

The Persianate World

Iran Studies

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The Persianate World

Rethinking a Shared Sphere

Edited by

Abbas Amanat
Assef Ashraf



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Contents

- Preface VII
- Introduction: Pathways to the Persianate 1
Assef Ashraf
- 1 Remembering the Persianate 15
Abbas Amanat
- 2 The Persian Cosmopolis (900–1900) and the Sanskrit Cosmopolis
(400–1400) 63
Richard M. Eaton
- 3 Living in Marvelous Lands: Persianate Vernacular Literatures and
Cosmographical *Imaginaires* around the Bay of Bengal 84
Thibaut d'Hubert
- 4 The Politics of Saint Shrines in the Persianate Empires 105
A. Azfar Moin
- 5 From Yarkand to Sindh via Kabul: The Rise of Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi Sufi
Networks in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries 125
Waleed Ziad
- 6 Lives of the Enikolopians: Multilingualism and the Religious-National
Identity of a Caucasus Family in the Persianate World 169
Hirotake Maeda
- 7 Inclusion and Exclusion in the “Persianate World”: Views of Baluch People
in the Nineteenth Century 196
Joanna de Groot
- 8 The Antipodes of “Progress”: A Journey to the End of Indo-Persian 216
Nile Green
- Index 253

Preface

This volume grew out of a conference, held at Yale University in May 2014, whose objective was to explore the dimensions of Persianate Studies as an academic field. The conference asked its participants to consider whether the term “Persianate” works as a conceptual framework beyond language and literature, to such areas as habitat, economy and trade routes, and political and material cultures. Were there tangible historical ties in the pre-modern and early modern eras among such diverse regions as Anatolia, the Iranian plateau and the greater Khorasan region, the Caucasus, the southern rim of Central Asia, Western Xinjiang, and the Indian subcontinent? Can these ties create a viable field of study beyond Middle Eastern, Central Asian, South Asian, and East Asian studies to underscore subtle interregional connections and *longue durée* commonalities? What circumstances, on the other hand, reoriented these regions and helped break up the Persianate ecumene in modern times?

The conference proved productive, and the essays included in this volume reflect the healthy interest in scholarship on the Persianate world. As the reader will note, several of the above topics are addressed in the volume’s essays. While language and textual culture remain the focus, material and cultural commonalities across regions, networks and modes of governance, and questions of regional identities and modernity all receive attention. Nevertheless, the reader will also note that these topics are only partially addressed, and that perhaps even less evident are considerations of topics related to trade, the economy, and environmental history. All this is to say that there is room for more and further research – something which, it is hoped, this volume will encourage.

Organized by the Yale Program in Iranian Studies, the conference was made possible with the generous support of the Council on Middle East Studies, the South Asia Studies Council, the Council on East Asian Studies, the MacMillan Center, and the Edward J. and Dorothy Clarke Kempf Memorial Fund at Yale University. The editors would like to thank those who helped with the planning and production of the conference, as well as the presenters, discussants, and other participants, for their valuable contributions.

Abbas Amanat
Assef Ashraf



FIGURE 0.1 Map of the Persianate World



Pathways to the Persianate

Assef Ashraf

The conference that gave rise to this volume began with a series of questions: does the term “Persianate” work as a conceptual framework beyond language and literature, to such areas as habitat, economy and trade routes, and political and material cultures? Are there tangible historical ties in the pre-modern and early modern eras among such diverse regions as Anatolia, the Iranian plateau and the greater Khorasan region, the Caucasus, the southern rim of Central Asia, Western Xinjiang, and the Indian subcontinent? Can these ties create a viable field of study beyond Middle Eastern, Central Asian, South Asian and East Asian studies to underscore subtle interregional connections and *longue durée* commonalities? What circumstances, on the other hand, reoriented these regions and helped break up the Persianate ecumene in modern times?

When Marshall Hodgson wrote of a “Persianate zone” in *The Venture of Islam*, he conceptualized it as a region that stretched from the Euphrates to the Oxus rivers – a region defined primarily along literary and cultural lines. But for a region whose defining feature was supposed to be language, it is curious that there was no Persian-language equivalent for the term “Persianate.” The peoples living in the so-called Persianate zone did not call themselves “Persianate,” even if they may have been dimly aware of a shared cultural space. Thus it has fallen to modern-day scholars to flesh out Hodgson’s conceptualization. In the years since Hodgson’s *The Venture of Islam* appeared, the term has seeped into the academic lexicon and established itself as a category of analysis. Following a couple decades during which the term was used infrequently, since the 1990s the term’s use has risen sharply.¹ It appears in job postings, journal names, as a keyword in articles, and in the descriptions of academic programs, centers, and organizations. A consensus has emerged that something called the “Persianate world” did exist.

The essays in this volume attest to the healthy state of the field. Taken as a whole, they are representative of three main topics around which scholarship on the Persianate world has tended to cluster. Broadly defined, these are: the production of culture, literature, and knowledge, and their diffusion in space and time; modes of religious thought and practice, as well as networks of

¹ See the graph in Said Amir Arjomand, “A Decade of Persianate Studies,” *Journal of Persianate Studies* 8, no. 2 (2015): 312.

religious authority; and finally, what may be categorized as the limits and ends of the Persianate world. There is considerable overlap between these three categories, but they nevertheless are the poles that serve to orient the lay of the land.

Despite the burgeoning scholarship, there has been less of an effort to reflect on why there has been a turn, in the last two decades, towards the idea of the “Persianate.” This essay attempts to do just that. It is not an attempt to question the term’s validity, nor is it purely an academic exercise in tracing its use; rather, it is intended as a brief introduction to this volume and at the same time an attempt to offer a constructive path forward for what Persianate Studies – the field devoted to studying the Persianate world – can be.

Two main arguments are put forward here. The first is that the turn towards the “Persianate” as an analytic category has not emerged in a vacuum, but has been part of a broader trend in historical writing – namely, the turn toward what has alternatively been called world, global, or transnational histories. The question of what difference, if any, exists between these approaches is important, but for now a definition offered by the editor of the *American Historical Review* in 2006 encapsulates what I mean: “these approaches ... all are characterized by a desire to break out of the nation-state or singular nation-state as the category of analysis, and especially to eschew the ethnocentrism that once characterized the writing of history in the West.”² The contributions in this volume make clear the resonance of the “global turn” upon Persianate Studies.

At the same time, Persianate Studies now sits at a crossroads. As more scholars deploy the term “Persianate” in their work, and as it becomes established in the academic landscape, it only seems appropriate to consider the question of where do we go from here? This essay therefore ends by drawing attention to topics that remain underexplored, and suggesting ways in which the field can move forward.³ Specifically, more explicitly comparative and connected approaches to historical writing offer potentially productive avenues for future research.

2 C.A. Bayly et al., “AHR Conversation: On Transnational History,” *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 5 (December 2006): 1441.

3 This essay does not provide a comprehensive review of the scholarship in Persianate Studies, since that is a topic that has received recent attention. See Arjomand, “A Decade of Persianate Studies.”

1 Persianate History as Global History

The synergy between Persianate Studies and a globalized vision of history can be traced back to Marshall Hodgson himself. The subtitle of *The Venture of Islam* was “Conscience and History in a World Civilization,” and even a cursory look at any of the work’s three volumes makes Hodgson’s ambitions evident. As early as 1978, Albert Hourani drew attention to the influence that the University of Chicago, Hodgson’s academic home, and the scholars at the institution must have had on Hodgson and his approach to history:

[I]n a sense this book could have been written nowhere except at the University of Chicago in the 1950’s and 1960’s. There are echoes in it of Nef on industrial civilization, McNeill’s *The Rise of the West*, Eliade’s studies of religion, Adams’s *Land Behind Baghdad*, and the discussions of sociologists and anthropologists.⁴

But Hodgson’s impetus for a new approach to world history actually pre-dated his time at Chicago. In 1944, when he was just nineteen, he wrote an essay in which he criticized what he called the “provincialism” of world history. Why is it, he asked, that “when we read ‘world history’ we read chiefly of Europe?” He provided three possible explanations: “snobbish misunderstanding”; Europe’s greater influence in the world since the Industrial Revolution; and “the heart of the matter: our civilization is European.”⁵ Not surprisingly, he rejected all three. The 1950s and 1960s may have been a time when world history was in vogue at the University of Chicago, but Hodgson may have in fact been ahead of the curve – or, at least, somehow outside it.⁶

Now, however, we live in a post-national age. Modern national boundaries, far from seeming like sensible parameters for historical inquiry, instead appear to distort our understanding of those topics which are not easily contained

4 Albert Hourani, “Review of *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* by Marshall G.S. Hodgson,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 37, no. 1 (January 1978): 53.

5 The essay was published posthumously with the title “World history and a world outlook” in Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *Rethinking World History: Essays on Europe, Islam and World History*, ed. Edmund Burke III (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 35–43.

6 Charles Issawi, for example, described *The Venture of Islam* as “thoroughly idiosyncratic” in an essay that otherwise was a thoughtful, and largely positive, response to the work. See Charles Issawi, “Europe, the Middle East and the Shift in Power: Reflections on a Theme by Marshall Hodgson,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22, no. 4 (October 1980): 488.

within those boundaries, including migration, finance, trade, and the environment. The circulation of people, goods, and ideas seems to get easier and faster as each day goes by – notwithstanding the efforts of some to control that movement – and historians have understandably been drawn to exploring the roots of those patterns. Terms like “transnational” and “transregional” abound in the humanities and social sciences, in journal articles and book titles, in academic programs and centers, and even in marketing and consumer-targeted campaigns.⁷ One result of this trend, it has been noted, has been to study imperial projects of the past. Empires, as historical polities that ruled over vast regions and multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-religious populations, are sometimes viewed as offering possibilities for a post-national order.⁸

The turn to the global and transnational is much more encompassing than imperial history, however. In fact, its breadth is implied in the lack of clarity over what, exactly, the parameters of the field are. Scholars who write in the global and transnational mode tend to use numerous terms, sometimes interchangeably, when referring to their own work. As David Armitage points out, “[h]istorians in all fields have more recently been moving towards studies they describe variously as international, transnational, comparative, and global.”⁹ Do these terms mean the same thing? If not, what are the distinctions in their meaning and scope? It seems clear that by “transnational” scholars suggest that their studies are not limited by national boundaries, but can there be “transnational” frameworks to historical processes and phenomena before the advent of nation-states?¹⁰ How is global history different than its older iteration, world history? By giving primacy to transnational networks and links, do we run the risk of de-emphasizing local events as drivers of historical change, and of writing generalized history?¹¹

7 For just one example, see Ibrahim Sirkeci, *Transnational Marketing and Transnational Consumers* (Berlin and New York: Springer, 2013).

8 On this point, see Alan Mikhail and Christine M. Philliou, “The Ottoman Empire and the Imperial Turn,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54, no. 4 (October 2012): 721.

9 David Armitage, “The International Turn in Intellectual History,” in *In Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History*, ed. Darrin M. McMahon and Samuel Moyn (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 232.

10 On this point, see Francesca Trivellato, “Is There a Future for Italian Microhistory in the Age of Global History?,” *California Italian Studies* 2, no. 1 (2011).

11 This is a critique offered in David A. Bell, “Questioning the Global Turn: The Case of the French Revolution,” *French Historical Studies* 37, no. 1 (2014): 1–24. See also David A. Bell, “This Is What Happens When Historians Overuse the Idea of the Network,” *New Republic*, October 25, 2013, <https://newrepublic.com/article/114709/world-connecting-reviewed-historians-overuse-network-metaphor>.

Like global historians, scholars of the Persianate world also use a variety of terms to describe the scope of their work. Programs for the biennial Association for the Study of Persianate Studies (ASPS) conferences have included terms like “transnational,” “translocal,” and “comparative” in their abstracts, while a recent book on Persian literature in eighteenth-century Mughal India speaks of “trans-temporal,” “trans-spatial,” and “trans-regional” concepts and processes.¹² The introduction to a guest-edited volume of the *Journal of Persianate Studies* on popular resistance and protest movements in the Ottoman Empire, Iran, and British India highlighted the “trans-imperial trade” and “trans-national and inter-regional connections” between West, South, and Central Asia.¹³ The wide range in terms suggests that, like those who work on global history, it may be time to reflect upon what is meant by these terms.

Despite the ambiguity of the terminology, it must be noted that scholars who deploy these terms generally are driven by admirable intentions: to reclaim Persian language and culture out of the confines of Iranian nationalism. Among the most significant results of our post-national moment has been the effort to break out of a form of historical writing within Iranian Studies that emphasized the exceptional features of Iranian history. According to this model, Iran was defined by how it was and continues to be *different* from the countries and regions in its geographic neighborhood: Persian is the primary language (not Arabic), Shi’i Islam is the dominant religious creed (not Sunni Islam), and Iran has existed as an idea and a civilization for thousands of years (it is not a product of nineteenth – and twentieth-century colonial projects). There is, of course, truth in all of these features, but similar differences may be discerned among other nation-states in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Few historians consciously describe Iran in these terms today, but the framework of exception has left an undeniable mark on Iranian Studies. By over-emphasizing Iran’s differences – by swinging the pendulum too far in the direction of exceptionalism – and not actively and vigorously engaging with debates that animate historical scholarship on other regions of the globe, what has resulted is a misperception that Iran is so different as to be beyond the pale of comparison. It is telling, for example, that the Safavid Empire, which ruled Iran from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, is often omitted from scholarship that compares the major empires of the early modern world, and

12 Prashant Keshavmurthy, *Persian Authorship and Canonicity in Late Mughal Delhi: Building an Ark* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 143, 162.

13 Ranin Kazemi, “Popular Resistance in the Persianate World: Subalterns, Outlaws, and Radicals in the Long Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of Persianate Studies* 7, no. 2 (2014): 179–88.

indeed, the question of whether the Safavid polity constituted an “empire” is one that still generates debate.¹⁴ In a groundbreaking book that compares the history of popular protests across the nineteenth- and twentieth-century Middle East, Iran is only discussed in the context of the 1979 Revolution, despite other significant episodes that deserve attention: the Babi movement, the Tobacco Revolt, and the Constitutional Revolution.¹⁵ This is not meant as a criticism against works that omit Iran; any scholar undertaking a comparative project faces difficult choices in determining what to include or exclude in their analysis. Rather, the burden must fall on historians of the Iranian and Persianate worlds to illustrate how and why what they study, and write on, can advance our understanding of big, historical, and methodological questions.

2 The Culture of the Persianate World

Surveying the essays in this volume – as well as Persianate Studies more generally – we can see that historians have begun swinging the pendulum back the other way, by highlighting the links, connections, and points of comparison between Iran and surrounding regions. So far, historians have emphasized what we can call “culture-based” connections: in the form of literature, art, architecture, and religion. Persianate culture was produced, read, absorbed, replicated, imitated, and expanded upon in societies stretching from Anatolia to the Indian Subcontinent – regions that today have been carved up into numerous nation-states. By studying the contours of this culture, historians must cross those national boundaries – a point made explicit upon the launch of a new academic organ for Persianate Studies, the *Journal of Persianate Studies*.¹⁶ The “culture-based” connections that have tended to dominate the field to date also appear prominently in the essays in this volume. As Abbas Amanat argues in the first chapter, the Persianate world can be defined by the four features, or “modalities,” that define it: a shared political culture based upon manuals of statecraft literature, an affinity for antinomian and Sufi tendencies, an appreciation for Persian literature, and a common material culture.

The production and spread of Persian culture and knowledge, in the form of canonical texts, offers perhaps the clearest way to trace the contours of the

14 On this point, see Rudi Matthee, “Was Safavid Iran an Empire?,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 53, no. 1/2 (March 2010): 233–65.

15 John T. Chalcraft, *Popular Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

16 See Said Amir Arjomand, “Defining Persianate Studies,” *Journal of Persianate Studies* 1, no. 1 (2008): 1–4.

Persianate world. By following the circulation these Persian texts, the extent to which they were received and read, and the ways in which they were imitated or adapted to fit local culture, one can begin to delimit a common cultural sphere. As Richard Eaton's essay demonstrates, Persian poetry, dictionaries, and material culture – what he calls an “aesthetic and literary sensibility” – shaped the textual and built environment of South Asia for hundreds of years. For Eaton, this was a Persianate “cosmopolis” in which a social and moral order informed by Persian texts created a shared cultural space, akin to the Sanskrit cosmopolis described by Sheldon Pollock or to the Hellenized cosmopolis of the Mediterranean basin.

The diffusion of Persian literature went beyond canonical texts, however, as Thibaut d'Hubert's essay illustrates. D'Hubert's contribution explores the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century cultural centers around the Bay of Bengal, namely, in the Deccan, Bengal, Arakan, and the Malay world, and the ways in which Persian narrative stories were received and adapted by local authors, who nevertheless continued to be influenced by what he describes as a “traditional cosmography” – a cosmography that characterized the region as a “land of marvels.” The literature and culture that emerged as a result could be described as hybrid, or to put it in d'Hubert's own words, a “vibrant and inquisitive vernacular Muslim cultural ethos (*adab*).”

But of course culture is not expressed solely through literature and art; its traces can be detected in other facets of life, including religion. It is in this context that A. Azfar Moin's essay on Sufi saint shrines and Waleed Ziad's contribution on Naqshbandi Sufi networks make their mark. Moin traces the development of the cults of Sufi saints in the post-Mongol Islamic world, and demonstrates that Sufi saint shrines were central to the political cultures of the Timurid, Safavid, and Ottoman Empires. In a sense, Moin's essay is a reminder that the case for a so-called “barrier of heterodoxy,” in which Safavid Iran was supposedly “isolated” from the rest of the Islamic world by virtue of its conversion to Shi'ism in the sixteenth century, has been exaggerated in the scholarly literature.¹⁷ In a similar vein, Ziad's essay demonstrates that Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi Sufi networks expanded in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as a result of the political vacuum created in Nader Shah's (d. 1747) wake. Dual processes contributed to the expansion of these Sufi networks: on the one hand, local rulers relied on the “intellectual infrastructure” of the Sufi networks to facilitate their own political and state-building

¹⁷ Robert D. McChesney, “Barrier of Heterodoxy?: Rethinking the Ties between Iran and Central Asia during the Seventeenth Century,” in *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society*, ed. Charles P. Melville (London: I.B. Tauris, 1996), 231–67.

agendas, and on the other, the Naqshbandi represented themselves “as a synthetic tradition, both trans-regional and local.”

The contributions outlined above draw attention to the similarities and links in culture, knowledge, and art across regions. But the final three contributions in this volume provide different lessons, challenging us to reflect upon where the ends of the Persianate world may or may not lie. The two essays by Hirotake Maeda and Joanna de Groot offer what de Groot calls an “exploration of fluid relationships between the [Persianate and non-Persianate] elements.” Maeda, by tracing the family network of the Enikolopians across Russia, Iran, and the Caucasus, and de Groot, by examining the views of the Baluch, in nineteenth-century Iran, challenge the reader to consider whether a “binary opposition” in categories, between “Persianate” and “non-Persianate,” is a helpful way to conceptualize the Persianate world. Nile Green’s essay, for its part, provides one example of where and when the Persianate world falls apart: in this case, in mid-nineteenth-century Hyderabad, when self-styled “progressives” abandoned Persian in favor of Urdu, especially when it came time for them to write about the technological and scientific innovations of Europe. Green’s example demonstrates that the shift to Urdu in South Asia developed as much through an organic and aesthetic process as through any top-down political agenda. Temporally speaking, the three essays point to the nineteenth century as a period of transformation in the Persianate world, an era that of course also witnessed the rise of nationalism.

One additional point should be made. If our present post-national historical moment has contributed to the growth of Persianate Studies, then it must be said that a related influence, also evident in the contributions in this volume, has come from the interest in moving beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries. The development of Persianate Studies may also be seen as an overdue corrective to the inadequacy of modern academic disciplines. According to this view, disciplines like “history” and “sociology” developed at a particular moment and in a particular place – nineteenth-century German universities, for the most part – when nationalism was on the rise, and therefore seemed not only suited, but also designed, to study nation-states like Germany, or France, or Iran. The framework of the “Persianate,” therefore, offers an opportunity to break free not just from national boundaries, but also forces scholars to move beyond the strictures of outdated academic disciplines.¹⁸

The turn to interdisciplinary approaches is not new, nor are the parameters to the approaches any clearer or better defined than those of global history. And again, like the influence of a global historical framework on the

18 See Arjomand, “Defining Persianate Studies,” 1.

conceptualization of the “Persianate,” an interdisciplinary approach is evident in Hodgson’s own work. Certainly, in those academic fields that are most closely related to Persianate Studies – Islamic Studies, Middle East Studies, Central Asian Studies, South Asian Studies – an interdisciplinary approach has been evident from the very beginning. In fact, it has been part of their core and founding missions. A measure of the strengths of this volume’s essays is that despite all being “historical,” by virtue of the sources they draw upon and the questions they seek to answer, they defy easy disciplinary categorizations.

3 Comparisons and Connections

The task now is to determine if the framework of the Persianate works “beyond language and literature” – to return to the questions with which the conference at Yale began – and to understand how the Persianate world compares to other supra-national regions. One way to proceed would be to apply, more systematically, the methods of comparative history to Iranian history. This approach offers numerous benefits, but perhaps the most important one is that instead of imposing the framework of a Persianate world, defined by language and literature, upon a certain geographic region and then searching for other shared features after the fact, comparing one region with another and searching for similarities and divergences will lead organically to an appropriate analytic category.

One of the great strengths of the comparative method is in its ability to identify the uniqueness of different societies, but a uniqueness that also demonstrates points of similarity.¹⁹ A truly comparative method is in fact the best antidote to the framework of exceptionalism discussed above. Azfar Moin’s *The Millennial Sovereign* provides a good example of the potentials for comparative history. In the book, Moin argues that Safavid and Mughal kingship and court culture must be understood in the context of “the cultivated manners, habits, and tastes ... that shaped elite Persianate ‘social personality’ across large swaths of Asia.”²⁰ He in turn explains the formation of that Safavid and Mughal political culture by drawing on historical and art historical methods. Yet he is also careful to point out where the cultures diverged.

19 See Marc Bloch, *The Historian’s Craft*, trans. Peter Putnam (New York: Vintage Books, 1964). For more on the “logic of hypothesis testing” that lay at the core of Bloch’s historical approach, see William H. Sewell, Jr., “Marc Bloch and the Logic of Comparative History,” *History and Theory* 6, no. 2 (1967): 208–18.

20 A. Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 56.

Just as important is the comparative method's tendency to encourage avenues of research beyond language and culture. By exploring points of comparison and contrast *within* the Persianate world, historians will be required, by default, to more frequently ask questions about the material, economic, and political aspects of the region. Here the scholarship on the Persianate world is much less well developed.

The possibility of exploring questions having to do with subjects like trade, economy, and politics raises the issue of being able to find the necessary sources to answer these questions. Over the past twenty years, historians of the Ottoman Empire have outpaced scholars of neighboring regions in exploring a range of historical questions, in large part because of the wealth of sources at their disposal. A recent ten-volume compilation and translation of seventeenth-century court records from Istanbul is remarkable, not only for the work done by its editor, Timur Kuran, but for its sheer depth and the potential research pathways it opens for scholars.²¹ It is difficult to imagine a similar project being possible for the Safavid or Mughal Empires, let alone earlier polities. The majority of sources that have been discovered for these other empires are narrative, literary, or visual in style: chronicles, local histories, biographical dictionaries (*tazkereh*), poetry, painting, and architecture. There are also the European sources, including diplomatic reports, mercantile sources, and travelogues. Nevertheless, and until new genres of sources emerge, even the more "traditional" types of sources can be used in innovative ways to answer new questions.

If a comparative method can be used to highlight ways in which societies and regions shared features beyond language, then equally important is its ability to illustrate differences and divergences. Being attuned to differences within the Persianate world, and to change over time, is essential if scholars are to avoid monolithic and unchanging depictions of Persianate culture. It may be true that a certain region of the globe was united by the fact that some – perhaps even most – of the people spoke Persian, and had an affinity for culture influenced by Persian canonical texts. But we should not close the door to the ways in which that zone does *not* hold together as a unified category of analysis. This seems to have been, at least in part, the motivation behind a series of conferences held at UCLA in 2015 and 2016 on the geographical, social, and

21 Timur Kuran, ed., *Mahkeme kayıtları ışığında 17. yüzyıl İstanbul'unda sosyo-ekonomik yaşam / Social and Economic Life in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul: Glimpses from Court Records*, 10 vols. (Istanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2010).

epistemological “frontiers” of Persian learning.²² The use of the term “frontier” conjures the scholarship, dating to the nineteenth century, on the American West as a zone between metropolitan culture and the wilderness, but it also alludes to more recent scholarship on China, the Ottoman Empire, and Europe that has emphasized the “mobility and fluidity” of frontier zones.²³ It bears reminding that an uncritical emphasis on linguistic and cultural unity beyond national boundaries can have unintended political consequences. Recent references by Russian political leaders to a “Russian world” (*russkii mir*) that extends to, for example, the Ukraine because a majority of Ukrainians speak Russian (in addition to Ukrainian), lays bare what those political ramifications can be.

Differences and divergences are just as important for their role in guarding against the impulse to replicate the “civilizational” model of earlier eras. By tracing the diffusion of Persian culture across regions, historians have moved their analyses beyond national boundaries, but once that has been accomplished – once we agree that Persianate culture was not confined to Iran – then the challenge becomes to write about cultural categories without framing them as inherent and fixed. This was, of course, the problem with some of the older ways of writing about Islam as a civilization, or as Richard Eaton has described it elsewhere, “as a ‘tradition’ that was static, timeless, and uniform, and by implication, impervious to the dynamics of change or historical process.”²⁴ A recent study of Chandar Bhan, a seventeenth-century Mughal historian and literary scholar, again illustrates the potentials for Persianate Studies.²⁵ By placing Bhan in the context of the Indo-Persian secretarial class (*monshi*), and drawing attention to the fact that he was a Hindu Brahman who served a succession of Mughal emperors, Rajeev Kinra challenges modern-day notions of castes in India, and heeds Sanjay Subrahmanyam’s call to avoid falling into

22 See <http://www.1718.ucla.edu/events/geographical-frontiers/> (accessed September 7, 2017).

23 For a comparison between China and the Ottoman Empire, see Peter C. Perdue, “Empire and Nation in Comparative Perspective: Frontier Administration in Eighteenth-Century China,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 5, no. 4 (November 2001): 282–304. For a helpful introduction to the scholarship on frontiers more broadly, see Daniel Power, “Introduction: A. Frontiers: Terms, Concepts, and the Historians of Medieval and Early Modern Europe,” in *Frontiers in Question: Eurasian Borderlands, 700–1700*, ed. Daniel Power and Naomi Standen (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 1–12.

24 Richard M. Eaton, “Islamic History as Global History,” in *Islamic and European Expansion: The Forging of a Global Order*, ed. Michael Adas (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 3.

25 Rajeev Kinra, *Writing Self, Writing Empire: Chandar Bhan Brahman and the Cultural World of the Indo-Persian State Secretary* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015).

the trap of placing at the center of analysis “multi-millennial ‘civilizational constants,’” which are seen as defining a region.²⁶

The urge to refute monolithic portrayals of culture is embedded in the very origins of the academic study of the Persianate world. Left unspoken by the authors of this volume’s contributions is how an understanding and appreciation for Persianate culture goes some way toward enriching our collective knowledge of the Islamic world. One of Hodgson’s own objectives in *The Venture of Islam* was precisely that: to “rescue Islam” from the traditional perception of Islamic culture as Arabic and shari’ah-minded, defined in the “pristine period of Mecca and Medina” with its later forms all being derivative. Persianate culture, with its vernacular literature, non-doctrinal and antinomian religious beliefs and practices, and ethnically diverse peoples, would not have fit that traditional image of Islam, propagated both by what Clifford Geertz called Islam’s “Western scholastics, the Arabists” and “its own, the ulama.”²⁷ But now that same logic can be extended to the study of the Persianate world: an understanding of the diversity of culture within the Persianate world will enrich our understanding of that world.

The diversity of culture within the Persianate world brings our attention to another way a comparative mindset can benefit Persianate Studies: by drawing on the questions that animate the study of other supra-national regions and bringing them to bear upon the Persianate world. Richard Eaton’s contribution in this volume begins to do this work, by comparing the Persianate cosmopolis to Sheldon Pollock’s Sanskrit cosmopolis. But there is much more that could be done. Topics having to do with trade and the circulation of people, goods, and ideas, have been the subject of considerable scholarship in fields of inquiry like the Mediterranean, Atlantic, and Indian Ocean worlds, but arguably the chief contribution of these supra-national frameworks has been their ability to serve as laboratories to study cross-cultural encounters and exchange. Historians have explored topics like travel,²⁸ trade,²⁹ diplomacy,³⁰ commodity exchange,³¹

26 Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia,” *Modern Asian Studies* 31, no. 3 (July 1997): 742–43.

27 Clifford Geertz, “Mysteries of Islam,” *The New York Review of Books*, December 11, 1975, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1975/12/11/mysteries-of-islam/>.

28 Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discoveries, 1400–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

29 K.N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

30 E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

31 Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Viking, 1985); Marcy Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: A History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

tolerance,³² conversion,³³ and communication³⁴ in order to illustrate the ways in which communities across space were held together, or pushed apart. At times, these worlds were characterized by “connected” historical phenomena in seemingly disparate places, but at other times they were defined by contested and violent interactions.³⁵ It remains to be seen if the Persianate world can offer similar lessons.

Finally, a comparative framework would also provide space for the continued use of the category of “Iran” while avoiding the criticism of engaging in nationalist historical writing. It is certainly true that an unfortunate nationalist tendency can be detected in some scholarship on Iran. But there must still be room for historical analyses of Iran, especially if those studies focus on topics like imperial and state formation, political economy, and governance. The Safavid and the Qajar states ruled over a territory they themselves referred to as Iran (*mamalek-e mahruseh-ye Iran*), even if Safavid and Qajar rulers’ conception of Iran was mutable and different than the modern nation-state that shares the name. There are other challenges to writing about the state in the wake of the social and cultural turns – for example, it is no longer acceptable to reify the state or view it as being autonomous from society – but any study that takes the state as its center of analysis will have to grapple with the term “Iran” and what it meant for the rulers who governed it. The logical question then is: can histories of the Persianate world be written without dismissing the category of Iran, and can histories of Iran be written without falling into the twin traps of parochialism and essentialism?

Thus the path moving ahead for Persianate Studies should be to maintain the attention to comparative history without resorting to simplistic definitions

32 David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

33 Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011); Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim between Worlds* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006).

34 John-Paul Ghobrial, *The Whispers of Cities: Information Flows in Istanbul, London, and Paris in the Age of William Trumbull* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Gagan Sood, *India and the Islamic Heartlands: An Eighteenth-Century World of Circulation and Exchange* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

35 Sanjay Subrahmanyam has explored almost the full spectrum of interactions between communities. See, for example, his *Courtly Encounters: Translating Courtliness and Violence in Early Modern Eurasia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012); *Three Ways to Be Alien: Travails and Encounters in the Early Modern World* (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 2011); “Turning the Stones Over: Sixteenth-Century Millenarianism from the Tagus to the Ganges,” *Indian Economic & Social History Review* 40, no. 2 (June 2003): 129–61.

of Persian culture, and to continue exploring the largely uncharted territory of topics beyond language and literature, while not dismissing the continued relevance of Iran as an analytic category. Based on the essays in this volume, there is much reason to be optimistic about the future of the field.

Remembering the Persianate

Abbas Amanat

As early as the fourteenth century, a well-known verse by Hafez, the great poet of Shiraz, shows oblique awareness of a geographical sphere that today we define as the Persianate world:

All the parrots of India will crack sugar,
Through this Persian sugar lump which is going to Bengal.

Hafez takes pride in the “Persian sugar lump” (*qand-e Parsi*), a reference to his own poetry, which he considers to be superior to that of the poets of Bengal. Whether this was a snippet of Fars nationalism or a sign of the poet’s cultural anxiety, the export of Persian literature to India probably was as old as the import of sugarcane from India. The thriving cultural and commercial network that connected the two regions lasted more than a millennium.¹

Note: A shorter version of this essay was first presented as the opening statement to the “Persianate World: A Conceptual Inquiry” organized by the Yale Program in Iranian Studies at the MacMillan Center on May 9–11, 2014. My thanks are due to Assef Ashraf, the conference co-organizer, and to Haynie Wheeler and Heidi Walcher for their invaluable assistance.

- 1 The Persian verse reads “*Shekkar-shekan shavand hameh tutiyan-e Hend/ Z’in qand-e Parsi keh be Bangaleh miravad.*” See *Divan-e Hafez-e Shirazi*, ed. P. Natel-Khanlari, 3rd ed. (Tehran: Khawarazmi, 1362 Sh./1983), vol. 3: 452, no. 218. That Hafez composed the above ode for Sultan Ghias al-Din Purbi, a ruler of Bengal, has proven to be a myth even though addressing an Indian audience is evident in the body of the *ghazal*. See Hafez, *Divan*, trans. H. Wilberforce Clarke, 2nd ed. (London, Octagon Press, 1974), vol. 1: 310; and E.G. Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, (Cambridge: 1928), vol. 3: 287 and note 1; cf. Qasem Ghani, *Tarikh-e Asr-e Hafez*, 7th ed. (Tehran: Zavvar, 1375 Sh./1996), vol. 1: 420–21. In a recent work, the French scholar Charles-Henri de Fouchécour, in commentaries to his translation of this *ghazal*, demystifies the identity of the ruler of Bengal who was a contemporary of Hafez based on E. de Zambour’s (*Manuel de généalogie et de chronologie pour l’histoire de l’islam*, p. 285) and Khanlari’s dating (*Hafez*, vol. 111, p. 1194). See *Le Divân* (Paris: Verdier/Poche, 2006), 597. I am indebted to Yann Richard for drawing my attention to Fouchécour’s note. Iran was an importer of sugar from India through the nineteenth century. See Willem Floor, *The Economy of Safavid Persia* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000), 126–33; and Willem Floor, “Sugar,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition, 2012, available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/sugar-cultivation> and cited sources.

For centuries, Persian poetry followed the path of patronage, commerce, and conquest. Poets, artists, scholars, and dissidents traveled along the same routes that were trodden by traders and caravaneers fanning out from Anatolia to Khotan (Eastern Turkistan or Xinjiang) and Khatay (northeastern provinces of China proper). Overland trade and a network of maritime trade through the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean spread over a vast region from the Turkish principalities of Anatolia, and later the Asian provinces of the Ottoman Empire, through the Caucasus to the southern tip of the Indian subcontinent. Often coexisting with, rather than dominating over other languages, Persian language and culture served as a medium of interregional commerce and correspondence, but also was favored as the language of literature and historiography, of love poems and epic tales, interacting with an even wider Eurasian zone including Southeast Asia, the Balkans and Kazan.

The Persianate domain is often associated with early modern Muslim empires: the Safavids, the Mughals, the Ottomans and the Shaybanids of Central Asia (and their subsidiary and successor states). Yet it was grounded in a rich cultural legacy that dated back to Late Antiquity and later evolved in the formative Islamic centuries. In medieval and early modern times, the Persianate world never really attained, or strived to achieve, political unity. The regional entities and territorial empires in Iran, Central Asia, the Indian subcontinent, and Anatolia maintained their ethno-political autonomy.

The Persianate sphere nevertheless provided something of a cultural affinity. The Persian theories of government and norms of statecraft, for example, were widely practiced from the age of the Caliphate through the Saljuqid and the Ilkhanid eras. Despite prolonged episodes of political and religious conflicts that divided the region, these norms and methods of statecraft survived through the early modern empires and beyond, even up to the creation of modern nation-states. The Safavid Empire of Iran developed its own religiously inclusive Shi'i identity while the Mughal Empire of Hindustan, and its successor princely states, explored new ecumenical approaches to state authority. The Ottoman Empire on the other hand incorporated a Turko-Islamic Sunni identity with Mediterranean characteristics. Similarly, the Central Asian khanates on the northeastern flanks of the Persianate world also adopted an uncompromising Sunni posture. The political and religious divides no doubt placed major constraints on the shaping and development of the Persianate world, but they did not destroy it altogether, at least not before the rise of colonial empires in the nineteenth century, and eventually the emergence of nationalist ideologies in the twentieth.

These shared cultural experiences have long been appreciated as Persianate. They were the focal point of Marshall Hodgson's reinterpretation of the history

of the eastern Eurasian ecumene. Literary and intellectual historians were the first to explore this transregional space and its cultural diversity, to be followed by historians of art and architecture. Yet the question remains: to what extent can we weave into these cultural patterns any socioeconomic underpinnings and discover shared natural and urban settings. In other words, to what extent can historical scholarship – with wider cultural, socioeconomic, artistic, and gender interests – articulate not only a nuanced context for literary texts, but delineate deeper trends in social, ecological, and material ties that held together the seemingly disparate regions of the Persianate world in the late medieval and early modern past.

1 The Semantics and the Discipline

It is in the aftermath of a now largely forlorn legacy that we should pursue an academic field of inquiry called “Persianate,” and explore its dimensions. Forty years since Marshall Hodgson first introduced the concept of “Persianate” in his *The Venture of Islam*,² the term has gained greater currency and influenced a wide range of scholarly inquiries.³

Yet long before the Persianate world was conceptualized as a linguistic and cultural space, one can trace a degree of awareness of a common cultural heritage among pre-modern authors. The fifteenth-century Dowlatshah Samarqandi, the author of a trans-regional literary biography, *Tazkereh-ye Sho'ara*;⁴ the sixteenth-century Bosnian literary commentator Ahmad Sudi's commentary on Hafez's *ghazals*;⁵ the seventeenth-century lexicographer

2 Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), vol. 2: 293–94.

3 The *Encyclopaedia Iranica* project, for instance, is founded on the conviction that there are historical ties and a substantive degree of coherence within the confines of the Persianate cultural zone. The *Encyclopaedia Iranica's* mission statement denotes that it is “dedicated to the study of Iranian civilization in the Middle East, the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Indian Subcontinent.” See <http://www.iranicaonline.org/pages/about>. For the past three decades the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies and its scholarly organ, *Journal of Persianate Studies*, have also promoted Persianate Studies. See <http://www.persianatesocieties.org/PDFs/ASPS%20Bylaws%20Amended%202016.pdf>.

4 Dowlatshah Samarqandi, *Tazkereh-ye Sho'ara* (Tehran: Kolaleh Khavar, 1335 Sh./1957). See also Dabih-Allah Safa, “Dawlatšāh Samarqandi,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vi1/2, pp. 149–150; available online at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/dawlatsah>.

5 The original Turkish was first published as Bosnavi Sudi, *Min Shar-e Hafez-e Sudi* (Bulaq, 1250 AH/1834). In Persian translation it appeared as *Shar-e Sudi bar Hafez*, trans. 'Esmat Sattarzadeh, 3rd ed. (Tehran: Dehkhoda, 1359 Sh./1980). Sudi also produced a well-known commentary on Sa'di's *Golestan*.

Mohammad Hosayn Khalaf Tabrizi, the compiler of *Borhan-e Qate'*⁶ and the eighteenth-century Perso-Indian heresiographer Kay-Khosrow Esfandiyar, the presumed author of *Dabestan-e Mazaheb*⁷ are but a few examples. With some stretch of imagination one can go even earlier in time in search of a Persianate identity, perhaps to as far back as the eighth-century proponents of the Shu'ubiyya movement and their shared memories of a Sasanian politico-cultural domain.⁸

Highlighting the relevance of the Shu'ubiyya to the revival of Persian, Bert Fragner argues in his important 1999 essay *Die Persophonie: Regionalität, Identität und Sprachkontakt in der Geschichte Asiens* that modern Iranian nationalism borrowed from European Orientalists to inaccurately characterize the Shu'ubiyya as a movement of cultural resistance, in the heartlands of the Iranian world, against Arab expressions of racial hegemony.⁹ Whatever the merits of defining the Shu'ubiyya as a movement within the "fortress of the caliphate," as Fragner suggests, it is undeniable that the Persian memories of pre-Islamic Iran were vivid in the minds of many of the proponents of Shu'ubiyya, even if it was expressed in Arabic prose and poetry. In the Shu'ubiyya discourse, geography played a secondary part, and so did class distinction, since some of the Shu'ubiyya had their roots among the lowly Persian city folks. In the Umayyad period, it was quite natural for the majority of the Iranian *mawali* (often translated as "clients"), who were essentially seen and treated as slaves of their Arab masters, to compensate for the demotion of their social status

6 The Persian printed edition together with an Ottoman Turkish translation first appeared as *Ketab-e Tebyan-e Nafe' Tarjome-e Borhan-e Qate'* (Constantinople [Istanbul]: Dar al-Teba'eh-ye 'Ameri, 1214 AH/1798) and Bulaq; 1212 AH/1798). A critical edition by Mohammad Mo'in, 'Ali-Akbar Dehkhoda, Ibrahim Purdavud, and 'Ali Asghar Hekmat appeared in five volumes (Tehran: Zavvar, 1330–1342 Sh./ 1953–1961). See also Mohammad Dabirsiqi, "Borhān-e Qāte'," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, IV/4, pp. 369–370; available online at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/borhan-e-qate>.

7 The authorship of *Dabestan* has long been debated. The earliest edition, attributed to Mohsen (Mohammad) Fani, edited by D. Shea and A. Toryer, appeared in three volumes as *Dabistan* (Paris: Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain, 1843). A new critical edition by Rahim Rezazadeh Malek, 2 vols. (Tehran: Tahuri, 1362 Sh./1983) attributed authorship to Kaykhosrow Esfandiyar. See also Fath-Allah Mojtaba'i, "Dabestān-e Maḏāheb," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, VI/5, pp. 532–534; available online at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/dabestan-e-madaheb>; and M. Athar Ali, "Pursuing an Elusive Seeker of Universal Truth: The Identity and Environment of the Author of the 'Dabistān-i Mazāhib,'" *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Third Series, 9, no. 3 (Nov. 1999), 365–373.

8 Roy P. Mottahedeh, "The Shu'ubiyya Controversy and the Social History of Early Islamic Iran," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 7, no. 2 (April 1976): 161–82.

9 *Die Persophonie: Regionalität, Identität und Sprachkontakt in der Geschichte Asiens* (Berlin, 1999); reprint, ed. H. Alam (Nordhausen (Germany): Verlag T. Bautz, n.d.), 16–17.

by underscoring Persian cultural superiority and expressing pride in Iran's pre-Islamic past.¹⁰

It is true, however, that from the late nineteenth century, Western scholars – Orientalists, archaeologists and Iranists – became more aware of a common Persianate culture, if not of a defined Persianate zone. One can think of Theodor Nöldeke, Edward Browne, Vasily Bartold, Guy le Strange, Arthur Upham Pope, Vladimir Minorsky, and more recently Henry Corbin, Jan Rypka, Richard Frye, Clifford Edmund Bosworth, and Bert Fragner. In the Persianate world too we can think of Shibli Nomani, Mehmet Fuad Koprulu, and more recently, Nazir Ahmad, Zabihollah Safa, Erfan Habib, and Muzaffar Alam. Contributions by Ehsan Yarshater are particularly noteworthy for the growth and maturation of Persianate Studies. Among other multi-volume projects, under Yarshater's editorship *Encyclopaedia Iranica* covered a vast array of historical, archeological, geographical, cultural, literary, and sociopolitical topics across the Persianate world. More recently, as the general editor of the multi-volume *A History of Persian Literature*, he also helped define the boundaries of a Persianate literary world and demonstrate its diversity.¹¹ Among cultural and political figures of the twentieth century, too, Abul Kalam Azad, Muhammad Iqbal Lahori, Sadr al-Din Ayni, and Adib Pishavari, to name a few, were conscious of transnational Persianate ties that brought their lands closer to one another. It was as if they sketched a common cultural space that was waiting to be defined but soon to disappear under the weight of territorial nationalisms and identity politics.

Despite this long textual and literary heritage, the notion of the Persianate was never consciously conceptualized in the sense that we recognize it today. The old nomenclature for Persian, '*ajam*, a non-Arabic-speaking alien, was by and large a derogatory term. It evokes an inescapable sense of otherness attached to non-Arab peoples and cultures. The association with Persian culture, however, even as late as the twentieth century – for example in Muhammad Iqbal Lahori's *Zabur-e 'Ajam* (Persian Psalms) – denotes a preferred usage not only in contradistinction to Arabic of the classical era, but Urdu and other languages of South Asia.¹² Even *farsi* (Persian), as a term defining the geographical heartland of Persian language and literature, is not an ideal equivalent.

10 See also Abbas Amanat, "Iranian Identity Boundaries: An Interpretive Overview," in *Iran Facing Others: Identity Boundaries in a Historical Perspective*, eds. Abbas Amanat and Farzin Vejdani (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 1–36 (p. 6) and cited source (note 14).

11 So far only three volumes of *A History of Persian Literature* have been published.

12 *Zabur-e 'Ajam*, 1st ed. (Lahore, 1927). For a discussion of '*ajam* in the subcontinent see Sunil Sharma, "Redrawing the Boundaries of '*Ajam* in Early Modern Persian Literary Histories,"

For one thing, the “Persian domain,” a translation of *qalamru-ye zaban-e farsi*, tends to overlook the diversity of vernacular languages and cultures within which the Persian language operated. Moreover the term “Persian” does not reflect the socioeconomic and sociocultural complexities of the region in question. The use of “Persian” can also imply a sense of Iranian hegemony, which defeats the purpose and contradicts the emphasis on the shared contribution of diverse societies. This sense of cultural hegemony may be to the delight of pan-Iranists (and other cultural expansionists) but by no means can it engender the spirit of commonality that is at the core of the term “Persianate.”

The recently adopted *farsi-zaban* (Persian speaker) is perhaps the closest to Persianate even though it has its own limitations, since it implies Persian-speaking as the criterion for inclusion in the Persianate space. Not all Persianate societies, it may be argued, speak Persian.¹³ In this respect it is akin to the term *persephone* and *persophonie*, proposed by Bert Fragner. Other permutations, like *farsi-gu* (those who compose poetry in Persian) for instance, have their own shortcomings, and *shebheh-farsi* (quasi-Persian) sounds pejorative. Perhaps *fari-san* (or *parsi-san*) comes closer to “Persianate” without being pejorative. As alternatives one may propose *farsivareh* (or *parsivareh*) and *farsiyaneh* (or *parsiyaneh*). Both possessive suffixes, *-vareh* and *-aneh*, pertain to resemblance and likelihood, which may correspond to the English *-ate*.

Beyond Hodgson, one of the first to articulate the notion of Persianate, as *persophonie*, was Bert Fragner in his essay *Die Persophonie*. The weight of Fragner’s pioneering conceptualization is linguistic, and more broadly, cultural. He argues that modern Persian successfully resisted expansion of Arabic as a dominant vernacular in the eastern Islamic lands. Over a period of a millennium, Persian not only remained the language of most of Central Asia and the Iranian plateau but also over the course of the thirteenth to the eighteenth centuries served as the lingua franca for a vast expanse, stretching roughly from Asia Minor to eastern Turkistan. Developed as an Islamicate language, moreover, Persian produced its own body of literature that included prose and poetry, both epics and lyrics, and historiography. The *persophonie* thus is more than a temporal but a spatial reality that gave expression to cultures of the eastern Islamic world and turned them into a cultural zone beyond just a geographical space occupied by successive dynastic empires of ethnically and linguistically diverse origins. In this respect Fragner made the Persianate

in *Iran Facing Others: Identity Boundaries in a Historical Perspective*, eds. A. Amanat and F. Vejdani (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 51–64.

13 As in the name of the Association for the Study of the Persianate Societies (*Anjoman-e Motale'at-e Javame'ye Farsi-zaban*).

a more tangible concept, despite an essentially emic approach that placed the Persian language at the core of the Persianate. Yet by its very definition, the *persophonie* project barely moves beyond the world of language and ethnicity, to explore aspects of political culture, socioreligious networks, material culture, trade and economy, even terrain and ecology; aspects that could open new avenues, and in some respect serve as the continuum beyond the “high culture” of the literary elites, be it courtly or scholastic – the latter being the product of the *madraseh*.¹⁴

Whatever the manner of conceptualization, what we define, or ought to define, today as the Persianate brings to mind more diverse features, that are both cultural and material. In this respect, the Persianate may imply variation on a common theme, or themes; something to be celebrated rather than apologized for or explained away. It gives a degree of cultural agency to its members without implying sheer imitation of “authentic” cultural ideals or subservience to them. Notions such as “Anglophone” and “Francophone,” which are widely used in linguistic and literary contexts and are viewed as academic subfields, although they may evoke a legacy of colonialism or even Orientalism, are no longer viewed as reprehensible or the property of the “mother country,” if the use of such terms is even justified any longer. Rather, they are thriving fields that have greatly contributed to English and French Studies and brought new vitality to them.¹⁵

Regions with a variety of languages including Turkic, Kurdish, Baluch, Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi, Kashmiri, and Kannada invariably had their own ethnic and regional characteristics. Remarkably Persian, even when it was adopted as the language of the court and administration, for instance under the Mughals, almost never held hegemonic sway over regional vernaculars. The absence of a missionary drive facilitated the Persian language’s coexistence with local languages even under ideological states such as the Safavids. As Richard Eaton has argued in his essay in this volume, Persian operated as a *lingua franca* parallel to regional and local languages within a given cultural setting and often adopted elements of local cultures and local modes of expression. This is obviously

14 I first became aware of Fragner’s endeavor, and his notion of *Persophonie*, in 2007 when he brought it up during his keynote speech at Yale in a conference on “Iran Facing Others: Iranian Identity Boundaries and Political Cultures.” Only some years later did I have the chance to see his abovementioned study. I found some parallels between his interpretation and mine even though there are naturally many points of divergence.

15 Since Winston Churchill’s *The History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, a project tinged with imperial nostalgia and political expediency during the World War II and wartime alliances, seldom has the term Anglophone implied cultural domination. The same may be said about Francophone since the time of decolonization.

true in what is today identified as Indo-Persian, with its vast repository of indigenous and semi-indigenous texts distinct in style from the Persian of the Iranian or Central Asian worlds. Even in urban centers of Central Asia, such as Bukhara, where an element of cultural pride is associated with the usage of eloquent Persian, one can detect a tendency toward indigenizing the language.¹⁶

Contrary to Arabic in classical Islamic times, as well as to modern European languages such as English, French, and Spanish that spread beyond their original linguistic domains on the backs of colonizing empires, Persian often was not the language of the conqueror but that of the conquered. Its literary revival in the early Islamic centuries in greater Khorasan and in Central Asia, and its later expansion under Turkish dynasties throughout the Ghaznavid, Saljuqid, and Ghorid Empires should thus be attributed to its administrative, literary, and commercial functions not only in the court and among the elite, but at times as the language of the subaltern.

That may be an explanation for why no derivative of “Persian” defined the domain in which the Persian language and culture operated.¹⁷ This is despite the fact that, for more than a millennium, Persianate lands successfully resisted overt Arabicization and Turkification. Terms such as *farsi-khwan* (s/he who reads Persian) or *parsi-gu* (she/he who composes in Persian), though they appear in literature, never are overtly associated with a geographical region. Even the Persian language’s geographical association with Iran or *Iranshahr* remained ambiguous. The closest association of course is with the province of Fars, the ancient *Parse*, the birthplace of ancient Persian and Middle Persian (*Pahlavi*), and home to two Persian empires of pre-Islamic times. Greater Khorasan, on the other hand, where Dari Persian first thrived and gave birth to an all-embracing renaissance in the ninth and tenth centuries, was acknowledged as the cradle of modern Persian only in recent times. Nor were the western Iranian provinces known as *Iraq-e ‘Ajam* (Persian Iraq) identified as being solely the domain of the Persian language, although the very term *‘ajam* differentiated the region from the adjacent *Iraq-e ‘Arab*, presumably because it was a predominantly Persian-speaking region.

16 For Richard Eaton’s discussion of Persian and Sanskrit see: “The Persian Cosmopolis (900–1900) and the Sanskrit Cosmopolis (400–1400)” in this volume. See also Fragner, *Die Persophonie*, 11–21. On the variants of Persian see for instance Ahmad-‘Ali Raja’i Bukhara’i, *Lahjeh-ye Bukhara’i* (Mashhad: Intisharat Danishgah Ferdowsi, 1996).

17 Needless to say *Persia* was the nomenclature for Iran in European languages since the ancient Greeks first adopted *Parse* to identify the Persian Empire, in reference to the seat of the Achaemenid Empire (today’s Fars province). A similar association is true for the Bible. Even the use of *Iranshahr* in reference to the Sasanian Empire did not change the nomenclature in Byzantine Greek and later in Western languages.

The complex relationship between the land and the language (i.e. Iran and Persian) before modern times is not an anomaly. In many other settings, for instance Spain, the British Isles, or even France, other binds of loyalty, such as ethnic, regional, religious, or local vernaculars, superseded identification with a *lingua franca*. Pre-modern empires tended to be dynastic in nature rather than territorial, with no fixed cultural identity. One example of course is the Ottoman Empire with a vast array of languages surviving along with Ottoman Turkish, those ranging from Greek, Bosnian, and Serbo-Croat to Arabic, Armenian, and Kurdish. Persian was no exception.

2 Persianate Center and Periphery

Is there a center and a periphery, we may ask, in our conceptualization of the Persianate world? The answer may vary depending on whether the emphasis is on the original development of Persian culture, or on the geographical, demographic, and political domains in which it evolved, or even on its contemporary state of being. It may also be argued that the center and periphery are essentially irrelevant, or even invalid, given the relativity of cultural experiences. Would it be convincingly possible to rank superior a Persian *ghazal* composed in Delhi or Konia over one composed in Shiraz, or to hold aesthetically of inferior quality a Kurdish melody (*gusheh*) originating in the Fayli tribal region (in today's southern Iraqi Kurdistan) compared to the Khosravani royal system devised by the Sasanian composer Barbad in the sixth century (of which now presumably only a melody in the *mahur* mode has survived)? Is the eleventh-century Friday mosque in Ardestan, on the edge of the central Iranian desert, any less refined architecturally than the fourteenth-century grand Ulu Jama mosque of Bursa? Indeed, distinguishing the center versus the periphery may come dangerously close to supporting the hegemonic notion of superior and inferior cultures common in the nineteenth-century social Darwinist theories.

A benign approach perhaps is to think in terms of the historical geography without invoking the "authenticity" debate; in other words exploring how Persian culture of Late Antiquity evolved into a widespread Persianate cultural medium in premodern and early modern times. Yet here too it is difficult to locate a center. Is it the Sasanian original homeland of Pars in southern Iran during the third century or, more likely, Mesopotamia of the fifth and sixth centuries, where a remarkable mix of ethnicities, languages, cultures, and religious trends intermingled within, or in reaction to, the Sasanian system? Should, for instance, the sixth-century Mazdaki movement in the heartland of the Sasanian world, and its revival in the ninth century as the Khorrami

religion, which deeply influenced the religious history of the Persianate world, be seen as central or peripheral?

Thinking beyond the center-periphery debate, we may identify three historical epochs corresponding roughly to three geographical spheres, even though both the historical epochs and the geographical spheres overlapped and remained fluid. First, that of West Asia-Central Asia in Late Antiquity; second, Central Asia and greater Khorasan to central Iran from the age of the high caliphate to the middle of the Timurid period (what Hodgson viewed as the zenith of the Persianate cultural epoch); and third, the age of the three early modern empires in the eastern part of the Islamic world.

The first of these epochs, the late Sasanian era to early Islamic conquest, roughly corresponded to the period from the reign of Bahram V (406–38 CE) to the end of the Umayyad caliphate (750 CE) – an era with its own cultural-commercial axis that stretched from Sogdian Samarkand and Bactrian Balkh, in the northeast, to the river valleys of Mesopotamia, where the Sasanian capital, Ctesiphon, stood. The vast multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic, and multi-confessional region that evolved under Sasanian aegis was essential in laying the foundation for what came to be the Persianate world. Despite the repressive authority of Zoroastrian orthodoxy, and the priesthood that represented it, the shift of the empire's center from Pars to Mesopotamia early in its gestation nurtured a thriving Perso-Aramaic culture that served the administrative, commercial and artistic life of the empire. In the west, the Sasanian Empire benefited from trade and intellectual exchanges with the Byzantine world and the Hellenistic culture that was preserved and articulated there, while being barred from expansion beyond the river Euphrates.

The Gondishapur Academy, established and patronized in the fifth and the sixth centuries by Sasanian rulers, was but one example. The remarkable blend of Greek, Syriac, Indian, and Persian medicine, philosophy, astronomy, and mathematical sciences that was taught and promoted in this Mesopotamian and southern Iranian environment served as a major conduit for the transmission of the so-called “Greek sciences” in the formative era of Islamic civilization. The corpus that survived from this cultural sphere, though not as widely known, was on a par with, if not more important than, the Syriac corpus preserved in the former Byzantine provinces of the Islamic empire.¹⁸

Through the Persian Gulf and southeastern provinces, commercial and cultural ties with the splendid Ghandara Buddhism and the post-Ashoka and

¹⁸ See for instance Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbāsīd Society (2nd–4th/8th–10th Centuries)* (London & New York: Routledge, 1998).

Gupta Hindu world further enriched the eastern Sasanian peripheries. The annexation of Bactria, and the absorption of its distinct culture enriched the Sasanian melting pot and was profoundly influential in shaping the Persianate mystical worldview in classical Islamic times. Anecdotal evidence of South Asian foodstuffs and medicinal plants imported into the Sasanian world, furthermore, can be traced to Pahlavi, and later to Arabic and Persian, pharmaceutical texts. Likewise, the semi-mythical account of the sixth-century Sasanian royal physician and philosopher, Borzuyeh, who brought – or more accurately smuggled – from Hindustan to the court of Khosrow Anushirvan the celebrated Sanskrit animal fables, *Panchatantra*, is further evidence of the Indo-Persian interplay. What came to be known in Pahlavi, and later in Arabic and Persian translations, as *Kalileh va Demneh*, proved to be seminal for development of the “counsel” (*andarz*) genre in the Islamic era.

On the northeastern Sasanian frontier, Sogdian trade with Khotan, along the route that later came to be labeled by Europeans as the Silk Road, was another source of wealth and cultural inspiration, as well as a site for settlement of Persian commercial and missionary communities in the outposts of Turfan (Turpan) and Kashgar in Khotan during the era of the Three Kingdoms in the third to fifth centuries. The connection was crucial not only for the importation of silk and the introduction of new weaving techniques into the Iranian world, but also for adopting a magnificent pictorial tradition of wall painting and book illustration. The Manichean missionary communities in Khotan and neighboring lands seem to have pioneered the enduring tradition in the Persian world of illustrating texts. This Sogdian pictorial tradition, represented for instance by the mid-seventh-century wall painting of Tal-e Afrasiab, near Samarkand, metaphorically depicts diplomatic relations among the Chinese, the Iranians, the Indians, and the Turks.¹⁹

The other geographical extreme of the Sasanian domains was the multi-confessional world of the second- and third-century Dura Europous, on the Parthian-Roman frontier in western Syria where the Perso-Roman Mithraic religion coexisted with indigenous Judaism, and early Christian and Roman cults. Although this fascinating world of commerce and imperial contestation came to an end with the rise of Sasanian hegemony, its resonance continued to echo in the centuries that followed. It was not a mere coincidence that in the third century, under early Sasanian rule, the ancient Mandaean cult of

19 See for example “Court Art of the Sogdian Samarqand in the 7th Century: <http://www.orientarch.uni-halle.de/ca/afra/general.htm> and Victor Mair and Prods Oktor Skjærvø, “Chinese Turkestan ii. In Pre-Islamic Times,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, v/5, pp. 463–471; available online at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/chinese-turkestan-ii>.

southern Mesopotamia, with an enduring Aramaic textual and ritual tradition, gave birth to the syncretic religion of Mani. A product of the confluence between the Aramaic and Persian cultures of Sasanian Iran, the Manichean religion was prototypical of a powerful religio-mystical trend that continued through the classical Islamic era and beyond. Incorporating diverse elements from Zoroastrianism, Gnostic beliefs of Mesopotamia, the early Christian cult of Christ, and Central Asian Buddhism, Mani's ecumenical worldview offered a reified notion of religion distinct from the ethnic and confessional belief systems of ancient times. In the same vein it inculcated a tradition of book illustration and melodic recitation that became characteristics of antinomian, inclusive, and mystical trends of the Persianate world.

Engagement with the Arabian Peninsula as far south as the fragmented kingdom of Yemen, widened the late Sasanian foundation of the Persianate sphere. Whether it was a geopolitical contest with the Byzantine Empire, or growing trade through the Persian Gulf with communities of northern Arabia, or pursuing expansionist ambitions in Yemen in the sixth century, the increasingly multi-ethnic Sasanian society appreciated the significance of the Arabian Peninsula and its neighboring lands not merely for their tradition of chivalry and fighting skills, but as an important bulwark against the threat of nomadic invasions from the interiors of Arabia. Based in Hira, near today's Kufa in southern Iraq, the Lakhmid vassalage, a longtime client of the Sasanian Empire, served as a buffer against the neighboring Ghossanids in Syria, a client of the Byzantine Empire. Irrespective of political and commercial rivalries, the two kingdoms served as conduits for the flow of Levantine trade and culture into the Sasanian world. Likewise, the indigenous culture of southern Arabia, with African and Indian Ocean traits, also fed Sasanian cosmopolitanism.

The age of the Abbasid Caliphate (750–1258) to the end of the Timurid period (1370–1507), corresponded to the rise and expansion of the Turco-Persian empires of the eastern Islamic world. This may be seen as the second phase of the Persianate socio-cultural and socio-economic development.²⁰ In several important respects, this era of more than seven centuries reaffirmed the earlier Persianate features that were grounded in Late Antiquity. Aside from the geographical contraction and then expansion, the reemergence of modern

20 Fragner's *Die Persophonie* (pp. 74–81) adopts a different chronology. Focusing on the development of modern Persian, it views the early Abbasid caliphate in the eastern Islamic world as the period of gestation of the *Persophonie* to be followed by the eleventh to thirteenth centuries and the Mongolian invasion, and from the thirteenth to eighteenth centuries as the final period of Persianate expansion. My periodization in this essay is not merely on the development of modern Persian but on the place of the Sassanian legacy in the shaping of the Persianate world.

Persian language and literature here was intertwined with the eastern expansion of Arabic, the consolidation and articulation of an Islamic legal and theological belief system, and the rise of the Turco-Mongolian dynasties' nomadic armies. The Persianate domain nevertheless preserved its multi-linguistic, multi-ethnic, and cross-cultural characteristics that it had inherited from the Sasanian era precisely because it served as a convenient medium in the political and commercial spheres. Remarkably it also preserved and even expanded its geographical domain. A Persian political ethos, as well as a culture of luxury and leisure, inherited from the pre-Islamic era also survived and thrived. Most importantly, under the aegis of Islam the lifting of politico-religious boundaries between the Sasanian and eastern Byzantine worlds allowed a cultural florescence and wider commercial span that were deeply influential in reshaping the Persianate world.

Persianization of the eastern provinces of the Islamic empire was evident even before the days of the Umayyad Caliphate. At least on the Mesopotamian side of a bipolar and disputed Islamic empire, Kufa, the capital of the Lakhmid kingdom of the pre-Islamic era, served as the seat of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, the fourth of the formative caliphs of early Islam. It was not without reason that the founding saint of the cult of proto-Shi'ism moved away from the seditious climate of Medina to settle in the Perso-Arabic world of Hira. Soon thereafter some so-called "clients" (*mawali*) of Iranian origin, a slave class of sorts in a peculiar power relationship with their Arab masters, helped tilt political power toward the former Sasanian capital in Mesopotamia. It was not a coincidence either that Baghdad, with a Middle Persian nomenclature, rose in the vicinity of Ctesiphon in the eighth century. As Ibn Khaldun reminds us, it was the materials salvaged from the still standing but abandoned Sasanian capital that built the seat of the new Abbasid power. Ibn Khaldun's numerous references in the *Muqaddimah* to Persian intellectual and material contributions, and to Persian statecraft as formative blocks of the Islamic civilization, and his emphasis on the endurance of Persian as an alternative language and culture in the eastern Islamic world, demonstrate a nascent notion of the Persianate in the work of the great Tunisian historian and philosopher of history.²¹

Along with building materials came the mortar of an old Perso-Aramaic civilization that bloomed, after the initial shock of conquest and then a period

21 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. F. Rosenthal, 3 vols., 2nd ed. (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1967). See for example vol. 1: 295. See also F. Rosenthal, "Ebn Kaldūn," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, VIII/1, pp. 32–35; available online at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/ebn-kaldun> for Ibn Khaldun's knowledge of Persian scholarship.

of mass conversion to Islam, in a remarkable era of intellectual, literary, and scientific florescence. For all intents and purposes, the Baghdad of the high caliphate fell within the cultural sphere of a Persianate zone. Though almost exclusively expressed in Arabic and anchored in Islamic learning, the worldview of a vast number of scholars, administrators, and literary figures was shaped by this Perso-Aramaic legacy even more than by the classical Greek knowledge that was fused into the Islamic philosophical and scientific corpus. Vast numbers of scholars and statesmen in Baghdad originated from Khorasan, Rayy, Isfahan, Jebal, and 'Iraq-e 'Ajam. Even natives of Baghdad and southern Iraq relied on this Perso-Aramaic legacy to some degree, either consciously or as beneficiaries of the emerging syncretic Islamic culture of the time. Contributions from greater Khorasan and Central Asia, especially Bukhara, Samarkand, Tus, Balkh, and Herat reinforced ancient ties with the eastern Islamic world.

The expanded boundaries of what Hodgson defines as an Islamicate region, from Turkistan to the Levant, Egypt, and the Maghreb, allowed new fusions of ideas, development of commercial ties, and movements of population that mixed with, broadened, and ultimately indigenized the Sasanian and the Byzantine heritages into the emerging Arabic-Islamic and Persian-Islamic cultures. Three waves of nomadic Turco-Mongolian invasions between the eleventh and the fifteenth centuries – the Saljuq, the Mongol, and the Timurid, which all originated in Central Asia and entered through Khorasan into the central Iranian plateau and beyond – were harmful, if not disastrous, to the urban settings and to their vulnerable agricultural hinterlands. The immediate outcome of Mongol and Timurid invasions in particular were nothing short of calamitous for major centers of learning, trade, and urban life such as Marv, Nayshapur, and Balkh. Yet despite their initial destructive impact, they ultimately proved to be instrumental in broadening the Persianate commercial and cultural horizons and opening new lines of communication especially to western China. One can probably speak not only of *Pax-Mongolica* in the thirteenth and early fourteenth century, but of a *Pax-Timurica* in the late fourteenth and through the fifteenth centuries.

The third transformative phase of Persianate historical geography came with the age of early modern Muslim empires. Between the middle of the fifteenth century and the early seventeenth century, military conquest, in particular by the Ottomans in the Balkans and the Mughals in the Indian subcontinent, widened the Persianate scope. While state institutions, transportable commodities, material culture, intellectual dissent, and literary trends still preserved a distinctive Persianate flavor, each zone earned a discrete personality of its own. In the west, Persianate culture interacted with a remarkable degree of harmony with Ottoman Turkish often through the long legacy of the Saljuqs of

Anatolia and other Turkish principalities of the region. In the Mughal world, on the other hand, Persianate culture coexisted with a plethora of indigenous Hindu-Sanskrit cultures. And in both, as in the case of the Shaybanids of Central Asia, the Persianate features of culture and state institutions were seen as independent from their origin in the Iranian heartlands. To be sure the Safavid state remained loyal to the Persianate legacy, yet its early radical anti-Sunni messianism, and later its loyalty to an institutional and legalistic interpretation of Shi'ism, drew deep division especially with the Ottomans and the Shaybanids. Sectarian-ideological rifts between the empires, it may be argued, contributed to a gradual breakdown of the Persianate interconnectedness.

3 Persianate Modalities

Up to the early decades of the nineteenth century, we can identify at least four enduring Persianate modalities, roughly within the Bengal to Bursa zone: a tradition of governance and methods of statecraft; a common literary heritage; the prevalence of Sufism and Sufi networks; and finally, common features of a Persianate material culture. Although it is difficult to define these modalities as purely Persian, they displayed common features upon interaction with the adjacent Turkic, Arabic, and Sanskrit linguistic zones. This is well evident in the evolution of the Persian vocabulary, which borrowed extensively from Arabic, as well as from Turkic languages, Mongolian, and to a limited extent, from the languages of the subcontinent. The liberal borrowing of images, myths, and concepts from Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Buddhism, Hindu, and pre-Islamic Arabian and Yemeni myths and cults also confirmed the plasticity of the emerging Persianate milieu.

The most prevalent of these modalities, perhaps, is the political culture and tradition of statecraft that originally was a legacy of the Sasanian past, transplanted and augmented in the Islamic era. It was articulated in manuals of government as early as the eighth century.²² Advanced mostly by members

22 Among the earliest in Arabic are translations and adaptations by the celebrated Ibn al-Moqaffa' (d. 757 CE), a second-generation Persian from Fars province who in the early decades of the eighth century translated numerous late-Pahlavi texts into Arabic including works in the genre of "mirrors for princes" (*andarz-nameh*). His *Ketab al-Adab al-Kabir* is a foundation text for classical Arabic *adab* literature. See J. Derek Latham, "Ebn-Moqaffa'," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, VIII/1, pp. 39–43; available online at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/ebn-al-moqaffa>. The ninth-century Ahmad al-Sarakhsi, a student of Greek philosophy from Khorasan, was another early author of "mirror for princes" literature of Sasanian origin. F. Rosenthal, "al-Sarakhsi," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second*

of a Khorasani ministerial class in control of the institution of the vizierate (*vezarat*) and of the *divan* in the eastern Islamic world, Persian methods of statecraft were transmitted throughout a vast geographical region. Famous ministers such as the tenth-century Saheb ibn 'Abbad, the eleventh-century Hasan Tusi, better known as Nezam al-Molk, and the thirteenth-century Fazlollah Hamadani were but a few in a long line of ministers and administrators who, from the ninth to the nineteenth centuries, both preserved and innovated upon the themes of this ministerial past. From the Abbasid era onward, and later through the Saljuqid Empire, the Persian vizierate and the *divan* institution spread widely from North Africa to Khotan and from the Khanates of the Golden Horde to southern kingdoms of the Indian subcontinent. This tradition laid the administrative foundation for all of the Persianate empires of the early modern era.

Above all the emergence in the eleventh century of the institution of the sultanate (*saltanat*; kingship) and the *sultan* as holder of temporal power reaffirmed the Sasanian legacy. Despite its Qur'anic nomenclature and nominal subservience to the caliphate, the sultanate for all practical purposes was a variation on the theme of *padshahi* (kingship) of the Sasanian era. The contrast between the caliphate, as the source of moral authority in the Muslim community, and the sultanate, as the source of temporal rule, was no doubt more pronounced than the division between the king of kings (*shahanshah*) and the Zoroastrian chief priest (*mobad-e mobadan*) in the Sasanian era, even at the height of Kartir's power in the third century.²³ The *de facto* division was already in place as early as the ninth century under the Samanids of Khorasan and Central Asia who were highly conscious of their Sasanian heritage, either real or imagined. Simultaneously, the ties to the Sasanian past are well evident among the Shi'i Buyids of western Iran and Iraq, who not only brought the Abbasid Caliphate to a state of virtual vassalage but adopted the title of "king of kings."

This was a paradigm shift from the time of the early Rashidun (the Rightly Guided) Caliphs in the seventh century for whom there was no practical distinction between the religious and temporal authority of the caliph. Curiously the rise of the Ghaznavid and Saljuqid sultans, who were staunch Sunni Turks supportive of the Abbasid caliphs, only consolidated the institution of

Edition, eds. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Like Ibn al-Moqaffa' he too was accused of heresy, for possibly Manichaean or Mazdakite tendencies.

23 Celebrated Mazdian priest under Shapur I (241–72 CE). See Prods Oktor Skjærvø, "Kartir," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, xv/6, pp. 608–628; available online at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/kartir>.

the sultanate as a model of dynastic rule far more powerful than the waning Abbasid caliphate. In effect the decline of the classical caliphate from the middle of the ninth century should be seen as the dawn of Persianate governance. The so-called Abbasid Revolution (*da'wa*) in 750 was the *de facto* triumph of Iranian political culture over the early notion of the caliphate as the repository of both moral and political authorities.²⁴ The Abbasid caliphate was built virtually on the ruins of Ctesiphon, the Sasanian metropolis, and inevitably inherited much of its complex Aramaic and Pahlavi multiculturalism.²⁵

The embrace of models of Sasanian ideology and statecraft, though they were in essence conservative and class-conscious, invited a range of unorthodox Persian beliefs that had survived the early shock of Arabicization in the Iranian world. An amalgam of Zoroastrian, Manichean, Zurvanist, Buddhist, and Mazdakian beliefs gained ground throughout the eighth to the eleventh centuries while the Iranian world underwent a slow process of conversion to Islam. The phenomenon of outwardly confessing to Islam and inwardly adhering to eclectic creeds, often labeled under the general rubric of *zendiq* (or *zindik*), is an important characteristic of the early Persianate world in greater Khorasan, Transoxiana, Sistan, Azerbaijan, and as far as Mesopotamia. The Khorramdini movement of the eighth and ninth centuries, for example, is typical of eclectic beliefs with a strong Mazdakite influence. Not only were the lower strata of Iranian society drawn into this Persian revival, but Manichaeism and Buddhist influences were not rare among the highest echelons of the state administration. The case in point is the influential tenth-century Samanid vizier, Abu 'Abdullah Mohammad al-Jayhani, who was known for his secret adherence to Manichaeism. His interest in geography, attested by his now-lost universal geography (used by later geographical sources), is closely tied with the administrative affairs of the Samanid world, and may be taken as an early example of a Persianate geographical awareness.²⁶

24 On Persian statecraft and the shaping of Islamic political thought and practice see for example A.K.S. Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam: An Introduction to the Study of Islamic Political Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980) and more recent essays by Said Arjomand, Muzaffar Alam, Javad Tabataba'i, and Mehrzad Boroujerdi in M. Boroujerdi ed. *Mirror for the Muslim Prince: Islam and the Theory of Statecraft* (Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 2013).

25 For the Perso-Aramaic transition to Islamic tradition see for example Michael Morony, *Iraq After the Muslim Conquest* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983) and more recently the compelling revisionist study by Parvaneh Pourshariati, *Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2008), especially parts 3, 4 and 6.

26 In his list of fifteen well-known adherents to Manichaeism in the early Abbasid era, the famous bibliographer Ibn Nadim, himself probably a Persian, identifies Mohammad

Among other aspects, one can detect in the Shu'ubiyya movement of the early Islamic centuries unmistakable signs of Persian national awareness rooted in a nostalgic memory of the Sasanian past. Written entirely in Arabic, a sense of pride in the Sasanian kings (*Moluk-e Kasra* or *Akasara*) and a record of their deeds were part of the intellectual discourse of the pro-Persian elite. Yet such sympathies were evident also among ordinary people, even the street folk who were often labeled by their opponents as "riff raff." The rise of Persian Dari as a vernacular in Central Asia and greater Khorasan from the late eighth century gradually supplanted the Shu'ubiyya discourse. In what may have been a reaction to the earlier Arabicization of the Iranian world, Dari Persian was born out of the Middle Persian (Pahlavi) of the Sasanian era. The relatively rapid reassertion of Persian is well evident in the remarkable corpus of poetry that included epics and panegyrics and also works of history and manuals of government. Contrary to the western Islamic world, such as Egypt and Syria, along the Mediterranean shores, and Mesopotamia, the societies of the Iranian plateau by and large did not succumb to Arabic as a vernacular. To be sure Persian-speaking peoples never rejected Arabic as the sacred language of Islam and the language of the Islamic sciences and education; rather they excelled in it and vastly contributed to its growth and enrichment. Yet despite such a heritage, the Zagros mountain range served as a geographical boundary and a cultural and linguistic marker dividing the Aramaic-Arabic lowlands of Mesopotamia from the world of the Iranian plateau and beyond – that which came to be the Persianate zone.

The geographical divide however did not stop the influential Persian secretarial class and their clients from occupying the state administration during and after the era of the high caliphate and early dynastic empires. Persian bureaucratic families schooled in Khorasan, Rayy, and Fars for generations served as viziers, state accountants, and confidants to sultans of Turkish and Mongolian stock. In their initial stage, the Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century brought unprecedented material destruction and genocidal damage to the Iranian and Mesopotamian worlds. Yet the Ilkhanid era expanded the boundaries of the Persianate in administrative, economic, and cultural

ibn Ahmad Jayhani as a crypto-Manichean. Abu'l-Faraj Mohammad ibn Nadim, *Ketab al-Fehrest*, ed. Reza Tajaddod (Tehran: Asadi and Ja'fari, 1971), 401. See also 'Abbas Eqbal Ashtiyani, *Tarikh-e Iran az Aghaz ta Enqeraz-e Qajariyya*, part II (Tehran: Khayyam, 1347 Sh./1968), 249–50. See also Rudolf Sellheim and Mohsen Zakeri, François de Blois, Werner Sundermann, "Fehrest iii. Representation of Manicheism," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, IX/5, pp. 475–483; available online at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/fehrest#iii>. Ch. Pellat, "al-Djayhāni," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* is confined to a bibliographical discussion of Jayhani's *al-Masalek wa'l-Mamalek*.

domains, in effect complementing the expansion of the Persian model of statecraft that was in progress under the Saljuqids.²⁷

The earliest conceptualization of the “Guarded Domains of Iran” presumably goes back to the late thirteenth-century Ilkhanid era when regional strategic initiatives, trade, textual culture, and to some extent Shi’ism, came to reinforce the foundations of the early modern Persianate world. What is labeled as *pax-Mongolica* in effect broadened a distinct cultural and politico-economic space vis-à-vis the Mamluks of Syria and Egypt in the west and the Ming Dynasty of China in the east. Though subject to bouts of political disorder between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries, the Persianate world witnessed a period of brilliant cultural and literary accomplishments in its heartland as well as its peripheries.

3.1 *From Persian to Persianate Literature*

The revival of Persian by no means hindered Arabic as a medium for transmitting knowledge, especially in fields associated with Islamic law and theology. A vast array of authors whose mother tongue was Persian, or a dialect of Persian, spoke and wrote in Arabic their entire career. Among numerous examples, one can think of the celebrated ninth-century polymath Ibn Qotayba who produced his impressive corpus entirely in Arabic with a distinct anti-Persian bent. He was born in Kufa to a father from Marv on the northeastern Iranian periphery and served all his adult life as a judge in Dinavar in western Iran (near Kermanshah). The ninth-century historian and exegetist, Mohammad ibn Jarir Tabari, was born and bred in Amol in Tabarestan (today’s Mazandaran) to a native mother and an Arab father. Others such as the tenth-century peripatetic philosopher Ibn Sina (Avicenna), who was born in a village in the vicinity of Bukhara, wrote both in Arabic and Persian. And so did the eleventh-century theologian Mohammad Ghazali, who was born and raised in Tus, spent the height of his career in Baghdad, and returned to his homeland as a “born-again” Sufi. Another celebrated Shi’i polymath, Nasir al-Din Tusi, who lived and studied in the Isma’ili fortresses before serving the last of the Abbasid caliphs in Baghdad and then switching loyalty to the conquering Mongols, found time to produce works in both Arabic and Persian in logic, astronomy, mathematics, philosophy, Isma’ili, and Twelver Shi’i theology, and of course counsel to the rulers.

27 Fragner’s *Die Persophonie* (pp. 62–68) points out the function of Persian as an administrative and trade language of the Persianate world though it barely extends his inquiry into the secretarial class and their part in the shaping of the Persianate domain.

Not surprisingly an impressive, and perhaps the largest, corpus of Arabic foundation texts in the early Islamic centuries was produced in the Persianate urban centers ranging from Bukhara, Samarkand, and Tus to Rayy, Hamadan, Isfahan, and Tabriz. The convivial interactions between Arabic and Persian are a remarkable feature of classical Islamic civilization whereby, as early as the tenth century, a *de facto* division between Persian and Arabic allowed the growth in Persian of such “non-Islamic” fields as history, biographical dictionaries, and Sufi aphorism and mystical texts. As the Persianate domain grew, such linguistic coexistence involved a host of other languages including Sanskrit, Uyghur, Turkish, and later Urdu.

The spread of Dari in greater Khorasan and Central Asia since the eighth century, soon replaced various Pahlavi dialects of the eastern Sasanian world, gaining an early poetic maturity less than a century later. Almost from the start Persian literature became a hallmark of a Persianate proto-identity and the seedbed for a vast array of poetic literature, and later prose, that included chronicles, mirrors for princes, ethical writings and Sufi manuals, ethical treatises, and biographical works. By the eleventh century, Persian had travelled through the Ghaznavid lands to South Asia and by the twelfth century under the Saljuqids it had reached an even wider audience from the Anatolian principalities of the post-Byzantine era to the Caucasus, and as far west as the coast of the Mediterranean and as far east as the outskirts of Khatay. What was remarkable about the growth of the Persian literary medium was its ability to adjust to new cultural settings, allowing in turn the production of an indigenous *belles lettres* or the *divan*-related literature. It coexisted and crossbred with the emerging Turkic languages and cultures in Anatolia, in the Caucasus and in Central Asia, and with the multilingualism of Hindustan. Literary talents, poets, and “men of the pen” in general roamed throughout a vast territory in search of patronage and fame outside of their homelands.

