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Research Paper

Typology of the eastern borders of Iran's resources during the Safavid reign

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Abstract

To achieve a scientific result in the historical research realm, it is necessary to recognize the correct sources. The study and research about the territory of Iran, especially the eastern borders, as one of the research aspects in the field of Safavid studies, is not exempt from this rule. The efforts of the Safavids to maintain control of the Kandahar state and the Jihun River region, and the confrontation with their north-eastern neighbors, the Uzbeks across the river and the Gurkans in India, initiated the transformation in the eastern borders of Iran's territory in the context of political and military relations. Considering the importance of the eastern borders of Iran as to the relations of the Safavids with the Uzbek Khanate and the Gurkans of India, the question here is: What range of sources can be applied to understand the course of transformation and the changes? The method adopted here is descriptive-analytic, to identify the typology of the subject sources, and introduce for assessing the issue at hand.

Keywords: Iran, Safavid period, sources, eastern borders.

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Introduction

In the field of historical studies, referring to sources and checking their content as much as possible is one of the most necessary and inevitable principles if a scientific, accurate, and coherent result is sought. A source means the resource of the origin, the genesis, and the sum of all these. In historical studies, sources refer to a collection of works that are arranged in a historical period. The most common division of historical sources among history researchers is based on subject and time principles. As to this subject, the sources are divided into general and detailed categories, for example, in the division of Jahangir Qaim-maqami, historical sources are of six categories: 1) subjective and narrative sources, 2) written documents, 3) archaeological sources, 4) historical documents (archives), 5) visual sources, and 6) statistical and graphic documents (Qaim-maqami, 1979: 89). (Zarinkoob, 2004: 20-120) presented a more detailed classification of historical sources in terms of subject matter general history form: 1) history of sultans and dynasties, 2) local history, 3) inscriptions, 4) coin minting, 5) geographical books, 6) ancient reports, 7) books of the Sufi history, 8) diaries, 9) anecdotes and travelogues, 10) historical documents, 11) travelogues, and 12) literary texts.

As to source chronology, sources are divided into first-hand and second-hand groups with historical precedence and delay. First-hand sources include the reports of eyewitnesses of historical events, narrated by a real observer or a participant in that event (Malai Towani, 2007: 105). For example, according to (Qazi Ahmad Manshi Qomi, 2015), the book summary of chronicles was ordered by Shah Ismail II of Safavi, thus, a first-hand source for the events of his reign; the second-hand sources refer to works that are based on primary sources and written after a longer time from the incident (Hazrati, 2018: 106). For example, the book *Zubdah al-Tawarikh* by Malakmal Al-Manjam was written during the Safavid period of Shah Abbas II; But since it is a general history and refers to the events before the Safavids, the Timurid period, thus, a second-hand source.

Considering the framework of the stated categories and divisions, the Safavid Iran (16-18th century AD/12-10 H), one of the most prosperous historical periods of Iran in terms of

the variety of historical sources' count on religious and medical historiographical texts to a number of administrative texts, institutional collections, geographical sources, and travelogues, compared to the previous, is considered the richest. Assessing the historical and geographical dimensions and angles of the Safavid period regarding the compilation of the reports of these sources provides new views of Safavid studies in different fields. One of the research aspects in the Safavid studies, which is necessary considering the geostrategic importance of Iran and its foreign relations with the neighbors, is to consider the territorial borders of Iran in that period, which reflects diverse historical and geographical information in different forms. The sources of the Safavid period add to the importance of acknowledging this phenomenon. Although to date, dealing with some of Iran's territorial western boundaries, has been a case of study among researchers (Guderzi, 2021), the importance of the eastern boundaries of the Safavids' reign due to its proximity to two powerful neighbors, the Indian and the Trans-Norvian, and the reflection of this geographical range in different Iranian and non-Iranian sources, there exists no coherent, accurate and comprehensive explanation of the sources in the Safavid studies. In his doctorate thesis entitled "Foreign Policy of the Safavids: Foundations, Thoughts and Developments", in a short section, (Khalandi, 2013: 76-87) mentions the importance of Kandahar and Jihun Rivers in the eastern borders of Iran. (Safarzaei and Malzaei 2021) an article titled "Historical Geography of Makran in the Safavid Period Based on European Historical Maps" assessed the position of this state in eastern Iran based on European maps. Because the correct and comprehensive knowledge of the sources for researching a historical issue is one of the essentials of this research, the objective here is to provide a coherent, accurate, and maximal explanation in terms of sources, typology, introduction, and attention patterns of the sources of the Safavid reign, regarding the eastern boarders of Iran.

