Religion and Politics in Post-Timurid Central Asia

Scholarship on the Timurid period has confirmed the veneration of ʿAlī and the *ahl al-bayt* by the Timurids, who promoted such veneration among their subjects and even attempted to connect their dynastic genealogy to ʿAlī.[1] The most important historical evidence of the pro-ʿAlid sentiments of the Timurids is the tomb inscriptions of Tīmūr and his

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[1] See A. A. Semenov, "Nadpisi na nadgrobiiakh Timura i ego potomkov v Guri Emire," in *Èpigrafika Vostoka II* (Moscow: Izdatelʹstvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1948), 49–63, and its continuation in *Èpigrafika Vostoka III* (Moscow: Izdatelʹstvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1949), 45–54. John Woods's study of Timurid genealogical data shows the dynasty's claim to descent from the wondrous union of Alān Quvā and the radiant being descended from ʿAlī. See John Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," in *Intellectual Studies on Islam: Essays Written in Honor of Martin B. Dickson*, ed. Michel M. Mazzaoui and Vera B. Moreen (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990), 85–125. A recent article by Kazuo Morimoto examines a hitherto unknown genealogy of the Timurids that represents them as descended from Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, ʿAlī's son by a woman of the Banū Ḥanīfa. See Kazuo Morimoto, "An Enigmatic Genealogical Chart of the Timurids: A Testimony to the Dynasty's Claim to Yasavi-ʿAlid Legitimacy?," *Oriens* 44 (2016): 145–78. The descendants of ʿAlī through his son, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, played an important role in the narrative traditions about Central Asia's Islamization. The region has long been home to "sacred communities" of *khwāja*s claiming descent from ʿAlī. These groups connect their genealogy to ʿAlī through Aḥmad Yasavī, who is said to be a fifteenth-generation descendant of ʿAlī through the latter's son, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya. For more information on the genealogies of *khwāja* communities, see Ashirbek Muminov, Anke von Kügelgen, Devin DeWeese, and Michael Kemper, (eds.), *Otkrytie puti dlia Islama: Rasskaz ob Iskhak Babe, XIV–XIX vv.*, vol. I of *Islamizatsiia i sakralʹnye rodoslovnye v Tsentralʹnoi Azii: Nasledie Iskhak Baba v narrativnoi i genealogicheskoi traditsiiakh* (Almaty: Daik Press, 2013); see also vol. II in the same series: Ashirbek Muminov, Anke von Kügelgen, Devin DeWeese, and Michael Kemper, (eds.), *Genealogicheskie gramoty i sakralʹnye semeistva XIX–XXI vekov: Nasab-nama i gruppy khodzhei, sviazannykh s sakralʹnym skazaniem ob Iskhak Babe* (Almaty: Daik Press, 2008).

son, Mīrānshāh, according to which the Timurids claimed descent from a mother figure known as Alān Quvā,[2] who was impregnated by the divine seed of a descendant of ʿAlī. Even more remarkably, Tīmūr's tomb inscriptions trace his lineage to ʿAlī through Chingiz Khan:

This is the tomb of the greatest *sulṭān* and the most honorable *khāqān* ... Amīr Tīmūr Gūragān b. Amīr Taraghāy b. al-Amīr Bargul ... then Chingīz Khan ... b. al-Amīr Būẓanjir. The father of this glorified [one] was not known, but his mother was Alān Quvā. It is narrated that it was not [a result of] adultery [but] through the pure light of the descendants of the Lion of God, the Conqueror ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib.[3]

The inscription on Tīmūr's jade tombstone further clarifies Alān Quvā's miraculous conception:

It is narrated that her [Alān Quvā's] qualities were sincerity (*ṣidq*) and chastity (*ʿafāf*). She was never an adulteress (*baghiyya*). She indeed conceived him through the light [that] entered her from the top of the door. It appeared to her [in the form of] "the well-proportioned man."[4] He mentioned that he is one of the sons of the Commander of the Faithful ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib. Perhaps her descendants, [who are] exalted and victorious over others in perpetuity, confirm her [Alān Quvā's] claims on him [ʿAlī].[5]

Tīmūr's tombstone highlights ʿAlī's importance in Timurid genealogy. Although the Timurids' claims to ancestors shared with the Chingizids are well known, the implicit assertion in Tīmūr's tomb inscriptions that Chingiz Khan was of ʿAlid descent deserves closer attention. As John Woods has noted, "in linking the houses of ʿAlī and Chingiz Khan, this claim combines the two most powerful notions of dynastic legitimacy current in post-ʿAbbasid, late Mongol Iran and Central Asia."[6] The Timurids not only fused these notions in their genealogy but did so under

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[2] Alān Quvā (or Alan Qoʿa) was a key figure in Chingizid genealogical traditions from the thirteenth century onward, and her impregnation by "an unusual figure" who came as a "resplendent yellow man" and departed as a yellow dog in the version of the *Secret History of the Mongols* is a recurrent theme. The Timurid tradition clearly adapted this story from the Chingizid accounts in Muslim historiography as reflected in Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmiʿ al-tavārīkh*. See Igor de Rachewiltz (trans. and ed.), *The Secret History of the Mongols: A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century*, vol. I (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 4. See also Rashiduddin Fazlullah, *Classical Writings of the Medieval Islamic World: Persian Histories of the Mongol Dynasties*, vol. III, trans. W. M. Thackston (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 82.

[3] Semenov, "Nadpisi" [part 1], 52–53.

[4] Qurʾan 19:17.

[5] Semenov, "Nadpisi" [part 1], 57–58.

[6] Woods, "Tīmur's Genealogy," 88.

the ʿAlid umbrella. ʿAlī's portrayal as a common ancestor uniting the Chingizid and Timurid houses implies his superiority over the legacy of Chingiz Khan in the Timurids' eyes.

THE VENERATION OF THE AHL *AL-BAYT* AMONG THE TIMURIDS

The Timurid historian Muʿīn al-Dīn Naṭanzī reported that Tīmūr considered love for the *ahl al-bayt* of the Prophet Muḥammad his religious duty (*farż*) and, following the example of Ghāzān Khan, minted coins with the names of the Twelve Imams.[7] Tīmūr's descendants continued to promote veneration of ʿAlī and his family. Significant instances of patronage by the Timurids included the refurbishment of the shrine of the eighth imam, Riżā, in Mashhad by Shāhrukh and his wife, Gavharshād,[8] Mīrzā Iskandar's minting of coinage bearing the names of the Twelve Imams in addition to those of the Rāshidūn caliphs,[9] and the rediscovery and rehabilitation of the ʿAlid shrine in Balkh during the reign of Ḥusayn Bāyqarā.[10] Ḥusayn Bāyqarā's intention to mint coins and have the Friday sermon (*khuṭba*) read in the name of the Twelve Imams – an idea from which he was dissuaded by two prominent literary figures of the fifteenth century, ʿAlīshīr Navāʾī and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī[11] – leaves no doubt about the reverence for ʿAlī and the *ahl al-bayt* among the Timurids.

Ḥusayn Bāyqarā's plan could be interpreted as imitation of his progenitor, Tīmūr. In his *Ḥabīb al-siyar*, Khwāndamīr describes the plan as a result of Ḥusayn Bāyqarā's love and admiration (*maḥabba va mavadda*) for the Prophet's family. This description contrasts with the reproachful language

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[7] Muʿīn al-Dīn Naṭanzī, *Muntakhab al-tavārīkh-i Muʿīnī* (Tehran: Kitābfurūshi-yi Khayyām, 1336/1958), 151, 288.

[8] Beatrice Manz, *Power, Politics and Religion in Timurid Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 220.

[9] The four Rāshidūn, or "rightly guided," caliphs were the Prophet Muḥammad's immediate successors as leaders of the Muslim community. See İlker Evrim Binbaş, "Timurid Experimentation with Eschatological Absolutism: Mīrzā Iskandar, Shāh Niʿmatullāh Walī, and Sayyid Sharīf Jurjānī in 815/1412," in *Unity in Diversity: Mysticism, Messianism and the Construction of Religious Authority in Islam*, ed. Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 298.

