

of the tenth century CE by the so-called 'Qarmaṭī' Ismaili⁵ *dā'īs* who constituted the so-called 'Persian School' represented mainly by Muḥammad al-Nasafī (considered the founder of Ismaili Neoplatonism), Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī and Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī.⁶ Building upon the theories advanced by Stern and Madelung, Heinz Halm maintained that Neoplatonism represented only a later phase in the development of Ismailism. Early Ismaili doctrine as developed in North Africa and Yemen is said to have produced a cosmology and soteriology that can be described as of a 'gnostic', 'mythical', 'pre-philosophical' order; subsequently, it would have been reformulated in Iran and Central Asia by authors from the 'Persian School' with concepts drawn from Neoplatonism. Furthermore, the oldest Ismaili texts that have come down to us (especially those attributed to Ja'far b. Maṣṣūr al-Yaman, among them *Kitāb al-Kashf*) are said to have been almost entirely exempt from any Neoplatonic influence, just like the works emanating from the western Fatimid *da'wa*, notably the *Risāla* by Abū 'Isā al-Murshid discovered by Stern⁷ and the abundant output of al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān.⁸

In spite of reservations expressed by Yves Marquet, according to whom from its beginnings Ismailism must have produced an emanationist doctrine imbued with Neoplatonic ideas,⁹ and in spite of the puzzling testimony of Abū 'Abd Allāh Ibn al-Haytham asserting that Neoplatonic works were circulating in the entourage of the first Fatimid caliphs in Ifriqiya,¹⁰ the theory advanced by Stern, Madelung and Halm has been accepted by most scholars.¹¹ As such, it implies that Ismaili Neoplatonism was entirely the work of the 'Qarmaṭī' *dā'īs* in Iran and Central Asia, and was only adopted later by the western Fatimid *da'wa* in North Africa and Egypt under the imamate of al-Mu'izz, and not without serious concerns on the part of the imam himself.¹²

From this perspective the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba* assumes a special significance. It issued from the entourage of al-Mu'izz, whose authority is invoked on several occasions. The *Risāla* was deeply influenced by Neoplatonic speculations and was composed by no less notable a personage than al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān ('nearing the end of his life'). The *Risāla*, if it is confirmed that it is by al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, might reflect the radical transformation of the Fatimid *da'wa* during the reign of al-Mu'izz. Thus it could be an invaluable testimony to the introduction of Neoplatonism into the 'official' doctrine of the Fatimids.¹³ In other words, the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba* may prefigure the major synthesis of Ismaili philosophy undertaken some decades later by Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d. ca. 411/1021) in his *Kitāb Rāḥat al-'aql*.

However, in 1988 a new edition of the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba* by the same 'Ārif Tāmīr appeared in Beirut, but this time bearing the name of Ya'qūb b. Killis, the famous vizier of al-Mu'izz (d. 380/991).¹⁴ Moreover, it presents a substantially different text from the 1956 edition. In his introduction, Tāmīr accounts for this surprising change by declaring the discovery of another manuscript. I have found it useful to translate his explanation in full, since it speaks volumes about the methods he has followed:

In 1956 – twenty-six years ago – I had the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba* published in Beirut at my own expense in a book containing four other philosophical treatises. I had found three manuscripts of this *Risāla*: the first in Qadmūs in Syria; the second in the village al-Mufakkar in the district of Salamiyya; the third in Maşyāf, also in Syria. It turns out that these three manuscripts had been copied recently and that they are dependent on each other such that there are few differences in their presentation of the text and wording. However, it is very strange that the three manuscripts do not mention the name of the author [sic., it will become clear below that all the manuscripts are unanimous in attributing the text to al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān]. At the time, when Fatimid studies were only just beginning, I consulted the *Guide to Ismaili Literature* by the famous orientalist W. Ivanow as well as other sources and I found no mention of this *Risāla*. I searched most of the libraries specialising in Fatimid manuscripts in India, Yemen, Iran, Egypt and Baghdad, and found no manuscript of it. Furthermore, scholars and those who are experts in the field, were not aware of this sort of manuscript. At that time, in agreement with several specialists in Fatimid studies, including Asaf Fyzee, Muḥammad Kāmil Ḥusayn and the orientalist Ivanow, it was established that the author of this epistle was perhaps al-Nu'mān b. Ḥayyūn al-Maghribī al-Tamīmī, *qāḍī al-quḍāt* of the Fatimid empire under the reign of the caliph al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh, on the basis that its author mentions several times that he was the contemporary of this caliph.

But as the years went by, every time this *Risāla* came to my mind, my dissatisfaction grew due to the uncertainty that surrounds some of the most renowned Fatimid philosophers. I was not as sure as before, as I had come to believe that the treatise is not one of the works by al-Nu'mān because there is no resemblance between their respective languages. All this encouraged me to continue the search for another manuscript. I restricted my search to Syria given the fact that the *Risāla* is only found in this region.

By chance, in 1968 I met one of my devoted friends (*aḥad al-aşḍiqā' al-muhtammīn*) in Damascus. He told me that an Ismaili family that had emigrated from Qadmūs to Damascus some two hundred years ago, still

had possession of a compilation (*majmū'a*) of Fatimid manuscripts. I went to the family's home. What a joy it was to discover a reliable copy (*nuskha ṣaḥiḥa*) of the *Risāla*! Fortunately, the name of its author was marked on the outside cover: the vizier Ya'qūb b. Killis. I compared this manuscript with the others and noticed a major difference. I was convinced that the manuscripts in question [i.e. the three manuscripts used for the first edition] were very faulty. Thus, I took this [new] manuscript as the basis for the edition. Here, I did not follow the method of correcting the words; I was satisfied with this reliable copy.¹⁵

Apart from the astonishing revelation that the attribution of the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba* to al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān was not based on a manuscript but on sheer conjecture, Tāmīr's revised attribution to Ya'qūb b. Killis is not only highly unlikely,¹⁶ it is entirely impossible – at least given the version that has been published – for reasons that shall be elaborated presently.

First, however, the editions must be compared. Immediately evident is the fact that in the first edition (henceforth referred to as '*Mudhhiba I*') the *Risāla* contains three *fuṣūl* (chapters; sing. *faṣl*), whereas it contains four in the second (henceforth referred to as '*Mudhhiba II*'), the fourth chapter having no equivalent in *Mudhhiba I*. One may therefore surmise that the three manuscripts on which *Mudhhiba I* is based are incomplete, unless the divisions in the treatise are indicated differently in each edition. Indeed, at the end of the exordium we read:

It [i.e. the treatise] is in the form of three *fuṣūl* (*Mudhhiba I*, p. 28.14).
It is in the form of four *fuṣūl* (*Mudhhiba II*, p. 22.3).

Then, at the end of the first *faṣl*, the author states:

We have divided your questions in this treatise into three *fuṣūl*. Each *faṣl* is based on what you have asked. The response to questions in the first *faṣl* is here ended. Now, we shall ask God to enlighten us in order to be able to explain your questions in the second *faṣl* (*Mudhhiba I*, p. 49.5–8).

We have divided your questions in this treatise into four *fuṣūl* and we shall answer you in sequence. We ask God to enlighten us about what you have asked (*Mudhhiba II*, p. 54.1–3).

The hypothesis that manuscripts of the *Mudhhiba* are incomplete must therefore be dismissed since the division into *fuṣūl* is indicated differently even in the actual text of the two versions.

Moreover, the third *faṣl* of *Mudhhiba II* (p. 109 *ult.*) ends abruptly with *wa huwa 'ilm al-nāṭiq*. This phrase, as well as everything that precedes

it, is found in *Mudhhiba* I (p. 87.7), but in this case the text continues for eight more lines. Then follows the *explicit*: *tammāt al-Risāla al-Mudhhiba al-mubāraka* and the *ḥamdala* (*Mudhhiba* I, p. 87.14–17). This seems to indicate that the end of the third *faṣl* of *Mudhhiba* II in the manuscript was incomplete.

A comparison of the first three *fuṣūl* in these editions reveals a considerable number of textual variants: words punctuated or read differently; words, sentences or entire passages missing in one version, often due to a leap 'from the same to the same'.¹⁷ In addition, one discovers certain significant modifications. Thus the final sentence of the second *faṣl* is different (*Mudhhiba* I, p. 60.7–9; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 70.5). More disturbing is an account of a discussion between two men about whether the imam knows what is hidden (*al-ghayb*):

They [in the plural] submitted their problem to Our Lord al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh, the Commander of the Faithful The imam said: 'What do you think about it, al-Nu'mān?' and so I said (*fa-qultu*) ... (*Mudhhiba* I, p. 82.3–5).

They [dual] submitted their problem to Our Lord the Imam al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh, the Commander of the Faithful, while *qāḍī* al-Nu'mān b. Ḥayyūn was present. Imam al-Mu'izz asked him: 'And you, al-Nu'mān, what do you think about it?' And then he said (*fa-qāla*) ... (*Mudhhiba* II, p. 103.5–8).

In the first version, al-Nu'mān speaks in the first person: he is the presumed author of the treatise; in the second, he speaks in the third person: his words are only cited by the author of the treatise, in this case, Ya'qūb b. Killis according to Tāmīr's attribution. *Mudhhiba* II also replaces the name of the first Fatimid caliph, al-Mahdī bi'llāh which appeared in *Mudhhiba* I with the name Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl.¹⁸

The first three *fuṣūl* of the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba* are structured in a disorderly fashion. The author responds to questions posed pell-mell by a correspondent or disciple on various matters of Ismaili doctrine. Nevertheless, there is undeniable unity of style, vocabulary and doctrine. As we read the fourth *faṣl* of the *Mudhhiba* II, the argument becomes more systematic certainly, better structured, but differences in doctrine and terminology emerge in it in comparison with the first three *fuṣūl*. A close analysis indicates that the text is in fact a collage of excerpts from three works by Ismaili authors of various times, all previously edited by Tāmīr.

The structure of the fourth *faṣl* is as follows:

- (1) *Mudhhiba* II, pp. 111–151 is from the *Risālat al-uṣūl wa'l-aḥkām* by Abu'l-Ma'ālī b. 'Imrān (d. ca. 497/1104), including the surprising passage (*Mudhhiba* II, p. 139) that attributes the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* to the 'hidden' imam 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad.¹⁹
- (2) *Mudhhiba* II, pp. 152–168.3 takes up a long passage from *Kitāb al-Shajara*, attributed by Paul Walker to Abū Tammām, a disciple of Muḥammad al-Nasafī (d. 332/943).²⁰
- (3) *Mudhhiba* II, pp. 168.8–170 *ult.*, an admonition directed to the disciple, is nothing other than the last section of *al-Risāla al-Kāfiya* by Muḥammad b. Sa'd b. Dā'ūd al-Rafna (d. 859/1454). Still, *Mudhhiba* II, p. 170.17–18, contains an invocation to *imām zamānika al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh al-Fāṭimī*, a reference that does not appear in the corresponding passage of the *Risāla al-Kāfiya*.²¹

What conclusions can we draw from the above? Either we are in the midst of a pastiche, Tāmir having made up the fourth *faṣl* by gathering various texts that he had edited previously, going even as far as to amend certain parts of the first three *fuṣūl* in order to delete any reference to the structure of the text in three *fuṣūl*, as well as any element that might indicate authorship by al-Nu'mān, in light of his revised attribution to Ibn Killis. But for what purpose? In his introduction to the *Mudhhiba* II, Tāmir does not advance any theory regarding the contents of the treatise: he is satisfied with a few general comments about Ibn Killis. Moreover, there is nothing that suggests that he has seriously examined the text, but instead it seems highly probable that it was simply typed up.

However, it should be noted that the end of the third *faṣl* is missing from *Mudhhiba* II and that there are considerable textual variants in the first three *fuṣūl* of both versions. The same is true for the texts that make up the fourth *faṣl*: it is not simply a reprint of passages lifted from previous editions. Here too there are divergences, different readings, bits of sentences that are missing or have been added.²²

One might thus suppose that a single manuscript served as the basis for *Mudhhiba* II, originally from Qadmūs and discovered by Tāmir in Damascus. If the *Khams rasā'il* are drawn from a *majmū'a* belonging to the library of the Āl Sulaymān in Qadmūs, *Mudhhiba* II may have come from a similar *majmū'a* that originally contained the same texts but in a different order – *al-Risāla al-Mudhhiba*, *Risālat al-Uṣūl* and *al-Risāla al-Kāfiya* – to which was added the *Kitāb al-Shajara*. However, this would result in a rather incomplete manuscript: not only is the end of the *Mudhhiba* missing, but of the subsequent treatises only a few scat-

tered folios remain, fragments with which a copyist could have made up a fourth *faṣl*. Tāmīr would have simply reproduced the text of this manuscript, without 'following the method of correcting the words', as he says in his introduction. Lacking access to the manuscripts used by Tāmīr, this must remain a hypothesis.

Moreover, the first *faṣl* of the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba* was edited in 2004, in Cairo by Ṣāliḥ 'Ammār al-Ḥājj (henceforth referred to as '*Mudhhiba* III')²³ based on a manuscript from Maṣyāf that is considered 'problematic in terms of its writing and reliability' by the editor,²⁴ who reproduces the first and last page in facsimile. Now, the beginning of *Mudhhiba* III does not appear in either edition by Tāmīr. The treatise bears a more elaborate title – *al-Risāla al-Mudhhiba fī funūn al-ḥikma wa gharā'ib al-ta'wīl* – and it is explicitly attributed to al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān.²⁵ This treatise is divided into three *fuṣūl* just as in *Mudhhiba* I.²⁶ Its text, however, contains several variants in comparison with the versions published by Tāmīr.

Finally, in the Library of The Institute of Ismaili Studies in London there is a Syrian *majmū'a* that contains the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba* (MS 176/1031)²⁷ (henceforth referred to as '*Mudhhiba* IV'). The *incipit* (p. 54) is identical with *Mudhhiba* III: it confirms the longer version of the title and the attribution to al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, as well as the division into three *fuṣūl* (p. 55). The *explicit* (p. 160) is only slightly different from *Mudhhiba* I, notably the final formulation after *tammāt al-risāla*. It thus confirms that the treatise ends after the third *faṣl*. The account of the debate between al-Mu'izz and al-Nu'mān regarding *al-ghayb* (p. 150.7–10) is unfortunately badly corrupted: the key phrase – *fa-qultu* or *fa-qāla* – was omitted, such that it is impossible to draw any conclusions with regard to attribution. As a whole, the manuscript presents a mediocre text.

All this serves to illustrate what we have known previously: that Ismaili works in general, and those transmitted by the Syrian Nizārīs in particular, have undergone substantial modification over the centuries,²⁸ made worse at times by corruption due to the vagaries of manuscript transmission.²⁹ Modern editions of them are often less reliable than the manuscripts themselves: the inadvertent actions of editors, their lack of philological rigour, numerous misreadings and typographical errors all have contributed to the dissemination of phantom texts on which scholars, lacking access to the manuscripts, have built their learned theories. Given these circumstances, the project 'Ismaili Texts and Translations' undertaken by The Institute of Ismaili Studies in London and directed by Farhad Daftary, with a view to publishing new critical editions of major Ismaili texts, bodes well for the future of Ismaili studies.

What, then, to make of the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba*? It is clear that one must remove from it the fourth *faṣl* which is nothing but an amalgam of disparate texts, for the most part later than the first three *fuṣūl*. For this very reason, the attribution of the entire work to Ibn Killis is out of the question. Moreover, no particular element in the three remaining *fuṣūl*, of which the epistle is really composed, allows us to attribute the work to the famous vizier.³⁰ As for its attribution to al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, the issue is much more complicated. One must take the following matters into consideration.

First of all, the epistle contains explicit references to other works. The author mentions a particular *Kitāb al-Ibtidā'* by 'Abdān, the famous Qarmaṭī leader (d. ca. 286/899).³¹ He refers to a letter addressed by al-Mu'izz to a *dā'i* from Sind called Ḥalam b. Shaybān. Now, this letter, preserved in the '*Uyūn al-akhbār* by Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn (d. 872/1468), was written in 354/965, which gives us a *terminus post quem* for dating the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba*.³²

After a passage in which he briefly attacks a theory attributed to the believers in metempsychosis (*ahl al-tanāsukh*), the author comments: 'This has already been said previously in the *Kitāb al-Ma'ād* so we are not obliged to mention it here. This is part of what was said by our master Imam al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh.' In *Mudhhiba* II, Tāmīr uses the ambiguity of the formulation to declare that it is a lost work by the imam. However, a *Kitāb al-Ma'ād* appears in a list of works attributed by Ismaili tradition to al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān.³³ Finally, the author refers twice to one of his own works: 'We have explained this in our book, in a chapter dedicated to the natural reigns (*al-mawālīd*)', a much too vague allusion to enable precise identification.³⁴ The second reference is more explicit: 'We have outlined this in our *Kitāb al-Ma'ālīm*'. Now, a *Kitāb Ma'ālīm al-Mahdī* is cited in two works by al-Nu'mān as a work written in his own hand. It is likely, as Poonawala³⁵ believes, that this is the same book. While there is nothing conclusive about these points, they do not contradict the attribution of the *Mudhhiba* to al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān: written after 354/965, it is possible that he is referring to two of his own earlier works (al-Nu'mān died in 363/974).

The *Risāla al-Mudhhiba* seems to have been written by someone in the entourage of the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mu'izz who ruled from 341/953 to 365/975, first in Ifrīqiya, then from 362/973 in Cairo. On several occasions, the author invokes the authority of al-Mu'izz, whom he describes as 'the imam of our age/time' (*imām 'aṣrīnā; imām zamāninā*).³⁶ We know that al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān spent the latter years of his long career in the service of al-Mu'izz, that he followed his master to the new capital Cairo, and

died there shortly thereafter. A passage of the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba* quoted above reports a conversation between al-Mu'izz and al-Nu'mān in which the latter speaks in the first person (at least according to *Mudhhiba I*).

Regarding what was said by al-Mu'izz as reported in *Kitāb al-Ma'ād*, the author alludes to the fact that the imam cursed two men: the first had maintained that the imams are gods, the second professed metempsychosis.³⁷ Several sources, including the *Kitāb al-Majālis wa'l-musāyarāt* by al-Nu'mān, indeed attest that during his imamate, al-Mu'izz had to struggle with some *dā'īs* who taught all kinds of heresies regarding the imams.³⁸

Moreover, the epistle devotes special attention to the rather complex and delicate question of the imamate and the appearance of the *qā'im*. As this doctrine has been subject to a number of modifications in the course of time, there is here an element that may enable precise dating of our treatise.

Invoking the enigmatic Qur'anic verse Q. 15:87, *We have given thee seven of the oft-repeated, and the mighty Qur'an (wa laqad ataynāka sab'an mina'l-mathānī wa'l-Qur'āna'l-'azīma)*,³⁹ the author maintains that God favoured Muḥammad such that his cycle was not limited to seven imams, as was the case for preceding prophets, but that after him the heptad of imams would be renewed. Implicitly, therefore, the author rejects the Qarmaṭī position which maintains that the era of Muḥammad came to an end with the seventh imam Ismā'il and the appearance of the *qā'im*, the seventh *nāṭiq* Muḥammad b. Ismā'il.⁴⁰

Still, far from breaking completely with Qarmaṭī doctrine, the author of the *Mudhhiba* integrates it into his own theory by maintaining that the *qā'im* will appear twice, which would correspond to the two blasts of the trumpet in Qur'anic eschatology (Q. 39:68).⁴¹ In other words, the *qā'im* had already emerged, but then went into hiding, before appearing for the second time:

The *qā'im* has two ranks: the rank of dissimulation (*kitmān*) and the rank of manifestation (*izhār*) He has two limits (*ḥaddān*): the limit of the Enunciators (*nuṭaqā*) in the cycle of the hidden imams (*al-a'imma al-mastūrūn*) and the limit of the rightly-guided lieutenants (*al-khulafā' al-rāshidūn*). He appeared by revealing himself, then he went into hiding until the passing of a predetermined period of time. He will reappear to complete his work. ...⁴² His appearance in the physical world took place with the completion of the cycle of the six Enunciators and seven imams. He established for himself eighteen lieutenants (*khulafā'*), who are hidden during [the time of] dissimulation (*taqiyya*) and apparent during [the time of] unveiling. By means of the last [lieutenant], the end (*khitām*)

will come. He [i.e. the *qā'im*] will then appear to them in the world of the celestial bodies (*dawr al-jirm*) ... and he will settle men in Paradise or Hell.⁴³

In spite of the obscurity inherent in this kind of text, the underlying doctrine is clear enough. Madelung, and then Daftary, gave it the following interpretation. After completion of Muḥammad's cycle by the seventh imam (Muḥammad being the sixth Enunciator), the *qā'im* appeared. Here we have the Qarmaṭī belief. However, according to the author of our epistle, the appearance of the *qā'im* took place while the cycle of occultation was still in effect. *Kitmān* and *taqiyya* being necessary, the *qā'im* soon went into hiding and established a series of eighteen lieutenants who succeeded each other in order to prepare for his second coming. The first among them lived in hiding as well – these are the 'hidden imams', the immediate successors of Muḥammad b. Ismā'il – then emerged into the open with the establishment of the Fatimid state by 'Abd Allāh al-Mahdī. At the end of the line of Fatimid imams, the *qā'im* will appear a second time. His *ḥujja*, the last of his lieutenants, will accomplish the messianic deeds as declared,⁴⁴ before the *qā'im* carries out the final Resurrection.⁴⁵

Madelung has found a similar conception of the Fatimid imams as lieutenants of the *qā'im* Muḥammad b. Ismā'il⁴⁶ in a number of works dating back to the period of al-Mu'izz: the *Munājāt* attributed by the Syrian Nizārī tradition to the imam himself, *Ta'wīl al-zakāt*, *Kitāb al-Fatarāt* and *Sarā'ir al-nuṭaqa'*, all attributed to Ja'far b. Maṣṣūr al-Yaman. Madelung draws the conclusion that this doctrine may be one of the reforms introduced by al-Mu'izz in the hope of winning over some of the Qarmaṭīs to the Fatimid cause and as a means of getting closer to the 'eastern' *da'wa*, mainly that of Iran and Central Asia, but also 'Iraq and Bahrayn.⁴⁷ If Madelung's theory is correct, the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba* fits into the ideological programme set out by al-Mu'izz. Moreover, the works he points to have a number of other similarities with our treatise, notably a common cosmology and usage of the same philosophical notions. A thorough analysis of these texts is required before drawing any conclusions about the intellectual milieu of what would have constituted the 'western' *da'wa* of the Fatimids under al-Mu'izz. I hope to be able to revisit this issue in a future study.

