

CONTENTS

<i>EDITORIAL BOARD</i>	3
<i>TEXTS AND MANUSCRIPTS: DESCRIPTION AND RESEARCH</i>	5
S. Grigoryev. Afghan Historical Sources on the <i>Khirqā</i> of the Prophet Muḥammad.	5
E. Rezvan. On the History of ‘Ishqiyya Brotherhood Sacred Relics. I: the <i>Khirqā</i> of the Prophet	10
Val. Polosin. ‘ <i>Unwān</i> Illuminations in Arabic Manuscripts (Part I)	12
M. Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya. A Sanskrit Manuscript on Birch-bark from Bairam-Ali. II. <i>Avadāna</i> and <i>Jātaka</i> (Part 7)	20
I. Zograph. Mongolian Borrowings in Documents of Yuan Chancellery	29
<i>TEXT AND ITS CULTURAL INTERPRETATION</i>	36
K. Kepping. “The Autumn Wind” by Han Wu-di in the Mi-nia (Tangut) Translation	36
<i>PRESENTING THE COLLECTIONS</i>	52
E. Rezvan. Oriental Manuscripts of Karl Fabergé. IV: Poetry and Miniatures (Part I)	52
<i>ORIENTAL MANUSCRIPTS AND NEW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES</i>	61
John Tait. Papyri, Digitisation, and the Web: Accessibility and Management of Collections	61
<i>OUR ARCHIVE</i>	68
A. Tsendina. A Work on the History of Buddhism in Mongolia	68
<i>BOOK REVIEWS</i>	71

Front cover:

“Khusraw watching Shīrīn combing her hair after bathing”, miniature from the manuscript *Farhād wa Shīrīn* by Kamāl al-Dīn Bāfiqī Waḥshī and Muḥammad Shafīʿ al-Shīrāzī Wiṣāl in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, call number A 910. Copied by Muḥammad Ismāʿīl al-Anjawī al-Shīrāzī in Rabīʿ I 1284 / July 1867, fol. 51b, 6.4×4.2 cm.

Back cover:

- Plate 1.** ‘*Unwān* and page decoration, a Qājār style, the same manuscript, fols. 1b – 2a, 14.3×8.8 cm.
Plate 2. “Farhād in the castle of Shīrīn”, miniature, the same manuscript, fol. 48b, 4.9×3.2 cm.
Plate 3. “Shīrīn sees Farhād while coming to see the works at Mount Bīsūtūn”, miniature, the same manuscript, fol. 65b, 4.8×5.1 cm.

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TEXTS AND MANUSCRIPTS: DESCRIPTION AND RESEARCH

S. E. Grigoryev

AFGHAN HISTORICAL SOURCES ON THE *KHIRQA* OF THE PROPHET MUḤAMMAD

The halting, gradual spread of Islam in Afghanistan, spaced over nearly a thousand years, led to an abundance of popular Islamic forms of worship there. Because of Afghanistan's distance from the Islamic centres of Arabia, Syria, Iraq and other regions of the Near East, it was not visited by any of the four so-called Rightly-guided caliphs or other great saints of Islam. Yet the country is bursting with graves, *mazārs*, the *ziyārats* of caliphs and Muslim saints who, however, never saw those places, local saints, *shahīds*, *hadrats*, *mūllās*, *hājīs*, etc. The population venerates various passes, mountain summits, valleys, rivers, cliffs and rocks, groups of trees and simply spots on the map. Today they are linked with the activities of local or pan-Islamic saints; in fact, they are usually throwbacks to past beliefs held by the inhabitants of this poly-confessional and poly-ethnic country.

