



# KHORASAN X. HISTORY IN THE SAFAVID AND AFSHARID PERIODS

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Khorasan changed hands several times between the Safavids and the Uzbeks during the 16th century. Eventually, it was under Shah ‘Abbās I (q.v.) that the province was fully integrated into the Safavid system of the “guarded domains” (*mamālek-e mahrusa*). Under the Safavids, major urban centers in Khorasan, including Herat and Mashhad, suffered ravages of war and administrative discontinuity, which in turn brought about successive bouts of famine and plague. The long years of civil war in Iran during the years leading up to Shah ‘Abbās’ ascent to the throne gave the Uzbeks opportunity to expand the range of their attacks outside Khorasan, destabilizing Kerman, Yazd, Sistān, Nimruz, and even Kandahar. Forced and coordinated mass migration from eastern Anatolia, the Caucasus, and Azarbaijan in the 16th and 17th centuries had a lasting impact on demographic characteristics of Khorasan as waves of Turkic and Kurdish nomadic and semi-nomadic clans and tribes entered the provinces, where they had been granted pastures and agricultural lands in the valleys and foothills of the Hezār-Masjed and Binālud ranges, forming a bulwark against the incursions of the Uzbeks. Early in the 18th century, when the Safavid dynasty entered its terminal phase, the Uzbeks from the north and the Abdāli (q.v.) Afghans from the east invaded Khorasan, bringing the political order established there by the Safavids to the brink of



disintegration.

Upon the death of the last Timurid ruler of Khorasan, Solṭān-Ḥosayn Bāyqarā (q.v.; r. 875-911/1470-1506), on 11 Du'l-ḥejja 911/5 May 1506, two of his sons, Badi' al-Zamān and Moẓaffar-Ḥosayn, suspended their fight over the Timurid throne to form a joint front against the Uzbeks. The last decade of Bāyqarā's reign was witness to the consolidation of the power base of the Yadgarids and the Abu'l-Khayrids (q.v.) as paramount clans of the Uzbek tribal confederations of Dašt-e Qepčāq and Transoxiana (Dickson, 1963, pp. 209-10). Led by Abu'l-Fotuḥ Moḥammad Khan Šībāni (Šaybāni), the Abu'l-Khayrid Uzbeks posed an immediate threat to Khorasan. At the close of the 15th century, they descended on Balk, Šaborḡān, and the Morḡāb valley shortly after their capture of Samarqand and Bukhara from the Timurid and Toḡloq/Timurid princes of Central Asia. The pillage and destruction wrought by the Uzbeks in Balk, the easternmost fortress town in Khorasan, which had been made the appanage of Badi'-al-Zamān Mirzā toward the end of the reign of Solṭān-Ḥosayn Bāyqarā, are reported to have been notably gruesome, raising alarm for inner cities of the province to abandon the path of resistance and surrender (Rāqem Samarqandi, p. 83). The scarcity of foodstuff and fodder in the winter of 1507 on the one hand, and the resurfacing of internal feuds among Solṭān-Ḥosayn Bāyqarā's sons on the other, led to a major breakup in the Timurid army camped outside Herat (Ḳvāndamir, IV, pp. 372-73; Mir Moḥammad Ma'ṣum, p. 101). It was under these circumstances that Herat fell to the Uzbeks on 8 Moḥarram 913/20 May 1507, just over a year after Solṭān-Ḥosayn Bāyqarā's death; a week later, on 15 Moḥarram/27 May, the Friday prayer sermon was officially preached at the congregational mosque in Herat in Šībāni's name. Shortly thereafter, the Uzbeks easily quelled a series of pro-Timurid uprisings in Mashhad, Abivard, Nishapur, and Sabzavār (Ḳvāndamir, IV, pp. 367-81; Bābor, I, pp. 127-47; Doḡlāt, pp. 121-23, tr., pp. 97-98; Qaṭaḡān, pp. 124-25; Mir Moḥammad Ma'ṣum, pp. 99-102; Roemer, pp. 124-25; Mukminova, pp. 34-35; Hajianpur, pp. 157-58).

Šībāni Khan is argued to have had a strong support base in Herat (Szuppe, 1992, p. 161). Yet the fact is that, soon after his victories in Khorasan, the Uzbek ruler introduced draconian fiscal policies that in the short run incited widespread disaffection with the Uzbeks in Khorasan (Semenov, p. 65; Tumanovich, p. 98). What is more, Šībāni Khan's distrust of the dominantly pro-Timurid urban elites in Herat led him, in less than three years after his annexation of Khorasan, to plan for moving the center of his khanate out of



the city. The new capital, to be called Yādgār-e Kāni, had been planned to be built on the ruins of Ṭus, a bastion of Sunni Islam in eastern Iran under the Saljuqids, located some 20 miles northwest of Mashhad. During a visit to Mashhad in Ṣafar 915/June 1509, Šībāni stopped over in Ṭus to pay tributes to Sunni worthies buried there, including the prominent jurist Abu Ḥāmed Ġazālī (q.v.; Kōnĵi Eṣfahāni, 1976, pp. 348-51). It was there that he appointed a local Sunni bureaucrat as chief judge of Yādgār-e Kāni with powers to adjudicate all over Transoxiana and Khorasan. The appointment letter (*nešān*) issued and sealed by Šībāni contains references to his plans to relocate several hundred households from among the Turkish, Persian, and Arab nomads of Khorasan and Transoxiana to Yādgār-e Kāni upon the completion of the city's walls and ramparts in 1511 (Šarifi Nasafi, fols. 134a-136b; Ghereghlou, 2016; Elias, p. 777).

Underlying Šībāni Khan's westward territorial expansionism was his quest for the revival of Sunnism in Iran and Central Asia. The mistreatment of Sunni Muslims in Safavid Iran made him even more eager to pursue a policy of all-out war with the Safavids, drawing on his mentor Fażl-Allāh Kōnĵi Eṣfahāni's (d. 1521) radical interpretations of the doctrine of jihad. A notable Sunni jurist and Hadith (q.v.) expert who had barely escaped after Shah Esmā'il's (q.v.; r. 1501-24) annexation of 'Erāq-e 'Ajam (q.v.) in the late fall of 1503, Kōnĵi considered the Safavids and their supporters in Iran as no more than "apostates and idolaters" whose extermination was mandatory upon any devoted Muslim ruler (Kōnĵi Eṣfahāni, 1983, p. 398; Kōnĵi Eṣfahāni, fol. 226b). To the Uzbeks, the Safavids were occupiers of the land of Islam, blocking the access of Central Asian Muslims to the holy cities of Hejaz. In one of his diplomatic dispatches to Shah Esmā'il, the Uzbek Šībāni Khan vows to secure the free passage of Sunni pilgrims to the Hejaz via Khorasan and 'Erāq-e 'Ajam, a plan that entailed the undoing of Safavid rule in Iran (*Majmu'a mak ā tib*, fols. 250a-251b). The same issue resurfaces in the correspondence of later generations of Uzbek rulers, including 'Obayd-Allāh Khan's (d. 1540) who, in one of his letters to Shah Ṭahmāsp (q.v.; r. 1524-76) accused the Safavids of blocking the road to Mecca and Medina for Central Asian Muslims (Ivoĝli, fols. 108a-109b). Late in the 16th century, in a letter to the Ottoman Sultan Morād II (r. 1574-95), the Uzbek khan 'Abd-al-Mo'men (d. 1598) deemed it his duty to "uproot the thorn bushes hindering the access of Sunni Muslims to Mecca" (Kuzāni Eṣfahāni, III, pp. 64-65; McChesney, 2003, pp. 145-46). The early Safavids, in their turn, denied such charges, accusing the Uzbeks of "spreading false statements and outrageous lies" regarding the conditions of Sunni



Muslims in Safavid Iran (Navā'i, 1989, pp. 81-88; Doḡlāt, pp. 198-99, tr., pp. 155-56; K̄vāndamir, IV, p. 504; Budāq Monši, p. 87; Rāqem Samarqandi, p. 92; Dickson, 1958, pp. 42-46). The Safavids' claims were more of territorial nature reflecting the core values of the eastern policy of the Aq Quyunlu (q.v.) Uzun Ḥasan, who took advantage of the power struggles that rocked the Timurid sultanate in the latter part of the 15th century to meddle in the internal affairs of Khorasan and the neighboring province of Astarābād. During the closing decade of his reign, the Aq Quyunlu ruler backed the Šāhrokiḍ prince Yādḡār Moḡammad Mirzā (d. 1470) during the civil war that broke out following the death of Abu Sa'id Mirzā (d. 1469), with the objective of installing him as his vassal in eastern Iran (Ṭehrāni Eṣfahāni, pp. 513-14; Navā'i, 1962, pp. 320-23; Mo'ayyad Ṭābeti, pp. 384-87; Woods, 1990, p. 46; idem, 1999, pp. 112-13).

