

## HISTORY AND SELF-REFLECTION: MUHAMMAD SALİH'S *SHAYBANI-NAMA*: (A SIXTEENTH CENTURY CENTRAL ASIAN SOURCE IN CHAGHATAY)<sup>1</sup>

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### ÖZET

**Tarih ve Kendini İfade: Muhammed Salih'in Seybani-name'si:  
(16. Yüzyılda Çağatayca Yazılmış Bir Orta Asya Kaynağı)**

*Bu çalışma yöntem ve içerik açısından bir metin analizidir. Muhammed Salih tarafından Çağatayca olarak yazılan Şeybani-name adındaki bu metin, 16. yüzyılın başlarında Orta Asya'da Timurlu idaresine son vererek Maveraiünnehir-Özbek Hanlığı'nı kuran Çinggis soyundan Şeybani Han'ın nazım şeklinde yazılmış biyografisi niteliğindedir. Muhammed Salih göçer kökenli, kabile bağı bulunan, kendisi ve ailesi Şeybani-Özbek öncesi Timurlulara hizmet etmiş ve daha sonra Şeybani Han'a katılmış Çağatay kimliği güçlü iki dilli bir yazardır. Bu dönemin sosyal, politik ve kültürel tarihini analiz etmek açısından önemli olan bu eser, yazarın kişiliği, kökeni, yaşam biçimi ve politik tercihi tarafından biçimlenen farklı bir perspektif sunmaktadır. Bu çalışmada yazarın dönemin politik ortamı içindeki konumu ve kökeni ile eserinde olayları sunuş tarzı ve yaklaşımı özellikle kendisini nasıl yansıttığı analiz edilmiştir. Böyle bir analiz dönemin politik kültür ve kimlik meselelerine Farsça konuşan ve genellikle yerleşik kökenli tarihçiler tarafından yazılan eserlerin sunmuş olduğu eserlerden farklı bir boyut kazandırmaktadır.*

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Compared with Persian sources, we have relatively few sources written in Chaghatay Turkish about the history of Central Asia. The authors of the Persian sources, who were usually from sedantary backgrounds, had a deep understanding of the world about which they were writing, but their writings do not present a complete historiographical picture<sup>2</sup>. The authors of the Chaghatay sources, who were generally from nomadic and tribal backgrounds, convey somewhat different perspectives on certain important issues from those of the Persian sources and present some issues that are not even dealt with in the Persian materials. Therefore, studying Chaghatay texts gives us a wider perspective on Central Asian history and leads us to ask different questions than we might ask if we looked only to the Persian sources.

In this respect, Muhammad Salih's *Shaybani-nama* is an interesting example of this kind of text. It stands as an important source not only for the information it offers for the history of Central Asia but also the way in which that information is presented. The *Shaybani-nama* is a 16<sup>th</sup> century Chaghatay source, devoted to Shaybani Khan, the founder of Shaybanid-Uzbek state in Mawarannahr at the very beginning of the century. It is a 'versified history' written in *masnavi* form covering Shaybani Khan's political career from 1499 through 15063. This source provides important information for the social, political and cultural history of Central Asia at the dawn of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and it also presents a unique perspective on the political and cultural environment which is shaped by its author's background. Although the *Shaybani-nama* has been used by historians of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Central Asia to some extent<sup>4</sup> it has not yet been fully analyzed.

<sup>2</sup> For the Persian histories of the Mongols and the related historiographical problems see, Morgan, D.O., "Persian Historians and the Mongols", *Medieval Historical Writers in the Christian and Islamic Worlds*, ed. D.O. Morgan, London, 1982, pp. 105-124.

<sup>3</sup> It was published by Vambery, H., *Die Scheibaniade. Ein Ozbegisches Heldengedicht in 76 Gesängen von Prinz Mohammed Salih aus Charezm*, Wien, 1886. (Cited throughout as Muhammad Salih, *Shaybani-nama*). Melioranskiy, P.M., *Sheibani-name*, dzhagataiskii tekst, posmertnoe izdanie P.M. Melioranskogo, pod nabliudeniem is predisloviem A.N.Samoilovicha, St. Petersburg, 1908. It was also published in Cyrillic: Salih, Muhammad, *Şeybani-name*, Taşkent, 1961. Partial Russian translation of it can be found in S.K.Ibragimov et al., *materialy po istorii kazakhskikh khanstv XV-XVIII vekov.*, Alma Ata, 1969. References for this source can be found in Mukminova, R.G., "O nekotorykh istočnikah po istorii Uzbekistane načale XVI v.", *Trudi Instituta Vostokovedeniya*, vip.III, 1954, pp.119-137 and also Ahmedov, B.A., *istoriko-geografičeskaya literatura srednei azii*, Taşkent, 1985. Also see, Eckmann, J., *Chaghatay Manual*, Bloomington, 1966, p. 3-4. Köprülü, M. F., "Çağatay Edebiyatı", *İslam Ansiklopedisi* 3, İstanbul, 1945, pp.270-323.