Afghanistan contains an enormous number of sacred objects linked by the local population with one of the four Rightly-guided caliphs — 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, traditionally called there Shāh-i mardān (Lord of Mankind). Among the holy places considered by the Afghan population to have a sacred tie with the Prophet Muḥammad, two stand out. These are the Friday mosque in the southern Afghan city of Jalalabad, with its hair from the beard of Muḥammad, and the *mazār* of *khirqā-yi sharif* in the city of Qandahar (see fig. 1), which holds one of the greatest holy relics in Islam, the *khirqā* (cloak, hair-shirt) of the Prophet (see fig. 2). Aḥmad-shāh Durrānī — founder of the Durrānī empire and one of Afghanistan's most brilliant rulers — was buried in the *mazār* in 1773.

Here is how the well-known Afghan historian 'Azīz al-Dīn Wakīl Pupālza'y describes the *khirqā* of the Prophet: "The *khirqā* is of thick wool, with two short sleeves that are shorter than the flaps. It is made of fine, shining bluish camel's wool. It fits a short man. It has no lining. The two front panels are moth-eaten and hemmed" [1]. According to Afghan legend, the *khirqā* was made by the Prophet himself with the help of his family. The Prophet wore the *khirqā* during his fatal illness. Before his death Muḥammad bequeathed it to 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb al-Farūq, the future sec-

ond caliph, 'Alī b. 'Abī Ṭālib. After the latter's death in 661, the *khirqā* was given to *sayyid* 'Umar b. al-'Amr al-Quranī. The *khirqā* was later taken to Yemen, then to Baghdad, and then to Central Asia. Wherever it was taken, the *khirqā* was usually kept in a specially constructed house that almost immediately became a place of worship.

A number of motifs connected with the appearance of the *khirqā* of the Prophet Muḥammad in Afghanistan are, in my view, of special interest. Local Afghan historical sources contains a wealth of information about the complex fate of this relic, which the Afghans so revere. The most important among them is considered the *Sirāj al-Tawārīkh* ("Lantern of History"), which contains the main explanations for the appearance of the *khirqā* of the Prophet in Afghanistan. It is the official historical chronicle of Afghanistan, written by Fayḍ Muḥammad-Khān Kātib, court historiographer to the *amīr* Khabīballāh-khān, who reigned in the early twentieth century. This three-volume work describes the history of Afghanistan from 1747 to 1896; it was published in Kabul in 1913–1915. The second — most significant and valuable materials on the odyssey of the *khirqā* in Afghanistan — are found in the historical manuscript *Tārīkh-i Badakhshān* ("History of Badakhshān"), written by the Badakhshān authors Sang Muḥammad Badakhshī and Mīrzā Faḍl 'Alī-Bek Surkhafsar at the turn of the nineteenth — twentieth century. It is held at the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies (call number B 2311). A facsimile edition of the manuscript text, a work of regional Afghan history that narrates the history of Badakhshān, an inaccessible mountainous region in north-eastern Afghanistan, was published in 1959 by Professor A. N. Boldyrev (Leningrad State University). In 1997, a facsimile of this manuscript with a translation from the Persian, introduction, notes and appendices was published by Professor Boldyrev and by the author of the present article.

We read the following about the appearance of the *khirqā* in Afghanistan in the first volume of *Sirāj al-tawārīkh*:

"In 1172 (1758) Aḥmad-shāh sent the *wazīr* Shāh Walī-khān with a force of six thousand to Balkh and Badakhshān, where the local populace had revolted. Murād-Bek, the ruler of Bukhara, went to help the inhabitants of Balkh and Badakhshān. The Afghan forces moved from Herat to Bukhara through Meyman, Balkh, Andkhoy and Shibergan (cities in northern Afghanistan — S. G.).

Wazīr Shāh Walī-khān went on to Kunduz and Badakhshan. *Aḥmad-Shāh* himself went to Bukhara, and *Murād-Bek* reached Karshi. *Aḥmad-Shāh* decided not to fight, preferring to begin negotiations with the Bukharans on the question (origins — *S. G.*) of the border along the Jeykhun (Amu-Darya — *S. G.*). According to the author of the work *Tārīkh-i sulṭānī*, an accord was reached [between the Afghan and Bukharan rulers] that the blessed *khirqa* of the Prophet — peace be upon him and all his kin — which was held in Bukhara, should be with all necessary respect sent to His Majesty *Aḥmad-Shāh*. The border between Afghanistan and Bukhara would run along the river Jeyhun. *Aḥmad-Shāh* performed all [the necessary] religious actions [before the *khirqa*] and with complete respect brought it to the esteemed capital (of Afghanistan — *S. G.*), the city of Qandahar ...