The author of the *Mudhhiba* engages in polemics against certain extremists⁴⁸ who claim that knowledge (*'ilm*) of the *bāṭin* provides a dispensation from the practice (*'amal*) of the *ẓāhir*: according to them, the knowledge of the hidden meaning is a substitute for respecting legal prescriptions to the letter. On the contrary, our treatise preaches the strict

complementarity of knowledge and practice: it is not until his (second) coming, that the *qā'im* will abrogate all the Laws (*nāsikh jamī' al-sharā'i'*) by revealing their inner meaning.⁴⁹ Although the text leaves some room for ambiguity – will the Law be abrogated before the end of time, leading to a form of human society deprived of positive religious prescriptions, or only until the Last Judgement? Belief in the strict complementarity of *'ilm* and *'amal* is typical of moderate Fatimid Ismailism, as it was conceived by al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān and subsequently by al-Kirmānī.⁵⁰

These few considerations do not suffice to attribute the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba* to al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān with absolute certainty but they do enable us to situate the production of the work, in all likelihood, in the entourage of the imam-caliph al-Mu'izz.

The *Risāla al-Mudhhiba* and Ismaili Neoplatonism

The *Risāla al-Mudhhiba*,⁵¹ let us recall, is made up of a set of responses to questions posed to the author, in a disconcerting disorder, by an anonymous correspondent. It would therefore be in vain to expect to find a coherent system in it. Yet, by putting together certain scattered passages, it is possible to reconstitute, on some matters, a more or less homogenous doctrine that nevertheless contains a number of gaps and obscurities, aggravated by corruption of the text and the mediocrity of both editions.⁵² Leaving aside questions relating to the theory of imamate and the *qā'im*, I shall limit myself to developing briefly four themes in which Neoplatonic influence on the treatise is clearly evident: (1) cosmology and the hierarchy of the celestial and terrestrial ranks (*ḥudūd*); (2) the fall of the soul; (3) the theory of knowledge; (4) the ascent of the soul and its salvation.

1. Cosmology and the hierarchy of celestial and terrestrial *ḥudūd*

The first section on the creation of the universe that I would like to examine, straight away poses quite an arduous problem in textual criticism. Indeed, in the *Mudhhiba* II we read:

When the Most-High wished to create Being (*arāda khalq al-kawn*), while there was no space, no time, no built sky, no extended earth, no dark night and no serene day, he raised (*masaka*) the heaven and levelled it; and He darkened its night, and brought forth its forenoon; and the earth—after that He spread it out; therefrom He brought forth its waters and its pastures; and the mountains He set firm (Q. 79:29–32). Then, He created in heaven angels of huge dimensions, after having created opposite them

an angel He established for them as an awe-inspiring limit [or dignitary, *ḥadd 'aẓīm*]: it is the source of souls (*mubtada' al-arwāḥ*) and the place they shall return to.

He said: *Upon the day when the spirit and the angels stand in ranks they shall speak not, save him to whom the All-merciful has given leave, and who speaks aright* (Q. 78:38). We will transmit on the authority of the Messenger of God [the following tradition]: 'The angels will stand forth in ranks and this angel will stand facing them.' Understand well these signs: they [the angels] place themselves near *the Lote-Tree of the Boundary; nigh which is the Garden of the Refuge* (Q. 53:14–15). Then, He created on earth the species of animals, one after another. The first thing produced (*awwal al-maṣnū'āt*) was the form of man.⁵³

Mudhhiba I and III have almost the same text⁵⁴ except at the beginning where each version differs considerably. *Mudhhiba* I: 'When the Most-High wished to generate the *qā'im*' (*fa-lammā arāda tabāraka wa ta'ālā kawna al-qā'im*); *Mudhhiba* II: 'When the Most-High wished to create Being' (*fa-lammā arāda tabāraka wa ta'ālā khalq al-kawna*); *Mudhhiba* III: 'When the Most-High wished things to appear suddenly from nothingness to being, He created the Agent Intellect' (*fa-lammā arāda tabāraka wa ta'ālā ibrāz al-ashyā' min al-'adam ilā'l-wujūd khalaqa'l-'aql al-fa'āl*).

If the difference between I and II could at most be ascribed to the inadvertence of the copyist, III reflects a deliberate modification of the text. The term *al-'aql al-fa'āl* is in fact anachronistic: to my knowledge, it was introduced into Ismaili doctrine by al-Kirmānī, after he had read *Kitāb Ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila* by Fārābī.⁵⁵

This example urges us to proceed carefully. The uncertainty of the text is such that one must guard against reaching hasty conclusions based on one isolated passage. Citing version I of this passage, the only one to which he had access, Yves Marquet attempted to explain the surprising doctrine that would have the *qā'im* be the first created being just like the Intellect. Marquet's analysis must now be qualified given the other versions available.⁵⁶

Although this first text is composed of elements from Qur'anic cosmology,⁵⁷ it nevertheless demonstrates a doctrine that is foreign to the Qur'an: before the creation of the animal species and of man, God originated an 'angel of huge dimensions' – source of origin and return for souls – and a number of celestial angels. A second passage provides us with more specifics regarding the latter. After citing Q. 79:5, *by those that direct the affair!* (*wa'l-mudabbirāt amran*), an obscure verse that tradition relates to angels or stars, the author rises up against astrologers:

The vain speculations of the astrologers (*al-munajjimūn*) maintain that these apparent stars are 'those that direct' (*al-mudabbira*). But how could God have established the directing (*tadbīr*) of His creatures in a body to which He had not yet given an intellect ('*aql*), nor endowed with intelligence (*lubb*), and which He could neither command nor forbid? When they advance as an argument the verse: *No! I swear by the fallings of the stars; and that is indeed a mighty oath, did you but know it* (Q. 56:75–76), they know the symbols (*al-muthul*), but are unaware of what is symbolised (*al-mamthūl*). If He had wished to designate these stars by His word, He would have said: 'No! I swear by the stars' ... He said instead: 'No! I swear by the falling of the stars (*bi-mawāqī' al-nujūm*)'. He thus has in mind their orbits (*mawāqī'*), which are signs referring to them, i.e. the cherubim angels (*al-malā'ika al-karūbiyya*). Then, after them He created twelve spiritual beings (*rūḥāniyya*) and said: *Over it are nineteen; We have appointed only angels to be masters of the Fire ...* (Q. 74:30–31). Next, He generated beings (*kawwana al-akwān*), originated essences (*abda'a al-a'yān*); He produced time and He created man and jinn.⁵⁸

Remaining within a context deeply influenced by Qur'anic references, the author maintains that the *mudabbirāt* are not inanimate beings, deprived of a soul and an intellect. Contrary to what the astrologers assert, it is not the stars themselves that govern the world but nineteen angels: seven cherubim and twelve spiritual beings. Thus the author introduces the theme of seven cherubim and twelve *rūḥāniyya* whose occurrences Heinz Halm has pointed out in Ismaili works from the time of al-Mu'izz (apart from the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba*, he refers to the *Risāla* by Abū 'Īsā al-Murshid and to *Kitāb al-Fatarāt*). Halm interprets this as the survival of an ancient Babylonian astral cult whose traces appear in Gnosticism, in doctrines attributed to the Sabians of Ḥarrān and in certain texts of the *ghulāt* (*Umm al-kitāb* and the literature of the Nuṣayrīs).⁵⁹

The relationship between these nineteen angels and the stars is explained as follows:

Know that these stars to which you allude are 'directors' (*mudabbirāt*) only in the sense that they are apparent manifestations (*zawāhir*) that were established as symbols (*muthul*) of these seven cherubim. Similarly, the twelve signs of the zodiac (*burūj*) are apparent manifestations and locations (*manāzil*) for the twelve *rūḥāniyya* ... As for what you say about these stars, according to which they would be originators (*mubdi'āt*), it is not the case. The Originator (*al-mubdi'*) 'makes being from non-being' (*ayyasa min lays*),⁶⁰ whereas these (i.e. the stars) are simple creatures.⁶¹

[The twelve *rūḥāniyya*] are the 'brought nigh' (*al-muqarrabūn*) angels ...

just as the seven cherubim. The seven planets and the twelve signs of the zodiac were established as symbols (*amthila*) for them.⁶²

Except for al-Tālī (the 'Following'), the names of the seven cherubim are not given in the text.⁶³ On the other hand, the author does provide those of the *rūḥāniyya*, if only eleven: al-Jadd, al-Faṭḥ, al-Khayāl, al-Ḥayy, al-Muḥyī, al-Munkar, al-Nakīr, Riḍwān, Mālik, Malakūt and al-Khiḍr.⁶⁴ Halm believes the missing name is that of al-Tālī or the Universal Soul.⁶⁵ If that is the case, then the Universal Soul would belong to both the cherubim and *rūḥāniyya*. We shall see later what meaning I believe we should accord to this ambiguous position of the Soul in the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba*.

The stars do not by themselves play any role in the creation and government of the sublunar world. If they have a role at all, they perform it only by the power of the angels whose external manifestations or 'symbols' they are. The *Risāla al-Mudhhiba* also establishes an explicit correspondence between these angels, the stars and their respective spheres:

These seven higher *ḥudūd* were established by God as intermediaries (*wasā'it*) between Him and his creatures, as we have reported earlier on the authority of the imām al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh, the Commander of the Faithful ...⁶⁶ The *Sābiq* (the 'Preceding') and the *Tālī* (the 'Following') assist [or 'transmit the influx to', *mumaddān*]⁶⁷ those that are below them. But the *Sābiq* remains veiled to the lower degrees such that the first among them is the *Tālī*. The six [*ḥudūd*] that come after it are deployed (*mumadda*) in the six heavens, except for the sphere of the fixed stars (*kawākib*) and (those) of the Sun and Moon. In the first heaven, which is the heaven of this world (*al-dunyā*), is located the *Tālī*: all the *ḥudūd* face it. In the second heaven, there is an angel responsible for intelligence (*muwakkil bi'l-fiṭna*); in the third heaven, there is an angel responsible for remembrance (*dhikr*); in the fourth heaven, there is an angel responsible for determination (*himma*); in the fifth heaven, there is an angel responsible for intention (*niyya*); in the sixth heaven, there is an angel responsible for fear (*khawf*) and in the seventh heaven, there is an angel responsible for hope (*amal*). The *Sābiq* is in the sphere of paradise (*falak al-firdaws*), above all else. Its influx (*mādda*) crosses these heavens until it reaches the *Tālī*. These six cherubim attest to and glorify the *Sābiq* and they sanctify the *Tālī*. God established all seven of them in man, since he is the microcosm (*al-'ālam al-ṣaghīr*) in whom all parts come together. Thus in man there is intelligence, remembrance, determination, intention, hope and fear while he gets his subsistence from the *Tālī*, from whom he receives the influx.⁶⁸

This important passage poses troublesome challenges of interpretation, all

the more so given the probable corruptions in the transmission and edition of the text. It becomes evident that the author locates the seven cherubim in the celestial spheres and to each among them he associates faculties of the soul that are gathered in the human soul, as man is conceived as a microcosm. The *Sābiq*, which clearly is not one of the cherubim, remains outside the system; it transcends all in the 'sphere of paradise'. The *Tālī* is the first of the cherubim that governs the first heaven, and is identified with the heaven of this world. This cannot be an unfortunate interpolation since the passage ends by specifying that man receives his subsistence and influx from the *Tālī*: it is the junction point, the intermediary between the celestial hierarchy and the sublunar world. There are no cherubim in the sphere of the fixed stars: that is the realm of the twelve *rūḥāniyya*, the signs of the zodiac being their apparent manifestations. More difficult to grasp is the reason why the author asserts that no cherub governs the spheres of the sun and moon. No doubt, these are reserved for the *qā'im*, at least if this is how we interpret an obscure passage that describes the successive phases of the occultation and manifestation of the *qā'im* as analogous with the phases of the Moon in relation to the Sun.⁶⁹ Six heavens remain, therefore, each governed by a cherub. Unfortunately, these heavens are not identified and it is not clear whether they are counted from lowest to highest (as the identification of the first heaven with the heaven of this world leads one to believe). If we interpret the text literally, there would be ten heavens altogether: three without cherubim and seven each governed by a cherub. The cosmology presumed by the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba* would thus correspond to the Ptolemaic system (as reviewed by Arabic thinkers) which serves as the basis for the emanation scheme developed by Fārābī and adopted in Ismailism by al-Kirmānī. To the nine spheres of Arabic astronomy (the all-encompassing sphere, the sphere of the fixed stars, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury and the Moon) correspond ten Intellects, except that no sphere corresponds to the First Intellect (which Ismaili Neoplatonism associates with the *Sābiq*) and the Tenth Intellect does not govern the Moon but forms a link between the celestial and sublunar world.⁷⁰

Still, a major problem remains. What is the role of the *Tālī* at such a low level in the hierarchy, especially since the text acknowledges its priority over the six other cherubim: all turning towards it and sanctifying it, just like the *Sābiq*?⁷¹ This reverence may be explained by the fact that the *Tālī* is none other than the Universal Soul, the third hypostasis in Plotinus, that forms a couple with the *Sābiq*, the Universal Intellect. Another passage of the *Mudhhiba* confirms this, but complicates everything by introducing

another celestial hierarchy, no longer comprised of seven cherubim but of five 'higher *ḥudūd*': the Intellect, the Soul, al-Jadd, al-Faṭḥ and al-Khayāl.

The First Intellect (*al-'aql al-awwal*), which is the cause (*'illa*) of the *rūḥāniyyāt* and the place of divine influences (*makān al-āthār al-ilāhiyya*), returns from itself on itself (*rāji' bi-dhātihi 'alā dhātihi*) and it acknowledges its debt to the Originator (*al-Mubdi'*), having had the privilege of receiving the influences that appeared in it, without any ipseity (*huwiyya*) by which one may refer to it and any determination (*taqdīr*) that might contain it. That indeed is what origination (*ibdā'*) in the originated being (*al-mubda'*) is. Due to the Intellect's submission to the One who is above it, it receives 'emerging things' (*al-mabrūzāt*, i.e. the forms) all at once, without any increase or decrease. As far as this refers to what we have explained about the nature of submission by the Intellect, the same applies to the Soul: it must submit to the Intellect, which is its cause and principle of existence.⁷² The Soul therefore submits to the Intellect, such that it can well and truly receive and make intellectual forms (*al-ṣuwar al-'aqliyya*) appear; forms that will enable it to compose the corporeal structures (*bi-ta'lif al-tarākīb al-jusdāniyya*). Similarly, al-Jadd, as far as it is the cause (*sabab*) of the manifestation of actions linked to the soul (*al-af'āl al-nafsāniyya*) that resemble spiritual substances (*al-jawāhir al-rūḥāniyya*), is that which makes intellectual forms appear by the intermediary of the Universal Soul (*al-nafs al-kulliyya*). Al-Jadd owes this power and what it receives to its submission to the Universal Soul; it recognises its inability to perceive [the] being of the eternal cause (*ays al-'illa al-azaliyya*). Similarly, al-Faṭḥ, which is located below the emanation (*ifāda*) of al-Jadd, receives from the Soul the subtle essences (*latā'if*) of divine, spiritual, demonstrable things (*burḥāniyya*), without corporeal instrument or natural forces. Al-Faṭḥ receives perfectly these essences [or meanings: *ma'ānī*] composed of assembled letters. It must submit and recognise the magnitude of the grace bestowed upon it. The same is true for the rank of al-Khayāl and what is allotted to it ... It is like the imam who influences the imaginative faculty (*mukhayyil*) of the *ḥujja*'s soul, with those divine influences and intellectual sciences that are related to the spiritual ranks without any corporeal intermediary.⁷³

This text, unfortunately corrupted in both editions, elicits extensive commentary that I cannot develop here. For the present purpose, suffice it to point out that this passage is deeply inspired by Neoplatonic thought: the First Intellect received the entirety of intelligible forms at once from the Originator; the origination merges with the first originated; from the Intellect, the Universal Soul receives the forms or archetypes that will enable it to organise the physical world; the Soul is assisted by three *ḥudūd* – al-Jadd, al-Faṭḥ and al-Khayāl – which under its direction 'prepare' the

forms, each adapting them to their own ontological level, in order to make their realisation in the physical world possible; by their mediation, the Soul plays a role in prophethood and the inspiration of the imams, as well as in the process of human knowledge; each *ḥadd* must submit to its superior *ḥudūd* in order to receive the influx by which it exists and due to which it is able to accomplish its function. Here we have a typical set of themes that belong to what is commonly called 'Ismaili Neoplatonism' as it appeared in the works of al-Nasafi and al-Sijistānī, among others, and later in a much reworked form, in *Rāḥat al-'Aql* by al-Kirmānī.⁷⁴

Other passages from the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba* reflect this same Neoplatonic influence. Unfortunately, once again, the text seems to have suffered substantial corruption during transmission:

You asked me how the Soul appeared from the Intellect: as light comes from light (*ka'l-ḍaw' 'an al-ḍaw'*), or as the form of matter comes from matter (*ka ṣūrat al-hayūlā 'an al-hayūlā*), or as act comes from the agent and influence from the one who exercises it. The proof of it is that the act does not proceed literally from the agent nor form from matter, just as the influence does not come literally from the one who exercises it. As soon as what we say is established on clear proof, it becomes evident that the Soul appears from the Intellect like form appears from matter.⁷⁵

Although it is dangerous to draw conclusions hastily from this isolated and lacunar text, it seems to allude to the doctrine of the Arabic Pseudo-Empedocles who places matter before form: form rises from matter, just as the Intellect proceeds from 'Unṣur, the Element or primordial Matter.⁷⁶

Once it has emanated from the Intellect, the Soul produces in conjunction with it the celestial spheres which, in turn and with the assistance of the signs of the zodiac, organise the corporeal world through their rotation and their 'beneficial and harmful' influences.

Know that God originated (*abda'a*) the higher world, that is the Intellect and the Soul in a perfect manner. He assisted them (*ayyada*) in the creation (*khalq*) of the spheres and the completion of their work. In order to put their action of composition (*tarkīb*) into effect, they [i.e. the spheres] turn with the signs of the zodiac, by exercising beneficial and harmful influences.⁷⁷

The universe is thus divided into an intelligible world and a sensorial world, the latter being the reflection, the 'symbol' of the former:

God created two worlds (*al-dārān*): the one here below and the other. He established this world as apparent (*zāhira*) and the other as hidden

(*bāṭina*), such that the apparent points to the hidden. This world belongs to physical beings ... ; whereas the other is a spiritual world.⁷⁸

An uninterrupted chain of *ḥudūd*, by which the influx is transmitted, links the highest degree of the intelligible world – the Intellect – with the lowest degree of the religious hierarchy in this world: the believer (*al-mu'min*).⁷⁹ Each *ḥadd* relates to the rank which is immediately above it, just like the wife to the husband. It receives from its 'husband' half of the influx that the latter has received from its predecessor, in keeping with the Qur'anic instruction: *to the male the like of the portion of two females* (Q. 4:11).⁸⁰

From all these passages it emerges that the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba* takes up emanationist cosmology as developed by Ismaili authors of the fourth/tenth century based on a particular interpretation of Arabic paraphrases of Plotinus and Proclus. But it intertwines two different systems. On the one hand, the treatise adheres to a pentadic system according to which the intelligible world is comprised of five *ḥudūd*: the Intellect, the Soul, al-Jadd, al-Faḥ and al-Khayāl.⁸¹ With the assistance of the latter three, the Universal Soul prepares the demiurgy: the intelligible forms are conditioned in order that they can be concretised in matter; next the Soul produces the celestial spheres, signs of the zodiac and the planets, that will serve it as instruments for the generation of the sublunar world. However, in addition, the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba* advances another system directly linked to the cosmology of the Arab astronomers. The *ḥudūd* of the intelligible world, which seem to number ten, with the exception of the *Sābiq*, the Intellect, which does not correspond to any sphere, animate and govern the celestial spheres: the external sphere is the realm of the twelve *rūḥāniyya*; the seven cherubim govern the spheres of the planets (from which one must exclude the Sun and the Moon); the seventh (or first) of the cherubim is the *Tālī* – the Universal Soul – which represents the junction point with the sublunar world. Telescoping these two systems renders the position of the Universal Soul ambiguous: is it located at a high degree in the hierarchy, immediately below the Intellect whose companion it is, the spouse (system 1) or, on the contrary, at the lowest rank, as the principle that governs the sublunar world (system 2)?⁸²

2. The fall of the soul

In his responses to the rambling questions from his correspondent, the author of the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba* alludes to the fall of the Universal Soul into the matter of this world. Although the theme is not dealt with explic-

itly, one is able to deduce from what he says that he considers the human soul as produced, the consequence, that is, of this fall. This doctrine is certainly a feature of Ismaili Neoplatonism,⁸³ but our author introduces it with the help of an original image: he compares the fall of the soul into matter with the birth of a child:

At the moment of childbirth, (the child) emerges from his mother's womb headfirst as something that falls (*hābiṭ*) from heaven upon the earth, a body in which there is no soul (*rūḥ*). Its fall and the fall of the higher Soul (*al-rūḥ al-ʿulwī*) occurs in an instant, quicker than a flash of lightning: there is no difference between them The body and soul (*nafs*) intermingle, such that they become one [thing]. One unites with the other without being able to distinguish one from the other When the child emerges from his mother's womb, he is created of six species (*ajnās*) like all the animals. But as soon as the seventh begins to mix with it, it rises above all the other animals such that it becomes more precious, higher, greater and nobler than them before God We see that in its mother's womb, the child is not endowed with speech [or reason, *nuṭq*]. It acquires reason when it enters this world. The soul begins to cry because it is separated from the world from which it has come and has no means to return there.⁸⁴

Although this text, transmitted in a corrupted form, raises many questions to which it is not easy to respond (is there a difference between *rūḥ* and *nafs*? What are the six 'species' that the human soul possesses in common with animals?),⁸⁵ the key idea is clear: at the moment of childbirth, the rational faculty, by which man distinguishes himself from animal, unites with the soul of the child.⁸⁶ By his tears, the child expresses the disarray in his soul: after its fall into matter, the soul sees no means of escape from exile in order to return to its origin which is none other than the Universal Soul.