<sup>4</sup> See Mukminova, R.G., "Borba za Maverannahr mejdu Timuridami i Sheibanidami", *Avtoreferat*, Leningrad, 1949, p.1-15. Semenov, A.A., "K voprosu o proishojdeniya i sostava uzbekov Sheybani-hana", *Materiali po istorii tajikov i uzbekov Srednei Azii*

In the following paper, I will show how the background of the author as a former Timurid-Chaghatay elite affects both the information he provides and the way he presents it.

### **The Context of the Text: The Rise of the Shaybanid-Uzbek State**

Muhammad Salih wrote the *Shaybani-nama* in a political climate in which various dynasties of Turkic and Turco-Mongolian origin were competing with each other for control of southern Central Asia which represented a sedentary and oasis culture. At the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, Mawarannahr and Khurasan represented a picture of political fragmentation. It was an area in which internal struggles between rival Timurid princes had been the norm, at least since the death of Timur in 1405. Towards the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century these struggles were joined by the nomadic Uzbeks who, under the leadership of Chinggisid Muhammad Shaybani Khan, had entered Transoxiana from Dasht-i Kipchaq, as well as the Moghuls who controlled the area known as Moghulistan (Eastern Turkestan and Semirechie region)<sup>5</sup>. The conflict among the Timurid, the Shaybanid-Uzbek and the Moghul dynastic clans was neither ethnic nor religious. All three were closely related with each other and had real or fabricated Chinggisid geneologies. The people attached to these dynastic clans came from the Turco-Mongolian tribes who identified themselves as Chaghatay, Uzbek and Moghul<sup>6</sup>. However, this struggle was not shaped by the deep enmity among the ruling elites of these groups. They had used the differences among themselves rather than the similarities to define themselves--and those differences were rooted in their political preferences and way of life.

The development of Chaghatay and Moghul eponymous identities dates back to the late 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries when the Turco-Mongolian tribes which made up the Chinggisid Chaghatay Khanate divided into two parts. Those which became part of the Timurid empire kept the name "Chaghatay" for themselves, while those who lived in Eastern Turkestan under the rule of the Chinggisid Khans called themselves "Moghul"<sup>7</sup>. Over

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imperi Timuridov", MTU, pp. 39-83. Semenov, "Pervi sheibanidi i borba za Maverannahr", MTU, pp. 111-150.

<sup>5</sup> Subtely, M.E., 'Babur's Rival Relations: A Study of Kinship and Conflict in 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Century Central Asia', *Der Islam* 66, 1, 1989, pp. 102-118.

<sup>6</sup> Manz, B.F., "The Development of Chaghatay Identity", *Muslims in Central Asia*, ed. Jo-Ann Gross, Durham and London, 1992, pp. 27- 28.

<sup>7</sup> Mirza Muhammad Haydar Dughlat, *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, *A History of the Moghuls of Central Asia, being the Tarikh-i Rashidi of Mirza Muhammad Haydar Dughlat.*, Trans. E. D. Ross and ed. N. Elias, London and New York, 1972, p. 148.

time Chaghatay identity seems to have become more particularly related to the tribal and military aristocracy which supported Timur and the Timurids<sup>8</sup>.

The third of the aforementioned dynastic clans, the Uzbeks, became a new force in Mawarrannahr under the leadership of Shaybani Khan, the grandson of Abulkhayir Khan, from the line of Shibani, the fifth son of Juji. They came into Mawarrannahr from the steppe region of Central Asia--the so-called Dest-i Kipcak--and brought with them their own sense of Chingissid identity.