The *khirqa* had been brought [earlier] from Mawerannahr to Samarqand, where they built for its storage a [special] building and chose several *ṣayyids* known for their [pious] ways from among the inhabitants of the village of Dakhbid (now a district of Samarqand — *S. G.*). They were given [land] as a *waqf* and *jāgīr* [to house the *khirqa* and themselves]. [To preserve the *khirqa*] they build a structure with a dome that exists to this day. It is called *Hwāja ḥaḍrat*. They then brought the sacred *khirqa* to Bukhara, and from there to Juzgun (in Afghan Badakhshan — *S. G.*) ... At the behest of *Shāh-Walī*, who ruled beyond the borders of Juzgun, they built [to house the *khirqa*] a structure with a dome and renamed the city to Fayzabad because of the goodness and grace (Fayzabad literally means “city of grace” — *S. G.*) that the *khirqa* brought from there.

The *khirqa* remained there until His Majesty *Aḥmad-Shāh* brought it to Qandahar. It was conveyed [there] with such honour and nobility that at each stop where the *khirqa* was unloaded they wrote special notes and hung them on the necks of the camels [that had earlier carried the *khirqa*] that they then released. The camels stayed with whomever they chose to stop with. When they came to Kuhistan (a mountainous region to the north-east of Kabul — *S. G.*), the number of pilgrims compelled them to leave the *khirqa* in each stop for two—three days before moving on to the next *manzil* (stop — *S. G.*).

They thus reached Kabul and stopped at a distance of two *kurūh* (a *kurūh* equals 2 km) to the north-west of the city and to the south of Aliabad (now a part of Kabul — *S. G.*) on the slope of a hill. They kept the *khirqa* there for eight—nine months. A great number of pilgrims gathered there and the *khirqa* was at times taken out of the chest and spread on a rock that later came to be called *Qadamgāh-i Shāh-i Mardān* (Footprint of the Lord of Men — *S. G.*). They later erected a domed *mazār* there (on that spot — *S. G.*).

Then, at the behest of His Majesty *Aḥmad-Shāh*, the *khirqa* was taken to Qandahar, where they began the construction of a large *mazār* [to house the *khirqa*]. *Aḥmad-Shāh Durrānī* himself was buried there...” [2].

The *khirqa* of the Prophet *Muḥammad* is to this day held in the city of Qandahar. It is perhaps the most venerated religious relic in this southern Afghani city.

The authors of the “History of Badakhshān” describe the *khirqa*’s stay in the city of Badakhshan (see also *fig. 3*):

“...several respected people from among the Samarqand *hwājas* took with them the blessed, noble, esteemed *khirqa* of the Prophet [Muḥammad] and set off for India through Chitral and Badakhshan. After they had [already] left Badakhshan and drawn near the Du Rah pass (the highest pass in the Hindukush; it connects Badakhshan and Chitral — *S. G.*), news of this event reached the cars of the *amīr* [of Badakhshan, Yari-Bek] (the *khān* who ruled Badakhshan in the second half of the seventeenth century — very beginning of the eighteenth century — *S. G.*).