Shah Esmā'il began meddling in the internal affairs of Khorasan and Astarābād even before Bāyqarā's death. Already in Du'l-ḡejja 909/May-June 1504, he had charged one of his military deputies with installing the Timurid prince Moḡaffar-Ḥosayn Mirzā as head of a vassal appanage in Astarābād, a move that excited Bāyqarā's ire, for he had just appointed his other son Moḡammad-Ḥosayn Mirzā as governor of Astarābād (Ḥayāti Tabrizi, pp. 312-15). Bāyqarā then sent a terse letter of protest to the Safavid ruler, reprimanding him for his uninvited meddling in the internal affairs of the Timurid sultanate (Marvārid, fol. 30b, tr., p. 121). It was in reaction to this letter that Shah Esmā'il attacked Ṭabas in Ramaḡān 910/February 1505, shortly after his conquest of Yazd with assistance from the Arab nomads of K̄ur (q.v.). It is reported that the Safavids sacked villages outside Ṭabas and put to the sword several hundred farmers and pastoralists (K̄vāndamir, IV, p. 480; Amini Heravi, pp. 242-43; Ḥayāti Tabrizi, pp. 327-29). When the Uzbeks took Herat, the provinces of Kerman and Sistān became the targets of their occasional raids. In Kerman, they pillaged Govāšir, Kabiš (present-day Šahdād), Rāvar, and Zangiābād in 1506-7 (Amini Heravi, p. 325; Waziri Kermāni, pp. 264-65; Aubin, 1988, p. 27). In spring 1506, a close relative of Šībāni Khan led a raid against Uq (present-day Qal'a-ye Kāh), a rural town outside Farāh, forcing Malek Maḡmud, the ruler of Sistān, to escape along with his clan to Bam and Narmāšir (Sistāni, p. 139). In winter 1508, the Uzbeks invaded Astarābād and Dāmḡān, driving the Timurid prince Badi'-al-Zamān Mirzā from the province. He ultimately escaped to 'Erāq-e 'Ajām, where he put himself under the protection of Shah Esmā'il (Qaṭaḡān, pp. 102-3).

The Battle of Maḡmudi, which was fought on 28-30 Ša'bān 916/30 November-2



December 1510 outside Ṭāherābād, a small village some 20 miles south of Marv, sealed the fate of Moḥammad Khan Šībāni, who was cornered by the Safavid troops and suffocated in a cavalry melee. The Safavid invasion of Khorasan, taking place out of season late in fall, was a complete surprise for the Uzbeks. It is reported that, upon Shah Esmā'il's arrival in Ray (q.v.), the Uzbek governor of Dāmḡān Aḥmad-Solṭān, who had married Šībāni Khan's daughter or sister, and K̄vāja Aḥmad Qonqrāt, who led the Uzbek forces in Astarābād, vacated their posts and fled to Transoxiana, leaving Khorasan undefended to Safavid penetration (K̄vāndamir, IV, pp. 509-14; Amini Heravi, pp. 339-45; Rumlu, pp. 1050-54; Doḡlāt, pp. 199-200, tr., pp. 156-57; Qaṭaḡān, pp. 104-12; K̄kāki Širāzi, fol. 593a; Sarwar, pp. 61-62; Tumanovich, p. 100; Savory, pp. 78-80). Subsequently, Shah Esmā'il entered Herat and within a few weeks of his victory assigned all cities and major rural towns in Khorasan to his military deputies, who ran their land assignments as *toyul* or military fief and within the temporal scope of one fiscal year produced more than 150 *tūmens* for the Safavid central treasury. The amount generated by *toyul*-holders posted to Khorasan made up more than 20 percent of the tax yield of all *toyul* land enfeoffments in the provinces Azarbaijan, 'Erāq-e 'Ajam, Diyarbakir, Iraq, Kurdistan, Fārs, and Kerman between fiscal years 913-19/1508-13 (Ghereghlou, 2015, pp. 94, 98). Early in spring 917/1511, Shah Esmā'il mounted a punitive campaign against the Uzbek forces in Maymana and Fāryāb. During the peace negotiations that ensued following this military campaign, the Uzbeks agreed to recognize the Oxus as the natural border separating the Safavid domain in Khorasan from Transoxiana. Shortly afterwards, the Safavid ruler appointed Bayrām Beg Qarāmānlu, a tribal military commander from Ṭāleš, as governor of Balḵ, Andḳoy, Šaborḡān, Čičaktow, Maymana, Fāryāb, Morḡāb, and Ġarčestān (K̄vāndamir, IV, p. 519; Ebn K̄vāndamir, p. 73).

On 15 Rajab 917/8 October 1511, Shah Esmā'il made the Timurid prince Zāhir-al-Din Moḥammad Bābor (q.v.) governor-general of Khorasan. At that time, major urban centers in the province were faced with depopulation and food shortage. Dated circa 1511, two missives from Safavid bureaucrats in Khorasan point to the difficulties Shah Esmā'il's deputies were experiencing in collecting annual taxes from their military fiefs in Khorasan on the eve of Bābor's rise to power as governor-general of the province (Evrāk 12212; Evrāk 8316; Fekete, p. 270; Aubin, 1988, p. 31). These reports are borne out by two 16th-century Persian chroniclers, who discuss in some detail the unfolding turmoil in Khorasan during the opening years of the 1510s (Ġaffāri Qazvini, p.



278; Novidi Širāzi, pp. 55-56). During his tenure, which lasted only eight months until Rabi' I 918/May-June 1512, Bābor managed to score a series of military victories against the Uzbeks in *Ḳatlān* (*Ḳottalā*), *Baqlān*, and *Qondož*, thanks mainly to the active support of the Timurid prince *Mirzā Solṭān-Ovays* (*Ḳvāndamir*, IV, pp. 523-24). Late in the spring of 918/1512, however, the Uzbeks recaptured *Samarqand*, forcing him to escape to the south, first to *Qondož* and then to *Kabul* (*Doḡlāt*, pp. 208, 217, tr., pp. 163, 170; Dale, pp. 188-200; *Budāq Monši*, pp. 91-92). Bābor's downfall coincided with the *Yādḡārid/Aminaki Ṣufiān Khan's* (r. ca. 1511-35) rise to power and his subsequent capture of *Khiva* (*Urganj*), the city he later made the administrative capital of the Khanate of *Ḳvārazm*, which encompassed vast swathes of land located between *Su-boyu*, the strip of agricultural lands along the western bank of the *Oxus*, and *Tāḡ-boyu*, southern foothills of the *Küren-Dāḡ* and *Köpet-Dāḡ* ranges in northeastern *Khorasan* (*Bartol'd*, 1963-77, II/1, pp. 596-97; *idem*, 1956-62, III, pp. 135-36). Under *Shah Esmā'il*, the ruler of *Kandahar*, *Šojā' Beg*, who later had to escape to *Sind* valley, where he founded the *Arghunid* dynasty, was one of the few claimants to power in eastern *Iran* who defied *Safavid* superiority. In summer 1513, he fled from *Eḳtiār-al-Din* Castle in *Herat*, where he had been detained by the *Safavids*, and managed to take refuge for a while in *Kandahar*. The *Safavid* forces, led by *Šāhroḡ Beg Afšār*, then attacked *Šojā' Beg*, but it came to naught (*Ḳvāndamir*, IV, p. 541; *Ḳuzāni Eṣfahāni*, I, fols. 217a-b; *Ḳāki Širāzi*, fol. 597a; *Aubin*, 1984, p. 21).

Under *Shah Esmā'il*, the *Sunni* population of *Khorasan* were subjected to various forms of maltreatment, from indiscriminate violence to forced migration. On the eve of the *Safavid* ruler's arrival in *Herat*, the prayer sermons (*ḡoṭba*) were delivered in the name of the *Shi'ite* imams at the city's congregational mosque. There followed a violent crackdown on the *Sunni* population of *Herat* as soon as a few *Sunni* notables dared to protest the elimination of the names of the *Sunni* caliphs from the *ḡoṭba*. The *Safavid* royal guards (*qur čis*) then massacred several dozen *Sunni* protesters and set aflame the main entrance to 'Abd-al-Raḡmān *Jāmi's* mausoleum, the city's main *Sunni* shrine (*Vāṣefi Heravi*, II, pp. 247-51; *Moin*). In *Marv*, the *Safavid* ruler is reported to have ordered the mass execution of *Sunni* denizens of the city following the *Battle of Maḡmudi* (*Amini Heravi*, pp. 347, 349; *Doḡlāt*, p. 200, tr. p. 156). Shortly thereafter, *Shah Esmā'il* sent three embassies to *Khiva*, *Urganj*, and *Hazār-Asb* in *Ḳvārazm* in an attempt to form an alliance with the *Uzbek Ilbārs Khan* (r. 910-30/1503-24). When the shah's request was rejected firmly by *Ilbārs*, in 1505, one of the *Safavid* envoys to *Ḳvārazm* declared a



