DOI: 10.46586/er.13.2023.11206
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Entangled Religions 13.5 (2023)
er.ceres.rub.de

Introduction

Safavid and Mughal Empires in Contact

Intellectual and Religious Exchanges between Iran and India in the Early Modern Era

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ABSTRACT In the introduction to this special issue, the editors attempt to portray the emergence/formation of a pluralistic atmosphere in Mughal India in the early modern era as a reciprocate reaction beginning with the migration of a group of not entirely religiously open-minded Iranian scholars to a not yet pluralistic Mughal India. They point out that the migration of Iranian scholars to Mughal India both enhanced the plurality of the Mughal intellectual atmosphere and their own openness. They then highlight some significant characteristics of the new/newly emerged discourse in the Mughal empire, such as pluralism, rationalism, antiquarianism, and Persianization. The editors moreover endeavor to point out these characteristics in the processes investigated by the authors of the special issue.

KEYWORDS Safavid Iran, Mughal India, pluralism, rationalism, antiquarianism, Persianization

This special issue includes the contributions to a workshop that took place on June 7–8, 2018, at the Center for Religious Studies, Ruhr University Bochum, as part of the Käte Hamburger Kolleg "Dynamics in the History of Religions between Asia and Europe" (2008–2022). Its central theme is the migration of Safavid scholars to the Mughal empire and its religious and intellectual outcomes.[1] [1]

As the result of a political decision, Mughal Emperor Akbar I (r. 963–1014/1556–1605) legitimized the rights of all non-Muslim subjects in his territory. This new policy presented [2]

1 We would like to thank our colleague Dr. Eduard Iricinschi for his comments on the draft of this introduction.

many political advantages for his rule. However, judging from firsthand accounts of his supporters and opponents, it is apparent that Akbar did not change his policy merely to gain political advantage.[2] His decision was rather the outcome of a new religious and intellectual perspective.

[3] A collection of several factors brought together this transition. One of them, which we consider important, is the migration of Iranian scholars to Mughal India. In the early sixteenth century, the Safavids proclaimed Shi'i Islam as state religion in Iran. Gradually, with the help of the religious scholars invited from Ǧabal ʿĀmil (the south of Lebanon), they promoted a Shari'a-oriented understanding of Shi'ism. As a result, the pressure on non-Shi'i thinkers, such as Naqšbandī Sufis and Noqṭavīs, to conform to this new perspective increased (Amanat 2014, 368–69). There were also specific incidents that started the immigration of scholars from the Safavid empire. For instance, following the arrest and imprisonment of the Zaidī ruler of Gīlān, Kār Kīā Khān Aḥmad Khān in 976/1568, many scholars associated with his court left for India, thus turning to the Mughal empire as their place of religious and political asylum. These scholars included Ḥakīm Abo l-Fatḥ Gīlānī (d. 997/1589), whose intellectual abilities brought him to Akbar's attention. As a result, he became one of the emperor's leading counselors on religious and intellectual affairs (Bany 2019, 216).

[4] That these scholars migrated from the Safavid to the Mughal empire does not imply that the Mughals ruled over an already established pluralistic society in which the Iranian immigrants participated after their arrival to India. The migrant scholars played a significant role in creating a pluralistic atmosphere in the empire, and their heterogeneous opinions contributed a great deal to general intellectual developments in the Mughal empire. It would also be a mistake to assume that certain Iranian freethinkers went to India and spread their ideas over there. While still residing in Iran, the same scholars did not hold quite the same religious openness as the one they maintained in India. The discourse in which they subsequently participated was the internal product of Mughal India, and the various cultural elements of the Mughal environment were indispensable to its formation.

[5] The new discourse that emerged in the Mughal empire in the 980/1570s was without precedent in Islamic civilization. Its marks can be best observed in the writings of Abo l-Fażl ʿAllāmī (d. 1011/1602), Akbar's official chronicler and his other counselor on religious matters, particularly in his official history of Akbar's reign, the *Akbar-nāma*, and in his work on Akbar's empire, *Āyīn-e Akbarī* (Habib 1998, 330; Abo l-Fażl ʿAllāmī 1877, 20152022). Moreover, they can be found in other writings and documents of this period or those produced shortly after. The following are some of the characteristics of the new discourse.

- [6] **Pluralism:** In 982/1575, the emperor began to hold debates between scholars of religion in a hall constructed especially for the purpose, called the House of Worship (*ʿEbādat-ẖāna*; Rizvi 1975, 119). The emperor's interests included, among others, Hindu religions, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Sufism and Noqṭavism. During this time, scholars pursued a comparative study of these various religions. From 986/1578-79, Akbar adopted the principal position of "peace with all" (*solḥ-e koll*), according to which one religious doctrine or practice should not become dominant to the point of excluding other religious doctrines and practices. Each religion has a sense of the truth, and none of them is the absolute truth. Moreover, scholars argued that the object of worship in various Hindu faiths and all other religions, including Islam, is

2 For the view of a supporter, see Abo l-Fażl ʿAllāmī's *Āyīn-e akbarī* (1877), and for the view of an opponent, see Badāʾūnī's *Montaẖab al-tavārīẖ* (1864–1869).

one and the same. This perspective seems to have been an offshoot of Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī's (d. 638/1240) doctrine of the "unity of existence" (*waḥdat al-wujūd*). Abo l-Fażl fully adhered to this doctrine, and so many Iranian immigrants did. Akbar might have had a teacher who instructed him in Ibn ʿArabī's teachings (Habib 1998, 331; Amanat 2014, 375). According to this doctrine, the unique absolute existence manifests itself in various forms, and the multiplicity of religions should be understood as a variety of its manifestations. Abo l-Fażl articulates this in the following way: "There is one heart-ensnaring Beauty which casts splendor through many thousands of veils. They have spread an expansive carpet, and it sheds forth many different colors" (Habib 1998, 331).

- **Rationalism:** The same discourse promoted by the Iranian scholars exiled in the Mughal Empire privileged rational thinking. By order of Akbar, teaching law (*feqh*), jurisprudence (*oṣūl*), and tradition (*ḥadīṯ*) were restricted, and instead, schools promoted studying medicine, philosophy, and arithmetic (Badāʾūnī 1864–1869, 2:306–307). Distinguished Iranian proponents of the rational sciences, such as Fatḥollāh Šīrāzī (d. 997/1589) and Nūrollāh Šūštarī (d. 1019/1610), who chose to migrate to the Mughal empire, enjoyed Mughal patronage (Ahmed and Pourjavady 2016, 608–10). They played a major role in establishing the teaching of the rational sciences in India. Notably, they taught classical philosophical works, such as those of Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) and Šehāb al-Dīn Sohravardī (d. 587/1191). They also gave special attention to the Greek philosophers, particularly the Neoplatonists. In the *Āʾīn-e Akbarī*, Abo l-Fażl takes special care to emphasize his knowledge of the philosophical tradition. He even responds to Abū Ḥāmed Ġazālī's (d. 505/1111) religious condemnation of the philosophers, remarking briefly that Ġazālī "had spoken nonsense" (Habib 1998, 331). At Akbar's request, Maqṣūd ʿAlī Tabrīzī (d. after 1025/1616) translated Šams al-Dīn Šahrazūrī's (d. after 687/1288) history of philosophy, *Nuzhat al-arwāḥ wa-rawḍat al-afrāḥ* (The Delight of Souls and the Garden of Joys), into Persian. [7]

- **Antiquarianism:** According to the newly adopted discourse, truth was unveiled to humankind in Antiquity. The proof of this position was to be found in the *Vedas*, the old Indian religious texts in Vedic Sanskrit, in the Zoroastrian *Zand-Avesta*, in the sayings of Ancient Greek philosophers, and in those attributed to the ancient Persian sages. The purpose of translating ancient texts was to make their truths available to the readers of the time. Although an antiquarian mindset was common among many religious traditions, it seems that the Neopythagorean tendencies of the Mughal courtiers reinforced this perspective under Akbar. [8]

- **Persianization:** Promoting Persian culture became a central part of the new discourse. Akbar identified himself as the heir to the old kings of Persia. Abo l-Fażl portrayed him as embodying the Iranian ideal of the recipient of divine majesty (*farrah-e īzadī*; Habib 1998, 332; Amanat 2014, 374). In 991/1583, Akbar adopted the Zoroastrian solar calendar as his official calendar and celebrated the Persian festival of Naurūz. During that festival, Akbar also issued a decree requesting the worship of the sun four times a day (Badāʾūnī 1864–1869, 2:321–322). [9]

Akbar's interest in Persianization was also manifested in his promotion of the Persian language. He ordered not only the translation of many works from Sanskrit into Persian but also [10]

the translation of several Arabic works into Persian. Unlike many Muslim rulers, Akbar did not grant Arabic any special status as the language of the *Qurʾān*, nor did he regard it as a second scientific language after Persian. On the contrary, in 990/1582, he ordered the madrasas in the Mughal Empire to restrict teaching in Arabic and to promote the widespread use of Persian (Badāʾūnī 1864–1869, 2:306–307; Amanat 2014, 382).

[11] However, this kind of discourse seems to have ceased after the death of its major promoters, Akbar and Abo l-Fażl. Akbar's successor, Jahāngīr (r. 1014–1037/1605–1627), transformed the discourse so much that only some of its minor elements remained intact. Nevertheless, in a few decades, the discourse found a new initiator, Dārā Šokūh (d. 1069/1659). By that time, however, its Persianizing element had abated, which meant it was generally better adapted to Indian society.

[12] For their part, the Safavids were aware of the formation of this new discourse in the Mughal empire. The Safavid court historian Iskandar Beg Munshī (d. 1043/1633–34) blamed Abo l-Fażl for making the Mughal emperor a "libertine" (*vasīʿ al-mašrab*) in matters of religion (Moin 2015). Some aspects of Akbar's cultural changes occurred later in Safavid Iran. Shah ʿAbbās I (r. 996–1038/1588–1629) was arguably influenced by many aspects of Akbar's reign. For instance, he followed Akbar's example by adopting a positive interaction with Christian missionaries. He also tried to create a multi-religious atmosphere in his capital, Isfahan. Another aspect of the impact of the Mughal cultural discourse was the Safavid's patronage of Persian scientific works and the translation of Arabic works into Persian. Indeed, following Akbar, and probably also inspired by him, the Safavids laid greater emphasis on Persian as the language of culture and science within their empire.

[13] The contributions of this special issue exemplify the mentioned characteristics in Mughal India and Safavid Iran in different ways. Takeshi Aoki and Kianoosh Rezania investigate the genesis and development of Āẕar Kaivānīs as a syncretistic religious group and their relations with Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Islam, especially Noqṭavī ideas and the Ešrāqī philosophy. The Āẕar Kaivānīs, as a group of authors linked to Āẕar Kaivān, the school's founder, exhibit extraordinary interest in the pre-Islamic Iranian legacy. They attempt to combine the Ešrāqī philosophy with this legacy, whereas the pre-Islamic Iranian tradition constitutes the linguistic surface and the Islamic philosophy the content. Besides some limited biographical information on Āẕar Kaivān himself, who died in 1028/1617-8 in Patna at the age of 85, there is not much historical information on this group (Corbin 1987; Rezania 2014). This scant state of sources gave rise to different hypotheses about the historical development of the school. What was not in doubt, however, was their connection to both Safavid Iran and Mughal India: According to the surviving sources, Āẕar Kaivān was born in Fārs province in Safavid Iran and migrated to India. This fact makes Āẕar Kaivānīs one of the foci of the present special issue.

[14] Instead of considering the school as a monolithic fabric, equally influenced during its history by the three components of Zoroastrianism, the Noqṭavī order, and Ešrāqī philosophy, Takeshi Aoki's contribution, "The Dasātīr and the 'Āẕar Kaivān school' in Historical Context: Origin and Later Development" (2022), inquires which tradition was more influential in which period. He thus divides the development of the school into four different historical stages according to its literature. In the first stage, an anonymous thinker must have authored the *Dasātīr*, one of the most important texts of the school, sometime after 1519. It should be pointed out that the scholarship formerly assumed hypothetically that Āẕar Kaivān penned this text (Mojtabaʾī 1994). Whereas some scholars highlight the Ešrāqī philosophy as the primary intellectual source for the emergence of the school, Aoki investigates the impact of the

Nuqṭavī on this group. The author holds that the Āẕar Kaivānīs migrated to India in 990/1582–3 after being attracted to Noqṭavī thoughts in Safavid Iran. Aoki identifies "Iranocentrism" as the most present element in this stage, as reflected in the *Dasātīr*. The second stage gives birth to the second authoritative book of the group, the *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro*, authored by Āẕar Kaivān. Leaving out the concept of transmigration, which is present in the *Dasātīr*, Āẕar Kaivān builds much more upon Persian Sufism in this book and, to some degree, on Ešrāqī philosophy. Both the *Dasātīr* and the *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro* influenced a trilogy of books written in the seventeenth century (1028–34/1618–24): the *Ḫᵛīš-tāb,* the *Zardošt Afšār*, and the *Zāyanda Rūd*. Although influenced by both former books, these writings do not exhibit marks of "Iranocentrism" but rather the influence of Ešrāqī philosophy. Aoki identifies in these books and thereby a higher level of systematization of religious thoughts of the school at this stage. The last stage of Aoki's periodization includes a more isolated book, the *Zūra-ye Bāstānī*. Instead of Persian Sufism or Ešrāqī philosophy, this book contains elements of Zoroastrian thoughts. Moreover, it resorts to *Dasātīr*'s vocabulary, previously absent in the writings of Āẕar Kaivānīs. Aoki's research shows how a religious tradition changes the balance of its constituents throughout time and how dynamically the tradition is able to reshape itself.

[15] Kianoosh Rezania's contribution, "Did the Āẕar Kaivānīs Know Zoroastrian Middle Persian Sources?" (2022), explores the religious contacts between the Āẕar Kaivānīs and Zoroastrians based on the linguistic evidence in the bilingual book *Dasātīr*. Rezania argues that *Dasātīr*'s author employed the Zoroastrian *Zand* texts as a model for his book. He identifies the part of the text written in an artificial encrypted language, representing a celestial language, as corresponding to the Avestan text in the Zoroastrian commentary tradition. The other part, written in a specific form of New Persian, i.e., with few Arabic words, corresponds to the Middle Persian translation and commentary in the *Zand* texts. Furthermore, Rezania shows that the Āẕar Kaivānīs were in contact with Zoroastrians from the very beginning of the formation of their tradition and, to some extent, were conversant with the Zoroastrian Middle Persian literature. The article attests to some lexemes in the *Dasātīr* that can be known to its author only through the Middle Persian texts. Rezania, however, points out that only the form of Zoroastrian literature, not its contents, shaped the *Dasātīr*. Rezania also demonstrates that the religious contact between the Āẕar Kaivānīs and Zoroastrians was based on literary contacts between Muslim literates and Zoroastrian priests as early as the beginning decades of the tenth/sixteenth century, rooted in the lexicographic interests in India. Therefore, the geographical field of contact between Āẕar Kaivānīs and Zoroastrianism was Mughal India rather than Safavid Iran. According to Rezania, the Āẕar Kaivānīs owe a great deal to the religious discourse emerging at the court of Akbar, namely *dīn-e elāhī*. The epithet *āẕar* 'fire' in the name of many figures of the group might be due to the prestigious place Akbar gave to fire at his court. Both Aoki's and Rezania's contributions deal with the topics of antiquarianism and Persianization in this period.

[16] In their contribution "Avicenna's *Šifāʾ* from Safavid Iran to the Mughal Empire: On Ms. Rampur Raza Library 3476" (2022), Amos Bertolacci and Gholamreza Dadkhah concentrate on the intellectual contact between Safavid Iran and Mughal India by investigating a manuscript of Avicenna's philosophical magnum opus, the *Kitāb al-Šifāʾ* (the *Book of the Healing*). The manuscript comprises three of four book parts: logic, natural philosophy, and metaphysics. Bertolacci and Dadkhah identify ten steps in the transmission of the manuscript, beginning with its production in 718/1318, and continuing with its ownership by prominent philosophers of Šīrāz in the ninth/fifteenth and tenth/sixteenth centuries, namely Ṣadr al-Dīn Moḥam-

mad Daštakī Šīrāzī (d. 903/1498), his son Ġeyās al-Dīn Manṣūr Daštakī Šīrāzī (d. 948/1542), his grandson Ṣadr al-Dīn Moḥammad II (d. 962/1555), and later by Fatḥollāh Šīrāzī, famous for his promotions of rationalism in Mughal India. Having been taken from Shiraz, the origin place of the Daštakī family, to Rampur, the manuscript exemplifies the strict intellectual exchanges between the two empires. Its transmission took place during the flourishing period of philosophical teachings in Safavid Iran, in which more than a hundred manuscripts of the *Šifāʾ* were produced, whereas only a couple of dozen manuscripts were produced in each of the previous centuries. The same period witnesses the emergence of the Persian translation of the *Metaphysics* as well as its commentaries as independent works. According to the authors, the manuscript testifies to the "Safavid renaissance" (Pourjavady and Schmidtke 2015) through its circulation. Moreover, being the subject of long-term philosophical investigations in Shiraz, the manuscript attests to the significance of the intellectual transmission from Safavid Iran to Mughal India. This article highlights the rationalism and Persianization in the Mughal-Safavid discourse.

[17] In his article "Exploring Patronage, Genre, and Scholar-Bureaucracy: The Trans-Imperial Career of Ḫvāndamīr (d. 1534)" (2022), Colin Mitchell explores the intersection of patronage, genre, and scholar-bureaucracy by investigating the career of Ġeyāṯ al-Dīn Ḫᵛāndamīr, the great statesman and historian of the late ninth/fifteenth and early tenth/sixteenth centuries. His career is entangled with the emergence of the Safavid and Mughal empires as well as the Uzbeks in Central Asia. Enjoying the patronage of these empires, Ḫᵛāndamīr penned numerous texts in different genres such as ethics, prosopography, epistolography, and chronicle. Mitchell investigates Ḫᵛāndamīr's understanding of patronage and discusses how the trans-imperial patronage shaped his approach to text and genre. In the introduction to one of his books, the *Makārem al-aḫlāq*, he highlights the role of intellect in bureaucracy and administration. Again, here, as was the case for Āẕar Kaivānīs, the text attests to a resort to pre-Islamic legacy because Ḫᵛāndamīr considers this rationality rooted in pre-Islamic traditions. Mitchell points out that Ḫᵛāndamīr does not see any contradiction between pre-Islamic wisdom, the Qurʾānic revelation, and ongoing divine inspiration in Sufi traditions. Like manuscripts of Avicenna's *Šifāʾ*, which transcended Safavid Iran and reached Mughal India, Ḫᵛāndamīr was influential in substantiating the Perso-Islamic culture in South Asia, producing a 'Persian cosmopolis,' which, according to Mitchell, shaped the north and south Indian courts. Mitchel identifies the probably pervasive participation of the Hindu scribes as the most prominent characteristic of the Persian cosmopolis. One can argue that Ḫᵛāndamīr fashioned new intellectual trends by shedding light on forerunners of the literary genre of the tenth/sixteenth and eleventh/seventeenth centuries. The case study of Mitchell attests to rationalist, antiquarianist, and Persianizing tendencies at the Safavid and Mughal courts.

[18] Reza Pourjavady and Sajjad Rizvi both investigate the religious and intellectual contacts between Safavid Iran and Mughal India by concentrating on Nūrollāh Šūštarī's works. While the former focused on his bio-bibliographical work *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn* (Assemblies of the Believers), the latter studied his polemical writings. The *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn* was written in Mughal India, but its author was educated in the Safavid territory. Following his migration to India, Šūštarī was associated with Akbar's court. As the first comprehensive Shi'i bio-bibliographical work, *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn* comprises various kinds of Shi'i figures. The work became a model for later Shi'i biographical literature. Pourjavady's contribution, "Nūrollāh Šūštarī on Shi'i Notables" (2022), investigates the author's motivations for undertaking this project. He demonstrates that the work's comprehensiveness aims to represent the Shi'a as

a significant Islamic tradition, repudiating its perception as a minor sect throughout Islamic history. Šūštarī seems to have aimed much more at a new representation of Shi'ism than only acquainting the reader with Shi'i figures. To this end, he widened the definition of Shi'ism to include in the book as many as possible influential figures throughout history. According to Pourjavady, Šūštarī categorically divides Muslims into two groups: those who supported and those who opposed ʿAlī. Šūštarī implicitly suggested to his readers to consider themselves Shi'i only if they like ʿAlī and fully support him. Dealing with the author's perspective, Pourjavady also notes the challenges which Šūštarī confronted within the circles of the Shi'i scholars. Šūštarī's definition of Shi'a allows the practice of Sufism and philosophy, which were not acceptable for many Shi'i scholars. Some later Shi'i scholars criticized his inclusion of numerous Sufis in the book. The inclusiveness of the work accompanies another characteristic, namely the author's attempt to gain credit and respect for Shi'i communities, especially those located in India. Although he applies aggressive language in his responses to the anti-Shi'i polemics, his tone in the *Maǧāles* is less provocative for the Sunni readers.

[19] Speaking about Šūštarī's polemical writings brings us to the topic of Rizvi's article, "Shiʿi Theology and Polemics between Iran and India: The Case of Saiyed Nūrollāh Šūštarī (d. 1019/1610)" (2022). Using Šūštarī's career as a case study, Rizvi investigates the transmission of theological ideas from Iran to India. Šūštarī migrated from East Iran, his birth and education place, to Indian scholarly circles in search of patronage. In his new homeland, however, he felt responsible for defending Shi'ism by writing polemical responses to anti-Shi'i treatises. Moreover, as a rational theologian, Šūštarī was presumably motivated by Akbar's embrace of reason to promote Shi'a as a rational tradition. Doing so, Rizvi shows that in intra- and inter-religious contacts, two parallel but different strategies might be applied: an offensive attack on the teachings of the others or an apologetic defense of own teaching. Which strategy one chooses to apply depends on many criteria, including the openness of the environment for such criticism. Pourjavady's and Rizvi's articles highlight the plurality of the Indian religious field in this period.

[20] The contributors to this special issue mostly studied contact situations as cases of tradition building, for example, how a traditionalist deliberately chooses an inclusive approach to the tradition, opening the tradition's definition to comprise various heterogeneous ideas and branches, unacceptable in other terms and situations. Moreover, the authors exhibit the process of systematization of religious thoughts. As Aoki shows for the Āẕar Kaivānīs, traditions tend to reflect upon and systematize themselves in a contact situation. His study emphasizes the fact that traditions react retrospectively and resort to their (invented) origin in contact situations. Pourjavady's contribution represents the prospective behavior of a religious tradition, explaining how the scholars of the tradition proactively decide about its future. The case of Nūrollāh Šūštarī exemplifies how building a tradition, i.e., setting its borders, occurs in a contact situation.

[21] Complementary to the cases of tradition building, Rezania focuses on the *Dasātīr* as a case study of how the concept of secrecy can be employed in a contact situation. He holds that the Āẕar Kaivānīs did not apply it to distinguish the insiders from outsiders. Instead, they adopt the Zoroastrian idea of secrecy as a means of communication with the divine sphere. Both traditions, namely Āẕar Kaivānī and Zoroastrianism, consider that a secret text needs the support of a mediatory text to translate it and elaborate the original secret text so that the divine message can communicate with the adherents. The leading figures of the Āẕar Kaivānīs did not claim the ability to read the *Dasātīr*'s original text. They did not seek to exert

authority over their adherents either. The competence of understanding the heavenly text was restricted to older prophets. The Āẕar Kaivānīs' strategy of secrecy is not a distinction but a sort of double coding; religious knowledge encoded in celestial language and, at the same time, encoded in translation and commentary. Their aim was not to conceal knowledge; on the contrary, it was rather to share the concealed message.

[22] Almost all contributions of this special issue analyze examples of exogenous religious contacts. An exogenous religious contact is a religious contact in which a social subsystem other than religion, e.g., politics or science, is involved in the contact situation. The case studies included in this special issue epitomize the involvement of politics or the state in religious contact. First of all, the migration of Safavid scholars to Mughal India was mainly caused by a religious-political change in Iran. Moreover, most of the migrant scholars were linked to the Mughal court, especially at the time of Akbar, meaning the Mughal state encouraged religious contact. Pourjavady and Rizvi highlight the role of Akbar's court for theologians like Nūrollāh Šūštarī, who not only defended Shi'ism in response to the polemics but also presented a new definition of Shi'ism. Rezania points to the role of Akbar's religiopolitical project for the crystallization of the Āẕar Kaivānīs, and Mitchell explores the role of patronage, the involvement of politics in religious affairs. As a social system, science can also be involved in religious contacts. Rezania highlights the emergence of religious contact between Zoroastrianism and the Āẕar Kaivānīs based on literary, specifically lexicographical, interests.

[23] In principle, religious contact might happen arbitrarily. However, in many cases, it occurs intentionally. For example, writing polemics against other religious traditions, as did Nūrollāh Šūštarī, is a deliberate religious contact. Syncretism seems to be a religious contact with intention too. Āẕar Kaivānī represents an example of a conscious syncretistic religious tradition based on different traditions. Aoki demonstrates how a specific tradition was more impulsive in a specific stratum of Āẕar Kaivānī's literature. Syncretism provides an example of religious contact with more than two religious components. In the case of the Āẕar Kaivānīs, we encounter an emergence of a religious tradition due to the contact between Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, the Noqṭavī order, and Ešrāqī philosophy.

[24] It is also possible that reasoning and rational thoughts play a role in religious contacts, as Rizvi and Mitchell demonstrate in their articles. Moreover, Bertolacci, Dadkhah, and Aoki highlight the contributions of philosophical teachings in the religious contacts between the Safavid and Mughal empires. Their pieces indicate that religious specialists resort to reasoning and rational thought in a specific contact situation, for instance, when they engage in polemical and apologetic discussions. In these situations, the specialists need to employ some universal principles applicable to all religions. Reasoning and rational thoughts provide such a framework for this enterprise. As an emperor who wanted to create a "meta-religion," Akbar organized the discussions between the scholars of different religions in a "rational" framework (Stietencron 1989).

[25] At the end of this introduction, we would like to highlight the transliteration guidelines applied in this special issue. We adopted English writing for Persian words, which have entered English dictionaries. For others, we followed the transliteration guidelines of the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft* (DMG) for Persian and Arabic. Since most sources were in Persian and the context of studies was a Persian-speaking environment, Persian transliteration was primarily applied. Exceptions are Arabic words, book titles, and names of Arab figures, for which the Arabic transliteration scheme was used. We transcribed Persian words written with silent *h* (ه) at the end of the words with an ending *a*, e.g., *ḫāna*, words like شیخ as *šaiḫ* and

uniformly used *va* for Persian conjunction, although Persian speakers have been pronouncing it in most cases as *o*. Words like سیاست were transliterated as *seyāsat*, the suffix *ye of nesbat*, indicating the place of origin, ancestry, or affiliation, were written in the form of *-īya*, like *Nūrbaḫšīya*. Despite our efforts to present a unified system, some inconsistencies might have escaped our attention.

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DOI: 10.46586/er.13.2022.9629
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Entangled Religions 13.5 (2022)
er.ceres.rub.de

Exploring Patronage, Genre, and Scholar-Bureaucracy: The Trans-Imperial Career of Ḫᵛāndamīr (d. 1534)

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ABSTRACT This paper examines the life, career, and patronage of the great statesman and historian, Ġeyāṯ al-Dīn Ḫᵛāndamīr. Ḫᵛāndamīr lived and worked during a dynamic period of early modern Islamic history, marking the terminus of the great Timurid empire and the genesis of no less than three major polities in Iran, Central Asia, and South Asia: the Safavids, the Uzbeks, and the Mughals. During the first three decades of the sixteenth century, Ḫᵛāndamīr produced numerous texts across a multitude of genres, all the while dextrously navigating violent dynastic upheaval and negotiating new terms of patronage in different imperial settings. This paper examines a number of these patronized texts towards the objective of understanding more about how such "men of the pen" understood the act of patronage; specifically, Ḫᵛāndamīr's approach to text and genre may have been shaped by the terms and conditions of these different negotiated "trans-imperial" relationships.

KEYWORDS patronage, bureaucracy, scholar-bureaucrat, Timurid, Safavid, Mughal

Introduction: Patronage and the Tradition of the Scholar-Bureaucrat

There is little doubting that Muslim literate societies across the Middle East, Iran, Central Asia and South Asia—when assessing ideas of civilizational contribution and legacy—have placed great emphasis on the notion of individuality and personality. One only needs to peruse the index of an academic monograph to encounter a surplus of personal names of rulers, scholars, notables, and poets. A typical medieval court chronicle, likewise, focuses exclusively on the names, identities, and actions of the highly placed and [in]famous. These observations here are not a prelude to a larger analysis regarding societal notions of individual and community and the privileging of the elite, nor a call-to-arms to seek and locate those 'lost voices' of Islamic history, although both are worthy pursuits that certainly deserve more attention. I only [1]

introduce this ontological predilection towards the celebration of luminaries and personages—be they theologians, poets, historians, scientists, etc.—because it is so closely connected, indeed intertwined, with the focus of this essay: the practice of patronage in the late medieval Islamic world. As scholars like Roy Mottahedeh, Patricia Crone, A.L. Udovitch, Marina Rustow, and others have discussed, patronage as a political and courtly concept was widespread and diverse in the classical and medieval periods (Mottahedeh 1980; Crone 1980; Udovitch 1977; Rustow 2008). While some have argued for a level of structuralism in defining the practice of patronage, it seems more reasonable to work in alignment with Mottahedeh and his endorsement of qualities like informality and fluidity when discussing how patrons and clients understood one another and their relationship (Mottahedeh 1980, 84–89). Nonetheless, Mottahedeh provides us with an operational taxonomy to explore the practice of patronage in medieval settings where terms like *baiʿat* (oath of allegiance), *neʿmat* (benefits accrued/given on the basis of patronage), *ḫedmat* (service), and *esteṣnāʾ* (nurturement) are used by individuals and groups while forming relationships with powerful notables or the state itself. At the same time, scholars are appreciative of questions about such terms, their linguistic etymology, and how they are applied and understood in a multiplicity of situations (Rustow 2008, 351). As Mottahedeh noted insightfully, the Buyid/Abbasid period saw shifts with respect to public and private definitions like patronage and loyalty:

> There was an increasing rigidity in many of the religiously sanctioned forms of proper public and private behavior. In private life, these forms continued to be widely used for their original purposes. But in public life, they were increasingly used not for their original purposes, but to indicate the continued respect by the user for the private application of Islamic norms. (Mottahedeh 1980, 27–28) [2]

I would argue that it was these dynamics in the private sphere which came to exert such a powerful influence for patrons and their sponsorship of the aforementioned 'luminaries and personages', who in turn were prolifically producing formative texts on various subjects. These texts, in turn, would be introduced and adapted to the ever-increasing, and no doubt unwieldy, discourse of civilizational knowledge (religious sciences, natural sciences, poetry, history, prophetic biographies, and esoteric knowledge) that educated Muslim elites were expected to not only be aware of, but to also engage with and provide commentary on. Of course, the biographies of famous poets and litterateurs provide detailed, and arguably embellished, stories about relationships between patrons and clients, but patronage in the literary realm as a greater lens of analysis and commentary has only recently begun to develop thanks to the work of Julie Scott Meisami (1987, 2001), Beatrice Gründler (2004), Jocelyn Sharlet (2011), Dominic Brookshaw (2019), and Christoph Werner (2017). The scholarly field dedicated to studying state patronage of sciences—religious, philosophical, scientific—is far more expansive, and we simply note here the contributions of Sonja Brentjes (2008a, 2008b, 2009), Ali Humayun Akhtar (2012), Omid Safi (2006), Dmitri Gutas (1998), Michael Chamberlain (1995), and Jonathan Berkey among others (1992). With this mind, it is evident that both disciplinary and polymathic scholarship was profoundly influenced by notions of patronage being formed during the late Abbasid period of the tenth to twelfth centuries. During the Mongol and post-Mongol periods, and the advent of Turkic and Turco-Mongol polities across the Middle East, Iran, Central Asia, and South Asia, the issue of patronage became not only more nuanced, but increasingly important for newly-Islamicized Turkic rulers seeking credibility as well as the numerous 'luminaries and personages' in need of protection and promotion of [3]

their scholarship. Of course, it was this period—the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—that profound religious, philosophical, and scientific innovations and changes were also taking place.[1]

[4] This present discussion of late medieval Islamic patronage is principally focused on the historian and *litterateur* Ġeyāṯ al-Dīn b. Homām al-Dīn Ḫᵛāndamīr (1475–1535). A scion of a well-established family of scholarly administrators based in Timurid Khorasan, Ḫᵛāndamīr produced a number of texts on behalf of his first major patron, Mīr ʿAlī Šīr Navāʾī, but the Uzbek and Safavid invasions of 1507 and 1510 violently convulsed his world of patron-client relations. The remainder of his career was spent exploring and navigating the new political landscape that was emerging in Iran, Central Asia, and India in the early sixteenth century. There is a growing, yet diverse, field of scholarship which has examined the issues of courtly, cultural, socio-economic, and scientific patronage in this remarkable period of dynastic inceptions, foundations, and dramatic expansion (Subtelny 1988; Paul 1991).[2] Less specific discussions of patronage as a phenomenon, but nonetheless containing important insights on its different manifestations during the late fifteenth to early sixteenth century, can be found in the work of John Woods (1999), Maria Subtelny (2007), Maria Szuppe (1992), Jean Aubin (1959, 1988), Chris Marckiewicz (2019), Mark Toutant (2016), Evrim Binbaş (2016), Chad Lingwood (2014), Rula Abisaab (2004), and Kathryn Babayan (2002).

[5] What was notable about Ḫᵛāndamīr was not necessarily his ability to negotiate various literary genres (history, poetry, epistolography, biography), but his success in seeking and securing patronage in a relatively short period with different dynasties which were not only varied in composition and mission but also competitive and often inimical with one another, namely the Timurids, the Uzbeks, the Safavids, and the Mughals. When Ḫᵛāndamīr was roughly 30 years of age, the Timurid empire was exterminated by the newly arrived Uzbeks from the north; he survived Uzbek rule in Khorasan for three years before they themselves were pushed out by Šāh Esmāʿīl I (r. 1501–24) and the Safavids in 1510. He maintained a somewhat distant relationship with the Safavid authorities in Herat; he, in fact, served intermittently as vizier to two surviving Timurid princes who had accepted Safavid sovereignty, but also lived a while in self-exile in a small village called Pašt to the east of the Herat (Szuppe 1992, 56). He eventually secured the patronage of the Safavid administrator Ġeyāṯ al-Dīn Amīr Moḥammad to write a grand historical chronicle—later named the *Ḥabīb al-seyar*—which he began in 1521 and finished three years later under the patronage of Amīr Moḥammad's replacement, Ḥabībollāh Savaǧī (fl. early sixteenth c.). At some point after 1526 and the founding of the Mughal empire by Bābor (r. 1526–30), Ḫᵛāndamīr made a decision to seek a new type of Timurid patronage in South Asia; he joined the court of Bābor in Agra in 1528, and continued to serve Bābor's son and successor, Homāyūn (r. 1530–56), from 1530 until 1534 as the court historian, but died serving on a campaign to Gujarat. And while he certainly brought copies of his various works to South Asia, he became more renowned—at least in the Mughal court—for his *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī* (a.k.a. *Homāyūn-nāmah*), a panegyric text celebrating the enthronement, courtly arrangements and ceremonies, and building architecture of Homāyūn in his early reign.

1 Working on the idea of sacralised politics, scholars like Orkhan Mir-Kasimov, Shahzad Bashir, Matthew Melvin-Koushki, and Evrim Binbaş argue, in their respective work, for the fifteenth century as a profound period of change with respective to the rise and standardization of esoteric sciences and popularity of mystical philosophy in the central and eastern Islamic world. See Mir-Kasimov (2015), Bashir (2005), Melvin-Koushki (n.d.), and Binbaş (2016).

2 I would also like to mention Ertuğrul Ötken's recent presentation, "Nawa'i in the himaya process" at the 33rd meeting of the *Deutscher Orientalisten Tag* in Jena, Germany, 2017; Ötken (2013).

While contemplating patronage, it is also worth considering the notion of the 'scholar-bureaucrat' during this particular early modern period of innovation and change. First fashioned as a category in English by Cemal Kafadar in his seminal study, *Between Two Worlds*, the general idea of administrator-cum-scholar has existed in Arabo- and Perso-Islamic societies since the eighth century with individuals like Ebn al-Moqaffaʿ and Ebn al-Qodāma (Kafadar 1996; Fleischer 1986; Atçil 2017; Mitchell 2009). Scholar-bureaucrats were invariably connected with state administration, and indeed it was in imperial spaces like revenue bureaucracy, chancelleries, or legal courts that such individuals brought their significant linguistic and scholarly training to bear. More often than not, they held official authoritative positions such as *vizier* (chief bureaucrat), *mostaufī* (comptroller), *monšī* (chancellery stylist), or *moftī* (legal jurist), and their oversight, maintenance, and occasional reform of an imperial administration was well-acknowledged. However, such scholar-bureaucrats were not entirely defined by their state identity and state vocation; to the contrary, their societal reputation and subsequent legacy is largely shaped by their contributions to multiple literary, historiographical, legal, and religio-intellectual traditions. It is this polymathic quality of such scholar-bureaucrats that can make categorization and nomination somewhat challenging; these are individuals who stood and operated in multiple epistemological spaces, producing valuable texts on various subjects while commenting and supra-commenting on others. Housed in administration, but so much more influential and wide-ranging in terms of scholarly production, such individuals were often styled rhetorically as 'Āṣaf-ǧāhs' of their era, a reference to the wise counselor and administrator to the great king and prophet, Solomon: Āṣaf b. Barḫeyāʾ. Indeed, Āṣaf b. Barḫeyāʾ is styled without fail as the progenitor of all viziers in a number of prosopographic histories dedicated to such men which are usually styled as *aḫbār al-vozarāʾ* and *dastūr al-vozarāʾ* (Arjomand 2013, 102–5). [6]

Thus, we find a healthy tradition of scholar-bureaucrats in the Mongol and post-Mongol Islamic world who defy reduction; they operate in a multi epistemic world where salary allocations intersect with prosody and poetry, where chancellery *promulgatio*s and *intitulatio*s sit side-by-side with hagiography and shrine manuals, and where courtly historical chronicles co-exist with tax remittance. During the Ghaznavid, Seljuk, and Mongol periods scholar-bureaucrats tended to focus on history (*tāʾrīḫ*) in terms of their grand oeuvres, but therein we find a rich array of literary and poetic devices and textual traditions being represented. Notables, predictably, include Abo-l-Faẓl Bayhaqī (d. 1077) and al-ʿOtbī (d. 982) of the Ghaznavid era, any one of the Ǧovainī family who had dominated the Mongol administration, Moḥammad b. Hendūšāh al-Naḫǧavānī (f. 1328–58), and of course the great administrator, Rašīd al-Dīn Faẓlollāh Hamadānī (d. 1318). Moving into the Timurid, Safavid, and Mughal periods, one could cautiously assert that typical Perso-Islamic scholar-bureaucrats in the fifteenth and sixteenth century were increasingly invested in the eclectic and variegated nature of intellectual debate and religious inquiry. In the Timurid context, we only need to point to the careers of such scholar-bureaucrats as Šaraf al-Dīn Yazdī (d. 1454), Moʿīn al-Dīn Zamčī Esfezārī (fl. 1456–1510), Ḥosain Vāʿeẓ Kāšefī (d. 1504), and above all, Mīr ʿAlī Šīr Navāʾī (d. 1501) to develop an appreciation for not only the depth of their scholarly production but also its breadth and diversity. [7]

Returning (finally) to the career and scholarship of our subject of study, Ġeyāṯ al-Dīn Ḫᵛāndamīr, we find a greater continuity of these aforementioned Perso-Islamic traditions, but with certain qualifications worth considering. While he was born, raised, educated, and trained in the city of Herat, Ḫᵛāndamīr was forced to adopt the life of a peripatetic scholar- [8]

bureaucrat during the inchoate days of Timurid collapse and Uzbek-Safavid contestation over control of Khorasan. This notion of peripateticism of course complicated enormously his practicing of patronage, but medieval Islamic civilization is in many ways defined by the movement of scholars—sometimes voluntarily, sometimes coercively—and thus Ḫᵛāndamīr was indeed part of a greater tradition of 'mobile' patronage politics. There has been less discussion in contemporary scholarship about this particular category, but interesting analyses have been offered by Ertuğrul Ötken (2013), Abdurrahman Atçil (2016), and Shawqat Toorawa (2004). Most recently, Quinn has elaborated further on the historiographical import of historians like Ḫᵛāndamīr with her superlative publication, *Persian Historiography Across Empires: The Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals* (*Persian Historiography Across Empires: The Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals* 2020). Also worth noting is the very recent scholarship of Philip Bockholt (2019, 2021), who has worked comprehensively on Ḫᵛāndamīr's *Ḥabīb al-seyar*. In this spirit, I am principally interested in exploring Ḫᵛāndamīr's administrative and scholarly career with these issues of mobile patronage politics in mind; as we explore the particular relationships of Ḫᵛāndamīr with his various patrons, we can better understand the nature and trajectory of his scholarly production as he navigated the dynastic landscape of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries in the eastern Islamic world. The peripatetic nature of Ḫᵛāndamīr's career was noted by Sholeh Quinn (2015) in her excellent analysis of the historian and the patronage by the Mughal emperor Homāyūn of the well-known text, the *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī*.

[9] And as we develop more nuanced insights into scholarly output and the issue of motive, interesting possibilities emerge regarding questions of textual categories and genres, and how scholars like Ḫᵛāndamīr were able to push epistemic borders in fascinating ways during a period of such innovation and change. Also worth considering, as Quinn has certainly demonstrated, Ḫᵛāndamīr was capable of recycling textual traditions that he had inherited from various medieval historiographical and literary canons, and while doing so, altering them significantly depending on the particular patron and dynasty involved. However, while Quinn examines his career and writing solely through a Safavid-Mughal analysis, this article is keen on examining Ḫᵛāndamīr's approach to text and patronage from his Timurid beginnings, through his complicated career under the Uzbeks and Safavids, and concluding with his twilight years in Mughal India. Over the duration of his professional career, Ḫᵛāndamīr produced eight texts—consisting largely of prose, but also including extensive poetry and prosimetrum—under the auspices of four dynasties:

Table 1

Title (Subject)[3]	Year	Dynastic Setting
Maʾāṯer al-molūk (collection of political maxims)	ca. 1498	Timurid
Ḫolāṣat al-aḫbār fī bayān aḥvāl al-aḫyār (concise world history)	ca. 1500	Timurid
Makārem al-aḫlāq (panegyric biography of Mīr ʿAlī Šīr)	1501	Timurid
Dastūr al-vozarāʾ (prosopography of viziers)	1508–09	Uzbek
Nāmah-ye nāmī (collection of model epistles)	1520	Safavid
Montaḫab-e Tāʾrīḫ-e Vaṣṣāf (no surviving text)	?	Safavid
Ḥabīb al-seyar fī aḫbār afrād al-bašar (multi-volume universal history)	1524	Safavid
Qānūn-e Homāyūnī (celebration of Homāyūn's coronation,	1534	Mughal

Title (Subject)	Year	Dynastic Setting
courtly organization, and architectural program)		

For the purposes of this present discussion, we will be focusing on five texts, some well-known, some less so, produced by Ḫᵛāndamīr over the years: *Makārem al-aḫlāq* (1501), *Dastūr al-vozarāʾ* (1508–09), *Nāmah-ye nāmī* (1520), *Ḥabīb al-seyar* (1524), and the *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī* (1534). What follows is far from an exhaustive textual analysis, but rather an overview of the sources with an eye towards the preamble (*dībāčah*) of each text and the dedicatory space where Ḫᵛāndamīr would: 1) discuss his motivation for writing the text in question, 2) describe his relationship with his patron, and 3) hint at his adaption and innovative approach to existing traditions and historico-literary genres. I am also interested in issues of textual provenance and intertextuality, and how Ḫᵛāndamīr chose to edit and alter texts in response to specific religio-political environments and relevant relationships of patronage. Ḫᵛāndamīr could be remarkably selective and adaptive in such compilations of texts, as Sholeh Quinn (2015) has recently demonstrated in her comparison of certain historical sections which appear in both the *Ḥabīb al-seyar* and the *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī*. [10]

Celebrating Patronage: the *Makārem al-aḫlāq* (1501)

The *Makārem al-aḫlāq* has been widely presented as a 'panegyric biography' of Mīr ʿAlī Šīr Navāʾī, the famous statesman, poet, and literary scholar who in many ways defined the cultural legacy of the Timurid empire under Sultan-Ḥosain Bāiqarā (r. 1470–1506). Himself a prolific poet in Chagatai Turkish and a scholar of languages, Mīr ʿAlī Šīr also used his position as chief administrator in the 1480s and 1490s to oversee the construction of dozens of religious institutions, shrines, tombs, hospitals, as well as a wide array of public works throughout Khorasan. His relationship with the dominant Naqšbandī Sufi Order under the Aḥrār family and its famous poet-spokesman, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ǧāmī (d. 1492), is also considered a key aspect of his legacy in Khorasan and Central Asia. Mīr ʿAlī Šīr had been a patron to many of the literati and poets of Herat during its cultural apex in the late fifteenth century, including Ḫᵛāndamīr's grandfather, Mīrḫᵛānd (d. 1498), who by Ḫᵛāndamīr's own admission was one of the most important people in his life; his greatest historical work, the *Ḥabīb al-seyar*, is largely based on Mīrḫᵛānd's *Raużat al-ṣafāʾ*. However, there is also little doubt regarding the impact of Mīr ʿAlī Šīr on Ḫᵛāndamīr as a young and budding scholar in the late 1490s. He had provided access to his personal vizierial library so that Ḫᵛāndamīr could write his first two texts in 1498 and 1499-1500: the *Maʿāṯer al-molūk* and the *Ḫolāṣat al-aḫbār fī bayān aḥvāl al-aḫyār*. Thus, when Ḫᵛāndamīr produced the *Makārem al-aḫlāq* one year later in 1501, it was clear that this particular text was the product of a vibrant and successful patron-client relationship. However, as Ḫᵛāndamīr relates in the preface (*dībāčah*), his patron had passed away before he was able to finish the text. It is this posthumous quality that likely explains why the *Makārem al-aḫlāq* is such a bold recognition of the singular impact of Mīr ʿAlī Šīr on late Timurid society. And while Ḫᵛāndamīr was clearly celebrating this legacy first and foremost, there are interesting aspects regarding the *Makārem al-aḫlāq* and its organization [11]

3 I'd like to thank Sholeh Quinn for sharing a draft of her article on Ḫᵛāndamīr ("A Historian on the Move"), in which she provided very helpful tabular information on Ḫᵛāndamīr's textual legacy.

to suggest that Ḫᵛāndamīr saw therein opportunities to use the genre of 'noblest of moral attributes' (*makārem al-aḫlāq*) literature in innovative ways with a greater objective of profiling particular aspects and institutions of Timurid society.

[12] The phrase 'makārem al-aḫlāq' references an amorphous genre of literature which is believed to date back to at least the ninth century (Bellamy 1963, 108). Generally translated as 'the noblest of moral attributes', *makārem al-aḫlāq* became a popular prose genre for Arab Muslim authors who were keen to offer prescriptive manuals of model behavior and piety, and, with time, it became commonly associated with ethics literature. More often than not, such Arab authors picked up the tools of biography and hadith sciences to concentrate on how the prophetic life and career (*sīrat*) of Moḥammad could inspire an understanding of proper ethics, but other *makārem al-aḫlāq*s could be simply collections of Qurʾānic verses, hadiths, aphorisms, and poetry regarding key characteristics like generosity, knowledge, and piety. The Qurʾānic anchor for the phrase *makārem al-aḫlāq* is 68: 4, wherein God addressed the prophet directly: "and you [stand] upon a mighty character" (*wa-innaka ʿalā ḫuluq-in ʿaẓīm-in*) (DeYoung 2014, 169). As the genre grew in popularity, *ḥadīṯ* scholars and exegetes from both Sunni and Shi'i traditions, such as Ibn Abī al-Dunyā (d. 894), al-Ṭabarī (d. 923), al-Saʿlabī (d. 1037), and al-Ṭabarsī (d. 1153), produced their own particular visions of *makārem al-aḫlāq* to begin expanding and connecting this blossoming ethics genre with hadiths and historical statements wherein the phrase *makārem al-aḫlāq*, or variations (*aḫlāqī*, *ḫoloq*, *ḫalaqī*), are believed to have appeared (Saleh 2014, 115–18). It should be noted that this genre stands apart from the healthy and vibrant tradition of courtly advice literature (*pand*, *andarz*, *naṣīḥat*), which, citing the ancient pre-Islamic Iranian past, also began to flourish in Persia in the twelfth century (Fouchécour 1986, 3–7).

[13] Turning to Ḫᵛāndamīr's own *Makārem al-aḫlāq*, it certainly appears that he was working within the general parameters of this genre as it had been developing since its initial surge of popularity in the ninth and tenth centuries. As we shall see, he uses typical Qurʾānic exegesis and hadith sciences to envision ethics and moral behavior within a Qurʾānic-prophetic framework, and we find no obvious references to pre-Islamic Iranian heritage or styles of philosophical ethics which had been popularized in the famous *aḫlāqī* texts by scholars like Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī (d. 1274), Ǧalāl al-Dīn al-Davānī (d. 1502), or Ḥosain Vāʾeẓ Kāšefī. As the following tabular presentation of the 12 chapters which constitute the *Makārem al-aḫlāq* indicates, Ḫᵛāndamīr nonetheless strikes a singular stance in his interpretation of personal and societal ethics wherein reason, intelligence, epistolography, and poetry are all accorded individual chapters alongside chapters dedicated to moral and ethical categories.

Table 2

Introduction	Explaining the virtue (*fażīlat*) of *makārem al-aḫlāq* and narrating the felicitous birth (*velādat bā-saʿādat*) of Mīr ʿAlī Šīr
Chapter 1	Explaining honour and dignity of reason and intelligence (*ʿaql va edrāk*)
Chapter 2	Explaining the virtue of knowledge (*ʿelm*) and ranks of religious scholars (*martabah-ye ʿolamāʾ*)
Chapter 3	Explaining the virtue of poetry and the highly-ranked poets (*ʿaẓam-šān-e shoʿarā*)
Chapter 4	Explaining the virtue of *enšāʾ* and the scholars of eloquence (*afāżel-e soḫān-ārā*)

Table 2

Chapter 5	Explaining the distribution of reward (*andāḫtan-e ẕaḫāʾr-e ʿoqbā*) and avoiding the earthly realm (*eʿraż az donyā va māfī-hā*)
Chapter 6	Explaining the patronage (*raʿāyat*) of the notables (*arkān*) who support the Prophetic *Šarīʿah*
Chapter 7	Explaining kindness and compassion (*raʿfat va raḥmat*)
Chapter 8	Explaining humility (*tavāżoʿ*)
Chapter 9	Explaining generosity and munificence (*ǧūd va saḫāvat*)
Chapter 10	Explaining subtle phrases and pleasantries (*laṭāʾef va maṭāʾebat*)
Conclusion	Strange events and miraculous stories (*ġarāʾeb va ʿaǧāʾeb-e ḥekāyāt*)

We find, almost immediately, indicators in Ḫᵛāndamīr's preface that the *Makārem al-aḫlāq* reflects the prevalence and popularity of Sufi philosophical concepts, language, and vocabulary in late Timurid Iran and Central Asia. It should also be noted that this preface (*dībāčah*) was written and appended *after* the text had been completed; as Ḫᵛāndamīr explains in the preface, Mīr ʿAlī Šīr had passed away shortly before its completion and the author felt that some prefatory explanation was needed. The opening words of the preface, using metaphors of pen and paper (*qalam-e qodrat, ṣaḥāʾef-e maḫlūqāt*), highlights God's epiphany to humankind by referencing the famous Hidden Treasure *ḥadīṯ*: "I was a Hidden Treasure…I created the world so I could be known" (*kuntu kanz-an maḫfī-an….fa-ḫalaqtu al-ḫalqa li-uʿraf*). It is with this divine epiphany, Ḫᵛāndamīr writes, that the "ornamented jeweled tools which allow mystical knowledge of God now became apparent" (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 39).[4] This 'Hidden Treasure' *ḥadīṯ* is a popular signifier of the much more significant mystico-philosophical tradition first established by Ibn ʿArabī, which stressed the beauty of God's creative act and creation, as well as the inability to appreciate this beauty without acknowledging the idea of Gnosticism (*maʿrefat*). The opening words of the preamble, interestingly, employ thanks and gratitude to God's bounty and generosity (*ʿenāyat-aš*, *makramat-aš*) towards humankind, and more specifically, towards those 'lords of Truth and Gnosticism' (*arbāb-e taḥqīq va ʿerfān*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 40). Ḫᵛāndamīr invokes the Prophet Moḥammad and the pantheon of exalted beings and angels who 'circle his harem in the way of service'. Here, he adds a line of Amīr Ḫosrau's poetry which continues the metaphor of service: "Behind the curtain in the great hall of Creation/Jesus is the server and Ḫeżr is the cup-bearer at His table" (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 40). Ḫᵛāndamīr profiles Moḥammad as *al-mošarraf* who received the 'excellent speech' (*ḫeṭāb-e mostaṭāb*) of Qurʾān 68:4: 'and you [stand] upon a mighty character' which, as mentioned, is the scriptural anchor to the entire *makārem al-aḫlāq* tradition. However, as Saleh has pointed out, tenth- and eleventh-century Arab writers also argued that pre-Islamic Arabs were "possessed of a natural moral code that somehow corresponded with the Islamic moral code" (Saleh 2014, 115). Ḫᵛāndamīr endorses this Qurʾānic quote of "you [stand] upon a mighty character' by listing names associated with the elite of Arab society: Moṣṭafā, Moʿallā, Moǧtabā, Mozakkā, Mohtadī, Hāšemī, Moqtadī, and Qoraišī" (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 40). Moreover, this moral quality was passed along to Moḥammad's family, companions, kinsmen, and friends (*āl va aṣḥāb va ʿašīrat va aḥbāb-e ū*), who would properly hold up the pillars of Islam and the rules of Šarīʿah. Turning to the subject at hand (*ammā baʿd*), Ḫᵛāndamīr narrates that it was not hidden to sagacious ones that—after some time—there was an individual who would receive God's [14]

4 All translations by the author unless otherwise noted.

light, and become the chief employee of the world's kings (*mostaḥdam-e sanādīd-e āfāq*), the embodiment of the most noble moral characteristics (*mostaǧmaʿ-e makārem-e aḫlāq*), the chief of the lords of knowledge and Gnosticism (*qodvah-ye arbāb-e ʿelm va ʿerfānī*), the *qeblah* of the master of verification and certainty (*qeblah-ye aṣḥāb-e taḥqīq va īqān*), the guarantor of imperial state (*moʾtamen-e daulat-e ḫāqānī*), and the confidant of sultanic excellency (*moqarreb-e ḥażrat-e solṭānī*): Mīr ʿAlī Šīr Navāʾī (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 41).

