

## Paleography and Textual Editing Practices in Afghanistan During the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

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### Abstract

Textual editing has remained an underexplored area within literary studies in Afghanistan. This study investigates the knowledge of paleography and the editorial methods employed by several Afghan scholars, with the aim of clarifying the approaches to textual editing in the country during the 20th century. Drawing on bibliographies and indexes of articles from leading Afghan literary and historical periodicals such as *Kābul* (Kabul Literary Association), *Āriānā* (History association of Afghanistan), *Zhmandūn* (Ministry of Information and Culture), and *Khorāsān* (Dari Institute of Language and Literature), this study identifies and analyzes the editorial work of four prominent scholars: Khāl-Muḥammad Khastah, Sarwar Gūyā I'timādī, 'Abd al-Ra'ūf Fekrī Saljūqī, and Muḥammad Ḥusayn Behrūz. The findings reveal that Afghan text editors often faced considerable challenges, most notably limited and difficult access to manuscripts preserved in international libraries. As a result, they frequently relied on locally available sources, which were sometimes unverified or based on single manuscript copies. Furthermore, core components of modern critical editing such as comprehensive manuscript description, systematic collation, and documentation of variant readings were often overlooked. This study offers new insight into the field of paleography in Afghanistan and provides a preliminary reassessment of its textual editing practices and key contributors during the 20th century.

**Keywords:** Paleography, Text editing, Afghanistan's Persian literature, Dari literature, Khāl-Muḥammad Khastah, Sarwar Gūyā I'timādī, 'Abd al-Ra'ūf Fekrī Saljūqī, and Muḥammad Ḥusayn Behrūz.

### Introduction

In Afghanistan, the field of paleography and textual editing has not been cultivated with the same vigor as in neighboring Iran and the Indian subcontinent, where a long tradition of manuscript studies exists<sup>1</sup>. Nonetheless, a number of Afghan scholars in the twentieth century attempted to edit classical Persian texts, whether literary, historical, or poetic, and thereby contributed to the country's emerging scholarly culture.

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<sup>1</sup> A primary obstacle to the development of textual criticism in Afghanistan during the twentieth century was the way Afghan nationalists approached Persian literary and historical texts. The government's goal of compiling an exclusive Afghan national history meant that publishing ancient Persian histories was often deemed counterproductive to their political goals. Because these histories did not focus on events related to the Afghan/Pashtun people, government publishing institutions showed no interest in them. The essential problem was the absence of the "desired" histories, necessitating their creation. As Jawan Shir noted, crafting and inventing a continuous history that portrayed Afghanistan as an ancient homeland perpetually belonging to the Afghans were crucial activities for these nationalists.

While the relationship between the Persian language and nationalism in Afghanistan requires dedicated study, Jawan Shir briefly affirmed its necessity, calling it a vital way "to fill a gap in the historiography of Afghanistan" (Jawan Shir, 2012, pp. 6, 115). These policies became particularly explicit and apparent during the reign of king Muḥammad Zāhir (r. 1933–1973). During this period, the Afghan government attempted, instead of publishing texts, to selectively rewrite the essence of the country's history, identity, and culture based on ethnic preferences. For example, Ghulām Muḥammad Ghubār, instead of publishing the *Tārīkh-i Aḥmadshāhī*, wrote "*Aḥmad Shāh Babā*" (Kabul, 1943). Sarwar Gūyā, instead of publishing *Tārīkh-nāmah-i Herāt*, published the "*Abidāt-i nafīsa-i Herāt*" [Precious Monuments of Herat] (Kabul, 1937). Riqā Mā'il, instead of publishing the *Tazkīrah-i Muḥammad Riqā Barnābādī*, wrote the "*Mirzāyān-i Barnābād*". 'Azīz al-Dīn Wakīlī, instead of publishing *Tārīkh-i Ḥusayn-Shāhī*, wrote *Durrat al-ḡamān fī Tārīkh-i Shāh-Zamān* (Kabul, 1958).

This study seeks to document and analyze these editorial practices. To do so, I first provide a general overview of paleography in Afghanistan, followed by a discussion of the historical circumstances that shaped access to manuscripts and the feasibility of editing projects. Subsequently, I divide Afghan textual editing into distinct phases: from its beginnings in the 1930s, through the 1970s–1980s when the Academy of Sciences became the institutional center of editorial work, and finally into the later decades of the century. Within this framework, I examine the approaches of four paleographer and text editors in particular: Khāl-Muḥammad Khastah, Sarwar Gūyā I‘timādī, ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf Fekrī Saljūqī, and Muḥammad Ḥusayn Behrūz<sup>2</sup>. My purpose is, not only to highlight their individual paleography and text editing methods and achievements but also, to evaluate the broader intellectual context in which they worked. Their limitations, which included restricted access to manuscript collections abroad and a shortage of technical training in codicology, should be acknowledged. Yet, their efforts constitute an important chapter in the history of Afghan scholarship.

In this research, we first identified the works of each individual by consulting bibliographies and article indexes from various Afghan journals. In the second step, we studied, reviewed, and critically evaluated these works.

### **Paleography in Afghanistan (Nuskha-shināsī dar Afghānistān)**

If we set aside the works published in the traditional text editing style common in sub-continent between the reign of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Khān (1880–1901 CE) and the early years of Zāhīr Shāh (1933–1973 CE), paleography in Afghanistan can be said to have begun with the writing

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<sup>2</sup> This study does not address the relatively more familiar figures of text editors in Afghanistan, and historical texts from the last two centuries are not within the scope of the current study.

of articles in *Majalla-i Kābul* (first issue on June 6, 1931) and *Majalla-i Adabī Herāt* (first issue on March 6, 1932).

The main researchers at this stage included Sarwar Gūyā I‘timādī (1901–1967 CE), Muḥammad Ibrāhīm ‘Ālamshāhī Ghaznawī (1905–1978 CE), Nūr Muḥammad Kaḡudāy (1900–1973 CE), ‘Abd al-Ḥayy Ḥabībī (1910–1984 CE), ‘Abd Allāh Afghānī-Nawīs (1897–1972 CE), Qārī ‘Abd Allāh Kābulī (1868–1943 CE)<sup>3</sup>, and others. These scholars, who either had access to manuscripts in the National Museum of Afghanistan in Kabul or used their own private collections and those of others, began to write articles about manuscripts. From the very first issue of *Majalla-i Kābul*, various paleographical essays can be found.

At the end of 1932 (1311 SH), the Kabul Literary Association (Anjuman-i Adabī-yi Kābul) began publishing a year book or almanac (*Sālnāmah-i majallab-i Kābul*) whose content differed from that of the journal. In the *Sālnāmah*, paleographical articles were primarily devoted to the introduction of manuscripts, including several from the Kabul Museum. For instance, in 1935 (1314 SH) Sarwar Gūyā I‘timādī introduced fifty-eight manuscripts, and in 1936 (1315 SH) Aḡmad-‘Alī Kuhzād described twelve manuscripts, six miniatures, and four albums (murraqa‘) from the Kabul Museum in the *Sālnāmah-i Kābul*<sup>4</sup>.