[10] See R. D. McChesney, *Waqf in Central Asia: Four Hundred Years in the History of a Muslim Shrine, 1480–1889* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991). See also Maria Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition: Turko-Persian Politics and Acculturation in Medieval Iran* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 208–20.

[11] See Hamid Algar, *Jami* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 41–42, 119.

that Khwāndamīr uses to admonish the "zealots" of the Ḥanafī *madhhab* (school of law) who pressured Ḥusayn Bāyqarā to abandon his intended course:

[Ḥusayn Bāyqarā] demanded that the *khuṭba* and coinage be adorned with the honorific titles of the Infallible Imams. The mandate of this good name [of Ḥusayn Bāyqarā] was spread across the surrounding regions. The news about the reformed rulings of the shariʿa of the Hāshimī Prophet was delivered from the palace to the planet Saturn. However, a group of zealots [*jamʿī az mutaʿaṣṣibān*] of the Ḥanafī *madhhab* who were respected and honored in the royal residence of Herat during that time hastened to the foot of the royal throne to lecture on the matter preferring the customs of the *ahl-i sunna* and dissuaded [Ḥusayn Bāyqarā] from changing the *khuṭba*.[12]

Although it is tempting to link reverence for the imams with Shiʿism[13] and to associate Ḥusayn Bāyqarā's admiration of the imams with a Twelver Shiʿi orientation, this connection is probably misleading, because being both a devout Sunni and a devotee of the Prophet's family was not uncommon in the Sunni-dominated environment of Timurid Central Asia.[14] The ongoing scholarly curiosity about the Shiʿi orientation of the

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[12] Khwāndamīr, *Tārīkh-i ḥabīb al-siyar fī akhbār-i afrār-i bashar*, vol. IV (Tehran: Kitābkhāna-yi Khayyām, 1954), 136. See also Khwandamir, *Habibu's-siyar: Tome Three*, part 2, trans. and ed. W. M. Thackston ([Cambridge, MA]: Harvard University, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 1994), 421.

[13] B. S. Amoretti, "Religion in the Timurid and Safavid Periods," in *The Cambridge History of Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 610–14.

[14] For discussion of the religious milieu during the Timurid period, see Michel Mazzaoui, *The Origins of the Ṣafavids: Šīʿism, Ṣūfism and the Ġulāt* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1972), 1–6, 83–85; Annemarie Schimmel, "The Ornament of the Saints: The Religious Situation in Iran in Pre-Safavid Times," *Iranian Studies* 7, no. 1/2 (1974): 88–111; A. K. S. Lambton, "Changing Concepts of Authority in the Late Ninth/Fifteenth and Early Tenth/Sixteenth Centuries," in *Islam and Power*, ed. A. S. Cudsi and A. E. Hillal Dessouki (London: Croom Helm, 1981), 49–71; Said Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 66–84; Devin DeWeese, "An 'Uvaysī' Sufi in Timūrid Mawarannahr: Notes on Hagiography and the Taxonomy of Sanctity in the Religious History of Central Asia," in *Studies on Sufism in Central Asia* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), no. IV, 1–38; Devin DeWeese, "Intercessory Claims of Ṣūfī Communities during the 14th and 15th Centuries: 'Messianic' Legitimizing Strategies on the Spectrum of Normativity," in *Unity in Diversity*, 197–219; Maria Subtelny, "The Cult of ʿAbdullāh Anṣārī under the Timurids," in *God Is Beautiful and He Loves Beauty: Festschrift in Honour of Annemarie Schimmel Presented by Students, Friends and Colleagues on April 7, 1992*, ed. Alma Giese and J. Christoph Bürgel (Bern: Peter Lang, 1994), 377–406; Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition*. See also Maria Subtelny and Anas B. Khalidov, "The Curriculum of Islamic Higher Learning in Timurid Iran in the Light of the Sunni Revival under Shāh-Rukh," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115 (1995): 210–36; Shahzad Bashir, *Messianic Hopes and Mystical*

Timurids[15] should address the issue from a different angle and problematize the nature of Sunnism during the Timurid period, when Sunnism and the veneration of the *ahl al-bayt* were fused. For instance, Maria Subtelny has examined Shāhrukh's abandonment of the Turco-Mongol customary laws (*yasa*) in light of his religious policies and suggested that Shāhrukh's efforts to restore Sunnism were motivated by his opposition to the growing threat of Shiʿi and other heterodox movements, such as the Ḥurūfiyya.[16] It is noteworthy that Shāhrukh's vigorous promotion of Sunni Islam along with his anti-Shiʿi policies did not hinder his patronage of Imam Riżā's shrine in Mashhad. It is within this religious and social context of Sunni devotion to the *ahl al-bayt* that I view the nature of Sunnism during the Timurid period in this book.

Hamid Algar has described the struggle of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī – one of the "zealots of the Ḥanafī *madhhab*" referred to by Khwāndamīr – to combine his Sunni devotion to the *ahl al-bayt* with open hostility to Shiʿism.[17] During a pilgrimage, Jāmī visited the shrine of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿAlī's son and third Shiʿi imam) and composed a poem symbolically exalting Karbala, the site of Ḥusayn's martyrdom, over the Kaʿba in Mecca. The poem attests to the status quo of being both a devotee of the *ahl al-bayt* and a committed Sunni:

> I made of my eye a foot to carry me to the scene of Ḥusayn's martyrdom,
> for this is a journey incumbent in the rite of the lovers.
> If the servitors of his shrine should place their feet on my head,
> it would proudly ascend beyond the stars of Ursa Minor.
> The Kaʿba itself circumambulates his paradisiacal tomb;
> O caravan of pilgrims, where then are you headed, where?[18]

Visions: The Nūrbakhshīya between Medieval and Modern Islam (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003); Shahzad Bashir, *Fazlallah Astarabadi and the Hurufis* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005); Manz, *Power, Politics and Religion*, 208–45; İlker Evrim Binbaş, "The Anatomy of a Regicide Attempt: Shāhrukh, the Ḥurūfīs, and the Timurid Intellectuals in 830/1426–27," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 23, no. 3 (2013): 391–428; Binbaş, "Timurid Experimentation," 277–303; and İlker Evrim Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran: Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAlī Yazdī and the Islamicate Republic of Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

[15] Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks*, 284.

[16] Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition*, 24–28; Subtelny, "Sunni Revival," 14–23; and Subtelny, "Cult of ʿAbdullāh Anṣārī," 379–83. See also Subtelny and Khalidov, "Curriculum," 211–12. It should be noted that the persecution of the Ḥurūfīs intensified in the region after the attempt on Shāhrukh's life in 1427. See Bashir, *Fazlallah Astarabadi and the Hurufis*. See also Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks*, 14–15, 17–18, 155–56, 248–49, and his "Anatomy of a Regicide Attempt," 406–11.

[17] Algar, *Jami*, 50–51, 58–59, 87, 106, 118–20.

[18] Ibid., 50–51.

In the Timurid period, admiration of the Twelve Imams did not conflict with observance of Sunni Islam, as respect for ʿAlī's descendants was deemed part of the tradition. However, the collapse of the Timurid dynasty and the ensuing political struggle between the Sunni Shibanids and the Shiʿi Safavids drastically transformed the religious milieu in the post-Timurid Persianate world. The tumult engendered a crisis of religious identity in Central Asia and facilitated the development of a more self-conscious Sunni identification in the region in response to the aggressive militant Shiʿism promoted by the Safavids. Nevertheless, there were still communities in Central Asia that continued the tradition of venerating the *ahl al-bayt* in the first half of the sixteenth century under Shibanid rule. One such group was the community of Aghā-yi Buzurg and Ḥāfiẓ Baṣīr.

