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# Studies on Persianate Societies

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# Style Sheet

## ABBREVIATIONS

Commonly abbreviated terms are used only in parenthesis within the text: par. (paragraph), col. (column), p. (page), ed. (editor, edition), fol. (folio), n. (note), chap. (chapter), vol. (volume), etc.

The following well-known abbreviations will be used instead of the full title: *JA*, *EI*, *EIr.*, *BOSAS*, *ZDMG*, *JAOS*, *JRAS*, *IJMES*, *IJJ*, *AMI*, *JNES*, *JRGS*, *MO*, *RMM*, *ZII*, *OLZ*, *IA*, *JESHO*.

## ANGLICIZED

Commonly known titles (khan, imam, shah, caliph, darvish, sayyed, ayatollah, shaikh, amir, sultan, pasha); transcription is used only when a title is part of a transcribed phrase.

The following religious terms: Muslim, Shi'ite/Shi'i, Sunnite/Sunni, Malikite, Ash'arite, Koran, Hanbalite, Isma'ili, Sunna, Sufi, Hadith, Hanafite.

Major place names (e.g., Tehran, Baghdad, Kabul, Herat, Shiraz, etc.); the spelling used in the *Webster Geographical Dictionary* should serve as the guideline.

Dynasties: Safavid, Ghaznavid, Median, Achaemenid, Sasanid/Sasanian, Parthian, Ottoman, Mughal, Saljuqid, Il-khanid, Timurid, Qajar, Afsharid, Aq Qoyunlu, Qara Qoyunlu, Buyid, Saffarid, Pahlavi, Samanid, Tahirid, Muzaffarid, Ayyubid, Ghurid, Ziyarid, Eldiguzid, Zangid, Shaybanids, Salghurids, etc.

Familiar ethnic designations: Kurd, Kurdish, Turk, Azeri, Uzbek, Tajik, Arab, Lor, Baluch, Afghan, Pashtu.

## CAPITALIZATION

Personal titles will be written in upper case only when they are used with personal names: the president, but President Bush; shah, but Mohammad Shah; prime minister, but Prime Minister Mosaddeq; imam, but Imam Hosayn; shaikh, but Shaikh Mofid; general, but General Lee; lord, but Lord Boothby; etc.

Geographical terms are in upper case as part of topographical names: e.g., Aras River, Mount Everest, Caspian Sea, Persian Gulf, Mount Sahand, Alborz Mountains, Fars Province, but the province of Fars.

Names of modern institutions in non-Western languages are capitalized in their English translation, but they have initial upper case only when transcribed: e.g., Wezārat-e āmuzesh wa parvaresh, but the Ministry of Education.

The Arabic article “al-” is capitalized only when it starts a new sentence: Ebn al-Nadim, *al-Ketāb, al-Bad’ wa’-l-ta’rikh*. It is dropped in names, however, except when it is in a construct or a part of a phrase: Ebn al-Nadim, ‘Abd al-Samad, Mostawfi al-Mamālek, Amin al-Dawla, *amir al-omarā’*, etc.

Only proper nouns and the initial letter (except for Ar. *al-*) are capitalized in the transcribed titles of books and articles:

Abu Hāmed Mohammad Ghazāli, *Ehyā’ ’olum al-din*, ed. ‘A. Khāledi, 5 vols., Beirut, 1998.

Names of public offices are always in lower case: the government of Iran, the cabinet, the minister of foreign affairs, etc.

## HYPHENATED WORDS

Terms made of two complete words are hyphenated: Mohammad-Hasan, *rish-safid*, Farrokh-nezhād, Dust-‘Ali, *dorost-kār*, but Bozorgzāda, *pishrow*, *dustdār*, *mihanparast*. For English words, the *New International Webster Dictionary* should be followed.

## REFERENCES

References should be given briefly in parantheses within the text rather than as footnotes. Full citations will be given in the bibliography at the end of the article. A reference within a text should normally include the author’s last name and the volume and page numbers, e.g.: (Browne, II, p. 45/pp. 45-46). The year of publication is used if more than one work of the same author is mentioned in the bibliography, e.g.: (Browne, 1969, IV, pp. 45-46).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

It shall be arranged alphabetically. Book titles will be italicized, but the titles of articles and unpublished dissertations will be in quotation marks:

Books: Author’s initials and last name (full name in the case of pre-20th-cent. authors: Abu Hāmed Mohammad Ghazāli, not A.M. Ghazāli),

full title of the book, name/names of the editor/editors (if any), the series (if any), number of volumes, and place and date of publication (n.p. and n.d. when the place or date of publication is not recorded). Subtitles are set apart by one space following colon: E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, 4 vols., Cambridge, 1969; E. Porada, *The Art of Ancient Iran: Pre-Islamic Cultures*, Baden-Baden, 1965.

Articles: Author's initials and last name, full title of the article (in quotation marks), name of the journal (italics) followed by the volume and the issue numbers (in Ar. numerals) separated by a slash, the date of publication, and the fully inclusive page numbers: M. Hinds, "The First Arab Conquest of Fārs," *Iran* 22, 1984, pp. 39-53. Philip Huyse, "Iranian History in Pre-Islamic Times," *Iranian Studies* 31/3-4, 1998, pp. 417-30.

If the article is published in an anthology, the word "in" is used immediately before the title of the anthology: G. Aperghis, "The Persepolis Fortification Tablets: Another Look," in M. Brosius and A. Kuhrt, eds., *Studies in Persian History: Essays in Memory of David M. Lewis*, Achaemenid History 11, Leiden, 1998, pp. 35-36.

English translation of titles in Russian, Armenian, Georgian and Greek will be given in parenthesis in Roman type. Only the initial letter and proper nouns are capitalized: K. Kedkelidze, *Etudebi zveli kartuli literaturis istoriidan* (Studies on the history of old Georgian literature), Tbilisi, 1957.

## TRANSCRIPTION

The transcription adopted for this journal is based on Persian with the minimum use of diacritical signs for the sake of simplicity. For works in modern Turkish the official transcription will be used.

## CONSONANTS

ا	( <sup>h</sup> )
ب	b
پ	p
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
چ	ch
ه	h
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	z
ر	r
ز	z
ژ	zh
س	s
ش	sh
ص	s
ض	z
ط	t
ظ	z
ع	( <sup>h</sup> )
غ	gh

ف	f
ق	q
ک	k
گ	g
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
و	v, w
ه	h
ی	y

## VOWELS

ا	a
ی	e
و	o
یِ	ā
یِ	i
وِ	u
یِ	ey, ay
وِ	ow, aw

The final e with the silent h is transcribed as “a”

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# ESSAYS



# Christians in Safavid Iran: Hospitality and Harassment

RUDI MATTHEE

## INTRODUCTION

Modern Western historians have paid much more attention to the presence of Christians in Safavid Iran than their number and activities seem to warrant, and some have presented, or are accused of having presented, a distorted picture of Safavid society as a result. Laurence Lockhart's classic study, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, for one, has been faulted for the undue space it devotes to the presence and role of Christians in Safavid Iran and its particular focus on the increasingly precarious circumstances in which they lived in the later years.<sup>1</sup>

The tendency among traditional scholars to overrate the importance of Westerners and Christians in early modern Iran clearly reflects a bias in favor of indigenous Armenians, resident European missionaries, and visiting diplomats from Christian countries, but it is also, and perhaps more importantly, a function of the nature of the available (and easily accessible) source material. The Persian sources offer information on the polemics of the Safavid ulama against the message preached by European missionaries, but unfortunately pay virtually no attention to the actual activities of Christian representatives in the country suggesting that their numbers were relatively small and, more significantly, that the authors did not find the topic particularly relevant and interesting.<sup>2</sup> Many contemporary writings on Iran, by contrast, were by missionaries themselves. These naturally paid disproportionate attention to their own affairs as well as to those of local Christians, people they hoped they might convert to the "true" Christian faith.<sup>3</sup> The writings of other

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*Author's note:* I thank the audience in Los Angeles, London, and Tbilisi, where I presented versions of this paper, for their comments, and Charles Melville for commenting on an earlier draft.

<sup>1</sup> See Lockhart and the critical review by Martin Dickson, pp. 503-17

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, Ja'fariyān, ed., 1996a, Intro., pp. 11-60; idem. 2000, pp. 965-1042.

<sup>3</sup> The most significant and informative collection of missionary writings is *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*. See also the various studies and editions of missionaries and their writings by Carlos Alonso, most of which focus on the presence and activities of the

Westerners visiting the country in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are filled with reports about these same missionaries and local Christians, communities they felt most comfortable with, because of the communality of religion and language as well as shared manners and customs, and with whom they thus interacted more than with Muslims.

There is no question that, as a relatively small minority, Christians, both local Christians and representatives of the faith visiting from outside, occupied a minor, even marginal place in Safavid society.<sup>4</sup> This essay is not concerned with their significance per se, however, but rather probes their evolving status, and more specifically, the attitudes of Iranian officials toward them, with an eye to the curiously wide range these attitudes evince: from tolerance, even cosmopolitan acceptance and inclusion, to parochial rejection, exclusion and, occasionally, also oppression. This wide range becomes significant in the way in which it has been marshaled in the portrayal of the evolution of the Safavid state and society. In modern scholarship, the tensions and contradictions between these extremes have typically been presented and made intelligible in a sequential narrative that plots Safavid history as a drama in three acts. The first act, spanning almost the entire sixteenth century, comprises the formative period of the Safavid polity and, is marked by the tribally supported millenarian enthusiasm (and brutality) surrounding the rise and reign of Shah Esmā'il I (r. 1501-24), the religious bigotry of his successor, Shah Tahmāsb (r. 1524-76), and the inchoate reigns of the two interim shahs who followed, Shah Esmā'il II (r. 1576-8) and Mohammad Khodābanda (r. 1578-87). Act two is characterized by visionary tolerance and is embodied by the commonly accepted apogee of Safavid governance, the reign of Shah 'Abbās I (1587-1629), and the lesser brilliance of that of his immediate successors, Shah Safi (r. 1629-42) and Shah 'Abbās II (r. 1642-66). The period of Shah Solaymān (r. 1666-94) and, above all, that of Shah Soltān-Hosayn (r. 1694-1722) constitutes the third act, one of growing intolerance ushering in a narrow-minded religious assertiveness responsible for widespread and growing discrimination and oppression of non-Muslims.<sup>5</sup> The present study seeks

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Augustinians fathers in Safavid Iran. Besides the ones listed in Rudi Matthee, 1998, p. 491, n. 10, see Alonso, 1958, pp. 249-87; idem, 1996), pp. 7-125; and idem, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> This essay will disregard the *gholāmān*, the "slave/page" recruits from Georgia and Armenia, many of whom attained high rank in the Safavid military and administrative order, since, nominally at least, they had been made to convert to Islam beforehand.

<sup>5</sup> For a recent example see Savory, 2003, pp. 435-58. For a more nuanced interpretation, which only discusses the period after 1650 while concentrating on Iran's Armenian community, see Baghdiantz-McCabe, 1996-97, pp. 367-96. The period of Shah Safi and Shah 'Abbās II occupies an ambiguous status in this scenario. Both rulers have been blamed for their personal behavior including excessive drinking, and the former for extreme cruelty. Yet Western commentators have historically seen Shah Safi's

to complicate this picture by arguing that such responses are not sequential but rather present in all periods, that they are grounded in and emerged from a multifarious historical tradition, and that probing that tradition will do much to clarify and explain the apparent inconsistencies and contradictions involved.

## I. ANTECEDENTS

The trope of the Safavids' constituting alternately a menace and a promise to Christianity builds on a rich genealogy of imagery and historical memory in which Western anxieties about Islam's perceived fanaticism and the military threat it posed to Christianity were entwined with hopes for deliverance from the same scourge. Typically, Europeans looked for forces near and even beyond the world of Islam to be mobilized in this effort, but early on they sought inspiration within Islam itself as well. Islam's image as a fanatical religion goes back to the early days of its encounter with the West, to be sure, but a counter-image of toleration and a willingness to accept, if not all outsiders, at least the representatives of other monotheistic faiths, has a long pedigree as well. Its origins are to be found in the syncretistic milieu that characterized the religious landscape in the Middle East, and especially that of Iran, prior to the preaching of Islam, which carried over into the treatment of the People of the Book (Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians) following Islam's early expansion. The antecedents to the perception of the tolerant Muslim ruler, in turn, probably go back to the encounters between Muslims and Christians in medieval Spain and, in the East, at least as far back as the time of Salah al-Din (Saladin), the twelfth-century nemesis of the Crusaders. In the medieval Christian imagination the latter ascended to the level of antithesis of the stereotypically cruel, fanatical Muslim. In the process he became a warrior lionized for his magnanimity and chivalry, and seen as a worthy opponent of the Crusaders. This earned him a place alongside Socrates, Plato and Aristotle in the first circle of hell in Dante's *Divina Commedia* and also glowing reports in much of modern Western scholarship.<sup>6</sup> Talking about the origins of this image, which only partially reflects reality, in medieval Europe, Hans Möhring argues that what caused Western authors to elevate Saladin to the position of a chivalrous warrior and to appropriate him as a crypto-Christian knight was a desire and a need, felt consciously or

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forcefulness and Shah 'Abbās II's favorable inclination toward Christians as mitigating, even redeeming, factors: see Malcolm, I, p. 583; and Lockhart, p. 28.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Lane-Poole. For a good analysis of the medieval Christian perception of Salah al-Din, see Tolan, pp. 7-38.

unconsciously, to cover up and justify the impotence of the crusaders *vis-à-vis* a ruler who was in all respects their superior.<sup>7</sup>

More often Christian Europe sought deliverance from Islam in distant lands. East-West relations around this theme were as old as the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian, who first established contacts with the Christians of Ethiopia in the hope of finding allies against Sasanian ambitions in the Red Sea basin, and a few decades later approached the Chinese for assistance against the new menace coming out of the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>8</sup> Later expectations of finding anti-Muslim coalition partners typically fastened upon little known lands and regimes, at times heretical Muslim ones, which were thought to be favorably inclined to Christianity. The Crusades and their struggle to keep the holy sites of Christianity out of the hands of the Turkish Seljuqs proved to be a fertile ground for rumors feeding such expectations. Thus in the twelfth century, strange stories about the leader of the Syrian Nizari Isma'ilis (also known as the Assassins), the fabled "Old Man of the Mountain" (Shaykh al-Jabal), gave rise to a belief that he might be recruited in the struggle against the Muslims, a notion reinforced by the story that he had Christian inclinations.<sup>9</sup>

The Crusades failed in their aim of keeping the Christian holy shrines out of Muslim hands, and the twelfth century merely strengthened the position of the Turks in the Islamic world. It is in this context that we first hear of the legendary Prester John, a mysterious ruler who was thought to be biding his time before coming to the rescue of the Christian faith. The West first associated Prester John with the Qara-Khetay, a semi-nomadic people who in the 1120s established an empire in Central Asia and in 1141 defeated the Seljuqs in Transoxania. The Qara-Khetay, whose Buddhism, a faith then unknown in Europe, may have misled Europeans into thinking that they were Christian, soon faded from existence, but the Western dream of assistance from beyond the world of Islam did not. It was the Mongols who next appeared on the scene as the great hope for deliverance from the Muslim fury. In 1221, just as the Fifth Crusade came to an ignominious end in Egypt, an Arabic letter translated into Latin by Jacques de Vitry, the French bishop of Acre, announced that a "new and mighty protector of Christianity" had risen from the east. The savior in question, a murky variant of Prester John and the product of Nestorian tales, was King David of India, who was said to be on his way to the Holy Land and keen to liberate Jerusalem from Muslim domination. This is likely to have been a garbled reference to Chingiz Khan, who shortly before had embarked on his

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<sup>7</sup> Möhring, pp. 145-47.

<sup>8</sup> Knobler, 1996, p. 182.

<sup>9</sup> Daftary, p. 421.

conquests.<sup>10</sup> Armenian sources from the same period confirm that rumors accompanied the Mongol invasion of the Caucasus to the effect that the Mongols “were magis and/or of the Christian faith—wonder-workers—and that they had come to avenge the Christians from the tyranny of the Tachiks.”<sup>11</sup>

Christian friars next provided Europeans with what seemed like more realistic information about the Mongols, spelling out their Christian affinities as well as their barbarism. The former image is likely to have owed its origins in part to the inclination among eastern Christians to view Mongol rule as a more benevolent alternative to Muslim domination, leading to a tendency to overestimate their susceptibility to conversion. There was possibly an element of wishful thinking in this as well, and the image is in part also attributable to the Mongol habit of exploiting the religious sensibilities of the peoples they encountered on their westward expansion, which may have included having a cross carried in front of their armies.<sup>12</sup> In 1245 the threat as well as the promise they represented was put on the agenda of the Council of Lyons. News of the Mongol invasion and reports about their apparent goodwill toward Christianity provoked a dual response among the rulers of Western Europe. It caused them to embark on efforts to revive the Crusades, but it also prompted some to send embassies to inner Asia with pleas not to attack Europe but to embrace Christianity instead. The Mongols never acceded to either request, and in their savagery soon lived up to the worst premonitions about the Anti-Christ. Yet relations, mediated by Nestorian monks and Italian merchants, were long kept alive, especially with the branch that ended up ruling the Middle East, the Il-Khanids, who eventually sought Christian cooperation in their struggle against the Mamluks of Egypt. In the process, the image of Il-Khanids sympathy for Christianity became so powerful that it lived on beyond the time when they actually converted to Islam in 1295, to the point where Ghāzān Khan’s defeat of the Mamluks in Syria in 1299-1300 reached Europe in the form of rumors that the Mongols had taken Jerusalem and returned it to Christian rule.<sup>13</sup>

Christians living among Muslims, harboring their own dreams of redemption, played an important role in the creation of this tendentious image of the Mongols. The Armenians of the Middle East had long had visions of restoring their lost grandeur with the assistance of outside forces. They expected these forces to come either from the East (Armenians thus urged the Mongol rulers to help them wrest the Holy

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<sup>10</sup> Richard, 1969, p. 45. Silverberg, p. 71.

<sup>11</sup> Bedrosian, p. 281.

<sup>12</sup> Jackson, pp. 48-49, 102.

<sup>13</sup> Schein, pp. 805-19.

Sepulcher from the Turks) or from the West; ever since the initial Muslim conquests, the Armenians had fastened their hopes for the liberation of Jerusalem on the Byzantines. By the time the Seljuqs had established themselves in the area, the liberators from the West had transmogrified into the Crusaders, and a belief had gained ground that after a four-year reign by a ruler from Khorasan, a peace-loving monarch and protector of the Christians, these would vanquish the Seljuqs.<sup>14</sup> Shortly thereafter, in 1244, the rulers of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia looked eastward as well, seeking refuge from Turkish domination by putting themselves under Mongol protection. Aligning themselves with the Il-khans against the Turks (and the Mamluks), the Armenians assisted in the Mongol attack on Syria.<sup>15</sup>

Following the collapse of the Il-Khanids in the early fourteenth century, European eyes continued to look toward the east, especially Central Asia, for the appearance of the next potential savior. The candidate who emerged toward the end of the century, Timur Lang, proved to be a particularly brutal and ruthless warlord with no discernable Christian sympathies. Yet his potential usefulness in the struggle against the Ottomans was quickly recognized in the West, especially after the Ottomans defeated a coalition of crusading armies at Nicopolis in 1396. Timur's reputation only grew when he routed the Ottomans at the battle of Ankara of 1402, capturing Sultan Bāyazid. The Europeans thus reacted favorably to the letters Timur conveyed to Western monarchs, offering friendship and free trade access, and before long stories began to circulate about his favorable disposition toward Christians. Tendentious missionary reports that may have been influenced by continuing Armenian prophecies about an Oriental ruler ready to join forces with the Franks, helped Timur gain a reputation for sparing Christians and for having liberated Christian slaves from Muslim captivity during his conquests. At the turn of the fifteenth century, wild reports even reached England that Timur had recaptured Jerusalem, had restored the rights of Christian pilgrims, and was about to convert to Christianity with his troops.<sup>16</sup>

In the fifteenth century continued Christian efforts to stem the Ottoman advance focused on Uzun Hasan, the formidable ruler of the Aq Qoyunlu dynasty, one of the more successful among the successor states that came into being following the death of Timur Lang in 1405 and the subsequent demise of his empire. Between 1457 and 1478, the year of his death, Uzun Hasan extended his realm until it encompassed most of Iran. In the process the Ottomans became his main opponents. His efforts to

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<sup>14</sup> Sanjian, pp. 229-31.

<sup>15</sup> Amitai-Preiss, 1990, pp. 10-12.

<sup>16</sup> Jackson, pp. 243-48; Knobler, 1995, pp. 342-44; idem, 1996, p. 191.

find allies against the Ottomans included a marriage with Kyra Catherina, called Despina in the Muslim sources, who was the niece of the last emperor of Trebizonde (Trabzon), an isolated Christian enclave on the Black Sea, all that was then left of Byzantine rule in the east. These efforts also led to a lively diplomatic exchange, especially with Venice, in which Uzun Hasan solicited Western arms and the Italian powers sought military support in their struggle against the Ottomans. Uzun Hasan's conjugal affiliation no doubt played a role in the European perceptions of him. Yet, the diplomatic forays remained largely secular in nature, focusing on a grandiose, quintessentially Renaissance project of recovering and reconstituting the ancient Greco-Roman Empire in the east through him. No wonder that the reputation Uzun Hasan acquired in Europe was suffused with his own self-image as a second Alexander (the Great).<sup>17</sup>

At the turn of the sixteenth century, at the height of the Ottoman menace, a time when some predicted that the Turks would soon penetrate as far as Cologne in Germany, a new light appeared on the eastern horizon: Shah Esmā'il, the charismatic leader of a messianic movement, who in 1501 proclaimed Tabriz his capital and Shi'i Islam the official creed of his realm. In a Europe plagued by religious anxiety, Shah Esmā'il fitted into the same eschatological expectations that also suffused the exploratory initiative of Christopher Columbus. From the earliest days of his reign Europeans, beginning with the Venetians, speculated that he might be a prophet, a renewing force who would return the Christian faith to its pristine beginnings and, more concretely, saw him as a force that might be enlisted in the struggle against the Ottomans.<sup>18</sup> His prophetic aura would quickly fade but not his status as a potential ally against the Turks. Not even Esmā'il's defeat against the Ottomans at the battle of Chālderān in 1514 was powerful enough to destroy that hope, for long after the event reports about the battle circulating in Europe spoke of an Iranian victory.<sup>19</sup> The relationship rested on mutual hopes and expectations: Esmā'il, in turn, was quick to explore European interests in a common front against the Ottomans,

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<sup>17</sup> Piemontese, 1991, pp. 191-203. For the contemporary historical memory of Iran as a classical imperial state, also see idem, 2004, pp. 539-65, esp. pp. 542-43.

<sup>18</sup> Amoretti, ed., pp. 7, 23, 32-39; Ponte, pp. 5-19. As early as 1502, Venice sent an envoy to Iran. Costantino Lascari, a Venetian who had been living in Cyprus for some twenty years, was to gather intelligence about the new ruler and his disposition, to assure him that Venice would support him in his struggle against the Ottomans, and to probe his interest in joining Europe in its war against the same enemy. It is interesting that this relatively close observer, although he never got to see Esmā'il in person, did meet with his Qaramanid ally in Tabriz. He, however, denied the rumors that the new ruler was a prophet; see Lascari's reports in Amoretti, ed., pp. 32-39.

<sup>19</sup> Aubin, 1994, pp. 207-09.

sending various diplomatic missions to the courts of the West for that purpose.

In Christian Europe expectations were raised by rumors circulating in the early sixteenth century to the effect that Esmā'il was intent on destroying the Islamic faith, that he had dogs and horses enter mosques to show his contempt for Islam, and that he had Muslim books burned in all the lands that he conquered. Of his Turcoman warriors, the Qezelbash, it was said that they fought the Ottomans as Muslim heretics, that they destroyed mosques but spared churches, and that they drank wine and ate pork with abandon. This image was complemented by reports that the Qezelbash believed in the Trinity, worshiped the Virgin Mary, and used holy water for a ritual resembling baptism and communion. Before long, stories were told in Europe about the Christian influences on Shah Esmā'il's childhood resulting in lifelong sympathies and affinities. It was said that his mother was a converted Armenian, that an Armenian uncle (or friar) had protected him for five years after his father's death, that for eight years three Armenians had served as his preceptors, reading the gospels and other sacred Christian texts with him, and that he had come to power with Armenian assistance. One self-proclaimed eyewitness, insisting that the Shah had been baptized, even turned him into a personification of Prester John. All this combined to present Esmā'il as a new prophet and to make him acceptable and respectable as a crypto-Christian, a picture that was further enhanced by the claim that he "drank wine, albeit in secret" and that he, too, ate pork. Reports graphically invoked Esmā'il's status as the archenemy of the Ottomans with the remark that he kept a big fat pig named Bāyazīd as an insult to the eponymous Ottoman Sultan. He was also said to have regaled an Ottoman ambassador to a banquet at which wine and pork were served. Such stories even reached Egypt, where the rumor went round that Shah Esmā'il called the Prophet Mohammad a great rascal, that his mother was Christian, and that he offered hospitality to some 15,000 Armenians. Following a time-honored theme, rumor also had it that Esmā'il was bent on reconquering Jerusalem and that once he had accomplished that feat, he would set the Christians enslaved by the Turks free.<sup>20</sup>

The popularization of many of these self-serving stories goes back to a booklet titled *La vita del Sophi*, which contained reports sent to the Venetian Doge Leonardo Loredan by Giovanni Rota, a physician who spent time in Aleppo, where he collected news coming in from Iran.<sup>21</sup> Compiled between 1504 and 1508, *La vita del Sophi* was soon translated

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<sup>20</sup> Amoretti, ed., pp. 30, 101; Pires, I, pp. 23, 26-27; Barbosa, I, p. 83; Vermeulen, pp. 56-57.

<sup>21</sup> Jodogne, ed., pp. 215-16, 218.

and given wider distribution, most notably through a French translation from the hand of Jean Lemaire de Belges, who in 1511 published his *Traicté de la différence des schisms*.<sup>22</sup> This and other such stories were presented to mobilize Christian Europe for a new Crusade. Lemaire de Belges was the historiographer and propagandist of Margaret of Austria, daughter of the Emperor Maximilian and duchess of Savoy, who became governess of the Low Countries in 1504. His treatise thus must be evaluated in the light of the formation of the League of Cambrai in 1508, whose purpose was the creation of a common Christian front against the Ottomans, and the struggle between the Pope and the main monarchies of Europe over the representation of Christianity. Lemaire de Belges was especially critical of Pope Julius II, accusing him of subordinating his spiritual obligations to his temporal interests, of being ungrateful to the French king, and of preferring to engage in acts of hostility against fellow Christians rather than waging war against the real enemy, the Turks. This explains why he portrayed Shah Esmā'il as more laudable than the Pope for his willingness to take on the Ottoman enemy.

## II. THE SAFAVIDS AND CHRISTIANITY

The main question raised by these reports concerns their veracity. It is tempting to dismiss them as figments of the overcharged imagination of Europeans desperate for relief from the advancing Ottomans. Much of the image created rested on long-standing conventions. Thus the idea of Christian mothers and spouses encouraging their sons and husbands to convert had a long ancestry in Europe, beginning with Clothild's influence on the decision of the sixth-century ruler Clovis to take baptism, and extending to the role that Olga, the mother of Vladimir of Kiev, played in the Christianization of Russia. A similar "civilizing" influence was later attributed to the Christian wives of several Mongol rulers.<sup>23</sup> Palmira Brummet rightfully has called the information offered to the European reading public the result of a process in which "layers of story intermingled with literary convention, entertaining anecdote, rumor, observation, official report, trope, and commercial information."<sup>24</sup>

That, and the fact that few of the authors of such narratives actually had set foot in Iran, let alone seen Shah Esmā'il, do of course not mean that the information proffered by them is false or that we can simply relegate these stories to the realm of fiction and fantasy. After all, we know that the Shah's mother was of Christian descent; ample documentation testifies to his predilection for drinking wine in copious

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<sup>22</sup> Lemaire de Belges.

<sup>23</sup> See Ryan, pp. 411-12, 415-16.

<sup>24</sup> Brummet, p. 333.

quantities, and he is also reported to have treated his Armenian subjects with kindness. Several contemporary observers claimed, moreover, that, early on, there were Armenian (and Georgian) warriors among his troops.<sup>25</sup> At the very least it is worth probing the issue further to see where these images came from and whether they are at all grounded in any fact. When we do so on the basis of a variety of sources, we find that, alongside fictional and exaggerated elements, they do reflect reality in that they build on a long, well documented record of Turco-Mongol tolerance of and even sympathy for, manifestations of Christianity that goes back as far as the Seljuqs.

Contrary to the propaganda about persecuted Christians in Seljuq territory that fired up people in Europe to join a crusading war against them, the members of this Turkish dynasty were generally quite well disposed to their non-Muslim subjects and in some cases exhibited a clear interest in Christianity. The attitude toward religion that the Seljuqs brought with them from the Central Asian steppes was devoid of the bigotry that has historically been the hallmark of the monotheistic traditions with their fixation on one single truth and their tendency to scrutinize the nature of people's beliefs. Instead, they evinced an openness to different creeds or perhaps an indifference to any one in particular. The fact that some Seljuq rulers were married to Christian wives, and actually seem to have preferred Christian spouses, reflects this and no doubt played a role as well in their generally favorable attitude to Christianity. Such mixed marriages allowed a great deal of syncretism to flourish and made Christian beliefs filter through and acquire great prestige among those who were nominally Muslim. There are even reports of Seljuq Turks who declared that, as young children, they had been baptized by their mothers, and who believed that this had inoculated them against evil spirits. All this greatly enhanced the prestige of Christians and Christianity.<sup>26</sup> Especially in the period immediately following their arrival in the largely Christian territory of Anatolia, when there naturally was a good deal of interaction with indigenous Christian elements, the Seljuqs were willing to exempt churches and monasteries from taxation, allowed Christians to tend to their own religious affairs, and enlisted Frankish, Armenian and Georgian mercenaries in their military. At the same time Anatolia saw the emergence of a hybrid religious culture in which Christian traditions mingled with Muslim ones,

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<sup>25</sup> For wine drinking, see Matthee, 2005, chaps. 2-3; for Shah Esmā'il protecting Armenians, see Zulalian, 1971, p. 63; for the argument that references to Shah Esmā'il's philo-Armenian sentiments are too rare to counteract the documented brutality of his campaigns in eastern Anatolia, see Aubin, 1988, p. 76; for Armenians and Georgians serving in his army, see Pires, pp. 26-29 and Barbaro and Contarini, II, pp. 189-90.

<sup>26</sup> Zachariadou, pp. 395-403.

Christianity was hailed as a necessary stage in true enlightenment, and Christian practices were incorporated into dervish rituals.<sup>27</sup> There is evidence to believe that, in response, the Christians of Anatolia preferred Seljuq rule to Byzantine domination and that for most of the twelfth century, they experienced a period of peace and prosperity. This tolerance is reflected in Christian sources, whose embellishments gave rise to popular legends, according to which the Byzantine Emperor had baptized Sultan Ghiyās al-Din Kaykhosrow (d. 1211) or that Seljuq rulers secretly practiced Christianity, or that, on her deathbed, the mother of Sultan Kilic (Qilij) Arslan II had implored her son to follow the teaching of Christ.<sup>28</sup>

A general atmosphere of tolerance and more than a passing interest in Christianity on the part of rulers persisted into the Mongol period. The Mongols displayed a remarkable openness to outside influence, including religious influence, that has become legendary and that had contributed to their status as cultural brokers *par excellence*. As Thomas Allsen explains, their penchant for cultural diversity can be attributed in part to a lack of specialization and an attendant need to attract talent from far and wide, in part to a habit of “mobilizing and monopolizing the spiritual resources of the realm” for the benefit of their empire. Outsiders figured prominently in this quest, precisely because they were outsiders. They thus were seen not just as people endowed with exceptional skills but also as carriers of magical, even supernatural powers, an important qualification in a society that attached great importance to the idea of the holy man. This same attribution also played a role in the Mongol habit of staging doctrinal disputations attended by representatives of diverse creeds and sects.<sup>29</sup>

As had been the case with the Seljuqs, Christian relatives and spouses clearly played a role in the specific interest in Christianity evinced by the Mongols. Some of Chingiz Khan’s wives were high-born Christian women and one of them, Sorqotani Begi, would become the chief wife of his younger son, Tolui, and the mother of the Great Khans, Möngke and Qubilāy, as well as of the first Il-Khan, Hülegü (Hulāku). Hülegü’s principal wife, Doquz Khātun, was a Nestorian Christian, too. Rashid al-Din Fazl Allāh Hamadāni, the author of *Jāme‘al-tawārikh* on the history of the Mongols, insists that she persuaded her husband to treat the Christians of the lands he conquered with leniency, and her efforts saved the lives of many Christians during the Mongol onslaught on

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<sup>27</sup> Wolper, pp. 74-81.

<sup>28</sup> Turan, pp. 70-83. There were exceptions, such as the rule of Mohammad/Mehmet, the son of Dāneshmand Ghāzi, who feared that his Christians subjects might support the Byzantine emperor.

<sup>29</sup> Allsen, p. 200, basing himself on Mary Helms’s argument.

Baghdad in 1258. Tegüder at a young age converted to Christianity under the influence of his Christian (probably Nestorian) mother, Qutui Khātun. (He would later convert to Islam, the first of the Mongol rulers to do so, and rule as Ahmad Khan.) Ket-Buqā, Hülegü's preeminent general who in 1260 commanded the Il-Khanid forces at the battle of 'Ayn Jālūt, was a Christian too, and Armenian as well as Georgian contingents had aided the Mongols in subduing Baghdad two years earlier.<sup>30</sup> Having forged a strategic relationship with the Il-Khans, the Armenians publicized the status that Christianity apparently enjoyed among the Mongols, while Western monks familiar with the Mongols did their part in playing up the beneficial influence wielded by their Christian consorts.<sup>31</sup>

It is important to realize in this context that the Armenians submitted to the Mongols and cooperated with them because they had little alternative, because it offered them an ally against the Mamluks, and because it gave them leverage against an overbearing Roman church whose initiatives in Asia were marked by efforts to bring Eastern Christianity back into the Latin fold.<sup>32</sup> The notion that all Mongol rulers were philo-Christians and that Christian property was not taxed under them must be qualified, too, since the situation varied from ruler to ruler and was in part induced by political considerations and circumstances.<sup>33</sup> It is essential to remember, moreover, that for the Mongols "religious alliances took second place to the task of conquering and governing the empire."<sup>34</sup> Their approach to faith and religious belief thus was governed by a policy of divide and rule. Rather than privileging one particular religion, the Mongols seem to have engaged in religious pluralism from a conviction that all religions represented the truth. It is nevertheless true that Armenian and Nestorian Christian influence on the Mongols was considerable, to the point where Möngke Khan converted to Christianity at the behest of Armenians residing at his court.<sup>35</sup> Nor did Mongol support for the Armenians disappear with Ghāzān Khan's conversion to Islam in 1295. Armenian-Il-Khanid relations did deteriorate, but not until a decade afterwards and only in the context of a general decline of central control in Mongol territory.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> See Ryan, p. 416; Roux, pp. 131-68; Bundy, p. 38; Amitai Preiss, 2001, p. 17.

<sup>31</sup> Richard, 1969, p. 50.

<sup>32</sup> Bundy, p. 39.

<sup>33</sup> Thus the letter sent by Hülegü to King Louis IX of France in 1262 came after the Mongol defeat at 'Ayn Jālūt. The friendly attitude toward Christians that it expresses must naturally be seen in light of the Mongol request for European assistance at this point; see Meyvart, pp. 245-59.

<sup>34</sup> Jackson, p. 100.

<sup>35</sup> Bedrosian, p. 281.

<sup>36</sup> Stewart, pp. 45-61.

Many of these trends and tendencies continued under the Safavids, as they did under the Mughals in India and, to a lesser extent, under the Ottomans. Esmā'il's Christian pedigree is uncontested. His mother, Halima Begom, also known as 'Alamshah Bigum, was the granddaughter of Calo Johannes, the penultimate emperor of the Christian enclave of Trebizond. According to Armenian and Venetian sources, she hid her sons in an Armenian monastery on Akhtamar Island in Lake Van.<sup>37</sup> This makes the story of the young Esmā'il having an Armenian tutor plausible indeed. Although there is no proven connection, it appears that Shah Esmā'il was kindly disposed toward his Armenian subjects, allowing them to take on an important role in the trade of his fledgling state.<sup>38</sup> And, ultimately, Shah Esmā'il projected himself as the champion of inclusiveness and syncretism by calling himself the reincarnation of not just the Abrahamic prophets but the heroes of Iran's pre-Islamic past as well.<sup>39</sup>

The role of women in the religious inclinations of rulers shows some continuity, too. Already under the Seljuqs, Christian wives of rulers may have influenced official policy.<sup>40</sup> The Mongols are of course famous for the prominent role their women played in public life. The influx of Armenians and Georgians into Iran in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was of great significance in this regard, for in the process the harems of rulers and court officials became filled with women from the Caucasus. The claim by a missionary that Shah Safī (r. 1629-42) was not circumcised at the time of his accession and refused to undergo the operation at that point with the argument that he was too old, if true, may point to far-reaching influence of his mother and grandmother, both of them Christians.<sup>41</sup> The Christian connection through the royal harem continued to color attitudes until the end of Safavid rule. As Father Krusinski put it in the early eighteenth century, the Georgian women of the harem preserved "a very strong inclination for the religion of their ancestors and their country." As proof he noted that the harem princesses were in the habit of taking Christian names, adding that the name Maryam was a common one in reference to the Mary, the mother of Christ. As he put it, "The women being accustomed to the name, they have a sort of veneration for the holy virgin from which it comes they honor her images, receive and preserve them with respect, and Shah

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<sup>37</sup> Aubin, 1988, p. 105.

<sup>38</sup> Zulalian, p. 63.

<sup>39</sup> Minorsky, pp. 1006-53; see also Babayan, p. 209.

<sup>40</sup> Möhring, p. 133.

<sup>41</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, I, p. 308, n. 1.

Hussein himself voluntarily admitted them, notwithstanding the Law of Mahomet, which positively forbids it.”<sup>42</sup>

To be sure, the Safavid adherence to Shi‘ism and its status as the realm’s official and legitimizing creed created a complicated picture in which an inherited tendency to indulge other faiths vied with an equally strong inclination to be suspicious of religious differences, if not to display outright hostility to belief systems other than Shi‘i Islam. Shah Tahmāsb is a case in point. His fear of contamination by non-Shi‘is was legendary. He is also on record for his brutality against priests and Christian houses of worship during his expedition against Georgia in 958/1551. Eskandar Beg Torkamān Monshi’s chronicle contains the following passage in his account of the ruler’s behavior at the fortress of Vardzia, where a number of Georgian nobles had taken refuge against the Iranians and which included a magnificent church:

Shah Tahmasb walked to inspect the church, and in that infidel place of worship, he put to death twenty irreligious priests and sent them to perdition. The church bell, which had been cast of the finest bronze, was smashed and destroyed like the lives of the Georgians. The steel doors and the gold doors were torn down. Together with the rest of the luxury items, ornaments and untold wealth which had been amassed in the treasuries of those ill-starred evildoers, they were transported back to the royal treasury. The fortress was smashed and razed to the ground.<sup>43</sup>

Some contemporary outside observers went further and claimed that Muslim Iranians in general abhorred Christians and were inclined to shun anyone other than Shi‘i Muslims as ritually unclean (*najēs*).<sup>44</sup> This is at best a generalization, however, for there are countless examples throughout the Safavid period of Iranians freely interacting with non-Muslims. It is clear that the rule of ritual purity was not widely observed, not even by clerics. The Portuguese traveler Manuel Godinho, for instance, reports how he met an Iranian mulla who was eager to discuss religious matters with him and who sat at the table with him and ate rice “stewed by my servant, having no scruples about it being forbidden by his religion.”<sup>45</sup> In general, it seems that it was mostly simple, uneducated people and many, although not all, members of the clergy who expressed a wariness of non-Muslims and adhered to the purity laws.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Krusinski, I, pp. 128-29. The reference is to Shah Sultan Hosays (r. 1694-1722).

<sup>43</sup> Eskandar Beg Monshi, tr., I, p. 144; see also Qāzi Ahmad, I, pp. 351-52.

<sup>44</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, I, p. 157.

<sup>45</sup> Godinho, p. 119.

<sup>46</sup> Sanson, pp. 254-55.

## III. SHAH 'ABBĀS I AND CHRISTIANITY

Such wariness of other creeds is said to have changed with Shah 'Abbās I (r. 1587-1629), whose friendliness toward Christians had already become legendary during his lifetime. Judging by the brutality of his campaigns into Armenia in 1603-04 and into Georgia in the 1610s, this philo-Christianity only went so far. But certain things did change. One conspicuous example concerns the official approach to *najāsāt*. It was Shah 'Abbās I who broke with the rules of ritual impurity in his contact with Armenians.<sup>47</sup> And the same ruler went much further. Like his contemporary in the east, Sultan Akbar in Mughal India, Shah 'Abbās showed a great interest in people of different faiths and liked to converse with Christians, both those living in his own realm and those visiting from abroad.<sup>48</sup> Numerous stories relate how this Safavid ruler freely mingled with representatives of the Christian faith, indigenous ones as well as visitors from abroad, and how he showed great interest in the Gospels and other Christian writings.<sup>49</sup> Even if we strip the period from the halo that over time came to surround it, it is no mere nostalgia to say that Shah 'Abbās's reign represents the acme of openness to people from various creeds. Contemporary Western visitors are virtually unanimous in their praise for the tolerance shown them by members of the Iranian elite. One missionary was astounded at the freedom enjoyed by Europeans in Iran, even those who, as he said, misbehaved by getting drunk and by galloping their horses across city squares while hitting people. He insisted that the "Persians will allow Franks to do everything except forcing the *harams* of the elite, because the Shah so wills it."<sup>50</sup>

In light of all this it is little surprising that the image of a crypto-Christian shah ready to convert officially remained alive under Shah 'Abbās. In fact, the first serious papal initiative to send missionaries to mainland Iran with the task of establishing a permanent mission was prompted by a story, conveyed by an ex-Jesuit monk by the name of Francisco da Costa who visited Iran on his way back from India in 1599, that 'Abbās was ready to convert to the Christian faith. This soon led to the dispatch of several Western missions that carried Christian objects as gifts designed to reinforce the monarch's enthusiasm for the faith.<sup>51</sup> The image of a Muslim ruler ready to convert was an old one, familiar from the Mongols as well as Timur, and similar to stories told about the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet (Mohammad) II, rumored to be a crypto-

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> For Akbar and Christians, see Mathew, pp. 114-31.

<sup>49</sup> For the later interest, see Gulbenkian, pp. 79 ff.

<sup>50</sup> A Chronicle of the Carmelites I, p. 104.

<sup>51</sup> See Alonso, 1996; for the gifts, see Simpson, pp. 141-50.

Christian, who on his deathbed had shown great interest in Christian relics and in burning candles. There was also the story about Sultan Akbar in India, who until his death was seen as prone to conversion by hopeful Portuguese missionaries.<sup>52</sup> Christian spouses remained pivotal to the trope, too. Thus when Hosayn-‘Ali Beg appeared in Rome in 1601 as Shah ‘Abbās’s ambassador, many assumed that his aim was to offer Iran’s assistance in the struggle against the Ottomans. There were those, however, who surmised that the envoy had come to Rome to give the Pope a response from Shah ‘Abbās’s Georgian wife. Clement VIII was thought previously to have sent a message to the Shah’s spouse to see if she could persuade her husband to accept the Christian faith.<sup>53</sup>

Shah ‘Abbās’s reign has become known as a period in which Iran’s Christians enjoyed favorable treatment and foreign representatives of the Christian faith or Christian countries were welcomed with open arms in the country. When in 1602 the Christians of Lār complained that Ebrāhim Khan, the local ruler, had robbed them of their money, the shah issued a royal decree, *farmān*, to Allāhverdi Khan, the Armenian governor of Fārs and Ebrāhim Khan’s superior, to have the money restored to their owners.<sup>54</sup> The most conspicuous manifestation of this hospitality was the shah’s permission to representatives of various religious orders to establish permanent convents in Isfahan and other cities in his realm. There were precedents for this too, to be sure. Thus, the Il-Khanid ruler Abu Sa‘id Bahādor Khan (r. 717-36/1317-35) issued a *farmān* allowing Italian monks to build churches and monasteries in his territory. Soon the Franciscans alone had an estimated fourteen convents in Il-Khanid lands.<sup>55</sup>

Although their tendency to take pride in their voluntary poverty created some disdain and even ridicule among Iranians who thought little of such self-imposed austerity displayed by representatives from abroad, the Christian friars appear to have been admired and to have enjoyed a certain popularity in Iran for being erudite and well versed in popular and important subjects like mathematics and philosophy, as well as for their willingness to engage in debate about these subjects. One gets the distinct impression that Shah ‘Abbās’s general friendliness to Christians, and especially to European Christians, was in part related to his eagerness to learn, to converse about an array of topics with a wide variety of interlocutors, and to explore the working and mysteries of faith. This, too, was built on existing patterns with origins in the Central Asian steppes. The Seljuqs had organized disputations between Christians and

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<sup>52</sup> For Mehmet II, see Roux, 1984, p. 409.

<sup>53</sup> Lefevre, p. 365.

<sup>54</sup> Mulla Jalāl al-Din Monajjem, pp. 212-13.

<sup>55</sup> Turan, p. 97

Muslims. The Mongols continued this tradition by frequently holding meetings between representatives of different religions where questions of religion and philosophy were debated. This tradition was transmitted to the Middle East at large. It was energetically practiced by Sultan Akbar in India, and it continued to exist in the Ottoman Empire until the reign of Sultan Solaymān the Lawgiver, who restricted such debates to members of the Muslim clergy.<sup>56</sup> Nor was this demeanor confined to the shah and the royal court. Countless eyewitness reports testify to a similar eagerness among educated Iranians, including religious officials, to discuss matters of religion, philosophy, and science with Westerners. In keeping with the notion of the outsider as purveyor of supernatural knowledge, some missionaries also gained a reputation for medical expertise among common people and used this to create goodwill in their efforts to preach the Gospel, thus establishing a tradition that would last well into the twentieth century.<sup>57</sup> There are even reports about missionaries baptizing children on their deathbeds, with the consent or even at the request of their Muslim parents, although it is difficult to assess the veracity of these reports.<sup>58</sup>

What accounts for this receptiveness, other than the features that we have discussed in some detail is a tradition of openness built in part on a religiously sanctioned acceptance of members of other monotheistic faiths, in part on a long history of interaction with people of diverse creeds, in part on intellectual curiosity, and perhaps, in part, on a belief that assembling representatives from diverse climes and background around the court served to enhance its stature and aura. In an effort to probe the question further, it is important to realize, first of all, that Iranian officials in the Safavid period were all but strict in observing the rules of their faith. As Jean Chardin put it, spiritual matters at the Safavid court were clearly subordinate to temporal concerns, and there is good reason to lend credence to the claim of one missionary that Iran's political authorities were not particularly religious.<sup>59</sup> The ruling classes certainly flouted the religious law with their copious drinking. The best example of behavior unbecoming of a Muslim is perhaps that high officials did not seem to recoil from keeping, and even eating, the meat

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<sup>56</sup> Roux, pp. 146-51.

<sup>57</sup> Antonio de Gouvea, p. 477; "Mémoire de la mission d'Erzeron," III, p. 286. One missionary in the late seventeenth century propagated medical knowledge as one of the best ways of creating goodwill in eastern lands; see [Bénigne Vachet], fol. 376. Over time, such knowledge indeed became a common way for Westerners to gain acceptance and popularity among the population of the Middle East. According to Binning (I, p. 161), traveling in Iran in the 1840s, "Every Frank traveling in the East is, in a matter of course, dubbed a 'médecin malgré lui.'"

<sup>58</sup> Wilson, pp. 687-88; Zimmel, p. 15.

<sup>59</sup> Chardin, VI, p. 48; "Lettre du Révérend Père H. B\*\*\*, IV, p. 108.

of hogs, that ultimate symbol of non-Muslim impurity. The Portuguese traveler Nicolau de Orta Rebelo, visiting Shiraz in 1608, reports how he saw domesticated pigs in the vicinity of the palace of Allāh-verdi Khan, the powerful Armenian governor of Fārs. When he expressed amazement, people told him that everyone, including the Khan, who owned the pigs, was very fond of pork.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, the Portuguese cleric-cum envoy Antonio de Gouvea tells an intriguing story of how Shah ‘Abbās not only allowed the Portuguese to kill pigs and eat pork for Christmas, but also brought out pigs himself, which, he explained, the prince of Georgia had sent him and which were kept in a village near Isfahan, to be slaughtered for the purpose.<sup>61</sup> The role that Georgians and Armenians, the mainstay of the newly emerging Safavid elite, played in this cannot be underestimated.

Although the recorded instances of cordial treatment of Christians are too numerous to ignore or dismiss as unrepresentative and based on wishful thinking, it would be erroneous to ascribe such treatment simply as a matter of inherent tolerance or merely as a function of the influence of Christian spouses. Pragmatism played a role, and perhaps the overriding role, in this demeanor. This operated on different levels. One concerned the use-fulness of local Christians as intermediaries in relations with the West. Iranian rulers had long made use of Armenians as diplomats in their contacts with European courts. As early as 1471 we hear of an Armenian named Murad (Morād) arriving in Venice on behalf of Uzun Hasan, and Shah Tahmāsb in 1541 sent Armenians to gather intelligence in Europe.<sup>62</sup> Among the numerous envoys Shah ‘Abbās dispatched to European capitals, there were quite a few Armenians.

Shah ‘Abbās’s practical approach with regard to Christians comes through in his announcement, reported by Antonio de Gouvea following the latter’s success in having a Polish slave freed who denied ever having converted to Islam, that any of his subjects who wished to become Christian would be free to do so on condition that de Gouvea and his colleague missionaries would not prevent any Christian from converting to Islam.<sup>63</sup> One detects the same type of approach with regard to the influx of Christians in the form of the thousands of Georgians and Armenians who were brought to Iran following campaigns into the Caucasus region in 1614-16. As Rula Abisaab has suggested, Shah ‘Abbās may have been intent on creating a religious and social climate in which these new Christian subjects could assimilate. The influx was certainly a concern for the Shi‘ite clergy who, led by Shaykh Bahā’ al-

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<sup>60</sup> Serrão, p. 125.

<sup>61</sup> de Gouvea, p. 499.

<sup>62</sup> Zekiyān, pp. 357-58; Neck, p. 74.

<sup>63</sup> de Gouvea, p. 178.

Din 'Āmeli, better known as Shaykh Bahā'i, wrote a number of treatises detailing the legality of eating meat slaughtered by non-Muslims and of the permissibility of allowing Christians to abide by their own dietary rules and the drinking of wine. Shaykh Bahā'i tended to be flexible in his opinion on such matters, perhaps reflecting royal encouragement to create a congenial environment for newly arrived Christians.<sup>64</sup>

Part of the perceived usefulness of Christian immigrants was surely economic in character. Shah 'Abbās's well-known forcible removal of a large number of Armenians from Julfa on the Aras River to a newly built suburb of Isfahan called New Julfa took place in the context of war and was part of a strategy of scorched-earth warfare. But just as the Seljuqs had engaged in mass deportation of Christians to encourage the cultivation of underdeveloped lands,<sup>65</sup> and just as the Ottomans, after conquering Cyprus in 1570, settled Jews on the island for economic purposes, in his case, too, a desire to utilize a community known for its industriousness played a role in their resettlement.<sup>66</sup>

Beyond economic motivations lay strategic considerations. Shah 'Abbās's friendliness to Christian agents is likely to have been a matter of deliberate ambiguity, a strategy designed to woo and propitiate European rulers. Here, too, there are Mongol antecedents. The main reason why the Il-Khans maintained strong diplomatic relations with the courts of Christian Europe even after they converted to Islam was their need for allies in their struggles against the Turks and the Mamluks. The ephemeral Sultan Baydu (r. 1295) was wont to declare to visiting Christians that he was a Christian and to Muslims that he was a Muslim, ostensibly so as to widen his options for making alliances.<sup>67</sup> It has long been recognized that Shah 'Abbās's desire to contain the Ottomans was an important motivating factor behind his famed tolerance of Christians. As Antonio de Gouvea put it, the shah intended to isolate Istanbul by forging a strategic alliance with the Christian powers of Europe, and thought that the surest way of obtaining such a pact would be by having missionaries in his country.<sup>68</sup> Another missionary concurred by saying that the shah did not favor Christians because he liked them but because he considered them useful in obtaining European assistance against his Ottoman enemies.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Abisaab, p. 67.

<sup>65</sup> Turan, p. 88.

<sup>66</sup> Herzig, 1990, pp. 59-71. At the request of Allāh-verdi Khan, the governor of Fārs, 500 Armenian families were also settled in Shiraz, "en raison du bon caractère et de la loyauté de ces gens," as chronicler Arakel of Tabriz put it. Some were also sent to Farahābād in Māzandarān; see Brosset, I, pp. 291, 488.

<sup>67</sup> Roux, 1984, p. 408.

<sup>68</sup> de Gouvea, p. 11.

<sup>69</sup> Florencio des Niño Jesús, p. 109.

That Shah ‘Abbās’s approach to Christians and Christianity was informed less by natural sympathies than by strategic considerations is further suggested by the anger he showed towards Christian countries after he learned that they had made peace with the Ottomans in 1607.<sup>70</sup> The differential treatment his own Christians received from him and the fact that on several occasions religious rules were strictly applied and Christians were put under pressure to convert all point in the same direction. As Edmund Herzig notes, Shah ‘Abbās was “responsible for more instances of anti-Christian persecution than any of his successors.”<sup>71</sup> In 1613 an incident involving de Gouvea making tactless remarks about the local New Julfa community raised the shah’s suspicions about links between Iran’s Armenians and the Church of Rome. The result was that Armenians were prohibited from visiting the houses of European missionaries and also ordered to repay the loan the shah had given them following their forcible resettlement of 1604.<sup>72</sup> In 1620 an official ban on the consumption of wine for all Muslims was pro-claimed.<sup>73</sup> The following year saw the onset of a campaign, begun in Armenian villages around Isfahan, which was designed to make the Armenians apostatize. This story, too, is told as one of personal revenge: the shah apparently blew up in rage after he had overheard Armenians speak ill of him. The date of the presumed affront, the summer of 1621, does not accord with the proclamation of the ban on wine a year earlier, however, and thus casts doubt on explanations that focus on a personal grudge. It was likely that clerical pressure played a role in this campaign. The ulama and, most notably, the prominent Shaykh Bahā’i, are said to have instigated it. Mounting tensions with the Portuguese, which culminated in the Safavid attack on their stronghold of Hormoz in 1622, need to be considered as a motivating factor as well.<sup>74</sup>

Following the attack on Hormoz, Shah ‘Abbās decreed that the Armenians and other Christians who had been settled on the borders of Bakhtiyāri territory would have to convert to Islam and that their churches were to be turned into mosques. Eskandar Beg Torkamān Monshi portrays the campaign as a measure taken with the interests of the Armenians in mind. Shah ‘Abbās, he notes, took up this plan in the context of a weak central state and out of fear that if the Armenians remained *zemmīs* (adherents of other revealed religions), they might be exposed to attacks by neighboring Lor tribes, who, as he put it, were

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<sup>70</sup> Gulbenkian, III, p. 321.

<sup>71</sup> Herzig, 1991, p. 82.

<sup>72</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, I, pp. 206-07.

<sup>73</sup> Della Valle, 1813, II, pp. 143-44.

<sup>74</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, I, pp. 256-57

naturally given to causing mischief and injury.<sup>75</sup> The reality appears to be somewhat different, however, for in the same year a large number of Armenians and Assyrians who had been captured as part of the seizure of Tabriz, as well as the Armenian inhabitants of a village near Isfahan, were all made to convert to Islam.<sup>76</sup> Following his taking Baghdad in late 1623, the shah forced the Armenians living in Mesopotamia to be circumcised “as an act of gratitude to his accursed Mohammad,” as the Carmelite fathers of Isfahan put it.<sup>77</sup> The monarch was careful to spare the New Julfa community in any of his measures, though. He also proved amenable to monetary incentives, for he accepted 1,000 tumans in extra taxes as a price for putting a halt to the forced conversion campaign.<sup>78</sup>

A similar attitude emerges from an incident that occurred in the spring of 1626, during Shah ‘Abbās’s absence from Isfahan. The Carmelite missionaries in Isfahan were rounded up in an operation led by grand vizier Khalifa Soltān (a.k.a. Soltān al-‘Olamā’), which subsequently proved to rest on a misunderstanding. The vizier came with 200 soldiers to search the Carmelite convent. The missionaries were bound and led away with their hands behind their backs. “As they passed, individuals from the populace variously expressed compassion out of regard for kindnesses received, or hostility on account of dislike of proselytism.” They were led before the vizier who greeted them politely, upbraiding the soldiers for the rough treatment. Soon the same magistrate learned that the captives were “missionaries of the Pope,” and that he and his officers had made a mistake, for it appeared that the shah had sent him instructions to remove not them but the “Portuguese Fathers” (i.e. the Augustinians) to Shiraz, on account of the “Portuguese activity in Basra against Persian interests and forces,” a reference to the military assistance the Portuguese had been lending to Basra in its defense against Iranian aggression in 1624. So the Augustinians were rounded up, “but courteously, and the Carmelites were set free.” The Augustinians were subsequently expelled from Isfahan, and not allowed to return until a year later, when it had become clear that they were innocent of “the troubles.”<sup>79</sup> A perception of collusion and collaboration between Portugal and Portuguese nationals residing in Iran clearly played a role in this measure.

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<sup>75</sup> Eskandar Beg, tr. , pp. 1181-82.

<sup>76</sup> Della Valle, 1628, pp. 53, 65-68.

<sup>77</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, p. 271. Little more is known about this than that the persecution had stopped by the fall of 1624, possibly after payments had been made by the community in question.

<sup>78</sup> Ghougassian, pp. 73, 75.

<sup>79</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, I, pp. 281-82; for the affairs of Basra in this period, see Matthee, 2006, pp. 53-78.

#### IV. THE PERIOD OF SHAH SAFI I (1629-42) AND SHAH 'ABBĀS II (1642-66)

The period following the reign of Shah 'Abbās I is rife with ambiguity with regard to the treatment of Christians. Under Shah Safi (r. 1629-42), 'Abbās's grandson and successor, the cordial relations with Christian powers of Europe cooled off somewhat, mostly, it seems, because the monarch himself was less interested in diplomatic overtures toward the West than his grandfather had been. We have reports in this period of increased pressure on Christians to convert.<sup>80</sup> There may have been direct economic reasons for this, or it may have been related to a growing perception that Christians formed a fifth column in the country. We have some evidence for the existence and the growing outspokenness of a xenophobic faction at the court in this period, but as the shah was not particularly religious himself, and since he managed to keep the clergy at bay, there was little sustained effort in that direction. On a personal level, Shah Safi, for all his well-attested cruelty, was similar to his grandfather in being well disposed to Christian visitors from abroad, something that clearly contributed to the positive rating he received from resident missionaries.<sup>81</sup>

The reign of Shah Safi's successor, Shah 'Abbās II, is marked by a great paradox. Chardin's famous claim that many upper-class Iranians were really deists certainly applies to Shah 'Abbās II himself. Harboring a fondness for Sufism, the shah is not known for any rigidity and zeal in his religious beliefs. Chardin states it best when he says that 'Abbās II was certainly attached to the Muslim faith, thus gainsaying contemporary Armenian claims that he was more Christian than Muslim, but that he considered himself put on the throne by God to rule as a king responsible for the welfare of all his subjects, not as a tyrant bent on the curtailment of freedom, including the freedom of conscience.<sup>82</sup>

The Carmelites claimed that Shah 'Abbās II's relations with the representatives of the European missionary orders were markedly cooler than they had been under Shah 'Abbās I. Any manifestation of this is likely to have been a function of the disappearance of the Ottoman threat and therefore the need to curry favor with agents and emissaries of potential European allies.<sup>83</sup> Yet on a personal level, the shah certainly remained cordial and forthcoming towards visitors from Christian lands, to the extent of allowing representatives from European countries and agents of Western interests to join him in his drinking sessions and even

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<sup>80</sup> Olearius, p. 535.

<sup>81</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, I, pp. 350-51.

<sup>82</sup> Chardin, IX, p. 514.

<sup>83</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites* I, p. 352.

to drink from his own goblet.<sup>84</sup> Like his great-grandfather, Shah ‘Abbās II had a great interest in intellectual debate, and this, too, he indulged in with long conversations with European visitors. So great was the hope generated by this congeniality among missionaries that even the time-honored story of Muslim rulers adopting Christianity resurfaced in the form of a claim, posthumously conveyed by Krusinski, that, on his deathbed, Shah ‘Abbās II converted to Christianity and was baptized by Raphael du Mans. The story is no doubt apocryphal (there is no evidence that Raphael du Mans was in Māzandarān at the time, he does not refer to it in his account on Iran, and Krusinski himself expressed doubt on its veracity) and it merely reflects the stubborn hopes of missionaries who had little to show for their proselytizing activities even among local Armenians.<sup>85</sup>

The more important subject of Shah ‘Abbās II’s rapport with indigenous Christian communities shows a good deal of ambiguity. Until the end of his reign, the shah continued to act as a countervailing force to clerical bigotry, at least on a personal level. Chardin’s claim that it was the secular authorities who protected non-Muslims, often against clerics who decried their presence and activities in the country, applies to Shah ‘Abbās I more than to any other Safavid ruler, but retained much of its validity in the reign of Shah ‘Abbās II. As the Frenchman put it, if it were not for the shah and his men, the clerical estate long ago would have forced all resident Jews and Christians to convert to Islam.<sup>86</sup> Both Chardin and Kaempfer give examples of Shah ‘Abbās threatening high officials who had treated foreign Christians badly with dismissal and punishment.<sup>87</sup>

Shah ‘Abbās II’s presumed attitude of tolerance and latitudinarianism is difficult to reconcile with the outbreak of persecution against Iran’s Armenians and Jews that took place in his reign. At various times between 1645 and 1654 the authorities made attempts to force Iran’s Jews to convert, forbade Christians from selling alcohol to Muslims, and took other measures directed against Iran’s non-Shi‘i inhabitants. In 1657 the Armenians were driven out of Isfahan. The same period also witnessed an increase in pressure on Christians to convert to Islam, with a law that had been enacted by Shah ‘Abbās I, according to which Armenian converts to Islam became the sole inheritors of their

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<sup>84</sup> See Matthee, 2005, p. 56.

<sup>85</sup> Krusinski, I, pp. 129-30.

<sup>86</sup> Chardin, VI, pp. 73-74.

<sup>87</sup> Kaempfer, p. 46. Writing more than a half century after the event, Kaempfer even claimed that Shah ‘Abbās threatened to impale the *shaykh al-Eslām* of Isfahan who had criticized him for his friendliness to Christians.

family fortune, becoming operational and leading to mass conversion among Christians.<sup>88</sup>

In trying to explain this contrast, the first thing to realize is that, invariably, the measures were instigated by officials around the shah rather than the shah himself, with a succession of grand viziers beginning with Mirzā Mohammad Sāru Taqi (served 1634-45) taking the lead. Chardin claims that the latter constantly urged the shah to enact measures against Christians, recommending that, like the Jews, they be forced to wear a special mark on their clothing. The shah, who had always resisted this, rebuffed his grand vizier, according to Chardin, who also attributed Sāru Taqi's fall and demise in 1645 in part to the ruler's dislike of the aversion his vizier harbored against Christianity.<sup>89</sup> Sāru Taqi made many enemies during his career, but there is no indication of his particular animosity *vis-à-vis* Christians other than that he levied ten times the annual tax of New Julfa in a period of five months, a measure that, if true, was in accordance with his overall zeal in increasing tax revenue for the royal coffers.<sup>90</sup>

No such ambiguity exists in the case of Khalifa Soltān, who in 1645 succeeded Sāru Taqi as grand vizier and who served in that capacity until 1654. Khalifa Soltān illustrates the extent to which the growing power and influence of the ulama at the time played a role in the measures that were enacted against indigenous Jews and Armenians. Khalifa Soltān was chosen for his political experience and qualities, to be sure (he had served as grand vizier between 1623 and 1632 also), but he was also known as a hardline cleric, and he proved to be much less open to local Christians than any of his predecessors (although, like so many clerics, he did show an interest in the doctrinal tenets of Christianity, interrogating visiting missionaries about their creed).<sup>91</sup> The Dutch report how on 3 December 1645, one-and-a-half months after his accession, the Armenian fur manufacturers and vendors of Isfahan were forced to close their shops so as to make room for Muslim artisans. The Armenians, not without resources, sought recourse with the *qollar-āqāsi*, Siyāvosh Beg, himself a former Christian. According to the author of the *'Abbās-nāma*, they also sent money to the *sarkār-e khāssa* (crown domain), which probably means, to the queen-mother, the official patron of New Julfa. The same source insists that this did not have the desired effect, but the Dutch reveal that, after these actions and a public protest on the royal

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<sup>88</sup> Baghdiantz-McCabe, p. 379.

<sup>89</sup> Chardin, IX, p. 517; Krusinski, I, p. 129.

<sup>90</sup> Chardin, VII, p. 315.

<sup>91</sup> Richard, 1995, II, p. 208, n. 20.

square, a compromise was reached whereby each group was allowed to have its shops in its own quarter.<sup>92</sup>

Khalifa Soltān's successor, Mohammad Beg (in office 1654-61), became known as much for his eagerness to adopt and import Western technology and know-how as for his curiosity about Christianity. He befriended several Christian visitors, among them the prior of the Jesuit mission in Isfahan, the learned Father Aymé Chézaud, who impressed the chief minister with his debating skills during disputations with the ulama and who with his assistance was able to obtain the real estate property he needed to establish a convent in town.<sup>93</sup> Mohammad Beg also continued the trend of increased pressure on Iran's indigenous non-Muslims. His appointment to the position of grand vizier in early 1654 was soon followed by measures targeting the country's *zemmi* population. Before the year was out, some Christian churches had been closed, and bans had been issued on the construction of new ones in New Julfa and on the tolling of church bells.<sup>94</sup> Christians were also prohibited from selling wine to Muslims.<sup>95</sup> More drastically, new pressure was put on the Jews of Isfahan, Shiraz and Lār: they were given a choice between conversion and expulsion from those cities, as well as loss of commercial employment. Many complied by pretending to become Muslim while expressing a readiness to offer the shah a large gift in exchange for a repeal of this measure. Also, with the exception of East India Company merchants and missionaries, Christians in 1657 were no longer allowed to stay in Isfahan proper but had to move across the river Zāyanda Rud. Both the Dutch and Du Mans explain this last measure as a function of clerical incitement, the latter pointing to a zealous mulla concerned about ritual purity and contamination, who had apparently told the shah that Christians washed themselves as well as their clothes and their wine jugs in the water of a canal that was connected to the royal palace.<sup>96</sup> But the Armenians of New Julfa had a hand in this outburst of intolerance as well, at least as far as it was directed against European missionaries. Anxious about the growing influx and activities of Christian preachers, they wrote letters to the court arguing that these foreigners had come to convert Muslims to Christianity. The pressure they thus exerted led to the issue of various orders to recall their missionaries from New Julfa.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Vahid Qazvini pp. 415-16; NA, VOC 1152, Daghregister Bastynck, fols. 246-49.

<sup>93</sup> Wilson, tr. and ed., pp. 697-99; Villotte, pp. 134-35; Zimmel, pp. 22-24.

<sup>94</sup> Richard, 1995, II, pp. 217-18, 143; Manucci, IV, p. 192.

<sup>95</sup> Chardin, VII, p. 411.

<sup>96</sup> NA, VOC 1215, Willemsz., Gamron to Batavia, 30 March 1657, fol. 864; idem in VOC 1224, fol. 285v; Richard, 1995, I, p. 143.

<sup>97</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites* II, p. 1075.

Changing circumstances within the domestic Armenian community and in Iran's strategic interaction with the outside world contributed to the growing vulnerability of Iran's Armenians as well. Vazken Ghougassian has documented how the contested appointment of Dawit Julayec'i as head of the diocese of New Julfa in 1646 led to a serious rift in Iran's Armenian community. One branch declared itself faithful to the Church of Rome and began to undermine the rival branch, that of the Schismatics, who remained the dominant force in New Julfa. Catholicism also made inroads through the growing collaboration between the Catholic Armenians and Catholic European powers and the use the latter made of the former to gain access and influence in Iran.<sup>98</sup> With the conclusion of the Treaty of Zohāb between Iran and the Ottoman Empire in 1639, the interests of the royal court and those of New Julfa's merchants, and those of missionaries and Christians in general, ceased to converge. The Julfan Armenians continued to conduct their trade with Europe, but as the shah, no longer focused on the Western front, lost interest in them as intermediaries, linguists and diplomats, and members of expatriate communities in Europe, their clout in Isfahan diminished.<sup>99</sup>

Why Shah 'Abbās II himself gave such latitude to his officials and did little to stop and roll back the measures enacted against minorities is not fully explained by these circumstances and remains a matter of speculation. The events of 1645 may be attributed in part to the weakness of a ruler who at that time was not yet thirteen years of age. But immaturity and diffidence do not account for the shah's muted reaction to the measures that were taken a decade later. A partial answer may be that a gregarious personality combined with an interest in Christianity as a philosophical system had little bearing on the political question of how to approach Christians as a group, least of all if that group involved a domestic constituency in a politically contentious climate. Given mounting pressure from orthodox religious forces, it is easy to see political calculations at work. The resistance Shah 'Abbās II met from the Shi'i ulama, some of whom argued that he should abdicate and be replaced with a more devout Muslim on account of his unholy lifestyle, was ostensibly based on his excessive drinking and his flirtation with Sufism, but it also seems to have involved their perception that he was too friendly with non-Muslims.<sup>100</sup> For the shah, giving in to some of the demands of the ulama with regard to non-Muslims may have been a safety valve, a way of muting or deflecting criticism of his own demeanor.

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<sup>98</sup> Ghougassian, p. 248.

<sup>99</sup> Baghdiantz-McCabe, pp. 375-76.

<sup>100</sup> Kaempfer, p. 46.