1. The eastern borders of Iran in the Safavid reign

The geographical area of Iran was wide throughout history; according to the power and desire of its rulers in offensive/defensive

operations and border treaties, the edges of this geographical area, especially in the east, shrunk and expanded. Before the rise of the Safavids in Iran, beginning Achaemenids, Sassanians, Ghaznavids, Seljuks, Ilkhans, and Timurids left expansionism but during the period of Nadir Shah Afshar's reign, Iran resorted to expansion. During these periods, the political systems governing the greater Iran were not only limited to the territory of historical and mythical Iran; but, expanded toward India and Central Asia, with efforts to preserve natural resources like the Jihun River and political and commercial centers like Kandahar. With the beginning of the Safavid reign in Iran (16th-18th century AD/12th-10th AD), the evaluation of the written and visual sources of this period reveals a pattern of contraction and expansion towards the edges of the eastern geographical boundary. On one side of this model, there was the historical memory of the Iranian elites and the imagination of some European travel writers and cartographers of the geographical area of Iran, behind which a maximalist mentality and a kind of expansion of the territory from the geographical area prevailed, up to the Indus River and It continued beyond the Jihun River in the east. In the meantime, travelogue reports, including Chardin's descriptions, sometimes more clearly show the attitudes and mentality of the Iranian elites about expanding territories of Iran, with a focus on Sendi (River) - Jihuni (River). In this context, Chardin writes:

According to Iranian elders and geographers, their country is the biggest empire on earth. To show the vastness of their country, they present the ancient borders, which are a vast and enclosed land between four seas: the Black Sea, the Red Sea, the Caspian Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the Oman Sea, a land where the six great rivers Euphrates, Aras, Tigris, Faz, Amu Darya. and the Indus flow around it, and no explanation can show the boundaries of this vast land more vividly and clearly than this (Sharden, 2012: 684/2).

The foundations of this geographical belief regarding Iran's territorial limits were so well formed in the mentality of the society and the government of the Safavid period that despite the changes and shrinking of the borders following the wars with the neighbors, the importance of this belief did not diminish (Bahramnejad, 2018: 401). The other

dimension of this model was outside the historical memory framework of Iranians, and its basis was the actual concrete events at the same time. In the first years of the Safavid reign, Afushtei Natanzi, while studying the territory of Shah Tahmasb I of Safavid, claimed:

From the country of Diyarbakir and its provinces and territories of Armenia and Georgia with Sharvanat and Gilanat and Mazandaran and Jurjan and Khwarezm and the country of Balkh and Takharistan and the countries of Khorasan and Zabulistan to the Aqsa province of Kandahar and the countries of Arab Iraq and Ajam Iraq and Azerbaijan and Aran and Kurdistan and Lorestan and Ahvaz and Khuzestan, the kingdom of Fars, Kerman, Kij, and Makran provinces up to the town of Lar and the Hormuz region came under the authority and authority of King Feridun Jah of the Sikandar army (Afushte-i Natanzi, 1373: 18).

Krusinski, at the end of the Safavid period, writes:

During the survival of the Safavid government, from Shah Ismail to Shah Sultan Hussein, they were in control of twelve countries: the first was Iraq Ajam, the second was Khuzestan, Sim Lorestan, the fourth was Fars and Kerman, the fifth was Makran, the sixth was Semnan, the seventh was Kandahar, the eighth was Zabulestan, the ninth and tenth were Khorasan and Mazandaran, the tenth [not mentioned] and the eleventh of Gilan and the twelfth of Azerbaijan, which consists of Yerevan and Shervan, and should be Georgia and Dagestan" (Krusinski, 1983: 23).

Among the eastern borders in the Safavid period, the two regions of Kandahar and Jihun River were of high importance (Khalandi, 2013: 76-87). The difference that existed in the historical and geographical memory of Iranian elites such as historians, compared to what was happening on the ground in reality in the eastern borders is a matter of concern.

