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Contemporary Uzbek Hagiography and its Sources

Jürgen Paul (Halle)

Since Uzbekistan achieved its independence during the collapse of the Soviet Union (Sept. 1st, 1991), the country has witnessed a resurgence of Islam in general and of sufism in particular¹. In Soviet times, Islam – rather more than other religions present on the territory of the Soviet Union, above all more than Russian Orthodoxy – was kept at a very low official level by the authorities, and partly, its resurgence can be explained as a return to normal, in this case, a normal level of piety and religious practice at large. Sufism had been even more harrassed than "official" Islam by the regime, and a large number of its leaders were physically annihilated under Stalin (above all during the great purges in the latter half of the 30s). I cannot dwell on the reasons for the particular attention the Soviet secret police and other organs had for the sufis; suffice it to say that even thus, a native branch of the Naqshbandiyya has survived in Uzbekistan, the Central Asian homeland of this major current of Islamic mysticism, even if at times the number of initiated adherents fell at below ten or so. Shaikh Ibrahim, a nonagenarian based at Khoqand (Ferghana valley) actually enjoys the respect of most other Naqshbandi leaders in the country, and he is said to have thousands, if not tens of thousands of *murīds* (disciples). Even if he is not active on the political scene, this is already a big organization, and there is reason to believe that not all of his disciples will follow his example in

¹ This article is the only slightly revised version of a paper given at the 19th meeting of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants, Halle, June 1998.

keeping out of politics². Thus, Vernon Schubel certainly is right in stating that "the once thriving Naqshbandiyya tariqa system was nearly completely rooted out", but I would be careful about his statement that "for all intents and purposes the classical institution of *pīr-murīd* (the relationship between Sufi master and disciple) has been utterly destroyed"³; Babajanov produces evidence to the contrary, and it is clear that *pīr-murīd* relations are being established on a large scale.

In Bukhara, the change is visible at the shrine of Bahā'uddīn himself: Whereas during my first visit to Bukhara in 1986 I was able to see the shrine complex only from a distance, but close enough to realize that it was in a rather bad shape⁴, it now flourishes again and has resumed its function as a communal and devotional center. People come there not only from Bukhara and its environs, but also from farther afield (as evidenced by the plates of the buses standing on the parking lot)⁵. It seems that Naqshbandi groups have

² Information about the actual resurgence of Naqshbandi sufism in Uzbekistan is available in Bakhtiyar Babajanov's article; he has summed up his observations and research in this field: "Le renouveau des communautés soufies en Ouzbékistan", in: *Cahiers d'Asie Centrale* 5-6 (1998), 285-311. This article is remarkable by the wealth of data it contains above all on the history of sufism under Soviet rule and in this respect, it is far superior to any publication by Western "visitors".

³ See his article quoted note 5, p. 74.

⁴ See my short note on this trip in "Bericht aus Sowjetisch-Zentralasien 2", in: *Materialia Turcica* 12 (1986), 104-109.

⁵ For the actual state of the shrine and a description of its architecture, see Thierry Zarcone, "Le mausolée de Bahauddin Naqshband à Bukhara (Uzbekistan - C.E.I.)", in: H. Chambert-Loir (éd.), *Le culte des saints dans l'Islam* (Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient) Paris 1995, 321-333. See also the photos (by E. Özdalga) going with Vernon Schubel's article "Post-Soviet Hagiography and the Reconstruction of the Naqshbandi Tradition in Contemporary Uzbekistan", in: E. Özdalga (ed.), *Naqshbandis in Western and Central Asia* (Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul. Transactions 9) Istanbul, 1999 73-87. See also note 42 for Levin's comments.

taken up open activities in Bukhara as well⁶. These activities are not induced from above, and in all, the resurgence of sufism, above all of its Naqshbandi brand, seems to be carried out "from below", that is, by the sufis themselves.

The Uzbek government has until now⁷ taken a more or less benevolent or even positive position regarding this evolution⁸. Besides its contribution to the material reconstruction of important sites, it has sponsored a number of festivals commemorating sufi figures of the past, among them one devoted to Bahā'uddīn's 675th anniversary in 1993. Bahā'uddīn and the other major figures of the Khwājagān preceding him also were visible during the festivities marking the 2500th anniversary of the city of Bukhara in fall 97. Naqshbandi studies are being pursued at Bukhara state university, and the Naqshbandi groups in Bukhara, the Ferghana valley and elsewhere are allowed to develop in relative peace. In the government's view, sufism is part of the cultural heritage; some of the government activities to claim this heritage will be discussed below. Of course, nobody can tell how long this situation of peaceful coexistence can last, and it is possible that in the foreseeable future, the Uzbek government might wish to halt further progress of the sufi groups.