The publication of paleographical articles in the *Sālnāmah* and also Kabul’s literary Journal continued until 1940 (1319 sh.), when the Kabul Literary Society was renamed “Pashto Ṭulana,” and the language of the

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<sup>3</sup> Sarwar Gūyā wrote about Qārī ‘Abd Allāh Kābulī’s paleography skills: “Moreover, in editing and revising the divans of poets and unique manuscripts, I endured much hardship, and after meticulous collation—which was his own particular method—he transcribed most manuscripts in his own elegant and beautiful handwriting.” (Sarwar Gūyā, *Maqālāt*, Vol. 2, p. 337).

<sup>4</sup> See. Sarwar Gūyā, “Ba‘ḏi aḡ nuskha hā-yi nāyāb-i qalami-yi Kābul”, *Sālnāmah-i Kābul*, (Kabul: Kabul literary association, 1935), 173-188 & Aḡmad Ali khān Kuhzād, “Muḡāb-i Kābul”, *Sālnāmah-i Kābul*, (Kabul: Kabul literary association, 1936), 269-300.

publication was changed to Pashto. The last Persian-language issue was no. 11, vol. 9, published in Jaddī (December–January) 1319 Sh<sup>5</sup>.

With the change of language in *Majallab-i Kābul*, literary scholars sought another outlet to publish their work. This opportunity arose with the launch of *Āryānā*, the journal of the Afghanistan Historical Society (Anjuman-i Tārīkh-i Afghānistān), under the editorship of Aḥmad-‘Alī Kuhzād in February 1943 (Dalw 1321 Sh.). More serious paleographical research—such as cataloguing, introducing manuscripts, and translating paleographical articles from English and Urdu—was carried out in this journal by a younger generation of scholars, including Khalīlullāh Khalīlī (1907–1987), Fekrī Saljūqī (1909–1969), ‘Alī Aṣghar Bashīr (1919–1981), Muḥammad Ṣālīḥ Parwantā (1912–1990), Ridā Mā’il Hirawī (1922–1995), and Muḥammad-Ḥusayn Behrūz (1929–2019). For example, in the very first year of publication, Ṣālīḥ Muḥammad Parwantā introduced forty-three manuscripts from his private library in four articles under the title “Kitāb wa Kitābkhāna” (“Book and Library”).

At the same time, journals such as *Adab* (founded in 1952/1331 Sh.) and *Zhuwandūn* also occasionally carried short pieces on manuscripts, but the main focus of paleographical work remained in the Historical Society and *Āryānā*.

During these years, whenever a rare or valuable manuscript surfaced, scholars took the opportunity to introduce it. For example, in 1959 (1338 SH), while preparing a catalogue of the manuscripts in the Kabul Museum, Khalīlullāh Khalīlī came across a rare copy of the collected works of Ḥakīm Sanā’ī, which led to a monograph titled “Nuskha-i nādir az Kulliyāt-i Āthār-i Ḥakīm Sanā’ī Ghaznawī” (“A Rare Manuscript of the Collected Works of Ḥakīm Sanā’ī Ghaznawī”), published by the Ministry of Education (Wizārat-i Ma’ārif).

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<sup>5</sup> See. Aria Fani, *Reading Across Borders Afghans, Iranians, and Literary Nationalism*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2024), 151.

Despite the historical importance of its holdings, manuscript research remained a marginal discipline in Afghanistan compared to other literary studies. This marginalization is underscored by the fact that only a single international conference devoted exclusively to manuscripts is recorded over the span of nearly a century.

This event, the International Conference on the Study of Manuscripts, was held at Kabul University from July 31 to August 4, 1967. It was attended by 32 scholars representing 12 countries, including the UNESCO delegation<sup>6</sup>. Crucially, the conference was not a domestic initiative but was held with the financial and logistical support of the UNESCO Project for the Study of Civilizations of Central Asia; the Afghan government and its Ministry of Information and Culture served primarily as the local organizer.

In addition to scientific sessions, the conference featured an exhibition displaying approximately 200 rare manuscripts borrowed from Afghanistan, Czechoslovakia, France, India, Iran, Pakistan, the Soviet Union, Turkey, England, and Yugoslavia. The meeting report, translated into Persian by Kazem Ahang, reveals the conference's broad regional agenda [2]. Key objectives included:

- examining and implementing scientific preservation methods for manuscripts;
- enhancing manuscript catalogs in accordance with international standards;
- expanding relevant institutions for acquiring rare manuscripts and documents; and
- promoting microfilming and improving access to rare resources for scholars in the region<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Kāzīm Āhang published the report of this meeting in *Āryānā* journal. See. "Semīnār-i bayn al-milāl-i nusakh-i khaṭṭ?" *Āriānā*, No. 272, 1346 [1967], 109-116.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 112.

Although a joint domestic and international committee was formed to follow up on the seminar's resolutions, no published record of its subsequent meetings or activities in Afghanistan has been found in Kabul publications.

### **Periodization of Text Editing in Afghanistan**

Establishing a clear periodization of text editing in Afghanistan is relatively difficult. After reviewing the works of many editors from the late nineteenth century to the 1980s, their editions can, in general, be placed into three broad categories.

The first group consisted of traditional text editors (muṣaḥḥihān-i sunnatī) whose methods were influenced by those of editors in the Indian subcontinent and Central Asia, and were largely similar to the style used in lithographic editions. In this method, an editor would prepare a text based on personal taste, using one or several manuscripts. The work would then be copied in the hand of a calligrapher and published without the necessary research, introduction of the manuscripts, or record of variant readings. Among this group can be mentioned the editors of Bīdīl's *Dīvān* under the patronage of Sardār Naṣr Allāh Khān—such as Muḥammad-Ya'qūb Adīb Farāhī—together with the editors of *Pand-nāma-yi Dunyā wa Dīn* (Kabul: Maṭba'a-yi Dār al-Salṭana, n.d.), *Dīvān-i 'Ā'isha Durānī* (Kabul: Maṭba'a-yi Sarkārī, 1299 AH), and individuals such as Khāl-Muḥammad Khastah (Kabul: *Kulliyāt-i Bīdīl*), 'Abd Allāh Sarwistānī (Lahore: *Dīvān-i Aḥmad Jām Zhindapīl, Anīs al-tā'ibīn*), 'Abd Allāh 'Ayshī Qandahārī (Lahore: *Risāla-yi Maṣārāt-i Harāt*), and Munshī 'Abd al-Karīm Aḥrārī (Herat, 1308 SH: *Risāla-yi Maṣārāt-i Harāt*), among others. These editions had numerous errors and inaccuracies. For example, 'Abd Allāh 'Ayshī, the editor of *Risāla-yi Maṣārāt-i Harāt*,

through excessive intervention and manipulation—adding chapters of his own—essentially produced an entirely different work<sup>8</sup>.

The second group consisted of editors who had connections with literary circles in Iran and whose work was almost in line with the text editing methods of scholars at the Bunyād-i Farhang-i Īrān (Iranian Cultural Foundation). The period of this group roughly spans the 1960s to the 1980s (1340s–1360s SH). In these editions, one finds introductions, descriptions of the manuscripts, annotations, indexes, and in some cases records of variant readings in the footnotes. Among this group were ‘Abd al-Ḥayy Ḥabībī, Riḍā Mā’il Hirawī, ‘Alī-Aṣghar Bashīr Harawī, and Muḥammad-Ḥusayn Behrūz, among others. Most of these researchers were employees of the Afghanistan History Association (Anjuman-i Tārīkh-i Afghānistān) and later the Academy of Sciences (Akādamī-yi ‘Ulūm), while some worked for the Ministry of Information and Culture, publishing articles in that ministry’s journals such as *Zhwandun*, *Kitāb*, and others.