The genre of literary dictionaries offers insight into the geographical span of Persian literature, and particularly the popularity of Persian poetry, over centuries. Despite a geographical shift in the patronage for these dictionaries, the wide coverage and diversity of the Persianate literary world barely changes. Both the *Chahar Maqaleh* by ‘Aruzi Samarqandi and *Lobab al-Albab* by Mohammad ‘Awfi Bokhari, were composed in the twelfth century by Central Asian authors who took refuge from the instability that threatened their homelands after the Saljuq invasion in the safer southern kingdoms of Bamiyan and Delhi. Aruzi, who dedicated his work to his longtime patron, a local ruler of Bamiyan (in today’s Afghanistan), covers major literary and scientific figures as well as distinguished members of the *divan* in greater Khorasan and Central Asia, including Khayyam and Ferdowsi, but is not oblivious to Persian

literary activities further to the west. Likewise ‘Awfi, who authored his work in Hindustan and dedicated it to a minister of the Delhi-based Ghurid dynasty, covers in his book a wide range of poets of his time throughout the Persianate world. As recently noted by Muzaffar Alam, true awareness of Persian literature as a field of literary endeavor, and hence the production of literary dictionaries, came about in Persianate regions, like South Asia, where Persian poetry remained a marker of cultural identity.²⁸

Three centuries later, the above-mentioned Dowlatshah Samarqandi, who composed his *Tazkerat al-Sho’ara* in Herat for his patron, the celebrated Amir ‘Alishir Nava’i, offers a wider range of poetic production from Anatolia and the Caucasus, to the Turkish domain (what he calls the *Turan-zamin*) and to Hindustan. By the eighteenth century the centers of poetic gravity definitely moved southward toward Iran proper and toward Hindustan. Two such poetic dictionaries, *Tazkereh-ye Atashkadeh* by Lotf ‘Ali Bayg Azar Bigdeli,²⁹ which was composed by a descendent of the Turkish-speaking Qezelbash in eighteenth-century Fars, and *Majma’ al-Fosaha* by Reza-Qoli Khan Hedayat, who served in the Qajar court in Tehran, built on the works of their predecessors to offer a truly vast vista of Persian poetic diversity. Evident in all these works is the fluid environment, a comfort zone so to speak, within which Persian-speaking literary figures, including the authors of these dictionaries, could migrate and settle with little linguistic and cultural hindrances. Rumi was by no means the only one who migrated across the span of the Persianate world from Balkh to Konya. Nasir al-Din Tusi, ‘Abd al-Rahman Jami, Hazin Laheji, and Sa’eb Tabrizi are but a few in a long list of these crafters of ideas, words, and styles who sought fame and fortune across Persianate lands.

Very early in its gestation modern Persian generated a body of refined *belles lettres* that included panegyrics (*qasideh*), epics, romances, and odes. Clues to the reasons for this unprecedented outburst of literary energy in the Samanid and Ghaznavid courts in Central Asia and greater Khorasan may in part be found in a revitalized cultural confidence and restoration of pre-Islamic Persian memories. One may also attribute this Persian renaissance to the economic and political sovereignty that the eastern Iranian world began to develop through trade with East Asia and South Asia. The rise of a series of nomadic “others” that emerged in the northeast frontier of the Iranian world may have also triggered a response to the intrusion in Central Asia and Khorasan of the Ghuzz and Qarakhanid Turkic confederacies, and eventually the arrival of the

28 Muzaffar Alam, “The Beginning and the First Major Phase of Persian Literary Culture in Hindustan,” *Iran Namaq* 1, no. 3 (Fall 2016), 4–38.

29 Edited by Ja’far Shahidi (Tehran: Nashr Ketab, 1337 Sh./1958).

Saljuqids, at the beginning of the eleventh century. Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* may be read as a mythologized narrative depicting these Perso-Turkish encounters. In the legendary part of the epic, Iran and Turan, the latter being the ultimate *Aniran* (non-Iran), have a complex set of hostile exchanges on the one hand, but also blood ties on the other.³⁰

The literary and political culture that was built around Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* for centuries is a telling example of the Persianate response to waves of nomadic intrusions, by an amalgamation of peoples who were labeled the Turanians. The sense of "us versus them" throughout the legendary part of the *Shahnameh*, though subject to much scrutiny and open to deconstruction, preserved a sense of identity for those on both sides of a largely imagined ethno-cultural divide. The interplay of the Iranians versus the Turanians allowed the survival of the *Shahnameh* epic as a foundation text for the emerging Persianate world. In the Ilkhanid and Timurid eras, and all the way up to the early modern Muslim empires, the *Shahnameh* was read and appreciated by the Persianate world not only as a history of kings and dynasties but also as an ideal model of kingship, even by the Turkic peoples who at times tended to identify with the Turanian side of the *Shahnameh*.

It was not without reason that the *Shahnameh* generated court patronage throughout the Persianate world and triggered the imagination of artists and bookmakers alike. It produced a genre of *Shahnameh*-inspired written and oral narratives commissioned by the courts and the elites in disparate parts of the Persianate world. It served as a vehicle to commemorate military exploits and majestic deeds. In later centuries it also gave rise to a performing tradition of recitation of the *Shahnameh* for the non-elite by itinerant and coffee-house storytellers. As a complex commentary on the institution of kingship, the *Shahnameh* commended as much as it rebuked the legendary kings. It was thus read and understood as a work in the "mirror for the princes" genre, and was a prime example of *andarz* (advice) literature. Not only was it popular among the Ilkhanids, the Saljuqs of Rum, and the Timurids of Tabriz, Herat, and Samarqand, but also the Turkmen dynasties of western Iran, the pre-Ottoman principalities of Anatolia, as well as the Ottomans, the Shaybanids

30 For *Iran v. Aniran* see *Elr*: "Eniran" (Ph. Gignoux). For ethno-cultural othering in the story of the Fereyduin in the *Shahnameh* see Abbas Amanat, "Divided Patrimony, Tree of Royal Power, and Fruit of Vengeance: Political Paradigms and Iranian Self-Image in the Story of Faridun in the Shahnama," in *Shahnama Studies 1*, ed. Charles P. Melville (Cambridge: Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, University of Cambridge, 2006), 49–70; Dick Davis, "Iran and *Aniran*: The Shaping of a Legend," in *Iran Facing Others: Identity Boundaries in a Historical Perspective*, ed. Abbas Amanat and Farzin Vejdani (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 39–50.

of Central Asia, the Safavids of Iran, and occasionally South Asian rulers of the post-Mughal era.

The *Shahnameh* aside, Ferdowsi's epic served as a model for countless other Persian *shahnamehs* produced over the centuries in the Persianate world. They included popular renderings of the whole or parts of Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, other independent versions of old Iranian epics, and ethnic renderings of the *Shahnameh*, such as the Lori (Bakhtiyari) version. For the most part, however, the *Shahnameh* served as a model, both for the adopted meter and style, and the use of pure Persian, to narrate the exploits of conquerors and glorify empire builders in the Persianate world, all the way up to the early twentieth century. In effect, the *shahnameh* as a genre often legitimized and consolidated peripheral powers who conquered the Persianate centers while also helping to assimilate them into their new cultural environment.

A pronounced parallel trend, with a wider geographical span than the Persian *andarz* literature, can be found in the production and distribution of the Sufi aphorism and verse literature. This literature travelled along the same path as the Sufi convents (*khaneqahs*) and itinerant dervishes that for centuries traversed from Turkistan to the Balkans, and from the Deccan and Kashmir to Mecca and Cairo. The dervishes often were oral transmitters of a wide-ranging Sufi corpus in Persian poetry and prose that was incorporated into local narratives. They were popular with the urban and village folks of diverse ethnicities and vernaculars.

An early geographical Persianate example may also be found in the case of the great eleventh-century poet Naser Khosrow Qobadiani, whose self-imposed exile to the hard-to-access Badakhshan valley on the northeastern tip of greater Khorasan produced some of most poignant examples of exile literature in the Persian language. The corpus of two major twelfth-century poets from the Caucasus, Khaqani of Shirvan and Nezami of Ganja, whose literary fame and ever-growing readership extended far beyond their homeland even in their own time, further demonstrated the growth of the Persianate domain. By the thirteenth century Amir Khosrow Dehlavi, the first major indigenous Hindustani poet active in the Sultanate of Delhi to compose in Persian, was admired or chagrined by his Iranian cohorts. By the fourteenth century Kamal Khojandi of Soghd (in today's Tajikistan) was one of several Central Asian poets who helped uphold Persian poetry in a progressively Turkic region. One of the greatest poets of Khorasan, Jalal al-Din Rumi, produced his entire corpus in the Sultanate of Rum in Anatolia, away from his homeland city of Balkh in today's Afghanistan. His poetry, in the *Masnavi* as well as in *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi*, depicts a great poet who is at home in his Greco-Turkish surroundings. Yet much of his imagery, expressions, and anecdotes belong to a Persianate

world which he had left a long time ago. Likewise, his feeling for Persian classical music, palpable in the meters of his *ghazals* and in many references in his poetry, comes from the same world, now effortlessly transplanted into a new Sufi surrounding in Konya.

Likewise lyrics and romances by Nezami in his *Khamseh*, didactic aphorisms of Sa'di in *Golestan* and *Bostan*, and mystical *ghazals* from Sana'i and 'Attar to Sa'di, Amir Khosrow Dehlavi, Hafez, Jami, and Sa'eb, to name just a few, served as the textual fabric upon which the Persianate universe thrived and was sustained. A large number of manuscripts of this genre circulated within a vast geographical span. That kings, princes, high officials, and urban notables commissioned the authors of these texts attests to their popularity in otherwise heterogeneous cultural spheres such as Hindustan and Anatolia. They were accompanied across the Persianate world through such mediums as music and dance (*raqs va sama'*) in Sufi convents. They were neither monopolized by the elite nor restricted to them. Imbued with local color, poetry, and music they often received a wider textual readership and performance audience trickling from the royal courts into the nocturnal world of the taverns, inside the women's quarters and in women's poetry gatherings, and in the increasingly popular venues of the bazaar and among the guilds.

With increasing agility, in early modern times Persian literature travelled not only via Sufi *khaneqahs* and court circles, but also through coffeehouses and poetic competitions (*musha'ereh*). The subgenre of *shahrashub* (urban sedition) in particular found a new outlet for celebrating, even inciting, voices of popular dissent and of the marginalized. It depicted revelries and scandals, and paid attention to the life of the bazaar and the tavern, the professions of ill-repute, the subversives, and the antinomians. Starting with Sana'i, Anvari, and Sa'd Salman, and continuing with such figures as the remarkable female poet from the Caucasus, Mehsati of Ganja, and Amir Khosrow, Bidel Dehlavi, and Kalim Kashani in Hindustan, *shahrashub* revealed the other side of society that often had been absent from the formality of court poetry and even formal Sufism of the convents.³¹

The message was appealing to a wide audience in Persian or via translation into vernacular languages because *shahrashub* offered a very different side of Perso-Islamic literature that was more lenient, inclusive, and open to local

31 For the literary and social significance of the *shahrashub* see, for instance, Sunil Sharma, "The City of Beauties in Indo-Persian Poetic Landscape," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 24, no. 2 (2004): 73–81; Carla R. Petievich, "Poetry of the Declining Mughals: The 'Shahr Āshob,'" *Journal of South Asian Literature* 25, no. 1 (1990): 99–110.

variants in contrast to the stern demands of the *shari'ā* and the jurists' interpretations of Islam. Not surprisingly, the contrast between the mosque and the tavern, the jurist (*faqih*) and the skeptic (*rend*), and the king and the pauper (*darvish*), which are familiar themes in Persian poetry, resonated with larger Persianate audiences. The seemingly benign but deeply subversive message of this literature, particularly the poetry, often remained surprisingly unrestrained by political and judicial authorities. Prior to the rise of an intransigent Islam in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a monolithic understanding of culture and religion could not, and did not, unhinge what was essentially a multilayered Persianate space with its latitudinarian and even antinomian characteristics.

The broadening of the Persianate geographical sphere in the late middle ages opened new horizons for poets and new sources of patronage for scholars and historians. Whereas poets in the early centuries of Persian literature were often confined to greater Khorasan and Central Asia, by Ilkhanid times more itinerant poets and scholars travelled across the Persianate span and even beyond. One early example is the thirteenth-century Sa'di of Shiraz who built a career as an itinerant lecturer and *madrash* teacher in the Arabic-speaking Sham (greater Syria and Lebanon). His residence in the Levant or his imaginary travels to an Orientalized "Hindustan," as appears in his literary works, gave him a cherished sense of pride for being an experienced globetrotter (*jahan-dideh*). In his prologue in the *Golestan* he took special pride that his poetry was carried like "golden leaves" around the world (*basit-e zamin*), by which one would assume he meant the Persianate world. Two centuries later the renowned poet and mystic 'Abd al-Rahman Jami enjoyed a wider popularity than Sa'di across the Persianate world from the Timurid courts of Samarkand and Herat, where he spent most of his life, to the court of the early Ottoman sultans with whom he corresponded. He and his powerful ally, Amir 'Ali-shir Nava'i, the celebrated minister to the Timurid prince Ulogh Beg, patronized a vast Naqshbandi network that helped spread Persianized Sufism throughout Central Asia and Hindustan.

With the rise of the vast Timurid Empire the center of political gravity gradually moved westward. In the late medieval period, Tabriz became the greatest center of power, population, and commerce west of Beijing, a status that it kept until the rise of Ottoman Istanbul in the fifteenth century. Herat and Samarkand, the eastern Timurid capitals, also experienced a remarkable artistic and scientific renaissance in the fifteenth century. Herat in particular was the epicenter of Persianate artistic and literary sophistication especially in painting, book illustration, and calligraphy, but also in literary genres. Later on, despite a relatively rapid political fragmentation of the Timurid Empire,

especially in the west, Persian language and culture thrived, achieving an even greater geographical span and cultural prominence. The Anatolian principalities in the west, the whole of the Indian subcontinent in the southeast, and the frontiers of Khotan in the east were exposed to new Persianate trends that originated in Tabriz and Herat respectively. Yet ironically Persian prose and poetry, in contrast to those of the Ilkhanid period, turned more formalistic, floral, pretentious, even hideous, resorting to an excessive Arabicized style with obsolete vocabulary and tasteless expressions. It was as if a loss of cultural confidence persuaded some prose writers to display their precious technical skills as an alternative route to patronage. One glance at *Tarikh-e Vassaf* and similar works of the high Timurid era demonstrates what came to be labeled as an age of literary “decline.”

Despite worthwhile scholarly efforts in recent decades to rehabilitate the Persian poetry of the late medieval era, and its extension in the Safavid and post-Safavid eras, the blossoming vitality of the earlier epic and panegyric literature of Khorasan in the tenth and eleventh centuries, or the complexity of the lyrical poetry and didactic literature of the Ilkhanid and post-Ilkhanid eras, are manifestly missing in Herat and later in Hindustan. A move toward stylistic acrobatics and *tours de force* of literary accomplishments, typical of the Persian literature of the fifteenth to early nineteenth centuries, left its indelible mark on Persianate culture. One can glean early symptoms of this Persian literary transformation even before early modern times, remarkably through the growth of the *shahrashub* literature and the first experimentations with the genre of life-writing, as for instance in the Mughal emperor Babur’s memoirs, Shah Tahmasp Safavi’s semi-autobiographical *Tazkereh*, and emperor Jahangir’s memoirs *Tozk-e Jahangiri*. Later on in the eighteenth century Hazin Laheji’s *Tarikh-e Hazin*, Mirza Mohammad Kalantar’s *Ruznameh-ye Kalantar*, and Mir ‘Abd al-Latif Shushtari’s semi-autobiographical *Tohfah al-‘Alam*, promised new vitality in the path of Persianate literature. As in Europe during the same period, the autobiographical genre reflected a new human agency. To be sure, here one can observe the potential for an indigenous sense of self within the Persianate domain that contrasted with the facile regurgitation of old historical and poetic formats. Yet new contingencies, the rise of competing territorial empires with religious ideologies, and later European imperial intrusion into the Persianate domain, diluted such potential without entirely undermining it. In effect, the Persianate world lost the necessary means by which it could have endured as a coherent, if not unitary, cultural environment and survive the trauma of encounters with modernity.

For over a millennium, the Persian language absorbed much from Arabic while preserving its own identity. Later it transmitted this new Perso-Arabic

hybrid to other vernaculars adjacent to the Persianate domain, a testimony to its flexibility as a medium not only among the elite and the powerful but also among traders, Sufis, craftsmen, and the street folk. In Central Asia the Persian interplay with Chagatai, Uzbek, and Uyghur is just one example. In the Indian subcontinent it profoundly influenced Urdu, and to a lesser extent Hindi. Persian geographic, administrative, technical, commercial, mystical, artistic, military, and household loanwords abound not only in Ottoman Turkish and in Urdu, but by extension in the Balkans. A surprisingly vast number of words in European languages originated in the Persian high and material cultures, ranging from better known words such as bazaar, caravan, check and checkmate, nave, maydan, paradise, magic, dervish, divan, durbar, firman, pasha, and khaki to less evident terms such as tiger, fairy, rice, musk, peach, spinach, orange, sandal, and fabrics such as taffeta, and items of clothing such as pajama, cummerbund, and shawl. Even the Italian “gondola” and the English and French “asparagus” have Persian origins. The prevalent usage of the suffix *stan* – as in *Hindustan* – from *ostan*, the provincial unit of the Sasanian Empire, survived up to early modern Persianate empires. In addition to Arabic, Persian also absorbed a vast number of Syriac, Hebrew and other Aramaic words and transmitted them to Urdu, Ottoman Turkish, Chaghatay and as far east as Chinese and as far west as the languages of the Mediterranean.

3.2 *The Persianate as an Alternative Path*

As early as the twelfth century, a Sufi mystical discourse and the associated network of Sufi orders expressed themselves through Persian poetry, aphorisms, and music. In notable contrast to the Sufi commentaries of the Qur’an and the so-called “sober” high Sufism, which was mostly articulated in Arabic, the prevailing tendency in this Persianate experience engaged more freely with the theory of “oneness of being” (*vahdat-e vojud*), often through a poetic medium. On one end of the Sufi spectrum were classical poets such as Sana’i, ‘Attar, and Rumi, and on the other end antinomian trends especially in late medieval and early modern times. Of the latter group the fourteenth-century Fazlollah Astarabadi, the founder of the Horufi movement, and the Noqtavi leader Mahmud Pasikhani, displayed defiance toward the *shari‘a* establishment and against the twofold Sufi-*shari‘a* paradigm upheld by many Muslim mystics. The Sufi networks contributed to the preservation of a Persianate cultural and religious fabric by drawing on the loyalty of the city and village folk. Despite their semi-rustic Sufi origins, by the seventeenth century the Safavids effectively had uprooted the Sufi networks in the Iranian heartland. Yet the Persianate Sufi networks survived and thrived in much of the Sunni Persianate world from the Balkans and Anatolia to Central Asia and Hindustan.

The most influential Sufi orders originated in the Persianate environment, some with Shi'i sympathies, and thrived in both urban and rural settings. The literature of the Kobrawi, Mevlevi, Naqshbandi, Khalvati, Ne'matollahi, and Cheshti orders were predominantly in Persian. Their prevalence in the Persianate world to some degree was helped because of their geographical distance from centers of Islamic orthodoxy. Their "frontier" characteristics allowed plasticity in the use of Persian cultural and literary media such as in music and dance – elements that appealed to larger followings and generated wider popular loyalties. A widespread network of Sufi shrines (*mazars*) and convents (*khaneqahs*, *takkiyeh*, *zaviyeh*) that dotted the landscape, likewise, served as foci of Persianate identity and as physical reminders of a mystical presence especially in Central and South Asia. In many instances, especially in the cities, Sufi convents operated side by side with the *shari'a* establishment. As in the rest of the Islamic world, like Egypt and North Africa for instance, it was not unusual in the Persianate world for religious officials, even jurists, to be affiliated with Sufi orders and to take part in Sufi ceremonies. The anti-Sufi sentiments prevalent in late Safavid-era Iran by no means were the norm. The confessional coexistence of the Sufis and *shari'a* officials helped consolidate the Persianate identity through mosques and the *khaneqah*.

The itinerant Qalandars and Khaksar dervishes, who even up to the end of the nineteenth century travelled widely across the span of Persianate lands, and beyond, and were often anchored in sacred sites or in their convents (known as *langars*), were tolerated, even revered, as liberated souls, despite their eccentric appearance and sexual preferences. As markers of gender diversity and alternative lifestyles, they defied society's *shari'a*-enforced social homogeneity. The so-called *kharabati* mystics, whether they ever existed as a distinct social group, were best defined by their rejection of institutionalized Sufism. Hafez's multilayered poetry, and in varying degrees the poetry of Amir Khosrow Dehlavi, Nasimi, Fozuli, and Qasem Anvar in Anatolia and in Azerbaijan were examples of what may be called an antinomian Sufi space. Here esoteric nuances in Persian poetry served as an ideal vehicle for layered imagery, complex metaphors, and poetic allusions that conveyed complex messages of religious dissent in a language of love, wine, and revelry. This was a distinct feature often accepted and appreciated by various segments of the public despite opposition from religious and state quarters.

The Noqtavi movement, a mystical, materialist, semi-organized antinomian movement active in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries in Gilan, the Caucasus, central Iran, and later in Hindustan, was explicit in its Persianate awareness. Built on a complex numerological and occult tradition long in practice in the Islamic, and especially the Persianate world, the cyclical progression

in time in Noqtavi thought called for the end to what it labeled as the Arab prophetic epoch. Instead it advocated the start of a new Persian (*'ajam*) cycle under Mahmud Pasikhani, the new Persian prophet. It called for a return to terrestrial existence and to humans' earthly origins as opposed to the celestial origins and eschatological destination inherent in western religions. The emphasis on a renewal of prophetic cycles was neither the first nor the last in the Islamic milieu. The most influential in earlier centuries was the Isma'ili cyclical scheme, especially in the Nezari movement of Alamut. Its widespread presence across the Persianate world entailed clear millenarian impulses. Its inner-outer binary was also emblematic of Persianate antinomian thoughts. These impulses were reminiscent, no doubt, of the Khorramdini movement of the ninth and tenth centuries as a legacy of the pre-Islamic Zorvanite and Mazdakite movements.³²

3.3 *Persianate Material Culture*

Perhaps the most prevalent feature of Persianate material culture is architecture and the means and methods of construction, a subject that goes hand in hand with urban morphology and ecology. Public structures – mosques, shrines, citadels, bathhouses, and water reservoirs – in most of the Persianate zone follow a familiar pattern in design and building materials. Cities, towns, and villages too follow a distinct pattern in their layout, and though they share some features with the western Islamic world, they also preserved their own characteristics. Ecological dictates of terrain and availability of water in particular, are important determinants in shaping the Persianate habitat. No longer can we confidently generalize about “Islamic cities,” as was once popular in the 1960s and 1970s. There are too many socioeconomic, political, and ecological variants to merit such a categorization. The Islamic heartland of the Eurasian landmass is too diverse in ecology and habitat to justify an exclusive characterization. Critiques of Orientalism struck a blow to that concept.

Yet attention to Persianate ecological features cannot be dismissed as simply an essentializing exercise in an imagined geographical space. Most cities and towns in the heartlands of the Persianate world were developed along trade routes or as agricultural oases in the “arid zone.” Limited rainfall, and thus a limited margin of human habitat, between high elevations and barren plains,

32 See Abbas Amanat, *Apocalyptic Islam and Iranian Shi'ism* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 73–90; and Abbas Amanat, “Nuqtavi Messianic Agnostics of Iran and the Shaping of the Doctrine of ‘Universal Conciliation’ (*sulh-i kull*) in Mughal India,” *Norm, Transgression and Identity in Islam: Diversity of Approaches and Interpretations*, ed. O. Mir-Kasimov (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), 367–92.

is typical in central Iran, the interiors of Central Asia, Afghanistan, the northern regions of the Indian subcontinent and eastern Anatolia. Yet major river valleys such as the Tigris and Euphrates – a historical part of the Persianate world – the Amu Darya (Oxus, Jayhun) and the Syr Darya (Juxartes, Sayhun), the Zarafshan, the Sindh, and other major and minor river systems in central India as well as in central Iran and in Khuzestan, all shaped the Persianate landscape. Likewise, the Caspian basin, the Persian Gulf and the western Indian seaboards, and the northeastern Mediterranean influenced the Persianate landscape, as did the mountainous regions of the Caucasus, greater Kurdistan, and Khotan.

Does geographical diversity leave room for a Persianate material cohesion, and more specifically for shared habitational modes and even architectural harmony? Are there elements that could be identified as relatively unified across a Persianate domain? The answer is complex but its affirmation is not entirely implausible. For one thing, in most of the arid regions of the Persianate world there were common techniques for irrigation and water preservation. The subterranean *qanat/kariz* system, widespread throughout the Afro-Asian world from Morocco to Japan, is but one example. With the earliest archeological traces of *qanat* systems, going back to the first millennium BCE, excavated in northwestern Iran, the renewable, though fragile, system of transferring water for agricultural and urban use required capital and expertise to construct, maintain, and distribute the water. It was a system that relied on collective village enterprise, private ownership, or charitable endowments. Hundreds of *qanats* interlaced the land, connecting mountain slopes to the plains and providing the means by which otherwise disparate rural and urban populations could remain on the land. That the spread of *qanat* technology extended beyond several linguistic and cultural zones was evidence of the remarkable transferability of Persianate material culture.

Climate and terrain also defined the architectural style and use of building materials, at least within the central Persianate lands. The scarcity of timber and stone dictated a heavy reliance on brick and mortar as the essential building materials. The use of baked and unbaked brick (*khesht*), in turn, required sophisticated construction techniques to erect supporting columns, walls, vaults, and domes, features that gave Persian architecture its distinct character. Public buildings and private residences, moreover, displayed a range of architectural modules that determined, playfully, the relationship between covered and open spaces and the intermediate areas in between. Mosques, shrines, *madrasehs*, tombs, and state buildings as well as bathhouses, water reservoirs, city squares, city gates, and bridges best demonstrated the prevalence of Persianate style even when they were executed in stone. One can see Persian

pointed arches, verandas, domes, and courtyards built with blocks of stone in Saljuq Anatolia as well as in Mughal Hindustan. In these and other instances, the designs evolved, at times substantially, to address local needs and dictates of the climate. Yet essentially the Persianate architectural patterns persisted. The seemingly ephemeral nature of brick, it is worth noting, did not cause edifices built hundreds of years ago to disintegrate, some even lasting more than a millennium. An essential characteristic of the Persianate style was its plastic quality, which allowed repair, reconstruction, and alterations to be an ever-present possibility.

Such building and periodic repair work and reconstruction, in turn, required community involvement. The charitable endowment (*waqf*), throughout the Muslim world, was the most important incentive in pre-modern times for building public structures even if they were initiated by rulers, ministers, and state officials. There seemed to be a pattern of continuity with Zoroastrian, Buddhist, and Jewish charitable endeavors. That the income of villages, estates, rows of shops in the bazaar, and caravansaries were earmarked for the upkeep of the endowments further encouraged community involvement. Architectural designs reflected more of an indigenous pattern rather than an alien intrusion. Even in the Indian subcontinent the construction projects of the Mughal era had distinct references to the style of the Sultanate of Delhi and to indigenous Hindu designs as much as they superimposed Persian-Central Asian design concepts. Elasticity in design, often devoid of an ideological statement, made such infusions effortless and enduring.

Within the Islamic world the painting tradition remained almost an exclusive monopoly of Persianate culture. Whether Persian, Perso-Ottoman, Perso-Indian, or Uyghur, book illustrations, and from the seventeenth century on large-scale wall paintings, were produced in large quantities despite the *shari'a* sanctions against iconography. Scenes of Persian epics such as Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, Nezami's romances, Sa'di's didactics in *Golestan* and *Bostan*, Hafez's *ghazals*, and mystical tales by Rumi, Jami, and Amir Khosrow were popular subject matter. Scenes from histories of Rashid al-Din Fazlollah Hamadani's *Jame' al-Tavarikh* and Hamdullah Mostowfi's *Tarikh-e Gozideh*, just to name two examples, were also common. And the Persianate pictorial imagination went so far as to portray sacred figures in religious texts. Apocryphal literature, such as *Me'raj-namehs* (books of ascension or night journey of the Prophet of Islam to the heavens) was particularly appealing to artists.³³

33 Contrary to the oppressive puritanism prevailing in the contemporary Muslim world, Persianate artists and their patrons had no compunction about portraying the prophet of Islam and his companions. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries not only

The pictorial tradition was as old as it was widespread, harkening back to the Manichean texts and Sasanian rock-reliefs of Late Antiquity. Even the Arabic illustrated texts produced in Baghdad from the tenth century onward were rooted in the *adab* humanistic literature and based on Sasanian themes but with an obvious Byzantine influence. Since the sixteenth century the pictorial tradition of the Persianate world comfortably absorbed new elements and new techniques from European art. These are well evident in Mughal and Safavid miniature paintings as well as in Safavid pictorial tiles. Later such influences are more tangible in Qajar court paintings, in lithographic prints, or in hunting and amorous scenes produced in princely courts in colonial India.³⁴

Calligraphy served as a parallel mode of artistic expression in the Persianate world unrestricted by Islamic *shari'a* and hence enjoying wider receptivity. In particular, the evolution of the *nast'aliq* style in the fifteenth century in Timurid Tabriz, Shiraz, and Herat transformed book production and later large-scale reliefs. Substituting the *naskh* style in eastern Islamic lands, *nast'aliq* often, though not exclusively, became the prevailing style in Persian texts: *divans*, histories, official documents, even Persian religious texts across the Persianate world from the Ottoman Empire to Timurid, Safavid, and Qajar Iran to southern India. By the late sixteenth century it was as if *nast'aliq* drew a line defining the Persianate textual world, which included the Turkish and Urdu worlds, from the Arabic world.

In the nineteenth century *nast'aliq* was successfully adopted in the printing culture of Iran and South Asia, almost exclusively in lithographic form (known as *chap-e sangi*). Hundreds, if not thousands, of Persian, Urdu, and Turkish titles as well as newspapers appeared in calligraphic presses. A fair number of these lithographic texts were illustrated in a novel style inspired by popular or miniature paintings of the time. Despite their limitations, such as the low quality paper used in lithographic printing, and the cumbersome production process, *nast'aliq* lithographic texts were received favorably, and widely, by the Persianate readership for more than half a century. The desirability of *nast'aliq* lithographs may well be attributed to the widespread popularity of *nast'aliq* as

were the prophet and the Shi'i Imams depicted in popular paintings but God, too, made his appearance on the Day of Resurrection.

34 On Persian painting and its common heritage see Basil W. Robinson, *The Court Painters of Fath 'Ali Shah* (Jerusalem, 1963); Basil Robinson, "Persian Painting under the Zand and Qajar Dynasties," in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, ed. Peter Avery, Gavin Hambly, and Charles Melville, vol. 7 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 870–89; Basil W. Robinson, "Persian Royal Portraiture and the Qajars," in *Qajar Iran: Political, Social, and Cultural Change, 1800–1925*, ed. Clifford Edmund Bosworth and Carole Hillenbrand (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1983), 291–310.

the predominant Persianate medium. It is also quite likely that *nast'aliq* lithographs served as a realistic compromise in securing the scribal class, whose livelihood was threatened with the decline of manuscript production in the age of printed texts. Colonial India experimented with *nast'aliq* movable type but the idea was abandoned in favor of a simplified *naskh* that soon came to dominate the print world throughout the Persianate domain, as it did in the Arab world. By the mid-twentieth century *nast'aliq* almost entirely had lost its mass communicative function and was reduced to an artistic, even decorative, expression confined to the production of calligraphic pieces (*qet'eh*). The eclipse of *nast'aliq* as a means of mass communication – even though it is still in use in newspapers and other publications in the Urdu world – is symptomatic of a broader dismemberment of the Persianate world in modern times.

The common motifs in musical systems and in the development of musical instruments were other areas of a lost commonality. What is now known as the Persian *radif* musical arrangement with *dastgah* systems originated in the *maqam* musical system that is shared not only with the music of Central Asia, South Asia, and even East Asia, but also with the music of the Arab and Turkish worlds. The origins of this complex system go back to the Sasanian era with tangible Greek, northern Arabian, and Indian influences. Especially significant was the music of the Indian *Luri* (*Luli*) itinerant musicians in the fifth century under Bahram v. Later in the sixth century, under Khosrow II (Parviz), court music reached new heights. Renowned musicians and composers such as Ramtin, Bamshad, Barbad (Pahlbod) Jahromi, and the female harpist and vocalist Nakisa (Nagisa), were responsible not only for the composition of new melodies, but also for the systematization of Persian music into modalities that became known to posterity as the Sufi and lyrical *ghazals*.

Although there was a fair amount of indigenization, the Persianate systems essentially drew their technical and performative principles from this Sasanian past: the survival of the seven (or twelve) musical scales, as opposed to the Western major and minor scales, the use of quarter tones in addition to full and half tones, instrumental and vocal exchanges (*saz va avaz*), lyrics as a method of memorizing intricate details of a vast repertoire, vocal styling (*tahrir*), and above all the transmission of an oral musical tradition through master-pupil heart-to-heart training are but a few of these characteristics. The common usage of the plectrum (*mezrab*), probably of Greek origin, is another characteristic. The nomenclature of the Persian *tar* (string), used in a range of instruments in the Persianate world, is rooted in the Indo-European family of languages that ranges from Greek and Latin (and European modern languages) to Sanskrit. The verb *tanidan* (to thread, to weave) is from the same root in Persian, and probably denotes the use of silk thread in string instruments

prior to the introduction of metal strings. Even by the early twentieth century, silk threads had not entirely been abandoned, as for example in the Persian *kamancheh* and related bowed string instruments. The Persian term *saz* (harmonious structure) in reference to musical instruments in general and in particular to plucked string instruments of common origin in rural and urban Khorasan, Kurdistan, Anatolia, Azerbaijan, and the Caucasus, is another example of a widespread shared music culture.³⁵

Persianate patterns may also be seen in the production and design of pottery and earthenware, games and leisure, hunting, and of course food culture. The arid zone with limited water resources and limited arable land in the plains of West Asia gave rise to a diet primarily based on grains, especially wheat and barley, fruits, and dairy products. The introduction of rice, and more importantly spices, from South Asia and Southeast Asia transformed Persian cuisine. The cuisine of the Sasanian court and nobility served as a model for food culture in early Islamic times and spread widely throughout the Muslim domains and as far west as the Mediterranean and North Africa. A mix of staples from the Iranian plains and Mesopotamian river valleys was at the core of early Persianate cuisine. Dairy products from Central Asia further enriched it.

In early modern times this mixed diet, and the elaborate cuisine to which it had given birth within the higher echelons of Timurid society in the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries, moved further south to the Indian subcontinent. In the process it absorbed many indigenous cooking techniques, use of spices, and table manners. The Mughal conquest of Hindustan was the zenith of a food revolution that, among other things, brought to India a greater variety of dairy, bread, and the preparation of mutton. In exchange, rice became an important staple in Persian cuisine especially in the nineteenth century, in part because of trade with colonial India. Trade with colonial India also changed the widespread habit of coffee drinking, leading to a greater prevalence of drinking green and black tea that had been imported from China earlier. Black tea, brewed in the Russian style, travelled westward to the Ottoman lands. Though it did not entirely supplant coffee, in the early twentieth century it found greater popularity in the central provinces of the Ottoman Empire mostly through Georgia (Gorjestan) and Azerbaijan.³⁶

35 On the shared tradition of Persian music and musical instruments see Jean During, Zia Mirabdolbaghi and Dariush Safvat, *The Art of Persian Music* (Washington DC: Mage Publishers, 1991); Hormoz Farhat, *The Dastgah Concept in Persian Music* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); and Owen Wright, *The Modal System of Arabic and Persian Music* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

36 Rudi Matthee, *The Pursuit of Pleasure: Drugs and Stimulants in Iranian History, 1500–1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Rudi Matthee, “From Coffee to Tea: Shifting

Tea drinking also affected, though did not entirely supplant, wine drinking as part and parcel of leisure in the classical Persianate world. Viticulture was indigenous to Iran from time immemorial, and though its prohibition under Islam somewhat curbed the habit, by no means did it eradicate that pleasure. The earliest traces of wine and wine production have their origins in what became the Persianate world, with evidence from Georgia in 6000 BCE and Western Iran in 5000 BCE. Soon wine production travelled westward into the Mediterranean world and eastward into greater Khorasan. As early as the fourth millennium BCE, Iranian traders introduced wine into the Sindh Valley and the Indian subcontinent. Even in the Islamic era, not only was wine (*badeh*, *may*, *sharab*) a prerogative of court entertainment, but it maintained its popularity with ordinary folks (including the pious, who allegedly drank in secret).

The popularity of wine and wine drinking may well be gauged by extensive references in Persian literature to taverns (*maykadeh*, *maykhaneh*), wine sellers (*badeh-forush*), wine cellars (*khom-khaneh*, *sharab-khaneh*), vineyards (*takistan*) and varieties of wines. References to degrees of intoxication, from tipsy (*mayzadeh*) to drunk (*mast*) and the rituals associated with nocturnal wine drinking, invariably were associated with music and dancing not only in the taverns and the brothels (*kharabat*) but also in the convents (*khaneqah*) of the liberated Sufi orders and in convents of the itinerant *qalandar* counter-orders. The nomenclature of *kharabat*, presumably from *kharab* (ruin), may well reflect the denigration of the nocturnal lifestyle and its relegation to dilapidated, disreputable quarters, or to ancient ruins (*kharabeh*) on the edge of towns and cities. By extension it was applied to taverns in Zoroastrian, Jewish, Christian (such as Armenian), and Hindu neighborhoods where serving wine in a semi-public space was tolerated. In the *kharabat*, opposite sexes, including male and female prostitutes and transsexuals, could intermingle, and music, dancing, and revelry were commonplace. It has been suggested that the term, and presumably the idea of, *kharabat* is the origin of the *cabaret* in the Western European world. This Dionysian wine culture, well evident in panegyrics (*khamriyat*) and in Sufi and lyrical *ghazals*, travelled widely throughout the Persianate world with an enduring influence.³⁷

The increasing influence of Shi'i jurists (*foqaha*) from early Safavid times theoretically curbed wine consumption, at least among the pious. Yet wine

Patterns of Consumption in Qajar Iran," *Journal of World History* 7, no. 2 (Fall 1996): 199–230.

37 For wine and wine drinking see Matthee, *The Pursuit of Pleasure*, 37–96, 177–206. The *kharabat* quarter in Kabul, originally Hendugozar (Hindu ally), was a Hindu and Sikh neighborhood that produced several generations of Afghan musicians with an Indo-Persian repertoire.

continued to be consumed in the Safavid court under nearly all the shahs, who prided themselves as being promoters and protectors of the *shari'a*. Even the notable exception of the two shahs, Tahmasp I and Sultan Hosayn, who refrained from drinking, pointed to an obvious tension in the court and also the inefficacy of prohibition in Safavid society at large. Wine and wine culture did not travel as widely to neighboring lands. In the Caucasus, because of its substantial Christian population, the wine tradition was preserved as it was in the Black Sea region and other wine-producing provinces of the Ottoman Empire. In South Asia, wine drinking was also preserved in the court and among non-Muslim subjects. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, a more stringently applied *shari'a* further restricted the time honored social habit.

4 The Legacy of the Persianate Empires

The four modalities of governance, literary production, an alternative socio-cultural milieu, and a common material culture were dependent to a degree on trans-regional empires, which facilitated the movement of ideas, texts, artifacts, craftsmanship, and the shifting of loyalties. Imperial and regional courts patronized administrators, artists, mystics, and poets. As in Europe's High Renaissance and in the age of Enlightenment, political power and cultural production were closely intertwined. In fact, the movement of talents, skills, and commodities across imperial borders proved to be vital for the sustenance of a thriving commercial network. It also reinforced a sense of Persianate identity.

Yet the rise of a major sectarian Shi'i-Sunni conflict struck a heavy blow on the cultural unity of the Persianate zone. The Safavid Empire's official imperial creed of Shi'ism adopted from the start a hostile anti-Sunni agenda, singling out the Sunnis as the enemy within. Others non-conformists, including the Noqtavis, were labeled as heretics and duly persecuted along with Sufis of various orders. The ritualized and legalistic Twelver Shi'ism, enforced by the jurist elite and backed by the state, was quickly accepted by the majority of the population, but it helped marginalize alternative religious and cultural loyalties, and sapped some of Iran's intellectual vitality. The largely isolated Safavid Empire lost some of its artists, intellectuals, and poets to the Mughal and Ottoman Empires. Not surprisingly a Persianate exilic subtext began to permeate the artistic and literary creativity of the early modern era. On the opposite side, the Ottoman state became more conscious of its Sunni Turkish identity. As early as the sixteenth century, perhaps in response to the rise of the Safavid nemesis, it relegated the Persianate common heritage to the realm of court poetry and high culture. Moreover the Persianate administrative heritage heavily influenced Ottoman statecraft and the theory of government all through to the

Tanzimat era in the middle of the nineteenth century. Ottoman administrative practices and their organization adhered to the Persianate model, mostly through the Saljuqs of Rum and other pre-Ottoman dynasties of Anatolia. Likewise, perceptions of kingship and the vizierate, administration, and court etiquette were deeply indebted to that ancient heritage. Despite the efforts by a new generation of historians of the Ottoman Empire, who take their cues from modern Turkish nationalism and present Ottoman history as “European” with a Mediterranean flavor, it remains an undeniable fact that the Ottoman Empire was, to a great degree, a Persianate empire, at least up to nineteenth century, with deep and enduring appreciation for all aspects of Persianate culture including pictorial art, calligraphy, crafts, poetry, and prose, as well as a taste for refined lifestyle.

The Muslim territorial empires of the early modern period thus continued to serve as epicenters for a trans-regional Persianate experience. Not only did imperial territoriality through conquest and methods of administration, taxation, recruitment, and warfare contribute to the survival of the Persianate, but the economy and geopolitics that were associated with these imperial powers helped define the Persianate space. Both the Ottoman and the Mughal Empires opened new frontiers for cultural and commercial exchanges in the Balkans and in Southeast Asia respectively even when they had reached their natural territorial limits. Cultural paradigms, texts, objects, and popular narratives were capable of crossing porous boundaries. To remain firmly grounded, they required not only state patronage but also safe trade routes and long-term commercial contacts.

In pre-modern times the most obvious case of trade as a means of cultural transmission was, of course, what is known as the Silk Road, a network of commercial communities stretching since Late Antiquity across the length of a vast territory from the western frontiers of China at the eastern edge of the Persianate world to central Iran and beyond to the Mediterranean entrepôts. In the Ilkhanid era, the so-called *pax-Mongolica* was essential not only in the exchange of commodities but as a means for the transfer of knowledge, artifacts, and artistic patterns, all of which had lasting effects in both directions.

As late as 1420 a large embassy dispatched from the Timurid court of Herat traversed the length of northern China to Beijing to present royal gifts to the Ming emperor, Yongle. This was in return to an earlier embassy to Shahrokh's court. The travel diary by Ghias al-Din Naqqash, presumably a painter in Herat, who served as the official secretary of the mission, records the thirty-month journey, depicting the Chinese landscape, administration, urban life, hospitality by which the mission was received, and the splendor of the Chinese court. His account, a source of marvel for Ghias al-Din's contemporaries and for later Persian and Turkish authors, denoted serious Persianate interest in Chinese

land and culture. The journey may well have influenced the Persian painting of the period.³⁸

A century later, in the early years of the sixteenth century, enough significance was still attached to the Chinese connection with the Persianate world to persuade Sayyed 'Ali Akbar, presumably a native of Bukhara, and twelve co-travellers, to journey to northern China and record his visit in his famous *Khataynameh*. Predating European travel accounts, it offered fascinating observations about life in China, its institutions, judiciary and prisons, means of travel, arts and crafts, food, medicine, currency and calendar. That 'Ali Akbar, presumably Shi'i by origin, dedicated his work to Sultan Solayman Qanuni (though it was originally meant to be dedicated to his predecessor, Sultan Salim I) later in Istanbul, denotes the extent of the Persianate geographical span despite a profound Safavid-Ottoman sectarian divide. *Khataynameh* was produced at the height of the Ottoman-Safavid geopolitical and sectarian conflict, culminating in the 1514 Battle of Chaldiran, a crucial juncture that determined the shaping of the Muslim world and the neighboring lands. His account was soon translated into Ottoman Turkish, indicating a slow closure of Persianate frontiers along its western flank.³⁹ Other works by Persian renegades from the Safavid revolution, such as Fazlollah Ruzbahan Khonji's *Suluk al-Moluk*, commissioned by the Ottoman Sultan Salim I, demonstrated a remarkable continuity in the Persian tradition of mirrors for princes and books of government.⁴⁰

On the eastern and southeastern flanks of the Persianate world, cultural and commercial connections persisted and were reinforced. All through the Mughal era, and the princely states that replaced the Mughals in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, and through the early days of the English East India

38 A large body of literature exists on this travel. See for example, Priscilla Soucek, "Ġiāt-al-Dīn Naqqāš," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, x/6, pp. 599–600; available online at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/gia-al-din-naqqas>. For the earliest surviving original Persian version see Hafez Abru, *Zobdat al-Tavarikh*, ed. Kamal Haj Sayyed-Javadi (Tehran: Nashr-e Nay, 1372 Sh./1993). For a new English translation see Ghiyathuddin Naqqash, "Report to Mirza Baysunghur on the Timurid Legation to the Ming Court at Peking," trans. and ed. Wheeler Thackston, *A Century of Princes: Sources on Timurid History and Art* (Cambridge, MA: The Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1989), 279–297.

39 For the original Persian text see Sayyed 'Ali Akbar Khata'i, *Khataynameh*, ed. Iraj Afshar, 2nd ed. (Tehran: Markaz Asnad Farhangi Asia, 1372 Sh./1993) and its extensive bibliography. For debates revolving around its authenticity see Ralph Kauz, "Ketāy-nāma," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition, 2011, available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/ketay-nama>, and cited sources.

40 Edited by Mohammad-'Ali Movahhed (Tehran: Khwarazmi, 1362 Sh./1984).

Company, these Indo-Persian ties with Kabul and Kandahar, Khiva, Bukhara, and with Shiraz, Isfahan, Yazd, and Tabriz remained strong and generated a fascinating multiculturalism rich with new hybrids and innovative styles. From Babur's garden landscapes and shrines of Sufi saints to the *Din-e Elahi* of Akbar's time, to the Hindu-Persian translation movement of the late Mughal era, and the Indo-Persian hybrid in the Nezam Shahi court of Hyderabad and Mysore, one may trace some of the richest experiences of cultural hybridity in the early modern period.

It was as if the Mughal Persianate political and high culture only reinforced the Persianate element that earlier was spread from the western and southwestern coasts of India to Kandahar, and over the Hindu Kush from Kashmir and Ladakh in the north to the Delhi Sultanate in the center and the Bahmanshahi sultanate of the Deccan (and its successor states, the Adel Shahis of Bijapur, the Qotb Shahis of Golkonda, and later the Nizam Shahis of Hyderabad and Mysore) in the south. Traveling along with spices, silk, cotton, precious metals, precious stones, ivory, gifts of animals, sandalwood, and textiles were also emissaries, poets, secretaries, painters, musicians, physicians, religious dissidents, Sufi *pīrs*, and mendicant dervishes.

Other trade routes in the region were no less important in the movement of ideas along with goods. The triangle of Azerbaijan, the Caucasus, and Anatolia, stretching from Transcaucasia, the Golden Horde (including Crimea and the Kazan) and the Caspian littoral to the pre-Ottoman Anatolian principalities as far west as Bursa and as far south as Diyarbakir and northern Mesopotamia enjoyed a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, and multi-cultural diversity that included the Kurds, the Turkic-speaking people, the Arabs, the Armenians, and the Persians and a variety of ethnicities in the Caucasus. Here too trade in commodities engendered Perso-Turkic and Perso-Arabic interplays. In particular, Persian coexisted with Turkish, Georgian, and Armenian for several centuries in Caucasia, Transcaucasia, Anatolia, and Azerbaijan, with Tabriz as its cosmopolitan center.

5 The Waning of the Persianate World

By the eighteenth century trans-regional trade and diplomacy along the China-Mediterranean axis ended almost entirely. The maritime trade of the Mediterranean with Europe and the Persian Gulf through the Indian Ocean with South and Southeast Asia and southern China, mostly conducted by European maritime empires, bypassed the old route from northern China to the Iranian plateau and diverted most commercial and economic resources

from that old overland artery in alternative directions. In the same time period Ottoman Turkish had developed its own vernacular, which, though resembling Persian in many respects, was independent from it. Azerbaijani Turkish, Chaghatay, Pashtu, Urdu, Hindi, and Uyghur all emerged as regional and later national languages while Telugu and Kannada in south India gradually supplanted Persian as the lingua franca of a large geographic span.

The fading of the Safavid memory, the eclipse of the Mughal Empire, and a notable shift in the cultural and administrative orientation of the Ottoman Empire further diminished the Persianate sphere and its cultural cohesion. Even though territorial Iran, the khanates of Central Asia, the Afghan principalities, and a few of the successor states in South Asia remained within the Persianate zone, the spread of Persianate culture declined on the periphery and became localized in the center. In the twentieth century even the Dari language of Afghanistan and the Tajik of Central Asia were recognized as ethno-linguistic dialects distinct from the Persian of Iran (or *farsi*).

Indo-Persian ties had been visible for centuries in Kashmir and Ladakh, where Persianate culture had established deep roots through commerce and the movement of artisans, especially weavers, and the clergy. The transfer of Persian crafts and artistic skills indigenized in Kashmir along with enduring family ties between Iran and Kashmir remained intact into the twentieth century. The Kashmiri dialect borrowed widely from Persian in much the same way as weaving techniques and patterns were borrowed from the workshops of Kerman and Isfahan. The local principalities of Khotan in eastern Turkistan, with Kashgar and Yarkand as major centers, though still in contact with Samarkand and Bukhara through trade and movements of scholars, gradually faded into isolation and in the process developed their own Turco-Persian hybrid partly in resistance to Chinese westward expansion since the eighteenth century. Pockets of the Persianate remained active nevertheless and developed their own pro-Shi'i legends and textual tradition.

British colonial expansion in South Asia reduced the prevalence of the Persian language even further. The East India Company, and later the British Raj, diverted the Subcontinent's commercial and economic ties toward Europe and the British Empire. Yet in the early days of British rule the Persianate network, insofar as the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf were concerned, thrived in diversity and increased in volume even though it bore the clear mark of colonial trade and colonial rule. Tea from India, for instance, became an important of trade with Iran and the Ottoman Empire, almost completely replacing Chinese tea exported through Central Asia. For the most part, Indo-Persian traders, both exporters and importers, successfully competed with British colonial establishments. Yet trade in commodities barely ever complemented, any more, significant socio-cultural ties.

Early on a class of *monshis* who served as administrators, court attendees, and advisers to the princely states from Bengal to Deccan, or as go-betweens with East India Company officials, helped preserve a semblance of a Persianate network. At times they even reinforced a sense of regional solidarity. Some were indigenous to Hindustan, and others were of Iranian extraction or newly arrived from Iran or Shi'ite Iraq, and their quivering loyalties gradually began to tilt toward the colonizers. But as more territory came under direct British control, this almost inevitable shift proved to be detrimental to the *monshi* class and their cherished Persianate culture. The English in India were not entirely hostile to Persian, so long as it remained a harmless luxury, a sparkle, perhaps, on the jewel of the British crown. For some mid-ranking British officials and officers, preparing scholarly editions and translations into English of Persian texts, both classical and Indo-Persian, was one way of displaying erudition and mastery of the culture of the colonized. For others it was a road to promotion through the ranks. Most importantly, Indo-Persian historical texts were major sources of learning about India and its medieval and Mughal past. Though up to 1832 British colonial authorities relied on Persian as the lingua franca of colonial Hindustan, from the middle of the century they switched decidedly to English. The shift proved to be detrimental for the long-term survival of Persian as a functioning linguistic medium.

Among successor states, such as the kingdoms of Awadh and Golkonda, the Nizam Shahis of Hyderabad, and Mysore under Haidar 'Ali and Tipu Sultan, Persian and the Persianate was associated with various shades of Imami Shi'ism, often with Sufi coloring, as practiced by the ruling families and by a sector of the population. In particular the celebrated Tipu Sultan, the ruler of Mysore and the anti-British hero of South Asia at the end of the eighteenth century, relied almost entirely on Persian as the court language and culture, including for his coinage, and for his secret dream book. Having been in Hyderabad's cultural zone before being carved out as an independent state by Tipu's father, Mysore predictably relied on Persian as much on the Shi'i loyalties prevalent in Deccan. Yet the cult of venerating 'Ali, the first Shi'i Imam, as promoted by Tipu Sultan, acquired a messianic undertone similar to the Persianate Sufi royal cult practiced earlier by Akbar and his immediate predecessors. It is therefore not surprising that both Tipu and his father before him tried to establish with limited success trade and diplomatic relations with the Zand and Qajar courts in Iran in the closing decades of the eighteenth century.⁴¹

This association with Muslim communities in the south of Hindustan or in the kingdom of Awadh, in Sindh, and in Kashmir, helped relegate Persian to a

41 For Tipu Sultan and his Persian dreams see my forthcoming *Anxious Onlookers: Qajar Iran, Tipu Sultan's Grand Alliance, the Persian Monshis*.

sectarian corner. As has long been noted, the 1857 Indian Revolt further confirmed British concerns with the Persian language and the associated Persianate identity, as a perpetual source of loyalty to Mughal rule. Supplanting Persian with English as the administrative language in effect ended the nearly nine hundred years of prominence Persian enjoyed on the subcontinent. Qajar Iran did not remain entirely indifferent to the Indian Revolt even if such a muted empathy was for its own political end. In the early years of Naser al-Din Shah's reign, and especially during the Herat campaign of 1855–56, and its aftermath, Qajar diplomats made some gestures supportive of the rebellion and even contemplated an orchestrated anti-British campaign. Defeat in the 1856 war in the Persian Gulf at the hands of the British quickly put an end to that design.

Yet it is important to add that the study of Persian by the officials and officers of the East India Company and later under direct British rule, and the print culture associated with it, to a limited extent helped disseminate the Persian classical corpus beyond India. The interest in learning Persian among Europeans was partly because of the need to master a major language of India. It was a colonial project to master Hindustan's past, its history and customs, and its administrative and commercial structure. An appreciation for Persian as a shared culture of a wider Persianate domain, however, was not entirely absent. The greater part of Gladwin's 1795 *Persian Moonshee* incorporated excerpts of Persian literature for English students. The manual clearly demonstrated British reliance on Persian language and culture to establish the Company's firm hold over the newly appropriated territories. Consisting of four parts, Francis Gladwin's manual taught English officers and officials not only the lingua franca of India they inherited from the Mughals, but the art of polite conversation, mannerism, examples of Persian statecraft, and, the basic financial and fiscal vocabulary and practices – tools needed to appear grand and in command.

Greater familiarity with Qajar Iran and with the Afghan principalities, or with the hard-to-access Central Asian khanates during the so-called Great Game, made the importance of Persian abundantly clear. Intermediaries such as Mir 'Ezzatullah, an Indo-Persian *monshi*, who accompanied William Moorcroft on his two expeditions into Tibet and Ladakh in the early decades of the nineteenth century, demonstrated the importance of Persian as the medium of communication with diverse communities in the Buddhist peripheries of northern India. His accounts of these expeditions served as the earliest example of Persian-language anthropological inquiries triggered by similar attempts by British counterparts.⁴²

42 For Mir 'Ezzatollah's diaries of his first journey in 1812–13 see *Travels in Central Asia by Meer Izzut-Oollah in the years 1812–13*, ed. Philip Durham Henderson (Calcutta, 1872). The

The first printed editions of Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, including the 1829 famous Macan edition, were done in India by British dilettantes fascinated with the ancient Persian epic. Similarly, Sa'di's *Golestan*, a hallmark of Persianate literary identity and a widespread pedagogical text, was printed in British India as early as 1791. British colonial authorities also patronized the production of Persian works in history and literature. William Jones was but one example of a scholar cum administrator who, in the closing years of the eighteenth century, translated and compiled the works of his Indian contemporaries. A Parsi scholar and poet, Mulla Firuz, also composed an extensive epic in the style of the *Shahnameh* glorifying British colonial exploits during the conquest of the subcontinent. His *George-nameh*, published in Bombay in 1837, was dedicated to George III and named after him. To be sure this was a remarkable piece of colonial propaganda. Yet subservience to colonial power aside, Mulla Firuz's Persian epic was among the first in print, at the outset of the nineteenth century, that aimed to revive the classical Persian style (the so-called Khorasan style). Earlier, the Khorasan style became popular with such early Qajar poets as Fath-'Ali Khan Saba and his *Shahanshahnameh* (the Book of King of Kings) in praise of Fath-'Ali Shah.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, independent presses publishing Persian texts were even more active than the British-owned and British-sponsored publishing houses. They were instrumental in the wider dissemination of Persian literature and history in Hindustan and in Iran. The most well-known perhaps was Newal Kishore publishing house, established in 1858 in Lucknow (after the Kingdom of Awadh was annexed by the British in 1856). It published hundreds of inexpensive lithographed Persian, Urdu, Arabic, Bengali, Hindi, English, Marathi, Punjabi, Pashtu, and Sanskrit texts during 1858–1885. These were titles in classical literature and history as well as pedagogical texts. Newal Kishore, survived its Hindu founder but declined in its range and significance. It should perhaps be seen as a fading glimpse of the twilight of Persianate India. The greater use of movable type printing and a decline in Persian-language readership made the Lucknow-based printing house, which relied on lithographic publication, less central to the growing market of books in vernacular languages.

In postcolonial times the rise of ethnic and territorial nationalisms exerted further pressures on the waning Persianate ties. Nationalist ideologies – Indian, Pakistani, Pashtun, Uzbek, Uyghur, Turkmen, Azerbaijani, Georgian, Armenian, and even Tajik – not only denounced colonial or Western hegemonic experiences but, as it turned out, were unenthusiastic toward a shared Persianate

diary of the second journey between 1819 to 1824 in the company of William Moorcroft is yet to be published.

experience of the pre-colonial era. The search for cultural sovereignty required an indigenous vernacular distinct from Persian, in turn allowing the Persianate experience to fall by the wayside or be labeled as an alien culture belonging to an imperial past. Even though up to the 1960s, Persian remained part of the curriculum in Pakistani and Indian schools, it was gradually shunned by the younger generations in favor of other more “useful” languages. Even to the intelligentsia in the Subcontinent or in the Caucasus and in Central Asia, not to mention Turkey, the Persianate past appeared to be a distant memory. The switch to Latin, Cyrillic, and modern Hindi scripts further weakened the shared Perso-Arabic ties. Even more so, the nationalistic language purification movements in Turkey, Central Asia, and India systematically coined neologisms to replace Persian and Arabic “foreign” words. In the eyes of new generations brought up under modern nation-states, Persian was associated almost exclusively with Iran and to a lesser extent with Afghanistan and Tajikistan. At times such associations conveyed an unhealthy dose of neighborly distrust, and in the case of Hindu nationalists, a legacy of Muslim imperialism.

In Iran, an appreciation for Persian language and culture not infrequently also fell victim to a sense of exceptionalism, as if Persian literature and culture was exclusively Iranian. Such a confined view of the Persian past, and how it functioned, often was oblivious of the greater Persianate sphere and its fluidity. And when there was awareness, it was often condescending, even toward the Tajik and Dari speakers. An Iranian sense of cultural superiority, often couched in a nationalist pride for Iran’s ancient past, also weakened ties with the Arabic and Turkish languages, both essential for the growth of Persian language and culture. Very few Iranians learned either of these languages proficiently despite their proximity to the Arab and Turkish lands. Even languages of the Iranian periphery such as Kurdish, Armenian, Gilak, Lori, and Baluchi which are solidly within the Iranian linguistic family, or Azerbaijani Turkish and Turkmen, which are spoken by a large sector of the Iranian population, were ignored or suppressed by nationalist regimes and their nationalist agendas.

The decline of the Persianate zone was further accelerated once trade and economic ties across the region dwindled to the point of suspension. As economies of the region largely reoriented toward overseas markets, especially Europe, often exchanging cash crops and natural resources for manufactured goods, there was less of a reason for nationalist governments to appreciate and preserve what eventually became a dysfunctional economic zone. Likewise, development and modernization projects and the rise of new models of governance undermined the shared tradition of statecraft. Fewer people among the populations crossed borders except as refugees and victims of modern repressive regimes, and such refugees were not always welcomed with open

arms. The deep prejudices toward Afghan refugees in today's Iran are but one example.

The geostrategic and defense alliance known as the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), which first emerged under the aegis of Western superpowers in the Cold War era, was devoid of cultural solidarity or even serious awareness of its significance. Even its reincarnation as the Economic Organization (ECO), a regional economic and trade alliance between Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan, does not seriously engage a shared cultural experience. Economic and development projects between Iran and India are not much different. And the same applies to Iran-Turkey, Iran-Pakistan, and Iran-China economic ties. A deep-rooted distrust between Pakistan and India, and the unsettling memories of the bloody 1947 partition, among other causalities, widened the nationalist-sectarian gap that was once ameliorated by a shared Persianate experience of coexistence. Similarly, the Azerbaijani-Armenian territorial conflict over Qarabagh is entirely oblivious of the shared Persianate past that ties Iravan (Yerevan) with Baku and both with Teflis (Tbilisi) in the north and Tabriz in the south.

6 Persianate Prospects

The absence of a precise contemporary equivalent for "Persianate," or the ambiguity associated with its domain or dimensions, does not devalue the concept or diminish its functionality. A number of academic disciplines based on geographic regions, the so-called "area studies," are geopolitical and academic constructs, and in most cases evolved as a result of processes outside the regions rather than as the outcome of an indigenous awareness or regional commonality among the inhabitants of each region. One example of such a construct is the Middle East, a region first defined almost by default by geostrategic and imperial contingencies of the Western powers rather than by any cultural or political commonality within it except, perhaps, a shared experience of imperial hegemony. Neither the Arabic *al-sharq al-awsat* nor the Persian *khavar-e miyaneh*, or any other rendering of this construct, are indigenous or can be stretched further back in history than the Second World War. And yet it is a commonly accepted nomenclature and even laid the foundation for an academic discipline.⁴³

43 See Michael E. Bonine, Abbas Amanat, and Michael Ezekiel Gasper, eds., *Is There a Middle East?: The Evolution of a Geopolitical Concept* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012).

It can be argued that even after a century of being in use, and its expanding boundaries, the Middle East as a geographical construct hardly exhibits unifying features within. Even when we exclude North Africa, the five sub-regions of the contemporary Middle East – the Egyptian delta and the Nile Valley, the Levant and the Fertile Crescent, the Iranian and Anatolia plateaus, and the Arabian Peninsula and southwestern shores of the Persian Gulf – share far less interregional commonality than, for example, Latin America or even Southeast Asia. Although each of the above five regions may possess their own inner commonalities with respect to their terrain, linguistic makeup, religious loyalties, and historical experiences, as a whole the Middle East's interregional integration is still a work in progress. Of course, even within each sub-region there are many anomalies: the Kurds in today's Iraq, Turkey, and Iran, Alawites in Syria and Turkey, and Shi'ites in Iraq, Lebanon, eastern Arabia, and Bahrain, are but a few examples of ethnically or culturally distinct communities resistant to nationalist projects. Moreover, the arbitrary boundaries that were superimposed by European powers on new nations-states like Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Kuwait, all former provinces of the Ottoman Empire, added a new element of volatility to the very notion of the Middle East which is well evident in frequent ethnic and sectarian conflicts.

Since ancient times Iran had wide interactions with Mesopotamia and maintained some economic and cultural relations with Arabia, the Fertile Crescent, and even Egypt. Yet the Safavid Empire and the rise of Shi'ism as the state creed developed a space of its own distinct from adjacent lands. By the mid-nineteenth century when the British India Office first identified the "Middle East" as a geographical space, it was solely for its strategic concerns and not in recognition of the Iranian lands as part of a larger regional unit. The Persian Gulf littoral, as a space between the Indian Subcontinent and the Fertile Crescent, was deemed necessary for the ever-present British anxiety related to defending their interests in India. Distinction with a somewhat older notion of the Near East, which carried a somewhat civilizational weight compared to the Middle East, and often was applied to a region between the eastern Mediterranean and Mesopotamia, revealed even more clearly a new geostrategic concern with the Persian Gulf littoral at its center. Later, at the turn of the twentieth century, the use of the term Middle East by an American naval historian, Alfred Manhan, further highlighted the strategic significance of the Persian Gulf and the land around it in contradistinction to the adjacent regions. That became even more apparent after the Iranian and Iraqi oil fields came into production. Yet only the imperial contingencies of the victorious European Powers in the aftermath of World War I and the carving up of the conquered Ottoman provinces – as in the implementation of the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement and

soon after the Balfour Declaration of 1917 – necessitated the wider broadening of the Middle East as a space to include all the territories between British India and Mandate Palestine and beyond to eventually include Egypt, which even after 1919 remained within the British sphere of influence.

Yet there was no recognition of a geopolitical construct called the Middle East in any Persian, Arabic, or Turkish geographical or historical texts, or in any informed European Orientalist sources before World War II. The semi-scholarly community that grew out of the British and French colonial administrations, and largely served strategic and geopolitical concerns of the British and French colonial empires, nevertheless laid the foundation of Middle East Studies as an academic subfield – normally under the aegis of Oriental Studies. The “Modern Middle East,” which in the early years of the Cold War gradually came of age as a subject of scholarly studies, aimed to serve, even as late as the 1960s, whether directly or indirectly, Anglo-American geopolitical and energy interests. Concerns for energy needs, for combatting communism, and soon after coming to terms with postcolonial nationalist movements in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, as well as with Iran during the National Movement of the postwar era, arrogated a sense of sociopolitical and even cultural unity to the Middle East that barely corresponded to historical realities. Even the endeavors of the community of scholars that from the 1960s began to study the Middle East on the “area studies” model highlighted with greater nuance the diversity within the region through historical, geographical, anthropological, and political studies. Yet the Middle East as a defining principle remained more or less intact. Greater specialization as a discipline and a geographical field of study gave precedence to newly-emerging nation-states such as Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Saudi Arabia and, since the 1970s, the United Arab Emirates. Any serious reexamination of the Middle East as a viable field of study nevertheless was considered unimportant and even a deviation. Academic investment within the institutions of higher education in the United States, the United Kingdom, and in Europe, as well as the emergence of professional associations such as the Middle East Studies Association of North America, further consecrated the Middle East as a field of study often with little recognition of its colonial origins or acknowledgment of the profound conceptual inconsistencies within the field.

Among the deficiencies of the new geographical reorganization of the old Muslim heartlands – the Hodgsonian Nile to Oxus within the Eurasian landmass – was a disregard for the historical precedence of the Persianate world. The lumping together of essentially heterogeneous regions was bound to undermine the older cultural and linguistic sovereignties, such as the Persianate world of Western, Central, and South Asia vis-à-vis the Arabic

prevalence along the Mediterranean coast, Egypt, and North Africa. The more systematic development of Oriental Studies as a field with its emphasis on languages and textual studies, also contributed to a seemingly unified Middle East in which the preponderance of Arabic as the scholarly lingua franca and as the “major” language of the western regions of the Middle East became apparent over Persian and Persianate lands and over Turkish and Turkic languages. The widespread substitution of Persian with English in British India had its own adverse effects on the study of Persian and Persianate studies.

A compelling feature in favor of *Persianate* as a concept may be detected in its geographical interconnectedness rather than its sociopolitical homogeneity or imperial hegemony. Contrary to colonial or geopolitical constructs of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Persianate may be viewed as a sociocultural zone that ties together diverse parts of the Middle East, Central Asia, the Caucasus, Anatolia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia, and the Persian Gulf. Thus defining the Persianate as a field is something to be hoped for, rather than striving to define it as an independent academic discipline. In other words, the Persianate is a “comfort zone” where the search for cultural commonalities, socioeconomic underpinnings, and shared memories can be conducted free from cultural hegemonies or nationalistic divides.

For scholars who are engaged with the Persianate region, what remains in our time is a fascinating legacy that is only beginning to regain relevance in today’s transnational and transregional approaches to history, literature, social studies, and gender studies. The impact of colonialism and nationalist ideologies aside, and beyond the preoccupations with the subaltern, Persianate studies can aim to reconnect seemingly disparate geographical disciplines by invoking a shared legacy.

A greater awareness of these ties and patterns has already created a new reservoir of transregional and transnational scholarship. How do such inquiries, we may ask, lead us to new historical questions that otherwise remained unnoticed or were marginalized? Can the Persianate framework transcend the ethnic, imperial, and sectarian divides that in early modern times carved up a thriving cultural zone into competing territorial empires? How far did the decline of the Persianate in the age of European colonial rule obfuscate the panorama of a great historical florescence? Can exploring trans-regional ties help us to remove blind spots that are embedded in nationalistic narratives? These are questions for academic forums where divisions of area studies are crossed and where rigorous research can problematize not only the existing frames of inquiry but also the very notion of the Persianate as an academic discipline.

The Persian Cosmopolis (900–1900) and the Sanskrit Cosmopolis (400–1400)

Richard M. Eaton

Back in the 1960s, Marshall Hodgson proposed the terms “Islamicate” and “Islamdom” to refer to those parts of the world that were inspired by a certain material, literary, and aesthetic sensibility – even if such regions did not have a majority Muslim population. “By the sixteenth century,” he wrote,

most of the East Christian, Hindu, and Theravada Buddhist peoples found themselves more or less enclaved in an Islamicate world where Muslim standards of taste commonly made their way even into independent kingdoms like Hindu Vijayanagar or Norman Sicily.¹

By citing Vijayanagara and Sicily, Hodgson signaled that he was referring to something very different from conventional understandings of the “Muslim world.” After all, a Hindu ruling class governed the south Indian state of Vijayanagara, Christians governed Sicily, and neither had many resident Muslims. So, by adapting the term “Islamdom” from “Christendom,” and by inventing the term “Islamicate,” Hodgson sought to theorize those parts of the world that exhibited what he called “the more egalitarian and cosmopolitan tendencies in Irano-Semitic culture.”²

Although Hodgson’s neologisms were admittedly unwieldy, he was at least struggling to account for historical processes such as cultural imitation or assimilation, or a subset of what we might call premodern “globalization.” But the problem with his formulation is that because the terms “Islamdom” and “Islamicate” contain the word “Islam,” their usage implies some sort of interaction with the superhuman world, when in fact Hodgson was referring to structures such as former government buildings in Vijayanagara that had nothing to do with such interactions, but which happened to feature pointed arches,

1 Marshall Hodgson, “The Role of Islam in World History,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 1, no. 2 (April 1970), 118.

2 Ibid.

domes, or vaulted arcades. Some art historians have even called these same structures “Islamic-styled.”³ On the other hand, for many years art historians refused to believe that another structure located in Vijayanagara, a self-styled “hall of dharma” (*dharmasāle*) built in 1439, was actually a mosque, even though it had a *mehrab*, faced Mecca, and bore an inscription identifying its patron as one Ahmad Khan. Scholars had so thoroughly associated early modern Persian architecture with Islam that they could not imagine that this thoroughly trabeated structure – lacking vaulting, domes, or arches – was anything other than a Hindu *maṇḍapa*, or pillared hall.⁴ In effect, then, rather than Vijayanagara being enclaved in an “Islamicate” world, as Hodgson had claimed, what we actually see are properly Islamic structures like this mosque being enclaved in an Indian world, while royal structures of metropolitan Vijayanagara, with their lavish use of arches, vaults, and domes, had been absorbed into something quite different.

1 Two Cosmopolises

In sorting through this kind of confusion, Sheldon Pollock’s notion of a Sanskrit cosmopolis can be of help. For what we see in this medieval Indian city is not evidence of an “Islamicate” world, much less an Islamic one, but of something we may more properly call a Persian cosmopolis. What I mean here is an aesthetic and literary sensibility, together with an integrated understanding of moral and social order that was informed not by religion as such, but by ideas and values that spread through the circulation of canonical Persian texts and the growth of populations that used Persian in speaking, reading, or writing. Crucially, it was precisely because this Persianate world could be decoupled from the Muslim religion⁵ – or indeed, from any religion – that Hindu rulers such as those at Vijayanagara could so readily title themselves “sultan” in their public proclamations, or assimilate pointed arches and vaulted domes

3 John M. Fritz, George Michell, and M.S. Nagaraja Rao, *Where Kings and Gods Meet: The Royal Centre at Vijayanagara, India* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1984), 133.

4 Phillip B. Wagoner, “Fortuitous Convergences and Essential Ambiguities: Transcultural Political Elites in the Medieval Deccan,” in Suchil Mittal, ed., *Surprising Bedfellows: Hindus and Muslims in Medieval and Early Modern India* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003), 39–49.

5 Ann K.S. Lambton, “*Quis custodiet custodiet*: Some Reflections on the Persian Theory of Government,” *Studia Islamica* 5 (1956), 125–48.

into their urban landscape. Doing so signaled their desire to participate in a transregional understanding of prestige and authority.

In short, in order to theorize long-term interactions between West, Central, East, and South Asia, we need a different way of thinking about cultural space. Sheldon Pollock's notion of a "Sanskrit cosmopolis" referred to the enormous geographic sweep of Indic culture that stretched from Afghanistan through Vietnam and the East Indies, and which spanned a millennium from the fourth to the fourteenth century. Place names alone tell the story. Two cities that suggestively demarcate the territorial limits of this formation are Kandahar (Skt. "Gandhara") in southern Afghanistan and Singapore in Southeast Asia – both of them Sanskrit names. For Pollock, what characterized this cosmopolis was not religion, but rather the ideas and values elaborated in the entire corpus of Sanskrit texts that circulated across and above the vernacular world of regional tongues. This was because Sanskrit, not being identified with a particular ethnic or linguistic group, or with a particular region, was transregional by its nature, or as Pollock put it, "a language of the gods in the world of men." Sanskrit texts embraced everything from rules of grammar to styles of kingship, architecture, proper comportment, the goals of life, the regulation of society, the acquisition of power and wealth, and much more. Because these texts were considered to be normative, their circulation through geographical space – the Sanskrit cosmopolis – created an enduring network of shared idioms, cultural styles, values, and sensibilities.

Very importantly, this cultural formation expanded over much of Asia not by force of arms, but by emulation, and without any governing center that enforced "orthodoxy". Nor was it bounded by fortified frontiers. In those respects, Pollock's notion of a Sanskrit cosmopolis compares with the Hellenized world that embraced the Mediterranean basin and the Middle East after Alexander the Great. For that world, too, was a culture-zone without political borders, a world in which people of various ethnic or religious backgrounds readily subscribed to the prestige of Greek language, sculpture, drama, cuisine, architecture, and so on, but without paying taxes to a Greek official or submitting to the might of Greek soldiers. Conversely, the cosmopolis idea may be contrasted with most any classical empire, such as the Romans, with their centralized governing structure, their sharp distinction between citizens and non-citizens, their fortified frontiers demarcating the territorial extent of the sovereign domain, and their reliance on the hard power of coercive force as opposed to the soft-power of models that encourage emulation. These models were articulated through a network of ideas – all elaborated in Sanskrit – which everywhere diffused by a process of borrowing, and which made similar

claims about aesthetics, polity, kingly virtue, learning, and the universality of dominion.⁶

Historically, however, this was only one such transregional formation that appeared in South Asia. The Sanskrit cosmopolis actually anticipated by some five centuries the advent of a similar phenomenon, a “Persian cosmopolis,” which spanned great swaths of West, Central, and South Asia for another thousand-year period of time, from about the ninth to the nineteenth century. These two models of cosmopolitan culture exhibited striking parallels. Apart from their shared investment in preserving moral and social order, they both expanded over such vast territories as to give them a transregional, “placeless” quality. Second, the Sanskrit and Persian cosmopolises were both grounded in a prestigious language and literature that conferred elite status on their users. Third, like its Sanskrit predecessor, the discourse of the Persian cosmopolis articulated universal dominion, especially from the mid-thirteenth century, when the Mongols’ destruction of the Abbasid caliphate created a conceptual void that would be filled by a number of Persianized states. And fourth, while they both elaborated, discussed, and critiqued religious traditions, neither cosmopolis was grounded in any one such tradition, but rather transcended the claims of any and all religions. This allowed peoples of various cultural backgrounds to participate in them even while continuing to practice their own religious traditions.

This last point is crucial. For several centuries now, the writing of South Asian history has tended to see the past through the lens of religion – especially Hinduism and Islam, commonly seen as essentialized, timeless, and locked in binary opposition, if not mutual hostility. We live with the image of a monolithic, immutable Islam colliding with an equally monolithic and immutable Hinduism from the twelfth century on. But a close look at post-twelfth century India would challenge the presumed primacy of religion as the fundamental category for analyzing that region’s history. What one more typically sees is two models of cosmopolitan culture, the Sanskrit and the Persian, which overlapped one another in the twelfth century and then continued to engage with each other in complex ways. Indeed, much of South Asian history

6 Sheldon Pollock, “The Sanskrit Cosmopolis, A.D. 300–1300: Transculturation, Vernacularization, and the Question of Ideology,” in J.E.M. Houben, ed., *Ideology and Status of Sanskrit: Contributions to the History of the Sanskrit Language* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 230; *idem.*, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 10–19, 226–36, 274–80. See also Yigal Bronner, Whitney Cox, and Lawrence McCrea eds., *South Asian Texts in History: Critical Engagements with Sheldon Pollock* (Ann Arbor: Association for Asian Studies, 2011).

between the twelfth and eighteenth centuries can be understood in terms of precisely this interaction.

The evolution of the Persian cosmopolis saw a wide spectrum of culture diffuse far beyond its principal point of incubation in Central Asia under the Samanid dynasty of rulers (819–999). Here, during the ninth and tenth centuries, a rich but largely submerged pre-Islamic language and civilization re-emerged in a transformed state some three hundred years after the seventh-century Arab conquest. Linguistically, a mixed Middle Persian and Arabic lexicon were adapted to the Arabic script, a development comparable with the emergence of a hybridized New English some three centuries after the Norman conquest of England in 1066.⁷ Initially, the Samanid court in Bukhara played an important role in promoting the linguistic and literary movement that would later evolve into the Persian cosmopolis. For that city straddled major trade routes connecting Central Asia with the Iranian plateau to the west, India to the south, and, via the Silk Road, China to the east. This commercially vibrant zone was also multi-lingual. Although both Arabic and Turkish flourished in ninth and tenth century Central Asia, and Sogdian was still spoken there, New Persian emerged as the lingua franca, having replaced the region's indigenous Iranian languages and dialects.

As had been the case with Sanskrit texts, which freely circulated across a vast expanse of territory between the fourth and fourteenth century, texts written in New Persian traveled astonishing distances from the eleventh century on, traversing ethnic and political, as well as natural frontiers. Also like the Sanskrit case, the production of (New) Persian literature had no single geographical or political epicenter, especially after the thirteenth century when the Mongols overran Central Asia and the Iranian plateau, destabilizing their courts. From that point on, peoples in far-flung regions like the Caucasus or India, as well as on the Iranian plateau, might retain everyday use of their local languages while cultivating, and even producing, great works of Persian literature. The Samanid court at Bukhara was also the first to adopt New Persian as its language of administration as well as a vehicle for both high literature and political theory.⁸ Writing at that court, the historian Bal'ami (d. 974)

7 The trajectories of modern Persian and modern English are remarkably similar. Three hundred years after the Arab conquest of Iran following the decisive Battle of Nahavand (642), there appeared the New Persian poet Rudaki. He was succeeded after another two centuries by such classical poets as 'Attar, Nezami, and Sa'di. Similarly, three hundred years after the French conquest of England at the Battle of Hastings (1066) we have Chaucer, who was followed after another two centuries by Shakespeare.

8 Brian Spooner and William L. Hanaway, "Persian as *Koine*: Written Persian in World-historical Perspective," in *Literacy in the Persianate World: Writing and the Social Order*, eds. Brian

naturalized the entire Arab-Islamic tradition for the Persianate world by producing an abridged Persian adaptation of the history of Tabari (d. 923), who had earlier chronicled the early Muslim centuries in Arabic.

In the eleventh century the writing of Persian history came into its own when, instead of merely translating from the Arabic or glorifying a real or imagined Persian past, scholars like Bayhaqi (d. 1077) began writing histories of their own days, with a view to understanding how justice and morality were related to the rise and fall of past and present dynasties.⁹ In the late eleventh century, Nezam al-Molk (d. 1092) wrote the *Siyasat-nameh*, the classic text in the “Mirror for Princes” genre of courtly advice literature. Here he elaborated practical techniques for running complex bureaucracies, instituting state-supported schools (*madrasehs*) to propagate a uniform, conservative religious education, and establishing efficient revenue systems.

Although few writers of New Persian worked outside Central Asia or Khorasan before the eleventh century, the subsequent centuries witnessed a widespread diaspora of Persian literati, driven in the eleventh and twelfth centuries partly by an agricultural decline on the Iranian plateau,¹⁰ and in the thirteenth century by the devastating onslaught of Mongol invasions. It was thus in the south Caucasus region, where Persian was not the local vernacular, that Nezami Ganjavi (d. 1203) composed his *Khamseh*, which became the most popular group of stories in the entire corpus of Persian literature. Soon thereafter, Mongol invasions of Central Asia and the Iranian plateau drove literati in all directions. The mystical poet Jalal al-Din Rumi (d. 1273), for example, resettled in Anatolia, having moved clear across the plateau from northern Afghanistan. Many more such refugees were driven into northern India under the recently-established Delhi sultanate (1204–1526).

As a consequence of this cultural and demographic diaspora, New Persian became a portable, prestige language, even though the many dialects spoken across the Iranian plateau rendered it far from uniform.¹¹ By the fourteenth

Spooner and William L. Hanaway (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2012), 14.

9 Julie Scott Meisami, *Persian Historiography to the end of the Twelfth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 282–83. See also Marilyn Robinson Waldman, *Toward a Theory of Historical Narrative: A Case Study in Perso-Islamicate Historiography* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1980).

