

## TWO ORIGINAL DECREES BY SULṬĀN-ḤUSAYN BAYQARĀ IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES IN KABUL\*

SHIVAN MAHENDRARAJAH

University of St Andrews  
Fife, Scotland  
e-mail: shivan@caa.columbia.edu

This paper makes available images, transcriptions, and translations of two original decrees by Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bayqarā (r. 873–911/1469–1506), the last Timurid monarch at Herat. Original Timurid chancery documents are exceedingly rare. By publishing images of the decrees' *recto* and *verso* faces, and details of two different royal seals, the artistic and historical values of the documents are brought to the attention of scholars. The calligraphic style is *ta'liq*, written in this instance with no dots. The *recto* and *verso* face royal seals are distinct and legible; the *verso* side seal (*muhr*) may not have been previously seen by scholars.

*Key words:* Timurid, Bayqara, chancery, decree, *farmān*, seal, *muhr*.

### Introduction

Only a handful of original Timurid documents have survived five centuries of political and social vicissitudes in Khurasan and remain available for examination. Handwritten copies (sgl. *sawād*) of Timurid decrees survive in *inshā'* compilations like the *Farā'id-i Ghiyāthī*,<sup>1</sup> *Sharafnāma* (al-Marwārīd 1952; see also al-Marwārīd Istanbul

\* There are many to thank in Afghanistan, and for assisting with this paper, one of the fruits of sojourns in Kabul, Balkh, and Herat. Warm thanks to Dr. Rohullah Amin, Country Director, *American Institute of Afghanistan Studies*; Mrs. Masuma Nazari, Directress, *National Archives of Afghanistan*; Ahmad Seyar Behroz, the chief archivist, historical documents section at the *National Archives*; and to Salman Ali Oruzghani and Ali Baba Awrang for sharing their epigraphical skills. Dr. Emadoddin Shaikhlohokema'i, Dr. Saqib Baburi, and Professor Robert D. McChesney saved me from grave errors. I remain responsible for errors that persist.

<sup>1</sup> There are six manuscripts of the *Farā'id-i Ghiyāthī*, but only a subset of them reproduce part or all of chapter (*bāb*) 7 (*manshūr wa mithāl*), which contains, *inter alia*, Ilkhanid, Kartid, and Timurid decrees. A subset of the epistles in this compilation of about 650 unique documents was

MSS), and *Recueil de documents diplomatiques* (Anonymous/Paris, Supplément persan 1815);<sup>2</sup> however, by their nature, copies cannot convey the calligraphic styles, artistic flourishes, and seals of the originals.

Published Timurid decrees (variously termed, *farmān*, *yarlīgh*, *manshūr*, *soyūr-ghāl*) include the collections edited by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Nawā’ī (1341/1963), Lajos Fekete (1977), and Humāyūn-Farrukh (Nizāmī Bākharzī 1357/1978). Fekete includes a facsimile of a decree by Temūr (Tamerlane) (Fekete 1977, pp. 71–75; Plates 3–5; and see Woods 1984, pp. 331–337), and a facsimile of a decree by Temūr’s son and successor, Shāh-Rukh (Fekete 1977, pp. 87–88; Plates 11–12). Decrees by the Timurids’ Turkmen rivals – the Aq-Qūyūnlū and the Qarā-Qūyūnlū confederations – are more prevalent (see Papazian 1956–1968, Busse 1959, and Ṭabāṭabā’i 1352 sh/1973). The above serves to illustrate the paucity of original Timurid decrees; hence the value of the decrees issued by Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bayqarā’s chancery in 896/1491 and 901/1495 which are reproduced here. Another original decree by Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bayqarā was published by Muḥammad Mukrī (1975). In the instant decrees, two variations of the sultan’s seal (*muhr*) are manifest, and accompanied by the seals of unidentified officials. The originals are held by the *National Archives of Afghanistan* in Kabul.

Ghulām Rizā Amīrkhānī (1391/2012, pp. 55–57) published in Iran images of the two decrees referenced above, with transcriptions of the decrees and the sultan’s seal on the front (*recto*) of both documents. He did not publish images of the seals on the back (*verso*), where a hitherto unknown variant of the royal seal is in evidence. Moreover, Amīrkhānī’s elucidations did not centre on the two decrees, but on Timurid chancery records in general. We have, nonetheless, profited from Amīrkhānī’s scholarship.

Original chancery documents are of value for their (visible) artistic qualities (calligraphy, ink colours, seals, and literary flourishes), but they serve also to enhance our understanding of a ruler’s symbols of sovereignty and his self-image. Epistolary protocols determine styles and placement on documents for invocations/doxologies (*invocatio*), document titles (*intitulatio*), honourifics (*elevatio*), epithets (*inscriptio*), salutations (*salutatio*) and such, and the proper location for royal seals (typically, above and to the right of other seals). The subject of *inshā*’ protocols has been explicated with respect to the Safavids (Mitchell 1997), and informs on Timurid *inshā*’ protocols. Apropos of this point, Timurid and Safavid chancery scribes were heirs to a “Perso-Islamic chancellery culture” (Mitchell 2003). Scribal practices can survive in copies if the copyist is meticulous, or mimics the calligraphy and formulary layout of the original, but this was not common. Seals can be reproduced as sketches, but this, too, was not common.

---

published by Heshmat Moayyad (see Jāmī 1358). On the manuscripts (MSS), see Herrmann (1972, pp. 499–504); and Jāmī/Moayyad (see Jāmī 1356/1977, pp. xxxii–lxi). Three *Farā’id-i Ghiyāthī* MSS have decrees: Jāmī/Berlin MS; Jāmī/Tehran MS; and Jāmī/Istanbul MS. Chapter 7 of the Berlin MS is believed to be complete. It is the author’s copy. On the Berlin MS, see Pertsch (1888, pp. 1010–1011; cat. no. 1060).

<sup>2</sup> On this manuscript, see Blochet (1905–1934, Vol. 4, pp. 277–279).

Seals, like coins, offer glimpses into a sultan's self-image and his symbols of legitimacy. Coins (*sikka*) have greater importance than seals due to their wider circulation – and *sikka* (with the sultan's name), the *khutba* (praising the sultan in the Friday sermon), and *tirāz* (a strip of embroidery on royal garments) – are three symbols of sovereignty. Seals were important to the Timurids, who apparently retained their seals of investiture in ornate sandalwood boxes, in emulation of Mongol practices (Blair 1996, pp. 567–568 and Figures 5 and 6, plates of the boxes). ‘Alī Shīr Nawā’ī (d. 907/1501), the sultan's confidant, was a keeper of the great imperial seal before he was promoted to emir. The “Mughals” of India were Timurids (Gurkanids, after Amīr Temūr Gūrkan). Their “orbital seal” – a central circle with the name of the reigning emperor, with satellite circles bearing the names of the emperor's ancestors up to Temūr – was their distinctive symbol of legitimacy (Gallop 1999).

Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bayqarā (r. 873–911/1469–1506),<sup>3</sup> the last Timurid sultan at Herat, ruled over greatly diminished domains. The Timurid empire began shrinking concomitant with Temūr's death in 807/1405, and shrank further with the death in 850/1447 of Shāh-Rukh (r. 807–50/1405–1447).<sup>4</sup> Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bayqarā's domains were confined in the main to Khurasan, *viz.*, northeastern Iran and western Afghanistan, and down to Sistan.<sup>5</sup>

Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bayqarā's realm was politically fragmented for the better part of his reign, a consequence to some degree of the proliferation of imperial benefices, *viz.*, the *soyūrghāl*, and other types of fiscal immunities to individuals, and the exempting of *waqf* estates from taxation. The beneficiaries of imperial largesse were members of the ulema (dominantly Tajik) and emirs (the military elite, dominantly Turkic). Royal favours served to acquire support. The issuance of imperial benefices reduced the inflows of tax revenues and placed pressures on the fisc.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, petitions to the Timurid court by influential intermediaries resulted in awards of a range of fiscal and legal immunities. Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī's (d. 898/1492) published collections of correspondence expose his practice of petitioning the court on behalf of third-parties (Jāmī 1985; 1378/1999; 1383/2004). Given his intimate relationships with Timurid court counsellor ‘Alī Shīr Nawā’ī, and Sulṭān-Ḥusayn, we can reasonably assume that most of Jāmī's petitions were granted. Sulṭān-Ḥusayn, as Maria Subtelny observed, “was famous for always granting the requests of members of the religious and literary intelligentsia and bestowing upon them ‘favours (*in ‘āmāt*) and soyurghals’” (Subtelny 1988, p. 126 and note 10, citing Khwāndamīr 1333/1954, Vol. 4, p. 111).

The two decrees of interest here appear to be the result of supplications by someone on behalf of the named petitioners, Sayyid Qāsim and Yūsuf (in the first decree), and Sayyid Qāsim (in the second decree). The context for the decrees and the identities of the supplicants are not known.

<sup>3</sup> “Sulṭān” and “Shāh” are often components of Timurid proper names. Hence “sultan Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bayqarā” and “padishah Shāh-Rukh”.

<sup>4</sup> On Shāh-Rukh's reign, see Manz (2007).

<sup>5</sup> On Sulṭān-Ḥusayn's reign, see Subtelny (2007).

<sup>6</sup> On this problem, see Subtelny (2007, pp. 74–102) and eadem (1988).

## Physical Descriptions

The decree of 896/1491 (hereinafter Decree 1) was executed on 10 Rajab 896 (19 May 1491). The yellow parchment is 236 mm × 175 mm, and approximately 0.5 mm in thickness. The paper's thickness may account for its resilience over five centuries. It has ten horizontal folds, a chancery practice: twelve folds are in the second decree (see Figure 3); and in Shāh Rukh's decree of 8 Muḥarram 838/14 August 1434, eight folds are visible (Fekete 1977, Plates 11–12). The rationale behind the folding is for ease of transportation. Folding, however, contributed to fraying along the folds and at the edges.

The script is *ta'liq*, the “hanging style”, used primarily in chanceries (Schimmel 1990, pp. 29–31).<sup>7</sup> The text in both decrees is undotted. An exquisite example of *ta'liq* from late Timurid Iran is a 911/1505–1506 letter by Darwīsh ‘Abdāllah Munshī, one of Sulṭān-Ḥusayn's distinguished calligraphers. It is owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art.<sup>8</sup> The calligraphic style, as with other calligraphic styles in use at the period, was “sensuous” and appealing (Roxburgh 2008). The exclusion of dots, except in specific places, makes it difficult for the untrained reader to decipher. This possibly reflects concerted efforts by scribes to protect and to enhance their roles by making chancery work product inaccessible to the uninitiated.

Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bayqarā's seal is visible on the front (Figure 1), above the Arabic numerals. This may be the most frequently affixed (“standard”) seal. A variant is seen on the reverse (Figures 2 and 7). There are six seals on the *verso* side; the sultan's is at the top right corner. The location of his seal is determined by protocol: none may place a seal higher than his or to his right. This is known from an anecdote related by Sheila Blair (1996, p. 555) about ‘Alī Shīr Nawā'ī who as an emir of high standing was entitled to affix his seal higher than any other emir, but not higher than the sultan's seal.

The decree of 901/1495 (hereinafter Decree 2) was executed in Ṣafar 901 (21 October 1495 to 18 November 1495) and is 275 mm × 180 mm. It has twelve folds and is worn, although its decrepit condition does not manifest in the image (Figure 3). The archivists in Kabul glued a sheet of white paper to the *verso* side to support the parchment (Figure 4), and cut a rectangular flap so the two seals can be examined (Figures 4 and 8).

<sup>7</sup> On *ta'liq* use in Timurid chanceries and the master calligraphers of *ta'liq*, see Qāḍī Aḥmad (1959, pp. 84–99).

<sup>8</sup> Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York: Accession Number 2015.139. On Darwīsh ‘Abdāllah, see Qāḍī Aḥmad (1959, pp. 85–86).