At the end of this struggle, it was Shaybani Khan and his Uzbek tribesmen who won supremacy in southern Central Asia. The Uzbeks brought an end to Timurid rule with their conquest of the cities in Mawarannahr, Kharezm, Khurasan and Balkh and established the Shaybanid-Uzbek Khanate in these regions at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>9</sup>. The emergence of Shaybanid Uzbek Khanate, which represented the reestablishment of actual Chingissid rule, brought about a new integration between the nomadic Uzbeks and the political, cultural elements of the sedentary regions which had taken new forms during Timurid rule.

A study of the historiography recounting the political struggles of the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century is crucial to understanding of the development of the cultural and political identities of Central Asia.. Unlike earlier periods, we see histories written by people of Turco-Mongolian background and especially by those who actually took part in these struggles. A well-known example of this sort of source is Babur's memoirs, known as the *Babur-nama*. Babur's work stands as a critically important source for understanding the Turco-Mongolian world at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Writing in Chaghatay Turkic, Babur reflects the relations among Moghuls, Timurids, and Shaybanid Uzbeks. Babur, who had a strong sense of his own Timurid family background, struggled with Shaybani Khan and the Uzbeks for supremacy in Mawarannahr<sup>10</sup>. In the *Babur-nama*, he presents his understanding of this struggle from his Timurid point of view<sup>11</sup>. Another source, which is similar to the *Babur-nama* in many ways, is

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<sup>8</sup> Manz, 1992, pp. 38-42.

<sup>9</sup> For a political history see the articles of Semenov and Mukminova and for a political structure of the Shibaniid-Uzbek Khanate see Dickson, M., Shah Tahmasb and The Uzbeks. The Duel For Khurasan with Ubayd Khan: 930-946/1524-1540, unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 1958. McChesney, R., *Waqf in Central Asia: Four Hundred Years in the History of a Muslim Shrine, 1480-1889*, Princeton, 1991.

<sup>10</sup> For a study of Baburnama from different perspective, Subtelny, 1989.

<sup>11</sup> Subtelny, 1989, p.116.

*Tarikh-i Rashidi*, written by Babur's cousin Muhammad Haydar Duglat<sup>12</sup> Also written in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it presents these same struggles from another perspective. Haydar Duglat is a member of Moghul tribal elite from the Duglat tribe, which had gained political prominence among the Eastern Chaghatayid Khans in Eastern Turkestan<sup>13</sup>.

There are also important sources, which represent the struggle from the point of Shaybani Khan and the Uzbeks. Shaybani Khan who expelled the Timurids from Mawarannahr and established the Uzbek state, himself wrote poetry in which he presented his view of these events<sup>14</sup>. With the emergence of the new dynasty, there also emerged a number of court histories written for Shaybani Khan. The authors of these sources were generally former Timurid intellectuals who had once served the Timurids or other local Persian speaking intellectuals. One such author is Mawlana Ibn Ruzbehan Khunji who wrote *Mehman-nama-yi Bukhara* in Persian. Another Persian source is Binai's *Shaybani-nama* and we should also mention Molla Shadi's *Fath-nama*<sup>15</sup>. Muhammad Salih is another Timurid intellectual who joined Shaybani Khan when Shaybani Khan conquered Mawarannahr.

Muhammad Salih's *Shaybani-nama* differs both from Babur's *Babur-nama* and Haydar Duglat's *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, and as well as from the other sources written for Shaybani Khan in that Muhammad Salih's writes from his background as a Timurid Chaghatay elite.

### History and Autobiography: Muhammad Salih and His Work

Muhammad Salih was a member of the Chaghatay military elite and the bilingual literati who could write and read both in Persian and Chaghatay. He came from the Bilkut tribe--a tribe that was not politically important in the Chaghatay *ulus*. However, his family had become prominent in the Timurid administration. His paternal grandfather, Shahmalik, had been one of Timur's most important emirs<sup>16</sup> and played an

<sup>12</sup> Mano, E., "The Baburnama and the Tarikh-i Rashidi: Their Mutual Relationship", *Timurid Art and Culture. Central Asia and Iran in the Fifteenth Century*, eds. L. Golombek and M.E. Subtelny, *Muqarnas* 6, 1992, pp. 44-47.

<sup>13</sup> Mano, E., "Moghulistan", *Acta Asiatica, Bulletin of the Institute of Eastern Culture*, 34, 1978, pp. 46-60.