## V. THE PERIOD OF SHAH SOLAYMĀN AND SHAH SOLTĀN-HOSAYN (1666-1722)

The period beginning with the reign of Shah Solaymān in 1666 is traditionally considered to mark the onset of inexorable decline in Iran, and an important aspect of this is the presumed worsening of conditions for non-Muslim. We should however be careful making such categorical statements. Some things continued, and no large-scale persecution of Christians was ever undertaken during his administration. In fact, one missionary, writing at the end of the seventeenth century, echoed sentiments already expressed by some under Shah ‘Abbās I when he remarked on the remarkable privileges and powers enjoyed by foreign ambassadors, claiming that the boldness of some would not be accepted anywhere but in Iran.<sup>101</sup> Yet the death of Shah ‘Abbās II and the accession of Shah Safī II, as Shah Solaymān was originally named, in 1666, did inaugurate a period of great uncertainty and increasing pressure on the Christians of Iran. They greeted the coming to power of Safī II with considerable apprehension, fearing that the young successor might be overly impressionable. They were right for, following the shah’s second coronation as Solaymān in 1667, they quickly saw him fall under the influence of Budāq Soltān, the country’s rifleman commander, *tofangchi-āqāsi*, who was seen as a notorious enemy of Christianity, partially out of conviction, but partially also because he was a sworn enemy of the *nāzer* (steward of the royal household), who was considered well disposed to Christians.<sup>102</sup> Conditions hardly improved with the appointment of Shaykh ‘Ali Khan as Budāq Soltān’s successor as *tofangchi-āqāsi* in 1668. Shaykh ‘Ali Khan became widely known for his dislike of Christians during his subsequent tenure as grand vizier, which began in 1669 and, with a brief interruption in 1671-72, lasted until his death in 1689. Indeed, pressure on Iran’s non-Muslim inhabitants quickly mounted in this period. A catalyst for this is said to have been the conversion to Islam in 1671 of an Armenian bishop who next sought refuge with the *shaykh al-Eslām* and brought charges against the Armenian Church.<sup>103</sup> A report written in the same year speaks of Christians being insulted on the street and publicly exhorted to convert, and mentions how the churches of New Julfa were subjected to a tax

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<sup>101</sup> [Bénigne Vachet], fols. 497-98. Privileges enjoyed by foreign envoys in pre-modern Iran indeed far exceeded those of foreign emissaries in Europe. Thus in Iran an envoy was lodged, fed, and received a *per diem* state allowance known as *mehmāndāri* (hospitality), from the moment he arrived in the country until he left Iranian soil.

<sup>102</sup> Chardin, IX, pp. 518-19.

<sup>103</sup> Chardin, III, p. 119, IX, pp. 406-07; Darhahuniyan, pp. 573-74; Ghougassian, pp. 41, 108-09.

increase and now had to pay an annual sum of 400 tumans.<sup>104</sup> The following year, Armenians were banned from entering the Muslim part of Isfahan even for commercial purposes.<sup>105</sup> In 1673 the chief (*kalāntar*) of the Armenians, Āqā Pir Kalāntar, who also happened to be one of the country's richest merchants, apostatized.<sup>106</sup> In 1674 it was reported that Shah Solaymān had forced more than twenty of the most prominent residents of New Julfa to adopt Islam.<sup>107</sup> This, it seems, was not necessarily a function of the shah's personal animosity toward Christians. Shah Solaymān in 1690 visited New Julfa, mostly to select young Armenian women for his harem, to be sure, but during his stay he also visited the Armenian Vanak church in New Julfa, showing an interest in the meaning of the icons displayed.<sup>108</sup> He generally disapproved of forced conversions, allowed non-Muslims who had thus been targeted to return to their original faith, and even annulled tax debts of certain poor Armenians to save them from conversion.<sup>109</sup> In this case, too, the impetus came from officials around him, including religious functionaries. Inasmuch as Shaykh 'Ali Khan was a suspected crypto-Sunni, a perceived need to appear beyond reproach in devoutness almost certainly played a role in his religious zeal, but purely economic motives need to be considered as well. Shaykh 'Ali Khan's drive to increase revenue for the shah's coffers after all was hardly discriminatory. Under his vizierate, taxes went up on church property in New Julfa, but also on Zoroastrians, and the agents of the Dutch and English maritime companies felt the heat of his efforts to curb and tax their illegal bullion exports.

The situation was certainly made worse by the intra-Christian rivalry involving catholic and schismatic Armenians that flared up in this period, and that a weak shah reportedly allowed to go unchecked.<sup>110</sup> The prominent catholic Armenian Shahrmanian family in this period drew closer to the Church of Rome and acted as benefactors to the missionaries, building schools for catechism instruction and churches where the Latin rite was celebrated. This collaboration between the catholic Armenians and Christian powers caused Safavid officials to see them as a fifth column, and this surely accounts for some of the persecution of

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<sup>104</sup> Carmelite Archives, Rome, OCD 236i, Ange de St Joseph, 2 Oct. 1672; *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, I, p. 407.

<sup>105</sup> Richard, 1995, I, p. 82; *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, II, pp. 406-07.

<sup>106</sup> Chardin, III, pp. 142-46.

<sup>107</sup> Metzler, I/1, p. 693.

<sup>108</sup> Villotte, pp. 148-51; Ja'fariyān, ed., 1996, intro., p. 30.

<sup>109</sup> Sanson, apud Herzig, 1991, pp. 85-86.

<sup>110</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, I, p. 416.

domestic Christians in late Safavid Iran.<sup>111</sup> Other rich New Julfa merchants, members of the schismatic branch, meanwhile schemed against the catholic missionaries by inciting the Safavid authorities to take measures against them. Buying anti-missionary decrees was part of this. In the summer of 1694, Bishop Stephen and his ecclesiastics took advantage of Shah Solaymān's terminal illness to obtain such a decree from the queen-mother, to whom New Julfa was dedicated as crown domain, using the construction of a new Carmelite church and a procession of the Sacraments through the streets of the suburb as arguments. Issued to the *divānbegi* (chief justice), it ordered the expulsion of the Carmelite Fathers from New Julfa. A joint missionary protest, the intervention of a Polish ambassador to Isfahan, and threats that this ill treatment of the Fathers would have negative repercussions for Iran's relations with European countries were no match for the money the Schismatics paid to various court officials, among them the queen-mother herself, to bolster their case. The Carmelites, although not the other missionaries, were thus forced to leave and their half-finished church was demolished.<sup>112</sup>

With all this, there is no denying that Iran's Shi'i clerics became even more assertive as of 1667, taking advantage of a ruler who quickly showed himself more interested in the pleasures of his office than in the duties it entailed, and that this assertiveness contributed to the growing pressure on Iran's non-Shi'i population.<sup>113</sup> In 1678 the ulama accused Iran's Armenians and Jews of being responsible for the drought that afflicted the country in that year. The bellies of several rabbis were slit and the Jews of Isfahan only escaped a worse fate by paying 600 tumans. Isfahan's Armenians, enjoying the protection of the queen-mother, paid less.<sup>114</sup> In due time, the hardline cleric, Mohammad-Bāqer Majlesi, came to play a prominent role in official policies. From the moment in 1687 that he was appointed *shaykh al-Eslām*, his zeal manifested itself in various ways, targeting not just non-Muslims but anyone who did not conform to his ideas about proper behavior. He thus immediately set out to make life difficult for Armenians with the apparent intent of forcing them to convert.<sup>115</sup>

The influence of the ulama and policies targeting non-Shi'i Muslims culminated under Shah Soltān-Hosayn (r. 1694-1722). Like his pre-

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<sup>111</sup> The connection between European powers and indigenous Christian communities in Iran goes back to the early days of the Safavids. Iran's Nestorians in 1502 expressed a desire to be put under Portuguese protection; see Neck, p. 74.

<sup>112</sup> Kroell, ed., p. 78, letter Gaudereau 16 Feb. 1695; *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, I, pp. 461-69, 862.

<sup>113</sup> Richard, 1995, I, pp. 77, 82.

<sup>114</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, I, p. 408.

<sup>115</sup> NA, VOC 1439, Van Heuvel, Gamron to Batavia, 25 Nov. 1687, fol. 1413r.

decessors, this famously pious and sanctimonious ruler showed an abiding interest in the polemics between Christians and Muslims that were conducted in Iran at the time and was cordial toward individual representatives of the Christian faith, inviting Father Thadeus Juda Krusinski to his palace to explain the meaning of Christian iconography to him.<sup>116</sup> After his accession he renewed the decrees that gave European missionaries the right to operate in Iran, and in 1703 authorized the Polish missionary-cum-diplomat Ignatius Franciscus Zapolski to establish a new Jesuit mission in Ganja in the Caucasus.<sup>117</sup> The tradition of encouraging debate on religious issues between representatives of Islam and Christianity was continued by him as well.<sup>118</sup> But Soltān-Hosayn also steadily consorted with high-ranking clerics and frequently sought their advice, and especially that of Mohammad-Bāqer Majlesi until the latter's death in 1699, and in subsequent years was very close to Mir Mohammad-Bāqer, his personal chaplain, to the point where it was said of the Shah that "all of his acts are in accordance with the *shari'a*."<sup>119</sup>

Pressure from the religious forces in this period is seen in the reaffirmation of the purity laws.<sup>120</sup> The measures taken at the shah's coronation in August 1694 included a prohibition for non-Muslims to leave their homes at time of rain and snow lest they might contaminate Muslims. This ban clearly did not work, for in 1708 it was reissued at the behest of the grand vizier, Shāhqoli Khan Zangana, and the *shaykh al-Eslām* of Isfahan, Mohammad-Bāqer Khātunābādi. Thanks to the mitigating influence of palace eunuch Āghā Kamāl these and other discriminatory measures were never fully enforced, however.<sup>121</sup> Similar measures were enacted following the appointment of Mirzā Rabi' as *mostawfi khāssa*, that is, comptroller of the crown domain, in January 1699. Mirzā Rabi' persuaded the shah to issue four *raqams* (royal decrees) curtailing the rights of the New Julfa community. According to the first, no corn or wheat could be brought to New Julfa directly, but all had to be taken to Isfahan proper first, there to be bought by the Julfans. The second stipulated that the Armenians could no longer sell fruit, vegetables and other foodstuffs to Muslims; the third raised the rent to be paid by the borough of New Julfa, and the fourth confiscated all the gardens alongside the Zāyanda Rud for the shah and forbade Armenians

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<sup>116</sup> Ja'fariyān, ed., 1996, Intro., p. 35; Pucko, p. 313.

<sup>117</sup> Krzyszkowskis. S. I., pp. 114-15.

<sup>118</sup> Ja'fariyān, 2000, p. 986; idem, ed., 1996, Intro., p. 35.

<sup>119</sup> Khātunābādi, p. 557.

<sup>120</sup> NA, VOC 1626, Casteleyn, Isfahan to Hoogcamer, Gamron, 22 Feb. 1699, fol. 99.

<sup>121</sup> NA, VOC 1779, Backer, Isfahan to Casteleyn, Gamron, 10 Dec. 1708, fol. 313.

from building on this land any longer.<sup>122</sup> In the same year the imposition on New Julfa reached 5,000 tumans, a sum that was apparently lowered after it caused a number of Armenians to flee the borough.<sup>123</sup> In 1714 high-ranking members of the clerical establishment argued with the shah that it was against the Islamic law for Christians to employ Muslim servants. A decree against the practice was issued in June of the same year. Not much seems to have come of it, although suggestions that the shah was about to forbid Europeans from employing Muslim servants and to send them all out of the country persisted into 1715.<sup>124</sup> In that year rumors also went around about an imminent expulsion of all Europeans from Iran.<sup>125</sup>

Arguably, clerical pressure could only have succeeded, contributing to a worsening of the position of Christians (and other non-Shi'is), in the context of deteriorating political and economic conditions in the country, combining growing royal weakness and a desperate search for treasure on the part of state officials. The country's miserable economic state for one, seem to have induced mass conversions. Thus in 1716 famine and starvation prompted thousands of Christians to convert to Islam, although the circumstances under which this occurred remain unclear.<sup>126</sup> Another example, where we are better informed about the source of pressure, is the re-imposition of the poll tax (*jezya*) for Hindus in 1699, which was part of a new effort to raise royal revenue led by Mirzā Rabi', who immediately after his appointment as *mostawfi khāssa* suggested to the shah tightening the accounting rules for provincial governors and forcing the country's Hindu merchants to either convert to Islam, pay the poll tax, or leave the Safavid realm.<sup>127</sup>

Diminishing royal power in this period allowed officials to vex vulnerable subjects. A missionary, writing in 1700, summed this up by saying about Shah Soltān-Hosayn that he had good intentions but was weak, as a result of which "officials and governors do not fear him and so they take money from the Armenians . . ."<sup>128</sup> The policies of Fath-'Alī Khan Dāghestāni, who in 1715 was appointed grand vizier, suggest that not just provincial governors but even the highest state officials at the

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Darhuhaniyan, pp. 144, 150.

<sup>124</sup> NA, VOC 1856, Oets, Isfahan to Backer Jacobsz., Gamron, 15 April 1714, fol. 742; *ibid.*, Backer Jacobsz., Gamron to Batavia, 15 June 1714, fols. 86-87; VOC 1886, Oets, Isfahan to Backer Jacobsz., Gamron, 9 Sept. 1715, fol. 189.

<sup>125</sup> NA, VOC 1886, Oets, Isfahan to Backer Jacobsz., Gamron, 9 Sept. 1715, fol. 189.

<sup>126</sup> NA, VOC 1897, Ketelaar, Gamron to Batavia, 30 Nov. 1716, fol. 16.

<sup>127</sup> IOR, E/3/54, #6614, Bruce, Isfahan to Company, 7 Feb. 1699, unfol.; and #6614, Bruce, Isfahan to Gombroon, 7 Feb. 1699, unfol.

<sup>128</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, I, p. 484.

center of the system were involved in this. Shortly after coming to power, Fath-‘Ali Khan demanded that the Armenians pay the poll tax retroactively from the accession of Shah Soltān-Hosayn in 1694. He tore up a decree, according to which the Armenian Shahrmanian family had been exempted from paying the poll tax, an exemption which had been in force since the days of Shah ‘Abbās II. The desperate financial state of the country at this point clearly provides the backdrop to this measure. Surely contributing to the grand vizier’s uncompromising stand was the fact that Fath-‘Ali Khan Dāghestāni was an avowed Sunni and thus found himself in an even more precarious position than his illustrious predecessor, Shaykh-‘Ali Khan, who had only been suspected of Sunni leanings. It is therefore tempting to speculate that he may have felt the need to demonstrate his loyalty to the crown and the system by refusing to make any concessions to religious minorities. Whether or not he was initially moved by such prudence, however, the lure of personal gain eventually caused him to compromise. Pleas and substantial bribery on the part of the Armenian community made Fath-‘Ali Khan commute the obligation to the effect that the Shahrmanians had to pay only for the preceding three years.<sup>129</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Western historians have often portrayed the two centuries of Safavid rule in religious terms, as the unfolding of three stages, from fanaticism to tolerance to bigotry, and typically have seen the elite’s approach to Christians and their faith as emblematic and reflective of this trajectory. This study suggests that the role played by Christianity in Safavid Iran was much too variegated to be fitted into such neat schemes and phases. With regard to the treatment of Christians by the state, the entire Safavid period is marked by a complex interplay between an inherited propensity toward openness, a search for strategic alliances, as well as the need to accommodate and integrate a large Christian population, and exclusionary religious impulses, and thus evinces an equally complex range of attitudes that, with variations, persisted over time and extended from tolerance to oppression. The roots of this blend are to be found in the richly layered history of Iran, a composite of multiple, overlapping (religious) traditions. The origins of the inclusionary policy *vis-à-vis* Christians generally practiced by the Safavids are located in equal measure in pre-Islamic Iranian syncretistic tendencies going back to Achaemenid times, which included allowing people to exercise freedom of conscience, in Islam’s tolerance for the People of the Book (*Ahl al-*

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<sup>129</sup> NA, VOC 1886, Oets, Isfahan to Jacobsz., Gamron, 23 Oct. 1715, fol. 278.

*ketāb*), and in a Central Asia-Turco-Mongol laissez-faire attitude toward religion in general. In all of this the steppes of Central Asia, whose inhabitants had long been known for their relaxed religious ways, their openness to outside talent, and their willingness to include outsiders in their quest for the truth, may have been most influential. Even if the non-tribal origins of the Safavids and the murky background of the Qezelbāsh make the precise lineage and trajectory unclear, there can be little doubt that a long history of Christian affinities and affiliations, including intermarriage with Christians, among Seljuqs and Mongols, carried over into the Safavid period, at which time it was reinforced through close relations with Georgians and Armenians.

Shi'ism represented a countervailing force to openness and acceptance, both in its function as the realm's official creed and given its preoccupation with purity. Yet religious latitudinarianism typically won over, or at least tempered and mitigated, Twelver Shi'ism's exclusionary tendencies, allowing all members of society, in the best of circumstances, more than a margin of (inner) freedom. What is more, Shi'ism's preoccupation with ritual purity never took the form of an insistence on purity of blood, as was the case in Spain following the Reconquista. The discrimination and oppression that non-Muslims, even *zemmīs*, often encountered in Iran thus never turned into anything like an Inquisition. In early modern Iran, the religious passions were directed outward, toward the major external enemy, the Ottoman Empire, and domestically, toward Sunnis and the adherents of heterodox beliefs threatening the Shi'i patrimonialism that came to underpin the Safavid polity. It is for the Sunni Turks that the Iranians reserved their most stinging invective (just as the Ottomans routinely blasted the Safavids as blasphemous heretics). In contemporary Europe, there were moments of "pragmatic tolerance or coexistence," as in France under Henri IV or in Spain under the Count-Duke of Olivares.<sup>130</sup> Yet the more typical policy pursued during the sixteenth-century Wars of Religion was that of encouraging unity through intolerance.<sup>131</sup> There was an element of this in Safavid Iran. The Qezelbāsh served as the vanguard of a military force inspired by religious zeal, but, rooted in the syncretistic crucible of eastern Anatolia as they were, the Qezelbāsh were too impure, too much imbued with heterodox beliefs, including crypto-Christian ones, to be a credible force against Christianity. Shah Esmā'il I himself took the lead in this by embracing a multiplicity of creeds and traditions in his poetry. In the end, no principle of *cuius regio eius religio* ever came into being in Iran (or,

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<sup>130</sup> Marx, pp.120-21, 127.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.

for that matter, the Ottoman Empire and other parts of the Islamic world).

The status of the shah and the role he was expected to play acted as a mitigating force in all of this. To provide justice was the ruler's foremost obligation, overriding his task of spreading the faith. The linchpin of pre-Islamic Iranian statecraftman, justice carried over into Islamic times as an essential ingredient of good governance. The political constraints attached to the shah in his capacity as representative and protector of the faith had little bearing on his personal conviction, just as the outward demeanor of believers in general need not necessarily correspond to their inner conviction. Inner faith is hard to measure and, anyhow, a prevailing opinion in Islam had always held that God should be the ultimate judge of that which humans find difficult to discern. So long as he fulfilled his primary duty, to defend the faith, the shah had great latitude in behavior as well as belief that might contravene Islam. This, too, was a factor in the rarity of inquisitions in Iranian and Islamic history.

It is important to note that, frequent examples of receptiveness to Christian influence and long-standing hopes and impression by European observers notwithstanding, the latitudinarianism professed by the shah and the elite is not to be mistaken for inherent philo-Christian sentiment. After all, Iran's Armenian population other than the inhabitants of New Julfa suffered some of the worst persecutions under Shah 'Abbās I. Pragmatism built on political and economic considerations prevailed in the approach toward Christians, as it did in the case of all other groups in society.

There is no question, finally, that toward the end of Safavid rule, the position of Christians in Iran deteriorated. The ill-treatment and occasional persecution to which they were subjected were in part a function of an increasingly assertive clergy, in part also the result of a split in the local Armenian community between Schismatics, who were anxious to keep their independence from Rome, and Catholics, who gradually strengthened their ties with the Papacy and various commercial centers in Italy. The discord within the Armenian community and the mutual scheming and maligning made them collectively more vulnerable to intimidation and extortion, leading the Shahrmaneans in the 1690s to transfer much of their wealth to Venice and to obtain Roman citizenship.<sup>132</sup> Yet the Armenians were not the only ones who were targeted. Just as it is impossible to speak of inherent philo-Christianity among the elite, so instances of persecution do not point to systemic anti-Christian sentiments in Safavid Iran. Shah 'Abbās I's forcible resettlement from the Caucasus included Muslims as well as Jews, in addition to many

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<sup>132</sup> White, pp. 11-12.

Christians.<sup>133</sup> Similarly, the heightened religious fervor of the Iranian ulama in the second half of the seventeenth century affected not just Christians but all non-Shi'i groups in the country.

It is equally important to realize that the growing pressure on these vulnerable groups was mostly the result of worsening economic conditions and could only have been successful in the context of a weakening court presided over by a shah who was no longer directly involved in the affairs of state. A desperate need for money and the incapacity (or unwillingness) of the center to curb the zeal of clerical forces and to keep the rapaciousness of high official in check combined to make Christians and other non-Shi'i groups in society easy targets. Issues of revenue and power rather than an inherent aversion to certain minorities played a central role in this. Indeed, officials like Fath-'Ali Khan Dāghestāni did not discriminate in their search for money; they appear to have singled out religious minorities mostly because these were easy targets. Numerous examples suggest that in late Safavid times no one of (suspected) financial means was immune from the threat of new and irregular taxes, forced loans, or other forms of extortion.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> See Eskandar Beg, tr., p. 1095.

<sup>134</sup> For examples under Fath-'Ali Khan Dāghestāni, see Mathee, 2004, pp. 179-220.

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# The Rise of Shah Esmā'il as a Mahdist Revolution

SAÏD AMIR ARJOMAND

Can we justify calling the rise of the Safavids a revolution? We can do so by showing the millenarian motives of Shah Esmā'il and his followers. Alternatively, we can discover a typical revolutionary process in its course. The third possibility is to justify a revolution in terms of its consequences—notably a significant change in the Iranian political order.<sup>1</sup> In his three monumental “Études Safavides,” Jean Aubin considers the rise of Shah Esmā'il a “Shi'ite revolution.” He does not explicitly define revolution, but seems to opt for the first possibility, reinforced by the second with an argument that a turning point in 1508-9 represents a shift, typical of the process of revolution, from extreme radicalism to regime consolidation. To be more precise, Aubin (1984, p. 9) considers the 1508-9 turning point as “the victory of the Persians over the Turkmen, and also a revenge of the Ostājlu over the Shāmlu faction” among the Qezelbāsh.<sup>2</sup> Moojan Momen (p. 106), by contrast, does not use the term ‘revolution’ but highlights the aspiration of the Safavid movement to world domination and its reach deep into the Ottoman Anatolia (and we may add the Balkans<sup>3</sup>) and Syria, stating that Shah Esmā'il came very close “to winning over the Islamic heartlands ideologically.” In this view, his rise would be a revolution or near-revolution in terms of its consequences. While recognizing the merits of these two arguments, I shall offer a new analysis of the revolutionary process that created the Safavid empire, and specify the significant revolutionary consequences of the rise of Shah Esmā'il.

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<sup>1</sup> See the Introduction to my forthcoming *Revolution in World History*, University of Chicago Press, for a discussion of these varying conceptions of revolution.

<sup>2</sup> In the final study, Aubin (1988, p. 63) describes the same transition as that from “the reign of the tutors to that of the favorites.” See also Aubin 1988, pp. 85, 124-26 for further discussion.

<sup>3</sup> The Bulgarian Qezelbāsh, consisting of four sects, survive to this day. The poetry of Shah Esmā'il, a text known as *Buyruk*, and especially ethnographic data suggest that these date from the time of Shah Esmā'il and the millenarian movement created by his *khalifas*. (See de Jong, pp. 209, 215)

## THE CHARACTER AND CONSEQUENCES OF SHAH ESMĀ'IL'S MAHDIST CLAIM

The beginning of the Safavid millenarian movement can be dated to the mid-fifteenth century, when Shaykh Ja'far (d. after 1470), the head of the Safavid Sufi order in Ardabil after 1448/852, prevailed upon the Qaraqoyunlu ruler, Jahānshāh, to exile his nephew Jonayd from the city. (Aubin 1959, pp. 46-47; Pārsādust, p. 133) Shaykh Jonayd (d. 1460) became an adventurer in Anatolia, where he gathered a band of Sufi raiders (*ghozāt-e sufiyya*) that included Turkman tribesmen and some of the survivors of the millenarian movement of Shaykh Badr al-Din, son of the kadi of Samawna, and their offspring. (Sohrweide, pp.119-23) Badr al-Din's rebellion had been suppressed in 1416, but Anatolia remained, as it had been since the Bābā'i uprising in the thirteenth century, a fertile region for the growth of unorthodox millenarian movements among the superficially Islamicized Turkmen. Shortly before his death in a raid in Sharvān in 1460, Jonayd married the sister of the Āqqoyunlu ruler, Ozun Hasan (r. 1453-78), whose power was on the rise. As his uncle, Shaykh Ja'far, was an orthodox Sunni and disowned him, it is likely that Jonayd imbibed 'extremist' Shi'ite beliefs in Anatolia.

A son was born to Jonayd after his death and was named Haydar (d. 1488). Haydar's maternal uncle, Ozun Hasan, took him under his protection, later giving him his daughter, Martha, in marriage. Once Ozun Hasan had conquered the area and made Tabriz his capital, he installed Haydar in Ardabil under the tutelage of Shaykh Ja'far in 1470. Haydar gained control of Ardabil after the death of Shaykh Ja'far, and recruited Anatolian adepts to the order in Anatolia through the order's local representatives (*khalifas*).<sup>4</sup> To the Ottoman authorities who tried to persuade them to go to Mecca and Medina instead of Ardabil, the adepts would reply that they preferred to go on pilgrimage to the living rather than the dead. (Sümer, p. 17) Haydar created a distinctive headgear for his followers out of red cloth, with twelve plumes representing the twelve holy Imams of the Shi'a, and called it the Haydari crown (*tāj-e haydari*), on account of which they became known as redheads (*qezelbāsh*). In 1488/893, the network of the local agents or *khalifas* was used very effectively to mobilized Haydar's followers for an attack on Sharvān to avenge Shaykh Jonayd in which Haydar, however, was killed. (Hinz, pp. 38, 72-73, 83) Haydar's sons and their mother, who was the daughter of the great Ozun Hasan and a devoutly Christian Greek princess, were imprisoned in a castle in Fars for a few years but then

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<sup>4</sup> There was a split after Jonayd's death among his followers, with one sect accepting Haydar as his successor and another following a certain stone-carver (*hakkāk*) as their messiah. (Aubin 1988, p. 36; Sharvāni, p. 106)

released by their Āqqoyunlu cousin, Rostam Beg, who counted them an ally. But the Safavids had their own project, and the network of local agents was again used to gather the Anatolian followers for an unsuccessful uprising in 1495/900 under Haydar's eldest son and successor, Soltān-'Ali, who appointed the leaders of the Qezelbāsh clans of Shāmlu, Qāramānlu and Qājār as his commanders. Soltān-'Ali was also killed, however, but the eighty or so surviving Sufis, including an inner circle of seven veterans seasoned in Āqqoyunlu internecine warfare, took his two younger brothers, Ebrāhim and Esmā'il, into hiding in Gilan. (Pārsādust, pp. 220-22, 250)

The earliest Persian source on the Safavid movement, written around 1490, leaves little doubt about the heterodox, millenarian and extremist attitude of the Qezelbāsh followers of the Safavid movement toward Jonayd and Haydar, Esmā'il's grandfather and father: "They openly called Shaykh Jonayd God, and his son, Son of God." They refused to accept Jonayd's death even after seeing his corpse, and would kill anyone who said he was dead. As for the child Haydar, "his fathers' *khalifas* came from every direction and foolishly announced the glad tidings of his divinity (*oluhyyat*)." (Khonji 1992, pp. 272-73; tr., p. 57)<sup>5</sup>

As for Esmā'il himself as the leader of the revolution, there can be no doubt about his intense charisma as an invincible warrior incarnating divinity. The manuscript known as *Ross Anonymous*, which was until recently taken to be the earliest account of his reign, depicted him as holding the sword of the Lord of the Age, the Mahdi, at the time of the declaration of Twelver Shi'ism as the official religion of Iran.<sup>6</sup> The work has been shown to have been composed under the title of *Jahāngoshā-ye Khāqān* by a certain Bizhan as late as in the 1680s. (Moztar, ed., pp. 148-49; Montazer-e Sāheb, ed., pp. 41-43, 60-61; Morton 1990) But we know that rival popular epics such as *Abu Moslem Nāme* were suppressed (Hamavi, pp. 141-44) and the storytellers were instead declaiming the heroic exploits of Esmā'il alongside the stories of *Shāhnāme* within two decades of his death (Membré, p. 52; Morton 1996, pp. 44-45), and this late-17<sup>th</sup> century romance of Esmā'il must reflect earlier beliefs and sources. In any event, there is no shortage of other similar evidence, the most striking being his poetry recorded under the pen-name of Khatā'i. His poems, presumably for use in religious ritual, expresses the nature of the divinity of Esmā'il as the reincarnation of God, the Prophets and the Imams quite precisely. He was the divine, pre-eternal truth, just as in its previous prophetic manifestations:

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شیخ جنید را بمجاهره اله و ولدش را ابن الله گفتند.... خلفای پدر از هر سو رو بدو آوردند و دعوی الوهیت او را بشهادت سفاقت آشکار کردند.

<sup>6</sup> That picture was as the frontispiece of *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam* (cf. Montazer-e Sāheb, ed., pp. 41-43, 60-61).

O, holy warriors say: God, God! Holy warriors, I am the faith of the king!  
Come and meet; prostrate yourselves Holy warriors, I am the faith of the king!

I was with Mansur on the gallows; I was with Abraham in the fire  
I was with Moses on Sinai! Holy warriors, I am the faith of the king!

I have the essence of 'Ali O holy warriors, I am the faith of the king!<sup>7</sup>  
(Gandjei, p. 22, poem # 20.1, 4, 7)

And again,

Today I have come to the world as a Master  
Know truly that I am Haydar's son!

The mystery of 'I am the Truth' is hidden in this my heart  
I am the Absolute Truth, and the truth I am telling!<sup>8</sup>  
(Gandjei, p. 125, poem # 198.1, 3)

There is also contemporary historical evidence from Venetian reports to the Signoria. Esmā'il's presence in Erzinjān in the Anatolian Āq Qoyunlu domains was reported in mid-December 1501, with 8,000 people gathered around him. Marino Sanudo (p. 3) refers to him as a Shaykh (Exeth)<sup>9</sup> and a new prophet who claims to be God and admits the dignitaries, when they present themselves, by putting his hand over their heads, while his forty *khalifas* do the same with the lesser people who join the movement. A letter from Constantinople on March 7, 1502 mentions the rumors that 500 Turks wanted to join "the new prophet of Persia" but were prevented from leaving the city. (Sanudo, p. 7) What is reported is not the rise of a new king or dynasty but a religious movement under an intensely charismatic divine leader who is most typically called the Sophy and who has inspired "the greatest terror in all

<sup>7</sup> 'The faith of the king' is a difficult construction. I take it to mean the divine, numinous essence of the king, or a variant of 'God' and 'Absolute Truth'

الله دينك غازيلر دين شاه منم قارشو كلونك سجده قيلونك غازيلر دين شاه منم .....  
منصور ايله دارده ابدبم خليل ايله نارده ايديم موسى ايله طورده ايديم غازيلر دين شاه منم  
مرتضى على ذاتلوم غازيلر دين شاه منم .....

<sup>8</sup> 'I am the Truth' are the words the great mystic Mansur al-Hallāj uttered upon the gallows at the time of his execution.

بو کون کلدوم جهانہ سرورم من يقين بيلونک که ابن حيدر من  
.....

انا الحق سري اوش کونکلومده کيزلو که حق مطلق حق سويلرم من

<sup>9</sup> His name is mentioned a year later (Sanudo, p.30) but not typically. The title of Shah appears much later.

of Turkey.” (Sanudo, p. 23) This is consistent with the use of the terms *zohur* (manifestation) and *khoroj* (uprising) in the Persian sources generally and, in particular, with ‘Abdi Beg’s (p. 37) statement that Esmā‘il was received in Anatolia “as the Helpers (*ansār*) received the Prophet and carried him to Medina, dancing and singing.”<sup>10</sup>

The exile polemicist Sharvāni (p. 97), would write decades later, “This sect says, explicitly and with a sincere heart and belief, that the God before our time was the Shah called Esmā‘il and [this divinity] has transmigrated and manifests itself in the form of our Shah called Tahmāsb, and he is our God, and the God of our time.”<sup>11</sup>

It seems that the presentation of Esmā‘il as the Mahdī, or the forerunner of the Mahdī, or the wielder of his sword in the above-mentioned romance of Shah Esmā‘il, was the doctored version of this core Qezelbāsh belief, and the modification was endorsed by him as he assumed the title of Shah<sup>12</sup> and opted for empire-building and the consolidation of kingship. The extreme adulation of Shah Esmā‘il by the Qezelbāsh is very well documented, and Michele Membré (tr., pp. 18, 25, 41-42) graphically describes its transfer to Tahmāsb in elaborate Qezelbāsh ceremonies a decade and a half after Esmā‘il’s death.

The doctored version of Shah Esmā‘il’s claim for his non-Qezelbāsh, Persian followers and subjects is well presented by ‘Abdi Beg (pp. 34-35): “As the ruler of the age and the Lord of Command is absent, it is rightful for a competent member of the exalted ‘Alid, Fātemid dynasty to execute the commandments of the Imam of the age among God’s creatures....[and such one is] the Solomon of the End of time, the King of the Auspicious Conjunction, the forerunner of the army of the Lord of the Age, Abu’l-Mozaffar Soltān Shāh Esmā‘il....”<sup>13</sup>

Esmā‘il’s charisma as a warrior made invincible by divine grace was shattered by his defeat in 1514 at the hand of the Ottoman Sultan Selim, who had goaded him to the battle of Chālderān in millenarian intoxication. It produced broad disaffection among his Qezelbāsh troops. He wore black as a sign of mourning, and had cities draped with banners bearing the inscription “punishment” (*al-qesās*). Esmā‘il never again led

به طریقی که انصار مدینه شریفه حضرت رسالت را به مدینه بردند، پای کویان و سرودگویان<sup>10</sup>  
 هذه الطائفة فقد صرحوا و قالوا عن صميم القلب و الاعتقاد ان الاله قبل زماننا هو الشاه المسمى  
 باسماعيل قد انتقل و تجلى الى صورة شاهنا المسمى بطهماسب و هو الهنا و اله زماننا.

<sup>12</sup> It is interesting to note Sharvāni’s explication (p. 94) of the meaning of the term ‘*shāh*’ to the Qezelbāsh: to some it meant ‘Ali [the *shāh-e mardān*], to others Esmā‘il b. Haydar and his offspring, and to yet others, it was one of the names of God.

<sup>13</sup> چون سلطان زمان صاحب امر علیه الصلوات الله ... غائب است حق آنست که از سلسله علیه<sup>13</sup>  
 علویه فاطمیه، شخصی که قابلیت این امر داشته باشد، در میان بندگان خدای حکم امام زمان را جاری  
 سازد... [و این شخص] سلیمان آخر الزمان، پادشاه صاحبقران، مقدمه الجیش صاحب الزمان،  
 ابوالمظفر سلطان شاه اسماعیل...

his men in battle, and changed his style of ruling into that of a mere Persian king. Most notably, he desisted from religious persecution and forceful conversion to Shi'ism, issuing a decree ordering his provincial governors "not to inconvenience anyone, from now on, by [forcing him into] abandoning his religion or converting, and to treat all subjects equally in matters of taxation and religious courts." (Cited in Pārsādust, p. 497)

It should be noted, however, that the Mahdist expectation that Esmā'il had deflected from himself in the course of imperial consolidation lingered on after his death. His young son Tahmāsb expected the imminent appearance of the Mahdi, and 'Abdi Beg (p. 60) confirms that "the reign of the End of Time is reserved for His Majesty."<sup>14</sup>

A white horse was accordingly kept prepared for the Hidden Imam, but more strikingly, Tahmāsb also kept his favorite sister unmarried to be the Mahdi's bride.<sup>15</sup> (Membré, tr., pp. 25-26)

The one contemporary Persian history of Esmā'il's reign I know of is Khwānd-Amir's *Habib al-siyar*.<sup>16</sup> Reflecting the viewpoint of an orthodox Sunni man of learning who has compromised with the new regime to save his life, limb and property, the narrative is extremely restrained regarding the nature of Shah Esmā'il's authority, substituting the alleged inspiration by the twelve Imams through dreams and visions for what must in reality have been more exaggerated claims, and clichés and euphemism for the violent enforcement of Shi'ism. References to the Safavid agitprops, *tabarrā'is*, or hints of their unorthodoxy, only appear involuntarily as in the rebellion of the people of Herat against the Safavid apparatchiks and the indignation at the murder of its respected Sunni

<sup>14</sup> سلطنت آخر الزمان به ان اعلى حضرت مخصوص است.

<sup>15</sup> This generated the rumors that Tahmāsp had an incestuous relationship with his favourite sister, Soltānem. (Sharvāni, p. 96) Tahmāsp was very attached to this sister, whose death in 1562 resulted in his withdrawal from active life. (Morton's Introduction to Membré, p. xxiv)

<sup>16</sup> The *Fotuhāt-e Shāhi*, University of Tehran Central Library, Meshkāt Collection # 1103, assumed to be written by Ebrāhim Amini, is in fact identical with Part 4 of *Habib al-siyar*, except for the headings and more defective transcription of Koranic verses. It was copied, according to the colophone, on 2 Rajab 979. The author in fact identifies it as the last part of *Habib al-siyar*, though the sentence is corrupt. (f.4a; cf Khwānd-Amir, *Habīb*, IV, p. 409 for the correct sentence) It is surprising that Ja'fariyān (2001), who used it, did not realize that the text is the same as *Habib al-siyar*, Pt. 4. Aubin (1984) cites a different MS at the Irān-e Bāstān Museum Library, but at present there is no such library. Khwānd-Amir does tell us that Amini was working on such a work commissioned by Shah Esmā'il in 1521/927 (Khwānd-Amir, *Habīb*, IV, p. 326). Whether Khwānd-Amir copied the work in its entirety, or the copyist misidentifies the present manuscript, we seem to have one and not two contemporary accounts of the reign of Shah Esmā'il. In any event, Amini was a friend and contemporary of Khwānd-Amir and can safely be assumed to have shared his attitude and extreme restraint.

judge by the Qezelbāsh governor. (Khwānd-Amir, *Habib*, IV, pp. 468, 532-33, 583-86) Other main chronicles date from two generations later—that is, the latter part of Shāh Tahmāsb’s reign, when orthodox Twelver Shi’ism had been established and the account of the excesses of the revolutionaries severely doctored. Nevertheless, the novelty of the Safavid mixture of religious and political authority requires a historical narrative of origins of the royal dynasty in the Sufi order of Shaykh Safi al-Din Ardabili, which is at great variance with the traditional narrative of secular origins of kingship. Noteworthy among the supernatural aspects of this narrative is a variation on the theme of the occultation of the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam taken from the hagiography of Shaykh Safi, *Safvat al-safā*.<sup>17</sup> Mohammad Hāfez, an ancestor of Shaykh Safi, disappears at the age of seven, and manifests himself seven years later, having been taught the Koran and religious sciences by the Jinn with whom he had spent the intervening years. (Khwānd-Amir, *Habib*, IV, p. 411)

The one lasting consequence of the Safavid revolution evident in the narrative of the rise of the Safavids in all the Persian chronicles is the radical change in the conception of kingship. In a decree issued in April 1511/Moharram 917, Shah Esmā’il claims divine sanction for his kingship (*saltanat*) and caliphate (*kelāfat*) by citing the Koran (Q.2.118 and Q. 38.25), and refers to the Safavid House as the “dynasty of spiritual authority (velāyat) and Imamate.” (Navā’i: 101-103) Although there are similarities between the religion of the Qezelbāsh and the early Shi’ite ‘extremism’ (*gholoww*), such as the belief in transmigration of souls and the refusal to accept the death of the charismatic leader, there are also considerable differences. These differences have two sources, the central Asiatic heritage of the Turkmen and Sufism. Sufism had become the dominant force in popular religion of Iran and Anatolia during the era of Turko-Mongolian domination in the centuries preceding 1500, and had produced a considerable number of Sufi millenarian or Mahdist movements, some of which I have analyzed in order to construct a somewhat narrow typology with respect to the relation between religious and political authority. (Arjomand 1984: chap. 2) Popular Sufism, which became increasingly tinged with the Shi’ite expectation of the manifestation of the Mahdi in the mid-fifteenth century, infused a sacral element into the idea of kingship as temporal rule. The new sacral idea of absolute and charismatic religio-political authority was espoused by Jonayd but rejected by his uncle Ja’far, who remained in control of the Safavid order in Ardabil and upheld the separation of Sufi spiritual authority from the temporal. Haydar reverted to the new charismatic

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<sup>17</sup> Other supernatural elements, such as the maternal descent of the Safavids, through the daughter of Shaykh Zāhed, from a Kurdish Shaykh and the daughter of the king of the Jinn who had become his disciple, were left out. (Togan, p. 351)

mixture of spiritual and temporal power, the “unification of dervishhood and kingship” (*jam‘-e darvishi va shāhi*) (Khwānd-Amir, *Habib*, IV, p. 426) or of “the material and the spiritual monarchy” (*saltanat-e suri va ma‘navi*) (Mazzaoui, p. 72n.2), but that resulted in his death and the imprisonment of his young children. His eldest son, Soltān-‘Ali, briefly assumed the leadership of the Qezelbāsh movement as a god reincarnate but was killed, and it was at that point that his surviving brothers took refuge in Gilān. It is significant to note that in the latter part of the 1490s, their cousin, the Āqqoyunlu prince Rostam Beg, was prepared to allow the return of the second son, Ebrāhim, to Ardabil to assume the spiritual guidance of the Safavid order, while Esmā'il remained in Lāhijān.<sup>18</sup> (Morton 1996: 35) Ebrāhim, however, significantly “removed the twelve-pronged Haydari *tāj* [the Qezelbāsh headgear]... and put on the Turkman cap in the fashion of the Āqqoyunlu.” (Khwānd-Amir, *Habib*, IV, p. 442)

In my opinion, the change in the conception of kingship made definitive by the Safavid revolution had as much to do with Sufism as with Shi‘ism. Khwānd-Amir, who was not a Shi‘ite but imbued with Sufism, took its essentials with him to India, and expressed it (*Qānun-e homāyuni*: 258) when he hailed his last patron, Homāyun, as “the unifier of the real and the apparent sovereignty” (*jāme‘-e saltanat-e haqiqi va majāzi*). Be that as it may, the popular Sufi conception of unified material and spiritual monarchy was institutionalized under Shah Esmā'il and reconciled with Twelver Shi‘ism by his successors who claimed to be the lieutenants of the Hidden Imam.<sup>19</sup>

## REVOLUTIONARY MOBILIZATION AND VICTORY

Esmā'il's uprising began slowly. Leaving Lāhijān with the seven Sufi veterans and 300 men in the summer of 1499, he tarried in Tālesh and then visited his ancestral city of Ardabil which was under the control of his brother, Ebrāhim, as the head of the Safavid order. He does not seem to have found any support from his now orthodox brother (Pārsādust, p. 254) nor, presumably, from his mother, and began a long march into the

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<sup>18</sup> According to one account, Ebrāhim conveniently died in 1499 just before Esmā'il set out. (Morton 1996, p. 38) Ebrāhim, however, very probably did not die but led an expedition for Esmā'il to Trabzon. (Uğur, p. 148) It seems likely that in 1508 he and another brother who may have been spared after the intercession of several *amirs* but confined to Ardabil and forbidden to raise more than 200 horsemen each. He may finally have been executed, together with Esmā'il's mother and other brothers. in 1513. (Aubin 1988, pp. 104-5)

<sup>19</sup> I have argued that the new sacral idea of kingship was inconsistent with the logic of Twelver Shi‘ism, and collapsed with the Safavid empire in 1722, making for the return of the traditional idea of monarchy as temporal rule (see Arjomand).

heartland of millenarian Qezelbāsh supporters in eastern Anatolia which ended in Erzinjan in the summer of 1500. "Bands of Sufis and the holy raiders from the clans of Rumlu and Shāmlu and Zu'l-Qadr from the heart of Anatolia (Rum) and Syria, Egypt and Diyarbekr (Diyār Bakr) began to gather. Leaflets summoning those expecting the manifestation of His Majesty, which is the prelude to the manifestation of the Lord of the Age, were sent in all directions." ('Abdi Beg, p. 38)

This is generally confirmed by a letter from Ayas in September 1500 that "a new lord has risen, and the whole country is in tumult." (Sanuto, III, p. 1119, apud Aubin, 1988, p. 12) Esmā'il used these troops to conquer Sharvān and Tabriz. During the sack of Sharvān, Esmā'il ordered the Qezelbāsh troops not to take any booty because the enemies were Sunnis and therefore impure (*najess*), and a general recorded his temptation to keep a beautiful precious stone which he eventually threw into a river in obedience to his spiritual master. (Cited in Pārsādust, p. 259) At this point, in the spring of 1501, we have an important defection of an Āq Qoyunlu vizier, Amir Zakariyā Tabrizi Kojoji, who joined Esmā'il's camp. He was appointed vizier and was appropriately called "the key to Azerbaijan." ('Abdi Beg, p. 39) Esmā'il then proceeded to conquer Tabriz.

In 1501/907, Shah Esmā'il abandoned Tabriz and moved to Erzinjān in eastern Anatolia to enlist more Qezelbāsh followers into his army. This move was strictly determined by the location of his supporters and was not seen as an opportunity for seizing power. The adepts coming from Tekke were organized into the clan of Tekkelu as a military unit, and those from Qarāmān into the clan of Qarāmānlu. 'Abdi (or 'Ābedin) Beg brought some 200 young men from Syria (Shām) to join the clan of Shāmlu under the veteran Lala Beg, and Mohammad Beg brought roughly the same number of men from an obscure geographical origin who were organized into the Ostājlu clan, another mainstay of the rising Safavid military power. (*Tārikh-e Qezelbāshān*, pp. 8, 27, 45, 49) The army thus gathered also absorbed the local clans of Kheneslu, Bāybortlu and Qarajadāghlu (*Tārikh-e Qezelbāshān*, pp. 25-26, 40) to number seven thousand horsemen and two thousand foot-soldiers and defeated the Āqqoyunlu forces in August 1501. Nine of the twelve known commanders of this army, were from the Qezelbāsh tribes of Anatolia. (Sümer, pp. 28, 30; Haneda 1987, pp. 32-33). After the success of the revolution, the Qezelbāsh leaders became the military elite of the Safavid empire, and many of them were appointed provincial governors and took their tribal contingents to their provinces. The new military elite of Qezelbāsh tribal leaders soon eclipsed the old clandestine revolutionary elite, the Sufis of Lāhijān. (Haneda 1987, pp. 86-100)

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the political opportunity for revolution created by the fragmentation of authority and dynastic feud existed only in Iran. It was Iran and not the Ottoman Empire that was ripe for a revolutionary takeover in this respect. Sultan Bāyezid II was securely on the Ottoman throne, and in that very year (i.e., 907 AH), issued a much enlarged and modified form of Mehmed II's law codes as the *kitāb-e qawānin-e 'orfīyya-ye 'othmāniyya*. By contrast, Iran was divided into some twelve independent regions, including the Safavid Azerbaijan. Two of these were ruled by city notables, the rest by three groups of feuding princes and *amirs* of the decaying Āqqoyunlu regime (Pārsādust: 235-38, 280), and by the Timurids in the east. As Hasan Rumlu (I, p. 62) attested: "In the realm of Iran in that year [907] quite a few governors claimed independence and put up the banner of 'I and none Else!': the equal-of-Alexander Khāqān [Esmā'il] in Azerbaijan, Sultan-Morād [Āqqoyunlu] in most of [the Persian] Iraq, Morād Beg Bāyandor [another Āqqoyunlu prince] in Yazd, the alderman (*ra'is*) Mohammad Karrahi in Abarquh, Hosyan Kiyā Chalāvi in Semnān, Khwār and Firuzkuh, Bārik Beg Parnāk in the Arab Iraq, Qāsem Beg [Āqqoyunlu] in Diyār Bakr, Kadi Mohammad in association with Mawlānā Mas'ud Bidgoli in Kāshān, [the Timurid] Sultan-Hosayn Mirzā in Khorasan, Amir Dhu'l-Nun in Qandahār, [the Timurid] Badi' al-Zamān Mirzā in Balkh, and Abu'l-Fath Beg Bāyandor [yet another dissident from the Āqqoyunlu] in Kermān."

Esmā'il therefore decided on the conquest of the Iranian cities, followed by those of the Arab Iraq. In the spring of 1502/907,<sup>20</sup> he returned to Tabriz, where the Sunni were said to be in a two-thirds majority and the Shi'a in a one-third minority of the population, to crown himself, and declared Shi'ism the state religion. "The *tabarrā'is*, despite opposition, raised the uproar of *tabarrā* to high heaven." ('Abdi Beg, p. 40; Montazer-e Sāheb, ed., pp. 60-61) This means that Esmā'il issued an order that "the *tabarrā'is* should denigrate and curse the three cursed [caliphs] in public places, and kill whoever does the contrary."<sup>21</sup> (Qāzi Ahmad, I, p. 73) Shah Esmā'il also instituted the offices of the new Safavid states; the highest military and administrative offices were filled by the Sufi veterans, and the highest religious office, that of *sadr*, by his tutor and another member of the inner charismatic circle, Mawlānā Shams al-Din Lāhiji. (Pārsādust, pp. 281-82)

There were some submissions and defections from the *ancien régime*, notably those of Mansur Beg Afshār in central Iran and

<sup>20</sup> The year 1502 is the correct date. Many sources give 1501 as the date, as I did in the *Shadow of God*. Pārsādust (pp. 273.n.86, 277 and 282-3.n.1) is inconsistent.

<sup>21</sup> در اسواق تبرانین همچنان زبان به طعن و لعن ملاعین ثلاثه گشوده هر کس خلاف کند او را  
به قتل رسانند.

especially of the Āqqoyunlu governor of Diyār Bakr, Amir Beg Mawsellu, in 1507. (Sümer, pp. 33, 39-40) He and other *amirs* of the Mawsellu clan were given important functions by Shah Esmā'il. (*Tārikh-e Qezelbāshān*, p. 22) In the following year, 1508/914, Shah Esmā'il conquered Baghdad and massacred the Pornāk clan which ruled it for the old dynasty. He appointed the veteran Sufi of Lāhijān, Khādem Beg Khalifa, its new governor and furthered the institutionalization of the Safavid regime by also creating a new office of chief deputy (*khalifat al-kholafā'*) of the Safavid order for him. (Pārsādust, pp. 301-02)

Most Āqqoyunlu *amirs* and independent local magnates were killed or cruelly executed. In 1504/909-910, for instance, the above-mentioned Mohammad Karrahi and Hosayn Kiyā were put in iron cages and tortured until they committed suicide, and their corpses were burned; and another Āqqoyunlu *amir* captured with the latter was roasted and eaten by the Qezelbāsh. ('Abdi-Beg: 43; Aubin 1988: 45; Montazer-e Sāheb, ed., pp. 138-39) Here, the zeal of the Qezelbāsh was harnessed to a military conquest of great violence to the civilian population, and no attempt was made to win over the latter or admit them to the Safavid order. On the contrary, the capture of the cities was accompanied by the destruction of the other Sufi orders, desecration of the tombs of the Sufi shaykhs, fierce suppression of Sunnism and the desecration of the tombs of Abu Hanifā and Abu Yusof in Baghdad. (Arjomand, pp. 112-21) Rival popular preachers were suppressed and the mosques delivered to the Shi'ite agit-props, the *tabarrā'is*. A major shift of the center of gravity of the Safavid empire of conquest occurred with the annexation of Khorasan and Herāt and the defeat of the Uzbek Shībāni Khan by Shah Esmā'il at the beginning of Ramadan 916/December 1510, which was followed by the incorporation of the Timurid officials and notables on a considerable scale. Furthermore, the Timurid Zahir al-Din Bābor, the future founder of the Mughal Empire in India, accepted Shi'ism and Esmā'il's suzerainty, and struck coins and said the prayer in his name when taking Bukhara and Samarqand in 1511. (Roemer, pp. 126-27) The putative tomb of Abu Moslem Khorāsāni in Nishabur was destroyed, and the *tabarrā'is* infested the mosques and markets of Herāt and Khorasanian cities, with the cursing of Abu Moslem added to that of the first three rightly-guided caliphs of the Sunnis.<sup>22</sup> (Hamavi, pp. 182-89) Shah Esmā'il henceforth turned to the consolidation of administration and taxation, management of the pious endowments (*awqāf*) and

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<sup>22</sup> Abu Moslem's popularity was such that his tomb was rebuilt and had to be destroyed again in the early years of Tahmāsp's reign. (Hamavi, p. 182) The leading Shi'ite jurist, Shaykh 'Ali al-Karaki wrote a book against Abu Moslem and the non-Shi'ite storytelling, and issued a *fatvā* permitting the cursing of Abu Moslem and declaring anyone trying to prevent it as corrupt. (Hamavi, p. 189)

judiciary organization by the Persian notables. The new conception of greater Iran as unifying the Āqqoyunlu domains in the west and the Timurid Khorasan and Herāt in the east is reflected in the description of Mirzā Shāh Hosayn Esfāhāni, Shah Esmā'il's *vakil* (plenipotentiary deputy) from 1514 to 1523 as the "implementer of the command of the two easts and the two wests" (*nāfez-e farmān-e mashreqayn va maghrebayn*, cited in Aubin 1988, p. 114).

### FAILURE OF THE EXPORT OF REVOLUTION TO THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

It was not until 1511, a dozen years after Esmā'il's uprising, that the opportunity for a revolution in Ottoman Anatolia arose with the expected death of Sultan Bāyezid II and the inception of the severe struggle for succession among his sons. The Anatolia Qezelbāsh responded. Their uprising, however, was now out of phase with post-revolutionary imperial consolidation in Iran. Shah Esmā'il had last been active in Anatolia in 1507-1508 at the time of the acquisition of Diyār Bakr and conquest of Arab Iraq. But after the recent conquest of Khorasan<sup>23</sup> and the shift of the center of gravity in his empire, he was no longer keen on the westward export of revolution into Ottoman Anatolia and Syria.

His grandfather, Shaykh Jonayd, had established a Safavid mission in Teke Ili in southern Anatolia (present day Antalya), appointing Hasan Khalifa Tekelu in its charge. (Sohrweide 1965, p. 133) Despite Sultan Bāyezid's forceful movement of the Qezelbāsh to the Balkans in 1502, the order survived. Furthermore, the Qezelbāsh began to proselytize among the *sipahis* (fief holding cavalry) dispossessed of their lands by Bāyezid's viziers, forcing his son, Prince Selim, who was a governor in eastern Anatolia, to make a competitive bid by recruiting them for a holy raid against Georgia. (Uğur, pp. 149-50, paraphrasing Neshanji) In the spring of 1511, rumors of the death of the Sultan spread, prompting the sudden departure from Anatolia of the shifty prince-governor, Şehzāde (Shāhzāda) Qorqud,<sup>24</sup> in his bid for succession, while Sultan Selim had risen against his father whom he considered senile, and probably with a nod from Bāyezid's other son, Sultan Ahmad. (Uğur, pp. 162-65). Under these circumstances, Bābā Shāhqoli, the son and successor of Jonayd's agent, Hasan Khalifa, who had lived with his father in a cave as a Sufi hermit (Uğur, p. 166), led a fierce uprising. The Turks are said to have sold their farms and cattle for little and joined the Qezelbāsh, donning

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<sup>23</sup> He was still there when the Anatolian uprising occurred.

<sup>24</sup> He evidently did not like the governorship of Teke, and had once before left it vacant for at least a year, fleeing to Egypt. (Uğur, pp. 154-56) On possible reasons for this, see our final section below.

their red headgear. (Sümer, pp. 36-37, n. 16, citing Kemalpāshāzāde) Some of the dispossessed *sipahis* threw in their lot with the rebels. (Uğur, p. 165, paraphrasing Bedlisi) Even Shahanshāh, yet another son of Bāyezid and the governor of Qarāmān, joined the Qezelbāsh (Sümer, p. 43) The rebellion spread, especially after the capture of the treasury of Sultan Qorqud in May 1511. Amasya was overrun and the rebels reached the countryside of Bursa. The rebellion was extremely violent, with massacres of city populations, cats and dogs, and of the jurists and Sufi shaykhs of Amasya, destruction of mosques and Sufi convents, and the beheading and impaling of a governor and killing of the grand vizier and several *beys*. (Sohrweide, pp. 146-58; Uğur, pp.164-96) According to the kadi of Antalya, Bābā Shāhqoli at times claimed to be the Mahdī, and at other times, that Shah Esmā'il had died and his divine charisma passed unto himself. (Aubin 1988, p. 90) A captured follower of his brought before the same kadi still considered him God and a new prophet and was executed for apostasy. (Sohrweide, pp. 148-49) A group of some three or five hundred Qezelbāsh rebels fled to Iran, attacking a commercial caravan from Tabriz on the way. Most chronicles put this event after the suppression of the rebellion of Bābā Shāhqoli, but, according to the intriguing account of Edris Bedlisi, Bābā Shāhqoli's "vizier" led the looting expedition into Azerbaijan *not after* but *during* the rebellion. (Uğur, pp. 181-83) Shah Esmā'il, who was preoccupied with the consolidation of the newly acquired eastern half of his empire and was physically in the east, ordered two of their leaders thrown into a cauldron of boiling water and others executed for robbing the caravan in Anatolia. The remaining men were divided among Qezelbāsh units, and the women and children reduced to begging. (Uğur, p. 183; Aubin 1988, pp. 90-91)

Nevertheless, further export of the revolution was not neglected entirely. In 1512, according to Rumlu (134), when Shah Esmā'il "heard the news of the revolution (*enqelāb*) in the realm of Rum, he sent Nur-'Ali Khalifa Rumlu<sup>25</sup> to that country to gather the sincere Sufis and close to three or four thousand horsemen with their nomadic household joined him." Nur-'Ali was sent as the governor of Erzinzān by Shah Esmā'il, captured Tokat (Tuqāt), which was a stronghold of the Safavid order (Uğur, p. 192, summarizing Bedlisi), and was joined by the Ottoman prince, Sultan Morād, son of Bāyezid's other son and contender for the throne, Sultan Ahmad. His son, Sultan Morād, had become the figurehead of another band of Qezelbāsh rebels under a certain Sufi 'Isā Khalifaoğlu who had sacked Amasya and killed the kadi of Chorum. (Pārsādust, pp. 389-90) He was now attacked by Sultan Selim's forces

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<sup>25</sup> He was, in fact, from the local clan of Kheneslu. (*Tārikh-e Qezelbāshān*: 26).

and fled with ten thousand men to take refuge with Shah Esmā'il, while Nur-'Ali Khalifa returned to Erzinjān, which he held for Shah Esmā'il. Selim then sent an army against the Qezelbāsh under Sinān Pasha who was defeated and killed by Nur-'Ali Khalifa. (Rumlu, p. 135) It is interesting to note that Nur-'Ali held on to power even after the battle of Chālderān, and was not defeated and killed until 912/1515 (Sümer, p. 49).

Finally, in the winter of 1519-20, there was a much smaller Qezelbāsh rebellion in Anatolia led by a certain Jalāl, who claimed Mahdihood. Again, there was no Safavid involvement (Sohrweide, pp. 167-70). Not only had the eastern orientation of the Safavid empire become set, but also the leader of the Safavid revolution had lost his charisma in Chālderān and withdrawn to secluded drinking and debauchery.

#### PERIODIZATION OF THE SAFAVID REVOLUTION

In his first Safavid study, Aubin (1959) gave a general view of the incorporation of the Persian notables into Esmā'il's Turkman empire of conquest in the course of its consolidation throughout his reign. In the second, he focused on the ousting of a small cluster of the Qezelbāsh leaders who had raised Esmā'il in exile and were accordingly known as the 'Sufis of Lāhijān', and their replacement by Persian notables in 914/1508-09 as the critical turning point in the transition from the revolutionary phase to that of consolidation (Aubin, 1984). I took a contrasting position and viewed Esmā'il's suppression of Qezelbāsh extremism committed to the export of the millenarian revolution—or, to be more precise, the liquidation, in 1512, of his own most extreme and millenarian followers who had fled after the suppression of Bābā Shāhqoli's rebellion—as the decisive point in the revolutionary power struggle that signaled the end of revolution and the beginning of consolidation (Arjomand, p. 110).

Some elaboration on my dating against Aubin's in terms of the logic of the revolutionary process seems to be in order. The decline of the "Sufis of Lāhijān" was the inevitable result of the military importance of the Turkman tribesmen who gathered under Esmā'il in 1500 and constituted his army thereafter. (Haneda 1987, pp. 96-100) Furthermore, they were not expelled from the movement in 1509 but were rather put in charge of the export of revolution to Khorasan in 1510. What is more, it is evident from Aubin's own earlier study (1959-65) that the incorporation of the administrative and judiciary cadre of the Āqqoyunlu ancien régime was more gradual, and in fact begins with the defection in the spring of 1501 of the above-mentioned Amir Zakariyā Khojaji, followed

by another colleague and former Āqqoyunlu vizier, Mahmud Khan, who belonged to the Daylami/Qazvini family in 1503-04. The Sāvaji family of clerical notables probably entered the Safavid service around that time. Similarly, the abovementioned Qāzi Mohammad Kāshi, who was in control of Kāshān with another local notable submitted to Shah Esmā'il and became a Safavid official. Furthermore, Shaykh Najm al-Din Zargar Rashti, whose appointment as his *vakil* in 1508 is taken to be part of this turning point, is of ambiguous value for supporting Aubin's argument. He was a jeweler (*zargar*) from the city of Rasht who had joined in the nearby Lahijan very early. Although a Persian, he belonged to the core sectarian cell around Shah Esmā'il in Lāhijān and should for sociological reasons be classified as one of the "Sufis of Lāhijān," alongside the five leading members named by Aubin (1984, p. 3).<sup>26</sup> In that sense, the post-revolutionary transition begins two years later, with the accession of Esmā'il's protégé, Yār Ahmad Khuzāni (of a family of notables who had settled in Isfahan), called the Second Star (*najm*) to the office of *vakil*. This signals the geopolitical shift toward Khorasan which, according to my argument, was decisive for initiating the phase of consolidation of revolution in one country. Yet this appointment was contingent and happened because of the death of the First Star, Najm al-Din the jeweler. It is interesting to note that although Yār Ahmad Khuzāni, who had been the first Persian to command the Qezelbāsh in the battle of Ghojdoḡvān in which he was captured and killed, was also the head of a Persian military clan who had joined the Qezelbāsh forces. (Haneda 1989, pp. 80-81)

From my perspective, the victory of the Ostājlu over the Shāmlu faction among the Qezelbāsh tribesmen in 1508-09 is important, but should be placed alongside the purge of the Qezelbāsh that had been carried out already under the "Sufis of Lāhijān" in 1505, and by no other than one of its leading members, Dede Beg, the *qurchi-bāshi* (Aubin, p. 4). We know very little about this extensive purge, but 'Abdi Beg (p. 44) significantly refers to the lethally purged group as "hypocites" (*monāfeqān*). We must consider it part of the revolutionary power struggle, and ideologically based, over and above cross-cutting clan rivalries. This power struggle between extremists and accommodationists ended with the suppression of the remnants of Bābā Shāhqli's rebellion, who were seeking to radicalize the Safavid movement and rekindle its commitment to millennial world revolution.

Whichever of the two dates discussed above is taken as the date for the inception of the phase of post-revolutionary consolidation, the implication is that by the spring of 1512 Esmā'il was thinking of "Shi'ism in one country" as, centuries later, Stalin was to think of

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<sup>26</sup> Two of the original group of seven from the 1490s had died by then.

“socialism in one country.” Even if that were the case, the Uzbek and Ottoman rulers had no way of knowing it and could not take any chances. So they dealt Esmā'il two decisive defeats in Ghojdoṽān in November 1512, and in Chālderān in May 1514. The revolution came to an end by necessity. Administrative consolidation, on the one hand, and conversion of the population to make Iran the one Shi'ite country, on the other, gained full force. These processes continued during the long reign of Shah Tahmāsb (1524-76) but became irreversible only under Shah 'Abbās I (r. 1587-1629).

### REVOLUTION AND THE SUNNI EXILES

Revolutions typically produce a large number of exiles, and the attempts to export them alarm neighboring powers and result in wars. The success of a millenarian Shi'ite revolution in Iran under the leadership of the child-God Esmā'il drove many Iranian notables and Sunni jurists into exile. This alarmed the Ottomans to the west and the Uzbek state in the east, who both made imperial counter-claims with significant help from these exiles. Unlike the Sasanian revolution under Ardashir and Shāpur I, whose counter-revolutionary exiles all gathered in the Parthian kingdom of Armenia, but like the Islamic revolution, whose exiles were dispersed eastwards and westwards, the exiles of the Safavid revolution moved in three main directions: westward to the Ottoman Empire, northeastward to the Uzbek Transoxania, and southeastward to India. We know of a few exiles who went to India also (Aubin, 1988, p. 96), but they had little opportunity for counter-revolutionary political activism. The ruler of the kingdom of Bijāpur in the Deccan, Yusof 'Ādelshāh (r. 1489-510) had established Shi'ism as the state religion in 1502, just as he heard of Shah Esmā'il's similar proclamation in Tabriz, and his successor made his soldiers wear the Qezelbāsh headgear. (Eaton, p. 67)

It was otherwise with the ancien régime exiles who had fled to the Ottoman and Uzbek states. To the Ottoman and Uzbek rulers, the Qezelbāsh warriors aiming at world domination were a dire and immediate threat. To stop the expansion of the Safavid empire, the Uzbeks in the northeast and the Ottomans in the west solicited the help of the jurists to pose as defenders of Islamic orthodoxy against the rampant new heresy. On both sides, prominent jurists supplied the rulers with *fatvās* (legal rulings) making the shedding of the blood of the Qezelbāsh lawful, indeed incumbent.

The foremost counter-revolutionary exile to move to Transoxania was the Āqqoyunlu patrician notable and court historian, Fazl Allāh Ruzbehān Khonji (d. 1521), (also known as Khwāja Mawlānā Esfahāni), who fled Kāshān after putting the final touches to his remarkable attempt

to appropriate for Sunni Islam (in competition with the Safavid preachers and agitprop) the popular cult of the Fourteen Immaculates (Mohammad, Fātema and the twelve Imams), as well as the principles *tavallā'* (friendship [of the holy House]) and *tabarrā'* (avoidance [of its enemies]; the basis for the cursing of the first three Sunni caliphs) in Rajab 909/January 1504, just as the city fell to Shah Esmā'il.<sup>27</sup> He first went to Herāt and then, by 1508, to the camp of the Uzbek prince, Mohammad Shībāni Khan, whom he accompanied on his campaigns, completing the *Mehmān-nāma-ye Bokhārā* for him in 915/1509 (Khonji, 1962, p. 356; idem, 1992, editor's introd., pp. 2-4). This work is very interesting, not so much for containing *fatvās* for *jehāds* against the Qezelbāsh (Khonji, 1962, pp. 44-45), which are also found elsewhere,<sup>28</sup> but rather for showing Khonji's strategy of competitive appropriation and preemption of popular Shi'ite themes for counter-revolutionary mobilization. The most important popular notions and practices Khonji sought to appropriate against the Qezelbāsh revolution are the belief in the Mahdi, which was modified into that of the Expected Hāreth (Khonji, 1962, pp. 95-99, 104-06)<sup>29</sup> and the Renewer (*mojadded*) of the century (claimed for his Uzbek patron), and the love of the family of the Prophet, and pilgrimage to the shrine of Imam Rezā.<sup>30</sup> (Khonji, 1962, pp. 339-46). Khonji continued the life of an ancien régime exile in search of a Sunni monarch to defeat Shah Esmā'il, and wrote a remarkable program for Sunni Shari'a-based government, the *Soluk al-moluk*, for the next Uzbek khan, 'Obayd Allāh, in 1514. After hearing of the defeat of Shah Esmā'il at the hand of the Ottoman Sultan Selim, he urged the latter to follow the example of Alexander and annex Iran to Rum in a poem in Persian, appending another poem in Chaghatay Turkish by a fellow Sunni doctor in exile, exhorting Selim to liberate Khorasan (Khonji, 1992, editor's intro., p. 3). Another exile, Zayn al-Din Mahmud Vāsefi, a preacher and man of letters trained by the famous Mollā Hosayn Vā'ez-e Kāshefi, has

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<sup>27</sup> This work has been taken as evidence of what is called syncretic Shi'itized Sunnism by Biancamaria Scarcia Amoretti, or "Twelver Sunnism" by Rasul Ja'fariyān (in his editorial intro. to Khonji, 1996, p. 26). Without wishing to deny the existence of syncretic trends in Timurid Iran, I would take Khonji's work as evidence of an attempt at competitive appropriation of popular Shi'ite themes by the opponents of the Safavid revolution.

<sup>28</sup> And notably also much earlier against Jonayd (Sharvāni, p. 106) and Haydar (Khonji, 1992, p. 286) and their followers.

<sup>29</sup> He cites a tradition reported in the *Sonann* of Abu Dāvud, which is an *ex eventu* prophecy of the return of the Hāreth b. Surayj, who unfurled the messianic black banner in Transoxania against the Umayyads some twelve years before Abu Moslem. See my forthcoming *Revolution in World History*, University of Chicago Press.

<sup>30</sup> In addition to a eulogy for Imam Rezā, in which the other eleven Imams are also mentioned (Khonji 1962, pp. 336-8), Khonji also mentions (p. 344) his other book (Khonji, 1996) in praise of the twelve Imams.

left an engaging account of his flight from Herāt to Samarqand in the company of a group of musicians, singers and poets during the early spring of 1512. The party heard of the defeat of Mirzā Bābor by 'Obayd Allāh Khan on the way and hastened to Samarqand to see the latter (Vāsefī, I, pp. 17-36).