At this juncture in the *Makārem al-aḫlāq*, Ḫᵛāndamīr begins to introduce the notion, language, and vocabulary of patronage. Using classical metaphors of gardening and watering, Ḫᵛāndamīr states that from the beginning of his childhood (*az mabādīʾ-e senn-e ṣebā*) until the last days of his youth (*avāḫer-e auqāt-e šabāb*), the "young shoot of his existence" was irrigated and cared for by Mīr ʿAlī Šīr. Ḫᵛāndamīr invokes the Arabic saying (*kalemāt*): "thanks to the benefactor is a necessity" (*šukr al-munʿim wāǧib-un*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 41). On the one hand, the notion of 'Thanking God, the Benefactor" is a powerful one in Islamic ethics (Reinhart 1995, 107–20), but it is possible that Ḫᵛāndamīr was quoting the mystic poet Rumi and referencing his cautionary tale of the people of Saba who took God's bounty and generosity for granted (Rūmī 2002, 6:96). "How much service" Ḫᵛāndamīr rhetorically asks, "must I perform to in order to satisfy this oath and pay back even *some* of his never-ending benefaction?"(*āyā beh kodām ḫedmat qeyām namāyam tā az ʿohdah-ye ada-ye šokr-e baʿżī az neʿam bī-karān-aš bīrūn āyam?*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 41). The terms used here by Ḫᵛāndamīr—*ḫedmat*, *ʿohdah*, *neʿam*—constitute the standard vocabulary of patronage, and indeed in doing so, he is underscoring the formality of his indebtedness to Mīr ʿAlī Šīr. Finally, the guide of reason spoke reason to his soul's ear (*ʿāqebat moršed-e ʿaql dar gūš-e ǧān goft*) and pointed out how Mīr ʿAlī Šīr's reputation and excellent qualities were already well-known throughout the world. Ḫᵛāndamīr realized, however, that with some preparation, he could focus on Mīr ʿAlī Šīr's qualities (*fażīlat*), most noble moral attributes (*makārem-e aḫlāq*), and greatest refinements of etiquette (*maḥāsen-e ādāb*). While doing so, he could also highlight "some of the sublime biographies, agreeable personalities, miraculous conditions, and strange events" which his patron inspired, including "magical poetry" (*ṭabʿ-e- seḥrāṣār*) and "delicate pen of art" (*ḫamah-ye laṭāʾef-negār*). Accomplishing this, it was possible that Ḫᵛāndamīr could bring "a trifle" (*daqīqahʾī*) of his debt to rest and repay "a mote" (*ẕarrah-ʾī*) of his obligation of thanks (*ʿohdah-ye šokr-e neʿmat*) to this exalted excellency (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 42). Moreover, Ḫᵛāndamīr hints at the eschatological import of recording Mīr ʿAlī Šīr's legacy as patron: the memory of Mīr ʿAlī Šīr's praiseworthy deeds will remain fixed on the pages of fortune until the Hour of Judgment *(tā qeyāmat-e sāʿat va sāʿat-e qeyām ẕekr-e aʿmāl-e ḥamīdah va afʿāl-e pasandīdah-ye ān ḥażrat bar ṣafaḥāt-e rūzgār va aurāq-e layl va nahār bāqī va pāydār mānad*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 42). Tragically, Mīr ʿAlī Šīr Navāʾī passed away before he could make a clean copy of the draft (*savād beh bayāż ravad*), and thus Ḫᵛāndamīr was all the more motivated to produce this bio-panegyric in a timely fashion.

[15]

Following the *dībāčah*, Ḫᵛāndamīr presents the formal introduction (*moqaddemah*) which is entitled "Explaining the Virtue of *Makārem-i Aḫlāq* and Narrating the Felicitous Birth of that Protector of the Nobles of the World" (*dar bayān-e fażīlat-e makārem-e aḫlāq va ẕekr-e velādat bā-saʿādat-e ān malāẕ-e akāber-e āfāq*). In the opening lines, he provides a rationale for the concept of *makārem al-aḫlāq* which is essentially an adoption and paraphrasing from elements of the pre-existing ethics tradition. According to the work of preceding scholars and prescient ones, the phrase "whosoever is destined to be good will be exalted with praiseworthy virtues" (*man yurida Allāh bihi ḫayr-an yaǧʿala lahu ḫuluq-an ḥasan-an*) is illuminating and

[16]

manifest (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 47). The Prophet Moḥammad is the ultimate receptacle in this regard, and the lynchpin for this is Qurʾān 68: 4 'and you [stand] upon a mighty character.' Indeed, thousands of earlier prophets and divine messengers had been sent to teach proper morals and behaviour with limited success but it was the Prophet Moḥammad who stated: "I was sent with perfect noble qualities" (*bu'iṯtu li-utammima makārim al-aḫlāq*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 48). Ḫᵛāndamīr provides a short commentary on this statement and its significance towards developing the idealization of noble character (*faẓīlat-e makārem-e aḫlāq*) as well as the dignity of excellent conduct (*manzalat-e maḥāsen-e ādāb*). With the prophetic exemplar in mind, Ḫᵛāndamīr introduces the mid-fifteenth-century birth of Mīr ʿAlī Šīr during the reign of Šāh-Roḫ as an especially significant divine act of creation. The singularity of this event is underlined by a poetic quotation from Ǧāmī and his description in the *Haft Aurang* of God's creation of the beautiful and unworldly Yusuf: "a breath from the garden of the soul creates a young plant in the way that a crescent moon appears from the sky of the soul" (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 49). Mīr ʿAlī Šīr's auspicious birth date is the 17 Ramażān in the *heǧrī* year 844 (Feb. 18, 1441), the significance of which is linked by Ḫᵛāndamīr to the revelation of the Qur'ānic verse 19:12, "And We gave him judgment [while he was still] a boy." 17 Ramażān is especially significant in Ḫᵛāndamīr's eyes because—according to many exegetes—this date signifies the beginning of the revelation of the Qur'ān to the Prophet Moḥammad. Moreover, not only did the Battle of Badr take place on this date, but it was also on 17 Ramażān that ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭāleb was murdered by a Ḫāreǧī; Ḫᵛāndamīr adds that some scholars agree that the night of power (*šab-e qadr*) took place on 17 Ramazan (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 49–50). Mīr ʿAlī Šīr's genius was discovered at the age of four, and he was sent to a *maktab* to begin his formal education. In a short time, he demonstrated his peerless stature and became famous as had been destined on the pages of fortune (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 51). The introduction concludes, appropriately, with a line of poetry: "with noble fortune, he became a verifier (*moḥaqqeq*)/such is the meaning of the utterance of *makārem al-aḫlaq*!" (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 51).

It is worth noting that the following two chapters of the *Makārem al-aḫlaq* are dedicated [17]
to a) "Honour and Virtue of Reason and Intelligence" (*šaraf va faẓīlat-e ʿaql va edrāk*) and b) "Virtue of [Religious] Knowledge and the Ranks of the [Religious] Scholars" (*faẓīlat-e ʿelm va martabah-ye ʿolamāʾ*). Ḫᵛāndamīr's distinction between the two, and his ranking of reason (*ʿaql*) before religious knowledge (*ʿelm*), bears mention since a number of earlier medieval texts on ethics, such as Meskavaih's (d. 1030) *Tahẕīb al-aḫlāq va-taṭhīr al-aʿrāq*, Rāġeb al-Esfahānī's (d. 1108) *Ẕarīʿah elā makārem al-šarīʿah,* and al-Ġazālī's (d. 1111) *Kīmeyāʾ-e saʿādat*, were organized with comparable epistemological imperatives; others, like Abī al-Dunyā and Rašīd al-Dīn Ṭabarsī eschew discussions on topics like reason and knowledge on their own basis, but rather treat them exclusively through the biographies of the Prophet and his family (Bellamy 1963, 109–10). The notion of epistemological hierarchies is especially strong among medieval philosophers and writers, and Ḫᵛāndamīr's opening chapters place him within a specific tradition associated with the aforementioned 'scholar-bureaucrats' who first emerged in the Abbasid period; here, distinguished scribes and scholarly administrators, like Qodāma b. Ǧaʿfar (d. 948), Ebn Farīġūn (d. 955), and al-Ḫʷārazmī (d. 985), approached knowledge and intellect through, among other things, notions of communication, speech, and writing (Heck 2002, 31–33). In his own first chapter on *ʿaql*, Ḫᵛāndamīr begins with the Prophetic *ḥadīṯ*: "he who has no reason has no religion" (*lā dīn l-man lā ʿaql lahu*). What follows is a composite of prose, poetry, and prosimetrum which both rationalizes and champions the role of reason, and interestingly, there is little by way of scriptural proof-texts or references to the

Prophetic sonnah. Without the "light of reason" (*nūr-e ʿaql*), "one can never light the lamp of faith and Islam in the home of one's heart" (*čerāġ-e dīn va Eslām dar ḫānah-ye del-e vay bar-afrūḫtah na-gardad*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 53). In turn, a *robāʿī* is presented:

> Reason (*ʿaql*) is what provides the foundation for everything in the world/Reason is what strengthens the work of state and faith [18]
>
> In his holy excellency and the rows of collected souls/Every splendour and magnificence which can be seen comes from reason (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 53) [19]

Ḫᵛāndamīr alternates from Persian poetry to Arabic para-scripture by quoting the famous hadith of reason (*hadīṯ al-ʿaql*): "Indeed, God, when He created reason, He said to it, 'Come', and it came. Then He said: 'Go back' and it went back. So, God said: 'Be my glory and beauty, I have not created anything nobler than you. By you, I will take and by you, I will give" (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 54). Ḫᵛāndamīr then follows with another *robāʿī*: [20]

> Reason (*ʿaql*) is what makes orderly the work of the world/and its twinning with the bases of faith is firm [21]
>
> Everywhere where there is a sultan with no reason in him/any justice which comes from him is annulled. [22]

Ḫᵛāndamīr's evaluation of reason, and its underpinning of all society, seems to better reflect contemporary medieval discussions of justice and sovereignty taking place in the Perso-Islamic tradition in poetry, history, and political advice literature. In this vein, the Timurid author presents a *maṯnavī* which is part quotation and part paraphrase from Ferdausī's section 'Praise for Intelligence' (*setāyeš-e ḫerad*) in the beginning of the *Shāh-nāmah*: [23]

> Guiding intelligence and exhilarating intelligence/Will take one by the hand to earth and heaven [24]
>
> Intelligence was the crown of kings/Intelligence was the book of nobles [25]
>
> Whomsoever shall not be favoured by intelligence/Will not be ranked among the prescient ones [26]
>
> If you discover the root of intelligence in the world/You will remain happy in both earth and heaven[5] [27]

In recent literature, there has been a concerted effort to reinterpret the *Šāh-nāmah* as more than an epic poem replete with legendary kings, chivalric heroes, and mythic creatures; we would be better served to see this text through the lens of political advice and ethics literature (Askari 2016). This non-attributed poetry was clearly inspired by and paraphrased from the *Šāh-nāmah*, and, as such, is reminiscent of similar strategies used by Timurid contemporaries when dealing with the *Šāh-nāmah* (Bernadini 2012, 161). In Ḫᵛāndamīr's estimation, Mīr ʿAlī Šīr was the perfect embodiment of this idea of intelligence and its application in sovereignty and statecraft. As proof, Ḫᵛāndamīr narrates two particular stories regarding the crucial role played by Mīr ʿAlī Šīr Navāʾī during a crisis in 1469–70 when his sovereign patron [28]

5 The first line of this quote is directly copied from the *Shāh-nāmah*, while the remaining three reflect the spirit of Ferdausī's praise of intelligence. See Ferdausī (2002, 1, line 19).

Solṭān-Ḥosain Bāyqarā faced a serious challenge from his Timurid cousin, Moḥammad Yādgār (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 55–58). The second chapter on knowledge (*ʿelm*) follows a similar pattern with respect to the use of Qur'ānic and prophetic proof texts in combination with poetry; some of the poetry can be attributed to the great Timurid poet, Ǧāmī. Interestingly, Mīr ʿAlī Šīr is not himself brandished as a singular possessor of *ʿelm* but a great patron and protector of its custodians, the *ʿolamā*. Ḫᵛāndamīr highlights his status as a refuge for religious scholars and their writing of prominent (and relatively orthodox) texts such as Taftāzānī's *Šarḥ-e Farāʾeż*, Ǧamāl al-Dīn ʿAṭāʾollāh Aṣīlī's *Raużat al-aḥbāb fī sīrat al-nabī va-l-āl va-l-asḥāb*, and Vāʿeẓ Kāšefī's *Tafsīr-e fārsī*, among others. Ḫᵛāndamīr also profiles a number of madrasahs and other public religious buildings which were initially built or renovated by Mīr ʿAlī Šīr (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 64–65).

We discover more fulsome presentations of Mīr ʿAlī Šīr in the third and fourth chapters, [29]
respectively on poetry and *enšāʾ*. The Timurid vizier's literary contribution in both the Turkish and Persian languages (such as the famous *Maǧāles al-nafāʾes*) is certainly profiled, but what is interesting is Ḫᵛāndamīr's editorial decision to highlight—in separate chapters—the phenomenon of both poetry and belletristic prose writing, both of which are subjects which would not necessarily be considered 'virtues' and thus eligible for inclusion in a typical *Makārem al-aḫlāq*. In the chapter on poetry, he defends the practice of poetry in both Qurʾānic and prophetic terms, as well as referring to the poetry of the companions, particularly ʿAlī. Ḫᵛāndamīr discusses and quotes Mīr ʿAlī Šīr's own poetry, both in Persian and in Turkish, while also profiling the literary art of crafting chronograms and *moʿammā*s. Likewise, *enšāʾ* and the prose tradition is discussed elaborately with Qurʾānic verses and *ḥadīṯ*, and Ḫᵛāndamīr lists a lengthy number of prose texts which were written by Mīr ʿAlī Šīr Navāʾī, including of course, the *Maǧāles al-nafāʾes*, as well as his patronage of a number of other scholarly texts including the *Šavāhed al-nobovvat* by Ǧāmī, a text on the science of music (*Resālah fī ʿelm-e mūsīqā*), a hagiography by Kamāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Vasīʿ, his grandfather's opus magnum, the *Raużat al-ṣafāʾ*, and of course Ḫᵛāndamīr's first two works.

Thus far we can safely designate Ḫᵛāndamīr's interpretation of the literary tradition [30]
makārem al-aḫlāq as being 'scholar-bureaucratic' in a number of ways, namely epistemological hierarchy, the primacy of the state and its ability to enforce sovereignty, and the valuing of secretarial culture as an important state institution. However, Ḫᵛāndamīr also uses the *makārem al-aḫlāq* to profile Naqšbandī Sufism and its power and influence in Timurid society. While there have been general references and allusions to Sufi philosophy and the ephemeral nature of earthly existence, Ḫᵛāndamīr uses the 5th chapter ("Dispersing Gifts while Avoiding the Earthly Realm") to showcase Mīr ʿAlī Šīr as the Naqšbandī patron par excellence. This chapter begins with the well-known *ḥadīṯ-e qodsī*, "I was a hidden treasure; I loved to be known. Hence, I created the world so that I would be known" (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 87). As Ḫᵛāndamīr explains, Sufi masters have interpreted this 'Hidden Treasure' *ḥadīṯ* to mean that the created world and the humans who inhabit it are reflections of God's perfection; thus, we should not necessarily reject the earthly realm outright but strive to discover its divine hidden secrets while also knowing the qualities of how to govern humankind appropriately.

Mīr ʿAlī Šīr is profiled as the exact point of balance between these mystical and earthly [31]
imperatives. Very early on, he demonstrated his Sufi orientation by "scattering favours on the earthly realm with his sleeve of non-existence" (*āstīn-e ʿadam-e eltefāt bar donyā va mā-fīhā fešānd*), while at the same time demonstrating how "the dust of love for possessions of this ephemeral world and the particles of attachment to things of this current world did not collect

on his skirt of inclination" (*ġobār-e maḥabbat-e amvāl-e fānī va gard-e mavaddat-e asbāb-e inğahānī bar dāman-e hemmat na-nešānd*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 88). At the age of 4, after beginning his studies in a *maktab*, Mīr ʿAlī Šīr demonstrated an innate genius for understanding the manifestation of the divine on earth; this endowed quality grew into fruition as Mīr ʿAlī Šīr associated freely with Sufis, most notably with the Naqšbandī Order and the preeminent family of Ḫʷāğah ʿObaidollāh Aḥrār. With the accession of Solṭān-Ḥosain Bāiqarā in 1470, Mīr ʿAlī Šīr became an imperial confidant and was charged with kingly and financial affairs; in turn, he became preoccupied with supporting the Sufis, and arranged a number of tax exemptions and financial reliefs. Ḫᵛāndamīr also relates how he became quite absorbed with the "books of the dervishes" (*kotob-e darvīšān*) and "Sufi texts" (*nosaḫ-e ṣūfīyah*), particularly those by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ğāmī, as well as a number of hagiographical texts. It is for these reasons that Mīr ʿAlī Šīr intensified his career as patron and benefactor by building a number of Sufi institutions: *ḫānqāh*s (hermitages), *emārat*s (lodges), *rebāṭ*s (monasteries), and *ḥauzah*s (cisterns). Ḫᵛāndamīr describes 12 specific Sufi shrine complexes, including the Ḫānqāh-e Eḫlāṣīyah and the Ḫānqāh-e Ğamāʿat-Ḫānah of Herat, which were built throughout Khorasan in cities such as Mashhad, Nishapur, and Marv. Thereafter, Ḫᵛāndamīr provides a list of named public works which were commissioned on the basis of endowment deeds (*waqfs*) which were in turn connected with Sufi orders such as the Naqšbandīs; the totals for these are: 53 *rebāṭs*, 20 *ḥauzahs*, 16 bridges, and 9 *ḥammāms* (bathhouses) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 91–94).

Ḫᵛāndamīr's specificity regarding Mīr ʿAlī Šīr Navāʾī's acts of patronage—be they musicology texts, illustrated manuscripts, or Sufi hermitages—highlights his *Makārem al-aḫlāq* in a powerful and unique way. Ḫᵛāndamīr uses the *makārem al-aḫlāq* genre as both a skeletal and malleable framework to include necessary opening chapters on the concept of 'most noble moral attributes' to highlight God's creation of humankind as rational, cognizant entities who are fully realized as such with the revelation of Islam and the Qurʾān. However, Ḫᵛāndamīr takes authorial license as an active scholar-bureaucrat to use formal chapters to highlight the superiority of poetry and epistolography as manifestations of intellect; moreover, there is a powerful epistemic quality here which allows representation and articulation of hidden essences and realities. Further in the text, theoretical discussions on the importance of the religious sciences and asceticism, in turn, become inventories of Navāʾī's patronage. Thus, Ḫᵛāndamīr creatively uses this genre of *makārem al-aḫlāq* to best represent and account for the wide ranging, multivalent nature of Mīr ʿAlī Šīr Navāʾī's career as a powerful Sufi scholar-bureaucrat who stood at the intersection of politics and administration. [32]

Soliciting Patronage: The *Dastūr al-vozarāʾ* (1509–10) and the *Nāmah-ye nāmī* (ca. 1520)

After the death of the Solṭān-Ḥosain Bāiqarā in 1506, and the final fragmentation a year later of what was left of the Timurid empire by the Uzbeks, Ḫᵛāndamīr entered a phase of his career which was marked by violence, distress, and uncertainty regarding employment and patronage. During the Uzbek occupation of Herat between 1507 and 1510, Ḫᵛāndamīr was arguably at his lowest point; property was confiscated, fines were levied, and goods were extorted (Szuppe 1992, 72–73; de Bruijn 1978, 1021). In the *Ḥabīb al-seyar*, Ḫᵛāndamīr remembers how the Uzbeks requisitioned a number of sheep from his personal estate: [33]

> we were forced to exchange the staffs (*ʿaṣāhā*) we held as official comptrollers' [34]

> insignia [instead] for shepherd's crooks (*čūb-hā-ye čūpānī*) and drive the sheep before ourselves all the way home. Several days prior to this, the people of Ḫosh Bazaar [in Herat] had seen us dressed luxuriously and riding fine horses, and when they saw us, they laughed in amazement (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1954, 4:383).[6]

[35] Ḫᵛāndamīr's depiction of Uzbek rule in Herat and the Haravi Valley was stark, and his comments on the Uzbek refusal to patronize and actively support maintenance are clear: "there was a shortage in the budgets of *ḫānqāh*s, caravanserais, and shrines, and in contrast to the days of the Timurids…there was a significant deficit…and charitable institutions began to decline. Until this present day, no wealthy person has been provided to repair and restore those institutions" (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1954, 4:383). Unable to secure an active patron, and contending with an acerbic and repressive political environment, Ḫᵛāndamīr retreated from active public life.

[36] However, the absence of immediate patronage did not dissuade Ḫᵛāndamīr from scholarly production. In 1509, during the Uzbek intermezzo in Herat, he produced a prosopography, the *Dastūr al-vozarāʾ*, which details the lives and maxims of dozens of famous viziers beginning with the legendary Solomonic minster, Āṣaf b. Barḫeya (Āṣaf-ǧāh), and concluding with Timurid bureaucrats like Maǧd al-Dīn Moḥammad and Šaraf al-Dīn Marvārīd. As noted by Said Arjomand, such *dastūr*s emerged as a textual tradition in the Seljuq period thanks to Neẓām al-Molk's profiling of the vizierate as an invaluable institution of governance: "every king who has attained greatness…has had good viziers!" he exclaimed (Arjomand 2013, 101). Over the following centuries, several prosopographies and histories of viziers had been produced in both Arabic and Persian, and Ḫᵛāndamīr's contribution stands as a Timurid continuation of Mongol-era texts like Naṣīr al-Dīn Monšī Kermānī's *Nasāʾem al-asḥār men laṭāʾem al-aḫbār dar tārīḫ-e vozarāʾ* (c. 1325) (Arjomand 2013, 104–5). The *dībāčah* itself is an effusive defense of the *ahl al-qalam*, citing Qurʾānic and prophetic proof texts, as well as supporting panegyric poetry (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1939, 1–2). There is no doubting that Ḫᵛāndamīr echoes here Neẓām al-Molk's argument regarding the centrality of the vizierate to proper sovereignty and governance: "there is not a single sultan who can work without the help of the august pen of the great vazirs!" (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1939, 3). "Some great prophets and messengers of lofty station" (*baʿżī az anbeyāʾ-e bozorgvār va rosol-e ʿālī-meqdār*), Ḫᵛāndamīr continues, believed that "an imperial court constitutes a house where viziers and ministers cooperate and arrange petition" (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1939, 3). On this matter, help and guidance was given with Qurʾān 20: 29–30: "And appoint for me [said Moses] a minister from my family, Aaron my brother." Indeed, "any bureaucrat who weaves the threads of intellect and ingenuity" (*har mošīr keh be-ṭarāz-e āṯar-e ʿaql va kayāsat moṭarraz bāšad*) will ultimately "open the doors of the treasury of secrets for the emperor" (*pādšāh-e kāmkār abvāb-e ḫazānah-ye asrār pīš-e u gošāyad*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1939, 4).

[37] Fascinatingly, Ḫᵛāndamīr talks about how this perfect juncture of kingship and vizierate had taken place "in these august days" (*dar īn aiyām-e ḫoǧasta*), and begins introducing the lengthy titulature of Solṭān-Ḥosain Bāiqarā, who is formally introduced as 'Abo-l-Fatḥ Solṭān Ḥosain Bahādor Ḫān' (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1939, 4–5). The formulaic blessing (*doʿā*) which normally appears in such setting, however, has been slightly altered by Ḫᵛāndamīr: "may the banners of the *friends* (italics mine) of his state never cease being raised in victory"' (*lā zālata rāyat awliyāʾ dawlatihi rafīʿah manṣūrah*) while "the standards of the enemies of his kingdom should

6 For an English translation, see Thackston (1994, 2:542).

be forever chopped down in defeat" (*aʿlām aʿdāʾ mamlakatihi ḫafiẓah maksūrah*). What is curious about this textual space is the fact that the *Dastūr al-vozarāʾ* was written in 1509–10, at least three years after the death of Solṭān-Ḥosain Bāiqarā, and two years after the centralized collapse of the Timurid empire based in Herat. However, there were several notable Timurid princes who were still contesting Uzbek rule in Khorasan, but they were scattered and limited in scope. Facing the rise of the Safavids in the west, and the occupation of the Uzbeks of his home province, Ḫᵛāndamīr likely invoked the deceased Solṭān-Ḥosain as a dedicatee in the hopes of demonstrating his sense of Timurid loyalty at a time when no viable or charismatic political leadership existed.[7] Indeed, Maria Szuppe highlighted Ḫᵛāndamīr's intense dedication and fidelity to the Timurid dynasty during his entire career: "at no point during his life did he ever abandon his Timurid loyalties" (Szuppe 1992, 147). This interpretation is in fact corroborated by the fact that the actual dedicatee is Kamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd Sāġarčī, who had been employed by Moḥammad Šaybānī Ḫān after conquering Khorasan. The Sāġarčīs were a typical family of Timurid *dīvāneyān* (administrators), and Ḫᵛāndamīr clearly respected Kamāl al-Dīn and his potential. However, nowhere in the *dībāčah* does he acknowledge the Uzbeks as the ruling dynasty of the day, and more interestingly, Kamāl al-Dīn would later be named—in a matter of months—as the *ṣāḥeb-dīvān* (top position in the administration) for all of Khorasan by Šāh Esmāʿīl I after pushing the Uzbeks themselves from power in Khorasan (Mitchell 2009, 27; Ḫᵛāndamīr 1954, 4:513). Clearly, Ḫᵛāndamīr knew an opportunity when he saw one, and thus the dedication of *Dastūr al-vozarāʾ* to Sāġarčī at this time makes sense. Having said this, none of the typical language associated with the mechanics of patronage appears here, and we are compelled to see this as more of an overture to a possible relationship.

Ḫᵛāndamīr's prefatory remarks about the provenance of this project alludes to the de- [38]
pressing conditions of Uzbek-controlled Khorasan and their unwillingness to patronize local elites. Learned ones (*ṭavāʾef-e afāżel*) are "ruined people" (*foqqāh-zadagān*) while nobles ones (*šarāʾef-e amāṣel*) themselves are now "oppressed ones" (*setam-dīdagān*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1939, 6). He clearly stocks much promise in Kamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd Sāġarčī, writing "if the clouds of [Sāġarčī's] mercy—at this time—do not provide a canopy over the heads of the inhabitants of the region of Khorasan, the existence of these who are like dirt-dwellers will be burned by the sun of calamities" (*agar ṣāḥeb marḥamat-aš dar īn auqāt sāyah bar farq-e sākenān-e deyār-e Ḫorāsān na-andāḫta vuǧūd-e amṣāl-e mā ḫāksārān dar āftāb-e ḥavādeṣ be-sūḫtī*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1939, 7). In a similar tone, and likely alluding to the Uzbek situation, he warns that if Sāġarčī does not provide justice (*ʿadālat*) and benefits (*eḥsān*), "those wandering the desert of perplexity will become lost in the nightfall of oppression and hatred" (*sar-gašta-gān-e vādī-ye parīšānī dar ẓalām-e ẓolm va ʿedvān mafqūd būdī*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1939, 7). Alternating between admonition and sycophancy, Ḫᵛāndamīr recalls Sāġarčī's recognition of his existence, and how this was a personal gift (*toḥfah-ye ḫod*) which pulled Ḫᵛāndamīr from his "daily drudgery" (*meḥnat-e ayyām*). In a feeble attempt at repayment, Ḫᵛāndamīr decided to write the *Dastūr al-vozarāʾ* for Sāġarčī's consideration, and in doing so, would present this gift "from biographies and sayings of viziers" (*az seyar va maʿāṣer-e vozarāʾ*).

Not unlike his creative innovation regarding the content and structure of the *Makārem* [39]
al-aḫlāq, Ḫᵛāndamīr uses the tradition of vizierial histories to fashion a particular epistemology. For him, the idea of garnering knowledge from either non-Islamic or pre-Islamic

7 Saʿīd Nafīsī, the editor of the *Dastūr al-Vozarāʾ*, suggests that this inconsistency is a result of two manuscripts—written at different times—being joined together. This seems highly unlikely for a scholar-bureaucrat of Ḫᵛāndamīr's training and reputation.

sources was not especially problematic; like many scholar-bureaucrats of the medieval period, Ḫᵛāndamīr was reluctant to eschew those ancient traditions of the Irano-Mediterranean frontier—Sasanian, Roman, Greek, Egyptian—on the basis of their ignorance (*ğāhelīyat*) of Islam. Indeed, he confronts the issue quite directly: "the affairs of some of that exalted group (*ṭabaqah-ye ʿālī-šān*) who were occupied with vizierial duties *before* (italics mine) the time of the Prophet are *not* mentioned in the books of history (*az kotob-e tavārīḫ mostafād na-gašt*)" (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1939, 8). With the blessing of such a realization, this particular treatise of the *Dastūr al-vozarāʾ* has constructed a foundation (*maṣdar*) by mentioning the great pre-Islamic viziers, namely Āṣaf b. Barḫeyā and Būẕarğ-mehr (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1939, 8). Moreover, Ḫᵛāndamīr declares he will not conceal the "miraculous circumstances" (*ġarāʾeb-e ettefāqāt*) of that period which witnessed "the pen of originating rhetoric" (*qalam-e balāġat-nežād*) arranging the bases for foundation which in turn allowed the laying of the path of reason (*ʿaql-e hedāyat*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1939, 8). Correspondingly, Ḫᵛāndamīr presents his first two significant chapters on the sayings and deeds of the legendary Āṣaf b. Barḫeyā and Būẕarğ-mehr. Ḫᵛāndamīr's innovative ideas on secretarial and vizierial culture become clearer after a comparison with texts like the *Nasāʾem al-asḥār men laṭāʾem al-aḫbār* of Kermānī. The introduction of the *Nasāʾem al-asḥār* is consistent with regard to its enthusiastic profiling of viziers and their invaluable service to the success of Perso-Islamic sultanates and kingdoms. However, there is no mistaking the scope and frequency of Qurʾānic and Prophetic proof texts between the two; Ḫᵛāndamīr cites roughly a dozen ayahs and hadiths in his *dībāčah*, while Kermānī's introduction contains significantly more, while also focusing on the provenance of administrative writing in the fledgling Prophetic community of seventh-century Mecca. Kermānī makes no explicit mention of any popular, pre-Islamic viziers in his preamble, and formally begins his prosopography on "the Viziers of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs" (*vozarāʾ-e ḫolafāʾ-e rāšedīn*) (Kermānī 1985, 12).

Ḫᵛāndamīr's situation in the next three years is difficult to follow. His own chronicle, the [40]
Ḥabīb al-seyar, describes how Kamāl al-Dīn Sāġarčī had indeed survived the Uzbek-Safavid transition, and "shortly after, gained the shah's favour and was appointed vizier and chief of divan, in which office he attained great power and influence and became a confidant to the shah" (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1954, 4:514). However, there are no references by Ḫᵛāndamīr to Sāġarčī as a personal patron during this period; it seems reasonable to conclude, then, that either a) Sāġarčī refused Ḫᵛāndamīr's overtures, or b) Ḫᵛāndamīr decided to disassociate himself quietly from any connection with the Safavids, at least for the time being. Given the need for experienced talent in Herat, as well as the stature of Ḫᵛāndamīr's family in the city, it seems unlikely that Sāġarčī would knowingly rebuff the well-established scholar-bureaucrat. In any event, Ḫᵛāndamīr withdrew to the village of Pasht in the neighboring province of Ġarğestān and remained there until 1514. At this time, there was a brief surge of Timurid sovereignty with the arrival in Ġarğestān of Moḥammad-Zamān Mīrzā, the son of Solṭān Badīʿal-Zamān Mīrzā and grandson of Solṭān-Ḥosain Bāiqarā. Initially, Moḥammad-Zamān Mīrzā had accepted, along with his father, a life of political exile and refuge in Safavid Iran, but in 1514 had mounted a campaign to restore the Timurid house in Khorasan. Safavid notables organized their military forces, and subsequently pushed the young rebellious Timurid prince eastwards to Ġarğestān, where he eventually came across Ḫᵛāndamīr and his quiet seclusion in Pasht. The mechanics of patronage were inescapable for Ḫᵛāndamīr, and as he stated somewhat stoically: "it was incumbent upon me to recognize my gratitude for the education (*ḥoqūq-e tarbeyat*) and beneficences (*ʿenāyat*) I had received from [Solṭān-Ḥosain Bāiqarā] and Solṭān

Badīʿ al-Zamān Mīrzā" (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1954, 4:397).[8] Ḫᵛāndamīr was informed by the prince: "as is according to custom, you were in the service of our fathers, and now you must serve us" (*be-dastūrī keh dar molāzamat-e ābāʾ-ye mā mī-būdah men baʿd ḫedmat-e mā mī-bāyad kard*).[9] In no way (*be-hīč vaǧh*) could the scholar-bureaucrat remove himself (*mofāreqat*) and get away (*mobāʿedat*), and thus found himself press-ganged into the prince's retinue. While most modern biographical treatments of Ḫᵛāndamīr suggest that he remained in Ġarǧestān during this period (Szuppe 1992, 56; de Bruijn 1978, 1021), it would appear that he was relatively active: he accompanied Moḥammad-Zamān Mīrzā during his conquest of Balkh in 1516, and was later sent from Pasht to Balkh as an official envoy. More telling, however, was his participation in a battle at Čerāġdān in 1517 between the Timurid prince and Safavid forces; after losing to the Safavids, Moḥammad-Zamān Mīrzā decided to push on to Qandahar but Ḫᵛāndamīr obtained permission to make a stop in Ġarǧestān on account of his destroyed armour (*rāqem-e ḥorūf be-sabab-e etlāf-e yarāq eǧāzat yāftah dar Ġarǧestān tavaqquf namūd*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1954, 4:403).[10] Moḥammad-Zamān Mīrzā continued campaigning, but was soon defeated and imprisoned; he was eventually brought to Kabul, where he was released and exonerated after some time by his Timurid cousin and future dynastic-founder, Ẓahīr al-Dīn Bābor. Indeed, Bābor ceremoniously returned the right to govern Balkh to Moḥammad-Zamān Mīrzā, while at the same time arranging a marriage between the prince and his daughter (Bābor 1921, 365).

Between 1514 and 1517, Ḫᵛāndamīr had entered, or been forced into, an exclusively [41]
Timurid client-patron relationship; moreover, at one point during this period, Ḫᵛāndamīr had actively fought against two prominent Safavid notables based in Khorasan, Aḥmad Solṭān Afšār and Ebrāhīm Solṭān Mūsālū, the latter being the brother of Amīr Solṭān Mūsālū who had been appointed governor of Herat and tutor (*lala*) to the prince-heir, Ṭahmāsp, one year earlier in 1516 (Mitchell 2009, 215). This might strike some as surprising since Ḫᵛāndamīr is often celebrated as a Safavid historian and propagandist, but the narrative certainly indicates that, at least until 1517, Ḫᵛāndamīr kept this millenarian-tinged Sufi-Shi'i dynasty—originally Āẕarbāiǧānī in orientation—at some distance from himself. Initial years of Safavid rule in Herat had been decidedly rocky, mostly on account of the apocalyptic and antinomian outlook of Šāh Esmāʿīl and his Qezelbāš followers between 1501 and 1510. Starting in 1516, however, civic governance in Herat improved considerably when the city was decreed by the shah to be the official seat of governorship for the *valī ʿahd*, or princely heir (Mitchell 2021, 86). In particular, it was the gubernatorial tenure (1521–29) of prince Sām Mīrzā, and his Qezelbāš handler/tutor, Dūrmīš Ḫān Šāmlū, which saw the calmest period since the halcyon dates of Solṭān-Ḥosain Baiqarā (Szuppe 1992, 94). Also, the stabilizing impact of certain key Herātī administrators after 1516, like Amīr Moḥammad-e Mīr Yūsof, Ḥabībollāh Sāvaǧī, as well as Mīrzā Šāh Ḥosain Eṣfahānī, has to be noted. It is the contention here that Ḫᵛāndamīr learned of his home city's recovery and resurgence under the Safavids and decided to re-locate from Ġarǧestān to Herat so as to seek out patronage in a new dynastic milieu.

Ḫᵛāndamīr's next textual contribution as a scholar-bureaucrat was the *Nāmah-ye nāmī*, a [42]
collection of model letters, decrees and edicts in the style of the well-established literary tradition of *enšāʾ*. While the bulk of these model texts have Timurid provenance, there is an occasional document which appears to be written on behalf of the Safavid state, such as Šāh Esmāʿīl's famous decree that the famous painter Kamāl al-Dīn Behzād be transferred from

8 My translation is slightly different than what Thackston provides (see Thackston 1994, 2:550).
9 Again, my translation is slightly different (see Thackston 1994, 2:550).
10 I have translated this slightly different (see Thackston 1994, 2:553).

Herat to Tabriz.[11] In the *dībāčah*, Ḫᵛāndamīr writes that at the time of the compilation he was "around" (*ḥodūd*) forty-six years of age; knowing that he was born in 880 heğra, this dates the *Nāmh-yi nāmī* at roughly 926 heğra, or 1520 C.E. As a *maǧmūʿah* ("collection") of high-level, yet disparate, chancellery material produced by himself as well as past and present notables in Herat, such as Saif al-Dīn Taftāzānī (d. 1514) and Mīr Moḥammad Yūsof (d. 1521), the *Nāmah-ye nāmī* was almost certainly not assembled in Pasht, but rather in Herat; while some of the profiled documents were written by Ḫᵛāndamīr himself, such as some correspondence from Moḥammad-Zamān Mīrzā to Bābor, he would have needed to consult and copy from state and private collections to give the *Nāmah-ye nāmī* its wide range and substance. Gottfried Hermann provided a summary and partial transcription of Ḫᵛāndamīr's manual, and as such we are provided a epistolographic taxonomy and hierarchy of Ḫᵛāndamīr's vision of Heratī society: rulers, amīrs, religious officials, viziers, accountants, scribes, saiyeds, ʿolamā, preachers, physicians, astrologers, calligraphers, painters, merchants, architects, bookbinders, archers, singers, musicians, artisans, moneychangers, bakers, druggists, cooks, tailors, saddlemakers, carpenters, ironmongers, vegetables merchants, and bath-house managers (Hermann 1968, 29–36).

The opening lines of the *Nāmah-ye nāmī* embrace the spirit of rhetoric, offering poetry and [43]
rhymed prose arrangements to highlight speech and rhetorical utterance and their special, intimate relationship with the Divine. The poetry is interspersed with Qurʾānic references which predictably invoke the imagery of the Pen (*al-qalam*) and the Tablet (*al-lauḥ*), and these are dedicated to profiling God's creation of the universe. These divine encomiums transition to Moḥammad, and likewise we see the Prophet framed as the reification of knowledge through which Divine utterance is channeled. Here, he invokes Ǧāmī's *Haft Aurang*, and writes how "the first offspring of divine power is the Pen/from whose nib, the two worlds are beautifully inscribed." Moreover, "the best fruit of that new sapling (i.e. humanity)/is none other than the speech of the most perfect race" (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1520, f. 2b). Ḫᵛāndamīr also makes adept use of rhymed prose (*tasǧīl*) and arrangements of parallel rhymed phrases (*tarṣīʿ*) as he describes—in predictably hyperbolic terms—how the *monšī*, or literary stylist, is the ultimate guardian and practitioner of this sacred craft (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1520, f. 2b). In many ways, Ḫᵛāndamīr's presentation is reflective of contemporary philosophical principles in the Perso-Islamic world. Knowledge and reason were of fundamental importance, and they were intertwined by the faculties of speech and utterance. Indeed, he uses mystical poetry consistently to describe how thought and idea would be doomed to suffer non-existence if not for the life-giving, generosity of speech.

Ḫᵛāndamīr formally introduces himself and his status as a harvester of previous works on [44]
rhetoric, and in this sense we are to understand that he is consciously including himself in a long and vibrant tradition of scholar-bureaucrats who choose to make their mark on literary history by proffering their own compilations of *enšāʾ* (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1520, f. 3b). Ḫᵛāndamīr talks of the epistemological interdependence of *enšāʾ* and the writing of history, and thus references his own historiographical contributions, including the *Ḫolāṣat al-aḫbār fī bayān aḥvāl al-aḫyār*, the *Maʿāṯer al-molūk*, the *Makarem al-aḫlāq*, the *Dastūr al-vozarāʾ*, and his abridgement, or *Montaḫab*, of the *Tārīḫ-e Vaṣṣāf* (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1520, f. 4a). He deliberately highlights the importance of patronage in terms of his past career: with divine and imperial bounty, these works were brought into existence from non-existence (*az katm-e ʿadam ẓohūr āmad*).

11 A good overview of the *Nāmah-ye nāmī* and its significance for Behzād's decree is provided by David Roxburgh (see Roxburgh 2001, 24–25).

Nonetheless, Ḫᵛāndamīr's tone here is somewhat maudlin, quoting two *robāʿīs* attributed to the Sufi master, Abo-l-Ḫair (d. 1049) which, in archly theosophical terms, laments the decayed nature of the present world and one's obsession with this earthly existence (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1520, f. 4a). He references a difficult period of his recent past, whereby he wandered with a disturbed soul (*del-e parīšān*) and a perplexed state of mind (*damaġī-ye mošavvaš*); entwining his foot in the skirt of seclusion (*pāy dar dāman-e ʿozlat pīčīdah*), he had been quaffing in a deep sea of wine (*dar baḥr-e ʿamīq-e modāmat ġūṭah mī-khordam*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1520, f. 4b). There are no explicit references to places or individuals here, but it is likely that he is referring to his troubled years after the collapse of the Timurid empire and semi-retirement to Pasht and nearby Mount Zagh (Crow Mountain) in Ġarğestān.

Eventually, he was able to "clear the rust of anxiety from his mind"and began walking [45]
into the oasis of amazement with "steps of cognition" (*bedāyat-e ḥayrat be-qadam-e fekrat*) in the spirit of overall recovery recommended by Qurʾān 94:5–6: "for indeed, with hardship [there is] ease, and with ease [there is] hardship." Ḫᵛāndamīr follows this scripture with a line of Neẓāmī's poetry: "In abundant despair, there is hope/The end of black night is white" (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1520, f. 4b). And with these happier times, Ḫᵛāndamīr decided to produce several lines (*saṭrī čand*) on letters and decrees (*makātīb va manāshīr*), with an eye towards appropriate phrases (*ʿebārat-e lāʾeqah*) and suitable allusions (*ešārāt-e rāʾeqah*). No patron is identified here, nor are there any textual references to the Safavids, the Qezelbāš, or Shi'ism in general. The introductory praise at the beginning of the *Nāmah-ye nāmī* invokes God and Moḥammad but makes no reference to ʿAlī and the Imams. Ḫᵛāndamīr simply writes: "it is hoped that this *Nāmah-ye nāmī*—having been approved in the eyes of the ruling lords and the learned ones—will distinguish the author with various types of favours" (*čašm dāšt čonam-ast keh īn Nāmah-ye nāmī dar naẓar-e arbāb-e daulat va eqbāl va aṣḥāb-e fażīlat va afżal-e mostaḥsan nemūdah moʾallef be-aṣnāf-e tavāʾef eḫteṣāṣ yābad*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1520, f. 5a). Rather than specifying one individual in his soliciting of patronage, Ḫᵛāndamīr praises the good opinions and praiseworthy inclinations of important grandees and notables in the city (*partau-e eqbāl-e żamāʾer-e tāmm-e karam va forūġ-e taḥsīn-e ḫavāṭer-e akāber-e lāzem al-eḥterām bar vağanāt-e aḥvāl-aš bād*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1520, f. 5a). Ḫᵛāndamīr's strategy to ultimately secure patronage was built upon seeking approval and inclusion by the nobles, grandees, and fellow scholar-bureaucrats of Safavid Herat: "this miraculous text created a tumult by the remembering of individual names and titles, and if they were to name it 'Increasing Fame' (i.e. *Nāmah-ye nāmī*), it would be very appropriate" (*čon īn nāmah-ye badīʿah-ye hangāmah az ẕekr-e nām va alqāb nāmī gašt, agar ān-rā Nāmah-ye nāmī nām nahand lāʾeq ḫʷāhad būd*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1520, f. 5b). This novel approach to securing patronage, i.e., corporate over individual, is consistent with Ḫᵛāndamīr's innovative approach to such relationships; moreover, there is no explicit referencing of Shi'i personalities or slogans, suggesting that the Timurid scholar-bureaucrat hoped to reach out to the 'traditional' base of administrators who had survived the transition in Herat from Uzbek to Safavid rule, and not the Safavid dynasty itself.

Secured Patronage: the *Ḥabīb al-seyar* (1524) and the *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī* (1534)

However, in the period of 1520–21, Ḫᵛāndamīr formally declared his status as a client of the [46]
Safavid dynasty and began writing his opus magnum, the *Ḥabīb al-seyar*. As stated, this universal chronicle is largely based on the work of his grandfather, the *Raużat al-ṣafā*, but with

added chapters on the reigns of the last Timurids (Solṭān-Ḥosain Bāiqarā, Badīʿ al-Zamān, and Moḥammad-Zamān), the rule of Šāh Esmāʿīl, and a concluding chapter (*ḫātema*) on "the miracles and oddities of the earth and the wonders and accidents of the world" (*badāyeʿ va ġarāʾeb-e robʿ-e maskūn va ʿaǧāʾeb va vaqāyeʿ-e ǧaḥān-e būqalamūn*). Ḫᵛāndamīr's introduction to the *Ḥabīb al-seyar* is also his own, as he recounts the conditions which led to his inclusion into Safavid Herat and opportunities to develop links of patronage with notables like Amīr Moḥammad Yūsof and Habībollāh Sāvaǧī. What is particularly worth noting is Ḫᵛāndamīr's paralleling here of the two scholastic-bureaucratic traditions of history and belle-lettrism. Referencing his life-long interest in history, he mentions how he arrived at a special stage (*marḥala*) of his life at around the age of 47/48 (*ḥodūd-e arbaʿīn-e haft hašt*) when he became especially preoccupied with "the study of books of history and giving great attention to the craft of *enšā*ʾ" (*moṭalāʿa-ye kotob-e tārīḫ va momārasat-e ṣanʿat-e enšāʾī*). This dating (1521), indeed, corresponds with the *dībāčah* of the earlier *Nāmah-ye nāmī* and its 1520 dedication to a group of unnamed notables in Safavid Herat. It is clear that Ḫᵛāndamīr's work on the *Nāmah-ye nāmī* a year earlier had influenced his conception of historiography; in the *Ḥabīb al-seyar*, he describes his objective of understanding "the great ones of kingship and religion" (*ozamāʾ-e molk va mellat*) but to do so required being on "the path of *enšā*ʾ" (*selk-e enšāʾ*) and "perfecting and ranking the various documents" (*monšaʾ mokammal va morattab gardānīd*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1954, 1:4). It was this approach, Ḫᵛāndamīr states, that allowed him to produce all of his treatises to date which, in turn, earned him the recognition of contemporary Herati society (*zomrah-ye az abnāʾ-e zamān*) and inclusion among its greatest scholars (*fożalāʾ-e soḫandān eqterān yāft*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1954, 1:4). It was at this time, specifically the year 1521, that Ḫᵛāndamīr came to the attention of Amīr Moḥammad Yūsof, who showed his own inclination towards the "art of biographies and traditions" (*fann-e seyar o aḫbār*), and how he commissioned the "writing of a collection" (*be-enšāʾ-e mağmūʿah*) which organizes and arranges all the events of the world (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1954, 1:5). With patron secured, Ḫᵛāndamīr began his project in earnest, with plans to make it into 12 chapters, or "knots" (*davāzdah ʿoqad*), about the prophets, caliphs, and sultans. However, the project—and Ḫᵛāndamīr's patronage—came to a crashing halt when Amīr Moḥammad Yūsof was accused of corruption, arrested, and executed soon after on 13 June 1521 (Szuppe 1992, 91).

After a period of months, the Safavid prince Sām Mīrzā—never explicitly named but re- [47]
ferred to as *nauvāb-e kamyāb-e šāhī*—arrived in Khorasan to guarantee justice, beneficence and good order (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1954, 1:6). In particular, Ḫᵛāndamīr draws attention to the prince's confidant (*moqarreb*), Dūrmīš Ḫān Šāmlū, who was understood to be a vice-gerent, tutor, and advisor to Sām Mīrzā (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1954, 1:7). However, it is the new chief administrator, Ḥabībollāh Sāvaǧī, who is described with extensive and appropriate titulature as the new source of patronage, including "renewer of the customs of majesty" (*moǧadded-e rosūm-e ǧalālat*) and "restorer of the greatest scholars among the descendants of Asaf [Barkhiya]" (*marǧaʿ-e afāẓel-e aʿāẓem-e banī ādam-e āṣaf*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1954, 1:8). Ḫᵛāndamīr notes how Ḥabībollāh was particularly "mindful of the conditions of the saiyeds, the ulama, and the eloquent ones" (*aḥvāl-e sādāt va ʿolamāʾ va fożalāʾ pordaḫt*) as well as the groups of writers and artists (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1954, 1:8). In this environment, Ḫᵛāndamīr turned his mind to his unfinished chronicle, and before long he came to the attention of Ḥabībollāh, who ordered that "the completion of these parts come about on the pages of revelation with the pens of diligence"(*tatimmah-ye īn ajzā-rā be-eqlām bar ṣafḥah-ye ẓohūr āvarad*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1954, 1:8). After consulting the final copy of the manuscript, Ḫᵛāndamīr relates how "it was [Ḥabībol-

lāh] himself who confirmed that, at this moment, I was to turn away from writing vain royal decrees on missives, while also excusing the tongue of [my] pen and the pen of [my] tongue from writing the exposition of traditions and stories" (*bā-ẖod moḥaqqaq dāšt keh yek-bargī tauqīʿ-e boṭlān bar roqʿa enšāʾ goshād va dīgar zabān-e qalam va qalam-e zabān-rā az taḥrīr-e taqrīr-e aḫbār va aṯār moʿāf dārad*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1954, 1:9). Thus, Ḫᵛāndamīr celebrates the formal conclusion of his grand oevre by naming it "Companion of the Biographies" (*Ḥabīb al-seyar*), and in doing so, onomastically acknowledges Ḥabībollāh as a friend and supporter of both himself and the discipline of history.

As noted earlier, Ḫᵛāndamīr approached textual genres with a spirit of innovation and adaptation throughout his career. With regard to the *Ḥabīb al-seyar*, Sholeh Quinn, Shahzad Bashir, and Philip Bockholt have done the most recent and extensive work on the degree to which Ḫᵛāndamīr's chronicle worked within the genre of universal chronicles and other textual traditions in terms of structure and content (Quinn 2015; Bashir 2015; Bockholt 2021). As Bashir noted, Ḫᵛāndamīr was comfortable with a certain parallelism in his structuring of history, whereby Qurʾānic-Prophetic conceptions of the creation of the universe and the pre-Islamic past were presented alongside Iranian notions of ancient and legendary history (Bashir 2015, 220). Quinn has approached the *Ḥabīb al-seyar* through a closer hermeneutic lens, comparing passages of the *Ḥabīb al-seyar* and the *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī* with anterior texts; for instance, she has demonstrated his use of a thirteenth-century Shīʿī scholarly text, ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā al-Erbelī's *Kašf al-ġommah fī maʿrefat al-aʾemmah*, to expand his grandfather's discussion of the Twelve Imams in the *Raużat al-ṣafāʾ* (Quinn 2015, 180). As she explains, Ḫᵛāndamīr clearly 'Shi'itized' parts of the *Ḥabīb al-seyar* for the benefit of his Safavid patrons in Herat (Quinn 2015, 183). Examining here such issues through the lens of the *dībāčah*, there is certainly evidence to support these conclusions. Indeed, Ḫᵛāndamīr includes praise of ʿAlī and the Imams in the appropriate opening spaces of the *dībāčah*, while no such benedictions appeared in any of the preambles discussed thus far. Moreover, in his subsequent defense of the importance of writing and the study of history, he talks about the need to record the miraculous events of the world with appropriately sophisticated language and literary devices; such advanced language is commensurate with the ineffable qualities of the Prophetic experience and the hidden meaning of the realities described by Moḥammad and the Imams (*ṭavāʾef-e aʾemmah*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1954, 1:3). More importantly with regard to genre, Ḫᵛāndamīr presents a relatively assertive epistemological construct whereby history and *enšāʾ* not only reinforce one another, but in fact are interdependent in any attempt to recover and represent the past. For Ḫᵛāndamīr, chronicles and written histories cannot be separated from the co-existing tradition of *enšāʾ*, and the stylized prose of recorded speeches, testimonials, written communications, state documents, and administrative decrees. The *dībāčah*, and indeed the entirety of the *Ḥabīb al-seyar*, relishes in the use and manipulation of different Persian literary devices, such as *taǧnīs*, *tarṣīʿ*, *esteʿārah*, and *saǧʿ*, and *tašbīh*, which are of course the popular tools of the *enšāʾ* craft and its practitioners, the *munshis*. Ḫᵛāndamīr himself was a product of a part of Timurid society which approached Persian poetry and stylized prose with more elaboration and a conscious sense of aesthetic adornment; indeed, once could reasonably highlight the Timurid period as the "age of the *monšī*." The editor of the *Ḥabīb al-seyar*, Ǧalāl al-Dīn Homāʾī, in fact included in his introduction a separate section on the conspicuous use and application of stylized prose by Ḫᵛāndamīr (*sabk-e naṯr va enšāʾ-e Ḥabīb al-seyar*) (Homāʾī 1954, 37–41). [48]

In 1527, Ḫᵛāndamīr learned that his former patron and ruler of Balkh, Moḥammad-Zamān Mīrzā, had decided to follow his father-in-law and political supporter, Ẓahīr al-Dīn Babor, to [49]

the Indo-Gangetic plains. Life in Safavid Herat had grown complicated in recent months for Ḫᵛāndamīr: Dūrmīš Ḫān Šāmlū passed away in 1524, and Ḥabībollāh Sāvağī was murdered in 1526 by rowdy Qezelbāš troops. Ḫᵛāndamīr likely concluded that Herat's recent status as a sanctuary of stability and patronage was coming to a close, and therefore decided to seek patronage among the new and fledgling dispensation of Timurid rule in South Asia. He formally presented himself to Bābor's court in Agra in 1528 and accompanied the Timurid ruler a year later during his campaign in Bengal where, coincidentally, he finished one of his versions of the *Ḥabīb al-seyar* (de Bruijn 1978, 1021). Ḫᵛāndamīr did not produce any prose texts on behalf of Bābor during these two years, all the more surprising given Bābor's love of poetry and literary fashioning, and his own self-profiling as a renaissance Timurid prince and patron (Dale 1996, 642–43). After Bābor passed away in 1530, his son Homāyūn assumed the Mughal throne and Ḫᵛāndamīr, now aged roughly 55, prepared himself to plot yet another career course towards patronage with a young ruler who had been raised and surrounded by Timurid notables, religious personalities, and administrators. However, Homāyūn's upbringing and junior career was decidedly peripatetic, moving among and between cities and citadels of Central Asia and Afghanistan with his ambitious father, and it is clear that Homāyūn viewed his new and sudden sovereignty in north-central India as unique and unprecedented. It is possible that the emphasis in the *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī* on spatial power, spatial relationships among courtiers, and immovable monuments of sovereignty were responses to the transitory and mobile nature of his father's life as a competing Timurid prince. On the other hand, Ḫᵛāndamīr's first panegyric, the *Makārem al-aḫlāq*, also included spatial dynamics of patronage, with chapters on buildings and public works (Quinn 2015, 176). Suffice it to say, Homāyūn's vision of his court—and its celebration by Ḫᵛāndamīr—proved to be ephemeral, and like his Timurid father and so many Timurid forebearers, Homāyūn was forced into a life of temporary exile when Shīr Šāh Sūrī (d. 1545) forced him to leave India and seek refuge in Safavid Iran.

This quality of uniqueness associated with the fledgling Mughal court, along with [50]
Ḫᵛāndamīr's own innovative style regarding textual production and genre, combined to create the sui genesis *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī*. Commissioned directly by Homāyūn, this text ("The Institutes of Homāyūn") is a wide-ranging celebration of not only Homāyūn himself, but also a detailed presentation of the physical arrangement and social hierarchy of his court, the duties and obligations of his courtiers, the cosmological and astrological itineraries which influenced policies and decision-making, the timing and mounting of festivals and celebrations, as well as a number of prominent buildings and public works in cities like Delhi and Agra. Ḫᵛāndamīr recounts in the *dībāčah* that he met Homāyūn in the fort at Gwalior in 1533, and was informed how "it is right and proper that the inventions of my [i.e. Homāyūn's] auspicious mind (*moḫtaraʿāt-e żamīr-e eqbāl*)…should be chronicled" (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1993, 255).[12] Ḫᵛāndamīr appears to have been struck by the singularity of Homāyūn's innovations in the Mughal court, and it is these "peerless inventions" (*moḫtaraʿāt-e bī-ʿadīl*) that he now endeavoured to celebrate by opening "the doors of clearness and distinction" (*abvāb-e tabāyon va tafṣīl*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1993, 256; Prashad 1940, 14). The timing of this commission may have been no accident; Ḫᵛāndamīr's former patron, Moḥammad-Zamān Mīrzā, had struggled with the shift in sovereignty between Bābor and his son, and had rebelled unsuccessfully after Homāyūn's accession in 1530, and again in 1534 (Neẓām al-Dīn Aḥmad 1936, 3:46–47; Bosworth 2010). Homāyūn's experimental adaption of a typical Timurid court in a new South Asian environment may have provided an opportunity for Ḫᵛāndamīr to erase any doubts

12 For English, see Prasad (1940, 14).

whatsoever regarding his loyalty to this particular Timurid lineage. Also worth noting is that this was the first occasion where Ḫᵛāndamīr had been commissioned by a sovereign ruler to write a treatise; previously, Ḫᵛāndamīr had operated in the more informal world of network patronage among viziers, notables, and senior functionaries, where texts were written either by way of soliciting or recompensing offers of patronage.