Not surprisingly, the resurgence of Islam and of sufism has also meant publishing activities in practically all fields of religious knowledge⁹. The texts under study here belong not only to religion properly speaking, but come from a variety of fields, from outright religious propaganda to science. Out of the rich offer, texts

⁶ Personal communication by Dr Dagmar Schatz, Braunschweig, and evident from remarks in Schubel and Levin.

⁷ Meaning summer 98. Since then, the Uzbek government has considerably hardened its attitude towards Islamic activists, seemingly as a result of the bombing in Tashkent, February 1999.

⁸ For possible reasons for this attitude, see Schubel.

⁹ See *Islam en 'mustaqillik'. Oezbeekse boeken sinds de onafhankelijkheid* (Kleine publicaties van de Leidse Universiteitsbibliotheek 27) Leiden 1998 (catalogue established by Jan Just Witkam and Arnoud Vrolijk).

concerning Bahā'uddīn Naqshband and his predecessors have been selected; the reason is that this gives a relatively well defined corpus, and also, that the sources are more easily discernable (at least for me). Other "heroes of our great cultural heritage" include two groups of people: Those who were accepted in very much the same role in Soviet times (Ibn Sīnā for example, and the poets Jāmī and Navā'ī), and those who were not; among the latter group, religious figures take a prominent place, like for instance the famous *muhaddith* al-Bukhārī or the eponymous founder of the Kubravi "order", Najmuddīn Kubrā.

The books and booklets which form one basis for the present paper were acquired during stays in Uzbekistan in 1996 and 1997 in an unsystematic fashion, and no measure of completeness is intended. Some of the texts are treated by Vernon Schubel as well who has also seen texts not included in this article, others are more recent.

Another field of activity (where also materials are published that serve as another source for the present paper) are scientific and other conferences and symposia, festivals and other events meant to celebrate anniversaries or any other occasions which the Uzbek government or other officials choose, the aim being to contribute to the fame of the great Uzbek nation and its golden cultural heritage. On some occasions, Western organizations and institutes are either allowed or asked to sponsor their own conferences. In the present study, two such conferences are covered: First, the colloquium organized by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung at Bukhara, september 1996, which had the title *Scheich Bahauddin Naqshband. Seine Bedeutung für die religiöse Mystik, die Auswirkungen seiner Lehre auf die Politik*¹⁰, and second, the international official symposium held on the occasion of the 2500th anniversary of the cities of

¹⁰ A resume of some of the contributions was distributed by the foundation, dated Taschkent 1996 (in fact, the folder was produced in 1998 only). The title of the conference in English: *Shaikh Bahā'uddīn Naqshband: His significance for religious mysticism, the impact of his teaching on politics.*

Bukhara and Khiva; abstracts of papers were published under the title *Nauchnoe i kul'turnoe nasledie chelovechestva - tret'emu tysiacheletiu. Tezisy dokladov mezhdunarodnogo simpoziuma, posviashchennogo 2500-letiiu Buxary i Xivy*¹¹. On several other occasions, above all the ceremonies devoted to the 675th anniversary of Bahā'uddīn and also the 890th anniversary of ʿAbd-alkhāliq-i Ghijduvānī, texts and studies were published which sometimes have a scientific coloring. Scientific publications as well as contributions to conferences and other scientific events are thus an important source for this paper.

Some of the booklets published are relatively faithful Uzbek renderings of medieval hagiographies written in Persian, but more often, they are extracts only of these works. The translators or editors often prefer later compilations over original works, and they make no difference between these two kinds of sources¹². These

¹¹ Published by UNESCO, Tashkent 1997, and given to the participants of the conference. Only very few of the papers were actually read. The title of the conference in English: *The scientific and cultural heritage of mankind [presented to] the third millennium*. Abstracts of the papers presented to the international symposium dedicated to the 2500th anniversary of the founding of Bukhara and Khiva.

