
The Art of Chieftaincy in the Writings of Pashtun

Tribal Rulers



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Abstract

The article surveys the views of Pashtun military-administrative elite on governance in the works of *Khushhāl Khān Khātak* (d. 1689) and *Afzal Khān Khātak* (d. circa 1740). The texts under discussion pertain to the universal literary genre of “Mirrors for Princes” (*naṣīḥat al-mulūk*) and include the *Khātak* chieftains’ didactical writings in prose and verse, as well as still poorly studied documents on real politics from *Afzal Khān*’s historiographical compilation “The Ornamented History” (*Tārīkh-i muraṣṣaʿ*). Rooted in the medieval Persian classics, early modern Pashto “mirrors” are distinguished by local ethnocultural peculiarities which manifest in shifting the very subject from statesmanship to chieftaincy and declaring regulations of the Pashtun unwritten Code of Honour. The study proves that the outlook and behavioural patterns of Pashtun tribal rulers stemmed from a combination, partly eclectic and contradictory, of Islamic precepts, feudal ideologies of the Mughal administrative system, and norms of the Pashtun customary law (*Pashtunwali*).

Keywords: Pashtuns; Pashto literature; mirrors for princes; political authority; chieftaincy; early modern Islamic societies.

1. Literary Background of the Early Modern Pashto “Mirrors for Princes”

The art of ruling belongs to the oldest and most profoundly explored topics in medieval Muslim literature. From the literary point of view, its roots may be traced in the pre-Islamic Sasanian books of instructions (*andarz*, *pandnāmak*) on statesmanship addressed to kings and high-ranking bureaucracy. Many of these writings, like a great body of the Pahlavi secular literature, have not survived in Middle Persian originals and are known to us only fragmentarily through the later works in Arabic and New Persian.¹ In emerging Muslim literature this

¹Summaries of the Middle Persian literary legacy and bibliographies see in Clima, O., “Avesta. Ancient Persian Inscriptions. Middle Persian Literature”, in J. Rypka, (et al.), *History of Iranian literature*, (ed.) K. Jahn (Dordrecht, 1968), pp. 45–47; S. Shaked, Z. Safa, “Andarz”, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, II/1 (1985), pp. 11–22, available online at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/andarz-precept-instruction-advice>, updated 2011, accessed on 5 October 2017; C. G. Cereti, “Middle Persian Literature. i. Pahlavi Literature”, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition (2009), available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/middle-persian-literature-1-pahlavi>, updated 2013, accessed on 5 October 2017.

topic necessarily required a new ideological grounding and, following the Hadith tradition, it was authorised by ascribing its formal beginnings to the ordinances and political testaments (*waṣīyya*) of the first caliphs, primarily ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 644). Towards the middle of the 8th Century precepts for rulers evolved first into a distinct branch of Arabic epistolary writings and then in the shape of a separate literary genre, very close to universal moralistic didactics (*adab*) and similar to that of “Mirror for Princes” (Fürstenspiegel) in European literatures. Key contributors to the creation of this genre were the court secretaries ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd (d. 750) and Ibn al-Muqaffā‘ (d. 756), the latter’s works betraying undisguised links with statecraft traditions and the *andarz* literature of the Sasanian times. Though in classical Arabic and Persian literatures “Mirrors for Princes” lacked a specific genre designation, these writings may be conveniently defined by the term *naṣīḥat al-mulūk* (“advice for rulers”), taking into account a few important works which shared this generic title, e.g. the books by al-Māwardī (d. 1048), the acknowledged theoretician of the Islamic administrative law, and al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), the eminent Muslim theologian and philosopher.²

In the vast territories of the Persophone world, which towards the late Middle Ages stretched from Asia Minor to East India, thematic scope and formal criteria of the *naṣīḥat al-mulūk* genre were outlined by two major and exemplary “Mirrors for Princes” – *Qābūs-nāma* (or *Naṣīḥat-nāma*) (1082) and *Siyar al-mulūk* (or *Siyāsat-nāma*) (1091/2 or 1107). Written within a short span of time in the early Saljuq period, these Persian works established two main types of discourse on the art of ruling. While the former, authored by a local Mazandarani ruler, the Ziyārid prince Kaykāvūs ‘Unṣur al-Ma‘ālī (b. circa 1021), may be described as a didactical essay with belletristic elements; the latter, traditionally attributed to the grand vizier Nizām al-Mulk (d. 1092), but more likely compiled by another person from the Saljuq secretary office, is a collection of diverse texts, obviously conceived as a technical treatise, a kind of a courtier’s guide with historiographical excursions.³

Deeply entwined with the general moralising strand of the classical Persian literature, the *naṣīḥat al-mulūk* motifs regularly surfaced in poetry and prose of many other genres. Throughout the centuries various aspects of the art of ruling were touched upon in Persian historiography and *belle-lettres* with a steady focus on the ethics of an ideal sovereign. The very concept of an ideal righteous ruler, in fact, implicitly underlies each standard Persian panegyric addressed to a man of power. Directly and thoughtfully this concept is discussed in a number of Persian top classics, such as the Sanā’ī Ghaznavī’s philosophic-didactical poem *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqa* (circa 1130), or the Nizāmī Ganjavī’s narrative *Iskandar-nāma* (1194

²Abū Ḥamīd al-Ghazālī’s *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, originally written in Persian and subsequently translated into Arabic, after the author’s death was supplemented by an anonymous Persian writer with a much longer second part which focuses on real politics and has an explicit Iranian flavour in its ideology emphasising the statesmanship heritage of the Sasanian kings and the Magians, i.e. Zoroastrian clergy. A basic outline of the *naṣīḥat al-mulūk* genre and its development in Arabic and Persian literatures see C. E. Bosworth, “Naṣīḥat al-mulūk”, in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition*, Vol. VII (Leiden and New York, 1993), pp. 984–988.

³A brief introduction to the study of *Qābūs-nāma* with updated bibliography see in de Bruijn, J. T. P., “Kaykāvūs b. Eskandar” in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition (2010), available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/kaykavus-onsor-maali>, accessed on 5 October 2017. A recent research of *Siyar al-mulūk* see A. Khismatulin, “Two Mirrors for Princes Fabricated at the Seljuq Court: Nizām al-Mulk’s *Siyar al-mulūk* and al-Ghazālī’s *Nasihat al-mulūk*”, in *The Age of the Seljuqs. The idea of Iran*. Vol. VI, (ed.) E. Herzig, S. Stewart (London, New York, 2015), pp. 94–130; the author offers here a new extravagant attribution of *Siyar al-mulūk* to the Saljuq poet laureate Muḥammad Mu‘izzī (d. circa 1124–8) and argues that the text of this work was based on the Nizām al-Mulk’s personal contract of employment.

or 1202), or Sa'dī Shīrāzī's brilliant collections of edifying stories and admonitions *Būstān* (1257) and *Gulistān* (1258). In the latter the opening chapter is unequivocally entitled *Dar sīrat-i pādshāhān* ("On the Way of Kings") which echoes aforementioned *Siyar al-mulūk* ("Ways of Rulers").

The latest visible upsurge of the *naṣīhat al-mulūk* genre in Persian literature occurred during the Mughal period in the 16–17th Centuries.⁴ It was in this Golden Age of Indo-Muslim culture and within its geographical space that the literature in the Pashto language came into being. Unlike cosmopolitan Persian literature, mature and refined, local Pashto writings were initially intended for a very small readership and for different reasons imbued with noticeable ethno-cultural peculiarities, which in the case of the *naṣīhat al-mulūk* genre manifested in shifting the subject from statesmanship to chieftaincy and dealing with particular *ad hoc* matters rather than all-purpose concepts and precepts.

In its formative period, which lasted over a century from the middle of the 16th to the late 17th Century, Pashto literature developed predominantly within two elite social groups: tribal spiritual leaders and military-administrative rulers. Texts produced by a number of Muslim preachers, tutors, and scholars of various backgrounds and doctrinal views, on the one hand, and by chieftains, on the other, strongly differed both in terms of ideology and functionality. While the former were quite expectedly homiletic writings in the form of religious handbooks or theosophical treatises, either prose or poetic, which often in a code-switching manner followed conventional Persian patterns, the latter at the very outset aimed at recording tribal legacies related to genealogies, supremacy and property regulations, and therefore best of all fall under the category of chronicles (*tārīkh*). Though the earliest extant writings in Pashto are religious texts, viz. *Khayr al-bayān* ("Best Manifest") by Bāyazīd Anṣārī (d. circa 1572) and *Makhzan al-Islām* ("Treasury of Islam") (1605) by Akhūnd Darveza (d. 1618/19 or 1638/39), there are trustworthy indications that the first Pashto books were the Yūsufzay chronicles written between 1535 and 1550 and attributed to Shaykh Malī and Khān Kajū.⁵ Though original texts of these books were lost in consequence of repeated redactions and translations into Persian and back into Pashto, their contents partly survived in the later work *Tawārīkh-i Ḥāfiẓ-Raḥmat-Khānī* (1767) compiled on the order of Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat Khān Barets (d. 1774), a Pashtun local ruler (*nawwāb*) in North India, with an implicit aim of legitimising his own political authority.⁶ Certain elements of the *naṣīhat al-mulūk* genre in "The Chronicles of Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat Khān" are discernible in a laudatory portrayal of the old-time Yūsufzay rulers, including Shaykh Malī and Khān Kajū, and accounts of their memorable military and administrative accomplishments.

