MAHMÚD B. AMÍR WALÍ AND HIS BAHR AL-ASRĀR

I. The data about the biography and the works of Mahmúd b. Amír Walí

Most part of Muslim writings has been authorised, and Bahr al-asrār fi ma’dalqil al-adārār is no exception. The author of this voluminous work, on the world history and geography is Mahmūd b. Amīr Walī. The information about the author that we posses is fragmentary and is obtained from his work in which the material is scattered confusedly. Most of the data on Mahmūd b. Walī's biography is contained in the chapter dedicated to his travel to India [1].

In the first volume of his work he calls the Farghānā valley the motherland of his ancestors. His father Amīr Walī originated from the Farghānā Khūš Kūn (at present the Khūš region of the Namangan oblast of the Republic of Uzbekistan) and came from the family of Šaῑd Ahmad Khūsīī b. Sa’d Jālī al-Din Khūsīī (d. 804/1400–1542–9), a prominent theologian of the 10th/16th century. Amīr Walī himself was considered a very educated man. He is the author of a number of poetic works which he wrote under a literary pseudonym, Ta‘līm al-Khīlār. The title amīr([1]) proves to his noble origin [2]. According to Mahmūd b. Walī's, his father had moved to BābāKhvāh—the home town of the author—during the reign of Shīhīnīs Pir-Muhammad-khān I (953–74/1546–67) [3].

The exact year of birth of Mahmūd b. Walī is not mentioned, but it can be calculated according to the following data: Mahmūd b. Walī mentions that at the age of 19 he became a pupil (marākib) of a famous shaykh theologian, Mirak-shāhī al-Ḥusaynī [4] and remained with him for 9 years, i.e. until the death of Mirak-shāhī, which was in the last day of the month of jamādī II 1033/1624, 1624. Thus, he became shaykh's student in 1023/1614, and so Mahmūd b. Walī was born in 1004/1596–5. We must also mention the fact that Mirak-shāhī and Mahmūd b. Walī were relatives, as the future historian and writer's sister was his teacher's wife.

Mirak-shāhī obviously possessed a large library, as Mahmūd b. Walī wrote that while serving his teacher he had managed to get familiar with numerous works on history, literary theory, historical geography, among which he distinguished the works by Ibn al-Faqīḥ, Qudādāt, al-Isjadi, Zākariyyā b. Muhammad al-Qazwīīī, Barākštī, Wajīh, Rūghī al-Dīn, Jawāyīn and Mirkhībānī, who we will refer to later in connection with the sources of Bahr al-asrār [5].

Mahmūd b. Walī began his literary activity when he was still a student. By Mirak-shāhī al-Ḥusaynī’s order he wrote a Sīḥīya tratatite Rūwāl 'l-lī ṭuyūsīa (”Delicate Aroma”) which, as well as all his other works except Bahr al-asrār has not preserved until our days [6].

After his teacher's death Mahmūd b. Walī left the abode and went travelling to enrich and deepen his education.

With a caravan of merchants going to India he arrived to Delhi in the month of ḡuwawī 1034/June—July 1625 through Khábul, Peshwāvar and Lāhāvar (Lahore). Having visited Delhi, he set off to Hījavābād, then to Agra, Allāhabād and Bāndras (Benares). After the visit to the city of Tāsiyī, the centre of the Bihār province, Mahmūd b. Walī went to Ceylon on board a Portuguese ship. The ship got into a storm and together with the crew and the passengers it was cast ashore in the mouth of Ganges. Mahmūd b. Walī was captured by the Great Mughals, and his fate could have been a sad one if he hadn't found a passport among one of the local feudal lords—Bābā Khvāh b. Mīrṣafat-ebī, Bābā Khvāh detained our author during two years. It was to him that Mahmūd gave his work called Rīvālārī, Bībhirārī ("The BIbhir Tractate") which he had completed in Golconda. In captivity Mahmūd b. Walī led quite a well-to-do life, was engaged in literary activity and participated in poetic contests (munṣūb). Such treatment of a noble and educated captive was quite natural. Many rulers eagerly attracted scholars and writers to their courts, thus raising the prestige of their lands. Besides, scholars, and especially writers and historians were carriers of a powerful ideological weapon—the artistic word—which they could turn for as well as against this or that ruler.

In the beginning of 1037/1626 he was set free and in the same year moved to Āgra, where he was warmly welcomined by the Great Mughal Shāh Jāhān. In the following year Mahmūd b. Walī went home through Panjāb. On his
way he had to stay in the fortress of Baghār where he com-
pleted his work on the poetical tractate Ḥabib-i Ḥaṣāvī ("Ḥaṣāvī's Ethics"), which exceeded six thousand lines [7].