¹² Translation: *Bahouddin Balogardon* by Abul Muhsin Muhammad Boqir ibn Muhammad Ali (Toshkent 1993), translator: Mahmudxon Maxdum Hassanxon Maxdum o'g'li; this translation is based upon the lithographic edition of Abū'l-Muhsin, *Maqāmāt* (Bukhara 1328/1909) as is evidenced by the - impossible - dating of this rather late work to 1401 CE (it must have been written somewhere in the first half or the middle of the 10th century A. H./16th century CE; it is thus roughly a century and a half younger than alleged in the lithograph). The early date is given in the lithograph at page 3 (804 A. H.) - Adaptation and extracts: *Durdona. Mir Kulol va Shohi Naqshband Maqomotlaridan* (Toshkent 1993), translators (and, as it were, redactors) Sadridin Salim Buxorij and Isroil Subhonij. The first text is a choice of pieces from *the Maqāmāt-i Amīr Kulāl*, also extant in a lithographed edition, Bukhara 1328/1909, the second text is once again from Abū'l-Muhsin. I have not seen any modern Uzbek version of such works as *Anīs at-tālibīn* in any of its versions, for instance. (This is the main hagiographic source on Bahā'uddīn; it is extant in numerous manuscripts, but I do not know a lithographic

translations and extracts are not going to retain us any longer, they obviously are designed to revive the cultural heritage; in this, they continue a trend long discernable in Uzbekistan, namely to translate (sometimes, over and over again) a relatively small array of texts into Uzbek rather than into Russian, in one instance, explicitly under the heading "Heritage"¹³.

In what follows, I am going to focus on two questions. First, to what extent are elements of hagiography discernable in writings going under the scientific label, and second, can we disclose a pattern in the way how certain texts are adapted to modern circumstances? This second question will take a short treatise attributed to ʿAbdalkhāliq as a basis, the so-called spiritual testament or *Vasiyatnoma*¹⁴ (*vaṣīyatnāma*).

Before entering into the subject, however, some remarks of what should be understood by hagiography in this context seem in order.

The whole purpose of the genre of hagiography is, as Algar once remarked, "to transmit to a believing and pious audience matters of practical spiritual value; the specifically 'human' – the whole stuff of modern biography – is trivial and profoundly uninteresting from

edition). Schubel remarks that a complete translation of Kāshifi's *Rashahāt* also is conspicuously absent; this is the main source for the life of Khwāja Aḥrār (d. 1490) (p. 77). A good example of how scientific and hagiographic purposes intermingle is the selection from the late (1906) guide for pilgrims by Nosir ad-din To'ra ibn Amir Muzaffar al-Hanafij al-Buxorij, published in both Uzbek and English translations under the title *Xo'zha Baho ud-din Naqshband – Khodja Baha ud-din Nakshband* (Buxoro 1993 [original title: *Tuhfat az-zā'irīn*]). This is called a "scientific and popular compilation" (*ilmij-ommabop to'plam*).

¹³ *Meros* (Toshkent 1991), contains four important texts for the history of Central Asia in Uzbek translation with commentary: Abu Tohirxozha, *Samarija* (a 19th- century guide for pilgrims), Narshaxij, *Buxoro Tarixi* (well-known early medieval city chronicle, *introuvable* in Soviet times in any language), Bajonij, *Shazharai Xorazmshohij* and Ibrat, *Farg'ona Tarixi* (the last two originally written in Chagatai Turkic).

¹⁴ Titles and quotations in modern Uzbek are given in the latin script; the texts themselves are in cyrillic script, of course.

a traditional viewpoint"¹⁵. Now, there is no doubt that some authors try to convey "matters of spiritual value", "knowledge" about the sufi path, telling their readers something about the *dhikr* (commemoration of God) and other techniques of sufi practice, and about the life and times of the great *pīrs* of the past. Some of them also focus on shrines and shrine cult, thus continuing the tradition of a later offshoot of hagiographical writing, the so-called guides for pilgrims, and in some cases, they come very close to tourist's guides; however, the boundaries between pilgrims and tourists were not clear-cut in the Soviet period, and a touristic aspect is evident even in the earliest guides for pilgrims. Sometimes, touristic enterprises seem to be intended (see below). Riding the wave of Islamic resurgence and of national awakening alike, some of the authors transform the ancient heroes of the sufi path into heroes of *mustaqillik* (independence) *avant la lettre*, and the attributes of Soviet-style heroes loom large in this case. Thus, hagiography today is more than what it was in "traditional" (meaning pre-colonial) times; it means styling somebody – independently from what we would term "historical truth" – as a supernatural figure, a cultural hero or religious virtuoso whose example we – ordinary humans – can strive to follow, but never hope to attain. Thus, the hagiographic discourse is not limited to the field of religion, normative or popular, but can be present in other fields as well, among them politics and science. It is evident for anybody who has had a however slight chance to get acquainted with the Soviet Union that there was quite a lot of hagiography going on, even if we leave out personality cult, and my thesis in this respect is that some of what is to be found nowadays in Uzbekistan more or less directly stems from this Soviet-style hagiography.

