A Mid-Fifteenth-Century Attestation of the Muhammad Shahi Isma‘ilis: Between Khudawand Muhammad and Shah Tahir Dakani

Kazuo MORIMOTO*

This study presents a hitherto unknown attestation from the mid-fifteenth century CE of the followers of the Muḥammad Shāhī branch of Nizārī Ismā‘īlism. The attestation in question is a marginal note found on folio 25b of MS British Library Or. 1406, a notebook of a Twelver Shi‘i genealogist from Najaf. The subject of the marginal note is a “*madhhab*” (religious group) attributed to a Khūn Muḥammad, a figure identifiable as the Nizārī imam Khudāwand Muḥammad (fl. in the second half of the fourteenth century). The note includes references to Khurāsān, Ray, Sulṭāniyya, and “*K-S-K-R* Khūn Muḥammad” in Gilān, which are mentioned as the places where sub-groups of Khūn Muḥammad’s *madhhab* were found at the time. The Najafī genealogist states that he met members of some of those sub-groups. The marginal note, in addition, shows the genealogist’s understanding that one such sub-group was called *al-Khūndiyya*. Further, the reference to a Shāh Ṭāhir in relation to the sub-group in Sulṭāniyya allows us to use this note as a source for discussing the background of Shāh Ṭāhir Dakanī, a well-known Muḥammad Shāhī imam from the first half of the sixteenth century. The Shāh Ṭāhir in the note is no doubt Dakanī’s grandfather. This linkage makes it clear that “*al-Khūndiyya*” as the name of Dakanī’s family derives from the family’s relationship with former Nizārī imams, that is, *khudāwands*, and possibly also from the family’s contemporary status as the family of the imamate, rather than simply from a (possibly fictitious) toponym Khūnd as has been explained to date. Lastly, this note enables us to establish a link between Muḥammad Shāhī Shāh Ṭāhir and Khudāwand Muḥammad, the nature of which reinforces the general understanding that Khudāwand Muḥammad was a Muḥammad Shāhī imam, in spite of a recent opinion that suggests otherwise.

Keywords: Nizari Isma‘ilism, Khudawand Muhammad, *Khundiyya*, Shah Tahir Dakani, MS British Library Or. 1406

I. Introduction

In the long history of Nizārī Ismā‘īlī Shi‘ism, the two centuries after the fall of Alamūt in 654 AH/1256 CE is arguably the most poorly understood. It is generally accepted that Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh, after his execution by the Mongols in 655/1257, was succeeded by his son Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad as imam. It is also considered an established fact that the Nizārīs split into two branches, the Qāsim Shāhīs and the Muḥammad Shāhīs, not long after the demise of Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. reportedly around 710/1310). However, as Farhad Daftary puts it, “[p]ractically nothing is known about the imams who, according to Nizārī traditions, succeeded one another in Persia” until the Qāsim Shāhī imams emerged in Anjudān (between Sulṭānābād/Arāk

* Associate Professor, Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, the University of Tokyo

and Maḥallāt) in the second half of the ninth/fifteenth century in what is sometimes dubbed the “Anjudān revival.”¹ This observation regarding the obscurity of the Nizārīs is now more appropriate for the Muḥammad Shāhīs rather than the Qāsim Shāhīs, since Shafique Virani’s 2007 monograph focuses on the situation of the Qāsim Shāhīs until the end of the ninth/fifteenth century (Virani 2007).²

There is no doubt that the dearth of source materials is a major cause of the current situation. It is true that more and more sources internal to the Nizārī Ismā‘īlī community are currently becoming available to scholars, thanks mainly to the efforts by that very community. But the semi-mythical nature and the later dates of many of those internal sources often call for corroboration by external, and desirably contemporary, sources. The discovery of such external sources, however, relies mostly on chance, since there are often no more than sporadic mentions of the Nizārīs scattered across sources in different genres. It is therefore desirable that useful sources external to the Nizārī community be made known to the scholarly community in order to further our understanding of the history of the Nizārī Ismā‘īlīs during that obscure period.

In view of all the above, this brief article draws the attention of the specialists in the field to a hitherto unknown attestation of Nizārī Ismā‘īlīs from around the mid-ninth/fifteenth century. The attestation in question refers to the followers of what is evidently a religious group that was attributed to a “Khūn Muḥammad.” As explained below, this figure can be identified as the Nizārī imam known as Khudāwand Muḥammad. The attestation also includes references to Khurāsān, Ray, Sulṭāniyya, and “K-S-K-R Khūn Muḥammad” in Gīlān, which are mentioned as the places where sub-groups of the group attributed to Khūn Muḥammad were found at that time. The attestation, in addition, includes a reference to the appellation *al-Khūndiyya* used in relation to the group.

Another interesting feature of the attestation is its inclusion of the reference to a Shāh Ṭāhir, who is presented as a figure with a connection with the sub-group in Sulṭāniyya. This Shāh Ṭāhir is no doubt the grandfather of Shāh Ṭāhir Dakanī, a well-known Muḥammad Shāhī imam from the first half of the tenth/sixteenth century (d. between 952/1545–46 and 956/1549–50). This finding reveals that “*al-Khūndiyya/al-Khwāndiyya*,” as the name of the family to which Shāh Ṭāhir Dakanī belonged, did not derive merely from a toponym Khūnd or Khwānd as has been explained so far, but rather from “*khudāwand*” as an appellation of Nizārī imams. In addition, the link between Muḥammad Shāhī Shāh Ṭāhir Dakanī and the group linked to Khudāwand Muḥammad in the attestation indicates that Khudāwand Muḥammad was also a Muḥammad Shāhī personage. This is significant because that identity, although generally accepted by scholars in the field, was challenged by Virani in his 2007 monograph.