*The Decrees*

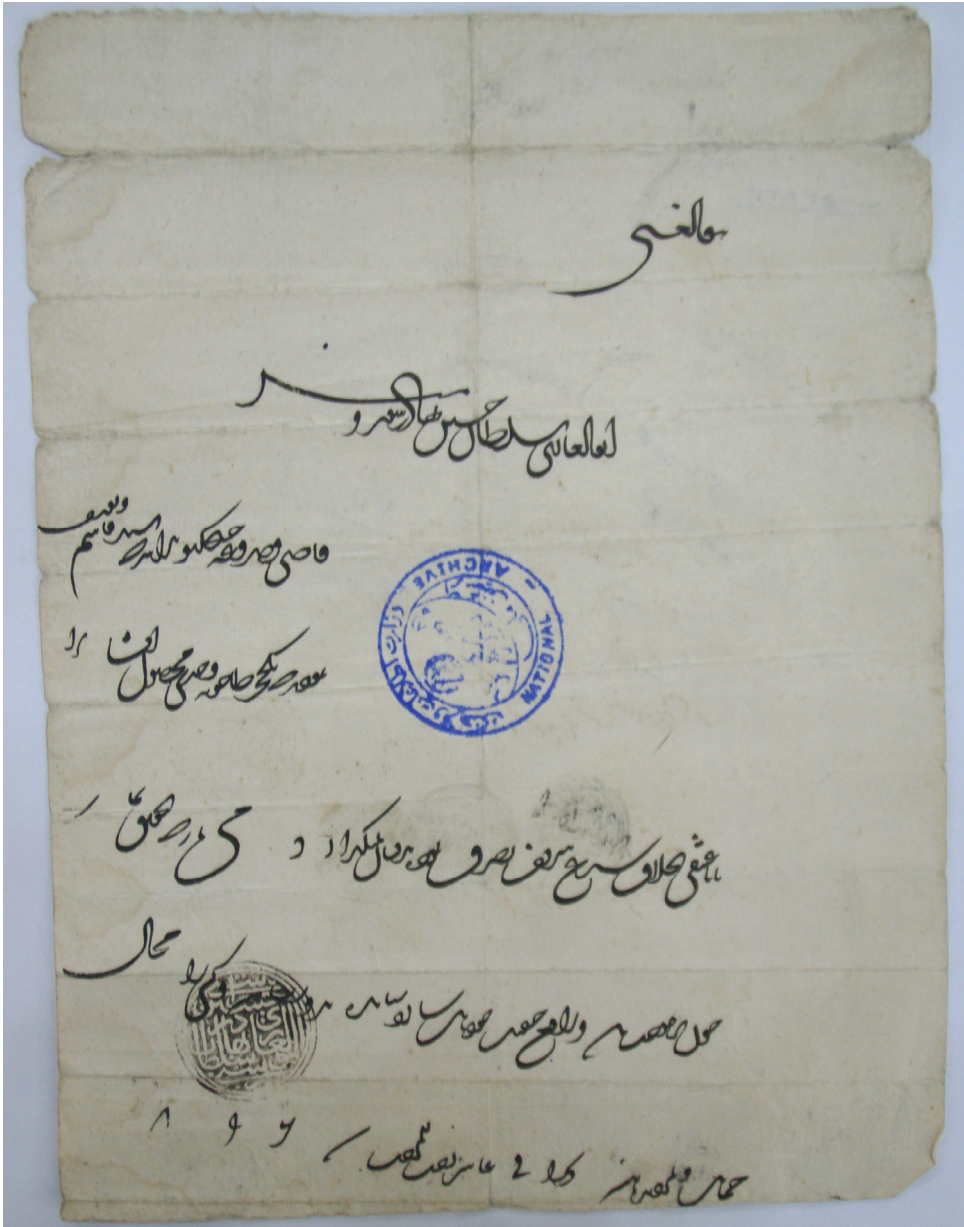


Figure 1. Front of the 896/1491 Decree



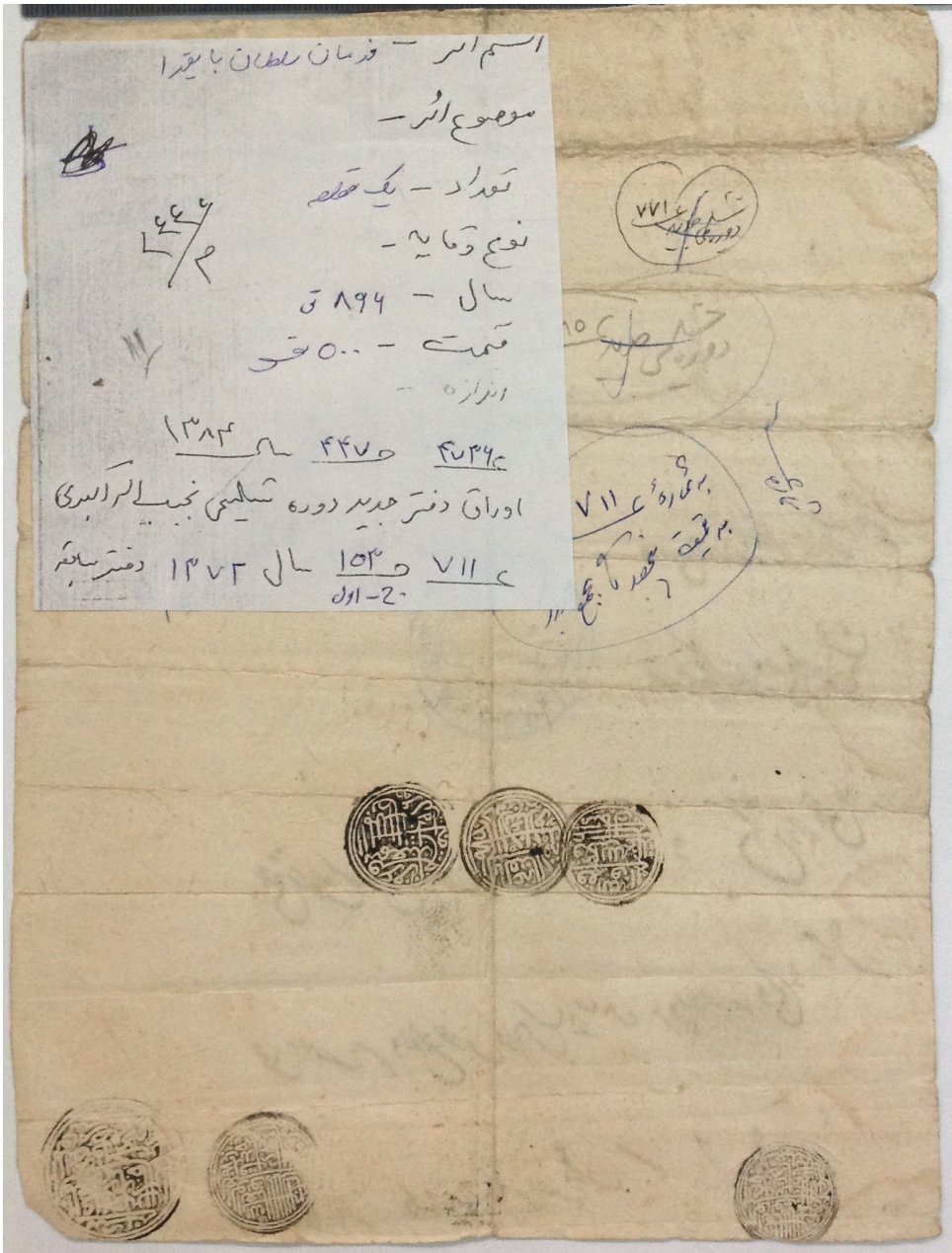


Figure 2. Back of the 896/1491 Decree

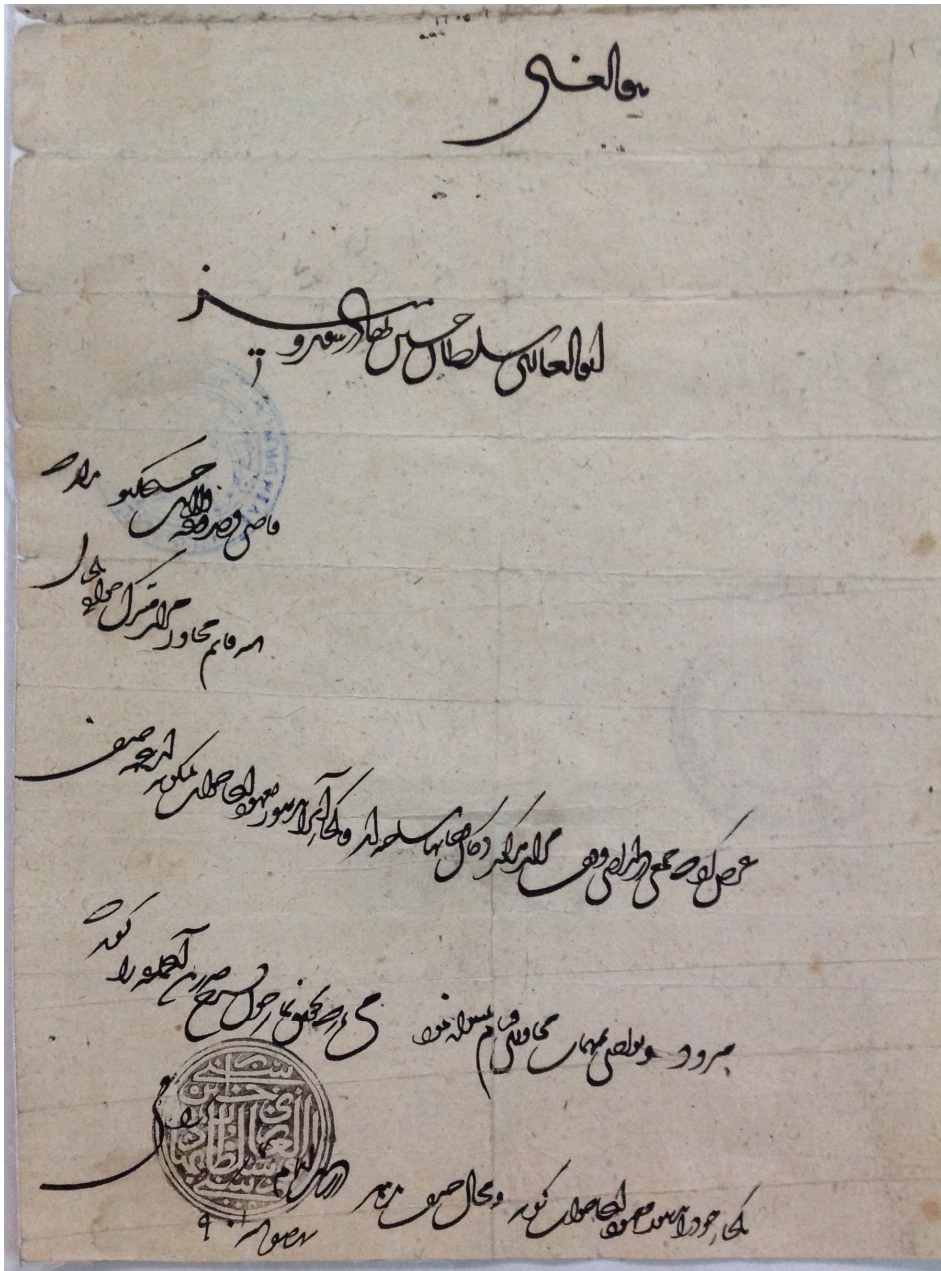


Figure 3. Front of the 901/1495 Decree



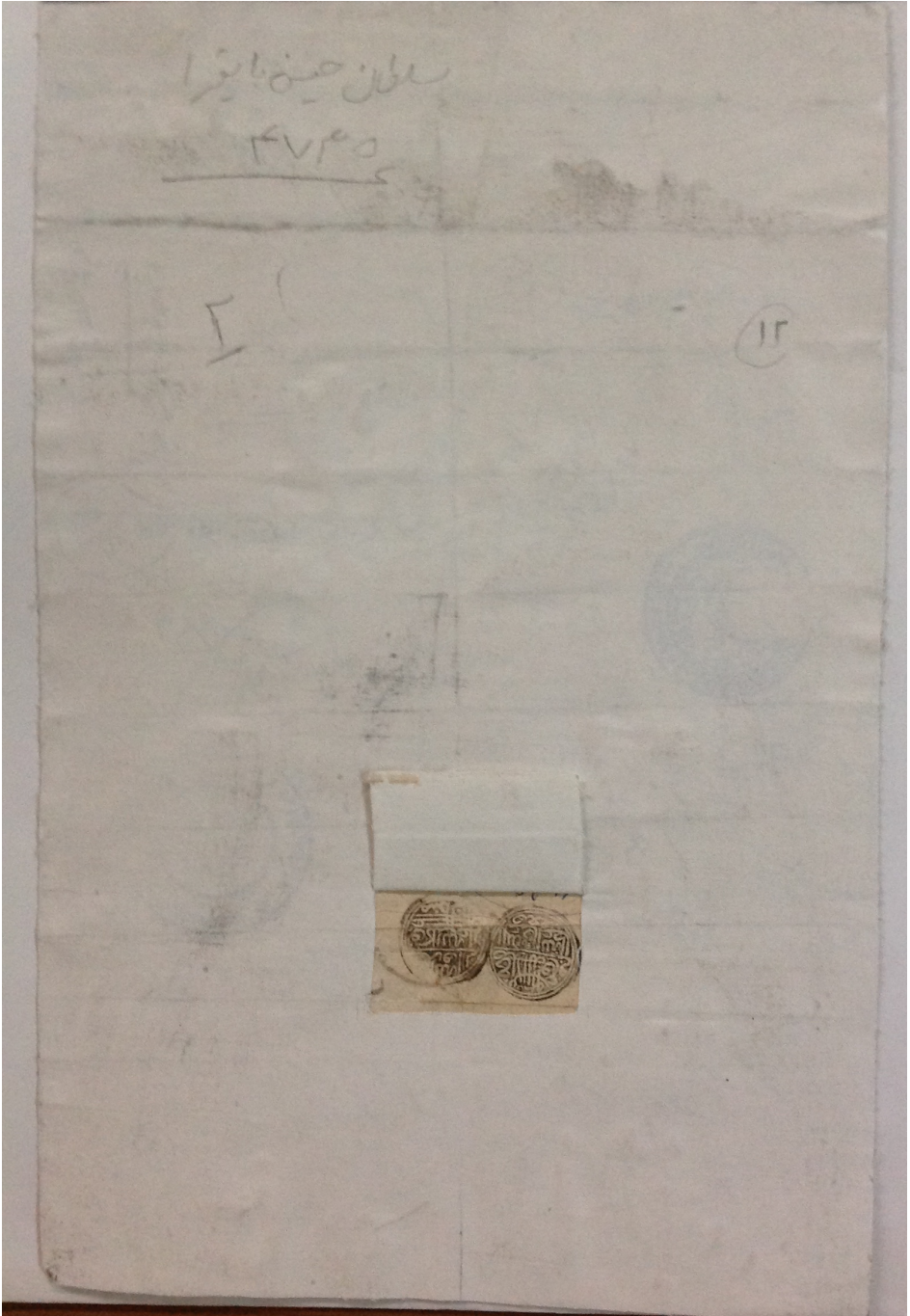


Figure 4. Back of the 901/1495 Decree



*Transcription of Decree 1*

- {1} هو الغنی  
 {2} ابو الغازی سلطان حسین بهادر سوزومیز  
 {3} قاضی و داروغه چیچکتو بدانند که سید قاسم و یوسف  
 {4} نمودند که یک حجر طاحونه و چندی محصول ایشان را  
 {5} بابا عشقی به خلاف شرع شریف تصرف نموده بدیشان نمی گذارد[.] و می باید که تحقیق نمایند[.]  
 {6} چون برین موجب باشد و رافع حقیت خود ثابت سازد ستانده بدو رسانند و کسی را مجال  
 {7} حمایت و تمرد ندهند[.] تحریراً فی عاشر رجب المرجب سنه ۸۹۶

