INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan's Islam

A History and Its Scholarship

Nile Green

CHARTING THE TERRAIN

This introductory chapter provides a survey of major developments in the religious history of Afghanistan. As part of this book's overall aim to construct a synoptic vision of Afghanistan's Islam, it presents a summary of existing scholarship in chronological terms that follow the emergence, expansion, and diversification of Afghanistan's various versions of Islam through the course of thirteen centuries. In this way, the following pages not only provide a summary of scholarship. They also chart the historical terrain of Afghanistan's religiosity so as to give a fuller sense of what is and is not known about the authorities, institutions, and practices of different periods. While many of the works cited here will be unknown even to specialists, general readers will find that the survey points to resources for initial research. Summarizing half a century of scholarship on Afghanistan's Islam, both in the humanities and in the social sciences, reveals both the scope and the limits of expertise by way of what is and is not known about Afghanistan's religious history. The final section of the introduction builds an investigative bridge to the new research presented in this volume by outlining subsequent chapters that range from Afghanistan's initial conversion to the emergence of enduring institutions in the medieval period and the more recent religious agendas of the *mujahidin* and Taliban.

The following sections focus initially on historical and literary studies of the periods prior to the mid-twentieth century before moving to social-scientific scholarship for discussion of research focusing on more recent decades. Although this dichotomy does not perfectly echo the division of scholarly labor, it does broadly

reflect the character of, on the one hand, the textual and art-historical research that have informed our understanding of Afghanistan's pre-twentieth-century religious history and, on the other hand, of the anthropological and political-scientific research that have shaped our appreciation of twentieth-century religiosity. As we will see in the later section on the limits of existing research, this division of labor has very much defined the colors and blanks on our map of Afghanistan's religious history. Humanities scholars who focused on periods before the mid-twentieth century relied on textual and artistic sources that overwhelmingly reflect the religiosity of urban and relatively elite groups. By contrast, in line with the disciplinary penchants of the day, social scientists working between the 1950s and the 1980s focused on the nonliterate religiosity of rural and tribal groups. As a consequence of this combined research focus on urban and literate Islam in premodern times and rural and nonliterate Islam in modern times, our collective perspective is highly skewed. Although not all research fits into this pattern, its broad contours have created what is surely an artificial—because highly selective—cartography of Afghanistan's religious history, in which a past of poets and Sufis seems to bear no relation with a present of Islamists and suicide bombers. Recognizing from the onset that this perspective is formed by gaps and clusters of research will prevent us from making hastily naive conclusions about the loss of golden ages and the dominant contemporary standing of fundamentalists. For all the media and military attention given to Afghanistan, the fact is that we still know far less about its religious heritage than about the history of Islam almost anywhere in the surrounding Middle East and South Asia.

Although scholarly understanding of Afghan religiosity was given primary shape by scholars and administrators working during the colonial period of British and Russian rule over neighboring India and Turkistan, these works do not form part of the survey that follows. Part of the reason for overlooking colonial scholarship is that such works—by the likes of the British Henry Raverty (1825–1906), the French James Darmesteter (1849–94), and the German Bernhard Dorn (1805–81)—are already far better known than the writings of the more professional scholars discussed below, many of whom had access to a far wider range of source materials. But the reason is also because, whatever their intrinsic value, colonial-era scholarship has already had far more influence than it merits. Much of this exaggerated influence is due to the easy availability of these writings, not least through cheap reprints, which has encouraged many supposed experts to rely on them in place of more reliable and recent work published in less accessible journals. In an attempt to move beyond this unreliable collusion of colonial orientalism and contemporary journalism, the following survey points to an abundance of lesser-known works. At the same time, it aims to afford readers an honest sense of the limits of expertise by way of what has and has not been researched.

CONQUESTS AND CONVERSIONS, CIRCA 700–1000

In line with the logic of chronology, this survey turns first to the formative era of conquests and conversions. Though this trope of military incursions and rapid conversions has been called into question for other areas, there is no doubt that the initial coming of Islam to Afghanistan occurred through the conquests of Arab generals serving the Rashidun caliphs (r. 632–61) and the Umayyad dynasty (r. 661–750) based in Damascus. But though the Arab governor of Basra, ʿAbdullah ibn ʿAmir, subdued Herat, Balkh, and Badghis as early as 652, it was not until the Abbasid era half a century later that Arab power over Khurasan and northern Afghanistan was consolidated through the governorship of Qutayba ibn Muslim between 705 and 714. As its Buddhist monasteries (*vihara*) closed down, Balkh gradually became an important center for the initial Islamization of the wider region, at least in the lowlands. Nonetheless, such was the nature of Afghanistan's mountainous terrain, and the patchy political geography that it created, that in other regions non-Muslim rulers hung onto power for almost two more centuries. These included Buddhist rulers in Bamiyan, Hindu Shahi rulers in Kabul, and the followers of the local cult of Zhun around Ghazna.

Although Kabul had initially fallen to the Umayyads in 671, the tenuous hold of the Hindu Shahi dynasty over the region saw non-Muslim rulers remain in power till 879, when Kabul fell to Yaʿqub-i Laith Saffari (r. 861–79), founder of the new Saffarid dynasty. From their capital at Zaranj, in southwestern Afghanistan, the Saffarids also defeated the last Zunbil, the ruler of the Zabulistan region around Ghazna who upheld the worship of Zhun. In 871 the Saffarids had also seized Buddhist-ruled Bamiyan, though one source records that Bamiyan's subsequent rulers had to be reconverted to Islam as late as 962.[1] And even though the surrounding Khurasan region had fallen under Muslim rule very early, the Syriac Church of the East maintained a bishopric in Herat well into the tenth century, pointing to the survival of a community of liturgically Syriac but likely Persian-speaking Christians there till at least this period.[2] It was not, then, until almost 900 C.E. that Muslim political power was proclaimed over all the region's main cities. And it was not until sometime afterward that Islam reached the majority of the region's population. Remote mountain regions such as Ghur remained beyond the reach of the muezzin's call till the eleventh century, while so-called Kafiristan ("Land of the Infidels") held on to its indigenous religion till the conquests of ʿAbd al-Rahman Khan in the late nineteenth century.

However, conversion was not always directly related to conquest, and beyond the level of the political, bureaucratic, and religious elite, conversion was likely a slow, patchy process. Conversion was more rapid in urban (and lowland) than in rural (and highland) areas and was in many cases more likely a slower, multigenerational process of acculturation than a single moment of conversion. We know

that Buddhism survived until the late tenth century, which would in turn suggest that popular Buddhist practices survived much later, while the region's pre-Islamic religious heritage also included Zoroastrian, Indic, and other local cults that were the fruit of centuries of selective adoption from religious influences that ranged from India to Greece. Some communities, including wealthy Jewish and Hindu merchant groups, avoided conversion entirely to survive into recent times.[3]

Despite what may appear to be the obviousness of the topic, the early arrival and spread of Islam during the eighth and ninth centuries through the territories of what later became Afghanistan have received remarkably little attention. The main studies have been articles by the British and Italian scholars C. Edmund Bosworth and Gianroberto Scarcia, both drawing on early Arabic and Persian sources, albeit sources written at considerable distances from the events themselves.[4] More recently, Hugh Kennedy and Arezou Azad have reexamined sources pertaining to the Islamization of Balkh, Afghanistan's earliest major Muslim city.[5] A significant problem with studying this early period is that the written sources are very few and that, where archaeology has been carried out, it has largely focused on pre-Islamic periods—to the point of not even recording data on strata from the Islamic era. The problems in reconstructing the conversion of Afghanistan are not unique: the earliest arrival of Islam in India with the Umayyad conquests of 711 presents parallel problems of Arabic sources written at long distances of space and time and recounting simple events rather than the more nuanced processes needed to explain phenomena as complex as conversion and acculturation. However, recent discoveries of early Islamic Arabic and Persian administrative documents from northern Afghanistan lend hope of future insights into the slow process of acculturation.[6] Even so, the Islamization of surrounding regions has still received much fuller attention. In methodological terms not least, the studies of Derryl Maclean, Richard Bulliet, and Deborah Tor on early conquests and conversions in Sindh, Khurasan, and Central Asia may offer insight or inspiration for further research on Afghanistan.[7]

The fullest case study so far of early Islamic life in Afghanistan is Arezou Azad's account of early Islamic Balkh between the eighth and the twelfth century, as revealed by the *Faza'il-i Balkh* (Merits of Balkh), a late-thirteenth-century Persian recension of an Arabic account of the city and its Muslim luminaries first composed in 1214.[8] Azad has argued that this "patchwork of texts merged together" not only reveals "the social memory of Balkh" as an early Islamic center. It also shows the process of Islamization by which "not only were Balkh's Buddhist sites converted, but by default, its Buddhist landscape as a whole" as new Muslim holy sites were inscribed like palimpsests on the same spaces as their Buddhist predecessors.[9] Together with other sources, Azad has also used the *Faza'il-i Balkh* as a source on early Muslim women's religiosity in the region through a case study of the ninth-century female mystic Umm ʿAli of Balkh.[10] So far, Azad's studies of Balkh are the richest accounts of an early Islamic city in Afghanistan. However, it

seems likely that the Balkh experience reflects that of other lowland urban centers in Central Asia rather than of highland cities such as Kabul, which was still under non-Muslim rule in the late ninth century. For the present-day border regions with Pakistan, André Wink has recently argued that large Muslim populations began to emerge only with the pastoral nomadic migrations that followed the Turkic and Mongol conquests of the twelfth and the thirteenth century.[11] His argument is effectively one of Muslim migration and resettlement rather than of conversion and acculturation.

Although by the year 1000 most of Afghanistan was at least under Muslim rule, many of its former Buddhist monuments remained standing for centuries, in some cases being adapted into Muslim religious sites. Yet it was not only physical structures that remained but also social structures, as formerly elite Buddhist families transformed themselves into new Muslim elites around Balkh. The most famous case is the Barmakid family. Former hereditary overlords of Balkh's Buddhist great monastery (called *Nawbahar* in Persian sources, from the Sanskrit *nava vihara,* "new monastery"), the family's Arabicized name, Barmaki, was itself derived from the Sanskrit *pramukha* (chief administrator). After converting to Islam, the Barmakids became not only local Muslim elites around Balkh but also one of the premier political families in the 'Abbasid capital, Baghdad, where they sponsored the translation of Sanskrit works into Arabic.[12] The Buddhist and more generally Bactrian background of the Barmakids has been painstakingly uncovered by Kevin van Bladel, who has pointed to the degree to which pre-Islamic cultural practices continued after nominal conversion.[13] Arguing for the importance of family and social history for understanding how Balkh's pre-Islamic culture was transmitted into the Islamic period, van Bladel explains that "we are dealing not with two ideologies (Buddhism and Islam) bouncing off one another like stones . . . but rather with human populations in daily contact . . . changing their beliefs and practices as a response to that contact over several generations."[14]

A more forceful, if contentious, argument for transmission of Balkh's Buddhist practices into the Islamic world and even Christian Europe has been made by Christopher I. Beckwith, who has declared that "the Latin [university] college borrowed directly from the Islamic *madrasa,* which was in origin the Central Asian Buddhist *vihara* [monastery]."[15] Noting the predominance of scholars from Central Asia in the early 'Abbasid centuries, and the fact that the first-ever madrasa was constructed in the Afghan city of Bust, Beckwith argues that it was not only Buddhist families and institutions that survived into the Islamic period.[16] Buddhist intellectual methods also survived, having developed in the region around Balkh, and being thereby distinct from Indian Buddhism. Specifically, this transmission comprised what Beckwith terms the "recursive argument method," which he claims Central Asian Buddhist thinkers handed down "in situ in Central Asia as part of Central Asians' conversion to Islam."[17]