One element of hagiography in scientific writing evidently is the direct and, as it were, naive transport of stories found in

¹⁵ Hamid Algar, "The Naqshbandi Order: A Preliminary Survey of its History and Significance", in: *Studia Islamica* 1976, 123-152 (134).

hagiographic sources into scientific statements. For instance, the way how one of Bahā'uddīn's immediate teachers, Bābā-yi Sammāsī, knew that a child would be born who would grow up to be a great saint: he smelled the odour of sanctity emanating from the soil, and this odour grew stronger after Bahā'uddīn had been born. This story is to be found in all hagiographic accounts of Bahā'uddīn's childhood; and it is retold as such – without any comments – for instance by Orif Usmon in the Adenauer conference¹⁶, and in this respect, there is no difference between this author and Sadriddin Salim Buxorij in his outright hagiographical guide for pilgrims¹⁷. The question of miracles is addressed in the same vein by Sadriddin Salim in various places, but it is doubtful whether he conceives of himself as a scientific writer, even if he is sometimes thus styled¹⁸. Taking over elements from the sources

¹⁶ P. 11 in the conference materials. See also the naive recounting of miracle stories as quoted by Schubel, p. 79. Unlike Schubel, I would not see a rejection of "scientific atheism" here, but a production of a new hagiographic style using the trappings of scientific discourse. The fundamental attitude of these texts cannot be called scientific, a point Schubel repeatedly fails to make. For the question of "discovery", or, in Schubel's terms, "Re-creation of History in Uzbekistan" (74), see Yuri Bregel, *Notes on the Study of Central Asia* (Papers on Inner Asia 28) Bloomington 1996.

¹⁷ Sadriddin Salim Buxorij, *Tabarruk ziyoratgohlar*, 26.

¹⁸ For instance, Adenauer conference, p.18. Sadriddin Salim evidently is himself affiliated to the Naqshbandi *ṭarīqa* and propagandizes it, e.g. in *Dilda yor*, Toshkent 1993, where the last chapter is devoted to a visit of the actual leader of the Naqshbandi group in Turkey, Esad Coşan, and another chapter gives a short introduction into the elements of *ṭarīqa* as such ("Tariqat ne"?, p. 20-33, note the turcism). He has started a cooperation with the Naqshbandi group in southwest Germany, and he is styled as a leading member of the "Popular Academy on the Culture of Tasawwuf and Sufism" in Bukhara. See his letter in *Der Morgenstern* 8 (fourth issue 1997), 60-62. This journal is published by the German Naqshbandi group. - A detailed summary of *Dilda yor* is given by Schubel, p. 77-9. Schubel styles Sadriddin Salim as "Professor Bukhari". Salim is also mentioned by Theodore Levin in *The Hundred Thousand*

without comment and qualification of course means that the old stories are being repeated, and the backdrop here may well be that some at least of the stories had been forgotten¹⁹. But in many other instances, elements are added to the "traditional" stories, and this shows that hagiography is an ongoing process and continues even today.

One element of hagiography is to invest the saintly figure with all positive attributes the writer can conceive of or with all those he thinks are in demand at the present political juncture. And since these qualities change over time, the stories equally change. One very good example of how this works today in Uzbekistan is the text "Bukhara as the home of Naqshbandism"²⁰. Bahā'uddīn first is identified as a member of the toiling masses, as in fact most of his predecessors and followers were; in a way, the class character of the group is emphasized in just the same way as Soviet authors would have proceeded for any political or other group in any country. Then, it is stressed that he did not like laziness and begging (this is unsocial behaviour according to Soviet ethics), he was not inclined to theoretical reasoning, he was a staunch supporter of the unity of Islam, and "therefore, we are not surprised that his in fact philosophical (not religious) views come close to pragmatism, above all with respect to the organization of productive activities and his calls to work and study". This is Soviet ethics with a very thin national – not even Muslim – veneer, and it is only by the constraint of the argument that I have to point out that this statement is not justified by the slightest reference to any source whatsoever; in particular, I wonder what "the organization of productive activities" might be referring to. The way Orif Usmon

Fools of God, paperback reprint, Bloomington 1999, 107; Levin presents him as an open propagandist for the Naqshbandiyya.

¹⁹ This is Schubel's conclusion from a comparison between Central Asia and the subcontinent.

²⁰ "Bukhara - rodina Nakshbandizma", in: *Nauchnoe i kul'turnoe nasledie chelovechestva - tret'emu tysiacheletiu*, p. 65-67, authors: F. S. Salieva, M. A. Baratova, V.S. Leshchinskii.

characterizes "the early Naqshbandis as practicing *hurfikrlik* (free thought) and *gumanism* (humanism)"²¹ is indicative of the same thing: The currently required positive values are being projected back on to the cultural heroes of the "golden heritage". There is of course nothing even remotely close to "free thinking" in the writings of the early Khwājagān who stress time and again that a follower of their path has to comply with everything the sharia makes mandatory; and if "humanism" is a way of thinking that places the human being into the center, the Khwājagān certainly were not "practicing" it.