The ancien régime notables who fled the Qezelbāsh revolution westward to the Ottoman Empire appear to have been more numerous (Aubin, 1988, pp. 98-102). Notable among these was Shaikh Ebrāhīm, the head of the Golshani Sufi order, who went into hiding after Shah Esmā'il's conquest of Tabriz, and fled with the connivance of a high Qezelbāsh functionary, and Edris Bedlisi, a secretary in the Āqqoyunlu chancery in Tabriz, who wrote *Hasht behesht* for Sultan Bāyezid II and began a *Salim-nāma* (Yildiz 2004).<sup>31</sup>

During the succession struggle in anticipation and after the death of Bāyezid II in 1511-12, as we have seen, Shah Esmā'il supported Sultan Ahmed's son, Sultan Morād, on the losing side. Having won this struggle as the champion of the Janissary in 1512, the new Sultan, Selim I ordered the registration and selective imprisonment of the Anatolian Qezelbāsh, and the execution of 40,000 followers of the Safavid Sufi order in 1513 (Sohrweide, pp. 161-64)<sup>32</sup>. He then proceeded to administer a decisive military defeat to Shah Esmā'il in the battle of Chālderān in 1514. Selim's military operations were conducted hand in hand with a propaganda campaign. As the background to this campaign and its consequent reactive emergence of the Ottomans as champions of Islamic orthodoxy against the Safavid revolution, we have a remarkable historical document, written by the above-mentioned Prince Qorqud in 1508, a disgruntled "summons" (*da'vat*) to base the Ottoman political and judiciary system on Islam that testifies to the kind of moral dissolution that would facilitate revolutionary moral regeneration. (Fleischer, pp. 70-74) Selim evidently responded to this situation of moral disintegration after his military response to Esmā'il. Notable among the learned jurists who participated in this campaign was Kamāl Pāshāzāda (d. 1535), to be later appointed *shaykh al-Eslām* by Solaymān in 1526. He had grown up in Amasya and maintained his connections with Anatolia. Like his contemporary Khonji in the east, Kamāl Pāshāzāda issued injunctions declaring the Qezelbāsh infidels, their territory the

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<sup>31</sup> Hosayn b. 'Abd Allāh Sharvāni, who fled to the Ottoman Empire from Shah Esmā'il, mentions a very large number of Sunni jurists as open opponents of the Qezelbāsh, and states that some of them were killed or burned by the Qezelbāsh revolutionaries (Sharvā ni, pp. 92-93). He does not, however, say how many of them went into exile.

<sup>32</sup> An undated anonymous *fatvā* appears to aim at justifying this act. (Eberhard, p. 167)

land of war (*dār al-harb*), and the waging of holy war (*jehād*) against them the individually incumbent duty (*farz al-'ayn*) of every Muslim. The sultan was then reminded of his duty to lead the *jehād* against the Qezelbāsh (Eberhard, pp. 164-65). Either at that stage or somewhat later, Kamāl Pāshāzāda appears to have assigned the task of a more detailed refutation of the Safavid claims to his student, Abu'l-So'ud, Mohammad b. Mohy al-Din 'Emādi. Abu'l-So'ud was from the Kurdish region under Safavid domination, and his refutations indicate some familiarity with the activities of Shaikh 'Ali Karaki, as the leading Shi'ite religious authority under Shah Esmā'il,<sup>33</sup> and go further in enumerating the deviations of the Qezelbāsh from orthodoxy, in refuting Shah Esmā'il's claim to descent from Imam 'Ali b. Abi Tāleb and the Safavid claim to being a Shi'ite sect. In one *fatvā*, Abu'l-So'ud considers fighting against the Qezelbāsh the most important duty of the Muslim, comparable to their duty to fight the false prophet, Mosaylama, under Abu Bakr and the Kharijites under 'Ali (Eberhard, pp.165-67).<sup>34</sup> Abu'l-So'ud later rose to prominence, holding the office of *shaykh al-Eslām* from 1545 until his death in 1574, and was a chief architect of the Ottoman judiciary organization under Sultan Solaymān the Lawgiver (*qānuni*). Although attempts at preemptive appropriation of Mahdist features for Sultan Solaymān were not lacking,<sup>35</sup> it was his construction of the imposing Ottoman judiciary system that was in part a reaction to the Safavid revolution and can therefore be counted as one of its long-term consequences.

To conclude, to the extent that revolutions are characterized by the processes of radical mobilization and formation of an ideologically committed community of dispossessed notables in exile, the rise of the Safavids constitutes a revolution. And if revolutions are defined in terms of their important consequences, both the internal (the conversion of Iran to Shi'ism, and the change in the conception of monarchy) and external consequences of the rise of Shah Esmā'il (emergence of the Ottoman empire as the champion of Sunni orthodoxy, with a historically unprecedented well-organized judiciary) qualify it as a revolution.

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<sup>33</sup> In a compilation of these opinions in 1581, he is referred to as Shaykh 'Abd al-'Ali al-Druzi. (Eberhard, p. 223)

<sup>34</sup> The Ottoman propaganda against the Safavids continued well into the reign of Shah Tahmāsb, and displaced ulema from the lands conquered by the Safavids appear to have played the leading role in it. We have two polemical tracts from a certain Nakhjavāni and the above-cited Sharvāni, which was written in 1540. (Eberhard, pp. 53-56) The propaganda campaign was revived under Morad III around 1580.

<sup>35</sup> See Cornell Fleischer's forthcoming work on this topic.

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# Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Shah Mohammad Khodābanda and the Safavid *Dār al-enshā*

COLIN P. MITCHELL

Undoubtedly, the Safavid ruling elite was in a state of shock following the chaotic rule of Esmā'il II and the wholesale massacre of princes and amirs alike between 1576 and 1577. It was also during Esmā'il's reign that the emerging phenomena of ethnic factions and rivalries came to appear with particular intensity. The 1576 death of the aged, yet highly venerated, Shah Tahmāsb closed an era in which autocratic rule, buttressed by key theocratic principles, had effectively repressed a panoply of competing and dissenting groups. Free of such absolutist rule, loose alliances of different ethnic groups – Circassians, Georgians, Turkmen, Azeris, Māzandarānis, Gilānis, Khorāsānis – began to challenge one another for primacy in the Safavid court, while religious groups and Sufi confraternities such as the Noqtavis<sup>1</sup> and the Naqshbandis<sup>2</sup> were able to expand their spheres of influence. On account of the predatory nature of the ethnic and court politics, the rule of Mohammad Khodābanda has been called the nadir in the historiographical timeline of 16<sup>th</sup>-century Safavid history. Disturbingly, historians have pointed to the indirect rule of royal women like Pari Khan Khānom and Khayr al-Nesā (Mahd-e 'Olyā) as evidence of the rapacious nature of Safavid politics in the 1570s; it is the assumption that it was the machinations of such personalities, each keen to advance their own scion as an heir to the throne, that set the stage ultimately for a further decade of volatility.<sup>3</sup> Leaving aside the issue whether it is fair to explain such instability on the basis of politically assertive women<sup>4</sup>, there is little doubt that historians – both contemporary and modern – are keen to highlight the period from

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<sup>1</sup> Babayan, p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> Algar, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Roemer describes how Khayr al-Nesā Begom was an ambitious woman and how “her enterprise and lust for power found undreamed-of opportunities” in the court of Khodābanda. It was in response to her autocratic ways that Turkmen leaders ultimately fell into a pattern of recrimination and violence, which beset “the internal crisis of the Safavid Empire, which had been simmering ever since Shah Tahmasb's death.” See Roemer, 1986, pp. 255-56. Similar depictions of Mahd-e 'Olyā are found in Roemer, 1989, p. 300. Likewise, see Hinz, 1933, pp. 19-100.

<sup>4</sup> The only serious examination of this issue and others can be found in Szuppe, 2003, pp. 140-69.

1577 to 1588 as fractured and unwieldy. The inability to manage such divisive trends is laid squarely at the feet of Mohammad Khodābanda, the only one of Tahmāsb's sons to survive Esmā'il's ruthless purge. Khodābanda had spent most of his adulthood enjoying a bon-vivant lifestyle in Herat and Shiraz before ascending the Safavid throne on 5 Zu al-Hejja 985 (13 Feb. 1578). His inability to control his sister (Pari Khan Khānom), wife (Mahd-e 'Olyā), and his Qezelbāsh amirs, combined with a debilitating ophthalmic condition, has allowed historians to consign Khodābanda to that ever popular category of regal dupes. Effectively blind and politically witless, Khodābanda is presented as the head of a court that was rife with debauchery, murder, intrigue, sex scandals, avarice and ineptitude. Such historiographical extremes are undoubtedly rooted in the Safavid sources themselves, namely chronicles such as Qāzi Ahmad's *Kholāsat al-tavārikh* and Eskandar Beg Monshi's *Tārikh-i 'ālam-ārā-ye 'Abbāsi*, which were commissioned during the period of Shah 'Abbās the Great and which endeavored to accentuate the unpleasant political conditions of Iran immediately prior to the accession of the greatest of Safavid rulers in 1588.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, it is clear that the authors of these sources needed to underscore the volatility and misdirection of Khodābanda's rule to better rationalize 'Abbās's numerous rebellions in Khorasan during the 1580s and his ultimate overthrow of his own father. The modern articulation of these prejudices is rooted in the work of one of the pioneers of Safavid political history, Hans Robert Roemer, who set the tenor for Khodābanda's reign as one of "decline" in 1939 with *Die Niedergang Irans nach dem Tode Isma'ils der Grausamen (1577-1581)*. At that time, he wrote of a shah who spent most of his time in the *haram*, and whose reign was a "departure" (*Abkehrung*) from normal kingly rule.<sup>6</sup> His misgivings about this period were reiterated in his chapter on the Safavids in the *Cambridge History of Iran*, wherein he typified Khodābanda's reign – rife with ambitious women and voracious courtiers – as one of "weakness, indifference, and incompetence."<sup>7</sup> In his well-received treatment of medieval Persian history, *Persien auf dem Weg in die Neuzeit*, Roemer castigated Khodābanda's reign as "being on the edge of chaos," and that there were no benefits at all brought to Iran during his decade of rule.<sup>8</sup> In a similar vein, David Morgan suggests that Mohammad Khodābanda "seems never to have taken much interest in the business of being ruler of Persia" and was content to remain in the background while Pari Khan

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<sup>5</sup> Savory notes some of these features with Eskandar Beg. See Savory, 1980, pp. 27-30.

<sup>6</sup> Roemer, 1939, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Roemer, 1986, p. 253.

<sup>8</sup> Roemer, 1989, p. 298.

Khānom *et alia* dominated the foreground.<sup>9</sup> Manuchehr Pārsādust's most recent contribution in Persian, with the pejorative title of *Shāh Mohammad: pādshāh-i ke shāh nabud* (*Shah Mohammad: An Emperor Who Was not King*) discusses in detail how Khodābanda was unable or unwilling to prevent family members like Pari Khan Khānom, Mahd-e 'Olyā, and Hamza Mirzā from dictating official policy.<sup>10</sup>

Perhaps it would be foolhardy to suggest that Khodābanda was *not* an impressionable ruler, who was obviously unable to quell royal familial machinations, courtier intrigue, and Qezelbāsh brinkmanship. After two failed Shāmlu putschs organized around the young prince 'Abbās in Herat, Khodābanda was ultimately forced to relinquish his throne to his charismatic, and arguably better-organized, son on 10 Zu al-Qa'da 996 (1 October 1588). Moreover, there is little contesting the fact that the Ottomans were able to extend their territory into the Caucasus and Azarbaijan after breaking the long-standing Peace Treaty of Amasya (1555) and repeatedly invading between 1578 and 1586. However, the question arises: can we think of a period in Safavid history where the above trends were not taking place? Yes, individuals like Pari Khan Khānom, Khayr al-Nesā, and Mirzā Salmān Jaberi operated as *de facto* rulers but could we not make the same observation for individuals like Hosayn Lala Beg Shāmlu and Najm-e Thāni during the reign of Shah Esmā'il? Did we not see Shah Tahmāsb struggle to free himself of overbearing personalities like Chuha Soltān Takkalu or Hosayn Khan Shāmlu? Moreover, there indeed appear to be antecedents for the Shāmlu revolt against Khodābanda in the form of 'Ulama Beg Takkalu's revolt in 1532, the Grand Sedition involving Sām Mirzā in 1534, Alqās Mirzā's 1548 defection to the Ottomans and attack against his own Safavid family, and Qazāq Khan Takkalu's revolt in 1564-65. Likewise, we would be hard-pressed to think of a period in the 16<sup>th</sup> century when the Ottomans or the Uzbeks were not attempting to carve out swathes of territory in Azarbaijan and Khorasan for themselves. Perhaps the problems we associate with the reign of Khodābanda were more a reflection of systemic difficulties in the Safavid empire than anything overtly specific in his personality or style of rule.<sup>11</sup> Since the mid 16<sup>th</sup>-century, the sanctity of the Safavid royal body had been diluted considerably, as we saw in the systematic elimination of Safavid princes and princelings during Esmā'il II's reign. This was a particularly mercenary era in terms of Qezelbāsh brinkmanship, and Shah Khodābanda's inveterate ways were designed to placate this unruly element. At the

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<sup>9</sup> Morgan, p. 130.

<sup>10</sup> Pārsādust, pp. 221-23.

<sup>11</sup> For a recent discussion on the problems associated with the Safavid notion of corporate sovereignty, see Babaie et al., pp. 25-30.

same time, this was clearly a canny individual who had benefited from a thorough courtly education, and it seems likely that Khodābanda had been an active agent in his self-preservation and was not a passive recipient of intermittent Qezelbāsh goodwill and succor. Not unlike a medieval Persian version of *I, Claudius*, Khodābanda navigated successfully a period of violent recrimination, and ultimately survived to tell the tale and live for close to ten years after his abdication.

This study is dedicated to making some degree of rehabilitation for a reign that for all intents and purposes serves as a historiographical *bête noire* for the scholars of Safavid and Perso-Islamic history. In fact, as this article will demonstrate, there is good evidence to suggest that this period of rule saw the growth of a powerful “scholar-bureaucrat”<sup>12</sup> movement which, working in concert with key hierocratic elements, fashioned a new and innovative discourse regarding legitimacy and the relationship between religion and polity in the Safavid state. Indeed, an analysis of Mohammad Khodābanda and his relationship with different sets of Persian administrators and religious personalities in cities such as Herat, Shiraz and Qazvin will give us good reason to reconsider how we understand this particular ruler. By examining the composition of the Safavid *divān-e ‘alā* and its production of chancellery material, namely *enshā*, during this period, we discover that Persian bureaucrats were able to reinforce definitions of corporate self-identity in the face of Turkmen Qezelbāsh political antagonism. More importantly, with respect to Khodābanda and the integrity of the Safavid dynastic household, this cadre of Persian scholar-bureaucrats was integral to resuscitating key elements of Perso-Islamic concepts of authority, justice, and religion and molding these to the peculiar Safavid hybrid of kingship, Imami Shi‘ism, and charismatic ideals of Sufism. As a prosopography of the Safavid bureaucratic class will demonstrate, many of those individuals who had served Khodābanda and had collaborated in this exciting and dynamic religio-political discourse were to go on to play more than influential roles in the governing apparatus set up by Shah ‘Abbās. On the premise of such institutional continuity, we discover that those ‘new’ and ‘innovative’ features we associate with Shah ‘Abbās the Great’s reign – pseudo-secularism, religious pluralism, toleration, justice – find their roots in a period traditionally disparaged as chaotic, cruel, and unrefined.

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<sup>12</sup> A term borrowed from Kafadar, p. 18, regarding those poets, litterateurs, rhetoricians, and stylists who also served a bureaucratic capacity in a medieval Islamic state.

## FROM PRINCE TO KING

Soltān-Mohammad Mirzā, son of Shah Tahmāsb and his Türkmen wife Soltāno Begom, was born on 937 (1531) in Tabriz. Not much is known of his youth, but we know that he was named as the nominal governor of Herat at the age of four after the re-conquest of that city from the Uzbeks in Shawwāl 943 (March 1537).<sup>13</sup> In reality, the city was under the governance of the powerful Qezelbāsh amir and *lala* (tutor) to Soltān-Mohammad Mirzā, Mohammad Sharaf al-Din Oghli Takkalu,<sup>14</sup> who was also the husband of his maternal aunt. Maria Szuppe has noted the impact of this foundational relationship for Soltān-Muhammad Mirzā, and anecdotal evidence suggests that he spoke well of the Qezelbāsh amir for many years to come.<sup>15</sup> An urban renewal program was instituted in Herat during Mohammad Sharaf al-Din's twenty-year gubernatorial tenure, whereby residential gardens, public edifices, shrines, and irrigation complexes were built or restored. A positive byproduct of this reconstruction in the 1540s and 1550s was an influx of poets, litterateurs, artists, and calligraphers, and it is rather certain that the young Soltān-Muhammad Mirzā would have been exposed to a rich array of cultural, bureaucratic, and scholarly influences in Herat. Indeed, it was during his first tenure as governor of Khorasan that he married the granddaughter of the great Persian vezier and *vakil*, Mirzā Sharaf Qāzi Jahān, in Ramazān 956 (September 1549).<sup>16</sup> Herat was able to recover much of its Timurid glory thanks to the administrative efforts of Mohammad Sharaf al-Din, and during the period of Soltān-Muhammad Mirzā's nominal governorship, "the court of Herat broadcasted manifestations of its splendour: festivals were organized, festivals which functioned effectively as propaganda for the regime."<sup>17</sup> One of the most costly and well-prepared of these festivals was a celebration of the arrival of the Mughal royal exile, Homāyun, in Zu al-Qa'da 950 (January 1544). Shah Tahmāsb's prescriptions for these ceremonies were so lavish and extensive that court scribes (*monshis*) included his original *farmān* to Mohammad Sharaf al-Din on this matter in their respective collections of model administrative documents.<sup>18</sup> This royal *farmān* in question instructs the governing elite of Khorasan on every conceivable aspect of the Safavid official reception: order and precedence of receiving nobility; sizes and dimensions of

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<sup>13</sup> Szuppe, 1992, pp. 31, 109.

<sup>14</sup> For the most comprehensive study of this individual, see Szuppe, 1996, pp. 79-104.

<sup>15</sup> Szuppe, 1996, p. 82.

<sup>16</sup> Idem, 1992, p. 117; Aubin, p. 74.

<sup>17</sup> Szuppe, 1992, p. 119.

<sup>18</sup> See Navā'i, 1971, pp. 53-61

gifted carpets, brocaded silks, cloths, jewelry, armor, weapons, and horses; types and quantities of foods and beverages to be prepared; specific names of local singers and musicians to be engaged; neighborhoods and quarters of Herat to be festooned and decorated.<sup>19</sup> Representing the royal Safavid body, Soltān-Muhammad Mirzā participated in an unprecedented imperial ceremony where two sovereign rulers, against the backdrop of a lively and well-attended court, exchanged a complicated litany of kingly greetings, salutations, benedictions, and invocations. Moreover, he contended with – at least nominally – a prodigious list of logistical and financial technicalities which would characterize such a grandiose event.

Shah Tahmāsb was pleased with the progress of this former-Timurid capital and its newly invigorated imperial profile, and Soltān-Muhammad Mirzā was re-appointed to this important appanage in 963 (1555-56) after a very brief stint in which his brother Esmā'il had taken over the governorship<sup>20</sup>; other brothers were named to more peripheral governorships in Mashhad, Sistān, and Qandahār.<sup>21</sup> In the meanwhile, the Qezelbāsh doyen Mohammad Sharaf al-Din had passed away and his son, Qazāq Khan, was named as the Safavid prince's new handler/*lala*.<sup>22</sup> In Sha'bān 974 (February 1567), a larger administrative shuffle was ordered for Herat after the revolt of Qazāq Khan in 1564. Yakān Shāh-qoli Ostājlu was named (honorary) tutor to the prince, while the chief religious position of *Shaikh al-Eslām* was granted to Shaikh Hosayn 'Abd al-Samad, father of Shaikh Bahā'i al-Din and exemplar of the 'Āmeli Shi'ite clerical emigration to Iran in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>23</sup> Soltān-Muhammad Mirzā continued as governor (*vāli*) of Khorasan for another six years until he was named governor of Shiraz in 979 (1572).<sup>24</sup> During this time, he continued to develop and nurture a lively coterie of supporters in the form of poets, artists, and courtiers in Herat. It was here that he earned his reputation as a talented poet, with the pen name (*takhallos*) of Fahmi, and began participating energetically in poetry gatherings (*moshā'arat*)<sup>25</sup> Sām Mirzā notes in his biography of poets that Soltān-Muhammad was well noted for his education and cognitive

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E.g., apple preserves from Mashhad" (*morabbāhā-ye sib-e moshkin-e Mashhadi*) and "rose-watered sherbet and citron juice" (*sharbat-e golāb va āb-e limu*), while popular performers included Mawlālā Qāsem Qānuni and Ostād Shāh-Muhammad Sornā'i; see Navā'i, 1971, pp. 55, 58.

<sup>19</sup> Röhrborn, p. 43; Pārsādust, p. 18.

<sup>21</sup> Babaie *et al.*, p. 26.

<sup>22</sup> Szuppe, 1996, p. 83.

<sup>23</sup> Stewart, pp. 393-94.

<sup>24</sup> Röhrborn, p. 41.

<sup>25</sup> Eskandar Beg Monshi, I, p. 216; Navā'i, 1973, p. 28.

acuity.<sup>26</sup> When he moved to Shiraz, he was accompanied by a number of individuals from his Herati retinue, the most recognizable of which was the *sayyed*, Shāh-Mozaffar al-Din ‘Ali Inju, who would serve in Shiraz as a judge to the local military (*qāzi-yi ‘askar*).<sup>27</sup>

From 1573 until his accession to the throne in 1578, Soltān-Mohammad Mirzā served as the nominal *vāli* of Fars, while in reality the governorship was served by Vali Soltān Qalmānchi Oghli Zu al-Qadar.<sup>28</sup> Fars was an ancillary Safavid province that for all intents and purposes removed the Safavid prince from the network of princes, amirs, *sayyeds*, and courtiers which crisscrossed east-west from Azarbaijan to Khorasan. While perhaps politically isolated, Shiraz was nonetheless an important center of philosophy and intellectual thought, and there is a general consensus that a “Shiraz school of philosophy” had been quite active there since the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, thanks to the work of Jalāl al-Din al-Davāni (d. 908/1502) and Sadr al-Din Mohammad Dashtaki, popularly known as Mollā Sadrā (d. 903/1497).<sup>29</sup> During Soltān-Mohammad’s tenure, key luminaries such as Fakhr al-Din Mohammad b. Hosayn Samaki Astarābādi and Mollā Mirzā Jān were producing work on various aspects of Perso-Islamic philosophy, with a focus on writing commentaries on Nasir al-Din al-Tusi’s seminal text on logic, the *Tajrid al-manteq*.<sup>30</sup> It would also appear that Shiraz continued its emergence as a center of illustrated manuscript production during Soltān-Mohammad’s administration; throughout much of the 1570s and 1580s, Shiraz began developing a reputation for its manuscript illumination and binding.<sup>31</sup> It was probably Soltān-Mohammad’s relative seclusion here in Shiraz that spared him from the familial bloodbath which swept across northern Iran during the reign of Esmā’il II. Before long, a group of dissenters coalesced around his sister Pari Khān Khānom and the troubled, megalomaniac shah died mysteriously on 13 Ramazān 985 (24 November 1577). Mirzā Salmān Jāberi, former superintendent of the royal households (*nāzer-e boyutāt sarkār-e khāssa-ye sharif*) and current *vazir-e divān-e a’lā*, realized that the Safavid court could not function without proximity to a male member of the Safavid family, and after two months of de facto rule by Pari Khān Khānom, he managed to make his way to Shiraz and convince Soltān-Mohammad to assume the throne. Soltān-Mohammad, his wife Khayr al-Nesā Begom (Mahd-e ‘Olyā), and the sizeable retinue

<sup>26</sup> Sām Mirzā, pp. 12-13.

<sup>27</sup> Qāzi Ahmad, 1980, II, p. 671.

<sup>28</sup> Roemer, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> Corbin, 1993, pp. 335-37

<sup>30</sup> Barakat, pp. 209-40.

Lale Uluç, pp. 73-96; Babaie, et al., p. 115. For earlier instances of Shirazi manuscript production, see Richard, pp. 87-104. For a general discussion of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century bibliotist dynamics, see Szuppe, 2004, pp. 1000-05.

he had gathered together in Shiraz proceeded to the Safavid capital of Qazvin. Pari Khān Khānom, who had engineered a series of motley alliances with various Turkoman, Takkalu and Circassian groups, was assassinated, and a purge of various posts and offices ensued. Given that Mirzā Salmān had been raised and trained as an administrator in Shiraz (his father had been the chief provincial vizier)<sup>32</sup>, it is not surprising that a “Shirazi” bloc of bureaucrats, courtiers and literary men grew in prominence in Qazvin after the accession of Soltān-Mohammad, now styled as Shah Mohammad Soltān, but popularly known as Mohammad Khodābanda. Shāh-Mozaffar al-Din ‘Ali Inju, who had acted as the judge of the army (*qāzi-yi ‘askar*) in Shiraz, was brought to Qazvin, nominated to the office of *sadr*, and placed in charge of assigning *soyurghāls* (grants)<sup>33</sup>; Hosayn Beg b. Khvājah Shojā’ al-Din would assume the post of *vizier* to Khodābanda’s son, Hamza Mirzā<sup>34</sup>; Mir Qevām al-Din Hosayn, for instance, enjoyed considerable political goodwill in this new order. He had been the *mostawfi* for the governor of Shiraz, Vali-Soltān Zu al-Qadar, before Khodābanda’s ascension, and after 1577, he would be appointed as vizier to Khodābanda’s wife, Khayr al-Nesā.<sup>35</sup> Mirzā Lotf Allāh Shirāzi was vizier to Khodābanda’s sister, Zaynab Soltān, and was promoted to the *divān-e a’lā* in 996 (1587).<sup>36</sup> Shirazi women appear to have played an important role in this reconstituted political environment: Hamza Mirzā’s wet-nurse, Khān Jān Khānom, was a daughter of a prominent Shirazi notable who had married the chief Shāmlu Amir, Soltān-Hosayn Khan. Khān Jān Khānom, in turn, was married to ‘Ali-qoli Khan Shāmlu, who would serve as *lala* and custodian of ‘Abbās Mirzā in Khorasan.<sup>37</sup> Immediate members of the Shah’s family assumed crucial positions. In an unprecedented move, Khodābanda’s own son Hamza Mirzā was named *vakil-e divān-e a’lā*<sup>38</sup>, while Mahd-e ‘Olyā exercised considerable degree of influence over her husband in administrative and governmental matters between 1578 and 1579.<sup>39</sup>

Facing antagonism from various disaffected Qezelbāsh groupings, as well as entrenched Circassian and Georgian ethnic elements at the court, Khodābanda relied increasingly on the Persian secretarial and

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<sup>32</sup> Vāleh Esfahāni, p. 449.

<sup>33</sup> Qāzi Ahmad, 1980, II pp. 671, 1078.

<sup>34</sup> Jalāl al-Din Monajjem, fol. 17a.

<sup>35</sup> Qāzi Ahmad, 1980, II, pp. 696, 699.

<sup>36</sup> Afushta’i Natanzi, pp. 272-73.

<sup>37</sup> Szuppe, 1995, p. 69.

<sup>38</sup> Mentioned in a *farmān* to Khan Ahmad Gilāni from Abu Tāleb Mirzā, son of Mohammad Khodābanda, see Navā’i, 1971, p. 116.

<sup>39</sup> For aspects of this woman’s impact on the Safavid court, see Szuppe, 2003, pp. 158-60.

bureaucratic class, with whom he had developed a lively and symbiotic relationship in the preceding thirty years. Khodābanda's partnership with Mirzā Salmān Jāberī and other Persian bureaucrats was supplemented by Mahd-e 'Olyā's patronage of her fellow Māzandarānis, such as Mir Qevām al-Din Hosayn, and her continued relationship with her family who served as local rulers in Māzandarān.<sup>40</sup> Not surprisingly this era of Persophilia further alienated Turkmen and Caucasian elements, and a disgruntled group of Qezelbāsh amirs (Pira Mohammad Khan Ostājlu, Mohammad Khan Turkoman, Nur Hasan Soltān Shāmlu) conspired to have the Queen removed from power. This conspiracy emerged against the backdrop of a number of invasions of the Caucasus in 1578-79 by Sultan Morād III who had dispatched Lala Mostafā Pasha to wrestle away Safavid satellite zones in Georgia and Armenia. The 1578 campaign was initially effective, with Ottoman governors appointed to Shervān and Dāghestān, but Lala Mostafā's winter retreat to Erzerum encouraged Caucasian local authorities to reject Ottoman suzerainty.<sup>41</sup> The ensuing Ottoman alliance with the Tatar ruler of Crimea allowed another foray into the Safavid satellite zone in the Caucasus. After the Tatars attacked the port city of Darband, Khodābanda dispatched a retaliatory force to Shervān under the leadership of Mirzā Salmān Jāberī and Hamza Mirzā. The Safavids successfully turned back the invasion, and in a surprising turn of events, managed to capture the Tatar field commander and brother of the reigning Tatar khan, 'Ādel Gerāy Khan, on 28 Ramazan 986 (28 November 1578). Mahd-e 'Olyā initially accompanied this counter-invasion to Qarabāgh, but soon realized that her position in the field *vis-à-vis* the Qezelbāsh was less than secure and withdrew to Qazvin a month later.<sup>42</sup> The conveyance of 'Ādel Gerāy Khan to Qazvin and his confinement in the royal apartments at Chehel Sotun would provide the enemies of Mahd-e 'Olyā with the ammunition they needed to rationalize her violent removal. The conspirators circulated the rumor that the Queen and the Tatar were sleeping together, and after killing 'Ādel Gerāy Khan, they burst into the *haram* and strangled the Queen.

Following his wife's death, Khodābanda relied increasingly on his bureaucratic ally, Mirzā Salmān Jāberī, who had effectively positioned himself as both a "lord of the sword *and* the pen" (*sāheb al-sayf wa'l-qalam*) in the Safavid court.<sup>43</sup> This ontological duality was best manifested in 989/1581 when he emerged as the principal architect of a major diplomatic arrangement, whereby the Georgian Kartel and Khakheti

<sup>40</sup> Szuppe, 1995, pp. 90-91, Qāzi Ahmad, 1980, II, pp. 695, 697

<sup>41</sup> Imber, p. 64.

<sup>42</sup> Qāzi Ahmad, 1980, II, pp. 686-87.

<sup>43</sup> Idem, II, p. 685.

dynasties, led by Simon Khan and Alexander Khan respectively, were subordinated to the Safavid household.<sup>44</sup> This new suzerain status, whereby each Georgian ruler proffered a son and daughter to the Safavid court (the daughters were married to Hamza Mirzā, while the sons were held as hostages) was negotiated by Mirzā Salmān, and it was he who personally presided over the ceremony in Georgia where robes of honor were exchanged and monies were remitted.<sup>45</sup> He secured the inclusion of his own family with that of the Safavids by arranging to have his daughter marry Hamza Mirzā in 1580, and much of 1580-81 was spent securing his own position at the expense of other Persian administrators and Qezelbāsh amirs.<sup>46</sup> During this period, Mirzā Salmān seems to have reversed many of the Ottoman successes in the Caucasus, with a Safavid-Georgian force overwhelming Ottoman garrisons in Tblisi and Shervān. By May 1583 it seemed likely that Ottoman activity in the Caucasus was about to be terminated, but the surprising victory by 'Othmān Pasha at Meshale secured the Ottoman presence in the short term.<sup>47</sup>

The most critical threat to Salmān's position came in 1582 when Morshed-qoli Khan and his charge, 'Abbās Mirzā, unfurled the banner of revolt in Herat. Salmān exhorted the Qezelbāsh amirs in the court to join their liege and eliminate these rebels to the east, and a number of lengthy sieges ensued at Herat and Torbat. Ultimately, Shāmlu and Ostājlu amirs circumvented Mirzā Salmān and secretly concluded a cease-fire with Morshed-qoli Khan. Mirzā Salmān's brinkmanship in Khorasan contributed to the coalescing of a conspiracy around the *qurchi-bāshi* Qoli Beg Afshār, the *mohrdār* Shāhrokh Khan Zu al-Qadar and Mohammad Khan Turkoman. Assassins were dispatched after Mirzā Salmān on the 19<sup>th</sup> of Rabi' al-thāni 991 (12 May 1583) when he left Herat to organize a celebratory feast at the shrine of his ancestor, Khvāja 'Abd Allāh Ansāri, in Gāzargāh, but supporters alerted him to this threat.<sup>48</sup> He promptly returned to Herat and sought asylum in the *madrassa* of Soltān-Hosayn Bāyqarā, where Khodābanda and Hamza Mirzā had based their royal apartments. Surrounded by Qezelbāsh amirs who argued that only strife and civil war would result from Salmān's continued presence, the shah conceded submissively to the conspirators' demands, and Qezelbāsh amirs killed the Persian vizier in the Bāgh-e Zaghan.<sup>49</sup>

Deprived of their key Persian vizier-cum-amir, Khodābanda and his son Hamza Mirza found it increasingly difficult to stave off pressure

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<sup>44</sup> Idem, II, p. 715.

<sup>45</sup> Idem, II, p. 716; Vāleh Esfahāni, p. 636; see also Maeda, p. 257.

<sup>46</sup> Savory, 1964, p. 182.

<sup>47</sup> Imber, p. 65

<sup>48</sup> Qāzi Ahmad, 1980, II, p. 743; Vāleh Esfahāni, pp. 671-72.

Qāzi Ahmad, 1980, II, pp. 746-47

from the Shāmlu-dominated Qezelbāsh coterie which had emerged around the Herati court of ‘Abbās Mirzā. After negotiating a settlement with Morshed-qoli Khan and approving of the reappointment of ‘Abbās Mirzā as governor, Khodābanda was forced to move his royal apartments from Herat to Qazvin after hearing of yet another Ottoman invasion led by Senān Pasha. The Qezelbāsh governors of Azarbaijan, Ganja and Qarabāgh were able to present an effective defense, but nonetheless petitioned the shah to muster an army and march forth from Qazvin.<sup>50</sup> The Safavid royal retinue and army advanced eventually to Tabriz, and the army was placed nominally in the control of the 16-year old Hamza Mirzā in the winter of 1584. The Qezelbāsh were further alienated when Hamza Mirzā ordered the execution of the field commander, Amir Khan Turkoman, a prominent amir who had served for years as the governor of Hamadān under Shah Tahmāsb. A redoubled Ottoman effort some months later resulted in the conquest and occupation of Tabriz in Ramazān 993 (September 1585), despite the efforts of Hamza Mirzā and others to muster a sufficient relief force.<sup>51</sup> While on campaign in Azarbaijan, Hamza Mirzā heard that Qezelbāsh tribes were threatening to rebel in Fars. Forced to alight near Qazvin on account of rain and snow, he was murdered while drinking with boon-companions in the tent of ‘Ali-qoli Khan Fath-oghli Ostājlu on 28 Zu al-Hejja (10 December 1586).<sup>52</sup>

After the death of Hamza Mirzā, Mohammad Khodābanda countermanded the Qezelbāsh demand for the rebellious Abbās Mirzā to be appointed as the formal successor, and named his 12-year old son Abu Tāleb Mirzā as his crown prince (*vali ‘ahd*). During this period, Khodābanda elevated the powerful Persian bureaucrat and confidant of the shah (*moqarrab-e hazrat*), Mirzā Mohammad Monshi, from being head of the chancery (*divān-e enshā*) to be the vizier of the central government (*divān-e a’lā*). Skeptical about Khodābanda’s ability to rule at the best of times, Manuchehr Pārsādust nonetheless admits that the shah involved himself diligently in such matters of state between 1586 and 1588.<sup>53</sup> During this time, Khodābanda ordered extensive siege operations against the Ottoman-held Tabriz, but he was forced to call off the campaign after the arrival of a relief force under Farhād Pasha in early 1587.<sup>54</sup> Khodābanda’s chief political ally, besides Mirzā Mohammad Monshi, was ‘Ali-qoli Khan Ostājlu, who was committed to preventing a Shāmlu ascendancy on the basis of ‘Abbās Mirzā’s claims

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<sup>50</sup> Pārsādust, pp. 143-45.

<sup>51</sup> Idem, pp. 150-51.

<sup>52</sup> Idem, p. 179.

<sup>53</sup> Idem, p. 185.

<sup>54</sup> Imber, p. 66.

to the throne. In the eastern theater, these intra-*Qezelbāsh* intrigues culminated in *Morshed-qoli Khan Ostājlu* successfully securing physical control of the young ‘*Abbās Mirzā* at the expense of his main political rival, ‘*Ali-qoli Khan Shāmlu*. By 1587, *Morshed-qoli Khan* was committed to attempting yet another putsch, and in December of that year, he marched to *Qazvin* with his imperial charge to demand *Khodābanda*’s abdication on 14 *Zu al-Qa’da* (5 October 1588). *Khodābanda* and his son *Abu Tāleb Mirzā* were courteously treated, and eventually they were transferred, along with another son (*Tahmāsb Mirzā*), to *Alamut* castle near *Qazvin*. *Khodābanda* spent the next seven years there in quiet retirement with his family and died peacefully at the age of sixty-five.

### CHANCELLERY DYNAMICS UNDER MOHAMMAD KHODĀBANDA

What, then, of the chancellery dynamics during this politically turbulent period, and how can they help us with our seemingly far-fetched program of rehabilitating the reign of *Mohammad Khodābanda*? We are committed here to fashioning a *prosopography* and learning more about the individuals associated with the administration, specifically the *chancery*. It was in the *chancery* that secretaries (*monshis, kātebs*) drafted and composed all official state documents, and determined which specific personalities dominated this particular institution is the key. Having mapped *viziers* as heads of the chancellery and a nexus of political and courtly contacts, we can now turn to the literary texts they produced under the rubric of *enshā*. The *enshā* tradition in the Islamic scholarly world is more than a little complex, and since *Abbasid* times can be linked confidently to any number of literary and administrative operations including poetry, *Qur’anic* exegesis, calligraphy, compiling copybooks, certification, and accounting. While a secretary was expected to know the technical details of drafting a properly-formatted tax document with the requisite and exact technology, he was also expected to be intimate with the principles of rhetoric (*khatāba*) and eloquence (*balāghat*), which in turn required familiarity with a plethora of sophisticated and creative literary devices. Under the auspices of the *Timurid* Persian cultural renaissance, *enshā* grew to be popular among litterateurs who saw this as a creative literary genre that allowed the writing of prose with extensive use of rhetorical and rhyming devices. In this sense, *enshā*, the secretarial craft, is very much a hybrid vehicle of creative expression which more often than not appears in state correspondence and personal missives. In view of our objective here, it is worth noting that some of the most intense and florid debates about political theory and legitimacy, as well as mirrors for princes, have been

presented in the form of epistles and exchanges of correspondence.<sup>55</sup> Beginning early with an Umayyad translation of letters allegedly sent by Aristotle to Alexander the Great regarding good government. Muslim scribes have embraced the epistolary genre as a forum through which aspects of political discourse can be disseminated effectively.<sup>56</sup> In the Shi'ite tradition, scholars have looked to a number of letters (*rasā'el*) purportedly sent out by Imam 'Ali b. Abi Tāleb which are enshrined in the *Nahj al-balāgha*, while in the medieval Perso-Islamic context, examples of advice literature being presented through the epistolary form can be found with the 13<sup>th</sup>-century New Persian translation of the *Nāma-ye Tansar*, a letter of political advice allegedly written to the ruler of Tabaristan by a chief Sasanian priest, which was subsequently translated into Arabic and disseminated.<sup>57</sup> Likewise, Qāzi Hosayn b. Mo'in al-Din Maybodi's 15<sup>th</sup>-century *Monsha'āt* contains a letter of political counsel to a local ruler.<sup>58</sup> The merging of this epistolary genre with this style of discourse is only reinforced when we acknowledge that functional state correspondence very often engaged in polemics on issues of sovereignty in the hopes of buttressing religious, historical, and political prerogatives to rival empires. In this sense, the letters produced by the secretaries serving in Khodābanda's chancellery provide us with an invaluable means of appreciating and gauging shifts in contemporary political and religious discourse between 1578 and 1588.

Epistolary and document composition had historically been the domain of the educated Persian elite, who in many ways fashioned their own family businesses out of serving the bureaucratic needs of a political dynasty. While these men had received systematic educations through the *madrasa* system, they were also trained in a wide array of different secretarial skills and duties, which ranged from accounting to calligraphy to meters of poetry to book illumination, and so on. Given the demanding requirements and extensive training, qualified secretaries were difficult to locate and those families who produced successful chancellery officials prided themselves on dominating a particular administrative tradition. The period following the death of Esmā'il II in 1577 was understandably fluid in terms of appointments and dismissals of different administrators, and this of course was intensified by the internal court dynamics. Nonetheless, there was continuity between the administrations of Shah Tahmāsb and that of Khodābanda, and we can locate a number of personalities who were members of families of *divāniyān* who had

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<sup>55</sup> Marlow, p. 117.

<sup>56</sup> Idem, p. 100; Patricia Crone, p. 151.

<sup>57</sup> Idem, pp. 74-75: for more on how this work was translated in the 13<sup>th</sup> century into New Persian, see Melville, in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, see *Nāma-ye Tansar*

<sup>58</sup> Qāzi Hosayn Meybodi, pp. 226-35.

come to dominate, if not monopolize, key positions in successive administrations of the late 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Probably the most famous administrator of this particular period is the aforementioned Mirzā Salmān Jāberi. Working as *vazīr-e divān-e a'lā* to Esmā'il II, Mirzā Salmān was able to secure his position after Khodābanda's accession in 1578 by removing rivals within the administration and working in proximity with Khodābanda's wife, Khayr al-Nesā. He earned the epithet of E'temād al-dawla (Pillar of the State), and was seen as a personification of the historical exemplar Āsaf b. Barkhiyā, the legendary vizier to King Solomon, by Qāzi Ahmad, who praised him as *Āsaf-e zamān*.<sup>59</sup> On the subject of historical exemplars, he apparently attempted to make the most of his genealogical connection to the "best of the [Prophet's] Companions" (*'omdat al-ashāb*)<sup>60</sup>, and contemporaries would refer to him as the "wonder of the age, the Salmān of the times" (*o'juba-ye al-awān, Salmān al-waqt wa'l-zamān*), a clear reference to the much vaunted Persian convert and confidant of the Prophet, Salmān-e Fārsi.<sup>61</sup> Afushta'i Natanzi is particularly approbatory in his depiction of Mirzā Salmān; indeed, he describes this administrator as being unsurpassed in eloquence and rhetoric, and more than diligent in his handling of civilian and military matters.<sup>62</sup> This can at least partly be rationalized by the fact that Afushta'i lived and worked in Shiraz and was probably more than intimate with Mirzā Salmān during his time there. In fact, according to the later Safavid source, the *Jāmi'-e Mofidi* by Mohammad-Mofid Mostawfī Bāfqī: "the vizierate of Mirzā Salmān Jāberi ranks with the vizierates of Khvāja Nezām al-Molk, Jovayni, Rashid al-Din, and Najm-e Thāni."<sup>63</sup>

After Mirzā Salmān, however, little is known about the Safavid bureaucracy, but Qāzi Ahmad provides us with an important prosopographic section dealing with scribes and secretaries in his celebrated text on calligraphers and painters, the *Golestān-e honar*. A cursory review of the different bureaucratic personalities involved suggests that Qāzi Ahmad saw great continuity between the reigns of Tahmāsb and Khodābanda. He notes how two prominent secretaries, Mirzā Sharaf-e Jahān and Mir Ruh Allāh, were the son and grandson of the famous vizier of Shah Tahmāsb for much of the 1550s and 1560s, Qāzi-ye Jahān Hasani.<sup>64</sup> He also mentions specifically the son of 'Atā Allāh Esfahāni, one Mirzā Ahmad, who had served as a chief bureaucrat

<sup>59</sup> Qāzi Ahmad, 1980, II, p. 702.

<sup>60</sup> Afushta'i Natanzi, p. 144.

<sup>61</sup> Shāh Tāher Hosayn, fols. 15a-b; see also, Massignon, I, pp. 443-83.

<sup>62</sup> Afushta'i Natanzi, pp. 144-45.

<sup>63</sup> Mohammad-Mofid Bāfqī, p. 242.

<sup>64</sup> Qāzi Ahmad, 1959, pp. 91, 145 and n. 504.

in the regions of Azarbaijan, Qarabāgh, and Shervān in the latter years of Shah Tahmāsb, and who had gone on to serve Khodābanda.<sup>65</sup> Mirzā Ahmad had penned a number of letters to the Ottomans on behalf of Tahmāsb, and after Khodābanda's accession he was transferred to an important post in the chancellery of Morshed-qoli Khan Ostājlu in Herat on account of a disagreement with the all-powerful Mirzā Salmān Jāberi.<sup>66</sup> Mirzā Ahmad's son, Mirzā Shāh-vali Esfahāni, was named as the replacement vizier for the province of Khorasan after his father's death in 1582.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, Mirzā Shāh-vali's elevation to the rank of E'temād al-dawla would be one of the first central bureaucratic appointments made by Shah 'Abbās when he came to power in 1588. Qāzi 'Abd Allāh of Khoi, who had "been entrusted with correspondence in the paradisaal court assembly of Shah Tahmāsb," continued to work for the chancery after Tahmāsb's death (in 1576) until his own passing in 1583.<sup>68</sup> The grandson of Najm-e Thāni, Esmā'il I's most famous administrator, was Mirzā Hedāyat Allāh, who served Khodābanda as vizier in the province of Gilān until his promotion to chief vizier after the murder of Mirzā Salmān in 1583. Soon displaced by Mirzā Mohammad Monshi, he was made chief functionary (*nāzer-e mo'āmalāt*) of Esfahān in 995 (1586-87).<sup>69</sup>

Another powerful administrator during the reign of Khodābanda was Mirzā Mohammad Monshi, the son of 'Ali Beg Sorkh and grandson of Khvāja Mirakī, the prominent *monshi* who had dominated the Safavid chancellery between 1524 and 1536.<sup>70</sup> Mirzā Mohammad Monshi began as a scribe (*kāteb*) in the chancellery under Shah Tahmāsb, and was later promoted as head of correspondence during the reign of Esmā'il II.<sup>71</sup> In 1586, Mirzā Mohammad was promoted to be the chief vizier of the *divān-e a'lā*, pushing aside the aforementioned Mirzā Hedāyat Allāh, and earning the honorary designation of *moqarrab al-hazrat* (confidant to the shah), as well as E'temād al-dawla, or Pillar of the State.<sup>72</sup> "In 1588, he was arrested after the arrival of Morshed-qoli Khan and 'Abbās Mirzā, but managed to avoid the wholesale purge which took place soon after."<sup>73</sup> One bureaucratic fixture that was not eliminated during this critical transition between Khodābanda and 'Abbās was Mawlānā Mohammad-Amin. Mohammad-Amin had been entrusted under Shah

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<sup>65</sup> Idem, p. 94.

<sup>66</sup> Haneda, p. 86.

<sup>67</sup> Idem, p. 87.

<sup>68</sup> Qāzi Ahmad, 1959, pp. 94-95.

<sup>69</sup> Haneda, p. 83.

<sup>70</sup> Qāzi Ahmad, 1980, II, p. 847.

<sup>71</sup> Afushta'i Natanzi, pp. 29-30.

<sup>72</sup> Idem, p. 272.

<sup>73</sup> Idem, pp. 272-73; Qāzi Ahmad, 1980, II, p. 889.

Tahmāsb and Khodābanda with the greater part of correspondence in Turkish and Persian. After 1588, he was elevated to the post of state secretary (*monshi al-mamālek*) and was in charge of all imperial correspondence (*enshā al-mamālek*) under Shah ‘Abbās until his death in 1592. Once again, the dynamic of generations of Persian *divāniyān* at work is evident in the fact that Mohammad-Amin was the grandson of Mawlānā Adham, who had been a key chancellery official during the latter years of Shah Esmā’il I and the beginning of Shah Tahmāsb’s reign.<sup>74</sup>

There is also evidence to suggest that a coterie of Persian bureaucrats became influential on account of their proximity to the shah during his two tenures as governor in the cities of Herat and Shiraz. Soltān-Mohammad Mirzā’s administration in Herat had been dominated by one Khvāja Ekhtiyār of Herat, who had written all formal correspondence on behalf of Soltān-Mohammad Mirzā for thirty years, a surprising length of time in such a competitive era among bureaucrats. Khvāja Ekhtiyār was a celebrated Herati personality, whose own collection of *enshā (monsh’āt)* has been preserved and is certainly worthy of more study.<sup>75</sup> Khvāja Ekhtiyār would not follow his master to Qazvin in 1577 when Khodābanda was put on the throne, but his relative, Khvāja Malek Mohammad Heravi, was a key official in the chancellery in Qazvin between 1577 and 1585.<sup>76</sup> Likewise, a number of Shirazi administrators decided to join their dynastic patron in Qazvin after he ascended to the throne.

In terms of this dynamic of bureaucratic continuity, it would appear that many of the future luminaries who served Shah ‘Abbās cut their “administrative teeth” while training and working under Khodābanda. One of the most famous administrators and court chroniclers, Eskandar Beg Monshi, had been an underling to Mirzā ‘Atā Allāh, the governor of Azarbaijan, in the early 1570s; he made his way to the accountancy (*dār al-estifā*) and eventually found himself in the royal chancery (*daftar-khāna-ye homāyun*).<sup>77</sup> From there, he began working in the *dār al-enshā* under the aforementioned *monshi al-mamālek*, Mawlānā Mohammad-Amin, and during this time he was entrusted with correspondence and the writing of orders (*parvānas*) and missives to sultans.<sup>78</sup> Similarly, Qāzi Ahmad had had a long and illustrious career in the pre-‘Abbās days, beginning with study and work in the famous atelier of Ebrāhīm Mirzā in Mashhad during the mid-1550s. Eventually, he was named as vizier to

<sup>74</sup> Idem, 1959, p. 96.

<sup>75</sup> Khvājāh Ekhtiyār, Ms., Tehran, Central Library.

<sup>76</sup> Qāzi Ahmad, 1959, p. 96.

<sup>77</sup> Melville, 2003, p. 86.

<sup>78</sup> For a detailed biography, see Erdmann, pp. 457-501.

Ebrāhim Mirzā, a post he held for quite some time before working ultimately on behalf of the state accountant (*mostawfi al-mamālek*), Mir Khan Ghāzi. In 1581, Qāzi Ahmad was appointed by Khodābanda to the lucrative position of administrator of pious foundations (*mostawfi-yi mawqūfāt*), a position which no doubt afforded him the time to finish his *magnum opus*, the *Kholāsāt al-tavārikh*.<sup>79</sup> The third in this powerful troika was Hātem Beg Ordubādi, who had served as chief vizier for Shah ‘Abbās and emerged as one of the principal architects in terms of the administrative reform which characterized the latter’s reign in the late 1590s.<sup>80</sup> Hātem Beg hailed from one of the best represented administrative families in Iran who traced their lineage back to the great bureaucrat/philosopher, Khvāja Nasir al-Din al-Tusi.<sup>81</sup> He was the son of Malek Bahrām, the local ruler of Ordubād, who had received his appointment as *kalāntar* of Ordubād in the Aras Valley from Shah Esmā‘il. Hātem Beg had assumed this post after the death of his father, but during the reign of Khodābanda he moved from Ordubādi directly into the provincial and central administration.<sup>82</sup> He had been named as vizier to the governor of Kermān, Vali Beg Yuz-bāshi Afshār, in the 1570s and was later nominated to the post of *mostawfi al-mamālek* in Yazd.<sup>83</sup> In 1591, three years after ‘Abbās’s accession, Hātem Beg Ordubādi was named the grand vizier and began his unrivalled ascent.

A prosopography of this period indicates that well-established familial networks were at work in the different chancelleries of the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. There is a rich typography of official Safavid documents, including *farmāns*, *soyurghāls*, *neshāns*, *‘arza-dāshths*, but the focus here will be on royal correspondence (*mokatabāt*, *morāsālāt*) and the degree to which such formal *enshā* allowed for creative ethico-political discourse. The most complicated and fascinating epistolary document produced between 1577 and 1588 is a lengthy royal letter from Khodābanda to the Ottoman Sultan Morād III.<sup>84</sup> This letter, very probably written soon after Ottoman hostilities broke out in 1579, reveals a number of features regarding the multitude of discourses (theosophical, numerological, millenarian, Shi‘ite, pre-Islamic) that seem to characterize this chancellery during the 1570s and 1580s. The Perso-

<sup>79</sup> Qāzi Ahmad, 1959, pp. 7-12.

<sup>80</sup> Röhrborn, p. 57, mentions how it was Ordubādi who early on as *mostawfi al-mamālek* had prepared a plan for organizing financial returns and expenditures for the entire kingdom.

<sup>81</sup> Melville, 2003, p. 71; Morton, p. 355.

<sup>82</sup> Babaie et alia., 160, n. 92.

<sup>83</sup> Qāzi Ahmad, 1980, II, pp. 1018, 1081.

<sup>84</sup> Ivughli, fols. 136b-140a; edited text, with some errors, appears in Navā‘i, 1973, I, pp. 43-63. For instance, Navā‘i misquotes Sanā‘i on p. 54 when he reads *ma’dum shod fanā* (the original should read *ma’dum shod vajā*).

Arabic syncretic style of the *monshi* is profiled quickly as he begins the letter with a macaronic *robā'i* (bilingual quatrain). The first distich is, in fact, an Arabic Qur'anic quote (2:32): "Glory to you (O Lord), knowledge we have none except what You have given us," and this is followed by a stylized, Persian encomiastic to God's dominion and knowledge: "Earth and heaven belong to you/What we have, we have only in name."<sup>85</sup> This linguistic dualism is in many ways framed by a larger binary whereby religious language and subject matter is interspersed regularly with secular motifs and tropes. This is more than evident in the introductory invocations to God and Prophet Mohammad. The Prophet and his family have been blessed by the unparalleled Artificer (*sāne'-e bichun*), who has "adorned [Muhammad's] flaming crown of authority (*tāj-e vahhāj-e ayālat*) with the jewel of "we have appointed you caliphs in the land" (10:14). The exalted throne of the Prophet, the scribe writes, has been flourished with the beauty of "We gave him authority in the land" (18:84), while the highly-placed pulpits of his fortune (*manāber-e boland-paya-ye dawlat-ash*) have been lit with "I have to place a trustee on earth" (2:30). Lastly, Mohammad's sovereignty has been stamped by His bountiful mint (*dār al-zarb-e 'enāyat*) on a coin which now reads "We have favored some over the others" (2: 253).<sup>86</sup> This proximity between the Prophet and such kingly, profane emblems of authority (crown, throne, *khotba*, mint) is not something regularly demonstrated in normative Islamic discourse. Indeed, this decidedly secular invocation to God and Mohammad is unique in terms of epistolary standards to date, and we are immediately struck by its less-than-subtle argumentation that the descendents of Mohammad have been divinely appointed as legatees and caliphs on earth. The inimitability of God is subsequently discussed, and we find a deliberate decision to frame this presentation in strict chancellery terms. God is the adorer of kingship (*mulk-i ārā'i*), who defies description "even if the arrangers of the pearls of rhetoric came together and worked for centuries" (*agar nāzeman-e dorar-e balāghat-rā qarn-an ha'd qarn bā yakdigar vefāq hāsel āyad*).<sup>87</sup> This presentation of God's power with epistolary motifs continues: "God, using his hand of decree (*dast-e qazā*) with the pen of power (*qalam-e qodrat*), has written the perfect words *howa al-morād* (Thus, it is done) and the universe was created. Undoubtedly, this is an allusion to the addressee of the letter itself: Sultan Morād III. In self-aggrandizing style, the chancellery official

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<sup>85</sup> Ivughli, fol. 136b; Navā'i, 1973, p. 43.

<sup>86</sup> Ivughli, fol. 136b; Navā'i, 1973, p. 43.

<sup>87</sup> Ivughli, fol. 136b; Navā'i, 1973, p. 44.

writes how “God, like a chancellery stylist (*monshi-ye dār al-enshā*), uses His perfect power to create with a simple nod of his head.”<sup>88</sup>

Provocatively, the letter introduces the addressee Morād III by observing blithely how an emperor, in the vigor of adolescence and the prime of youth (*dar ‘onfavān-e javāni va rai‘ān-e shabāb*), should avoid “carnal desires and illicit things” (*mahzurāt va malāhi*) and withdraw his hand from “illegal and improper matters” (*monkarāt va manāhi*).<sup>89</sup> In a disappointed and avuncular tone, Khodābanda observes how the Arabic phrase “Youth do not love the appeal of pious tranquility” had been inscribed on the forehead of Morād III’s affairs (*nāsiya-ye ahvāl-ash*) while the Qur’anic phrase 19:57 “And We raised him to an exalted station” had appeared on the page of his hopes and desires (*safha-ye āmāl-ash*). Clearly, these are rhetorical allusions to the Sultan Morād’s well-known harem antics, to which the scribe appends a number of verses of Sa’di regarding the dangers of youthful exuberance. It is only at this point that the scribe acknowledges Perso-Islamic epistolary structure and introduce a lengthy *intitulatio* section in Arabo-Persian that exalts the addressee through encomiums and epideictic language. Interestingly, this formulaic section appears to be a composite of phrases taken from earlier letters. Large sections of this *intitulatio*, wherein Morād III is described as “he who observes the balance between good and kindness” (*wāze‘ al-mizān al-berr wa’l-ehsān*), “he who pours the running waters of kindness on all of Islam” (*mofiz zawāref al-‘awāref ‘alā qātebat al-eslām*), “the defender of kings and protector of rulers” (*mo’in al-moluk wa zahir al-khawāqin*), as well as the “servant of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina” (*khādem al-haramayn al-sharifayn*)<sup>90</sup>, are borrowed from the *intitulatio* of an earlier letter written by the Safavid chancellery to Sulaymān the Magnificent in the 1560s; moreover, sections of verse also appear to have been recycled from this particular missive.<sup>91</sup> This replication is made further evident by the fact that the entire Arabic *elevation* – that signal text which is designed to (finally) introduce the name of the addressee of an epistle’s *intitulatio* and which appears separate and in the upper corner of the original missive – is the same *elevatio* used in Tahmāsb’s letter to Sulaymān. Indeed, we find no less than 13 poetic verses, some appearing as single *bayts* and some appearing as quatrains, which are quoted from earlier correspondence penned during the reign of Shah Tahmāsb. The bulk of these verses appeared in letters sent to the Ottoman dynasty in the 1560 and 70s, and we can given that chancellery officials serving Tahmāsb continued to

<sup>88</sup> Ivughli, fol. 136b; Navā’i, 1973, p. 44.

<sup>89</sup> Ivughli, fol. 136b; Navā’i, 1973, p. 45.

<sup>90</sup> Ivughli, fol. 137a; Navā’i, 1973, pp. 47-48.

<sup>91</sup> Idem, 1971, pp. 330-37

exert some level of influence, either in person or through their work, during the reign of Khodābanda.

We also note that a number of classical Persian poets were particularly in vogue in Khodābanda's chancellery, and the choice of certain poets and poems by these Safavid scribes yields, I believe, some intriguing observations. After the formulaic *intitulatio*, the secretary is particularly adamant on illustrating how vanity mixed with kingship is a dangerous concoction, not a surprising theme given Morād III's recent attack on Safavid territories. To this point, the scribe looks to three lines of poetry from Nezāmi's panegyric to Shah Mozaffar al-Din Qezel Arsalān, which prefaces his great epic poem, *Khosrow o Shirin*.<sup>92</sup> In particular, the scribe rhetorically twists the line "The Shah of the west is also penultimate in the east; Qezel whose crown is higher than the moon," and replaces the name Qezel with the name Sulaymān.<sup>93</sup> We see further evidence of this Safavid chancellery official enjoying literary dalliance with this term "Qezel" with a number of quotations from the first chapter of Sa'di's *Bustān*, in which the kingly virtues of justice and education are discussed. There are many legends and fables which Sa'di discusses in this chapter, but the Safavid scribe chooses to quote verses from a story about a meeting between Qezel Arsalān and some scholar (*hekāyat-e Qezel Arslan bā dāneshmand*).<sup>94</sup> The didactic thrust of this story is Qezel Arsalān's realization that kingship is inherently fleeting, and that there will always be a ruler prepared to sit in the place of another. Thus, the Safavid scribe punches his point home by quoting the scholar's advice to Qezel Arsalān: "A frantic one thus spoke in Persia to Anushirvān: 'O heir to the country of Jamshid! If country and fortune remained with Jamshid, when would crown and throne become available to you?'"<sup>95</sup> In another work,<sup>96</sup> I have suggested that Persian scholar-bureaucrats looked to the discursive practice of epistolography to enhance the political status and fortune of the Persian class of administrators (*ahl-e qalam*), while at the same time impeding, if not denigrating, the traditional warrior class (*ahl-e sayf*) dominated by Turks. In this particular instance, we have a frame narrative, whereby traditional Persian sages (*dāneshmand*) counsel an archetypal medieval Turkish ruler. While this particular textual episode can certainly be read allegorically as the Safavid Persian chancellery exhorting the Turkish Ottoman ruler against tyranny, we cannot help but wonder whether this particular poetic story (*hekāyat*), wherein the principal antagonist (named

<sup>92</sup> Nezāmi Ganjavi, I, p. 91

<sup>93</sup> Ivughli, fol. 137a; Navā'i, 1973, p. 47.

<sup>94</sup> Sa'di Shirāzi, pp. 225-26.

<sup>95</sup> Ivughli, fol. 139b; Navā'i, 1973, p. 59.

<sup>96</sup> Mitchell, pp. 485-507.

“Qezel” on the basis of his red hair) shares an onomastic relationship with the unruly and unwieldy “redheads” (*Qezelbāsh*) was not selected as an edifying tool for those Persian literati and bureaucrats working in the Safavid court.

This motif of vanity undoing proper, responsible rule is also underscored by a line from Rumi’s *Mathnavi*: “How Adam, upon whom be peace, marveled at the perdition of Eblis and showed vanity. Everything except Allāh is vain.”<sup>97</sup> Later in the letter, when discussing Morād III’s recent breaking of the Amasya treaty, the scribe quotes Sanā’i’s poetic admonition that those who break their oaths will be left searching for unattainable truths and realities.<sup>98</sup> While we see occasional quotations from Nezāmi, Rumi, and Sanā’i,<sup>99</sup> it is clear that this chancellery official is particularly enamored of Sa’di, citing the *Bustān* in a number of sequences: “Be careful! Sympathize with [your] vassals, and be wary of the supremacy of Fate”<sup>100</sup> is followed by “The hearts of kings become burdened when they see thorn-bearing donkeys mired in the mud,” and “Don’t harm the peasants even a little for the ruler is the shepherd and his subjects are the flock.”<sup>101</sup> This secretary’s attraction to this particular poetic masterpiece suggests an affinity among Safavid chancery notables for the ethical reflections and maxims of worldly wisdom that characterize Sa’di’s poetry.

This dynamic of the mutual relationship between king and subject superseding all other concerns, specifically religious ones, is strongly represented in this particular epistolary text. Indeed, references to and discussion of pre-Islamic Iranian virtues of kingship become particularly pointed and challenging towards normative Islamic frameworks. The scribe observes that logical proofs (*barāhin-e ‘aqliyya*) and traditional evidences (*shavāhed-e naqliyya*) demonstrate that the ontological function of rulers is to distribute justice and equity. Here, the scribe brandishes rhetorically the exemplary figure of Anushirvān, who stands as the traditional classical embodiment of justice despite his status as a non-Muslim (*az din bigāna bud dar ‘adl va dād yagāna bud*).<sup>102</sup> The secretary quotes tradition from the Prophet whereby he purportedly said: “I was born at the time of Anushirvān (*waladato ana fi zamān al-soltān al-‘ādel*).” This, in turn, is followed by a quatrain: “The Prophet, who came to illuminate the world during the reign of Anushirvān/Always said

<sup>97</sup> Ivughli, fol. 139b; Navā’i, 1973, p. 59.

<sup>98</sup> Ivughli, fol. 138b; Navā’i, 1973, p. 54.

<sup>99</sup> Ivughli, fols. 137a-b, 139a, 139b; Navā’i, 1973, pp. 46, 48, 57-59.

<sup>100</sup> Hoseyn Vā’ez Kāshefi quotes this poetry in his section discussing the role of sultans and amirs. See Kāshefi, p. 246.

<sup>101</sup> Ivughli, fol. 139a; Navā’i, 1973, p. 58; Sa’di, pp. 217-18, 223.

<sup>102</sup> Ivughli, fol. 137b; Navā’i, 1973, p. 49.

that I am without guile regarding sedition because I was born in the age of Anushirvān."<sup>103</sup> The text relates how several histories testify to the fact that the Gabarān – meaning the pre-Islamic Persian kings – ruled for 5,000 years, and that they had always treated the peasantry with justice. Moreover, the Prophet/King David had commanded that the Persian rulers were not to be reviled or castigated because “they had cultivated the world with justice in order that his descendents may live in this world” (*ishān jahān-rā be ‘adl ābādān karda-and tā bandagān-e man dar vey zendagāni konand*).<sup>104</sup> This is in fact borrowed directly from Ghazāli, who described how the Magians (*moghān*) ruled the world for four thousand years since they ruled over people with justice.<sup>105</sup> Moreover, it was Ghazāli who first related the tradition that God instructed David to treat the people of Iran (*ahl-e ‘ajam*) well, while the Safavid scribe copied his exact phraseology regarding the cultivation of justice by the Persian kings (*ān kesān-i budand ke jahān ābādān kardand tā bandagān-e man dar vey zandagāni mi-konand*).<sup>106</sup> Indeed, Khodābanda’s letter continues to echo Ghazāli’s advice manual, provocatively arguing that justice supercedes the role of religion: “Justice and fairness, not belief or disbelief, are what protect a kingdom/Justice without religion will exalt the world better than a religious king.”<sup>107</sup> The scribe elaborates this point at length, employing classical rhetorical figures of natural elements and agriculture: “it is clear as the sun in the middle of the sky (*ka’l-shams fi wasat al-samā’ ast*) that the fruit of the tree of justice is the welfare of the subjects (*ra’āyā*), nothing else.” However, it is incumbent upon the peasantry (*‘amma-ye ra’āya*) to plant the “seed of prayer” (*tokhm-e do‘a*) in the “field of worship” (*kasht-zār-e ‘ebūdat*), and pray constantly (*layl-an va nahār-an*) so as to see these prayers deposited “in the constructed treasury of the ruler’s life and fortune” (*khazāne-ye ‘āmera-ye ‘omr va daulat*).<sup>108</sup> The hydrological/agricultural metaphor associated with kingship – a trope arguably made popular in the 12<sup>th</sup> century by Khāqāni Shirvāni – is concluded with this poem:

Kingship is a field and justice is a cloud full of water/God gave you a kingdom; hasten [and establish] justice  
You planted the seed, [now] endeavor to irrigate [your field]/Do not let it be thirsty and become a field of thorns

<sup>103</sup> Ivughli, fol. 137b; Navā’i, 1973, p. 49.

<sup>104</sup> Ivughli, fol. 137b; Navā’i, 1973, p. 50.

<sup>105</sup> Ghazāli, p. 82; see also Lambton, pp 47-55.

<sup>106</sup> Ghazāli, p. 83.

<sup>107</sup> Ivughli, f. 137b; Navā’i, 1973, p. 50

<sup>108</sup> Ivughli, f. 137b; Navā’i, 1973, p. 50.

This field, without water, will yield nothing/just as a dry tree bears no fruit.<sup>109</sup>

There is little doubting that the letter thus far reflects a cosmopolitan, urbane orientation. The preponderance of mystical references, combined with quotations from theosophically-inclined poets (Sanā'i, Nezāmi, Sa'di) points to a chancellery official with at least some level of affinity for Sufi concepts, tropes, and terminology. Notably, there is only the briefest of references to traditional Shi'ite polemic as the secretary offhandedly mentions the sanctity of the Imamate by hurriedly citing 33:33 ("God desires to remove impurities from you, O members of this house, and to cleanse and bring out the best in you"), 42:23 ("Say: 'I ask no recompense of you for it other than obligations of relationship'"), and 12:18 ("I seek the help of God alone").<sup>110</sup> The scribe is far more concerned with addressing the implications of Morād III's breaking of the Amasya treaty, the resulting ruin and trauma for the peasants at large, and how these in turn will have dire eschatological consequences for the Ottoman sultan: "The fleetingness of this world is evident, and the non-existence of fidelity in there is clear" (*fanā-ye donyā shay'-e vāzeh ast, wa 'adam-e vafā-ye u amr-i lāyeh*). The scribe assumes a sententious tone and, using partial Qur'anic allusions, warns Morād III of the ephemerality of his own existence, while at the same time including some like-minded Persian verses from Nezāmi and Sa'di.<sup>111</sup> These are interspersed with lines of distinctive Arabic poetry which reaffirm long-held mystical perceptions of this current existence as illusory and transient. "If any people of the world could exist forever/Certainly the messenger of Allāh would have lived forever in it" (*Wa law kāna be-'l-donyā baqā' be-sāken/Le-kāna rasul Allāh fi-hā mokhalladā*), reads a line of poetry by the famous panegyrist, poet laureate, and Companion to the Prophet, Hasan b. Thābet.<sup>112</sup> Indeed, this verse was identified as having implicit references to 'Ali by Qāzi Mir Hosayn Meybodi in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>113</sup> Thābet's verse, in turn, is followed by one verse from Labid b. Rabia's famous *qasida*: "Know that everything is null and void except God/And without a doubt all riches come to an end" (*Alā koll shay'en mā khalā Allāhu bātel/Wa koll na'imen lā mohālata zā'el*).<sup>114</sup> This cluster of moralizing Arabic verse continues with a quatrain allegedly penned by Imam 'Ali himself, which is placed immediately

<sup>109</sup> Ivughli, f. 137b; Navā'i, 1973, p. 51.

<sup>110</sup> Ivughli, f. 139a; Navā'i, 1973, p. 50.

<sup>111</sup> Qur'an, 15:72, 39:30, 55:26, 3:185. Ivughli, f. 139a; Navā'i, 1973, p. 58.

<sup>112</sup> Nicholson, pp. 53-54.

<sup>113</sup> Meybodi, 2000, p. 227.

<sup>114</sup> Nicholson, p. 119.

after that of Labid, together forming a three-verse poem: “Your happiness in this world is deceptive and foolish/And your joy in this world is impossible and void/The world is like a caravanserai/Where you and your camels sleep during the night and continue traveling in the morning.”<sup>115</sup> Indeed, the world presented as a way-station or battered caravanserai was a favourite trope among Persian classical poets such as ‘Omar Khayyām, Hāfez, and Ebn Yamin. The Safavid secretary brings this remonstrance to an end by hoping that “God forbid that there be a spilling of blood” and that “the light of this message will shine on the blessed heart of that Anushirvān of the age (i.e., Morād III).” It would be in Morād III’s best interests to observe the Qur’ānic injunction in 8:1 (“So fulfill your duty to God and keep the peace among you”) since, on the Day of Judgment (*ruz-e jazā*), “kings and beggars will be counted as one and all will see the wretchedness of their condition in the presence of both Mohammad and ‘Ali.”<sup>116</sup>

This letter is illustrative of what appears to be a complex and literary-minded chancellery working under Mohammad Khodābanda. Particularly noteworthy is what appears to be a chancellery cosmology that operates outside of traditional, orthodox Shi‘ite models, and instead embraces dictums and axioms which emphasize the importance of proper modes of conduct among rulers and kings. The lauding of Anushirvān and the pre-Islamic age of the Persian kings, combined with the consistent use of rhetorical exemplars and classical Persian poetic verses associated with the Achaemenid and Sasanian age, suggests a Safavid scribe whose *Weltanschauung* was not confined to a normative Shi‘ite framework. Indeed, a good example of this non-compliance was the author’s quotation of the Companion Hasan Thābet, who had actively opposed the candidacy of ‘Ali in support of the Shi‘ite antagonist par excellence, Mo‘āwiya.<sup>117</sup> His inclusion here is probably more a result of his appeal as an Arabic literary icon and the contribution of his poetry towards mysticism than anything else.<sup>118</sup> Consistent quoting of Sa‘di and Sanā‘i, the ease with which the text shifts back and forth between religious Arabic and secular Persian, and lastly the dominant themes of temporal and spatial vacuity in this universe all combine to suggest a theosophically-inclined scholar-bureaucrat. While we have argued thus far that this chancery was in many ways a continuity of what had existed in the latter years of Shah Tahmāsb’s reign, we nonetheless need to acknowledge the arrival of a strong, distinctive Shirāzi element after Khodābanda’s accession in 1578. Is it possible that the mystical under-

<sup>115</sup> Ivughli, fol.139a; Navā‘i, 1973, pp. 58-59; Bayhaqi, p. 326.