II. The Marginal Note on Folio 25b, MS British Library Or. 1406

1. A General Description of the Marginal Note

What concerns us here is a marginal note found on folio 25b of MS British Library Or. 1406. MS

¹ For the outline of the historical development during the period and general situation of the research on it, see Daftary 2007, 403–422, 451–452. The quotation is from 413.

² Another important recent contribution to the history of the Nizārīs during the period is Eboo Jamal 2002, which focuses on the poet Nizārī Qūhistānī (645/1247–48—720/1320), who was a contemporary to Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad and whose *Safarnāma* contains no information about the Nizārīs’ split.

British Library Or. 1406 was produced by a Twelver Shi'i expert of 'Alid genealogy from Najaf named 'Alī b. Qāsim al-Mūsawī al-Najafī, who wrote various texts in which he took interest into a codex (possibly unbound). In other words, it is a genealogist's notebook or scrapbook. Al-Mūsawī al-Najafī appears to have filled the folios around the second half of the 860s/the first half of the 1460s. The manuscript as we have it now, however, contains marginal notes added by al-Mūsawī al-Najafī himself, and the latest date mentioned in those notes is 885/1480–81.³

Copied into folios 19a–28b of MS British Library Or. 1406 is a treatise entitled the *Bayān al-ad'iyā'* which enumerates the names and genealogies of those people whose claims to 'Alid descent were denied by the experts and who were classified as "impostors" (*ad'iyā'*).⁴ By adding the marginal note that concerns us here, al-Mūsawī al-Najafī clearly meant to record his encounters with the people whom he considered to be impostors, as he did with other marginal notes he wrote on the folios onto which he copied the *Bayān al-ad'iyā'*.⁵ In other words, what al-Mūsawī al-Najafī wanted to record was not the *madhhab* as a religious group per se, but the *madhhab*, or rather its leadership, conceived of as a kinship group.

2. Reading the Marginal Note

The facsimile of the marginal note in question is appended at the end of this study (Fig. 1). I present in the following my reading of the note's original text in Arabic and my translation thereof. Brackets ([]) in the original text indicate my proposals for reconstructing the portions towards the edge of the folio (beginning of the lines) now lost because of the infelicitous job of a later binder. The brackets in the English translation, likewise, indicate my own supplements. Those portions in the translation that are based on my supplements to the original text are indicated by an underline.

The Original Text in Arabic

س. ١١: [فرقة بالري	س. ١: من ولد إسماعيل
س. ١٢: رأيت منهم جماعة	س. ٢: مذهب
س. ١٣: فرقة بالسلطانية	س. ٣: خون محمد
س. ١٤: أولهم شاه حاكم	س. ٤: [بخـ]راسان رأيت منهم جماعة
س. ١٥: رأيت شاه طاهر وكان في سمنان يضيع وقته شارب الخمر	س. ٥: [يقـ]ال لهم الخوندية
س. ١٦: [لم] يتزوج	س. ٦: [فر]قة ترون إمامة
س. ١٧: فرقة كيلان في موضع	س. ٧: [ولد إ]سماعيل من دون ولد
س. ١٨: يسمى كسكر خون	س. ٨: [عـ]لي عليه السلام ويحلون
س. ١٩: محمد هناك	س. ٩: [مـ]ا يحرم الله
س. ٢٠: رأيتهم سنة خمسة وستين وثمانمائة	س. ١٠: في كتابه منهم

³ I have discussed MS. British Library Or. 1406 on several occasions, and my understanding of the process of the manuscript's formation has developed (and changed) significantly during the process. See Morimoto 2008; 2010; 2016. For my latest understating, see Morimoto 2016, esp., 151–156.

⁴ An edition in printed form of this treatise is available now (Ibn Kafīla Ḥusaynī 1392 AHS).

⁵ For the contents of other marginal notes, see Morimoto 2016, 153–156.

English Translation

[ll. 1–3] Among the descendants of Ismāʿīl are [the leaders (and followers of)] the *madhhab* of Khūn Muḥammad. [l. 4] In Khurāsān I saw a group from among them. [l. 5] They are called al-Khūndiyya. [ll. 6–10] [They are] a group that believes in the imamate of the descendants of Ismāʿīl to the exclusion of the [other] descendants of ‘Alī – peace be upon him – and declare lawful what God forbids in his Book. [ll. 10–12] Among them is a group in Ray of which I saw a group. [ll. 13–16] [As for] the group in Sulṭāniyya, I saw Shāh Ṭāhir. The first of them was Shāh Ḥākim. He was in Simnān wasting his time [in delinquencies] and drinking wine, and he never got married. [ll. 17–20] The group in Gilān is found in a place called *K-S-K-R* Khūn Muḥammad. There I saw them in the year 865 (1460–61).

Notes Pertaining to the Reading of the Original

L. 6 “*tarawna*” and l. 15 “*al-khamr*”: The letter *rāʾ* in both places admittedly looks rather like a *dāl*, but the text at both places makes a good sense with the current reading. The fact that the same thing occurs twice in the text of one and the same marginal note reinforces the appropriateness of the reading.

L. 7 “[*walad/wuld*]”: Line 7 in its hypothetical original form with the supplementation of this word would admittedly project to the right hand side vis-à-vis the other lines. I would nonetheless submit this supplementation as a way to make sense of the text in ll. 6–8. Consider also the fact that the text in line 6 would read more naturally if we supplemented “*hum*” at the beginning (*hum firqa^{un} tarawna* [. . .]). If that supplementation were made, which I have refrained from doing in order to keep my speculative supplementations minimal, the beginning of line 6 would be located even more to the right.