<sup>14</sup> Shaybani Khan, *Divan*, Ms Istanbul Topkapı, Ahmed III Library, No. 2436. Bodrogligeti, A.J.E., "Muhammad Shaybani's 'Bahru'l-huda' An Early Sixteenth Century Didactic Qasida in Chaghatay", *Ural-Altische Jahrbücher* 54, Bloomington, 1982, pp. 1-56.

<sup>15</sup> Fadl Allah b. Ruzbehan Khunji, *Mehman-nama-i Bukhara*, ed. M. Studah, Tehran, 1341/1962. Binai, *Shaybani-nama*, Ms IO Tashkent, No. 3422. Mulla Shadi, *Fath-nama*, Ms IO Tashkent, No. 5369.

<sup>16</sup> Manz, 1992, p. 118. Ando, S., *Timuridische Emire nach dem Mu'izz al ansab*, Berlin, 1992, p. 166.

important role in Timurid politics after the death of Timur. During the reign of Shahrukh he became the governor of Kharezm<sup>17</sup>. Muhammad Salih's father Nur Said had also been an important member of the Chaghatay military elite and became the governor of Kharezm. Apparently, Muhammad Salih's family, which had once enjoyed a prominent position during the time of Timur and early Timurids lost their position of prominence due to the changing politics of the Timurids and the changing relations between the Chaghatay military elite and the Timurid princes in the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Muhammad Salih's father Nur Said was executed by one of the Timurid princes in the midst of one of the internecine struggles among the Timurids<sup>18</sup>. From this time onward Muhammad Salih, who was deeply effected by his father's execution by the Timurids (an event he mentions in several places in the *Shaybani-nama*), displayed an open resentment towards the Timurids and the Chaghatay people.

Muhammad Salih joined Shaybani Khan at an early stage in his career just before his conquest of Bukhara from the Timurids in 1599-1500 and, in fact, even helped him to conquer the city. At the beginning of the *Shaybani-nama* Muhammad Salih explains why he composed the *Shaybani-namah* stating:

Söz bile hanlik itarlar hanlar/Her tarafge yıbarıb fermanlar  
Söz bile halq tapar emn ü aman/ Müşköl işlar bolur andın asan  
Barı uşmunçegine söz bilüram/Kim bu taqrib ile hanga kilüram<sup>19</sup>

(Khans rule by way of words sending decrees to everywhere.

People find security and peace by words and difficult things become easier with words.

I know many words and came to the service of the Khan with this ability)

By these lines Muhammad Salih explains his reasons for writing the *Shaybani-nama* in a professional manner stating that his aim is nothing more than to praise the ruler and ask for favor. However, Muhammad Salih's reasons for joining Shaybani Khan and writing the *Shaybani-nama* were more personal than professional. Although he understands himself as a

<sup>17</sup> Manz, 1992, p.182.

<sup>18</sup> Shahmalik, governor of Kharezm for Shahrukh in 1414-1426. He was succeeded by his son Ibrahim (1426-1430). See, Hofman, H.F., *Turkish Literature. A Bio-Bibliographical Survey*, Section III, Utrecht, 1969, pp. 294-295.

<sup>19</sup> Muhammad Salih, *Shaybani-nama*, p. 20.

member of the literati or intellegientsia he also understands and identifies himself as a former Timurid Chaghatay elite. He is writing for an audience of mainly Chaghatay speaking people with a specific rhetorical purpose in mind and presents that audience with his particular explanation for joining the Uzbeks. The *Shaybani-nama* is influenced by his Chaghatay identity on the one hand and by his personal resentment towards the Chaghatay people and the Timurids on the other.

At the beginning of the *Shaybani-nama* Muhammad Salih gives the following autobiographical information:

Laqabi Salih özi talih/ Nur Said oğlu Muhammad Salih  
Mundaq iturke Hudadın takdir/ Çün atam işiga birdi tağyir  
Çıqtı Harezmi diyari qolidın/ Hiyuk ve Kat, Hisar qolidın  
Tüşti andın güzari Merv sari/ Anda savruıldı iv il bari  
Gah Horasan ara qıldım menzil/ Gah Samarkandga boldum mayil  
Hizmet ettim bari mirzalarğa/ Bendelik andagi danalarga<sup>20</sup>

(His nickname is Salih and He is the son of Nur Said.

What happened to my father was God's will

He (his father) lost Harezmi, Hive, Kat and Hisar.

Then he came Merv where his family and tribe scattered.)

