

CHAPTER I

NĀDIR SHĀH AND THE AFSHARID LEGACY

ORIGINS AND FRONTIER EXPERIENCES

The year 1688 has recently found acceptance as that of Nādir's birth,¹ but one of the best Iranian authorities for his time, the *Jabān-gushā-yi Nādirī* of Mīrzā Mahdī Khān Astarābādī, spells out A.H. 1110 as the year, and 28 Muḥarram as the day, which gives us 6 August A.D. 1698.² A Bombay lithographed edition³ of Mīrzā Mahdī Khān's *Jabān-gushā* has A.H. 1100, but this date is not supported by manuscripts and the Tehran edition of the early nineteen sixties prefers the 1110 A.H. date. Other dates are given in other sources and are discussed by Dr Lockhart in his *Nadir Shah*, but it so happens that another contemporary source, the *Ālam-ārā-yi Nādirī* of Muḥammad Kāzīm, the "Vazīr of Marv", gives A.H. 1109 as the year of conception and, although he does not give the precise date of birth, this date corroborates 1110 as the year of delivery.⁴ It took place in the Darra Gaz, where a first-born and for some time only son was brought into the world for Imām Qulī, Nādir's father, in the fortress at Dastgird, a refuge for Nādir's people against the border raids from which the northern Khurāsān uplands frequently suffered.

Dastgird was in the winter quarters, where Nādir's father might have lingered on account of the expected birth. The summer-grazing was near Kupkān or Kubkān, thirty-eight kilometres southwest of the Dastgird-Chāpshalū winter-grounds in the low-lying, milder Darra Gaz, "Valley of Manna". Further to the east, on the margin of the Marv desert, lay Abīvard, the metropolis of this region and in Nādir's youth the seat of the Safavid agent or district governor. In those days this dignity was an Afshār named Bābā 'Alī Kūsa Aḥmadlū. The whole neighbourhood was predominantly Afshār, and Nādir's kin formed the Qiriqlū clan or sept of the Afshārs.⁵

The Afshārs had originally been a well-established tribal group of long standing in Turkistan,⁶ whence they moved when the Mongols entered that

¹ Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, pp. 18, 20; but it is conceded that this date "may not be absolutely accurate".

² Mīrzā Mahdī Khān, p. 27; also a ms. in the author's possession, dated 1264/1848, fol. 18.

³ Bombay, 1849 (cf. Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, p. 292ff. and 323).

⁴ Muḥammad Kāzīm, vol. 1, fol. 6.

⁵ Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, p. 17. ⁶ *ibid.*

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region in the 13th century. They migrated westwards and settled in Āzarbāijān. During the early part of the Safavid era Khurāsān was subject to large-scale Uzbek raids, particularly serious when the Uzbeks were under the sway of the Shaibanid ʿAbd-Allāh ibn Iskandar, who died in 1598. He had made Bukhārā his capital and his power extended as far as Khwārazm, while his son, ʿAbd al-Muʾmin, was his Viceroy at Balkh. Although ʿAbd al-Muʾmin only survived his father by six months, during their lives the two men were the terror of Khurāsān, which was threatened from both Khwārazm and Balkh. It was not until Shāh ʿAbbās I (1588–1629) succeeded in ridding Khurāsān of this menace that he could turn his attention to his north-western frontier province of Āzarbāijān.

There he had the Ottoman Turks to contend with and control of the area was not gained until 1606. He then followed a practice also used by his predecessors, Shāh Ismāʿīl (1501–24) and Ṭahmāsp I (1524–76), a combination of stiffening one frontier while carrying out a scorched-earth policy on another. The Āzarbāijān borders were deprived of cultivators to make the advance of hostile armies more difficult, and the Khurāsān borders strengthened with people removed from Āzarbāijān. Another factor which influenced the Safavids (1501–1732) may have been fear that such tribes as the Afshārs, whose language was Turkish, would be tempted to collude with the Ottomans; but such affiliations do not always, in the tribal context, justify such an expectation; Nādir was later to be disappointed by his reception from those of his Afshār kin who had remained in Āzarbāijān.