Focusing more on material than on intellectual transmission, the French researcher Étienne de la Vaissière has investigated the links in the same area between pre-Islamic institutions and the Muslim *ribat,* a frontier residence for holy warriors and ascetics.[18] Echoing Beckwith's attention to the location of early madrasas, Vaissière has pointed to the very large number of *ribat*s sponsored by the 'Abbasids in Central Asia and in turn argued that they developed in part out of the preexisting Buddhist houses of charity that had spread along merchant routes through unsettled nomadic areas.[19] Focusing on the more spectacular physical survival of the Buddhas of Bamiyan, the Swiss scholar Pierre Centlivres has traced the afterlife of Afghanistan's pre-Islamic heritage by examining medieval Persian and Arabic accounts of Bamiyan, the folklore of local Hazara Muslims, and the periodic iconoclasms that predated their final destruction in 2001.[20] However, more useful for understanding the spread of Islam as such are the various archaeological and art-historical studies of Afghanistan's earliest mosques. Of particular interest is the eighth- or ninth-century Nuh Gunbad (Nine-Dome) at Balkh, which demonstrates substantial similarities with pre-Islamic religious architecture and may have been turned into a mosque only years after its construction.[21]

For more than a century, scholars have noted the possible impact of Buddhist narratives on the stories told about the early Sufis, in particular Ibrahim ibn Adham (d. 779?), the semi-legendary prince-turned-ascetic from Balkh whose biography closely resembles that of the Buddha. Unfortunately, the issue has never been explored in depth. The main early Islamic religious movement from the region that has received considerable study is the Karramiyya, the focus of research by C. Edmund Bosworth, Afaf Hatoum, Margaret Malamud, Wilferd Madelung, and Jean-Claude Vadet.[22] Emerging in Khurasan, which encompasses eastern Iran and much of western and northern Afghanistan, the Karramiyya were named after their founder, Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad ibn Karram (d. 874). He taught that salvation was to be found through the renunciation of the world by means of rigorously ascetic practices, doctrines that he linked to a particular reading of the Quran. Given that the Karramiyya was largely a lower-class movement apparently comprising recent converts, there is every chance that its ascetic profile—out of tune with the religious teachings emerging from Baghdad, the 'Abbasid capital, in this period—was linked to Afghanistan's Buddhist heritage.[23] By developing large monastic communities devoted to asceticism and prayer, and attracting patrons who endowed them with landholdings, the Karramiyya flourished in Khurasan from the ninth through the twelfth century. However, how far people in what is now Afghanistan can be linked to the well-studied development of early mystical thought (as distinct from ascetic practice) in other Khurasani urban centers such as Tirmiz or Nishapur is uncertain.[24] Even though research on the lower-class ascetics of the Karramiyya and the more urbane luminaries of Balkh spotlights the early profiles of Islam in Afghanistan, our overall understanding of the early

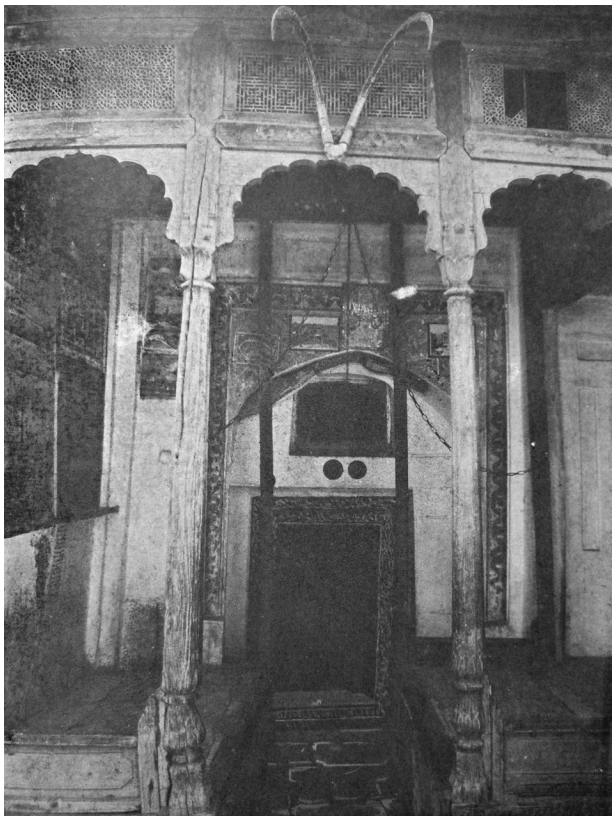

FIGURE 1. Mausoleum of the Ghaznavid mystical poet Hakim Sana'i, Ghazna. (From *Salnama-yi Kabul* [Kabul: Anjuman-i Adabi, 1935])

expansion and variety of Islam in the region remains as patchy as the sources. Another focus of study has been the so-called *Ghulat* (Exaggerators), rebel movements during the Umayyad–early 'Abbasid era that appear to have blended newer Islamic teachings with older Zoroastrian and Buddhist motifs that still survived in Khurasan.[25]

SULTANS AND SUFIS, CIRCA 1000–1200

Between the late tenth and the twelfth centuries, the period of Ghaznavid rule from 977 to 1186 offers much richer textual and architectural testimony that scholars have used to reconstruct the religious life of the period. Based on the most thorough acquaintance with the Arabic and Persian court histories of the period,

it is again to C. Edmund Bosworth that we must turn for the fullest studies of the Ghaznavids.[26] However, aside from short discussions of Ghaznavid court culture, Bosworth was more interested in Ghaznavid politics and administration than in Ghaznavid religion.[27] Given the nature of the sources, his studies tell us more about the Ghaznavid state, its administrators, and its capitals in Ghazna and Lahore than about its peoples, religious practices, and provinces. While Andrew Peacock and Ali Anooshahr have also recently turned to the Ghaznavid court histories, the focus still necessarily remains on the period's historiographical rather than its religious writings.[28] Fortunately, Ghaznavid court patronage also supported Hakim Sana'i (d. 1131), the writer of some of the earliest Persian mystical poetry, whose works have been the focus of close scrutiny by J. T. P. de Bruijn, Franklin D. Lewis, and Bo Utas.[29] Another of the most famous early Sufi writers—and the earliest to write in Persian prose about Sufism—was 'Ali ibn 'Usman al-Hujwiri (d. ca. 1075).[30] Though he settled, and wrote, in the later Ghaznavid capital of Lahore, in what is now Pakistan, many of the pilgrimage and other pious practices he described in the third and final section of his Persian *Kashf al-Mahjub* (Unveiling of the Hidden) were current around his native Ghazna in what is now eastern Afghanistan. Farther west, on the outskirts of the city of Herat, al-Hujwiri's contemporary 'Abdullah Ansari (d. 1089) was another of the first Sufis to make use of Persian. Ansari wrote in a local dialect, suggesting an attempt to spread his teachings among ordinary people rather than the Arabic-educated *'ulama.* Ansari's extant writings are the focus of studies by the French Dominican scholar Serge de Laugier de Beaurecueil, the Afghan scholar and diplomat A. G. Ravan Farhadi, and the Swedish linguist Bo Utas.[31]

Also from this period was the great Isma'ili thinker Nasir Khusraw (d. 1088). Although he was one of the most important figures in the history of Afghanistan's Islam, his Isma'ili beliefs made him seek refuge in the mountains of Afghan Badakhshan, far from the aggressively Sunni Ghaznavid court. His voluminous writings, studied by such scholars as Henry Corbin and Alice Hunsberger, helped form the doctrinal basis of Isma'ili Islam. Later followers of Isma'ilism managed to survive persecution through the remoteness of their mountain communities in the Badakhshan region, where according to tradition Nasir Khusraw himself died.[32] His shrine in the Badakhshan valley of Yumgan, a major pilgrimage site for Isma'ilis, is the subject of an article by the German researcher Marcus Schadl.[33] More recently, through a groundbreaking reconstruction of the centuries-long hagiographical tradition surrounding Nasir Khusraw, Daniel Beben has shown that for much of his posthumous cultic history this "Ruby of Badakhshan" was not regarded as an Isma'ili at all.[34] On the contrary: Beben has shown that, as Nasir Khusraw's shrine became a focus of patronage from the Chinggisid period through the Timurid era and well into the nineteenth century, Khusraw was reframed as a Sunni holy figure. Only via the gradual revival of Isma'ilism in the eighteenth

century and later were his Isma'ili identity and writings recovered and reclaimed by the reinvigorated Isma'ili imamate based in Iran and then India. Beben's study is a rare and important example of the kind of longitudinal study that is able to trace the transformations of Afghanistan's Islam over extended periods of time. More such work is needed.

In addition to the larger corpus of written materials that has survived from this period, the era of the Ghaznavids and their Ghurid successors has bequeathed to the present a considerable amount of religious architecture, particularly by way of minarets.[35] The most famous of these is the stunning and remote Ghurid minaret of Jam, whose Quranic inscription was studied by the Belgian and French epigraphers André Maricq and Gaston Wiet shortly after its discovery in the early 1950s with the Afghan historian Ahmad 'Ali Kuhzad.[36] The minaret was later the subject of a fuller study by Janine Sourdel-Thomine.[37] Several other religious structures from the Ghaznavid and Ghurid periods have been scrutinized. The Ghaznavid mosques and mausoleums at Balkh, Ghazna, and Lashkari Bazaar were the subject of early studies by Ali Ahmad Naimi, Janine Sourdel-Thomine, and Daniel Schlumberger, while André Godard and Ralph Pinder-Wilson examined the epigraphy and architecture of the great victory minaret built by Mas'ud III (r. 1099–1114) in his capital, Ghazna.[38]

Particular attention has been given to the Ghurid stone mosque at Larwand, in central Afghanistan, by Italian and British archaeologists and more recently by Alka Patel, who argues for its construction by migrant non-Muslim craftsmen from the recently conquered Ghurid domains of Gujarat and Rajasthan.[39] Bernt Glazer and Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani have also researched the since-destroyed twelfth-century Ghurid madrasa of Shah-i Mashhad, in Badghis province, and the Ghurid reconstruction of the great mosque of Herat that took place from around 1200.[40] The latter's blue-glazed portal has recently been reexamined so as to uncover its original construction techniques.[41] However, the most recent and fullest study of Ghurid archaeology is by David C. Thomas.[42]

A TIMURID RENAISSANCE, CIRCA 1400–1500

Though as much a part of the religious heritage of Iran as of Afghanistan, the city of Herat under Timurid rule during the fifteenth and the early sixteenth century has been the focus of more research than any other city of present-day Afghanistan.[43] The rich literary, artistic, and architectural legacy of Timurid rule has nourished three interrelated strains of scholarship. In terms of architectural history, there are major studies by Lisa Golombek, Donald Wilber, and Bernard O'Kane, as well as shorter studies of Timurid patronage of madrasas and Sufi shrines.[44] With regard to Afghanistan, the most important of the latter is Lisa Golombek's monograph on the Timurid reconstruction of the shrine of 'Abdullah Ansari at Gazurgah, outside

Herat.[45] Complementing Golombek's work, Maria Subtelny has analyzed textual sources describing Timurid courtiers' devotion to Ansari's shrine, pointing to the high status of Sufi pilgrimage centers in this period.[46]

