



## BUDĀQ MONŠI QAZVINI

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**BUDĀQ MONŠI QAZVINI** (b. Qazvin, 916/1510-11), author of the *Jawāher al-aḵbār*, a universal history of a substantial part of the Persianate world, and member of the **Safavid** financial administration during the reign of Shah **Ṭahmāsb I** (r. 1524-76).

*Family background.* Budāq belonged to a family of notables from Qazvin. His maternal grandfather, **Ḳ**<sup>v</sup>āja Ruḥ-Allāh Šālkāni Qazvini, had served as vizier under the Āq Qoyunlu ruler Bāysonqor (r. 1490-93). Under the Safavids, his maternal uncle Amir Beg Šālkāni Qazvini worked in the same post for Moḥammad Khan Takkalu Šaraf-al-Din Oġlu, the Safavid governor of **Baghdad**, while his brother **Ḳ**<sup>v</sup>āja ‘Ezz-al-Din Šālkāni held a bureaucratic position at Shah Ṭahmāsb’s court. Budāq himself was employed in diverse posts of the financial branch of the Safavid administration. Most of what is known about Budāq is found in his *Jawāher al-aḵbār* (ed., pp. 187-91), which contains a passage describing his career in great detail. His chronology is somewhat confused, but the information he provides about his own life is much more informative than what is mentioned in the works of other chroniclers of the 16th-century Iran.

*Biography.* Budāq entered the royal secretariat (*daftar-ḵāna-ye homāyun*) at the age of fourteen (Budāq, ed., p. 187), when young Ṭahmāsb was wintering in Qazvin (i.e., in 932/1525-26, which would rather make him sixteen years old; Rumlu, II, p. 1153), working initially as a scribe (*moḥarrer*). After a few years, he also became occupied as a copyist and finally took responsibility for financial registers as well. Around the age of twenty, he followed his uncle,



who was then vizier and commissioner (*wakil*) of Moḥammad Khan Takkalu Šaraf al-Din-Oġlu, to Baghdad, of which the latter had just been appointed governor in 935/1529 (Rumlu, II, p. 1183). Henceforth, Budāq worked as a secretary (*monši*) in the *divan* of ‘Erāq-e ‘Arab. Later on, he also became Moḥammad Khan’s *nevisanda-ye laškar* (a scribe assisting the *laškarnevis*, Floor, p. 50). After seven years (a statement that is unlikely to be accurate (see below, The problem of chronology), Budāq left Baghdad in his patron’s retinue, whom he served as vizier for two more years. In 942/1535-36, when Moḥammad Khan became governor of *Herat* (Rumlu, III, p. 1237), he discharged Budāq from the position of *nevisande-ye laškar*, which made him leave Moḥammad Khan’s retinue (Budāq, ed., p. 188).

A short time later, Budāq entered the service of *Bahrām Mirzā*, brother of Shah Ṭahmāsb, in Qazvin, whom he says to have served as a secretary for the next fourteen years (a statement that is definitely wrong; see below, The problem of chronology). Then Budāq lost Bahrām Mirzā’s favor due to the instigation of the latter’s vizier, Mir ‘Enāyat-Allāh K<sup>v</sup>āri (Rumlu, III, pp. 1284, 1348), and subsequently lost his post. After six years of unemployment, Bahrām Mirzā recalled him and made him leader (*kalāntar*) of three districts in the surroundings of Qazvin. In 955/1548-49, he was with the army that intended to intercept the Ottoman Sultan Solaymān on his second Persian campaign (Budāq, ed., p. 202). This point, however, is not mentioned in his self-description, which is strictly limited to administrative matters.

A few years later, Moḥammad Khan summoned him to Herat. However, on his way he was detained in Sabzavār by Āqā Kamāli (probably Āqā Kamāli Kermāni; see Budāq, ed., p. 160), the vizier (*wazir-e koll*) of Khorasan, who entrusted him with a number of consecutive posts in the following years: as assessor (*momayyez*) of Beštām and *Biārjomand*, vizier and assessor of Torbat, and assessor of Arġiān and controller (*kelidrow*) of the department of mines (*sarkār-e ma’dan*). After ten years of service to Āqā Kamāli, Moštāfā-Solṭān Varsāq, the governor of Toršiz and Sabzavār, made Budāq his vizier and *wakil*. He held these posts for another ten years. Then, Āqā Kamāli summoned Budāq again, which is why he finally left Khorasan. However, when he reached *Dāmġān*, he received news of Āqā Kamāli’s arrest. Because of their former association, Budāq fell from favor as well, this time instigated by Ma’šum Beg Šafawi, vizier of the royal chancellery, Ṭahmāsb’s *wakil* and chief Safavid official in Syria (Rumlu, III, pp. 1463-65).