3. The theory of knowledge

As with all Ismaili noetics, the theory of knowledge presented in the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba* – unfortunately in a very fragmentary and obscure manner – attempts to outline the path that will enable the fallen human soul to return to its place of origin. For our author, this return is only possible due to the rational faculty: there is no salvation without rational knowledge; thus explaining the importance he accords to the rational faculty (*al-quwwa al-nāṭiqā*) by which the human soul distinguishes itself from

those of other animals. Exploiting the double meaning of the root *n-ṭ-q* (speech and reason), he takes up the example of the newly born:

The child emerges from his mother endowed with seven sensory organs, namely two eyes, two ears, two nostrils and a mouth. When he sees with his eyes, he says with his tongue: 'I see'; when he hears with his ears, he says with his tongue: 'I hear'; when he smells with his nose, he says with his tongue: 'I smell.' The tongue is therefore the translator of the seven sensory organs (*fa kāna'l-lisān al-mutarjim 'an al-ḥawāṣṣ al-sab'a*).⁸⁷

The rational faculty, which expresses itself by speech, is not only the 'translator' of sense-perceptions; its function above all is to have command over the other faculties of the soul – those that man possesses in common with animals.⁸⁸ Here we see the Platonic image of the Charioteer:

It is necessary to master the animal soul (*al-bahimiyya*) and to bridle it, lest it separates itself from its companion [i.e. the rational soul] or weaken it and hurl it into perdition. If one perishes the other will perish along with it. On the other hand, if the reins are held firmly in the hands of the companion, the latter will turn it away [from the passions] and choose what is best for it. That is why it is necessary to make a pact with the soul (*wajaba akhdh al-'ahd 'alā'l-nafs*): as long as its bridles and reins direct it towards what is good, towards salvation (*najāt*), away from the darkness of ignorance towards the light of the Intellect.⁸⁹

The author interprets the Aristotelian definition of the soul as 'the substance that completes and perfects all natural beings gifted with organs' (*al-jawhar alladhī huwa tamām wa kamāl kull jism ṭabī'ī dhī āla*)⁹⁰ in the sense that the soul, at least by its rational faculty, is the principle that guarantees order and harmony in the natural body to which it is united. It performs this function because of its ability to acquire knowledge: 'knowledge is the completion of the animal substance' (*al-mā'rifa hiya tamām jawhar al-ḥayawān*).⁹¹

If knowledge (*mā'rifa*) is a 'natural influence' (*athar ṭabī'ī*) insofar as it relates to material beings and is obtained by sense-perception, knowledge ('ilm) is defined as 'the soul's perception of the real essences (*ḥaqā'iq*) of things': it has to do therefore with intelligible realities. Now, this knowledge is described as a 'divine influence' (*athar ilāhī*),⁹² which means that it is not based on sense-perception but is acquired by 'inspiration' (*ta'yīd*).

4. The ascent of the soul and its salvation

For the author of the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba*, the salvation of the human soul, its escape from exile in the body and its return to its origin, all happen through the 'acquisition of knowledge ('ilm).⁹³ This radiates (*ashraqa*) from the Intellect and the Soul; it is transmitted by the various *ḥudūd* of the celestial world (al-Jadd, al-Fath and al-Khayāl or the cherubim governing the spheres, according to the system adopted)⁹⁴ to the *ḥudūd* who constitute the earthly *da'wa* – the imam, the *ḥujja*, the *dā'ī* – before reaching the simple believer.⁹⁵ Hence the key role played by the imam in the perfection of the human soul:

Know that the imam in himself (*al-imām bi-dhātihi*) is the sun of an intellect (*shams 'aql*) that shines (*ashraqa*) upon the rational souls, such that they are illuminated by the emanation of substantiality (*ifādat al-jawhariyya*). [The souls] become substances (*tajawharat*) by receiving his (i.e. the imam's) intelligibles (*ma'lūmāt*) With the appearance of [these intelligibles] they are purified, at the same time as their bodies.⁹⁶

By deriving nourishment from the knowledge taught by the imam, human souls become substances: that is, they can subsist by themselves, liberated from their bodily attachments. They are ready to undertake the path of return (*ma'ād*), in order to reunite with their celestial cause: the Universal Soul.⁹⁷

Although the author remains very evasive and, perhaps deliberately, obscure regarding this subject, the conjunction (*ittiṣāl*) of the human soul with the Universal Soul occurs gradually, during the various prophetic and imamic cycles. It will not be complete until the second coming of the *qā'im*, which prefigures the return of all the saved souls to their celestial origin:

This will take place when he [i.e. the *qā'im*] enters into conjunction with the Soul, without intermediary, once the bodily cycle reaches completion.⁹⁸

Having entered into conjunction with the Universal Soul, the *qā'im* will reveal salutary knowledge in its entirety. In turn, due to his teaching, the souls of the faithful will be fully actualised: freed from their bodily attachments they will be able to undertake the journey beyond this world and return to their place of origin.⁹⁹

This partial analysis of the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba* suffices to demonstrate that with its vocabulary, cosmology and conception of the fall and rise

of souls, it is close to the 'Ismaili Neoplatonism' of works emerging from the 'Persian School'. Indeed it would be easy to point out a number of resemblances to texts by al-Nasafi, Abū Tammām and al-Sijistānī inspired by the Arabic paraphrases of Plotinus and Proclus. If we accept that the treatise was written in the entourage of al-Mu'izz, it constitutes a precious testimony of the reception of Neoplatonism by the Western Fatimid *da'wa* in Ifrīqiya and Egypt in the second half of the fourth/tenth century.

Unfortunately, the *Mudhhiba*, as it has come down to us, is only a 'vestige' or rather 'a vestige of a vestige'. Indeed it represents one of the rare pieces of evidence – along with some works attributed to Ja'far b. Maṣṣūr al-Yaman, including *Kitāb al-Fatarāt*, also problematic from many points of view – of a mostly lost literature, superseded by the great Fatimid philosophical summaries of the fifth/eleventh century (al-Kirmānī, al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shirāzī, Nāṣir-i Khusraw). Not unlike most works transmitted by the Syrian Nizārīs, it has undergone a number of modifications, rewrites, interpolations, as well as an uncertain process of manuscript transmission.

Moreover, our treatise proves to be quite unlike the systematic and well-constructed works of Sijistānī or Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī. Let us recall that we are dealing with what appears to be a collection of incoherent and obscure responses to scattered questions, in what is an isolated example of a doctrine whose details are not known. Furthermore, there are numerous contradictions and inconsistencies, notably on cosmology. We have thus pointed out the manner in which the author seems to have intertwined two different systems, leaving the Universal Soul in an ambiguous position, at once at the peak of the cosmic hierarchy, as 'the spouse of the Intellect' (*zawjat al-'aql*) and at the lowest position, as angel-cherub governing the sublunar world.

The *Risāla al-Mudhhiba* and Kirmānī's cosmology

In a letter dated 9 March 1990, the late Yves Marquet sought my opinion on a question that occurred to him while writing his article 'La pensée philosophique et religieuse du Qāḍī al-Nu'mān à travers la *Risāla Mudhhiba*':

In this article, I speculated as to whether or not al-Kirmānī came round to the theory of the ten Intellects in an attempt to repair the disorder that al-Nu'mān, and presumably the caliph al-Mu'izz, had introduced into the doctrine of the Intellect and the Soul.¹⁰⁰

This question seems entirely pertinent especially since the *Mudhhiba* contains elements that, one way or another, foreshadow al-Kirmānī's cosmology. We have seen that the author establishes a correspondence between the *hudūd* of the intelligible world (the Intellect, the Soul, the twelve *ruḥāniyya*, the seven cherubim) and the celestial spheres. Without being described as 'intellects', the cherubim represent psychic faculties. Moreover, the Soul, relegated to the lowest level of the celestial world, intervenes in the generation of the sublunar world, the actualisation of the human intellect and the transmission of salutary knowledge, which closely recalls the function of the Tenth Intellect or Agent Intellect in al-Kirmānī's writings. Marquet pointed out these similarities. But he ascribed the inconsistencies caused by the intertwining of two different systems (mainly regarding the position and function of the Soul) to the philosophical incompetence of the author: 'It seems in any case that the concept developed by al-Nu'mān, good jurist and good exegete perhaps, but poor philosopher, results from a contamination between the Plotinian system and that of the *falāsifa*.'¹⁰¹

A close analysis of the *Kitāb Rāḥat al-ʿaql* shows that al-Kirmānī's theory of the ten Intellects contains exactly the same incongruities, such that it too appears to be the product of an overlapping of the two systems, as suggested by Marquet. Thus al-Kirmānī creates a puzzling duplication, where elements proper to the Soul in the previous Plotinian system are shared between the Third Intellect (which he explicitly identifies as 'the Universal Soul', described, for example, as being the female, passive counterpart of the Intellect, receiving the forms from it) and the Tenth Intellect (which he describes as informing Nature and the sensible world, but identifies it, following Fārābī, with 'the Agent Intellect' of the Aristotelian tradition) in such a manner that one can only conclude they are identical. Therefore, I have been led to formulate the hypothesis that the fall of the Third Intellect to the lowest level in the cosmic hierarchy – the 'drama in heaven', a recurring theme among Tayyibī authors – had been implied in the *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*.¹⁰²

We see the same problem arise in the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba*, half a century earlier than the *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*. The only way to give meaning to its cosmology is to accept the fall of the Universal Soul that, following an error not specified by the author, lost its privileged position as 'spouse' of the Intellect, to find itself at the lowest level of the intelligible world. Marquet was right to consider the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba* an immediate precursor to the great synthesis by al-Kirmānī.¹⁰³ In spite of the poor state in which it has come down to us, this text has special importance in the

history of Ismaili philosophy. As such, it thoroughly deserves a critical edition and an in-depth study.

Notes

1. On the Muḥammad-Shāhī branch of the Nizārīs, see Farhad Daftary *The Ismā'īlīs: Their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 441–442, 447–448; (2nd ed., Cambridge, 2007), pp. 415–418, 451–456. A minority among the Ismailis of Syria are known, like the Bohras in India, for having preserved and recopied Ismaili texts in Arabic, some of which date from the Fatimid period. Unfortunately, their libraries remain closed to researchers and no reliable inventory exists; cf. Wladimir Ivanow, *Ismaili Literature: A Bibliographical Survey* (Tehran, 1963), pp. 168–173 (contains a list of works that was conveyed to him by 'an enterprising journalist of Beirut'); Paul E. Walker, 'Abū Tammām and his *Kitāb al-Shajara*: A New Ismaili Treatise from Tenth-century Khurasan', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 114 (1994), pp. 343–344. 'Arif Tāmīr had the merit of publishing some of the texts transmitted by his community, although it remains unclear which manuscripts he used for his, often very faulty, editions.
2. Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *al-Risāla al-Mudhhiba. Ta'lif al-faqīh al-akbar wa'l-dā'ī al-ajall al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān b. Muḥammad b. Ḥayyūn al-Maghribī al-Tamīmī*, ed. 'Arif Tāmīr, in *Khams rasā'il Ismā'iliyya* (Salamiyya, 1956), pp. 27–88. The collection also contains: Muḥammad b. Sa'd b. Dā'ūd al-Rafna (d. 859/1454), *al-Risāla al-Kāfiya* (pp. 90–99), Abu'l-Ma'ālī b. 'Imrān (d. ca. 497/1104), *Risālat al-Uṣūl wa'l-aḥkām* (pp. 100–143), Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī (d. after 361/970), *Tuḥfat al-mustajībīn* (pp. 145–156) and Qays b. Maṣṣūr al-Dādīhī (d. 655/1257), *Risālat al-asābī'* (pp. 158–179). Tāmīr tells us (*Khams rasā'il*, p. 12) he based his edition of the *Mudhhiba* on three manuscripts from (1) the library of Āl Sulaymān in Qadmūs, (2) the village of al-Mufakkar in the district of Salamiyya and (3) from the city Maṣyāf. On the other hand, as regards the other four texts in the collection, he acknowledges having found only one manuscript, belonging to Āl Sulaymān in Qadmūs, see *Khams rasā'il*, pp. 13, 14, 17; cf. the introduction in the reprint of *Tuḥfat al-mustajībīn* in *al-Mashriq*, 61 (1967), p. 137; Ismail K. Poonawala, *Biobibliography of Ismā'ili Literature* (Malibu, CA, 1977), pp. 67, 87, 292, 294, 387. If this information is reliable, one may gather that the library in Qadmūs possesses a manuscript containing all five of the treatises published by Tāmīr in *Khams rasā'il*. These kinds of *majmū'āt*, bringing together pell-mell various authors from different periods, seem typical of the Syrian manuscript tradition. The rare examples of it that are known are in fact of this kind; see, for example, the manuscript from Maṣyāf edited by Stanislas Guyard, *Fragments relatifs à la doctrine des Ismaélīs* (Paris, 1874) which Jean-Baptiste Rousseau, the French Consul-Général in Aleppo who

acquired the manuscript in Damascus, described as 'une compilation indigeste des principaux livres des Ismaélis', cf. Guyard, p. 3); also MS 176/1031 at The Institute of Ismaili Studies in London, that contains *al-Risāla al-Mudhhiba*; cf. Delia Cortese, *Ismaili and Other Arabic Manuscripts: A Descriptive Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Library of The Institute of Ismaili Studies* (London, 2000), pp. 125–127.

3. Thus Asaf A. A. Fyzee, 'Qadi an-Nu'man: The Fatimid Jurist and Author', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1934), pp. 1–32, is unaware of the *Risāla*.
4. Ivanow, *Ismaili Literature*, pp. 170–171 ('it is highly probable that its attribution to Nu'mān is fictitious'); Ismail K. Poonawala, 'al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's Works and the Sources', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 36 (1973), p. 112; Poonawala, *Biobibliography*, p. 67 ('the authorship of this treatise to Nu'mān is doubtful, and it is not mentioned in any source'); Farhad Daftary, *Ismaili Literature: A Bibliography of Sources and Studies* (London, 2004), p. 145 ('the attribution of the work to al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān may be doubtful').
5. The term 'Qarmatī', as used, for instance, by Madelung in connection with the Ismaili *da'wa* forming what he called the 'Persian School', is rather ambiguous. Most of them, it is true, do not seem to have accepted the claim of the Fatimids to the imamate but adhered to the belief that Muḥammad b. Ismā'il was the last Imam and thus the Mahdī. However, linking them with the 'Qarmatians' of Bahrayn remains highly problematic.
6. Samuel M. Stern, 'The Early Ismā'īlī Missionaries in North-West Persia and in Khurāsān and Transoxania', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 23 (1960), pp. 56–90 (also published in S. M. Stern, *Studies in Early Ismā'ilism* (Leiden and Jerusalem, 1983), pp. 189–233); Wilferd Madelung, 'Das Imamāt in der frühen ismailitischen Lehre', *Der Islam*, 37 (1961), pp. 101–114. One might include Abū Tammām in this 'School', as a disciple of Nasafī and author of *Kitāb al-Shajara*, according to the hypothesis by Walker, 'Abū Tammām'.
7. Samuel M. Stern, 'The Earliest Cosmological Doctrines of Ismā'ilism', in Stern, *Studies*, pp. 3–29.
8. Heinz Halm, *Kosmologie und Heilslehre der frühen Ismā'īliya: Eine Studie zur islamischen Gnosis* (Wiesbaden, 1978); Halm, 'The Cosmology of the Pre-Fatimid Ismā'īliya', in Farhad Daftary, ed., *Mediaeval Ismā'īli History and Thought* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 75–83. For a more detailed report on the matter, see De Smet, 'Les bibliothèques ismaéliennes et la question du néoplatonisme ismaélien', in Cristina D'Ancona, ed., *The Libraries of the Neoplatonists* (Leiden and Boston, 2007), pp. 481–492.
9. Yves Marquet, 'Quelques remarques à propos de *Kosmologie und Heilslehre der frühen Ismā'īliya* de Heinz Halm', *Studia Islamica*, 55 (1982), pp. 115–135.
10. Ibn al-Haytham, *Kitāb al-Munāẓarāt*, ed. and tr. Wilferd Madelung and Paul E. Walker as *The Advent of the Fatimids: A Contemporary Shi'i Witness. An Edition and English Translation of Ibn al-Haytham's Kitāb al-Munāẓarāt*

- (London, 2000), pp. 50, 52, 111, 137–140, 150–151, 154; cf. De Smet, 'Les bibliothèques ismaéliennes', pp. 486–487.
11. As evident, for example, in the study of the evolution of Ismaili doctrine by Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs* (1st ed.), pp. 122, 168, 179–180, 234–240, 245.
 12. On this subject one cites the passage in al-Qaḍī al-Nu'mān, *Kitāb al-Majālis wa'l-musāyarāt*, ed. Habib Feki (= al-Ḥabīb al-Faqī), et al. (Beirut, 1997), pp. 374–375, which gives an account of al-Mu'izz's frustration with an 'eastern' *dā'ī* who based Ismailism on principles drawn from 'the doctrine of the philosophers' (*madhhab al-falāsifa*); cf. Samuel M. Stern, 'Heterodox Ismā'ilism at the Time of al-Mu'izz', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 17, i (1955), pp. 15, 30–31 (= Stern, *Studies*, pp. 265, 284–285); Madelung, 'Das Imamāt', p. 112; Halm, *Kosmologie*, pp. 135–136.
 13. Madelung, 'Das Imamāt', pp. 86, 100–101, 112; Halm, *Kosmologie*, p. 136; Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs* (1st ed.), pp. 177, 245 (2nd ed., pp. 164, 232–233, but in the latter passage, the second edition no longer refers to *Risāla al-Mudhhiba*); Cortese, *Ismaili and Other Arabic Manuscripts*, p. 125.
 14. Al-Wazīr Ya'qūb Ibn Killis [attrib.], *al-Risāla al-Mudhhiba*, ed. 'Ārif Tāmīr (Beirut, 1988). This edition seems to have escaped the attention of scholars and I am not aware of any reference in secondary sources.
 15. 'Ārif Tāmīr's introduction to Ibn Killis, *al-Risāla al-Mudhhiba*, pp. 5–7.
 16. For Ya'qūb b. Killis, who is said to have written several works of *fiqh* all missing, see Poonawala, *Biobibliography*, pp. 78–79; Yaacov Lev, 'The Fatimid Vizier Ya'qub Ibn Killis and the Beginning of the Fatimid Administration in Egypt', *Der Islam*, 58 (1981), pp. 237–249; Leila S. al-Imad, *The Fatimid Vizierate, 969–1172* (Berlin, 1990), pp. 80–96; Paul E. Walker, 'Fatimid Institutions of Learning', *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*, 34 (1997), pp. 187–188.
 17. As a whole, *Mudhhiba* II seems to present a less corrupted, more reliable text. It is not possible to list all the variants here but I will point some out in the doctrinal analysis that follows.
 18. *Wa qad dhakarnā fī Kitāb al-Ma'ālim anna min walad al-Mahdī bi'llāh aḥad 'ashar imāman* (*Mudhhiba* I, p. 57.11–12; cf. *ibid.* I, 15); *wa qad dhakarnā fī Kitāb al-Ma'ālim anna min Muḥammad b. Ismā'il aḥad 'ashar imāman* (*Mudhhiba* II, p. 65.14–15; cf. *ibid.* pp. 65 ult.–66.1).
 19. Abu'l-Ma'ālī b. 'Imrān, *Risālat al-Uṣūl wa'l-aḥkām*, ed. Tāmīr, in *Khams rasā'il*, pp. 100–143. This work is comprised of long excerpts from *Kitāb al-Fatarāt* attributed to Ja'far b. Maṣ'nūr al-Yaman which was probably written in the entourage of the Imam al-Mu'izz.
 20. *Kitāb al-Shajara* experienced a fate similar to that of *Risāla al-Mudhhiba*. First it was edited by 'Ārif Tāmīr as *Kitāb al-Idāh* (Beirut, 1965) and attributed to Shihāb al-Dīn b. al-Qaḍī Naṣr Abū Firās al-Maynaqī (d. 937/1530 or 947/1540), then partially re-edited by Tāmīr as *Kitāb Shajarat al-yaqīn* (Beirut, 1982), but this time in the name of the Qarmaṭī leader 'Abdān b. al-Rabiṭ (d. ca. 286/899); the chapter on Satan from a manuscript contain-

- ing the hitherto unpublished Part One of the work was edited and translated by Wilferd Madelung and Paul E. Walker in *An Ismaili Heresiography: The 'Bāb al-shayṭān' from Abū Tammām's Kitāb al-shajara* (Leiden, 1998); cf. Walker, 'Abū Tammām', pp. 343–345 and the preface and introduction to Madelung and Walker, *An Ismaili Heresiography*. The passage quoted in *Mudhhiba* II corresponds to pp. 91.5–105.4 of the Beirut 1982 edition.
21. Muḥammad b. Sa'd b. Dā'ūd al-Rafna, *al-Risāla al-Kāfiya*, ed. Tāmīr, in *Khams rasā'il*, pp. 90–99; reprinted in Tāmīr's *Thalāth rasā'il Ismā'īliyya* (Beirut, 1983), pp. 25–33. The passage taken up in *Mudhhiba* II corresponds to *Thalāth rasā'il*, pp. 31.16–33.14; *Khams rasā'il*, pp. 95.4–97.7.
 22. Walker, 'Abū Tammām', pp. 344–345, 349, raised exactly the same points when comparing both editions of *Kitāb al-Shajara*.
 23. Al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān [attrib.], *al-Risāla al-Mudhhiba fī funūn al-ḥikma wa ghara'ib al-ta'wīl*, ed. Ṣāliḥ 'Ammār al-Hājj (Cairo, 2004), pp. 145–178. I am most grateful to Ahmed from the Librairie Avicenne in Paris for bringing this edition to my attention and obtaining a photocopy of it.
 24. *Mudhhiba* III, p. 145 note.
 25. *Mudhhiba* III, p. 145, confirmed by the reproduction of the first page of the manuscript that precedes the edition of the text.
 26. *Mudhhiba* III, p. 146.12–13; p. 178.13–16.
 27. Cortese, *Ismaili and Other Arabic Manuscripts*, pp. 125–127. According to Cortese, the manuscript may date from the twentieth century. I would like to thank Omar Alí-de-Unzaga for sending me a copy of the first and last folios.
 28. One can cite out of others as an example, *Kitāb al-Fatarāt* attributed to Ja'far b. Maṣṣūr al-Yaman. Heinz Halm, 'Zur Datierung des ismā'ilitischen "Buches der Zwischenzeiten und der zehn Konjunktionen" (*Kitāb al-Fatarāt wa'l-qirānāt al-a'sara*) HS Tübingen Ma VI 297', *Die Welt des Orients*, 8 (1975), p. 105; Halm, *Kosmologie*, pp. 136–137, has shown that this work, probably written in the entourage of al-Mu'izz – just as the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba*, with which it has many similarities – underwent several modifications during the Fatimid period, until the reign of al-Ḥākim, even later, before being accepted in a form adapted to the doctrine of his time, by the Syrian Nizārī author, Abu'l-Ma'ālī b. 'Imrān (see above, n.19). *Kitāb al-Shajara* seems to have undergone similar treatment (see above, n.20).
 29. Regarding the condition of Syrian Ismaili manuscripts, refer to the comments by Josef van Ess in his review of *Ash-Shāfiya (The Healer)*, an *Ismā'ili poem attributed to Shihāb ad-Dīn Abū Firās*, edited and translated with introduction and commentary by Sami Nassib Makarem (Beirut, 1966) and of *al-Qasida al-Shāfiya*. Texte arabe établi et annoté par Aref Tamer (Beirut, 1967) in *Der Islam*, 46 (1970), pp. 92–95, esp. p. 92.
 30. A fragment from the Genizah in Cairo states that Ibn Killis held *majālis* in which jurists, men of letters, philosophers and theologians belonging to different confessions participated; see Mark R. Cohen and Sasson Somekh,