It was not only Herat but also Balkh that received patronage from the Timurids, and the Soviet Tajik scholar Akhror Mukhtarov has examined numerous Arabic and Persian sources to compile a study of Balkh's numerous mosques, madrasas, and shrines.[47] The wealth of landholdings and other assets that such shrines gathered under the Timurids was to render them influential shapers of society for centuries to come. By focusing on the economics and administration of the shrines of Herat, Balkh, and other Timurid cities, R. D. McChesney has shown them to be the fulcrums of entire "shrine societies" that were as dependent on a shrine's water resources, employment, and conflict resolution as on its religious teachings.[48] Moving from saintly agriculture to Sufi art, among the rich body of scholarship on Timurid artworks the most relevant studies with regard to the history of Afghanistan's Islam are those of miniature paintings, such as Rachel Milstein's account of Sufi themes in Herati painting.[49]

By using Arabic *ijaza* (permission-to-teach) documents relating to *'ulama* teaching in Herat in the reign of Shahrukh (r. 1409–47), Maria Subtelny and Anas Khalidov have shown how the spread of a Hanafi "core curriculum" in the city's madrasas under the Timurids helped bolster the place of Sunnism in a city that in 1510 would fall to the Shi'i Safavid rulers of Persia.[50] In a similar vein, an earlier study by the historian Roger Savory deals with attempts to spread Safavid Shi'i religious ideas in Herat at this time, pointing to the origins of the Shi'i community that survives in Herat to this day.[51]

However, it is Sufism—and particularly the legalistic Sufism of the Central Asian Naqshbandiyya—that has formed the main focus of research on Timurid religion. The Timurids were far from the first rulers of Herat to patronize Sufis, as shown in Lawrence Potter's studies of the ties between Sufis of the Jami order and the Kart dynasty (r. 1244–1381), which preceded the Timurids in Herat.[52] However, because of the sheer wealth of the Timurids and the fact that their polity also encompassed large parts of Central Asia, their rule over Herat saw the arrival of the Central Asian Naqshbandi order into what is today western Afghanistan. Studies by Jo-Ann Gross and Jürgen Paul, American and German specialists on Central Asia, reveal the strategies by which the Naqshbandis laid roots in the material as well as the religious economy of Herat.[53] As Paul argues, during the reign of Shahrukh in Herat a fundamental, long-term shift was made in Naqshbandi attitudes toward political power. This shift saw a move away from the quietism of such earlier masters as the eponymous Baha al-Din Naqshband (1318–89) toward the close political connections with Muslim rulers that are associated with the later Naqshbandiyya. Mining the same rich seam of sources, the French Turkologists Alexandre Papas and Marc Toutant have examined the links between Sufi ideas and the

FIGURE 2. Mihrab and stucco decoration, Ghurid Mosque, Lashkargah. (Photograph © Nile Green)

great Timurid statesman and litterateur Mir ʿAli Shir Nawa'i (1441–1501). Papas has decoded Nawa'i's writings on the occult sciences (*makhfi ʿilm*), while Toutant has examined a long poem in Chaghata'i, written by Nawa'i himself, in which he encouraged the Herat ruler Husayn Bayqara to do more to promote Shariʿa as opposed to Mongolian customary law.[54]

However, it is the Herati Naqshbandi Sufi and poet ʿAbd al-Rahman Jami (d. 1492) whose writings have attracted the most scholarly attention, particularly by Okten Ertugrul and Farah Shadchehr.[55] Much scholarship has focused on Jami's poetic and doctrinal works, as in studies by the American and Afghan specialists on Sufism William C. Chittick and Jawid A. Mojaddedi.[56] Chad Lingwood's monograph on Jami's *Salman wa Absal* (Salman and Absal), by contrast, pays close attention to the political dimensions of his writings, albeit mainly at the Aq-Qoyunlu court in what is now western Iran rather than in Herat.[57] Staying with the theme of Sufi links to holders of political power, Maria Subtelny has studied how Jami received material support by way of landholdings granted by Herat's Timurid rulers.[58]

With regard to the crucial link between land grants and religious institutions, the most important study for the entire region is R. D. McChesney's history of the shrine of the Prophet's son-in-law Imam ʿAli at Mazar-i Sharif from its late-fifteenth-century foundation under the Timurids to the late nineteenth century.[59] Based on the study of numerous Persian historical works and *waqf* (endowment) documents, McChesney's monograph is arguably the most important single work

on the religious history of Afghanistan. Demonstrating the importance of shrines as both architectural and narrative spaces, McChesney has also researched the long history of the shrine of the Naqshbandi Sufi Abu Nasr Parsa (d. 1461), in Balkh.[60] The Timurids' support for such shrines positions Afghanistan into a wider regional pattern. For just as at Mazar-i Sharif they patronized a shrine dedicated to one of the founding figures of Islamic history, so in their erstwhile capital at Samarqand, to the north, did Timurid elites patronize the preexisting shrine of Qusam ibn Abbas, known as Shah-i Zinda (The Living King). As a cousin of the Prophet and a purported martyr in the initial Muslim conquest of Central Asia, Qusam became the focus of tremendous veneration by both Timur's family and his military elite. Together they transformed Qusam's preexisting mausoleum into a dynastic cemetery and major pilgrimage site that remains today one of Central Asia's chief artistic wonders, albeit outside the present-day borders of Afghanistan.[61]

Around the same time that the Timurids were ruling over what is now western Afghanistan, northern India was being ruled by a dynasty that can truly be called Afghan in that its rulers belonged to the Lodi tribe of Pashtuns. During the centuries that had followed the Ghaznavid conquests of northern India around the year 1000, large numbers of Pashtun tribes had migrated southward into the subcontinent as warriors, horse traders, and pastoralists. Though the religious practices of these Indo-Afghans cannot be considered part of Afghanistan's Islam in geographical terms, they cannot be overlooked in a broad survey such as that offered here, particularly because they have been the focus of a great deal of research by scholars of Indian history. Among the dozens of articles related to the Lodi (1451–1526) and Suri (1540–56) dynasties of Indo-Afghans, it is worth singling out the studies of their relations with the subcontinent's Sufis by Raziuddin Aquil, Simon Digby, and Nile Green.[62] As their research has shown, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Indo-Afghans became deeply intertwined with the Sufi orders and institutions that by this time flourished throughout the regions where the Indo-Afghans lived and ruled in the subcontinent. As a result, from this period onward, Sufi Islam in Afghanistan proper became inseparable from the Sufism of Mughal and post-Mughal India, particularly with regard to the circulation of the Naqshbandi order into and out of the subcontinent.

AFGHANISTAN AMID EARLY MODERN EMPIRES, CIRCA 1500–1800

After Afghan rule over India succumbed to the Mughals, around 1530, between the sixteenth and the eighteenth century much of what is now Afghanistan was ruled by the competing Mughal and Safavid empires. Such dual imperial rule resulted in increased circulation of religious texts and specialists between Afghanistan and the major cities of these two imperial polities in India and

Persia. Unfortunately, despite the great potential, little research has been conducted on Afghanistan's cities under either Safavid or Mughal rule, notwithstanding the fact that before the conquest of Delhi, in 1526, Kabul was the first capital of the Mughal Empire.[63] The Safavid impact on Afghanistan's Islam has been especially neglected, despite the likelihood that the Safavids were responsible for the conversion of the Hazaras and other groups to Shi'ism.[64] Given that Kabul lay midway between the Mughals' Central Asian homelands and their new domains in northern India, the city formed a transit point for the Naqshbandi Sufis who followed the new conquerors south. An important article by Stephen Dale and Alam Payind uses an endowment (*waqf*) document to uncover early Mughal patronage of the Naqshbandiyya in Kabul, showing how Naqshbandi migration to the subcontinent was enabled by that order's material as well as initiatic ties to the conquering Mughal elite.[65]

Moving from the city to the province of Kabul, Joseph Arlinghaus has presented the richest study to date of competition between different forms of Islam under early Mughal rule, not least among the tribal Pashtuns who occupied the rural hinterlands of Kabul.[66] Together with the Russian researcher Sergei Andreyev, it is also Arlinghaus who has conducted the fullest research into the Rawshaniyya movement, which flourished among Pashtuns in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Founded by the charismatic *pir-i rawshan* (illuminated master) Bayazid Ansari (d. 1585) and expounded partly in Pashto in his written revelation *Khayr al-Bayan* (Best of Expositions), this new Rawshani Islam gained many supporters among the powerful Pashtun tribes.[67] However, the latter's control of the empire's northern frontier encouraged the Mughal rulers to use charges of heterodoxy as an excuse to violently suppress them. During the reign of Akbar (r. 1556–1605)—a figure usually regarded as the epitome of Mughal tolerance—his younger brother, Muhammad Hakim, also led a crusading mission in 1582 against the so-called Kafirs (infidels) of what is today northeastern Afghanistan. The Persian record of the expedition by Darwish Muhammad Khan has been edited, translated, and studied by the Italian scholar Gianroberto Scarcia.[68] It is also to Scarcia that we owe the only study to date of any Afghan Sufi poet from the Mughal period, pointing to the use of Persian as a common language of religious exchange between Afghanistan and Mughal India.[69]

Unfortunately, the period when Afghanistan began to emerge as a recognizable political entity, during the eighteenth century under Ahmad Shah Durrani (r. 1747–72) and his immediate successors, has been the least studied period of all. We have only short articles by Afghan and Russian scholars: Muhammad Ali has recounted later oral traditions on Ahmad Shah Durrani's coronation by the wandering Sufi Sabir Shah; Rawan Farhadi has given an overview of the life and works of the Naqshbandi Sufi Miyan Faqirullah (d. 1781), who enjoyed the support of the early Durrani emperors; and Sergey E. Grigoryev has summarized eighteenth-century

FIGURE 3. Sufi tombs inside a Kabul khanaqah. (Photograph © Nile Green)

accounts of the bringing of the cloak of the Prophet Muhammad to Qandahar from Bukhara in 1768.[70] Fortunately, a recent article and doctoral thesis by Waleed Ziad brings to light the close connections forged between Durrani rule and Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi Sufis who migrated to Afghanistan from India under Durrani patronage.[71] Casting rare light on the mountainous region of Badakhshan, an article by Alexandre Papas has brought forward the writings of the Naqshbandi mystic and poet Mir Ghiyas al-Din Badakhshi (d. 1768).[72] Together, Papas and Ziad show the deep connections forged by migrant shaykhs of the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi between even the most remote regions of Afghanistan and the Indian town of Sirhind, where Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624) lay buried in his family shrine. The mechanics and doctrines of the expanding Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi network is the focus of Waleed Ziad's chapter in this volume.

THE STATE, REFORM, AND DIASPORA, CIRCA 1800–1930

Aside from the work of Papas and Ziad on the successors to these late Mughal Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi lineages, for most of the nineteenth century we know very little about religious developments in Afghanistan. An important exception is a study by the German historian Christine Noelle-Karimi of several anti-Wahhabi texts published during the 1870s and 1880s.[73] Written ostensibly by the rulers Shir ʿAli Khan (r. 1868–78) and ʿAbd al-Rahman Khan (r. 1880–1901), these two texts were among the earliest items ever published in Afghanistan and show the increasing role of the state in policing what was viewed as a potentially seditious form of Islam.