The third group included scholars whose method of editing was intermediate between these two approaches. Their works contained valuable introductions and annotations, but they paid less attention to providing precise descriptions of manuscripts or recording variant readings. Among this group were ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf Fekrī Saljūqī, ‘Alī-Aḥmad Kuhzād, Sarwar Gūyā I’timādī, and later Ghulām Fārūq Nilāb Raḥīmī.

### Text Editing in the 1970s and 1980s

In the 1970s, Afghanistan’s literary environment experienced significant growth in terms of publishing classical texts. Many literary works were published in Kabul in connection with state-sponsored conferences

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<sup>8</sup> [Sayyid Aṣīl al-Dīn ‘Abd Allāh Vā’iz], *Risālah-i Maẓārāt-i Herāt*, Edited by Fekrī Saljūqī, (Kabul: Maṭba’ah-i dawlatī, 1343 [1964]), 12.

attended by both domestic and foreign scholars. Among these publications were the *Guzīda-yi Āthār-i Amīr Khusrāw-i Balkhī* (1353 SH / 1974, Bayhaqī Publications), *Daqīqī-nāma* (1975, Bayhaqī Publications), and the works of Ḥakīm Sanā'ī, including a facsimile of the *Kulliyāt-i Ash'ār* (1356 SH / 1977, Bayhaqī Publications), preserved in the manuscript library of the Ministry of Information and Culture in Kabul.

In the following decade, particularly during the presidency of Babrak Karmal (r. 1979–1986), major changes occurred in the government's cultural policies and in the publication of texts. The establishment of literary and artistic unions became part of state policy. The Union of Afghanistan Writers (*Ittihadīyya-yi Nivīsandagān-i Afghānistān*) marked a turning point in Afghanistan's literary movement. With less state interference and oversight, writers and poets received greater support, leading to the publication of dozens of works including poetry, short stories, and literary research. Among its initiatives was *Zhwandūn*<sup>9</sup>, the union's journal, which appeared regularly throughout the 1980s and was considered one of Afghanistan's best literary journals. Other cultural-literary organizations founded in this period included the Artists' Union, which published *Honar*, and the Writers' Association, which issued *Qalam*.

During this era, the government also placed importance on the various dialects and languages spoken across the country and established institutes in different ministries. For example, the Hazāra National Solidarity Council (*Shūrā-yi Insiyām-i Milliāt-i Hazāra*) was founded, publishing the journal *Gharjīstān*, which became one of the capital's most respected periodicals. Within the Ministry of Tribes and Nationalities, the Institute of Languages and Literatures of Brotherly Nationalities

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<sup>9</sup> In Afghanistan, two periodicals named *Zhwandūn* have been published: the first was a weekly magazine with a socio-cultural approach and was published by the Ministry of Information and Culture. The other publication had a literary approach and was published in the 1980s by the Afghanistan Writers' Union.

(*Institūt-i Zabān-bā wa Adabīyyāt-i Millīat-bā-yi Barādar*) was also established, consisting of various departments and published specialized journals, such as *Yūldūz* for Uzbek languages and *Gūrāsh* for Turkman. These bodies made notable achievements in organizing literary gatherings and publishing journals.

Book printing also accelerated in this period, with the establishment of the *Ri'āsat-i Nasharāt* (Publications Directorate) under the State Committee for Printing and Publishing (*Kumītab-i Dawlatī-yi Ṭab' wa Nashr*). A modern printing press with offset capability was imported from East Germany, enabling the reproduction of high-quality texts. Using this press, several major classical works were published in offset editions based on earlier Iranian prints, including:

- *Shāhnāmab-i Firdawsī* (1361 SH / 1982, State Printing House)
- *Mathnawī-yi Ma'navī*, ed. Nicholson (1366 SH / 1987, State Printing House, under the efforts of Nūr Allāh Tāliqānī)
- *Tārikh-i Baybaqī*, ed. 'Alī Akbar Fayyāz (1364 SH / 1985, State Printing House)
- *Guzīdab-i Ghazaliyyāt-i Shams*, ed. Muḥammad Riḍā Shafī'ī Kadkanī
- *Dīvān-i Ḥāfiẓ*, ed. Aḥmad Shāmlū (1365 SH / 1986, State Printing House)
- *Taḥlīl-i Ash'ar-i Nāṣir-i Khusraw* by Mahdī Muḥaqqiq (1365 SH / 1986, Institute of Dari Language and Literature)
- *Dīvān-i Nāṣir-i Khusraw*, ed. Mujtabā Mīnavī (1366 SH / 1987, Institute of Dari Language and Literature)
- *Safar-nāmab-i Nāṣir-i Khusraw*, ed. Nādir Vazīn-pūr (1370 SH / 1991, Institute of Dari Language and Literature)<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> I am grateful to Dr. Muḥammad Yunis Tughyān Sākāī and Dr. Farid Bizhan for providing this information.

### The Literary Movement of Textual Criticism in the Academy of Sciences of Afghanistan

Upon the rise of the Khalq (People)'s Democratic Party of Afghanistan, the new regime made the publication of historical texts a priority. They sought to challenge and replace the historical narratives created during the previous kingdom by the Ministry of Education and the Historical Association of Afghanistan. The goal was to illuminate the obscured aspects of culture and the unwritten parts of history. These intentions were even reflected in the forewords of books. For example, in the opening message of *Jarīdab-i Balkh*, Bāriq Shafī'ī, the Minister of Information and Culture at the time, expressed the hope that more classical and past texts could be published within Afghanistan<sup>11</sup>.

In this context, in 1985, through the cooperation of Muḥammad Ya'qūb Wāḥidī Jawzjānī and the efforts of 'Abd al-Ḥayy Ḥabībī and 'Abd al-Majīd Sarbaland (then Minister of Information and Culture), a number of microfilms of manuscripts from Soviet scientific repositories were provided to the Afghan government by Soviet officials. These microfilms were handed over to the National Archives of Afghanistan by the Cultural Relations Department of the ministry for preservation and use<sup>12</sup>. Some of these microfilms were later utilized in the textual editing projects of Afghan scholars during the 1980s, including the edition of *Tuḥfat al-Aḥbāb* by Ubihī.

Close ties were established with the Soviet Union and its autonomous republics. Advisors—often Persian-speaking Tajiks and Uzbeks—were assigned to some institution. Within the Academy of Sciences, Dr. Tursun-bāy Ni'mat-zāda (1926-2008) and Ḥakīm Qurbānov served as

<sup>11</sup> See. Muḥammad Mu'min, *Jarīdab-i Balkh*, Ed. by Mā'il Hirawī, (Kabul: Bayhaqi publishing house, 1357 [1978]), [First page].

<sup>12</sup> Ḥāfīz Ubihī, *Lughat nāmāh-i Tuḥfat al-ahbāb*, Ed. by Ḥusayn Farmand, (Kabul: Institute-i zaban wa adab-i Dari, 1367 [1988]), Eleven.