THE SUNNI–SHIʿI DICHOTOMY IN THE EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY

The rise of the Safavid dynasty and the enshrinement of Shiʿism as the state-sponsored branch of Islam in Iran generated a great threat for the neighboring Sunni states,[19] including that of the newly founded Shibanid dynasty.[20] The recognition of Shiʿism as an "official religion" in the

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[19] The emergence of the Safavid dynasty also threatened the growing ambitions of the Ottoman sultans and affected Ottoman Sunni identification. See Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Perspectives and Reflections on Religious and Cultural Life in Medieval Anatolia* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2012), 63–122. On the persecution of Shiʿites in the Ottoman dynasty, see Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Zındıklar ve Mülhidler: 15.–17. Yüzyıllar* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998), 268–304; and Saim Savaş, *XVI. Asırda Anadolu'da Alevîlik* (Ankara: Vadi Yayınları, 2002), 102–18. The Sunni Ottoman and Shibanid dynasties continued to collaborate against the Shiʿi Safavids throughout the sixteenth century. See Audrey Burton, "Relations between the Khanate of Bukhara and Ottoman Turkey, 1558–1702," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 5, no. 1/2 (1990/1991): 85. See also Vefa Erginbas, "Problematizing Ottoman Sunnism: Appropriation of Islamic History and *Ahl al-Baytism* in Ottoman Literary and Historical Writing in the Sixteenth Century," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 60 (2017): 614–46.

[20] On the religious milieu of early sixteenth-century Central Asia, see Ulrich Haarmann, "Staat und Religion in Transoxanien im frühen 16. Jahrhundert," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 124, no. 2 (1974): 332–69. See also R. D. McChesney, "'Barrier of Heterodoxy'? Rethinking the Ties between Iran and Central Asia in the 17th Century," in *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society*, ed. Charles Merville (London: I. B. Tauris, 1996), 231–34. For a general overview of the sociopolitical history of Central Asia in the sixteenth century, see R. D. McChesney, "Central Asia vi. In the 16th–18th Centuries," *EIr* (2000), and McChesney, "S̲h̲ībānids," *EI2* (2012).

Safavid-controlled domain led to the reformulation and reassertion of Sunni religious identity by the Shibanids. The Safavids' forceful promotion of Shiʿism and suppression of Sunnism created religio-political circumstances that put the Central Asian Sunni Ḥanafī orientation to the test. Moreover, the reframing of the Shibanids' Sunni orientation was accompanied by a reimagining of the dynasty's Chingizid identity. After the fall of the Timurids, a Chingizid prince, Shībānī Khan, succeeded in restoring the Chingizid principle of governance, according to which only a blood descendant of Chingiz Khan could claim the title of "khan." Shībānī Khan imported this Chingizid principle into a Muslim context that was unselfconsciously Sunni. The conflict culminated in the Safavids' later transformation of Shībānī Khan's skull as a wine cup.[21] According to Ḥasan Beg Rūmlū, the Safavid court historian under Shah Ṭahmāsb,

Shah [Ismāʿīl] commanded that his [Shībānī Khan's] wicked head should be cut from off his body, and stuffed with straw, and sent to Sultan Bāyazīd of Turkey, and that the bones of his skull should be mounted in gold and fashioned into a cup. And they poured wine into it and sent it round in the royal assembly.[22]

The public proclamation of respect for ʿAlī and his descendants, supported and propagated by the Timurids, became unsafe in the early 1500s because of its increasing association with Shiʿi sympathies. Within this religious and political climate, the veneration of ʿAlī and the *ahl al-bayt* came under suspicion of signaling ties with the Safavids.

Sunni–Shiʿi antagonism was a hallmark of the intense rivalry between the Safavid and Shibanid dynasties. For instance, after Safavid troops under the direction of Shah Ismāʿīl displayed the severed heads of about fifty Sunnis, they cried, "O Sunni Khārijī[23] dogs, let this be a lesson for you [*ʿibrat gīrīd*]!" Their triumphant taunt was recorded by the sixteenth-century historian Vāṣifī, who witnessed the incident.[24] The climax of the opposition between the two dynasties occurred when

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[21] Annemarie Schimmel, "Some Notes on the Cultural Activity of the First Uzbek Rulers," *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* 8 (1960): 157–58.

[22] C. N. Seddon (trans.), *A Chronicle of the Early Ṣafawīs: Being the Aḥsanu't tawārīkh of Ḥasan-i Rūmlū*, vol. II (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1934), 54–55; hereafter *Aḥsanu't tawārīkh*.

[23] "*Khārijī*" was a derogatory term used by Shiʿa to refer to Sunnis; the latter, in turn, referred to Shiʿa by the equally derogatory label "*rāfiżī*."

[24] Zayn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Vāṣifī, *Badāʾiʿ al-vaqāʾiʿ*, ed. A. Boldyrev, vol. II (Iran: Chāpkhāna-yi Zar, 1350), 250.

Safavid troops set fire to Jāmī's tomb after Shah Ismāʿīl took Herat in 1510.[25]

Zayn al-Dīn Ziyāratgāhī, who served as *khaṭīb* (preacher) in the grand mosque of Herat, was one of the Heratī locals who fell victim to the ruthless punishments that Shah Ismāʿīl meted out to those who disobeyed his orders.[26] Ziyāratgāhī was murdered for his refusal to recite the Friday sermon according to Shiʿi custom by including the names of the Twelve Imams while cursing the first three Rāshidūn caliphs, the Prophet's wife ʿĀʾisha, and the Companions of the Prophet – individuals generally revered by Sunnis but reviled by the Shiʿa. In his *Tāʾrīkh-i rashīdī*, Mīrzā Ḥaydar Dughlat describes vividly how the white-haired Zayn al-Dīn Ziyāratgāhī was dragged from the pulpit and hacked to death by the shah's loyal Qizilbāsh ("redhead") troops in the mosque for not following their order to curse the Sunni figures.[27] Another well-known individual who was killed by the Safavids on the same grounds was Farīd al-Dīn Aḥmad Taftāzānī, a prominent Sunni scholar in Khurasan and the *shaykh al-islām* (chief Islamic legal authority) of Herat.[28] After Taftāzānī publicly humiliated Shah Ismāʿīl during a debate concerning the difference between false and true religions, Shah Ismāʿīl shot him twice with an arrow for refusing to adopt Shiʿism. According to Mīrzā Ḥaydar, Taftāzānī's body was then hung at the top of a tree before being burned in the marketplace.[29] The Safavid court historian Rūmlū reports that Taftāzānī's execution at the hands of Shah Ismāʿīl was prompted solely by the former's Sunnism.[30] The persecution of Sunnis continued under the subsequent Safavid rulers Shah Ṭahmāsb (r. 1524–76) and Shah ʿAbbās I (r. 1587–1629).[31]

The Sunni Shibanids did not miss a chance to take their revenge. The growing antipathy among Sunnis toward the figure of ʿAlī is evident from

[25] Ibid. See also Algar, *Jami*, 126–27, and Paul Losensky, "'Utterly Fluent, but Seldom Fresh': Jāmī's Reception among the Safavids," in *Jāmī in Regional Contexts: The Reception of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī's Works in the Islamicate World, ca. 9th/15th–14th/20th Century*, ed. Thibaut d'Hubert and Alexandre Papas (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 568–601.

[26] N. D. Miklukho-Maklai, "Shiizm i ego sotsialʹnoe litso v Irane na rubezhe XV–XVI vv.," in *Pamiati Akademika Ignatiia Iulianovicha Krachkovskogo* (Leningrad: Izdatelʹstvo Leningradskogo Universiteta, 1958), 228.

[27] Mirza Haydar Dughlat, *Tarikh-i Rashidi: A History of the Khans of Moghulistan*, trans. W. M. Thackston ([Cambridge, MA]: Harvard University, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 1996), 157.

[28] Miklukho-Maklai, "Shiizm," 228.

[29] Mirza Haydar, *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, 157–58.

[30] *Aḥsanuʾt tawārīkh*, 56.

[31] Arjomand, *Shadow of God*, 119–21.

