



## NAJM-E TĀNI

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**NAJM-E TĀNI**, Amir Yār-Aḥmad Eşfahāni (d. 918/1512), the third holder of the office of *wakil-e nafs-e nafis-e Homāyun* under Shah Esmā'il Şafawi, the representative of the Shah both in his religious and in his political capacity; as Roger Savory has put it, the holder of this office “was, in fact, the *alter ego* of the Shah” (Savory, 1960, p. 94). After appointing a *qezelbāš* amir (Ḥosayn-Beg Şāmlu) as his first *wakil*, Shah Esmā'il shifted to a policy of appointing individuals of Persian stock to the *wekālat*, the second *wakil* being Amir Najm-al-Din Mas'ud Gilāni (d. 915/1509-10). Amir Yār-Aḥmad was given the honorific (*laqab*) “Najm-e Tāni” (Najm the Second) after his predecessor (Rumlu, ed. Navā'i, p. 146).

In 918/1512, Najm-e Tāni led a Safavid *qezelbāš* army against the Uzbeks, who, despite having been decisively defeated by Shah Esmā'il outside Marv two years earlier, were still not pacified. The sources disagree on whether or not Shah Esmā'il had approved the expedition. According to Eskandar Monši, “Without orders or instructions from the Shah, Najm-e Sòāni resolved on the subjugation of Transoxiana” (Eskandar Monši, trans. Savory, p. 65). Najm-e Tāni made several errors of judgement during this campaign, which ultimately led to his defeat and death. After crossing the Oxus and occupying Qaraši, he unnecessarily ordered a general massacre “in which about fifteen thousand persons both young and old, and small and great, were slain” (Rumlu, trans. Seddon, p. 61). Some *sayyeds* and their families had taken refuge in the main mosque, but they too were slain on the orders of Najm-e Tāni “along with their wives and their children” (Rumlu, trans. Seddon, *op.*



*cit.*). Subsequently, Ġojdovān, a few miles to the north of Bukhara, was besieged. Unable to enter the town, Bābor, who had joined the Safavid expedition, suggested a tactical withdrawal to Qaraši to await reinforcements from Balkh. Najm-e Tāni refused to take this advice, but many *qezelbāš* chiefs refused to fight under his leadership and withdrew. In the fighting that ensued Najm-e Tāni was captured and beheaded on the orders of the Uzbek leader ‘Ubayd Khan.

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(Michel M. Mazzaoui)