CENTRAL ASIA IN THE 18TH CENTURY: THE AGE OF INTROSPECTION

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation delineates two new political and cultural visions that emerged in Central Asia in the eighteenth century. These visions shaped Central Asia’s political and cultural boundaries and its perception of self-image, and became the mode of cultural discourse in that period, a discourse that continued well into the Russian era. They were the most significant creations in a period in the region’s history that is generally known as a period of political, economic and cultural decline. The work demonstrates how the period of decline in fact led to and even called for a thorough introspection by presenting Central Asians with an unprecedented opportunity to begin their understanding of their geographical and cultural space, indeed, their place in the world, and also to begin to fashion their self-image. These ideas were manifested in two seemingly distinct realms, the courtly and the popular. The “courtly vision” is examined through the prism of inauguration rituals of new rulers. These rituals were reported in the official chronicles, and their descriptions uncover many layers in the court’s understanding of itself and of its changing composition and functions over time, and in the court’s legitimacy. The “popular vision” is explored through the analysis of a new genre in popular literature that I term “heroic apocrypha” and that appeared in Central Asia in the 18th century. This genre brought before its audience extensive and compelling narratives about Central Asia’s most illustrious son and conqueror of much of Central Eurasia in the fourteenth century, namely, Tīmūr. The study of Tīmūr’s fictional life story opens a window into many expressions of the Central Asian reality in the eighteenth century. The two visions, the courtly and the popular, were indeed connected by the circumstances of their creation, and by the issues that they addressed: legitimacy of rule, the relationship between religion
and state, interpretations of traditions and customs and of sources of inspiration, and their understanding of Central Asia's place in the world.
INTRODUCTION

This dissertation delineates the new political and cultural vision that emerged in Central Asia in the eighteenth century. This vision shaped Central Asia’s political and cultural boundaries and its self-image and became the mode of cultural discourse in that period, a discourse that continued well into the Russian era. It was one of the most significant creations in a period in the region’s history that is generally known as a period of political, economic and cultural decline. The present study demonstrates how the period of decline in fact led to and even called for a thorough introspection. What follows is, in a sense, a story of a society that looks inward.

Central Asia¹ in the eighteenth century enjoys a very dubious reputation, one of stagnation and isolation, even decline. So dreadful has been its reputation that the era has become one of the most ignored and least-studied periods in Central Asian studies. After all, the study of great empires is much more inviting. Most historical discussions about the eighteenth century and nearly all attempts to characterize the period, at least until recently, centered on examining the causes for the decline: decentralization of the state, loss of revenues, deterioration in city life and in artistic production, a nomad-oriented political mechanism that failed to function in sedentary regions, the alarming influence of “backward” Sufi brotherhoods and so forth. Even recent contributions to the history of Central Asia in the era under discussion have been more an attempt to refute the theory of decline, rather than study the unique evidence (textual and other) that the period has to

¹Unless pointed out differently, Central Asia throughout this work refers to the territory of the three Central Asian khanates that governed the region in the second half of the eighteenth century, although the center of gravity in this work is the khanate of Bukhara.
offer. Such contributions – welcome to Western academia primarily because “decline” was declared unpopular in light of post-colonial literary theory – not only failed to reveal any new data concerning the historical developments in Central Asia in the eighteenth century, but also completely ignored the primary sources of the period.

The present work suggests that the eighteenth century was, in fact, a period of great significance in the early modern history of Central Asia and, indeed, planted the seeds for future developments in the region. In the middle of the century Central Asia began to recover from the crisis with the rise of the Tribal Dynasties (the Manghīts in Bukhara, the Qongrats in Khiva and the Mings in Qoqand) who exercised authority in the region up to the Russian conquest, over a century later. We will chart some of the major developments that were conceived during the time of crisis, developments that eventually encouraged the transition to a new era in Central Asia’s history.

This study maintains that the eighteenth century presented Central Asians with an unprecedented opportunity to begin their understanding of their geographical and cultural space, indeed, their place in the world, and also to begin to fashion their self-image. I propose to outline these insights as they expressed themselves in two seemingly distinct realms, the courtly and the popular. What I term the “courtly vision” (that is, the vision expressed through the officially-declared policy of the court, or court propaganda, if you will) will be examined through the prism of court rituals, and more specifically, through the inauguration rituals of new khans and amirs. These rituals were given a place of honor in the official chronicles, and their descriptions uncover many layers in the court’s understanding of itself and of its changing composition and functions over time and in the court’s understanding of its sources of inspiration and, consequently, of its legitimacy.
The "popular vision" will be explored through the analysis of a new genre of popular literature in Central Asia -- what I term "heroic apocrypha" -- that appeared in the eighteenth century. This genre brought before its audience extensive and compelling narratives about Central Asia's most illustrious son, the conqueror of much of Central Eurasia in the fourteenth century, namely, Tīmūr. The study of Tīmūr’s fictional life story (and probably one of the finest examples of heroic apocrypha), opens a window into many expressions of Central Asian reality in the eighteenth century. I will make the argument that the two realms, or the two visions, the courtly and the popular, were indeed connected by the circumstances of their creation, and by the issues that they addressed, from the changing perceptions of legitimacy of rule to the relationship between religion and state; from their interpretations of traditions and customs and invocation of sources of inspiration to their understanding of their place in the world, as well as various related issues that dominated the cultural discourse in Central Asia even beyond the early modern period.
Central Asia in the First Half of the 18th Century: The Age of Decline; the Age of Introspection.

The eighteenth century brought about the political disintegration of the traditional polities of the states in Central Asia that had existed since the Uzbeks took over Mawarannahr in the early 1500s. Tribal forces challenged the central authority and ceased to recognize Chinggisid charisma, while conflicts between rebellious tribes and inter-tribal warfare wreaked havoc in Central Asian cities with the warring sides attempting to pillage each other’s political centers. Consequently, city life deteriorated and the urban population dwindled to the extent that several major cities were reported almost totally de-populated. Commerce and traditional crafts were rapidly degenerating, and even famine was not an uncommon occurrence. Naturally, these events were also influenced by longer-term changes in the world surrounding Central Asia that essentially furthered the region’s isolation, such as the shift in the main international trade routes and the European move to maritime trade, the rift between Sunni Central Asia and Shi’ite Iran, and the disruption of trade with China by warring Qazaqs and Junghars who also invaded the settled realms of Central Asia a number of times and caused much destruction.

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2Imperial charisma dictated that only Chinggis Khan’s descendants were entitled to the throne.

3The most noteworthy example was the period of the 1720s, after the invasion of the Qazaqs into Mawarannahr. Following a revolt led by Ibrāhīm Biy, chief of the Keneges in 1722, the large city of Samarqand was almost deserted, so that when Nādir Shāh invaded the city in 1740, only about one thousand families lodged at the fort. See Bartol’d, “Istoriia kul’turnogo zhizni Turkestana,” pp. 271-272.

4See for example, the famine in the city of Khiva in the 1760s, a result of feuds between Uzbek troops and Turkmens.
Thus, the eighteenth century witnessed the collapse of the political system that was established following the Uzbek conquest, a system based on the rule of dynasties of Chinggisid origin that commanded loyalty on the part of the Uzbek tribes. Toward the end of the seventeenth century a process that began earlier was reaching its highpoint and the tribes realized that the ruling dynasty that was once the unifying factor of the state could no longer perform its role effectively. The state was unable to maintain its financial system and was unable to pay the military (after the distribution of land grants, the assignment of tankhā status, the waqf endowments, and various other types of allowance, the state lost most of its revenues). The bureaucratic mechanism was ineffective because there was no strong ruler able to ensure the well-being of the population and maintain his own authority based on military success, thus satisfying the interests of the tribes and ethnic groups. Once the dynasty and the tribes lost their consensus, the system fell into decline. The rulers were unable to provide their troops (or tribes) with victories in wars (or economic gains). Once sedentarization became imminent, the older system of conquests and gains (that some scholars call “imperial ideology”) was harder to maintain. The central administration was, in actuality, losing its grip on the periphery. The fact that the khanates were surrounded by outside enemies, of course, did not contribute to their well-being. Since the establishment of the Shi‘ite Safavid dynasty in Iran there were ongoing conflicts and skirmishes on the border with Khorasan. The Junghars were attacking the Qazaqs from the east, the khanates were attacking each other, and so on. Central Asia was experiencing growing isolation as its world simply contracted. All this culminated in 1740, when Nādir Shāh, the Turkmen emperor of Iran, invaded Central Asia and conquered most of the region, virtually unopposed. City after city surrendered to his armies
(with some minor resistance in Khiva) and entrusted him with their care. Nādir Shāh did not come to the region to stay. He treated favorably those who agreed to become his vassals and installed new rulers in place of those who rejected his authority. Ultimately, his invasion served as one of the most significant catalysts to the rise of the tribal dynasties in Central Asia.

The process of Central Asia’s decline, although emphasized in scholarship (which is not vast anyway), has not been very well researched. In fact, those who have sought to refute the decline never really defined it, and critical presentations of the decline were not supported by the Central Asian sources. Therefore, for an informed study of “decline” we should turn to Lambton’s study of similar developments in eighteenth-century Iran, and to what Lambton terms the “moral decay” at the center of the kingdom. In her study about “Tribal Resurgence and the Decline of the Bureaucracy” in eighteenth-century Iran Lambton paints a picture of political contraction and economic decline. Lambton identifies the collapse of the central government as the cause, or at least the impetus for tribal resurgence and the decline in bureaucracy. She describes a situation whereby there was reassertion of tribal authority, first in the periphery, then in the center. This reassertion expressed itself in raids and incursions into the central areas, as well as in revolts against

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5 On the decline see Bregel, “The Role of Central Asia;” Barthold, A Short History of Turkestan, p. 66; Spuler, “Central Asia,” p. 470. Some of the arguments for decline (with additional bibliography) are briefly (and conveniently) summarized in Levi, The Indian Diaspora in Central Asia, pp. 21-23. In the first part of his book Levi offers several fundamental counter-arguments to the idea of “decline,” arguments that in my opinion are not convincing for the eighteenth century, but for a century later (though by then, the claim for decline is not really made in serious scholarship).

6 Indeed, as we will see below, the themes of tyranny, corruption and poor decision-making on the part of the Ashtarkhanid dynasty in the khanate of Bukhara, are repeated themes in eighteenth-century historical records (whether officially sponsored or not).
the central administration. The three dynasties that followed the Safavids (the Afshars, Zands and Qajars) were based on tribal support. Nādir Shāh, founder of the first of these dynasties, had to rely, at first, on his military prowess to justify his rule, but naturally, this was not enough to secure a long-lasting dynasty.

Iran and Central Asia differed in many regards. Nevertheless, some parallels may be sought. For instance, the central government was no longer capable of administering the army. As Lambton puts it, “the complicated administrative machinery for allocating the funds of the empire to its military and civil officials had ceased to function effectively.”7 This can be clearly seen in Central Asia, although it does not mean that the old administrative system ceased to exist. On the contrary, as Lambton demonstrates, the old bureaucracy survived and lingered on (with a few modifications), partly because the personnel were the same (only serving different rulers), but their effectiveness was minimal.

Another interesting parallel is the concept of rulership. Lambton distinguishes between two forms of political theory. One deemed that kingship was inherent in the family of kings, and the other held that rule was to be inherent in the tribe, or the family of the tribal ruler. The fierce debate on who was worthy of kingship is prominently featured in the Central Asian accounts from that era. The following story from Iran is a good example:

Before Nādir Shāh ascended the throne he assembled the amirs and the ʿulamāʾ and asked them to choose a king. They nominated him. He said: “The king must be the son of a king. We are not such.” They answered: “Kingship is in the hands of God. He gives it to whomsoever He wills.” One participant objected, saying (about Nādir Shāh): “this fellow is not a

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man of any family.” But he was quickly contradicted by the *shaykh al-islām* that “God gives kingship and glory.”

In other words, and as we will see in Central Asia, the debate regarding who was worthy of kingship was central to this period of upheaval. The dispute was intense and introduced new elements into the decision-making process. The emphasis on the cooperation between the tribal chieftains and the religious officials (and also Sufis) created a new reality not only in Iran, but also in Central Asia. No longer did the king have to be the son of a king (or the khan – the son of a Chinggisid), no longer (theoretically, at least) was it enough to belong to a certain tribe or family, but sanction for sovereignty also had to come from God.

The identity of the chosen leader and his basis of legitimation were not the only issues at stake. In a period when social structures fell apart, a new social structure was forming. Like the tribal rulers in Central Asia, Nādir Shāh the Turkmen was viewed, in this context, as the counter reaction against the decay and weakness of the late Safavid state. Nevertheless, the fact that the Safavids were deposed does not mean that they had completely vanished, and their charismatic appeal still persisted well into the nineteenth century. This complexity also appears in Central Asia in that era.

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8 The man who spoke against Nādir Shāh was then strangled, and the *shaykh al-islām* was given a robe of honor. See Lambton, “The Tribal Resurgence and the Decline of the Bureaucracy,” p. 113.

The Plan of this Study.

The basic premise of this work is that (1) a period of long-term political instability, personal insecurity and economic crisis not only created a power vacuum but also necessitated thorough introspection; (2) like every vacuum, this too needed to be filled. The competing powers came from several directions but all rose essentially from within the geographical and cultural sphere that was Central Asia. As they tried to fill the vacuum they used resources that were already there, but they presented them or translated them to accommodate and create a new reality. Thus, by manipulating the old resources, whether tangible (like material objects) or metaphysical (like traditions) they challenged the previous customs and constructed a new vision.

This work is divided into two parts. Part I, titled “The Courtly Vision” takes the reader to the realm of the old inauguration ritual of new rulers in Central Asia, and more specifically, to the ceremony’s high point: the elevation of the chosen leader on a white felt carpet by the most important dignitaries of the realm. Although the ceremony had ancient Inner Asian roots, the chroniclers usually attributed the origin of the ceremony (as well as many other things) to Chinggis Khan and to the legacy of the Mongol World Empire. Chapter One will explore and present the vision of kingship under the Mongols and Timurids and how it began to change under the early Uzbeks. We will trace the development of the elevation ritual from the thirteenth century down to the eighteenth century and discuss the Mongol vision of the ceremony and how it was perceived in centuries to come. The study of these rituals will actually point to a variety of cultural phenomena in the Mongol world in Central Asia that ultimately led to a fusion of tradi-
tions. We will outline the changing nature of the ceremony under Tīmūr and the Timurids and its further developments following the Uzbek conquest.

The eighteenth century yielded new experiences in inauguration rituals. Chapter Two explores in depth the coronation, in Bukhara, of Muḥammad Raḥīm Khan Mangḥīt in 1756. Muḥammad Raḥīm was the first Mangḥīt tribal chieftain to ascend the throne of the khanate of Bukhara and also assume the title “khan.” His inauguration, recorded in his official history, an eighteenth-century work entitled Tuhfat al-khānī (The Khan’s Gift), and presented here in full translation, will serve as our basis for understanding what happened to coronation rituals in the eighteenth century and how the courtly vision was officially represented. We will speculate on how the work influenced future narratives, and whether there was a similar development also in the khanate of Khiva.

Chapter Three introduces a tradition that began to be developed around a particular stone in Samarqand, known as the Kök Tash (Blue Stone). Noted in numerous travel guidebooks, and familiar to many locals and visitors alike, this so-called “coronation stone” is conveniently regarded as the place where all (or at least, most) of the rulers of Mawarannahr since Tīmūr were enthroned. However, a closer examination of the primary sources (both travel accounts and post-Timurid historical works) reveals a wide variety of stories about the origin of the stone, conflicting reports as to its whereabouts and its purpose, and the procedure of the ceremony that may or may not have taken place at the stone. The stone’s remarkable absence from some of the most basic and important narratives of the time only increases the mystery.¹⁰ We will examine how the Kök Tash sup-

¹⁰In fact, it is important to note that our sources are not unanimous, and there seems to be a continuing discrepancy (beginning already under Mongol rule) in describing inauguration ceremonies between internal and external sources. This point is discussed below.
posedly became the destination for pilgrimage by the newly enthroned (and by others), and consider what we can learn from stories about the Kök Tash about the relationship between ritual, politics and religion in the eighteenth century. We will discuss the stone’s function in popular memory and in actual use, and explore its association (if any) with Tīmūr and the Timurids.

The second part of this work, focused on the “popular vision,” examines the “heroic apocrypha” centered on the figure of Tīmūr. We will first introduce the numerous biographies of Tīmūr that began to appear in Central Asia in the 1710s. We will describe the main manuscript in its various renderings and try to place the work in the general context of Central Asian studies, defying the notion that the veneration of Tīmūr in Central Asia today is a new phenomenon. Rather, one of the goals of this work is to emphasize (the very trivial point that is so often ignored) that processes of nation-building cannot be understood properly without looking into the past. We will then sketch the history of the renderings of Tīmūr’s fictional biographies and their descriptions in catalogs of manuscripts in Tashkent, Dushanbe and St. Petersburg and follow this with a discussion on the history of scholarship of the genre (a very short discussion, since the genre has received little scholarly attention), and introduce the work’s structure.

Chapter Two features a translation of selected narratives of the work that will expose the reader to samples of its contents. The analytical discussion will take place in Chapter Three. This chapter is devoted to the study of the work and its role in setting the cultural boundaries of Central Asia in the eighteenth century. We will argue that the “popular vision” articulated a Central Asian ethos that not only addressed the issues of legitimacy of rule and the role of the Sufis and the ʿulamāʾ in administering political and
social life in Central Asia, but also coped with the function of individuals in the society and offered a certain moral code for the readers or listeners of these biographies. Some of my conclusions were inspired by research on one of the most popular tales in the Arab world, namely, the *Sīrat Baybars*, the saga of the founder of the Mamlūk sultanate in Egypt in the thirteenth century.

The dissertation concludes with a chapter that is, in effect, devoted to synthesizing the two parts of the work into one coherent narrative about the formulation of the vision of Central Asia in the eighteenth century. My aim is to compare and contrast the two seemingly disparate visions and to show that, although these were seemingly two distinct world views, both tackled many of the same issues, and even (at times) addressed some of them similarly. There are, of course, many dissimilarities as well. It is safe to say that the popular vision dealt with more issues than the courtly vision, since it was more comprehensive and engaged aspects of life that the courtly vision ignored.

Finally, a word is needed about the topics investigated and the types of the primary sources used for the present study. It is important to emphasize that the topics of this study have never been explored previously: inauguration rituals in Central Asia, save for a few observations by Russian ethnographers about the nineteenth-century Qazaqs, were never researched, and the *Kök Tash*, the biographies on Tīmūr and Tīmūr’s revival in the eighteenth century, have received almost no scholarly treatment. All are major themes in the history of Central Asia in the early modern period, and yet they were neglected by modern scholarship.
A note about the sources: I have mostly used primary sources (most of the Central Asian sources used in this study are in manuscript form, never edited, published or translated). In addition to the Central Asian court chronicles (or official histories), family histories and popular literature, I also made extensive use of travel literature. All four genres are very different from each other, each has its own biases, advantages and shortcomings, and each is open to a variety of sources of information, often overlooked in other types of sources. It is my view that no single type of source is better than the other. The question is what kind of information the scholar wishes to explore, what access can be gained into different worlds by using different sources, and to what extent we are aware of the picture that each source wanted to paint for its audience. Eventually, a synthesis of sources probably reflects a full picture of the developments in the society than the use of any one source alone.
PART I: THE COURTLY VISION:

THE RULER'S INAUGURATION RITUAL.¹¹

From the time of the Mongol conquest of Central Asia in the thirteenth century, authors of Central Asian historical works repeatedly harnessed their best writing skills to describe the inauguration rituals of new khans. Such descriptions are crucial for our understanding of court culture and the ideology of kingship since inauguration rituals (and their literary depictions) display the "symbolic and ritual acts that served both to legitimate and to present monarchical rule."¹² A study of the representation of the ceremony in eighteenth-century Central Asia will allow us to construct the unique courtly vision for the region that came to life in that century. We will therefore examine the literary sources in order to underscore authors' perceptions of the ceremony's origin and authenticity, to highlight the idealized tradition of inaugurations in contrast with the actual performance of the ritual, and writers' explanations of the circumstances leading to the departure from this idealized tradition. In this study the eighteenth century emerges as a pivotal point in the history of Central Asia that accommodated the attempts to turn old traditions to a new political reality, a political order that would be maintained for the next century and a half.

¹¹This part of the dissertation saw its debut in a Master's Thesis submitted to the Department of Central Eurasian Studies at Indiana University, Bloomington in 2001. The thesis was later altered considerably and was published in the series Papers on Inner Asia of the Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies at Indiana University (see Sela, Ritual and Authority in Central Asia). I revised the material and included it here because I believe it is imperative for the purpose of the present work (and after I distanced myself from it for a while, some issues became clearer and needed to be addressed). Chapter 3 (the Kök-Tash narratives) is an entirely new addition.

Central Asian rulers – often the sponsors of the written accounts – and the authors had a stake in the successful representation of the inauguration ceremony: the khans wished their legacy to be adequately perpetuated, admired and validated; the writers, in turn, hoped to establish their own literary credentials and curry favor with their patrons. The products of this mutual endeavor offer vivid descriptions that provide a fertile ground for investigation into the relationships between ritual and political power, into the relationships between Mongol customs and Islamic law, and into diverse issues in cultural history. In particular, our authors saw the need to highlight and explain one moment in the inauguration ritual which was singularly regarded as concluding the transformation of the prince into the new monarch. This moment was the elevation of the newly-enthroned khan on a white felt rug by the most important dignitaries of the realm.

Well-rooted in Inner Asian traditions, the khan’s elevation was the most dramatic point in the accession to the throne. It best represented the ambivalent relationship between ruler and subjects: on the one hand, the khan enjoyed a superior position by being elevated above all others; on the other hand, he was very much dependent upon those who held him, probably wishing they would not let go. This climactic moment, compared in literary sources to the rise of the sun and the moon, not only concluded a rite of passage, but also physically symbolized the investiture of the power of governance by sealing, in effect, a contract between the ruler and the state.

From the sixteenth century, Central Asian authors associated the elevation ritual with a legacy initiated by Chinggis Khan, founder of the Mongol Empire. Several writers emphasized that the ritual followed a prescribed formula that had endured since the days of the Mongol conquest of Central Asia, a formula that dictated the procedure for the
elevation ritual and also determined the identity of those who held the felt. However, the description of the actual ritual always seemed to depart from the original formula: the ritual was always performed differently, the number of the felt-bearers was usually higher than the prescribed four, and the characterization of the participants was always diverse. In addition, when we examine narratives from the Mongol period, we find that the elevation ritual was hardly mentioned in the Mongol-commissioned works, in direct contrast to the ceremony’s descriptions in contemporary accounts of missionaries and travelers to the region.

In the post-Mongol period the ceremony continued to be shaped and re-shaped, benefiting from the rich variety of Islamic and Inner Asian political ritual, but at the same time charged with the suggested tension between Islamic law (sharī‘a) and Mongol customary law (yasa), and discrepancies between expectation and reality, rhetoric and actual performance. Beginning with ‘Abdallāh Khan’s enthronement in 1583, the khan’s elevation became almost the standard form of inauguration, but the descriptions of the event were never standardized. Although the identity of the felt-bearers, their ethnic or tribal affiliations, and their rank and position in the court were supposedly clearly marked, in actuality they were constantly changing.

The middle of the eighteenth century witnessed the rise to power of the so-called tribal dynasties in Central Asia. Different Uzbek tribes – the Qongrats in Khiva, the Mings in Qoqand, and the Manghits in Bukhara – slowly assumed control of the Central Asian khanates. Since they were theoretically deprived of ruling privileges (imperial legacy in Central Asia prescribed that only Chinggis Khan’s descendants had the right to the throne), they had to sanction certain modes of legitimation to facilitate their rule. The
first such leader to try to come to terms with his new position, and, in a way, to set an example for future generations, was Muḥammad Raḥīm Atalīq, a Manghīt tribal chieftain (and therefore, a non-Chinggisid), who, on December 16, 1756, was raised on the white felt to the throne of the khanate of Bukhara. At the ceremony’s conclusion Muḥammad Raḥīm assumed the title “khan” and became the first ruler of the Manghīt dynasty, the last dynasty of the Uzbeks which would endure through the Russian conquest of Central Asia in the second half of the nineteenth century. Muḥammad Raḥīm’s inauguration narrative, related in the eighteenth-century chronicle Tuhfat al-khānī (and rendered in full translation below), will serve as the basis for inquiry into the courtly vision of Central Asia that emerges in the eighteenth century. This vision of the court – after all, the ritual was closed to most of the subjects, who did not participate in it, and dissemination of knowledge of the event was, apparently, not very crucial – essentially determined who was entitled to rule, who was entitled to participate in the “court society,”¹³ what were the sources of inspiration that provided the legitimation for kingship, what was the relationship between religion and state, and related issues.

¹³The phrase follows Norbert Elias’ terminology in The Court Society (Die höfische Gesellschaft), where the German sociologist essentially made one of the most significant steps in understanding the interaction between the ruler and his court, and also examined the relationship between court ritual and court identity. See Elias, The Court Society.
CHAPTER 1: INAUGURATION RITUALS BEFORE THE 18TH CENTURY

1.1 Inauguration Rituals under the Mongols and Timurids.14

The elevation ritual had ancient roots in Inner Asia. We have a description of such a ceremony from as early as the sixth century A.D., when one of the Toba Emperors (the Toba was the ruling family of the Northern Wei Dynasty in China) was raised by seven dignitaries on a black felt rug and then, facing west, made obeisance to Heaven.15 And yet Muslim authors (from the sixteenth century on) never mentioned the ancient tradition. Instead, they traced the legacy of elevation rituals back to the Mongol conquest and, more specifically, to Chinggis Khan and to what was known as the customary law of the Mongols, the yasa. Commissioned to record their masters’ dynastic history, authors writing under Mongol and Timurid rule often produced colorful narratives of inauguration rituals, but the elevation of the new ruler on the felt – perceived as the high point of the ceremony in sixth-century Inner Asia as well as in post-Mongol Central Asia – received hardly any treatment by authors in the Mongol period, including such sources as the Secret History of the Mongols.16

14 The initial version of this sub-chapter was read at the 54th Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, April 4-7, 2002, Washington DC.

15 Boodberg, “Marginalia to the Histories of the Northern Dynasties,” pp. 306-318. The ancient Turks had other inauguration practices involving the use of felt. For example, at the election of a new khan, the nobles of the realm would bundle him in a felt rug and spin him around nine times. Then they would put him on a horse and, following the ride, they would ask him how long he intended to be the qaghan. From his dazed mumbling they would conclude the length of his reign. See Sinor, “The Making of a Great Khan,” pp. 245-46; de Guignes, Histoire générale, vol. 1, pt. 4, p. 460. This custom, or a version of it, was practiced also under the Khitans. See History of Chinese Society: Liao, pp. 274-275.

16 In fact, a white felt rug (tolog or tologh) was mentioned only once in the Secret History, when Gürbestü, mother (or wife) of Tayang-qan, ruler of the Naiman tribe, ordered Ong-qan’s head to be cut off and brought to her on a large white felt rug. See “Secret History,”
Evidence provided by authors working for the Mongol courts leads us to believe that under Mongol rule an inauguration ceremony was almost entirely a Chinggisid event, involving two or sometimes three participants. The new khan, one of Chinggis Khan’s descendants, was led to the throne by two other important members of Chinggis Khan’s family. According to the official sources, tribal and military personnel fulfilled the role of spectators, but they were not given access to the most intimate and privileged part of the ceremony. Our chronicles describe how during these events, whose exact time was determined by astrologers and the so-called shamans (qams), the participants and the audience typically removed their hats and slung their belts across their backs,\(^{17}\) knelt three times to the sun, distributed gifts, and passed the wine goblet.\(^{18}\) Several authors associated these activities with the Mongols’ “ancient custom,” but did not elaborate. The ceremony also often included a change in the new ruler’s name and/or title. For example, when Temüjin rose to power, two of his family members, Quchar and Sacha-beki, swore never to disobey him in days of war and never to disturb him in days of peace. Then, according to the Secret History, “they named him Chinggis-qahan and made him qan.”\(^{19}\)

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\(^{17}\)Jean-Paul Roux explained that the act of removing the hat and belt meant giving up one’s rights, position, and privileges, so that the act of replacing them would thereby establish new ties of subordination and dependence with the replacer. See Roux, “Quelque objects,” pp. 50-51.

\(^{18}\)Drinking ceremonies were common in the Mongol court. For an outline of the custom and for additional bibliography see DeWeese, Islamization, pp. 221-225.

Persian historians provided elaborate descriptions of inauguration rituals of Chinggis Khan’s descendants. Ögedei’s inauguration in 1229 was preceded by a quril-tay (assembly, council) that was attended by “all the princes, noyans and emirs” together with a large army. After they decided to appoint Ögedei as Chinggis Khan’s heir, Chaghatay took his right hand and Otchigin his left and “by the resolution of aged counsel and the support of youthful fortune established him on the throne.” They knelt three times to the sun and Ögedei sat on the throne with the ladies seated to his left.

In 1246 Güyük Khan was accompanied to the throne by his family members Yesu and Orda. Yesu took one of his hands, Orda the other and “they sat him [Güyük] on the throne of Dominion and the cushion of Kingship and seized their goblets; and the people that were present inside and outside the audience-hall knelt down three times and called him ‘Goyuk Khan’.” They also gave declarations in writing that they would not change his word or commands and prayed for his welfare, after which they went out of the hall and knelt three times to the sun.

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20 For a more detailed study of the ritual under the Mongols, see Sela, Ritual and Authority in Central Asia, pp. 25-42.


At the high point in Môngke Khan’s inauguration in 1251, “the Princes [Juvaynī mentioned at least 5 names] set him upon the throne of sovereignty and kingship, and named him Mengu Qa’an.”

Clearly, Juvaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn (as well as other Persian sources, with one exception noted below) were silent about the elevation on the felt. However, other (external) sources provided surprisingly different accounts. The earliest was Friar Simon of Saint-Quentin, a member of a Dominican delegation to the Mongols under the leadership of Friar Acelin. Simon painted the following picture of Güyüg’s enthronement:

After that they spread a felt blanket on the ground, placed him [Güyük] on it and said to him: ‘Look upward and recognize God; look at the ground and see the felt blanket on which you are sitting! If you rule your empire well, if you are generous and do good deeds, if you make justice your guiding star and honor your princes and barons, each according to his rank and dignity, you will rule in splendor and glory; the whole world will bow before your rule, and God will give you whatever your heart desires. If, however, you act to the contrary, you will become miserable, worthless, despised and so poor, that not even the felt on which you are now sitting will be left to you as your own.’ After these words, the beys made the wife of the Great Khan sit down on the felt blanket beside him, and when they were both seated on it, they lifted both of them high off the ground, and with loud voices and much shouting proclaimed them Emperor and Empress of all Tatars.

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24The first to notice this discrepancy (but without commentary) was Baron Constantine d’Ohsson in Histoire des Mongols, vol. II, p. 200, n. 1.

25Simon’s original text has been lost, and parts of his report were included in Vincent of Beauvais’ Speculum Historiale, together with parts of John of Plano Carpini’s narrative. On the problems of the text, see Guzman, Simon of Saint-Quentin, pp. 7-30.

26English translation in Spuler, History of the Mongols, pp. 87-88 (translated from Spuler’s text in German). One gets the impression here that the passage was authored by the Franciscan missionary John of Plano Carpini. It should be noted that Spuler reproduced the text from Plano Carpini, Geschichte der Mongolen, pp. 242-244, where it is made clear that the author of the passage was Simon of Saint-Quentin. For an edition of the Latin text see Saint-Quentin, Histoire des Tartares, pp. 90-92. Carpini, by the way, was
Simon of Saint-Quentin did not witness Güyük’s inauguration and probably received this information from Anguthan, a Mongol official who may have been present at the event and had just arrived at the Mongol commander’s court in Persia (where Simon had been at the time) from Karakorum. Simon also used certain motifs that were not corroborated elsewhere, and his testimony would be hard to accept were it not for an interesting account by the Armenian monk Hayton (nephew of Hethum I, king of Armenia) dictated to Nicholas Falcon in 1307. According to Hayton,

The Tartars set up a throne in their midst, and they spread a black felt on the ground and made Cangius sit upon it. And the chieftains of the seven nations (Tatars, Tangut, Eurath, Jalair, Sonit, Mengli and Tebet), raised him upon the felt, put him on the throne, and named him Can. And kneeling before him, they showed every honor and reverence, befitting their lord. One should not be surprised about the solemnity which the Tartars show their lord under such circumstances, nor should one wonder about the felt which they use to elevate him to the throne, or whether, perchance, they did not know any better, or they did not have in their possession a nicer piece of cloth to seat their lord upon. One may well marvel why they did not wish to change their ancient practice (primer usoige), especially since they had conquered so many lands and realms and still keep their ancient practice. When they wish to elect their leader – and I have been twice at the election of the emperor of the Tartars, and seen how all the Tartars assemble in a great field and they seat their leader upon a black felt and set up a rich throne in their midst. After that, the great men and those of the lineage of Cangius, their first khan, come and raise him high and make him sit on the throne, and then they show him every honor and reverence befitting their precious lord as it should be. Not for rank, nor for the riches that they conquered, but because they did not wish to change their ancient practice.  

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present at the ceremony, but described nothing of the sort (see Mission to Asia, p. 63). See also the account by Benedict the Pole (ibid. pp. 81-82).

27 So speculates Guzman, Simon of Saint-Quentin, pp. 28 and 73.

28 My translation from Hayton’s Old French text in Hayton, La Flor des estoires, pp. 148-149. (All translations are mine unless noted otherwise.)
Hayton appears to describe two separate kinds of events. The first was Chinggis Khan’s enthronement – a ceremony for the first “emperor” of the Mongols when he was presumably raised by the leaders of the “seven nations.” The second elaborates on what Hayton had witnessed during two separate inaugurations of Mongol khans (presumably in the Ilkhanid realm) where, by contrast to the inaugural elevation of Chinggis Khan, the new khans were raised by “the great men and those of the lineage of Cangius, their first khan [i.e., Chinggis Khan].” In other words, the participants in these two events were both Chinggisids and other men, perhaps eminent tribal chieftains. We will return to this point below.

The “civil war” that broke out following Möngke’s death (1259) ensured the breakup of the Mongol Empire into four major powers (Golden Horde, Ilkhanids, Chaghatayids and the Yuan). Within a few years, the Great Khan Qubilai established himself in Yuan China and entertained an alliance with his brother Hülegü in Persia. The Mongol-sponsored sources in the Ilkhanid realm described the inaugurations of their Chinggisid benefactors with the characteristic assertion that the latter guided their own to

\[29\] In fact, Hayton explained in the preface to his work that he relied on three different sources for three time periods: the period up to the middle of the thirteenth century relied upon “Tartar” traditions; the second part (1251-1265) relied upon the account of Hayton’s uncle, King Hethum I; and the third part (from the debut of Abaqa Khan) was his (Hayton’s) own testimony. (See Hayton, Die Geschichte der Mongolen, p. 11.)

\[30\] Hayton’s account seems to have been repeated in the fourteenth-century (fabricated) account of Sir John Mandeville where the khan was raised on a “black felt cloth” by the “seven tribes.” (Mandeville, The Travels, p. 160.) Several centuries later, François Pétis De La Croix, “secretary and interpreter to the King in the Turkish and Arabic languages,” described Chinggis Khan’s investiture (which he claims, took place in 1202 and not 1206). It seems, at first glance, to be a synthesis of Simon and Hayton, but according to De La Croix’s own testimony, he was familiar only with Hayton’s report. (Pétis De La Croix, p. 78. See also Levshin, Opisanie, p. 348, n. 16.) It would be intriguing to explore Hayton’s textual legacy in Europe.
the throne. However, Aḥmad Tegūder’s accession to the throne in 1282 proved to be an exception. He was escorted to the throne by Qonqurtai, a Chinggisid, and by Shiktur Noyan, an amir, who, in fact, took Arghūn’s place in the latter’s absence. Another perceived break from tradition occurred in 1317, during young Abū Saʿīd’s inauguration. He was led to the throne by Amir Sevinch, his atabeg, and by Amir Chūpān, the dominant figure in Ilkhanid politics at the time. The amirs’ power seems to have grown so considerably that they had taken over the ceremonial functions. Still, the elevation ceremony itself was not described; the amirs were simply performing the role of their Chinggisid “counterparts” in a ceremony of an earlier age.

The only departure from the standard description of the ceremony that I have found thus far appears in the history of Vaşṣāf, completed in 1312 and presented to the Ilkhanid ruler Öljeitū. Vaşṣāf, who offered no account of the elevation ritual elsewhere in his narrative, provided the following description of the inauguration of Haishan, nephew of Temūr, Qubilai Khan’s grandson, who reigned in Yuan China from 1307-1311:

According to the established custom, Khaishan sat cross-legged upon a white felt carpet. Seven of the most distinguished princes (shāhzadagān) were entrusted (mutaʿayin būdand) with the enthronement and confirmation of the khan. Four (of the seven) grasped the edges of the felt, two led the monarch by his arms and installed him on the throne of excellence, and the last one presented him with the goblet (kāsa) of wine, as brilliant as the sun.32

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32 Vaşṣāf, Tārīkh, p. 501. Étienne Quatemère referred to this passage when discussing the goblet’s (kāsa) role in Mongol court ceremonial. See Rashīd al-Dīn (ed. Quatemère), p. 335, note 155.
Vaşşaf, it should be noted, described the investitures of other Yuan rulers as well. All have common features, such as feasts, sacrifice of white horses and oxen,33 but only Haishan was accorded an elevation ritual. Recently Thomas Allsen underscored the close relationship between the Ilkhanid court and Yuan China, but even if, as Allsen demonstrates, there was growing awareness in Iran of events taking place in China during Haishan’s rule,34 the lack of an elevation narrative for Qubilai, founder of the Yuan (and to whom the Ilkhans owed some degree of allegiance), is peculiar.

The rise of Timūr, conqueror of much of Central Eurasia in the last quarter of the fourteenth century (and the focus of the second half of this dissertation), secured the transfer of power, in practical terms, from the Chinggisid khans to the tribal chieftains. Nevertheless, Timūr did not cast off the Chinggisid ideal so easily and found ways to bind himself to his celebrated predecessor. First, he married Sarāy Mulk, a Chinggisid princess,35 and began to style himself gürezen (royal son-in-law), a powerful position in the Mongol hierarchy. Second, he appointed Chinggisids to serve as puppet khans (see below). Timurid historiography also promoted the story of the shared ancestry of Timūr and Chinggis Khan.36 And yet Timūr was careful not to assimilate other Chinggisid

33 This brings to mind similar customs practiced by the Khitans (History of Chinese Society: Liao, pp. 274-5) and witnessed as late as the nineteenth century in Buriatia. (See Jeremiah Curtin’s graphic portrayal of white horse sacrifice in Curtin, Journey, pp. 44-52.)

34 Allsen, Culture and Conquest, p. 38.

35 Years later, in 1397, Timūr would marry another Chinggisid princess, a daughter of the Moghul Khan Khīzr Khoja.

36 According to the story, Timūr was a descendant of Qachulai, brother of Qabūl Khan (Chinggis Khan’s great-grandfather). On Timūr’s legitimation process see, for example, Haider, “The Sovereign”; Manz, “Tamerlane”; Woods, “Timur’s Genealogy.” Timūr’s
properties such as the title “khan” and the elevation on the felt. For example, in describing Tīmūr’s own inauguration (in 1370), one of his later biographers, Sharaf al-Dīn ʻAlī Yazdī, made no reference to Chinggis Khan as a source of inspiration for the ceremony or as a source of legitimation for Tīmūr’s kingship. Accordingly, he made no mention of the performance of the elevation ritual (which, it is plausible to assume, did not take place). Only centuries later, after his legacy in Central Asia had been rekindled, would Tīmūr be accorded the elevation on the white felt.

As mentioned, Tīmūr appointed Chinggisid khans to act as nominal figureheads. Their inauguration ceremonies are usually absent from the official accounts, which may suggest that such ceremonies never took place, or, more plausibly, that Timurid historians ascribed no real value to elevation rituals of puppet khans and decided (perhaps with someone’s encouragement) to omit any mention of the performance of the elevation ritual so it would not remain for posterity. However, as we will see, even if the Timurid sources were silent about such performances, external sources were not, and the discrepancy between inside and outside sources persisted through the Timurid period.

genealogy, proclaiming the shared ancestry with Chinggis Khan, was also engraved on his tombstone and in the foundation inscription of Samarqand’s great mosque.


38 In the Kunūz al-aʿzam (also known as the Tārīkh-i Timūrī), an eighteenth-century work authored in Bukhara (and discussed in Part II of this study), Tīmūr was not only raised on the felt, but also enjoyed the support of every possible constituency, including a memorable dream appearance by the Prophet Muḥammad. See below the full translation of Tīmūr’s accession to the throne in the Kunūz al-aʿzam.
The first appointment of a Chinggisid khan took place in 1363-4 when Timur was still in the process of consolidating his power. The tribes would not acknowledge one of their own chieftains as ruler, so Timur and his major ally, Amir Husayn, decided to “elevate someone from the lineage of Chaghatay Khan to the khanate.” They convened a quriltay, placed Kabulshah Oghlan (also known as Kabul Sultan), a great-grandson of Du’a (r. 1291-1306) on the throne, and “according to the custom of the Turk sultans, they raised their goblets to him. All the nobles and warriors genuflected before him nine times.”

In 1369, another Chinggisid (this time, of Ogodeid descent), Soyurghatmiş Oghlan, was appointed khan. Ibn Arabshah, to whom we will return shortly, used this occasion to make the following, frequently-cited observation,

He [Timur] appointed deputy in his own name one Shuur Ghatmish of the seed of Jinkizkhan. And only men of the tribe of Jinkizkhan claim the title Khan and Sultan, since they are the Koreish of the Turks, of whom no one can take precedence or pluck that nobility from their hands; for if anyone could have done it, it would certainly have been Timur, who conquered kingdoms and dared everything. However, he set up Shuur Ghatmiş to repel the calumnies of detractors and cut off the piercing point of every tongue... and the Khan was his bondage, like a centipede in the mud.”