L. 8 “*alayhi al-salām*”: This optative is represented by an abridgment which clearly stands for it. I cannot tell exactly of what letters the abridgment is composed because of its stylization. See Fig. 1.

L. 14 “*awwaluhum*”: It appears in the high-resolution image that I possess that “*awwal*” here is written over what likely was “*min*” of “*min-hum*.”

L. 15 “*yuḍīʿu waqtahu*” and “*shārib^a al-khamr*”: The reading “*yuḍīʿu waqtahu*” is chosen partly because it resonates with “*shārib^a al-khamr*” that follows it. The *wāw* of *waqt* admittedly looks like a *dāl*. What I have rendered “*al-khamr*” looks far more like “*liʿl-khamr*.” I have opted for the current reading in consideration of its grammatical soundness.

L. 16 “[*lam*]”: This supplementation is based solely on what appears to be the remainder of a vertical line found on the very edge of the folio, to the lower right from “*yatazawwaj*.”

Notes Pertaining to the Translation

LI. 1–3: The unnaturalness here of identifying a religious group called a *madhhab* with part of the descendants (*walad/wuld*) of a person may be eliminated by paying attention to the tight spaces between the three lines. It may be possible that al-Mūsawī al-Najafī first wrote “*min walad/wuld Ismāʿīl Khūn Muḥammad*” and then added the word “*madhhab*.”

L. 4 “*bi-Khurāsān*”: The other possibility is to connect this phrase to the phrase preceding it and translate the relevant portion as “Among the descendants of Ismāʿīl are [the leaders (and

followers of)] the *madhhab* of Khūn Muḥammad in Khurāsān. I saw a group called al-Khūndiyya from among them.” I adduce the phrase “*hunāka ra’aytuhum*” in ll. 19–20 as another instance where place of the meeting is mentioned before the fact of meeting as a support for my interpretation. It might, however, be argued back that the word order in ll. 19–20 is due to the emphasis the writer wanted to put on the place of meeting.

Ll. 5–6: It is ambiguous whether “they” in “They are called al-Khūndiyya” and “[They are] a group that believes [. . .]” signifies Khūn Muḥammad’s religious group (*madhhab*) as a whole or the group in Khurāsān only. As for the latter, I would opt for the *madhhab* as a whole, on the basis of my observation that it is more natural for the explanation of the dogma following it to be linked to the religious group as a whole rather than to a sub-group within it. On the contrary, I see no strong basis for sacrificing the sequence of the text in the case of the former, and would understand that “They” there stands for the group in Khurāsān. However, I believe that the appellation *al-Khūndiyya* in reality – that is, regardless of al-Mūsawī al-Najafī’s presentation – covered the whole of Khūn Muḥammad’s *madhhab*, as I will discuss below.

Ll. 14–16: These three lines are especially problematic. That “[*ra*]aytu Shāh Ṭāhir” was written first can be inferred from its position, especially from its vertical position which puts it roughly in the middle between “*firqa bi’l-Sulṭāniyya*” above and “*firqat Kīlān*” below. It also appears in the high-resolution image that I possess that the *mīm* of “*awwaluhum*” is written over the *rāʾ* of “*Ṭāhir*.” In the meantime, “*wa-kāna fī Simnān yuḍīʿu waqtahu shārib^a al-khamr*” appears to be the continuation of “*awwaluhum Shāh Ḥākim*,” because (what appears to be) the *wāw* (meaning “and”) at the beginning is written in the upper position as if to suggest that continuation or, rather, as if to show that the writer was trying to find the proper positioning of the second line after writing “*Shāh Ḥākim*.” I consider “[*lam*] yatazawwaj” as the continuation of “*wa-kāna fī Simnān yuḍīʿu waqtahu shārib^a al-khamr*.” For one thing, it pertains to the situation of the subject’s life just as the phrase towards the end of the mentioned portion does. For another, if “[*lam*] yatazawwaj” supposedly pertains to Shāh Ṭāhir, the writer likely could have written it just in the same line as “[*ra*]aytu Shāh Ṭāhir,” since the space was probably still open. This, however, is presented merely as the most likely interpretation. Other possible interpretations include reading “*Wa-kāna fī Simnān yuḍīʿu waqtahu shārib^a al-khamr*” and “[*lam*] yatazawwaj” as the continuation to “[*ra*]aytu Shāh Ṭāhir.” We may perhaps separate “[*lam*] yatazawwaj” from “*Wa-kāna fī Simnān* [. . .]” and connect the former to “[*ra*]aytu Shāh Ṭāhir,” too.

III. Interpretation and Evaluation of the Marginal Note

The marginal note on folio 25b of MS British Library Or. 1406 conveys that there was a religious group, deserving the appellation “*madhhab*,” named after a Khūn Muḥammad. The note also reports that the group’s sub-groups, characterized unsystematically as “*firqa*” or “*jamāʿa*,” were found in Khurāsān, Ray, Sulṭāniyya, and Gilān, more precisely in a place called *K-S-K-R* Khūn Muḥammad, around the middle of the ninth/fifteenth century. The religious group was linked to “Ismāʿīl” in two ways, according to what al-Mūsawī al-Najafī writes. The first link was that of descent. The note appears to say that the group, that is, either only its leaders or also including its followers, but in either case naturally including Khūn Muḥammad himself, was descended from

an Ismāʿīl. Alternatively, we may assume that the descent al-Mūsawī al-Najafī had in mind when he wrote “from among the descendants of” was that of Khūn Muḥammad, as suggested above. The second link is through the group’s creed. Al-Mūsawī al-Najafī appears to be reporting that the group believed in the imamate of the descendants of an ‘Alid called Ismāʿīl to the exclusion of ‘Alids from the other lines. Even if this interpretation is not accepted, al-Mūsawī al-Najafī’s report leaves no doubt that the group held the imamate of an Ismāʿīl, although it is not clear whether the belief pertained to the imamate in the past or during their own time. Al-Mūsawī al-Najafī also mentions the antinomianism of the religious group, and, last but not least, appears to refer to “*al-Khūndiyya*” as a name pertaining to a sub-group that was found in Khurāsān.