2. Typology, introduction, and patterns of concern on the eastern borders in the sources of the Safavid period

2. 1. Geographical maps drawn by Europeans

Historical maps are one of the most important concrete sources in the field of

historical studies. During the past historical periods, this type of history was drawn by a cartographer to present a geographical view of the studies area or political territory, mainly used for political, military, and commercial and tourism purposes at the level of governance and society. Among the historical periods of Iran, the Safavid reign is considered one of the most prosperous periods in terms of drawing and maintaining geographical maps. The fact is that the maps were drawn by European cartographers during the 16th to 18th centuries. At the same time just like Safavid kings, Europeans, sought to gain knowledge of the geography of Iran (Alai, 2010:47), while increasing their efforts to know Iran and its geography in the context of mapping (Haeri, 2014: 144). After drawing the maps, the Europeans applied them for military, geographical, and commercial purposes. In his travel log to Europe, where he visited a European library, Naseruddin Shah Qajar writes:

All the objects in this mansion are exquisite and precious and all belong to this countess. They made a cardboard globe with the whole pattern of the globe in it, and they made this globe a long time ago. I looked at that sphere and saw the map of Iran there, the map of Iran was the reign of Shah Abbas Safavid, who drew a map at that time. It turns out that this was a

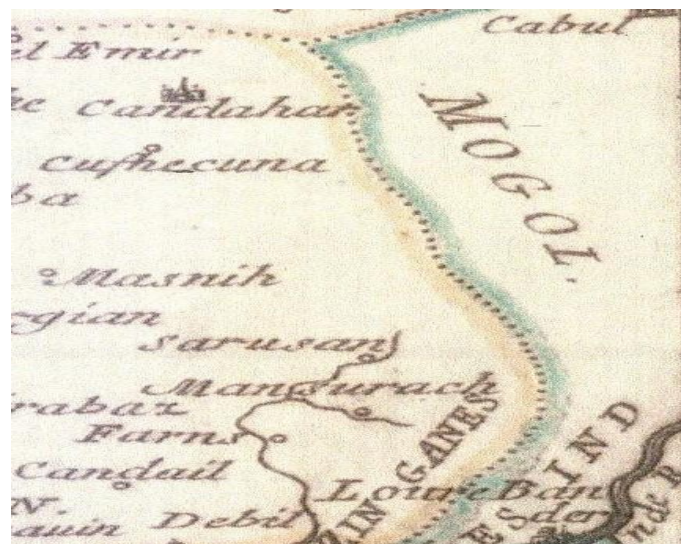
very old plan drawn during the reign of Louis Cutters, who is Louis XIV of France" (Naseruddin Shah, 2001: 200).

Even today, most of these geographical maps are kept in European museums libraries, and collections, in the form of authored works such as books or digital collections.

The result of these efforts by Europeans was the design and drawing of hundreds of geographical maps of Iran during the Safavid reign, which are rich in information about the historical geography of Iran. One portion of these data significantly reflected in the geographical maps of Europeans, is about the territorial boundaries of Iran. European cartographers sought to determine the shape of Iran's geographical boundaries by using signs and abbreviations and next to expressing some natural features.

European cartographers have resorted to three descriptive patterns in determining the geographical limits of the Safavid territory in the east: 1) the focus on the abbreviated signs, and indicators like symbols or dotted or colored lines on the geographical edges of the territory of Iran for clean distinction from the neighboring territories (Map No. 1).

2) Exposure of natural features like the mountains and rivers, by which cartographers sought to define the borders of Iran's territory (Map No. 2).