For among the tribes removed in the seventeenth century from the Āzarbāijān region, to be planted in Khurāsān and Māzandarān, were the Türkmens of Afshārs and Qājārs, and they were not remote in speech or habits from the major Türkmens threat on the frontiers which they were transplanted to guard. They were, however, considered loyal to the Safavids and counted within the fold of the Safavid Shīʿī sect, unlike the Sunnī Türkmens across the border. Besides these Afshārs and Qājārs, Kurds from the west were planted in Khurāsān, as was also a clan of the Bayāt. Shāh ʿAbbās is said to have transferred four thousand five hundred families of Afshārs from the Urmīya region to Abivard and the Darra Gaz. After he had conquered in the vicinity of Erzerum, he sent nearly thirty thousand families of Kurds to settle round Khabūshān. Their number gave them a preponderance of which Nādir Shāh was well aware. A group of Qājārs from the Tabrīz district was settled in Marv. Qājārs from Ganja and the Qarābāgh were sent to Astarābād. A section of the Bayāt from Erivan was placed in Nīshāpūr. Thus a string of peoples was planted across

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Khurāsān whose capacity for unity and disunity had considerable bearing on Nādir's rise to power and the efforts required to retain it. He died on his way to Khabūshān to suppress a Kurdish rising.

Iranian exiles in India, when they wrote about Nādir's antecedents, tended to exalt them. They were writing under Indian patrons in the land which had witnessed Nādir's humiliation of the Mughul Emperor Muḥammad Shāh, and they were compatriots of Iranians who had been ruled by a self-made Shah. Not to add insult to the Indians' injury nor to emphasize the debasement of fellow Iranians' thralldom, a writer like Muḥammad Shafī' Tihirānī in his *Nādir Nāma* awards Nādir the dignity of being the son of an Afsharid Sardār, one of the high officers of the "Sulṭān" of Abivard.⁷ James Fraser, whose sources were for the most part Indian, also gives Nādir a father of rank in the Afshār community.⁸ Other fashions make for other kinds of selection. Although he speaks of Nādir's own habit of making contradictory claims, and of confusing differences in accounts of Nādir's ancestry, Jonas Hanway plumps for the more humble version, and Lockhart, who incidentally echoes one of Hanway's asides, also considers Nādir's birth not of the quality for its having taken place in a "castle" to be plausible.⁹ It is improbable that the *qal'a* at Dastgird was anything of the order of a castle. It was probably simply a tower, or a farmyard with walls and bastions.

Hanway makes Nādir's father very poor indeed, but if we follow Muḥammad Kāzīm's account, it may be seen just how poor or, how comparatively well-off Nādir's father was as a herdsman. As for Mīrzā Mahdī Khān, in the earlier passages of his book he was not in a position to offend Nādir, his master, with flattery totally devoid of truth, nor to insult him with a degrading lineage. He tells the well known story about the strength of the sword lying in its temper, not in the vein whence the metal came; but he also says that the first name given Nādir was that of his grandfather.¹⁰ This point in an Iranian context is important. Nādir had a known grandfather: he was a man of a recognized family.

His original name has generally been taken as *Nadr Qulī*, "Slave of the Unique". In his article on Nādir Shāh in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* Minorsky avoids the issue, but in his *Esquisse d'une Histoire de Nader-Chah*,¹¹ he prefers the spelling which occurs in several of the manuscripts of Mīrzā Mahdī Khān's *Tārīkh-i Jabān-gushā*. It differs from the uncommon word *nadr* by one point only, to give *nazr*. *Nazr Qulī* would mean "Slave of the Votive Promise" and is

⁷ Tihirānī, *Tārīkh-i Nādir Shāhī*, p. 4.

⁸ *History of Nadir Shah*, p. 71–2.

⁹ Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, p. 20.

¹⁰ Mīrzā Mahdī Khān, p. 27.

¹¹ Paris, 1934.

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intriguing because of Muḥammad Kāzīm’s somewhat lengthy account of how Imām Qulī had been mysteriously prepared for the coming of his first-born and longed-for son. The name suggests a boon received after votive exercises in quest of it.

Muḥammad Kāzīm merely says the boy was called *Nādir*, “Prodigy”, from the start because as a baby he at once displayed the development of a three-year old. He generally refers to Nādir in the early years as *Nādir-i Daurān*, “Wonder of the Ages”. Apart from Kāzīm, it is generally accepted that he was Nazr or Nadr Qulī Beg until he was made Ṭahmāsp Qulī Khān by Shāh Ṭahmāsp in reward for services: “the slave and Khān of Ṭahmāsp”. He retained these titles, by which he was generally known among Europeans, until he became king. Then, as Minorsky put it, he “improved” on his old name by changing it to *Nādir*.