Ibn Arabshah’s comment is telling of the lowly position of the Chinggisid khans in the Timurid court, and yet, even Timur’s formidable authority was not sufficient to

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39 Yazdi, vol. 1, p. 73. Yazdi’s account was later repeated in the Tārīkh-i Rashidi (see Mīrzā Ḥaydar Dughlat, p. 17). Qabulsah Oghlan was subsequently deposed and replaced by ‘Ādil Sultan.

abolish the khans’ presence. According to Mīrzā Ḥaydar Dūghlāt, who had communicated the story of Soyurghatmīsh’s inauguration from the mouth of Abū Sa‘īd Mīrzā (the Timurid ruler of Samarqand between 1451-1469), the amirs came to Tīmūr and insisted that, “a khan must be established for us to obey.” Therefore, Tīmūr installed Soyurghatmīsh and the amirs bowed their heads in obedience before the new khan. When Soyurghatmīsh Khan died Tīmūr appointed the latter’s son, Sulṭān Maḥmūd, as khan.41

The amirs’ insistence on installing a khan is significant. We will see below that in later times the amirs would also push for the performance of the elevation ceremony, a point which serves, I believe, to identify the installation of a khan (or rather, the adoption of the title “khan”) with the ceremony requiring an elevation on the white felt. In other words, when the amirs insist that a khan be appointed, they not only expect an announcement of the installation of a nominal figurehead who carries the title, but they also require the elevation ceremony, an instructive ritual to visually pronounce to all concerned that there is a Chinggisid in that position. The ceremony and the adoption of the title “khan” may have been interdependent – the former would not take place without the latter. Clearly, having a khan act at least as a nominal figurehead made the amirs, at least psychologically, peers to each other, and, at the same time, absolved them from competi-

41Mīrzā Ḥaydar reports that this custom was maintained until Ulugh Beg’s time (for example, with the appointment of Satūq Khan), “but of the khanate there was nothing more than a name. Toward the end, the khan was mostly kept imprisoned in Samarqand” (Mīrzā Ḥaydar Dūghlāt, p. 44). Gradually, in other parts of the Timurid realm (particularly in Herat under Shāhrūkh), legitimation would be based largely on Islamic norms. One inconsequential attempt by a Timurid to adopt (or rather bestow) the title “khan” took place after Tīmūr’s death in 1405 when Khalīl Sulṭān occupied Samarqand. In an effort, it seems, to outwit the people of the city, Khalīl Sulṭān proclaimed Muḥammad Jahāṅgīr, the nine-year-old son of Muḥammad Sulṭān (the late governor of Samarqand and son of Jahāṅgīr, Tīmūr’s second son), “khan.” See Barthold, Ulugh-Beg, p. 59.
tion and fighting over the position. (This did not, of course, preclude them from fighting over many other things.) More important, having one of their own to rule them was seen as an almost unnatural occurrence, contradictory to the way of the world. Accordingly, if someone else – a Chinggisid – performed this function, they were free to play their part in their world order. The amirs, with all their diversity, constituted a stratum in the society of the Mongol Empire (and in later times) that adhered to a collective, unpronounced charter that compelled them to conform to certain norms.\footnote{See also Robert McChesney’s observations on the amirs’ role and perception of identity in later times in McChesney, “The Amirs.”}

Before we proceed to discuss the amirs’ role in initiating the elevation ceremony in sixteenth-century Central Asia, we should address two mid-fifteenth-century reports of the performance of the elevation ritual, both written by authors who had (unwillingly) spent considerable time in Timurid courts. The first is taken from Ibn ‘Arabshāh’s \textit{Fākihat al-khulafā’ wa-mufākahat al-zurafā’}, a book consisting of Ibn ‘Arabshāh’s translation into Arabic of assorted fables and allegories, to which he added a chapter on the history of the Mongols. According to Ibn ‘Arabshāh, when the “Tatars” wished to choose a leader, they held a \textit{quriltay} and after many deliberations decided upon one of the late khan’s sons to be their leader. They seated him on a piece of black felt (\textit{liibd aswad}).\footnote{Not on “tiger skin,” as Robert Irwin suggested in Irwin, “A Neglected Arabic Source,” p. 10. Although Leonardo Olschki suggested that the black felt rug represented the “Turko-Mongolian version of the old image of the heavenly curtain and celestial tent” (Olschki, \textit{The Myth of Felt}, p. 31), there is ample evidence to suggest that the Mongols considered white to be the more auspicious color. Much has been written about color symbolism, more in association with cardinal directions, but less so in their ceremonial context. See for example, Pritsak, “Orientierung”; Kononov, “Semantika”; Poppe, “Colour Names.” A comparison with burial practices in Central Asia may shed some light on the matter.}
and four men – each a great amir (amīr kabīr) – seized the edges of the felt and raised him from the ground above the throne, while the khan cried out in a loud voice that he could not rule over them, had no power to judge them, and was unable to carry that heavy burden. They, in turn, reassured him that he could, and so it went on until they put him on the throne. Then, continues Ibn ‘Arabshāh, they brought forth the “Satanic curse,” the tura (yasa) of Chinggis Khan, which they revered the most. They honored it by standing, blessed themselves by touching it, and then they opened it, looked at it, and read it in silence.\textsuperscript{44} They swore allegiance to the khan on condition that he would observe and keep the tura and that its rules would serve as his guide. Then they fell on their knees three times before the khan,\textsuperscript{45} turned toward the sun in the middle of the day, and bowed to it. The khan passed around the wine goblet and opened his treasury to distribute precious stones, gold and silver coins, and robes of honor. Ibn ‘Arabshāh also related that the Tatars only held this ceremony in the spring, and that this custom was common throughout the empires under Mongol rule.\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{44}Bringing to mind Juvaynī’s famous passage in which he described how “these rolls [yāsas and decrees which were written down under Chinggis Khan’s orders] are called the Great Book of Yṇas (yāṣa-nāma-i buzurg) and are kept in the treasury of the chief princes. Whenever a khan ascends the throne, or a great army is mobilized, or the princes assemble and consult the affairs of state and the administration thereof, they produce these rolls and base their actions thereon.” See Juvaynī (ed. Qazvīnī), vol. I, p. 14 (tr. Boyle, p. 25).

\textsuperscript{45}They did not “hit the khan,” as Uli Schamiloğlu suggested in Schamiloğlu, \textit{Tribal Politics}, p. 106.

\textsuperscript{46}Ibn ‘Arabshāh, \textit{Fākihat al-khulafā’}, pp. 203-204. A synopsis of the passage in German is offered by Risch in Plano Carpini, \textit{Geschichte der Mongolen}, p. 243, n. 3; see also the brief mention by Boodberg, “Marginalia,” p. 310.
Ibn ‘Arabshāh’s account raises several interesting points, the most important of which seems to be the role of the yasa in ceremonial functions. However, except for an allusion to its physical presence (the revealing of “scrolls” in public during the ceremony), we have no indication of the existence of any regulation for the ceremony in Mongol customary law. Although the yasa may have dealt, as Juvaynī suggested, with some aspects of court ceremonial, there is no mention of the elevation ceremony or of any other procedure necessary for the performance of the ritual. This may be another indication that the yasa was not a fixed code, but rather a developing set of rules.\(^4\)

Our second fifteenth-century account was written by the Bavarian prisoner of war Johann Schiltberger, who spent nearly thirty years in the service of Mongol and Timurid princes. In a passage dedicated to the qualities of the countries he had visited, Schiltberger offered the following brief observation:

> It is also to be noted that when the Tatars choose a king, they take him and seat him on white felt, and raise him three times. Then they lift him up and carry him round the tent, and seat him on a throne, and put a golden sword in his hand.\(^5\)

Another typical feature of the ceremony under Mongol (and Timurid) rule was the participation of women in politics and more specifically, in inauguration rituals.\(^6\) In fact, the last mention of a woman participating in the ritual seems to be in Bābur’s memoirs,

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\(^4\)The yasa has long been a subject of debate which will not be engaged here. For some of the latest observations (and bibliography) see De Rachewiltz, “Reflections,” pp. 91-104; Morgan, “The Great Yasa,” p. 166, and pp. 172-3 for references to the yasa’s existence in material form; Haider, “Mongol Traditions,” pp. 57-59.


\(^6\)As noted, for example, by Lambton, “Marāṣim,” p. 524; Gronke, “courts,” pp. 366-371.
when Yūnus Khan (d. 1487) was elevated to the khanship of Moghulistan "according to Moghul custom" on a piece of white felt together with his wife Esan Dawlat Begim.\footnote{Bābur-nāma (tr. Thackston), p. 20.} If there were any women present at coronations in later periods in Central Asia, they are not mentioned in the literary tradition, perhaps a consequence of the growing Islamization of Central Asia and of the sedentarization process, which may have appropriated some of the powers held by women in nomadic societies. Their absence is not only evident in the textual sources, but in other modes of expression as well, such as in miniature paintings. Elevation rituals per se were typically nonexistent in miniature paintings, even if Mongol and Timurid miniatures display many so-called ‘enthronement scenes’ (julūs), where women were occasionally depicted sitting next to the khan on the throne or generally portrayed as part of the audience in various capacities, sometimes sitting in their prearranged positions surrounding the throne. Miniature paintings never actually depicted an elevation ritual but rather a post-ritual display, where the khan was already sitting on the throne. This should not be too surprising since, in the majority of cases, miniatures in historical works corresponded to the text, and the elevations, as mentioned above, were missing in the text.

To summarize our sources, we should point out that we have no indigenous accounts of the elevation ritual in Central Asia under Mongol and Timurid rule. The fourteenth-century narratives that carry a reference to the ceremony were written by European missionaries; the early fourteenth-century report of a Yuan inauguration was authored in Ilkhanid Persia; and the fifteenth-century accounts (namely, Ibn 'Arabshāh and Schiltber-
ger) describe a generic ceremony that was supposedly always performed, through the
eyes of (essentially-) outside observers, who had spent considerable time in various parts
of the Mongol and Timurid world. We may consider all of these accounts as external
sources, either neutral in their observations (with the natural biases that each source has)
or even hostile. Their diversity — Franciscan and Dominican missionaries, an Armenian
monk, a Persian historian, an Arab author, and a German prisoner of war — suggests that
they were not simply exposed to the same source, but rather, that their reports on the
performance of the ritual have a grain of undeniable authenticity.

However, the mere existence or performance of the ritual is not the only issue in
question; the descriptions also vary in their contents, most particularly regarding the
number and identity of the participants and the color of the felt used to raise the khan. 51
Prior to the fifteenth-century account by Ibn Ḥ Arabshāh the number of the dignitaries
raising the khan was seven. 52 Ibn Ḥ Arabshāh is the only author describing a ritual that
involved four felt-bearers. The transition in the number of felt-bearers from seven to four
remains a puzzle. Both numbers are not considered common or particularly auspicious in
the Turkic or Mongol world, 53 and yet they are unquestionably embedded in the mono-
theistic traditions of the Near East. Indeed, in later centuries, Muslim authors would

51 I will not deal with the issue of the felt’s color here. See Sela, Ritual and Authority in
Central Asia, pp. 38-39.

52 I refer to the Chinese Annals of the Northern Dynasties, Hayton’s description of Ching-
gis Khan’s accession, and Vaşaf’s record of Haishan’s inauguration. Other accounts do
not put forward a specific number.

53 The suggestion, for example, that the number four was significant in Mongol cosmog-
ony simply because it symbolized the four cardinal directions seems to me to be tauto-
logical. See for example, Zhukovskaya, Kategorii i simvolika, p. 136.
endorse the performance of a ceremony based on four felt-bearers even if this served as a
basis for change. One explanation for this transformation may lie with the growing sig-
nificance of the amirs in the western parts of the Mongol Empire, where, gradually, the
Mongols came to rely upon an office of four amirs in order to administer their army and
their empire.  

This brings us back to the accounts (most notably by Hayton and Simon of
St. Quentin) that suggested that both Chinggisids and other “great men” and “barons”
took part in the inauguration procedure. We may, conceivably, identify them as tribal
chieftains. Therefore, in Haishan’s inauguration we may envision two Chinggisids per-
forming their “assigned” role in leading Haishan to the white felt, four tribal chieftains
raising him upon it, and another Chinggisid presenting him with the wine goblet.

It seems that we have enough evidence to conclude that the elevation ceremony
was indeed performed, even if we often lack its description. Felt was so important, and so
commonly used in everyday life as well as in Mongol religious and political rituals, that it
is reasonable to assume that it would be used in inaugurations as well.  

Furthermore, evidence antedating the period of the Mongol Empire and provided under Mongol rule
(by foreigners) supports the performance of the ritual. However, if we accept the credibil-
ity of the ritual’s performance, we have to ask why the Mongol-sponsored sources ne-
glected to report it? Was it a feature of the Islamic character of the historical works which

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54 This important change still remains little studied (with the noted exception of Uli
Schamiloglu’s attempt to outline the significance of the office with particular attention to
the Golden Horde. See Schamiloglu, “The Qaraçi Beys.”)

55 Laufer, “Early History.” Peter Andrews’ monumental work Felt Tents and Pavilions
emphasizes, as its title suggests, the significance of felt and tents but has less to do with
the felt’s ceremonial functions. (See Andrews, Felt Tents.)
would reject “heathen” practices? In later times, the suggested tension between the shari'a and the yasa as competing or complementing sources of inspiration for the performance of the elevation ritual was characteristic of Central Asian (official) literary works. But the Muslim authors of the thirteenth-fifteenth centuries were still struggling to define their ideas about Mongol rule and how to articulate them in writing, especially given the fact that these very Mongols were their patrons. Ibn ‘Arabshâh, the only Muslim author to acknowledge the practice in the Islamic lands (and not an employee of the Mongols), severely criticized the performance of the ritual in accordance with the yasa, which he labeled “the Satanic curse” (al-mal ‘ūna al-shaytâniyya). The other Muslim author to mention the ritual was Vaṣṣāf, but he chose to attribute the ceremony to China – far away from Ilkhanid Persia. One of the reasons, it seems, for the Muslim authors’ uneasiness may have been the fact that Islam offered no alternative procedure for inauguration rituals. Islamic guide-books for princes, etiquette manuals, and essays on morals and ethics, usually full of instructions on matters of protocol, lack any prescription for the performance of a coronation ceremony. This would make it harder for Muslim authors

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56 Court ceremonies in the Islamic world are labeled marāsim. This term includes a wide range of ceremonial, etiquette and protocol such as coronations, private and public audiences, receptions of ambassadors, investiture of high officials with robes of honor, court hierarchy and ceremonial duties, and yet, the conceptual basis for analysis of these rituals is still wanting. A partial bibliography is given in Sanders, “Marāsim.” See also R. Stephen Humphreys’ comments in Humphreys, Islamic History, pp. 152-154.

57 I found no mention of a “proper” coronation procedure in works by (or attributed to) Kai Kā‘ūs b. Iskandar, Nizām al-Mulk, Ibn al-Muqaffa’, al-Jāhiz, Miskawayh, Yūsuf Ḥājib, or in works by Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī or by Ibn Khaldūn, to mention only a few (or even in much later works, such as the seventeenth-century Central Asian Dastūr al-mulūk by Khoja Samandar Termezi). This brings to mind Oleg Grabar’s observation that the early Muslims had no text to guide them on ceremonial matters, compared with, for
to counter the lawfulness of the ritual. Nonetheless, even if there was a sense of censorship (self or imposed) on the part of the Muslim authors, one has to wonder what would suppress a description of the elevation ceremony, but still allow for a description of such acts as belt removal, wine drinking and bowing to the sun.

A possible explanation is that the elevation ceremony was considered taboo and, therefore, left out of the official descriptions (perhaps in the same way that descriptions of burials and references to the *yasa* were often excluded). However tempting this idea may be, we have no way of ascertaining this at present. One would also have to prove that there was a deliberate “collective” censorship on the part of our authors on other matters as well.

In this context, another possibility appears to be more plausible (although equally in need of substantiation), that is, the existence of an unstated alliance or understanding between khans and viziers, between patrons and authors, aimed at stifling the amirs’ participation in court rituals and thereby suppressing their growing significance. Accordingly, performing the role of felt-bearers would grant the tribal chieftains considerable prestige, a distinction that the Chinggisid khans, and the viziers, would not desire. Suppression of the amirs’ role would ensure lessened fame in the chronicles. Such a conscious act demanded considerable historical awareness on the part of the khans and viziers.

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example, the *Livre des cérémonies* of the tenth-century Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus. See Grabar, “Notes,” p. 52.
The courtly vision presented in the official sources of the Mongols and Timurids is very different from the picture painted by outside sources. The official sources consciously ignored the tradition of the felt because they wanted to foster a tradition that promoted the exclusivity of the Chinggisid ideal and that was expressed through the special privilege that the Chinggisids enjoyed in the ceremony. The reader of the official chronicles would not think that there was anything wrong with the ceremonies’ descriptions. We cannot prove who actually decided how the court vision would be presented in the literature, but we assume that only when writers of these narratives had no choice, either because the amirs became too powerful or because the Chinggisids were already embarked upon the path of decline, did they describe the amirs as leading the khans to the throne, seemingly taking over the Chinggisids’ authority. We should note, that even if the khans and viziers decided to ignore the elevation ritual and the amirs’ role in the ceremony, it does not mean that the courtly vision always presents an untruthful account. We will return to this point below.
1.2 Inauguration Rituals in the Early Uzbek Period.

In 1583 ʿAbdallāh Khan ascended the throne of Mawarannahr. ʿAbdallāh’s inauguration hinged upon the cooperation of Khoja Saʿd al-Dīn Jūybārī, one of the most influential religious and political figures of the time.⁵⁸ Soon after ʿAbdallāh’s father’s death,

A group of amirs addressed his holiness, the kbotja [Khoja Saʿd al-Dīn Jūybārī] saying, ‘It is the manner and custom of the great khaqans and the noble sultans that whenever an auspicious person is acknowledged as deserving of the royal seat and worthy of the world-sheltering throne, they seat him on a piece of white felt and raise him up on it.’ So the kbotja brought to the gathering a white felt rug whose owner, while performing circumambulation of the two holy precincts [Mecca and Medina] had washed it with the water of (the sacred well of) Zamzam, and which was that very day in his (the kbotja’s) possession. They seated His Highness on that piece of felt, and the kbotja, beseeching the consent (ittifāq) and resolution (iqtiṣād) of the group of persons of distinction and leaders of the realm, such as the felicitous progeny of saintly men and heir to the office of the niqābat Yūsuf Khoja [b. Ḥasan Khoja naqīb], the pilgrim to the two holy precincts, Turdīka Biy, the great nūʿīn [noyan] Nazar Biy, and the noble amīr, Tursūn Biy, stepped forward and lifted up that royal person to the kingly office and installed him.⁵⁹

This account symbolizes the new reality formed in the region after the Uzbek conquest of Central Asia in the beginning of the sixteenth century and the triumphant

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⁵⁸The cooperation was mutual. In return for Khoja Saʿd’s guarantee of Jūybārī support, which would ensure the smooth transition of governance, ʿAbdallāh rewarded him by appointing Saʿd shaykh al-islām and endowing him with tax-free land. Khoja Saʿd also blessed ʿAbdallāh’s campaigns against Badakhshan and Khorasan. See Akhmedov, “Roʿl’ dzuḥbarskikh khodzhei.”

⁵⁹Sharaf-nāma-i shāhī, f. 493a. This passage was recently translated by Robert McChesney (see McChesney, “Zamzam Water,” pp. 66-67). My translation differs only slightly from his.
return of the descendants of Chinggis Khan to their place at the top of the hierarchical ladder, now attended by their Sufi allies.

This is probably the first description that we have of the elevation ceremony for a Muslim ruler in Mawarannahr, a description given by a Muslim author in an official chronicle. Finally, the Muslims begin to feel more comfortable (though not too comfortable) with the public display of one of the most important symbols of kingship. On the other hand, there is some hesitation. Since the “tradition” of elevating princes is not entirely clear – perhaps even a novelty to some elements in the new “court society” – the author needs an agent to introduce the age-old tradition. The agent or agents in this case are the tribal chieftains who explain the custom.

The most substantial difference from earlier times seems to be the added Islamic dimension of the ceremony. This is manifested in two ways: First, the ritual is sanctioned by the khoja, a Jüybari shaykh and holder of the highest religious position in the state. The story clearly affirms the khoja’s political and religious standing (as McChesney suggests, the work is as much an account of Khoja Sa’d al-Dīn as it is an account of ʿAbdallāh Khan). The second “Islamizing” element is, of course, the felt that had been washed in the water of the sacred Zamzam well in Mecca, a well of mythical origins and a source of sacredness in various parts of the Islamic world. McChesney argues that the

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60 It seems that popular belief in Central Asia holds that the Zamzam well is (and was) connected by underground water channels to wells in Central Asian Muslim shrines, and therefore, shares its sacredness with the local waters (Privratsky, Muslim Turkistan, p. 191, n. 9). I am presently unaware of any such connection made in Central Asian historical and hagiographical sources. The Zamzam was believed to be subterraneously linked to Islamic locales in other parts of the world, such as the Great Mosque at al-Qayrawān (Chabbi, “Zamzam,” p. 442).
story of the felt enabled Muslim authors to handle a ritual that was apparently contradictory to the shari‘a, and therefore, helped reconcile two seemingly opposed traditions.⁶¹

In addition to the Islamic dimension, other issues that we have encountered before seem to persist. For example, the initiative for ‘Abdallāh’s elevation comes, again, from the tribal chieftains who suggest that the ceremony was standard, indeed, something that had always been performed. The amirs’ initiative is evocative of the Timurid accounts, where the amirs also acted as the proponents of the khan’s enthronement. Clearly, the amirs’ need of a khan and of the ceremony has not subsided over the years, but by the sixteenth century more elements have joined the “court society.” The change here is that the amirs bring their request not to the prospective khan (or to one of their own), but to a Muslim dignitary (another indication of the work’s bias toward the khoja). Although Sa‘d al-Dīn seems to be ignorant of this custom, he nevertheless immediately agrees to follow the amirs’ directions and does not question the veracity of the procedure. Although the amirs do not present the custom as open for interpretation (they provide a simple, clear-cut description), the khoja tries to appropriate the ceremony by the story of the felt.

The felt-bearers in the Sharaf-nâma-i shāhī are five in number (the amirs did not mention that four was the appropriate or customary number necessary for the elevation, although we may assume that it is probably the most convenient way to lift a carpet);

⁶¹McChesney explains elsewhere that the mention of Chinggis Khan’s yasa was a way of “explaining and lending legitimacy to certain practices that might, in a shari‘a context, be considered questionable or at least unfamiliar” (McChesney, Foundations, p. 123). However, since Islam offered no alternative to the procedure, even as late as the sixteenth century, perhaps the assertion that the practice was contradictory to the shari‘a should be reconsidered.
three are amirs and two (including the khoja) are religious dignitaries.\textsuperscript{62} Two other contemporary accounts that also offer witness of the ceremony refer to different participants.\textsuperscript{63} In the \textit{Rawžat al-riżvān}, which lacks any mention of the washing of the felt in the water of Zamzam, the khoja seats ʿAbdallāh on a “four-cornered carpet of felicity,” held by Amir Qul Bābā Kukaltāsh, Turdīka Khan (?), Sayyid Ḥasan Khoja \textit{naqīb} (Yūsuf’s father), and Khoja Sa’d himself (Nāzār Biy and Tursūn Biy are not mentioned).\textsuperscript{64} The \textit{Maṭlab al-ṭālibīn} includes the story of Zamzam and the felt, but has four other felt-bearers: Yūsuf Khoja, Amir Qul Bābā Kukaltāsh, Turdīka Khan (?), and Khoja Sa’d himself.\textsuperscript{65} A closer reading of both works may reveal the reason for the discrepancy.

Another account of an inauguration, also cited by McChesney, is of Subḥān-Qulí Khan’s elevation in 1681. In a very brief account, the author of the work titled \textit{Muhūṭ al-tavārīkh} informs the reader that

On Monday, with auspicious fortune and blessed joy, and in accordance with the Chinggisid yasa, [they] seated [Subḥān-Qulí Khan] upon the white felt (\textit{aq kigiz}), [and] the four great amirs Khādim Biy \textit{atāliq} and Imām-Qulí \textit{divānbegī}, and Khoja-Qulí Biy \textit{divānbegī} and Muḥammad Jān

\textsuperscript{62}In addition to Sa’d al-Dīn, Turdīka Biy and Tursūn Biy were members of the Qushji clan, Nāzār Biy was a Nayman, and Yūsuf Khoja was a Tajik, a \textit{naqīb}, and apparently, a Sayyid Ātāyī, since he was Ḥasan Khoja’s son (DeWeese, “Descendants,” p. 621, n. 45).

\textsuperscript{63}The works in question are the \textit{Maṭlab al-ṭālibīn} and the \textit{Rawžat al-riżvān}, two family histories and hagiographies dedicated to the Ḥūbārī shaykhs. \textit{Rawžat al-riżvān} was written no later than 1589-1590 (more or less at the same time as the \textit{Sharaf-nāma-i shāhī}) by Badr al-Dīn Kasmīrī, personal secretary to the first Ḥūbārīs. \textit{Maṭlab al-ṭālibīn} was authored in 1646 by Abūl-Fāṭem Mūḥammad Ťālib, great grandson of Mūḥammad Islām. For a description of both works, see Akhmedov, \textit{Literatura}, pp. 182-187 and 188-194 respectively.

\textsuperscript{64}McChesney, “Zamzam Water,” p. 67, n. 4; \textit{Rawžat al-riżvān}, ff. 240ab.

\textsuperscript{65}\textit{Maṭlab al-ṭālibīn}, ff. 85ab.
By dīvānbegī, raised the felt from its four corners and installed him upon the throne of kingship.  

The participants are mentioned by name, identified by their position or rank in the court. McChesney identifies their tribal affiliation from other sources as Ming, Kilji, Ütarchi, and Yüz, respectively. Unlike Ḥāfīz-i Tanīsh, the author, Muḥammad Amīn Kīrāk-Yarāqchī does not employ a group of tribal chieftains to explain to the reader why the elevation ritual is upheld; the khan is elevated on the felt (identified in Turkic, not in Persian) in accordance with the “Chinggisid yasa” as common practice would dictate. The participants are identified by name, by their position at the court or their rank, but not by their tribal affiliation. If their tribal affiliation was so pertinent to the ritual (since, supposedly, the leaders of the four most prominent Uzbek tribes had to carry the felt), one would expect that they would have been identified. If we assume that they were well-known people, and therefore, their tribal affiliations were known as well, would not their rank or status or position be equally well-known? The absence of a religious figure “sanctioning” the ceremony is also noteworthy.

The eighteenth century witnessed the end of Ashtarkhanid rule amidst growing confusion and a state of disorder and political vacuum that eventually gave rise to the Tribal Dynasties and to a competition for power between Samarkand and the center of the khanate, Bukhara.

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66Muḥīṭ al-tavārīkh, f. 106.


68Discussed in Chapter Three of the present study.
CHAPTER 2: INAUGURATION RITUALS IN THE 18TH CENTURY

2.1 The Inauguration of Muhammad Rahim Khan Manghit.

Before ascending the throne of Bukhara in the middle of the eighteenth century, Muhammad Rahim had already established himself as the strongman in the khanate and was fulfilling a leading role in the affairs of the state. He belonged to a long line of holders of the prestigious position of ataliq, the senior counselor to the khan. His grandfather, Khudayar Biy, was given the post already in 1714, and Muhammad’s father, Muhammad Hakim, had held the position since 1722. Muhammad Hakim became the most powerful minister in the khanate and was instrumental in negotiating Bukhara’s peaceful surrender to Nadir Shah in the year 1740.⁶⁹

Nadir Shah’s incursion into Central Asia helped raise Muhammad Rahim’s stature when the Persian Emperor appointed the Manghit tribal chieftain a detachment commander in his army.⁷⁰ In 1745 Muhammad Rahim pacified rebellious militants in the city of Bukhara operating against the weak rule of Abu’l-Fayz Khan – the last khan of consequence of the Ashtarkhanid dynasty. After Nadir Shah’s assassination in June 1747, Muhammad Rahim entered the palace in Bukhara and seized the throne.⁷¹ He struck a deal with the Afghan troops who had helped him withstand some Persian resistance,

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⁷⁰Nadir Shah gave Muhammad Rahim Bek the honorary rank (martaba) of “khan” and assigned to him 6,000 troops. See ‘Abd al-Karim Bukhari, Persian text, p. 46; French translation, p. 101.

⁷¹Literally, he “beat the drum of sovereignty” (tabl-i huqumat zad). Ibid., text, p. 51; tr., p. 111. Beating the drum also signified the rise of a new ruler. See Lambton, “Naqqaara-Khana.”
executed Abu’l-Fayż Khan, married the latter’s daughter, and installed the late khan’s son, ‘Abd al-Mu’min, as ruler. He later decided to kill ‘Abd al-Mu’min, and continued to appoint other successors to serve as puppet khans until 1753. For three years he ruled alone, until in 1756, he decided, together with the clergy and other officials and military commanders, to change his status and claim the throne for himself. Although he had personal fame and glory and the familial legacy of distinguished advisors to the khan behind him, he did not simply proclaim himself sovereign and assume the title “khan.” He needed a lavish and elaborate ceremony which relied upon both tradition and custom, both innovation and ingenuity, and which appealed directly and indirectly to all possible constituencies.

The pomp-filled event was commemorated in the *Tuhfat al-khānī* (*The Khan’s Gift*), a historical work in Persian describing the history of the Bukharan khanate in the years 1722-1759. The work dedicates an entire chapter to Muḥammad Rahīm’s inauguration, beginning with his decision to ascend the throne, proceeding with the new ruler’s

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72 Numismatic evidence does not help us determine the year of his accession (Davidovich, *Istoriia*, p. 176). For a summary of the circumstances leading to the rise of the Manghīts, and on the different dates of Muḥammad Rahīm’s accession, see Bregel, “Central Asia,” p. 194.

73 *Tuhfat al-khānī*, also known as the *Tārīkh-i Muḥammad Rahīm Khānī*, describes the growing influence of the Manghīts on the Ashtarkhānid court and their official seizure of power in the year 1756. Under Muḥammad Rahīm Khan the Manghīts became the rulers of the khanate *de jure* and not only *de facto*. The work was written by Muḥammad Vafā Karmīnāghī (1685-1769), whereas a later addition (up to the year 1769 or 1782, depending on the manuscript) was added by ‘Ālim Bek Ishān Nasafī. Although the work contains valuable information on the Manghīts it has never been edited or published, one of the reasons why it has been so underutilized by scholars. For descriptions of *Tuhfat al-khānī* see von Kügelgen, *Die Legitimierung*, pp. 106-111; Akhmedov, *Literatura*, pp. 114-120; Storey – Bregel, vol. II, pp. 1150-52.
speech, justifying his usurpation, and culminating with his elevation on the white felt.

The weeklong event closed with the recitation of the Friday sermon in the new ruler’s name throughout the country. The secretaries then issued the new orders and letters of appointments and decrees in the name of the new khan.
Translation

Account of the Installation of His Blessed Majesty upon the Seat of the Caliphate and the Throne of Kingship by the Graces of the Lord

When the secretary of fate inscribed upon the tablet of destiny (qadr) with the pen of the divine decree (taqdir) the esteemed [verse]: “We have made you the ruler of the earth,” in the name of the kingship of this religion-nurturing monarch and pleasing ruler of auspicious fate, and [when] the blessing-laden divine essence made him worthy of the bejeweled crown (tāj) and the diadem (iklil) and the girdle (kamar) and parasol (chatr) and diadem (dayhim) and crown (afşar), [then] the endless bounty of the divine made his star of felicity sit upon the royal throne, in order to attend to the needs of the people and provide sustenance for all mankind. And it (the endless bounty of the divine) made the four cushions of the kingdom the seat of his magnificence, and prepared and readied

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74 *Tuhfat al-khānī*, MS No. C 525, ff. 253b-260b. I also utilized MS No. C 526 (ff. 185a-190b), which is almost identical. For the description of the manuscripts see Miklukho-Maklāī, pp. 308-311 (items 443 and 445). For the Persian see Sela, *Ritual and Authority in Central Asia*, Appendix I. 

75 Qurʾān, 38:26.

76 Insignia of rank are often described in coronation accounts. The parasol (chatr), for example, was held over the sovereign, not only in coronations but also in other royal activities (military campaigns, hunts, and at the court). Its significance in the Islamic world – the parasol also served as a royal attribute from the Near East to China – lies in the Muslim-Persian concept of the sāya-yī Zill Allāh, the “shade of the shadow of God,” viewed as the protective and reassuring power of God. See Andrews, “Miẓalla,” pp. 192-94; Shaked, “From Persia to Islam,” esp. pp. 75-82.

77 A conventional epithet for a kingdom, presumably referring to the four cardinal directions. See for example, Juvaynī (ed. Qazvīnī), vol. III, p. 31.
the instruments of monarchy with the multiplicity\textsuperscript{78} of the Lord in the sphere of his glory. And it made ready and created the requirements for conquest by the grace of God and to the satisfaction of his state. Upon the surface of the mighty empire, [254a] the victorious and triumphant armies of the khan of nobility and benevolence, growing bit by bit and gathering little by little, exceeded by all accounts 12,000 soldiers, and each of the soldiers was supported by a few men, and from morning to night they bound the belt of service to act for the glory and dignity of the state.

In these times, the guardians of the \textit{shari\'a} and the community, and the men of instruction and legal opinions, whether in private or publicly, announced and explained to the court [sublime] as Saturn that whenever the Generous Lord shows approval (by means of such benevolence) to someone who has glory, the most correct traditions and the decisions based upon them [require] that he imitate the exemplar of mankind, the greatest leader (i.e., Mu\u{h}ammad) thus: [that] it is proper for the sovereignty of the kingdom and worthy governance to have the \textit{khu\textsuperscript{79}ba} of the world-monarch recited in the pulpits of Islam adorning his imperial titles, and [that] the face of \textit{dirhams} and \textit{d\u{i}n\u{a}rs} will be engraved with his royal die.\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{78}Az\'\u{a}f means multiplicity, referring to God's ability to multiply reward or punishment for the individual, depending upon his good or evil deeds.

\textsuperscript{79}Khu\textsuperscript{79}ba, or sermon, is an important component of the Friday congregational worship. It is customary to mention the ruling sovereign during the prayer on behalf of the faithful (\textit{du\textsuperscript{79}\'\u{a} li 'l-mu\textsuperscript{79}min\u{a}}). See Wensinck, "Khu\textsuperscript{79}ba." The practice of \textit{khu\textsuperscript{79}ba} became almost inevitably linked with \textit{sikka}, the minting or issuing of gold and silver coins (and the ruler's right to place his name on the coinage), as the insignia of royal power. See Darley-Doran, "Sikka."
When the pillars [of the state] supporting the throne of successorship and world-keeping and the officials in charge of the affairs of the state had delivered the words of the 'ulamā’ to His Honorable Imperial Presence, His Royal Majesty, in his answer to the courtiers, pierced the noble pearl [of hidden meaning] with the drill of perception [and said]:

“Although this claim has the absolute proof of God [on its side], nevertheless, the torch of acceptance does not shine brightly without the agreement and will of the people, who are the subjects entrusted to the king by God. Thus, it is necessary that the groups of amirs and the learned men of the [God-] protected land, [254b] and the governors and officials of the [God-] preserved provinces, indeed all the small and great subjects from the towns and villages and cities, gather at the world-sheltering palace, in order that the sound counsel and solid thought of each one will be considered.”

As soon as this ultimate goal and pleasing aim emerged safely and pure as gold out of the crucible of contention and disagreement, then the edict was drawn from the pages of the scribes and accepted by the polished signet ring [of the ruler]. And their request was generously received with the honor of [the ruler’s] close attention, and according to the will of God, from the first days of the month of Rabī’ al-awwal, which corresponds to the beginning of Qaws\(^80\) and the last parts of the month of Tir,\(^81\) in the year 1170 (A.H.), a binding decree, a decree which is to be obeyed, was issued to the state attendants and to the officials of the royal treasury of His Highness, that they pre-

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\(^{80}\)The zodiac sign of Sagittarius.

\(^{81}\)The fourth month in the old Iranian calendar.
pare the sums of cash and abundant goods, and they make ready the implements of spreading justice and [everything] required for the royal rank.

The swift couriers summoned Khājam Yār Biy, governor of Samarqand, and Dāniyāl Biy, governor of Karmina, and from Yakkabag and Shahr-i Sabz and Qarshi, Imām-Quṭī Biy and Qalmaqcha Bahādur and Ni‘matallāh Dādkhāh hurried to the world-sheltering court. Qazis and sayyids and the nobles of the realm, and amirs of the provinces and the officials of every region set off willingly toward the qibla of hope.

On Saturday, the 21st of the aforementioned month, [255a] the elite of the amirs and the best of the nobles were granted an audience in the private assembly. In keeping with [the verse]: “And take counsel with them in the affairs,” the sovereign, the patron of religion and state, brought [the inauguration procedure] before them, and explained the right-guided opinion of the people of guidance and prudence about attending to the royal accession and performing the affairs and royal decrees. And he made his eloquent tongue issue the sweet words of the following statement:

“The reins of the affairs of mankind in arranging the affairs of the times must be in the palms of ability and in the grip of authority of a mighty monarch, so that heroes of his blood-spilling sword will every moment tear the root of life from the enemies of the kingdom and the [Muslim] community with an assault ‘wherein is great might’; and [so

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82 Qurʾān, 3:150.

83 The new khan is loyal to the Inner Asian tradition of consultation, but also to the Qurʾān’s dictum to take counsel with his trusted subjects, and the custom of the private bayʿa noted below.

84 A Qurʾānic verse: “And we sent down iron, wherein is great might.” [37:25]
that] the guards of his venomous sword will pour the wine of death into the mouths of those who rebel against religion and state. From the beginning of the state and the rise of the star of felicity of Muḥammad Khan Shībānī,⁸⁵ the past sultans and khaqans established this praiseworthy tradition, and displayed noble zeal, and demonstrated miraculous power in arranging the affairs of the kingdom and securing its borders. For undertaking this exertion and effort, [255b] they earned fame in both worlds and won out over their peers and equals.⁸⁶ When the will of the Almighty God resolved upon the expiration of the rule of their dynasty and the destruction of Mawarannahr, for an [entire] generation they recited a worthless khutba in the name of Abu’l-Fayż Khan. During his reign all kinds of corruption appeared from every corner of the kingdom, to the extent that in most of the regions and cities and areas of this country not a soul was to be found. [But] in accordance with [the words of the Qurʾān] ‘he eradicated the people who were tyrannical,’⁸⁷ not a single one of the rebels or of the people of enmity and malice has now been left in our fortunate state.

“It has been eleven years⁸⁸ since one blow of the royal sword hamstrung the unbroken steed of wickedness and the piebald horse of corruption, and the hand of effort

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⁸⁵Muḥammad Shībānī Khan, leader of the Uzbek conquest of Central Asia in the beginning of the sixteenth century.

⁸⁶Literally, “they stole the ball of competition from amongst their peers and equals.”

⁸⁷Qurʾān, 6:45.

⁸⁸Muḥammad Raḥīm probably refers to the year 1158/1745, when the city of Bukhara was sacked by rebellious Uzbek tribes and he was sent by Nādir Shāh to help restore order in the city.
uprooted the tree of oppression and tyranny from its roots and foundations. The ailing health of the kingdom was approaching its recovery, and the four pillars of the building of prosperity were being erected. Now it is proper for the state counselors to adorn the royal throne with the person of the monarch, so that the flame of his fortunate glory will be the beginning of the rise of the star of Canopus of the new state."

When the great princes and the most honored notables understood [the meaning of these] dazzling gems (i.e., his words), they sang the following praises to the king of the horizons:

O King, Monarch, Sovereign,
O Lord, Nourisher of the World,

Thou art worthy of the crown and throne and diadem.
Thou art worthy of the parasol and the royal seat.

[256a] In your time the old world is renewed.
For you the throne of Khusraw is blessed.

You are the giver of orders and we are your slaves.
We bow to the club of your wisdom.

Each and every one of our hearts is at your command.
All our faith is under the oath of allegiance to you.89

89This concludes the private bay‘a: the proclamation and recognition of the head of the Muslim state. The Caliphs used to hold the bay‘at al-khāṣṣa (private bay‘a) in which a limited number of people participated. This would be followed by the bay‘at al-‘ūmma (public bay‘a). (See Tyan, “Bay‘a.”) In the Ottoman world, the first biat (bay‘a) ceremony seems to have taken place within the Topkapi palace, where the new sultan received the allegiance of the highest-ranking dignitaries of the state. Following, a public ceremony was held at the Babussaaded, the gate separating the Second and Third courts of the palace and within fifteen days the new sultan left in a grand procession to Eyüp, to the tomb of Halid ibn-i Zeyd Ebu Eyyub-i Ensari, the Prophet’s companion and standard-bearer, who died in the Arab siege of Constantinople in 672. There, the top religious dignitary girded the sultan with a sword chosen from the treasury. See Brookes, “Of Swords and Tombs”; Nutku, “Mawākid.”
In these fortunate times, when the world is fertile and lush from the affluence of the spring of the royal justice of the master of the age, and the sown lands of the kingdom are forever green and well-watered by the overflowing rivers of the noble khan’s mercy, and [since] the Omniscient Lord has placed the protection of the [Muslim] community and the commands and the practice of the *shari‘a* of the all-knowing lord of mortals [i.e., Muhammad] in the grasp of the power of His Blessed Highness, it is therefore most necessary and essential that the coin of worth for this new age and for many generations be struck upon the heart of *dirhams* and *dīnārs*, and that the *khuṭba* of the confirmation of his immeasurable majesty flow from and linger upon the tongues of villagers and town dwellers until the next world, because the noble crown and glorious throne are not given as an inheritance to just any man and if from time to time, such a secret affair reveals itself from behind the veil of the unseen, its outcome is nothing but damage and destruction. The dowry [for] the groom of kingship is a sharp blade, and the brideprice for the beloved of monarchy is the flaming sword of ‘Ali. Since the divine generosity bestowed this eternal state upon His Majesty, it is impossible for one who has not endured the royal toil and the burden of the conquest of the country to be called by this exalted name.

[256b] After the firm trust, sincerity, determination and unanimity of the pillars of state and the nobles of the kingdom were conveyed to the enlightened mind of the fortunate monarch, the chamberlains of the sublime court were given the command that they should bring the governors of the kingdom and the commanders of the victorious army and the leaders of the artisans and peasants, group by group, to the court, and that they should please and satisfy that group out of all-encompassing compassion and innate kindness. The nobles and common folk and the holy men of the group placed their hum-
ble foreheads upon the threshold of humility, and out of full sincerity and with submission and supplication to the court – [their] protector – they wished for the long life and fortune and the perseverance of glory and splendor of His Highness, and, with the utterance of “we hear and obey,” ⁹⁰ they came blushing and groveling. ⁹¹ When the instruments of the will of the Lord were set into motion, the will of men being considered as the will of the Lord, His Highness offered his unmatched thanks to the merciful Lord for this wonderful present (i.e., his rule).

On Monday, the 23rd of Rabi‘ al-awwal, which corresponds to the beginning of Toqsan ⁹² and the middle of the month of Qaws and the last days of the Year of the Mouse, ⁹³ in the year 1170 A.H. [December 16, 1756 A.D.], ⁹⁴ the chamberlains of


⁹¹Literally, “red-faced and long-tongued.”

⁹²This refers to the ninety days of the cold season according to traditional local calculation. When the constellation Khurqar reached a position in the sky that corresponded to the setting of the sun, the people knew that it was the beginning of Toqsan. Another indication was that Toqsan began on the fifteenth day of Qaws. Toqsan itself was further divided into shorter periods, each with its own name and characteristics. See Andreev, Tadzhiki, pp. 172-174.

⁹³See the calculation in Pisarchik, “Tablitsy.”

⁹⁴Charles Melville tried to determine whether the order in which the dates (Islamic calendar and animal cycle years) were listed had any significance. He assumed at first that when historians in the Ilkhanid realm recorded events in animal cycle years they often concerned the activities of the Mongol ruling class (such as births, marriages, deaths and accessions to the throne). Melville indicated that historians may have relied upon oral testimony when recording these events, thereby implying that popular memory found it easier to remember the Year of the Tiger than the year 743, for example. He also suggested that historians did not bother to convert dates from one calendar to the other, but rather repeated the information that they received, which may account for various errors in dating certain events. Melville submitted, albeit apprehensively, that when the event in question was purely Mongol – such as a qurūltay – the animal cycle year came first (such was the case with the decision to enthrone Ahmad Tegüder). However, at Geikhatu’s
the royal court, having brightened and polished the floors of the audience hall of the imperial palace with the broom of service, spread out multicolored carpets. They adorned the throne of the monarch with brocade (dībā) and silk (harīr), embroidered cloth (kim-khā) and satin (atlās). The astrologers chose for the hour of the imperial enthronement the [rise of the] planet Jupiter, which, according to the rules of those who observe the astronomical tables, was on the third hour of the aforementioned day.\textsuperscript{95}

The expanse of the hall of audience was filled with the crowd of the great men and amirs, and great numbers of nobles and commoners, and the multitude of the army and the subjects of the kingdom, and the vast number of commanders of the victorious army swayed the secured posts (saqlūhā),\textsuperscript{96} and the crowds of attendants were awaiting the appearance of the felicitous monarch and expecting his fortunate footsteps.

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\textsuperscript{95}The astrologers determined the preferable hour and day of the event by the science of ikhtiyārāt, the study of the auspicious or inauspicious character of the future, which was the duty of the court astrologer as early as the Umayyad period, and greatly developed under the ‘Abbāsids (see Fahd, “Ikhtiyārāt”). The court astrologer also played an important role under the Šafavids and the Qājārs in deciding the most auspicious moment for the coronation of the ruler. See, for example the description of the coronation of Sulaymān III (Šafī) by John Chardin. (Chardin, \textit{Travels}, p. 25).

\textsuperscript{96}Saqlū – probably a variant of sākhlū – was a word of Turkic origin which referred to groups of military personnel assigned to guard or to protect a particular locale (\textit{Lughat-nāma-i Dīkhudā}, vol. 8, p. 11,646). One may assume that the word was used here (and below) to designate the physical places where these (or other) guards were sitting. Cf. Doerfer, vol. 3, pp. 218-219.
At that time, when the morning of his rule and the time of accession to the imperial throne became imminent, the king, as magnificent as Darius of great majesty, with the power of 'Ālamgīr and adorned like Awrangzīb, and with the royal crown upon his head and the bejeweled robe upon his chest, from head to toe studded with pearls and jewels, and with generous thought and strong heart, and relying upon the aid of the Lord, set his foot outside of the royal palace with the aim of [establishing] his rule and arranging the foundation of religion and state. Together with the servants of the palace he came to the entrance of the court and summoned his close servants (mahram) to come there. And he dignified each one with honorable tasks and stationed his bodyguards (qūrchiyan). [257b] In the manner and custom of the Khaqans and the principles of the Chinggisids and the Qa’ans, he went toward the public hall of audience and the venerable throne.

When the green sapling of the fortune of the king of praiseworthy qualities appeared in the assembly of the people of God, the great amirs and the notables, distinguished by their power and knowledge, in perfect joy and gladness, gathered at the foot of the throne of the Caliphate. They brought forth and spread out the white felt (namad-i safid) of good omen, which was among the customs of the royal method of accession (īʿīra bardārī). And His Highness, having placed his blessed foot upon the noble carpet, sat upon it, as was the royal custom, facing the qibla of felicity.