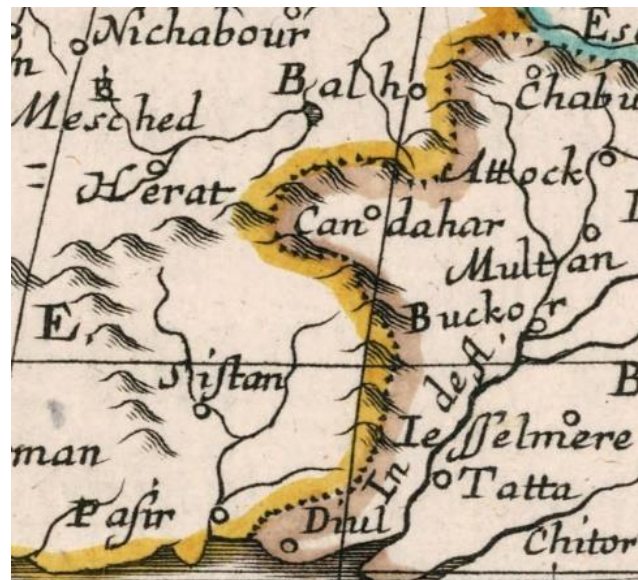
Map No. 1. Using indicators to determine the eastern borders of the Safavids (Alai, 2010:106)

3) Adopting a combination of the previous two patterns to determine the geographical

boundaries of Iran (Map No. 3).



Map number 2. The use of natural features for the eastern borders of the Safavids (Ganji et al., 1386: 176)

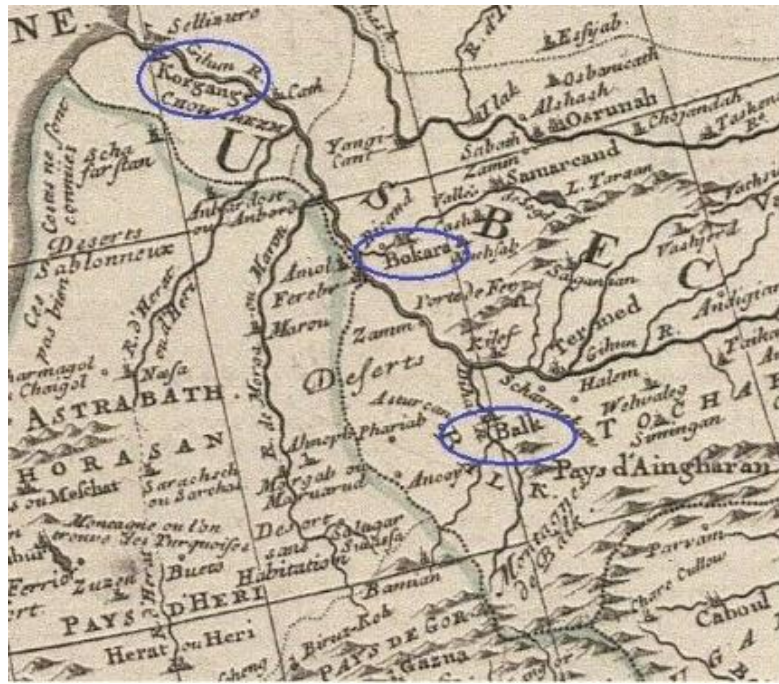


Map number 3. The use of abbreviations and natural features for the eastern borders of the Safavids (B2n.ir/davidrumsey)

European cartographers have adopted these three patterns in drawing the eastern boundaries of the Safavid territory and determining the points they placed outside or inside the territory of Iran. One of the notable European maps of Iran during the Safavid period is the French Guillaume Doullil map, which was drawn in 1701 AD/1112 AD, during Shah Sultan Hossein Safavid's reign. In this map, the eastern territory of Iran facing the Uzbek territory is near the cities of Garganj, Bukhara, and Balkh

(map no. 4).

In addition to the Uzbek territory, the territorial confrontation of the Safavids with the territory of the Gurkans of India begins near Kabul, and this territory connects to the sea by passing through the west of the cities of Kasmar, Kandabil and the west of the Tete area, and based on this boundary, the states of Kandahar and Makran were included in the territory of the Safavids (Map No. 5).