[51] The unique subject matter of the *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī*, and the unprecedented context regarding its author and his commissioning by Homāyūn, are manifested in a number of ways in the formal preamble, or *dībāčah*. The opening section, predictably, praises God and his divine creation of the universe, earth, and humanity; and while Moḥammad is praised in both prose and verse, there is no explicit mention of ʿAlī and the Imams but simply the "guiding descendants" of the Prophet (*āl al-hādīn*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1993, 250; Prashad 1940, 3). The absence of any overt recognition of the Imams is consistent with Quinn's observation that Ḫᵛāndamīr 'shi'itized' and 'de-shi'itized' his texts depending on his religio-political environment. Particular attention is paid to God's endowing of prophets and kings with the requisite abilities for one to speak religious truth and the other to enforce and guarantee religious laws. At this juncture, Homāyūn is indirectly introduced as "he who excels all in prosperity, and who is far in advance of others in the field of justice"; in fact, Ḫᵛāndamīr exceptionalizes Homāyūn—"the most glorious of all sultans"—on the basis of his distinguished pedigree and exalted lineage (*ʿalavī nasab va samāvī ḥasab*), which are likely references to his Timurid and Mongol ancestry (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1993, 252; Prashad 1940, 6). And while Homāyūn's actual sovereign territory may have been north-central India, the geographical scope of his reputation and magnetic pull was significantly larger: "…those from the farthest borders of Turkestan to Hindustan have found rest under the shadow of his never-ceasing kindness, and [those] of the desert of mischief from the farthest territories of Iran and Azerbaijan, Kabul and Zabulistan seek the protection of his never-ending state" (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1993, 253; Prashad 1940, 7). A series of sovereign exemplars are profiled by Ḫᵛāndamīr as metaphorical embodiments of Homāyūn: thus, he rules with the dignity of Alexander the Great, the power of Solomon, and the hero-qualities of Rostam; concurrently, he is also the Ardašīr and the Anū Šīrvān of the age (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1993, 253; Prashad 1940, 9–10).

[52] After formally invoking the sovereign's full name—Moḥammad Homāyūn Pādšāh-e Ġāzī—Ḫᵛāndamīr introduces himself and how he was taken into the service of the king (*šaraf-e molāzamat-e īn pādšāh-e ḫelāfat-panāh daryāft*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1993, 255; Prashad 1940, 11). It was clear that the ruler saw in the aged Timurid scholar-bureaucrat an adroit propogandist. Thus, Ḫᵛāndamīr was fully cognizant that his duty was to reveal and popularize "the issuances of his work, the news of his deeds, the discoveries of his skillful disposition, and the inventions of his sharp nature" (*ṣāderāt-e aʿmāl va vāredāt-e afʿāl va mobadaʿāt-e ẕehn- e waqqād va moḫtaraʿāt-e ṭabʿ-e naqqād*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1993, 255; Prashad 1940, 11). Allowing that the *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī* was no history, he saw it in comparable order (*ham-čenān-čeh*) to other great celebrations in the Perso-Islamic tradition: "the eulogistic pages of ʿOtbī and ʿOnṣorī" (*ṣafaḥāt-e madḥāt-e ʿOtbī va ʿOnṣorī*) about the Ghaznavid ruler Maḥmūd along with "precious panegyrical gems of poetry of Moʿezzī and Anvārī" (*farāʾed-e qaṣāʾed-e Moʾezzī va Anvarī*) about the Seljuq ruler Sanğar (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1993, 255; Prashad 1940, 12). And while Homāyūn was the patron, and in a greater sense the architect of this particular panegyric, Ḫᵛāndamīr was more concerned, as he has been in other similar circumstances, with ensuring acceptance and inclusion by the notables and scholars of the court in question: "through God's grace, it is hoped that the eminent courtiers of this noble assembly will honour these on account of

the beneficial things of the age with their acceptance" (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1993, 256; Prashad 1940, 12).

[53] The *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī* represents a new genre of sorts in Persian court literature, which must have inspired people like Abo-l-Fażl (d. 1602) while writing monumental texts like the *Āyena-ye Akbarī* for Akbar the Great (r. 1556–1605). However, there remains a historiographical penchant among some scholars to depict Homāyūn's reign as an unnuanced continuation of Bābor's reign and Timurid Central Asian court practices as a whole (Balabanlilar 2010, 132–33). Azfar Moin has pointed out the importance of the Timurid legacy, while also highlighting the innovative and unprecedented nature of court cosmologies and the degree to which Homāyūn's reign deserves more interest and research (Moin 2012, 112–13). A recent article by Taymiya Zaman reviews ideas of literary genre in the early sixteenth century Mughal court with no mention of either Ḫᵛāndamīr or the *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī;* fascinatingly, she mentions a Herati scholar, Qāżī Iḫteyār al-Dīn, who moved to Kabul after the collapse of the Timurids and, under the patronage of Bābor, wrote a text entitled the *Aḫlāq-e Homāyūnī* (Zaman 2011, 680–81). While the text is only referred to in passing by Zaman, one wonders whether or not there wasn't a deeper and more complex relationship between this particular text and the one produced by Ḫᵛāndamīr on behalf of Bābor's son some two decades later.

Conclusion

[54] Ḫᵛāndamīr, a scholar-bureaucrat who spent much of his career subtly challenging and realigning literary and scholarly genres, should be considered at least a component during this fascinating dynamic period of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The respective contributions by Ḫᵛāndamīr to a variety of literary traditions—ethics, vizierial prosopography, epistolography, chronicle-writing—portray an individual who was as much aware of past traditions as he was interested in fashioning new ones. His *dībāčah*s, without a doubt, reflect his respect and admiration for past generations of scholars and "eloquent ones" (*fożalāʾ*). On the other hand, Ḫᵛāndamīr began his career early on with literary gestures and projects, like the *Makārem al-aḫlāq*, which were arguably forerunners of the age of literary genre innovation seen in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For Ḫᵛāndamīr, the *dībāčah* of these different works functioned as para-textual spaces where he could introduce, discuss, and rationalize how and why he was fashioning particular epistemologies. The highlighting of intellect (*ʿaql*) in the *Makārem al-aḫlāq*, for instance, is buttressed by his emphasis on recognizing the importance of rational bureaucracy and administration in medieval Islamic societies; this rationality, in Ḫᵛāndamīr's estimation, is decidedly pre-Islamic in origin, but like many educated Sufi Muslims he sees no contradiction between the enlightened ancient age and the superiority of Qur'ānic revelation and ongoing divine inspiration from Sufi shaikhs and brotherhoods. Like past 'mobile scholars', Ḫᵛāndamīr was forced to make his way dextrously through a period of intense change and violence, and in some cases, he needed to show caution and discretion. However, in doing so, Ḫᵛāndamīr played a large part in buttressing the appeal of Perso-Islamic culture which had been shaping South Asia since the eleventh century.

[55] The notion of a wide-ranging Perso-Islamic culture has very recently been re-articulated thanks to the respective work of Richard Eaton and Emma Flatt. Working with Sheldon Pollock's seminal study *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, scholars like Eaton and Flatt have used the notion of a Sanskrit 'cosmopolis'—i.e., an elite vision of Hindu South Asian society which is shaped directly by the prescriptions and admonitions found in Sanskrit literary

culture—and applied it to the Muslim Indian experience in the medieval and early modern period (Eaton 2019; Flatt 2019). In this sense, there is a compelling argument for the existence of a competing and complimentary 'Persian' cosmopolis shaping the courts of northern India, Gujarat, Bengal, and the Deccan. The emergence of this cosmopolis in South Asia, shaped by epic and mystical poetry, as well as Sufi hagiographies, chronicles, the belletristic tradition, ethics literature, and philosophy, began in the eleventh century during the Ghaznavid period. The Persian 'cosmopolis' can be seen as a composite of literary texts and traditions which made their way to South Asia from 'Greater Iran', which in turn combined with those indigenous Persian textual contributions provided by medieval Muslim South Asians, such as great medieval poets and writers like Amīr Ḫosrau, Masʿūd Saʿd Salmān, Maḥmūd Gāvān, and Nezām al-Dīn Auleyāʾ.

The culmination of this Persian cosmopolis arguably took place during the height of the [56]
Mughal empire in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Building on the foundational work of Timurid rulers like Bābor and Homāyūn, Mughal successors like Akbar, Ǧahāngīr and Šāhǧahān patronized and encouraged the proliferation of Persian as the dominant literary and administrative language, while notables and elites followed suit in their regional and local milieus (Alam 1998). Perhaps the most profound characteristic of this Persian cosmopolis in central and local Mughal courts was the entry, participation, and eventual domination by the Hindu scribal class. As Rajiv Kinra (2015) has argued successfully, the emergence of administrative and belletristic Persian in the Mughal court was inseparably enmeshed with generations of Hindu scribes, accountants, reporters, auditors, and clerks of every level. The early transition of the Timurids from Central Asian imperial interlopers to Mughal Indian indigenous emperors was clearly a part of this greater cosmopolitan narrative. To better understand how the Mughals were able to intensify and expand the existing parameters of the Persian cosmopolis, I think it is helpful to re-evaluate the role and contribution of Timurid mobile scholar-bureaucrats like Ġeyāṯ al-Dīn Ḫᵛāndamīr. His chronicle *Ḥabīb al-seyar* exerted a powerful historiographical influence on sixteenth and seventeenth century Indo-Islamic historians, while the *Makārem al-aḫlāq* and the *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī* certainly inspired the tone and structure of the *Āyena-ye Akbarī* by Abo-l-Fażl and subsequent texts which describes charismatic individuals, court arrangements, and administrative organization in the Mughal environment. The Timurid fascination with belle-lettrism was conveyed to the Mughal court thanks to texts like the *Nāmah-yi nāmī*, and the surge in popularity for *enšāʾ* would become a striking feature of the Persian cosmopolis both in northern and Deccani India (Flatt 2019, 167–209).

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DOI: 10.46586/er.13.2022.8895
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Entangled Religions 13.5 (2022)
er.ceres.rub.de

Did the Āẕar Kaivānīs Know Zoroastrian Middle Persian Sources?

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ABSTRACT The Āẕar Kaivānīs, a syncretistic religious school in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, combined elements from Islam, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Ešrāqī philosophy. The *Dasātīr*, written by the first authority of the group, Āẕar Kaivān (943/1533–1028/1618), is a bilingual text. Its first language is an artificial encrypted language, represented as the language of heaven; the second is a specific form of New Persian, i.e., with few Arabic words. This article argues that *Dasātīr*'s author employed the Zoroastrian *Zand* as a model for the construction of his book. It moreover demonstrates the trace of some Middle Persian lexemes in it. Accordingly, it concludes that the Āẕar Kaivānīs were familiar with the Zoroastrian Middle Persian literature, if perhaps only superficially. The article also scrutinizes where and when contact occurred between Zoroastrianism and the Āẕar Kaivānī school. As a result, it discusses the Zoroastrian concept of secret language and the necessity of its translation and interpretation, which provided the Āẕar Kaivānīs with the possibility to include the notion of a secret book in their own system of thought.

KEYWORDS Āẕar Kaivānī school, Dasātīr, Zoroastrianism, Zand, secrecy, Safavid-Mughal, religious contact

Introduction

Āẕar Kaivānīs is a syncretistic religious school combining elements from Islam, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Ešrāqī philosophy; its major texts were composed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The texts name a certain Kaivān, probably from Estaḫr, near Shiraz, as founder of the school. According to the *Dabestān-e maẕāheb* (*The School of Religious Teachings*),[1] a heresiographical work from the mid-seventeenth century (see below) whose author must have belonged to this school, Kaivān lived from 943/1533 to 1028/1618. He must have left his homeland for India under pressure resulting from the intolerant Safavid religious policy to enjoy the religious freedom of the Mughal empire, and settled in Patna, probably in the year [1]

1 From the contents of the *Dabestān-e maẕāheb*, Carl Ernst (2017, 440) concludes that the title of the book can alternatively be translated as *The School of Theologies*.

1001/1592–3, or at the end of the sixteenth century.[2] The *Dabestān-e maẕāheb* (Āẕar Sāsānī 2010, 4r) refers to the school by various names: Īzadīyān, Yazdānīyān, Ābādīyān, Sepāsīyān, Āzādān, Sorūšān, Hūšīyān, Anūšagān, Āẕar-hūšangīyān and, last but not least, Āẕarīyān.[3]

[2] The *Dabestān-e maẕāheb* presents a hagiographical biography of Āẕar Kaivān, making it difficult to attempt a historical contextualization of the founder's activities. Given the strong syncretism of the Āẕar Kaivānī school, it is difficult not only to identify the origin of its ideas, but also to trace the religious contours of the school, i.e., to demarcate it from its neighboring religious groups and clearly define its ideas. One could even raise the question of whether the representation of the school in the *Dabestān-e maẕāheb* is a heresiographical[4] categorization of the *Dabestān-e maẕāheb*'s author, an idealized depiction of the school, or a historical description. In contrast to their diverse content, Āẕar Kaivān's texts feature a homogeneous form: They are written in Persian, the official language of Safavid Iran and Mughal India, and clearly strive to avoid Arabic words. The texts' preoccupation with a 'pure' Persian language also caught the attention of nineteenth-century philologists;[5] this fascination was short-lived, however, since later research proved that the word formations encountered in these texts are highly artificial and often do not follow Persian morphology. The scholarly disappointment reached its highest point in the investigations into a book which the Āẕar Kaivānīs represent as 'heavenly': the *Dasātīr-e Āsmānī*.

[3] The title *dasātīr-e āsmānī* literally means 'Heavenly Professors.' Given the Āẕar Kaivānīs' efforts to avoid Arabic words, it might come across as an accidental irony that the title of their heavenly book, *dasātīr*, is the Arabic plural of the Persian word *dastūr*. The book includes 16 chapters: the first 15 chapters are ascribed to 15 *shats*, or prophets, starting from Mahābād and ending with Zarathustra, Sāsān I. and Āẕar Sāsān. The text does not mention any of the prophets known from the Abrahamic traditions; instead, the prophets' names derive from Iranian mythology, Zoroastrian cosmogony or anthropogony or, in other cases, they remain unknown. A chapter titled *Pand-nāma-ye eskandar* 'Alexander's Book of Advice' is placed after the chapter *Nāma-ye šat zartošt* 'Prophet Zarathustra's Book.' Alexander is not called a prophet in the *Dasātīr*, yet Zarathustra is quoted as saying that "No one can receive the meaning of my words as he [Alexander] did" (D, 222).

[4] The *Dasātīr* is a bilingual text. Its first language is an artificial encrypted language; the second is a specific form of New Persian, i.e., one which includes few Arabic words. The *Dabestān-e maẕāheb* represents the pseudo-language of the *Dasātīr* as follows:

[5] چند مجلد از آن زبانی بود که به هیچ زبانی فرودینیان نمی‌ماند و آن را زبان آسمانی نامیده.

[6] Some volumes of that [*scil.* the *Dasātīr*] are/were in a language which does/did[6] not resemble any language of the people of lower religions and that is called 'the Language of Heaven'[7].

2 Takeshi Aoki (2000, 263) dates Āẕar Kaivān's migration to India in the period between 1573 and 1580.

3 Three names Āzādān, Sorūšān, Hūšīyān are absent in the edition of Keyẖosro (1362), 5f. I quote the *Dabestān-e maẕāheb* after the facsimile publication of its oldest manuscript (Āẕar Sāsānī 2010) as well as its edition (Keyẖosro 1362). An English translation of the book can be found in Shea and Troyer (1843).

4 For a detailed survey on the concept of religion in the *Dabestān-e maẕāheb,* see Ernst (2017, 438–46).

5 Sir William Jones, the British orientalist, was the first to draw attention to this book and consequently to Āẕar Kaivān and this school by praising the *Dasātīr* in 1789 (Jones 2013).

6 Āẕar-sāsānī (2010, 8r); parallel to Keyẖosro (1362, 10). Depending on how the verbs are to read: *bowad* and *na-mī-mānad* or *būd* and *na-mī-mānd*.

7 All translations into English are by the author unless indicated otherwise.

The *Dasātīr* describes itself as a heavenly book sent by God to Mahābād, the first prophet of the *Dasātīr*. In the first decades after the discovery of the *Dasātīr*, scholars made valiant efforts to decipher this 'language of Heaven.' Once scholars understood that it was an invented language, interest in the Āẕar Kaivānī texts waned. [7]

In a recent article, Daniel Sheffield (2014) made the case that the concept of heavenly language in the Āẕar Kaivānī school is directly connected to older notions of Horūfīya. The arguments he presents to support this hypothesis can be summarized as follows: [8]

- The Āẕar Kaivānīs belong to the context of Horūfīya and more especially to Noqṭavīya, founded by Mahmūd Pasīḫānī (Sheffield 2014, 165–69). [9]
- There were artificial languages in the Ottoman-Safavid-Mughal world, as illustrated by the dictionary *Kitāb-e Baleybelen*, assigned to the Hurufist author Mohyī Golšanī (Sheffield 2014, 169f.).
- Similar concepts existed in the discussions of celestial language among the Hurufists. Also, Sheffield points out the Hurufist distinction between two languages: an absolute, limitless and celestial language, which is opposed to unfolded, limited and terrestrial language (Sheffield 2014, 171).
- There were similar claims of linguistic miracles in the Āẕar Kaivānī school as well as in (other) Hurufists authors, as well as by the poet Fayżī (Sheffield 2014, 171f.).

Whereas Sheffield's hypothesis about the Hurufist influence on the *concept* of celestial language is plausible, it cannot, on its own, explain the construction of the *Dasātīr-e Āsmānī* as a whole. In this article, I would like to argue that the Āẕar Kaivānīs might have used the general paradigms of Horūfīya and Noqṭavīya, but employed the Zoroastrian *Zand* as a model for the construction of the *Dasātīr*. We know already that the Āẕar Kaivānīs were aware of the Zoroastrian New Persian literature, as the *Dabestān-e maẕāheb* explicitly shows. Furthermore, this article will show that they were familiar with the Zoroastrian Middle Persian literature as well, if perhaps only superficially. I will also show that the Āẕar Kaivānīs did not use the concept of secrecy in their encounter with Zoroastrianism in order to draw in-group and out-group distinctions. On the contrary, I argue that the Zoroastrian concept of secret language and the necessity of its translation and interpretation provided the Āẕar Kaivānīs with the possibility to include the notion of a secret book in their own system of thought. [10]

Celestial Language, Translation and Commentary in the *Dasātīr-e Āsmānī*

This investigation begins with a straightforward analysis of the structure of the *Dasātīr*. In each chapter of the book, a phrase, or often a sentence, is rendered in the celestial language, followed by a Persian 'translation' of the phrase from the celestial language. Occasionally some sentences are added to the translation and are offered as the commentary on the original text. The celestial language is demarcated from its Persian translation by the number of the passage, which appears at the beginning of the phrase in the celestial language, and by the letter ت (*t*; for *tarğoma* 'translation') at the beginning of the translation, as is illustrated, for instance, in the Haydarabad manuscript of the book. In this manuscript, the beginning of the commentary is marked with the letter ش (*š*; for *šarḥ* 'commentary'). These signs, moreover, are written in this manuscript in red ink, whereas the texts in both languages are written [11]

in black.[8] This striking structure did not escape the attention of the first editor of the text, although he regarded the New Persian text as an actual translation of the *Dasātīr* text in its 'heavenly' language. In the epilogue to this edition, Mulla Firuz b. Kaus writes:

[12] باید دانست که زبان اصل صحایف منزله اصلا و قطعا مناسبت بزبان زند و پهلوی و دری بلکه بجمیع السنه مشهوره طوایف مختلفه این زمان ندارد و در عصر خسرو پرویز [...] حضرت ساسان پنجم اینصحف را بزبان فرس در غایت سلامت و فصاحت و بلاغت [...] ترجمه فرموده هر یک از آیات بینات که محتاج بزیادت شرح و بسط است بعد ترجمه الفاظ آیات شرحی واضح مرقوم تا طالبان را دریافت بسهولت میسر گردد (D., 306).

[13] It should be known that the original language of the revealed books does not resemble the languages Zand, Pahlavi, Dari or even any famous language of the different contemporary people at all. In the era of Ḫosro Parvīz, Majesty Sāsān V. translated these books into Persian with the highest correctness, fluency and eloquence. For each verse that needed a commentary he wrote a clear commentary after its translation so that the students could easily apprehend it.

[14] To provide an example for this text structure I render in the following the paragraphs 40-44 and 47-52 of the chapter *Nāma-ye šat vaḫšūr yāsān* (D, 97-9). To allow better visualization of the text structure, I have rendered the texts in the celestial language red, the translation black, and the optional commentary blue. The sign for the demarcation of the celestial language from the translation is replaced by an asterisk:

[15] (40) زابهاش هروند اسپ و فه هروار دم له چایند * فروزهاش بسیار است و بشمار در نیایند

[16] (41) فر هوشام لی هروار خمیده هزهیشام خر میم بهنام اسپ که سارام اورنگرامان و حمیدگان نوند شکار هواند * فرشتگان بی‌شمار آفریده از ایشان نخستین خرد نخست است که همه خردها و آفریدگان زیردست اویند

[17] (42) نزم مانیستار که فدسمند اسپ ویودسرو نویشرامان است * پس روان سپهر برتر که بس بزرگست و سالار همه روانهاست

[18] (43) تیرسریرید وهو فرسار سروسریرام اسپ * پس تنبد و او سالار همه تنهاست و تن‌بد نام سپهر برترین است

[19] (44) سیامکان و هرنامگان و هرنامگانیان و شاورام و تاو رام سارام خمیده هواند هزهو فستام پم هیشام * آزادان و وارستگان و تنان و تنانیان و گوهرها و ناگوهرها همه آفریده اویند از او آفرین برایشان

[20] [...]

[21] (47) فه سام زمرپان وای * بنام مهربان خدای

[22] (48) تشتاریدن رام برج ادهابیغی و سابیغی * پاک شدن دو گونه است امیغی و روایی

[23] (49) هابیغی منا درافه افرکنون له بر تن و هموزیدگیها سجردن * امیغی دل را به بدی نه بستن و

8 In his edition of the text, Mulla Firuz uses two signs to mark the division between the phrases in the celestial language on the one hand and their translations and commentaries on the other. A similar representation can be found in some lithographic reprints of the book, which I found in the Library, Museum and Document Center of Iran Parliament, Tehran (classification number 2937 and 128162). In the book with the classification number 86831 from the same library, moreover, the text in the celestial language has been partly written on the margin. In this book and in the one with the classification number F7474, the word *bayān* or *šarḥ* separates the translation from the commentary. In number F4609, the text in celestial language is written in red.

نکوهیدگیها ستردن مانند خشم و کام از دل زدودن

[24] (50) و سابیغی هانچیم دم پرکتار یاج هاسد سلودن * و روایی آنچه در آشکار بد باشد زدودن چون اویژگی و ناپازی آشکاری

[25] (51) وهیم تشتاریدن فه جریفترپامد * و این پاک شدن به آب یفتر باشد و یفتر آبیست که رنگ و بوی و مزه او نگشته بود و بدبوی نشده ورنه گلاب و مانند آن پاک‌ون ستوده جم است

[26] (52) وجرسود دم کاو سمید * و آب کرد در خورد تنه و توش باید دانست که آب کرد آنرا گویند که تن و چیز بدان پاک شود و آن در خورد تن آمده پس در خورد تن پیل رودی و مردم را آنمایه که درو سراپا فرو شود و بهر پشه همینه

[27] It is important to highlight at this point again that the celestial text of the *Dasātīr* is represented as the original text, and was considered as such in the nineteenth century scholarly research as well. As far as the genesis of the book is concerned, however, it is the Persian text, encrypted into an artificial language, which should be considered the original. Interestingly, one can find a reflection on the 'original text' and its translation in the *Dasātīr* itself. The 70th paragraph of Jī-āfrām's Book of the *Dasātīr* reveals the language of the 'original text' and its translation as well as the necessity of translation for the purpose of accessibility:

[28] New Persian 'translation':

[29] سخن خدا و نامه خدا و فرشته خدا و فرسته خدا دانستی

[30] It is worthy knowing the speech of God, the book of God, the angel of God, and the envoy of God.

[31] Commentary:

[32] سخن خدا نه بگلو و کام و زبان است و آن خواستی است و گفتی بی اینهمه که چون پرمود فرشته سالار بهمن بهستی پیوست و زین خامه بدست نیرو جهانرا نگاشت و یزدانی نامه دو است نامه نخستین دو گیتی است و آنرا مهین‌نامه گویند و بزبان فرازآباد فرز دساتیرش نامند که مهین‌نامه یزدان باشد و نامه دیگر دساتیریست که چم آنرا مه‌آباد و دیگر پیغمبران از مه‌آباد تا من یافته‌اند, و آن آرشی است که بر دل تابد نه باد نوا. و این باد نوا آنرا کالبد است بهر شنوانیدن و این را بفرتین نواد دریک دساتیر خوانند که کهین‌نامه یزدان باشد و مهین‌پیغمبرش خرد است [...] و این فرز فرجیشور است بزبان دساتیر که بپارسی دری مهین‌پیغمبر باشد و دوم پیغمبر مردم است و او را انگیخته‌اند تا فرودیانرا بخواند (D., 68).

[33] "The speech of God exists not by means of the throat, the mouth or the tongue: It is a will and a speech without any of these. For when He commanded, the chief of angels, Bahman, came into existence, and with this pen, he [i.e. Bahman] wrote the world with the hand of might. There are two divine books. The first book is the two worlds, and it is called The Great Book [*mihīnnāma*], and in the language of Farzābād, it is called the *Farz-Dasātīr*, that is, *The Great Book of God*. And there is another *dasātīrī* book, the meaning [*chim*] of which Mahābād and the other prophets from Mahābād down to me have acquired, and it is a signification [*āriš*] which shines on the heart, not [comprehended through] the breath of the voice. This breath of the voice is a mere from [*kālbod*] for it in order to make it

> heard [*bahr-i shinavānīdan*]. In the heavenly language [*farātīn navād*], it is called *Darīk Dasātīr*, which is *The Small Book of God* [*kehīnnāma-ye yazdān*]" (Sheffield 2014, 170). Its great convey is knowledge […]. This is called *Farz-Farǧīšvar* in the language of the *Dasātīr*. This means 'Great Envoy' in Dari Persian, and designates the second envoy of people. He has been commissioned to call inferior people."

[34] The text structure of the *Dasātīr*, as shown in the above paragraphs, reveals three distinct components: the revelation to the prophets in a celestial language; the translation of the revelation; and finally, a commentary on the revelation. Both translation and commentary are represented as deriving from ancient times and are hence endowed with more value. As a result, not only the constructed celestial language is important for the composition of the *Dasātīr*, but also the artificial Persian language of the translation—from which words of Arabic origin are expunged.[9] In my opinion, the systematically antiquated language of the translation and commentary are also an aspect of the author's intention to present a 'celestial language.' The celestial message can only be received through prophetic mediation; therefore, divine action is expressed in the celestial text as well as in the translation and commentary of the prophetic figures. The purpose of the 'pure' language of the translation and commentary is not only to suggest their ancient origins, but also to allude to an idealistic past, namely the Sasanian period. In this way, their ancient character also confers authority on them.

Exegetical Traditions in the Āẕar Kaivānīs' Environment

[35] The most influential religious traditions in the Āẕar Kaivānīs' milieu which possessed an exegetical tradition include the Vedic tradition, Zoroastrianism and Islam. For the sake of argument, I assume that the author of the *Dasātīr* was familiar with these exegetical traditions and might have used them as models for the construction of his 'heavenly book.'

[36] There is no doubt that the Āẕar Kaivānīs became familiar with the religious books of India after their migration to the subcontinent, if not even earlier; this is proven by the use of Sanskrit words in the *Dasātīr* as well as in other Āẕar Kaivānīs treatises. The following passage of the *Dabestān-e maẕāheb*, moreover, demonstrates the Āẕar Kaivānīs' familiarity with the *Vedas*:

[37] گویند کلام الهی آن است که هیچ یکی از آخشیجی پیکران بدان لغت متکلم نشوند و قرآن اگرچه کتاب آسمانی است اما تازیان را همان گفتار است و چهار بید که به زعم ایشان نامهٔ سماوی است به لغت سنسکریت است که در هیچ شهری بدان زبان تکلم نکنند و سوای کتب این طایفه یافته نشود و گویند که این کلام فرشتگان است و بید کلام برهماست برای انتظام جهانیان.

[38] They regard the celestial language as a language in which none of the elemental forms have been expressed. Although the Qurʾān is a divine revelation, the Arabs speak in its language. The four Vedas, however, which they consider a heavenly book, are in Sanskrit, a language not spoken in any region and found nowhere other than in the books of this group. They maintain that this [*scil.* celestial language] is the speech of angels, and that the Vedas are the speech of Brahmā for the arrangement of the worldly affairs.[10]

9 Aoki (2000, 264f.) suggests that the Āẕar Kaivānīs used Arabic words in their works before their emigration to India. According to him, their reservation against the use of Arabic words first arose in India.

10 Āẕar-sāsānī (2010, 104v, ll. 9–15); parallel to Keyḫosro (1362, 113).

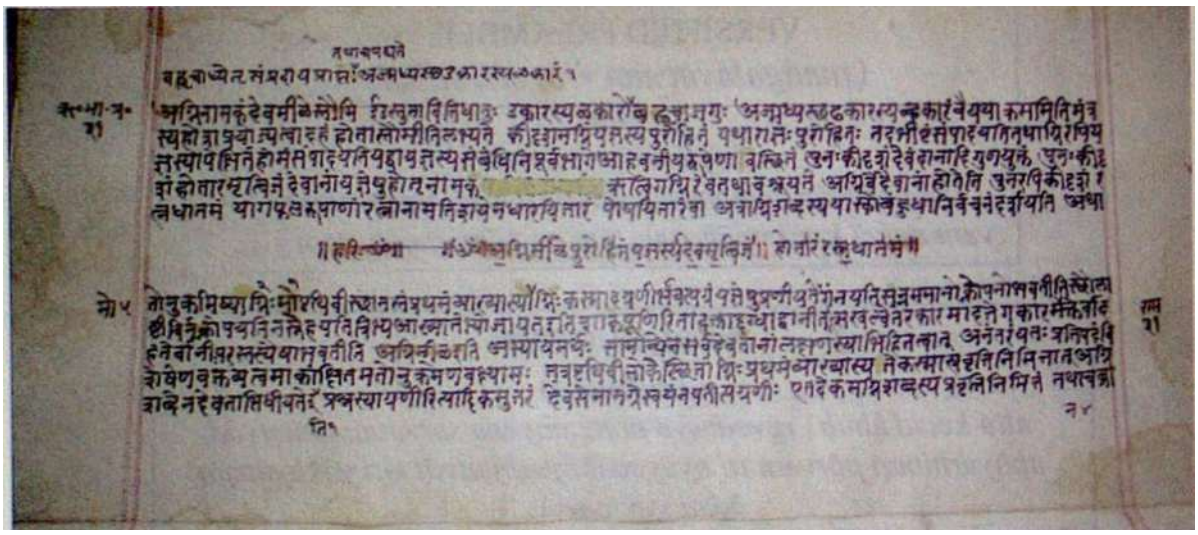

Figure 1 Fol. 31v of a Hs of Sāyaṇas Ṛgvedasamhitābhāṣyabhūmikā, RV I, 1.1 in center, surrounded by commentary (Galewicz 2009, 296).

This passage might even give the impression that the author of the *Dasātīr* used the *Vedas* as a model for the construction of the celestial language in his heavenly book. It states that the Brahmans regard the *Vedas* as a heavenly book. This claim is justified with the argument that Arabic is the language of some people and therefore a terrestrial language, while Sanskrit, in contrast, is not a spoken language. Considering the existence of a commentary in the *Dasātīr*, a commentary on the *Vedas* could have served the model for the construction of Āz̲ar Kaivān's heavenly book if Sanskrit had been used as a model for its celestial language. The *Veda* exegeses of Sāyaṇa ācārya, one of the most prominent intellectuals of medieval India,[11] are considered the most important exegeses of the *Vedas*.[12] He authored them at the height of Indian literature in the fourteenth century in the Vijayanagra Empire. Sāyana and his team penned 18 comprehensive exegeses on different Vedic works, which rapidly won authority. Their historical proximity to the *Dasātīr*'s creation, and their widespread reputation in India, allow us to assume that they were not unknown to the author of the *Dasātīr*. If he had aimed to construct his heavenly book modeled on a commentary on Vedic texts, it is logical to assume that he must have chosen a commentary by Sāyana, perhaps specifically the *Ṛgvedasaṃhitābhāṣya*,[13] his commentary to the *Ṛgveda*. It should be noted, however, that this commentary—as virtually every other authoritative commentary on the *Vedas*—is written in Sanskrit. The original text and the commentary are thus written more or less in the same language, even if a speaker of Sanskrit cannot always understand a Vedic passage. Moreover, this commentary evidences a textual structure[14] which definitely differs from one of the *Dasātīr*. In *Ṛgvedasaṃhitābhāṣya* the commentary encloses the commented text,[15] whereas in the *Dasātīr* the commentary follows the original text.[16] [39]

11 For an overview to Sāyana's life and works see Modak (1992, 3885–86.) and Modak (1995).

12 In the exegetical works assigned to him, his brother, Mādhava, as well as more assistants seem to have been involved. For an elaborated investigation of his commentary project, see Galewicz (2009).

13 For an edition of *Ṛgvedasaṃhitābhāṣya*, see Müller (1849).

14 See Galewicz (2009, 295) and figure 1.

15 This structure can be called ring composition; for this, see the classic work of Mary Douglas (2007).

16 The representation of *Ṛgvedasaṃhitābhāṣya's* structure should, moreover, demonstrate that the linear sequence of original and commentary is not the only possible form for exegetical literature, even if it is the simplest and most manifest.

Commentators writing in the same language as the original text are not unique to the *Vedas*; this was true for some Qurʾān exegeses in Iran as well, where the most important commentaries were often written in Arabic. Commentaries with a Persian translation, however, were not infrequent in Iran. According to Zadeh (2012, 264–66), they linked the original and the translation in two forms: often through an interlinear translation, or by putting the translation at the end of a liturgical unit. The second form was not so current as the first one but common. The Persian translations of the Qurʾan thus incorporate three components similar to the *Dasātīr*: the original sacred text in Arabic, the translation, and the commentary in Persian: [40]

> Yet it is not uncommon for translations to fully envelop the text with the commentarial expansions. In these instances, the original Arabic text of the Qurʾan is not only contained between interlinear translations, above and below, but is also surrounded by marginal commentaries which fill the entire page so that the sacred scripture is visually afloat in a sea of exegetical expansion.[17] [41]

As a consequence, it cannot be ruled out that Persian exegeses of the Qurʾan served as a model for the construction of the Āẕar Kaivānīs' heavenly book. Nevertheless, there are some decisive differences between the *Dasātīr* and the exegeses of the Qurʾān or *Vedas*: in the commentary on *Vedas*, there are only two textual components, the original and its commentary. The *Dasātīr* has three components, however. In the Qurʾān, the original text is in a real, generally comprehensible human language, whereas in the *Dasātīr*, the original language is an artificial one. The texture constitutes the next major difference: The *Ṛgvedasaṃhitābhāṣya,* for example, exhibits a ring structure not present in the *Dasātīr*. In the case of the Persian commentaries on the Qurʾan, we frequently see an interlinear translation. Even when the translation appears at the end of a liturgical unit, the commentary, however, is often written on the margin. The commentary is thus not an integral part of the text as is the case for the *Dasātīr*. These differences make it improbable that these commentary traditions would have functioned as models for the *Dasātīr*. [42]

The Zoroastrian Exegetical Tradition

In the second millennium CE, Zoroastrians, laity as well as religious specialists, believed that Avestan was a heavenly language. They regarded it as the language in which Zarathustra communicated with Ahura Mazdā. The knowledge that Avestan, as an Old Iranian language, had been spoken by a group of eastern Iranian people was promoted by Iranian philologists in the eighteenth and nineteenth century.[18] Afterwards, Zoroastrians adopted this conclusion as well. Before these philological investigations, the general opinion did not consider Avestan to be a dead language but a language of revelation, not spoken by people on the earth. A thirteenth century Zoroastrian text adopts this perspective on the Avestan language:[19] [43]

[44] و آن بیست و یک نسک اوستا که میگویند اوستا زبان اورمزد است و زند زفان ما و پازند آنکه هر کسی

17 Zadeh (2012, 266); for some examples of manuscripts, see Zadeh (2012, figs. 2, 10).

18 See Anquetil Duperron's (1771, Ouvrage de Zoroastre, 2:1.1/iii) hint regarding the language of Zend-Avesta as an old language of north Persia, as well as Morgenstierne's (1926, 29–30) contextualization of Avestan in east Iranian languages.

19 We can find the same opinion on Avesta in the older Zoroastrian literature. Identifying a source that is chronologically close to the *Dasātīr* demonstrates that the Āẕar Kaivānīs may have received this opinion from Zoroastrian New Persian literature.

+بداند که چه میگوید.

> About those 21 *nasks* [*scil.* books] of the *Avesta* which they recite: Avestan is Ahura Mazdā's language, Zand is our language and Pāzand is the one of which everybody knows what it [*scil.* Avesta] says.[20] [45]

In the Zoroastrian tradition, Middle Persian (and its Pahlavi script) thus occupied an intermediate position between Avestan as an ideal language and New Persian (or Gujarati) as a spoken language. On the one hand, Middle Persian made the content of Avestan liturgical texts accessible to Zoroastrian priests; on the other hand, it historically stands at the interface between a language projected back into the mythical past and a living language. [46]

The quoted passage, moreover, not only claims that Avestan is the language of Ahura Mazdā; it also introduces two other Zoroastrian linguistic components, *Zand* and *Pāzand*, which are relevant for our discussion. As we know, the Avestan texts were translated into Middle Persian and were commented upon.[21] The commented translation written in the Pahlavi script is also known by the technical term *zand*, lit. 'interpretation.'[22] Since the complexity of the Pahlavi script hampers the reading of Pahlavi texts, some of these texts were re-rendered in the more distinctive Avestan script. So, the Middle Persian texts, occasional exegeses of Avestan texts, written in the Avestan script, are called *pāzand*. Therefore, we have to differentiate between the pair translation-commentary and *zand-pāzand*. The definitions of *Zand* and *Pāzand* in the quotation above are consistent with their definitions in Iranian philology (Andrés-Toledo 2015, 524). The quotation defines *zand* as 'our language,' i.e., the Middle Persian language, the literary language of the Zoroastrian priests in the Sasanian and early Islamic period, written in Pahlavi script, which in the period after the eleventh/twelfth century, in particular, Zoroastrian priests were able to read. In contrast, *Pāzand* is represented as a text form "of which everybody knows what it says." The author presumably intends 'everyone' to mean lay Zoroastrians, who must have been able to read the Avestan script. [47]

To illustrate the overall structure of the *Zand* texts,[23] I will quote two verses of the *Yasna* text, Y. 9.1-2, from the exegetical tradition.[24] These texts comprise, like the *Dasātīr*, three components: the original text, its translation, and the commentary. In the *Zand* texts, the Avestan passages are mainly translated phrase for phrase. In order to do this, first the Avestan original phrase is written (here rendered in red). Secondly, its translation follows (here rendered in black). Thirdly, a short or long commentary is occasionally added after the translation (here rendered in blue). In manuscripts, the original Avestan text is demarcated from the translation by a decorative character (here marked by an asterisk). Moreover, some words, such as *hād*, mark the beginning of the commentary. [48]

Y.9.1 [49]

*hāuuanīm ā ratūm ā haomō upāiṯ zaraθuštrəm * pad hāwan radīh [[pad hāwan gāh]]* [50]
hōm abar raft ō Zardušt

** ātrəm pairi yaožda θəṇtəm gāθåsca srāuuaiiaṇtəm * pad ātaxš-gāh pērāmōn yōǰ-* [51]

20 UIbdR, 85; in the original *bidānand* instead of *bidānad*.
21 For an exhaustive study on the Pahlavi translation of the *Avesta*, see (Cantera 2004).
22 The term *zand*, moreover, designates the texts based on the Pahlavi translation of the *Avesta*. This part of Zand literature, however, is not decisive for our discussion here.
23 The meaning of the text is not important for our discussion.
24 The text is transcribed after the ms. T55 (Andrés-Toledo 2012). One folio of this manuscript can be seen in Figure 2.

dahrēnišnīh ka-š [[ān Ašem-wohū sē]] guft [[kē Frawarānēy ō pēš]]

* *ādim pərəsaṯ zaraθuštrō kō narə ahī* * *u-š az ōy pursīd Zardušt kū kē mard hē [[hād nē pad yašt ī fradom būd az pēš paydāg. u-š dānist kū hōm ōh rasēd ud ka mad būd ā-š pursīd abāyist mad miθrō upāit zardušt ān paydāg kū-š šnāxt ēd rāy čē ān zamān abāg yazdān wēš būd ēstād u-š yād āšnāgtar būd hēnd. u-š ēn fragard warm būd u-š abāyist rāy abāg hōm ul guft.* * *ast kē ēdōn gōwēd hād* * *Ohrmazd guft ēstād kū harw dō ōh rasēnd ud ka hōm mad būd ā-š madan šnāsēd.]]* [52]

* *yim azəm vīspahe aŋhāuš astuuatō sraēštəm dādarəsa xᵛahe gaiiehe xᵛanuuatō aməṣahe* * *kē man az harwisp axw ī astōmand ā-m nēktar dīd hē čē-t ān ī xwēš ǰān nēk kard ēstēd ud amarg [[hād ā-š pad frārōnīh ā amarg kerd estēd nē ēdōn čiyōn awēšān kē gōšt ī ǰam ǰūd u-šān andar tan amarg kerd estād tā bē az tan harw kas-ēw amarg […]]]* [53]

Y.9.2 [54]

āaṯ mē aēm paitiiaoxta haomō aṣauua dūraošō * *ō man ōy passox guft hōm ī ahlaw ī dūrōš [[hād dūrōšīh-iš ēd kū ōš az ruwān ī mardōmān dūr dārēd* * *rōšn guft ay ahōšīh pad hōm bawēd.]]* [55]

* *azəm ahmi zaraθuštra haomō aṣauua dūraošō* * *an ham Zardušt hōm ī ahlaw ī dūrōš* [56]

* *ā mąm yāsaŋᵛha spitama frā mąm hunuuaŋᵛha xᵛarətāe* * *ān ī ān ī man ōh ān xwarišn xwāhēd Spitāmān frāz man hūn ō* xwarišn [[xwarišn rāy bē hūn* * *xwarišn xward]]* [57]

* *aoi mąm staomaine stūiδi yaθa māf aparaciṯ saošiiaṇtō stauuąn* * *abar man pad stāyišn stāy [[yazišn]] čiyōn man pas-iz sūdōmand stāyēnd [[ā-š ān ī tō ud tō ud ašmā rāy]]* [58]

The migration of the Avestan texts from Eastern Iran to Western Iran, as well as some probable discontinuity in the Zoroastrian textual tradition, led to a situation in which the Zoroastrian priests of the post-Achaemenian period were not able to produce new texts in Avestan. It moreover undermined their competence in understanding the Avestan language. Due to these circumstances, translation of the Avestan texts became necessary and also increased the necessity for explanatory exegesis. Therefore, the Avestan original and its translation always accompany the exegeses. Consequently, *Zand* designates both the translation and the commentary of the Avestan text, although the Zoroastrian priests differentiated between them in their textual tradition. In the late or post-Sasanian period, the translation and the exegesis became fixed and acquired an authoritative status, which is partly projected in the Zoroastrian tradition on the Middle Persian language and the Pahlavi script. Whereas Avestan was considered Ahura Mazdā's language, Pahlavi was represented as the language and the script of its mediators, that is, the Zoroastrian authorities. The 99th chapter of the Zoroastrian book *Saddar-e naṣr* (Hundred Chapters in Prose), a Zoroastrian treatise from the fifteenth century or earlier, illustrates this Zoroastrian perception: [59]

[60] در نود و نهم. (1) اینکه موبدان و دستوران و ردان و هیربدان را نشاید که همه کس را پهلوی آموزند. (2) که زردشت از هورمزد پرسید که پهلوی آموختن مر کسان را شاید (3) هورمزد به افزونی جواب داد که هر که از نسل تو باشد موبد و دستور و هیربدی که خردمند باشد. (4) دیگر هیچ کس را نشاید جز از اینکه گفته‌ام اگر دیگران را آموزند او را عظیم گناه باشد اگر بسیار کارکرفه کرده باشد فرجام او را بدوزخ بود (Dhabhar 1909, 66).

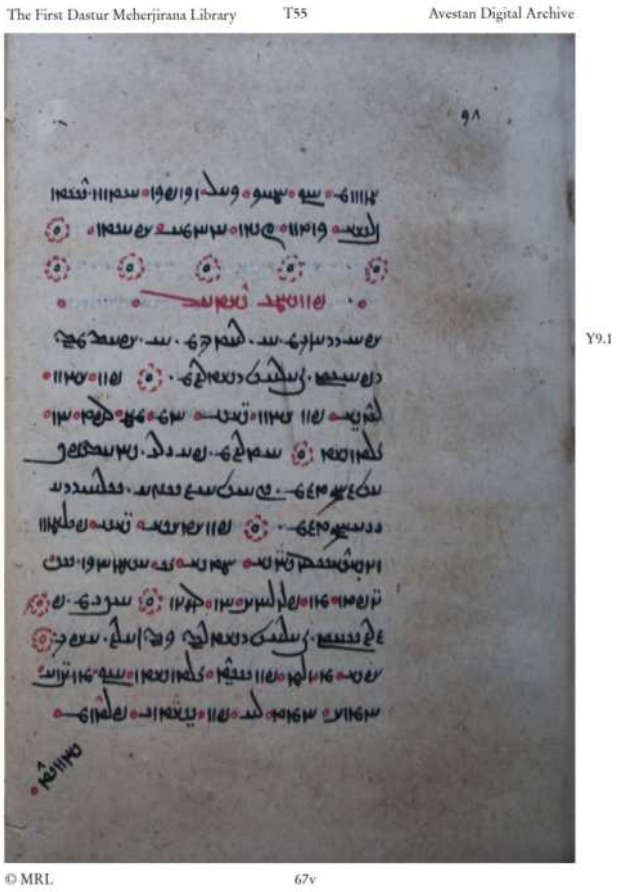

Figure 2 Fol. 57v from Yasna Pahlavi Hs T55 (Andrés-Toledo 2012).

Passage 99: (1) It is not allowed that mūbeds, dastūrs, radān and hīrbeds teach Pahlavi to everybody. (2) For Zarathustra asked Ahura Mazdā who is allowed to be taught Pahlavi. (3) Ahura Mazdā answered in detail, whoever is of your descendants (and) is a wise mūbed or dastūr or hīrbed. (4) Otherwise, nobody is allowed. If someone teaches someone other than those whom I have mentioned, s/he commits a huge sin. Even if s/he has many virtues s/he will be finally brought to hell. [61]

Passage 99 limits instruction in the Pahlavi script and language to the Zoroastrian priests. It is worth noting that the restriction of teaching to priests refers only to the Pahlavi script and language. In contrast, Zoroastrians must learn the Avestan script to be able to accomplish their liturgical tasks, and priests must help them do so, as passage 98 of the same text requires: [62]

[63] در نود و هشتم (1) اینکه بهدینانرا می‌باید که خط اوستا بیاموزند پیش هیربدان و اوستادان تا در خواندن نیایش و یشت خطا نرود. (2) بیشتر واجب مر هیربدان را و اوستادان را هست که همه بهدینانرا خط اوستا بیاموزند و اگر هیربد در آموختن ایشان تقصیر نماید او را عظیم گناه باشد. (3) که اورمزد به افزونی زرتشت را گفت که هر هیربدی و اوستادی در آموختن اوستا بهدینانرا تقصیر کند او را از بهشت چندان دور کنم که پهنای زمین است.

Passage 98: (1) The Avestan script must be taught to Zoroastrians by hīrbeds and masters so that there will not be any mistakes in the recitation of prayers and *Yašts*. (2) It is more imperative to hīrbeds and masters to teach the Avestan scripts to all Zoroastrians. If a hīrbed neglects their teaching s/he commits a huge sin. (3) Ahura Mazdā emphasized to Zarathustra: 'I will take every hīrbed and master who neglects teaching Avesta to Zoroastrians as far away from Paradise as the breadth of the earth.'[25] [64]

Both passages attempt to authorize the presented direction through two postulates. The first postulate refers to the representation of the instruction as a divine provision, which was revealed to Zarathustra in a dialogue with Ahura Mazdā. The second postulate alludes to the representation of its violation as a severe sin, which leads the offender to hell even if s/he has acquired numerous virtues. [65]

It is worth noting that these chapters are paraphrased in chapters 99 and 100 of the *Dabestān-e maẕāheb*: [66]

[67] در نود و نهم: بهدین باید که خط استا و ژند بداند.

[68] در صدم: موبد را باید لغت پهلوی غیر را نیاموزاند چه یزدان به زردشت گفته این علم به فرزندان خود تعلیم کن.

Passage 99: Zoroastrians must know the Avestan and the Zand script. [69]

Passage 100: Mūbeds must not teach Pahlavi words to others, because Yazdān [*scil.* Ahura Mazdā] has said to Zarathustra: 'Teach this science to your children.'[26] [70]

This demonstrates that this emic perspective on Zoroastrian exegetical literature was known to the Āẕar Kaivānīs, as the section on the reception of Zoroastrian exegetical tradition below will attempt to investigate in more detail. [71]

25 Dhabhar (1909, 66); in the original *vājit* instead of *vājib*.
26 Āẕar-sāsānī (2010, 90v), parallel to Keyẖosro (1362, 111).

Comparing the Structures of Exegetical Texts in Zoroastrianism and in the *Dasātīr*

The evidence presented above allows us to infer that, even if the Āẕar Kaivānīs took over the concept of celestial language from their immediate religious environment (Horūfīya and Noqṭavīya), their construction of the *Dasātīr-e Āsmānī* obviously imitates the Zoroastrian *Zand*. This hypothesis is supported by the following evidence: [72]

- In both the Zoroastrian tradition and in the *Dasātīr,* the transmission of the divine revelation consists of three components: a) the language of heaven (Avestan or the constructed language in the *Dasātīr)*, b) translation and c) commentary. [73]
- The celestial language in both the *Dasātīr* and the Zoroastrian *Zand-Avesta* is inaccessible. Although it has been shown that the constructed celestial language of the *Dasātīr* morphologically and syntactically resembles New Persian, and was likely invented using New Persian as a model, it is worth investigating whether the Āẕar Kaivānīs attempted to make this language phonologically similar to Avestan.
- The inaccessibility of the celestial language is compensated for by its translation into an understandable language.
- *Dasātīr*'s celestial text is not translated into the spoken form of a contemporary language, but into an artificially antiquated New Persian. It seems that the author aimed to make the language of the translation and commentary similar to Middle Persian.
- Both in the *Dasātīr* and in the Zoroastrian exegetical tradition, the exegesis depends on the translation and is based upon it.
- Both in the *Dasātīr* and in the Zoroastrian exegetical tradition, the original, the translation and the exegesis immediately follow each other.[27]
- Translation and exegesis of phrases in an invented language must have been put together according to a preexisting model. Otherwise one might expect that the author either translated or commented on the phrases.

If we accept that the author of the *Dasātīr* used the Zoroastrian *Zand* tradition as a model for his book, there would be no doubt that the Zoroastrian exegetical texts were known to the Āẕar Kaivānīs at the latest after their migration to India. Now the question can be posed to what extent these texts were known in the broader context of early Modern Iran and India and how deeply Āẕar Kaivānīs authors were acquainted with them. [74]

Reception of the Zoroastrian Exegetical Tradition in Early Modern Indo-Iranian Culture and in Āẕar Kaivānī Literature

In Early Modern Indo-Iranian Culture

In the early modern period, Middle Persian was considered the language of the golden age [75]

27 This is the case in all Zoroastrian manuscripts of the Pahlavi translation; I did not have the chance to check all manuscripts of the *Dasātīr*. In the case of the *Dasātīr*, however, I do not see a necessity for such a double check because these three components undoubtedly belong together on the conceptual level. If one assumes that the New Persian text constitutes the starting point of the *Dasātīr*, it must remain bound to its conversion into the constructed language. From this perspective it is impossible to present these three components separately in the construction of the *Dasātīr*.

of Iran and was often contrasted with contemporary spoken languages. Its importance was not restricted to Zoroastrianism; it was generally perceived as the language of pre-Islamic heritage. This is the case with philologists such as Ğamāl al-dīn Enğū Šīrāzī, the author of the famous *Farhang-e Ğahāngīrī*, composed between 1595 and 1608.[28] His interest in Pahlavi philology must have been so great that at the end of the sixteenth century, Akbar (1556–1605), the third Mughal emperor, invited Ardašīr, a knowledgeable Zoroastrian priest from Kerman, to his court to help the philologist with his dictionary.[29] As an epilogue to the lemma '*barsam*,' thin branches of tamarix or pomegranate tree, which are used in Zoroastrian rituals, Enğū Šīrāzī writes:

[76] شرح این لغت را مجوسی که در دین خود بغایت فاضل بود، و اردشیر نام داشت، و او را مجوسان موبد میدانستند و حضرت عرش آستانی محض، بجهت تحقیق لغت فرس مبلغها از برایش فرستاده از کرمان طلبیده بود، تحقیق نموده، نوشت (Enğū Šīrāzī [1351] 1972, I/854).

[77] A Zoroastrian who was extremely learned in his religion, named Ardašīr, whom the Zoroastrians considered mūbed, and to whom the Majesty of the absolute empyrean throne sent an enormous sum of money, inviting him from Kerman for philological investigations of Persian, did some research and wrote the explanation of this term.

[78] Ardašīr seems to be alluded to in the entry *āẓar* as well (Modi 1903, 90–91):

[79] و فقیر حقیر که راقم این حروفم، پیری از پارسیان را که در دین زرتشت بود دیدم، که جزوی چند از کتاب زند و وستا داشت چون مرا رغبت و شعف تمام، بجمع لغات فرس بود [–] و در فرس از زند و وستا کتابی معتبرتر نیست – بجهت تحقیق لغات با او صحبت میداشتم و اکثر لغاتی که در خاتمهٔ کتاب از زندو وستا نقل شده، تقریر [آن] زرتشتی است (Enğū Šīrāzī [1351] 1972, I/96).

[80] I, the little poor (man) who is the writer of these letters, saw a wise man of Persians/Parsis who was Zoroastrian. He had many parts of the book *Zand-Avesta*. As I was very interested in compiling Persian words and there is no more creditable book than the *Zand-Avesta* in Persian, I engaged in conversation with him because of (my) philological investigations. Most of the words that are listed at the end of the book of the *Zand-Avesta* are written by that Zoroastrian.

[81] For our discussion, it is worth examining how the Zoroastrian terms *zand*, *pāzand*, and *avestā* were perceived in non-Zoroastrian environments in the early modern era. For this, I quote their definitions in the *Farhang-e Ğahāngīrī* and the *Farhang-e Moʾaiyad al-Fożalāʾ*:[30]

[82] ابستا با اول مفتوح و ثانی مکسور، تفسیر زند باشد. و زند کتاب زرتشت است

[83] (Enğū Šīrāzī [1351] 1972, I/563)

[84] Avesta: [*abestā*] is the commentary on *Zand*, and *Zand* is Zarathustra's book.

[85] پازند تفسیر زند باشد، و زند کتاب زرتشت است (Enğū Šīrāzī [1351] 1972, I/231)

Pāzand: is the commentary on *Zand*, and *Zand* is Zarathustra's book. [86]

[87] زنداستا بالفتح نام کتابی در احکام آتش‌پرستی از مصنفات ابراهیم زرتشت (Dehlavī, n.d., 432)

Zanda(ve)sta: the name of a book comprising instructions about fire-worshiping, of Ebrāhīm-Zardošt's compositions. [88]

[89] زند [...] نام کتابی از جمله مصنفات ابراهیم زرتشت در احکام دین باطل آتش‌پرستی که شرح پازندست [...]

