāzīm’s involvement with the chancellery of Herat had additional financial benefits. Aḥmad Shāh initially fixed his income at 15 *tūmān* in cash, 5 *kharvār* in kind, and 3 *fard* of land in 1759. In March 1761, Aḥmad Shāh’s son Tīmūr Mīrzā, while still governor of Herat, enhanced Muḥammad Kāzīm’s salary by adding another 20 *tūmān* in cash and 5 *kharvār* in kind.²⁷⁸

For a brief period, Muḥammad Kāzīm’s standing at the court of Herat was called into question because of his close association with the controversial Hazāra leader Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān. Fondly remembering numerous instances of friendship the *bēglerbēgī* had shown to him over time, Muḥammad Kāzīm remained loyal to him throughout his rebellion in the 1760s and consistently ignored Tīmūr Mīrzā’s orders to cease relations. Finally, Tīmūr Mīrzā relented in the face of Muḥammad Kāzīm’s unwavering attitude and his willingness to pay substantial fines as a price for his friendship with Darvīsh ‘Alī Khān Hazāra.²⁷⁹

With the appointment as minister of crown lands (*vizārat-i khālīṣajāt*) in autumn 1770, Muḥammad Kāzīm’s professional career reached its apex. He held this prestigious and lucrative position for fourteen years until he lost it amid allegations of corruption. There are indeed indications that Muḥammad Kāzīm not only sought to enhance the prosperity of the crown lands assigned to his care but also fostered the fortune of his own family.²⁸⁰ Residing in the fashionable quarter adjoining the Friday mosque and the chancellery in the northeast of Herat, Muḥammad Kāzīm left the supervision of the estate in Barnābād to his brother Muḥammad Bāqir. There seems to have been a lively interchange of men and goods between the rural base of Barnābād and the urban residence at Herat. In 1180/1766–67, Muḥammad Kāzīm saw to it that his first-born son Muḥammad Rizā, the future author of the *Tadhkira*, was appointed supervisor of taxes (*vakīl*) of the province of Ghūriyān in order to remove him from the bad company he had fallen in with in Herat.²⁸¹ Muḥammad Kāzīm himself continued to engage in agricultural activities, which in turn enhanced his status at the royal court. His efforts to introduce new varieties of wheat and rice (*shālī*) met with the approval of Tīmūr Shāh, who ordered him to supply the royal court with 200 *mann* of rice annually.²⁸²

Muḥammad Kāzīm used the wealth he had accumulated for the restoration of public works. He ordered a second mosque to be built in Barnābād and repaired two water reservoirs in and near Herat.²⁸³ Muḥammad Rizā’s description of his father’s other achievements also serves to emphasize the privileged position this most prominent member of the Barnābādī lineage enjoyed during Tīmūr Shāh’s era. His discourse on Muḥammad Kāzīm’s modest disposition simultaneously demonstrates that he was a man of great means: Although the *vazīr* always had seven, eight, or ten fine horses worth at least 50 *tūmān* at his disposal, he insisted on visiting the king and the governors on foot even during winter when his progress was rendered difficult by rain or cold weather.²⁸⁴ Muḥammad Rizā finds his father’s clement attitude towards his slaves equally noteworthy, advertizing that he bought a total of 22–23 male and female slaves who were either freed or incorporated into his household. The latter group received some sort of professional training, as barber, masseur or the like, and were probably employed in the family’s *ḥammām* in Barnābād.²⁸⁵

²⁷⁸ Barnābādī f. 48a, 49a–b. See also Tumanovich 1989: 220–2.

²⁷⁹ Barnābādī 46b–48a.

²⁸⁰ Barnābādī f. 44a–b, 50a–b. See also Tumanovich 1989: 222–35.

²⁸¹ This settlement included a *tuyūl* of two *zauj* of land in Arīz (?) and Fashān (?) (Barnābādī f. 64a; see also Tumanovich 1989: 23, 56, 223–4, 232–3).

²⁸² Barnābādī f. 46a. See also Tumanovich 1989: 191–2, 231.

²⁸³ One of the water reservoirs Muḥammad Kāzīm repaired was the Hauz-i Mīr Ḥusainī in the MŠRH quarter of Herat. The other reservoir was located in the village (*qarya*) of Jibra’īl in the *bulūk* of Injīl (Barnābādī f. 44b; see also Krawulsky 1984: 89; Tumanovich 1989: 226).