Map No. 4. The location of Jihun River, Bukhara, and Balk on the eastern borders of the Safavids (Alai, 2010:109)



Map No. 5. The location of Kabul, Kasdar, Kandabil, and Tete in the east of the Safavid territory (Ibid)

2. European travel books

During the Safavid reign, Iran's relations with Europe flourished due to the military alliance plan and the expansion of commercial and economic relations. As to the expansion of these relations, the Europeans sought to increase their knowledge and understanding of Iran's political, economic, cultural, and social issues through different means. By achieving this goal, sending of tourists and traders to Iran

and the preparation of reports from Iran gained momentum, and led to the preparation of a great number of administrative, political, cultural, economic, geographical, and social reports on Iran, which are of special importance for Safavid studies. If the information about the eastern limits of the Safavid territory is assessed from the perspective of these travelogues, two patterns of attention to the eastern limits of the Safavid territory are traced:

1) the tendency of travel writers to describe the eastern boundaries of the Safavids in the form of the scope and limits of Iran. Based on this feature, a number of travel writers, while reporting on the situation in Iran, dedicated a section to describe the boundaries and extent of Safavid Iran, the eastern section as well. Dalsandri, one of the Venetian travel writers of Shah Tahmasab's period, wrote:

The country to which the king of Iran belongs is limited from the east to India, which is located between the Ganges and Indus rivers, and from the west, to the Tigris river, which separates Iran from Mesopotamia, and is now called Diyarbakir, and extends to the border of Babylon. and joins the Euphrates River, and then both rivers pass through Basra in the same channel and flow into the Persian Gulf in the south. It is bounded by the Mazandaran Sea, which is also called the Baku Sea and is also bounded by Tatarstan and Great Khata. (Travels of Venetians in Iran, 2001: 472).

According to this description, the eastern borders of Iran reached the Indus River, Gurkans of India but when reached the Uzbek territories, conflicts began.

In addition to Dalsandri, Tavernier, one of the French travel writers of the 17th century/11th century, who traveled to Iran many times, devoted a topic to the discussion of Iran's area and wrote the following:

Currently, Iran is limited to the Caspian Sea from the north, the ocean from the south, the Mongol Empire from the east, and the Ottoman Empire from the west, which are separated by the Euphrates and the Tigris (Taverniyeh, 1383: 11).

Kaempfer, one of the German travel writers of the reign of Shah Suleiman the Safavid, has presented a discussion titled 'the extent of Iran', where he writes:

The king's domain is limited to the land that leads to the Tigris in the west, to Helmand (in Afghanistan) in the east, to the Persian Gulf in the south, and the Caspian Sea in the north (Kempfer, 1363: 18).

In his travelogue, the German Adam Olearius devoted a section on Iran's territorial boundaries and wrote:

The current borders of Iran are from north to south from the shores of the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf and from west to east from the Euphrates River to the city of Kandahar. In the northwest, almost half of the shores of the

Caspian Sea to the mountains of Armenia belong to Iran, and in the northeast, Iran's border reaches the Jihun River, which was formerly called the Oxus (Olearios, 1369: 2/588).

In this explanation, what is important about the eastern borders of Iran is the centrality of the Jihun River in facing the Uzbek territory and the city of Kandahar in front of the territory of the Gurkans of India in the eastern borders and 2) the emphasis on the thematic format of the states and their geography. Based on this feature, some travel writers have devoted discussions about the nomenclature, number, and geographical features of the Iranian states, which, as to the eastern states, can illustrate a picture of the eastern borders of the Safavids. Krusinski, who came to Iran during Shah Sultan Hossein Safavid's reign, mentions that from the beginning of the Safavid Shah Sultan Hossein reign, Iran embodied the following twelve states:

1) Ajam Iraq, 2) Khuzestan, 3) Lorestan, 4) Fars and Kerman, 5) Makran, 6) Semnan, 7) Kandahar, 8) Zabulistan, 9) Khorasan, 10) Mazandaran, 11) Gilan, and 12) Azerbaijan which consists of Yerevan and Shirvan, and Georgia and Dagestan (Krusinski, 1984: 23).

Based on this description, the states of Kandahar and Makran are considered to be borderstates with the Gurkans of India, and Khorasan is a border state with Uzbek territory. Olearius, in his travelogue, mentions the important states and regions of Iran and wrote the following:

The states and different parts of Iran in order of their importance are Iraq, Fars, Shirvan, Gilan, Azerbaijan, Tabaristan, Eran, Khorasan, Zabulestan, Sejstan, Kerman, Khuzestan, the island, and finally Diyarbakir (Olearios, 1369: 589/2).