Yesevi Sufi *sayyed* called Ḥosām al-Dīn ruler of K̄vārazm. In the battle that ensued following this incident, Ilbārs defeated the pro-Safavid Ḥosām al-Dīn and for the rest of his reign kept the province safe from the Safavid invasion (Munes and Āgahi, pp. 105-107). During his stay in Herat, Shah Esmā'il personally executed the Naq̄šbandi mystic and Ḥanafī religious dignitary (*šayk̄ -al-eslām*) of Khorasan Sayf-al-Din Aḥmad Taftāzāni (Doḡlāt, pp. 200-201, tr., p. 157; Rumlu, p. 1057). Shortly thereafter, the first Safavid governor of Herat and Shah Esmā'il's brother-in-law, Eḡtiār-al-Molk Ḥosayn Beg Šāmlu, had recourse to a carrot-and-stick policy in his dealings with the Sunni population of the city, providing a handful of Sunni notables with employment opportunity in local bureaucracy while forcing groups of their coreligionists to leave Khorasan for Transoxiana (Vaṣefi Heravi, I, pp. 17-18). Under Ḥosayn Beg Šāmlu, all public lands confiscated by the state (*kāleša*) sector during the centralizing reforms of the 1490s were liberalized, empowering the Safavid authorities in Herat to incentivize these lands for winning over the support of local notables across Khorasan (Amini Heravi, p. 358).

The Uzbek recapture of Samarqand in the spring of 918/1512 and Bābor's withdrawal from Khorasan shortly thereafter prompted Shah Esmā'il to assign his grand vizier Najm-al-Din Yār-Aḥmad Kuzāni with leading the Safavid forces during a major military campaign against Samarqand in close collaboration with the military governor of Astarābād Dēv-'Ali Beg Rumlu. The Safavid army crossed the Oxus at Termed late in Rajab 918/early October 1512 and descended on Qarši (Nasaf) and Bukhara. The decisive battle was fought in Ġojdovān (q.v.), a village some 25 miles northeast of Bukhara, during which Yār-Aḥmad Kuzāni was arrested alive and beheaded in the battlefield. The Uzbeks then descended on Khorasan advancing westward as far as Esfarāyen (q.v.). They laid a successful siege to Herat and captured the city by the end of Moḥarram 919/March 1513. Contingents of the Uzbek forces, led by Moḥammad Timur-Solṭān and 'Obayd-Allāh Khan, engaged in offensive operations against Mashhad and captured the city shortly after the fall of Herat, at the end of a harsh winter that had already ushered in a season of famine and pestilence in Khorasan and Transoxiana. In Herat, groups of pro-Safavid elements were rounded up and put to the sword (K̄vāndamir, IV, pp. 530-34; Amini Heravi, pp. 379-99; Vāṣefi Heravi, I, pp. 62-72; Qaṭaḡān, pp. 128-32; Rumlu, pp. 1065-068; Ebn K̄vāndamir, pp. 81-84; Sayfi Qazvini, p. 284). The emergence of Abu'l-Qāsem Baḡši, an ex-Timurid army clerk, as leader of an anti-Safavid movement in Pušang (Bušang, Fušang; present-day Zendajān), a rural town outside Herat, contextualized Moḥammad Timur-Solṭān's



merciless suppression of local backers of the Safavids in Herat. Later in 1512, when the Safavids recaptured Herat, Piri Beg Qājār went after Abu'l-Qāsem and his supporters in rural suburbs of Herat and executed many of them. Shortly afterwards, Zaynal Khan Šāmlu was made governor-general of Khorasan (Kvāndamir, IV, pp. 536-38; Qaṭagān, pp. 136-38; Szuppe, 1992, pp. 149-50).

Three years later, in early 1516, Shah Esmā'il made Khorasan an appanage for his eldest son, Ṭahmāsp Mirzā, charging Amir Khan Mawṣellu, the former governor of Qā'en and a close relative of Ṭahmāsp Mirzā's mother Tājlu Kānom Mawṣellu (d. 1539), with supervising him as guardian (*lala*) and governor-general of Khorasan (Kvāndamir, IV, p. 553; Ebn Kvāndamir, p. 89; Sayfi Qazvini, p. 287; Ġaffāri Qazvini, p. 278; Ḥosayni 'Erāqi, pp. 64, 71; Kāki Širāzi, fol. 598a). In Rabi' I 922/April 1516, Majd-al-Din Moḥammad Kermāni was made vizier of Khorasan and Mir Ġiāt-al-Din Moḥammad Heravi took over as *šadr*, or minister for religious affairs and endowments. Less than two years later, early in 1518, Kermāni was replaced by Kvāja Moẓaffar Bitikči, an influential scribe and landed notable from Astarābād. Shortly thereafter, Amir Khan Mawṣellu made his own brother, Ebrāhim Beg, his deputy (*wakil*) in Khorasan. During the early years of Amir Khan's tenure, factional feuds among the Safavid administrators in Herat had become so violent and destabilizing that Shah Esmā'il decided to intervene and to reinstate, on Rabi' I 924/March-April 1518, the beleaguered *šadr* Mir Ġiāt-al-Din Moḥammad b. Yusof Heravi. Yet Heravi's enemies in Herat, led by Amir Khan Mawṣellu, stepped up their opposition and he was ultimately assassinated on 7 Rajab 927/13 June 1521 at the hands of one of Amir Khan's adjutants for his rumored pro-Timurid leanings (Kvāndamir, IV, pp. 554, 575-76, 583-84; Sayfi Qazvini, p. 288; Ġaffāri Qazvini, pp. 279-80; Ebn Kvāndamir, pp. 107-10; Ḥosayni 'Erāqi, pp. 75-76). Heravi's murder took place on the eve of the Uzbek invasion of Khorasan. Shortly before this incident, Amir Khan had the tongue of a prominent Herat-based Kobrawi (see kobrawiyya) mystic and poet called Āgahi cut (Kāki Širāzi, fol. 599a). Late in the spring of 1521, famine broke out in Herat, forcing the Uzbek 'Obayd-Allāh Khan and his armies to cut short their presence in Khorasan and withdraw to Transoxiana by the end of Jomādā II 927/June 1521 (Kvāndamir, IV, pp. 579-81; Ḥosayni 'Erāqi, pp. 70-71; Novidi Širāzi, p. 58). This incident marked the end of Amir Khan Mawṣellu's tenure as governor-general of Khorasan.

On 25 Du'l-Qa'da 927/6 November 1521, Shah Esmā'il appointed Durmeš Khan



Šāmlu (q.v.; d. 1525), his nephew and the military governor of Astarābād, as guardian (*lala*) of his second son Sām Mirza (d. 1568) and governor-general of Khorasan (K̄vāndamir, IV, p. 588; Ebn K̄vāndamir, pp. 112-13; Sayfī Qazvini, p. 288; Ḥosayni ‘Erāqi, pp. 75-76; Kāki Širāzi, fol. 599a). In an unpublished letter, which is dated Du’l-Ḥejja 927/November-December 1521 and is addressed to his military deputies in Khorasan, Shah Esmā’īl instructed them to collaborate closely with Durmeš Khan in his efforts to restore peace and prosperity in Khorasan (Ḥosayni Širāzi, f. 318a). Upon his arrival in Herat, Durmeš Khan appointed Aḥmad Beg Şufi-Oġlu Ālplu Afšār military governor of Farāh, the administrative capital of Sistān. Furthermore, he made Zaynal Khan Šāmlu, one of his close relatives, governor of Astarābād. He also ordered his military underlings in Khorasan to recognize Bābor’s annexation of Kabul and Kandahar, which at that time had been given to Bābor’s son, Moḥammad Kāmran Mirzā. Gubernatorial posts in Mashhad, Nishapur, Sabzavār, and Esfarāyen were filled by a trio of Durmeš Khan’s close allies. On 3 Ramaẓān 928/6 August 1522, the underage prince Sām Mirzā arrived in Herat and was put under the tutelage of Durmeš Khan (K̄vāndamir, IV, pp. 590-92; Ebn K̄vāndamir, pp. 111-14, 116; Novidi Širāzi, p. 58). Durmeš Khan’s free hand in posting his relatives and cronies to Astarābād and Sistān can be taken to imply the administrative integration of these two provinces into Khorasan. Under Durmeš Khan and his vizier, K̄vāja Ḥabib-Allāh Sāvaji (d. 932/1526), Khorasan became administratively centralized, excessive taxing practices introduced under Amir Khan Mawşellu were discontinued; abandoned agricultural lands were irrigated and re-cultivated; dilapidated educational and Sufi institutions were repaired and revived; religious endowments to be used for feeding the poor were reestablished; and pro-Safavid notables of the province were offered tax exemptions (Ebn K̄vāndamir, pp. 116-18; Szuppe, 1992, pp. 93-96).