<sup>116</sup> Ivughli, fol.139b; Navā‘i, 1973, p. 60.

<sup>117</sup> Madelung, pp. 148, 192.

<sup>118</sup> Schimmel, pp. 173-77.

tones here, combined with strong literary dynamics (characterized by a clear appetite for Sa`di), reflect such a shift in the chancellery?

It is probable that heterogeneous inclinations such as these were encouraged by Khodābanda himself. As mentioned, he had been developing links and partnerships with the Persian bureaucratic class and literati since his youthful governorship in Herat, and he himself had written mystically-inspired poetry under the pen-name of Fahmi and participated actively in poetry gatherings. The likelihood that Khodābanda might have continued or even intensified such connections during his gubernatorial career in Shiraz between 1573 and 1578 appears to be the case on the basis of our last chancellery item: a short letter from Mohammad Khodābanda to the well-reputed *sayyed* and respected scholar, Mir Fath Allāh Shirāzi.<sup>119</sup> After a short career in Shiraz during the 1570s and 1580s, Fath Allāh Shirāzi had left Iran to pursue a career in India, first under the Ādelshāhs in Bijapur and later under Akbar the Great.<sup>120</sup> Mughal texts like the *Akbar-nāma*, the *Ā'in-e Akbari*, and the *Tabaqāt-e Akbari* all agree that this intellectual was highly respected and admired by his peers in terms of his mastery of Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*), Prophetic *hadiths*, Arabic grammar and syntax, rhetoric, as well as astrology, astronomy, and philosophy.<sup>121</sup> Moreover, on the basis of this letter, we know that Fath Allāh Shirāzi and Mohammad Khodābanda shared a close relationship during his governorship in Shiraz, and it seems likely that Fath Allāh left Iran during Esmā'il II's chaotic rule to seek greener, if not more stable, pastures on the Indian subcontinent. Indeed, this relationship and its import for shedding the much-needed light on Khodābanda's reign have been ignored by the pertinent studies.<sup>122</sup>

The letter appears to eschew invocations to and praise of God, Prophet Mohammad and his family, and begins instead with a series of laudatory Persian and Arabic epithets for Fath Allāh Shirāzi: "most learned of the Imami religious scholars" (*'allāmat al-'olamā' al-emāmiyya*), "exemplar of the great *sayyeds* and nobles (*qodwat a'āzem al-sādāt wa'l-ashrāf*), and "master of mankind" (*ostād al-bashar*).<sup>123</sup> Indeed, the letter makes it manifestly clear that Mohammad Khodābanda considered himself, as one-time governor and patron of Shirāzi, responsible for the creation, formation, and training of this future Sufi polymath and celebrity. In a clever use of Qur'anic allusions, we read

<sup>119</sup> Navā'i, 1973, pp. 113-16.

<sup>120</sup> Abu al-Fazl 'Allāmi, I, p. 208.

<sup>121</sup> Nezām al-Din Ahmad, pp. 624-25.

<sup>122</sup> Pārsādust makes no mention of Fath Allāh Shirāzi, nor of the Shirāzi school, in his biography, and Riazul Islam ignores this important Iranian émigré in his study.

<sup>123</sup> Navā'i, 1973, p. 113.

how such royal beneficence is akin to 20:50 “[We] gave to each created thing its form and nature, and further gave it guidance.” Likewise, we read 6:165: “It is He who hath made you (His) agents, inheritors of the earth. He has raised you in ranks, some above others,” and 17:70: “We have conferred on them special favors, above a great part of [Our] creation,” and 12:22: “We gave him power and knowledge.”<sup>124</sup> Khodābanda informs Fath Allāh Shirāzi that as of late he had been turning his royal attention to the memory of those pure times (*kholāsa-ye awqāt*) when that most exalted group (*zomra-ye ‘āli al-sha’n*), which is the most perfect kind of humanity (*kholāsa-ye anvā’-e ensān ast*), would sit in session.

The question is: who was in this “most sublime group” (*tāyefa-ye rafi’ al-makān*) and when were these “flawless times” (*noqāvat-e sā’āt*) that Khodābanda idealizes so unflinchingly? Alluded to earlier, there was a distinctive Shirāzi school of philosophy that had been in existence since the late 15<sup>th</sup> century and the founding of the Madrasa-ye Mansuriyya by Sadr al-Din Mohammad Dashtaki. This school was given concrete moorings in the 1530s with the writings and teachings of the prominent thinker, Ghiyāth al-Din Mansur Dashtaki. Khodābanda was the governor of Shiraz during one of its more energetic and eclectic phases, and the enthusiastic discussion of this esteemed group here suggests some degree of association between Fath Allāh Shirāzi, this coterie of scholars based in the Madrasa-ye Mansuriyya, and Mirzā Mohammad Khodābanda. Before leaving for India, Fath Allāh Shirāzi had been a disciple of a notable Sufi *shaikh* Mirzā Mir Takiya Shirāzi, and studied actively with noted philosophers like Khvāja Jamāl al-Din Mahmud Kamāl al-Din Shirvāni. The later intellectual accomplishments and the resurgence of *eshrāqi* philosophy under the banner of Mir Dāmād and Mollā Sadrā would appear to owe its roots, at least partly, to Khodābanda’s gubernatorial sponsorship and support of this “most exalted group” of religious scholars. Particularly intriguing is Mohammad Tavakoli-Targhi’s recent observation that Fath Allāh Shirāzi had been a disciple at one point of the Zoroastrian mystic, Āzar Kayvān.<sup>125</sup> According to Corbin, this individual would hold sessions and discussions in the environs of Estakhr (not far from Shiraz), and discuss the connections between Sufism and *eshrāqi* elements in Zoroastrianism. Indeed, this Zoroastrian illuminative school “was dominated by *Eshraqi* doctrine and terminology,” borrowed from the writings of Shehāb al-Din Sohrawardi.<sup>126</sup> Accordingly, a key feature of Āzar Kayvān’s teachings was an emphasis on the glory of the pre-Islamic age, and a veneration

<sup>124</sup> Navā’i, 1973, pp. 113-14.

Tavakoli-Targhi, pp. 149-75. See also Alvi and Rahman, pp. 29-30.

<sup>126</sup> Corbin, p. 183.

of the miraculous behavior of select Achaemenian and Sasanian monarchs.<sup>127</sup> While Āzar Kayvān left for India before Khodābanda's appointment to Shiraz, there is still debate among scholars as to the degree of influence this mystic/visionary exerted on this coterie of mystics and philosophers based in Shiraz and the Madrasa-ye Mansuriyya.<sup>128</sup>

Returning to the letter in question, we read that two disciples of Fath Allāh Shirāzi, Mawlānā Lotfī and Ahmad-qoli Āqā, had recently arrived at the Safavid court.<sup>129</sup> Khodābanda implores the Sufī mystic to return to the Safavid court by describing how royal monies had already been sent to India, and it had been officially stipulated that monies and taxes that had accrued from Shirāzi's property were to be henceforth protected by a royal *soyurghāl*. "God willing, after all this, he will come and we will distinguish him with renewed kindnesses (*tafaqqondāt-e tāza*) and immeasurable courtesies (*nevāzeshāt-e bi-andāza*)"<sup>130</sup> Possibly this invitation and offer of employment and patronage came about as a result of the death of one of Khodābanda's earlier 'Shirāzi' appointments, the *sadr* Sayyed Shah Mozaffār al-Din 'Ali Inju (the timing of the letter is unclear). Nonetheless, Khodābanda's relationship with this particular Sufī personality from Shirāz, who in turn boasted friendships, contacts, and tutelages with some of the most heterogeneous religious and mystical elements of the time, depicts a ruler who belies those reductive characterizations – lazy, uninspiring and naïve – offered by scholars such as Hans Roemer, Manuchehr Pārsādust, and others. On the contrary, we are presented with a ruler who actively sought to staff his religious and administrative positions with dynamic individuals who were responsible for laying the groundwork for some of the most profound and exciting discussions to take place among medieval Iranian philosophers and intellectuals.

These letters demonstrate that an innovative chancellery was at work during the period of Mohammad Khodābanda's rule, and it has been the argument here that this innovation was a reflection of intellectual trends and currents that were encouraged, if not sponsored, by Khodābanda and his surrounding coterie from Herat and Shiraz. While we saw that there was considerable institutional continuity between the reigns of Tahmāsb and Khodābanda, the uniqueness and vitality of the letters produced after 1577 point to a chancellery that no longer felt especially obliged to adhere strictly to a normative Shi'ite agenda. Extensive quotations from certain classical Persian poets, as well as detailed exposition on the clear

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<sup>127</sup> Babayan, p. 493.

<sup>128</sup> Corbin, pp. 184-85.

<sup>129</sup> Navā'i, 1973, p. 115.

<sup>130</sup> Navā'i, 1973, p. 116.

superiority of pre-Islamic kings such as Anushirvan, Jamshid, and Alexander the Great, were stark deviations from how authority had been depicted in previous Safavid correspondence. Moreover, the intensity of this highlighting of exemplary kingship of pre-Islamic mythical and historical Iranian rulers suggests a notable shift in ideological discourse from the classic Shi'ite rhetoric, with an emphasis on the sanctity of the Imamate and its role as arbiter of divine knowledge and power in this world, which we would come to expect in the Safavid court and chancellery. Perhaps the most striking feature of these letters was the power and grandeur attributed to Mohammad Khodābanda and the Safavid throne. As a source of contemporary political thought, this chancellery material presents a Perso-Islamic model of authority which clearly subsumes more traditional, theocratic models, that denigrated, or even eliminated, the religious role of a secular ruler in favor of the *'olamā*.

With the influx of Twelver Shi'ite scholars from the Jabal 'Āmel region as early as the 1520s, the theoretical implications of a secular kingship ruling a Shi'ite community during the 'great Occultation of the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam became entangled, and the debate among scholars soon turned acrimonious. We only need to look to the careers of 'Abd al-Samad and Mir Hosayn Karaki in the second half of the reign of Shah Tahmāsb to understand the intensity and acerbity that characterized the debate about the role of representatives and deputies during the Occultation. Thanks to the work of Devin Stewart, we know that there were elements among the hierocrats who championed a re-articulation of the power of the Safavid shah in the face of those orthodox Shi'ite clerics who insisted that secular deputyship in a Shi'ite state was an impossibility. In particular, Stewart examined the career of 'Abd al-Samad, previously Shaykh al-Eslām for both Qazvin and Herat during the reign of Shah Tahmāsb, to highlight such a current among the religious intelligentsia.<sup>131</sup> In his *Resāla fi helliyyat jawā'ez al-soltān*, 'Abd al-Samad argued that it was acceptable for Shi'ite scholars to accept patronage from a secular ruler, while in his famous *'Eqd al-Hosayn*, he asserted that it was permissible to perform prostration (*sejda*) to the shah, an incendiary proposal among Shi'ite hierocrats, to say the least.<sup>132</sup>

However, 'Abd al-Samad would ultimately fall into disfavor with the increasingly orthopraxic Shah Tahmāsb, but it is significant for this present discussion that this very same 'Abd al-Samad had been responsible for the religious and scholarly tutelage of Mohammad Khodābanda during his tenure as governor of Herat. Moreover, it would

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<sup>131</sup> Stewart 1996a, pp. 400-01; 1996b, p. 98.

<sup>132</sup> Idem, 1996a, p. 399.

be ‘Abd al-Samad’s son, Shaikh Bahā’ al-Din ‘Āmeli, also known as Shaikh Bahā’i, who would play such a central role in the rise of *eshrāqi* Gnostic philosophy along with others of the Shirāzi school at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. I contend that the resurgence of royal authority characterizing the 1570s and later on is rooted in these early formative relationships of Khodābanda with the Persian intelligentsia while in Herat and Shiraz. In many ways, Khodābanda’s partnership with mystics and scholar-bureaucrats in the chancellery and elsewhere was a symbiotic one. Sufis and intelligentsia (and often these were one and the same) looked to Khodābanda and the sanctity of his royal station as a means of protection and support against the twin threats of Shi’ite jurists and Qezelbāsh Turks. To maintain the sanctity and strength of the Safavid throne, these Persian elements championed hard – often through the vehicle of state correspondence and *enshā* – to present the rule of the shah as inviolable and all-embracing. Unfortunately Esmā’il II’s reign had done inestimable damage regarding the sanctity of the royal throne, and Muhammad Khodābanda and his beleaguered Persian administration were on the defensive for the duration of his reign. Nonetheless, these aforementioned attempts to retrench royal power and authority were not all for nought. This political culture was protected and fostered by the Safavid chancellery, and scribes and stylists such as Eskandar Beg Torkamān Monshi and Hātem Beg Ordubādi would later play a crucial role in a process, whereby this discourse was implemented to bolster the absolutist, uncompromising rule of Shah ‘Abbās. Physically disabled and easily manipulated, yet savvy enough to rule during one of the more fragmented eras of Safavid history, Shah Mohammad Khodābanda was a ruler who navigated effectively between blind luck and blind ambition.

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# Kurdish Autobiography, Memoir and Novel: 'Ereb Ƴemo and His successors

CHRISTINE ALLISON

## INTRODUCTION

The first draft of this article was presented at a conference in Yerevan,<sup>1</sup> home of 'Ereb Ƴemo (better known under his Russified name, Shamilov<sup>2</sup>), author of a pioneering autobiographical Kurdish novel. It was also the home of the first (and perhaps the only) modern Kurmanji-speaking intelligentsia for whom the mother tongue was not a despised minority dialect, but a viable instrument of academic discourse and mass communication (via books, newspapers and radio) with a literate public. Although it seemed appropriate to speak briefly about 'Ereb Ƴemo in his home city, where many of his personal acquaintances still live, and where a plaque on the wall of his house commemorates him, the choice of this subject raises much wider questions about the relationship between 'Ereb Ƴemo and other Kurdish authors elsewhere, about the written genres of memoir and autobiography and their place in Kurdish discourse, and about the place of Kurdish self-narratives amid the plethora of similar writings currently being published in Turkey and Iran. This paper will touch on these wider issues, but addressing them satisfactorily is inevitably beyond the scope of a single article.

## AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND SELF-NARRATIVE IN CONTEXT

A contrast is often drawn between autobiography proper and memoir, which has been defined thus: real autobiography is a weave in which self-consciousness is delicately threaded throughout interrelated experiences. It may have such varied functions as self-explication, self-discovery, self-clarification, self-formation, self-presentation, self-justification. All these functions interpenetrate easily, but all are

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<sup>2</sup> Ƴemo's books, listed below under References, are often catalogued under Shamilov.

centered upon a self that is aware of its relation to its experience (Weintraub, p. 824).

Memoirs, on the other hand, are primarily chronicles of events experienced, although the degree to which the personality and evolution of the narrator is revealed can vary considerably, and it is in some cases difficult to fix a point differentiating the two.

Autobiography, with its emphasis on understanding the individual through a focus on the lived life, is often considered to be typically “an invention that has its roots in Western culture but has characteristics that have been articulated and theorized within, say the last hundred years,” to quote Elie Kedourie (p. 90). Such a notion of autobiography is, according to some scholars, not part of the Middle Eastern cultural make-up. Although this opinion seems unduly hard on that great North African autobiographer St. Augustine of Hippo, it is true that in the pre-modern Middle East one often finds memoirs, accounts of ‘things I have done’ (by kings and other influential figures), ‘things I have seen’ (e.g., the ever-entertaining Evliya Çelebi), and ‘things I have thought’ (including the summaries by scholars of their thoughts and narratives found in biographical dictionaries, mostly in Arabic, but also in Persian and Turkish). Many Middle Eastern genres of the pre-modern period that narrate lives tend to be edifying and formalized (in many cases, the same can be said of early European ones). The private life is never mentioned, and women, whether mothers, wives or sisters, are in general conspicuous by their absence.

The apparent absence of true autobiographical tradition in Islamic culture has not only been accepted as a given by some, but has also been used as a basis for further sweeping statements. As late as 1991, Kedourie went so far as to say “this absence is significant in itself as a pointer to a lack of interest, within traditional Muslim culture, in individuals, with their own specific characteristics and peculiar quirks” (pp. 89-90).

This statement is apt to evoke puzzlement amongst those Western researchers who have lived in conservative Middle Eastern societies, who have observed that, while people are officially commemorated and described in conventional terms, in everyday life people are in fact extremely interested in individuals who have their own characteristics and quirks. However, rather than being announced to the world at large, these quirks are more likely to be described in informal contexts, during relaxed discussions at the home of friends, or during a shared task, or at a cafe with fellow-students. Among the Kurds, as among their neighbors, it is difficult to believe that there is no interest in the individual, when centuries of oral tradition bear witness to the pain that individuals feel

when their wishes are overruled by those of the family or community (especially in matters of love and marriage). Rather, the popularity of such traditions would seem to indicate a general fascination with the private life of the individual.

What may be said aloud in human society in general is driven by rules of genre and context. In European society (in most families at any rate) family members will speak only eulogies of their elderly relation during the funeral oration; afterwards, in the more relaxed context of the funeral breakfast, they might willingly admit amongst themselves that the deceased was in fact a difficult old curmudgeon. In the more conservative societies of the "Islamic world" (for want of a better phrase), even within those groups (such as young women) who have little public opportunity to make narratives and express feelings about themselves, genres nevertheless exist which, if not narrating a life, interweave an awareness of the self with interrelated experiences.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps one should not minimize the complexity of the life of the individual in "traditional" Middle Eastern societies without considering other, perhaps non-literary, ways in which such ideas or feelings might be articulated. Moreover, since the use of oral and written genres in Middle Eastern societies is very different from that in the West, one should be wary of extrapolating too far what is simply an absence of evidence.

It is a great relief, then, to see that the view that autobiography is absent in Islamic cultures is convincingly discredited by Reynolds (ed., pp. 17-36), who traces the origins of this strand of thought and shows that, as far as the Arabic literary tradition is concerned, much of this reasoning was based on insufficient data (in fact, many more autobiographical texts had been produced than those which were available to scholars) and on a misunderstanding of the uses of certain literary genres. Many of Reynolds' arguments could possibly also be applied to Iranian cultural contexts, and the work now being undertaken by Iranist historians interested in the subaltern, such as Afsaneh Najmabadi and Oliver Bast, will no doubt improve our understanding in this area. These earlier forms of self-narrative are not the focus of this article, but the "fallacy of Western origins" as Reynolds calls it, is highly relevant, as it evokes the issue of European and Middle Eastern views of genre and the relationship between them. The issue of genre, and its implications for authorial intent and readers' expectations, is crucial.

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For the expression of personal feelings among Bedouin women, see Abu Lughod, esp. pp. 171-260. For Paxtun women's narratives, see Grima. For Kurdish women's self-expression through lamentation, see Amy de la Breteque.

## AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND NOVEL

It is interesting to note that for the modern period, one of the problems highlighted by Reynolds in the treatment of autobiography is its identification as a “roman manqué.” In fact, it is often difficult to draw a clear line between autobiography and novel in Kurdish (and, indeed, Turkish) contexts. For the Kurdish context the usefulness of attempting a clear distinction between both seems limited; boundaries between autobiography and novel, like those between autobiography and memoir, are apt to be blurred. There is no a priori assumption by Kurdish novelists that the novel ought to be a work of fiction (rather, the opposite seems to be the case), and many draw on “true” stories.

If one accepts the modern novel as originally a European genre that was adopted by writers in the Middle East, it is possible to observe how it took root in its new terrain and how it then developed. This is a complex process; one might say that the writer is in constant negotiation between “local” and “Western” elements and modes of expression. Formally, as an extended narrative, the novel is very much a “modern Western” form, but even a cursory analysis may reveal much: for instance, the structuring of episodes is according to patterns of folkloric narrative or the descriptions of love that recall those of classical poetry. In the Kurdish context, it seems that self-narrative is very important in the development of the novel.

Nedim Gürsel, himself a Turkish writer and autobiographer, discusses the “autobiographical space” in the novels of Yachar Kemal (Gürsel, 1997). He refers to modern European views on autobiography, such as that of Lejeune (p. 26), whose view of the “autobiographical pact” involves an identification between narrator and protagonist. Indeed as an author Gürsel seeks to extend “the autobiographical space” from the limits of the autobiography proper into the novel by considering what kind of truth is expressed in the novels, and comparing it to what Yachar Kemal says about his own life.

Here the issue of autobiography and novel must be left aside for a moment, and attention be turned to what is a very real and pertinent problem in Kurdish literature. To use the example of Yachar Kemal in a discussion of Kurdish literature is to take a position with which many specialists of Turkish and Kurdish would disagree. Yachar Kemal writes in Turkish, but defines himself as a person of Kurdish origin; he writes about his own family, which came to the Çukurova plain from the East, and its place in the village where he grew up. His writing is suffused with the sights, sounds and scents of this region. Turks are justifiably proud of his writing, which has achieved international success. Kurds

are also proud of him and see him as a model, though the fact that his work is rarely cited in detail in Kurdish anthologies and histories of literature indicates some discomfort with the idea of Yachar Kemal as a “Kurdish” author, as he writes in Turkish. According to Scalbert-Yücel, “Kurdish authors like to stress the Kurdishness of this author. However, they continually question his Kurdish identity as an author, and whether he belongs to Kurdish literature” (Scalbert-Yücel, p. 370). There are other Kurdish authors, such as Selim Barakat in Syria, who use the language of the state in which they grew up rather than Kurdish, and their place in the canon of Kurdish literature is also discussed.<sup>4</sup>

It would clearly be ridiculous to attempt to deny that Yachar Kemal is a great Turkish writer; but in a very real sense he is a Kurdish writer too. It is the view of a literary heritage as monolingual and, often, belonging to one nation, which is inadequate here. To do justice to the cultural complexities at work, we need to find a way to see Yachar Kemal as both a Turkish and Kurdish writer, and of course there are models that provide precedents. Scalbert-Yücel’s sensitive discussion (p. 372) mentions not only the possibility of using a “step-mother language” in addition to the mother tongue but also the “rhizome” model developed by Édouard Glissant, which uses the idea not of a single “root” greedily sucking all its nourishment from one patch of soil, but of a “rhizome” that is more of a network taking nourishment from many points, under or also above ground, all these points related to one another. Thus, a writer such as Yachar Kemal can express himself in Turkish as a citizen of Turkey and, at the same time, draw on his Kurdish identity. In her discussion of Kurdish languages (p. 171), Maria O’Shea prefers to use mathematics, describing the model of language use among the populations of Kurdistan as a Venn diagram with degrees of overlap amongst various groups but without uniformity. This could also be applied to literary examples. For instance, in Yachar Kemal’s case, Turkish and Kurdish identities overlap. One could argue that, in addition to the experience of growing up in an Anatolia that has now disappeared due to modern technology and economic reform, an experience which is highly resonant for Turks, Yachar Kemal expresses the same attention to the land and feeling for the landscape which thoroughly permeates Kurdish folklore. Moreover, his story in the autobiographical *Kimsecik*

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<sup>4</sup> It is my personal impression that amongst the Kurds of Iraq who have had more access to education in Kurdish, creative writing in Arabic is often seen as unpatriotic. This was exemplified during a conference in Krakow in May 2004, where a presentation on a Kurdish poet who wrote in Arabic was very poorly received by professors from Iraqi Kurdish universities, who expressed the view that the subject could not be considered a Kurdish writer.

trilogy, for instance, is overshadowed by the silent looming presence of the massacres in eastern Turkey, which deprived Salman of his own family and sent Ismail Ağa to Çukurova (see below). My own oral history interviews with Kurds from Turkey have also shown a strong preoccupation with these bloody events, which until recently have been little discussed at the public level in Turkey.

To return to the question of the autobiographical element in Yachar Kemal's novels, Nedim Gürsel points out the resemblances between the *Kimsecik* trilogy which begins with *Yağmurcuk Kuşu* (Salman the Solitary) and his life. This first volume recounts a tragic tale where the outsider Salman, adopted as a child by the honorable Ismail Ağa and ever resentful of Ismail's love for his own son Mustafa, eventually kills his adoptive father. These are true events; Yachar Kemal was the child Mustafa, and he has explained in interviews the role these real events play in his novels. Gürsel makes it clear that there are many truths that may be more easily explored in the novelistic form than in the simple narration of the "true" story, limited by the structure of the life. Perhaps, he implies, as André Gide thought, one gets closest to the truth in the novel (Gürsel, 1997, p. 105). Certainly, he adds, the novel permits Yachar Kemal to explore a whole universe, not only of his own childhood, but that of the other children, and the alienation and pain of Salman himself, who in personal terms is Yachar Kemal's own enemy (ibid., pp. 109-16).

Thus Gürsel extends the autobiographical space from the simple narratives given by Yachar Kemal in response to interviewers' questions into the novels. Could one extend "autobiographical space" any further, into other types of novels? Various Kurdish novelists have based their novels not on the story of their own lives, but on the history of their families or tribes, or of their villages. One such example is the trilogy beginning with *Sê Xev û Sê Roj* (Three Nights and Three Days) by Lale Qaso (written in his local dialect). This tendency is one of several important strands in the development of the Kurdish novel. Such work can hardly be called a self-narrative, but it is a narration of a personalized past that has close links with identity. Like the self-narrative, it is a work of memory.<sup>5</sup> Other novels which are works of memory are more biographical than autobiographical, such as those of Mehmet Uzun, who has written fictionalized biographies of noted Kurdish figures, including the pioneering nationalists Celadet Bedir Khan and Memduh Selim Beg

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<sup>5</sup> I am not using this in the sense of Ricoeur's "travail de mémoire," but rather in the dual sense of "enterprise" and "product" of memory.

and the bard Evdalê Zeynikê.<sup>6</sup> These certainly do show an interweave between a historical individual as an aware self and the events of his time. His portrayal of Memduh Selim Beg plays on the conflict between his own wishes and the exigencies of his position in Kurdish politics. For all that they are written in the third person, they resemble Weintraub's definition of autobiography quite closely. However, they are fiction. Yet another type of "work of memory" novel are those that "novelize" episodes of history, either those preserved in folklore such as Eyüp Kiran's *Dewrêşê 'Evdî*, a story of heroism and love from the Kurdish tribes of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, or more recent events such as the Ararat uprising, commemorated in 'Elî Evdilrehman's *Ser Çiya da* ["On the Mountain"]. It is useful to consider Kurdish autobiography as part of this wider literary work of memory.

### KURDISH BOOK PRODUCTION

The Kurds began to produce written self-narratives in the 20th century, especially over the last fifteen years or so, as there has been an upsurge in the publication of Kurdish books in general. In the Kurdish-controlled area of Iraq, a number of publishing houses have been founded in the centres of Sulaymaniya, Erbil and Dihok. In Iranian Kurdistan, publishing houses have been active in Sanandaj, Bāna, Seqqez and Mahābād. In the years since the publication in Kurdish was legalized in Turkey, a number of publishing houses have sprung up, which produce books in Kurdish (Scalbert-Yücel, pp. 315-40) in addition to the Turkish translation of titles concerning the Kurds. The Kurdish diaspora has been active since the 1970s, with a number of publishing houses in Sweden, producing printed editions and many titles available on the internet (Scalbert-Yücel, pp. 282-310). Many of the titles produced in all of these places are textbooks and factual reports. Some are novels. Hashem Ahmadzadeh (p. 177) notes that whilst in the late 1980s it was hard to list more than a dozen, a decade later at least a hundred titles could be easily found.

As in other Iranian languages, the Kurdish novel, compared with other genres, arrived relatively late. Its development follows a pattern similar to that of the Persian novel (Ahmadzadeh, *passim*). Prose writing started with journalism and short story and followed at least three centuries of learned poetry (in various dialects) and many hundred years of oral literature. Compared to Persian literature the development of

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<sup>6</sup> These are: *Siya Evîñê* ["The Shadow of Love"] (1989) and *Rojeke ji Rojên Evdalê Zeynikê* ["A Day in the Life of Evdalê Zeynikê"] (1991), and *Bira Qederê* ["The Well of Destiny"] (1995).

Kurdish literature, is somewhat complicated by two facts. Firstly, in the pre-modern period many Kurds used the major literary languages, especially Arabic and Persian, for their literary compositions. Secondly, in the 20th century, the lack of a Kurdish state and the partition of Kurdistan between nation-states, where the dominant language and culture differed and the political élites were hostile to the use of Kurdish, meant that the standard literary forms of the two major dialects, Kurmanji and Sorani, would develop much more slowly than those of modern Turkish and Persian.

It is important to note that, although reliable statistics on book sales and reading habits are not available. The printed book in Kurdish is probably not a dominant form in Kurdish discourse, where the media (especially satellite broadcast and to some extent printed newspapers and magazines) enjoy a much greater following. In fact, many people still receive and exchange information through face to face contact and clandestine political networks. However, whether fiction or non-fiction, the printed book is a high-status genre with a symbolic importance out of all proportion to the numbers of its readership.

#### ‘EREB ẒEMO

The novels of ‘Ereb Ẓemo include all three types of “works of memory” mentioned above. There is the autobiography (*Ẓivanê Kurmanca* “The Kurmanj Shepherd” and *Berbang* “Daybreak”), the family history found in *Jiyîna Bextewar* “The Fortunate Life” and *Hopo* (a proper name) and *Dimdim*, the retelling in novelistic form of a historical episode transmitted by oral tradition. This discussion will focus mainly on *Ẓivanê Kurmanca*, which was published in Yerevan in 1935, shortly before Kamuran Bedir Khan’s “The Eagle of Kurdistan” (published in Germany in 1937), and usually called the first Kurdish novel (though the status of Bedir Khan’s publication is open to debate as it was written in German).<sup>7</sup> There has (inevitably) been some debate as to exactly which is the first Kurdish novel.<sup>8</sup> Personally I am inclined to accept ‘Ereb Ẓemo’s claim. He began to publish almost two decades before Yachar Kemal (though, unlike the latter, he had a gap of more than two decades in his publications) and roughly half a century before the “Swedish generation” of Kurdish writers such as Mehmed Uzun.

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<sup>7</sup> Bedir Khan must have known about *Ẓivanê Kurmanca*; it is interesting that, li’ ‘Ereb Ẓemo, he chooses to have an interlude where he recounts a version of the folkloric tale *Siyabend* (though Bedir Khan’s version is substantially altered to serve his own purposes). See Strohmeier, pp. 157-73 for a fascinating discussion of this novel.

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of this see Ahmadzadeh, pp. 167-77.

Of the new régimes that were in place in the years following the First World War, the only one which regarded the Kurdish language as something which could be positively harnessed to the national development was the Soviet Union.<sup>9</sup> Of course, much Kurdish nationalist discourse was not acceptable, but the language itself was seen as a vehicle of the Revolution, especially in the early years when schools were founded and programs of literacy begun. The situation varied between different Republics, but it was in Armenia where much of the important literary and academic work took place. In Yerevan, a Congress was held in 1934, which assessed the extent of progress so far and voted in favour of adopting the dialect of Kurmanji spoken in Armenia as the official form of literary Kurdish in the USSR. As Basile Nikitine puts it, “these Kurds [of the USSR] turned themselves into the avant-garde of Kurdish culture; the congress itself was a striking proof of this, for Kurdish shepherds and peasants, who were previously illiterate, were here discussing the future of their language and culture, and a former agricultural worker, now armed with a University qualification, could speak as a delegate” (Nikitine, p. 290). Perhaps the most prominent of these newly-qualified Kurds of humble origins was ‘Ereb Ƴemo, who began his working life as a boy shepherd, became a participant in the class struggle during the War, and worked for the Bolsheviks with *nom de guerre* “Misto.” He discussed the education of Kurdish cadres with Stalin himself in 1927, the same year that he participated in the development of a writing system for Kurmanji. He also worked on the organization of these cadres in Georgia and in Armenia and became head of a school for Kurds in Yerevan. He was close to the founders of the newspaper *Riya T’eze* (New Road), which was started in 1931, the year he left Yerevan for Leningrad, where he received his doctorate in 1934. In 1932 he published a novella, *Kurdê Elegezê* “The Kurds of Mt. Aragats,” a socialist parable drawing on his experience of political work among the tribes, where he talks of himself as “Misto” in the third person. He was one of the most prominent figures in Kurdish cultural life in his time, as well as a formative influence on other Kurdish scholars and writers, such as Qanatê Kurdo (Kurdojev). His presentation to the 1934 Congress in Yerevan, on the socio-economic structure of Kurdish society, provoked animated discussion (Nikitine, p. 292). The following year in Yerevan he published *Ƴivanê Kurmanca*, which is traditionally cited as the first Kurdish novel. It is an interesting point that

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A good summary of the situation in Turkey is given in Haig. For Iraq, where British policy on language as a vehicle of Kurdish nationalism changed over the mandatory period, see Hassanpour, pp. 102-25.

he had already published a Russian version of it in Leningrad in 1931.<sup>10</sup> Shortly afterwards, however, he was exiled to Siberia, where he remained until 1957. After his return, he began to write again; all his later novels were produced after this date.

### ¥IVANÊ KURMANCA

The few comments which have so far been made on *¥ivanê Kurmanca* in Europe have been bedevilled by the problem of access to the original text. In 1989 the Institut Kurde de Paris published a bilingual text under the title *¥ivanê Kurd*, containing Basile Nikitine's French translation of ¥emo's first Russian publication and Nureddine Zaza's translation of Nikitine's version into Kurmanji. In fact, many people doubted that an original Kurdish text even existed.<sup>11</sup> There are various problems with *¥ivanê Kurd*. Nureddine Zaza was originally from Turkey, and his style, which is self-consciously literary, is very different from the conversational, everyday language of ¥emo. Dialectal differences are also considerable. Another problem is that (possibly due to the original Russian edition, which is also rarely if ever seen in Europe) the narrative (despite the dramatic events it recounts) is very flat and impersonal. The narrator witnesses and experiences remarkable things, but they do not seem to touch him. Admittedly the work was written at the time of the development of "socialist realism," a term coined in 1932, officially by Stalin in a widely-reported "secret meeting" with writers in October, but actually published in the press earlier that year. It was the outcome of years of debates and conflicts over appropriate forms of art, including literature, in the revolutionary state. The exigencies of socialist realism did not favour an excessive focus on the inner life and conflicts of the narrator, but, even allowing for this, *¥ivanê Kurd* remains unengaging. Fortunately, the Kurdish novelist and researcher Ibrahim Seydo Aydoĝan has rediscovered the Kurdish original, thanks to which we now know that *¥ivanê Kurmanca* is a much more engaging and craftsman-like work than *¥ivanê Kurd* would have us suspect. Unfortunately some

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<sup>10</sup> I am following Japharova's listing of publications and dates (p. 252), though, as Ahmadzadeh notes (p. 171), Rasul mentions a publication in 1927 (p. 70).

<sup>11</sup> I am indebted to Ibrahim Seydo Aydoĝan for bringing this problem to my attention in 2004. These doubts were not confined to those in Europe. In 2005, Emerikê Serdar, editor of *R ʒa Teze*, told me that as far as he knew the original Kurdish text was in fact the much later redrafted version of *Berbang*.

comments of Japharova and Jamo, for instance, are based on an inauthentic text.<sup>12</sup>

The book is narrated in the first person, in a linear fashion, without flashbacks, though there are some references to the present situation, that is, to the time when the author was writing. There are a very small number of interludes where he retells folkloric material, notably the well-known Kurdish story of Siyabend and Xecê. The book recounts the terrible poverty of the author's childhood as a shepherd boy, son of a shepherd and casual worker who struggled to keep his family. Though often disadvantaged and thwarted, the family tries to be resourceful, finding work wherever possible, with all members making the contributions they can. They seem to be an atypical Kurdish family, as they spend years living in a Molokan village (near Kars). Through the kindness of a teacher, 'Ereb manages to acquire literacy in Russian at the village school, and when he grows up finds first translation work with the Cossacks during the war, and then political work for the Bolshevik underground, eventually serving with the Red Army. At the end of the War, the Revolution begins to penetrate the countryside, though the *aghas* and *begs* (the propertied classes) hold on to their privileges as much as possible. Having been separated from his family, the author discovers that his parents are dead, like many other poor non-combatants in the War.

The style of *Ûivanê Kurmanca* is in keeping with the prescription of the 1934 Yerevan Congress on the literary language. The vocabulary and sentence structure are conversational, and the whole work is reminiscent of someone recalling their past orally (very consistent with the structuring and narratives in my own recordings of oral history interviews with Kurdish speakers from the Caucasus, Turkey, and Iraq). References are frequently made to what happened later, giving a direct, intimate note, such as in: "Spring came, I became the village cowherd. My sister Gogê, the one who is still alive now working in the tobacco factory in Tbilisi, used to help me out" (*Ûivanê Kurmanca*, p. 33).

Or the mention (still in the period of 'Ereb's childhood) of his father's friend Pîr Cewo, which is followed by an account of their conversation years later when Pîr Cewo had grown old and was living in Axbaran (Aparan, Armenia): he and 'Ereb spent some happy moments sharing memories of the difficult times, and Pîr Cewo opines that things are much better now that the propertied classes are no longer oppressing

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In fact, many of Jamo's pertinent comments on the differences between *Ûivanê Kurd* and *Berbang* actually deal with differences between *Ûivanê Kurd* and *Ûivanê Kurmanca*, as *Berbang* is substantially the same text.

the poor (*Yivanê Kurmanca*, pp. 21-22). There is a great deal of direct speech and the political message is leavened with human interest.

Although 'Ereb Yemo is very strongly motivated by class struggle, he does not portray all members of the propertied classes negatively. He says of the Molokan in general that they did not live up to the high ideals of their religion in the way that they treated those who worked for them (*Yivanê Kurmanca*, pp. 19-20). The prosperous Molokan village near Kars, where modern farming methods were used, is inhabited by a variety of figures, some violent, such as the priest who beats 'Ereb savagely when he is unable to prevent a sheep from being eaten by a wolf (p. 29). Others, however, are kind and thoughtful, such as the school teacher who engages him as school janitor and teaches him to read. She and her equally kind daughter Marusiya (on whom 'Ereb develops a crush) give him a book; 'Ereb's mother finds it so hard to believe the book could be a gift that she goes to the teacher herself to make sure (pp. 4-45).

'Ereb's acquaintance with the schoolteacher begins with his taking a letter from her to her husband in Kars. While he is at the house with her husband and the other children, he is given a meal before his journey, which he eats alone. Cutlery is put by his plate. He has never seen a little fork before; he has no idea that it is for eating with and thinks that it is a toy, a present for him. He puts it in his pocket, and a painful scene arises when he is about to leave, as the husband sees it and thinks he has tried to steal it. The house gets filled with inquisitive neighbors and it is some time before the misunderstanding is revealed (*Yivanê Kurmanca*, pp. 37-39). 'Ereb's shame at his social ignorance and his anger are vividly described. Some of the Armenian women neighbors say: "All Kurmanj are like that, they're thieves and smugglers" (p. 38). This mistrust of Kurmanj (a term which for Yemo seems to denote tribal speakers of Northern Kurdish)<sup>13</sup> is a recurrent theme in the book. It is the reason why 'Ereb's family eventually leaves the Molokan village, the father being under suspicion of having stolen cattle, which were in fact stolen by Mirza Temoyê Kero, another Kurmanj (pp. 48-49). Although members of the different communities live side by side, it seems that residual suspicion always lurks below the surface.

'Ereb Yemo does not always speak of the Kurmanj themselves in laudatory tones. Many of the ordinary people are described as *pak*

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<sup>13</sup> The meaning of *Kurmanj* is open to some discussion. It is probably not a synonym for "Kurd." but a regional name for this part of the population. Although it can mean "non-tribal peasant," the people that Yemo describes as *Kurmanj* are tribal. The language that we know as Kurmanji was known as Kurdish for most of the duration of the former Soviet Union.

(morally) good, but the *aghas* and *begs* are another matter. In the *zozan* or high pastures, the poorer members of the tribe are expected to work hard for the richer ones, or they risk losing their right to pasture alongside them the next year; the *begs* and *aghas* “drink the blood” of the poor (pp. 56-57). Usib Beg and Cehangir Agha (now in the independent Republic of Armenia, heroes of the community for their role in turning back the Turks during the First World War) are particularly characterized as class enemies. When ‘Ereb’s father approached Usib Beg for help, he was made to pay the “beg’s gift” for all the years he had been living away from the tribe among the Molokan before the chief would help him (p. 64).

There is even betrayal from ‘Ereb’s own uncle. During the War, having worked with the Cossacks and deserted them, the young man finds work with the Russians, lodging with his (paternal) uncle. He falls in love with his cousin, Karê. They plan to marry so the young man saves up the money he earns and pays it in instalments to his uncle for the bride-price. When he pays the final instalment, the uncle denies having received the earlier instalments. They begin to quarrel and then fight, and the young man accidentally kills the uncle. In the ensuing confusion, he has to run away and leave behind the young girl (pp. 83-85). This incident, witnessed by the neighbors, is described vividly, like the other moments of action in the book, with a rhetorical tone reminiscent of Kurdish folkloric narrative. ‘Ereb is at a disadvantage because his own family were not on hand to negotiate for Karê, and is thus vulnerable to his uncle’s lies. Although he does not comment on the tribal value-system here, he does make it clear that he was obliged to flee because of the blood-feud he had started, and remarks bitterly that the uncle, Sefo, managed to prevent the young couple’s dearest wish from being realized after all (p. 85).

#### ÛIVANÊ KURMANCA AND BERBANG

In any consideration of *Ûivanê Kurmanca* and its place in Kurdish literature, and of ‘Ereb Ûemo himself, one must consider *Berbang* and why he wrote it. It was published in 1958 (not long after the author’s return from exile) and later in 1969 in a collection called *Berevok* (Collection) alongside *Jiyîna Bextewar* and *Hopo*.<sup>14</sup> It is a reprise of *Ûivanê Kurmanca* and many passages are word for word the same. There are, however, some new episodes, including more reminiscences of the Molokans, and a whole new section on the myth of American wealth,

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<sup>14</sup> Also reprinted in Latin script by a Kurdish publishing house in Stockholm in 1988.

which recounts the story of a Molokan family who emigrated to America full of hope, only to fall into poverty much worse than anything experienced in their village (1988, pp. 35-43). Some small differences can be explained by the political context of the two dates of publication, for example:

“The village we went to, it had another name before....They used to call it Komesor, but when they arrived, the Russians, the Molokans, called it Aleksandrovsk, they called the village they built after their king” (*Ûivanê Kurmanca*, p. 18). This is replaced by: “The Molokans had been exiled from Russia because of their religion, which according to the Armenians was heretical...” (*Berbang*, p. 12).

Also the description of Cossack atrocities (*Ûivanê Kurmanca*, p. 86) does not occur in *Berbang*, which has a description of Turkish brutality (pp. 72-74), interestingly, recounted by a Kurd rather than by an Armenian. Despite these politically correct alterations, most of the changes seem to be made for literary reasons. *Berbang* uses a wider range of vocabulary and contains more characterization, mostly done through small touches. For instance, ‘Ereb returns to his parents’ house after a long absence:

When I saw my father, I looked at him; his clothes were torn, he had nothing left, he had already grown old, his eyes dim and his mouth almost toothless. I burst into tears, and I wept. (*Ûivanê Kurmanca*, p. 95)

When I saw my father, I looked at him; his clothes were torn, he had nothing left, he had already grown old. I had (gone away and) left my father, and he had grown old, his eyes dim and his mouth almost toothless, nothing left of him but skin and bone. I burst into tears, embraced my father and wept. I was ashamed to tell them about falling in love with Karê, but I guessed that they had heard about it. They didn’t bring it up with me either. (*Berbang*, p. 79)

This detail is absent in *Ûivanê Kurmanca*. Such small nuances do give some added depth of characterization, but Ûemo stays within the bounds of socialist realism, subordinating his own emotional development to larger political and social considerations. There are other silences and absences in both novels, which are entirely consistent with the aims of socialist realism. For instance, despite his interest in folklore as shown in his retelling of Siyabend and Xecê and his account of the customs of such people as the Kurdish nomads and the Molokan, Ûemo says little about his Yezidi religion, which must have influenced many aspects of his family’s life. Religion is limited to passing references to such objects as the *stêr*, the sacred place in Caucasian Yezidi homes where ‘Ereb’s father keeps his important documents and money (*Ûivanê Kurmanca*, p. 46), and they are rarely explained. Although the

readership of a book published in Kurmanji in Armenia would have been substantially Yezidi and thus well aware of Yezidi customs, there were also Muslim Kurds, and 'Ereb Ẓemo probably hoped for a wider Kurdish readership. It seems more likely that he intentionally avoids discussion of religion, which was considered outmoded by many intellectuals and of course would not have been favourably viewed by the Soviet authorities.

*Berbang*, then, is a later draft of *Ẓivanê Kurmanca* rather than a separate work. It seems that 'Ereb Ẓemo wished it to be his definitive version, probably for literary rather than political reasons. So far I have been unable to find any evidence that the text of *Ẓivanê Kurmanca* was considered problematic by the authorities, or that it was a major reason for his exile. This question remains open, however.

#### ẒEMO'S SUCCESSORS: LATER WRITERS OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND MEMOIR

Since *Ẓivanê Kurmanca*, a number of Kurdish self-narratives have been published. Though a full analysis of them is beyond the scope of a single article, it is worth considering a few types and examples and noticing what resemblances (if any) they have with the pioneering work of 'Ereb Ẓemo. Just as Ẓemo must be seen in the Soviet as well as the Kurdish context, other Kurdish writers also need to be placed not only in the Kurdish context, but also in those of the States in which they live. After all, since the early twentieth century it has been quite common for prominent figures throughout the Middle East to write memoirs chronicling their careers or their role in major events. Figures such as Said Pasha, the grand vizier of Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid, did this, and the practice also became well known in the Kurdish context. The memoirs of Ihsan Nuri Pasha, a former Ottoman officer who led the Kurdish fighters in the Ararat revolt (1927-30), are compiled from his own notes, and focus on the great events rather than on the "lived life."

Ihsan Nuri later lived in exile in Iran and, interestingly, after the Iran-Iraq Treaty of Algiers (1975) put an end to the revolt of Mollā Mostafā Bārzāni in Iraq, Ihsan Nuri visited Mollā Mostafā in exile in Iran. He urged Mollā Mostafā to write his memoirs for future generations of Kurds, but Mollā Mostafā refused at the time, though his son Mas'ud has written a lengthy narrative (in Arabic, with an abridged form published in English), which includes a great deal of unpublished material relating to Mollā Mostafā. Other Kurds such as the poet and translator 'Abd al-Rahmān Sharafkandi (pen name Hajar), who was

closely involved in the so-called Republic of Mahābād, have also written memoirs for a Kurdish audience (Hajar wrote in Sorani Kurdish).

It is understandable that prominent Kurds should feel moved to record their life experiences, as, in the absence of a Kurdish state, the preservation of a communal memory of events is unstructured and often problematic. Without a state, there is unlikely to be a national archive, or a steady production of history books for use in schools and universities. The propensity for the nation-states of the area, especially Turkey, to practise “organized forgetting” as the anthropologist Paul Connerton calls it, clearly leads to an impetus among Kurds to recount history from their point of view as much as possible. This type of work of memory, the anti-*oubli* “lest we forget,” or rather “lest nobody else hear about it” type, is found in several forms. Kurdish satellite stations feature documentaries about history and especially about atrocities, and many web pages contain sections in European languages about such events, for instance, the Kurdistan Regional Government’s substantial Halabja section. Magazines exist, such as the Swedish-based *Bîrnebûn* (Not forgetting), which is focused on the memory of Kurds from central Anatolia (Scalbert-Yücel, 2005: pp. 146-47).

Self-narratives are by no means confined to Kurds, however. Musa Anter’s *Hatîralarîm* (My memoirs) is a very good example of Turkish as much as Kurdish self-narrative; accounts of childhood (usually a childhood lost through exile or destruction of the home place, as recounted by Mehmud Baksi and Hiner Saleem, are by no means peculiar to Kurds, and the prison narratives of Mehdi Zana should be set in the context not only of Turkish prison literature, but also of the prison literature of the whole region. It is normal, however, for the “lest we forget” memoirs produced by Kurds to have a strong focus on the narrator’s Kurdish identity.<sup>15</sup>

Many memoirs focus on atrocities. Hüseyin Yildirim’s *Ema lenge* is a curious example of this, which turns out to say rather more than the reader expects about its subject, moving further along the scale from memoir to autobiography. According to the author, it was transcribed faithfully from an account by a woman who survived the Dersim massacres (1936-38), though she was permanently lamed and lost the use of one arm through injuries. Hence her name (Ema the lame). The description of the period of the massacres is vivid, and gives some fascinating insights into local culture, but what is perhaps surprising is that Ema has more to say, or Hüseyin Yildirim lets her say more, than

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<sup>15</sup> This is also true of the novels, which almost all, up to the present day, deal with Kurdishness and Kurdistan. An exception is Ibrahim Seydo Aydoğan’s *Leyla Figaro*, a love story for which the identity of the protagonists is not terribly important.

her account of the massacres. She goes on at some length to describe how the massacres blighted her life. Not only did she experience the terrible pain of losing her immediate family, but her injuries also rendered her virtually unmarriageable. She felt different from those around her and wanted to be independent. She had come from a village background and had had no formal education. As a sop to traditional views that she could not live alone, she married a man who was lame like herself, but the marriage was loveless, so she publicly divorced him. Later she had an affair and brought up a child alone, an achievement of which she was very proud. This latter part of the book is an attack on traditional views of women's honour. Of course, we have only Hüseyin Yildirim's word that these are Ema's own words, yet he may have omitted and/or rearranged the material. If he has not completely invented this part of the book (which seems unlikely), the examination by Ema of her feelings and her place in society seems to indicate the kind of reflection on the self that we would associate with autobiography, rather than memoir. Like 'Ereb Ƴemo, she is motivated by anger at a social system that discriminated against her, but she says more about her personal progress than he does.

Some Kurdish "autobiographies," which are more often memoirs, are directly aimed at the non-Kurdish audience. One such is Nureddin Zāza's *Ma vie de Kurde* (My life as a Kurd). Its title implies a Westernized autobiography, though it is in fact more of a memoir recounting episodes from his childhood in Turkey, his political work in Syria and Iraq, and his eventual exile in Europe, where he married a European. It does, however, give an insight into his emotional life, and its slightly disjointed nature is due to the fact that it was compiled from material dictated from his hospital bed during his final illness.

Similarly, the memoir of Ahmad Bamarni, an Iraqi Kurd active in the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), is in many ways typical of the statements of many Kurds who have been working for the political parties in Europe for years: it is engaging, interesting, vivid, and aimed at the European market. It recounts his the author's role in the events of Kurdish history, giving a vivid description of the horror of many Kurds at Mollā Mostafā Bārzāni's cessation of the rebellion following the Treaty of Algiers in 1975. It was at that point that the PUK was founded, to which Bamarni belongs. So it is hardly surprising that he is particularly passionate about this. The book was written with the help of a journalist, and its style is consistent with this fact, in the way it ranges widely, setting scenes, for instance recounting the experience of the first proto-PUK guerrilla groups (the fighters all called by their first names) in the mountains. This is done in some detail, though Bamarni was not,

and does not claim to have been, there. Bamarni's own self-narrative is, typically, closely interwoven with that of the Kurdish struggle. The great events of Kurdish political history are also the great turning points in his life, according to the book. In my experience of oral history interviews with Kurds, people who are very politically aware tend to do the same thing: their own life and history is viewed through the prism of Kurdish nationalism.<sup>16</sup>

#### CONCLUSION: 'EREB ẒEMO: AN ISOLATED EXAMPLE?

'Ereb Ẓemo wrote *Ẓivanê Kurmanca*, the first flagship novel of the newly emancipated Kurdish intelligentsia, within the context of the literary activities of the new Soviet Union. He could have made it a symbolic or allegorical tale of stereotypical characters, a sort of full-length *Kurdê Elegezê*, which is more or less what Bedir Khan did in Germany, or what Ibrahim Ahmad did with *Janî gel* (The people's suffering), the first Sorani novel (written 1956, pub. 1972). Instead he chose to use his own life and to embark on a work of memory.

After an event or a period of rupture in historical terms, it is a normal response to reflect on the past, and there is no doubt that the period of the end of the Ottoman Empire and the Great War saw maps redrawn and entire populations wiped out in Eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus. By the 1920s, everything had changed; the area bore very little resemblance to what it had been in the 1890s. It is very common for autobiographies in general to look back on a lost world, as do many novels, such as those of Yachar Kemal. Perhaps it is not fanciful here to recall that the half-English, half-German poet Robert Graves published his autobiography (not a memoir) *Goodbye to All That* in 1929, in his early thirties, largely because the Great War had ended the world order he had known and utterly changed his expectations of the life he would lead. For 'Ereb Ẓemo, the Revolution was supposed to offer a more certain future, though it must have been hard for anyone who had lived through the Great War in the Caucasus to feel truly secure (in the event, the course of Ẓemo's life did not run smooth). He looks back on the pre-war period with anger rather than nostalgia, and despite his lack of focus on his inner life he does not hide the fact that these terrible events marked him. His personal life history, as a poor boy made good in the new order, sits well with the socialist message.

Moreover, in many ways a memoir is a very natural early prose genre for Kurdish speakers to develop, because of its resemblance to

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<sup>16</sup> This was particularly evident in an interview with a senior member of the family of Hajo Agha, from Syria, in Berlin, summer 1998.

normal speech genres. ‘Ereb Ƴemo’s conversational style, with the anecdotes and the references to what became of the individual characters, is highly reminiscent of ordinary speech patterns. It is only a short step from, say, a respected uncle sitting amongst his family recalling episodes from his life (a scenario many of my Kurdish oral history interviewees remember very well as one of the most important ways they learned their own family history), to a highly conversational and anecdotal written account like *Ƴivanê Kurmanca*. This is a rather different way of producing a novel than that of Mehmet Uzun, for instance, who writes a very literary Kurdish, very different from the way people speak. This is not to deny that there is artistry in *Ƴivanê Kurmanca*, in the organization of episodes, in the expansion of narrative to novelistic length, and in the choice of folkloric and didactic details.

Although its main theme is that of social justice, *Ƴivanê Kurmanca* is also an exploration of what it means to be Kurdish. ‘Ereb Ƴemo depicts the interplay between the various groups living in the Kars area with some care, showing non-Kurdish attitudes to Kurds (Kurmanj) and also the interrelations between the richer and poorer Kurmanj. He was very much interested in the Kurds as a community and nation. His presentation at the 1934 Yerevan Congress was on the socio-economic structure of Kurdish society, which, says Nikitine, “gave rise to a lively discussion demonstrating the historical existence in the past of Kurdish national culture” (1956, p. 292). His later work *Dimdim* has a strong nationalist theme (Japharova, pp. 120-22). *Ƴivanê Kurmanca*, like his other works, forms part of the Kurdish discourse of identity. Finally, ‘Ereb Ƴemo is also fired by the “lest we forget,” anti-*oubli* principle. He does not want the terrible injustices of the past to be forgotten, either by the *agha* and *beg* families or by the proletariat.

It would not be correct to see the proliferation of autobiographies and memoirs among Kurds, especially in recent years, as due to the influence of ‘Ereb Ƴemo, who could hardly have found a mass readership among the non-Soviet Kurds. It would be more accurate to see published self-narrative and the work of memory of which it forms a part, as inspired by much wider factors that were at work at the time of ‘Ereb Ƴemo in the Caucasus, and which are now at work in Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria. The traumatic upheavals of twentieth-century history, the rise of the nation-state and its accompanying nationalisms, and even the forces of modernity (and latterly, globalization) have all led to the re-evaluations of the past and an obsession with reclaiming it. As Pierre Nora says of the resurgence of memory in general, we have witnessed the development, not only of heritage in a world where history seems to be accelerating and we no longer feel sure of what the future holds from,

but also of memory as a collective item belonging to groups, often downtrodden minorities who seek to reclaim their own history. Identity has also become a group attribute, intimately linked to memory (Nora, *passim*), and reclaiming memory is part of the process of emancipation for minority groups worldwide.

It is possible to say, that if one draws a rough distinction between memoir and autobiography, that the self-narratives the Kurds are now producing are more memoir than autobiography. Nevertheless, to see this as in any way symptomatic of a lack of interest in the individual would be to miss the point. Interest in the individual and his path through life is shown in other genres, such as the biographical novels. Kurdish contemporary self-narratives are, for the most part, currently focused on chronicling events as a struggle against *oubli*, as a way of informing non-Kurds, and, in many cases, as a part of a wider national work of memory aimed at reclaiming national history. Whether produced in the Turkish, Iraqi, Syrian or Iranian context, they are works of memory that tend to explore Kurdish identity, often with a view to achieving liberation. Within its early Soviet context, *Ûivanê Kurmanca* was just such a work.

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# Civil Society *Within* the State? The Production of Knowledge and the State Under the Islamic Republic of Iran

Kian Tajbakhsh

## INTRODUCTION: KNOWLEDGE AND NEW URBAN REALITIES IN CONTEMPORARY IRAN

One of the key transformations in the Iranian society over the last three decades has been the rapid growth of cities and urban population. In the 1960s less than 40 per cent of the nation's population of 25 million lived in less than 400 cities; today 66 per cent (43 million) of Iran's population of almost 66 million reside in over 1,000 cities. Although the majority of cities are small (almost 95 per cent of the total number of cities have less than 100,000), they comprise only about 35 per cent of the total urban population. Thus about half the nation's population lives in medium to large cities (greater than 100,000); Tehran by itself comprises about 11 per cent of the nation's population. In demographic terms at least, Iran is now, in significant ways, an urban country.

This demographic transformation is related to other sociocultural developments. The nature of spatial relations, such as neighborhood relations and forms and local public spaces, have undergone changes. Social and spatial relations among the youth and between genders have been affected. New formal and informal institutions of local governance, such as elected local councils, have come into being. Everyday urban life is characterized by novel tensions and contradictions, such as pollution, automobile traffic and congestion, high residential density with modern multi-story apartment buildings in old narrow streets. In sum a new set of social issues and problems have been created. However, the social, scientific and scholarly knowledge of these new urban realities has only recently begun to receive attention and is, in general, poorly developed.

To understand the landscape of urban knowledge production in Iran we can, in general, identify three sources of specialized knowledge production about urbanism in Iran: (1) the universities, the classical locus of formal knowledge production in modern societies; (2) private sector professions and their commercial publications (predominantly on city planning and architecture) and commissioned reports and project documents (the latter remaining usually unpublished); and (3) research

centers within government and quasi-governmental (municipal) departments.<sup>1</sup> This paper presents a case study of the third group, focusing on the government sponsored research centers. (Future papers will examine the other two sources.) Before turning to the case study, however, some brief words about the universities and the private sector will provide the larger context for understanding the case study made here.

Universities do not commit themselves seriously enough to the production of this kind of knowledge and the establishment of programs for the education and training of future researchers of the field. For example, sociology programs in undergraduate curriculum have only a one-course requirement for urban studies; masters and doctoral programs have no urban studies requirement at all and urban related courses are almost non-existent. Urban planning programs are focused on physical design and geography and urban management issues, rather than on human geography, although this is changing slowly, with greater attention being paid to social dimensions of geography. Although there is social scientific research on some areas pertinent to understanding urban society (the family, migration patterns, social deviance and crime) these tend to concern problems in cities, rather than problems *of* cities, to use the distinction suggested by the British urban sociologist, Peter Saunders.

The marginal role played by the university can be explained by a number of factors, which also helps to describe important elements of the social context in which the following case study is set. In the two decades before the Islamic Revolution (1960s and 1970s) the country experienced rapid urbanization. A limited number of scholars and academics (and policy analysts) slowly began to respond to these realities by introducing the discipline of urban studies and sociology through the publication and translation of texts (see, e.g., Adibi). This process was disrupted, however, by the 1979 revolution and even more seriously by the following “cultural revolution,” which was aimed at purging the universities of those viewed as ideological and intellectual opponents of the new Islamic regime. As a result, the universities became highly politicized, resulting in the loss of whatever ideological and financial autonomy it had. Sociology department faculties that were heavily dominated by rural sociologists and anthropologists – reflecting the nature of the society in the early and middle part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – did not have the opportunity to adapt their faculties and curriculum in a significant way to the new urban realities. Even if they had wanted to, they would have faced obstacles in having materials to transmit and teach, since there had been very little information produced about the

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<sup>1</sup> The term “specialized” is used here to exclude journalism and media coverage of urban affairs and city life.

urban realities of the country and very little access to the scholarly literature available on the subject in the rest of the world (see Tajbakhsh, 1991a and 1991b). Ahmad Ashraf's article about the history of urbanization in Iran stands out not only because of its contribution to Iranian sociology but also in regard to its pioneering nature, and it remained the only such study during the five years prior to the Islamic Revolution, which clearly reflects the status of social sciences in Iran at that time. The experience of revolution was followed by the exigencies of war, which prompted ventures into new realms of intellectual and academic inquiry, therefore requiring new human and financial resources. These attempts, however, somewhat had the appearance of a luxury, if not a danger, particularly if trained urbanist scholars could only be found outside the country, at a time when the passions of xenophobia and mistrust of ex-patriot Iranians ran high. With the end of the war and the beginnings of re-construction in the later 1980s and early 1990s, and especially with the emergence of the high profile mayor of Tehran, who was committed to re-vitalizing the country's capital, the urban question again appeared on the national agenda. At this time, however, the universities were not equipped to respond to the new need independently and adequately. The gap was and continues to be addressed by other actors.

The second set of actors is represented by a number of independent, commercial journals (about 20 at the present time) that entered the market in the last decade, covering different aspects of the problems of urbanism. Although these magazines often give evidence of a wide range of analysis concerning society, politics and economics, they tend to be focused on urban planning, design and architectural approaches and thus are less social-scientific in orientation. Many of these journals are published by private engineering consulting firms which also produce specialized project documents as part of the jobs they are commissioned – (usually by the government) to undertake. These documents sometimes contain the only primary field research into the social and economic realities of a locality, city or village. These dimensions are usually included as part of the preparation of urban master plans, and although they do not address the academic community or respond to specific areas of research, they are an important, often a unique, source of knowledge about urban realities.

The most important producers of urban knowledge in contemporary Iran are to be found in departments associated with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and the Ministry of Interior (and to a lesser extent the Iranian Statistical Center and the Management and Planning Organization, formerly known as the Plan and Budget Organization). The research centers associated with the Ministry of

Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in Tehran were most active in the mid to late 1980s, but in the last decade they have, in comparative terms, considerably reduced their activities although one of the centers continues to publish the journal *Ābādi* ("Settlement"). However, over the last decade, it has been the urban research centers associated with the Ministry of Interior that have produced and disseminated large quantities of often high quality specialized magazines, journals and books, and have sponsored and funded quite widespread urban research. The publications cover issues ranging from urban policy and city planning and architecture to sociology and history, finance, law and anthropology. This state-sponsored knowledge production is often wide ranging, and sometimes even contains points critical of government policies and current realities. The institutions producing this knowledge are often staffed and managed by young, talented students and graduates of social sciences, city planning and policy, geography and related disciplines. Their publications offer these individuals resources and opportunities to engage in applied and, sometimes, non-applied research activities. Through contact with specialists in all related branches of the government, these institutions create a loose intellectual network and offer these specialists outlets for their views and opinions, which can be critical of current policies and which could not have found a home as easily outside the state.

In the larger cities, especially Tehran, municipalities have also promoted knowledge production through their own research centers. Although municipalities in Iran are legally supposed to be outside the domain of the government (although they are considered part of the public sector), they are, arguably, quasi-governmental. Thus for the purposes of the general analysis presented here, it is possible to consider them together with the government research centers. Besides, the publication of translations of books and monographs by independent translators forms another conduit through which this type of information finds its way into the Iranian context.

In fact, some of the activities of these government institutions appear similar to what in other contexts are the prerogatives of civil society institutions, particularly the universities, which often are autonomous, and may indeed criticize the state. Thus this paper aims to explore what may be called the paradox of "civil society within the state." The paradox is compounded by the restrictions imposed by the state both on the universities (which in other contexts are the sources of knowledge production) and on the press (the sources of more general information). The present author does not intend to make too strong a case about the mutually exclusive nature or incompatibility of the state on the one hand and free intellectual activity on the other, but maintains that the Iranian

case highlights the weakness of what are understood as “civil society” institutions – especially the universities in this case – and he sheds light on the constraints and logics whereby the state’s dominance of social affairs is both persistent and deeply rooted.

The high degree of activity by government research centers (as well as commercial magazines) reflects two factors: first, the pressing demands of contemporary urban society for informed (state) intervention and policy making, and second, the absence of a significant body of academic “basic” knowledge of contemporary urbanism in Iran, on which “applied” work could be built and to which the latter could refer. This is most clearly evident in the case of universities which, in this (and other instances), do not appear to be fulfilling their role as suppliers of scientific and cultural knowledge to the society.

The present paper is focused on the case of the government research centers. It seeks to describe the genesis, evolution as well as the impact and limitations of this phenomenon of government research centers and publications and the latter’s production of urban knowledge more generally. It aims to examine, as a case study, the Center for the Study of Urban Policy and Planning (hereafter referred to as the Center), a part of the Ministry of Interior based in Tehran. It will also address the question of the individuals responsible in shaping the activities of the Center. The central thesis explored here is that four sets of factors – sociostructural, institutional, individual personality, and the relative higher level of resources – help explain the prominent role that the Center has played in the production of urban knowledge in Iran.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The data used in the paper are based on several sources. First and foremost among them are the published and unpublished documents and archives of various departments of the Ministry of Interior, in particular the Office of Development, the Office of Council Affairs, and the Center for Urban and Rural Research. Published sources include all issues of the Monthly journal *Shahrdārihā* (“Municipalities”) and the quarterly *Modiriyat-e shahri* (“Municipal Management”). The author was also able to interview several people involved in the editorial and managerial aspects of these publications. Unpublished sources included all sponsored reports and studies that are held in the Center’s library in Tehran. Secondly the author was able to interview several key individuals who had played essential roles in the establishment of the research centers of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and the Center for Urban and Rural Research. A list of key individuals interviewed is given

at the end. The study also draws on data collected in the course of a previous case study evaluating the performance of city councils.

### THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF URBAN POLICY AND PLANNING: ORIGINS

The origins of the Center can be traced to 1368/1989-90 and the efforts of Rasul Zargar, the then Deputy Interior Minister for Development ('*omrān*, "civil engineering"), which was perhaps the key agency responsible for the post-war reconstruction and infrastructure programs throughout the country in both the urban and rural areas. Faced with an acute lack of information and data about the current state of local infrastructure, demographics and social needs, Zargar established a small research group (hereafter referred to as the Group), which was staffed mostly with students in city planning disciplines (Zargar himself was a trained civil engineer). The Group occupied one room in the Office of Development Planning in the ministry (*Daftar-e barnāma-rizi-e 'omrani*). It was led by Majid Behest, an economist with master's degrees in city planning, who, along with Zargar, had come from the Ministry of ([Rural] Construction) *Jehad-e Sāzandegi*. The latter ministry had been established because of (Islamic) revolutionary ideology, the need to respond to war damage, and because of a rural bias that was characteristic of the new regime. The Group began with collecting all available data and feeding them into the development of government policies and programs for reconstruction and development. With the end of the war, the atmosphere was more conducive to analytical planning and information gathering, but the Group was nonetheless faced with the paucity of reliable data on the basis of which it could form an accurate picture of localities.

The arrival of 'Ali Nowzarpur in the Office of Development Planning in 1370/1991-92, who had already served in the Ministry of Oil as a statistician and research officer concerning social issues, was to have an important impact on the Group and the future character of the Center. His first responsibility was to draft the chapters on municipal development for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Five Year Development Plan (FYDP). He contacted the Group for assistance relating to population data, demographic trends and predictions, but found that the available data were either non-existent or were inadequate to draft the sections. As a result, he commissioned first a study of population trends at the national and local levels and then another one to find out what the nature of urban management was under the first FYDP. This was the minimum necessary information needed in order to develop strategic policy goals. Part of this strategic analysis involved clarifying and classifying the different types of urban projects

in different areas and sectors, rather than a general provision for all municipal development programs, as had been the case in the first plan.<sup>2</sup>

Using the results of these studies, the draft proposals were presented to the Majles in 1372/1993-94 and in 1373/1994-95 the 2<sup>nd</sup> Five Year Development Plan was passed. According to Nowzarpur, this was the first time that quantitative goals and objectives for the municipal sector were specified in the Plan. Out of about 70 billion tomans of government funds allocated for municipal development, which resulted from the ratified second five year plan, about 19 million tomans were earmarked for “urban development research” (*tarh-e melli-e ‘omrāni motala’āt va tahghighāt-e shahri*) for the first year. This fund had been included in the draft written by Nowzarpur with support from Zargar.

This was the financial and legislative germ of the beginning of the Center. Although it was a relatively small proportion of the total government support for the municipal sector, it was nonetheless a substantial amount for a specialized research center. Besides, Article 19, Section J of the National Budget Regulations had made the Ministry of Interior the sole distributor of nationally collected municipal revenues throughout the country, which gave the Ministry the flexibility and independence it needed to fund any research that it felt was necessary.

The deputy minister had ordered the study group to cooperate with Nowzarpur in the writing of the draft, but he was frustrated by the poor information collected by the Group and their very vague sense of what urban and city management consisted of. The experience with the study group and the second plan convinced Nowzarpur that he needed to have a better sense of what the state of urban studies and urban research was in Iran, even beyond the directly policy oriented and applied research that the ministry required. Zargar also supported this broader set of concerns. With these changes in the concept, the Center moved to its own independent offices outside the Ministry compound in the center of Tehran.

