BOOK REVIEWS

INDO-PERSIAN RELATIONS, (Sources of the History and Geography of Iran Series No. 32), Iranian Cultural Foundation, Tehran, 1970, (published on the occasion of 2500th Anniversary of the Iranian Empire), pp. 290, price not given.

The present book by Dr. Riazul Islam is a scholarly and comprehensive study of the political and diplomatic relations between the Mughal Empire of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent and its contemporary Safavid Empire of Iran. These neighbours have a long history of close cultural and political relations. It was particularly during the Mughal period that these relations reached their peak. The present work is the outcome of the erudite research of the learned author and fills a long-felt desideratum in the field of its subject. As regards the period before the advent of the Mughal Empire in this sub-continent the diplomatic intercourse between the Muslim Indian and Iranian rulers hardly deserves any mention. The period of the Great Mughal empire of India synchronized with that of the Great Safavids of Iran. This period is of paramount importance from the literary, cultural, commercial, religious and diplomatic points of view. The author has thus chosen the most important period of the Indo-Pak history in the diplomatic field.

Several books have been written on the subject of Mughal-Safavid relations. But there is no other work on the subject covering the entire period from the advent of the Mughal Empire in this sub-continent to its downfall. From the time of William Erskine, all modern historians who have dealt with the subject have confined their discussion to a particular period or aspect of the Mughal-Safavid relations. In this respect this is the first work on the subject which has dealt with the entire span of Indo-Pak Mughal history in the diplomatic field on a broad canvas.

This valuable work is a revised and amplified version of the author’s doctoral dissertation submitted to, and approved by the Cambridge University in 1957. In writing this book the author had before him all the extant printed sources and manuscript material available in the libraries of the U.K., France, Austria, Iran and Pakistan. He has also carefully compared the various narrations and deduced scholarly conclusions of a very high standard of textual criticism. For this purpose, he had to read all the extant correspondence of the Mughal and Safavid rulers as well as the relevant letters and documents from the Uzbek, Ottoman and Deccan Chanceries. He has also gone through a large number of chronicles written under the court patronage in India and Iran as well as those written independently, and a considerable amount of biographical literature including three royal autobiographies. From the voluminous debris of diplomatic correspondence frequently in a verbose diction and at times of obscure meanings, the author has most painstakingly dug out a valuable material which illuminates the various aspects of the subject. So also he has searched the travellers’ accounts, the records of
the East India Company and the relevant correspondence on the subject which hitherto had not been used by any other author except cursorily.

Besides the text (in 186 pages), the author has given eleven appendices (in 68 pages) comprising very useful information on the subject. Particularly the last appendix K: "A Note on the Sources" is a critical appraisal of the history of the Mughal period. The vast bibliography (in 14 pages) reveals the richness of the sources he has used in writing this book. A detailed study of the relevant sources is expected to appear in his Calendar of Documents on Indo-Persian Relations during the Mughal Period which is eagerly awaited by all scholars interested in the subject. In one of these appendices he has given for the first time an outline of the diplomatic usage of the time culled from the contemporary chronicles, collections of correspondence and European travellers' accounts. The latter particularly provide full and vivid descriptions of the reception of envoys and other diplomatic matters. The author has also provided in the book six very beautiful plates in colour based on some paintings and inscriptions of the Mughal and Safavid Emperors.

In short, this book is 'a monument of industry and a mine of information' on the subject of history of diplomatic and political interaction between the Mughals of the Indo-Pak sub-continent and the Safavids of Iran. There is hardly a source, contemporary late or modern, he has not drawn upon.

The substance of the present book has already appeared in Persian in a series of articles written on Indo-Pak Iranian relations by Dr. Shahryar in one of the Iranian periodicals. We are, however, of the opinion that translation of the entire book into Persian and Urdu by some competent scholars is overdue.

—'Ali Raza Naqavi

THE SHÂMLÜ LETTERS (Texts Series No. 1) ed. by Riazul Islam. Karachi: the Institute of Central & West Asian Studies, 1971, (published on the occasion of 2500th Anniversary of the Iranian Empire), pp. 92 (Persian)+40 (English), price Rs. 15. or $2.00

This is a work of mixed authorship. It contains the correspondence of Hasan Khan Shâmlû and 'Abbâs Quli Khan Shâmlû, consecutively viceroys of Khurásân during the reign of Shâh-Šâfî and Shâh 'Abbâs II of the Safavid dynasty, with Mughal officials, Khâns of Turân and others. The editor, Dr. Riazul Islam has added an historical introduction with explanatory notes (in 35 pages) including summaries of two of Hasan Khan's letters in English which have been given in order to illustrate the value and importance of the material contained in the work.