The political instability that engulfed Safavid Iran during the opening years of the reign of Shah Ṭahmāsp enabled the Uzbeks to attack Herat and plunder its neighboring rural towns (Ebn K̄vāndamir, pp. 128-33; Rumlu, pp. 1138-40). They eventually annexed vast swathes of land in eastern Khorasan forcing the Safavids out of Termed, Šaborġān, Balk, and Farāh (Bacqué-Grammont, p. 430). Shortly thereafter, they recaptured Mashhad, Nišāpur, Sabzavār, Esfarāyen, Dāmġān, and Semnān, bringing all Khorasan under their control. In due course, Astarābād also fell to the Uzbeks (Ḥosayni ‘Erāqi, pp. 84-89, 91-92, 94; Şafawi, pp. 582-83; Monši, p. 93; Novidi Širāzi, p. 62; Dickson, 1958, pp. 88-92). Durmeš Khan passed away following the Uzbek invasion of Herat in 1526. He



was replaced by his younger brother Ḥosayn Khan Šāmlu as governor-general of Khorasan. Within a few weeks of Ḥosayn Khan's rise to power in Herat, his underlings assassinated Ḥabīb-Allāh Sāvaji and promoted Aḥmad Beg Nur-e Kamāl Eṣfahāni, a bureaucrat in service of Ḥosayn Khan, to vizier of Khorasan (Ebn K̄vāndamir, pp. 135-37; Ṣafawī, p. 578; Ġaffāri Qazvini, p. 283; Novidi Širāzi, p. 62; Kuzāni Eṣfahāni, II, ff. 23a-24a). Shortly after Shah Ṭahmāsp's ascent to the throne, the Timurid ruler of Kabul and Kandahar, Bābor achieved a series of major conquests in India, a feat that prepared the way for him to build an empire outside Khorasan, leading the Timurids to quit the struggle for supremacy in eastern Iran (Bābor, pp. 324ff, Engl. tr., I, 445ff; Ebn K̄vāndamir, pp. 137-39; Dale, pp. 320-54; Dickson, 1958, pp. 47-50). Following his territorial gains in inner Khorasan and Astarābād, 'Obayd-Allāh Khan, who at the time held office as governor of Bokhara and ranked among the most influential military commanders of the Abu'l-Khayrid ruler of Transoxiana, Güçgünci Khan (r. 1512-30), attacked Herat, triggering a bout of famine that was soon to spread to other parts of the province. The Uzbeks then laid a successful siege on Mashhad and by the end of 933/1527 managed to bring Astarābād and Dāmḡān under their control (Ebn K̄vāndamir, p. 144; Qaṭaḡān, pp. 140-41; Ḥosayni Qomi, pp. 171-72; Ḥosayni 'Erāqi, p. 96; Kuzāni Eṣfahāni, II, ff. 24b-25a; Dickson, 1958, pp. 54-63).

The Safavids were intent on regaining supremacy in eastern Iran in the short run, but the campaign to repel the Uzbeks from Khorasan was delayed as the result of infighting between various factions of Shah Ṭahmāsp's army in Azarbaijan and 'Erāq-e 'Ajam. In the spring of 1528, the Safavid vanguard forces proceeded to Sāvaj-bolāḡ, some 50 miles to the west of Ray, and it was on 21 Ša'bān 934/21 May 1528 outside the mountainous fortress town of Firuzkuh that Zaynal Khan Šāmlu, the former governor of Astarābād, engaged the Uzbek forces, an encounter that cost Zaynal Khan and a handful of high-ranking Safavid military commanders their lives (Ebn K̄vāndamir, pp. 142-43; Ḥosayni 'Erāqi, p. 98; Ḥosayni Qomi, p. 173; Ġaffāri Qazvini, p. 284; Novidi Širāzi, p. 64; Kuzāni Eṣfahāni, II, ff. 32a-b; Kāki Širāzi, f. 601b; Dickson, 1958, pp. 93-108). Late in the summer of 1528, Shah Ṭahmāsp led his army into Khorasan forcing the Uzbeks to end their siege of Herat, which lasted for seven months and caused the outbreak of famine in Khorasan. 'Obayd-Allāh Khan and his military deputies in the province then regrouped for the decisive battle, which was fought on 11 Moḡarram 935/5 October 1528 in Sāruḡameš (present-day Zurābād/Šāleḡābād), a cluster of rural settlements some 50 miles north of Jām. The Battle of Sāruḡameš ended with Ṭahmāsp's hurried



withdrawal to 'Erāq-e 'Ajam. In the peace negotiations that ensued following the battle, Ḥusayn Khan Šāmlu, the Safavid governor of Herat, and the Uzbek governor of Bokhara, 'Obayd-Allāh Khan agreed to halt hostilities during the winter (Ebn K̄vādamir, pp. 146-52; Rumlu, pp. 1172-179; Ḥosayni Qomi, pp. 176-78, 179-89; Ḥosayni 'Erāqi, pp. 101-2; Novidi Širāzi, p. 65; Kuzāni Eṣfahāni, II, ff. 30b-32a, 42b-45a; Qaṭaḡān, p. 124).

Between 1528 and 1539, the year in which 'Obayd-Allāh Khan died and his Central Asian khanate plunged into several decades of civil war and administrative instability, the Safavids and the Uzbeks fought five major battles over Khorasan. During the same period, the province was also made an appanage to four Safavid princes—Shah Ṭahmāsp's two brothers, one of his nephews, and his oldest son, Moḥammad Mirzā, who later was crowned as Moḥammad Kōdābanda. Within a few months of Shah Ṭahmāsp's withdrawal from Khorasan, which took place on 16 Rabi' I 937/17 November 1530, however, 'Obayd-Allāh Khan and his military deputies attacked Herat and Mashhad. In Mashhad, where the Uzbeks led by 'Obayd-Allāh Khan defeated overnight an army of about 4,000 Safavid troops, several hundred pro-Safavid civilians were arrested and massacred. At that time, the Safavid garrison in Mashhad was under the command of Aḥmad Beg Afšār, whose hurried escape to Farāh, his permanent military fief in Sistān, which took place on the night of 'Obayd-Allāh Khan's arrival before the wall of Mashhad, enabled the Uzbeks to enter Mashhad with no resistance. Shortly before the fall of Mashhad, 'Obayd-Allāh Khan had negotiated a ceasefire with Ḥusayn Khan Šāmlu, the governor-general of a famine-stricken Herat, agreeing to provide him, the Safavid prince Sām Mirzā, and their entourage safe passage to Sistān. Before making their way to Fārs, the retreating forces from Herat mounted a series of raids against Kij and Makorān (Makrān) (Rumlu, pp. 1180-82; Gaffāri Qazvini, p. 285; Ḥosayni Qomi, pp. 190-93; Eskandar Beg, pp. 57-58, tr., pp. 93-95). While Safavid chroniclers have chronicled in detail the fall of Herat to the Uzbeks and subsequent suppression of the pro-Safavid notables of the city, during which “many Shiite Muslims” were either tortured or beheaded in the hands of 'Obayd-Allāh Khān's armies, there is evidence from an eyewitness account that Herat did not fall to the Uzbeks at this time. The Herat-based chronicler Ebn K̄vādamir tells us that immediately after the Battle of Sāruqameš Shah Ṭahmāsp bestowed Khorasan as an appanage to his younger brother, Bahrām Mirzā (d. 1549), posting him to Herat immediately, where the Safavid prince was to live under the tutelage of Gāzi Beg b. Čerkes Ḥasan Tekkelu, who had just been appointed as governor-general of Khorasan. Bahrām Mirzā and Gāzi



Beg, as Ebn K̄vāndamir points out, heroically resisted and survived the Uzbek siege of Herat, which lasted for about 20 months from the spring of 1530 up until the latter part of October 1532. At the close of this long siege, when the Uzbeks decided to withdraw to Transoxiana, Shah Ṭahmāsp made Khorasan once again an appanage for Sām Mirzā and appointed Āġzivār Khan Šāmlu as his guardian and governor-general of Herat. On 7 Šafar 939/18 September 1532, Shah Ṭahmāsp left Khorasan for ‘Erāq-e ‘Ajam (Ebn K̄vāndamir, pp. 156, 158-61).