Muḥammad Kāzīm is far more explicit about Nādir’s father than other writers are. He was a decent, God-fearing man with two brothers, Begtāsh and Bābur. Each of the three possessed six to seven thousand head of sheep and ten to fifteen cows. Muḥammad Kāzīm had a taste for marvels and they often stood him in good stead as substitutes for more circumstantial details in his narrative when he either lacked the facts or preferred not to express them. His skill in the devices of an epic prose style was less developed than the gifted and learned Mahdī Khān’s. Moreover, he is frequently too colloquial, often using direct speech, to be able to sustain conceits, flattery, or disguises, however thin, of the truth. His taste for the miraculous must be borne with, especially when it may point to another version of events, or indicate dates, with which he is sparing. Fortunately, he is less so with financial details: he makes Nādir’s meticulousness over accounts quite explicit.

Determined appropriately to herald Nādir’s birth, Kāzīm describes Imām Qulī’s twice-witnessed dream, which his brother Begtāsh also saw. Kāzīm makes Imām Qulī, such a vague entity in other sources, strikingly real. The shepherd puts on his posteen to go out and watch the sheep in the Chāpshalū winter pastures. Out for three days and nights, he indulges in prayer and meditation, exercises to which he was apparently prone. On the night of 23 Ramazān, a Sabbath Eve, in 1087 (9 November 1676) he has a dream, repeated the next night. He sees a sun whose radiance covers the whole earth and which rises from his own collar. It sets in the district of Khabūshān. He thinks that if he told them of this vision people would take him for mad, but when he found that his brother had had the same dream about him, the two men were emboldened to

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seek an interpretation from a “poor village mulla”. The *mullā* gave them the obvious interpretation, even to the world-conqueror’s death near Khabūshān.¹²

When the prodigy was eventually born, Imām Qulī doted on him. By his tenth year he was a good horseman, practised in archery, javelin-throwing, hunting and horse-racing. His brother Ibrāhīm was not born till some time after; Nādir, from a small segment of a tribe and from a family which does not appear to have been excessively fertile, was to a significant degree concerned with the continual acquisition of men to serve under his banner.

Writers on Nādir Shāh to whom the first part of Muḥammad Kāzīm’s book was unavailable have been at pains to state how little is known about Nādir’s early life, but have lent currency to several stories. In Lockhart, Nādir had a biographer who rejected many of the legends but remained uncertain about the tale that Nādir was for a time a robber. Muḥammad Kāzīm, to whom the terms ‘bandit’ or ‘robber’ would not mean quite what they did to Lockhart, gives no evidence of Nādir’s banditry. What Nādir often had to do was to retrieve cattle, captives and goods stolen in border raids: rather than being one himself, he seems to have spent many of his early years pursuing robbers. Indeed the more plausible thesis, applicable to many stages of his career, might be that he was on the side of merchants, bandits’ most likely victims. The rise of a strong ruler in Iran may often have had more to do with the support of operators of caravan routes than such a ruler’s annalists trouble to reveal, either from a desire not to link their champion with the mercantile classes, or because what most people would already know needs no telling. Muḥammad Kāzīm was probably of this opinion: his evidence for Nādir as the friend of merchants is scanty, but what there is signifies much.

One of the legends Lockhart rejects is Hanway’s story of Nādir’s capture at the age of seventeen or eighteen by Uzbeks. His mother died in this captivity, but he escaped. No Iranian source seems to corroborate this episode, but Hanway must have got it from somewhere and Kāzīm relates two incidents that, coalesced or garbled, might have given rise to Hanway’s version.

The first incident was that out hunting Nādir chased a wild ass till he was lost and his mount exhausted. An old woman, mysterious enough to suit Kāzīm’s pen, succoured him and gave him special advice. On his return, the boy, thus refreshed and peculiarly empowered, met a party of Türkmen raiders marching home across the border with five hundred of his father’s sheep and two or three

¹² Muḥammad Kāzīm, vol. 1, p. 22 (fol. 5b).

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of his cows as well as human captives. Nādir fought off the raiders and retrieved the captives.