10 Richard Bulliet connects the diffusion of New Persian with the collapse of cotton cultivation in Iran, which had resulted from a cooling trend in the region's climate. Richard W. Bulliet, *Cotton, Climate, and Camels in Early Islamic Iran: a Moment in World History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

11 Rajeev Kinra notes that the eleventh-century lexicographer Asadi Tusi wrote his comparative dictionary, the *Loghat-e Fors*, to enable literati from Azerbaijan to understand

century, a network of circulating texts conveying a common core of ideas and sensibilities had fully emerged. Across a vast swath of territory between Anatolia and East Asia New Persian had become three things: (1) a prestige language for the composition of historical chronicles as well as literary works, (2) a principal medium used in state bureaucracies, and (3) a contact tongue used in interregional diplomacy. In thirteenth- and fourteenth-century China, it served not only as a *lingua franca*, but as the official foreign language.¹² Marco Polo (d. 1324) used mainly Persian throughout his travels on the Silk Road, as did his near-contemporary Ibn Battuta (d. 1377), who travelled many of the same circuits.¹³

2 Elaboration of the Persian Cosmopolis

What explains this remarkable development? One factor was the cosmopolitan environment in which New Persian had been incubated. Central Asia in the Samanid era was diverse not only linguistically, but also religiously, with its communities of Jews, Christians, Manichaeans, Zoroastrians, Buddhists, pagans, and shamanists, together with both Shi'i and Sunni Muslims.¹⁴ The new tongue thus served as a linguistic common denominator in a multi-ethnic society. Moreover, as John Perry has noted, since it did not serve as the vehicle for any scripture or liturgy, New Persian posed no ideological threat to Arabic, the language of Iran's seventh century Muslim victors. By contrast, the territorial reach of other Middle Eastern tongues – such as Coptic, Aramaic, and Syriac – shrank after the Arab conquest of the Middle East, largely because they had served as a scriptural or liturgical language for pre-Muslim religious

poetry produced in Khorasan and Central Asia. Rajeev Kinra, "This Noble Science: Indo-Persian comparative Philology, c. 1000–1800 CE", in *South Asian Texts*, eds. Bronner, Cox, and McCrea, 364.

12 David Morgan, "Persian as a *Lingua Franca* in the Mongol Empire," in *Literacy in the Persianate World*, eds. Spooner and Hanaway, 166.

13 Ibid, 161.

14 Louise Marlow, "A Samanid Work of Counsel and Commentary: the *Nashat al-muluk* of Pseudo-Mawardi," *Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies* 45 (2007), 182–83. For the ethnic and religious diversity in Central Asia and Khorasan at this time, see also Elton L. Daniel, *The Political and Social History of Khurasan under Abbasid Rule* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1979), 13–24, and Richard W. Bulliet, *The Patricians of Nishapur: a Study in Medieval Islamic Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 14–19.

communities.¹⁵ This speaks to the point made earlier, namely, the decoupling of New Persian from religion generally, and from Islam in particular.

Persian poetry also played a part in the diffusion of the Persian cosmopolis. The poet Ferdowsi (d. 1020) self-consciously canonized Iran's pre-Islamic royal history.¹⁶ Moreover, like the language in which it was composed, his grand epic, the *Shahnameh*, posed no threat to Arab or Islamic sentiment; to the contrary, it praised Ferdowsi's royal patron, Mahmud of Ghazni (r. 997–1030), as combining the virtues of both Iranian and Islamic sovereignty. It also assimilated both the warrior ethos of Central Asian Turks and the heritage of Greek civilization. In Ferdowsi's hands, Alexander himself was transformed into a great Iranian king, and his mother into an Iranian princess, while pre-Zoroastrian heroes were presented as analogs to Vedic Indian gods. Looking backwards in time, the *Shahnameh* had thus accommodated Greek, Arab, Turkic, and Indian cultures, while looking forward in time, it would serve as a model for acculturating subsequent peoples to Persian traditions of monarchical rule, in particular the Mongols in the fourteenth century.¹⁷

One feature of both the Sanskrit and Persian cosmopolises, then, was their lack of a single geographic center and the astonishing portability of their respective bodies of literature – their ability to span many ethnic regions defined by particular vernacular tongues. Another was the ability of Persian and Sanskrit to penetrate those same vernacular languages, a process that led to what Pollock calls the “cosmopolitan vernacular.” He was referring to the translation of the great epics of classical Sanskrit, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, into vernacular languages, which began to occur from about the tenth century on. Similarly, in the seventeenth century Persian romance works such as Nezami's *Haft Paykar* were translated into Bengali for kings of Burma's Arakan coast. Ronit Ricci has shown how both the Tamil and even the Malay “tellings” of the popular text *One Thousand Questions* claimed Persian origins that can be traced to sixteenth-century South India.¹⁸ Through

15 For a long time, Arabic had served as the language of “high” discourse in the Persian-speaking world, until, that is, the Mongols sacked Baghdad in the thirteenth century and destroyed the Abbasid Caliphate. From that point on, Arabic retreated from the eastern world, to be replaced by Persian as the language of high culture. See John R. Perry, “New Persian: Expansion, Standardization, and Inclusivity,” in *Literacy in the Persianate World*, eds. Spooner and Hanaway, 82–83.

16 As the poet wrote, “I have revived Iran with this Persian language.” (*‘ajam zendeḥ kardam ba-d-in Parsi*). *Ibid.*, 75. In Ferdowsi's day, the term *‘ajam* referred more loosely to the non-Arab world of eastern Islam.

17 Oleg Grabar, “Why was the *Shahnama* illustrated?” *Iranian Studies* 43, no.1 (2010), 91–96.

18 Ronit Ricci, *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversion, and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 41, 132.

such vectors of transmission, the Persian cosmopolis came to include not only the Bengali and Tamil worlds of South Asia, but also the Burmese and Malay worlds of Southeast Asia. In other words, in these later centuries it was not just the circulation of Persian language and literature that defined the Persian cosmopolis, but also the circulation of *translations* of canonical Persian texts into vernacular languages that did so.

Although the ideals of the Persian cosmopolis had first been patronized by the Samanid court in ninth- and tenth-century Bukhara, when the Ghaznavid sultans (962–1186) declared independence from their former Samanid overlords in the late tenth century, the production of a revived Persian language, literature, and culture gravitated with the Ghaznavids eastward – first to Ghazni in eastern Afghanistan, home to Ferdowsi, Bayhaqi, and al-Biruni (d. 1048) during the reign of Sultan Mahmud (d. 1030), and then to Lahore in the Punjab. In the verses of the Indo-Persian poet Mas‘ud Sa‘d Salman (d. 1121), himself a native of Lahore, we see an early encounter of the Sanskrit cosmopolis and its emerging Persian counterpart – in a region, the Punjab, where neither Persian nor Sanskrit was the local vernacular.¹⁹ In 1186 the Ghaznavids were overrun by another Persianized dynasty, the Ghurids, operating from their base in the mountains of central Afghanistan. Just six years later, in 1192, these Ghurids and their Turkish slave-clients burst out of their mountain strongholds and defeated several Rajput houses in north India, leading directly to the establishment of the Delhi sultanate (1206–1526).

The successive dynastic houses of the Delhi sultanate thus inherited from their Samanid, Ghaznavid, and Ghurid predecessors a legacy of Persian cosmopolitanism that had already been elaborated between the tenth and thirteenth centuries. Politically, this legacy was realized in the idea of a transregional, sovereign state under the authority of a supreme ruler, the sultan. While such a figure theoretically governed as a deputy appointed by the caliph in Baghdad, in fact the scope of a sultan’s authority progressively grew, filling the political space vacated first by the Samanid *amirs* when they were eclipsed in 999, and then by the Abbasid caliphs when the Mongols overthrew them in 1258.²⁰

19 Though clearly situating himself in the Punjab, the land of his birth, Mas‘ud Sa‘d looked to Iranian lands to the west for cultural inspiration. “In essence,” writes Sunil Sharma, “Mas‘ud Sa‘d belonged to both worlds and to neither.” Sunil Sharma, *Persian Poetry at the Indian Frontier: Mas‘ud Sa‘d Salman of Lahore* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2000), 13.

20 Although they wielded absolute power, sultans in the Persianate world were nonetheless keen to legitimate their rule by invoking the authority of the reigning caliph. Even after 1258, and for the rest of the thirteenth century, the sultans of Delhi continued to invoke the name of the last caliph on their coins. See Stan Goron and J.P. Goenka, *The Coins of the Indian Sultanates* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 2001), pp. 29–35. In 1317 Sultan

Increasingly, Persianized sultans resisted geographical limits to their claims of sovereign territory. The same, of course, was true of maharajas inhabiting the Sanskrit cosmopolis. The Indian emperor Vikramaditya VI (r. 1076–1126), who reigned over the Chalukya empire in the early twelfth century, grandly depicted himself and his court as the “asylum of the whole world,” while the Persianized ruler Sultan Qotb al-Din Khalaji of Delhi (r. 1316–20) claimed to be the “ruler of the surface of the earth.”²¹ Significantly, the inscriptions of such rulers refrained from mentioning the territory over which they actually ruled, for doing so would have compromised their universalist claims.

Over time, a major strand of political thought decoupled Persian conceptions of kingship and governance from Islam, or indeed from any religion.²² Early theorists in the Persian world had cast the figure of the sultan in the imperial Sasanian (AD 224–651) role as “Shadow of God,” a title enthusiastically embraced by Delhi sultans such as Balban (r. 1266–87) and Qotb al-Din Khalaji. But from the eleventh century on, as the writ of the caliph steadily diminished, political and religious authority became effectively compartmentalized, with the politically impotent caliph monopolizing religious authority, and sultans appropriating political authority.²³ A de facto separation of Religion and State was made explicit in the early twelfth century by Ibn Balkhi in his *Fars-nameh*, a work dedicated to the Seljuq sultan Mohammad Tapar (r. 1105–18). In this work the chronicler wrote that kingship in pre-Islamic Iran had been based on the supreme principle of justice, and that every king of that age taught his heir-apparent the following maxim:

Qotb al-Din Mobarak Khalaji (r. 1316–20) went further, declaring *himself* to be caliph (*ibid.*, pp. 40–41). In 1343, a deputation from Cairo arrived in Delhi with a certificate of investiture and a robe of honor for Sultan Mohammad bin Tughluq (r. 1325–51) from the current Egyptian caliph, al-Hakim II. See H.M. Elliott and John Dowson, *History of India as Told by its Own Historians* (8 vols., Allahabad: Kitab Mahal, 1964), vol. 3: 249–50.

21 *Epigraphia Indica* 12 (1913–14), 289; *Epigraphia Indica, Arabic and Persian Supplement* (1972), 15.

22 Lambton, “*Quis custodiet custodiet*,” 125–48.

23 Synthesizing Perso-Indian statecraft with Greek political science, the Shafi'i jurist and philosopher Fakhr al-Din Razi (d. 1209) established an absolute independence of royalty from the caliph, maintaining that world order is impossible without “the king (*padshah*) who is God's Caliph.” As Amir Arjomand remarks, “The 'Abbasid Caliphate was thus made redundant even before its overthrow.” Said Amir Arjomand, “Evolution of the Persianate Polity and its Transmission to India,” *Journal of Persianate Studies* 2 (2009), 124.

There is no kingdom without an army, no army without wealth, no wealth without material prosperity, and no material prosperity without justice.²⁴

Several points are notable about this aphorism. First, it is to pre-Islamic Persian kings or their ministers, especially those of the Sasanian dynasty, or even Alexander the Great, that such aphorisms were typically attributed. Second, one notes the scheme's totalizing, all-embracing character – that is, its ability to integrate economy, morality, power, and kingship all into a single coherent ideology. And third, we see the central place it gives to the idea of justice, and correspondingly, its omission of any reference to God or religion. As a ruling ideology, this secularized formula became a stock theme throughout the Persian-speaking world, repeated with only slight variations by a host of writers of the “Mirrors for Princes” genre of courtly advice literature, such as Kay Ka’us bin Iskandar (d. 1085), Nezam al-Molk (d. 1092), and Abu Hamid Ghazali (d. 1111).²⁵

Although the secular nature of the Persian cosmopolis – that is, a world upheld by a just sultan rather than a pious caliph – had been formulated well before the Mongol age, it was greatly bolstered in 1258 when pagan Mongols destroyed Abbasid Baghdad, executed the caliph, and effectively abolished the Islamic caliphate (although a remnant survived in Cairo). Persian thinkers who served the Mongols, such as Nasir al-Din Tusi (d. 1274), then crafted political ideologies well suited for the Mongols' sprawling, multi-cultural state systems.²⁶ Crucially, a Persianate ruling vision that accommodated cultural diversity and focused on the principle of justice had become fully elaborated by the time the Delhi sultanate's own ruling institutions were established in the early thirteenth century.²⁷ Sultan Iltutmish (r. 1210–35), for example, minted copper

24 Ann K.S. Lambton, “Justice in the Medieval Persian Theory of Kingship,” *Studia Islamica* 17 (1962), 100.

25 *Ibid.*, 101–07.

26 “The ideal ruler in the Nasirean tradition,” writes Muzaffar Alam, “was the one who ensured the wellbeing of the people of diverse religious groups, and not Muslims alone.” Muzaffar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam: India, 1200–1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 49.

27 The ideal of social justice was never exclusively Persian, as it had deep roots in Middle Eastern thought. Nonetheless, it became central to Persianate political thought from the Samanid period on. For the transmission of the “Circle of Justice” ideology to India during the Delhi sultanate and Mughal periods, see Linda T. Darling, “Do Justice, Do Justice, for that is Paradise’: Middle Eastern Advice for Indian Muslim Rulers,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 22, nos. 1&2 (2002), 3–19. For a broader discussion of the topic, see *idem*, *A History of Social Justice and Political Power in the Middle East: the Circle of Justice from Mesopotamia to Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

coins with a single word on its obverse side: ‘*adl* (“justice”).²⁸ Moreover, the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were precisely when streams of Iranians and Persianized Turks, driven from their Central Asian homelands by invading Mongols, took refuge in north Indian territories governed by the Delhi sultanate. Their settlement contributed greatly to the rooting of Persian cultural ideals in their adopted home.

What is perhaps most remarkable about the Persian cosmopolis, however, is how readily its ideals and values diffused into South Asian territories that lay *beyond* the realm of the Delhi sultanate. A distinctively Persianate ideology privileging the notion of justice and connecting economy, morality, and politics infiltrated the eastern Deccan plateau even while that region was still under the rule of the Kakatiya dynasty of rajas (1083–1323). At some point in the twelfth or thirteenth century, the Telugu poet Baddena, writing at the Kakatiya court, penned these striking lines:

To acquire wealth: make the people prosper. To make the people prosper:
justice is the means. O Kirti Narayana! They say that justice is the treasury
of kings.²⁹

Though more terse than the many formulations found in contemporary Mirror for Princes literature, Baddena’s lines clearly reveal the influence of the Persianate world in this corner of the Deccan, for the concept of justice had never been central to Sanskrit political thought.³⁰ Like the ideals of the Sanskrit cosmopolis, which were emulated or assimilated but never imposed, this Persianate formulation had been borrowed by a Telugu court poet very far from the Delhi sultanate. Actually, this was only one of many aspects of the Persian cosmopolis – together with architecture, dress, courtly comportment, cuisine, and especially, language – that spread throughout South Asia between the twelfth and eighteenth centuries.

28 Goron and Goenka, *Coins*, 23–24.

29 Quoted from the Telugu *Niti* of Baddena, cited in Phillip B. Wagoner, *Tidings of the King: a Translation and Ethnohistorical Analysis of the Rayavacakamu* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993), 95.

30 The word for ‘justice’ used by Baddena is *nyāyam*, a Sanskrit term usually used in the sense of ‘logic’, ‘reason’, or ‘principle’. It also carries the sense of ‘justice’ in *dharma-śāstra* literature where court cases and lawsuits are discussed. But this seems to be a secondary, more specialized meaning. Until Baddena, the term was never elevated to the status of *the* fundamental principle of statecraft.

3 Persian Dictionaries in India

As the geographic reach of Persian letters expanded, so did the production of multi-lingual dictionaries (*farhang*) that used Persian as their medium, as well as versified bi-lingual vocabularies (*nesab*). India played a major role here. Indeed, between the ninth and nineteenth centuries, more Persian-language dictionaries were produced there than anywhere else in the world.³¹ Between the mid-fourteenth and early sixteenth centuries, soon after Mongol invasions of Central Asia and Khorasan had driven many Persianized refugees to the Delhi sultanate, lexicographers in India began producing an unprecedented number of dictionaries that rendered Persian equivalences for words in north Indian languages.³² Driving this lexicographical output was the political fragmentation of north India following Timur's invasion of 1398–99, and the consequent need for regional courts to reassert, by producing normative texts, their literary and linguistic status within the larger Persian cosmopolis.³³

Compiled in regional courts across north India, these dictionaries gave Persian equivalents for Arabic, Turkic, Syrian, Greek, Latin, and even Pashto words, which indicates not only the multi-lingual and multi-ethnic nature of Sultanate-period Indian society, but also the effort to represent Persian as a hyper language, that is, a language that could enfold non-Persian languages within a larger Persianate world. One dictionary – the *Farhang-e Zafanguya o Jahanpuya*, compiled in 1433 – mentioned six major languages whose words its compiler sought to “put in the right place,” making extensive use of Indic equivalents to explain those words. But as Stefano Pellò writes, the absence of Hindavi as one of those six named languages effectively rendered north India as “the place from which the world is observed, not itself an object of observation.” Noting this dictionary's title, which translates as a dictionary for the “polyglot” and the “globe-trotter” – in a word, cosmopolitan – Pellò argues that

31 In this thousand-year span of time, a total of about a hundred Persian dictionaries were compiled worldwide, of which seventy-four appeared after 1510, most all of them in India. William L. Hanaway, “Secretaries, Poets, and the Literary Language,” in *Literacy in the Persianate World*, eds. Spooner and Hanaway, 133.

32 These include the *Dastur al-Afadel fi'l-Lughat al-Fada'el* (Delhi, 1342), the *Adat al-Fodala* (Malwa, 1419), the *Farhang-e Zafanguya o Jahanpuya* (Jaunpur and Malwa, 1423), the *Meftah al-Fodala* (Malwa, 1468), the *Sharafnameh-ye Monyari* (Bihar, 1473), and *Mo'ayyed al-Fodala* (Delhi, 1519). Dilorom Karomat, “Turki and Hindavi in the World of Persian: Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century Dictionaries,” in *After Timur Left: Culture and Circulation in Fifteenth-Century North India*, eds. Francesca Orsini and Samira Sheikh (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014), 130–65.

33 Stefano Pellò, “Local Lexis? Provincializing Persian in Fifteenth-Century North India,” in Orsini and Sheikh, *After Timur Came*, 170.

Persian philology had become a means to “conquer the world.”³⁴ Indeed, the rising production of Persian dictionaries in India is one of the clearest indices of South Asia’s incorporation into an expanding Persian cosmopolis. By the fifteenth century, a simplified form of Persian seems to have emerged as a spoken lingua franca in the Delhi sultanate’s several successor states.³⁵

It is from the turn of the sixteenth century, too, that we find evidence of the use of Persian among Hindu scribal communities employed in government bureaucracies. The *Tabaqat-e Akbarshahi*, a chronicle compiled by Nezam al-Din Ahmad in 1594, records that in the time of Sultan Sikandar Lodi (r. 1489–1517), Hindus “learned to read and write the Persian script, which had not been common among them until then.”³⁶ In 1520, during the Delhi sultanate’s twilight days, the government was issuing Persian and Hindawi bilingual revenue documents.³⁷ It is not clear whether Babur’s defeat of the Lodis in 1526 and the establishment of Mughal rule altered such arrangements.³⁸ But during the interregnum when Afghans briefly regained control of north India, Sher Shah (r. 1540–45) appointed two writers (*karkon*) for each district, one for Persian and one for Hindavi, a sure sign of the growing institutionalization of Persian as a bureaucratic language in India.³⁹ Then, when Humayun returned from Safavid Iran in 1555 and re-established Mughal authority, he came accompanied by a large entourage of Persian-speaking soldiers and nobles.

All of this laid the groundwork for the late sixteenth century, when Akbar (r. 1556–1605) systematically recruited Persian-speaking administrators from beyond the Khyber Pass. Most importantly, in 1582 he established Persian as the official language for every level of the Mughals’ sprawling bureaucracy, creating a huge “army of the pen” that expanded exponentially with Akbar’s conquests. Muzaffar Alam argues that Akbar targeted Persian as the “language of empire” in order to evolve a political culture that would arch over India’s

34 Ibid., 177.

35 The compositions of the Sikh gurus show that simplified Persian was current as a spoken language in the Punjab in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Orsini and Sheikh, eds., *After Timur Left*, 8.

36 Ibid., 18.

37 Ibid., 9.

38 When Babur invaded India in 1526 from his base in Kabul, he had to use a translator to communicate with the Hindavi-speaking Lodi governor of Lahore, noting that his men had had to deal with “an unfamiliar people whose language we did not know and who did not know ours” (by which he certainly meant Turki). Wheeler Thackston, trans., *The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 318, 324.

39 ‘Abbas Khan Sarwani, *The Tarikh-i Sher Shahi*, ed. S.M. Imamuddin (Dacca: University of Dacca, 1964), 1: 210.

diverse religious and cultural communities.⁴⁰ Certainly, the effect of Akbar's historic move was to create a widespread demand for Persian competence among large numbers of Indians, especially Hindu clerical classes that had traditionally served state bureaucracies.

This process has recently been explored by Walter Hakala, who has studied the genre of the *nesab*, or versified bi-lingual vocabularies intended to interpret words from an unfamiliar language into a familiar one.⁴¹ The issue here is the directionality of terms – that is, discovering which language is assumed to be already known, and which is the target language. For example, the migration of Persianized Turks to India in the early sixteenth century created a demand for a text explaining Hindavi terms for these recent newcomers. Written at this time, the *Qasideh dar Loghat-e Hendi* gave Persian equivalents for Hindavi terms, indicating that it presupposed an audience familiar with Persian, but not with Hindavi. Demographically, the waves of Persian-speaking élites pouring into India after the Mughal conquest of 1526 can be compared to the earlier waves of Persianized Turks who had migrated to the Delhi sultanate in the thirteenth century, during and following the Mongol invasions. Except that this time, the use of Persian would gain a much more secure footing than had been the case earlier, owing not only to the arrival of these immigrants, but also to the preparation laid by the many Persian dictionaries and *nesabs* compiled in India between the time of Timur (d. 1405) and that of Babur (d. 1530).

From the mid-sixteenth century, however, a different kind of *nesab* began to appear. In 1552 a Hindu of the *kāyastha* caste wrote a *nesab* entitled *Ajay Cand-nameh*, which glossed Persian terms for native speakers of Hindavi. The fact that the author was a *kāyastha* is significant, since this prominent caste of writers had traditionally made their living as accountants and clerks serving ruling dynasties. Many more such bilingual glossaries would appear after 1582, when Akbar made Persian the sole language for all levels of the Mughal bureaucracy. Competence in Persian now enabled socio-economic advancement for upwardly mobile Hindu scribal communities across all north India, just as knowing English would do in nineteenth century India, and for the same reason.⁴²

40 Alam, *Languages of Political Islam*, 133–40.

41 Walter Hakala, "On Equal Terms: The Equivocal Origins of an Early Mughal Indo-Persian Vocabulary," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 25, no. 2 (April 2015), 209–227.

42 Writes Hakala, "Much of especially the lower levels of administration (e.g., the office of *qānūngo*) had been staffed by Hindus, particularly of the *Kāyasth* and *Khatri* castes, whose children acquired Persian in *madraseshs*. From the variety of languages used to gloss the Persian terminology, it is apparent that the *nesab* genre was being employed for the education of a diverse population in Persian, reproducing the spectrum of north Indian languages." *Ibid*, 225.

The authorship of this *nesab* literature by members of north India's scribal communities suggests its use by non-élite, upwardly-mobile Indians eager to enter the Mughal bureaucracy. This contrasts not only with the thirteenth and fourteenth century situation, when the diffusion of Persian was mainly a product of Central Asians migrating into the Indo-Gangetic Plain. It also contrasts with what was happening concurrently in the Mughal court. Towards the end of the sixteenth century Akbar commissioned the compilation of a comprehensive Persian dictionary, the *Farhang-e Jahangiri*, completed in 1606 during the reign of his son and successor, Jahangir (r. 1605–27). This undertaking, which sought to secure for the Mughal court a prominent place in the Persophone world, paralleled Akbar's ambitious projects to translate into Persian major works of Hindu literature such as the great epics *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*. Clearly, Akbar sought to project himself not only as a patron of Persian letters, but also as the one and only emperor of *all* Indians. After all, patronizing Sanskrit literature was what Indian kings had been doing ever since the Gupta period (the fourth to sixth centuries), when Brahmins began entering state service as advisors, astrologers, and court literati.

In reality, Akbar carved out a cultural space for Persian in India at two levels. At a courtly level, he placed Persian at the pinnacle of Mughal culture by patronizing both translations of Sanskrit epic literature and the compilation of the massive *Farhang-e Jahangiri*. At a more popular level, however, by making Persian the language of ordinary administration across north India, the regime encouraged non-élite Hindu communities to learn Persian, which is reflected in the production of word-books of the *nesab* genre. Such considerations of class signal an important difference between the social bases of the two cosmopolises – namely, that whereas the Sanskrit cosmopolis was always a mainly Brahman and Jain project, the Persian cosmopolis spanned across a much broader cross-section of society.

4 The Persian Cosmopolis and Material Culture

It is in architecture, however, where one sees most clearly the diffusion of the Persian cosmopolis in South Asia. The issue here is not grand monuments like the Taj Mahal, which were designed by architects transplanted from Iran. Far more revealing of the polycentric and transregional nature of the Persian cosmopolis are monuments such as those mentioned at the outset of this essay. Structures that Hindu patrons built in fourteenth- or fifteenth-century Vijayanagara are replete with Persian architectural elements: domes, vaulted

arches, parapets of merlons, corner finials, fine plasterwork, etc.⁴³ Moreover, Vijayanagara's citadel does not appear in the center of a concentric *mandala* pattern, as is prescribed in classical Indian texts. Rather, it appears off to one side, a design that finds antecedents in the citadel of Daulatabad (1326–27), or a few years earlier in Tughluqabad (1320–23). Similarly, whereas Vijayanagara's north-facing throne hall has no known precedent in classical Indian courts, it has many antecedents in Persianate courts, such as those at Bidar, Warangal (the “Khush Mahal”), Tughluqabad, and Samarqand. The same is true for the tradition of royal halls with forty columns, a hundred columns, or even a thousand columns, which are found in courts throughout the Iranian plateau and South Asia, as in Delhi's “Hazar Sutun,” built by Mohammad bin Tughluq in 1343. In fact, it is hard to imagine Vijayanagara's vaulted and domed monuments appearing any time before Persianate ideas of courtly space had swept across South Asia. The Hindu kings who built these structures were clearly emulating what they understood as a prestigious, international style of projecting royal authority.

What is more, contemporaries from beyond India seem to have recognized that the so-called “Hindu” court of Vijayanagara belonged to a broader, Persianate world. We have the valuable account of ‘Abd al-Razzaq Samarqandi, a Timurid ambassador whom Shahrokh (r. 1405–47) had sent on a diplomatic mission from Herat to southern India. Arriving at the Vijayanagara court in 1443, the ambassador found the king, Deva Raya II (r. 1424–46), wearing a green satin robe and seated on a magnificent golden throne set in a north-facing throne hall that the ambassador called a *chehel sotun* (“forty columns”). ‘Abd al-Razzaq's use of that term suggests that he recognized in Vijayanagara the same sort of multi-columned hall already familiar to him from the Timurid world. During their meeting, moreover, the Vijayanagara king closely questioned the ambassador about Timurid nobles, army, numbers of horses, and the cities of Shahrokh's realm, including Samarqand, Herat, and Shiraz – all indicating Deva Raya II's avid interest in the Timurid world.⁴⁴

We see similar developments in sculpture. In the sixteenth century, one of India's greatest kings, Krishna Raya of Vijayanagara, used India's tradition of

43 George Michell, “Royal Architecture and Imperial Style at Vijayanagara,” in Barbara S. Miller (ed), *The Powers of Art: Patronage in Indian Culture* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992), 175. See also Catherine B. Asher, “Islamic Influence and the Architecture of Vijayanagara,” in Anna L. Dallapiccola, ed, *Vijayanagara – City and Empire: New Currents of Research*, (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1985), 188–95.

44 W.M. Thackston, trans., *A Century of Princes: Sources on Timurid History and Art* (Cambridge MA: Agha Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, 1989), 310–14.

stucco friezes to project his identity and authority. In 1520, soon after seizing from the sultan of Bijapur the city of Raichur, he ordered the construction there of an elaborate gateway, the Naurangi Darwaza, which featured a large, central courtyard with friezes running along the cornice of its four sides. Drawing upon the Hindu epic *Rāmāyaṇa*, the frieze juxtaposes the image of Krishna Raya with that of Rama, the epic's god-king and hero, thereby establishing a clear homology between king and god. Yet Krishna Raya is also depicted wearing a tall, conical headgear made of brocaded fabric known in Telugu as *kollayi*, a word derived from the Persian *kolah*, which was a type of headgear that had already diffused throughout the Persian-speaking world in the early modern period. In the contemporary Safavid world, *kolah* was identified with a crown, as when worn by Shah Isma'īl (r. 1501–24), or simply with élite headgear more generally. In this single image, then, Krishna Raya was drawing simultaneously from two discourses of power and authority: he was connected iconographically both to the hero of the *Rāmāyaṇa* epic and to contemporary Persian understandings of élite, even royal, status.

These cultural flows, however, were by no means moving in only one direction, for the Sanskrit cosmopolis made its own claims to universal dominion. When Persianized rulers first appeared in India, Sanskrit literati endeavored to absorb them into their own world. Consider a public charter issued in 1326 in the name of Sultan Mohammad bin Tughluq, who had just come to supreme power in the Delhi sultanate.⁴⁵ Issued not from the imperial capital of Delhi but from the city of Kalyana in a recently annexed part of the Deccan plateau, the record is extraordinary in several respects. First, it was drafted by a certain Vijaditya not in Persian, the power-language of the Delhi sultanate and of the Persian cosmopolis, but in Sanskrit – the language of the *other* cosmopolis – and in Nagari script. Second, it was dated not according to the *hejri* calendar, but in India's *Saka* calendar. Third, appearing at the top of the stone slab bearing the inscription is the image of the sun and a crescent moon, the same iconographic program that traditional, Indian inscriptions would have borne. And finally, Sultan Mohammad bin Tughluq was given the Sanskrit title "*mahārājādhirāja śrī-suratāṇa*," "great king of kings and sultan," while the governor of the Deccan, Qiyam al-Din Qutlugh, was called "*mahāpradhāna*," or "great minister" – these being titles that traditional Indian dynasties would have used in reference to their own public officials. The only non-Sanskrit term here, "*suratāṇa*" was itself a Sanskritized form of the Arabic *sultān*.

45 P.B. Desai, "Kalyana Inscription of Sultan Muhammad, Saka 1248," *Epigraphia Indica* 32 (1957–58), 165–70.

The Kalyana inscription thus suggests the extent to which a local society had assimilated the *mahārājādhirāja śrī-suratāṇa* in distant Delhi into its conceptual world. This is conveyed as much in the inscription's media – its language, script, honorific titles, and iconography – as it is in its message, which was to restore to ordinary worship a Hindu temple that had been damaged in some disturbance.⁴⁶ Thus, at one level, the inscription reveals the ordinary machinery of local government; but at another level it suggests how the ideals of the Persian and Sanskrit cosmopolises were negotiated – in this case, by assimilating the Persianate to the Sanskrit world.

Four decades after the Kalyana inscription was issued, the coastal province of Gujarat, with its thriving tradition of international maritime commerce, witnessed a similar sort of negotiation. In 1365 the ruler of Idar, in northeastern Gujarat, patronized the first Persian-Sanskrit lexicon, the *Śabdavilāsa*, in response to the needs of people working in an increasingly multicultural context. Equating Abraham with Brahma, Muhammad with Krishna, and Adam with Śiva, its author claimed that the entire Persianate world could be explained within the intellectual universe of Sanskrit – a position roughly akin to the Abbasids bringing Greek knowledge into Arabic.⁴⁷ Likewise, in the late sixteenth century, when Akbar commissioned the Brahman scholar Kṛsnadasa to produce another Sanskrit-Persian lexicon, the author sought to integrate Persianate notions of power into the Sanskrit world. This he did by casting the Mughal emperor as an incarnation of Vishnu, and as the last in a long line of just, Indian rulers.⁴⁸

46 The inscription itself refers to the outbreak of a serious anti-Tughluq rebellion in the newly conquered Deccan. At that time, the Tughluq governor in charge of Kalyana, Khwaja Ahmad, together with his Hindu secretary Jandamala, left the city in order to consult with other government officials, presumably about how to deal with the uprising. But in their absence, unruly elements disrupted worship in Kalyana's temple of Madhukēśvara and even damaged the Śiva linga. Some devotees of the deity planned to repair the image and for this purpose approached the temple trustees. When Khwaja Ahmad returned to Kalyana, the official in charge of managing the temple, one Thakkura Malla, appealed to him, as the governor of the region, to restore the structure and reinstate the deity's image. After first consulting Jandamala, his secretary, Khwaja Ahmad approved the request, reasoning that for the temple's petitioners, worship in the temple was a religious duty. Accordingly, the temple's Śiva linga was repaired and re-installed according to the prescribed rites for such procedures, including the nocturnal chanting of mantras.

47 Audrey Truschke, "Defining the Other: an Intellectual History of Sanskrit Lexicons and Grammars of Persian," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 40 (2012), 638–40.

48 *Ibid.*, 648.

5 Conclusion

Historically, two similar visions of social and moral order originated independently of one another: from the fourth century the Sanskrit cosmopolis, which expanded over a broad swath of southern Asia, and from the tenth century the Persian cosmopolis, which expanded over Central, West and South Asia. From the thirteenth century on, however, the Indian subcontinent became a contact zone for both traditions. They also influenced each other in important ways, catalyzed not only by the Ghurid dynasty's conquest of north India in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century, but also by the increasingly globalized world produced by growing commercial exchanges, overland and maritime. The diffusion of Persian in India was given a huge boost in 1582, when Akbar decreed that all administrative documents at every level of government be written in Persian, which in turn inspired a spurt of word-books of the *nesab* genre.

By the seventeenth century, the use of Persian for administrative purposes, promoted by sultanate-style polities, had spread throughout South Asia. Indeed, in the western Deccan, the infiltration of Persian vocabulary into the Marathi language provoked a reaction. Nearly a century after Akbar had established Persian as the administrative language of the Mughal empire, the Hindu chieftain Shivaji launched a Maratha state in that region. One of his first acts was to order his minister to produce a lexicon, the *Rājavyavahāraśā* ("Lexicon of Royal Institutes"), which sought to provide Sanskrit equivalents for commonly used Perso-Arabic administrative terms.⁴⁹ But the very attempt to compile this lexicon only revealed the extent to which Persian terms had already penetrated vernacular Marathi. Indeed, the effort recalls the futile attempts by the Académie française to prevent hotdogs or supermarkets from infiltrating French. For even while this reaction was occurring in Maharashtra, Hindu *kāyasthas* in north India were writing *nesabs* to equip clerks with the Persian proficiency they needed to advance within the Mughal bureaucracy.

Finally, despite their many similarities, one is struck by several important differences between the Sanskrit and Persian cosmopolises. In the first place, Sanskrit was linked to an exclusively élite audience and as such, was seldom employed as a primary language for ordinary administration. Whereas the parts of Indian inscriptions dealing with genealogies, eulogies of kings, or invocations to deities were composed in Sanskrit, their "business sections" typically appeared in vernacular tongues. But over time, vernacular languages began encroaching even on an inscription's discursive areas: Telugu from the ninth

49 Ibid., 66o.

century, Kannada from the tenth century, Tamil from the eleventh century, and Marathi from the twelfth century.⁵⁰ What is more, while the use of Sanskrit continued to recede in the public sphere, Persian began infiltrating those same vernaculars across all of South Asia, since Persian, too, was being used for ordinary administration, both judicial and revenue. It was precisely this steady advance that Shivaji was reacting to when, in the late seventeenth century, he attempted to replace Persian with Sanskrit administrative vocabulary.

The other main difference between the two cosmopolises lay in their different attitudes towards alien cultures. Notwithstanding isolated attempts to explain Persian or Islamic ideas in Sanskrit, Brahmanic scholars were historically hostile to assimilating, or even acknowledging, alien cultures. Persian literature and literary ideas are never discussed in the Sanskrit philosophical tradition.⁵¹ This raises the rather basic question of just how cosmopolitan the Sanskrit cosmopolis really was. By contrast, ever since the eleventh century Persian literati had appropriated earlier cosmopolitan cultures – namely, pre-Islamic Iran, Arab Islam, and the Greek world. This is why, when Islam as a religious system eventually diffused through north India and the Deccan, it could do so encapsulated within a larger Persianate vessel.

This would appear to explain why Marshall Hodgson had confused the Persianate for the Islamicate – or indeed, most all things Persian with Islam. It also explains why art historians might think of vaulted structures in India as exhibiting an “Islamic style,” or their inability to see that Ahmad Khan’s trabeated “hall of dharma” in Vijayanagara was actually a mosque. For it was precisely the non-religious character of this larger Persian cosmopolis that had allowed non-Muslims to participate in it so readily. Yet most modern scholarship appears to have missed this important point, continuing instead to read South Asian history through the narrow lens of religion, and in particular that of Hindu-Muslim confrontation. For such reasons the idea of a Persianate world, or Persian cosmopolis, might prove a promising conceptual key for understanding pre-modern South Asian history on its own terms – and indeed, for rescuing both Iranian and Indian history from the steel grip of nationalist historiographies.

50 Cynthia Talbot, *Precolonial India in Practice: Society, Region, and Identity in Medieval Andhra* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 260, no. 14.

51 Truschke, “Defining,” 636.

Living in Marvelous Lands: Persianate Vernacular Literatures and Cosmographical *Imaginaires* around the Bay of Bengal

Thibaut d'Hubert

Islamic cosmography conceived of the lands lying beyond the geographical and cultural boundaries of the Muslim world through an *imaginaire* of marvels: the *'aja'eb*.¹ The eventual spread of Islam in the eastern regions surrounding the Bay of Bengal meant that the lands formerly known as those of demons and fairies were now inhabited by Muslims whose literati inherited the classical worldview of Islamic cosmography. There were, broadly speaking, two strategies that sought, through narratives, to include this land within the Muslim world. Authors either attempted to import Middle Eastern cultural and natural environments, translating them into local terms and therefore bringing the center to the peripheries, or, and this is what I propose to explore with this article, they decided to inhabit these marvelous lands and retain an awareness of their remote location from the centers of the Muslim world.²

Note: I want to express my gratitude toward Pasha M. Khan for inviting me to present a first version of this paper at the 60th Anniversary Conference of the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, and for his enlightening comments and insights. I am also grateful to Prof. Abbas Amanat for inviting me to contribute this article to the present volume. Finally, I want to thank my colleague Muzaffar Alam and the students of the University of Chicago for their enthusiasm during weekly reading sessions of the Persian *dastan* of *Sayf al-Muluk* that took place in the Spring quarter of 2015, and my assistant Nell Hawley for revising the text of this article. All mistakes and inaccuracies are my own.

- 1 C.E. Dubler, "Adjā'ib," ed. P. Bearman et al., *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (Brill Online, 2012), http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.uchicago.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/adjajib-SIM_0319; André Miquel, *La géographie humaine du monde musulman jusqu'au milieu du 11^e siècle*, 4 vols., École Pratique des Hautes Études (Paris, La Haye: Mouton & Co., 1967); Travis E. Zadeh, *Mapping Frontiers across Medieval Islam: Geography, Translation, and the 'Abbāsid Empire*, Library of Middle East History 27 (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011).
- 2 In the context of Bengal, Asim Roy observed: "The process of acculturation of Muslim tradition was further stimulated by attempts of our writers to set the characters, situations, and stories in the natural geographical, social and cultural milieus of the land." Asim Roy, *The Islamic Syncretistic Tradition in Bengal* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 104. Roy's treatment of the regional expression of Islam in Bengal that relied on the notion of

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries AD, we observe that a narrative literature whose space was framed by traditional cosmography was received and adapted by authors who were engaged in the formation of vernacular traditions in the cultural centers around the Bay of Bengal, namely, in the Deccan, Bengal, Arakan, and the Malay world.³ The story of Sayf al-Muluk and his quest to find the fairy Badi' al-Jamal is one such narrative text that was adapted by several vernacular authors in the Bay of Bengal region during this period.⁴ The geographical space covered by the travels of the young Egyptian prince corresponds to the eastward expansion of Islam. In contrast to the oft-encountered narrative of a decline of the Islamic intellectual tradition that started in the post-Abbasid period, which emphasizes the divorce of science and literature, and, in the field of cosmography, a semantic shift of the term *'aja'eb* from "marvels of Creation" to "marvels of human imagination,"⁵ I would argue that the transmission of this narrative/cosmographical tradition in the early modern period shows fascinating instances of subtle combination of scientific knowledge and literary motifs.

To illustrate this argument, I will look at a Bengali version of this story that was composed by Ālāol (*fl.* 1651–71), a court poet who lived in the capital of the kingdom of Arakan (in today's Myanmar).⁶ Ālāol used this story to convey his

religious syncretism has been thoroughly criticized since the publication of his monograph. For a critique of the use of the term "syncretism" in the study of South Asian religions, see Tony K. Stewart and Carl W. Ernst, "Syncretism," in *South Asian Folklore: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Peter J. Claus, Margaret A. Mills, and Sarah Diamond (New York: Routledge, 2003), 586–88. R.M. Eaton discussed the various strategies used by Bengali Muslims to resettle in the environment of Bengal narratives that had originally taken place in the Middle East. See: Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier 1204–1760* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 268–90. For a recent study that speaks to similar questions of cultural translation from the Middle East to South India and Southeast Asia, see Ronit Ricci, *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversion, and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia*, *South Asia Across the Disciplines* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

- 3 References will be provided for each of those literary traditions in the following discussion.
- 4 Christopher Shackle, "The Story of Sayf al-Mulūk in South Asia," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Third Series, 17, no. 2 (April 1, 2007): 115–29.
- 5 This view constitutes the framework of Dubler, "Adjā'ib." For an insightful and stimulating exploration of the semantic domain covered by this term from the perspective of literary criticism and plot analysis, see Roy Mottahedeh, "Ajā'ib in The Thousand and One Nights," in *The Thousand and One Nights in Arabic Literature and Society*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian and Georges Sabagh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 29–39.
- 6 Thibaut d'Hubert, "Ālāol," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam THREE*, ed. Denis Matringe, Everett Rowson, and Gudrun Krämer (Leiden: Brill Online, 2013), http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.uchicago.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/alaol-COM_27295; Ālāol, "Say'phul Muluk Badiujjāmāl," in *Ālāol racanāvalī*, ed. Muhammad Abdul Qayyum and Raziya Sultana (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 2007), 451–593.

very acute awareness of the expanding horizons of the seventeenth century, locating himself and his milieu in the frontier areas of the Muslim world.⁷ In this work, the Bengali poet of Arakan gives us a sense of what it meant to inhabit the lands of marvels, and how this situation informed the fostering of a vibrant and inquisitive vernacular Muslim cultural ethos (*adab*).

In this article, I propose to discuss the theme of Muslim cosmography and cultural location. I will provide the wider context of the diffusion of the narrative (*dastan*, *qesseh*) of *Sayf al-Moluk*, with a special focus on the Bay of Bengal area, and then turn to Ālāol's Bengali *Sayphulmuluk Badiujjāmāl* (ca. 1656–70, Mrauk U) that eloquently illustrates the way vernacular authors used this story to articulate regional literary identities.

1 The Generic Model of the Story of Sayf al-Moluk and Badi' al-Jamal

Before I engage in tracing the diffusion of the story and in discussing the various shapes it took and purposes it served, I propose to give a summary of the core of the narrative.⁸ The story can be read from the perspective of the genre to which it participates – that is the romance⁹ – or the type of tale it very clearly displays (AT 400 and motifs pertaining to related types).¹⁰ Throughout the

7 Thibaut d'Hubert and Paul Wormser, "Représentations du monde dans le golfe du Bengale au XVII^e siècle: Ālāol et Rānirī," *Archipel* 76 (2008): 15–35.

8 Apart from C. Shackle's article, which provides a summary and references to previous scholarship on the narrative, here are some references in which you will find summaries and information for further readings: Victor Charles Chauvin, *Bibliographie des ouvrages arabes ou relatifs aux Arabes publiés dans l'Europe chrétienne de 1810 à 1885*, vol. 7 (Liège: H. Vaillant-Carmanne, imprimeur, 1892), 64–73; Ulrich Marzolph, Richard van Leeuwen, and Hassan Wassouf, eds., *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 362–64 (for the presence of the tale in the various recensions of the Nights, see the table in Appendix 1); Hasan Dhu al-Faqari, *Yeksad Manzumeh-ye Asheqaneh-ye Farsi* (Tehran: Charkh, 2013), 536–41.

9 Qualifying the story of Sayf al-Moluk as exclusively pertaining to the genre of the romance may sound a bit reductive. I use this category here in keeping with the following comment made by Heath in his attempt to define the genre of the romance based on his study of the *Nights*: "[...] the concept of the dominant proves useful, since it promotes an apprehension of genre that entails a spectrum of gradation. Romances are not stories that fulfill generic definition completely, but those in which it predominates." Peter Heath, "Romance as Genre in 'The Thousand and One Nights': Part I," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 18 (January 1, 1987): 10.

10 For a brief discussion on the topic of the type of folktale to which the story belongs, see Daniel Septfonds, *Le dzadrāni: un parler pashto du Paktyā (Afghanistan)*, Travaux de l'Institut d'Études Iraniennes de l'Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle / Institut d'Études Iraniennes Paris 15 (Louvain: Peeters, 1994), 312. Note that the version of the story that

following pages, when discussing questions pertaining to literary forms and genres, I will rely on the elements of definition provided by the litterateur of Jahangir (r. 1014–37/1605–27)’s time ‘Abd al-Nabi Qazvini Fakhr al-Zamani (b. 988/1580, d. after 1041/1631–2).¹¹ In an anthology of prose and poetry meant to be studied and used by storytellers (*qesseh-khwan*) composed in (1032/1622), Fakhr al-Zamani distinguishes four registers of storytelling: *razm* (martial-epic episodes), *bazm* (banquets and festivities), *hosn o ‘eshq* (beauty and passionate love), *‘ayyari* (trickery).¹²

As Christopher Shackle pointed out in his article on the fate of the Sayf al-Moluk story in the South Asian context, the story reproduces the tripartite structure of the romance genre: it narrates the youth of the protagonist in the safe environment of the household, continues to illustrate the stage of puberty and his impulse to leave his parents and homeland (which entails facing all kinds of obstacles and undergoing social demotion), and concludes with a section in which the hero unites with his beloved and regains both his social status and a safe domestic environment.¹³ As we shall see, the last part actually contains two phases in order to make some space for a martial-epic episode – the *razm* of the code of the *dastan* – after the first union with Badi‘ al-Jamal.

The narrative is typically embedded in a frame story that tells us either the origin of the *dastan* as a work of fiction commissioned by Mahmud of Ghazni

was transcribed and translated by Septfonds on the basis of an oral performance in the Dzadrani dialect of Pashto differs substantially from the “root” tale. But this variant appears here and there in the diffusion of the narrative – for instance in the Malay story of the origin of the rulers of Aceh and in the story of Lake Sayf al-Moluk in the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. The motifs of the story are also treated in the following surveys: Nikita Elisséeff, *Thèmes et motifs des Mille et une nuits; essai de classification* (Beyrouth: Institut français de Damas, 1949); Hasan M. El-Shamy, *A Motif Index of The Thousand and One Nights* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

11 Paul Losensky, “‘Abd al-Nabī Qazvīnī,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, ed. Denis Matringe, Everett Rowson, and Gudrun Krämer (Leiden: Brill Online, 2014), http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.uchicago.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/abd-al-nabi-qazvini-COM_24656; Pasha M. Khan, “The Broken Spell: The Romance Genre in Late Mughal India” (Ph.D., Columbia University, 2013); Pasha M. Khan, “A Manual for Storytellers: ‘Abd al-Nabī Fakhr al-Zamānī’s Tirāz al-Akhbār” (Tellings, Not Texts, London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 2009).

12 I am grateful to Pasha M. Khan for sharing drafts of a forthcoming article and a translation of the preface of the *Teraz al-Akhbar*, which allowed me to gather a better understanding of this important text for the study of Persian *qesseh-khwani* in South Asia. For discussions about this text, see Mohammad Ja‘far Mahjub, “Tahavvol-e naqqali va qesseh-khwani, tarbiyat-e qesseh-khwanan va tomar-ha-ye naqqali,” *Irannameh* 9 (1991): 190–96; Mohammad Reza Shafi‘i-Kadkani, “Negahi beh Teraz al-Akhbar,” *Nameh-ye Baharestan* 1, no. 5 (1381): 109–22.

13 Shackle, “The Story of Sayf al-Mulūk in South Asia,” 115–16.

(r. 388–421/998–1030) or, locating the action in a wider pre-Islamic time frame, at the court of the prophet Solayman. In the latter case, we learn that Sayf al-Moluk was meant to unite with the *peri Badi' al-Jamal*, which emphasizes the role of fate in the unfolding of the plot.¹⁴ I will come back to the significance of those two frame stories.

The story opens with the grief of the childless king of Egypt and the miraculous birth of his son Sayf al-Moluk (“the Sword of Kings”).¹⁵ At the same time, his vizier also has a son, Sa'id, who becomes the prince's best friend and faithful companion. Sa'id and Sayf al-Moluk receive, respectively, a horse and an ornate garment from the king who himself obtained them from the prophet Solayman.¹⁶ One day, Sayf sees a portrait on the piece of cloth and falls desperately in love with the young woman whom it represents. He becomes sick and no doctor manages to cure him of his mysterious illness. The king of Egypt then decides to send agents around the world to inquire about the location of the Garden of Eram,¹⁷ where the *peri Badi' al-Jamal*, whose portrait was on Solayman's cloth, is supposed to live. But none manage to find the Garden of Eram and Sayf decides to go look for his mysterious beloved himself.

Accompanied by Sa'id, he first travels to China and meets with Faghfur Shah. Sayf is invited to settle in the country, but he refuses. Faghfur asks the merchants of the kingdom to help Sayf find some clues about the Garden of Eram. The episodes that follow describe the perils that befall Sayf al-Moluk during his quest – beginning with a shipwreck in which he is separated from his companion. As he voyages for many years from island to island, he has

14 Heath, “Romance as Genre in “The Thousand and One Nights,”” 13–14.

15 I would argue that the names of both protagonists indicate if not a South Asian, then at least some regional, vernacular prehistory of the narrative. The name “Sayf al-Moluk” is probably the result of a correction of a vernacular form Sayf al-Molok < Arabic *molk*, with an epenthetic [o] appearing in the consonant cluster [lk] due to a vernacular/regional pronunciation. Badi' al-Jamal may similarly be a re-Arabicized form of a vernacular pronunciation of Badi' al-Zaman, which is also indicated by the Bengali form Badiujjāmāl. This shift is indicated by the odd form of the name that is given in the summary of the story given by Dhu al-Faqari: *بديع الجمال*. Dhu al-Faqari, *Yeksad manzumeh-ye Asheqaneh-ye Farsi*, 536–38.

16 The Solomonic frame may have been inserted later to highlight the role played by the artifacts that are given by the prophet to Sayf's father. Whatever the diachronic dimension of those modifications, it manifests the scope of the narrative domain in which this story was located: from universal folktale motifs and tropes of travel-narratives up to stories of the lives of the Prophet.

17 W. Montgomery Watt, “Iram,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman et al. (Brill Online), accessed March 26, 2015, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.uchicago.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/iram-SIM_3586.

many dangerous encounters of the kind described in the story of Sindbad.¹⁸ Emerging from an island filled with giant apes, he reaches a mysterious castle where he finds a princess who lies unconscious. With the help of a peri, he manages to wake up the princess, who tells him she is Malika, the daughter of king Taj al-Moluk of Sarandip. When Sayf al-Moluk tells her his own story, she reveals that Badi' al-Jamal is her foster sister and that she can arrange their meeting if first he frees her from the demon's power. He accomplishes this by conjuring up from the depths the chest in which the demon's soul has been hidden and by destroying it with the aid of Solayman's ring (*'ayyari*).

In the final part of the story, Sayf al-Moluk and the princess reach her father's capital, the city of Sarandip. There he is reunited with his companion, who relates his own adventures. When a meeting with Badi' al-Jamal is at last arranged, she resists his advances (*hosn o 'eshq*), but eventually she tells Sayf to go to Eram and persuade her grandmother to intercede with her father, king Shahpal, who would certainly oppose a marriage between a human and a peri. The grandmother agrees to help, but Sayf is captured by the king of Qulzum, the father of the demon whose soul he destroyed to rescue Malika. Initially reluctant to take sides in support of a human, the peri king finally orders his army to attack and they emerge victorious after a fierce battle that allows the narrators to display their skills in describing martial scenes (*razm*). Then follow festivities (*bazm*): the celebration of the double marriage of Sayf al-Moluk to Badi' al-Jamal and of his companion Sa'id to the princess of Sarandip.¹⁹

To this basic account of the core of the story one should add an additional episode that actually does not fit this narrative structure exactly, but, rather, is associated with the names of the protagonists, at least from northwestern South Asia to the Indonesian archipelago. The core of the motif involves a

18 "Die Geschichte von Saif al-Moluk ist sehr stark abhängig von den „Reisen des Sindbad“, namentlich von dem Bericht über der dritte Reise und mit Hilfe der gewöhnlichen Kunstgriffe arabischer Märchenerzähler sind die abenteuerreichen Seefahrten in den Rahmen einer Liebesgeschichte hineingeschachtelt worden [...].“ Josef Horovitz, "Saif al-Mulük," *Mittheilungen des Seminars für orientalische Sprachen an der königlichen Friedrich Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin* 6 (1903): 52.

19 The summary given here is based on Shackle's article, which I cross-checked with the text of the Persian *dastan* kept at the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin (dated 1071/1660). The version of the Berlin manuscript seems to present the core structure of the tale and, besides some peculiar linguistic features, it seems devoid of elements (place names, realia, units of measure, use of regional languages, etc ...) that would suggest that we are dealing with a recension heavily influenced by its local environment. Shackle, "The Story of Sayf al-Mulük in South Asia," 16; Wilhelm Pertsch, *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin. Vierter Band. Verzeichniss der persischen Handschriften der königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin* (Berlin: A. Asher & Co., 1888), 996, ms. no. 1044.

prince who sees a group of peris bathing in a lake, and who steals the clothes of one of them, thus preventing her from flying back home. What surrounds this episode differs from one version to the other.

The basic components of the narrative of Sayf al-Moluk make it a remarkable example of the synthesis between the codes of the romance and those of the *dastan* tradition. The structuring element of the plot is *hosn o 'eshq* (beauty and passionate love) – which is the dominant feature that makes it a romance – but it also provides room for the inclusion of the three other building blocks of the performative tradition of the *dastan*: festivities (*bazm*), battles (*razm*) and trickery (*'ayyari*) – to which we could also add the additional element of magic (*telesm*).

In addition to a formal diversity that increased the possibilities of negotiations with regional equivalents of narrative and performative features, *Sayf al-Moluk* covers almost the entire scope of the Muslim cosmographical *imaginaire*. In the story, the world is mapped at least twice: first when the king of Egypt sends his agents to find the Garden of Eram, and a second time through the very journey of Sayf. The tale thus proposes a very clear agenda of geographical exploration: not only do the adventures of the protagonist bring us to the farthest corners of the world, but this is accomplished by first observing the available knowledge about the world's extent – through the king's investigation – and then by actually exploring the world and pushing its geographical boundaries. It is a narrative of programmatic exploration that echoes that of Sikandar – which is another story that traveled along the same paths and that has been presented in recent scholarship as a structuring narrative of the cultural geography of the Muslim world.²⁰

20 In the introduction to a volume dealing with the commercial and cultural history of the Bay of Bengal during this period, Om Prakash makes the following comment based on D. Lombard and S. Subrahmanyam's contributions: "Subrahmanyam and Denys Lombard also refer to the myth regarding Alexander's destiny to establish not merely a universal kingdom, but a kingdom of Islam. The Arakanese version [read: Bengali version from Arakan] of the myth pertains to the relationship between Alexander and Sultan Shoja and the latter's attempts to establishing a sultanate in Arakan. There are also at least two Malay versions of the myth, one from the Malay peninsula and the other from Sumatra, the latter dating from the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century." Note that considering that Shuja attempted to establish a "Sultanate" in Arakan is a conjecture that, to my knowledge, is not confirmed by contemporary sources – Ālāol's Bengali version, despite its rather orthodox treatment of the story as a narrative of conversion, never alludes to a plan of establishing a sultanate in the region. Om Prakash and Denys Lombard, eds., *Commerce and Culture in the Bay of Bengal, 1500–1800* (New Delhi: Manohar: Indian Council of Historical Research, 1999), 11; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "'Persianization' and 'Mercantilism': Two Themes in Bay of Bengal History, 1400–1700," in *Commerce and Culture in the Bay of Bengal, 1500–1800*, ed. Om Prakash and Denys Lombard (New Delhi: Manohar:

Because of this agenda of exploration, I would argue that the story of Sayf al-Moluk has a special relationship with cosmographical writings – a relationship that was recognized by those who received and retold the story in various other contexts. The rich formal features of the narrative allowed for a variety of strategies of appropriation, and its cosmographical agenda invited those who received it to locate themselves in the world of the story.

2 The Diffusion of the Story: Social, Cultural and Literary Aspects

Basing myself on Christopher Shackle's preliminary survey, I tried to collect more information about the diffusion of the story. I will try to give a sense of its general geographical spread, but also, and more relevantly, of the literary domains it entered and the social significance that the tale bore in various contexts.

Despite the timeless and almost universal nature of the motifs displayed in *Sayf al-Moluk*, the tale seems to enter the history of literature in a rather recent period. Its diffusion can actually be traced throughout what some may call the "early modern period" – roughly from the fifteenth century AD onward, and many versions are still circulating today – mainly in the realm of regional, traditional performances.²¹

Motivated by the assumption that vehicular languages foster the development of vernacular languages (and, more rarely, vice versa), scholars long referred to the Arabic *Nights* as the ultimate source of the story and viewed regional texts as adaptations of this version of the tale.²² But it is now clear that

Indian Council of Historical Research, 1999), 79–83; Denys Lombard, "The Indian World as Seen from Acheh in the Seventeenth Century," in *Commerce and Culture in the Bay of Bengal, 1500–1800*, ed. Om Prakash and Denys Lombard (New Delhi: Manohar: Indian Council of Historical Research, 1999), 193, see n. 42 for further references about Lombard's treatment of the Alexander myth. Peter Gaeffke, "Alexander and the Bengali Sufis," in *Studies in South Asian Devotional Literature: Research Papers, 1988–1991, Presented at the Fifth Conference on "Devotional Literature in New Indo-Aryan Languages", Held at Paris-École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, ed. Alan W. Entwistle and Françoise Mallison (New Delhi: Manohar; Paris: École Française d'Extrême Orient, 1994), 275–84.

21 Septfonds, *Le dzadrâni*, 309–15; Saymon Zakaria, *Praṇamahi Baiṅgamātā*, Māolā Brādārs, vol. 2 (Dhaka, 2004), 37–65.

22 For references about studies on the story in the context of the *Nights*, see Marzolph, Leeuwen, and Wassouf, *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, 364. In his recent historical reading of the various recensions of the *Nights*, Garcin provides a detailed analysis of the story focusing on elements evincing the late Mamluk and Ottoman context of the composition of the earliest Arabic versions. See Jean-Claude Garcin, *Pour une lecture historique*

the *Nights* relied on a previous Persian *dastan* that was also used by vernacular authors in eastern regions.²³ There are several manuscripts containing anonymous prose versions of the *dastan* which were copied in the Ottoman Empire, Iran, and India.²⁴ The story was therefore part of the repertoire of professional storytellers throughout this geographical domain. In the introductory sections devoted to the circumstances of the composition of the text, the Persian *dastan* is systematically referenced by South Asian authors, from Kashmir to the Deccan and Bengal.

des Mille et une nuits: essai sur l'édition de Būlāq (1835), Bibliothèque arabe. Hommes et sociétés (Arles: Actes Sud, 2013), 493–503.

- 23 Garcin goes too far when he claims that the story finds its origin within the previous cycles of story of the *Nights*: “Si on admet cette lecture du conte [i.e. which draws parallels between motifs found in tales belonging to older strata of the text], l'histoire du roi Muḥammad Sabā'ik et du marchand Ḥasan, qui l'introduit, prend tout son sens. Ce n'est pas une allusion historique à Maḥmūd de Ghazna (m. 1030) comme le pensait Horovitz, ni une simple plaisanterie qu'il ne faut pas prendre “trop sérieusement”, mais une reconnaissance de dette envers l'auteur damascène du xv^e siècle, qui, deux siècles après sa mort, aurait permis au mamelouk du marchand Ḥasan de recopier le conte de Sayf al-Mulūk (qu'il aurait évidemment déjà prévu) sur l'amour fou et le portrait. Le marchand Ḥasan a donc pris son histoire chez l'auteur du xv^e siècle, comme notre auteur qui livre ici sa source d'inspiration.” Garcin, *Pour une lecture historique des Mille et une nuits*, 501. As Horovitz observed it, a close comparison of the Arabic version of the *Nights* and the Persian *dastan* leaves no room for doubt about the indebtedness of the former from latter. That said, there is certainly a process of recognition and mirroring at work in the way the story was inserted in the *Nights*, but internal coherence does not rule out the reliance on an external source – the relative homogeneity of the narrative material in the Perso-Arabic domain, which can be attributed to the constant circulation of people and texts within the Muslim World, makes possible such seamless narrative interventions. Therefore, Garcin's reading is perfectly accurate in terms of intertextual analysis, but it cannot be used as to reconstruct the genealogy of the text. In an unpublished paper, S. Digby discussed the probable South Asian – early thirteenth century AD, Gujarat – origin of the story. The paper should come out in a forthcoming issue of *The Deccan Studies Journal*. I am grateful to Subah Dayal for sharing this information.
- 24 For a general overview of the manuscripts of the Persian *dastan* kept in the major collections around the world, see Ahmad Monzavi, *Fehrest-e noskkeh-ha-ye khatti-e Farsi*, Mu'assaseh-ye farhangi-e mantaqeh'i (Tehran, 1348), 3724–25. See also the list given in Husain Barzgar, “Dastan-sara'i va dastan-nevisi-e farsi dar shebh-e qarreh,” in *Daneshnameh-ye adab-e Farsi: Adab-e farsi dar shebh-e qarreh-ye Hend (Hend, Pakistan, Bangladesh)*, ed. Hasan Anushe, vol. 4 (Tehran: Vezarat-e Farhang va Ershad-e Islami, 1996), 1128. The late (1830) ms. used by Bricteux for his translation of two versions of the story (Pertsch no 1039) seems to be from the Ottoman region (toward the end of the text bilingual Turkish-Persian verses are quoted). Victor Charles Chauvin, ed., *Contes persans*, trans. Auguste Bricteux, Bibliothèque de la Faculté de philosophie et lettres de l'Université de Liège 19 (Liège: Imprimerie Vaillant-Carmagne, 1910), 227–303; 427–95.

One of the earliest versified adaptations of the tale was composed by Majlesi, a poet at the court of ‘Obayd Allah Khan (r. 940–6/1533–9) who is also known for his relationship with the founder of the Mughal dynasty, Babur (886–937/1483–1530).²⁵ Majlesi’s is the first instance not only of a datable rendering of the story, but of its inclusion in the courtly literary form that was the *masnavi*. Later on, Persian and vernacular *masnavis* based on the *dastan* were also produced alongside their oral and semi-oral transmissions. The process of including the tale in a given literary tradition entailed the production of various discourses to frame the story and highlight its purpose(s).

In the Persian anonymous prose tradition, the story is already framed in a very specific setting that locates it in a transitional space between the popular oral tradition and courtly literature. In a rather old manuscript dating from 1071/1660, kept in Berlin (ms. Or. 40 137), we find a prologue that relates the origin of the story.²⁶

One day, Mahmud of Ghazni offered a reward of a thousand dinars to any man who would bring him a story (*qesseh*) and perform it. The poet ‘Onsori (d. 431/1039–40) immediately wrote a story that he presented to the Sultan, whereupon he received a thousand dinars. Then the vizier, Hasan Khwaja Maymandi (d. 424/1032), expressed his disagreement with the Sultan’s judgment of the quality of ‘Onsori’s story. Sultan Mahmud challenged his vizier to bring him a better story: if he succeeded, he would be granted the district of Khawaran in Khorasan; but if the Sultan were not satisfied with the story, Hasan would lose his position at the court. Hasan sent his men around the world and eventually one of them caught wind of someone in Constantinople who regularly told stories that drew huge crowds. After hearing the adventures of Sayf al-Moluk from that man, he was convinced that this story would bring Hasan success. At first, however, the storyteller refused to provide a copy (*noskheh*) of the tale. It was only after being offered a large amount of money that he agreed with the following caveat regarding its future audience:

May you never read this story in front of first ignorant children, second women, third idiots, four effeminate, five slaves bought with gold.²⁷

25 Baha al-Din Hasan Nithari Bukhari, *Mozakker-e ahabab*, ed. Mohammad Fazlullah (Hyderabad: Da’irat al-Mu’arif al-Uthmaniyya, 1389), 153–55.

26 The Persian text and a German translation of this prologue are given in Horovitz, “Saif al-Muluk.”

27 *zinhar keh in qesseh pish-e hichkas na-khwani avval kudak-e na-dan dovvom zan-an sevvom ablah-an chaharom mokhannas-an panjom bandeh-gan-e zar-kharideh*. Ibid., 54; “Sayf al-Moluk o Badi’ al-Jamal va Bagh-e Eram” (Berlin, 1660 1071), f. 3a, Ms. orient. 40. 137, Staatsbibliothek. The question of the social environment of the diffusion in the Malay

The servant came back to the vizier, gave him the book, and the story was told to the Sultan and the learned men of the court. The Sultan then ordered the story to be read in front of fifteen out of the one hundred and thirteen poets of his court. They unanimously agreed on its unsurpassable quality. The book was then stored in his treasury and taken out only to be read to the Sultan “who pleased his heart with this story” (*del-ra z'in qesseh khosh kardi*).

This prologue is present in the Arabic version of the *Nights*, but the names are corrupted, which, even in the absence of further codicological and philological evidence, shows clearly that the Arabic is a rendering of the Persian *dastan*.²⁸ It presents the complex location of the *dastan* tradition: it does not solely belong to the oral tradition, nor is it a purely popular form.²⁹ The storyteller competes with the greatest poets of the court and is lavishly rewarded.³⁰ The tale of Sayf itself is not recited from memory, but it is read aloud from a written text (*noskheh*) – an artifact that can be copied and stored in the royal treasury. This complexity is quite obvious when one starts looking at the manuscript tradition and the biographical accounts of successful storytellers – Fakhr al-Zamani is certainly one of the best examples of the social mobility of the *qesseh-khwan*.³¹

world is discussed by Wieringa, who concludes that the style and the values that are put forward in the story are not courtly but, rather, point to the milieu of merchants in which the main concern is loyalty (Malay *setia* – comp. Ben. *satya/satīva* in Ālāol's texts): “Hier trifft die fiktive Welt der märchenhaften Erzählungen auf die reale Erfahrungswelt der Händler: Ohne Vertrauen keine Geschäfte.” Edwin Wieringa, “Ein malaiischer Codex unicus der Geschichte von Sayf al-Mulūk (BSB München Cod. Malai. 2),” in *Orientalistische Studien zu Sprache und Literatur: Festgabe zum 65. Geburtstag von Werner Diem*, ed. Ulrich Marzolph (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011), 381.

28 Horovitz similarly concludes: “Da die Einleitung also sicher ursprünglich persisch ist, wird man annehmen müssen, dass die arabische Geschichte von Saif al-mulūk, die nicht viel mehr ist, als eine Nachahmung der Reisen des Sindbad, bei ihrer Übersetzung in's Persische mit einer Einleitung versehen worden ist, durch welche sie mit glänzenden Namen des persischen Literaturgeschichte in Verbindung gebracht wurde. Diese erweiterte Form der Geschichte ist dann in's Arabische übernommen und 1001 Nacht einverleibt worden.” Horovitz, “Saif al-Mulūk,” 56.

29 For a brief discussion of and further references about the relevance of this prologue for the study of storytelling in the Arabic tradition, see Marzolph, Leeuwen, and Wassouf, *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, 309–10.

30 In the preface to his *Teraz al-Akhbar*, Fakhr al-Zamani has a short section titled: “On the superiority of the storyteller to the poet shown by two proofs” (translation by Pasha M. Khan).

31 John W. Seyller and Wheeler M. Thackston, *The Adventures of Hamza: Painting and Storytelling in Mughal India* (Washington, DC: Freer Gallery of Art, 2002).

Also noteworthy is the concern for finding a proper audience for the performance of the *qesseh*. This concern coincides with the ambiguous status of the *qesseh* as a piece of fiction – or, to put it in terms that are more relevant within this context, as an untruthful account that can nevertheless be a source of wise and useful teaching if it is performed and heard by informed people in the proper state of mind.³²

Among the South Asian vernacular versions of the story, the Dakani poem of Ghavvasi, which was composed in 1625 at the court of the Golkonda sultanate, represents another instance of the conscious integration of this semi-oral text to an emerging literary language. Majlesi was also contributing to the enrichment of Chaghatay, the eastern Turkish literary idiom that truly had become a literary language in the previous generation through the very self-aware efforts of ‘Ali Sher Nava’i (844–906/1441–1501).³³ The shift from the realm of the Persian *dastan* to that of the budding vernacular courtly eloquence is emphasized by Ghavvasi, who states:

Come to the battleground of eloquence, and make run the horse of
speech,
Since now in that place there is none but you to take up this ornate speech.
Because Sayf al-Moluk Badi‘ al-Jamal are both unequaled in the world,
Tell their story, open the book of their passionate love!
There have been stories in the world, but none has been told in such a
way.
This story has come to you, to you it has brought victory.

32 This topic is also discussed by Fakhr al-Zamani; see Khan, “A Manual for Storytellers.” In the context of the present paper, it seems appropriate to compare the harsh judgment of the Haḍramī author from Gujarat Nur al-Din al-Raniri who wrote in his Malay *Bostan al-Salatin*: “Ces romans sont très célèbres et appréciés dans le monde malais, les paroles n’y sont que mensonges qui mènent au péché. Il est évident qu’il ne faut pas en garder dans sa maison. Qui les lit est un infidèle. Les mensonges de l’*Hikayat Jawa Indraputra* sont évidents. Ceux qui rapportent ces mensonges ou y croient sont des imbéciles.” Paul Wormser, *Le Bostan al-Salatin de Nuruddin ar-Raniri: réflexions sur le rôle culturel d’un étranger dans le monde malais au XVII^e siècle*, Cahiers d’Archipel 41 (Paris: MSH, 2012), 115–16, see also 133–34.

33 The emblematic text displaying the self-awareness of Nava’i’s endeavor is certainly the *Mohakamat al-Loghatayn*. See: Robert Devereux, “Judgment of Two Languages; Muḥākamat al-Lughatain by Mir ‘Alī Shīr Nawā’ī; Introduction, Translation and Notes (First Installment),” *The Muslim World* 54, no. 4 (October 1, 1964): 270–87; “Judgment of Two Languages; Muḥākamat al-Lughatain by Mir ‘Alī Shīr Nawā’ī; Introduction, Translation and Notes (Second Installment),” *The Muslim World* 55, no. 1 (January 1, 1965): 28–45.

[...] I told this fresh poem very skillfully, I recited verse after verse.
I have assembled colorful and pure words, I have threaded excellent
jewels.³⁴

Ghavvasi's discourse echoes the courtly setting of the prologue of the *dastan* and the competition to gain the sultan's patronage. He also clearly states that he is going to intervene in the *dastan* by turning it into a rhetorically ornate, versified narrative (i.e. a *masnavi*). Unlike Ālāol's version, which I will introduce in a moment, Ghavvasi's relies heavily on the basic narrative repertoires of the Persian *dastan* and – as far as I can see – the worldview of his text remains close to the classical West-to-East template of his source. The local appropriation occurs through rhetorical and lexical means in a way that is typical of Dakani poets who were directly engaged with the Persian poetical tradition, since they were actually competing with Persian poets for fame in the Deccani courtly milieu. Also, in the process of turning the *dastan* into a *masnavi*, the already-dominant features of the romance are further enhanced, and the other repertoires (*razm*, *bazm*, and 'ayyari'), as well as the cosmographical agenda, appear only in the background.

3 Paradise on Earth: The Role of the Story in the Building of Local and Regional Imaginaires

So far, we have followed the eastward diffusion of the story from Central Asian courtly milieu to Golkonda, which was an important window on the Bay of Bengal for the spread of Persianate culture. Before observing how the Bengali court poet Ālāol received the tale and what he made of its potential, I want to share (in brief) my vision of the Bay of Bengal as a cultural area and the way in which the story of Sayf al-Moluk contributed to drawing the outline of this cultural geography in its centers, thereby cultivating a Muslim regional literature.

In the last few decades, scholars of South and Southeast Asia have made important contributions to our knowledge of the system of the Bay of Bengal and its reinforcement of commercial, diplomatic, and religious interactions during

34 *nikal ā faṣāḥat ke maidān tū / bachan ke turang kū de jaulān tū. ki is ṭhār tuj bin nāhi ko'ī ab / lijā tū balāghat kerā go'ī ab. ki Sayf al-mulūk badī' al-jamāl / yo donō hē 'ālam mane be-mithāl. in do'ī kā dāstā bol tū / so daftar un 'ishq kā khul tū. ki ga'ī dāstā jag mē ho ga'e ahē / wale ko'ī aisā nahī ka'e ahē. tere tā'ī āyā he yo dāstā / zafar tuj kō lyāyā he yo dāstā. [...]* *kayā shī'r tāzā barhe chand sō / har ek band baslāyā band sō. jo lafzā milāyā rangilī nichal / piroyā javāhir kī chilī nichal.* Ghavvasi, *Masnavi-e Sayf al-Moluk va Badi' al-Jamal*, ed. Sa'adat 'Ali Rizvi (Hyderabad: Majles-e Esha'at-e Dakeni Makhtutat, 1938), 15.

the early modern period.³⁵ This network was characterized by the formation of more or less locally-grounded communities of Muslim merchants and scholars who acted as intermediaries between the local elite and the Muslim networks of the Indian Ocean. Persian and (to some extent) Arabic were the vehicular languages of this network and we observe regional elites as well as rural literati simultaneously adopting the literary cultures associated with Arabic and Persian. The cultivation of a Persianate *adab* was not a matter of discrete intellectual discipline; it pervaded virtually all spheres that had to do with speech and some form of formal communication. If the anxiety to integrate the sphere of the Persianate world was a phenomenon that was shared around the Bay of Bengal, then the way in which this urge to integrate was manifested depended on the precise context in which the elaboration of those new regional literary idioms was taking place. But the synchronism is itself a striking phenomenon that compels us to study literary traditions around the Bay of Bengal in a connected way.

One can notice striking synchronisms in the formation of the repertoire of Dakani poets in Golkonda and that of Bengali authors in the kingdom of Arakan.³⁶ When, in Golkonda, a work was composed that took a Persian – or northern Hindawi – text as its model, then, one or two decades later, the same model would be used by Bengali poets in Arakan. The story of *Sayf al-Moluk* is one example of this phenomenon. (More subtle is a synchronism with Malay literature in Sumatra, but one finds a few significant examples.) In fact, the phenomenon was first described by Denys Lombard and then Sanjay Subrahmanyam with reference to the comparative reception of the figure of Sikandar in Golkonda, Arakan, and Aceh.³⁷ The presence of the *Sayf al-Moluk* story in Dakani, Bengali, and Malay³⁸ is another sign of this shared literary culture around the Bay of Bengal.

What I am trying to bring to light is not so much the paper trail of the diffusion of texts as it is the construction of a trans-linguistic *imaginaire* that allowed for the inclusion of those regions in an Islamicate cultural geography.

35 Prakash and Lombard, *Commerce and Culture in the Bay of Bengal, 1500–1800*; Rila Mukherjee, *Pelagic Passageways: The Northern Bay of Bengal before Colonialism* (Delhi: Primus Books, 2011); Sunil S. Amrith, *Crossing the Bay of Bengal: The Furies of Nature and the Fortunes of Migrants* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013).

36 Thibaut d'Hubert, "Pirates, Poets, and Merchants: Bengali Language and Literature in Seventeenth-Century Mrauk-U," in *Culture and Circulation: Literature in Motion in Early Modern India*, ed. Thomas de Bruijn and Allison Busch, Brill's Indological Library 46 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 64–69.

37 See *supra*, note 20.

38 Wieringa, "Ein malaiischer Codex unicus der Geschichte von Sayf al-Mulūk (BSB München Cod. Malai. 2)."

The project of reconstructing the way in which texts were transmitted in those traditions is rendered difficult by the semi-oral transmission of many models and the very little information we have about the curricula and the holdings of libraries, institutional or private. Nevertheless, we are making efforts in this direction, and these will certainly contribute to a clearer picture of multilingual literacy around the Bay of Bengal during the period in question.

The method that I am using to reveal the scope of the shared cultural space of Persianate literati around the Bay of Bengal begins with observing the geographical horizons of vernacular authors. It consists of surveying how Bengal, Golkonda, and Sumatra are used both in original works of those emerging vernacular traditions and in regionalizations of Persian models. For instance, we see that Bengal stands prominently in the Dakani tradition in the plot of Vajhi (d. 1069/1659)'s *masnavi Qotb Moshtari* (1018/1609–10) in which the protagonist, Mohammad Qoli Qotb Shah (r. 988–1020/1580–1612), goes to Bengal to find his beloved. In Arakan, besides the story of Sayf al-Moluk (in which, as we will see in a moment, the geography of the region is rendered), the rural poet Mardan (*fl.* 1622–38) composed his *Sādhur vacan* (“The Merchant’s Speech,” a.k.a. *Nasib-nameh* or “The Book of Fate”) using Aceh and the merchant milieu to locate the frame story of this collection of edifying tales.³⁹ South Asia was also very much present not only in the literary *imaginaire* of the period but also in shaping the courtly *adab* and political idiom of the Sultanate of Aceh.⁴⁰

Those narratives testify not only to the adoption of foreign models to shape local traditions but also to the will of the authors and their audiences to locate themselves in the inherited Islamic cosmography. These stories often display an awareness of being located at the margins of the Muslim world and frequently deal with having to negotiate with liminal spaces and supra-human characters. If the topoi are not new, the ways in which they are treated prove strikingly different from those of the *‘aja’eb* literature that looked at the margins of the known world from a distance. In *Qotb Moshtari*, it is not some historically insignificant merchant who engages in the adventure, but the Sultan himself who travels to unite with a *peri*. This notion of “living in marvelous lands” was also eloquently expressed by the *monshi* who drafted the letter in answer to the Mughal governor of Bengal Islam Khan Mashhadi (1635–39)’s

39 Mardan, “Nasibanāmā [Sādhur vacan]” (Ms. no. 238, maghi 1180), Abdul Karim “Sāhityaviśārad,” Dhaka University Library; Ahmed Sharif, “Śatero śataker Rosāngarājyer kavi Mardān racita Nasibnāmā,” *Sāhitya Patrikā* 39, no. 2 (1402): 147–222.

40 Lombard, “The Indian World as Seen from Aceh in the Seventeenth Century.”

threat to invade Arakan. The region is described as covered with impenetrable jungles filled with wild beasts and demons.⁴¹

In Sumatra, several accounts of the origin of the local dynasty are fashioned around a motif that is actually part of the *Sayf al-Muluk* cycle in northwestern South Asia (Sindhi and Pashto versions).⁴² Not only do we find this tale in the local chronicles written in Malay, but also in Taher Mohammad's cosmographical text, the *Rawzat al-Taherin* (ca. 1600) when he relates the origins of ruling dynasty of Aceh.⁴³ The identification of the local emerging elite with the world of the *'aja'eb* literature is thus reflected in the contemporary perception of those regions in cosmographical works and travel accounts. Another instance of this process of identification of local history with the story of *Sayf al-Muluk* is the description of Mohammad Rabi's *Safineh-ye Solaymani*.⁴⁴ When sailing along the coasts of Sumatra on his way to Thailand in 1096/1685, Muḥammad Rabi' was told various stories about the island and its inhabitants. It is worth quoting some substantial passages of his account (in which the emphasis is mine):

Another of the flourishing islands which we passed on our way to Siam was the island of Achi. From Ceylon to the port of Achi takes five or six days if the winds are favorable and this island is considered part of Below the Winds. *As is well known, Sayf ol-Muluk and Badi' al-Jamal lived here and their palace and throne can still be seen.* The island is located on the equator and thus it is constantly spring. All year the trees bear fruit. On

41 Subrahmanyam, "'Persianization' and 'Mercantilism': Two Themes in Bay of Bengal History, 1400–1700," 49. I do not know if we have premodern instances of the interpretation of the name Rakhang, or the Pali Rakkhapura to designate Arakan, but one interpretation given in modern historiography is precisely derived from the Sanskrit *rākṣasa* (demon) – Arakan would thus have been perceived as the land of the demons. The representations of Arakanese as demons is clearly attested by the eighteenth century Bengali text *Nasle Osmān Islāmābād*, in which we find the account of Pir Badr "cleaning" the jungles from Arakanese demons thanks to his supernatural powers. Mohammad Ujir Ali, "Nasle Osmān Islāmābād vā Śāhnāmā" (Ms. no. 253, n.d.), Abdul Karim "Sāhityaviśārad," Dhaka University Library.

42 Septfonds, *Le dzadrāni*.

43 Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "The Mughals Look beyond the Winds," in *Writing the Mughal World: Studies on Culture and Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 110–11.

44 Mohammad Rabi' ibn Mohammad Ibrahim, *Safineh-ye Solaymani: Safarnameh-ye Safir-e Iran beh Sīyam, 1094–1098 H.Q.*, ed. 'Abbas Faruqi (Tehran: Mu'assaseh-ye Intisharat-e Daneshgah-e Tehran, 1977); Mohammad Rabi' ibn Mohammad Ibrahim, *The Ship of Sulaimān*, trans. John O'Kane, Persian Heritage Series 11 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972).

some of the branches the hanging fruit is already ripe and on others it is still maturing and some trees are just beginning to bloom.