By 1372/1993-94, that is, four years after its inception as a small informal research unit assisting the office of the deputy minister of development, the study group had received its first lease on life. It had found legal and financial support through the national development plan under provisions drafted by a dynamic policy specialist with the support of the deputy minister. It is noteworthy in this connection to mention that

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<sup>2</sup> Note. The population report was controversial, since it criticized the analysis, predictions and indices used in what was, at that time, the accepted population analysis written by an academic consultant to the HUD. This was perhaps the beginnings of the sense that government can get better analyses from the inside, which had been directly commissioned, rather than rely on academically produced data.

the Ministry of Interior is predominantly responsible for domestic security: It defines the territorial divisions of the country, supervises the police force in cities, and directly oversees the government appointees that govern the 30 provinces (*ostan*), 330 sub-provinces (*shahrestān*), 794 rural counties (*bakhsh*), over 1000 cities, and over 2300 rural districts (*dehestān*) of the country. In other words, it is not surprising that what Nowzarpur calls the “traditional public managers” did not and do not view this type of intellectual research as part of their organizational culture or mission. The resistances to the expansion of the Center will be discussed below.

#### FORMALIZING THE CENTER AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MONTHLY, *SHAHRDĀRIHĀ*

With his work on the second plan finished, Nowzarpur replaced the head of the Group in 1373/1994. The latter was apparently unpopular with the young staff, partly due to his ideological differences with the young generation of researchers that were increasingly being employed in the Group. The former director was aligned politically and ideologically with the conservative wing of the regime, whereas the young researchers tended to be less ideologically oriented and more open to new ideas. The more pragmatic and liberal character of the young researchers was closer to Nowzarpur’s own approach and, as such, was an important reason for his success in expanding the Center in the subsequent years.

Many of the talented individuals at the Center were from the disciplines of social sciences rather than from that of the physical design. Now, led by Nowzarpur, the Center started attracting students of sociology. According to Nowzarpur, these students and recent university graduates were better trained in conducting research than economists and geographers were. Both professional planning and academic consultants, generally lacking adequate qualifications, would not conduct research in the way envisioned by Nowzarpur. Consequently, the first project he launched was to produce an internal document about “how to do urban research” that would serve as methodological evaluation guidelines for research projects conducted by staff at the Center or funded by the Group. This was a clear response to a gap in the knowledge available to policy makers at the time. In accordance with the change in the ambitions and scope of activities, the Group’s official name was changed to the Center for Urban Planning Research.

In the first round of funded research, five projects were selected: (1) an analysis of urban management in Iran, (2) an analysis of municipal finances (3) an analysis of municipal laws, (4) reasons for the ineffectiveness of urban plans and (5) the issue of fire protection services

and management in cities. In the following years the budget for the Center increased steadily from 19 to 23 to 30 to 40 million tomans and more research projects were funded. In 1382/2003-4 the Center's budget of about 100 million tomans funded around 15-20 research projects.

As the Center grew into one of the main producers and sponsors of urban research in the country, it advertised in universities and colleges and attracted talented graduates and students from across the disciplines. The Center, compared with many other types of employment, would offer and pay attractive salaries. A further feature that drew younger researchers to it was the friendly college-like atmosphere of the Center, which was in sharp contrast to the formal milieu of most government offices and even to the politicized atmosphere of the university.

The atmosphere within the Center matched that in the society that was slowly changing, especially in Tehran. Karbāschi, the dynamic mayor of Tehran, was determined to transform the capital from being the stifling image of a memorial to the martyrs of the revolution and the war with Iraq into a modern city which could respond to a wider set of needs, from economic functions and social services befitting a major metropolis to the needs of the youth expressed in terms of beauty, love and enjoyment, rather than providing a space for Islamic Puritanism. The Rafsanjāni presidency represented, at least in formal terms, a type of technocratic pragmatism, and, by the mid 1990s, various ideas exploring a democratic version of Islamic governance were finding their way into elite discourse.

The significance of these developments – in the hegemonic model of the city and in the approach to social problems favored by the hardliners of the Islamic revolution of the 1980s – for the changing social context of an institution such as the Center and the types of individuals that it attracted should not be underestimated. This social opening was glimpsed by those seeking to contribute to social reform and policy making but who were not part of the revolutionary “cadre” or insiders that received support and were placed in decision-making posts. Thus the Center can be interpreted as institutional response *within* the state to this new atmosphere. It was in a sense one of the early signs of “reform from within the system” that contributed to the success of Khatami in the presidential elections of 1996.

One of the key factors that contributed to the success of the Center was Zargar, the deputy minister, who supported the broad intellectual and research orientation of the Center. According to Nowzarpur, Zargar played a very important role in starting the whole project: “He was personally interested in serious research and participated in all our debates. He would personally read and critique many of our project reports.”

In 1374/1995-96 the Center took the first step into the public sphere – by launching the monthly *Shahrdārihā*. In 1376/1997-98 the Center received official permission to publish books commercially. This was used to publish the results of the research projects funded by the Center and thereby making them available to the general public. By 1998 about twenty research projects had been completed. In addition, several books on urban policy and urban studies were chosen for translation. A few years later the Center received permission to publish *Modiriyat-e shahri* (“Municipal Management”), a quarterly professional journal, with an academic editorial board. The monthly magazine, the journal and the book series constitute the main efforts in sponsoring and disseminating urban knowledge in Iran over the last two decades.

As the Center’s activities grew, it began to have an influence in the field of urban studies, management and planning. Through research projects, contributions to publications and consulting, it was successful in attracting the cooperation of many professionals, academics and intellectuals who otherwise might have been resistant to the idea of working with a government ministry. Several of the members of the Center active at the time have said that the major impetus to undertake this type of publishing was the vacuum they all felt when looking for material to serve the policy-making community. Because the basics of the literature were unavailable, they ventured perhaps further into basic social science research than they otherwise might have. One former staff member said: “In fact, some of the books and manuals we have translated (such as one chapter “Data Collection in the Urban Settings” from *Doing Urban Research*) are now being used as teaching materials in the university. Yes, it’s certainly a good question – why instead of the University servicing the knowledge needs of the professional community, it’s the other way around” (Nejāti, interview).

Zargar supported these efforts and defended the activities and the increased budget for the Center. After his departure in 1376/1997 the Ministry never found such a strong leader and the Center was left without a senior supporter.<sup>3</sup> As the Center became a full-fledged research unit and publishing enterprise, it experienced some resistance and criticism from the traditional managers in the Office of Development, who were not altogether happy with the knowledge being produced and information being disseminated within their office. For example, for the first time the Center collected and published the annual budgets of all urban municipalities in Iran. Other bureaucrats felt that this information

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<sup>3</sup> Zargar was dismissed by the reformist minister ‘Abd Allāh Nuri on a disagreement over the controversial policies of Karbāschi. Zargar did not support Karbāschi’s city management policies, but Nuri wanted to support him. In Nowzarpur’s view Zargar’s dismissal was a mistake and a blow to the Ministry.

should remain confidential government document. “My outlook was intellectual and academic (*dāneshāghi*), but the dominant approach was security based (*amniyati*). We tried to encourage and represent a culture of openness” (Nowzarpur, interview).

In 1380/2001-2, the Municipalities Organization within the Ministry of Interior was re-organized and became the department responsible for the Center. For a variety of reasons, Nowzarpur was not supported and he left for another division of the Ministry in charge of regional and rural affairs. He has now embarked upon a similar set of activities for the rural municipalities that he had done for the cities. He has also started the first magazine for the new rural municipalities (*dehyāris*) and has brought some of the same sort of young talent to work on these projects. Many of the young researchers that he had brought to the Center in the mid-1990s also left with him and a new set of staff entered the Center. The main activities of the Center continue as before. There are working groups on city planning, urban sociology, transportation, and public safety. In the opinion of some people, however, the Center – now pays less attention to strategic and policy issues than it did before.

Some people in the Ministry feel that the Journal has become too autonomous and has moved away from the direct policy needs and control of the Ministry. The editorial board, consisting entirely of academicians and professionals, is seen by some to be too far removed from development needs. The current editor of the Journal is a well-known, talented member of the young generation of city planners – with both practical experience and academic training, but the feeling that the autonomy has gone too far may eventually lead to the loss of support and state funding. If this comes about, independent institutions will again face the problem of the absence of reliable urban knowledge in Iran. The Center could face a fate similar to that of the pre-revolutionary government research centers and be dismantled as they were during the revolution. Should this happen, in the absence of a strong (academic) institutional basis for producing urban knowledge in Iran, the chances of a significant growth in quality and quantity of urban studies would seem dim.

## DISCUSSION

Four factors are highlighted in our analysis: individual interest, creativity and capacity, the weakness of non-state production of knowledge, and the high level of financial and other resources available to the state. Each one plays a role in explaining the current situation discussed above.

The urban management and planning divisions of the Ministry of Interior were not unique in seeking out institutional innovations to be

able to generate the types of knowledge that these divisions needed for planning purposes. There was in fact at the beginning of the 1990s a “mushrooming” (to use the words of one of the managers interviewed) of research centers within many, if not most, of the government agencies faced with developing strategic priorities in the second FYDP. This was in part a response to the changed social context. By the end of the 1980s, the Islamic Republic had entered a new phase: The war with Iraq had been concluded, Ayatollah Khomeini had died, and Rafsanjāni elected to the presidency with a program of more pragmatic, less ideological economic development and modernization. The general mood and outlook of the state became “developmental,” albeit within the constraints of an authoritarian regime whose revolutionary energies had not faded away. New personnel, less ideological in outlook although still “children of the revolution,” entered the agencies and offices charged with reconstruction and development. All were immediately confronted with a state apparatus that not only had had its trained specialists purged through revolutionary zeal and prejudices, but had also focused all its energies on the war effort for the better part of a decade. These agencies lacked in effect the necessary tools of basic management, including the knowledge. This ranged from “hard” knowledge, namely data (e.g., population, the number of municipal employees, the revenues and expenses of municipalities and how these revenues were spent, the number of fire engines and factories and their distribution across the country, etc. .) to “soft” data, such as understanding the process of urbanization, the nature of the urban land market, the demand for transportation services, and thus the possibilities, limitations and modalities of intervention. The pressing need for both “the first-order” (informational) and “the second-order” (causal, interpretative) knowledge and its unavailability, in conjunction with the opening of the opportunities for educated, ambitious individuals from a technocratic class to demonstrate their credentials, inevitably led these government research centers to develop this knowledge themselves.

The role of individuals and their interaction with the state in accounting for the nature and quality of the knowledge produced in these centers cannot be discounted. Nowzarpur, for example, during the 1979 revolution was a university student in sociology influenced by the leftist Islamic ideas of ‘Ali Shari’ati, but he was unable to defend the new state: “I had entered Islam with critical eyes, so I couldn’t just defend the new state without reservation.” He started an independent Muslim Students Association distinct from the dominant Anjoman-e Eslāmi on the campus. Because of the difficulties engendered by this independent stand during a highly repressive time, his interests in Islamic ideology moved from the social basis of Shari’ati to the philosophical discourses of

Motahhari. After some time in detention, which prevented him from rising to the highest decision-making offices, and volunteering at the front during the war, he returned to the university to continue his studies: "But I realized that this wasn't the same university college anymore. It was no longer vibrant and many of the faculty and many of the ideas were prohibited. I didn't want to study sociology in this new environment after the purges." After graduating, the only technical discipline open to him was city planning: "I had no real sense of what it was. "

The case of Nowzarpur shows how the possibility of state employment in the context of the difficulties posed by the highly politicized atmosphere of universities in Iran during the last two decades attracted many otherwise academically oriented students. Similar descriptions could be given of other individuals who have contributed to urban studies in government research centers and at different times (e.g., a center in the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development in the 1360s/1980s was instrumental in launching new directions in urban studies). For example, another researcher recalls: "when I started working for the municipality and while I was a student [of city planning and urban studies], I realized that the Center could be a good place for research and knowledge production. I, however, would have never expected the government to be such a place. There were good people there doing good work, so I was more confident, but I had two doubts: first, whether it would be sustainable [rather than go the way of other government initiatives which were dissolved with changes in administration] and second what effect it would have on my career."

The third factor which is relevant to understanding this case is the shortcoming of universities in the production of urban knowledge. Hoseyn Imāni Jājarmi, formerly a specialist on urban affairs at the Ministry of Interior and a former deputy director of the Center (who had gone on to receive his doctorate in sociology) recalls that in the early days of the Center "we tried to reach out to the universities but found they did not have much to offer in the field of urban studies." He notes, however, that "The universities had very limited budgets and capacity through our funded projects, we created a space and demand for the universities to expand their research." The research Center's contribution to knowledge was to introduce basic research methodology and insist upon using it: "Because we believed that it was necessary to conduct research within a conceptual framework, we were open to theoretically inclined and informed researchers."

Finally, the resources available to the Center as opposed to the universities are indicative of the difference in capacity. According to the deputy director of research manager, the Center's current annual budget for 2005-6 was about 60 billion rials (about 6 million US dollars),

whereas the estimated research budget for Tehran University in all disciplines was probably around 30 billion rials, about half of the Center's.<sup>4</sup>

All staff interviewed expressed the sentiment that despite being students of social sciences and despite being interested in the widest intellectual debates, "we never confused our responsibility to produce policy relevant knowledge that could help solve the real problem that we faced in the country. We knew we were not universities" (Imāni). They point out that, for example, as the Journal has become more academic and independently run, it has become more marginal to municipalities throughout the country, and to the Ministry of Interior and is losing its effectiveness and influence. Referring to a recently published book by the Center entitled "Language, Thought and Space: A Post-modern Approach to the Environment" the current director of research programs said "This is an academic book; universities should be producing this type of work. We shouldn't be in the business of developing theory or method books on how to do urban research."

#### ASSESSING THE STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF STATE PRIMACY IN KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

How should we assess the role that the state plays in developing knowledge in the case of urban studies in Iran? There are two levels of analysis, empirical (or positive) and normative, to operate at. The first one takes the sociopolitical realities of the current situation in Iran as given, while the second one evaluates the case relative to certain normative criteria, such as the importance of the autonomy of intellectuals *vis-à-vis* the state for both the quality of knowledge produced as well as for a democratic system of governance. Of course these criteria are controversial and open to debate, but they appear indispensable for creating a critical perspective. On the other hand, the two levels or perspectives are not mutually exclusive, since the realities "on the ground" should inform the possibilities (utopias) that are carried within normative frameworks.

From the concrete experience of the government research centers the following points concerning the strengths and advantages of the current

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<sup>4</sup> Although detailed data on university budget allocations is not readily available, this assessment appears to be accurate. For example in 2003-4, the national budget dedicated about 20 billion rials for research projects to Tehran University. If take into account that about 50 per cent of all students enroll in the social sciences and humanities, and taking into account the usually capital intensive nature of research in the hard sciences, we might estimate that 30-40 per cent of the 20 billion rials or about 6-8 billion rials went for social sciences; this is a guess, but it still is substantially lower than the Centers' budget for that year which was about 30 billion rials.

level of government involvement in research can be summarized. In the first place, the government has much more resources and capacity to conduct social research. It has greater financial resources, greater access to data, and more authority to persuade actors in society to participate in research, such as surveys. (A former director of the Center said: "If a province or a municipality doesn't fill out the questionnaires, I'll hold on to their money until they do!" Even this threat, however, did not manage to motivate local offices to respond, and usually it was not for political reasons, but simply because of the lack of administrative capacity to respond.) In fact, given the absence of viable alternatives (such as universities or independent research centers) one should expect the government to take a lead role, and it has.

Secondly, there is now a closer connection between theory (research) and practice (the needs of the country). Whether this in fact reflects more the needs of the government is discussed below. The universities and their faculty are very far removed from the realities of the problems in the country. A good example of this is the way in which our sponsored research finds its way into the national Five Year Development Plans, where the results of research are (often too hastily) applied and find their way into policy documents. This is especially significant in the case of urban planning, which is an applied science. For example, the Center's publications are more policy oriented than academic outputs. In fact, there are no equivalent academic publications dedicated to urban studies. The articles that appear in the academic journals tend not to be well grounded in realities. Thus it is fair to conclude that, while there are of course exceptions, government centers support academic-practitioners who are better informed than both university-based academicians and traditional public managers or bureaucrats, who tend to be unaware of new conceptual approaches necessary for problem solving.

This assessment should not be taken to imply that the worth of academic research should be judged only by its applied or policy relevance. The point here is that, given the lack of empirical field investigation, the research in and of itself lacks an adequate empirical base; this naturally affects the ability to generalize or theorize within the given discipline.

Thirdly, the Center has strengthened the ability of academia to do relevant research, and, by putting public managers in closer contact with researchers, the former have become more aware of the importance and value of good information and new ideas for their work. By lobbying for continued budgets for the projects, the value and culture of research is reinforced within the state system.

Fourthly, the Center has helped social scientists/sociologists to play a more important role in the domain of urban planning management and policy. Earlier, private planning consultants were closely focused on

physical planning and saw no value in their contribution, but now consultants hire sociologists to identify the social aspects and needs of, for example, urban re-development plans. According to several consultants this is a result of the fact that this type of research is explicitly required as part of the proposals. Finally, the publications of the Center are perhaps their most important contribution. They are distributed in the public sphere through a well known distributor and bookseller of urban studies texts and thus contribute to social awareness and the stock of public knowledge. Several of the books have reached a third or fourth printing, which demonstrate the popularity and usefulness of the books. Many of these are not used only by practitioners, but also by students.

However, there are several weaknesses, too. First, because research is not a "core mission" of the government ministries, lack of sustainability and guarantee to grow over time thus undermines personal and financial investments. The Center is focused on research, but its budget is evaluated by the ministry's general accounting office, which does not have the ability to employ scientific or policy studies criteria to assess the value of projects. A second weakness is that the research is ultimately tied to government priorities, and the Center is not autonomous to decide the best way to conduct research. For example, even though the journal has tried to appear academic and independent, it is apparent that it is fully funded by the government, therefore reflecting to a significant degree the research priorities and needs of the government. Thirdly, the activities of the centers have in fact weakened the universities. The latter have become more dependent upon government for funding and thus for the content of its research.

#### CONCLUSION: KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION, THE STATE AND MODERNITY

The present author maintains that the full meaning of the case presented in this paper can be understood better within the broader context of the question of the transformation of the Iranian state and bureaucracy. There is no space to deal with this issue in any detail here. The hypothesis that he would like to propose is that, even though in the future the Iranian state may retreat from some of its wide-ranging activities (for example, as a result of privatization of some activities and services), the predominant role of the state in knowledge production reflects a major trend: the increasing expansion and entrenchment of the state bureaucracy over the last several decades. The state is all encompassing not only as a result of the political economy of oil revenues (rentier-state), but also because of qualitative new status and power of the machinery of government and public administration.

Several interpretations of the evolution of the Iranian state since the Islamic revolution support this interpretation. For example, Ali Farazmand has argued that “The Iranian bureaucracy has not been abolished by the Revolution. On the contrary, it has survived and prevailed as a well-entrenched institution of power” (Farazmand, p. 345 cited in Heady, p. 341). Jean-Francois Bayart argued some time ago that the continuities between the pre- and post-revolutionary state were as important as the discontinuities, if not more so, and that this “modernizing” tendency included, among other things, a greater centralization of authority and the state (Bayart). More recently, Olivier Roy has argued that political Islam has in fact been dominated by need of the new revolutionaries to consolidate its power within the framework of a nation-state: delineated territory and with the tools of a modern nation state and government apparatus. To paraphrase Roy, if in 1979 the Islamic revolutionaries captured the state, today the state has captured and transformed them (at least the dominant faction) into authoritarian and ideological nationalists.

Perhaps the significant role of state-funded knowledge production can profitably be seen in the light of the current tensions and trends in the modernizing of the Iranian state. Whether or not the hypothesis that under “modernity” the sphere of knowledge must be autonomous and free from political pressures will have any connections with or implications for the processes and shape of democratization in Iran is something that cannot be predicted at present. For example, one might tentatively ask whether or not, the case of progressive factions with an interest in promoting information, knowledge and transparency within government research centers represents a case of “civil society *within* the state.” Despite its paradoxical nature, this is a hypothesis worth exploring and warranted by the results of the case study presented here. Of course the thesis could be seen as entirely ironical: where the shadow of the state falls so broadly on everything aspect of society and the embrace of the state is so wide as to dominate almost all institutionally based intellectual production leaving no room for independent institutions, it is hardly surprising that we should detect creativity from within its confines. This realistic interpretation would however not explain why there would have had to be any sparks of creativity at all from within the state structures – state bureaucracies are notorious for stifling initiative.

What is more certain is that the themes and tensions that we have explored in the case of one discipline are illustrative of a general trend in Iranian society. On the other hand, if the Islamic Republic of Iran has presented the world with an unusual, neo-traditional hybrid state, whether, in the area of knowledge production, it will prove to be an effective sponsor or a hindrance to quality research and output is less

certain and will depend on case by case studies of the disciplines and their limits and strengths.

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#### LIST OF INTERVIEWS

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- Dr. Gh. Kāzemiān (former editor of the journal and quarterly published by the Center).
- Ms. Tashakkor (staff writer and researcher for the Center's monthly publications).
- Dr. M. Nejāti Hosayni (former director of research department at the Center).
- Mr. Tāherkhāni (current director of research department at the Center).
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## RESEARCH AND CRITICAL NOTES



# Sasanian Textile Art: An Iconographic Approach

MATTEO COMPARETI

The lack of direct written sources still represents a serious gap for the study of Persia during the Sasanian period (226-642 CE). The only documents on the Sasanians that are reliable to a certain extent can be found in the works of Muslim historians or in contemporary sources written outside Persia proper (especially in Latin, Greek, and Armenian) by not always impartial authors. Moreover, the information obtained from these sources must be considered with caution since they lack details and are often misleading.

In classical, Islamic, and Chinese literatures Sasanian textiles are celebrated as a very precious commodity, but no specific descriptions of them are given.<sup>1</sup> Most of the studies on Sasanian textile art were originally based on these sources and the examination of the Tāq-e Bostān reliefs, which, although extremely interesting, present too many external influences and, cannot therefore, be considered to represent a typical specimen of the court art of Iran (Ērān in Middle Persian). Some patterns observed on the garments of the figures at Tāq-e Bostān are definitely reproductions of the decorations that also appear in metalwork and, above all, in stuccoes of the Sasanian period. In most of the cases, however, both the decorative patterns and the fashion of the clothes mirror a sort of exotic taste, which calls to mind the secluded non-Iranian lands (Anērān).<sup>2</sup>

It is now quite clear that many formulae considered typical of Sasanian art were actually known and were even created during the

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the admiring words of the authors describing the goods stolen during the sack of Sasanian territory by Byzantine and Arab invaders: Christensen, p. 469; Shalem, pp. 78-79. Khosrow II Parviz actually donated precious metalwork and a "Hunnish" curtain to the shrine of St. Sergius in Syria during the period of friendship with Byzantium. Most likely, these Hunnish (that is to say "oriental") textiles were highly estimated by the late Sasanians; see Harper, 1998, p. 217. Some sources explicitly mention highly estimated "Persian brocades" presented as gifts to the imperial court; see Compareti, forthcoming.b, pp. 153-54.

<sup>2</sup> Peck, 1969; idem, 1992. For a hypothesis about the creation of the motifs at Tāq-e Bostān in "Eastern Iran," see Kawami, 1992, p. 16, n. 80. According to Harper, it is highly probable that a specific type of drinking vessel adopted in the Near Eastern Christian liturgy had Persian origins.

Arsacid period (ca. 247 BCE-224 BCE). This re-evaluation of Parthian art has been possible thanks to the excavations at Hatra (in northern Mesopotamia), Seleucia-Ctesiphon, and Nasā (near present-day Ashkhabad), as well as some new excavation in Iran. Several statues representing important members of the local high classes wearing typical nomadic clothes embellished with elaborated decoration were found at Hatra. Other interesting textile decorations connected with Parthian taste can be observed on the monuments recovered at Palmyra and Dura Europos<sup>3</sup> (on the right bank of the Euphrates River). The three afore-mentioned sites, however, are peripheral and their evidence cannot be considered genuine Parthian. Their populations were Semitic (in the case of Syrian cities also the Greek element was very strong), even if the Iranian borrowings had a great influence.

A few textiles dated to the Parthian period have been found during scientific excavations in Persia, specifically at Shahr-e Qumes (present-day Dāmghān) and at Germe (Ardabil).<sup>4</sup> The textile fragments from the former site are not embellished, while the ones from the latter present chequered and swastika-like decorations (Fig. 1). Unfortunately, it is not possible to discern if these textiles were created within the borders of the Arsacid Empire, or if they were imports.<sup>5</sup> Although a great amount of materials found during several archaeological campaigns at Old Nisa and other sites are unquestionably Parthian, no textile fragments have been recovered in any of them.

Actually, one cannot say much about Sasanian textile art. The only textile fragments referable to the Sasanian period (6<sup>th</sup> century) recovered during scientific excavations at Shahr-e Qumes do not display particular decorations and we cannot be totally sure about their production within Persia proper (Fig. 3).<sup>6</sup> In 1993 some workers accidentally found a

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<sup>3</sup> Interesting textile fragments of this group have been found also in Crimea. For a summary on the relics found at these sites, see Ackerman, 1946.

<sup>4</sup> Kawami, 1991; idem, 1992, pp. 14-17; Kambakhsh Fard, pls 122-24.

<sup>5</sup> The motifs on the Germe fragments could have been imported from a Hellenized country like Syria. The Hellenistic touch can be observed in some woollen fragments from Loulan (Chinese Turkestan) and Noin Ula (Mongolia) also. It has been argued that these textiles arrived in these regions of Asia from the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea (most likely from Syria) through the maritime branch of the so-called "Silk Road" just to avoid the Parthians; see Ierusalimskaya, figs. 1, 3, 5. Other embroideries from Noin Ula and Chinese Turkestan even display a mixture of Iranian and Hellenized elements, which should be probably linked to this trade: Stawiski, pls. 54-60; Shunying, Xiaoshan, and Pin, figs. 260, 267, 269-70.

<sup>6</sup> Hansman and Stronach; Kawami, 1992, pp. 15-17. In his well-known book on pre-Islamic Persian archaeology, Lukonin (1976, p. 110) related that "in the [19]40s some farmers brought to light, in Northern Iran, a metal coffer containing Sasanian silvers and a valuable silk fabric decorated with portraits of Sasanian kings." Unfortunately, he did not insert any pictures, nor did he give any bibliographical information. Also

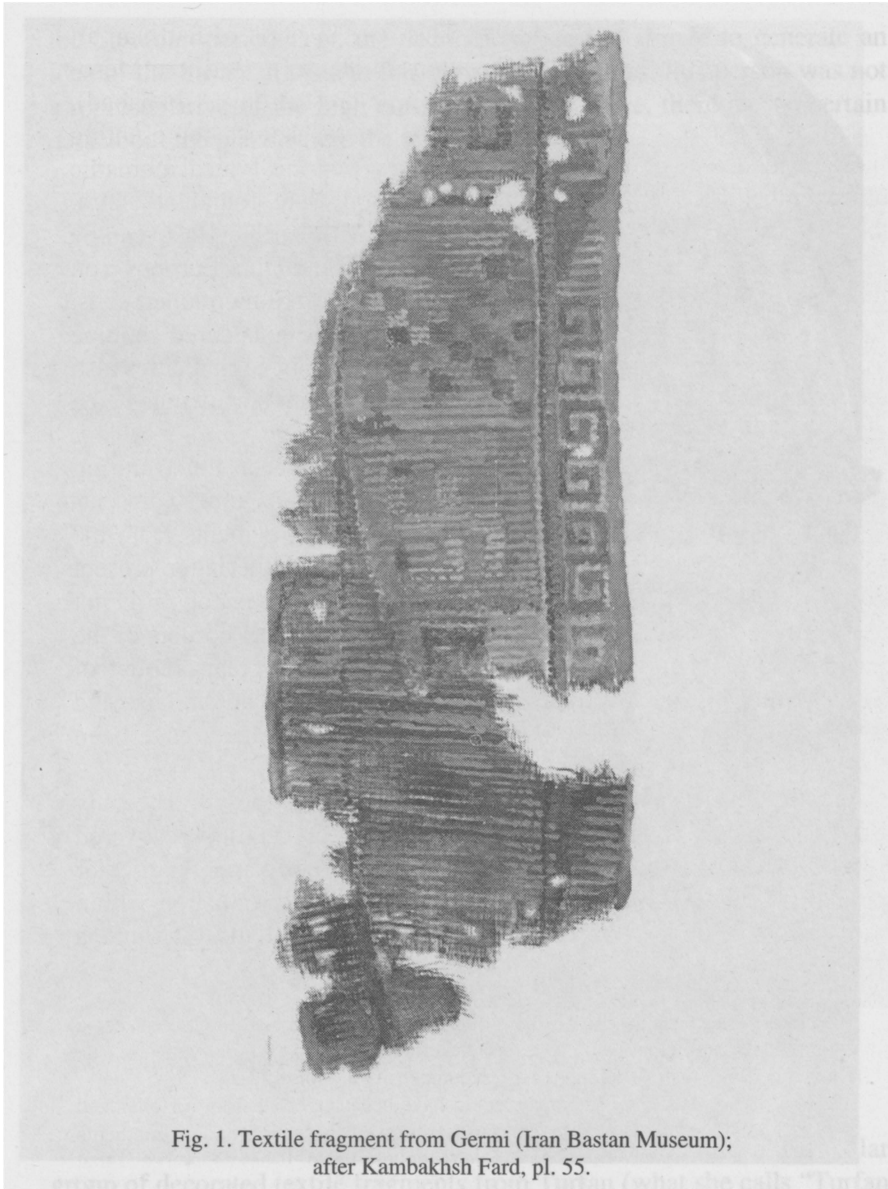


Fig. 1. Textile fragment from Germi (Iran Bastan Museum);  
after Kambakhsh Fard, pl. 55.

Jerusalimskaya (1993, p. 118) reports briefly on an unpublished silk wrapped around a silver plate recovered in Māzandarān, which is most likely the same mentioned by Lukonin. According to Vanden Berghe (1959, p. 6), the textile was recovered at Kalār Dašt (Māzandarān Province) in 1948 together with other metalworks. Unfortunately, the textile seems to have been sold on the antiquary market. Although no image of such a textile has been published, it could be considered an early Islamic specimen. In fact, the Arab conquest was slower in Māzandarān than in the rest of Persia, and the Sasanian traditions were preserved longer there.

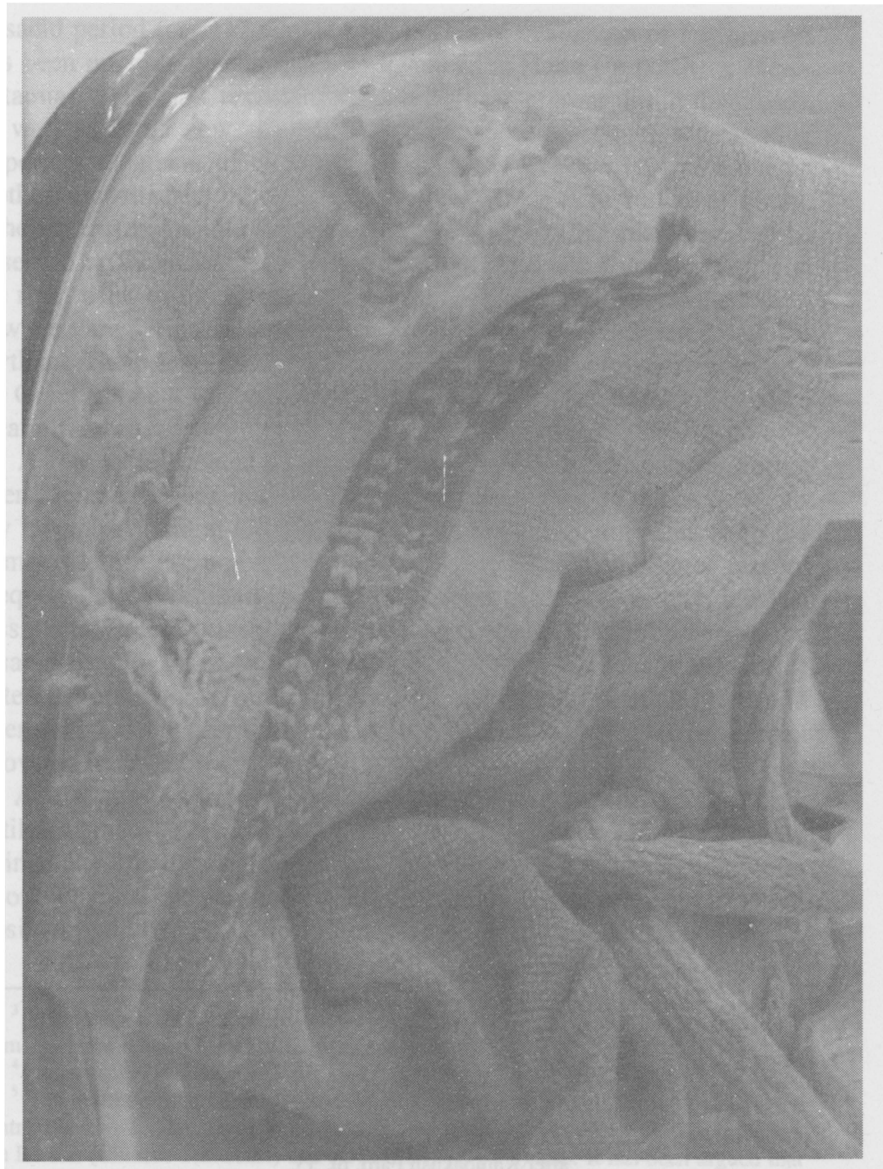


Fig. 2. Decoration of a woolen garment worn by the “salty man” found at the Hamzelu village, Zanjān Province (Iran Bastan Museum); photo: Dr. Rudy Favaro.

corpse naturally mummified in the Hamzelu village (Zanjān region); the corpse is now kept in the Irān Bāstān Museum (Tehran). The organic material was in a good state of preservation, and his woolen clothes still present stripes with very bright colors (Fig. 2). According to the  $C^{14}$  test, the mummy could be dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, that is, to the beginning of

the Sasanian period. Yet, the decorations are too simple to generate an idea of the Sasanian taste in this period and, besides, this person was not a representative of the high class. Then, once more, there are no certain data about the place where the textiles were woven.

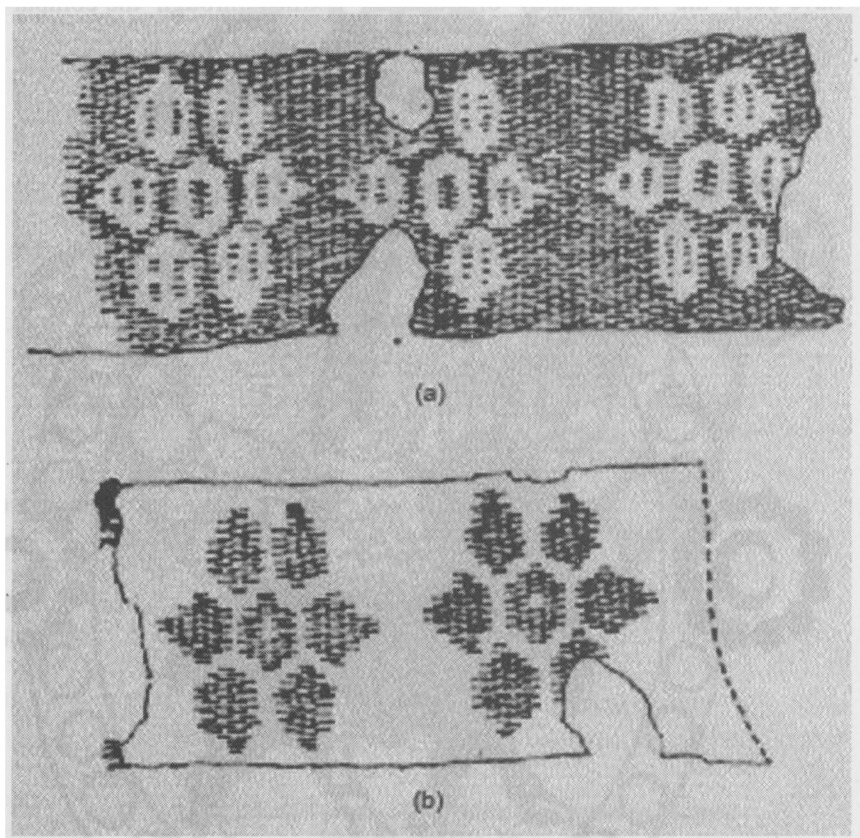


Fig. 3. Reconstruction of a textile fragment from Shahr-e Qumes;  
after Hansman and Stronach, 1970: fig. 7.4.

Recently Etsuko Kageyama tried to demonstrate that a particular group of decorated textile fragments from Turfan (what she calls “Turfan group A”) could be attributed to the Sasanian production. To these Kageyama added some silk specimens excavated at Antinoe, which are embellished with pearl roundels containing figures of rams (Fig. 4) and winged horses (Fig. 5). However, since the reports of the excavations at Antinoe do not exist, and there is no evidence of any written document

recovered with these silk specimens, on an iconographic basis, these textiles could be considered a local, or even a Sogdian, production.<sup>7</sup>

In the past, the studies on Sasanian textile art (based both on stylistic and technical analyses) tried to establish connections with what could have been the iconography of Sasanian textiles through the compar-

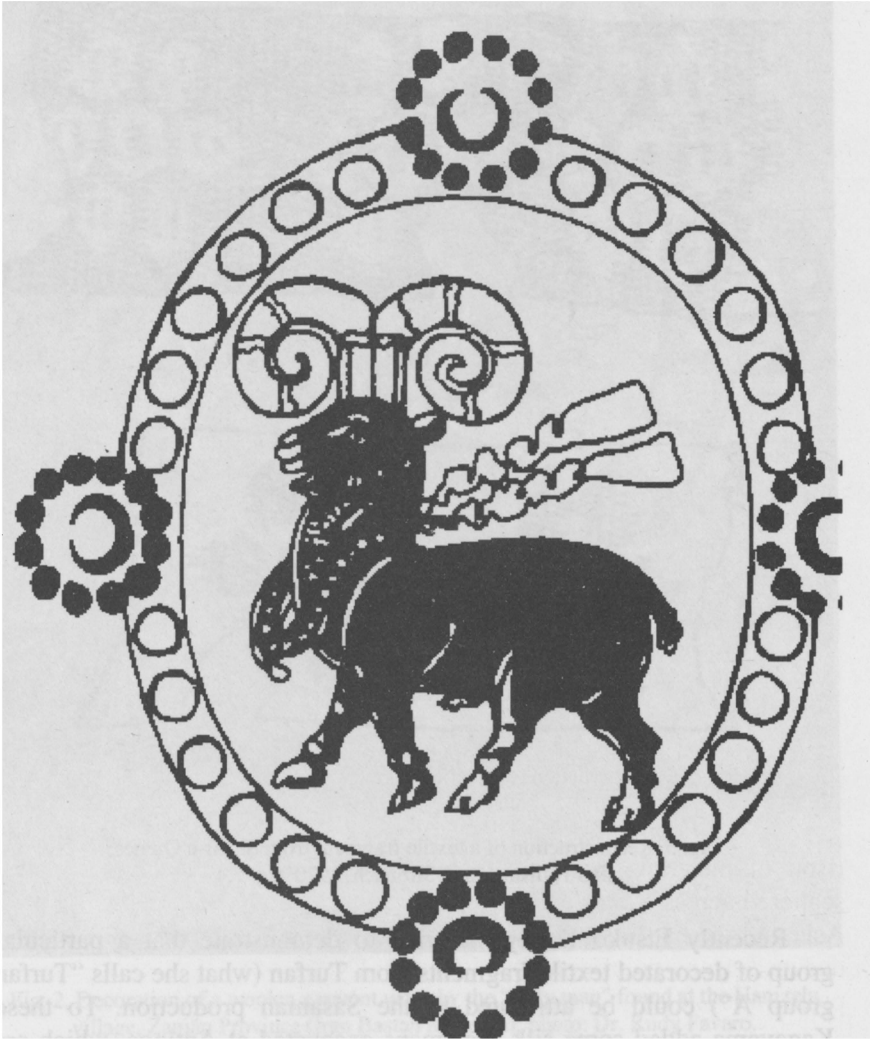


Fig. 4. Reconstruction of a textile fragment from Antioch (lost); after Scerrato, fig. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Kageyama, 2002; Compareti, forthcoming a; idem, forthcoming b. Otavski's study is so far the most definitive treatment of Iranian textile decoration in general (with a large section on the specimens from Chinese Turkestan as well).

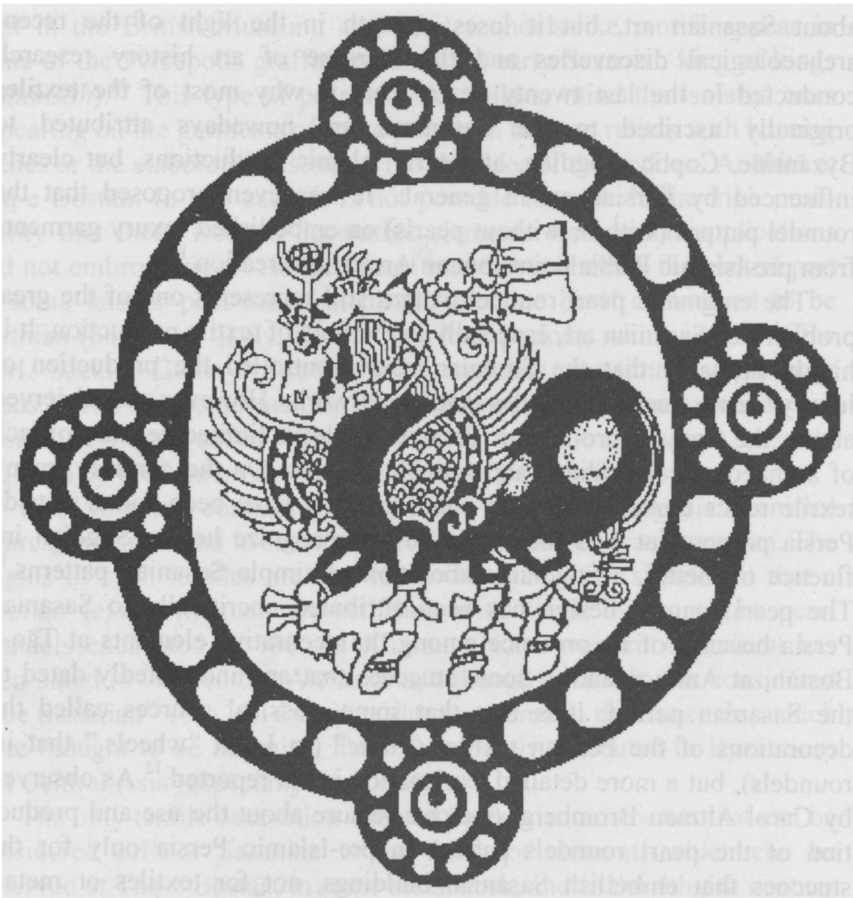


Fig. 5. Reconstruction of a textile fragment from Antinoe (Louvre);  
after Azarpay, fig. 16.

ri-son of material fragments recovered at several archaeological sites scattered across a very extensive area (Europe, Egypt, Caucasus, Central Asia and the Far East). The same can be said for the textile iconography deduced from paintings and statues.<sup>8</sup> This kind of approach to the problem is the only one possible because of the lack of indubitable data

<sup>8</sup> von Falke, 1913; Ackerman, 1938; Pfister; Geijer; Scerrato. Some stucco panels recovered at Bandyān present a good repertoire of textile patterns probably in fashion in the eastern part of the Sasanian Empire; see Rahbar. The 10th-century authors Mas'udi (pp. 106-7) and Estakhri (p. 150) mention a book containing the portraits of twenty-seven Sasanian monarchs, each one reproduced in his royal garment, crown and weapons. This is most probably the book that the historian Hamza Esfahāni (p. 48) refers to as *Ketāb sowar moluk Bani Sāsān*. Unfortunately, none of these sources provides any illustrations; see also Mohl, pp. 258-68.

about Sasanian art, but it loses strength in the light of the recent archaeological discoveries and the increase of art history research conducted in the last twenty years. That is why most of the textiles originally ascribed to the Sasanians are nowadays attributed to Byzantine, Coptic, Sogdian, and early Islamic productions, but clearly influenced by Persian art in general.<sup>9</sup> It was even proposed that the roundel pattern (with or without pearls) on embellished luxury garments from pre-Islamic Persia points out an Armenian creation.<sup>10</sup>

The enigmatic pearl roundel pattern still represents one of the great problems of Sasanian art, especially in the field of textile production. It is highly probable that the Sasanian court controlled the production of luxury items such as textiles and metalwork. However, as observed above, the study of pre-Islamic Persian textiles is limited because of lack of archaeological findings and reliable sources. On the contrary, many textile relics embellished with pearl roundels have been found outside Persia proper, but it is more cautious to recognize here a Sogdian influence or, better, a Sogdian elaboration of simple Sasanian patterns.<sup>11</sup> The pearl roundel design has been attributed uncritically to Sasanian Persia because of its presence among the decorative elements at Tāq-e Bostān, at Antinoe and in some stuccoes that are undoubtedly dated to the Sasanian period. It is true that some classical sources called the decorations of the Persian textiles “*rotae*” (in Latin “wheels,” that is, roundels), but a more detailed explanation is not reported.<sup>12</sup> As observed by Carol Altman Bromberg, one can be sure about the use and production of the pearl roundels pattern in pre-Islamic Persia only for the stuccoes that embellish Sasanian buildings, not for textiles or metalwork.<sup>13</sup>

Isolated pearl roundels containing a rosette, the attribution of which is still debated, can be noted on the shoulder of the king and on the garments of a queen on at least four silver plates. In a word, it is not certain whether the metalwork can be considered as a central or peripheral Sasanian production.<sup>14</sup> A rosette (without any frame) embellishes the shoulder of a possible Sasanian king reproduced in a bronze statuette

<sup>9</sup> De Francovich: Overlaet, De Jonge, and Daemen; Compareti, forthcoming b.

<sup>10</sup> Taverna, 1993; Taverna, 2001. See also: Melikian-Chirvani, p. 176.

<sup>11</sup> The literature on the pearl roundel pattern is now quite extensive. Among the most updated studies with extended bibliography (besides Meister), see Compareti, 2000; idem, 2004a; idem, forthcoming b. See also Yinjing.

<sup>12</sup> Scerrato.

<sup>13</sup> Bromberg; see also D’jakonova; Otavsky, pp. 138-49; McDowell, p. 157.

<sup>14</sup> According to Goldman (1993, p. 206), the origin of these decorations is probably Parthian. The pearl roundel design with a eight-petals rosette inside can be observed also in the paintings at Balalyk Tepe on the garments of some figures who cannot be considered representatives of the Sasanians; see Al’baum, figs. 106-7, 117-20.

kept in the British Museum, and pearl roundels-like motifs appear in some of the Persepolis graffiti representing early Sasanian king of kings (*šāhānšāh*).<sup>15</sup> This type of pearl roundel calls to mind the isolated ones appearing on the garments of some people in the two reliefs with hunting scenes or the elaborated rosette on the shoulder of the goddess Anāhitā at Tāq-e Bostān. In any case, it is not possible to exclude the high probability that these isolated decorative elements were metal applications and not embroideries.<sup>16</sup> Isolated pearl roundels embellish the central part of some late or post Sasanian plates, and one bowl considered to be Parthian (but, most likely, datable to a later period), which is part of the A.M. Sackler Gallery, displays pearl roundels containing single boar heads.<sup>17</sup> The list could include other items as well, for instance, a very interesting bowl (called “Eastern Iranian or Central Asian”) recently acquired by the Louvre Museum but not yet published.<sup>18</sup>

Pearl roundels containing many kinds of subjects (especially animal figures) can be found in some textiles found in the Caucasian region. The origins of such textiles are not known for sure. It is significant that a woollen textile fragment embellished with single birds within pearl roundels excavated in 1885 at Khasaut (North-western Caucasus) has been dated to 7th-century Alexandria, although at first it was considered to be Sasanian<sup>19</sup> (Fig. 6). Other textiles recovered in the Caucasus, which were thought to be Sasanian, have been rightly attributed to Byzantium and Central Asia (especially Sogdiana).

The only textile decoration adopted by Persian aristocrats that can be considered official Sasanian is the three-dot element, which can be observed at Tāq-e Bostān, in some metalwork, and in the 4th-5th century wall paintings at Hājiābād.<sup>20</sup> This decoration was never attested outside the territory of Iran and this fact enforces the hypothesis of a pure Sasanian creation.

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<sup>15</sup> Almost the entire repertoire of the Sasanian textile decorations can be observed in Goldman, 1993 and 1997. The rosette within roundels (without pearls along the rim) can be seen among the stucco decorations from Kiš; see Baltrušaitis, fig. 189.

<sup>16</sup> Metal application possibly to be sewn on clothes (the so-called *bracteates*) are part of some collections; see, e.g., Catalogue Bruxelles, cat. 46-47; Catalogue Roma, cat. 23.

<sup>17</sup> Sasanian Silver, 1967, cat. 41; Harper, 1978, cat. 14, 25-26; Gunter and Jett, cat. 7.

<sup>18</sup> This is a silver polylobed bowl partially gilded, acquired with a donation by Mrs. Shelby White: Acq. 2004, AO 32234.

<sup>19</sup> Talbot Rice, fig. 3; Lukonin, 1977, p. 100; Ierusalimskaya in: Catalogue Sankt-Petersburg, cat. 75.

<sup>20</sup> Azarnoush, pl. 35. On the three-dot decoration see: Goldman, p. 218.



**Fig. 6.** Textile fragment from Khasaut (Hermitage); after Catalogue Sankt-Petersburg, cat. 75.

This is what can be said on Sasanian textile decorations according to the fashion possibly adopted at court as reflected in art. We may now turn to reconsider some specimens of textiles that, unfortunately, have not been recovered during archaeological excavations. An enigmatic group of textiles that is said to have come from Egypt – although acquired from the antiquary market – is extremely interesting for the study of pre-Islamic Persian textiles. The fragments cannot be considered Coptic; they display several Iranian elements, which do not completely respond to Sasanian artistic canons. The scholars who studied this group (especially from the iconographical point of view) suggested that most of them were wall tapestries.<sup>21</sup> The Coptic and the Iranian elements are often not easily discernible, unless (as in two cases) it is possible to observe very strong Sasanian marks.

The first fragment considered here (now kept in the Textile Museum, Washington, D.C.) is a portion of a big woolen tapestry now quite degraded. Horses are represented in front of a stylized tree, and each of them seems to be held or hit by a standing figure. These figures are definitely male, except for the ones without beards, because of the style of their garments and of the fact that they hold a sort of dagger in one hand. The horses and the human figures are contained within a frame of human heads and palmettes (Fig. 7). The meaning of the composition is not clear. The present author proposed to identify the scene as a possible horse sacrifice because of the position of the lifted hand holding a sword and also because the horses seem to be quite agitated. Besides, horse sacrifice was a common practice among ancient Iranian peoples, as reflected in arts.<sup>22</sup> Just the presence of patches on the body of the animals raises some doubts, since this is not a typical Sasanian feature. Such decorations embellish the body of several animals in Sogdian art and later started to be represented also on Byzantine and Coptic items.<sup>23</sup> According to James Trilling, the fragment could be dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> century, but, possibly, a later chronology could also be considered.<sup>24</sup>

The second fragment to be considered here is much more interesting and at present is kept in excellent conditions in the Benaki Museum, Athens (inventory 7001).<sup>25</sup> In the scene represented in this linen and

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<sup>21</sup> Kitzinger; Trilling.

<sup>22</sup> Compareti, 2003, pp. 35-36.

<sup>23</sup> McDowell, p. 157; Compareti, 2004b, pp. 877-82.

<sup>24</sup> Trilling, cat. 17. The textile presents many similarities with some reliefs from the Hāzāra Rāma Temple at Hampi (Southern India), starting in 1513: Compareti, 2005, pp. 37-40.

<sup>25</sup> Apostolaki; Schuette, Müller and Christensen; Benaki Museum. A new approach to the textile of the Benaki Museum is proposed now (with a contribution of the present writer) in Scarcia and Curatola, eds., pp. 112-13, and in a specific study by Compareti, forthcoming c.

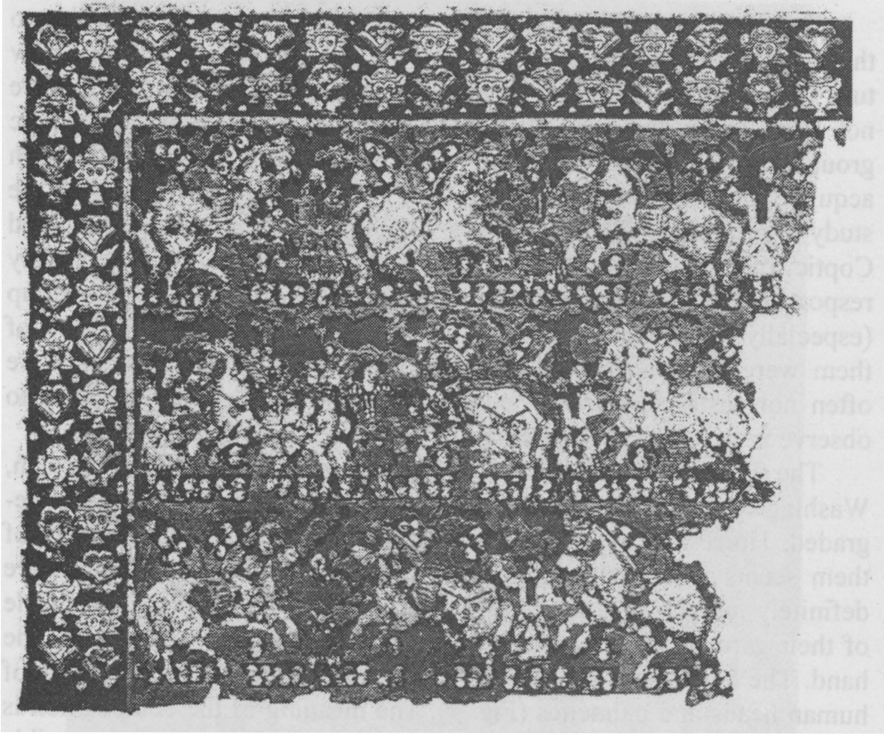


Fig. 7. Textile fragment (Egypt?) (Textile Museum); after Trilling, cat. 17.

woolen textile, there are four people dressed in the typical garment observed in many Sasanian reliefs. It is possible to recognize a central figure (most likely a king), larger in dimensions and probably sitting on a horse, and three smaller male figures, likely attendants. The central figure wears a belt and a caftan embellished with pearls and what could be considered jewels sewn on the entire robe (Fig. 8). A similar decoration embellishes the dress of the king at Tāq-e Bostān and a silk fragment considered to be Sasanian (6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> cent.), now part of the Victoria and Albert Museum collection.<sup>26</sup> The main figure has bare hands but the right one is raised in front of him. There is a hanging object on his flank, probably an empty quiver decorated with a vegetal element. His head is not preserved but most likely it was represented with a crown or a diadem embellished with floating ribbons whose ends can be observed above the right shoulder, covering part of the “symbol of rank”

<sup>26</sup> This fragment comes from the antiquary market and every attribution must be considered hypothetical; see Bier, cat. 54. It is not clear if this motif had been introduced from abroad. Similar decorations are present on the clothes of some people in the 5th-century stucco panels from Bandyān, identified as Hephtalites or Persians who, however, lived in the eastern provinces of Iran; see Rahbar, pls. IV, VI, fig. 5.

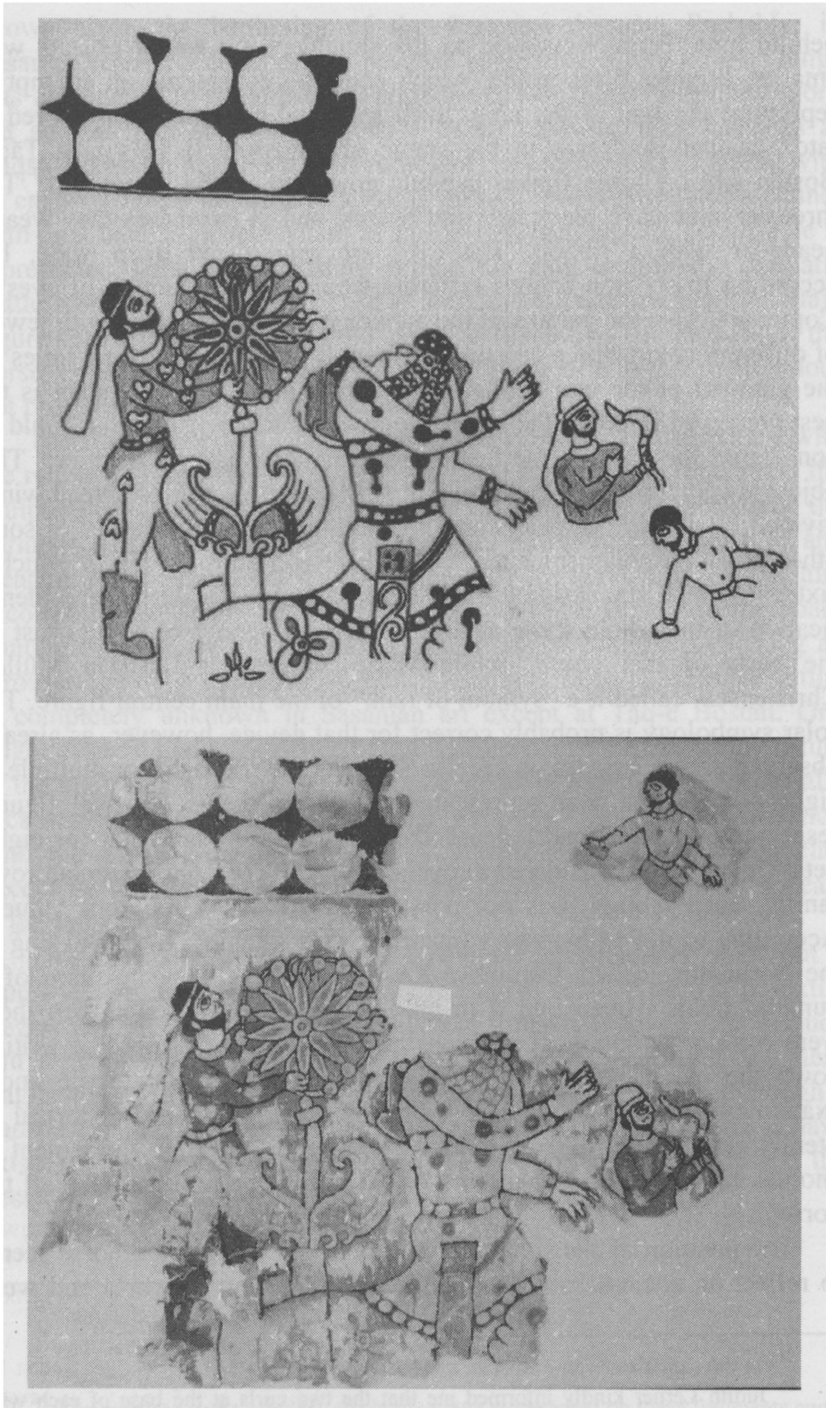


Fig. 8. Textile fragment (Benaki); photo: courtesy Dr. Roberta Cortopassi (© by the Benaki Museum Athens).

behind him. Partially visible on his shoulders are round objects with smaller, brighter discs inside, which could be considered an attempt to reproduce the hair of the king. Such spherical tufts can be observed in late Sasanian sculpture in the statue of Khosrow II Parviz at Tāq-e Bostān and on some figural capitals now kept at the same site.<sup>27</sup> The three servants have black hair and beards, and in two cases they wear a headgear with a ribbon. The eyes are reproduced open wide, but according to stylistic canons different from the reproduction of eyes in Coptic art. Also the caftans of the attendants seem decorated with jewels of different colors and a heartlike element is reproduced several times on the garment of the one behind the central figure. This attendant is the best preserved figure of the whole scene. He is standing on what could be considered the back of the horse and is holding a curious object. This object is composed of a pedestal embellished with a pair of spread wings divided by a string of pearls and typical double curls observed in some 6th-century Sasanian stuccoes;<sup>28</sup> then there is a pole, on top of which a sixteen-pointed star inside a roundel is fixed. Apostolaki laid the identification of the whole scene as a procession in honour of Mithra just on the basis of this object, while Marie Schuette and Sigrid Müller-Christensen, called it a “symbol of rank” of the main central figure. The solar symbology is probably correct for that device, however, as already observed above; besides, in secular Sasanian art, the eight (or multiple of eight)-pointed star was represented on the garments of royal figures (especially on metalwork). Most likely, the eight-pointed star (or eight-petal flower) was considered a royal emblem of the same Sasanian royal family, even though it is not possible to exclude a religious value.<sup>29</sup> According to the 14th-century historian, Ebn Khaldun, the royal flag of the Sasanians, called *Derafsh-e Kāvīyān*, “had a magic square of a hundred fields woven into it in gold. That had been done when there were certain astronomical positions observed for the purpose of writing down the magic square.”<sup>30</sup> If this is the case, then the textile under examination could be considered the representation of an historical or literary episode, not a generic representation of kingship. A fragment of another eight-pointed star appears on the saddle cloth on the back of the horse.

The position of the symbolic device on the back of the horse seems to reflect an ancient habit very diffused in the Iranian world and well-

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<sup>27</sup> On the capitals at Tāq-e Bostān, see Lushey; Moradi.

<sup>28</sup> Judith Lerner kindly informed me that the two curls at the base of each wing represent a late Sasanian trait. For similar specimens in Sasanian stuccoes, see Kröger, 1982: figs. 138. a-e.

<sup>29</sup> Harper and Meyers, p. 75; De Jong, 2003.

<sup>30</sup> Ebn Khaldun, III, p. 168; Christensen, pp. 202-4.

known since the beginning of the Sasanian dynasty. Probably, in Sasanian royal conception, this position behind the riding king of kings was considered to be indicative not only of the “ideal” heavenly glory but also as real symbols of rank.<sup>31</sup> Some Sasanian rock carvings at Naqsh-e Rostam near Persepolis represent the king of kings fighting with an enemy while a standing or a riding person behind him holds a banner with both hands.<sup>32</sup> The position of this person is unnatural, because he is represented standing impassibly behind his king despite the dramatic battle scene. In the Benaki textile as well, the attendant behind the main figure seems to be floating in the air, or as if standing on the back of the horse; unfortunately, the poor condition of the textile in this section does not provide room for any additional comments.

The fragment of the Benaki Museum is probably contemporary with the reliefs at Tāq-e Bostān; in fact, the royal figure in the textile and the sculpture of the king in the bigger grotto have the same decoration on the garments. The central figure in the textile, however, does not bear any weapon in his hands, and his bow is held by the servant in front of him according to a scheme similar to the one at Tāq-e Bostān in the board hunting panel. Here an attendant (smaller than the king) is offering an arrow to the main character of the composition. Such an unusual setting is completely unknown in Sasanian art except at Tāq-e Bostān. One might observe that the absence of the weapon points out the divine nature of the main figure on the Benaki textile since, in Sasanian art (especially rock carvings), the gods do not wear weapons.<sup>33</sup> So, the identification with the god Mithra proposed by A. Apostolaki could be convincing except for the fact that an object that can be considered a quiver appears at the flank of the figure in question.

This narrative textile and its technique (embroidery) point out a tapestry. Narrative scenes with definite Iranian subjects appear in textile fragments that had been part of a pair of trousers recovered at Antinoe and probably dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 9).<sup>34</sup> The origins of these fragmentary trousers are probably to be sought in Coptic art, although a Sasanian model (a tapestry or a painting) could also be supposed to have existed.<sup>35</sup> Thus, it is not possible to rule out for the Benaki textile the possibility of use as well as a decoration for garments.

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<sup>31</sup> Compareti, forthcoming.c.

<sup>32</sup> von Gall, 1990, fig. 4.

<sup>33</sup> Vanden Berghe, 1993: 74.

<sup>34</sup> According to some scholars, the battle scene represented on these fragments could even be an episode of the war between the army of Khosrow I and the Aksumite: Bénazeth, 1991.

<sup>35</sup> On Sasanian elements in Coptic art see: Badaway, 1987.

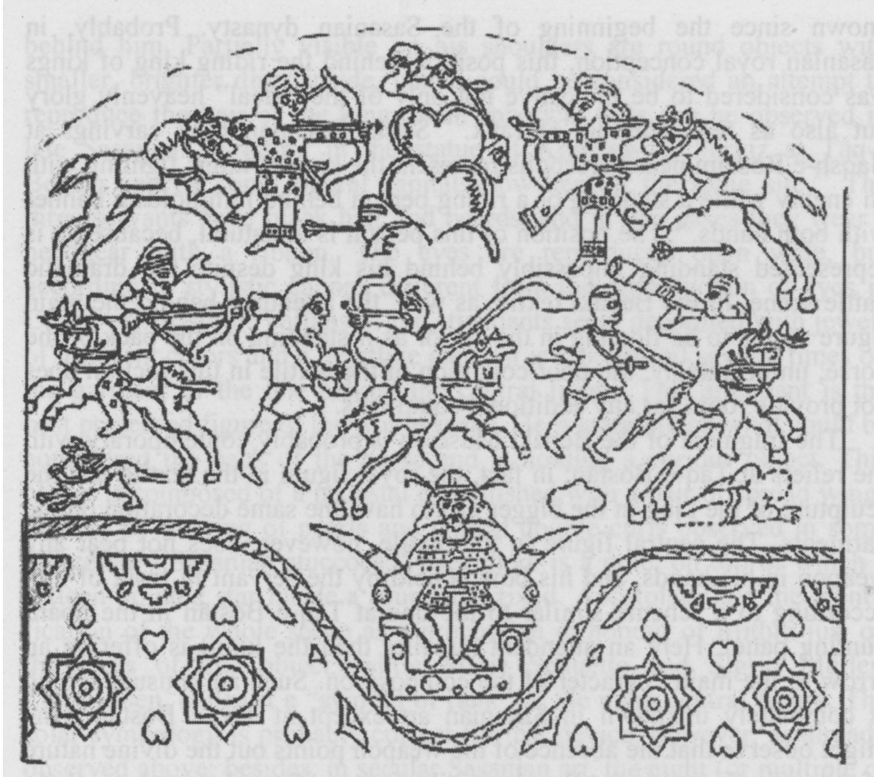


Fig. 9. Textile fragment (Louvre and Musée historique des Tissus, Lyon); after Bénazeth, Fig. 6.

The argument of the present paper focused mainly on the Benaki textile fragment, because, although this is probably a late Sasanian specimen, its origins are clearly rooted in the pre-Islamic Persian artistic traditions. Other fragmentary textiles (from Egypt?) belonging to various collections have just started to be studied. In particular, one previously unknown woollen and cotton fragment dated to the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century and kept in the Benaki Museum (inventory 7213), was presented to the public on the occasion of a recent exhibition.<sup>36</sup> The embroidery clearly shows a figure (most likely a male one) wearing a caftan and bringing a cup to his chest with his right hand, while the left hand is holding a very thin bottle. There is no doubt about the Iranian character of the figure but, on mere technical basis, the experts dated it to the post-Sasanian period.

Unfortunately, all these most interesting fragmentary textiles considered here are late Sasanian or early Islamic, and in no way can they be

<sup>36</sup> Catalogue Paris, 2002: cat. 130. For a presentation of many other specimens, mainly from Antinoe, displaying Iranian features, see: Del Francia Barocas, 1998.

considered to be a production typical of the central court of Seleucia-Ctesiphon. This is clearly an evidence of the fortune of the Sasanian decorative elements, which were maintained in Persian manufactures after the fall of the dynasty, but it does not shed much light on the study of Sasanian iconography itself.

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# The Peacock in *Nahj al-Balāgha* and Near Eastern Religious Traditions

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Since ancient times the image of the peacock has played an important role in the Near Eastern religious systems. It has symbolised immortality, beauty, splendour, and light. The 5<sup>th</sup>-century Armenian thinker Yeznik of Koghbatsi, for instance, when speaking about the Old Iranian religion, says that Ahriman, in order to prove that he is not unable but rather unwilling to do good, created the peacock. "And what is more wonderful than the peacock!?" (pp. 97-98). The passage shows on one side, the cultic nature of the bird in the Old Iranian religion, and on the other, its ambiguous character. It is compared to light, praised for its beauty; yet, it is created by the evil Ahriman.

In mediaeval Islam the peacock symbolized beauty, being depicted as a marvellous creature of God. According to one Islamic tradition, it was God's favourite bird and lived in Paradise, but was expelled from there due to its arrogance. As a punishment, God made his feet ugly and told the Serpent to guard the door of Paradise so that the Peacock would not enter it (Asatrian and Poladian, p. 134). This ugly aspect of peacock's appearance has been reflected in Sa'di's following verse:

طاووس را به نقش و نگاري كه هست  
همه تحسین کنند و او خجل از پای زشت خویش

Everybody praises the peacock for his its beauty, but he is ashamed of his ugly legs. (Cited in Asatrian, and Arakelova, p. 26.)

In his *Manteq al-tayr*, the poet Farid al-Din 'Attār attributes the expulsion of the peacock from the Paradise to its association with the Serpent and the latter's deceit:

یار شد با من به يك جا مار زشت      تا بیفتادم بخواري از بهشت  
(‘Attār, 1974, p. 53)

'Attār describes the peacock also as an embodiment of beauty, as a heavenly creature. It admires its appearance, saying in the beginning of the same poem:

بعد از آن طاوس آمد ز رنگار  
نقش هر پرش نه صد بل صد هزار  
چون عروسی جلوه کردن ساز کرد  
هر پر او جلوه ای آغاز کرد  
گفت تا نقاش غیبم نقش بست  
چینیانرا شد قلم انگشت دست  
(‘Attār, 1974, p. 52)

Elsewhere he says:

ای جلوه گر عالم طاوس جمال تو سرسبزی و شیرنگی وصف خط و خال تو  
(‘Attār, 1966, p. 558)

The classical Persian literature abounds in phrases made with the element *tāvūs* to symbolize the sun, which is referred to by metaphors such as *tāvūs-e falak*, *tāvūs-e zarrin*, *tāvūs-e sharghi*, *tāvūs-e zarrīn-bāl*, *tāvūs-e mashreq-kharām*, *tāvūs-e-ruz*, etc. (‘Attār, 1974, p. 105: ‘Afifī, s.v. *طاوس*). In this connection it should be noted that in the Near Eastern traditions the images of the bird and sun since Palaeolite have always had similar symbolism, and had very often substituted each other. A good example is the Phoenix, which in some Near Eastern myths has symbolized the sun. The epithets *tāvūs-e ‘arsh*, *tāvūs-e malāyek* were used for Gabriel (Golan, pp. 97-103); conversely, in the quoted poem from *Manteq al-tayr*, the peacock refers to itself as the Gabriel of birds (*Jabril-e morghān*; ‘Attār, 1974, p. 53). The heavenly nature of the peacock is shown in other phases such as *tāvūs-e qods* (‘Afifī, s.v.).