Although the ancient custom and the longstanding rule of the Chinggisid Sultans is that in completing the affair of the khanship (i.e., the inauguration ceremony) and in executing the business of placing [someone] on the throne of successorship, the amirs of the four clans (urugh) raise the felt at its corners – and they do not allow others [to do it] – [now] the great naqībs and the most honored judges and sayyids and the exalted amirs,
out of their loyalty, sincerity, and utter enthusiasm, came rushing and dashing forward and grasped that piece of felt from all sides. For example, the ishān, spiritual guide (pīr) of His Felicitous Majesty, Ishāq Khoja Makhdūm-i A‘zamī, and Muḥammad Amīn Khoja naqīb Sayyid Ātāyī,97 and the chief qazi (aṣzā al-qūzāt) Amir Niẓām al-Dīn Ḫusaynī, and qazi Mīr Abū ʿAbdallāh Khoja shaykh al-islām Jūybarī, and Shihāb al-Dīn Khoja shaykh al-islām Ahrārī,98 and qazi Maḥmūd Shāh Samarqandī, [258a] and the pillar of amirs, Khwājam Yār Biy Ītarchī, and amīr al-umarā Dāniyāl Biy Manghīt, and Ghayballāh Biy dīvānbegī Bahrain, and Jahāngīr Biy dīvānbegī Saray, and Imām-Quļ Biy parvānachī Manghīt, and Dawlat Biy parvānachī Manghīt, and several of the dādkhāš and toqsābāś and many of the commanders of the army.99 [And] they

97The naqīb had considerable military duties. On the hereditary connection between Sayyid Ata’s descendants and this important position see DeWeese, “Descendants.”

98There are two shaykhs al-islām mentioned in the text. One belongs to the Jūybarī family and the other to the Ahrārī family, although we have no indication that there was more than one shaykh al-islām, the highest-ranking religious dignitary in the country. However, the title may have been an honorary one, and may have been kept even after one terminated his job; or perhaps there was more than one shaykh al-islām. The situation may be reminiscent of Timurid Samarqand, when Abū Sa‘īd brought Shaykh Būrān al-Dīn from Herat to serve as shaykh al-islām in conjunction with the famous Khoja Ahrār. According to Bartol’d, one acted as the “preserver” of the traditions of Ulugh Beg’s days and the other as the “destroyer.” See Barthold, Ulugh-Beg, pp. 170-172.

99The dīvānbegī was the head of the civil administration, the parvānachī issued decrees for important people, the dādkhāš was in charge of correspondence with foreign rulers, and the toqsābā was a military rank. The standard source for ranks and positions in the Bukharan court is an appendix to Mīrzā Badrī-dīvān’s Majma‘ al-arqām, an administrative manual written in Bukhara in 1798 (see Majma‘ al-arqām), which had been previously translated by Semenov on the basis of an incomplete copy (Semenov, “Bukharskii traktat”). See Yuri Bregel’s recent discussion on the author and his work in Bregel, Administration. Nikolai Khanykov’s visit to Bukhara in 1841 yielded additional valuable information on the subject. (See Khanykov, Bokhara, esp. pp. 231-268.)
began to praise God, and they raised the imperial khaqan above the throne, like the rising of the sun and the moon. The cry of joy and the sound of felicitations and the praise of the people with the meaning of the words of the glorious Qur’ān: “Such is the grace of God, He bestows it on whom He will,”\textsuperscript{100} reached the zenith of the Pleiades. The royal throne of command became, by being honored with the khan’s august person, the rising-point of fortune, and the imperial throne found beauty and elegance from the ascension of the benevolent and magnificent khaqan.

Everything that is [required] by the rules of fortune and customs of elevating princes (türa bardārtī) was carried out by the chuhrā-aqāṣīs and the īṣhīk-aqābāshīs,\textsuperscript{101} and from every corner of the hall of audience, the people of prayer and the masters of eloquence (i.e., the poets) and the pious opened the hands of prayer in praise of the king, the refuge of the world, [while] they were appealing to the Lord to increase [the khan’s] magnificence and grandeur.

After the conclusion of the business of the sultanate (i.e., the enthronement), by order of the king of the horizons, those appointed to the throne of governance and the retinue of the amirs and the pillars of the state came outside the court and turned around [facing the court]. [258b] And having renewed the rule of obedience and allegiance, they bowed down their heads.

\textsuperscript{100}Qur’ān, 57:21.

\textsuperscript{101}The chuhrā-aqāṣī was one of the ranks of the personal bodyguards of the amir, and the īṣhīk-aqābāshi was one of the masters of ceremony. (See Khanykov, Bokhara, p. 238).
The great amirs and most reverend judges and sayyids, having come from the right and left (ong va sol) wings of the court, sat in their places.\textsuperscript{102} And the toqsābās and masters of ceremony (ūdaychi)\textsuperscript{103} and the chiefs of the yasauls (yasaul-bashīs), ready for service, lined up at the end of the royal assembly, arranging [themselves] in rows for the reception. The bodyguards and the close retainers placed themselves in appropriate places to the right and the left at the back of the royal throne.\textsuperscript{104} The cooks and the cupbearers of the royal kitchen unfolded the generous tablecloth. They brought so many sweets, and so much food and drink that the eye of greed could not be kept open, because of the sweet wine, and became sated with the abundance of food.

In spite of his young age, Mīr Zayn al-Dīn Khoja, son of the chief qazi,\textsuperscript{105} wrote a learned treatise about the imamate, appropriate for the occasion. \{And he was shown kindness and given a robe of honor (khalat).\textsuperscript{106} And the poets of the age composed splen-

\textsuperscript{102} More research needs to be done regarding the sitting arrangements during these (and other) rituals. One of the most interesting developments has been a change in the left wing, for example, which used to serve as the sitting place for women during the Mongol period, and has turned into the position for religious (Muslim) officials. Cf. Bartol’d, "Tseremonial," which was based on a passage in the seventeenth-century Bahyr al-asrār of Maḥmūd b. Valī, and which prompted a discussion by McChesney (see McChesney, "The Amirs"). See also Andreev – Chekhovich, Arāk, p. 36, n. 1.

\textsuperscript{103} Khanykov described the ūdaychi’s duty as "a duty exercised by two persons, who, as a mark of distinction, hold red staffs in their hands, and proclaim, whenever the Amir goes out, the words, ‘May the Almighty help the Hezreti Amir, during his life, never to deviate from the path of justice.’" He added that the prayer was read in Turkic. See Khanykov, Bokhara, p. 242.

\textsuperscript{104} Note that women are not mentioned.

\textsuperscript{105} I.e., son of Amir Nizām al-Dīn Ḥusaynī, previously mentioned, who participated in the elevation ceremony.

\textsuperscript{106} Bestowal of robes, a standard way to exhibit honor, had various implications to the relationship between ruler and subjects, and sometimes also bore some repercussions for
did poems in praise of the king of all time, and they pledged their allegiance before the royal assembly.\textsuperscript{107} And they became distinguished among their peers through kindness and royal gifts and glorious honors. The kingly will so demanded that the commanders of the army with their retinues, and the amirs of the right and left wings, and the dignitaries and elders, be favored and honored with proper robes of honor, [259a] and therefore, the blessed pillar of the state, Dawlat Qoshbegi, who was in charge of the royal treasury,\textsuperscript{108} exalted all the judges and sayyids and army generals, the commanders of thousands and hundreds and tens, with [the grant of] splendid robes of honor and royal garments. That day, the floor of the court was made so colorful by various kinds of fabrics that the people were wearing – brocade (\textit{tas}), and \textit{bawale},\textsuperscript{109} and embroidered cloth (\textit{kimkha}), and silk with gold threads (\textit{zerbaft}), and \textit{tanbat} (?), and \textit{māvut} (thick, smooth woolen cloth),

\textsuperscript{107}This passage is found in the margins of C525 f. 258b, but is part of the text of C526 (f. 189a).

\textsuperscript{108}For a discussion of the term \textit{qoshbegi} see Bregel, \textit{Administration}, pp. 7-12. Dawlat Qoshbegi is mentioned in the text both as \textit{qoshbegi} and as being in charge of the royal treasury. In fact, the \textit{qoshbegi} was not in charge of the treasury, but rather, acted as the chief minister. Since Muhammad Raḥīm appointed Dawlat to the position of \textit{qoshbegi} after his inauguration (\textit{ibid.}, p. 10), this may reflect an interim period when the old \textit{dīvānbegi} (Dawlat) still retained his authority until the new \textit{dīvānbegi} came into office.

\textsuperscript{109}Silk made in the village of Bawwal.
and saqirlat (warm woolen cloth), and other dresses of many colors – that in looking upon them, the eye of curiosity was bewildered.\footnote{On the significance of textiles in the cultural history of the Mongol world see Allsen, Commodity and Exchange. Although our author specifies many types of cloths, he tells us nothing about their color, nor about their significance, or the actual types of clothing.}

When the royal council reached its joyful conclusion and the august assembly came to a happy end, His Imperial Majesty (kai asās) – that is to say, the most generous khan\footnote{Khān darya-nawāl-āhang, i.e., the khan whose rule is as bounteous as the sea.} returned to the palace, and the rest of the amirs and pillars of the monarchy and the governors and courtiers and masses of troops made haste to their houses and places of residence from the glorious king’s court. On Tuesday and Wednesday, the crowds of tribesmen set into motion, and the dignified pillars of the state together with the troops, numerous as the stars, turned to the court of service.

Since the weather was cold, they set up the throne in the hall of audience, which had been recently renovated,\footnote{According to Mīrza Shams Bukharī, Amir Ḥaydar’s coronation in 1800 took place in this very same hall, which was (again) renovated for the same purpose (Grigor’ev, O nekotorykh sobytiakh, Persian text, p. 40; Russian tr., p. 6).} wherein the authority of the king served as an architect.

[259b] And a wise mind composed this verse concerning it:

Heaven has not seen such an august edifice with its [own] eyes;
No one can recall such an exalted building.

They spread out the kingly seat on a golden frame in the shāh-nishīn\footnote{An architectural term denoting a raised recess against one wall.} of that noble house. The august person, possessor of the royal farr,\footnote{Farr means “glory” or “fortune,” and goes back to the old Persian concept of being endowed with majesty. See Gnoli, “Farr(ah).”} sat upon the diwan (nim-}
takhīt). The amirs and the dignitaries were admitted to arrange the affairs of the state, while other influential and important people and army commanders sat in the secured posts\textsuperscript{115} and requested the Lord to increase the grandeur of the ruler of Islam (i.e., the sovereign).

On Thursday, the muḫarrir-i awrāq (the writer of [these] pages)\textsuperscript{116} presented a poem (qaṣīdah) in the hall of the king of the horizons, and was ennobled through the grace [of His Imperial Majesty], who uses the moon for a stirrup:\textsuperscript{117}

Bravo, your fate [made] of heavenly essence by the aid of the Divine, Soared like the sun from the Imperial throne.

Today you have become worthy of the crown by eternal grace. May the crown and royal throne be blessed with your good fortune.

The summits of conquest and ferocity of the Chinggisids Were turned over by fortune to your governance.

The robe of kingship is elegant upon the stature of your good-fortunes. You raised the banner of justice in the style of the kingdom of the Samanids.

[260a] In this age, when the lamp shedding [light] on this land was extinguished, You became the torch lighter of the state of the Turanian kings.

Tyranny and oppression spread like a shadow in the world, [But] the beauty of your rule made the world as bright as the sun.

Your reputation for justice has seized the world from end to end. In the clime of world-conquest, you are second to Alexander.

\textsuperscript{115}See above, note 30.

\textsuperscript{116}I.e., the author of the work, Muḥammad Vafā Karmīnāḡī.

\textsuperscript{117}The following qaṣīdah captures the essence of the procedure of the inauguration and may be looked at as the summary of the description of the account. It congratulates the khan, mentions his military might and personal qualities which, by the grace of God, enabled him to rise to the throne. Muḥammad Raḥīm, it claims, ended the dark age of the Ashtarkhānids and revived the impoverished kingdom. The poet takes the opportunity to do himself some service and mentions how he, a man of some prominence, finds it inevitable to praise the new khan.
Your existence showers everyone from the sea of God’s generosity. 
You have made every parched lip as moist as a spring cloud.

Although your inherited crown was worn out in the days of kings past, 
In your time the imperial crown became bejeweled once again.

Due to your preeminent, victorious, and just influence, 
The old world has changed from desolation to prosperity.

For a century Heaven has been preparing the goblet of the desired wine; 
 Everywhere, everyone will become sated from this decanter.

I am not smaller than an ant, and this prayer is on my tongue: 
May God bestow upon you the expanse of Solomon’s kingdom.

He became worthy of sitting upon the throne of kings, 
Bravo, victorious king, Bravo, divine graces.

The august, resplendent Raḥīm Khan, religion-nurturing Shāh, 
Adorn the throne of kingship by the sublime graces.

Pen of fame, write with a happy heart the year of this event, 
Today, kingship has placed the imperial crown upon your head.118

On Friday, the fifth day of the king’s reign, [260b], His Majesty mounted his horse in his ever-increasing glory, and with the army commanders and servants and attendants at the bridle of the horse of felicity, turned to the mosque of the high citadel (ark) in order to perform the obligatory prayers and to complete their devotion and benediction. That day, the preachers of the age recited the fortunate khutba and the imperial titles in the blessed name of the king of the age from the pulpits of Islam, from Bukhara to Samarkand and Miyankan and Shahr-i Sabz and Qarshi and Khuzar and Qaraqul, to the banks of the Amu Darya and the rest of the villages and roads and paths of the kingdom.

118The poem ends with a chronogram: “nihād imrūz jamjāhī be sar tāj-i jahnānī,” indicating the year of the enthronement as 1169 A.H., although the actual date was 1170 A.H. (as given twice before in the narrative). Variation by a year in a chronogram is not at all unusual.
And they praised the noble and prosperous king. At the time of the public prayer, His Majesty, as great as Jamshīd, sat upon the imperial throne. The amirs of the right and the left wings were arranged in their places. The deputies of His Majesty and the governors divided up the duties of governance in accordance with the [khan’s] obligatory command. The secretaries (munštīyan), distinguished by their eloquence, wrote the diplomas and royal orders and the headings of yarlıqs and decrees [with the name of] Abu’l-Muẓaffar wa’l-Manṣūr Muḥammad Raḥīm Bahādur Khan.
Commentary

Although the *Tuhfat al-khānī*’s description of the inauguration ritual follows a tradition of such presentations in Central Asian historiography, its exposition—a demonstration of the ritual’s significance and its central position in the political process—seems to be much more developed than previous similar accounts.\(^{119}\) Perhaps its patron, Muḥammad Rāhīm Khan, encouraged a more elaborate narrative in order to obscure the fact that he was, after all, claiming a status that had not previously been claimed by a tribal chieftain (not successfully, at least). Even as influential and powerful a figure as Muḥammad Rāhīm needed the ceremony, especially since he did not simply inherit the throne as a matter of course, but had to be publicly acknowledged as the champion in a political struggle.\(^{120}\)

Muḥammad Rāhīm’s inauguration epitomized the consecration of monarchical rule by divine sanction. He is portrayed as chosen by God (or ‘fate’ or the ‘divine decree’ that bestowed kingship upon him), and this portrayal is also substantiated through the frequent usage of Qur’ānic quotations, a common motif in Islamic historiography, which, in this case, also carried the direct injunction “We have made you ruler on earth.” However, divine sanction is not the only source of Muḥammad Rāhīm’s virtue; he also benefits from a description of his own merits and his personal charisma achieved through

\(^{119}\) Anke von Kügelgen’s recent work on the representation of the first Manghīt rulers in Manghīt historiography deals with many aspects of their legitimation process. Muḥammad Rāhīm’s inauguration concentrates all of these aspects into a focused and coherent narrative which may complement von Kügelgen’s broader scope. See von Kügelgen, *Die Legitimation* (the ritual is mentioned on pp. 276-77).

\(^{120}\) Following J. L. Nelson’s remarks on the ceremony as a “reminder of the powers and functions of kingship” in Nelson, *Politics*, p. 284.
military prowess and deeds of conquest which liberated the country from the corrupt rule of his predecessors. The brief mention of Muḥammad Raḥīm’s path to the throne bears some of the qualities of an epic saga of conquest, whose aim is to deliver the realm from the grip of evil. Much like (albeit less developed) a classic narrative of the coming-to-power of an Inner Asian leader, Muḥammad Vafā describes the assembling of the troops, growing bit by bit, charged with devotion to their charismatic leader, an army that would eventually conquer its way to the throne following a model set by Muḥammad Shībānī Khan, conqueror of Central Asia in the beginning of the sixteenth century.

The theme of divine choice and personal virtue that is echoed throughout the narrative essentially disregards the most important requirement of a Central Asian ruler in the post-Mongol world: his descent from Chinggis Khan. This finds further emphasis in the new khan’s commanding and unopposed speech, which reveals the latter’s evident reverence for the Lord’s will, but also displays his own merits (conquest, eradication of corruption, securing safety and prosperity) which render him the legitimation he deserves. Chinggis Khan is not mentioned by Muḥammad Raḥīm at all. On the contrary, the latter is portrayed as filling the vacuum created by Abu’l-Fayż Khan’s weak rule, a vacuum which exhibited the need for a strong ruler, a source of strength and stability, who will act against corruption, against potential rebels, and who will ensure security and prosperity. Vafā invokes Muḥammad Shībānī Khan as his model of conduct for military skills, but perhaps also for his role as the founder of a new dynasty. Clearly, his audience held Shībānī Khan in great esteem, although the latter is only one in a host of characters invoked by the Tuhfat al-khānī to serve as symbols of sanction and authority and as sources of inspiration for Muḥammad Raḥīm. The text readily accommodates figures
from Islamic traditions as King Solomon, the Prophet Muḥammad and his cousin and son-in-law ʿAli, alongside the ancient (mythical and historical) Iranian kings Jamshīd, Khusraw and Darius, the Greek Alexander the Great, Central Asian champions such as Chinggis Khan and Muḥammad Shībānī Khan, and Emperors of Moghul India such as Awrangzīb.\footnote{The latter is also used as play on the names: ʿĀlamgīr means “world conqueror,” and Awrangzīb – the “throne’s ornament.”} Although many of these names are commonplace in Islamic historiography, it is the combination of all these figures that generates one of the unique features of Central Asia’s textual legacy.\footnote{The issue of dating and calendar is also distinctive. The dating of the event relies on five different calendars: the Islamic Hijri calendar, the Inner Asian animal cycle, the old Iranian calendar, the Zodiac sign (in Arabic), and the local calculation of the seasons.}

The ʿulamāʾ play a significant role in the inauguration procedure.\footnote{This did not go unnoticed by Russian and Soviet scholars who highlighted the “clergy’s” role. Bartol’d wrote, based on Muḥammad Yaʿqūb, that although Muḥammad Raḥīm Khan was not a religious zealot, the fact that he was chosen by the clergy was an indication for future politics of the Manghīts, who would later become strict adherents of the sharīʿa (Bartol’d, “Istoriia kulturnoi zhizni,” p. 279). See also Chekhovich, “O nekotorykh voprosakh,” p. 89; Ivanov, Ocherki, p. 103.} It is very important for the author to show that Muḥammad Raḥīm follows their instructions and that they regulate and supervise everything. They decree that Muḥammad Raḥīm is deserving of the throne and therefore should uphold the proper Islamic norm (perceived as an imitation of the Prophet) by having the khutba read in his name and by engraving his name and title on the coins. The ʿulamāʾ ignore Muḥammad Raḥīm’s non-Chinggisid status that should, according to custom, prevent him from ascending the throne. Therefore, they do not initiate the elevation ceremony, nor do they suggest that Muḥammad Raḥīm
should style himself “khan.” It seems that the initiative for the elevation ceremony was, as in the past, the prerogative of the amirs; in this case, the amir Muḥammad Raḥīm initiates it for himself. Nevertheless, the ‘ulamā’ participate in the elevation ceremony with great enthusiasm and the lifting of the felt is executed while prayers are being uttered, another testimony to the merger of traditions and to the interdependent relationship between religion and state. In fact, there are more religious dignitaries raising the khan than there are amirs, and their names precede the names of the amirs. It seems that they are in a position to determine the procedure and the outcome. Sufi representatives are hardly mentioned among the host of attendants, and they are certainly not consulted in order to decide upon the fate of the kingdom.

Following the advice of the ‘ulamā’ to uphold the khutba and sikka, Muḥammad Raḥīm seems (as common etiquette apparently dictated) to hesitate to take the kingship upon himself or to decide single-handedly upon such a matter. The motif of the rejection of the crown was an essential component in the ceremony, although here it is not manifested so firmly. Before embarking upon his path to the throne Muḥammad Raḥīm needs to consult “the people,” that is, the people of consequence – the “core group” of the monarchy – royal dignitaries, governors of the provinces, court officials and the higher ranks of the military.

The members of the “core group” are the other lead actors (beside the khan) in this “theater of power.”\footnote{Following Richard Wortman’s insightful analysis of Russian coronations (see Wortman, \textit{Scenarios of Power}). Much of the pioneering work in the analysis of such rituals was done by Ernst Kantorowicz (see Kantorowicz, \textit{The King’s Two Bodies}). The following essays are useful introductions to the historiography and methods of inquiry for “coronation studies”: Wilentz, “On Symbolism”; Cannadine, “Divine Rites.”} They perform this play and, at the same time, make up the
audience for their own performance. Whether this dramatic display increased their prestige or helped to distance the group from the rest of the ruled (both physically and symbolically, a fact which may have even increased their loyalty to the ruler), their aim, conscious or not, may have been to make the exercise of power appear rooted in the "natural order of things."125 This "court society," as Wortman notes, "shared in the charisma of authority and in the exalted image of the sovereign," and by so doing, magnified its own self-image and its command over its subordinates.126 After all, most of the ruled were absent from the ceremony.

The inauguration ritual builds towards the elevation upon the white felt that would secure Muhammad Rahim's position as the legitimate sovereign of the khanate. Staged at the ceremony's climactic moment, after which the contender for the throne was transformed into the new monarch, the khan's elevation symbolized the end of a rite of passage, and as such, appears to have held a cathartic sensation that liberated all concerned from the "liminal," chaotic phase which kept the participants in suspense.127 Such deliv-

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125Wortman, *Scenarios of Power*, p. 4. See also Clifford Geertz' observations on the relationship between coronations and the "way the world is built" (Geertz, "Centers"). See also my earlier comments about the amirs' interest in maintaining the khan's position.

126Wortman views the coronation process as an "elevation," where the sovereign was "lifted into another realm where he or she displayed the superior qualities of a being entitled to rule." It is interesting to see Wortman's commentary take a very physical manifestation in its Inner Asian context.

127Every coronation had a decisive moment when the transformation became complete. In Europe, for example, where the clergy often held the power of transformation through their monopoly over sacred power, the anointment by the archbishop or its vocal utterance *ungo te in regem* transformed the prince into a king (Le Goff, "A Coronation Program," p. 48). The "rite de passage" theory, advanced by Arnold van Gennep in the early
erance must have acted as a stabilizing factor, fostering a sense of comfort, a sense that a nostalgic past has been restored. On a less emotional note, the ritual sealed the contract between the new ruler and his most eminent subjects, indeed, the realm as a whole. By completing the ritual and by adopting the title of “khan,” Muḥammad Raḥīm was proclaimed the new rightful and legal sovereign. His usurpation had supposedly been forgotten.

The identity of the felt-bearers is one of the ceremony’s most significant aspects. Muḥammad Vafā, author of Tuhfat al-khānī, explains that according to the “ancient custom and the longstanding rule of the Chinggisid sultans... the amirs of the four clans raise the felt at its corners and they do not allow others [to do it].” In other words, not only were the heads of the four most important clans (of the Uzbeks?) responsible for elevating the khan, but in so doing they were following Chinggisid tradition. In actuality, Muḥammad Raḥīm was raised by thirteen named men, who were not merely representatives of the four clans but of the entire “court society.” We may also note that they were also supposed to raise a Chinggisid khan, not one of their own (another Manghīt).

Muḥammad Vafā explains the reason for this departure from tradition in the following

twentieth century, divided rites of passage into three stages: the first symbolized the departure of the individual from his previous life; the second placed the individual in a state of “limen,” an in-between zone where ordinary rules did not apply; and the third reintegrated him into society in his new position/status (van Gennep, Les rites de passage). Victor Turner observed, among other things, that the successful conclusion of the rite could hold salvific qualities for participants and outside observers alike since the liminal stage could become very chaotic (see Turner, “Betwixt and Between”).

128 Thereby adopting the ‘legality of the regime,’ according to Max Weber’s well-known theory on the three components of the legitimation process. The legality of the regime was defined as the belief in the legality of patterns of normative rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands (the two other elements being tradition and custom, and the charisma of leadership). See Weber, Economy and Society, vol. 1, pp. 212-254.
manner: "[now] the great naqībs and the most honored judges and sayyids and the exalted amirs, out of their loyalty, sincerity, and utter enthusiasm, came rushing and dashing forward and grasped that piece of felt from all sides." In other words, the overwhelming emotions generated by Muḥammad Raḥīm's character and the magnitude of the event created circumstances in which the tradition could be forgivingly ignored.

By undergoing the elevation ritual Muḥammad Raḥīm affirmed himself as the successor to the rich heritage of Chinggis Khan and Muḥammad Shībānī Khan. The fact that the ritual was not actually carried out as it should have been only highlighted Muḥammad Raḥīm's singularity and placed him on the same level as his "great ancestors." The public display of support for the old tradition had to be maintained since the participants in the ritual (and writers of such narratives) had to find ways to assure the audience and themselves that what they witnessed (or read) was conducted in the most appropriate manner. While depending upon some respectable tradition of bygone days as one of their means to achieve this assurance, they also tried to show that the new regime was not only following the tradition but was unique in its own right. Such a demonstration was particularly significant when a transition of power was taking place in a society that experienced internal (or external) conflicts. Under such circumstances, the new ruler was portrayed as the only one with the ability to save the day. Therefore, since we may assume, as Catherine Bell has, that "the invocation of tradition for the sake of legitimation is not standardized," the elevation ritual was seeking to inculcate cultural or political values and to fashion a new practice even as it claimed to be transmitting an old tradition. Building upon works by Cannadine, Geertz, Bloch and Hobsbawm, Bell explains that political ritual evokes many traditional symbols but orchestrates them to differentiate the
new political authority from the previous ones. Therefore, although there is a sense of cultural continuity, the new ritual is unique.\textsuperscript{129}

\textsuperscript{129}Bell, \textit{Ritual Theory}, p. 194. As David Sturdy has shown in his work with English coronations, legitimation was not merely the invocation of tradition, but also required a departure from tradition and custom. (Sturdy, “Continuity versus Change”).
2.2 Rituals in Bukhara in the 18th Century and Beyond

It has yet to be ascertained whether Muḥammad Raḥīm’s inauguration had any influence on future similar events celebrated by the Manghīts. Nevertheless, Amir Ḥaydar’s inauguration in 1800 bears a striking resemblance to Muḥammad Raḥīm’s. Muḥammad Sharīf, author of a work titled Tāj al-tavārīḵh (and also an eye-witness to the event), first presented an interesting description of the way the felt for the elevation ceremony was produced. Such a procedure was often left out in other accounts.\(^{130}\) In this case,

A royal decree was issued, that Khoja Ṣādiq, the mihtar\(^{131}\) of the heaven-resembling court, will endeavor to find the white felt of good omen, which is a part of and the greatest of the customs and regulations of raising princes and seating [them] upon the throne. After a while, an efficient and devoted servant from among the merchants, in accordance with the decree of the adorned crown, presented a piece of white felt of auspicious fortune, that [was made] according to custom by artisans from the province of Birjand,\(^{132}\) who, out of exquisiteness and subtlety and smoothness and softness, had stolen the ball of delicacy and heart-pleasingness from the velvet cloth of Isfahan and Europe.\(^{133}\)

Tāj al-tavārīḵh’s emphasis on the felt’s quality and value may imply a departure from the tradition of the days of old, when the felt may have stood for the simple, very

\(^{130}\)Unless it served a unique purpose, as we have seen in the sixteenth-century Sharaf-nāma-i shāhī.

\(^{131}\)Khoja Ṣādiq had many dealings with merchants and commerce. See Bregel, Administration, p. 26.

\(^{132}\)A town and province in southeastern Khorasan, famous for the quality of its carpet weaving and rug making industries.

\(^{133}\)Tāj al-tavārīḵh, MS No. 2092 ff. 431ab; MS No. 9265 ff. 346ab (for the Persian text see Sela, Ritual and Authority in Central Asia, Appendix IIa). The work was written for Amir Ḥaydar, and was completed by the end of November, 1800 (12 Rajab, 1215). (SVR, vol. I, p. 85.) See also Bregel, Administration, pp. 2, 30-33.
basic ethics of governance, but has now become an object of fancy. What follows is an account of the prescription for the elevation ritual and how the ceremony was actually carried out:

The confirmed and well-known customs and regulations of the Chinggisid Khans and Shībānid Sultans at the time of the royal enthronement upon the imperial throne were such that the commanders and chiefs of the four divisions (firqa) of the Uzbeks held the four corners of the felt and placed [the khan] upon the throne of courage, and no one from among the nobles and dignitaries behind them had any claim to participate nor the power to intervene in this exalted task. Moreover, they would deny their own rivals with brute force from taking part in this ennobling duty. However, at the time of this unique enthronement, the nobles and amirs, too numerous to estimate or guess, out of utmost sincerity and love, and finest desire and elation for the sake of glory and awe, charged and scrambled from all directions of the court, as decorated as heaven, to the foot of the throne of noble intention of the ruler, as cultured as Plato, and they yearningly and with blessing grasped the hem along the sides of the masnad. [Here follows a list of 31 men who participated in the ceremony] ... and glorifying and praising God, and with full awareness and consciousness, they seated His Imperial Majesty upon the throne of heavenly command, as though he were the vanguard of the sun and the moon.

Similar to Tuhfat al-khānī’s account of Muḥammad Raḥīm Khan’s inauguration, the author of Tāj al-tavārīkh explains that the elevation ritual originated in the “customs and regulations of the Chinggisids and Shībānids,” and that its prescribed formula de-

134 During Uraz Muḥammad’s inauguration in the khanate of Kasimov in 1600 the participants gathered at the mosque, where they had made a throne of gold (altunlīgh sandalni kūlturub), and raised the 20-year-old khan upon it (ḥazrat khānī altunlīgh sandalnī ustīna kutardīlar). In the Russian translation, the throne, or seat of gold (altunlīgh sandali) turned into a golden felt rug (zolotaya koshma). See Vel’iaminov-Zernov, Izśledovanie, pt. IV, pp. 400-408; for the Turkic text see Qādir ʿAlī Bek Jalāyīrī, pp. 166-169.

135 Literally, “seat” or “throne,” but undoubtedly referring to the felt mentioned earlier in the text.

136 Tāj al-tavārīkh, ff. 438b-439b (for the Persian text see Sela, Ritual and Authority in Central Asia, Appendix IIb).
manded that the ruler be raised on the white felt by the "leaders of the four Uzbek divisions." Once again, the participants would have adhered to the old tradition, but Amir Ḥaydar’s presence stirred up such intense emotions that they had to ignore the procedure. The identity of the "four divisions of the Uzbeks," or the identity of their "commanders and chiefs," remains a mystery, and we have to try and learn about them through some other means.

A later description of Amir Ḥaydar’s coronation took a completely different approach to these proceedings:

After all the requirements [for the ceremony] were ready, all the officials came and one by one took their seats. A white felt was spread before the throne, and the amir, a bejeweled crown on his head, sat upon the felt. The naqīb grasped one side [of the felt], the atalīq grasped the other, the dīvānbegī took hold of the third, and the parvānachī of the fourth. They raised [the felt] above the throne and scattered upon [him] many coins (tilla va tanga).¹³⁷

In this short passage there is no association of the ceremony with a preordained formula; there is no mention of the elevation ceremony as rooted in a longstanding tradition going back to Chinggis Khan’s days. The narrative is very clear and matter-of-fact. In addition, the participants are only identified by their courtly ranks or duties, not by their names or tribal affiliation. They do, however, adhere to the conventional number four. This account is more laconic than others in its description of the inauguration, but an unusual statement, made at the conclusion of the ceremony, should draw our attention.

¹³⁷ Grigor’ev, O nekotorykh sobytiikh, Persian text, pp. 40-42; Russian translation, pp. 6-8. The author, Mirzā Shams Bukhārī (b. 1804), came from a family of officials in the service of the Manghīt amirs, and his sister was married to Amir Ḥaydar’s eldest son. Bukhārī’s association with different factions in the khanate apparently led to his flight from Bukhara, and he eventually settled in Orenburg.
According to Mīrzā Shams Bukhari, Amir Ḥaydar announced: "My mother was the daughter of Abū’l-Fayż khan and was of Chinggisid origin. [Therefore], the sikka and the khuṭba will be done in my name."³⁸ In other words, Amir Ḥaydar considers himself the rightful sovereign based on his lineage, being the son of a Chinggisid princess (although his father was not a Chinggisid himself). The performance of the elevation ritual serves as another affirmation of Ḥaydar’s perception of legitimate sovereignty, but it is not enough. If we accept Bukhari’s account, Ḥaydar redefines hierarchical hegemony, completely ignoring the “tribal” dimension of his dynasty, which may prompt us to ask how “tribal” did the tribal dynasties perceive themselves to be?³⁹

Clearly, descriptions of the elevation ritual vary. We do not have elaborate descriptions for every inauguration. Although there is some correspondence between patronage of a work and a portrayal of the inauguration procedure, sometimes there is also a gap between reports of eyewitnesses and those further removed from the event.⁴⁰ Similarly, some accounts make no reference to the ceremony, but simply use generic terms,

³⁸Ibid., Persian text, p. 42; Russian tr., p. 8.

³⁹See also von Kügelgen’s comments on Ḥaydar’s perceived lineage (and his status as a sayyid) in von Kügelgen, Die Legitimitierung, pp. 226-231.

⁴⁰Thus, Amir Ḥaydar’s inauguration was reported differently by the author of the Tāj al-tavārīkh and by Mīrzā Shams Bukhārī; Muḥammad Rahīm Khan’s elevation on the white felt received no mention in the Tāj al-tavārīkh, but was enthusiastically reported by Muḥammad Vafā. However, ‘Abdallāh Khan’s inauguration had three different accounts, with Ḥāfīz-i Tanīsh, Badr al-Dīn Kashmīrī, and Abu’l-ʿAbbās Muḥammad Ṭālib – all fairly close to the event, and all may be considered officially sponsored sources – supplying different descriptions of the ceremony and identities of the felt-bearers.
such as “the khan was raised to the throne,” or “sat on the throne,” to describe the inaugu-
ration without going into any detail.\textsuperscript{141}

\textsuperscript{141}For example, Muḥammad Yaʿqūb, writing in 1824-5, has no account of Muḥammad Raḥīm’s elevation ritual. He simply commented that “in the year 1167 Muḥammad Raḥīm Bahādur Khan ascended the throne of Bukhara and was the first of the Manghīt Sultans. He was blessed with majesty and splendor and followed the custom and manner of Nādir Shāh” (\textit{Gulshan al-mulūk}, f. 136b).
2.3 Rituals in Khiva and the Qazaq Connection.

Information on elevation ceremonies in Khiva is scarce. In fact, although our first account goes back to the inauguration of Ḥājim Khan in 1557 (in the Year of the Horse), a long silence in the sources follows. The description of the event is concise, but interesting nonetheless. According to Abu’l-Ghāzī, Ḥājim Khan was raised on the white felt by ʿAlī Sulṭān and Ḥājim’s three younger brothers, Maḥmūd Sulṭān, Pulād Sulṭān, and Temīr Sulṭān.\(^{142}\) This unique description was not followed, to the best of my knowledge, in Khivan historiography, and we have to rely on an outsider’s observation, dated to the middle of the nineteenth century, to learn more about the custom in Khorezm.

In an unusual account, Riżā-Quṭlī Khan, special envoy of the Persian Shāh Nāṣīr al-Dīn, described inauguration ceremonies in Khiva. According to Riżā-Quṭlī, once a Khan of Khiva had passed away, the qazis, the ʿulamāʾ, the amirs and the viziers gather after [the period of] mourning for the dead and they offer the title “Khan” to his worthy son and heir. At first he refuses and declines, until he publicly declares: “If you are unanimously determined to make me khan, it is necessary that you will not contradict any of my commands and orders, even if [I sentence someone] to death.” The Great Qazi and the others give their consent, and then they seat him (the new khan) upon a white felt rug, and the princes (tura), the amirs and the ʿulamāʾ grasp the sides of the felt and thrust and fling him upon the throne with such brutality that he may fall on his face or his crown may tumble down. Then, each one according to custom, cuts with a knife the corners of the masnad\(^{143}\) and takes it along with him to his house. It is said that as long as one of the descendants of Chaghatay is not present, it is impossible to raise someone to the seat of Khanship. [Therefore], it is said that the vizier mihtar Yaʿqūb claims that he is of the descendants of Chaghatay, but

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\(^{142}\) Abu’l-Ghāzī, Türkic text, p. 255; French tr., p. 273. This brings to mind descriptions of such ceremonies in the Mongol-commissioned sources where the family members of the Chinggisid candidate led him to the throne.

\(^{143}\) Cf. above, note 135.
the people of that province [i.e., Khiva] know him to be a native of Kat, and they say that his claim is false.\textsuperscript{144}

Rižā-Qulī Khan’s report, ostensibly based upon testimonies of Persian prisoners in the khanate of Khiva, ridicules the Khorezmian government that practiced ceremonies where the participants demonstrated such disdain toward the object of their practice (the khan). At the same time they tried to deceive the people with their endeavors to showcase legitimacy, although the people of Khorezm were aware of the truth. The attempt at deception centered around a tradition whereby one of the descendants of Chaghatay supposedly had to be present at the new khan’s enthronement. Our first concern is to try and understand what the designation “Chaghatay” meant in the context of mid nineteenth-century Khorezm.

One possibility is that Rižā-Qulī became aware of the reputation of the historical figure Chaghatay (that is, Chinggis Khan’s second son) as the celebrated upholder of the yasa,\textsuperscript{145} and, for some reason, determined that Chaghatay’s descendants were in charge of observing the proper administration of the ceremony. Considering the powerful (at least, perceived) association of the yasa with inauguration ceremonies, the presence of a “Chaghatayid” supervisor may not be such a farfetched suggestion. Yet, we have no evidence of Chaghatayid involvement in the ceremony elsewhere in Central Asia and no further indication that this may have been the case in Khorezm.

\textsuperscript{144}Rižā-Qulī Khan, Persian text p. 114; French translation, p. 177.

\textsuperscript{145}Juvaynī maintained that Chaghatay was “extremely zealous in enforcing the yasa and spared no one who had deviated even slightly from it.” See Juvaynī (ed. Qazvīnī), vol. I, pp. 162 and 227 (tr. Boyle, pp. 205 and 272 respectively).
A more likely scenario is that “Chaghatay” was associated with a tribal ethnonym. In his travels in Central Asia in the early 1860s, the Hungarian scholar Arminius Vámbéry reported that the elevation on the white felt (which, in his words, “had endured since Chinggis Khan’s days”) was the “exclusive privilege of the grey-beards of the tribe of Djagatay.” \(^{146}\) In Rıžä-Qulî Khan’s account the role of the “Chaghatayid witness” was played by Ya‘qūb Mihtar, a Sart and a native of Kat. \(^{147}\) One may conclude that the reason for choosing Ya‘qūb to act this part, was that Kat may have been associated with the Chaghatays. \(^{148}\) However, Kat in the nineteenth century was a relatively new town that had little to do with the deserted old capital of Kat on the other bank of the Amu Darya. In fact, Rıžä-Qulî Khan reports that Ya‘qūb’s association with Kat probably made it more difficult for him to pretend to be a descendant of Chaghatay. This may simply reflect a

\(^{146}\) Vámbéry, *Travels*, p. 356. Vámbéry refers to the elevation ritual as the standard coronation ritual in Khiva and Khokand, but not (!) in Bukhara.

\(^{147}\) The *mihtar* was the head of the civil administration in Khiva, always appointed from among the Sarts. See *Firdaws al-Iqbal* (tr. Bregel), p. 560, n. 250. For more on Ya‘qūb Mihtar’s involvement in the affairs of the khanate of Khiva, see Bregel, “The Sarts.” Kat is mentioned previously in the narrative as the birthplace of Ya‘qūb, whose family had served as governors of that district (Rıžä-Qulî Khan, p. 149).

\(^{148}\) The city of Kat, according to Timurid claim, was assigned to the *ulus* of Chaghatay, and consequently, the Qongrat Sufi attack on Kat justified Timur’s campaigns against Khorezm. (See also Woods, “Timur’s Genealogy,” p. 122, n. 92.) Khorezm came to be under the possession of the Chaghatays after its destruction by Timur at the end of the fourteenth century. (See also Schefer’s introduction to Rıžä-Qulî Khan’s narrative, p. xiii.) The Khivan historians Munis and Āgahī mention that the group known as Chaghatay in the nineteenth century originated from the Chaghatays who were left in Khorezm when Timur had conquered it and who had settled in Chaghatay, a town about 7 km west of Kat, by the 1680s. See *Firdaws al-Iqbal* (tr. Bregel), p. 49. Abu’l-Ghāzī, it should be noted, associated Chaghatays with Kat only once, when six Chaghatays of Kat informed ‘Abdallāh Khan on the whereabouts of Ḥājjī Muḥammad Khan (Abu’l-Ghāzī, p. 274).
misunderstanding on his part. To Rižā-Qulī Khan the inauguration practice, in which all the characters supported the preservation of such a false façade, probably seemed rather pointless.

Another interesting feature of Rižā-Qulī Khan’s account is the cutting of the felt with the knife, a custom which is not attested, to my knowledge, in Bukhara. This practice may have come to Khiva from the Qazaq steppes since the nineteenth-century Khivans used to enthrone Qazaq khans. Our knowledge of the inauguration ritual among the Qazaqs comes mainly from reports by Russians who had traveled to the steppes in various capacities (military personnel, traders, travelers). The Russian government, wishing to bestow honor upon the khan and thereby gain favor in the eyes of the Qazaqs, sent its representatives to every inauguration ceremony since the installation of Nurali Khan in 1749.

Accordingly, the Russian travelers described the cutting of the felt on numerous occasions. During the inauguration of Ablai, khan of the Qazaq Middle Horde, in the year

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149 Abd al-Karīm Bukhārī coined the phrase “playing khans” (khan-bāzī), referring to the constant replacing of khans in Khiva and the way in which they were abused and mistreated (‘Abd al-Karīm Bukhari, text, p. 79; tr., pp. 179-180). See also Bartol’d, “Istoriia kulturnoi zhizni,” p. 274; Firdaws al-īqbaḥ (tr. Bregel), p. 590, n. 401. This is somewhat reminiscent of the position of khans in the court of the Timurids (Barthold, Ulugh-Beg, p. 85). Not only Qazaqs, but also Qaraqalpaqs were summoned (or abducted) to serve as khans in Khiva.

150 The performance of the elevation ceremony among the Qazaqs attracted the attention of Russian scholars over a century ago. See for example, Iudin, “Tseremonal’ya”; Zasedatelev, “Drevni obriad.” Although a recent work by T. Sultanov carries the title Podniatye na beloĭ koshme: potomki Chingiz-khana [Raised on the White Felt: The Descendants of Chinggis Khan], in actuality it does not treat the elevation ceremony, but rather deals with the history of Qazaq khans between 1470-1718. The choice of title is, in fact, instructive for the purpose of this essay since it implies that the identification of the practice with a symbolic legacy of governance is still lingering in Qazaq memory.
1771. Four of the noble elders attending the ceremony lifted him on the white felt. Subsequently, they tore the felt into small bits and divided them among themselves.\footnote{Spasskiï, "Kirgiz-kaïsaki," p. 118.} A similar practice was observed by Levshin (who considered the khan’s election to be “the most peculiar and important ceremony of the Kirghiz-Kazakhs”). Levshin mentioned that, “at the end [of the ceremony], [the participants] tear into small pieces the felt, which served as a throne, and sometimes even the khan’s own vestments, and everyone tries to carry off with him some of these fragments, as a souvenir that he was a participant in the election.”\footnote{Levshin, Opisanie, p. 127.}

Alexander Konstantinovich Geïns, traveling in 1865 in the “Trans-Ural” steppes, made the following comment regarding the same phenomenon: “the felt on which the khan was sitting quickly disappeared, torn into small pieces as each of the participants was trying to get a piece, however insignificant, in order to take home to serve as evidence of his own share in the khan’s election.”\footnote{Geïns, Sobranie, p. 95; N. I. Veselovskiï alluded to these accounts in Veselovskiï, "Perezhitkii," p. 37.}

What was the significance of this custom and where did it come from? It seems that the tearing and distribution of the felt has ancient Inner Asian roots. If we go back to my theory that there was a distinct connection between enthronements and burial practices this may help us discover the source for the custom. In fact, we find in Maḩmūd Kāshgharī’s dictionary (under the term āšūg) that at a grave ceremony the cloth was
spread over the grave of the dead ruler as a symbol of honor, and following the ceremony the cloth would be divided among the poor.\textsuperscript{154}

To Rižā-Quǚ Khan (or to the recorder of Ablai’s inauguration) this was a novelty that required no elaboration. In Rižā-Qu吕布’s narrative, it seems that the right for the pieces of the felt was reserved for each of the participants raising the khan. Similarly, the participants in Ablai’s inauguration divided the torn felt among themselves. Levshin suggested that they kept these pieces as souvenirs or relics, whereas Geĩns described a competition for the pieces, clearly showing that the participants attached great importance to the pieces, perhaps to serve as evidence that they were present at the ceremony (in place of a written document?), perhaps to use as exhibits on special occasions (such as when reciting history), possibly to resolve future claims or maybe to show to their grandchildren. In any case, tearing the felt may have also served as a reminder to everyone present of the elusive and temporal nature of governance, reminding the khan of his fragile (mortal) position, and perhaps – much as was intimated in Simon of Saint-Quentin’s thirteenth-century account – that his political basis of support could easily vanish as well.