Without delay the *amīr* sent people in pursuit. After bringing the *hwājas* back from the peak of the Du Rah pass, they brought [them] to the *amīr*. After that, they were not permitted to bring the blessed *khirqa* to India and it was de-

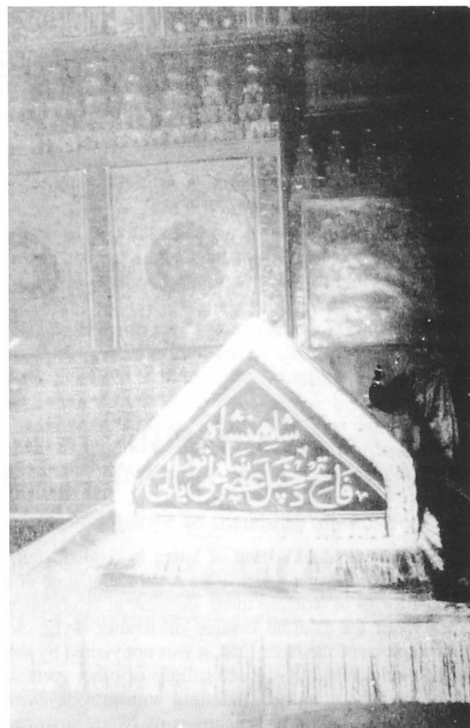


Fig. 1

cided that the blessed *khirqa* should remain in Badakhshan in a place of worship and a sacred *mazār*.

The *hwājas* who had carried the *khirqa* to Badakhshan were given a place to live, land, and gardens. They settled [there]. A fine, high building was constructed in the city to house the sacred *khirqa*; it became a place of worship for the faithful. The Samarqand *hwājas* who had brought the *khirqa* were raised at this sacred threshold to the level of *shaykhs*, guardians and preachers. To this day they pass on from father to son [the title of] *shaykh* and guardian at the high threshold. Since the sacred *khirqa* was held in the city of [Juzgan], by that kindness they called the capital of Badakhshan Fayzabad” [3].

As presented in the two Afghan historical works, the descriptions how the *khirqa* of the Prophet *Muḥammad* arrived in Afghanistan are by and large the same, but differ noticeably in the details. This seems quite natural, as the history of the numerous sacred Islamic objects and relics that have appeared in Afghanistan is shrouded in legend, discrepancy, and contradiction.