⁴E.g. see Muhammad Baqir Najm-i Sani, *Advice on the Art of Governance (Mau'izah-i Jahangiri): An Indo-Islamic Mirror for Princes*, edited and translated by S. S. Alvi (Albany, 1989). Earlier specimens of the *naṣīhat al-mulūk* writings in Muslim India, *Fatāwā-yi jahāndārī* by Ziyā al-Dīn Baranī (d. 1357) being a major contribution to the genre within the court literature of the Delhi Sultanate, are explored in B.H. Auer, *Symbols of Authority in Medieval Islam: History, Religion, and Muslim Legitimacy in the Delhi Sultanate* (London, New York, 2012).

⁵On the early Pashto writings see V. V. Kushev, *Afganskaia nukopisnaia kniga: ocherki afganskoi pis'mennoi kul'yury* (Moscow: Nauka, Glavnaia redaktsia vostochnoi literatury, 1980), pp. 21–48, 66–67; S. Andreev, "Pashto Literature: the Classical Period", in *Oral Literature of Iranian Languages, Kurdish, Pashto, Balochi, Ossetic, Persian and Tajik*, (ed.) Ph. G. Kreyenbroek, U. Marzolph (London, New York, 2010), pp. 89–107; M. S. Pelevin, *Afganskaia literatura pozdnego srednevekovia* (St Petersburg, 2010), pp. 32–67.

⁶Pīr Mu'azzam Shāh, *Tārīkh-i Ḥāfiẓ-Raḥmat-Khānī*, (ed.) and preface by M. Nawāz Ṭāyīr (Peshawar, 1971); R. Nichols, "Reclaiming the Past. The Tawarikh-i Hafiz Rahmat Khani and Pashtun historiography", in *Afghan History through Afghan Eyes*, edited by N. Green, (New York, 2015), pp. 211–234.

2. “The Book of the Turban” by Khushḥāl Khān Khaṭāk: a Training Programme for a Pashtun Chieftain

A person who made the largest contribution to the progress of Pashto secular literature replete with strong national overtones was the Khaṭāk chief Khushḥāl Khān (1613–1689). In emulation of the ever popular Persian *Qābūs-nāma* Khushḥāl Khān composed in Pashto his own “Mirror for Princes” entitled *Dastār-nāma* (“The Book of the Turban”).⁷ The book was dedicated not only to the author’s descendants, i.e. the members of the Khaṭāk ruling clan and potential chieftains, but to everybody “worthy to wear the Turban”, regarded by Khushḥāl and his compatriots as a symbol of power, knowledge and moral virtues. After a short praise to God Almighty the book begins with an epigraph, a quotation from Khushḥāl’s poem *Firāq-nāma* (“The Book of Separation”): “Those who wear turbans are thousands; men [worthy] of the Turban are [few] in number”.⁸ A conceptual idea of the book, aphoristically formulated in this verse, is explained then in two introductory sections: “On the true meaning of the Turban” and “On faculties and aptitudes, listed as arts (*hunarūna*) and qualities (*khaṣlatūna*), which determine the capability of [wearing] the Turban”. In two following chapters Khushḥāl Khān at length expounds on twenty arts and twenty qualities required of a ruler and any good nobleman.

In line with his declared determination to promote learning and letters among fellow countrymen Khushḥāl Khān begins his essay with spiritual matters, quoting a famous Prophetic saying “Who knows himself knows his Lord” and discussing self-knowledge (*dā dzān ma’rifat*) as a basic notion of the Islamic religious philosophy and an essential ground for an individual’s proper psychic, intellectual and physical maturation. The second “art” in the Khushḥāl’s list is *‘ilm* interpreted in a broader sense as learning (*zda kawəḷ*) in general, rather than only theology, which nevertheless provides a framework and forms the very core of education: “Learning is what attaches a man to faith”.⁹ To accommodate these wide-ranging speculations about *‘ilm* to the specific tasks of his “Mirror for Princes” Khushḥāl Khān makes such a remark: “Education and power are interrelated. Those who yearn for men of learning and education are [going to be] kings”.¹⁰

If learning is an “acquirement of perfection” (*kasb-i kamāl*), its main instrument is writing (*khatt*), which goes third in the Khushḥāl’s list of arts. Though Khushḥāl Khān accentuates

⁷Khushḥāl Khān Khaṭāk, *Dastār-nāma*, foreword by Ş. Rishfīn, glossary by D. M. Kāmil Momand (Kabul, 1966). Various aspects of this work are discussed in S. B. Majrouh, “Étude du Dastār-nama de Khoshhal Khan Khaṭāk” in *Proceedings of the XXV International Congress of Orientalists*, Vol. 2 (Moscow, 1963), pp. 241–250; V. V. Kushev, “A Pashtun Ruler and Literary Figure of the Seventeenth Century on Political Ethics”, *Manuscripta Orientalia*, 6/2 (2000), pp. 20–38; Idem., “Dastār-nama Khushhal-khana Khattaka – pashtunskaiia entsiklopediia XVII veka”, in *Peterburgskoiie vostokovedeniie*, 10 (St Petersburg, 2002), pp. 75–93; M. Lorenz, “Chuschhāl-Chān über das Schahspiel”, in *Ex Oriente. Collected Papers in Honour of Jiří Běčka*, (eds.) A. Křikavová, L. Hřebiček (Prague, 1995), pp. 101–104; Idem., “Dastār-nāma – sochineniie Khushhal-khana Khattaka (1613–1689)”, in *Vestnik vostochnogo instituta (Acta Institutionis Orientalis)*, 2/1 (3) (Saint Petersburg, 1996), pp. 58–66; Idem., “Der afghanischer Dichter Chuschhāl-Chān in seinem Dastār-nāma über die Ehe”, in *Eros, Liebe und Zuneigung in der Indogermania: Akten des Symposiums zur Indogermanischen Kultur- und Altertumskunde in Graz (29.-30. September 1994)* (Graz, 1997), pp. 31–36; I. L. Inozemtsev, “Khushhal-khan Khattak o musul’manskoii muzyke”, in *Sufizm v kontekste musul’manskoii kul’tury*, (ed.) N. I. Prigarina (Moscow, 1989), pp. 302–318.

⁸Khushḥāl Khān Khaṭāk, *Firāq-nāma*, (ed.) with preface, notes and glossary by Zalmai Hewādmal (Kabul, 1984), p. 60.

⁹Khushḥāl, *Dastār-nāma*, p. 17.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 15.

such advanced facets of writing as calligraphy and a scribe's proficiency in rhetoric, it is obvious that the first thing he had in mind was literacy. His high appraisal of writing and his ardent call for its study, on the one hand, emphasizes the lack of formal education among Pashtuns in tribal territories at the time, even within the military-administrative elite. In one of his poems Khushhāl admits that his father Shahbāz Khān was illiterate (*khaṭṭ sawād-ye na wu*).¹¹ Khushhāl's opening statements on writing in *Dastār-nāma* seem to be addressed to those who were leastwise not much accustomed to everyday dealing with written texts: "Learning is like a wild animal, and writing is comparable to a noose with which that animal is trapped. So many books would not exist if there were not writing... All things in this world are being done by writing... If a man of power and wealth learns it, this is an adornment [for him]; if a poor man learns it, this is his power and wealth".¹² On the other hand, such wording totally agrees with eulogies to Arabic script and writing in the early Pashto poetry of the Roshānī mystics, which proves that Pashto became a written language only in the Mughal times.¹³