The fact that the Khivans seem to have adopted this custom suggests a greater influence of the Qazaq khans than they are credited with. Although there is probably no doubt as to their low standing in Khivan decision-making process, Qazaq impact on matters of protocol and on political conduct may have been greater than is customarily thought.

\textsuperscript{154}I am indebted to Ruth Meserve for the reference to the üӧSites.
CHAPTER 3: THE KÖK-TASH NARRATIVES: AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY INNOVATION?

Travelers to the fabled city of Samarqand will not pass up the opportunity to visit the tomb of Timūr (Tamerlane). In the courtyard of Timūr’s mausoleum (known as the Gur-i Emir) stands a stone of grayish marble, approximately ten feet long, four feet wide and two and a half feet high, decorated with arabesques. A relic of a glorious past, this stone, known as the Kök Tash (Kök means blue, green or gray in Turkic, and Tash means a “stone”), was the great coronation stone of Central Asian rulers ever since it had served as Timūr’s throne. Every coronation ceremony was held here, and only when a new khan was seated upon the Kök Tash did the stone’s supernatural properties make him the legitimate sovereign. At least, this is the general story told in official publications, both in Russian and in Uzbek, narrated by modern-day visitors to Samarqand in their travelogues, described in tourist guidebooks to the region, and repeated by local tour guides.

Having a stone as a component in the ritual of accession to the throne was not unique to the Uzbeks and served many cultures, from the Saxons to the Aztecs. By far the most well-known stone of this kind that comes to mind is the famed Scottish Stone of Destiny, whose origin is still shrouded by a cloud of myth (according to legend, it came from the Holy Land, where the biblical Jacob supposedly used it for his pillow). The

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156 See for example, Thubron, The Lost Heart of Asia, pp. 163-4.

157 In fact, one may visit the “coronation stone” of the tenth-century Saxon kings in Kingston-upon-Thames, one of the royal boroughs of England and Wales, or one may set eyes on the sixteenth-century Aztec coronation stone (known as the Stone of the Five Suns) of Moctezuma (Motecuhzoma) II at the Art Institute of Chicago.
stone resided for centuries in Westminster Abbey in London after the English King Edward I stole it from the Scots seven hundred years ago. It was only recently that the stone was returned to Edinburgh Castle.

The “Coronation Stone” of Samarqand lies in the courtyard of Timūr’s mausoleum, thereby implying that the stone and Timūr are inevitably connected through the physical setting; and Timūr’s legacy, which has endured five hundred years of different dynasties and empires, still survives uninterrupted in modern-day Samarqand. Naturally, the perception of historical continuity always serves someone’s agenda.

However, this was not always the case: The stone was actually relocated to its present position only in the 1950s, and possibly in the early 60s. In addition, there is no mention of the Kök Tash in sources on Timūr and the Timurids, and we have no evidence that Central Asian rulers after the middle of the sixteenth century were ever even coronated in the city of Samarqand, save for the few examples discussed below. Furthermore, most textual records of the post-Timurid dynasties (be they the Shībanids, Ashtarkhanids, or the Manghīts) carry no reference to the stone with the noted exception of four sources that will be introduced shortly. Likewise, the Kök Tash is absent from local histories devoted to Samarqand.¹⁵⁸ (The genre of local histories is rather old in Central Asia, dating back to the ninth century, and typically entailed a somewhat systematic description of sacred places – more often than not, holy men’s burial places – that probably served pilgrims’ needs). The stone is also missing from geographical manuals devoted to de-

¹⁵⁸ Thus, the stone is not mentioned in works by Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Khalīl Samarqandī or Abū Ṭāhir Khoja Samarqandī. See for example, Qandīya va Samarīya (ed. Afshār).
criptions of physical geography, urban environment, monuments, and so forth,\textsuperscript{159} and even from a Central Asian “Mirror for Princes” from the end of the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{160} Outsiders’ reports (travelogues, diaries, mission reports, and so forth) also completely ignore the stone prior to the nineteenth century, when the story of the Kök Tash begins to be mentioned by almost every foreigner visiting the region.

It should be said that, the aim of this chapter is not to simply expose the shortcomings of the story of the Kök Tash – although by now it is already clear that the official story suffers from a few imperfections – but rather to illustrate certain key elements in Central Asian political and cultural history in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries through the story of the stone. In other words, this chapter is not really about this ornamented slab of marble; it is about the relationship between politics and ritual. It is a story of sedition and rebellion and an attempt to add another layer to our understanding of the courtly vision in Central Asia in the eighteenth century.

As we have seen, the centuries-old coronation ceremony of Central Asian rulers was supposedly one in which the new khan was raised on a white felt rug held by the four most important dignitaries of the realm, presumably (at least since the sixteenth century) by the leaders of the four most prominent Uzbek tribes. We have also seen that although the ideal performance of the ceremony according to its prescribed formula was almost never really observed, nevertheless, one of its most enduring features was the fact that all the authors who described the ceremony from the fifteenth century onward emphasized how the men of the court were meticulously following traditions set by Chinggis Khan

\textsuperscript{159} Including the geographical part of the seventeenth-century Bahr al-asrār. See Bahr al-asrār (ed. Akhmedov), where Samarqand (but not the Kök Tash) is discussed on pages 53-55.

\textsuperscript{160} See Dastūr al-mulūk.
and practiced under his descendants. And yet, although local (Central Asian) historians still described the ceremony of the elevation on the felt well into the nineteenth century, a new development in external literature began to take shape. All at once, every foreign visitor to Central Asia in the nineteenth century mentioned a ceremony that complemented the elevation on the felt: this ceremony required the new khan to be seated upon the Kök Tash in Samarqand. This is not the first time that we have such a gap between the external and the internal, indigenous records, a point that we will have to address in our conclusions to this chapter.

I will briefly summarize these travel accounts before describing them in some detail. Nearly all nineteenth-century travelers to Central Asia described a marble stone in Samarqand called the Kök Tash, located in the palace of the Amir inside the city’s citadel. According to their testimonies, the stone served as Timur’s throne in the fourteenth century. After Timur’s death in the year 1405 the stone became the “coronation stone” for Central Asian rulers. As to the actual ritual that was held at the stone, some claimed that merely sitting on the Kök Tash was enough, whereas others combined the elevation on the white felt and the stone: presumably the felt was placed on top of the Kök Tash and the new sovereign was raised up high. Our travelers disagreed on the origin of the Kök Tash: some remarked that the stone was extracted from a nearby mountain with a large concentration of marble; others argued that the marble was brought by Timur himself from Turkey some four hundred and fifty years earlier, and yet others quoted a legend about the apparent fall of the Kök Tash from Heaven. Thus, the stone was endowed with supernatural attributes and, in the words of one traveler, “would not allow a

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161 The citadel (ark) of Samarqand has by now been largely destroyed, and therefore has been less familiar than the citadel of Bukhara.
false Khan, or one not of genuine descent, to approach it.”

The Travelers’ Reports

When Baron Meyendorf, a high officer in the tsarist army, visited Samarqand in 1820 as part of an official embassy from St. Petersburg to Bukhara, he came across a stone of “bluish marble” situated in the madrasa built by Tîmûr’s grandson Ulugh Beg. Meyendorf reported that the khans of Bukhara used to go to Samarqand and sit upon the stone. “A white felt covers this stone,” noted Meyendorf. The khan was raised three times upon this felt, whose corners where held by “the ulammah, the fukara, the fuzala (the ‘doctors’), and the sayyids.”

Such a description implies that the khan was raised solely by religious officials, dervishes, people who traced their descent back to the Prophet Muḥammad and by those directly affiliated with Islamic traditions and institutions, and therefore, raises the notion that Meyendorf may have heard this story in a religious setting, a point we will return to below. Meyendorf added that the stone was taken out of Mount Ghazgham, a mountain east of Samarqand, famous for its concentration of marble, and that the locals had the intention of turning the stone into a throne, presumably for the succeeding rulers of the khanate of Bukhara. The decorated “bluish” marble was mentioned, in fact, by almost all visitors to the region in the nineteenth century. For instance, in 1841 Nikolai Khanykov accompanied a Russian scientific expedition into the region. Khanykov was only 19 years old at the time, but left us one of the most valuable and significant accounts of Central Asia before the Russian conquest. He simply indicated that upon the blue stone “every

\[162\] Meyendorf, Voyage d’Orenbourg à Boukhara, p.160.

\[163\] See “Ghozghon” in Uzbek Soviet Entsiklopediiasi, vol. 14, p. 324; vol. 9, p. 471. This mountain will make a second appearance in our treatment of Tîmûr’s heroic apocrypha.
new khan must absolutely sit down, in order that no doubt may remain as to his title of Amir.” He also indicated that the location of the stone was in the citadel of Samarqand, in the palace of the Amir,\(^\text{164}\) in contrast with Meyendorf, who supposedly saw the stone in Ulugh Beg’s madrasa.

In 1842 Alexander Lehmann, a Russian biologist of German descent, traveled to the region as a member of another Russian expedition that reported back to the Orenburg Boundary Commission. In the words of the editor of Lehmann’s report, “Lehmann visited the graves of several emirs [apparently found in one of the mosques purportedly located in Samarqand’s citadel]... and then mentioned one of Samarqand’s most prominent sights in another mosque in the citadel, namely, a big blue stone (maybe a lapis lazuli) at which the emirs of Bukhara prayed only once, in fact on the occasion of their accession to power.”\(^\text{165}\) Such a claim, again, imbued the stone with a religious meaning. The amirs did not undergo any ceremony at the stone; they simply prayed there in the hope, perhaps, of receiving a blessing. There is no mention of the felt.

Arminius Vámbéry, the Hungarian traveler and member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, arrived in Central Asia in the 1860s from Istanbul with a group of pilgrims, disguised as a dervish. He described the amir’s palace in the ark (citadel) of Samarqand, in which he found the “Talari Timour” or Timūr’s “Reception Hall,” a long, narrow court, surrounded by a covered cloister. The side facing the visitor contained the

\(^{164}\)Khanykov, Bokhara, p. 131.

\(^{165}\)”Lehmann besuchte die Gräber mehrerer Emire, die sich in dieser Moschee befinden, erwähnt dann einer der grössten Merkwürdigkeiten Samarkan’ds in einer andern Moschee der Citadelle, nämlich eines grossen blauen Steins (vielleicht ein Lasurstein) an welchem die Emire von Buchara nur ein Mal und zwar bei ihrem Regierungsantritte beten.” (Lehmann, Reise nach Buchara und Samarkand, pp. 150-51.)
“celebrated Köktash [translated by Vámbéry as the “green stone”], upon which Timour caused his throne to be placed.” Vámbéry continued his dramatic description:

To the stone flocked vassals from all parts of the world to do homage, and were ranged there according to their rank; whilst in the central space, that resembled an arena, three heralds sat ready mounted to convey, on the instant, the words of the conqueror of the world to the farthest end of the hall. As the green stone is four feet and a half high, some prisoner of illustrious birth was always forced to serve as a footstool. It is singular that, according to the tradition, this colossal stone was transported hither from Broussa.\textsuperscript{166}

According to Vámbéry, Timur brought the stone with him from Turkey, after his successful campaign against the Ottomans. As if to prove the stone’s origin in Turkey, Vámbéry noted that,

fixed in the wall to the right of this stone is a prominent oval piece of iron, like half a cocoa-nut; upon it there is an inscription in Arabic, engraved in Kufish letters. It is said to have been brought from the treasury of the Sultan, Bāyazīd Yıldırı̈n [whom Timur had defeated in battle], and to have served one of the Khalifs as an amulet.

Vámbéry added that, “The Emirs, now-a-days, content themselves on their accession with doing homage at the Köktash; and the stone is no longer used but for this purpose, and as a place of pilgrimage for pious Hadjis who say three Fatihas, and rub their heads with peculiar unction upon that monument, whence, once, every word uttered by their glorious monarch echoed as a command to the remotest parts of Asia.”\textsuperscript{167} Again, the religious dimension is stressed.

\textsuperscript{166}Vámbéry refers, of course, to the city of Bursa in Turkey, a well-known source for marble.

\textsuperscript{167}Vámbéry, \textit{Travels in Central Asia}, p. 206. See also the comments about the Köktash by Emil Bretschneider (in Bretschneider, \textit{Medieval Researches from Eastern Asiatic Sources}, vol. II, pp. 268-69, note 1080), who wonders whether Vámbéry ever actually visited Samarqand.
Several years after Vámbéry’s visit, in the 1870s, soon after the khanate of Bukhara was conquered by the Russians, Alexander Pavlovich Khoroshkhin, a Cossack of nobility by birth and a captain in the service of the battalion of the Ural Kossacks who had participated in the conquest of Central Asia, left a report of his impressions of the region. In it, Khoroshkhin mentioned: “we should also note in the citadel the reception hall of the amirs, with the celebrated green stone on which Tīmūr used to sit, and on which, today, the Russian flag is hoisted when the Russian celebrates his holidays.” Khoroshkhin indicated that the original palace was located a few miles away, and commented dryly that this fact “did not prevent Vambery from falling into pathos.”\textsuperscript{168}

Some time later, the great philologist Vasilii Vasil’evich Radlov (also known by his German name Friedrich Wilhelm Radloff) reported that in the citadel towering to the south-east of the city, the amirs “spent several months every summer, and each new amir had to receive his sovereignty. From the exterior, this castle is hardly distinguished among the other houses.” Radlov found no trace of royal luxury in the place, which, by the time of his visit, served as a hospital. The only thing worth mentioning, Radlov maintained, was the “famous Keuk-tach (blue stone). It is upon this stone that the amirs were enthroned. It is located in a large court, in the middle of a well-constructed gallery... This Keuk-tach is an enormous piece of white marble with a number of blue veins, barely visible. It is polished. On the short end a narrow strip of arabesques is tastefully designed.”\textsuperscript{169} Radlov did not speculate about the ceremonies that may have taken place at the stone.


By far, the most elaborate account of the Kök Tash was written by Eugene Schuyler, the American chargé d'affaires in St. Petersburg who visited Samarqand in the early 1870s. He found the stone in the citadel, in the "former palace of the amir." When he arrived there the place had already been converted by the Russians to a military hospital. The Kök Tash was placed on the veranda opposite the entrance. Schuyler described it as "an oblong block of whitish-grey marble, polished at the top, carved in arabesques on the sides, and with small pilasters at the corners." He measured it to be "ten feet four inches long, four feet nine inches wide, and two feet high, without the base of brick and plaster nine inches high, on which it stands." He added that when the Russians entered the citadel they found the decorated slab of hard plaster which formed a back to the stone, giving the appearance of a throne. That piece of plaster had fallen by the time of his visit, and he was able to detect it resting against a wall.

Schuyler was the first to hypothesize about the origin of the name Kök Tash. According to him, the Kök Tash received its name since it must have been inside the main palace in the citadel of Samarqand, a palace famous by the name Kök Saray (Blue Palace) at least in the early sixteenth century. At that time, the citadel housed many royal institutions, such as the armories, the chancery, the prison and two palaces: the Kök Saray and the Bustan Saray. Kök Saray was notorious for the secret murders that took place between its walls during struggles for the throne. The most thorough description of the Kök Saray is found in the memoirs of Bābur, founder of the Mughal empire in India in the sixteenth century. Bābur wrote that,

One of the most magnificent structures Timur Beg had built was the Kok Saray, which is located in the Samarkand citadel. It is a building with amazing properties. All of Timur Beg’s offsprings who raised their heads and sat on the throne sat here. All who lost their heads in quest of the
throne lost it here. To say, ‘They’ve taken the prince to the Kök Saray,’ meant that they had killed him.\footnote{Bābur-nāma (tr. Thackston), p. 74. Kök Saray was already mentioned as the place chosen for the court when Chinggis Khan had conquered the city of Samarqand. (Rashid al-Dīn, p. 248.)}

However, Bābur did not mention the Kök Tash or anything resembling its functions. Timurid historians, it should be noted, also mentioned no similar functions for the Kök Saray. Be that as it may, Soviet scholars such as Galina Pugachenkova, probably the most well-known Soviet art historian of the region, adopted Schuyler’s suggestion and thus it became the accepted explanation.\footnote{As Pugachenkova wrote in the Istoriiia Samarkanda: “In it [i.e., in the Kök Saray] sat the throne: a royal stone called the Kok Tash, on which the khans were raised on a white felt at the time of coronations. Now [i.e., in 1969] it stands in the courtyard of the Gur-i Amir” (Istoriiia Samarkanda, p. 238).}

Schuyler also claimed that the stone served as the foundation stone for Timūr’s throne, and hinted that the elevation on the Kök Tash must have passed into custom since that time. According to a legend that he had heard – Schuyler did not reveal the sources for the legend, or for any of his other claims – the stone had fallen from Heaven, and “would not allow a false Khan, or one not of genuine descent, to approach it.” As an illustration, Schuyler related that when a rebellion was declared against Abu’l-Fayż Khan in 1722, the rebels’ claim was that Abu’l-Fayż never sat on the stone, and therefore, never received formal approval to act as khan.\footnote{Schuyler, Turkistan, p. 255.} After Schuyler, almost all other travelers to the region mentioned the stone, but did not offer any additional or particularly
remarkable details and simply kept the story alive.\textsuperscript{173}

Let us make a few quick observations to sum up the travel accounts.\textsuperscript{174} It is worth noting that our travel records are very diverse, written by Russians, Germans, Hungarians, Americans, and so on, presumably giving it an air of credibility: if so many different sources paint the same picture we are tempted to think it must be true. But we have to remember that travelers often borrowed from each other and frequently relied on previous narratives in order to describe what they saw (or even describe what they did not see). In other words, there is an on-going dialogue among travelers that generates the final picture that we receive. At the same time, some of these descriptions contradict each other, particularly regarding the exact location of the stone or its functions.

In fact, no nineteenth-century traveler to Central Asia who mentioned the ceremonies held at the \textit{Kök Tash} actually attended a coronation ceremony. Secondly, we should be aware that there is a problem regarding the reliability of some of these accounts; for example, it has been proven that some of the travelers never made it as far as Samarqand, even if they described the city in considerable detail. I would suggest that this should not really concern us - the fact that they had heard the story and chose to report it with much vigor is more important for our purpose than whether they had been to Samarqand or not.

\textsuperscript{173}For example, when Henry Lansdell visited the citadel of Samarqand about a decade later, he only repeated that in the “reception hall of the Emir of Bukhara,” was the “ancient \textit{koktash}, or coronation stone of Tamerlane.” (Lansdell, \textit{Russian Central Asia}, pp. 577-579.)

\textsuperscript{174}For the purpose of this work I define “travel accounts” as any encounter with a foreign culture in its own territory.
In addition to the Western travelers, the Kök Tash’s fame spread rapidly and reached even the remote Kirghiz. In an epic poem recorded in the 1860s and dedicated to commemorate the memorial feast for Kökötöy Khan, the Kök Tash – not the famous landmarks of Samarqand – is mentioned as the most evident designation (almost an appellation) for Samarqand. The text uses twice the same pattern of reference:

Dedi din musulman barısı
Samarkandınıñ Kök-taśın
közdęp sürdü, dedi.¹⁷⁵

Then again,

Musulmannıñ barısı
Samarkandınıñ Kök-taśın
karap ele sürüptü.¹⁷⁶

The Kirghiz were never associated with Samarqand. In fact, they were far removed from the city and probably heard of the stone from the Qazaqs, who were heavily involved in Samarqand politics in the eighteenth century. Still, why would they choose the stone as a point of reference or as a literary topos, is a mystery.

Before we move on to discuss the Blue Stone’s appearance in the indigenous sources we should caution the reader not to confuse the Kök Tash with another famous stone in Samarqand, located inside Timur’s mausoleum. This is, of course, the enormous piece of jade that serves as the tombstone on Timur’s grave. At first it was assumed that the Kök Tash was actually one and the same as the famous jade, which, for the casual observer, would seem rather obvious given the descriptions of its color and its association with Timur in the written records. The story goes that Ulugh Beg, Timur’s grandson, had

¹⁷⁵“Then all those of the Muslim faith raced towards the Blue Stone of Samarqand.” See Hatto, The Memorial Feast for Kökötöy-Khan, text, p. 54, tr. p. 55.

¹⁷⁶“All the Muslims raced towards the Blue Stone of Samarqand.” Ibid., text, p. 58, tr. p. 59.
brought three stones to Samarqand from his campaigns into Moghulistan in the 1420s. One of these stones was a long piece of jade which was used as the tombstone for Timūr’s grave. When Nādir Shāh, the Turkmen emperor of Persia, invaded Central Asia in 1740 he heard that the tombstone was a great curiosity and decided to remove the stone and take it back to Persia to the holy city of Mashhad. On the way the stone broke into four parts and Nādir Shāh decided to return it to Samarqand.177

The great Russian orientalist Bartol’d was the first to suggest that the two stones (the Kök Tash and Timūr’s tombstone) were indeed one and the same,178 but he retracted his statement after re-reading the works of the historians Mīrkhwānd and ‘Abd al-Razzāq Samarqandī.179 Clearly, the two stones were very different and served different purposes. It is also important to note at this point, that other than Bartol’d, the Kök Tash received no scholarly treatment whatsoever.

As mentioned, there is no word about the Kök Tash in any of the Timurid sources. In addition, there is no reference to the Kök Tash in any of the major sources from the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries that I have consulted. So, where are the references to the stone in indigenous sources, and what can we make of them?

The first reference to the Kök Tash appears in the ‘Ubaydallāh-nāma – a work in Persian written by Muḥammad Amīn Bukhari, who describes, among other things, the

177 See ‘Abd al-Karīm Kashmīrī, p. 44.

178 Barthold, History of the Semirechye, p. 146. Bartol’d identified the stone with one of the stones that Ulugh Beg had brought back with him from a place called Qarshi (in Moghulistan) after his a successful campaign in Semireche in 1425.

circumstances surrounding the coronation of ʿUbaydallāh Khan in the year 1702. The second mention comes in the Tārīkh-i Abuʾl-Fayż Khan, authored by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ṭāliʿ, a work which also documents the well-known rebellion of 1722, where the Kök Tash played a significant role. The third indication is from a much later source which refers to a much later coronation - that of Muẓaffar al-Dīn, Amir of Bukhara from 1860. In these three instances, men of prominence have taken it upon themselves to perform the enthronement ceremony at the Kök Tash. The question is why, since no one else seems to have done it before.

In order to solve the mystery, we should go back to the late seventeenth century and the political conditions in the khanate of Bukhara before and after the death of Subḥān-Qulī Khan, ruler of Bukhara and Balkh. We have already described the conditions in the region in that period. From the late seventeenth century, the city of Samarqand became the cradle of rebellion and the center for anti-“government” sentiments. It began with two or three invasions by Anūsha, Khan of Khorezm, into Mawarannahr (the central lands of the khanate of Bukhara) in the 1680s, invasions solicited by Samarqand’s governor and his faction. Only with great difficulty did Subḥān-Qulī Khan of Bukhara manage to fend them off. Then, even before Subḥān-Qulī Khan died, a competition for his soon-to-be inherited throne began. His younger son, ʿUbaydallāh, emerged as winner, and was enthroned in Bukhara (not in Samarqand) in the “traditional” elevation ceremony on the white felt. However, after a while, a group of Amirs approached him and explained that,

The kings of Turan, and especially the noble ancestors of Your Majesty, would first set off to Samarqand, which is one of the cities built by Alexander, to sit on the Kök Tash, and thereby reassure all the neighboring tribes and peoples (uluses).
Then the author explains that since ‘Ubaydallāh realized that at the time Samarqand was occupied by (other) Uzbek tribes, going to the Kök Tash would actually be a good idea. Then they set out to Samarqand, and ‘Ubaydallāh sat on the Kök Tash, as the amirs and clergy of Samarqand and Bukhara knelt before him.  

The second episode relating to the Kök Tash comes some twenty years later, in the year 1722, when Samarqand again became a center for a rebellion against Abu’l-Fayţ, Khan of Bukhara. The leader of the rebellion was the chief of the Uzbek Keneges tribe, who decided to enthrone Rajab Sulţān, cousin of Shīr Ghāzī, Khan of Khiva, in place of Abu’l-Fayţ. The rebels gathered in Samarqand, and, in the words of the historian, they “seated him [Rajab Sulţān], as khan, upon the gray stone, which had served as a seat for fortunate sultans and powerful sovereigns... [Then] this bloodthirsty and impudent mob raised him (Rajab Sulţān), according to Chinggisid custom, upon the white felt.”

A third account on the Kök Tash concerns the coronation of Amir Muţaffar in 1860. According to ‘Avāţ Muţammad, historian of Qoqand (in a work entitled Jahān-numā), after the death of Amir Naşrallāh, representatives from the Uzbek tribe of Khitay-Qipchaq – a tribe notorious in the sources for its rebellions earlier in the century – came to the governor of Samarqand and told him: “You know we have caused trouble to Emir

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180 ‘Ubaydallāh-nāma (tr. Semenov), pp. 53-55.

181 This is the episode that Schuyler had mentioned.

182 “Seryi kamen’.” Semenov (who translated this account) indicated in a footnote that it was the “well-known” Kök Tash, but did not elaborate.

Muḥaffar’s father and grandfather [referring to Ḥaydar and Naṣrallāh], but now we have come to congratulate him and become his subjects.” Samarqand’s governor invested them with robes of honor, and delivered their words to Muḥaffar. Upon hearing these words, Muḥaffar immediately hurried to Samarqand and was enthroned at the Kök Tash.¹⁸⁴

All three accounts demonstrate the helplessness of the rulers.¹⁸⁵ In two accounts there is an explanation of the political pilgrimage to Samarqand, and one is simply a narrative of rebellion. One ruler, ʿUbaydallāh, understands that it is the wise political thing to do. Another, Muḥaffar, needs an implied threat to help him understand that he needs to go to Samarqand (assuming that we believe this source, which was fairly hostile to Muḥaffar), and during Abu’l-Fayż Khan’s tenure, the rebellion is already under way.

It is more interesting for our purpose to see how the authors explain the existence of the Kök Tash and its function. On the one hand, the stone seems to be a known artifact: since the authors do not bother explaining to the reader what the Kök Tash is, they probably assume the reader knows. On the other hand, our authors are puzzled (or at least pretend to be). The tradition of coronations at the Kök Tash does not seem to originate from a particular source of inspiration, which is highly unusual: ritual, in general, and certainly in Central Asia, needed to be anchored in some respectable tradition of days

¹⁸⁴Quoted in Ivanov, Vosstanie Kitaï-Kipchakov v Bukharskom khanstve, p. 80.

¹⁸⁵It should be noted that I am still missing at least one source that refers to the Kök Tash: Vyatkin mentioned a letter written by Amir Ḥaydar in which he records a visit to Samarqand to be enthroned, “according to custom,” on the Kök Tash. Vyatkin did not give any specific reference to the letter or its whereabouts. (See Vyatkin, “Karshinskiĭ okrug,” p. 9.) Another source that mentions the stone is the Tārīkh-i Khumūlī, a work completed towards the middle of the nineteenth century, in which the author seems to have conflated the story of the Kök Tash with the more well-known story of the cenotaph on Timūr’s tomb (see Tārīkh-i Khumūlī, ff. 272a-273b). I am indebted to Anke von Kügelgen for making the relevant folios of the Tārīkh-i Khumūlī available for this study.
past (even if this constituted a basis for change). Therefore, our authors fumble when trying to describe it. It seems that the author of the \textit{Ubaydollāh-nāma} would suffice with having his master and patron go through the elevation ceremony in Bukhara. Since ‘Ubaydollāh seems to surrender to a demand, our author has to describe it in some fashion that would give his patron an honorable way out; he therefore says that Samarqand was one of the cities built by Alexander. It is clear, however, that only when his amirs told him that he had to appease the Samarqand constituency, was ‘Ubaydollāh willing to go there, probably without much choice. In the case of the rebellion against Abu’l-Fayż Khan, the author is furious with the rebels, not for having gone to the \textit{Kök Tash}, but for having performed the elevation ceremony. It is worth mentioning that the elevation on the white felt is clearly expressed as a Chinggisid custom, but the sitting on the \textit{Kök Tash} is left unexplained. It is also plausible to assume that the felt had been placed on the stone, although ‘Abd al-Rahmān Tālī did not specifically state it.

To conclude, the \textit{Kök Tash} began to play a role in the political life of Central Asia only in the eighteenth century, although the stone itself was probably there before. However, unless some new evidence shows up, we have no way of knowing where the \textit{Kök Tash} originated, and what its role was before the eighteenth century.\footnote{Architecturally, the stone does seem to have functioned as a supporting stone, perhaps even as the basis for a throne. In the audience hall in the citadel of Bukhara today one may observe a very similar stone, although smaller in size (but with comparable ornamentation) as the base of the khan’s throne.} It is fairly clear that Samarqand gradually lost its place of honor as the capital of the state after the fall of the Timurids, to be almost entirely neglected after the middle of the sixteenth century.

\footnote{We will expand on this point below, in our description of Muḥammad Raḥīm Khan’s inauguration.}
with the rise of both the clergy of Bukhara (I am referring, of course, to the Jüybārī Shaykhs) on the one hand, and the house of Jānī Beg (under ʿAbdallāh Khan) on the other.

Although Central Asia, under different regimes, suffered from political instability and rebellions, the area of Miyankal, between Bukhara and Samarkand, produced one of the most serious threats to the central authority. The city of Samarqand was conveniently located close to Miyankal, and with an established status as a former capital also possessed, so it seems, a physically inspiring symbol in the image of the Kök Tash. The early eighteenth century provided a chance for Samarqand to play a pivotal role as the alternative to central power. In addition to the invasions of the late seventeenth century, the unrest of the early eighteenth century, and the 1722 rebellion, we may add another major uprising that took place toward the end of Abuʾl-Fayż Khan’s rule, in 1745, in the same region.188 This revolt was crushed by a relatively new force in Central Asian politics - Muḥammad Raḥīm Khan of the Mangḥīts in command of a regiment of mostly Persians and Afghans of Nādir Shāh’s army. Under the early Mangḥīts there was a bit less room for rebellion. Muḥammad Raḥīm then proclaimed himself khan in an elaborate elevation ceremony in Bukhara.

The appearance of the Kök Tash story in the eighteenth century may have also encouraged the emergence from the ashes of history of Tīmūr. As we will see in the second half of this work, after nearly two hundred years of relative silence on the part of Central Asian historical sources, suddenly Tīmūr came to life. Large works of literature were dedicated to him, the Mangḥīts of Bukhara made political pilgrimages to Tīmūr’s Aq

188This time led by ʿĪbādallāh Biy, and also supported by the Khitay-Qipchaq tribes from the region of Miyankal.
Saray palace in Shahr-i Sabz after they conquered the city; the Ming dynasty in Qoqand traced its origins to Tīmūr. The *Kök Tash* narratives may well fall into this attempt at revival, with the evident connection between Tīmūr and Samarqand, his old capital, and the potential appeal of Tīmūr for the tribal chieftains – after all, Tīmūr himself was one. Clearly, the process of decline and crisis that we had described in the introduction to this work may have even encouraged the emergence of new or old forces, and probably contributed to the re-surfacing of the Timurid ideal.

The foreign travelers who flooded the region in the nineteenth century – and who usually did not reveal their sources – began hearing of these local traditions in Samarqand and they translated them into a more comprehensive narrative. This may have facilitated the turning of a story of rebellion (which is probably what the *Kök Tash* story was, at least in the beginning) into official dogma, and when in the 1940s important Soviet scholars as Andreev and Chekhovich wrote their invaluable book about the citadel of Bukhara, they concluded, without bringing any proof, that the Manghit amirs sought a special stone for the Amir’s throne in Bukhara because they were “greatly embarrassed” by the *Kök Tash* in Samarqand.\(^\text{189}\) What is interesting is that the idea to simply go to Samarqand and seize the stone by force, never occurred to any of the Bukharan amirs, even at the height of their power.

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\(^{189}\) Andreev – Chekhovich, *Ark*, p. 43.
Conclusions to Part I: The Courtly Vision in the 18th Century

Central Asia maintained a long tradition of the elevation ceremony that was central to the idea of political power, legitimacy of rule and the representation of the khan’s authority and the court’s prestige. From the sixteenth through the nineteenth century, Central Asian authors identified the elevation ceremony with an enduring legacy that Chinggis Khan had supposedly bequeathed, and which was supposedly codified (whether orally or in written form) in the yasa. From the perspective of these later authors, the Mongol period served as the point of origin for the elevation ritual. Whereas in a previous publication on this issue my aim was to show the fluid nature of the ritual over the centuries, in the present context I would emphasize the introduction of the new perception in the eighteenth century and its distinction from earlier visions.

Under Mongol rule Muslim authors were provided with new stimuli for literary production, and yet, these authors were still struggling to define their attitude towards their new conquerors, to establish the limits of critique of their new patrons, and to settle apparent differences between sharī’ā-sanctioned customs and yasa-sanctioned ones. Part of the ambiguity of the Muslim dialogue with this particular tradition may have been generated by the lack of prescription for an alternative inauguration ritual in the Islamic world, which made it more difficult to counter the lawfulness of the practice. However, this deliberation of the Muslim authors with their subject matter was probably not the reason for the elevation ceremony’s absence from Mongol-sponsored sources. The Mongol courtly vision displayed an exclusively Chinggisid ritual, in direct contrast with the accounts of the visitors to the Mongol courts who provided vivid descriptions of the elevation of the new khan on black felt by the most important dignitaries of the realm.
Our sources also allude to a change in the number of people needed to raise the new khan, a shift from a ceremony that required seven felt-bearers to one that involved four. This change may tie in with the growing importance (already in the thirteenth century) of the office of the four amirs. Yet the strengthening of the amirs' position may have also yielded an intentional suppression of their role in the written records of the ceremony, perhaps an outcome of an unstated alliance between khans and viziers, between patrons and their representatives, aimed at countering the amirs' influence.

The gap between internal and external sources persisted through the Timurid period. Because Tīmūr yielded to the significance of the Chinggisid ideal (perhaps due to his own conviction, perhaps because the amirs were pressing for the appointment and keeping of Chinggisid khans), he was neither raised on the felt nor assumed the title "khan." At the same time, official Timurid historiography did not record an elevation ceremony for the khans that Tīmūr had appointed (again, contrary to external testimonies).

In the post-Timurid era, we notice the emergence of the Islamic dimensions of the ritual through the participation of the ʿulamāʾ and through the Islamization of artifacts (and possibly the minimizing of women’s role in the ceremony). The fusion of the sharīʿa- and the yasa-sanctioned traditions is becoming more evident in the texts as well. In time, authors seem to have a fairly clear-cut, formulaic vision of the ceremony’s procedure and of the sanction for its performance. Their idealized description centers on the figure of the khan being raised on a white piece of felt by four felt-bearers who were the leaders of the four most prominent tribes in the realm. This practice was inspired, at least
in rhetoric, by the authority of Chinggis Khan’s laws, although the active support of the Islamic establishment was being solicited.

Although the idealized descriptions of the ritual were kept, the picture of the ceremony in the eighteenth century begins to shift and change – first with the Kök Tash narratives, and then with the rise of the Tribal Dynasties. The study of the changing perceptions of governance in the eighteenth century is only beginning. The Kök Tash accounts and the emergence of the Timurid ideal[^90] are yet to be fully explored and integrated into the larger picture of Central Asian political and cultural history in the early modern period. However, we may safely say that the eighteenth century proved to be a period of political transition when a political vacuum led to alternative rituals and, at the same time, to the appropriation of the elevation ceremony itself by tribal aspirations. The Kök Tash narratives are problematic, as far as the courtly vision is concerned, but they are almost a natural development in an age that experienced fierce competition for power. The Kök Tash coerced the court to an exercise of power that the court did not desire. As far as the court was concerned, the Kök Tash was not a part of what it imagined itself to be. The writers would seemingly prefer not to report about the stone, but in effect they were compelled to, and did so reluctantly. They probably felt that the Kök Tash was somehow connected with an alternative for the power that they represented, and so they evaded an explanation of the stone’s heritage and significance. They did not even try to

[^90]: This is expressed through the potential association of Tīmūr’s old capital of Samarqand with growing tribal aspirations in the wake of Abu’l-Fayż Khan’s rule, articulated in the Manghīts’ political pilgrimage to Tīmūr’s Aq Saray palace in Shahr-i Sabz and in the growing literary production surrounding Tīmūr’s figure that is the basis for the second half of this dissertation.
tie it to the Timurid ideal, probably because they wanted to divorce themselves from the Timurid ideal. Interestingly, although Tīmūr (or what he represented) could have been appropriated by the tribal chieftains as the prime example of tribal power, our writers did not wish to do so possibly for the following reasons. First, Tīmūr’s legacy had been downplayed over the centuries;\textsuperscript{191} secondly, Tīmūr was connected with Samarqand, whereas the khan’s (and the Manghīt amirs that followed) seat of power was in Bukhara. And thirdly, Tīmūr (with all his power) never transcended the two fundamental barriers for the tribal chieftains: the elevation on the white felt and the taking on of the title “khan.” Muḥammad Raḥīm, the new Manghīt ruler and the forbearer of the tribal “revolution” in Central Asia in the eighteenth century, had a completely different agenda before him, one in which he would manage to combine all the attributes of kingship.

The picture that we can draw of the actual performance of the ceremony from the description of Muḥammad Raḥīm Khan’s elevation in the Tuhfat al-khānī is more complex. The “tribal” nature of the new Central Asian dynasties in the eighteenth century required a new form of legitimation (or rather, an old form of legitimation in a new garb), and Muḥammad Raḥīm’s negotiation of his status through the evocation of Islamic and Mongol legacies is a fine example. Thus, the Tuhfat al-khānī offers a rather developed narrative, which displays Central Asia’s unique textual legacy. Although the ritual seemed to represent the continuity of a tradition, in reality it was exhibiting many changes, not only in the identity of the elevated monarch, but also in the functions of the various constituencies belonging, in one way or another, to the court.

\textsuperscript{191}See below when we discuss Tīmūr’s eighteenth-century revival.
Again, the figure of Timur was not evoked even once in the description of the ceremony, although he and the Manghit leader shared many characteristics. Why was not Timur an ideal and official source of inspiration for Muhammad Rahim? After all (and as we will see in the second half of this study), Timur became a very potent and popular symbol for Central Asians, already in the first half of the eighteenth century. Having him as a model of conduct would surely encourage the people to receive Muhammad Rahim more peacefully or even enthusiastically. The simple answer is that the ceremony was not staged for the population—it existed for the elite, for the “court society,” both in its actual performance and in the type of literature in which it was recorded. For the amirs the status of Muhammad Rahim may not have been so different than Timur’s. They may have still believed that a Chinggisid should be in the khan’s position and absolve them from competition for the khanship, but the amirs’ significance became less important (or so the chronicle would have us believe). With the exception of their formulaic mention as part of the ideal tradition, in reality (and paradoxically) the ceremony diminished the role of the four felt-bearers among the host of characters raising the khan, most particularly the Muslim dignitaries. This may echo the Mongol period, where the role of the four amirs may have also been suppressed by an understanding between patrons and writers (but without the participation of representatives of the religious establishment).

In any case, the amirs could not compete with Muhammad Rahim’s military success and charisma. As for the ulamāʾ, they did not care whether he was a Chinggisid or not—for them legitimation was measured on a different scale. The kingmakers in the official accounts were not Sufis (who will become remarkably important when we discuss the popular vision). The kingmakers were the chosen ruler and the ulamāʾ. Indeed, the latter
served as the sole interpreters of the law, and those who, together with the man in power, also determined the fate of the state.

The understanding was that there needed to be a strong ruler who would hold the “reigns of the affairs of mankind” (to quote Muḥammad Raḥīm) and who would be supported by a strong Islamic establishment. Thus, both would operate for the common good. What is equally important is that both the ruler and the Muslim dignitaries had a common distaste for the ancien regime. As the author of Tuhfat al-khānī emphatically described: “for an [entire] generation they (the Janids) recited a worthless khuṭba in the name of Abu’l-Fayz Khan. During his reign all kinds of corruption appeared from every corner of the kingdom, to the extent that in most of the regions and cities and areas of this country not a soul was to be found.” Muḥammad Raḥīm and his trusted allies were the only ones who could restore the country to its glorious past. Not to the days of Tīmūr, of course, but to the past of Chinggis Khan, and more importantly, of Muḥammad Shībānī Khan. This restoration apparently could be achieved without having a Chinggisid on the throne.
PART II: THE POPULAR VISION: TĪMŪR’S HEROIC APOCRYPHA

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCING TĪMŪR’S HEROIC APOCRYPHA

1. 1 Context of the Genre in Central Asian Studies.

The veneration of Tīmūr, Uzbekistan’s national hero whose statues have replaced those of Soviet champions in the squares of the young republic’s towns, immediately attracted the attention of many visitors, scholars and commentators. These observers were quick to recognize the significance of the impressive new monuments, not to mention the roads, parks and subway station named after him, as well as museums, funds and medals, portraits, films, novels, plays, the publication in Uzbek translation of most of the sources that deal with Tīmūr culminating in the colossal celebration of the 660th anniversary of his birth, and promptly evaluated them within the framework of new (or rather, old) insights into questions of national identity and related issues. In short, all the rhetoric of theory now found a new target and the so-called “cult” of Tīmūr rapidly multiplied its audience.192

Some Western scholars rebuked the choice of Tīmūr for a national symbol – such a symbol should not have been a “ruthless” and “cruel” leader, who “encouraged military solutions” to everyday problems, and so on and so forth193 – but at the same time they acknowledged with a sympathetic nod that this was simply another characteristic of nation-building. The only continuity with Central Asia’s past that these analysts discov-


193 See for example Critchlow, “Uzbekistan’s Prospects,” p. 4.
erected was what seemed to them to be a succession and justification of the authoritarian state, demonstrated, in this case, within the context of post-Soviet power-worship. President Karimov is merely a contemporary mirror image of Tīmūr, assuring Uzbekistan's populace that Tīmūr's perceived legacy of governance is the right path to follow.

Students of Central Asian history (or anyone else with an interest in the region) usually learn of Tīmūr in the context of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries or that of the late twentieth century. Indeed, we seem to be under the impression that after his death in the year 1405 and the demise of his house approximately a century later, Tīmūr virtually disappeared from Central Asia for nearly five hundred years and found his prominence elsewhere: in Mughal India,¹⁹⁴ in Iran,¹⁹⁵ and even in Europe.¹⁹⁶ Attempts to study Tīmūr's legacy in Central Asia itself were not very productive due to scholars' unfamiliarity with the Central Asian sources of the post-Timurid era.¹⁹⁷ The end result is that we do not learn about Tīmūr in a Central Asian context from the sixteenth until the twentieth century. Only then - according to modern scholarship - and more particularly in the 1910s and 1920s did Tīmūr receive some attention as various cultural groups were named

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¹⁹⁴See for example, Habib, “Timur in the Political Tradition and Historiography of Mughal India.” Of course, one of the most noteworthy of Tīmūr’s “legacies” was his (fabricated) autobiography, presented to the emperor Shāh Jahān (1628-1637). (See Malfuzat Timury.)


¹⁹⁷See for example, Dale, “The Legacy of the Timurids.” Even an accomplished authority on Tīmūr as Beatrice Manz neglected to mention almost all of the Tīmūr-related developments in sixteenth-nineteenth century Central Asia in her recent, otherwise useful survey of Tīmūr’s legacy (see Manz, “Tamerlane’s Career”).
after him, and poets and playwrights wrote dramas appealing to Timūr to “restore Turkestan’s greatness.” With the breakdown of the Soviet Union, as noted above, Timūr and Timurid legacy played a significant role in shaping Uzbek national consciousness and in the construction of Uzbekistan’s national mythology.

Therefore, the reader may be surprised to learn that Timūr’s rebirth is neither a Soviet phenomenon, nor a post-Soviet curiosity, but rather an old tradition that has been evoked at every juncture of political uncertainty, at least since the eighteenth century, and that has been serving Central Asian communities for generations. This part of the dissertation aims at introducing Timūr’s revival in the eighteenth century and his legacy during the centuries of proposed silence by looking at “his” textual heritage – the Kunūz al-ṣam.