It is only for the nineteenth century's last two decades, and in relation to the state-building project of ʿAbd al-Rahman Khan, that there exists a small, albeit important, cluster of research, mainly but not exclusively by scholars with Afghan backgrounds. For ʿAbd al-Rahman's reign saw attempts to use religion to leverage increasing control over Afghanistan's population. In her study of ʿAbd al-Rahman's attempts to use Islam to consolidate central control over a tribal society, Asta Olesen described a policy of "establishing the hegemony of state-sanctioned interpretations of Islam" through centralized support and brutal suppression of different Sufis and *ʿulama*.[74]

The two most notorious examples of this political deployment of Islam were ʿAbd al-Rahman's wars of conquest during the 1890s against the mountainous highlands of central and northeastern Afghanistan, whose Hazara and Kafir populations followed Twelver Shiʿi Islam and their own indigenous religion, respectively.[75] Aided by Sunni judicial opinions (*fatwa*) proclaiming the legality of ʿAbd al-Rahman's war against the Shiʿi Hazaras as a *jihad,* Hazara men, women, and children were enslaved and then sold by Pashtun and even Hindu slave traders, in addition bringing vast revenues to the central government through its taxation of the slave trade.[76] A decade after many thousands of Hazaras escaped into the safety of exile around Quetta in British-administered Baluchistan and Mashhad in Iran, in 1904 ʿAbd al-Rahman's successor Habibullah Khan gave the exiles a ten-month window to return home or forfeit their lands.[77] In the event, even when Hazara exiles returned, they found that the Pashtun government had granted much of their former land to its favored Sunni Pashtun tribes. It was a foreshadowing of the government decision thirty years later, discussed below, to confiscate Jewish property and similarly redistribute it to Sunni Pashtun elites.

Returning to ʿAbd al-Rahman's reign, it was also during this period that print technology spread in Afghanistan, albeit as a tool for increasing state control rather than for fostering civil society. Though printed books had previously been imported to Afghanistan from the Muslim presses of colonial India, and a few texts had been issued from an earlier state press in Kabul during the 1870s, it was under ʿAbd al-Rahman that religious works were first printed in Afghanistan through a

newly established government press. Unsurprisingly, this small number of publications prominently included works by ʿAbd al-Rahman himself and his religious officials. Crucial documents on the close links forged between religion and state during the era in which Afghanistan took its present form, these works have been studied by the Afghan historian (and subsequent president) Ashraf Ghani.[78] Along with Ghani, another Afghan historian, Amin Tarzi, has carried out pioneering research on the state's construction of Islamic law courts during ʿAbd al-Rahman's reign, which saw increased attempts to centralize and bureaucratize enforcement of the Shariʿa as part of the larger state-building project.[79]

Amin Tarzi has also studied the evolution of the numerous constitutions proclaimed in Afghanistan since the 1920s. His work has revealed the central place given to Islam (and hence, to the role of unelected clerics) in every constitution except that propounded by the failed royal reformer Amanullah in 1923.[80] However, religion also served as a force of resistance to such state ventures, not least when religious leaders failed to adhere to the policies of a central government that lacked power and legitimacy in the rural provinces. The American anthropologist David B. Edwards has used oral sources on the life of the influential Mullah of Hadda to look back on moral conflicts during ʿAbd al-Rahman's reign as revealed in narratives concerning the relationship between the saint and the ruler.[81] In this way, memories of past actions, whether purported or real, served as legitimizing templates for future rebellions.

Along with Helena Malikyar and Amin Tarzi, Edwards has also written about the continued importance of the hereditary Jilani and Naqshbandi Sufi families in Kabul around the turn of the twentieth century.[82] However, the reigns of Habibullah Khan (r. 1901–19), Amanullah Khan (r. 1919–29), and Nadir Shah (r. 1929–33) saw a range of new religious ideas emerge in Afghanistan having little apparent connection with the older, establishment Islam represented by such urban Sufi elites. An important Afghan primary source on religious developments during the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century is the *Siraj al-Tawarikh* (Torch of Histories) of Fayz Muhammad Katib (1862–1931), which has recently been translated and annotated by R. D. McChesney, with M. M. Khorrami.[83] Turning back to the secondary literature, the fullest study of religious reform during the early twentieth century is the Afghan historian Senzil Nawid's monograph on the policies of King Amanullah Khan during the 1920s. Drawing on many Persian sources from the period, Nawid explores the motivations of the negative and ultimately violent coalition of mullahs and tribesmen whose rebellion overthrew Amanullah's reformist government in 1929.[84]

An important element of Amanullah's reforms were his attempts to control the hold of the *ʿulama* over education and legislation in Afghanistan. The reforms included a policy of state certification of mullahs' qualifications and hence authority. As the Afghan educational historian Yahia Baiza has shown, after Amanullah's

downfall his successor Nadir Shah sought to placate the religious classes by placing *'ulama* in key posts in the Ministry of Justice.[85] The first girls' school, opened in the 1920s, was closed under Nadir Shah, and the first article of the new 1931 constitution enshrined Hanafi Sunni Islam as the state religion.[86] Modern constitutionalism thus served to institutionalize older discrimination against Shi'i Muslims as well as Afghanistan's Jewish and Hindu second-class citizens. In 1933, the Afghan government also signed an agreement of cooperation with the fundamentalist Deoband seminary in India, whose cross-border influence Amanullah had tried to restrict.[87]

Another body of scholarship has used documentation from the increasing transnational connections of the period to show the importing to Afghanistan of reformist religious ideas from surrounding regions. With regard to links with Iran, Nikki Keddie has reconstructed the activities of Jamal al-Din "al-Afghani" (1838–97) in Kabul during the late 1860s, when the pioneering pseudo-Afghan Pan-Islamist attempted (and failed) to gain influence in government circles.[88] However, most studies have focused on travelers from the post-Tanzimat Ottoman Empire on the one side and from colonial India on the other. Based on Turkish rather than Persian or Pashto sources, studies of Ottoman connections by Christoph Herzog, Raoul Motika, Michael O'Sullivan, and S. Tanvir Wasti have used the travelogues written by diplomats, intellectuals, and an exiled soldier-turned-printer to reveal the varied ideological contours of these Ottoman migrants.[89] While the impact of late Ottoman reformist ideas on the influential Afghan nationalist minister (and longtime Damascene exile) Mahmud Tarzi (1865–1933) has long been vaguely acknowledged, these studies reveal more concrete Ottoman connections with reformist circles in Kabul between the 1870s and the 1910s.

Turning to religious connections with India (and present-day Pakistan) during this period, the fullest studies are those of the Pakistani scholar Sana Haroon and the American imperial historian Benjamin D. Hopkins. Haroon has traced the increasing influence of mullahs from the Indian madrasa at Deoband among tribal groups on the Indo-Afghan frontier, while Hopkins has focused on British colonial accounts of the so-called fanatics of the frontier.[90] Their work shows the difficulties of separating empirical data on the Pashtun religiosity of the borderlands from the politics and rhetoric of British colonial concerns. The discourse of empire notwithstanding, there is no doubt that the very creation of an imperial frontier rendered the region a destination point for anticolonial activists of all kinds, including the new Muslim activists who emerged in colonial India. The Russian scholar G. L. Dmitriev has studied the activities of Indian nationalist revolutionaries, including several influential Muslims, who resided in Kabul during the reign of Habibullah.[91] However, it is only in the more recent dissertation of Thomas Wide that the ideas flowing from the Ottoman Empire, colonial India, and as well Russian Central Asia have been brought together for comparison.[92] Staying with the focus on

transborder connections, the Pakistani and German scholars M. Naeem Qureshi and Dietrich Reetz have produced studies of the mass migration of poor Indian Muslims to Afghanistan during the *hijrat* (pious emigration) from Christian-ruled colonial India that took place in 1920.[93] Responding to the religious rhetoric of Afghan leaders who portrayed themselves as anti-imperial defenders of Islam, most of these poor migrants found themselves unwelcome and destitute on their arrival in Afghanistan. Thousands of them were forced to walk back across the mountain roads to India in a state of near-starvation, though several hundred remained in Kabul to form a distinct community of *muhajirin,* "pious exiles."

The vast Muslim population of the subcontinent notwithstanding, it is important not to see the Afghan religious encounter with India solely in Islamic terms. Many of the communities of ethnic Pashtuns (known as Pathans in India) that had emerged in India over the previous centuries lived peaceably among their Hindu neighbors. Most of these Indo-Afghans lost the ability to speak Pashto and instead spoke Hindi and Punjabi. In at least one case, we know of a Pashtun local dynasty that patronized the Hindu priests and temples within their domains. This was the *nawab*s of Savanur, a small Mughal successor state and then princely state in what is now the Indian region of Karnataka that existed from 1672 to 1948, when it was absorbed into the Indian Union. As the Indian scholar K. N. Chitnis has shown, throughout almost three centuries of rule the Afghan *nawab*s of Savanur issued land grants to Vaishnava temples (*mandir*) and Lingayat monasteries (*math*), donated revenues to brahmins and lower-caste religious specialists, and supported various Hindu festivals.[94] Research among the records of other Indo-Afghan successor and princely states, such as Rampur, would likely reveal this to have been a more general pattern that continued into the twentieth century.

Returning to Afghanistan proper, for the reigns of Amanullah and Nadir Shah in the 1920s and early 1930s, the British, Afghan, and Pakistani scholars Nile Green, Khalilullah Khalili, and Barbak Lodhi have examined the Afghan interactions of Indian Muslim reformists.[95] The most famous of these travelers was the philosopher-poet Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938), who exerted considerable influence on the new Afghan intelligentsia that developed between the 1920s and the 1940s. Such interactions brought the ideas (and even the Urdu language) of Indo-Islamic reform into contact with Afghanistan. However, in an age of increasing mobility, it was not only older contact routes with the subcontinent that were intensified through the expansion of overland road and rail networks.[96] Afghanistan's links with colonial India's railroad towns and port cities also enabled increasing numbers of Afghans to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, which had previously been made by very few people indeed from Afghanistan.[97] With regard to Afghans making the *hajj,* the French Turkologist Thierry Zarcone has brought to light the existence of Afghan Sufi lodges along the pilgrimage route through Ottoman territory.

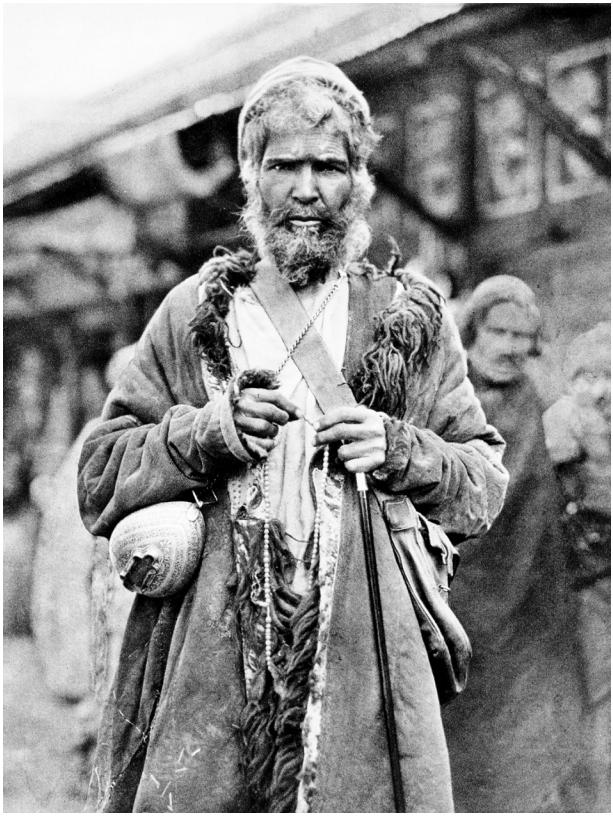

FIGURE 4. Afghan mendicant dervish. (Original photograph ca. 1890; collection of Nile Green)

Of particular interest is the Afghan lodge (*zawiyya al-afghaniyya*) in Jerusalem, which, though founded in 1633 as a Qadiri Sufi lodge, served mainly as a hostel for Afghan pilgrims between the late nineteenth and the mid-twentieth century.[98]

In a detailed and robust study of the most remarkable of all the period's transnational connections, Christine Stevens has uncovered the history of extensive Pashtun Afghan labor migration to Australia during the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century, when Afghan cameleers pioneered the trans-Australian overland route. One chapter of Stevens's book focuses on the religious lives of these migrants, piecing together the history of the "bush mosques," built first of mud and then of corrugated iron, in such outback Afghan settlements (or "Ghan-towns") as Marree in 1884 and North Broken Hill in 1891.[99] Even in this early period of settlement, Afghan migrants supported mullahs (such as Hajji Mulla Mirban of Coolgardie) who performed marriage ceremonies, mediated in disputes, and

encouraged them to invest in larger mosques.[100] The long history of migration out of Afghanistan that created many diasporas in the premodern and modern periods suggests that other Afghan communities created or shared religious institutions in their new homelands. The tens of thousands of persecuted Shi'i Hazaras forced into exile in Persia and British India in the late nineteenth century form only one obvious example.