Translator and advisors, assisting researchers in their literary and historical studies. Sayf Allāh Sa'īdov (1936-2018) was the cultural attaché at the Soviet Embassy in Kabul during this period, organizing numerous cultural programs in cooperation with literary institutions. Tajikistani scholars such as Dr. Khudāy-nazar 'Asā-zāda (1941-2014), Dr. Rūshan Raḥmānī (1941), and Dr. 'Abd al-Nabī Sattār-zāda (1941) also collaborated with Kabul University during these years.

In line with this orientation, the government established the Center for Languages and Literature within the Academy of Sciences, comprising institutes for Dari, Uzbek, Pashto, and other languages. The creation of this center, considered a milestone in Afghanistan's language policies, aimed to edit and publish literary texts, compile catalogs of Afghan printed works, and prepare bibliographies of sources for Persian literature from the past three centuries. This literary hub, under the guidance of three senior figures of Persian literature in Afghanistan—'Abd al-Aḥmad Jāwid (1927-2002), Riḍā Mā'il Hirawī (1922-1995), and Amīr Muḥammad Athīr (1915-1989)—engaged a younger generation of ambitious scholars, including Ḥusayn Farmand, Nāṣir Raḥyāb (1954-2024), Sārā Mujaddidī, and Parvīn Sīnā (1956), in textual editing and bibliography. Alongside them, other researchers such as Ḥusayn Nā'il (1931-1997), Muḥammad Ya'qūb Wāḥidī Jawzjānī (1932), and Muḥammad Ḥusayn Behrūz also collaborated with the center.

During this period, the center successfully published several works, such as *Tuḥfat al-Aḥbāb* by Ubahī (1988), *Akbbār-i Āl-i Barmak* (1982), *Tqd-i Surayyā* (1983), and *Nāmib-hā-yi Dastnawīs-i Jāmī* (1986). In the 1980s, *Khurāsān*, the journal of the Institute of Dari Language and Literature of the Academy of Sciences, paid more attention to paleography than other journals. Ḥusayn Nā'il, Nāṣir Raḥyāb, and Sarwar Pākfar were among its editors.

At the same time, some texts that had already been published in Iran or the Soviet Union were reprinted in Afghanistan with only brief

introductions or occasional additional annotations. Among these works were *Tārikh-i Bayhaqī*, ed. ‘Alī Akbar Fayyāz (with an introduction and supplementary notes by Muḥammad Sarwar Humāyūn, 1985); *Tadbkīra al-Tavārikh* of ‘Abd Allāh Kābulī, ed. Shams al-Dīn Nūr al-Dīnov (transliterated from Cyrillic to Perso-Arabic script by Jalāl al-Dīn Šidīqī, 1986); *Nāmih-bā-yi Dastnawīs-i Jāmī*, ed. ‘Iṣām al-Dīn Urunbāyov (with the cooperation and introduction of Riḍā Mā’il Hirawī, 1985); *Divān-i Naṣīr-i Khusraw* (1987); and *Akbbār-i Al-i Barmak* (1982).

In this same period, connections with Iran and its scholars diminished to a minimum, while literary exchanges with the Central Asian republics intensified. For instance, in the spring of 1990, a group of Institute members—including Ḥusayn Nā’il, Ḥusayn Farmand, and others—undertook a three-month trip to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, where they visited manuscript libraries and met with local experts. Later, Ḥusayn Farmand published a report of this journey, along with descriptions of 38 manuscripts from those libraries, in *Khorāsān*<sup>13</sup>.

Following this overview, the study will examine the editorial methods of four Afghan textual scholars, based on their works and articles: *Khulāṣat al-Akbbār* edited by Sarwar Gūyā, *Ghazaliyyāt of Bīdīl* edited by Khāl-Muḥammad Khastah, *Risālah-i Mazārāt-i Herāt* edited by Fekrī Saljūqī, and the paleographical essays of Muḥammad Ḥusayn Behrūz.

### **Khāl-Muḥammad Khastah (1902–1973)**

Khāl-Muḥammad Khastah was a poet, calligrapher, *Tadbkīra*-writer, and editor, born to a mother from Khutalān and a father from Panjshir. Of his edited works, two are well known: *Kulliyāt-i Bīdīl* (Ministry of Education, 1962–1965) and *Iqd-i Surayyā* (Academy of Sciences, 1983). Several of his works remain unpublished. Information on his editorial

<sup>13</sup> Ḥusayn Farmand, “Rahāvard-i yak dīdār-i farhangī” (Souvenirs of a cultural trip), *Khorāsān*, No. 48, fall 1381sh. [/2002], 9-32 & No. 49, winter 1381sh. [/2003], 11-43.

method is derived from his two published editions and the collected articles from the 2005 commemorative seminar held in his honor at the Academy of Sciences of Afghanistan. The most important of Khastah's editorial works is the *Kulliyāt* of Mīrzā ʿAbd al-Qādir Bīdil. This edition coincided with the peak of attention to Bīdil in Afghanistan during the 1960s and was published in four volumes through the Ministry of Education. It is noteworthy that Khastah's name was not mentioned as editor on the cover of the book. Only once, at the end of the introduction, Khalīlullāh Khalīlī acknowledged Khastah's tireless efforts in collating and editing the text in introduction<sup>14</sup>.

A number of prominent Bīdil scholars of the time—including Mīr Najm al-Dīn Anṣārī (1912–1971), ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq Bītāb (1886–1969), Sayyid Muḥammad Dāʿūd al-Ḥusaynī (1897–1979), and Nūr Muḥammad Kuhgadāy (1900–1972)—assisted him. However, the main responsibility of collation and comparison of manuscripts fell on Khastah himself. His only direct contribution to the four volumes is the chronogram inscribed with the year 1382 A.H., corresponding to the publication year of the first volume<sup>15</sup>.

For the *Kulliyāt-i Bīdil*, up to page 692 of the first volume, the base text was the edition of Bīdil's *Dīmān* printed by Sardār Naṣr Allāh Khān (1874–1920). For subsequent ghazals, the Bombay Safdarī Press edition served as the basis, and where errors were detected, the editors referred to the manuscript copy of the *Kulliyāt* in the Kabul Museum and other manuscripts preserved in the Ministry of Education's library<sup>16</sup>. Khalīlī also noted that some ghazals were collected over several years by Ḥāfiẓ Nūr Muḥammad Khān Kuhgadāy, royal secretary, from more than ninety manuscripts and miscellanies (Jungs and Bayaḍs) of Bīdil's works. These ghazals were marked with an asterisk in the new edition. It is

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<sup>14</sup> ʿAbd al-Qādir Bīdil, *Kulliyāt*, (Kabul, Da Puhaniṯ Wizārat [(Ministry of Education)], 1341 sh. [1962], Vol. 1), [page fifth].

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 1198.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, [page fourth].

noteworthy that none of these starred ghazals appear in the Bombay or Kabul editions. The *Dīwān* was arranged alphabetically by rhyme, with an index provided for easy access to the ghazals.

This edition does not provide an introduction to the manuscripts used, nor does it record textual variants in footnotes. The other three volumes lack introductions altogether, and only volumes two and four contain tables of contents at the end. The second volume, which contains the rubā‘iyyāt, includes more than two hundred quatrains under the title “Miscellaneous Rubā‘iyyāt” (pp. 384–430). No explanation was given as to their source or why they were categorized separately.