The second episode was later. Nādir was already in the service of Bābā ‘Alī, the governor of Abīvard. He had been into the Chāpshalū district to bury his father and uncle Bābur. On his return towards Abīvard, he and his party stopped by a spring. While they were asleep a group of Yamūt Türkmens, the plague of Astarābād further to the west, surprised them. This time Nādir and his companions were captured, but one of them escaped to reach Bābā ‘Alī with the bad news. Bābā ‘Alī Beg set out with a small force on a two-day pursuit which was unsuccessful, but one night Nādir, whom Bābā ‘Alī would have had to ransom from enslavement, prayed for release. His fetters fell away like cobwebs. He liberated his friends and surprised his captors, whose loot he brought back to Abīvard. It is not difficult to see how allegations that Nādir also was sometimes a robber might arise; but the tale about the fetters falling off like cobwebs deserves further comment.

It may hide a significant fact that Nādir, until very near the end, and except at certain major turning-points in his career, was nearly always a temporiser, by no means contemptuous of diplomacy. His passion for collecting and hoarding manpower made him more often than not conciliatory towards defeated enemies, particularly when they paid up, and provided that he had no longstanding grievance against them. He seldom failed to enlist large numbers of the vanquished into his service, in order to create the army whose final unwieldiness helped to break him and ruin Iran. The fact which the legend may conceal is that the fetters did not fall off as the result of prayers to the Almighty, but following some nocturnal parley between Nādir and his gaolers, during which he may have promised them a share in future enterprises. They were, after all, of his own tongue; but this would not be a version of the story Kāzīm needed to expose. His readers could draw their own conclusions.

Joining Bābā ‘Alī Beg Kūsa Aḥmadlū’s service, at first as a *tufangchī*, (musketeer), was certainly a major turning-point in Nādir’s career. It meant handling some of the more sophisticated weapons of the day and in the service of a man who, as will be mentioned below, was apparently a properly appointed royal governor, and himself an Afsharid. He had heard of Nādir’s prowess and summoned him; and it seems likely that the boy was in any event fairly close kin to Bābā ‘Alī. After a period as *tufangchī*, he was raised to the dignity of *Īshīk Bāshī*. In terms of the Safavid Court at Iṣfahān the *Īshīk Āqāsī Bāshī* was a very high officer, similar to High Chamberlain. In Bābā ‘Alī’s entourage, the terms “muster-master” or “sergeant-at-arms” might fit. Bābā ‘Alī Beg’s function as

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governor of Abīvard was, as Mīrzā Mahdī Khān says, always to be “engaged in battle against hostile Afsharids, Türkmens, Kurds and Uzbeks”.¹³ Kāzīm seems to reflect tribal lays and ballads when he describes Bābā ‘Alī’s new henchman in encounters with these raiders. These skirmishes culminated in a serious clash which involved Bābā ‘Alī in person against a Yamūt Türkmen force given as eight thousand strong and led by a certain Muḥammad ‘Alī known as the Fox, who attempted to overrun Abīvard and Darra Gaz. The Fox was worsted and fourteen hundred prisoners taken, an event of sufficient importance for news of it to be conveyed to Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusain (1694–1722) at Iṣfahān. Kāzīm makes Nādir, as bearer of the good tidings, have his first sight of the Safavid capital, where he was rewarded by the Shah with a hundred *tūmāns*, no mean gift.¹⁴

Bābā ‘Alī is reported to have cemented the paternal aspect of his patronage of Nādir by marrying the boy’s widowed mother. Nādir thus gained two half brothers, Faṭḥ ‘Alī and Luṭf ‘Alī. Mīrzā Mahdī says that Nādir conceived the notion of more intimately allying himself with Bābā ‘Alī by marrying his daughter. As Lockhart perceived, there is almost certainly no truth in the version that makes Nādir hostile to his first master; but his desire to marry his daughter aroused the opposition of other Afsharid chiefs, jealous of the young man’s increasing influence. Fighting broke out and several of the envious chiefs were slain before the nuptials were completed. This union’s first fruit was Rizā Qulī, born according to Mīrzā Mahdī Khān in 1131/1719, according to Muḥammad Kāzīm, in 1125/1713–14.

Mahdī Khān says that the first wife died after five years. Nādir married her sister, by whom he had two sons, one later named Naṣr-Allāh, the other Imām Qulī. Kāzīm is correct, although he does not differentiate the mothers, when he says that the first of these two sons was originally called Murtaẓā Qulī and only styled Naṣr-Allāh after the capture of Qandahar; but he dates Naṣr-Allāh’s birth 1128/1715–16, which makes Nādir a very youthful father by western standards; Nādir must have been adopted into Bābā ‘Alī’s household at a very early age, but fatherhood at fifteen or sixteen would not be too young in such a situation, especially if male progeny were a need.