For six years, Budāq was unemployed before being given the post of vizier and



assessor of Dāmḡān, Beštām, Biārjomand, and ‘Arab-e ‘Āmeri. However, accused of overpaying the tax collector, he was dismissed and remained unemployed for five more years. Then, Ṭahmāsb ordered him to compile an account-book (*dah sāla-ye ḥesāb*) of all taxes, revenues, and expenditures of Qazvin within the last ten years, which took him two years to complete. This is where Budāq’s self-description closes, in the year 984/1576-77. He is now 68 years of age, again without employment and “sitting in the corner of misery and disappointment” (Budāq, ed., p. 190). However, his reports on the last days of Ṭahmāsb and the enthronement of the latter’s son, Esmā‘il II, indicate that he was still part of the courtly society of Qazvin at the end of his life.

*The problem of chronology.* Budāq’s chronology is detailed but somewhat unclear due to the inconsistency of details. This concerns periods of as well as points in time, and especially the early years of his career (Savory, 1963, pp. 350-52; Budāq, ed., pp. 20-27). It is possible that Budāq did not recall the exact details of his life when recording it several decades later. However, his text gives us reason to believe that he acted on purpose. For instance, adding up the stated years in Qazvin after 932/1525-26, he could not have followed his uncle to Baghdad in 935/1529, but would have been employed in Qazvin until at least 937/1530-31. Thus, he either entered the Safavid administration in 930/1523-24, when he would have been fourteen years old, or he misrepresents the length of the initial steps of his career. The first version is supported by the notion that Budāq, convinced of his own significance, had considered it appropriate to coordinate his career with that of the ruler by letting both start at the same time in the very city that was going to be the realm’s capital. The second version is supported by the fact that he misrepresents the length of other steps of his career as well: If he came to Baghdad in the summer of 935/1529, he could not have stayed there for seven years until 942/1535-36, but must have left the city earlier, most probably in 941/1534 when Moḥammad Khan evacuated Baghdad in the face of Solaymān’s first Persian campaign of 940-41/1533-35, when Budāq was serving Moḥammad Khan as his secretary and *nevisanda-ye laškar* (Budāq, ed., p. 177).

Assuming that Budāq has made false statements intentionally, it is notable that his self-description records numerous meaningful dates and events, with religion as a major point: the year 932/1525-26, when Ṭahmāsb wintered in Qazvin for the first time; being fourteen at the outset of his career, which potentially triggers associations in a Shi‘ite environment; writing copies of the Qur’an during his first six years of unemployment; his intention to undertake



the Ḥajj after the arrest of Āqā Kamāli; and finally, his service to Bahrām Mirzā for, again, fourteen years since 943/1536 (which is almost certainly inaccurate, while a period of four years would make perfect sense). Thus, assuming that Budāq's intention was to name meaningful dates, these contradictions in chronological detail are perfectly explicable; they do not affect the overall plausibility of his career.

*Personality.* In the 16th century, it was considered indecent for an author of a chronicle to prominently present himself in his text. Instead, the topos of the poor, unworthy, and completely untalented patron's servant prevailed. Budāq, however, overrode this convention. His self-description not only paints a very detailed picture of his life, but it also makes it possible to have a good perception of him as an individual, although this was certainly not intended by him. Most notably, Budāq is highly convinced of his own merits. He explains his dismissal from a post as the result of jealousy by Mir 'Enāyat-Allāh K̄'āri and Ma'ṣum Beg; when he is serving Moṣṭafā-Solṭān Varsāq as his vizier and *wakil*, he portrays himself as the master (*āqā*) rather than the servant; being accused of financial irregularities is just a fallacious imputation; and when writing the account-book of Qazvin, he is so successful that he acquires five or six thousand *tumān* for the treasury without receiving a single *dinār* for his efforts (Budāq, ed., p. 190).