Other arts described in *Dastār-nāma* may be grouped into three categories: competences in social affairs and economy, martial arts and physical skills, entertaining occupations. Under the first category falls matrimonial relations (*də azwājo mu 'āsharat*), children upbringing (*də awlādo tarbiyyat*), treatment of servants (*ta'ḍīb-i khadam aw ḥasham*), means of subsistence (*asbāb-i ma 'īshat*), cultivation of land (*zīrā 'at*), commerce (*tijārat*) (no. 11–16). The second category includes archery (*īrandāzī*), swimming (*ābbāzī*), horsemanship (*asptāzī*) (no. 5–7). To the third belongs poetry (*shī 'r*), music (*'ilm-i mūsīqī*), backgammon and chess (*nard aw shaṭranj*), drawing (*də naqqāshay taṣwīr*), and hunting (*ḫkār*) (no. 4, 8, 18–20). The latter, however, according to its place in the list of arts and essential characteristics, was regarded by Khushhāl Khān as a kind of martial art: "There is a great pleasure in hunting. Those with high spirit do love hunting very much. For rulers hunting is obligatory. Rulers are [destined] for hunting; hunting is [destined] for rulers. Through the practice of hunting skills in warfare are acquired, bravery and courage do increase".¹⁴

Among the arts Khushhāl Khān considered two items which would, probably, better fit into the list of qualities (no. 9, 10). These are valour (*shujā 'at*) and generosity (*sakhāwat*), two basic and universal ethical principles of military aristocracies. While in Muslim tradition in general they partly correspond to such polysemantic notions as *futuwwa* and *muruwwa* in the meanings of "chivalry" and "morality," within the ethical norms of the unwritten Code of Honour, which is an inseparable component of the Pashtun customary law (*Pashtunwali*), their equivalents are *tūra* ("blade," "courage") and *war-kawəl*, or *bax'əəl* ("giving," "mercy").¹⁵ By ascribing these principles to the arts, Khushhāl implied their strong

¹¹Khushhāl Khān Khaṭak, *Kulliyāt*, (ed.) with preface and notes by D. M. Kāmil Momand (Peshawar, 1952), p. 567.

¹²Khushhāl, *Dastār-nāma*, p. 18.

¹³See in M. S. Pelevin, *Afganskaia poeziia v pervoi polovine – seredine XVII v.* (St Petersburg, 2005), pp. 187–190; Idem., "The Development of Literacy and the Conflict of Powers among Pashtuns on the Eve of State Formation", in *Iran and the Caucasus*, 16/2 (2012), pp. 141–152.

¹⁴Khushhāl, *Dastār-nāma*, p. 29.

¹⁵Cf. Khādīm, Qiyāmuddīn, *Pakhtūnwalay* (Kabul, 1953), pp. 13–35, 90–99; Bakhtanay, 'Abdullāh, *Pakhtānī khoyūna* (S. 1., 1955), pp. 12–19, 29–31, 56–61; M. I. Atayee, *A Dictionary of the Terminology of Pashtun's Tribal Customary Law and Usages*, translated by A. M. Shinwary (Kabul, 1979), pp. 14–15, 59, 101–102; Willi Steul, *Pashtunwali: ein Ehrenkodex und seine rechtliche Relevanz* (Wiesbaden, 1981), pp. 151–169; L. Rzehak, "Kodeks chesti

connection with a range of practices and customs related to warfare, reconciliation procedures, charity, hospitality, etc. In his discourse on valour, the *Dastār-nāma*'s largest section, Khushḥāl Khān even makes an extended digression explaining some bad omens, which one has to bear in mind deciding on a military campaign or any other important action.¹⁶

Especially noteworthy in the Khushḥāl's list is the eighteenth art defined as a study of ancestry (*tahqīq-i nasab*). It is this art that directly links up Khushḥāl's "Mirror for Princes" with the Pashtun historical and social background. The author of *Dastār-nāma* reiterates the legendary version of the ancient origins of Pashtun people supposed to be the descendants of such Biblical and Quranic figures as Ya'qūb (Jacob), Tālūt (Saul) and Dāniyāl (Daniel), describes his own lineage within the Pashtun genealogical tree and provides folkloric etymologies of the ethnonyms "Afghan" and "Pashtun" ("Pathan"). Apparently dissatisfied with what he "heard and read" about Pashtuns before, Khushḥāl Khān expresses an intention to write his own book about the history of his people: "There is no doubt that before me no one has tried his best to study this matter... I shall write a special [book on] history that is to be widely known".¹⁷ It is very likely that prior to Khushḥāl's *Dastār-nāma* only one book on Pashtuns' history existed, viz. *Tārīkh-i Khānjahānī*, written in Persian in 1612/3 by the Mughal historian Ni'matallāh Haravī.¹⁸ What Khushḥāl Khān left behind were his drafts of such a book in Pashto which contained exclusively materials on his own tribe, the Khataks. These were tribal genealogies with his family's full pedigree, few accounts of the Khataks's history, and the excerpts from his personal memoirs and diaries together with a number of biographical poems. Later these records, either in original or edited and retold form, were included by Khushḥāl's grandson, Afzal Khān (1665/6–1740/1), in the voluminous historiographical compilation *Tārīkh-i muraṣṣa'* ("The Ornamented History") which is the earliest of this kind of book in Pashto currently at our disposal.¹⁹

If the Persian author of *Qābūs-nāma* only briefly highlighted the royal descent of his family in the Foreword with a reference to the Sasanian kings,²⁰ Khushḥāl Khān insisted on regarding the study of tribal genealogies as a special discipline to be learned by a ruler and a nobleman. Among Pashtun lineage, basically the knowledge of ancestors' names at least up to seven generations, was a major "certificate" which legitimised an individual's social and legal status within a tribe. The genealogical section in *Dastār-nāma* better than any other indicates true addressees of this book. Afzal Khān, who supervised the transcribing of the *Dastār-nāma*'s text from his grandfather's archives into a clean copy, made an evident interpolation in the family lineage adding his own name as the latest link in the chain of the

pushtunov" in *Afghanistan: istoriia, ekonomika, kul'tura*, (ed.) Yu. V. Gankovskii (Moscow, 1989), pp. 61–62, 68–71. General overview of the *Pashtunwali* ideology and basic principles see also in Charles Lindholm, *Generosity and Jealousy: The Swat Pukhtun of Northern Pakistan* (New York, 1982), pp. 209–238; popular description of the very spirit of *Pashtunwali* as perceived by an outsider see in J. W. Spain, *The Way of the Pathans* (London, 1962), pp. 46–54.

¹⁶Khushḥāl, *Dastār-nāma*, pp. 47–49.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 83–84.

¹⁸Ni'matallāh Ibn Ḥabībullah al-Haravī, *Tārīkh-i Khānjahānī va Makhzan-i Afghānī*, Vol. 1–2, (ed.) with introduction and notes by S. M. Imām al-Dīn (Dacca: Asiatic Society of Pakistan, 1960–62); English translation see in B. Dom, *History of the Afghans: Translated from the Persian of Neamat Ullah*, Vol. 1–2 (London, 1829–36). Recent discussion of the book see in N. Green, "Tribe, Diaspora, and Sainthood in Afghan History", in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 67/1 (2008), pp. 183–197.

¹⁹Afzal Khān Khatak, *Tārīkh-i muraṣṣa'*, (ed.) with preface and notes by D. M. Kāmil Momand (Peshawar, 1974).

²⁰Unṣur al-Ma'ālī Kaykāvūs b. Iskandar, *Qābūs-nāma*, (ed.) Ghulām-Ḥusayn Yūsufī (Tehran, 1988), pp. 4–5.

Khatak rulers. In 1665, when *Dastār-nāma* was written, Afzal was at best a one-year-old child, and for many reasons, e.g. because of the high rate of infant mortality, Khushhāl Khān, who had twenty eight (!) sons at the time, would have been unlikely to insert the name of a particular grandson in his own pedigree. Of course, by such an interpolation Afzal Khān aimed at documentarily confirming his claims to chieftaincy in the Khatak tribe long after his grandfather's demise.

Twenty qualities are arranged and characterised in *Dastār-nāma* less coherently than arts, but they may be divided into three groups as well. One of them includes religious notions, such as confidence in God (*tawakkul*), awe of God (*khauf aw rajā*), obedience to God (*tā'at aw wara'*) and repentance (*istighfār*) (no. 11, 13, 19, 20). The largest group comprises thirteen moral qualities: resoluteness (*'azīmat*), taciturnity (*khāmūshī*), honesty (*rāsī*), modesty and reserve (*sharm aw hayā*), kindness (*khulq-i nīkū*), nobleness (*murūwwat*), forgiveness and mercy (*'afw aw karam*), differentiation and measured assessment (*tamyīz aw ta'ānī*), justice and sincerity (*'adl aw inṣāf*), fortitude (*himmat*), gentleness (*hilm*), dignity (*ghayrat*), prudence and discreetness (*ḥazm aw ihtiyā'*) (no. 2–10, 15–18). Three qualities pertain to administrative abilities: acceptance of counsels (*mashūrat*), selectivity in patronage (*tarbiyyat aw sharm dā khpəl nawāzish*), and regulation of the estate affairs (*dā mulk intizām*) (no. 1, 12, 14). While some of these qualities, such as *himmat*, *ghayrat*, *'afw*, directly relate to the Pashtun Code of Honour, combined they clearly portray an ideal tribal ruler who abides the laws of *Pashtunwali*. For those who were not apt to follow his instructions about the required arts and qualities Khushhāl Khān added a few passages in the closing section of the book, where he briefly commented on harmful effects brought about by stupidity (*hīmāqat*) and ignorance (*jahālat*).