However, these statements are topped by another one, namely that the views the early Khwājagān (from Yūsuf-i Hamadānī down to Naqshband) held about honesty, modesty, moral purity, truthfulness, patriotism, love for work and above all their ideas about the struggle for the freedom and independence of one's homeland earned the teaching of the Khwājagān world-wide fame²². Again, the qualities ascribed in a totally anachronistic fashion (a good marker for hagiography) are taken from the arsenal of current political demands, in this case, the hero of the cultural heritage appears in the trappings of modern Uzbek nationalism.

The last remark in the passage just quoted leads to another topic of hagiography: It is claimed that the subjects enjoyed world-wide fame, at least in the Islamic world, but sometimes in the whole world not excluding Europe. This is particularly true in the "Guide for pilgrims" *Tabarruk Ziyoratgohlar* where it is said that ʿAbdalkhāliq-i Ghijduvānī "is known to the whole world" as "*khwāja* of the world"²³; Bahāʿuddīn has taken a firm place in the hearts of the peoples of the world as a great saint, an incomparable teacher, a deep philosopher, a refined poet, a fine weaver and

²¹ Schubel, 80. Transcription is Schubel's. The source given for this is M.A. Usmanov (ed.), *Islam: Spravochnik* (Tashkent 1989), 67.

²² Orif Usmon, "Sem' pirov-nastavnikov blagorodnoi Buxary", in: *Nauchnoe i kul'turnoe nasledie chelovechestva*, 64.

²³ *Tabarruk Ziyoratgohlar*, 16: "Xozhai Zhaxon (Zhahon Xozhasi) nomi bilan butun dunyoga mashhur wa ma'lum".

embroiderer²⁴; Khwāja-yi Aḥrār likewise is known to the whole world²⁵. In the case of another Uzbek national hero, Amir Temur, we read that the burial hall at Weimar where Herzog August, Goethe and Schiller are buried, was constructed on the model of the Gūr-i Amīr²⁶.

Yet another element of hagiographic reasoning that appears in modern texts but is not present in the medieval sources is the following: In a number of statements, the "Seven Pirs of Bukhara" are invoked and enumerated; these are Naqshband and six of his immediate predecessors in later Naqshbandi *silsila*-constructions. They are nowhere grouped together in this fashion in the earlier sources (maybe this is taken from some very late compilation, although it does not seem to occur in Nāṣiruddīn Töre's *Tuḥfat az-zā'irīn*), and thus, I am inclined to think that this is a further element of hagiography. "Seven" evidently is a heavily symbolic number, and that there should be a Pleiad of *pīrs* in Bukhara and its surroundings would do quite a lot to enhance the sanctity of the place(s). Thus, it does not come as a surprise that it is announced that after some scientific and other preparations, a center of travel "Seven Pirs" will be set up at Bukhara which is to devote its activities to "organizing pilgrimages to the sacred places of Bukhara and to the shrines of the Seven Pirs"²⁷. In this case, the blessing carried by the shrines and tombs of the Bukharan *khwājas* is obviously going to be commercialized, and there can be little doubt

²⁴ Ibid., 25. Note the attributes not normally going with Bahā'uddīn: In the medieval texts, he is not shown to be a philosopher or a poet, both professions not being held in high esteem by the early Khwājagān, and the question of which trade he plied has to rest unresolved; this is normally "integrated" and harmonized in contemporary Uzbek hagiography: He was a weaver and an embroiderer and a farmer.

²⁵ Ibid., 35.

²⁶ Ibid., 34.

²⁷ See the statement by Orif Usmon quoted above, and the announcement of Sadridin Salim and Isroil Subhonij in *Der Morgenstern*, quoted issue, 62.

that this offer will be meeting a growing demand by pilgrims from, say, Turkey, Europe, and the subcontinent.

The spiritual testament or *vaṣīyatnāma*²⁸ going under the name of ʿAbdalkhāliq-i Ghijduvānī is one of the most frequently quoted early Khwājagānī texts in contemporary Uzbek hagiography. It has been printed (in Uzbek translation, to be sure) in a separate booklet together with other materials on (or attributed to; no single treatise going under his name is doubtlessly his) ʿAbdalkhāliq; the spiritual testament proper does not take up more than the last two pages (14 and 15)²⁹. It is also included in Sadriiddin Salim's *Tabarruk Ziyoratgohlar*³⁰; and apart from that, with extended commentary in a work called "Eternal Bahā'uddīn Naqshband"³¹, and there may be further translations which I simply did not come across.