On the whole, Mahmud b. Walī's travel lasted for seven years. Later he will describe his travels in a special chapter of Bahzār al-鸟rār [8]. In every place he went he took interest in the local places of note, talked to educated people, ex-
perts in olden days and merchants and travelers who came from far away [9].

In 1040/1630, having received a lot of impressions, he returned to Bahzār. As well as his father Mahmud b. Walī was invited to the court. Approximately a year after his return, Ḥaṣāvī (the ruler of Bahzār in 1018–52/1608–42; then the khān of Bahzār in 1052–5/1642–5; the ruler of Bahzār for the second

II. Copies of Bahzār al-鸟rār

The main work of Mahmud b. Walī and, unfortunately, the only one preserved is Bahzār al-鸟rār fi ma‘ānī al-
akhir ("The Sea of Mysteries Concerning Noble Per-
sons"). Bahzār al-鸟rār is a huge compendium consisting of seven volumes (maqālāt), four sections (rubān) in each volume. The work is missing an introduction and the final chapter, while the sixth volume has its own conclusion.

According to its contents, Bahzār al-鸟rār is a substantial work of encyclopaedic character on cosmography, medi-
cine, geography and world history. Unfortunately, the work of Mahmud b. Walī has not preserved in cor-
poræ. Only separate parts of different volumes have preserved which are then included in various collections in different cities, countries and continuities. For a long time this work was in oblivion, and was returned from it by the academicians V.V. Bartol’d (1869–1930). Asearly as in 1899 he familiarised himself with the manuscript of the fourth part of the sixth volume which is kept in the London collection of the India Office library, Bartol’d immediately attached great importance to Bahzār al-鸟rār as a historical source and copied big extracts from the book, which resulted in a big article in a collection dedicated to K. V. Poznanski's "The monumental at the court of Uzbek khans" [12]. The first scien-
tific description of Bahzār al-鸟rār was presented by V. V. Bartol’d a little later, in 1904 in the article "Report on the trip to Turkestan" [13]. He found the work by Mahmud b. Walī in the collection of oriental manuscripts of the Major-general Jurabek, due to which this copy received a non-official name "Jurabek's manuscript". First Bartol’d took this copy for an independent work. However, in the course of further research it was established that the manu-
script only contains fragments of the second, the third and the final part (rubān) of the second volume of the book. Thus, as early as in the beginning of the 26th century all four parts of the sixth volume were known to scholars: the first is the history of the descendants of Chinghiz-Khan in China and Persia; the second is the history of the Čeggādzade; the third is the history of the Shi‘ahs; the fourth is the history of the descendants of the thirteenth son of Ḥusayn, Tughlu Qutb-Timur.

Due to the work on systematisation and generalisation of the information on the manuscript heritage of Central Asia which was carried out in all large centres for oriental studies in Russia in the 1920s–1940s, it became possible to introduce into the scientific circles a large number of works and to discover new manuscript copies of the already known works. Among the newly gained manuscripts were copies of Bahzār al-鸟rār; A. Z. Valitov, A. A. Semenov, and others played a significant role. As new manuscripts and copies of the work by Mahmud b. Walī is kept in the Instit-
tute for Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Tashkent, it is this collection that we shall start our presentation of manuscripts from.

"Jurabek's copy", call no. 7418

We must point to the fact that the question of identifi-
cation of MS 7418 has not been decided yet [14]. This is a manuscript of odd incomplete manuscript which contains the first, the second and the third rubān of the work. The handwriting is small nasta‘ī, quite slipped. The analysis of the handwriting

This manuscript is also incomplete (302 folios). It contains only the second and the third rubān of the sixth volume. Palaeographical data allows to say that it was copy-
ed in the 12/18th century. The narration in this copy begins from the description of plots which refer to the intrusions of Turkic-Mongolian tribes, the ceremonial at the court of Āq-Quli-khan Nādir-Muhammad-khan and about the travel of Mahmud b. Walī to India [15]. Several folios are also missing in the end of the manuscript. What concerns the architecture of this copy, it is quite close to the photo-
copy from the collection of the SPOIS — FV 258, but due to the difference in the number of folios, the format and the layout of folios, the coincidence of lacking and the S. Petersurg photo-copy, which we will refer to later, can not be viewed as identical.

Call No. 11357

A copy of the MS 1385 was made. It is a copy of the former researcher of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR 'Ībādullaḥ-khaṭ'aja

As it follows from what has been said above, manu-
script No. 2372 is incomplete. It consists of 412 folios. This copy contains the first volume, i.e. the geographical part of this work and the tractate on mineralogy. The manu-
script is quite big in size (27*31.5 cm) and has a number of defects. The copy is missing the end of the introduction (fī‘ilāt) and a number of folios from the fourth rubān. At the same time, there is a sufficient number of blank folios which must have been meant for illustrations and sketches. The copy is made on grey khoqand paper in black and red ink. More than twenty people were involved in making this

copy, which is a rare case for quite a small manuscript. Their names are given on the margins: dānullāh Muhammad Sharīf, Muḥammad Sharīf muğālim, mullā Muḥammad Ājā, mullā Abī al-Fadl Ībādī, Kāmil-Muḥammad makarris, mullā ʿImām Bāshā-bek, dānullāh Tanikī makarris, etc. This explains the fact that the nasta‘ī writing hand in which this copy is made is very different. The manuscript contains no date, but according to the palaeographical data, we can assume that it was copied in the end of the 12/18th—the beginning of the 19th century [17].