THE CENTER AND THE PROVINCES, CIRCA 1930–1960

Returning to religious developments in Afghanistan itself and looking to the mid-twentieth century, the long reign of Zahir Shah (r. 1933–73) has been the focus of a small number of studies of attempts to create a state-approved (and state-approving) Islam. The Swedish researcher Jan Samuelsson, for example, has examined the somewhat successful state-led attempts to produce a reformist Islam in the 1950s and 1960s that flourished before the rise of the *mujahidin* in the 1980s.[101] An overview of official, state-sponsored Islamic education during the 1960s at such government madrasas as Kabul's Dar al-'Ulum-i 'Arabi (Arabic Studies Center) is given in an article by Abdul Satar Sirat, who in the 1960s served as dean of the Faculty of Islamic Law at Kabul University.[102] Still, as the Italian Persianist Gianroberto Scarcia has shown, Afghan *'ulama* were already turning to the Quran to find powerful sources of objection to the nationalist political system that was taking shape in the mid-twentieth century.[103] Islamist ideologies were already present in Afghanistan before the rise of the anti-Soviet *mujahidin.*

All such studies have focused mainly on the government and the capital, so that we know little of the practice of Islam beyond the confines of the state and capital even into the twentieth century. For the first decades of the twentieth century, it is mainly the work of the American scholar James Caron on small-town Pashto poets that shines an indirect light onto Pashtun religious culture in the provinces.[104] The belated spread of print technology among Pashtuns in the 1920s saw the flourishing of a small Pashto reading public that placed a range of religious ideas into circulation. These included more subaltern visions that differed from the official Islam sponsored by the state and its urban Pashtun elites. As one of very few Western scholars trained in Pashto, Caron has also written a critique of what he sees as the dominance of modernization theory in framing the history of Pashtun Islam for the period before 1978 as a sequence of anti-state rebellions.[105]

We are also afforded some glimpse of Afghan (if not necessarily Pashtun) Islam beyond both cities and rebellions through the early work of the French archaeologist Ria Hackin and the Afghan historian Ahmad 'Ali Kuhzad. As part of the arrival of European archaeologists to Afghanistan during the 1920s, Hackin and Kuhzad collaborated to collect a series of folktales from people residing around their excavation sites, mainly in the outskirts of Kabul and in Hazarajat. Many

of these stories comprised oral traditions concerning the coming of Islam to Afghanistan and aetiological tales about the shrines of local saints.[106] These offer all-too-rare glimpses of Afghanistan's predominant rural Islam.

THE PERSISTENCE OF CUSTOM, CIRCA 1960–1980

Despite the early and somewhat amateur endeavors of Hackin and Kuhzad, the urban and official focus of scholarship changed significantly only in the late 1950s. It was then that anthropologists, and later political scientists, began to work on Afghanistan as part of the great postwar expansion of the social sciences. Following the intellectual concerns of the period, the decades between the 1950s' opening of Afghanistan to foreign anthropologists and the closure of the field to non-Soviet scholars during the 1980s saw a wealth of research on Islamic practices that were rural and tribal, nonliterate and nonstate.[107] Increased access to Afghanistan also enabled several textual scholars to research the contemporary religiosity that they witnessed between their visits to the archives.

Many of the classic monographs of this period (such as those of Fredrik Barth, Thomas Barfield, Shuyler Jones, Nancy Tapper, and Donald Wilber) dealt with social and political structures, particularly among tribal communities.[108] Such studies often necessarily touched on religious life, particularly in the case of Akbar Ahmed's study of the links between Pashtun social structure and charismatic religiosity.[109] Though strictly speaking Ahmed's was a study of Pakistani rather than Afghan Pashtuns, when reread decades later in the wake of the Taliban it presents a startling premise. For the work of Ahmed (as also of Barth before him) forces us to ask whether the success of the Taliban is to be understood in social-structural terms (as another example of the charismatic leadership repeatedly produced by tribal communities) or as a rejection of Pashtun tribal values (through the deployment of new values borrowed from nontribal urban institutions such as Deobandi madrasas).

Turning to the heyday of Afghan anthropological fieldwork in the 1960s and the 1970s, it was a series of shorter studies by the indefatigable American ethnographer Louis Dupree that saw rural Afghan religious practices become for the first time the true focus of study.[110] Less inclined to theorize than many of his structuralist and then culturalist contemporaries, Dupree was content to ethnographically describe such Afghan traditions as saint veneration on their own terms. Even so, what his descriptions show is the continuity between such practices in Afghanistan and forms of Muslim saint veneration in surrounding areas in the Indian subcontinent and pre-Soviet Central Asia.

Led by the Afghan and American anthropologists M. Nazif Shahrani, Homayun Sidky, and Audrey Shalinsky, during the 1970s another important shift was made, this time toward the study of Islam among the Uzbeks of northern Afghanistan.[111]

The Uzbeks were later the focus of the research of the German Turkologist Ingeborg Baldauf, whose many field-based investigations in northern Afghanistan have included research on the religious practices of Uzbek women from the region.[112] Meanwhile, another German researcher, Lucas-Michael Kopecky, became one of a small number of researchers to focus on the Shi'i religious traditions of the Hazaras of Bamiyan.[113]

In one of the classic anthropological studies of Afghanistan, Robert Canfield placed Bamiyan's Shi'is among their Sunni and Isma'ili neighbors to study the complex patterns of alliance, competition, and conversion among the region's sectarian "mosaic."[114] Observing that the region's Shi'is, Sunnis, and Isma'ilis inhabited distinct but neighboring territories, Canfield argued for a model of "cultural ecology" that studied changing sectarian allegiances in the context of competing claims for irrigated land and variable access to Sunni-dominated trade networks. Despite the fact that his informants denied that conversion was possible, Canfield was able to make sense of the fact that different groups did at times convert, theorizing that conversion formed a strategy of "social realignment" through which weaker groups sought solidarity with the more powerful. By way of a general conclusion, Canfield argued that his research demonstrated that sectarian groups such as the Shi'is, Sunnis, and Isma'ilis of Bamiyan were "not merely different cultural groups transmitting their characteristic traditions from the past, but . . . also political units existing in tension within their socio-political contexts."[115] In a context of increasing sectarian violence in the region, more than forty years after he outlined them Canfield's findings are more important than ever.

Looking beyond sociopolitical questions to cultural practices in their own right, other researchers—as for example the German, Polish, and Czech ethnographers Jürgen Frembgen, Danuta Penkala-Gawęcka, and Lutz Rzehak—produced accounts of popular practices ranging from cures at shrines and belief in the *jinn* to cattle amulets, dervishes' begging bowls, and other aspects of religious material culture.[116] However, in the 1970s it was the German researcher Harald Einzmann who produced the fullest ethnographic account of shrine veneration, focusing on popular pilgrimages to dozens of saintly shrines located in and around Kabul.[117] Einzmann's work offered a rare glimpse into forms of popular religiosity that flourished all over Afghanistan and to which both the Afghan socialists and their Taliban successors were opposed for their different political and theological reasons.

With regard to the more formal Sufi brotherhoods, the Swedish literary scholar Bo Utas wrote two articles describing the Sufi status quo prior to the Soviet invasion of 1979.[118] His work was complemented by a short overview of the Naqshbandis of Afghanistan by the French sociologist Olivier Roy and in a biography of the twentieth-century Naqshbandi master Sayf al-Rahman (1925–2010) by the American researcher Kenneth Lizzio,[119] who has detailed the rise to Sufi leadership and the subsequent fall of this former sharecropper's son whose career stretched from

his home region of Kunduz to his thirty-year exile in Pakistan. A short account of the Afghan Sufi poets who were still active during this period—such as Ghulam Nabi ʿAshqari (1894–1979) and Haydari Wujudi (1939–)—has been written by Arley Loewen and Partaw Nadiri, who have also translated some of their verses.[120]

Twenty years after the research of Harald Einzmann, his account of Kabul's Sufis was brought up to date by the work of another German researcher, Almut Wieland-Karimi, who in the mid-1990s used interviews with Afghan exiles to show how almost two decades of socialist rule and then war had massively disrupted the Sufi networks that had been inseparable from Afghan society for centuries.[121] Pointing to the links between traditional religiosity and festivity, Wieland-Karimi also wrote an account of the Kabul neighborhood of Kharabat, traditionally a center for Sufi musicians associated with the Chishti brotherhood, and by extension the city's entertainment district.[122] However, it has been the British ethnomusicologist John Baily who has paid the most sustained attention to the Sufi musical traditions of Kabul and Herat. Particularly notable are his studies of the *ghazal* singer Ustad Amir Muhammad and of the intoxicated-dervish lutenist Amin-i Diwana.[123]

COMMUNISTS AND JIHADISTS, CIRCA 1980–1995

If Sunni practices of Sufism and shrine veneration formed the mainstay of scholarship on pre-Soviet Afghanistan, then that focus changed rapidly after the Soviet invasion of 1979 and the rise of the *mujahidin*. Sufis did not entirely disappear from the research scene any more than they disappeared from Afghan society, and several articles by the French researchers Olivier Roy and Marc Yared examined the role of Sufis in encouraging and in some cases leading *mujahidin* to fight the Soviets.[124] However, in the 1980s the greater number of scholars by far began to focus on the role of Islam in what was being called the Afghan resistance.[125] The most prominent scholar in this analytical shift during its earlier phase was Olivier Roy.[126] But as the years of war progressed and began to include people from almost every region of Afghanistan, researchers turned toward greater specialization on the effects of the bellicose politicization of Islam. For example, the American anthropologist David Edwards and the Afghan political scientist Hafizullah Emadi examined the impact of the Iranian Revolution in providing both ideological and material resources for the distinctly Shiʿi Islamist resistance that developed among the Hazaras.[127]

However, it was the German and Swedish researchers Rolf Bindemann, Jan Grevemeyer, and Kristian Harpviken who offered the fullest studies of Hazara Shiʿi ideological internationalism, while Alessandro Monsutti examined the religious life of the Hazaras in their Pakistani exile.[128] Looking at Arab rather than Iranian ideological (and indeed theological) input into Afghanistan, Abdallah al-Amri and Simon Wolfgang Fuchs have studied the doctrinal dimensions of the *jihad* against the Soviet Union.[129] David Edwards, meanwhile, has examined the

informal and underground printing methods that Afghanistan's Islamists used to distribute their message.[130] Yet it was not only the Afghan *mujahidin* and their international supporters who made political use of Islam during this period. As Gilles Dorronsoro, Chantal Lobato, and Eren Tasar have shown, in line with its much older policy in its long-standing Central Asian domains, the Soviet Union (and the socialist government that it supported in Kabul) created its own Islamic institutions and discourse in occupied Afghanistan.[131] Far from suppressing Islam *tout court,* the Soviets were keen to conserve and control it as a means of promoting their own ideology and rule.