The only inventory of the arts and the qualities discussed in *Dastār-nāma* may not exhibit at once any salient specificity of the Khushhāl Khān's Pashto "Mirror for Princes". Even a cursory comparison of the tables of contents in *Dastār-nāma* and *Qābūs-nāma* will immediately disclose few obvious parallels. However even the most conventional topics addressed by Khushhāl were not so much borrowings from classical texts as the products of the author's personal examination of common social practices and ethical categories. To figure out distinct peculiarities of *Dastār-nāma* one has to consider it with regard to Khushhāl Khān's biography and literary legacy. Khushhāl's personality in the discussion of quite standard issues comes to light much more clearly when *Dastār-nāma* is read with references to the author's numerous biographical poems and narratives from his memoirs and diaries in that part of *Tārīkh-i muraṣṣa'* which is to be identified as "The Khataks' Chronicle".²¹ In this case *Dastār-nāma* will be correctly understood as not just a local Pashto version of a typical "Mirror for Princes" but as the mirror of Khushhāl's individual life experiences, comprehensions and feelings. *Dastār-nāma* was inspired by *Qābūs-nāma* but written downright independently of this and other possible Persian sources.

Suffice to mention that the first known episode from Khushhāl's biography is the story of an incident on the Kabul river in 1618/19 when at the age of six the future author of *Dastār-nāma* almost drowned during bathing.²² "If someone does not know how to swim,

²¹See in M. Pelevin, "The beginnings of Pashto Narrative Prose", in *Iran and the Caucasus*, 21/2 (2017), pp. 132–149.

²²Afzal, *Tārīkh-i muraṣṣa'*, p. 272.

a great mischief may happen”, writes Khushḥāl Khān in *Dastār-nāma*.²³ These words would appear as just a general observation if they do not resound in “The Khātak’s Chronicle” where we find also another account about an incident on the river, now the Indus, in the autumn of 1661 when Khushḥāl barely survived in the water after his boat crashed against the rocks.²⁴ The section on the swimming in *Dastār-nāma* consists but of a few phrases. Nevertheless, Khushḥāl is very precise here in specifying the ways of swimming which were in use among Pashtun highlanders in his times. Besides “free-hand” swimming (*tāsh-bāzī*), which he considers basic, Khushḥāl mentions three other kinds with such accessories as leather bag (*shanāz*), leather bottle (*gāray*) and pumpkin (*kādū*). In his brief and rather commonplace advices one feels the author’s personal experience: “If [a swimmer] does not know [well] the free-hand manner, *shanāz* and all other things, if known to him, are nothing... A swimmer, even if he is a very good one, should not parade his prowess in big and deep waters!”²⁵

Even more convincing in this respect is the much larger section on hunting.²⁶ The contents and the wordings of this professional treatise tell of Khushḥāl Khān’s full expertise in the subject and wholly agree with his similar poetical works. The largest part of this section deals with technical aspects of falconry which Khushḥāl regarded as the most exquisite kind of hunting and practiced it all his life as a favourite entertainment. “[In childhood] I spent one hour at classes and twenty at hunting. / Whether hunting did ever let me go for acquiring perfection? // All the world’s knowledge would have been mine, / if I had not been occupied with hunting [all the time]. // Still now, when my beard is white and the teeth have fallen out, / I wander in mountains with a falcon on my hand:” sings Khushḥāl in one of his poems written in 1683.²⁷ Besides lyrical verses on falconry Khushḥāl Khān left behind few teaching texts, such as the large poetical treatise *Bāz-nāma* (“The Book of Falcon”) (1674) and a number of smaller pieces of similar content which are included in his *dīwān*.²⁸

What also makes *Dastār-nāma* a mirror of Khushḥāl Khān’s individual accomplishments is the author’s numerous remarks and digressions which may be interpreted only in the context of his life and other works. For example, in the discourse on valour Khushḥāl observes: “God knows that all these wars in the past were waged with half a heart, except for two days in the whole life: one is the attack on Haytam, another is the big war with Jagtā when all his army had assaulted our trenches...”²⁹ Details of these events are reported only in “The Khātak’s Chronicle:” the attack on Haytam, a village of the Yūsufzay clan Akāzay, occurred in January 1641, its dramatic aftermath being the death of Khushḥāl’s father Shahbāz Khān of a fatal wound in the head. The big war with Jagtā, the Rajput Prince Jagat Singh, took place in the autumn of the same year near the town of Tārāgaṭh in Punjab

²³Khushḥāl, *Dastār-nāma*, p. 26.

²⁴Afzal, *Tārīkh-i muraṣṣa‘*, pp. 273–274.

²⁵Khushḥāl, *Dastār-nāma*, p. 26.

²⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 29–35.

²⁷Khushḥāl, *Kulliyāt*, p. 540.

²⁸Khushḥāl Khān Khātak, *Bāz-nāma*, (ed.) and prefaced by Zalmay Hewādmal (Kabul, 1983); *idem.*, *Kulliyāt*, pp. 77–78, 253–254, 597–600, 626–627, *passim*.

²⁹Khushḥāl, *Dastār-nāma*, p. 46.

where Khushhāl Khān, with his Khatak posse, fought in the army of the Mughal Emperor Shāhjahān (r. 1627–58).³⁰

Khushhāl Khān wrote *Dastār-nāma* in 1665 when he was imprisoned by the Mughal imperial authorities in the jail-fort of Rantambhor (now Ranthambhore Fort in Jaipur). In the afterword he apologises to readers for all possible flaws in the contents and style of this work, justifying himself by asserting that he had not books at his disposal and was compelled to rely mostly on memory. Even if this claim is slightly exaggerated, since in *Firāq-nāma* (1665/66) Khushhāl states that reading books was a popular pursuit among Rantambhor prisoners, the text of *Dastār-nāma* testifies to the author's excellent education and strong individuality emphasised by his almost declarative self-identification as a Pashtun chieftain.

3. The Art of Ruling in Khushhāl Khān's Poetry

Dastār-nāma was the Khushhāl Khān's largest, but not his only contribution to the *naṣīḥat al-mulūk* genre. His other literary works containing both direct and implied didactics abound in advices and ruminations on the art of ruling as it is viewed by a Pashtun chieftain. We may only guess that such themes found their way into the Khushhāl's poetry after his accession to chieftaincy in the Khatak tribe in 1641. In a poem written somewhere in the 1650s and intoned as a semi-ironical repentance (*tauba*) Khushhāl Khān enumerates his everyday activities to which his "lower soul" (*nafs*) caused him to stray from the spiritual path. These activities, in fact, encompass what is elsewhere described by Khushhāl as the required conduct of tribal rulers. The poet expresses here much "regret" for following the laws of honour (*nang*) which forced him to fight incessantly with other tribes, occupy other's lands, and kill innocent people, for serving imperial authorities, sometimes with shameful obsequiousness, for being wholly absorbed by mundane matters like increasing property and estates, building new houses and planting gardens, for spending much time in love with women, for composing poetry, hunting, wasting money on falcons, listening to music and singing, even for paying too much attention to good clothes.³¹

However, such ingenious depiction of a tribal ruler's way of life stands apart from Khushhāl's other verses where he treats the art of ruling with no equivokes. This topic appears central in over thirty poems from his collected lyrics (*dūwān*), and it is here that we come across the full Pashto equivalent of the very notion "the art of chieftaincy", viz. *dā sardār̄y hunar*.³² Khushhāl considers this topic also in some fragments in his *maṣṇawī*-poems *Firāq-nāma* and *Suwāt-nāma* ("The Book about Swat"). In the last section of *Firāq-nāma*, written along with *Dastār-nāma* in the Rantambhor jail, Khushhāl Khān comments on the status and powers of a chieftain emphasising the importance of one-man ascendancy; in *Suwāt-nāma*, composed as a poetical diary of his visit to the Swat valley in 1675, he refers to the art of chieftaincy obliquely in the satirical verses addressed to the Yūsufzay khans.³³

³⁰ Afzal, *Tārīkh-i muraṣṣa'*, pp. 269–271, 273, 276–277.

³¹ Khushhāl, *Kulliyāt*, pp. 818–820.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 183.