²⁸⁴ Barnābādī f. 44a.

²⁸⁵ Barnābādī f. 44b. See also Tumanovich 1989: 229–30.

The wealth of the family is illustrated by the loss of property occasioned by the power struggles among the Sadūzai princes after Timūr Shāh's death. At times the warring parties and their followers took up position in the orchards of Barnābād, relying on Muḥammad Rizā, his immediate relatives, and the local inhabitants to look after their material needs.²⁸⁶ Another continuous grievance were successive rounds of excessive revenue assessment that targeted "men and women, people near and far, Muslims and Hindus, agriculturists and traders, artisans and travellers alike".²⁸⁷ Muḥammad Rizā reports that the local governor, Maḥmūd Mīrzā, had little control over his revenue officials, who devised new tax categories like a poll tax (*sar shumār*) and consumed the proceeds locally without passing them on to the provincial government.²⁸⁸ The officials appointed to the region after Maḥmūd Mīrzā's flight to Iran in 1797 imposed equally ruthless revenue demands, causing the "smoke of the sighs of the oppressed to rise to the revolving cupola [of the sky]".²⁸⁹ Moreover, the weak position of the central government in Herat allowed local actors to engage in plundering and slave raids. Muḥammad Rizā reports that his family estate was subject to repeated incursions, most of which were perpetrated by the "slaver" (*asīrfurūsh*) Ibrāhīm Khān Durrānī, who held sway in Ghūriyān until 1219/1804.²⁹⁰ At the time of writing in 1806–1811, Muḥammad Rizā accused Ibrāhīm Khān Durrānī of having engaged in theft, highway robbery and slavery for the past twenty years. During a final raid, Ibrāhīm Khān Durrānī's nephew Jamāl denuded the Barnābādīs of valuable vessels, books, and cash. With the connivance and assistance of Muḥammad Rizā's own servants, the last remnants of the property assembled over a period of three hundred years fell into the hands of robbers. Muḥammad Rizā's detailed list of the items lost in this process represents a last attempt to revive the vanishing grandeur associated with his illustrious ancestors. Denuded of all their possessions, the Barnābādīs and their dependants were forced to seek shelter in the city of Herat.²⁹¹

CONCLUSION

The foundation of the Sadūzai Empire worked to the advantage of Herat. Once again, a reverse relationship between the twin cities of Herat and Mashhad may be noticed. Forming the capital of the Afsharid Empire, Mashhad had prospered during the 1740s. Herat, by contrast, had suffered the adverse effects of Nādir Shāh's ongoing warfare and was reduced both in terms of population and size. Under Aḥmad Shāh, the province of Herat regained its central position and was one of the four core regions of the new polity. With the incorporation of Turshīz, Turbat-i Haidarīya, Turbat-i Shaikh Jām, Bākharz and Khvāf, the province expanded at the cost of the remnants of the Afsharid Empire, which were left to the tenuous control of Nādir Shāh's grandson Shāh Rukh Afshār and his sons. The relative importance of Herat is documented by the fact

²⁸⁶ Barnābādī f. 74b–75a.

²⁸⁷ Barnābādī f. 73b.

²⁸⁸ Barnābādī f. 76a–b.

²⁸⁹ Barnābādī f. 76b.

²⁹⁰ Barnābādī f. 77a–b. See also Barnābādī ff. 3b, 4b, 5a–b, 6a–b, 26a, 35a–b, 42b; Māyil Haravī 1969a: 55. Ibrāhīm Khān Durrānī held the government of Ghūriyān until Ramaẓān 1219/December 1804, when he was displaced by the Qājār governor of Mashhad, Muḥammad Valī Mīrzā, whom he had summoned to ward off military pressure exerted by Fīrūz al-Dīn Sadūzai from Herat. Ibrāhīm Khān Durrānī's son Yūsuf governed Barnābād until that time (*Ashraf al-tavārīkh* 155–6; 199–200, 202–3).