Soon after his rise to power, the Safavid governor of Herat, Āġzivār Khan Šāmlu, and his close relatives were implicated in an attempt on the life of Shah Ṭahmāsp. It is reported that between the fall of 1532 and the early spring of 1535, the Šāmlu of Herat and their allies led by Āġzivār Khan were involved in systematic ransacking of public funds and maltreatment of non-collaborating bureaucrats and landed notables. Consequently, within a few months of Shah Ṭahmāsp’s departure, local bureaucracy broke down and the city started to suffer from depopulation and ruin. Eventually, on 15 Ša’bān 941/1 March 1535, Āġzivār Khan and Sām Mirzā fled to Kandahar, preparing the way for the Uzbeks to re-enter Khorasan and restore their rule on Herat. On 19 Ḍu’l-qa’da 941/1 June 1535, the Uzbeks imposed a crushing defeat on Safavid forces in Herat, massacred almost all remaining pro-Safavid elements in the city, including the renowned chronicler and bureaucrat Šadr-al-din Ebrāhim Amini Heravi, and then left to plunder Ġarjestān. Šufiān K̄lifa Rumlu, the Safavid governor of Mashhad, then recaptured Herat, but before long introduced draconian taxes exacerbating the preexisting political chaos and administrative discontinuity. This resulted in the outbreak of a riot by the urban poor, during which the Safavid vizier of Herat, Nur-al-Din Aḥmad Ešfahāni, was killed. Closely scrutinizing these developments, the Uzbeks laid a siege to Mashhad, forcing Šufiān K̄lifa and his military deputies out of Herat. In the battle that broke out on 20 Rajab 942/24 January 1536 in ‘Abdolābād, a small village outside Nišāpur, Šufiān K̄lifa was captured alive and beheaded on the battlefield. In Herat, the local population sided with the Uzbeks. It is reported that Amir Abu-Ṭāher b. Šadr-al-din Ebrāhim Amini Heravi, who had been assigned with the task of defending Herat against the Uzbeks, gave his backing to ‘Obayd-Allāh Khan and agreed to raze the city’s walls to the ground, which was done on 27 Šafar 943/25 August 1536. It was under these circumstances that the Uzbeks brought Herat under their control (Ebn K̄vāndamir, pp. 162-81; Rumlu, pp. 1236-244; Budāq Monši, pp. 78-80; Ḥosayni ‘Erāqi, pp. 134-35, 137-38).



Six months later, late in Ša'bān 943/February 1537, 'Obayd-Allāh Khan retreated to Bukhara on the eve of Shah Ṭahmāsp's invasion of Khorasan. The Safavid ruler then made Herat an appanage for his oldest son, Moḥammad Mirzā, who entered Herat in early Šawwāl 943/late March 1537 along with his guardian, Moḥammad Khan Šaraf-al-din Oġli Tekkelu (d. 1557). Less than a week later, Shah Ṭahmāsp arrived in the city and remained there for almost two months. By the end of the spring of 1537, the Safavid forces invaded Kandahar and brought the city under their control. Shah Ṭahmāsp left Khorasan on 9 Rabi' I 944/26 August 1537 (Ebn K̄vādamir, pp. 187-97). Under the new administration, major steps were taken to revive trade and agriculture in Herat and the rural settlements clustered around it. Moḥammad Khan Tekkelu introduced regulations to curb the rising food prices. Several unruly powerbrokers and Sunni malefactors in Herat and K̄vāf were arrested and executed, and from 1538 onwards Moḥammad Khan arranged for Shiite clerics to occupy top-ranking posts in local administration (Ebn K̄vādamir, pp. 198-202). Under Moḥammad Khan's leadership, the Safavid forces in Khorasan played a decisive role in restoring stability and order in Astarābād, where a group of landed notables from Fenderesk led by Moḥammad Šāleḥ Bitikči, a close relative of K̄vāja Moẓaffar Bitikči, had risen in revolt against Shah Ṭahmāsp (Ebn K̄vādamir, pp. 203-6; Rumlu, pp. 1257-60; Ḥosayni Qomi, pp. 284-85; Reid; Abisaab). The Safavids kept Khorasan under their firm control for the rest of the long reign of Shah Ṭahmāsp.

In the fall of 1548, a contingent of the Uzbek army invaded Saraḡs, exciting a fast and furious response from the Safavid governor of Herat. The Safavid forces defeated the Uzbek invaders in Pol-e Kātun, a small village outside Saraḡs (Ebn K̄vādamir, pp. 229-30). On the night of Wednesday 15 Moḥarram 956/23 February 1549, a huge earthquake struck southern Khorasan. Bajestān, a rural town some 280 miles west of Herat, was the epicenter of the earthquake, but the disaster claimed several thousand lives to the south as far as K̄usf and Birjand (Ebn K̄vādamir, p. 231; Rumlu, p. 1332; Eskandar Beg, p. 117, tr., p. 194). In 1550, the year in which 'Obayd-Allāh Khan's son and successor, 'Abd-al-'aziz Khan died, the Uzbeks, led by Borāq Khan, the new governor of Bukhara, and his military deputies in Samarqand and Tashkent, descended on Herat, laid an unsuccessful siege to the city, and then mounted a series of raids against Farāh, the administrative capital of Sistān. Until 1559-60, the Uzbeks led by 'Abd-Allāh Khan, the governor of Balḡ, and his military deputies, including 'Abd-al-Laṭif Khan of Samarqand and Borāq Khan of



Tashkent, attacked Khorasan several times, fighting Safavid forces outside Mashhad, Torbat-e Ḥaydari, Saraḡs, Jām, and Farāh. Consequently, rural life in the war-torn areas of the province came to a halt and thousands of agriculturalists and pastoralists across Khorasan were displaced (Ebn K̄vāndamir, pp. 233-36; Rumlu, pp. 1334-36; Ḥosayni Qomi, pp. 344-45; Eskandar Beg, pp. 93-94, tr., pp. 155-56). In 1555, Shah Ṭahmāsp appointed his son Esmā'il Mirzā to governor of Herat. Esmā'il Mirzā departed for Herat on 6 Rabi' II 962/10 March 1555, with orders to put himself under the guardianship of Moḥammad Khan Šaraf-al-Din Oḡli Tekelu (Ḥosayni-Qomi, pp. 379-81; Rumlu, p. 1395; Novidi Širāzi, p. 110). He arrived in Herat on 23 Jomādā I 963/14 April 1556 (Ḥosayni Qomi, p. 384; Jonābadi, pp. 543-44). During the year intervening between his departure from Qazvin and arrival in Herat, he had toured various cities of Khorasan, including Sabzavār, Toršiz, Zāva, Maḥwalāt, K̄vāf, Bāḡarż, and Ġuriān, deliberately avoiding a visit to the holy shrine of Imam 'Ali b. Musā al-Rezā in Mashhad, the city that had recently been assigned to his paternal cousin, Ebrāhim Mirzā b. Bahrām Mirzā (Ḥosayni-Qomi, p. 385). It is reported that during Esmā'il Mirzā's short tenure as governor of Herat, many Sunni learned and landed notables, who had fled Khorasan early in the reign of Shah Ṭahmāsp, were exonerated and allowed resettlement in the city. The Safavid prince's pro-Sunni policies in Herat were soon to be exploited by his enemies in Qazvin who used the occasion to persuade Shah Ṭahmāsp to recall him from Khorasan (Kāmi Qazvini, f. 144a). According to Šaraf Khan Bedlisi (II, p. 208), it was the outbreak of a bitter feud between Moḥammad Khan Tekelu and his elder son, Zayn-al-Din 'Ali-Solṭān, a close friend and maternal cousin of Esmā'il Mirzā, that prompted Ṭahmāsp to recall his son from Khorasan in less than two years. During Esmā'il Mirzā's stay in Khorasan, Zayn-al-Din 'Ali-Solṭān Tekelu was arrested and tortured to death in Qazvin for complicity in the Safavid prince's disgraceful flings with consenting boys (Ḥosayni Qomi, p. 386; Novidi Širāzi, p. 110; Hinz, p. 35).

In 1558, shortly after the Mughal emperor Homāyun's escape to Iran (see homāyun pādešāh), Safavid forces in Khorasan mounted a military campaign against Kandahar and, amid the chaos that erupted in Mughal India following the Afghan Šir Khan's rebellion, easily annexed the province. Shah Ṭahmāsp's nephew, Solṭān-Ḥosayn Mirzā b. Bahrām Mirzā was then posted to serve as governor-general of Kandahar. Before his departure, Shah Ṭahmāsp married off his eldest daughter, Pariḡān Kānom (q.v.), to Solṭān-Ḥosayn Mirzā's younger brother, Badi'-al-Zamān Mirzā and appointed him as governor-general of Sistān and assigned his guardianship to Moḥammad Jān Beg Du'l-



Qadr, a military commander from Shiraz (Rumlu, p. 1406; Ḥosayni Qomi, pp. 396-97; Eskandar Beg, pp. 90-92, tr., pp. 151-54). A year later, in 1559, a contingent of the Uzbek forces from K̄vārazm led by ‘Ali-Solṭān descended on Nišāpur and Esfarāyen, plundering major rural settlements clustered around both fortress towns. The same Uzbeks attacked Mashhad four years later in 1563. It is reported that ‘Ali-Solṭān, who had turned Nasā/Nesā into his base, had allied with Šahriār, a powerful landed notable in K̄abušān who claimed descent from the Sarbedārs (q.v.). Subsequently, in 1564, the Safavid forces attacked K̄abušān and massacred Šahriār and his clan. Shah Ṭahmāsp then appointed Āyḡut Beg Čāvošlu as governor of Kalidar, a major rural settlement outside K̄abušān (Ḥosayni Qomi, pp. 435, 442, 447). In the same year, Qazāq Khan Tekkelu, who had inherited the governorship of Herat from his father Moḥammad Khan Tekkelu and reportedly planned an armed rebellion against the Safavids, was arrested on his deathbed by a group of Safavid military commanders in Khorasan led by Shah Ṭahmāsp’s nephew and son-in-law, Ebrāhim Mirzā (Ḥosayni Qomi, pp. 448-49; Rumlu, pp. 1436-39). The Uzbeks of Bukhara entered Khorasan in the winter of 1567 and laid a siege to Herat. Yet the Safavid forces in the city endured the siege and eventually repelled the Uzbeks from Khorasan before the end of winter (Ḥosayni Qomi, pp. 457-58).