While most of the research on the *jihad* and civil wars of the 1980s and 1990s focused on the politicization of religion, a few scholars looked at the more phenomenological dimensions of the *jihad.* Pierre Centlivres, for example, placed the massive production of new "martyrs" (*shuhada*) into the context of long-standing traditions of Afghan martyr veneration.[132] Similarly, Darryl Li has used an influential Arabic martyrological text written during the 1990s to show the importance of stories of miracles taking place in the battles against the Soviets.[133] Diana Glazebrook and Mohammad Jalal Abbasi-Shavazi, meanwhile, have examined how the Hazaras' enforced exile in Iran has rendered pilgrimage to Mashhad an increasingly important aspect of Afghan Shi'i piety.[134] Through exile in Iran from the 1980s, what had for centuries been a distinct and localized Shi'i Islam was being rapidly transformed. The vast number of other Afghans who became refugees outside their country—proportionally more than any national population in the world during the 1990s—were similarly exposed to new ways of seeing their religion in their different places of exile.

TALIBAN AND TRANSNATIONALISM, 1996–2015

The rise of the Taliban, and their rule over most of Afghanistan between 1996 and 2001, meant that political Islam remained the main focus of research. A rare exception came in 1996–98 when the American researcher Kenneth Lizzio spent a year among Afghan Sufis exiled in the borderlands between Afghanistan and Pakistan, leading him to write a book about the émigré circle of the Naqshbandi master Sayf al-Rahman.[135] Detailing everyday life conditions, sources of income, local politics, and, especially, the form and content of teaching, Lizzio's study offers a unique glimpse into an exiled Sufi khanaqah during the very years when the Taliban conquered Afghanistan. Ironically, the rise of the Taliban was at first greeted with enthusiasm among Sayf al-Rahman's Sufi followers, with the shaykh himself expressing interest in taking a position in their government.[136] But there was to be no such collusion between Sufis and Talibs. Having fled his native Kunduz after the Russian invasion, and having spent twenty years building his new khanaqah at Bara, in the Pakistani Tribal Regions beyond Peshawar, the emergence of local

neo-Taliban then pushed Sayf al-Rahman into a second exile in Lahore, where he died in 2010. After being attacked in 2006, his khanaqah at Bara closed down, leaving the borderlands increasingly in the hands of neo-Taliban.

Lizzio's fieldwork was a brave exception to the more common pattern of withdrawal from the field as the danger of fieldwork inside the country in the 1990s saw political scientists claim an increasing role in discussions that had previously been dominated by anthropologists. The ethnographic accounts of the practice of Islam on the ground that had flourished over the previous three decades gave way to theoretical depictions drawn at a considerable distance, both geographical and linguistic. Even setting aside the numerous journalistic accounts of the Taliban, in many academic works the foundational place of primary source materials gave way to theoretical models drawn from political science and then security studies. The chief exception to the political-science framing was a book of contemporary history in which the American anthropologist David Edwards provided a historical genealogy for these "armed students from nowhere" by way of a rich and nuanced account of Afghanistan's suppressed Islamist politics of the 1960s and 1970s that eventually metamorphosed into Taliban ideology.[137] Although we must leave aside works by newcomers with limited expertise, there are several helpful studies of the Taliban written by seasoned specialists such as Neamatollah Nojumi, Olivier Roy, and the Pakistan specialist Mariam Abou Zahab.[138] Two collected volumes edited by William Maley and by Robert Crews and Amin Tarzi are also notable for collating historical, sociological, and political perspectives on the Taliban.[139]

All too often, though, studies of the Taliban lacked any firm footing in written or otherwise published sources by Taliban actors, a problem compounded by the fact that very few scholars have ever studied Pashto and the Taliban has been a predominantly Pashtun movement. Several Germany-based scholars, such as Lutz Rzehak and Kaltoum Djeridi, have found ways around this evidentiary impasse through a translation of the Persian memoir of an Afghan observer of the Taliban's rise and a study of the Taliban's reception in the Middle Eastern Arabic media.[140] Similarly focusing on the transnational dimensions of Afghan Islamism, the Turkish political scientist Pinar Akcalı has written a short but helpful study of the connections forged between the Afghan *mujahidin* and the new Islamist political parties that emerged during the 1990s in post-Soviet Central Asia.[141] In a rare attempt to understand the more religious dimensions of Taliban life, Iain Edgar has examined several accounts of the purported dreams of Mulla 'Umar, arguing that the Taliban displayed more traditional forms of piety than is often realized, albeit within a framework of finding nocturnal justifications for their *jihad*.[142]

However, political-science approaches have dominated the scholarship on the post-2001 neo-Taliban. This is seen to fullest effect in the work of Antonio Giustozzi, which has the benefit of combining theory with fieldwork.[143] Nonetheless, historians and political analysts such as Sana Haroon and Thomas Ruttig have

added their perspectives on the cross-border character of the neo-Taliban, pointing to the longer history of mullah-led activism among the Pashtun groups whose habitats cross the Durand Line.[144] Yet paradoxically, in many studies of the Taliban the Islamic profile—the beliefs and practices, debates and decisions—that render them more than a simple peasant insurgency gets lost in the dust of explosions. The legacy of the Western propaganda that framed the *mujahidin* as freedom fighters and their *jihad* as "resistance" has meant that the discursive, ideological, and transnational dimensions of Afghanistan's Islamists are still underdocumented.

Despite the reopening of Afghanistan to foreign fieldworkers during the relatively peaceful years that followed the collapse of the Taliban in 2001, the concerns of U.S. officials and NGOs to foster civil society without offending religious sensibilities meant that religion received startlingly little attention. Islam became the elephant in the NGO seminar rooms devoted to voting lessons and women's empowerment. With fieldwork now all but impossible again, a more recent return to texts and discourse has begun to provide insights into the religious life of the Taliban. For instance, a translation of Taliban poetry by Felix Kuehn and others, and a short study of Taliban media tactics by Hekmat Karzai, which shows the impact of new media in Afghanistan no less than in the Middle East.[145] However, apart from Jan-Peter Hartung's recent investigation of the Taliban's doctrinal response to the Islamic state, the fullest textual study of Taliban doctrine is Yoshinobu Nagamine's account of several editions of the Taliban's Pashto *Layeha,* or "code of conduct" manual.[146] The *Layeha* formed an attempt to explain (and, arguably, constrain) through Islamic precepts the violence and looting of the Taliban. Although in being first issued only in 2006, the manual is primarily a source on the later neo-Taliban rather than on the period of Taliban rule in the 1990s, Nagamine claims that its influence was widespread. The 2009 edition "was copied 20,000 times," so that "it may reasonably be assumed that the *Layeha* was distributed to all Taliban members."[147] Valuable as Nagamine's work on the *Layeha* is, its frame of analysis conceived the manual in strategic rather than theological or broadly religious terms. By contrast, John Mock's fieldwork between 2004 and 2011 on the continuation during the twenty-first century of shrine-based Islam in the remote Wakhan provides a rare ethnography of nonpolitical Islam that avoids the Taliban in favor of the much older traditions of Pamir Isma'ilism.[148] How long such local Islams will survive in the future remains uncertain, as does the possibility that researchers will be able to study them.

"KNOWN UNKNOWNS": ACKNOWLEDGING THE BLANKS ON THE MAP

Although this overview of research on Afghanistan may appear extensive, it actually points to a somewhat underdeveloped field of inquiry. It would be impossible

to summarize the entire body of scholarship on Islam in neighboring Iran or India-Pakistan in a similar number of pages. While this survey may seem to draw a detailed picture of religious history, there remain many gaps in its coverage of the broad canvas of Afghanistan's Islam. With regard to research by historians and textual specialists, the most striking issue is the narrowness of geographical focus. While it has always been difficult for historians to access the rural populations of Islamic Asia, in the Afghan case we know little of the history of religious practice in even its major urban centers, including such key cities as Kabul and especially Qandahar. Only Herat has received sustained coverage—and only during the Timurid period, at that. Such skewed geographical coverage is hugely problematic, given the fact that Afghanistan's geography comprises highlands and deserts, agrarian and nomadic societies, many different languages, and highly variable access to writing. The sheer inconsistency of Afghanistan's physical and human geography renders it impossible to base assumptions about one region (and its people) on research from another region, however nearby such regions may be.

If coverage of the varied terrains of Afghanistan's Islam has been patchy, then the same can be said for attention to the variety of its written sources. It is fair to say that Persian and particularly Sufi materials have been given vastly more attention than Arabic sources pertaining to Shari'a and the *'ulama.* Though the corpus of Pashto and Turkic (that is, Chaghata'i or Uzbek) sources for earlier periods is undoubtedly much smaller than that of Persian or Arabic, written materials in Pashto and Turkic have still received far too little attention.[149] As for the many unwritten languages of Afghanistan, we can only rely on the anthropological research of the 1960s and 1970s, a period in which anthropologists preferred to focus on social structure rather than language and discourse.

A further major issue is the lack of diachronic case studies that allow us to document transformations through time. Here the only major examples of such projects are R. D. McChesney's five-century history of the shrine of 'Ali in Mazar-i Sharif and Daniel Beben's study of the hagiographical legacy of Nasir Khusraw.[150] What we lack even more are studies on religious discontinuity, of how certain groups of Afghan Muslims came to reject one version of Islam in favor of another, a theme taken up in detail only by the anthropologist Robert Canfield. Given the importance of institutional as well as human agents in such patterns of change, longitudinal historical studies of such transformations are all the more important. We therefore have little understanding of how particular forms of Islam developed over time, such that even such basic questions as how the Hazara became Shi'i are only hazily answered.

Indeed, Afghanistan's several Shi'i minority communities have long been marginalized in the scholarship. Though there is a small number of works on the Isma'ilis and Hazaras, there has been effectively no research on the Farsiwan of Herat and Farah or the Qizilbash of Kabul and Qandahar.[151] The Qizilbash form a

FIGURE 5. Wooden prayer board from Nuristan. (Collection of Nile Green)

particularly interesting community, having settled in Afghanistan during the eighteenth-century conquests of Nadir Shah Afshar and having then gained great influence in the military and bureaucracy before falling foul of Amir ʿAbd al-Rahman, who confiscated much of their property. Nonetheless, they remain an important urban community today, who like other minorities deserve detailed study. In the wake of the First Anglo-Afghan War, one group of these Qizilbash migrated from Afghanistan to settle in colonial India. Their leader, ʿAli Riza Khan Qizilbash (d. 1865), was granted 147 villages by the British for his loyalty. He used the extensive revenues from these agricultural villages to become a major sponsor of Shiʿi ceremonies in Lahore, where he also endowed a Shiʿi mosque and madrasa.[152] The

Qizilbash waqf, as his endowment became known, was subsequently enlarged by his grandson in 1892, since when it has funded some of South Asia's most lavish *ta'ziya* processions in commemoration of the martyrdom of imams Hasan and Husayn.