Who then was Khūn Muḥammad, and what significance does the marginal note have for elucidating the history of his religious group? After clarifying what is written in the text of the marginal note, it is now time for an in-depth interpretation and evaluation of it.

1. The Identity of “*Khūn Muḥammad*” and His “*Madhhab*”

With what figure and religious group can we identify this Khūn Muḥammad and his *madhhab*? I submit, on the basis of the reasons enumerated below, that we can identify Khūn Muḥammad in the text as the Nizārī imam Khudāwand Muḥammad, who was an active player in the regional politics of Daylam during the second half of the eighth/fourteenth century. Khudāwand Muḥammad was a figure emblematic of the continued activities of the Nizārīs in the Alburz mountains after the fall of Alamūt and, at one point during his turbulent career of alliances and betrayals, even controlled Alamūt for a while (Daftary 2007, 415–417; Virani 2007, 35–37, 38–39).

The two-fold link with “Ismāʿīl,” of course, serves as a basis for this identification. Khudāwand Muḥammad as an Ismāʿīlī imam must indeed have been accepted as “among the descendants of Ismāʿīl” (l. 1) b. Jaʿfar al-Šādiq, and Ismāʿīlism upheld the imamate of the descendants of the same Ismāʿīl (ll. 6–8).⁶ But, that is not the only basis. The appellation *al-Khūndiyya* with a *dāl*, which reportedly was used in connection with the religious group, leaves no doubt that “*khūn*” actually stands for “*khūd*,” and “*khūd*” is explained as a variant of “*khudāwand*” even in Dihkhudā’s *Lughat-nāma* (Dihkhudā 1372 AHS, vol. 6, 8910 [s.v., “*khūd*”]). As Daftary explains, “*khudāwand*” was a title used generically for Nizārī imams in the Persian sources of the time (Daftary 2007, 302. See also Marʿashī 1364 AHS, 129). It is therefore not my intention to assert that “*al-Khūndiyya*” derived from the “*Khūn*” of Khūn Muḥammad. The mentioned comparison between *al-Khūndiyya* and *Khūn*, however, should be tenable even without such a claim.

The reference to the presence of the *madhhab*’s sub-group in Sulṭāniyya also supports this identification, as Sulṭāniyya is the very locale where Khudāwand Muḥammad was confined by Timur at one juncture in his turbulent political life and where, as Ṣāḥib al-Dīn Marʿashī (d. after 894/1489) puts it in his *Tārikh-i Gilān wa Daylamistān*, Khudāwand Muḥammad’s descendants

⁶ Even if my supplementing “*wuld/walad*” before “*Ismāʿīl*” were not accepted, the text would still convey the religious group’s linkage of the imamate with an “Ismāʿīl.” We would thus still be able to use this portion of the text as a basis for identifying Khūn Muḥammad’s *madhhab* as (part of the) Ismāʿīlīs. On another note, none of the impostors mentioned in the main text of the *Bayān al-adʿiyā* on the same page (25b) is descended from Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar al-Šādiq or has anything substantial to do with Ismāʿīlism. All in all, the rest of what is found on folio 25b does not help us in our interpretation of the marginal note.

still lived in the late ninth/fifteenth century (Marʿashī 1364 AHS, 65; Daftary 2007, 416–417, 451; Virani 2007, 36. See also Tāmir 1419 AH, 192–195). In view of all these, there remains no doubt that “Khūn Muḥammad” stands for Khudāwand Muḥammad.

What religious group then does al-Mūsawī al-Najafī signify by Khūn Muḥammad’s *madhhab*? It is generally accepted that we can consider all the Ismāʿīlīs in Iran during the period in question as Nizārīs unless any clear sign shows otherwise. We know that the Nizārīs had split into the Qāsim Shāhī and Muḥammad Shāhī branches in the first half of the eighth/fourteenth century, that is, more than one century before al-Mūsawī al-Najafī wrote the marginal note. The most straightforward and natural answer to the question, therefore, will be that the *madhhab* signifies either of the two branches, the one that was formerly led by Khudāwand Muḥammad. A caveat, however, appears to be necessary. Although it appears safe to surmise on the basis of the two-fold reference to “Ismāʿīl,” especially the mention of the imamate, that al-Mūsawī al-Najafī knew he was dealing with Ismāʿīlīs, we cannot know whether he knew anything about the split within the Nizārīs. Thus, we cannot deny the possibility that part of the sub-groups that al-Mūsawī al-Najafī mentions belong to the other branch – the non-Khudāwand Muḥammad branch – but that al-Mūsawī, unaware of the difference, put all in one and the same basket. If that were the case, the sub-group in Sulṭāniyya would be the only one of the four sub-groups about whose connection with Khudāwand Muḥammad we can be certain, because of our knowledge about Khudāwand Muḥammad’s confinement there.

2. The Marginal Note as a Source for the History of Post-Alamūt Nizārī Ismāʿīlism

We now move on to discuss notable features of this marginal note as a source for the history of post-Alamūt Nizārī Ismāʿīlism. Based on the above reading and interpretations, the following can be counted as the noteworthy features of this note.