(I (Muhammad Salih) started sometime in Khorasan then tended toward Samarkand

I served all the *mirzas* and became servants of scholars)

In these lines Muhammad Salih clearly implies what encouraged him to leave the Timurids and join Shaybani Khan during the struggle between them. As stated above Muhammad Salih joined Shaybani Khan at the beginning of Shaybani Khan's career. He rose very high in Shaybani Khan's favor, becoming his close associate and friend. He was also given the governorship of Bukhara when Shaybani Khan conquered the city from the hands of Timurids<sup>21</sup>.

Muhammad Salih was not the only person from the Chaghatay elite who joined Shaybani Khan and the Uzbeks. It is known from the sources that there were some Chaghatay tribal elements among Shaybani Khan's retainers. Muhammad Salih differs from these other people in that he was also a poet and writer. In this respect he is much more like his friend Benai,

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p.34.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 36.

a non-Chagatay Persian writer who also wrote a biography of Shaybani Khan in prose. It is interesting to note that Benai does not mention anything about himself and his family background or his immediate reasons for joining Shaybani Khan<sup>22</sup>. Muhammad Salih, unlike the other court poets or historians of his time who did not feel the need to explain their immediate reasons in changing their loyalties and joining Shaybani Khan, Muhammad Salih begins his work by explaining his reasons for joining Shaybani Khan.

Clearly Muhammad Salih is considered to defend his decision to his Chagatay speaking audience. In the *Shaybani-nama* he mentions that he asked the opinions of the ulama before joining Shaybani Khan. They answered him in these words:

Didilar barçe minga danalar/Kim adem bolgusıdur mirzalar  
Devlet-i Al Temür kitgusi dur/Növbet özga kişiga yitgusi dur  
Ol kişi bar dur Şeybani Han/Han u Şeyban dur u mehdi-yi zaman  
Hali aning yeri Turkistandur/Ozbek ilige muazzam handur  
Ol alur uşbu vilayetlerni/korsatur ilga inayetlerni<sup>23</sup>

(All the scholars told me what kind of people the princes (Timurid) were.

They told me that the star of Timur is disappearing. Now it is the turn of another person.

He is Shaybani Khan, Khan of Sibani and *mehdi-yi zaman*.

Now his place is Turkestan, He is the great Khan of Uzbeks.

He will take these provinces and will show favors to the people)

By presenting what the ulema told him about joining Shaybani Khan, Muhammad Salih is trying to make his change of loyalty more acceptable, both to himself and his Chagatay speaking readers. In the following lines Muhammad Salih compares the Timurids with the Shaybanids through the words of ulema:

Bardur aning işi Kur`an birle/Olturuptur niçe sultan birle  
Ol bolup barçege candın mayil/Ol selatin anga andın mayil  
Bu cemaatki körarsin hala/ Tana-tirna bile başlab gavga

<sup>22</sup> Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, *Baburnama*, ed. W.M.Thackston, 3 vols., Cambridge, 1993.

<sup>23</sup> Muhammad Salih, *Shaybani-nama*, p.34.



İçe durlar kice kündüz bade/Din u iman sarıdın azade  
Bir biri birle muhalif barçe/Bir biridin taqi halif barçe<sup>24</sup>

(He is occupied with Kur'an and sits with many sultans  
He likes all of them and they like him in return.

These people you see are fighting with each other over for nothing.  
They drink wine all the time and turn away from religion and faith.  
They are all against each other and opposed to each other.)

Here both the ulema and Muhammad Salih himself are critical of the Timurids because of their lack of cohesion as a ruling family and the internecine struggles among themselves. This theme is stressed in many places in the *Shaybani-nama*. Interestingly, this theme is also stressed by Babur who criticized his Timurid cousins for not helping him in his struggle against Shaybani Khan<sup>25</sup>.

The reason that Muhammad Salih makes a point of stating his reasons for joining Shaybani Khan—unlike the authors of his period—seems to be that as a Chagatay elite he felt troubled to be in the service of Shaybani Khan. Though he had good reasons for his decision, he apparently still felt a contradiction within himself. He received criticism from outside himself as well. For example Babur, who shows some appreciation for some of Muhammad Salih's other poetry, harshly criticizes the *Shaybani-nama*. He also describes Muhammad Salih as an evil, iniquitous and pitiless man<sup>26</sup>. It is obvious that Babur resented Muhammad Salih for joining Shaybani Khan, his enemy. It seems that Muhammad Salih responded to Babur in the following lines:

Min özümni ni qılıp yahşi diyin/Min özümni ni bilip yahşi diyin

Dünyada bar mu iken minçe yaman/Yahşi bolur mu yaman ey  
sultan<sup>27</sup>.