- 'In the Court of Ya'qūb Ibn Killis: A Fragment from the Cairo Genizah', *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 80 (1990), pp. 283–314. But nothing suggests that he personally wrote works like the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba*.
31. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 41.10–11; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 43.1–2. This title is cited by Poonawala, *Biobibliography*, p. 32, n.10, among the works by 'Abdān, but he does not mention any manuscripts.
 32. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 56.22–24; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 64.15–17. Regarding this letter, see Stern, 'Heterodox Ismā'ilism', pp. 11–13, 24–25, published also in Stern, *Studies*, pp. 258–261, 276–281.
 33. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 43.22; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 46.15–17 and footnote; cf. Poonawala, *Biobibliography*, p. 68, n.61.
 34. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 35.15–16; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 33.13–14. Nevertheless, in his second edition, Tāmīr adds a footnote: 'this belongs among one of the lost works by vizier Ibn Killis'. I do not know where he obtained this information.
 35. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 57.11; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 65.14; cf. Poonawala, *Biobibliography*, pp. 58, n.17, 67, n.54; Poonawala, 'al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān's Works', p. 112 n.17. Here again, Tāmīr insists on considering this a missing work by Ibn Killis.
 36. *Mudhhiba* I, pp. 38.7, 43.23, 54.2, 56.23, 82.4.
 37. *Mudhhiba* I, pp. 43 ult.–44.1.
 38. Stern, 'Heterodox Ismā'ilism', in his *Studies*, pp. 257–288.
 39. According to traditional Islamic exegesis, it would be either the seven verses of the *Fātiḥa*, or the seven longest suras of the Qur'an; cf. Régis Blachère, *Le Coran* (Paris, 1980), p. 290.
 40. *Mudhhiba* I, pp. 46, 70; *Mudhhiba* II, pp. 51, 85.
 41. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 74.10–18; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 90.
 42. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 71.13–19; *Mudhhiba* II, pp. 86.22–87.4.
 43. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 79.5–8; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 98.15–19. One must correct *al-baqiyya* as *al-taqiyya* as Madelung suggests in 'Das Imamāt', p. 88 n.233. In Ismaili Neoplatonic texts, and in Arabic Neoplatonism in general, *jirm* usually refers to the celestial bodies, whereas the physical bodies are referred to by the term *jism*. These terms are sometimes used as synonyms, though, so a certain ambiguity remains.
 44. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 69.1–2; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 83.13–14.
 45. Madelung, 'Das Imamāt', pp. 88–89; Daftary, *The Ismā'ilis* (1st ed.), pp. 177–178; (2nd ed.), pp. 164–165.
 46. Let us recall, however, that this name does not appear in *Mudhhiba* I; on the other hand, it is mentioned on several occasions in *Mudhhiba* II.
 47. Madelung, 'Das Imamāt', pp. 90–101.
 48. On the notion of 'exaggeration' (*ghuluww*), see Daniel De Smet, 'Exagération', in M. A. Amir-Moezzi (ed.), *Dictionnaire du Coran* (Paris, 2007), pp. 292–295.
 49. *Mudhhiba* I, pp. 31.15–17, 70.18–19, 75.20–25; *Mudhhiba* II, pp. 27.13–15, 86.2, 93.1–5.

50. Regarding this matter, see Daniel De Smet, 'Loi rationnelle et loi imposée. Les deux aspects de la *ṣarī'a* dans le chiisme ismaélien des X^e et XI^e siècles', *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph*, 61 (2008), pp. 515–544.
51. The author says he named his epistle *al-Mudhhiba* ('that which eliminates, which makes disappear') 'because it eliminates (*tudhib*) temptations from Satan and illuminates the hearts of the learned by faith', clearly an allusion to Q. 8:11, 'to put away from you the defilement of Satan, and to strengthen your hearts' (*wa yudhhiba 'ankum rijza'l-shayṭān*). See *Mudhhiba* I, p. 28.12–13; *Mudhhiba* II, pp. 21 ult.–22.1. This calls into question the reading '*al-Mudhahhaba*' ('the gilded') that Tāmīr (*Mudhhiba* II, p. 21 note) is said to have found 'in another manuscript' and which is strangely retained by Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums, Band I* (Leiden, 1967), p. 577, n.12.
52. A first attempt at a systematic analysis of the treatise was undertaken by Yves Marquet, 'La pensée philosophique et religieuse du Qāḍī al-Nu'mān à travers la *Risāla Muḍhiba*', *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales*, 39–40 (1987–1988), pp. 141–81. At no point does Marquet doubt the attribution of the treatise to al-Nu'mān.
53. *Mudhhiba* II, p. 42.
54. *Mudhhiba* I, pp. 40.23–41.9; *Mudhhiba* III, pp. 166.12–167.5. However, in the last sentence, *Mudhhiba* III describes the human form as 'the last of the natural beings' (*ākhar al-maṭbū'āt*).
55. See Daniel De Smet, 'Al-Fārābī's Influence on Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī's Theory of Intellect and Soul', in Peter Adamson, ed., *In the Age of al-Fārābī: Arabic Philosophy in the fourth/tenth Century* (London, 2008), pp. 131–150.
56. Marquet, 'La pensée philosophique et religieuse du Qāḍī al-Nu'mān', pp. 158, 162–164; Marquet, 'Les Iḥwān aṣ-Ṣafā' et l'ismaélisme', in *Convegno sugli Iḥwān aṣ-Ṣafā'* (Rome, 1981), p. 78; Marquet, *La philosophie des alchimistes et l'alchimie des philosophes. Jābir ibn Ḥayyān et les 'Frères de la Pureté'* (Paris, 1988), p. 74.
57. Following the passage translated above, the author maintains that the 'human form' appeared in a dark and incandescent (*muḥriq*) world in which there was no light. He supports this with a quotation from 'Abdān, *Kitāb al-Ibtidā'*, who reports a tradition according to which, at the moment of his fall from paradise, Adam had become entirely black; then, as he repented his error, he turned white by one-third per day, such that he became completely white on the third day of his repentance (*Mudhhiba* I, p. 41.9–15; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 43.1–7). An allusion to the same tradition can be found in Druze texts; see also Daniel De Smet, *Les Épîtres sacrées des Druzes. Rasā'il al-Ḥikma. Volumes 1 et 2. Introduction, édition critique et traduction annotée des traités attribués à Ḥamza b. 'Alī et Ismā'il at-Tamīmī* (Louvain, 2007), p. 245.
58. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 36.5–16; *Mudhhiba* II, pp. 34.16–35.15; *Mudhhiba* III, p. 159.2–16; cf. *Mudhhiba* IV, pp. 68.9–69.6. My translation is based on *Mudhhiba* I and III which seem less corrupted than II.

59. Halm, *Kosmologie*, pp. 90–100; cf. Stern, *Studies*, pp. 26–29.
60. This is my correction of the text, visibly corrupted in both editions, that read: *ayyasa min ays*. It is in fact the definition of origination (*ibdāʿ*) formulated by Kindī; see *Rasāʾil al-Kindī al-falsafīyya*, ed. M. Abū Rīda (Cairo, 1950), vol. 1, pp. 182–183. This terminology is also used by Sijistānī in *Kitāb al-Yanābīʿ* and by Kirmānī in *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*; refer to my study, *La Quiétude de l'Intellect. Néoplatonisme et gnose ismaélienne dans l'œuvre de Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī* (Leuven, 1995), pp. 42–43, 119.
61. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 54.5–10; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 61.5–11.
62. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 78.23–ult.; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 98.7–9. In both editions, I have corrected *al-tisʿa al-karūbiyya*, changing it to *al-sabʿa al-karūbiyya*.
63. See the passage translated below, p. 322.
64. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 78.22–23; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 98.5–7. This varied list, in which the first three names are those of the enigmatic *ḥudūd* that appear in several Ismaili works, was analysed in the light of similar lists contained in contemporary texts by Halm, *Kosmologie*, pp. 90–94.
65. Halm, *Kosmologie*, p. 92.
66. See *Mudhhiba* I, p. 34.3; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 31.5–6.
67. In other words, they bring the influx (*mādda*) down to the lower levels in the hierarchy. On the Ismaili notion of *mādda* as the influx that passes, starting from the higher *ḥudūd*, across all levels of the celestial and terrestrial hierarchy, conferring subsistence and knowledge upon each level, see Daniel De Smet, *Les Épîtres sacrées des Druzes*, pp. 59–60.
68. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 53.4–19; *Mudhhiba* II, pp. 59.17–60.14.
69. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 71.8–19; *Mudhhiba* II, pp. 86.18–87.4; cf. Yves Marquet, 'Le Qāḍi Nu'mān à propos des heptades d'imāms', *Arabica*, 25 (1978), pp. 226–228.
70. For the systems developed by Fārābī and Kirmānī, see Ian R. Netton, *Allāh Transcendent: Studies in the Structure and Semiotics of Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Cosmology* (Richmond, Surrey, 1994), pp. 116, 228, as well as De Smet, 'Al-Fārābī's Influence', where I show that this correspondence is less evident in al-Kirmānī than it is in his Farabian source.
71. Marquet, 'La pensée philosophique et religieuse du Qāḍi al-Nu'mān', pp. 148–150, pointed out this *aporia*; he attributes it to a lack of rigour on the part of al-Qāḍi al-Nu'mān, if not to his incompetence in matters of philosophy.
72. I translate this corrupted sentence rather freely. Surely one ought to replace *ans* with *ays*?
73. *Mudhhiba* I, pp. 60.22–61.18; *Mudhhiba* II, pp. 71.12–72 ult.
74. See Paul E. Walker, *Early Philosophical Shiism: The Ismaili Neoplatonism of Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī* (Cambridge, 1993), as well as De Smet, *La Quiétude de l'Intellect*; cf. Halm, *Kosmologie*, p. 136.
75. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 64.19–24; *Mudhhiba* II, pp. 76.20–77.3.
76. On this doctrine, which results from a particular interpretation of Arabic

- paraphrases of Plotinus, see my book, *Empedocles Arabus. Une lecture néoplatonicienne tardive* (Brussels, 1998), pp. 96–111. Marquet, 'La pensée philosophique et religieuse du Qāḍī al-Nu'mān', p. 144, on the other hand, detects an incongruence here, perhaps further proof of al-Nu'mān's 'lack of philosophical acumen'.
77. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 79.12–15; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 99.2–5. Then follows a very muddled passage that describes the parallelism between the celestial world and man as the microcosm: the harmony of the spheres is reflected in man's composition.
 78. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 47.10–13; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 51.16–21; *Mudhhiba* III, pp. 175.19–176.1.
 79. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 73.5–8; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 88.12–16.
 80. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 35.1–2, p. 55.14–15, p. 84.4–5; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 32.15–17, p. 62.19, p. 105.18–20. The sexual ambivalence of the *ḥudūd* is characteristic of the Ismaili interpretation of Neoplatonic emanationism: it is found, also based on the same Qur'anic verse, in the *Risāla* by Abū 'Īsā al-Murshid and in the Druze epistles; see De Smet, 'La valorisation du féminin dans l'ismaélisme ṭayyibite. Le cas de la reine yéménite al-Sayyida Arwā', *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph*, 58 (2005), pp. 111–112, as well as my book, *Les Épîtres sacrées des Druzes*, pp. 50–52.
 81. Traces of the pentadic scheme are found in several Ismaili texts of the tenth century, as well as in the epistles of the Druze; refer to Halm, *Kosmologie*, pp. 67–74, and De Smet, *Les Épîtres sacrées des Druzes*, pp. 46–50.
 82. On the obvious contradiction between these systems, see Marquet, 'La pensée philosophique et religieuse du Qāḍī al-Nu'mān', pp. 169–170.
 83. Thus one of the points of disagreement among various authors of the so-called 'Persian School' was the question whether the human soul is an 'influence' (*athar*) or a 'part' (*juz'*) of the Universal Soul; see De Smet, 'Die ismā'īlitischen Denker des 10. und frühen 11. Jhs.', in Ulrich Rudolph, ed., *Philosophie in der islamischen Welt. Vol 1: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Basel, forthcoming).
 84. *Mudhhiba* I, pp. 42.14–43.6; *Mudhhiba* II, pp. 44.19–45.19; *Mudhhiba* III, p. 169. After 'crying befalls a soul that is separated,' *Mudhhiba* III contains a sentence that is missing from both editions by Tāmīr following a leap from the same to the same: 'from its precious (*naḥīs*) world. It cries with sadness (for having left its world), since it is now linked to a fatal world. It is tormented by the desire to return to the world from which it emerged.'
 85. According to Marquet, 'La pensée philosophique et religieuse du Qāḍī al-Nu'mān', p. 153, it would be the four natures that form the substrata of the soul, to which are added the vegetative soul and the animal soul.
 86. As Marquet notes in 'La pensée', p. 153, the author of the *Mudhhiba* clearly differs on this point from the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', according to whom the rational soul enters the child's body at four years of age; see Carmela Baffioni, 'L'embryologie islamique. Entre héritage grec et Coran: les philosophes, les

- savants, les théologiens,' in Luc Brisson, Marie-Hélène Congourdeau and Jean-Luc Solère, ed., *L'embryon: formation et animation. Antiquité grecque et latine, traditions hébraïque, chrétienne et islamique* (Paris, 2008), pp. 218–219.
87. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 44.2–6; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 47.3–8; *Mudhhiba* III, pp. 170 ult.–171.4.
 88. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 81.6–9; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 101.15–19: mentions the sensitive soul (*al-nafs al-hissiyya*), the vegetative soul (*al-nafs al-nāmiyya*) and the rational soul (*al-nātiqa*).
 89. *Mudhhiba* I, pp. 61. 24–62. 4; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 73.7–13.
 90. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 62.21–22; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 74.11; cf. Aristotle, *De Anima*, II, 1, 412a 27–29. On the interpretation of this definition in Fatimid and post-Fatimid Ismaili literature, see Daniel De Smet, 'Perfectio prima – Perfectio secunda ou les vicissitudes d'une notion: de S. Thomas aux Ismaéliens ṭayyibites du Yémen', *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales*, 66 (1999), pp. 263–269.
 91. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 65.11–12; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 77.18.
 92. *Mudhhiba* I, pp. 65.7–66.1; *Mudhhiba* II, pp. 77.12–78.12. This entire passage, in which the author gives a number of definitions of cognisance and knowledge, is especially muddled and corrupted in both editions.
 93. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 64.7–14; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 76.7–14. As is the practice in Ismaili texts, the author is very discrete regarding the content of this 'knowledge'; see De Smet, 'Loi rationnelle et loi imposée', pp. 540–541.
 94. On the contradictions about this subject resulting from the interweaving of two systems see Marquet, 'La pensée philosophique et religieuse du Qāḍī al-Nu'mān', pp. 170–173.
 95. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 34.2–13, p. 54.13–18, p. 60.18–21; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 31.4–15, p. 61.14–18, p. 71.9–11.
 96. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 81.12–15; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 102.4–6. Marquet, 'La pensée philosophique et religieuse du Qāḍī al-Nu'mān', p. 153, interprets the expression *shams 'aql* to mean that the imam acts, like the sun, as an intermediary between man and the spiritual world, represented here by the Universal Intellect.
 97. *Mudhhiba* I, pp. 62.25–63.13; *Mudhhiba* II, pp. 74.16–75.6 (muddled and corrupted passage in both editions).
 98. *Mudhhiba* I, p. 74.5–7; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 90.1–3; cf. *Mudhhiba* I, pp. 74.19–75.1, p. 78.15–16; *Mudhhiba* II, p. 91.1–9, p. 97.16–17.
 99. Marquet, 'La pensée philosophique et religieuse du Qāḍī al-Nu'mān', pp. 162–164, believes to have found in the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba* a theory maintaining that the Soul was incarnated on earth the first time in Adam; it then moved, gradually purifying itself, into successive prophets before uniting with its celestial archetype at the moment of its manifestation in the *qā'im*. However, the passages on which this reading is based are so obscure and corrupted that one must advise great caution.

100. I wish to take this occasion to pay homage to the eminent scholar Yves Marquet to whom Ismaili studies owes so much; see Daniel De Smet, 'Yves Marquet, les Iḥwān al-Ṣafā' et le pythagorisme', *Journal Asiatique*, 295 (2007), pp. 491–500.
101. Yves Marquet, *Poésie ésotérique ismaïlienne. La Tā'iyya de 'Āmir b. 'Āmir al-Baṣrī* (Paris, 1985), p. 229.
102. Refer to De Smet, *La Quiétude de l'Intellect*, pp. 229–234, 243–251, as well as De Smet, 'al-Fārābī's Influence on Ḥamid al-Dīn al-Kirmānī'. Still, my hypothesis has been contested by Tatsuya Kikuchi, 'Some Problems in D. De Smet's Understanding of the Development of Ismā'ilism: A Reexamination of the Fallen Existent in al-Kirmānī's Cosmology', *Orient: Report of the Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan*, 34 (1999), pp. 106–120. Whatever the case may be, the *Risāla al-Mudhhiba* seems to me to be an important document to insert into the current file.
103. Marquet, 'La pensée philosophique et religieuse du Qāḍī al-Nu'mān', pp. 149–150, 180–181; Marquet, *La philosophie des alchimistes*, p. 74.

Cosmos into Verse: Two Examples of Islamic Philosophical Poetry in Persian

Alice C. Hunsberger

Just as the architecture and art of cathedrals and churches can tell the tale of the development of Christian ideas in Europe and beyond, the art of poetry can trace the trajectories of Islamic spiritual and intellectual life in the Persian-speaking world over 1,300 years. More than just architecture, churches also contain paintings, wood carvings, stone sculptures, stained glass, jewelled vestments, illuminated books, tilework, metalwork and many other art forms, in styles that have evolved over the centuries. So, too, Persian poetry contains many revered art forms and styles that also reflect change over time and space. These twin histories of cathedrals and poetry reveal the faith, fears and feelings, as well as certainties and sublime visions, of two profoundly faith-based cultures. They also show the trail of technical theories and experiments, that is, the human intellect and craft, devoted to transforming mankind's most meaningful meditations into material and intelligible artefacts able to touch the soul and bring a tear to the eye. Transcending time, place and medium, artistic production through the ages bears witness to the ability of human beings to express (literally, to press out) intangible elements – thoughts and sentiments – into tangible forms which, in a conversely intangible way, somehow affect the hearts and minds of other human beings.

Over the centuries, schools and styles of constructing cathedrals and composing poetry have arisen and subsided: certain cities became beacons of visionary creativity only to eventually see their influence dim, and equally artists and wordsmiths have worked in fame or anonymity. Acknowledging that waves of change and development have affected Persian poetry as much as Christian art and architecture is not equivalent to saying that what came later is superior to what came before, that

some kind of 'progress' has always taken place, in either instance. Rather, it means that we must take care in our critique to acknowledge the value of each work in its own time and place, as well as in our own time and place in history, to understand the artistic theories under the influences of which we live. In the case of literature, we need to understand the purpose for which certain poems were composed and to analyse them according to how well they fulfilled that purpose. The poet Ezra Pound, in his *ABC of Reading*, pointed out that the exactitude of terminology found in the Middle Ages has been largely obliterated,¹ and we need to rediscover this lost knowledge. But it is not just vocabulary we need to review; it is the aims of poetry, that is, what poetry was expected to offer.

Persian poetry is deservedly famous for the soaring monuments of its Sufi and mystical love poems, as well as its sweeping arches of national epic and its traditions of sharply pointed didactic and moralising verse. These are some of what we mean by the 'purposes' of poetry. But poetry in the Persian language, as well as in Arabic, was also a legitimate vehicle for expressing Islamic theological and philosophical ideas. So highly esteemed was this intellectual poetry, in fact, that one philosophical poem could occasion hundreds of pages of prose commentary by another intellectual² and, *vice versa*, an admired philosophical prose work could inspire a poet to adapt it in a poetic form.³ In addition, philosophical texts were frequently transformed into verse in order to facilitate student learning: students could easily memorise the poem for the information it contained, employing it as an *aide-mémoire*.⁴ Thus poetry was generally accepted as a medium for not only expressing rational, intellectual and philosophical ideas, but also for arguing in support of them. Indeed, poetry itself was regarded as the proper vehicle for articulating the highest truths. That is, if something was noble and true, it should be presented in equally noble language and format.

This chapter will address a challenge that arose in the twentieth century to the legitimacy and even poetic content ('poeticity') of the genre of philosophical poetry, as it has played out in the context of Persian poetry. Some of the argument derives from a sharp distinction between the words 'poetry' (*shi'r*) and 'verse' (*naẓm*) in Persian, a difference not always felt or forced in English. Specific criticism in the case of the poet Nāṣir-i Khusraw will be noted.