Zanda(ve)sta: the name of one of Ebrāhīm-Zardošt's compositions comprising instructions of the false religion of fire-worshiping. It is the commentary on Pāzand.[31] [90]

One can distinguish between the emic Zoroastrian definition of the terms Avesta, *zand* and *pāzand*, on the one hand, and their understanding in the broader milieu of early modern Indo-Iranian culture on the other. It appears that the author has mixed Avesta and Zand with each other: he represents Avesta not as the original but as the commentary, and Zand as the original text, whereas in Zoroastrian use it designates the commentary. The distinction between the original text and the commentary, however, is known to the author. The component translation is completely absent. [91]

In Āẕar Kaivānī Literature

The chapter 'On Some Benefits of Secrets of Zoroastrians' (*dar ẕekr-e baʿżī az favāyed-e romūz-e zardoštīyān*) in the *Dabestān-e maẕāheb* describes the inaccessibility of revelation, the necessity of commentary and the division of commentary into two types, main and secondary: [92]

[93] بدان بعضی از یزدانیان گفته‌اند که کتاب ژند بر دو قسم بود: یک قسم آن صریح و بیرمز، که آن را مِه‌ژند نیز میگفتند، و قسم دوم رمز و اشارات که آن را کِه‌ژند هم میخواندند، و مه‌ژند مشتمل بود بر احیای شریعت حضرت مه‌آباد، چنانکه کتب آذرساسانیان، است، و مه‌ژند از تسلط بیگانگان، چون ترکان، خاصّه رومیان، از میان رفت و که‌ژند ماند، و بسیاری از که‌ژند هم در تاختها از میان رفت. خلاصهٔ مضامین مه‌ژند آنکه [...] در مطالب دیگر از علمی و عملی چون حفظ زندبار و قتل تندبار با دساتیر موافق است و در عهد اشکانیان عمل به که‌ژند کردند، چون اردشیر، مطیع ساسان دوم شد، عمل به دساتیر و مه‌ژند نمود و از قتل زندبار دوری جست، و مه‌ژند نیز جزو دساتیر است، و بعد از آن، دیگران رو به عمل که‌ژند آوردند، و انوشیروان بنابر اشارهٔ آذرساسان عصر، عمل بر دساتیر و مه‌ژند کرده، از قتل زندبار مبرّا زیست، و باز بعد از او عمل به احکام که‌ژند کرده، تا ساسان پنجم نفرین در حقّ ایرانیان کردند و ایشان گرفتار فقر و مسکنت گشتند.

> Know that some of Yazdānīyān have said that the book *Žand* comprised two sorts (of *žand*): one sort was unequivocal and without enigma, also called *Meh-žand* [the Higher *Žand*]; the second one included enigmas and allusions, also called *Keh-žand* [the Lower *Žand*]. The *Meh-žand*, like the books of the Āẕar-sāsānīds, contained the law of the holy Mahābād. The *Meh-žand* was lost during foreign conquests, such as those of the Turks and especially the Greeks. The *Keh-žand*, however, still remained, but a great part of it was also lost during invasions. In summary, the *Meh-žand*'s contents are […] In other matters, scientific and practical, e.g., the protection of harmless animals and killing of harmful ones, it agrees with the *Dasātīr*. In the Arsacid period, the people acted according to the *Keh-žand*. Ardašīr, obeying Sāsān II, acted according to the *Dasātīr* and the *Meh-žand*. Consequently, he avoided killing harmless animals. The *Meh-žand* is a part of the *Dasātīr*. After him, others began to adopt the *Keh-žand*, Following the contemporary Āẕar-sāsān's authority, Anūšīrvān adopted the *Dasātīr* and the *Meh-žand*. Thus, he refused to kill harmless animals. After him, people again adopted the *Keh-žand*'s precepts until Sāsān V execrated Iranians and they fell victim to wretchedness and poverty.[32] [94]

This passage illustrates that the Zoroastrian division of the texts into divine revelation, translation and commentary was not unknown to the Āẕar Kaivānīs. The artificially Persianized word *žand*, in particular, reveals that the author is working with the Zoroastrian concept of *zand*. I do not, however, claim that *Meh-žand* and *Keh-žānd*, as described in the passage, would coincide with the pair *zand-pāzand* or translation-commentary. Nevertheless, it seems plausible to assume that the Āẕar Kaivānīs were familiar with the Zoroastrian distinction between translation and commentary, which are together called *zand*: the author could thus have designated translation, which may still contain ambiguities, *keh-žand*, and interpretation, which explains the uncertainties of the translation, *Meh-žand*. [95]

It is well known that the Āẕar Kaivānīs received some New Persian Zoroastrian works.[33] This can be seen, for example, in the *Dabestān-e maẕāheb*, where the author explains the belief system of the Zoroastrians:[34] there, some sections from works *Zarādošt nāma*,[35] *Ardāvīrāf nāma*,[36] and *Ṣaddar*[37] are paraphrased. This demonstrates that the Āẕar Kaivānīs were familiar, at the very least, with the New Persian literature of the Zoroastrians. In addition, the Zoroastrian priests directly participated in the inter-religious discussions at the Akbar court (see below). This likely added to the reputation of Zoroastrianism in this period, so that the Āẕar Kaivānīs might have been eager to know more about it after their arrival on the Indian subcontinent and might have attempted to come into contact with Zoroastrian priests. The author of the *Dabestān-e maẕāheb,* for example, claims to have been in contact with a Zoroastrian priest from Navsari: [96]

28 On this dictionary, see Bayevsky (1999).
29 Modi (1903, 92–93) uses the attestation of a Persian *Revāyat*, a correspondence between Irani and Parsi Zoroastrian priests, to show that Ardašīr left India in 1597. Therefore, he must have been located, for an unknown period of time until 1597, at Akbar's court.
30 On the significance of this latter dictionary see below.
31 Dehlavi (n.d., 436). This dictionary defines *pāzand* similar to Zandavestā.
32 Keyẖosro (1362, 111–12); this passage is absent in the first recension of the work (Āẕar Sāsānī 2010).
33 See e.g. Grobbel (2007, 99); Sheffield (2018, 457–58).
34 Āẕar-sāsānī (2010, 57v–95v) = Keyẖosro (1362, 72–118).
35 Āẕar-sāsānī (2010, 58r–74v) = Keyẖosro (1362, 72–93).
36 Āẕar-sāsānī (2010, 75v–81r) = Keyẖosro (1362, 94–100).
37 Āẕar-sāsānī (2010, 82r–90v) = Keyẖosro (1362, 101–11).

[97] در میان مردم مشهور است که زردشت آذربایگانی است، امّا غیر بهدینان گویند و نامه‌نگار از موبد برزو – که نوساری من اعمال گجرات وطن اوست – شنیده که مولد زردشت و آباء نامدارش شهر ری است.

[98] It is common among the people to believe that Zarathustra comes from Āẕarbāygān. This however is what non-Zoroastrians say. The author has heard from mūbed Borzū, who is from Navsārī in the province Gujarat, that the birthplace of Zarathustra and his distinguished ancestors is the city of Ray.[38]

[99] The author of the *Dabestān-e maẕāheb* even sets the religion of Zarathustra and the one of the Āẕar Kaivānīs in an exegetical relationship and claims that the former was adapted to the latter by interpretation, since the words of Zarathustra were mysterious:

[100] چون این دانسته شد، بدان که کیش آذرهوشنگیان یعنی یزدانیان آن است که اگرچه دین زردشت از گشتاسپ تا یزدگرد رواجی تمام داشت اما تأویل کرده آن را با شریعت آذرهوشنگ یعنی مه‌آباد مطابق می‌ساختند و هیچگونه به قتل زندبار فرمان ندادند و کلمات زردشت را مرموز می‌دانستند جایی که مخالف کیش آذرهوشنگ بود عمل نمی‌کردند و تأویل می‌نمودند. [...] آذرساسانیان جز به راه شت مه‌آباد نمی‌رفتند و کیشی دیگر بی‌تأویل نمی‌پسندیدند و اصلا ملتفت به ظاهر قول زردشت نبودند و ایشان برآنند که عقیدهٔ خسروان خاصه دارا و داراب و بهمن و اسفندیار و گشتاسپ و لهراسپ بر این بوده یعنی کلام زردشت را حق می‌دانستند، اما ظاهر کتاب او را مرموز می‌شمردند.

[101] Now that you understood these (premises), you should also know that the teaching of the Āẕar-hūšangīyāns, i.e., the Yazdānīyāns, states that although Zarathustra's religion flourished from the time of Goštāsp to that of Yazdegird, they interpreted it and adapted it to the teaching of Āẕar-hūšang, i.e., Mahābād. They never recommended the killing of harmless animals. They considered Zarathustra's words ambiguous and did not follow them when they contradicted Āẕar-hūšang's teaching, instead reinterpreted them. [...] The Āẕar-sāsānīs followed only the way of the prophet Mahābād. They did not accept any other teaching without interpretation, and did not adhere to the external form of Zarathustra's words at all. They moreover believed that this was the opinion of (ancient) kings, especially Dārā, Dārāb, Bahman, Esfandīyār, Goštāsp and Lohrāsp. They accepted Zarathustra's teachings as true but considered the exoteric aspect of his book symbolic [rather than literally true].[39]

[102] Significantly, the author of the *Dabestān-e maẕāheb* claims that Bahrām b. Farhād Esfandīyār Pārsī, the author of the *Šārestān-e čahār čaman*, who died in 1624, knew Pahlavi:

[103] فرزانه بهرام بن فرهاد از نژاد گودرز کشواد بوده. چون آذرکیوان به پنته خرامید در باز پسین روزها فرزانه بهرام از شیراز آمده در پتنه به ریاضت مشغول شد و او مردی بود مراتب منطقیات و طبیعیات و ریاضیات و الهیات از پارسی و پهلوی و تازی زبان آنچه نقل افتاده.

[104] "Farzāna Bahrām the son of Farhād was from the lineage of Gūdarz, the son of

38 Keyẖosro (1362, 87); this passage is absent in the first recension; see fol. 72r in (Āẕar Sāsānī 2010).
39 Āẕar-sāsānī (2010, 90v, l. 20–91r, l. 15), parallel to Keyẖosro (1362, 112–13).

> Kashvād [an ancient hero from the Book of Kings]. When Āzar Kaivān went to Patna in his later days, Farzāna Bahrām came from Shiraz. He occupied himself with austerities in Patna. He was a man who had obtained the highest degrees and accolades, and he was well read in the sciences of logic (*manṭeqīyāt*), natural sciences (*ṭabīʿīyāt*) and theology (*elāhīyāt*) as transmitted through the Persian, Pahlavi, and Arabic languages."[40]

These passages evince that the Āẕar Kaivānīs were familiar with the general concepts of the Zoroastrian commentary tradition. Moreover, they presumably were in contact with Zoroastrian priests who knew Middle Persian. We can thus search for the linguistic traces of contact with the Zoroastrian Middle Persian in the Āẕar Kaivānī texts, and particularly in the *Dasātīr*. [105]

Some Pahlavi Terms in the *Dasātīr*

In the previous sections, I investigated the structural analogy of the construct *Dasātīr* and the Zoroastrian *Zand* tradition of the Avestan texts. I tried to demonstrate the *Dasātīr's* structural dependence on the *Zand* tradition. Moreover, I tried to infer from the Āẕar Kaivānī literature that these authors were familiar with the Zoroastrian text tradition and knew *Zand* and its structure. In the following I would like to point out some terms in the *Dasātīr* that must have found their way to the *Dasātīr* from Zoroastrian Middle Persian literature. For this, I will concentrate on terms related to the concept of time. For my conclusions in this part, I formulate two explicit premises: [106]

- Premise 1: The Āẕar Kaivānīs had at their disposal only those Zoroastrian sources that are available to us today. This premise rules out the possibility that the Āẕar Kaivānīs could have received terms from Zoroastrian New Persian texts that are not transmitted to us. [107]
- Premise 2: The Āẕar Kaivānīs had no access to the Zoroastrian side-traditions from the first millennium CE in non-Iranian languages such as Syrian, Armenian or Greek. This premise rules out the possibility that the Āẕar Kaivānīs could have received terms from non-Zoroastrian texts.[41]

Both premises seem probable enough to be accepted as true and presupposed in the following. The first terms to scrutinize come from the commentary on section 29 of the chapter Šāy Kelīyo in the *Dasātīr*. There, we find two terms representing time which could be revealing for identifying the sources of the *Dasātīr*. The section reads: [108]

[109] میلاد ور ورد * آفریننده و پیداکننده بیمایه و دمانکش همه باید دانست دمان چندی گردش آسمان بزرگست و خویشی ناپاینده و نادرست بناپاینده و نادرست چون نو پدید امده و تازه شدهای روزانی را خویشی بگردش اسمانها و چرخ سپهران و این را بفراتین نواد زروان گویند (D., 78).

mīlād var vard * The creator and revealer is completely immaterial and without [110]

40 Sheffield (2018, 458); Āẕar-sāsānī (2010, 31r–31v) = Keyẖosro (1362, 36).

41 For the case of Arabic texts, and al-Šahrestānī's heresiography in particular, see below in this section.

duration [*damān-keš*][42] It should be known that time [*damān*] is the measure of the rotations of the great sky, "and the relation of one fleeting and unfixed subject with another fleeting and unfixed subject; as for example, the relation of new events and fresh occurrences in the world, with the revolution of the Heavens and the motion of the spheres."[43] In the celestial language [*farātīn-navād*], it is called *zorvān*.

Striking in this passage is the word form *damān*, in *damān-keš*, instead of the New Persian word *zamān* 'time.' One might think this is a mere spelling mistake, where the letter <z> was replaced with <d> in the Persian-Arabic script. Although this confusion cannot be ruled out, it is hardly likely because of its repetition in different parts of the book. Much more likely is a misreading of a text in the Pahlavi script: In Pahlavi, the word *zamān* is written in two ways: <zmʾn'> or <dmʾn'>, where <d> is the corrupted form of the letter <z> (hence transliterated as <z̲>). It is worth pointing out that before modern philological investigations, Zoroastrian priests read the word as *damān*. The use of the letter <d/y/g>[44] instead of <z> is a well-attested phenomenon in the Pahlavi script, as the following Middle Persian words demonstrate: [111]

<z̲myk> as well as <zmyk> for *zamīg* 'earth'

<z̲mstʾn'> as well as <zmstʾn'> *zamestān* 'winter'

<yz̲dʾn'> *yazdān* 'gods'

<ʾwhrmz̲d> *ohrmazd* 'Ohrmazd'

The word form *damān* appears in other passages in the *Dasātīr* as well, where its meaning 'time' is explicitly confirmed: [112]

[113] دمانی چیزیرا گویند که هست نتواند شد جز در دمان که چندی گردش برترین سپهرست و هستی خردان باز بسته بدمان نیست و خرد نخست را کمان بدمان بود کردن چرخه آورد چه دمان برین نیرویش باز بسته بر سپهر باشد و هستی سپهر باز بسته بر هستی نخستین خرد (D., 256).

Temporal [*damānī*] is called that which can be created only in time [*damān*], which is the measure of the rotations of the greatest firmament. The existence of Intelligences does not depend on time [*damān*]. Making the First Intelligence dependent on an existence in time [*damān*] produces circular reasoning because time itself depends on the firmament for this (form) of its force, and the existence of firmament itself depends on the existence of the First Intelligence. [114]

[115] و هستی نزد دانش او یک‌بار بی دمان و هنگام پیداست و بر او هیچ چیز پوشیده نیست رسا دانایی که دانش او هنگامی نیست و در فر باره او گذشته و اکنون و آینده نگارش نتوان کرد کشش دمان و درازی هنگام بانو شدها که پیوسته لختان و لخت‌های اوست یکبار نزد یزدان پدیدار است (D., 3).

And the existence is manifest to His knowledge at once, without time [*damān*] and duration [*hengām*]; and nothing is hidden to Him. His knowledge is expressive [116]

42 The term *damān-keš* occurs in the *Dasātīr* only in the phrase *bīmāye va damān-keš* attributing creator (D., 78, 130, 135). We can derive the meaning of these adjectives from the following phrase, D., 149: به یک

because His knowledge does not have duration. It is impossible to ascribe to Him past, present and future. The progress of time [*damān*] and the length of duration, with renovations, which occur in continuous divisions, which are its [*scil.* time's] divisions, are manifest to God at once.

[117] و اخترشناس +خروس است که دمان و هنگام روز و شب نیکو شناسد (D., 213).

The cock is an astronomer who knows time [*damān*] and the duration [*hengām*] of the day and night right well. [118]

[119] یکتای بی امید مزد از بخشندگی و نیکویی کردن نخست آزاد و رسته گوهری بی‌پیوند و بند و مایه و پیکر و دمان و هنگام و تن و تنانی و نیاز و آرزو به تن [...] آفرید (D., 4).

Without hope of return, only for generosity and beneficence, the unique One, first of all, created an essence free and unlimited, independent, boundless, immaterial, formless, timeless [(*bī*)-*damān*], without duration [(*bī*)-*hengām*], without body and bodiness, without need and wish to body [...] [120]

The use of the word form *damān* instead of the New Persian *zamān* in the quoted passages from the *Dasātīr* can be explained with one of the following reasons: [121]

- The reproduction is based directly on an original in the Pahlavi script. The author read the word in a piece of text in the Pahlavi script. [122]
- The reproduction is based indirectly on an original in the Pahlavi script. The author had a reproduction, e.g., in the Persian-Arabic script, in which the Middle Persian original was read as *damān*.
- The author was informed that the word form *damān* was the Middle Persian counterpart to the New Persian word *zamān*. This information must have also been based on a reading of the word *zamān* in the Pahlavi script.

Since in the sixteenth century only the Zoroastrian priests had the competence to read the Pahlavi script, one is forced to conclude from this word form that either the author belonged to this circle, which current scholarship does not support, or obtained his information from Zoroastrian priests. In any case, he must have used a Pahlavi text as a source, directly or indirectly. [123]

Decisive is likewise the time term used in the celestial language (*farātīn navād*),[45] *zorvān*. The word derives from MP *zurwān*, which in turn is a loan word from Avestan *zruuan-* 'time,' and appears as a New Persian word only in the Zoroastrian literature. In the sixteenth century, the name could have been derived from a Pahlavi text, an Arabic work of heresiography [124]

تاب خدا دو جهان اشکارا شد که یکی جهان بیمایه و هنگام و دوم گیتی مایه دار باشد هر دورا هستی از پرتو خورشید گوهر دادار است. / "A radiance of God originated both worlds. One is the immaterial [*bīmāye*] world without duration [(*bī*)-*hengām*], the second one is material universe. Both have their existence from a beam of the sun of creator's essence."

43 D, 52, translated by Mulla Firuz.

44 All three phonemes are represented with the same letter in the Pahlavi script.

45 On this, see this section below.

such as al-Šahrestānī's *al-Milal wa-l-niḥal*, its translation into New Persian, or a New Persian Zoroastrian account of the Zurwān myth.[46]

The only New Persian treatises known in the scholarship that deal with the Zurwān myth or the Zoroastrian theory of time are *ʿOlamā-ye eslām* (UI), *ʿOlamā-ye eslām be dīgar raveš* (UIbdR) and a short passage quoted below. The word *zorvān*, however, does not appear in these works; to denote profane time, UIbdR uses *zamān*, *zamān-e derang-ḫodāy* (mp. *zamān ī dagrand-xwadāy*) (UIbdR, 81.13) or *zamāne* (UIbdR, 84.8); for the designation of the sacred time, it uses *zamān* (UIbdR, 81.6-9, 82.16) and *zamāne* (UIbdR, 82.16,18). Similarly, UI uses *zamān*, *zamāne* and *rūz(e)gār* to denote profane time.[47] In another New Persian passage,[48] which alludes to the Zurwān cosmogony, sacred time is again referred to as *zamāne*. In other New Persian Zoroastrian accounts that the Āẕar Kaivānīs received, such as *Zarātošt-nāme*, *Ardā vīrāf nāme* and *Ṣaddar*, the word *zorvān*—as far as I discovered—does not occur. Therefore, the word *zorvān* could not have been taken from these New Persian Zoroastrian works in the mentioned section from the *Dasātīr*. [125]

Some Arabic heresiographies deal with the Zurwān myth, especially the al-Šahrestānī's *al-Milal wa-l-niḥal*. It is obvious that the Āẕar Kaivānīs knew and received al-Šahrestānī's book. The *Dasātīr* even contains direct quotations from the Arabic original, and not its New Persian translation.[49] Therefore we are tempted, at first glance, to assume that Āẕar Kaivān adopted the word *zorvān* from Šahrestānī's book. A more attentive examination of the text passages in question, however, shows that *zorvān* does not have the meaning 'time' in these passages.[50] There, *zurwān* is only presented as a primordial principle; the word does not represent a concept of time or eternity. This is true also for other Arabic heresiographies that narrate the Zurwān cosmogony.[51] In some descriptions of Zoroastrianism in the *Dabestān-e maẕāheb,* one can recognize Zurvanite traits. None of these sections, nonetheless, indicates that the author used the word *zorvān* or *azorvān* to mean 'time; eternity.' These passages are listed below: [126]

[127] بهدینان گویند زردشت شاخی از بهشت آورده، بر در کشمیر نشاند و این سَروْ شد و نزد یزدانیان این سخن اشارت است بدان که نَفْس مجّرد در نبات است و بعضی از یزدانیان گفته‌اند زردشت از ربّ سَروْها که آن را ازروان گویند درخواست تا کِشته او را نیکو پرورد و از یکی از حکمای مرتاض نقل کنند که گفت من رَبّ سَروْ را دیدم، فرمود که من متوکّل را کُشتن فرمودم، به جُرم بریدن آن.

[128] The Zoroastrians believe that Zarathustra brought a branch from paradise and planted it at the gate of Kashmir; this grew up into a cypress. According to

46 For the history of research on the Zurwān myth in the Iranian Studies, which started two centuries later, see Rezania (2010, 12–43); an interpretation of the myth can be read in Rezania (2010, 169–200).

47 UI, §§21f. = Unvâlâ (1922, 2/75, ll.17–19, 76, 1–4).

48 See manuscript M55, edited by Bartholomae (1915, 113–14).

49 As an example, I can mention the sections about the belief system of the Mazdakites. The text in the *Dābestān-e maẕāheb* (Āẕar Sāsānī 2010, 97r; Keyḫosro 1362, 119) strongly resembles the corresponding passages from al-Šahrestānī's Arabic text (Abolqāsemī 1386, 153–54; Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm. Šahrestānī 1961; Shaked 1994). The New Persian translation of this Arabic book from the sixth century H. (Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm Šahrestānī [1395] 2016, vol. 290, fol. 117r and v), however, differs in some places from both these texts, e.g., in the number of spiritual managers, 13 in contrast to 12, and their order. As broadly discussed, al-Šahrestānī lists here 13 elements but gives their number as 12; the Persian translation corrects their number to 13. It nevertheless enumerates 14 elements because *davande* is repeated twice by mistake; for another citation from al-Šahrestānī in the *Dabestān-e maẕāheb*, see Ernst (2017, 443–44).

50 See passages 14, 20-22 (Abolqāsemī 1386, 135–36).

51 These include al-Isfarāʾinī (1374, 132), al-Baġdādī ([1328] 1910, 347), and even the exhaustive theological discussion of al-Malāḥimī al-Ḫʷārazmī (2012, 638ff.). On this, see Dehghani Farsani and Rezania (2020).

Yazdānīyān, this saying alludes to the fact that the incorporeal soul is vegetable. Some Yazdānīyāns narrate that Zarathustra asked the lord of cypresses, who is called Azarvān, to carefully nourish this (tree) that he had planted. They narrate the following from one of the ascetic savants: "I saw the lord of cypress, and he commanded: 'I ordered that Motevakkel be slain for the crime of cutting that cypress.' "[52]

[129] اکنون هنگام آن است که لختی از رمز و اشارات شت زرتشت را آورد چه از رمز حکمت محفوظ ماند و به دست نابخرد نیفتد و کامل مطلب ازو برگیردبالجمله پیروان زردشت گویند گیتی را دو صانع است، یزدان و آهرمن یزدان اندیشه بد کرد و گفت که مبادا مرا ضدی پدید شود که دشمن من باشد آهرمن از فکر او پدید آمد و در بعضی جا آمده که ایزد تنها بود آن را وحشتی پیدا شده فکر بد کرد، آهرمن پیدا گشت [...]

It is now time to present some of the enigmas and allusions of the prophet Zarathustra, as enigma guards wisdom from falling into the hands of ignorant, and only perfect ones can benefit from its content. For example, Zarathustra's adherents believe in two creators of the world: Yazdān and Āherman. Yazdān conceived an evil thought and uttered: "Perhaps, an antagonist may arise against me who shall be my enemy." Āherman arose from this thought of him. Otherwise, it is attested in some places that Yazdān was alone, a fear overwhelmed him, he had an evil thought and Āherman arose.[53] [130]

[131] بهدینان گویند: «آهرمن از زمان پدید آمد، و فرشته‌ها و آسمانها و ستارگان بودند و باشند، اما پدید آمدهٔ موالیدند، و مدّت ماندن این آفرینش دوازده هزار سال است، پس رستخیز شود و یزدان مردم را برانگیزد و همین جهان آخشیجی را بهشت برین سازد و آهرمن و آهرمنان و دوزخ را به نیستی برد».

The Zoroastrians believe that Āherman arose from time, and that the angels, skies and stars existed and will exist, but are the result of births. The period of this creation is twelve thousand years. Afterwards, the resurrection will occur. Yazdān will resurrect the people and transform this material world into the eternal paradise. He will annihilate Āherman, his adherents and hell.[54] [132]

The word *zorvān* is not used in the time theory of the Āẕar Kaivānīs as described by the [133]

52 Āẕar-sāsānī (2010, 81v, l. 15–82r, l. 1); parallel to Keyḫosro (1362, 100–111). This passage alludes to the Zoroastrian narration recounted by Ferdowsi (1988–2008, 5/81-4). According to the narration of the 'Cypress of Kašmar,' Zarathustra brought a sapling of a noble cypress (*sarv-e āzāda*) from paradise and gave it to Goštāsp, who planted it in front of the first fire temple in Kašmar in Khorasan. In only a few years, it grew into a huge, beautiful cypress, serving as a focal point for pilgrimage. The sources of the Islamic period, e.g., Ṯaʿālibī, report that the caliph al-Mutawakkil wished to see this cypress. As it was not possible for him to travel to Nishapur, he commanded his governor in Khorasan to cut the tree and to send it to Baghdad. The Zoroastrians tried to prevent the inauspicious felling of their cypress by offering the caliph 50,000 dinars, which he rejected. 1300 camels carried the pieces of the cypress to the caliph, who was assassinated just one day before the convoy arrived in his capital; see Aʿlam 1993.

53 Āẕar-sāsānī (2010, 91r, l. 15 – 91v, l. 1); parallel to Keyḫosro (1362, 113).

54 Keyḫosro (1362, 101); this passage is absent in Āẕar-sāsānī (2010).

Dabestān-e maẕāheb,[55] although pseudo-words are artificially constructed to designate different time periods of the multi-period world age. These periods and their relations are shown in the following table:

	zād	vād	ğād	mard	vard	fard	*sāl*	*māh*	*rūz*
world age	100								2.16×10^{26}
zād		2000							
vād			3000						
ğād				1000					
mard					1000				
vard						1000			
fard							106		
sāl (‘year’)								12	
māh (‘month’)									30

Consequently, no other literature remains except Zoroastrian Pahlavi literature to serve in the quoted section of the *Dasātīr* as a source for the use of the word *zorvān*. Accordingly, the author of the *Dasātīr* must have taken the two words for time, *damān* and *zorvān*, from the Zoroastrian Middle Persian literature, directly or indirectly through the Zoroastrian priests. The assertion that in the celestial language ‘time’ means *zorvān* is also decisive for the following reason: it explicitly shows that for Āẕar Kaivān the template for the celestial language was the Avestan language, in which the word *zruuan* means ‘time.’ *Dasātīr*’s designation of the celestial language, *farātīn-navād*, mentioned in the quotation above, occurs in three places in the book (D., 69, 78 and 263). Besides the passage quoted above, the following passage is significant for identifying the template of the celestial language: [134]

چنانکه همی نموده آمد انرا گوهر خوانند و بفراتین نواد فروهر (D., 263). [135]

> As it has been shown, it is called essence, and in the celestial language [*farātīn-navād*] *fravahr/frūhar*. [136]

The author here again uses a Zoroastrian *terminus technicus*, which derives from Avestan (< *frauuaṣi-*), as a celestial term. This usage increases the probability that the *Dasātīr*’s author designed his book after Zoroastrian *Zand* texts, with Avestan in mind as a template for his celestial language. [137]

The ‘Where’ and ‘When’ of the Religious Contact

The historical contextualization of Āẕar Kaivān’s encounter with Zoroastrianism faces many difficulties, and this is true even for the historical contextualization of the school itself. When did Aẕar Kaivān live? And when did he migrate to Patna? Who authored the *Dasātīr*, and when? Even these most basic questions can be answered only tentatively because we have only late manuscripts of the Āẕar Kaivānī texts at our disposal. The same questions can be [138]

55 Āẕar-sāsānī (2010, 6v) = Keyḫosro (1362, 8); the first smallest units, day, month and year, are not mentioned in Āẕar-sāsānī (2010).

raised regarding the *Dabestān-e maẕāheb*, a text whose authorship has been the subject of controversial discussion. The discovery of an old *Dabestān* manuscript, however, contributes enormously to answering some of these questions.

Some years ago, the Cultural Center of Iran in New Delhi acquired a *Dabestān* manuscript [139] dated to 8 Shawwāl 1060 H. (1650 A.D.). The colophon of the manuscript reads:

[140] كاتبه العبد فقير حقير محمد شريف ابن شيخ ميان سپاهى زاده بوم ميدک ساكن بنده تبلحور تحريراً فى التاريخ هشت ماه شوال سنه١٠٦٠. تمت تمام شد، شيطان غلام شد.

Written by poor, abject Muḥammad Šarīf b. Šayḫ Mīyān, soldier, born in the land [141] Mīdak, resident of Banda-ye Tabalhūr (?), recorded in the date, 8, month Šavvāl, year 1060 [October 4 1650]. *finitur*, completed, Satan became slave.[56]

This makes it the oldest known Āẕar Kaivān manuscript, 15 years older than the Mashkut [142] manuscript of the *Nāme-ye zardošt* or *Zūre-ye bāstānī*. The most salient feature of this manuscript is that, on the 23 Shawwāl of the same year, a student of the author compared this manuscript with what was apparently the original text of the author and noted the differences on the margin of the manuscript. He records his activity in an epilogue to the manuscript as follows:

[143] بانجام انجاميد مقابله دوازده تعليم از كتاب دبستان كه انشاى مرشد المحققين، امام المدققين، عارف كامل، صوفى واصل، حكيم حكمت‌كده دريافت حق، شناسنده معارف حضرت وجود مطلق، مؤيّد بتأييدات سبحانى، اعظم شافى، استاد ميرزا ذوالفقار آذر ساسانى المتخلص بموبد، طول الله عمره، كه بسنه ١٠٦٠ بسلک تأليف درآمده بود، بقدر طاقت صحت داده و قيد و قيود و بتوان شناخت خود كرده در كناره ثبت نموده بنشان ميم. اميد كه از خطا در امان خدا باشد. انشاءالله آنچه ديگر تأليف شود نگاشته گردد.كمين شاگرد مجدالدين محمد، مقابله‌ساز اين نامى‌نامه حضرت استاد است. قد حرّر فى ٢٣ شوال سنه ١٠٦٠ هجرى.

It has been finished: the comparison of twelve teachings from the book *Dabestān*, [144] composed by the elder of the truth-seekers, the leader of the scrutinizers, perfect mystic, the arrived sufi, the sage of the house of wisdom, where to perceive the truth, the recognizer of the teachings of the honored Absolute Existent, confirmed by praised affirmations, the arch-healer, the master Mirzā Ẕolfaqār Āẕar-sāsānī, with the pen name Mūbed, may God elongate his age, (which) was authored in the year 1060. I corrected it to the limit of my endurance, and I did (this) as much as constraints allowed, and to the extent of my recognition. I noted (the differences) at the margin with the character *mīm*. Hopefully, it will stay in God's safety, away from error. If God wills, may what will be authored later be recorded. The humble student, Maǧd-al-dīn Muḥammad, is the one who compared this magnum opus of the honored master. Redacted on 23 Šawwāl 1060 h. [October 19, 1650].[57]

This epilogue provides a definite answer to the question of the text's authorship. The au- [145] thor was a certain Mīrzā Ẕolfaqār Āẕar Sāsānī, who wrote under the pen name Mūbed.[58] It

56 Āẕar-sāsānī (2010, 302); see ʿĀbedī (1383, 162) as well.
57 Āẕar-sāsānī (2010, 302); see ʿĀbedī (1383, 162) as well.
58 Āẕar-sāsānī (2010, 13–15).

moreover gives a *terminus ante quem* for authoring the *Dabestān-e maẕāheb* as well as for the other Āẕar Kaivānī treatises mentioned in this book. Hence, the *Dabestān-e* must have been authored before 1060/1650. A *terminus post quem* of 1653 for the *Dabestān-e maẕāheb* has been already inferred from the events mentioned in its edition text (Keyḫosro 1362, 1/122, 2/20): Welcome to the paradox! The inconsistency consists in major differences between the text of this manuscript (Āẓar Sāsānī 2010) and the published text of the *Dabestān* (Keyḫosro 1362, 1362). Comparing the volume of Reżāzāde Malek's edition with this manuscript shows that the text was expanded by ca. 16.4%, or about 23,000 tokens.[59]

In his notes to the edition of the *Dabestān-e maẕāheb*, Reżāzāde Malek lists the dates ex- [146]
plicitly mentioned in the *Dabestān-e maẕāheb* (Keyḫosro 1362, 2/10-16). To find the *terminus post quem* for the *Dabestān-e maẕāheb* I went through this list in reverse chronological order and checked for the existence of the passages involving these dates in the manuscript from 1060/1650. The passages consisting of the dates 1063/1653 and 1061/1651, which are attested in the edition, are not present in this manuscript.[60] The migration of Šāh-Badaḫšī to India, his initiation into the Mīr-Qāderī order and his acceptance of Moḥyī-al-dīn Moḥammad as a student, which is the last event in Reżāzāde Malek's list, are absent in the manuscript as well.[61] By this, the latest date mentioned in the manuscript is 1059/1649. The corresponding passage reads:

[147] پیکرپژوه و جهان‌نورد دو تن بودند از پیکری‌کیشان که در جدول‌کشی و تصویر و نقاشی بی‌بدل بودند. نامه‌نگار بسال پنجاه و نهم در گجرات من اعمال پنجاب هر دو را یافت.

Peykarpažūh and Ğahān-navard were two persons of the group of Peykarī, who [148]
were unique in creating rule-borders, illustrating and painting. This author visited both of them in the 59th year [= 1649 M.] in Gujarat from Punjab.[62]

Two other passages in the book give information about the period of its writing: [149]

[150] و اکنون که سنه هزار پنجاه و پنج هجریست پسر مهروان که اوبرجی جانشین اوست [...]

And now, the year 1055 Hiğrī [= 1645 M.], the son of Mihravān, whom Ūbarğī [151]
(?) succeeds, [...][63]

[152] اکنون که هنگام نبشتن این نامه است و سال هجری بهزار و پنجاه و پنج رسیده [...]

And now that the time of written of this book, the Hiğrī year 1055 (1645 m.) has [153]
come [...][64]

At the beginning of the second chapter of the book in its published edition, which is about [154]

59 I estimate the number of tokens in the manuscript as approx. 140,000, in the edition around 163,000. The estimation for the first text is based on the count of words of its first 50 folios; for the second text, it relies on the word count of a digital version of the text.

60 The first date is attested in Keyḫosro (1362, 122, ll. 3–8) and is expected on Āẕar-sāsānī (2010, fol. 99r); the second date is attested in Keyḫosro (1362, 18–19, ll. 27–4) and expected on Āẕar-sāsānī (2010, fol. 16r).

61 It is attested in Keyḫosro (1362, 359, ll. 11–19) and expected on Āẕar-sāsānī (2010, fol. 295v).

62 Āẕar-sāsānī (2010, fol. 55v, ll. 8–11), Keyḫosro (1362, 69, ll.9–11).

63 Āẕar-sāsānī (2010, fol. 142r, ll. 8–9), Keyḫosro (1362, 207, l.11).

64 Āẕar-sāsānī (2010, fol. 106r, ll. 12–14), Keyḫosro (1362, 135, ll.7–8).

Hindus, the author adds an editorial note revealing that the author visited a group of Hindus in 1063/1653. This visit led to revision of this chapter of the book specifically. The author writes at the end of this editorial note: "Consequently a difference occurred between the first and second edition [*lit.* order]."[65] Consequently, the manuscript of 1060/1650 should represent the manuscript of the first recension of the book, while later manuscripts represent the latter recension after the year 1063/1653. The author must have worked on the text of the first recension for a period of at least five years, from 1055/1645 to 1060/1650. The differences between the two recensions of the text are not limited to the chapter on Hindus, although this chapter remains the most heavily revised part of the book. The author enlarged this chapter in his second recension by about 10,000 tokens. This means that he added another 13,000 tokens to other parts of his book in its second recension.

The epithet *āẕar* in the name of the probable founder of the school, Āẕar Kaivān, helps to [155]
illuminate the interreligious contact between the school with Zoroastrianism. According to the *Dabestān-e maẕāheb* the epithet *āẕar*, 'fire,' was assigned to the names of all of his precedents as well. Moreover, the author of the *Dabestān-e maẕāheb*, another prominent member of the school, also bore the title *āẕar*. One of the names given by the *Dabestān-e maẕāheb* to the school, Āẕarīyān, seems to be connected to this epithet. The epithet in the name of some members of the school, and the importance of fire in religious theories of the school, is emphasized in Āẕar Kaivān's genealogy as well as in the name Āẕarīyān for the school.

On his expedition to Gujarat, Akbar made the acquaintance of Mūbed Meherjī Rānā' and [156]
invited him to the courtly discussions of 1578 and 1579. Consequently, he spent 1578–79 in Fathpur as the first representative of a non-Islamic religion in order to participate in the discussions in the *ʿebādat ẖāna* 'House of Worship' founded by Akbar. In 1581–82, Akbar introduced a form of the Zoroastrian cult of fire to his court. The sojourn of Meherji Rānā at the court was presumably influential in this measure.[66] Afterwards, the compatibility of this cult of fire with Islamic monotheism was intensively discussed at the court. The Zoroastrian theological interpretation of fire as the everlasting symbol of God on earth must have ensured that it took a prominent place in the theological discourse of this period. Consequently, the bearers of the epithet *āẕar* were connected to ancient Iranian cultural assets, as well as endowed with theological prestige. Therefore, I would like to propose the date of Akbar's introduction of the cult of fire at his court as the *terminus post quem* for the authoring of the *Dasātīr*. Accordingly, it can be hypothesized that the *Dasātīr* was written after 1581-82. Because of the influence of Sanskrit on the heavenly language of the *Dasātīr* (Mojtabaʾī 1994), we can assume that it was authored after the migration of Āẕar Kaivān to Patna, assuming Āẕar Kaivān was its author. By assuming that Āẕar Kaivān migrated to Patna in 1001/1593 we can even limit the *terminus post quem* to this date. We can regard the date of the first recension of *Dabestān-e maẕāheb*, 1060/1650, or even the date of death of Āẕar Kaivān, 1028/1618, as the *terminus ante quem* of the *Dasātīr*. Subsequently, the *Dasātīr* must have been authored between 990/1581-2 and 1060/1650, or Āẕar Kaivān must have authored it between 1001/1593 and 1028/1618. The encounter of the *Dasātīr* with Zoroastrian Middle Persian literature, thus, must have occurred in the same period, and likely took place in Patna in India.

Were the *Āẕar Kaivānīs* the first non-Zoroastrian New Persian speakers who detected Middle [157]
Persian texts and developed a fascination for it? This was the assumption in the scholarship of the last centuries. Recently, Ali Ashraf Sadeghi (2020) made a significant discovery which

65 Keyẖosro (1362, 1/122, ll. 7–8): "لاجرم میان ترتیب اول و ثانی مباینتی روی داد."

66 See Modi (1903, esp. 152-58); Hottinger (1998, 116–17, 129–30).

sheds light on the acquaintance of early modern New Persian-speaking literates with Middle Persian literature. Previously, the scholarship assumed that the *Borhān-e Qāṭeʿ* was the oldest dictionary citing '*dasātīrī*' terms. Sadeghi shows that the '*dasātīrī*' terms are actually older than the *Dasātīr*. According to him, the *Farhang-e Moʾaiyad al-fożalāʾ*, authored by Moḥammad b. Lād Dehlavī in 925/1519, had already cited such words at least 65 years before the *Dasātīr* saw the light of day. Sadeghi shows, moreover, that the *Farhang-e Moʾaiyad al-fożalāʾ* cites not only '*dasātīrī*,' i.e., artificially antiquated New Persian words famously used in the *Dasātīr*, but also Middle Persian lexemes. He lists, for example, *odardan* 'to pass away' (gained from MP *widardan* <*wtltn*>)[67], *basrīyā* 'meat' (gained from MP *gōšt* <BSLYA>), *baytā* 'house' (gained from MP *xānag* <BYTA>), *pāteprās* 'punishment' (gained from MP *pādifrāh* <pʾtplʾs>), *čīčast* 'mountain' (gained from MP *čēčast* <čyčst> 'a mythical sea'), and finally *činvad* 'bridge to the hereafter' (gained from MP *činwad* (*puhl*) [cynwt] 'bridge to the hereafter'). This evidence asserts that the New Persian speaking literates in India were already acquainted with and fascinated by Middle Persian in the first decades of the sixteenth century. The *Āẕar Kaivānīs* were thus not the initiators of this contact with Zoroastrianism and the Zoroastrian Middle Persian—they were its consumers. As early as 925/1519, there was contact between Muslim literates and Zoroastrian texts in India. The Āẕar Kaivānīs, however, extended this literary contact to a religious one.

Conclusions: the *Dasātīr* and Secrecy

As we saw above, the Avestan texts are represented in younger Zoroastrianism as concealed texts, and Avestan as a celestial language which was spoken only in the communication of Ahura Mazdā and Zarathustra. This perspective, however, was not adopted by older Zoroastrianism when Avestan was still used for text production. Even in the Sasanian and early Islamic periods, the Avestan language was not perceived or represented as a secret language. The Zoroastrian priests were engaged in the translation of, and commentary on, these texts. Because of the reduced competence of the priests in understanding the Avestan language in the first half of the second millennium A.D., perspectives on the Avestan language underwent significant change. Avestan texts came to be perceived as secret texts which were not supposed to be understood by Zoroastrians, and which were accessible only through translations and commentaries. In this way, the Zoroastrians in this period constructed an 'otherworld' by relocating the Avestan language to the transcending divine sphere. They did not use this emerging secrecy to establish an insider-outsider distinction. Rather, they highlighted the inherent potential of a secret language for communication with the divine sphere, modeled upon Zarathustra's communication with Ahura Mazdā and unceasingly re-exemplified in Zoroastrian rituals, i.e., in priests' communication with the divine world. [158]

By adopting the concept of a secret, celestial language from Zoroastrian *Zand* literature, the Āẕar Kaivānīs remained within the Zoroastrian conceptual framework of secrecy. The Āẕar Kaivānīs did not use the secret language to establish an in-group / out-group distinction vis-à-vis other religions, because they did not claim the ability to understand and translate it. Interestingly, they also made clear that the competence to understand and translate the heavenly language was restricted to older prophets; not even Āẕar Kaivān or the author of the *Dasātīr* claimed this competence for himself. The Āẕar Kaivānīs even dispensed with claims of [159]

67 We should take into consideration that the Pahlavi script often uses the character <l> to represent the phoneme *r*.

access to the heavenly language, which in Zoroastrianism was an intra-religious demarcation parameter between a group of specialists and other Zoroastrians. It is true that, in the early modern period, they did not know that the Zoroastrian priests were able to translate and comment the Avestan texts in the Sasanian period. Nevertheless, they hypothetically could have constructed their *Dasātīr* in such a way as to show that a specific group of their circle would have access to the language of heaven. Hence, we can conclude that the Āẕar Kaivānīs did not use the secrecy of their celestial language for purposes of inter- or intra-religious demarcation or to gain intra-religious authority or inter-religious superiority.

Rather, the Āẕar Kaivānīs' strategy of secrecy seems to be a sort of double coding (Boneberg 2005, 461). Knowledge is encoded on two layers: communicated in translation and commentary as well as encoded in celestial language. The Āẕar Kaivānīs developed a strategy of secrecy rather than distinction. They used secrecy to construct an other-world which cannot be reached directly, but only through the mediation of translation and commentary. This secrecy is not characterized as a mode of exclusion; in contrast, it is extremely inclusive. The constructed other-world applies to all religious traditions in the same way and is or is not available to them to the same degree. Their secrecy is not a concealment of knowledge but a sharing of the concealed. *Dasātīr*'s approach to secrecy is in perfect accord with the religious discourse emerging at the court of Akbar, namely *dīn-e elāhī*. [160]

This investigation shows that the contact with the Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts was established in the early Modern Persian speaking elite circles and outside of the religious field. Presumably, it was the lexicographical interest which first led to the re-discovery of Middle Persian as an antique form of New Persian. To include noble forgotten Persian words in their dictionaries, the lexicographers gained Middle Persian lexemes from the Zoroastrian texts. The Āẕar Kaivānīs presumably became acquainted with the Middle Persian literature through these lexicographical activities in India. They, however, extended this language contact to a religious contact. They created a heavenly language and a heavenly book after the Zoroastrian Zand texts. They avoided Arabic words and created a form of Persian imitating Sasanian Middle Persian. Whereas the form of Zoroastrian literature must have strongly influenced Āẕar Kaivānī literature, their contents do not seem to have been influential for this school. [161]

Abbreviations

- *D. Dasātīr* quotet after (Mulla Firuz b. 1818).
- *UI ʿUlemā-ye islām* quoted after (Aoki 2016).
- *UIbdR ʿUlemā-ye islām be digar raveš* quoted after (Unvâlâ 1922, 2/80-6).

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DOI: 10.46586/er.13.2022.9808
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Entangled Religions 13.5 (2022)
er.ceres.rub.de

Shiʿi Theology and Polemics between Iran and India: The Case of Saiyed Nūrollāh Šūštarī (d. 1019/1610)

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ABSTRACT Connected intellectual history is one of the modes in which we can consider the ways in which ideas, theologies and even polemical exchanges travel between different geographical and political milieux. In this case study, I examine the theology and polemics of Saiyed Nūrollāh Šūštarī between his birth and intellectual formation in eastern Iran and his career and eventual death at the Mughal court. I indicate how his polemical works played a role in transmitting theological ideas and debates from the Iranian milieu to Indian scholarly circles, and how the fluctuating fortunes and reception of his work followed the political shifts and patronage at court.

KEYWORDS Theology, polemics, Sunni, Shiʿi, Ǧahāngīr, Mughal

Introduction

One of the distorting lenses of nationalist historiographies and the modern obsession with the boundaries and limits of the state, its inhabitants and its cultural and intellectual history is that we forget that identities, cultures, linguistic and intellectual communities are not bound by such political limitations. The current trends towards more connected histories in the study of the early modern world—especially effected in the work of Sanjay Subrahmanyam and some of his interlocutors, such as Muzaffar Alam and Nile Green—is a mere reflection of a fact that ideas, practices, symbols and tokens move, transform, merge and overlap (Subrahmanyam 1997, 735–62, 2005b, 2005a; Subrahmanyam and Alam 2007; Green 2019).[1] Even the trend of looking at bilateral intellectual and cultural relations—evinced in a number of conferences and cultural products in Iran in recent years celebrating the 'relations' between Iran and India (or perhaps one should say South Asia)—raises the problem of assuming that there is an essential entity 'Iran' and another that we call 'India' that are discrete and distinct.[2] This is [1]

1 For studies of a different kind of connected intellectual history within the same milieu, see Nair (2020) and Truschke (2016).

2 *Čekīda-ye maqālāt-e hamāyeš-e bayn al-melalī-ye mīrās-e moštarak-e Īrān va Hend* 1392; Loṭfī/Aškevarī ([1394a Š] 2015a, 2015b).

neither to deny facts of geography—there are locations identified as being 'in' India and 'in' Iran—nor the dynastic differences between Timurids, Mughals, Safavids and others. Learned elites in the Persianate world—as a number of studies have shown—were mobile by virtue of the fact that they had transferable cultural capital derived from their learning in the skills privileged in the Perso-Arabic cosmopolis in language, literature, philology, the rational disciplines and scriptural hermeneutics, they possessed sufficient material resources to be mobile, and because they were integrated into scholarly networks and the means to proceed through those networks through their connections, letters of introduction, lineage, confessional and spiritual connections (Subrahmanyam 1992, 340–63; El-Rouayheb 2015; Binbaş 2016; Atçil 2017; al-Musawi 2015; Ricci 2011; Kia 2020). Still too much on the literature on intellectual exchange and even polemics in this period is coloured by a political reductionism; as if meaning can only be inscribed in theological and intellectual discourse if and only if it expresses a political theology. The debates between Čištīs and Naqšbandīs or Catholics and Muslims do have a significant political context; however, one ought to pay attention to the texts themselves and not assume that argumentation stands merely for an unarticulated act of opposition and mode of conflict and little else.[3]

[2] I examine the role of one such intellectual and member of a learned and social elite, Saiyed Nūrollāh Šūštarī—a scholar, a *saiyed* and a scion of a notable family from the borderlands of what are now Iran and Iraq as well as relative of the erstwhile Marʿašī rulers of Māzandarān on the cusp of Safavid rule—and his theological contribution in defending Twelver Shiʿi doctrine, which had become the dominant and officially recognised and promulgated religion of the Safavid realms through the mode of his composition of polemics.[4] In that sense, I propose a study in connected intellectual history that considers a figure between Safavid Iran and Mughal India whose polemics challenged, transgressed, and established theologically normative positions. Polemics are thus proposed as a ground for exchange and interaction across differing milieu and even networks but grounded in common idioms of learning and language; as mentioned above, it is all too common for polemics and debates (on tradition, on the nature of Sufism, Shiʿi-Sunni, Catholic-Muslim and so forth) to be reduced to political difference, conflict and positioning. I shall first locate his work within a wider context of the nature of polemics and their relationship to theology and philosophy in learned traditions. Then I will proceed to a narrower contextualisation of the person and his intellectual output. Finally, I will focus on the polemical texts themselves standing as witnesses to an intellectual exchange between Iran and India but whose work also stretched back to early cycles of polemical engagement and whose writing in Persian and Arabic then addresses audiences not just within the Perso-Arabic cosmopolis of South Asia but Arabia, the Ottoman realms and beyond.

[3] However, before commencing a few caveats are pertinent. First, although I shall primarily be discussing Shiʿi polemics, polemical defences and critiques of Sunni theological positions, I do not intend to project a 'sectarian' or confessional framework onto the relationship between

3 Arguably, an example of this is Muzaffar Alam (2021), especially chapter three on Čištī and Naqšbandī debates on the validity of Sufism that are primarily located within the struggle for politics at the Mughal court. Theological polemics are not innocent of their political contexts but ought not to be reduced to them. Similarly, see Alam and Subrahmanyam (2012, 249–10) on ʿAbd al-Sattār Lāhorī and what they consider to be primarily the Mughal encounter with European culture.

4 The Marʿašī dynasty of Māzandarān was established by Saiyed Qavām al-Dīn known as Mīr-e Bozorg (d. 781/1380) from a family of saiyeds claiming descent from the fourth Shiʿi Imam Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib. Naǧm al-Dīn Maḥmūd left Māzandarān and settled in Šūštar. The lineage from him to our figure is as follows: Naǧm al-Dīn Maḥmūd Āmolī – Mīr Ǧamāl al-Dīn Ḥosain – Mīr Mobārez al-Dīn – Saiyed Moḥammad Šāh – Mīr Żeyāʾ al-Dīn Nūrollāh – Saiyed Moḥammad Šarīf al-Dīn – Saiyed Nūrollāh. See 'Moqaddema', to Šūštarī ([1392 Š] 2014, I/84–101).

Iran and North India in the early modern period, in which Mughal means Sunni and Safavid means Shiʿi. This does not mean that I ascribe to the notion popularised in recent times of 'confessional ambiguity' that is considered as a characterisation of the theological affiliation of the commonality and the learned elites which were then gradually eroded by the Ottoman-Safavid conflict.[5] While all too often religion has been neglected in analyses of Mughal politics and socio-intellectual history, one ought not over-compensate by seeing in every policy or activity a distinct confessional posture. Nevertheless, Šūštarī's own work distinctly makes a Shiʿi confessional case but within a context that he recognises is religiously plural and not unambiguously marked by Sunni supremacy, even while he does not necessarily see his role as a Safavid 'outlier' whose role is to defend a new Shiʿi space against the aggressive 'expansionism' of Sunni Ottomans, Uzbeks and Mughals.

[4] Second, as I just indicated, the effect of the dominance of nationalist, Marxist, Aligarhian and then subalternist historiographies has been to play down and even neglect the cultural, political and intellectual role of religions and religious discourse in society. The question of the nature of Shiʿi confessionalism and politics in the middle Mughal period from Akbar (r. 963–1014/1556–1605) to Šāh Ǧahān (r. 1037–1068/1628–1658) requires careful consideration not just in terms of the effects of the migration of Shiʿi intellectuals—considered perhaps even as missionaries among the many other religious missionaries at the courts of Akbar and after—but in the context of the scholarly and elite dynamics within North India itself, between networks and factions at the centres of cultural and political capital.

[5] Third, even within the parameters of polemical literature, there are clear periodic distinctions in the wider West Asian context as well as South Asia and its environs. One cannot project the polemics of the Mongol period forward to 1600 nor backwardly project the heightened polemics of the later eighteenth century marked by the *Toḥfa-ye Eṯnāʿašarīya* (Gift to the Twelver Shiʿa) of Šāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (d. 1176/1762) and other Naqšbandī divines in the midst of the declining Mughal court and the rise of 'Iranian' and Shiʿi political actors in Delhi, Fyzabad and Lucknow (Rizvi 1982; Alvi 2012).

[6] Finally, it would be unjust to consider Šūštarī merely as a clever polemicist outwitting his interlocutors and then losing out in the political game in the long term with his fall from grace and death during the early reign of Ǧahāngīr. He was a wonderful linguistic stylist in both Arabic and Persian and a prolific scholar across a number of distinct scholarly disciplines. His own rationalist theology (*kalām*) and philosophy (*ḥekma*) and his interventions into the cycle of texts such as the *Šarḥ Hidāyat al-ḥikma* of Mīr Ḥosain Maibodī (d. 909/1504), *Taǧrīd al-iʿtiqād* of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) and *Šarḥ al-Mawāqif* of al-Šarīf ʿAlī al-Ǧorǧānī (d. 816/1413), all layers of texts, super-texts and para-texts well known to the scholarly elites across the Perso-Arabic cosmopolis from the Balkans to the Malaccas, are worthy of analysis in their own right. Thus, what I present is an aspect of his intellectual biography as a contribution to a connected intellectual history, albeit one which is familiar to those who are familiar with this period of Mughal history.

The Nature of Polemics

[7] One did not have to wait until modern Oxford ordinary language philosophy to recognise that language, both in its spoken and written tokens, contains both affirmative and rhetorical aspects, and in fact the latter is a critical element in the successful communication of ideas

5 See Rizvi (2019, 227–55); on confessional ambiguity, see Pfeiffer (2013, 129–68).

and sentiments (Austin 1962; Searle 1969). Polemical writing is often associated with the rhetorical flourishes of language, not because it is devoid of reasoning or dialectical method but because it utilises strategies of othering and affirming the self. Philosophical argumentation without polemics is practically unheard of precisely because of the need to differentiate one's argument from the other. The ancient Greek tradition often considered philosophy to constitute a cacophony of quarrelling sectarian positions, with Stoics opposed to Epicureans arguing with Platonists disputing with Aristotelians. Skeptics drew upon this discord to argue for relativism and the indeterminacy of knowledge, while the new religious groups such as Christians saw in the polemics among philosophers proof not only of their distance from truth but a vindication of the simplicity of their own scriptural belief. Lactantius in his *Divine Institutes* wrote:

> Philosophy has split into a multiplicity of sects, and they all think differently. Which one do we go to for truth? Any one sect dismisses all others in order to confirm itself and its own ideas, and it admits wisdom in no other sect in case it concedes error of its own; but its process of dismissing other sects is the same process by which they dismiss it, for those who condemn a sect for its folly are philosophers none the less: praise any sect and call it true, and philosophers condemn it as false. They will all perish together. (Lactantius 2003, 3.4.3–10; cited in Weisser and Thaler 2016, 2) [8]

He conceded that philosophers used rational methods and argumentation and that their polemics were continuous with their method, but that polemical reasoning could not fail to contain within itself the seeds of its own critique. Perhaps this is an inevitable result of the process of institutionalisation of school positions and the need to defend them. But what constitutes the features that characterise polemic? We assume that they are aggressive and triumphant (they constitute a 'war of words'), argumentative and not above resorting to *ad hominem* and also activating in their recipients feelings of value, and they are directed to a goal of vindicating a position and defeating an opponent.[6] This raises some important questions: At what point does legitimate critique become polemic? When can one resort to personalisation in argument without detracting from its validity? Do polemics assume an absent arbiter who might adjudicate between the two warring parties? Is our Kantian disdain for polemic while praise for critique itself a sort of rhetorical posture? Do polemics not contain argumentation and hermeneutics insofar as they gloss an opponent's position and reflect upon one's own position with respect to texts? We tend to distinguish between polemic and reason in the same way as the ancients tried to differentiate philosophy from sophistry. But both contain argumentation, conceptualization, and the deployment of concepts and categories to make sense of reality.[7] At the same time, polemic is not quite the same as rhetoric—it does not seek to persuade but rather is already persuaded and seeks to confirm with others already persuaded in their position. Does critique entail mutual respect while polemic is strikingly disrespectful? Can polemic be gentle and respectful? Harsh criticism and polemic are still better than neglect—and most thinkers often do not take criticism well and read it as a polemical attack. [9]

Just as polemic is continuous with philosophy, so too is it in a religious context continuous [10]

6 Modifying and drawing upon the excellent Straub (2004). For a useful discussion of polemic and philosophy, see Laks (2016). For a diachronic study of the role of polemic and rhetoric in reasoning, see Albert/Nicolas (2010).