We have seen already in the first part of this work some of the possible aspects that may be connected with Timūr’s eighteenth-century recovery, such as the Kök Tash narratives and the attempt to turn Samarqand into an alternative center of power to Bukhara, or other Timūr-related exploits of the Manghīts and of their rival tribal groups. To this we should add the development of the story of the Golden Cradle (Altun Beshik) by the Uzbek tribal dynasty of the Mings (centered in Qoqand in the eighteenth and nine-


199 Subtelny, “The Timurid Legacy,” pp. 14-17. The Timurid legacy was much more highly regarded than the Shībanid one, partly because of evident Timurid “presence” (in the form of existing artifacts, impressive architecture and so forth), and because of the Shībanids’ late arrival into the region and the Soviets’ wish to confer upon the Uzbeks more “glorious” ancestors. Subtelny suggests that the nomadic character associated with the Shībanids made them unpopular and somewhat inferior to the sedentary population in Soviet eyes (see Subtelny, “The Timurid Legacy”).
teenth centuries) as a focal point of legitimation to their rulership. According to the story, Bābur left a son in a golden cradle before he fled Fergana to India. The son, aptly named after the container in which he was left, was recovered by the Uzbek Mings and was gradually regarded as their great progenitor. Such a story helped legitimize Ming rule in Qoqand through the natural association of Bābur with Tīmūr. To this array of eighteenth-century, Tīmūr-related developments we may even add the attempts by historians of Khiva, the third khanate in the Central Asia (under the tribal dynasty of the Qongrats) to embrace and even emulate Timurid historiography and Timurid modes of legitimation. All these aspects, and especially what follows below, emphasize that the sources of inspiration for Central Asian society went beyond what is customarily thought of as shari‘a vs. yasa.

In this chapter I wish to draw the reader’s attention to the noticeable surge in literary production surrounding Tīmūr’s figure in the early eighteenth century and the development of Tīmūr’s “heroic apocrypha,” a narrative-cycle consisting of long, mostly imaginary biographies of Tīmūr, chronologically ordered from his birth to his death. In general, these works are fictional; events oscillate between fact and fiction rather effortlessly, and – for many characters featured in these stories – also journey freely through time: various “facts” and figures who have found their way into the narratives are sometimes simply made-up or anachronistic. These matters caused the very few scholars who

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201 See Bregel, “Tribal Tradition and Dynastic History,” pp. 392-397.
were aware of fragments of these stories to dismiss them as simple legends. However, as I hope to demonstrate, these works greatly underscore the turning point of the eighteenth century in Central Asian history, and support our more general premise that this period of transformation yielded a new vision for Central Asia. In an atmosphere marked by uncertainty and anxiety, generated by various political, economic and cultural breakdowns, new models for imitation were sought, old relics were given new meanings, ancient heroes were evoked. One such forgotten hero had been resting in his grave for over three centuries and was now ready to be awakened.

When the armies of Muḥammad Shībānī Khan swept across Mawarannahr early in the sixteenth century, they defeated the ailing state of the Timurids, vanquished their allies and absorbed their memory. For two hundred years the Shībanids and their successors, the Ashtarkhanids, cultivated a historiography that naturally aimed at securing their own place on the world stage, and downplaying the significance of their predecessors. Tīmūr’s reputation could not be ignored, of course, but sponsorship of literary production and other cultural activities concerning his memory, and examples of championing him as a protagonist in his own right, were scarce. Even his monuments did not experience any particular developments in this era.  

202 See for example, McChesney’s treatment of the Gur-i Amir, Tīmūr’s mausoleum, and the little attention it received from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. (See McChesney, “Timur’s Tomb.”)
were no literary works produced in Central Asia that were centered directly on Timūr’s character, and his legacy seems to have been put aside.\footnote{This does not mean that there was a complete break from the Timurids. Naturally, Timurid artisans, scholars and artists still enjoyed Shībanid patronage, and some other Timurid-related practices of taxation or administration still survived, but the Shībanids did not perceive themselves to be an “extension” of the Timurid dynasty – quite the contrary.}

What sparked my own interest in Timūr’s apparent eighteenth-century revival were two large (on average 400-500 pages long), unstudied manuscripts that I had originally used for a different purpose. The works in question were produced, more or less at the same time, in the early eighteenth century. One work in Persian, titled Kunūz al-aʾzam, was compiled in Bukhara by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Sīrat,\footnote{See Kunūz al-aʾzam.} and the other work, in Chaghatay Turkic, titled Dāstān-i Amīr Tīmūr, was compiled in Khiva by Sayyid Muḥammad Khoja b. Jaʿfar Khoja.\footnote{See Dāstān-i Amīr Tīmūr (and the description of the manuscript in SVR, I, 206). Dāstān-i Amīr Tīmūr was written during the time of Sayyid Yadigar Muḥammad Bahādur Khan of Khiva (enthroned in June 1712). See also Hofman, Turkish Literature, vol. IV, p. 170; Zettersteet, Die arabischen, persischen und türkischen Handschriften, vol. I, p. 382 (entry no. 563); Firdaws al-īqābī (tr. Bregel), p. 568, note 285. See also the short comment by Devin DeWeese in DeWeese, “Descendants,” p. 626, note 76.} Both works are dedicated in their entirety to Timūr, and seem to belong to the genre of Timūr’s heroic apocrypha that will occupy the rest of this part. They are neither a fraction of a larger, general history, nor a section of a history dedicated to the Timurids. They are devoted solely to a partly fantastic, partly historical, perhaps didactic retelling of Timūr’s life and adventures from his birth to his decease, through his various campaigns against Turkey, the Golden Horde and India, even his plans to invade China. The works conduct us through deeds of conquest, embassies,
marriages, Tīmūr’s enthronement and his demise. One of the most impressive stories deals with Tīmūr’s rise to power and his ascension to the throne, a fulfillment of an ancient letter of prophecy, written in Uighur, and delivered to Tīmūr by none other than a two hundred-year-old albino woman, who was given the letter by the great early thirteenth-century Shaykh Najm al-Dīn Kubrā.

Some of the content of these works, as the compilers themselves acknowledged, was taken from previous historians of the Timurids (the likes of Ḥāfiz-i Abrū, Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAli Yazdī, ʿAbd al-Razzāq Samarqandī, Mīrkhwānd and others), but nearly all of the stories that appear in these manuscripts – like the story of the prophecy - seem to be original contributions that possibly also relied on oral traditions. Among them are anecdotes concerning Tīmūr’s associations with holy men, such as Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband, Sayyid Ata, Shaykh Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī and many others (even the Prophet himself), or with prominent figures from days long gone, such as Alexander the Great or the eleventh-century philosopher and poet Ṣāṣir-i Khusraw. We will discuss these features in the next chapter.

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206 It is still too early to comment on the similarities and differences between the works. One need not rule out that both works had a common model (although they do not attest to one), but the exact relationship between them is still unclear to me at present.

207 See the full translation of the story below.
1.2 The History of the Genre.

According to Storey–Bregel,208 ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Sīrat wrote a work titled Kunūz al-aʿzām (this title is mentioned in one of the manuscripts kept in St. Petersburg) during the early reign of the Ashtarkhanid ruler, Abu’l Fayż Khan (r. 1711–1747).209 The work was supposed to have had two parts, the first from Tīmūr’s birth to the Shībanid ruler ʿAbdallāh Khan, and the second – from ʿAbdallāh Khan down to the author’s time.210 However, all the manuscripts contain only the life of Tīmūr (which leads Bregel to assume that the second part was never actually written), and the introduction to the works that I consulted does not betray any intention to write about anything else.

It is difficult to assess how many manuscripts of the work still exist, partly because the manuscripts are catalogued under many different titles such as Kunūz al-aʿzām, Tīmūr-nāma, Tārīkh-i Ṣaḥīb-qirān, Tārīkh-i Tīmūrī, Tārīkh-i Ṣaḥīb-qirān Amīr Tīmūr Gurgān and so on, and there seem to be as many manuscripts in Turkic as there are in Persian. Apparently, there are at least five Persian manuscripts in Tashkent, six in St. Petersburg, probably six in Dushanbe, and a couple in Europe (namely, in Berlin and in Budapest).211 As noted, there seems to be an equal number of renderings of the work in

208 Storey-Bregel, pp. 812-815.
209 In fact, the author notes that “in the year 1122 (1711) Abu’l Fayż Muḥammad Bahādur Khan was established upon the throne of the sultanate of Bukhara. In the year 1124 (1713), two years after the khan’s enthronement, this work was composed.” (Kunūz al-aʿzām, p. 17).
210 This, at least, is what we read in a short excerpt from the introduction to a manuscript entitled Kunūz al-aʿzām that was made available to Zeki Velidi Togan during his visit to Shahr-i Sabz in 1914. See Validov, “O sobraniiaakh rukopisei v Bukharskom khanstve,” p. 246.
211 There are probably more manuscripts that I have failed to mention. Most of the Persian manuscripts are cited in Storey-Bregel. For descriptions of the manuscripts in Dushanbe
Turkic, and I would not be surprised if more showed up.\textsuperscript{212} The quantity of manuscripts and their diversity suggests that the \textit{Kunûz al-a'зам}, in its many renderings, enjoyed a forceful presence in Central Asian literature that began in the early eighteenth century and has maintained a high degree of popularity through the nineteenth century. The work, as we will see shortly, has also been circulating in Central Asia throughout the twentieth century.

Since the \textit{Kunûz al-a'зам}, in its numerous copies, was generally ignored by modern scholarship, the only description of the work is found in the catalogues of manuscripts. The primary goal of the cataloger was to establish (or verify) the essential information about each manuscript, including authorship, date and location of authorship, the very basic structure of the work, informative details given in the introduction to the work, and various technical details (size and type of paper, type of ink, number of folios, date and location of copying, identity of the scribe, type of script etc.). The most elaborate description of the \textit{Kunûz al-a'зам} was provided by Miklukho-Maklaï in the volume

\footnotesize{(formerly Stalinabad) see Mirzoev – Boldyrev, items 51-55. The manuscripts are dated from the 19\textsuperscript{th} century to as late as 1906, and the number of folios in each ranges from 266 to 391. For the manuscripts in Tashkent consult the SVR, vol. I, items 185-188 (the manuscripts are numbered 1526, 699, 1502/II, and 1502/I consecutively). These manuscripts are catalogued under the rubric “history,” they are dated back to the 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries, and the number of folios in each ranges from 257 to 482. See also SVR, vol. X, items 6761-68 (the manuscript numbers are 1501, 2602, 4817, 5657, 3627, 4890, and 7390 consecutively). These manuscripts are all dated back to the 19\textsuperscript{th} century (1820-1883), and each contains anywhere from 205 to 529 folios. For the manuscripts kept in St. Petersburg see Miklukho-Maklaï, pp. 279-294 (MS numbers C378, C1927, C2336, D67, C379, and C1636). The manuscripts were copied from 1815 to 1885, and the number of folios in each ranges from 198 to 584.}

\textsuperscript{212} However, I still have to check whether all the titles correspond to the same work. It seems – having read their catalogue descriptions – that they do.
on historical sources of the *Opisanie tadzhikskikh i persidskikh rukopisei Instituta vostokovedeniiia* in St. Petersburg.\(^{213}\) Indicating three occurrences of the name of the author in the text, Miklukho-Maklaï mentions that in several manuscripts the name of the author appears as 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ṣīrat, whereas in others it appears as Mīrzā Ṭumūz. By asserting the name of 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ṣīrat, Miklukho-Maklaï follows V. A. Zhukovskiï, who was the one who determined that the first is the proper name.\(^{214}\) The problem is that hardly anything is known about the author or his life, and there is no explanation in the work of the circumstances under which the work was written. Since the cataloger determined that the author’s intention was to compose a so-called “general history” he decided to catalogue the work as “historical” under the History section. However, he expressed his doubts about the decision because the work contains a good deal of “folkloric material” and has a “fantastic, legendary character.” Such attributes make the work, as Miklukho-Maklaï argued, a literary work rather than a historical one, and one should treat it accordingly.

Herein lies the problem, because such a statement immediately rendered the work worthless in the eyes of most historians. Such an attitude was obviously emphasized (or rather, encouraged) by other statements (as Semenov’s comments noted below) and therefore there were no attempts to actually deal with the text at any level. Not surprisingly, the Central Asians themselves remained unaware of the professional evaluations of

\(^{213}\) See Miklukho-Maklaï.

\(^{214}\) Zhukovskiï was aware of the manuscripts in St. Petersburg and in Tashkent, and was following Togan’s description of the manuscript in Shahr-i Sabz in determining the title *Kūnūz al-a’zam*. His comments, apparently never published, are mentioned in Borshevskii, “K kharakteristike rukopisnego naslediiia V. A. Zhukovskogo,” pp. 11-13.
the work as they continued to copy, re-copy, and read the text for many generations, enthralled by its contents, probably more than most other works in the history of early modern Central Asia. But we will return to this matter below.

Before we proceed to describe the contents of the work we should bear in mind two crucial facts: the first is that all the manuscripts of such biographies of Tīmūr were copied in Central Asia, mostly in Bukhara and Khiva, sometimes in Merv (or in other unidentifiable locales in Central Asia), which makes the work (in addition to other factors discussed in the next sub-chapters) distinctly Central Asian. Secondly, all the manuscripts preserved in Central Asia and elsewhere are from the eighteenth century and onward. We have no such manuscripts prior to the eighteenth century, and the compilers of the works do not claim that they had copied these works based on a pre-eighteenth century model.

As mentioned, the Kunūz al-ʿam continued to be copied and recopied throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. At the beginning of the twentieth century, or more precisely, in 1913 (1331 A.H.), the work was published in Tashkent under the title Tīmūr-nāma. Kulliyāt-i fārsī in a lengthy lithograph of 441 pages, on average 27 lines per page. The editor, Mīrzā Muḥammad Qāsim ibn Mīrzā ʿAbd al-Khāliq Bukhārī, based the lithograph on a manuscript copied in 1792-3 (1207 A.H.) in Bukhara under the reign of the Manghīt Amir Shāh Murād.215 Although the quality of the script is not good, this edition is very extensive and very valuable.

Finally, a new edition of the Turkic version of the work was recently published in Uzbek in Tashkent under the title Temurnoma: Amir Temur Kuragon zhangnomasi.216


216See Temurnoma (ed. Ravshanov).
The editor Ravshanov, who describes the text as “a combination of the Baburnāma and the Kisas al-anbiya (Stories of the Prophets),” attributes the work to one Mullā Salah al-Dīn Khoja ibn Mullā ‘Ala’ al-Dīn Khoja, also known as Salah al-Dīn Tāshkandī, who had originally published the work in 1908 (1317 A.H.) in the Il’in publishing house in Tashkent. Not much is known about Tāshkandī or about the circumstances of this publication, save for the fact that he apparently stated that there were numerous copies of the Kunūz al-aʿzam in Persian, and that his was the first translation of the work into Turkic. Perhaps Tāshkandī was unaware of the earlier versions of the work in Turkic (such as the Dāstān-i Amīr Tīmūr), or perhaps he simply did not wish to reveal that he did know of them.\footnote{17} In any case, the recent version of the Kunūz al-aʿzam in Uzbek (with a glossary for some of the Arabic and Chaghatai words in the text – by no means all of them) is a much abridged version of the earlier manuscripts (and is still three hundred and fifty pages long, with no index or an acceptable table of contents), that also has many mistakes in transcription.\footnote{18}

\footnote{17} I was unable to find Tāshkandī’s work (or any other reference to it) in a recent visit to Uzbekistan.

\footnote{18} Thus, Dunya Bahādur became Donboi Bahadur; amīr al-ulus became amir un-nos, etc.
1.3 History of Scholarship (or lack thereof) on the Kunūz al-a ḡam.

Although the Kunūz al-a ḡam is probably one of the most popular works in the early modern history of Central Asia, and although there is a continuous tradition of copying the work from the eighteenth century until today, it has not attracted much scholarship. The work in its numerous copies and renditions is not even mentioned in such important general works on Persian or Turkic literature such as Rypka’s History of Iranian Literature, or the Philologiae Turcicae fundamenta. Likewise, the work is equally ignored in bibliographical surveys devoted to Timūr and to his legacy. There has been little scholarly treatment of this work, and we do not even have a scholarly edition of the text. The only author of a bio-bibliographical survey who mentioned the text (in addition to its description in Storey-Bregel noted above) was Hofman in his extensive survey of Turkish Literature. Hofman was certainly aware of the text, and promised to discuss what he referred to as “Timur’s vitae” in a section devoted to motifs in Turkish literature, which, apparently, he never completed.

In 1897 the Hungarian scholar Arminius Vambéry published three fragments of a manuscript of, apparently, the Kunūz al-a ḡam. The publication, titled “Eine legendäre Geschichte Timurs,” presented three previously unknown stories about Timūr. The first described Timūr’s campaign to Dasht-i Qipchaq to fight Toqtamīsh Khan; the sec-

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219 See Rypka, History of Iranian Literature; Deny, Philologiae Turcicae fundamenta.

220 See for example Bouvat, Essai sur la civilisation timouride; Brion, Tamerlan; Bernardini, “The Historiography Concerning Timur-i Lang.”

221 Hofman, Turkish Literature, pp. 14-15.

222 See Vambéry, “Eine legendäre Geschichte Timurs.”
ond described how Tīmūr came into possession of the Christian Gospel, written, as it were, by Jesus himself; and the third described Tīmūr’s conquest of Moscow. Vambéry published only fragments of these stories (by no means the full stories, which in the manuscript would be ten times as long). He treated the accounts with some degree of amusement and did not identify them as part of the much larger genre. Part of his mistrust of the work may have stemmed from the confusion about the time of composition of the narratives since the copyist got the dates completely mixed-up. Vambéry edited and translated the three excerpts, which he only identified as legends of a fantastic nature about Tīmūr. He offered no commentary to the stories and, as far as I know, did not pursue the matter elsewhere.

The next scholar to engage the work was V. Klemm, when, in 1900, he translated into Russian the story of Tīmūr’s birth as it appeared in a manuscript titled “Tarikh-i Tīmūri.” According to Klemm, the manuscript was written in 1712 by a nameless “Bukharan Tajik,” who compiled his account based on various historical works. Klemm’s translation was a contribution to a book that featured a collection of “Turkestani” stories.

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223 From the preface to the manuscript, Vambéry was given to understand that the work was copied during the “21st year of reign of Abu’l-Ghāzī Khan, under the governorship of Muḥammad Dāniyāl Biy Atalīq in the year 1024 A.H.” Vambéry knew that the year 1024 preceded Abu’l-Ghāzī’s reign by approximately 30 years, whereas Dāniyāl Biy Atalīq ruled approximately 110 years after Abu’l-Ghāzī, Khan of Khiva, had died (it did not occur to Vambéry that the Abu’l-Ghāzī in question may have been the puppet khan Abu’l-Ghāzī who was khan during some of Dāniyāl Biy’s tenure, though he did not rule for 21 years). The scribe further explained that since Tīmūr’s death 399 years passed, and that he copied the work around 1092 A.H. All the dates, of course, do not make any sense. (See Vambéry, “Eine legendäre Geschichte Timurs,” p. 216.)
Again, Klemm did not attempt to analyze any aspects of the story and merely provided the translation.\footnote{Klemm, “Predanie o rozhdenii Tamerlana.” This translation, too, has a few mistakes in transcription: Amir Qazaghan, for example, became Karagan; mount Ghazgham also became Karagan; Tegina Begim is called Neki Bigim, etc.}

When the Russian orientalist Semenov traveled in Central Asia in the early 1920s in order to catalogue manuscripts in Bukhara, he encountered quite a number of literary productions consisting of stories and narratives about Timur. Semenov dismissively associated these tales with the typical chatter that dominates idle conversations in teashops and guest-houses (choikhonas and mihmonkhonas).\footnote{Semenov, Katalog, p. 26.} Nevertheless, he did make an effort to identify the origins of these manuscripts, and came to the conclusion that they were based on a late fifteenth-century poetic work titled Timur-nama and authored by ʿAbdallāh Ḥātifi (d. 1521), the celebrated poet of the Safavid court who worked for a while under the patronage of Shāh Ismāʿīl Safavi.\footnote{See Ḥātifi, Timur-nama. On Ḥātifi’s work see also Bernardini, “Hatifi’s Timurnama.”}

It seems, at first glance, that the connection is not strong. Ḥātifi’s Timur-nama is a long poem, whereas the works in question are all in prose. However, the rendering of poetry into prose was a rather commonplace phenomenon all over the Islamic world. The problem lies elsewhere. First, although authors of biographies of Timur generally acknowledge Ḥātifi as one of their (many) sources, his work is not prominently featured in the Kunūz al-aʿẓam and is relatively inconsequential. Almost all the anecdotes and stories reported in the Kunūz al-aʿẓam are not found in Ḥātifi’s Timur-nama. In fact, the compil-
ers of the Kunūz al-aʾzām probably copied verses from Hātifī and inserted them every once in a while into the text. Nevertheless, the question of Hātifī as a source of influence on the work brings us to wonder about the interplay between the Kunūz al-aʾzām and the “official” historical narratives, and we will do so (to a limited degree) below.

Semenov’s comment from the early 1920s was, to my knowledge, the last reference to the Kunūz al-aʾzām (nonwithstanding the descriptions in other catalogues and bio-bibliographical surveys).\(^{227}\) The truth is that the work (or perhaps, the genre) was almost completely overlooked (and therefore, also unrecognized as a genre), and was labeled ahistorical, and therefore, irrelevant to Central Asian history. What I will try to show is that the genre introduced, in fact, the popular vision of Central Asia in the eighteenth century. Among the many paths of investigation, we will inquire into the purpose that these manuscripts tried to fulfill, and into the relationship between this work and the establishment. Among the inquiries we will ask are: Was there a degree of direct or indirect sponsorship? What was the didactic message, if it existed, in such narratives? Who was the target audience for such tales? What was their connection to religious figures/circles? Why did the story originate in the eighteenth century? Since the work is in a preliminary stage, my answers will be in part speculative, but I hope that this essay will not only convince the reader of the potential significance of its consequences, but also be the ground for future studies.

\(^{227}\) We should also note the mention of the Kunūz al-aʾzām by Devin DeWeese in his study on the office of the niqābat and its connection to the descendants of Sayyid Ata. In the work, Sayyid Ata is described as serving as naqīb in the army of Özbek Khan, and that the latter promised the office of the niqābat to Sayyid Ata’s descendants. (See DeWeese, “Descendants,” pp. 613-14.)
1.4 Structure and Arrangement of the Work.

At first glance, the work seems to be a little confusing. However, once thoroughly examined the structure of the text does make sense. First, it is chronologically ordered, beginning with Timūr’s birth and ending with his death. After a short introduction, the rest of the text is divided into chapters (chapter headings are titled dāstān, goftār or dhikr), the number of which changes according to the manuscript. Although most manuscripts and renderings of the work that I have examined seem to follow the same sequence of chapters, sometimes there are additions or omissions of certain chapters or a change in their order in the narrative. It is clear, however, that the author/compiler’s intention was to bring these stories in an orderly fashion.

The introduction opens with the essential doxology that also compares Timūr and Alexander the Great, stressing that both were descended from Yāfîth ibn Nūḥ. The author then discloses that he relied on a number of written sources; among them he lists several well-known works and some lesser-known as well:

Ḥāfiz-i Abrū, author of Tārīkh-i Shāhrukhī, Qāżī Bayzāvi qāżī ʿAbd al-Wakīl author of Tārīkh-i Farrokhshāhī, Amīr Kabīr shaykh vazīr-i Aʿzām Mir ʿAli Shir, Maulānā Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAli Yāzdī author of Zaḥfarnāma, Maulānā ʿAbd al-Razzāq Samarqandi author of Tadhkīrat Dawlatshāhī,228 Maulānā Asrāfī, author of Jāmīʿ al-aʿzām, Khwāndshāh, author of Rawżat al-ṣafā,229 Khoja ʿAbdallāh Hātīfī author of Tārīkh-i Timūrī, Khoja Ḥasan Nīshāpūrī author of Tadhkīrat al-aḥbāb, ʿAli Irānī author of Tuhfāt al-asāmi, ʿAbdallāh Bālkhī author of Tām al-tavārīkh. In fact, it is hard at this stage to determine which part came from what work. It is made clear at times by the author himself, who, occasionally but not systematically,

228 Possibly confusing with Tadhkīrat Dawlatshāhī written by another Samarqandi - see SVR, I, pp. 334-5 index).

229 Here the author confuses Khwāndshāh with Mīrkhwānd, author of Rawżat al-ṣafā'.
acknowledges other authors. In addition, it is clear that the structure of the work follows that of the court chronicles even if the content is very different. Thus, numerous chapter headings in the Kunūz al-aʿẓam are named after chapter headings that appear in other works. For example, I counted many chapter headings (approximately 26) that are identical to Yazdi’s Żafarnāma, though the content, of course, is very different.

The author then details Tīmūr’s genealogy, tracing his lineage back to Qarachar Noyan, commander of one of the tumens of Chinggis Khan, and regarded in Timurid histories as the ancestor of the leading clan of Tīmūr’s tribe – the Barlas. He then gives a historical sketch of Tīmūr and the history of Central Asia, including only dates and the name of the ruler, down to the time of the copyist of the manuscript. (Thus, each copyist would add a few basic details about the rulers of the region down to his time). The rest of the introduction details the chronological framework of Tīmūr’s time – the focus of the work – by giving the supposedly major events, and by so doing, it again emulates the court chronicles. Here is the rest of the introduction:

Şāhib-qirān Amir Tīmūr güregen was born in the year 735 (A.H.) at the time of Bayān-Qulī Khan and at the time of Shaykh al-ʿĀlam, that is Shaykh Sayf al-Dīn. His mother, Tegina Khatun, daughter of Şadr al-Shariʿa, suffered a great deal of misfortune, and after much toil his father married her. From the city of Shahr-i Sabz he came to Bukhara to the service of Bayān-Qulī Khan. Then Toqtemūr Khan Jatta arrived (and at that time the Uzbeks were called Jatta). Baraq Khan, son of Bayān-Qulī Khan, escaped, and Amir Tīmūr with the help of His Holiness Shāh Naqshband

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230 Amir Tīmūr ibn Ṭaraghay Bahādūr ibn Irkul Bahādūr ibn Angiz Bahādūr ibn Alhil Noyan ibn Qarachar Noyan.

231 On Qarachar Noyan and the place of the Barlas tribe in the Chaghatay khanate see Manz, The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane, pp. 156-157.

232 Shaykh Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī (see below).
went [to look for Baraq Khan]. Shāh Maṣūr, who was of the Muzaffarids, captured Baraq Khan and threw him into a well. Timūr rescued Baraq Khan. He expelled the Uzbeks from their lands, but the house of Baraq Khan was determined to kill Sāhib-qirān.

Timūr reached Mashhad to the vicinity of Shāh Shuja' Kirmānī. Then, with his son Mīrzā Jahāngīr he seized Qarshī. Baraq Khan killed Mīrzā Jahāngīr in Balkh. Sāhib-qirān arrived (in Balkh) and killed him. In 771 [A.H.] he was enthroned. He then went to Khorezm. He captured Husayn Šūfī and then rode to Khorasan in order to capture Shiraz, and vanquish the people of Muẓaffar. From there he returned to Dasht-i Qipchaq and pushed the Uzbek army as far as the Crimea. Mīrzā Shāhrukh, Timūr’s son, killed Toqtamīsh Khan Uzbek. He (Timūr) proceeded to conquer the Russians. He then moved to Hindustan and from there returned once more to Khorasan and Iraq. He captured Baghdad and appointed his son Mīrānshāh as governor. Timūr seized the whole of Mazandaran and Kurdistan, he captured Sham and Haleb and Damscus, and advanced towards the emperor of Rum. He took Rum from the hands of Yıldırım Bāyazīd. Mīrzā Ulugh Beg b. Shāhrukh, went to the west. The khutba was recited in the name of the Amir.

Then in the year 807 [A.H.] he (Timūr) returned to Samarqand and sent his sons to [govern] the provinces. He sent Mirānshāh and Mīrzā ‘Umar to Baghdad and Iraq and kept Mīrzā Khalīl b. Mīrānshāh in Samarqand. Shāhrukh was sent to Herat. Mīrzā Pir Muḥammad b. Mīrzā Jahāngīr was sent to Qandahar. He went to the border of his country and made a summer encampment in Otrar, where his soul traveled from the world of infirmity to Paradise. He lived seventy two years, one month and eighteen days. He ruled for thirty six years. His wife, Sarāy Khanum, brought the amir’s body to Samarqand and buried him.

Although this convenient chronology is given, in actuality the narrative is interspersed with numerous, less “worldly” stories and anecdotes that place emphasis on Timūr’s character (and, to a certain extent, on that of his sons and grandsons), on models of conduct, on the relationship between Timūr and other family members, friends, Sufi shaykhs, and on Timūr’s upbringing and coming of age. Thus, for example, the history of Timūr’s heroic clashes with Toqtamīsh Khan of the Golden Horde actually began when Timūr’s son, Mīrānshāh, fell in love with Toqtamīsh Khan’s wife. Timūr passes tests,
fights wars, defends Islam, destroys false prophets. When his sons come of age, Tīmūr sends them to different corners of the world and some of their unusual experiences are related.
CHAPTER 2: TĪMŪR’S HEROIC APOCRYPHA: SELECTED NARRATIVES.

This chapter introduces the reader to three narratives translated from the Kunūz al-aṣam, MS of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung MS Or. Quart. 1231.\(^{233}\) I also consulted the Tīmūr-nāma. Kulliyāt-i fārsī – the lithograph based on a 1793 manuscript copied during the reign of Shāh Murād in Bukhara.

The reason for selecting these narratives is that they take us through various stages in Tīmūr’s life (and therefore, of the work itself) and make fine examples of various motifs in the work. In time, I hope to be able to provide a fuller treatment of the genre.

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\(^{233}\) For a short description of the manuscript see *Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland*, Bd. 14, no. 100 (pp. 88-89).
2.1 Tīmūr’s Birth and His Childhood\textsuperscript{234}

Account of the Birth of Şāhib-qirān,\textsuperscript{235} Conqueror of the World.\textsuperscript{236}

The storyteller narrates that the Şāhib-qirān’s father was Amir Taraghay Bahādūr, a descendant of Qarachar Noyan, who was the relative (\textit{`umm-zāda}, lit. paternal uncle’s son) of Temūjin, who is now known as Chinggis Khan. When Chinggis Khan returned from the annihilation of Iran to his capital Qaraqorum in Moghulistan, he summoned his beloved son whose name was Chaghatay Khan and appointed him governor of Mawaran-nahr and Fergana. He made his vizier Qarachar Noyan accompany him (Chaghatay), and made groups (or representatives) of the thirty-two tribes go with him as well, and now they are called Aimaq.\textsuperscript{237} Chaghatay Khan made the city of Kashgar his capital and gave Mawarannahr to Qarachar Noyan. Chaghatay’s descendants became the kings of Mawarannahr and Fergana one after the other, until the turn of kingship reached Bayān-Qulī Khan ibn Duran Khan.

\textsuperscript{234}The first narrative, which I titled “Tīmūr’s Birth and His Childhood,” is divided into three parts (all presented here): (1) the account of the circumstances surrounding Tīmūr’s birth; (2) the arrival of ambassadors from the seven corners of the world to kill Tīmūr; and (3) Tīmūr’s encounter with the men of the unseen world. The part about the birth was translated into Russian in a somewhat abridged form in 1900 (see Klemm, “Predanie o rozhdeniï Tamerlana”), and has not been visited since. The entire first narrative also appears in the (much abridged) Uzbek version. See Temurnoma (ed. Ravshanov), pp. 40-56.

\textsuperscript{235}Şāhib-qirān is the common epithet for Tīmūr (and for other figures, such as Alexander the Great). It means a person who was born at the time of the auspicious conjunction of Venus and Jupiter, or Venus and the sun.

\textsuperscript{236}\textit{Kunūz al-a ḥam}, pp. 17-50. The manuscript has two systems of pagination (pages and folios). I refer to the page system.

\textsuperscript{237}In the Tīmūr-nāma. Kulliyāti fārsī: “and made the thirty-two tribes go with him as well, and so the people of Chaghatay were formed.”
Such was the turn of events that in the year 720 (A.H.) Qazan Khan (known as Malikshāh) sat on the throne in Bukhara. And at that time the axis of holymen, His Holiness Shaykh al-ʾĀlam, that is, Shaykh Sayf al-Dīn came to Bukhara. The people of Bukhara became his loyal disciples. Such was the grace of God on the shaykh that he had in his possession seven hundred fine horses. Qazan Khan was such a tyrant that whomever he summoned, whether he was of the amirs or of the poor, had to come to him and (together with his wife and children) became his property. When the men came to the shaykh to complain he told them to be patient. Malikshāh heard that the shaykh had excellent horses and ordered the mounts to be brought to him. “What’s the use of so much fortune to such a beggar?” he wondered. He sent a man to the ishān (that is, to the shaykh) to tell him. The shaykh became angry and wrote an insulting ruba ʾī and sent it to him,

How much longer will you spread your tyranny?  
Your virtues could have united the hearts of men.

O tyrant, renounce your intention, abandon oppression.  
We have told you that you are inducing your own blood.

That man brought the ruba ʾī and gave it to the khan. The khan studied [the ruba ʾī] and became angry, “This man has such nerve to write something like this to me.” He mounted his horse and prepared to leave with the intention of killing the shaykh, but his amirs tried to detain him.

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238 Shaykh al-ʾĀlam was the appellation of Shaykh Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī (who was known by this appellation also in the sixteenth-century work by Öttemish Hājjī). See DeWeese, Islamization, p. 357, note 87.
News reached the shaykh that the khan was on his way [to kill him]. The shaykh took an apple and threw it in the air, saying, “By the time it reaches the ground God will advise me how to act.” Then he went into meditation. After a while he said, “Allāhu akbar,” and raised his head.

When Qazan Khan arrived in Qal‘a-jui a farmer gave him an apple as a gift. The khan took the apple as he was riding, and started playing with it (throwing it up in the air). Suddenly, he missed and the apple struck the drum that was hung at the saddle, making a noise such that the horse tossed the khan to the ground and his neck broke. Everyone realized that this was the miracle of His Holiness the Iśhān. The amirs and the rest of the people came and stood before the shaykh. Now the people wondered who would be king. Someone suggested, “The shaykh is worthy to be the king,” but the shaykh refused. The people kept coming for a whole year to the shaykh’s khānqāh in the east of Bukhara to seek his just council [on the matter]. The shaykh said, “Take this staff of mine. He who suits this staff can be king even if he appears to you to be a miserable fellow.” The people returned to the shaykh (asking for further explanation) and he said, “Go and call out loud [the name of] Bayān-Qulī Khan. Go to the direction of Kuhinor. Whatever happens, this staff should fit his stature.” After that, the people of Bukhara, full of zeal, took the staff and left. They measured the staff against every man they met, but no person suited the staff until they reached Bayān-Qulī Khan.
The story of Bayân-Qulí Khan.

When his uncle Malikshāh was sitting on the throne of kingship, Bayân-Qulí Khan was eighteen years old. His uncle ordered him killed, but the amirs secretly bribed the executioner and put him to flight. Since then he had been roaming the land in the vicinity of Kuhinor. At that time, the people of Arlat were settled there. One day, he looked to the sky and watched a bird of prey (a kite), when something fell from its beak. He approached and saw that it was a money-belt full of gold coins. He took it and went to the quarters of the Arlat. Someone saw him and recognized the belt and went to Amir Muʿayyad Arlat (the gold belonged to Amir Muʿayyad). He (the amir) accused him of stealing the money. The khan tried to explain what had happened but he would not believe him and imprisoned him. The khan never told him that he was actually a prince.

At night he saw Shaykh al-ʿĀlam in a dream. When he woke up he managed to break his chains and fled, pretending to be a beggar. He came to Ghažghâm and hid in caves and lamented his misfortune. An old woman and her husband, a shepherd, adopted him as their son. The shepherd trained him for one year, and he (Bayân-Qulí Khan) worked as a shepherd until the group of men from Bukhara found him. He saw them walking around shouting, “Bayân-Qulí Khan.” “Young man,” they asked him, “did you see Bayân-Qulí Khan?” He asked, “What do you want with him?” The men explained the situation. Then they placed the staff in his hand and saw that it was exactly his height. They were all amazed [thinking], “How can this miserable fellow be our king?” One of them recalled that the shaykh had said that even a beggar might be king. They brought

\[239\] The mountain in the vicinity of Samarqand noted in Part I, Chapter III of the present study.
Bayān-Qulī Khan to the city of Bukhara and the shaykh came immediately [to greet him]. The city was adorned and they seated the khan on the throne of Bukhara. He ruled for three years and was known to be a just ruler.
The story of Taraghay Bahādur.

And so we arrived at the story of Taraghay Bahādur. He was of the descendants of Qarachar Noyan, and at that time the commands of council used to come out of his house. He was a rich man and the people showed him much respect. His house was in Shahr-i Sabz (which today is known as Taraghiyya). At that time in Bukhara lived Ṣadr al-Sharī‘a. One day, as he was teaching, a dervish entered the classroom, saying, “Your daughter Tegina will soon be wed and will give birth to the conqueror of the world.” The Ṣadr asked, “You madman, do you think you have knowledge of the secrets of the unseen?” The dervish said, “I do.” The Ṣadr ordered him locked up in his house, and he went to the khan and explained what had happened. The khan commanded him to bring the dervish before him, but when the Ṣadr returned home he found his daughter in chains where the dervish was supposed to be. He became very concerned, but the daughter was going mad, and so they decided to bring her to the Shaykh al-‘Ālam. The shaykh smiled and said, “That dervish was a holy spirit. Out of this fortunate daughter a very fortunate son will be born.” Immediately the girl regained her senses from her fortunate meeting with the shaykh’s nobility. His Holiness said, “I will take care of this daughter myself.” Ṣadr al-Sharī‘a said, “It is your choice.” The people heard that the daughter became very devoted to the shaykh. Many amirs and ‘ulamā’ asked her hand in marriage but the shaykh said, “Her husband has not yet entered Bukhara.” But people suspected that he probably wanted to keep her for himself.

But now let us hear about the events of Taraghay Bahādur. One day Taraghay Bahādur was hunting in the vicinity of Shahr-i Sabz, when he started in pursuit of a gazelle. The gazelle broke off through a flock of sheep and escaped. Bahādur looked at
the herd, and saw that a wolf cut off one sheep [from the flock]. He aimed an arrow at the wolf and fired, and his shot woke a shepherd from his dream. The shepherd said, “O amir, do not kill me for I just saw you in my dream.” Bahādur said, “Speak!” “I saw,” said the shepherd, “that a man dressed in green called me and said, ‘Tell your master that he should leave for Shaykh al-ʿĀlam and marry the daughter of Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa, because from her will be born the conqueror of the world’.” Bahādur said: “You are trying to deceive me out of fear.” “O Bahādur;” answered the shepherd, “I never heard the name of the Shaykh or of the Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa before. I swear before God that a great fortune has befallen you.” Bahādur, not trusting him, wanted to hit him. Suddenly, the shepherd’s dog jumped up and barked. It seemed to the Bahādur as if the dog said that the shepherd was speaking the truth. After that the Bahādur, believing the words of the shepherd, prepared all the provisions for the journey and set out to Bukhara.

After a few stages, he reached Bukhara. In Bukhara he first went to the Shaykh al-ʿĀlam. Ishān (i.e., the shaykh) was praying at the time, but he took notice of the Bahādur’s arrival. Taraghay Bahādur sat in the circle of Sufis and waited. At last, the shaykh raised his head and said, “Welcome, father of the Ṣāḥib-qirān!” (The shaykh was the one who gave the title Ṣāḥib-qirān to Amir Tīmūr). Taraghay Bahādur retold the strange story of the shepherd. The shaykh said, “The shepherd’s dream is correct, I reserved Tegina Begim for you, but I did vow to finish first the construction of a khānqāh, and that you should embrace this project.” Taraghay said, “I am your servant. I will help you build it.” Then the shaykh said, “We will not begin, young man, until you have released yourself from your sin.” The amir fell at the shaykh’s feet. Ishān sent away all his students, so that no one was left beside Amir Taraghay. The shaykh said, “Rise and
perform the asblusions." The amir did as the shaykh ordered. Then the shaykh said, "Pray!" The shaykh wrote a letter and handed it over to the amir, saying, "Go out of town, to the cemetery of Fayż Athar where the spring of His Holiness Ayyub is located (and at that time the shrine of His Holiness Ayyub was outside the citadel of Bukhara. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Khan ibn ‘Ubaydallāh ordered the inclusion of the shrine in the city)."240

When you reach the shrine of His Holiness Ayyub sit on the bank of the spring. You will see the closed door of the khāṅqāh. Do not try to open it and remain silent. A Sufi will come out and will bring you a pot. If its contents are permissible (ḥalāl), then God will grant you a son who will be true to the shari‘ā. If, however, the food is unacceptable (ḥarām), you will have a son who will do nothing but evil deeds. After eating, give my letter to the Sufi. Then leave. Be careful not to look back. If someone speaks to you, do not respond. Return to us."

Taraghay Bahādur thanked him, took the letter and set out. Leaving the city gates, he reached the shrine of His Holiness Ayyub and saw that a heavenly ray was emanating from the dome. Beautiful music of lute and tambourine, the sigh of the flute, reached his ears. He said, "God be praised, what does all this mean?" Then, he recalled what the shaykh had told him and sat on the bank of the spring. Suddenly, the door opened, and out came a Sufi, dressed in green, carrying a tablecloth and dishes, which he placed before the amir. Taraghay was tormented by thoughts of whether the food would be prohibited or permissible, because the fate of his son depended upon it. When he took the

240 The author refers to the Shībanid ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn ‘Ubaydallāh (d. 1550), who rebuilt the walls of the city of Bukhara.
lid off the pot, he saw – much to his dismay – that the pot was full of milk. He drank all the milk, gave the letter to the Sufi and headed back.

Suddenly, he heard cries of “Allāhu akbar, Allāhu akbar, lā ilāha illā 'l-lāh, Allāhu akbar, Allāhu akbar” behind him, and he began to tremble. He went out to the garden of Shams al-Mulk, which today they call Namazgah. Out of the garden came an old man who said, “Why don’t you look around? Take a chair and admire the wondrous things around you.” The words of the old man had such an effect on Taraghay that he nearly stayed. Suddenly a mysterious breeze touched his face, and the Bahādur continued on his way to the shaykh. The old man disappeared.

Returning to the khānqāh, he looked for the shaykh. He (the shaykh) said, “That old man was the devil (īblīs), curses on his head, but the mysterious breeze came from me. Had I not done so, you would have looked back and your work would perish. Now come and look through my fingers.” When Bahādur looked, he saw that many people wearing green were walking with bricks and alabaster in their hands. The shaykh remarked to him that these people were the men of the unseen world. The Bahādur asked, “Who of these people is their leader?” Ishān said, “Their leader died and they asked me to become their leader.” The Bahādur objected, “I know most of them. Outwardly, they used to be soldiers but inwardly they are of the people of the unseen.” The shaykh said, “O Taraghay, if our succession is not secured, you will not have the power to see them.” However, the men approached the shaykh and after greeting him respectfully, they said, “The first time we came here you refused to take leadership upon yourself, but now we received word from you to come.” They said, “Although you did not intend to lead us, we
will yield to the Bahādur’s destiny and build a khānqāh for you until morning.” And in so saying, the men of the unseen removed their mourning clothes, and put on clothes of joy, and began building the khānqāh. And so the khānqāh was built by morning and the sun was shining upon the dome. The people of Bukhara the Noble saw the dome the next day towering above His Holiness’s head, and were amazed and mentioned this miraculous deed in honor of the shaykh. [But] the shaykh declared that the building was built by Taraghay Bahādur. He then led Taraghay and Tegina Begim to the wedding, when the sun was in the sign of Capricorn. And within one hour the pure seed was secured in the womb of the new mother.

But there remained one obstacle, Amir Qazaghan, known as the amir al-ulus (today it is called atalīq. He was a Qongrat. Everything was in the hands of the atalīq).241 He desired Tegina khatun; he tried to influence the khan that the girl should not be given to the descendant of Qarachar Noyan and threatened to fight the shaykh. Bayān-Qulī Khan tried to dissuade him but with no success. He sent a man to the shaykh to ask him for the place of battle. Amir Qazaghan assembled an army and approached the khānqāh of the shaykh. The shaykh assembled four hundred of his disciples and instructed them to meet Qazaghan’s army. He remained in his khānqāh in prayer. Qazaghan called him to come out and when the shaykh stepped outside, Qazaghan challenged Taraghay Bahādur to a duel. Both men stepped into the battlefield and began to fight. As they were fighting an arrow hit Taraghay in the eye and he fell off his horse. Taraghay became blind in one eye. At that time Bayān-Qulī Khan arrived and stood at the shaykh’s side, and the battle stopped. Taraghay took Tegina Begim to Shahr-i Sabz

241 Tūmūr-nāma. Kulīyāt-i fārsī: “And things were such that he would not allow the khatba and sikka to be in [the name of] another king.”
That year the royal falcon of the spirit of the Ḥšān departed this frail world to the everlasting abode. Amir Tīmūr was then six months old. This happened in the year 736 [A.H.] and the shaykh was then one hundred and fifteen years of age.