Numerous critical articles have been written on the editorial method of this *Kulliyāt*. Later editions of Bīdil’s *Dīwān*—such as that of Sayyid Maḥdī Ṭabāṭabā‘ī and ‘Alī Riḍā Qazwah (Shahristān-i Adab, 2014)—have highlighted the shortcomings of Khastah’s edition, pointing to issues such as faulty word choices, conflation of multiple ghazals, and the omission of many poems. Consequently, his edition cannot be considered authoritative. Similar problems are evident in his edition of *‘Iqd-i Surayyā*, which arguably resembles transcription (*kitābat*) rather than textual editing. That volume, too, lacked an introduction by Khastah himself; instead, Ḥusayn Nā‘il provided an extensive and scholarly preface.

Khastah also edited the *Dīwān* of Shawkat Bukhārī. The manuscript of this work, preserved in the National Archives of Afghanistan under no. 15/20, comprises 210 folios. He prepared this edition using nine manuscripts (four from the library of Hāshim Shāyiq Afandī (1887–1954), and others from the libraries of ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq Bītāb, Mudīr ‘Abd al-Raḥīm Khān, Qārī Sharaf al-Dīn Sharaf, Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Parwantā, and ‘Abd al-Aḥmad Jāwid). He provided details on the dates of transcription and the number of verses for each manuscript. Beyond

these manuscripts, Khastah occasionally incorporated verses he had located elsewhere, recording them in the margins of pages<sup>17</sup>.

For these reasons, Khastah's method of editing the *Kulliyāt-i Bidil* may be considered traditional, resembling the approach of older Indian editors, especially those of lithographic publications in the region. This influence seems largely due to his thirteen-year stay in India (1923–1936) and his extensive studies of Indo-Persian sources. His work in *tadbkīra*-writing was likewise shaped by Indian models. Among his *tadbkīras* are *Yādī az Raftagān* (1965, Kabul), *Mu'āsirin-i Sukhanwar* (1960, Anīs Publishing Institute, Kabul), *Tadbkīra-yi Khattātān* (2004, Academy of Sciences of Afghanistan), *Tadbkīra-yi Tadbkīranigārān* (1966, unpublished), *Tadbkīra-yi Nuḡūdh-i Dānīsh* (1966, unpublished), *Dabīristān-i Balakh* (unpublished), *Tadbkīra-yi Mūsīqī-dānān* (unpublished), among others.

#### Sarwar Gūyā I'timādī (1901–1967)

Sarwar Gūyā I'timādī was a codicologist, cataloger, text editor, and translator. He was a member of the Kabul Literary Association (Anjuman-i Adabī-yi Kābul), advisor to the Historical Society (Anjuman-i Tārīkh), literary advisor to the Directorate of Press, and consultant to the Ministry of Education. Among Afghan manuscript specialists, he was the first to conduct research in this field and published numerous articles. In 1935 (1314 sh.), he introduced fifty-seven manuscripts from the Kabul Museum, the Dār al-Salṭana National Library, and the Ministry of Education in the *Sālnāma-yi Kābul*<sup>18</sup>. Later, in 1959 (1338 sh.), together with Khalīlullāh Khalīlī and Mawlavī 'Abd al-Qadīr Shahāb, he was

<sup>17</sup> Gulzād, Muhammad Āsīf, (2005), Scholar's viewpoints regarding Mawlana Khastah (Collection of Articles of the 30th death anniversary seminar of Late Mawlānā Khastah), (Kabul: Afghanistan Academy of Sciences), 113.

<sup>18</sup> Sarwar Gūyā, "Ba'ḏī az nuskha hā-yi nāyāb-i qalamī-yi Kābul", *Sālnāmah-i Kābul*, (Kabul: Anjuman-i Adabi Kabul, 1314sh. [/1935]), 173.

tasked with preparing a preliminary catalog of the manuscripts of the Kabul Museum<sup>19</sup>.

His editorial works include the Letters of Sana'ī al-Ghaznavī, published in six installments in *Kābul* magazine from issue no. 2 (Ḥūt 1321/1943) through issue no. 9 (Mizān 1322/1943–44), based on an undated manuscript. He also edited the *Safarnāmah* of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Naqqāsh to China, translated from Ḥāfiẓ Abrū's *Zubdat al-Tawārikh*, with comparison to *Maṭla' al-Sa'dayn* and other historical works, and annotated with French orientalist Catremér's translation<sup>20</sup>. Another of his edited texts was "Darbār-i 'Ilparvar-i Herāt (On the Science-loving Court of Herat), derived from the *Waqi'āt-i Baburi* and *Tarikh-i Rashidī*<sup>21</sup>. He also published a chapter from Khwāndamīr's *Khulāṣat al-Akbbār*: first in *Āryānā* magazine (1945/1324 sh.), and again in 1967 (Dalw 1345 sh.) through the Ministry of Information and Culture. For this, he collated a manuscript from the Royal Chancery Library (Kitābkhānah-i Dār al-Taḥrīr-i Shāhī) with copies belonging to 'Abd al-Ra'ūf Fekrī Saljūqī and the Navā'ī Library in Tashkent<sup>22</sup>. This book included a table of contents, a brief introduction, and 131 annotations (pp. 67–138), though it lacked an index. Other works linked to manuscript studies include *Ābidāt-i Naḥṣab-i Herāt* (Historical Society, 1937/1316 sh.) and a preface to the *Kulliyāt* of Qārī 'Abdullāh.

Sarwar Gūyā was the most active codicologist writing for *Kābul* magazine. In its very first issue, he demonstrated his command of paleographical knowledge by referring to catalogs in English, Arabic, and

<sup>19</sup> Khalīlullāh Khalīlī, "Dar bārah-i yak nuskhah-i qadīm-i Kulliyāt-i Hakīm Abu'l-Majid Majdud Sana'ī", (Kabul: Ministry of Education, 1338sh. [1959]), 2.

<sup>20</sup> Sarwar Gūyā, *Maqālāt*, (Kabul: Shirkat-i Kitāb-i Shah Muhammad, Vol. 2, 1385sh [2006]), 507-545.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 571-594.

<sup>22</sup> Ghiyāth al-Dīn ibn Humām al-Dīn Khwānd Mīr, *Faṣlī az Khulāṣat al-akbbār*, Ed. by Gūyā I'timādī. (Kabul: Maṭba'a-i Dawlatī, 1345sh [1967]), 136.

Urdu, including Charles Rieu's catalog<sup>23</sup>. Soon after, he translated an article from English that was published in issue no. 12 of *Kābul*, which introduced a manuscript of *Jāmi's Dīwān*, copied in Herat in 921 A.H., preserved at Lafayette College in Pennsylvania. In the second year of the journal, he published a series of articles on Afghan poets and scholars, drawing on manuscript sources<sup>24</sup>.

He was also a contributor to *Āryānā* magazine, where he published specialized articles on paleography. In one article titled "Yādāvarī" (Remembrance), he discussed three manuscripts of the *Safīna* of Šā'ib Tabrīzī, showcasing his skill as a textual editor. In this piece, he examined two Kabul manuscripts of *Šā'ib's Dīwān* and another in the National Library, and even produced a critical edition of a single ghazal based on several copies<sup>25</sup>.