The stories of the tragic events (death of the Prophet, the assassinations of ‘Omar, ‘Othmān, and ‘Ali) that are said to have coincided with significant moments in the life of the famous singer Toways (lit: little peacock) may have had something to do with the peacock being considered as the harbinger of tragedies.<sup>1</sup> The so-called “open-eye” in the peacock’s feathers, which denoted bad fortune, is another evidence of this bird’s ambiguous character, mostly found in the European tradition (Radford and Radford, s.v.).

The peacock, finally, appears to be the most important character in the Yezidi pantheon. He is the demiurge of the Yezidi religion, having assisted God, according to some Yezidi traditions, in creating the

<sup>1</sup> The story of this Toways is reported by the 13<sup>th</sup> century Arab lexicographer Ibn Mandhur in his *Lisān al-‘Arab* (s.v. *طاوس*) as a man, “ضرب به المثل في الشوم”, i.e. an example for denoting disaster. Toways is said to be a “*mokhannath*” (hermaphrodite), living in Madina, to whom the following words are ascribed:

يا اهل المدينة! توقعوا خروج الدجال ما دمت بين ظهرانكم:

“Oh, ye, People of Madina! Beware of the advent of the Antichrist whilst I am amongst you!” “For the day I die,” he continues, “you will be safe, because I was born the night when the Prophet, may God pray upon him, died. And was weaned the day Abu Bakr died, and reached virility the day ‘Omar was killed, and married the day ‘Othman was murdered, and I fathered a child the day of ‘Ali’s murder.”

universe (Müller, pp. 368-73; Asatrian and Arakelova, pp. 1-36; Wilson, pp. 45-46).

## II

The image of the peacock is, to the best of my knowledge, most thoroughly presented in sermon number 165 of *Nahj al-balāgha*, the collection of sermons, sayings, and letters compiled by the 10<sup>th</sup> century Shi'ite poet from Baghdad, Sharif al-Razi, and ascribed to Imam 'Alī b. Abi Tāleb (pp. 310-16).

The sermon starts with a description of creation, passing then to the birds, and describing the various types of them. After depicting all the possible types of birds, the author then refers to peacock as

و من أعجبها خلقًا الطاووس الذي أقامه في أحكم تعديل, و نصدّ ألوانه في أحسن تنضيد.

Among them the most amazing by the way of creation is peacock, which God has created in the most symmetrical moderateness, and arranged its hues in the best arrangement (p. 312; translations are quoted from the published edition with very minor changes).

The author uses various similes in describing the bird. Depicting its tail, he says in astonishment:

تخال قصبه مداري من فضة، و ما أنبت عليها من عجيب داراته و شموسه، خالص العقيان  
وفلذ الزبرجد

You would imagine his feathers to be sticks made of silver, and the wonderful circles and sun-shaped feathers growing thereupon, as pure gold and pieces of green emerald.

Further, the bird is likened to flowers growing in spring:

فإن شَبّهته بما أنبتت الأرض، قلت: جنى جني من زهرة كل ربيع.

If you liken him to anything growing on the land you would say that it is a bouquet of flowers collected every spring.

The author compares the appearance of the peacock to exquisite garments and adornments.

و إن ضاهيته بالملابس فهو كموشي الخلل أو كمونق عصب اليمن

If you liken him to clothes, then he is like printed apparels or amazing variegated sheets of Yemen.

و إن شاكلته بالحلي، فهو كفصوص ذات ألوان، قد نطقت باللجين المكال.

If you liken him to ornaments then he is like gems of different colors girded by means of studded silver.<sup>2</sup>

The sermon contains a scrupulous description of the peacock's neck.

و له في موضع العُرف قنزعة خضراء مُوشاة.

In the place of its mane there is a bunch of green variegated feathers.

و مخرج عنقه كالإبريق، و مغزها إلى حيث بطنه كصبغ الوسمة اليمانية، أو كحريرة مُلبسة  
مرآة ذات صقال، و كآته متلفح بمعجر أسحم.

Its neck begins in the shape of a goblet and its stretch up to its belly is like the basma of Yemen in color or like the silk cloth put on a polished mirror, and he looks as if it has been covered with black veil.

And “there is hardly a hue from which it has not taken a bit and improved it further by regular polish, lustre, silken brightness and brilliance.”

و قلّ صبغ إلا و قد أخذ منه بقسط، و علاه بكثرة صقاله و بريقه، و بصيص ديباجه و رونقه.

The author then describes how marvellously the feathers of the peacock fall and grow again, without breaking the order of the previous texture:

و قد ينحسر من ريشه، و يعري من لباسه، فيسقط تترّي، و ينبت تباعاً، فينحتّ من قصبه  
إنحناّت أوراق الأغصان، ثم يتلاحق نامياً حتى يعود كهياته قبل سقوطه، لا يخالف سالف  
ألوانه، و لا يقع لون في غير مكانه.

It also sheds its plumage and puts off its dress. They all fall away and grow again. They fall away from the feather sticks like the falling of leaves from twigs and then begin to join together and grow till they return to the position that existed before their falling away. The new hues do not change from the previous ones, nor does any colour occur in other than its own place.<sup>3</sup>

In the passage with the above-mentioned similes we see lexical and semantic parallelism between its members. The grammatical and

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<sup>2</sup> Nahj al-balāgha, p. 312.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 314.

semantic independence of the first sentence is a means to concentrate the audience attention on the passage that follows:

تخال قصبه مداري من فضة، و ما أنبت عليها من عجيب داراته و شموسه، خالص العقيان و  
فلذ الزبرجد.<sup>4</sup>

Further we have three passages having a lexically and semantically similar beginning:

و ان شاكلته، و ان ضاهيته، فان شبهته و ان فبان، all of these meaning: “if you liken him.” And all these have a similar beginning: *و ان* or *فبان*.

There are examples of parallelism elsewhere too. For instance, after describing the creation of the birds and animals and starting the depiction of the peacock, and after saying that “the most amazing among the birds by the way of creation is peacock,” the author goes on to say: *الذي أقامه في أحسن تنضيد* and *في أحكم تعديل*. Here the phrases *في أحسن تنضيد* and *في أحكم تعديل* are parallel. The parallelism here is lexical, grammatical, and semantic. The pairs *أحسن - أحكم* and *تنضيد - تعديل* are parallel in their grammatical form. Besides, the two phrases are similar semantically.

Another example of this grammatical and semantic parallelism is used when describing the tail of the peacock:

بذنب ... يختال بالوانه، و يميمس بزيفانه.

It feels proud over the hues of its tail and swaggers with its movements.

### III

The author admires the peacock's sexuality and passion. There is a description of how the bird copulates with its female:

إذا درج إلي الأنتي نشر [ذنبه] من طيه و سما به مطلا علي رأسه يؤرّ بملاقحة أرّ الفحول  
المغتلمة للضراب.

When it strolls towards its female, it spreads out its folded tail and raises it over its head it leaps towards the female for impregnation like lustful energetic males.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The role of the independence of the first line as a means to concentrate the audience's attention on the parallelism of the following lines is noted by Roman Jacobson, on the example of Russian folk poetry, in his article “Grammatical Parallelism and Its Russian Facet” (in Jacobson, p. 157).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 312.

It is interesting to note that the way it covers its female is compared to that of cocks.

يفضي كإفضاء الديكة...

“It copulates like cocks...”

The presentation of the peacock in some traditions, such as Yezidism, bears certain traces of the image of the cock. Here also, being presented as a passionate and lustful bird, the peacock is likened to this bird, also symbolising passion and sexual power. Qazvini, for instance, says that if one anoints his genitals with cock’s blood mixed with honey and exposed to fire, his sexual potency will increase. Eating its meat, according to him, has the same effect (Qazvini, p. 434).

A few observations on this matter should be made. Mircea Eliade, in his *The Forge and the Crucible* says that people often sexualize the world around them since sexuality is a feature of the “true, live reality” (p. 157). Therefore, plants and many inanimate objects are sexualized, being thus raised to the level of the real being, to the level of men. Eliade does not speak of animals or birds. However, stressing the sexuality of the peacock (and the cock) might also mean lifting these to a higher level, to the supernatural one, since to the religious mind, after the inanimate nature, there comes the level of men, which is followed by the supernatural one. Moreover, depicting peacock as a male bird, albeit not denying the existence of its female, might mean ascribing to it strength, aggressiveness, dominance. In a monotheistic religion such as Islam, with one single Realm of the Sacred, which is the exclusive preserve of the One Single God, for a creature, which is in some way connected to the Supernatural, such activeness and aggressiveness could mean having ties with the Evil, since being active and independent with regard to the Supernatural would also mean opposing it. For instance, such a bird as the dove, known for its kindness, or, to put it in another way, its passiveness, is viewed in another monotheistic religion as Christianity, as a heavenly symbol, the symbol of the Holy Spirit (Jack Tressider, s.v.). It has relatively little role for itself, being merely the messenger of God. Such is also the image of other heavenly beings, both in Islam and Christianity, such as, for instance, the angels. They also mainly do what God orders them to do. Therefore, if we assume, basing on what was said, that the capacity or intention to act independently with regard to the Sacred means being evil, or being at least to some extent related to the evil powers, then, the peacock should be regarded as not only the embodiment of splendor and beauty, but also as a being that in some way has intercourse with malign powers (an indication of which are the passages of Yeznik and ‘Attār).

The author of the sermon, by the way, rejects the view that the peacock impregnates the female with a tear that flows from its eye and is swallowed by the female, thus impregnating it. This is yet another testimony of the peacock's supernatural potencies as viewed by the people of the time.

The ugliness of the peacock's feet is another hint of its affinity with dark powers.

يقهقه ضاحكا لجمال سربا له و أصابيح وشاحه، فإذا رمي ببصره الي قوائمه، زقا معولا بصوت يكاد يبين عن استغاثته و يشهد بصادق توجهه.

[The peacock] laughs admiring the handsomeness of its dress and the hues of its necklace... But when it casts its glance at its legs it cries loudly with a voice which is in an indication of its call for help and displays its true grief.<sup>6</sup>

And the reason for his sorrow is the following:

لأن قوائمه حُمش كقوائم الديكة الخلاسية. و قد نجمت من ظنوب ساقه صيصية خفية.

because its legs are thin like the legs of Indo-Persian cross-bred cocks. And at the end of its shin there is a thin thorn....<sup>7</sup>

These lines are surprisingly similar to those written by 'Attār, mentioned in the beginning of the paper (cf. Asatrian, G., V Arakelova, p. 26).

Thus, the evidence of the peacock's image in *Nahja l-balāgha* once again shows the importance of the image of this bird in the Near Eastern religious tradition. The very fact that its description and, in fact, the praise of this bird are given in a book ascribed to such a person as 'Alī b. Abi Tāleb, whoever the real author of the sermon may be. This shows how significant this character has been. All the more so, that it is done in such a genre as a sermon, the intention of which is directly to impress the audience, and is not given within the context of a larger narrative. In fact, this sermon is in some way unique for the book in which it is contained. *Nahja l-balāgha* contains mainly orations of political, moral, religious content, or instructions to local rulers, and a topic like the present one is indeed very unusual for it.

<sup>6</sup> *Nahj al-balāgha*, pp. 313-14.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 314.

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# The Oldest Known Prose Text in Modern Tabari: A Translation from *Tufān al-Bokā'*

HABIB BORJIAN

The Tabari language, spoken in the Caspian province of Māzandarān in northern Persia, can be categorized into two historical periods: pre-modern and modern. The pre-modern period corresponds to the texts written from the 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries and those of the ensuing centuries but not yet dated or studied.<sup>1</sup> Modern Tabari, also called Māzandarāni, is known since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when several European travelers, scholars, and diplomats undertook the task of documenting the language. The resulting materials are substantial, among which stands out *Kanz al-asrār*, which includes several collections of verses attributed to the legendary Tabari poet Amir Pāzvāri,<sup>2</sup> compiled by Boris Andreevich Dorn (1860-66). Several other collections of popular poems and songs as well as prose texts and individual sentences and words were published by Aleksander Borejko Chodźko (1842), Il'ya Nikolaevich Berezin (1853), B. A. Dorn (1865), G. V. Melgunov (1868), and Jacques de Morgan (1904).<sup>3</sup> From the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century has also survived a versified Tabari-Persian dictionary, which was edited by Sādeq Kiā (1947) and published as *Vāžanāma-ye ṭabari*.<sup>4</sup> Except for the latter work, none of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Tabari materials have yet received the scholarly attention they deserve for their linguistic merits.<sup>5</sup> This article is one of the series that study 19<sup>th</sup>-century Tabari texts.<sup>6</sup>

A pioneer in the study of Modern Tabari, Il'ya Berezin (1818-96) was the Russian orientalist known for his works in Iranian, Arabic, and Turkic philology and dialectology as well as on Mongol history. He studied at the oriental faculty of the University of Kazan with Mirza Aleksandr Kazem Beg. After graduation, Berezin went on a scholarly voyage to Transcaucasia, Persia, and the Near East (1842-45). His two-

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<sup>1</sup> Borjian, 2004a.

<sup>2</sup> Borjian and Borjian.

<sup>3</sup> For an overview of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Tabari collections, see Borjian 2004a.

<sup>4</sup> See H. Borjian, "Nesāb-e ṭabari revisited."

<sup>5</sup> Geiger (1898-1901), however, used some of these materials in his historical-comparative study of the Caspian dialects (Tabari, Gilaki, Tāleshi, Tāti, Semnāni) collectively.

<sup>6</sup> For the study of other 19<sup>th</sup>-century Tabari texts, see Borjian, 2006a, b; idem, "Two Mazandarani texts," forthcoming.

volume travelogue (1850-52) reports on customs, religions, laws, culture, architecture, and inscriptions of the countries he visited, with many drawings of landscapes and towns. From 1946, Berezin taught at the University of Kazan and then moved to the Oriental faculty in Saint Petersburg in 1855, where he held various academic and administrative positions.<sup>7</sup>

In his pioneering work *Recherche sur les dialectes persans*, Berezin studies the Iranian languages and dialects of Gilaki, Tāleshi, Tabari, Kurdish, Gabri, and the Caucasian Tāti. For Tabari, Berezin offers a grammar (I, pp. 75-99), a list of sentences (II, pp. 13-19), popular songs, including several *amiri* quatrains with French translation (II, pp. 57-72), and a Tabari translation of a section from *Tufān al-bokā* 'Storm of weep' (II, pp. 72-79). In part 3 of *Recherche sur les dialectes persans*, we find a combined glossary of the dialects studied.<sup>8</sup> Although the materials Berezin gathered were limited and not infrequently inaccurate, his contribution, together with Chodźko's (1842), which Berezin cites occasionally, was pioneering in Iranian dialect studies.

## THE TEXT

The Tabari text in Berezin's *Recherche* is the oldest known prose document in New Tabari and, therefore, it is of considerable dialectological interest. It is a translation from Persian of an extract from *Tufān al-bokā* (Appendix I). This article intends to identify the grammatical traits of the Tabari text (Appendix II) and compile a glossary for it.

Compiled by Mirzā Ebrāhim Jowhari in 1834 in the genre of *marṣiya* or *rowza-khvāni*, *Tufān al-bokā* became quickly admired among the Shi'ite literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup> Having found the work highly popular, Berezin perhaps commissioned a Mazandarani scribe to help him translate a dramatic section of the book into Tabari. There is no

<sup>7</sup> For a biography of Berezin, see Calmard.

<sup>8</sup> See Borjian, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> *Marṣiya* 'lament' is a literary genre closely connected to *rowza-khvāni*, the denomination referring to public recitation of Hoseyn Vā'ez Kāshefis's *Rowzat al-shohadā*. The genre treats the central tragedy experienced by Shi'ite community, the martyrdom of third Imam, Hoseyn b. 'Ali, and his 72 companions at Karbalā', confronting the army of the Omayyid Caliphs. The episode translated into the Tabari language (Appendices I and II) narrates the final departure of 'Abbās, Hoseyn's brother, from the camp, leading to his ultimate demise. His sister Zeynab tries to prevent him leaving the tent. But 'Abbās becomes affected when he hears the thirsty Sekina, his infant niece, lamenting for water. He takes a sheepskin to fetch water from Euphrates, while the family of Hoseyn tries to stop him from taking the risk of crossing enemy lines. Having finally acquired permission of Imam Hoseyn, 'Abbās sets off on horseback, while looking back at his brother who is bidding him farewell in tragic verses.

mention, however, what dialect of Tabari the text reflects; yet it can be deduced from its linguistic traits that the dialect belonged to central-western Māzandarān, most likely the town or environs of Bārforush, which was the chief commercial center of the province at the time. Several lexical and grammatical difficulties in the text were overcome by drawing upon the other Tabari materials provided by Berezin as well as other available Tabari texts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

*Transcription.* The Tabari text of *Tufān al-bokā'* appears in the standard Perso-Arabic script with occasional diacritic marks, but they are used neither completely nor consistently. Many words are spelled variously, e.g. for “water” we have the spellings *ا*, *ا*, and *ا*, corresponding to the possible pronunciations *ū/u*, *ō/o*, and *ā*, respectively. Berezin has offered transcription for only a few words in the footnotes, but these are not very helpful in settling the phonological problems of the dialect in which the Tabari text is written. In order to overcome the problem of a group of uncertain cases, I have used in the transcription a common Tabari vowel absent in the Persian orthography; it is shown as *ə*, which represents a phoneme with a broad range of pronunciation throughout Māzandarān, varying between the “central vowel” [ə] itself, [ɛ], and [æ]. Thus, the symbol *ə* assists us in bringing together the otherwise diverse phonology of Tabari dialects and providing a remedy for many ambiguous spellings in the aged text under investigation.

*Pronouns.* The personal pronouns of the text are shown in Table 1. The distinction between the direct and oblique cases for the third person singular appears to be only in the higher front vowel used in the oblique, which probably would be pronounced *ʌ*. An interesting trait is the clear distinction between oblique and accusative cases in the first person singular: *mi* vs. *māni*, with nasalization of the latter. Yet another case emerges by suffixing to the oblique case the postposition *-vəsər* ‘for’ (as in *tivəsər* “for you”; l. 38),<sup>10</sup> the form used today in certain Tabari dialects.<sup>11</sup> Note also that the ablative case with *-jāl/-jə* is absent in the entire text. As for the reflexive pronoun, the Tabari-specific *ši* as well as *xod* (from Persian *kh<sup>v</sup>od*) are both used.

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<sup>10</sup> *l.* and *ll.* correspond to the line number(s) in the Tabari text as shown in Appendix II.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Borjian, 2004b.

TABLE 1: Personal Pronouns<sup>12</sup>

	Direct	Oblique- possessive	Accusative- dative
sg. 1	<i>mon</i>	<i>mī/me</i>	<i>māni</i>
2	<i>tu</i>	<i>ti</i>	?
3	<i>ve (və?)</i>	<i>vi/ve</i>	?
pl. 1	<i>*amā</i>	<i>*áme</i>	<i>amārā</i>
2	<i>*šumā</i>	<i>*šúme</i>	<i>*šumārā</i>
3	<i>*vāšun</i>	<i>*vešúne</i>	<i>*vāšunrā</i>

*Verb stems.* The present and past stems are related in several ways. The old pairs are retained in the verbs such as *kən-/kərd-* (pres./past stems) “do” More recently formed past stems derive from present stems plus *-Vss-* (e.g. *gər(d)-ess-* “turn”, *āšn-uss-* “hear”) or *-i* (e.g. *kāš-i-* “drag”, *puš-i-* “put on,” *ras-i-* “reach,” *tərs-i-* “be afraid”). There are several examples of the causative construction, attained by suffixing *-Vn(n)-* to the present stem of the non-causative verb; past stems then are all formed by adding the past maker *-i-*. For instance, the present stem *kāš-ən(n)-* ‘drag,’ and the past stems: *neš-ānn-i-* “place,” *puš-ānn-i-* “put on,” *gərd-ān(n)-i-* “turn.” Moreover, there are verbs such as *vin-(d)i-* “see” and *šu-/burd-* “go,” for which the present and past stems have distinct roots.

There remain several problems to be solved. The past stems *vāxt-* “lose” and *rixt-* “spill” are quite unexpected in Tabari, which characteristically reduces the old cluster *\*-xt-* to *-t-*, as attested in *tad-* “run.” Dialect-specifics are the present stems *or-* “bring” (for the more common *iār-*)<sup>13</sup> and *āmu-* “come,” and the past stem *i-* “see” (otherwise *di-*).<sup>14</sup> So is the present stem *gu-* “say,” if *na-gu* “say not!” (l. 23) is not simply a Persianism. The spelling *ده* (*de-n<sup>h</sup>hu-*?) for the verb “to put, to toss” is attested repeatedly in the text (ll. 28, 36, 37, 44, 50), while Berezin provides in a footnote (p. 79) the transcription *Dinguoueo*, suggesting the well-known Tabari verb *d-ingu-* “put.” Another unusual form is *hādā* (ll. 37, 50) for the expected *hā-dā-ə* or *hā-dā-ə* “he gave.”<sup>15</sup> The present stem *mu-* or *mun-* or *mā-* “go by” (l. 56) is obscure to me.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> The words preceded by asterisks are taken from Berezin I, pp. 81-83.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *ār-* (Berezin, I, p. 92, no. 3).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Berezin, I, p. 92, no. 5.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *ho-/hā-dā-* (Berezin, I, p. 93, no. 10).

<sup>16</sup> But cf. *hā-maj-/mat-* ‘walk’ (Berezin, I, p. 94), *da-mat-* ‘step over’ (Kiā, no. 358).

*Verb affixes.* The preverbs attested in the text are *hā-* (as in *hā-kārd-* “do,” *hā-dā-* “give,” *hā-it-* “get,” *hā-r-eš-* “look”) and *dV-* (as in *da-kārd-* “scatter,” *da-kot-* “fall,” *dā-vāxt-* “lose,” *da-gārd-* “turn,” *d-ingu-* “place”). Preverbs occasionally expand or specify the stem lexically, for instance, *hā-kārd-* “do” vs. *da-kārd-* “scatter”; the stem *kāt-*, however, appears in the rhyming position of lines 1 through 9 interchangeably with or without the preverb *da-* (see Glossary s.v. *kot-/kāt-*); and *ba-it-ə* and *hā-it-ə* are both used as “he grabbed.” Preverbs appear in Tabari verb conjugation in the subjunctive, imperative, and preterit, which, in the absence of a preverb, employ *bə-* as the modal prefix.

The three basic sets of personal endings are shown in Table 2. Set I is used for the indicative present, II for the preterit and the imperfect and for the present of the substantive verbs, and III for the subjunctive present.

TABLE 2: Personal Endings<sup>17</sup>

Sets	I	II	III
sg. 1	<i>-mə</i>	<i>-mə</i>	<i>-əṃ</i>
2	<i>-ni</i>	<i>-i</i>	<i>*-i</i>
3	<i>*-nə</i>	<i>-(y)ə</i>	<i>-(y)e</i>
pl. 1	<i>*-mi</i>	<i>*-mi</i>	<i>*-im</i>
2	<i>*nəni</i>	<i>*-ni</i>	<i>-in</i>
3	<i>*nənə</i>	<i>-nə</i>	<i>*-ən</i>

For Set I endings, only the 1st and 2nd persons singular are attested in the text. Interesting is the 1st person singular, *-mə*, as in in *šū-mə* “I go, I am going” (l. 38),<sup>18</sup> for which most Tabari dialects use *-mmə*, with gemination of the nasal phoneme. The forms *or-mə* “I bring” (l. 38) and *dār-mə* “I have” (l. 29), however, are common in most Tabari dialects, according to the rule governing the stem ending in the liquid consonant *r*.<sup>19</sup>

*The verbs to be and to become.* The copula is formed by suffixing to nominals or to the verb stem *hass-* the set *-mə, -i, -ə* “am, are, is.” (Note that these are the past-tense endings for other verbs, as shown in Table 2.) Its present subjunctive stem is *vo-* (ll. 7, 27, 43). The past stem of “to

<sup>17</sup> The endings preceded by asterisks are taken from Berezin, I, pp. 85ff.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *šū-mə* “I go” (Chodźko, p. 575, no. 11; Berezin, I, pp. 91f., no. 2; Humand, p. 34). It seems that the group I ending for the first persons singular and plural were respectively *-mə* and *-mi* for this dialect.

<sup>19</sup> Borjian, 2005.

be” may be deduced from the infinitive *pidā na-vi-ən* “to be unseen” (l. 7) as *vi-*.<sup>20</sup> It follows that the 3rd singular preterit should be *vi-ə*, but in the text we have the unverifiable orthography <v-h> in *garm-e hāfez* ~ ‘he was engaged in saying farewell’ (l. 18). The existential verb, with the present stem *dar-* does not occur in the text.

The orthography of the text is extremely poor in demonstrating the conjugations of the verb “become.”<sup>21</sup> We have the following:

<b-v-y-m> = *ba-vi-m?* “that I become” (l. 57)

<b-v-h> = *ba-v-ə?* “it became” (ll. 3, 7, 8, 11, 23, 30, 50, 51)

<n-v-h> *na-v-ə?* “it became not” (l. 29)

<b-v-y-h> “it has become?” (in the participle form *loš-əš xošk* ~, for Pers. *khoshkida lab-ash*; l. 32), “that it becomes” (in *rušan* ~, for Pers. *rowshan shavad*; l. 52), “that you become/go?” (in *to agar bələnd* ~, for Pers. *to agar boland ravi*; l. 56).

*Verbal nouns.* The infinitive is the preverb plus the past stem suffixed by *-ən*: *da-kət-ən* (l. 16), *entehā ba-rasi-ən* “to reach the end” (l. 16). The past participle is constructed similarly except with the suffix *-ə*, which can be omitted optionally: *ba-sut-ə* (l. 18), *ba-kəši-ə* (l. 25). The text is rich in compound adjectives with the past participle, e.g.

Tabari	Persian	English
<i>larz kərdə</i> (l. 18)	<i>sarāsima</i>	shaken, confused
<i>ū hākərdə</i> (l. 21)	<i>godākhta</i>	melted
<i>zolm bakāši</i> (l. 25)	<i>setam-kashida</i>	suffered
<i>bardāgər(d)essə baxt</i> (l. 26)	<i>bargashta-bakht</i>	miserable, ill-fated
<i>dir šudə</i> (l. 51)	<i>mahjur</i>	distanced
<i>ta 'assor *hākərdə</i> (l. 56)	<i>mo 'asser</i>	effective, striking

## GLOSSARY

Excluded are most lexemes that are either the same as in Persian or merely indicate a slightly deviating pronunciation of Persian words. Verbs are listed under present and/or past stems, separated by a semicolon, followed by the conjugations attested in the text. Numbers in parentheses refer to line numbers of the text.

<sup>20</sup> The common past stem of “to be” is *bi-* in Tabari.

<sup>21</sup> The verb “to become” in Tabari appears in three basic stems: the present indicative *bu-vu-*, the subjunctive *ba-vu-*, and the past *bai-*.

## Abbreviations

aux.	auxiliary verb
c.	causative
pers.	person(al)
Pers.	Persian
postp.	postposition
p. p.	past participle
pres.	present
pron.	pronoun
sg.	singular
Tab.	Tabari
v.	verb

**ahldār** (?) consciousness (for Pers. *hush*) (32)

**āmu-** (v.) come — **āmu-yə** he would come (53), **b-āmu-yə** he came (38)

**aser** tears (11, 24); cf. *asri*

**āšnus-** (v.) hear — **b-āšnus-ə** he heard (24)

**asp** horse (10, 11)

**asri** tears (31); cf. *aser*

**bardāgər(d)ess-** → *gər(d)ess-*

**baut-** → *gu-*

**bərār** brother (5, 6, 20, 45, 49, 51, 52)

**bəvafā** loyal (17)

**bur-**; **burd-** → *šu-*

**burmā** weep(ing) (24, 30)

**češ** eye (2, 9, 10, 11, 20, 24, 44, 51)

**\*dā-** (v.) give — **hā-d[ā]-ə** he gave (37, 50)

**da-kərd-** (v.) scatter — **\*da-kərd-i** (for Pers. *afshāndi*) you sprinkled (46)

**damāl** after, following (53)

**dār-** (v.) have — **dār-mə** I have (29)

**de-n<sup>h</sup>hu-** (v.) place, toss — **de-nhu-mə** I threw (28), **de-nhu-yə/d-ingu-yə**<sup>22</sup> he threw, he put (36, 37, 44, 50)

**dī-** → *vin-*

**dir** far (51)

**-e**<sup>23</sup> oblique marker (*passim*); *ezāfa* (*passim*); cf. *-i*

**əmā-rə** (pers. pron.) accusative form of *əmā* 'we' (43)

**eš-** (v.) look — **hā-r-eš** look! (26)

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Spelled <d<sup>e</sup>-n<sup>h</sup>-v-y-h> in the script, but Berezin provides the transcription *Dinguoueo* (p. 78, fn. 4).

<sup>23</sup> Not consistently marked in the text. Somewhat surprisingly, <-h> is also used to signify *ezāfa*: e.g. نويته in *az pidā-naviān-e ū* "from scarcity of water" (l. 7).

**(g)it-** (v.) get — **ba-it-ə** he grabbed (33), *yād* ~ he learned (31), **hā-it-ə** he got (37, 45)

**geli** neck (42)

**gərdānni-** (v. c.) turn — **dā-gərdān(n)i-ə** he turned (51)

**gərdess-** (v.) turn — **bar-dā-gər(d)ess-ə** (p. p.) turned around (26)

**gəzər-** (v.) pass, elapse — **bə-g<sup>3</sup>zər** pass! (56), **gəzər-ni** you (sg.) pass (55, 57, 58)

**gu-**; **ut-** (v.) say — **na-gu** say not! (23), **\*gu-ə** he says (54),<sup>24</sup> **ba-ut-ə** he said (3, 4, 19, 25, 37, 45)

**hāreš** → *eš-*

**hass-/ə-**, **vo-** (v.) be — **-əmə** am (34, 34), **hass-i** you are (20), **hass-ə** is (40, 42), **-ə** is (in *ki-ə* “who is” (3), *behtar-ə* “it is better” (27, 28), *zennə-ə* “is alive” (34), *dusti-ə* “it is friendship” (41)), **ni-ə** is not (5, 27); **vo-ye** that it be (for Pers. *bāshad*) (27, 43), **na-vo-ye** that it not be (28); <v-h> (**və**, **viə?**) he was (18)

**hel-** (v.) let — **be-hel** allow to go!, ignore! (26, 41); cf. *ne-i ezāfa* (14, 33, 41, 48); otherwise *-e*

**iārd-** → *or-*

**ingu-** → *den<sup>n</sup> hu-*

**it-** → *(g)it-*

**jin jinni** (1)

**jingə/jəngə** stack or heap of the harvest (Pers. *kherman*) (1, 36)

**kāme** — in ~ *bazu*ye “he hugged” (for Pers. *dar bar kashid*) (45)

**kaš** — in *kaš* [*bazu*]ə (for Pers. *dar bar kashid*) (19)

**kən-**; **kərd-** (v.) do — **na-kən** do not! (37), **kən-ə** he does (22); **hā-kərd-i** you did (47, 59), **hā-kərd-ə** he did (21, 35, 42, 44), **hā-kərd-ənə** they did (39), **hā-kərdə-əmə** (*sic!*)<sup>25</sup> I have done (22); **hā-kərd-ən** to do (35, 40), *piš* ~ to escort (53), **hā-kərd-ə** (p. p.) (56), **\*na-kərd-ə** (p. p.) (55); see also *da-kərd-*

**kəš-ənn-**; **kəši-** (v.) drag — **kəšən<sup>n</sup>-e** (causative form) that it takes (aux. in *enteqām* ~ that it avenges (22), *zolm-ba-kəši* (p. p.) suffered (25)

**kot-/kət-** (v.) fall — **ba-kot-ə** it fell (1, 3, 9, 12), **da-kot-ə** it fell (1, 2, 4-7, 13), *rāh dā-kot-ə* (50) he set off, **da-kət-ən** (for Pers. *tapidan*) to throb (16)

**ling** leg (44)

**loš** lip (32, 40)

**luš** corpse (2)

**māni** (pers. pron.) 1<sup>st</sup> pers. sg. accusative (cf. Pers. *marā*) (21, 35, 46, 47, 58)

**mərd-** (v.) die — **ba-mərd-ən** to die (28)

<sup>24</sup> Corrected for *gutə* in the text.

<sup>25</sup> Tabari has no perfect tense. The form *hā-kərdə-əmə* seems to be influenced by Persian *kārda-am* “I have done”

- mesevi**<sup>26</sup> equal (6, 20)  
**mi/me** (pers. pron.) my (6, 21, 34, 55)  
**mim** wax (20)  
**mon** (pers. pron.) I (22, 33)  
**mu-** or **mun-** (?) (v.) pass — **mu-ni** you pass by (for Pers. *mi-gozar-i*) (56)<sup>27</sup>  
**mudəm** (?) present, souvenir? (3)  
**ne-** (v.) let — **na-ne** do not let! (42); cf. *hel-*  
**nešānni-** (v. c.) place, seat — **\*nešānn<sup>i</sup>-i** you (sg.) placed (46)  
**n<sup>3</sup>višt-** (v.) write — **ba-nvišt-ənə** they wrote (17)  
**n<sup>e</sup>hu-** → *den<sup>e</sup>hu-*  
**ō** → *ū*  
**or-; iārd-** (v.) bring — **or-mə** I bring (38), **b-iārd-ən** to bring (41)  
**owsur** bridle (8)  
**per** father (34<sup>2</sup>)  
**pišvəyə** leader, imam (44)  
**pušānni-** (v. c.) put on, dress in — **ba-pušānni-ə** he put on (49)  
**puši-** (v.) put on — **ba-puši-ə** he wore (49)  
**rasi-** (v.) reach — **\*ba-rasi-ən** to reach (16)  
**-(r)ə** (postp.) accusative marker (cf. Persia *rā*) (19, 21)  
**rixt-** (v.) spill — **ba-rixt-ə** it showered (24)  
**rušnā** brightness (20)  
**saāt** time (17)  
**\*šənn-; \*šənni-**<sup>28</sup> (v.) spill — **\*bə-šənn-e** that he spills (31),<sup>29</sup> **\*bə-šənni-ə** he shed/spilled (3, 11)<sup>30</sup>  
**səvəi** separation (40)  
**ši** (pers. pron.) self, his, her, its (3, 9, 10, 37, 42, 43f., 47, 51)  
**šu-, bur-; burd-** (v.) go — **na-šu** go not! (23), **šu-mə** I go (38), **šu-ni** you (sg.) are going (59), **\*bur-əm** that I go (27); **burd-i** you (sg.) went (46, 48), **burd-ə** he went (32, 50)  
**sut-** (v.) burn — **ba-sut-əmə** I was burned (30), **ba-sut-ə** (p. p.) burnt (18)  
**tad-** (v.) run — **ba-tad-ə** he ran (18)  
**tal** bitter (22)  
**tašni** thirst (30)  
**tərsi-** (v.) be afraid — **ba-tərsi-ə** he was frightened (23)  
**ti** (pers. pron.) your (sg.), oblique form of *tu* (38)

<sup>26</sup> Cf. glossary in Berezin, III, p. 102.

<sup>27</sup> Spelled <m-ā-n-y> in the text, but transcribed *Mouni* in the footnote.

<sup>28</sup> The forms of the stems are inferred from the different spellings used in the text.

<sup>29</sup> The spelling <b<sup>3</sup>-š<sup>e</sup>-y-nn<sup>e</sup>-y<sup>3</sup>-h> in the script corresponds to the untenable form *ba-šinni-ə*, which carries a past stem (because of the formant -i-).

<sup>30</sup> Spelled <b-š-y-n<sup>e</sup>-h> and <b<sup>e</sup>-š<sup>o</sup>-v-nn<sup>e</sup>-y<sup>3</sup>-h>.

**tisā** empty (32)

**ti-vəsər** (pers. pron.) for you (38)

**tu** (pers. pron.) you (sg.) (6, 20, 57)

**ū/ō/ā** water (9, 21, 28, 32, 41, 42<sup>2</sup>, 43)

**ut-** → *gu-*

**uti** thus (Pers. *chonin*) (17)

**v-; šud-** (v.) become — <b-v-y-m> that I become (57), <b-v-h> it became (3, 7, 8<sup>2</sup>, 11, 23, 30, 50, 51), <n-v-h> it became not (29); <b-v-y-h> has become? (32), that it becomes (52), that you (sg.) become/go? (56); **šud-ə** (p. p.) (51)

**vačə** child (36)

**vāl** deformed, skew (42)

**-var** (postp.) toward (as in *mi* ~ “to me”) (55); cf. *-vār*

**-vār** (postp.) toward? (as in *čəš-e* ~ = Pers. *az pish-e chashm*) (9); cf. *var*

**vāxt-** (v.) lose — **də-vāxt-ə** he was defeated (21)

**ve/və** (?) (pers. pron.) he, it (32, 56)

**-vəsər** (postp.) for (in *ti* ~ “for you”) (38)

**vi/ve** (pers. pron.) his, her, its (11, 12, 51, 52)

**vin-**; **(d)i-** (v.) see — **ba-vin** see! (26, 42); **ba-i-ə** (?) he saw (52), **na-di-ə** he saw not (31), **na-i-ə** (?) he saw not (31)

**vo-** → *hass-*

**vong** cry, noise (29)

**xin** blood (1, 11, 16, 23, 46)

**xod** (pers. pron.) self (34, 43f., 47)

**xū** sleep (31)

**xunxāyəri** ransom (15)

**xuri** dear (31)

**xuš** kiss (37, 49)

**zennə** living (34)

**zu-** (v.) hit — **ba-zu-yə** (aux.) he hit (12, 45), *harf ba-zu-ən* (aux.) to speak (35)

## CONCLUSION

This paper glosses and analyses the oldest known prose text in modern Tabari, documented in the 1840s by the pioneering Orientalist and linguist Il'ya Berezin, who published the text in Perso-Arabic characters without linguistic comments. Although its vocabulary is largely that of modern Persian, the text is still of considerable interest to the Iranist for the lexical and morphological data it offers. The poor orthography of the text did not allow us to elucidate on all words and grammatical traits, some of which are perhaps already extinct. A number of problems

remain to be addressed: *mudem*? “souvenir”, the verb stems *denhu-* “place” and *mu-* or *mun-* “pass”, conjugations of “to be” and “to become”, among others.

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## APPENDIX I

## THE PERSIAN TEXT

- (1) چو بیرق از کف عباس نوجوان افتاد / شرر به خرمن سلطان انس و جان افتاد  
 (2) به خون دیده انجم طپید رایت مهر / که نعش صاحب رایت به خون طپان افتاد  
 (3) به عقل گفت او: اولاد آدم اول کیست / که ریخت خونس و مقاتل ارمغان افتاد؟  
 (4) جواب داد که اول حسین تشنه جگر / که همعنان به بلاهای ناگهان افتاد  
 (5) دلاوری نه چو فرزند بوترا ب دلیر / براندی نه چو عباس مهربان افتاد  
 (6) که ای برادر با جان برابر عباس / قسم به جان تو کاتش مرا به جان افتاد  
 (7) گل حیات شد از قحط آب پزمرده / بهار عمر در اندیشه خزان افتاد  
 (8) چه یافت رخصت میدان رزم چون زمام / گران رکاب شد اما سبک عنان افتاد  
 (9) ز پیش چشم برادر برای آب حیات / جدا چو خضر ز اسکندر زمان افتاد  
 (10) مجال راکب خود مرکبش در آن وادی / ز ابر دیده گهرپاش و درفشان افتاد  
 (11) نه اشک سرخ سمندش به خاک هامون ریخت / ستاره خون شد و از چشم (12) آسمان افتاد  
 زد آتشی به جهان جوهری که شعله او / به کاخ عیش (13) جهان و جهانیان افتاد  
 بیرق داران لشکر اسلام و جان نثاران معرکه (14) بی ننگ و نام، ساقیان بزم  
 عطش و التهاب و سقایان بادیه شورش و انقلاب، (15) فارسان عسکر غیرت و خونخواهی،  
 وارثان طنطنه صولت حیدری، قصه (16) پر غصه در خون طپیدن آن شجاع سلسله  
 عمرانی و حکایت مصیبت نهایت شدن (17) بی دست آن جعفر طیار ثانی را چنین رقم زدند که  
 در وقتی که عباس وفادار (18) با اهل بیت اطهار گرم وداع بود، زینب سوخته جگر سراسیمه  
 از خیمه بیرون دوید (19) و سر و قامت عباس را در بر کشید و به زبان حال عرض کرد:  
 (20) ای برادر با جان برابر زینب / تو ضیاء دل و دیده تر زینب  
 چو موم ز آتش (21) غم بیکرم گذاخته است / دگر سپهر چه نیرنگ باز باخته است  
 مرا چرا (22) کند این قدر تلخ کام فلک / چه کرده ام که کشد از این انتقام فلک  
 مرو به جنگ، (23) که گردیده خون جگر زینب / "سفر" مگوی که ترسیده زین سفر زینب  
 چون (24) عباس رشید الحال و زاری زینب را شنید، اشک حممت از دیده بارید و (25) فرمود:  
 ای خواهر ستم کشیده!
- (26) خواهر، ای زینب، ببین برگشته اقبال حسین / منعم مکن، بنگر بر احوال حسین  
 (27) گل که نبرد از وفا بویی، از آن پزمرده به / مرد را گر غیرت مردی (28) نباشد، مرده به  
 بهر آبی از خجالت سر به زیر افکنده ام / تا قیامت نزد (29) اطفال حسین شرمنده ام  
 هنوز مکالمه عباس با زینب به اتمام نرسیده بود که او را سکینه، (30) طفل کوچک حسین،  
 به ناله بلند شد که: یا عما العطش!
- (31) طفلی که ندیده جز عزیزی / نو یاد گرفته اشک ریزی  
 طفلی که الم ندیده در خواب / (32) خشکیده لبش چو لعل بی آب

طفلی که پریده از سرش هوش / مشگی خالی<sup>(33)</sup> گرفته بر دوش  
 کای عم دلاور کرامم / رحمی، رحمی، که تشنه<sup>(34)</sup> کام  
 آنم که عزیز باب خویشم / در سایه آفتاب خویشم  
 زنده است هنوز باب<sup>(35)</sup> زارم / گردون به چه جرم کرد خوارم  
 تکلم و زاری سکینه<sup>(36)</sup> صغیرهء حسین آتش در خرمن آرام عباس افکنده، صورت سکینه  
 را<sup>(37)</sup> بوسید و مشگ را گرفته بردوش کشید و فرمود: عموجان، بی تابی مکن، که<sup>(38)</sup> می  
 روم از برای تو آب بیاورم. همین که سقای سپاه تشنه کامان از خیمه بیرون آمد،<sup>(39)</sup> اهل بیت  
 یکمربته فریاد کردند که: ای عباس،

<sup>(40)</sup> حسین تشنه لب تنهاست، از وی در چنین وقتی / جدایی کردن عباس کی<sup>(41)</sup> شرط وفا  
 باشد

از این آب روان آوردن، ای روح روان، بگذر! / که ترک مدعای<sup>(42)</sup> آب، عین مدعا باشد  
 ببین اسکندر دوران، حسین، کج کرده گردن را / نمی خواهم آب،<sup>(43)</sup> ای خضر، گر آب بقا  
 باشد

پس آن سقای تشنه جگر خویش<sup>(44)</sup> را بر مقدم امام جن و بشر انداخت و چندان الحال نمود  
 که رخصت<sup>(45)</sup> حرب حاصل کرد. شاه شهید عباس را در بر کشید و به زبان حال فرمود:  
 برادر جان!

<sup>(46)</sup> خون از دل و دیده ام فشانندی رفتی / در آتش فرقم نشانندی رفتی  
<sup>(47)</sup> کردی به کمند غم گرفتار مرا / خود را ز کمند غم رهاندی<sup>(48)</sup> رفتی  
 پس آن خسرو سپهر اساس سر و بالای عباس را به زیور اسلحه<sup>(49)</sup> کارزار آراست و کفن  
 در وی پوشانیده آن علم دار رشید دست برادر را بوسید<sup>(50)</sup> و مشگ را بر دوش کشیده سوار  
 شد. رو به راه نهاد. چون چند قدم رفت و از<sup>(51)</sup> برادر مهجور دور شد، روی برگردانید که  
 یک بار دیگر چشمش بر<sup>(52)</sup> جمال خورشید مثال برادرش روشن شود. دید آن یعقوب بیت  
 الاخزان<sup>(53)</sup> ملال از عقب خورشید جمال خویش به طریق مشایعت پیاده می آید<sup>(54)</sup> و  
 به زبان حال می گوید:

<sup>(55)</sup> چه تند از برم، ای ماهپاره، می گذری / نکرده درد من زار چاره<sup>(56)</sup> می گذری  
 موثر از دل او بگذر، ای شراره آه! / تو گر بلند روی، از<sup>(57)</sup> ستاره می گذری  
 شوم فدای وفا داری ات، که از یاری / ز جان به یاری<sup>(58)</sup> ام از یک اشاره می گذری  
 ز ذوالجنان شکیبایی، ای گزیده سوار! / پیاده<sup>(59)</sup> می کنی ام چون سواره می گذری

## APPENDIX II

## THE TABARI TEXT

چون علم از دستِ عباسِ نازه جوان بگتته آتش بچنگه<sup>1)</sup> پادشاهی آدم و جین دگته  
 بچین چشِ ستارها بگتته رایتِ آفتاب که لوش (1) صاحبِ عالم درخون دگته  
 بعقل بوته از پسرها آدم اول کیه که بشینه شِ خونِ وکشته بوه مودم بگته  
 جواب بوته که اول حسین جگر نشنه که هم سِرِ ببلای بی وقت دگته  
 دلبری نیه چون پسرِ ابو نرابِ پهلوان براری نیه مثلِ عباس دلسوز دگته  
 که ای برار باجان مسوی عباس قسم بتو جان کانش (2) می جان دگته  
 کل زندگانی از پیدانوینه (3) اوزرد بوه بهارِ زندگانی در فکر پایز دگته  
 چون مرخصِ میدانِ دهوی از امام بوه سنگین رکاب بوه اما سبک او صور دگته  
 شی برار چشِ وار برای آی (4) زندگانی جدا بگته مثلِ خضر از اسکند  
 روز کاروی اسپ بجهتِ شی صاحبِ درآن صحرا از ازا بر چشِ کهر و درر بخته  
 نوکی وی اسپ سِرِ سرخ تنها در صحرا بشونیه ستاره خین بوه و از چشِ

---

<sup>1)</sup> *Losh.*

<sup>2)</sup> *Quitash.*

<sup>3)</sup> *Naviani.*

<sup>4)</sup> *Oi.*

آسمان بکته آتشی بزویه در روزگار جوهری که وی شعله بامارت زندگانی  
 روزگار و روزگارها دکنه علمدارها سپاه اسلام و جان دهان سپاه گاهی  
 بی آروبی نم سقاها ی مجلس نشنگی و التهاب و سقاها صحرا شورش و منقلب  
 سواران سپاه مردی و خونخا بری و وارثان آواز جنگ حیدری قصیده<sup>1</sup>  
 پُرغم در خین دکن آن دلبر نسلِ عمرانی و حکایت مصیبتِ انتها بر سینّه  
 دیدست آن جعفر پرنده<sup>2</sup> دوم را اوتی بنویشته که در سغانیکه عباس بوفا  
 باعیال باک کرم حافظ و ه زینب بسوته جگر لرز کرده (1) از چادر بیرون بتنه  
 و سر و قدّ عباس ره کشه و بوتنه

که برار باجان مسوی زینب توهستی روشنا دل و چش تر زینب مثل میم آتشی  
 غصه<sup>3</sup> تو می بدانه و (2) ها کرده ای روزگار چه مکر و حیلّه دوخته منی چر  
 کنه اینقدر تلّ دهان فلک چه ها کرده امه که آسمان از من انتقام کشته بجنگ  
 نشو که زینب خین جگر بوه سفر نکو (3) بترسیه از این سفر زینب چون  
 پهلوان عباس بورمه و زاری زینب باشنوسه اسپر نرم از دوچش بریخته و  
 بوته ای خواهر ظلم بکش

خواهر ای زینب بوین بر داکر سه بخت حسین احوال حسین هارش و بهل  
 بر و مکلّ که وفا بونیه آنوقت از بوخشک و به بهتره اگر عیرت مردی (4)

<sup>1</sup>) Larz-a quurdou.

<sup>2</sup>) Badanou-ou.

<sup>3</sup>) Nouqui.

<sup>4</sup>) Merdou.

نویه بردن بهتره بجهت او از خجالت سر پابن دَنهَوَمَه تا قیامت پیش  
 پسرها حسین خجالت دارمه حالا حرفِ عباس بازینب تمام نوه که وُنْکِ سَکینه  
 طفلِ کوچِکِ حسین بیورمه بلند بوه که ای همانشنی بَسوتَمَه

30

طفلی که نیه غیر خوری نازه یاد بیته اسری بِشِیْنِیَه طفلی که بدی در خونديه  
 لُشْشِ خَشْکِ بویه مثل لعل بی (1) طفلی که از سِروِی اهل دار برده حیک تيسا  
 دوشکه بیته ای عموی پهلوانِ بزرگْمن رَحِمِ کن مرا رَحِمِ کن مرا که تشنه  
 کامه آمه که فرزندِ پر خودمه در سایه آفتاب خودمه حالا زنه اه (2) می پر  
 ذلیل آسان چه کُناه منی ذلیل ها کرده حرف بزوئن وگر یاها کردن سَکینه  
 وچه کوچِکِ حسین آتش درجنگه آرام (3) عباس دَنهَوِیَه (4) چهره سَکینه را  
 دوش هاده و حیکي هابته شی دوش دَنهَوِیَه و بونه جان عمو بیتابی نکن که  
 شومه تی و سر آ ارمه همین که سقای سپاه تشنه دهانان از چادر بیرون بامویه  
 عبالِ خانه بک دفعه سراها کُر دَنه که ای عباس

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حسین تشنه لیش تنها هسه ازوی در همچو وقت سوئی ها کزدن ای عباس کی  
 شرط دوستیه ازین ائی (5) روان بیاردن ای جان روان بهل که ترک ادعای  
 اصل ادعا هسه بوین پادشاه روزگار حسین والها کرده شی کلی ننه آ  
 اماره ای خضرا کر آن آ ائی زندگانی و به بعد ازین آن سقای تشنه جگرشی

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1) O.

2) O.

3) Oroum-i.

4) Dinguoueo.

5) Ou-i.

خودی بر لنگ پیشوتیه جن و آدم دهنویه و خیلی ناله ها کرده که مرخصی  
 دعوی هایتیه بزرگ کشتها عباسرا کلمه بزویه و زبان حال بوتیه برار جان  
 خین از دل و چشمن ده کرده ئی بردی در آتش جدای منی ها نشانه ئی بردی  
 ها کردی بکمند غصه گرفتار منی شی خودی از کمند غصه رها ها کردی  
 بردی بعدا زان آن شاه روزگار اساس سُر و قدی عباسرا بز یور اسلمه  
 دعوی بپوشیه و کفن دروی بپوشانیه آن علم دار دلبر دست برار را حوش  
 هاده و حیک بردوش دهنویه سوار بوه و راه دا کته چون چند قدم برده و از  
 برار دیر شوده دیر بوه شی روی ذا کُر دانیه (1) که بک دفعه دیکر وی چش بر  
 سورت مثل آفتاب وی برار روشن بویه بیه که آن یعقوب بیت الاحزان  
 خصه از دمال یوسنی آفتاب سورت خود بطریق پیش ها کردن پیاده آموبه  
 و باین زبان کونه

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چو تند از منی و رای ماهی پاره کذرنی نکردی در دمن منی منی زاری (2) چاره  
 مانی (3) تا اثرها کردی از دل وی بگذرای شراره اه تو اثر بلند بویه از  
 ستاره کذرنی بویم قربان (4) وفاداری تو که از دوستی من از جان باری  
 من از یک اشاره کذرنی از ذوالجنای صبر من ای کزیده سوار منی پیاده  
 ها کردی چون سواره شونی

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<sup>1)</sup> *Guordanieh.*

<sup>2)</sup> *Zouri.*

<sup>3)</sup> *Mouni.*

<sup>4)</sup> *Kourboun-i.*

# The Presence of Perso-Islamic Mysticism in Malay-Indonesian Literature\*

AHMAD KAZEMI MOUSSAVI

The Islamization of the Malay-Indonesian archipelago is believed to have been either initiated or facilitated by Sufi excursions and their missionary activities. Most of today's scholars on the issue hold that wandering Sufis from Arab and Indo-Iranian areas has influenced the local culture of certain cities in South-East Asia since the 7<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> By the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> century, there appeared a host of local Sufis who traveled back to the Middle East and produced a genre of Malay Sufi writings in which the influence of Arabic and Persian literatures was evident. This genre of writing, not only expanded and solidified their conviction in Islam, but also acquainted the Malay peoples with the beauty of Arabic and Persian literary expressions and tales. The focus of this essay, however, is on the influence of Persian presentation of Islamic thought and literature in Malay writings in three spheres: (A) the presentation of *wojudiyya* thought through the Persian writings of authors such as Fakhr al-Din 'Erāqi (d. 1289), Shaikh Mahmud Shabestari (d. 1320) and 'Abd al-Rahmān Jāmi (d. 1431); (B) the influence of Abu Hāmed Mohammad Ghazālī's (d. 1111) thought in the re-orientation of Islamic ethics on the Malay thinkers; and (C) the adoption of Persian words and tales in Malay culture.

The presentation of *wojudiyya* doctrine was amongst the first notions that captured the Malay mind at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This doctrine has its origin in the thought of Shaikh Mohyi al-Din Ebn 'Arabi (d. 1240) who theorized on the whole human relations with God in his doctrine of the "unity of existence" (*wahdat al-wojud*). This doctrine has attracted many Muslim thinkers, and particularly furnished Indo-Iranian authors with grounds to equip their poetic talent with philosophy. The Divine universal presence, as proposed by Ebn 'Arabi motivated the Perso-

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<sup>1</sup> Syed Muhammad Naguib al-Attas, *Some Aspects of Sufism as Understood and Practiced Among the Malays*, Singapore, 1963, p.21. See also Osman Bakar. "Sufism in the Malay-Indonesian World," in Seyyed Hossein Nasr, ed., *Islamic Spirituality*, New York, 1991, p. 269.

Muslim poetic mind to locate the divine manifestations anywhere they liked to consider as the locus of His activity.

Amongst Malay writers, Hamza Fansuri (d. ca.1607) was the first, and perhaps the best, exponent of the doctrine of the unity of existence in Malay language. Fansuri wrote several treatises on this doctrine, two of which, namely *Asrār al-‘ārefin* and *Sharāb al-‘āsheqin* are written in Malay and partly translated into English. In his expositions, Fansuri frequently referred to Persian poets such as Fakhr al-Din ‘Erāqi, Shaikh Mahmud Shabestari and ‘Abd al-Rahmān Jāmi; and quoted their expressions,<sup>2</sup> which indicate the influence of Persian conceptions of the doctrine of the unity of existence on Fansuri. In this regard, ‘Erāqi’s *Lama’āt* and Jāmi’s *Lawā’eh* were the most often quoted ones. Fansuri employed ‘Erāqi’s example of “sea and wave” particularly to illustrate the unity of existence that “a wave is not separate from the sea.”<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, Fansuri quotes from Ghazālī’s *Kimīyā-ye sa‘ādat* as if making a statement: “This world is from Him, it is Him, nay, He indeed is all”<sup>4</sup> is in agreement with the doctrine of the *wojudiyya*. Nevertheless, this kind of references shows Fansuri’s mastery of Persian texts.

It is noteworthy that Fansuri was the first (perhaps the greatest) Malay thinker who initiated writing on theosophical matters in Malay language. Fansuri himself confirmed that, before him, “all known works on Sufism were written in Arabic and Persian.”<sup>5</sup> According to Osman Bakar, Fansuri, in his *Sharāb al-‘āsheqin*, “had written it in Malay so that those who do not know Arabic and Persian might be able to discourse on the subject.”<sup>6</sup>

Fansuri’s mysticism was followed by his disciples such as Shams al-Din Sumatrāni (d. 1630), who wrote several treatises elaborating Fansuri’s thought using Arabic and Persian expressions. In his *Nur al-daqa’eq*, Sumatrāni employs Persian expressions such as “*nist hasti-ye man agar haqq nist*” (I will not exist if God does not exist) to illustrate his conception of existence and its various forms and degrees.<sup>7</sup>

Both Fansuri and Sumatrāni were vigorously contested by their near contemporary jurist Nur al-Din Rāniri (d. 1658) as he put Fansuri’s conception of *wojudiyya* doctrine at par with infidelity. By writing *Serāt al-mostaqim*, Rāniri was the first local jurist to present a work in Malay language devoted entirely to Islamic jurisprudence (*feqh*). Nevertheless,

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See Muhammad Naguib al-Attas, *The Mysticism of Hamzah Fansūrī*, Kuala Lumpur, 1970, pp. 3-30.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 390.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 461.

<sup>5</sup> Osman Bakar, “Sufism in Malay-Indonesian World,” p. 283.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> See A. Johns, “Nūr al-Daqa’iq by the Sumatran mystic Shams al-Dīn ibn ‘Abdullah,” *JRAS*, 1953, p. 146.

he employed *wojudiyya* mystical doctrine in his *Latā'if al-asrār* following a different approach.<sup>8</sup> He named this approach *mowahheda* (unitarian theology) as opposed to *molheda* (infidel). Rāniri's refutation of mysticism while adopting a large part of Sufi ethics resembles the practice of the 14<sup>th</sup> century Syrian thinker Ebn Taymiyya, whose later influence produced a similar trend in parts of Arabian Peninsula. However, Rāniri, too, exhibited his knowledge of Persian as he sometimes referred to the poems of Jāmi and Shāh Ne'mat Allāh Wali (d. 1431).<sup>9</sup> Like Fansuri, Rāniri had traveled to the Middle East, but his trip was confined to the pilgrimage at Mecca and Medina (in Arabia), whereas the former had traveled to several cities in Iraq including Baghdad. It is apparent, however, that learning Persian was part of the traditional education for South-East Asian Muslims in pre-modern periods.

Rāniri's attack on the *wojudiyya* type of Sufism pushed back philosophical mysticism in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago, and paved the way for a kind of ritualistic Sufism based on Ghazālī's teachings. Ghazālī's proposal for revival of religious thought had already impressed the Muslim milieu of Middle East. He is a thinker who offered the most plausible synthesis between the *shari'a* and mysticism at the expense of philosophical sciences (except for "logic"). Despite his controversial rejection of philosophy, Ghazālī incorporated logic into religious learning, especially into Islamic legal methodology (*osul al-feqh*). The secret of Ghazālī's influence, to borrow James Morris' words, has to do with "his remarkable ability to reach all levels of readers."<sup>10</sup>

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a shift of orientation occurred in Malay-Indonesian Sufism. The Malays began to adopt a more "sober" Sufism and normative Shāfi'i jurisprudence, both characteristic of much of Ghazālī's teachings. A major figure in this transition was 'Abd al-Samad Falembāni, who was born in Palembang South Sumatra in the early eighteenth century. According to Michael Feener, it is clear from his most popular surviving works in Malay language that Falembāni adapted

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<sup>8</sup> See Muhammad Zainiy Uthman, "Rāniri's *Latā'if al-Asrār li Ahl Allah al-Athār*: An Annotated Transliteration together with a Translation of His Exposition of the Fundamental Aspects of Sufi Doctrine," Ph.D. disser., 2 vols, Kuala Lumpur, Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1997.

<sup>9</sup> Attas, *The Mysticism of Hamzah Fansuri.*, p. 42. Also see Muhammad Zainiy Uthman's disser., esp. I, p. 249; II, p. 178.

<sup>10</sup> James Morris, "Conclusion of al-Ghazālī's *Mizān al-'Amal*," a paper delivered at International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, Kuala Lumpur, January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2004, p. 1.

Ghazālī's thought.<sup>11</sup> During the eighteenth century, Ghazālī's, *Ehyā' 'olum al-din* was one of the hallmarks of Sufi reformism in the Middle East, North Africa and India, to which South-East Asia should be added. It was translated into Jāwī by 'Abd al-Samad Falembāni in 1780, who also added his own elaboration and entitled the version *Siyar al-sālekin*. According to Numan Said, the first section of the book discusses mainly "faith" (*imān*) and rites (*'ebāda*), the second part explains ethics (*akhlāq*), the third deals with various kinds of vices and the last part on certain kinds of good deeds which may lead the doer away from various kinds of bad qualities.<sup>12</sup>

*Siyar al-sālekin* circulated widely in Indonesia even before appearing in a printed version.<sup>13</sup> It was circulated particularly in Aceh, which held a key position in the development of Islamic society in Indonesia. It played an important role in introducing Ghazālī's thought among South-East Asian Muslims. A romanized version of it was produced by contemporary Indonesian authors.<sup>14</sup> Other works of Ghazālī that have been translated into Malay include *Bedāyat al-hidāya*, and *Menhāj al-'ābedin*. The former is reportedly used as a textbook for schools in Aceh and some other parts of Indonesia and the Malay peninsular.

Interestingly, Falembāni finds Ghazālī's teachings consistent with Ebn al-'Arabi's thought. In his *Siyar al-sālekin*, he presented his own interpretation of *wahdat al-wojud* (unity of being) by putting it within the framework of Ghazālī's teachings on God, the cosmos and the soul of man and proved it to be consistent with the *shari'a*. His original contributions lie among other things, in making a parallel between the seven levels of being with seven stages of the soul, and in classifying major texts on mysticism (*tasawwuf*) into three levels of learning, elementary (*mobtadi*), intermediate (*motawasset*) and advanced (*montahi*).<sup>15</sup>

Before turning to the contemporary era, it seems appropriate to mention the names of other Malay writers who either translated or wrote on Ghazālī's works. Shaikh Daud Fatāni translated portions of the *Menhāj al-'ābedin* into Malay language; Shaikh 'Abd al-Samad Kalartāni wrote *Menhat al-qarib* in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century on Ghazālī's

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<sup>11</sup> R. Michael Feener, "Tracing a Life Across the Indian Ocean: The Case of 'Abd al-Ṣamad" a paper presented in International Conference on Cultural Exchange and Transformation in the Indian Ocean World, April 2002, p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> Numan Said, "Ghazali's Works and Their Influence in Indonesia," M.A. thesis, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, 1992, p. 58.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Idem., op. cit., p. 59.

<sup>15</sup> Megawati Moris, "Al-Ghazali's Influence on Malay Thinkers of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries," a paper presented to International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) as a Ph.D. proposal, 2003, p. 3.

spiritual ethics; Ismail Ya'qub made a new translation of *Ehyā 'olum al-dīn* into Indonesian language in the 1960s; and 'Abd al-Majid Haj Khatib translated *Meshkāt al-anwār* as *Spiritual Symbolism* in the 1970s.

Among the latest South Asian Muslim scholars to be influenced by Ghazālī is the contemporary Malay scholar Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, who established the chair of Ghazālī in the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) in 1996. Faced with the challenge of modernity, al-Attas finds Ghazālī's attitude against the penetration of Greek sciences as an example that should be pursued in present times. He claims that Ghazālī's attack on the philosophers, both the Greek and the Muslim, was not aimed at philosophy as such, that is as *hekma*, because *hekma* as revealed in the Qur'an is God's gift. The application of reason with wisdom not only in religion but also in philosophy and sciences is commendable. What Ghazālī attacked was the metaphysical and religious theories of the Greek philosophers, and their beliefs and the claim of Muslim philosophers with regard to the primacy of the intellect as the sole guide to knowledge of the Ultimate Reality.<sup>16</sup>

According to Naquib al-Attas a most important idea of Ghazālī that has not received the attention it deserves is the idea of how semantic change and restriction in Islamic key terms pertaining to knowledge in a science that is considered as praiseworthy renders the science blame-worthy; and this will ultimately bring about confusion and corruption in knowledge. According to al-Attas, Ghazālī pointed out in the *Ehyā'* that even in his time key terms such as *feqh*, *'elm*, *tawhid*, *zehr* and *hekma* had been tampered with and in their original and authentic meanings restricted. Similarly in the *Tahāfot al-falālisefa*, he demonstrated that the philosophers have changed the original meaning of the important concept conveyed by the term *fe'l* and *fā'el* to suit their own ideas which contradict the teachings of Islam with respect to the nature of God and of creation. The lesson derived from Ghazālī is that the basic vocabulary in Islamic language can only develop from roots that have been stunted in restriction.

The problem related to language, according to Attas, is not simply a matter of language as such, but also a matter of the worldview. However, al-Attas adds that his ideas on semantic interpretation "should not be construed as not allowing language to develop, to unfold itself according to its potential."<sup>17</sup>

Apart from intellectual influence, the presence of Persian folk literature, too, is visible in Malay language. This can be discerned in the

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<sup>16</sup> Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, "Welcoming Address." in *International Conference on al-Ghazālī's Legacy: Its Contemporary Relevance*, Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) October 2001, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

two areas – of loan-words and the use of the *hekāyat* genre of literature. Concerning loan words, it is estimated that about 350 Persian words have been used in Malay literature, most of which are still current in the spoken language.<sup>18</sup> Some of these terms, such as *shābāsh* (greeting), *sudāgar* (merchant; Pers. *sowdāgar*), *pahlavān* (valiant, strongman) *biadab* (impolite), *bihush* (clumsy) and *shahbandar* (city), carry Persian way of expressing ideas that have been adopted and even expanded by Malay speakers. For example, the word such as *bi'adat* (unsociable) is not used in Persian in the same sense, but the structure of the term signals the presence of Persian logic of language in making a new word. It seems that the presence of Persian expressions in Malay language goes beyond just loan-word links between the two languages, as suggested by some authors.<sup>19</sup>

Besides literal expressions, there are a number of tales from the *hekāyat* genre in Malay folklore, which have common characters with Persian *hekāyāt* either in the usage of names and application of titles or in content. For instance, *Hekāyat Amir Hamza* (The story of Amir Hamza) is a romance that begins with the tale of Khawajeh (Khawāja) Alqāsh, vizier of Kobād Shahryār, king of Median. The story involves other names of figures such as Nushirvān (Pers. Nushiravān) and his agent Monzer Shāh, which obviously indicate the Persian Sasanian root of the tale. The name of a city in the story is Shahrīstān Zarin (golden city in Persian) under the rule of good and bad fairies with Persian names *pari* and *div*.<sup>20</sup> Richard Winstedt believes that the story of the adventures of Badi' al-Zamān, is taken directly from some unknown Persian manuscript of Amir Hamza: "its Persian origin [is] clear from its vocabulary and verses, and its connection with the main romance [is] clear from its style."<sup>21</sup>

*Shāh-e mardān* is the name of another tale that, in spite of its Persian title, has an Indian character. The opening of the story, however, resembles that of the tale of *Amir Arsalān Rumi*, a 19<sup>th</sup>-century reproduction of older fictions such as *Malek Jamshid*, *Telesm-e Āsaf and Hammām-e bolur*.<sup>22</sup> Rare Persian terms such as *āstāna* (seat) and vizier are used in the tale, but the shared Islamic mystical terminologies<sup>23</sup> are more expressive than the common Indian or Persian sources.

<sup>18</sup> Mohammad Khosh Haikal Azad, *Vāzhahā-ye Fārsi dakhil dar zabān-e Malayu*, Tehran, 1998, p. 231.

<sup>19</sup> M.A.J. Beg, *Persian and Turkish Loan-words in Malay*, Kuala Lumpur, 1982.

<sup>20</sup> See Richard Winstedt, *A History of Classical Malay Literature*, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia, 1996, p. 179.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>22</sup> See Mohammad Ja'far Mahjub, "Dāstanhā-ye 'āmiyāna-ye Fārsi," *Sokhan* 8/1, Āzar- Esfand 1339 Sh./1960-61.

<sup>23</sup> Sir Richard Winstedt, *A History of Classical Malay Literature*, p. 176.

Another originally Persian story is *Hekāyat Bakhtiyār* which literally means the “Tale of the Fortunate” The Malay version of the story appears in two forms, the short and long forms, both bearing a faint resemblance to the original ones.<sup>24</sup> The use of names and terms such as *Āzādbakhat*, *shahriyār* and *shahbandar* signals the presence of Persian elements in the stories. Winstedt dates the writing of Persian *Bakhtiyār-nāma* about 1203 A.D., almost 230 years before its appearance in Uigur and Arabic versions.<sup>25</sup> The German orientalist Theodore Nöldeke believed that this tale has its origin in *Sendbād-nāma*.<sup>26</sup> Both forms were later incorporated into another Indo-Iranian compound genre of stories, namely *One Thousand and One Nights*.

*Hekāyat Eskander Zu'l-Qarnayn* is believed to be derived from Perso-Arabic sources. According to Winstedt, in about 1000 A.D., when the Arabs got to know the *Shāh-nāma* of Ferdowsi (d.1020) through a summary translation of Abu Mansur Tha'ālebi (d.1037), it included the story of *Eskandar Zu'l-Qarnayn* which described “Alexander as the founder of the throne of Iran and gave the names of ancestors of Bahman, a mythical ancestor of the Sassanid kings; and it is this fantastic Perso-Arabic version with its sop to Persian pride that is followed in the Malay romance of Alexander.”<sup>27</sup> *Hekāyat Mohammad Hanafiyya* has Persian origins combined with Arabic characters. Nevertheless the Malay version of the story puts great emphasis on *pahlavān* (hero, champion) quality of the main figure in connection with Imam Hosayn and Karbalā, which can indicate a shared sympathy to the tragic event of Karbalā in 61/680.<sup>28</sup> In this story, when Mohammad the son of Hanafiyya, learns about the martyrdom of Imam Hosayn he embarks on a revolt until he releases the latter's son, Imam Zayn al-‘Ābedin, from captivity, “and finds the charred body of the accursed Yazid at the bottom of a well.”<sup>29</sup> At the end of the tale Imam Zayn al-‘Ābedin appears as ruler of Damascus, and marries a girl with that stock name of Malay romance, Shams al-Bahrain. This part was apparently added by a Malay writer. According to Winstedt, the Malay version contains a preface dealing with the birth and life of the Prophet, which is apparently absent from the Persian manuscripts. “It notes that the Prophet's birth was followed by the quenching of the fire of Persian fire-worshippers, by the collapse of

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 87

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 87

<sup>26</sup> See *Bakhtiyār-nāma*. ed. Mohammad Rowshan, Tehran, 1988, p. 23.