Call No. 6842

In khoqand, in the collection of manuscripts of mullā Rāyī, the main of the mosque Kūr-khān, another copy of the work by Mahmud b. Walī was found. This copy is also incom-
plete and contains some chapters of the same chapters of the manuscript No. 2372. Two copies of Bahzār al-鸟rār are kept in the collection of the SPOIS in the form of a photocopy (FV 258, the old call No. 82), a microfilm (FV 337) and a xerocopy of this microfilm (FV 257). As we have already said above, the question of the identification of the copy 7418 has not been answered yet. For a long time the photocopy FV 258 was equated with the "Jurabek's copy", which is totally wrong. Let us look at these materials:

Call No. 2528

The photocopy is the incomplete manu-
script (327 folios). It contains the following parts of the work: the second part of the sixth volume (rūhān-i ābārīvān) — folios 1a—98; the third part of volume six (rūhān-i sāvārī) — folios 95a—298 [19]; the final part of volume six (ḵudāmān) — folios 1b—31b (296a—325b). Each page of the manuscript is divided by a line of the text of the manuscript except folios 237b—238a. Folios 1a—23b are positives, folios 238b—292b are nega-
tives, from folios 293b and to the end of the photocopy all folios are positives.

The copyist of this manuscript is unknown. On the re-
verse side there is a stamp "Asiatic museum. 1818", then there is a stamp with the inventory and the call number (1992 No. 438; FV 258). The handwriting is nasta‘ī. Cor-
rections and interpolations are over the main text as well as on the margins on the left and on the right. The inter-
polations are marked with the letter šin and the insertion sign in the main text to which they refer. Several folios contain inscriptions on the margins made in large, unidi-
ctly handwriting which must be a child's one. It seems that someone was learning to write on the margins of the manu-
script.

Call No. 1385

The copyist has found his copy in the collection

The troops by Chaghāzād’l ibn Birqāl-khān (r. 633—68/1235—
970) into Khuṭbīn and their battle with the army of the Īlāhābi Āqā-khān in 1235. When com-
pared with MS 7418 it turned out that this copy is missing 151 folios, but it has the conclusion (ḵudāmān) which tells

On the title-page there are several poetical fragments, one of which obviously belongs to Mahmud b. Walī, and the other to the founder of the Ḥabīd’s state in Mīl Wawr, ʻAlī-Nu‘r Muhammad Shāhīd-khan (r. 982/1514—100). The attribution of other poetic fragments is still impossible. Except the quatrains by Muḥammad ʻAlī-khān, which is written in folios b—c of the microfilm, all fragments are written in Central Asian Persian language. The introduction is missing. The poetic fragments are fol-
ios 457b—458a, an account of events connected with the rule of ʻAli Abāk-khān.

In the course of work with this copy, the results of which have been partially published, we have come to the conclusion that this manuscript has nothing to do with the "copy of Jurabek" kept in Tashkent and is an independent copy [20]. The photocopy is most similar to the manuscript under the call No. 1385 from the collection of the Institute for Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Re-
public of Uzbekistan, but because of a different pagination, folios, different formats and the lack of coincidence of gaps, these copies can not be viewed as identical.
This is a microfilm of the London manuscript from the India Office Library which was received by O. F. Akimushkin, a researcher from the Leningrad Branch of the Institute for Oriental Studies in the middle of the 1970s. For the convenience of usage a paper copy of the microfilm was made and bound into two volumes kept under glass in the material of this part has been put into the scientific circulation by the efforts of T. I. Sultanov, A. M. Makeev, O. F. Akimushkin, etc. Almost simultaneously with academician Bartold’s work, Bahar al-asrār was studied in Britain. In 1903 a work by a British specialist in oriental studies H. Etche “Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in the Library of the India Office” [21] was published. In 1971 a description of the London copy of Bahar al-asrār (call no. 575 new or 1496 old), whose paper copy we used while writing the present work. According to Etche who based on the analysis of the monument’s material, the manuscript was copied by Shīh Kājīn, a court peanār Nādir-Muhammad-khan. The manuscript was made in the lifetime of this Ashgarhāndī ruler. This is proved by the line which follows the Kājīn’s name: 

"Let the Allah prolong his domain and reign until the Judgment Day” [22].