³³ Khushhāl, *Firāq-nāma*, pp. 71–72; *idem.*, *Suwāt-nāma*, (ed.) with preface and notes by 'Abd al-Ḥayy Ḥabībī (Kabul, 1979), pp. 20–32.

Two of Khushḥāl's poems in the *dīwān* may be regarded as concise charters of tribal rulers. One of them, a *qaṣīda* of forty distiches, is a true "Mirror for Princes" in verse.³⁴ Khushḥāl wrote it in 1681 for his third son Bahrām Khān (d. 1712) after the latter was elected chief by the Khaṭak tribal assembly (*jirga*). Since 1672, Bahrām Khān had openly confronted Khushḥāl Khān and his elder brother Ashraf Khān (d. 1694/95), Afzal's father, in the struggle for supremacy in the tribe. A few episodes from this struggle, which evolved into a bloody fratricidal war, were related by Khushḥāl in his diaries.³⁵ In 1681 the Mughal authorities of Peshawar arrested Ashraf Khān and deported him to India where he died after fifteen years of incarceration in Gwaliyār (now Gwalior Fort in Madhya Pradesh). Bahrām, who reportedly stood behind his brother's arrest, seized an opportunity to consolidate his supporters in the tribe and lay claims for chieftaincy. For various reasons Khushḥāl Khān at the *jirga* voted for Bahrām and soon sent him instructions on ruling in the form of a *qaṣīda*. The first distich of this poem clearly speaks of the author's uneasy feelings about his decision and the current situation in the tribe: "My heart does not get along with anybody, Bahrām; / my dealings with all others are against my will". Such gloomy prelude notwithstanding, Khushḥāl Khān then formulates a number of maxims directly related to the art of chieftaincy. Assembled in one poem these maxims overlap with most other Khushḥāl's statements on the subject in his lyrics.

The list of instructions in this chieftains' charter predictably begins with an order to adhere strictly to Islamic norms. However, this order is unexpectedly confined to a single line after which the author immediately turns to the concepts of *Pashtunwali* calling for unconditional abidance by the rules of the Pashtun Code of Honour (lit. "honour and reputation" – *də pashṭānə nang-u-nām*): "While you have enough strength and God's assistance, / do not step back for a moment from the Pashtun laws of honour!" Though moral and behavioural prescriptions of *Pashtunwali* target each Pashtun, Khushḥāl specifies in the poem that he addresses a chieftain (*sardār*): "A good chieftain needs the treasure of reputation, / even if he does not have anything else". As everywhere in his works Khushḥāl Khān accentuates here two fundamental principles of a tribal ruler's conduct, named "arts" in *Dastār-nāma*: "Giving (*war-kawəl*) and fighting (*tūre wahəl*), these are two things / that are needed for the affairs of chieftaincy (*sardārī*) to be accomplished". According to him, the generosity of a ruler must be pragmatic and any expenditures have their reasonable limitations: "Eat, feed, but save [something in] a bundle for an occasion..." Khushḥāl makes a few remarks on the importance of military force and arms, e.g.: "Even if a chieftain can master thousand arts, / his governance over people will not succeed without a sword". The poet advises to patronise faithful and steadfast subalterns, "brave lads" (*ḡə dzuwānān*), who would be unfaltering assistants in administrative affairs and comrades-in-arms in wars. He cautions against excessive reliance on tribal assemblies (*jirga*, *ma'raka*) which are rather contemptuously characterised as ineffective governmental bodies and insists on the mandatory obedience of subjects ever inclined to blame rulers for excessive cruelties, praises persistence in achieving set goals and keeping to the law of retaliation: "Even if a man all the time suffers from blades and arrows, loses battles, / he will never let [a desire of] revenge cool down in his

³⁴Khushḥāl, *Kulliyāt*, pp. 560–562.

³⁵Afzal, *Tārīkh-i muraṣṣa'*, pp. 301–316.

heart". As a vassal of the Great Mughals Khushhāl Khān requires loyalty to imperial powers, but, through memory of his own experience, warns local rulers not to trust kings' ordinances too much. In many lines of this poem Khushhāl sharply criticises his own tribe the Khataks, for continuous discord and conflicts. Without any embarrassment the poet calls his fellow tribesmen ungrateful beasts and states that only thanks to his family, i.e. the ruling clan (*khelkhāna*), the Khatak tribe has not fallen apart. Then he points to dissents between his close relatives that threaten integrity of the tribe and calls for unity (*ittifāq*), persuading Bahrām Khān, the addressee of the poem, to accept peacefully the most unpleasant criticism of his brothers.

In "The Khataks' Chronicle" Afzal Khān, a Bahrām's political rival, provides us with a detailed, if one-sided and very tendentious, account of his uncle's rule in 1681–92.³⁶ He states that already around 1685 Khushhāl Khān lost any expectations of positive developments in the tribe under the Bahrām's chieftainship and expressed his regrets in a poem (*ghazal*) which sounded like an afterword to his earlier admonitions. The *ghazal* begins with a straightforward accusation: "You have not learned the art of chieftaincy, Bahrām! / You discredited chieftaincy by your rule!"³⁷

Khushhāl's other, much smaller poetical charter of a tribal ruler dwells on the same two basic tenets of chieftaincy – valour and generosity.³⁸ Within these tenets, exhibiting his habitual pragmatism, the poet highlights such aspects as peacefulness and prudence. He preaches that there should be no weakness in defending honour and fighting, but living in peace is preferable, for "one is not a turnip or a cheese to expose himself to a knife". Khushhāl employs similar mundane metaphors in his reprobation of unwise squandering (*tabzīr*). According to him, one should breed only able retrievers and not waste money on mutts. Even a brief survey of Khushhāl Khān's two charters of chieftaincy indicates that he voiced rather authoritarian views trying to reconcile strict adherence to old customary laws with an evident departure from the traditional egalitarianism of tribal society.

The contents of Khushhāl's other verses on chieftaincy may be perfectly summarised by a maxim articulated in the first line of a didactical *ghazal*: "The one who gains, consumes and bestows is a [true] man; / the one who follows the law of valour is a [true] khan".³⁹ Time and again Khushhāl Khān identifies the primary function of tribal military-administrative elites with the trade of war. He teaches that any chieftain first and foremost is a military commander whose personal bravery must be combined with skills of a troop leader and an expert in battlefield tactics. He advocates the love of arms, singing in a quatrain that without "a blade of wrath" a chieftain would resemble a snake without poison and "would never be remembered neither in village, nor in town".⁴⁰ In one poem Khushhāl goes as far as to confess that "the tree of the chieftain's rule bears fruits only [if watered] by enemy's blood and faeces".⁴¹ Most laconically the idea of correlation between administrative power and military profession is worded in a motto "Throne or funeral board!" (*yā takht dāy yā takhta da*), i.e.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 482–285, 494–510.

³⁷ Khushhāl, *Kulliyāt*, p. 183.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 860–861.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 660.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

“Rule or die!”⁴² Khushḥāl Khān pays no less attention to generosity which is understood foremost as a chieftain’s duty to support his fellow tribesmen with livelihoods. A chieftain has to be a wealthy person, instructs Khushḥāl, for it is “gold” (*zar*) that makes a ruler potent, but truly powerful (*dawlatmān*) is the one “from whose river the canals of other [people] branch off”.⁴³

That valour and generosity were considered two major criteria in assessment of a Pashtun chieftain’s morals is confirmed also by Khushḥāl’s brief eulogies to his ancestors who are praised for having exactly these qualities. Khushḥāl’s father Shahbāz Khān is portrayed in such verses: “For the sake of his honour / he would always sacrifice himself and his family... // He always aspired for bravery, / until he went to grave. // He gained and bestowed, / these were his only deeds and nothing else. // He won hundreds and spent thousands, / he was never free from debts. // He was a sharp archer / and had strong love for hunting”.⁴⁴ The same characteristics Khushḥāl Khān ascribes to his grandfather Malik Akoṛay, whose status as a Khaṭāk ruler was validated in the 1580s by the ordinance of Mughal Emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605): “He fought bravely with sword / and was a sharp archer. // His enemy when appeared, / quickly found himself in a grave. // He had both sword and cauldron, / he was both severe and generous”.⁴⁵ These laudatory verses are corroborated by a brief note in “The Khaṭāks’ Chronicle:” “It is said that in fighting [Malik Akoṛay] was a very valiant and brave warrior. And he was generous to such an extent that if he had something in the morning, there was nothing left in the evening, and if something appeared in the evening, it was not saved for tomorrow morning. Everything that came to his hands he spent on his companions and poor people”.⁴⁶

In his sporadic self-praises (*fakhriyya*) Khushḥāl Khān evaluated himself according to the same criteria. He underlined his social origin and status as a person belonging to tribal aristocracy and vigorously dissociated himself from all other strata – peasants, merchants, artisans, clergymen. His profession, inherited from the ancestors, he called figuratively “the clink of blades” and added: “If [money] comes to my house in thousands, / it goes away in all directions... // Gold is good for [making] the name, / in grave it is not needed”.⁴⁷

It goes without saying that negative qualities, opposite to valour, generosity, and other virtues of a righteous ruler, are consistently reproved in Khushḥāl’s verses. As the antipode to the ideal sovereign, and a regular target of his poetical vilifications (*haju*), Khushḥāl Khān chose Emperor Aurangzeb (r. 1659–1707), with whom he exaggeratedly associated all his own misfortunes of imprisonment in Rantambhor and later dissents in the Khaṭāk tribe. Besides a dozen of deprecating verses addressed directly to Aurangzeb, Khushḥāl wrote a number of poems with abstract criticism of tyrants, though the image of this particular Mughal Emperor is often easily recognised in such aphoristic portrayals of a despot (*sitamgar*) as: “With the same knife he takes to sharpen a pen (*qalam*) for copying Quran, / he cuts the throat of his brother”.⁴⁸

⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 822.

