ABSTRACT
THE WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS OF A CENTRAL ASIAN ŠÛFĪ SHAYKH: 
AḤMAD IBN MAWLĀNĀ JALĀL AL-DĪN KHWĀJAGĪ KĀSĀNĪ “MAKHDŪM-I AʿZAM” (D.1542)

by

Victoria R. Gardner

Chair: Alexander D. Knysh

This study will examine the written works of Aḥmad ibn Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Khwājagī Kāsānī, known as “Makhdūm-i Aʿzam”, who lived in what is now Uzbekistan, dying in 1542 CE. Although he considered himself a part of a Šûfī order called the Khwājagān, the modern name, the Naqshbandiyya, based on the fourteenth-century figure, Bahāʾ al-Dīn Naqšband (d. 1389), is often applied to his group by scholars of Sufism. Makhdūm-i Aʿzam, “the great master”, wrote a number of treatises on topics related to Sufism; these written works form the basis of this research in order to reach more deeply into the thought of a single individual Central Asian shaykh.

The dissertation has five parts. The first part, Chapter 1, is an introduction to the Khwājagān and Makhdūm-i Aʿzam in a broad perspective. The second part, Chapter 2, looks briefly at both the codices containing the works and the text of the works, drawing upon variations in the texts to delimit two manuscript branches. This chapter also examines each of the known treatises of Makhdūm-i Aʿzam, giving basic structures, topics, and a complete list of the individuals mentioned in each work. The third part, Chapter 3, looks at the treatises to draw out the group to which Makhdūm-i Aʿzam belongs as presented in these works, and what groups one might read the works as
suggesting were its critics during his time. The fourth part, Chapter 4, draws the practices that the works suggested formed the major practical paths of the group; these practices are not necessarily in line with what most people have come to understand the Naqshbandiyya as practicing and may expand how the group is interpreted during the sixteenth century and after.

The fifth and final part of the dissertation is part of an effort to expand access to these works, which have never been published in their original Persian. In addition to various appendices listing where codices can be found, each of the two codices that were used as the basis for this research, one from each of the two manuscript branches, are included in typed form, with three indices each, Appendices VI and VII. Also included is a nineteenth-century commentary on Makhdüm-i Aʿẓam’s works found at the end of one of the codices in Tashkent, Appendix V.
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These consonants are transliterated as they would be in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, except “dh” has been changed to “z” to reflect common Central Asian (both Persianate and Turkic) pronunciations.

I have elected to transliterate all short vowels in the Arabic manner, using a, i, u, rather than to transliterate Arabic one way and Persian/Tajik another.
Abstract

This study will examine the written works of Aḥmad ibn Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Khwājażī Kāsānī, known as “Makhdūm-i Aʿẓam”, who lived in what is now Uzbekistan, dying in 1542 CE. Although he considered himself a part of a Ṣūfī order called the Khwājagān, the modern name of the the group, the Naqshbandiyya, based on the fourteenth-century figure, Bahāʾ al-Dīn Naqshband (d. 1389), is often applied to his group by scholars of Sufism. Makhdūm-i Aʿẓam, “the great master”, wrote a number of treatises on topics related to Sufism; these written works form the basis of this research in order to reach more deeply into the thought of a single individual Central Asian shaykh.

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