Sarwar Gūyā also owned a valuable private library of manuscripts. Fekrī Saljūqī once noted that he possessed an autograph manuscript of *Rawḍat al-Aḥbāb* by Amīr Jamāl al-Dīn 'Aṭā' Allāh<sup>26</sup>. Among other prized manuscripts in his possession were the *Dīwān of Mīr-i Hūtak Afghān*, the *Dīwān of Ibn Qāḍī Bidīl*, the *Dīwān of Muḥammad Amin 'Andalīb*, the *Tadbkīrah-i Ātashfashān*, and *Didāb-i Ya'qūb* by Muḥammad Ya'qūb Farāhī<sup>27</sup>.

His manuscript pursuits took him far beyond Afghanistan. He consulted manuscript catalogs in India, the Soviet Union, the United States,

<sup>23</sup> See. Sarwar Gūyā, "Ham shāh ham shā'ir dar hudūd-i 500 Hijrī" [(Both king and poet circa 1100 C.E.)], *Kābul*, No. 1, 1310sh. [/1931], 30-34 or "Kāhī Kābulī", *Kābul*, No. 3, 1310sh. [/1931], 7-15.

<sup>24</sup> See. Sarwar Gūyā, "Dīwān-i Jāmi dar Amrīcā", [(A copy of the Jami's Divan in the united states)], *Kābul*, No. 12, 1311sh. [/1932], 84-85.

<sup>25</sup> Sarwar Gūyā, *Maqālāt*, (Kabul, Shirkat-i Kitāb-i Shah Muhammad, 1385sh [/2006]), Vo. 2, 471-474.

<sup>26</sup> [Sayyid Aṣīl al-Dīn 'Abd Allāh Vā'iz and others], *Risālah-i Mazārāt-i Herāt*, ed. by Fekrī Saljūqī, (Kabul: Maṭba'ah-i Dawlatī, 1343 [/1964]), preface.

<sup>27</sup> Sarwar Gūyā, *Maqālāt*, (Kabul, Shirkat-i Kitāb-i Shah Muhammad, 1385sh [/2006]), Vo. 1, 151, 156, 175, 253, and 254.

Germany, Turkey, Britain, and Iran, often relying on listings in English and Urdu. For instance, he reported seeing a copy of Qāzī Qummī's *Gulīstān-i Hunar* at the Dā'ir al-Islām Library in Hyderabad (Deccan)<sup>28</sup>. His knowledge of manuscript history was remarkable: he knew, for example, that a unique copy of the *Shaybānī-nāmah* had been discovered during the author Shīr 'Alī Banā'ī's lifetime in 1908 in the library of the Khān of Khiva or that a manuscript of *Babrām wa Bebrūz* was preserved in the collection of Mawlavī Khān Bahādur Muḥammad Shafī' in Lahore<sup>29</sup>.

He maintained connections with manuscript specialists in India, Europe, and Iran, including Mawlavī Muḥammad Shafī' (1883–1963), Louis Massignon (1883–1962), and Maḥmūd Afshār (1893–1983). His scholarly notes drew extensively on Afghan manuscript collections (both private and institutional), such as the Directorate of Independent Press Library (which housed *Maṭla' al-Sa'dayn*) and the National Library of Kabul (home to a copy of Ṣā'ib's *Dīvān*), as well as on printed editions of literary and historical works by Orientalists in Russia, India, Britain, Austria, and France.

It appears that no seminar or commemorative event was ever organized for him in Afghanistan. However, in October 1948 the Academy of Persian Language and Literature in Tehran held a memorial in his honor, attended by its president and the Afghan ambassador. A report of this gathering was published in *Yaghmā* magazine<sup>30</sup>. In 2001 (1380 sh.), Sayyid Maḥmūd Rād in Kabul collected and published a two-volume set of Sarwar Gūyā's articles from various Kabul periodicals, which remains the primary source for information about his activities.

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<sup>28</sup> Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn ibn Humām al-Dīn Khvānd Mīr, *Faṣlī az khulāṣat al-akhbār*, Ed. by Gūyā I'timādī. (Kabul: Maṭba'ah-'i dawlatī, 1345sh [1967]), 136.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 118.

<sup>30</sup> Aria Fani, *Reading Across Borders Afghans, Iranians, and Literary Nationalism*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2024), 16-17.

**‘Abd al-Ra’ūf Fekrī Saljūqī (1909–1969)**

‘Abd al-Ra’ūf Fekrī Saljūqī was a prominent scholar of Herat studies, with deep expertise in the city’s history, literature, and manuscript heritage. His work reflected a lifelong commitment to preserving Herat’s cultural legacy through both scholarship and practice. In addition to his historical and literary research, Saljūqī was highly skilled in the collection, preservation, and restoration of manuscripts, as well as in the arts of paleography, including calligraphy, illumination, and bookbinding. He acquired significant manuscripts for the Herat Museum and frequently referenced them in his publications. He was also the first to compile a comprehensive catalog of the manuscript holdings at the Public Library of the Ministry of Information and Culture, in 1965 (1344 sh.)<sup>31</sup>. To date, five of his critical editions of classical texts have been published.

In spring 1984 (1363 sh.), the quarterly *Herāt-i Bāstān* dedicated its eighteenth issue to Fekrī Saljūqī on the fifteenth anniversary of his death. Later, in 2005, the Academy of Sciences in Kabul held a commemoration seminar in his honor, and the collected papers of this event were published. This study on Fekrī Saljuqi draws on his published works, available articles, the proceedings of commemorative seminars, and his contributions to *Herāt* journal to examine his text editorial method.

Fekrī was one of the Afghan scholars who conducted the most extensive research on manuscripts. During the 1940s and 1950s he wrote a series of articles for *Herāt* journal under the titles “Mashāhīr-i khaṭṭ wa khaṭṭān-i Herāt” (Famous Calligraphers of Herat) and *Nusakh-i khaṭṭī-yi kamyāb* (Rare Manuscripts)<sup>32</sup>. These pieces typically described

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<sup>31</sup> The checklist is currently unlocated. Its existence and contents were discussed in a paper delivered by Fekrī at the 1967 International Manuscript Conference in Kabul (see: Ahang, Kāzem, *Semīnār-i bayn al-milālī-i nusakh-i khaṭṭī? Ariānā*, No. 272, 1346 [1967], p. 110).

<sup>32</sup> Khalilullāh Afzalī, *Namab-ī Herāt*, (Herat, Baysunghur Research Institute, 2020), 164-174.

important manuscripts either in his possession or acquired for the Herat Museum<sup>33</sup>.

In one article, he introduced an incomplete manuscript of *Chibil Majlis* or *Risālah-i Iqbālīya* by Amīr Iqbāl Shāh Sijistānī<sup>34</sup>. This manuscript was of special interest to Fekrī because in its margins he found a qaṣīda of Kamāl-al-Dīn Banā'ī (1453-1512) titled “Majma‘ al-gharā’ib”. Portions of this qaṣīda were first published in *Aryānā* magazine (February 1947). After further work, a more complete version of *Majma‘ al-gharā’ib* appeared in his edition of *Banā’ī’s Dīwān* (1958, Herat). Since the name of the Risāla was unknown to him, he tentatively identified it as “*Majālis-i Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dawla Simnāni*”. However, he did not provide fuller codicological details of the manuscript other than reproducing a sample page as a prose specimen. To this day, that manuscript remains the only known witness of Banā’ī’s *Majma‘ al-gharā’ib*, though its present location is untraceable.