At that time Bayān-Qulī Khan was informed that a Mongol army was on its way to Kashghar. The khan sent a letter to Taraghay Bahādur in Shahr-i Sabz to take the Barlas army and go to Kashghar. Taraghay went to the service of the khan. Taraghay had a chief wife who was the daughter of Amir Qazaghan. Her name was Yuqūn Aqa. He entrusted Tegina Begim to her charge, and he started the journey to Kashghar.
The story of Amir Timur's Birth.

Now let us hear about the Amir's birth: It was Tegina Begim's time to give birth. She had completed nine months and nine days, and it was time for her to be released from her burden. However, Yuqun Khatun harbored malice toward Tegina Begim for her father's ruin would come from her. She saw a dream one night in which the sun was emanating from Tegina Begim's womb and was illuminating the world from east to west, eventually turning to Hindustan, where, after a while, it set. Immediately she awoke from her sleep, suspecting her rival, who lay there in her blissfulness. Out of envy, she lulled her back to sleep, and summoned a slave who was left to her by her father, by the name of Qaidun (he was a native of the tribe Hezarlachin and was faithful to her father). She told him, "I have something I wish to convey to you, that you should swear to keep a secret." The slave answered, "I was left here by your father, and I shall not betray your secret." Then she told him what she had seen in her dream about the wretched Tegina Begim and asked him whether he could find a knowledgeable interpretation of the dream. Qaidun said, "There are no dream interpreters here, but I heard that there is a man named Soyulik Ata who lives in a cave. They say that he can solve all the people's difficulties."

Yuqun embraced her slave, and putting her confidence in him, sent him to Soyulik. When the slave approached the cave, he saw the Ata sitting in the midst of many people, who were waiting to hear his words. He realized it would take him a whole night and a whole day to be able to approach the man. He looked and saw a man dressed in animal skin, who looked as though he were not of this world. He began to explain his story, when the Ata said, "Yes, in this year (735) a child will be born who will become the conqueror of the world. I believe that the time of his appearance in this world is
beginning. The child who will be born from this woman will have descendants who will rule the world.” When the slave heard these words from Soyulik Ata he took his leave, returned home and told the whole story to Yuqun Aqa. The fire of envy from the hearth of her bosom consumed her. She said to the slave, “Can’t you kill Tegina Begim?” When the slave heard her words he tried his best to talk her out of it, but without success. Finally, seeing that Yuqun was firm in her decision, and not finding any means to calm her down, he agreed to the murder conspiracy. Writing a false letter, he gave it to Tegina Begim. The letter’s contents were as follows: “From your father, that is, Şadr al-shari‘a: O, dear daughter, know that if you do not leave soon you may not see me alive again, for I do not have long to live.” When Tegina Begim studied the letter, she was burning with impatience to see her father. She rushed to Yuqun Aqa, explained what had happened and asked her permission to leave (for she was entrusted to Yuqun’s charge by Taraghay Bahādur). Yuqun appointed two maids to escort Tegina, and sent the slave with them.

When they came to a well Qaidun killed the two maids, and was ready to murder the unfortunate Tegina. She cried, “O Baba, what use will it be if you kill me? In my womb there is a premature child. What will become of him?” The slave answered, “I am killing you because of him, for your child is going to conquer the world.” Immediately he drew his sword and was about to slash Tegina Begim. Fearing for her life, Tegina Begim jumped into the well. The slave bent over the well’s opening and shouted at her to quickly climb out. Suddenly (because of the fortunate fate of Amir Tīmūr ğürejen) a lightning bolt from Heaven flashed, hit the slave in the chest and cut him in two. The princess was saved from his conspiracy but was unable to climb out of the well, which was dry.
It so happened that a shepherd was walking by, who, seeing her inside, dropped a rope and managed to pull her out. He saw before him an extraordinarily beautiful woman. The shepherd inquired about the circumstances of her fall, and she replied, “I am of the tribe Aimaqiyya. We passed here at night and I fell into the well. The dead body over there is my husband, who was hit by lightning.” The shepherd was seized by lust, and desired to commit some unsavory act against Tegina Begim, but God would not allow such a thing. Suddenly, a man appeared who looked like an Arab. He frightened away the shepherd, and said, “O princess, my name is Amir Châku Barlas and this is one of my shepherds. Be like my own daughter, come with me to my home, and then we will learn of your origins and your name.” And uttering these words, he led her to his home and charged her to his wife.

[It was] at night, on Wednesday, the 25th of Sha’bān, in the Year of the Mouse, 735 [A.H.], in the sign of Cancer, when the sun was in the 1st of Capricorn and the moon was in the 29th of Aquarius, and both [signs] are connected.\textsuperscript{242} And this occurrence is as follows: Whenever there are seven stars in the sign of Cancer, and in the sign of Capricorn occurs a conjunction, the fortune of a child who is born in that hour will always be blessed until his death. Sharaf Yazdī in his \textit{Zafarnāma} says that three children were born in such an hour. The first was Iskandar Dhū’l-Qarnayn (i.e., Alexander the Great); the second was His Holiness Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (blessing of Allah upon him); and the third Amir Timūr giyegen. From the birth of Iskandar until the blessed birth of His Holiness the Messenger (peace be upon him) eight hundred years passed, and from the noble birth of His Holiness until the birth of Amir Timūr giyegen another eight hundred years

\textsuperscript{242}The sign of Aquarius follows the sign of Capricorn.
passed. Every eight hundred years the stars in the sign of Capricorn are in conjunction, as was mentioned. The storyteller says that the Şāḥib-qirān’s mother suffered no pain during the birth (such as happens to other women).
Account of the Arrival of Seven Wise Men from the Seven Climes in order to Kill

His Highness Amir Şâhîb-qirân, Conqueror of the World

After Amir Tîmîr’s birth, Amir Châku was engaged in his education. Tîmîr was at the time six months old. At that time in the country of Rum (Turkey) Yîldîrîm Sulṭân Bâyazîd, grandson of Osman Ghâzî, was the successor to the throne. And Osman Ghâzî was of the descendants of Yâfîth ibn Nûh (peace be upon him). During the time of Sulṭân Sanjar Ghâzî, the Saljuqs conquered the kingdoms of Rum. The origins of the kings of Rum were close to that of the kings of Turan, for both are descendants of Yâfîth ibn Nûh (peace be upon him). When the turn of the kingship of Rum reached Yîldîrîm Bâyazîd (whose name was Sulṭân Țuhûr), he conquered seventy cities of Farangistan, and achieved more than his ancestors.

One day, as the Sulṭân of Rum was returning from the hunt, he spotted a cave at the side of a mountain. When he asked what kind of cave it was, he was told that it was the cave in which Iskandar was born, and that the sultans of this region go on pilgrimage to that cave. He decided to visit the cave. Upon entering he saw a table with various diagrams inscribed upon it. His wise men explained that eight hundred years after the birth of Iskandar Dhûl-Qarnayn, the Prophet (praise of God upon him) was born, and eight hundred years after the birth of Muḥammad (peace be upon him), a man will be born who will capture the earth and vanquish its kings. Such was written by Aristotle. Caesar (i.e., Bâyazîd) said, “This Şâhîb-qirân must be me. I should conquer all the lands.” He summoned one of his wise men, a man named Abu’l-Mufâkhir to his service and asked, “What have you to say about it?” Abu’l-Mufâkhir said, “I have found in these writings that this year in Mawarannahr an infant seems to have been born. He will be
known as the second Iskandar. The province of Rum will become his for the taking, and Yıldırım Bāyazīd will become his prisoner.” When the Sultan of Rum heard these words, he immediately ordered that a letter be written to Bayān-Quli Khan. He made Abu’l-Mufākhir an ambassador and sent him to see that the infant would be destroyed.

The storyteller says that at that time there were seven climes in the world. Three were ruled by Muslims, and four, by infidels. The second was Dilshād Khatun, governor of Baghdad (after Abū Sa‘īd Khan’s death, who was a descendant of Hūlegū Khan, no descendant of Hūlegū was left who would become king. Dilneshād Khatun was sitting on the throne). The third was Shāh Shujā’ [in Khorasan], who saw one night in his dream how a ray of sunshine from Heaven was illuminating Mawarannahr. He asked his wise men about it and one of them said, “Ṣāhib-qirān was born in Mawarannahr. He will soon make his presence known.” Shāh Shujā’ immediately sent this man to Bukhara as his ambassador. The fourth was the ruler of India, Malik Ra’no Ballu Khan, who was sultan over all of India. He heard of the birth of Ṣāhib-qirān from one of his wise men and sent him as ambassador, in order to destroy the newborn child. An ambassador also arrived from the fifth ruler, the king of Farangistan, one from the sixth – the King of China – and from the seventh – the king of Russia.

Bayān-Quli Khan heard that the seven ambassadors were making their way to see him. He ordered the city of Bukhara to be decorated, and to offer the best hospitality to the ambassadors. The messengers said, “With your permission, we have no time to dally.” Bayān-Quli Khan set a date for the meeting. He seated the three Muslim ambassadors to his right, and the four infidels to his left. Maulānā Burḥān al-Dīn, Ṣāhib Hidāyat
said, "The ambassador from Rum sat first, then the ambassador from Iraq, then the one from Khorasan." The ambassador from Rum was the first to convey his letter. The letter’s contents were as follows: "Praises and salutations to Tengri. We send our blessings to the Sulțan of Mawarannahr. In your country a child came to the world this year. Our wise men call him Alexander the Second, who will capture the earth and seize the day and make its sultans his prisoners. Naturally, you have to try and destroy this child." All seven ambassadors carried letters with similar contents. Bayān-Qulí Khan called Şâhib Hidāyat who said, "You must not interfere with God’s plans." At that time the vizier of the khan was Sirāj Qamari.

Bayān-Qulí Khan asked the ambassadors, "How do you know of the birth of such a child?" The ambassadors replied, "O khan, we have become aware of his birth this very year, and need to find him as soon as possible." The khan ordered his wise men to assemble in the Friday mosque and at the same time sent a messenger to his own yurt to find out whether, in fact, a child was born that year and who his parents were, and to tempt them to come and present themselves for such and such amount of gold. He also instructed his men to search every house with toddlers. The couriers did as they were commanded but there was no newborn child in the city of Bukhara. Sirāj Qamari was appointed to accompany the messengers and help them look. They went to Miyankal, Samarqand, Khojand, Hisar, and Shahr-i Sabz. [In Shahr-i Sabz] Taraghay Bahādur extended his hospitality towards them. Then they continued to Qarshi and to Zanjir Sara Barlas, where they were the guests of Amir Chāku. Amir Chāku presented his children the next day. Meanwhile, he told his wife of these events. Having overheard his words, Tegina Begim understood and became very anxious. "In my child the marks are clear,"
she said to herself. In the middle of the night she had a dream: In her dream she saw His Holiness, Shaykh al-ʿĀlam. The Shaykh said, “Go to Bukhara, and stay for a while in my shrine. And bow before God. This child was appointed a great fate.” Tegina Begim stayed up for the rest of the night, hugging her child, and decided to head towards Bukhara.
The miracle of Shaykh al-'Ālam:

Before dawn she reached Bukhara and entered the mazār-i fayz-āthar. She hid her son in a box and covered it. The next day, when Amir Châku was asked by the ambassadors where she was, he answered, “This woman was my guest for a few days. I don’t know where she took her son.” The ambassadors hurried back to Bukhara and petitioned the khan to see him. Bayân-Quî Khan sent a message to his yurt that whoever finds a boy of such and such qualities should keep him in his house. Then he proceeded to the shrine of Shaykh al-'Ālam, and there he found the child. Tegina Begim, who feared his intentions, was hugging this child and cried, “My child, my child, O God, save this sinless child of mine.” Begîm pleaded much before the khan but he did not seem to do anything.

The first to enter the shrine was the ambassador from Khorasan. Tegina Begim prayed to God and said, “O Lord Creator, hear the cry of the oppressed, accept my prayers.” As she was praying the ambassador approached the box. Suddenly, out of the blessed grave a hand appeared and struck the man’s neck, and his head – much like an apple that had fallen from the tree – fell rolling on the ground across five steps. This was the reason why Khorasan was the first to be conquered. The second ambassador from Iraq entered. Out of the grave the weapon-like hand appeared. He too was destroyed. Then Iraq was conquered. The third ambassador from the Russians came; he also died. The fourth ambassador of the Franks, his head too was cut off and he died. The same fate awaited the fifth ambassador (from India). The sixth ambassador, from Rum, set his foot in the shrine with much zeal, and the weapon-like hand of the unseen immediately killed him. They say that each ambassador who came in and was destroyed symbolized the conquest of his respective country. The seventh ambassador, from China, said to himself,
“Clearly, if I enter the grave I too will be destroyed. O Muslims, although I am an infidel I know that the friend of Allah in this grave is an angel. This weapon-like hand must be his hand. Perhaps if I enter the grave with a dog, the angel will flee.” They sent for dogs to be brought and then he entered the grave with the dogs. Near the noble grave he could see Tegin Begim with her son, but the day was already becoming night. The (Chinese) ambassador said, “Now I shall kill the boy,” but the khan said: “Be patient until dawn breaks. Then we will be able to see everything.” That night Bayân-Qulî Khan spent the night at Shaykh al-‘Ălam’s shrine and saw the shaykh in a dream. The shaykh commanded, “We have entrusted the boy to you. Send him to Amir Châku.” The Khan immediately stood up, and, taking Tegin Begim and her son, he dressed her in royal clothes, and sent them to Zanjir Sara. The ambassador was unable to complete his intention and was also destroyed. These deeds demonstrate Amir Timûr’s good fortune.

And so Amir Timûr was twelve years old. He was spending his time at Amir Châku’s house. As the people were wondering who this new addition to the household was, Amir Châku explained that this was a child of one of his female slaves, yet he treated him as one of his own children. The storyteller says that Amir Châku was about to be appointed governor of Qarshi, but Bayân-Qulî Khan canceled his appointment, and made Amir Mûsâ Jalayir governor in his stead. Tegin Begim, meanwhile, became a devoted servant of God. She would pray a lot, the sick and the needy would come to her, and she would pray to God for their recovery, and they recovered. Amir Châku was especially devoted to her and gave her a special space in his house, where she was engaged in her worship. Amir Châku was the richest of the Barlas. He had many possessions, and even forty slaves. Amir Châku still did not know that Amir Timûr was
Taraghay Bahādur’s son. Tegina Begim never told him anything, and Taraghay was Chāku’s kinsman.

One day, as the forty slaves were engaged in drawing water out of the well, Mīrzā Sayf al-Dīn (jokingly) said, “Could one man draw water out of this well on his own?” Sāhib-qirān said, “Sure.” Sayf al-Dīn laughed. In the middle of the night Sāhib-qirān came to the well, started pulling the chain, drew the water out, gave some to the people and watered the livestock. Mīrzā Sayf al-Dīn said, “O, relative of mine, if it were up to me, I would make you my vizier.” Amir said, “I am no king, but I would make you the vizier.” The Mīrzā said, “I thought before that if my relative were able to draw the water, he would become king. My thought was well fulfilled.” Amir took an oath saying, “If I become king I will make you the vizier.” That evening all the livestock were fed, and the entire tribe of Amir Chāku heard of this deed.

Taraghay, who went to Kashghar, returned to Bukhara for a council announced by Bayān-Qulī Khan. Yoqun Khatun was by now already mad and blind. Bahādur tried to get word of his son, but to no avail, and it grieved him greatly. One night Shaykh al-‘Ālam appeared before him in a dream. He said, “O Taraghay Bahādur, you have had no news and your son is already twelve years old. What are you still doing here in this land?” Bahādur immediately stood up but could not leave Yoqun Khanum. Bahādur was beginning to hear of what was going on in the Barlas tribe. He decided to take Yoqun Khanum, and with many presents and gifts headed towards Zanjir Sara. They traveled for a few days, until they reached a group of wells in the vicinity of Zanjir Sara. The weather was very hot. At that place Amir Tīmūr was drawing water from the well, but he grew tired and decided to lie down. In this state Taraghay found him. Suddenly Taraghay saw a
snake making its way towards Timur’s chest in order to attack him. The old father’s compassion arose but there was nothing he could do. Amir Timur opened his eyes and saw the snake on his chest. He quickly broke the snake’s fangs and threw it away.

Taraghay Bahadur was amazed at this behavior and said, “O son, who is your father?” He said, “I am Amir Chaku’s son.” Bahadur said, “Direct me to your father’s house.”

Amir Timur brought Taraghay Bahadur to Amir Chaku’s house and announced, “A guest is arriving.” When he (Chaku) saw Bahadur the two embraced and greeted each other. After the greeting, Bahadur said, “I was very much amazed by a thing that this slave-boy did this morning.” Amir Chaku said, “This boy is no slave. His mother is like a daughter to me and she is very devoted [to God].” Bahadur said, “I saw something in my dream. Maybe I can ask that woman to solve that mystery.” Amir Chaku said, “So be it,” and sent to fetch Tegina Begim. As soon as she saw her husband (she was standing behind a curtain), she realized that her secret was kept. Amir Taraghay asked her about the events that he had seen in his dream. She said, “God most high gave you a son who is going to be Sultan over the whole world.” Taraghay said, “I never had a son, and Yoqun Khatun became mad and blind a few years ago, after my own wife had disappeared.” Tegina Begim said, “You do have a son, and he is in good health. I shall pray that Yoqun Khatun will also recover.” They brought Yoqun Khatun. Tegina Begim said, “O Yoqun Khanum, may God most high give you cure. Now tell your doings truthfully.” Yoqun Khanum began to tell her deeds unwillingly, “It so happened that I had sent the slave Qaidun in order to kill Tegina Begim,” and saying that, Taraghay Bahadur, holding a sword in his hand, struck her down to the ground. “Extend your hand, I am Tegina Begim and the boy standing there is your son.” Taraghay hugged the child and wept. Then Tegina Begim said, “You do have a son, and he is in good health. I shall pray that Yoqun Khatun will also recover.” They brought Yoqun Khatun. Tegina Begim said, “O Yoqun Khanum, may God most high give you cure. Now tell your doings truthfully.” Yoqun Khanum began to tell her deeds unwillingly, “It so happened that I had sent the slave Qaidun in order to kill Tegina Begim,” and saying that, Taraghay Bahadur, holding a sword in his hand, struck her down to the ground. “Extend your hand, I am Tegina Begim and the boy standing there is your son.” Taraghay hugged the child and wept. Then Te-
gina Begim prayed and Yoqun Khanum was cured. They stayed at Amir Chāku’s house for a few days. Then they set out towards the city of Shahr-i Sabz. And so Taraghay Bahādur brought Amir Timūr to Shahr-i Sabz. Šāhib-qirān was passing his twelfth year and entering his thirteenth in the Year of the Mouse, at the beginning of the year.
Account of Tīmūr's Encounter with the Men of the Unseen World.

At that time Shaykh Ḥasan Kulal was alive. He was preaching to his students from the pulpit of the mosque and announced that on the morrow a man who would become a great king would appear in town. The next day, the students assembled and saw that a boy was approaching with the sign of God on his forehead. Apart from him there was no one about. They gathered around him. Tīmūr knew that these were the students of the man who was preaching from the pulpit. Tīmūr approached the pulpit. The Shaykh said, “Today our conversation will revolve around the things of this world and the next, and what God has given.” Tīmūr thought, “I am going to be like this man, I am alone in this world to experience grief and sadness.” The shaykh became aware of his inner thoughts and told what was told of His Holiness Adam, “Adam was arrogant enough to think that everything came from him, but became silent when he saw woman.” Now Tīmūr extended his hand to the shaykh and became his disciple. The shaykh taught him to read from the Qurʾān. At the same time he extended the hand of friendship and kindness to the other followers.

There was a dome there that no one ever saw (from the inside). The shaykh invited Tīmūr to enter. Suddenly a man appeared. He was a Sufi; he too entered the dome. Then another man came in, with a boy at his side as his companion. He too entered the dome and disappeared. Both men were wearing strange clothes and were speaking languages that Tīmūr could not understand. Suddenly the door of the dome opened and out came a Sufi, wearing green clothes. Slowly their languages became easier to understand. One of them said, “I am the son of the bek of the Maghrib. We were out hunting when a bird flew away and we could not catch it, and it brought us here. My name is Sulṭān
Muḥammad.” Another said, “I am the son of the bek of Yemen. I was on my way to the hajj and I was also brought here by a bird. My name is Sulṭān Zunnun.” They asked the Sufi, “What is the meaning of this?” That man said, “This is the land of the men of the unseen world. They know the source of strength of the world. If they wish it, they can make you kings; if they wish it, they can make you beggars. This is especially important now as we are approaching a period of choosing a king. Whoever they choose amongst you will receive their instruction. The birds that led you here were sent from the men of the unseen. It is their wish now to speak to you and to ask you questions, even test you. Whoever succeeds shall be garbed with the robe of kingship.”

The prince from Yemen said, “Kingship is mine, for I have been trained in all kinds of science.” The son of the bek of the Maghrib said, “Kingship should fall into my hands, for I have studied much wisdom.” Tīmūr remained silent. That Sufi said, “Turk boy, you’re not saying anything?” He said, “Anyone who takes a look at me, O my Sufi, sees that I have no such capabilities, but I am willing to serve the men of the unseen.”

In short, the three princes were invited inside. The prince from Yemen said, “I should sit in the senior (upper) position.” Sulṭān Muḥammad said, “I should be sitting in the higher position.” Amir Tīmūr said nothing. Finally, a servant came in and directed one to the left side, the other to the right. The Sufis were sitting according to protocol like amirs. Only Amir Tīmūr was left standing, his hand on his heart in greeting. The servant told him to sit down, but he refused, saying, “This place is too important for me to sit down, I will remain standing.” Then Shaykh Shams Kulal appeared. He was Tīmūr’s teacher. He said, “Son, your behavior is worthy of kingship.” A man recited a poem and Tīmūr asked the servant for the man’s identity. The servant said, “This is the Shaykh of
the South, Sulṭān Muḥammad’s master.” Everyone kept silent. [Finally], the qutb said, “This is the place of testing. They all need to pass a test.”

As soon as he finished his words, a man was brought into the room. He was drunk and rude and was holding a bottle of wine in one hand, a weapon in the other. He was wearing black. The qutb said, “This is my son. As much as I tried, he would not accept my ways. He offered his regret three times, but every time he broke his word. You three have to advise us how to deal with him.” The prince from Yemen, who was very knowledgeable, said, “You have to pray for him yourself.” The prince from the Maghrib said, “Allow him to repent once more.” Then they asked the Şâhib-qirān what he thought. Şâhib-qirān jumped at the man and struck him so hard that he died. Both others exclaimed at the Şâhib-qirān, “This is the qutb’s son, why have you wrongfully killed him? You don’t kill people for wine drinking.” Şâhib-qirān said, “You both told us your skills, but I had to show you mine. I am a Turk and this is my skill. A drunk should not enter such a place.” The story teller says that the location of the men of the unseen was unknown.
Tīmūr’s Marriage

Tīmūr went to visit Shams Kulal, but he died that night (the year was 755/1355). Tīmūr went to sleep by his grave and one evening he had a dream in which the shaykh told him, “My son, go to Bukhara and observe the wisdom of the Lord most High.” After that Tīmūr headed for Bukhara. He walked much of the way and became tired. He entered through one of the gates of Bukhara and came into one of the buildings, found a room and settled there. By chance, someone had left a bag in that room that contained one ruby from Badakhshan. There was nothing else there. He decided to take the ruby and try to sell it in the bazaar. Suddenly, a few men emerged from behind a wooden beam. They were running away, and Tīmūr tried to ask them but they would not answer and dispersed in every direction. A young, drunk bully emerged, carrying a dagger. Someone shouted, “Hey, Turk-boy, run away!” Tīmūr stayed put. After all, he was tall and strong. That youth struck Tīmūr with his dagger. Tīmūr evaded the blow, but then the ruby fell to the ground. The thug picked up the ruby and started to run away. Tīmūr gave chase. One man shouted at him, “Turk-boy, stop chasing this tyrant! He will kill you! He is the beloved of Baraq Khan.” Baraq Khan was Bayān-Qulī Khan’s son. He set fire to the houses of many Muslims for his own enjoyment, but out of fear no one ever complained about him to his father. [At that time] Bayān-Qulī Khan was becoming old and had no other son. If Baraq Khan were to be disposed with, no other person would be able to inherit Chaghatay’s throne!

Although the ʿulamāʾ managed to endure this hardship, order was needed. Şāhīb-qirān was very young when he stepped into the caravansarāy; he had nothing and was hungry and thirsty. He thought that he would petition the dādkhān. At that time the
dādkhā’āh was Amir Yaḍgarshāh Arlat. Timūr explained the circumstances to him, but he said, “Go to the tumanbāshi, he will take care of you.” Timūr went to him but he said, “Go to Amir Jalayir the mingbāshi.” He (Amir Jalayir) sent him to Amir Bayān Sulduz, who was of the noyans, but among the Chaghatays there was no man of strength or courage. He said to Timūr, “This is a matter for the sharīʿa, go see a qazi.” The qazi was Imām Saʿd who said, “I have no respect for the khan. I am a man of the sharīʿa first. Go bring a witness (who will testify for you).” Timūr went to the jewelers market to look for a witness, but all the people said, “We are simple men. We cannot be your witnesses. We want to live.” The amir went into a mosque and collapsed out of hunger.

In the middle of the night a dervish came in, carrying a torch. He saw Timūr and asked him how he was doing. Timūr explained the events that happened. The dervish said, “Yes, it is unfortunate that we have such tyranny in Bukhara.” He then said, “Tomorrow after the morning prayer, go to the minaret and you will find Malham Pāradoz sitting there. Explain your situation to him. Maybe he could help. Do whatever he tells you.”

The next morning Timūr went to the minaret. There was a small shop in which an old man was sitting, sewing some old clothes. Timūr became upset, “How could this old man help with my misfortune?” He stepped forward anyway and greeted the man. The old man returned his greetings, but remained busy with what he was doing. He did not say a word. After a while Timūr decided to explain his situation to him. He listened to Timūr’s words and asked, “Didn’t you speak to the ʿulamāʾ about it?” “I did,” said Timūr, “but they sent me to Yaḍgarshāh.” Timūr thought that nothing could come out of this, but then suddenly Amir Yaḍgarshāh himself appeared and greeted the old man with
much respect. The old man seemed not to notice him and continued his sewing. After a while he said, “You impious tyrant, why didn’t you help this poor young man?” Yādgarschāh said fearfully, “I sent him to Amir Mu’ayyad, so that he would help him. He is my superior.”

The old man sent an apprentice to bring Amir Mu’ayyad. Mu’ayyad explained that it was on account of his superior, Bāyāzīd. Then Bāyāzīd was summoned, and he blamed Bayān Sulduz, who arrived with his retinue, all wearing their fine brocade robes with their royal emblems. The old man paid no attention to them and they just stood there in sheer reverence. Tīmūr was shocked. He felt like he was drowning and put his finger in his mouth. After a while, the old man said, “Hey, Bayān Sulduz, if you are of Qarachar Noyan, how come you never heard the request of this visitor?” He said, “I did, and I directed him to the qazi of our noble sharīʿa.” So they brought Qazi Saʿd. Amir Tīmūr was astonished to see the respect which the qazi showed the old man. The latter, still sitting in his place, said to the qazi, “Why did you not implement the judgment of the sharīʿa?” The qazi said, “I was looking for a witness. This young man just left and never returned.” The Amir said, “I went to the jewelers market, but they just said that they were simple people and did not want to be witnesses. I asked them about the ruby, but they said that they would not want to deal with the qazi. They said that Baraq Khan is a tyrant and that they are afraid of him.” Upon hearing these words the old man became bitter and enraged. He commanded that they bring Baraq Khan. Tīmūr could not keep silent any more. He said, “Baba, why do all these people show you such respect?” The old man said, “Sit quietly and I will tell you.” But he was still busy doing his work (sewing). Everyone kept silent and uttered no word waiting for the old man to speak.
Suddenly the sound of carriages was heard. Baraq Khan was entering with much pomp and splendor. All the amirs and townsfolk were standing in their places, everyone assembled to see the glory of His Majesty. The old man remained seated in silence. Baraq Khan and his entourage approached the old man. Then he said, “O Tyrant, for a while I was guilty of praising you, but now I will tell your father to destroy you.” Baraq Khan said, “Baba, what have I done wrong?” Then he explained to him what had happened. Baraq Khan said, “I had no news of that.” He sent for his close servant. As it so happened, his beloved was there. He said, “I don’t know how the ruby got here. I must have been drunk.” Baraq Khan placed his hand on his heart and with much reverence said, “Baba, with your permission, let this young man come to me tomorrow, and I will give him the price of two rubies.” A jeweler said, “The price is one thousand gold.” The Khan said: “I will give him two thousand gold.”

“Young man,” the old man said to Tīmūr, “Stand up. You will take your money from Baraq Khan.” Tīmūr said, “My claim is settled. Now explain what has just happened.” The man said, “First go and recover your money. Then return here and I will explain.” Tīmūr went to Baraq Khan’s headquarters and saw him there, sitting on a sofa, entertained by dancers. He averted his eyes. Rising from his seat, Baraq Khan saw Tīmūr and sent his servants to bring two thousand gold coins. Then he came to Tīmūr and began to apologize profusely. He also asked him to convey his apologies to the old man. Tīmūr gathered the gold and went back to the old man. The old man asked, “Did you take it?” Tīmūr said, “Yes, I did.” Then he placed the gold before them, divided the pile in half and gave one part to the old man. The man became irritated and said, “Hey, stupid kid. I
have no need for anything in this world. Use it yourself for your own expenses.” Şahib-qirân said, “Baba, tell me your secret. Make my poor soul happy.”

The old man said, “Ah, charming young man, listen to my words. For the last forty years I have been making clothes. I never coveted anything from anyone. I have been calling the morning prayer from this minaret. Ten years ago during the time of the evening prayer, rain began to fall. That time a woman was passing. A man, a drunk of the Chaghatay, was following her and caught her by the hand, and forced her into a house. The woman wailed and cried, ‘My hand, my hand, stop it! O good Muslims, I am pure. My husband said that if I’m not home tonight he will divorce me, take pity on me.’ So I went to that Turk’s house to help her, but his servants were there. They beat me up and I fled. I thought to myself, ‘How could the woman stay with her husband?’ And then I had an idea. I went up to the minaret and sounded the call for prayer, but not in its usual form. It seems that Bayân-Qulî Khan was in the citadel, reciting a prayer from the Qur’ân. His retainers alerted him, and he asked who was calling for prayer at this time. They told him, ‘It must be a madman or a fool.’ The khan sent someone to check, and he came and brought me before the khan. The khan asked, ‘Are you crazy or are you sane?’ I said, ‘I am sane.’ And I proceeded to explain to him what had happened. The khan sent for the Turk and the poor woman, and they were brought before him. He then searched for the woman’s husband and brought him too. He tied a rope around the Turk’s neck and strangled him to death. Nothing was revealed to the husband of the woman’s sin. Then he called me Ata. He said, ‘Ata, help me and let me know of whatever happens in the city.’ Thanks to God Almighty I pledged to make another late call to prayer if this serves justice. And I have kept my word for the last ten years. And this is why the amirs fear me.”
(Today they call him Bābā Paradoz, and his grave is on the south side of Bukhara near the South Gate.)

One night Bayān-Qulī Khan saw Shaykh al-ʻĀlam in a dream. He said, “Do not behave contrary to the shari’a. Rise and give your daughters in marriage.” Bayān-Qulī Khan had nine daughters. He rose from his sleep, assembled his daughters and told them, “My daughters, it is time for you to choose a man to marry.” They all agreed. The youngest daughter was Sarāy Mulk. She said to her father, “Father, I do not wish to depart from your fortunate shadow and I am not going to marry.” Then Bayān-Qulī Khan gave one daughter to Amir Chāku, one to Amir Jahānshāh, one to Amir Ōljei. He married off all his daughters (except for Sarāy Mulk) with much celebration and merriment. One day Shaykh al-ʻĀlam appeared before him again in a dream and said, “Marry your daughter!” When he woke up he called his youngest daughter and said, “You have to get married.” She said, “I am not going to choose a husband.” Again Shaykh al-ʻĀlam appeared before him in a dream and in a warning voice said, “Marry off your daughter!” Again he summoned his daughter and told her, “O my daughter, heed to my wishes and choose a husband.” She said, “Do you care about my wishes? If so, give me Taraghay Bahādur’s son.” Since the khan was upset with Taraghay Bahādur, he did not consent. Again his daughter said, “My wish is that whoever beats me in chess, I will accept him, even if he is a shepherd.” The khan was upset and said, “How can I deal with your disrespect?” She said, “I will marry even your slave-boy if he is of worthy quality. Whoever wins in chess, I will become his wife.” The khan agreed.
The next morning the rumor spread and many chess players gathered at the palace. The princess beat them all. At the same time, Shaykh al-Ālam appeared again in his dream and told him to give his daughter to whomever she wishes. She told him, “My beloved father, tell your messengers to tell every chess player, wherever he is found, to come.” The messengers spread throughout the markets, announcing and summoning all the chess players in the realm. Amir Tīmūr heard the call, stepped outside, and the messenger explained to him what it was all about. Since Tīmūr had no equal in chess, he decided to go.

The khan saw a Turk-boy, wearing a robe, on his head a fur hat. The khan said, “What does this kid want?” The messenger said, “As much as I tried to discourage him, he insisted on coming along.” Amir Şāhib-qirān said nothing. The khan commanded that they bring a slave boy to him (this was Sarāy Mulk in disguise). They brought her. Tīmūr knew that although the clothes were those of a slave boy, the person before him was a girl. As soon as they saw each other, they fell in love. They set the chess board between them. Şāhib-qirān said, “I am going to play on one condition.” The khan said, “The condition is that if you win, this slave boy is yours.” He said, “And what happens if I lose?” The khan said, “Nothing is required of you if you lose.” He said, “If I lose, I will become the slave of this slave boy.” They played three times. Each game lasted one night and one day. Tīmūr emerged as the winner. Finally, the princess loosened her robe, and rising, went into the house. The khan became upset. Tīmūr did not reveal his true origin. The reason was that the khan was upset with his father. Therefore, Tīmūr was afraid to reveal his true identity. The khan said, “Leave now, come back tomorrow. The slave-boy is yours.” Tīmūr returned to the caravansarāy. The khan came back to the house and sum-
moned his daughter. She said, “Stay loyal to your oath. Give me to him, even if he is a slave.” The khan was upset. He placed a guard at the door, so that when the Turk boy comes he will not be allowed to enter.

The next morning when Şähib-qirān came to the palace, the guards at the gate would not let him pass. He returned to his room at the caravansarāy. The next day a maid came to the Şähib-qirān from the palace, carrying a letter: “Praise be to God. Know that the slave-boy who played chess with you is actually me, Sarāy Mulk, daughter of the khan. If the anxiety of love has kindled your heart, please petition the khan on our behalf. My father is a just man and will surely give me to you. If he gives you another slave, do not accept him.” Tīmūr honored the maid and sent her back. The next morning the khan went hunting. As he was riding Tīmūr appeared before him on the road and said, “O, just king. Please keep your promise.” The khan became upset that he could not go on the hunt on time and returned. The next day he sent to Tīmūr a number of slaves, but Tīmūr would not accept them, saying, “These are not the slaves I played chess with.” The khan became agitated and appointed Sirāj Qamari, his vizier, to talk to Tīmūr. The vizier came to him and said, “Young man, that is the khan’s own daughter. Go, accept something else instead.” He was holding a box in his hands that contained much gold. The vizier said, “Go ahead, take it.” But Tīmūr refused, and for the next three days he was weeping for his love.

Then he decided to visit the shrine of His Holiness Shaykh al-ʿĀlam. He covered his head and began to wail, “O Lord Creator, do not put my heart in such a state of love, and sustain me through this separation.” Tīmūr cried himself to sleep. Shaykh al-ʿĀlam appeared before him in a dream and said, “O Amir Tīmūr, rise! God most High will show
you the way.” Timūr immediately woke up and headed back to the city. He soon saw something on the road that turned out to be a box. He came close and saw that it was the same box that the vizier had offered him earlier. He picked up the box and returned to town. He saw that many people gathered and were speaking anxiously amongst themselves. Timūr asked one of them what had happened, but no one would answer. Suddenly the vizier Sirāj Qamari came rushing. Timūr greeted the vizier. The vizier spotted the box under Timūr’s arm, and commanded, “Arrest the thief!” They put shackles on his legs, chains on his hands. (That night a thief entered the khan’s quarters, and managed to injure the khan, steal the box and escape.)

Timūr asked, “What wrong have I done?” But people simply cursed at him. The vizier brought Timūr before the khan. The khan was sitting on his throne as the amirs and beggs were sitting on his left and right flanks. Baraq Khan, the khan’s son, was also sitting at his side. The vizier entered saying, “I found the thief.” The khan said, “Was it you who came in search of my daughter?” Amir Timūr said, “Yes.” The khan said, “And you injured me?” Then Šāhāb-qirān explained everything that had happened, but the khan showed no interest in his words. They took Timūr and put him in prison. The khan’s condition had worsened and soon his soul returned to his creator in the month of Ramadān. His son, Baraq khan took his place. The khan was buried next to Shaykh al-ʿĀlam.

So Baraq Khan was installed upon the seat of kingship and was carefully watching Sirāj Qamari. He soon executed Qamari, but after the latter’s death the yurt fell into chaos and Baraq Khan began to lose his mind. He was humiliating all the beggs to the point that Amir Chāku, Amir Bayān Sulduz and Amir Yādgārshāh, as well as others, dropped out of his government and distanced themselves from him. Amir Timūr was still
in prison, as Baraq Khan seemed to have lost his memory and completely forgot about him. The weather was very hot. It was the time of summer. Seeing no solution, Tîmûr was sitting in his cell, weeping.

In the middle of the night someone came and called to Amir Tîmûr, “Young man, stand up! I will help you.” Amir asked him for his name, but he said, “It’s no concern of yours.” And he smuggled Tîmûr out of prison. The jailor awoke from his sleep, and immediately raised the alarm. The people of Bukhara began to chase [Tîmûr]. Tîmûr ran into the Friday Mosque (the mosque had six gates). They all gathered at the gates, but no one dared to go inside. Tîmûr climbed to the top of the minaret and waited there. He struck with a stick those who tried to climb after him. Outside, a hundred men gathered. Day passed and night descended. A little after midnight, the black-dressed man (who had saved him from prison) climbed up. The amir tried to hit him, but he said, “I am your friend.” They descended the minaret when everyone around them had already fallen asleep. Two other men dressed in black joined them from the shadows. They led Tîmûr directly to the citadel. The gate was opened before them and they stepped into the citadel. Tîmûr asked, “Where are you leading me? I am going to face too many hardships [this way].” They laughed. He was led into an interior hall decorated with carpets and gold, and one of them said, “Let us play chess together. I am Sarây Mulk.” Tîmûr said, “My queen, I have suffered a lot because of my love for you. Praise the Lord that we finally succeeded in meeting.” Tîmûr told her about his true origins, and the princess realized that he was Taraghay Bahâdur’s son. The two spent the next few days together in utter delight.
One night Baraq Khan was walking on the roof, when he saw a light coming out of his young sister’s room. This surprised him so he went over to check. He glanced through the crack in the door and saw the two lovers engaged in prayer. He immediately summoned ten of his strongest slaves. The princess heard their footsteps, looked outside and saw that the men had gathered outside her door. She immediately cried to Timūr to stop his prayer. Timūr tried to get up from his place but he was injured and collapsed. They entered, made him stand, beat him up and carried him to the field outside of Shaykh Hasan Bākharzī, where they threw him to the ground and left him to die. Then Baraq Khan sent for one of his slaves to take the princess out of town and kill her secretly without anyone knowing about it, for “she shamed me.”

The slave put the princess on a horse and rode out of town to the steppe. The princess realized that, for sure, she was about to die. She slowly took out a dagger from the side-saddle and struck the man’s neck with such force that his head rolled – like an apple – to the ground. She then jumped off the horse. She took the slave’s clothes and put them on, climbed back on the saddle and headed to the town of Qarshi. In two days she reached Qarshi and from there went to Shahr-i Sabz. Her horse grew tired and she was forced to walk until she reached a place called Yiglachliq. There she saw a yellow-skinned man waiting for the shepherds and watching many sheep. That man was Taraghay Bahādur. As she approached him she fell, and her hat rolled off her head, uncovering her hair. Amir Taraghay Bahādur asked, “Who are you? Where are you from?” And she answered, “I am Taraghay Bahādur’s daughter-in-law.” Bahādur became upset. She explained to him all that had happened. Then Taraghay Bahādur wept, “O my dear child, Amir Timūr is my son, but I haven’t been able to find him for the last two years.” Then
he showed his new daughter-in-law every kind of reverence and respect and assigned to her a few maids. Next, he wrote a letter to Baraq Khan detailing how Timūr went to Bukhara, played chess with the khan’s daughter, and how devoted the two were to each other. He included Sarāy Mulk’s regards to her father and concluded the letter with an implied threat. The letter reached Baraq Khan. As soon as he became aware of the letter’s contents he became confused. He said, “I did not know that Timūr was Taraghay Bahādur’s son. Does anyone know whether Timūr is dead or alive?”

That very night, as the disciples of Shaykh Ḥasan Bākharzī were visiting the shrine, they saw something lying in the field outside [the shrine]. They came near and saw a young man moving very slowly, several of his limbs broken. Two of them carried him into the shrine to treat his wounds. He spent forty days in the shrine before he was entrusted into the care of Shaykh Ḥasan Bākharzī himself.243

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243 Eventually Baraq Khan and Taraghay Bahādur reached an agreement and Timūr and Sarāy Mulk had a large and joyful wedding ceremony.
2.2 Tīmūr’s Rise to Power and His Enthronement

Account of the Installation on the Imperial Throne and the Enthronement of

Şāhib-qirān in the year 771 A.H.\textsuperscript{244}

When Baraq Khan’s fortune had reached its demise, a group of amirs gathered in the city of Balkh to decide upon the fortune of the country by determining the identity of its next ruler. The gathering was in unanimous agreement that His Highness the Şāhib-qirān was worthy and deserving of the crown, even though up until that time the affair of the khanship was part and parcel of the lineage of Chinggis Khan. Having this consideration in mind, the amirs set out for the hunt.

It so happened that Tīmūr was hunting when his favorite falcon, indeed his falcon of good omen, picked up the trail of a gazelle. They kept following the gazelle through every step and in every direction (and in their zealous pursuit separated from the rest of the group) until midnight, when they had reached an old village in ruins where Tīmūr decided to camp for the night.

When daylight broke, Tīmūr heard a whistling sound, and when he turned around he saw a woman approaching the campsite. The skin was flayed from her face from her forehead to her chin, so that the bones of her face shone in their whiteness. At first Tīmūr was startled, but then he took courage and approached. The woman exhibited much honor, but Tīmūr grew suspicious and drew his sword in order to strike. The woman swore to him, “I am not an enemy.” When Tīmūr asked her to explain her condition, the woman said, “My story is long and difficult, and my circumstances are heartbreakingly, for

\textsuperscript{244} \textit{Kunūz al-a抯am}, pp. 285-293. This story does not appear in the Uzbek version of the work. See also \textit{Tīmūr-nāma. Kullīyāt-i fārsī}, pp. 136-139.
I have lived two hundred years and at the time Chinggis Khan invaded these lands I was but twenty years old. Ah, my lot is a bad one. The Mongols had murdered my husband, and I decided to kill Chinggis Khan in revenge. As the Mongol convoy was returning to Khorezm, I was cooking some food along the side of the road, and poured some poison into the pot. I came close to Chinggis Khan and said, ‘O Khan, I implore His Majesty to taste my cooking,’ but just then Qarachar Noyan, his vizier, prevented me from coming any closer. After many trials, they finally decided to put my food to the test. They brought a thief from a local prison and commanded him to eat the food. The thief ate and died on the spot. They realized that it contained poison and they handed me over to Qarachar, who locked me up in his house as a prisoner.