In his *Durra-yi Nādirī*, “The Nadiric Pearl”, Mīrzā Mahdī Khān of Astarābād gives the year 1136/1723–4 as the beginning of Nādir’s world-conquering exploits. Since, following promotion in Bābā ‘Alī’s service, Nādir’s assumption of control over the natural fortress of Kalāt might be taken as the next turning point in his career, it would be useful to be able to date it. Persian sources do not

¹³ Mīrzā Mahdī Khān, p. 28.

¹⁴ Muḥammad Kāzīm, vol. 1, fol. 9b.

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help over this, but Hanway dates the seizure of Kalāt in 1721, which may not be far wrong. His account of the episode, however, does not ring true, but it is again possible to discern how he might have arrived at it. As has been said already, there is no reason to suspect discord between Nādir and Bābā ‘Alī, who, as Lockhart pointed out, had sons, notably Kalb ‘Alī, faithful in Nādir’s service long after their father’s death. Kāzim, whose service was mostly under Nādir’s brother Ibrāhīm and Ibrāhīm’s son, so that he is often a detached observer of Nādir himself and not given to flattering him, gives no hint that Bābā ‘Alī ever wavered in the realization that in the Qiriqlū boy he had a strong arm of great value.

A further consideration is that Mahdī Khān confessedly restricts himself to only a summary of Nādir’s early days and affrays with “Turk and Tajik, near and far”, by which Nādir the frontiersman “tamed those people and introduced tranquillity to the borders”.¹⁵ Kāzim, on the other hand, narrates the incidents and names the people behind Mahdī Khan’s summary treatment of clashes with the fickle Kurds, Türkmens of other clans, and also rival Afshārs. The enemies were by no means always from beyond the Safavid frontier with Central Asia. Mahdī Khān says that local rivals, even powerful fortress-holding Afshārs, had recourse to Malīk Maḥmūd of Sīstān, the captor of Mashhad, to raise obstacles in the way of Nādir’s rise to power, while in Darra Gaz, in Abīvard itself, Kurds were hostile to the same purpose, combining with their kinsmen from Khabūshān. It is significant that Mahdī Khān places his outline of these events in a general excursus which is the sequel to Nādir’s acquisition of the “Kalāt-i Nādirī”, a saucer-shaped plateau some twenty miles long from west-north-west to east-south-east, and from five to seven miles wide, surrounded by a rim of limestone cliffs sheer on the outside and rising from seven hundred to eleven hundred feet in height: the perfect natural fortress.

When Kāzim says Nādir was out hunting in Kalāt and discovered Tīmūr’s buried treasure there and an inscription prophesying its discoverer’s future glory, he is merely introducing Tīmūr in association with a strong point with which, in any event, this name was historically associated; and in association with a strong man who was pleased to connect his own achievements with those of Tīmūr, whom he believed was of the same race as himself. As for the treasure, that lay not in chests of specie or jewels, but in the control of such a bastion, dominating the Darra Gaz to the northwest of it, Abīvard to the southeast, and the Atak plain below Khurāsān’s mountain frontier, and the route from

¹⁵ Mīrzā Mahdī Khān, p. 29–30.

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Mashhad into Turkestan. To possess it was certainly an advantage to be treasured and it might have been when Nādir had control of Kalāt that enemies and rivals decided to try conclusions with the ambitious Īshīk Bāshī before it was too late. It is at this juncture that Kāzīm relates that Bābā ‘Alī deputed all his powers to Nādir who, the narrative continues, occupied himself preparing horses, ordnance and arms until the news of Maḥmūd Ghilzai’s victories came – a piece of evidence which accords with Hanway’s dating of the beginning of the “Kalāt Period” to *circa* 1720–1.

The two main Persian-language accounts preface the history of Nādir Shāh with observations on the stricken state of Iran after the collapse of the Safavid empire. Nādir is introduced as Iran’s saviour. Both these sources provide detailed comment on the pretenders to the Safavid throne who appeared between 1722 and the 1750s. Besides such appearances affording additional evidence for how distracted conditions were, they prove how the people were inclined to cling to the memory of the Safavid monarchy and desire its continuation or revival.¹⁶ Its aura remained although, before 1722 even, its strength had been depleted by, among other things, ill-conceived and conflicting counsels offered a weak ruler in a contentious Court.