Can philosophy be expressed in poetic form? Is it still philosophy? This is only one part of a long debate over the relative strengths of these two endeavours, a debate asking which of these two, philosophy or poetry,

brings us closer to truth, closer to understanding reality. Plato himself asserted that 'philosophy has a quarrel with poetry',⁵ and banned poets from his utopian Republic, which was to be ruled most wisely by a philosopher, the famous philosopher-king, not a poet-king. Why was this? Is there a quarrel between philosophy and poetry? Plato, that most poetic of philosophers, considered poets dangerous because they take people away from reality, instead of bringing them closer to it. According to Plato's theory of forms, this world is not reality but only an image, so language describing this world is only an image of an image, and therefore doubly removed from reality. Hence poets are dangerous. Only philosophers bring people closer to reality. However, Plato's student Aristotle had a radically different view of reality, saying that what is here and now is the real. With this opposite outlook, Aristotle defended poetry as a useful art, and did not consider art as merely an imitation of an imitation. He was thinking of Greek drama, with its moral lessons chanted by a chorus observing the action on stage. All Greek drama, tragedies and comedies alike, were poems which expounded the fundamental truths of human existence. Aristotle defended poetry as a means of achieving catharsis and a reminder of which human actions are good and noble and which are ignoble and base. Comparing history to poetry, Aristotle argued that poetry is the higher-language art; poetry 'is a more philosophical and higher thing than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular'.⁶ Significantly, by 'poetry' Aristotle meant not only the final product, a poem, but *poesis*, the act of art itself, the creative act of making poetry. In fact, we should recall here that *poesis* in Greek literally means 'to make, or create' generally, not just poetry.

Western poetry continues to be affected by the dictum of the Latin poet Horace that the purpose of poetry was twofold – to both 'instruct and delight',⁷ and didactic poetry, poetry that teaches and instructs, has a noble history, in spite of the attacks against it by the Romantics, including Keats and Shelley,⁸ and twentieth-century poets such as Archibald MacLeish and I. A. Richards.⁹ Persian epics and mystical texts contain great amounts of didactic verse, with which Persian speakers delighted to be instructed. The poet as teacher has a long history in Persian.¹⁰

Muslim philosophers, including al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes) – to name major ones – sought to bring Aristotle's statements on poetics into line with the rest of his philosophy, by summarising, commenting and expanding on his *Poetics*. While a study of Islamic philosophical poetics is beyond the scope of this article, it is worth remembering, as we consider the purposes and aims of philosophical

poetry, that poetic statements were regarded as an aspect of logic (as in the hierarchy: demonstration, dialectic, sophistic, rhetoric and poetic).¹¹ Poetry is a syllogistic art, with its own meaningful logic and imaginative discourse. As for purpose, Ismail M. Dahiyat explains that for Ibn Sīnā, 'the proper function of [poetry] is to move the soul towards an attitude involving either pursuit or avoidance and not [like rhetoric] to present propositions asserting that something is or is not'.¹² In other words, poetry's goal is to get us to act.

What do we mean by philosophical poetry? The *Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry* asserts two ways a poem may be philosophical. First, the poem may simply be a vehicle for conveying ideas, so that it would be quite simple to restate the philosophy in abbreviated prose form without changing the meaning. Second, idea and poetry may be intertwined in so complex a fashion, the full repertoire of literary devices having been called into play, that the poem would fall apart were the philosophy to be removed.¹³ This article aims to present one of each of these types of philosophical poems: one by Abu'l 'Abbās al-Lawkarī (d. ca. 517/1123) and one by Nāṣir-i Khusraw (d. ca. 470/1077).

Philosophical poetry in Persian

Examining the genre of philosophical poetry in the Persian language specifically, we could take several approaches. Here are four possibly fruitful paths for such study.

Looking broadly, a first approach might be to examine the large number of poets whose subject matter was highly intellectual, to the extent that they were, and still are, honoured with the sobriquet *ḥakīm* ('sage'), one who dispenses *ḥikmat* (translated as 'wisdom' or, at times, 'philosophy'). The title *ḥakīm* distinguishes these poets from those with other titles, such as *mawlānā* ('our master'), the most famous of whom is Rūmī. Major *ḥakīm* poets include luminaries like Firdawsī, Sanā'ī of Ghazna and Niẓāmī of Ganja, yet who, in spite of their respected intellectuality, are not considered philosophers, nor have they produced philosophical writings as such. For example, Firdawsī's epic Iranian masterpiece, the *Shāhnāma*, is filled with knights, warriors and kings who established, protected or threatened the well-being and security of Iran with dynastic dramas and love stories which evoke the poet's reflections and didactic advice on God's purposes, human morality and the ultimate meaning of existence. Sanā'ī is acknowledged as the first to put mystical ideas, which are highly philosophical, into verse and Niẓāmī's epic romance *Haft paykar*

(‘Seven Beauties’) opens with pages of philosophical verse on God, the Universal Intellect, the Universal Soul and matter, as well as praise of the Prophet Muḥammad. Yet none of their works would be called philosophical poems. On the other hand, there were philosophers who wrote poetry, such as Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī (d. after 654/1256),¹⁴ Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), Awḥad al-Dīn al-Rāzī (seventh/thirteenth century), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209), and even perhaps Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037),¹⁵ but not one is a poet.

A second approach could be to explore how some critics and intellectuals have spoken of philosophy in Persian poetry. For example, taking the earliest extant anthology of Persian poetry, the *Lubab al-albāb* by Muḥammad ‘Awfī (wr. 617/1220), we find an entry for Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Khusrawī al-Sarakhsī al-Ḥakīm (d. before 383/1005),¹⁶ a poet who served in the intellectual court of the Daylamī Ziyarid prince Shams al-Ma‘ālī Abu’l-Ḥasan Qābūs b. Wushmgīr (d. 402/1012).¹⁷ Note that ‘Awfī includes the title ‘al-Ḥakīm’ as part of Sarakhsī’s full name, indicating that he was considered a poet who deserved this appellation. With a play on the first part of his name, ‘Awfī calls Khusrawī al-Sarakhsī a veritable ‘king of the realms of speech’ (*khusraw-i mamālik-i sukhān*), and praises Sarakhsī’s poetry, specifically saying that ‘while the verse of others can be good or bad, Sarakhsī’s verse (*naẓm*) is filled to the brim with philosophy (*ḥikmat*)’. ‘Awfī cites five verses calling on the listener to ‘know God though the Intellect (*‘aql*)’ rather than imagination (*wahm*). In the twentieth century, the Iranian scholar Badī‘ al-Zamān Furūzānfar, in his *Sukhan wa sukhānwārān*, called Sarakhsī the first poet (*shā‘ir*) who combined philosophical ideas and poetic images, adding that after Sarakhsī this genre became a very important feature of Persian poetry (*ash‘ār*). Further combing through anthologies would doubtless turn up more examples.

A third approach would be to arrange the poets themselves into broad types or schools of philosophy, such as:

- (1) The Peripatetic rational scientists, philosophers and intellectuals who wrote poetry in addition to prose. In fact, the longest extant Persian poem written before Firdawsī’s *Shāhnāma* is a medical poem dedicated to a Samanid governor of Khurāsān, composed by the physician Ḥakīm Maysarī (wr. 380/970), describing various illnesses and cures.¹⁸ Maysarī says that cures consist of more than just drugs, and include also our own thoughts, prayers and behaviour. In this group, however, the most famous philosopher is Ibn Sīnā who, in addition to his influential philosophical prose works, wrote an ode (*qaṣīda*) on the soul, an

important philosophical poem in Arabic,¹⁹ although we do not have a body of Persian poetry from him. From Ibn Sīnā's follower, Abu'l 'Abbās Lawkarī, a philosopher and professor of philosophy, we have a *qaṣīda* as well as his commentary on it (examined below).²⁰ Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, the Sunni theologian, jurisprudent and philosopher who wrote against Ibn Sīnā, composed a *qaṣīda* expressing his own philosophy, to which he too added a commentary.²¹ We could also consider the scientist and mathematician 'Umar Khayyām as being in this category, since his quatrains display a certain philosophy of life. Two major philosophers of the School of Iṣfahān which flourished in the eleventh/seventeenth century, Mīr Dāmād and Mīr Findiriskī, also wrote poems. Mīr Findiriskī composed a famous *qaṣīda* on the reality of gnosis (*ḥikmat*), in direct response to, and in the same rhyme scheme as, a poem by Nāṣir-i Khusraw.²²

- (2) Sufis who wrote poetry (such as Anṣārī, Sanā'ī, 'Ayn al-Quḍāt al-Hamadānī, Nizāmī, 'Aṭṭār and Rūmī); with a subdivision including those mystical or Sufi poets who followed Ibn 'Arabī's ideas (such as 'Irāqī, Maḥmūd Shabistārī, Muḥammad Shirīn Maghribī, Shāh Ni'mat Allāh, Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn 'Āmilī, Jāmī and Fayḍ Kāshānī).
- (3) The 'Ishrāqī or Illuminationist school which developed from Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī, who intersperses his philosophical texts with his own poetry to illustrate his points.
- (4) The Ismaili poets, which include Nāṣir-i Khusraw and Nizārī Quhistānī.

A fourth approach could undertake to search through the centuries of Persian poetry for philosophical terms or topics, looking for poems that treat with distinctly philosophical terms or topics, such as the Prime Mover, the one and the many, Plato's theory of form and matter, Plotinus' emanations from the One, Logos, the Intellect (*'aql* or *khirad*), the ten intellects, the Active Intellect, the Universal Soul, the human tripartite soul (of reason ruling, spirit aiding reason and appetites obeying); Aristotle's categories, Pythagoras' mathematical theories of the revolving planets and the music of the spheres; other Neoplatonic theories; Logic, Mathematics, Physics, Metaphysics, and so on. Using this chronological approach in seeking philosophical vocabulary, we could also examine the nineteenth-century versified Qur'anic commentary by Nūr 'Alī Shāh Iṣfahānī and the twentieth-century *qaṣīdas* of Parwīn I'tiṣāmī, a woman writing in a classical style frequently compared to that of Sanā'ī and Nāṣir-i Khusraw.

The two philosophical *qaṣīdas* by Lawkarī and Nāṣir-i Khusraw examined here make for apt comparison because not only were both these poets of the fifth/eleventh century, from Khurāsān, and students, teachers and writers on philosophy, but both were also actively involved in enlarging the scope of the Persian language, regarding it as an entirely appropriate vehicle for philosophy.

Lawkarī, a student of one of Ibn Sīnā's most celebrated students, has left us *Asrār al-ḥikma*, a *qaṣīda* combining philosophy with commentary. Nāṣir-i Khusraw, an Ismaili famous not only for several major philosophical works, such as *Jāmi' al-ḥikmatayn*, *Zād al-musāfirīn*, *Khawān al-ikhwān*, *Gushāyish wa rahāyish* and *Wajh-i dīn* – any one of which would be sufficient to earn him the title of philosopher – also left a substantial collection of philosophical poetry which for the past thousand years has been held to be among the highest levels of poetic achievement.²³

Abu'l 'Abbās al-Lawkarī, philosopher and poet

Ancient Greek philosophy spread quickly throughout the Muslim world, first by means of the industry of translation, then through networks of students and followers inspired by Ibn Sīnā's original and revolutionary treatment of Aristotle's metaphysics.²⁴ Ibn Sīnā wrote all his works, save one,²⁵ in Arabic, the *lingua franca* for scholars of all religions in Muslim-majority lands. However, until the early decades of the twentieth century, in the lands east of Iraq the pre-eminent language of intellectual, diplomatic and courtly discourse was Persian.²⁶ Therefore, teachers needed to find ways to effectively convey philosophical ideas in Persian. One of those who can be credited with spreading Avicennan philosophy in the eastern regions of the Islamic world was Abu'l-'Abbās al-Lawkarī, whose biography and writings are undergoing close study by Roxanne D. Marcotte, which greatly informs this present work. Marcotte counts Lawkarī as one of the 'most important figures in the history of the transmission of the post-Avicennan Peripatetic philosophical tradition'.²⁷ Lawkarī's own teacher, Bahmanyār Ibn Marzubān (d. 458/1066), was a student of Ibn Sīnā, and in fact, had been brought up practically as a son by Ibn Sīnā.²⁸ Lawkarī was listed in the key classical biographies of intellectuals and learned men, and his fame as a philosopher, teacher of philosophy and doorway to future generations of philosophy students was widespread. One of the oldest of these sources, Bayhaqī's *Tatimmat Ṣiwān al-ḥikma*, composed in the sixth/twelfth century²⁹ firmly asserts that 'the philosophical sciences (*'ulūm al-ḥikma*) were spread into Khurāsān by the

littérateur (*adīb*) Abu'l-'Abbās [al-Lawkarī].³⁰ The use of the term *adīb* should be particularly noted in our context of philosophy, as it highlights the literary quality of his writing.³¹ Lawkarī wrote both in Arabic and Persian, and examples of his poetry as well as philosophy have been found in both languages.³²

Fortunately we have extant one of the teaching tools prepared by Abu'l-'Abbās al-Lawkarī for his students and for the wider dissemination of Peripatetic philosophy. It is a composite book, consisting of a *qaṣīda* and a commentary on the poem, both composed by Lawkarī himself, published as *Sharḥ-i qaṣīda-yi Asrār al-ḥikma* ('Commentary on the Poem "Secrets of Knowledge"').³³ It was for two reasons – one of the traditional marks of learning was extensive memorisation and poetry is easier to memorise than prose – that Lawkarī composed a *qaṣīda* for pedagogical purposes, seeking to assist his students in studying the discipline of philosophy. Explaining that this poem (*shī'r*) is an '*ilmī* (scientific) *qaṣīda*,³⁴ and later on the same page calling it 'this scientific poem' (*in shī'r-i 'ilmī*), Lawkarī used metre and rhyme to write a poem filled with student-like questions covering philosophy's main topics. Then he wrote his commentary to answer the questions and expand on each topic. The final product is a weaving alternation between a few lines of poetry and a page or two of prose explanation, and is a veritable textbook designed to both attract and instruct students.

In his introduction to the book, Lawkarī explains that he arranged his *qaṣīda-yi Asrār al-ḥikma* into four disciplines ('*ulūm*) of philosophy (*ḥikmat*): Logic, Physics, Mathematics and Metaphysics, as well as, he adds, the science of practical Ethics ('*ilm-i akhlāq wa 'amālī*).³⁵ We see immediately that this arrangement primarily concerns itself with philosophy's hierarchy of theoretical topics. Greek Peripatetic philosophy was divided into two parts, theoretical and practical, with each one having three parts. The theoretical part comprised Physics, Mathematics and Metaphysics (which included music and astronomy). The Practical part of philosophy comprised Ethics, for an individual; Economics, for the family or household (from *oikonomos*, 'house manager', meaning household management, translated into Persian as *tadbīr-i manzil*); and Politics, for managing society at large.

Lawkarī explains that he has a tripartite purpose in composing this *qaṣīda* and commentary. That is, he had three audiences in mind. First, those desirous of learning, *when they hear* (emphasis added) these problems, their interest will be piqued so they will want to master them completely, and from the answers they will become aware, and then exert

themselves in studying these sciences. I have emphasised his use of the word ‘hearing’ to remind us of how much education was oral and involved memorisation. Second, for those who had already mastered these sciences, this work could serve as a reminder, since ‘most of the difficult topics and abstruse matters’ are mentioned in it. If the poem itself is not sufficient for such a person to deduce the answer himself, the commentary is at hand for him to make use of so he can understand. The third aim of *Asrār al-ḥikma* is directed towards those who would fulfil the lessons of the poem and debate its inner meanings. Such a person would have already acquired all ten human virtues, which Lawkarī lists: there are four spiritual virtues, three bodily and three external. The spiritual virtues are temperance, generosity, courage and wisdom; the bodily virtues are health, strength and beauty; and the external virtues are wealth, friends (and) leadership, and family. Certain external factors are necessary to develop each human being’s potential – enough money not to suffer, training by family, advice of friends and good government with just rulers. Lawkarī’s list thus appears to have four external virtues, but if friends and just leadership are seen as external even to the family, that is the *polis*, the ‘village’, ‘community’, or ‘city-state’, then we can accept his count of three external virtues, for his total of ten.³⁶ Lawkarī explains further that, by ‘courage’ he does not mean what military men think, but the golden mean between cowardice and foolhardiness. He closes his introduction by saying a person who acquires these virtues in full shall be praised in panegyric and long remembered.

Now, if theoretical philosophy comprised Physics, Mathematics and Metaphysics, why did Lawkarī put Logic first? This follows the pattern set by some Muslim philosophers – though not all – who considered Logic not as a part of philosophy itself, but rather a necessary tool to carry out the philosophic method. For these philosophers, Logic was the means,³⁷ the craft, by which to achieve the philosophic goal, which is knowledge. Needing to defend themselves against the grammarians, who held that the rules of grammar were sufficient to analyse meaning in language, some philosophers responded that Logic was the grammar of reason.³⁸

Limitations of space do not allow a full analysis of the entire poem, but highlighting a few structural points will help us compare Lawkarī’s *qaṣīda* with the one by Nāṣir-i Khusraw. Looking at Lawkarī’s *qaṣīda*, we can see the relative importance he ascribes to these disciplines by comparing the number of verses and pages of commentary:

Part	Section	Verses	Pages
I	Logic	22	22 (pp. 14–36)
II	Physics	50	29 (pp. 37–66)
III	Mathematics	21	11 (pp. 67–78)
IV	Metaphysics	44	20 (pp. 78–98)
V	Ethics	12	4 (pp. 99–103)
Closing		2	“

Throughout Lawkarī's poem, each line raises at least one question or one important concept in philosophy, but it is only in the opening section on Logic that each verse receives nearly one page of commentary, reflecting the importance of learning the methodology and terminology of Logic before embarking on philosophy. Structurally, Lawkarī's first lines open with the employment of technical terms; having declared his composition an intellectual poem, he does not compromise his statement by presenting an introduction on the subject of spring or autumn, or love, or any kind of metaphor:

Have you heard of syllogism and understood proof,
 And learned all the teachings of Logic from Greece?
 I have a few questions that need to be answered
 If the enigmas of Logic are easy for you.
 Why have they set out all these varieties of Analogical Logic
 What has demonstration to do with these shapes and forms?
 Why is one of the three preferred over all of the others?
 Why is the first type labelled the first?

In addition, it is noteworthy that Lawkarī opens this textbook with a question: *aya* is the first word. Not only the vocabulary, the terms the student needs to know, but even the methodology is philosophical. Lawkarī is using the tools of Logic to teach Logic. And yet, the way the questions are posed can also be read as if a student were putting questions to a teacher. The question format, of course, also sets up the commentary as answer: 'First I will define "syllogism" (*qiyās*) and then I will comment on it.' The poem asks for definitions of terms, for an explanation of the difference between universals and particulars, genus and species, cause and effect, and different kinds of analogies. Questions also directly address the problem of Logic, how primary and fundamental is it and how should it be understood? Lawkarī refers to Ibn Sīnā's *Kitāb al-Shifā'* to bolster his commentary arguing that Logic is an art or craft (*ṣinā'at*).³⁹ Since Logic

veers into other fields, he ends his commentary on it by saying that he will address certain points in the sections on Metaphysics and Physics.

The Physics section (*ṭabīʿiyyāt*) begins with basic questions concerning motion and rest, and explanations of such concepts as prime matter, form, essence, the four Aristotelian causes (sing. *fāʿil*), and the relation of the universal nature (*ṭabīʿat*) to the human soul. Then it moves on to questions about the motions of the heavens and the rotation of the spheres of the stars and planets. The answer about the rotation of the spheres takes up four and a half pages, yet he says he will come back to it in the Metaphysics section. Lawkarī says he does not need to present proofs for the soul and its substance and so on because so many books have been written precisely on that subject, but he is mainly concerned to convey the relationship of the human rational (or ‘speaking’) soul to the body and the intellect. He also covers questions about the material world, such as how do things that are not warm give warmth to other things, how does water have colour, what is the reason for the lapis lazuli colour of the sky, and how to explain the eventual decay of bodies. Some of this has to do with attributes, which he says he will delve into further in the section on Metaphysics.

Starting his third section on Mathematics (*riyādiyyāt*), in verses 73 and 74 Lawkarī for the first time actually indicates a transition in his first line, from one topic to the next, and lays out some of the breadth of what comprises Mathematics, namely Astronomy and Music:

Passing on from that, to Mathematics my questions,
On the sciences of astronomy and musical notes.
It is obvious that the larger spheres are higher,
By reason of the orbits of Saturn and Mars.

His commentary on these verses begins with the Ptolemaic background to Mathematics: ‘So states Ptolemy, in the beginning of the ninth chapter of his *Almagest*, that proof is solid (*burhān qāʿim ast*) that the spheres of these three planets are in this order ... that Mars is the lowest,⁴⁰ with Jupiter above it, and Saturn above Jupiter. Of this there is no doubt.’ But on the next page Lawkarī states that he disagrees with Ptolemy, and others, regarding the order of the planets. Lawkarī the teacher presents his students with the history and various aspect of the debate. In the Mathematics section, he also devotes a considerable amount of attention to the Pythagorean theory of the music of the spheres and how music and the sound of the voice and other sounds affect the soul. This leads him to ask questions about all the senses, especially about taste: how is it that one

body can taste and another not (p. 73) since both are related on the level of knowledge ('ilm)?⁴¹ His answer takes him into the rules of poetry and scansion of lines, and the ways in which they differ from prose.

The fourth section, on Metaphysics (*ilāhiyyāt*), the second longest section of the poem, also includes verses on Theology, following the standard practice of his time. Lawkarī's first line not only provides a transition, but also offers a metaphor that is echoed in Nāṣir-i Khusraw's *qaṣida*:

Since we have passed from Mathematics to Metaphysics,
Speak, you and I and the Horse of Question, out there on the field.⁴²

He asks for an explanation of Neoplatonic cosmogony, of the Soul and Intellect and God above them, and how causation enters into the picture. 'Since the Soul and Intellect are one, and the First Cause is one, what explains the different motions and relations of intelligences, souls, planets and spheres?'⁴³ The happiness of the soul is achieved by perfecting it, and its perfection lies in knowing its own essence, the Necessary Existent, the active intelligibles, and earthly and heavenly souls.⁴⁴ The soul derives pleasure from those acts performed that lead to the achievement of perfection. Other topics include the attributes of God, the two paths on the road to knowledge, causality, and generation and decay (traditionally translated as 'corruption').

The fifth and final section, on Ethics (*'amaliyyāt wa'l-khuluqiyyāt*), poses questions about the causes of morals, and whether these are an innate part of the human soul's natural disposition, bestowed by the Giver of Forms, or whether they are the result of a proper balance (*mizāj*). Related to this is education, how to activate the divine intuition within each person (*bi hads-i qudsī-yi mardum hami shawad 'ālim*).⁴⁵ Yet, true to his time, Lawkarī assumes an innate difference between races, and then asks how character traits are communicated from one to the other, 'For the nature of the Indian shall never become Turk'.⁴⁶ The questions of ethics and education in a Muslim setting has a serious foundation, that is, the ultimate fate of souls after death, and how actions of the body adhere to the soul. Since this is a philosophical and not a theological poem Lawkarī only allows twelve verses and a few pages of commentary to summarise the philosophical response to these large questions. But as Marcotte notes, 'Some of the most important philosophical theses are, therefore, included in the 151 verses of Lawkarī's Persian *qaṣidah* which remains of great didactic value for students who would not have been familiar with Arabic. The *qaṣidah* may in fact have helped Persian speakers to integrate and assimilate Arabic scientific terminology.'⁴⁷

Lawkarī closes the *qaṣīda* with two verses about his purpose in composing it, and comments that he handled the material in both poetry and prose.