7 While our contemporary intellectual culture tends to disdain polemics, it is difficult not to notice its prevalence. For one recent defence of polemics as a critical aspect of public reason, see Amossy (2014).

with theology. In fact, theology is similarly unthinkable with polemics. Polemics have been a major feature of Muslim theologies from the classical period, drawing upon the polemics that were already present in the scripture. Much of the negative critique of Christians and other religious positions in the Qurʾan is characterised as polemical, especially by progressives and modernists embarrassed by its language, not taking into consideration the rather standard nature of such polemical configurations in late Antiquity.[8] These scriptural polemical constructions about the non-Muslim other were carried over into creedal works (*ʿaqāʾid*) and heresiographies that polemicized against other Muslims.[9] Such works had a dual purpose: to differentiate the thought and practice of the community that was being defended in distinction to its others, and to speak to one's own community, bolster, cajole and console them in their beliefs.

In this paper, as an intellectual historian, I want to show how Šūštarī represents two types of contact and encounter between Safavid Iran and Mughal India.[10] The first is his role in Shiʿi-Sunni polemics and his prolific work in that area that stemmed from the current round of Timurid and post-Timurid texts. These works had a major impact and reflected the ethos of the new resurgent and dominant Shiʿism of the Safavid court. The second was his role in transmitting the ideas of the philosophers and theologians of Shiraz through his works in *kalām*, especially his commentaries and glosses on the *Taǧrīd al-iʿtiqād* cycle of texts. In the course of these two contributions, one might even suggest, as biographers have, that he was the first to disseminate seriously Shiʿi theology in North India, although some teachings had been available through the works of Šāh Ṭāher (d. c. 956/1549), an Esmāʿīlī Imam and Safavid envoy, and Šāh Fatḥ Allāh Šīrāzī (d. 998/1589), eminent thinker from Shiraz before him (Ahmed and Pourjavady 2016, 606–10). As such, what I present is a study that contrasts but stands alongside two important recent works: Ali Anooshahr's study of Fatḥ Allāh Šīrāzī and his networks arising from the Shiraz intellectual milieu that contributed to the promotion of the rational sciences and learning at the court of Akbar, and Corinne Lefevre's study of ʿAbd al-Sattār Lāhorī and his disputation to the court of Ǧahāngīr providing evidence for ideology and rhetoric in the writing of thought and history (Anooshahr 2014; Lefèvre 2017). While their times and networks intersected, Šūštarī's polemics were more marked and scholarly in his corpus and intellectual contribution than Šīrāzī's. My concern, however, is less with networks and ideological formation and more with the transmission and exchange of ideas within a connected but also fractured context. My use of Šūštarī is to show how his composition of polemics constituted a rhetorical expression of his theological and philosophical learning and effected a critical episode in the transmission of learning from the Iranian milieux of the school of Shiraz and Mashhad to North India. [11]

Šūštarī's Life

Saiyed Nūrollāh was a significant figure of the time, featuring prominently in many biograph- [12]

8 Two classical works on the polemics against Christians are McAuliffe (1991) and Sirry (2014). See also, Ridgeon (2001).

9 For a short version of this, see van Ess (2006); for the longer consideration of the heresiography in this context, see van Ess (2011).

10 A third possible area of encounter could be Sufism and whether Šūštarī played a role in the dissemination of the Nūrbaḫšīya into India and especially Kashmīr. See 'Muqaddema', to Šūštarī ([1392 Š] 2014, I/195–198); Bashir (2003, 180–81).

ical dictionaries both Iranian and Indian.[11] One of the earliest accounts of his life is by his son Saiyed ʿAlāʾ al-Molk, who found patronage in Bengal with Prince Šoǧāʿ (which may account for his silence on how his father died, merely mentioning that he is buried in Agra; Šūštarī [1378 Š] 1999, 24–36; Rizvi 1986, II/3).[12] He came from the southern borderlands of the Ottoman-Safavid conflict in Tustar/Šūštar, from a bilingual social context, where he was born in 956/1549. His father, Saiyed Šarīf al-Dīn, who was also his first teacher, had been a student of Šaiḫ Ibrāhīm al-Qaṭīfī (d. c. 945/1539), the independent-minded jurist originally from Eastern Arabia active in the early Safavid period in Iraq.[13] The prominence of his family was indicated by the fact that his father's uncle Saiyed Asad Allāh b. Zain al-Dīn ʿAlī, better known as 'Šāh-Mīr' (b. Najaf 888/1483, d. Tabriz c. 964/1557), served as *ṣadr* under Šāh Ṭahmāsb (r. 930–984/1524–1576) from 944/1537; his son Saiyed ʿAlī became *ṣadr* in 970/1563 and was also made the custodian of the shrine at Mashhad in 984/1577 ("Moqaddema", to Šūštarī [1392 Š] 2014, I/89–95, 1999, 21; Rūmlū [1384 Š] 2005, 362, 510–11; Monšī 1350 Š/1971, I/236), and his other son Saiyed ʿAbd al-Vahhāb was appointed as governor of Dezfūl for a period of time. Saiyed ʿAbd al-Vahhāb's son Saiyed Rašīd al-Dīn became governor of Šuštar in 985/1577 (Šūštarī [1378 Š] 1999, 22). His grandfather, Saiyed Żeyāʾ al-Dīn Nūrollāh (d. 925/1519), after whom he was named, was much feted as a great scholar and propagator of the Shiʿi faith and confidant of Šāh Esmāʿīl I (r. 907–930/1501–1524; "Moqaddema", to Šūštarī [1392 Š] 2014, I/87–89). He had studied in Shiraz with students of the famous philosopher Saiyed Šarīf al-Ǧorǧānī, such as Qavām al-Dīn Korbālī, and had originally thought of migrating to India with his brother. He was also a Sufi disciple of Saiyed Moḥammad Nūrbaḫš (d. 869/1464) and after him accompanied Šams al-Dīn Moḥammad Lāhīǧī (d. 912/1506)—and this may have been the beginning of a family association with that order, which was clearly later reflected in Šūštarī's *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn* (Maʿṣūm ʿAlī Šāh and Ǧaʿfar Maḥǧūb [1345 Š] 1966, II/319–34, III/127–30; Ṣādeqīyānlū [1351 Š] 1972; Bashir 2003, 29–75, 163–97). Later he gained the favour of the Mošaʿšaʿid rulers of his region and was offered the position of *ṣadr,* which he declined. Sources claim he had a role in spreading the Shiʿi faith in the borderlands. Šūštarī's role in defending the Shiʿi faith and going to India is perhaps an indication of walking in the footsteps of his grandfather—his namesake.

Šūštarī moved to Mashhad to continue his studies, arriving in Ramażān 979/January 1572; [13]
there he studied the rational disciplines and exegesis with ʿAbd al-Vāḥed Šūštarī who was linked to the philosophers of Shiraz especially through Abo-l-Ḥasan Kāšānī (d. 966/1559), the author of a popular work on proving the existence of God (Šūštarī [1378 Š] 1999, 25, 53–63, "Moqaddema", to 2014, I/128–131).[14] This older Šūštarī is credited in various biographical works – including in the account of ʿAlāʾ al-Molk—of prolific sets on glosses on theological works such as *al-ʿAqāʾid al-Nasafīya* and the *Taǧrīd* cycle of texts, as well as works in metaphysics such as *Šarḥ al-Hidāya* of Mīr Ḥosain Maibodī. ʿAlāʾ al-Molk cites his father's

11 Modern studies include 'Moqaddema', to Šūštarī ([1426] 2005, I, 12–28); 'Moqaddema', to Šūštarī ([1392 Š] 2014, I/80–87); Hansvī (Hansvī 1962); Rizvi (Rizvi 1986, I/342–88); Husted (Husted 1992); Naqvī (Naqvī, n.d.). Classical sources include Afandī ([1401] 1981, V/265); al-ʿĀmelī (1966, I/226); Šūštarī ([1378 Š] 1999, 16–46); Zunūzī ([1390 Š] 2011, V/205–8).

12 Mīrzā Moḥammad Ṣādeq Eṣfahānī (d. 1651) in his *Ṣobḥ-e Ṣāḍiq* draws heavily upon the work of Šūštarī and on his friendship with ʿAlāʾ al-Molk on the biography of Saiyed Nūrollāh. There are numerous manuscripts of this latter work, of which I have consulted MS British Library Or. 1728, a nineteenth-century copy.

13 An *iǧāza* dated 944/1537, authorising the teaching of the legal manual *Iršād al-aẕhān* of ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī, is reproduced in Mağlesī 1990, CV/116–23. Qaṭīfī was embroiled in disputes with the leading jurist of the early Safavid period, Šaiḫ ʿAlī al-Karakī (d. 940/1533), on questions of authority and juristic method.

14 For Kāšānī's text, see Kāšānī ([1391 Š] 2012).

gloss on the *Šarḥ al-Hidāya* (suggesting that a copy did indeed exist), in which he narrated an encounter between some scholars from Lāhīǧān and ʿAbd al-Vāḥed on the question of whether the power of God was finite or infinite and how he resolved it with recourse to the notion of mental existence (*vojūd-e ẕehnī*), in a way also demonstrating a critical gloss on Ǧalāl al-Dīn Davānī (d. 908/1502; Šūštarī [1378 Š] 1999, 61–62). In Mashhad, he also studied the scriptural disciplines with ʿAbd al-Rašīd Šūštarī ([1378 Š] 1999, 21, "Moqaddema", to 2014, I/128). ʿAlāʾ al-Molk cites an anecdote from his time in Mashhad when Šūštarī visited his uncle the *ṣadr* Saiyed ʿAlī and heard him talk about his exchange with a Sunni scholar at Ḥaǧǧ on the issue of the impeccability of the prophets (Šūštarī [1378 Š] 1999, 25–27). This encounter is reported to show Šūštarī's attachment to defending the Shiʿi cause as part of his sense of his family's responsibility in that matter.

[14] The turmoil following the death of Šāh Ṭahmāsb in 983/1576 led to his decision to move to India. He was already an accomplished scholar before he left for India in Šavvāl 992/October 1584, partly prompted by the ongoing civil wars and strife and due to the Uzbek threat in Khurasan, and perhaps on the invitation of notables at the Mughal court (Šūštarī [1378 Š] 1999, 25, "Moqaddema", to 2014, I/151). He arrived at the Mughal court in the middle of 993/1585 and through an introduction by Ḥakīm Abo-l-Fatḥ Gīlānī (d. 997/1589) obtained an audience with Akbar, whom he impressed with his learning (Badāyūnī and ʿAlī et al. [1379] 2000, III/173). He quickly gained the patronage of the Mughal emperor such that, within a year of arriving at court, he was appointed a judge in Lahore and the judge for the military (*qāżī-ye ʿaskar*) according to the Sunni legal rites—Rizvi is adamant that the evidence suggests that Akbar knew he was Shiʿi (Rizvi 1986).[15] This might have been partly because after the campaigns in Punjab, engaging with Kabul and the pacification of Sind, Akbar had sent the ʿolamāʾ of Lahore into these regions and there was a need to replenish personnel in this major city; he may also have needed more compliant and loyal ʿolamāʾ following the revolt of the Shiʿi *qāżī* of Jaunpur Mollā Moḥammad Yazdī, and who better to fill that role than another 'foreigner' (Streusand 1989, 155; Abo-l-Fażl 2000, III/415–22; Badāyūnī and ʿAlī et al. [1379] 2000, II/266–76)?

[15] The famous ʿAbd al-Qāder Badāyūnī (d. 1014/1605), despite his antipathy to the Shiʿa, could not help praising the good character, wit, intellect, and the scholarly achievements of Šūštarī. He even said of him that his endorsement of the Qurʾanic exegesis of Abo-l-Fayż Fayżī (d. 1004/1595), despite the text itself not being worthy of any praise, made the work worth perusing. In particular, he praised his role as chief judge in Lahore for providing structure and due process to the procedures and for eradicating corruption that was rife (Badāyūnī and ʿAlī et al. [1379] 2000, III/137–38; Hansvī 1962, 40–41). So being a recipient of imperial favour was certainly Saiyed Nūrollāh's lot. In a letter that was probably penned in the 1590s to Šaiḫ Bahāʾ al-Dīn al-ʿĀmelī (d. 1030/1621), the Šaiḫ al-Eslām of Isfahan and a friend of his father's, he wrote:

> [16] After traversing long distances and undergoing considerable pains and agony, I reached the Indian capital. There, luck favoured me and I obtained an opportunity

15 Šaiḫ Farīd Bhakkarī (1961–1970, I/373), writing in 1060/1649, is clear that his Shi'ism was well known and yet he was still appointed *qāżī-ye ʿaskar*; Rizvi (1986, 2:349). See also Hansvī (1962, 37–38). Corinne Lefèvre also cites an anecdote to the point that Akbar was not so worried about which particular Muslim legal confession his judges professed as long as they ruled according to what he deemed most appropriate; see Lefèvre (2017, 116–19). The post of judge for the military was from the royal prerogative and demonstrates his closeness to Akbar.

> to benefit from the luminous sun and found repose under the shadow of the great Sultan, Akbar …
>
> Through divine grace and blessings, I obtained a lofty position and the honour of the companionship of the emperor…[whose] patronage and favours increase daily. In fact, my success is due to divine munificence and the benevolence of the Prophet and *the* friend of God, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib. The high position and nearness to the Emperor did not, however, make me forgetful of myself. I was always conscious of the hereafter and of the ultimate end of mortal beings. In refuting the arguments and the rationale of the *Nawāṣib* [anti-Shiʿi Sunnis], I was guided by the holy traditions of my ancestors. In these circumstances, I came to the conclusion that in India, *taqīya* was a great calamity. It would expel out children from the Imāmīya faith and make them embrace the false Ašʿarī or Mātorīdi faiths. Reinforced by the kindness and the bounty of the Sultan, I threw away the scarf of *taqīya* from my shoulders and, taking with me an army of arguments, I plunged myself into *jihad* against the Sunni ʿolamāʾ of this country. I was convinced that active religious polemics and discussions against the Sunni ʿolamāʾ was the *jihad* which would make the best provision for the world hereafter. First of all, I wrote *Maṣāʾib al-nawāṣib* which refutes the *Nawāqiḍ al-rawāfiḍ*. My arguments in that book smeared the beard of the author of the *Nawāqiḍ* with filth. Then I wrote *al-Ṣawārim al-muhriqa*. Because of my book the bitter attacks by the author of the *Sawāʾiq* on the Shiʿa rebounded upon him and reduced the *Sawāʾiq*, which claimed to be lightening to ashes. God also gave me the strength to perform other deeds.[16] [17]

In such a correspondence with a major figure of the Safavid court—a space that was rife with polemics and in which the Shiʿa need not worry about the consequence of enunciating their version of sacred history and theology—it would perhaps be self-serving for Saiyed Nūrollāh to claim such a courageous position of defending the faith. It also assumes that the court would have a strong religious hue (as one assumed it did in Iran and at the Ottoman and Uzbek courts). One also sees how his own portrayal of his life as a heroic figure is fashioning himself as a major scholar and a leading divine of his age, furthering the Safavid Shiʿi cause—*despite* being in India. By rehearsing elements of his biography, one presents a construction of the life of scholar and his many networks located within the cosmopolitanism of his learning within the Persianate world. [18]

His Works

Saiyed Nūrollāh was an extremely prolific author with over a hundred works enumerated in various bibliographies.[17] Arguably there were few contemporaries whose work in the Persianate context is even close to being comparable—and the breadth of learning was appreciated by his contemporaries and even opponents, as we saw above, because they recognised its value even if deployed in polemical mode. The range of issues demonstrates his wide training: He wrote glosses on the legal and legal theoretical works of al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī (d. 725/1325), [19]

16 *Bayāz* of ʿEnāyat Ḫān Rāseḫ, MS Aligarh Habib Ganj Collection 50/335 (Persian), fols. 94r–95r, based on a translation by Rizvi (1986, I/357–58).

17 The manuscript evidence suggests that his most popular works were *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn* and *Iḥqāq al-ḥaqq,* of which there are numerous copies in Iran and India.

such as *Qawāʿid al-ʿaqāʾid* and *Muḫtalif al-Šīʿa*, as well as on works of Ḥanafī *feqh* popular in India, such as *Šarḥ al-Wiqāya* of ʿObaidollāh al-Maḥbūbī, known as Ṣadr al-Šarīʿa (d. 747/1346), no doubt based on his time as a judge in Lahore. He has some Qurʾanic exegetical works, such as *Kašf al-qināʿ*, an extensive gloss on *Anwār al-tanzīl* of Nāṣer al-Dīn al-Baiżāvī (d. 685/1286), which was a popular exercise in exegesis at the time, as well as some exegeses on particular verses, such as his treatise *Uns al-Waḥīd fī tafsīr āyat al-ʿadl wa-l-tawḥīd* on Q. 3.18, *Tafsīr āyat al-ṣadr* on Q. 6.125, *al-Siḥāb al-muṭīr fī tafsīr āyat al-taṭhīr* on Q. 33.33 and a polemic on the 'cave verse' Q. 9.40 titled *Kašf al-ʿawār fī tafsīr āyat al-ġār*.[18] These works continued his approach and interest in polemics: the extensive gloss on Baiżāvī is a polemical response to an Aš'arī work already penned in Mashhad before moving to India, and his *Maǧmūʿ*, which was probably also collated in Mashhad and that collects various exegetical glosses, is primarily a polemical exchange across time with another major Aš'arī thinker, Faḫr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) on matters of law, legal theory and theology.[19] His interest in grammar is indicated by a codex that he copied of glosses on the famous grammar text of his time, *al-Fawāʾid al-Ḍiyāʾīya* of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ǧāmī (d. 898/1492), somewhat ironic given his antipathy to the famous poet.[20] In the area of devotional works, he contributed to the vernacularisation of the Shiʿi tradition with a translation and commentary on the morning supplication (*Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*) attributed to ʿAlī.[21] In an age of encyclopaedias and anthologies, he wrote a short work on the difficulties in ten disciplines such as grammar, rhetoric and law entitled *al-ʿAšara al-kāmila* in Arabic.[22] In the field of logic, he wrote a treatise on the five (Porphyryan) universal predicables (*al-kullīyāt al-ḫams*), a gloss on the popular school-text commentary on the *Šamsīya* of Qoṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 766/1365) and a gloss on the gloss of Ǧalāl al-Dīn al-Davānī on *Tahẕīb al-manṭiq* of Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 793/1790).[23] In metaphysics, he penned a gloss on the *Šarḥ al-Hidāya* of Mīr Ḥosain Maibodī and a gloss on the *Šarḥ al-Išārāt* of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī. He even wrote a short treatise defending the legitimacy of studying metaphysics: *risāla fī radd šubhat fī taḥqīq al-ʿilm al-ilāhī*. He is also credited with a short treatise on the reality of being (*fī ḥaqīqat al-wuǧūd*).[24] In theology, he was very prolific but interestingly these

18 At least three copies of the gloss on al-Baiżāvī are extant: MS Madrasa-ye Moṭahharī (former Sepahsālār in Tehran) 2095 dated 1049/1639 with 528 folios (Catalogue I: 120–22); MS Ketābḫāna-ye Mellī (Tehran) 1473 dated 1200/1786 with 414 folios (Catalogue IX: 497); MS Marʿašī (Qom) 5969 with 250 folios dated Ẕo-l-Ḥeǧǧa 1214/May 1800. The *Ḥāšiya* on Baiżāvī is now published based on seven manuscripts discussed in Šūštarī 2019, I: 58 – 60. The *Ḥāšiya* is almost definitely inspired by, and a response to, the proximate Aš'arī one of the philosopher ʿIṣām al-Dīn al-Israfāyīnī (d. 943/1536). The first two short treatises are extant too in the same codex: MS Marʿašī (Qom) 8381, fols. 169v–182r and 182v–197v. The exegesis on the purity verse is also extant: MS Marʿašī 4222, fols. 11r–16v dated 1092/1681. The exegesis on the cave verse is extant: MS Marʿašī (Qom) 4222, fols. 1r–11r dated 1092/1681, and MS Marʿašī 6869, fols. 64v–87r dated 1084/1673 in Patna, and MS Marʿašī 7351, fols. 37v–44v, copied in 1264/1848 in Najaf. These particular exegetical treatises are now edited and published in volume 5 of Šuštarī 1398.

19 The *Maǧmūʿ* is also published—Šūštarī ([1399 Š] 2020)—and edited based on a unique manuscript dated 14 Raǧab 1035/April 1626 (MS Central Library of the University of Tehran 3038).

20 This codex, copied in Mashhad before his move to India and probably still from his student days, is extant in MS Marʿašī (Qom) 3042; it bears the seal of Aurangzeb, dated Raǧab 1089/August 1678, and was part of the Mughal royal library.

21 A copy is MS Marʿašī (Qom) 15506, fols. 206r–226v, dated Ẕo-l-Ḥeǧǧa 1096/November 1685, copied in Tehran.

22 Two copies are MS Marʿašī (Qom) 2783, fols. 34v–49r, dated Ramażān 1091/October 1680, and MS Marʿašī 6968, fols. 25v–35r, dated 1221/1806.

23 A manuscript of the third text is extant: MS Āstān-e Qods-e Raẓavī (Mashhad) 28395, dated from the eleventh/seventeenth century with 36 folios. Arguably, his logical interventions followed the Shiʿi mode of Ḥillī—see Street (2016).

24 Both of these short texts are extant in the same codex: the Theology Faculty of the University of Tehran 51/8 and 51/12. They are also extant in the library of the shrine of Shāh-e čerāġ in Shiraz in a collection: 817/8 and 817/12.

texts are barely attested in the manuscript tradition; I have only managed to locate some copies in London. He wrote a number of works on the *Taǧrīd* cycle of texts: a gloss on Ḥosām al-Dīn Čelebī's (d. 926/1520) gloss on Ǧorǧānī's gloss on the *Šarḥ al-Taǧrīd* of Šams al-Dīn Eṣfahānī (d. 749/1348), a gloss on the substance and accident section of the *Šarḥ al-Taǧrīd* of ʿAlī al-Qūšǧī (d. 879/1474), a gloss on the substance section of *Kašf al-murād*, al-Ḥillī's commentary on the *Taǧrīd*, a gloss on the metaphysics section of *Šarḥ al-Taǧrīd* of Qūšǧī, a gloss on the proof of the existence of God section of the *Šarḥ al-Taǧrīd*, an extensive gloss on Davānī's 'old' gloss on the *Šarḥ al-Taǧrīd,* with a separate treatise on the particular problem of the semantics of the modulation of being (*taškīk*), a gloss on the imamate section of the *Šarḥ al-Taǧrīd* of Qūšǧī and a gloss on the afterlife section of the *Šarḥ al-Taǧrīd* of Qūšǧī.[25] Alongside works from this cycle, he wrote a gloss on the *Šarḥ al-Mawāqif* of Ǧorǧānī, a gloss on al-Ḥillī's treatise on the divine decree and measurement (*al-qaḍāʾ wa-l-qadar*), a gloss on the 'new' treatise establishing the existence of God (*Isbāt al-wāǧib al-ǧadīd*) of Davānī, a gloss on the treatise *Anmūẕaǧ al-ʿulūm* of Davānī, with a separate associated treatise glossing his discussion on the incipience of the cosmos (*ḥudūs al-ʿālam*) from the work (a popular topic at the time), a short treatise on divine knowledge that may have been extracted from a gloss on the *Šarḥ al-Taǧrīd* and possibly a gloss on Davānī's gloss on Taftāzānī's *Šarḥ al-ʿAqāʾid al-Nasafīya*. What is clear from these works is the way in which his theological output is a response to Davānī, which is not surprising given his association with philosophers and theologians trained in Shiraz as well as the dominance of Davānī in the teaching of Islamic theology India. He specifically wrote a refutation on Davānī's position on the faith of Pharaoh (*īmān Firʿawn*). This playing against Davānī may further corroborate the notion that the Shiʿi tradition of philosophy in Shiraz starting with Ġīyās al-Dīn Manṣūr Daštakī and his students was an attempt to recover Shiʿi theology and appropriate Avicennism from Davānī.[26]

Šūštarī's Polemics

Saiyed Nūrollāh was known for the polemics that he wrote, most of which were penned in India. While some of his biographers refer to *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn* as a polemical work, it was more a vindication of Shiʿi Islam through an appropriation of previous Sufis and a whole range of cultural, religious and intellectual figures as Shiʿi. The text was an attempt to demonstrate the primordiality and contribution of the Shiʿa to Islamic history and civilization and is indirectly polemical insofar as it is triumphalist. In the preface, Šūštarī explicitly says that the work sets aside *taqīya* and seeks, perhaps for the first time, to write a full history of the Shiʿa from the beginning to his time and name all the famous figures in that narrative (Šūštarī [1392 Š] 2014, I/8). Commenced in Iran in 990/1582, it was completed in Lahore in Ẕo l-Qaʿda 1010/May 1602. Yet according to the sources, it was its discovery that led to much consternation among the Sunni *ʿolamāʾ* at Ǧahāngīr's court. One needs to locate the polemics within a wider context of Shiʿi responses to Sunni accusations.[27] These [20]

25 I have consulted three of these texts: the gloss on the proof for the existence of God section from *Šarḥ al-Taǧrīd* of Qūšǧī in Delhi Arabic (British Library) 846, the gloss on the ontology section of *Šarḥ al-Taǧrīd* in Delhi Arabic (British Library) 848 and the gloss on the imamate section of the *Šarḥ al-Taǧrīd* in India Office Islamic (British Library) 1258. He was familiar with Mīrzāǧān Šīrāzī's gloss on Dawānī's 'old gloss' on the *Šarḥ al-Taǧrīd* as evidenced by his autograph of this text in MS Khuda Bakhsh (Patna) 609, dated 982/1574, that is before he moved to India (Cat. X: 106–7).

26 On this point, see Bdaiwi (2014).

27 There is still a dearth of serious academic literature on polemics. These are good starting points that are relevant for this study: Rizvi (1982), and Ǧaʿfarīyān ([1388 Š] 2009, I/11–124).

took the form of (at least) four cycles of texts. The first was the *Risāla ʿUṣmānīya* of al-Ǧāḥiẓ (d. 255/869), which was written around the year 240/854, to which a number of classical authors penned responses such as the Refutation (*Naqḍ*) of the famous theologian al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbaḫtī (d. c. 310/922) and especially *Bināʾ al-maqāla al-Fāṭimīya* of Saiyed Ǧamāl al-Dīn b. Ṭāwūs (d. 673/1274).[28] The second cycle of texts began with *Minhāǧ al-karāma* of ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī (d. 725/1325), probably written in 710/1311 for the Il-Khan Öljaytü (r. 703-16/1304-16), which was refuted by the *Minhāǧ al-sunna* of Ibn Taymīya (d. 728/1328) a few years later, not the only anti-Shiʿi polemic he wrote.[29] The third cycle, and a little-known one, started with *al-Risāla al-moʿāriḍa fī l-radd ʿalā l-rawāfiḍ* (Refutation of the Rejectors) of Yūsuf b. Maḫzūm al-Aʿwar al-Wāsiṭī in the ninth/fifteenth century, which led to a refutation in Hilla in 839/1435 by Naǧm al-Dīn Ḫiḍr al-Ḥabalrūdī titled *al-Tawāḍiḥ al-anwār bi-l-ḥuǧaǧ al-wārida li-dafʿ šubhat al-Aʿwar* (The Clarifying Lights through scriptural proofs warding off the objections of the One-Eyed).[30] The fourth, which is crucial for Saiyed Nūrollāh, began with *Ibṭāl nahǧ al-bāṭil* (Invalidity of the path of falsehood), written around 909/1503 by Faẓlollāh b. Rūzbehān al-Ḫonǧī (d. 927/1521), a prominent Timurid historian and theologian in refutation of *Nahǧ al-ḥaqq wa-kašf al-ṣidq* of ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī.[31] It was this text to which Nūrollāh responded with *Iḥqāq al-ḥaqq* completed in Lahore in Rabīʿ I 1014/August 1605.[32]

The Ottoman-Safavid conflict was a critical backdrop with its literary production excoriating the other as well as the fatwas produced in the Ottoman realms against the Shiʿa (Ǧaʿfarīyān [1388 Š] 2009, I/44–51). Apart from fatwas, Ǧaʿfarīyān cites around nine Ottoman texts in the early Safavid period that anathemised the Shiʿa in a number of ways, either directly attacking Shi'i beliefs and practices or focusing on the Qezelbāš and their supposed allies in Ottoman-controlled Anatolia or the recounting of the Abū-Moslem-nāmas that were popular in Khorasan (Ǧaʿfarīyān [1388 Š] 2009, I/73–77). A further work of central importance for South Asia was the fatwa of the *ʿolamāʾ* of Central Asia in response to the question posed from Mashhad after the Safavid takeover. During the siege of Mashhad by ʿAbdollāh Ḫān Uzbek, the Shiʿi *ʿolamāʾ* of Mashhad requested a fatwa to protect their lives and properties in the event of an Uzbek takeover. The response of the Central Asian Sunni Ḥanafī jurists was not exactly comforting; while they accepted that the lives and properties of all those who professed to believe in God and the Prophet were sacrosanct at the same time, they warned that if those people also violated the norms of behaviour towards the way of the Sunnis and excoriated them then the original freedom was curtailed. This influenced the polemics of Šaiḫ Aḥmad Serhendī and demonstrated that the polemics in India were affected not just by the Ottoman-Safavid conflict but also by developments in Central Asia (and arguably the Uzbek- [21]

28 Al-Ḥasan al-Nawbaḫtī was a member of a famous family of theologians and court officials, on whom see Āšteyānī ([1345] 1966). He was the author of a famous work on heresiography *Firaq al-Šīʿa* (Al-Nawbaḫtī 2007) and also a commentary on Aristotle's *De generatione et corruptione*, al-Nawbaḫtī (2015); but the authorship of this latter text has been disputed—see Anṣārī ([1395] 2016). The original text of the later author is Ibn Ṭāwūs ([1411] 1991), and the classic study is Afsaruddin (1995).

29 For a discussion, see al-Jamil (2010, 229–46); but see also the polemical Michot (2014, 104, 109–49).

30 On this cycle and attestations of some manuscripts in Najaf and Mashhad, see Ṭabāṭabāʾī ([1407] 1986, 32–96). This is generally a very scholarly consideration of the manuscripts in polemics and considers much that fed into the *ʿAbaqāt al-anwār* of Mīr Ḥāmed Ḥosain Mūsavī Kentūrī (d. 1306/1888).

31 The most recent Shiʿi work in this cycle is *Dalāʾil al-Ṣidq* of Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Muẓaffar (d. 1375/1955), which was first published in 1953 and more recently re-issued in an excellent six-volume edition by the shrine in Najaf in 2011.

32 Another possible cycle worth mentioning was initiated by Ibn Ḥaǧar al-Haysamī (d. 973/1565) and his *al-Ṣawāʾiq al-muḥriqa*, to which Saiyed Nūrollāh responded with *al-Ṣawārim al-muhriqa*.

Safavid conflict which, to an extent, became the Tūrānī-Īrānī division at the Mughal court; Ğaᶜfarīyān [1388 Š] 2009, I/53–72).

[22] Šūštarī took the role of writing polemics very seriously. Not only did he see it as a way of demonstrating his learning and his ability to transmit and critically evaluate ideas, but also as an obligation to defend the faith and indeed to promote it in different contexts. In the introduction to his gloss on the imamate section of the *Šarḥ al-Tağrīd* of Qūšğī, he wrote that he prayed that God made him a lion championing the Emāmī cause so that he could vanquish his enemies, and he described the war of words and the polemical struggles with his opponents as 'the greatest jihad' of his time, one in which he deployed rational techniques of argumentation, in this case drawing upon the twin concepts of the rational discernment of good and evil and the principle of divine facilitating grace that was incumbent upon the divine to provide guidance in the form of the Imam.[33] While he is credited with more than a hundred works, it was his three voluminous polemics that became famous. The first was *Maṣāᵓib al-nawāṣib,* written in India in Rağab 995/1587 in seventeen days in response to the Sunni Iranian exile at the Ottoman court Mīr Maḫdūm Šarīfī (d. 995/1587) and his text *al-Nawāqiḍ fī l-radd ᶜalā al-rawāfiḍ* (Šūštarī [1392 Š] 2014, II/275).[34] Šarīfī, a descendent of the famous theologian Šarīf Ğorğānī, had dedicated his work in 987/1580 to Sultan Murād III (r. 982-1003/1574-1599). The vehemence of the polemic might result from the fact that the descendants of Ğorğānī had become Shiᶜi—for Šūštarī, even Ğorğānī was Shiᶜi (Šūštarī [1392 Š] 2014, IV/534–42).

[23] The text itself is divided into eight preliminaries (*muqaddemāt*) and six sections entitled *ğund* (the warlike language indicates the polemical intent) critiquing the use of the Qurᵓanic verses, hadith and rational arguments adduced by Šarīfī on the legitimacy of the first three Sunni caliphs, on the confused nature of his ascription of doctrine to the Shiᶜa and on the refutation of these false accusations against Shiᶜi theologians; in the final one, he goes on the attack by accusing Sunnis of unbelief in a number of their legal and theological positions. The preliminaries cover important areas too: The first is on the biography of Šarīfī, the second on the distinction between *eslām* and *īmān*, the third on the nature of the 'saved sect' (*al-firqa al-nāğiya*), the fourth and fifth on a critique of the notion of the probity of all the 'companions' of the Prophet and a consideration of relevant hadith, the sixth on the proofs of the imamate of ᶜAlī and the calumnies of his opponents, the seventh on the doctrine of the Shiᶜa being identical to the doctrine of the family of the Prophet and the eighth on the permissibility of cursing those who deserve to be cursed. In the general introduction, he lays down the polemical nature of the text by describing it as a series of gifts for the Shiᶜa and a set of accusations and trials for their opponents. He begins by praising and thanking God for being chosen as one of the 'saved sect' (*al-firqa al-nāğiya*) and for rejecting the false traditions of the Umayyads and the enemies of God and his prophet that spawned the false doctrine of the Ašāᶜira and Muᶜtazila (Šūštarī [1426] 2005, I/59). He also accuses Šarīfī of writing the work in the service of the Sultan to ingratiate himself, and of engaging in futile disputation

33 MS India Office Islamic (British Library, London) 1258, fols. 379v–380v. His other glosses on the 'new' *Šarḥ al-Tağrīd* on sections one and three are more engaged with the text and less polemical in their framing and content.

34 For a detailed discussion, see Ğaᶜfarīyān ([1388 Š] 2009, I/85–99). On Šarīfī, see Rosemary Johnston (1994, 123–33); Golsorkhi (1994, 477–88). Codices of this text include: MS Marᶜašī (Qom) 4222, fols. 16v–201r dated 1092/1681; MS Marᶜašī 10078 with 158 folios dated Ğomādā I 1080/October 1669 in the hand of Mollā Šamsā Gīlānī Kašmīrī (not the famous student of Mīr Dāmād); MS Marᶜašī 15202, fols. 1r–77v dated 1297/1880; MS Marᶜašī 16446, fols. 1v–122v dated around the time of the author's death so perhaps the oldest copy.

and polemics, while by implication his own work offers wise counsel (Šūštarī [1426] 2005, I/60–62). On Šarīfī's biography, he points out that he is a grandson of al-Ǧorǧānī and that the Shiʿism of his grandfather is undeniable (Šūštarī [1426] 2005, I/66). Consistent with his line in *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn*, he holds that all the great scholars of the past, including Ġazālī, only feigned adherence to the Sunni faith but secretly were Shiʿi (Šūštarī [1426] 2005, I/68). Given the pure intentions and faith of his ancestors, it is thus a wonder that Šarīfī went so wrong and seized the opportunity to propagate the Sunni faith (and hide the true faith) when the country was weakened by Esmāʿīl II (r. 984–985/1576–1577), who himself was in an opiate stupor (Šūštarī [1426] 2005, I/71). The point being made is to present an *ad hominem* argument against Šarīfī to discredit his work. Another common polemical strategy that he uses is to discredit Šarīfī's scholarly credentials by juxtaposing his use of Qurʾanic verses with the exegetical positions of Zamaḫšarī and Baiżāvī, and by implication demonstrating that Šūštarī's knowledge of the Sunni tradition is better than Šarīfī.

[24] The second was *al-Ṣawārim al-muhriqa* in response to Ibn Ḥaǧar al-Haytamī's (d. 973/1565) scriptural refutation of Shiʿi Islam, entitled *al-Ṣawāriq al-muḥriqa ʿalā ahl al-rafḍ wa-l-zandiqa*; like the other polemics it was popular in India and written later in his life, after *Maṣāʾib* and possibly *Maǧāles* but before *Iḥqāq*.[35] It again shows Šūštarī engaging with the polemics of his time, as Ibn Ḥaǧar was an old contemporary. It engages with Ibn Ḥaǧar's use of hadith and, in particular, those that pit the authority of the companions against that of the Imams. One sees again the polemical strategy of discrediting the scholarly credentials of the opponent by showing that Šūštarī's command of the Sunni tradition is more sound by citing hadith authorities as well as theological ones like Taftāzānī.

[25] The third, completed late in 1014/1605 in Lahore—which was certainly the cause of much grumbling at court—was *Iḥqāq al-ḥaqq wa-izhāq al-bāṭil*.[36] His works were well known but the *Iḥqāq al-ḥaqq* and *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn* were not so—and it was the latter that came to the attention of the Sunni ʿolamāʾ and led to them bringing a case before Ǧahāngīr. A number of other polemical works are attributed to him: a refutation of Ibn Ḥaǧar (which may be the same as *al-Ṣawārim*), *al-Radd ʿalā šobahāt al-šaiṭān* in Persian, on seven positions of Sunnis, *Baḥr al-ġadīr fī iṯbāt tavātur ḥadīṯ al-Ġadīr* responding to early Sunni critiques of this key proof text for the imamate of ʿAlī, *Dalāʾil al-Šīʿa fī l-imāma*, a treatise on the nature of impeccability (*ʿiṣma*) of prophets, and a refutation of Sunnis on their denial of the impeccability of the prophets.[37]

[26] What changed later in the reign of Akbar for Saiyed Nūrollāh was the loss of the support of his influential friends dying one after another: Fatḥollāh Šīrāzī in 997/1589, the Gīlānīs and Abo-l-Faẓl in 1111/1602.[38] From a position of prominence at court and as chief judge of Lahore, a major Mughal city for sure, he seemed to be slowly sidelined.[39] By the time he completed *Iḥqāq al-ḥaqq* in 1014/1605, he was already complaining of the loss of patronage. Two years before that he had lamented to Šaiḫ Bahāʾ al-Dīn al-ʿĀmelī:

35 The text was edited by Saiyed Hāšem Ormavī and published in the 1950s – a recent printing is Ormavī 1385. There are some extant codices: MS Marʿašī (Qom) 5194 with 180 folios dated Rağab 1102/April 1691, MS Marʿašī 8381, fols. 1v–168r dated 1069/1659, MS Marʿašī 12961, fols. 1v–152r dated 1307/1889.

36 This is a huge work and has been published with the glosses of his kinsman Saiyed Šehāb al-Dīn Marʿašī (d. 1990)—see Šūštarī ([1362 Š] 1983).

37 The refutation of the Satanic objections is extant in MS Marʿašī (Qom) 15254, fols. 124v–136v.

38 On the Gīlānīs in India, see Āzmūda ([1394] 2015).

39 One cannot be too prescriptive about the Mughal court's presence in a 'capital city', but Lahore throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth century was probably as much the capital as were Agra and Fatehpur Sikri—see Richards (1993, 49–52).

> For some time, luck has deprived me of its favours. The mean and wretched India has caused me unbearable pain and shock. Not only has the Sultan ended his patronage and benevolence towards me, but he has closed the doors of my departure to Khurasan and Iraq. When the tyranny and oppressions against me began to mount and the sufferings and anguish stepped up, I began to imagine India (Hend) was the same Hend (bint ʿOtba) who ate the liver of my great uncle Ḥamza (b. Muṭṭalib).[40] [27]

Saiyed Nūrollāh's final supporter at court—by this time of Ǧahāngīr—Ḥakīm ʿAlī Gīlānī died in 1018/1609 (Rizvi 1986, I/377). The context had turn against him, and the time was not so favourable for a courageous polemicist. [28]

Conclusion

The case study of Šūštarī sheds light upon a certain type of cultural and intellectual exchange between Iran and India that focuses on polemic and contestation – and indeed the war of words. There is also a sense of Šūštarī feeling the weight of expectation as an eminent Saiyed from a scholarly family who had to address the need to defend the Shi'I faith wherever necessary. Suffice it to say he was not a nationalist, and we should be careful about projecting modern nationalist projects of Iran and India onto the early modern empires. Theological and philosophical learning could be deployed wherever needed and Šūštarī used the genre of polemics to demonstrate his learning and skill. [29]

While he may have moved to India in search of patronage and to flee the Uzbeks and the political turmoil in Safavid Iran, he and those writing about it saw in the move a desire to propagate the faith and defend it. There are a number of reasons for thinking so, including the polemics against the Ašāʿira and Mātorīdīya, who did not really pose any challenge in Iran, and any move to the Ottoman lands or Central Asia would not have been conducive. India was ripe for proselytism and polemics. India presented material and intellectual opportunities not least for an intellectual with his skills in a courtly setting that did not necessarily favour one confession over another. But the way in which he exploited that opportunity was unlike Širāzī and other Persian intellectuals at court who had preferred to bolster imperial (messianic) ideology and the facilitation of ecumenical courtly exchange of ideas. While Šūštarī's language had the elegance of courtly discourse, he did not compromise on his beliefs. [30]

Further, one might consider whether that proselytism was the main desire or just the simple need to find a free space to write and teach. Was India open to a Shiʿi political theology? Did Šūštarī consider Akbar to be philo-Shiʿi and see in the 'millennial sovereign' model, of which Azfar Moin has made much in recent years, a Shiʿi political theology whereby he could win the court for the Shiʿi cause—much in the same way as Portuguese missionaries may have seen it? Did he see himself as ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī at the court of Öljaitü Ḫān? As a rational theologian carrying the mainstream Shiʿi rational theological tradition (established by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī and al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī) to India, a tradition that was founded upon the principle of the ability of humans to rationally discern good and evil independent of revelation (*al-ḥosn wa-l-qubḥ ʿaqlīyān*), he saw the embrace of reason by Akbar as an inducement. [31]

But the example of Šūštarī demonstrates foremost the vagaries of Mughal patronage and [32]

40 *Bayāz* of ʿEnāyat Ḫān Rāseḫ, MS Aligarh Habib Ganj Collection 50/335 (Fārsī), fols. 97r–97r, translated by Rizvi (1986, I/370).

support – such that the attractive land of opportunity became a devourer for him, ending with his own demise. Theological treatises of a polemical mode were not just a means for attracting attention and raising awareness of theological concerns; they were also a possible means for testing boundaries and negotiating positions within a courtly, intellectual milieu. Šūštarī exemplifies the fluctuating fortunes within the negotiation of ideas and power politics.

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DOI: 10.46586/er.13.2022.9636

Entangled Religions 13.5 (2022)
er.ceres.rub.de

Nūrollāh Šūštarī on Shi'i Notables

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ABSTRACT Nūrollāh Šūštarī's (d. 1019/1610) *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn* (*Assemblies of the Believers*) is an extensive work on distinguished Shi'i figures throughout history. The author, trained in Safavid lands, composed this work while residing in the Mughal empire. There, he was associated with the court of Akbar (r. 963–1014/[1556]–1605). The present article introduces various aspects of Šūštarī's project and examines what might have motivated him to undertake such a significant task. It also touches on the internal challenges found in the circles of the Shi'i scholars, with which the author was intellectually engaged, and discusses later critics of the work, who blamed its author for including in it many Sufi figures of the classical and post-classical period. Furthermore, the possibility that the composition of the *Maǧāles* caused its author's death will be discussed. With his authorship of this work, Šūštarī was pioneering a trend of writing Shi'i bio-bibliographical works, to which many scholars contributed up until the twentieth century.

KEYWORDS Nūrollāh Šūštarī, Sunni-Shi'i controversy, Safavid Shi'ism, Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn, Shi'i bio-bibliographical works, Shi'ism, Sufism, Shi'ism in the Mughal court, Safavids and Naqšbandīya

Introduction

Nūrollāh Šūštarī's (d. 1019/1610) *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn* (*Assemblies of the Believers*) can be considered the first comprehensive Shi'i bio-bibliographical work.[1] Earlier works of this kind included only Shi'i scholars who transmitted Shi'i *ḥadīṯ*. *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn*'s scope was much wider, mapping out the entire Shi'i communities of previous centuries. It introduces Shi'i personalities in different spheres of life, including rulers, viziers and officials as well as scholars, thinkers, Sufis and poets. Moreover, the work is significant for presenting the Shi'a as an intellectual perspective within Islam instead of a sect like many others. [1]

Born in or around 956/1549 in Shushtar in the south-west of Iran, in 979/1571, Nūrollāh [2]

1 The author would like to thank Annabel Keeler, Arham Moradi, Kianoosh Rezania, Shahrad Shahvand and Christoph Werner for their comments on the draft of this paper.

Šūštarī moved to Mashhad to study among Safavid scholars there (Šūštarī [1378] 1999, 24–25). In 992/1584, he went to Mecca via India. Following his pilgrimage, Šūštarī did not return to the Safavid territory and spent the rest of his life in the Mughal empire (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 6:535). Shortly after he arrived in Fatehpur Sikri in 993/1585, he went to the residence of the Mughal emperor, Ǧalāl al-Dīn Akbar (r. 963–1014/1556–1605). The Mughal court physician, Abo-l-Fatḥ Gīlānī (d. 997/1589), who probably knew Šūštarī from the time he spent in Mashhad (Ṣafā [1363–1370] 1984–1991, 5(2): 825), introduced him to Akbar (Badāʾūnī [1379] 2000–2001, 3:93). Šūštarī was in contact with the emperor even before moving to India. He completed a work, titled *al-Risāla al-Ǧalālīya* (The *Ǧalālian Treatise*), which he dedicated to Akbar while he was still in Mashhad in Ramażān 992/September 1584, which was shortly before his departure to India (Šūštarī [1377] 1584; Neyšābūrī Kentūrī [1409] 1988, 157).[2] This work consists of nine questions on Qurʾānic exegesis (*al-tafsīr*), tradition (*al-ḥadīṯ*), morphology (*mabādiʾ al-luġa*), syntax (*al-naḥw*), semantics (*al-maʿānī*), the theory of figurative speech proper (*al-bayān*), legal methodology (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), rational theology (*kalām*) and logic (*al-manṭiq*). By showing his engagement in various sciences, Šūštarī tried to impress the emperor with his competence in these sciences in advance. Sometime after he arrived in India, Akbar appointed him the chief judge of Lahore (Badāʾūnī [1379] 2000–2001, 3:93; Šūštarī [1378] 1999, 25), a post which Šūštarī held for more than a decade.

Šūštarī was not the only Shi'i scholar associated with the Mughal court.[3] However, he was [3]
the one most rigorous in defending Shi'i doctrines. During the years he was associated with the Mughal court, he engaged in several Sunni–Shi'i debates.[4] He also wrote several polemical works in response to Sunni refutations of Shi'ism. The subjects of most of his works are, in one way or another, related to Shi'ism. Among his works, *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn*, which is the focus of the present study, arguably is the most revealing work of Šūštarī in terms of his view of Shi'i intellectual heritage. Fortunately, a group of scholars in Mashhad has recently prepared a critical edition of this work, which is far more reliable than earlier editions.[5] Moreover, the editors' extensive introduction to this book and their footnotes throughout the text were beneficial for the present study.

2 The holograph, and probably the unique extant copy of this work, is preserved in the Habibganj Collection of Maulana Azad Library in Aligarh (MS Habibganj 1043). I want to thank Shahrad Shahvand, who generously shared the images of this manuscript with me.

In 995/1587, a few years after the composition of *Ǧalālīya*, Šūštarī completed another work with a similar structure, titled *al-ʿAšara al-kāmila*. This work consists of ten chapters on *tafsīr*, *ḥadīṯ*, syntax, dialectics, legal methodology (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*), logic, metaphysics, natural philosophy and mathematics (Šūštarī [1071] 1661, fols. 34b–49a). Šūštarī followed Ǧalāl al-Dīn Davānī's (d. 908/1502) *Unmūẕaǧ al-ʿulūm* in the structure of both his *Ǧalālīya* and *al-ʿAšara al-kāmila*. Nevertheless, *Ǧalālīya* is closer to Davānī's work, in terms of having a similar purpose of securing patronage. On the structure of Davānī's *Unmūẕaǧ al-ʿulūm* and some other works written in this *genre*, see Pourjavady (2014, 300–301).

3 In addition to Twelver Shi'i scholars, a few Zaidī scholars were also active at the Mughal court. See N. Šūštarī ([1392] 2013, 1:132–149); Bandy (2019, 249–74, 423).

4 An account of one of these debates was presented by Badāʾūnī ([1379] 2000–2001, 3:93).

5 Nūrollāh Šūštarī, *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn*, edited by Ebrāhīm ʿArabpūr, Manṣūr Setāyeš, Moḥammad Reżā Moḥammadeyān, Moḥammad Ḥasan Khazāʾī and Moḥammad ʿAlī ʿAlīdūst. 6 vols. Mashhad: Bonyād-e Pažūheshā-ye Eslamī-e Āstān-e Qods-e Raẓavī, ([1392] 2013). The work was published at least five times earlier; (1) Lithography edition in Tehran in 1268/1851–52 by Saiyed Ḥosain Ṭehrānī; (2) lithography edition in Tehran in 1299/1881–89 by Mollā Amīn Vāʿeẓ Ṭehrānī; (3) lithography edition in Tehran in 1326/1908–9; (4) lithography edition in Tabriz, n.d.; (5) printed edition in Tehran: Entešārāt-e Eslāmīya, 1335 Š/1956–57, rpt. 1365 Š/1986–87. See N. Šūštarī ([1392] 2013, 1:396).

The Structure of the Work

Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn consists of a preface (*dībāča*), a prologue (*fāteḥa*), twelve chapters which the author called 'assemblies' (*maǧāles*, sing. *maǧles*) and an epilogue (*ḫātema*). The subjects of the chapters are as follows: [4]

1. On the places and regions associated with the Imams and the Shi'a; [5]
2. On the Shi'i clans (*ṭavāʾef*; sing. *ṭāʾefa*);
3. On the distinguished Shi'i companions of the Prophet;
4. On the notable Shi'i contemporaries of the companions (*tābeʿīn*);
5. On the Shi'i theologians, Qurʾān exegetes, jurists, reciters of the Qurʾān (*qorrāʾ*), grammarians and philologists among the generations following the companions;
6. On the Shi'i Sufis;
7. On the Shi'i philosophers and theologians;
8. On the notable Shi'i kings and sultans;
9. On the notable Shi'i provincial rulers (*omarāʾ*, sing. *amīr*) and army commanders;
10. On the Shi'i viziers and officials;
11. On the Shi'i Arab poets;
12. On the Shi'i Persian poets (*shoʿarāʾ-e ʿaǧam*).

Duration of the Composition of *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn* and Its Dedication

While residing in India, Šūštarī devoted more than a decade of his life to writing *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn*. According to the author's statement at the end of the *Maǧāles*, he started writing the work on 1 Raǧab 998/6 May 1590 and completed it on 23 Ẕo l-Qaʿda 1010/15 May 1602 ([1401] 1981, 5: 269–70).[6] However, Āqā Bozorg Ṭehrānī ([1403–1406] 1983–1986, 19:370) and the recent editors of *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn* (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 1:346–52), have moved the starting date of the composition to sometime before 982/1574–75. The reason is that at one point in the text, the author refers to the current date as 982/1574–75 (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 5:360).[7] At another point in the prologue (*fāteḥa*), the date was given as 990/1582 (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 1:51–52). Nevertheless, it is not reasonable to doubt the author's statement about the time he started the composition simply because of the two earlier dates mentioned in the body of the text. Those dates may have been taken from sources which Šūštarī had drawn upon on certain occasions. In any case, the date given by the author as the beginning of the composition, i.e., 1 Raǧab 998/6 May 1590, must be the date he made up his mind to compose the work.

Šūštarī was able to produce his works of scholarship with remarkable speed. He wrote the [7]

6 The author's statements about the start and end dates of the composition are given in some copies of the text, such as MSS Tehran, Maǧlis 7842 and Maʿārif 1176. Mīrzā ʿAbdollāh Afandī Eṣfahānī's knowledge of the dates is based on a copy of the *Maǧāles*, produced under the supervision of the author. See below the transcription of *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn* under the author's supervision.

7 As noted by the recent editors of the *Maǧāles*, that particular passage was taken from Qāżī Aḥmad Ġaffārī Qazvīnī's *Tārīḫ-e Ǧahānārā* (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 1:350, editors' introduction). In the edition of *Tārīḫ-e Ǧahānārā*, the date was given as 972/1564-65 (186). The recent editors of the *Maǧāles* assumed that Šūštarī updated the date. In other words, the year 982/1574-75 was when he wrote this part of the work. However, it is also possible that Qāżī Aḥmad changed the date to ten years later when preparing a later recension of his work. This possibility needs to be investigated further.

draft of his extensive *Maṣāʾib al-nawāṣib* (Afflictions of ʿAlī's Enemies) in seventeen days (Šūštarī [1426] 2005–2006, 2:21). He also wrote his *Iḥqāq al-ḥaqq* (Establishing Justice), which is likewise extensive, in seven months (Šūštarī [1377] 1957–1958, 1:32). The fact that it took him twelve years to compose the *Maǧāles* indicates that the composition was done with greater care and attention. Moreover, Šūštarī benefitted from a large number of sources in the *Maǧāles*, some of which were not at his disposal at the very beginning of his project. He was gathering and accumulating the materials gradually, incorporating his notes in the text. This process even continued after the completion of the first draft. In the epilogue, Šūštarī indicates that after the completion of the draft, whenever he found some further information on a particular matter which could improve the text, he inserted a gloss (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 6:529). These glosses were later incorporated into the book (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 1:350, editors' introduction). Therefore, the text has several recensions, depending on the extent to which additional materials have been incorporated in it.

[8] Šūštarī dedicated the work to the "Imam of the time," the Twelfth Shi'i Imam, Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī. Dedication of a work to the Twelfth Imam was not unprecedented by this time. The most well-known example preceding the *Maǧāles* was ʿAbd al-Ǧalīl Qazvīnī's (fl. 560/1164–65) *Baʿż masāleb al-navāṣeb fī naqż baʿż fażāʾeḥ al-ravāfeż*, known as *Ketāb al-naqż*. Qazvīnī wrote this work in Persian in response to an anti-Shi'i polemical work, the *Baʿż fażāʾeḥ al-ravāfeż*. Šūštarī was familiar with Qazvīnī's *Ketāb al-naqż* as he used it and referred to it in various occasions in his *Maǧāles* (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 3:373). Apart from the dedication to the Imam, the *Maǧāles* and *Ketāb al-naqż* share some other features. They are both apologetics, they were both written in Persian, and the target readers for both works were not only specialists but also the general Shi'i reader. Nevertheless, the structure and the goal of the *Maǧāles* were quite different from those of *Ketāb al-naqż*.