This husk of sovereignty finally crumbled when Maḥmūd Ghilzai of Qandahar entered the capital, Iṣfahān, on 25 October 1722 after a six-month siege. Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusain, who had been on the throne since 1694, abdicated and Maḥmūd assumed the insignia of ruler. The ex-Shah was decapitated in 1726 on the orders of Maḥmūd’s cousin, his successor, Ashraf (1725–29). Proof of the importance provincial authorities attached to the upholding of the Safavid monarchical institution is furnished by the appeals sent to Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusain during the siege of Iṣfahān for him to ensure the escape of one of his sons, to be a rallying point for resistance to other invaders and to ensure the dynasty’s survival. The Shah’s third son, Ṭahmāsp Mīrzā, was smuggled out of the city in June 1722. This was the prince whose servant Nādir later became and Nādir’s rise to power might be attributed to the Ghilzai invasion and the awful challenge it presented.

This episode opened when in 1709 a Ghilzai Afghan notable, Mīr Vais, overthrew the Safavid governor of Qandahar who was a Georgian convert to Islam, originally Giorgi XI and known in his converted state as Gurgīn or Shāhnavāz Khān. He was a valued *ghulam* in the Safavid service because of his military skills and sent to Qandahar in 1704, to secure Iran’s bastion against

¹⁶ For a useful treatment of these Safavid pretenders, see Perry, “The last Safavids, 1722–1773”.

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Mughul India and prevent local unrest among the Afghans. Iṣfahān was rent by factions in the Court of a ruler the historians describe as both other-worldly and inept. A centre which manifested signs of declining power found increasing difficulty in holding outlying provinces in subjection. To send Gurgīn Khān to Qandahar might have been a positive move but his personality nullified it. His treatment of the local people precipitated disaster; sent to prevent rebellion breaking out he punished the Afghans “as severely as if they had carried their designs into execution”, as Malcolm says.¹⁷ Krusinski, however, explains that Gurgīn operated as the Court had instructed, to deprive the Mughul government in India of any claim or justification upon which to base an incursion. This meant that he had to keep the Afghans in check, especially to prevent them from raiding Mughul territory.¹⁸ It is only when he is citing Mīr Vais’s remarks to the anti-Gurgīn faction at Court that Krusinski repeats terms as opprobrious about the governor as any used by Kāzīm; they are quite contrary to what Krusinski reports Mīr Vais as telling Gurgīn’s supporters in Iṣfahān.¹⁹ Krusinski is demonstrating Mīr Vais’s cunning and how the factionalism round the Shah gave him scope to exercise it.

Muḥammad Kāzīm describes Gurgīn as considering himself unaccountable at Qandahar, drinking heavily, and lusting for girls to the extent that he sent men to fetch Mīr Vais’s beautiful daughter. According to this historian it was over this impropriety that Mīr Vais, a man of standing in his area, set out for the Court to complain. Krusinski differs and says Gurgīn sent this popular local notable to Iṣfahān “not indeed as a prisoner”, but to distance him from followers over whom his influence might be dangerous. Mīr Vais’s six-month sojourn in Iṣfahān procured him neither the dismissal of the governor nor any redress, but he went on the Pilgrimage to Mecca and from there returned directly to Qandahar armed with a *fatwā*, a canon-law decree, from the Sunnī religious authorities in the Holy City, that sanctioned his throwing off Shī‘ī-Safavid dominion exercised through an immoral governor of dubious credentials as a Muslim.²⁰ On his return home Mīr Vais is alleged to have told his followers about the disorganized state of affairs in Iṣfahān, with the inference that subservience to such a venal government need not be tolerated. Gurgīn was murdered. The rebels made Mīr Vais their governor, but he died only very few years later, in 1715, without taking his rebellion into metropolitan Iran. The religious element in the Sunnī Mīr Vais’s anti-Safavid propaganda deserves to be

¹⁷ Malcolm, *History*, vol. 1, p. 602.

¹⁸ Krusinski, *The History of the Revolution of Persia*, p. 152. ¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 156–7.

²⁰ Cf. Chapter 19, p. 706.