In another article (*Herāt*, June 1957), Fekrī described a manuscript of *Rashḥāt al-quds fī sharḥ Nafabāt al-uns* (955 A.H./1548) by Darvīsh ‘Alī Būzjānī (active 16th century), from his personal library<sup>35</sup>. Again, he omitted codicological details, citing only part of the preface. He further noted that in addition to this copy, he owned two other early manuscripts of *Nafabāt al-uns*, one copied in Herat and another in Balkh, though he gave no further information<sup>36</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> He later sent this work to Kabul for printing, and after much delay it was finally published there under someone else's name. Behzād Saljuqī, the son of Fekrī, first revealed this in a letter to the author of this article. See. Behzād Saljuqī, “Tazkirah-i khaṭṭātān Herāt wa mājarāhā-ye ān” [(Calligraphers anthology and its adventures)], *Nāmab-i Baysunghur*, No. 1, 1398sh. [2019], 311-315.

<sup>34</sup> Fekrī Saljuqī, “Nusakh-i khaṭṭī-ye kamyāb” [(Rare manuscripts)], *Herat*, second period, Year 10, No. 2, Thawr 1336sh. [1957], 47-49.

<sup>35</sup> Fekrī Saljuqī, “Nusakh-i khaṭṭī-ye kamyāb” [(Rare manuscripts)], *Herat*, second period, Year 10, No. 4, Saraṭān 1336sh. [June 1957], 11-14. This copy is now housed with the registration number 174290, in the library of Majlis-i shura-ye islami of Iran in Tehran.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

Fekrī was particularly devoted to editing the *dīvāns* of Herat-region poets. He apparently edited five collections: *Mānī*, *Kamāl-al-Dīn Banā'ī*, *Ḥaydar Kulīch Hirawī* (d. 1551), *Āṣafī* (1449-1517), and *Badr al-Dīn Hilālī* (d. 1528 or 1529)<sup>37</sup>. His practice relied heavily on *jungs* (miscellaneous anthologies). Whenever he found a manuscript of a poet's *dīvān*, he would quickly produce his own copy. For example, in his edition of the *Dīvān-i Āṣafī*, since no complete manuscript was available, each *ghazal* was taken from disparate *jungs* and copies<sup>38</sup>. As a result, many errors and conjectural readings entered the text. Though in his introduction he explained his aim to mark textual emendations, numerous mistakes remained. One striking flaw is that the volume contains *ghazals* actually belonging to poets such as *Nidā'ī Samarqandī* and *Ṣaḥābī Iṣṭarābādī* (d. 1601/02)<sup>39</sup>. Moreover, the edition appeared without annotations, another significant shortcoming.

Similar issues appear in his edition of *Dīvān-i Banā'ī*. Without access to an actual manuscript of the poet's collection, he reconstructed it by assembling verses from *jungs* and *bayāzs*. His edition consisted of eight *qaṣīdas*, seventy *ghazals*, eight *qit'as*, and one *rubā'ī*—barely ten percent of *Banā'ī*'s poetry when compared with 'Abbās Rastākhīz's later critical edition (2017/1396 sh.), which comprises 470 pages.

Fekrī had extraordinary access to manuscripts and was generous in sharing them. He gifted manuscripts to many scholars, including *Mahdī Bayānī* (1906–1968) and *Muḥammad Ishāq* (1898-1969) of Calcutta University. In 1956 (1335 sh.) he presented *Bayānī* with a set of manuscripts that included a treatise by *Ḥakīm Samarqandī* dated 795 A.H. He lent a copy of *Rawḍāt al-jannāt* to *Muḥammad Ishāq*, which enabled the latter to prepare the first edited volume. In 1962 (1341 sh.)

<sup>37</sup> *Āṣafī Hirawī*, *Dīvān*, (Herat: Anjuman-i Adabi Herat, 1337sh. [/1958], 1. His two editions, *Dīvān Ḥaydar Kulīch* and *Hilālī*, were never published. We also do not know of a poet named “*Mānī*” in Herat. It is likely that there was a typographical error.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, page Dal.

<sup>39</sup> *Hamīdullāh Kāmgār*, *Pārsibin*, Year 2, No. 15, 1404sh. [/2025], 72.

he donated a copy of *Mudhakkir al-ahbab* to Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Parwantā, which is now preserved in the private collection of Wasīm Amīrī in Kabul.

Fekrī's most important editorial work was the *Risālah-i Maẓārāt-i Herāt*. This project originated with a proposal from the Afghanistan History Association in April 1964. He based his edition on a printed Herat copy (1308 sh./1929, prepared by Munshī 'Abd al-Karīm Aḥrārī) and a manuscript of the second part of *Maẓārāt* housed in the AHA's library. Relying also on his old notes and prodigious memory, he completed the edition within three to four months<sup>40</sup>.

He also published the preface of the *Murraqa'-i Bahrām Mīrzā Ṣafawī* (an album compiled for Prince Bahrām Mīrzā (1517-1549)) written by Dūst-Muḥammad Guwāshānī, collated against its printed Lahore edition (*Ḥalāt-i Hunarvarān*). His version corrected typographical errors and included extensive annotations and additional material from other scholars.

Overall, Fekrī's text editorial method did not consistently adhere much to the principles of critical text editing. In many cases, he failed to properly identify or describe the manuscripts he used, nor did he record variant readings. Nevertheless, his annotations and notes—particularly on historical figures and geographical locations in *Risālah-i Maẓārāt-i Herāt* and his commentary on Guwāshānī's preface—remain unmatched in their richness and value.

### **Muḥammad-Ḥusayn Behrūz (1929–2019)**

Muhammad Husayn Behrūz was a manuscript researcher and literary scholar from Kabul. He began his research on manuscripts while

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<sup>40</sup> [Sayyid Aṣīl al-Dīn 'Abd Allāh Vā'iz and others], *Risālah-i Maẓārāt-i Herāt*, ed. by Fekrī Saljuqī, (Kabul: Maṭba'ah-i Dawlatī, 1343 [1964]), 10.

studying at the Faculty of Literature at Kabul University, with his early studies being published in the literary journals of the capital. Later, through his travels and residence in Moscow, and his work in the Department of Textual Studies at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Soviet Academy of Sciences (1975–1999), he was able to deepen his knowledge and experience in this field. Most of his critical editions belong to this period of his career. Behrūz also possessed a valuable collection of over two hundred microfilms of manuscripts from various libraries and museums, which he had gathered during more than six decades of research and scholarship.

We know of five critical editions prepared by Muhammad Husayn Behrūz, none of which appear to have been published, and their current status is unknown. These include: a critical edition of the *Divan-i Sa'eb Tabrizi*, *Tazkīrat al-shu'arā' Qāti'i Hirawī*, portions of Ferdowsi's *Shāhnāmab*, the *Divan of Maylī Hirawī*, and the *Divan of Abū Ṭālib Barnābādī*. Many of his articles were published in Kabul journals, especially *Adab*, *Khorāsān*, and *Ariānā*. In what follows, and based on his published articles in these journals, we will examine some of the characteristics and skills of this scholar in the field of manuscript studies and textual criticism.