In asking my questions about each one of these
 My goal was to know the Originator, creator of heaven and earth.
 For a beneficial purpose, I collected all these notions,
 And answered them all in both poetry and prose.⁴⁸

What we see, then, in Lawkarī's philosophical *qaṣīda*, is poetry used for teaching purposes, and not only the moral lessons we can see in Firdawsī, for example. Lawkarī wanted his students to memorise the *qaṣīda* so they could internalise, and have forever readily available, the entire framework of philosophy. They would at least know what the questions were. However, we do not see the reverence and humility towards God that both Firdawsī and Nizāmī exhibited. For them, this reverence was an organic part of the starting of their works of art. Just as many Muslims invoke the name of God before starting work or a speech or a journey, so too these poets placed praises to God at the opening of their works. Lawkarī wrote a secular piece of poetry. And yet at the end, he avowed that Greek philosophy is a valid way to understand the scriptural God, the Creator of both worlds – the spiritual and physical.

A philosophical *qaṣīda* by Nāṣir-i Khusraw

About a century before Lawkarī, the intellectually vibrant eastern regions of Khurāsān produced the literary and scholarly star, Nāṣir-i Khusraw. Important aims of Nāṣir-i Khusraw's writings were to explain Ismaili beliefs and dogmas, to attract believers to the faith, and to defend it intellectually against deniers. His success in these ends, along with his allegiance to the Cairo-based Fatimid Ismaili caliphate, stirred up virulent enemies who threatened his life. He fled eastwards from Khurāsān and spent his last years in exile in the Pamir mountain range which now extends through parts of the modern states of Afghanistan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan and Tajikistan.

Cited in the most important literary anthologies, Nāṣir-i Khusraw was known for excellence in three genres: (i) Ismaili philosophical texts, (ii) a travelogue of his journey to Cairo and his three-year sojourn at the Fatimid court there, and (iii) lofty philosophical poetry. He is the first Persian poet to place specifically religious and philosophical ideas at the core of his poetry, not simply as introductions or scattered moral truths

(as are found in the *Shāhnāma* of Firdawsī, *Haft paykar* of Niẓāmī, and *Bustān* and *Gulistān* of Sa'dī). The *qaṣīda* form calls for the poet to make a specific point, to have a particular goal (*qaṣd*) in mind. The main purpose of Nāṣir-i Khusraw's poetry, as he says frequently in his verse, is to open the reader's or listener's inner eye to universal truths and thereby save their souls from ignorance.⁴⁹ While frequently inserting Qur'anic verses and phrases from *ḥadīths* into his poetry as evidence or proof of his philosophical points, he expounds on Neoplatonic metaphysics as the structure of all Being. In addition, his argumentative method is also philosophical, even Socratic, in asking questions to draw lessons out of the reader. Indeed, his pen-name, 'Ḥujjat', usually translated as 'Proof', meaning philosophical or mathematical proof, is 'Argument' itself in the field of Logic. Theologically, it signifies an expert authority on Islam, and in Nāṣir-i Khusraw's Ismaili context it means a living proof, a representative, of the Imam. But being more than a philosophic mind taking up a poetic pen, and more than a technical virtuoso with rules of rhetoric and prosody, Nāṣir-i Khusraw's creative powers in language are reflected in his rank over the centuries as one of the leading poets in the Persian language.

The high esteem which Nāṣir-i Khusraw's poetry enjoyed over a millennium was questioned in the twentieth century, when several scholars made disparaging comments about it. For example, Badi' al-Zamān Furūzānfar, asserts on the one hand that 'Nāṣir-i Khusraw is a master with a powerful poetic nature and a rare style', and his poetry 'profound and meaningful', yet, on the other, also declares that, since Nāṣir 'composed poetry to propagate the faith and to pass on his beliefs to others, his verses became a collection of religious and rational arguments, devoid of poetic fervour and thought'.⁵⁰ Another critic, Shibli Nu'mānī, in a chapter of his work specifically entitled 'Philosophical Poetry' (*Shi'r-i Falsafana*), classifies Nāṣir-i Khusraw as the poet who first 'inserted philosophical ideas and concepts into poetry before anyone else', yet, after providing his biography, Shibli ends by saying, 'we have not quoted any poems because the style is not poetical'.⁵¹ A third scholar, Yahya al-Khachab, the author of the first full-length biography of Nāṣir, maintains that he 'is not a pure poet ... [with his] subjects too political to give rise to flights of the imagination ... [and his poetry containing] no lyrical themes worth remembering'.⁵² 'Alī Dashtī, author of the first book-length study on Nāṣir-i Khusraw in Persian, asserts that the poet is skilful but stuck in a 'monotonous groove of tiresome advice' on worldly matters. While Dashtī admits that Sana'ī, 'Aṭṭār and Rūmī were also ascetics (sing. *zāhid*) and religious observers who brought their religious beliefs into their verses, he complains that

they at least sprinkled the spice of love (*chashni-yi 'ishq*) into their mystical poetry, giving it a special vibe (*tamawwuj-i khāṣṣī*) and, in the case of Rūmī, humour making the poetry more enticing.⁵³ A fifth critic wrote that Nāṣir's poetry is a 'means, not an end, and therefore not really in the ranks of poetry'.⁵⁴ These judgements question the validity of the inspiration, content and purposes of Nāṣir-i Khusraw's poetry. I argue elsewhere⁵⁵ that such rejections of his poetry reflect a recent, that is, twentieth-century unease with philosophical poetry itself, an unease arising from theories of poetry and literature that have developed in the West over recent centuries and which affected judgements by Iranians (and others) on Persian poetry and its uses. This is not solely applied to Nāṣir-i Khusraw, but questions the validity of the genre itself.

Having examined Lawkarī's philosophical poem and discussed its inspiration and uses, let us consider the poem by Nāṣir-i Khusraw that begins '*kumayt-i sukhan-rā ḍamīr ast maydān / sawar-ash chī chīz ast? jān-i sukhan dan*'. Here I want to compare a few verses with Lawkarī's lines, and note differences between the two works. To start with the opening verse, we saw that Lawkarī opens his *qaṣīda* with questions about Logic, the first tools a student of philosophy needs. Nāṣir-i Khusraw's first two verses are:

- 1 The steed of speech has the whole mind as running field,
 Who, what, is the rider? The eloquent soul.
- 2 Craft your reins out of intellect and your saddle of thought,
 To mount this horse of the tongue, in its expansive space.

Immediately we see and sense a difference. We have been thrown into the land of metaphor with the first phrase, the 'steed of speech' (*kumayt-i sukhan*). To continue reading the poem, we have to accept the reality of the metaphor, that it contains and confers meaning. And with this strange, original metaphor, we have to let the poet guide us to discover its meaning. This is a different kind of teaching, a pedagogy different from that of Lawkarī, the professor who wants us to memorise. Nāṣir-i Khusraw has immediately incited, excited, our active imaginations. Whatever image our imaginations conjure with this phrase must be nimble enough to adjust to any new information the poet may provide. We have to trust the poet. And while we had to trust Lawkarī to teach us the main terms and topics of philosophy, we need Nāṣir-i Khusraw to both ground and loosen our imaginations, which are asking, 'What is a steed of speech?' He asserts in the second phrase that the steed of speech has full rein to gallop and play all over the field of the mind (*kumayt-i sukhan-rā ḍamīr*

ast maydān). *Maydān* is 'field, polo field, field of war, field of combat' (in British English, also 'pitch'), and for the gallant (we imagine it must be a magnificent) horse which is Speech, the mind (*damīr*) is its rightful realm. While supplying further details in order to enhance the image in our mind, the poet has also established particular items of vocabulary that he wants us to be aware of; he has given us four nouns, two metaphors (horse = Speech; field = Mind) which our mind must keep in play for the next phrases. The poet switches the rules, however. He throws a question at us, a gauntlet, a challenge: who is the rider of this steed? How would we know? We run all over our own minds, but find no answer. Here we are, right at the very heart of the method of philosophy, which is questioning. Questioning which makes the mind work; and at the moment when we admit we do not have an answer. Thankfully, the poet gives the answer right away. The rider is the speaking soul (*jān-i sukhandan*), the eloquent soul, the soul of language itself, therefore often translated as the rational soul, the human soul, which is the only soul which speaks. Rationality depends on speech. The other effect of this question is that our original image is transformed from a wild, free-running horse, to one with a rider. Language does not operate freely; speech is controlled by a soul whose special feature is speech itself. The poet wants us to be aware of the dynamism between horse and rider. A rider is not a rider without a mount. Through its control of speech, the rider becomes more rational; and by being controlled by the rational soul, speech is made more powerful, by being made more rational.

The second line continues the equine metaphor, but now the poet again shifts tone. He uses imperative verbs to command us, the readers. See how rapidly he expects us to follow his lessons. Not only with the question, but now with the command Nāṣir-i Khusraw brings us right into the metaphor. We are not allowed to watch the combat from the sidelines. We are not allowed to learn the lesson and then decide whether to enter the lists. Here, in the second *bayt*, he points to our task. Since we are human, we each have a rational soul, a soul whose function differs from that of the vegetative soul (which grows and reproduces) and from the animal soul (which grows, reproduces, and moves around). The human soul's rightful activity is to use language, the basis of thought. The poet commands his readers to fashion their own reins out of intellect (*khīrad*) and a saddle out of thought (*andīsha*) in order to mount the steed of speech. But here he varies his wording, and calls it the horse of language (*asp-i zabān*). And since in Persian, as in English, the word for language also means tongue (*zabān*), Nāṣir-i Khusraw makes the image much more concrete.

Our language is from our tongue, and we must control it with our minds and thought. We could be imaginative and think that by the phrase, 'in its expansive space' (*andar īn pahn maydān*), the poet is not only speaking of the mind as the *maydān* of speech, but in fact here is referring to the physical 'wide field' or 'broad space' for our tongues, that is, the entire interior of the mouth, teeth, throat and palate, the interplay of which makes language come out.

This *qaṣīda* of Nāṣir-i Khusraw has eighty couplets (*bayts*).⁵⁶ And, like all *qaṣīdas*, it has topical sections, but they are not like the sections of Lawkarī's *qaṣīda*, which are clearly shaped on philosophy's topics. Nāṣir continues the 'horse and rider' metaphor through *bayt* five, at which point he shifts the focus to the other riders, that is, the competition and the need to polish our horsemanship skills of language. But if we move down to line 12, we see a long series of questions, each one beginning with 'who?' (*kih*). If we listen to the lines recited out loud, with the rush of questions and the 'k' sound clattering like hooves, we would find our minds racing from science to science over the realm of natural philosophy.

- 12 Who knew at the beginning, what do you think?
That time, as it is, could be measured in a glass?
- 13 Who knew that Jupiter, Saturn, the Moon,
All take their light from the light of the Sun?
- 14 Who knew that the mountains, oceans and deserts
Stay up in the air without any support?
- 15 Who knew that the area of the sun is 160 times larger,
Bigger by far than this whole earth of ours?
- 16 Who started first the blacksmith's art,
When there were no tongs, no hammer, no anvil?
- 17 Who knew that this bitter, foul medicine, myrobalan,
Could chase away fever from the human form?
- 18 Who first prescribed for stomach-aches and pains,
'Take rhubarb from China and fennel from Byzantium'?⁵⁷
- 19 Who was it invented red Turkish ink
From powdery red sulphur and aqueous mercury?⁵⁸
- 20 Who knew that a stone from the mountain of Iṣfahān
Would increase the light that comes from the eyes?⁵⁹
- 21 Who was it who valued gold as more precious
Than silver, all over the whole world entire?⁶⁰
- 22 Who was it whose word made the Yemen carnelian
To be valued less than the Badakhshān ruby?

Note how Nāṣir turns what seems to be simply a catalogue of questions of Astronomy, Physics and Medicine into a question of Ethics. The last two

bayts of this section ask about fundamental value – what is the intrinsic value of any metal or stone, and how does intrinsic value have anything to do with worldly, monetary value? Nāṣir's use of the *qaṣīda* differs from Lawkarī's in that Nāṣir is not just laying out a field of study for philosophy, but rather is asking the reader to question assumptions, to challenge the 'givens' in equations. He is teaching, through the experience of reading the poem, the philosophical technique. This is an experiential *qaṣīda*, not simply a transfer of information. But, lest anyone think that the poet strives for a merely 'rational' view of intellect (*khirad*, 'aql'), he makes it clear that he is pushing the reader towards another kind of knowledge:

- 25 Now look deep in these with the eye of your heart
 For the eye of your head cannot see them.
 26 You've been consumed with curing the eye of your head
 Now, make a cure also for the eye of your heart.

Nāṣir-i Khusraw wants the readers and listeners to move beyond rational understanding, and to see with the 'eye of the heart'. This is where metaphor reigns, because it lifts the mind and imagination out of the realm of rational, discursive thinking into the realm of speech, where the creative, 'speaking soul' (*naḥs-i suḥḥān gūy*) creates knowledge and understanding and brings this understanding into language and speech.

While Nāṣir-i Khusraw is teaching the philosophic method and forcing his readers to use their minds and imaginations to keep up with his images and his challenges, he does not separate philosophy from his religious faith. In the middle of the *qaṣīda* he speaks of God the Creator and All-Knowing (lines 40 and 41). He then shifts to a discussion on God's first created being, Intellect (*khirad*), with the perhaps surprising image of Intellect as God's messenger-prophet (*rasūl*) to human beings and the command 'recite!' (*furū khwān!*):

- 42 Intellect, which is a Messenger of God to you,
 What has it recited to you of this matter? You recite it! Say it!
 43 On this matter, for a proof of your Speaking Soul
 I do not want to hear you say that so-and-so told you so.
 44 If one people knows these sciences, you, too, my son,
 are still a human being like them.

In these three lines, Nāṣir-i Khusraw crystallises his philosophy and faith and pedagogy. God has sent you your mind to use and to listen to, so 'recite!' from what it teaches you, just as Muḥammad was commanded to recite the message of God. Here, Nāṣir is also highlighting the Ismaili

Neoplatonist correspondence of Muḥammad to the Intellect in the cosmic hierarchy: The One, Intellect, Soul, Nature.⁶¹ In addition, in a strong condemnation of *taqlīd* (blindly, mindlessly following a religious leader's teaching, when asked about religious questions), the poet warns, you may not say that you heard the truth from someone else, some great teacher – it must come from inside. As human beings we all share this ability and responsibility. Whilst Lawkarī was also a Muslim believer, he did not blend philosophy and faith in the way that Nāṣir-i Khusraw did in his *qaṣīda*. Lawkarī kept the two separate, whereas Nāṣir expounded on how they work together, both coming from God.

Conclusion

We began by making a case for seeing the richly textured past millennium of Persian poetry as a treasury embodying the full range of ideas in the culture, embracing all human emotions, virtues and vices, as well as history, humour, invective, moral didacticism, astronomy, medicine, science, philosophy, religious faith and mystical drive. Twentieth-century criticisms of the work of Nāṣir-i Khusraw, perhaps the most important philosophical poet in Persian, occasioned our argument to show how Persian poetry participates in the long and celebrated tradition of philosophical poetry, that is, specifically poetry exploring ancient Greek philosophical ideas. By comparing selections of two *qaṣīdas* by Lawkarī and Nāṣir-i Khusraw, the aim here has been to respond to the critics of philosophical poetry as a respected genre of poetry, and also to reveal one level of depth in the genre, that we have here two different approaches to philosophical poetry.

Lawkarī's poem follows the most basic definition of poetry then current ('metered speech with an established rhyme', *sukhan-i manzūm*), but contains few flights of fancy.⁶² It hardly enters into the realm of imagination (*wahm*), which Ibn Sinā and other Islamic philosophers considered essential to poetry. Lawkarī's *qaṣīda* has rhymed and metered speech for easier memorisation of key concepts. Nāṣir-i Khusraw treats his poem differently. He uses metaphor; he speaks in an allegorical way; he uses literary and rhetorical devices. It is literature. It is poetry. Perhaps the readers are not transported out of themselves, or they do not see the aesthetics, or share his beliefs. But it is still poetry.

Moreover, there is an added significant element in Nāṣir-i Khusraw's work. He is not taking the idea of poetic instruction as a means of merely pouring information into the reader's head. He is not trying to teach his

readers philosophy as he does in his prose works; he is trying to stimulate their minds, to make them ponder. He is trying to get his readers to think in a philosophical way, to consider the perplexity of nature, marvel at its glorious variety, and then he wants them to progress from marvelling to thinking of the ultimate causes and purposes of Creation. His poetry is not trying to impose information on them, just the opposite – it seeks to create an outward movement in their minds so that it is their own innate creativity that produces the sought-after truth. He wants to use language to transform the thinking of his reader, taking it to a higher level. In his poetry, Nāṣir-i Khusraw uses philosophy to impel their imagination out of its normal comfort zone into a new rational progression to truth. This is the philosophical method at its best.

Nāṣir-i Khusraw's poetry exhibits a rich array of imaginative poetic devices, while Lawkarī's hardly ever does. But both *qaṣīdas* count as philosophical poetry.

Notes

1. Ezra Pound, *ABC of Reading* (London, 1951; repr., 1979), pp. 19–20.
2. An example of this is the three-hundred page response to a philosophical poem by the obscure Ismaili author Abu'l-Haytham al-Jurjānī (fl. fourth/tenth century) which was written by Nāṣir-i Khusraw: *Kitāb Jāmi' al-ḥikmatayn*, ed. Henry Corbin and Muḥammad Mu'in as *Kitab-e Jami' al-Hikmatayn. Le livre réunissant les deux sagesses, ou harmonie de la philosophie grecque et de la théosophie ismaélienne* (Tehran and Paris, 1953; 2nd ed., 1984). See 'Aziz Allāh Juwaynī, "Ulūm wa ri'yādī dar kutub-i naẓm wa nathr-i Nāṣir-i Khusraw', in *Nāma-yi mā'nā*, ed. Bihrūz Īmānī (Tehran, 1383 Sh./2004), pp. 355–363. See also the forthcoming article by Alice C. Hunsberger, 'Jāmi' al-Ḥikmatayn', in *Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif-i Buzurg-i Islāmī* [*The Greater Islamic Encyclopaedia*], ed. Kāẓim Mūsawī Bujnūrdī (Tehran, 1367 Sh.–/1989–). Regarding Jurjānī, Corbin, *Kitab-e Jami' al-Hikmatayn*, p. 48, n.107, and Mu'in, *ibid.*, p. 10 nn.4–7, say that his only trace is Ṣāḥib al-Dīn Abu'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Zayd al-Bayhaqī's *Tatimmat Ṣiḥān al-Hikma* (completed in 553/1158), published with a Persian tr. by Nāṣir al-Dīn Khwāja Muntakhab al-Dīn as *Tārīkh al-ḥukamā al-musammā bi-Durrat al-akhbār wa lum'at al-anwār, ya'nī tarjuma-yi Tatimma-yi Siḥān al-Hikma*, ed. Muḥammad Shafī' (Lahore, 1935), Arabic text, no. 80, p. 132; Persian text, no. 73, p. 91; Henry Corbin, 'Abu'l-Haytham Gorgānī', *Elr*, vol. 1, pp. 316–317; see also Farhad Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs: Their History and Doctrines* (2nd ed., Cambridge, 2007), p. 155 and n.22.
3. An example of this is a poem by Nūr 'Alī Shāh Iṣfahānī (d. 1212/1797–1798) which is a versification of Sharif Jurjānī's (d. 816/1797–1798) succinct Persian

- prose textbook on logic, known as *Kubrā*; see Jurjānī, *Dū mantiq-i fārsī: Kubrā, Sughrā*, ed. Murtaẓā Mudarrisī Chahārdirī (Tehran, 1334/1956), pp. 5–22. The poem is mentioned in p. 9 of the introduction to *Iṣfahānī, Dīwān-i Nūr ‘Alī Shāh Iṣfahānī, bi-inḍimān-i Risāla-yi Jāmi‘ al-asrār, Kanz al-asrār*, ed. Aḥmad Khūshniwīs ‘Imād (Tehran, 1370 Sh./1991).
4. Two examples of this are the *qaṣīda* by Lawkarī analysed in this paper (see note 22 re Marcotte), and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209), ‘*Manẓūma-yi mantiq wa falsafa*’, in Nasrollah Pourjavady, *Dū mujaddid: Pazhūhishā‘ī dar bāra-yi Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī wa Fakhr Rāzī* (Tehran, 2002), pp. 551–564.
 5. This ‘quarrel’ has been much studied; for a review, see Mark Edmundson, *Literature against Philosophy, Plato to Derrida: A Defence of Poetry* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 1–29.
 6. Aristotle, *Peri Poiētikēs*, ed. and tr. Samuel H. Butcher as *The Poetics of Aristotle* (4th ed., London, 1922), p. 35; see Edmundson, *Literature against Philosophy*, p. 8.
 7. ‘*Aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae*’ (Poets want either to benefit or delight us): Horace, *Ars Poetica*, line 333, tr. Osborne B. Hardison and Leon Golden, *Horace for Students of Literature: The “Ars Poetica” and Its Tradition* (Gainesville, FL, 1995), p. 17.
 8. This background is analysed in Willard Spiegelman, *The Didactic Muse: Scenes of Instruction in Contemporary American Poetry* (Princeton, 1989), pp. 3–5.
 9. Philip Wheelwright, ‘Philosophy and Poetry’, in Alex Preminger et al., ed., *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (enlarged ed., Princeton, 1974), p. 617.
 10. For example, see Johannes T. P. de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry: An Introduction to the Mystical Use of Classical Poems* (Richmond, Surrey, 1997), p. 86: ‘If one could characterize the Persian literary genius by a single pervasive trait, the tendency to moralising would be a good choice. This is easily supported by evidence from all periods.’
 11. See Salim Kemal, *The Philosophical Poetics of Alfarabi, Avicenna and Averroës: The Aristotelian Reception* (London and New York, 2003), pp. 63, 107, 261–263, and throughout; Ismail M. Dahiyat examines al-Fārābī in *Avicenna’s Commentary on the ‘Poetics’ of Aristotle: A Critical Study with an Annotated Translation of the Text* (Leiden, 1974), pp. 16–18.
 12. Dahiyat, *Avicenna’s Commentary*, p. 47.
 13. This two-part scheme is developed by Philip Wheelwright, ‘Philosophy and Poetry’, in *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, pp. 615–617, with examples for the first type (Lucretius’ *De Rerum Natura* and Pope’s *Essay on Man*), and the second (Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, Keats’ *Ode to a Grecian Urn*, and Eliot’s *Four Quartets*).
 14. See William C. Chittick, *The Heart of Islamic Philosophy: The Quest for Self-Knowledge in the Teachings of Afdal al-Dīn Kashānī* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 127–131.