Rūmlū's description of the cries of the heralds who marched toward Herat before Shībānī Khan's occupation of the city: "Say not, 'Let God and Muḥammad and ʿAlī be thy friends.' But say, 'Let God and Muḥammad and the four successors [i.e., the Rāshidūn caliphs] be thy friends.'"[32] When Shibanid troops under the leadership of Tīmūr Sulṭān reoccupied Herat in 1513, they "persecuted and inflicted harm on Shiʿites"[33] and "put to death many Shiʿas."[34] The Shibanids took every opportunity to desecrate the tombs of prominent Shiʿi Safavid figures buried in the shrine complex of Imam Riżā, which had once been under Timurid patronage. When Mashhad fell to the Shibanids in 1588, ʿAbdullāh Khan (r. 1582–98) subjected the remains of Shah Ṭahmāsb and other Safavid princes buried next to Imam Riżā's tomb "to every form of ignominy."[35]

As part of his attempt to reclaim his ancestral right to power in Central Asia with the help of Safavid troops in 1511, the Timurid prince Bābur succeeded in having the Friday sermon read in the Shiʿi style with the names of the Twelve Imams as well as the name of Shah Ismāʿīl.[36] However, this policy damaged Bābur's reputation in the eyes of the religious authorities of Samarqand and contributed to his ultimate failure to retake Central Asia. In the *Sulūk al-mulūk*, the eminent Shāfiʿī jurist Fażlullāh b. Rūzbihān Iṣfahānī Khunjī, who fled Iranian territory in the wake of the Safavids' rise to power and entered the service of the Shibanid rulers,[37] described Samarqand as being "in the thralldom of the heretics" during Bābur's occupation of the city.[38] Mīrzā Ḥaydar, the unreservedly anti-Shiʿi writer who witnessed these events, tried to defend his cousin and benefactor Bābur's reliance on the "heretic and infidel" Qizilbāsh troops by describing

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[32] *Aḥsanu't tawārīkh*, 43.

[33] Eskandar Monshi, *History of Shah ʿAbbas the Great*, trans. R. Savory, vol. I (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1978), 67.

[34] *Aḥsanu't tawārīkh*, 65. See also R. M. Savory, "The Consolidation of Safawid Power in Persia," *Der Islam* 41, no. 1 (1965): 81.

[35] According to Iskandar Munshī, the remains that the Uzbeks took to Central Asia did not belong to Shah Ṭahmāsb. Munshī clarifies that Shah Ṭahmāsb's remains were delivered to the Safavids by the caretaker of Imam Riżā's shrine, named Riżā Qulī Beg, and a certain Dūstum Bahādur, who claimed to know the true location of Shāh Ṭahmāsb's remains. See Eskandar Monshi, *History of Shah ʿAbbas the Great*, trans. R. Savory, vol. II (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1978), 702–5.

[36] Monshi, *History of Shah ʿAbbas*, I:65; *Aḥsanu't tawārīkh*, 58.

[37] A. A. Semenov, "Kulʹturnyi urovenʹ pervykh sheibanidov," *Sovetskoe vostokovedenie* 3 (1956): 53.

[38] V. Minorsky, ed., *Persia in A.D. 1478–1490: An Abridged Translation of Fażlullāh b. Rūzbihān Khunjī's Tārīkh-i ʿAlam-ārā-yi Amīnī* (London: Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1957), 127.

it as necessary to withstand the Uzbek army.[39] He also suggested that Bābur's failure to replace Shah Ismāʿīl's crown, as Samarqand's population expected, played an important role in Bābur's inability to secure control over Central Asia.[40] Khunjī praised ʿUbaydullāh Khan for purifying Mawarannahr of "innovation and Shiʿism" after Bābur's defeat and linked Bābur's loss with his reliance on the Shiʿi Safavids:

> Bābur was fortunate when he was a Sunni;
> When he became a friend of a *rāfiżī*, he fell into adversity.[41]

In his *Tārīkh-i ʿālam-ārā-yi ʿAbbāsī*, Iskandar Munshī describes the precarious situation of the Shiʿa in Herat after the city fell once again into the hands of the Shibanids, this time under ʿUbaydullāh Khan. Shiʿa were persecuted, as were those Sunnis who were accused of adherence to Shiʿism. "Many persons of undoubted Sunni beliefs were put to death on specious charges of heresy and professing Shiʿism."[42] Among the well-known Sunnis who were put to death by ʿUbaydullāh Khan on charges of Shiʿism was the poet Mawlānā Hilālī. The following verses condemning ʿUbaydullāh Khan's plunder of Khurasan were attributed to Hilālī and served as the basis for the accusation of Shiʿi heresy:

> How long, ʿUbayd, are you going to go on seeking plunder?
> How long are you going to ravage the land of Khurasan?
> You plunder and loot and carry off the property of orphans;
> If you are a Muslim, then I am an infidel.[43]

Munshī is openly skeptical of Hilālī's alleged Shiʿism, describing it as an excuse used by the authorities to take over his wealth and property.[44] In the following passage, Rūmlū offers further details regarding Hilālī's death while illustrating the vulnerable position of both Sunnis and Shiʿites who fell victim to false charges:

So that if they [the Uzbeks] thought a man of Herāt had a little wealth they hauled him before the Qāżī, saying that he had cursed the Companions in the days of

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[39] Mirza Haydar, *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, 163.
[40] Ibid. It is worth mentioning that Bābur did not include in his *Bāburnāma* any accounts of his takeover of Samarqand with the help of the Safavid army or of his order to conduct the Friday sermon according to the Shiʿi custom.
[41] Muḥammad Aslan (trans. and ed.), *Muslim Conduct of State Based upon the Sulūk-ul-mulūk of Faḍl-ullah bin Rūzbihān Iṣfahānī* (Lahore: University of Islamabad Press, 1974), 45.
[42] Monshi, *History of Shah ʿAbbas*, I:94.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid., I:95.

Qizilbāshes. And the Qāzī condemned him from the mouths of two false witnesses; nor made any inquiry, but commanded that he be put to death. Such men the Muḥtasibs dragged to the Square, and killed them, even as thieves. Many Sunnis were killed for their money as Shiʿa, and many Shiʿa were left unhurt because they were poor. And among those slain was Mawlānā Hilālī.[45]

According to Munshī and Rūmlū, then, ʿUbaydullāh Khan and his troops used religious sectarianism as a pretext to execute affluent members of the population, both Sunni and Shiʿi, in order to appropriate their wealth. Accusing someone of Shiʿi heresy on the grounds that the person in question had cursed the Rāshidūn caliphs other than ʿAlī during the Safavid occupation of the city became a sort of business for "gangs and racketeers," who used the risky religious and social situation to their benefit.[46] The use of such denunciations as a political tool by opposing sides to eliminate their rivals became a central characteristic of the milieu of early sixteenth-century Central Asia.

Rūmlū reports that Shībānī Khan was displeased with "a bigoted Sunni" scholar, Khwāja Mawlānā Iṣfahānī – that is, the aforementioned Fażlullāh b. Rūzbihān Khunjī – because of the latter's "hatred for the family of ʿAlī."[47] Shībānī Khan's disapproval of disrespect for ʿAlids not only suggests that the founder of the Shibanid dynasty venerated the Twelve Imams, but also highlights the ongoing debates about the status of the *ahl al-bayt* among Sunni elites in the early sixteenth century. Although Rūmlū portrays Khunjī as a "hater" of the *ahl al-bayt*, Khunjī's own writings show the opposite – namely, a respectful attitude toward the imams.[48] However, one cannot deny Khunjī's anti-Shiʿi stance and his hostility to the Safavids, whose aggressive Shiʿism had forced scholars such as Khunjī to abandon their homeland.

Shībānī Khan himself appears to have been closer to the Timurid era's respectful attitude toward the *ahl al-bayt* than he was to the sharp suspicion of the "*ahl al-baytism*"[49] that developed in the sixteenth century after his death at the hands of Qizilbāsh army. Shībānī Khan was a product of the Timurid cultural milieu, imbibing its values during his youth in Bukhara, where he was educated, associated with Sufi shaykhs, and served

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[45] *Aḥsanu't tawārīkh*, 105–6.

[46] Martin Dickson, "Shah Tahmasb and the Uzbeks: The Duel for Khurasan with ʿUbayd Khan, 930–940/1524–1540" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1958), 155–60.

[47] *Aḥsanu't tawārīkh*, 86.

[48] Fazlallakh ibn Ruzbikhan Isfakhani, *Mikhman-name-yi Bukhara: Zapiski bukharskogo gostia*, trans. R. P. Djalilovoi (Moscow: Nauka, 1976), 164–67.