Most Below the Winds enjoys a continual spring season but Achi has a climate which is even more unusual for its balance and beauty. There are many fountains and rivers whose sweet water is a delight to the palate. The plantations as well as the uncultivated fields are continually in full bloom and the hills and plains are always green and flourishing. The whole island is like the dazzling garden of Eram and the beauty of such a climate can only be described by the verses of the poet Zuhuri.

Evening is never sultry, noon is never hot
 And trees sway gently in cool breezes.
 The happy grove smiles to see new spring
 And raises a canopy of dew-fresh branches.
 Everywhere the trees are heavy, laden with bright fruits.
 Their heads bow to the ground to thank God for His bounty.

Achi is indeed a very prosperous and splendid island. At one time it was the abode of genii but now every corner shelters a separate king or governor and all the local rulers maintain themselves independently and do not pay tribute to any higher authority.

[...]

Another strange sight is a beautiful clear-water spring located on an imposing mountain. There the climate is always cool and pleasant and every so often charming and singing is heard coming from that lovely spot. Some nights the bright glow of lamps can be seen up there but no one is able to explain what it is. They say that in the most ancient times Ceylon and Achi were both in the possession of the genii and once a week the king of the genii flew over to Achi and would entertain himself with a banquet. Then he would fly back to Ceylon. Remains of the genii king's palace and throne are still to be seen on the peak of the musical mountain and it is obvious that those remains are not the work of the natives of Achi.⁴⁵

This passage from the Iranian traveler's account confirms the process of identification that is visible in the vernacular literatures of the region. Aceh is seen as the Garden of Eram and its ancient history is understood on the basis of

45 Mohammad Rabi' ibn Mohammad Ibrahim, *Safineh-ye Solaymani*, 173–74; 178–79; Mohammad Rabi' ibn Mohammad Ibrahim, *The Ship of Sulaimān*, 174; 179. See also: Alam and Subrahmanyam, "The Mughals Look beyond the Winds," 121.

the political relations between Sarandip and Eram/Aceh as they are depicted in the narrative. The fact that the Iranian author quotes verses by the court poet of Bijapur Zuhuri (d. 1025/1616) also strengthens our understanding of the area as a cultural unit: How could one find a better witness of the beauties of those fantastic margins of the Muslim world than Zuhuri, who himself made the choice to live in those marvelous lands of the Deccan?⁴⁶

4 *Ālāol's Saḡphulmuluk o Badūjjāmāl: A Cosmographical Update in a Courtly Rendering of the Dastan*

A few decades after Ghavvasi wrote his Dakani *masnavi*, in the northern corner of the Bay of Bengal, in Arakan – a kingdom that cultivated commercial relations with Golkonda – the Bengali poet Ālāol composed another courtly version of *Saḡfal-Moluk* that was also based on a Persian *dastan*. Unlike Ghavvasi, Ālāol gives a detailed description of the circumstances of the commissioning of the poem by his patron, a wealthy Muslim dignitary of the Arakanese court. One day, one of his patron's friends organized a party and invited his Sufi master and his son, along with the learned men and scholars living in the capital city, Mrauk U. After serving a meal, Ālāol's patron asked the son of the Sufi master to tell some ancient story (*purāṇa prasaṅga*). The young man then chose to tell the story (*kicchā*) of Saḡphulmuluk and the peri Badiujjāmāl. Ālāol gives us a glimpse at the skills of the Sufi master's son as an amateur *qesseh-khwan* (storyteller):

In the mouth of the scholar, grace expanded in a playful motion.
The assembly was engulfed by a wave of joy.⁴⁷

Ālāol and the audience were caught by the dominant mood of the story and the poet adds:

He whose heart contains love, when he listens to a love story
Starts burning like gold whose purity increases in the flames.⁴⁸

46 See Paul Losensky, "Zuhūrī Turshīzī," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman et al. (Brill Online, 2007), http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.uchicago.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/zuhuri-turshizi-SIM_8206.

47 *paṇḍitera mukhe lāvanya-lilā-bhaṅga | sabhā-khaṇḍa sukhāila ānanda-taraṅga ||* d'Hubert, "Histoire culturelle et poétique de la traduction," 656. This passage is also discussed in "Pirates, Poets, and Merchants," 67–69.

48 *sunite premera kathā jāra hṛde prema | dahite 2 jena mane bāre hema || ibidem.*

Then the patron asked the poet to turn this “Persian book” (*phāraṣi-kitāba*) into a “versified composition” (*paṣyāra-prabandhe*) in the regional language. Once again we get a sense of both aspects of the performance as text-based and as oral literature, and of the shift from the anonymous prose to the authorial, versified, and courtly format.

Neither the Dakani nor the Bengali version renders the prologue with Mahmud Ghaznavi's story. The discourse on the circumstances and the motivations behind the composition of the poem seem to replace and actualize it. In the Bengali version, though, we do have a particular kind of frame story. The poem opens at the court of the prophet Solayman, where we learn about the origin of the portrait on the piece of cloth that was made by a peri who also predicted the fate of the future prince of Egypt.

Ālāol, like Ghavvasi, recognized in the tale the potential to compose a full-fledged romance. The poet makes its romantic potential very clear when he composes long digressions on the concept of love (*prema*) and in his treatment of the key episodes of the romance between Sayf and Badi' al-Jamal. The poem happens to be his second work for the same patron – the first was a Bengali rendering of Jayasi (d. 949/1542)'s Awadhi *Padmāvat* (947/1540) – itself a landmark in the formation of the romance tradition in Hindavi.⁴⁹ Ālāol also underlines the generic relation between both texts by recycling verses and entire passages from his *Padmāvatī* and by inserting them within *Sayphulmuluk*.

Nevertheless, he did not completely put aside the rest of the *dastan*'s potential, that is, its martial, courtly and magical repertoires. He also (remarkably) took advantage of the cosmographical agenda of the tale. When the king of Egypt resolves to find the Garden of Eram and cures his son from his love-sickness, the poet provides a detailed description of the world.⁵⁰ In most versions that I have consulted, when specific names are given, these are typical place-names drawn from classical cosmography.⁵¹ Here, the king assigns five generals (*senā-pati*) to the exploration of five routes: three of them travel

49 “Hindavi” refers here to the main intercomprehensible literary languages of North India and the Deccan (i.e. Braj, Awadhi, Dakani). Regarding the Awadhi romance tradition, see Aditya Behl, *Love's Subtle Magic: An Indian Islamic Literary Tradition, 1379–1545*, ed. Wendy Doniger (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). For a recent study on Jāyāsī's *Padmāvat*, see Thomas De Bruijn, *Ruby in the Dust: Poetry and History of the Padmāvat by the South-Asian Sufi Poet Muhammad Jāyāsī*. (Amsterdam: Leiden University Press, 2012).

50 d'Hubert and Wormser, “Représentations du monde dans le golfe du Bengale au XVII^e siècle: Ālāol et Rānirī,” 29–30.

51 “Sayf al-Mulūk u Badi' al-Jamāl,” f. 13a–b; Chauvin, *Contes persans*, 438. In Ghavvasi's text the list is not entirely stereotypical, and the poet mentions specific cities and regions of South Asia, as well as Portugal (*partagāl*). Ghavvasi, *Masnavi Sayf al-Moluk va Badi' al-Jamal*, 43.

by land, one sails along the coasts, and one on the open sea. The first general, called Sadiq, goes westward (*paścime sādeka name gelā senāpati*), so one would expect a mention of cities located in North Africa and Europe, but instead the poet enumerates place names in the Middle East (Anatolia, Syria, Arabia, etc.). The explanation is, of course, that he describes the world not from the standpoint of Egypt, but from Arakan. The second general goes northward and crosses Central Asia, China, and Nepal. The third one goes southward and visits the coastal regions of the subcontinent (Gujarat, Sri Lanka, Tamil Nadu, and Orissa). The fourth general goes to mountainous regions, to Mount Meru – the axis of the world in Puranic cosmology – and then he goes to Iraq, Iran, Qandahar, Multan, and Kashmir, before engaging in the Gangetic valley and making his way to Delhi, Awadh, Bihar, Bengal, and, finally, to Arakan and Ava. With this last route, we see that the place where the poet is composing his poem is, this time, at the end of an eastward road. The description of this route is the most richly detailed one; Ālāol becomes more and more precise as he is getting closer to Arakan. He even mentions the mountain tribes of the frontier region between Bengal, Tripura, and Arakan, which must constitute one of the earliest references to these tribes in literary sources. The list that immediately follows contains the typical monsters of ‘*aja’eb*’ literature. The last general sails on open sea and the enumeration of place names starts with European countries, followed by places in the Indian Ocean, the Maldives, and then Southeast Asia, including Aceh and Vietnam. Ālāol concludes the maritime trip with Qulzum (the Red Sea) and Zūlmat, the Ocean that surrounds the world.⁵²

Ālāol uses the full potential of the *dastan* and its cosmographical agenda. The routes that he describes correspond to actual trading networks and reflect the interactions of his milieu with merchants traveling along these paths. The poet subtly combines elements of classical Islamic cosmography with Puranic cosmology, and mentions unexpected details such as far-away European countries and local mountain tribes. The anthropological categories of the ‘*aja’eb*’ are also present, and monsters were further pushed beyond the limits of civilization (after the mention of the mountain tribes). As I have argued elsewhere, the geographical knowledge and ability to distinguish men and their origins in the cosmopolitan market place of Mrauk U was a key to the success of Ālāol’s milieu.⁵³ The Bengali poet thus integrates in the story of Sayf al-Moluk his own geographical horizons, and he displays his mastery of classical as well as contemporary cosmographical knowledge.

52 For details on the place names, see d’Hubert and Wormser 2007.

53 d’Hubert, “Pirates, Poets, and Merchants,” 49–53.

The story of Sayf al-Moluk was often presented as a narrative of second rank, either as a retelling of the story of Sindbad or as a tale of the *Nights*. As Shackle pointed out, it did not really attract the attention of scholars and, until his article, information about the various versions of the story was scattered and anecdotal. We now know that the story became tremendously popular and circulated widely throughout the Persianate world. As an anonymous prose *dastan*, it stood out from other tales related to the Sindbad cycle because it was re-encoded as a romance, and thus benefited from the multiple uses that were made of this genre in the Persianate world. The *dastan* remarkably staged two aspects of the storytelling tradition: its location halfway between the literary and oral worlds, and ethical concerns relative to its audience. The core of the narrative was crafted in such a way that, in addition to a good balance of the repertoires of the *dastan*, one could rely on the generic turn – that is, the story as a romance – to insert it in a Persianate courtly setting. One could also give the story a special relevance by locating the milieu of its retelling in the map of the world that it provided. In the case of Ālāol, this strategy of relocation is used in a very explicit way.

Moreover, as it is shown by the emic and etic identification of the Garden of Eram with Sumatra, the story itself became a way to envision the geography and the history of the maritime ends of the Muslim world. Thus the story of Sayf al-Moluk, both as a text and as bearer of a malleable cosmology, was instrumental in shaping regional Muslim *adabs* around the cultural area that was the Bay of Bengal.

The Politics of Saint Shrines in the Persianate Empires

A. Azfar Moin

The political culture of the three largest Muslim empires of the post-Mongol era – Timurid, Safavid, and Ottoman – cannot be understood without taking into account the significance of saint shrines.¹ If we use imperial engagement with the graves of holy men as a measure, these early modern realms, which were Turkic in ethnic origin and Persianate in court culture, provide a sharp historical contrast to the Umayyad and Abbasid polities of the “classical” era, when Arab ethnicity, language, and custom were the norm, and when the cults of Muslim saints had yet to take root. In between these two epochs, there appears a transitional stage. From the tenth century to the thirteenth, across the Muslim world there was a gradual development of popular shrine cults, which began to receive greater acceptance and patronage by Muslim rulers, but it was only after the Mongol-dominated thirteenth century that the enshrined saint transformed into an iconic source of sovereignty, replacing in an important sense the sacred body of the caliph. Further, a focus on saint shrines reveals a geographic divergence across the world of Islam. As Muslim sainthood centered on shrines spread, it had a greater social and economic impact on Muslim societies of the Turco-Persian east – Iran, Central Asia, South Asia – than the Turco-Arab west.² Even with this variance in mind, an argument could be made for a periodization of history in which saint shrines and cults serve as markers of a new style of religion and politics in the Islamic world.

In general, historical scholarship on early modern Muslim empires focuses less on saint shrines and more on sectarian identity. This is understandable since the Ottomans developed a staunch Sunni reputation just as the Safavids embraced Shi'ism. Yet these were relatively late developments in institutional terms, gathering strength at the end of the sixteenth century. Doctrinal

1 A useful survey of the hagiographic and shrine culture of these empires, along with that of the Shaybanid or Uzbek realm is in Zeynep Yürekli, “Writing Down the Feats and Setting up the Scene: Hagiographers and Architectural Patrons in the Age of Empires,” in *Sufism and Society: Arrangements of the Mystical in the Muslim World, 1200–1800*, ed. John J. Curry and Erik S. Ohlander (Abingdon, Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2011), 94–119.

2 Nile Green, *Sufism: A Global History* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 100.

categories are not adequate to capture the complexity of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when warrior and saintly lineages competed for power and resources in a cultural geography reshaped by the Mongol conquests. This point becomes especially clear if we look at the Timurids.

Nominally Timur (d. 1405) and many of his successors in Iran and Central Asia were Sunni, but their attitude toward Shi'i saint shrines and devotion to 'Ali and his descendants was unusually pronounced, making their sectarian loyalties ambiguous.³ Scholars use the term 'Alid loyalty or *tashayyu' hasan* to discuss this puzzling phenomenon of post-Mongol Iran and Central Asia, when sectarian identity and religious loyalties were difficult to categorize. This was a phenomenological setting in which devotion to the Prophet's family overlapped with reverence for the dynastic line of the pagan Chinggis Khan, and astrology, lettrism, and occult traditions received elite patronage as well as support from popular Sufi movements. As I have argued elsewhere, all of these trends are reflected in Timur's famous astrological-millennial title *saheb qeran* or Lord of Conjunction.⁴

If we expand our focus to include the Timurid experience in South Asia, the picture becomes even more complex. To list just three phenomena that confound the categories of doctrinal Islam: the miraculous connection, as inscribed on Timur's tombstone in Samarkand, of the Mongol mythical queen Alanqoa via a ray of divine light to 'Ali;⁵ Akbar's (d. 1605) cult of discipleship, the so-called Divine Religion (*din-e elahi*), which framed the monarch as a saint and spiritual guide;⁶ and Shah Jahan's (d. 1656) exquisite shrine, the "Taj Mahal," an attempt perhaps to create on earth the throne of God.⁷ These transgressive phenomena only make sense against the backdrop of performative cults of saints that dominated these milieus. To be sure, the extended Timurid experimentation with shrines and other institutions of sainthood has much to do with their unwillingness or inability to assume an imperial policy based on doctrinal religion like those of the Safavids and the later Ottomans, yet it highlights a foundational legacy that shaped politics and religions in all of these

3 B.S. Amoretti, "Religion in the Timurid and Safavid Periods," in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, ed. Peter Avery, Gavin Hambly, and Charles Melville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 610–55, 616.

4 A. Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 23–55.

5 Denise Aigle, "Les Transformations d'un Mythe d'Origine: L'Exemple de Gengis Khan et de Tamerlan," *Revue de Mondes Musulmans et de Méditerranée* 89–90 (2000): 151–68.

6 Moin, *Millennial Sovereign*, 130–69.

7 Wayne E. Begley, "The Myth of the Taj Mahal and a New Theory of Its Symbolic Meaning," *Art Bulletin* 61, no. 1 (1979): 7–37, 16. Ebba Koch calls Begley's hypothesis "extravagant." Ebba Koch, *The Complete Taj Mahal* (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 2006), 250.

imperial realms. This essay briefly surveys the historical development that gave prominence to the cults of the saints in the eastern Islamic lands, especially as sources of sovereignty, before comparing Timurid, Safavid, and Ottoman imperial engagement with shrines.⁸

1 The Cults of Muslim Saints before the Mongols

Although saint cults and shrines gained unprecedented centrality in Muslim religious custom and political imagination during and after the Mongol era, the process was well under way before Chinggis Khan's conquest of Iran and Central Asia. To appreciate this development, it is helpful to begin with the four conclusions reached by Oleg Grabar in his classic survey of the earliest Islamic commemorative structures built around the graves of Muslim saints and sovereigns.⁹ First, Grabar noted, such structures began to appear at the end of the ninth century and had spread noticeably by the end of the eleventh century when texts cataloging sacred sites and guidebooks for pilgrims became common. Second, the earliest of such buildings were either holy places celebrating the descendants of 'Ali (henceforth 'Alid or *sayyed*) or mausoleums glorifying smaller Muslim dynasties, which were often Persian and associated with religious trends that would later be deemed heterodox; and it was competition from these popular sites that seems to have spurred the later growth of "Sunni" shrines of scholars, Sufis, sultans, and caliphs. Third, most of the early shrines appeared concentrated in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and northeastern Iran, while North Africa and Spain remained relatively unaffected by this phenomena in Islam's first four centuries. Finally, there was no overarching architectural consistency among the shrines and mausoleums of this early era.

It is worth adding to Grabar's observations above that the growth in Muslim shrines in the tenth and eleventh centuries mirrors the rise in conversion to Islam. As the number of Muslims grew, especially beyond the urban areas, the enshrined landscape also became Islamic. Even Arab regions such as Syria, which were geographically and culturally close to the early centers of Islam and where the graves and relics of biblical prophets had served as early pilgrimage centers for Muslims, experienced a shift by the twelfth century when, perhaps because of the pressures of the Crusades, the shrines of Muslim – that

⁸ The Uzbek case, while relevant, is not included here for the sake of brevity, but see Yürekli, "Writing Down the Feats," 98–99.

⁹ Oleg Grabar, "The Earliest Islamic Commemorative Structures, Notes and Documents," *Ars Orientalis* 6 (1966): 7–46, 38–45.

is, 'Alid and Sufi – saints began to serve as greater attractions.¹⁰ This sea change in popular religious attitude toward saint cults also can be credited for a shift in behavior of Muslim rulers toward saint shrines.

Early caliphal attitude toward shrines had been severely negative. Politics had as much to do with this outlook as religion. Put simply, in Islam's first two centuries, the caliphs in power were of Umayyad and Abbasid lineage but the nascent cults of the saints celebrated their political and spiritual rivals, the 'Alids. Although the 'Alids had become politically marginal since the defeat in 680 of 'Ali's son Hosayn at Karbala, rebels often rose up in their name because the 'Alid line provided an alternative source of sovereignty. The Abbasids themselves had used such pro-'Alid propaganda to overthrow the Umayyads. They had claimed that sovereignty was the right only of the Prophet's family – to which both the 'Alids and Abbasids belonged – but after gaining power, they hesitated to share power with their cousins. It is understandable then that the initial concern of the Umayyads and Abbasids was to suppress the devotional memory of the 'Alids.¹¹ These dynasties often policed and harassed pilgrims to 'Alid sites, at times even arresting and executing people. The Abbasid caliph Mutawakkil (d. 846–861) seems to have taken the harshest steps, destroying the Karbala tomb of Hosayn four times in his reign.

The popularity of 'Alid shrines managed to outlast Abbasid power, which declined rapidly by the tenth century. When the Shi'i-inclined Buyids (934–1062) established themselves in Iran and Iraq, they maintained the Abbasid caliphs as icons of sovereignty but also patronized 'Alid shrines. It is no accident that the first extant text outlining visitation rituals at the Karbala shrine is from this era.¹² At the same time, the Fatimid counter-caliphate, which also drew upon the 'Alid line in its sovereign claims, took power in Cairo, resulting in a revival of the cults of 'Alid saints in Egypt.¹³ Overall, the predominance of Shi'i rulers in the tenth century had a lasting effect on attitude toward shrines and mausoleums. Before this era, the Sunni Abbasid caliphs had been buried in secluded royal palaces, but afterward, in apparent competition with the

10 Stephennie Mulder, *The Shrines of the 'Alids in Medieval Syria: Sunnis, Shi'is and the Architecture of Coexistence* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 251.

11 Sindawi Khalid Sindawi, "Visit to the Tomb of Al-Hosayn b. 'Ali in Shiite Poetry: First to Fifth Centuries AH (8th–11th Centuries CE)," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 37, no. 2 (2006): 230–58, 235–37.

12 This text is *Kamel al-Ziyarat* by Ibn Qulawayh (d. 977). See May Farhat, "Islamic Piety and Dynastic Legitimacy: The Case of the Shrine of 'Ali b. Musa al-Riḍa in Mashhad (10th–17th Century)" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 2002), 17–18.

13 Caroline Williams, "The Cult of 'Alid Saints in the Fatimid Monuments of Cairo Part II: The Mausolea," *Muqarnas* 3 (1985): 39–69.

Fatimids and inspired by the popularity of 'Alid shrines, they began to build and promote their dynastic mausoleums as pilgrimage sites.¹⁴ By the twelfth century, domed shrines of all types had become an integral part of Islamic architecture in the Middle East and Central Asia when, once again, Sunni dynasties had regained power. The Ayyubids replaced the Fatimids in Egypt and Syria, and the Seljuqs took over from the Buyids in Iran and Iraq. Nevertheless, these Sunni rulers continued the established practice of investing in shrines of 'Alid even if they also invested in the memory of rival Sunni holy men. For instance, the Ayyubids built a grand mausoleum for the famous Sunni jurist Shafi'i (d. 820) as a counterweight to the 'Alid shrines within their territory.¹⁵

These new Sunni rulers faced a problem when patronizing 'Alid graves. They had to acknowledge the importance of these sites, which were very popular, but also had to find ways to patronize them that set them apart from their Shi'i predecessors. From the relatively well-studied case of the Ayyubids, it appears that their solution to this problem was to inscribe prayers for the companions of the prophet in 'Alid shrines.¹⁶ Most Shi'a avoided such prayers for the companions, many of whom had been rivals of 'Ali; some preferred to curse the companions, the extremist Shi'a publicly so. Such prayers can be read as signs of a rapprochement between the new Sunni rulers and groups of moderate Shi'a, in other words, representing perhaps an attempt at inclusive ecumenism on part of the emerging Sunni regimes.¹⁷ Even so, since they explicitly broke a Shi'i taboo, these prayers can also be interpreted as a ritual attempt to universalize 'Alid shrines for their Sunni patrons. Sunni rulers and elites could thus participate in the charisma of the popular 'Alid saint or relic but without entering the Shi'i sectarian fold.

In other words, the patronage of 'Alid saint cults by Sunni rulers was not just good politics but also good religion. These sites had miraculous powers and sacred status that served a real ritual and cosmological need for Muslim rulers and commanders. Such a reading is borne out if we consider the case of an 'Alid shrine appropriated by a Sunni ruler in Iran on the eve of the Mongol invasion. This was the grave at Mashhad of the eighth Shi'i imam.

14 Terry Allen, "The Tombs of the 'Abbasid Caliphs in Baghdad," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 46, no. 3 (1983): 421–31, 431.

15 Williams, "Cult of 'Alid Saints II," 57.

16 Mulder, *Shrines of the 'Alids*, 89–99.

17 *Ibid.*, 96–97.

2 The Caliph versus the Saint

The first mighty Muslim ruler to fall before the Mongol onslaught was the Khwarazm Shah, Mohammad II b. Tekish (r. 1200–1220).¹⁸ What is of interest is this king's massive rebuilding of the Mashhad shrine a few years before the end of his dominion. In her study of the architectural history of Mashhad, May Farhat has argued that the Khwarazm Shah had invested heavily in Mashhad in a bid to revive the 'Alid line of sovereignty against that of the Abbasids.¹⁹ The Turkic ruler had good reason to turn against the Abbasid caliph, al-Nasir li-Din Allah. Nasir was one of the few latter era caliphs who had tried to revive the political fortunes of the Abbasids by trying to rule independently in Baghdad and its environs.²⁰ He did so by playing one Muslim ruler against another, and the bargaining chip he used was his ability to ritually proclaim them participants in his sovereignty.

Consider, for instance, the custom of praying for the caliph and the sultan together in the Friday congregation.²¹ From the tenth century onward, this ritual caliphal affirmation had become necessary for Turkic warlords and slave generals with no royal pedigree to transform themselves into legitimate Muslim sovereigns. As a consequence, the iconic value of the person of the caliph rose to new heights. And it is this ritual, iconic status that Nasir used to lure various rulers and warlords to his side. First he sought help from Mohammad II to defeat and kill the last Seljuq sultan. Then he incited the Ghurid ruler, unsuccessfully, to remove the Khwarazm Shah. The Abbasid caliph also refused to acknowledge Mohammad II as a sovereign by excluding his name in the Friday prayers in Baghdad. Furious, the spurned king marched on Baghdad with the intent of putting an end to the Abbasid line, but when bad weather and reports of the Mongol threat forced him to turn back, he resorted to a ritual battle plan. Mohammad II declared the Abbasid caliph – who was very much alive – dead and installed in his place an 'Alid whose name was pronounced along with the Khwarazm Shah's in the Friday congregational prayers across eastern Iran

18 The argument in this section is condensed from the following article, A. Azfar Moin, "Sovereign Violence: Temple Destruction in India and Shrine Desecration in Iran and Central Asia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 57, no. 2 (2015), 479–485.

19 Farhat, "Islamic Piety," 56–58.

20 For a history of al-Nasir, see Angelika Hartmann, "al-Nasir Li-Din Allah," in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, et al. (Brill, 2013). A broader treatment of how the latter era Abbasids tried to revive their political fortunes, see Eric J. Hanne, *Putting the Caliph in his Place: Power, Authority, and the Late Abbasid Caliphate* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007).

21 Norman Calder, "Friday Prayer and the Juristic Theory of Government: Sarakhsi, Shirazi, Mawardi," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 49 (1986): 35–47.

and Transoxiana.²² For a very brief moment in the early thirteenth century, the rivalry between Mohammad II and the Abbasid caliph produced an 'Alid counter-caliphate in Khorasan and Transoxiana.

It was amidst this intense political rivalry with Nasir that Mohammad II commissioned the rebuilding of the Mashhad shrine. The inscriptions still extant from this renovation program show that along with the celebration of 'Alid sovereignty there exist prayers for the companions of the Prophet.²³ In other words, Khwarazm Shah used the same ritual technique as the 'Ayyubids had in Syria in appropriating the 'Alid shrine for enacting his sovereignty but in non-partisan, universal terms. Perhaps the king needed the saint's help because the 'Alid who had been appointed the new caliph was of little import, especially in competition with the established Abbasid line. Indeed, the greatest son of 'Ali in the land was Imam Reza, whose shrine had steadily grown in size and significance since the ninth century. In an important sense, the Khwarazm Shah's patronage of Mashhad was part of this scheme to derive his sovereignty, not from the Sunni Abbasid line but from the 'Alids. And the prayer for the companions on the Imam's shrine was a way for him to display his loyalty to the 'Alid lineage without embracing doctrinal Shi'ism.

Khwarazm Shah's patronage of Mashhad was an example of explicit sectarian ambiguity within a larger scheme of ritualized politics in which the sovereign's body was linked with the Prophet's family. This desire for the charisma of the prophetic line was quite pervasive in the beginning of the thirteenth century. The Abbasid caliph Nasir himself provides a good example with his embrace of 'Alid symbols and shrines. By one reckoning, he gave funds for the upkeep and renovation of at least seven Shi'i holy places, including the important tomb of the twelfth Imam at Samarra.²⁴ The caliph also organized a cult of loyalty around himself using the model of the chivalrous order called *futuwwa* in which many of the rituals and symbols depended on devotion to 'Ali. Such actions are why Nasir is sometimes described by modern scholars as an eccentric.²⁵ Yet if we take into account the rising importance of 'Alid sovereignty, it is not difficult to appreciate why even the Abbasid caliph had to make use of it. Indeed, 'Alid sovereignty in its enshrined form was potent

22 Hartmann, "Nasir." Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamel fi al-Tarikh*, 13 vols. (Beirut: Dar al-Sadir, 1965), 12: 316–18.

23 The inscriptional program is discussed in Farhat, "Islamic Piety," 56; Dwight M Donaldson, "Significant Mihrabs in the Haram at Mashhad," *Ars Islamica* 2 (1935): 118–27, 112.

24 Mulder, *Shrines of the 'Alids*, 103.

25 Nasir is described as an eccentric who presented himself as a cross between a Shi'i imam and a Sufi shaykh in Patricia Crone, *God's Rule: Government and Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 133.

and malleable enough to survive the Mongol conquests, which eliminated both the political realm of the Khwarazm Shah and the ritual dominion of the Abbasid caliphate.

3 Saint Shrines after the Mongols

After the conquests of Chinggis Khan laid waste to Iran, Iraq, and Central Asia, the conventional view of Islamic history takes Mamluk Egypt – and to a lesser degree North India under the Delhi sultans – to be the thirteenth-century refuge where Islam continued to thrive unmolested by the Mongols. Yet the imperial style of the later Muslim empires was based on patterns of Mongol rule, not those of Mamluk or Delhi Sultanate. To be sure, the Ottomans do not entirely fit in this picture since they took over Mamluk territories in the beginning of the sixteenth century and because their imperial realm expanded westward toward Europe away from regions of Asia shaped by the Mongol invasions. Nevertheless, as will be discussed toward the end of the paper, even the Ottomans had to incorporate into their imperial style a serious engagement with the Persianate shrine cultures that had already spread across the lands they ended up conquering in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The Mongol kings took their time to convert to Islam. The defining moment came with Ghazan Khan's conversion in 1295.²⁶ Yet this royal Mongol embrace of Islam marked not the end of non-Muslim Mongol hegemony and a return to earlier Islamic ways but rather the beginning of a new cosmology of kingship in which sovereignty was anchored not in the symbol of the caliph but in the shrine of the saint. Mongol attitude toward saint shrines and Sufi lineages had been favorable even before their rulers formally embraced Islam.²⁷ After conversion, they elaborated on these sacred spaces and rituals. As Judith Pfeiffer has shown, one such ritual space was created by the Ilkhanid-era institution of the *dar al-siyada* or the House of the Prophet's Descendants, a handsomely endowed hospice reserved for the Prophet's descendants, which was built in

26 Charles Melville, "Padshah-i Islam: The Conversion of Sultan Mahmud Ghazan Khan," in *History and Literature in Iran*, ed. Charles Melville, Pembroke Persian Papers (British Academic Press, 1990), 159–77.

27 Judith Pfeiffer, "Reflections on a 'Double Rapprochement': Conversion to Islam among the Mongol Elite during the Early Ilkhanate," in *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, ed. Linda Komaroff (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 369–89.

all the major cities of the Ilkhanid realm, including Tabriz, Isfahan, Shiraz, Baghdad, Kirman, Kashan, Sivas, Kufa, and Yazd.²⁸

Pfeiffer argues that the Mongol kings imagined a direct parallel between descent from Chinggis Khan and from Muhammad, through his daughter Fatima and son-in-law 'Ali. Since they considered Chinggisid lineage to be an absolute requirement for rule, they sought to align it with the 'Alid line in an attempt to remain sovereign even as they became Muslim. Such a cultural logic seems to have been behind Ghazan Khan's commissioning of the *dar al-siyada*. The elaborate nature of Mongol support for the Prophet's family is underscored by a surviving *dar al-siyada* endowment deed, which provided salaries for a host of officials and servants such as prayer leader, physician, physician's assistant, chamberlain, doorkeeper, water-bearer, cook, and director. It also provisioned stipends for poor *sayyeds*, *sayyed* madraseh students, *sayyed* widows, and *sayyed* women needing a dowry for marriage. Not least, 'Alid descent was required for holding key positions such as the prayer leader, administrator, and teacher.²⁹

Despite his patronage of the 'Alids, Ghazan Khan did not formally embrace doctrinal Shi'ism, but his successor Oljeytu did. In the latter's reign, oversight of all shrines of the Ilkhanid dominion was in the hands of a prominent Shi'i administrator and even pre-Islamic shrines such as sanctuary of the prophet Ezekiel near Hilla were also taken over by a Shi'i group.³⁰ Thus while Ghazan Khan had been invested in 'Alid sovereignty but not to the point of disparaging the other companions of the prophet, Oljeytu openly implemented anti-Sunni policies. Reportedly, in one dream he saw the first three caliphs, Abu Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthman attempting to cut down a tree on which 'Ali stood – the tree being a widely used image for genealogy.³¹ As this dream imagery shows, embodied sovereignty was what these neo-Muslim rulers were after, and this was only available via the bodies, alive and enshrined, of the 'Alids.

It is important to keep in mind that the need of the Mongol rulers was to become Muslim sovereigns – not to subvert their sovereignty to Islam's doctrines. But after 1258, when the Mongol ruler Hulegu Khan executed the last Abbasid dynast in Baghdad, al-Musta'sim Billah, the caliph could no longer serve as the sacred icon of sovereignty, a body from whom Muslim amirs, sultans, and shahs had used to derive their sovereignty. This cosmological vacuum

28 "Confessional Ambiguity vs. Confessional Polarization: Politics and the Negotiation of Religious Boundaries in the Ilkhanate," in *Politics, Patronage and the Transmission of Knowledge in 13th–15th Century Tabriz*, ed. Judith Pfeiffer (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 129–68, 146.

29 *Ibid.*, 149.

30 *Ibid.*, 152.

31 *Ibid.*, 153.

was filled by the enshrined saint, who became in this era the “real” sovereign. Post-Mongol Islam thus experienced two important shifts. First, Muslim Asia saw a major growth in the number and size of shrines, both saintly and royal. Second, enshrined ‘Alids and Sufi saints began to serve as surrogates of the living ‘Alid imams and Abbasid caliphs of the past, a development that eventually led the greatest of Muslim kings to declare their dynasties sacred by building grand ancestral shrines and instituting cults of devotion around the monarch. The case of Timur serves to highlight this dynamic well. Despite being the most successful Muslim conqueror of all time, with a reputation to match that of Chinggis Khan, Timur did not commission a single *madrasesh* that we know of but instead erected colossal shrines for his patron saints.³² Moreover, his successors ensured that their founder’s mausoleum resembled that of a saint, complete with messianic genealogy, where his soldiers are said to have made pilgrimage as they would have to a holy man’s grave.³³ We do not have to search far to find where the idea of a sovereign ruling from his grave could have come from. For, it was also in Timurid times that Imam Reza began to be venerated as the Sultan of Khorasan, the true sovereign who governed the entire cosmos peopled by humans and *jinn*s from his shrine in Mashhad.³⁴

4 The Safavid Imperial Shrines

After the Mongols and Timur, the trend of royal shrine building and of shrine-centered lineages claiming royal authority accelerated as can be seen in the exemplary case of the Safavids, a Sufi family who declared themselves to be descendants of ‘Ali. As Kishwar Rizvi has described in a detailed study, the Safavids converted the shrine of their own predecessor, Shaykh Safi al-Din into that of an ‘Alid saint.³⁵ Within a generation, under the second Safavid ruler Tahmasb, they had also embraced Mashhad as the second dynastic shrine, a place where they held court, performed imperial ceremonies, and buried royalty. The level of their involvement with Mashhad can be gauged by the fact that under the Safavids, the state took over the administration of Imam

32 Lisa Golombek and Donald Newton Wilber, *The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan*, 2 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 1: 57–60.

33 Maria E. Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition: Turko-Persian Politics and Acculturation in Medieval Iran* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 13.

34 Farhat, “Islamic Piety,” 77.

35 Kishwar Rizvi, *The Safavid Dynastic Shrine: Architecture, Religion and Power in Early Modern Iran* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

Reza's shrine, an unprecedented step in the history of Mashhad.³⁶ Indeed, the Safavids may have given us, for the first time, what may be called an imperial shrine.

The Safavid policy of imposing Shi'ism as the doctrinal religion of the empire while selecting two saintly shrines for imperial patronage had a major impact on cults of the saints in Iran, many of which were eradicated or inscribed with 'Alid genealogies.³⁷ Unlike most of their predecessors, the Safavids were no longer willing to remain ambiguous in their commitment to the family of 'Ali. They rolled back the customs that Sunni powers – such as the Ayyubid and Khwarazm Shah rulers – had used to link their sovereignty with 'Alid shrines. In fact, they went a step further, and imposed their own rites of conquest on shrines of rivals. This is what happened at the burial place in Herat of the famous Naqshbandi Sufi saint and poet, 'Abd al-Rahman Jami (d. 1492).

The eye-witness account of the Safavid destruction of Jami's shrine is in the work of the minor Herati poet and writer, Zayn al-Din Vasefi, who emigrated after the Safavid conquest to Uzbek controlled Transoxiana.³⁸ Vasefi related that when in 1510 the Safavid Shah Isma'il had defeated the Uzbek Shaybani Khan to become ruler of Khorasan, he sent one of his representatives to organize the public recitation of a victory proclamation. The Safavid agent gathered Herat's notables in the congregational mosque. Many commoners were also present, some even on the roof. At first, a quarrel ensued between two eager scions of *sayyed* families of Herat about who would recite the Safavid proclamation. However, the person who won the privilege ended up losing his life. This was because neither he nor anyone else had realized that the Safavid ceremony required the public cursing of the companions of the prophet. When the reciter hesitated, the Safavid soldiers hacked him to death at the foot of the pulpit.

This was not the only incident concerning ritual cursing in Vasefi's account. He had started the anecdote about the Safavid conquest of Herat with the story of a close friend who, fifteen years earlier, had a street preacher caught and

36 Farhat, "Islamic Piety," 173.

37 Said Amir Arjomand, "Religious Extremism (*ghuluw*), Sufism and Sunnism in Safavid Iran: 1501–1722," *Journal of Asian History* 15 (1981): 1–35, 10.

38 Zayn al-Din Mahmud Vasefi, *Badayi' al-Vaqaye'*, 2 vols. (Tehran: Bonyad-e Farhang-e Iran, 1970 [1349]), 2:248–50. A translation of this excerpt is available with an introduction in A. Azfar Moin, "Shah Isma'il Comes to Herat: An Anecdote from Vasefi's 'Amazing Events' (*Badayi' al-Vaqai'*)," in *A Persian Mosaic: Essays on Persian Language, Literature and Film in Honor of M.R. Ghanoonparvar*, Behrad Aghaie & Mehdi Khorami eds. (Bethesda, MD: Ibex Publishers, 2015), 86–101.

hanged for cursing the companions of the prophet.³⁹ Vasefi had warned his friend even then that Shah Isma‘il had risen in Iraq and that many in Herat were his sympathizers. But his friend was too zealous a Sunni to let such an insult pass. Vasefi’s narrative highlights the deep but hidden sectarian divide among Herat’s population despite the widespread custom of saint veneration. He noted this issue again when he described how in the aftermath of the victory proclamation incident the Safavid soldiers marched as many locals as they could, on pain of death, to the shrine of the Sufi Jami and made them watch as they burned it to the ground. As Vasefi stood there, bearing witness to the flames, he recognized the man standing next to him as a reliable Sunni from his school days, and suggested to him that they both quietly slip away. To his surprise, the man turned out to be a Shi‘i who called out to the Qezilbash soldiers to arrest this “Khareji”⁴⁰ – that is, Vasefi. The matter did not end there. As Vasefi ran for his life, he was given shelter by a woman who hid him in her storeroom. But even she warned him that her husband was a staunch Shi‘i and would kill Vasefi if he found him. What Vasefi’s story shows is that in Timurid Herat at the beginning of the sixteenth century, one did not know for certain the sectarian loyalty of an old school friend or even one’s wife. With the Safavid conquest, however, this confusion began to clear up. And, in the process, the shrines of Iran began to be marked as Sunni or Shi‘i.

But why did the Safavids choose to target the shrine of Jami? Contemporary sources are not helpful in answering this question, except in the very general sense of Shah Isma‘il’s animosity toward Sunnis and rival Sufis. Based on Vasefi’s narrative, it appears that Jami’s shrine was targeted because this famous Naqshbandi Sufi had been closely associated with the city’s last Timurid ruler Hosayn Bayqara and his administration; and the poet also had a reputation for harboring anti-Shi‘i sentiments.⁴¹ The last Timurid ruler, Hosayn Bayqara, had died a few years earlier and the Uzbek invasion had dislodged his sons as rulers of the region. When the Safavids entered Herat after defeating the Uzbeks, the city was in effect kingless. Can we assume then that the enshrined saint stood in for Herat’s missing sovereign? If so, it can be suggested that since the Safavids did not have a king to subjugate, they subjugated the saint associated with him. While speculative, this interpretation is supported by the way Safavids destroyed the shrine immediately after the victory proclamation ceremony and forced the Heratis – many of whom were also present

39 Ibid., 2:247.

40 *Khareji* or Dissenter is used here pejoratively for Sunnis but refers in historical fact to an early Muslim group that refused to recognize ‘Ali’s right to rule.

41 Hamid Algar, *Jami* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013), 40–61.

at the earlier ceremony – to watch. In any case, what cannot be denied is that the desecration of Jami's grave was a severe blow to Timurid prestige. Perhaps this is why the incident is not mentioned in any of the later Timurid texts, including the *Baburnama*, the diary of the Timurid ruler Babur, who conquered northern Indian in 1526 and laid the foundations of what is now known as the Mughal Empire, or in the accounts relating Babur's son Humayun's long exile in Iran.

Humayun, after his defeat at the hands of the Afghans in India in 1535, sought refuge in the Safavid realm, where his stay was punctuated by visits to saint shrines.⁴² The vanquished Timurid had arrived in Iran poor and bedraggled with a small band of followers. When the Safavids granted him permission to stay, he was first taken to Herat, an ancestral Timurid city now under Safavid control. There he is said to have visited the famous shrine of Khwaja Ansari among others, but not it seems the shrine of Jami, which was in the same locale. From Herat, Humayun wrote to the Safavid Shah Tahmasb, whom he had not yet met, for permission to visit Mashhad. It is noteworthy that the only time Humayun is said to have formally sought imperial permission to visit saint shrines was to go to Mashhad and, later, to Ardabil. In effect, the Timurid ruler was preparing for his meeting with the Safavid sovereign by first paying homage to the Safavid imperial shrine. There are several accounts of Humayun's stay at Mashhad, some short, some more detailed, but the main events can be summarized as follows.⁴³ When Humayun first entered the tomb, he burst into tears.⁴⁴ Altogether, he spent 30 to 40 days at the shrine, constantly in attendance to the saint accompanied by the prominent *sayyeds* of the city. Finally, it was in Mashhad that Humayun received summons from Shah Tahmasb, and before leaving the Timurid ruler hung one of his bows on the gate of the shrine as an offering.

When Humayun reached the Safavid court, Shah Tahmasb made him submit by putting on the Qezilbash *taj*, the mark of Safavid discipleship.⁴⁵ The powerless Timurid ruler did what he had to in order to survive court treacheries and gain favor with his host. After some difficult moments with Shah Tahmasb, Humayun eventually managed to extract promises of military support. But then, without the promised soldiers, Humayun left for Ardabil and the shrine

42 Unless otherwise stated, the account of Humayun's exile in Iran is taken from Sukumar Ray, *Humayun in Persia* (Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1948).

43 *Ibid.*, 19.

44 Qazi Ahmad b. Sharaf al-Din al-Hosayn al-Hosayni al-Qomi, *Kholasat al-Tavarikh*, 2 vols. (Tehran: Tehran University Press, 2004), 1: 306.

45 The historical significance of this ceremony is discussed in Moin, *Millennial Sovereign*, 125–27.

of the Safavid ancestor Shaykh Safi al-Din. From there he made his way again to Mashhad. It was only after these two pilgrimages – and one report suggests that he was submitted to the *taj*-wearing ritual once again⁴⁶ – that Humayun finally received the soldiers he had asked for, some twelve thousand men.

In sum, Humayun's supplication and submission to the Safavids involved a pilgrimage to their imperial shrines. According to most reports, it was Humayun who took the initiative by asking for permission from the Safavid ruler. But it is plausible that he may have been told by Safavid officials that this was the way to demonstrate loyalty and submission. In any case, Humayun played his part as a Safavid devotee well. According to one account, once when he was negotiating a difficult situation with Tahmasb, Humayun even asked for help by invoking the grave of Shah Isma'īl who was buried in the shrine of Ardabil.⁴⁷ This act, among others, shows how these shrines and their saints had become substitutes for the court and the king. Humayun's pilgrimage to Ardabil and Mashhad were part of the same dynamic – the substitution of the saint for the king – that existed, it seems, in the case of the destruction of Jami's shrine in Herat.

5 The Timurid Imperial Shrines

How did the shrine culture of post-Mongol Iran and Central Asia shape the Timurid dynasty's experience in India? When, first under Babur and then Humayun, the Timurids began to establish themselves in South Asia in the first half of the sixteenth century, they found themselves in a familiar milieu already saturated with the cults of Muslim saints. Saint shrines in India had evolved in a manner similar to that in Iran, but with two differences. First, there were no deeply rooted 'Alid cults in the region from pre-Mongol times and, second, saint shrines became desirable to Muslim rulers in India much later than in Iran and Central Asia. Troubled by the competing sources of authority from popular Sufi saints,⁴⁸ the Delhi sultans attempted to keep Sufi institutions away from the centers of their kingdom until the end of the thirteenth century, and sought to draw their sovereignty from the Abbasid caliph even though the

46 Khvurshah ibn Qobad al-Hosayni, Mohammad Reza Naseri, and Koichi Haneda, *Tarikh-e Ilchi-e Nezam Shah* (Tehran: Anjuman-e Asar va Mafakher-e Farhangi, 2000), 151.

47 Jawhar Aftabchi, "Tadhkiratu'l-Waqiat," in *Three Memoirs of Homayun*, ed. Wheeler M. Thackston (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2009), 127.

48 Simon Digby, "The Sufi Shaykh and the Sultan: A Conflict of Claims to Authority in Medieval India," *Iran* 28 (1990), 71–81.

line had been extinguished by the Mongols in 1258.⁴⁹ It is only from the fourteenth century that South Asian rulers began to fight over the patronage of sacred sites associated with saints. Thus the grave of Shaykh Mo'inuddin Chishti (d. 1236) in Ajmer, the founder of what eventually became the most important Sufi order in the Mughal empire, remained roofless until the middle of the fifteenth century when a Muslim ruler of Malwa built a domed shrine there after a victory over a Hindu rival. In 1526, when the Raja of Jodhpur conquered the region, he is said to have converted the shrine into a temple by placing Hindu icons upon the grave. Shortly afterward, the sultan of Gujarat is said to have retaken the site and restored it as a saint shrine.⁵⁰ But the transformation of Ajmer to an imperial shrine on the model Safavid Mashhad, directly managed by the empire and closely linked to the body of the emperor, occurred under the aegis of Humayun's son Akbar (r. 1556–1605) who also established the administrative and courtly style of what is now known as the Mughal (Timurid) Empire in South Asia.⁵¹

As Bruce Lawrence shows, Akbar's policy toward the Sufis and their shrines in his dominion proceeded through three distinct phases in his half-century long reign.⁵² In the first phase, from 1556 to 1574, the young emperor tried to establish a close association with various important lines of the Chishti Sufi order. However, Akbar had to tread carefully. He was spurned in his initial attempt to embrace the popular and well-established Chishti shrines of Delhi; an assassin managed to wound the emperor while on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Nizamuddin Awliya in 1564. This is likely why he turned to the living saint, Salim Chishti, who prayed for Akbar's son and whose shrine became the centerpiece of the grand new imperial city of Fatehpur Sikri, which was erected away from Delhi and near Agra.

It was also in this era that the emperor made repeated pilgrimages to Chishti shrine in Ajmer. Much as Shah Tahmasb had done with Mashhad, Akbar made the enshrined Chishti saint at Ajmer the key patron saint of the empire,

49 Sunil Kumar, *The Emergence of the Delhi Sultanate, 1192–1286* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007), 226.

50 P.M. Currie, *The Shrine and Cult of Mu'in al-Din Chishti of Ajmer* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), 97–99; Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, "The Early Chishti Dargahs," in *Muslim Shrines in India: Their Character, History, and Significance*, ed. Christian W. Troll (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), 7–10.

51 Catherine B. Asher, "Pilgrimage to the Shrines in Ajmer," in *Islam in South Asia in Practice*, ed. Barbara D. Metcalf (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 77–100.

52 Bruce Lawrence, "Veiled Opposition to Sufis in Muslim South Asia: Dynastic Manipulation of Mystical Brotherhoods by the Great Mughal," in *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics*, ed. Frederick De Jong and Bernd Radke (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 436–51.

directly appointed the shrine's caretakers, and funded a large-scale building program for the shrines and its environs.⁵³ That this was an exclusive relationship between emperor and saint is reflected in the way the emperor reserved for himself and his inner circle the privilege of patronizing the shrine's buildings and festivals; lesser nobility was encouraged to show their devotion to the emperor's saint by contributing to the lower status shrines of the Chishti saint's disciples and heirs in the area.⁵⁴ Humayun's experience at the imperial shrines of Safavid Iran may have helped spur this development; Akbar's regent, Bayram Khan, had been a close companion of Humayun during his exile in Safavid Iran.

In the second phase, from 1574 to 1585, Akbar did not abandon the Ajmer shrine or his association with important Chishti figures but poured far more effort into building his own sacred status as a saintly emperor.⁵⁵ This endeavor culminated in the grand millennial unveiling of the emperor as saint in 1582, an event that became known as the promulgation of Akbar's so-called Divine Religion.⁵⁶ It is significant that after 1580, the emperor no longer made a pilgrimage to Ajmer or other Chishti shrines; even when he visited Delhi in 1585, the only shrine he went to was that of his father, Humayun, who was buried in a grand mausoleum near that of the Chishti shrine complex associated with Nizamuddin Awliya.⁵⁷ By this time, it seems that for Akbar the Mughal imperial line had become more sacred than the Chishti mystical lineage. It is this worldview that colored the production of Mughal court chronicles in the third phase when, after 1585, the *Akbarnama* and *A'in-e Akbari* openly portrayed the emperor as the supreme spiritual leader of the world, above the 'ulama and the Sufis.

In sum, the Timurids of India may have had Mashhad in mind when they established their imperial shrine at Ajmer, but unlike the Safavids they did not impose a particular sectarian identity on their empire through the selection of a patron saint or a particular saintly line. Rather, in India, the person of the living Muslim emperor superseded the body of the buried Muslim saint. Thus, while Ajmer continued to be an important site for successors of Akbar, it did not come to function as a Timurid imperial mausoleum as Mashhad had served for the Safavids. Instead the Timurids marshalled their vast economic resources to build grand tombs for themselves on a scale that had no

53 Asher, "Pilgrimage to the Shrines in Ajmer," 79.

54 Ibid., 80.

55 Lawrence, "Veiled Opposition," 438–48.

56 For a recent treatment of this event, see Moin, *Millennial Sovereign*, 130–69.

57 Lawrence, "Veiled Opposition," 448.

precedent, culminating in a unique white marble shrine – now known as the Taj Mahal – of the Second Lord of Conjunction, Shah Jahan.

6 Shrines in the Ottoman Empire

Since the Ottomans had no patron saint with a grand shrine like Imam Reza or Mo'inuddin Chishti, and because they did not build imposing mausoleums for themselves like the Timurids of India, it is easy to see their imperial culture as one disengaged from the cults of the saints and sovereigns and focused instead on the relatively orthodox practice of building mosques. Yet this assumption may be a reflection of the state of art historical scholarship rather than historical reality. Indeed, until the recent work of Zeynep Yürekli on shrines in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Anatolia, there was little scholarly data available for evaluating the Ottoman situation in a comparative vein.⁵⁸ Yürekli offers a much needed corrective to Ottoman art history and history, which has privileged mosques and palaces to the detriment of shrine complexes. By reconstructing the history of the shrines of Sayyed Ghazi (also Seyyid Gazi) and Haji Bektash (also Hacı Bektas), two semi-legendary figures who lived centuries apart – if indeed they ever existed – and whose shrines were located at the opposite edges of the Anatolian plateau, she gives a coherent picture of changing Ottoman policies toward saint shrines.

The Ottomans inherited a situation in Anatolia in which the shrines of Sayyed Ghazi and Haji Bektash were already serving an important role as potential sources of sovereignty, and they struggled with trying to control their new vassals and subjects by imposing their authority on the popular shrines of the region. Before the Ottoman conquest of Anatolia, the shrines' principle patrons had been military families based in the Balkans, who then became semi-independent Ottoman vassals. To bring to heel these powerful families and their shrine-centered supporters, many of whom had 'Alid sympathies, the Ottoman sultan Mehmed II (d. 1481) imposed strong central control and stripped the shrines of their endowments. However, in an act of accommodation, his son Bayezid II (d. 1512) reversed these policies and reprivatized the shrines to regain favor with the shrine's adherents.

58 Yürekli, "Writing Down the Feats.," *Architecture and Hagiography in the Ottoman Empire: The Politics of Bektashi Shrines in the Classical Age* (Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2012). Unless otherwise noted, the argument in this section depends on Yürekli's two cited works.

Notably, it was in the late fifteenth century, at the same time that the Safavids were gathering strength in northwestern Iran, when these two shrines were rebuilt on a massive scale and became elaborate multifunctional complexes, a development quite similar to what the Mashhad shrine experienced under the fifteenth-century Timurids. The palatial layout and appearance of these reconstructed shrines, which evoked Ottoman imperial palaces in Istanbul and Edirne, indicates that these sites symbolized local sources of sovereignty that the Ottomans had to police and negotiate. After they took over Anatolia, the Ottomans did not directly patronize these shrines, which continued to receive sub-imperial attention, but they did intervene in matters of administration and construction at key moments. For example, they interrupted the construction of the Haji Bektash shrine for three decades, from 1520 to 1553, and closed down the shrine in the 1520s after a rebellion.

On another note, the Ottomans did directly patronize other shrines. In 1453, following the conquest of Constantinople Mehmed II built the shrine of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari; in 1517, after the conquest of Mamluk Egypt and Syria, Selim I (d. 1520) built the shrine of Ibn 'Arabi (d. 1240) in Damascus; and upon the conquest of Baghdad from the Safavids in 1534, Suleyman I (d. 1566) renovated the shrine of the Sufi shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir Gilani. All of these acts of patronage followed, it should be noted, Ottoman acts of conquest. The one case of extensive and continued Ottoman patronage of a saint shrine that did not involve conquest was that of the Sufi master and poet Rumi (d. 1273) in Konya. Suleyman I, Selim II (d. 1574), and Murad III (d. 1595) all contributed to the growth of this shrine. According to Yürekli, the cult and mausoleum of Rumi acted as a counterweight to the Sayyed Ghazi and Haji Bektash shrines, which continued to plague the Ottomans as seats of 'Alid loyalty, clandestine Safavid support, and local rebellions. It was probably due to such imperial moves that by the end of the sixteenth century, there was even a partial realignment of the Janissari military corps away from the Bektashi cult toward the Mevlevi one.⁵⁹

A notable difference between the Ottoman case and the Mughal and Safavid situations seems to have been the Ottoman use of the juridical fatwa in the patronage of shrines. The Ottomans only patronized Ibn 'Arabi and Rumi's shrine after obtaining a fatwa from the chief mufti of their realm. It was chief mufti Kemalpasazade who supported Selim I's patronage of Ibn 'Arabi's shrine. This did not mean though that the emperor needed anyone's permission. When in 1540, another chief mufti, Civzade, issued hostile fatwas against Ibn 'Arabi and Rumi, and also against Ibrahim Gulseni who had prophesied that Selim I would conquer Cairo, the Ottoman emperor dismissed this jurist from his post.

59 *Architecture and Hagiography*, 48.

His replacement, chief mufti Ebussu‘ud, reestablished the appropriateness of these saints. Moreover, the orthodoxy of the Sufi ‘Abd al-Qadir Gilani, whose shrine in Baghdad was desecrated by the Safavids and then renovated by the Ottomans after they retook the city, was apparently never questioned by Ottoman jurists.⁶⁰

Whether the Ottomans needed the jurists’ support or whether they used official fatwas to highlight their difference from the Safavids and other local antinomian followers of these saints is a question that needs further examination. It may well be that the Ottomans became trapped, as did the later Safavids, by the very juridical establishment they erected as part of their empire. Alternatively, it could have been the case that, as Yürekli suggests, they used jurist *responsa* as an imperial tool against the power of local hagiographies and legends. Nonetheless, there should be no doubt that the Ottomans were in the same situation as their contemporaries in Iran, Central Asia, and India, in that they had no choice but to seriously engage with the shrine cults of their realm, which grew in size and importance along with their empire.

7 Conclusion

The Safavids, Timurids, and Ottomans inherited a common religious infrastructure in the form of a dense network of saint shrines that underpinned the moral and political economies of their dominions. Yet the way each of the empires molded this spiritual and material base to establish their rule bequeathed very different legacies to the modern world. To appreciate these differences, it is worth paying attention to where the king’s body was interred vis-à-vis the saint’s in each of the three empires.

The Safavids left behind no tradition of independent imperial mausoleums. They buried their sovereigns in “ancestral” shrines, which were in most cases the shrines of Shi‘i imams or their descendants such the shrines of Shaykh Safi al-Din in Ardabil or of Imam Reza in Mashhad. As Twelver Shi‘ism engulfed Iran in the sixteenth century, the bodies of Shi‘i saints absorbed those of the Safavid emperors. This bond was wrought so well, and the connection of Iran to Shi‘ism rendered so eternal, that today many are surprised when told that this region once used to be the heartland of Sunni and Sufi Islam.

The Ottomans in their mature phase, that is, after the conquest of Istanbul, also eschewed the building of independent mausoleums. Instead, they anchored their capital by building enormous imperial mosques, many built by

60 Ibid., 18.

the revenues of captured territories in Christian Europe. Ottoman rulers were buried in tombs adjacent to these mosques. It is no wonder that their dynasty is thought of today as the symbol of triumphant Sunni Islam, the holder of the last "Caliphate," while the fact of their largely Christian subject population and their long struggle to incorporate and discipline the Sufi and saintly powers of Anatolia remains largely in the shadows.

The Timurids are thought of today as leaders neither of the Sunni world nor of Shi'i Islam, but mostly as a Muslim dynasty that became too heterodox by adapting to its non-Muslim environment in India. Yet it was they who built imperial mausoleums on a scale the world had not seen at least since the Pyramids. It is worth pointing out that the building of imperial mausoleums has little to do with Indic religions or kingship – Hindu kings were cremated. Indeed, the Timurid tombs in India are a mark of the dynasty's Muslimness. However, unlike the Safavids and the Ottomans, the Timurids did not typically bury their sovereigns within the precincts of a saint shrine or adjacent to an imperial mosque. The "independence" of Timurid mausoleums from both shrines and mosques is a product of their "millennial" style of sovereignty in which the sovereign was considered a saint in his own right, above the distinctions of religions and sects. The religious policy that stemmed from this style of sovereignty was that of "Solh-e Koll" (Universal Peace) in which all religions and sects were protected by the emperor. Indeed, of the first six Timurid emperors, the only one to not be buried in a mausoleum of his own was the last one, Aurangzeb, after whom the imperial center dissolved; he is also the one who abandoned the policy of Universal Peace. Within modern conceptions of Islam, there is no category left to capture and name such an official attitude toward religion. Which is why the Timurids are commonly seen as presaging the secularism enshrined in the constitution of the Republic of India. Yet, one look at Shah Jahan's magnificent burial place is enough to bring to mind the realization that his dynasty was not that of secular rulers, but of Lords of Conjunction and saints. In a word, it was in the Timurid Empire in South Asia that the political significance of saint shrines reached its logical conclusion when the body of the king overshadowed that of the saint.

From Yarkand to Sindh via Kabul: The Rise of Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi Sufi Networks in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

Waleed Ziad

The political landscape of the Persianate world underwent drastic transformations following the untimely death of Nader Shah Afshar in 1747.¹ Weak successor states gradually emerged through tribal consolidation and warfare at Shiraz, Khiva, Khoqand, Bukhara, and elsewhere. Simultaneously, Nader Shah's erstwhile Afghan commander-in-chief, Ahmad Shah Durrani, consolidated power at Qandahar and invaded Hindustan, aspiring to carve an empire out of Nader Shah's eastern dominions.²

In this turbulent period, an intricate network of shrines, *khaneqahs* (centers for Sufi practice), and *madrasehs* associated with the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi Sufi order rapidly proliferated across southern and central Asia. This order had originated several generations earlier with Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (1564–1624), a widely revered yet controversial Hindustani mystic. Amongst his groundbreaking contributions to Islamic theology, Sirhindi had articulated the metaphysical concept of *tajdid-e alfi* (millennial revival) of Islam.³ He was, in fact, himself popularly designated the *Mujaddid-e Alf-e Sani* – the reviver of the second millennium.⁴ His successors, the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi Sufis,

1 Marshall Hodgson proposed the concept of a Persianate ecumene, encompassing southern and central Asia and Iran, mediated through a shared cultural-linguistic tradition and historical memory. Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Vol. 2* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 293–94.

2 The terms 'Hindustan,' 'Khorasan,' and 'Turkestan,' as employed in the contemporary Persian sources, will be used in lieu of terms such as 'India,' 'Afghanistan,' and 'Central Asia,' which represent later conceptualizations of this region. Similarly, southern Xinjiang will be referred to as 'Altishehr'. Jonathan L. Lee, *The "Ancient Supremacy": Bukhara, Afghanistan and the Battle for Balkh, 1731–1901* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), xvii.

3 For a discussion on the genealogy of the concept of *tajdid*, see John O. Voll, "Renewal and Reform in Islamic History: Tajdid and Islah," *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (1983), 32–47.

4 See Yohanan Friedmann, *Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi: An Outline of His Thought and a Study of His Image in the Eyes of Posterity* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1971); J.G.J. ter Haar, *Follower and Heir of the Prophet: Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (1564–1624) as Mystic* (Leiden: Het Oosters Instituut, 1992) for details regarding the life and work of Sirhindi.



MAP 5.1 Eastern Persianate World

conceived of themselves as heirs to his program of millennial renewal, and helped shape popular responses to the fragmentation of the great Muslim empires and the eventual rise of British and Russian colonialism.

In the Afghan Durrani capital cities of Qandahar, Peshawar, and Kabul, a preeminent Mujaddidi lineage was that of Shah Gholam Mohammad Ma'sum (known as 'Ma'sum-e Sani', d. 1748), a *pir*,⁵ and a descendant of Sirhindi. His progeny were invited by Ahmad Shah Durrani from Sirhind to the Durrani Empire in the mid-eighteenth century, and became known as the 'Hazarat-e Ma'sumiyya', or the 'Hazarat.' By the early nineteenth century, branches of the lineage migrated as far as Bukhara, Sindh, Badakhshan, and Yarkand, assuming multiple roles – as Sufi guides, poets, jurists, social organizers, landholders, and even as political mediators. A prominent branch, the Hazarat of Shor Bazaar, Kabul, played a decisive part in the history of Afghanistan up to the 1979 Soviet-Afghan war.⁶

Scholars from Afghanistan's historian-laureate Abdul Hayy Habibi to Albert Hourani and Robert Crews acknowledge that Sirhindi and his successors inspired new directions in Muslim culture and community. However, the

5 Lit., elder. *Pir*, shaykh or *morshed* refers to a Sufi teacher or guide.

6 Shor Bazaar is one of the two axial bazaars of Kabul.

structure and function of the Mujaddidi networks and the sources of their trans-regional authority remain a source of considerable controversy.⁷

This essay will explore how the Mujaddidiyya were able to establish a parallel form of popular leadership which transcended local political structures during the apogee of the Durrani Empire (1747–1800), providing cohesion within the Sunni Persianate world. An investigation of this formative period of the Mujaddidi Hazarat, referred to by Noelle-Karimi as “one of the desiderata for the understanding of the socio-political setting in nineteenth-century Afghanistan,” is more than a simple micro-history of a lineage.⁸ It is an inquiry into the nature of a “fibre,” to use Joseph Fletcher’s term, which held together parts of Eurasia and enabled horizontal continuities in the early modern period.⁹ Furthermore, contemplating the history of the Durrani period with a focus on the Hazarat and their Sufi compatriots reveals a dynamic religio-intellectual cross-Asiatic domain of exchange, problematizing widely held notions of the isolation of cities like Kabul, Peshawar, and Qandahar in this period.

Turning to unexplored sources from within the Mujaddidi and contemporary Sufi traditions, together with local histories, shrine catalogs, and contemporary European records, I argue that the westward expansion of the Mujaddidi network was a byproduct of two processes deeply connected with the political fragmentation of the post-Nader Shahi age.

First, local state-building projects of the Durrani Empire and its successor states facilitated the establishment of these Sufi networks. For local rulers, it was vital to revive the intellectual infrastructure of their emerging polities. Towards this end, they invited renowned Sufi lineages to settle in cities like Kabul, furnishing them with generous endowments and, moreover, allowing the orders to develop independently. Inadvertently, this supported parallel authority structures which proved to be more resilient than the ruling families themselves. In the case of Kabul, the social and intellectual milieu drastically transformed in the last three decades of the eighteenth century as Sufi

7 See Robert D. Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 31; Albert Hourani, “Shaikh Khalid and the Naqshbandi Order,” in *Islamic Philosophy and the Classical Tradition*, eds. Richard Walzer, S.M. Stern, Albert Habib Hourani, and Vivian Brown (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1972), 89–101; Abd al-Hayy Habibi, *Tarikh-e Mokhtasar-e Afghanistan* (Kabul: Da Chapulu Muasisa ba hamkari-e Anjuman-e Tarikh, 1346), vol. 2, 137.

8 Christine Noelle-Karimi, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan: The Reign of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan (1826–1863)* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1997), 280.

9 Joseph Fletcher, “Integrative History: Parallels and Interconnections in the Early Modern Period,” in *Studies on Chinese and Islamic Inner Asia* (Hampshire: Variorum, 1995), 33.

orders – notably the Mujaddidiyya – fleeing instability in Hindustan, established centers for both *bateni* (esoteric or gnostic) and *zaheri* (exoteric, encompassing both revealed and rational senses) knowledge. These rapidly became hubs for new north-south networks through which ‘ulama and Sufis from as far as Bukhara, Kalat, and Yarkand could access a body of knowledge and literature from Mughal Hindustan.¹⁰

Second, relying on Sirhindi’s ontology, the Hazarat represented themselves as a synthetic tradition, both transregional and local. Absorbing pre-existing orders and sacred spaces, they inevitably became a point of convergence for urban ‘ulama, Sufis, and intelligentsia, popular shrine-based Sufism, and the tribal and Kohistani religious spheres.¹¹

Part 1 of this essay begins with a historical narrative of the network and its characteristics from the eighteenth to the early nineteenth century. It illustrates how, within one generation, the Hazarat established *madrseh-mosque-khaneqah* complexes in over a dozen cities and ungovernable regions across Turkestan, Hindustan, and Khorasan. Part 2 goes on to discuss how this happened, focusing on the process of Durrani state formation and its relationship to the genesis of the Hazarat-e Ma’sumiyya. Finally, based on a study of hagiographical genealogies, Part 3 explores self-representation of the Hazarat and, in particular, how it enabled them to penetrate the varied contours of the Persianate world.

The history of the Mujaddidi Hazarat contributes to several debates, challenging key historiographical paradigms regarding the political and religious landscape of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The first debate concerns the nature of the eighteenth-century Sufi ‘revival.’ John Voll has suggested that the eighteenth-century Muslim world witnessed a precolonial re-definition of religious identity through reformist ‘neo-Sufi’ movements.¹² Foremost among these were the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidiyya. In the opinion of Voll, along with Fazlur Rahman and Trimingham,¹³ characteristics of neo-Sufism included: a rejection of ecstatic practices, in particular

10 Although the two terms are used interchangeably in the primary sources, and functions regularly overlap, I will use the term Sufi to refer to specialists in the esoteric sciences and ‘ulama for specialists in the exoteric sciences.

11 Kohistan refers to the mountainous regions north of Kabul, and includes Charikar, Istalif, Ghorband, Nijrab, Tagab, and Panjshir. The population of Kohistan was predominantly Persian-speaking Tajik. Noelle-Karimi, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan*, 30–31.

12 See John Obert Voll, *Islam, Continuity and Change in the Modern World*, 2nd ed, Contemporary Issues in the Middle East (Syracuse, N.Y: Syracuse University Press, 1994).

13 See John Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).

connected to the Andalusian mystic Ibn al-‘Arabi (d. 1240); an emphasis on the prophetic model and hadith; hierarchically structured mass organizations; and, ultimately, the will to act politically and militarily.¹⁴ In line with this framework, most secondary literature treats the Hazarat-e Ma’sumiyya as the paradigmatic neo-Sufi movement. The sources of their authority are often viewed anachronistically through the narrow lens of their overt political engagement in the modern period. However, their foundational history remains neglected.¹⁵

More recently, the work of Arthur Buehler,¹⁶ Nile Green,¹⁷ and Dina LeGall¹⁸ has challenged the neo-Sufi hypothesis. They suggest instead that revivalist movements of the eighteenth-century contain many aspects of what Voll and Rahman would consider ‘antinomian’ or transcendent Sufism of the medieval period. They further argue that the Sufi orders of the eighteenth century are epistemologically distinct from nineteenth-century fundamentalisms, and need to be assessed on their own terms.

This work analyzes the Mujaddidi Hazarat-e Ma’sumiyya independently, as networks which grew out of particular historical conditions of the post-Nader Shahi socio-political order. The primary sources, as discussed below, indicate that the Hazarat incorporated pedagogies from Ibn al-‘Arabi, and Chishti, Sohrawardi, and even antinomian Sufi traditions. All were seen as conforming to the prophetic model. Also, as Buehler argues for the Mujaddidiyya, the Hazarat were not generally concerned with affairs of the court. Any political activities were an extension of their mediatory functions, which in turn were a byproduct of their scholastic-spiritual mission.¹⁹

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- 14 Albrecht Hofheinz, “Illumination and Enlightenment Revisited, or: Pietism and the Roots of Islamic Modernity,” 1988.
- 15 While some attention is given to their involvement in ousting the king Amanullah Khan in 1929, and their role in the anti-Soviet Mujahideen movement, secondary literature on the Hazarat-e Ma’sumiyya before the twentieth century is scant. Brief references to the early history of the lineage in Afghanistan are found in Senzil K. Nawid, *Religious Response to Social Change in Afghanistan, 1919–29: King Aman-Allah and the Afghan Ulama* (Costa Mesa, Calif., U.S.A: Mazda Publishers, 1999), 25–31; Noelle-Karimi, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan*, 22–30; and Iqbal Mujaddidi, “‘Ālami Satah par Silsila Naqshbandiyya Mujaddidiyya kā Asr-o Rasukh,” in *Armaqan-e Imam Rabbani*, vol. 2 (Lahore: Sher-e Rabbāni Publications, 2008), 96.
- 16 Arthur F. Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet: The Indian Naqshbandiyya and the Rise of the Mediating Sufi Shaykh* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1998).
- 17 Nile Green, *Indian Sufism Since the Seventeenth Century: Saints, Books and Empires in the Muslim Deccan* (New York: Routledge, 2006).
- 18 Dina LeGall, *A Culture of Sufism: Naqshbandis in the Ottoman World, 1450–1700* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 4–6.
- 19 Arthur Buehler, “Mawlānā Khālid and Shah Ghulam ‘Ali in India,” *Journal of the History of Sufism: The Naqshbandi-Khālidiyyah Sufi Order V* (2008): 199–214.

The second historiographical debate centers on the persistence, cohesion, and limits of a Persianate ecumene in the early modern period. Drawing largely from European primary sources, earlier studies suggest that by the eighteenth century, the Persianate zone of exchange had collapsed. As a result, the region suffered social and intellectual fragmentation and decay.²⁰ In addition, British and Russian imperial administrators defined the region based on several constructed frontiers, including the Amu Darya (Oxus) and the Pushtun Tribal belt, and conceived of an unbridgeable divide between independent cities, and tribal and Kohistani spaces.²¹ Each of these paradigms found their way into later scholarship, which continued to view this region as an underdeveloped buffer zone in the Great Game.

Studies by Stephen Dale, Muzaffar Alam, Claude Markovitz, and Jos Gommans, have begun challenging this paradigm. They have drawn attention to the robust economic linkages between Turkestan and Hindustan in this period, which declined only with the delineation of Russian and British spheres of influence after the mid-nineteenth century.²²

Religious and intellectual exchange in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, however, remains largely unexplored. Moreover, the notion of the intellectual isolation of this region has not been systematically critiqued. This essay demonstrates that via Sufi networks, the region remained socially, culturally, and intellectually integrated, and the Mujaddidiyya played a critical role in sustaining a Persianate sphere through textual production, networks of pilgrimage and literary exchange, and transregional structures of authority. The narrative within the Mujaddidi biographies, often revolving around the motif of travel and pilgrimage, provides a unique window into how local actors conceived of this interconnected world and its frontiers.

20 These conclusions were based on the reduction in size of the Durrani dominions rather than on the socio-economic vitality of its towns. See, for example, Sir John Malcolm, *The History of Persia: From the Most Early Period to the Present Time* (London: John Murray, 1829), vol. 2, 155–156. The few English visitors to Kabul during the Durrani period, such as George Forster (travelling between 1782–4), provided descriptions of the “decaying, drooping court” of Ahmad Shah Durrani’s successors. George Forster, *A Journey From Bengal To England: Through The Northern Part Of India, Kashmere, Afghanistan, And Persia And Into Russia By The Caspian-Sea. In Two Volumes* (London: R. Faulder, 1798), 94–99.

21 The Amu Darya divides present-day Afghanistan and Tajikistan from Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Lee, *The “Ancient Supremacy,”* xviii.

22 See Claude Markovits, *The Global World of Indian Merchants, 1750–1947: Traders of Sind from Bukhara to Panama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Muzaffar Alam, “Trade, State Policy and Regional Change: Aspects of Mughal-Uzbek Commercial Relations, C. 1550–1750,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 37, no. 3 (1994): 202–27; Jos Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire: C. 1710–1780* (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

1 Historical Narrative



FIGURE 5.1 Hazarat-e Ma'sumiyya Genealogy

The biographies of the Hazarat-e Ma'sumiyya, notably Shah Mohammad Fazlullah's seminal biography *Umdat al-Maqamat*, present a three-hundred year narrative of the Naqhsbandi-Mujaddidiyya from Sirhind to Kabul.²³

Shah Fazullah tell us that Sirhindi's *pir*, Khwaja Baqi-Billah, initially carried the Naqshbandi order from Kabul to Delhi in the second half of the sixteenth century. His journey marked a momentous shift in the focus of the Naqshbandi order from Turkestan and Khorasan into the heartlands of Mughal Hindustan. While at Delhi, Baqi-Billah met Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, the son of a Chishti *pir* from Sirhind, and initiated him into the Naqshbandi path.²⁴ This event signaled the start of a new epoch. Returning to his hometown, Sirhindi pioneered many of the core ontological and epistemological concepts and practices which became hallmarks of the order, from the relationship between shari'a and Sufism to advanced methods of meditation and spiritual training.

23 Shah Mohammad Fazlullah, *Umdat al-Maqamat* (Hyderabad, Sindh: Nu'mani Publishers, 1355). Shah Fazlullah (d. 1822) was the son of the renowned Mujaddidi *pir* of Qandahar and Peshawar, Gholam Hasan (d. 1790), and the disciple of Khwaja Safiullah. (See chart above.) Composed in honor of Khwaja Safiullah shortly after his death, *Umdat al-Maqamat* is intended for adherents of the Sufi path. The text was used by Sufi practitioners and to date it is actively read by initiates of the Mujaddadi order in Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan. Haji Hanifullah "Sirat" Taleqani, *Karnamaheh-ye Jihad-e Hazrat Mujaddid-e Alf-e Sani: Maqam-e 'Ilmi o 'Irfani* (Kabul: Private Printing of handwritten manuscript by Dr. Zaynullah Jan Mujaddidi, 1366), 141.

24 Sirhind is located between Lahore and Delhi.

Sirhindi was then succeeded by his son and *khalifa* (successor or deputy), Khwaja Mohammad Ma'sum (d. 1669), who inaugurated an expansive *khaneqah* complex for the order at Sirhind. The biographies go so far as to claim that Khwaja Mohammad Ma'sum had over 100,000 disciples and 4,000 deputies who were dispatched throughout the Muslim world as far as Istanbul and Kashgar. Among his successors was his son, Sibghatullah (d. 1710), who passed on his spiritual mantle to his son Shaykh Mohammad Isma'il (d. 1136/1720). Both father and son focused their attentions on the western provinces of the Mughal Empire. Partly due to their efforts, Kabul and Peshawar became attuned to the Mujaddidi order through Mughal socio-intellectual networks and hosted several Hindustani 'ulama and Sufis. Isma'il's most renowned *khalifa* at Kabul was Khwaja Hassan Ata, founder of the Madrased-e Uzbekan, whose sub-lineage continued at Kabul well into the nineteenth-century, with disciples as far afield as Bukhara and Kazan.²⁵

Isma'il was in turn succeeded by his son, Hazrat Ma'sum-e Sani. Although *'Umdat al-Maqamat*, points out that he "guided the rulers of the age," it is short on details. In fact, it only provides one reference, that of the Mughal Emperor Nasir al-Din Mohammad Shah's (d. 1748) reverence for the *pir*.²⁶ We also know that two Mughal governor of Punjab sought spiritual counsel from him.²⁷ He too had a broad network of disciples. Notable among them was his biographer, the eclectic saint Ghiyas al-Din 'Ghiyasi' who purportedly trained four hundred antinomian (Qalandari) disciples who engaged in ecstatic forms of worship. Ghiyas al-Din was one Badakhshan's foremost poet-saints, and a vehicle through which the Mujaddidi order took root in Altishehr and beyond into China proper.²⁸

Of Ma'sum-e Sani's nine sons, four are celebrated as the fountainheads of major Mujaddidi sub-lineages throughout the Durrani Empire and its successor states. The eldest, also Shah Gholam Mohammad Ma'sum ('Hazratji

25 Khwaja Mohammad Ihsan Mujaddidi Sirhindi, *Rawzat al-Qayyumiyya* (Lahore: Maktaba Nabawiyya, 2002), vol. 3: 53; Haji Mohammad al-Bukhari, *Takmil-e Rashahat* (mss, Iqbal Mujaddidi Collection, 1249), fol. 38b; Mir Safar Ahmad Ma'sumi, *Maqamat-e Ma'sumi*, ed. Mohammad Iqbal Mujaddidi (Lahore: Zia' al-Qur'an Publications, 2004), vol. 3: 364; Shah Mohammad Fazlullah, *'Umdat al-Maqamat*, 341–51, 387; Taleqani, *Karnamaheh-e Jihad*, 137.

26 Shah Mohammad Fazlullah, *'Umdat al-Maqamat*, 414–23.

27 Nik Mohammad Pupalzai, *Kabul Qadim* (Peshawar: Ahmad Waleed Pazzhan, 1996), 97.

28 Ghiyasi studied with Ma'sum-e Sani at Lahore (although other sources suggest Sirhind), and composed numerous *qasidehs* in his honor, as well as a versified biography, entitled *Tohfat-e Ma'sum*. Shah 'Abdullah Badakhshi, *Armaqan-e Badakhshan* (Tehran: Bunyad-e Mawqafat-e Doctor Mahmud Afshar, 1385), 109–12; Haji Mohammad al-Bukhari, *Takmil-e Rashahat*, fol. 38b.

Peshawari', d. 1763, Peshawar), was his father's principal successor, based at Lahore and Peshawar.²⁹ The second son was Shah 'Izzatullah ('Hazratji Kabuli', d. 1792, Kabul), whose career spanned Rohilkhand, Yarkand, Delhi, and Kabul. The third, Shah Gholam Sadiq (d. 1786, Peshawar), also had a following of thousands in Kabul and the Koh-e Daman valley in Kohistan, as well as in Jalalabad. The fourth brother, Khwaja Safiullah ('Qayyum al-Jahan', 1746–1798), was the progenitor of the celebrated 'Hazarat of Shor Bazaar' in Kabul. He eventually became the pivotal figure for all the Hazarat lineages in Kabul and beyond.³⁰

Khwaja Safiullah, whose father passed away while he was a child, initially received spiritual training from his eldest brother, whom he succeeded as the senior-most *pir* among his brothers.³¹ Furnishing few details regarding his youth, Shah Fazlullah only relates that he migrated to Kabul during the reign of Ahmad Shah's son Timur Shah Durrani (r. 1772–1793), establishing a *khaneqah* at Shor Bazaar in the heart of the city. At age forty, we are told, he had a life-changing experience. He was on his way to Bukhara to impart Sufi teachings when he fell into a state of psychological turmoil (*biqarari*).³² He was then compelled to return to Kabul, upon which he forfeited his gardens, estates, and pension received from the Durrani state. Thereafter, he embraced a life of poverty and seclusion. In 1797, we are told, he left for pilgrimage (*hajj*) for the second time, and died on route at al-Hudayda, Yemen, where his shrine is located. Through several primary source references, it is clear that he was one of the preeminent *pirs* of the Durrani period. Timur Shah's son and successor, Zaman Shah (r. 1793–1800) was his devotee and possibly a disciple.³³

The eminence of this family expanded across the Persianate world into the next generations. The progeny of each of the four sons were celebrated Sufis in their own right. Of Hazratji Peshawari's sons, Shah Gholam Hosayn ('Hazratji Qandahari'), was the forefather of two Qandahari lineages,³⁴ while Shah 'Izzatullah's sons were the progenitors of the 'Hazarat-e Badakhshan'

29 Ibid., 423; Faqir Mohammad Amir Shah Qadiri, *Tazkireh-ye Ulama o Mashaykh-e Sarhad* (Peshawar: 'Azim Publishing House, Khyber Bazaar, 1972), vol 1: 101–103.

30 'Aziz al-Din Vakili Fofalzai, *Farhang-e Kabul-e Bastan* (Kabul: Riyasat-e Intisharat-e Kutub Bayhaqi, 1387), vol. 1: 193; Shah Mohammad Fazlullah, *Umdat al-Maqamat*, 445–47.