Under Shah Ṭahmāsp and his immediate successors various Turkic and Kurdish tribes and clans were forced and/or coordinated to settle in Khorasan. Prominent among the Turkic clans that were sent to Khorasan are those affiliated with the Afšārs, which had been granted permanent *toyul* land assignments in Farāh and Abivard, a fortress town some 180 miles north of Mashhad. The Afšār clans posted to Abivard and its rural suburbs on the foothills of the Hazār Masjed mountain range bore the Turkish moniker *qereqlu* (from Turkish *q ırıq/kırık* meaning broken off, cut off, detached), that is, clans dismembered from the mother tribe, and were composed mainly of the Eyerlu (also Ajarlu and Abarlu) and Šarvānlu (also Sarvarlu). According to the 16th-century Ottoman land surveys, we know that the Eyerlu Afšārs were originally from eastern Anatolia and a major community of them is reported to have lived, as early as 1530, a nomadic life in the defunct Du’l-Qadr (q.v.) emirate in the areas stretching from Aleppo to Kayseri (998 *Numaral ı Muhāsebe*, II, col. 624; Refik, pp. 96-100; Mirniā, II, pp. 25, 29; Mostawfi, p. 412). The earliest known group of the Qereqlu, led by a certain K̄osrow-Solṭān, is reported to have moved to Khorasan under Ṭahmāsp (Eskandar Beg, p. 140, tr. pp. 222-24). Under Shah ‘Abbās they were joined by another group of the Qereqlu Afšārs from central Anatolia, whose leader, a



certain Ebrāhim-Solṭān, is reported to have held office as governor of Saraḵs (Eskandar Beg, p. 1085, tr., p. 1310). A branch of the Ostājlu/Afšār Kurds and Turkmens, headed by a certain Biktāš Khan, had been granted military fiefs in Marv, Nasā, and Abivard under Shah ‘Abbās (Eskandar Beg, p. 1085). In the opening part of the 17th century, groups of Eyerlu and Qereqlu Afšārs lived in Abivard, where they were responsible for thwarting the Uzbeks’ threat against major urban centers in inner Khorasan (Eskandar Beg, *Dayl*, p. 22; Vāleh Eṣfahāni, p. 26). According to a mid-18th-century chronicler, after his recapture of Azarbaijan in the opening years of the 17th century, Shah ‘Abbās sent 4,500 households of the Afšārs, together with 30,000 households of Kurds from rural and nomadic settlements clustered around Lake Urmia, to Khorasan, where the Afšārs had already been granted land in Abivard and Darragaz, a rural settlement some 30 miles southeast of Abivard. A group of Qājārs from Tabriz were also sent to settle in Marv shortly thereafter (Marvi, I, pp. 4-5; Qodduṣi, p. 20; Astarābādi, pp. 26-27, 49). Various clans associated with the Çemişgezek (present-day Dersim) Kurdish nomads of eastern Anatolia, including the Za’farānlu, Qochkānlu, Şādlu (also Sa’dlu), Kāvānlu (also Kayvānlu), and Dudānlu, were also granted lands and pastures in northern Khorasan, mainly in Rādkān, Kalāt, the rural suburbs of Ḳabuṣān and Abivard, and Esfarāyen (Mirniā, I, pp. 13-14; Eskandar Beg, p. 141, tr., pp. 226-27; Mostawfi, pp. 410-11). Groups of Siāh-Manṣur (or Siāh-Monḍur) Kurds, who were originally from Dersim, had been posted as well to Khorasan under the Safavids, where one of them by the name of Emāmḡoli Khan held office as governor of Esfarāyen during the reign of Shah ‘Abbās (Eskandar Beg, p. 1086, tr., p. 1313). In the closing years of the 16th century, small groups of the Şāhseven tribal confederacy of Azarbaijan and Qarābāḡ ended up in Khorasan (Oberling, p. 38). Under the early Safavids, several clans of the Şāmlu and the Tekkelu clans settled in Herat, Jām, and Mashhad (Eskandar Beg, p. 140, tr., p. 225). Under Shah ‘Abbās, the Chagatai (also Jaḡatā’i) Mongols and the Bayāt Turkmens of Khwarazm, including the Jalāyer, Qarabayāt, and Garāyeli (also Qarā’i) clans, held high-ranking military posts in Kalāt, Nişāpur, Sabzavār, Buzanjerd (present-day Bojnurd, q.v.), and Jargalān (Eskandar Beg, p. 1087, tr., p. 1314; Mostawfi, pp. 412). Later in the reign of Shah ‘Abbās II (r. 1052-77/1642-66), the leader of the Pāzuki tribe, Mortazāḡoli Khan Sa’dlu, was instructed by the Safavid ruler to move all Georgian converts in service of the Safavid bureaucracy to Khorasan, where they were to be placed in charge of local Muslim communities (Waḡid Qazvini, p. 757). Under the later Safavids, all nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes and clans of Khorasan were considered part of the Qara-Olus, or the country’s taxpayer nomads, paying taxes to the



vizier of Qarā Olus, an official in charge of keeping record of the livestock, movements, and tax proceeds of nomads across Safavid Iran (Anṣārī Eṣfahānī, p. 592).

Shortly after Esmā'īl II's (q.v.) ascent to the throne, which occurred in the summer of 984/1576, and following the bloody purges that claimed the lives of almost all male members of the Safavid dynasty, Jalāl Khan, the Uzbek governor of Urganj, invaded Khorasan, where his troops plundered Nasā, Abivard, Jām, and Saraḡs. The decisive battle was fought outside 'Eṣqābād, a small village some 25 miles south of Nišāpur, during which the Safavid forces, led by Mortažāqoli Khan Pornāk, the governor (*beglarbeg*) of Mashhad, arrested Jalāl Khan alive and beheaded him on the battlefield. This victory intensified rivalries between Mortažāqoli Beg and the Safavid governor of Herat, 'Aliqoli Beg Šāmlu, preparing the way for the outbreak of civil war in Khorasan (Eskandar Beg, pp. 229-30, tr., pp. 342-44). In 1577, Shah Esmā'īl II removed his elder brother, Moḡammad Mirzā, as nominal governor of Herat and imprisoned him in Fārs. Still, the Šāmlu notables of Herat kept Solṭān-Moḡammad Mirzā's newborn son, 'Abbās Mirzā, in Herat and, by Shah Esmā'īl II's order, the governor-general of Khorasan, 'Aliqoli Khan Šāmlu, who had recently married Shah Ṭahmāsp's daughter, Zaynab Begum (q.v.), acted as his guardian (Ḥosayni Qomi, pp. 650-51; Eskandar Beg, pp. 243-45, tr., pp. 362-64).

Backed by the Afšārs, Kurds, and his Torkmān (Rumlu and Pornāk) relatives in Mashhad, Jām, Ḳabušān, Esfarāyen, and Nišāpur, the governor of Mashhad, Mortažāqoli Khan Pornāk soon entered a war with the Šāmlu clan and their Ostājlu allies in Herat. In 1580, the Šāmlu forces laid a siege to Mashhad, which lasted for four months, during which a group of local notables, including the chief superintendent of Imam 'Ali al-Rezā's shrine, Mir 'Abd-al-Karim, were killed and a large part of the city's fortifications was leveled to the ground. It is reported that toward the end of the siege of Mashhad Mortažāqoli Khan Pornāk ordered the confiscation of all gold and silver reserves of the Shi'ite shrine of the city, a move that enabled him to mint new coins to buy the loyalty of his troops. Nišāpur and Sabzavār were also attacked and plundered by the Šāmlu (Eskandar Beg Torkmān, pp. 254-56, Engl. tr., pp. 375-80; Ḥosayni Qomi, pp. 711-13; Jonābadi, pp. 609-17).