[49] This term was introduced by McChesney in his *Waqf in Central Asia*, 33–35.

the governor.[50] In his *Rawżat al-salāṭīn*, Fakhrī Haravī quotes Chaghatay Turkic verses composed by Shībānī Khan, which are devoted to the shrine of Imam Riżā in Mashhad and leave no doubt about his loyalty to the *ahl al-bayt*:

> Ṭūs and Mashhad are where grace and beneficence are found;
> The tomb of Sultan ʿAlī, the king of Khurasan, is there.
> The dome's arch became light bestowed on the world;
> The light of the radiant sun is blue there.[51]

Celebrating the same occasion, Khunjī, who accompanied Shībānī Khan to the shrine of Imam Riżā, cites the following Chaghatay Turkic verses ascribed to Shībānī Khan:

> O breeze, lift the veil from that rosy face;
> If it sees my bloody tears, I will vanish off the face of the earth.
> From the pain of the sword of separation one dies and is resurrected now
>   and then;
> The thought of separation first revives melancholy.
> I lay my head at this threshold and shed many tears of soul;
> I will hold no regrets if I die at this sacred threshold.
> O God, when I circumambulate Sultan ʿAlī Mūsā Riżā,
> I reveal my secret in that moment to that genius.
> This town of Kaʿba is the morning light; that is, the pure light of the Sun.
> I have finally reached this blessing of the light that adorned the heavens.
> You are the sultan and I am just a beggar ready to serve;
> O king, come with grace and enlighten [me] without fear.
> My weak body suffers as [my] bones become firewood;
> O friends, it is no surprise if Shībānī burns among chips.
> The great chronology is 519/1510, which makes my soul pleased.[52]

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[50] Devin DeWeese, "The Yasavī Order and the Uzbeks in the Early 16th Century: The Story of Shaykh Jamāl ad-Dīn and Muḥammad Shībānī Khān," in Devin DeWeese, *Studies on Sufism in Central Asia* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), no. XII, 297–310. See also Nurten Kılıç, "Change in Political Culture: The Rise of Sheybani Khan," *Cahiers d'Asie Centrale* 3–4 (1997): 57–68, and András Bodrogligeti, "Muḥammad Shaybānī Khān's Apology to the Muslim Clergy," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 8 (1993–94): 85–100. On the links between Timurid and Shibanid administrative practices, see Jürgen Paul, "On Some 16th- and 17th-Century Documents concerning Nomads," in *Studies on Central Asian History in Honor of Yuri Bregel*, ed. Devin DeWeese (Bloomington: Indiana University Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 2001), 283–96.

[51] Fakhrī b. Amīrī Haravī, *Rawżat al-salāṭīn*, ed. Sayyid Ḥusām al-Dīn Rāshidī (Hyderabad, 1968), 23.

[52] *Mikhman-name-yi Bukhara*, 308.

Khunjī's anti-Shiʿi, yet respectful, attitude toward the Imams influenced the worldview of his student, ʿUbaydullāh Khan, to whom Khunjī dedicated his *Sulūk al-mulūk*.[53] In his correspondence with Shah Ṭahmāsb, ʿUbaydullāh Khan clarified that he was fighting the Shiʿa because of their cursing of the Companions of the Prophet and the Companions' descendants.[54] ʿUbaydullāh Khan reasoned that anyone who did not venerate the Companions of the Prophet, including ʿAlī, was not a Muslim. ʿUbaydullāh Khan not only claimed ʿAlī for the Sunnis by representing him as a Companion of the Prophet but also reproached the Safavids for not adhering to the example set by their forefather, Shaykh Ṣafī, and ʿAlī, both of whom followed the Companions of the Prophet. Referencing the correspondence between the two rival rulers, Rūmlū summarized ʿUbaydullāh Khan's response to Shah Ṭahmāsb thus:

In it ʿUbayd, acknowledging a letter from the Shah, expounded how the troubles of Khurasan were because it had accepted the Shiʿa faith … His [ʿUbaydullāh Khan's] quarrel lay with those who had left the faith of their fathers and had accepted heresy and error and become Shiʿa. The worship of any but God was infidelity. Such things that Shah had done, yet he admonished them. ʿAlī followed and accepted the Khalīfas [the first three Rāshidūn caliphs]; the Shah's forefather Sheikh Ṣafīy was a Sunni; strange it was that the Shah followed neither ʿAlī nor his own forefather.[55]

ʿUbaydullāh Khan's attempt to claim ʿAlī on behalf of the Sunnis was not a novel endeavor. A few decades earlier, Jāmī had already made the same claim in his works, in which he maintained that the Sunnis venerated the genuine ʿAlī in contrast to the false ʿAlī followed by the Shiʿa.[56] Hamid Algar notes that it was common for Jāmī's contemporaries to appropriate the Twelve Imams for Sunni Islam, and such appropriation has been incorrectly interpreted as a sign of growing acceptance of Shiʿism.[57] Within this shifting religious environment, the Sunni Shibanids and the Shiʿi Safavids each promoted themselves as the champions and defenders of the Prophet's family in their political struggles while laying claim to the *ahl al-bayt*.

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[53] Semenov, "Kulʹturnyi urovenʹ," 57. See also A. K. S. Lambton, "The *Imām*/Sultan: Faḍl Allāh b. Rūzbihān Khunjī," in her *State and Government in Medieval Islam: An Introduction to the Study of Islamic Political Theory; The Jurists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 178–200.

[54] On the correspondence between Shāh Ṭahmāsb and ʿUbaydullāh Khan, see Dickson, "Shah Tahmasb and the Uzbeks," 182–86.

[55] *Aḥsanuʾt tawārīkh*, 107.

[56] ʿAbd al-Vāsiʿ Niẓāmī Bākharzī, *Maqāmāt-i Jāmī* (Tehrān: Mumtāz, 1371/1951), 169–71; Algar, *Jami*, 52.

[57] Algar, *Jami*, 118–19.

Central Asian Sufi orders of the sixteenth century articulated their particular doctrines and practices against this backdrop of the two dynasties' contestation over ʿAlī's legacy. The role and status of ʿAlī was a central concern for Aghā-yi Buzurg as well as for the broader Khwājagān–Naqshbandī Sufi tradition within which she implicitly placed herself. Aghā-yi Buzurg's connection with this tradition emerges from an account in the *Maẓhar al-ʿajāʾib*. The account starts with a lecture given by Aghā-yi Buzurg on the path of the *ahl al-sunna wa-l jamāʿa* (that is, the Sunnis), in which she characterized Abū Ḥanīfa as the beginning of the path that ends with the eponym of the Naqshbandiyya, Bahāʾ al-Dīn Naqshband. Then, taking a piece of wood (*chub pāra*) from the ground, Aghā-yi Buzurg said: "Between the path of the Khwājagān (*ṭarīqa-yi Khwājagān*) and the path of the *ahl al-bayt* (*ṭarīqa-yi ahl al-bayt*) there is not even this much difference."[58] Aghā-yi Buzurg's reference to her community as the *ṭarīqa-yi ahl al-bayt* emphasized the centrality of the veneration of the *ahl al-bayt* for her circle,[59] and she asserted that the difference between her followers and the Khwājagān did not amount even to a chip of wood. Aghā-yi Buzurg further clarified that she preferred the practices of *ʿazīmat* (rigor) and *sunna* (tradition) over the practices of *rukhṣat* (dispensation) and *bidʿat* (innovation). Moreover, she expressed her disapproval of such Sufi rituals as *raqṣ* (dancing), *samāʿ* (listening/singing), *jahr* (vocal *dhikr*), and *khalvat* (seclusion).[60] In listing these rituals, Aghā-yi Buzurg seems to have directly evoked Bahāʾ al-Dīn Naqshband's comments when questioned by Malik Ḥusayn in Herat, as recorded in the earliest biography of Naqshband, *Anīs al-ṭālibīn*.[61] Aghā-yi Buzurg's support of *ʿazīmat* and her rejection of *rukhṣat*, *raqṣ*, *samāʿ*, *jahr*, and *khalvat* echo earlier Khwājagānī principles as well as the instructions that Bahāʾ al-Dīn Naqshband spiritually received from his precursor, Khwāja ʿAbd al-Khāliq Ghijduvānī.

Aghā-yi Buzurg's repudiation of these practices – at a time when Makhdūm-i Aʿẓam, the most prominent and influential Naqshbandī shaykh in the first half of the sixteenth century, following in the footsteps

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[58] *MA*, fol. 181b.