(How can I say I am a good person/how can I present myself as a good person

Is there any person in the word worse than me/a bad person can not be a good person)

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p.36.

<sup>25</sup> Baburnama, 1993, I, p.40,

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p.83.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p.360.

It was not only Babur who criticized Muhammad Salih but his own Chaghatay people as well. Muhammad Salih addresses these criticisms towards him for joining Shaybani Khan in the *Shaybani-nama* when he says::

Didilar: Sin Çagatay ili sin/Uşbu yirda Çagatay hayli sin  
Ni dip Özbek bile yaver boldung/Hanga bu yanglıg çaker boldung<sup>28</sup>.

(They said: You are from the Chaghatay people. You are here from the Chaghatay community.

Why did you become intimate with the Uzbeks? Why did you become such a servant of the Khan?).

He responds to these accusations with the following lines:

Cevrüngüzden atam öldi nitayin/Başıma qaygu okuldı nitayin<sup>29</sup>.

(Because of your cruelty my father has died, what can I do?

I became troubled, what can I do?)

This passage shows further evidence that Muhammad Salih felt the need to explain the reasons that prompted him to join Uzbeks. Even though Muhammad Salih had ample reasons for his action-in particular the death of his father at the hands of the Timurids-- he still seems unsatisfied with his decision. At one point he confesses that he is not actually happy being with Uzbeks when he says:

Min atam qanı için qatlanamın/Özüm canı için qatlanamın<sup>30</sup>

(I endure (this situation) because of the blood of my father. I endure because of my own life).

It is significant that Muhammad Salih openly expressed his dissatisfaction with the Uzbeks and Shaybani Khan in a work devoted to Shaybani Khan. This reflects the fact that Muhammed Salih felt free to express his personal feelings even in a work which was designed to praise the ruler. We generally do not find such personal information or confessions in the Persian sources. One reason that Muhammad Salih feels free to express his feelings might be his intimacy with Shaybani Khan. Muhammad

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid. p.418.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. p.418.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. p.110.

Salih's freedom in expressing his feelings shows itself in his representation of Shaybani Khan.

### **Muhammad Salih's Representation of Shaybani Khan**

Muhammad Salih's *Shaybani-nama* is designed at least in part to praise the ruler and thus it makes use of traditional symbols and rhetoric which we find in other sources regarding the qualities of a ruler. Muhammad Salih projects Shaybani Khan as a ruler who dedicates himself to rule his people with equity and justice and displays generosity and magnanimity. He is also a ruler who wants nothing more than to protect the social welfare and bring order to society. His conquest is presented not as the result of his selfish ambition but rather the will of God. He praises Shaybani Khan as a very pious person.

On the other hand Muhammad Salih also presents other aspects of Shaybani Khan which are neither imperial nor ideal, rather they are highly personal. In many places in his poetry he describes his patron, Shaybani Khan as a man with numerous shortcomings. Muhammad Salih talks about their private conversations about Shaybani Khan's love affairs and openly talks about his personal life. In some places, Shaybani Khan opens his heart to Muhammad Salih and share his sadness with him and he cries.

### **Muhammad Salih's Description of the Struggle Between Shaybani Han and Timurids**

Muhammad Salih's *Shaybani-nama* contains a great deal of description of the struggle between Shaybani Khan and Timurids. His writing reveals his difficult personal position as a Chagatay elite and former supporter of the Timurids who is now fighting against them.. One good example of this is his description of the confrontation between Shaybani Khan and Babur for control of Samarkand, the center of political power for Timur and the Chagatay *ulus*. This event is also described by Babur in the *Babur-nama*, but Muhammad Salih's description of the events regarding this struggle is quite different from that in the *Babur-nama* and other sources. He gives extremely vivid scenes of the events surrounding the conquest of Samarkand, the symbolic center of Timurid rule, by Shaybani Khan--the event which symbolized the end of the Timurid rule. Indeed, Muhammad Salih's descriptions of the events which took place during the conquest of city give us some insights into the process of the change of political supremacy from the Timurids to the Shaybanids, and particularly about claims to legitimacy and rhetoric used by various political actors involved in the struggle, as well as the response and role of the local people from the perspective of Muhammed Salih.