Such formula is always used after the name of a living ruler unlike the formula roshāna (Allāh which means that this “he shall reign until the year 1578”). The manuscript is copied in a dedicate nasta’īq. The first two folios are decorated with a golden edging. The format of the manuscript is big 37-23. This is practically all information that Etche gives [23].

We can add several very important details to this description of the copy of the manuscript from the SPiOS (FV 257). First of all, we must point to the high quality of copying. The number of interpolations in the text is insufficient and they are of fragmentary character. The copyist did not stick to any concrete system of text correction. Notes and additions can be found on the margins, on the right and on the left of the frame which separates the main text from the margins as well between the lines. On folio 1b there is a colophon which follows the following inscription:

“...as the sun of the world-decorating contemplation which is the bower of wisdom and the creator of the richness of arts, in the year of 1044 in the middle of the seventh month of the year of the sun which coincides with the first day of the month of rīsāl-āl-farrā’, having wrapped the garden of determined intention around the metaphysics of the divine ray of light, the source of the rays of radiance and the devastation of the sun’s power, reverence, rendered mercy regarding the service which has no statute of limitation and the former submission of the loyal slave Mahdī b. Waff (having laid to rest the edge of the creation) and was given the charge, written compilation (or a narrative) about the deeds of the past and the present which contain the gifts of welfare and the rain from the clouds of felicity. Let the Khāji prolong forever the shelter of his [i.e. that of Nādir-Muhammad Khan – A.J.] existence.”

As it follows from this abstract, Mahdī b. Waff received the order to compile Bahar al-asrār on the 1st of rīsāl 1044/24th of September 1634. In other words, we knew the date of the beginning of his work on this writing [24].

The fact that we do not know not only the date but also the year of the composition of the manuscript is partly due to the author himself. Thus, Mahdī b. Waff mentions that the account of events of 1040–4/1635–6 is added later; at the third of rīsāl the work there is a reference to 1049/1639–40 which makes the statement of the author rather doubtful. B. A. Ahmadov sticks to the idea that the work was completed in the period between 1040 and 1044/1635 and 1635 [26]. But this opinion is also hard to agree with not only due to the reference to events that are not mentioned to fol. 93a of the London copy. When telling about the circumstances of the accession to the throne of Imām-Qul-ālā Khan which took place in 1019/1612 Mahdī b. Waff says about the events between brothers co-rulers Imām-Qul-ālā and Nādir-Muhammad. The following statement follows the agreement between the Khāji (fol. 93a):

“Now when [the janāt] rule of the ḍabbar reached 26 years, agreement not only did not weaken, but, on the contrary, the building of this union was becoming more and more strong and 26 festivities were observed for the main word here in ḍabbar (today) which proves that it was the year 1635-1636. Based on the fact that the London copy is the author’s copy, we can be certain that the manuscript was working on his work. If we add 26 years to 1019 we get 1045/1635-6. In another fact the author’s copy is confirmed by that in 1635-6 Mahdī b. Waff could not have finished his work, as the materials of this volume are an authentic part of the monument and are quite distinct from other folios [27].

Also, it is often forgotten that the sixth volume is not the last in this work. From the author’s plans we know that he was going to write the seventh volume dedicated to Timūr and his descendants which was also going to consist of four rūḥān” [28].

Apart from the above mentioned copies, in one of the present manuscripts, taking into account the compilation character of his work, such approach seems quite natural. Due to his educational background and his lifestyle, Mahdī b. Waff mastered not only of Arabic, the Persian language but also of the Khūjahī and Uzbek languages. We can say that all of them were his mother tongues. The absence of the “language barrier” allowed him to use a wide range of historical-geographical terms, which probably all could be found in the collections available to him.

In the Arabic-Muslim historical tradition strict rules of quotation from different materials were developed quite early. These rules obliged a historian to indicate the author’s full name, all titles of the quoted work known to him if there was a special reference to that. The beginning and the end of each quotation had to be marked. When translating the quoted fragments a historian had to be as precise as possible not to distort the idea even in another language. Of course, in practice such strict rules were never observed. In most cases only the author’s names were mentioned, often in the form of roshāna (Allāh which means that this “he shall reign until the year 1578”). These factors complicate the attribution of a number of works which were used by this or that Muslim author. Partly this is also true concerning Bahar al-asrār. However, in Mahdī b. Waff’s work a certain system can be traced. When working with his sources Mahdī b. Waff mentions the name of the author of a work or his taqaddum. When quoting a source he uses the term taqaddum with regard to its author, for example:

“...as the sun of the world-decorating contemplation which is the bower of wisdom and the creator of the richness of arts, in the year of 1044 in the middle of the seventh month of the year of the sun which coincides with the first day of the month of rīsāl-āl-farrā’, having wrapped the garden of determined intention around the metaphysics of the divine ray of light, the source of the rays of radiance and the devastation of the sun’s power, reverence, rendered mercy regarding the service which has no statute of limitation and the former submission of the loyal slave Mahdī b. Waff (having laid to rest the edge of the creation) and was given the charge, written compilation (or a narrative) about the deeds of the past and the present which contain the gifts of welfare and the rain from the clouds of felicity. Let the Khāji prolong forever the shelter of his [i.e. that of Nādir-Muhammad Khan – A.J.] existence.”