⁴³*Ibid.*, p. 368.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 852.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p. 582.

⁴⁶Afzal, *Tārīkh-i muraṣṣaʿ*, p. 264.

⁴⁷Khushḥāl, *Kulliyāt*, p. 853.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, p. 418; this is an allusion to the history of wars for succession to the Mughal throne between Aurangzeb and his brothers Dārā Shikūh (d. 1659), Shāh Shujāʿ (d. 1661) and Murād Bakhsh (d. 1661) in 1657–9.

If Aurangzeb plays in Khushḥāl's poetry a stereotypic tyrant liable to be accused for any possible vice (injustice, meanness, cruelty, violence, hypocrisy, self-interest, etc.), a number of individuals of the poet's own social milieu, including his closest relatives, are disparaged as unworthy rulers according to the moral standards of *Pashtunwali* mostly with reference to actual events in the Khatak territories. In his verses written after the beginning of military confrontations among the Khataks in 1672 Khushḥāl Khān pitilessly blamed his elder sons and main political contestants Ashraf and Bahrām above all for the lack of true valour and generosity. An exemplary specimen of such a satire is a fragment from the Khushḥāl's longest autobiographical *qaṣīda* composed in 1680 on the peak of his disagreements with Ashraf Khān: "He is over forty years old now, / but no arrow has ever hit him. // Everywhere he faces a war, / he always flees from battlefield. // He girds a gilded sabre about his waist, / spurs exquisite horses, // but neither did he make use of his sabre, / nor was his horse's armour damaged. // While his house is full of money, / a guest leaves it hungry. // If he spends something at all, / that is only on buffoons and pimps. // He is busy with calculating [money] / all the time like a Hindu. // He thinks and speaks only of money, / collects silver and golden coins".⁴⁹

In the same way, with a deliberate shift from cursing to mocking, Khushḥāl Khān attacked with critical verses his counterparts from the neighbouring Yūsufzay tribe. Most of these verses together with parallel passages in *Swāt-nāma* date back to the years of the big Mughal-Afghan war of 1672–6 when the Yūsufzay clans in the mass backed out of participation in armed clashes with imperial armies. Khushḥāl took this as an opportunity to accuse the Yūfzay chieftains of breaking the laws of honour: "Do they really know what Afghan honour is? / They are Kashmīrīs, Pakhlīs, Laghmānīs (i.e. anyone but not Pashtuns)", or "I am the only one among them who cares about honour, / whilst the Yūsufzays repose being occupied with husbandry".⁵⁰ Apart from down-to-earth personal invectives against certain Yūsufzay chieftains ("Ṭālay looks like a hen, an effeminate / with a cockscomb and screechy shouts") Khushḥāl depicts in his poems a collective image of a Yūsufzay *malik* as a yokel whose major attributes are cowardice and miserliness, i.e. two qualities contrary to valour and generosity.⁵¹ It is noteworthy that Khushḥāl Khān, well aware of inveracity of his exorbitant reproofs concerning alleged military disability of the Yūsufzays, preferred to underscore their avarice and parsimony: "Money is their religion, / they think only of silver and gold. // To make somehow two coins of one // is what they are busy with, other things they do not know", "Whether he is the chief of a village, or of a tribe, or of many a people / does he ever slaughter a chicken for a guest?" etc.⁵²

Undoubtedly, such satirical verses were aimed not only at defaming and deriding particular people in particular circumstances, but also at propagating ethical values of the Pashtun Code of Honour. Therefore, we have every right to regard them, together with the laudations of ancestors, as a kind of illustrative attachment to the Khushḥāl Khān's discourse on the art of chieftaincy in *Dastār-nāma* and didactical poetry.

⁴⁹Khushḥāl, *Kulliyāt*, pp. 586–587.

⁵⁰Khushḥāl, *Swāt-nāma*, p. 29; *Idem.*, *Kulliyāt*, p. 528.

⁵¹Khushḥāl, *Kulliyāt*, pp. 104–105, 233, 847–848.

⁵²Khushḥāl, *Swāt-nāma*, pp. 22–23, 28.

4. Afzal Khān Khaṭak on Political Power

Another even greater portion of illustrative material on the art of chieftaincy may be extracted from “The Khaṭaks’ Chronicle”. In fact, the very notion of chieftaincy underlay the key ideological implications of this collection of miscellaneous texts authored by Khushhāl Khān and Afzal Khān, the Khaṭak hereditary rulers. The common thread running throughout “The Chronicle”, which begins with the lineage of the Khaṭak ruling family and then recounts the history of conflicts related mostly to the contest for supremacy in the tribe, is the succession of power by the right of primogeniture.⁵³ Written largely in the form of diaries and memoirs, rather than historiographical narratives, “The Chronicle” presents a detailed picture of how the Khaṭak rulers applied the art of chieftaincy in practice. Echoing theoretical premises outlined in *Dastār-nāma* the stories from “The Chronicle” forthrightly describe military and administrative activities, everyday occupations, attainments, and ethics of Pashtun chieftains. Inasmuch as the main subject of narration in “The Chronicle” is conflict, the issues pertaining to the art of chieftaincy, warfare skills and valour seem the most discussed ones. Within the context of the struggle for political power these issues are often interpreted in line with a Khushhāl’s slogan “Throne or funeral board!” once quoted by Afzal Khān.⁵⁴

The central idea of “The Chronicle” becomes clear with consideration of the Afzal’s general introduction to *Tārīkh-i muraṣṣa’*. Besides a brief explanation of the goals and contents of the book, the introduction contains the author’s discourse on the concept of political power (*iqtidār*). Factually, this is an independent work, a small treatise (*risāla*), in which Afzal Khān examines theoretical aspects of power and administration.⁵⁵ Afzal regularly supports his arguments with references to *Dastār-nāma* and quotations from his grandfather’s poetry, while allusions to Quran and Muslim traditions are much less frequent and any other sources are not mentioned at all. It has to be stressed that this kind of scholarly essay, entirely dedicated to the notion of political power, was pioneering in the Pashto language.

The core postulate in Afzal Khān’s exposition naturally follows basic Muslim tenets maintaining the divine nature of power. Afzal reiterates a prevailing idea that God exercises his power over people by selecting among them the most worthy and capable individuals, i.e. kings (*bādshāhān*). Disobedience to kings equals disobedience to God, so everybody should obey earthly rulers even if they are usurpers like Żahhāk, a sinister personage from Firdawsi’s *Shāh-nāma*, or tyrants like Quranic Fir‘awn (Pharaoh). According to Afzal, God sends villainous kings to punish people for infidelity, apostasy, and ungratefulness. At the same time Afzal Khān states that power is a test for kings who in order to pass it and win the favour of God have to abide by laws of justice (*‘adl*) and mercy (*ihsān*).

Then Afzal Khān identifies and characterises three main forms of acquiring administrative authority (*riyāsat*): “consensual” (*ijmā’ī*), “hereditary” (*mīrāsī*, or *mawrūsī*), and “appropriative” (*taḡhlībī*). The first form presumes a consensus of people over the candidature of a ruler and somehow corresponds to the ideas of electivity and social contract, it agrees

⁵³See in M. Pelevin, “The Khaṭaks’ Tribal Chronicle (XVII–XVIII): Extra literary Text Functions”, in *Iran and the Caucasus*, 18/3 (2014), pp. 201–212.