Following their victories in Khorasan, late in the summer of 1581, the Šāmlu of Herat and their Ostājlu allies led by Moršedqoli Khan Čāvošlu swore allegiance to 'Abbās Mirzā in Zāva, a rural settlement some 120 miles south of Nišāpur, as Shah 'Abbās. The turn of events in Khorasan excited a vigorous response from



Azərbaycan. In the spring of 1583, the grand vizier Mirzā Salmān Jāberi, who had planned to enthrone Ḥamza Mirzā, his son-in-law and ‘Abbās Mirzā’s older brother, as shah, led the Safavid army from Azərbaycan to Khorasan. During the battle that took place in Ġuriān, a rural town outside Herat, the Šāmlu and Ostājlu military commanders defeated Mirzā Salmān and beheaded him on the battlefield (Eskandar Beg, pp. 276-78, tr., pp. 375-80, 406-8; Ḥosayni Qomi, pp. 736-47; Jonābadi, pp. 618-21; Afušta’i Naṭanzi, pp. 131-35; Savory, 1964).

In the years leading to Shah ‘Abbās’ rise to power as ruler of all Iran, Khorasan suffered greatly from political strife and military conflicts between various factions of the Qezelbāš. In the spring of 1589, the Uzbeks led by ‘Abd-Allāh Khan captured Herat after a short siege and massacred several hundred pro-Safavid elements in the city. They then invaded Mashhad and laid a long siege to the city. One year later, in the spring of 1590, while Shah ‘Abbās was busy eliminating his opponents from among the Qezelbāš military commanders, the Uzbek ‘Abd-al-Mo’men Khan b. ‘Abd-Allāh Khan captured Mashhad and beheaded almost all renowned supporters of the Safavid dynasty there. This new round of territorial conquests eventually brought Khorasan under the firm control of the Uzbeks (Eskandar Beg, pp. 386-89, 411-14, tr. pp. 557-65, 588-91). In 1592, the Safavid forces led by Farhād Beg Qarāmānlu invaded Khorasan and managed to recapture Esfarāyen, an important fortress town some 65 miles north of Sabzavār (Eskandar Beg, pp. 443-45, tr. pp. 617-19). One year later, pro-Safavid forces in Mazinān killed their Uzbek governor and helped the Safavid forces in Esfarāyen bring this major rural settlement, sitting astride the route from Sabzavār to Dāmġān, under their control (Eskandar Beg, pp. 451-53, tr. pp. 625-28). In 1593, the Uzbeks fought a major battle against the Safavid forces in Tun, a rural town some 85 miles west of Qā’en, where the invaders were surprised by Safavid auxiliary forces sent to Khorasan from Kerman and had to withdraw to Herat and Mashhad (Eskandar Beg, pp. 455-56, tr. pp. 628-30). In 1593-94, the Uzbeks descended on Toršiz, where they defeated the Safavid forces and annexed Tun and Ṭabas. This victory emboldened the Uzbeks to attack Yazd a year later, where they plundered the dominantly Zoroastrian-populated neighborhoods of the city (Eskandar Beg, pp. 489-90, 525-26, tr. pp. 663-66, 701-2; Ghereghlou, 2017, p. 61). In the spring of 1596, Farhād Khan Qarāmānlu, the incumbent generalissimo (*amir-al-omarā*), led the Safavid army into Khorasan, where they invaded Jājarm and Esfarāyen, forcing ‘Abd-al-Mo’men Khan to withdraw to Mashhad. Yet the Uzbek forces made a quick comeback and captured



Sabzavār, where ‘Abd-al-Mo’men Khan ordered the massacre of all pro-Safavid elements together with their families (Eskandar Beg, pp. 509-12, tr. pp. 681-89).

Eventually it was in 1598 that Shah ‘Abbās personally mounted his major military campaign against the Uzbeks in Khorasan. The Safavid army captured the province with no significant resistance on the part of ‘Abd-al-Mo’men Khan and his underlings, who following the death of ‘Abd-Allāh Khan and subsequent outbreak of civil war in Samarqand and Bukhara in the same year, had to withdraw to Balk. In Balk, ‘Abd-al-Mo’men Khan was assassinated by his opponents and Din-Moḥammad, a nephew of ‘Abdallāh Khan, ascended to the throne as khan (Eskandar Beg, pp. 556-63, tr. pp. 738-48). The decisive battle was fought in Pol-e Sālār, a small village outside Herat, during which the Uzbeks were defeated and all major urban centers in Khorasan, including Herat, Mashhad, Nišāpur, Sabzavār, Toršiz, Tun, and Ṭabas, were brought under the undisputed control of the Safavid forces (Eskandar Beg, pp. 570-76, tr. pp. 755-63). Shah ‘Abbās returned to Khorasan in 1599 to conduct a series of punitive campaigns in the provinces, including a raid against Abivard, Nasā, and Marv in 1600, where his forces drove out the remaining Uzbeks (Eskandar Beg, pp. 595-605, tr. pp. 783-96). More than two years later, in 1602-3, Shah ‘Abbās attacked Balk. The Safavid forces descended on major rural towns, including Bādḡis and Andḡoy, on their way from Herat to Balk. The military campaign against Balk ended without a significant victory. Yet it was a pre-emptive engagement aimed at destroying the Uzbek support network and thwarting them in their quest for making a quick comeback after Shah ‘Abbās’ departure from Herat (Eskandar Beg, pp. 619-30, tr. pp. 809-22).

In 1612, during his visit to Khorasan, Shah ‘Abbās ordered a major expansion project in the Shi‘ite shrine of Mashhad. The central courtyard of the shrine was subsequently broadened. A new veranda was also added. Additionally, a boulevard was constructed extending from the shrine’s main entrance to the city’s western gate (*darvāza-ye Kabušān*). All houses and local businesses located along Mashhad’s Upper Street (*bālā kiābān*), to the south of the shrine, were connected to a newly expanded *qanāt* network, allowing local authorities to build new hostels and bathhouses there. In the same year, Shah ‘Abbās ordered the construction of two local shrines in Khorasan, one in a cemetery called K̄vāja Rabi’ outside Mashhad and the other outside Nishapur on the site of a popular sanctuary called Qadam-gāh (Bāfqi, pp. 228-29; Afzal-al-Molk Kermāni, p. 252). Shah ‘Abbās then ordered the settlement of several hundred Arab immigrants from Bahrain in Qadam-gāh, charging them with supervising



the newly founded shrine (Afzal-al-Molk Kermāni, p. 93). On 27 Moḥarram 1012/7 July 1603, an orphanage and boarding school for the *sayyeds* was established in Mashhad by royal fiat. This institution remained in operation until the end of the reign of Shah ‘Abbās II (1052-77/1642-66) (Jahānpur, pp. 69-78). Funded by the Georgian governor of Shiraz Allāh-Verdi Khan (q.v.; d. 1613), the construction of a new dome together with a decorated veranda and portal was completed in 1612 (Afzal-al-Molk Kermāni, pp. 253-54). In 1613, construction work on a major irrigation canal called *nahr-e šāhi*, designed to bring water to Mashhad from the Gel-Asb springs (*č ešma-ye gel-asb*, also *č ešma-ye gilās*) located some 35 miles west of Mashhad in the foothills of the Hazār Masjed range, was finished. In Jomādā I 1023/June-July 1614, Shah ‘Abbās officially endowed to the Shi‘ite shrine in Mashhad all the revenues to be collected from the villages, farmlands, and businesses located along this irrigation canal (Rawšani Za‘farānlu, pp. 324-25).

Shortly after Shah Šafi’s ascent to the throne in the winter of 1629, the Uzbeks of Urganj led by Esfandiār Khan invaded Khorasan. Major infightings are reported to have been taken place in the summer of the same year in Abivard, where the Eyerlu and Qereqlu Afšārs, led by the Ostājlu governor of Marv, Bekiš Khan; the Georgian governor of Abivard, Jamšid-Soltān; and the Circassian governor of Mashhad, Manučehr Khan, killed many Uzbeks in a series of ambushes, forcing Esfandiār Khan out of Khorasan (Vāleh Ešfahāni, pp. 24-30; Moḥammad Ma‘šum Ešfahāni, pp. 57-59; Eskandar Beg, *Dayl*, pp. 21-22; Vaḥid Qazvini, pp. 225-26). A year later, Shah Šafi sent several divisions of his harquebusiers (*tofangčis*) to Khorasan, where Manučehr Khan posted them to Abivard, Nasā, and Marv (Moḥammad Ma‘šum Ešfahāni, pp. 61-62). In the winter of 1630, Shah Šafi was presented with a petition from Ḥasan Khan Šāmlu, the governor of Herat, and his underlings in Khorasan, in which they had complained about a remarkable increase in the number and frequency of Uzbek raids against rural and pastoral settlements in northern Khorasan. Accordingly, the Safavid ruler issued a new order, instructing his military deputies in Khorasan “to kill or die” in their border confrontations with the Uzbek invaders (Moḥammad Ma‘šum Ešfahāni, pp. 122-23). In the spring of 1632, new auxiliary forces from among the Afšār, Pāzuki, and Silsupur tribes of Kerman and Semnan were posted to Marv and fortress towns of Abivard and Nasā immediately after the news of a new Uzbek invasion of Khorasan reached Isfahan (Ešfahāni, pp. 132-34). Border clashes with the Uzbeks continued during the remaining years of the reign of Shah Šafi (1038-52/1629-42). There is evidence that in most cases Safavid forces in the



province were successful in their efforts to ward off the Uzbek advances beyond Marv, Abivard, and northern suburbs of Herat (Moḥammad Ma'şum Eşfahāni, 171, 175, 190-92, 259).