The Persian original also is found in more than one redaction. I have three versions of the Persian text: The first version is the one included in the section on ʿAbdalkhāliq in the *Rashahāt*³²; the second – and older – version is to be found in one redaction of *Maslak al-ʿārifīn*³³; the third version is the commentary written by

²⁸ I am using the Persian form when I am referring to the "classical" text.

²⁹ Xozha Abdulxoliq G'izhduvonij, *Vasiyatnoma* (Toshkent 1993). – It is maybe interesting to note that this *khwāja* also holds the copyright of the booklet which by the way was printed with the support of the governor of G'izhduvon *tumoni*. – It can be suspected that Sadriiddin Salim was involved in preparing the booklet since ʿAbdalkhāliq is described in quite similar terms in *Tabarruk Ziyoratgohlar*.

³⁰ See in that booklet, p. 18f.

³¹ Izzat Sulton, *Bahovuddin Naqshband Abadiyati* (Toshkent 1994), p. 26ff.

³² Fakhriddin ʿAlī al-Kāshifī, *Rashahāt ʿain al-ḥayāt*, ed. in 2 vols by ʿAlī Aṣghar Muʿīniyān, Tehran 2536; vol. 1, 37-38.

³³ Muḥammad b. Asʿad al-Bukhārī: *Maslak al-ʿārifīn*, ms Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Pertsch 260, beginning at fol. 1b. – The spiritual testament of ʿAbdalkhāliq seems to be missing in the other redaction of this work, represented e.g. in ms Tashkent, Institut Vostokovedeniia "Biruni" 2517 and in ms London, British Library 6490. For a preliminary study of this work, see my "Maslak al-ʿārifīn: Ein Dokument zur frühen Geschichte der Ḥwājagān-Naqshbandīya", in: *Hallesche Beiträge zur Orientwissenschaft* 25 (1998),

Faḍlullāh b. Rūzbihān al-Khunjī called *Sharḥ al-wiṣāya*³⁴. The authenticity of the work is open to question; but there are strong arguments in favor of its being comparatively early. The best argument is that its character – it consists of ethical advice and admonitions rather than specifically sufi doctrine – is quite consistent with what we know of early Khwājagānī teaching and practice. It has even been proposed that the (spiritual) "family" (*khānavāda*) of ʿAbdalkhāliq, the "family of *khwājas*" or the "ʿAbdalkhāliqiyān" was nothing else but a certain group of his successors who transmitted the *vaṣīyatnāma*; this text thus may have been instrumental in defining who belonged to the early urban Bukharan Khwājagān³⁵. At any rate thus, this "spiritual testament" plays a certain role not only in medieval Khwājagānī history, but also in modern Uzbekistan.

A detailed comparison of the translation as presented in *Vasiyatnoma* (the separate booklet) with the versions of the Persian original it comes closest to (the *Maslak al-ʿarifīn*) as well as the other ones shows that it is in fact no translation (at least, not of any

172-185. Thanks to Devin DeWeese who generously provided me with a copy of the London ms.

³⁴ Several mss known; I use ms Istanbul, Beyazit 1056 (microfilm in Paris, Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes, in the so-called "Fonds Molé"). Since this version evidently is based on *Maslak al-ʿarifīn*, the version transmitted in *Rashaḥāt* should be viewed as an abridgement; Khunjī's text is proof that the corresponding version of *Maslak*, even if it is younger than the other one, must be dated at least into the 15th century, and that it is possible that it is older still.

³⁵ See Florian Schwarz, "*Unser Weg schließt tausend Wege ein*". *Derwische und Gesellschaft im islamischen Mittelasien im 16. Jahrhundert* (Berlin 2000), p.128. - The status of the *vaṣīyatnāma* can be clarified only through an overall study of early Khwājagānī history and the history of the Bukharan ulama families during the Mongol and post-Mongol periods (13th and 14th centuries). Another step in this direction is made by Maria Subtelny in her paper "The Making of Bukhārā-yi Sharīf: Scholars, Books and Libraries in Medieval Bukhara. The Library of Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā", In: Devin DeWeese (ed.) *Studies on Central Asian History in Honor of Yuri Bregel*, Bloomington 2001, 79-111.