Firstly, the note is a source for the geographical distribution of the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs towards the middle of the ninth/fifteenth century: namely, it enumerates their presence in Khurāsān, Ray, Sulṭāniyya, and *K-S-K-R* Khūn Muḥammad in Gīlān. None of these, admittedly, surprises us as the location of a Nizārī congregation. It is, however, noteworthy that al-Mūsawī al-Najafī states that he himself met the members of three of those local sub-groups, in one case even recording the date of the meeting (865/1460–61). Regarding the reference to Khurāsān, it should be helpful to note that we know from other marginal notes in MS British Library Or. 1406 that al-Mūsawī al-Najafī certainly visited Herat and Mashhad and may also have visited Isfarāʾin and Astarābād (although the latter is technically not in Khurāsān) (Morimoto 2016, 153–154).

Where was *K-S-K-R* Khūn Muḥammad? “*K-S-K-R*” naturally leads us to Gaskar, a city of significant importance (though only ruins remain today) in Biya Pas (the area lying to the west of the Safīdrūd river) in Gīlān.⁷ Al-Mūsawī al-Najafī, however, appears to be referring to a compound name “*K-S-K-R* Khūn Muḥammad.” It thus appears worthwhile to consider other possible interpretations, without discarding Gaskar as the most likely candidate. Here, I would like to suggest the possibility to read it as a corrupted form or a variant of كشه, the name of a place

⁷ I thank Professor Manšūr Šifatgul (University of Tehran) for teaching me of the existence of Gaskar. In spite of my use of “naturally” in the main text, I had not heard of the city’s name before he pointed it out to me in March 2017.

that is mentioned as a center of Ismāʿīlīs in Daylam in the second half of the eighth/fourteenth century by Ẓahīr al-Dīn Marʿashī (Marʿashī 1364 AHS, 136, 137). The name كشه is also used alone, without any additional phrase to make a compound, in the text in this case, too. But if this place was well-known as a center of the Ismāʿīlīs, then the addition of the name of the sect's imam Khūn Muḥammad to its name would appear not that unnatural, at least in comparison to the case of such a well-known town as Gaskar. This would also enable us to locate K-S-K-R Khūn Muḥammad in the Alburz mountains area, a more traditional and expected stage for Ismāʿīlī activities.⁸

The second notable feature of the marginal note is the fact that al-Mūsawī al-Najafī could realize that the group's creed included the belief in the *imamate* of the descendants of Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq or an Ismāʿīl. This is interesting in view of the emphasis scholars place on the strict observance of *taqiyya* (dissimulation of one's religious belief) by the Nizārīs during the period (Daftary 2007, 410, 412–413, 418–422, 431; Virani 2007, 47–49, 136–137). Although it is not clear whether it was from the members of the group themselves or from another channel that al-Mūsawī al-Najafī got the information, he certainly did not mistake the group for, say, a Sufi network in the guise of which the Ismāʿīlīs at the time were often operating.

The appearance of Shāh Ṭāhir as a figure related to the sub-group in Sulṭāniyya (l. 15) is another notable feature of the note. This allows us to link the information found in the note to Shāh Ṭāhir Dakanī (d. between 952/1545–46 and 956/1549–50). Shāh Ṭāhir Dakanī is a well-known Muḥammad Shāhī imam who fled to the Deccan from Ṣafawid Iran under Shāh Ismāʿīl's reign (907/1501–930/1524), rose to a prominent position at the court of Burhān I of the Nizām Shāhīs (r. 915/1509–961/1554), and converted Burhān to Twelver Shiʿism while dissimulating his Ismāʿīlī identity.⁹

The Shāh Ṭāhir who appears in the marginal note is Shāh Ṭāhir Dakanī's grandfather. Shāh Ṭāhir's genealogy, as reconstructed by Daftary, was Shāh Ṭāhir b. Raḍī al-Dīn II b. Ṭāhir (d. 868/1463–64) b. Raḍī al-Dīn (d. 838/1434) b. Muḥammad Shāh b. Mu'min Shāh.¹⁰ It is also reported, by the contemporary Muḥammad Shāhī scholar ʿArif Tāmir who relies heavily on the tradition within his own community in Syria, that Ṭāhir the grandfather was born in Sulṭāniyya in 821/1418–19 and that Raḍī al-Dīn II, Shāh Ṭāhir Dakanī's father, was also born in Sulṭāniyya in 857/1453.¹¹ Moreover, two sources from the late tenth/sixteenth to the twelfth/eighteenth century point to Sulṭāniyya as Shāh Ṭāhir Dakanī's own birthplace.¹²

⁸ Kashkash (كشكش) in Khargām-i ʿAmārlū district, also in the Alburz mountains, could possibly be a candidate too, because of its name and location. There is a ruins of a fortress near the village. See Sutūda 1374–75 AHS, vol. 1, 500.

⁹ For Shāh Ṭāhir Dakanī's career, see Daftary 2005; 2007, 452–455; Ṣafā 1373 AHS, 662–670, and the references cited in the latter two.

¹⁰ Daftary 2007, 451. See also Tāmir 1419 AH, 191–195. The death dates, presented by Tāmir and then taken by Daftary, apparently derive from the tradition within the Muḥammad Shāhī community of Syria from which Tāmir came.

¹¹ Tāmir 1419 AH, 194–195. Although Ṭāhir the grandfather was reportedly born in Sulṭāniyya, he spent his life in Syria and Shīrāz, according to Tāmir. Note, however, that Tāmir also reports that Raḍī al-Dīn II was born in Sulṭāniyya.