31 Khwaja Safiullah Mujaddidi Sirhindi, "Makhzan al-Anwar fi Kashf al-Asrar" (Kabul, AH 1299), fol. 7b, Archif-e Milli, Kabul.

32 Shah Mohammad Fazlullah, *Umdat al-Maqamat*, 451.

33 Zaman Shah was eventually buried in Sirhind, and his mausoleum is within Sirhindi's shrine complex.

34 Among Hazratji Qandahari's sons were Shah Fazlullah, the author of *Umdat al-Maqamat*, and Shah Zia' al-Haq. Shah Zia' al-Haq's sons settled in Sind, Qandahar, and Punjab, and his grandsons established *khaneqahs* at Charikar, Sindh, Qandahar, Ghurband, and Laghman. Fazlullah, *Umdat al-Maqamat*, 434–441.

and 'Hazarat-e Yarkand' lineages.³⁵ Among Shah Gholam Sadiq's sons, Miyan Basharullah had a sizable following in Kohistan and Kabul, while Gholam Muhiyy al-Din was revered as a popular saint of the cosmopolitan mart of Shikarpur in upper Sindh.³⁶ Finally, Khwaja Safiullah's son, 'Abd al-Baqi, and his descendants comprised one of the two most influential Sufi lineages in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Afghanistan, alongside the Gilani of Baghdad who arrived in Afghanistan a century later.³⁷

1.1 *The Architecture of the Network*

Through the biographies, we can glean several characteristics of the emergent Hazarat-e Ma'sumiyya network. This network was perpetuated through the appointment of *khulafa'*, through travel and circulation, as well as through a collection of institutions providing a variety of social services.

1.1.1 Succession

As with other contemporary Sufi orders, the biographies indicate that succession within the Hazarat was based on *ijaza* (grant of permission or authority) and the appointment of multiple *khulafa'*, who would be dispatched to other locales or remain in the *pirs'* company. We are told, for example, that Khwaja Safiullah appointed at least 28 *khulafa'*, and that his eldest brother dispatched numerous *khulafa'* throughout Hindustan, Khorasan, and Turkestan.³⁸ The *khulafa'* were generally promising disciples who had excelled in their esoteric and exoteric education. Succession, moreover, was not restricted by place of origin, lineage, or gender. It is noteworthy that the first amongst Khwaja Safiullah's *khulafa'* was his niece, Hazrat Bibi Saheba. The biographies exalt her as the highest of the gnostics, and relate that she was awarded an *ijaza* to impart the teachings of the order. Being recognized as a Sufi saint, she was

35 The elder, Miyan Shah Beg, left Kabul in 1800 for Badakhshan and Yarkand, becoming known as Ulugh Hazrat among the people. Shah 'Izzatullah's second son, Miyan Shah Nawaz, taught at Badakhshan, and eventually settled in Bukhara. Shah Mohammad Fazlullah, *Umdat al-Maqamat*, 422.

36 He migrated from Peshawar to Sindh initially in 1790, and in 1806, after the Sikh invasion of Peshawar left the city altogether to settle in the emerging commercial metropolis of Shikarpur, Sindh, along with three of his brothers. Collectively, the brothers and their progeny became known as the "Hazarat-e Shikarpur." 'Ata Mohammad Shikarpuri, *Navai-e Ma'arek* (Karachi: Sindhi Adabi Board, 1959), 857–58.

37 Sayyed Mohammad Nadir Khurram, *Sufiyan-e Varasteh ya Mujaddiyan-e Mobarez* (Peshawar: N.A., 1326), 93–98.

38 Shah Mohammad Fazlullah, *Umdat al-Maqamat*, 423–24, 490.

honored with a burial within the shrine attributed to Imam 'Ali at Mazar-e Sharif.³⁹

The Hazarat-e Ma'sumiyya attached special significance to both initiatic and biological genealogies. While *pirs* appointed numerous *khulafa'* from among their disciples, those within the family were quite often designated as the inheritors of the major *khaneqahs*. Analogous to the concept of the Imamate, Sirhindi's descendants embodied greater sacred capital than solely initiatic lineages, and were considered more authentic links to Sirhindi himself. The appointment of sons as principal successors had clear advantages for the institutions and families, ensuring managerial and financial continuity. Such appointments eased the process of authority transfer, as well as the transfer of personal property which was intended to sustain the *khaneqah* and the household.

In some cases, prominent regional sacred or scholarly lineages were incorporated into the Hazarat-e Ma'sumiyya network through appointments as *khulafa'*. For example, Ibrahim Thattavi, the grandson of the Sindhi Mujaddidi polymath Makhdum Hashim Thattavi, was designated as a *khalifa*, thereby forging linkages between Thatta and Kabul which lasted into the twentieth century.⁴⁰ Conversely, descendants of the Hazarat were appointed as *khulafa'* within other Mujaddidi Sufi lineages.⁴¹

1.1.2 Mapping 'Spiritual Geography'

The "spiritual geography," to employ Enseng Ho's terminology, laid out in biographical narratives provides unique insights into the boundaries, contours, and cohesiveness of the Persianate ecumene.⁴² These texts trace a domain of activity comprised of four central nodes endowed with spiritual significance, and multiple branches where *khulafa'* were dispatched.

39 'Ali Mohammad al-Balkhi, *Tarikh-e Awliya' al-Ma'ruf bi Ilhamat-e Ghaybiyya fi Salasil-e Sayfiyya* (Bara, Khyber Agency: 'Ali Mohammad al-Balkhi, 1403), 129; Shah Mohammad Fazlullah, *Umdat al-Maqamat*, 490–91.

40 Sahibzada Abu'l-Khair Zubair, *Sindh kay Sufia-e Naqshband* (Hyderabad, Sindh: Sahibzada Abu'l Khair Zubair, n.d.), vol. 1: 160–170. Makhdum Hashim Thattavi, d. 1761, was one of Sindh's leading Sufi luminaries and theologians of the eighteenth century. He was a prolific writer, having written over 400 works on subjects ranging from history to metaphysics, and played a key role in developing Sindhi literature.

41 For example, two grandsons of Hazratji Peshawari were deputees of another celebrated Mujaddidi *pir* of Peshawar and Bukhara, Hazrat Fazl Ahmad Ma'sumi. Nizam al-Din Balkhi Mazari, *Tohfat al-Morshed dar Manaqeb-e Qotub-e Zaman Ghaws-e Jahan Hazrat Jio Saheb Shah Fazl Ahmad Ma'sumi* (Lahore: Fayz Ahmad, 1913), 156, 189.

42 See Enseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility Across the Indian Ocean* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

In the entries on the early pre-Sirhindi Naqshbandis, Iran and Turkestan factor prominently. The significance of these regions as 'origins' are alluded to throughout the biographies. Sirhind, naturally, is one of the pivotal nodes in the narrative, by virtue of the efforts of Sirhindi and his descendants, and the presence of their historic *khaneqah*. Kabul is the second node for two reasons. First, Kabul hosted the Shor Bazaar *khaneqah*. Second, Sirhindi's family, in addition to his *pir*, Khwaja Baqi-Billah, had migrated from Kabul into Hindustan. The narrative of *Umdat al-Maqamat* consequently implies that Kabul partially endowed Sirhind with its spiritual status. Finally, the two remaining nodes are Qandahar and Peshawar, Durrani metropolises which housed shrines and *khaneqahs* of several generations of the Hazarat-e Ma'sumiyya. (See below. Note that the maps represent regions where biographies mention the establishment of *khaneqahs*, the appointment of *khulafa'* or concentrations of disciples.)

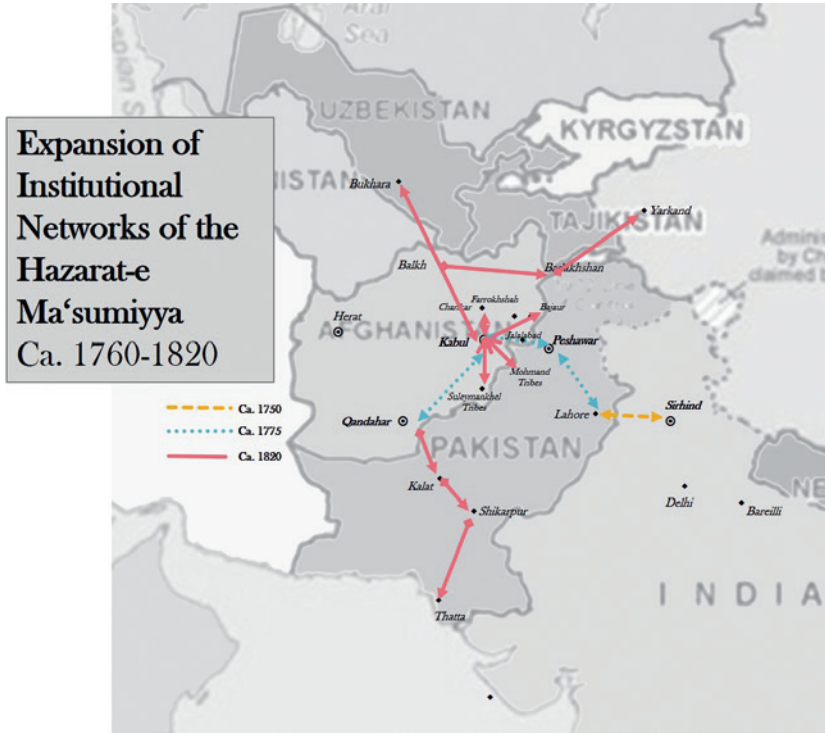
By the early nineteenth century, from these nodes, branches of the lineage were established as far as Bukhara, Yarkand, Kohistan, Khoqand, Badakhshan, Jalalabad, Sindh, and Punjab. The broader base of *khulafa'* expanded the geographic scope yet further, as depicted below.

It is noteworthy that the Hazarat-e Ma'sumiyya became authoritative spiritual guides even in parts of the Pushtun tribal belt which remained largely independent of Durrani, Mughal, and later British rule. A grandson of Hazratji Peshawari, Mian Masjidi, was a *pir* of the tribal region of Bajaur, while Khwaja Safiullah's progeny were patron saints of the Mohmand and Sulaimankhail tribes.⁴³

Branches also attracted communities of devotees in the Kohistani regions north of Kabul, which extended beyond Kabul's jurisdiction until the early nineteenth century. For example, another of Hazratji Peshawari's grandsons, Shah Zia' al-Haq, left Kabul for Nijrab, a highly inaccessible mountainous district of Kapisa. There, he inaugurated a mosque and *khaneqah* complex at the shrine of his legendary ancestor, Farrokshah Kabuli, and later helped mobilize Kohistani resistance to the British invasion during the First Anglo-Afghan War in 1839. Over the next several generations, at least 20 members of the family, who had arrived from Kabul and beyond, were buried at this shrine.⁴⁴

43 Shah Mohammad Fazlullah, *Umdat al-Maqamat*, 441, 487. Interview with Khwaja Mohammad Na'im Siddiq, Kabul, June, 2013; interview with Sahibzadeh Gholam Rasul Ma'sumi Sarhandi, Matiari, April, 2016.

44 Pir Gholam Rasul Sirhindi, *Tohfah al-Talebin* (MSS, Khaneqah-ye Pir Baha al-Din Sarhandi, Matiari, Sindh, ND), fols. 26, 33; Gholam Najm al-Din Mujaddidi Kabuli, *Guldasteh-ye Karamat-e Shamsiyya* (Peshawar: Empire Electric Press, Sadar Bazaar, 1354), 23. See below for a discussion on Farrokshah Kabul.



MAP 5.2 Expansion institutional network

The Hazarat-e Ma'sumiyya were therefore actively engaged not only in urban, high cultural settings, but also among pastoral nomadic and rural populations. In doing so, they had to adapt their pedagogies to a wide range of social groups. Moreover, tribal *pirs* were in regular communication with those operating in the urban sphere, and *pirs* and their disciples frequently toured remote territories to train local Sufis and 'ulama, and supply them with texts.

The biographies reference constant migration and travel between cities, villages and tribal regions.⁴⁵ Most of the *pirs* within the family emigrated more than once in the course of their careers. Hazratji Peshawari, for example, would spend six months of the year in Lahore, and six months in Peshawar. Hundreds of retainers, family members, and disciples would accompany him in this bi-annual journey which resembled, we are told, "the marching of a princely army."⁴⁶ This type of travel facilitated the exchange and constant

45 Shah Mohammad Fazlullah, *Umdat al-Maqamat*, 472.

46 *Ibid.*, 423–28.



FIGURE 5.2 Khaneqah-e Farrokshah, Nijrab, Kapisa

flow of human capital, pedagogies, and literary production between Mughal, Durrani, and adjacent domains.

Khwaja Safiullah's *hajj* journeys (circa 1783 and 1797) highlight the place of pilgrimage in perpetuating this integrated transregional network. The journeys took him from Qandahar, though Kalat and Sindh to the port of Karachi – governed by the Durrani, khans of Kalat, and Talpurs of Sindh respectively (the latter two had recently asserted their independence from the Durrani Empire). At each stage, his arrival was accompanied by public fanfare. His community of disciples grew, and he appointed at least ten *khulafa'* during the course of these journeys to set up teaching circles in each location. It was these *khulafa'* who cemented long term associations and knowledge-transfer between Sufis and 'ulama in Sindh, Baluchistan, and Kabul. In fact, when Khwaja Safiullah's son 'Abd al-Baqi, left for *hajj* in 1844, he was welcomed in towns and villages across Baluchistan and Sindh where his father's *khulafa'* resided.⁴⁷

1.1.3 Institutions and Pedagogies

The biographies and shrine catalogs tell how, in each region, these *khulafa'* established a *khaneqah* for the esoteric sciences and practice, a mosque, and

47 Mujaddidi, *Hayat-e Baqi*, 47–50.

a *madrseh* for the provision of exoteric sciences. It is important to note that in Persian sources from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the boundaries between mosque, *madrseh*, and *khaneqah* were not fixed, and institutions could serve multiple functions.

Hazarat-e Ma'sumiyya biographies mention the *gharibkhaneh* or *langar*, a feature of the every *khaneqah*-shrine complex.⁴⁸ A *langar* for the distribution of food to the poor was a core service expected of the *khaneqahs*. References to prayer sessions, as well as feeding and housing guests suggest that the *khaneqahs* functioned as mosques and *sarays*, equipped with lodging facilities and extensive kitchens. Another core feature was the *haram saray*, where authorized women scholar-saints like Bibi Saheba would offer lessons to female disciples.⁴⁹ Naturally, the rapid establishment of such institutions, providing tangible benefits to communities, was critical to the extension of their influence.

The day-to-day activities of these institutions can be gleaned from references throughout the biographies and didactic texts. In particular, sources mention *sohbat* (inspired lectures on matters of Sufism), structured lessons in religious sciences, *zeker* (invoking the names of God), and *moraqabeh* (meditation in the presence of the guide). Some of these activities catered for select disciples while others were popular affairs open to the public. Shah Fazlullah tells us, with hagiographic hyperbole, that Hazratji Peshawari's *moraqabeh* sessions would attract more than 12,000 devotees. After Friday prayers, apparently, these crowds would be even greater. The biographies often emphasize that such public events attracted multiple socio-economic classes. For instance, we are told that Hazratji Peshawari's *khaneqah* featured devotees "from dervishes to the affluent, to Sultans, and governors, Sufi guides, nobility, the learned, and 'ulama."⁵⁰

Exoteric sciences could be taught within the same space as the *khaneqahs*. Alternatively, *khaneqahs* and shrines were associated with preexisting *madrsehs*. Students would make substantial progress in revealed and rational sciences under the tutelage of reputable scholarly 'ulama, before embarking upon their formal *khaneqah* education.⁵¹

48 Facility for feeding the poor.

49 Pir Gholam Rasul Sirhindi, *Tohfah al-Talebin*, fols. 8–9. Interview with Gholam Rasul Sarhandi, Matiari, March, 2016.

50 Shah Mohammad Fazlullah, *Umdat al-Maqamat*, 423–24.

51 At Kabul and Peshawar students commenced their instruction at a *maktab* (primary school), beginning with the alphabet, followed by the ethical writings of Sa'di Shirazi, followed by the Qur'an, Persian classics, and Arabic grammar. Students would then go on to a *madrseh* to pursue studies of law, logic, theology, ethics, metaphysics, history, poetry,

The *khaneqah* was also a site for the production, dissemination, and practical application of mostly Persian literature reflecting exoteric and esoteric knowledge. While some *khulafa'* composed works on jurisprudence and theology, the Hazarat-e Ma'sumiyya lineal *pirs* were renowned for their devotional poetry and works on spiritual travel and wayfaring.⁵² Each generation produced *divans*. Even today, in the Mujaddidi *khaneqah*-madrseh at Tando Saindad in Sindh the *ghazals* of the principal *pir* 'Abd al-Wahid Jan are performed in Persian, Sindhi, and Arabic by talented vocalists after Friday prayers, and during *zehr* ceremonies. In addition to his collection of *ghazals*, Khwaja Safiullah produced four works on Sufi theology and praxis, including *Makhzan al-Anwar fi Kashf al-Asrar*, on *lata'ef*, *moraqabeh*, and meditative methodology within four Sufi orders.⁵³ Such texts, then, formed the basis for practical lessons delivered at the *khaneqah*.⁵⁴

Another hallmark of the Hazarat-e Ma'sumiyya was their multigenerational expertise in *tebb-e Yunani* or *hekmat*, Perso-Arabic traditional medicine. Both men and women within the lineage were educated in medicine. Several biographical narratives, in fact, involve Khwaja Safiullah administering remedies, like treating a cough with oil, and using rhubarb and other plants as cures for a wide range of ailments. In once instance, Khwaja Safiullah even cured Timur Shah Durrani using fleawort.⁵⁵

and medicine. Sufi biographies imply that *khaneqah* initiates required a robust education in theology, jurisprudence, and hadith at the very least, meaning that they should have completed several years at a *madrseh*. Mountstuart Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul, and Its Dependencies, in Persia, Tartary, and India* (London: R. Bentley, 1839), vol. 1: 301.

52 Khwaja Safiullah wrote under the pen name Safi, in a style imitative of Rumi's *Masnawi*; his son wrote under the name Baqi, and his *divan* continues to be reproduced in Kabul to this day. His descendants in turn wrote under the pen names 'Umar, Janan, Shamsi, and Fazli. 'Abd al-Baqi Mujaddidi, "Divan-e Baqi" n.d., Archif-e Milli, Kabul. Habibi, *Tarikh-e Mokhtasar-e Afghanistan*, vol. 2: 137–38.

53 Subtle centers for divine energy reception, corresponding to points on the human body. Akin to chakras in Tantric Buddhism, these are metaphysical entities that act as vehicles to facilitate spiritual travel. Activating the *lata'ef* through meditation is a core practice of the Naqshbandi path, and Sirhindi is considered a pioneer in developing this science of mystical physiology.

54 Mujaddidi Sirhindi, "Makhzan al-Anwar fi Kashf al-Asrar." For a detailed discussion on this genre, see Waleed Ziad, "Transporting Knowledge in the Durrani Empire: Two Manuals of Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi Sufi Practice," in *Afghanistan's Islam: From Conversion to the Taliban*, ed. Nile Green (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2017), 105–26.

55 Shah Mohammad Fazlullah, *Umdat al-Maqamat*, 469. Interview with Gholam Rasul Sarhandi, Matiari, 29 March, 2016.

1.1.4 Institutional Economy

The operational income of these institutions derived from land grants, gifts, monthly or annual stipends, and to a lesser extent commercial activities within the network. *Khaneqahs* and shrines were often gifted by ruling elites and nobility, like the Durrani, Talpurs, Mughals, and Mirs of Badakhshan and Qunduz. Shrines were generally accompanied by estates and gardens, the proceeds of which could finance the greater institution and *langarkhaneh*.⁵⁶ In Qandahar alone, one branch of Hazratji Peshawari's family were said to have been assigned 25,000 acres through the mid-nineteenth century.⁵⁷

A considerable portion of expenses were also met through donations from disciples and adherents, who included wealthy landowners, commercial and merchant classes, and moneylenders. Supplementary income for instance derived from certain deputies who belonged to elite landowning religious families, and had their own preexisting personal or *waqf* lands which could be reoriented to the Mujaddidi networks.

Upon the death of the associated *pirs*, most *khaneqahs* of the Hazarat-e Ma'sumiyya became shrines with significant symbolic potential. These shrines attracted continued patronage by the nobility. Shah 'Izzatullah's shrine complex in the Maranjan Hills on the outskirts of Kabul was sponsored by the chief Durrani military officer. The shah himself financed an accompanying hostel and rose gardens. To date, this shrine remains one of Kabul's holy sites.⁵⁸ Similarly, the shrine of Khwaja Safiullah's nephew, Hazratji Qandahari, in Qandahar became a popular regional pilgrimage center, complete with a mosque, *gharibkhaneh*, and water tank courtesy of the Durrani. In *Seraj al-Tawarikh*, Fayz Mohammad Katib points out that five of the 22 sons of Payinda Khan – who ruled Afghanistan after the 1820s – as well as other Barakzai sardars were buried at this site. Among these was Sardar Kohandil Khan (d. 1854), the ruler of Qandahar in the 1820s.⁵⁹ It is noteworthy that Payinda Khan's other

56 Some of the land provided to the lineage may have in fact been newly reclaimed land. In places like Kalat, Sindh, Yarkand and Kabul new governing authorities had prioritized irrigation and reclamation, and endeavored to farm out land to individuals with the capacity to render the land productive.

57 'Aziz al-Din Vakili Fufalzai, *Taimur Shah Durrani* (Kabul: Anjuman-e Tarikh-e Afghanistan, 1333), 677–85; Fofalzai, *Farhang-e Kabul-e Bastan*, vol. 1: 192; Pir Gholam Rasul Sirhindi, *Tohfah al-Talebin*, fol. 24.

58 Shah Mohammad Fazlullah, *Umdat al-Maqamat*, 442–43; Haji Mohammad al-Bukhari, *Takmil-e Rashahat*, fol. 44a–b; Pir Nizamuddin Shikarpuri, *Awj-e Morid-e Asrar-e Naqshbandiyya* (Sindh University Library, 172/24763, 1292), fols. 51b–51b.

59 Fayz Mohammad Katib Hazarah, *The History of Afghanistan: Fayz Muhammad Katib Hazarah's Siraj Al-Tawarikh*, trans. Robert McChesney and Mohammad Mehdi Khorrami (Leiden: Brill, 2012), vol. 2: 197.

sons were buried in historic shrines including ‘Asheqan-o ‘Arefan in Kabul (see below) and ‘Abdullah Ansari in Herat. This indicates that Hazratji Qandahari’s shrine paralleled the ancient shrines in its symbolic significance only two decades after his death.⁶⁰

2 Durrani Statebuilding and the Hazarat-e Ma’sumiyya

A key question emerges in light this of narrative: How did the Hazarat-e Ma’sumiyya establish their presence and attract both students and capital in such diverse environments? A close examination of the socio-political circumstances surrounding their settlement at Qandahar and Peshawar and later in Kabul provides answers. Essentially, instability in the Mughal Empire coincided with the demands of the emerging Durrani state requiring a religio-academic foundation. This gave rise to a transregional domain of independent Sufi institutions. The Hazarat’s *khaneqahs* were among the most prominent of these.

The following sections trace the process through which Sufis and ‘ulama migrated from Mughal to Durrani domains in the late eighteenth century. Kabul, consequently, was transformed into an entrepot linking Hindustani scholastic and Sufi traditions with scholastic networks across Khorasan and Turkestan.⁶¹ At this time, the Durrani rulers and their tributary states had limited legitimacy among their subject populations. As such, they were unable to effectively supervise the development of Sufis networks, which enjoyed deeply-rooted historical legitimacy at the popular level. These factors were critical to the consolidation of the Hazarat’s regional networks and their widespread influence.

2.1 *Sirhind to Peshawar and Qandahar*

The biographies of the Hazarat are curiously silent regarding the circumstances surrounding their immigration from Sirhind to Durrani cosmopolitan centers. However, sources from other contemporary Naqshbandi lineages explicitly cite the Mughal, Sikh, Maratha, and Rohilla Afghan⁶² power struggle over Sirhind in the early eighteenth century as the catalyst behind their emigration.⁶³

60 Fofalzai, *Timur Shah Durrani*, 68o.

61 Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar*, 31–34.

62 Literally, ‘people of the hills’, referring to Afghan cavalry bodies who came to Hindustan in search of military opportunities, and came to rule several states in the Doab region.

63 See, for example, Imam Mohammad Jio Sahib Zakori, *Rawzat al-Awliya’ fi Ahval-e Asfiya’* (Zakori, Dera Ismail Khan: Nijaroz Bazaar Press, 1333), 165–66.

In 1705, following a series of Mughal-Sikh clashes, two sons of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth spiritual-political leader of the Sikhs, were killed by the Mughal garrison commander at Sirhind. In the following decades, Sirhind became the site of a fierce conflict between the Mughal, Sikh, and Rohilla armies which devastated the city.⁶⁴ The symbolic significance of Sirhind as the site of Sikh martyrdom meant that the city's inhabitants faced a particularly harsh retribution from the Sikh armies.⁶⁵ The Mujaddidi *pirs* and disciples were likely targeted during the campaigns of plunder.

Amidst these conflicts, in 1748 Ahmad Shah Durrani embarked on the first of nine invasions of Hindustan and, within months, occupied Sirhind.⁶⁶ The town then changed hands several times in the next decade and a half. Through the course of the Durrani campaigns, the four sons of Shah Gholam Mohammad Ma'sum were invited to settle in Peshawar and Qandahar. Ahmad Shah provided them houses and land, where they established *khaneqahs*.⁶⁷

By 1763–64, Sirhind, along with the Durrani territories of Lahore and Multan, was formally occupied by Sikh armies.⁶⁸ A substantial part of the population dispersed or migrated and much of the city was razed.⁶⁹ Sirhind rapidly lost its importance as a trading and pilgrimage center, and even the city's sacred relics were transferred to other towns.⁷⁰

Ahmad Shah's rationale for resettling the Hazarat-e Ma'sumiyya may well have been a result of own religious convictions and predilections towards Sufism, as the sources imply. However, it could certainly have also served to buttress his fragile authority. The nascent Durrani state managed an informal empire comprised of disparate cities along Hindustan and Khorasan's major trade routes – including Sirhind, Lahore, Multan, Thatta, the Derajat, Kabul, Qandahar, and Herat. In consolidating his hold over this territory, Ahmad Shah understood

64 Shaykh 'Abdullah Gholam 'Ali Dehlavi, *Maqamat-e Mazhari: Ahval-o Malfuzat-o Maktubat-e Hazrat Mirza Mazhar Jan-e Janan Shahid*, trans. Mohammad Iqbal Mujaddidi (Lahore: Urdu Science Board, 2001), 48; Ganda Singh, *Ahmad Shah Durrani: Father of Modern Afghanistan* (London: Asia Pub. House, 1959), 115–18.

65 Shah Gholam 'Ali Dehlavi, *Maqamat-e Mazhari*, trans. Mohammad Iqbal Mujaddidi (Lahore: Urdu Science Board, 2001), 51.

66 In 1747, Ahmad Shah Durrani was selected as the successor to Nader Shah's eastern empire by a Loya Jirga of Qandahar. Fofalzai, *Timur Shah Durrani*, 679.

67 Mujaddidi, "Alami Sateh Par Silsila Naqshbandiyya Mujaddidiyya ka Asr o Rasukh," 96.

68 Singh, *Ahmad Shah Durrani: Father of Modern Afghanistan*, 135.

69 Ma'sumi, *Maqamat-e Ma'sumi*, vol. 1: 242; Qazi Nur Mohammad, *Jang Nama*, ed. Ganda Singh (Amritsar: Sikh History Research Department, 1939), 166–67.

70 As of the census of 1881, the population of Sirhind had diminished to 5,401. Fauja Singh, *Sirhind Through the Ages* (Patiala: Phulkian Press, 1972), 115.

that legitimacy could not be based on local Pushtun-specific traditions. Instead, his authority needed to be expanded to absorb the still active symbols of legitimacy of the Safavid, Uzbek, and Mughal Empires.⁷¹ Accordingly, the potent, transregional authority of the Mujaddidiyya would have been an important factor in Ahmad Shah's invitation to the Hazarat. By safeguarding Sufis who were closely associated with the Mughal emperors, Ahmad Shah would have reinforced his image of a guardian king whose supervisory authority incorporated yet superseded the existing princes of the region.⁷²

In addition to legitimation, Ahmad Shah may also have settled the Hazarat at Peshawar and Qandahar to endow his new empire with a spiritual and academic infrastructure. Qandahar, a former Mughal trade entrepot, had been entirely razed by Nader Shah. Ahmad Shah built a new capital of the same name near the site of the former city. To invest the city with symbolic capital Ahmad Shah also had a mantle of the Prophet bequeathed to him by the Dahbidi Naqshbandi who governed Badakhshan, which he henceforth housed in Qandahar.⁷³ The presence of celebrated Sufi lineages in the city would have served a similar purpose. And, by establishing educational institutions, the Mujaddidi scholar-saints would have attracted other 'ulama from Hindustan and elsewhere. The emergent scholarly class could, in turn, provide a range of required social functions from education, jurisprudence, and spiritual guidance, to mediatory functions within the burgeoning capital city.⁷⁴

2.2 *Peshawar and Qandahar to Kabul*

In the 1770s, two of the brothers – Khwaja Safiullah and Shah 'Izzatullah – resettled at Kabul.⁷⁵ This second emigration was connected to the relocation of the imperial capital to Kabul in 1773 under Ahmad Shah's successor, Timur Shah.⁷⁶ Timur Shah's decision to transfer the capital was partly due to logistical considerations. Kabul was, after all, situated on a principal trade route

71 Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire*, 47.

72 To a similar effect, Ahmad Shah assumed several regional Muslim causes, such as supporting Naqshbandi Khwajas who ruled over Altishehr after they appealed for help against the Manchu advance. *Ibid.*, 48.

73 The Dahbidi Khwajas were descendants of the celebrated Naqshbandi *pir*, Makhdum-e 'Azam Ahmad Kasani (d. 1542), from Dehbid, near Samarqand.

74 Other prominent religious and scholarly lineages patronized at Qandahar included the Barakzai Qazis, the families of Mullah Isma'il Alikozai Qazi and Qazi Mohammad Hotak. Habibi, *Tarikh-e Mokhtasar-e Afghanistan*, vol. 2: 134–144.

75 Khwaja Safiullah was previously at Peshawar (and possibly Qandahar) while Shah 'Izzatullah came to Kabul from Rohilkhand and Yarkand via Delhi. Haji Mohammad al-Bukhari, *Takmil-e Rashahat*, fol. 43a–43b.

76 Ahmad 'Ali Kohzad, *Bala Hisar-e Kabul* (Kabul: Intisharat-e Maiwand, 1387), 257.

between his Khorasani and Hindustani provinces. However, the relocation also served to bring the center of power further from the Pushtun tribes which dominated Qandahar, and closer towards his Persian speaking provinces. In his city-building endeavor, Timur Shah, followed by his son Zaman Shah, placed considerable emphasis on rebuilding and repopulating Kabul's royal fortress, the Bala Hisar, and the central city adjacent to the fortress.

2.2.1 Kabul Before 1773

At the time of Timur Shah's relocation of the imperial capital, Kabul had long lost its privileged position as an economic, cultural, and intellectual hub. Its population, in fact, had dwindled to 10,000. Kabul's steady decline as a Mughal metropolis was partly due to the loss of Qandahar to the Safavids in 1648 and the independence of Balkh and Badakhshan around the same time. Kabul's situation was further impacted by instability following the resurgence of Pushtun tribes in the first half of the eighteenth century. On the eve of Nader Shah's invasion in the mid eighteenth century, the financial situation was so dire that salaries of Mughal soldiers remained unpaid to the Mughal governor of Kabul and Peshawar for five years.⁷⁷

By this time, the city's infrastructure had also deteriorated. The last substantial city development had been carried out under the Mughal emperors Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb in the seventeenth century.⁷⁸ Local shrine and mosque catalogues and city histories⁷⁹ record no major *khaneqahs* and *madrases* operating within Kabul in the mid-eighteenth century. As the city's principal

77 Ibid., 246; Ann Lambton, "Tribal Resurgence and Decline of the Bureaucracy in Eighteenth Century Persia," in *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History*, ed. Thomas Naff and Edward Roger John Owen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

78 Ahmad Shah Durrani began reinvesting in Kabul soon after his coronation in 1747, but he was more concerned with refortifying the city and rebuilding the Bala Hisar. Civic building projects were limited to restoring several shrines and mosques. Fofalzai records only three mosques built during his reign in Kabul. Fofalzai, *Farhang-e Kabul-e Bastan*, vol. 1: 221, 242, 253, 255, 265, 268; May Schinasi, *Kaboul 1773-1948: Naissance et Croissance d'une Capitale Royale*, Series maior 13 (Naples: Università degli studi di Napoli "L'Orientale," Dipartimento di studi asiatici, 2008), 39.

79 See 'Abd al-Hayy Khakrub, *Karvan-e Nur* (Kabul: Kutub Farushi Shaykh Ahmad Jam (Zhanda Pil), 1384); Mohammad Ibrahim Khalil, *Mazarat-e Shahr-e Kabul* (Kabul: Anjuman-e Nasharati Danish, 1383); Mohammad Vali Zalmay, *Da Kandahar aw Kabul Tarikhi Masjidona* (Quetta: Mawlawi Sher Mohammad 'Umarzai, 1996), 174-203; Ustad Mohammad Ahsan Sayqal, *Cheragh-e Ma'arifat Kulid-e Sa'adat* (Kabul: Qari Sayqal, 1388), 58-73; Fofalzai, *Farhang-e Kabul-e Bastan*, Vol 1: 251-67.

mosques built under Mughal rule were in need of repair during Ahmad Shah's rule, it can be assumed that funds for higher education were also depleted.⁸⁰

However, Kabul still hosted functional shrine spaces with deep roots in the city's historical and sacred identity. On the outskirts of the central city were three principal shrines which linked Kabul to foundational Islamic history and folklore. The first was a Shi'i shrine purportedly belonging to Abu'l-Fazl 'Abbas, Imam 'Ali's nephew martyred at Karbala.⁸¹ The others were Shah-e Do Shamshireh and Tamim Saheb Ansari, which over time came to be attributed to companions of the Prophet Muhammad who had participated in the early campaigns against Kabul in the seventh century. The city center featured several Sunni and Shi'i shrines, notably of 'Asheqan-o 'Arefan (grandsons of 'Abdullah Ansari Heravi⁸²), Baba-e Khudi, and Abu'l-Ishaq Khatlani.⁸³ The former two were associated with the Naqshbandi order. This means that despite the dearth of madrasehs and *khaneqahs* in this period, there was still an active memory of Kabul's Sufi traditions, particularly the Naqshbandiyya.⁸⁴

Khaneqah networks were emerging in parallel in the tribal and Kohistani regions surrounding the city, financed with local capital. Among these were several Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi *khaneqahs* managed by Sufis affiliated with the *khaneqah* at Sirhind. As early as the seventeenth century, Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi had appointed several Afghan deputies who carried the order into Khorasan and beyond.⁸⁵ A disciple of Sirhindi's son Khwaja Mohammad

80 Including Pul-e Khishti and the Eidgah Masjid, built by Aurangzeb. Zalmay, *Da Kandahar aw Kabul Tarikhi Masjidona*, 176–8, 188. Sources do not mention students from Hindustan or Transoxiana travelling to Kabul for educational purposes under Ahmad Shah.

81 The popularly venerated shrine of Abu'l-Fazal 'Abbas is in Karbala, where he is known to be buried.

82 In some sources, the shrine is attributed to two companions of Prophet Muhammad. However, 'Asheqan and 'Arefan are more widely believed to be sons of Khwaja Jabir, a son of the revered poet-saint of Herat, Khwaja 'Abdullah Ansari (d. 1088), who was a disciple of Abu'l-Hasan Kharraqani (d. 1033), a pivotal figure in the Naqshbandi Sufi lineage. Sayqal, *Cheragh-e Ma'arifat Kulid-e Sa'adat*, 66; Khalil, *Mazarat-e Shahr-e Kabul*, 74.

83 Khalil, *Mazarat-e Shahr-e Kabul*, 112. Abu Ishaq was a Kubrawi Sufi, and a disciple of 'Ali Hamadani. He was said to have been martyred during the reign of the Timurid ruler Shahrokh Mirza.

84 It is noteworthy that in the 1750s–60s Ahmad Shah Durrani commissioned the renovation of at least three historic shrines (Masjid Shah-e Do Shamshira, Ziyarat-e Hazrat Tamim Sahib, and Ziyarat-e Ishaq Khatlani) which would have been widely venerated prior to Kabul becoming the capital.

85 Notably, Shaykh Ahmad Burki, Shaykh Yusuf Burki, and Shaykh Hasan Burki. 'Allama Badr al-Din Sirhindi, *Hazarat al-Qods*, trans. Hafez Mohammad Ashraf Mujaddidi Naqshbandi (Lahore: Qari Rizvi Kutub Khana, 1431), 378–96; Khwaja Mohammad Ihsan Mujaddidi Sirhindi, *Rawzat al-Qayyumiyya*, Vol I, 228–231. A century earlier the Rawshaniyya movement, which had originated in northern Waziristan, gained a considerable following



FIGURE 5.3 Shrine complex of Musa Khan Batikoti, Batikot, Pakistan-Afghanistan border, Nangarhar

Ma'sum, Akhund Sayyed Musa Khan Batikoti (d. 1711), established an institutional complex near Torkham (now on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border), attracting Shinwari and Mohmand tribes, and, most likely, traders on the Khyber Pass.⁸⁶ Another important figure was Faqirullah Alavi Jalalabadi (later, Shikarpuri) (d. 1781), a polymath and luminary who was well regarded among the Durrani. He is considered one of the first major transregionally oriented Mujaddidi figures of the empire, tying together Nangarhar, Kabul, Qandahar, and Sindh.⁸⁷

amongst the people of Kabul and the Peshawar Valley and beyond. In addition, the teachings of Akhund Darwiza had gained currency amongst the Yusufzai Pushtuns. Nile Green suggests that these movements may have paved the way for the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi entry into the region. Nile Green, "Tribe, Diaspora, and Sainthood in Afghan History," *Journal of Asian Studies* 67, no. 1 (2008): 198–99.

86 Interview with Khakrub Faqir and custodians at the shrine at Batikot, Nangarhar, Jun, 2013.; Sa'id, *Da Afghanistan Mafakhir*, 216. Khwaja Mohammad Ihsan Mujaddidi Sirhindi, *Rawzat al-Qayyumiyya*, 11, 79, 80.

87 Jalalabadi, *Maktub-e Panjom: Resaleh dar Bayan-e Mohabbat o Digar Masa'el-e Soluk-e 'Irfani*, 3–8; Sahibzada Abu'l Khair Zubair, *Sindh kay Sufia-e Naqshband*, vol. 2: 443–453.

2.2.2 Kabul after 1773

From 1773 to 1800, Timur Shah and Zaman Shah embarked upon an ambitious project to revive and resettle Kabul, transforming it into a multi-ethnic, multi-confessional cosmopolis. It was during this period that members of the Hazarat-e Ma'sumiyya were invited to the city.⁸⁸

Kabul grew steadily in the decades that followed. Edward Stirling, an East India Company civil servant visiting in 1829 described it as a city “justly celebrated for its luxuries, its fruits, and flowers,” with houses three to four stories high, and a population which exceeded Shiraz, Isfahan, Tehran and Mashhad.⁸⁹ The British military-defector turned archaeologist-adventurer, Charles Masson (d. 1853), in 1832, estimated the population at 50 to 60,000.⁹⁰ Under Timur Shah, Kabul was confined to the right bank of the Kabul River, and divided into four units: the Bala Hisar fortress and royal complex, the central town, and the Chendawal and Muradkhani quarters. At the time of resettlement, land within and around the city was allotted to notable families. Eventually, streets and neighborhoods bore the names of individual notables or ethnicities who inhabited them.

The central town attracted Sunni and Shi'i Persian-speaking and Pushtun populations, as well as immigrants from Mawarannahr and Hindustan, and Uzbek, Jewish, Armenian, and Hindu merchant communities. Hindus and Muslims of Peshawar and the Punjab made up the backbone of the mercantile classes. George Forster, who came to Kabul in the 1780s, described the “great bazaar crowded with Usbecks.” The “Tatars of Bochara” he explained, “bring to Kabul the horses of Turkistan, furs and hides ... the amount of which is applied to the purchase of indigo, and other commodities of India.”⁹¹ The most influential corporate group however, were undoubtedly the Qezelbash Shi'a, who had been settled in Kabul under Nader Shah during his 1738–39 campaigns.⁹²

88 Schinasi, *Kaboul 1773–1948*, 214.

89 Edward Hamilton Stirling, *The Journals of Edward Stirling in Persia and Afghanistan, 1828–1829: From Manuscripts in the Archives of the Royal Geographical Society* (Istituto universitario orientale, Dipartimento di studi asiatici, 1991), 319.

90 Charles Masson, *Narrative of Various Journeys in Balochistan, Afghanistan and the Panjab: Including a Residence in Those Countries from 1826–1838* (London: Richard Bentley, 1842), vol. 2: 260.

91 Forster, *A Journey From Bengal To England*, 82–83.

92 The term generally refers to Turkic Shi'i factions who pledged their allegiance to the Safavi Sufi order, and who provided the foundation for the Safavid state. Fofalzai noted that not all groups classified as such were 'Qezelbash' in the strict sense of the term; Kabul's Qezelbash comprised several Shi'i Afghan tribes and factions grouped under the ubiquitous 'Qezelbash' category. Fofalzai, *Farhang-e Kabul-e Bastan*, vol. 1: 200.

They comprised a significant portion of the administrative and military class, balancing the hegemony of the Durrani Pushtun *sardars* at Qandahar.

A key component of the municipal building project was restoring the academic, religious, and cultural life of the city.⁹³ Under Timur Shah and Zaman Shah, at least 15 major mosques were constructed, in addition to *khaneqahs* and *madraseshs*.⁹⁴ Sources also mention several state-sponsored venues providing a public space for literary and scholarly interaction, including the *Anjoman-e Hozur* and the *Tasbihkhaneh*, which featured poetry recitations and theological debates. Another such venue was the Bala Hisar, where ‘ulama and literary figures would also gather for scholarly discussions every Friday evening.⁹⁵

Venues like these – and the cultural and scholastic milieu of Kabul at large – benefited from continued turbulence in the Mughal Empire. Timur Shah encouraged the settlement of prominent Sufis, jurists, and literary families by offering incentives in the form of land grants and stipends.⁹⁶ Khwaja Safiullah and Shah ‘Izzatullah were among many beneficiaries of Timur Shah’s patronage, and their institutions formed an integral part of the rejuvenated scholastic landscape of Kabul.

Shrine catalogs list at least ten major Sufi institutions active in early nineteenth-century Kabul, of which only one predated Timur Shah’s resettlement. This was the Qadiri *khaneqah* of Zayvar al-Din (d. 1738) at Paiminar, 15 kilometers north of Kabul.⁹⁷ The other *khaneqahs* were established between 1770 and 1790, and located mostly in central Kabul. All were associated with

93 With the onset of the Sadozai-Barakzai rivalry in the 1820s, the development of Kabul temporarily came to an end. Dost Mohammad Khan, too involved with politically and administratively consolidating his power, was not able to substantially invest in the city. The next major developments occurred under Sher Ali Khan (r. 1863–79). Schinasi, *Kaboul 1773–1948*, 40.

94 See Zalmay, *Da Kandahar aw Kabul Tarikhi Masjidona*, 174–203.

95 Faruq Ansari, *Afghanistan dar Ruzgar-e Taymur Shah Durrani* (Kabul: Markaz-e Mutala’at-e Istitratizhik, Vizarat-e Umur-e Kharijah-e Jumhuri-e Islami-e Afghanistan, 2011), 129; Mountstuart Elphinstone, *Memoirs on Afghanistan, Iran, and Neighbouring Countries by Mountstuart Elphinstone (Qv), and Lt (Later Capt) Francis Irvine (1786–1855), Bengal Army 1805–22, Mostly Incorporated into Elphinstone’s Account of the Kingdom of Caubul’* (London 1815); Also *List of Nine Memoirs by Various Hands on Afghanistan, Persia, Etc, Relating to Elphinstone’s Embassy to Kabul 1808 and Sir John Malcolm’s Mission to Persia 1810*. (British Library, India Office Records and Private Papers, MSS Eur E91, 1808), 225; Fofalzai, *Farhang-e Kabul-e Bastan*, vol. 1: 356.

96 Ahmad ‘Ali Kohzad, *Bala Hisar-e Kabul va Pishamadha-ye Tarikhi* (Kabul: Anjuman-e Tarikh-e Afghanistan, 1336), vol 2: 12–14, 32–33.

97 The order was closely associated with the Durrans, particularly under Zayvar al-Din’s successor, Mir Mohammad Akbar. Mawlawi Gul Mohammad Kabuli, *Iradat al-‘Asheqin*

the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi order.⁹⁸ They were founded by Sufis who, like the Hazarat-e Ma'sumiyya, had left the Mughal Empire within the last generation, fleeing Sikh expansionism or other political unrest.

Within a short period, the map of Kabul was transformed, and these Hindustan-linked Naqshbandi and Qadiri *khaneqahs* formed the basis of the socio-intellectual apparatus of Kabul. Within a generation, scholastic and religious networks were reoriented north to south: students from Kazan, Khoqand, and Bukhara began traveling to Kabul. They were introduced to a Hindustani corpus of literature, epistemology, and practices. The Kabuli *khaneqah*-madrasesh became hubs for new networks across Khorasan and Mawarannahr and back into Hindustan. In particular, they supplied 'ulama and Sufis to recently independent states – such as Sindh, Kalat, Badakhshan, and Bukhara – requiring an accredited academic or spiritual infrastructure.

Several accounts indicate that Kabul, along with Bukhara and Peshawar, became a pivotal part of a network of cities in which 'ulama would complete their studies in both esoteric and exoteric sciences. The *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, for example, furnished a contemporary account of an Uzbek scholar from Khoqand who was educated in Khoqand and Bukhara, and initiated into the Naqshbandi order in Kabul.⁹⁹

Although *khaneqahs* and madrasesh were ethnically diversified, individual *khaneqahs* occasionally attracted particular ethnicities and had specific orientations for their subsidiary networks. These institutions therefore served as focal points for the wide array of Sunni communities at Kabul, and could at the same time provide spaces for intimate interactions between these various communities. To balance the hold of the Qezilbash, Timur Shah may indeed have promoted these institutions as sites for social cohesion for less-prominent communities, where social services, charity, and other types of assistance could readily be procured.

(Kabul: Intishirat-e Shaykh Ahmad Jam (Zhanda Pil), 1392), 16–17; Fofalzai, *Farhang-e Kabul-e Bastan*, vol. 1: 157.

98 According to Fofalzai, Sarkar Vakil al-Dawlah, the *divanbegi* under Timur Shah, financed a *khaneqah* near Bala Hisar in 1788, although the order affiliation is not specified. In addition, he names two other revered Sufis in Kabul under Timur Shah Durrani, Sayyed 'Izzatullah from Kalat, and Sayyed Jalal ad-din Baghdadi, although it is not clear whether they established *khaneqahs*. Fofalzai, *Farhang-e Kabul-e Bastan*, vol. 1: 353, 390, 404. (Ibid., vol. 1: 390, 404.) Mr. Durie also referenced a “tekeea” near the Lahore gate. Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul*, vol. 2: 356–7.

99 The scholar performed Hajj in 1810, and had probably studied in Kabul several decades earlier. W.H. Wathen, “Route of Usbek Pilgrims,” *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 111 (1834): 382.

TABLE 5.1 From East-West to North-South: A reorientation of networks

<i>Khaneqah</i>	Progenitor	<i>Tariqeh</i>	Origin	Date
Dargah-e 'Ali, Paiminar	Zayvar al-Din, Mir Mohammad Akbar	Qadiri	Waziristan	Ca. 1739
Khaneqah-e Pahlavan ^a	Sufi Sher Mohammad	Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi	Lahore	1773
Khaneqah-e Islamabad ^b	Mir Isma'il b. Mir Abu Qasim	Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi	Kashmir	?
Madrasesh / Khaneqah-e Kashmirian			Kashmir	?
Khaneqah-e Gulabi Murshid ^c		Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi (but for all four <i>toruq</i>)	Delhi, Bajaur	1777
Madrasesh / Khaneqah-e Uzbekan ^d	Hasan 'Ata al-Kabuli; Fayz Khan Kabuli	Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi	Sirhind, Peshawar	Ca. 1780
Khaneqah-e Mujaddidiyya, Shor Bazaar	Khwaja Safiullah; Shah 'Abd al-Baqi	Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi	Sirhind, Peshawar, Qandahar	Ca. 1780
Khaneqah-e Sa'ad al-Din Ansari ^e	Sa'ad al-Din Ansari	Qadiri (Paiminar)	Paiminar	1787
Khaneqah-e Hz. Padkhabif	Hazrat 'Usman Padkhabi	Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi	Delhi, Dir, Logar	Ca. 1800
Khaneqah-e Chishtiyya, Guzar 'Ali Riza Khan ^g	Yar Mohammad Chishti Niazi	Chishtiyya	Delhi	Ca. 1810

- a Sufi Sher Mohammad accompanied Timur Shah from Qandahar to Kabul in 1773. He belonged to a Mujaddidi branch in Lahore which originated from Sirhindi's disciple, Adam Binori, and either Sher Mohammad or his *pir* had arrived in Qandahar in the early Durrani period. He established a *khaneqah* known as Khaniqa-e 'Asheqan-o 'Arefan, and gatherings were held at the shrine. Several years later, Sufi Sher Mohammad's *khaneqah* was transferred to a nearby location in Shor Bazaar, and became known Khaneqah-e Pahlawan, after his son and successor, Mir Mohammad, known as Hazarat-e Pahlawan. Sayqal, *Cheragh-e Ma'arifat Kulid-e Sa'adat*, 63–65.
- b Senzil Nawid, "The State, the Clergy, and British Imperial Policy in Afghanistan during the 19th and Early 20th Centuries," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 29, no. 4 (1997): 11, ft 39.

- c In 1777, another Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi *pir*, Sayyed Gulabshah established the Khaneqah-e Gulabi Murshid in Bagh-e Ali Mardan Shah dedicated to four Sufi orders. The biographies mention that he studied shari'a in Baghdad, and pursued esoteric studies with Timur Shah Bajauri, a well known Afghan Mujaddidi who had studied with the Delhi branch of the order, as well as with an anonymous Qadiri Sufi. Hazrat Mirza Mohammad Meskin Kabuli, *Divan-e Meskin* (Kabul: Ketabforushi-e Maiwand, 1391), ba-jim.; Sayqal, *Cheragh-e Ma'arifat Kulid-e Sa'adat*, 68–69.
- d As referenced above, the Uzbekan, located near the 'Asheqan-o 'Arefan shrine at Shor Bazaar, was closely affiliated with Khwaja Safiullah's lineage. Khwaja 'Ata had arrived from Peshawar during Timur Shah's reign. The *khaneqah* was substantially expanded by Khwaja 'Ata's son, Fayz Khan (d. 1802), and the lineage came to be known as the Naqshbandi-Fayzaniyya. Riza al-Din b. Fakhr al-Din, *Asar*, vol. 2: 145; Khalil, *Mazarat-e Shahr-e Kabul*, 64–65; Haji Mohammad al-Bukhari, *Takmil-e Rashahat*, fol. 38b; Shah Mohammad Fazlullah, *Umdat al-Maqamat*, 386.
- e Sa'ad al-Din Ansari (d. 1810), one of Kabul's most prolific scholars, was associated with the Paiminar Qadiri order, and wrote 43 volumes of prose and poetry. Sa'ad al-Din was provided with land as a *waqf* by Ahmad Shah Durrani (ca. 1758) in Kariz Fazalabad, Kabul, and built an independent *khaneqah* in 1787. The *khaneqah* was sponsored by Ahmad Khan Durrani Fofalzai in the Durrani administration. Fofalzai, *Farhang-e Kabul-e Bastan*, vol. 1: 387.
- f A Naqshbandi *pir* from the Delhi Mujaddidi initiatic lineage, Hazrat Usman Padkhabi, concurrently became influential in Logar and Kabul. The lineage passed from Mirza Mazhar Jan-e Janan in Delhi to his Afghan disciple Akhund Mulla Nasim (d. 1231 AH / 1815–16) at Dir, to Mian Murtaza 'Ali, to 'Usman Padkhabi, to the famed poet Mullah Buzurg, or 'Jazibi'. Khwaja Mohammad Na'im Siddiq, *Ulama, Mashaykh o 'Urafa-ye Logar* (Kabul: Bunyad-e Hazrat Shaykh Sa'ad al-Din Ahmad Ansari, 1391), 78–89. Al-Hajj Mawlana Niyaz Ahmad Fani, *Riyaz al-'Irfan* (Kabul: Intishar Nu'mani, 1386), 204–8. Sayqal, *Chiragh-e Ma'arifat Kulid-e Sa'adat*, 60, 67; Mirza Mohammad Jazibi, *Asrar al-'Arefin* (Kabul: Qari Gul Mohammad 'Asimi, 1378).
- g In the late Durrani period, Yar Mohammad Chishti Niyazi founded the Khaneqah-e Chishtiyya in Guzar Ali Raza Khan, Kabul. This has remained to date one of Kabul's major Chishti institutions. Like his Naqshbandi contemporaries, Yar Mohammad had also recently arrived from Hindustan. There are several subsequent Chishti lineages that became prominent in Kabul in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Sayqal, *Cheragh-e Ma'arifat Kulid-e Sa'adat*, 70.

The Qadiris at Paiminar maintained a network extending into Pushtun tribal regions towards Ghazni, including Waziristan, as well as in Kohistan-e Kabul. The Madrasedh-ye Kashmirian, as the name suggests, drew mainly Kashmiri communities.¹⁰⁰ Fayz Khan's Masjid-e Uzbekan was oriented towards students from Mawarannahr, and the Volga and Kama rivers, and its network reached northwards to Siberia. *Umdat al-Maqamat* mentions that the Uzbekan

100 During the reign of Zaman Shah, the madrasedh hosted 84 students, who studying grammar, morphology, and additional sciences. 'Aziz al-Din Vakili Fufalzai, *Durrat al-Zaman fi Tarikh-e Shah Zaman* (Kabul: Anjoman-e Tarikh-e Afghanistan, 1337), 403.

Mujaddidis had disciples as far as “Rum and Bulghar.”¹⁰¹ Several early leading officials of the Orenberg Mohammadan Ecclesiastical Assembly had studied at this institution. Established under Catherine II in 1788, the Assembly formed the center of the religious apparatus for the Muslim community in Russia. The first mufti Akhund Mukhamedzhan Khusainov (1756–1824) was in fact a student of Fayz Khan in Kabul.¹⁰² Another of his prominent disciples was Niyaz Quli Turkmen, one of Bukhara’s celebrated educators of the early nineteenth century, with whom the Tatar reformer Shahab al-Din Marjani (1848–1889) had studied. A number of prominent Tatar Sufis of Siberia in the first half of the nineteenth century had also attained diplomas from Fayz Khan’s lineage.¹⁰³

Khwaja Safiullah’s *khaneqah* at Shor Bazaar, on the other hand, attracted students from Pushtun tribal regions of Kunar and Bannu, as well as Kohistan-e Kabul to the north of the city where several of his sons were based. Its broader networks in the early part of the nineteenth century were oriented in an arc from Thatta in Lower Sindh, to Nasarpur in Central Sindh, to Shikarpur and Sehwan in Upper Sindh, Kalat and its environs, Qandahar, and Kabul. With its Hindustani orientation, it likely that the *khaneqah* served Peshawari and Punjabi trading communities in Kabul. Khwaja Safiullah’s brother, Shah ‘Izzatullah probably managed a separate *khaneqah* and had a network oriented towards Qunduz, Badakhshan, and Yarkand.¹⁰⁴

The following list of Khwaja Safiullah’s deputies indicates the scope and geographic diversity of the immediate network around the Shor Bazaar *khaneqah*. The *khulafa’* appointed in Qandahar, Kalat and Sindh would regularly visit Khwaja Safiullah, making extended trips at Shor Bazaar for their training.

The reorientation of Sufi-scholastic networks was facilitated by the growth of north-south trade in this period. Gommans argues that in the mid-eighteenth century, north-south trade continued to flourish despite political fragmentation. This had resulted in the accumulation of capital in emerging trading centers including Kabul, Qandahar, and Peshawar, as well as Shikarpur in Sindh and Faizabad in Badakhshan. Local capital, therefore, would have been

101 Shah Mohammad Fazlullah, *Umdat al-Maqamat*, 386; “Shajratnoma,” Early 19th c., Uzbekistan Archives. An early nineteenth-century genealogical chart from Bukhara lists three of his key disciples, all of whom were from Kazan: Khalifa Uzbek Khwaja Kazani, Khalifa Abu Bakr Kazani, and Khalifa Ramzan Qazani.

102 The assembly was located at Ufa until 1796, then shifted to Orenburg. Khusainov, from Kargala, was appointed as the first mufti of the Assembly from 1788 to 1824.

103 Zarccone mentions Dhu’l Qarnayn b. Khalil al-Qaqtamaqi (d. 1846) and Shaykh Ja’far Salih al-Qulatqi (d. 1863), both of whom received the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya-Fayzaniyya from disciples in Central Asia. Thierry Zarccone, “Les confréries Soufies en Sibérie (XIX^e siècle et début du XX^e siècle),” *Cahiers du monde Russe* (2000), 294–95.

104 Interviews at the shrines of ‘Abd al-Baqi and Shah Izzatullah, Kabul, June, 2013.

TABLE 5.2 Khulafa' of Khwaja Safiullah

Name	Origin	Name	Origin
Bibi Sahiba	Kabul	Akhundzada Mollah Hosayn Musa Saheb	
Miyan Waliollah (son)	Kabul	Khalifa Mollah Hesam al-Din Dawlatshahi	Shah Pushanki, Shikarpur, Sindh
Shah Fazlollah (Great nephew)	Kabul	Mollah Hajji Wali Mohammad Babi	Kalat, Baluchistan
Zia' al-Haqq (Great nephew)	Kabul; Nijrab	Mollah 'Abd al-Karim Babi Kalati	Kalat, Baluchistan
Hazrat 'Abd al-Baqi	Kabul	Khalifa Mohammad Solayman	
Makhdum Ebrahim Thattavi	Thatta, Sindh	Mohammad Sadeq Gunjabi	Gunjab, Baluchistan
Khalifa Miyan Ahmad Khan Nizamani	Tando Adam, Sindh	Pir Mohammad Chardahi	Chardahi, Kabul
Mollah Mohammad Zaki		Mollah 'Abdollah Chagatai	Kohistan-e Kabul
Akhundzada M. Anwar Bannui	Bannu	Mollah 'Abdollah Qaqani	Qaqan
Khwaja Moqim Sufiyan Charikari	Charikar	Makhdum 'Abd al-Wahid Sehvastani (Sehwan)	Shikarpur, Sindh
Pir Akbar Shah Khosti	Khost, Alkai?	Mollah 'Usman 'Alizai	Alizai Pashtun
Pir Ahmad	Khost	Sayyed Hasan Dehlavi	Delhi and Bengal ^a
Shah Bozorg Khosti	Khost	Miyan 'Abd al-Karim Thattavi	Thatta, Sindh
Shah Maqsud Zurmati	Zurmat	Qazi Mohammad Nasrpuri	Nasrpur, Sindh
Shaykh Sanan Khosti	Khost	Miyan 'Abdollah Nasrpuri	Nasrpur, Sindh
Mollah Sultan Andari	Andar, Ghazni	Mohammad Kazem Shikarpuri	Shikarpur, Sindh
Mollah Mahraban Tokhi Mohammadzai	Tokhi Pashtun	Khalifa Mohammad Kazem Naqil	Shikarpur; Karachi, Sindh

a According to an Urdu text published in Patna, *Hayat-i 'Uwaysi*, Sayyid Hasan Dehlavi's lineage passed on to Shah Sufi Fatah 'Ali 'Vaisi' (1820–1886), a principal Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi Sufi from Chittagong, Bengal, whose order is still active at Calcutta, Dhaka, Chittagong, and elsewhere. I am grateful to Kashif ud-Din Chauhan for this reference.

present to help finance Sufi networks, and travel routes would have remained intact. Even the growing independence and recalcitrance of, in Stirling's description, "fierce and independent ... Kyber, Khiljee, and Vazaree tribes" along these trade routes did not adversely impact trade.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, as mentioned above, contemporary sources indicate that the *khaneqahs* and mosques often functioned as serays for pilgrims and merchants on these routes.¹⁰⁶

2.2.3 Integrated Institutions at Kabul

The picture that emerges from the biographies and shrine catalogs is a closely integrated network of religious institutions producing both Sufis and 'ulama. Among these, the *khaneqahs* of the Hazarat-e Ma'sumiyya at Shor Bazaar occupied a focal position.

The central city consisted of a web of locally managed mosques, shrines, and *khaneqahs*. Kabul had only two state-run *jame'* mosques (Pul-e Khishti and the Eidgah) and several mosques in the Bala Hisar. Meanwhile the remaining mosques built or renovated during Timur Shah and Zaman Shah's reigns were integrated into neighborhoods and bazaars, and were operated and financed by each *mahalleh* (neighborhood).¹⁰⁷ As discussed earlier, both mosques and *khaneqahs* often grew around historic shrines, and housed madrasesh.¹⁰⁸ Apart from drawing Sufis and 'ulama, the shrines also functioned as important public spaces and popular venues for family recreation.¹⁰⁹

105 Stirling, *The Journals of Edward Stirling*, 324–25. Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire*, 108–9.

106 Trade networks of Shikarpuri Hindu families operated in the same region in which the Hazarat were established, extending from Yarkand to Orenberg; while in the nineteenth century the Parancha tribe maintained trade networks from Bombay, Calcutta, Bukhara, Yarkand, Tashkent, Orenburg, to Nizhni Novgorod. Moorecroft in 1820 mentions that manufactures from Hoshiarpur in Hindustan were actively traded as far as Herat, Balkh, Yarkand, Badakshan, and Kabul through such networks. Edward Balfour, *The Cyclopædia of India and of Eastern and Southern Asia: Commercial, Industrial and Scientific, Products of the Mineral, Vegetable, and Animal Kingdoms, Useful Arts and Manufactures* (London: B. Quartitch, 1885), 218. William Moorecroft and George Trebeck, *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan and the Panjab; in Ladakh and Kashmir; in Peshawar, Kabul, Kunduz, and Bokhara: From 1819 to 1825* (London: J. Murray, 1841), vol. 1: 84.

107 Masson mentions that unlike other contemporary Hindustani and Khorasani Muslim cities, Kabul did not have great and visible *jame'* mosques which defined the landscape. Instead, each quarter in Kabul had a certain "spacious and commodious" mosque built with private funds. Masson, *Narrative of Various Journeys in Balochistan, Afghanistan and the Panjab*, vol. 2: 263.

108 For example, two of the three major mosques of Shor Bazaar were built around shrines. Zalmay, *Da Kandahar aw Kabul Tarikhi Masjidona*, 182–83.

109 Mr. Durie, who came to Kabul in the first decade of the nineteenth century in the guise of a *faqir*, related his experiences at shrine complex where *faqirs* organized regular

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Kabul's religious classes comprised three functional groups. These were state employed 'ulama (qazis, state mosque imams, etc.), lower ranking mosque functionaries such as imams (supported by local communities), and Sufis (the *pirs*, disciples, and shrine custodians). The latter were largely independent of state interference.¹¹⁰ From lists of students at *khaneqah* it becomes evident that all three groups were educated at the *khaneqahs* and associated madrases. Of the three leading families of qazis, Qazi Fayzullah, the chief qazi under Timur Shah, was a Qadiri Sufi associated with the Paiminar *khaneqah*.¹¹¹ The Mir Waiz of the *jame'* mosque at Pul-e Khishti was Mir Ahmad, a Naqshbandi *pir*, son of the founder of the Khaneqah-e Islamabad.¹¹² Sufi biographies also indicate that local 'ulama and imams were associated with these *khaneqahs*. For example, Khwaja Safiullah's *khulafa'* included several imams of mosques in the Kabul region, while the students at Khaneqah-e Pahlawan included at least three notable local 'ulama. Mir Sa'ad al-Din, Sufi Sher Mohammad's *khalifa* at the Khaneqah-e Pahlavan, was also the imam of the Masjid-e Se Dukan-e 'Asheqan-o 'Arefan (most likely a reference to Uzbekan), and another disciple of Sufi Sher Mohammad's was Mulla Gholam, a well-known imam of a mosque bearing his name in Bagh-e Qazi, Kabul.¹¹³

Sufis and 'ulama across institutions seamlessly interacted, with partnerships between institutions, shared affiliations, and, naturally, a moderate degree of competition and contestation. The poems of Jazibi, a *khalifa* of 'Usman Padkhabi, for example, were recited in other *khaneqahs*, and the poetry of Meskin, produced in a Qadiri institution was performed in Naqshbandi

entertainments. The shrine was situated on a picturesque mountain around the city, and frequented by families on holidays. Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul*, 362.

110 Mirza 'Abd al-Qadir Kashmiri uses the following categorizations (in a reference to groups subsidized by the Durrani): *modarres*, *modarresbashi*, *saheban-e khaneqah o langarkhaneh*. Mirza 'Abd al-Qadir Qadiri Kashmiri, as quoted in Fufalzai, *Durrat al-Zaman fi Tarikh-e Shah Zaman*, 404.

111 Kabuli, *Iradat al-'Asheqin*, 16.

112 Shikarpuri, *Navai-e Ma'arik*, 802–10. Fufalzai, *Durrat al-Zaman fi Tarikh-e Shah Zaman*, 274–75. Nawid, *Religious Response to Social Change in Afghanistan, 1919–29*, 11, fn39. According to Fofalzai, Mir Waiz Mir Ahmad Mir Aqa, Mir Waiz under Zaman Shah, was a disciple of Sa'ad al-Din Ansari.

113 Sayqal, *Cheragh-e Ma'arifat Kulid-e Sa'adat*, 63.

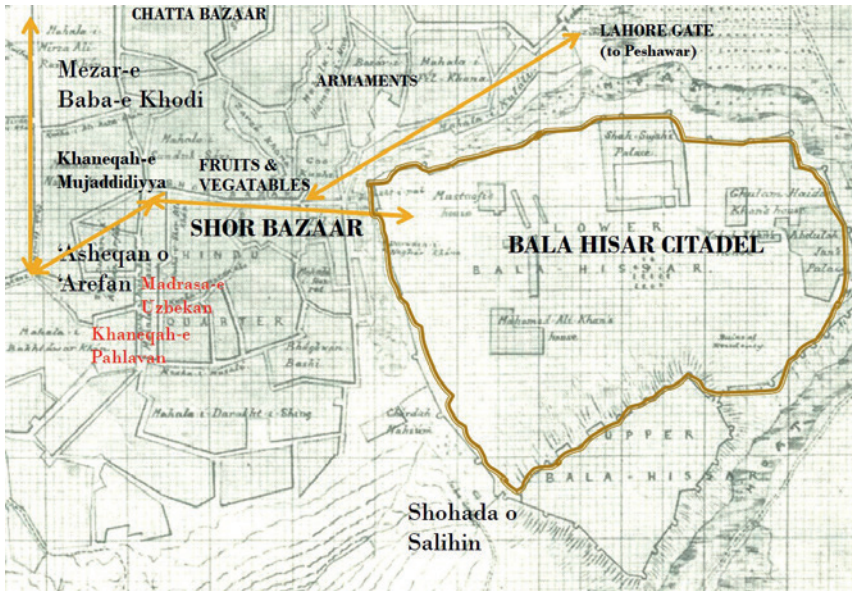


FIGURE 5.4 Traffic flows through Central Kabul, ca. 1800

circles.¹¹⁴ In the decades that followed, genealogies and *ijazat* of different lineages also converged.¹¹⁵

Within this closely knit religio-scholastic space, Khwaja Safiullah's *khaneqah* at Shor Bazaar was particularly prominent. Undoubtedly, its influence was enhanced by its centrality in Kabul's physical landscape. First, it was situated between two principal pilgrimage sites associated with the Naqshbandi order: 'Asheqan-o 'Arefan, and Baba-e Khudi.¹¹⁶ Second, Shor Bazaar, a renowned fruit and vegetable bazaar built under Zaman Shah, was one of two main axes of Kabul.¹¹⁷ The bazaar cut across the city, extending three quarters of a mile between the Bala Hisar and the shrine of Baba-e Khudi. In fact, the two exits of Bala Hisar opened into the town through Shor Bazaar,¹¹⁸ effectively linking the royal quarters to the commercial space, and the bazaar to Kabul's residential

114 Kabuli, *Divan-e Meskin*, ba-jim.

115 Interview with custodian of the Khaneqah-e 'Ala' al-Din, Kabul and Sayqal, *Cheragh-e Ma'arifat Kulid-e Sa'adat*, 64.

116 Baba-e Khudi, or Andkhui, was a disciple of Amir Kullal, who the *pir* of Khwaja Baha al-Din Naqshband.

117 Fufalzai, *Durrat al-Zaman fi Tarikh-e Shah Zaman*, 380.

118 Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul*, 354–55.



FIGURE 5.5 Shrine and Khaneqah of 'Abd-al Baqi Mujaddidi, Shor Bazaar, Kabul

quarters.¹¹⁹ State officials entering central Kabul would have regularly interacted with the Shor Bazaar *khaneqah*. Similarly, travelers to Kabul from Peshawar,

119 Masson, *Narrative of Various Journeys in Balochistan, Afghanistan and the Panjab*, vol. 2: 267.

entered Kabul through Lahore gate, which led via the wood market into Shor Bazaar.¹²⁰

Although Timur Shah and Zaman Shah provided land grants and stipends to Sufi lineages, and even participated in scholarly discussions, they lacked the capacity to effectively interfere in the emerging religio-scholastic sphere.¹²¹ This dynamic ensured the autonomy of the *khaneqah* at Shor Bazaar.

First, as Charles Masson pointed out, the state sphere in Kabul, as in Peshawar, was confined to the Bala Hisar citadel, and physically separated from the central city. This was in contrast to other Durrani cities including Ghazni, Qandahar, and Herat.¹²² The Kabul citadel was self-sufficient, housing palaces, administrative buildings, a bureau of police, courts, bazaars, mosques, and residential areas. Interaction with the central city was therefore limited. Second, *khaneqahs* and *madrases* could maintain a degree of financial independence from the Durrani state. Land grants awarded for these institutions were, naturally, irrevocable, and they drew additional material support for day to day operations from disciples and merchant classes.¹²³

120 Both Durie and Moorcroft mention walking through Shor Bazaar, and from there to Bala Chawk, a central square which housed Hindu and Muslim cloth merchants. On the main bazaar road, one would find bakers, cooks, soup sellers, fruit, shoe and boot sellers, and alleys that led to shops of various types of craftsmen. Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul*, 354. Moorcroft and Trebeck, *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces*, 375.

121 Several biographies, such as *Umdat al-Maqamat* and *Iradat al-ʿAsheqin*, mention land grants to set up *khaneqahs*, while both Elphinstone and ʿAbd al-Qadir Qadiri Kashmiri point out that very generous stipends and grants were provided by the Durrani government for ʿulama.

122 Masson, *Narrative of Various Journeys in Balochistan, Afghanistan and the Panjab*, vol. 2: 251.

123 For example, the *khaneqah* of Gulabshah in Kabul was provided by a disciple who dedicated his own house for gatherings, and several students established affiliated *khaneqahs* with their own resources. The Paiminar Qadiri *khaneqahs* were similarly sustained by landholdings within the order. Additionally, land and charitable endowments provided by the Durrani states to *khaneqahs* including Gulabshah, Mujaddidiyya-e Shor Bazaar, and Saʿad al-din Ansari, provided a steady irrevocable stream of income. Kabuli, *Iradat al-ʿAsheqin*, 6. There were several other non-state sources of financing for Sufis, particular for those who may have performed other religious or legal functions. Elphinstone, for instance, pointed out that the public was generous in providing alms to either the poor, to holy men or to ʿulama. In addition, in both urban and rural areas, ʿulama derived income from legal services, while imams would often be paid by the congregation. Village imams would “have share of produce and crops from villages, grants of land from king and heads of villages, [or] legacies of land from individuals” Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul*, vol. 1: 339, 345.

2.2.4 Sacred Authority and Durrani Temporal Rule

Despite occasional forays into the state and military sphere, Khwaja Safiullah and the Hazarat-e Ma'sumiyya were able to assert their independence at Kabul by consciously maintaining a separation from the ruling elite. Unlike state 'ulama, this shielded them from the political dislocations which eventually resulted in civil war and fragmentation of the Durrani territories.

The biographies make clear that the Hazarat were often patronized by regional elites, including the Mughals, Durrani, and regional powerbrokers who sought legitimacy through them. In addition, members of Durrani administration, we are told, frequented the *khaneqah* at Shor Bazaar. However, the Hazarat and their chief *khulafa'* did not involve themselves directly in the affairs of the court and their attitude towards the Durrani was somewhat complicated.

References to the Durrani and their administrators in the biographies of the Hazarat-e Ma'sumiyya are not necessarily disparaging.¹²⁴ Overall, however, in Mujaddidi literature the Durrani are presented as well-intentioned though misguided rulers, and ultimately subject to the will of saintly authorities.

The absence of any explicit praise of the Durrani in biographies of the Hazarat-e Ma'sumiyya is particularly unusual given that contemporary literature often contains dedications or effusive praise for the local sovereigns as protectors and purveyors of justice. Instead, the Hazarat actively maintained a distance from royal authority. *Umdat al-Maqamat* relates that after a transformative experience at age 40, Khwaja Safiullah refused to admit court notables who came to seek his blessings and advice. In another instance, the biography notes that while travelling from Peshawar to Kabul, Timur Shah Durrani requested a visit to Khwaja Safiullah, who politely refused an audience.

Particularly noteworthy is an incident involving the *dastarbandi* ceremony of Zaman Shah. Typically, the investiture ceremony of a ruler involved the ceremonial wrapping of a turban around the head of the honored individual. The senior-most religious figure would be selected to perform the ceremony, and would present a copy of the Qur'an to the king on condition that he abided by its precepts. *Umdat al-Maqamat* relates that on the day of Timur Shah's death (12 May 1793) all the notables and religious figures gathered in the Bala Hisar fortress to perform the funeral prayers with the heir apparent. The new shah specifically requested that Khwaja Safiullah come to the royal mosque at the Bala Hisar and perform his *dastarbandi*. The *pir* refused, and instead called

124 A paean for Timur Shah Durrani in the opening pages of *Makhzan al-Anwar* even praises the king as justice and chartable, and refers to him as the lord of the conjunctions. Khwaja Safiullah Mujaddidi, "Anwar al-Safi" 1845, fol. 6a-7a, MSS 34307, University of Sindh Central Library, Jamshoro.

upon Zaman Shah to appear before him at his *khaneqah* “in a humble manner.” That night, Zaman Shah proceeded on foot, with two or three companions, to the Mujaddidi *khaneqah* at Shor Bazaar. The *pir* performed the ceremony, then exclaimed to the new king: “See how exalted our Poverty is, that it has sent you at this time of night, on foot, from the Sultan’s palace to the chamber of our Poverty.”¹²⁵

Such pointed ambivalence towards the Durrani may be due to two factors. First, it may have represented a deliberate effort to preserve popular authority that was not subject to the volatility of *divan* politics of the post-Nader Shahi order. This would have allowed the Hazarat-e Ma’sumiyya to maintain their role as religio-political facilitators. In effect, they could provide continuity amidst the constant power struggles in Kabul, Qandahar, Peshawar, and Herat.¹²⁶ Second, the Mujaddidis of Hindustan as a whole had an ambivalent reaction towards the Durrani invasion and may not have considered the Durrani as the ideal sovereigns to assume the Mughal mantle after their invasion of Sirhind. Several of Hindustan’s contemporary Mujaddidi Sufis had initially expressed their support for the Durrani invasion. However, as Iqbal Mujaddidi points out, the Mujaddidi ‘ulama and *pirs* ultimately objected to the devastation that Ahmad Shah’s invasion brought about which further destabilized the region.¹²⁷ Perhaps then, in their estimation, the Durrani could not ensure the long-term stability which the earlier Mughal emperors had delivered.

3 Genealogy and Sources of Authority

The next question that emerges is how the Hazarat-e Ma’sumiyya represented and secured their authority in Kabul – a diverse and contested milieu quite distinct from Sirhind. As we have discussed, Kabul hosted an ethnically variegated Sunni and Shi’a population with numerous Sufi affiliations.¹²⁸

125 Fufalzai, *Timur Shah Durrani*, 682.

126 Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet*, 12.

127 Dehlavi, *Maqamat-e Mazhari*, 41, 43, 49. Both Mirza Mazhar Jan-e Janan and Shah Waliullah at Delhi, who had earlier supported the Durrani campaigns, lamented that his violence was unacceptable.

128 Elphinstone mentions that numerous ‘sects’ existed in Kabul, such as the “ancient sect of Mulla Zaki,” supposedly based on the teachings of Khayyam. Mountstuart Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul, and Its Dependencies in Persia, Tartary, and India: Comprising a View of the Afghaun Nation, and a History of the Dooraunee Monarchy* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and J. Murray, 1819), vol. 1: 331.

The Mujaddidi response to this ecumenical and ethnic diversity is evidenced in the genealogies of the Hazarat as articulated in *‘Umdat al-Maqamat* and later hagiographies. By invoking the intertwined sacred and physical genealogies of the central figure, Sirhindi, this biography represents the lineage as a synthetic tradition. It reconciles Sunni and Imami traditions, as well as the principal orders of Hindustan, Khorasan, and Turkestan – including the Chishtiyya and Suhrawardiyya – into one cohesive lineage. Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi constitutes the critical source of authority from which all of the transregional lineages flow. In Shah Fazlullah’s narrative he is a figure at once Kabuli, Hindustani, Persianate, pan-Islamic, and beyond the physical realm. This self-representation of the order, as both transregional and local, may have been a means by which the Hazarat gained widespread acceptance in environments as distinct as the Kabul Valley and Hindustan.

3.1 *The Caliphate and Imamate*

Similar to other contemporary Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi biographies, the lineage of the Hazarat in *‘Umdat al-Maqamat* begins with the Prophet Muhammad and his family, and goes on to include the Rightly Guided Caliphs, twelve Imams, and the Ahl-e Suffah.¹²⁹ However, in contrast to other biographies, Shah Fazlullah emphasizes that belief in the Imams and the Caliphate are not mutually exclusive. In fact, he consciously makes an effort to reconcile the two lineages of Prophetic succession. It is noteworthy that the author identifies himself as a staunch Sunni, yet refers to concepts, terminology, and appellations for the Imams often associated with Shi’ism. Moreover, he emphasizes the Hazarat’s reverence for the Prophetic lineage. This emphasis may reflect the Hazarat’s effort to accommodate Kabul’s specific confessional milieu, particularly given Kabul’s influential Shi’i population and the preponderance of devotional traditions to the Prophet Muhammad’s family.¹³⁰ Rather than engaging in anti-Shi’a polemics, the Hazarat, according to the biography, present themselves as legitimate inheritors of the Imamate.

First, Shah Fazlullah stresses Imam ‘Ali’s role as both the first of the Imams and the fourth caliph¹³¹ and designates him with a range of Sunni and Shi’i

129 Lit, People of the Bench. This refers to Prophetic companions who lived a life of asceticism, and who are considered the progenitors of all Sufi paths.

130 The biographical narrative in *Rawzat al-Awliya* and *Maqamat-e Mazhari* begins with the four caliphs, followed by Naqshbandi sacred genealogy. *Maqamat-e Mazhari* does not reference the 12 Imams, while *Rawzat al-Awliya* includes short entries on Imam Hosayn and Hasan. The Chishti and Qadri are referenced, without separate entries dedicated to the *toroq*.

131 Shah Mohammad Fazlullah, *‘Umdat al-Maqamat*, 28–29.

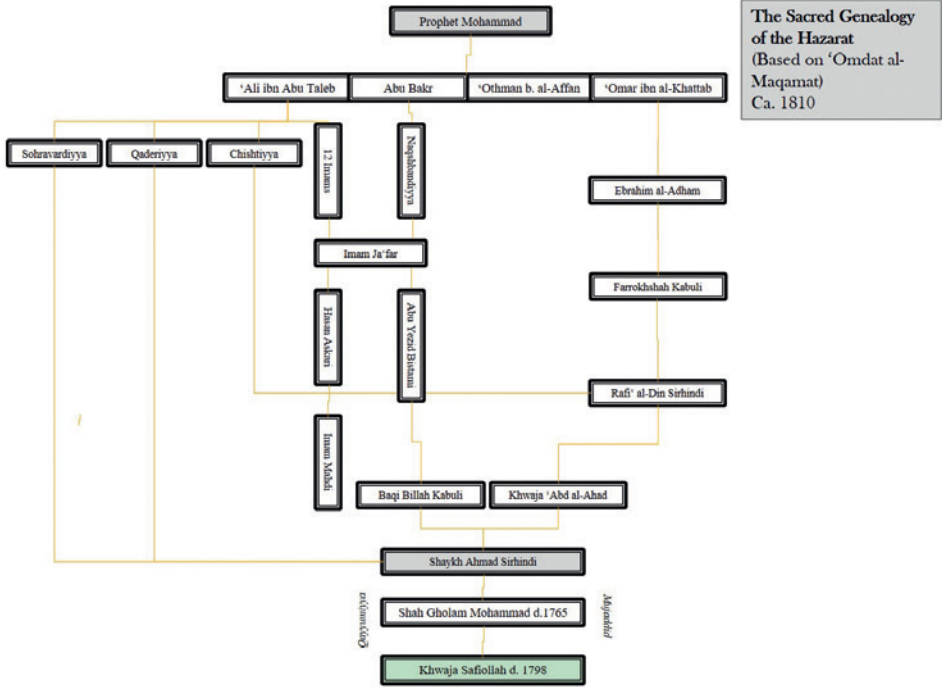


FIGURE 5.6 Sacred Genealogy Hazarat

appellations: “Imam ‘Ali, Asadullah al-Ghalib, Matlub-e Koll-e Taleb, Amir al-Mu’minin Hazrat ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib.”¹³² He exhibits a deep devotional commitment to ‘Ali. In a personal side-note, he tells us that, upon visiting to the shrine of Imam ‘Ali in Balkh, he was so moved that he wrote a *kafiyeh* in his honor. In the verses of praise, Shah Fazlullah mentions the “*velayat*” (spiritual dominion) and “*vasilat*” (intercession) of ‘Ali, and offers to sacrifice himself to the “dogs at your door.”¹³³ Then, to prevent any further debates regarding succession, he points out that differences in *ijtihad* existed between the companions of the Prophet, but that the differences are all beyond reproach.¹³⁴

Second, as part of the Naqshbandi lineage, Shah Fazlullah presents individual biographical entries for the Twelve Imams, along with their Shi‘i titles. This section, entitled “A’emah al-Mahdiyyin,” outlines significant aspects of

132 Ibid., 28.

133 Ibid., 30. He further emphasizes that the contemporary Sunni tradition bestows enormous praise to “Khatun-e Qiyamat, Shafe-e Ummat, Sayyeda Nisa al-Alamin, Fatima al-Zahra.”