[59] Aghā-yi Buzurg uses the characterization *ṭarīqa-yi ahl al-bayt* for her community alongside *ṭarīqa-yi nā-maslūk* throughout the *Maẓhar al-ʿajāʾib*.

[60] *MA*, fol. 181b.

[61] Ṣalāḥ b. Mubārak Bukhārī, *Anīs al-ṭālibīn va ʿuddat al-sālikīn*, ed. Khalīl Ibrāhīm Ṣārī Ughlī (Tehran: Sāzmān-i Intishārāt-i Kayhān, 1371/1992), 120.

of earlier Khwājagān masters such as Maḥmūd Anjīr Faghnavī and Amīr Kulāl, allowed singing, dancing, and vocal *dhikr*[62] – could indicate her disassociation from the Aḥrārī branch of the Naqshbandī tradition, which was dominated by Makhdūm-i Aʿẓam and his followers. Although the *Maẓhar al-ʿajāʾib* does not elaborate on the connection between the communities of Aghā-yi Buzurg and Makhdūm-i Aʿẓam, it tells us that Aghā-yi Buzurg predicted Ḥāfiẓ Baṣīr's entrance into the service of Mawlānā ʿAlī Bāvardī, a representative of the Khwājagān–Naqshbandī tradition not related to the branch of Makhdūm-i Aʿẓam. Aghā-yi Buzurg's refusal to entertain the idea of Makhdūm-i Aʿẓam as a teacher for Ḥāfiẓ Baṣīr after her death suggests a self-conscious effort to distance her disciples from the circles connected to Makhdūm-i Aʿẓam. On the other hand, Aghā-yi Buzurg's decision to send Ḥāfiẓ Baṣīr to the non-Aḥrārī shaykh ʿAlī Bāvardī could also reflect the pro-ʿAlid inclination of the Naqshbandī tradition that ʿAlī Bāvardī represented.

The following anecdote from the *Maẓhar al-ʿajāʾib* further clarifies the connection between Aghā-yi Buzurg and the Khwājagān–Naqshbandiyya. During one of her lectures, Aghā-yi Buzurg mentioned a certain Qādir Qulī Turkmān as an example of a person unable to understand the inner dimension of her spiritual path. Ḥāfiẓ Baṣīr identified this Qādir Qulī Turkmān as one of the disciples of Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn Khalvatī.[63] According to Ḥāfiẓ Baṣīr, one day, Qādir Qulī Turkmān, who "used to reject the *ṭarīqa-yi Khwājagān*,"[64] entered the service of Aghā-yi Buzurg's foster brother, named Amīr Ḥanafī. Under Amīr Ḥanafī's guidance, Qādir Qulī Turkmān "saw the light of sainthood" (*nūr-i valāyat*), which signaled his spiritual progress. He immediately repented and attached himself to the *ṭarīqa-yi Khwājagān*. Remaining suspicious of Qādir Qulī Turkmān's

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[62] B. Babajanov, "Makhdum-i Aʿzam," in *Islam na territorii byvshei Rossiiskoi imperii: Èntsiklopedicheskii slovarʾ*, no. 1 (Moscow: Vostochnaia literatura, 1998), 69.

[63] According to Kāshifī's *Rashaḥāt*, the famous Nūr al-Dīn Khalvatī died before Bahāʾ al-Dīn Naqshband (d. 1389), as the latter attended Khalvatī's funeral ceremony; see Mawlana Fakhr al-Dīn ʿAlī b. Ḥusayn Vāʿiẓ Kāshifī, *Rashaḥāt-i ʿayn al-ḥayāt*, ed. ʿAlī Aṣghar Muʿīniyān, vol. I (Tehran, 1977), 98. If the *Maẓhar al-ʿajāʾib* is referring to the same Nūr al-Dīn Khalvatī, Qādir Qulī Turkmān cannot have been a direct disciple of Khalvatī but must have been merely a follower of his spiritual path. For more information on the activities of the Khalvatī community in Central Asia, see Devin DeWeese, "Spiritual Practice and Corporate Identity in Medieval Sufi Communities of Iran, Central Asia, and India: The Khalvatī/ʿIshqī/Shaṭṭārī Continuum," in *Religion and Identity in South Asia and Beyond: Essays in Honor of Patrick Olivelle*, ed. Steven Lindquist (London: Anthem Press, 2013), 255–68.

[64] *MA*, fol. 182a.

spiritual development, Aghā-yi Buzurg compared "the chip of his essence" to "a dried piece of wood"[65] and then recited the well-known verses of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī:

> You, an adornment, what do you know about those who adorn?
> You, a form, what do you know about the soul?
> The green tree knows rain's value;
> You, a chip, how would you know rain's value?[66]

Ḥāfiẓ Baṣīr ends this narrative by reporting that Qādir Qulī Turkmān soon became ill, lost weight (lit. "melted," *bigudākht*), and died before finding a cure.

Although the anecdote does not provide much information about Qādir Qulī Turkmān and his Sufi career, it makes several important points. Most importantly, it explicitly identifies Aghā-yi Buzurg's circle as part of the *ṭarīqa-yi Khwājagān*. Moreover, the text clearly states that Qādir Qulī Turkmān adopted the *ṭarīqa-yi Khwājagān* under the guidance of Amīr Ḥanafī, a close associate of Aghā-yi Buzurg. It also hints at Aghā-yi Buzurg's hostile and disparaging attitude toward Qādir Qulī Turkmān's persistent denial of the spiritual path of the Khwājagān and his previous attachment to the Khalvatī Sufi circle, particularly to Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn Khalvatī. Although Qādir Qulī Turkmān's later repentance and attachment to the *ṭarīqa-yi Khwājagān* does not redeem him in the eyes of Aghā-yi Buzurg, it offers a possible explanation as to why the Khalvatī Sufi community, including the disciples of Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn Khalvatī, are absent from sources produced in the sixteenth century. The case of Qādir Qulī Turkmān illustrates the ongoing hostility between the Khalvatī community and the followers of Bahāʾ al-Dīn Naqshband during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries in Central Asia and reveals the efforts of the followers of various Khwājagān–Naqshbandī branches, including the community of Aghā-yi Buzurg, to recruit Khalvatī disciples.

The *Maẓhar al-ʿajāʾib* introduces a peculiar initiation process with four facets (*ṭaraf*) that connects Aghā-yi Buzurg and Ḥāfiẓ Baṣīr to the Prophet and incorporates Bahāʾ al-Dīn Naqshband. Interestingly, the second *ṭaraf* ends with the obscure figures of Shaykh Shādī and his wife. The *Anīs al-ṭālibīn*[67] identifies Shaykh Shādī as a former gambler who emerged as the leader of a group of dervishes in his native Ghadīvat (or Ghadiyūt, a

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[65] Ibid., fol. 181b.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Bukhārī, *Anīs al-ṭālibīn*, 177–78, 194–95, 235.

village near Bukhara) and who submitted to Bahāʾ al-Dīn Naqshband. The figure of Shaykh Shādī mostly drops out of the hagiographical narratives in later accounts about Bahāʾ al-Dīn Naqshband,[68] but he reappears in the eighteenth-century Naqshbandī hagiographical compendium *Tadhkira-yi Ṭāhir Īshān*[69] as a direct disciple of the eponym of the Naqshbandiyya. His wife, however, is not mentioned again in the later accounts about Shaykh Shādī. Although there is no conclusive explanation for the presence of these two figures at the end of the second *ṭaraf* of the *Maẓhar al-ʿajāʾib*, there may be a link between the legacy of Shaykh Shādī and Aghā-yi Buzurg's ancestors, from whom she received another line of initiation – the third *ṭaraf*.

Shaykh Shādī's appearance in the *Maẓhar al-ʿajāʾib* and his subsequent reappearance in the *Tadhkira-yi Ṭāhir Īshān* may be related, since Ḥāfiẓ Baṣīr and Ṭāhir Īshān shared the same spiritual lineage within the non-Aḥrārī line of the Naqshbandiyya. The fact that Ṭāhir Īshān's spiritual lineage passed through Ḥāfiẓ Baṣīr – the center of the fourth *ṭaraf* – could explain Ṭāhir Īshān's interest in reviving the legacy of Shaykh Shādī. Ṭāhir Īshān sought to fit Ḥāfiẓ Baṣīr firmly within the Khwājagān–Naqshbandī *silsila* in spite of the latter's association with other Sufi communities active in sixteenth-century Central Asia. Ṭāhir Īshān's revival of Shaykh Shādī's legacy as a direct disciple of Bahāʾ al-Dīn Naqshband probably reflects his investment in framing his own spiritual lineage as "the authentic path of the Khwājagān" in competition with the Naqshbandī–Mujaddidī shaykhs who had recently arrived in Central Asia.