At that time the Mongol army arrested the great Shaykh Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, and they chained us together (one of my legs and one of Shaykh Najm al-Dīn’s legs were shackled in one chain). Qarachar came in and said, ‘O Shaykh, I ask for your forgiveness. You are free to go, but the woman will have to be killed.’ I was determined to try and escape, but just then His Holiness the Shaykh said, ‘O Qarachar, know that this woman’s life will be long. One of your own descendants will become king. Give to this woman this letter written by Qachulay and Kābul Khan and Tumanay, so that she will deliver it to your children. Do not kill her, for the decree of the Divine is upon this woman!’ Qarachar said, ‘It is the khan’s command that we flay the skin off this woman’s face.’ The Shaykh said, ‘Flay her, then.’ After that they flayed the skin off my face, but they gave me that letter. And - I am in my origin a daughter of Khorezm - the Shaykh told me, ‘Go to Balkh and remain there,’ and since that time until today I have been in this place. Now that I look at you I see all the signs that the distinguished one had told me about.’
Timur said, “I am of Qarachar’s lineage, but God forbid I should be the man you are looking for.” Timur said further, “O woman, this child (i.e., Timur) has no mark that you might recognize.” The woman said, “When I take a closer look at you I will know if you are the destined son. Show me your shoulder!” Timur showed her his shoulder. The woman saw the mark on his shoulder and observed that he was lame and that he looked like an Arab. The woman said, “Now explain your lineage.” Amir Timur rehearsed his lineage down to Qarachar Noyan. That woman knelt in recognition before him and afterwards said, “I bring you greetings on behalf of Shaykh Najm al-Din Kubra.” Then she produced the letter of the three ancient kings, Qachulay Khan and Tumanay Khan and Kabul Khan. Timur observed that the seals of the three were affixed to the letter. However, the contents were written in a Turkic language unfamiliar to Timur, and he could not read it. Timur took the woman and the letter and returned to Balkh. He announced the matter to the council of amirs, but among them there was no one who could read the letter – identified as written in the Uyghur tongue – except for Mirza Sayf al-Din, who had translated its contents to the assembly. It was, they realized, a prophecy, predicting that the fortunate turn of events would bring about the establishment of the auspicious and imperial sultanate upon a distinguished descendant whose name begins at four hundred, and comes to a close at two hundred.\footnote{A reference to Timur’s name, his “r” having a numerical value of four hundred, and his “t” matching two hundred.} The assembly was excited. The prophecy continued: “The khanship passes along the lineage of Qabul Khan, and Qachulay’s descendants should not take upon themselves the custom of the khan. In this manner, the seal of Qarachar and Chinggis Khan is of the lineage of Qabul Khan. Qachulay should choose the
vizierate.” The letter ended in the following words: “Let us hope that his distinguished descendants will not break the pact.”

Timur remarked, “I am also committed to this agreement. However, I will not become king.” The Amir said, “It is conveyed through the line of Kâbul Khan that one of his descendants will be king.” As much as Mir Baraka tried to convince Amir Timur, the Amir would not accept. Finally, after making another effort, the amirs became convinced that they should find someone of Kâbul Khan’s lineage.246

At that time a wandering dervish appeared at the court. He greeted Timur and said, “I come from the direction of Sali Sarây, which is in the vicinity of Kulab-i Hisar, where the Dughlat tribe is resident. One day I saw a youth, about fourteen years of age who was playing in the company of other children. He made himself (to be) king. When he ceased playing, he would play chess, and would beat anyone he played with. I suspected he must be a true prince. His name is Amir Ḥusayn. The people claim that he is a grandson of Amir Qazaghan, who had been missing for a while.” Timur asked, “How can

246 The story of the pact between the ancestors of Chinggis Khan and Timur was promoted in Timurid sources, and served as one of foundations for Timur’s legitimation. According to the story, Qachulay, Chinggis Khan’s grandfather’s brother, dreamt that four stars were emanating from his brother Kâbul’s chest, the last of the stars filling the world with its brilliance. Then he dreamt of seven stars emanating from his own chest, followed by an eighth star that spread its radiance in the world. When he woke up, he asked their father, Tumanay, about the dream. His father explained that the fourth star rising from Kâbul’s chest was to be Chinggis Khan, and the eighth star emanating from Qachulay was to be Timur. Tumanay then wrote, in Uyghur, that from then on the takht-i khânî would belong to Kâbul’s descendants, and to Qachulay’s descendants – the shamshîr va ḥukmranî. Then the two sons swore before Tumanay, that they would keep the pact. Then they sealed the pact with the royal seal and kept it in the treasury. The story appears in Timurid sources, including Yazdi’s Zaftarnâma (vol. I, pp. 24-25) and the Shajarat al-ātrâk (p. 55-57). It seems that custody of the covenant was entrusted to Chaghatai (much like the yasa), and that the covenant was physically destroyed in a raid on the treasury in the year 1340, by a descendant of Ögedei (‘Ali Sulṭân). See also Woods, “Timur’s Genealogy,” p. 93.
you be sure he is a real prince? What are his identifying marks?” The dervish exclaimed, “He is black-eyed, pearly-toothed, wide-mouthed and big-eared. Naturally, Chinggis Khan’s lineage is defined by these celebrated qualities.” The assembly hurried to concede that indeed these were the signs of a true prince.

Timūr sent his son, Mīrāẕa ‘Umar Shaykh, to bring the boy to him. Mīrāẕa ‘Umar Shaykh took the letter from the gathering of the amirs, and set off together with five hundred men. They set out and came to a mountain slope. That very night there was a flood, which carried off the five hundred men. It was springtime. The Mīrāẕa escaped with a thousand disasters and calamities, including a fierce battle with a pack of vicious wolves. The Mīrāẕa reached a place where the paraphernalia of an apothecary had been scattered all over, which made the place look like a disaster had occurred. An old man appeared and said, “O young man, come quick, a tiger has come to destroy you.” That old man was eating the leaves of a tree out of a stone bowl. The prince saw that there were many roots there, he took hold of them, turned them into a paste and anointed the trunk of the tree with them. When the tiger approached, the Mīrāẕa withdrew to the side, the tiger rubbed himself against the tree, and his hairs became glued to the tree. Then Mīrāẕa struck it with a cudgel and took off its skin. The old man descended from the tree. Mīrāẕa asked him of the whereabouts of the prince. The old man (who was an apothecary) said, “That young man is in our tribe.” The old man said, “His name is Amir Ḥusayn ibn Amir ʿAbdallāh, and he is of the lineage of Chinggis Khan.” The Mīrāẕa was thrilled to learn of this and the old man guided him.
When they came into the village Amir Ḥusayn was playing with other children. The Mīrzā bowed before him and placed the tiger skin in front of him as a gift. He also gave him Tīmūr’s letter of invitation. Amir Ḥusayn studied the letter and brought the Mīrzā into his house, where he set the chess board and beat the Mīrzā three times. In chess-playing the Mīrzā used to always beat Tīmūr (and Tīmūr used to say that on account of chess he would conquer the face of the earth). In short, the men of the tribe heard about the Mīrzā’s arrival and came to see him. The Mīrzā took the prince and set out on the road. They reached the city of Balkh and descended from their horses. Most of the time, when the Mīrzā came to deliver news, they would joyfully sound the drum to announce his arrival. When Mir Baraka heard of the arrival of the young prince, he said, “The turn of kingship is of the Ṣāḥīb-qirān, all this is idle.” Tīmūr came forth to greet the important guest. But fate has its own rules...

Amir Ḥusayn rode off to the hunt. As the company of hunters were in pursuit of a gazelle, Amir Ḥusayn outpaced the others. He descended from his horse and wanted to cut off the gazelle’s head. However, a man by the name of Möngke the Drunk appeared. A year earlier Amir Ḥusayn had struck his father with an arrow and killed him. He always contemplated taking vengeance for his father’s blood. Now he could seize the opportunity. Möngke arrived and with one strike of his sword he cut off one of Amir Ḥusayn’s arms at the shoulder. Having destroyed his world, Möngke began to flee.

Tīmūr arrived at the scene with an army. He had already heard in Balkh that Amir Ḥusayn had gone hunting and wanted to convene an assembly right there, but other events were taking their toll. Tīmūr hugged the head of the young man (Amir Ḥusayn).
Mīrzā ‘Umar Shaykh seized Möngke and brought him. Ḥusayn said, “I implore you, do not kill my murderer.” Since Amir Ḥusayn was an intelligent young man, he said,

O Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction.

Precarious Heaven has overturned my hope,
and has made the fruit of my youth one with the dark dust.
It has cut the warp and woof of my hope into shreds.

The flower from the garden of my desire has not yet blossomed,
and the autumn of death came rushing in.
Death disheveled my musky locks under the tomb.

O Beloved, do not attach your heart to this world.
Another day has passed, I wandered and saw no rose petals,
nor have I heard the call of the nightingale.

After that, Amir Ḥusayn said further, “O Tīmūr, you are worthy of the sultanate.
It is clear that you should become king. Abide by the command of the Prophet, praises and blessings of God be upon him!” Amir Ḥusayn had passed away, and they brought his body to Shahr-i Sabz, and enshrined it in the mausoleum of Shaykh Shams Kulal. A multitude of men have now gathered, calling Tīmūr, “Fortune is now with you, the riches of kingship are yours. God has granted rulership to you as a present.”

That very night Tīmūr saw His Holiness the Prophet (praises and blessings of God upon him!) in a dream. He commanded, “O Amir Tīmūr, we have made you king on this earth. It is necessary that you immediately renounce your doubts, and conquer the face of the earth.” Tīmūr said, “What am I to do with the letter of the ancestors?” His Holiness the Messenger (praises and blessings of God upon him!) said, “The letter of your forefathers is better than our command. Now rise king, and claim the throne. Then find a man
of the lineage of Chinggis Khan. He should have the title of khan, and you should have the affairs of the sultanate."

When Şâhib-qirân woke up, he took counsel with the amirs. They were all of the opinion that he was deserving of the sultanate, and it so happened that on the 27th of blessed Ramadan, on Wednesday, in the Year of the Dog, in the year 771 A.H., they girded the city with festivity. In accordance with the custom of Chinggis Khan they made an enthronement, and raised (Tîmûr) on the white felt – four commanders of the amirs enthroned him upon the throne which they called the throne of Jamshîd. And the amirs, in accordance with the custom of Chinggis Khan, knelt down and saluted. The Amir commanded, “I have brought Soy urghatmîsh Oghlan,” and gave him the Khanship, and he [i.e., Soy urghatmîsh Oghlan] sat in council higher than the others, and on all the decrees they wrote his name before the name of Şâhib-qirân.
2.3 Timūr’s Dream about the Uzbek Conquest.

Account of the Dream of the Sāḥib-qirān in which the Uzbeks

Finally Seize the Kingdom.\(^{247}\)

The storyteller related that one night Sāḥib-qirān dreamed that from the north (qub\(\text{h}\)\) came a big elephant, a who wandered throughout Mawarannahr. It came towards the amir’s throne and ascended the throne. After that, twenty one lion cubs came and ascended the throne. A group of thirsty people were fleeing from water, a group of blind people were engaged in buying and selling, a group of sick and ailing persons were visiting the healthy, a group of sheep were eating grass but were not dropping manure, an ox was grazing in the meadow but when it was leaving it was in worse shape than before. He saw a bazaar where there was meat of pig and bear, and the people of that place were not buying permissible (ḥalāl) meat.

In short, when he awoke from his dream he asked the knowledgeable dream interpreters for an explanation, but no explanation satisfied him. They said that in Qarshi there was a man whose name was Ḥākim Sābi Bakhshī, who was living in the cloisters (zaway\(\text{a}\)) and who used to be a student of ʿUmar Nisfarat. If the Sāḥib-qirān desired a satisfactory interpretation for his dream he should consult this man. He sent Mīrzā Mīrānshāh [to bring him]. Ḥākim said, “If this is so important to him, he should come to see me himself.” Mīrānshāh returned [to Timūr] and told [him what had happened]. Sāḥib-qirān set out in the direction of Qarshi. He paid homage to Ḥākim and told him of the events. Ḥākim said, “My master has a book. He placed it in an iron box, and instructed [me] that

whoever opens the box will conquer the face of the earth.” Şāḥib-qirān commanded that they bring the box, but no one was able to open it. However much they tried it would not budge, so Şāḥib-qirān himself opened the lock, and took hold of the Book of the Ages (Kitab-i Tārikh-i Ayyām). Ḥakīm Sabi said, “Understanding this book is very difficult, for it was written in [the style of] ‘ilm-i jafr. If one is versed in ‘ilm-i jafr all events that are to be recorded until the Day of Judgment will become plain.”

After this, he turned to explain the dream to the Şāḥib-qirān, “That elephant is the Uzbek who will rule over your kingdom [and] will take your kingdom from your descendants. Those lion cubs are his children [and] twenty one of his relatives will become kings. The thirsty ones who were fleeing from the water are the people of that time who will flee. The blind ones are the people of that time who will not distinguish friend from foe. The sick who were visiting the healthy are the hypocrite ascetics [zāhidān] who will curry favor with the wealthy. The animals who were eating but not depositing manure are the kings of that time who will take from the poor and give nothing in return. The ox who was grazing in the meadow and was not getting any fatter is the amirs of that time who, no matter how much property they take from the poor, are never satisfied. The men who

248 The tradition tells that when the Prophet was on his death bed he summoned ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib and said, “O ʿAlī, when I am dead, wash me, embalm me, clothe me and sit me up; then I shall tell thee what shall happen until the day of resurrection.” The extensive literature that developed around this tradition was mostly of an apocalyptic nature. One of its characteristics was the occult properties of the value of the letters of the alphabet (ḥurūf). Apparently, this science was transmitted from Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 765), the last imām recognized by the Twelver and Ismāʿīlī Shiʿīs, and therefore much of this knowledge of the occult was named after him or attributed to him (ʿilm-i jafr). See Fahd, “Djafr.”
were not eating sheep in the place [that was selling] pork and bear meat are the people of that time who will be eating harām instead of halāl.”

When the Şāḥīb-qirān heard this matter he swore to massacre all the Uzbeks. He came from Qarshi to Samarqand and commanded Mīrzā Mīrānshāh to go to Turkistan and together with Aqbugha Nayman to fall upon the Uzbeks and massacre all of them. The prince set out with ten thousand young men. When he reached Turkistan he came before Aqbugha Nayman with three thousand strong, who threw a feast for the Mīrzā.

At that time, a man came to the Mīrzā and told him that Aqbugha had married two sisters. Mīrzā summoned him (Aqbugha) and asked him [about it]. He said it was true. Mīrzā said, “This is not according to the shari‘a. Divorce one of them!” He said, “My heart is taken with both.” Mīrzā ordered that he be stripped of his clothes and beaten. That very night, Aqbugha with his tribe killed part of the prince’s men, and the others fled. He bound the Mīrzā and went to Mangīshlaq, to Toqtamīsh Khan, saying, “What does the shari‘a have to do with a military man?”

After ten days they reached the place. [Aqbugha] paid homage to Toqtamīsh Khan. The khan asked the Mīrzā the reason for the quarrel and the Mīrzā explained. Aqbugha said, “It is Amir Tīmūr who commanded to kill all the Uzbeks.” The khan realized that the words of the Mīrzā were reasonable. Moreover, Şāḥīb-qirān had done the khan some favors in the past. He took the Mīrzā and killed Aqbugha. He gave the Mīrzā a robe of honor and made him sit beside him. He said, “If it is God’s decree that the Uzbeks take the kingdom, all these other circumstances do not matter.” But whenever the Mīrzā came to his audience he (Toqtamīsh) invited him to sit on the throne. Whenever
the Mīrzā asked the khan for permission to leave and go back to his country the khan said, “Be patient.”

One day, when the prince returned to the tribe from the hunt he saw a woman of extraordinary beauty standing by a well. He asked her for water, and she filled a cup and gave it to the Mīrzā. Three times he spilled the water unto the ground for it was too hot. After he drank, he explained to her his situation but that woman said nothing. He asked her for her name, and she said, “My name is Suyung Khān-zāda.” He asked her, “Who is your husband?” But she left, keeping silent. The love for this princess rendered him powerless, and he fell on the bed, sick. Mīrzā was embarrassed, he told no one about it. The khan came and saw that the Mīrzā was stricken. In that place was an old, very experienced Uzbek; everything he said came true. The Turks called him Juyina Tengri (“the seeker of God”). The khan summoned him, but that man was wandering about in caves, wearing animal pelts. He was two hundred years old. The khan explained to him the circumstances and charged him to find the cause for the Mīrzā’s illness. He (the old man) took the Mīrzā’s pulse and understood that he was in love. The khan said, “If a woman is involved, I can make it possible.”

The old man ordered him to say out loud the names of all Uzbek women. [As the khan recited their names] he took the Mīrzā’s pulse but found nothing [unusual]. He then ordered [the khan] to recite [the names of the women of] his own harem. When he reached the name Suyung Khān-zāda [the Mīrzā’s] pulse beat rapidly. He realized that he was in love with the khan’s wife. He left the Mīrzā’s bed, went to the khan and said, “This boy is in love with your wife.” The khan told no one, and divorced the princess. The princess was confused, “I committed no sin. Why does he divorce me?” And she sat
with her servants at the border of the tribe. The khan came and told the Mīrzā, “I found the woman that you fell in love with. Her husband just divorced her. Be patient! When the time of probation (îddat) has passed you will be able to marry the princess.” Amir Timūr’s son thought that he would have her agreement as well. The Mīrzā went to see his beloved and sat at her bed, but she did not extend her hand to him. He asked her, “Who are you?” And she explained all that had happened. “I am the khan’s wife,” she said, “Today my hand was not extended towards you. The khan did this in the name of friendship, we divorced over considerations of the khan’s well-being.” Upon hearing this [the Mīrzā] left without the khan’s permission and returned to his country until he reached Samarkand. Şāhīb-qirān approved both of the khan’s behavior and the Mīrzā’s as well. The next day the khan heard the news [of the Mīrzā’s leaving] and said: “I have acted in accordance with the noble shari‘a.” He sent the princess and all her possessions to Samarkand with a letter from Toqtaqīsh Khan, “I have sent the princess.” Şāhīb-qirān assigned a good place for the princess, but Mīrzā Mīrānshāh was not allowed to visit her.

Daulatshaykh Oghlan heard that Toqtaqīsh Khan divorced his daughter and sent her to Samarkand. He became enraged. The burden weighed heavy on him. He mounted his horse and during the night charged the khan’s tribe. The khan escaped, alone, and went on foot to Turkistan. After a while he reached the gates of Samarkand and entered the city. At that time Şāhīb-qirān was busy building the Aq Sarāy palace, and so the khan went to Shahr-i Sabz. For a few days he was without food and realized that he would have to work to be able to eat. He went to the place of the hired laborers, and after a
while was recruited to work in the Aq Sarāy. He was able to carry such heavy stones [for the building] that everyone was astonished. His aim was to regain his crown.

One day, Şāhib-qirān came to see the Aq Sarāy and saw the example of the khan’s strength. Şāhib-qirān looked at him in wonder, thinking he must be the son of kings, but he did not recognize him as Toqtmīsh Khan. With every stone that he carried, Şāhib-qirān’s wonder grew. When he saw [Toqtmīsh Khan] before he was beardless. Now this man had a beard. He asked the foreman what kind of man is he? But he did not know. Şāhib-qirān summoned him (Toqtmīsh Khan) and saw that he was good looking. He thought he recognized him as Toqtmīsh Khan but was not sure. As much as he asked him for his origin, he could not establish his identity. Şāhib-qirān said to himself, “If Mīrānsḥāh had been here he would have recognized him.” One evening Suyung Khān-zāda came to see [the construction of] Aq Sarāy. The khan saw her and saw that she was seized with pain. The people around him gossiped that Toqtmīsh Khan had given this girl to Şāhib-qirān’s son. The Amir observed him behind his back but did not allow him to approach her. Finally, the khan mustered his courage and approached her. She was astonished to see him and even cried. She said, “My love, where have you been?”

Word reached Şāhib-qirān that the young man was indeed Toqtmīsh Khan. Şāhib-qirān honored him, dressed him in a robe of kings and seated him at his side. Şāhib-qirān asked him what had happened, and he told him of his trials. Şāhib-qirān showed him much affection and gave him much gold, [but] the khan did not wish to accept his gifts. When Tūmūr asked why, the khan said, “I did not come here for riches, but for my honor, for my kingdom has fallen.” Şāhib-qirān said, “I have seen a dream in which I was entrusted with the killing of the Uzbeks. Will you agree to this?” Since the
khan was a practical man he gave his consent. Şâhib-qirān assembled the army (at that
time two years and a half passed since Şâhib-qirān attained the throne), and set out with
three-hundred thousand troops. He left the khan with Mīrzā Mīrānshāh in Samarqand,
and gave the princess back to the khan.

News reached the Uzbeks that Şâhib-qirān was on his way to annihilate them.
They all came to Daulatshaykh Oghlan. He was an old man. They said, “Let us fight.”
Daulatshaykh Oghlan said, “This man (i.e., Tīmūr) is the chosen favorite of God. Aban-
don your desire to fight him. Leave me here, and scatter in all directions. I think that no
person of this nation will remain.” They said, “You are an old man. What will happen to
you?” He said, “What’s it to you?” And they left. When Şâhib-qirān came to Dasht-i
Qîpchaq, he found no one. They all dispersed. Daulatshaykh Oghlan was brought before
him. Tīmūr asked him, “Who are you?” At first he did not answer, but simply recited
verses from the Qurʾān about how God most High (exalted be his power) rebuked Nūḥ
(peace be upon him).249 Şâhib-qirān was amazed at his eloquence. He said, “I am Daulat-
shaykh Oghlan. O son, if that is God’s decree [that the Uzbeks shall conquer Central
Asia], then this attempt of yours is futile. Even the Simurgh cannot alter God’s decree.”
Then he recited the story of the Simurgh in such a way that everybody wept.250 He said,

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249 According to the Qurʾān (in the Sura of Hood), when Noah pleaded with God to be
merciful because his son was one of the disbelievers, God rebuked him saying: “Noah, he
is not of thy family; it is a deed not righteous. Do not ask of Me that whereof thou hast no
knowledge. I admonish thee, lest thou shouldst be among the ignorant.”

250 I assume that the reference here is to the story of how the mythical bird Simurgh, out
of ultimate compassion, rescued an abandoned infant (who was later named Zal) and
adopted him as her own child. Then God put it into the heart of the Simurgh to change
her mind and return the child to humanity. She did so, heart-broken, and they departed
with many tears and much sorrow, and Zal returned to his father, the great hero Sam.
“All this blood is in vain and fear of the Day of Judgment is well-advised.” Şâhib-qirân swore not to kill them on condition that Daulatshaykh Oghlan would write a letter of testimony that would be kept in the Şâhib-qirân’s treasury, declaring that Şâhib-qirân had compassion for the Uzbeks. Thus, whoever emerges from among the Uzbeks to seize the kingdom will also show compassion for the people of the descendants of king Chaghatay. He wrote the letter of testimony and entrusted it in Şâhib-qirân’s treasury. When Shibání became ruler during the time of plunder, he found the letter in that treasury.
CHAPTER 3: TĪMŪR’S HEROIC APOCRYPHA: ANALYSIS AND COMPARISON.

3.1 Setting the Boundaries of the Genre.

This chapter addresses a number of questions concerning the cultural, geographical, historical and religious character of the Kunūz al-aʿẓam. In particular we will try to understand what made the Kunūz al-aʿẓam “popular,” what made the work distinctly Central Asian, and what is “historical” about the Kunūz al-aʿẓam. Since the nature of this study is preliminary and does not profess to offer the final, decisive word about the genre, the answers that we propose here are relatively brief, only scratching the surface, and possibly directing the scholar to further avenues of exploration. Each of the themes presented here is worthy of a separate study. Clearly, a more intimate knowledge of the work and its many manuscripts is required in order to provide a fuller analysis.

**Popularity and Patronage**

We have, perhaps a little presumptuously, labeled the Kunūz al-aʿẓam the “popular” vision of Central Asia. Such a suggestion is, naturally, almost impossible to verify, not only because the term “popular” is always (including today) rather vague, but also because we do not possess the tools to measure popularity (once we have determined what “popular” meant in eighteenth-century Central Asia). I would argue that what demonstrates the “popularity” of the biographies of Tīmūr is the following four factors: first, the many manuscripts of the work that survived and exist in archives in the former Soviet Union; second, the oral characteristics of the written text that reveal the relationship between oral traditions and textuality; third, the continuity in its production and replication, almost without interruptions, from the eighteenth century down to the present; and
finally, that the language used in the text is clearly modified to accommodate to the more “common” audience.

Clearly there were attempts to characterize the idea of popularity in neighboring cultures. Jean Calmard, for example, reluctantly recognized two criteria for what he deemed “popular literature” in Safavid Iran: on the one hand, he considers popular the literary works that were recited by professional story-tellers (qiṣṣeh-khvān, daftar-khvān, naqqāl, maʿrakagīr, and so on). On the other hand, he considers popular those literary creations that were banned by religious decrees, mostly issued by Twelver Imami mujtalīhids. Calmard’s claim is that such works were inevitably popular (or had the potential to become popular), otherwise there would be no need to outlaw them. Neither principle seems to hold for Central Asia at least until the proper scholarly work has been accomplished. Strict religious rulings against certain stories or against story-telling in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are, as far as I know, unexplored in Central Asia.

It seems that Central Asia had institutions of professional story-tellers, perhaps even similar to those of Iran, although this topic demands further research. We know that in the early twentieth century, story-tellers – especially the maddakh – were arranged in guilds (that had patron saints), and that engaged a stock of stories, with particular

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251 Calmard admits that the concept of popular literature is “difficult to delineate” and does not actually define what “popular” means. See Calmard, “Popular Literature.”

252 Semenov gives the impression that the stories of Timur were topics for countless exchanges in tea-shops and guest-houses almost a century ago. See Semenov, Katalog, p. 26.
emphasis on Sufi shaykhs. To be sure, there were also performers and singers in the khanates, but they served a different function and performed an entirely different repertoire. There is also a difference between the professional story-tellers of Iran and the (mostly nomadic) singers of oral epic poetry in Central Asia. Nevertheless, the matter of orality and textuality deserves some attention. It is fairly clear that among the host of sources used by the author (or compiler) of the Kunūz al-ā'lam, a special place was reserved for oral traditions, at least judging by the language of the text. Unfortunately, we are unable to answer the questions that such a problem raises, with all the theoretical ramifications of what happens to the oral tradition part of the narrative once it is put into writing: Was this a genuine turning point in the history of the “work”? Was there a change in language from oral usage to literary usage? Has the language become more

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253 See Troitskaia, “Iz proshlogo kalandarov i maddakhov v Uzbekistane.”

254 See for example, Reichl, “Oral Tradition and Performance.” I am also unaware of the historical continuity of institutions of reciters of religious works, such as Dr. Kleinmichel describes in her work of the twentieth century. See Kleinmichel, Halpa in Choresm und Atin Ayi im Ferghanaatal.

255 I am not going to take up the significance of oral epic poetry here, first because we are not dealing with epic poetry, and also because we are discussing a written text, not an oral performance (for general references on the topic see DeWeese, Islamization, p. 517, note 27).

256 The text is abundant with expressions such as “the story teller says that,” or “now let us hear about...” or “we have now arrived at the story of ...” or “listen to” this or the other. We also have to add that, as opposed to most (by no means all) oral epic poetry in Eurasia, the hero of the Kunūz al-ā'lam was a real, historical figure. Whether or not it made a difference for the audience is unclear.
simplified or more embellished for the readers? And how does the oral tradition function alongside the written text?\textsuperscript{257}

It is also unclear whether there was direct sponsorship of the work by the court or by any other patron, and whether such patronage would influence the notion of popularity. The author of the \textit{Kunūz al-aˈ zaman} only stated that the work was written during the reign of Abuˈl-Fayz Khan, but did not acknowledge the khan's patronage, or even express his gratitude to the khan. Moreover, the khan is not described in any lofty terms and receives no special consideration from the author -- something that one would expect in a sponsored work.\textsuperscript{258} Incidentally, the recent Uzbek edition of the work is clearly intended for the general audience.

Regrettably, we have little information about the author. We do not know if he was close to the court or held any official position. This too may be discovered with further exploration. However, it is safe to assume that the author had access to many different sources (both textual and oral), some of which may have been preserved at the court. Not only that, he probably had access to ideas of political authority discussed at the court, and to the "exercise of power."\textsuperscript{259} He was clearly "in the know," not only about a range of political and ideological considerations, but also about aspects of so-called Islamic mysticism (see more below). Until we discover more about his identity, it would

\textsuperscript{257}See also the recent work on the interaction between oral and written traditions in the \textit{Shāh-nāma}. See Yamamoto, \textit{The Oral Background of Persian Epics}.

\textsuperscript{258}One still needs to ascertain whether the \textit{Dāstān-i Amīr Timūr} (in Chaghatay) may have received the patronage of the ruler, Yār-Muḥammad Bahādur Khan.

\textsuperscript{259}See also Gril's assumption about the author of the \textit{Sīrat Baybars} discussed below. (Gril, "Du sultanat au califat universel," p. 196.)
be unproductive to spend words on the theoretical relationship between patronage and popularity. The question that does beg an answer is who would have to gain from such a composition? And if so, how would this affect the popular understanding of the work? We will reserve answers to these questions for the conclusions, after we have presented our analysis.

**The Kunūz al-aʿzham and Central Asia**

Our next concern is the question of boundaries. First, the *Kunūz al-aʿzham* is clearly a Central Asian creation. Two significant mechanical considerations attest to it: the work was written in Central Asia, and all its manuscripts and different renditions are from Central Asia. For three centuries the work remained in the region and did not migrate elsewhere. In addition, the geographical space in the narrative is clearly oriented towards Central Asia. This is how the author and the audience imagined Central Asia and how they imagined the world surrounding them. Central Asia is presented in the work as the pivot of the world, the center from which and unto which everything must pour forth or return. The *Kunūz al-aʿzham* is not a concise story of a dynasty, but the history – as most people in Central Asia must have viewed it then – of the region, retold through its most illustrious individual: a figure native to the region, brought up and educated in the region, who, out of its own mold burst out into the world. (Naturally, he could not have done it alone, as we will discuss further below). Tīmūr came from within, not from the outside. He is not presented as a consequence or as an offshoot of the Mongol invasion, he is not presented as a Turko-Mongol. He is a Turk, and he comes to the fore at a historical juncture well after the Uzbek conquest of Central Asia, when the character of the
ruling dynasties, as well as the majority of the population was already much more Turkic-oriented than before.

The *Kunūz al-aʾjam* is therefore the beginning of Central Asia’s claim on Tīmūr. Well before the Uzbek nation-building in the late twentieth century, the Central Asians were claiming Tīmūr for themselves, as their native champion. While the world around them – Imperial Russia, China under the Qing, India under the Mughals, the Ottoman Empire, Iran under the Safavids and the following dynasties – was expanding in other directions, Central Asia was becoming more and more isolated, more and more self-absorbed. It is our argument that the saga of Tīmūr came into being almost intuitively; a product of the age of introspection, when, on the one hand, Central Asia’s boundaries became clearer, and on the other hand, the need for a rallying ethos in their own decen-tralized world grew stronger.

Paradoxically, the claim for such an ethos (at least on the external side of things; we will soon discuss the internal aspects) also required situating Central Asia in the greater world with very little knowledge of that world. It was an attempt to give Central Asia the meaning and significance that it deserved (in their minds of course) without having to actually set foot outside their corner of the globe. The narrative takes the reader or listener around the world, and the world, in turn, comes to him. The “irony” is symbolized in the story of the seven great ambassadors from China, India, Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Russia and Europe, who arrive in Bukhara in order to kill a six-month-old infant, only to meet their untimely death by the hand (literally,) of the local powers. Such a story not only bestows great pride upon the people of Bukhara, but also puts them at the center of the narrative.
Indeed, within the geographical space of Central Asia in the narrative, it is the city of Bukhara that enjoys one of the most central positions, certainly as the place that most influenced Tīmūr’s youth, and, consequently, Tīmūr’s education and character. Once he leaves Bukhara as an adult, he is already self-assured, knows right from wrong, and is responsible for his actions. Bukhara is the focal point of his encounters with his Sufi teachers and mentors; this is where he receives his religious training, where he undergoes tests by the unseen world. Not only is Bukhara the center of Sufi activity in the Kunūz al-aʿẓam, it is also the center of power – where the khans are located and where his ideas of what rulership means and who is entitled to rule are formed. This is also where Tīmūr falls in love and gets married. In fact, the story of Bukhara in the narrative may be somewhat analogous to the state of affairs in the area in the eighteenth century, which leads us to the question of historicity.

**Historicity**

Our aim is not to identify the mistakes or the misrepresentations of the past in the Kunūz al-aʿẓam (those obviously abound in the text), or to bring to light new details about Central Asia’s history in the fourteenth century. Thus, the stories should not take us back to the fourteenth century in order to measure the Tīmūr of the Kunūz al-aʿẓam against the fourteenth-century Tīmūr. Rather, there are several major points that merit consideration. We have labeled the Kunūz al-aʿẓam “heroic apocrypha” – not a history, not a biography or a hagiography, but a genre in literature that focuses on the hero, and yet tells his story from a different perspective. This is the kind of work that has not found
its way into the historical canon because it is distinguished from the official court chronicles, on which we historians sometimes tend to base our analysis.

The work clearly revolves around the main figure of a hero. The protagonist is of heroic qualities; this is a literary work that relies on oral traditions and literary texts. The hero is not limited by some of the confines of “historical” chronicles. Its method of recording “events” is different, which is why it cannot be a part of the canon, but stands as an apocryphal creation that serves a different audience at a different time. This is precisely its greatest worth for the historian: its ability to shed light on a particular audience in a particular time frame. The problem is that these matters are not as clear here as they are when we deal with a “proper” official history. At the same time, the “heroic apocrypha” also entertains a certain relationship in structure and content (the exact nature of which is still to be determined) with the canon of historical works. The relationship of the Kunūz al-ʿam with Sharaḥ al-Dīn ʿAlī Yazdī’s Zafarnāma or with Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū’s Tārīkh-i Shāhrukhī would make interesting case studies. The work was also recorded in writing a very long time after the protagonist had died (but is not a scholarly study of the past), and patronage of the work was probably by someone who was not directly related to the work’s subject matter.

Although it is clear to the historian that the historical Tīmūr and the Tīmūr of the Kunūz al-ʿam are not identical,\(^2\) it should be said that for most Central Asian readers and listeners in the eighteenth century (and beyond) it probably was the same figure, and the impact of this knowledge upon them, and the way in which this knowledge was

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\(^2\)See Elbendary’s comments on Baybars in Elbendary, “The Sultan, the Tyrant, and the Her,” p. 151.
brought to them (through the unique style of the work) was probably fairly significant. It created a figure that they could identify with; it reinforced a “Central Asian” ethos, and sent a didactic message regarding their place in the Islamic community (more on this below). Of course, part of this ethos was to help shape a historical memory, a restoration of a great past, questions that today seem almost trivial after so much theoretical scholarship has been written on nationalism and related issues.

**The Kunūz al-a ẓam and Sīrat Baybars: Possible Insights into a Didactic Message.**

A possible insight into the world of the *Kunūz al-a ẓam* may be gained by comparing it with one of the great epics of the Arab world, namely, *Sīrat Baybars.*\(^{261}\) This epic cycle of al-Zahir Baybars, the founder of the Mamlūk state in the thirteenth century, seems to have been a collection of stories – mostly oral traditions – that were remembered and performed in front of an audience, and keep serving in this very capacity until today.\(^{262}\) Similar to the *Kunūz al-a ẓam*, the *Sīra* was also put into writing several centu-

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\(^{261}\) For the purpose of this work I used the French translation of the *Sīra*. See *Roman de Baībars*. On the history of the *Sīrah* see Herzog, “La Sīrat Baybars, histoire d’un texte.”

\(^{262}\) The idea to compare the two works first came up in one of my conversations with Professor Gottfried Hagen. The comparison is worthwhile, not only because the works have much in common, but also because the state of research on the *Sīra* is so much more advanced than the research on the *Kunūz al-a ẓam* (though we should note that the study of the *Sīrat Baybars* is far from complete). Recently, a collection of articles dealing with the *Sīra* was published in France (see *Lectures du Roman de Baybars*). This collection features thirteen articles about the work and its implications, from a history of the text itself, a history of research, the placement of the text within certain literary and folkloric traditions, the implications of the text for today’s Arab world, and so forth. One can only hope that the *Kunūz al-a ẓam* will receive similar attention in the future.
ries after the ruler’s death, though almost all of the existing manuscripts of the work are from the nineteenth century.263

The Si̇ra begins with the story of Baybars’ climb to kingship in accordance with an ancient prophecy that would coincide with bringing about the final victory of the Muslims over their great rivals – the Christian Franks and the “fire-worshipping” Mongols. Si̇rat Baybars tells the story of the young prince who was betrayed by his brothers and thrown into a pit only to be rescued by a passing caravan of merchants who then sold him to slavery.264 He subsequently fell gravely ill. More or less at the same time, the Ayyubid Sultan of Egypt, al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb (r. 1240-1249) had a forceful dream in which he was attacked in the desert by a band of ferocious hyenas. As he was on the verge of losing the battle, he was rescued by a group of lions, led by a most formidable large lion. After consulting with his astrologers and dream-interpreters, the Sultan decided to purchase Turkic mamlūks to help him withstand a potential onslaught. Among these mamlūks one was supposed to possess extraordinary qualities. The Sultan sent a merchant to Asia Minor to purchase the slaves, among them was young Baybars, still seriously ill, so ill that the merchant was forced to leave him in Damascus on his way to Cairo. It is in Damascus that Baybars would begin to acquire a reputation for being the shield of the poor, the companion of the high and mighty, and the protector of Islam. He eventually moved to Cairo, where his adventures continued.

263 But even after one hundred and eighty years of scholarship (by no means extensive) on the work, scholars are still incapable of finding the “mother” copy of the text. Our earliest copy (merely a few fragments) of the work is from the seventeenth century, although it seems likely that some version of the Si̇ra existed in the sixteenth century. See more in Guillaume, “La Si̇rat Baybars,” pp. 62-63.

264 The source of inspiration is clearly the story of the biblical Joseph.
Like the saga of Tīmūr, the Sīra is a collection of half-historical tales, brought to the reader (or listener, or spectator) in a chronological order, from the hero’s birth (or rather, the prophecy of his imminent birth) until his death. Because each tale is complex and, to some extent independent, the stories can be read separately. In other words, there is no real need to read (or recite) those stories from the beginning of the narrative to its end. It suffices to join the text at some point, and things will probably become clear independently of the other stories. One may assume that the stories gradually became familiar to the audience and they already knew what to expect.

Like the Sīra, the Ḳūnūz al-ʿam humanizes its protagonist. Tīmūr often displays his emotions (love, hate, fear, confusion); he is at times very naïve. He is scarred with all sorts of marks (lameness, bad shoulder),\(^{265}\) and is even proud of his marks. His marks not only make him identifiable, but also emphasize both his extraordinary abilities and God’s omnipotence in enabling a lame and a scarred person to conquer the world. In fact, when Tīmūr visits the al-Aqṣa mosque in Jerusalem, a healer offers to make him perfectly healthy. Tīmūr refuses, saying that he is a testimony to God’s power, and that he would never have accomplished what he has, had he been completely healthy.\(^{266}\)

Although he is pre-destined to rule, although he valiantly defends the sharīʿa, although he vanquishes formidable enemies, although he is very powerful, exceptionally strong, enjoys dealings with extraordinary beings, has communion with the unseen world,

\(^{265}\)Baybars too has identifying marks.

\(^{266}\)Tīmūr-nāma. Kulliyāt-i fārsī, p. 341.
and dreams of the Prophet, Tīmūr is not a holy man. He does not perform any miracles, he does not change his form and he does not live an exceptionally long life. This is not the story of a saint. Tīmūr and Baybars find themselves in an ambiguous state: on the one hand, they receive many signs about their destiny and their confidence in such a destiny only increases throughout the work. On the other hand, they are not really privy to the “grand design,” and can only see the exterior side of things – not the internal and supposedly, the more meaningful. Externally, Tīmūr possesses all the necessary attributes to allow him to rule (except, of course, for the Chinggisid ideal). Internally, Tīmūr has no access to the hidden or unseen world. Even when he associates with the so-called internal reality and with its representatives (as in the story of the test), he remains the odd man out. He does not attain the true knowledge or the wisdom of the men of the unseen world, only their approval.

We should not really wonder about his lack of access to the hidden world. After all, it is not his role in the society; it is not Tīmūr’s place. This is another reason why we should not treat this work as a hagiography, or as “epico-religious” literature, to use Jean Calmard’s (and others’) definition. The work has a strong religious dimension because it was written in a religious setting (the background is religious and all its characters are

\(^{267}\) Neither is Baybars.

\(^{268}\) Gril’s comments about Baybars are especially instructive. See Gril, “Du sultanat au califat universel,” p. 178.

\(^{269}\) Ibid., p. 183.

\(^{270}\) Gril, by the way, never uses the word hagiography. For him the Sīrat Baybars is a roman.
religious). This is not, however, religious literature per se: it is not a hagiography, even if it displays hagiographical motifs; neither is it a doctrinal work, nor a devotional work, even if the Kunūz al-aṣam was clearly inspired by religious literature.

Like Baybars in the Sīra, Timūr has an absolute commitment to the community, and there is some acceptance of the authority of the community’s representatives, as long as they behave in accordance with the way in which they should behave. The work advocates a prescription, it seems, for a certain type of behavior. Tyranny is not acceptable (at least not until our protagonist becomes the tyrant). There are no differences in social roles (or “classes,” if you will) – everyone is equally (or almost equally) responsible for the ultimate conclusion. They all have a role to play in the successful completion of the ascent of the hero to his delegated place (although they do so while remaining in their respective places). Without communal responsibility Timūr is unable to accomplish anything. Such communal, helpful agents include women, beggars, children, men of all professions, even animals (corroborating prophecies, for example). Many of these “simple” figures had some previous encounter with the divine that guided them into helping the hero. These figures were somehow informed of events to come and they intervene at critical points. They come from all walks of life, a shepherd, a dervish or the Ottoman Sultan.271 The hero learns that salvation can be found in the most unlikely places.272 We may add that the audience learns exactly the same thing, as they form their own perceptions about the social order.

271 See also Gril, “Du sultanat au califat universel,” p. 173.

272 Ibid., p. 182.
A good example is the role that women play in the narrative, which greatly exceeds their role in the official chronicles. Several women are at least as heroic as our central character, especially Timur’s mother and Timur’s wife, although there are many others, less heroic perhaps, but still crucial for the development of the story and, consequently, for Timur’s progress. Women are generally portrayed as attractive and tempting, usually morally good, and as keepers of some type of knowledge that is hidden from the men. (This will become particularly revealing when we discuss the daughters or maids of false prophets.) First and foremost is, of course, Timur’s mother, Tegina Begim, who bravely faces all difficulties, and eventually becomes a devoted servant of God with healing powers. In the same manner, Timur’s wife, Saray Mulk, carries a lot of weight in the early stages of the narrative. Both women are the heroic models for women in the Islamic community of Central Asia: god-fearing, with special access to the divine, ready to sacrifice themselves for a cause, strong, chaste, ferociously defending their husbands. The audience can identify with the heroes and heroines, with the courageous men and women, although they are the only ones who are allowed to test the limits of their roles in the society, probably because they are destined to explore not only the limits of their abilities, but also the possible achievements of the community.

In the story of Baybars there is an emphasis on the slave soldier who was born a non-Muslim and then became the ruler over the lands of Islam. Not only that, he was also – like many other mamluks – separated from his family at a very young age, and therefore would be ridiculed in a society that gives the family a place of honor. In the Sīra the problem is solved by Baybars’ adoption by a prestigious Muslim family (the lady of the


family actually names him Baybars) in Damascus. A somewhat similar process happens to Tīmūr – he is detached from his family, only to be reunited with his father twelve years later, during which time he pretends to be a maid’s son. These are not only issues of legitimation through descent or through the recognition of the “establishment” that the figure of the hero is worthy of consideration, but also an emphasis on certain key institutions in the Islamic world, like family and social organizations.

One major difference between Baybars and Tīmūr is that throughout the Sīrah Baybars is treated as a founder of the Mamlūk sultanate. Tīmūr, however, is not accorded such a status. Although he is the ultimate hero and a model for the population, he knows that his legacy will not be everlasting, and that his dynasty will disappear when the Uzbeks come.

On the Reasons for Writing the Work.

Why was the work written? What does it mean that the Kunūz al-aʿẓam (or, for that matter, Sīrat Baybars) offers no explanation regarding the circumstances of its coming to light? One way to answer this question is to try to determine how much of the narrative is essentially a reaction against something external or internal. In Sīrat Baybars the Franks, the Mongols, and sometimes the Ismāʿīlī assassins serve as the personification of the Other, and through the fight against them (as well as other things) Baybars and the Mamlūks also reinforce their own identity. In the Kunūz al-aʿẓam Central Asia is constantly challenged. As we will see in the next chapter, the challenges are often of eschatological dimensions. The challenges come from within and from the outside. There is no one particular entity who acts as the Other, who requires a fierce counter-reaction. The hero fights against corrupt kings, against false prophets, against external enemies
(invasions of Qalmuqs, for example), against the world around him. Tīmūr fulfils his destiny, decreed by the divine, to conquer the world, even if he does not betray a clear desire to do so.