*Transcription of Decree 2*

- {1} هو الغنی  
 {2} ابو الغازی سلطان حسین بهادر سوزومیز  
 {3} قاضی و داروغه ولایت چیچکتو بدانند که  
 {4} سید قاسم مجاور مزار متبرکه که خواجه بلجان  
 {5} عرض کرد که جمعی در اراضی وقف مزار مذکور دکان و خانه ها ساخته اند و یک چار آن را به  
 دستور معهود آنجا جواب نمی گویند از این جهت صرف  
 {6} می رود و به واجبی به مهمات مجاوری قیام نمی تواند نمود[.] می باید که تحقیق نمایند[.] چون به شرح  
 صدر باشد آن جماعه را گویند که  
 {7} یک چار خود را به دستور معهود آنجا جواب گویند و مجال صرف ندهند[.] در این باب  
 اهتمام نمایند[.] تحریراً فی شهر ۱۰ ۹۰۱

*Translations**Decree 1*

- {1} He [God], the Independent One,  
 {2} The Holy Warrior (Abū al-Ghāzī), Sulṭān-Ḥusayn the Valiant (*bahādur*): “Our word” (*sözümüz*)  
 {3} To the judge and prefect of Chīchaktū [province], be it known that Sayyid Qāsim and Yūsuf {4} have claimed that a stone grinding mill [gristmill] and some of their revenue {5} have been acquired by Bābā ‘Isqhī in contravention of the noble law, preventing them from using it [the property and its revenue]. You must investigate this [complaint] {6–7} Since this is necessary, and should it prove to refute their own [Qāsim’s and Yūsuf’s] claim, then it [property and revenues] should be taken and delivered to him [Bābā ‘Isqhī]. {7} Issued on the 10th [day] of the revered [month of] Rajab of [AH] 896 [19 May 1491]

*Decree 2*

- {1} He [God], the Independent One  
 {2} The Holy Warrior (Abū al-Ghāzī), Sulṭān-Ḥusayn the Valiant (*bahādur*): “Our word” (*sözümüz*)

{3} To the judge and prefect of Chīchaktū province, be it known that {4} Sayyid Qāsim, an employee of the blessed shrine of Khwāja Baljān {5} has complained that many [individuals] have erected shops and houses on the endowed lands of the aforementioned shrine and are not paying the one-quarter [rental and/or tax rate] as they are obligated to do under the prevailing agreement; {6} and [therefore] he [the complainant] cannot fulfill his duties. This [complaint] must be investigated. Per the explanation [given] above, they [judge and prefect] should tell those people that they are responsible for the {7} one-quarter [rent and/or tax] in accordance with the prevailing agreement; and they should not have the opportunity to retain [the one-quarter]. They [judge and prefect] should attend to this matter. Issued in the month of Šafar 901 [21 October to 18 November 1495].