'Abd al-Rahman's internal *jihad*s also forced thousands of Hazara Shi'is into exile in colonial India, where they settled in the city of Quetta in particular. Needing to find work and seeking powerful patrons, many of them joined special regiments of the colonial Indian Army called the Hazara Pioneers. Work on the interplay between Muslim religious practice and colonial soldiering in other regions of India suggests that the experience, status, and revenues gained from serving in the Indian Army may have similarly helped bolster or transform the Hazaras' Shi'i traditions during their decades of exile.[153] Although no one has yet studied this topic or the development of Hazara Shi'i institutions in colonial Quetta (or Qajar Mashhad), the subject is ripe for research as a counterpoint to studies of the high-status Indian reformists who moved between Afghanistan and India in this period. Similarly unstudied is the history of the Ahmadiyya in Afghanistan, which in the late nineteenth century saw several prominent converts to the new Islam promoted by the Indian Muslim messiah Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835–1908). In the early 1900s, several Afghan Ahmadis were executed in Kabul at the behest of the Sunni *'ulama,* pointing to wider patterns of state-*'ulama* collusion in sectarian persecution that was clearly not limited to followers of Shi'i Islam.[154]

Another important lacuna has been the relative neglect of intergroup relations. This is equally as true of relations between Muslims and the various non-Muslim groups of Afghanistan (including Jews, Hindus, Sikhs, and Armenian Christians) as it is for the lack of studies of relations between different Muslim sects (particularly Sunnis and Twelver and Isma'ili Shi'is). As we have seen, among different Muslims, the only historical cases of intergroup relations that have received somewhat sustained coverage have been the Mughal imperial suppression of the Rawshaniyya movement and 'Abd al-Rahman's bellicose policies toward the Shi'i Hazaras, many of whom were sold into slavery as infidels.

Although Afghanistan is invariably presented as a Muslim country by Afghans and non-Afghans alike, it has always in fact been home to various non-Muslim minorities. In terms of numbers, the largest are the communities of Hindus and Sikhs. They were mainly merchants and petty traders, but during the reign of 'Abd al-Rahman Khan, at least, there was a small number of influential Hindu bureaucrats. Aside from studies of the pre-Islamic period and the very occasional art-historical study, these communities have been entirely ignored by scholarship.[155] Yet as late as the 1980s Hindu cult statues (*murthi*) were still being worshipped in Kabul's several Hindu temples.[156] Only Scott Levi's recent work on the trade in Hindu slaves between the eleventh and the eighteenth century has begun to shed light on these forgotten communities, though his focus is on economic rather than religious history.[157] Despite the bravery of Afghan Sikhs in returning to their

Afghan homeland and reopening a *gurudwara* after the fall of the Taliban, the Persian-speaking Sikh communities of Kabul and Jalalabad have received even less attention.

Afghanistan's former (and smaller) community of Armenian Christian merchants has fared little better in the scholarly record, with only a short article by the historian Jonathan Lee that focuses on the eighteenth and the early nineteenth century.[158] Although Afghanistan stridently resisted the expansion of the Christian missionaries who were active in British India, the Protestant mission of the "Frontier Doctor," Theodore Leighton Pennell (1867–1912), had some influence on Pashtuns from across the border in Afghanistan who traveled to his school and clinic.[159] However, even as late as the 1960s, the only legal church in Afghanistan remained the Catholic chapel established in the Italian embassy in 1935, which by Afghan law could only minister to European Christians.[160] Nonetheless, between the 1960s and the 1980s, the French Dominican Serge de Beaurecueil (1917–2005) made passionate attempts to bring what he saw as the light of Christianity to Afghan Muslims.[161] Together with a group of American Protestant missionaries, Beaurecueil was able to make a number of covert conversions in a pattern that was to recommence with the quiet return of American missionaries to Kabul after the fall of the Taliban.[162]

While Afghanistan's Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians have been all but overlooked, the Afghan Jews have received somewhat fuller attention. The Jews of Afghanistan were part of the wide but thinly dispersed population of Persian-speaking Jews who dwelt in the trading cities of Iran and Central Asia. They became the focus of study first in the mid-twentieth century, after the discovery in the 1940s and 1950s of increasing numbers of tombstones inscribed in Judeo-Persian (that is, Persian in Hebrew script) in the mountainous region around Jam.[163] Through their struggles to decipher these inscriptions, epigraphists eventually realized that these seventy-four tombstones could all be dated between 1012 and 1215. This pointed to the existence of a flourishing but previously unknown Jewish merchant community in one of the main cities of the Ghaznavid and then the Ghurid Empire. The community appears to have survived till it was destroyed during the Mongol invasions of the early 1220s. Another Judeo-Persian inscription, this time in the even more remote mountain setting of Tang-i Azao, was dated by the German Persianist W. B. Henning to 752/3.[164] This date would make it the earliest written example of the Persian language, predating the earliest examples of the Islamic use of Persian in the Arabic script. The discovery during illegal excavations during the 1990s and early 2000s of a haul of early manuscripts has also brought to light a number of eleventh-century Judeo-Persian documents relating to the former Jewish community of Balkh, which have been the focus of study by the Israeli Persianist Shaul Shaked.[165] Such discoveries have important implications in turn for how we understand the medieval Muslim sultanates in which these wealthy communities of Jews apparently flourished.

Aside from these epigraphical and paleographical investigations, a smaller number of studies by Eric Brauer and particularly Sara Koplik have examined the modern history of Afghan Jewry from the eighteenth to the twentieth century.[166] The community at first grew during this period as Jewish refugees fled persecution in Qajar Persia and Soviet Central Asia. It then shrank into disappearance as a result of persecution in Afghanistan itself so grave as to leave only one Jewish resident in post-Taliban Kabul. Pointing to the longer roots of persecution, Koplik has detailed the role of ruling Muslim elites in organizing the state seizure of Jewish assets in Afghanistan during the 1930s.[167] Fortunately, since the early twentieth century much of the Judeo-Persian literature produced by Afghan Jews (and Central Asian Jews more generally) has been published in Jerusalem. Such publication has preserved an important part of Afghanistan's religious heritage that would otherwise have been persecuted out of the historical record. Of particular note are the writings of the Garji family, who for several generations provided the main community of Afghan Jewry in Herat with its leading rabbis. Their works included Judeo-Persian commentaries on the Bible and Psalms, such as *Sefer Hanukkat Zion* and *Sefer Minhat Shmuel.*[168] Through working with Afghan Jews in exile, the Israeli researcher Tsila Zan-Bar Tsur has also managed to recover part of their oral and folkloric heritage.[169] Comparison with Afghan Muslim folklore may reveal elements of a common religious culture that was once shared between Jews and Muslims who shared their language and many other aspects of their lives.

Reflecting the grim modern pattern of so many Muslim-ruled nation-states, it is only in recent times that Afghanistan's minorities have fled into exile. This development points to the emergence of a religious uniformity that has made Afghanistan the least religiously diverse Muslim-majority nation in the world.[170] Despite the existence of many studies of the fate of non-Muslim minorities in surrounding regions, the processes behind this "de-diversification" have been entirely ignored in the Afghan case, in part perhaps because of the lack of recognition given to non-Muslim Afghans. This omission makes it all the more important that their (former) presence is signaled in a study such as this. Looking to the future, only research into interreligious relations can help us understand the processes behind the emergence of such uniformity. Such processes are all the more important now that Islam has also become a tool of sectarian persecution among Muslim Afghans themselves.

Although Afghanistan's non-Muslims were ignored during the heyday of fieldwork between the late 1950s and the 1970s, the gaps of coverage look somewhat different when we move from historical studies to research by anthropologists and other social scientists. In line with the disciplinary biases of the day, the core era of anthropological research on Afghanistan during the 1960s and the 1970s gave overwhelming attention to rural, tribal, or otherwise provincial forms of Muslim religiosity, in this way reversing the predominantly urban focus of historical

studies. Reflecting tendencies in the discipline at large, anthropologists also focused largely on nonliterate groups (or, when their subjects were literate, they ignored their use of texts). David Edwards has been the only anthropologist to pay sustained attention to the social life of written religious texts in Afghanistan.[171] The years since the toppling of the Taliban in 2001 have seen both a revival of anthropological work and a massive increase in studies framed by the disciplinary foci of political science and development and security studies. But with few exceptions, much of this work has focused on developmentalism and democratization, reflecting a tendency to overlook religion and regard it as a dated (even "Orientalist") category of analysis. The extensive anthropological and sociological literature that has developed around the massive and far-flung Afghan diasporas that emerged during the past quarter-century has also overlooked the roles played by Islam in diaspora life.

All these neglected areas merit closer attention if we are truly to be able to account for the changing places of Islam in Afghanistan's past and present. Though the state of the field is such that it is impossible at present to plug all these gaps in coverage, the eleven case studies brought together in this book share the collective aim of presenting the best overview currently possible of the development of Afghanistan's Islam from the first centuries of Islamization to the present day.

LOOKING MORE CLOSELY: A CHAPTER SUMMARY

As the previous pages have shown, the scholarship on Afghanistan's Islam has been produced by researchers from many different countries. Reflecting these diverse academic lineages, the contributors to this volume originate from Afghanistan, Austria, Britain, Germany, Iran, Pakistan, Switzerland and the United States. These international specialists have been chosen for their expertise on specific periods of Afghanistan's religious history. They are distinguished by their rare ability to use written sources in the primary languages in which Afghanistan's Islam was expressed, including Persian, Arabic, Pashto, Uzbek, and Urdu. The case studies that they present aim to show how Afghanistan's different versions of Islam emerged, coexisted, and at times competed. In the chapters that follow, we will see the circumstances in which different religious institutions and actors rose to differing degrees of prominence in different regions of the country. Afghanistan is often described as an ethnic mosaic. In this way, by moving beyond the unifying rhetoric of a singular "Islam in Afghanistan," we will also see how a nation was constructed from the sometimes ill-fitting pieces of such a religious mosaic. As readers progress through the chronological chapters, it is therefore important to realize that the institutions and authorities created in one period did not disappear or merely linger in the next but continued to exist as sometimes complementary, sometimes competing claimants to religious leadership.

Covering the period from 709 to 871, chapter 1, by Arezou Azad, traces the initial conversion of Afghanistan from Zoroastrianism and Buddhism to Islam. Highlighting differential developments in four regions of Afghanistan, Azad discusses the early history of Afghanistan's Islam both as a religion and as a political system in the form of a caliphate. The chapter draws on underutilized sources, such as fourth- to eighth-century Bactrian documents from Tukharistan and medieval Arabic and Persian histories of Balkh, Herat, and Sistan. Azad argues that Islam did not arrive in Afghanistan as a finished product but instead continued to evolve during these early centuries in Afghanistan's multireligious environment. Through fusions with Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and local cult practices, the Islam that resulted was less an Arab Islam that was imported wholesale than a patchwork of religious practices.

Chapter 2, by Nushin Arbabzadah, moves further into the medieval period to shed light on the foundational Timurid era of Afghan history, which saw important and enduring religious institutions established in the capital city of Herat and other urban centers. Her chapter focuses on how during the fifteenth century women of the Timurid ruling class patronized religious architecture with their own private funds. The most audacious of these patrons, Queen Gawhar Shad (r. 1405–47), broke the traditional taboo that banned women from patronizing mosques by building two prestigious Friday mosques that stood at the intersection of political and religious power. Drawing on various Persian sources, the chapter provides an overview of the role of female elites in shaping the medieval religious landscape that the Timurids bequeathed to later times.