In explaining the division of Iran, (Kaempfer, 1984: 157) writes that Iran was divided by Shah Abbas the Great into the following five regions or main states: Fars, Khorasan of eastern Iran, which extends to India and is divided into forty districts. ... Northwestern Azerbaijan of Iran, which includes northern Mada and a part of Armenia and extends to the border of Turkey, Gilan and Mazandaran on the southern coast of the Caspian Sea, and Ajam Iraq (ibid.: 158).

3. Diplomatic correspondence with neighbors

Next to the expansion of Iran's relations with Europe, Iran's regional relations with its neighbors entered a new stage during this period. Although the Safavid government in the west faced the Ottomans, with over two hundred years of political past, in the east, Iran faced two newly developed political entities, the Uzbek Khanate in Trans-Nahar and the Gurkans in India. Besides these three big political units, the Safavids were also neighbors with smaller political units, among which the Khan of Khwarezm in the northeast and the Deccan sultans in the southeast are outstanding. In addition to these big and small neighbors, during the reign of the Safavids, another neighbor, in the northwest and in the vicinity of the Caspian Sea, named Russia, struggled. Having a common border and mutual good neighborliness, soon provided the possibility of political, military, cultural, and economic relations between the Safavids and the neighboring territories. In establishing such relations, resorting to letter writings to convey and reflect one's political, military, and economic ideas and interests to others was highly contributive. There exist hundreds of letters from the Safavid reign transmitted between the territory of Iran and its neighbors. These letters are mainly preserved in two types of Safavid period sources: 1) the collections of works containing personal communication inside and outside Iran and 2) historiographical texts by some historians when narrating the events related to the relations of the Safavids with their neighbors.

What is important in these letters about the eastern borders of the Safavids' territory is the type of letters that were exchanged between Iran and its eastern neighbors during times of war or peace, and in some of them, the parties referred to the claimed geographical areas, that is almost political letters written by Shibak Khan to Shah Ismail I as follows:

We will send to him a group of commanders and soldiers from the borders of Bukhara, Samarkand, Hazara, Nikodri, Ghor, and Georgia to subjugate him by force and politics... We will make Badakhshan and other regions of Turkestan to attack that province so that they can conquer that area" (Nawai, 1368: 82-83).

In this letter, Shibak Khan Uzbek has an

indirect approach to the geographical areas under his control, which were not geographically far from Iran's borders. In the letter sent by Shah Abbas I to Abd al-Mu'min Khan (Khan Uzbek), the following is evident:

"If they are in a position of friendship and reconciliation, it is worthy that they should give up Khorasan, according to their past, Khorasan might have been within the designated countries across the river that belonged to them" (Afushte-e Natanzi, 1994: 419).

According to this letter, considering Khorasan in Safavid territory and Trans-Nahr in Uzbek territory, the Jihun River is the eastern limit of Iran's territory. In the letter of Jahangir, the king of India, to Sultan Murad, the Ottoman sultan at the same time as Shah Safi reigned in Iran, the following is stated:

God willing, in the position of repelling Qazlbas mobs, he will become a religious leader and first conquer Kandahar, which is located on the border of that country, and then try to capture Khorasan and open up that province... God willing, the forces of Cairo require Samadit. First, they will go to Kandahar and after that to Khorasan, and since the governor of Mawra al-Anhar and the governor of Balkh have also been mentioned, they will also move from that side (Nawai, 1360: 21-22).

In general, paying attention to the geographical areas claimed in the political letters of the Safavid period can be important in better understanding the eastern borders of Iran.

4. Administrative communications

In addition to geographical writings, the administrative and judicial texts of the Safavid period are important in the geographical areas context. Among these texts, Tazkira al-Muluk by Mirza Samia and Alqab and Muwajib of the Safavid Sultans period written by a member of the Nasiri family is outstanding. These writings, mainly compiled at the end of the Safavid period, cover the structure and administrative organization of the Safavid period. The importance of these works in the geographical context of the Safavid administrative structure, concerning the knowledge of the eastern borders, is the presentation of a list of the states and governors of the cities and geographical regions of Iran. According to (Mirza Sami'a, 1953: 72), "the obligatory appointment of border commanders and the count of the Biglar Begiyas attendants,