¹² Shāhnavāz Khān 1388 AHS, 374; Rāzī 1389 AHS, vol. 2, 1367–1369. Apart from Sulṭāniyya, Hamadān is also named as Shāh Ṭāhir Dakanī's birthplace in some sources. A common feature of those relatively later sources is that they misrepresent Dakanī as an individual from an ʿAlid family settled in Anjudān (a clear sign that their authors mistook Dakanī as a member of the Qāsim Shāhī line settled there), and therefore the information they provide should not bother us too much. See Ādhar Biḡdilī 1336–39 AHS, vol. 3, 1267; Hidāyat 1385 AHS, 194. See also Gūpāmawī 1387 AHS, 485. I thank Professor Nobuaki Kondo for letting me consult his copy of the most recent, 1388 AHS edition of the *Bahāristān-i sukhān* (i.e., Shāhnavāz Khān 1388 AHS).

What does this linkage between the content of the marginal note and Shāh Ṭāhir Dakanī add to our knowledge? In addition to strengthening the theory of Shāh Ṭāhir Dakanī's Sultāniyya background, this finding enables us to fine-tune our knowledge about his family background. Sources recounting Shāh Ṭāhir's career state that he was from an 'Alid family named al-Khūndiyya or al-Khwāndiyya (*sādāt-i Khūndiyya/Khwāndiyya*), thus named, it is explained, because of their inhabitation in a place (village in some sources) called Khūnd or Khwānd. This Khūnd/Khwānd was reportedly located to the north of Qazwīn in the Alburz mountains.¹³ It is evident that *al-Khūndiyya* appearing in our marginal note can be identified with this al-Khūndiyya/Khwāndiyya, although the former, when literally read, refers to a religious group, rather than a kinship group that formed its core.

Thus, through its reference to Shāh Ṭāhir of the Sultāniyya sub-group and to *al-Khūndiyya*, our marginal note reveals that *al-Khūndiyya/Khwāndiyya* as the name of Dakanī's family is linked to the word "*khudāwand*" as a title of Ismā'īlī imams, if it did not derive from the appellation of Khudāwand Muḥammad himself. None of the authors of the sources that mention Khūnd/Khwānd as a toponym from which the family name al-Khūndiyya/Khwāndiyya supposedly derived appears to have known the place himself. They were simply repeating the etymology whose original source is unclear. I have not been able to find a place called Khūnd/Khwānd in the related geographical areas in the relevant sources.¹⁴ Thus, Khūnd/Khwānd might possibly have been a fictitious toponym invented to explain, or hide the true etymology of, the name al-Khūndiyya/Khwāndiyya.¹⁵ It may, at the same time, be possible that the toponym Khūnd/Khwānd refers to none other than *K-S-K-R* Khūn Muḥammad in the marginal note. In this case, the derivation of al-Khūndiyya/Khwāndiyya from a related toponym should duly be accepted as a fact. This, however, does not affect my argument, as the toponym itself would have been derived from Khudāwand Muḥammad's name. In either case, it is now clear that *al-Khūndiyya/Khwāndiyya* as the name of Dakanī's family points to the family's connection with the title *khudāwand*, a connection it no doubt enjoyed because of its status as the family of the imamate. However, it is unclear whether Shāh Ṭāhir Dakanī himself was also called *khudāwand* by his followers during the first half of the tenth/sixteenth century.

This discussion of the term *al-Khūndiyya* leads us to the fourth notable point of the marginal note, namely, the very appearance of the name "*al-Khūndiyya*" in connection with a religious group linked to Khudāwand Muḥammad. To date, "*Khūndiyya*" has been known only as the name of Shāh Ṭāhir Dakanī's family. The seeming discrepancy in the two usages can be eliminated by

¹³ According to the *Tārīkh-i Firīšta*, the most important single source for Shāh Ṭāhir Dakanī's career, Khūnd "belonged to Qazwīn and was located on the border with Gilān" (*az muḍāfat-i Qazwīn ast wa sar ḥadd-i Gilān wāqī' shuda*) (Astarābādī 1393 AHS, 358). This locates it in the Alburz mountains separating Qazwīn area from Gilān. The two sources cited in n. 12 as presenting Sultāniyya as Shāh Ṭāhir Dakanī's birthplace do also report that Shāh Ṭāhir Dakanī's family first settled in "Khwānd" in the Alburz mountains or "in Rūdbār of Qazwīn." Both sources, then, state that the family moved to Sultāniyya during the reign of the city's founder Ōljeitū (r. 703/1304–716/1316).

¹⁴ I checked the indices of Mustawfī 1915–19; 1362 AHS; 1394 AHS; Mar'ashī 1364 AHS; Sutūda 1374–75 AHS; Krawulsky 1978, as well as Pāpuli Yazdī's gazetteer (1367 AHS). Needless to say, no survey today can demonstrate that Khūnd/Khwānd never existed in the period under question.