²⁹¹ Among the property taken from Muḥammad Rizā and his relatives were forty beds (*rakht-i khvāb*), expensive clothing, carpets, porcelain and copper vessels, fourteen chests containing cash, textiles, valuable items and rare medicines, a camel-litter and blankets, seven Korans, seven hundred books and fine specimens of penmanship by Mīr and Mīr 'Alī [Akbar?], one hundred rolls of paper from Kashmīr and Samarqand, excellent pen-cases encrusted with fine jewels, golden ink-holders, decrees issued by the Timurid and Safavid rulers, title-deeds along with the seal-rings of his ancestors, twenty yokes of oxen ('*avāmil*'), five horses, one fine colt, five mules, and ten donkeys. The items plundered were so numerous that it took ten days for them to be transported from Barnābād to Ghūriyān by beasts of burden obtained per force in Barnābād and furnished by Ibrāhīm Khān Durrānī's men. Moreover, the mansions, the fort, the town of Barnābād and the surrounding villages were denuded of two hundred gates. Muḥammad Rizā estimated that the property taken by Ibrāhīm Khān Durrānī amounted to one thousand *tūmān* at least. In the wake of the plunderers, the population of Barnābād destroyed local buildings, reservoirs and bridges to sell the bricks and to obtain the money and copper that had been overlooked (Barnābādī f. 77b–78a).

that the members of the royal family acting as local governors stood a good chance of rising to power at the center.

If we take a closer look at the social and political fabric of the province, a number of continuities stand out. As in Safavid times, we learn relatively little about the urban setting or the pursuits and the pastimes of the local population. One notable exception is furnished by Muḥammad Riẓā Barnābādī's memoirs that allow unique insights into the fortune of one elite family and the ties it entertained with the provincial and central government. The other available sources on the Sadūzai era conform to the standard format of court chronicles and display the customary preoccupation with the dynamics of warfare. From this vantage point, the tribal landscape constitutes the most definitive feature within the political framework of the province. In the case of Herat, the projected space is taken up by the so-called *ūymāq* and their leadership. In keeping with the early modern mode of organization, these tribal groups primarily assume a military profile. One important aspect of the administration of Herat is the military structure called *chahār ūymāq* which apparently corresponded to the four divisions (*bulūk/vilāyāt*) adjoining the city. This organizational framework was not a Sadūzai invention but possibly harked back to the Safavid era.

Another phenomenon reminiscent of the Safavid period is the fluidity of spatial relations. Forming the backbone of the military, the prominent tribal leaders tended to be upwardly mobile within the political hierarchy. Their standing in the provincial government translated into control of land. As a rule, shifts in the position of individual leaders implied lateral movement for the bulk of their followers. This phenomenon is exemplified by the most prominent *ūymāq* during the Sadūzai period, the Sunnī Hazāras and the Tīmūrīs. The careers of their leaders Darvīsh 'Alī Khān Hazāra and Qilich Khān Tīmūrī demonstrate the volatile nature of tribal "homelands", fittingly described as *yūrt*. Darvīsh 'Alī Khān's rebellion in the early 1760s led to a temporary relocation of his followers from Qal'a-yi Nau in Bādghīs to Marv. Darvīsh 'Alī Khān Hazāra's successors, by contrast, were associated with the administration of Bākharz. A similar case can be made for Qilich Khān Tīmūrī, who moved from Bādghīs to Khvāf as part of his endeavor to play Qājār and Sadūzai interests off against one another. Mobility, often involuntary, remained a noticeable feature well into the nineteenth century. This prompted Ferrier to point out "the difficulty of stating anything certain about the geography of Central Asia", and, somewhat overstating the issue, to assume that entire towns might be on the move:

[A] place may to-day be the centre of a flourishing population, and in four-and-twenty hours a desert. The Afghans have become so used to sudden and enforced displacements, that they never attach themselves to the soil; their tent is their country. In two days a family will build themselves a good house of earth, roofed, with the door only made of wood; and the facility with which they do this explains... how so many towns appear and disappear without leaving a trace behind them... This mania of the chiefs for removing whole populations renders it so difficult to ascertain their numbers with accuracy... nothing there is certain; nothing is durable; everything is liable to impromptu changes, – men as well as things.²⁹²