Among his edited works, only the introduction to the *Divan of Maylī* (No. 43 & 44) was published across two issues, and the introduction to the *Divan of Abū Ṭālib Barnābādī* (No. 36-38) in a single issue of *Khorāsān*. In these introductions, he carefully presented the poet, their biography and works, and described the manuscripts available to him. Both introductions demonstrate Behrūz's deep knowledge and experience in codicology. Another feature of these works was his detailed attention to the orthographic characteristics of the manuscripts.

It seems that Behrūz was the first researcher in Afghanistan to publish a critique of someone else's text edition. He wrote a detailed article criticizing the introduction to the Florence *Shāhnāmab*, which Abdul Hai

Habibi had edited in issue no. 14 of *Khorāsān*<sup>41</sup>. In this article, Behrūz not only demonstrated his mastery of textual criticism but also pointed out Habibi's alterations to the text—done without acknowledgment. Behrūz explicitly stated that, according to the principles of textual scholarship, no one has the right to alter a text simply to suit the reader's taste<sup>42</sup>. It should not be forgotten that he was writing this critique of Habibi—who was considered the most prominent figure in textual criticism in Afghanistan at the time.

The introduction to the *Florence Shāhnāmāh* was first transcribed by Behrūz during a trip that Habibi and Rida Mayel Heravi made to Moscow, hosted by UNESCO, for an international symposium on the structure and heritage of Persian poetry. At Habibi's request, Behrūz prepared a copy of that introduction in two or three days, noting its codicological features, and handed them over<sup>43</sup>. Later, however, when Habibi published this introduction in Kabul, he made no mention of Behrūz's contribution. It appears that both scholars were simultaneously working on this *Shāhnāmāh* manuscript. Behrūz had managed to publish his introduction a few months before Habibi. Yet, despite having seen Behrūz's work, Habibi—for reasons unknown—made no reference to it in his own research. Maybe, this, along with other reasons, pushed Behrūz to openly critique Habibi's text editorial method. Soon after, Behrūz wrote another article criticizing the edition of the *Florence Shāhnāmāh* introduction by the Italian scholar Pio Montez, questioning his readings of many words<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>41</sup> 'Abdulḥa'ī Habībī, "Kashf-i Shāhnāmāh qabl az dawrah-'i Mughul" *Khorāsān*, year 3, No. 14, Winter 1362sh. [/1983], 217-262.

<sup>42</sup> Muhammad Husayn Behrūz, "Bāz ham pīrāmūn-i muqaddimah-'i kuhan-tarīn nuskha-'i Shāhnāmāh" *Khorāsān*, No. 26, winter 1364sh. [/ winter 1985], 2.

<sup>43</sup> Mā' il Hirawī, "Bāz-negarī hā-ye dīgarī pīrāmūn-i īn muqaddima", *Khorāsān*, No. 10, Ḥūt 1361-Ḥamal 1362sh. [/Feb-March 1983], 80.

<sup>44</sup> Muhammad Husayn Behrūz, "Pīsh guftār-i Shāhnāmāh-'i Florānce wa nā-durustī-hā-ye matn-i professor A. M. Piemontese", *Khorāsān*, No. 28, Jawzā-Saratān 1365 [/may-June 1986], 1-10.

Behrūz also engaged in scholarly exchanges with Western academics. Through such connections, he once obtained an image of a poetic anthology preserved at the University of Bologna library, containing poems by five Seljuq-era poets: Shams al-Dīn al-Sajjājī, Shams al-Dīn Aqta' Bilaqānī, Shahāb al-Dīn Qutbī al-Marghazī, Qamar al-Dīn 'Umar Rāḍī (known as Sayfī), and Shahāb al-Dīn Atlas—poets whose existence was previously unknown to the history of Persian literature. He entrusted the results of his study of this anthology to the Union of Poets and Writers of Afghanistan for publication, but unfortunately, it was never printed<sup>45</sup>.

In a very interesting and rare undertaking, Behrūz wrote an article documenting and recording all the manuscripts he had personally copied since his youth until the late 1960s, as well as those he had intended to edit. In this piece, he described 25 works, providing information about the manuscripts, biographical notes about the authors, bibliographic details, and samples of the poets' verses. He also noted the location and physical characteristics of each manuscript<sup>46</sup>.

Muhammad Husayn Behrūz was a distinguished scholar in textual criticism and manuscript studies in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, he was unable to publish the majority of his works. In reality, he advanced his research to significant levels but did not pursue their publication with the same rigor.

## Conclusion

Despite the occasional, limited printing of Persian literary works and the hosting of seminars dedicated to Persian-speaking poets and Sufis in

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<sup>45</sup> Muḥammad Ḥusayn Behrūz, “Bāz ham pīrāmūn-i muqaddīmah-ʿi kuhan-tarīn nuskhah-ʿi Shāhnāmah” *Khorāsān*, No. 26, winter 1364sh. [/ winter 1985], 10 & 11.

<sup>46</sup> Muḥammad Ḥusayn Behrūz, “Ru-navisht-ha”, *Hujjat quarterly*, No. 8, winter 1370sh. [/winter 1992], 24-51.

Afghanistan during the twentieth century, publishing the Persian literary text was very difficult. Except for the 1980s, no Afghan cultural department pursued an official policy to preserve and develop the Persian language specifically through publishing its literature. This consistent lack of government attention, and the occasional presence of direct obstacles, significantly curtailed the breadth of published Persian literary works<sup>47</sup>. Nevertheless, a number of Afghan editors independently undertook the task of editing these works using the limited manuscripts available to them.

During the 1980s, with changes in cultural policies, the publication of books—including the editing of texts—saw significant growth. In this period, attention was given for some time to the languages and dialects of different social groups.

In Afghanistan, apart from a few notable figures, most editors approached text editing through traditional methods, much like the style of editors in the Indian subcontinent.

Overall, three approaches to text editing can be observed in Afghanistan. The first group of editors—such as Qārī ‘Abd Allāh Kābulī, Khāl-Muḥammad Khastah, ‘Abd Allāh Sarwistānī, ‘Abd Allāh ‘Ayshī Qandahārī, and others—followed a traditional method of editing, based on the approaches of South Asian editors. The second group—including Riḍā Mā’il, Sarwar Gūyā, and Fekrī Saljuqī—worked with a method that blended the traditional style with the approaches of Iranian scholars, especially those influenced by the publications of the Iranian Cultural

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<sup>47</sup> Sayyid Sulṭān Shāh Humām, a professor at Kabul University in 1980s, in his book *Sukhan andar Sharḥ-i Dardhā-yi Khurasāniyan* (Speech on the Pains of the Khurasanis), discussed the rise of social injustices following the publication of Zāhir Shah’s decree in 1316 (1937). He specifically addressed issues concerning Persian culture and language, writing: “The language and culture of the Tajiks are being neglected, and Persian culture has suffered considerable harm.” Humām then enumerated fifteen examples of such neglect, including, in the eleventh issue, restrictions imposed on Persian-language publications (see: Sayyid Sulṭān Shāh Humām, *Sukhan andar Sharḥ-i Dardhā-yi Khurasāniyan*, Peshawar: n.p., Jaddi 1370 [January 1992], pp. 5, 8).

Foundation. The third and smaller group, represented by figures such as Muhammad Husayn Behrūz, pursued text editing with high precision, relying on the principles of critical text editing. Writing detailed introductions including the poet's biography, describing the available manuscripts, noting orthographic features, recording physical attributes, and adding scholarly annotations were characteristic features of the third group's method.

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