of the versions cited). Since the translators or editors do not name their source, we are facing a problem: There are two possibilities, namely, they either had yet another version, or else they have left out substantial parts of the original adding other passages instead. Some of the passages that are missing may have been deleted on purpose. For instance the warning against illiterate sufis is missing (Khunjī: *az šūfiyān-i jāhil bar ḥidhir bāsh wa az ʿawāmm-i Ishān mabāsh*; ms Berlin: *az juhhāl-i šūfiyān dūr bāsh wa az ʿawāmm-i šūfiyān mabāsh*; Kāshifī: *az šūfiyān-i jāhil par-khīzī*); this is coherent with the fact that another passage is equally missing where the select character of the Khwājagān sufis is stressed: Do not sit with youthful people, with women or with commoners, nor with rich people. This Uzbek version also leaves out the *vaṣīyatnāma*'s advice on seclusion, e.g. the passage where the Khwājagān adepts are told to seek seclusion (*khalwat*) and to flee people like you would a roaring lion³⁶. It is relatively easy to propose a reason for this meddling with the text: All these positions contradict what Bahāʿuddīn and his predecessors are made to stand for: activity in society based on ethical convictions, taking part in productive work, siding with the poor and the needy. Thus, I would suggest that at least some of the variants in this particular Uzbek version are due to the translators or editors who in this followed a not really hidden agenda.

On the other hand, those passages where the spiritual testament attributed to ʿAbdalkhāliq warns against taking over or desiring offices (if only that of imam or muezzin) are reproduced in this Uzbek version (which seems to be the "freest" of all those considered), since modestly not seeking fame, not aspiring for

³⁶ The problem of seclusion in early Khwājagānī teaching is dealt with at some length in my preliminary study of the *Maslak*, and also in my *Organization and doctrine: The Khwājagān-Naqshbandīya in the first generation after Bahāʿuddīn* (ANOR 1) Berlin & Halle 1998. It is all too readily assumed that the principle of "Isolation within society" (*khalwat dar anjuman*) was observed in a continuous fashion from ʿAbdalkhāliq on.

leadership, neither in the community nor in the state, is what you would expect a leader to tell his clientele, and it also must be reassuring for the Uzbek government that the Naqshbandis emphasize that leadership is not to be sought after.

The Uzbek version of the *vaṣīyatnāma* included in the work of Izzat Sulton seems to be a relatively fair rendering of the *Rashaḥāt* version apart from some very typical changes which can hardly be explained as mistakes³⁷. To give only one, but crucial, example: the way he understands *jamāʿat* (which he simply translates as *zhamoat*, which in modern Uzbek means "society" or "community"). The Persian sentence *tatabbuʿ-i āthār-i salaf kunī wa mulāzim-i sunnat wa jamāʿat bāshī* - which approximately means "Follow the traditions of your forebears (or: the early Muslim generations) and do not deviate from what is correct in the view of Sunni Islam" looks like this in Izzat Sulton's translation: *Va lozim bo'lsin sengakim, osori salafni tatabbu' etmoq sunnat. Va zhamoatga mulozim bo'l*³⁸; this rather means: "You should know that it is mandatory and sunnat to follow the traditions of your forefathers. And serve society (or: the community)". Thus, in order to have the last sentence, the author cuts the well-known combination of *sunnat wa jamāʿat*. The reason is that he erects a large commentary on this single sentence. In his commentary on the whole text, he first underlines that this is a text on ethics, not on mysticism (this is quite defendable, and indeed seems to be a typical trait of the *Vasiyatnoma*). He then goes on (and I summarize): If we ask ourselves what is the importance of this text in our days, the answer is that it responds to certain ethical needs. After this remark, he gets to the contents of the text properly speaking. And there he says, *zhamoatga mulozim bo'l, ya'ni, zhamiatga xisimat et*³⁹, "serve society". Then he raises the question, what is important about the

³⁷ Even if I cannot tell whether the author has any credentials in Iranian or Islamic studies, it can be supposed that he knows Persian well enough.

³⁸ Izzat Sulton, *Bahovuddin Naqshband Abadiyati*, 26.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 27.

Khawājagān, what did they introduce in their time? They departed from earlier mystical practice, where sufis endeavoured (individually) to reach something for themselves (nearness to God, self-fulfillment and so on), and now, the Khawājagān emphasize society and the service the individual is obliged to render it. One of the most important points in this respect is that a man has to have a legal occupation and has to make his livelihood from it. (This no doubt is a hallmark of early Khawājagānī and also evident in later Naqshbandi practice, but the reason given for this is not that one should serve "society").

