



AḤMAD KĀSĀNĪ

AḤMAD KṼĀJAGĪ B. JALĀL-AL-DĪN **KĀSĀNĪ** (866/1461-62—949/1542-43), known as MAḶDŪM-E AʻZAM, Sufi, author of about thirty religious treatises, political activist, and founding ancestor of two important saintly lineages of Naqšbandī *kṼājagān*. He was born into a family of *sayyeds* of Kāsān in the Farḡāna valley. As a youth he farmed for a living, then in Tashkent became a disciple of the Naqšbandī *pīr* Moḡammad Qāzī b. Borhān-al-dīn (d. 921/1515-16), a *kalīfa* of KṼāja Aḡrār (d. 895/1490). In the conditions of the time, the Naqšbandī *ṭarīqa* provided a link between nomad tribes, the artisan guild life of the cities and towns, and the cultivating population of the villages. As a leading Naqšbandī *pīr*, Kāsānī was able to use his broad following to wrest concessions from Central Asian rulers. He obtained the patronage of the Uzbek ruler of Karmīna, Jānī Beg b. KṼāja Moḡammad, and his sons, and he also won the patronage of the Uzbek khan, ʻObaydallāh, who gave Kāsānī enough gold to build a Naqšbandī hostel in Bokhara and housed him near the khan's own quarters. Kāsānī helped force Baraq Khan b. Süyüñč to lift his siege of Bokhara. Even Saʻīd Khan of the Mughals sent a gift to the Kāsān Naqšbandīs. Kāsānī died at his estate in the village of Dahbīd outside Samarqand, leaving as a legacy his reputation for sanctity and scholarship, his political role, and much property in *waqf* both in Mā Warāʻ-al-nahr and in Altīšahr. Although Kāsānī himself never visited Altīšahr, it was there that his descendants played their main historical role, dividing into two saintly lineages, the Eshāqīya (called Qarataḡliq) and the Āfāqīya (Aqtaḡliq), and dominating the history of eastern Turkestan in the 11th-12th/17th-18th centuries. The Āfāqīya were instrumental in establishing the Naqšbandīya among the Sālārs and Huis of



Tsinghai and Kansu in northwest China. The Jūybārī shaikhs of Bokhara also trace their *selsela* to Kāsānī.

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