<sup>27</sup> Winstedt, *A History of Classical Malay Literature*, p. 65.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp.72-74, see also pp. 182-87

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 73.

the dome of Nushiravān's palace and by the falling down of the palace of Khosrow, who is mentioned in its Arabic form Kesrā."<sup>30</sup>

*Hekāyat Kalila dan Damina* (Kalila va Demna), according to Winstedt, must have been translated from the Persian original which was the source of some south Indian version used by the Malay translator. The Malay introduction and the arrangement of chapters are in accordance with the Persian version of the text by Nasr Allāh Monshi, who presented it to Bahrām Shah (r. 1118-57) a sultan of Ghaznavid dynasty.<sup>31</sup> The chapter added by Borzuya, a physician who brought the Sanskrit original of the work to Iran at the time of Khosrow I Anushiravān, and the preface, said to have been written by his vizier, Bozorgmehr, introduced a number of Persian names and expressions to Malay readers. For this reason, the *hekāyat* genre of romance should be considered as a major conduit for introducing Persian terms and figures to the Malay speaking peoples.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 73. See also L.F. Brakel, *The Story of Muhammad Hanafiyyah*, Bibliotheca Indonesica, The Hague, 1977.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 84.

# Sultan Ezid in the Yazidi Religion: Genesis of the Character

VICTORIA ARAKELOVA

In the Yazidi Holy Triad, namely Malak Tāwus, Shaikh ‘Adi and Sultan Ezid, the last is probably the least significant figure, although sometimes the tradition identifies him with Malak Tāwus (see Asatrian and Arakelova, 2003).

Sultan Ezid is the Lord of people and their worldly life, the essence of the Yazidi faith (Kreyenbroek, pp. 95-96), though the latter characteristic is usually applied to the other members of the Holy Triad as well. The image of Sultan Ezid can generally be approached mainly in the trinity with Malak Tāwus and Shaikh ‘Adi.

Like Shaikh ‘Adi, Sultan Ezid is considered the master of the fourteen spheres of the Earth and heavens; cf.:

*Āqā-yē min Ēzida,  
Bayrāqā sōr ū spī p'idā;  
Ĉārda tavak a'rd u a'zmān k'afā dastē Silt'ān Ēzida* (field materials of the author).

(My lord is Ezid,  
In his hand is a red-and-white flag,  
The fourteen spheres of the Earth and Heaven are on his palm.)

Sultan Ezid is sometimes called “red” (*Silt'ān Ēzidē sōr*), though the same epithet is applied to one of the minor figures of the Yazidi folk pantheon, for instance Šēkh Mūsē sōr (the lord of the wind and air; see Asatrian and Arakelova, 2004, pp. 242-44).

Sultan Ezid is the only deity whose name is used in the important praying formula with *hōl* (*yōl*) “[mystical] Path,” identifying with the religion itself, which again points at the Sufi roots of the Yazidism (cf. *Hōla, hōla, hōla, Silt'ān Ēzidē sōra!* “The red Sultan Ezid is our mystical way,” or, in fact, “Sultan Ezid is our religion,” which most probably used to be the *zēkr* formula).

Very often in orthopraxy the purity of the faith is confirmed by the formula *barkhē Selt'ān Ēzid* “the lamb of Sultan Ezid.” Loud addresses to Sultan Ezid can be heard during the *samā'* and his birthday (*Āzā Ēzidē*) on the first of December, which involves a big religious celebration preceded by a three-day fasting. Sultan Ezid has his own

shrine, a legendary grave in Lalesh, the center of the Yazidi religion. Although his so-called *mazār* looks less impressive than those of other legendary personalities and Yazidi deities, it is always overcrowded with pilgrims during religious feasts.

Despite the fact that Sultan Ezid's name is more often used in the religious hymns than that of Shaikh 'Adi (the name of Malak Tāwus is almost absolutely tabooed), the secondary role of the former in the Triad is obvious. It is, however, just Sultan Ezid who became the main eponym of the Yazidi community, having given birth to a number of hypotheses concerning the genesis of both the personage and his name.

According to the most common opinion, the name Ēzid is connected with the Persian word *izad* "deity, god," going back to the Avestan *yazata*- "worthy of sacrifice," definition of the class of deities (< *yaz*- to sacrifice). The name of the character and, accordingly, the name of the community, are also connected with the name of Yazd, a city in southeast Iran, where a relatively large Zoroastrian community thrives (Driver, p. 200; Semenov, p. 79). The Heidi tradition itself sometimes identifies the personality of Sultan Ezid with Hasid bin Maria (Yazid b. Mo'āwiya), the second Umayyad caliph.

All the above-mentioned theories, however, are mere *ad hoc* assumptions, except for the last, that is, the identification of Sultan Ezid with Yazid b. Mo'āwiya. No matter how strange such an identification may seem from the historical point of view, since it concerns a caliph who ruled only for three years (680-83) and did not demonstrate any outstanding characteristics or moral merits, this theory can be substantiated as a result of the secondary development.

According to the Yazidi tradition, Sultan Ezid, once broke away from Islam and adopted the religion of Shahid bin Jarr, the son of Adam (see Spaet), and spread it everywhere in Syria till the time of Shaikh 'Adi, the founder of the first Yazidi community according to the Yazidi tradition (*Kreyenbroek*, p. 37). A number of legendary and mythological events (e.g., the conquest of Constantinople) are also connected with the name of Ezid (Lescot, pp. 61-62).

As for the historical Yazid b. Mo'āwiya, his reputation even in the lores of Islam, is of dual nature. According to a legend, he was predestined to become the Shi'ite Pilatus (the roman governor who ordered the crucification of Jesus). According to this legend, his father, Mo'āwiya b. Sofiyān once accidentally cut Prophet Mohammad while he was shaving him, which caused the prophet to bleed. The prophet said that Mo'āwiya's descendants would fight against the prophet's followers and would even win. Mo'āwiya swore never to marry; but God sent him a disease that could be cured only if he would get married. Then Mo'āwiya married an eighty-year old virgin Mahūsa, who, right the first

night after the wedding, appeared to be a young girl (a very important element of a legendary birth), and later gave birth to Yazid.

This legend has a vivid allusion to a tragic event in Karbalā, which took place in the short period of Yazid' caliphate, and made the caliph one of the marked figures in the history of Islam.

Thus, how could a historical personality become the pre-figure of a deity with whom he had nothing in common? The genesis of this complex phenomenon can be clearly traced back. Most probably, the image of Yazid, having already been venerated as an Umayyad offspring, was incorporated into the newly forming Yazidi tradition together with a religious-political movement of the supporters of the Umayyad dynasty. Even in that period some groups venerating the Umayyads called themselves Yazidis, meaning exclusively their adherence to Yazid b. Mo'āwiya (we could conditionally define this group as proto-Yezidis, or one of the proto-Yezidi sects). One of such groups joined the 'Adawiyas (a Sufi community, which later became the backbone of the first Yazidi community), and, being quite influential, took part in the formation of the Yazidi tradition. By the way, the 'Adawiyas themselves paid special deference to the Umayyad, as Shaykh 'Adi b. Mosāfer himself belonged to the same dynasty. Apparently, the atmosphere in the newly formed community, later having developed into the Yazidi ethnic-religious group, was quite tolerant. Absence of dogmatic views and beliefs at the early stage, and the prevalence of the mystical-emotional knowledge, etc. produced a rather flexible structure, which finally resulted in a unique syncretism. The 'Adawiya faction of the community as an obligate course of any Sufi order, stressed the deification of Shaikh 'Adi as the founder of the 'Adawiyas, while the Umayyad' supporters venerated caliph Yazid. Finally, other elements that had joined the community, could bring their own cults, which further either disappeared under the onrush of more significant figures or left some nuances in the colorful palette of the syncretic teaching. At the early stage of its formation, the community experienced a "non-dogmatic" period, when it absorbed many ideas, though naturally ignoring, absolutely strange elements. Anyway, the deification of Shaikh 'Adi to the level of Malak Tāwus himself did not exclude the same process involving Sultan Ezid, particularly in the light of the view that the head of the Triad was definitely Malak Tāwus, and, above all three, there was the overlooking Khwade, the God Himself balancing the situation and unifying all around the common idea of monotheism.

It is quite clear that the tragic event of Karbalā marked this quite ordinary personality. That is why even the followers of other Umayyad members, be it Mo'āwiya b. Sofyān or Marwān b. Hakam (Bartold, p. 462 ff.), finally turned to be considered the venerators of Yazid and were

called by his name. For example, in Shungan (the Pamirs region), the Marvanids, who recognized Mohammad Marwān, the secretary of Prophet Mohammad, as the fourth caliph, were also called Yazidis. This was undoubtedly because of the marked figure of Yazid b. Mo'āwiya, since, in the folk tradition, the whole rule of the Umayyad was mainly associated with the Karbalā battle. It is also worth mentioning that Mo'āwiya, in the form of Māwi with clear reference to Sultan Yazid, occurs in the Yazidi religious hymns (cf., e.g., in *Qawlē Ēzid*; see Celil and Celil 1978a, pp. 26-29).

Thus, it is quite clear, that Sultan Ezid as deity and the member of the Yazidi Holy triad, being not the equivalent of caliph Yazid, has been formed, in fact, on the basis of this character. Still, the question remains how his name, that of the least significant member of the Holy Triad, became the main eponym of the Yazidi community.

First of all, *ēzdi* (< \**ēzidi*) is not the only name of the group. Previously, there existed other definitions of the community, which later became colloquially obsolete but were preserved in the religious texts. One of them is *a'dabi*, going back to the Arabic *'adawi*, meaning "the follower of Shaikh 'Adi" or rather "a member of the 'Adawiya order." Another one is *sharqi*, (lit. eastern) most probable from 'Adawiya Sharqi "the Eastern Aadwiya" (see, e.g., Celil and Celil, 1978b, p. 321); and finally, *dāseni* from the name of one of the Yazidi tribes.

In all appearances, there was a time when all these terms, including *ēz(i)di*, were used simultaneously, and the dominating one (also as self-definition) was most likely *a'dabi* or *'adawi*. The term *ēz(i)di* is the heritage of the Umayyad' supporters in the community, either having joined the community with this cult or the result of his deification within the 'Adawiya themselves.

Later, by the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the definition *ēz(i)di* had displaced other names, which will have been bolstered by the following circumstances. After the Karbalā tragedy, in which the prophet's grandson was killed, the personality of caliph Yazid assumed an evil look, and that was not limited to the Shi'ites. Thus, the term "*ezid*," being already an endo-ethnonym, could be also fixed as a pejorative exo-ethnonyme applied mainly by the Shi'ites to the people venerating the Shi'ites' enemy.

Slowly, the name became, to a certain extent, a synonym of a renegade in the Muslim milieu as well as elsewhere. In the Armenian *ashogh* poetry and, in particular, with Sayat'-Nova (p. 112), we come across *Šat mart' k'u ēshkhemēn ku dařna ezid* ("Many will become the Yazidis because of love to you" [i.e., renegades, infidels]), or *Ēshkhemet dařil im ezid / Halvec'a, mashvec'a k'izid* ("My love to you made me a *yazid*, I am pining away") (ibid., p. 118).

The same occurs in Turkish poems by the same author: *Yigilsun y[e]zidler, cama tolansun / Namardün göğsinä qama tolansun* ("Let the yazidi [here infidels] come all together, let them put the knife to the bosom of the unrighteous one") (ibid., p. 96). The last example reflects the later tradition of the metaphoric use of the term "Yazidi," that is, the perception of the Yazidis as unbelievers, devil-worshippers.

In the modern Yazidi tradition, the connection between Sultan Ezid and Yazid b. Mo'āwiya is sometimes categorically negated (Issa, pp. 18-22), which is another attempt to separate the Yazidi tradition from Islam and from any personage attested in the history of Islam. The same concerns Shaikh 'Adi, who would never be recognized in the modern Yazidi tradition as the founder of the 'Adawiya Sufi order, since doing otherwise would be in effect admitting that he once was a righteous Muslim.

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# Familiar Strangers: Armenians in Modern Persian Literature

ANNA KRASNOWOLSKA

Each culture and each community builds its own self-image in opposition to other groups. This implies a dichotomous division of all people into "ourselves" and "the others," "familiar" and "alien." Both categories are described through a number of constant characteristics which result in their stereotypical images.

It should be noticed that the notion of "strangeness" as opposed to "familiarity" is both contextual and subject to gradation (e.g., a person from a neighboring village, usually considered a stranger, will be perceived as familiar when met in a far-away city, or while compared with a visitor from abroad).<sup>1</sup>

Through the creation of their stereotypical images, which show a considerable durability and resistance to all actual experience and rational evaluation, the strangers become "domesticated," that is, included into the range of common knowledge of a given community or culture. These ethnic stereotypes may be perpetuated in verbal forms, as well as through other semantic systems, such as iconography and non-verbal behavior.<sup>2</sup> Verbalized ethnic stereotypes recorded in literature help to consolidate and propagate a common vision of one's own group (community, ethnicity, nation, confession) as opposed to the "others."

In multi-ethnic and multi-cultural Iran, situated on the crossroads of many cultures, interrelations with many different categories of "strangers" (foreign nations as well as home minorities), have always occurred with great intensity. Persian literature supplies vast material for investigation into their stereotyped images. Continuation and development of such patterns can be followed from the Islamic times until today.

The present paper deals dealing with a stereotyped vision of Armenians in modern Persian literature. As an ethnic and religious minority in Iran,

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ch. Bromberg, "Comment peut-on être Rašti?. Contenus, perceptions et implications du fait ethnique dans le Nord de l'Iran," in J.-P. Digard, *Le fait ethnique en Iran et en Afghanistan*, Paris, 1988, pp. 89-107.

<sup>2</sup> "Stereotypes are always verbal, because they appear always as the content of a word or expression" (tr. by A. Krasnowolska); see Adam Schaff, "Stereotyp: definicja i teoria," *Kultura i społeczeństwo* 22/3, 1978, pp. 43-77.

they are of a particular interest as a go-between group, bordering two different civilizations and oscillating between them.

Unlike an Arab, a Hindu, or a Jew, whose stereotype took shape in early stages of classical Persian literature (and partly even in the Sasanian period), a literary image of an Armenian seems to have come to existence more recently. Its prototype should probably be looked for in a traditional vision of a Christian, which is present in early Muslim literature already. Yet, as a separate literary character (most frequently in a supporting role), the Armenian seems to appear regularly only in twentieth century Persian literature.

This relatively late entrance of Armenian characters into Persian literary repertory is conditioned by historical occurrences. It is true that, since Achaemenian times, Armenia was either a part of Persian Empire, or stayed within the range of its interests, their contacts being particularly close in the Parthian period. It is, however, only from the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century that large waves of Armenians began to appear inside Iran proper, as a result of Shah 'Abbās I's (r. 1588-629) forcible deportations and resettlement. They formed an important ethno-religious minority, living in compact, chiefly urban, communities in many parts of Iran (in particular in New Julfa of Isfahan). Under the Safavids, the Armenians were granted many privileges, they had the monopoly of Iran's silk trade and some of them acquired high positions in state offices and the army.

Subsequent groups of Armenian settlers were brought to Iran by Nader Shah Afsāhr (r. 1736-47), and then came a wave at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century (especially during the First World War and the Bolshevik Revolution). Alongside these migrations a contrariwise movement was also taking place with the return to Armenia en mass. The first one happened after the defeat of Iran in two successive wars with the Imperial Russia, which resulted in the total loss of her Trans-Caucasian provinces to Russia according to the treaties of Golestān (1813) and Torkamānchāy (1829). The last Armenian exodus from Iran took place after the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

Pro-Russian feelings among the peoples of Trans-Caucasia were no surprise. Tsarist Russia was the only Christian power in the region that was expected to be able to defend local Christians against the despotism of Muslim rulers. Russians, for their part, used the Georgians' and Armenians' national aspirations in their policy of expanding southeast. Yet, those Armenians who stayed inside Iran were its loyal citizens, pioneering in various economic, cultural and political activities, due to their broad international contacts.<sup>3</sup> The first printing house in Iran was an Armenian

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<sup>3</sup> See: H. Papazian, G. Bournoutian, "Armeno-Iranian Relations in the Islamic Period." *Encyclopaedia Iranica* II, pp. 467-78.

one, established in New Julfa around 1636. Armenians were the first to establish modern schools (including those for girls) in Iran; towards the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century over thirty Armenian newspapers were being printed in Iran and numerous Armenian charitable and cultural societies flourished.<sup>4</sup> Armenian activists were involved in reformist and constitutional movements which, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, transformed Qajar Iran into a constitutional monarchy.<sup>5</sup> The best known modernist thinker of Armenian background was Mirzā Malkom Khan, a diplomat and political writer, famous for his London-based newspaper *Qānun*, which was instrumental in the development of the idea of constitutional government in Iran.

Armenians were among the first to master modern technical jobs in Iran. Moreover, not restricted by their religion, they also actively took over such fields as Western music, theater, cinema, photography, and sports, which were usually shunned by Muslims.<sup>6</sup>

In classical Persian literature Christians appear as a distinct group opposed to Muslims by their religious beliefs and practices rather than by their different ethnic, national or linguistic identity.<sup>7</sup> The traditional literary representation of a Christian has, undoubtedly, influenced that of an Armenian in modern Persian literature. Yet, it seems that so far as the image of Armenians in modern Persian literature is concerned, it is not their religion as such which makes them different. Some secondary features of their religious distinctness, namely those which become manifest in their contacts with Muslims, appear to be the most relevant. Unlike Islam, Christian faith not only allows its followers to drink wine, but even demands its use for ritual purpose. Therefore, the Armenians who, in Islamic Iran, from the Safavid times on, had the privileges of wine production and its trade<sup>8</sup>, in modern Persian literature are portrayed as liquor-sellers, tavern-keepers and drinking-companions.

For instance, in Shahrnush Pārsipur's novel *Tubā va ma'nā-ye shab*, an impoverished Qajar prince Fereydun Mirzā and his dervish friends are used to drinking alcohol in company of his Armenian lodger Monsieur

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<sup>4</sup> A. Amurian, M. Kasheff, "Armenians of Modern Iran", *ibid.*, pp. 478-83; Andranik Hoviyān, *Armaniyān-e Irān*, Tehran 1380 Sh./2001, schools: pp. 39-62; press: pp. 67-94; charitable and cultural societies: pp.195-206.

<sup>5</sup> On the role of the Dashnak movement in the Iranian Constitutional Revolution see: Aram Arkun, "Dašnak", *Encyclopaedia Iranica* VII, pp. 90-94.

<sup>6</sup> A. Amurian, M. Kasheff, *op. cit.*, 479; Hoviyān, *op.cit.*, theatre: pp. 207-274; photography: pp. 301-03; cinema: pp. 305-07, 317-32.

<sup>7</sup> See: Qamar Aryān, "Christianity. VI. In Persian Literature", *Encyclopaedia Iranica* V, pp. 539-42.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. R. Ferrier "Trade from the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the Safavid period", *The Cambridge History of Iran* 6, London-N. York-Sidney 1986, 482; H. Hovhanyān, *Tārikh-e Jolfā-ye Esfahān*, Esfahān 1379 Sh./2000, p. 60.

Bughusiyan.<sup>9</sup> Similarly in Goli Taraqqi's short story "Bozorgbānu-ye ruh-e man":

"In the evenings monsieur Ārdāvāz [ . . . ] comes to see him and they drink 'araq together. Monsieur Ārdāvāz has closed his liquor shop after it had been burned"<sup>10</sup> (This passage refers to the beginning of the Islamic Revolution, when liquor sellers became a target of the fundamentalists' attacks.). In Sādeq Chubak's *Tangsir*, an Armenian shopkeeper Asātur has bottles of whisky and gin stored at the back of his shop and his counter is decorated with a picture of marching Johnny Walker.<sup>11</sup>

In modern Persian literature, the backroom (*pastu*) of an Armenian shop or restaurant is frequently referred to as a place, in which a Muslim customer can have a drink unseen and to experience some other, forbidden pleasures: "Sometimes they would go to Khāchik's at Lālezār [Street]. Smiling to them kindly, the Armenian [...] would seat them at the back of his shop, so that they even could hold each other's hand" (Pārsipur, *Tubā*, p. 249)

An Armenian's shop or restaurant may become a place of intellectual and political discussions. In the same book by Parsipur, leftist intellectuals, depressed about the fall of Mosaddeq, "used to meet at monsieur Ārdāvāz's; while drinking 'araq, eating boiled feet (*khōrāk-e pācha*) and sausage they discussed fiercely" (ibid., p. 301). In Forugh Farrokhzād's poem "Ey marz-e por gohar," one could not only drink whisky on the back of Khāchik's shop, but also smoke "several grams of the purest first-class staff," taking part in a pseudo-mystical dispute, parodied with much irony by the poet.<sup>12</sup> Similarly Ali Musavi-Garmārudi in his revolutionary poem "Hefdah-e Shahrivar" bitinglly refers to some Westernized intellectuals drinking vodka in a bar and discussing stylistic details of their revolutionary poems, while a genuine Muslim woman-revolutionist is being shot dead in the street outside. The keeper of this establishment is addressed to as *monsieur* that, apparently, points to his Armenian identity (see below).

Thus, in modern literature, Armenians play a role somewhat similar to that of Zoroastrians (*pir-e moghān*; *mogh-bacha*) in classical poetry: they act as dispensers of alcoholic drinks forbidden by Islam, and as hosts of the places which stay beyond the control of political, as well as religious Muslim authorities. Yet, in comparison with an ancient *pir-e moghān* or

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<sup>9</sup> Shahrnus Pārsipur, *Tubā va ma'nā-ye shab*, 4th ed., Tehran, 1374 Sh./1995, pp. 122-23.

<sup>10</sup> Goli Taraqqi, "Bozorg-bānu-ye ruh-e man," in *Ganjina-ye zanān*, Spanga, 1992, pp. 84-85; in Iranian edition of the story (*Jā'i digar*, Tehran, 1380 Sh./2001, pp. 160-61) neither the motif of drinking, nor of the devastation of the Armenian shop appears (tr. by A. Krasnowolska).

<sup>11</sup> Sādeq Chubak, *Tangsir*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., Tehran, 2535 = 1355 Sh./1976, pp. 211-12, 214.

<sup>12</sup> *Tavallod-i digar*, Tehran, 2536 = 1356 Sh./1977, pp. 145.

*sāqi*, their role has been secularized and deprived of its esoteric dimension and, instead, connected to modern ideologies and ways of life.

Literary stereotype apparently makes no difference between those Armenians who have lived in Iran for hundreds of years and the newcomers. They are generally perceived as relatively new immigrants. Flights, displacements, and migrations from one country to another seem to be the common elements of their life stories. Their ties with Russian culture are often underlined, and in some cases they are even mistaken for Russians. If at all they can speak Persian, it is with a specific accent. For example, in Bozorg Alavi's "Tārikhcha-ye otāq-e man",<sup>13</sup> a landlady, madame Hākopiān – "was born in Iran, but she had spent her youth in Russia. She speaks Russian well [. . . and] since she has been staying in Iran for twenty-five years already, she can speak Persian, too, although with an Armenian accent" (p. 42). Or "A certain Armenian has an account in our bank [. . .]. He comes from Yerevan in Russia (*Iravān-e Rusiyya*). His name is Mr. Mirzāyān. He has a large factory and I think his income should be high"<sup>14</sup> (Ma'rufi, p. 193); and "Then monsieur Bughusiyān came, an Armenian refugee from Armenia, who could speak no more than a few words in Persian. [. . .] in a broken language he explained to Tubā, that Bolshevik was bad" (Pārsipur, p. 122)

In some instances Armenians are represented as people with a European appearance: monsieur Mirzāyān's niece Surmelina in Ma'rufi's *Samfoni* (p.200) has golden hair, a mechanic Ārman (Golshiri, p. 108)<sup>15</sup> is freckled, and Chubak's shopkeeper Asātur has blue eyes.

The houses of Armenian characters are described as furnished in a European way, with such objects as a piano, a fire-place (*shumina*; Ma'rufi, *ibid.*) and various Western-type gadgets.<sup>16</sup>

In general, Armenians, in spite of being deeply rooted in Iranian social landscape, are perceived as a sort of representatives of Western culture, especially in its Eastern (Russian) version. Cultural distance is stressed by French titles *madame* and *monsieur* given to Armenians by Muslim Iranians but, allegedly, also used among themselves. This distance may take an ironical implication, as in Ma'rufi's miniature short story "Mādām-ike . . ."<sup>17</sup>, in which a polite conversation takes place between two people of an extremely modest social background: an old tailor (Monsieur) and a poor widow (Madame). Out of hunger, Madame and her children eat

<sup>13</sup> Bozorg Alavi, "Tārikhcha-ye otāq-e man," in *idem, Chamedān*, Tehran, 2537 =1357 Sh./1978, pp. 41-52.

<sup>14</sup> 'Abbās Ma'rufi, *Samfoni-ye mordagān*, 4th ed., Tehran, 1374 Sh./1995.

<sup>15</sup> Hushang Golshiri, *Āyehā-ye dardār*, Tehran 1372 Sh./1993.

<sup>16</sup> 'Ali Khodā'i, *Tamām-e zemestān marā garm kon*, Tehran, 1379 Sh./2000, pp. 41-62.

<sup>17</sup> 'Abbās Ma'rufi, *Ākherin nasl-e bartar*, 2nd ed., Tehran 1370 Sh./1991, pp. 151-52.

polluted raisins found in garbage and, as a result, they all die. The contrast between the elegant way the characters address each other, and their miserable living conditions makes a grotesque effect. A similar paradox has been observed by Goli Taraqqi in her youth memoirs (“Khāna-ye mādar-bozorg”)<sup>18</sup>: “My mother has her dresses sewn by Madame Ana. My mother says she is queen Thorryā’s private tailor and has learned her job in Paris. My father laughs at these words and says all those impoverished Armenians tell similar rubbish” (p. 59). Madame Ana lives in a ruined house, in a tiny flat, full of mangy cats and stinking of dirty toilet.

The ironical implication of the French titles is sometimes noticed by the Armenians themselves. In Sā’edi’s “Vāgon-e siyāh”<sup>19</sup> an old, homeless Armenian, addressed by a secret agent as *monsieur*, replies: “I am not a “monsieur,” I am a “muqduṣi”.<sup>20</sup> Monsieurs sell sausage, muqduṣis pray and watch the holy Messiah, they are the children of God himself” (p. 255).

While underlining their outlandish snobbishness and, occasionally, noticing their interest in Western music and literature and their knowledge of foreign languages, modern authors seldom present Armenians as people of prestigious professions and high social position. Due to their “modern” jobs, they are perceived rather as low and middle-level representatives of Western technical civilization which made its way to Iran, in particular in the times of Rezā Shah Pahlavi. So, an Armenian may not only be a liquor-seller, but also a driver or a mechanic,<sup>21</sup> a photographer (Hedāyat, Pezeshkzād,<sup>22</sup> a waiter, a musician who plays Western music in a night club, a pop-singer (Khodā’i<sup>23</sup>), a tailor who follows European fashion (Taraqqi, Ma’rufi, Pārsipur), or/and a local businessman (Ma’rufi: owner of a sawmill). Armenian women, most frequently represented as tailors, may also rent rooms (Alavi), keep small restaurants and hotels (Khodā’i)<sup>24</sup> and photographic ateliers for ladies (Pārsipur, p. 175), teach foreign languages, Western dances and piano (Alavi, Khodā’i, Taraqqi).<sup>25</sup> Moreover, being more emancipated and better educated than their Muslim counterparts,

<sup>18</sup> Goli Taraqqi, *Khāterehā-ye parākanda*, Tehran 1371 Sh./1992, pp. 48-75.

<sup>19</sup> Gholām-Hosayn Sā’edi, “Vāgon-e siyāh,” in: *Shokufāyi-ye dāstān-e kutāh dar dāha-ye nakhostin-e enqelāb*, ed. S. Taqizada, 2nd ed., Tehran 1374 Sh./1995, pp. 251-74.

<sup>20</sup> *Muqduṣi* is a Christian counterpart of Moslem *hājji*, i.e., a person who has made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. For this explanation I am grateful to Prof. Andrzej Pisowicz.

<sup>21</sup> Golshiri, *Āyenehā*, p. 106.

<sup>22</sup> Hasan Hedāyat, “Tārik-khāna,” in idem, *Tārik-khāna: Majmu’a-ye dāstān*, Tehran, 1376 Sh./1997, pp. 7-80; Iraj Pezeshkzād, *Dā’i jān Nāpol’ on*.

<sup>23</sup> ‘Ali Khodā’i, “Bārun bārun-e,” in idem, *Az miyān-e shisha az miyān-e meh: Majmu’a-ye dāstān*, Tehran, 1370 Sh./1991, pp. 115-28.

<sup>24</sup> Idem, “Az miyān-e shisha az miyān-e meh,” *ibid.*, pp. 57-76.

<sup>25</sup> Idem, short stories in idem, *Az miyān-e shisha* and *Tamām-e zemestān marā garm kon*, Tehran 1379 Sh./2000; G. Taraqqi, “An su-ye divār” and “Golhā-ye Shirāz,” in idem, *Do donyā*, Tehran, 1383 Sh./2004, pp. 65-126.

Armenian girls are mentioned as the first to undertake office jobs in state institutions (banks, ministries, offices) after Rezā Shah's reforms (Pārsipur, p. 248).

Usually Armenians are viewed as people loyal to their Muslim friends, and ready to help them in need. A motif of an Armenian giving shelter to a Muslim followed by security agents appears both in Chubak's *Tangsir* and in Ma'rufi's *Samfoni*. In Chubak's novel an Armenian shopkeeper gives refuge to a nomad rebel, who had shot dead some corrupt local authorities (pp. 211-67). In *Samfoni*, the businessman Galust Mirzāyān hides in the cellars of a church a young poet Āyidin, who is looked for by SAVAK. This last case appears more complicated, however. While protecting Āyidin from his persecutors, Mirzāyān makes him work in hiding, himself drawing profits from his products. In the eyes of Iranian commentator on the book,<sup>26</sup> the Armenian is, in reality, a cynical capitalist in the service of Western imperialism.

On the other hand, because of their borderline position and dangers issuing from their minority status in Iran, Armenians are sometimes portrayed as conformists, who willingly declare their loyalty towards the disliked regime.<sup>27</sup> In Taraqqi's "Bozorgbānu," M. Ārdāvāz, whose shop had been burned by the revolutionists, "is afraid of imperialism and gave his vote to the Islamic Republic" (loc. cit.). An Armenian may even acquire some features of a suspected and dangerous individual serving foreign powers. This is the case with an Armenian photographer Bughus, allegedly a British spy, in Iraj Pezeshkzād's satirical novel *Dāyi jān Nāpol'on*.<sup>28</sup> Another Armenian photographer, Alek Shafarāzyān in Hasan Hedāyat's long short story "Tārik-khāna" (not to be mistaken with Sādeq Hedāyat's "Tārik-khāna"), killed in obscure circumstances, is supposed to have been connected with both the Soviet KGB and Western intelligence services. Although the story, told in the style of an American thriller, is poorly composed and its numerous threads find no logical solution, yet it keeps the reader in a sense of mystery and fear, and the "exotic" environment of an Armenian neighborhood and small Polish cafes during the time of World War II in Tehran contribute to this atmosphere.

A similar effect (however, deprived of any political subtext), is achieved by Bozorg Alavi in his "Tārikhcha-ye otāq-e man," in which a murder out of jealousy takes place in an Armenian family. In Iranian prose literature of the thirties, murders and suicides out of love are no exception but, in this particular story, horror and the uncommon nature of the events are intensified by its foreign setting and foreign requisites (a Christmas tree,

<sup>26</sup> Elhām Mahvizāni, *Marg-e rang*, Tehran, 1372 Sh./1993, p. 40.

<sup>27</sup> On the Armenians' attitudes towards Iranian authorities, see: Eliz Sanasarian, *Religious Minorities in Iran*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 39.

<sup>28</sup> 11th edition, Tehran, 2537=1357 Sh./1978, pp. 209 ff.

a baked goose, alcohol, a book of German short stories in Russian translation) staying in a striking contrast with everyday Tehran reality.

A literary piece in which a whole range of stereotyped ideas about Armenians has been used, sometimes in a perverse manner, is Gholām-Hosayn Sā'edi's "Vāgon-e siyāh."<sup>29</sup> Its hero, called Bughus, but also Hayk, Mayk, Qarapat, Harapat, Barghus, Marghus, Purghus, and some other names, is an old and, apparently, mentally disturbed beggar who is shadowed by a SAVAK agent who suspects him of being involved in some (possibly communist) conspiracy. And indeed, as the observation goes on, the old man reveals some puzzling sides of his personality. He appears to have a strong influence on the workers who visit him in an old railway wagon in which he lives and for whom he is a "father" and a spiritual guide. A store of weapons, discovered close to his wagon, seems to point to his subversive activity. Imprisoned, Bughus stands tortures and dies a heroic death, not having denounced his friends. Although seemingly mad and living a life of a tramp, the old man appears to be well-educated; in his bags he carries with him the books in various, eastern and western languages which he can read. When pretending to translate the passages from them to the SAVAK agent, Bughus makes use of the common belief about Armenian outlandish snobbishness, presenting the books as sentimental love stories from European aristocratic spheres. The story does not lack the image of Armenians as wine-drinkers. Bughus, probably conscious of the secret agent observing him from outside, addresses to his "children" a speech in praise of wine-drinking: "The lecture of today, that is tonight, is a very good one. It is about the advantages of wine and wine-drinking. Oh, my children! Wine is a good think. I mean, it is a very good thing, isn't it? And since it is good, one has to drink it, doesn't he? (p. 268).

Muslim authors seldom try to give up their stereotyped vision and to make a deeper insight into the life of Armenian community. An interesting passage, being a description of an Armenian rite connected with the cult of the dead in modern Tehran, is found in Hushang Golshiri's *Āyegahā-ye dardār* (pp. 106-09). The narrator becomes a witness to a ceremony, which impresses him strongly. Together with the friends of a dead Armenian mechanic he goes to a Christian cemetery outside the city. The men kindle bonfires that enclose the grave in a triangle, and then drink vodka, pouring the share dedicated to the deceased friend into his grave, through a small metal pipe stuck in the ground. The narrator, not understanding their language and not fully aware of the meaning of the event, relates the scene as an outsider, who has suddenly discovered an unknown and unexpected

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<sup>29</sup> I am grateful to Prof. Carina Jahani from the Uppsala University for having drawn my attention to this story.

sphere of life of the people so far known to him from superficial contacts only.

A more serious attempt at an author's identification with the viewpoint of Iranian Armenians can be seen in 'Ali Khodā'i's short stories (*Az miyān-e shisha*, *Az miyān-e meh* and *Tamām-e zemestān marā garm kon*). Action of some of his stories takes place in Anzali and other Caspian resorts, where the Iranian and European (mainly Russian) influences intermingled during the last two centuries. The majority of Khodā'i's characters are elderly, lonely people (in particular women) with complicated, painful biographies. They live their old age in the Islamic Republic, where their previous social milieu does not exist any more and their skills are of no use. Khodā'i's heroes are people with double identity. They are considered strangers by their Muslim compatriots and the Revolution has driven them to the margin of public life, yet they themselves consider Iran their own place on earth. However, while in some of the stories Armenian identity of the characters is undisputed ("Bārun bārun-e"<sup>30</sup>; "Shomāra-ye 69909"<sup>31</sup>), in some other cases they may be Russian, Polish or any other East European immigrants, as well. A set of common features seem to be in force for all of them. Interestingly, both in Khodā'i's and Taraqqi's writings, we come across the same types of old, queer, half-foreign ladies titled *madame*, but while Taraqqi's approach to them may be qualified as that of ironical distance, Khodā'i treats them with much sympathy and sentiment.

Zoyā Pīrzād's works can be viewed as a further step towards the breaking of cultural and ethnic barriers. Here the observer-narrator has been placed inside an Armenian community, which he/she presents as an integral part of Iranian social landscape. It seems quite clear that the author is personally acquainted with the language, culture and customs of the minority she describes. The world of Pīrzād's books seems to be, in a way, hermetic and self-sufficient, concentrated on its own past and present problems, although many passages remind the reader that she is dealing with a small diaspora, surrounded by Muslim majority that now takes the role of the "others." On the other hand, this world is, in many respects, strikingly parallel to that of Muslim Iranians. Patriarchal and authoritarian family, deep attachment to tradition, pressure of religion and of community on an individual – all these are no less powerful than among Muslims. The author approaches the problems of co-existence of the two communities from different angles, showing both personal and social consequences of their interrelationships.

So, for instance, in Pīrzād's "Hastehā-ye ālbālu,"<sup>32</sup> we find a Muslim

<sup>30</sup> *Az miyān-e shisha*, pp. 113-28.

<sup>31</sup> *Tamām-e zemestān*, pp. 73-83.

<sup>32</sup> In: Zoyā Pīrzād, *Yek ruz mānda be 'Id-e Pāk*, 2nd ed., Tehran 1379 Sh./2000, pp. 1-42.

girl Tāhera, attending an Armenian school in a provincial Caspian city and seemingly feeling at home in both languages, religions and cultures. As a child, she can easily skip between the two, being a Muslim at home and a Christian at school, alternately wearing the emblems of both religions:

...she laughed. At school and in the church I wear a cross, and while saying my *namāz* – an Allāh. [ . . . ]

– Why have you got both a cross and an Allāh?, I asked.

She shrugged her shoulders [ . . . ] – Because both are pretty, she replied. (pp. 24-5)

The reader is not told what happened to Tāhera when she grew up. One can only guess that she would have to choose only one of the two worlds for herself but, most probably, she would remain an outsider in both of them.

The most important book by Pirzād, her novel *Cherāghā-rā man khāmush mikonam*,<sup>33</sup> is a story of an Armenian family in Ābādān in early sixties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The narrative concentrates on the psychological problems faced by the heroine, but in the background we find repercussions of many important social and political issues of the epoch: a discussion of nationalism (here, Armenian nationalism) versus cosmopolitan leftism; Westernization as reflected in mass culture, life-style and language; economic and social inequalities in Iranian society; and women's fight for their social and political rights (here, in particular: for their voting rights). Another question recurring in the novel is the place of Armenians in Iranian society: should they live in isolation, cultivating their own identity, or rather should they get involved in all-nation agenda and feel themselves to be a part of Iranian society? Should Muslim Iranians be interested in Armenian culture and history? Is it a part of their own patrimony, or does it belong to Armenians only?

Pirzād's books break the stereotypes. Her Armenians are not much more Westernized than their contemporary educated Muslim Iranians, and no less attached to their tradition than religious Muslims are to theirs. Moreover, what is strikingly different from the image of an Armenian dominating in Persian literature, is that Pirzād's Armenian characters belong to the intelligentsia; they are cultured, well educated, well-off professionals (teachers, engineers, doctors, etc.), interested in literature, science and social activities. They have their own writers, publishers and bookshops; there are books in the families, and taste for reading is transferred from parents to children. They form small, well-integrated communities, concentrated around a church and a school, experienced in self-organization. Their members are active in different cultural and charitable societies. The school is a local cultural center in which the

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<sup>33</sup> First published in 1380 Sh./2001.

children, their parents and teachers cooperate successfully. In *Cherāghā* a Muslim feminist is looking for Armenian ladies' support for women's voting cause, but simultaneously she hopes to learn from them how to run a private school, how to organize help for the poor, and for self-education for women. In other words, she looks in Armenian community for patterns of a grassroot civil society and for women's emancipation. Paradoxically, for the apparently more emancipated and independent Armenian heroine of the novel, the idea of undertaking an activity outside the family and community circle at first seems impossible. Her understanding of the need for participation in broader political and social issues comes later, as a result of her personal maturing experience.

### CONCLUSION

An Armenian in Persian literature generally appears as a particular type of a familiar stranger. Remaining at the meeting point of two civilizations (East and West) and partly belonging to both, he plays the role of a mediator who transfers new cultural phenomena (inventions, fashions, ways of life) from West to East. The literary material at hand witnesses a common idea of Armenians as transmitters of technical, artistic and everyday-life modernizing changes rather than of intellectual ideas. On the other hand, Pirzād's works points to the Armenian community as an important potential source of intellectual and social patterns, which can serve as a model for Iranian society.

As E. Sanasarian puts it,<sup>34</sup> "For much of the twentieth century, as indigenous Christians more at ease with Western ways, they [Armenians] satisfied the Iranian thirst for Western economic connections, lifestyle, and ethos."

Thus, an Armenian seems to be thought of as a sort of local European, domesticated and assimilated to Iranian conditions. He/she lives outside the Muslim community, yet in a close symbiosis with it. Although the general attitude towards him is friendly, albeit somewhat paternalizing, he keeps some features of a "stranger." Literature reveals a distance and in some cases even a distrust and suspicion of the Muslim majority towards him: an Armenian's intermediary position may be seen as a precondition for his collaboration with hostile foreign powers and for defusing undesirable elements of Western civilization.

On the basis of the example of Iranian Armenians as presented by literary works, it can be clearly seen how fluent the borders between the cultural "East" and "West" are, and how an important factor of their mutual interactions the mobility of a bordering minority group can be. In this

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<sup>34</sup> Op. cit., p. 39.

particular case, former Russian possessions in Trans-Caucasia served as a territory through which European culture expanded southeastward. The migrations and trans-border contacts of the Armenians were an important factor of the change.

The most recent developments in Persian literature are witness to the fact that the idea of Iran as a multi-cultural country in which minorities have their own place, had found its way into public consciousness. This happens in a great part in opposition to official ideologies (Pahlavi nationalism, Islamic fundamentalism) each of which in its own way, has tried to present Iranian society as homogeneous and mono-cultural. Moreover, modern Iranian writers do not perceive their own culture as being sharply separated from the outside world, in particular from the West. The frequency of appearance of Armenian characters in contemporary literature seems to be a sign of a search for links between the cultures.

# Urban Experience in Iranian Narrative Fiction

JAVAD FA'AL ALAVI

Translated from the Persian by *Guilan Siassi*

For Iranians of the second half of the nineteenth century, urban experience, as the modern experience *par excellence*, was an open-ended process. Despite all the efforts and struggles to discern its varied aspects, the big city experience was, like the phenomenon of modernity, thought to belong only to faraway lands, namely, Western Europe. Far from being carefully conceived in their social and historical reality, these metropolitan lands had a mythical quality in the minds of statesmen and thinkers of the period.

One of the distinguishing marks of Iranian literature of the past hundred years in general, and fictional narratives in particular, is that they were written in response to the phenomenon of the modern city. By presenting a condensed picture of the noteworthy outcomes of this experience, as exemplified by several fictional narratives drawn from this period, this study will attempt to show how the concept of the city as a modern phenomenon also became a source for negative narrative portrayals from various viewpoints: stories in which modern cities were materialistic and irreligious, and introduced all kinds of debauchery and corruption. The old traditions of our towns and villages provided a contrasting symbol of opposition to such urban debasement.

The first narrative experience revolving around the concept of the city takes shape in the 1895 novel, *Siyāhat-nāma-ye Ebrāhim Beg* (The travel diary of Ebrāhim Beg), by Hājj Zayn al-'Ābedin Marāgha'i. Ebrāhim Beg, the hero of this novel, was born in Egypt to an Iranian merchant father who had lived in that country from the time of his youth. He is an idealistic and patriotic character, whose image of Iran has been formed by his readings of ancient Iranian history and his experiences of life in advanced European countries. His idea of the modern city is a mixture of the beliefs and dreams of a merchant, brimming with thoughts of progress and civic society. The modern and utopian city of Ebrāhim Beg is one that is filled with factories, commercial companies, recreational opportunities and outlets, banks and communication networks, all buttressed by progressive economic and legal laws and regulations together with individual and occupational security. The novel is about the adventures of Ebrāhim Beg on his travels to Iranian towns, which is

his first journey to the land of his ancestors. He describes 'Iranian cities' in the last decade of the nineteenth century as follows:

In this entire country, whether in large cities or small villages and hamlets, one cannot see the chimney of a single textile plant emitting smoke; from no direction can one hear the whistle of an arriving train; in no city are there tall or stately government buildings; there are no public schools or hospitals anywhere in sight. Companies and banks, which are markers of progress and civilization, cannot be found. Since so many of the inhabitants have no choice but to emigrate to foreign countries, the towns appear deserted (pp. 185-86).

Marāgha'i's entire novel is filled with his hero's impressions of whatever he observes in the course of his travels to Iranian cities. His criticism of the conditions of Iranian cities is accompanied by harsh rejection of its backward, non-civic, and traditional aspects:

Compared to Western towns, [Iranian towns] could not even be considered hamlets. Whereas the walls and gates of European cities seem to show spirit and feeling ..., grief rains down from the walls and gates of Iranian towns, whose inhabitants are ignorant of human life; so much has delusion settled into their veins that they are completely unaware of the state of the times and removed from all aspects of the civilized world (pp. 117, 125).

Although Ebrāhim Beg, having seen the backwardness and the disorganized condition of Iranian cities, is stricken with grief and despair at the end of his journey, the abiding value of the novel lies in the great feeling with which this defeated character paints a most idealized picture of modern cities.

The Constitutional Revolution reinforced the intellectual atmosphere, which was highly critical of superstitious beliefs and norms (the best example of this age is 'Ali-Akbar Dehkhodā (1878-1955) and his satirical pieces, *Charand o Parand*. There followed a more objective look at urban social relations and a turning of them to the narrative imagination, which we see most dramatically in Moshfeq Kāzemi's *Tehrān-e makhowf* (*Frightful Tehran*, 1925).

*Tehrān-e makhowf*, the city set on the eve of Sayyed Ziyā' al-Din Tabātabā'i's coup d'état in February 1921, is an environment for progressive original thinkers to admire individual heroism and for the recently empowered *nouveau-riches*. It is a bourgeois town under the hegemony of incompetent and conspiratorial characters who are busy occupying the social scene and urban spaces of the defeated and declining Qajar aristocracy.

In this novel, Moshfeq Kāzemi succeeds in producing realistic scenes of the northern and central neighborhoods of the city (Chāla Meydān); of opium dens, brothels, and other centers of vice. He also takes innovative and successful steps in describing the urban way of life,

which on one hand is going through the decadence of the Qajar period and on the other hand is a place where new symbols of the bourgeoisie (like hotels, clubs, cafes, cinemas and motorcars passing through wealthy upper-class neighborhoods) are taking form.

With artistic incisiveness, Kāzemi contrasts the northern and southern neighborhoods and makes visible, for the first time in Persian narrative, the concept of uptown and downtown for cities like Tehran, where the wealthy live at the foot of the Alborz mountains and the poor live south of the city in the fields of Dulāb and Rey. Despair, ignorance, and incompetence reign supreme and progressive, enlightened thought is exposed to threats, intimidation, and ridicule. Although people hope for reforms in the city's living conditions and modernization of its structures, they are pessimistic and do not know how to achieve them.

Farrokh, the dissident, passionate protagonist of the novel, having suffered great pains and vagrancy in order to reach his beloved, enters Tehran in the front lines of the coup with big dreams, but soon realizes that all those who had been arrested have now been freed by royal decree and are on their way to the parliament (Majles). The novel ends on a desperate and pessimistic note about the accomplishment of reforms, and Moshfeq Kāzemi's stormy and chaotic, noxious and terrifying Tehran remains vivid in one's memory.

In the novel *Tafrihāt-e shab* (*Nighttime Recreations*) by Mohammad Mas'ud (1901-47), the narrator, who is a young teacher, spends the night with his friends in the cafes and red light district of the city with prostitutes, runaway girls, knife-pulling ruffians, immigrant construction workers and wayward students from the provinces, and civil servants "on twenty-tumans monthly salaries" who are thus experiencing a Tehran in whose streets only drunkards, beggars and vagabonds can be seen, and in whose neighborhoods nothing but poverty, prostitution and insecurity can be found. In the concluding section, the stray teacher returning from his nightly excursion finds himself the following morning in front of his students and realizes that it is the Ethics class, and he must teach them ethics! This reveals the contradictory character of life in the city that is the capital of the powerful government of social and cultural reforms.

Similarly in *Zibā* (1933), Mohammad Hejāzi (1918-73) denounces the corruption that reigns among Tehran's urban society from the same pessimistic perspective as Moshfeq Kāzemi and Mohammad Mas'ud. Hejāzi's gauge of this corruption of urban life is the collapse of moral and religious values and traditions under the influence of urban development and the wish for modernization. For the first time in this novel, traditional values and principles, rustic Islamic piety and virtues, come face to face with the morals and values of worldly city life. The former are exemplified by the "purity" of Shaikh Hosayn (a rural-born

seminarian who, with hopes of becoming a mullah, has come to Tehran to continue his education) while the latter is represented by Zibā (lit: beautiful), a woman of questionable morals who eventually, with a thousand tricks, captures the love of this Hosayn. Using Zibā's connections and adopting the degenerate values stemming from city life, Hosayn quickly moves up the ladder of success. Hejāzi paints a stormy and chaotic picture of Tehran in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: a picture of a city where thugs, crooks, and wicked women like Zibā are in charge, casting their shadow over people's lives and causing simple country boys like Shaikh Hosayn, who eventually ends up in prison, to become corrupted.

The narrative works of Sādeq Hedāyat (1902-1951) in the thirties belong to a period of ambivalence and uncertainty for urban Iranian intellectuals who were writing in the wake of the failed Constitutional Revolution and witnessing the first harsh top-down modernization measures. This was a period whose direct and indirect consequences led to an unparalleled dissemination of reaction in the following decades. The works of Hedāyat build upon Marāgha'i's sympathetic treatment of the modern city and at the same time develop a new critical approach towards it.

Hedayat's *The Blind Owl* (1937) may be considered the greatest novel of the post-Constitutional Revolution period and is one of the clear signs of the new Iranian culture and society that was in the process of formation then. Like Hedāyat's other works in these years, *The Blind Owl* is the product of a transitional period when old neighborhoods lost their luster while new streets and neighborhoods, along with stately buildings, were springing up; a period of the waning of old urban values and the formation of new ones; a period which can be characterized in the words of Dāryush Shāyegān as follows: "As we find ourselves at a rift between different strata of history, it is likely that clashes and confrontations between different strata of consciousness will occur." (Shāyegān, p. 206) It is not without reason, then, that the narrator of *The Blind Owl* has built his house, quite remarkably, on the other side of the town's gully, between Tehran and Rey, that is, "at a rift" between the strata of two different times.

I am fortunate in that the house where I live is situated beyond the edge of the city in a quiet district far from the noise and bustle of life.... Only on the far side of the gully one can see a number of squat mud-brick houses which mark the extreme limit of the city. Opening off my room is a dark closet. The room itself has two windows facing out onto the world of the rabble. One of them looks onto our own courtyard, the other onto the street, forming thereby a link between me and the city of Rey, the city which they call the "Bride of the World," with its thousand-fold web of winding streets, its host of squat houses,

its schools and its caravanserais. The city which is accounted the greatest city in the world is breathing and living its life there beyond my room. When I close my eyes here in my little room the vague, blurred shadows of the city (of which my mind is at all aware, whether consciously or not), all take substantial form and rise before me in the shape of pavilions, mosques and gardens.<sup>1</sup>

Being situated in a time and place suspended on the border of the present and past gives the narrator of *The Blind Owl* access to two levels of consciousness and recognition: the power to confront simultaneously the elements of past and future. It is for this reason that when the narrator closes his eyes, according to him, he can envision the blurred shadows of an ideal town that bears elements of the past and as such has left its mark on him: a town stemming from a historical, dreamlike memory.

This suspended state of time and place forms Hedāyat's conception of modernity and of the city, where nothing belongs to either future or past and for that reason has fallen into the circle of repetitious memories and dreams.

In spite of all his anxieties about the backwardness of traditional urban culture and his anger over the new hypocritical and inauthentic values, Hedāyat remains sympathetic to the notion of modernization. In contrast to the designers of top-down modernization, he sees its actualization to lie not in a return to glories of the ancient past but in a free and judicious passage from the past and in the building of a modern society from below (even though the weaknesses and backward state of the society in general also make him despair about the accomplishment of this task).

One can follow this same thought and vision in Hedāyat's other stories, particularly "Changāl" (The claws; 1932) and "Sag-e velgard" (The stray dog; 1942). On the one hand, the cultural lifestyle and values of the newly-arrived *nouveau-riche* class, who are gradually making a place for themselves in society, enrages him; he portrays them as inauthentic and phony people who all look greedy who run after money, and who follow their lust. The works of Hedāyat and *The Blind Owl* in particular are a loud objection to the dominance of such a social order and of such an imitative top-down modernization program. On the other hand, he paints a sympathetic picture of the life and traditions of the urban lower classes but severely criticizes their cultural and social backwardness and their superstitions.

A decade after Reza Shah's modernization program, the crisis caused by Iran's occupation during the Second World War increased the marginalization of the lower strata of the country's urban society. This strata comprise the subject of most of Sādeq Chubak's stories and two of

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Costello's tr., pp. 6 and 43.

his books: *Khaymashab-bāzi* (*The puppet show*; 1945) and *Antar-i ke luti-ash morda bud* (*The monkey whose master had died*; 1949). Later, they appear in *Cherāgh-e ākher* (*The last lamp*; 1965) and *Ruz-e avval-e qabr* (*First day in the grave*; 1965). Chubak conveys a pessimistic and sardonic view of life on the margins of the city as he paints an ugly and violent picture of the life of thieves, addicts, street performers, corpse washers, prostitutes, drivers, low-level employees, and other outcast strata without much sympathy or intellectual sensitivity. The towns depicted in Chubak's work are all awash in pollution and corruption. The people in his stories are generally helpless, spiteful and lacking in human emotions, caught up in the circle of their inescapable fate on the margins of city life.

Chubak's approach is the opposite of Hedāyat's. Hedāyat is not only attentive to the conditions that reinforce cultural backwardness among the lower classes but is also more sensitive in his encounter with modern life, while Chubak maintains a constantly bleak picture of urban society and especially the outcasts, avoiding any critical view of the modernization phenomenon.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the dominant view in Iranian narrative literature was opposition to modernization (now called the Western model) and, accordingly, an opposition to all aspects of modern life in the cities, as the symbol of consumerism and westernization. In the opinion of most of the writers of this period, the arrival of the Western model of modernization was responsible for the severe endangerment of many urban customs and cultures. At a time when the Marāgha'i's dreams about the modern city were coming true, even if only partially and incompletely, the composition of the urban population was changing as a result of the ever-growing immigration of peasants to the city and the spread of urban ghettos. Meanwhile, the hostility of Iranian intellectuals and writers toward modernization increased and the depiction of urban life entered a new phase. Literature, especially narrative literature, came to reflect both the endangered ideals of the traditional strata and the customs of the rural newcomers to the city.

In *Gharb-zadagi* (Westoxification; 1962), Jalāl Āl-e Ahmad (1923-69) considers the peasants the mainstay of Iran's independence from the West through self-sufficiency in agricultural production, and speaks out against the disintegration of villages in *Modir-e madrasa* (*The school principal*; 1958) and *Nefrin-e zamin* (*Curse of the land*; 1967). In *Nefrin-e zamin*, he lauds the peasants and overtly declares that the abandonment of the land and villages and the corruption of Islamic traditions are the results of the pursuit of Western models of modernization by the ruling class and the rich. Āl-e Ahmad's heroes in *Modir-e madrasa* and *Nefrin-e zamin*, who are both teachers with the same pragmatic attitude, fight to

somehow establish a mutual understanding between modern urban life and rural traditions, without realizing that they have inadvertently put a seal of approval on the obliteration of those traditions.

In the years that followed, up to the 1979 Revolution, pastoral subjects formed the predominant content of novels, while the problems of the rapidly-changing cities were largely ignored or used only as a subterfuge for political battles against the regime, which had put modernization and Western-type development on the frontispiece of its programs.

To conclude, the narrative literature of Iran in its alarmed reaction to more than a half-century of top-down modernization and the upheavals of urban life, exceptional cases aside, brought about a broad spectrum of varied opposition. The modern city depicted in most of the narrative texts of this period is built on political foundations that were perceived as destructive to ancient and religious traditions. The roots of this discontent lay in the top-down modernization program. At a time when the cities of the country, especially the capital Tehran, were gradually becoming symbols of an official worldly culture and as massive, luxurious buildings were increasingly overshadowing the old houses and neighborhoods, our writers, despite their own urban origins, continued their hostility by offering chaotic pictures of urban life. Only rarely do we find among them a writer like Sādeq Hedāyat who sympathetically accepts modernity and urbanization in its totality, with all its abasement and wretchedness. Neither painting a decorative picture of urban ugliness, poverty, and misery (as did Hejāzi), nor flatly opposing the city's modern manifestations (as did Āl-e Ahmad), Hedāyat exposed a multitude of problems in urban life as well as their human impact. Thus, he can be considered the first Iranian writer to introduce the arenas of city life into the images of a narrative world, offering the first serious meditation on the problem of urbanization and the most important representation of these fountainheads of urban life in friction in Iran.

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## BOOK SURVEYS



# Survey of Russian Publications on Iranian and Persianate Studies (2001-2005)

FIRUZA ABDULLAYEVA and LEILA DODYKHUOEVA

Vera Rastorgueva and Joy Edelman, *Etimologicheskii slovar' iranskih yazykov* (Etymological dictionary of the Iranian languages) I (a-ā, 327 pp.) and II, *Vostochnaya literatura*, Moscow, 2000-2003.

This is the first systematic etymological dictionary of Iranian languages, containing words of both dead Iranian languages and those that are still being spoken in Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Russia and other countries. It is arranged according to the root-principle. Every entry includes information on the most archaic, reconstructed proto-Iranian prototype and its pre-history, as well as its representative reflections in Iranian languages, old and modern, so that the Iranian lexicon could be easily incorporated into the more general Indo-European system as its sub-division.

*Iranistika v Rossii i iranisty* (Iranian Studies in Russia: Research and Researchers), Institute of Oriental Studies, Moscow, 2001, 238 pp. •

This book contains the proceedings of the round table conference sponsored by the embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Moscow in May 2000. It is a collection of twenty-five articles by Moscow Iranologists on the history of Iranian studies in Moscow, and also papers on notable scholars who have made significant contributions to Iranistics as well as some papers addressing specific subjects concerning Iranian studies. Among them are the papers by L. Kulagina (on the history of Russian Iranian Studies and about B. Zahoder on his centenary), N. Mamedova (three articles on contemporary Iranian studies in Russia, political situation in modern Iranian society, and the role of Armenians in the Iranian studies of Russia), S. Ravandi-Fadayi (on foreign policy of Iran as reflected in the works of Russian scholars), I. Fedorova (on Iran-American relations in Russian historiography), V. Klyashtorina (on Iranistics in Russia and the heritage of Evgeniy Bertels), A. Arabadjan (on the beginning of the studies of Iranian economy in Russia and the Soviet Union in 1920-56), V. Tsukanov (on the study of the economy of Iran in the 1960-90s), O. Zhigalina (Ethno-social aspects of Iranian studies in Russia), B. Logashova (on ethnography of Iranian peoples in

the works of Russian scholars) and M. Arunova (on the history of studies of Herat and its region). Papers on individual scholars include those by N. Sazonova (Iranistics in the State museum of Orient, also as a co-author of M. Kullanda about V. Tardov), V. Genis (about R. Abikh), B. Zahoder (about E. Bertels), L. Salomatshaeva (about A. Bertels), Yu. Rubinchik (about L. Peysikov), M. Reisner (about V. Nikitin) and S. Miliband (about A. Falina, V. Trubetskoy, A. Demin, N. Kuznetsova, E. Doroshenko). The last paper contains poems dedicated by L. Avdeeva to Nina Kuznetsova, Elena Doroshenko, and Boris Zahoder.

The supplement contains two reviews by S. Ravandi-Fadayi: (1) of the exhibition “Five centuries of Irano-Russian cooperation” and (2) of the collective work of the group of scholars in the Institute of Linguistics (3 vols, Moscow, 1999-2000) in the series “World Languages: Iranian languages (South Western, North Western and Eastern Iranian languages): E. Gladkov’s *Manual of the Persian Language*; V. Ivanov’s *Manual of the Persian Language*; G. Golev’s *Persian Russian Phraseological Dictionary*.

*Tolkovanie Korana: Lahorskiy tafsir* (Commentary on the Qur’an: The Lahore Tafsir), an annotated translation of the anonymous Persian manuscript, by F. Abdullaeva, with indices and a preface discussing the appearance of the genre of Persian Qur’ān exegesis and theological prose and its development after the Islamization of the Iranian peoples. It is published in the series *Vostochnaya literatura, Pamyatniki pis’mennosti Vostoka* 124, Moscow, 2001, 342 pp. The unique manuscript, created about a thousand years ago, is part of a text of 92 folios, containing the interpretation of 88 verses (*āyas*) of the second chapter (*sura*) of the Qur’ān, “al-Baqara” (the Cow). The linguistic (phonetic/orthographic, and lexical peculiarities of the text make it one of the most interesting monuments of Persian prose from the earliest period of the New Persian language, when it was establishing itself as a viable literary medium after “two centuries of silence,” but such works surviving from that period are extremely rare. The author must have lived in the region between historical Transoxiana and Northern Khurasan, not later than the 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

Vladimir Kushev, *Sochinenie afganskogo poeta XVIII veka* (The study of *Golshan-e Afghān*, a work of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Afghan poet, calligrapher and painter, ‘Ali-Akbar Orakzay), *Peterburgskoe vostoko-vedenie*, Saint Petersburg, 2003, 123 pp., based on a unique manuscript in the collection of the Matenadaran, which is believed to be an autographed copy of the author.

The text of the manuscript had been studied by D. N. MacKenzie (1963) and ‘Abdallah Khidmatgar Bakhtanay (1964), but it was the late Kushev who gave full analyses of the poetic works of Orakzay as well as his social, political and spiritual environment, reconstructing the details of his biography on the basis of information garnered from Orakzay’s own poems.

The book also contains Kushev’s Russian translations of three Orakzay’s *qasidas*, with their facsimile as a supplement. It is a pity, however, that none of the eighteen miniature paintings executed by the author himself to illustrate his poems has been reproduced in the book, particularly in view of the fact that several of them represent his autographed self-portrait. Professor Kushev has given rather detailed descriptions of them in a special chapter on the paintings in the manuscript.

Oleg Akimushkin, *Srednevekovyi Iran: Kultura, istoriya, filologiya* (Medieval Iran. Culture, history, philology), Vostok series (Society, culture, religion), Saint Petersburg “Nauka,” 2004.

This is an invaluable collection of Akimushkin’s major contributions during his long and fruitful scholarly life. They all had been published in various Soviet and Russian periodicals, except for “Le Turkestan Oriental et les Oirats,” which appeared in *Etudes mongoles* (1974, cahier 5, pp. 157-63). Twenty-nine articles are arranged in four parts, representing his main scholarly fields of interest, in (1) palaeography, codicology and textology, (2) history, historiography and chronicles, (3) literature and literary historiography, and (4) culture:

1. “State Calligrapher Mir ‘Emād Qazvini; An illuminated manuscript in the collection of the Institute of the Peoples of Asia of the Academy of Sciences of USSR”; “Eskandar Monshi on the calligraphers in the reign of Shah Tahmāsb I”; “The Legend about the painter Behzād and the calligrapher Mahmud Nishāpuri”; “Qāzi Ahmad Qomi about the copy of the *Lawā’eh* by ‘Abd al-Rahmān Jāmi”; “Notes to the biography of Kamāl al-Din Behzād”; “Notes about a Persian manuscript book and its creators”; “Eskandar Monshi on the painters in the reign of Shah Tahmāsb I Safavi”; “Scholarly study of the text of written monuments and ‘critical edition’ ”; “The Hyderabad ‘autograph’ of the ‘Treatise on calligraphers’ by Qāzi Ahmad Qomi”; “Archeography and codicology”; “Sources of the ‘Treatise on calligraphers and painters’ [*Golestān-e honar*] by Qāzi Ahmad Qomi; *Divān* of Hāfez: textology and editions.

2. “Kāshghar campaign of Uzbeks under ‘Abd Allāh Khan”; “On the foreign policy of the Monghol state towards Uzbeks and Kazakhs from 1530s to 1660s”; “Mongolia: Mongols and qirghizes in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century”; “Continuation of Eskandar Monshi and ‘Brief essence

of biographies' of Mohammad Ma'sum"; "Chronology of the rulers of the Eastern part of Chaghatay Ulus (Tughluq-Timur-khan)."

3. Commentaries on: "The 'artificial' *qasida* of Qewāmi Motarrezi"; "The history of the first *Divān* of Jāmi"; "About the tradition of the genre of 'artificial *qasida*' in Persian poetry"; "The second edition of the *Divān* of Hāfez; *Tuti-nāma* and the predecessor of Naqshabi"; "The functions of poetic collections and albums in the Medieval Persian and Tajik *belles-lettres*"; "The Inspired One from Rum."

4. "The royal library (*ketāb-khāna*) of Shah Tahmāsb Safavi in Tabriz"; "The library of the Shibanids in Bukhara in the 16<sup>th</sup> century"; "The dictionary *al-Sehāh al-'Ajamiyya*: date of compilation."

The articles are accompanied by the bibliography of Akimushkin's works published from 1954 until 2003, compiled by the author himself. Hopefully this collection of his articles will be a start for publication of all his *kolliyyāt*, mentioned in the bibliographical list.

Olga Chunakova, *Pehleviyskiy slovar' zoroastriyskikh terminov, mificheskikh personazhey i mifologicheskikh simvolov* (Pahlavi dictionary of Zoroastrian terms, mythological personages, and mythological symbols), Vostochnaya literatura, Moscow, 2004.

Despite being rather modest in size, this dictionary (286 pp. of pocket book format) contains in many cases unique materials extracted from the original Zoroastrian sources (about forty), some of which had been published by Professor Chunakova during the last several years (Zoroastrian texts: Maxims of the Spirit of Mind, Moscow, 1997; Learning the ways and routes of the pious, Moscow, 1991; *Kār-nāmag ī Ardashīr ī Pāpakān*, Moscow, 1987; Pahlavi Divine Comedy: *Ardā Wīrāz-nāmag* and other texts, Moscow 2001) as well as from *Bundahishn*.

The corpus of the dictionary is accompanied by a very brief preface, a list of the sources used, two lists of abbreviations, bibliography, a list of entries (about 450) and a list of illustrations (altogether nine) reproducing in black and white the images of the Sasanian silver plates, jugs and coins in the collection of the Hermitage museum, and miniatures from the *Shāh-nāma* manuscripts in the collection of the National Library of Russia. The proper names in the titles of the entries are given in all known versions of pronunciation. The information compiled in this dictionary is based almost exclusively on Pahlavi sources; that is why entries vary in length from several lines (e.g., Mehr, Anāhid, Siyāvosh) to several pages. Entries such as "Ahriman" (7 pp), "Resurrection" (3 pp), "Evil creatures" (2 pp), "Giyumard" [Gayōmard] (2 pp), "Demon" (2 pp), "Dev" [Dēv] (3 pp), "Animals" (4 pp), "Calendar" (5 pp), "Mashya and Madhyane" [Mashiya and Mashiyānag]

(2 pp), “Fire” (5 pp), “Ormazd” (4 pp), “Paradise” (3 pp), “Plants” (3 pp), “Sun” (2 pp), “Tishtar” (2 pp), “Farnbay” (4 pp), “Numbers” (6 pp), contain not only a great deal of details but also several versions of myths.

The system of having articles on the same subject both under the Russian and Pahlavi titles, according to which the dictionary is organized, tends to double the user’s effort. It would have been more logical, for example, to merge the two articles “Dēv” and “Demon” into one entry. The same observation can also be made about the existence of general articles on wider subjects (e.g., “Animals,” “Plants,” “Planets”) and also of entries on specific topics that are parts of these subjects (“Bull,” “Frog,” “Dog”, etc.).

Victoria Kryukova, *Zoroastrianism*, Azbuka-klassika, Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie, Saint Petersburg 2005. The book is a brief and popular survey of the history of Zoroastrian and Avestan studies, conducted with scholarly approach and high academic quality. It covers the most recent updated publications on the subject. It draws on the materials on ethnography and anthropology, describing and comparing them with live rituals in the everyday practices that are still current in different ethnic groups like the Pamirian “Live funeral.” The author illustrates her narrative by illuminating excerpts from the Avesta and other original contemporary sources in Russian translations by K. G. Salemann, I. M. Steblin-Kamenskiy, T. Ya. Elizarenkova, O. Chunakova, and Z. Harebati. The supplement contains the author’s own translations from the *Vidēvdād*, not published before.

*Yazyki i etnografiya kryshi mira*, (Roof of the world: Languages and ethnography), Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie, Saint Petersburg, 2005, 112 pp., published on the occasion of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Faculty of Oriental Studies of the Saint Petersburg University and the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Gorno-Badakhshan province of Tajikistan.

The book is a collection of articles on Iranian, and in particular Central Asian and Pamirian philology, dialectology, ethnography, and anthropology, prepared by the native speakers of the Pamir languages (Shughnāni, Vakhi, Roshāni, Eshkāshmi), who did graduate work at the faculty of Oriental Studies of the University and the Institute of General Linguistics. Their study and research in several archives of Saint Petersburg were supervised by the department of Iranian Philology and financed by the Isma‘ili Institute in London.

The articles in the volume are: M. Alamshoev, “Lexical formation of new words in the Shughnani language”; A. Asadbekov, “Ethno-linguistic analysis of the expressions of swearing in Vakhi language material”; U. Bulbulshoev, “Anthropo-toponymy of the Western Pamir”; idem,

“Grammatical gender in microtoponyms”; “R. Dodikhudoeva, On the history of Shughni writing”; idem Color symbolism in the Shughnāni-Roshāni clothes”; Sh. Zoolishoeva, “Formation of personal names on the basis of the significance of colors in the group of Shughni and Roshāni languages”; T. Qalandarov, “Ethno-confessional transformation in the Pamir region in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century”; M. Qambarova, “Names in the function of subject and direct object in the Roshāni language”; G. Mirhasan, “Literary and cultural life of the people of Badakhshan at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries”; S. Matrobov, “Traditional games of the Vakhi people and their ethno-linguistic interpretation”; idem, “The Vakhi folk game Kishk (Holes)”; S. Sarkorov, “The uprising of Shughnis and Roshānis against Afghans in the fortress Barpanja under Maram; Z. Nazarova, “Hunting lexics in the Eshkāshmi language.”

Alexander Pyle, *Politicheskoe polozhenie Bukharskogo emirate i Khivinskogo khanstva v 1917-1920 godah* (The political position of the Bukhara Emirate and the Khiva Khanate in 1917-1920), Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie, Saint Petersburg, 2005, 187 pp.

Though small-sized (pocket book format), the book is a fresh and quite informative contribution to the most controversial and complex period of the history of two once rich and stable Central Asian subjects of the Russian Empire protectorate. The author tried to give a possibly full picture of the movements in these two city states by the time of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and its influence on the events in the region afterwards. The author’s use of the Russian archives, mainly of the Oriental Institute in Saint Petersburg and the Russian State archive of social and political history, as well as of numerous published documents contemporary to the events, all with an analytical approach, makes the book a valuable study of special merit.

Mikhail Pelevin, *Afganskaya poeziya v pervoy polovine-seredine XVII veka* (Afghan poetry in the first half and the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century), Saint Petersburg, 2005, 352 pp.