rulers and sultans and the sum of Iran's inputs and expenditures" is of concern. In the meantime, the details of geographical areas in the east of Iran with Biglarbegi, Khorasan, and Kandahar as centers are tabulated in Table 1. In the Titles and Obligations of the Safavid Sultans, which was compiled during the reign of Shah Tahmasb II of Safavid (refer to the preface. Nasiri, 1993: 15), the author has referred to ruling places in the eastern regions

of Iran, focusing on Kandahar and Khorasan province. The author writes about Kandahar, "Kandahar is the limit of the province belonging to Qazlbash and located between the provinces of Qazlbash and India..." (ibid.). In general, extracting a list of governors and mayors of cities in the eastern regions of Iran in these administrative texts would reveal which regions were subject to the control of the Safavid central government.

Table 1. The eastern regions of the Safavid territory in administrative and civil writings

Eastern regions of Iran in Tadzireh al-Maluk (Mirzasmia, 1953: 79-82)				The Eastern Regions of Iran in the Titles and Obligations of Safavid Sultans (Nasiri, 1992: 71-73 and 104-99)			
Herat	Marchang	Farah	Khawaf	Keri and Yeke tribes	Bast and Karshak	Comindavar	Abdali tribe
Jam	High morgheb	Panjdeh	Badghis	Hodi Jebeli tribe	Sistan	Khawaf	Marchang
Karaj	Rodami	Ghor	Toun	Nahbabad	Farah	Gheychan	Ghori
Sarakhs	Neyshabour	Tarshiz	Abivard	Panjdeh	High morgheb	Zouri	Karakh and Jamshidi tribes
Azadwar	Nasa	Sabzevar	Aspherine	Badghis	Heratrod and Shaklan	Mashhad	Jam
Horoz and Ysako	Dowrun	Karbat	Bazavandaq	Heydarie	Abivard	Bazavand Qan	Aspherine
Kandahar	Zemindavar and Ghorian	Kushk	Kori tribe	Forumad and Aradvar	Paskuh	Neyshabour	Sabzevar
Maro	Sistan	-	-	Sarkhs and Zorabad	Dorom Khaboshan	Nasa	Tun and Tabas
-	-	-	-	Marushahijan	-	-	-

5. Historical texts

Assessing the historiographical process of Safavid reign, and the identification of its various dimensions, in the form of a monograph (Quinn, 2008) and a more general format (Melville, 2023), has attracted the attention of researchers in this field. Iranian historiography in this period has followed two patterns of continuity and transformation: 1) patterns that were common in Iranian historiography before the Safavid period and 2) new patterns with more focus on the political and religious issues initiated during the Safavid reign. The result of the application of these patterns and the authorial efforts made by the historians of the Safavid reign in the field of historiography was the production of a large volume of texts in different categories from the popularization of Shahnamah writing or the production of local chronicles such as the Safavid Tazkira of Kerman or Ahya al-Muluk, which reflects the developments and transformations of a specific region, to the arrangement of the dynasty chronicles that were

written about the Safavids and their kings. What is important about the eastern borders of Iran during the Safavid reign is the two common patterns in the historiographical texts of this period. The first pattern refers to the consideration of Iran's borders with its neighbors in the Safavids' military relations with their eastern neighbors. For example, in the report given by Abdul Latif Qazvini about the outcome of Shah Ismail I's victory over Shibak Khan Uzbek in the war of Merv in 916 A.H., he wrote, "The waters of Amoyeh camp of the Nusrat soldiers were affected." The Uzbek sultans took refuge in the powerful princes and asked for their intercession. The Prophet accepted his intercession and returned to the government and Iqbal (Qazvini, 282: 1387). According to this narration, Shah Ismail I limited himself to Rudjihun and considered the border of the Safavid territory in the Uzbekan front up to this area.

In addition to the issue of military conflicts, the second pattern of attention to the eastern borders of Iran in historiographical writings is

where the historian mentions the states under his command to show the glory of the geographical territory of a king. Afushtei Natanzi is one of the followers of this model. In his description, he listed the Safavid states under the command of Shah Tahmasb, which were mentioned earlier (Afushte-e-Natanzi, 1373: 18). According to the list of eastern states presented in this report, up to Balkh, as well as the states of Kandahar and Makran were under the command of the Shah of Iran during his period.