134 Ibid., 24.

their life and their period of *Imamat*. An entry on Imam Hosayn, which details his suffering and sacrifices, is particularly noteworthy. The author exonerates Mu'awiya by pointing out that he eventually accepted Hosayn's caliphate, but curses Yazid as "Yazid-e Palid (impure)," a customary Shi'i practice.¹³⁵ Both the title of this section, referencing the connection of the Imamate to the Mahdi tradition, as well as the content, are unusual for Sunni hagiographies. This represents a departure even from earlier Mujaddidi writings. For example, *Hazarat al-Qods* of Badr al-din Sirhindi identifies the Imami lineage of the Naqshbandiyya, but does not include such a detailed treatment on their lives.¹³⁶

Shah Fazlullah's entry on the twelfth Imam "Hazrat Imam Mohammad bin al-Hasan al-'Askari" is of particular interest. It attests to contested eschatological traditions in contemporary Kabul, and presents both the Sunni and Shi'a view on the subject. Shah Fazlullah begins, curiously, with the traditionally Shi'i appellations of the twelfth Imam: "Abu'l-Qasem and Hojjat, Qa'em, Montazer, Mahdi, and Saheb-e Zaman." He then mentions that the Imam went into occultation, and relates the Shi'i narrative. This is subsequently countered with an alternative Sunni explanation from 'Ala' ad-Dawleh Semnani:

[The twelfth Imam] achieved the status of *Abdal*, and when the *Qotb* of that time 'Ali bin Hasan Baghdadi passed away, Imam Mohammad took his place as *Qotb*. He remained *Qotb* for nineteen years until he passed away and was buried in Medina.¹³⁷

In the following section, Shah Fazlullah offers the Sunni narrative concerning the Mahdi, now referencing Ibn 'Arabi's *Futuh al-Makkīyya* as the authoritative Sunni source.¹³⁸ Based on *Futuh al-Makkīyya*, Shah Fazlullah provides a detailed treatment of eschatological events, from the birth of Mohammad Mahdi at Medina, to the descent of the Prophet Jesus. This detailed discussion of the Mahdi is intended as a corrective for audiences exposed to the Shi'i narrative.

135 Ibid., 32.

136 Sirhindi, *Hazarat al-Qods*, 1–40. Badr ud-din Sirhindi was a *khalifah* of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi.

137 Shah Mohammad Fazlullah, *Umdat al-Maqamat*, 37–38. *Abdal* (substitutes) and *Qotb* (spiritual pole) refers to Sufi ranks of sainthood.

138 This is noteworthy, as prior to Friedmann's work, scholars like I.H. Qureshi, S.A.A. Rizvi, and John Voll claimed the rejection of Ibn 'Arabi to be a hallmark of the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi tradition, and Sirhindi and Ibn Arabi were presented as figureheads of irreconcilable strands of Sufism. This reference indicates that Ibn Arabi constituted an authoritative source for Mujaddidi theology.

It further reflects eschatological expectations in early nineteenth-century Kabul which crossed Sunni-Shi'i confessional lines.

3.2 *Transregional Sufi Traditions*

After the Imamate the next chain of transmission in *Umdat al-Maqamat* is the Naqshbandi lineage. This lineage links the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidiyya to the Prophet Muhammad (and caliphs and Imams) through a trans-regional chain of Sufi luminaries including Qasem ibn Abu Bakr, Abu Yazid al-Bastami, 'Abd al-Khaleq Ghujdawani, and Khwaja 'Ubaydullah Ahrar.¹³⁹ Through this chain of Sufi transmission the Hazarat-e Ma'sumiyya portrayed themselves as inheritors of a vast body of knowledge and sacred authority spanning over a millennium. *Umdat al-Maqamat*, following standard Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi biographies, lists a long chain of masters extending from the Hejaz, to Persia, Turkestan, Khorasan, and Hindustan, eventually returning to Kabul.

The role of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq – the sixth Imam and fifth great *pir* of the Naqshbandi order – is pivotal in synthesizing the Naqshbandi and Imami genealogy. Shah Fazlullah explains that because of Imam Ja'far's maternal descent through Abu Bakr, and paternal descent through 'Ali, as well as his spiritual inheritance from both, the Naqshbandi path is the "most exalted," and represents the "convergence of the two oceans."¹⁴⁰

Shah Fazlullah goes on to remind us that the Mujaddidiyya are heirs not just to one, but to all the four great Sufi traditions – namely, the Suhrawardi, Chishti, Qadiri, and Naqshbandi. Indeed, Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi and his successors had received *ijazat* in all four. In this vein, Khwaja Safiullah wrote a treatise, entitled *Chahar Jui* (Four Streams), in which he argued that all four paths were "on truth," and received their spiritual authority from Imam 'Ali.¹⁴¹ This ecumenism may have attracted disciples from all four Sufi lineages in Kabul. It also facilitated connections between *khaneqahs*, and allowed the order to incorporate practices and teachings from each of the traditions. Such 'bundling' of Sufi orders was a widespread development in this period with

139 The principal *pirs* who define each phase of the tradition (from whom the order derives its name at every stage) were: Abu Yazid al-Bistami (Tayfuriya), Khwajah Baha al-Din Naqshband (Naqshbandiyya), Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (Mujaddidiyya), his son Mohammad Ma'sum (Ma'sumiyya), Sibghatullah (Sibghaviyya), and Safiullah (Safaviyya).

140 According to Shah Fazlullah, through Abu Bakr, Imam Ja'far inherited the 'velayat-e Siddiqiyya', and through 'Ali he inherited the "velayat-e Mumtazaj be Kamalat-e Nabuwwat." Shah Mohammad Fazlullah, *Umdat al-Maqamat*, 45–46.

141 Khwaja Safiullah Mujaddidi, "Masnavi Chahar Jui" n.d., MSS R. No. 108, Punjab University Dr. Iqbal Mujaddidi Collection (Original in Daudi Collection, Lahore); Shah Mohammad Fazlullah, *Umdat al-Maqamat*, 46o.

major repercussions in terms of communal organization. It led, as Devin de Weese argues, to the absorption of former communal structures defined by *silsila* affiliations into transnational *silsilas* like the Mujaddidiyya.¹⁴²

In a later discussion on Sirhindi's genealogy, Shah Fazlullah places considerable emphasis on Sirhindi's family as one of Hindustan's principal Chishti Sufi lineages. He points out that Sirhindi had received *ijaza* in the Chishti as well as Qadri orders from his father, Khwaja 'Abd al-Ahad, prior to his initiation into the Naqshbandiyya.¹⁴³

3.3 *The Transregional and the Local*

Umdat al-Maqamat also harmonizes the transregionalism of the Naqshbandi order with Khorasan and Kabul's vernacular religio-historical identity through Sirhindi's physical genealogy. On one hand, the Naqshbandi Sufi lineage, as mentioned above, is ultimately trans-regional. The Naqshbandi chain of saints, as well as the *khulafa'* of Khwaja Safiullah formed a network of pilgrimage and scholastic sites scattered throughout the Persianate world and even beyond. On the other hand, the Hazarat are represented as an indigenously Kabuli and Khorasani family, whose history is intimately connected with the foundation of Kabul and the establishment of Islam in the region.

The biographical note on Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi is complemented with a sub-entry on his celebrated ancestry, which includes 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, Ibrahim ibn al-Adham, Shaykh Shihab al-Din Farrokshah Kabuli, and Imam Rafi' al-Din Kabuli. The unusual inclusion of Ibrahim ibn al-Adham, the mythological king of Balkh turned Sufi, is significant. His abandonment of wealth and power in his quest for the truth is a trope which his descendants, from Farrokshah Kabuli to Khwaja Safiullah, are said to embody. As Shah Fazlullah narrates, Farrokshah had settled in Khorasan during the reign of Sultan Mas'ud Ghaznavi (r. 1030–40). Like his ancestor Ibrahim, Farrokshah was originally engaged in worldly pursuits, and was appointed as the Ghaznavid governor of Kabul. All of this was overturned through a chance encounter with a Chishti Sufi. Farrokshah thereafter renounced his worldly belongings and commenced on a path of asceticism. He eventually returned to Kabul, and was credited with introducing Islam in the Kohistani regions.¹⁴⁴

142 Devin DeWeese, "'Dis-Ordering' Sufism in Early Modern Central Asia: Suggestions for Rethinking the Sources and Social Structures of Sufi History in the 18th and 19th Centuries." (A paper delivered at the 'Uzbek-Japanese Scientific Cooperation: History and Culture of Central Asia (Sources and Methodological Issues), Tashkent, 2009), 279.

143 Shah Mohammad Fazlullah, *Umdat al-Maqamat*, 137.

144 *Ibid.*, 99–100; Taleqani, *Karnamaheh-ye Jihad*, 33–35.

The other ancestor mentioned in *Umdat al-Maqamat* and later biographies is Imam Rafi‘ al-Din, a notable Chishti *pir* who left Kabul for Sirhind in the fourteenth century. He is credited as one of the founders of the city of Sirhind under the Tughluq Delhi Sultanate. His lineage produced several important Chishti *pirs* of Hindustan.¹⁴⁵ He therefore represents at once a meeting point between the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi and Chishti orders, and a historical link between Kabul and Sirhind. The biography treats both Sirhindi’s father ‘Abd al-Ahd and Sirhindi as natives of Kabul on the basis of their descent from Rafi‘ al-Din. They are designated as both ‘Kabuli’ and ‘Sirhindi’.¹⁴⁶

3.4 *Ghaws, Qutb, Mujaddid, and Qayyum*

In parallel with their genealogical inheritance, select members of the Hazarat inherited certain esoteric, exalted Sufi designations through Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi. These undergirded their spiritual authority and metaphysical cosmic functions. In *Umdat al-Maqamat*, Khwaja Safiullah is designated as the Mujaddid of the thirteenth century and “*Ghaws al-Jinn wa al-Bashar, Qotb al-Zaman, Qayyum al-Jahan, Zobda-ye Ahl Allah*.”¹⁴⁷ While the stations of *ghaws* (supreme helper) and *qotb* trace back to writings of al-Tirmidhi, Abd al-Razaq, and Ibn ‘Arabi, among others, *Mujaddid* and *Qayyum* are intimately associated with Sirhindi.

Although the designation *mujaddid* predates Sirhindi, it became more widely employed after Sirhindi’s exposition on cosmic changes occurring at the turn of the millennium. In his *Maktubat*, in fact, he emphasizes his own role in facilitating these transformations. Shah Fazlullah devotes a section of *Umdat al-Maqamat* to this issue of millennial *tajdid*.¹⁴⁸ He summarizes Sirhindi’s discourses on the renewal of the shari‘a in thousand year cycles. We are told that the Hazarat, inheriting Sirhindi’s mantle, were also the Renewers of their respective epochs.

Finally, Shaykh Ahmed Sirhindi is referred to in the text as the *Qayyum*, an honorific that derives from *Qayyum-e Zaman*, a role introduced near the end of Sirhindi’s life in 1618–19. The function of the *Qayyum* was grounded in the Qur’anic concept of God’s trust. In *Maktubat*, Sirhindi defined the divine trust

145 Shah Mohammad Fazlullah, *Umdat al-Maqamat*, 100–102.

146 Sirhindi, for example, is designated as “Shaykh Ahmad Kabuli summa Sirhindi.” *Ibid.*, 84, 98.

147 *Ibid.*, 445.

148 *Ibid.*, 157.

as the “*Qayyumiyyat* of every object which God awarded to the Perfect Man... All the angels, spirits, and human beings and every other object look towards him for assistance.”¹⁴⁹ The *Qayyum* was a new concept partly derived from Ibn ‘Arabi’s *al-Insan al-Kamil*.¹⁵⁰ Several select successors of Sirhindi have inherited this station from Sirhindi and were, likewise, the *Qayyums* of their respective ages. Among these was Khwaja Safiullah’s *khalifa*, Bibi Saheba, popularly known as ‘Bibi Qayyumah.’¹⁵¹

4 Conclusion

Ultimately, by representing themselves as inheritors of sacred functions and lineages, the Hazarat-e Ma’sumiyya came to embody a more permanent form of authority than the petty rulers of the pre-colonial period. The Hazarat and their contemporary Sufi networks, mediated through the Persian literary tradition, continued to play a critical role in sustaining and perpetuating the concept of a Persianate occumene into the nineteenth century. Even as post-Nader Shahi states collapsed in the wake of Russian, Chinese, and British expansion, the complex architecture of the Mujaddidi network and its symbolic authority remained intact, especially among Muslim populations requiring popular leadership to maintain social cohesion.

The resilience of the Hazarat’s authority is exemplified in the case of Yarkand following a string of rebellions against Qing rule in 1864, half a century after the collapse of the Durrani Empire. The Tungan (ethnic Chinese, or Hui Muslim) agitators required compromise rulers whose popular authority could rally the Turkic Muslims and diverse diaspora communities under a single banner. Surprisingly, for a brief period, they selected as their kings two Kabuli-Sirhindi *pirs*, Gholam Hosayn and ‘Abd al-Rahman, the grandsons of Shah ‘Izzatullah of Kabul.’¹⁵²

149 Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, *Maktubat-e Imam Rabbani* (Karachi: Educational Press, 1972), 11:74.

150 Lit., the Perfect Man. Haar, *Follower and Heir of the Prophet*, 153–55.

151 al-Balkhi, *Tarikh-e Awliya’ al-Ma’ruf bi Ilhamat-e Ghaybiyya fi Salasil-e Sayfiyya*, 128.

152 Taleqani, *Karnamaheh-ye Jihad*, 149–51; Hodong Kim, *Holy War in China: The Muslim Rebellion and State in Chinese Central Asia, 1864–1877* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 64. Anonymous, *A Short History of Chinese Turkestan*, trans. A.M. Mattoo (Srinagar, Kashmir: Center of Central Asian Studies, 1981), 31–32.

Lives of the Enikolopians: Multilingualism and the Religious-National Identity of a Caucasus Family in the Persianate World

Hirotake Maeda

Peoples of the Caucasus played significant roles in the various Persianate polities. Especially after the introduction of the *gholam* corps and the Armenian merchant community in the early seventeenth century, we can detect a steady flow of Georgians and Armenians to and from their communal existence at the core of the Persianate empires.¹ They were not outsiders, foreigners, or guests. Rather they were bearers of cross cultural knowledge and often consisted a leading part of Persianate intellectuals and elite components of the society. However, the establishment of national divisions in the twentieth century seriously damaged the historiography, not to mention the real lives of those border-crossing peoples. This article aims to shed clear light on the reality before the age of nationalism and the nation-state. The calculated neglect of ethno-religious minorities in historical memory is widely evident in various modern polities around the globe. Thus this study contributes to recuperating the diverse and multi-faceted nature of pre-modern societies. It also demonstrates that the flexible and spontaneous adaptation of peoples of mixed heritage was a unique historical phenomenon produced in the Persianate world. The curious fate and survival strategies of one Armenian family from Georgia provide us with many insights into the middle ground between family and states, and (minority) nations and empires, which would contribute our understanding of “Eurasian history” after a century or so of a “national(ized)-interlude.”

The Enikolopian family, meaning “Language Box” in Georgian, broadened their activities in the nineteenth century by exploiting their traditional multilingual skills which were cultivated and preserved in their family profession.²

1 On Safavid policy towards Georgia, see Hirotake Maeda, “Exploitation of the Frontier: The Caucasus Policy of Shah ‘Abbas I,” in *Iran and the World in the Safavid Age*, eds. Willem Floor and Edmund Herzig (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 471–489. On the Armenian merchant community, see the works of Levon and Shushanik Khachikyan, Vazken S. Ghougassian, Edmund Herzig, Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, and Sebouh David Aslanian.

2 As discussed below, this family name consists of Georgian words and many variants exist in Georgian, Armenian, Persian and Russian. In the Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia, the name is

The activities of the family members contained cross-cultural features from the beginning, and are beyond the framework of nationalized history and nationalized historians. Their family history is complex and we have to scrutinize the sources written in various languages, including Persian, Georgian, Armenian, and Russian, at least, to reconstruct it. Some of their family members and close relatives rose to prominence in Iran, as well as in Russia, including the celebrated Qajar courtiers Manuchehr Khan Mo'tamad al-Dowleh (?–1847)³ and Solyman Khan Saham al-Dowleh (?–1853) in Iran, and Mikhail Loris-Melikov (1824–1888) in Russia (this fact has not drawn enough attention).⁴

This essay reconsiders the history of Caucasia's peoples from a much broader regional perspective and tries to integrate (not separate) their history across national borders to present a unified historical sketch across the region and neighboring empires. Thus the study has a trans-imperial and transnational nature. At the same time, by following their lives and mapping the physical and mental boundaries of these imperial subjects, we also can assess the impact of the Russian advance and the regional reorganization of the early nineteenth century. The Enikolopian family's activities between empires are another story of the Great Game, for the Caucasus, being situated at a hub of the Eurasian continent, became contested territories among globalizing European powers in the nineteenth century. There were many examples of the forced deportation of indigenous populations and huge demographic changes which influenced the make-up of local society. We should avoid a narrow interpretation based on a nationalized history which, unfortunately, prevails because of today's political turmoil and the Soviet historical legacy. For Iranian history too, we should avoid conspiracy theories and "imperial agency-ness" – how they

rendered as V. Diloyan, "Yenikolopeanner/Enikolopyanner." *Haykakan sovetakan hanragitaran (Armenian Soviet Encyclopedia)*, (Yerevan, 1977), vol. 3: 517. In this article, I give preference to "Enikolopian." On this family see also Hirotake Maeda, "Transcending Boundaries: When the Mamluk Legacy Meets a Family of Armeno-Georgian Interpreters," in *Constellations of the Caucasus: Empires, Peoples, and Faiths*, ed. Michael A. Reynolds (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishing Inc, 2016), 63–85.

3 He was a Georgian eunuch of great political talents. Abbas Amanat, *Pivot of the Universe: Nasir al-Din Shah and the Iranian Monarchy* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 1997), 40, 45.

4 Loris-Melikov was the Minister of Interior at the court of Aleksandre II. Andreas Kappel, *The Russian Empire: A Multi-ethnic History*, tr. Alfred Clalyton (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 301; Austine Lee Jersild, "From Savagery to Citizenship: Caucasian Mountaineers and Muslims in the Russian Empire", in *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700–1917*, eds. Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzarini (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 103–108, 112.

intruded in reality or perceptions would need a careful study.⁵ In fact, the history of Enikolopians does not permit the easy deployment of a nationalist historiography. Yet it also escapes from the simple praise of being a part of a multi-national society. In the first part of this article we shall introduce the sources and tackle the problem of current historiography.

1 A Family History Lost

The Enikolopians' history was "lost" in twentieth-century historiography, for it was often constructed upon a nationalist framework, and thus neglects human mobility before the emergence of the "nationalized" boundaries in a physical and psychological sense. In order to investigate their genealogical relations and to reconstruct their family history, we need to cross many boundaries fortified by not only linguistic but also historiographical barriers. There are a few studies referring to the Enikolopian family, and by reading those articles one inevitably recognizes that their history is "divided" even among their native Caucasian republics.⁶

Aleksandre Gvakharia (1929–2002), a leading specialist of Georgian-Iranian literary relations, referred to this rather strange family name in his short article in 1983.⁷ He quoted a letter from the Russian Orientalist K. Chaikin to I. Megrelidze dated April 8, 1936 (and April 25, 1936 as well), which mentions a certain "language and tongue box" Manuchehr Khan, the Georgian from "Enakulubu" of Tbilisi (*sandoq-e loqhat va lesan Manuchehr Khan-e Gorji Teḡlisi Enakulubu*).⁸ In fact, "enakolop" consists of two Georgian words, *ena* (language

5 In an important study on the Iranians' perception of the English and the Russians in Qajar Iran, Rudi Matthee reveals that resentment towards the Westerners was rarely found in contemporary sources and the conspiracy theories were products of later period. Rudi Matthee, "Between Sympathy and Enmity: Nineteenth-Century Iranian Views of the British and the Russians," in *Looking at the Coloniser: Cross-Cultural Perceptions in Central Asia and the Caucasus, Bengal, and Related Areas*, eds. Beate Eschment and Hans Harder (Würzburg: Ergon, 2004), 311–338.

6 The Armenians and Georgians developed their own national discourse throughout the nineteenth century. Following these examples, Azerbaijanis also succeeded in shaping their nationhood towards the end of the century. Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, 2nd ed., (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994). Firouzeh Mostashari, *On the Religious Frontier: Tsarist Russia and Islam in the Caucasus* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

7 Gvakharia left an introductory note in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. Aleksandre Gvakharia, "Georgia iv: Literary Contacts with Persia," *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (New York: Bibliotheca Persia Press, 2001), 10: 481–486.

8 Yu. N. Marr, I.V. Megrelidze, and K.I. Chaikin, *Perepiska po boprosam iranistiki i kavkazovedeniya* (Tbilisi: Metsniereba, 1980), 122–123. This book contains letters between Yu. Marr (son

or tongue) and *kolop* (box). Gvakharia also pointed out that “his Christian brother Ebrahim (Abraham) played a certain role in Caucasian-Teheran diplomatic relations.”⁹ Towards the end of the article Gvakharia mentioned another person who bore this family name, a certain Gurgén Enakolopashvili in the eighteenth century (for the protagonists of this chapter see genealogy A). The author asked what relations existed between Gurgén and Manuchehr.¹⁰ So far among Georgian academics, this problem has been left unanswered.

However, a unique article on the Enikolopian family had been published in another neighboring Soviet republic more than a decade earlier. Gvakharia’s article was published just three years after the death of Ivane Enikolopov (Enakolopashvili), a famous literary critic in Soviet Georgia. Enikolopov, a descendant of the above-mentioned Gurgén Enakolopashvili (Mirza Gurgén Khan), wrote an article in 1970 where relations between Manuchehr Khan and the Enikolopian family are discussed.¹¹ Enikolopov is the author of many Russian books on famous Russian writers such as Pushkin, Lermontov, and Griboedov and their relationships with the peoples of the Caucasus. He briefly referred to Manuchehr Khan in relation to Griboedov’s murder. However, it is interesting to note that Enikolopov did not stress these relations, at least in his *Griboedov in Georgia* published in 1954.¹² Only in his 1970 article does he clearly

of the famous linguist Niko Marr), I. Magrelidze (a disciple of Marr), and Chaikin. In fact this Persian form is the same found in a Persian chronicle dedicated to Manuchehr Khan, for which see below.

- 9 Aleksandre Gvakharia, “Erti purtseli kartul-sparsuli istoriuli urtiertobidan (A Note on the Georgian-Persian Historical Relations),” in *Akhloaghmosavluri krebuli (Near Eastern Studies)*, ed. O. Tskitshvili (Tbilisi: Metsniereba, 1983), 198–202.
- 10 Gvakharia concluded by saying that the study will be the work of a scholar of Gabashvili school. On V. Gabashvili and his school of Georgian-Iranian political relations, see Grigol Beradze and Karlo Kutsia, “Towards the Interrelations of Iran and Georgia in the 16th–18th Centuries,” in *Caucasia between Ottoman Empire and Iran, 1555–1914*, eds. Raoul Motika and Michael Ursinus (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2000), 121–132. Thirty years before Gvakharia’s article there actually was another article, written for a more popular audience, that demanded a further study on Manuchehr Khan Gorji simply because he was of Georgian origin. I thank Dr. Grigol Beradze for information on this article.
- 11 I. Enikolopov set up an exhibition on the hundred-year anniversary of Griboedov’s passing, a famous Russian noble writer-diplomat who became a symbol of Georgian-Russian friendship because of his marriage with Nino Chavchavadze, a daughter of an influential Georgian great noble Aleksandre Chavchavadze. Enikolopov contributed to the establishment of the Literary Museum in Tbilisi and also worked as director of the Mtatsminda (Sacred Mountain) Pantheon where Griboedov is buried. He was also in charge of the Pushkin exhibition held in 1937. Cf. Matenadaran 151-1-354. I thank Mr. Rafael Abramyan for access to the materials preserved in Matenadaran.
- 12 I. Enikolopov, *Griboedov v Gruzii* (Tbilisi: Zarya Vostoka, 1954), 85. Enikolopov deliberately refers to his direct ancestor and Manuchehr Khan’s half-brother Abraham Enikolopian

relate that Griboedov's corps were first sent to Echmiadzin with relatives of the Enikolopian family, and that it was an arrangement of an Iranian courtier of Enikolopian origin, namely Manuchehr Khan.¹³ In that article, Manuchehr Khan is identified as a son of the above-mentioned Gurgen Khan.

It is not certain why Ivane Enikolopov refrained from delving into his family's history in a 1954 publication.¹⁴ Although it was not his main subject, social circumstances could have influenced his work. For example, Enikolopov expressed his deep regret when he reviewed a book on Russo-Iranian relations, accusing the author of "neglecting the endeavors of the Armenians and Georgians in the defense of the fatherland."¹⁵ Ironically, however, the social atmosphere represented by Enikolopov's usage of the word "fatherland" (*samshoblo* in this Georgian article) did not easily permit him to reveal his family's activities fully in his lifetime, probably because it dealt with "dangerous" Islamic connections and the existence of converted relatives. Enikolopov was born in 1888, the same year that his close relative (his uncle's wife's brother) Mikhail Loris-Melikov died, and lived most of his life during the complicated times of the twentieth century, with its revolutions and wars.

Still this gap of information is striking given that Enikolopov lived and died in Georgia, and was one of the few Armenian representatives of Georgian society mentioned in the Georgian Soviet Encyclopedia. He also helped prevent the sale of Shota Rustaveli's portrait in 1922.¹⁶ We certainly admit how

and his son Mikhail as Griboedov's friends in the abovementioned book, *ibid.* 26–27. He also mentions Manuchehr's other half-brother Agalo Enikolopian as a chief administrator in Armenians in Qajar Azerbaijan province. I. Enikolopov, *Griboedov i Vostok* (Erevan: Aipetrat, 1954), 20. Kelly used three books of Enikolopov (Yenikolopov), but never referred to the family name of Manuchehr Khan. Laurence Kelly, *Diplomacy and Murder in Tehran: Alexander Griboedov and Imperial Russia's Mission to the Shah of Persia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

- 13 In this well-known tragedy, Solomon Melikov, Griboedov's assistant in the embassy and a nephew of Manuchehr Khan, was killed. Mourning her grandson's murder, Manuchehr's mother soon passed away. Both corps were sent to Echmiadzin to cross the border. I. Enikolopov, "Griboedov i sem'ya Enikolopovykh: k 175-letiyu so dnya rojdeniya A.S. Griboedova," *Literaturnaya Armeniya*, no. 1 (January 1970), 81–85 (the manuscript of this article is preserved in Matenadaran fond 151-1-155).
- 14 Judging from my investigation and interviews with his relatives in Tbilisi, Moscow, and Cambridge (Massachusetts), and the documents preserved in the Matenadaran (Armenian State Archive), I. Enikolopov possessed many materials at his disposal which made it possible to reconstruct his family history.
- 15 I. Enikolopashvili, "Griboedovis diplomatiuri moghvatseoba (The Diplomatic Activities of Griboedov)," *Mnatobi (The Light)*, 10 October 1960. He criticized L.V. Shostakovich.
- 16 Anonymous, "ivane enikolopovi/enakolopashvili konstantines dze" (Ivane Enikolopovi/Enakolopashvili, son of Konstantine), ed. *K'art'uli Sabchot'a Ents'iklopedia (Georgian*

influential the Soviet nationalities policy was. Although he made his career in Georgian society and wrote articles not only in Russian but in Georgian, Enikolopov won his degree in history in the Republic of Armenia in 1967 and his aforementioned 1970 article was published in Yerevan.¹⁷ This was not common knowledge among Georgian academics, at least until his death.¹⁸ As a result, the Enikolopians' history has not obtained its rightful place in historiography.¹⁹

2 Shermazanian's Work as an Important Source for Iranian History

An Armenian source called *Materials for the National History: Distinguished Armenians in Persia* provides us with a considerable amount of information for exploring the Enikolopians' history. It is not an irony that a book with "national history" in the title and published in the Russian city Rostov (on the Don) in 1890 gives us ample evidence and crucial information for understanding the history of, among other topics, Middle Eastern polities, the Armenian community in Iran, and Russo-Iranian relations.²⁰ It is important to note that the meaning of "national" was quite a different only hundred years ago as the

Soviet Encyclopedia, (Tbilisi, 1979), vol. 4: 157. Zurab Chumburidze, *Kartuli khehnatserebis kvaldakval* (Tbilisi: Nakaduli, 1983), 287–288.

17 Matenadaran 151-1-310.

18 I asked the late Gvakharia, a prominent Georgian scholar of Iranian studies who passed away in 2002, about I. Enikolopov some years before his death. He mentioned Enikolopov's rich private library and was concerned about its fate. We do not know whether Gvakharia noticed the relations.

19 In his article "Armenia: Armeno-Iranian relations 1828–1925," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, H. Papazian wrote that "Some scions of Armenian feudal families settled in Tabriz or Tehran and took up administrative and financial posts. These included such figures as Manuchehr Khan Mo'tamad al-Dawleh, who was captured by Aqa Mohammad Khan at the end of the previous century in the conquest of Tiflis ... Of his brother's sons, Mirza Rostam Khan, Agalar Khan and Solyman Khan also occupied high posts." As we discuss below, according to an Armenian source, Manuchehr Khan became a prisoner of war in 1804 during the reign of Fath-'Ali Shah. Mirza Rostam and Agalar Khan were Manuchehr's elder brothers. Also see, George A. Bournoutian, "Armenians in Nineteenth-Century Iran," in *The Armenians of Iran*, ed. Cosroe Chaqueri (Cambridge: Harvard Center for Middle Eastern Studies, 1998), 73.

20 Galust Shermazanean, *Nivter azgayin patmuteshamar: yereveli hayikazunk i Parskastan* (*Materials for the National History: Distinguished Armenians in Persia*) (Rostov, 1890). I thank Ms. Ketii Otashvili, a Georgian specialist of old Armenian literature who helped me read the text and prepared a partial Georgian translation. In the present article, the biographies of Mirza Rostam (201–208), Mirza Gurgen (284–294), Aghalar Khan (311–323), Manuchehr Khan (323–377), and Solomon/Solyman Khan (377–388) are

author devoted more than fifty pages in his 400-page volume to Manuchehr Khan, an Armenian by origin but a Muslim convert eunuch, and from an *azn-auri*, or Georgian landed nobility background (so he was called the Georgian/Gorji in Persian sources). As it happens, the Enikolopians' family story was widely known in the nineteenth century. We again note how deeply the nationalized way of thinking penetrated into the historiography of the twentieth century as this interesting work is now mostly forgotten.

The author of the book, Galust Shermazanian (Galust Arutyunyan Shermazan-Vardanyants or Shermazan-Vardanov), was born in 1814 in old Julfa situated along the Aras River. His father Arutyun Vardanyants was a trader who had close ties with the Qajar court. He was later given the name Shermazan. After that, Shermazanian was added to their family name. In 1818, he moved to Tbilisi at the invitation of Nerses Ashtaraketsi who played an important role in the Armenian community in Russia and Russia's Caucasian policy. He then became an active benefactor of St. Nerses Seminary established by Nerses Ashtaraketsi.²¹ In 1825–1829, his son Galust studied at this seminary and started his cultural activities, writing a play and acting on stage.²²

Galust became his father's agent and took control of the family business, shuttling between Leipzig and Iran. By acquiring a knowledge of German, he continued to be quite active in cultural activities. Even during his stay in Iran, Galust established a theater (called the Shermazanian Theater/Darbaz Shermazanyantsa) in Tbilisi and played an important role in Tbilisi's cultural life.²³ On the other hand, having resided in Tabriz, for a long time the most flourishing town in Iran, Shermazanian acquired the title *tojjarbashi* (meaning

mainly analyzed. Harden made some use of this source. Evelyn J. Harden, *The Murder of Griboedov: New Materials* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1979).

21 Before serving as the Catholicos of the Armenian Apostolic Church between 1843 and 1857, Nerses Ashtaraketsi was once the leader of Diocese of Georgia from 1814 to 1828. On his life, see V.G. Tunyan, "Zashitnik Otechestva"-Katolikos vsekh Armyan. Nerses Ashtaraketsi. 1826–1857, Erevan: Sv. Echmiadzin, 2007.

22 For the life of Galust Shermazanian, see Sambel Karapetyan, *Mery Tiflisa (Tbilisi)* (Erevan: Gitutyun, 2003), 52–60.

23 In 1860, he returned to Tbilisi and was selected to serve as Tbilisi's civil mayor in 1864. It was the first time a so-called new citizen, *akhalmosul* (meaning "newly arrived" in Georgian), was selected for this post, who did not come from the (old) citizens called *mokalake* (meaning "city folk" in Georgian). He was a major representative of Armenian society in nineteenth-century Tbilisi in terms of his intellectual and economic activities. He was also known as a bibliophile. See A.P. Berje, "Biblioteka Kallusta Shirmazaniyana (syna armyanskogo vykhodtsa iz Persii v Rossiyu)," *Kavkaz* (1856), 29–31. On his dismissal, Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, 120. Briefly on *mokalake*, also see *ibid*, "Eastern Armenians under Tsarist Rule," in *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Time*, ed. R.G. Hovannesian, 2 vols. (New York: St. Martin's Press), vol. 2: 114.

“head of merchants” in Persian). As a frequent guest of Qajar courtiers of Enikolopian origin, Shermazanian himself witnessed many events. He not only associated personally with many Enikolopians in Iran, but Shermazanian also was related to this family through the second wife of Manucehr’s elder half-brother, Mirza Rostam. His informants were Aghalar Khan in Tabriz and Solayman Khan (Solomon) in Tehran, both belonging to the Enikolopian family (Manucehr’s elder half-brother and nephew).²⁴ Thus his description on the family is a high-quality source on this family.

3 The Origins of Enikolopiants

Only by choosing and comparing the information from various sources in multiple languages can we construct a more reliable family history of the Enikolopians. Besides Shermazanian’s Armenian description we have a Persian chronicle and a Georgian document at our disposal to reconstruct the family genealogy. First we must probe the detailed descriptions made by Shermazanian (see genealogy B, based on Shermazanian’s description). According to him a certain Vehen Mamikonian (B-1) from the ruling family of Sasun (today a district in the Batman Province of Turkey) fled to his relatives in Siunik (or Syunik, today situated in the south of the Republic of Armenia). These relatives were the offspring of Siunik’s ruler Elikum and established a family line there. Among his descendants, Mirza Zohrab, or Zurab Mamikonian (B-2), who was born in the first half of the seventeenth century, had linguistic talent. He knew Persian, Arabic, and Armenian, and went to Georgia to serve as translator while acquiring knowledge of Georgian as well. The title of *mirza* was held by a person who was trained as a scribe in Persianate societies. Because of his language skills, Zurab was given the additional family name of Enakolop (language box) by the Georgian kings.²⁵

Shermazanian wrote that Mirza Zurab lived for more than a hundred years and left two successors, Mirza Aftandil (B-3) and Tomas (B-4). Aftandil succeeded Zurab as a translator and also lived for more than a hundred years. His successor was Mirza Papik (B-5) and his successors were Azaria (B-6) and Mirza Gurgen (B-7). Azaria also lived more than a hundred years and left Stepanos (B-8). Their sons were Jhangirn (B-9) and Mikayel (B-10). Mirza Gurgen became a translator and by his first wife had four sons, Mirza Ghahraman (Qaraman) (B-12), Mirza Rostam (B-13), Mirza Abraham (Abrama) (B-14), and

²⁴ Shermazanian, *Nivter azgayin patmutedan hamar*, 201.

²⁵ Shermazanian, *Nivter azgayin patmutedan hamar*, 201–202.

Aghalar Khan (Aghalo) (B-15), and by his second wife three sons, Manuchar Khan (Manuchehr, Chongur) (B-18), Jhan-Bashkh (B-19), and Jhangir (B-20).²⁶

On their genealogy the Persian source *Madayeh al-Mo'tamadiyya* is also useful. The two surviving manuscripts were written in neat *nast'aliq*, in 1259 AH / 1843 AD (MS. Or. 4511) and in 1263 AH / 1847 AD (MS. Or. 4512), and are preserved in the British Library. The source is a collection of poems in praise of Manuchehr Khan Enikolopian compiled by Mohammad Ali Bahar and includes a brief account of the Enikolopian family in its introduction.²⁷ Interestingly, the author wrote that before the appearance of Mirza Sohrab, the fifth ancestor of his majesty with wisdom (meaning Manuchehr Khan), the family was called Mamikonian (ممکان). Mirza Sohrab (Zurab in Georgian) was known for his linguistic talent, a skill held by later members of this family, and "for that reason they became known as Enakolop which means the Language Box in Georgian."²⁸ This part mostly corresponds with Shermazanian's description. Thus the family had their own common and shared account on their ancestral history in the nineteenth century.

According to the Persian author Sohrab's son was Mirza Gurgen and was known as Mirza Baba Enikolop. Mirza Baba's son was Aftandil. The author repeated the name of Gurgen, Sohrab, and Aftandil for the ancestors of Manuchehr Khan. Baba could be identified with Papik in Shermazanian's work. The Persian author also connects a family legend with Persian and Armenian mythology: they were the descendants of Anushirvan and after the rise of Islam the family moved from the Armenian capital (which was situated between Yerevan, Bayazid, and Qars, which implies Ani) to Tbilisi.

In addition to these half-legendary descriptions, there is an anonymous Georgian genealogy with a short biography (see Genealogy C based on this anonymous Georgian genealogy).²⁹ It must belong to the first half of the nineteenth century because Manuchehr Khan (written as *manucharkhan*), who

26 Shermazanian, *Nivter azgayin patmutedan hamar*, 202.

27 On the manuscripts and the author, see Ch. Rieu, *Supplement to the Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London, 1895), 92–95 and C.A. Storey, *Persian Literature: A Bio-bibliographical Survey*, vol. 1, part 2 (London: Luzac, 1953), 902. It seems that the discussions of the family's name by Russian and Georgian scholars are based on this source. MS. Or. 4511: fols. 10a–11a, 4512: 8a–9a.

28 MS. Or. 4511, fol.10a: به این سبب موسوم و ملقب به انکلبوکه به لغة گرج به معنی صندوق لغات و لسانست آمدند.

29 I thank the descendants and relatives of the Enikolopian family in Tbilisi and Moscow for putting these unpublished documents at my disposal. There is another document of genealogy in Russian that contains information for the twentieth century. It is probably in the hands of I. Enikolopov.

died in 1847 (5 Rabi' I 1263 AH / 21 February 1847 AD), is said to be still living (*aris tsotskhali*). It is reported that their ancestor was from the city of Ani, which corresponds to the Persian description. There is mention of a certain Papa (C-6) (Papa means grandfather in the eastern Georgian dialect) who once fled to Qarabagh after the fall of Safavid power and during the turmoil in Georgia in the early eighteenth century. Papa bought land and married there. Once the situation calmed, he returned to Georgia. Papa left four sons: the eldest was Mirza Gurgen (C-7), then Mikhail (C-8), Hames(?) (C-9), and Azaria (C-10). According to this document, descendants of the third son Hames(?) were rooted in Qarabagh. The genealogy was extended to both Enikolopians who were Russian and Persian subjects. These materials contain half-legendary descriptions, but they shared with much information, for example, Papa in the Georgian document must be the same person as Shermazanian's Mirza Papik and the Persian source's Mirza Baba.

Though identified by different names, various Enikolopashvilis are recorded in Georgian documents dated to the late seventeenth century. In 1688, the Safavid Shah Soleyman I (r. 1666–1694) appointed a Russian-bred Kakhetian prince, Erekle, as *vali* (ruler) of the Kartli kingdom, thus nullifying traditional pro-Kartli policy of over a century.³⁰ The Kartlian Bagratids led by Giorgi XI opposed this decision and resisted for a while, and the Kartli kingdom fell into a period of confusion called *oreanova* (two rival kings reigning simultaneously).³¹ The first known representative of Enikolopashvili Bezhan appears in a document written exactly in 1688.³² Having little connection with Kartlian society and mainly spending his time abroad (about twenty years in Russia and fourteen years in Iran), Erekle was said to promote the new elements at his court. The Enikolopashvilis (Enikolopians) started their service and became important court officials in these circumstances.

30 For Safavid-Georgian relations and pro-Kartli policy, see Hirotake Maeda, "Slave Elites Who Returned Home: Georgian *Vālī*-king Rostom and the Safavid Household Empire," *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko*, 69 (2011) 97–127.

31 Mamia Dumbadze, ed., *Sak'art'velos istoriis narkvevebi* (*Studies on Georgian History*) (Tbilisi: Sabchota Sakartvelo, 1973), vol. 4: 312–356.

32 Sakartvelos erovnuli arkivi (Georgian National Archive, hereafter SEA) 1450–14–48. Bezhan Enakolopashvili was mentioned during 1688–1693 as the secretary-librarian (*mdivan-mtsignobari*) of Nazar-'Ali Khan (Erekle's name after his conversion to Islam) and Paremuz Enakolopashvili, is attested during 1696–1699 in the same post. Cf. D. Kldiashvili and M. Surguladze, eds., *Pirt'a anotirebuli lek'sikoni (XI–XVII ss.): K'art'uli istoriuli sabut'ebis mikhedvit* (*A Biographical Dictionary: According to Georgian Historical Documents*) (Tbilisi: Metsniereba, 1993), vol. 2: 133–134.

4 Before the Russian Advance: The Case of Mirza Gurgen Khan

Though we can confirm Enikolopians at the Georgian court in the second half of the seventeenth century, the first representative of the Enikolopian family whose activities can be traced from various sources is Mirza Gurgen Khan (A-3, B-7, C-7, D-1), a distinguished diplomat in the reign of Erekle II of eastern Georgia (r. 1744–1798). The Safavid collapse had greatly affected the regional order and the lives of local peoples. Prince Teimuraz (1782–1846), a son of the last king of eastern Georgia Giorgi XII, also left biographical information on the Enikolopian family which tells us their hardships and explains why the description on Gurgen's ancestors contains ambiguous information.³³ According to Prince Teimuraz, Gurgen's grandfather (*papa* in Georgian) (A-1) was originally from Tbilisi but left for Qarabagh during the Ottoman invasion. He used to visit Iran. Gurgen's grandmother (*bebia* in Georgian) Tamar-Khanum (A-2) served the *haram* of Nader Shah. When the mother of Erekle II (Ekekle I/Nazar 'Ali's grandson and Prince Teimuraz's grandfather), Queen Tamar (herself, a daughter of Vakhtang VI or Hosaynquli Khan, the last Safavid *vali*-king of eastern Georgia), visited the Iranian court, Tamar-Khanum worked as an interpreter. This story reminds us that Enikolopians served as interpreters for Georgian kings. Erekle II's sister Ketevan married Nader Shah's nephew Adel Shah and at that time, too, Tamar-Khanum introduced the princess to the wives of Nader Shah. Prince Teimuraz wrote that Tamar-Khanum was a widow and served Nader's *haram* and had a salary there. He further mentioned that Gurgen's parents residing in Qarabagh died young and thereafter the orphaned Gurgen and his brothers were left wandering in Iran. They were trained to play musical instruments and to sing in Iran; Gurgen was a good player of the *tambul* (as mentioned later Gurgen became a patron of Sayat-Nova). Gurgen eventually returned to Georgia, which is where his grandfather was from, and became a secretary of crown prince Giorgi (later Giorgi XII). Then he was appointed as secretary of King Erekle II and later became his vazir. His brother Miseila

33 After the Russian annexation, Prince Teimuraz temporarily found exile in the court of Fath-'Ali Shah. After accepting the Russian suzerain he resided in St. Petersburg and was mainly engaged in cultural and academic activities. He was the first Georgian member of the Imperial Academy of the Russian Empire. He was known for being a great collector of Georgian manuscripts and helped scholars of Caucasian Studies like M.-F. Brosset. Prince Teimuraz was linguistically talented and knew Turkish, Persian, French, and Italian, in addition to Georgian and Russian.

(Mikhail) also served Erekle and another brother Azaria likewise became a servant of Georgian court (*msakhuri katsi*).³⁴

From these accounts we can reconstruct the Enikolopians' family history before the nineteenth century. The names of three brothers in the anonymous genealogy coincide with the description of Prince Teimuraz. Reference to the Qarabagh branch suggests the veracity of these sources. In fact in Russian official documents we can find the name "Enikalopov" as a hereditary *bek* (*potomstvennye beki*) in the former Qarabagh khanate.³⁵ The collapse of the Safavid Empire in the early eighteenth century and the successive turmoil in eastern Georgia heavily influenced the Enikolopians' lives. It seems that Gurgen's parents died young and family tradition barely survived in the time of Gurgen, though they clearly were conscious of their Armenian identity and their connections with Georgian and Iranian monarchs. This would be a reason why Armenian, Persian, and Georgian sources unanimously refer to Gurgen's father (or grandfather) as Baba, Papa, or Papik without mentioning his real name. The activities of the Enikolopians during the eighteenth century gradually appeared on the historical scene.

Enikolopov claims that Karim Khan Zand gave the title of *khan* to Mirza Gurgen as a reward for his service towards better relations with the Georgian kings.³⁶ Gurgen's diplomatic activities were recorded by Georgian chroniclers such as Oman Kherkheulidze and Iase Baratashvili. Kherkheulidze wrote that Gurgen was from Qarabagh and knew many languages such as Persian, Turkish, and Arabic. Prince Teimuraz praised his intelligence. Gurgen led a diplomatic mission to the Ottomans in 1778. The aim of the mission was to check the power of ruler of Akhaltsikhe who had assisted the Lezgi invasion of eastern Georgia. Gurgen successfully concluded his service and returned to Georgia with gifts.³⁷ He also invited the German scientist Jacob Reineggs to Georgia after meeting

34 Oman Kherkheulidze, *Mepoba Irakli Meorisa*, ed. Lela Mikiashvili, 1989 (Tbilisi: Metsniereba, 1989), 90–91.

35 An unpublished list made by Dr. Elidar Ismailov (No. 545). He made the list using journals of the congress of the main chancellery civilian part in the Caucasus, "Soveta Glavnonachal'stvuyushevo grajdanskoi chast'yu na Kavkaze" published on 2/12/1882, 13/1/1883, 10/2/1883, and 15/12/1888. I thank the author for permission to use it. Some of the descendants of the Qarabagh branch are living in Moscow and the famous chemist Nikolai Sergeevich Enikolopov (1924–1993) belonged to this branch.

36 Ivane Enikolopovi, "Didi ashughi da Mirza Gurgen-Khan (A Great Minstrel and Mirza Gurgen-Khan)," *Tbilisi*, 21 November 1963.

37 Kherkheulidze, *Mepoba Irakli Meorisa*, 68, 90–91. Cf. Dumbadze, *Sak'art'velos istoriis narkvevebi*, vol. 4: 681.

him in Istanbul in 1776–1778.³⁸ In addition, Mirza Gurgen was known as a patron of the famous multilingual poet of the time, Sayatnova.³⁹ At the time of the Giorgesk Treaty, which placed the eastern kingdom of Georgia under Russian suzerainty, the Enikolopian family (described as Enikolopashvili) was cited as one of eighty-two royal *aznauris* (*sakhaso aznauri*).⁴⁰ Mirza Gurgen died in 1786 in Tbilisi.

In Georgian society of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, the role of the Armenians was quite important as the closest “other,” and many courtiers of Armenian origin served the Georgian kings as writers and translators.⁴¹ The Enikolopians started learning languages in their childhood and through their knowledge of Armenian, Georgian, Persian, Turkish, and Arabic, they often played a diplomatic role. Using traditional skills and probably his personal experiences from his youth, Mirza Gurgen Khan mainly served as a negotiator with the neighboring Muslim states that were still dominant over the Southern Caucasus at that time.

5 In the Transitional Period from Persian to Russian: Sons of Mirza Gurgen

Mirza Gurgen Khan lived in a traditional society while serving as an intermediary through his works as a multilingual diplomat. However all of his sons experienced quite different lives in the transitional period from Iranian to Russian hegemony. His eldest son Ghahrama (A-5, B-12, C11, D-2) first served Prince Iulon (1760–1827), a son of Erekle II, as a scribe and later came into the service of Prince David (1767–1819) who temporarily ruled over Georgia in 1800–1801 after the death of the king George XII. Ghahrama helped David to translate into Georgian a Persian chronicle on Nader Shah (Mirza Mahdi Astarabadi’s

38 Dumbadze, *Sak’art’velos istoriis narkvevebi*, 4: 28, 687–688. Ivane Enakolopashvili, *Mt’atsmindis pant’eoni (Mtatsminda Pantheon)* (Tbilisi: Sabchota Sakartvelo, 1958), 8. After staying in Georgia Reinegs went to Russia and served Pochomkin from 1981. M.A. Polievktov, *Evropeiskie puteshestvenniki XIII–XVIII vv. po Kavkazu* (Tiflis, 1935), 165–168. I. Enikolopov, “Tsarevich David o Reinegse,” *Materialy po istorii Gruzii I Kavkaza*, ch. 29, (1951), 289–294.

39 At the end of the poem “Or saop’els shua” Sayatnova sings that “(they) say Sayatnova is a servant of Gurgen-Khan. It is true.” Enikolopovi, “Didi ashughi.”

40 Giorgi Paichadze, ed., *Georgievskis traktati* (Tbilisi: Metsniereba, 1983), 59.

41 The most successful was the Tumanishvili family. On these relations, see: Thornike Gordadze, “Formation socio-historique de la nation géorgienne: le legs des identités pré-modernes, les idéologies et acteurs nationalistes,” (Paris, Insititut D’Etudes Politiques, 2006), 132–141.

Tarikh-e Naderi) in 1802 in Tbilisi.⁴² After the annexation of eastern Georgia (the Kartuli-Kakheti kingdom) by the Russian Empire in 1801, Ghahrama moved to St. Petersburg with his patron and later received a pension from Alexander I.⁴³ Thus the eldest son remained a faithful servant of Georgian royals abdicating from the throne.

Gurgen's third son Abraham (A-7, B-14, C-17, D-4) continued to be based in Tbilisi.⁴⁴ He became a Russian subject and kept working as an interpreter until his death in 1836. As we see later in this article, he visited several times in Iran to see his younger brothers but was always a part of diplomatic missions. As a translator of Russian viceroy, Abrama should have been influential among local society for there are many documents translated by him from Georgian to Russian. Abrama's son Mikhail (A-16, C-18, D-16) became a military officer and participated in the Russo-Persian War, the Russo-Ottoman War and military operations in the North Caucasus. He was in attendance for the peace treaty signed at Torkmanchai.⁴⁵ Abraham's namesake grandson became Mikhail Loris-Melikov (A-14, D-18)'s brother-in-law and Ivane Enikolopov (A-17, D-21), mentioned above, was his great grandson. Thus Abrama and his successors adapted to new situations, further cultivated ethno-national ties, and continued to flourish in the local society of Tbilisi.

Unlike Ghahrama and Mikhail, Gurgen's second son Mirza Rostam (A-6, B-12, C-14, D-3) left for Iran and remained there in the service of Qajar shahs.⁴⁶ Because his younger half-brother Manuchehr had no heir Rostam's lineage successively produced Qajar and even Pahlavi courtiers. Yet Rostam first had close relationship with Russian courtier visiting Georgian king Erekle II. Then he went to Vienna to learn military skills. After returning to Tbilisi, he decided to go to Iran for the release of his half-brother Manuchehr who became a war captive and was made a Qajar eunuch courtier. He failed to liberate his brother but instead was scouted to serve crown-prince 'Abbas Mirza thanks to his knowledge of Western military tactics. However his main role in the

42 The manuscript is preserved in the Institute of Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg. See R.R. Orbeli, *Gruzinskie rukopisi institute vostokovedeniya*, vypusk 1 (Moskva-Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk SSSR, 1956), 68. I. Enikolopov edited the manuscripts of Prince David, mentioned above. I.K. Enikolopov, ed., "Dve zapiski Tsrevicha Davida 'o luchshem ustroistve Gruzii," *Masalebi Sakartvelosa da Kavkasiis istoriisatis (Materials for the History of Georgia and the Caucasus)*, part 1 (Tbilisi, 1942), 121–165.

43 The anonymous Georgian genealogy.

44 Abraham was said to succeed in returning the once confiscated family land back to his hands in Erekle's last days.

45 His career is described in detail in the order issued on 9 August in 1852. Matenadaran, 151-1-347.

46 On his life, see Maeda, "Transcending Boundaries," 71–74.

prince's court in Tabriz was as an intermediary between local government and Armenian community in Azarbaijan province.⁴⁷ Judging from Shermazanian's description, Rostam was a man both of traditional values (which he inherited from his families' scribal profession) and of new western knowledge and technologies which allowed him to cross the border of the empires and in both ways of communication.

6 A "Slave Elite" of Iranian Society: The Case of Manuchehr Khan Mo'tamad al-Dawleh

Another son of Gurgun, Chongur/Manuchehr (Manuchar in Georgian and Armenian) (A-8, B-18, C-122, D-5), became one of the most celebrated and powerful statesmen of Qajar Iran in the first half of the nineteenth century. He governed many provinces such as Gilan, Fars, Kermanshah, Lorestan, Khuzistan and Isfahan.⁴⁸ During his governorship in Isfahan, he was called "king of Isfahan."⁴⁹ Manuchehr Khan was a great patron of the arts as well.⁵⁰ However, his departure to Iran was unexpected. The siege of Yerevan fortress by General Tsitsianov opened the first Russo-Persian war in July 1804. Conflict continued until 1813, while the siege itself lasted for three months from July to September 1804. The Iranian side gave a good fight. There was an incident in which a two hundred-man contingent was sent to Georgia for supplies was

47 The Georgian genealogy by the unknown author. Shermazanian, *Nivter azgayin patmutean hamar*, 202–203.

48 Iraj Afshar, ed., *Chehel Sal Tarikh-e Iran* (Tehran: Asatir, AH 1363/ AD 1980), vol. 2: 706–708. Mahdi Bamdad, *Sharh-e Hal-e Rejal-e Iran*, 4th ed. (Tehran: Zavar, AH 1371/ AD 1992), vol. 4: 159–163. Kondo followed his political life in his article on Manuchehr's waqf deeds. Kondo, Nobuaki, "The Waqf and Religious Patronage of Manuchihr Khan Mu'tamad al-Dawlah," Robert Gleave ed. *Religion and Society in Qajar Iran* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 227–244.

49 The shah was concerned with the rumor that Manuchehr was called "king of Isfahan." Manuchehr replied "Yes, your Majesty, that is true, and you must have such kings as your governors, in order that you may enjoy the title of Shahanshah (king of kings)." As governor of Fars, he was known as a protector of the Bab, too. Edward Granville Browne, *A Year amongst the Persians* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1950) (Cambridge, 1893), 66, 219.

50 Maryam Ekhtiar commented on a penbox with a portrait of Manuchehr Khan. Several courtiers are identified by inscriptions. Among them are 'Alijah Solayman Khan Sarhang, Haji Mulla Ahmad Nadim, Mirza Davud Khan, 'Alijah Mirza Gurgun Khan, and Mirza Yusof. "Mirror Case with Portrait of Manuchihr Khan Mu'tamid al-Dawleh," in *Royal Persian Paintings: The Qajar Epoch 1785–1925*, eds. Layla S. Diba, with Maryam Ekhtiar (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1998), 229–230. Also see N.A. Kuznetsova, *Iran v pervoi polovine XIX veka* (Moscow: Nauka, 1983), 132: David-Khan Melikov, nephew of Manuchehr Khan.

surrounded by six thousand Iranians. Most were killed. Revolt broke out in Georgia and as most generals opposed continuing war, the Russian army retreated in September.⁵¹

During this war, there was a volunteer army of Georgian nobles led by Ivane Orbeliani.⁵² They battled troops under the Russian commander Tsitsianov but by having a quarrel with the commander decided to return to Georgia. When they departed Yerevan on August 4 with a large caravan, the Persian army, led by Pirquli Khan Qajar and 'Aliquli Khan Shahsivan, suddenly attacked them. Many Georgian *tavadi-aznauris* fell captive. Among them was the young Armenian *aznauri* Chongur Enikolopian. He was presented to the shah with other two Armenian boys (Andre Ghaitmazean of Tbilisi, later Khosraw Khan, and Hakob/Ya'qub Margarean of Yerevan) and three Russians. All became eunuchs.⁵³ In this troubled situation, Manuchehr cut a brilliant figure with his knowledge of Turkish and his impressive character. When he was in the presence of 'Abbas Mirza, ruler of Tabriz and crown prince of Fath-'Ali Shah, Manuchehr asked the prince, "When I meet with the ruler of the East, what I shall say about the generosity of the successor to the throne?" 'Abbas Mirza was surprised to hear this and gave them many gifts. Manuchehr then said, "I will inform the ruler of the world of this."⁵⁴

Besides his talents and unique background as an Armeno-Georgian noble, Manuchehr was supported by some of his original family members at some point. In comparison to the Safavid system of slave elites where systematic incorporation and integration of Caucasian local elites is observed, the Qajar

51 Atkin, *Russia and Iran*, 76–77, 99, 120–121.

52 Ivane Orbeliani worked as lord chancellor (*sakhlukhutsesi*) of Kartli-Kakheti kingdom. He was from the first branch of the Orbeliani (= Qaplanshvili) family, the most powerful great noble (*tavadi*) of east Georgia. His capture is dated August 4 in the Soviet Encyclopedia of Georgia. Givi Jamburia, *K'art'uli p'eodaluri urt'iert'obis istoridan (From the History of Georgian Feudal Relations)* (Tbilisi: Sakartvelos sssr metsnierebata akademiis gamomtsemloba, 1955), 148–149; Givi Jamburia, "Orbeliani Iovane (Ivane) Davitis dze (Orbeliani John, son of David)," *K'art'uli Sabchot'a Ents'iklopedia* (1984), vol. 7: 558.

53 Shermazanian, *Nivter azgayin patmutesan hamar*, 324–327. According to Shermazanian, Tsitsianov refused the Georgians' demand for feeding their horses so the angered Georgians left the camp.

54 According to Shermazanian, Manuchehr later spoke of his early days. When he fell into Persian hands, he waited for his brothers' help for liberation. But it was in vain. He then decided to collect as much money as possible because he thought the Russians would leave Georgia and return as their predecessors did. Then, only with his own riches could one go back to Georgia. So, on the journey from Tabriz to Tehran, Manuchehr left the gift of clothes untouched and sold them in Tehran. He was given some forty *toman* on the same journey and started a money-lending business in the *haram* and soon gathered a hundred *toman*. Shermazanian, *Nivter azgayin patmutesan hamar*, 327–329.

case was more dependent on the shah's personality. However, Manuchehr's promotion clearly reflects the Persian model of the slave elite system where kin and local relations were crucial as opposed to the established slave-soldiers paradigm.⁵⁵ When his brother Rostam came to court, Manuchehr had a conversation with his superior and spoke of his mother's knowledge of Turkish and a little Persian. His mother Voskum Khanum (A-4, B-17) was a daughter of Hakobjan Aqa Amatun (B-16) and was born in Hamadan. She later married a translator at the Georgian court, Mirza Gurban Khan. Turkish was the second language of the Enikolopian family due to their hereditary jobs.

His superior decided to invite Manuchehr's mother to Tehran so that she could pray for the Christian captives who had no chance to listen to devotion. Shermazanian remembered Voskum because she stayed at his home for several days as a flood slowed her journey to Tehran in 1818–1819.⁵⁶ Though the details are not known, Manuchehr's advance in the Qajar court and probably her economic situation made Voskum decide to move to Iran.⁵⁷ Called Valtei Khan by Fath-'Ali Shah, Voskum Khanum used her wisdom to build close relations with the women of the Persian imperial court. She once arranged the final prayer for one of the shah's Armenian wives. With the help of his mother, Manuchehr's advancement was accelerated. A mother of a eunuch took care of the religious life of the *haram* as her castrated son had been forced to convert. They could then build a strong base inside the royal court.⁵⁸

55 This biased observation is still widely accepted. Consider, for example, the pioneering work in this field, which was heavily influenced by "Ayalon's doctrine": Sussan Babaie, Kathryn Babayan, Ina Baghdiantz-McCabe and Massumeh Farhad, *Slaves of the Shah: New Elites of Safavid Iran* (London-New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004). On the family participation of the Safavid *gholam* institution, see Hirotake Maeda, "On the Ethno-Social Background of the Four *Gholām* Families from Georgia in Safavid Iran," *Studia Iranica* 32, no. 2 (2003): 243–278 and Rudi Matthee, "Blinded by Power: The Rise and Fall of Fath 'Ali Khan Daghestani, Grand Vizier under Shah Sultan Hosayn Safavi (1127/1715–1133/1720)," *Studia Iranica* 33, no. 2 (2004): 179–220.

56 At first glance there is some confusion about this description as Rostam's arrival at the Persian court was in 1805 according to the same author. In fact, there is a Georgian document issued on 20 July 1818. Voskum loaned 282 *toman* to *tavadi* Karapeta and Giorgi Amatun for 18 months. SEA 1450–42–266 (fol. 273a).

57 After seventy years, Shermazanian (born in 1814) wrote that she gave him *unabi* (a sort of jujube) and *churchkhela* (Georgian sweet made from nuts and grape juice), which he never ate and did not know the name of at that time. However, he could clearly remember the fruits, their names, and Voskum Khanum's face. Shermazanian, *Nivter azgayin patmutedan hamar*, 329–330.

58 Shermazanian, *Nivter azgayin patmutedan hamar*, 320–334. On the Armenian merchants' historical networks in Eurasia, see Sebouh David Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011).

Manuchehr had already lost his wish to return but he was eager to spread his influence. He embarked upon significant business activities with two other prominent eunuchs, Khosraw Khan (Andre Ghaitmazean) and Aqa Ya'qub (Hakob Margarean).⁵⁹ According to Shermazanian, Manuchehr used Stefan of New Julfa and Samuel of Tbilisi as his agents. This shows how the slave elites' ethnic and local background played an important role. Their Armenian trade network spread throughout all of Iran and the surrounding territories through Tabriz, Astrakhan, Rasht, Constantinople, Baghdad, Bushehr, Madras, and Calcutta.⁶⁰ More importantly Khosraw Khan's grandfather Philipo Ghaitmazean (Gaitmazashvili) was a celebrated Armenian scholar in the service of Georgian king Erekle II and was very active culturally, translating many books from Armenian to Georgian.⁶¹ Thus, even if the capture of Chongur Enikolopian (Manuchehr Khan) and Andre Ghaitmazean (Khosraw Khan) eventually happened, both men exploited their unique backgrounds. Whether or not the Qajar court recognized their origin from the beginning, it should be stressed that their hybrid backgrounds as Armenian intellectuals in Georgian noble society conditioned their various socio-political activities.

Manuchehr's activities were always connected with economics and diplomacy. In 1823 he became governor of Gilan, which was one of the main silk-producing provinces with ports facing the Caspian Sea.⁶² After stabilizing the region's order, he set up a commission composed of two Muslims and two Russians with the intention of promoting trade. He also loaned money to four Armenians in Tbilisi (Minas Hoja Minasean, Efreem Efrumean, Avetik

59 On the life of Khosrow Khan, see Hirotake Maeda, "Kosrow Khan Gorji Qajar (Andre Ghaytmazeants, b. Tbilisi, 1785–6; d. Tehran, 1857)," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Online Edition, 20 April 2009, available at www.iranicaonline.org. Aqa Yaqub was captured and castrated with Manuchehr and Khosrow too. He later sought refuge in the Russian embassy in Tehran, which caused a serious conflict and resulted in the death of Griboedov: Kelly, *Diplomacy and Murder in Tehran*, 187. Manuchehr's nephew Solomon Melikov was also killed in the riot and Voskum Khanom died shortly after. With that of Griboedov, coffins were sent to Echimajin via Tabriz, and the tombstone of Voskum still remains in Gayane Church. Enikolopov, "Griboedo i sem'ya Enikolopovykh," 83–85. In Harden's *The Murder of Griboedov*, Manuchehr assumed the important role to solve the problems on Yakub's return to homeland. Ibid. 33–34.

60 Shermazanian, *Nivter azgayin patmutedan hamar*, 334–335.

61 P.M. Muradyan, *Armyano-Gruzinskoie literaturnye vzaimootnosheniya v XVII veke* (Erevan: Izdatel'stvo AN Armyanskoikh SSR, 1966), 178–182. Philipo Ghaitmazean was a director of seminary in Telavi, the highest educational institution of Georgia at that period.

62 Yermolov demanded opening of the port in 1817. Rizaquli Khan Hidayat, *Tarikh-e Rawzat al-Safa-ye Naseri*, ed. Jamshid Kiyanfar (Tehran: Asatir, 1380 Sh. / 2001), vol. 14: 7725.

Mandinean, and Avetik Ghuzinean) to start trade between Russia and Iran.⁶³ Manuchehr's fame peaked when he played a definitive role in the succession of Mohammad Shah in 1834. Manuchehr became the acting governor-general of Shiraz where he pursued his task of calming a local uprising with the aid of English commander Henry Lindsay Bethune (1787–1851) and his nephew (a son of Mirza Rostam) Solomon (Solayman in the Persian source). He then governed Isfahan for nine years, where he died on February 9, 1847. He was buried on the site of the tomb of Fath-ʿAli Shah.

7 Ambiguous Attitudes Toward Religion and State

In opposition to the established slave soldiers' doctrine, I stress that the "slave" elites or the imperial subjects in Iran with origins from the Caucasus were dependent on their ethnic and local bonds (or their previous identity). As such, Manuchehr's origin as an Armenian from Tbilisi sometimes endangered his political life. Shermazanian describes Manuchehr's sensitive attitude towards the Russians in many places.⁶⁴ According to him, Manuchehr did not agree about the war with Russia. Once it was decided, Manuchehr never spoke of war in the court. In addition, Manuchehr prohibited his family from saying anything about the war even at home. His mother and sister's son David Malikov were barred from going to church and receiving Armenian guests (thus they were allowed to go to churches in the time of peace). Manuchehr refused to be present at court until at his request Fath-ʿAli Shah arrested those who blackmailed him. Once the war ended, however, he played an important role in exchanging war captives with Bayglar Khan.⁶⁵

As his brother Abraham was an interpreter of the Russian viceroy's office in Tbilisi, Manuchehr was charged with every kind of misdemeanor. Manuchehr

63 Shermazanian, *Nivter azgayin patmutedan hamar*, 350–352. In a letter dated May 17, 1832, Manuchehr is mentioned as ruler of Gilan. N.G. Kukanov, ed., "Proshenie S.I.Posylina Aziatskomu departamentu ministerstva inostrennykh del," *Rusko-iranskaya torgovlya, 30–50-e rody XIX veke: sbornik dokumentov*, 280–281.

64 In 1817 when a famous general of the Caucasian front and viceroy A. Yermolov (1777–1861) was sent to Iran, Yermolov had two meetings with Manuchehr. As he had no presents for the shah's wife, he asked Manuchehr to accompany him to buy presents. Manuchehr refused to do so as it was not his duty. Nevertheless, Yermolov tried to hand him the gifts (among the gifts entrusted for Yermolov's will). Manuchehr would not receive them, saying, "If I could do any good for your county, your government would decide in advance and send them. But I do not know you and I can do you no good. So, I cannot take them from you." Shermazanian, *Nivter azgayin patmutedan hamar*, 343–344.

65 Shermazanian, *Nivter azgayin patmutedan hamar*, 353–359.

was extremely careful as described above in these relations. However, it should be stressed that their family relations were not secret and Manucehr's delicate attitude towards Russians did not necessarily hamper his kin relations. In 1832–1833, his elder half-brother Abraham was sent to the Qajar court by Prince G. Rozen, Russian viceroy of the Caucasus. After having had an audience with the shah, Abraham traveled to Gilan where his younger half-brother reigned. Abraham then went to Tabriz to see another younger brother Aghalar Khan (B-15, C-20) and stayed there for ten days.⁶⁶ Our Persian chronicle also refers to Abraham's visit to Persian court and trip to Gilan.⁶⁷ Abraham once visited Iran after the Treaty of Golestan, which was concluded in 1813.⁶⁸ Abraham's son Mikhail (born 1798–99) (A-16, C-18, D-16) was a military officer and participated in the Russo-Iranian war. He was charged with the migration of the shah's Christian subjects to Russia according to the terms of the Torkmanchai treaty, whose congress he had he attended. In 1828 he was awarded both by Nikolai I and Fath-'Ali Shah.⁶⁹ These kin relations could be heavily influenced by the diplomatic relations of the two empires but the importance of the connection seemed to be recognized by broad audiences in both empires.

It should be emphasized that the family deliberately connected themselves not only with Russia but also with the Iranian state and religious society. Manucehr's brother and nephews in Iran worked as his representatives in the provinces and elsewhere. He was a great protector but could be harsh to his relatives on sensitive issues. For instance, his nephew Gurgen (A-9, C-15, D-14), a son of his elder half-brother Rostam, was sentenced to death on account of being involved in the killing of a Muslim clergyman at his home.⁷⁰ With the

66 Shermazanian, *Nivter azgayin patmutesan hamar*, 360. Shermazanian was an eyewitness to the event since he accompanied Abraham on his return journey to old Nakhchevan.

67 Mohammad Taqi Lesan al-Molk Sepehr, *Nasekh al-Tavarikh*, ed. Jamshid Kiyanfar, (Tehran: Asatir, 1377 Sh. / 1998), 492–493.

68 There is a document dated September–October 1814, which was given to Abraham by Fath-'Ali Shah.

69 His career is described in detail in a document dated in 9 August 1852. Among the subjects he studied were the Russian, Georgian, Latin, German, Persian, Tatar (Turkish), and Armenian languages.

70 Gurgen also played important role in Qajar politics. According to Shermazanian's account, Gurgen was raised as a priest, and knowing very well the rules of churches, he finally converted to Islam through the seduction of polygamy. He had thirty-two women at home. Gurgen loved drinking and his house was full of drinkers and was always noisy, which Shermazanian hated but described vividly because he was often Gurgen's guest in Tehran in 1852–53. All of these negative views (at least described by Shermazanian), we know from his explanation that Gurgen was recognized as a full family member of the Enikolopians in Iran and played a significant political role by possibly uniting and cultivating various levels of Muslim-Christian ties. Shermazanian, *Nivter azgayin patmutesan hamar*, 284–294. Gurgen's descendants were rooted in Iranian high society and Bahram

intervention of Manuchehr's mother, Gurgen was entrusted to Manuchehr. Manuchehr then used an old Armenian torture device that crippled his legs. Voskum Khanum accused her son of being cruel hearted and said that news would spread in Georgia that Manuchehr executed his own nephew and they would think that the Enikolopian family's honor was not enough to save the life one Enikolopian. Shemazanian's account reflects their ambiguous belonging to these two empires.

In the realm of religion we also observe various means of adaptation. Having been raised as a priest, Gurgen became a Muslim imperial courtier. By contrast, his elder brother Solomon/Solayman Khan (A-10, C-16, D-11), who was once a Russian official, "escaped" to Iran for religious reasons and kept the Armenian faith until his death. In his conversation with Shermazanian, Solomon said he had been twelve or thirteen years old when Aqa Mohammad Khan Qajar invaded Tbilisi. He escaped with great difficulty. Probably after the abolition of the Georgian kingdom, Solomon entered the Russian army and became an officer. At that time, Solomon heard that the Russian government forced them to move to Russia and planned their forced conversion. He was also in need of money. Solomon was in debt because his relatives did not help him with his mother's funeral. His brother Gurgen returned from Tabriz and informed Solomon of 'Abbas Mirza's military reforms. After a few years with his friends, the Georgian brothers David and Zaal Saginean,⁷¹ who were also afraid of forced conversion, fled to Iran. So, one of their main reasons for escaping was fear of new rule in terms of religion.⁷²

Solomon took an active role in the domestic and foreign politics of Iran as a provincial ruler and as the chief of foreign policy. It is important that journals

Ariyana (1906–1985) was among his descendants. I thank Dr. Shariat and Dr. Afsaneh Gächter (Institute of Iranian Studies in Vienna) for this information.

71 According to Shermazanian, they embraced the Grigorian faith after their arrival in Tabriz and their children became Armenians.

72 It is difficult to confirm the existence of this rumor and its influence, but the religious situation was especially fragile at that time. In 1811, Anton 11, of the last Georgian Catholicos of eastern Georgia, was exiled to Russia and the Georgian Church was practically abolished. On the other hand, the strong pro-Russian Armenian cleric Nerses settled in Tbilisi and started his strong campaign for Armenian nationhood. The Russo-Persian war continued, and in these circumstances Solomon finally made the choice to go to Iran. In early 1811, Solomon and David asked his senior officer for permission to visit Tbilisi. The officer thought they wished to participate in wrestling and permitted them to go. They arrived first in Yerevan via Akhalkalaki and Giumri then finally arrived in Tabriz. They were not welcomed because no one knew of their arrival in advance. Moreover, when they met his uncle Aghalar Beg and an Armenian priest, they astonished the priest by starting to pray. Solomon's father Rostam died just a week before their arrival. Aghalar helped Solomon to enter 'Abbas Mirza's army and in 1821, he became a major. Shermazanian, *Nivter azgayin patmutean hamar*, 377–380.

published in New Julfa paid as much attention to his works as Shermazanian does. He kept in touch with the famous Russian general of the Qajar army Samson Khan Makintsev too.⁷³ Solomon was sent to the Russian embassy when it was attacked. As he kept his faith, he might have been free in associating with Christians in Iran. His connections reached even Europeans at the shah's court. Solomon's daughter was married to the French doctor Ernest (Louis-André-) Cloquet who was the shah's court physician.⁷⁴ Solomon's son Nariman Khan (1830-?) Qavam al-Saltaneh (A-12, D-12) followed his family profession to become an interpreter of the Iranian court.⁷⁵ Another son Jahangir Khan (1833/1834–1891) (A-13, D-13) also played significant roles in Iranian politics in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Solomon died in January 1853. As Shermazanian personally took part in his funeral, his account is vivid. He was proud of the Armenian religious chorus when a son of the vizier was astonished to hear that. Shermazanian informed him that the song was ten times more magnificent at home than in Iran. It is interesting to note that after the funeral they had a banquet which was prepared in the name of the deceased according to the customs of Tbilisi's population. Although absent from Tbilisi for nearly half century, through trade and religious networks, their ties continued, remembered, and practiced.

8 Conclusion

The Enikolopian family navigated the new geo-political situation of the Caucasus exploring their traditional values as multi-lingual scribes. Their

73 Elena Andreeva, *Russia and Iran in the Great Game: Travelogues and Orientalism* (London: Routledge, 2007), especially "The Travelers' Missions in Iran," 59–76. About Samson Khan Makintsev, Berzhe wrote an article. 'Abbas Mirza aided them in forming a military corps. The Russians tried unsuccessfully to persuade the Persian government to deliver them. Griboedov once reached an agreement for their return but it stopped after his death. Shermazanian personally knew Makintsev.

74 Yann Richard, *Répertoire prosopographique de l'Iran moderne Rejal (Iran, 1800–1953)* (Paris: Sorbonne nouvelle, 2002), 156.

75 Bamdad, *Sharh-e Hal-e Rejal-e Iran*, vol. 1: 285–287. Richard, *Répertoire prosopographique*, 145. Nariman participated in congresses and became Iranian ambassador to Egypt and Austria. Other Armenians were also active in charge of Iranian diplomacy. David Khan Melik Shahnazaryan had been the Qajar representative in Baghdad and Paris in the early nineteenth century. George A. Bouroutian, "Armenians in Nineteenth-Century Iran," in *The Armenians of Iran*, ed. Cosroe Chaqueri (Cambridge: Harvard Center for Middle Eastern Studies, 1998), 73; H. Papazian, "Armeno-Iranian relations 1828–1925," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (1986), vol. 2: 476. His portrait is cited here: A. Melik-Shakhnazarov, "Varanda-serdtse Artsakha," *Aniv* (2006), vol. 6: 32.

communication skills gave them chances for not only survival but even for obtaining prosperity. However, their activities should not be easily interpreted as an example of a family business in the trading diaspora. Shermazanian stressed Manuchehr's connections with Armenians while a contemporary Armenian author of New Julfa denied those special relations.⁷⁶ Their religious choices present us with an intricate picture resisting any simplified nationalist interpretation. It certainly depended on each person's character (especially their view for survival) and surrounding socio-political situation. But we should rather pay much attention to their multiple setting or provisions for adaptation to the new socio-political realities. Among them was their in-between character which was nourished in the mixed cultural legacies. This is clearly observed in a quote attributed to Manuchehr's mother Voskum Khanum. When Fath-'Ali Shah urged her conversion to Islam and mentioned the example of Manuchehr and Gurgen, she replied modestly but clearly: "you could refer to any name but never Gurgen for he was not with us, neither with you. He is in the very center of hell."⁷⁷

As is mentioned, they were always sensitive for any anticipated conflicts in foreign politics and religions. Thus, we know that they were always conscious about the lines between different types of personal attributes.⁷⁸ It may sound paradoxical, but Voskum Khanum's words clearly show their multiple and complex identities. They possessed identities as a eunuch and his relatives, administrators, financiers, military figures, the Armenians from the Georgian noble society, and so forth.⁷⁹ They, in other words, nourished a trans-border identity, their identities were shaped by multiple settings, and their linguistic skills became the source for survival to the new situations. Their family bonds were a most useful and needed identity when they crossed boundaries and adapted to new situations. At the same time we also should take into account that during the age of modernization, the state structure and its configuration

76 Harootun Der Hovhanean, *Tarikh-e Julfa-ye Isfahan*, trans. Leon G. Minassian and M.A. Mussavi Fereydani (New Julfa: Zende Rood & Naghsh-e khorshid, 2000), 340.

77 *Nivter azgayin patmutedan hamar*, 330–331. Fath-'Ali Shah laughed and never repeated this request again.

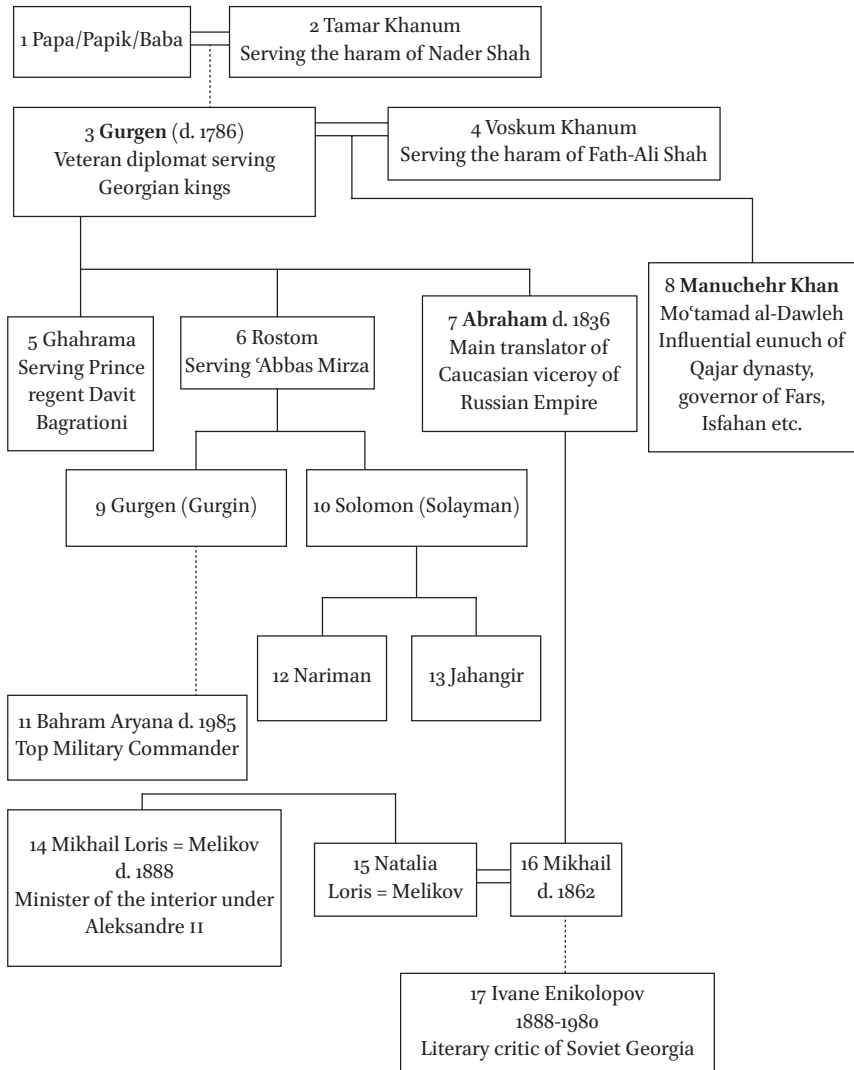
78 In other words, Voskum wanted to say that she kept the Armenian faith and Manuchehr became a faithful Muslim after conversion. They both acted as an Armenian and a Muslim should. However, only Gurgen is not counted as he became "bad Muslim." It should have been an excuse for as we know Voskum harshly criticized her son when Gurgen was severely punished.