The example of the Barnābādīs shows that Aḥmad Shāh and his successors recognized the existing local elites and emulated Safavid policies of patronage. At the same time, the creation of the Sadūzai Empire gave rise to a new nobility. The Abdālī/Durrānī Afghāns, whose presence in Herat had diminished during the Afsharid period, rebounded and assumed a leading position in all government affairs. It was this group that Aḥmad Shāh primarily relied on in his efforts at statebuilding. The Sadūzai state was conceived of as a web of personal loyalties generated by notions of common descent. With the royal family at its core, this system radiated outward on the basis of genealogical proximity. Being most closely related to Aḥmad Shāh, the Sadūzai and Bāmīzai subdivisions of the Pūpalzai Durrānīs occupied a preeminent position at the Sadūzai court. The leaders of the other influential Durrānī tribes likewise enjoyed high offices and the concomitant privileges. The internal cohesion of Aḥmad Shāh's new polity was thus secured by the creation of the Durrānī confederacy as state supporting elite. To this end, the Sadūzai ruler endowed this group with a common identity that somewhat resembled the one constructed for the Qizilbāsh in the early Safavid period. Part and parcel of this process was the renaming of the erstwhile Abdālī confederacy into "Durrānī" and the creation of the "Bardurrānīs" as matching entity. The royal space created by Aḥmad Shāh was mirrored and

²⁹² Ferrier 1857: 395.

enhanced in the historiography of the time. Following Safavid precedents, the Sadūzai chronicler Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī referred to Aḥmad Shāh's followers as *ghāzī*, "(religious) warriors," and thus cast them as principal partners in his enterprise.²⁹³ The leading position of Aḥmad Shāh's family within this framework was in turn cemented by the notion that their lineage had occupied an exalted position within the confederacy since the time of its eponymous ancestor Sadū.²⁹⁴

The Sadūzai Empire reached the height of its expansion under Aḥmad Shāh. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the various strands making up the kingdom unravelled. Aḥmad Shāh's erstwhile realm, and with it the province of Herat, shrank dramatically. In 1233/1817–18, Boukhary observed that Khurāsān was divided into Sadūzai and Qājār spheres of influence. The Qājār rulers of Tehran, who had begun to make their influence felt in the western part of Khurāsān from 1796 on, had incorporated the former Sadūzai possessions of Turshīz, Turbat-i Ḥaidarīya and Turbat-i Shaikh Jām into their domain.²⁹⁵ During the following decades, Qājār presence in the region increased steadily. Meanwhile the principality of Herat became the last enclave of Sadūzai authority and led a perilous existence. Squeezed between Qājār interests in the west and the budding Muḥammadzai state in the east, its fate was largely decided by British intervention. The following chapter will consider the political fate of Herat in the nineteenth century and its implications for regional alignments of power.

²⁹³ The close relationship between the king and the men fighting for his cause (*ghāzīs*) is also a topos of sixteenth-century Safavid historiography. Used as a synonym for *askar* or *lashkarī*, the term *ghāzī* connotes a collective identity, strong bonds of solidarity and military clout (Tilmann Trausch (forthcoming), "Ghazā in 16th-Century Chronicles of Safavid Iran,").

²⁹⁴ Elphinstone 1992 II: 96.

²⁹⁵ Boukhary lists the following regions under Qājār authority: Maḥvilāt, Turbat [-i Ḥaidarīya], Turshīz, Gūnābād [Junābad], Tūn [Tūn], Charakhs [Sarakhs?], Bam Rūd [located between Ghūriyān and Qāyin], Qāyin, Siqal'a [west of Tūn], Ṭabas Masīnā, Ṭabas Gīlak, Jām, Nīshāpūr, Mashhad, Tūs, Sabzavār, Kūh-i Mīsh [a range of hills bounding the plain of Sabzavār to the south and west], Kirmān, Chinārān, Kiltān (?), Qūchān [Khabūshān], Bisṭām, Shahrūd [Shāhrūd], Varāmīn, Astarābād, Kalāt-i Nādir Shāh, Nasā, Abīvard, Shādbākh [?], Damghān [Dāmghān], Chahchaha, the quarters of Kūrdistān, Simnān, etc. (Boukhary 245 (Persian text, 107); see also *Gaz. Iran* II: 63, 122–3, 427, 600; Krawulsky 1982: 45–6, 49; 1984: 40–1).