### *The Seals*

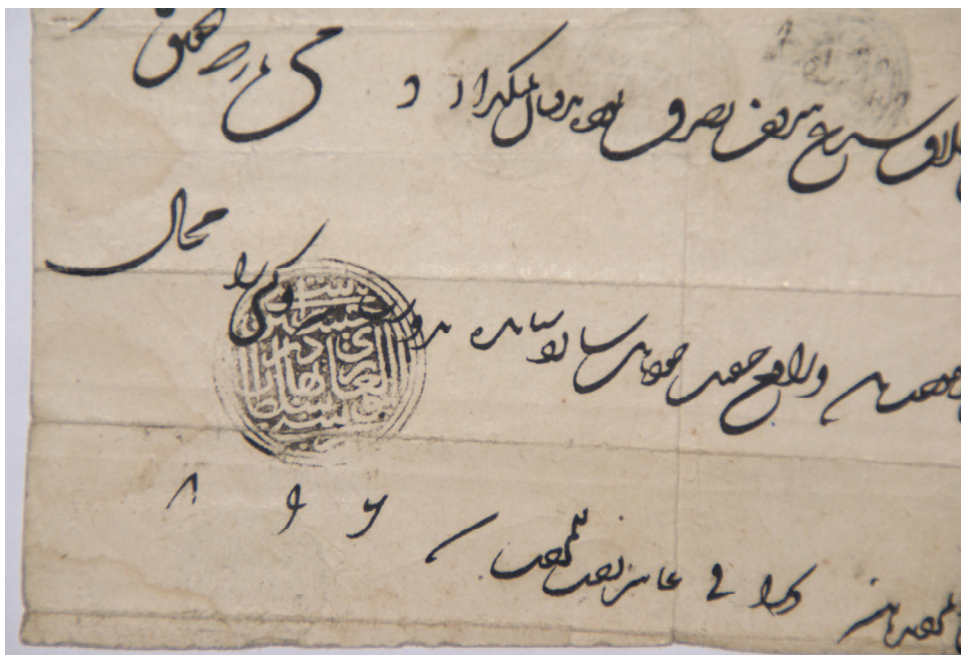


Figure 5. Sultan's seal in the 896/1491 Decree

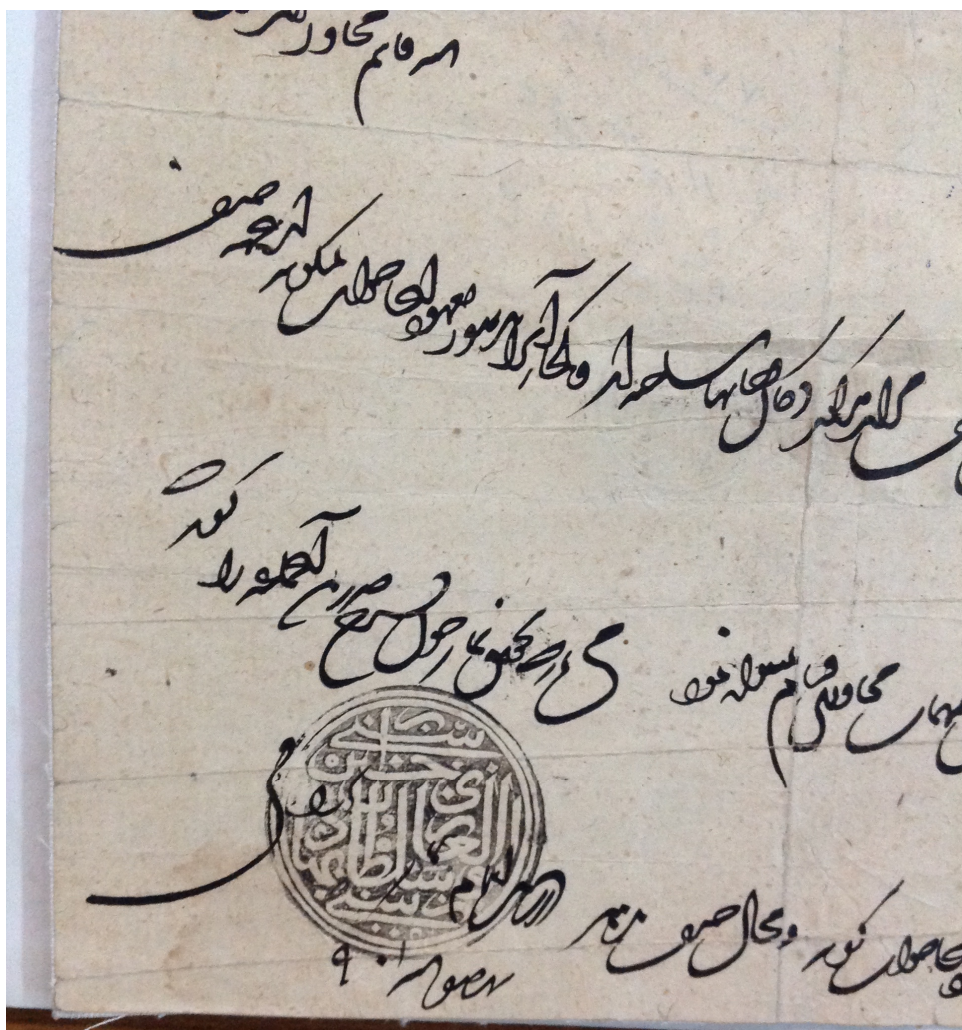


Figure 6. Sultan's seal in the 901/1495 Decree



Figure 7. Six seals on the back of the 896/1491 Decree



Figure 8. Two seals on the back of the 901/1495 Decree

### ***The Sultan's Seals***

#### *The seal on the front (Decrees 1 and 2)*

راستی  
ابو الغازی سلطان حسین بہادر  
راستی

In rectitude lies salvation (*rāstī rastī*)  
Abū al-Ghāzī, Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bahādur



*The seal on the back (Decree 1)*

راستی  
 ابو الغازی  
 سلطان حسین بهادر خان  
 مظفر المنصور حسین بهادر  
 رستی

In rectitude lies salvation (*rāstī rastī*)

The Holy Warrior (Abū al-Ghāzī), Sultān-Ḥusayn, the Valiant King (*bahādur khān*)

The Victorious (*muẓaffar al-manṣūr*), Ḥusayn the Valiant

**Commentary**

Khurasan is generally viewed as a long and narrow tract that stretches from the south-eastern littoral of the Caspian Sea to the Hindu Kush and Pamir ranges. It is bounded in the north by the River Oxus and Murghāb River, and in the south and southeast by Quhistan, Sistan, and Bamiyan. Khurasan's four administrative quarters (*rub*) and their eponymous capitals were Balkh, Herat, Marv, and Nishapur. Chīchaktū (or Chachaktū, Chaychaktū, Jījaktū), lies north to the Murghāb, and straddles the Herat and Balkh quarters.<sup>9</sup> Chīchaktū is a subdivision of Fāryāb province of (modern) Afghanistan; the provincial capital is Maymana.<sup>10</sup> A ruined village, Chīchaktū, lies between the towns of Qaysār and Chahārshamba (Adamec 1972–1985, Vol. 4, pp. 163, 286–292, 390). Major C. E. Yate, a British officer with the *Afghan Boundary Commission*, describes Chīchaktū of 1886: “Now there is nothing to strike the eye but the ruins of an old mud-fort on a mound” (Yate 1888, p. 157; see pp. 130–131 for a description of the fort).

The Khwāja Baljān (or Khwāja Balkhān) shrine is not known today. A toponym, Ziyārat-i Khwāja Barāt, is in the vicinity, but this is likely a recent addition to the shifting catalogue of Afghan shrines honouring local notables. The “khwāja” honourific is affixed to numerous Afghan toponyms, not all of which indicate a *locus sanctus*. Joseph Ferrier (1856, pp. 195–199), who traversed the Murghāb and Maymana regions in 1845, does not mention a shrine. The Khwāja Baljān/Balkhān shrine was minor or not extant when Yate visited. It is not noted by William Peacocke of the *Afghan Boundary Commission*.<sup>11</sup>

Decree 2 proves the shrine thrived in the 9th/15th century, but biographical dictionaries, chronographies, and histories by Timurid and Safavid era writers – Ḥāfiz-i Abrū, ‘Alī Yazdī, Faṣṣḥ Khwāfī, Khwāndamīr, ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Samarqandī, Dawlatshāh al-Samarqandī, and Zamchī Izfīzārī – provide no information about Khwāja

<sup>9</sup> On Chīchaktū, see Krawulsky (1982–1984, Vol. 1, pp. 32, 64–65); Le Strange (1966, pp. 423–424); Anonymous/Cambridge (1937, p. 335).

<sup>10</sup> On Maymana, see Lee (1987).

<sup>11</sup> The Commission's observations are included in Yate and Adamec.

Baljān/Balkhān. Khwāndamīr (1333/1954, Vol. 4, p. 532) mentions a Bābā ‘Isqih Tabarrā’i who died in 918/1513 battling Uzbeks, but there is no way of knowing if he is the individual named in Decree 1. Qāsim and Yūsuf are of course generic names.

The Khwāja Baljān/Balkhān shrine is known only from Decree 2. Donald Wilber and Bernard O’Kane do not mention it in their publications on Ilkhanid and Timurid architecture in Khurasan. “Baljān” offers the best lead in identifying the person honoured by the shrine.

The letters b-l-h-ā-n could be read as Baljān or Balkhān by adding a dot below or above the “h”: hence “j” or “kh”. Both variants refer to toponyms close to Chī-chaktū.

Balkhān was a town near Abīward according to Yāqūt (1397/1977, Vol. 1, p. 479)<sup>12</sup> who lived in Marv before the Mongol invasions. Abīward was destroyed in 618/1221, but would become a revitalised town and administrative subdivision of Timurid Khurasan.<sup>13</sup> Ḥāfīz-i Abrū does not mention Balkhān in his descriptions of Abīward’s dependencies, which suggests the town had joined the myriads of abandoned settlements across mediaeval Khurasan.

Baljān – vowelless thusly by Yāqūt – was situated near Marv (Yāqūt 1397/1977, Vol. 1, pp. 479–480). Ḥāfīz-i Abrū does not identify Baljān, but in his descriptions of Murghāb, Fāryāb, and Shibūrghān – districts encompassing or neighbouring Chī-chaktū – he writes that farms, orchards, and villages in the districts are too plentiful to be itemised. These were indeed well-irrigated and fertile agricultural districts, with many thriving villages and hamlets.