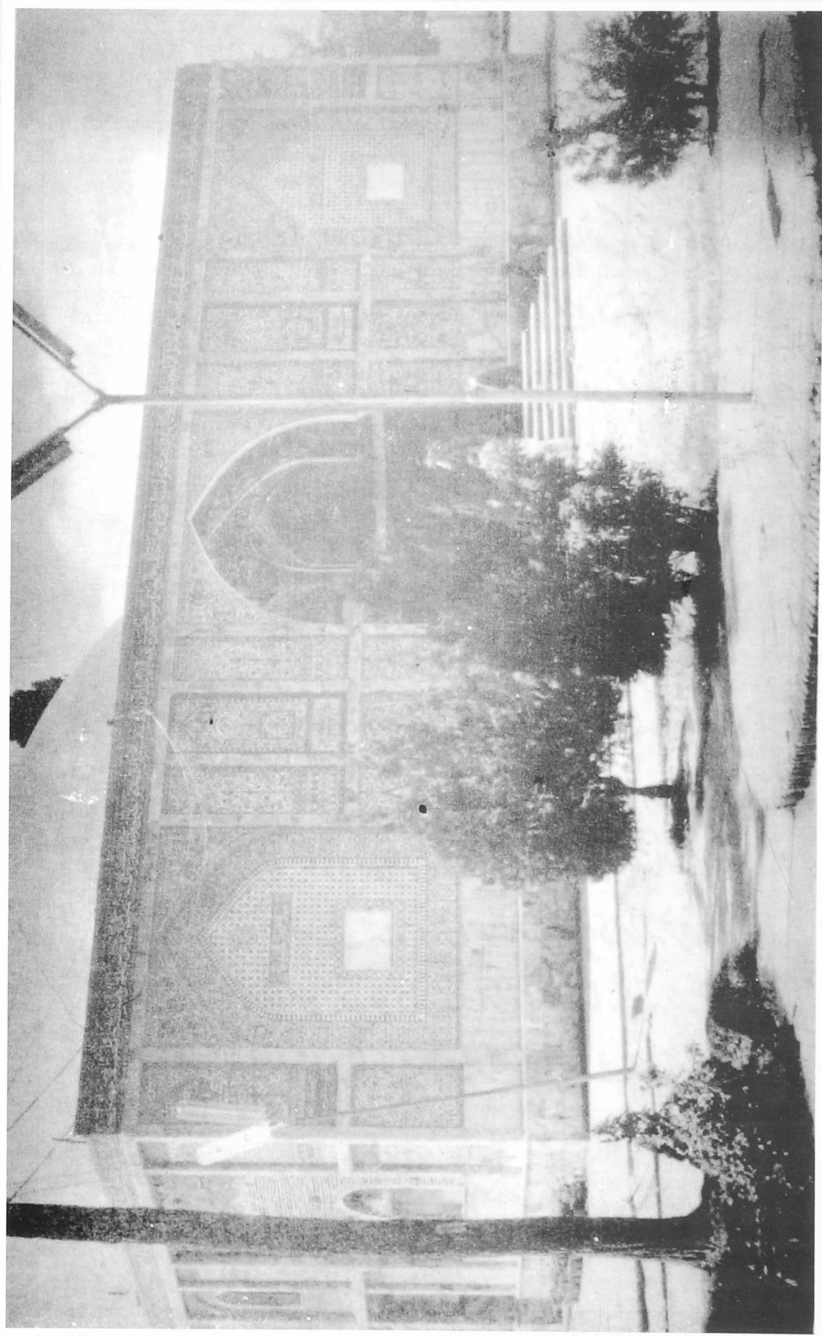


Fig. 2

به کوش دوراه فریب میسند که خبر واقعه بکوش میریزند
 و امیر را توقف آردمان متعقب فرموده خواجگان را
 از سر کوش دوراه گردانیده وارد حضور نمودند و بعد از
 خرقه مبارکه را بطرف پهنه بردن نگذاشتند مصالحت
 بران قرار دادند که خرقه مبارکه در خط بخشا عمل
 زیارت و مزار متبرک باشد گندم خواجگان خرقه
 برکنده را در بخشان جای سکونت زمین و خانه
 و باغ مهربان کرده متمکن ساخته و اندر شهر کجیل خج
 را محض نهادن و ماندن خرقه مبارکه عمارت عالیست
 در زیارتگاه بنمایان گردانیده و خرقه را در انعمات
 گذاشتند و خواجگان قسمی را که خرقه را
 آنها آورده بودند در آن آستانه مقدسه
 شیخی متولی کری و صاحب الدعوتی بخشید تا بهانه آن
 در آن

Fig. 3

Notes

1. 'Azīz al-Dīn Wakīl Pupālzayī, *Tārīkh-i khirqa-yi sharīfa-yi qandahār* (Kabul, 1367/1988), p. 12.
2. *Sirāj al-tawārīkh* (Kabul, 1913—1915), i, p. 27.
3. *Tārīkh-i Badakhshān*, manuscript B 2311 in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, 1325/1907, Qandahār, fol. 6b. Cf. also *Tārīkh-i Badakhshān*, manuscript facsimile. Text, translation from the Persian by A. N. Boldyrev with the assistance of S. E. Grigoryev, introduction by A. N. Boldyrev and S. E. Grigoryev. Notes and appendices by S. E. Grigoryev (Moscow, 1997), p. 29.

Illustrations

- Fig. 1.** The building of a *mazār* in Qandahār where the *khirqa* of the Prophet Muḥammad is preserved. Reproduced from 'Azīz al-Dīn Wakīl Pupālzayī, *Tārīkh-i khirqa-yi sharīfa-yi qandahār* (Kabul, 1367/1988), p. 56.
- Fig. 2.** Interior of the *mazār*, with the chest containing the *khirqa* of the Prophet (as represented *ibid.*, p. 149).
- Fig. 3.** *Tārīkh-i Badakhshān*, manuscript B 2311 in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, fol. 6b, 20.5 × 12.5 cm.
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