Surprisingly, there were hardly any attempts to examine the reasons for the composition of Sihrat Baybars.275 Recently, Jane Hathaway raised the possibility that the Sīra, as well as other folkloric materials, were eventually used for the indoctrination of various “grandees” who came from many different backgrounds to Ottoman Egypt. Thus, the work complemented the sources of knowledge of the Ottoman rulers of Egypt when they came to administer the territories which had previously been under Mamlūk rule.276 Hathaway claims that nostalgia to the Mamlūk era was “nurtured by folkloric presentations of key sultans,” and that “the transmission of such stories was part of the future grandee’s education and acculturation.”277 Hathaway maintains that the construction of an “idealized vision” of the past and the “exploitation” of the pre-Ottoman past in the provinces served as a source of the grass-roots authority far from the center and enhanced the grandees’ status within their respective localities.278 One problem with this approach is the fact that Hathaway does not offer any proof that the “grandees” actually read this

275 Even the recent, rather thorough study of the work hardly offers any suggestions (see Lectures du Roman de Baybars).


277 Hathaway, 389

278 Ibid., p. 401. Hathaway argues that the Sihrat Baybars reflected “Ottoman-era popular memory of the events of the early Mamluk sultanate, embellished with stock elements of shape-changing wizards and damsels in distress.”
material, and she also does not explain the transition of the work (if there was one) from a folkloric manual for administrators (one might assume that such a "manual" would enjoy official patronage, and we have no evidence of patronage of any kind) to a popular, public narrative.

The situation is very different with the Kunūz al-aẓam. Our argument is that the work essentially provided an ethos, a moral nature or a set of guiding principles for the Islamic community of Central Asia in a time of crisis (and did so while providing some entertainment as well). The Kunūz al-aẓam was put together in the age of introspection, when the world around its audience had already contracted, but at the same time became more uncertain, when their former ethos or "communal identity" seemed to be in some doubt. This ethos called for a collective effort and for an understanding of the individual’s place in the Islamic society. At the same time, another message was clearly articulated: the co-dependence of the ordinary people and the people of God. As Gril put it, "the government of ordinary man depends entirely on the government of the men of God, even if the latter remain hidden."²⁷⁹

3.2 Ṭīmuṛ’s Heroic Apocrypha and Islam.

Prophecies, dream sequences, captivity and escape, monsters and curiosities, divinations and the battlefield are only some of the prominent motifs that come into play in this long work.\(^{280}\) However, the play between the external and the internal, the seen and the unseen, occupies the key position in the narrative. This is not expressed only by events that are explained straightforwardly (such as Ṭīmuṛ’s encounter with the men of the unseen), but is also seen in various literary motifs. Problems emerge from or find their solutions in places of hiding: caves, coffers, wells, tombs, holes in the ground. Many things are not what they appear to be. The theme of disguise is significant: for instance, for the first twelve years of his life, Ṭīmuṛ’s true identity is kept secret. The same is true for countless other characters in the narrative. They first appear in disguise, usually as slaves or dervishes, as simple people, only to reveal their true identity later.

Prophecies and dreams serve together to move the storyline forward (this, in addition, of course, to the mere chronology of the story). Although Ṭīmuṛ’s birth, for example, was foretold by Alexander the Great,\(^ {281}\) the people most responsible for the important prophecies are Sufi shaykhs, such Shaykh Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī (who foretold Ṭīmuṛ’s birth) or Shaykh Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, who predicted Ṭīmuṛ’s accession to the throne two

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\(^{280}\) Although we may try to divide these motifs into larger categorizations (such as town-country, center-periphery, nomads-city dwellers, etc.), these may turn out to be too artificially imposed: the center of gravity of the work changes often, towns and country-side seem to serve the same purpose, and nomads and city dwellers are not necessarily treated as such in the narrative. Eventually, the story seems to maneuver the continuum of large-scale groups (Uzbeks, Hindus, Turks, Qalmuqs, Chinese, Russians, various tribes) and their individual representatives.

\(^{281}\) Referring to the prophetic message that was found by the Ottoman Sulṭān, Yıldırım Bāyazīd, when he visited the cave where Alexander the Great was born.
hundred years earlier. Many of these prophecies are revealed in dreams. In fact, dreams generate much of the story. The source of the dreams is usually identified with the unseen world. A dream is what makes the shepherd tell Taraghay to leave for Bukhara and find his future; a dream compels Bayân-Quli Khan to protect Tīmūr, or to marry off his daughters (including Sarāy Mulk), a dream (and a prophecy) makes Tīmūr realize that his rule is not eternal and that he and his sons will be replaced by the Uzbeks. The Prophet appears before Tīmūr in a dream and commands him to take the throne and install a puppet khan. In another dream, Tīmūr saw a dervish who gave him a loaf of bread, but then broke the loaf and kept half of it for himself. Tīmūr asked one of his companions for the meaning of the dream and was answered that the piece of the loaf that was given to Tīmūr will be the portion of the Sufis in his world conquest.

The Role of the Sufis

The text deals for the most part with the chief representatives of the so-called non-normative elements in Islam, namely, the Sufi shaykhs. Although the history of Islam in Central Asia in the period under discussion has yet to be written, it is safe to say that historically, the period from the end of the seventeenth to the early eighteenth century was marked by the growing influence of Sufi shaykhs. The Sufis seem to have wielded a considerable influence on the Janid (Ashtarkhanid) khans, but as the seventeenth century came to a close, most of the Sufi shaykhs transferred their support to the amirs. The Sufis were involved in decisions about the identity of khans and had a role to play as mediators

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282 Shaykh Najm al-Dīn Kubrā had some prophetic reputation before. See his prophecy about Ghazan Khan’s conversion to Islam in the Rawżat al-jinān (DeWeese, Islamization, p. 357, n. 85).

283 The same is true for Sīrat Baybars. See Gril, “Du sultanat au Califat universel,” p. 177.
in conflicts between Bukhara and Khiva, for example. Our author gives no consideration to whether the Sufi shaykhs in the narrative came from a particular order, and he certainly does not identify them as such or give any details about their origins or lineages, ancestral or spiritual. In fact, the text hardly gives any details about the holy figures. The names invoked in the text – Bahāʾ al-Dīn Naqshband, Mīr Baraka, Shams al-Dīn Kulal, Sayyid Ata, Aḥmad Yasavi, Muḥammad Pārsā, Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī, Ḥasan Bulghārī, and others – were probably well-known to most audiences. They all serve more or less the same functions in the story, and they are all very different from the ʿulama‘. The truth is that Tīmūr needed the guidance and active support of the Sufi shaykhs, although there was no question that they were not in the position of rulership. The amir assumes the same position as in the days of old, when there was a clear separation between those who had the right to govern and those who assisted them and counseled them. One could not exist without the other.

The Sufi shaykhs are depicted as the kingmakers. Shaykh Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī, for example, was the one who introduced Taraghay Bahādur to the fate of his future son, and only through his intervention did Taraghay survive an encounter with Satan, meet his future wife, Tīmūr’s mother, and marry her. The shaykh, already dead, saved Tīmūr from the attempts on his life by the seven ambassadors, and Tīmūr was reunited with his family only after the (dead) shaykh’s intervention. Tīmūr is wed only after the shaykh instructed Bayān-Qulī Khan to give his daughter’s hand in marriage.

\[284\] Another major difference between this work and a hagiography.

\[285\] It may be that parts of the narrative were also a counter-reaction against the Mujad-didiyya that finds its way into Central Asia in the second half of the seventeenth century, but this is a matter for a different discussion.
At the same time, many other shaykhs are active in helping Tīmūr achieve his destiny. When the Qipchaqs arrive at Qasr-i Arifīn to kill Tīmūr, they find Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband sitting calmly in his garden. When they demand Tīmūr, Bahā’ al-Dīn says that Tīmūr is his disciple and he cannot release him. Bahā’ al-Dīn also helps Tīmūr in his fight against the Indians, and saves his life in a battle against the Ottomans. We are told that Shaykh Hasan Kulal taught Tīmūr to read from the Qur’ān, and also escorted him to undertake the “test” from the men of the unseen world. Sayyid Ata leads the Bukharans in their fight against Qazaghan. Shaykh Hasan Bākharzī himself treats Tīmūr’s wounds.

Conversion Narratives

One does not have to dwell too long on the significance of conversion narratives in the history of Central Asia in light of Devin DeWeese’s Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde.286 Motifs of Islamization and conversion, defense of the faith, association with figures who were known for their conversion activities. Sayyid Ata is the obvious example, but Shaykh al-’Ālam or Shaykh Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī was also well-known for his conversion activities.287 Such associations may have “lent prestige and authority, at court and among the people, to familial and spiritual lineages linked to those bearers of Islam,”288 and in our case it is clear that the entire collective was influenced by such associations.

286See DeWeese, Islamization, esp. chapters 3 and 4.

287In fact, Bākharzī was credited in many sources (Ibn-Khaldūn, al-’Aynī, al-Qalqashandi) with the conversion to Islam of Berke Khan of the Golden Horde.

The story of the conversion to Islam of Ïzbek Khan of the Golden Horde at the hand of Sayyid Ata is probably the most famous example for a conversion narrative in the *Kunūz al-aʿzam*. The story is drawn from earlier sources and is repeated with only a few additions and modifications. Since it has become relatively well-known (again, following DeWeese’s publication) we need not repeat it here, save for the mention that Zangī Ata, Sayyid Ata’s teacher, also predicts the rise of Tīmūr and his world-conquest as he interprets one of his disciple’s dreams.

**The Plight of the Islamic Community**

Throughout the *Kunūz al-aʿzam* the author emphasizes the predicament of the Muslim community, and Tīmūr’s duty to help the Muslims. It is indeed as Gril demonstrates in his study of *Sīrat Baybars*, an attempt to show that the eventual victory of the Muslims will come, that the Muslim community will prevail. However, the eschatological dimension in the *Kunūz al-aʿzam* is much more pronounced than in the *Sīrat Baybars*.

One of the most enduring features in the narrative is the plight of the Muslim community, which is expressed through a variety of factors: internal threat (heathen rulers, corruption, anti-Muslim oppression, anti-šariʿa activities, false prophets, etc.), and external dangers (invasions, battles, and so forth.). The examples are numerous and range from Tīmūr’s first experiences in the city of Bukhara to his accession to the throne and beyond. In Bukhara, Tīmūr encounters fights, drunkenness, ineffective city officials and a cruel tyrant who “set fire to houses of many Muslims for his own enjoyment, but out of fear no one ever complained about him to his father.” Following Bayān-Qulī Khan’s death, the head vizier is executed, and a rift builds up between the khan and the
amirs. Eventually, a new tyrant, Amir Qazaghan, rises and slaughters four thousand mullahs in forty days, destroys madrasas and burns down mosques, and even forbids the Muslims to fast during Ramadan to the point that our storyteller recalls the time of Noah and the flood. Other fundamental dangers include the very troubling issue of false prophets (see below), and the continual invasions, particularly of Bukhara and Samarkand by Uzbeks, Moghuls, and, more than anyone else – Qalmuqs.

**False Prophets**

False prophethood is typically closely linked to ideas of a crisis in the Islamic community and to visions of an apocalyptic nature about the end of the world. There are several narratives in the work about false prophets, and interestingly enough (and for reasons that are unclear to me at the moment), they all put forward the Ismāʿīlīs as the symbols of false prophethood.

The Kunūz al-aʿām explains that when Timūr was still very young (fourteen years old, in fact), a false prophet emerged near the city of Shahr-i Sabz. His name was Naṣir-i Khusraw, but he was also known as Muqanna. He claimed to have invented a new school of law (madhīhab), to be able to restore sight to the blind, and to enjoy the benefaction of the angel Gabriel. He commanded his followers to proclaim that he was

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289Naṣir-i Khusraw, the eleventh-century writer, poet, traveler and philosopher, who was also a noted preacher of the Ismāʿīlī doctrine. V. A. Zhukovskiĭ translated two stories from the Kunūz al-aʿām about Timūr’s meeting with Naṣir-i Khusraw, that were mentioned in Borshchevskiĭ, “K kharakteristike rukopisnogo naslediia V. A. Zhukovskogo,” pp. 11-13.

290Referring to al-Muqanna’, leader of the rebellions in Mawarannahr during the caliphate of al-Mahdi (r. 775-785). His followers were known as the “wearers of white” (safīd jāmagān), who are also mentioned in the narrative.
the true messenger (*rasul*), and indeed people began to believe in him. After the ṭulamāʾ declared him to be an infidel,²⁹¹ he began a systematic slaughter of those Muslims who rejected his doctrine. In 1348 in the cities of Bukhara, Samarqand and Balkh as many as four thousand Muslim *mullahs* were slain. Young Tīmūr insisted on participating in a war that was declared against Nāṣir and in a couple of battles even showed remarkable skill. Still, many Muslims were converting to the new religion. Tīmūr went to Shaykh Burḥān al-Dīn for help, but even he feared Nāṣir. One night the Prophet appeared before the shaykh in a dream and told him to face Nāṣir with Tīmūr at his side, the only way to victory. Tīmūr rode forth together with the shaykh to meet Nāṣir. Tīmūr succeeded in injuring Nāṣir’s military commander, and when Nāṣir’s troops realized that the angel Gabriel was not coming to their aid as their leader had promised, they dispersed. Nāṣir himself managed to escape.

The next encounter of the people of Central Asia with a false prophet was with Nāṣir-i Khusraw’s son. The son, Shāh Maṣṣūr, fled to India where he was trained in magic by “Brahmins of Kashmir.” He began preaching to his followers, claiming that he was the *mahdi*. The ṭulamāʾ who rejected him sooner or later found their death. Shāh Maṣṣūr challenged Tīmūr in a letter from Kashghar. Tīmūr decided to assign twenty thousand troops to this matter, under the command of his son, Jahāngīr, and to send him to face Maṣṣūr. The latter challenged him to a contest, telling him that he could not be killed. They chained Maṣṣūr, dug a grave, buried him alive, and lit a fire on top. For three

²⁹¹We are told that the ṭulamāʾ began to refer to his doctrine as the *fidāʾ Nāṣir*. Among the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs, this term was used for those who risked their lives to assassinate the enemies of the sect.
days the fire burned until they decided to dig him out. Manṣūr emerged completely unharmed. When Jahāngīr commanded to untie him, the chains disintegrated on his body, showing everyone that he could have easily gotten away had he wished. This, of course, greatly increased his following. Manṣūr demanded that Jahāngīr and his troops believe in him, and gave them a seven-day ultimatum. For a week Jahāngīr was baffled, thinking, “If Manṣūr was not a prophet, how was he able to perform such miracles?”

When the two armies finally collided, a strange disease afflicted all the horses in Jahāngīr’s army. The battle seemed lost when a dervish suddenly appeared before Jahāngīr and introduced himself as Maulānā Sa’d al-Dīn from Kashghar. He told the story of his own past conflict with Manṣūr, and explained that Khiżr had told him that a man of Chaghatay would come to his aid. “With Khiżr’s help, I am now able to dispel Manṣūr’s magic,” he said. And so it happened that the next day Jahāngīr was about to kill Manṣūr in the battlefield when the latter all of a sudden invoked the name of his daughter, Qoyliq. (Jahāngīr was in love with her, but was unaware that Manṣūr was her father). Once Jahāngīr finished destroying the rest of Manṣūr’s army, he took him to a mountain and hurled him from the summit. To everyone’s surprise, Manṣūr did not die. They tried to kill him again and again, but nothing happened. Finally, Sa’d al-Dīn suggested that the answer might lie with the daughter. The daughter agreed to reveal the secret on condition that Jahāngīr marry her, and when Jahāngīr agreed she revealed that Manṣūr could only be killed by a blade with a young girl’s menstruation blood on it. And so it was. Jahāngīr
and his new wife returned to Bukhara, and Sa‘d al-Dīn became Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband’s disciple.

A third story of a false prophet describes Ḥākīm Nizārī, a descendant of one of Nāṣir-i Khusraw’s disciples, who had quarreled with Nāṣir and established his own sect. Nizārī declared that he was reincarnated seventy-two times during which he once appeared as a merchant, as a butcher, even as a wolf during the time of the biblical Jacob. Now he finally came to save the world, declaring that his religion preceeded all others.

Everyone began to believe in him and accept his message, but several men came to Timūr to complain. Timūr decided to investigate. He came to Kuhistan and besieged the city where Nizārī was. Timūr sent his ambassador into the city with a letter commanding Nizārī to renounce his false teachings and practice the shari‘a. The letter cautioned Nizārī: “Behold the fate of Nāṣir-i Khusraw and his son Manṣūr.” Nizārī dismissed the ambassador and challenged Timūr to a battle.

More or less at the same time Timūr was informed about a holy man named Ḩamza, who had just returned from the hajj and was living in a cave nearby. Timūr was told that Ḩamza was the only one who could successfully debate with Nizārī. Timūr convinced Ḩamza to face Nizārī, and when the two began to debate Nizārī suddenly offered a contest. “We will both enter into the fire,” he said, “and see who can come out alive and unharmed.” Ḩamza immediately agreed, but Timūr grew worried.

All of a sudden two men appeared, carrying a large chest. Inside there was a slave-girl. She said that Nizārī put her there as a punishment for having a sexual relation with another slave. It occurred to Timūr that the girl might know how Nizārī was able to
withstand fire, and she said that her master had a vial of salamander fat that he used as an ointment, but she did not know where he kept it. (The salamander, explains the narrator, is a creature who lives in fire, and fire cannot harm it).

Timūr commanded the postponement of the day of the contest for three days, as his men frantically looked for the vial of salamander fat. In the meantime, the inaq’s son managed to sneak into Nizārī’s quarters and found the vial. He replaced it with a vial of lamp oil (that looked exactly like the fat), and brought the salamander fat to Ḥamza. However, he refused to use it, saying that he only trusted God.

The day came and the shaykh, wearing white, stood facing Nizārī, who was dressed in black (and was completely drunk). Nizārī’s body was dabbed in the lamp oil (which he thought was the salamander fat). Everyone started to recite the dhikr as both men stood before the fire. Holding hands, they took seven steps forward. Nizārī was instantly burned, but Ḥamza came out after one hour, unharmed.292

**Eschatology**

Naturally, false prophets are also closely associated with apocalyptic predictions and emphasize to a great extent the strife of the Muslims and their need of a hero to save them from potential doom. Indeed, many parts of the narrative carry eschatological qualities that are hard to dismiss. Some of them are relatively straightforward, such as dreams and prophecies about the end of the world, or about various stages in the process of the disintegration of the world until the Day of Judgment. By and large, such narratives tend to circulate when approaching the end of a century, and we may well hypothesize that the

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292 This narrative bears a striking resemblance to the story of Özbek Khan’s conversion to Islam at the hands of Baba Tükles. (See DeWeese, *Islamization.* )
end of the eleventh Islamic century, which was approximately in the year 1688-89, probably lent some intensity to eschatological narratives. We have already encountered several manifestations of eschatology, but here I would like to deal with aspects that are associated with apocalyptic visions, such as the story of Gog and Magog, the many references to al-Dajjāl, “the deceiver,” and the role of Jesus in Tīmūr’s biographies.293

A. Gog and Magog and al-Dajjāl.

One of the most fascinating accounts tells how Mirzā Sultan Muḥammad, Tīmūr’s grandson, traveled in search of the wall that Alexander the Great had built to defend the world from Gog and Magog.294 He reached a place far beyond the borders of China and met an old man of one hundred and twenty years who immediately identified Muhammad as Tīmūr’s grandson. He explained that the people of Gog and Magog were destroying all the cities of the area during the time of Alexander the Great, but that he managed to repel them and built a wall around them. The place was apparently still inhabited by the descendants of Alexander’s army commanders who were left here to secure the wall. After finding a way to scale the exceptionally high and very smooth wall, Mirzā Muḥammad climbed the wall and saw before him a piece of land surrounded in three directions by a large ocean. He saw three groups of creatures: some were felt-wearing giants, others were very tall and resembled men, whereas others had very long ears and beards.

293 To this we should add other attributes that point to the eschatological nature of the work, such as the ʿilm-i jafr (that also appears in the Sīrat Baybars. See Gril, “Du sultanat au Califat universel,” pp. 181 and 193).

294 Gog and Magog (or Yājūj and Mājūj) held a special place in Islamic eschatology as the destroyers of the world before the Day of Judgment. The Alexander legend is indeed very famous.
After about an hour of watching, several of the creatures began howling, approached the wall, and tried to climb it. The commanders stopped them, but Muḥammad was still able to talk to them. They told him that they were descended from Og son of Anak. They had lived for centuries, back to the time of Moses. Eight hundred years later Muḥammad appeared, and eight hundred years after him, Alexander the Great. “We were told,” they said, “that three men would come to look at us, and after that we would make our appearance in the world. You are the second.” Muḥammad asked them when they were going to appear, and they simply said: “We will come after al-Dajjāl.”

On the way back, Muḥammad heard a voice from a cave calling him, “O grandson of Tīmūr, so you have returned from Gog and Magog?” He entered the cave and saw a man standing there. He asked him how he recognized him, and the man answered, “I know God, so I know all about you as well.” He tested Muḥammad to see whether he knew all the prayers, and then commanded him to bow before him. The prince refused, expressing a few doubts, and suddenly found himself alone outside the cave. He realized that the man inside the cave was al-Dajjāl himself. Muḥammad called to him, “When will you come out of the cave?” Al-Dajjāl answered, “The Uzbeks will come and cross the Amu Darya and take over Mawarannahr and Khorasan. Then others will emerge. After that all will become unclear and then I shall make my appearance.” Muḥammad returned home to Tīmūr and explained all that had happened.

295 Al-Dajjāl, “the deceiver,” was considered a person of great magical abilities who will appear (for about 40 days or 40 years, depending on the tradition) before the end of time, and will allow tyranny and impurity to rule the world. In fact, his arrival was considered to be one of the proofs for the end of time. Only Jesus (as is also told in the Timūr-nāma) can kill him. See also, Abel, “al-Dajjdīl.”
B. ⲏ︃sā (Jesus) and al-Dajjāl.

南昌 (Jesus) appears several times in the narrative, particularly as Tīmūr faces the Russians, undergoes many adventures before and after the conquest of Moscow, and even debates with Russian clerics about the nature of ⲏ︃sā (son of God or slave of God). One of the fascinating stories relates how Tīmūr found a spear stuck in a stone inside a cave not far from Moscow. He tried to pull the spear out of the stone, but it would not budge. Tīmūr went outside and saw an old man who advised him to pray before pulling the spear. Tīmūr prayed and was indeed able to take out the spear. The old man cautioned him against taking the spear. He identified himself as Zaib, who had lived there since Muhammad's time, and was going to stay there until ⲏ︃sā made his appearance when he comes to take the spear and kill al-Dajjāl at the end of time. Tīmūr asked the man to tell him about the end of the world, and the old man explained that before ⲏ︃sā's arrival several cities will be destroyed, including Bukhara. The people of Bukhara will find refuge in the Maghrib, but Samarqand will be flooded, Badakhshan will be destroyed by an earthquake, a strong wind will raze Balkh to the ground, snakes will infest Isfahan, tigers will overrun India, lightning will reduce the mountains, frost will destroy Russia, Ethiopians will conquer Mecca, and the Arabs will flee to Turkey. At that time the Ka'ba will

296 Váméry edited and translated (with hardly any commentary) a short part of Tīmūr's adventures in Russia. He suggested that the context for studying this text should be explored in relation to either Christianity (relations between Christian communities in Central Asia and Russia), or in the greater context of the relationship between Russia and Central Asia. (Váméry, "Eine legendaré Geschichte Timurs," p. 224, note 1; 231-32.) I think that this is not the case, as the story before you demonstrates.
also be destroyed. Scholars will stop their learning, children will disrespect their parents, mosques and madrasas will be administered by bullies, people will drink wine and eat ḫarām. After all these signs the mahdi will appear in Mecca, but al-Dajjāl will also become visible and expand in the world. Then, on a Friday, ʿĪsā will come and together with the mahdi will trap al-Dajjāl, and ʿĪsā will kill him with this spear. Only then will the shariʿa rule and the Muslims will live well.

**Tīmūr and the Ark of the Covenant.**

Clearly, one of the most prominent issues in this narrative is the question of sovereignty. Although we have dealt with the question, to a certain extent, earlier (and will return to it in our conclusions), the following story about Tīmūr and the Ark of the Covenant serves as an excellent example. According to the story, Sulṭān Bāyazīd Yıldırım sent his son, Sulṭān Shibli, to Tīmūr, who at that time was encamped in Egypt. The various dignitaries assembled and sat in their arranged places, according to their ranks. Among the many presents that Shibli brought with him from his father was a large box (sunduq) shaped like a long chest or coffer (tābūt). A letter from Bāyazid explained the nature of the strange box:

That box that I have sent to you is called the Ark of the Covenant (tābūt sakīna). It was bequeathed to His Highness Iskandar from the time of Adam. It was opened once during Iskandar’s reign, and once again during

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297 The story is brought here in the context of ideas of sovereignty in the biographies of Tīmūr, although it could easily fit also the genre of ʿajāʾīb (marvels of creation), often viewed as a testimony to God’s endless power, that abounds in the narrative.

298 See Tīmūr-nāma. Kulliyāt-i faṣīḥ, pp. 369-374. The Berlin copy of the Kunūz al-aʿẓam is incomplete (page 572 is its last written page containing only about four fifths of the Tashkent lithograph) and does not include the story of the Ark.
the time of the Caliphate of the Commander of the Faithful (*amīr al-muʿminīn*) 'Umar, at the court of Hirqal (Heraclius) who was at that time the emperor of Rum. Now it has been close to eight hundred years that it has been impossible to open [it]. As hard as we hit it, it showed no intention of breaking. I have sent [it] so that you will open [it] and see what is inside.”

Timūr ordered the chest opened, but no one could find the opening. Eventually, Maulānā Sharaf Yazdī saw that on one of the walls of the chest a picture of the sun was drawn, and opposite it a picture of a new moon and a star. He ordered that a piece of loadstone be brought. He held it facing the picture of the star. The loadstone raised those pictures. Slowly a knob emerged. A kind of a small door (*daricha*) opened. An apparition of a slave-child appeared, holding something written in his hand. The people asked Maulānā Sharaf how he found the way to open it. He answered that something was written on the wall of the chest that revealed the secret of the opening, but no one was able to read it. When the slave boy brought forth a sheet of paper, made from the skin of a gazelle, Maulānā Sharaf took it from his hand and handed it to the Șāhib-qirān. No one was able to read it. They all surrendered the reading to the Maulānā. He studied the writing and read its contents:

> From me, Iskandar Dhūl-Qarnayn, it reaches to you, Iskandar the Second. My wise men have informed me that after one thousand and six hundred years, you, a man descended from Yāfīth ibn Nūḥ (peace be upon him), will emerge. We placed in the coffer the cloak of His Holiness Adam, the staff of His Holiness Mūsā, the goblet of His Holiness Yūsuf, the shirt of His Holiness Ibrāhīm, the sash of His Holiness Seth, the sandals of His Holiness Idrīs and the hatchet of His Holiness Nūḥ (blessings of Allah upon them). We have left a sign of each of the Prophets. Know that the Prophets also exercised sovereignty. As the saying goes,

> According to wisdom, kingship is prophethood
> For these two are the bezels of one ring.

> Do you say that it is they who tormented each other?
> For both come out of the same origin.
The portraits of all the sultans and kings and khaqans of Ajam (i.e., the non-Arabs) until our own time, and after (our own time) the pictures of those to come (i.e., future kings), based on what they have learned from celestial positions were drawn. Even your own picture has also been drawn. Behold what has happened and give praise to the past generations for having such knowledge. If you wish, you can take the pictures out of the interior of the coffer. Turn that knob to the right and the slave boy will descend and bring the picture. When you turn the knob to the left, (the boy) will leave the picture inside. Turn the knob again to the right and that boy will bring forth another picture. And that is the logic."

So they turned the knob to the right and the boy went inside and brought forth a piece of green silk, and when they opened the silk they saw that a picture of a man was painted on it. The man was of tall stature, his face white, of open countenance and sparse moustache and a mole on the side of his eyebrow. On that piece of silk was written that this was Jamshid Shah of high aspiration, who was of the nation of His Holiness Salih.299

A few lines concerning the transient nature of this world were written on that silk:

I am Jamshid who clothed the bride of this world in a beautiful robe. I taught the beautiful youth of this world how to deck himself out with grace. I have brought forth 3,600 compositions from the wine cellar of genius:

Of the compositions of Jamshid of noble constitution
Once again he wrote 1000 and 800 times two
The carpenter of destiny set the saw of annihilation upon my head
And I no longer grew lush from the fields of hope.

How well spoke Jamshid of noble constitution
By a spring, on a marble stone he wrote
At this spring people would speak without rhyme or reason (like the water of the spring)
They passed on until they shut their eyes.

The rest of the story describes how the slave-boy went inside twelve times and each time brought forth a piece of silk with a portrait of a man imprinted upon it. The

299 Salih: A Qur'anic non-biblical prophet, sent to the people of Thamud in Arabia.
twelve men were Jamshīd, Zahhak, Farīdūn, Kay-Qubād, Kay-Kaʿūs, Kay-Khusraw, Zal, Rustam, Afrāsiyāb, Isfandiyār, Bahman and Iskandar. Each had a short description of his appearance, of his qualities, and of the circumstances that led to his death.

One of the most interesting things about this story is the fact that the portraits belong to mighty kings, which is highly unusual. Stories about a box containing portraits of the Prophets circulated in the Islamic world from as early as the late ninth century. In most of the stories we find Muslim emissaries in the court of the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius in Constantinople, where they were shown a gilded object shaped like a cube that had many small compartments. From each of the compartments Heraclius took out a piece of silk, with a portrait on it. These portraits included Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Aaron, Lot, Isaac, Jacob, Ismāʿīl, Joseph, David, Solomon, Jesus and Muḥammad. Heraclius added that the portraits were made by order of the Lord for Adam, who had asked to see the prophets who would follow him. God transmitted these pictures to him and they were in Adam’s treasury somewhere in the West. Alexander the Great took them from there and handed them over to the prophet Daniel.

These stories apparently never identified the “box” as the Ark of the Covenant, and the Timurid historian Mīrkhwānd was perhaps the first to recognize the box as the Ark of the Covenant (tābūt sakīna), reporting, again, that the box contained pictures of

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300 The ancient kings mentioned in the great Persian epic, the Shāh-nāma.

301 Such stories appear in the works of al-Bayhaqī, Abū Nuʿaym al- Isfahānī, and repeated in different versions by al-Kisāʿī, Ibn al-Faqīh, al-Dīnawārī, al-Maṣʿūdī and al-Thaʿalabī. See the forthcoming study by Oleg Grabar and Mika Natif (Grabar – Natif, “The Story of the Portraits of the Prophet.”)
prophets in the possession of Heraclius. Mīrkhwānd’s account was later picked up by
the sixteenth-century historian of painting and calligraphy Dūst Muḥammad, though he
did not describe the box as the Ark of the Covenant, but rather as a “chest of witnessing”
(sunduq-i shahāda), which he mentioned in order to describe the development of the
idea of portraiture and its alleged development by Daniel.

I have been unable thus far to trace any reference to the story of the Ark of the
Covenant with portraits of kings rather than prophets. In a nutshell, this story demon-
strates several points: First, the sources that the author used are much more diverse than
he admits in the introduction to the work. He does not, for example, acknowledge the
Shāh-nāma as one of his sources, and similarly does not admit to having an acquaint-
ance not only with stories of the heroes of the Persian epic, but also with the sources of the
story of the portraits that circulated in the Islamic world. Was he the first to change the
story from portraits of prophets to portraits of kings? The second question is probably
why are the portraits of the ancient Persian kings and not of prophets? After all, this is
almost contrary to the essence of the biographies of Tīmūr. The fact is that the story is
actually in complete agreement with the rest of the text with regard to the issue of author-
ity. It cautions the king not to be too proud and reminds him of his mortality. It also lets
the people understand the mortality of the ruler. The basic concept of authority is intro-
duced by Alexander the Great “himself” in the old verse:

303 This account is noted by David Roxburgh, but he does not make it clear that
Mīrkhwānd did not use the term “Chest of Witnessing,” which may be a Shiʿī develop-
ment. See Roxburgh, Prefacing the Image, pp. 170-74.
According to wisdom, kingship is prophethood
For these two are the bezels of one ring.

Do you say that it is they who tormented each other?
For both come out of the same origin.

Thus, Tīmūr continues a long tradition of kings, not of prophets. The kings will give him the model that he needs on how to act, and more importantly, how not to act. We should also note the audience may not have known that the story originated with portraits of the prophets, not kings, and so the audience did not make the association.
SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS

The age of introspection in Central Asia in the eighteenth century led to the construction of a localized identity among the sedentary population of Mawarannahr that drew its inspiration from within. It was the period of decline that demanded these people to look inward, not so much in a conscious effort to understand the causes for the decline, but rather in an intuitive manner that imagined a glorious past, and through that past, imagined a better present and future. This is how the Kunūz al-aʿzam came into being. The text was not a passive reflector of its surrounding culture but rather an active shaper or mediator of the culture.\textsuperscript{304} In the story of the hero Central Asians could find a model for behavior; could come to conclusions about the nature of kingship, about the role of Sufi shaykhs, and also about the role of each and every one of them in the society. Moreover, they could boast a whole new history of their own, with a local hero who had shaped the world, a world that was far-removed from their immediate reality. When Muḥammad Raḥīm ascended the throne of Bukhara, the country was beginning its road to recovery. Muḥammad Raḥīm Khan was thus able to create his own new vision for the region by re-evaluating the relationship between religion and state, a re-evaluation that essentially conceived of as an effective Islamic society led by a charismatic leader who was not part of the formal or informal Islamic establishment.

\textsuperscript{304}These comments are inspired by the literary school of New Historicism, although, in the end, our methodology is different. The literary text was one of an array of cultural products that share a single deep structure or mentality.
The *Tuhfat al-khānī* and the *Kunūz al-aʿzam* are seemingly unrelated creations that introduced two different fields of study: The first dealt with the changing perceptions of the inauguration ritual of new rulers in Central Asia and focused on the vision of the court in Bukhara in the eighteenth century. The second described the emergence of the genre of heroic apocrypha, also in the eighteenth century, that centered on the figure of Timūr. I believe that we can interpret both creations as manifestations of the same issue: both emerge out of similar circumstances and both address key questions in society and politics: Who has the right to rule? What should be the image of the ideal ruler? How did the ideal ruler reflect his community? What is the ethos of the Muslim community? What was the role of the *ulamāʾ* and the Sufis? What was the role in the society of the rest of the population?\textsuperscript{305} It is too early to determine whether the courtly and the popular visions presented in these works were aware of each other, competed with each other, ignored each other or simply co-existed.

Both visions seemed to address different audiences and therefore emphasized what their respective audiences wanted to hear (and downplayed, or even ignored what they did not want to hear). The different audiences required, therefore, different techniques and styles of articulation, and a different setting.\textsuperscript{306} Essentially, both creations offer a vision for a “proper” Islamic society within the boundaries of Central Asia, whose interest lies in maintaining itself in Central Asia and not venturing beyond it. It is a vision

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\textsuperscript{305} Of course, the texts do not address these issues in a theoretical fashion. They do not offer a new theory of kingship, but a practical prescription for kingship (and for many other things) that is set in in the narratives.

\textsuperscript{306} By this I do not mean that there was one conscious effort, or one directing hand to both visions.
that emerged as a response to a certain situation and that sees the legitimation of the ruler coming first and foremost from the divine and therefore accords more place for Islam in the decision-making process than it had previously. It still acknowledges the significance of the old traditions of Central Asia, like the Chinggisid ideal (since by the eighteenth century Chinggisid legacies are very much engrained in Central Asia’s culture), and yet the Chinggisid halo was slowly dimming and the Chinggisid khans were becoming ceremonial figures with no real authority. Therefore, I would argue that attempts to see legitimation and sources of inspiration running along a single continuum of Muḥammad – Chinggis Khan or sharīʿa – yasa need to be re-evaluated. Many yasa-sanctioned practices were certainly rooted in Central Asian culture, and although at times some of them still evoked some debate with the sharīʿa, both tended to co-exist peacefully. Even if the Timurid ideal was received verycoldly by the formal elites when it claimed its share in the cultural discourse, other significant segments of the society seemed to embrace it, among them Sufis, political oppositions, and probably many in the population. We historians should not be tempted to welcome only the position of the formal elites.

A comparison between the individual heroes, between Muḥammad Raḥīm and Timūr of the Kunūz al-aʿẓam reveals that both rulers were fortunate enough to have received God’s assistance in their quest for the throne, both repelled external and internal enemies and rebuilt the state in accordance with the sharīʿa while keeping their identities as Central Asian heroes. The Kunūz al-aʿẓam was written at an earlier stage, deep in the age of the decline and therefore also entailed a clear eschatological dimension. Muḥammad Raḥīm’s ascent symbolized – as far as the narrative is concerned – the arrival
of the savior of Bukhara, and therefore lacked the eschatological qualities of the *Kunūz al-αzam*. The elevation ritual of the Manghīt amir built a myth around the new monarch in the form of an epic drama of conquest, a deliverer whose selfless heroism saved the region from total ruin. The presentation of the hero bears some resemblance to the *Kunūz al-αzam*.

Muḥammad Raḥīm’s appropriation of the throne follows the ulāmāʾs suggestion that he take upon himself the *khuṭba* and *sikka* in imitation, as far as they are concerned, of the Prophet Muḥammad. Muḥammad Raḥīm summons all the people for “consultation” but the discussion is essentially an impressive speech by the ruler. He receives their unanimous support and they, in turn, sing his praises. Muḥammad Raḥīm briefly hesitates before accepting the khanship, and the narrative moves on to describe a pompous ceremony that displays so many riches and so much grandeur that one is astonished to discover that the country was in total decay only a short while ago. This is, of course, the language of propaganda. The *Tuḥfat al-khānī* strives to give the impression of order in the khanate. Not only is the strongman firmly in the seat of authority, in the position of the ruler who can take care of everything, but there is a clear hierarchy, a large and effective administrative mechanism where all the officials know their respective places and responsibilities. Ceremonies are also fully developed and there is no room for doubt, no room for surprises. In fact, the only “surprise” during Muḥammad Raḥīm’s inauguration ritual is when the dignitaries “forget” the solemnity of the situation and rush forward in their excitement to elevate the new monarch.
The biographies of Tīmūr present a very different approach. Everything is much more chaotic (in the events, not the overall framework!). Tīmūr experiences the same course of military conquest and rise to the crown. In his acceptance of the kingship Tīmūr displays much humility as he constantly rejects the offer. It is interesting to note that the Sufis (Mir Baraka, for example) object to Tīmūr’s attempts to find a Chinggisid to rule as khan. In contrast with the Tuhfat al-khānī, the voice of the participants is not confined to blind following (even if the outcome is fairly clear).

The new agenda in the eighteenth century struggled with the question of the ruler’s origin. Origin usually helped determine (or was the only cause for) political legitimation. In the past, the right origin was all that was needed to at least narrow down the list of participants in the scramble for kingship. For over five centuries being a male descendant of Chinggis Khan was enough to give one a shot at the throne. Although Chinggisid charisma, as mentioned, was still powerful, we encounter in the eighteenth century different strategies to deal with the question of ancestry. Both Tīmūr and Muḥammad Raḥīm were tribal, non-Chinggisid rulers. Both did their best to connect themselves to Chinggisid legacy: they married a Chinggisid princess, they evoked Chinggis Khan’s name as a source of inspiration (the author of the Kunūz al-aʾżam explains at one point that Tīmūr was a descendant of Qarachar Noyan, whose mother was Chaghatai’s daughter), they adopted titles of status, such as guřegen (for Tīmūr) and khan (for Muḥammad Raḥīm), and both were raised on the white felt. However, neither ever claimed direct descent from Chinggis Khan. Both were aware, of course, that Chinggis Khan’s descendants had the exclusive right to the throne, but also realized that the era of unchallenged Chinggisid authority was approaching its end. Therefore, they tried to look
at the question of origin differently through their ethnic and religious identities: Tīmūr was presented as a Turk and as a descendant of Yāfīth ibn Nūḥ (Japhet, Noah’s third son). This did not grant him instant right for sovereignty, but it did give him another source of legitimation vis-à-vis other powerful sovereigns as the Ottoman Sultan, or even Alexander the Great, all of whom boasted a lineage going back to Yāfīth. Muḥammad Raḥīm, on the other hand, tried to diminish the question of origin. He was a Mangḥīt tribal chieftain and the emphasis on his Mangḥīt heritage in the Tuhfat al-khānī is scanty. The ideal ruler’s duty was to lead the Islamic community in a just manner, to rid the country of corruption, act against corruption and rebellion (Tuhfat al-khānī) and against bad faith and false proophood (Kunūz al-ʿam); both political and religious anxieties were perceived as endangering the stability of the Islamic society.

The biographies of Tīmūr place emphasis on the helplessness of the ʿulamāʾ. They have no access to “real,” profound knowledge, they are frequently vulnerable in the face of danger (as the stories of the false prophets clearly demonstrate), and they are also powerless when dealing with corrupt authorities. In fact, it is as if the Kunūz al-ʿam acknowledges their role in the society, but at the same time perceives them as bureaucrats, cold-hearted when dealing with the population, and frail when facing stronger forces. Eventually, Tīmūr himself becomes responsible for upholding the shariʿa, and by

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307 The ethnic dimension is something that we have not dealt with in this work. It is interesting to see how potent Turkic identity was. Throughout his childhood other people refer to Tīmūr as “Türkbağa” (Turk-boy), and even he, when trying to solve a conflict with Qipchaqs, Ottomans, Qalmuqs and even Uzbeks, says: “We are Turks, they are Turks – we’ll manage.”
doing so he almost appropriates the ‘ulamā’\'s functions.\textsuperscript{308} The Kunūz al-aʿẓam does not allow Sufis to perform the duties of the ‘ulamā’. They are responsible for much larger accomplishments. In the official chronicles, however, the ‘ulamā’ are the symbols of order and of the structure of the society. The chronicles pay much less attention to the Sufis. Nevertheless, both visions have one thing in common: religious dignitaries (‘ulamā’ or Sufis) are obliged to participate in the country’s government, but they should not, under any circumstance, be its rulers! Both accounts make it categorically clear: each segment of the society has its own role to play. Only then will the community accomplish its destiny.

The courtly vision allowed and even required the participation of the rest of the population in the inauguration ritual. However, it was not real participation but lip service. It is true that Tuhfat al-khānī presented the choice of Muḥammad Raḥīm as a collective decision – everyone was invited to the court to take part in the process. In fact, most of the people are simply shown as happy, joyous and grateful, praising the new ruler. Timūr’s mandate in the Kunūz al-aʿẓam extends also from the people. (In fact, the diversity of characters also demonstrates the popular character of the work).

What is interesting is that the source of the demand for a ruler is different. The demand in the biographies of Timūr comes from the people of Bukhara: A khan had died, the next khan was a tyrant, and the people now demanded a new leader. They did not demand to choose the leader. This prerogative is reserved for God (or, in the case of the Kunūz al-aʿẓam, for someone who is aware of the divine choice, namely, the Sufi

\textsuperscript{308}In the Sīrat Baybars, Baybars takes upon himself, as a young man, a similar (and more pronounced) role by declaring himself to be a muḥtāṣib (the “enforcer” of the sharīʿa). See Roman de Baībars, vol. I, p. 103.
shaykh). However, it is clear that God is obviously going to choose someone who already has the necessary pre-requisites, someone of noble birth, with ties to the idea of kingship, someone with charisma, piety, and a sincere heart. Even when the shaykh declares that even a beggar would do, the beggar turns out to be a Chinggisid prince (Bayān-Quṭī Khan, for example). In the *Tuḥfat al-khānī* the demand for a khan comes from the two most important strata in the elite: the ‘ulamā’ and the amirs. They are already of a different status from the rest of the population, and at the elevation ceremony they remove themselves further from the rest of the ruled, both physically and symbolically.

To conclude, the two visions, the courtly and the popular, were indeed connected by the circumstances of their creation, and by the issues that they addressed, from the changing perceptions of legitimacy of rule to the relationship between religion and state; from their interpretations of their traditions and customs and their invocation of sources of inspiration to their understanding of their place in the world, as well as various related issues that dominated the cultural discourse in Central Asia even beyond the early modern period. What we were unable to do in this presentation, but hope to accomplish in the near future, is to provide a fuller synthesis of these visions with aspects of the historical “reality” in the eighteenth century, to deepen the comparison between the rise of the Timurid ideal and the rise of the Tribal Dynasties, to understand how the so-called revival of the *shari‘a* following the introduction of the Naqshbandiyya Mujaddidiyya\(^{309}\) corresponded (or not) to the visions presented above, and to continue the reconstruction of Central Asia’s history in the early modern period.

\(^{309}\)See for example, Babadjanov, “On the History of the Naqšbandiya Muğaddidiyya.”
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