“The author of Ṭa’tiḥīr al-Raṣūlī Ṭabāqat Muhammad Ḥaydar [Dīghāt] says the following...” [31].

For comparison, when Mahdī b. Waff speaks from the first person, he uses two terms: rāqūm (screivener) and masanfī (compiler) [32].

Relatively, all sources can be divided into four big groups: (i) original historical and geographical; (ii) information which Mahdī b. Waff received from the participants or witnesses of events, messengers and merchants in the world of the Islam; (iii) observations and travel notes of the author himself; (iv) people’s rumors.

The first group of sources is the largest one. It contains works in the Arabic, Persian and Turkic languages (about 100 titles). The works of Arabic authors are mostly dedicated to geography which was developed actively throughout the whole history of the Islamic world. Persian and Turkic works are of historic character.

According to the author himself, he familiarised himself with the works of al-Jahānshīr al-Sūfī, Jalāl al-Dīn ad-Dīghāt, Yaʿqūb and other classic writers of the Arabic-Muslim his...
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toric and geographical literature while working in the li-

brary of Mirk-shah al-Husayni.

Wishing to have an opportunity to check his infor-

mants, and, if necessary, he copied fragments from cer-

tain works. Let us give some examples. Thus, when

working with Talabani's large fragments were compi-

led. A big reference to this work can be found on fol. 46b.
The whole of chapter 40 from the copy FV 258 is compiled
from Talh b. Rashid' al-Mas'udi. This is a story about Mirz

Husayn b. Husayn al-Mardhahānī and Talh b. Rashid al-

Mas'udi with a detailed de-

scription of the itinerary and interesting information about

the population of these areas. The copyist of the manuscript

FV 258 must have understood a number of toponyms and

ethnic names, thus, their reconstruction is only possible if

one refers to a copy of Talh b. Rashid' al-Mas'udi. The infor-

mation about Tibet from Talh b. Rashid' al-Mas'udi was thor-

oughly studied by Prof. T. L. Sultanov [34].

The next chapter of Babr al-asrar "Dastān-i Ḥurānī-i Qabālūni" [105] ("The Description of the Chaghatcha's March from HinduStan and Mirz Muhammad Husayn's Conquest of Kajmīr") is also adopted completely from the

second daftar of Talh b. Rashid' al-Mas'udi. Mirz Husayn
did have great authority in the eyes of Mahmud b. Walli. He
toured the materials of Talh b. Rashid' al-Mas'udi very seri-
cially, although the information about the first rulers of

Moghulistan is very contradictory and confused in Mirz

Husayn's work. Thus, for example, in Talh b. Rashid' al-

Mas'udi's Babr al-asrar, Turan is referred to by Isb-n-Ḥusayn's son, although the latter had died long be-

fore he was born. In Zubārī-n námá by Yuzid which was used

by both authors, Turan is referred to by Isb-nla Ḥusayn's son.

Babr al-asrar is the second and the third name of that
distance from the written under the author himself.

The second group of sources to which we have placed

verbal informants is not so large. With rare exceptions

Mahmud b. Walli does not mention the names of his verbal

informants. We can only guess that certain information

was received from verbal informants due to key words "verbal

legend" (mawzū'ī) and "story" (qisas) which can be some-
times found in the manuscript [40]. In some cases verbal

messages can be viewed as sub-sources as they are trans-
mitted through other literary works. An example of it can be found in chapter 18 from the third part of the sixth

technique of the Babr al-asrar into the Ashtarkhanids. Ele-

ments of Babr al-asrar is, in a way, a logical continuation of

Sharaf-nāma-yi shāhī, especially regarding the history of

the last Shibiliyūn and the circumstances of the

Ashtarkhanids taking over the Shibiliyūn dynasty. Anyway,

the final answer to this question requires a special study and

a thorough comparison of the texts with each other.

The same can be said with regard to al-Rāzi's work

Haft ālif ("Seven Regions"). This is a biography dic-
tionary of the 8th century AD. It is a general-purpose dictionary covering the place of birth of this or that religious or personal

ity, with division into seven climatic zones. It is the princi-
pal reference book for any medieval scholar that explains the title of this work. Mahmud b. Walli was undoubtedly familiar with

al-Rāzi's work and used it when working on chapter 53 of

the fourth rule of the sixth volume of Babr al-asrar in which

he talks about the burial-vaults of the great shāhīns of

Bukhārā and the famous Šīfāt and gives detailed bio-

digraphical data and the account of deeds of concrete histori-

ical figures [38]. V. Bortolozzi carried out a comparative

analysis of these materials and came to the conclusion that

Rāzi's materials are much more complete and reliable [39].