There was a link between the growing popularity of Naqshbandī communities and the Sunni orientation of Central Asia under Shibanid rule in the sixteenth century. The tracing of their spiritual lineage back to Abū Bakr, the Prophet Muḥammad's first successor, became a hallmark of the Naqshbandī communities, setting them apart from other Sufi groups that traced their *silsila*s to the Prophet through ʿAlī. The fixation of the

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[68] Devin DeWeese, "Orality and the Master–Disciple Relationship in Medieval Sufi Communities: Iran and Central Asia, 12th–15th Centuries," in *Oralité et lien social au Moyen Âge*, ed. Marie France Auzépy and Guillaume Saint-Guillain (Paris: Collège de France and CNRS/Centre de Recherche d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, 2008), 302, and DeWeese, "The Legitimation of Bahāʾ ad-Dīn Naqshband," *Asiatische Studien–Études Asiatiques* 60 (2006): 268–69.

[69] For more information on this hagiographical compendium and its author, see Aziza Shanazarova, "*Tadhkira-yi Ṭāhir Īshān*: A Neglected Source on the History of the Naqshbandī Sufi Tradition in Central Asia," *Journal of Sufi Studies* 11, no. 2 (2022): 208–50.

Naqshbandī shaykhs on the Bakrī spiritual lineage helped them, in Khwāja Aḥrār's words, win the "hearts of the rulers," who were becoming increasingly concerned about the threat posed by the newly established Shiʿi Safavid dynasty. The foregrounding of Abū Bakr's spirituality was a significant factor in the Naqshbandīs' success in winning the Shibanids' support when the veneration of ʿAlī became associated with Shiʿism in the early sixteenth century. With their focus on Abū Bakr, the Naqshbandī shaykhs were in the right place at the right time, so to speak, enabling them to become the dominant Sufi community in the region in intellectual, organizational, and sociopolitical terms over the following centuries.

The Naqshbandī tradition had no issue with claims to an ʿAlid spiritual lineage; indeed, its own *silsila* incorporated an ʿAlid line through the sixth imam, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq.[70] What the Naqshbandīs disputed was the notion of ʿAlī's spiritual superiority over the first three Rāshidūn caliphs and even, in extreme form, over the Prophet. The Naqshbandī shaykhs' rejection of such superiority was so strident that they intimidated other Sufi groups in the region, especially the Kubraviyya,[71] that also claimed an ʿAlid *silsila* – a standard mode of spiritual transmission in the Sufi world.[72] For instance, Luṭfullāh Chūstī, a prominent Naqshbandī shaykh in the second half of the sixteenth century, labeled the followers of the prominent Kubravī master Ḥusayn Khwārazmī supporters of Shiʿism (*madhhab-i ravāfiż*) for their insistence on ʿAlī's spiritual preeminence.[73]

Nevertheless, the Naqshbandī communities were not always united in their criticism of the veneration of ʿAlī. Aghā-yi Buzurg's community, with its emphasis on ʿAlī, is a case in point,[74] attesting to the internal diversity within the broader Naqshbandī tradition on the subtle question of ʿAlī's status. For instance, there is a brief discussion in the *Maẓhar al-ʿajāʾib* on a

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[70] See Hamid Algar, "A Brief History of the Naqshbandī Order," in *Naqshbandis: Cheminements et situation actuelle d'un ordre mystique musulman; Actes de la Table Ronde de Sèvres/Historical Developments and Present Situation of a Muslim Mystical Order: Proceedings of the Sèvres Round Table, 2–4 mai/2–4 May 1985*, ed. Marc Gaborie, Alexandre Popovic, and Thierry Zarcone (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1990), 5.

[71] Devin DeWeese, "The Eclipse of the Kubravīyah in Central Asia," in Devin DeWeese, *Studies on Sufism in Central Asia* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), no. I, 36–38.

[72] Devin DeWeese, "The Mashāʾikh-i Turk and the Khojagān: Rethinking the Links between the Yasavī and Naqshbandī Sufi Traditions," in Devin DeWeese, *Studies on Sufism in Central Asia* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), no. VI, 200.

[73] DeWeese, "Eclipse," 37–38.

[74] For other Naqshbandī figures who venerated ʿAlī and the *ahl al-bayt*, see Hamid Algar, "Naqshbandīs and Safavids: A Contribution to the Religious History of Iran and Her Neighbors," in *Safavid Iran and Her Neighbors*, ed. Michel Mazzaoui (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2003), 7–48.

tradition transmitted from Salmān al-Fārsī regarding the preexistence of ʿAlī 700,000 years before all other prophets. Appealing to the judgment of the Sunni hadith scholar Ḥākim Abū ʿAbdullāh Nishābūrī (d. 1014) that the tradition is authentic, Aghā-yi Buzurg claimed that ʿAlī's essence (*wujūd*) emerged from the essence of the Prophet Muḥammad and that it was not independent, "as claimed by the Shiʿa" (*kamā zaʿamahu al-Shīʿa*).[75] Aghā-yi Buzurg was trying to achieve two goals with this argument: justifying her pro-ʿAlid tradition by fitting it under the Sunni blanket and explicitly disassociating her respect for ʿAlī from Shiʿi sympathies.

The late fifteenth-century hagiographical work *Rawżat al-sālikīn*, which is devoted to Mawlānā ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Ābīzhī, suggests the presence of pro-ʿAlid sentiments within the non-Aḥrārī line of the Naqshbandī initiatory lineage that ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Ābīzhī passed down through his disciple Mawlānā ʿAlī Bāvardī, to whom Aghā-yi Buzurg entrusted Ḥāfiẓ Baṣīr.[76] The *Rawżat al-sālikīn* reports that after completing his training under Saʿd al-Dīn al-Kāshgharī,[77] ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Ābīzhī entered the service of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Kabīr, a shaykh of Arab origin in Mecca who is described using Shiʿi imagery.[78] According to the text,[79] when ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Ābīzhī was a child, his mother called him wicked for playing with his friends until midnight. At this moment, an unknown man appeared, wearing a red hat that was similar to executioners' headgear (*ṭāqiya-yi jallādān*) and brought to mind the Qizilbāsh, who were known for wearing red headdresses. This man scolded the mother for cursing the boy, referring to him as "our child," and threatened to take him away. The mother repented and promised not to curse her son again. The man then let go of the child's hand and disappeared. Later, when ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn met Shaykh ʿAbd al-Kabīr in Mecca, the latter was wearing the same red hat, and ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn realized that the shaykh was the person who had appeared in his youth and had scolded his mother.

[75] *MA*, fols. 56b–57a.

[76] Bahāʾ al-Dīn Naqshband > ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār > Niẓām al-Dīn Khāmūsh Khwāja > Saʿd al-Dīn al-Kāshgharī > ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Ābīzhī al-Qūhistānī > ʿAlī Bāvardī > Ḥāfiẓ Baṣīr.

[77] ʿAlī b. Maḥmūd al-Abīvardī Kūrānī, *Rawżat al-sālikīn*, India Office Library, Ethé 632/ I.O. 698, fols. 32b, 36a.

[78] Dina Le Gall identifies Shaykh ʿAbd al-Kabīr as the famous Yemenite teacher under whom ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Ābīzhī learned the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd* (unity of being). See Dina Le Gall, *A Culture of Sufism: Naqshbandīs in the Ottoman World, 1450–1700* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 218, n. 89.

[79] Kūrānī, *Rawżat al-sālikīn*, fols. 32a–b.