At one point, Muhammad Salih presents a scene in which different people speak and express their opinions. The main actors of this struggle are, of course Babur and Shaybani Khan. Muhammad Salih presents a situation in which both seek the acceptance of the people of Samarkand. Each employs different rhetorical strategies in legitimizing their claims for the throne of Samarkand. In the account in the *Shaybani-nama*, Muhammad Salih first presents Babur's claim for Samarkand and his legitimacy. In this account Babur uses the following words to legitimize his claims for Samarkand:

My ancestor Timur was the king of the World of justice. Ages have passed since he died and now all people forgot him. Please remember him and see him as close even if he is far away, and please give me help for the sake of my forefather<sup>31</sup>.

Here Babur stresses his genealogy in his claims for Samarkand. He states that Samarkand is his legitimate throne because it had been the throne of his forefather, Timur. Indeed, Babur in his own account in the *Babur-nama* enumerates the long list of his family and family history<sup>32</sup>.

Shaybani Khan, on the other hand uses a different rhetorical strategy when he asks the people to surrender the city to him:

Her niçe il tilamas min tilaram/Il mini silamas min silaram  
Min tilap tingri biriptur ey şeyh /Tingri sözi menga kiriptur ey şeyh.  
Bu Samarkand hod oz tahtumdur/Bilgil andanki netik bahtumdur<sup>33</sup>.

(Though this people do not want me, I want them/they don't chose me I choose them.

(But rather) because what I want is God's will and what I say is God's word. This Samarkand is my throne by the grace of God).

It is highly significant that although Muhammad Shaybani Khan as a Chinggisid in fact had a much more prestigious genealogy than Babur, he did not use that genealogy to support his claims. Instead, he uses Islamic rhetoric. Moreover, in the following lines Muhammad Salih has Shaybani Khan address the Chaghatay people saying:

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<sup>31</sup> ibid, p.104.

<sup>32</sup> Baburnama, 1993, II, p.160.

<sup>33</sup> Muhammad Salih, *Shaybani-nama*, p.148.

Bilke min barçege müşfikdur min/Barçe il birle muvafıqdur min.  
Çagatay il mini Özbek dimasun/Beyhude fikr qılıb gam yimasun  
Ger min Özbek ilidindur min/Lik Tengrige irur bu revşen<sup>34</sup>.

(I am affectionate to all people, the Chaghatay shall not call me Uzbek and shall not be worried about that. I am from the people of the Uzbeks, but my light is coming from God).

Here, Muhammad Salih makes an important argument which helps to justify his decision to join Shaybani Khan. When he puts these words into Shaybani Khan's mouth, Muhammed Salih addresses his Chaghatay speaking audience through Shaybani Khan and conveys a perspective which addresses his personal dilemma as a former Chaghatay elite who now serves Shaybani Khan by presenting Shaybani Khan as one who transcends the differences among Uzbeks and Chaghatays by emphasizing his Muslim identity.

In the end Shaybani Khan is presented as a muslim ruler whose claim to legitimacy transcends any genealogical claim. Perhaps this is one way that Muhammad Salih attempts to provide a justification for his own apparent betrayal of his tribal allegiance.

### Conclusion

The history presented in the *Shaybani-nama* of Muhammad Salih differs in several significant ways from that of the Persian sources. Writing in Chaghatay for a Chaghatay speaking audience as a former Chaghatay elite attempting to explain and justify his allegiance to Shaybanni Khan he provides a unique perspective on events in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. This perspective adds important insights into the period that add to those already provided by the Persian sources. The *Shaybani-nama* written in Chaghatay and intended to be read by the other Turkish speaking people gives us a clearer picture of the arguments for legitimation which Shaybani Khan and Muhammad Salih wished to present to the Chaghatay Turkish speaking peoples of the region. Interestingly, those arguments did not emphasized Shaybani Khan's superior geneological claims of legitimacy but rather presented an Islamic legitimacy which transended Uzbek or Chaghatay identity. This signifies an important change in political culture and identity in Central Asia. Previous Turkic rulers used Islamic rhetoric and symbols primarily to gain the support of the local Muslim people that they conquered and ruled. Shaybani Khan uses these symbols and rhetoric, which transcend particular tribal identities, to court and maintain the support of both the nomadic and sedentary tribal peoples upon whom his reign depends.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p.148.