⁵⁴Afzal, *Tārīkh-i muraṣṣa’*, p. 449.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 3–14.

with a procedure of electing chieftain by tribal assembly (*jirga*); the second one means succession by right of blood relationship and is the transfer of authority within the ruling clan (*khānkhel*); the third one implies “self-nomination” of a group leader through exhibiting personal skills and qualities,⁵⁶ and primarily means acquisition of power by force. According to Afzal, all three forms are legitimate. Whatever bookish sources of these theoretical views may have been, the very forms of acquiring supremacy mentioned by Afzal Khān reflected real practices in social and political interactions in Pashtun tribes and conformed with common rules of lawful acquisition of the status of a chieftain. To illustrate the “appropriative” form Afzal Khān mentions the circumstances of two Pashtun dynasties, the Lodis (1451–1526) and the Suris (1540–55), came to power in the Delhi Sultanate. However, in the late 16th century Afzal Khān’s own ancestor Malik Akoṛay seized leadership in the Khaṭak tribe through “appropriation”, or “self-nomination”.⁵⁷ “Appropriation” of power naturally requires military force and valour (*tūra*). Afzal accentuates this idea, but stipulates that the power appropriated by force may be acknowledged as legitimate only if “the life of people becomes better than it was before”.⁵⁸

In the Khaṭak tribe, after the formation of the ruling clan at the turn of the 17th century, there was a certain balance between the “consensual” and the “hereditary” forms of acquiring supremacy. Although *de jure* priority remained with the first form, which was an exponent of tribal patriarchal democracy, *de facto* during few decades the chieftaincy in the tribe with the *jirga*’s consent regularly passed from father to eldest son. With the beginning of internal tribal conflicts in 1664, when Khushḥāl Khān was imprisoned by the Mughals, the established order of power succession by the right of primogeniture proved to be insecure. In 1681 the *jirga* elected as a chieftain “self-nominated” Bahrām Khān, Khushḥāl’s third son, and after 1712 the “legitimate” chieftaincy of Afzal Khān, who came to power in 1692, was challenged first by his younger brother Nāmdār and later, in 1724, by the clan of the Khaṭak sheikhs. In his essay Afzal Khān does not advocate openly the priority of hereditary transfer of power, but it is this concept that dominates the ideology of “The Chronicle”. The author’s true political attitudes leak out only in such a remark on the hereditary power, “One should not oppose it except with the consent of the people (*pə ittifāq dā khalqo*)”.⁵⁹

A claimant to supremacy, i.e. chieftaincy, according to Afzal Khān, must meet the following requirements: impeccable reputation, descent from a noble family of a ruling stratum (“not a man of religion, or an alien, but a head of a kin and a descendant of the old-time rulers”), local (*waṭanī*) origin (“a person who belongs to his land and his people cares more about the honour and dignity of his homeland (*waṭan*) and his compatriots (*mutawaṭṭinān*)”), adulthood, maturity, administrative experience, intelligence and education.⁶⁰ Then Afzal enumerates ten moral qualities obligatory for a ruler: 1) gratitude towards parents, teachers, and all other benefactors, 2) self-control, 3) vigour and diligence, 4) truthfulness, 5) resistance

⁵⁶Cf. I. E. Katkov, “Sotsial’nyie aspekty plemennoy struktury pushtunov,” *Afghanistan: istoriia, ekonomika, kul’tura*, (ed.) Yu. V. Gankovskii (Moscow, 1989), pp. 42–51.

⁵⁷Afzal, *Tārīkh-i muraṣṣa’*, pp. 264–265.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 7–8.

to worldly passions, 6) modesty and decency, 7) lack of extreme suspiciousness, 8) imperturbability, 9) valour, 10) generosity.⁶¹

His discourse on power and politics Afzal Khān concludes with contemplations over the main causes of social disturbances and mutinies. Such causes he sees in tyranny, despotism, violence and all kinds of misuse of administrative authority. He states that successful ruling may be accomplished through the denial of violent methods of governance, on the one hand, and providing a balance in relations between three social groups, namely ordinary subjects (*ra'āyā*), nobility (*makhṣūṣān*) and army (*sipāhiyān*). Afzal's comments on the treatment of ordinary people reveal his social status and attitudes: "Lest the subjects might go out of control, one must be more merciful to them than to his own children... However, at the assembly (*majlis*) one should not allow them to be impudent (*gustākh*). Ordinary people are unwise and short-sighted. Either they may commit an unseemly act which will cause a ruler's anger, though one should not be angry at subordinates without guilt, or may fall into impudence..."⁶²

Like his grandfather's teachings in *Dastār-nāma*, Afzal Khān's theoretical speculations on power in the introduction to *Tārīkh-i muraṣṣa'* can be correctly interpreted as an outcome of his own administrative experience only through the study of "The Khātak's Chronicle" which offers plenty of factual material on the Afzal's ways of exercising political authority in the capacity of the Khātak chieftain in 1692–1724.

5. Real Politics in the Epistles of the Khātak Chieftains

Among the documents included in "The Chronicle" there are two pieces which may be attributed to the *naṣīḥat al-mulūk* genre. These are epistles composed by Khushḥāl and Afzal in 1666 and 1719 respectively in connection with actual developments in the Khātak tribe.

The epistle of Khushḥāl Khān is quoted under the title "The Testament" (*waṣīyyat-nāma*) which recalls an old literary tradition going back as far as to the times of the first Muslim caliphs. Khushḥāl wrote it in the Rantambhor prison on March 16, 1666, as an instructive letter to his eldest son Ashraf Khān who replaced him as the Khātak chieftain by the right of primogeniture with the sanction of the Mughal authorities. Thereby it appears that the document was called "The Testament" not so much because of some deliberate historical allusions, but for the simple reason that Khushḥāl expected his incarceration to be a life sentence.⁶³

"The Testament" is not a legal document concerning disposal of property or imposition of an obligation but a political declaration with the guidelines for the members of the Khātak ruling family, "friends and well-wishers" on what policy should be pursued towards particular clans and factions which took part in the internal tribal conflict after the author was arrested by the Mughals in January 1664. Khushḥāl Khān figuratively called this document "the seven-thread (*owā-prāka*) testament" explaining that it would deal with seven "groups" (*qism*) which "are involved in the schism among the people" (*dā olās pā tafriqa dākhil dī*). In

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 292–293.

the opening passage of “The Testament” the author immediately tells of a distinction within these groups between “the relatives” (*khpəl*) and “the strangers” (*pradī*), namely the Khaṭaks and the neighbouring Yūsufzays. Such a remark signals the inborn dichotomy of a Pashtun chieftain’s ethno-social consciousness with regard to the fundamental differentiation between “self” and “other” and once more ascertains the meanings of these notions in the minds of Pashtuns in pre-modern times. Along with other numerous evidences in “The Chronicle” and Khushḥāl Khān’s works this statement indicates that by the word *khpəl* the Khaṭak chieftains always meant only their fellow tribesmen, while the word *pradī* in their lexicon referred mainly to Pashtuns of other tribes.

The very wording of “The Testament” is rather intriguing in the sense that the author chose to designate the groups under consideration with invented metaphoric names, thus demonstrating his personal attitude towards them. Three groups of “the strangers” are the Yūsufzay clans Bāyīzay, Rāñīzay and Kamālzay, respectively nicknamed “Bābāzay” (*bābā* “father”), “Raḥmatzay” (*raḥmat*, “mercy,” “gratitude”), and “Kamzāzay” (*kamzāt* “of bad nature”). The first two, as their sobriquets indicate, are declared friendly since Khushḥāl Khān was married to a daughter of a Bāyīzay chieftain, and after his imprisoning in Rantambhor, both clans took him under their protection and sheltered his family.⁶⁴ In “The Testament” Khushḥāl instructs that they should be treated in a most generous way according to the laws of *Pashtunwali*: “One should not spare life and property for them when it is needed”. With the Kamālzays, who in 1641 killed Khushḥāl’s father Shahbāz Khān in a skirmish, the Khaṭak rulers had been permanently in the state of feud since the times of Malik Akoṛay. Unrest among the Khaṭaks caused by Khushḥāl’s imprisonment, gave the Kamālzays an opportunity to attack and rob the lands of their southern neighbours. Khushḥāl Khān does not specify in his epistle what policy exactly should have been adopted towards the Kamālzays, but the general course is implied in a diatribe, “in such hard times they committed such a low deed, assaulted our family, disgraced Pashtun women!”

If the groups of “the strangers” in the epistle are particular tribal subdivisions registered in the Yūsufzay genealogies, “the relatives” are political factions within the Khaṭak tribe, i.e. the unions of various clans and families which are much less identifiable because of their figurative appellations. The opening sections of “The Chronicle” contain a full list of the main Khaṭak subdivisions in the seventeenth century.⁶⁵ Among thirty two Khaṭak clans only a few were the upshots of various kinds of assimilation, such as the Mughalkays whose ancestor was a deserter from the Mughal army, or the Radzars who originated from the Mandaf-Yūsufzay tribal coalition. The majority of the Khaṭak clans had long ancestries within the Khaṭak genealogical tree. We may only guess how these subdivisions were divided into four groups described by Khushḥāl Khān in “The Testament”, taking into account that some of them, like the ruling clan Ḥasankhel, may have been split into several factions.