Rāzi's work was used by Mahmud b. Walli quite often

refers to the works he used.

In the text of his work we find:

"One historian says the following..."

which introduces a quotation. The author may have done it

to make his work look more profound.

Mahmud b. Walli inserted into his work texts of other

writings without naming them. In such cases we can only

guesses basing on that they are very different from the

sections written from the author himself.

Then the author speaks about the gardens and parks of

the city. About one of them, Bāgh-i Frām he wrote:

"The area of this garden is about 1000 jumāt [46]. On one side of the garden there is a river. The garden consists of a large number of copes and groves. In them live a huge number of birds. This picture from that garden I saw a round-shaped house which is erected on a high wheel. Each time the wheel moved, the house moved with it" [47].

A fragment from the final part of the sixth volume, in

which the author tells about ceremonies, can serve as an

eample of the fourth type of the sources of Babr al-asrar.

He writes that although there is a tradition to consider the

right side more honorable and refers to the saying "stretch

forward your right hands" (qaddām yāwuma lāhī). How-

ever, "...they say that this people [i. e. the Uzbek] consider the

left side to be most honorable".

In this case the author does not refer to any other

source apart from the common belief based on peoples' ru-
mours [48].

In conclusion we must say that, despite the fact that

only the first and the sixth volumes of Mahmud b. Walli's works have preserved until our days in a relatively com-

plete form, the monument itself is of great importance for

the study of the history and ethnography of the Volga re-

gion and the Central Asia and of the works of the court

historian himself.

Babr al-asrar is a source which has conveyed to us,
thought often in retelling, the data about the lost works, such
d as, for example, Gīrīghānānā. Even the compilation material given by the author is an interesting object for

research, and it sometimes contains plots interesting for a

modern researcher. The importance of the original frag-

ments is also hard to underestimate. The chapter about

Mahmud b. Walli's travel around India is interesting from the

historical as well as the ethnographical point of view, and

the materials which refer to the Ashtarkhanids' early stay in

the Central Asia in Khurasan are unique. In Babr al-asrar we deal with world history in its traditional Muslim under-

standing, and, at the same time with the official history of

a separate dynasty, and observations and evidence of a con-

crete man who lived in a certain historic time and aspired to

convey its specifics to the reader.

Notes

2. V. Bortolozzi, "Ostche o pozvedk v Turkestane" ("The report about Turkistan trip"), Sbornie sochinenii (Moscow, 1973), viii, p. 171.
4. Mahmud ibn al-Walî must be confused with another famous šahīn Mahmud from the family of Qaʾīb al-Mahmūd Tabrīz, about whom Mahmud b. Walli wrote the following lines in the fourth part of the sixth volume of his work:

"Among his great descendents [i. e. of Qaʾīb al-Mahmūd Tabrīz] — A. A. — he was the ablest-born Mirk-shah who was granted the reign of eminence in madrasa of the deceased ʿAbd al-ʿAli al-Mahmūd ibn Isb in 1026/1617-18 he designated to stop in Bagāl and the miserable slave [i. e. Mahmud b. Walli — A. A.] several times he honored to meet him and talk to him... Some time later he returned to his homeland and found his place by God".


10. It is interesting that the author of Mahmud al-Saffarī which was written later and who used Babr al-asrar as a source refers to author as Khān Mahmūd Kūlbilān. Mahbīl-i urmānī, p. 10.
TEXT AND ITS CULTURAL INTERPRETATION

A. Kudelin

ARABIC LITERATURE: POETICS AND STYLISTICS. V: A ROMANTIC EPOS ABOUT MAJNUN AND ITS ARABIC ROOTS

The works by E. E. Berthelot's and I. Iu. Krachkovskii made a weighty contribution to the studies of the romantic epics about Majnun, and for a long time determined the direction of the research in this sphere and formed a base for comparative-typological studies [4]. However, it has become necessary to complete, specify, deepen, and, probably, revise some conclusions of the two outstanding scholars concerning the Arabic legend about Majnun, which is determined by the appearance of a sufficient number of theoretical as well as concrete historical-literary works which touch upon the issues under concern [5].

Since the publications by E. E. Berthelot and I. Iu. Krachkovskii, the number of important sources of the Arabic legend about Majnun has not increased. We still deal with the works by Ibn Qutayba, al-Iflasani and al-Walih. However, let us take a fresh look at them.