In 1674, a devastating earthquake hit Mashhad, causing considerable damages to the Shiite shrine in the city. Two years later, Shah Solaymān I (q.v.) ordered major repairs on the shrine's main dome (*Tāriḳ-e Ma š had*, fol. 1a; Bastāmi, p. 50; Afzal-al-Molk Kermāni, p. 254). Šāh-Verdi Khan, a high-ranking official at the court of Shah Solaymān, is also reported to have financed the construction of a caravanserai, a public bath, and a bazaar in Mashhad (Bastāmi, p. 50). In 1708-9, the Safavid governor of Tun and Ṭabas, Malek Maḥmud b. Faṭḥ-'Ali Sistāni, whose brother Malek Ḥosayn held office as governor of Kerman, brought much of Khorasan under his control and eventually, in 1723, made Mashhad his capital. His supporters were mainly from among the Arab tribes of southern Khorasan, including the Zangu'i, Naḳa'i, Lālā'i (also Lo'lo'i), and Bābā'i (Vāred Ṭehrāni, pp. 118-31; *Tāriḳ-e Ma š had*, f. 1a). In 1717, the Uzbek ruler of Urgenj Šir Khan descended on northern Khorasan, plundering Marv, Abivard, Nishapur, Ḳabušan, and Sabzevār (Mar'aši, pp. 22-23).

The inaction and negligence on the part of the late Safavid authorities in Isfahan soon excited public outrage in Khorasan. In Sabzavār, a local cleric called Shaikh Bahā'-al-Din Estiri, rebelled against the Safavids and, upon the Uzbek Šir Khan's arrival in Khorasan in 1717, led an army of his local supporters to the battlefield. When the Uzbeks withdrew from Khorasan, he traveled to the court of Shah Solṭān-Ḥosayn (q.v.; r. 1105-35/1694-1722) to discuss the seriousness of the situation in Khorasan with the Safavid rulers' bureaucratic underlings, but Shiite clerics in Isfahan accused him of apostasy and armed rebellion against the just ruler (Astarābādi, pp. 6-7). In the meantime, the Abdāli Afghans descended on Mashhad, where they fought a brief battle with the Safavid forces and laid an unsuccessful thirty-five-day siege to the city (*Tāriḳ-e Ma š had*, f. 1a). Estiri was ultimately nabbed by the Safavid governor of Khorasan, Şafiqoli Khan Torkestānoġli, also known as *divāna* (lunatic), and put to the sword for his anti-Safavid leanings (Mar'aši, pp. 24-26). Likewise, in Abivard, the local governor of the fortress town, Bābā-'Ali Beg Köse-Aḥmadlu Afšār and his son-in-law Nāderqoli Qereqlu Afšār organized local centers of resistance against the Uzbeks to repel them from the northern and northwestern suburbs of Mashhad. On the eve of Sistāni's rise to power, two Kurdish military commanders from the Ganjlu Kalāvand clan staged a military coup against the Safavid governor of the city, Esmā'il Khan



Šāmlu, and seized Mashhad, an incident that in the short run brought about political chaos and administrative instability in the province (Mostawfi, *Zubdat*, pp. 175-76). Under Şafiqoli Khan Torkestān-oġli, the Safavid military commanders in Mashhad had to confiscate all gold and silver reserves of the Shiite shrine in the city to mobilize their forces against the Abdāli rebels of Herat. Internal feuds among Şafiqoli Khan's Kurdish and Qājār supporters resurfaced shortly before the decisive battle, which was fought in Kāfer-Qal'a outside Herat, leading to Şafiqoli Khan's defeat and death on the battlefield (Mar'aši, pp. 27-28; Astarābādi, p. 8). The plunder of the Shiite shrine in Mashhad was repeated under Malek Maḥmud Sistāni, who spent the remainder of its gold and silver reserves to mint new coins in his own name (Mostawfi, *Zobdat*, p. 180).

In 1721, the Ġalzā'i (Ġalzi, q.v.) Afghans descended on Mashhad but failed to capture the city (*Tāriḳ-e Mašhad*, f. 1a). After the fall of Isfahan in the fall of 1722, Nāderqoli Beg Qereqlu Afšār emerged victorious from his clashes with Malek Maḥmud Sistāni. Ṭahmāsp II (r. 1135-45/1722-32) entered Mashhad together with Nāderqoli Beg on 27 Moḥarram 1138/5 October 1725 after a ten-month siege, during which Malek Maḥmud Sistāni vehemently resisted the Safavid ruler and his armies (*Tāriḳ-e Ma š had*, f. 1b). Shortly thereafter, Nāderqoli Beg eliminated Faṭḥ-'Ali Khan Qājār, and on 16 Rabi' I 1138/22 November 1725 was promoted to head of the royal guards (*qurčī-bāši*). He then plotted against his old rival, Malek Maḥmud Sistāni, who had now taken refuge inside the shrine. Ultimately, one of Nāder's allies by the name of Qelič Khan Ganjlu Kalāvand, who held office as the prefect of Mashhad, arrested and executed Malek Maḥmud together with a group of his relatives on 4 Rajab 1139/25 February 1727 (Mostawfi, *Zobdat*, pp. 183-84; *Tāriḳ-e Ma š had*, ff. 1a-b).

Under Nāder Shah (r. 1148-60/1736-47) and his immediate successors, Khorasan was no longer threatened by the Uzbeks. Nāder Shah invested huge amounts of money on expanding Imam 'Ali al-Rezā's shrine and its endowments in Khorasan (Baštāmi, pp. 53-54). A large group of Jews were transplanted from Qazvin and Daylamān to Mashhad early in the reign of Nāder Shah, where he took them under his protection and settled them in a newly built neighborhood outside the city walls (Levi, III, p. 473). During his short reign, Nāder Shah's nephew and successor, 'Aliqoli Khan Qereqlu Afšār, also known as 'Adel Shah (q.v.), who ascended to the throne on 27 Jomāda II 1160/6 July 1747, also invested in the expansion of the endowments of Imam



‘Ali al-Rezā’s shrine in Mashhad. ‘Ādel Shah built a sanatorium (*dār al- šefā*) in Mashhad and endowed to the shrine several villages outside the city (Naqdi Kadkani, pp. 87-88). Internal strife under ‘Adel Shah led to his downfall and execution two years later at the hands of Nāder Shah’s grandson, Šāhroḡ, who shortly after his victory over ‘Ādel Shah, allied himself with the Qom-based Sayyed Moḡammad Mar‘āši Šafawi, who claimed descent from Shah Solaymān and at the time had been put in charge of the treasures confiscated by ‘Ādel Shah’s younger brother Ebrāhim during his short reign in Azarbaijan and ‘Erāq-e ‘Ajam, including the Kuh-e Nur (see koh-i-noor) and Daryā-ye Nur (q.v.) diamonds. Šāhroḡ invited Sayyed Moḡammad to Mashhad, but less than a year after his arrival in Mashhad, he fell into disfavor and even the Afsharid ruler of Khorasan tried to assassinate him. Upon the failure of the assassination plot, all the erstwhile supporters of Šāhroḡ sided with Sayyed Moḡammad and declared him shah. Sayyed Moḡammad took Mashhad under his control by the end of 1749 and on 5 Šafar 1163/14 January 1750, was crowned as the Safavid Shah Solaymān II (Mar‘āši Šafawi, 90-115; Mar‘āši, pp. 97-110; Perry, pp. 4-5). Less than three months later, the sightless Šāhroḡ was reinstated and Sayyed Moḡammad, now blinded by his opponents, was removed from office. Toward the end of the reign of Šāhroḡ, Aḡmad Shah Dorrāni invaded Mashhad and, in the early summer of 1754, laid a siege to the city, which lasted for nine months, but failed to capture it (Mar‘āši Šafawi, 90-115; Mar‘āši, pp. 112-21). Šāhroḡ remained in power as governor of Mashhad until 1795, the year in which Āqā Moḡammad Khan Qājār entered the city and put an end to the reign of the Afsharids (Sāravi, pp. 285-88).

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