Budāq shows a particular liking of money and a constant consciousness of being underpaid. He fastidiously mentions his wage for every task and position that he was assigned to: It was 3 *tumāns* when he started as a scribe in the royal secretariat, and it was raised to 5 *tumāns* when he served as a copyist for the comptroller-general (*mostawfi-al-mamālek*); he earned 20 *tumāns* when he was responsible for the financial registers, 30 *tumāns* as a secretary in the *divān* of 'Erāq-e 'Arab and Moḥammad Khan's *nevisanda-ye laškar*, and 50 *tumāns* as the *kalāntar* of the districts in the surroundings of Qazvin. He also hints at how much money he actually possessed, by stating that he owned 300 *tumāns* when he finally left Khorasan (Budāq, ed., pp. 188-90).

Budāq also sounds very sensitive to what he perceives as injustice: the jealousy of a superior costing him his job, the allocation of a post to another one, and low or no salary in spite of his excellent performance. Budāq regularly feels to have come up short of what he deserved and tends to be offended. When Moḥammad Khan discharged him from the post of *nevisanda-ye laškar*, he offered him the position of his personal keeper of the accounts (*wezārat-e kāṣṣa*) and secretary instead. However, Budāq felt so hurt that he



turned it down. Due to Mir ‘Enāyat-Allāh K̄vāri’s intrigues against him, he fell from Bahrām Mirzā’s favor, who, enraged, also took 300 *tumāns* from him. He managed to save his life by paying additional 100 *tumāns* to high-ranking officials, but he does not indicate the relief of having escaped with his life even by a single word. Destitute and emotionally disturbed after his personal estrangement from Moḥammad Khan, he pretended to be an envoy of Ṭahmāsb’s son, Moḥammad Mirzā (later Sultan Moḥammad Kōdā-banda), and his tutor, the same Moḥammad Khan, in order to appropriate money from the treasury. His fraud was exposed and he had to return the money, again, without suffering any harsh consequences (Budāq, ed., pp. 188-89). Furthermore, Budāq even recorded these events in a chronicle that was to be presented at court. Based on these events, there evolves the general image of a man of materialistic attitude and status conscious, who is highly convinced of his own ability and doing, but not necessarily equipped with a sense of its possible consequences.

*Work.* Budāq is known most notably as the author of the *Jawāher al-akbār*, a universal history of a substantial part of the Persianate world. The text exists in only one manuscript kept in the library of the Russian Academy of Sciences, with copies in the library of the University of Tehran and the National Library of Iran. According to its colophon, this manuscript is an autograph and was finished in the end of Jomādā I 984/end of August 1576. The latter parts of the text are edited.

The book comprises two volumes. The first volume treats the pre-Islamic history of Iran in three chapters: The Pishdadis; the *Kayanids*; and the *Sasanians* up to the time of Prophet Moḥammad. The second volume includes the Islamic history of Iran in four chapters and an epilogue: (I) Moḥammad, the Shi‘ite *Imams*, the biblical prophets, and the Sasanians from the time of Moḥammad; (II) The Omayyads and ‘*Abbasids*. This chapter is subdivided into three sections, dealing with the Omayyads, ‘Abbasids, and their respective contemporaneous dynasties of the Persianate world from the *Taherids*; (III) *Čengiz Khan*, Timur, and their dynasties, again subdivided into three sections, dealing with Čengiz Khan and his successors, contemporary dynasties of the *Mongols*, and the Timurids, respectively. (IV) The Qarā Qoyunlu and *Āq Qoyunlu* dynasties. The epilogue is on the Safavids up to 984/1576-77.

*Sources.* Budāq consulted several other texts of historiographical content, of which he names only *Ebn Bazzāz’s Šafwat al-šafā’*. He obviously made use of a number of chronicles, such as ‘*Abd-al-Razzāq Samarqandi’s Maṭla‘e sa‘dayn*



and Abu Bakr Tehrāni's *Ketāb-e diārbakriya from the 15th century* (Budāq, ed., pp. 41-44), and the texts written in the environments of Herat's and Qazvin's courts in the 16th century (for an in-depth analysis of these texts, including the *Jawāher al-aḳbār*, see Trausch).

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