Of the thirty letters included in the collection, seven are addressed to Mughal officials. They are, from the point of view of foreign relations, the most substantial letters in the entire work. They occur in a MS. of mixed content in the British Museum bearing the call No. Add. 7802.
The *munshi* (scribe) who drafted the letters and composed the pieces in the work wrote in a heavy and inflated style; he loved to elaborate a minute point in ponderous sentences and abstract arguments. His is a deliberately difficult style, and his imageries are not sustained. Besides the letters written on behalf of his patrons, the unknown author has in the work several letters written in his own name.

An important new source of Iranian diplomatic correspondence, the *Shāmīlā Letters* have so far remained unnoticed. In view of their contents, they carry considerable importance as a hitherto untapped source of diplomatic relations between the Mughal India and Safavid Iran. The Institute of Central and West Asian Studies deserves a special appreciation for this important contribution in the field of Indo-Iranian diplomatic relations.

—'Ali Raza Naqavi.

**DĪWĀN OF BAYRAM KHĀN** (Text Series No. 2), ed. by S. Husāmuddin Rāshīdī and Muḥammad Șābir. Karachi: the Institute of Central & West Asian Studies, 1971. (Published on the occasion of the 2500th Anniversary of the Iranian Empire), pp. 85 (Persian & Turkish) + 19 (English), price Rs. 15 or $2.00

Born of noble parentage, Bayram Khān has been one of the most important and illustrious generals and capable statesmen of the Mughal history. Carrying blue blood in his veins through his father, Sayf ‘Ali Beg, of princely Turkish origin once even appointed Governor of Ghaznī by Bābūr, Bayram had his descent from Naqshbandī Khwājas from maternal side which brought forth hallowed distinction to his house.

He was born at Badakhshān, and soon distinguished himself at Bābūr's court by his accomplishments and 'well-groomed court manners'. At the tender age of sixteen he was entrusted by Bābūr to the care and company of Humayūn. For nearly forty years he dominated the historical scene, and truly speaking, steered the destiny of the house of Bābūr, and on more than one occasion, saved the Mughal rule in the Subcontinent from dissolution.

Throughout his eventful career and even during the darkest days of the Mughal Empire he remained a constant and loyal supporter of his Mughal patrons. Having been Humayūn's commander-in-chief and Akbar's tutor, regent and chief minister, he succeeded in saving the Mughal rule from the most formidable dangers. For his distinguished services he was befittingly awarded most exclusive honorifics. His last days were, however shrouded with gloom and despair; and his inglorious end, and as a result of court intrigues is a sad commentary on his glorious career as a faithful servant of the Mughal Empire.

A great general in the battle-field and a sincere counsellor in the royal council-chamber, Bayram was also a master of pen and is generally acclaimed as an accomplished scholar and a versatile poet. Equally at home in Persian, Turkish and Hindi he is repor-
ted to have written and composed in all these three languages, though nothing of his Hindi poetry or writings seems to have survived today. Rich in Turko-Persian heritage, Bayram was a perfect model of a distinctive social elite of the age.

In poetry, the range of his compositions varied from devotional odes and panegyrics to romantic and moral themes. Besides ghazals, odes, quatrains and fardiyāt, he was an adept in making ‘fitting insertions in the poems of masters’ which he called dakhīlya.

Bayram Khān’s Diwān which, according to the author of Ma‘āthir-i Ruhfīl originally contained nearly two thousand verses, does not seem to have survived in its entirety. The present work is based on British Museum MS. Or. 9337 and MS. Or. 7510 (wrongly written as 7410). The latter seems to be the largest of the Bayram Khān’s Diwāns, now extant.

Although the present work is largely based on ‘The Persian and Turkish Diwāns of Bayram Khān, Khān Khānān’ by Sir E. Denison Ross, published by the Asiatic Society from Calcutta in 1910, it incorporates certain material not included in D. Ross’s edition. The editors of the Persian and Turkish sections have painstakingly removed the inaccurate readings of D. Ross’s edition and made substantial improvements, both in form and content. The present edition contains 388 Turkish verses as against 366 in D. Ross’s edition.

The Persian Diwān contains one ode each in praise of Imām ‘Alī, Imām Riḍā, Humāyūn, Akbar and Daryā Khān, a ghazal, a naṣm in praise of Imām ‘Alī, 39 ghazals, 20 verses in fardiyāt, 27 verses in muqāṭṭa‘āt, 19 quatrains, 16 verses in a poem on the conquest of Qandahār and a quatrain containing a chronogram on the occasion of vanquishing the Sūris.

Generally speaking, Bayram’s Persian poetry has ‘refreshing simplicity and directness’. It is the reflection of the flight of imagination of a great general and gives out the throbbings of the heart of a great statesman. Bayram displays in his art ‘a mastery over expression which corresponds to the depth of his feelings.’

The present edition is expected to introduce Bayram Khān to a larger number of readers. We also hope that the lovers of the Persian and Turkish poetry will welcome and appreciate the publication of this otherwise rare work after over sixty years of D. Ross’s edition.

—‘Alī Razā Naqvi.