¹⁵ Ṣafā states in a footnote that "some" interpreted *Khwāndiyya* to be a shortened form of *Khudāwandiyya* (Ṣafā 1373 AHS, 663n1). None of the sources Ṣafā cites at the beginning of the biographical notice he dedicates to Shāh Ṭāhir, however, suggests such a view. Ṣafā does not discuss the connotation of "*Khudāwandiyya*," either. See also Tāmir 1959, 856; 1419 AH, 191; Nafīsī 1363 AHS, vol. 2, 803, where forms deriving from *khudāwand* (*al-usra al-Khudāwandiyya*, *Khudāwandān*, [*al-*]*Khudāwandiyya*) are mentioned.

interpreting that the name was used both for the religious group and for the family of its leaders. As discussed above, al-Mūsawī al-Najafī appears to be saying that only a part of the sub-group in Khurāsān was called by that name. However, given the etymology of the name from “*khudāwand*,” which signifies a Nizārī imam in a generic manner, the name may well have been used in relation to the whole of the group attributed to Khūn Muḥammad or even of the Nizārīs. That this actually was the case is indicated by the fact that Shāh Ṭāhir Dakanī’s family was also named al-Khūndiyya in spite of their reported residence in Gīlān and/or Sulṭāniyya. This apparent misrepresentation may be attributed either to al-Mūsawī al-Najafī’s lack of precise understanding or to the sloppy way in which he presented his correct understanding of the matter. However, there remains a possibility that al-Mūsawī al-Najafī is actually saying that the whole of Khūn Muḥammad’s *madhhab* was called *al-Khūndiyya*, as suggested above in the notes pertaining to the translation of the marginal note.

The fifth and probably the most notable feature of the marginal note is that it mentions Khudāwand Muḥammad and Shāh Ṭāhir Dakanī’s grandfather in one place. This reinforces the general understanding that Khudāwand Muḥammad was an imam of the Muḥammad Shāhī branch of the Nizārī Ismā‘īlism. Khudāwand Muḥammad is generally identified, albeit cautiously, as the imam Muḥammad Shāh b. Mu‘min Shāh b. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh, the eponymous first imam of the Muḥammad Shāhī Ismā‘īlism (Daftary 2007, 415; Virani 2007, 38–39, 94). This also means that he is widely considered to have been Shāh Ṭāhir Dakanī’s great-great-grandfather. Khudāwand Muḥammad is a name attested in the sources external to Ismā‘īlīs, while Muḥammad Shāh is a name that appears in their internal sources. However, Virani questioned this identification and proposed in his 2007 book that Khudāwand Muḥammad is actually the Qāsim Shāhī imam Islām Shāh b. Qāsim Shāh. After enumerating the bases for his proposal, which, all in all, look rather far-fetched to me, Virani states that “[i]n the absence of further information, the question of Khudāwand Muḥammad’s identity must remain open” (Virani 2007, 38–39). In this situation, our marginal note represents Shāh Ṭāhir Dakanī’s grandfather as a member (in fact the leader) of the sub-group of the *madhhab* formerly led by Khudāwand Muḥammad (n.b., not named “Muḥammad Shāh” but “Khudāwand Muḥammad” here). Given the undisputed Muḥammad Shāhī identity of Shāh Ṭāhir Dakanī, this means that Khudāwand Muḥammad was also Muḥammad Shāhī himself. The aforementioned caveat about the slight possibility that al-Mūsawī al-Najafī put all the Nizārīs he encountered under the rubric of Khūn Muḥammad’s *madhhab* can be ignored in this case, because we are talking here about the sub-group in Sulṭāniyya, which we are pretty certain was linked with Khudāwand Muḥammad.

Lastly, the reference to “Shāh Ḥākim” is another notable feature of the marginal note. The phrase “the first among them [i.e. the sub-group at Sulṭāniyya]” most probably signifies that al-Mūsawī al-Najafī understood that this Shāh Ḥākim was the first leader of the sub-group at Sulṭāniyya. Yet, I have not been able to find a reference where Khudāwand Muḥammad, the first person we think of as such because of his confinement in Sulṭāniyya at the hands of Timur, is called Ḥākim, Shāh Ḥākim or such like. I have not been able to find a mention of a relevant name in Daftary’s, Tāmīr’s, and Virani’s books, either. The reference to Shāh Ḥākim, therefore, adds an item to the list of questions awaiting answers in the quest for a clearer history of the post-Alamūt

Nizārī Ismā'īlism.

V. Conclusion

The marginal note on folio 25b of MS British Library Or. 1406, with all its brevity, provides us with useful information concerning the situation of Muḥammad Shāhī Nizārī Ismā'īlism around the middle of the ninth/fifteenth century. In addition, the information found therein helps us further our understanding of two imams of the branch from earlier and later periods, that is, Khudāwand Muḥammad and Shāh Ṭāhir Dakanī. Reading and interpreting this note, however, requires much speculation, because of the lacunae and the cursive script used. My reading and interpretations, therefore, certainly need to be scrutinized by colleagues in the field. It is hoped that this short article has successfully aroused the interest of the readers and invited them to examine this new source material from their respective perspectives.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Professor Daniel Beben for commenting on a draft of this article and to Professor Mimi Hanaoka for editing my English. My gratitude is also due to the anonymous reviewers of *Orient*, especially for their help with finessing my reading of the marginal note's text. The research for this study was supported by the JSPS Kakenhi grants-in-aid 15H01895 and 16H03531.