[9] The dedication of the work to the "Imam of the time" is also an indication that the author did not intend to show it to the Mughal emperor because it goes without saying that he would not have been pleased with the way its dedication was formulated. There are reasons to believe that at the end of Akbar's reign Šūštarī was no longer receiving the support of the emperor (Rizvi 1986, 1:369–70; Rezavi 2017, 41). While the exact reason for the emperor's change of attitude towards Šūštarī remains unknown, S. A. A. Rizvi (1986, 1:369–370) and Rezavi (2017, 41) relate it to the death of the Mughal vizier, Abo-l-Fażl ʿAllāmī, who used to support Šūštarī in several occasions. They assume that Šūštarī lost the royal support after Abo-l-Fażl's death on 4 Rabīʿ I 1011/22 August 1602. However, there is no evidence supporting this assumption. Šūštarī might have lost the support a few months earlier than Abo-l-Fażl's death, sometime before 23 Ẓo l-Qaʿda 1010/15 May 1602, when the *Maǧāles* was completed. Knowing that he could no longer secure patronage at the court might be one of the reasons that Šūštarī decided to dedicate the *Maǧāles* to the Twelfth Imam.

The Scope of the Work

[10] In the preface to the *Maǧāles*, Šūštarī explains that Shi'is in the period between the caliphate of ʿAlī b. Abī Tāleb and the rise of the Safavids were mostly practising dissimulation (*taqīya*), undertaking precautionary concealment of their beliefs. Sunni scholars had the opportunity to establish their principals and their positions on various religious matters, and ultimately it is these scholars who have been recognized and listed in the bio-bibliographical works (aka *Ṭabaqāt* works). In these works, Shi'i scholars who were practising *taqīya* were considered to

be Šāfeʿī or Ḥanafī. The Shi'is themselves, Šūštarī noted, did not compose a significant bio-bibliographical work. The only exceptions are the collections of names and brief biographies of the Shi'i transmitters of *ḥadīṯ*, the purpose of which was purely a matter of dogma. With the rise of the Safavid dynasty, Šūštarī argued, there remained no need for *taqīya*. Therefore, he intended to devote his time to writing a book, in the style of *Ṭabaqāt* works, on pre-Safavid Shi'i figures (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 1:8–9).

The above explanation makes several points clear. First, the scope of the work has been given. It starts with the period after the caliphate of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib and ends with the rise of the Safavids. However, there are exceptions, so that he went beyond the limit he had set and included figures whose career was spent partially or entirely within the Safavid era; scholars such as Ġeyāṯ al-Dīn Daštakī (d. 949/1542), Šams al-Dīn Ḫafrī (d. 942/1535–36), Šāh Ṭāher Dakanī (d. 952/1545-46), Aḥmad b. Naṣrollāh Daibalī Tattawī (d. ca. 996/1587–88), Saiyed Rāğū Bokhārī Hendī (fl. 990/1582) and poets such as Ahlī-ye Šīrāzī (d. 942/1535–36) and Lesānī (d. 940/1533–34). Šūštarī himself explains the reasons for the inclusion of these exceptions: [11]

> If occasionally a distinguished Safavid personality or someone contemporaneous to them was included in one of the chapters of the book, it is because either it is pretty hard to imagine that the Safavids imposed [Shi'i] belief on him, or there is another reason which can be understood from the context.[8] (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 6:531) [12]

Šūštarī's sole criterion for inclusion of such pre-Ṣafavid individuals was that they should have been one of the famous figures of Shi'a (*mašāhīr-e Šīʿa*) (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 1:10), and by the Shi'a, he had its broad sense in mind, namely anyone who believed ʿAlī to be the immediate successor of the Prophet. The details of Shi'i belief, which might differ from one person to another, were not taken into consideration. In other words, he included not only the Twelver Shi'i figures but also the Esmāʿīlīs and Zaidīs. The author appears to be consistent in applying this criterion throughout the work, even when he disliked an individual. For instance, he included the Abbasid Caliph, al-Manṣūr (r. 136–158/754–775) because of his Shi'i beliefs, even though he was admittedly cruel to many Shi'i individuals (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 5:72). [13]

However, the criterion is not as straightforward as the author claimed it to be because he also included figures who had only a remote association with Shi'ism. For instance, he included Abū Naṣr Fārābī (d. 339/950) as a Shi'i philosopher because of enjoying the patronage of a Shi'i ruler. Moreover, on numerous occasions, the author seemingly aimed to convince the readers of the Shi'i affiliation of the persons in question without caring much about the truth of the matter. [14]

Some later scholars criticized Šūštarī for having generous criteria for Shi'i belief by which some Sunni scholars and Sufis were considered Shi'is. Among later Shi'i scholars, the harshest critic was Muḥammad ʿAlī Behbahānī (d. 1216/1801), who first labelled Šūštarī the 'Shi'a-fabricator' (*Šīʿa-tarāsh*) (Behbahānī [1370] 1991, 2:155).[9] It seems that the primary concern of Behbahānī and other critics was the inclusion of the Sufi figures. Despite this criticism, [15]

8 All translation by the author unless indicated otherwise.

9 Following Behbehānī, Mīrzā Abo-l-Qāsem Qomī (d. 1231/1815-16) in his *Resāla-ye eğāza-ye ẓekr* ([1384] 2005–2006, 89) and Moḥammad Bāqir Ḫᵛānsārī (d. 1313/1895-96) in his *Rawḍāt al-ğannāt* (Ḫᵛānsārī [1390] 1970, 3:142) applied this label to Šūštarī. Mainly because of the popularity of the latter work, this label became widespread and used by several scholars of the twentieth century; see N. Šūštarī ([1392] 2013, 1:183–84).

the imposition of Shi'i identity was overlooked by most readers, and *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn* gained much popularity generally. Its wide circulation was mainly because of the work's broad scope, its encyclopaedic features and the author's use of a vast number of sources, including numerous bio-bibliographical works and chronicles. Thereby, the *Maǧāles* was considered a highly significant work.

[16] Notably, Šūštarī did not include women in his book. We might think that there were a few well-known Shi'i women. However, if the author wanted to include notable Shi'i women, at least as a subsection, it would have been possible. In it he could have provided biographies of the wives of the Imams or their sisters and perhaps some later Shi'i women. However, as explained below, Šūštarī intended to compose a book similar to Ḥanafī and Šāfeʿī bio-bibliographical compositions, and none of those works included female figures. Nevertheless, Šūštarī must have noticed that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ǧāmī's (d. 871/1492) *Nafaḥāt al-uns*, which was one of his primary sources, had a section on female Sufis. In any case, Šūštarī's exclusion of female figures was not exceptional. Among later authors of Shi'i bio-bibliographical works, Saiyed ʿAlī Ḫān Ḥusainī Šīrāzī Madanī (d. ca. 1120/1708), author of *al-Daraǧāt al-rafīʿa fī ṭabaqāt al-Imāmīya*, was the only one who devoted a chapter of his work to women and hence addressed a shortcoming of the *Maǧāles* (Madanī [1397] 1976, 1:75). Unfortunately, the *Daraǧāt* is only partially extant, missing several chapters, including the chapter on women.

The Target Audience

[17] In his correspondence with Šūštarī, Yūsof-ʿAlī Astarābādī (fl. 1011/1602–3) criticized Šūštarī for applying legal judgments according to the Ḥanafī School (Šūštarī and Astarābādī [1388] 2009, 174). It suggests that Šūštarī was not given the freedom to apply legal judgments based on Shi'i jurisprudence during the time he held the position of a judge. In his *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn*, Šūštarī revealed that before the completion of the *Maǧāles* (i.e., before 1010/1602), he had been practising *taqīya* with non-Shi'is and tolerating Sunni positions without raising any objections to them. Šūštarī then announced that the practice of *taqīya* had ended with the authorship of the *Maǧāles* (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 3:83), possibly because he intended to distribute the *Maǧāles* among selected non-Shi'i individuals who were not hostile towards the Shi'is. Therefore, one can conclude that all the Shi'i works he composed in India before the completion of the *Maǧāles*, i.e., 1010/1602, were only intended for Shi'i readers and that within the Mughal territory, they were circulated almost exclusively among Shi'i communities. In particular, his anti-Sunni polemical works, in which the author did not mind using harsh words or cursing the first three Rashidin Caliphs, were unlikely to have been written for a Sunni audience.

[18] Compared with his polemical works, the tone of Šūštarī in the *Maǧāles* is less provocative for general non-Shi'i readers. Most probably, the decision to distribute the *Maǧāles* among selected Sunni readers was not taken at the beginning of the composition. It might be that the author revised the text, removing any polemical discussions from it after he decided to open up the readership. Nevertheless, the text still contains elements that might irritate the general Sunni reader.[10] In other words, even if the author aimed to make the text tolerable for Sunni readers, it is not likely that he would have had much success with them.

10 For instance, on one occasion, he stated that all the Sunnis hate ʿAlī (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 3:478). On another occasion, he indirectly offended Abū Ḥanīfa (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 3:487).

Obviously, Šūštarī wanted the book to be circulated in the Safavid empire. Nevertheless, the readers of the Indian subcontinent were of great significance for him too. In the work, Šūštarī provided a vivid account of the Shīʿī community in Kashmir. In 999/1591 and 1000/1592, on the orders of Akbar, Šūštarī journeyed twice to Kashmir to inspect the state of the region in terms of its ongoing conflicts and the mismanagement and corruption of its rulers (Abo-l-Fażl ʿAllāmī 1877–1886, 3:595). Besides the report, which must have been an official document, Šūštarī also gave accounts of what he had witnessed there in the *Maǧāles*.[11] In the epilogue of the *Maǧāles*, Šūštarī reveals his anxiety about including them. He states: [19]

> Furthermore, they [= the readers] may hide the book from those opponents or those who have an unfriendly attitude towards Shi'is (*moḫālefān o sāʾer-e nā-ahlān*). Because if those people were to know about the Shi'i regions and their community, they might persecute individuals of this rightful sect who live in foreign regions. They might also attack the graves of their ancestors. (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 3:531) [20]

Šūštarī was worried that this account might put the Shi'is of the region into trouble. For this reason, he begged his readers not to make the book available to those who treated Shi'is harshly. [21]

The Author's Motives

Šūštarī's implicit reference to Šafeʿī and Ḥanafī *Ṭabaqāt* works in the preface suggests that his work was planned to be a work of the same type, dedicated to the Shi'is. He must have been familiar with several *Ṭabaqāt* works of Ḥanafī and Šāfeʿī scholars composed in the eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries. As was the case for the authors of Ḥanafī and Šāfeʿī *Ṭabaqāt*s, broad inclusiveness held particular importance for Šūštarī. [22]

To undertake such a demanding task, Šūštarī must have had a specific motive. In the epilogue of the work, he clarifies his reason to some extent. He indicates that the work is an indirect response to arguments presented by hostile individuals (*moʿānedān*) (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 6:530). The argument he tries to tackle can be reconstructed as follows: Throughout history, there had not been many notable Shi'is. The Safavid rulers, with the assistance of the Qizilbāš, forcefully implemented the conversion of people to Shi'ism. Moreover, the Safavids have been trying to get the idea across that the Shi'is were always highly significant throughout Islamic history (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 6:530–531). [23]

Šūštarī did not explicitly name the person(s) whose anti-Shi'i argument(s) motivated him to write the *Maǧāles*. However, we do know that he was aware of two anti-Safavid polemical works written in the Ottoman territory within the last few decades. These were Ḥosain b. ʿAbdollāh Šervānī's *al-Aḥkām al-dīnīya fī takfīr al-Qizilbāš*, completed after 950/1543 and Mīrzā Maḫdūm Šarīfī's (d. 995/1587) *al-Nawāqiḍ li-bunyān al-rawāfiḍ*. While he possibly knew the former only indirectly, he was thoroughly familiar with the latter.[12] [24]

In his *al-Aḥkām al-dīnīya fī takfīr al-Qizilbāš*, Šervānī treated the Safavid religion as the religion of the Qizilbāš. He consciously avoided the term Shi'ism. According to him, "the [25]

11 For example, see N. Šūštarī ([1392] 2013, 1:330–332).

12 Another sixteenth-century anti-Twelver Shi'i polemics was Ibn Ḥaǧar al-Haytamī's (d. 973/1566) *al-Ṣawāʿiq al-muḥriqa fī l-radd ʿalā ahl al-bidʿ wa-l-zandaqa*. Šūštarī was undoubtedly familiar with this work, as he wrote a response to it (Šūštarī [1327] 1948). However, the author of *al-Ṣawāʿiq al-muḥriqa* attacked Shi'ism in its historical form, and he did not refer to the Safavids at all. For this reason, this work was not relevant to the present discussion.

Qizilbāš religion" was initiated by Šāh Esmāʿīl I's (r. 907–930/1501–1524) grandfather, Ǧonaid (d. 864/1460), in the ninth/fifteenth century and developed further when Esmāʿīl I gained power. He pinpointed those beliefs and practices of the Qizilbāš which were not only in conflict with Sunni Islam but also at odds with the well-established form of Shi'i Islam, such as believing in the divinity of Šāh Esmāʿīl I. The divinity was explained in various ways; for example, some argued that the soul of ʿAlī, who was the true God, transmigrated to the body of Šāh Esmāʿīl I (Šervānī et al. [1376] 1997–1998, 735–36). According to Šervānī, after Šāh Esmāʿīl I's death, some Qizilbāš spoke about the transference of this divinity to his son, Šāh Tahmāsp I (r. 930–84/1524–76) (Šervānī et al. [1376] 1997–1998, 729). Moreover, the Qizilbāš argued that they were exempt from the obligation to perform various religious duties such as the daily prayers and the pilgrimage to Mecca and from some prohibitions, including drinking wine (Šervānī et al. [1376] 1997–1998, 733–34, 736). Besides, Šervānī pointed to the Qizilbāš practice of cursing of the Prophet's wife, ʿĀʾeša, which he regarded as disrespectful to the Prophet (Šervānī et al. [1376] 1997–1998, 725).

[26] For unclear reasons, in his *al-Nawāqiḍ*, Mīrzā Maḫdūm Šarīfī rejected Šervānī's account of the Safavid religion as an "unjust imputation" (*iftirāʾ*) (Šarīfī, fol. 30a). According to Mīrzā Maḫdūm, Šervānī was not sophisticated enough to comprehend the complexity of the Safavid religion. In his response to the *Nawāqiḍ*, Šūštarī chose not to interfere, other than indicating agreement with Mīrzā Maḫdūm's judgment (Šūštarī [1426] 2005–2006, 2:21). He was possibly aware that Šervānī's account was partially correct. At the dawn of the Safavid era, some Qizilbāš did claim that Šāh Esmāʿīl I was divine. Šervānī's was also correct in his argument that the Qizilbāš did not observe the *šarīʿa* fully and justified this. However, Mīrzā Maḫdūm's rejection of Šervānī's argument meant that Šūštarī did not have to respond to it. Šūštarī's only comment was that Mīrzā Maḫdūm likewise had imputed the Shi'is unjustly (Šūštarī [1426] 2005–2006, 2:22).

[27] Šūštarī's knowledge of Šervānī's *al-Aḥkām al-dīnīya* might have been only indirectly through the references to the work by Mīrzā Maḫdūm. In contrast, he had profound knowledge of Mīrzā Maḫdūm's *Nawāqiḍ*, of which he wrote a refutation. Šūštarī considered the *Nawāqiḍ* a significant threat to Shi'ism. In his correspondence with Mīr Yūsof-ʿAlī Astarābādī, Šūštarī stated that Mīrzā Maḫdūm, either genuinely or to entertain the Ottomans, put forward some new and precisely-aimed ideas (*fekr-e daqīq-e tāza*) in his anti-Shi'i arguments. Šūštarī also acknowledged the popularity of the *Nawāqiḍ* by saying that the Ottoman scholars snatch the work from each another, and that about a hundred copies of it were brought back to India by Indian Sunnis who had gone on the pilgrimage to Mecca (Šūštarī and Astarābādī [1388] 2009, 143).

[28] The significance of the *Nawāqiḍ* as an anti-Shi'i polemic lies in its author's following qualifications: his education in the religious sciences and theology, and his familiarity with the Safavid religion, based on his direct experience of living in Safavid lands and being associated with the Safavid court at the highest possible level.

[29] Coming from a family of learned and landed notables, Mīrzā Maḫdūm was the third member of his family to serve the Safavid monarchs. His grandfather, Sayyed Šarīf al-Dīn ʿAlī (d. 920/1514), acted as *ṣadr* (head of religious administration) during the reign of Šāh Esmāʿīl I and his father, Mīr Šarif Šīrāzī, was the chief judge and *kalāntar* (local mayor) of Shiraz, then vizier of the province of ʿErāq-e ʿAǧam, and finally grand vizier of Šāh Ṭahmāsp I (Ghereghlou 2019, 157–58). Mīrzā Maḫdūm entered the political scene in the final years of Šāh Ṭahmāsp I's reign when his father was the grand vizier. He spent most of his time in the

capital, Qazvin, and enjoyed the patronage of the influential daughter of the shah, Parīḫān Ḫānum (d. 985/1578) (Ghereghlou 2019, 158–59). When Šāh Esmāʿīl II (r. 984–85/1576–77) ascended the throne, Mīrzā Maḫdūm was appointed as the *ṣadr*. Intending to weaken the prerogatives enjoyed by the Shi'i religious authorities, Esmāʿīl II sought to pursue a more moderate policy towards the Sunni population. Mīrzā Maḫdūm is said to have played a significant role in this change of policy (Ghereghlou 2019, 159–60). After Esmāʿīl II died in 985/1577, Mīrzā Maḫdūm fled to the Ottoman empire. Shortly after, in 987/1580, he completed his *Nawāqiḍ* (Stanfield Johnson 1994, 125).

Although Mīrzā Maḫdūm's *Nawāqiḍ* should be considered an anti-Twelver Shi'i polemical work, the target of this work was not the core Shi'i beliefs, such as their belief in ʿAlī as the true successor of the Prophet or the *emāma*. Instead, Mīrzā Maḫdūm in this work targeted some ideas and practices which he believed to have been developed by Twelver Shi'i scholars, such as temporary marriage (*mutʿa*) and cursing the Sunni Caliphs, among others. Moreover, he argued time and again that before the rise of the Safavids, both in terms of numbers as well as social and intellectual weight, the Shi'is were not considered significant. For instance, discussing the view of the majority of Shi'i scholars that anyone other than Twelver Shi'is will be held in Hell forever, Mīrzā Maḫdūm states: [30]

> I say: As if He [= God] created Paradise, which is as wide as heaven and earth, for these minor and rare people, who are incredibly minor and rare, or better to say less than anything minor and rare, and as if He would keep most of the Muslims, even those pure and innocent, in Hell forever. Because it is well known that all the Companions and contemporaries of the Companions, the scholars firmly rooted in knowledge and the saints who reached perfection had liked Abū Bakr, the truthful, and had truly acknowledged his excellence. Hence, according to them [= Shi'i scholars], they cannot be counted among believers and deserve to be burned forever in Hell […]. They do not understand what they are implying [by what they say] about the generosity of God, the Generous and Affectionate, whose mercy precedes his wrath and who is Forgiving and Beneficent […]. (Šarīfī, n.d., fol. 33a) [31]

In 995/1586, a few years before the beginning of the composition of the *Maǧāles*, Šūštarī completed his response to the *Nawāqiḍ*, titled *Maṣāʾib al-nawāṣib fī radd ʿalā Nawāqiḍ al-rawāfiḍ* (Šūštarī [1426] 2005–2006, 2:275; Afandī Eṣfahānī [1401] 1981, 5:268). Although Šūštarī devoted a work specifically to responding to the *Nawāqiḍ*, he must have been fully aware that Mīrzā Maḫdūm's criticisms cannot be profoundly responded to within a dialectical framework. More specifically, Mīrzā Maḫdūm's humiliation of the Shi'is deserved a more demonstrative response, in which a survey of Shi'i notables throughout history was provided. Writing such a response was the task which Šūštarī undertook in his *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn*. Unlike his direct response to Mīrzā Maḫdūm's *Nawāqiḍ*, which was written in Arabic, he chose to write *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn* in Persian, probably because he meant this work to have a broader readership in the Safavid and Mughal empires. [32]

At the same time, it is simplistic to assume that Šūštarī composed *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn* merely as a response to the *Nawāqiḍ*. Instead, it is more likely that a set of antecedent causal conditions was responsible for the composition of this work, and the *Nawāqiḍ* was just one of them. [33]

Šūštarī on Shi'i Ulama

The chapter on the Shi'i ulama in the *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn* is unprecedented, in the sense that no one before Šūštarī had devoted a piece of writing to Shi'i scholars in its broader sense. To accomplish his task, Šūštarī used Shi'i *reǧāl* works, whose primary task was to determine whether the persons featuring in the chain of support (*esnād*) of Shi'i traditions (*aḫbār*) are trustworthy or not. These include such works as Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Naǧāšī's (d. 455/1063) *Asmāʾ al-riǧāl*, Šaiḫ Abū Ǧaʿfar Ṭūsī's (d. 459/1067) *al-Fihrist* and his *Iḫtiyār maʿrifat al-riǧāl*, Ibn Šahrāšūb's (d. 588/1192) *Maʿālim al-ʿulamāʾ* and Ibn Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī's (d. 725/1325) *Ḫolāṣat al-aqwāl fī maʿrifat al-riǧāl*. [34]

Some of the people that the author included in this chapter were merely narrators of *ḥadīṯ*. However, he also included some significant *ḥadīṯ* scholars like Ebn Bābūya (or Ebn Bābawayh, d. 381/991), Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb Kolaynī (d. 329/941) and Abū ʿAlī Ṭabresī (fl. sixth/twelfth c.), Qurʾānic exegetes like Abo-l-Fotūḥ Rāzī (d. 525/1131), and theologians like Abū ʿAbdullāh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1032) (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 3:302–7, 385–87, 329–65). In addition to *Reǧāl* works, Šūštarī used several other sources for the composition of this chapter which were not Shi'i, including bio-bibliographical works such as *al-Ansāb* by Abo-l-Qāsem Samʿānī (d. 534/1140) and *Buġyat al-wuʿāh* by Ǧalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505). He also made use of several chronicles, such as those by Ibn Ḫallikān (d. 681/1282), Ibn Kaṯīr (d. 774/1373), ʿAfīf al-Dīn al-Yāfiʿī (d. 768/1367) and Ġeyāṯ al-Dīn Ḫʷāndamīr (d. 942/1535-6). [35]

The author seems to have experienced some difficulty covering the decades immediately preceding the Safavid period since there were not many sources he could have consulted. Nevertheless, he endeavoured to show the continuity of Shi'i scholasticism, not only in Iran, Iraq and Bahrain but also in the Indian subcontinent (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 3:453ff.). [36]

Šūštarī on the Sufis

In the introduction to his chapter on Sufis, Šūštarī describes them as "the purpose of the creation and the formation of the human being" after the Prophets and the Imams (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:9). He explicitly states that he considers all Sufi orders to be Shi'i except for Naqšbandīya (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:15). Notwithstanding, he excludes two distinguished Sufi masters, whose names usually appear in the Sufi chains of lineage, namely Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728) and Aḥmad Ġazālī (d. 520/1126). Concerning Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, he was uncertain about his Shi'i faith. As for Aḥmad Ġazālī, he expresses less uncertainty and refuted him, because based on the general opinion of Shi'i scholars: *ḥāl-e ū saqīm bāšad* (his spiritual awareness was puny, feeble or infirm). No more clarification is provided in this regard. What is more, Šūštarī explains how to avoid these two figures in the Sufi chains of lineage (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:19–21). At the end of the introduction, Šūštarī adds two notes. The first one is about anti-Shīʿī occultists who pretend to be true Sufis. These people, Šūštarī states, though they might be able to implement supernatural powers by bringing *ǧenn* into their service, or as a result of jugglery (*ʿamal-e šaʿvaẕa*) or by using the science of illusion (*sīmīyāʾ*), are veiled from the truth (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:21–22). The second note addresses the wayfarers on the Sufi in their initial stage. The author alerts them to the concern that choosing an inappropriate master might have long-term consequences for them. Again, Šūštarī indicated that he has some Naqšbandī Sufi masters in mind. If the master is a liar (*mobṭel*), disbeliever (*molḥed*), or [37]

heretic (*zandīq*), he might cause his disciples to deviate from the right path. Even if a master observes the *šarīʿa*, yet is immature, he could harm the wayfarers. The disciple might think after a while that he reached the level of the Sufi masters. It is also possible that he could come to fundamentally doubt the achievements of the great Sufi masters of the past (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:22–28).

[38] Although Šūštarī generally spoke about the immature masters, he referred at the beginning of this note to the Naqšbandī Sufi masters (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:23). He might have had, in particular, the Naqšbandī Šaiḫ Aḥmad Sirhindī (d.1034/1624) in mind, whose number of followers was rapidly increasing in North India. Sirhindī, who considered himself the 'Renewer of the Second Millennium of Islam' (*Muǧadded-e alf-e sānī*), was at the time an ambitious young Sufi šaiḫ with rigid orthodox Sunnī positions. At the same time, he was a critic of the great Sufi master of the past, Ibnʿ Arabī (d. 638/1240).[13] Although the description fits Sirhindī well, since Šūštarī did not identify the Sufi šaiḫ, the assumption remains speculative.

[39] In the body of the chapter, Šūštarī included those Sufis who, in his opinion, had an affinity with the Shi'i Imāms. The chapter starts with Kumayl b. Ziyād al-Naḫaʿī (fl. 40/661), loyal to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, who is well-known among the Shi'is for recording one of ʿAlī's supplications (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:28–31). Clearly, by considering Kumayl a Sufi and putting his entry at the beginning of the chapter, the author aimed to emphasise the connection between Sufism and Shi'ism. The chapter contains several major early Sufis including Abū Yazīd Basṭāmī (d. 261/874–5 or 234/848–9), Sahl Tostarī (or as the author referred to him Šūštarī, d. 283/896), Ǧonaid Baġdādī (d. 298/910), and Ḥosain b. Manṣūr Ḥallāǧ (exe. 309/922) (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:49–90). Šūštarī then moves on to the post-classical Sufis such as Aḥmad Ǧām (d. 536/1141), Shehāb al-Dīn ʿOmar Sohrawardī (d. 632/1234), Ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 632/1235), Ibn ʿArabī, and Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnavī (d. 673/1274) (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:91–229), and then he adds some Persian Sufi poets namely Sanāʾī (d. 525/1131), ʿAṭṭār (d. 618/1221), Rūmī (d. 672/1273), Saʿdī (d. 691/1292) and Ḥāfeẓ (d. 792/1390) (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:230–323). By including significant Sufi figures of the classical and post-classical periods, the author intended to establish the idea that the foundation of Sufism is Shi'i.

[40] As mentioned above, most of the Shi'i criticisms of *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn* were due to its inclusion of distinguished Sufis. Behbahānī suggested that Šūštarī's treatment of the Sufis might be a reaction to the position of Mīrzā Maḫdūm in his *Nawāqiḍ al-rawāfiḍ*:

> [41] Moreover, Qāżī [=Šūštarī]'s definition of Sufism and his consideration of Sufis as being Shi'a […] might be because of his opposition to Mīrzā Maḫdūm Šarīfī, who in his *Nawāqiḍ al-rawāfiḍ* enumerated the nonsensical positions (*hafavāt*) of the Shi'is. Among others, Mīrzā Maḫdūm referred to Shi'i scholars' forbidding inner purification (*taṣfeya-ye bāṭen*). That is the reason, he argues, that darkness and impurity covered their inner side and deprived them of perceiving divine emanations and mystical lights. Therefore, there is no way that a Sufi or a *valī* could emerge from among them. In order to rebuff Mīrzā Maḫdūm Šarīfī on the matter, the Shi'a-fabricator Qāżī, states that most of the Sufis were Shi'a, and only a small number of them were Sunni and false believers such as the immature Mollā Ǧāmī and the Hypocrite Sunni and Šāfeʿī, ʿAbd al-Qāder Gīlānī. (Behbahānī [1370] 1991, 2:155)

[42] As Behbahānī noted, Mīrzā Maḫdūm in his *Nawāqiḍ al-rawāfiḍ* quoted from *al-Makāsib* by

13 On Sirhindī and his connection to the Mughal court, see Moin (2012, 134–36).

Šams al-Dīn Makkī ʿĀmelī, known as Šahīd I (d. 786/1384), a statement in which it seems *taṣfiyat al-bāṭin* (the inner purification) was held prohibited. According to Mīrzā Maḥdūm, the Safavids' attitude towards Sufism was aligned with that position. They did not hesitate to display their animosity to Sufism and to harass those who read their books. In particular, in the Safavid lands, the followers of the Naqšbandī order were at risk of death. Therefore, as long as one lived in the Safavid territory, Mīrzā Maḥdūm argues, one should keep oneself away from anything associated with the Naqšbandīs and any ritual resembling their practice (Šarīfī, n.d., fol. 35a).

[43] In his response to *Nawāqiḍ al-rawāfiḍ*, Šūštarī argued that Mīrzā Maḥdūm had misunderstood the intention of Šahīd I. However, he admitted that some notable Shi'i scholars were against the Sufis. As an example, Šūštarī referred to Ibn Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī, who accused those Sufis who supported the idea of unification with God (*ittiḥād*), as well as the followers of Ibn ʿArabī (whom al-Ḥillī referred to as *wuǧūdī* Sufis) of unbelief and blasphemy (*al-kufr wa-l-ilḥād*). Šūštarī disagreed with al-Ḥillī on this matter. Moreover, he insisted that al-Ḥillī's view did not represent the view of the mainstream Shi'is (Šūštarī [1426] 2005–2006, 2:161–164).[14]

[44] It is indeed plausible that Šūštarī allotted a long chapter to the Sufis in response to the above-mentioned argument by Mīrzā Maḥdūm. At the same time, he was aware that the image of Shi'ism presented in the *Maǧāles* was not the one widely accepted among Shi'i scholars. Therefore, by embracing the main parts of the Sufi tradition, Šūštarī was consciously fighting on two fronts: one against anti-Shi'i scholars such as Mīrzā Maḥdūm Šarīfī who blamed the Shi'is for their animosity to the Sufis, and the other against those of his Shi'i colleagues who, following al-Ḥillī, believed that many distinguished Sufi masters deviated from the right path.

[45] In any case, the emphasis of the chapter is on the Nūrbaḫšīya order. Šūštarī lists Naǧm al-Dīn Kobrā (d. 617/1220), Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥammūya (d. 650/1252), Raẓī al-Dīn Lālā (d. 642/1244) and ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla Semnānī (d. 736/1336) as the earlier masters of the order, and then he presents Mīr Saiyed ʿAlī Hamadānī (d. 786/1385) and finally Muḥammad Nūrbaḫš (d. 869/1464). Then, after Nūrbaḫš, he continues the chapter with the disciples of Nūrbaḫš, namely his son and his successor Šāh Qāsim (d. 927/1520–21) and the prominent figure, Šams al-Dīn Lāhīǧī (aka Ǧīlānī, d. 912/1506–7) (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:220–30, 352–404). In other words, he presents a list of the successors of Nūrbaḫš up to the early Safavid era. Altogether, he included eight figures in the Nūrbaḫšī cluster. The author's strong affinity for the Nūrbaḫšīya is evident from the way he speaks about the masters of this order. Moreover, Šūštarī indicates that his grandfather, whose name was also Nūrollāh, was a Nūrbaḫšī Sufi and a direct disciple of Saiyed Moḥammad Nūrbaḫš (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:456). Furthermore, throughout the *Maǧāles*, Šūštarī frequently quotes from several of Moḥammad Nūrbaḫš's works, and he uses any opportunity to praise him (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 1:196–97). Based on these signs, the editors of the *Maǧāles* suggested that Šūštarī had been a Nūrbaḫšī Sufi (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, editors' introduction, 1:195).[15]

[46] In his *Nafaḥāt al-uns*, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ǧāmī, who was himself a Naqšbandī, dismissed the Neʿmatollāhīya and Nūrbaḫšīya orders altogether (Algar 2013, 106; Rizvi 2018, 249). Supposing that Šūštarī was a Nūrbakhshī Sufi, we might be meant to believe that he, likewise, did not have high regard for competing Sufi orders, namely the Ṣafavīya, Neʿmatollāhīya, Ẕahabīya and Naqšbandīya. Regarding the Ṣafavīya and Neʿmatollāhīya, specifically, there is

14 For more detailed study of Šūštarī's argument in support of Sufism, see S. A. A. Rizvi (1986, 373–75).

15 Shahzad Bashir, likewise, argued for Šūštarī being a Nūrbaḫšī Sufi. He assumed that Šūštarī was an indirect disciple of Šams al-Dīn Lāhīǧī (Bashir 2003, 55, 175, 180).

no evidence of such feelings of rivalry, as the founder of the two orders, namely Ṣafī al-Dīn Ardabīlī (d. 735/1334) and Šāh Neʿmatollāh Kohbonānī (d. 827/1431), were both highly venerated by him (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:100–3, 110–17). As for the Ẕahabīya, a sense of rivalry might seem to be an explanation for some of Šūštarī's attitudes. Undoubtedly, his emphasis on Moḥammad Nūrbaḫš as the true successor to Esḥāq Ḫottalānī (fl. 826/1423) ruled out the succession of Sayyed ʿAbdollāh Borzešābādī Mašhadī (d. ca. 856/1452), the founder of the order that later became known as the Ẕahabīya. Moreover, Šūštarī explicitly stated that Ḫottalānī considered Borzešābādī an apostate (*mortad*) for not recognising Nūrbaḫš as a Sufi master (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:378). Evidently, on the succession of Ḫottalānī, Šūštarī drew upon a Nūrbaḫšī source without any moderation. However, a sense of rivalry does not explain why Šūštarī included three Sufis whose lineage goes back to Borzešābādī, namely Ḥāǧī Moḥammad Ḫabūšānī (d. 938/1531–32), ʿEmād al-Dīn Faẓlollāh Mašhadī (d. 914/1508–9) and Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥosayn Ḫʷārazmī (d. after 914/1508–9) (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:404–450).

The author's treatment of the Naqšbandīya deserves special attention, too. Šūštarī considered the Naqšbandīya a fake order (*selsela-ye moḫtaraʿa*) (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:23). He not only excluded distinguished Naqšbandī Sufis, but he also used every opportunity to criticise their current masters for being charlatans and for their false pretences (*šaiyādī va talbīs*) (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:23). As one can see from Mīrzā Maḫdūm's *Nawāqiḍ*, the Safavids were hostile to the Naqšbandīs decades before the authorship of the *Maǧāles*. In his *Maṣāʾib al-nawāṣib*, Šūštarī referred to hostility in the other direction, namely that of the Naqšbandīs towards Shi'is. He explained this by saying that many ordinary people in Transoxiana were Naqšbandī Sufis and their Uzbek rulers had been deliberately intensifying their anti-Shī'ī sentiments (Šūštarī [1426] 2005–2006, 2:165). Therefore, one can safely assume that there was hostility on both sides, which was political as well as religious. However, the Naqšbandīs, whose false pretences were criticized by Šūštarī, are unlikely to be the Uzbek Sufis. Šūštarī must have referred, therefore, to a branch of the order with whom he had encountered in his day-to-day life. [47]

Šūštarī on Muslim Philosophers

A review of Šūštarī's writings reveals that metaphysics was not his primary interest. However, he had some significant contributions to logic and rational theology.[16] [48]

In the chapter on the philosophers, he included two highly significant figures, namely Fārābī and Ebn Sīnā. The main reason Šūštarī presents for them being Shi'i is their preference for having Shi'i patrons. Fārābī was associated with the court of Hamdanid Saif al-Daula (r. 333–356/945–967) (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:455) and Ebn Sīnā, according to Šūštarī, was born into a Shi'i family, and he chose to work for Shi'i patrons, namely Qābūs b. Vošmgīr (r. 366–371/977–981 and 388–403/998–1012), the Buyid Mağd al-Daula (r. 387–420/997–1029) and the Kakuyid ʿAlāʾ al-Daula (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:466). Abū ʿAlī Moskūya (or Meskavayh, d. 421/1030) is another distinguished philosopher included in the chapter (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:476–78). [49]

Then, after citing some minor figures, Šūštarī included an entry on Abū Ḥāmed Ġazālī (d. 505/1111). According to Šūštarī, Ġazālī inwardly was Shi'i, and late in his life, he revealed his Shi'i affiliation in his *Sirr al-ʿālamayn* (otherwise known as *Sirr al-maknūn*), a Shi'i polemical work whose attribution to Ġazālī was taken for granted by Šūštarī (Šūštarī [1392] [50]

16 For a list of Šūštarī's writings on logic and rational theology, see S. Rizvi, ??

2013, 4:492–96). Evidently, for Šūštarī, it was particularly important to include Ġazālī, as he discussed his hypothetical conversion extensively. Šūštarī continues the chapter again with some rather minor figures. His focus is then trained on philosophers who lived from the seventh/thirteenth century onwards, most notably Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī and Qoṭb al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 766/1365) (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:503–627). The only reason provided for the latter holding Shi'i beliefs is a license (*iǧāza*) he received from Ibn Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:524). The chapter ends with a cluster of philosophers of Shiraz, starting with Mīr Saiyed Šarīf Ǧorǧānī (d. 816/1414), to whom he devotes a lengthy entry. However, no substantial evidence for his Shi'i affiliation is presented. In this final section, Šūštarī included most of the distinguished philosophers of Shiraz working in the late Aq Qoyunlu and the early Safavid period, namely Ǧalāl al-Dīn Davānī (d. 908/1502), Ṣadr al-Dīn Daštakī (or Šīrāzī, d. 903/1498), Ġeyāṯ al-Dīn Daštakī, Šams al-Dīn Ḫafrī and Šāh Ṭāher Dakanī (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:541–576), even though the later ones were mainly active or, indeed, exclusively active, after the rise of the Safavids. Šāh Ṭāher Dakanī might have been included for his enormous impact on India. Notwithstanding, Šūštarī encouraged his Shi'i readers to embrace the intellectual endeavours of the philosophers of Shiraz as their own heritage.

Ġazālī, Ǧorǧānī and Davānī were three distinguished Aš'arī theologians who, Šūštarī held, were Shi'i. In the case of Ġazālī, Šūštarī argued that his thought was inwardly Shi'i, although his *kalām* works on the surface are Aš'arī (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:496). As for Ǧorǧānī, Šūštarī argued that his commentary on Ażod al-Dīn Īǧī's (d. 756/1355–56) *Mawāqif* did not truly represent his thought, because it was written merely to appeal to 'the noble patron of Shiraz', namely the Timurid prince, Eskandar Mīrzā (r. 811–817/1408–1415). Šūštarī added that the commentary was mainly based on Saif al-Dīn Abharī's (d. after 778/1376–77) commentary on the same text and Ǧorǧānī's contribution was nothing other than rephrasing Abharī's arguments and lemmatizing the commentary with Īǧī's text (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:538–539). On Ǧorǧānī's other significant theological work, namely his gloss on Šams al-Dīn Eṣfahānī's (d. 749/1348) commentary on *Taǧrīd al-iʿtiqād*, Šūštarī's note was more positive. Nevertheless, he did not give Ǧorǧānī the full credit for his innovative thought in the work. He argued that before Ǧorǧānī, a Shi'i theologian and philosopher, Naṣīr al-Dīn Kāšī (d. 755/1354) wrote a gloss on Eṣfahānī's commentary on the *Taǧrīd* and Ǧorǧānī adopted the substance of that gloss in his own gloss on the same commentary (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:532). [51]

Like Ǧorǧānī's commentary on the *Mawāqif*, Davānī's commentary on Īǧī's *ʿAqāʾid* was supposedly written to appeal its author's patron, who in this case was the anti-Shi'i ruler of Ǧarūn, Salġor Šāh (r. 880–910/1475–1505) (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:547). However, Šūštarī treated this work as exceptional within Davānī's oeuvre. Having a great admiration for Davānī, Šūštarī included a detailed bibliography of Davānī's works in this chapter. Although at first admitting that this kind of bibliography was inappropriate in the context of *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn* (*bā ānke munāseb-e maqām nīst*), he justified it because it is unknown to most of the people of the time and cannot be found in the bibliographical works (*ḫoṣūṣīyāt-e ān bar akṯar-e ahl-e zamān ẓāher nīst va dar davāvīn-e arbāb-e seyar az ān aṯarī peydā na*) (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:551–558). Šūštarī's familiarity with the works of Davānī makes it unlikely that he was ignorant of Davānī's defence of Aš'arī theology in his other works. Nevertheless, he firmly argued that Davānī was inwardly Shi'i (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 4:549–51). As we discussed earlier, Šūštarī brought the same argument for Ġazālī. However, Šūštarī appeared to be more inclined to theological views of Davānī than those of Ġazālī. In his *Mūnis al-waḥīd fī tafsīr āyat al-ʿadl wa-l-tawḥīd* (The Unique Companion to Interpreting the Verse on Divine Unity and Justice) [52]

for example, Šūštarī conforms the view of Davānī on the question of determination and free will without any hesitation (Šūštarī [1385] 2006, 2:516–62). Hence, Šūštarī not only believed in the Šīʿī foundation of Davānī's thoughts but also personally found some of Davānī's ideas appealing.

Šūštarī on Persian Poets

Being himself a poet, Šūštarī paid particular attention to Persian poets in his *Maǧāles*. As mentioned above, the chapter on Sufism includes several Persian poets, such as Sanāʾī, ʿAṭṭār, Rūmī, Saʿdī and Ḥāfeẓ. Nevertheless, a further chapter of the *Maǧāles* was exclusively devoted to Persian poets. That Šūštarī included the poets mentioned above in the chapter on Sufism and not in the chapter on Persian poets is significant. It seems that Šūštarī wanted to convey the idea that these poets were primarily distinguished Sufis, and their literary works should be considered within the context of their Sufi identity. [53]

The chapter on Persian poets was mainly based on Daulat-šāh Samarqandī's (d. 900/1494 or 913/1507) *Taẕkerat al-šoʿarāʾ*. Šūštarī starts the chapter with a long section on Ferdausī (d. 411/1020). Apparently, it was important for Šūštarī to have the composer of the *Šāhnāma* on board and argue for his Shi'i belief. The chapter includes some other well-known poets such as Asadī-e Ṭūsī (d. 465/1073), Ḫāqānī (d. after 580/1185), Anvarī (fl. 565/1170) and Salmān Sāvaǧī (d. 778/1376). Šūštarī ended the chapter with four poets who had been active on the cusp of the Safavid period. Some of them lived in the early Safavid period, namely Neẓām Astarābādī (d. 921/1515–16), Bābā Feġānī (d. 925/1519), Ahlī-ye Šīrāzī and Lesānī. These four poets had not been included in Daulat-šāh Samarqandī's *Taẕkera*, because they were still alive or only in the early stage of their poetic careers. By including them in this chapter, it could be argued that Šūštarī intended the chapter of the *Maǧāles* to surpass the *Taẕkera*. [54]

The Supplement to *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn*

One of the addenda to *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn* is an independent remark which can be considered as a separate work. It is called *Resāla-ye dafʿ-e šobahāt-e Eblīs* (Removing Satan's Sophistries). At the beginning of the treatise, Šūštarī explains that in the prologue (*fāteḥa*) of the *Maǧāles*, an analogy was made between the sophistries of one of the members of the Umma and Satan's sophistries. A highly ranked friend of Šūštarī and possibly a courtier (*baʿżī az eḫvān-e ʿālīšān-e malek-nešān*) who read the introduction of the *Maǧāles* requested that the author add a supplement to the work, clarifying that particular point by recounting Satan's sophistries together with a response to them. Šūštarī aimed to do so by writing the treatise (Šūštarī and Heravī [1369] 1990, 40). [55]

Along with his analogy in the prologue of the *Maǧāles*, this work implies an anti-Sunni polemical subtext against the second caliph, ʿUmar b. al-Ḫaṭṭāb. However, the author refrained from directly referring to this subject in this treatise. Instead of naming ʿUmar explicitly, he referred to him vaguely and neutrally as one of the members of the Umma. Such a neutral reference to ʿUmar might indicate that the author was concerned about the non-Shi'is among readers of the work. It is not unlikely that the very person who requested Šūštarī to write this piece was Sunni. [56]

The so-called "Satan's sophistries" are about the nature of human action, its predestination [57]

and divine justice on this particular matter. The author's source for these sophistries is ʿAbd al-Karīm Šahrastānī's (d. 548/1153) *al-Milal wa-niḥal*. However, Šūštarī blamed Šahrastānī for his Ašʿarī resolution of the issue of the sophistries, a resolution which it should be said was approved by Faḫr al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 606/1210).[17] Instead, Šūštarī supported the Moʿtazelī and Emāmī view on God's justice (Šūštarī and Heravī [1369] 1990, 40–49).

Transcription of *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn* under the Author's Supervision

At the end of *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn,* Šūštarī states that he commissioned the production of seven clean copies of the work and that he collated them with his draft (*mosvadda*) before he started distributing it. None of these seven manuscripts has been identified so far. However, MS Tehran, Maǧles 7842 and MS Tehran, Maʿāref 1176 must both have been based on a copy produced under the author's supervision. Moreover, the copy of the *Maǧāles* owned by Mīrzā ʿAbdollāh Afandī Eṣfahānī was also produced under the author's supervision. In his *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamāʾ*, Afandī Eṣfahānī indicated that he had a copy of the *Maǧāles*, with a note by Šūštarī about the date of completion of the work in his hand (Afandī Eṣfahānī [1401] 1981, 5:269–70). [58]

Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn as a Possible Cause of the Author's Death

The closest report about Šūštarī's tragic death, which occurred on 26 Rabīʿ II 1019/18 July 1610, can be found in Taqī al-Dīn Auḥadī Balyānī's (d. 1030/1621 or after) *ʿArafāt al-ʿāšeqīn*. According to Auḥadī Balyānī, upon the emperor Ǧahāngīr (r. 1014–1037/1605–1627) questioning him about his religious affiliation, Šūštarī claimed to be Šāfeʿī. Knowing Šūštarī was lying or more accurately speaking practising *taqīya,* the emperor became angry and had him flogged five times, which was the cause of his death (Auḥadī Balyānī [1389] 2009, 7:4496; Rizvi 2017, 64). [59]

Later, biographers narrated the event with some more details. Accordingly, Ǧahāngīr was informed about Šūštarī's Shi'i affiliation by members of his court. They brought Šūštarī's *Maǧāles al-moʾminīn* or/and *Iḥqāq al-ḥaqq* to the emperor's attention (Rizvi 1986, 2:4). However, this additional information is not verifiable. Because in the account written close to Šūštarī's death, no book was mentioned being brought to the attention of the emperor on that occasion. [60]

Conclusion

For a long time, Muslim scholars, Sunni and Shi'i alike, have considered the Shi'is a small sect within the broader Muslim community. In his *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn*, Šūštarī made an effort to establish the idea that the Shi'is throughout the history were not followers of a minor sect, but a significant portion of Islam with highly influential figures among them, worthy of respect. The Shi'is, according to Šūštarī, are the true Muslims. He divided the Muslims from the beginning of Islam into two groups: those who liked ʿAlī and those who did not [61]

17 Šūštarī considered Šahrastānī to be an Ašʿarī theologian rather than an Esmāʿīlī. For the same reason, he did not include him in the *Maǧāles*.

like him. Šūštarī's decision to make the *Maǧāles* accessible to friends of the Shi'a among the Sunnis could be an indication of the propagational nature of the work. The implication to Sunni readers was that, as Muslims, if they liked ʿAlī and preferred his path to that of other Rashidun caliphs, they could regard themselves as Shi'i.

[62] In some of his writings, Šūštarī did not hesitate to use expressions that would offend Sunni readers. He was the author of several refutations of anti-Shi'i polemics in which he applied the same aggressive attitude that his opponents had shown. In his *Maǧāles*, however, he refrained from provoking Sunni sensitivities. His aim in this work was not confrontation but rather to gain credibility and respect for the Shi'a. Šūštarī's concern was particularly for Shi'i communities of the Indian subcontinent. On the one hand, he tried to give members of these communities a sense of pride, and on the other, he tried to gain the respect of the Mughal intellectuals for their tradition.

[63] Šūštarī depicted Shi'ism as a religion of high culture, an outlook open to Sufism and mysticism in general, a rational path taken by many significant philosophers, and finally, an aesthetic viewpoint held by distinguished poets. Clearly, Šūštarī not only tried to present an enhanced picture of the Shi'a for the outsiders but also internally tried to modify the cultural attitude of the Shi'is by rejecting the views of those Shi'i scholars whose definition of Shi'a would not allow practising mysticism, philosophy and poetry. Indeed, the composition of the *Maǧāles* aimed, among other things, to establish Shi'ism as a religion open to cultural values.

[64] The significance of *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn* in the development of Shi'i biographical literature cannot be overestimated. As the first comprehensive Shi'i bio-bibliographical work to be written, the *Maǧāles* was used as a model and an instructional work for the composition of Shi'i bio-bibliographical works of later periods, such as *al-Daraǧāt al-rafīʿa fī ṭabaqāt al-Imāmīya* by Saiyed ʿAlī Ḫān Šīrāzī Madanī, *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamāʾ* by Mīrzā ʿAbdollāh Afandī Eṣfahānī (d. 1130/1718), *Rawḍāt al-ǧannāt* by Saiyed Moḥammad Bāqer Ḫᵛānsārī (d. 1313/1895–96), *Aʿyān al-Šīʿa* by Sayyid Muḥsin al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī (d. 1371/1952) and *Ṭabaqāt aʿlām al-Šīʿa* and *al-Ḏarīʿa ilā taṣānīf al-Šīʿa* by Āqā Bozorg Ṭehrānī (d. 1389/1970). The authors of these works might have disagreed with Šūštarī on the Shi'i beliefs of specific figures. Nevertheless, they knew that Šūštarī's hints to the relevant sources on each figure were indispensable. Among the bio-bibliographers mentioned above, Āqā Bozorg Ṭehrānī, with his overarching attitude towards the Shi'a, had perhaps the mindset closest to that of Šūštarī. We know that Āqā Bozorg had great respect for Šūštarī (Monzavī [1382] 2003, 122). There were some other Shi'i scholars with a similar attitude as well. In 1190/1776–77, Saiyed Moḥammad-Šafīʿ Ḥosaynī ʿĀmelī (fl. 1190/1776) composed a supplement to *Maǧāles al-moʾmenīn*, titled *Maḥāfel al-moʾmenīn*. This work consists of two parts: part one deals with Shi'i rulers of Iran and India, and part two deals with Shi'i saiyeds, scholars and poets. This work covers the centuries from the beginning of the Safavid period up to the date of composition of the text. Nevertheless, it also includes some figures of earlier periods who cannot be found in the *Maǧāles*. The author of *Maḥāfel al-moʾmenīn* tried to be faithful to the criterion of Šūštarī. However, he could not help but include even the Naqšbandī poet ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ǧāmī in his work (Šūštarī [1392] 2013, 391–94).

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DOI: 10.46586/er.13.2022.9625
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Entangled Religions 13.5 (2022)
er.ceres.rub.de

The *Dasātīr* and the "Āz̲ar Kaivān school" in Historical Context: Origin and Later Development

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ABSTRACT The present paper aims to offer a new understanding of the so-called "Zoroastrian Illuminative philosophers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries," namely the Āz̲ar Kaivān school. In the twentieth century, this school was understood to be a Zoroastrian phenomenon originating from Āz̲ar Kaivān (1533–1618), who is believed to have been born at Estakhr (Iran) and later to have immigrated to Patna (India). One way to sketch their texts is to notice their contents as the Zoroastrian Illuminative school, as H. Corbin did. But it may be more likely that the first principle for this school is a matter of ancient Persian culture, especially the Āsmānī language. Until recently, we knew little for certain about the origin of this Āsmānī vocabulary, except the inference that it might be the product of Āz̲ar Kaivān himself. But Sadeghi (2020) shows that the earliest mention of what would become the Āsmānī vocabulary can be confirmed in the Persian dictionary *Farhang-e Mo'aiyid al-Fożalā'*, compiled in India in 1519. The origin of the essential points of the Āz̲ar Kaivān school is not Āz̲ar Kaivān himself, but there were probably some pioneers in the Delhi Sultanate in India before him. Adding to this, a closer look at their writings shows that this school is not a monolith, but a complex of various preceding elements. The Illuminative Philosophy is just one of them. As such, it becomes possible to arrive at the conclusion that the Āz̲ar Kaivān school is not Āz̲ar Kaivān's school. He simply put together the various elements that preceded him.

KEYWORDS Āz̲ar Kaivān, Dasātīr, Farhang-e Mo'aiyid al-Fożalā', Ḥorūfism, Zoroastrianism

Introduction

Recent Studies

In this brief article, I seek first to provide a basic outline of the developmental stages of the so-called "school" of Āz̲ar Kaivān (1533–1618), and second to contextualize its history in relation to the religious and political situations in medieval Iran and India. Most discourse on the Āz̲ar Kaivān school has examined it in relation to modern Zoroastrianism and Ešrāqī philosophy. [1]

Although we are greatly indebted to J. J. Modi (1930) and Henry Corbin (1989)[1] for their prior interpretations, it is time to take the next step and develop a new perspective on the Āẕar Kaivān school in the light of an updated understanding of its contexts. This reinterpretation is necessary because our knowledge of the background factors involved in the emergence of the Āẕar Kaivān school has changed considerably since the twentieth century.

[2] Corbin's overwhelming influence as the scholar who introduced the Āẕar Kaivān school to the field of Islamic studies may be one reason why, until recently, this school was analyzed only as a Zoroastrian offshoot of the Ešrāqī philosophy, which was founded by Šehāb al-Dīn Sohravardī (d. 1191).[2] Thus, to most students of early modern Islamic thought, the Āẕar Kaivān school is noteworthy only as a tangential aspect of later Ešrāqī philosophy.

[3] In their recent analyses of the Āẕar Kaivān school, Babayan (2002) and Sheffield (2014) mentioned the Noqtavī order (founded by Mahmūd Pasīḫānī, d. 1427) as a main factor contributing to the development of the Āẕar Kaivān school, noting that the Noqtavī messianic movement remained influential in Iranian society at least until 1592/3 (the millennium of the *hejra*). As both scholars observed, the two schools have several elements in common, yet the Noqtavī order preceded the Āẕar Kaivān school by more than a century. Therefore, the possibility that the Noqtavī order exerted an important influence on the formation of the Āẕar Kaivān school cannot be ruled out, although, after its initial success, the Nuqtavī order's Iranian nativist tendencies brought trouble in later Aq Qoyunlu and early Safavid Iran. To summarize the above, current scholarship generally regards Zoroastrianism, the Noqtavī order, and the Ešrāqī philosophy as the three main factors influencing the formation of the Āẕar Kaivān school.

Sources

[4] As primary sources for the Āẕar Kaivān school, we are fortunate to have eight extant New Persian books, written by the members of the so-called Āẕar Kaivān school (see table 1), as well as the names of another 44 New Persian books that are as yet undiscovered (see tables 2 and 3) (Goštāsb [1397] 2018).

Table 1 The Eight Extant Books of the Āẕar Kaivān School.

Title	Author	Publication
Dasātīr	Pseudonymously attributed to the seventh-century prophet Sāsān the Fifth. The presumed author is Āẕar Kaivān (d. 1618).	Mollā Fīrūz (1818), Bombay
Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro	Poems by Āẕar Kaivān with a commentary by Mūbed Ḫodāǧūy (d. 1630).	Mīr Ašraf ʿAlī (1848), Bombay
Šārestān-e Čahār Čaman	Farzāna Bahrām ebn Farhād Esfandeyār Pārsī (d. 1624).	Bahrām Bīžan et al. (1862), Bombay

1 For other overviews of the Āẕar Kaivān school, see Mo'īn ([1335] 1957); Moǧtabā'ī (1989); Pūrdāvūd (1947); Rezania (2014).

2 For example, Tavakoli-Targhi (2001) designates them as "neo-Mazdaean renaissance."

Title	Author	Publication
Ḫīsh-tāb	Pseudonymously attributed to Ḥakīm Pīštāb, a disciple of Sāsān the Fifth. The real author is Mūbed Hūš (d.?).	Mīrzā Bahrām Rostam Naṣrābādī (1878), Bombay
Zardošt Afšār	Pseudonymously attributed to Ḥakīm Ḫošgūy, a disciple of Sāsān the Fifth. The real author is Mūbed Sorūš ebn Kaivān (d. after 1627).	Same as above
Zāyanda Rūd	Pseudonymously attributed to Ḥakīm Zende Āzarm, a disciple of Sāsān the Fifth. The real author is Mūbed Ḫūšī (d.?).	Same as above
Zūra-ye Bāstānī	Pseudonymously attributed to Āzar Pažūh Esfahānī. The real author is unknown.	Same as above
Dabestān-e maẕāheb[3]	Ẕo l-faqār al-Ḥusaynī al-Ardistānī, with the pen name Mūbed (d. 1670)	Reżāzāda Malek (1983), Tehran

Table 2 The 24 (presumed lost) titles in Šārestān-e Čahār Čaman.