The book represents a study of the earliest stages in the development of written poetry in the Pashto language, which took place, according to the author, mainly due to the active process of Islamization of the Afghan tribes by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The sources of the book, some of which have never been published before, are divided by the author into three main groups: (1) the *divāns* of the Roshāni mystical poets Mirzā Khan Ansāri, Dawlat Lohanay, Wāsel Roshāni; (2) poetical fragments from the religious and didactic treatises *Makhzan al-Eslām*;

(3) verses from the *divan*, *masnavi* poems, *Ferāq-nāma* (in the genre of *habsiyya*), and *Swat-nāma* (a travelogue) of Khoshhāl Khan Khattak.

Articles in the two main periodicals on Oriental studies: “St Petersburg Journal of Oriental Studies” and “The Memoirs of the Oriental Department of the Russian Archaeological Society,” both published in Saint Petersburg, are worth noting in this survey. “The Memoirs” was founded by Baron Victor Rosen in 1886 and continued until 1921 (vol. 25). The volume under discussion (26) is the first one of the new series.

*Zapiski Vostochnogo otdeleniya Rossiyskogo arkheologicheskogo obschestva (ZVORAO)* (The Memoirs of the Oriental Department of the Russian Archaeological Society), New Series 1 (vol. 26) Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie, 2002, 560 pp.

The collection contains numerous articles by Russian, mostly Saint Petersburg scholars in various fields of Oriental studies (linguistics, ethnography, anthropology, archaeology, codicology, historiography, musicology). It has several main divisions: articles, personalia, news from colleagues of the former Soviet Union (here, from Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan), conferences, and book reviews. The papers related to Iranistics are as follows:

O. Akimushkin, “*Hasanat al-Abrār* of Shaykh Mohammad Morād Kashmiri as a rare hagiography of the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century of the Naqshbandiyya-Mojaddidiyya order”; A. Ambartsumyan, “Ethnonym *hyaona*- in Avesta”; Yu. Zadneprovskiy, “Problems of studying of red angobide ceramics of Farghāna”; A. Kolesnikov, “Middle Iranian numismatics in the 19<sup>th</sup> century”; B. Kochnev, “Who won at Buka Budracha (from the history of Qarakhanids)”; B. Litvinskiy, “Bactrians at hunt”; E. Rtveladze. “On periodization of the history of money exchange in Transoxiana in ancient times”; N. Vasilyeva, “Victor Rosen as a founder of the Russian school of Orientalistics”; N. Lazarevskaya, “N. Veselovskiy as a specialist on Central Asia”; V. Masson, I. Orbeli and archaeology”; V. Yakobson, “I. Dyakonov as a historian”; D. Abdulloev, “The Conference on the 1100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Samanids”; V. Masson, “Review of Prospection archéologique en Bactriane Orientale by B. Lyonnet (vol.2) and J.-C. Gardin (vol.3), Paris, 1997-98”; B. Staviskiy, “New books on ancient Central Asia.”

*Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie* (Saint Petersburg Journal of Oriental studies), No 10, Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie, 2002, 624 pp.

This volume is a collection of articles by scholars of Orientalistic institutions (the Faculty of Oriental Studies at Saint Petersburg University, Institute of Oriental Studies, Institute of Archaeology, and

Museum of Ethnography [Kunstkamera]), published on the occasion of the 180<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Institute of Oriental studies, Saint Petersburg branch. The papers are arranged by subject into eight parts: jubilee articles, translations of original sources, research articles, historiography, Japanese literature, archives, personalia, in memoriam, and miscellanea. The supplement contains a bibliography of all nine previous volumes of the Journal. Iranian studies are represented by the following articles:

Vladimir Kushev, “*Dastār-nāma* of Khoshhāl Khan Khattak as an encyclopaedia of the 17<sup>th</sup> century in Pashto. Selected chapters translated from Pashto”; Jalile Jalil, Kurdish version of the Sufi legend about Ebrāhim Adham”; Yuliy Ionesyan, historically unmotivated *majhul* vowel as a significant areal dialect feature”; Serguey Turki, “A new look on the petition of Ja‘far Tabrizi Baysonghori addressed to Baysonghor b. Shāhrokh b. Timur”; Oleg Akimushkin, “Notes on the biography of Vladimir Ivanov: Vladimir Ivanov, Biography”; Elena Molchanova, “Vladimir Ivanov On the history of Russian Iranistics abroad”; Igor Alimov-Olga Trofimova, “To the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of J. Jalilov”; Alexander Nikitin, “In memoriam of Evgeniy Zeimal”; and Yuliy Ionessyan, “In memoriam of Vladimir Kushev.”

A. Aliev, *Luqo Injil*, Excerpts of New Testament Texts in Yazghulāmi Language, Moscow, 2000.

The Institute of Bible Translation located in Moscow opened a pilot project on the translation of different parts of the Bible into Iranian languages. The first project included four Iranian languages in Pamir: Shughni, Vahāni, Yazghulāmi and Roshāni.

Chalisova N. Yu, *Sobesednik v lublennih. Traktat XIII veka: Perevod i kommentarii* (Speaking to lovers: Treatise of the XIII century, tr. and comments), Vestnik Rossiyskogo Gosudarstvennogo Gumanitarnogo Universiteta (Journal of the Russian State University for Humanities) 3, Moscow, 2004.

R. Kh. Dodykhudoev, *Luqo injil* (Excerpts of New Testament texts in Shughni Language), Moscow, 2000.

L.R. Dodykhudoeva and M.L. Reisner, *Nasir-i Khusraw: kontseptsiya poeticheskogo tvorchestva* (Nāser-e Khosrow: Perspective of poetic creation), Moscow, 2004.

The book is a manual for university students studying Persian literature. It provides the poet’s biography as well as analysis of his poetic role in Persian literature. The analytic part is supplemented by

Persian texts as well as transcriptions and Russian translation of three *qasidas*.

Idem, "Qasidai Nasir-i Khusrawa: traditsiya i tvorcheskaya individualnost" (Qasidas of Nāser-e Khosrow: tradition and creative distinctiveness), *Irano-Slavica* II, Moscow, 2004. The article deals with the problem of tradition and the creative personality of Nāser-e Khosrow as a poet. It is based on poetry devoted to the role of women in *qasidas*.

J. I. Edelman, *Irānskie i slavianskie yaziki* (Iranian and Slavonic Languages), Vostochnaya literatura, Moscow, 2002. This is a study of the historical contacts of Iranian and Slavonic languages, providing the isoglosses of this intercommunication with a precise etymological analysis.

Idem, "Some Taboo-Words in Iranian languages of Central Asia," in Brigitte L. M. Bauer and Georges-Jean Pinault, eds., *Language in Time and Space: A Festschrift for W. Winter on the Occasion of His 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday*, Berlin and New York, 2003, pp. 121-30.

Idem, "K rekonstruktsii sotsiolingvisticheskoy situatsii v drevneiranskom mire" (To the reconstruction of the sociolinguistic situation in Old Iranian world), *Problem of Philology* 2/5, Moscow, 2000, pp. 38-42

Idem, "Syntactic and Lexical Models of the Taboo-Words (Iranian and Baltic parallels)," in *Jono Kazlausko Diena: Istorines gramatikos dalykai. Tarptautines konferencijos programa irtezes*, Vilnius, 2000. pp. 12-14.

V. A. Efimov, "V. I. Abaev i iranskoe yazikoznanie" (V. I. Abaev and Iranian linguistics), in *Aktualnie problemi iranistiki i teoriya yazikoznaniya* (Actual problems of Iranian Studies and theory of linguistics), Vladikavkaz, Iriston, 2002, pp. 60-69.

An epoch was gone with the death of a prominent Russian scholar V. I. Abaev. Ossetic by origin, he was born in the Caucasian mountains, where people live long life. He died several days after his 100 birthday. The collection of papers was dedicated to his 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and his memory. This article is devoted to the scholarship of Vasiliy Abaev and his role in Russian Iranian studies, as well as his "Historical and typological dictionary of the Ossetic language."

G. S. Goleva, *Farsi-russkiy frazeologicheskii slovar* (Farsi-Russian dictionary of phraseology), Moscow, 2002.

This dictionary is the first attempt to demonstrate the system of modern Persian, and includes a research on the principles of the arrangement of a phraseological dictionary. It covers the phraseology of colloquial Persian with classification of structural and communicative units.

*Yaziki mira* (Languages of the world) III, Indrik, Moscow, 2000.

This is the last volume of the three-volume edition of the "Iranian Languages" in "Languages of the world" series that is published by the Institute of Linguistics, Russian Academy of sciences. The volume is dedicated to East-Iranian live and extinct languages and includes works of all scholars working on these Iranian languages in Russia:

I. J. Edelman, "Khorezmian, Sargulāmi, Vanji, Yazghulāmi, Shughni-Roshāni group; L. R. Dodykhudoeva, "Languages of the Pamirs"; T. N. Pakhalina, and B. B. Lashkarbekov, "Vakhāni"; Sh. Yusufbekov, "Sanglichi language"; S. P. Vinogradova, "Avestan"; idem, "Soghdian"; V. A. Livshits, "Bactrian"; L. G. Gertsenberg, "The language of Khotan Saka"; M. Isaev, "Scythian Language"; idem, "Alanic language."

V. B. Ivanov and E. L. Gladkova, *Uchebnik persidskogo yazika* (Manual of Persian Language), Part 2. Filomatis, Moscow, 2004.

Idem, "*Suschestvuyut li artiklevie sochetaniya v persidskom yazike?*" (Does Persian language have word combinations with articles?), *Vostochnoe yazikoznanie* (Oriental Linguistics), Vostochnaya literature, Filomatis, Moscow, 2003.

Idem, "Fundamentals of Word Form in Iranian Languages," The First National Congress on Iranian Studies, June 17–20, 2002, Abstract volume, Tehran.

Idem, "Programma obshchego kursa po persidskomu yaziku" (Program on general course on Persian Language), *Yaziki i literaturi Blizhnego Vostoka* (Languages and Literatures of the Near East). Moscow, 2002.

Idem, "Prosodic Reduction of Vowels in Pashto," in *Issledovaniya po iranskoy filologii* (research on Iranian Philology) III, Moscow, 2001.

Idem, "The Problems of Teaching Colloquial Persian to Russian Students," *Iranian Journal of Teaching Languages* 2/6–7, Summer and Fall, Tehran, 2001

دشوريهاي آموزش گفتار فارسي به دانشجويان روسي زبان / فصلنامه آموزشي پژوهشي .  
آموزش زبان، سال دوم، شماره 6 – تابستان و شماره 7 پاییز 1380.

Professor Vladimir Ivanov, Chair of the Department of the Iranian languages at The Institute of Asian and African Studies, Moscow State University, specializes in problems of teaching Persian to Russian audience, especially new computerized audio technologies in the process of teaching. His scholarly interests are mostly in experimental phonetics.

A. I. Kogan, *Dardic Languages: Genetic Features*, Vostochnaya literatura, Moscow, 2005; monographic comparative studies of Dardic languages with a new perspective on affiliation of Dardic branches.

B. B. Lashkarbekov, *Luqo injil* (Excerpts of New Testament texts in Vakhani Language), Moscow, 2000.

*Malie yaziki i traditsii: suschestvovanie na grani* (Minor Languages: Life at the edge), I. Lingvisticheskie problemi sohraneniya i dokumentatsii malih yazikov (Linguistic problems of preservation and documentation of minor languages), Moscow, 2005. This collection, published by the Institute of the World Culture, Moscow State University, includes several articles on endangered Iranian languages:

L. R. Dodykhudoeva, "Ethnolinguistic Dictionary: house, household, mansion"; V. A. Efimov, "Data on minor endangered languages of Central Asia: Parāchi and Ormuri texts"; E. K. Molchanova, "Sivandi language: On Persian language influence on other Iranian Vernaculars"; Z. O. Nazarova, "Kin system in Eshkāshmi language."

E. K. Molchanova, *Sivendi Language*, Moscow, 2003.

Elena Molchanova, senior researcher at the Institute of Linguistics, Russian Academy of Sciences, gives in this book a precise systemic, synchronic and historical description of the Sivandi, an unwritten Iranian language spoken in Sivand, Fars. The author analyses its phonetics and morphology.

B. Ya. Ostrovsky, *Voprosi grammaticheskoy semantiki glagola yazika dari* (Questions of grammar semantics in Dari language), Moscow, 2004.

The book includes a precise description of the main parts of the grammar and semantic system of the verb in modern Dari Persian, based on the "meaning to form" principal-modal meaning of the forms presenting an event.

I. K. Ovchinnikova, *Uchebnik persidskogo yazika* (Manual of Persian Language), ed. Vladimir Ivanov, Moscow, 2002 (with collaboration of S. Borzu). This is a manual compiled by the late Professor Irina Ovchinnikova for first-year students of Persian at college level.

Kh. Qurbanov, *Luqo injil* (Excerpts of New Testament texts in Roshāni language), Moscow, 2000.

M. L. Reisner, “Motivi avtorskogo samosoznaniya v persidskoy gazeli XI-XVIII veka” (Motives of author’s individual identity in Persian *ghazals* of XI-XVIII centuries), *Pamyatniki literaturnoy misli Vostoka* (Scripts of literary thought of Orient), Moscow, 2004.

Idem, “The Life of the Text and the Fate of the Tradition II: ‘Old Age Qasida’ by Rudaki (The Standard and Its Deviation),” *Manuscripta Orientalia*, 10/1 March. 2004.

Y Rubinchik, *Grammatika sovremennogo persidskogo literaturnogo yazika* (Grammar of the modern literary Persian language), Moscow, 2002.

This is a fundamental work on modern Persian grammar by the most senior Russian expert on Iranian languages, whose previous work, “Persian-Russian Dictionary,” has been used by generations of Russian students. Professor Yuriy Rubinchik has described in this book the whole system of the modern literary idiom of Persian, with a profoundly precise analysis of grammar categories.

*Vostochnoe yazykoznanie. K 80-letiyu Yuriya Rubinchika* (Oriental Linguistics dedicated to the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Professor Yuriy Rubinchik), Vostochnaya literature, Moscow, 2003, a collection of papers devoted to various Oriental languages, mainly Iranian.

*Drevnie tsivilizatsii Evrazii: Istoriya i kultura* (Ancient civilizations of Eurasia: History and culture). Vostochnaya literature, Moscow, 2003.

This is a collection of papers on the ethno-cultural contacts of the people of Ancient East and surrounding world, read at the international scholarly conference on the occasion of 75<sup>th</sup> birthday of Professor Boris Litvinskiy, the Academician of Tajik Academy of Sciences

A. R. Chochiev, *Narti - aritsi i ih ariyskaya ideologiya* (Narts – ariyan people and their Ariyan Ideology), Moscow, 2002. Dr. Chochiev, working in collaboration with the Institute of History and Archeology of the Republic North Ossetia and Tshinvali university of the Republic South Ossetia, presents in this book a description of the parts of Nart’s (ancient Ossetians) ideology.

Sh. Shukurov, *Khram* (Cathedral). Aleteya, Moscow, 2003.

The book by Dr. Sharif Shukurov, Head of the Department of Culture at the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, is a unique description of the historical places in connection with their significance in Islamic, especially Iranian culture, besides an outline of theoretical problems concerning conscious perception of the artifacts. Cf. also his: *Arts and secret*. Aleteya, Moscow, 1999.

B. Ya. Staviskiy and S. A. Yacenko, *Iskusstvo i kultura drevnih irantsev* (Arts and culture of ancient Iranians), Moscow, 2002; a manual on cultural problems of the Great Steppe, Iranian plain and Middle and Central Asia, prepared for the use of students of the Russian State University for Humanities.

T. Kalandarov, *Shugnantsi* (Shugnāni people), Moscow, 2004.

This is a study of the history and ethnology of the people of Shugnān, based on archive data and fieldwork, by the research fellows of the Department of Central Asia at the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Russian Academy of Sciences.

# Survey of Publications in South Asia on Persianate Studies

ISHTIYAQ AHMAD ZILLI

Rezq Allāh Moshtāqi, *Waqe'āt-i moshtāqi*, ed. Iqtidar Husain Siddiqi and Waqarul Hasan Siddiqi, Rampur Raza Library, Rampur, 2002, pages 276+xxvi.

Moshtāqi, (1495/6–1581/2) hailed from an old and respected family of Delhi, which was known for piety, scholarship, and military exploits. He was intensely religious but free from fanaticism. He came under the influence of Shattāri Sufis and Bhakti saints, and, as a result, his writings exhibit a broad and sympathetic tolerance for other religions and religious communities. *Waqe'āt-e moshtāqi* is the earliest surviving source for the Afghan period. Moshtāqi was mainly interested in matters relating to the life and culture of the people, hence he does not provide much information on military campaigns and conquests. It contains a good deal of information about the life and culture of north India under the Afghans and also describes the achievements of the rulers of Jaunpur, Gujarat and Malwa in the cultural and political field. As he was brought up during the reign of Sultan Sekandar Lodi (1489-1517), he wrote from personal observation or on the basis of information gathered from his father and other reliable persons. Moshtāqi wrote his book in 1572 during the reign of Akbar, but he never fails to give due credit to Surs for their achievements and also provides considerable information about the Sufis and saints. Developments of great significance were taking place in the field of social and cultural life of the people during the Afghan period. The two communities, Hindus and Muslims, were coming closer to each other. Muslims were appreciating the Hindu sciences and Hindus had begun to learn Persian and secure jobs in the government, particularly in the finance department. Bhakti movement was influencing the thinking and attitudes of the people. All these developments and the consequent changes in the outlook and attitude of the people are fully reflected in the *Waqe'āt-e moshtāqi*.

Kami Shirāzi, *Waqā'e' al-zamān/Waqa' uz Zaman*, facs. ed. and tr. Waqarul Hasan Siddiqi, Rampur Raza Library, Rampur, 2003, 296+xii pages.

Kami Shirāzi was a poet of Jahāngir's reign and enjoyed the patronage of Jahāngir and Nur Jahān. His book (comp. 1625-26), more popularly known as *Fath-nāma-ye Nur Jahān Begom* is a contemporary account of the last years of Jahāngir's reign and an important source of information for the period. Unfortunately, a major portion of the work is lost. Only the portion dealing with the coup d'état of Mahābat Khan is available at Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, which is the text published by Waqarul Hasan.

Maria Bilqis, ed., *Akbar Shanasi*, Persian Department, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, 2002, 238+16+xi pages.

This volume is the collection of papers presented at a three-day seminar in May 1999, organized by the Persian Department of Aligarh Muslim University on the theme of Persian literature during Akbar's reign (963-1014/1556-1605). Contributors include Amir Hasan Abidi, Iqtidar Husain Siddiqi, Wali ul Haq Ansari, Shoeb Azmi, Abdul Wadud Azhar, Sharif Husain Qasemi, Zia ud din Islahi and Asif Naim Siddiqi. The papers discuss a wide range of literary personalities and activities of Akbar's reign, including such figures as Khān-e Khānān, Mohammad 'Orfi Shirāzi, 'Abd al-Qāder Badā'uni, Ahmad Thattavi, Mir Fath-Allāh Shirāzi, Sanā'i Mashhadi, and Shaykh 'Abd al-Haqq Dehlavi. They also cover Persian translations and *Tazkera* writing during Akbar's reign, as well as the *Noqtavi* movement and its influence on *Din-e Elāhi*. The book also contains an introduction by Nazir Ahmad.

Saiyid Amir Hasan Abidi, *Maqālāt-e Abidi*, compiled by Saiyada Bilqis Fatima Husaini, Persian Department, University of Delhi, 2003, 361 pages, a collection of thirty-four articles on various aspects of Persian language and literature. Subjects discussed include 'Abd al-Rahmān Jāmi, Wāleh Dāghestāni, Emāmi Hervi, Ghāleb, *Latā'ef al-loghāt*, *Sabk-e Hendi*, a critique of Shebli No'māni's *She'r al-'Ajam*, some unpublished *ghazals* of Salmān Sāvaji and Amir Khosrow Dehlavi, *Divān-e Bayram Khan*, Kashmir in Persian literature, Benaras in Persian literature, influence of Hindi on Persian literature, etc.

Saiyid Amir Hasan Abidi, *Indo-Persian Literature*, compiled by S. B. F. Husaini, Department of Persian, University of Delhi, 2003, 412+xvi pages.

This is a collection of presidential addresses delivered by Professor Abidi at the sessions of All India Persian Teachers Association held at Aligarh, Gujarat, Bombay, Osmania and Calcutta universities, besides articles on Chandra Bhan Brahman-His life and works, India's rich and valuable contribution to Persian literature in the light of some recent

discoveries, Persian researches in India, Thā'eb Tabrizi/Esfahāni, the story of Hir and Ranjha, The story of Padmawat in Indo-Persian literature, and Impact of Hāfez on east and west.

*Diwan-e Amir Hasan Sijzi*, ed. Dr. Nergis Jahan, Department of Persian, University of Delhi, 2003, 854 pages.

Amir Najm al-Din Hasan 'Alā' Sejzi (1252-1337) a poet friend of Amir Khosrow Dehlavi author of *Fawā'd al-fo'ād*, the sayings (*malfuzāt*) of his spiritual master Shaikh Nezām al-Din Awliā', for which he is best known. The book also contains a preface by Prof. Amir Hasan Abidi and an introduction, in which the compiler has given a detailed account of the life of Amir Hasan and discussed his poetry and prose at length. The text includes *ghazals* (pp.119-594), *qasidas* (pp. 595-747), *mathnavis* (pp. 748-804), miscellaneous (pp. 805-818), and *roba'iyāt* (pp. 819-854).

Dr. Kulsum Saiyid, *Tahqiq dar Elāhi-nāma-ye Shaykh Mohammad Farid al-Din 'Attār Nishāpuri*, Markaz-e Tahqiqat-e Farsi-e Iran wa Pakistan, Islamabad, 2003, 398 pages.

This is an analytical study in six chapters. The first chapter deals with the influence of the Qor'ān, and the second with the sayings of the Prophet and saints, proverbs, etc. The third chapter concerns the life and conditions of the personalities mentioned in the book, while the fourth investigates the sources of the book. The fifth chapter makes a comparative study of the contents of *Elāhi-nāma* with the other books of Shaikh 'Attār, such as *Manteq al-tayr*, *Mosibat-nāma* and *Asrār-nāma*, and also studies the stories and anecdotes, mentioned in his other books. The last chapter deals with religious and Sufi terminology and problems related with the language.

Sultan Altaf Ali, *Ahwāl wa āthār-e fārsi-e Hazrat Sultan Bahu wa nazr-i dar afkār-e vey*, Markaz-e Tahqiqat-e Farsi-e Iran wa Pakistan, Islamabad, 2003, 450 pages.

This book is arranged in eight chapters discussing Sultan Bahu's life, the places where he lived (Sher Kot, Multan, Jhang), his relations with the Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb, his accomplishments, his Persian works, evaluation of his works, and a discussion on his ideas and teachings.

Muhammad Sharaf Alam, *Farsi Sha'eri men Hija Navisi (Hajv-nevisi dar she'ir-e fārsi)*, Khuda Bakhsh Public Oriental Library, Patna, 2003, 408+14 pages.

This book, as indicated by the title, traces with critical observations the history of satirical themes in Persian poetry from its beginning to modern times, including those of the subcontinent. It also contains a preface by Zia ud din Ansari, and an introduction discussing the nature of satire.

Muhammad Bashir Anwar Abuhari Multani, *Sada-e Khalkhal-e Janan: Negāh-i ba she 'ir-e fārsi-e Hazrat Khwāja Gholām Farid (1841-1901)*, Saraiki Adabi Board, Multan, 2002, 112 pages.

This is an anthology of poetic compositions of Khwāja Gholām Farid collected from a variety of sources and published with Urdu translation.

Irfan Habib, ed., *A Shared Heritage: The Growth of Civilizations in India and Iran*, Aligarh Historians Society, Tulika, 2002, 252 pages.

This volume is the collection of papers on the historical relationships between India and Iran, presented by the panel organized by Aligarh Historians Society at the 62<sup>nd</sup> session of Indian History Congress held at Bhoj Open University, Bhopal, in December 2001. They include “A Shared Past,” “India-Iran Contacts in Prehistory: Glimpses of Indo-Iranian Connections in Earliest Times,” “The Rgveda and the Avesta: A Study of Their Religious Trajectories,” “India, Greece and Iran: A Cultural Triangle,” “Technological Exchanges between India and Iran in Ancient and Medieval Times,” “The Mughal Empire and the Iranian Diaspora of the Sixteenth Century,” “Iranian Ideological Influences at Akbar’s Court,” “Iranian Influences on Medieval Indian Architecture,” “Persian and Mughal Paintings: The Fundamental Relationship,” “Sharing the ‘Asiatic Mode’? India and Iran,” “Global Networks of Exchanges: The India Trade and the Mercantile Economy of Safavid Iran,” “The Message of Iqbal in Persian and Urdu Poetry,” and “Reflections on Cultural Encounters: India and Iran.” The contributors include R. S. Sharma, K. M. Shrimali, Iqtidar Alam Khan, Iqbal Husain, Ishrat Alam, Syed Ali Nadeem Rezavi, Som Parkash Verma, Shireen Moosvi, Najaf Haider, V N. Datta, and Mushirul Hasan.

# نگاهی به وضعیت نشر کتاب های علوم انسانی سال 2004-5/1383 در ایران

رضا نجفی  
دفتر مطالعات ادبیات داستانی \_ تهران

## الف \_ آمار و چشم اندازهای کلی

در نگاهی کلی، بنا بر آمار مراجع رسمی در سال 1383 در ایران، 38 هزار و 546 عنوان کتاب منتشر شده است که بیش از دو هزار عنوان نسبت به سال پیش از آن (1382) رشد نشان می دهد.

بر اساس همین آمار، جمع شمارگان (= تیراژ) این عناوین برابر با 164 میلیون و 925 هزار و 677 نسخه و شمارگان متوسط هر کتاب 4292 نسخه است که در مقایسه با آمار سال گذشته به رغم افزایش تعداد عناوین از لحاظ شمارگان شاهد کاهش آمار هستیم؛ به عبارتی، شمارگان متوسط هر عنوان از 4864 نسخه در 1382 به 4292 نسخه در 1383 کاهش یافته است.

گفتنی است هر کتاب به طور متوسط در 252 صفحه منتشر شده است. پراکندگی موضوعی کتاب ها نشان می دهد بیشترین شمار کتاب ها در این سال با 7848 عنوان در حوزه دین و پس از آن به ترتیب در حوزه های ادبیات با 5261 عنوان، علوم عملی با 5022 عنوان، علوم اجتماعی با 3688 عنوان، علوم طبیعی و ریاضیات با 3024 عنوان، زبان با 2454 عنوان، تاریخ و جغرافیا با 1767 عنوان، فلسفه و روانشناسی با 1652 عنوان، کلیات با 1494 عنوان و هنر با 1296 عنوان منتشر شده اند.

در نگاهی دیگر می توان درصد کتاب های چاپ شده در هر موضوع را به ترتیب چنین معین کرد: دین 20٪، ادبیات 14٪، علوم کاربردی 13٪، کودک و نوجوان 13٪، علوم اجتماعی 10٪، علوم طبیعی 8٪، زبان 6٪، تاریخ و جغرافیا 5٪، فلسفه و روانشناسی 4٪، کلیات 4٪ و هنر 3٪. در این سال، 20 هزار و 309 عنوان کتاب چاپ نخست (53٪ از کل تعداد عناوین) و 18 هزار و 237 عنوان (47٪) چاپ مجدد است. همچنین تعداد 29 هزار و 570 عنوان کتاب (77٪) تألیف و 8 هزار و 976 عنوان (23٪) ترجمه شمرده می شوند.

تذکار مهم در بررسی آمار مذکور این است که از عناوین یادشده، 5042 عنوان مربوط به کودکان و نوجوانان و 5678 عنوان، کتاب های کمک درسی و آموزشی هستند. همچنین اگر شمارگان آثاری چون دیوان های اشعار، قرآن، نهج البلاغه و به طور کلی برخی متون مذهبی و کتب مورد حمایت نهادهای دولتی را از این آمار جدا کنیم، به تصویری واقع بینانه تر از وضعیت چاپ و نشر کتاب در ایران پی خواهیم برد. بر این اساس، می توان پی برد، که میانگین واقعی شمارگان کتاب نه 4300 نسخه، بلکه مانند سال های گذشته، زیر سه هزار نسخه است.

همچنین همواره بنا به عللی، برخی عناوین در آمارهای رسمی ثبت نمی شوند و یا خارج از روال مرسوم منتشر می شوند. از این رو، می توان مطمئن بود که آمار واقعی در هر سال چند درصد بیش از آمار مراجع رسمی باشند. بر این نکته می باید، چاپ زیرزمینی و اغلب به شیوه افستی و غیر قانونی برخی آثار را نیز افزود.

## ب \_ نگاهی به وضعیت کتب علوم اجتماعی، تاریخ، سیاست، فلسفه و دیگر شاخه های مربوطه

در میان کتاب های علوم انسانی، حوزه سیاست مانند چند سال اخیر جزو پررونق ترین حوزه ها بوده و در این حوزه مضامینی چون دمکراسی، مشروعیت، اصلاحات، روحانیت و قدرت، تاریخ سیاسی معاصر، جریان های سیاسی، تاریخ مشروطه و ... بیشترین آثار را به خود اختصاص داده اند.

برخی از آثار مطرح در چنین مضامینی به قرار ذیل اند:

دو کتاب روحانیت و قدرت و جنبش اصلاحات دموکراتیک در ایران (عمادالدین باقی \_ نشر سرابی)، دهه سوم؛ تخمین ها و تدبیرها (محمدرضا تاجیک \_ مرکز بررسی های استراتژیک ریاست جمهوری)، کالبدشکافی جریان های روشنفکری و اصلاح طلبی در ایران (حسین امانیان \_ پرسمان)، جنبش دانشجویی در دو دهه 1320 و 1330 (ابراهیم یزدی \_ انتشارات قلم)، آزادی (مجموعه مقالات و مصاحبه های احسان نراقی \_ افکار)، بحران مشروطیت در ایران (حسین آبادیان \_ مؤسسه مطالعات و پژوهش های سیاسی)، اسناد و گزارش های گروه ها، انجمن ها و اتحادیه های مطبوعاتی از انقلاب مشروطه تا انقلاب اسلامی (مسعود کوهستانی نژاد \_ مرکز مطالعات و تحقیقات رسانه ها)، جدال دمکراسی با استبداد در ایران (مهران امیراحمدی \_ فرهنگ دانشجو) که از آغاز حکومت های ایرانی تا به انقراض قاجاریه می پردازد، آسیب

شناسی نهضت دمکراتیک مردم ایران (بهنام کریمی \_ نشر آبی) که به سال های سرنوشت ساز 1320 تا 1325 توجه دارد، زبان، گفتار و سیاست (محمدرضا تاجیک \_ مؤسسه تحقیقات و توسعه علوم انسانی)، نقد ایدئولوژی (کمال خسروی \_ اختران) که در نقد ذهنیت ایدئولوژیک است، نامه هایی از زندان به دخترم؛ مروری بر تاریخ دو قرن اول ایران و اسلام (حسین یوسفی اشکوری \_ مؤسسه مطالعات تاریخ معاصر ایران) که تکرار تجربه زندان جواهر لعل نهرو شمرده می شود، جمهوری خواهی در ایران (غلام عباس مصلی نژاد \_ قومس)، حاکمیت و آزادی (رامین جهاننگلو \_ نشر نی)، شش گفتار (میرحسین موسوی \_ نشر نی) که در واقع همان کتاب پنج گفتار اوست که اکنون با افزودن یک گفتار دیگر درباره مسائل انقلاب اسلامی منتشر شده است، عبور از استبداد مرکزی (علی مرادی مراغه ای \_ اوحدی) که به بررسی انجمن های شورایی عصر مشروطیت می پردازد.

در این سال مانند گذشته تاریخ های شفاهی و زندگینامه های سیاسی نیز پر خواننده است. از میان چنین آثاری چند نمونه قابل ذکر است: خاطرات محمود فروغی، فرزند محمد علی فروغی ( به کوشش حبیب لاجوردی \_ کتاب نادر)، در جستجوی صبح؛ خاطرات عبدالرحیم جعفری بنیانگذار انتشارات امیرکبیر (روزبهان) که چاپ آن حساسیت هایی را نیز برانگیخت، وزیر خاکستری؛ بازشناسی نقش داریوش همایون در حاکمیت پهلوی دوم (صفالدین تبرانیان \_ مؤسسه مطالعات تاریخ معاصر ایران)، نگاهی به نهضت ملی ایران؛ نقد خاطرات شعبان جعفری (سعید رهبر - هیرمند)، خاطرات سه جلدی جمیله کدیور از زمان عضویت وی در کمیسیون اصل 90 (با پیشگفتار عطاءالله مهاجرانی).

همچنین چاپ برخی اسناد و مدارک درباره برخی اهل سیاست توجه برانگیز بوده است. از جمله: الهیار صالح به روایت اسناد (مرکز اسناد انقلاب اسلامی)، پرونده های صالح (ایرج افشار \_ کتاب روشن) که روایتی متفاوت با کتاب پیشین ارائه می دهد، مظفر بقایی به روایت اسناد ساواک (مرکز بررسی اسناد تاریخی)، کانون نویسندگان ایران به روایت اسناد ساواک (مرکز اسناد انقلاب اسلامی).

بازخوانی جریان های سیاسی گذشته بویژه دوره پهلوی اول و دوم و جریان ملی شدن نفت و دولت دکتر محمد مصدق هنوز مخاطبان فراوانی دارد. از آثاری که در سال 1383 به این مضامین پرداخته اند، چند نمونه را می توان برشمرد: اختیارات، اصلاحات و لوایح قانونی دکتر محمد مصدق (مسعود کوهستانی نژاد \_ نشر نی)، حاکمیت ملی و دشمنان آن (فخرالدین عظیمی \_

نگاره آفتاب) که نسخه فارسی آن با استناد به سندهای جدید چاپ شده است، پنج دهه پس از کودتا: اسناد سخن می گویند (احمدعلی رجایی) که با ارائه 508 سند رسمی و کاملاً محرمانه مأموران دولت امریکا به تحلیل و بازخوانی نقش امریکا در رویدادهای سال 1332 می پردازد. سرنوشت یاران دکتر مصدق (عبدالرضا هوشنگ مهدوی \_ نشر علم) که اثری است درباره بیست تن از یاران مصدق، جنگ های لرستان (غلامحسین قراگزلو \_ اقبال) که به لشکرکشی رضا شاه به لرستان می پردازد، رضا شاه از الشتر تا الاشت (کیوان پهلوان \_ آرون)، دلدادگان آزادی [جلد اول]؛ معرفی زندانیان سیاسی قبل از انقلاب (جلیل امجدی و محسن علی نژاد قمی \_ نشر رسانش)، داد بی داد؛ نخستین زندان زنان سیاسی 1350-1375 (ویدا حاجبی تیریزی \_ بازتاب نگار)، بحران ظفار و رژیم پهلوی (محمد جعفر چمنکار \_ مؤسسه مطالعات تاریخ معاصر ایران) که به نقش دولت وقت ایران در آشوب های بحرین می پردازد، تاریخچه بریگاد و دیویزیون قزاق (محسن میرزایی \_ نشر علم) و برخی از آثار حتی به ادوار دورتری نیز می پردازند، مانند: سیری در تاریخ ارتش ایران از آغاز تا پایان شهریور 1320 (میرحسین یکرنگیان \_ خجسته)، روابط ایران و آلمان در جنگ جهانی اول (معصومه ارباب \_ مؤسسه مطالعات تاریخ ایران).

از جمله آثاری که به تحلیل نقش جریان های سیاسی چپ و نیز گروه هایی مانند مجاهدین خلق در وقایع سیاسی ایران پرداخته اند، چند نمونه را می توان برشمرد: یگانه متفکر تنها: مصطفی شعیبیان (هوشنگ ماهروی \_ بازتاب) که اثری است درباره شعیبیان تنوریسین جبهه دموکراتیک خلق ایران، بررسی تغییر ایدئولوژی سازمان مجاهدین خلق ایران (مظفر مهرآبادی \_ مرکز اسناد انقلاب اسلامی)، سازمان مجاهدین خلق از درون، خاطرات محمد مهدی جعفری (گفتگو از سیدقاسم یا حسینی \_ نگاه امروز). همچنین در این سال شاهد انتشار چند اثر درباره علی شریعتی نظریه پرداز اسلامی بودیم که از آن جمله می توان به این سه نمونه اشاره کرد: شریعتی از شك تا یقین (احمد راسخی لنگرودی \_ قصیده سرا)، شریعتی، هرمنوتیک رهایی و عرفان (عباس منوچهری \_ مؤسسه تحقیقات و توسعه علوم انسانی) و شریعتی و ایمان رهایی بخش (عباس منوچهری \_ مؤسسه تحقیقات و توسعه علوم انسانی).

در سال 1383 به سبب مناقشات بین المللی و بویژه تنش هایی با کشورهای عربی حوزه خلیج فارس، مضمون امنیت ملی و منافع ملی بیشتر مورد توجه قرار گرفت و آثاری به این دغدغه پرداختند، از جمله: نام خلیج فارس در درازای تاریخ (پیروز مجتهدزاده \_ سایه روشن)، مجموعه مقالات چهاردهمین همایش بین المللی خلیج فارس (مرکز چاپ و انتشارات وزارت

امور خارجه)، مطالعات امنیت ملی (علی ربیعی \_ دفتر مطالعات سیاسی و بین المللی وزارت امور خارجه). همچنین مؤسسه تحقیقاتی تدبیر اقتصادی چندین اثر در حوزه اقتصاد سیاسی، از جمله آسیب شناسی روابط اقتصادی ایران و اتحادیه اروپا، هژمونی دلار و یورو و امنیت ملی ایران، سرمایه گذاری خارجی، تبعات امنیتی اجرای سیاست آزادسازی در بستر جهانی سازی در سال 1383 منتشر کرد که مرتبط به این مضمون است.

سرانجام از جمله دیگر کتاب های سیاسی منتشره در این سال چند اثر قابل ذکر به نظر می رسند: عقل در سیاست (حشین بشیری \_ نگاه معاصر) که 35 مقاله با مضمون توسعه سیاسی و اجتماعی است، جامعه شناسی بیطرفی و روانشناسی انزوآگرایی در تاریخ دیپلماسی ایران (احمد نقیب زاده \_ انتشارات وزارت امور خارجه)، زنده باد فساد؛ جامعه شناسی فساد در دولت های جهان سوم (علی ربیعی \_ سازمان چاپ و انتشارات وزارت فرهنگ و ارشاد اسلامی)، علل و پیامدهای توسعه روابط فدراسیون روسیه و اسرائیل با نگاهی به جمهوری اسلامی ایران (الله کولایی \_ انتشارات دانشگاه تهران) و جستارهایی در شناخت اندیشه سیاسی معاصر غرب (سید علیرضا حسینی بهشتی \_ مؤسسه تحقیقات و توسعه علوم انسانی) که در عین حال نگاهی نیز دارد به کاربرد این اندیشه ها در ایران.

و اما مهم ترین آثار منتشره 1383 در ایران در حوزه جامعه شناسی و شاخه های مرتبط را به این شرح می توان برشمرد:

مسأله هویت ملی ایرانیان امروز (فرهنگ رجانی \_ نشر نی)، پی نکته هایی بر جامعه شناسی خودمانی (حسن نراقی \_ اختران) که مجموعه ایست از نقدها، مصاحبه ها و مقاله های نویسنده کتاب جامعه شناسی خودمانی، چرا عقب مانده ایم؟ (علی محمد ایزدی \_ نشر علم) که در واقع بازنگری و باز نویسی کتاب نجات اوست که در سال 1362 در کانادا چاپ شده بود، انسان شناسی شهری (ناصر فکوهی \_ نشر نی)، اشتغال زنان در ایران (شهلا باقری \_ شورای فرهنگی اجتماعی زنان)، بررسی آسیب های اجتماعی زنان در دهه 1370 تا فضاهای فرهنگی ایران، رفتارهای فرهنگی ایرانیان و سنجش مفاهیم اساسی علوم اجتماعی (دفتر طرح های ملی وزارت فرهنگ و ارشاد اسلامی) که هر کدام در چندین مجلد منتشر شده اند و براساس آمارهایی از 28 استان کشور فراهم آمده اند، دگرگونی اجتماعی و فیلم های سینمایی در ایران؛ جامعه شناسی فیلم های عامه پسند ایرانی 1309-1357 (پرویز اجلائی \_ فرهنگ و اندیشه)، ایران، هویت، ملیت، قومیت (به کوشش دکتر حمید احمدی \_ مؤسسه تحقیقات و توسعه علوم انسانی)، کانون بانوان با رویکردی به ریشه های تاریخی حرکت

های زنان در ایران (مریم فتحی \_ مؤسسه مطالعات تاریخ معاصر ایران)، روشنفکران ایران در قرن بیستم (علی قیصری و به ترجمه محمد دهقانی - هرامس).

در حوزه مدیریت و برنامه ریزی شهری و روستایی نیز چند اثر از سال 1383 قابل ذکر اند. از جمله:

پیشینه اندیشه توسعه و برنامه ریزی در ایران (احمد تابش \_ سازمان مدیریت و برنامه ریزی کشور)، مقدمه ای بر برنامه ریزی توسعه روستایی در ایران (محمدرضا رضوانی \_ قومس)، اقتصاد؛ توسعه روستایی با تکیه بر جامعه روستایی ایران (مصطفی ازکیا و غلامرضا غفاری \_ نشر نی)، درآمدی به دیوان سالاری در ایران (حمید تنکابنی - انتشارات علمی و فرهنگی)، مهاجرت روستاییان به شهرها و تأثیرات اقتصادی و سیاسی آن در دوره پهلوی دوم (مسعود مرتضوی تبریزی \_ مرکز اسناد انقلاب اسلامی).

اما در حوزه حقوق در این سال 301 عنوان کتاب منتشر شد که از آن میان 274 عنوان تألیف و 27 عنوان ترجمه بود که نسبت به سال های قبل رشد نسبتاً خوبی داشت. از جمله کتب حقوقی این سال را باید چنین نام برد: معاهدات بین المللی (محمدرضا ضیایی بیگدلی \_ گنج دانش)، ماهیت و آثار فسخ قرارداد در حقوق ایران (فریدون بحرینی \_ گنج دانش)، حقوق کیفری، مالکیت ادبی - هنری (ساناز الستی \_ نشر میزان)، تاریخ حقوق ایران (سید حسن امین \_ انتشارات دائرة المعارف ایرانشناسی) که از دوره های پیش آریاییان تا انقلاب اسلامی را دربرمی گیرد و ...

در موضوع فلسفه در این سال، 431 عنوان اثر ترجمه شده و 77 عنوان تألیف فلسفی صورت گرفته است. از مولفان پرکار این سال باید از سیدحسن نصر، غلامحسین ابراهیمی دینانی، کمال خسروی، آیت قنبری، محمد مددیور و ... نام برد. از جمله آثار منتشر شده چاپ اول این سال می توان به چند مقاله فلسفی (محمدرضا ریخته گران - جنگ اندیشه) و درس گفتارهای فلسفی (محمدرضا حسینی بهشتی - موسسه تحقیقات و علوم انسانی) اشاره کرد.

در حوزه ارتباطات نیز چند اثر شایسته ذکر اند: سید فرید قاسمی پژوهشگر تاریخ مطبوعات ایران سه کتاب در حوزه تخصصی خود منتشر کرد. این سه کتاب که هر سه از سوی نشر آبی منتشر شده اند عبارتند از اولین های مطبوعات ایران، خاطرات مطبوعاتی و خاطرات روزنامه نگاران زندانی. علی دهباشی یادنامه دکتر مهدی سمسار روزنامه نگار معروف ایران را به کمک نشر قطره منتشر کرد. جلد اول از مجموعه چهار جلدی تاریخ مطبوعات فارس در دوره قاجار، توسط سیروس رومی منتشر شد. همچنین اندیشه های بنیادین علم ارتباطات (باقر ساروخانی \_ انتشارات خجسته) در این زمینه قابل ذکر است.

در زمینه تاریخ نیز آثار فراوانی را می‌توان نام برد. برخی از مهم‌ترین این آثار عبارتند از:

نسخه فارسی کتاب یونانیان و بربرها (نوشته امیرمهدی بدیع) که به شانزده جلد بالغ خواهد شد. قوم‌های کهن در آسیای مرکزی و فلات ایران (رقیه بهزادی - طهوری)، سرگذشت آل مظفر (ستار عودی - اهل قلم) که هفتاد و سومین اثر از مجموعه کارنامه دانشوران ایران و اسلام است، چاپارخانه‌ها و راه‌های چاپاری در ایران (فریدون عبدلی فرد - هیرمند) که در دو جلد به بررسی تاریخ پست ایران می‌پردازد، مرآت واردات؛ تاریخ سقوط صفویان، پیامدهای آن و فرمانروایی ملک محمود سیستانی (محمد شفیع تهرانی، به تصحیح منصور گل - نشر میراث مکتوب)، شهر آریا؛ سیری در تاریخ و جغرافیای تاریخی هرات تا دوره تیموریان (فاروق انصاری - مرکز اسناد و خدمات پژوهشی وزارت امور خارجه). تاریخ رشیدی، تألیف میرزا محمد حیدر دوغلات (به تصحیح عباسقلی غفاری - میراث مکتوب) از آثار دهم هجری که متنی درباره تاریخ مغولان در تبت و کشمیر شمرده می‌شود؛ همچنین اسناد پادریانی کرملی کتاب دیگری از نشر میراث مکتوب است که به کارملیت‌ها (راهبان فقیر مسیحی) که در زمان صفویه به ایران آمده بودند، می‌پردازد. این اثر شامل 170 سند درباره این گروه از مسیحیان است که به کوشش منوچهر ستوده و همکاری ایرج افشار فراهم آمده است.

گفتنی است نخستین همایش ملی ایران‌شناسی که توسط بنیاد ایران‌شناسی در سال 81 برگزار شده بود، در ده گروه علمی ادبیات ایران، اقتصاد ایران، تاریخ و جغرافیای تاریخی، زبان و زبان‌شناسی، سیاست و مدیریت روابط بین‌الملل ایران، کتاب‌شناسی و نسخه‌شناسی، مسائل اجتماعی مردم‌شناسی و فرهنگ عامه، مسائل عمومی ایران‌شناسی، معارف و علوم اسلامی، تاریخ علم و تعلیم و تربیت در ایران و هنر و باستان‌شناسی، مجموعه مقالاتی در عناوین دهگانه یادشده منتشر کرده است.

در سال 1383 به مانند سال‌های پیش، چاپ و انتشار دائرة المعارف‌ها، فرهنگ‌ها، دانشنامه‌ها و مجموعه‌ها رونق چشمگیری داشت. از جمله آثاری از این دست، چنین شایان ذکر است:

مجلدات سوم تا پنجم دانشنامه کاشان، به کوشش جهان‌شاه درخشانی که به آریاییان، مردم کاشی، امرد، پارس و دیگر ایرانیان می‌پردازد. نخستین جلد از دانشنامه نخبگان با نظارت مؤسسه فرهنگی مطالعات و تحقیقات بین‌المللی ابرار معاصر تهران، دائرة المعارف زن ایرانی (بنیاد دانشنامه فارسی)، فرهنگ سه هزار تن از بزرگان و ناموران ایران؛ از روزگار باستان تا امروز (عبدالعظیم رضایی - اقبال)، ششمین مجلد فهرست مقالات فارسی (به کوشش

ایرج افشار)، فهرست دستنوشته های فارسی در کتابخانه ملی اتریش و آرشیو دولتی اتریش در وین (ایرج افشار \_ مؤسسه نشر فهرستگان و انتشارات فرهنگستان علوم اتریش)، جلد هفتم از مجموعه پژوهشگران معاصر ایران (هوشنگ اتحاد \_ فرهنگ معاصر)، جلد هشتم دانشنامه ادب فارسی که به آسیای صغیر و منطقه بالکان اختصاص دارد، چکیده های ایرانشناسی (میراث فرهنگی)، مجموعه از ایران چه می دانیم (دفتر پژوهش های فرهنگی)، نادره کاران؛ سوگنامه ناموران فرهنگی و ادبی 1304-1381 (ایرج افشار \_ قطره).

سرانجام برشمردن چند اثر مرجع در حوزه علوم انسانی نیز خالی از

سود نیست:

کلایمکس؛ فرهنگ طبقه بندی شده اصطلاحات و ضرب المثل های رایج در مکالمات روزمره (احمد ساکی لرستانی)، فرهنگ نهادهای آموزشی ایران؛ از روزگار باستان تا تأسیس دولت صفوی (نورالله کسانلی \_ دانشگاه تهران)، فرهنگ ریشه شناختی زبان فارسی (محمد حسن دوست \_ نشر آثار و فرهنگستان زبان و ادب فارسی)، نوروز در ورارودان (روزی احمد \_ سازمان میراث فرهنگی) که یکی از بهترین پژوهش ها درباره آیین نوروز شمرده می شود، کتابشناسی توصیفی خور و بیابانک (سید علی آل داوود \_ مگستان)، زبان فارسی فرارودی (علی رواقی)، گنجینه گویش شناسی فارسی (عبدالباقی سلامی \_ گروه گویش شناسی فرهنگستان زبان و ادبیات فارسی).

## پ \_ ادبیات داستانی و شاخه های مرتبط

آنچه در چند سال اخیر جلب توجه می کند، حضور فعال تر زنان به طور کلی در امر تألیف و به طور خاص در تألیف ادبی نسبت به گذشته است. در سال 1383 از کل نویسندگان ایرانی 37% زن و 62% مرد بوده اند که با توجه به آمار سال های گذشته می توان دریافت که در سال های اخیر شمار نویسندگان زن کمابیش ده برابر شده است. حال آنکه شمار نویسندگان مرد تنها 2/5 برابر افزایش نشان می دهد.

در سال 1383 نیز هرچند بیشتر کتاب های پرفروش، نوشته نویسندگان مرد است، اما هفت عنوان از پرفروش ترین آثار متعلق به زنان بوده است که از جمله باید به بامداد خمار و چراغ ها را من خاموش می کنم که البته آثار تجدیدچاپی بوده اند، اشاره کرد. گذشته از آثار تجدید چاپی، موفق ترین رمان این سال نیز متعلق به یک نویسنده زن بود.

عادت می‌کنیم اثر زویا پیرزاد در کمتر از 20 روز به چاپ چهارم رسید و در کمتر از یک ماه 22000 نسخه از آن فروش رفت. ظاهراً این نخستین بار در تاریخ چاپ و نشر آثار ادبی در ایران بود که خوانندگان در روز توزیع رمانی جلوی فروشگاه‌های کتاب صف می‌بستند.

اما به رغم موفقیت این اثر، عادت می‌کنیم از لحاظ ارزش ادبی به پای اثر پیشین نویسنده یعنی چراغ‌ها... نمی‌رسد. از دیگر آثار داستانی نویسندگان زن که در جشنواره‌های ادبی برگزیده یا تشویق شدند، به این موارد می‌توان اشاره کرد: عاشقیت در پاورقی (مهسا محب‌علی)، ماهی‌ها در شب می‌خوابند (سودابه اشرفی - مروارید)، نقطه‌گریز (فرزانه کرم‌پور)، کیمیا خاتون (سعیده قدس - چشمه)، پایان درخت سیب (نوشین سالاری - مروارید)، بگذریم (بهناز علیپور گسگری - چشمه).

فهرست آثار داستانی مطرح زنان نویسنده در سال 1383 به برگزیدگان جشنواره‌ها ختم نمی‌شود. برخی دیگر از این گونه آثار را چنین باید نام برد: با من به جهنم بیا (ناتاشا امیری - افق)، پیراهن آبی (ناهید کبیری - نگاه)، بیسکویت نیم خورده (بنفشه حجازی - همراه)، زن عجم خوبه یا تویی ان تویی (فرخنده حاجی زاده - دستار)، تنها که می‌مانم (شاهلا پروین - آگه)، گرنیکا (فرشته توانگر - ققنوس)، این مجموعه نامی ندارد (رویای راد)، آبی و صورتی (ناهید طباطبایی - علم)، کتاب هول (شیوا مقالو - چشمه)، یک فنجان چای سرد (طلا نژادحسن - چشمه)، حوا (مریم نعمت طاووسی - مس)، یلدا دختر خورشید (هایده صیرفی زاده - بهار نارنج).

همچنین در زمینه ادبیات مهاجرت نیز می‌توان از شالی به درازای جاده ابریشم (مهستی شاهرخی ورجاوند) و غریبه‌ای در اتاق من (مهرنوش مزارعی - آهنگ دیگر) نام برد.

در این سال، دو اثر موفق در حوزه نوجوانان نیز متعلق به نویسندگان زن بوده است: علم ابدی اثر ناهید هاشمیان بجنورد که برنده بهترین اثر علمی تخیلی سال شد و جدول کلمات به هم ریخته (صوفیا محمدی - قطره).

اما اکنون شماری از آثار داستانی برگزیده نویسندگان مرد در جشنواره

های ادبی:

مجموعه داستان‌های هتل مارکوپولو (خسرو دوامی)، من قاتل پسران هستم (احمد دهقان - افق) که به سبب نگاه انتقادی‌اش به جنگ اعتراضاتی را برانگیخت، ما اینجا هستیم (به روز ناکره‌ئی)، مکث آخر (یونس تراکمه - قصه)، انجیرهای سرخ مزار (محمد حسین محمدی)، سپیدرود زیر سی و سه پل (کیهان خانجانی) و همچنین رمان‌های مرده‌ای که حالش خوب است (احمد آرام)، آداب بی‌قراری (یعقوب یادعلی)، وقت تقصیر (محمدرضا کاتب -

نیلوفر)، استخوان های خوک و دست های جذامی (مصطفی مستور) و آبی تر از گناه (محمد حسینی).

گفتنی است که انتخاب برخی منتقدان و اهل کتاب گاه بسیار مغایر با برگزیدگان جشنواره های ادبی بوده است. این منتقدان به مواردی از این دست نیز اشاره کرده اند: چند روایت معتبر (مصطفی مستور - چشمه)، وعده دیدار با جوجوتسو (بهرام صادقی - نشر پژوه) که اثری چاپ نشده از این نویسنده است، سه گانه محمد ایوبی به نام های غمزه مردگان، سفر سقوط و زیتون تلخ، خرماهای گس (انتشارات فرهنگ گستر) که از قوی ترین آثار انتقادی نسبت به جنگ شمرده می شوند، دیدار در حلب (جعفر مدرس صادقی - مرکز)، رنگ کلاغ (فرهاد بردبار)، با گارد باز (حسین سنایور - چشمه)، از یاد رفته ها (محمود پاینده لنگرودی)، داستان های برگزیده اصفهان (از نویسندگان جوان اصفهان)، اسفرزه (ابوالفضل شاهی - ماه ریز)، دو پله گودتر (مهیاری رشیدیان - قصه)، فقط می خواستم خودکشی کنم (بابک تختی - قصه)، وسوسه های اردیبهشت (علی قانع - دشتستان)، ماه در حلقه (مسعود کریم خانی - چشمه)، جین داریم تا جین آقای کارور (علی رضا مجابی - پانید)، کوچه اول، خانه آخر (حمیدرضا ساعتچی - یادآوران)، خورشید (محمد رحیم اخوت - روزآمد)، پاگرد (محمد حسن شهسواری - افق).

همچنین در این سال، محمود طیاری نیز با کتاب های رمان سینما، نی موشته سرخ الوجّه و پبله برفی سال پرکار بود. اما نثر ویژه او موجب شده است، آثارش با اقبال مواجه نشوند.

چپستان یثربی نیز دو نمایشنامه خود را به نام های هتل عروس و محاله که فکر کنید این طوری هم ممکنه بشه (انتشارات نامیرا) به صورت دوزبانه و با مقدمه محمود دولت آبادی منتشر کرد.

فتح الله بی نیاز منتقد پرکار، افزون بر برخی نقدها و مقالاتش، رمانی به نام اندوه رهگذران مرده را منتشر کرد. از این نویسنده در سال 83 همچنین شاهد چاپ نخستین جلد از مجموعه ده جلدی نقدها و نوشته های ادبی او به نام ادبیات، قصری در تاروپود تنهایی، بودیم.

بی نیاز تنها نویسنده ای نبود که در این سال در هر دو حوزه داستان و نظریه پردازی گام برمی داشت. حسین سنایور نویسنده مطرح این سال ها نیز با انتشار ده جستار داستان نویسی؛ درباب شگردهای داستان نویسی (چشمه) به بیان دیدگاه های خود در هنر نویسندگی پرداخته است.

شهریار مندنی پور نیز با چاپ کتاب ارواح شهرزاد؛ سازه ها، شگردها و فرم های داستان نو (ققنوس) به اقدامی مشابه پرداخت و کوشید راه هوشنگ گلشیری را ادامه دهد. به نظر می رسد سال 1383 هرچند در حوزه

رمان و داستان کوتاه چندان درخشان و پربار نیست، اما بیش از سال های دیگر در حوزه نقد و پژوهش موفق بوده است. در این سال، آثار فراوانی در نقد و بررسی نویسندگان معاصر ایرانی آفریده شد که مهم ترین آنها را به این ترتیب می توان نام برد: غریبه بزرگ (محمد عبدي \_ ثالث) که مجموعه نقدي است در باب زندگي و آثار بهرام بیضایی، سرزدن به خانه پدری (جابر تواضعی) که زندگي نامه بهرام بیضایی است، واقعیت و رویا (علیرضا پیروزان \_ افق) که تلفیقی است از گفتگو، نقد و کتابشناسی درباره محمد محمدعلی و آثارش، کلیدر؛ رمان حماسه و عشق (جواد اسحاقیان \_ گل آذین)، شناختنامه اکبر رادی (فرامرز طالبی \_ قطره) که اثری پر اطلاع است درباره اکبر رادی، نمایشنامه نویس صاحبنام ایرانی، جلد چهارم صدسال داستان نویسی ایران (حسن میرعابدینی - چشمه)، داستان نویسان معاصر ایران؛ 1300\_ 1370، گزیده و نقد هفتاد سال داستان نویسی معاصر ایران (محمد قاسم زاده \_ هیرمند)، دیدار با احمد محمود (سارک محمود \_ هیرمند) شامل خاطرات، نامه ها و عکس های احمد محمود، صادق چوبک (محمدرضا اصلانی \_ قصه) که دفتر دهم از مجموعه چهره های قرن بیستمی ایران شمرده می شود، حکایت حال (لیلی گلستان \_ معین) که گفتگوهای لیلی گلستان با احمد محمود است، نقاب نقد؛ چیستی نقد ادبی در ایران (شاهرخ تندرو صالح \_ چشمه) که گفتگوهایی است با منتقدان ایرانی درباره آسیب شناسی ادبیات امروز ایران، بررسی زندگي و آثار محمود دولت آبادی که آن نیز از مجموعه چهره های قرن بیستمی ایران شمرده می شود، دفتر سوم از تاریخ شفاهی ادبیات معاصر ایران (مریم طاهری مجد، زیر نظر محمدهاشم اکبریان \_ روزنگار) که به هوشنگ گلشیری اختصاص دارد.

در این میان شایسته است که از پژوهش های نظری در باب ادبیات نیز

یاد کرد.

ریشه یابی درخت کهن (بهرام بیضایی \_ انتشارات روشنگران و مطالعات زنان) پژوهشی است درباره ریشه های هندوایرانی هزار و یکشب. سایه ایزوت و شکرخند شیرین (جلال ستاری \_ مرکز) نیز مقایسه ای شمرده می شود میان تریستان و ایزوت و داستان خسرو و شیرین. ریشه های نمایش در آیین های ایران باستان (آرمین رهبین و محمدعلی رحیمی \_ اهورا) و پژوهش در خیمه شب بازی در ایران (یوسف صدیق \_ نمایش) تحقیق هایی در حوزه نمایش به شمار می روند، عصر اساطیری تاریخ ایران؛ خطوط برجسته داستان های قدیم ایران (حسن پیرنیا \_ هیرمند) پژوهشی در ادبیات اساطیری ایرانی است.

يك عمر در خدمت دو فرهنگ (تورج رهنما \_ بهجت) به بررسی ادبیات دو کشور آلمان و ایران می پردازد.

در حوزه ادبیات کلاسیک و کهن فارسی و نیز فرهنگنامه ها و دانشنامه ها ذکر چند نمونه خالی از سود نیست:

گاتاها؛ برگردان هفت گات نخستین همراه با متن اوستایی و گزارش های زبان شناسی (آبتین ساسانفر \_ بهجت)، اسکندر و عیاران؛ تلخیصی از کلیات هفت جلدی اسکندرنامه نقالی منوچهر خان حکیم (گزینش و ویرایش علی رضا ذکاوتی قراگزلو \_ نی)، جواهر نامه نظامی تالیف محمدبن ابی البرکات جوهر نیشابوری (به کوشش ایرج افشار و محمد رسول دریاگشت - میراث مکتوب)، تاریخ ادبیات ایران (به کوشش عنایت الله مجیدی \_ سازمان چاپ و انتشارات وزارت فرهنگ و ارشاد) که در واقع درس گفتار های منتشر نشده بدیع زمان فروزانفر در سال 1307 درباره ادبیات ایرانی از عهد اسلامی تا صفاریان و از دوره مغول تا تیموریان است، دهخدا؛ مرغ سحر در شبی تار (ولی الله درودیان \_ اختران)، جلد دوم از مجموعه قند پارسی شامل 19 مقاله و رساله درباره ادبیات فارسی و نسخه شناسی (نوشته نذیر احمد و به کوشش عباس حسن \_ بنیاد موقوفات دکتر محمد افشار)، روضه العقول؛ تحریر دیگر مرزبان نامه (انشای محمد غازی مطیوی به تصحیح جلیل نظری \_ دانشگاه آزاد اسلامی واحد گچساران).

## ت \_ نگاهی به وضعیت کتاب های حوزه الهیات، ادیان و عرفان

به نظر می رسد حمایت ها و سوبسیدهای نهادهای دولتی از کتب مذهبی در سال 1383 از سال های پیشین نیز فزونی گرفته است، از دلایل این مدعا برگزاری جشنواره ها، مسابقات، نمایشگاه ها، تعیین کتاب های برگزیده در حوزه های مذهبی و اقداماتی مشابه را می توان نام برد. برای نمونه، انتخاب کتاب سال ولایت، انتخاب بهترین پژوهش قرآنی سال، جشنواره کتاب دین، همایش بانوان قرآن پژوه، همایش نهج البلاغه، جشنواره امام رضا، اجلاس نماز، جشنواره کتب فاطمیه، جشنواره کتاب سال حوزه، جایزه 125 هزار دلاری هنر و نیایش، همایش حکمت مطهر، جشنواره کتاب برتر حقوق بشر در اسلام، کنگره میراث علمی و معنوی حضرت زهرا، همایش لوح تا لوح و ... چند نمونه از ده ها جشنواره و مسابقه در حوزه کتب دینی است که برخی از آنها برای نخستین بار از سال 1383 کار خود را آغاز کرده اند. بر این اساس و با توجه به حمایت های دولتی پیش و پس از چاپ آثار دینی، می توان دریافت، رشد چاپ و نشر این آثار تا حدود زیادی کاذب است.

با این حال، به رغم آنچه گفته شد، در سال 1383 توجه روزافزون به ادیان دیگر از جمله مسیحیت، میترانیسم، آیین یهود و ... جای توجه دارد. برای نمونه در سال 1383 تعداد 27 عنوان اثر با مضمون مسیح منتشر شده است که در مقایسه با 13 عنوان در سال 1380 تقریباً سالی 25% رشد نشان می دهد. این رشد درباره ادیانی مانند میترانیسم بسیار بیشتر است. همچنین در این سال، ناشرانی چون مرکز تحقیقات و مطالعات اسلامی، مرکز مطالعات و تحقیقات ادیان و مذاهب، انجمن معارف اسلامی ایران، مؤسسه پژوهشی نگاه معاصر و ... به شکلی جدی در چاپ و نشر آثاری تخصصی در حوزه ادیان فعال بوده اند.

پیش از پرداختن به آثار مطرح این سال، ذکر چند نکته درباره 7848 اثر دینی منتشر شده در سال 1383 خالی از سود نیست. از شمار این آثار 80% تألیف و 20% ترجمه شمرده می شود. همچنین 51% این آثار چاپ نخست و 49% تجدید چاپی بوده است. متوسط صفحه هر عنوان 303 صفحه و متوسط شمارگان عناوین دینی 5674 نسخه (نزدیک به دوبرابر متوسط شمارگان کتب ادبی) است. نکته بسیار جالب این است که حدود 70% این آثار در شهرستان ها منتشر شده اند. در حالی که در همه حوزه های دیگر از جمله ادبیات، فلسفه، و هنر تنها 20% از کل کتاب های منتشره متعلق به ناشران شهرستانی شمرده می شود.

و اما برخی از آثار مطرح سال 1383 در حوزه دین که البته گاه با حوزه هایی چون سیاست و تاریخ و ... نیز تلاقی دارد:

مجموعه چهارجلدی اندیشه سیاسی در جهان اسلام (تدوین علی اکبر علیخانی - پژوهشگر علوم انسانی و اجتماعی جهاد دانشگاهی) به بررسی آراء و عقاید 60 نفر از متفکرانی که از زمان فروپاشی عثمانی تا زمان معاصر نقش تأثیرگذاری در جهان اسلام داشته اند، می پردازد.

نخستین جلد از کتاب میراث مکتوب شیعه (سید حسن مدرس طباطبایی) که به سه قرن نخست هجری می پردازد، در سال 1383 منتشر شد.

قرآن در آینه پژوهش (به کوشش محمد کاظم شاکر - نشر هستی) مجموعه 12 مقاله علمی از فارغ التحصیلان دکترای تخصصی با محوریت قرآن شمرده می شود.

دین، عرفان، ملاصدرا (بنیاد حکمت صدرا) نیز نهمین جلد از مجموعه مقالات همایش جهانی ملاصدرا است. این مجموعه در دو بخش الهیات و فلسفه دین و عرفان و تصوف ارائه شده است.

در کتاب تأملاتی در قرانت انسانی از دین (طرح نو)، محمد مجتهد شبستری بار دیگر به مضمون مورد علاقه خود یعنی هرمنوتیک و متون دینی می پردازد.

بهاءالدین خرمشاهی نیز در این سال آثاری همچون ترجمه پژوهی قرآن، بررسی توصیفی و انتقادی ترجمه های امروزی قرآن کریم و قرآن و مثنوی؛ فرهنگ واره تأثیر آیات قرآن در ادبیات مثنوی (با همکاری سیامک مختاری - قطره) را ارائه می دهد. علی فاضل نیز کارنامه احمدجام نامقی (توس) را ارائه می دهد که پژوهشی است درباره عارف شهیر معاصر غزالی، عین القضاة و سنایی غزنوی. از همیشه تا جاویدان نیز برگزیده متون عرفانی است که به کوشش ابراهیم قیصری (توس) منتشر شده است.

تعمیدیان غریب، مطالعه ای مردم شناختی در دین ورزی صائبین مندانی ایران (مهرداد عربستانی - نشر افکار) احتمالاً بهترین پژوهش آکادمیکی است که درباره این دین از یادرفته صورت گرفته است. از جمله دیگر متون ارزشمندی که در این سال تحریر یافته است، جنبش نقطویه (علیرضا ذکاوتی قرآزلو - نشر ادیان) را نام برد که پژوهشی است درباره جنبش دینی نقطویان.

همچنین به کوشش ایرج افشار نوشته هایی منتشر نشده از سید حسن تقی زاده با عنوان مانی شناسی درباره مانویت پس از سال ها تأخیر به دست خوانندگان فارسی زبان رسید.

غلامحسین ابراهیمی دینانی نیز از مؤلفان پرکار حوزه ادیان است که در این سال عقلانیت و معنویت (مؤسسه تحقیقات و توسعه علوم انسانی) را منتشر ساخت.

از دیگر آثار تخصصی سال 1383 در این حوزه می‌باید به کتاب صفات اشیاء در فلسفه تحلیلی و حکمت اسلامی (مرتضی قرانی \_ دفتر پژوهش و نشر سهروردی)، چراغ راه دینداری؛ تلخیص و بازنویسی مصباح الشریعه (علیرضا مختارپور \_ اهل قلم) و اسم اعظم؛ شرح کتاب الاسری الی مقام الاسری محی الدین عربی (شارح علی باقری \_ نشر پازینه) اشاره کرد. انتشارات طرح نو نیز در این سال ناشر دو اثر در حوزه جامعه‌شناسی دین به شمار می‌رود: تأملاتی جامعه‌شناسانه درباره سکولار شدن (هادی جلیلی) و چالش‌های دین و مدرنیته (سید حسین سراج زاده).

کتابی دیگر با مضمونی مشابه، جامعه مدنی در دنیای اسلام؛ دیدگاه‌های معاصر (امین سجود \_ انتشارات مؤسسه مطالعات اسلامی) است. از سوی دیگر، می‌باید به تعلیقه بر الهیات شرح تجرید ملاعلی قوشچی تألیف شمس‌الدین محمدبن احمد خفري (تصحیح فیروز ساعتچیان - میراث مکتوب) و کشف المحجوب نوشته علی ابن عثمان هجویری (سروش) اشاره کرد. این اثر که جزء باارزش‌ترین متون صوفیانه فارسی شمرده می‌شود، با مقدمه و تصحیح محمود عابدی به بازار آمده است.

از جمله آثار نویسندگان ایرانی که در ابتدا به زبان‌های دیگر نوشته شده بودند و اکنون نسخه فارسی آنها را به دست آورده ایم، می‌توان به نخستین اندیشه‌های شیعه، اثر رزیتا آرالانی (به همت فریدون بدره‌ای \_ نشر پژوهش فرزانه روز) اشاره کرد. بخش مهمی از این اثر به بررسی نقش امام محمد باقر در تشیع می‌پردازد. همچنین انشاءالله رحمتی کتاب اسلام و تنگنای انسان متجدد، اثر سید حسن نصر را که چهارمین کتاب از مجموعه آثار اوست، به کمک دفتر پژوهش و نشر سهروردی منتشر کرده است.

و سرانجام، اشاره‌ای نیز به آثار دائرةالعمارفی در حوزه دین سودمند به نظر می‌رسد. در این سال دهمین جلد از دائرةالمعارف تشیع که دربرگیرنده مدخل‌های شفاء تا ظهیر فارابی است، منتشر شد. همچنین دوازدهمین جلد از دائرةالعمارف بزرگ اسلام (دربرگیرنده مدخل‌های برمکیان تا بوسنوی) زیر نظر کاظم موسوی بجنوردی و جلد هشتم دانشنامه جهان اسلام (از مجموعه‌ای چهل جلدی) مشتمل بر آخرین بخش مقالات حرف "ت"، از آثار منتشره در این سال است.