Another account in the *Rawżat al-sālikīn* features Shaykh ʿAbd al-Kabīr and Saʿd al-Dīn al-Kāshgharī, exemplified in the forms of Abū Bakr and ʿAlī:

One of the disciples of ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Ābīzhī narrated that one day, the shaykh said: "At the beginning of [my] spiritual development, when I had not yet entered the service of Mawlānā Saʿd al-Dīn al-Kāshgharī, I saw at night in [my] dream two individuals who brought me into the presence of a king. It became known to me that one of those two individuals was the Commander of the Faithful Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq and the other was the Commander of the Faithful ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib. We came to a place where we saw a person who was resting. They told me that it was the Prophet, and they [ordered] me to greet him. I greeted him. The Prophet greeted me back and extended one of his blessed hands toward me. I moved closer and shook hands with His Holiness. When I was honored with the service of Mawlānā Saʿd al-Dīn al-Kāshgharī, I saw him in the image of the Commander of the Faithful ʿAlī. And when I entered the service of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Kabīr, I saw him in the image of the Commander of the Faithful Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq."[80]

In this anecdote, the figures of ʿAlī and Abū Bakr embody the dual *silsila* of the Naqshbandī tradition that goes back to the Prophet through both Abū Bakr and Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq. The narrative challenges presumptions by switching the expected conduits of Bakrī and ʿAlid initiation: it places the solidly Naqshbandī shaykh Saʿd al-Dīn al-Kāshgharī in the role of ʿAlī, and the Shiʿi sympathizer of Arab origin, Shaykh ʿAbd al-Kabīr, in the role of Abū Bakr. All in all, ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Ābīzhī's training under Shaykh ʿAbd al-Kabīr offers clues for tracing the roots of pro-ʿAlid sentiments within the non-Aḥrārī line of the Naqshbandī lineage passed down by ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Ābīzhī.

The report of the first encounter between the author of the *Rashaḥāt-i ʿayn al-ḥayāt*, Fakhr al-Dīn ʿAlī b. Ḥusayn Vāʿiẓ Kāshifī "Ṣafī," and his master, Khwāja Aḥrār, sheds further light on the attitudes of Sunni religious authorities toward the Shiʿa two decades before the fall of the Timurid dynasty:

The first time it was bestowed upon me to meet Ḥażrat [Khwāja Aḥrār], he asked: "Where are you from?" I said: "My birthplace is Sabzavār,[81] but I grew up in Hirī [Herat]." He smiled and entertainingly narrated: "There was a Sunni in Sabzavār who was sitting in the shade of a wall. After some time, he lifted his head up and

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80 Ibid., fols. 37a–b.
81 Sabzavār, located in Khurasan, was a center of the Sarbadār movement and state. For more information, see Bashir, *Messianic Hopes*, 32–33. See also Denise Aigle, "Sarbedārs," *EIr* (2015).

saw a Shiʿi man (*rāfiżī*) who was sitting on top of the wall, with his feet dangling down. The names of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar had been written on the sole of his foot for the purpose of insulting them. The religious zeal of the Sunni was aroused; and he took a knife and threw it at the sole of the Shiʿite's foot so that it pierced his foot. The Shiʿite cried, 'Friends, look! A Sunni (*khārijī*) threw a knife at me!' The Shiʿa (*ravāfiż*) who were nearby encircled the Sunni, and said: 'Why did you throw a knife at our friend?' The Sunni saw that he would be destroyed in that crowd and tumult; deceitfully, he said: 'Let me go so that I can tell you my story. I am one of your kind. I wanted to rest for a while in the shade of this wall in order to ease the anguish of traveling. While I was sitting, I looked up and saw that this person was displaying the names that I could not ever [bear to] see and held them over my head. I was extremely displeased with that, and that is why I threw the knife so that he would remove those names from over my head.' After listening to him, the Shiʿa kissed the Sunni's hand and praised him. By this deceit, the Sunni was able to flee from them."

Then Ḥażrat Īshān [Khwāja Aḥrār] said with a smile: "Which city are you from?" After that he narrated: "When one of the shaykhs arrived in the country of the Shiʿa [*arż-i rafża*], all of their wrongdoers gathered next to the shaykh's caravan and started cursing and insulting Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq. Addressing his companions who were present there and prohibited from attacking, the shaykh said: 'Do not harm them! They are not cursing our Abū Bakr. Our Abū Bakr is different and their Abū Bakr is different. They curse and insult their imaginary Abū Bakr, who without the right of succession took the caliphate and who was hypocritical with His Holiness the Prophet and his *ahl al-bayt*. We also curse and insult such an Abū Bakr.' When the Shiʿa heard these words from the shaykh they were impressed and became repentant. They returned from their false path (*ṭarīq-i bāṭil*) and repented at the hands of the shaykh."[82]

Demonstrating the internal diversity of the Naqshbandiyya in relation to the Shiʿa, this passage challenges the notion that the Naqshbandī shaykhs harbored zealous anti-Shiʿi attitudes, which is often seen as one of the hallmarks of this Sufi tradition.[83] The significance of this account lies in its description of the coexistence between the majority Sunni and minority Shiʿi parties in the late Timurid period. Implicit is the superior and unthreatened position of the narrator, Khwāja Aḥrār, who represented the Sunni majority in his humorous depiction of the quick-witted Sunni's escape from maltreatment at the hands of the Shiʿa.

The anecdote of the imaginary Abū Bakr cursed by the Shiʿa deserves a closer look because it helps us better understand the intentional blurring

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[82] Mawlana Fakhr al-Dīn ʿAlī b. Ḥusayn Vāʿiẓ Kāshifī, *Rashaḥāt-i ʿayn al-ḥayāt*, ed. ʿAlī Aṣghar Muʿīniyān, vol. II (Tehran, 1977), 489–90.
[83] Cf. Schimmel, "Ornament," 110.

of the boundaries between Sunnism and Shiʿism with the goal of appropriating Shiʿi rituals for Sunnis. The fact that the anecdote was narrated by Khwāja Aḥrār, one of the most influential religious authorities of the second half of the fifteenth century in Central Asia, gives us a glimpse into the position of religious scholars regarding the Shiʿi ritual cursing of prominent Sunni figures. According to the shaykh in the story, the target of the vilification was not the real Abū Bakr venerated by Sunnis but a false one who, as imagined by the Shiʿa, usurped the caliphate and mistreated the Prophet and his household. Khwāja Aḥrār's comment "We also curse and insult such an Abū Bakr" demonstrates an effort to rationalize the Shiʿi tradition among Sunnis within a sociohistorical context in which Shiʿi groups were on the margins of society and posed no political threat. In this narrative, the rhetorical appropriation of the Shiʿi ritual cursing of the "corrupt" Abū Bakr, who had nothing to do with the real Abū Bakr, was a way of incorporating those Shiʿi wrongdoers who would later repent and abandon the practice. Aḥrār's remarks about the imaginary Abū Bakr cursed by the Shiʿa bring to mind Jāmī's comments about the false ʿAlī followed by Shiʿa. Both of these highly regarded Sunni public figures of the fifteenth century claimed unapologetically that the Sunnis were the ones who followed the authentic Abū Bakr *and* ʿAlī, whereas the Shiʿa were on the false path (*ṭarīq-i bāṭil*).

In sum, Sunni Islam during the Timurid period was characterized by devotion to ʿAlī and his descendants, as such admiration was deemed compatible with the observance of Sunni tradition. The ʿAlid orientation of the Timurids was evident in Tīmūr's tombstone inscriptions, in which ʿAlī was used to link the Chingizid and Timurid genealogical trees. The incorporation of the Chingizids into the Timurid legitimation narrative through the claim of ʿAlid descent signals the superiority of ʿAlī's authority over the legacy of Chingiz Khan for the Timurids. However, the decline of the Timurid dynasty in the early sixteenth century triggered widespread religious and political turmoil in the Persianate world. The contest between the newly founded Shibanid and Safavid dynasties facilitated the development of the self-conscious Sunni orientation of the Shibanids in response to the hostile militant Shiʿism promoted by the Safavids, thus contributing to Sunni–Shiʿi antagonism. The public proclamation of reverence for ʿAlī and the imams, once promoted by the Timurids, became unsafe in the early 1500s, as it was increasingly linked to Shiʿi and Safavid sympathies. Within this tumultuous sociohistorical environment, we find Aghā-yi Buzurg's community in Mawarannahr continuing the Timurid tradition of devotion to ʿAlī.