No	Preserved	Title	Author
1-1	×	*Āʾīna-ye Eskandar*	Āẕar Kaivān
1-2	×	*Taḫt-e ṭāqdīs*	Āẕar Kaivān
1-3	×	*Partov-e farhang*	Āẕar Kaivān
1-4	×	*Nahād-e Mūbedī*	–
1-5	×	*Farhād-kard*	–
1-6	×	*Awrand-nāma-ye Pīšdādī*	–
1-7	×	*Tahmūras-nāma*	–
1-8	×	*Nāma-ye āʾīn-e dād*	–
1-9	×	*Ǧāvedān ḫerad*	–
1-10	×	*Nasab-nāma-ye šāhān*	–
1-11	?	*Nāma-ye Šīdestān*	Āzar Pažūh
1-12	×	*Šokūh-fazā*	–
1-13	×	*Farhād-nāma/Nāma-ye Farhād*	–
1-14	×	*Āʾīna-ye āʾīn*	Ǧāmāsp-e Ḥakīm
1-15	×	*Farāzdegān*	Āzād Sarv
1-16	×	*Naṣāʾih al-mulūk*	Āzar Mehr
1-17	×	*Dārāb-nāma*	–

3 A new manuscript of *Dabestān-e maẕāheb* with the date of 1650 has been discovered, and its facsimile edition was published in 2015. See *Dabestān-e maẕāheb* (*Dabestān-e maẕāheb: Čāp-e ʿaksī-ye nosḫa-ye ḫaṭṭī-ye sāl-e 1060/1650.* [1393] 2015).

No	Preserved	Title	Author
1-18	×	*Dāneš-afzā-ye Nūšīravān*	Būẕarj-mehr
1-19	×	*Ḫarrād-nāma*	–
1-20	×	*Dāneš-furūz*	–
1-21	?	*Golestān-e dāneš*	Āẕar Pažūh ebn Āẕar Āʾīn
1-22	×	*Golestān-e bīneš*	Ḫarrād ebn Āʾīn-e Gošasp
1-23	×	*Rahbarestān*	Ḫarrād Borzīn
1-24	×	*Ǧāmāspī*	–

Table 3 The 20 (presumed lost) titles in Dabestān-e maẕāheb.

No	Preserved	Title	Author
2-1	o	*Dasātīr*	–
2-2	×	*Dārā-ye Eskandar*	Dāvar Hūryār
2-3	?	*Ǧašn-e Sada*	Mūbed Hūšyār
2-4	?	*Sorūd-e mastān*	Mūbed Hūšyār
2-5	o	*Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro*	Mūbed Ḫodāǧūy
2-6	o	*Šārestān-e Čahār Čaman*	Farzāna Bahrām
2-7	o	*Zardošt Afshār*	Mūbed Sorūš
2-8	×	*Nūšdār*	–
2-9	×	*Serkangabīn*	Mūbed Sorūš
2-10	?	*Bazmgāh*	Farzāna Ḫūšī
2-11	×	*Aržang-e Mānī*	Farzāna Bahrām-e Kūček
2-12	×	*Tadbīre-ye Mūbedī*	Mūbed Parastār
2-13	×	*Ramzestān*	–
2-14	×	*Bāstān-nāma*	–
2-15	×	*Rāz-ābād*	Šams ad-Dīn Šīdāb
2-16	×	*Peymān-e farhang*	–
2-17	×	*Andarz-e Ǧāmšīd be Ātabīn*	Dastūr Ǧāmāspī
2-18	×	*Samrād-nāma-ye Kāmkār*	Samrādeyān
2-19	×	*Āmiġestān va Aḫtarestān*	Sepāseyān
2-20	×	*Persian Translations of Arabic Books of Sohravardī*	Bahrām ebn Faršād (= Farzāna Bahrām-e Kūček)

The Purpose

Before embarking on an analysis of the Āẕar Kaivān school, it is necessary to address some problems that are inherent to this article. Debate regarding the historical context of the Āẕar Kaivān school has lasted for nearly two centuries, since the first publication of the *Dasātīr* in 1818. Even the term "Āẕar Kaivān school" is defined in a variety of inconsistent ways. Given that, among the eight extant books listed in table 1 above, the *Dasātīr* has typically been regarded as the "sacred book" reflecting Āẕar Kaivān's inspiration, one might expect that the beliefs and philosophy of the "Āẕar Kaivān school" would be neatly summarized in the *Dasātīr*. [5]

The truth of this statement, however, is far from certain, and it can be dangerous to rely on this presumption. Calling the *Dasātīr* a sacred book implies that it was used as the *Qur'an* is used today; in practice, however, I have found no direct quotations from the *Dasātīr* in any of the other seven books, neither in its "language of Heaven (Āsmānī)" nor its New Persian translation and commentary. Thus, it seems inappropriate to apply the term "sacred book" to the *Dasātīr* without careful discussion (a sacred book may have a debatable meaning but is typically interpreted as being comparable to the *Qur'an* in its function in the religious community). In fact, although we cannot rule out the possibility that the *Dasātīr* represents some aspect of the Āẕar Kaivān school, and although it appears to be the most important source of mystical thought for Āẕar Kaivān's disciples, it does not serve as the fundamental "sacred book" or the unquestioned authority of the school. [6]

What is needed is not a more concentrated analysis of the contents of the *Dasātīr*, but rather studies devoted to the sources that influenced the *Dasātīr* as well as examinations of the other seven texts, which have not been subjected to a critical survey to date. Furthermore, it remains to be shown precisely what the "Āẕar Kaivān school" is, where the *Dasātīr* comes from, which authors (or texts) represent which strains of thought within the school, how the other seven texts originated from the *Dasātīr*, and indeed in what sense they are "Āẕar Kaivānic." In short, one should keep in mind that, as the concept of the "Āẕar Kaivān school" is dynamically variable, it will only be possible to contextualize this concept by comparing each text with Āẕar Kaivān's predecessors, contemporaries, and successors. The present article undertakes comparing the *Dasātīr* with texts from the following categories: [7]

- As examples of Āẕar Kaivān's predecessors: *Farhang-e Mo'aiyid al-Fożalāʾ* (Persianate Indian lexicography), *Maḥram-nāma* (Ḥorūfism), and *Zarātušt-nāma* etc. (Zoroastrianism). [8]
- As an example of Āẕar Kaivān's contemporaries: *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro*. [9]
- As examples of Āẕar Kaivān's successors: *Ḫᵛīš-tāb* and *Zūra-ye Bāstānī*. [10]

The problem then is to establish the means and continuity of the tradition of the Āẕar Kaivān school. Nothing can be transmitted through time unless something is available in earlier texts, yet everything that is transmitted is unavoidably changed through the transmission process. It is fundamental, therefore, to trace *Dasātīr*'s history and its reception both retrospectively and prospectively, insofar as we can discern them. [11]

The Dasātīr

The Āẕar Kaivān school's eight extant texts are similar in outlook, all displaying a pseudo-ancient Iranian style that intentionally imitates Zoroastrian sacred books, yet none of them quotes a single word of Avestan (Sheffield 2014). Take, for example, the case of the *Dasātīr*. The fact that its main text is written in the enigmatic (or celestial) invented language known as Āsmānī (= Avestan, in the case of Zoroastrianism), with a more understandable 'translation' and commentary written in New Persian (= *Zand*, written in Pahlavi, in the case of Zoroastrianism), shows that the author(s) of *Dasātīr* had profound knowledge of the structure of the Zoroastrian sacred book and adopted its style in his own writings. Adding to this, Rezania (in this issue) points out that the text contains some Pahlavi words such as *zorvān* and the rendering *damān* (a misreading of Pahlavi *zamān*) in place of the NP *zamān*. The author(s) of the *Dasātīr* seems to know Middle Persian to some extent. Therefore, regardless of whether [12]

the school can be considered Zoroastrian or not, the literary similarity between the *Dasātīr* and Zoroastrian sacred books demonstrates the author's intimate familiarity with Zoroastrian literature. Needless to say, this fact does not mean that Āẕar Kaivān was inevitably a Zoroastrian.

[13] Although the *Dasātīr*, like Zoroastrianism, reflects an alignment toward ancient Iranian culture (avoiding any use of Arabic words and implying anti-Islamic emotion), it also, surprisingly, devotes considerable attention to the ideas of transmigration of the soul (Goštāsb, forthcoming) and worship of the planets,[4] both of which are relatively uncharacteristic of Zoroastrianism. Moreover, a perusal of the *Dasātīr* reveals that the concept of a cyclical sense of time and the idea that the planets, primarily the moon, control the world are key aspects of *Dasātīr*'s original religious ideas, and are more characteristic of *Dasātīr*'s philosophy than the book's superficial resemblance to Zoroastrian writings and its nominal use of Ešrāqī terminology[5] (Goštāsb [1395] 2016). For our present purposes, however, we do not need to go any further in analyzing the contents of *Dasātīr*; this brief outline of its character is sufficient.

Comparison of *Dasātīr* with Āẕar Kaivān's predecessors

Farhang-e Moʾaiyad al-Fożalāʾ

[14] In 2020, new discoveries in Iranian scholarship enabled us to place the unique vocabulary of *Dasātīr* (i.e., the Āsmānī invented language), the myth of Prophet Meh Ābād, and the name of the Ābādīān dynasty in their proper position in Iranian studies: They are now understood not to be original products of Āẕar Kaivān but the product of its historical predecessors, dating from before 1519 or even earlier (prior to the birth of Āẕar Kaivān in 1533). Thus, a new framework for the Āẕar Kaivān school has emerged. ʿAlī Ašraf Ṣādeqī (Ṣādeghī 2020) has effectively dispelled the theory that Āẕar Kaivān was the original pioneer for the new vocabulary and new Iranian Prophets by proving that both concepts were already mentioned in the Persian-Persian dictionary *Farhang-e Moʾaiyid al-Fożalāʾ*, compiled by Maulānā Moḥammad Lād Dehlavī in India in 1519. As an example, Ṣādeqī has neatly quoted the definitive sentence below (Ṣādeghī 2020, 97):

[15] آبادیان امتان مه‌آباد را کویند و او اولین پیغمبری است که به عجم معبوث شده

> The Ābādīans are the followers of Great Ābād, he is the first prophet sent for the Persians. [16]

[17] Further research in *Farhang-e Moʾaiyid al-Fożalāʾ* may enable scholars to shed more light on the source of *Dasātīr* and its background, but we know little for certain about this dictionary or about its compiler except that he came from Delhi. One can see from this fact, however, that at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the type of vocabulary and the pseudo-Persian Prophets seen in the *Dasātīr* were already popular in Lodi-dynasty India (1451–1526) to the

4 One can compare this religious thought with the ideas in *Kāmarūpañcāśikā*, quoted in Šams al-Dīn Moḥammad ebn Maḥmūd Āmolī's (d. 1353) *Nafāʾis al-funūn wa-ʿarāʾis al-ʿuyūn*.

5 In the later Ešrāqī philosophers, including al-Shahrazūrī, the idea of tanāsokh and the cycles of time are emphasized. This point could not be considered in this paper.

extent that these words and concepts were recorded in an authentic Persian-Persian dictionary without any doubt as to whether they were genuine[6].

This discovery raises the additional question of whether Āẕar Kaivān emigrated from Iran to India or whether he was a native Indian who pretended to have been born in Estaḫr as a means of establishing his authority regarding ancient Iranian teachings. As an extreme possibility, one could even propose that the *Dasātīr* was written not by Āẕar Kaivān himself but rather by another writer in pre-Safavid Iran or pre-Mughal India. We cannot know whether these possibilities and assumptions are correct or not, but, as we will see in the next section, we cannot proceed with our study of Āẕar Kaivān without full awareness of the distinction between the *Dasātīr* and Āẕar Kaivān himself. [18]

Farhang-e Moʾaiyad al-Fożalāʾ contains another argument in favor of a Zoroastrian-focused approach, which is worth citing here to make a point. It was conventionally believed that the Zoroastrian Pahlavi arameograms were first mentioned in the Persian-Persian dictionary *Borhān-e qāteʿ* (compiled in 1652 in Hyderabad Deccan), but Ṣādeqī's recent article makes it clear that *Farhang-e Moʾaiyad al-Fożalāʾ*, not *Borhān-e qāteʿ*, is the oldest surviving Persian dictionary that contains a reference to such terms. In other words, Zoroastrian Pahlavi might have been known outside the Zoroastrian communities in northern India before 1519; in fact, its details might have been accepted as common knowledge among Persian intellectuals in pre-Mughal India. [19]

It is also clear that it was not the Mughal Emperor Akbar (r. 1556-1605) who first took the initiative to promote ancient Iranian culture in medieval India; rather, the linguistic characteristics of Zoroastrian writing were already well-known prior to Mughal India among the Persian-speaking Muslim intellectuals who were then scattered in northern India as a ruling élite. This is a likely background for the birth of the antiquated New Persian (so-called Āsmānī) language and the information about the Iranian Prophets expressed in the *Dasātīr*. [20]

Relationship with Ḥorufism

According to the prophecy of Meh Ābād in the first chapter of *Dasātīr*, the present Grand Period will pass, but everything will eventually return to the same form in the next Grand Period, as expressed below: [21]

Nāma-ye Meh Ābād 115: [22]

[23] میکوید که در آغاز مهین‌چرخ پیوستن اخیج سرکند و پیکرها پد آرد که در نکار و کار و کردار و کفتار مانند پیکر و دانش و کنش رفته مهین‌چرخ باشد نه انکه پیکرها پدید آید

He [Prophet Meh Ābād] says that, in the beginning of the Grand Period, combination of the elements will commence, and will produce figures that, in appearance, and in act, deeds and speech are similar to the figures, knowledge and deeds of the past Grand Period: not that the very same figures will be produced.[7] [24]

Nāma-ye Meh Ābād 117: [25]

[26] باید دانست که در انجام مهین‌چرخ جز دو تن که مرد و زن باشند باز نمانند و همه مردمان فرو روند

6 Sheffield points out the possibility that the language of Heaven is an imitation of Mohyī al-Dīn Golšanī's (1528-1604) Bāleybelen language in the *Kitāb Aṣl al-maqāsid wa-faṣl al-marāsid* (Sheffield 2014). However, *Farhang-e Mo'aiyid al-Fożalāʾ* was compiled before that work.

7 Translations by the author unless noted otherwise.

پس آغاز مردم از زن و مرد باز مانده شود و در مهین‌چرخ نو از نژاد ایشان پر شوند لادبرین به آباد پرمود
که آغاز مردمان از تو شود و همه از نژاد تو آیند و تو پدر همه باشی.

It is to be observed that at the end of a Grand Period, only two persons will be left, one man and one woman: all the rest of mankind will perish: And hence mankind will derive their origin from the woman and man who will have survived, and will propagate from whose origin in the new Grand Period. Hence, Lādbarīn [= God] says to Ābād, the origin of mankind is from thee, and all proceed from thy root, and thou art the father of them all (Mollā Fīrūz ebn-e Kāvūs 1888, 16). [27]

This is a striking statement. The text of *Dasātīr* does not give us any more details about the apparent fine line between the figures, knowledge and deeds of the next Grand Period being "similar to [those] of the past Grand Revolution" and their being "not […] the very same figures." Yet this story is notably incompatible with the teachings on transmigration that are seen in Hinduism (not reincarnation in Buddhism, which does not presuppose the existence of a soul), contrary to the expectations of certain scholars who had presumed that the *Dasātīr* was written in an Indian context. [28]

If, however, we compare this story with Ḥorūfist writings such as the *Maḥram-nāma*,[8] written by Saiyed Eshāq Astarābādī (d. after 1428), a personal pupil of Faẓlollāh Astarābādī (d. 1394), the historical context appears clearer. *Maḥram-nāma*'s story begins with the Grand Cycle of the world (*daur-e kollī*) of the eighth heaven, whose dominion on the earth lasts for 1360 years (= *ẓamān-e Š-S-Gh*) (Huart 1909, 14). The text says that when this Grand Cycle is completed, the next Grand Cycle will begin sequentially, and the same things, persons, and events (*muḥaddaṣ*) will be repeated in each cycle, to the extent that there is no discrepancy among the identical products in the different cycles. This consistency in the identification, however, is on the level of essence (*māhīya*), not on the level of mode (*kaifīya*) or characteristic (*ḫāṣṣīya*) (Huart 1909, 13–14). [29]

In this account, every prophet is identical to his duplicates in the other cycles, on the level of both form (*sūra*) and meaning (*maʿnā*). The first prophet, Ādam, will become the Perfect Man (*ensān-e kāmel*) at the great resurrection (*qeyāmat-e kobrā*), because he is the final end of the world (*ʿellat-e ġā'ī*); then, after his return to the next cycle, he will be the next Ādam again, wholly identical to the previous one. *Maḥram-nāma* explains this theory using the analogy of a circle (Huart 1909, 19). The starting point is the first prophet Ādam, the orbit represents the time course, and everything returns to the first point at the time of resurrection as in Figure 1. [30]

It should be remembered here that the concept of the Grand Cycle (*daur-e kollī*) in the *Maḥram-nāma* is meant to indicate similarity to the concept of the Grand Period (*mehīn čarḫ*) in the *Dasātīr*. This becomes clear when we compare "*negār va kār va kerdār va goftār*" in the *Dasātīr* with "the mode and characteristic" in the *Maḥram-nāma.* As it is related, moreover, the first prophet, Ādam (Ābād), returns at the end of time as the next founder of the next cycle of the world, as expressed in the passage from the *Dasātīr* that reads, "Ābād, the origin of mankind is from thee, and all proceed from thy root, and thou art the father of them all." These facts shed light on the historical context behind the *Dasātīr*, as this element has been combined with the concept of the "language of Heaven" to construct the *Dasātīr* as a new sacred text influenced by the Ḥorūfis. [31]

It may be worth pointing out the problem of Mahdī here. In Iranian thought between the [32]

8 About this text, see Huart (1909).

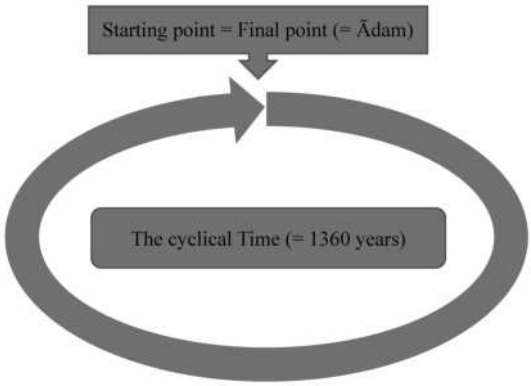

Figure 1

thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, the concept of Mahdī was particularly widespread. In the Āẕar Kaivān literature, however, we find no mention of Mahdī (in the context of Islam) or of Sōšāns (in the context of Zoroastrianism) appearing at the end of time. One way to understand this structure of thought is by considering that, if the *Dasātīr* was dependent on Iranian thought from before 1519, it was likely linked to one of the branches of Ḥorūfism, in which one could well imagine a cyclical world without the need for a savior.

Relationship with Zoroastrianism

According to the Iranian historians of the twentieth century, Zoroastrianism undoubtedly exerted the most significant influence on the Āẕar Kaivān school in spite of certain inconsistencies between the Āẕar Kaivān school and Zoroastrianism that cannot be overlooked. Yet of all the traditional New Persian Zoroastrian texts, the literature produced by the Āẕar Kaivān school quotes only four books: *Zarātošt-nāma*, *Čangragāča-nāma*, *Ardā-vīrāf-nāma*, and *Ṣad dar-e nasr*, all of which were already well-known to Persian-speaking Muslim intellectuals by the seventeenth century (table 4) (Sheffield 2014). Thus, there is no direct evidence to prove that the Āẕar Kaivān school was an heir to traditional Zoroastrianism. [33]

Another fact reinforces our skepticism here: the *Dasātīr* recommends burial of the dead in water (Mollā Fīrūz ebn-e Kāvūs 1818, 34), whereas Zoroastrians never practiced this type of burial. Later generations' understanding of the Āẕar Kaivān school's place in intellectual history is also relevant: the Āẕar Kaivān school's literature was understood and copied by Muslim copyists only in the context of Islamic mysticism. No Zoroastrian priest is known to have copied these books until the *Dasātīr* suddenly became famous—and later notorious—in the early nineteenth century. [34]

Table 4 Quotations from traditional Zoroastrian New Persian Literature in books of the Āẕar Kaivān School.

Title	Quoted Zoroastrian Persian Book	Part
Dasātīr	*Zarātošt-nāma*	Ch. 13
Šārestān-e čahār čaman	*Ardā-vīrāf-nāma*	First Čaman
Dabestān-e maẕāheb	*Ṣad dar-e nasr* (full version)	vol. 1, chap. 14

Although the ideas expressed in *Dasātīr* might have been influenced by some elements of Zoroastrianism that were current in fifteenth-century Iran or India, it is important to bear in mind that, at this stage, the possibility of a direct relationship between the Āẕar Kaivān school and Zoroastrianism is more remote than previously assumed. [35]

Summary of Findings about Āẕar Kaivān's Predecessors

- New information from *Farhang-e Mo'aiyid al-Fożalā'* shows that the Āsmānī language and the New Iranian Prophets mentioned in the *Dasātīr* originated prior to 1519 in pre-Mughal India or pre-Safavid Iran. [36]
- The concepts of cyclical time and transmigration expressed in the *Dasātīr* were probably inherited from Ḥorūfism in fifteenth-century Timurid Iran. [37]
- Thus, at least a prototype for *Dasātīr* was written in fifteenth- or sixteenth-century Iran or India, before Āẕar Kaivān's time, by anonymous Persian-speaking intellectual(s). This supposed text represents the origin of the Āẕar Kaivān school, but it might not be an original work by Āẕar Kaivān. [38]
- Quotations from Zoroastrian literature in the texts of the Āẕar Kaivān school are limited to those within the scope of the New Persian Zoroastrian literature that was already well-known among Persian-speaking Muslims. We cannot confirm any direct relationship between the Āẕar Kaivān school and Zoroastrianism, although we cannot rule out the possibility. [39]

Comparison of the *Dasātīr* with Āẕar Kaivān's Contemporaries

Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro

Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro is a work certainly written by Āẕar Kaivān and accompanied by a commentary by his disciple Mūbed Ḫodāǧūy. It differs greatly from the *Dasātīr* in both style and content. It avoids enigmatic language and follows a standard style of New Persian poetry that was consistently used by Persian Sufis when expressing their mystical experiences through metaphors. This document provides us with two new pieces of relevant information. First, according to Mūbed Ḫodāǧūy's commentary, Āẕar Kaivān considered himself a profound mystic with deep comprehension of the four mystical worlds: the world of dreams (*ruʾyā*), the world of occultation (*ġaibat*), the world of awakening (*ṣaḥv*), and the world of withdrawal (*ḫalʾ*) (see table 5).[9] Second, *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro* expresses a universalist philosophy and advocates for the oneness of all religions, in sharp contrast to the fierce yearning for ancient Iran that is expressed in the *Dasātīr*. [40]

Table 5 Āẕar Kaivān's mystical four steps in *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro*.

1st Step	Dreams	The world of light, training in abstinence
2nd Step	Occultation	Going to the world of emanations

9 I believe that this text (or poem) is independent of the Zoroastrian Pahlavi work *Ardā Wīrāz Nāmag*. Most likely, *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro* belongs not to traditional Zoroastrian literature but rather to the genre of Islamic mystical literature.

Table 5 Āẕar Kaivān's mystical four steps in *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro*.

3rd Step	Awakening	Being elevated to the higher worlds
4th Step	Withdrawal	Departing from the elements of flesh and then returning to the flesh again

This of course raises an important question: if Āẕar Kaivān is the real author of both *Dasātīr* and *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro*, why do the two documents express such contradictory sentiments? Were there two persons with the same name writing at the same time? It is hypothetically possible that Āẕar Kaivān had a dual personality, although this is not likely, given that Āẕar Kaivān was an able leader of his intellectual school, respected by his disciples up to his death and beyond. In any case, this discrepancy poses a considerable problem that must be confronted when dealing with these two texts attributed to Āẕar Kaivān. Perhaps his other three texts, *Āʾīna-ye Eskandar*, *Taḫt-e ṭāqdīs*, and *Partov-e farhang* (see table 2), will allow us to see changes over time in the course of his spiritual development. [41]

Table 6 Comparison of the *Dasātīr* and *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro*.

	Dasātīr	***Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro***
Literary Form	Prophecies of (pseudo-) ancient Iranian Prophets	Poems about the heavenly journey of a mystic
Descriptive Style	Pseudo-historical biography	Scenery perceived in the mind
Language	the language of Heaven with New Persian translation avoiding Arabic lexemes	normal New Persian (including Arabic loanwords)
Nativism/ Universalism	Iranian nativism	Oneness of all religions (universalism)

As we have already discussed in Chapter 2, however, recent studies have shown that at least the vocabulary of *Dasātīr* was in fact formed before 1519 and that Āẕar Kaivān might have encountered the *Dasātīrī* vocabulary or the already-written text of the *Dasātīr* during his time in Iran or India (this point will be discussed later). One might imagine, moreover, that Āẕar Kaivān would have received what is written in the *Dasātīr* (if there is any *Dasātīr*) at face value, then based his own unique school of thought on it, incorporating heavy influence from Persian Sufism as well. [42]

Because the *Dasātīr* was more influential than *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro* in the later years of the Āẕar Kaivān school, a skeptic might suggest that the *Dasātīr* was written later than the *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro*, which would mean that the discrepancies between the documents are due to the passage of time and the evolution of Āẕar Kaivān's thought. Based on this assumption, the *Dasātīr* would likely reflect the mature thought of Āẕar Kaivān. [43]

However, there are some arguments against this position. First, the *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro* is unlikely to have been written after the *Dasātīr* because the former postulates the latter. For example, the *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro* states that, in the first step, Āẕar Kaivān pursued "the way of Pahlavi" (*rāh-e Pahlavī*, 1-1-3), in which he kept away all passion (*hama ḫāheš*, 1-1-6) by [44]

following the teachings of his predecessors (*be āyīn-e pīš*, 1-1-6).[10] His pupil Mūbed Ḫodāğūy comments that "the way of Pahlavi" means "the way of the Ešrāqī school in Persia" (*tarīq-e ḥokamāʾ-e ešrāqīya-ye Pārs*), but says nothing about what these "teachings of his predecessors" might contain, although this is a favorite phrase of Āẕar Kaivān. This might indicate an Āẕar Kaivān context for the Ešrāqī school and its "predecessors," and suggests that, while the Āẕar Kaivān school includes the Ešrāqī school, the Ešrāqī school may precede the Āẕar Kaivān school. From this point of view, those "predecessors" may have been the predecessors not only of the Āẕar Kaivān school but also of the Ešrāqī school, namely the ancient Iranian sages. This expression in the *Dasātīr* might therefore refer to the original prophets.

In order to test more thoroughly the possibility that *Dasātīr* may have preceded *Ğām-e Kai Ḫosro*, we must search for evidence among the 'ancient' vocabulary of *Ğām-e Kai Ḫosro*. The following is a brief description of Āẕar Kaivān's spiritual journey among the planets at the third step: he starts from the first sphere of moon (*falk-e avval va Qamar*, 3-5-4), then visits the second sphere of Mercury (*ğahān-e kabūd, falk-e dovom va ḥażrat-e ʿOtāred*, 3-6-1), the third sphere of Venus (*ğahān-e sepīd, falak-e Zohra*, 3-7-1), the fourth sphere of Sun (*ğahān-e bozorg, falak-e rābeʿ*, 3-8-1), the fifth sphere of Mars (*šahr-e dīgar…sorḫ, falak-e Merrīḫ*, 3-9-1), the sixth sphere of Jupiter (*ğahān-e kabūd, falak-e moštarī*, 3-10-1), the seventh sphere of Saturn (*ğahān-e siyāh, falak-e ḥażrat-e Zoḥal*, 3-11-1), and the eighth sphere of the stars (*ğahān-e dīgar, falak-e nohom…kavākeb*, 3-12-1).[11] Each sphere is designed systematically with its own ectoplasm. It is this evidence to which I now turn: Note that the ectoplasm of the "blue Jupiter" is "*vaḫšūr*," which is a typical *Dasātīrian* word for an ancient Iranian prophet. Not only that, but the ectoplasm of the seventh sphere (Saturn) is "mašāyḫ va aṣḥāb-e taṣavvof," a typical Arabic term that refers to Sufi sages, while the name of the ectoplasm of the eighth heaven has no known meaning. [45]

This structure indicates both Āẕar Kaivān's interest in *Dasātīr*'s artificial Iranian history and his understanding of the hierarchy of teachers, namely, his belief that the Sufis or the Ešrāqī school are more authoritative than the *Dasātīrī* ancient Iranian prophets. One could propose that the motive underlying his interest in *Dasātīr* was to call attention to Persian Sufism or Ešrāqī philosophy. Thus, he introduced the concepts in the *Dasātīr* to his school for a particular purpose, and only insofar as they were useful for his personal aims. [46]

Āẕar Kaivān's Encounter with the Dasātīr

After all this discussion about Āẕar Kaivān's contemporaries, it still remains to be shown when and where the *Dasātīr* text was formed, who had written it, and indeed when and how Āẕar Kaivān encountered it. Although this issue cannot be settled at the present stage of study, there are a number of notable possibilities which might have a significant impact on both Zoroastrian and Āẕar Kaivān studies. [47]

The following is my estimated, approximate chronology of the formation process of the *Dasātīr* text and the early Āẕar Kaivān school. [48]

1. The *Dasātīrī* vocabulary was formed in dependence on the knowledge (or partly on the misunderstanding) of Zoroastrian Pahlavi literature before 1519, probably in northern India. [49]

2. A prototype of the *Dasātīr* text was written in dependence on the *Dasātīrī* vocabulary [50]

10 See Mīr Ašraf ʿAlī (ed.) (1848, 3–4).
11 See Mīr Ašraf ʿAlī (ed.) (1848, 34–40).

sometime after 1519, probably in northern India, by anonymous author(s).

3. As mentioned above, we are not sure whether Āẕar Kaivān really came from Iran or whether he was a native Indian who only pretended to be an Iranian to lend authority to his Persianate religious thought. [51]

4. If Āẕar Kaivān was originally Iranian, theoretically it is possible that the factor enticing him to emigrate from Iran to northern India in the late sixteenth century was not the syncretic atmosphere of Mughal Empire but the fame of the *Dasātīr* itself. In this case, he formed his own Sufi order in Iran, then came to India for the *Dasātīr*. [52]

5. If Āẕar Kaivān was a native Indian, one hypothesis regarding his background is that the real author of the *Dasātīr* text was his master, father, or a related person with a deep understanding of the Zoroastrian sacred book *Zand*. In this case, Āẕar Kaivān would have been an orthodox successor of Indian interest in the ancient Iranian culture, one who happened to be attracted to Persian mysticism. If we take this reasoning further, we can even postulate that the headquarters of this Persianate Indian tradition was at Patna, the city of Āẕar Kaivān's death. [53]

6. It is even possible that the last editor of the present *Dasātīr* text might have been Āẕar Kaivān himself. But the difficulty with this explanation is that, within his only extant text *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro*, we do not find any reflection of Āẕar Kaivān's knowledge of Zoroastrian *Zand* literature, which was indispensable for writing the *Dasātīr* text. [54]

Therefore, calling something "the Āẕar Kaivān school" does more to obscure than to explain anything. It is inappropriate to apply this term with the meaning that Persianate intellectual activity was started by a person who called himself Āẕar Kaivān. He is not a *pioneer*, but rather an *integrator* who combined an inherited linguistic interest in ancient Iran with his own religious mysticism. Only in this sense can his disciples be called the "Āẕar Kaivān school." [55]

Summary of Findings about Āẕar Kaivān's Contemporaries

- A comparison of the contents of the *Dasātīr* and the *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro* seems to suggest that the two texts cannot have been written by the same author. [56]
- Āẕar Kaivān certainly could have encountered the *Dasātīrī* vocabulary or even a prototype of the *Dasātīr* text during his time in Iran or in India. He could have copied the *Dasātīr* as written, then described his own mystical experiences achieved through the influence of the *Dasātīr* in his own work the *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro*. [57]
- From the perspective of the pupils of Āẕar Kaivān who formed a school under their leader's name in early seventeenth-century India, both texts deserve to be revered as the school's documents of origin. Because of its style, however, the *Dasātīr* is more focused than the *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro*, which has led to the mistaken belief that the *Dasātīr* was also written by Āẕar Kaivān, including its vocabulary. [58]

Comparison of the *Dasātīr* with Āẕar Kaivān's Successors

Four Short Treatises

Among the Āẕar Kaivān school's six other extant treatises (see table 1), we can exclude [59]

Šārestān-e čahār čaman and *Dabestān-e maẕāheb* from our scope, as both are Iran-centric historiographies discussing historical events of the seventeenth century. The remaining four titles, *Ḫʷīš-tāb*, *Zardošt Afšār*, *Zāyanda Rūd*, and *Zūra-ye bāstānī*, are relatively short treatises supposedly written by Āẕar Kaivān's disciples.

If the *Dasātīr* and *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro* were written by Āẕar Kaivān, these four short treatises show only that his pupils inherited and passed along their master's original ideas without making their own original contributions. If the *Dasātīr* and *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro* were written by different authors, on the other hand, the four short treatises still have a great deal of value for modern scholars researching the Āẕar Kaivān school. These treatises show how the pupils, under the mistaken impression that both texts had been written by their master, struggled to make their two vastly different foundational texts coherent and to smooth over the discrepancies between them. [60]

If this assumption is correct, then the four short treatises are evidence not only of the attempt to harmonize several divergent ideas within the Āẕar Kaivān school but also of the connections among the enigmatic activity in the Persian language, the Iranian prophets, and Ḥorūfism expressed in the Dasātīr and Persian Sufism and the Ešrāqī philosophy expressed in the *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro*. [61]

Although the format of each of these four treatises seems to be a faithful imitation of that of the Dasātīr, their contents require more subtle examination. If one compares the contents of the *Dasātīr* with those of the four short treatises, one finds that the short treatises lack the Iran-centrism and antiquated New Persian (so-called Āsmānī) vocabulary that characterize the *Dasātīr*, leaving a strong impression that these four treatises were written for a different purpose from that of the *Dasātīr*. I will say more about the characteristics of these four treatises in the following section, but a complete study of all four lies outside the scope of this article, and we must limit ourselves to exploring only *Ḫʷīš-tāb* and *Zūra-ye Bāstānī* in greater detail. [62]

From Āẕar Kaivān to Kai Ḫosro Esfandīyār

After Āẕar Kaivān's death in 1618, his son (we do not know whether he is a real son or a disciple trusted like a son) Kai Ḫosro Esfandīyār gradually took on a leadership role within the Āẕar Kaivān school. Much must have happened internally and externally during this leadership change. One clue to the events of this time is the fact that three brief treatises (*Ḫʷīš-tāb*, *Zardošt Afšār* and *Zāyanda Rūd*) by Āẕar Kaivān's disciples are all said to have been "translated from (pseudo-)ancient Persian by order of Kai Ḫosro Esfandīyār," and all of them are quoted in *Šārestān-e čahār čaman* by *Farzāna Bahrām ebn Farhād Šīrāzī* (d. 1624).[12] Therefore, we may conclude that those three articles were written between 1618 and 1624. Perhaps it was during this time that Kai Ḫosro Esfandīyār became recognized as the new leader of the Āẕar Kaivān school. [63]

As for his religious ideas, it appears that Kai Ḫosro Esfandeyār deviated from Āẕar Kaivān's ideas as expressed in the *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro* and, over time, gravitated more and more toward the thinking expressed by the *Dasātīrian* prophets and the ideas of the Ešrāqī philosophy.[13] The Ešrāqī philosophy is only a nominal component of the *Dasātīr*, where the references to it functioned as an effective way to re-encode the contents of Āẕar Kaivān's own mystical thought into literature for the next generation. [64]

It is worthwhile to examine the *Ḫʷīš-tāb* and the *Zūra-ye Bāstānī* in particular among the four [65]

12 Tavakoli-Targhi (2001).

13 On the Ešrāqī philosophy in India, see Karīmī Zanǧānī Asl ([1387] 2008); Subūt ([1385] 2007).

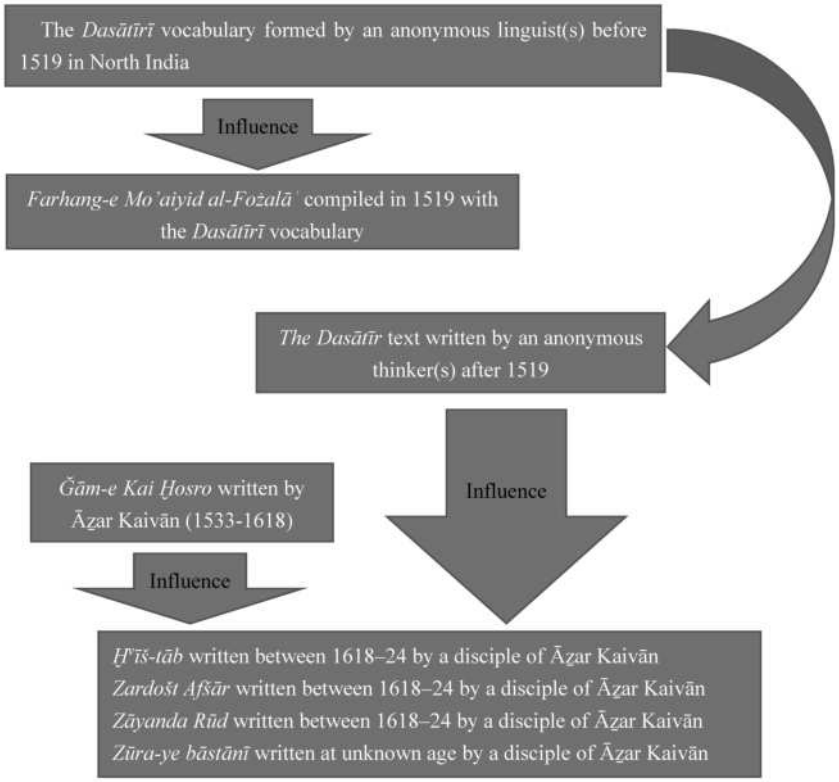

Figure 2 Proposed chronological order in which the extant texts of the Āẕar Kaivān School were written.

short treatises, because, as I understand them, the *Zardošt Afšār* and the *Zāyanda Rūd* can be considered together with *Ḫᵛīš-tāb*, as all three deal with the same topic and exhibit the same style, which suggests that they may have been written in the same intellectual atmosphere or even by the same author. The *Zūra-ye Bāstānī*, on the other hand, is written in a different style, which shows almost without doubt that this treatise represents an isolated phenomenon among the other extant Āẕar Kaivān texts.

Ḫᵛīš-tāb

A major question in current research into the Āẕar Kaivān school is to what degree the four short treatises were really influenced by the imaginary history of the *Dasātīr* or by Āẕar Kaivān's personal mysticism. At the core of this issue is the essential question of whether all of them inherited traditions from both sources, or whether some of the four short treatises inherited from only one source. If all of them inherited the same elements from the *Dasātīr* and Āẕar Kaivān's thought, this confirms the general belief that the Āẕar Kaivān school remained a monolithic organization after the death of its integrator. If not, however, this opens up the possibility of diffusion within the school, which even initially did not have a well-organized system of thought. [66]

The following is a text excerpt and its English translation from the first part of *Ḫᵛīš-tāb* (1878, 2–3). [67]

[68] چنین کوید ملازم ستاره سینه عقلا و خادم مخادیم یعنی فضلا و حکما موبد هوش که خلیفهٔ شیخ الانبیا و امام رسل مظهر موعود کخیسرو اسفندیار ابن قائم مقام استاد پیمبران و جانشین پیشوای وخشوران وخشور باستحقاق و پیمبر باتفاق اهل انصاف آذرکیوان بدین بنده که از بدو امکان خانه زاد این طبقه عالیه است و نجات ابد هم از بندکی این درکاه میجوید فرمود که رساله حکیم بالغ خرد تمام هوش پیشتاب را که از راه یافتکان انجمن انجم فروغ شاکردان حضرت نبی کامل و رسول فاضل امام طریق یقین و راهبر راه دین ساسان پنجم بوده و در عهد خسرو عادل و شهریار باذن خسرو پرویز بفرمان قدر مقدار قضا اقتضای آنحضرت بفارسی قدیم بتالیف آن صحیفه والا پرداخته بزبان سروش‌وش حضرت شاهنشاهی بخطاب شریف منیف کرزن دانش سرافراز شده بلغه متعارف این عصر بعبارتی واضح ترجمه نمائی تا طلاب فواید را منفعت آن عام کردد و این فرمان والاشان سروشی‌نشانرا بکوش هوش شنیده اطاعت را خدمت بانجام رسانید و حسب‌الامر عالی که ترجمه امر اول تواند بود موسوم بخویشتاب کردانید و آن نام آتشکدة بود که بی‌توجه فروزنده و هیمه دائم‌الاوقات آتش در آن اشتعال داشت و آنرا خودسوز نیز کفتندی. ستایش آن در نامة رسول دیوبند طهمورث آمده:

[69] نماز بر سَوْسَوْیَسْت‌تان را خوش خویشتاب

[70] یعنی قبلة طاعات نوریست شما را خوب موسوم بخویشتاب کو خود تابد که آن بذات خود بی مدد افروزنده وهیمه منور است

[71] زی سُوئی شو کاهَرْمَن سُوزیست خودسوز

[72] به طرف نوری کرامی که او محرق شیطانست و بذات خود میضئ بعد ازین تقریر ترجمه و تفسیر این کتاب آفتاب تابست

[73] اول: شت وخشور وخشوران برکزیده یزدان خدیو جهان‌راهنمای مردمان مه‌آباد فرماید هر هستیداری که هست یا هستی او متعلّق است بدیکری تا اکر نبودن آن دیکر فرض کنند نیستی آن هستی لازم آید.

> [Preface] It is said that the companion of the century, the wise one and the servant of scholars, Mūbed Hūš, who is deputy to the head of the prophets and Imam of the messengers, the chosen Kai Ḫosro Esfandīyār, who is the son of the deputy of the master prophet and the justified successor of the leader of the prophet of prophets, Āẕar Kaivān, ordered this servant [Mūbed Hūš], who has been a member of this exalted Sufi order, and who also seeks salvation from the service of the threshold [of the Sufi temple], to read the treatise of the Reasonable Wise One, the perfect Prophet and the Excellent Messenger, the Imam of the Path of Faith and the Leader of the Path of Religion, Sāsān the Fifth of the time of the just King and generous ruler Ḫosro Parviz, because of whose command this book was written in the ancient Persian, and became known as the high and noble script *Garzan-e Dāneš*, commanded me to translate [this book] into a clear formulation so that students can benefit from it. The translator [Mūbed Hūš] heard this lofty angelic command through his mind, performed obedience, and according to the lofty command that translation may be the supreme duty, he [Kai Ḫosro Esfandeyār] called it [the translated book] *Ḫᵛīš-tāb*. This is the name of a certain fire temple, in which the ever-burning firewood blazed. That (fire temple) was also called "Ḫod-sūz (self-burning)." In the book of the demon-binding prophet Tahmūraṯ it is mentioned that [74]

> The direction of prayer is good, in the direction of *Ḫᵛīš-tāb*, the direction of prayer of worship is a light that is well-known to you as *Ḫᵛīš-tāb*, which shines by itself, which by its own nature is flickering and burning wood without help. Turn to [the light] that Ahriman burns. It is self-burning; turn to a light that lights the devil and is radiant in its own nature. [75]

This quote is the end of the passage on the introduction translation and interpretation of this book; the next lines begin to convey the teachings as follows: [76]

> Chapter 1: The prophet of prophets Meh Ābād [not Mahābād as is generally called, but Meh Ābād accurately] commanded that every being who is or whose being is dependent on another, (and) if the non-being of that other is conceivable, then whose non-being is necessary […][14] [77]

What can we take away from this introductory passage? First and foremost, it shows that Mūbed Hūš strictly maintained the line of succession from master to disciple, starting with Āẕar Kaivān and passing through Kai Ḫosro Esfandīyār, especially with regard to their characteristic preference for the Ešrāqī terms. It is less certain when and how Mūbed Hūš introduced *Dasātīrian* ideas into *Ḫᵛīš-tāb*, given that the fictitious Ābādian dynasty of prophets first appears in *Farhang-e Mo'aiyid al-Fożalāʾ*; more information about this dynasty was probably added in the *Dasātīr* after 1519, but it is completely absent from *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro*, which propagates Āẕar Kaivānian philosophical ideas in the names of Āẕar Kaivān and Kai Ḫosro Esfandīyār. This is the first evidence of an exchange, or fusion, of ideas between *Dasātīrian* prophets and Āẕar Kaivānian mysticism. [78]

Second, the above passage shows that the philosophical ideas of the Ešrāqī school, the vocabulary of which is only nominally present in both the *Dasātīr* and *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro*, are [79]

14 For a German translation of the first half of *Ḫᵛīš-tāb*, see Tavana (2014).

well-organized among the works of the next generation of the Āẕar Kaivān school. While both works seem to introduce vocabulary that emphasizes their ancient Iranian origin, *Ḫᵛīš-tāb*'s catechism mainly reflects an Aristotelian context, which is more orthodox from the viewpoint of Islamic philosophy. In contrast, there is no trace of the concept of transmigration, as in the *Dasātīr*.

To sum up, the special importance of *Ḫᵛīš-tāb* is that this text is the first confluence point, [80]
or *majma' al-bahrain,* at which the stream of *Dasātīrian* references to ancient prophets and the stream of *Ğām-e Kai Ḫosro*'s Persian Sufism are merged in a document with a philosophical style. What is certain is that the Āẕar Kaivān school viewed from posterity, especially from the viewpoint of Corbin, was formed at this stage, after the death of Āẕar Kaivān.

Zūra-ye Bāstānī

When Mānekjī Limjī Hātariyā first published Āẕar Kaivān's disciples' treatises at Bombay in [81]
1846, he included only three texts in his anthology: the *Ḫᵛīš-tāb*, the *Zardošt Afšār*, and the *Zenda Rūd* (= *Zāyanda Rūd*) (Hātariyā 1846). Thirty-two years later, Mīrzā Bahrām Rostam Naṣrābādī published another anthology called the *Ā'īn-e Hūšang*, in which the number of treatises was increased from three to four by the addition of *Zūra-ye Bāstānī* (Mīrzā Bahrām Rostam Naṣrābādī 1878). As we can see from this series of publications, the precise identity of *Zūra-ye Bāstānī* would have been a matter of controversy for scholars studying Āẕar Kaivān in earlier decades. Yet there has been no attempt to understand or interpret these four treatises by the later Āẕar Kaivān school in early seventeenth-century India from a wide variety of approaches.

The following is a Roman transcription and English translation of the first part of *Zūra-ye* [82]
Bāstānī. Many questions about the nature of this text remain to be answered even within the context of the four short treatises, if we can even determine whether this text belongs to the Āẕar Kaivān school or not.

[83] زورة باستانی شت وخشوران وخشور سفیتمان زردشت

[84] چنین کوید آذرپژوه که من از اسپهانم و از نژاد کیومرث از ساسانیان از اردشیر نیکوکار و روزی مرا پادشاه دادکر پور قباد ساسانیان که او را انوشیروان کویند در پیش خود نشاند و فرمود که دانای ایران که بزرگ‌مهر است پیر شده است و آنچه میخواهم از او نمی‌آید و او از تو بهتر شاکردی نیست میخواهم که تو را کاری بفرمایم کفتم پادشاه تویی و ما بندة فرمان کفت ما را سخنی چند هست از سخنهای ابراهیم زردشت که پیغامبر ایران بوده است و دانستن آن نه آسان و بر همه دانشورن دشوار است که سخن‌های چندست سربسته که بزبان پارسی پهلوی نوشته و نزد شاه هند فرستاده بوده است و نام آن زوره است و در اینچند روز پادشاه هند آنرا بمن رسانیده است و من خواهان آنم که آن سخنها را روشن کردانی تا همه بدانند و ترا مزدی و یادکار باشد کفتم آن زوره کدام است

[85] نامه را برداشت و بمن داد در او نکاه کردم شناختم که چه میکوید چیزی چند بر نوشته نزد خسرو بردم او را خوش آمد و بخشش فرمود و نامه دیکری آورد و بمن داد که این را دهقان خداپرست نزد من نوشته است اما سخن او دراز است آنرا کوتاه کردان و در سرانجام آنچه نوشته بنویس همچنان کردم تا خدا مرا مزد دهد ابراهیم در آغاز نوشته بود.

[86] که کیتی به بنیاد یکی و بنهاد دو من ایدون کمانم که چرخ و ستاره نمونه هامون و یزدان و فرشتکان باشد [...] (Mīrzā Bahrām Rostam Naṣrābādī 1878, 149–50)

> *Ancient Chapter* of the holy ancient Iranian Prophet of Prophets Abraham Zoroaster: [87]
>
> Āẕar Pažūh says: "I am from Esfahan and a descendant of Kai Kaiumarṣ from the Sasanian dynasty from Ardašīr. One day the Great King Khosrow, the Immortal Soul, invited me in front of him and told me that the Iranian sage Bozorgmehr had become so old that I cannot expect much from him. You are the best of his disciples, thus I hope to assign you a task." I answered that "you are the Great King and I am a slave." His command was as follows: "we have several words of Abraham Zoroaster who was the Iranian Prophet. But that knowledge is not easy to access, and is difficult for all scholars, because it is written in Pahlavi-Persian. It was sent to the Indian King and its name is *Zūra*. Recently the Indian King sent it to me and I want to make its contents so clear that everyone can understand it. You will get a reward and a keepsake." I answered, "which is that *Zūra*?" He had the book brought and gave it to me. I read it and understood what was written. I brought it to Khosrow and he was pleased and gave me a reward. He brought another book and gave it to me and said, "this is a book sent to me by an Iranian magnate, but it is too long. Make it short and write its quintessence." Then I did so, and the King gave me a reward. Abraham [Zoroaster] wrote at the beginning that [88]
>
> The world is by one foundation and two principles (?). I believe that the sphere and star are specimens of Hamun (?) and God and angels. [89]

The translated passage above is only a short section of the treatise explaining the pseudo-historical context of the text as well as the first lines of the section explaining its religious thought, but I believe this sample is sufficient to allow us to draw some conclusions. Āẕar Pažūh, the presumed author and the self-described best pupil of the Sasanian chancellor Bozorgmehr, as well as the presumed author of two other texts (see table 2), briefly describes the conversation between Khosrow I and himself during which the King of Kings gives him the task of translating Abraham Zoroaster's book from "Pahlavi-Persian" into a language more commonly used at that time. Comparing this with the opening section of *Ḫᵛīš-tāb*, it is quite curious that we cannot find the names of Sasan the Fifth, Āẕar Kaivān, or even Kai Ḫosro Esfandīyār, who make regular appearances in later Āẕar Kaivān literature. [90]

Instead of these names, we find Zoroaster, identified with the Semitic Prophet Abraham, as the author of a sacred "Pahlavi-Persian" text named *Zūra*. This identification seems curious at first glance but was popular in the medieval Islamic world. The chief thing to notice here is that this identification is never seen elsewhere in Āẕar Kaivān literature. One might therefore suppose that this text escaped the influence of *Dasātīrian* prophets, with its tendency to embrace more orthodox Islamicized Zoroastrianism. [91]

In the first part of Abraham Zoroaster's document, the prophet describes his own worldview, which cannot by any means be interpreted as a branch of the Ešrāqī philosophy. Furthermore, there are considerable differences between Abraham Zoroaster's thought and Āẕar Kaivān's mysticism in the theoretical domain which require some explanation. In this regard, one might imagine that the only similarity between the two is the frame-story format of the late Sasanian periods. Yet the emphasis on Zoroaster, even if he is "Abraham" Zoroaster, and the unique worldview of "one foundation and two principles (?)" leave some room for the [92]

possibility of influence from more orthodox Islamicized Zoroastrianism, which was unrelated to Āẕar Kaivān. If this text can still be said to belong to the corpus of Āẕar Kaivān literature, its development must have been significantly different from that of other works.

In short, although there is vanishingly little evidence about the internal development of the later Āẕar Kaivān school, we can see that *Zūra-ye Bāstānī* may be not a direct product of Āẕar Kaivānīs, but rather a document influenced by the Āẕar Kaivānian format reflecting a revival of some kind of Zoroastrian literary style in Mughal India. Only further study and the discovery of additional texts, whose titles are listed in tables 2 and 3, will enable scholars to clarify the situation. [93]

Summary of Findings about Āẕar Kaivān's Successors

- The late sixteenth or early seventeenth century was a turning point for the Āẕar Kaivān school because of its members' immigration from Safavid Iran to Mughal India (if it actually happened) and the transfer of leadership from Āẕar Kaivān to Kai Ḫosro Esfandīyār. [94]
- In *Ḫʸīš-tāb* (and *Zardošt Afšār* and *Zāyanda Rūd* as well), the Ešrāqī philosophy appears to dominate, although the format used by the *Dasātīrian* prophets continues to prevail. But the *Dasātīrian* concepts of transmigration and Iran-centrism seem to have disappeared with time. [95]
- In *Zūra-ye Bāstānī*, the absence of references to the *Dasātīr* and *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro* demonstrates the existence of divergent paths of religious development within the framework of the later Āẕar Kaivān school. This text is concerned with Islamicized Zoroastrianism within the framework of the Āẕar Kaivānian format. [96]

Conclusion

This brief survey has made the origin and the later development of the "Āẕar Kaivān school" fairly clear. Before 1519, anonymous linguist(s) in pre-Mughal India—whether Muslim or Zoroastrian is unknown—took the initiative to create the *Dasātīrī* vocabulary, or a prototype of the *Dasātīr* text, based on their access to Zoroastrian sacred literature and a good deal of imaginative speculation about ancient Iranian history. [97]

Some years later, around the middle of the sixteenth century, Persian Sufis in Estaḫr or Persianate Sufis in India (probably at Patna) used the basic form of this *Dasātīr* as a framework into which they incorporated their own mysticism. Leaving out the religious teaching regarding transmigration and the Āsmānī language, they made much use of the names of imaginary ancient prophets and Ešrāqī terms and combined them with their mystical thought. The leader of this group was Āẕar Kaivān, and his book *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro* became the authoritative text for this group, serving as a pseudo-scripture along with the *Dasātīr*. If he was originally from Estaḫr, this group emigrated from Safavid Iran to Mughal India in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. If he was originally from northern India, this group only pretended to emigrate from Iran for the sake of their reputation. [98]

At some stage, perhaps after the death of Āẕar Kaivān at Patna in 1618, a member of this group, probably inspired by Āẕar Kaivān's successor Kai Ḫosro Esfandīyār, tried to develop a more systematic religious thought by producing the New Persian books the *Ḫʸīš-tāb*, the *Zardošt Afšār*, and the *Zāyanda Rūd* between 1618 and 1624. Those texts, however, did not [99]

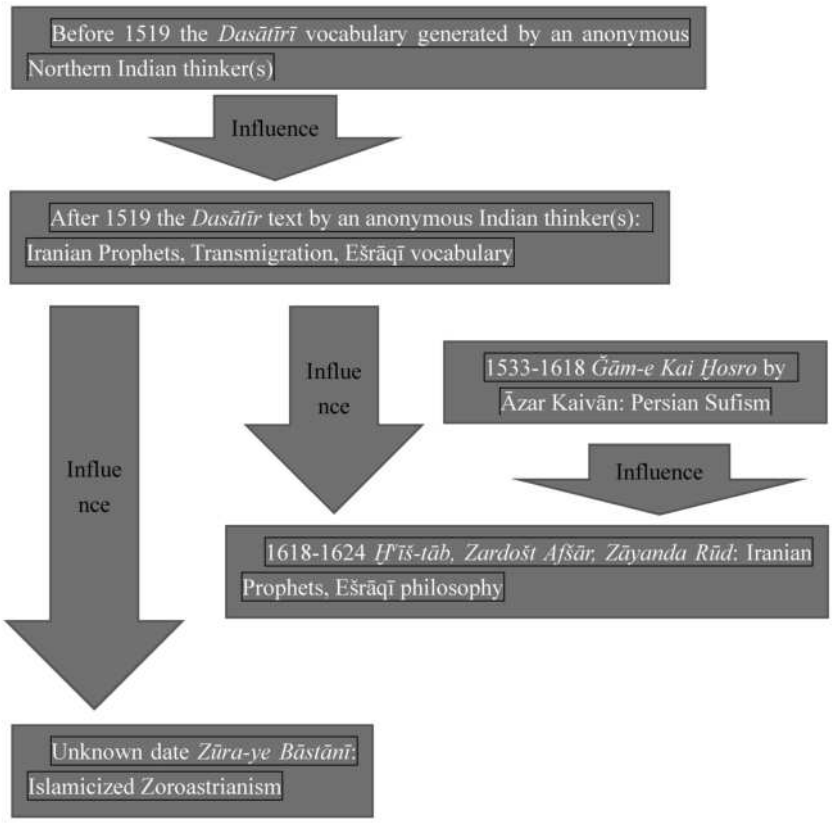

Figure 3 Diagram depicting the paths of influence among the six extant texts of the Āẕar Kaivān School.

exactly match either the *Dasātīr* or the *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro*. The main points of these three texts depend explicitly on Ešrāqī philosophy, with occasional mentions of the *Dasātīrian* Prophets. As a result of this drastic change, the group's religious thought became more well-organized.