In the next chapter, Jürgen Paul addresses the important questions of why and how the Khwajagan-Naqshbandi order became the paramount Sufi group in Timurid Herat, paving the way for the Naqshbandis' central role in Afghan society down to the twentieth century. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, Khwajagan-Naqshbandi Sufis came to Herat as outsiders from Bukhara with the odds set against them. But through their Shari'a-mindedness, their flexibility in ritual practice, and their intellectual appeal to the Timurid cultured class, they rapidly rose to prominence, not least through their close associations with the ruling elite. Their ascent was also enabled by the support of wealthy hereditary Sufi landlords who controlled popular shrines, such as that of Ahmad-i Jam, now in Iran. The chapter shows how, in the 1450s, political support became instrumental to the Khwajagan-Naqshbandi ascent when the newly established Sufi group around 'Ubaydullah Ahrar (d. 1490) in Samarqand exercised a notable influence in the Timurid territories in Afghanistan. Since the impact on Afghanistan of Sufi (and especially Naqshbandi) Islam can hardly be overestimated, Paul's chapter reveals the early history of this Sufi rise to power. In this way it lays the background for the later chapter by Waleed Ziad, which turns to a second phase in the eighteenth century that saw the Naqshbandis win the support of the Afghan Durrani Empire.

In chapter 4, R. D. McChesney focuses on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to provide an overview of the process of transmitting and transforming Islam in Afghanistan. He places special emphasis on the organization and exploitation of the material resources of religion, drawing on a variety of Persian biographical works written by religious scholars from the period to show how Islam was taught, institutionalized, and funded. McChesney focuses his discussion on the crucial question of how the religious professionals that emerged from such material and institutional forms of support were able to earn a living from Islam. By examining the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century economy of Islam in Afghanistan and its surrounding region, his chapter shows that the majority of resources was allocated by ruling groups who established the built landscape of Islam in Afghanistan and funded the endowments that paid for their religious staff. By exploring the flow of material resources and religious ideas from this patron class through the professional religious class to the population at large, the chapter provides a holistic view of the social and economic position of Islam in premodern Afghanistan.

Waleed Ziad continues the chronological tracing of historical developments by examining the religious consequences of the unification of Afghanistan with parts of what is today Pakistan and India under the Pashtun Durrani Empire between 1747 and 1826. Ziad's chapter follows the expansion of the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi Sufi order from the Indian subcontinent. As a consequence of Durrani support, the influence of the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidis in Afghanistan became such that, until the upheavals of the Soviet invasion, their leaders formed the closest thing Afghanistan had to a religious establishment. Showing how their doctrines came to Afghanistan, Ziad examines how religious knowledge was transmitted from India by Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi teaching manuals. Through a careful reading of two such handbooks composed in the early nineteenth century in Kabul and Peshawar, this chapter argues that such texts served as easily replicable tools for the efficient transfer of complex knowledge systems through the diverse cultural environments of the Afghan Durrani Empire.

While premodern Naqshbandi Sufis emphasized the Shari'a and cultivated close connections with ruling elites, the emergence of Afghanistan as a nation-state in the nineteenth century saw Islamic law (and its exponents) drawn into a closer relationship with the ruling authorities as the latter sought to centralize their power over society. The resulting development of a state legal system based on Shari'a is the theme of the next chapter, by Amin Tarzi, who takes us forward to the reign of the "Iron Amir," 'Abd al-Rahman Khan, between 1880 and 1901. Although the relationship between Pashtun political authorities and the peoples they governed was traditionally very loose in Afghanistan, under 'Abd al-Rahman Khan the establishment of a centralized legal apparatus became a governmental priority. Pushing back against this governmental need was the state's weak legitimacy, forcing state actors to use Islam as a means to achieve legal legitimacy in their bid to expand

central authority. Tarzi's chapter examines this process by chronicling the formation of Afghanistan's state law through a focus on the establishment of official state Shari'a courts in the late nineteenth century. In this way, the chapter details the central role that Islam—Shari'a in particular—has played in the centralizing efforts made for more than a century to build a modern state in Afghanistan.

In chapter 7, Sana Haroon takes us into the first half of the twentieth century to examine the Jama'at-i Mujahidin (Society of Holy Warriors), which emerged from the Pashtun border regions of Afghanistan and British India. By drawing on both Afghan Persian and Indian Urdu sources, Haroon presents a prehistory of the cross-border religious activism and violence that are usually associated with more recent decades. Comparing Indian Muslim, frontier Pashtun, and centralized Afghan nationalist discourses from the period, her chapter highlights the inadequacies of the concept of tribalism for understanding the frontier's religious dynamics. Haroon shows how Indian and Afghan nationalists challenged the idealized model of the tribe (*qabila*) as the foundational familial and moral basis of Muslim society by producing nationalizing counternarratives instead. Nonetheless, tribalist discourse continued to have political purchase later in the twentieth century. For as Haroon's chapter goes on to show, the United States and Pakistan sought to instrumentalize these older invocations of tribal solidarity in an effort to identify and mobilize Pashtun tribes to resist the Soviet invasion.

The interplay—and, indeed, competition—between tribal, nationalist, and religious models of collective identity is taken up, next, in Faridullah Bezhan's chapter on the heyday of Afghan nationalist political discourse. Through a focus on Afghanistan's liberalizing midcentury, Bezhan shows how nationalism and constitutionalism, not Islam and Islamism, formed the ideological basis for the new politics that emerged at this time. His chapter examines these developments through a case study of *Wish Zalmiyan* (Awaken Youth) between 1947 and 1953 as the first political party to operate openly in Afghanistan. However, while a blend of liberal constitutionalism and Pashtun nationalism made the party popular with the intelligentsia and parts of the ruling elite, it brought resentment from the religious establishment. For the formerly influential *'ulama,* Islam was the only ideology to be followed and the Quran the only constitution that the country needed. Drawing on a wide variety of newspapers, journals, and memoirs in both Persian and Pashto, Bezhan's chapter reveals the ideological battles that took place as advocates of constitutionalism and Pashtun nationalism confronted proponents of religion-based politics. In this way, the chapter demonstrates the alternatives to Islamist politics that emerged in Afghanistan's most successful period of modernization. Even after the suppression of political parties, this nationalist mode of politics remained the dominant state ideology till the Afghan Marxists staged their coup d'état in 1978.

The outcome of the Sawr Revolution of April 1978 and the Soviet invasion that it triggered marked the onset of Afghanistan's ongoing decades of war. During the

jihad years, Islamist ideologues came increasingly to prominence as the authentic and indigenous alternative to godless foreign invaders, whether of Soviet or, subsequently, NATO provenance. The role of the U.S., Pakistani, and British secret services in channeling weapons and funds to the *mujahidin* is well documented and well known. What has received remarkably little attention is the ideological content of Islamist thought as revealed in the multilingual publications that circulated among Afghans in exile and eventually inside the country itself. Using previously unstudied transnational pamphlets in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu, the next chapter, by Simon Wolfgang Fuchs, maps the shifting and divergent conceptions of Islam that were promoted through the *jihad* of the 1980s and early 1990s. Seeking an overview of this Islamist flood of ideas, Fuchs examines the multilingual magazines, pamphlets, and monographs that were produced by the Sufis, Salafis, and Deobandis of Afghan, Arab, and Pakistani origin who competed for control of the *jihad.* Rather than subsume their variegated Islamic visions under the catchall rubric of a generic holy war, Fuchs's chapter reveals the increasing religious fragmentation that continues to tear Afghanistan apart today.

In the next chapter, Ingeborg Baldauf moves away from the texts produced by male warriors and ideologues to turn the focus onto women's Islam. Examining a ten-year period, she traces the emergence of a female saint's cult in northern Afghanistan. Yet in taking place during the civil war against the Taliban and the latter's subsequent rule over the Uzbek-majority north, even the cult of a female saint was shaped by the powerful warlords who emerged as the new religious patrons of the period. Drawing on Uzbek oral materials, the chapter shows how, after a young girl from Shibirghan was killed in mysterious circumstances in the spring of 1996, strange phenomena started to occur around her burial place, suggesting to locals that she was a saint. Over the following decade, her grave became a pilgrimage site, attracting the sick, deprived, and persecuted from near and far. At the same time, its religious status was contested by local Islamist warlords. By recounting the rise and fall of a female saint at the height of Taliban rule, Baldauf reveals how women's religiosity cross-fertilizes with regional varieties of Islam to continue to produce new forms of religious expression. In turn, the chapter shows how the brutal conditions of a warlord society produce an ever-increasing demand for distinct religious services that can be supplied only by a variety of different versions of Islam.

Turning to subaltern women in post-Taliban Kabul, the final chapter, by Sonia Ahsan, continues this theme of the expression of female religiosity in a male-governed society. Its focus is the *khana-yi aman,* a safe house or shelter set up after 2001 to house women undergoing criminal trials for sexual or moral transgressions. Despite the defeat of the Taliban, the chapter shows how morality laws continued to shape the lives of Afghan women in a decade that was celebrated for the triumph of democratic government and the liberalizing impact of foreign NGOs. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork, Ahsan shows how the women who

administered and inhabited the shelter tried to render dangerous forms of sexual expression acceptable, or at least intelligible, in Islamic terms. Though the *khana-yi aman* was a shelter for the religiously and morally condemned, the women within its confines were able to dance, play music, and express themselves freely. Created by a democratic state that confined sexually transgressive women to its institutionally silenced margins, ironically the *khana-yi aman* served as a rare space in which Afghan women could debate their moral positions, religiosity, and life choices.

If Ahsan's chapter does not present Islam as a weapon of the weak, it at least shows religion's continued role as a consolation for those pushed to the margins of society. As the words of the *khana-yi aman*'s women show, Islamic righteousness is forever being claimed, reshaped, and contested. This theme is also taken up in the afterword, by the anthropologist Alessandro Monsutti, focusing on the case of the Hazaras and their Shi'i Islam, which cannot be overlooked in any study of Afghanistan's Islam. Building on years of fieldwork in Hazarajat during and after the period of Taliban rule, Monsutti shows how in recent decades Shi'i rituals, symbols, and narratives have provided the principal language for political mobilization among the Hazaras. As he explains, Hazaras turned to their religion to connect the ancient injustices of Shi'i sacred history with the modern history of their own persecution by Pashtun dynasts and their Taliban successors. In this way, their Shi'i Islam provided the Hazaras with both the consolation to endure oppression and the justification to resist it.

As the afterword makes clear, Islam has been a means to legitimize central power but also a vector of rebellion. As much as it has been a unifying factor, Islam has also been used to create and sustain boundaries between the many different groups in Afghan society. The chapters in this book show that this was no less the case in the past than it is in the present. The key difference is that war and globalization have undermined the institutions and traditions of religious authority that emerged during the long medieval period and the shorter modern era. From transnational fundraising to videos, smart phones, and the Internet, new means of religious production now enable exponential numbers of religious entrepreneurs to claim religious authority in Afghanistan. The current Afghan state—or rather Islamic republic (Jumhuri-yi Islami)—is only one religious actor among many Afghan rivals, both within Afghanistan itself and in the vast Afghan diaspora. In a region with so few legal avenues for social mobility, religion will remain a favored career for the ambitious as well as the godly. If nothing else, this volume shows the range of past religious resources from which new versions of Islam may in future emerge in Afghanistan while still claiming to preach the unique path of the Prophet. Islam has been, still is, and will remain a multifarious presence in Afghanistan.