6. Geographical texts

Another way to know the appearance of the eastern borders of Iran in the Safavid period is through those geographical texts that were compiled and compiled in this period. Regarding these sources, the evaluation and investigation of the production of independent geographical writings in Iran after Islam indicates that its curve decreased to some extent at the same time as the Safavid period compared to the first and middle Islamic centuries, when Iranians were not engaged in writing their geographical texts compared to such sources. They did not have the initiative. In the reports of the European travel writers of the Safavid period and the views of researchers, Iran in the Safavid reign passed a period of low prosperity in terms of producing independent geographical resources. It seems that the geography of this period had two prominent features: 1) a significant decrease in the number of geographical writings in quantitative terms, though the works of Mohammad Mofid Mustofi-Yazdi's Ghazth Mofid in this context are outstanding, and 2) the dominance of shorthand writing and geographic understatement in this period, where, the authors of this category of works not only highlighted abbreviations in the selected titles of their works but referring to geographic information and data appropriate briefing (i.e. the summary of al-Beldan, indicates the remarkable signs of the Geographers' tendency in shorthand for geographical writings). In the conclusion of Shahid Sadiq, although the count of geographical areas described is much more than the conclusion of Al Beldan; the author has provided brief descriptions for each geographical area (Sadeghi Isfahani, 1998: 64, 67, 91, 130 and 137). Mohammad Mofid Mostofi Yazdi provided brief clarifications in

the book of Mofid, except for a few important geographical areas in Iran like Isfahan (Mostofi Yazdi, 2010: 79-88), Mashhad (ibid.: 215-232) and Yazd (ibid.: 134-146). Though his book contains a briefing on the geography of Iran, it is possible to extract a list of the cities and geographical regions of eastern Iran and exhibit a picture of the condition of the Safavids' eastern borders.

Table No. 1. The number, typology, and patterns of attention of Safavid period sources to the eastern borders of Iran		
Number	Typology	Patterns of attention to the eastern borders
1	Geographical maps of Europeans	Determining the state of Kandahar and the Jihun River as the eastern limits of the Safavids using abbreviations and natural physical bodies
2	European travel books	Enumeration of the states and eastern boundaries of the Safavids in the thematic formats of the vastness of Iran and description of its important states and cities
3	Diplomatic letters with neighbors	Reflecting territorial claims and dominated geographical areas
4	Administrative texts	Enumeration of the Sultans and Beigs of East Iran
5	Historiographical writings	Paying attention to border agreements in the context of military relations and listing the states under the command of Safavid kings
6	Geographical sources	Enumeration of the geographical areas of the East under Safavid rule

Conclusion

In Iran's history Safavid reign is considered one of the most prosperous in terms of the durability and the count of a variety of recorded sources compared to previous periods. The high volume and variety of types of sources provide the possibility of introducing many interesting research fields in the field of Safavid studies. The neighborhood of the Safavids in the east with two powerful neighbors, namely the Uzbeks across the Jihun River and the Gurkans

in India, and the territorial dispute of the Safavids to preserve the Jihun River and the Kandahar state, have turned the study of this geographical area into one of the fields of research in Safavid studies. To assess the eastern borders of Iran, it is possible to identify the types of historical sources of different thematic dimensions. One such source is a collection of geographical maps of Iran during the Safavid period, made by European cartographers in the 16th-18th centuries. Based on such sources, cartographers have determined the eastern borders of the Safavid territory by relying on natural features and abbreviations. Another type is the European travelogues based on which the European explorers and visitors have listed the eastern borders of Iran in their reports about the size of Iran and the structure and count of states under its rule. The diplomatic letters exchanged between the Safavids and their neighbors constitute another source of the Safavid period for knowing the eastern borders of Iran and considering the territorial claims between the parties. The administrative communications of this period like that of *Tazkire al-Muluk* between Iran and neighboring Sultans contain issues about the geographical areas that were under the administration of the central government of Iran. Geographical writings and Safavid historiographical texts can be important as supplementary sources to know the eastern borders of the Safavids. According to these patterns, the Jihun River, Kandahar, and Makran can be considered as the pillars of the eastern borders of the Safavid Empire.

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