Baljān was the birthplace (c. 456/1064) of Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf b. Abī Sahl b. Abī Sa‘īd b. Maḥmūd b. Abī Sa‘īd al-Baljāni, preacher, scholar, and Sufi, a man of excellent humor and demeanor. He died in Jumādā I 536/2-31 December 1141, in Kumsān, a village close to Baljān. He was the companion of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Bustī. He studied (the Islamic Sciences) by the auditory method (*sama’*) with the biographer’s grandfather, Abū al-Muẓaffar [Maṣṣūr b. Muḥammad] al-Sam‘ānī (fl. 426–489/1035–1096); Abū al-Faẓl Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-‘Arif; and Abū [...] (text dropped) Muḥammad b. al-Faẓl al-Ḥuraqī, among other scholars. In addition to Abū Ya‘qūb al-Baljāni, the biographer (al-Sam‘ānī) identifies Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Baljāni (d. 276/889–890) as another person originating in Baljān (al-Sam‘ānī 1962–1982, Vol. 2, pp. 281–282).<sup>14</sup>

A definitive connection cannot be made to the Khwāja Baljān named in Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bayqarā’s decree. The ephemeral nature of most shrines is illustrated by the circumstances that have overtaken the Khwāja Baljān shrine: it was significant as to attract the attention of a sultan, but is today covered by weeds, metaphorically, probably literally, too. We do not know if the shrine included sepulchral or spiritual

<sup>12</sup> Le Strange (1966, p. 455) places Balkhān closer to Nisā.

<sup>13</sup> On Abīward, see Krawulsky (1982–1984, Vol. 1, pp. 100–103).

<sup>14</sup> On the toponyms: for al-Bustī (see *ibid.*, Vol. 2, pp. 208–210); al-Ḥuraqī (see *ibid.*, Vol. 4, pp. 113–115); al-Kumsānī (see *ibid.*, Vol. 10, pp. 470–471). Kumsān is not mentioned by Ḥāfīz-i Abrū.

edifices; this appears to have been a minor shrine. It did not have a trustee (*mutawallī*) overseeing its *waqf* (charitable endowment), but instead had a *mujāwir*, an “employee”, an ambiguous term that covers duties ranging from administration to menial labour.

The formulary style is direct. The selection of *al-Ghanī*, one of the ninety-nine “beautiful names of God”, is an unobtrusive reminder that, he, Sultān-Ḥusayn, is “the independent one”, not subject to any bonds of vassalage. The inclusion of his sobriquet (*laqab*), Abū al-Ghāzī (holy warrior), and Muẓaffar (victorious), Maṣṣūr (triumphant, aided by God), and Bahādur (valiant), invoke images of Sultān-Ḥusayn’s faded military glories and self-image as the conquering hero, steppe warrior, and defender of Islam.

The decree by Shāh-Rukh, in contradistinction to Sultān-Ḥusayn’s, is unadorned: Shāh-Rukh abjures honourifics and invocations; he is identified by name only (Fekete 1977, pp. 87–88; Plates 11–12). Temūr uses the invocation *huwa*, He (Fekete 1977, pp. 71–75; Plates 3–5), a reference to God with Sufi overtones. Temūr’s decree, due to the fiction he perpetrated of governing as the humble emir of a Chingissid lord, has a complex subtext as John Woods (1984, pp. 332–335) has explained.

*Sözümüz* or *sözümüz*, “Our word”, was used by other Turkmen polities; for example, the Aq-Qūyūnlū and Qarā-Qūyūnlū. Its usage was continued by diverse polities into the early modern period. The Timurid motto, *rāsī rastī* (“In rectitude lies salvation”), had been in use since Temūr’s time (Subtelny 2007, p. 260 and note 12).

The self-image of the sultan was richly-earned according to his critical but mostly impartial cousin, Ẓahīr al-Dīn Bābur (fl. 886–937/1483–1530), the inveterate diarist and founder of the Mughal Empire. Sultān-Ḥusayn had an arduous path to the Timurid throne at Herat (Subtelny 2007). Bābur praises Sultān-Ḥusayn’s bravery and successes, acknowledging the fortitude and skill of his relative, who like himself, had acquired and lost power, but had then battled his way back to the throne. Bābur recognises, however, that since Sultān-Ḥusayn’s distant successes, the alcoholic and religiously lax sultan was presiding over an enervated sultanate (Babur 2002, pp. 192–197; fols 163b–166a). Timurid Herat was then experiencing a florescence in literature, art, music, and Sufism, but it was to be Herat’s last grand epoch – and it was hurriedly drawing to close.

The sultan’s self-image and his symbols of sovereignty were a hybrid; he adopted symbols and topoi from Islam (*ghāzī*, *muẓaffar*, *maṣṣūr*) and from the ethos of the valiant steppe warrior (*bahādur*) – but the symbols and topoi represented a faded past.

## References

- Adamec, L. (1972–1985): *Historical and Political Gazetteer of Afghanistan*. 6 Vols. Graz.  
 Amīrkhānī, G. R. (1391 sh/2012): Pizhūhishī dar naqsh-i asnād-i dīrwānī dar tabyīn sākhtār-i qudrat-i dawlat-i Tīmūrīyān. *Ganjīna-i asnād* Vol. 85, pp. 46–60. <<http://www.noormags.ir/view/fa/articlepage/871703>> (Accessed 7 May 2018).

- Anonymous (1937): *Hudūd al-Ālam*. Ed. and tr. V. Minorsky. Cambridge.
- Anonymous: *Recueil de documents diplomatiques, de lettres et de pièces littéraires*. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Supplément persan 1815. Paris.
- Babur, Zahir al-Din (2002): *The Baburnama*. Tr. W. M. Thackston. New York.
- Blair, S. (1996): Timurid Signs of Sovereignty. *Oriente Moderno* Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 551–576.
- Bloch, E. (1905–1934): *Catalogue des manuscrits persans de la Bibliothèque Nationale*. 4 Vols. Paris.
- Busse, H. (1959): *Untersuchungen zum islamischen Kanzleiwesen: an Hand turkmenischer und safawidischer Urkunden*. Cairo.
- Daniel, E. (1979): *The Political and Social History of Khurasan under Abbasid Rule 747–820*. Minneapolis–Chicago.
- Dupree, L. (1976): Saint Cults in Afghanistan. *South Asia Series* Vol. 20, No. 1, pp. 1–21.
- Fekete, L. (1977): *Einführung in die persische Paläographie: 101 persische Dokumente*. Ed. G. Hazai. Budapest.
- Ferrier, J. P. (1856): *Caravan Journeys and Wanderings in Persia, Afghanistan, Turkistan and Beloochistan*. Tr. W. Jesse. Ed. H. D. Seymour. London.
- Fragner, B. (1980): *Repertorium persischer Herrscherurkunden: Publierte Originalurkunden (bis 1848)*. Freiburg im Breisgau.
- Fragner, Bert G. (1999): FARMĀN. In: *EnlR*. = <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/farman> (Accessed 7 May 2018).
- Gallop, A. T. (1999): The Genealogical Seal of the Mughal Emperors of India. *JRAS* Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 77–140.
- Ḥaṭīb-Rahbar, Ḥ. 1354 AHS [AD 1975]: Barḥī az mawārid-i kārburd-i laqaqab-i ḥwāga tā' qarn-i nuhum-i hiḡrī. *Našrīya-yi Dāniškada-yi Adabiyāt wa 'Ulūm-i Insānī-yi Dānišgāh-i Tīhrān* Vol. 89, pp. 20–42.
- Herrmann, G. (1972): Zur Intitulatio timuridischer Urkunden. *ZDMG*, Supplement II, Vol. XVIII, pp. 498–521.
- Jāmī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān (1378 sh/1999): *Nāmahā wa munsha'āt-i Jāmī*. Eds 'Aṣām al-Dīn Ūrunbāyif and Asrār Raḥmānūf. Tehran.
- Jāmī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān (1383 sh/2004f.): *Risālah-i munsha'āt-i Nūr al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥman Jāmī*. Ed. 'Abd al-'Alī Nūr Aḥrārī. Turbat-i Jām (Iran).
- Jāmī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān (1985): *Nāmahā-yi dastnīwīs-i Jāmī*. Eds 'Aṣām al-Dīn Ūrunbāyif and Māyil Harawī. Kabul.
- Jāmī, Jalāl al-Dīn Yūsuf-i Ahl (1356 sh/1977): *Farā'id-i Ghīyāthī*. Ed. Heshmat Moayyad. Tehran.
- Jāmī, Jalāl al-Dīn Yūsuf-i Ahl (1358 sh/1979): *Farā'id-i Ghīyāthī*. Ed. H. Moayyad. Tehran.
- Jāmī, Jalāl al-Dīn Yūsuf-i Ahl (Berlin MS): *Farā'id-i Ghīyāthī*. Ms. Orient. Fol. 110. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. Berlin.
- Jāmī, Jalāl al-Dīn Yūsuf-i Ahl (Istanbul MS): *Farā'id-i Ghīyāthī*. Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Fatih 4012. Istanbul.
- Jāmī, Jalāl al-Dīn Yūsuf-i Ahl (Tehran MS): *Farā'id-i Ghīyāthī*. University of Tehran, MS 4756. Tehran.
- Khwāndamīr, Ghīyāth al-Dīn (1333 sh/1954): *Ḥabīb al-siyar*. Ed. M. D. Siyāqī. 4 Vols. Tehran.
- Krawulsky, D. (1982–1984): *Ḥorāsān zur Timuridenzeit nach dem Tārīḡ-e Ḥāfez-e Abrū*. 2 Vols. Wiesbaden.
- Le Strange, G. (1966): *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*. New York.
- Lee, J. (1987): The History of Maimana in Northwestern Afghanistan 1731–1893. *Iran* Vol. 25, pp. 107–124.
- Manz, B. F. (2007): *Power, Politics and Religion in Timurid Iran*. Cambridge.