An isolated phenomenon among the later Āẕar Kaivānian texts is the *Zūra-ye Bāstānī*. It [100] is unique in that it does not appear to contain any influence from the *Dasātīr* or *Ǧām-e Kai Ḫosro*; instead, it is filled with elements of Islamicized Zoroastrianism and its own unique vocabulary, as if the *Dasātīr*'s atavism. Nevertheless, this text is traditionally counted among the Āẕar Kaivānian literature.

More briefly put, our analysis points to the conclusion that the so-called "Āẕar Kaivān" [101] school enjoyed a much wider historical range than previously expected. Its thought shifted and changed, but persisted in some form from fifteenth-century pre-Safavid Iran or pre-Mughal India to seventeenth-century Mughal India. In fact, it should not be designated as "Āẕar Kaivānic," given that Āẕar Kaivān appeared in the middle of its development only as an *integrator*, and its writings, rather than being composed exclusively by him, were assembled from at least three sources: 1. *Dasātīr*'s imaginary ancient Iranian literature, 2. Āẕar Kaivān's mysticism and 3. Ešrāqī terms. Figure 3 summarizes this conclusion.

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DOI: 10.46586/er.13.2022.9638

Entangled Religions 13.5 (2022)
er.ceres.rub.de

Avicenna's *Šifāʾ* from Safavid Iran to the Mughal Empire: On Ms. Rampur Raza Library 3476

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ABSTRACT The paper aims at providing a comprehensive description of the manuscript Rampur, Rampur Raza Library 3476 (*ḥikma* 112), which contains three of the four main parts of Avicenna's philosophical magnum opus, the *Kitāb al-Šifāʾ* (the *Book of the Cure* or: *of the Healing*). This manuscript documents important developments in the history of Arabic-Islamic philosophy. First, it attests a precise intellectual genealogy within the influential Daštakī family from Shiraz, several exponents of which can be identified as successive owners of this manuscript at the turn of the ninth/fifteenth and tenth/sixteenth centuries, among whom one should mention Ṣadr al-Dīn Moḥammad Daštakī Šīrāzī (d. 903/1498), the founder of the so-called "Šīrāzī school" of philosophy; Ġeyāṯ al-Dīn Manṣūr Daštakī Šīrāzī (d. 948/1542), son of the preceding and author of the first extant commentary on the *Ilāhiyyāt* (*Science of Divine Things*, or Metaphysics) of the *Šifāʾ* in Arabic presently known; and Fatḥollāh Šīrāzī (d. 997/1589), a student and possibly also a relative of Ġeyāṯ al-Dīn Manṣūr Daštakī Šīrāzī, one of the main advocates and promoters of rationalism in India. Second, copied in 718/1318, the manuscript at hand highlights a crucial phase of the transmission of Avicenna's *Šifāʾ*, at the pivotal juncture between the most ancient phase of dissemination of the work (fifth to seventh/eleventh to thirteenth centuries) and the later period of its manuscript production (ninth to fourteenth/fifteenth to twentieth centuries). Third, it offers a concrete and insightful specimen of the intellectual exchanges between the Safavid (1502–1736) and the Mughal (1530–1707) empires in the seminal and formative phase of cultural life in Iran and India in the tenth/sixteenth century, in an itinerary that from Shiraz, the place of origin of the Daštakī family, goes eastward in the direction of the Mughal court of Akbar I (r. 963–1014/1556–1605) until it reaches the Raza Library of Rampur at some point.

KEYWORDS Avicenna, Kitāb al-Šifāʾ, Safavid Iran, Arabic-Islamic philosophy, Daštakī family, Fatḥollāh Šīrāzī, India, Rampur Raza Library

Introduction

Manuscript Rampur Raza Library 3476 contains a copy of Avicenna's *Kitāb al-Šifāʾ*, which de- [1]
serves attention in the history of Arabic-Islamic philosophy for at least three reasons.[1] First, it documents a precise intellectual genealogy within the influential Daštakī family from Shiraz, three generations of which arguably owned this manuscript, at the turn of the ninth/fifteenth and tenth/sixteenth centuries. Although the nisba Daštakī is absent in the ownership statements that can be read in the manuscript, the names mentioned in some of them clearly and coherently hint at members of this family as consecutive owners of the present codex. The correspondence of the names found in the manuscript with those of the Daštakī family members is attested by historical sources.[2] Second, copied in 718/1318, the manuscript in question highlights a crucial phase of the transmission of Avicenna's philosophical magnum opus, the *Kitāb al-Šifāʾ* (the *Book of the Cure* or: *of the Healing*), of which it represents a valuable testimonium, at the pivotal juncture between the most ancient phase of dissemination of the work (fifth to seventh/eleventh to thirteenth centuries) and the later period of its manuscript production (ninth to fourteenth/fifteenth to twentieth centuries). Third, it offers a concrete and insightful specimen of the intellectual exchanges between the Safavid (1502–1736) and the Mughal (1530–1707) empires at the outset of their historical life span, in the seminal and formative phase of cultural life in Iran and India in the tenth/sixteenth century, in an itinerary that from Shiraz, the place of origin of the Daštakī family, goes eastward in the direction of the Mughal court of Akbar I (reg. 963–1014/1556–1605), until it reaches the Raza Library of Rampur at some point.[3] These three reasons of interest in the manuscript can be seen as three concentric stories, in which the reiterated father-to-son handling of a precious codex within an inner family circuit goes hand in hand with the fate of one of the most impactful *summa* of philosophy ever written in the history of *falsafa*, and the personal heritage transactions among the Daštakīs, as well as the specific dissemination routes of the *Šifāʾ*, enter into the shaping an epoch-making event of cultural transfer in a larger geographical setting and with a wider geopolitical impact.

The manuscript Rampur Raza Library 3476 is well known to scholars of Avicenna and of [2]
Islamic philosophy in general. Its importance was recently stressed, among others, by Reza Pourjavady, Sajjad Rizvi, Asad Ahmed, and Sonja Brentjes, after the pioneering mentions by Carl Brockelmann in the supplementary volumes of his *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur* [sic], and by Georges Anawati, in his *Essai de bibliographie avicennienne* (Pourjavady 2011, 23; Rizvi 2011, 11; Ahmed 2012, 202; Brentjes 2018, 134–35; Brockelmann 1937–1942, I–III:1:815; Anawati 1950, 74).[4] A comprehensive description of its transmission history, however, is still lacking, despite the relevance of its possessors. It is hardly necessary to recall the significance of the first attested owner of the manuscript, Ṣadr al-Dīn Moḥammad Daštakī

1 The authors are grateful to members of the PhiBor project (Stefano Di Pietrantonio, Silvia Di Vincenzo, Daniele Marotta, Ivana Panzeca), to Reza Pourjavady, Kianoosh Rezania, Mohammad Hossein Hakim, and two anonymous referees for the precious help received. In the present paper, both Persian and Arabic are transliterated according to the DMG system. The spelling of proper names differs depending on the context.

2 See, e.g., Afandī al-Iṣbahānī ([1401] 1980–1981, 67) and al-Mūsawī al-Ḫʷānsārī al-Iṣbahānī ([1391] 2012, 4:372, 394, 7:176).

3 Conventionally, the Safavid and the Mughal empires are temporally located between 1501 and 1736, and between 1526 and 1857 respectively, with an intermission in the latter between 1540 and 1555.

4 See also Bertolacci (2008, 69 (nr. 88)), with info on the manuscript derived from Anawati's *Essai de bibliographie avicennienne*. This manuscript is neither recorded in Mahdavī's *Fehrest-e nosḫahā-ye moṣannafāt-e Ebn-e Sīnā* nor in H. Daiber's "New Manuscript Findings from Indian Libraries."

Šīrāzī (d. 903/1498), the founder of the so-called "Šīrāz school" of philosophy and one of the most influential intellectual figures of his time.[5] Equally well-known is that Ġeyāṯ al-Dīn Manṣūr Daštakī Šīrāzī (d. 948/1542), son of the preceding, eponym of the famous Madrasa-ye Manṣūriyya founded by his father, and owner of the manuscript after this latter, was the author of the first extant commentary on the *Ilāhiyyāt* (*Science of Divine Things*, or Metaphysics) of the *Šifāʾ* in Arabic presently known.[6] A third owner of the manuscript, Fatḥollāh Šīrāzī (d. 997/1589)[7], a student and possibly also a relative of Ġeyāṯ al-Dīn Manṣūr Daštakī Šīrāzī, is credited with being one of the main advocates and promoters of rationalism in India, once he became a member of the court of the Mughal ruler Akbar I. In so far as this codex was arguably among the philosophical works that he brought with him from Iran to India, he can be regarded as one of the fathers of Indian Avicennism (Rizvi 2011, 9–11; Ahmed 2012, 202 (n. 9); Niewöhner-Eberhard 2009, 36, 48 (n. 213), 87). But the list of owners of the present manuscript is not limited to these prime exponents of Safavid and Mughal *falsafa*: They also include other less known figures, who are nonetheless, despite their scarce notoriousness, significant examples of cultural life at the turn between the eleventh/seventeenth and the twelfth/eighteenth centuries. Some of them confirm, for example, the close interaction of philosophy and medicine in the transmission of Avicenna's work (see Bertolacci 2019): In 1100/1689, a certain Ḥāǧǧī Moḥammad bequeathed this manuscript to his descendants together with other works, among which a commentary on Avicenna's *Canon of Medicine*. The inclusion of women in the circuit of knowledge is also attested: The inheritors of this manuscript from Ḥāǧǧī Moḥammad were not only his son, Mīr Ḫān Moḥammad Ḥādī Ḥosainī, but also his daughter Fāṭema.

Therefore, a more comprehensive codicological description of our manuscript, in which [3]
the already known data can be precisely documented and new information may be provided, is recommendable. The present contribution strives towards this aim. Section I proposes an overview of the main features of this manuscript, its copyist, and its owners in the Daštakī family as well as later possessors. Section II pinpoints its significance for the transmission history of Avicenna's *Šifāʾ*, with particular regard to its final metaphysical section (*Ilāhiyyāt*). The data presented here are the outcome of the research on the manuscripts of Avicenna's *Šifāʾ* conducted within the ERC funded project "Philosophy on the Border of Civilizations and Intellectual Endeavours" (henceforth: PhiBor), where a selection of its most relevant passages

5 Niewöhner-Eberhard (2009); Pourjavady (2011, 24–25); Pourjavady-Schmidtke (2015, 254); Aminrazavi (2015, 48–58).

6 See Ġeyās al-Dīn Manṣūr ebn Moḥammad Ḥosainī Daštakī Šīrāzī, *Šifāʾ al-qulūb* (glosses on *Ilāhiyyāt* I.1-6). This work is integrally available in at least three editions: 1) *Šifāʾ al-qulūb*, ed. Amir Ahari, in *Ganǧīna-ye Bahārestān (A Collection of 18 Treatises in Logic, Philosophy, Theology, and Mysticism)*, Vol. I, cur. ʿAlī Auǧabī, Tehran 1379 Š/2000, 184–276 (based on mss. Tehran, Dānešgāh 6921/9 and Tehran, Maǧles, 611/9); 2) *Šifāʾ al-qulūb*, in *Moṣannafāt Ġeyās al-Dīn Manṣūr Ḥosainī Daštakī Šīrāzī*, ed. ʿA. Nūrānī, Tehran 1386 Š/2007, vol. II, pp. 375–487 (cf. vol. I, p. 110) (based on mss. Tehran, Dānešgāh 6921/9, Tehran, Maǧles, 611/9, and a manuscript of the private collection Rawḍāti in Isfahan); 3) *Šifāʾ al-qulūb,* in *Šifāʾ al-qulūb wa-Taǧawhur al-aǧsām*, ed. ʿAlī Auǧabī, Ketābḫāna, Mūze va Markaz-e Asnād-e Maǧles-e Šūrā-ye Eslāmī, Tehran 1390 Š/2012, pp. 1–132 (based on Mss. Tehran, Dānešgāh 6921/9 and Tehran, Maǧles, 611/9). Commentaries on the *Ilāhiyyāt* by previous authors are attested (see the bibliographical information in the section "Commentaries" at https://www.avicennaproject.eu//#/downloads/indirect, last accessed: March 27, 2022).

7 A shortly later date of death (998/1590) is given by Asad Q. Ahmed and Reza Pourjavady (Ahmed and Pourjavady 2016, 608), where relevant information on the author can be found (see 993/1585-86 in Pourjavady 2011, 52 [n. 33]).

are visualized.[8] On account of its importance, as documented in the following pages, the manuscript analyzed here has been selected in this project for the new critical edition of the *Ilāhiyyāt* of the *Šifāʾ* proposed there (siglum R), together with other fifteen manuscripts, the work of a second-generation disciple of Avicenna (Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Lawkarī's *Bayān al-ḥaqq bi-ḍamān al-ṣidq*, *Clarification of the Truth with the Guarantee of the Veracity*) in which the *Ilāhiyyāt* is abundantly quoted (fifth to sixth/eleventh to twelfth century), and the Latin medieval translation (sixth/twelfth century).

Description and History of the Manuscript

The Ms. India, Rampur, Rampur Raza Library 3476 A (*ḥikma* 112) is described in at least two catalogues of the library in which it is housed: Moḥammad Aġmal Khān, *Fehrest-e Kotob-e ʿArabīya-ye maujūda-ye kotobḫāna-ye reyāsat-e Rāmpūr*, vol. I, Rampur (1902), p. 397 (where it is labelled *ḥikma* 112)[9], and in Imtiyāz ʿAlī ʿAršī, *Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts in Raza Library Rampur*, vol. IV: Sufism, Holy Scriptures, Logic & Philosophy, Printed for Raza Library Trust, Rampur, U.P. India (1971), pp. 440–441 (where it is recorded as nr. 3476 *al-ḥikma al-ʿāmma*). As to its content, we face a huge manuscript of 431 folios (in fact, of 862 pages, since it is a paginated, rather than foliated, codex) comprising the logic, natural philosophy, and metaphysics of the *Šifāʾ*, according to a very common format of three parts (rather than four) of transmission of Avicenna's philosophical *magnum opus*.[10] A table of contents precedes each of the three parts.[11] In the part on natural philosophy, Avicenna's medical treatise *al-Adwiya al-qalbiyya* (*Cardiac Remedies*), often incorporated into the *Šifāʾ*, occurs in a very peculiar position, namely at the end of the entire natural philosophy, rather than at the end of *Book of the Soul*, Treatise IV, where it is usually found in the manuscripts of the *Šifāʾ* which contain it (see Alpina 2017). The history of this manuscript is a unique and intriguing specimen of [4]

8 See www.avicennaproject.eu (last accessed: March 27, 2022). The images of all the passages discussed in section I are available at https://www.avicennaproject.eu//#/manuscripts/list/154 (last accessed: March 27, 2022).

9 This catalogue is the basis for the references to our manuscript in Brockelmann's *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur*, Anawati's *Essai de bibliographie avicennienne*, and Ahmed's "The *Shifāʾ* in India I". Brockelmann places under Logic what appears to be a cumulative reference to all the Rampur manuscripts known to him as "I, 397/8", i.e. vol. I, 397–8 of the catalogue. Anawati condenses information on the page and volume of the catalogue at stake and on the century (VIII) of the manuscript's date of copying in the formula "397/1 (8)"; and Ahmed refers to this manuscript as 397/8, Ḥikma 112.

10 Whereas Brockelmann connects this manuscript solely with the Logic of the *Šifāʾ* (see previous footnote), the lack of any annotation about content in Anawati's *Essai de bibliographie avicennienne* cit. qualifies it—in accordance with the conventions of Anawati's bibliography—as a manuscript of the entire work. Also, a passage of the description of this manuscript in the Catalogue of 1971, p. 44 ("This copy deals with Logic, Physics, Mathematics & Metaphysics") conveys the wrong impression that the manuscript also contains mathematics. On the different types of partition of the *Šifāʾ* in manuscripts, see Bertolacci (2017–2018, 280–87).

11 The second table of contents (p. 488), the one preceding the natural philosophy, portrays this latter, in the initial rubric, as a second part (*ǧumla*) of the *Šifāʾ* regarding wisdom (*ḥikma*) in thirteen sections (*funūn*). In the right top margin of the first page of the natural philosophy (p. 496), a note qualifies this latter as the first part (*ǧumla*) of the *Šifāʾ* regarding wisdom (*ḥikma*) in thirteen sections. Strictly speaking, neither description applies to the natural philosophy: Whereas the reference to wisdom (*ḥikma*) rather fits metaphysics, the count of thirteen sections (*funūn*) is compatible with one of the attested formats of copy of three parts of the *Šifāʾ*, in which natural philosophy (eight sections), mathematics (four sections), and metaphysics (one section) are comprised, to the exclusion of logic (nine sections).

intertwined family links and scholarly connections. Ten distinct steps of its transmission can be distinguished on the basis of the colophon and the ownership statements present in it.

Table 1

Step 1	Early Rabīʿ I, 718/10–15 May, 1318	Copied by Maḥmūd ebn ʿAlī ebn Moḥammad ebn ʿAlī Wandgalī, possibly not in Wandgal (Kashan, Iran) but elsewhere
Step 2	845/1441	Collated
Step 3	Before 903/1498	Studied by Ṣadr Moḥammad (i.e., Ṣadr al-Dīn Moḥammad Daštakī Šīrāzī, d. 903/1498)
Step 4	Before 948/1543	Possessed by Manṣūr ebn Moḥammad Ḥosainī (i.e., Ġeyāṯ al-Dīn Manṣūr Daštakī Šīrāzī, d. 948), son of Ṣadr al-Dīn Moḥammad Daštakī Šīrāzī
Step 5	Before 962/1555	Owned by Moḥammad ebn Manṣūr ebn Moḥammad Ḥosainī (i.e., Ṣadr al-Dīn Moḥammad II, d. 962/1555), son of Ġeyās al-Dīn Manṣūr Daštakī
Step 6	Before 997/1589	Presumably owned by Fatḥollāh Šīrāzī (d. 997/1589), a student of Ġeyās al-Dīn Manṣūr Daštakī
Step 7	In the late tenth or early eleventh century	Allegedly owned by an unknown student/ relative of Šāh Fatḥollāh Šīrāzī
Step 8	Before 1100/1689	Possessed by a certain Ḥāǧǧī Moḥammad until 1100/1689
Step 9	1100/1689	Given by Ḥāǧǧī Moḥammad to his son Mīr Ḫān Moḥammad Ḥādī Ḥosainī and his daughter Fāṭema in 1100/1689
Step 10	?	Lodged at some point in Rampur

Step 1). The copying of the logic part of the manuscript was completed, from an erroneous exemplar (*nusḫa saqīma*), in the early Rabīʿ I, 718/10–15 of May 1318, by a not particularly well-known Maḥmūd ebn ʿAlī ebn Moḥammad ebn ʿAlī Wandgalī.[12] The date of copying of 718/1318 can be taken as representative of the copying of the entire manuscript, which is copied by the same hand, presumably in a continuous span of time. This being the case, our manuscript is, as known at present, the only dated manuscript of the *Ilāhiyyāt* of the *Šifāʾ that was* copied in the eighth/fourteenth century. The place of copying is not specified in the colophon of logic or elsewhere in the manuscript. Nonetheless, the copyist remarks in the colophon of logic that Wandgal, from which his attributive Wandgalī is derived, is a village [5]

12 al-Qāsānī in the Catalogue of 1971.

near Qāsān (nowadays Kashan), Iran.[13] This leads us to assume that the immediate readers of the codex were not familiar with the place of origin of the copyist, and that, therefore, the manuscript might have been copied not in Wandgal and Kashan, but elsewhere.

Colophon of Logic, p. 486 (ll. 5–14): [6]

[7] فرغ من تسويد هذه المجلّدة الداعي لصاحبها أينما كان محمود بن عليّ بن محمّد | ابن عليّ الوندكلي وهي قرية من إحدى قرى قاسان حماها الله من طوارق | الحدثان في أوائل ربيع الأوّل من شهور سنة ثمان عشر وسبعمائة | وقد كتب من نسخة سقيمة كثيرة التصحيفات قليلة التصحيحات | والكاتب في أيدي الزمان أسير و في قيد الهوان كسير | ومع ذلك لا يقدر على إدراك معانيها وإبدال ألفاظها وقد | استمسك بالعروة الوثقى أعني ألطاف المولى أن يبلّ (؟) عليّ | ذيل الإغماض وإلّا فاقض ما أنت قاض فإنّه قد بلغت نفسي | بأقصى غاية جهدها ولا يكلّف الله نفساً إلّا وسعها | وصلّى الله على خير الأخيار محمّد وصحبه الأبرار.

[8] The one who prays for its owner, wherever he may be, Maḥmūd ebn ʿAlī ebn Moḥammad ebn ʿAlī al-Wandgalī, which is one of the villages of Qāsān, may God protect it from the calamities of misfortune, terminated the copying of this volume at the beginning of the month Rabīʿ al-awwal of the year 718. It was copied from a faulty manuscript, full of misspellings, with few corrections. And the copyist is prisoner in the hands of time, and defeated in the chain of disgrace; still, he is not able to grasp its meanings and replace its words, while he held the trustworthy bond, that is, the benevolences of the master to close his eyes to my [faults]; if not, then judge what you <prefer to> judge, for my soul reached the utmost degree of its exertion, and God charges no soul except <what is in> its capacity. God bless the best of the best <men> Moḥammad and his pious companions.[14]

[9] Step 2). The three parts of the manuscript were collated almost a century and a half later (845/1441). The sequence of the collation, however, does not correspond to the order of the parts of the *Šifāʾ* in the manuscript: The collation of the part on natural philosophy (i.e., the second part) was completed in Muḥarram 845, a few months before the completion of the collation of the part on logic (i.e., the first part) on the 2nd of Ğumādà II, 845. The date of collation of the part on metaphysics (i.e., the third part) is unreadable due to damage: One may speculate that it was done during the four months separating the collations of the other two parts.

Collation note, Natural philosophy, p. 771 (on the left, below the explicit): [10]

[11] تمّ مقابلة هذا القسم الطبيعي وبعد لا تصحّح | وأرجو أن أطالعه مراراً فصحّح في *** | الكتاب واللباب (؟) في محرّم | سنة ٨٤٥

[12] The collation of this part on natural philosophy is completed, and yet <the text of this part> is not corrected. I hope I will study it several times, so that it will be corrected in *** the writing and the gist. <This happened> in <the month> Muḥarram of the year 845.

Collation note, Logic, p. 486 (below the colophon): [13]

13 There are two villages near the present Kashan which could be identical with the ancient Wandgal: Wan and Wandāde. See *Farhang-e ǧoġrāfiyāyī-e Īrān* ([1329] 1950), 322.

14 Here and in what follows, translations are by the authors unless indicated otherwise.

[14] قد تمّ مقابلة القسم (كذا) المنطق وإن كان مع نسخة سقيمة أيضاً | خصوصاً من المغالطة إلى الآخر لكنّي أظنّ أنّه في المطالعة | يصير صحيحاً في ٢ جمادى الآخر سنة ٨٤٥ الهجرية

[15] The collation of the part of logic is completed, although <it was done> again with a faulty copy, especially from the <section on> fallacy to the end. I think, however, that once it is studied it will become correct. <That happened> on the 2nd of Ǧumādà II of the year 845 from the Migration.

[16] Collation note, Metaphysics, p. 861 (bottom of page, under the explicit; covered by a tape and only partially readable):

[17] تمّ مقابلة ***

[18] The collation is completed ***

[19] The reason why the collation of the part on natural philosophy preceded that of the part on logic (and presumably that of the part on metaphysics as well), if, as it seems, all three collations were made by the same person, remains obscure.[15]

[20] Step 3). The manuscript was studied (*kāna fī muṭāla'a*) by a certain Ṣadr Moḥammad, who can be safely identified as Ṣadr al-Dīn Moḥammad Daštakī Šīrāzī, as indicated by the extolling praise of his intellectual merits in the following ownership statement on p. 495, written by the hand of his grandson, Moḥammad ebn Manṣūr ebn Moḥammad Ḥosainī, known as Ṣadr the Second, i.e., Ṣadr al-Dīn Moḥammad II Daštakī Šīrāzī (see also Step 5, below). The most relevant passages are marked in red.

[21] Ownership statement, p. 495 (ll. 8–16):

[22] هو| إنّ هذا الكتاب كان في مطالعة جدّي وسيّدي وإسنادي صدر الحكماء بدر العلماء شمس السماء | قمر الخضراء النيّر الأعظم ومنوّر العالم صدر الحقيقة محمّد الماضي عليه من الله السلام ثمّ انتقل منه إلى ولده | العلّامة وهو أبي وسيّدي وأستادي فخر آبائي وأجدادي إمام الحكمة غياث النفوس | كاشف الغمّة صاحب الهمّة الإمام الجامع الغالب على الشيخ الرئيس والحكيم العظيم الفائق على | أرسطاطاليس أكمل أهل النظر أستاد البشر العقل الحادي عشر أعني الحضرة العليّة البهيّة | والسدّة السنيّة الجليّة الفيلسوفية غياث الأنام المنصور كاسمه ناصر الشريعة والإسلام | ثمّ انتقل منه إلى ابنه وتلميذه بل أقلّ عبد من عبيده الباسط ذراعيه بالوصيد | محمّد بن علي (؟) منصور بن محمّد الحسيني المشتهر بصدر الثاني شرح الله صدره ورفع قدره.

[23] He. This book was studied by my grandfather, my master and my support, the highest among the wise ones, the full moon of the scholars, the sun of the heaven,

15 Both for the natural philosophy and for the logic, the collator looks to rely on a faulty further copy of the text. This is expressly stated in the collation note regarding the logic, and it also turns out to be the most likely interpretation of the collation note regarding the natural philosophy. In this latter, the sentence *wa-ba'du lā tuṣaḥḥaḥ* (according to the most obvious vocalization) means, in all likelihood, "and yet [the text (*nusḫa*) of this part] is not corrected," i.e. "not thoroughly edited through collation," so as to be in need of further study for its complete emendation; the alternative meaning "and afterwards the text is not going to be corrected" looks less plausible, also being in contrast with the collation of the metaphysics, if this latter occurred later.

the moon of the green [sky], the great star which illuminates the world, the head of truth, the late Moḥammad, may peace be from God upon him. Then it came from him into the possession of his most learned son, who was my father, my lord, and my master, the pride of my grandparents and ancestors, the leader of wisdom, the aider of mankind, the one who removes the grief, and possesses ambition, the universal leader who overshadowed the chief master and the great philosopher [i.e. Avicenna], and surpassed Aristotle, the most perfect among the people of speculation, the master of mankind, the eleventh intellect, namely the high and glorious presence, and the supreme and splendid court, the philosopher, the aider of mankind, the one who was aided as his name indicates, the helper of religion and Islam. Then it came from him into the possession of his son and his pupil, rather of the most humble among his servants, the one who stretched his forelegs at the doorstep, Moḥammad ebn ʿAlī (?) Manṣūr ebn Moḥammad Ḥosainī known as Ṣadr II, may God cause him joy and lift his rank.

Step 4). The manuscript then came into the possession of Manṣūr ebn Moḥammad Ḥosainī (i.e., Ġeyāṯ al-Dīn Manṣūr Daštakī Šīrāzī), son of the aforementioned Ṣadr al-Dīn Moḥammad I (see Step 3). The following ownership statement was written by the hand of Ġeyāṯ al-Dīn Manṣūr himself. [24]

Ownership statement, p. 495 (ll. 1-7): [25]

[26] هو | انتقل هذا الكتاب المشتمل على زبد هي نتائج الأنظار المحتوي على نخب هي أبكار الأفكار | هو بحر فيه درر الدقائق وكنز أودع فيه نقود الحقائق ألفاظه معادن جواهر المطالب | الشريفة وحروفه أكمام (أكاميم؟) أزاهير النكات اللطيفة ففي كلّ لفظ منه روض من المنى | وفي كلّ سطر منه عقد من الدرر *** | *** إلى أحوج الخلائق إلى فضل الله الغنيّ منصور بن محمّد الحسيني | ختم له بالحسنى.

He. This book – which contains the quintessences resulting from speculations, embraces selections which are unprecedented thoughts, a sea where pearl-like points exist, a treasure where money-like truths can be found, whose words are mines of demanded and noble jewels, whose letters are calyxes of the flowers of subtle points, so that there are gardens of desires in each of its words, and necklace of pearls in each line of it[16] *** *** – came to the one who needs the favor of God, the Rich, more than any other creature <Ġeyāṯ al-Dīn> Manṣūr ebn Moḥammad Ḥosainī <Daštakī Šīrāzī>, may God provide him with a good end. [27]

Ownership statement, again by the hand of Manṣūr ebn Moḥammad Ḥosainī, p. 777 (ll. 1-3): [28]

[29] من متملّكات الفقير إلى الله الغنيّ | منصور بن محمّد الحسيني | متّع الله به.

<This is> among the properties of the poor, who needs God, the Rich, Manṣūr ebn Moḥammad Ḥosainī, may God grant him enjoyment throughout his life. [30]

Step 5). The manuscript was later owned by Moḥammad ebn Manṣūr ebn Moḥammad Ḥo- [31]

16 The end of lin. 5 and the beginning of lin. 6 are deleted, and the words beneath the deletion stripe are barely readable.

sainī, i.e., Ṣadr al-Dīn Moḥammad II (d. 962/1555), son of Ġeyāṯ al-Dīn Manṣūr Daštakī and grandson of Ṣadr al-Dīn Moḥammad I, as indicated in the abovementioned ownership statement on p. 495 (Step 3), as well as in the following one on p. 777 (ll. 3-5):

[32] ثمّ انتقل منه انتقالاً صحيحاً شرعياً إلى ابنه وتلميذه بل أقلّ عبد من عبيده | الباسط ذراعيه بالوصيد الفقير الغنيّ المستغني من الدنيا الدنيّ والعقبى السنيّ | محمّد بن منصور بن محمّد الحسيني المشتهر بصدر الثاني متّعه الله به آمين.

Then it came rightly and legally from him into the possession of his son and his pupil, or better of the lowest among his servants, the one who stretches his arms at the threshold [see *Qurʾān* 50: 18], the poor <in need of> the Rich, the One who can dispense from the earthly world and the lofty outcome, Moḥammad ebn Manṣūr ebn Moḥammad Ḥosainī known as Ṣadr al-Ṯānī, may God grant him enjoyment through it. Amen [33]

Ṣadr al-Dīn II's ownership of the manuscript is also attested by his stamp on the bottom of the same p. 495. [34]

Step 6). A possible further owner, Fatḥollāh Šīrāzī, a student of Ġeyāṯ al-Dīn Manṣūr Daštakī and member of the court of the Mughal ruler Akbar I the Great,[17] wrote the table of contents and presumably first brought the manuscript to India[18], where at some point it was lodged in the Mughal royal library and later transferred to Rampur. [35]

Note in Persian, p. 1 (upper-left side of the page): [36]

[37] فهرست اين كتاب شريف نديز | عديم النظير بخط شاه فتح الله است قدّس سرّه | و باقى حالش معلوم است كه در | مطالعه سلف علما بود و تصحيح و اشارات | و رموزى كه ظاهر ميشود شاهد است.

The table of contents of this noble, unique, and unparalleled book is by the hand of Šāh Fatḥ Allāh <Šīrāzī>, may his soul be sanctified, and the other issues are clear, i.e., it was studied by preceding scholars, a fact that is witnessed by <their> apparent corrections, indications, and subtle points. [38]

This note, which ascribes to Šāh Fatḥollāh Šīrāzī the composition of the index of the manuscript, is written by someone (possibly a student or a relative of Šāh Fatḥollāh) who was familiar enough to him to recognize his hand in the index of content, or to be informed that the hand in question was his own. This information on the hand was apparently taken as trustworthy by subsequent annotators (see the following note, at point c). The present note is written in a hand different from the hands of the other notes, including the one which follows. [39]

Note in Persian, p. 9 (center-left side of the page): [40]

[41] هو | اين كتاب جليل القدر را كه از عرايس و نفايس روزگار است | و در مطالعه عاليه حضرت سيّد الحكماء و صدر العلماء امير صدر الدين شيرازى بوده | وظهر ورق اول علم طبيعى و علم الهى بخط شريف غياث *** | امير غياث الدين منصور و خلف الصدق ايشان مير صدر الدين ثانى عليه الرحمة

17 For the info on Fatḥollāh Šīrāzī, see Kākāyī (n.d., 29–30); Qasemi (2011).

18 Reportedly Fatḥollāh Šīrāzī brought some of the works of Ǧalāl al-Dīn Davānī (d. 908/1502), Ġeyāṯ al-Dīn Manṣūr Daštakī, and Mīrzā Jān Bāġnavī (d. 994/1587) to India and popularized them in the local circles of learning. See al-Ḥusaynī (al-Ḥusaynī [1420] 1999, 4:4:393); Kākāyī (n.d., 29); Pourjavady (2011, 23 (144)). So it is likely that Fatḥollāh Šīrāzī brought this manuscript to India together with these other works.

| و الرضوان توشیح و تزیین یافته و فهرست علم منطق و طبیعی و الهی آن بخط عالی | علامه دهر شاه فتح الله شیرازی است رحمة الله علیه حضرت والد | أدام الله سبحانه عزّه و شأنه بتاریخ نهم جمادی الأولی سنه ۳۳ جلوس الهی | مطابق سنه ۱۱۰۰ هجری بافقر احقر آرزومند مغفرت و نیازمند شفاعت کمترین | فرزندان باخلاص مخدومی (؟) محرّر این سطور هبه فرمودند حرّره ابن حاجی محمد | المخاطب بمیرخان محمد هادی الحسینی شرح الله صدورهما و یسّر لهما أمورهما | *** ربّ العالمین سیّد المرسلین و آله و صحبه علیه و علیهم | الصلوات و التحیّات.

He. This is a noble book which is regarded among the most precious objects of <this> time. The book was studied by the majesty, master of the philosophers and chief of the scholars Amīr Ṣadr al-Dīn Šīrāzī. And the back of the first page of the science of physics and of metaphysics is endorsed and adorned by the hand of Amīr Ġiyāṯ al-Dīn Manṣūr <Daštakī Šīrāzī> and his true successor Mīr Ṣadr al-Dīn Ṯānī, may <God> grant peace upon him and be satisfied with him. And the table of contents of its logic, physics, and metaphysics is by the noble hand of the most learned of this time Šāh Fatḥ Allāh Šīrāzī, peace be upon him. My father, may God, the Glorious, prolong his honor and position, gifted it to the poor and humble who wishes <God's> forgiveness and needs <His> intercession, the most humble among <his> children by showing honesty, the writer of these lines, on 9th Ğumādà al-ūlà of the year 33 of the Divine accession[19] corresponding to year 1100 of the Migration. It was written by the son of Ḥāğğī Moḥammad called Mīr Ḥān Moḥammad Hādī Ḥosainī, may God expand their breasts and make their affairs easy for them *** Lord of the worlds, lord of the messengers, his family and his companions, peace and salutation upon him and upon them. [42]

This second note indicates that: a) the manuscript was studied (and owned) by Amīr Ṣadr al-Dīn [Daštakī] Šīrāzī (see also Step 5); b) the front side (recto) of the first pages of the physics (p. 495) and the metaphysics (p. 777) is adorned (*tazyīn*), namely contains ownership statements, by the hand of Amīr Ġeyās al-Dīn Manṣūr [Daštakī Šīrāzī] and his true successor (*ḫalafo l-ṣedq*) Mīr Ṣadr al-Dīn [i.e. Ṣadr II] (see also Steps 3 and 4); c) the tables of contents of the physics and of the metaphysics were written by the noble hand (*ḫaṭṭ-e šarīf*) of the most learned of our time (*ʿallāma-ye dahr*), Šāh Fatḥollāh Šīrāzī (see previous note); d) the manuscript was donated by Ḥāğğī Moḥammad to his son, who wrote the note (see also Steps 8 and 9) on 9th Ğomādà I of the year 33 (of the *ğolūs-e elāhī*, "divine accession," i.e., of the reign of Akbar I the Great) corresponding to 1100H; e) the writer of the note was the son of Ḥāğğī Moḥammad, Mīr Ḥān Moḥammad Ḥādī Ḥosainī (see also Step 9). [43]

Step 7). The manuscript was possibly owned by a student or a relative of Šāh Fatḥollāh Šīrāzī, the person who wrote the Persian note on p. 1 (see the first note of Step 6 above), when Šāh Fatḥollāh Šīrāzī had already passed away, because of the formula "*quddisa sirruhū*" (may his soul be sanctified) which follows his name in the note. [44]

Step 8). As indicated in the note above (Step 6, note on p. 9), the manuscript was in the [45]

19 By *ğolūs-e elāhī* ("divine accession"), he means Akbar Šāh's accession in 992/1584, after which the Mughal era was fixed to begin. This era, also known as *Taʾrīḫ-e elāhī* ("Divine Era"), was introduced by the Mughal Emperor Akbar I the Great in 992/1584. The first year of this era was the year of Akbar's accession, 963/1555-6, and it was a solar year beginning with Naurūz (the day of vernal equinox, about 20 March). The names of the months were the same as those of the ancient Persian calendar. The number of days in a month varied from 29 to 32. The calculations were made and rules for the era drawn up by Fatḥollāh Šīrāzī (Athar n.d.).

possession of Ḥāǧǧī Moḥammad until 1100/1689. Possibly a physician himself, he looks to have been interested in philosophy and medicine, since he possessed books in these two fields (see Step 9, the note in Persian on p. 1).

Step 9). The manuscript was given by Ḥāǧǧī Moḥammad to his son, Mīr Ḥān Moḥammad Ḥādī Ḥosainī[20] (see Step 6, the note on p. 9), and to his daughter, Fāṭema, together with seven other books, among which a commentary on Avicenna's *Canon of Medicine* by Ḥakīm ʿAlī, in 1100/1689.[21] [46]

Note in Persian, p. 1 (lower part of the page): [47]

[48] مخفی و مستور نماند که این کتاب شریف با کتب مفصّله ذیل الکتاب که عدد آنها مجموع با کتاب شفاء مزبور هشت جلد است سوی قرآن که با قرآن نه مجلد *** | میانه حضرت سیادت و افادت پناه حقایق و معارف آگاه عمدة اجلّة السادات و النخب العظام نوراً للسیادة و الفضیلة و العزّ و الدین محمّدا حسینا | الشهیر بمیرزا خان مشترک است و میانه سیادت و عفت دستگاه عمدة المخدّرات فاطمه خانم همشیرهٔ مشار إلیه، للذکر ضعف الأنثی سوی کلام الله مجید | که مختصّ مشار إلیه است بعنوان حبوه شرعیه و مسمّاة مزبوره را در قرآن حقی نیست و قیمت این کتاب شریف منیع بیست و هشت تومان است | کتاب شرح قانون حکیم علی جلد؛ کتاب رموز الأوراد (؟) جلد؛ کتاب ترویح الأرواح جلد؛ کتاب تلخیص الأمّ جلد؛ کتاب متوسطات جلد؛ کتاب *** جلد؛ کتاب مختصر مخروطات جلد؛ کتاب شفاء مذکور | و قیمت سایر کتب بنوعی است که در ضمن هر کتابی قلمی شده که مجموع آن مبلغ هفده تومان و شش *** هزار دینار رایج (؟) است و چون قرآن حبوه است هدیه نشده | و حسب الإرث والد ماجد ایشان منتقل شده بمشار إلیهما و سایر ورثه را در کتب مزبوره حقی نیست.

This note can be paraphrased as follows: [49]

> It should be clarified that this honorable book, together with the books which are mentioned below in detail and whose number, including the previously mentioned *Šifāʾ*, is eight, excluding the *Qurʾān*, with which the number [of the books] will be nine, goes into the possession of Moḥammadā Ḥosainā, known as Mīrzā Ḥān, and his sister Fāṭema. The *Qurʾān* is only for the former as a legal *ḥabwa* (a gift for the eldest immediate son) and the latter has no right in it. The price of this honorable book is 28 tomans. The commentary on the *Qānūn* by Ḥakīm ʿAlī, the *Rumūz al-awrād* [?], the *Tarwīḥ al-arwāḥ*, the *Talḫīṣ al-Umm*, the *Mutawassiṭāt*, the book of ***, the *Muḫtaṣar Maḫrūṭāt*, and the aforementioned *Šifāʾ*. The price of each book is indicated under its name, and the total sum is 17 tomans and 6000 current dinars [?]. Since the *Qurʾān* is a *ḥabwa*, it has not been gifted [to Fāṭema]. These books are possessed by the two mentioned persons as goods inherited from their father, and the other heirs have no right to possess them. [50]

Note, p. 495 (bottom of page, followed by Mīr Ḥān's stamp; the same note is visible on page 777 followed again by his stamp): [51]

20 This Mīr Ḥān Moḥammad Ḥādī Ḥosainī possibly corresponds to Moḥammad Hādī l-Ḥosainī ebn Mīr-Ḥān, owner of another manuscript of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, Azerbaijan, Baku, National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Manuscripts, M-102 (AH), as indicated in one of the ownership statements in f. 2r (see https://www.avicennaproject.eu//#/manuscripts/list/245, last accessed: March 27, 2022).

21 The author of this commentary is in all likelihood identical with Ḥakīm ʿAlī Gīlānī (d. 1018/1609), an Iranian student of Šāh Fatḥollāh Šīrāzī and a physician at the Mughal court. Like Gīlānī himself, his son, Ḥakīm Ṣāleḥ Šīrāzī, and grandson, Moḥsen Šīrāzī, served as royal physicians in India. See Kākāyī (n.d., 30).

[52] هو | ثمّ انتقل بالهبة الشرعية من جناب الوالد الماجد أدام الله سبحانه | عزّه وشأنه إلى الأحوج إلى غفران ربّه الغنيّ وشفاعة حبيبه المولى (؟) | ابن حاجّي محمّد المخاطب بمير خان محمّد هادي الحسيني عفى عنهما | وتلك الهبة في تاسع جمادى *** خمسة من المائة الأولى | من الألف الثاني من الهجرة المصطفية على صاحبها | وعترته وصحبته الصلوة والسلام والتحية.

[53] He. Then <this book> passed by means of a legal donation from the honorable father, may God, the Glorious, prolong his honor, his rank and his condition, to the one who needs very much the forgiveness of his Lord, the Rich, and the intercession of his beloved master, ebn Ḥāğğī Moḥammad, called Mīr Ḫān Moḥammad Hādī Ḥosainī, may <God> forgive them. And that donation occurred on the 9th of Ǧumādà *** of <the year> 1100 from the Migration of the chosen <Prophet>, may <His> prayer, <His> peace and <His> salutation be upon the one who did <this Migration> and upon his tribe and companions.

[54] Mīr Ḫān Moḥammad Ḥādī Ḥosainī was well-known to the curator of the 1971 catalogue of the Rampur Raza Library, who reports "Mīr M. Ḥādī (d. 1114/1703)" among the owners of the manuscripts, specifying his date of death. On the bottom of pages 495 and 777, his stamps include the name of Šāh-e ʿĀlamgīr (Aurangzeb), who reigned over a major part of the Indian subcontinent from 1068/1658 to 1118/1707. This inclusion attests Mīr Ḫān Moḥammad Ḥādī Ḥosainī's close relationship with the court. He likely lived on the Indian subcontinent and was a member of the school of Fatḥollāh Šīrāzī, since he describes Šāh Fatḥollāh as "the most learned of [our] time" (*ʿallāma-ye dahr*) and computes time by means of the chronological system (*ğolūs-e elāhī*) current in the Mughal era (see Step 6, note on p. 9 and footnote 20), instead of the *heğrī* system which was widely used all over the Islamic lands. This hypothesis finds some support in the tenth-to-eleventh-century manuscript of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, Baku, National Academy of Sciences, M-102, which was first in the possession of Mīrzā Ǧān Šīrāzī (f. 2r), a rival and colleague of Fatḥollāh Šīrāzī, and subsequently came into the possession of a Moḥammad Hādī l-Ḥosaynī ebn Mīr-Ḫān, whose name closely resembles that of our Mīr Ḫān Moḥammad Ḥādī Ḥosainī (see footnote 21). Should this identification be tenable, it would imply that Ḥosainī (and presumably his father) were connected, in one way or another, with the intellectual tradition cultivated by Mīrzā Ǧān Šīrāzī and Fatḥollāh Šīrāzī in the tenth/sixteenth and eleventh/seventeenth centuries in India.

[55] Step 10). The manuscript was lodged in Rampur at some point.

Ms. Rampur 3476 from a Chronological Perspective

[56] The number of extant manuscripts of the *Šifāʾ* presently known greatly surpasses the figures provided in the available bibliographies of Avicenna's works. Taking the metaphysical part (*Ilāhiyyāt*) of this *summa* as case in point, we observe that this fourth and last portion of Avicenna's work is preserved in more than 280 codices known to date, whereas Avicennian bibliographies of the twentieth century do not arrive at eighty units. The overall count of the codices increases if we also take into consideration the manuscripts of the Persian translations of the *Ilāhiyyāt* in which the Arabic original text is incorporated, and the Arabic manuscripts

that are attested by other codices as their immediate or remote exemplars but cannot be presently retrieved.[22]

[57] The manuscripts of the *Ilāhiyyāt*—which often also contain some other parts of this summa, as in the case of the manuscript at hand, or even the work in its entirety—were copied uninterruptedly throughout ten centuries, since the fifth/eleventh century, a few decades after Avicenna's death, until the fourteenth/twentieth century, less than one hundred years ago.[23] The geographical dissemination of the depositories embraces libraries in Europe and the United States and a wide array of centers in the Near East and Central Asia, from Morocco to Malaysia. The largest repository of manuscripts is Iran, both in terms of manuscripts preserved (more than 150 extant codices) and of cities and libraries involved, followed by Turkey (more than forty manuscripts) and India (more than twenty codices).

[58] In a chronological perspective, three striking features of the activity of copying of the *Šifāʾ* in general, and of the *Ilāhiyyāt* in particular, can be singled out. First, some ancient exemplars enjoyed wide circulation and were copied in distinct later manuscripts, now preserved in Iraq, Iran, or India, so as to function as "editions" of the work. We can detect at least three ancient exemplars of the *Šifāʾ* of this kind copied respectively in 468-9/1076-7, probably in Nishapur (three later known copies), in 503/1109-10 in Baghdad (seven later copies amenable to it), and in 509/1115, once again in Baghdad (one later known copy). From the temporal distance between these three "editions," we can observe a sort of intensification of the copying of the *Šifāʾ* over time, since the Baghdad editions of 503 and 509 are much closer temporally to one another than they are to edition 468-9.

[59] The second remarkable trait of the chronology of manuscripts of the *Ilāhiyyāt* is the substantial continuity of the activity of copying over time. The only significant decrease in the number of attested copies of the *Ilāhiyyāt* can be observed from the first decades of the eighth/fourteenth century (after 718/1318-9, date of copying of the present manuscript) until the second half of the ninth/fifteenth century (865/1461), determining for more than a century a real collapse in the activity of copying, with no extant dated manuscript presently known produced in this period. This decrement marks a significant hiatus between the older stage of transmission of the work (fifth to seventh/eleventh to thirteenth centuries) and its later stage (ninth to fourteenth/fifteenth to twentieth centuries). If a similar decrease of the manuscript diffusion in this same period should also affect the other parts of the *Šifāʾ*—as the chronological data that begin to be gathered about the manuscripts of these parts of Avicenna's work seem to suggest[24]—we would likely face a repercussion on cultural life of the political and economic decline of the Ilkhanid Mongol power in the area at the time, which apparently had a long-lasting disruptive impact on the circulation even of prime philosophical works like the *Šifāʾ* for more than a century, until the Timurid cultural revival at the turn between the eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries. Alternatively, this sudden decrease of copies of Avicenna's work may be explained as a belated effect of the fall of the capital Baghdad—the main center where ancient copies of the work were produced, as we

22 See Bertolacci (2017–2018). See also the section "Manuscripts" in https://www.avicennaproject.eu//#/manuscripts/list (last accessed: March 27, 2022).

23 The most ancient extant dated manuscript of the *Ilāhiyyāt* presently known (Najaf, Maktabat al-Imām Amīr al-Muʾminīn, 3070) goes back to 496/1102–3, a decade after the most ancient known extant manuscript of the *Šifāʾ* (London, British Museum, Or. 11190, copied in 485/1092–1093 and containing part of the Mathematics); the most recent one (Qom, ʿAllāma Saiyed Moḥammad Ḥosain Ṭabāṭabāʾī Collection, no number) dates to 1345/1927.

24 See the section "All Šifāʾ Manuscripts" in https://www.avicennaproject.eu//#/downloads/mss (last accessed: March 27, 2022).

have seen—under the Mongols in 656/1258, if the new political dominion determined an interruption of cultural activities in the main city of the Muslim empire, as one may incline to suppose.

[60] The third noteworthy aspect of the activity of copying regarding the *Ilāhiyyāt* is its exponential increase in the eleventh/seventeenth century, at the heyday of the Safavid era. Whereas the number of known copies produced in previous centuries amounts to at most a couple of tens per century (in the ninth/fifteenth century, for example) and does not exceed the seventy units cumulatively reached (including the non-extant attested exemplars), by the eleventh/seventeenth century we witness the production of more than one hundred manuscripts of the *Ilāhiyyāt* in one single century. Even if we cannot exclude that copies of the *Šifāʾ* antedating the eleventh/seventeenth century might have been lost without leaving any trace, the Safavid period remains the apogee of the copying process of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, which gradually decreases in the following centuries. This fact is, on the one hand, a confirmation of what we presently know about the so-called "Safavid renaissance" (Pourjavady and Schmidtke 2015). On the other hand, it is significant with respect to the diffusion and impact of Avicenna's philosophy: After the "golden age" of the reception of Avicenna argued in previous scholarship from the fifth/eleventh until the middle of the eighth/fourteenth century, and the later "golden ages" in which the reception of Avicenna is substantiated in a regional perspective by subsequent studies, the eleventh/seventeenth century in Safavid Iran emerges as a real "platinum age" of the production of copies of the *Ilāhiyyāt* and, arguably, of the other parts of the *Šifāʾ* as well. The same applies to the Persian translations of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, which start being produced in this period, and to the commentaries on the work, which only begin gaining literary independence since the Safavid period: At this time the glosses on the *Ilāhiyyāt*—a type of exegetical practice that existed long before—began to circulate as independent works with their own titles, and the commentary activity in this and the following centuries involved an unprecedented number of exegetes.

[61] The manuscript under consideration instantiates these three general features in a remarkable way, showing how the survival and circulation of valuable exemplars helped assure the *Ilāhiyyāt* and other parts of the *Šifāʾ* an uninterrupted and long-lasting transmission in connection with the Safavid renaissance in Iran. First, written at the beginning of the eighth/fourteenth (718/1318–9), the manuscript at hand closes what we have determined above as the older stage of transmission of the work (fifth to seventh/eleventh to thirteenth centuries), and opens the thriving stage of its dissemination under the Safavids, having been copied shortly after the death of Qoṭb al-Dīn Šīrāzī (634–710/1236–1311), one of the last scholars who shared a "dismissive attitude towards Ebn Sīnā and the Peripatetics" in pre-Safavid times (Pourjavady and Schmidtke 2015, 252).

[62] Second, on account of its historical importance, it comes as no surprise that our manuscript was copied afterwards. In fact, it turns out to remain at the origin of a later codex preserved in the Raza Library of Rampur (Ms. Rampur, Rampur Raza Library 3478 ع), which is one of the latest manuscripts of the *Ilāhiyyāt* presently known, having been copied in 1267/1850–51: Like its exemplar, it contains the logic, natural philosophy, and metaphysics of the *Šifāʾ*. Also, a manuscript preserved in Iran might be related with it: Ms. Khoy, *Ketābḫāna-ye Madrasa-ye Namāzī* 247, copied in 986/1578, whose patron (ʿAbdolḫāleq ebn Moḥammad Maḥmūd Gīlānī) reportedly was a student of the same Fatḥollāh Šīrāzī who wrote the various indexes

of contents in our Rampur manuscript, as well as of Mīrzā Ǧān.[25] Historical sources inform us that ʿAbdolḫāleq studied the Khoy manuscript with Fatḥollāh Šīrāzī and collated it and corrected it before 988/1580—that is to say, in all likelihood before Fatḥollāh Šīrāzī moved to the court of Akbar I in India around 991 H. On the basis of these provisional data, we should expect to see the descendants of Ms. Rampur 3476 disclosed by future philological research and historical evidence to increase in number.

Finally, our manuscript testifies in different ways to the Safavid renaissance. On the one [63]
hand, it documents ownership by a handful of the most famous initiators of the cultural efflorescence regarding philosophy within the Iranian intelligentsia of the time. On the other hand, it attests to the energy and attractiveness of this intellectual movement by showing how, through its impulse, relevant textual material seminally spread from Iran to the Indian sub-continent. The manuscript at hand preserves remarkable signs of a continuous scholarly consideration of the *Šifāʾ* by a series of distinguished intellectuals. The leg of its ownership history that we can presently identify spans, in fact, from 903/1498, the date of death of its first attested owner Ṣadr al-Dīn Moḥammad Daštakī Šīrāzī, until 1105/1694, date in which its last known owner Mīr/Mīrzā Ḫān Moḥammad Hādī Ḥosainī turns out to have got possession of it; in this way, it covers two full centuries of one of the most important and impactful phases of post-Avicennian philosophy in Iran and India. Within this time framework, three of the most important exponents of intellectual life in the region during the ninth/fifteenth and tenth/sixteenth centuries are involved (Ṣadr al-Dīn Moḥammad Daštakī Šīrāzī, his son Ġeyāṯ al-Dīn Manṣūr Daštakī Šīrāzī, and this latter student Fatḥollāh Šīrāzī). Although their access to the *Šifāʾ* was not limited to this manuscript (the glosses on the *Ilāhiyyāt* contained in our manuscript, for instance, are scanty and do not correspond to what we presently know of the commentary by Ġeyāṯ al-Dīn Manṣūr Daštakī Šīrāzī on this part of the *Šifāʾ*), their shared ownership of the present codex of Avicenna's masterpiece in philosophy represent a historical phenomenon of utmost interest.

Other examples of manuscripts which document family and scholarly ties of historical im- [64]
portance have recently been brought to the scholarly attention.[26] The codex analyzed in the present contribution deserves to be placed in this prestigious category of historical documents.

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25 Maʿṣūm (1938), 215. Interestingly, an ʿAbdolḫāleq Ǧīlānī is also recorded as the copyist of another witness of the *Šifāʾ*, which does not preserve the *Ilāhiyyāt*, namely MS Qom, Markaz-e Eḥyāʾ-e Mīrāṯ-e Eslāmī 314, which might therefore be an additional manuscript related to the same intellectual *milieu*. On Ms. *Khoy, Ketābḫāna-ye Madrasa-ye Namāzī* 247, see the section "Manuscripts. Introduction" ("II.3. The *Ilāhiyyāt* in Mughal India") at https://www.avicennaproject.eu/#/manuscripts/intro (last accessed: March 27, 2022), and Di Vincenzo (2021, lxxix).

26 See, e.g., what Witkam noted with regard to the codex of the Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya of Cairo, which is "the authoritative manuscript" of the *Maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī (Witkam 1995, 132). The authors of the present article plan to analyze another fundamental witness of the transmission of Avicenna's *Šifāʾ*, Ms. Kabul, Aršīf-i Millī Afġānistān, Afghan National Archive, 2295 (ex Private Library of King Zaher Shah 4926) in a forthcoming publication.

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