Bibliography

- Ādhar Bigdilī, Luṭf'alī b. Āqākhān 1336–39 AHS/1957–61: *Ātashkada*, 3 vols., ed. by Ḥ. Sādāt-i Nāširī, Tehran: Amīr-i Kabīr.
- Astarābādī, Muḥammad Qāsim Hindūshāh 1393 AHS/2014–15: *Tārīkh-i Firishṭa*, jild-i siwwum, Az 'Ādil Shāhiyān tā Barīd Shāhiyān, ed. by M. R. Naširī, Tehran: Anjuman-i Āthār wa Mafākhīr-i Farhangī.
- Daftary, F. 2005: "Shāh Ṭāhir and the Nizārī Ismaili Disguises," in T. Lawson (ed.), *Reason and Inspiration in Islam: Theology, Philosophy and Mysticism in Muslim Thought*, London and New York: I.B. Tauris in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 395–406.
- Daftary, F. 2007: *The Ismā'īlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 2nd ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dihkhudā, 'A.-A. 1372 AHS/1993–94: *Lughat-nāma*, 15 vols., Tehran: Mu'assisa-i Intishārāt wa Chāp-i Dānishgāh-i Tihārān.
- Eboo Jamal, N. 2002: *Surviving the Mongols: Nizārī Qūhistānī and the Continuity of Ismaili Tradition in Persia*, London: I.B. Tauris in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies.
- Gūpāmawī, Muḥammad Qudrat Allāh 1387 AHS/2008–09: *Tadhkira-i natā'ij al-afkār*, ed. by Y. Bābāpūr, Qom: Majma'-i Dhakhā'ir-i Islāmī.
- Hidāyat, Riḍā Qulī Khān 1385 AHS/2006–07: *Tadhkira-i riyāḍ al-'arifīn*, ed. by A. Rādfar and G. Ashīdarī, Tehran: Pazhūhishgāh-i 'Ulūm-i Insānī wa Muṭālī'āt-i Farhangī.
- Ibn Kaṭīla Ḥusaynī, 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad 1392 AHS/2013–14: *Bayān al-ad'iyā'*, ed. by K. Mūrīmūtū (K. Morimoto), in R. Ja'fariyān (ed.), *Jashn-nāma-i Ustād Sayyid Aḥmad Ishkiwarī*, Tehran: Nashr-i 'Ilm, Qom: Kitābkhāna-i Takhaṣṣuṣi-yi Tārīkh-i Islām wa Īrān and [Tehran:] Khāna-i Kitāb-i Tihārān, 959–1004.
- Krawulsky, D. 1978: *Īrān, das Reich der Īlḥāne*, Wiesbaden: Reichert.
- Mar'ashī, Zāhīr al-Dīn 1364 AHS/1985–86: *Tārīkh-i Gīlān wa Daylamistān*, ed. by M. Sutūda, 2nd ed., Tehran: Ittīlā'āt.
- Morimoto, K. 2008: "The Notebook of a Sayyid/Sharīf Genealogist: Ms. British Library Or. 1406," in D. Bredi et al. (eds.), *Scritti in onore di Biancamaria Scarcia Amoretti*, 3 vols., Rome: Dipartimento di Studi Orientali, Università di Roma (La Sapienza) and Edizioni Q, vol. 3, 823–836.
- Morimoto, K. 2010: "The Earliest 'Alid Genealogy for the Safavids: New Evidence for the Pre-Dynastic Claim to Sayyid

- Status,” *Iranian Studies* 43/4, 447–469.
- Morimoto, K. 2016: “An Enigmatic Genealogical Chart of the Timurids: A Testimony to the Dynasty’s Claim to Yasavi-‘Alid Legitimacy?” *Oriens* 44/1–2, 145–178.
- Mustawfī, Ḥamd Allāh 1915–19: *The Geographical Part of the Nuzhat-al-qulūb Composed by Hamd-Allāh Mustawfī of Qazwīn in 740 (1340)*, 2 vols., ed. by G. Le Strange, Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- Mustawfī, Ḥamd Allāh 1362 AHS/1983–84: *Tārīkh-i guzīda*, ed. by ‘Ā. Nawā’ī, 2nd ed., Tehran: Amīr-i Kabīr.
- Mustawfī, Ḥamd Allāh 1394 AHS/2015–16: *Tārīkh-i guzīda*, 2 vols., ed. by M. Rawshan, Tehran: Intishārāt-i Bunyād-i Mawqūfāt-i Duktur Maḥmūd Afshār.
- Nafīsī, S. 1363 AHS/1984–85: *Tārīkh-i naẓm wa nathr dar Īrān wa dar zabān-i Fārsī: Tā pāyān-i qarn-i dahum-i Hijrī*, 2nd ed., [Tehran]: Kitābforūshī-yi Furūghī.
- Pāpulī Yazdī, M. Ḥ. et al. 1367 AHS/1988–89: *Farhang-i ābādīhā wa makānhā-yi madhhabī-yi kishwar*, [Mashhad]: Bunyād-i Pazhūhishhā-yi Islāmī, Āstān-i Quds-i Raḍawī.
- Rāzī, Amīn Aḥmad 1389 AHS/2010–11: *Haft iqlīm*, 3 vols., ed. by M. R. Ṭāhirī, 2nd ed., Tehran: Surūsh.
- Şafā, Dh. 1373 AHS/1994–95: *Tārīkh-i adabīyāt dar Īrān*, vol. 5, pt. 2, 7th ed., Tehran: Nashr-i Andīsha.
- Shāhnawāz Khān Awrangābādī 1388 AHS/2009–10: *Bahārīstān-i-sukhan*, ed. by ‘A. Āyatī et al., Tehran: Anjuman-i Āthār wa Mafākhir-i Farhangī.
- Sutūda, M. 1374–75 AHS/1995–96: *Az Āstārā tā Istārābād*, 5 vols., 2nd ed., Tehran: Āgāh, Wizārat-i Farhang wa Irshād-i Islāmī, Anjuman-i Āthār wa Mafākhir-i Farhangī.
- Tāmir, ‘Ā. 1959: “Ṭāhir Shāh al-Nizārī al-Alamūtī,” *al-Dirāsāt al-adabīyya* (al-Jāmi‘a al-Lubnāniyya) 1, 83–93.
- Tāmir, ‘Ā. 1419 AH/1998: *al-Imāma fī al-Islām*, Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwā’.
- Virani, Sh. N. 2007: *The Ismailis in the Middle Ages: A History of Survival, a Search for Salvation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

from MS British Library Or. 1406, 25b
(© British Library Board. Or. 1406, 25b)