79 Even their ethnic attributions were complex. Manuchehr was called "the Georgian (*gorji*)" while his nephew Solomon was mostly identified as "the Armenian (*armani*)" in Persian sources. See the same example of Safavid *gholams* from the Armeno-Georgian landed nobility, the Mirimanidzes: Hirotake Maeda, "On the Ethno-Social Background," 253–257.

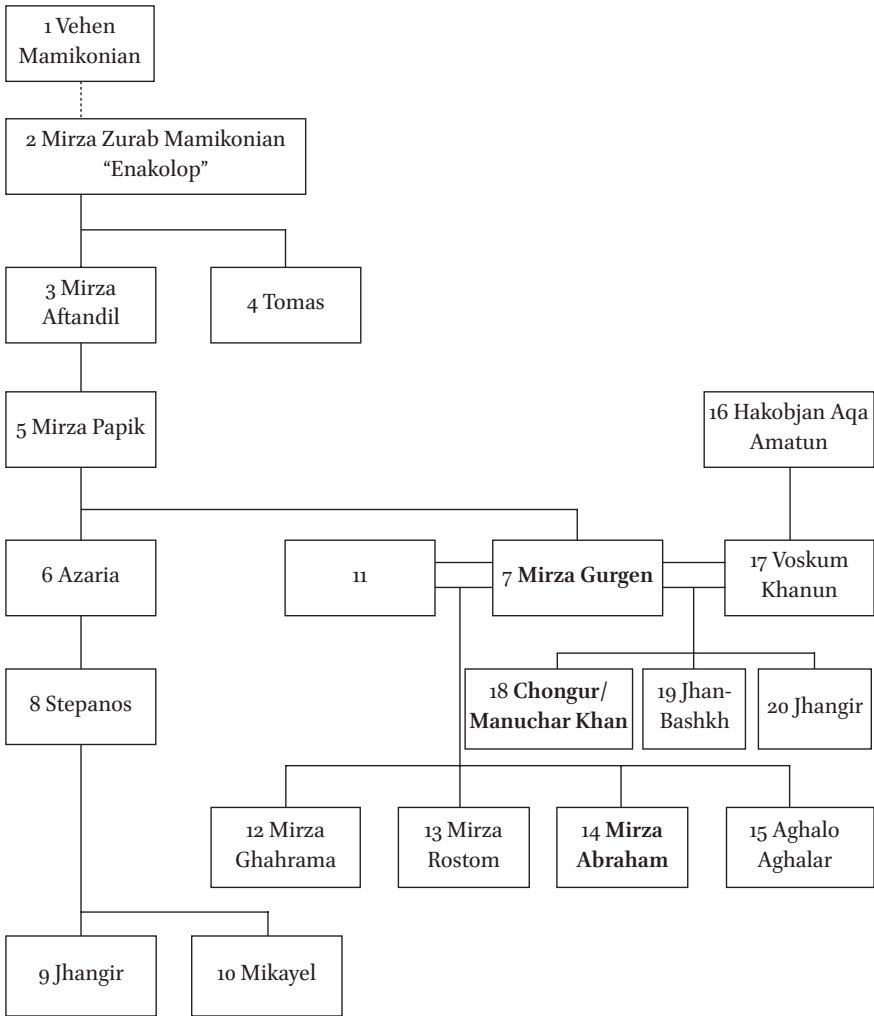
were gradually visualized throughout the nineteenth century. The successive fate of this unique family in Iran and Russia in the second half of nineteenth century is another theme requiring deep investigation.

Appendix: Genealogy of the Enikolopians

Genealogy A (Protagonists with professional careers) (Gurgen, Abraham, Manuchehr in bold)

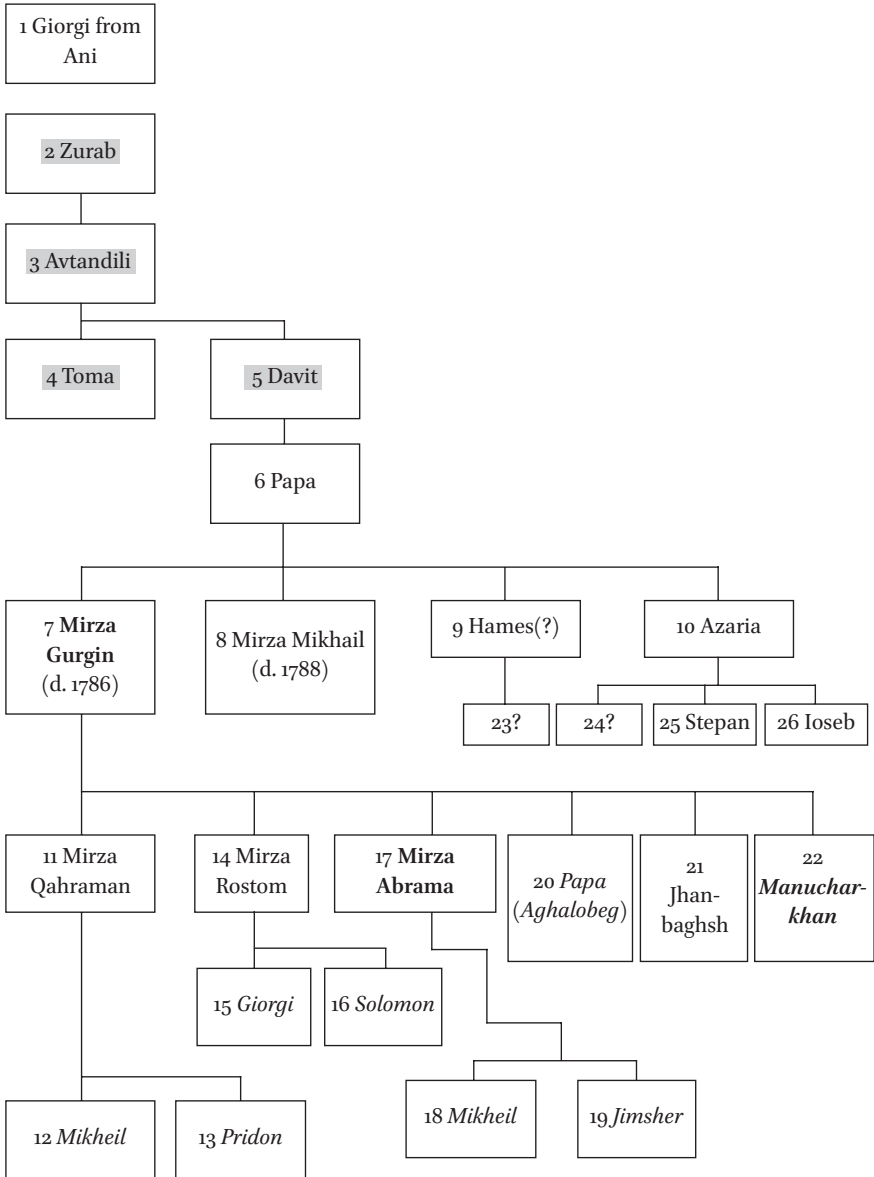


Genealogy B (Based on Shermanzanian's description)

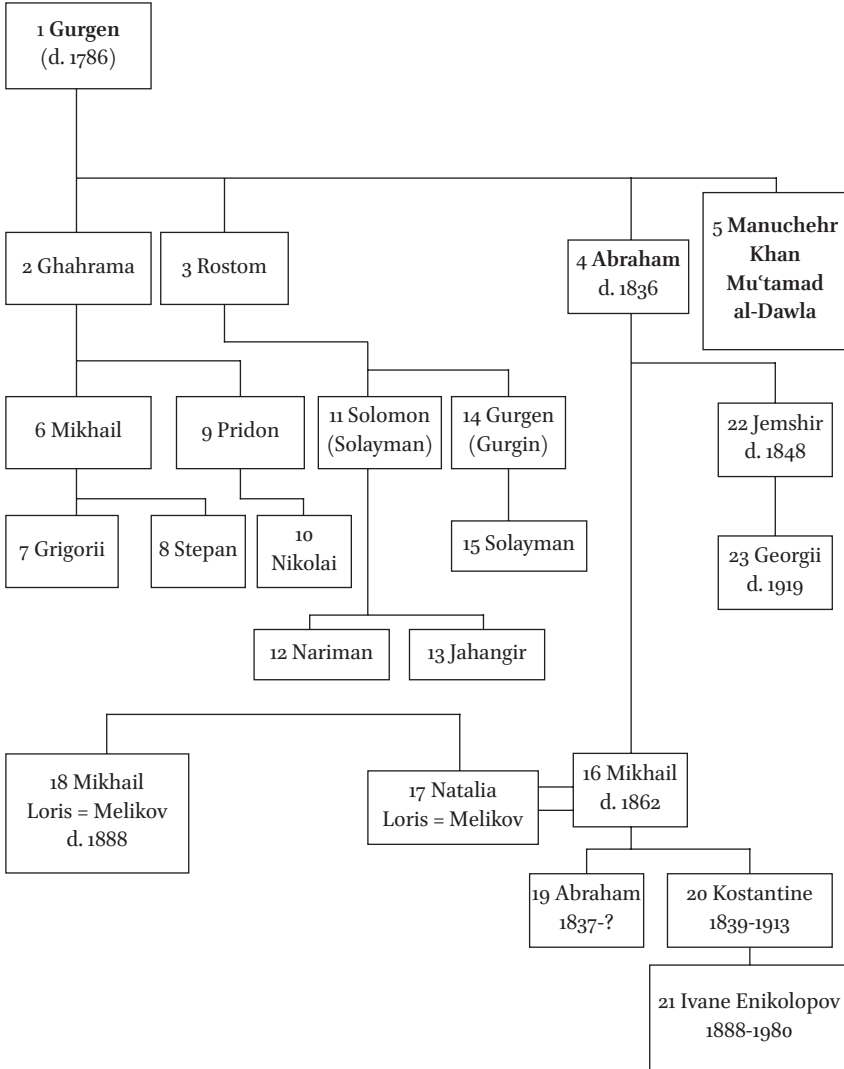


Genealogy C (Based on anonymous Georgian genealogy)

 Revised by the same author?
 Referred to as still living (*aris tsotskhali*)



Genealogy D (To Ivane Enikolopov including Manuchehr Khan and M. Loris-Melikov)



Inclusion and Exclusion in the “Persianate World”: Views of Baluch People in the Nineteenth Century

Joanna de Groot

One of the attractive features of the notion of a “Persianate world” is its potentially varied range of applications. While at first sight the term appears to direct scholars primarily towards literary, textual, and linguistic matters, the very study of language and text opens up questions of culture, politics, and social context. In order to appreciate and analyze the religious, entertaining, or learned content and purposes of texts and genres it is vital to situate them in the *milieux* and world views of those who produced, transmitted and read them. Even specifically linguistic or textual investigations of a “Persianate world” need to address the issues of the historical conditions of the use and production of language and text. Beyond that, study of the social, political, commercial, and religious pasts of western, southern and central Asia supports approaches to the histories of Sufi *tariqehs*, material exchanges, political networks, migration, or social life, in which notions of the “Persianate” have resonance. Movements of people (traders, religious specialists, migrants), objects (gifts, marriage goods, trade goods), ideas, and cultural practices (scholarly, governmental, religious) across different polities or jurisdictions created interesting tensions between structure and mobility. Administrators or ‘ulama using the Persian language, and Iranian religious or bureaucratic traditions in India, the Ottoman lands or Central Asia spread cultural and political practices, just as merchants or Sufis in Mesopotamian, Central Asian or Anatolian towns were nodes of cultural exchange.¹ The movements of scholars, migrants or other relocated groups, likewise transcended political boundaries and could embed “Persian” linguistic or cultural practices alongside those with other origins. Such empirical observations are a stimulus to scholarly and analytical questions about the cultural and political fluidity and diversity implied by the

1 See Muzaffar Alam, “The Pursuit of Persian: Languages in Mughal Politics,” *Modern Asian Studies* 32, no. 2 (May 1998): 317–49; Said Arjomand, “The Evolution of the Persianate Polity and its Transmission to India,” *Journal of Persianate Studies* 2, no. 2 (2009): 115–36; *idem*, “The Salience of Political Ethic in the Spread of Persianate Islam,” *Journal of Persianate Studies* 1, no. 1 (2008): 5–29; Brian Spooner and William Hanaway, eds., *Writing and the Social Order* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

evidence. The notion of a “Persianate world” potentially aids the study of social, cultural, and political formations and activities in which “Persian” influences, and people identifying with “Persian” origins or connections had a role across western, central and southern Asia.²

That being said, the concept needs further interrogation. Since the idea of a “Persianate world” has emerged as a way to question the character and role of boundaries and state structures, and to probe socio-cultural complexity, it is important that it is not used restrictively. Rather than establishing an analytical category which separates off a supposed “Persianate world” in binary opposition to another supposed category of the “non-Persianate,” it should aid the exploration of fluid relationships between the two elements. Just as governments *construct* lines on maps, or the ground, which may then become “boundaries,” so too cultural and historical actors (and subsequently scholars) *construct* categories which are then understood and acted upon as markers of difference. Our task is to track the processes and contexts of construction and reconstruction over time and space, and deconstruct such processes and contexts in order better to understand their significance as complex wholes. Far from undermining the use and value of the concept of the “Persianate world,” explorations of its fluidity, complexity, and heterogeneity will give it more force and impact as an analytical tool. In particular it is important to do further work on convergences and divergences between the religio-cultural focus which has largely dominated the use of the term, and the socio-material and political environments within which learned, literate and religious practices took place.

The development of Persianate cultures in Central Asia, Anatolia, and northern India as well as in the area now known as Iran from the third/ninth century

2 Examples are the special issues on “Trade and Traffic in the Persianate World” and on “The Indo-Persianate World” in *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*; Richard Foltz, *Mughal India and Central Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Peter Golden, “Turks and Iranians: A Historical Context,” in *Turkic-Iranian Contact Areas: Historical and Linguistic Aspects*, eds. Lars Johanson and Christiane Bulut (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), 17–38; Scott Levi, *The Indian Diaspora in Central Asia and its Trade* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); Fariba Zarinebaf-Shahr, “Cross Cultural Contacts in Eurasia: Persianate Art in Ottoman Istanbul,” in *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East*, eds. John Woods *et al.* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 529–41; Nile Green, “Migrant Sufis and Sacred Space in South Asian Islam,” *Contemporary South Asia* 12, no. 4 (2003): 493–509; James Pickett, *The Persianate Ulama in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Central Asia*, American Councils Combined Research and Language Scholarship Final Report / Working Paper, 2012; Finbarr Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and the Medieval Hindu-Muslim Encounter* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009); Juan Cole, “Iranian Culture in South Asia, 1500–1900,” in *Iran and the Surrounding World: Interactions in Culture and Cultural Politics*, eds. Nikki Keddie and Rudi Mathee (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2002), 15–35.

was articulated through a set of relationships between conquest, migration, and new cultural and social formations. What Mana Kia has called “a shared language of learning and power” rested on the interplay between the construction of dynastic rule, based on administrative as well as military power, and the development of urban *milieux* for religious and literary activity.³ It was underpinned by the spread of Persianate religious thought and practice (notably through Sufi networks), the adoption of Persianate forms of governance, and the emergence of court and bureaucratic groups practicing Persianate versions of *adab* (cultured comportment). Recent scholarship rightly emphasizes the many-sided and persistent influence of this rich blend of political, literary and devotional practices, but the complexities posed by their existence in settings where other influences were also in play also need attention. Turco-Mongol and Indian governmental or religious traditions, like the diverse trade goods and vocabularies found in urban settings across western, southern and central Asia, intersected with their Persianate equivalents in complex shifting ways. From forms of land grant or official titles to poetic allusions and devotional rituals, scholars discern elements of cultural pluralism and hybridity alongside distinctively Persianate features. Rather than investigating and interpreting the “Persianate world” as though it were sealed within a bubble, it makes sense to take an interactive approach to its positioning within a range of *non*-Persianate social, political and cultural formations.⁴

This approach has the advantage of drawing attention to how the notion of a “Persianate world” as a set of practices and perceptions makes significant use of processes of “othering” and of the marking of difference. The embedding of Persianate culture or governance among Turcic, Arab, or Indian populations entailed the establishment of both distinctions and commonalities within the settings and power relations involved. Deciding upon and developing ideas and practices understood as distinctively Persianate was itself a constitutive element in the making and maintenance of that world, as was a degree of hybridity between Persianate and non-Persianate influences. Whether

3 Mana Kia, “Contours of the Persianate Community 1722–1835,” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2011).

4 See citations in footnote 2; conceptual issues are discussed in Said Arjomand, “Defining Persianate Studies,” *Journal of Persianate Studies* 1, no. 1 (2008); *idem* and E. Tiryakin, eds., *Rethinking Civilizational Analysis* (London: Sage, 2004); Nile Green, “Rethinking the Middle East after the Oceanic Turn,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 34, no. 3 (2014): 556–564; Noah Feldman, “Ethical Literature: Religion and Political Authority as Brothers,” *Journal of Persianate Studies* 5, no. 2 (2012): 95–127; Armando Salvatore, “Repositioning ‘Islamdom’: The Culture-Power Syndrome within a Transcivilizational Ecumene,” *European Journal of Social Theory* 13, no. 1 (2010): 99–115.

considering the everyday facts of multi-lingualism in urban or courtly settings, or exploring links between geographical mobility/relocation and cultural identities, the elaboration of distinctions and interactions across lines of difference forms part of the investigation.⁵ Thus notions of the "Persianate" draw attention both to the cross-cultural and cross-communal integrative role of practices and discourses associated with this term, *and* to their role in demarcating distinctions and boundaries which differentiated them from others. In this sense perhaps the most helpful usage of the idea of a "Persianate world" is to indicate something continuously in process, or an aspiration, rather than a fixed or uncontested entity, and to examine the continuities and changes in its multiple components.

It is in this context that I offer a discussion of ways in which the history of Baluch dealings with non-Baluch people, and *vice versa*, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries shaped and were shaped (or not) by ideas of a "Persianate world." Although as one author has suggested the component elements of Baluch lives and identities can seem "a palimpsest of cultural and linguistic discontinuities," it is possible to offer some coherent account of their formation.⁶ As ethnic and political maps of the relevant regions suggest, communities self-identified as "Baluch," and so labelled by others, have lived in areas of what are now south-eastern and eastern Iran, western and south-western Afghanistan, and south-western Pakistan over a considerable period. Harsh soil and climatic conditions, and distance from major urban centers, allowed these areas to become extended zones of limited but interactive crop and animal husbandry, and of refuge for displaced groups. Within that framework the use of the Baluchi language, and the formation of power and protective relations between cultivators, chieftains, and pastoralists,

5 For an analysis of relevant themes see Brian Spooner, "Persian, Farsi, Dari, Tajik: Language Names and Language Policy," in *Language Policy and Language Conflict in Afghanistan and its Neighbors: The Changing Politics of Language Choice*, ed. Harold Schiffman (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 89–117; John Perry, "The Historical Role of Turkish in Relation to Persian in Iran," *Iran & the Caucasus*, vol. 5 (2001): 193–200; *idem*, "Cultural Currents in the Turco-Persian World in Safavid and post-Safavid Times," in *New Perspectives on Safavid Iran: Empire and Society*, ed. Colin Mitchell (New York: Routledge, 2011), 84–96; Michael Fisher, "Teaching Persian as an Imperial Language in India and in England during the late 18th and early 19th centuries," in *Literacy in the Persianate World*, 328–358; Sunil Kumar, "The Ignored Elites: Turks, Mongols and a Persian Secretarial Class in the Early Delhi Sultanate," *Modern Asian Studies* 43, no. 1 (2009): 45–77; Rebecca Gould, "The Geographies of 'Ajam: The Circulation of Persian Poetry from South Asia to the Caucasus," *Medieval History Journal* 18, no. 1 (2015): 87–119.

6 Brian Spooner, "Baluchistan i. Geography, History and Ethnography," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 111/6, 598–632; available online at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/baluchistan-i> (accessed 27 July 2017).

sustained the development of communities who called themselves Baluch, and were named as such by others. Such groups did not rely exclusively on location or kinship to define their identity and communal boundaries, but also on linguistic practices which could be extended from existing Baluch speakers to incomers to the region. Thus groups which were identified as Pashto speaking at one point in time subsequently became Baluch speakers and known as “Baluch.” Oral poetic culture among the Baluch depicted this process of transformation as part of “Baluch” tradition.⁷ As Spooner observed, Baluch identity centered on language use, but also on social structures (group organization and power relations), on the spatial organization of production (movement between particular pastures and cultivated areas), and on historical contingencies which offered possibilities for Baluch political autonomy and/or polity formation.⁸

There are of course many ways to consider the range of experiences and institutions which formed Baluch communities, but this piece considers how relations between Baluch and others in the nineteenth century illumine, or are illumined by notions of a “Persianate world.” Baluch groups interacted with non-Baluch at a number of levels; Baluch landholders used non-Baluch labour and vice versa;⁹ Baluch settlers in the regions of Sistan, Qaenat, and Kerman (as well as in southern Afghanistan) were resisted and accommodated by other residents;¹⁰ Baluch men both assisted and raided the caravan

7 Mansel Longworth Dames, *Popular Poetry of the Baloches*, rev. ed. (1907; repr., Quetta: Baluchi Academy, 1988), 52–3 presents Baluch poetry dealing with people who “become” Baluch, referring to Kurds, Jats, and others.

8 Brian Spooner, “Who are the Baluch? A Preliminary Enquiry into the Dynamics of an Ethnic Identity from Qajar Iran,” in *Qajar Iran: Political, Social, and Cultural Change, 1800–1925*, eds. Clifford Bosworth and Carole Hillenbrand (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1983), 93–110; *idem*, “The Baloch in Islamic Civilisation, Western Ethnography and World History,” *Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 4, no. 2 (2013): 135–151; Nina Swidler, “Kalat: The Political Economy of a Tribal Chieftdom,” *American Ethnologist* 19, no. 3 (1992): 573–70.

9 Ahmad ‘Ali Vaziri Kermani, *Joghrafiyya-ye Kerman*, ed. Mohammad Bastani Parizi (Tehran, 1967), 108 (henceforth Vaziri, *Joghrafiyya*); Charles Edward Yate, *Khurasan and Sistan* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1900), 137; *Imperial Gazetteer of India, provincial series: Baluchistan* (Calcutta: 1908), 182–3; George P. Tate, *The Frontiers of Baluchistan* (London, 1909), 58, 93; Firuz Mirza Farmanfarma, *Safarnameh-ye Kerman va Baluchestan*, ed. Mansoureh Etehadieh (Tehran, 1963), 12–13 (henceforth *Safarnameh*); ‘Abd al-Hosayn Mirza Farmanfarma, *Mosaferatnameh-ye Kerman va Baluchestan*, ed. Iraj Afshar (Tehran: Asatir, 2004), 146, 176 (henceforth *Mosaferatnameh*).

10 Vaziri, *Joghrafiyya*, 105, 179, 188; *Safarnameh*, 12, 37–8; Yate, *Khurasan*, 91, 93, 97, 108, 112–3, 126, 137, 350, 391; *Imperial Gazetteer ... Baluchistan*, 182–3.

trade;¹¹ Baluch women produced carpets which by the end of the nineteenth century were entering long distance capitalistic exchange networks;¹² Baluch families intermarried with non-Baluch, although interestingly this practice varied according to power relations in particular areas;¹³ elite Baluch men bargained with, and sometimes took posts in, the Qajar civil and military administration, just as Baluch rulers used Persian speaking officials, and Baluch men served in the military levies of the Qajar government;¹⁴ on a wider terrain, Baluch leaderships and the rulers of the Baluch polity of Kalat, formed in the seventeenth century and maintained into the nineteenth century, engaged at state level with governors, generals, and rulers in Iran, Afghanistan, and northern India. A web of connections thus linked the worlds of Persianate linguistic and governmental practice to communities and elites who saw themselves, and were also seen by others as *non*-Persianate. What will be examined here are the roles played by distinctions between "Persianate" and "non-Persianate" in such a web.

In order to do this it will help both to open up some of the formulations about language, social structure, and historical context, and to consider what analytical tools can enable scholars to make sense of this diverse body of relationships. Here attention needs to be paid both to the perceptions and understandings of the historical actors, and to the needs of historical and cultural analysis. Initially consideration of linguistic and cultural issues seems to reveal a strong line of differentiation between Baluch-speaking communities,

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- 11 Vaziri, *Joghrafiyya*, 179, 181; Ahmad 'Ali Vaziri, *Tarikh-e Kerman*, ed. Mohammad Bastani Parizi (Tehran, 1961), 606, 615–6 (henceforth Vaziri, *Tarikh*); E'temad al-Saltaneh, *Mer'at al-Boldan*, ed. 'Abd al-Hosayn Nava'i (Tehran, 1990), vol. 1: 237.
 - 12 Arthur Cecil Edwards, *The Persian Carpet* (London: Duckworth, 1953), 185–8, 191–5; James Morier, *A Journey through Persia, Armenia, and Asia Minor, to Constantinople, in the Years 1808 and 1809* (London, 1812), 50; *Imperial Gazetteer ... Baluchistan*, 49–50, 104, 114, 124, 133, 142, 155, 161, 173, 177, 190; Tate, *Frontiers*, 232–4.
 - 13 Pirouz Mojtahed-Zadeh, *Small Players of the Great Game* (London: Routledge, 2007), 67; 'Ali Naghi Khan Hakim al-Mamalik, *Ruznameh-ye Safar-e Khorasan* (Tehran, 1977), 476; Tate, *Frontiers*, 236; Harry De Windt, *A Ride to India across Persia and Baluchistan*, rev. ed. (1891; repr., Charleston, SC: BiblioBazaar, 2006), 104; Daran Khan Zargham al-Saltaneh, an official in Rudbar and Kahnuj, noted in Vaziri, *Joghrafiyya*, 126 and *Safarnameh*, 55, 56, 61, 62, was of Perso-Baluch descent.
 - 14 *Safarnameh*, 38–40; 'Abd al-Hosayn Mirza, *Mosaferatnameh*, 144, 146; Michael Patterson, "A partial translation of 'ayn al-vaqayi' (wellspring of events)" (master's thesis, New York University, 1988), 157, 178, 280–1; Oliver St. John, "The Physical geography of Persia; Narrative of a journey through Baluchistan and Southern Persia, 1872," in W. Blandford, ed., *Eastern Persia*, 2 vols (London, 1876), vol.1: 76 (henceforth St. John, *Narrative*); Evan Smith, "The Perso-Afghan mission 1871–2," in *Eastern Persia*, vol. 1: 250; Mojtahed-Zadeh, *Small Players*, 61; Henry Pottinger, *Travels in Beloochistan and Sindh* (London, 1816), 168–9.

affirming Baluch speech as a key marker of identity, and those they described as *farsiwan* (= Persian speaking).¹⁵ The incorporation of those with other linguistic practices, whether Pashto settlers or descendants of non-Baluch speaking cultivators, reinforces such a view of the “Baluchification” of those who participated in “Baluch” productive and political networks. Baluch oral poetic and narrative traditions were other features of the linguistic landscape which distinguished “Persian” from “Baluch” cultural practice and self identification. Public recitations by professional “bards” commemorated distant and recent events, notably warfare and heroic deeds by noted Baluch leaders, bonding collective memory and narrative to the Baluch language.¹⁶ Observations by nineteenth-century visitors to Baluch communities within Iranian, Afghan, and British Indian spheres of influence depict those communities functioning as entities visibly distinct from their Sistani, Pashtun, Sindhi, or Iranian neighbors. Although, this may reveal as much about the observers as about the communities they describe, nonetheless this coincidence of linguistic and social groupings can be seen as one marker of the limits of a “Persianate” world.¹⁷

Such a perspective should be offset by other considerations. In many respects the “worlds” of Baluch people and their non-Baluch neighbors were articulated by linguistic pluralism rather than solely by linguistic demarcation. The Khans of Kalat’s use of Persian-speaking advisors, or the interchanges of Persian-speaking governors and officials in “Iranian Baluchistan” with Baluch chiefs, allies or soldiers required forms or degrees of multilingualism, which would be shaped by gender, occupation, age and rank. Senior males with power and status were more likely to be multilingual than junior, female, or subaltern persons, just as poor Baluch youths travelling from Sistan to Merv needed some linguistic adeptness;¹⁸ traders, hired soldiers, and *mollas* in or close to Baluch communities might acquire and use more than one language, while cultivators or shepherds in isolated areas might not. Thus the Baluch who accompanied Ernest Floyer on his travels in Baluchistan and Iran in 1876–7 joked with each other about whether to use Baluch, Persian, or Arabic terms for a pack animal, although refusing to use the Persian term for a felt coat. One of his guides carried a Persian text with him, and another reported

15 Spooner, “Persian, Dari”; Fredrik Barth, “Ethnic Processes on the Pathan-Baluch Boundary,” in *Indo-Iranica: Mélanges présentés à G.Morgenstierne* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1964), 13–20.

16 Dames, *Popular Poetry*, xvi–xviii, xxii, xxv, and the poems presented from pp. 1–57, those on pp. 60–3, collected in the 1840s, deal with recent events.

17 *Safarnameh*, 21, 38; Vaziri, *Joghrafiyya*, 105, 106, 179; Tate, *Frontiers*, 71, 236.

18 Although one should note the case of a female “governor”/chief of a Baluch community in Sistan noted in Tate, *Frontiers*, 235; see also *Ibid.*, 125–6.

that the school in a small town near Bampur taught mainly in Baluch but also used Persian and Arabic.¹⁹ Despite assertions that Baluch poetry did not use Persian forms or styles, topics from Persian tradition appear in Baluch poems.²⁰ Thus the question for analysts of "Persianate worlds" becomes less one about the role of any single language, and more about the historical and social conditions in which one language is privileged *among others* as socially, culturally, or politically defining or normative. Thus Iranian governors reporting encounters with Baluch *khans/hakims*²¹ in territories where they claimed Iranian control do not mention the language used in such encounters, indicating both the dominance of Persian and the ability of some Baluch to use it. Insofar as language was used to negotiate power relations, to protect particular interests, and to assert or challenge status and dominance, it could reinforce the privileged position of Persian in a "Persianate world" (or of English and Hindi in a "British colonial world") while also sustaining multilingual practices and crossovers. Baluch incorporation of slaves, refugees, subaltern cultivators, and non-Baluch wives into a "Baluch" identity was grounded in language use, but the maintenance of both material and political life required more complex relationships to language. Visitors to Baluch communities sometimes commented on such complex outcomes.²² Nationalistic historians may construct narratives of the decline of the Kalat polity being accelerated by the incompetent/malevolent role of "foreign" (Persian speaking /culturally "Persian") advisors; others may prefer to reflect on the cultural hybridity of that polity and its consequent tensions.²³

Other studies of the "Persianate world" foreground the role of distinctively Persianate variants of Muslim practice and spirituality in linking intellectuals and/or Sufis whose mobility across political borders or ethnic groups gave them distinctive roles in that world. Clearly the history of Iranian dynastic states (Safavid, Qajar) with specific commitments to Shi'i Islam raise interesting questions about the relevance, or otherwise, of the Shi'a / Sunni divide for concepts and analyses of a "Persianate world." How did the advent of a

19 Ernest Floyer, *Unexplored Baluchistan: A survey, with observations astronomical, geographical, botanical, etc., of a route through Mekran, Bashkurd, Persia, Kurdistan, and Turkey* (London, 1882), 58, 171, 243.

20 Dames, *Popular Poetry*, xvii makes this case; on pp. 111–3 is a Baluch version of the romance of Majnun and Leila; on pp. 117–8 is a Baluch version of the romance of Farhad and Shirin.

21 The former the term used by Iranians, the latter by Baluch, to denote a local power holder.

22 See references in note 18.

23 See for example Naseer Dashti, *The Baloch and Balochistan: A Historical Account from the Beginning to the Fall of the Baloch State* (Trafford Publishing, 2012), 212–3.

confessional state which was also in some senses Persianate alter or fracture a trans-regional and trans-ethnic “Persianate world” in which users of Turcic or Georgian languages also used Persian? Were the roles of literature, statecraft, and mysticism in the enactment of Persianate identities and affiliations more important than that divide, making it secondary or marginal to religious divisions? Study of the Baluch has not been very illuminating on these questions, since little specifically historical work has been done on the significance of the predominantly Sunni affiliations of Baluch people or on Sufi activity or organization in their communities in the past as opposed to the present. Dames’ work on Baluch poetry identified not only patterns of Sufi tradition and imagery, but poems with invocations of ‘Ali and the twelve Imams.²⁴ There are only hints at how this affected their inclusion, exclusion, or liminality within a “Persianate world.”²⁵ Late nineteenth-century Iranian observers occasionally linked the supposed “savagery” of the Baluch with their superstitious or mistaken religious beliefs, adding a modern ethnographic flavor to their judgements on (“Persian”) civilization and religion.²⁶ However as elite men with primarily governmental or literary interests this did not loom very large in their depictions of Baluch people, in a period when the hold of notions of a “Persianate world” was arguably becoming weaker than in the past. On a more political note, a British commentator reported that a Baluch leader in Sistan who converted to Shi‘i Islam (itself evidence of new patterns of politics and settlement), was regarded by fellow Baluch as less trustworthy, and less “Baluch,” for that reason.²⁷ “Ethnic” identity, political relationships, and religious affiliation at times combined and at other times pulled against one another.

Turning away from more specifically cultural aspects of the concept of a “Persianate world” it is useful to situate commentary on Baluch relationships to that world in a spatial context. Just as scholarly work on spatiality has problematized the meanings and importance of political borders, so too it problematizes center/periphery or core/margin models and analyses of governance and political power. Accounts of Baluch history in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries often construct them as “border peoples” accepting or resisting incorporation into the controlling and encroaching agendas of the developing Afghan, Iranian, British Indian, or Sikh states. Each of these state

24 Dames, *Popular Poetry*, xxviii and poems on pp. 1–2, 141, 144, 147, 161–5.

25 But note the important essay of Waleed Ziad, “From Yarkand to Sindh via Kabul: The rise of Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi Sufi Networks in the 18th–19th Century,” in this volume, which notes the connections of this *tariqeh* to Baluch people who studied in its *khaneqah* or met its missionaries.

26 *Safarnameh*, 53–4.

27 Tate, *Frontiers*, 229.

actors deployed Persianate conventions of governance to varying degrees, whether the Sikh and (declining) British use of Mughal practices, or the Abdali/Durrani and Qajar re-configuring of Safavid equivalents, while adopting new and different ("modern") modes of rule. However there are also alternative or reverse narratives which foreground the primacy of Baluch actors on the terrain where they moved and exercised power, dealing with what were for them unwelcome incursions by distant if assertive dynastic or colonial powers. Such readings place Baluch groups and their leaders at the "center," confronting pressure from Qajars, Afghans, or British on the "margins" of the Baluch sphere of material and political agency. Historians can usefully reflect on the merits of accounts which privilege particular dynastic or state centered perspectives as against the advantages of accounts which decenter them.

Whichever narratives are preferred, the question here is how far notions of a "Persianate world" can assist us in understanding the dynamics of Baluch political and organizational relations with non-Baluch in the spaces where both pursued their interests. Nationalistic Baluch accounts of the Khanate of Kalat in the eighteenth century situate it in an "ethnic" as well as a politico-military and dynastic story of Iranians, Afghans, and Baluch.²⁸ Like their Sikh, Afghan, and Maratha counterparts in the eighteenth century, the rulers of Kalat seized opportunities arising from the weakening of dynastic control in the Safavid, Mughal, and Afshar polities. Like other polities in the area, the khanate drew on Persianate administrative expertise, in the form of Persian-speaking *dehwar* officials, as well as on the military skills of incoming Afghans, and the commercial activities of "Babi"/Pushkun and Indian traders linking Bombay, Kalat, and Kandahar. If there was a reshuffling of political structures and Persianate governmental practices in the context of weakened dynastic empires in Iran and India in the eighteenth century, new configurations emerged in the following century. The expansionism of the British in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent, the aspirations of various Afghan rulers, and the interactions between these, changed the situation in which Baluch leaderships whether rulers of Kalat or local *hakims* and *sardars*, operated. Likewise the consolidation of the Qajar state, which included renewed assertion of control over "western Baluchistan" used existing conventions and personnel, and might be regarded as a revival of Persianate influence in the area. The rhetorical claim to control "Baluchistan," evidenced in the regular naming of a conjoint regional governorate of "Kerman and Baluchistan" had material backing in the construction of forts and despatching of troops into "Baluch" occupied areas. Qajar governors

28 Dashti, *The Baloch and Balochistan*, chapters 11, 12. Nationalistic readings are offered on pp. 196, 197–8, 200, 203, 204.

also accepted and sometimes encouraged Baluch settlement in the Kerman region, an initiative paralleled in parts of Sistan and Khorasan.²⁹

Such developments complicate any unequivocal spatial definitions of distinctively “Baluch” territory, and are a reminder that “Persianate” governance involved the management and interaction of disparate groups rather than necessarily emphasizing ethnic separation. Indian traders in Bampur or Kalat, Afghan fighters in Kalat and Sistan, or Persian speaking officials in Kalat or “western Baluchistan,” had interdependent as well as adversarial connections with “Baluch,” as did Baluch *sardars* with cultivators or pastoralists in Sistan and Makran. In these settings notions of “difference” combined perceptions of place of origin, of occupation, of language, and of faith. This becomes clear from descriptions of traders in Kalat and local chiefs in various parts of Baluchistan and Sistan, and from accounts of migrations and marriages in those areas.³⁰ It might be added that Baluchi groups engaged in commercial carpet production in the nineteenth century included those in Khorasan with its trade and investment networks linking rural areas to centers like Mashhad and to Russian markets for wool and carpets from Iran. Such growing involvement in market-oriented carpet making brought Baluch into contact with Persianate aesthetic conventions and commercial activities, and closer study of this phenomenon would enable a nuanced appreciation of adaptation, Persianization, and cultural resilience in this setting.³¹ Such interactions can be compared with the material interests taking the Baluch youths mentioned earlier from the Irano-Afghan borderlands to the Russian-controlled Central Asia seeking work as shepherds through migrant kin connections there. These youths could deal with the “modern” world of borders and steam locomotion while using their established pastoral skills and feeling the pull of their community and culture of origin strongly enough to return there.

29 Vaziri, *Joghrafiyya*, 57, 105, 179; Vaziri, *Tarikh*, 590, 615; ‘Abd al-Hosayn Mirza, *Mosaferatnameh*, 27, 144; Pottinger, *Travels*, 170; Floyer, *Unexplored Baluchistan*, 189–91, 272–4.

30 Pottinger, *Travels*, 70, 173–4, 177, 193–4, 199, 313, 316–7; Yate, *Khurasan and Sistan*, 126, 137, 350, 391.

31 Jeff W. Boucher, “Baluchi carpet weaving of the nineteenth century,” *Hali* 1, no. 3 (1978): 284–287; *Imperial gazetteer of India ... Baluchistan*, 49–50, 51–2, 104, 114, 124, 133, 142, 155, 161, 173, 177, 190; Tate, *Frontiers*, 232–4; Edwards, *The Persian Carpet*, 185–8, 191–5; Percy Sykes, “A Fifth Journey in Persia (Continued),” *The Geographical Journal* 28, no. 6 (1906): 560–587; Alfred Janata, “The So-called Herat Baluch Carpets and their Weavers,” *Oriental Carpet & Textile Studies* vol. 1 (1985), 165; H.J.R. Twigg, *Monograph on the Art and Practice of Carpet-Making in the Bombay Presidency* (Bombay, 1907); David Black and Clive Loveless, *Rugs of the Wandering Baluchi* (London: David Black Oriental Carpets, 1976).

From at least the 1840s onward bargaining and alliances, including marriage alliances, between Iranian elites and their Baluch equivalents formed part of the repertoire of political dealings and options through which they managed relationships and interests. That repertoire also included warfare, taxation, "rebellion," and punishment, but both aggression and negotiation made their contribution to the management process. The fact that one common Baluch term for an Iranian was *kajar* suggests that dynastic and governmental distinctions shaped ethnic perceptions rather than the reverse. We can understand this in terms of elite competition for control of subalterns and resources, or of a somewhat fragile dynastic system seeking to extend or preserve its sphere of control and legitimacy, as well as of distinctively "Persianate" forms of governance. Late nineteenth-century accounts by Iranian governors travelling in Baluch areas to assert their authority certainly reveal their concerns with power, law, and order, but also depict sociable activities and rituals involving them with their Baluch counterparts.³² At a regional level ambitious individuals like Mirza Qasem Khan Rif'at-e Nezam of Narmashir maneuvered between making a reputation for controlling Baluch "bandits" and "rebels," and allying with Baluch khans in pursuit of his aims within the turbulent politics of the constitutionalist era. Long-established dynamics among dynastic, regional, and local wielders of power intersected with emergent constitutional politics, combining Persianate and post-Persianate forms of political activity and relationships.³³ The "ethnic" difference between this aspiring borderland notable and his Baluch peers registers in the sources, as do their interlocking interests and conflicts over political influence and material resources.

In addition to remaking and maintaining long established conventions of governance, it can be seen that new elements and pressures were also in play. The Qajar state faced not only familiar rivals in Afghanistan or the Ottoman lands, but also expansionist activities of a different kind initiated by British imperialists in India and the Tsarist regime in the Caucasus and central Asia. As with other Asian states, rulers and officials experimented, somewhat intermittently in the Iranian case, with new forms of military and civil organization, using examples and advisors from a variety of sources, notably the practices

32 *Safarnameh*, 38–9, 55–6; *Mosaferatnameh*, 17, 43.

33 Mohammad Bastani-Parizi, *Payghambar-e Dozdan* (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1977), 33–52; Nazem al-Islam Kermani, *Tarikh-e Bidari-ye Iranian* (Tehran: Agah, 1983), vol. 2: 186, 188, 218; UK Foreign Office consular records (held at the National Archives, London), FO 248, vol. 946, May 1907; vol. 948, diary March–April, 26 June and July, 1908; vol. 969, diaries for July, September, December 1909; vol. 998, diaries for February 1910; vol. 1030, diaries for August, September, October, November, December 1911; vol. 1052, diaries for February, 29 March, 25 April, May, June 1912.

of the Ottomans and of European states. It could be argued that the changed geopolitical circumstances faced by Iranian rulers, and the extended range of practices and institutions on which they drew, significantly modified the Persianate conventions which also remained in their repertoire. At the rhetorical and ideological level older formulae of just rule, monarchical command, and the divine legitimacy of kingship were supplemented by reference to newer tropes of modern governance and patriotism. Modern official news-sheets and dress practices as well as conventional rituals and robes were used to project royal power alongside attempts at fiscal military and administrative re-organization. In addition to fluctuating attempts at the reform of their own governance, Qajar rulers found themselves dealing with new and unavoidable pressures from British and Russian governments to delineate the boundaries of their state in a “modern” fashion.

This had particular implications in the areas in which Baluch communities lived. Between the 1860s and the turn of the twentieth century Iranian, British, and Afghan governments sought to establish boundaries across territories in Afghanistan, Khorasan, Sistan, and Baluchistan which included such areas. Borderlands, or as the anthropologist Barth called them “shatter zones,” in which nomadic, settled, and semi-nomadic groups had maneuvered with one another and with state power were to be reconfigured and managed differently.³⁴ This involved “modern” (post-Persianate) practices such as the demarcation of boundary lines on maps, the appearance of “border guards” and “border posts” and the associated paraphernalia accompanying the documentation and organization of customs, travellers, and quarantine regulations. New types of governmentality were manifest in these attempts to regulate bodies, spaces, and bodies *in* space. The extent to which officially agreed changes were actually implemented, let alone transformative, is a matter for debate, and their impact in Baluch areas was arguably less than in Shahsevan areas of the Moghan steppe in north-western Iran. The adaptations involved local elites (“small players,” in one revealingly judgemental phrase) as well as representatives of the state, and initiated processes of recording and attempted control which prefigured later policies of settlement and policing in which mobile populations would be “otherized” in new ways.³⁵

34 The phrase comes from Fredrik Barth, *Principles of Social Organization in Southern Kurdistan* (Oslo: Jorgensen, 1953). Attempts by Iranian British and Afghan diplomats to settle boundaries in Sistan, Khorasan, and Baluchistan were made in 1870–2, 1894–6, 1903–5.

35 On the impact of Russo-Iranian boundary activities on the Shahsevan see Richard Tapper, *Frontier Nomads of Iran: A Political and Social History of the Shahsevan* (New

Some of these complexities surface in the depictions of Baluch people which appear in both Iranian and European texts. Setting aside the latter, with their colonial, ethnographic, and "info-tainment" agendas, it is worth considering how Baluch people and communities were approached within the shifting genres of Persian descriptive literature. In these genres new influences and established conventions combine to produce particular hybrid effects, expressive of the transitional cultural and political environment and world views underpinning the texts. By the later nineteenth century established conventions of descriptive travel writing and the recording of notable/wondrous phenomena were being modified by new agendas. Three of these merit comment; firstly, many educated men, now exposed to an expanding range of intellectual influences from within and beyond the Persianate world, sought to incorporate "modern" forms of rational knowledge and analysis within existing forms of social and historical comment and description; secondly, emergent intellectual and political discourses of nationalism linked the creation and dissemination of texts conveying fuller and clearer knowledge about the various parts of Iran and their problems to patriotic aspirations for progress and reform; thirdly, members of court and/or government circles in Tehran intermittently encouraged officials and local notables to produce works of this type specifically to inform and influence policy and debate.³⁶ The blend of elements is well illustrated in the opening paragraphs of Firuz Mirza's travel text with its pious invocation, followed by the announcement of his intention of providing a stage by stage account of settled and desolate areas as a source of information for the state.³⁷

Two texts by a regionally based Kermani author, and two by Qajar prince-governors sent from Tehran to Kerman/Baluchistan suggest how literate and privileged Iranians situated Baluch people, within Persianate and other conventions of travel writing, official reports and regional history or surveys. In the 1870s Ahmad 'Ali Khan Vaziri, a Kermani notable from a land and office-holding family, wrote both a *History* and a *Geography* of the Kerman region (later revised by his son) in which Baluch people appear in a number of contexts. It

York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); the term "small players" appears in the title of Mojtahed-Zadeh, *Small Players of the Great Game*.

36 Notable examples are the *Tarikh-e Kashan* by a Kashani scholar 'Abd al-Rahim Kalantar Zarrabi of 1877 and the *Safarnameh-ye Khuzistan* by a government official and engineer 'Abd al-Ghaffar Najm al-Mulk of 1885; more closely relevant is the "Siyahatnameh-ye Baluchestan" authored by one Mirza Mehdi Khan, included in *Mer'at al-Buldan*, a collection of accounts of various parts of Iran assembled by the Qajar official E'temad al-Saltaneh in the 1860s.

37 Firuz Mirza, *Safarnameh*, 2.

also appears that Vaziri wrote a *History of Baluchistan*.³⁸ In the 1880s and 1890s the Qajar prince Firuz Mirza Farmanfarma, followed by his son ‘Abd al-Hosayn Mirza, wrote accounts of official tours in the Kerman region and Baluch territories in their capacity as governors. These accounts, while using the format of a travel account structured by dates and distances, are shaped by the official and dynastic concerns of the late Qajar period.³⁹ Conventional references to the duties of good government are supplemented by specific discussions of taxation, dispute settlement, and agricultural improvement. In addition there are passages which offer realistic “modern” descriptions of scenery, routes, and natural phenomena.⁴⁰ By contrast, Vaziri’s two texts are exercises in regional description and historical narrative respectively, displaying his command of local knowledge and experience as well as some awareness of contemporary cultural and political changes. While the *Geography* refers to legendary and mythic tales, and has a section on “wonders/curiosities” in the tradition of older works towards the end of the text, the descriptions in the body of the work use recent texts and personal knowledge.⁴¹ An interesting link between the two groups or genres of texts is suggested by ‘Abd al-Hosayn Mirza Farmanfarma’s role as the patron/sponsor of the revision of Vaziri’s texts.

It is perhaps in keeping with its show of local expertise that Vaziri’s *Joghrafiyya* very much embeds its references to Baluch groups or individuals in its district-by-district account of the whole Kerman region, in which “Baluchistan” itself is marginalized. It notes when a particular group arrived or settled in a district, commenting on their economic activities and their relationships with other inhabitants.⁴² It engages with the conventional assumption that Baluch were robbers, noting groups of whom that was not the case, and discusses Baluch leaders in similar tones to that used for other notables.⁴³ Any sense of their distinctiveness is subordinated to the main agenda of the text, which is to depict social and material structures and activities within the region, and the Baluch appear as one of the many diverse groups and communities recorded in the text. The “othering” of the Baluch in the *Joghrafiyya* is less about their “non-Persianate” status, than about their roles as incomers (rather than

38 Vaziri, *Joghrafiyya*; *idem*, *Tarikh*; Vaziri mentions having written a *History of Baluchistan* in *Joghrafiyya*, 57.

39 Firuz Mirza, *Safarnameh*; *idem*, *Mosaferatnameh*; Firuz Mirza was governor of Kerman and Baluchistan in 1836–8; he and his sons ‘Abd al-Majid Mirza and ‘Abd al-Hosayn Mirza held the governorship of Kerman/Baluchestan between 1879 and 1893; ‘Abd al-Hosayn Mirza was governor there again in 1894–6 and 1905–6.

40 Firuz Mirza, *Safarnameh*, 11–12, 62, 77–8, (taxation); 11, 68–9, 72–4 (governance and grievances); 18, 21, 29–30, 46–7, 59, 75 (physical description).

41 *Joghrafiyya*, 193–8.

42 *Joghrafiyya*, 105–6, 179.

43 *Joghrafiyya*, 179, 181, 188.

long established residents of the region), as transhumant tent dwellers (rather than settled villagers or townspeople), or as disrupters of law and order. They are presented within conventions used to depict other pastoralists, bandits, or nomad groups, just as observations about Baluch elites parallel those about other local power-holders and their interactions with each other and with regional authorities. This seems to place Baluch groups and leaders within a Persianate framework of cultured approaches to the depiction of governance and social life, in which their ethnic otherness is less important than their social and political roles or potential challenges to law and order. Alongside this it is worth noting that Vaziri's production of a *History of Baluchistan* suggests that he had some notion of an area with a distinct identity, although only actual study of that text would clarify what blend of linguistic, political, or cultural criteria were being deployed to depict that identity.

This approach differs somewhat from the treatment of Baluch people in Vaziri's *Tarikh-e Kerman*, an extended narrative of regional history from early times until the nineteenth century presented from the perspective of a cultivated local notable. The section dealing with the Qajar era insistently couples the governance of Kerman and Baluchistan, in line with the dynastic agenda of asserting control in the south-eastern "borderlands" of Iran, whose modalities are sketched in accounts of the rule of various provincial governors. From the governorship of Ibrahim Mirza Zahir al-Dowleh Qajar (1803–24) to the turn of the twentieth century Vaziri includes comments on gubernatorial initiatives in "Baluchistan" in those accounts, which surface in other Qajar histories by non-Kermani authors.⁴⁴ This assertion of Iranian state power over the Baluch by the Qajars followed the pattern of earlier governors like the local notable and Isma'ili leader Sayyed Abu'l-Hosayn who governed the region in the late eighteenth century. It is worth noting that the fluctuating and uncertain character of Qajar authority in Baluchistan and Makran is acknowledged in the more descriptive *Joghrafiyya*.⁴⁵ The work of negotiation and maneuvering with Baluch chiefs, attempts at taxation, and the use of troops to police disruptive activity are reported with approval, but present such activities as the normal and appropriate practices of regional government. Indeed the absence of reference to the new presence of British interests, or to the vicissitudes of the nineteenth-century Afghan state (important in the Kerman/Baluchistan/Sistan area), locate Vaziri's view within perceptions of governance and order

44 For example Hasan Fasa'i, *History of Persia Under Qajar Rule*, trans. Heribert Busse (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 64 (dealing with 1209 AH / 1794–5) and 271 (dealing with 1258 AH / 1842–3).

45 Vaziri, *Tarikh*, 555, 590; *Joghrafiyya*, 186, 22–3.

long associated with the Persianate world. The terms, “rebel,” “control,” “authority,” “plunder,” “disorder,” are applied to Baluch people as they are to other predatory “tent dwellers” or “tribes” (*ilat*), to bandits, and to rebellious townspeople or local notables.⁴⁶ A similar tone is used in references to the building and maintenance of forts, which was another key feature of Qajar rule found across their territories and through their period in power. Here we might reflect on whether that activity, like the presence of Persian-speaking officials among those identified as “Baluch,” represented a way of marking a “Persianate” presence in a non-Persianate environment.⁴⁷

The treatment of Baluch groups as a matter of good governance and of law and order is also prominent in the narratives of the Qajar prince governors who produced texts depicting their roles as travellers and governors. Their self-presentation as agents of these desirable activities, settling disputes, managing taxation, and dealing with disorder, relates both to Baluch and non-Baluch communities, again embedding the Baluch in the broader life of the region. From the bestowal of *khel'ats* to adjudicating land and tax claims they present themselves as authorities and benefactors for local land and power holders, whether Baluch or non-Baluch.⁴⁸ Long established tropes of government as the maintenance of order, and of stable flows of revenue to the ruling regime, are linked to interest in the improvement of cultivation, settlement, and irrigation which feature in Firuz Mirza's account from the 1880s and in his son's text from a decade later. The ethnicity of the Baluch people with whom they had dealings is offset by how they are also situated within the text as khans, landowners, subject peasantry, or slaves. Comments on the agricultural potential of particular localities and soils, and on the building of *qanats* or houses, express such (Persianate) conventions, but also have a practical tone and specificity suggesting more “modern” views of good governance.⁴⁹ The plans and pen and wash drawings of landscapes created and included in the text by Firuz Mirza express another facet of modern and practical recording, offering visual parallels to the statistics and technical descriptions in the text. It is interesting to see such forms of representation being practiced by a man in his sixties, and consider how his acquisition of the relevant skills sat beside his conventional princely Persianate education in the 1820s and 1830s.⁵⁰

46 Vaziri, *Tarikh*, 590, 647.

47 Vaziri, *Tarikh*, 615–6.

48 Firuz Mirza, *Safarnameh*, 16, 65–7; *Mosaferatnameh*, 93.

49 Firuz Mirza, *Mosaferatnameh*, 27; *Safarnameh*, 12–13, 29–30, 58–9.

50 Firuz Mirza, *Safarnameh*, 21, 31, 34, 53, 54.

There is an additional element within these texts, which include a certain range of cultural and quasi-ethnographic comments on "Baluch" housing, dress, and religious beliefs. It is not clear whether the judgements on their "savage" or "backward" culture found in the texts are specifically ethnic comments on Baluch people, since comparable statements are made about other communities in the Kerman region.⁵¹ Certainly the assumptions about "civilization" embedded in their observations may have been underpinned by the elite education and world view of the authors, which maintained elements of a long established Persianate culture. They are paralleled in E'temad al-Saltaneh's remarks on the Baluch language and the religious practices of Baluchis in his *Mer'at al-Boldan*.⁵² Long established mappings of various peoples within assumptions about "proper" expressions of faith and observations on exotic others combine with "modern" taxonomic and intellectual interests in the ethnic and linguistic histories of such peoples. This cultural perspective is offset by the focus of our two travelling prince-governors on riding, falconry, and hunting (rather than cultured courtly activities) as their favored forms of recreation, or at least the forms most easily pursued in "remote" rural areas of Kerman and Baluchistan. Their preference might be more immediately associated with conventions stemming from the Qajars' "tribal" and/or Turcic background, and with patterns of court recreation, than with the predominantly urban/urbane features of Persianate cultural practice. Morphing into a modern mode, hunting played the role of a major bonding activity not just with local notables, but with the European officials who were new figures on the Iranian regional diplomatic scene in the later nineteenth century. Like the Russian consular officer Alexandr Ilyas in Khorasan, Sistan, and Kurdistan, his English equivalent Percy Sykes and 'Abd al-Hosayn Mirza Farmanfarma shaped their relationship in Kerman and Baluchistan in the 1890s through joint hunting expeditions as well as diplomatic exchanges. These hunting expeditions on occasion involved Baluch people both as subordinates and elite co-participants, indicating how their engagement with Iranian as well as European elite visitors was constituted through inclusion, hierarchy, and othering.⁵³

In a somewhat different, and perhaps more "modern," register, these accounts also include what might be seen as attempts at comparative ethnology. Firuz Mirza provides material on the lives and organization of Baluch *ilat* at the same time as depicting their impoverished and backward character, as did

51 Firuz Mirza, *Safarnameh*, 29–30, 48, 53–4; Firuz Mirza, *Mosaferatnameh*, 174.

52 E'temad al-Saltaneh, *Mer'at al-Boldan*, vol. 1: 434–71.

53 John Tchalenko, *Images from the Endgame: Persia through a Russian Lens, 1901–1914* (London: Saqi, 2006); Percy Sykes, *Ten Thousand Miles in Persia* (London, 1902), 76–7; Ella Sykes, *Through Persia on a side-saddle* (London, 1898), 175–6, 179.

his son.⁵⁴ His remarks combine statistical, descriptive, and judgemental views of the Baluch which distance them from the author and his educated elite urban Persianate readership, while incorporating them in his report on a governor's tour and its overall portrayal of the region. 'Abd al-Hosayn Mirza comments on the similarity between the cries of greeting given by Baluch women seeking money from him and those of Arab women.⁵⁵ This somewhat "ethnographic" tone is also found in Firuz Mirza's report on his encounter with two "animal-like" male Baluchis and their families near the *jangal* area of Bashir near the Hali-Rud, which lay in the Baluchi/Iranian border zone. Their inability to respond to questions provides an occasion for wonder and laughter, but also one for comparisons between this encounter and that between an Iranian and the king of Belgium featuring a similar failure to communicate across cultures.⁵⁶ In Firuz Mirza's comments the Baluchis become cultural "others," as in his view Iranians and *farangis* likewise were for each other. Sitting as it does alongside accounts of interaction and shared activity among Iranian and Baluch notables, this type of commentary shows Baluch people as both within and outside the frame of elite Iranian culture and politics.

Such depictions sometimes validated local knowledge and expertise, while at the same time distancing those depicted as backward, different, or subordinate, rather like comments by contemporary European colonial officials or visitors on the non-European world. Firuz Mirza notes his use of Baluch as guides for his travels and comments on their knowledge of land and other resources, and their ability to adapt pastoral and arable production to local circumstances.⁵⁷ 'Abd al-Hosayn Mirza's descriptive account of the settlements and production he observed during his expedition also suggest an awareness of the ability of the Baluch to make use of a harsh environment. His remarks on pastoral activity in the Kruk area mention the Baluch tribes digging and maintaining wells specifically for their flocks rather than for the needs of travellers.⁵⁸ Such remarks are less prominent than references to the need for development, and extensive listing of landowners and tax arrangements, suggesting, perhaps unsurprisingly, the dominance of governmental and "modern" agendas of recording and improvement. Both "ethnographic" and governmental agendas intersected with the shifting patterns of negotiation, coercion, and incorporation underpinning the human relationships between Iranians and Baluch in the contact zones where their lives and interests encountered one

54 Firuz Mirza, *Safarnameh*, 21, 29, 35, 48.

55 'Abd al-Hosayn Mirza, *Mosaferatnameh*, 120; the basis of his comparison is not clear.

56 Firuz Mirza, *Safarnameh*, 54.

57 Firuz Mirza, *Safarnameh*, 36, 55–6.

58 'Abd al-Hosayn Mirza, *Mosaferatnameh*, 117.

another. The symbols and rhetoric of "good" government and informed narrative both conveyed and concealed the limited and improvised character of Baluch/Iranian relations, and the conditionality of Persianate practices, while underpinning those very relations and practices. Like those who read their texts today, Firuz Mirza and 'Abd al-Hosayn Mirza could both record and grasp the varied politico-cultural meanings of the rituals of elite sociability, of gift giving, or the shared views of status and power which mediated such encounters. In this sense the two authors seem to be to some extent ethnographically aware both of themselves and of their Baluch interlocutors.

Retuning to the core concerns of this volume, in a world which Firuz Mirza saw as changing, such rituals had the legitimacy of longstanding Persianate practice and a practical efficacy which met the needs of Qajar rule while making sense to those who had to deal with it.⁵⁹ This reinforces the argument made earlier for an approach to notions of the "Persianate" which avoids the constraints of binary opposition. As Baluch groups contended for material needs and political space with Iranian, Afghan, and British rulers, and with non-Baluch co-residents of the areas where they operated, all parties found themselves constructing relationships founded on both differentiation and interaction. Baluch or Iranian perceptions and experiences of their own distinctive language, history, and culture were cross-cut by shared or similar elements in the lives and mindsets of pastoralists, local ruling elites, or traders. Relationships of unequal power and conflicted interests were managed through negotiation and alliance as well as through coercion and force. During the nineteenth century the tried and tested practices of cultured office-holders or urban religious and commercial networks which were the fabric of a/the "Persianate world" encountered new approaches to governance, and its relationship to knowledge formation and to an unequal global universe. That world now had to deal with the challenges of modern colonial and anti-colonial politics, and with new approaches to wealth creation, science, religion, and reform. While these challenges were hard to avoid, and ultimately transformative, our exploration of material dealing with Iranian-Baluch relations illustrates the continuing resonance of Persianate practices in much changed circumstances. The vocabulary and framework of the Persian texts depicting the Baluch express both the influence of Persianate tradition, and the impact of new politico-cultural forces acting on both authors and readers of the text. This acts as a reminder that while there are no easy or mechanical uses of the category "Persianate world," it is a stimulating and valuable starting point for social, cultural, and political analysis.

59 Firuz Mirza, *Safarnameh*, 38.

The Antipodes of “Progress”: A Journey to the End of Indo-Persian

Nile Green

Siyahat ki gun hain na mard-e safar hain
(We do not seize the advantages of travel, nor are we intrepid voyagers.)

HALI, *Mosaddas* (1879)

•••

Die Grenzen meiner Sprache bedeuten die Grenzen meiner Welt.
(The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.)

LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN, *Tractatus* (1922)

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In the last decades of the nineteenth century, Indians effectively stopped producing Persian prose after over eight hundred years of using the language for literature, statecraft, and science.¹ At the public level, the obvious turning point was Persian’s administrative replacement by the East India Company with English and the vernaculars between 1832 and 1837.² As Tariq Rahman

This essay is dedicated to the memory of Omar Khalidi with whom I had hoped to write a short book about travelers from his beloved Hyderabad. For archival and other assistance, I am grateful to Teresa Jones (Worcestershire History Centre), Alf Russell (Wolverhampton City Archives) and the staff of the Library of Birmingham and the Birmingham Pen Museum. I am also thankful to the custodians of the Salar Jung Library (particularly director A. Negender Reddy) and the Salar Jung Museum for their assistance during my previous research visits to Hyderabad.

- 1 For historical overviews of Indo-Persian, see T.N. Devare, *A Short History of Persian Literature at the Bahmani, Adil Shahi and Qutb Shahi Courts* (Poona: T.N. Devare, 1961); and Muhammad Abdul Ghani, *History of Persian Language and Literature at the Mughal Court*, 3 vols. (Allahabad: The Indian Press, 1929).
- 2 Tariq Rahman, “The Decline of Persian in British India,” *South Asia* 22, 1 (1999): 63–77.

has explained, the rationale appears to have been "providing justice to people in their vernacular languages rather than a foreign language; appealing to the masses rather than only to the elite; and, through this ... to symbolize the end of Muslim ascendancy."³ Yet it took decades for these official decisions to filter through to the private level by way of changes in education, publishing, and fashion. Moreover, Persian works continued to be produced at the Mughal court till 1858 (and in some princely states thereafter) while in Punjab in particular Persian-based schools lingered until the 1890s.⁴ The vogue for Urdu verse was already ascendant over a century earlier, but between around 1860 and 1880 Persian prose was also eclipsed by Urdu. Part vernacular and part lingua franca, Urdu was strengthened through its ties to colonial government schools, reformist intellectuals and the massive new market for printed books.⁵ Nonetheless, certain niches remained for Persian in the subcontinent, whether among Iranian expatriates, cultured literary conservatives or Sufis (reformist Muslims preferring Urdu, Arabic or English). In the half century after the East India Company disestablished Persian, the most important of these niches was certain princely states, particularly Hyderabad State, where Persian remained the official language till 1884.⁶ Having been introduced to India by the Ghaznavids, raised to supremacy by the Mughals and retired by the East India Company and then finally by the Nizam of Hyderabad, Persian had by the 1880s all but reached the end of its history in India. In 1892, the missionary C.B. Ward wrote that Urdu was "spoken more or less everywhere" in Hyderabad State; by 1911 only 256 of its residents claimed to be able to speak and write Persian compared to 1,341,622 who claimed the same abilities in Urdu.⁷

It is perhaps ironic that three years later the prime minister responsible for replacing Persian with Urdu in Hyderabad, Mir La'eq 'Ali Khan Sir Salar Jang II

3 Ibid., 50.

4 Ibid., 52, 59.

5 On these factors in the rise of Urdu, Farina Mir, *The Social Space of Language: Vernacular Culture in British Colonial Punjab* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Ulrike Stark, *An Empire of Books: The Naval Kishore Press and the Diffusion of the Printed Word in Colonial India, 1858–1895* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007); and *idem*, "Politics, Public Issues and the Promotion of Urdu Literature: *Avadh Akhbar*, the First Urdu Daily in Northern India," *Annual of Urdu Studies* 18, 1 (2003): 66–94.

6 Tariq Rahman, "Urdu in Hyderabad State," *Annual of Urdu Studies* 23 (2008): 36–54; On the links of Persian literature with Hyderabad elites, see M. Fathullah Khan, "The Nizams as Men of Letters," *Islamic Culture* 12, no. 4 (1938): 460–461; and Nile Green, *Indian Sufism since the Seventeenth Century: Saints, Books and Empires in the Muslim Deccan* (London: Routledge, 2006), chapter 2.

7 C.B. Ward, *History of Twelve Years' Work in the Nizam's Dominions, 1879–1891* (Bombay: Anglo-Vernacular Press, n.d.), 3; and Anonymous, *Modern Hyderabad* (Hyderabad: n.p., 1914?), 72 respectively.

(1862–89; hereafter Mir La'eq 'Ali), wrote one of the last ever Indo-Persian travelogues, the *Vaqaye'-e Mosaferat*.⁸ Even Hyderabad's last great promoter of Persian, Mir La'eq 'Ali's father Mir Torab 'Ali Khan Sir Salar Jung I (1829–83), had been required to conduct his meetings with British officials in Urdu rather than Indo-Persian.⁹ Change was therefore underway for several decades before Mir La'eq 'Ali officially replaced Persian in 1884 under pressure from the reformist Nawwab Mohsen al-Molk (1837–1907) and Bashir al-Dawleh Sir Asman Jah (1839–98), who would cement the language change when he replaced Mir La'eq 'Ali as prime minister after his departure for England.¹⁰ Written as the *Vaqaye'-e Mosaferat* was in 1887, just three years after that turning point in linguistic history – and, moreover, by the very person who disestablished the language – the text provides us with as fitting an example of the 'end of Indo-Persian' as can be hoped for. Replete as the *Vaqaye'-e Mosaferat* is with descriptions of places and processes without precedent in a millennium of literary tradition – experiences for which the author struggled to find the apt idiom or even word – the text allows us to probe the semantic and sociolinguistic dimensions of a language that educated Indians were abandoning for vernaculars that seemed both more flexible and familiar.

As a travelogue (*safarnameh*), the *Vaqaye'-e Mosaferat* is particularly suited to this exercise. For whether in Persian, Arabic, or Urdu, in the nineteenth century the description of international travel pushed writers to the very limits of their languages as they struggled to find words for the many new things born of the scientific-industrial revolutions. Prior to the official creation of new technical lexicons for Urdu, Persian, and Arabic in India, Iran, and Egypt in the early twentieth century, for many travelers the organic response to this disjuncture between words and things was to adopt loanwords. In the second half of the

8 Mir La'eq 'Ali Khan Sir Salar Jang II, *Vaqaye'-e Mosaferat-e Navvab-e Mostatab-e Ashraf-e Arfa'-e Wala Mir La'eq 'Ali Khan 'Imad al-Saltana Sar Salar Jang Ki. Si. Ay. I. basawb-e Farangestan* (Bombay: Matba'-ye Shirazi, 1305/1888) (hereafter Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*). As detailed in the references, three editions of the travelogue exist: the original Bombay edition of 1305/1888 and two recent reprints: (i) with an introduction by Sunil Sharma and Omar Khalidi (1387/2009) and (ii) with annotations (some incorrect) by Harun Vahuman (1383/2005). Except where I have found it useful to consult Princetone's copy of the Bombay edition, throughout the following notes I refer to the more widely available edition by Harun Vahuman: *Safarnameh-ye 'Imad al-Saltaneh beh Urupa* (Tehran: Nashr-e Paniz, 1383/2005).

9 G.H. Trevor, "Sir Salar Jung's Visit to Europe in 1876," *Macmillan's Magazine* 79 (November 1898–April 1899), 390.

10 On the circumstances surrounding this language change in Hyderabad, see Tariq Rahman, *From Hindi to Urdu: A Social and Political History* (Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 2011), 238–243. On Mohsen al-Molk's career, see Mohammad Amin Zubayri, *Hayat-e Mohsen* (Aligarh: Muslim University Press, 1934).

nineteenth century, such European loanwords entered Islamic languages in vast numbers.¹¹ As Mohammed Sawaie has written with regard to the adoption of such loanwords into Arabic, this created for Arab intellectuals "linguistic dilemmas ... as a result of the influx of Western terminology during the Arab renaissance of the 19th century."¹² By contrast, compared to the widespread lexical borrowing of Arabic- and Urdu-users, and indeed Persian-users in Iran, Mir La'eq 'Ali showed a marked reticence to besmirch his classical prose with such alien sounds. By the *fin de siècle*, his decision was symptomatic of Indo-Persian's aesthetic and intellectual conservatism. A close reading of his text in this way reveals tensions – aesthetic and linguistic, social and intellectual – that help us detect more subtle reasons for the demise of Indo-Persian than the top-down explanations of official diktat as Indian intellectuals chose not to associate themselves with a language which, in India, had become a less flexible literary medium than the vernaculars. Through Mir La'eq 'Ali's pen, at least, Indo-Persian had become a prisoner of its past.

Whether through Bernard Cohn's notion of the "command of language" or Tariq Rahman's argument that "as [Indo-Persian] lost its power, so it lost its prestige," previous scholarship has explained the demise of Indo-Persian solely as a response to colonial administrative and educational policy.¹³ But this is too simple an explanation: many Indian languages successfully survived the pressures of colonial language policy (most notably Punjabi, which was also sidelined in favor of Urdu).¹⁴ In contrast to this model of external pressure, this essay explores alternative reasons, both semantic and sociolinguistic, that were internal to Indo-Persian and its users (along with those who abandoned it for Urdu). This is not intended to deny the existence of external pressures,

11 On travel, loan words, and lexicons, see Kavita Datla, *The Language of Secular Islam: Urdu Nationalism and Colonial India* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013), chapter 2; Marwa S. Elshakry, "Knowledge in Motion: The Cultural Politics of Modern Science Translations in Arabic," *Isis* 99, no. 4 (2008): 701–730; Nile Green, "Spacetime and the Muslim Journey West: Industrial Communications in the Making of the 'Muslim World,'" *American Historical Review* 118, 2 (2013): 401–429; Daniel Newman, "The European Influence on Arabic during the *Nahda*: Lexical Borrowing from European Languages (*Ta'rib*) in 19th-Century Literature," *Arabic Language and Literature* 5, no. 2 (2002): 1–32; and Mohammed Sawaie, "Rifa'a Rafi' al-Tahtawi and his Contribution to the Lexical Development of Modern Literary Arabic," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 32, no. 3 (August 2000): 395–410.

12 Sawaie, "Rifa'a Rafi' al-Tahtawi," 396.

13 Bernard S. Cohn, "The Command of Language and the Language of Command," in *Subaltern Studies IV: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, ed. Ranajit Guha (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985); and Rahman, "Decline of Persian," 61.

14 Mir, *Social Space of Language*.

particularly by way of colonial language policies, which were very real. The aim is rather to use a case study of a single text to identify some of the internal factors that also contributed to the abandonment of Indo-Persian by India's Muslim intelligentsia. Through a close reading of Mir La'eq 'Ali's travelogue, the following pages argue that through the classical rigidity of its lexicon and genres, and its affiliation to an older class of Muslim elites, by the last quarter of the nineteenth century Indo-Persian was seen as a language of a past that had little grasp of the present let alone the future. In this way, we can better understand the decision of India's self-styled Muslim 'progressives' (*taraqqi pasand*) to write in the more flexible vernaculars instead, particularly Urdu.¹⁵ Pointing to Indo-Persian's links to an old elite, one of its final writers was the last Nizam, 'Osman 'Ali Khan (r. 1911–48), for whom it was a medium for the most banal and self-referential poems, the very antithesis of the *Mosaddas*, the great Urdu paean to cultural reform by Altaf Hosayn Hali (1837–1914).¹⁶

As we shall see in the following pages, Mir La'eq 'Ali struggled to bend both his language and genre to the wider world in which Indians were moving at the Victorian height of empire. His *Vaqaye'-e Mosaferat* sailed directly along that high imperial watermark, for its pretext was the author's steamship journey to England for the celebrations surrounding the fiftieth anniversary of Victoria's reign in 1887.¹⁷ His was not the only Persian account of the anniversary: it was also described in the travelogue of the Iranian Haji Pirzadeh (1835/40–1904), who recounted the scale of the "great festival and celebration (*'ayd o jashn-e bozorg*)," noting the presence of Iranian delegates along with representatives from India, China, Central Asia, and America, along with a million (*du korur*) ordinary onlookers.¹⁸ But unlike Haji Pirzadeh's travelogue, Mir La'eq 'Ali's text was the loyalist testament of an imperial citizen who, near the end of the journey he described, was honored by Victoria's own hand as a Knight Commander of the Indian Empire (KCIЕ). As such, the *Vaqaye'-e Mosaferat* belonged to a very different imperial order from that which Indo-Persian had nurtured over

15 Note that I am not referring here to the Anjoman Taraqqi Pasand Mossanafin-e Hend (Progressive Writers' Movement), which was not founded until 1936. Instead, I am referring to that more diffuse generation of intellectuals for whom the term *taraqqi* ('progress') formed a leitmotif.

16 See e.g. the *ghazal* cited in Fathullah Khan, "The Nizams as Men of Letters," 460.

17 In fact, due to his recent fall from favor, the Nizam banned Mir La'eq 'Ali from attending the official celebrations, forcing him to arrive in England somewhat late.

18 Haji Mohammad 'Ali Pirzadeh, *Safarnameh-ye Haji Pirzadeh*, ed. Hafez Farmanfarma'iyan (Tehran: Daneshgah-e Tehran, 1342–43/1963–65), vol. 1: 292–293. Here I have relied on Steingass's definition of a Persian *korur* as equaling 500,000 rather than the more familiar Indian *korur* (crore) of ten million. See Steingass, *Comprehensive Persian-English*, q.v. "*korur*," 1025.

the previous eight centuries. Yet it was not so much the shifts of empire that concerned its author. Like other Hyderabad elites, his position was secured by colonial power.¹⁹ When he had been appointed as Hyderabad's *diwan* (prime minister), it had been with British support. Instead, what caught his interest on his travels through the colonial metropolis were the shifts in technology and industry that marked a more visible transformation than the continuities of protocol and hierarchy which, like many a Hyderabad aristocrat, he considered part of the proper socio-political order.²⁰ This tension between an older world of elite Indo-Muslim status consciousness and a newer world of industrialists, machines, and the workforces is revealed in his account of the furthest point, as it were the antipodes, of his journey from Hyderabad as he reached the English industrial Midlands before turning back towards home. If precolonial Persian travelogues from both Iran and India had charted all manner of ethnographic and political difference, then the travelogues of the nineteenth century were set apart by a concern for the 'European sciences' (*'olum-e farangi*) and the visible 'progress' (*taraqqi*) which they wrought. These concerns became all the more fraught for knowing that neither Persian nor Arabic were the languages of this new scientific order.²¹ As early as the 1810s, to see, to describe and, perchance, to understand the factories and machines that drove this new order became one of the primary purposes (or at least, justifications) of travel. This was all the more true of later royal and official travelers, such as Nasir al-Din Shah of Persia and the Amir Amanullah of Afghanistan, whose itineraries through Europe included dozens of factories, mills, and munitions works.²²

19 On Hyderabad in this period, see Cheragh Ali, *Hyderabad (Deccan) under Sir Salar Jung* (Bombay: Education Society Press, 1885); and Kerin Gräfin von Schwerin, *Indirekte Herrschaft und Reformpolitik im indischen Fürstenstaat Hyderabad, 1853–1911* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1980).

20 On similar concerns in the Iranian travelogue, see Monica Ringer, "The Quest for the Secret of Strength in Iranian Nineteenth-Century Travel Literature: Rethinking Tradition in the *Safarnameh*," in *Iran and the Surrounding World: Interactions in Culture and Cultural Politics*, eds. Nikki R. Keddie and Rudi Matthee (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 146–161.

21 If the translations made at the Dar al-Fonun after 1851 rendered some of this scientific learning into Persian in Iran, by the middle of the century it was Urdu that was the focus of educational translation in India. On Indo-Persian scientific translations earlier in the nineteenth century, see Margrit Pernau, ed. *The Delhi College: Traditional Elites, the Colonial State, and Education before 1857* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006).

22 Nile Green, "Afghan Afterlife of Phileas Fogg: Space and Time in the Literature of Afghan Travel," in *Afghanistan in Ink: Literature between Diaspora and Nation*, eds. Nile Green and Nushin Arbabzadah (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 67–90; and David Motadel, "Qajar Shahs in Imperial Germany," *Past & Present* 213, no. 1 (2011), 191–235.

As Hyderabad's erstwhile prime minister, Mir La'eq 'Ali certainly fit this pattern. Indeed, the opening line of his travelogue stated the rationale of his journey in terms of the "many sorts of progress (*taraqqi*) that result from travel."²³ Yet as we shall see, both the traveler and his text were far from embodiments of the 'progress' that so many Indian Muslim intellectuals were seeking by this time.

Written amid the intersection of imperial citizenship, industrial tourism, and the foibles of a feudal elite, Mir La'eq 'Ali's late example of Indo-Persian prose thus allows us to reflect on what is now an unfashionable question for historians but was nonetheless a pressing issue for his contemporaries: 'decline' and 'decadence'. A decade before Mir La'eq 'Ali wrote his travel diary, the aforementioned poet Altaf Hosayn Hali had published his celebrated Urdu *Mosaddas-e Madd o Jazr-e Islam* ('Elegy on the Flow and Ebb of Islam'), which berated his fellow Indian Muslims for the intellectual and moral decadence into which they had fallen.²⁴ And just two years after Mir La'eq 'Ali published his travelogue, the Nizam's political and financial secretary Mohsin al-Molk (who had masterminded Hyderabad's disestablishment of Persian) had lectured then published his account of the "causes of the decline" of India's Muslims.²⁵ Like other reformists, he chose to give the lecture in Urdu. It is hard not to suspect that Mir La'eq 'Ali's travelogue embodied the state of *jazr* ('decline') that Hali and other reformists decried: *Vaqaye'-e Mosaferrat* is an account of pleasure-seeking jaunts, imperial hobnobbing, and banal descriptions of technologies for which Indo-Persian had no vocabulary. Pointing to the tensions around language and policy more generally in Hyderabad at this time, in 1887 – the very year in which Mir La'eq 'Ali was writing his travelogue – Hali was granted a pension for life by Sir Asman Jah, Mir La'eq 'Ali's replacement as prime minister.²⁶ Writing as the reformists did in the Urdu they championed as the proper medium of progress left Persian positioned as the cant of reactionaries, whether religious or feudal. With the influx to Hyderabad of graduates from Sir

23 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 47. In the first three paragraphs of the book he made ten references to *taraqqi*.

24 Altaf Hosayn Hali, *Hali's Musaddas: The Flow and Ebb of Islam*, Urdu text with trans. by Christopher Shackle and Javed Majeed (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997).

25 Nawab Mohsen al-Molk, *The Causes of the Decline of the Mahomedan Nation* (Bombay: Bombay Gazette Steam Printing Works, 1891).

26 Frances W. Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness: Urdu Poetry and its Critics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 43.

Sayyed Ahmad Khan's reformist college at Aligarh, it was a polarization that was instrumental in Persian's disestablishment in Hyderabad.²⁷

When read against this background, Mir La'eq 'Ali's late example of Indo-Persian prose helps us understand why so many of India's Muslim progressives chose to dissociate themselves from a language that seemed to be kept alive only in the luxurious rambblings of an alcoholic aristocrat. In view of the alcoholic excesses associated with the aristocracy of the princely states, is also worth bearing in mind here Gandhi and other nationalists' strong association with the temperance movement.²⁸ Published apparently at its author's expense, *Vaqaye'-e Mosaferat* was a work that had no place in India's new vernacular marketplace of books and ideas. To explore what we have outlined above as the internal dynamics behind the demise of Indo-Persian, the following pages focus on two dimensions of the travelogue. The first is Indo-Persian's generic and semantic profile as an inefficient descriptive medium for the new scientific-industrial world system in which Muslim intellectuals were struggling to position themselves. The second is the language's sociolinguistic profile as the medium of an old Indo-Muslim elite seeking to reproduce former hierarchies through their new role as British imperial citizens. For as Tariq Rahman has stated, Indo-Persian was "a language of elitist culture ... an elitist identity marker."²⁹

The focus now turns to the travelogue's later sections in which Mir La'eq 'Ali ventured into what we might term the Ultima Thule of Indo-Persian, the places where Indo-Persian prose reached its most northerly limits before finally retracting in India under the bolder shadow of Urdu.³⁰ As we shall see by the way its author treated the world he found in that 'furthest point' of Indo-Persian, it marked the antipodes of the progress sought by the period's reformists.