- al-Marwārīd, ‘Abdallāh (1952): *Staatsschreiben der Timuridenzeit: das Šarafnāma des ‘Abdallāh Marwārīd in kritischer Auswertung*. Tr. H. R. Roemer. Wiesbaden.
- al-Marwārīd, ‘Abdallāh (Istanbul MS): *Sharafnāma*. Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Esad Efendi 3309. Istanbul.
- al-Marwārīd, ‘Abdallāh (Istanbul MS): *Sharafnāma*. Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Nuruosmaniye 4298. Istanbul.
- Matsui, Dai – Watanabe, Ryoko – Ono, Hiroshi (2015): A Turkic–Persian Decree of Timurid Mīrān Šāh of 800 AH/1398 CE. *Orient* Vol. 50, pp. 53–75.
- McChesney, Robert D. (1991): *Waqf in Central Asia: Four Hundred Years in the History of a Muslim Shrine, 1480–1889*. Princeton.
- Mitchell, C. (1997): Safavid Imperial *tarassul* and the Persian *inshā’* Tradition. *Studia Iranica* Vol. 26, pp. 173–209.
- Mitchell, C. (2003): To Preserve and Protect: Husayn Va‘iz-i Kashifī and Perso-Islamic Chancellery Culture. *Iranian Studies* Vol. 36, No. 4, pp. 485–507.
- Mukrī, M. (1975): Un *farmān* de Sultān Ḥusain Bāyqarā recommandant la protection d’une ambassade ottomane en Khorāsān en 879/1474. *Turcica* Vol. 5, pp. 68–79.
- Nawā‘ī, ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn (1341 sh/1963): *Asnād wa mukātibāt-i tārikh-i Īrān: az Tīmūr tā Shāh Ismā‘īl*. Tehran.
- Nizāmī Bākhārī, Nizām al-Dīn (1357 sh/1978): *Manshā’ al-inshā’*. Ed. Rukn al-Dīn Humāyūn-Farrukh. Tehran.
- Papazian, A. D. (1956–1968): *Persidskie dokumenty Matenadarana*. Yerevan.
- Pertsch, W. (1888): *Verzeichniss der Persischen Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*. Berlin.
- Qāḍī Aḥmad (1959): *Calligraphers and Painters*. Tr. V. Minorsky. Washington.
- Qā‘im-Maqāmī, Ġahāngīr 1350 AHS [AD 1971]: *Muqaddima ‘ī bar shinākht-i asnād-i tārikhī*. Tehran.
- Roemer, Hans R. (1986): The Successors of Tīmūr. In: Jackson, Peter – Lockhart, Laurence (eds): *The Cambridge History of Iran*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, Vol. VI, pp. 98–146.
- Roemer, Hans R. (1986): The Türkmen Dynasties. In: Jackson, Peter – Lockhart, Laurence (eds): *The Cambridge History of Iran*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, Vol. VI, pp. 147–188.
- Roxburgh, D. J. (2008): ‘The Eye is Favored for Seeing the Writing’s Form’: On the Sensual and the Sensuous in Islamic Calligraphy. *Muqarnas* Vol. 25, pp. 275–298.
- al-Sam‘ānī, ‘Abd al-Karīm (1962–1982): *Kitāb al-ansāb*. Eds ‘Abd al-Raḥman al-Yamānī et al. 13 Vols. Hyderabad.
- Schimmel, A. (1990): *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*. London.
- Shayḥ al-Ḥukamā‘ī, ‘I. 1387 AHS [AD 2008]: *Fihrist-i asnād-i buq‘a-yi Shayḥ Šafī al-Dīn Arda-bīlī*. Tehran.
- Spooner, Brian – Hanaway, William L. (eds) (2012): *Literacy in the Persianate World: Writing and the Social Order*. University of Pennsylvania, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia, PA.
- Subtelny, Maria E. (1979): The Poetic Circle at the Court of the Timurid Sultan Ḥusain Baiqara. Ph.D. dissertation. Cambridge, Mass.
- Subtelny, M. E. (1988): Centralizing Reform and Its Opponents in the Late Timurid Period. *Iranian Studies* Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 123–151.
- Subtelny, M. E. (2007): *Timurids in Transition: Turko-Persian Politics and Acculturation in Medieval Iran*. Leiden.

- Ṭabāṭabā'ī, H. M. (1352 sh/1973): *Farmānhā-yi Turkamānān-i Qarā-Qūyūnlū wa Āq-Qūyūnlū*. Qum.
- Woods, J. E. (1984): Turco-Iranica II: Notes on a Timurid Decree of 1396/798. *JNES* Vol. 43, No. 4, pp. 331–337.
- Woods, J. E. (1999): *The Aqqyunlu. Clan, Confederation, Empire*. Revised and expanded. Salt Lake City.
- Yāqūt b. 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥamawī (1397/1977): *Mu'jam al-buldān*. 5 Vols. Beirut.
- Yate, C. E. (1888): *Northern Afghanistan*. Edinburgh.