E. E. Berthelot and I. Iu. Krachkovskii more than once mentioned that the legend about Majnun underwent some changes during the period of its Arabic circulation (there we speak mostly about various additions). However, we are interested in the purpose of the additions, we did not engage them especially in the study of the transformations of this legend among the Arabs. This would have involved the detection not only of the latest additions to the legend told by Ibn Qutayba, al-Iflasani or al-Walih, but also of the selective approach of al-Walih to the version by Ibn Qutayba and the additions by al-Iflasani. Running a few steps forward and anticipating the results of our analysis, we must say that the additions to the legend as well as the exclusions from it in al-Walih's work were deliberate. Our aim is to find out what exactly was added to the legend, and what was excluded from it on the purpose of.

To achieve our purpose we shall conditionally divide all messages fixed in the three analysed sources into three groups which contain:

(i) information about the genealogy and full names of Majnun and Layli;

(ii) information about the story of love between Majnun and Layli;

(iii) elements of literary-critical assessment included in the analysed manuscripts as well as genealogical, historical,
I. Information about the genealogy of Majorin and Layla

A. In the beginning of the section about Majorin Ibn Qurayba, the author speaks about his relatives and tells about the origin of the nickname Majorin ("insane"). His full name is Quray b. Mu'adh b. Abi Jarda al-Quray' a and his nickname is Majorin. He received the nickname "insane" because of his over-active imagination and his love for poetry. He is known for his passion for Layla, his beloved. He was not insane from birth; he went crazy because of his passion for Layla. He would speak to her in his mad state.

The name and the genealogy of Majorin's beloved one Layla bint Sa'd b. Mahdi b. Rabbiya b. al-Harbi b. Ka'b b. Rakib are well-known. Layla bint Sa'd b. Mahdi b. Rabbiya b. al-Harbi b. Ka'b b. Rakib b. al-Harbi b. Hafsa b. Abu Su'ud, the name of the child, is Umme Malik or Umme Ammar. From the comparison of the genealogies of Majorin and Layla given in the Book of Songs it follows that they were close relatives. In the end of his section al-Qurayba directly says that Majorin was Layla's paternal uncle's son and Layla was Majorin's paternal uncle's daughter.

B. In the beginning of his work Al-Walihi [9] mentions different variants of the name of the legend's hero and gives his genealogy in brief; however he does not mention the genealogy of the heroine but says that Majorin and Layla were cousins on their fathers' side.

II. Information about the Majorin and Layla love story

A. Ibn Qurayba gives the elements of the famous legend about Majorin and Layla in the following order.

1. Majorin fell in love with Layla when they were children and occasionally lured her away.

2. When Majorin grew older he became handsome, became famous as a pleasant interlocutor, and was known for his poetic abilities; he often talked to Layla and her relatives. One day Layla started a conversation with a young man in the presence of other young men and girls, and, according to Majorin's reaction, she realized that he loved her. In her poem, written on that occasion, she declared that she also loved him.

3. This lasted for some time until Majorin became insane. He would dress up in sheep's clothes and with wild animals, torture the clothes he was wearing. He only came to consciousness when somebody mentioned Layla's name.

4. Unfortunately, information of Majadin ibn Mushaqi in the matchingmaking of Layla for Majorin (Layla's relatives, making reference to the ruler's permission to shed Majorin's blood, marriage with his hands in them, and he withdrew his offer).

5. Layla learns the latest news about Majorin from a man who had visited his relatives' lands.

6. Majorin's father unsuccessfully asks Layla's father for his daughter's hand in marriage for his son (no reasons are given for his father's decision).

7. Majorin's father set off to Ka'ba to heal his son; in Minia valley Layla, having heard a voice calling Layla, fell unconscious.

8. In a place called Bir' ey Ayyub Layla waited for a puff of wind from the land of Najd where Layla lived.

Let us give a terse (to save space) annotated index of messages on the three sources in the three groups mentioned above.

Quays b. Mu'adh b. Abi Jarda, al-Aqra' b. Mu'adh and al-Sala'ah b. al-Harbi b. Ka'b b. Rakib b. al-Harbi b. Hafsa b. Abu Su'ud, the name of the child, is Umme Malik or Umme Ammar. From the comparison of the genealogies of Majorin and Layla given in the Book of Songs it follows that they were close relatives. In the end of his section al-Qurayba directly says that Majorin was Layla's paternal uncle's son and Layla was Majorin's paternal uncle's daughter.

C. In the beginning of his work Al-Walihi [9] mentions different variants of the name of the legend's hero and gives his genealogy in brief; however he does not mention the genealogy of the heroine but says that Majorin and Layla were cousins on their fathers' side.

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8. Majorin's parents ask Layla's father for his daughter's hand in marriage on behalf of their son (the latter vows that he will not permit disgrace for his family and won't do something which no one has ever done, not explaining, however, what this disgraceful act is). Having learnt about this, Majorin goes completely crazy.