27 Vasant Kumar Bawa, *Hyderabad under Salar Jang I* (Delhi: S. Chand, 1996), 113–115; and Karen Leonard, "Hyderabad: The Mulki–Non-Mulki Conflict," in *People, Princes and Paramount Power: Society and Politics in the Indian Princely States*, ed. Robin Jeffrey (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978), 65–106.

28 Lucy Carroll, "The Temperance Movement in India: Politics and Social Reform," *Modern Asian Studies* 10, no. 3 (1976), 417–447.

29 Rahman, "Decline of Persian," 47. We may well detect echoes of nineteenth-century reformist attitudes to Persian in the words of this contemporary Pakistani literary critic and specialist on Urdu. His point is nonetheless valid.

30 Note that in this essay I am concerned with the fate of Indo-Persian prose and not with poetry, which had a somewhat different trajectory, and certainly different uses, in the modern period. I am also not concerned here with the somewhat separate topic of later Persian texts produced in India by and for Iranians, such as the newspaper *Habl al-Matin*.

1 Mir La'eq 'Ali and the Persian/Urdu Travelogue

Mir La'eq 'Ali was the son of Hyderabad's most famous statesman, Sir Salar Jung I.³¹ He received his formal education in Hyderabad at the elite Madrasedh-ye 'Aliya, before spending just under a year studying in England in 1882.³² Following in his father's footsteps, in a society still wholly dominated by old landholding families, in 1883 Mir La'eq 'Ali received from the Nizam of Hyderabad the same title of Salar Jung ('War General') and the following year was likewise appointed as *diwan* (prime minister). He was then twenty-two years old.³³ He was initially very close to the young Nizam, Mahbub 'Ali Khan (r. 1869–1911). But for reasons that remain uncertain (though seem to circle around a breach of court etiquette) Mir La'eq 'Ali fell out of favor with the Nizam. In April 1887, he resigned his post as *diwan*. Shortly afterwards, he set out on his journey to Europe that would reach its furthest point in the great industrial centres of Wolverhampton and Birmingham.

Mir La'eq 'Ali was one of the second generation of Indian steam travelers who made their way to Europe and wrote about what they saw there. By 1850, the age of the steamship was already underway and in 1869 the opening of the Suez Canal cheapened and quickened the route between Bombay and London. From around 1880, the adaptation of the screw propeller allowed larger ships to sail on smaller quantities of coal, resulting in rising numbers of Middle Eastern and Indian travelers to Europe. Their travel writings were part of a global culture of industrialization that Muslim intellectuals shared with their European counterparts, a context that distinguished the period's Persian and Arabic travelogues from their earlier predecessors.³⁴ Even so, as early as 1815

31 On Salar Jung I's own travels to Europe in 1876, see Trevor, "Sir Salar Jung's Visit." There is no known Persian or Urdu account of this journey.

32 M.A. Nayeem and Dharmendra Prasad, *The Salar Jung's: Mir Turab Ali Khan, Mir Laiq Ali Khan, Mir Yousuf Ali Khan* (Hyderabad: Salar Jung Museum, 1986), 43. The Madrasedh-ye 'Aliya was in fact founded as a private school specifically for the education of Mir La'eq 'Ali and his brothers. Even after it became a public school for the sons of other Hyderabad aristocrats, in 1879 it still only had nineteen pupils. See *Hyderabad State Gazetteer* (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1909), 74.

33 For an overview of his political career, see K. Sajun Lal, "Mir Laiq 'Ali Khan Salar Jung II, Prime Minister of Hyderabad, and His Relations with His Highness Nawab Mir Mahboob 'Ali Khan 'Asaf Jah Nizam VI," *Islamic Culture* 48, no. 4 (October 1974), 221–235.

34 Green, "Spacetime"; Roberta Micallef and Sunil Sharma, eds., *On the Wonders of Land and Sea: Persianate Travel Writing* (Boston: Ilex Foundation, 2013); and Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

the Iranian traveler and future diplomat Mirza Saleh Shirazi had made tours of an industrial paper mill near Oxford, of textile mills in Gloucestershire, and of brass foundries and a shipyard in which an iron ship was being constructed in Bristol, all of which he described in his Persian travelogue.³⁵ While Mirza Saleh did not visit Birmingham, he did describe its weapons industry, which we will see below also attracting Mir La'eq 'Ali's attention. Marking the city's entry into Persian prose, Mirza Saleh wrote that "in Birmingham there is a place that is famous for manufacturing weapons of war, including muskets (*tofang*), swords (*shamshir*), pistols (*tobancheh*), daggers (*chaqu*) and other weapons; many workstations (*dastgah*) and large crowds of people are busy at work there."³⁶ In later decades, England's factories would attract other Iranian travelers such as Nasir al-Din Shah (r. 1848–1896), who in the decade before Mir La'eq 'Ali's travels described his visit to the industrial city of Manchester.³⁷ Mir La'eq 'Ali's father, Sir Salar Jung I, had also intended to visit Manchester on his own European tour of 1876, but "was obliged to decline" due to a thigh fracture.³⁸

In an age of intense efforts by the remaining independent Muslim-ruled states to access the mechanical expertise of Europe, these acts of technological inspection were aimed at enabling the transfer of knowledge and, with it, industrial development. While in India basic technical training was available under the colonial education system, many Indian no less than Iranian and Egyptian students were dispatched to study scientific subjects in Europe.³⁹ Among the Indian Muslims who followed this path was Sayyed 'Ali Belgrami (1853–1911) who, after studying at the Thomson Civil Engineering College at

35 Mirza Saleh Shirazi, *Majmu'eh-ye Safarnamehha-ye Mirza Saleh Shirazi*, ed. Gholam Hosayn Mirza Saleh (Tehran: Nashr-e Tarikh-e Iran, 1364 Sh./1985), 324, 330–331, 333–335. On Mirza Saleh's travels and scientific observations more fully, see Nile Green, *The Love of Strangers: What Six Muslim Students Learned in Jane Austen's London* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016). There is a very limited scholarship on the textual transfer of modern science into Indo-Persian. See, however, S.M. Razaullah Ansari, "Modern Science in Indo-Persian Writings," in *Indo-Persian Cultural Perspectives: Prof. Bhagavat Swaroop Memorial Volume*, eds. M. Aslam Khan, R. Gargesh, and Ch. Shekhar (New Delhi: Saud Ahmad Dehlavi, 1998).

36 Mirza Saleh Shirazi, *Majmu'eh-ye Safarnamehha*, 334.

37 Nasir al-Din Shah, *Diary of H. M. the Shah of Persia, During his Tour through Europe in AD 1873*, trans. by J.W. Redhouse (London: John Murray, 1874), 183–184.

38 Trevor, "Sir Salar Jung's Visit," 396.

39 Mohammad Hossein Azizi and Farzaneh Azizi, "Government-Sponsored Iranian Medical Students Abroad (1811–1935)," *Iranian Studies* 43, no. 3 (2010), 349–363; Nile Green, "The Madrasas of Oxford: Iranian Interactions with the English Universities in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Iranian Studies* 44, no. 6 (2011), 807–829; and Donald M. Reid, "Educational and Career Choices of Egyptian Students, 1882–1922," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 8, no. 3 (1977), 349–378.

Roorkee, travelled to England in 1876 with Sir Salar Jung I to study at the Royal School of Mines, where he was awarded the Murchison Medal in Geology.⁴⁰ On his return to India in 1879, Bilgrami was appointed to Hyderabad's Department of Public Works, Railways and Mines. In a decade in which Hyderabad's own heavy industrial infrastructure was rapidly being developed by way of mines and railroads, several other Hyderabad officials were also dispatched to Britain.⁴¹ One of these was 'Abd al-Haqq Diler Jung (1853–96), who visited London twice in the 1880s in connection with the Nizam's railway and its associated coalmines, leading to the signing of a joint venture agreement.⁴² Early in 1888, another official, Mehdi Hasan Fath Nawaz Jung (1852–1904), set off for London in connection with the Hyderabad (Deccan) Mining Company. While he was in London, Fath Nawaz Jung was appointed as director of the Nizam's Guaranteed State Railways.⁴³

Given the purpose of Fath Nawaz Jung's journey, he made inspection tours of various factories, including the famous cotton mills of Manchester, which he described as "a wonderful place ... There are thousands of cotton-weaving machines and on account of the numerous factory chimneys it is full of smoke all day."⁴⁴ This enthusiasm, quite distinct from that of critics of Manchester who ranged from Engels to Gandhi, continued in his account of other industrial sites and was typical of the upbeat tenor of similar industrial travelogues. Though Fath Nawaz Jung wrote his account of his travels in English, on his return to Hyderabad in 1889 – just months after Mir La'eq 'Ali published his own travelogue in Persian – Fath Nawaz Jung's book was translated into Urdu not Persian and published under the title *Golgasht-e Farang* ('A Stroll through Europe').⁴⁵

Once again, we see the oddity – the princely conservatism, perhaps – of Mir La'eq 'Ali's decision just a year earlier to go against the literary grain and write in Persian. For though the Indo-Persian travelogue had a long history dating back to the early Mughal period, since the 1850s it had been rapidly replaced by its

40 C. Hayavando Rao, *Indian Biographical Dictionary* (Madras: Pillar & Co., 1915), 3.

41 Tara Sethia, "The Railways and Mining Enterprises in Hyderabad under the British Raj," (PhD diss., UCLA, 1986).

42 Omar Khalidi, "Hyderabad Elite Travel Writings" (unpublished manuscript), 6; and Anonymous, *The Hyderabad (Deccan) Mining Concession* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1888).

43 Omar Khalidi, "An Indian Passage to Europe: The Travels of Mahdi Hasan Khan Fath Nawaz Jang," in *On the Wonders of Land and Sea*, 68–88.

44 Mahdi Hasan Fath Nawaz Jung, *An Indian Passage to Europe: The Travels of Fath Nawaz Jung*, ed. Omar Khalidi (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 136.

45 Mahdi Hasan Fath Nawaz Jung, *Golgasht-e Farang*, trans. into Urdu by 'Aziz Mirza (Agra: Matba'a-e Mofid-e 'Am, 1889).

Urdu successor.⁴⁶ Ironically, the earliest known Urdu travelogue – Yusuf Khan Kambalposh's *Tarikh-e-Yusofi*, first published in Delhi in 1847 – was written by a fellow Hyderabadī traveler to England. However, linked as Urdu prose was with the colonial institutions that had invented Urdu printing in Calcutta half a century earlier, it became strongly associated with reformists and modernizers who sought to change the behavior of a new reading public through the powerful combination of print technology and a language. In 1869 the most influential Muslim reformer, Sayyed Ahmad Khan (1817–98), penned then published his own Urdu travel letters concerning his travels in England.⁴⁷ Sayyed Ahmad was a major promoter of the switch from Persian to Urdu who, in response to his travels to the colonial metropolis, in 1875 founded the loyalist and progressive Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh. His college in turn became a major promoter of Urdu and, as we have seen, sent many of its Urdu-literate graduates to work in the Hyderabad civil service. There was certainly a North Indian bias towards Urdu, such that in the 1880s there was still an older generation of Hyderabadīs who, having been educated in Persian, continued to write in that language. As late as 1892, for example, the Hyderabadī notable Sadeq Yar Jang published an Indo-Persian account of his *hajj* to Mecca.⁴⁸ Even so, by the time Mir La'eq 'Ali published his own travelogue in 1888, Urdu had overtaken Indo-Persian as the medium for travel writing no less than the new genres of the short story (*afsaneh*) and novel (*naval*).⁴⁹ With their expatriate Iranian populations the port cities of Bombay and Calcutta remained (indeed, became in this period) alternative enclaves for Persian in India. But among Indian Muslims, by the 1880s Urdu was firmly associated with the ideologies of progress (*taraqqi*) and reform (*eslah*). This cast an unmistakable shadow of conservatism around Indo-Persian, not least through its association with the old order of Hyderabad, where Dakani Urdu had in any

46 Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discoveries, 1400–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Ruhangiz Karachi, *Didarhaye Dur: Pazhuheshi dar Adabiyat-e Safarnameh-ye Hamrah ba Kitabshenasi-ye Safarnamehha-ye Farsi* (Tehran: Nashr-e Chapar, 1381 Sh./2002); Micallef and Sharma, *Wonders*; and Wahid Qureshi, *Urdu Adab main Safarnameh* (Lahore: Qawmi Press, n.d.).

47 Sayyed Ahmad Khan, *Mosaferan-e Landan*, ed. Mohammad Esma'il Panipati (Lahore: Majles-e Taraqqi-e Adab, 1961). Note that while Qureshi's *Urdu Adab* (chapter 1) refers to this as the first Urdu travelogue per se, as noted above, Yusuf Khan Kambalposh predates it by more than twenty years.

48 Mohammad Sadeq ibn Gholam Mostafa Sadeq Yar Jang, *Safarnameh-ye Haramayn-e Sharifayn* (S.N.: Matba'e Safdari, 1310 AH/1892).

49 Ralph Russell, "The Development of the Modern Novel in Urdu," in *The Novel in India: Its Birth and Development*, ed. T.W. Clark (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970).

case always been widely spoken as a vernacular of the kind supported by the self-styled progressives. When Mir La'eq 'Ali's father, the great Hyderabad statesman and protector of Persian Sir Salar Jung I, died in 1883, even his biography (written by his secretary Sayyed Hosayn Belgrami) was published in Urdu rather than Persian.⁵⁰ Mir La'eq 'Ali's own biography, penned by his youthful friend Mo'in al-Din Qoreshi, would likewise be written in Urdu and even his son, Mir Yusof 'Ali Khan Salar Jung III (1889–1949), would subsequently choose Urdu for his own travel account of Europe.⁵¹ There is good reason, then, to see Mir La'eq 'Ali's *Vaqaye'-e Mosaferat* as representative of the last stage of Indo-Persian.

2 Indo-Persian in the Pen Factories & Ironworks

Mir La'eq 'Ali set out on his journey to Europe shortly after his resignation as *diwan* in 1887. Managed by the Anglo-Irish entrepreneur Moreton Frewen (1853–1924), it was to be a luxurious grand tour.⁵² Setting off in May 1887 on the railway that, through Mir La'eq 'Ali's and his father's policies, had only entered Hyderabad State a decade earlier, Mir La'eq 'Ali would continue his journey via the great steam port of Bombay. As numerous Iranian Persian travel accounts testified, Bombay was the earliest place in Asia to see the new powers of coal and iron put to full and varied effect.⁵³ Having reached the city via rail, Mir La'eq 'Ali thus checked into Watson's Hotel, a building constructed entirely of iron to the designs of the civil engineer Rowland Mason Ordish (1824–86), best known for his work on the great single-span iron roof of London's St. Pancras

50 Sayyed Hosayn Belgrami, *Moraqqa'-e 'Ebrat: Savaneh 'Omri-e Nawwab Salar Jang* (Hyderabad: Matba'-ye Kanz al-'Olum, 1885). Ironically, the original appears to have been ghost written for Bilgrami in English.

51 Sayyed Mo'in al-Din Qoreshi, *La'eq 'Ali Meri Nazar Main* (Hyderabad: Entezami Press, n.d.). While Qoreshi gave no account of Mir La'eq 'Ali's travels, he did describe the circumstances leading up to them: see Qoreshi, *La'eq 'Ali*, 18–19. On Sir Salar Jung's resistance to replacing Persian with Urdu, see H.R. Lynton and M. Rajan, *The Days of the Beloved* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 163.

52 On Frewen, see Allen Andrews, *The Splendid Pauper* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1968), including chapters 8 and 9 on the tour with Mir La'eq 'Ali. For accompanying Mir La'eq 'Ali, Frewen was paid a one-off fee of £250 plus a salary of £100 per month with all expenses paid. See Andrews, *Splendid Pauper*, 104. He joined Mir La'eq 'Ali in Cairo as detailed in Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 72.

53 Nile Green, *Bombay Islam: The Religious Economy of the West Indian Ocean, 1840–1915* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 125–148.

station.⁵⁴ It was a fitting start to a tour that would end in the industrial epicenter of British power in the English Midlands. When Mir La'eq 'Ali set off again, it was aboard the P&O steamship *Peshawur*, whose engine room he visited and described with fascination.⁵⁵ Always in first class, he sailed and railed onwards via Aden, Suez, Cairo and Istanbul, thence on to a grand tour of Europe that took in Athens, Vienna, Rome and Paris before he reached London in the summer of 1887.⁵⁶

In mid-September, Mir La'eq 'Ali arrived in the English Midlands by train from London.⁵⁷ Although the official purpose of his visit to the region was to visit its factories and so witness the manufacturing techniques that had brought it such prosperity, he was clearly reluctant to immerse himself too fully in the region's smoke-filled cities and chose to reside instead in the more genteel setting of Droitwich Spa, a leafy spa town a clean-aired twenty miles south of Birmingham's notorious smog.⁵⁸ But over the next ten days, he made an extensive tour of Birmingham and Wolverhampton, visiting manufactories of fountain pens, safety pins, rifles, nuts, bolts, washers, brass, porcelain, chandeliers, shipping chains, and nails as well as an iron smelting foundry, a gilding workshop, and a newspaper print works.⁵⁹ He attempted to describe all of these places and processes in Persian with minimal resort to the loan words that enabled similar Urdu prose works of the period to engage more fully with the changing world around them.

54 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 54.

55 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 57. Launched in 1871, in 1899 the *Peshawur* was sold to Haji Cassum Joosub and renamed *Ashruf* for use on the pilgrim trade to Jeddah. The official shipping record is available on: <http://www.theshipslist.com/ships/lines/pando.shtml> Supported partly by the desire for quicker postal communications between London and Calcutta, steam travel between Bombay and Suez had expanded widely over the previous few decades. For the fullest overall accounts, see Searight, *Steaming East* and Thorner, *Investment in Empire*.

56 The first train of the Nizam's State Railway departed on October 9, 1874. See Y. Sarasvati Rao, "Development of Nizam's State Railways," in *Memoirs of Cyril Jones: People, Society and Railways in Hyderabad*, ed. Omar Khalidi (Delhi: Manohar, 1991), 9.

57 I have based the dates on the local newspaper reports rather than on conversions from the dates given in Vahuman's 1383 Sh./2005 edition of the travelogue, which have proven inaccurate by around two weeks.

58 Decades later, Birmingham's factories would attract a large industrial workforce of South Asian Muslims. See Yousef Choudhury and Peter Drake, *From Bangladesh to Birmingham: The History of Bangladeshis in Birmingham* (Birmingham: Birmingham City Council, 2001).

59 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 205, 208–214. On the role of Mir La'eq 'Ali's family in industrial development, see C.V. Subba Rao, *Hyderabad: The Social Context of Industrialization, 1875–1948* (Delhi: Orient Longman, 2007).

Mir La'eq 'Ali's first inspection visit was to a rifle factory in Birmingham. A local newspaper report identifies this as the Birmingham Small Arms factory, where he "witnessed the whole process of manufacturing rifles by the most approved modern machinery, every detail of construction being courteously explained by the manager."⁶⁰ Yet in Mir La'eq 'Ali's terms, the visit was conceived as a *tamasha* or 'spectacle,' a term with a long history in Indo-Persian accounts that was normally associated with an aesthetic of describing pleasurable and even frivolous sights and wonders.⁶¹ Even if the Persian he had learned as a youth at the Madraseh-ye 'Aliya lacked the technical vocabulary for "the most approved modern machinery" that he now observed, he tried to recount seriously the different stages of the manufacturing process in which he noted that around a thousand workers were immersed. Each piece of the rifle (*tofāng*) was thus assembled in sequence on a separate machine (*dastgāh-ye 'alihada*) such that the tube casting, hole drilling, polishing, and the adding of the trigger (*chakhmaq*), barrel (*pestanak*) and buttstock (*qandaq*), were carried out in different stages by specialist workers.⁶² By such means, the factory was able to produce two hundred rifles each day. Resorting to the same term twice within the same paragraph, he concluded that "it was a very worthwhile spectacle (*tamasha*)." Yet even if the inspection was thus reduced to cliché in his prose, the visit was in principle a sensible one for a man who until a few months earlier was the prime minister of a state that maintained its own standing army. After all, Birmingham's famous Gun Quarter was at this time the British Empire's largest supplier of weapons and, in slow years when imperial war mongering was waning, Birmingham's gun makers were keen seekers of new contracts throughout the empire and beyond.⁶³ In 1895, eight years after Mir La'eq 'Ali's visit, Birmingham's gun factories were visited by prince Nasrollah, the son of Afghanistan's 'Iron Amir' 'Abd al-Rahman (r. 1880–1901)

60 "Visit of Sir Salar Jung to Birmingham," *Birmingham Daily Post* (September 13, 1887).

61 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 205. On *tamasha* and *hayrat* in earlier nineteenth century Persian travel accounts, see Naghmeh Sohrabi, *Taken for Wonder: Nineteenth Century Travel Accounts from Iran to Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), chapter 1.

62 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 205.

63 Emrys Chew, *Arming the Periphery: The Arms Trade in the Indian Ocean during the Age of Global Empire* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). In fact, twenty years later the Birmingham Small Arms factory that Mir La'eq 'Ali visited would respond to market slow downs by adapting its workers' skills in producing steel tubing to the manufacture of a new machine, the motorbike, with which its name BSA has ever since been associated. See Nigel S. Brown, *British Gunmakers: Birmingham, Scotland and the Regions* (Wyke: Quiller Press, 2005).

whose expanding army the city's manufacturers were eager to supply.⁶⁴ But if this was the hope of the courteous factory manager Mir La'eq 'Ali mentioned, then he was disappointed: no longer controlling the state purse, Mir La'eq 'Ali bought a mere twenty-four rifles.⁶⁵ This was not the purchase of a statesman, merely of a sportsman with deep pockets.

Next he visited a brass factory (*karkhaneh-ye berenj-sazi*), which a local newspaper report clarifies as being Allen Everitt & Co.'s Kingston Metal Works.⁶⁶ There "the processes of rolling and drawing brass and copper sheets and tubes &c were fully demonstrated."⁶⁷ According to his own account, Mir La'eq 'Ali was shown the manufacturing of thick and thin wire (*maftul*), wheels (*charkh*), screws (*pich*), ball bearings (*mohreh*), and brass and copper pipes (*luleh*) which made their appearance from beneath the steam engine (*charkh-e bokhar*, literally 'steam wheel' in reference to their visual appearance.⁶⁸ Although the Kingston Metal Works were given short shrift in his travelogue – apparently they didn't constitute a *tamasha* – they were an important site for a statesman's visit. Having been founded in 1769, Allen Everitt & Sons had some to supply many of the high-pressure pipes and boilers that not only ensured Britain's naval power but also powered merchant and passenger shipping worldwide.⁶⁹ It was quite likely that Everitt piping had been present in the engine room that Mir La'eq 'Ali inspected aboard the six year old P&O steamer *Peshawur* on which he had sailed from Bombay. But such matters were not germane to the conservative genre of the Indo-Persian travelogue, which in Mir La'eq 'Ali's hands continued its old trope of the *tamasha*.

His next destination was a 'pen nib factory' (*karkhaneh-ye sar qalam-sazi*), which a local newspaper report again helps us identify as being the "well-known pen works of Messrs. Gillott and Sons." As with the choice of the Birmingham Small Arms factory in the Gun Quarter, the selection of Gillott and Sons was a sensible one (albeit one possibly made by his tour manager, Moreton Frewen). Its founder Joseph Gillott (1799–1873) had been one of the first entrepreneurs to seize on the 1828 invention of the mass-producible steel pen nib by the local

64 Ludwig Ademec, "Mission of an Afghan Prince to London," *Afghanistan Forum Occasional Paper* 33 (1994), 9–10. In the event, the Afghan prince made a similar purchase of "a number of military and sporting rifles."

65 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 205.

66 "Visit of Sir Salar Jung to Birmingham."

67 Ibid.

68 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 205–206.

69 On the company history, see Anonymous, *Allen Everitt & Sons Ltd., Kingston Metal Works, Smethwick, Birmingham* (Birmingham: Allen Everitt & Sons, 1920).



FIGURE 8.1 An Industrial *Tamasha*: The New Hall Works, Birmingham

entrepreneur, Josiah Mason (1795–1881).⁷⁰ Established around 1830, by the time of Mir La'eq 'Ali's visit Gillott and Sons was one of the oldest of nearly a hundred such factories that made Birmingham the dominant global supplier of metal nibs for the ink pens with which most of the planet was writing by the 1880s.⁷¹ The millions of such nibs shipped to India every year raises the tantalizing but statistically very likely possibility that Mir La'eq 'Ali was writing his travel diary with a Birmingham pen of the kind exported to Bombay in Indian and Islamicate packaging. Perhaps he wrote with the Birmingham-made *Ofsar*

70 Bryan Jones, ed. *People, Pens & Production in Birmingham's Steel Pen Trade* (Studley: Brewin Books, 2013).

71 Ibid.

Pen (afsar: Persian/Urdu: 'crown') marketed by M.N. Harianawalla of 207 Abdul Rehman Street, Bombay or with the *Rasik Pen Number 1 (rasikh*: Persian/Urdu: 'reliable') marketed by R.M. Khambatwallah of 202 Abdul Rehman Street but also made in Brum.⁷² Be that as it may, the fame of the Gillott & Sons' factory (known in royal deference as the Victoria Works) was such that it hosted many other notable visitors, including Prince Albert; the Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria-Hungary; and the former U.S. President Ulysses S. Grant, whose visit would take place just a month later in October 1877. More pertinently, the Iranian ruler Naser al-Din Shah also made a visit to a pen factory in Birmingham, which was also likely Gillott & Sons' Victoria Works.⁷³

For his part, Mir La'eq 'Ali gave the following account of the pen factory:

All of the workers were young girls. There were a few men at the far end of the factory in charge of the steam wheel (*charkh-e bokhar*). It was their task to ensure that the thin strips of metal reach the workers. There were around two hundred presses (*manganeh*) and at each one stood a girl working with her hands. In the first workstation (*dastgah*), the shape of the nib was cut in a flat and broad outline. In the next workstation, the name of the factory, together with the name of its owner, was inscribed on it. Then in another place, the nibs were cut with great speed and skill. It was altogether a fine spectacle (*tamasha*).⁷⁴

Evidently, the pen factory was more interesting than the brass works to which he devoted less attention. But in semantic terms, the cost of such interest was that it too was conceived within the same generic rubric of the 'spectacle.'

After a few days of taking the waters at Droitwich Spa, Mir La'eq 'Ali returned to Birmingham to pay a visit to a safety pin factory. Another local newspaper specifies this as having been Edelsten & Williams, located at the Newhall Works just off the Georgian calm of St. Paul's Square.⁷⁵ Here, he explained, there were some hundred and seventy small workstations, each powered by

72 I am grateful to the custodians of the Birmingham Pen Museum for showing me surviving examples of these and other pen nib packages made for the Indian market. The Ufsar 'crown,' displayed on the nib, was the trademark of its manufacturer.

73 For details of these visits, I have relied on information at the Birmingham Pen Museum and on Jones, *People, Pens & Production*.

74 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 206.

75 *Birmingham Daily Post* (September 13, 1887), 4. Having begun their trade with John Edelsten's patented "solid headed pin," the firm also specialized in all forms of copper and steel wire, including telegraphic wire and, according to their advertising posters, held the appointment to Her Majesty Queen Victoria. Located on George Street, Edelsten's Newhall Works survives to this day (see Figure 8.1), albeit now as an apartment building.

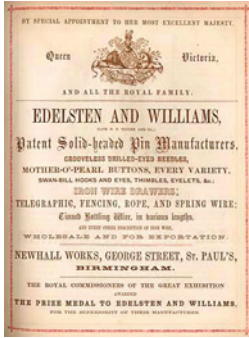


FIGURE 8.2
Pins by Royal Appointment: Poster for Edelsten & Williams' New Hall Works

steam, which manufactured pins by cutting lengths and inserting holes in coils of wire some thirty or forty meters in length.⁷⁶ So swift was the process that each workstation could produce around two hundred pins every minute. In another factory, he recounted, another large workforce of girls ensured that the pins were all attached to display sheets of paper, a process which was again partly automated through the application of steam power. While there was a real attempt here to explain the industrial processes that were transforming the world's economy, in the end this visit too generated no greater or lesser meaning than being another fine 'spectacle' (*tamasha*).

Next on the itinerary was a jewelry works (*karkhaneh-ye zargari*), where Mir La'eq 'Ali saw even younger girls at work producing delicate chains of gold, silver, and brass. This was part of Birmingham's vast jewelry trade.⁷⁷ Recognizing this as another of the city's notable industries, he noted that jewelry production was aided by lighting from 'electrical power' (*qovvat-e barqiyya*) which enabled one person to efficiently perform two tasks at once.⁷⁸ After lunching with local dignitaries, he toured several other factories, including one producing crystal glass (*balur*) fashioned into chandeliers, candlesticks, vases, and other items.⁷⁹ It was presumably the same crystal factory from which the Afghan prince Nasrollah bought the crystal chandelier that on his return home he presented to the celebrated shrine of the Prophet's cloak in Qandahar.⁸⁰

76 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 208. A *zar'a*, the measurement used, is in fact somewhat longer than its approximate equivalent of a meter.

77 Unlike its more industrialized counterparts, Birmingham's craft-based jewelry industry has survived to this day.

78 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 208–209.

79 The names of these other factories that Mir La'eq 'Ali visited on this day were: Good & Son; Elkington & Co.; Osler's; Chatwin's; and the printing offices of the *Daily Post*. See *Birmingham Daily Post* (September 13, 1887), 4.

80 I am very grateful to Robert D. McChesney for this tantalizing fact.

More impressive than the crystal factory for Mir La'eq 'Ali was an ironworks. He described in some detail the smelting, hammering, and reshaping of the huge sheets of iron used to manufacture boilers and other apparatus of the steam he saw powering everything around him via the 'steam wheels' (*charkh-e bokhar*) on which he frequently remarked. Particularly impressive was a huge iron chain – likely for a ship's anchor – that was apparently so heavy that five thousand men could not lift it. Yet all this added up to no adaptive lessons for the 'progress' of Hyderabad's Muslims: it was merely a 'particularly fine spectacle' (*khayli tamasha dasht*).⁸¹ For Mir La'eq 'Ali, the classical conventions of the *safarnameh*, and the trusted pre-industrial lexicon of the Indo-Persian traveler, trumped all other concerns. In literary matters at least, he was no reformist.

A few days later, after several theatre and museum trips, Mir La'eq 'Ali made an official visit to the manufacturing town of Wolverhampton, which at around seventeen miles northwest of Birmingham constituted the furthest point of his entire journey.⁸² The coal and slag that covered the surrounding landscape had given the region its nickname the 'Black Country.' According to a famous but probably apocryphal story, the shocking sight of it had forced Queen Victoria to close the shutter of her train carriage in disgust.⁸³ But for Mir La'eq 'Ali, under whose administration Hyderabad's coal-based industrialization had been initiated by entrepreneurs such as the aforementioned 'Abd al-Haqq Diler Jung, the view from the train was a marvel to behold. It provoked him to pen the most inspired lines of the British section of his travelogue:

On both sides of the track, as far as the eye could see, there lay factories. Heaps of ashes appeared all along the way like a series of little hills. The ashes had all been extracted from furnaces and piled together. The beauty of it all was that herbs and grass had grown over them. Flames of fire constantly shot out of the factory chimneys so that from afar it seemed as though every entity along the route was pleading to be spared [from destruction].⁸⁴

81 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 209–210.

82 Mir La'eq 'Ali himself gave this distance as twelve miles.

83 Rhetoric aside, the description was actually a commonplace one. As one historian noted a century later, "the blast furnaces, forges, foundries, mills, factories and workshops belched out the flames and smoke which gave the Black Country its name." See G.W. Jones, *Borough Politics: A Study of the Wolverhampton Town Council, 1888–1964* (London: Macmillan, 1969), 20–22, 20.

84 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 213.

Once again, his assistant Moreton Frewen and the Nizam's local agent Joseph Rock had made preparations. And so, on his arrival at Wolverhampton's train station, he was greeted by the town's mayor and escorted in a carriage with outriders. Once again, he was taken on inspection tours of the local industries that were at the time enjoying a boom that was rapidly increasing Wolverhampton's population.⁸⁵ First off was an ironworks, which a local newspaper report identifies as the Shakespeare Foundry of Messrs T. & C. Clarke.⁸⁶ It was best known as a manufacturer of the enameled ironware that, being quicker to clean and slower to rust, was improving the quality of domestic utensils worldwide, not least in India. The foundry, Mir La'eq 'Ali wrote, was rather like the one he had inspected in Birmingham but had far larger steam engines (*charkh-e bokhar*) and far more machines (*dastgah*).⁸⁷ Here he could see iron poured like water into the various molds (*qaleb*) that gave shape to T. & C. Clarke's products. In every corner, there was literally iron everywhere he looked. Even the factory floor was made of iron and the workers wore iron boots: it was little surprise, then, that "the factory was as hot as hell."⁸⁸ Then his final industrial inspection tour was summed up yet again through the old travelogue trope of being another 'fine spectacle' (*khayli tamasha dasht*).

This banality of language – and of purpose – for his prose is striking. Until just weeks before he had sailed from Bombay, Mir La'eq 'Ali had been the prime minister of Hyderabad. Despite the fact that his visit to England coincided with intense negotiations over the development of Hyderabad's coal mines and railways – and just a year earlier he had himself granted a 99-year concessions on all mining rights in the state to 'Abd al-Haqq Diler Jung's Deccan Mining Company – the dominant tone of his account of the British Empire's industrial powerhouse was that of the lighthearted dilettante of Indo-Persian *belle-lettres*.⁸⁹ Only once did he step outside the rhetorical circle of the *tamasha* to remark on political economy, noting as he entered Wolverhampton that the "spring of British wealth and power" lay in the many factories built near the coal and iron mines that supplied them.⁹⁰

This seems not to have been a reflection of the shallowness of Mir La'eq 'Ali himself: by all accounts he was a capable minister whose intelligence was

85 Jones, *Borough Politics*, 20–22.

86 "Visit of Sir Salar Jung to Wolverhampton," *Wolverhampton Chronicle* (September 21, 1887), 6.

87 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 214.

88 Ibid.

89 The fruits of the concession and negotiations can be studied in Anonymous, *Hyderabad (Deccan) Mining Concession*.

90 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 213.

attested by all who met him on his travels. That he had earlier discharged his ministerial duties effectively in Hyderabad by overseeing a number of industrial ventures is further assurance of his capabilities in this domain. This suggests that the deficiencies lay in the linguistic medium rather than its user. Following Wittgenstein, we might therefore suggest that the problem lay with his chosen Indo-Persian medium, the genre and lexicon of which acted as constraints on his ability to describe and make meaning.⁹¹ Of course, Mir La'eq 'Ali presumably made a conscious and deliberate decision to avoid European loanwords. But what is important is that he felt this was necessary when writing in Persian in a way that writers of Urdu in this period did not. We have seen how the conservative weight of tradition from the Persian genre of the *safarnameh* (travelogue) encouraged him to frame and grade every sight as a 'spectacle,' an aesthetic that itself developed from the emphasis on the 'weird and wonderful' (*'aja'eb o ghara'eb*) in earlier Persian and Arabic travel writing. If this was the case in a context when a highly influential former minister was listening to experts explain the newest industrial techniques, then we can only conclude that the concept of *tamasha* acted as a rhetorical restraint on the transfer of knowledge.⁹² If this is not quite how the 'progressives' (*taraqqi-pasand*) would have phrased the matter, it is in line with the spirit of their critique of the stagnant old ways of writing.

To further this line of argument, a case can be made that it was not only the genres and tropes of Indo-Persian but also its technical vocabulary as it existed in this period that created problems for the effective transfer of knowledge about the *'olum-e farangi*, or European sciences. From both his own writings and the testament of those he met, we know that Mir La'eq 'Ali spoke English fluently. He was therefore perfectly capable of understanding the technical explanations he was given, even if – and here is the crux – he was unable to transfer those explanations into Persian. Here lay his dilemma, at once linguistic/lexical and literary/stylistic. Fifty years earlier, in writing his Arabic account of education in Paris, the Egyptian Rifa'a al-Tahtawi had "felt acutely the difficulty of finding appropriate terminology in the Arabic lexicon to portray French institutions and sciences."⁹³ However, rather than avoid writing about the machines, libraries and laboratories that he inspected, Tahtawi opted to

91 The impact of Persian genre and lexicon in early modern contexts is explored in Green, "Idiom, Genre and the Politics."

92 On the interface between Victorian British and Indo-Persian moral concepts, see Margrit Pernau, "Teaching Emotions: The Encounter between Victorian Values and Indo-Persian Concepts of Civility in Nineteenth-Century Delhi," in *Knowledge Production, Pedagogy, and Institutions in Colonial India*, eds. Indra Sengupta and Daud Ali (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 227–247.

93 Sawaie, "Rifa'a Rafi' al-Tahtawi," 396.

extensively use French loanwords, leaving the issue of Arabic lexical reform to the later *Nahda* generation. As the nineteenth century continued, this problem of loanword versus neologism was faced by the promoters of scientific learning in various other Asian languages. In response, it was Japanese then Chinese intellectuals who tackled this issue of deficient lexicons most effectively through coining new words with which to make scientific translations into their own languages. In 1922, it was to Japan that Hyderabad's education minister Ross Masood (1889–1937) would be dispatched to study the successful Japanese scheme in order to create an Urdu-medium scientific education – via a new Urdu scientific lexicon and syllabus – for Hyderabad's newly-founded Osmaniya University.⁹⁴ But thirty years earlier in 1887, Mir La'eq 'Ali was straddled with a version of the Persian language for which a modern technical and scientific lexicon had not yet been developed in India.

As far as we know, the works of European science translated into Persian at the Dar al-Fonun in Iran since the 1850s had not found their way onto the syllabi of the last *madrases* and *maktabs* teaching Persian in India, where the language's discursive fields had largely retracted to literary and religious topics. In late nineteenth-century India, those who sought to learn scientific or technical disciplines studied English, Urdu, or one of the other colonial educational vernaculars, such as Bengali. From start to finish, Mir La'eq 'Ali struggled to precisely describe his industrial observations in his highly literary Indo-Persian. The argument made here is that this was due to the lack of a specialist vocabulary for the machinery and processes he was not only observing but also having explained to him by engineers. As Wittgenstein pithily expressed the conundrum, “the limits of my language mean the limits of my world.”

A case in point is the indeterminate term *dastgah*. Traditionally it had been used to refer to cottage industry technologies such as weavers' hand looms, a pre-mechanized semantic range that was signaled in its literal meaning of 'hand-place.' But Mir La'eq 'Ali had to use *dastgah* as a generic term for machines of any kind, constantly employing it for what were evidently a wide variety of machines with very different purposes, all of which were ironically to replace the manual handicrafts of the *dastgah*. The same point about the semantic indeterminacy of *dastgah* can be made about Mir La'eq 'Ali's vague usage of *charkh-e bokhar* ('steam wheel') to describe what were engines of considerable variety and complexity and by 1887 quite possibly driven by electricity instead of steam. On one of the rare occasions when he referred to a more specialist tool, he resorted to the pre-industrial *qaleb* ('mold'), a term that was akin to the artisanal *karkhaneh* ('workshop') he used to describe what were

94 Nile Green, “Forgotten Futures: Indian Muslims in the Trans-Islamic Turn to Japan,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 72, no. 3 (2013): 611–631.

instead the factory frontlines of industrialization.⁹⁵ Although he occasionally used the variant *manganeh* ('press') as his sole point of mechanical differentiation, the reader would find it difficult to picture what by 1887 were sophisticated items of specialized equipment, especially in the absence of the careful drawings that characterized similar European books of the period. The issue here was not technological, since lithographic printing of the kind used to publish Mir La'eq 'Ali's *Vaqaye'-e Mosaferat* could easily accommodate scientific drawings. The problem was rather that elite travelers such as Mir La'eq 'Ali were either unable or unwilling to draw what they could not describe.⁹⁶ Urdu technical manuals from this period did accommodate such diagrams and this is unsurprising, since lithography was perfectly suited for (indeed, originally invented for) the printing of drawings. But Mir La'eq 'Ali was publishing a book intended to mirror his Indo-Persian manuscript prose models of old, not the cheap manuals of British India's colonized craftsmen.

These problems were exacerbated by his decision – part and parcel of the aesthetic choice of Indo-Persian rather than Urdu to begin with – to try to write in a pure idiom rather than use the loanwords to which many Iranian and Arab travelers resorted by this period and which were a commonplace in the more flexibly absorbent writing practices of Urdu-users. For Mir La'eq 'Ali, trains were thus always *kalaskeh-ye bokhar* ('steam carriages') rather than the more common Urdu *tren*, even though this relied on the acceptably older (and importantly, Iranian) adoption of the Russian word for a carriage (*Колеска/ koljáska*). Only on a couple of rare occasions – once using *panal* ('panel') for a sheet of card on which pins were fixed, once using *anjín* ('engine') and a few times *istasiun* ('station') – did he allow any loanwords to enter his prose.⁹⁷ But here too, *istasiun* was only legitimate in being taken from the Iranian adaptation from the French rather than the English phonology adopted into the Urdu as *estashun*. Rather than use the same loan word again, on several occasions he used the awkward neoclassical neologism of *tavvaqofgah-e rah-e ahan* (literally 'halting place of the iron road').⁹⁸ In Urdu by comparison, even Sayyed Ahmad Khan's *Mosaferan-e Landan* (1869) had adopted the shorter *rel* ('rail') and *estashun* ('station') in abundance; but then, its author was India's leading Muslim reformist.⁹⁹ Writing in the 1880s, Mir La'eq 'Ali was half a century too early to avail himself of the more than 1,600 'pure Persian' neologisms created

95 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 214.

96 To substantiate this point, I have checked the original lithographed edition of the *Vaqaye'-e Mosaferat* and it contains no illustrations whatsoever.

97 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 208, 213, 215.

98 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 214. The term occurs several times throughout the text as a whole.

99 Sayyed Ahmad Khan, *Mosaferan*, passim.

during the nationalist language reforms of the first Farhangistan in Iran during the 1930s to replace the European loanwords that clearly presented Mir La'eq 'Ali and others with the "linguistic dilemmas" that Mohammed Sawaie has similarly located among nineteenth century Arabic users.¹⁰⁰

Coupled as it sometimes was with the genuine absence of a requisite vocabulary, Mir La'eq 'Ali's evident linguistic anxiety may explain the two most striking omissions in his account of the industrial Midlands. For while comparison of the Persian text with the several local newspaper reports of his visit reveals a striking level of coherence, the two stops on his itinerary that were entirely absent from the Persian were his visits to Elwell & Parker's electrical factory and Elkington and Co.'s electroplating factory. Though recorded in the *Birmingham Daily Post*, his visit to the latter is a particularly surprising omission in that Elkington and Co. were pioneers of the silver electroplating methods that were now mass producing formerly luxury metalwares and in the process pushing out of business Indian silver craft industries in regions such as Kashmir.¹⁰¹ Moreover, it was also in the Elkington and Co. factory that, thirty years earlier, the local metallurgist Alexander Parkes (1813–90) had invented 'Parkesine,' that is, the world's first plastic.

According to the *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, at the Elwell & Parker electroplating factory, "Mr Elwell himself conducted [Mir La'eq 'Ali] through the various departments, where he witnessed the manufacture of dynamos ... accumulators, motors, electro-plating, and other specialities [which] were brought under their notice, Sir Salar [i.e. Mir La'eq 'Ali] manifesting considerable interest in the explanations."¹⁰² Staring straight into what historians have since dubbed the 'Second Industrial Revolution' made possible by electrical power and its related technologies, Mir La'eq 'Ali was shown a single dynamo that had been designed to power the tram system of an entire Irish city. Here he was looking into the future, for even Birmingham would not see its first electric trams till over a decade later in 1890.¹⁰³ It seems extraordinary that Hyderabad's erstwhile prime minister, who just months earlier was

100 Sawaie, "Rifa'a Rafi' al-Tahtawi," 396. On the first Farhangestan, see Ludwig Paul, "Iranian Language Reform in the Twentieth Century: Did the First Farhangestān (1935–40) Succeed?" *Journal of Persianate Studies* 3 (2010), 78–103.

101 *Birmingham Daily Post* (September 13, 1887), 4. Graced with a historic blue plaque, the Elkington and Co. factory building survives to this day on Newhall Street off St Paul's Square.

102 "Visit of Sir Salar Jung to Wolverhampton," *Wolverhampton Chronicle* (September 21, 1887), 6.

103 For details on the urban and industrial development of Birmingham, I have relied on Malcolm Dick, *Birmingham: A History of the City and its People* (Birmingham: Birmingham City Council, 2005); Conrad Gill, *A History of Birmingham* (Oxford: Oxford University

contracting imports of coal-powered trains, should entirely neglect to mention this remarkable deployment of a revolutionary new technology. But then, with what words could he have described in his Indo-Persian the invention of plastic, or what the local newspaper easily referred to as "dynamos ... accumulators, motors, electro-plating"?

Here we see Mir La'eq 'Ali running up against the lexical limits of Indo-Persian in the last years of its life as a medium for factual prose. Twenty years later, Hyderabad officials would finally tackle the deficiency of technical vocabulary they rightly saw as impairing the scientific education of India's Muslims by creating thousands of neologisms. But the language for which they created this new scientific lexicon was Urdu, not Persian, which for Hyderabad's last half century became the focus of its substantial official educational and cultural enterprises.¹⁰⁴ This wave of word-coining – largely from Arabic and Persian – was to culminate in 1931 with Mawlwi 'Abd al-Haq's *English-Urdu Dictionary*, which was also compiled in Hyderabad. As noted near the opening of this essay, Persian had already been replaced by Urdu as Hyderabad's official language back in 1884. By the 1910s, Hyderabad's official creation of a technical vocabulary for Urdu, and a university in which to teach it, meant that the demise of Indo-Persian was settled for good.

3 An Encomium for the Music Hall & Museum

So far, by examining Mir La'eq 'Ali's description of his various factory visits, we have been able to detect some of the lexical and generic weaknesses associated with Indo-Persian in the late nineteenth century. Yet beyond these semantic issues, the *Vaqaye'-e Mosaferat* also allows us to grasp some of the sociolinguistic dilemmas of late Indo-Persian by revealing the elevated – for reformists, effete – social circles with which the language was associated in its Indian twilight. For the attention Mir La'eq 'Ali gave in his travelogue to the social and frivolous dimensions of his time in the Midlands points to the association of Indo-Persian with the fripperies of a regressive courtly order of overfed (and perhaps over-loyal) aristocrats.¹⁰⁵ These were the very social

Press, 1952); and Eric Hopkins, *The Rise of the Manufacturing Town: Birmingham and the Industrial Revolution* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1998).

104 On the official Hyderabad program to create this new technical vocabulary, see Datla, *Language of Secular Islam*, chapter 2.

105 On the interplay between Urdu, reform and Hyderabad's aristocracy in this period, see Nile Green, "The Propriety of Poetry: Morality and Mysticism in the Nineteenth Century Urdu Religious Lyric," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 13, no. 3 (2010): 299–314.

types who were lampooned in such Urdu satirical novels as ‘Abd al-Halim Sharar’s *Darbar-e Harampur* (‘The Court of Forbiddenville’) based on a similar Muslim-ruled princely state. If Indo-Persian was associated with an old courtly order, then Urdu was indubitably the language of a new middle class for whom Persian was, as Tariq Rahman has described it, “an elitist identity marker.”¹⁰⁶

Let us turn, then, to these social dimensions of the *Vaqaye’-e Mosaferat*. Through the orchestrations of his tour manager Moreton Frewen and the Nizam’s representative Joseph Rock, Mir La’eq ‘Ali was hosted by the leading men of the Midlands.¹⁰⁷ Residing throughout his visit at the Royal Bath Hotel in Droitwich Spa, on his repeated day trips into the region’s industrial towns he was accompanied by the High Sherriff of Worcestershire, William Everitt; the Mayor of Birmingham, Sir Thomas Martineau; and the Mayor of Wolverhampton, Alderman T. Vincent Jackson.¹⁰⁸ In some cases, this led to grand luncheons, such as that laid on by the Mayor of Birmingham at the Queen’s Hotel (conveniently located “beside the station,” as Mir La’eq ‘Ali noted).¹⁰⁹ In other cases, it involved private entertainments in the suburban homes of wealthy industrialists such as William Everitt. Sharing the tastes of these English elites, Mir La’eq ‘Ali described Everitt’s home and gardens (at Fininstall House, built in 1770 amid beautiful parklands) as being “in very good taste (*besyar ba saliqeh*).”¹¹⁰ It was one gentleman’s compliment to another. Responding to the accomplishments of Everitt’s daughters that would have served them well even in Mansfield Park, he praised their piano-playing, embroidery, dancing, painting and their mastery of “two or three languages.”¹¹¹

His grandest social engagement took place in Wolverhampton’s town hall, itself completed only six years earlier in 1871 as a bastion of bourgeois pride.¹¹² Wolverhampton’s Liberal-dominated council had voted in favor of officially receiving “this distinguished visitor” who they understood was nothing less than an “Indian prince.” On September 21, 1887, the members of the council therefore assembled to meet Mir La’eq ‘Ali after he and Wolverhampton’s mayor were

106 Rahman, “Decline of Persian,” 47.

107 Joseph Rock was a partner in the firm of ‘Rogers Rock, Merchants and East India Agents’ who also acted as Agent for the Nizam of Hyderabad. See Andrews, *Splendid Pauper*, 101.

108 Mir La’eq ‘Ali, *Vaqaye’*, 204–205, 208, 212–213. I have compared and in a few cases corrected the names given in Vahuman’s (1383 Sh./2005) edition against those provided by the local newspaper reports.

109 “Visit of Sir Salar Jung to Birmingham” and Mir La’eq ‘Ali, *Vaqaye’*, 205.

110 Mir La’eq ‘Ali, *Vaqaye’*, 207.

111 Ibid.

112 On the new town hall and art galley, see Jones, *Borough Politics*, 26.

driven from the train station "in open conveyances with postillions, the first carriage being escorted by Major Hay (chief of police), mounted."¹¹³ Evidently pleased with his reception, Mir La'eq 'Ali recorded the luncheon (and its multiple toasts and speeches) in details that were closely echoed by local newspaper reports. Unlike the newspapers (but like other Hyderabad elites who were notorious for their concern with protocol), he carefully specified that there were three carriages waiting in attendance for him on his arrival at the station and that the mayor, properly decked out in his regalia, proffered an appropriate show of politesse (*ta'arof*).¹¹⁴ Even more pleasing was the presence of what he estimated as around "two hundred people, men and women, rich and poor, big and small" who had gathered beneath the town hall's balcony to greet him. It was inadvertent modesty: the *Wolverhampton Chronicle* estimated "a crowd of some 2000 people."¹¹⁵

Visiting Indian elites were often received in this manner by Britain's industrial bourgeoisie and labourers. In September 1888, almost exactly a year later, the Hyderabad official Fath Nawaz Jung was hosted to a similar luncheon by the leading men of industrial Sheffield, after which he stepped outside to find that "thousands of people thronged the gate to shake hands with me."¹¹⁶ As with Mir La'eq 'Ali in Wolverhampton, Fath Nawaz Jung's hosts in Sheffield toasted Hyderabad's loyalty and he responded with a long loyalist speech, the text of which he included in his own travelogue (notably, published in Urdu). Mir La'eq 'Ali's experience was markedly similar. After a luncheon in the presence of aldermen, councilors, magistrates, industrialists and reverends, the mayor raised the toast, "The Empress of India! God bless her!"¹¹⁷ Then he raised a toast to the guest of honor, Mir La'eq 'Ali, who responded with a speech of his own. He gave it from the balcony so as to be heard also by the crowds gathered below:

O brother statesmen, I am not only happy and joyful to meet you, but also full of pride for the kindness you have shown me. A few days ago

113 The mayor's motion, the debate and the vote on the visit were reported in "Proposed Visit of an Indian Prince to Wolverhampton," *Wolverhampton Chronicle* (September 14, 1887), p.5. On the escort, see "Visit of Sir Salar Jung to Wolverhampton," *Express & Star* (September 14, 1887), p.3. On the dominance of the council whose members Mir La'eq 'Ali met by nonconformist Radical Liberals, see Jones, *Borough Politics*, chapter 2.

114 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 213.

115 "Visit of Sir Salar Jung to Wolverhampton," *Wolverhampton Chronicle* (September 21, 1887), 6.

116 Fath Nawaz Jung, *Indian Passage to Europe*, 137–139. The following day he also attended the installation of the Master Cutler of Sheffield in the town hall.

117 *Ibid.* The names and offices of those present are also recorded in *ibid.*

in Worcester I met a farmer who said 'If England and India were to join hands, what power or nation could defeat us?' And I agree with that farmer's opinion. God willing, our solidarity and union will last forever.¹¹⁸

Imperial loyalists like Mir La'eq 'Ali himself, the gathered townsfolk roared back "at the top of their voices." What may seem surprising now is Mir La'eq 'Ali's willingness to quote his own speech so honestly and in so doing declare his imperial loyalties in Persian no less than English. Yet this was in fact not at all surprising. For as was constantly noted in the publicity and protocol that attended Mir La'eq 'Ali's every movement in England, Hyderabad was 'Our Most Faithfull Ally' and it was as a loyal imperial citizen that he accepted his reward from Queen Victoria of the title Knight Commander of the Indian Empire. Indeed, the equivalent Persian letters for KCIE were proudly displayed on the *Vaqaye'-e Mosaferat's* lithographic title page. Here was no testament of *taraqqi*. If his prose could not usefully describe the kind of technological 'progress' that many anti-imperialists dreamt could liberate Muslims worldwide, then it was entirely capable of translating the loyalist words of the speech he gave that day in Wolverhampton. To the 'progressive' middle class Muslims who in 1885 had helped found the Indian National Congress and in 1886 the All India Muhammadan Educational Conference (later to evolve into the Muslim League), neither Hyderabad nor the Persian it had long protected offered desirable models for the future. In social and political as in literary and epistemological terms, Indo-Persian seemed to speak both for and from the past.

Surrounded by his entourage, there was undoubtedly an *hauteur* to Mir La'eq 'Ali's social interactions in England. His factory tours were not only inspections of machines: they were also visits to the work places of an industrial work force. Observationally at least, he was brought into contact with the soot-blackened work (*'amalyat*) on whose laborers rested the entire industrial infrastructure that made his international journey happen. Although at the Birmingham pen factory he carefully inspected the output of the two hundred women he saw at work there, and at the end of his visit accepted a gift of pens they had made, not one of those women nor any other worker was named in his text.¹¹⁹ Even the Worcestershire farmer he quoted in his speech at the town hall remained an anonymous type, a *rosta'i* or 'rustic.' Unlike the fellow knights, lord lieutenants and gentlemen councilors – whose names are

118 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 214. The English original of the speech is quoted in the *Wolverhampton Chronicle* (September 21, 1887), 6.

119 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 206.

fully recognizable through the Persian orthography of his book – these English subalterns remained invisible.¹²⁰ Except, that is, as Mir La'eq 'Ali described them: as appendages to their machines. Neither for Indians nor Britons, then, was much 'progress' to be found in the *Vaqaye'-e Mosaferat*, despite the claim of its opening lines that its author was travelling to find it.

Whether male or female, the work-soiled factory laborers on whom Mir La'eq 'Ali gazed constituted no *tamasha*. But female spectacles could be found in plenty in the Victorian music hall, where Mir La'eq 'Ali ventured regularly during his tour. For beyond the private dinners and public banquets, the other social venues that appeared in his account of the Midlands were its theatres and music halls. By his own evidence, as well as various reports in local newspapers and the 'theatrical gossip' sections of the trade press, he spent most of his evenings in England attending such venues.¹²¹ Such was his fascination with the Canadian singer 'Madame' Emma Albani (1847–1930), an internationally renowned soprano then at the height of her fame, that he made several repeated evening excursions to Worcester by train just to see her perform.¹²² "Her voice," he told his readers, "rang out like the bell of a church."¹²³ In a vivid pointer to the 'new world' that the Persian travelogue was entering, four years earlier Albani had already appeared in the diary of Naser al-Din Shah: he saw her in London, complimented her voice and noted her origins in "Canada of the New World (*Kanadeh-ye Yanki Donya*)."¹²⁴ Back in Birmingham, Mir La'eq 'Ali stayed till midnight at another theatre, among whose cast he remarked on the particular beauty of the girls, perhaps unsurprisingly given that a local newspaper report identifies the play in question as Tom Cannam and J.F. Preston's *The Queen of Fashion*.¹²⁵ From the same report, we know that the venue was Birmingham's Prince of Wales Theatre. It had opened in 1856 and, not being one of the city's grander theatres, tended to specialize in the more risqué entertainment that

120 Cf. Harald Fischer-Tiné, *Low and Licentious Europeans: Race, Class and 'White Subalternity' in Colonial India* (Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2009).

121 As well as local newspapers, the theatre visits were recorded in the 'Theatrical Gossip' section of the trade newspaper *The Era* (September 10, 1887), 8.

122 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 204, 206, 212. On the representation of European women in other nineteenth century Persian travelogues, see Fisher, "Representing 'His' Women" and Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran: Orientalism, Occidentalism and Historiography* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), chapter 4.

123 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 204, 206–207. As a local reporter noted, Mir La'eq 'Ali "is said to have a fine ear for an oratorio." Quoted in "Gossip from the World," *Birmingham Daily Post* (September 14, 1887), 3.

124 Naser al-Din Shah, *Ruznameh-ye Safar-e Farangestan* (Istanbul: n.p., 1291 AH/1874), 81.

125 *Birmingham Daily Post* (September 13, 1887), 4 and Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 206.

clearly appealed to Mir La'eq 'Ali.¹²⁶ Newspaper reports also confirm his attendance at a performance of Mr. and Mrs. Herman Merivale's drama *Our Joan* (which the *The Theatre* magazine noted derisively had "found acceptance in the provinces") as well as at another play with a female lead entitled *Ruth*.¹²⁷ On another night, he attended a music hall to watch what he described as "a tall and extremely beautiful woman sing very well."¹²⁸

Remarking on the special effects and stage scenery of yet another stage performance – which included mock mountains, seas, waves, ships and storms – he resorted again to the language of 'spectacle.' After all, every theatre he described was a *tamasha-khaneh* ('spectacle house'), the older word that he preferred to the *te'atr* ('theatre') adopted by many Iranian travel writers of the period. Trapped as he was in the rhetoric of an earlier travelogue genre that celebrated the wondrous and spectacular, it would have been difficult for readers to detect the difference between a factory and a music hall. Described side-by-side and indistinguishable in their treatment, both the factory floor and the theatre stage were evaluated on the scale of the degree of spectacle, *tamasha*, they offered. The *belle-lettrist* Indo-Persian aesthetic that Mir La'eq 'Ali inherited from an earlier age could offer no deeper meaning to these wholly different spaces of labor and pleasure.

The same rhetoric framed his visits to the region's museums and art galleries. The Birmingham Museum opened only two years earlier in 1885, due to the efforts of its first director Sir Whitworth Wallis (1855–1927) to gain the support of local industrialists. As a result, the museum had an impressive founding collection which, as Mir La'eq 'Ali noted, included porcelain (*chini alat*), ceramics (*kashi*), assorted weapons (*aslaheh-e mokhtalefeh*) and the works of painters old and new (*kar-e naqqashan qadim o jadid*).¹²⁹ Among this miscellany was a collection of Indian metalware, particularly Kashmiri silverware and Lakhnavi silver gilt, that Wallis bought for the museum as a means of teaching local manufacturers about Indian craft techniques. Given that Birmingham Museum records show these items had only been donated to its collections in 1887 by John Feeney, the owner of the *Birmingham Daily Post* (whose offices Mir La'eq 'Ali also visited), it seems highly likely that they would have been pointed out to

126 *Birmingham Daily Post* (September 13, 1887), 4. On the theatre's history, see Roy Thornton, *Lost Buildings of Birmingham* (Stroud: The History Press, 2009), 94.

127 "Local News," *Berrows' Worcester Journal* (September 10, 1887), 4 and *The Theater: A Monthly Review and Magazine* (May 1, 1890), 238. I have been unable to identify the authorship of *Ruth*.

128 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 212.

129 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 212.

the Indian visitor a few months later.¹³⁰ Despite being a former prime minister holding responsibility for Hyderabad's economic development, rather than remark on this surely prescient display of Indian goods intended to be copied for Birmingham to better compete with Indian craftsmen, Mir La'eq 'Ali instead conceived the museum in the now hackneyed terms of the Indo-Persian travelogue: it was merely "the spectacle of a museum of old things (*tamasha-ye muzeh-ye ashya-e qadimeh*)."¹³¹ His account of the Wolverhampton Art Gallery, inaugurated three years earlier, was similarly construed as "not without spectacle (*khali az tamasha nist*)".¹³¹

On his visit to a commercial art gallery in Birmingham, Mir La'eq 'Ali bought a set of oil paintings for himself after admiring an equestrian portrait of Queen Victoria that was apparently so convincing it looked like a statue.¹³² For such aristocratic travelers, Europe was not merely a *tamasha* to be looked at. As testified in many other such elite travelogues, Europe was acquirable and even exportable through its goods.¹³³ Following this pattern, Mir La'eq 'Ali's son, Salar Jung III, would buy so many *objets d'art* and paintings (generally by third-rate artists) during his own travels in Europe as to fill the museum that is named after him in Hyderabad.¹³⁴ Amid these patterns of elite consumption, the Indo-Persian travelogue acted less as a road map to the 'progress' sought by the period's modernists than as a showy testament of princely shopping

130 The items in question are a Kashmir silverware bottle and plate (accession number 1887M101) and a Lucknow silver gilt dish and cover (accession number 1887M95, 1887M104). The museum also displayed the famous eight foot copper Sultanganj Buddha, discovered in 1861 by the railway engineer E.B. Harris and bought for the prospective museum three years later by the former mayor, Samuel Thornton.

131 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 214.

132 Mir La'eq 'Ali, *Vaqaye'*, 205, 212, 214. On other Indian princely art collectors at this time, see Codell, "Ironies of Mimicry."

133 On similar patterns of consumption by other Persianate travelers, see Green, "Afghan Afterlife" and Motadel, "Qajar Shahs".

134 On the Salar Jung Museum, see B.A. Kotaiah, *Hand Book of Western Arts in the Salar Jung Museum* (Hyderabad: Salar Jung Museum Board, 1986). My enquires to various curators have been unable to ascertain whether any of the purchases made by Mir La'eq 'Ali at the Wolverhampton and Birmingham art galleries found their way into the Salar Jung Museum in Hyderabad. However, purchases from such provincial salons might help explain how so many works of marginal repute found their way into the museum. A broader sense of the colonial collecting tastes of Hyderabad elites from the period of Sir Salar Jung III can be seen in the account of the British and continental European furniture presented to the Victoria Memorial in Calcutta by Sayyed Sirdar 'Ali Khan, the eldest son of the Hyderabad notable Nawwab Sirdar Diler Jung. See Anonymous, *Historical Furniture: A Description of the "Queen Mary" and "Prince Regent" Suites Presented by Syed Sirdar Ali Khan* (Bombay: n.p., 1908).



FIGURE 8.3 Ancestor of the Salar Jung Museum: The Art Gallery, Wolverhampton

trips. As the reformist Urdu poet Hali – another progressive seeker of *taraqqi* – had complained in his *Mosaddas* a decade earlier, “We do not seize the advantages of travel.”¹³⁵

¹³⁵ Hali, *Mosaddas*, 148–149 (verse 125). On Droitwich Spa in this period, see Phyllis Hembry, Leonard W. Cowie and Evelyn E. Cowie, *British Spas from 1815 to the Present: A Social History*. (Cranbury, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1997).

Pondering Hali’s words, it is hard not to picture Mir La’eq ‘Ali, bloated by his excessive daily whisky intake, retiring each evening to the luxury of the Royal Bath Hotel in Droitwich Spa. Drawing on the diaries of his tour manager Moreton Frewen, the latter’s biographer Allen Andrews noted Mir La’eq ‘Ali’s “remarkable capacity for whiskey,” adding that during the trip through England “he was not given much chance to reform, because the principals among the staff he had brought with him from Hyderabad – particularly a Persian secretary – were even more addicted to the bottle.”¹³⁶ In Frewen’s own pithy description, Mir La’eq ‘Ali was “twenty-four years and twenty-four stone.”¹³⁷ Was devoting more attention in his travelogue to the curative waters of the Royal Bath Hotel than to any of the industrial techniques he had seen what Hali had in mind by “seizing the advantages of travel”?¹³⁸ One somehow doubts it. Rather than use his printed Persian book to export to India the secrets of Britain’s industrial progress, in the words of the account of his trip in *Berrows’ Worcester Journal*, on returning to Hyderabad he would “carry with him varied recollections of brine baths, grand music, partridge shooting and the drama.”¹³⁹ For Mir La’eq ‘Ali, there was in any case little time left to seize those advantages. After returning to Hyderabad in 1889, on 7th July that year he died at the age of twenty-seven of an alcohol-related illness, likely exacerbated by the indulgences of his travels.

4 Conclusions

In 1900, just over a decade after the *Vaqaye’-e Mosaferat* was published in Bombay, the Hyderabad minister Mohsen al-Molk (whom we have seen bewailing the ‘decline’ of India’s Muslims) established the Urdu Defence



FIGURE 8.4
From the Hammam to the Spa: The Royal Bath Hotel, Droitwich Spa

136 Andrews, *Splendid Pauper*, 106.

137 *Ibid.*, 104.

138 For his admiring account of the spa, see Mir Laeq ‘Ali, *Vaqaye’*, 202–204. Cf. Lucy Carroll, “The Temperance Movement in India: Politics and Social Reform,” *Modern Asian Studies* 10, no. 3 (1976): 417–447.

139 “Jottings,” *Berrows’ Worcester Journal* (September 10, 1887), 4.

Association to advocate for Urdu as the lingua franca of his community. It had after all been Mohsen al-Molk who had pressed Mir La'eq 'Ali into replacing Persian with Urdu as Hyderabad's official language back in 1884. By the turn of the century, the legal, political, and institutional momentum behind Urdu was unstoppable. Shortly after the Anjoman Taraqqi-e Urdu ('Society for the Progress of Urdu') was founded at Aligarh in 1903, its headquarters were shifted to Hyderabad, which within two decades had switched from being the last bastion of Indo-Persian to the champion of Urdu.

Vaqaye'-e Mosaferat was not the very last Indo-Persian text to be written in Hyderabad: a few more such works appeared from the literary old guard. But in being authored by the prime minister who agreed to disestablish the language, it has allowed us to explore that end point as it unfolded between Hyderabad and the wider world in which India's Muslim literatures and languages had become entangled. *Vaqaye'-e Mosaferat* marked the encounter of Indo-Persian with a world of industrial tourism shared by hundreds of other travelers from Europe, the United States, and Asia.¹⁴⁰ Pursuing the same type of industrial tour, Mir La'eq 'Ali visited factories where the 'progress' he lauded in his book's opening lines was on visible display. Yet while he struggled to capture what he witnessed with a lexicon and genre weighed down by the heritage of Indo-Persian letters, most of his Indian Muslim contemporaries had already moved on to either Urdu or English, or in other cases Bengali or Arabic. Their intellectual disengagement with Indo-Persian only exacerbated the disinvestment in the language by the colonial state in the 1830s and then Hyderabad in the 1880s, further weakening its ability to chart a way from what reformists saw as the 'ebb' and 'decline' of India's Muslims.

By reading Mir La'eq 'Ali's travelogue in the light of those concerns, this essay has made a case that the demise of Indo-Persian was not only caused by such external factors as its colonial disestablishment in 1837. What we have seen suggests that its demise was also due to such internal factors as the lexical, generic, and sociolinguistic characteristics of late Indo-Persian that Muslim reformists found objectionable and unhelpful to their cause. Against a background of scholarship that has been largely celebratory of Indo-Persian – as cosmopolitan, pluralistic, early modern – this shift of focus from external to internal factors helps us develop a more nuanced perspective on the late history of a literary tradition that India's Muslim reformists and middle classes were eager to abandon. Through a close reading of the parts of *Vaqaye'-e Mosaferat* that were in principle most conducive to the reformist connection

140 On these other industrial tourists, see Giorgio Riello and Patrick K. O'Brien, "The Future is Another Country: Offshore Views of the British Industrial Revolution," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 22, no. 1 (2009), 1–28.

between overseas travel and the observation of 'progress', we have seen how in practice this late example of Indo-Persian was symptomatic of the reformists' complaints. Constrained by a genre and lexicon as chosen by an aristocratic literary conservative; devoted to the pursuit of entertaining 'spectacles'; and dwelling on the luxuries of a high-born elite: in both its semantic and sociolinguistic dimensions, the *Vaqaye'-e Mosaferat* reveals the fault lines of a literary tradition that in its last years was chiefly upheld by the literary conservatives of princely kingdoms like Hyderabad.¹⁴¹ Given the commitment to Urdu of colonial India's reformist intelligentsia, at a time when 'decadence' and 'decline' were key words of Muslim self-critique, this semantic and sociolinguistic profile helps us better understand the abandonment of Indo-Persian by the 'promoters of progress' (*taraqqi pasand*).

As one of the last examples of its kind, the travelogue of Mir La'eq 'Ali has in this way allowed us to follow Indo-Persian to its imperial and industrial Ultima Thule, its furthest point, before it retracted into all but silence.¹⁴² As we have seen, in Mir La'eq 'Ali's hands at least, that furthest point turned out to be a nadir: his 'spectacles' (*tamasha*) of factories and music halls marked the conceptual antipodes of 'progress' (*taraqqi*). To borrow the terms of Hali, *Vaqaye'-e Mosaferat* charted the commingling of *madd* and *jazr* as the furthest 'flow' of Indo-Persian at the same time marked its 'ebb.' It would take Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938) to try to resurrect Persian in India as a means of reaching fellow Muslims in Afghanistan and Iran. But even for Iqbal, Persian had become only a language of poetry. Whether in novels, newspapers, technical manuals, or indeed travelogues, Urdu had supplanted Indo-Persian as a medium for contemporary topics and original prose.

141 Counter to an Anglophone literary history that has emphasized the works of colonial era Muslim reformists (such as the Aligarh movement) and modernists (such as the Progressive Writers Movement), I have also explored this neglected question of Hyderabad literary conservatism in Green, "The Propriety of Poetry."

142 As Storey's catalogue suggests, rather than original prose works it was the *ensha'* manual, based on past composition models and penned by traditional *madraseh* – and princely-state based language teachers, that made up a large proportion of Indo-Persian works published after the 1880s. See the listings in C.A. Storey, *Persian Literature: A Bio-Bibliographical Survey*, Volume 3, Part 2 (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1990).

Index

- Abbasid Caliphate 26–28, 71, 73, 105, 108,
110–112
- ‘Abbas Mirza (Qajar prince) 182, 184
- Adab* 86, 97, 98
- Literature 46
- Aja‘eb* 84
- Ahmad Khan, Sayyed 227, 239
- See also Urdu
- Ajmer shrine 119–121
- Ālāol 85–86, 96, 101–102
- ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib 27, 106
- ‘Alid
- loyalty 106
- shrines 107–109, 114
- Alexander the Great 65, 73
- Akbar (Mughal Emperor) 53, 55, 77–78, 82,
106, 119–120
- Andarz* 36–37
- Arabian Nights* 91–92, 94, 104
- Arakan 85, 97, 101, 103
- ‘Aruzi Samarqandi 34
- ‘Awfi Bokhari, Mohammad 34–35
- Ayyubids 109
- Bal‘ami 67–68
- Babur (Mughal Emperor) 40, 53, 76, 93, 117,
118
- Baghdad 27–28, 73
- Bengal, Bay of 96–97, 98
- Bukhara 22, 33, 52, 67, 71, 150, 153
- Buyids 108, 109
- Caliphate 30–31
- Central Asia 24–25, 67, 69
- Cultural centers of 28, 67
- Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) 59
- Chaghatay 95
- Chinggis Khan 106, 107, 112–113
- Chinggisid lineage, ‘Alid line, alignment
with 113
- Chishti Sufi order 131
- Shaykh Mo‘inuddin 119
- Shrines 119–120
- See also Ajmer shrine
- Comparative study of history 9–14
- Dar al-Siyada* 112–113
- Dastgah* (see Persian music)
- Delhi sultanate 71–72, 75–76, 77
- Dowlatshah Samarqandi 17, 35
- Dari 32, 34
- Divan* (see Secretarial class)
- Durrani Empire 125–128, 132–133
- See also Hazarat-e Ma‘sumiyya
- East India Company 54–55, 56,
213–214
- Economic Organization (ECO) 59
- Fakhr al-Zamani, ‘Abd al-Nabi Qazvini 87,
94
- Farmanfarma, Firuz Mirza 209, 210–215
- Fath-‘Ali Shah Qajar 184
- Fatimids 108
- Ferdowsi (see *Shahnameh*)
- Floyer, Ernest 199–200
- Genghis Khan (see Chinggis Khan)
- Ghazan Khan 112–113
- Ghazi, Sayyed 121–122
- Ghaznavids 71
- See also Mahmud of Ghazna
- Ghias al-Din Naqqash 51–52
- Ghurids 71
- Gladwin, Francis 56
- Golestan* (see Sa‘di)
- Golestan, Treaty of 188
- Golkonda Sultanate 95, 97
- Gondishapur 24
- Great Game 56
- Hafez 15, 42
- Haji Bektash 121–122
- Hazarat-e Ma‘sumiyya
- Definition of 126
- Durrani, relationship with 160–161
- Institutional economy of 142–143
- Institutions and practices related
to 138–142
- Spiritual Geography of 135–138
- Herat 28, 35, 36, 39–40, 51, 115–118

- Hodgson, Marshall 3, 16–17, 63, 83
Venture of Islam 3, 17
- Humayun (Mughal Emperor) 117–118
- Ibn ‘Arabi 122
- Ibn Balkhi 72
- Ibn Khaldun 27
- Ilkhanids 32–33, 39–40, 51, 112–113
- Interdisciplinary scholarship 8–9
- Islamicate 63–64
- Isma‘il, Shah 116
- Jami, ‘Abd al-Rahman 39
 Shrine, destruction of 115–118
See also Vasefi, Zayn al-Din
- Jones, William 57
- Kabul 145, 148–150
 Bala Hisar Citadel 149, 155–159
 Shor Bazaar 133, 136, 153, 155–159
 Shrines in 146–147
- Kalyani inscription 80–81
- Khataynameh* 52
- Khorasan 28
- Kingship (*see also padshahi, saltanat*)
 30–31, 36, 72
 King of kings (*see also shahanshah*) 30
- Mahābhārata* 70, 78
- Mahmud of Ghazni 70, 87–88, 93, 102
- Mani 26
- Manuchehr Khan (Mo‘tamad al-Dawleh)
 171–173, 175–176, 177, 184–187, 191
 Mirza Gurgun Khan, relation to 183
- Mashhad shrine 109–111
 Humayun’s pilgrimage 117–118
 Khwarazm Shah, patronage of 110–112
 Mughals, influence upon 119–121
 Safavid patronage of 114–115
- Mehmed II 121–122
- Middle East (as field of study) 60–62
- Middle Persian 32, 34, 67
see also Pahlavi
- Mir ‘Ezzatullah 56
- Mirror for Princes literature 68, 73–74
See also Persianate statecraft
- Gurgun Khan, Mirza 179–181
 Manuchehr Khan, relation to 183
- Mongols 28, 68, 73–74, 105
 Islam, conversion to (*see also* Ghazan Khan) 112–113
Monshis (*see* Secretarial class)
- Moorcroft, William 56
- Mughals 16, 29, 48, 52–53, 77
See also Timurids
- Mulla Firuz 57
- Muslim empires, early modern 16, 28–29, 105
 Mongols, influence of 112
See also Mughals, Ottomans, Safavids, Shaybanids, Timurids
- Nader Shah Afshar 125
- Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi 132
See also Hazarat-e Ma‘sumiyya
- Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar 221, 245
- Naskh* (*see* Persianate calligraphy)
- Nast‘aliq* (*see* Persianate calligraphy)
- Naurangi Darwaza 80
- Newal Kishore publishing house 57
- Nezam al-Molk 68
- Nezami Ganjavi 68
- Nizam of Hyderabad 222, 224, 226, 235, 242
- Noqtavi 42–43
- Ottomans 16, 28, 50–51
 Imperial shrines (*see also* Haji Bektash, Sayyed Ghazi) 121–123
 Mausoleums 123
- Padshahi* (*see* Kingship)
- Pahlavi (*see* Middle Persian)
- Pax-Mongolica* (*see* Ilkhanid era)
- Persian
 Administration, as language of 30, 55, 67–69
 Arabic, interactions with 20, 22–23, 27–28, 40–41, 67
 Architecture (*see* Persianate architecture)
 Conservatism of, aesthetic and intellectual 219, 228–241
 Cosmopolis 64–74
 Decline in usage of 221–223, 250–251
 Dictionaries 75–78
 Geographical writing 37–38

- Historical writing 68
Lingua franca, as 21–22, 69
 Literary dictionaries 34–35
 Literature and poetry 15–16, 34–41, 42,
 67–69
 Music 47–48
 Non-religious character of 66, 83
 Old elites, association with 223,
 241–249
 Prestige of 68–69
 Resurgence under Islam 32
 Sculpture (*see* Persianate sculpture)
- Persianate**
 Architecture 43, 44–45, 63–64, 78–79
 Calligraphy 46–47, 51
 Culture, development of 24–29
 Culture, heritage of 17–18
 Food culture 48–50
 Governance (*see* Persianate statecraft)
 Identity 17–18, 34
 Material culture 43–50
 Painting and pictorial art 45–46, 51–52
 Sculpture 79–80
 Statecraft 16, 29–30, 31, 32–33, 50–51,
 205–207, 212, 215
See also Persianate World
- Persianate World**
 Academic study of 1–6, 9–14, 59–62
 Antinomian trends, as feature of 41–43,
 204
 Constructed category, as 197–198, 215
 Environmental characteristics of
 43–44
 European imperial expansion in 54–59,
 207–208
 Geographical boundaries of 23–24, 32,
 34
 Linguistic practices, as feature
 of 201–203
 Nationalism, impact of 57–58
 Nomenclature for 19–21, 22
 Scholars of 19
 Shi'ism, as feature of 203–204
 Trade, role of 51, 53, 67
 Urban centers of 28, 34, 39–40
See also Persian cosmopolis
- Persian-Sanskrit lexicon 81, 82
 Pollock, Sheldon (*see* Sanskrit cosmopolis)
- Qanat* 44
 Qezilbash 116–117, 150
Qotb Moshtari 98
- Radif* (*see* Persianate music)
Rāmāyaṇa 70, 78, 80
 Rumi 37–38, 68, 122
 Russo-Persian War (1804–1813) 183–184
- Sa'di Shirazi, Mosleh al-Din 38, 39, 57
 Safavids 16, 29, 50, 60
 Imperial shrines 114–118
 Mausoleums 123
See also Shi'ism
- Safi al-Din Ardabili, Shaykh 114, 118
Safīneh-ye Solaymani 99–101
Saheb Qeran (Lord of Conjunction) 106
Saltanat (*see* Kingship)
 Samanid dynasty 67, 69, 71
 Samarqandi, 'Abd al-Razzaq 79
 Sanskrit Cosmopolis 64–69
 Non-religious character of 65
 Persian cosmopolis, relationship
 with 66–68, 70, 74, 80–81, 83
 Vernacular languages, encroachment
 of 82–83
- Sasanian Empire 24, 47, 72–73
 relations with
 Arabian Peninsula 26
 Buddhist world 24–25
 Central Asia 25
 Hellenistic culture 24
 Hindu world 24–25
 Roman world 25–26
- Sayf al-Muluk* (narrative) 86–89
 Components of 89–90
 Diffusion of 91–96, 97–98
 South Asian vernaculars of 95–96
- Sayyed 'Ali Akbar (*see* *Khataynameh*)
 Secretarial class 30, 55
 Seljuqs 72, 109, 110
 Shah Jahan 106, 121
 Shahrokh 79
Shahanshah (title) 30
Shahrashub (urban sedition) 38–39,
 40
Shahnameh 36–37, 57, 69
 Shaybanids 16, 29

Shi'ism

- Under Safavids 29, 50, 60, 115
- Persianate world, relevance for understanding 203–204

Shivaji 82–83

Silk Road 25, 51, 69

Sirhindi, Shaykh Ahmad 125

- Hazarat, lineage of 126, 131–134

Shu'ubiyya 18, 32

Solayman (Solomon) 88, 102

Solh-e Koll (Universal Peace) 124

Sufi, Sufism 41–43, 106

- Convents (*khaneqah*) 37, 42

- Orders 42, 119

- Shrines 42, 107–108, 114

- See also* Chishti, Naqshbandi

Sultan (office) 30–31, 71–73

Tabriz 34, 39–40

Tahmasb (Tahmasp) I, Shah 40, 50, 114, 117–118, 119

Taj Mahal 78, 106, 121

Tbilisi 171, 175, 177, 179, 181–182, 186, 187, 189, 190

Timur 106, 114

Timurids 24, 28, 39–40, 51–52, 106

- Imperial shrines 118–121

- Mausoleums 123

Tipu Sultan 55

Torkmanchai, Treaty of 188

Transnational histories 4–5

Tusi, Nasir al-Din 73

Umayyads 105, 108

Urdu

- Ascendancy of 217–220

- Colonial government, strengthened by 217, 219–220

- Progress and reform, association with 221–222, 227–228

- Travelogue, earliest example of 227

Vasefi, Zayn al-Din 115–117

Vaziri, Ahmad 'Ali Khan 209–212

Vijayanagara 63–64, 78–79

Waqf 45

Wine

- Production of 49

- Social practices associated with 49

- See also* Persianate food culture

Zendiq 31

Zoroastrianism 24