15. Ibn Sinā wrote a *qaṣīda* on the soul in Arabic, ed. Fathalla Kholeif, *Avicenna on Psychology: A Study of His Poem on the Soul (al-Qaṣīda al-'Ayniyya)* (Beirut, 1974), pp. 129–131; tr. Edward G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia* (London and Cambridge, 1902–1904; repr. Cambridge, 1969), vol. 2, pp. 110–111; tr. Arthur J. Arberry, *Avicenna on Theology* (London, 1951), pp. 77–78.
16. See the entry on 'Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Khusrawī al-Sarakhsī al-Ḥakīm', with several poetry selections, in Sadīd al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad 'Awfī, *Kitāb Lubāb al-albāb*, ed. Edward G. Browne as *The Lubābu'l-albāb of Muḥammad 'Awfī* (London and Leiden, 1903; Tehran, 1361 Sh./1982), Part II, pp. 18–19; Tehran pagination pp. 505–506.
17. Qābūs b. Wushmgīr, who ruled over Gurgān and Ṭabaristān, attracted many intellectuals, including al-Bīrūnī, who dedicated his *Chronology of Nations* to Qābūs, and Ibn Sinā, who sought patronage from him; his grandson, Kay Kā'ūs b. Iskandar b. Qābūs b. Wushmgīr, wrote a treatise of advice for rulers which honours his grandfather: *A Mirror for Princes: The Qābūs Nāma*, tr. Reuben Levy (New York, 1951), pp. ix–xi. 'Awfī, *Lubāb al-albāb*, p. 18 (505), also states that what he records is a panegyric by Sarakhsī for the prince Nāṣir al-Dawla Abu'l-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Simjūr (d. 378/989).
18. Ḥakīm Maysarī, *Dānish-nāma'-i dar 'ilm-i pizishkī*, ed. Barāt Zanjānī (Tehran, 1366 Sh./1987), a scientific and medical poem written for a governor of Khurāsān under the Samanids. See Gilbert Lazard, *Les premiers poètes persans édités et traduits (IXe–Xe siècles): fragments rassemblées* (Tehran and Paris, 1964), pp. 36–40; partial French tr., pp. 163–180. Lazard (p. 39) argues that Maysarī's confident style shows him as no pioneer or radical poet in this genre, but rather 'heir to a tradition already well established' by the fourth/tenth century.
19. See note 15.
20. See, for example, Roxanne D. Marcotte, 'Preliminary Notes on the Life and Work of Abū al-Abbās al-Lawkarī (d. ca. 517/1123)', *Anaquel de estudios árabes*, 17 (2006), pp. 150–152.
21. See note 4.
22. The *qaṣīda* by Abu'l-Qāsim b. Mīrzā Burzurg Mīr Findiriskī (d. 1050/1640) has been published, with 'Abbās Sharīf Dārābīyī's commentary on another commentary, as *Tuḥfat al-murād: sharḥ-i qaṣīda-yi Mīr Findiriskī, shāriḥ Ḥakīm 'Abbās Sharīf Dārābī, bi-ḥamīma-yi sharḥ-i Khalkhālī Wagilānī*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Akbarī Sāwī, introduction by Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Tehran, 1372 Sh./1994).
23. See the recent volume of articles occasioned by the international scholarly conferences celebrating his birth, *Nasir Khusraw: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, ed. Sarfarozi Niyozov and Ramazon Nazariyev (Khujand, Tajikistan, 2005); for a survey of Nāṣir-i Khusraw's writings and thought, see Alice C. Hunsberger, *Nasir Khusraw, The Ruby of Badakhshan: A Portrait of the Persian Poet, Traveller and Philosopher* (London and New

- York, 2000; 2nd ed., 2003), pp. 17–32; Persian tr. Faridūn Badra'i, *Nāṣir-i Khusraw, la'l-i Badakhshān: taṣwīrī az shā'ir-i jahāngard wa filsūf-i Irānī* (Tehran, 1380/2001), pp. 49–62. Nāṣir's poetry was the subject of an international conference in London in 2005, the proceedings of which will be the first in-depth inquiry into his poetry and its genre of philosophical poetry: Alice C. Hunsberger, ed., *Pearls of Persia: The Philosophical Poetry of Nāṣir-i Khusraw* (London, forthcoming).
24. For an introduction to Ibn Sīnā's contribution to Aristotelian philosophy, see Lenn E. Goodman, *Avicenna* (London and New York, 1992), pp. 14–16, 60–83.
 25. Ibn Sīnā, *Dānish-nāma-yi 'alā'i*, ed. Muḥammad Mu'in and Muḥammad Mishkāt (Tehran, 1952, repr. 1975); tr. Parviz Morewedge, *The Metaphysics of Avicenna (Ibn Sina)* (London and New York, 1973); cf. Goodman, *Avicenna*, p. 37, and nn.45–7.
 26. A case might even be made for Ottoman Turkey, but certainly in territories now defined as Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, the British and French overlords themselves functioned in Persian through most of the nineteenth century. In Central Asian territories, Persian was only forcibly supplanted by Russian well after the 1917 Revolution.
 27. Marcotte, 'Preliminary Notes', pp. 137–157.
 28. Ibid.
 29. Bayhaqī's *Tatimmat Ṣiwān al-ḥikma* was completed in 533/1158; see Marcotte, 'Preliminary Notes', pp. 134–135, with extensive references.
 30. Marcotte's translation, 'Preliminary Notes', p. 138.
 31. For a study examining the relationship between *adīb* and *faylasūf*, see Everett K. Rowson, 'The Philosopher as Littérateur: al-Tawḥīdī and His Predecessors', *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der arabisch-islamischen Wissenschaften*, 6 (1990), pp. 50–92, cited in Peter Heath, *Allegory and Philosophy in Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā), with a translation of the Book of the Prophet Muḥammad's Ascent to Heaven* (Philadelphia, 1992), p. 30. Marcotte notes that Arabic verses by Lawkarī are included in the anonymous *Itmām Tatimmat Ṣiwān al-ḥikma*, written in 689/1290 (pp. 135–140).
 32. Over forty Arabic verses selected from several *qaṣīdas* by Lawkarī are included in the anonymous anthology of Arabic philosophical poetry known as *Itmām Tatimmat Ṣiwān al-ḥikma*, which is extant in several unpublished manuscripts. I am grateful to Professor Frank Griffel for sending me photocopies of the relevant pages from the Istanbul MS Köprölü 902, fols 187b–189a (with a colophon dated Rabi' II 637 [=October 1239]), as well as his unpublished study of the *Ṣiwān al-ḥikma* circle of texts. Six of the verses by Lawkarī were published in the editor's introduction to Abu'l-'Abbās al-Lawkarī, *Bayān al-ḥaqq bi-dīmān al-ṣidq: al-'ilm al-ilāhī* [Section on Metaphysics], ed. Ibrāhīm Dībājī (Tehran, 1373 Sh./1414/1995), p. 19. For the section on Lawkarī in the *Itmām*, Marcotte ('Preliminary Notes', p. 135) cites MS 935/2 (copied in 689/1290) from the Central Library of Tehran

- University, fols 151r.8–152v.2; see also the British Museum MS Or. 9033, fol. 142a, cited in Joel L. Kraemer, *Philosophy in the Renaissance of Islam: Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī and His Circle* (Leiden, 1986), p. 105.
33. Lawkarī, *Sharḥ-i qaṣīda-yi Asrār al-ḥikma*, text established by Ilāhah Ruhidil, ed. Muḥammad Rasūl Daryāgasht and Reza Pourjavady (Tehran, 1382/2002).
 34. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
 35. *Ibid.*
 36. *Ibid.*, p. 13. The Persian terms are: *nafsānī*-‘iffat, *sakhāwat*, *shajā‘at*, *ḥikmat*; *jismānī-siḥhat*, *quwwat*, *jamāl*; *khārij-māl wa yārān wa farmānbardārī wa nasab*. The *khārij* could be read as containing four virtues, in which case the total would be eleven, not ten.
 37. See Roger Arnaldez, ‘Mantiq’, *EI2*, vol. 6, p. 450: ‘Ibn Sīnā and the Muslim Neoplatonists reconcile these two concepts: logic is a part of philosophy to which it constitutes an introduction.’
 38. For more on this debate, see Nicholas Rescher, *The Development of Arabic Logic* (Pittsburgh, 1964), pp. 50–52.
 39. Lawkarī, *Asrār al-ḥikma*, p. 35.
 40. Reading the original *zir* instead of the editors’ *zi bar*. Lawkarī, *Asrār al-ḥikma*, p. 67.
 41. Lawkarī, *Asrār al-ḥikma*, p. 73; verses 73 and 74.
 42. *Ibid.*, verse 94.
 43. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
 44. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
 45. *Ibid.*, p. 100, verse 141.
 46. *Ibid.*
 47. Marcotte, ‘Preliminary Notes’, p. 150.
 48. *Asrār al-ḥikma*, verses 150–151.
 49. These themes are developed by Nāṣir-i Khusraw over the course of lengthy *qaṣīdas*. See, e.g. *Dīwān*, no. 5:1, 3 (tr. Hunsberger in *Nasir Khusraw, The Ruby of Badakhshan*, p. 76): ‘Look with the inner eye at earth’s hiddenness, For the outer eye cannot see it./ Not with iron should the world be chained, But with chains of wisdom should it be bound’; see also *Dīwān*, nos 26: 37–38 (*Ruby*, p. 250), 78:15 (*Ruby*, p. 72), 179: 9–10 (*Ruby*, p. 2552), and 39:80 (analysed in Hunsberger, *Pearls of Persia*, forthcoming).
 50. Badī‘ al-Zamān Furūzānfar, *Sukhan wa sukhānwarān* (Tehran, 1369 Sh./1990), p. 154, n.1.
 51. Muḥammad Shibli Nu‘manī Hindī, *Shi‘r al-‘ajam* (Lahore, 1908–1918); Persian tr. Muḥammad Taqī Fakhr Dā‘ī Gilānī as *Shi‘r al-‘ajam yā tārikh-i shi‘r wa adabiyāt-i Irān* (Tehran, 1363 Sh./1984), vol. 5, pp. 177–179 (in a chapter entitled ‘A Philosophical Poet’).
 52. Yahya El-Khachab, *Nāṣir ʿ Hosraw: son voyage, sa pensée religieuse, sa philosophie et sa poésie* (Cairo, 1940), p. 271; cf. p. 284.
 53. ‘Alī Dashtī, *Taṣwīrī az Nāṣir-i Khusraw* (Tehran, 1362 Sh./1983), pp. 21–22.

54. Sayyid Ja'far Shahīdī, 'Afkār wa 'aqā'id-i kalāmī-yi Nāṣir-i Khusraw', in *Yād-nāma-yi Nāṣir-i Khusraw* (Mashhad, Persian Imperial Year 2535/1396 sh./1976), p. 316; cited in Raḥīm Musalmāniyān Qubādiyānī, *Pāra-yi Samarqand* (Tehran, 1378 Sh./1999), pp. 59–60.
55. Alice C. Hunsberger, 'The Eloquent Soul: An Analysis of a Philosophical Poem by Nasir Khusraw', in Alice C. Hunsberger, ed., *Pearls of Persia: The Philosophical Poetry of Nasir Khusraw* (London, forthcoming).
56. In the Muḥaqqiq edition of the *Dīwān*; compare the Taqawī edition, with 79 *bayts* (missing *bayt* 57 of the Muḥaqqiq edition), and the Ethé edition, with 78 (missing *bayts* 57 and 71 of the Muḥaqqiq edition).
57. Following the Taqawī edition, here I read '*furuzh*' (rhubarb or galangale); see Francis J. Steingass, *Persian-English Dictionary* (n.p., 1892; repr. Lahore, 1981).
58. Red sulfur and mercury were the two basic elements of alchemy. In this line, however, Nāṣir seems to report that they were also main ingredients in the production of the most important form of red ink used for transcribing titles or entries in manuscripts.
59. This is based on the 'emission' theory of perception, which was current among some Greek and Muslim philosophers, that sight was the result of how much and how clearly light was coming *out* from the eyes encompassing the object. Here, a particular stone from Iṣfahān was ground into a powder, *surmih*, to make the eyes healthier. For a similar verse from Khāqānī and a line in Arabic from Hajjāj b. Yūsuf's *Thamar al-Qulūb*, see Mujtabā Mīnuwī and Mahdī Muḥaqqiq, *Sharḥ-i buzurg-i Dīwān-i Nāṣir-i Khusraw* (Tehran, 1386 Sh./2007), vol. 1, p. 479.
60. Here I follow the Mīnuwī/Muḥaqqiq version.
61. For more on the Ismaili doctrine of human intellect (*'aql*) as the messenger-prophet (*rasūl*), see Mohamed Abualy Alibhai, 'Abu Ya'qub al-Sijistani and "Kitab Sullam al-Najat": A Study in Islamic Neoplatonism', Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, 1983, pp. 153–156, which elaborates on two types of prophecy (*risāla*): bodily (*jismānī*) and spiritual (*ruhānī*).
62. Compare Julie Scott Meisami, 'Poetic Microcosms: The Persian Qasida to the End of the Twelfth Century', in Stefan Sperl and Christopher Shackle, ed., *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa. 1: Classical Traditions and Modern Meanings* (Leiden, 1995), p. 138 (137–182); and Michael Glünz, 'Poetic Tradition and Social Change: The Persian Qasida in Post-Mongol Iran', *ibid.*, p. 183 (183–204).

Early Evidence for the Reception of Nāṣir-i Khusraw's Poetry in Sufism: 'Ayn al-Qudāt's Letter on the Ta'limīs

Hermann Landolt

In his *magnum opus* *The Ismā'īlīs*, Farhad Daftary points out 'close analogies' between Nizārī Ismaili doctrine and certain Sufi ideas and practices, such as the role of a Sufi *shaykh* or *pīr* which the imam takes in relation to his followers, or the spiritual experience associated similarly with Nizārī *qiyāma* and Sufi *ḥaqīqa*. While carefully avoiding any confusion between the two traditions, Daftary rightly suggests that such analogies – rather than being the mere desire on the part of the Nizārīs to escape persecution after the destruction of Alamūt, one might add – 'laid the ground for the coalescence between Nizārī Ismailism and Sufism in Persia during the post-Alamūt period'.¹

Here I should like to examine two somewhat different, earlier cases of possible cross-ties between Ismailism and Sufism, both having to do with the – Daftary's words – 'multi-faceted personality'² of Nāṣir-i Khusraw (d. 465/1072 or later). To begin with, I shall briefly discuss the general questions of Sufi influence on, and reception of, the great Ismaili poet himself. I will then turn to the recently discovered fact that eight verses from Nāṣir's unquestionably authentic *Qaṣīda* no. 106, which served much later as a model for a 'philosophical *qaṣīda*' attributed to Mīr Findiriskī (d. 1050/1640 or 1641) of the 'School of Iṣfahān', were already quoted and interpreted by the famous Sufi 'Ayn al-Qudāt-i Hamadānī in support of his own views. 'Ayn al-Qudāt was indeed suspected of crypto-Ismailism and executed in 525/1131, that is, less than a decade after the death of the reputed founder of the Nizārī *da'wa jadīda*, Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ (d. 518/1124).

Nāṣir-i Khusraw and Sufism

The widely received image of Nāṣir-i Khusraw as a Sufi poet of sorts has, to a significant extent, been generated by two didactic *mathnawīs* that were traditionally attributed to him, the *Sa'ādat-nāma*³ and the *Rawshanā'ī-nāma*.⁴ However, the authenticity of these works has been strongly questioned by modern authorities. While few today would maintain the genuineness of the former and draw far-reaching conclusions from it, the debate is far from closed in the case of the *Rawshanā'ī-nāma*, as may be seen from the thorough discussion of the question by François de Blois.⁵ It should be noted that doubt arises in this case not only from matters of style, and problems relating to the date of its composition, but also from the existence of another *Rawshanā'ī-nāma*, written in prose by the same author. This prose *Rawshanā'ī-nāma* was published for the first time in 1949 by Wladimir Ivanow under the title *Six Chapters or Shish Faṣl also called Rawshana'i-namah*.⁶ Yet Ivanow's title was slightly misleading in that the author himself, while describing it in his own preface as consisting of six chapters (*shish faṣl*), clearly indicates only *Rawshanā'ī-nāma* as its title, not *shish faṣl*. This work is an openly Ismaili-Neoplatonic treatise and, like most of Nāṣir's doctrinal prose works, of which – in addition to this one – no less than four⁷ have gradually come to light during the past century, it is written explicitly on behalf of the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mustaṣir bi'llāh (r. 427–487/1037–1094), who is frequently praised by Nāṣir in his *qaṣīdas*. By contrast, the metrical *Rawshanā'ī-nāma* contains little if any explicit references to specifically Fatimid or Shī'i teachings. Whereas this *mathnawī* does not even mention the imams, it displays, at least in the presently available editions, unmistakable traces of a strongly Sufi-coloured version of Neoplatonism.

The oldest extant manuscripts of both the metric and the prose *Rawshanā'ī-nāmas* date from approximately the same time from which we also have a collection of selected *qaṣīdas* from Nāṣir's *Dīwān*, i.e. the late seventh/thirteenth and early eighth/fourteenth centuries.⁸ But while the prose *Rawshanā'ī-nāma* seems to have remained unknown outside strictly Ismaili circles for centuries, the *mathnawī* was evidently well known from that time on and regarded by some Sufis as a work by Nāṣir-i Khusraw. Evidence for this is found in the *Sa'ādat-nāma* by the early fourteenth-century Sufi Maḥmūd-i Shabistarī, who is more famously known from his *Gulshan-i rāz* as a radical follower of Ibn 'Arabī. In this *Sa'ādat-nāma*, he paradoxically turns against philosophers such as Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) and the *ishrāqī* Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191), condemning them as utter here-

tics, and places Nāṣir-i Khusraw in the same category.⁹ It is quite obvious that he has the metrical *Rawshanā'ī-nāma* as we know it in mind, for he mentions not only the name of the author, Nāṣir-i Khusraw, and the title (shortened to *Rawshanī-nāma* for metric reasons), but also paraphrases a verse, which is indeed found in the original text, in which the 'vegetative spirit' (*rūḥ-i nāmīya*) rather than God himself is made responsible for the existence of the plants in their variety.¹⁰ A metrical *Rawshanā'ī-nāma* – presumably the same – is also ascribed to Nāṣir in Amīr Dawlatshāh's (wr. 892/1487) notoriously fictional account of Nāṣir's life.¹¹ This seems to derive from Sufi sources, too; for the point of the story is the miraculous conversion of the philosopher-poet to Sufism by the Sufi saint Abū'l-Ḥasan-i Kharaqānī (d. 425/1033–1034).¹² By the ninth/fifteenth century, Nāṣir-i Khusraw appears as a pure Sufi in pseudo-ʿAṭṭār's *Lisān al-ghayb*.¹³

Now while there is certainly something to be said for the suspicion that the metric *Rawshanā'ī-nāma* has perhaps more to do with the Sufi reception of Nāṣir-i Khusraw than with the man himself, there is also evidence from the *Dīwān* which appears to suggest that he was indeed at some point in his life touched by Sufism. In this regard, a word must be said about the famous *qaṣīda* known as *A Wasted Pilgrimage* or *The Pilgrims* (no. 141 in the Mīnuwī/Muḥaqqiq edition), which had already been singled out by E. G. Browne as a 'very remarkable poem', as he believed that in it 'we can see in its best light the application of the characteristic Isma'īli doctrine of *ta'wīl*, or allegorical interpretation'.¹⁴ Perhaps not surprisingly, it is now available in at least four English translations.¹⁵

As was pointed out by Mahdī Muḥaqqiq,¹⁶ this *qaṣīda* is quite unique, though not exactly for the reason suggested by Browne: it is no more and no less than a poetic version of a well-known Sufi tale, a prose version of which is found in the *Kashf al-maḥjūb*, the standard Persian manual of classical Sufism written by Nāṣir's Sunni (indeed anti-Isma'ili) contemporary, ʿAlī b. ʿUthmān al-Ghaznawī al-Jullābī, better known as Hujwīrī, who attributes it to no less a figure than the celebrated Junayd of Baghdad (d. 297/910).¹⁷ In both versions, the tale carries a typically Sufi message: true performance of the sacrifice during the pilgrimage (*hajj*) ceremonies means the sacrifice of everything related to the lower self (*nafs*).¹⁸ What is more is that the *qaṣīda* under discussion has strictly nothing to do with specifically Isma'ili *ta'wīl* of the pilgrimage rituals as given by Nāṣir himself in his *Wajh-i dīn*.¹⁹ Rather it tallies perfectly with the whole story as given by Hujwīrī. This leaves, it seems to me, only one of two possible conclusions: either Nāṣir heard the tale of the missed pilgrimage from a Sufi, with the remote possibility that this Sufi was none other than

Hujwīrī himself. As is known, both Nāṣir and Hujwīrī travelled extensively in the eastern part of the Islamic world; and although the chronology of Hujwīrī's travels is not known to any sufficient degree of precision and certainty, it may nevertheless be worth mentioning that both visited the tomb of Abū Yazīd-i Baṣṭāmī, and both were of course familiar with travelling routes and famous places between Lahore and Syria.²⁰ Or it may be the case that the *qaṣīda* is not, after all, Nāṣir's own. In that case, we would have to assume that it was incorporated into ḥis *Dīwān* sometime before 714/1315, since it is already included in the earliest extant collection of his *qaṣīdas* mentioned above.