In the whole book, the Yasavi tradition is made to stand for "earlier" (ecstatic and individual) mystical pursuits, and the Khawājagān for the "new" (sober and society-oriented) way⁴⁰. The historical validity of this statement remains to be proved; it is not evident for example that the "Yasavi order" or even a distinctly "Yasavi" tradition is older than the Khawājagānī current, and their mutual relationships are far from clear⁴¹. But on the other hand, books like that of Izzat Sulton are not necessarily meant to contribute to historical research. What looks like a somewhat arbitrary attribution of two different lifestyles to two different historical entities could be interpreted as a rhetoric device in a treatise on ethics. The values the author wants to promote are projected back on figures of the past, and on the other hand, there

⁴⁰ See Annemarie Schimmel's statement: "It seems that the quiet and intense way of this order [the Naqshbandiya] (...) is proudly claiming to be better suited to a modern mind than the ecstatic flights and sometimes strange behavior of some of the older orders. Averse to dance and music, the sober Naqshbandis' way of life seems to appeal more to practically minded people than does the emphasis on poverty, otherworldliness, and rapture found among certain other lineages (...)", in: Arthur Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet. The Indian Naqshbandiyya and the Rise of the Mediating Sufi Shaykh* (Columbia, South Carolina 1998), Foreword, x.

⁴¹ See recent publications of Devin DeWeese on this subject, e. g., "The Mashā'ikh-i Turk and the Khojagon: Rethinking the links between the Yasavi and the Naqshbandi Sufi Traditions", in: *Journal of Islamic Studies* 7/2 (1996), 180-207.

have to be those who represent the other side. The issue of whether an "ethics of labor" could be constructed out of early Khwājagānī teachings in fact was debated at the Konrad Adenauer symposium; and some of the Uzbek authors clearly try to do just this.

What is maybe more important for the historian is another question. What we observe is that on the one hand, a resurgence of Naqshbandi practice "from below" is under way in Uzbekistan; on the other hand, this resurgence is not countered by the government (maybe not yet), but instead, government tries to integrate and use this current to promote values which are not altogether new in an ex-Soviet context⁴². Serve society, work honestly, do not stick your head out, listen to what your "ancestors" say, do not aspire to self-fulfillment if this means a really individual effort - this is entirely compatible with Soviet ethics, where people receiving important decorations or being otherwise promoted ritually said: "I am serving the Soviet Union"⁴³. These values are being taken up and interpreted as "national" (rather than Muslim), and in this process, Muslim "great ancestors" are interpreted as "national heroes" who now take the place of the former Soviet heroes; the structures remain unchanged, and the hagiographic process underlying this continues unabated, only a new source is tapped, a new set of materials and persons is taken to contribution.

To come to the question: Are Naqshbandi "ancestors" particularly susceptible of being used in this manner, and if so, why should that

⁴² See Levin's remarks on this subject, *The Hundred Thousand Fools of God*, 110f. At the renovated shrine of Bahā'uddīn, he had the feeling that this was "a turnkey shrine ordered up by the government to authenticate the Muslim element in its ideological blend of secular Islamic nationalism. In fact, the neatly bricked walkways and flower gardens, the gaggles of schoolchildren on their guided tours, the roving television crew from Tashkent - all could equally well have made up the set of a Communist-era shrine to Lenin or to Soviet war heroes" (111). Without going as far as Levin does, I agree with him on the essential point: the continuity between Soviet and post-Soviet hagiography.

⁴³ *Sluzhu Sovetskomu Soiuzu*. That is to say: my effort is nothing, the Soviet Union is all.

be so? There seems to be a kind of more or less fragile alliance between some Naqshbandi activists in Uzbekistan (who are the agents of the resurgence of the *ṭarīqat* "from below" and also to a certain degree of the re-islamization going on) and the Uzbek government. In the generations following ʿAbdalkhāliq, Sunni Muslims in Central Asia assumed the task of re-islamization after the turmoil and disruption of the Mongol conquest, and among them, and maybe in a prominent position, those whom we now know as representatives of the Khwājagānī movement. These early Khwājagān, therefore, emphasized the need to follow the sunna of the Prophet more than most other groups, it seems also that they got involved in polemics with other (maybe heterodox, maybe simply not quite as sunni) groups in the course of the 14th century⁴⁴. At the present juncture, re-islamization again is an issue (after several generations of Soviet rule; this point is very much stressed and perhaps overstated by Schubel when he discusses the effects of "scientific atheism"). The nationalist political leadership of the Uzbek republic seems willing to use this effort for its own purposes as long as the Naqshbandi leaders accept that their spiritual ancestors are depicted not so much as spiritual masters, but of national cultural heroes.

⁴⁴ See Devin DeWeese, "Khojagani Origins and the Critique of Sufism: The Rhetoric of Communal Uniqueness in the *Manāqib* of ʿAlī ʿAzīzān Rāmītānī". – Forthcoming in: F. de Jong (ed), *Sufism and its Opponents* (proceedings of a conference on this subject held at Utrecht).