These Khaṭak groups bear the names “Sa’ādatkhel” (*sa’ādat* “fortune”), “Nāqīškhel” (*nāqīš* “damaged”), “Mardūdikhel” (*mardūd* “rejected”), and “Muzabzabīn” (*muzabzab* “hesitant”), apparently, according to their positions as regards the transfer of chieftaincy in the Khaṭak tribe from Khushḥāl to Asharf. “Sa’ādatkhel” is declared loyal and worthy of being granted

⁶⁴Cf. brief poetical account of these events in Khushḥāl, *Kulliyāt*, p. 942.

⁶⁵Afzal, *Tārīkh-i muraṣṣa’*, pp. 262–263, 266.

with certain privileges, such as the exemption from the poll-tax (*qalang*) and road tolls (*rāhdārī*). The name of this group, probably, points to its leader, Sa'ādat Khān, who was Khushḥāl's second son and Ashraf's full brother. "Nāqīshkel" is very likely the party of Khushḥāl's third son Bahrām who contested the supremacy of his elder brother and few years later started against him a military campaign. Khushḥāl reproves this group for breaking "the law of brotherhood" but, nevertheless, recommends maintaining peaceful relations with them. Under the sobriquet "Mardūdikhel" Khushḥāl Khān presumably meant the faction of Ziyā ad-Dīn, the leader of the Khaṭak spiritual clan Yāsīnkhel and the former's son-in-law, who strived for the change of power in the Khaṭak tribe and supported political ambitions of Bahrām. The association of this group with the Khaṭak sheikhs may be inferred from the Khushḥāl's demand that "arrogance and wish of grandeur should be suppressed in them by the blade". With respect to "Muzabzabīn", who avoided direct partaking in the political conflict and took a wait-and-see position, Khushḥāl Khān recommends a more restrained policy.

"The Testament" is the earliest extant specimen of a written directive of a Pashtun chieftain concerning internal tribal policies. This document demonstrates well the priorities of the tribal ruler's governance. It proves that in the period of political instability interrelations between tribal subdivisions became of foremost importance and ensuring peaceful coexistence of conflicting groups was considered much more preferable to imposing a chieftain's authoritative rule by force. In this respect "The Testament", as a deliberated political document, sounds much more pragmatic than some of Khushḥāl's impassioned verses acclaiming tough methods of ruling (see above).

Of the same *ad hoc* nature is the Afzal Khān's epistle which appeared over fifty years later under the neutral generic title "Admonition" (*pand-nāma*).⁶⁶ Afzal composed this document in 1719 in the town of Tsoṭara on his way to Lakkī, then the southernmost settlement in the Khaṭak territories, where he spent next two years (1720–1) in exile having been temporarily removed from power by his younger brother Nāmdār Khān. Afzal asserts in "The Chronicle" that he was prompted to write "Admonition" by a series of armed clashes and robberies in the Khaṭak domain which displayed Nāmdār Khān's inability to exercise properly his newly acquired authority and guarantee safety for both the Khaṭak tribesmen and transit traders. Intended to be circulated among the members of the Khaṭak ruling family "Admonition" declared Afzal Khān's views on internal tribal conflicts in general and his political confrontation with Nāmdār in particular. By presenting himself as an experienced and responsible ruler who cares about the welfare of his people, Afzal wished to regain the support of his relatives in order to start a legitimate campaign against his brother.

Unlike Afzal's essay in the introduction to *Tārīkh-i muraṣṣa'* "Admonition" is a diplomatic message written in an extremely evasive and equivocal style. The very subject of this document and the circumstances in which it appeared explain why no names, dates, or any real facts are mentioned in it. On the other hand, such elusiveness makes for perceiving this text more as a product of a careful theoretical analysis of a political conflict than a propagandistic petition pursuing only practical goals. Key points of Afzal's reasoning in "Admonition" may be summarised as follows: 1) the divine nature of human virtues expected from a legitimate

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 423–425.

ruler; 2) bad manners that lead to a schism (*tafriqa*) among the people; 3) external military and political pressure as an inevitable consequence of an internal schism; 4) neglect of public interest and disregard for the welfare of the homeland (*waṭan*) as obstacles for claiming supremacy; 5) legitimacy of the author's claim for power (obviously, an implicit reference to principle of primogeniture) and necessity of a reconciliation on his (!) terms. The historical background and the real purpose of "Admonition" are best disclosed in a passage where Afzal Khān compares himself to his adversary: "It is tested through experience that [true] men are not those who hand out money (lit. "gold"), but those who sell their skills and earn money, be they kings or cobblers. When the lord of the homeland (i.e. hereditary estates) ventures to war, everywhere he goes people say either in front of him or behind his back: "If he were a brave man he would defend his power and his homeland. Whether he possesses the homeland or not, if he loses power, his daughters and sisters will be humiliated. Though now, in this age, my soul does not have an ardent desire for chieftaincy (*sardārī*), for ruling the homeland (*waṭandārī*), for satisfying other passions, to calm down anxieties about the children, the people (*qawm*), the tribes (*qabā'il*) would be far from the ways of [true] men..."

Afzal Khān's "Admonition" shares with "The Testament" of his grandfather the features of both *ad hoc* texts performing momentary political tasks and *naṣīḥat al-mulūk* writings generalising about long-term administrative practices. It is for this reason that Afzal separated "Admonition" from his other correspondence by entitling it as a literary work with the ancient name of a didactical genre (cf. Sasanian *pandnāmak*). In accompanying remarks he explained that "Admonition" was addressed to everybody (*'alā 'l-'umūm*) and its contents were homilies (*wa'z*) and advices (*naṣīḥat*).

6. Conclusion

The writings of the Pashtun chieftains Khushḥāl Khān and Afzal Khān on the art of ruling occupy a distinctive and independent niche in Pashto literature of pre-modern times standing apart from prevailing lyrical and religio-philosophical poetry. Shaped by literary traditions of classical Persian "Mirrors for Princes" the works by the Khatak *litterateurs* reflect a strong individual approach to the subject which is treated in full conformity with the authors' own views and experiences, as well as social and political realities of the Pashtuns' tribal life in the heyday of the Mughal empire. Comprising a variety of prose and poetical texts, these early Pashto "handbooks for chieftains" offer the most authentic primary material on the political ideology, ethics and education of Pashtun military-administrative elite. They prove that the outlook and behavioural patterns of Pashtun tribal rulers stemmed from a combination, sometime quite eclectic and contradictory, of Islamic precepts and norms, rules imposed by Pashtun customary law (*Pashtunwali*) and feudal ideologies of the Mughal governmental system. The idea of divinely predestined supremacy went hand in hand with the common practice of "self-nominated" leadership based on personal skills and ambitions. The perception of collective authority exercised by tribal assembly (*jirga*) conjoined with the firm belief in the efficiency of one-man power. After the inclusion of the Khatak territories into the feudatory structure of the Mughal state the principle of hereditary transfer of power within the ruling clan by the right of primogeniture became haunting in the minds of the

Khatak chieftains and served as a key factor in debates on the legitimacy of political authority. The ethics of tribal rulers conveyed not so much the basic Quranic tenet of “enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong” (*amr bi l-ma’rūf wa nahy ‘an al-munkar*) as the norms of the unwritten Pashtun Code of Honour. In Khushḥāl Khān’s works the general concept of honour (*nang*) is permanently discussed with reference to its two fundamental notions, valour and generosity, which are regarded as practical “arts” (*hunarūna*) rather than moral qualities because they imply definite social functions of a chieftain and provide ideological grounds for a number of customs and legal institutions. A kind of teaching programme aimed at nurturing an honourable and competent ruler is outlined by Khushḥāl Khān in *Dastār-namā*. This book establishes the scope of knowledge and skills required of an educated Pashtun chieftain, whereas “The Khataks’ Chronicle,” compiled by Afzal Khān, describes numerous cases of how these competences were applied by the Khatak rulers in everyday life. The views of the Khatak chieftains on real politics are documented in “The Chronicle” not only within the large corpus of historical and autobiographical narratives, but also in a few ad hoc texts among which two epistles purposely entitled like specimens of the *naṣīḥat al-mulūk* genre, viz. “The Testament” (*waṣīyyat-nāma*) and “Admonition” (*pand-nāma*), explicate the authors’ opinion on the art of chieftaincy in time of internal political conflicts. <mosprolege@gmail.com>

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