9. Following his relatives' advice, Majorin's father sets off to Makka to heal his son. In Minia valley Majorin hears a voice calling for Layla and fainted.

10. In Makka Majorin asks his son to touch Ka'ba's veil and to pray Allah to heal him from his love to Layla. Instead of this Majorin asks Allah to strengthen his love and never to let him forget Layla.

11. Wandering around the desert with gazelles he finds himself at the border with Syria.

12. The information about Bir' ey Ayyub (analogous to IBII).


14. After his unfortunate vow Majorin keeps coming to the camp of Layla's relatives. They complain and the ruler agrees to shed Majorin's blood. The latter is eager to accept death for the sake of love. Layla's relatives move away from them.

15. Before Majorin went crazy Layla had several times promised to visit him at night if there was a favourable occasion. Having waited not to visit herself Majorin sent to her with some oil and to go involved in the conversation with her that he did not notice that oil flew over on their feet; he went to Layla to get fire for his hearth which had gone out. Layla wrapped cakes in a piece of cloth, while they were talking and could not burn out, Majorin kept tearing off pieces of material from his cloak until he almost completely burnt it.

16. When Majorin was ill, Layla visited him at night at the instance of Majorin's mother, and talked to him until morning. This was their last meeting.

17. When Majorin fell in love with Layla he often visited her at night, as the Arabs did not view it as anything shameful that young men talked to girls, but, having found out about his passionate love to Layla, her relatives prohibited him to come.

18. A variation of the information about the beginning of the love between Majorin and Layla when they were adults.

19. Layla is married to someone named Musir from the Thug tribe.

20. Majorin, wandering around the desert comes to the camp of the relatives of his beloved. Having met Layla, he faints and Majorin's mother and asks her servants to tell him she wishes him quick recovery when he comes to consciousness. Majorin replies that Layla is his illness and his health.

21. Nawfal ibn Musaghi meets Majorin surrounded by gazelles when hunting.

22. The repetition of the information about Majorin's father's decision to marry his son (analogous to IBII).

23. Layla's father and her husband go to Makka. Layla calls for Majorin who spends all nights with her until their return.

24. From a secluded tomb Majorin watches Layla setting off to her husband.

25. Majorin pronounces ridicule of Layla's husband.

26. A man from Makka meets Majorin with Layla setting off to her husband.

27. Majorin redeems a gazelle from the hunters and frees it.

28. Women reproach Majorin for his love to Layla: according to their complaint, he could have paid attention to one of them, and could have regained his mind and health.

29. Before leaving to the camp of Layla's relatives, a man from Makka tells Majorin that he would like to pass something to her. Majorin asks him to find a place in her camp from which she would hear him and read his poems to her. Having heard is, Layla started crying, and, in her turn, read a poem which was later passed to Majorin.

30. Majorin's father asks some man to tell his son that Layla disapproves of his poems in which he describes their meetings in private which, in fact, never took place. Majorin replies that Layla may reproach him.

31. Layla learns the latest news about Majorin from a person who had been in his land (analogous to IBII).

32. A man from haur Murra meets Majorin's father and then Majorin himself; the story about Majorin's death (analogous to IAII).

33. Majorin's relatives mourn over his death; in the camp of Layla's relatives it is her father whose mourning is the strongest.

34. Poet Qays ibn Dharbi meets Layla by the instance of Majorin; she reproaches Majorin for his poems in which he describes their meetings in private. Dharbi justifies Majorin. Layla agrees with his reasons and asks him to give her regards to Majorin. Qays ibn Dharbi does not finally give her poem.

35. Once, when Majorin has already gone crazy, he goes past Layla, and, having seen her, he faints. Layla goes away fearing that her relatives will see them together (possibly, the analogue of IBII).

C. Al-Walihi gives the information in the following order.

1. When Majorin and Layla were children they shepherded sheep together.

2. Layla knew poems and adab works well and young men from the haur (Ameri liked to spend time with her (compare with IAII). Among them Majorin was her dearest one.

3. Having realised that Majorin and Layla are in love with each other, 'Anmir youteds information her father. He hides Layla from Majorin and complains to the ruler about Majorin. The latter allows to shed Majorin's blood if he visits Layla again.

4. When Majorin's father asks Layla's father for his daughter's hand in marriage on behalf of his son, pointing out to important circumstances favourable for their marriage, such as resemblance and the great right (it is not clarified what is meant by it). Layla's father replies that he will not allow his daughter to marry a man who is passionately, crazily in love with her.

5. Majorin goes to Makka with his father, at Ka'ba, instead of asking to heal him, he asks to strengthen his love to Layla.

6. In Minia valley Majorin hears a voice calling Layla.

7. The occasion in Bir' ey Ayyub.
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