'Ayn al-Qudāt and Ismailism

In his short notice on Nāṣir-i Khusraw, Jāmī (d. 898/1492) cites six verses which, he says, were quoted by 'Ayn al-Qudāt in his *Zubdat al-ḥaqā'iq* from a poem by Nāṣir-i Khusraw.²¹ The book referred to by Jāmī as *Zubdat al-ḥaqā'iq* is, of course, 'Ayn al-Qudāt's Persian work more commonly known as *Tamhīdāt*, where the same verses are indeed spelled out and introduced in such a way that he appears to be quoting another author.²² However, from another citation of the same verses found in 'Ayn al-Qudāt's Letter no. 65,²³ it appears that he was, rather, quoting himself. Be that as it may, the verses in question are, in fact, part of a *qaṣīda* which was included in older editions of Nāṣir's *Dīwān* but excluded, for good reasons it seems to me, from the critical edition by Muṣṭabā Mīnuwī and Mahdī Muḥaqqiq.²⁴

Jāmī was nevertheless not entirely wrong. As we now know, thanks to 'Alīnaqī Munzawī's extensive comments on 'Ayn al-Qudāt's *Letters*,²⁵ he did in fact quote verses from the *Dīwān* of Nāṣir-i Khusraw, though not those 'almost blasphemous' verses just referred to, but eight verses from a very different *qaṣīda* (no. 106) that reflects Nāṣir's Ismaili views *in nuce*. I have translated this *qaṣīda* in full at the end of this article, indicating the verses quoted by 'Ayn al-Qudāt in the notes for easier reference. Apart from their intrinsic interest, 'Ayn al-Qudāt's quotes and variants are also important from a purely philological point of view, since they must have been written some two hundred years before the earliest extant manuscript of the *Dīwān* itself (i.e. the collection dated 714/1315 mentioned above) was copied.

'Ayn al-Qudāt probably knew the whole *qaṣīda*, for he quotes seven verses in Letter no. 75 (vv. 21, 22, 24, 26, 23, 29, 38, in this order),²⁶ and verse 40 independently in Letter no. 87.²⁷ As was common practice in

such cases, he does not mention the name of the poet. However, in this case there can be little doubt that he knew very well that he was quoting Nāṣir-i Khusraw. He mentions elsewhere that a friend from Badakhshān told him about a strange form of Islam practised in those regions,²⁸ so that he might well have had access to sources deriving immediately from Nāṣir himself, as it was in Badakhshān that he spent the last fifteen years of his life.

Letter no. 75 was written in answer to a question on the way to attain true knowledge or gnosis (*tarīq-i ḥuṣūl-i ma'rifat*). In particular, it was an occasion for 'Ayn al-Quḍāt to explain his own doctrine of the master-disciple (*pīr-murīd*) relationship²⁹ in line with the Sunni Sufi tradition, and to distinguish it from the doctrine of the *ta'limiyyān*, i.e. the Nizārīs. In actual fact, however, he himself propounds a kind of *ta'lim* and only refutes the Nizārī argumentation insofar as it is meant to prove an exclusive status for their imam's *ta'lim*. By so doing, he clearly distances himself from Ghazālī, as we shall see presently.

Given the heated religio-political climate under the Saljūq sultan Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad b. Malikshāh (r. 511–525/1118–1133), who was ultimately responsible for 'Ayn al-Quḍāt's execution, such a display of implicit acceptance of the enemy, or what could be seen as such, could by itself be dangerous, especially since Letter no. 75 was most probably addressed to one of the most important figures in the Saljūq administration, the controller of finances (*mustawfī*) and one of 'Ayn al-Quḍāt's close disciples, Abū Naṣr 'Azīz al-Dīn al-Iṣbahānī (who was also executed two years after 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, in 525/1131). The main responsibility for the execution of both 'Azīz al-Dīn and 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, as well as of a number of other prominent Sunnis, is generally ascribed by Saljūq historians such as 'Imād al-Dīn al-Iṣbahānī, 'Azīz al-Dīn's nephew, to 'Azīz al-Dīn's rival in power politics, the controversial vizier Qiwām al-Dīn al-Dargazīnī (also executed in 527/1133),³⁰ whom they are quick to identify as a secret agent of the Nizārīs. There are, however, several problems with this simple explanation,³¹ not least among which being the fact that 'Ayn al-Quḍāt himself was accused of crypto-Ismailism during his lifetime. As he himself complains in his *Shakwā al-gharīb*, it was his 'adversary' (*al-khaṣm*) – whoever that may have been – who had 'chosen to interpret my words as being in line with the doctrine of the Ismailis [literally, 'those who profess the doctrine of *ta'lim*' (*madhhab al-qā'ilīna bi'l-ta'lim*, i.e. the Nizārīs)].³²

He begins the discussion in Letter no. 75, which shows him to be a true master of Socratic irony, by referring first to the 'habit of the *ta'limiyyān*' to initiate their *da'wat* by asking the question, "How is gnosis attained?

Through the intellect, or through an infallible imam?" This question, he goes on, has many ramifications, and whoever says that it must be either the intellect or the infallible imam, has no idea of the truth of the matter.³³

At first sight, this introductory reference to the 'habit of the *ta'limiyān*' looks as though 'Ayn al-Qudāt was simply going to repeat Ghazālī's famous critique of Nizārī *ta'lim*. However, the immediately following caveat amounts, in fact, to a veiled criticism of Ghazālī's, simplified version of it, which criticism is confirmed a little later in the letter, by 'Ayn al-Qudāt's remark that the 'Proof of Islam' dealt with the matter in a manner that was 'inadequate' (*muqaṣṣir*).³⁴ Indeed it was Ghazālī, not Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ, who reduced the question to this simple alternative form.³⁵ By putting it this way, Ghazālī was trying to prove the answer had to be in favour of the intellect.³⁶

Continuing on the topic of simple either/or questions, 'Ayn al-Qudāt then suggests that the same attitude characterises theologians in general: they argue for (or against) doctrines they have not properly understood themselves. For example, they argue about whether or not God can be seen, without even knowing what 'seeing' really means (*ḥaqīqat-i dīdār*); or they debate whether the Qur'an is created or not, but when you ask them what 'created' or 'speech' (*kalām*) really means, they remain perplexed. After this reference to famous debates among the theologians (*mutakallimūn*), he quotes the first seven verses from Nāṣir-i Khusraw, obviously to underline the sceptical argument against certainty obtained from reason alone.³⁷

'Ayn al-Qudāt then refers directly to Ghazālī's writings about the main issue, calling his 'inadequate' judgement into question, as already mentioned, and turns to a more detailed discussion of the matter. It would be too long to analyse it in every detail here, but his main points may be summarised as follows:

First of all, it has to be made clear whether one is talking about intuitive knowledge of God, such as the one possessed by certain companions of the Prophet like Abū Bakr, 'Alī, Uways-i Qaranī – he mentions only those recognised by the Sunnis, including 'Umar in later passages – or by mystics like Bāyazīd-i Bastāmī, or whether 'knowledge' means the rational certainty of the existence of God gained through proof. In both cases, however, the need for a good teacher is the norm, even in mathematics, as we learn later.

Secondly, as far as the first kind of 'knowledge' is concerned, the teacher need not be impeccable (*ma'ṣūm az gunāh*), since even the Prophet was not. All he needs is experience of the path leading to God, and compassion

(*shafaqat*) for his *murīd*.

Thirdly, it is by no means established that there can be only one such teacher in the world; indeed there may be thousands, as is suggested by the verses Q. 7:181 and Q. 3:104. Nor does he necessarily have to reside in Egypt, or in Iṣfahān, or in Baghdad, or in Hamadān, in clear reference to, respectively, the seats of the Fatimid imam-caliph, the Saljūq sultan, the 'Abbasid caliph, and – possibly – himself. Indeed he may be an uneducated village saint such as Abu'l-Ḥasan-i Kharaqānī.³⁸

Fourthly, if they (the Nizārīs) argue that from among all these, one must be more perfect, and the others below him, this is admissible (*rawā*). However, only a human with all-encompassing vision can truly know who this might be. Even Khidr, supposed to have knowledge of all the Friends of God, said one day, 'I met a *walī* whom I had never seen before!'³⁹

The message is clear enough. Despite very close analogies between his thought and Nizārī *ta'lim*, of which even more striking examples can be found in other passages of his Persian writings,⁴⁰ or perhaps, rather, because of such similarities, 'Ayn al-Quḍāt certainly does not wish to be misunderstood as siding with the Nizārīs. But, contrary to Ghazālī, he does not really accept Saljūq authority as legitimate, either. In fact, he frequently reminds his high-placed disciple that he cannot serve God and 'the Turks' at the same time,⁴¹ another point which is, of course, reminiscent of Nāṣir-i Khusraw.⁴²

To return to Qaṣīda no. 106, it should be noted that 'Ayn al-Quḍāt interprets the remaining verse 40 (in Letter no. 87) in a sense which was hardly intended by the Ismaili poet. He understands the 'Command of God' (*amr-i Khudā*) not as the creative Order, 'Be!', but in the sense of man's legal obligations (*taklīf*), which would 'leave' the lover (*āshiq*) 'if intellect were to leave him',⁴³ that is to say, if he passes to the stage 'Ayn al-Quḍāt (like Ghazālī in his mystical writings) often calls the 'stage beyond reason'. Perhaps a similar Sufi hint was given to the Nāṣir-i Khusraw of Dawlatshāh's tale when he was taught by Kharaqānī that love is superior to intellect.⁴⁴

APPENDIX

A translation of Nāṣir-i Khusraw's Qaṣīda no. 106

N.B: Verse numbers indicated on the left side are those of the Mīnuwī/Muḥaqqiq edition.⁴⁵ Variants of the Taqawī edition (= T), and verses quoted by 'Ayn al-Quḍāt-i Hamadānī (= AQH), are mentioned in the notes. I have taken the liberty of changing the verse order occasionally,

and of arranging the verses in groups of seven times seven, as was done by Julie Scott Meisami in a similar case.⁴⁶ Verses 1–8, 44–46 and 48 are also found in a slightly different translation in Faquir Muhammad Hunzai/Kutub Kassam, *Shimmering Light* (London, 1996), pp. 69f. For an alternative translation of verses 1–2 see Annemarie Schimmel, *Make a Shield from Wisdom* (London, 1993; 2nd ed., 2003), pp. 18f.

- 1 What kind of canopy is this? An ocean full of pearls, you might say
Or thousands of candles lit inside a burnished bowl
- 2 A garden on the sphere, perhaps? Then Jupiter would be the tulip
And if the sphere were in the garden, its rose-bush would be Gemini
- 3 No one would be able to tell the Capella from the red rose
The resplendent from the fragrant.
- 4 See the morning light as it follows the Pleiades
A coral-coloured griffin pursuing a silver pheasant
- 6 Its signs glimmer bright in the dark revolving vault
You might say: a bright idea in an ignorant soul!⁴⁷
- 5 It adorns the face of the East with its many-coloured hues
So it looks just like the throne of Darius.⁴⁸
- 7 The crescent moon would not sail every month as a golden boat
If this rolling blue sphere were not an ocean.

* * *

- 8 Nay, this is not an ocean, but a pavilion of delightful paradise
Or else it would not be full of fair black-eyed ones!
- 9 Rather, it is a 'complete artefact', as the logician would say
If 'complete' means that which suffers no deficiency.⁴⁹
- 10 Really, it is a mill-stone, with the stream running outside it
This is why it is rotating. I have heard this from a truthful one.
- 11 You would see the miller⁵⁰ once you got outside
You might also have seen him inside, if your eye were one that could
see.

- 12 Think: what is the cereal⁵¹ the mill produces to the miller?
If he had no need for the cereal, he would not have set up the mill.
- 13 This is what intellect indicates to the soul of the wise:
It would indeed seem that it had been made for our sake.
- 15 How could our soul ever become the king of the mill thanks to the intellect
If human souls were not parts (*ajzā*) of their Whole [i.e. of the Universal Soul]?⁵²

* * *

- 14 Time (*rūzgār*), the sphere and the stars would all be idle play
If there were no Morrow to this long Day, to this unmeasured Time (*dahr*).⁵³
- 16 The Wheel's message through its turning is: I am passing!
If it were speaking in words as we are, it would say just that.
- 17 The wise one understands its message from its turning
If it had a voice, as we do, its turning would be audible.
- 18 Nobody knows how things are outside this cupola
If a person were up there, he would bow his head.⁵⁴
- 19 There is nothing to be seen outside this, and that is why
Some would believe that there might be empty space out there.⁵⁵
- 20 Unmeasured Time (*dahr*) itself passes or its state keeps changing
Its state would not be changing if it did not have a beginning.
- 21 Each one says something out of his unlit reasoning
So you might believe he is a Qusṭā bin Lūqā!⁵⁶

* * *

- 22 Says one: If we did not have two creators,
It would not be necessary for thorn and date ever to come together.⁵⁷
- 23 Why else would it be that Light, Good, Purity, Beauty
Are natural enemies of Darkness, Evil, Filth and Ugliness?⁵⁸
- 24 Says another: If the world had a just Creator
His justice would at once be apparent to the world and man.⁵⁹

- 25 Sand, salt-marsh, rock, desert, caves and brackish water
Would be cultivated land, orchards, meadows and gardens like
brocade.⁶⁰
- 26 Why would the one be a poor slave, servant, beggar
The other a king, a lord majestic and strong?⁶¹
- 27 If God had wanted the world to be altogether Muslim
Neither Jew nor Christian would exist beside Muslims!⁶²
- 28 Yet another one says: All this *is* justice, and we are to be [nothing
but] slaves
It was and shall be His to want, not ours.⁶³

* * *

- 29 I would give the true [answer] if, through the language of these
mean people,
My speech could encourage the intelligent ones to listen.⁶⁴
- 30 If every mean one were entitled to dispense a religion
The Creator would not have established prophethood in the world.
- 31 If there were no difference, all men being equal
Everyone would be unique and peerless in his essence
- 32 But this, too, cannot be so for the mind, because then
Everyone would be both equal to his fellow creature, and yet, unique.
- 33 And whatever turns out to be absurd, after reflection, cannot come
true.
Therefore, one should not say: 'Were it like that, it would be beautiful!'
- 34 Thus, absurd was the discourse on the world's condition advanced
by him who said:
'It would be better if there were neither masters nor slaves!'⁶⁵
- 37 He resembles the intelligent ones as long as he keeps silent, but
As soon as he speaks, you would say his head is full of black bile!⁶⁶

* * *

- 35 As for him who said: 'It is not for us to want', the intellect will reply:
This surely is the opinion of a drunkard or one insane!⁶⁷

- 36 How could such a mindless person ever [be allowed to] go to *miḥrāb*
and pulpit
If the commoners were not altogether blind in the eye of the heart
[=mind]?
- 38 Why would he face the *miḥrāb* [i.e. pray] if it were not out of hope
To get [a piece^e of] bread and a pot of fried food and *ḥalwā* in
Paradise!⁶⁸
- T37 Why would the backs of this handful of imitators be bent in prayer
If it were not in the hope of fruit from the Tūbā-tree in the Garden?
- 39 How could there be a place in Paradise for the pious ascetics and the
saints
If it were to be measured by the belly and stomach of these people?⁶⁹
- 40 Say, the Intellect is from the Command of God [cf. Qur'an 17:85] for
man, O Son,
The Command would leave him if Intellect were to leave him.⁷⁰
- 41 In the human composition it is Intellect which is the ruler in
creation
If it were not for Intellect, there would be no How and Therefore for
man.⁷¹

* * *

- 42 Both Creation and Command belong to Him [Qur'an 7:54]. He
made and ordered what He willed.
How is it, then, permissible to say *after* this: 'If He willed'?⁷²
- 43 If only you listened, O Brother, for I told you a full story
Pure and worthy, so you might say: 'This is pure ambergris!' ⁷³
- 44 And if someone objects: 'If the "Proof" [i.e. the author] were a sage,
why, then
Is he sitting alone like a lonely pauper in the Yumgān valley?' ⁷⁴
- 45 He knows not that if my plight were evil like his
My back would be bent like his before kings! ⁷⁵
- 46 I would not wish to possess what the king has
And let him have all the knowledge I have instead.⁷⁶
- 47 Why would I stay in Yumgān, friendless, distressed and a pauper

If the affairs of religion were not in such disturbance and confusion?⁷⁷

- 48 How could my soul have been mounted on such wisdom
If my support were not the rider of the ash-coloured Duldul
[i.e. 'Alī]?⁷⁸

Notes

1. Farhad Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs: Their History and Doctrines* (2nd ed., Cambridge, 2007), p. 366.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 205.
3. *Sa'adat-nāma*, first ed. (with a French summary) by Edmond Fagnan, 'Le livre de la félicité par Nāṣir ed-Dīn Khosrou', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 34 (1880), pp. 643–674 and 36 (1882), pp. 96–114; tr. George M. Wickens, 'The *Sa'adatnāme* attributed to Nāṣir-i Khusrau', *Islamic Quarterly*, 2 (1955), pp. 117–132 and 206–221.
4. Nāṣir-i Khusraw (attrib.), *Rawshanā'ī-nāma* [in verse], ed. and tr. Hermann Ethé as 'Nāṣir Chusrau's *Rûsanâinâma*, oder Buch der Erleuchtung', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 33 (1879), pp. 645–665 and 34 (1880), pp. 428–464; also as an appendix in Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Safar-nāma*, ed. Maḥmūd Ghanizāda (Berlin, 1341/1922); and as an appendix in Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Diwān*, ed. Naṣr Allāh Taqawī et al. (Tehran, 1304–1307 Sh./1925–1928; 3rd ed., Tehran, 1348 Sh./1969–1970), pp. 511–542.
5. François de Blois, *Persian Literature: A Bio-Bibliographical Survey* (London, 1992), vol. V, 1, pp. 206–211.
6. Wladimir Ivanow, ed. and tr., *Six Chapters or Shish Fasl also called Rawshana'i-nama* (London and Leiden, 1949).
7. Or five, if the short version of Nāṣir-i Khusraw's *Jāmi' al-ḥikmatayn* – a '*Risāla*' published as an appendix to Nāṣir-i Khusraw's *Diwān*, ed. Naṣr Allāh Taqawī et al. (3rd ed., Tehran, 1348 Sh./1969–1970), pp. 563–583 – is counted as an independent treatise.
8. The oldest recorded copy of the metric *Rawshanā'ī-nāma*, which has apparently not been used in any edition, is dated 710/1310 (see de Blois, *Persian Literature*, vol. V, 1, p. 210). Another metric *Rawshanā'ī-nāma*, which has absolutely nothing to do with the one ascribed to our author, was written in the eighth/fourteenth century by a certain Iftikhār al-Dīn-i Dāmghānī and published by Ḥasan Dhu'l-Fiqrī in Iraj Afshar and Karīm Iṣfahānīyān, ed., *Nāmwāra-yi duktur Maḥmūd-i Afshār-i Yazdī* (Tehran, 1373 Sh./1994–1995), vol. 8, pp. 2300–2335; a photocopy of this was kindly provided by Nasrollah Pourjavady. As for the prose *Rawshanā'ī-nāma*, the oldest manuscript, as described in a more recent edition by Taḥsīn Yazījī and Bahman Ḥamīdī (Tehran, 1373 Sh./1994), is dated 27 Šafar 674 (= 22 August 1275).

The earliest manuscript of the *Dīwān*, or, more precisely, of a collection of poetry containing in addition to selections from five other poets, 78 of Nāṣir's *qaṣīdas*, is dated 714/1315. It is found in MS 132 of the Persian Collections in the India Office Library (now in the British Library) and corresponds to MS 903 in Hermann Ethé, *Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in the Library of the India Office*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1903), pp. 564–565; see also Edward G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia* (London and Cambridge, 1902–1924), vol. 2, p. 219; it is referred to as MS *sīn* in the critical edition of Nāṣir's *Dīwān* by Muṣṭafā Mīnuwī and Mahdī Muḥaqqiq (Tehran, 1357 Sh./1978).

9. Leonard Lewisohn, *Beyond Faith and Infidelity: The Sufi Poetry and Teachings of Maḥmūd Shabistārī* (Richmond, 1995), pp. 26f.
10. Nāṣir-i Khusraw (attrib.), *Rawshanā'ī-nāma* [in verse], v. 176, ed. Ethé, p. 430; *Safar-nāma*, ed. Ghanizāda, appendix, p. 12; *Dīwān*, ed. Taqawī et al., appendix, p. 518. Shabistārī's paraphrase reads *rūḥ-i namā'* for the 'vegetative spirit'; see Šamad-i Muwaḥḥid, ed., *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i shaykh Maḥmūd-i Shabistārī* (Tehran, 1365 Sh./1986–1987), v. 706 on p. 186, see also p. 269. Lewisohn's translation in *Beyond Faith* (p. 27) should be revised accordingly.
11. See Dawlatshāh-i Samarqandī, *Tadhkirat al-Shu'ārā'*, ed. Edward G. Browne as *The Tadhkiratu 'sh-shu'arā' ("Memoirs of the poets") of Dawlatshāh bin 'Alā' u'd-Dawla Bakhtishāh al-Ghāzī of Samarqand* (London, 1901), pp. 61–64. Dawlatshāh identifies Nāṣir's *Rawshanā'ī-nāma* specifically as a work 'in verse' (*dar naẓm*, *ibid.*, p. 63.24). It is not clear exactly on what evidence Yahya El-Khachab, *Nāṣir ʿ Hosrow: son voyage, sa pensée religieuse, sa philosophie et sa poésie* (Cairo, 1940), pp. 4–11, and Alice C. Hunsberger, *Nasir Khusraw, The Ruby of Badakhshan: A Portrait of the Persian Poet, Traveller and Philosopher* (London and New York, 2000), pp. 21–26, ascribe what is, in fact, Dawlatshāh's account of Nāṣir's life, to al-Qāḍī al-Bayḍāwī's *Nizām al-tawārīkh* (written in 674/1275), so that Dawlatshāh, writing in 892/1487, would have taken it from there. Nothing whatsoever about Nāṣir-i Khusraw is to be found in any existing edition of the *Nizām al-tawārīkh*, ed. Hakim Sayyid Shams-Ullah Qadri (Hyderabad, 1930); ed. Bahman Mīrzā Karīmī (Tehran, 1934); ed. Mīr Ḥāshim Muḥaddith (Tehran, 1383 Sh./2003). On various versions, manuscripts and editions of this work see Charles Melville, 'From Adam to Abaqā: Qāḍī Baidāwī's Rearrangement of History', *Studia Iranica*, 30, i (2001), pp. 67–86 and 36, i (2007), pp. 7–64.
12. Summary in El-Khachab, *Nāṣir ʿ Hosrow*, pp. 5–6, and Hunsberger, *Nasir Khusraw*, pp. 22–24.
13. Pseudo-'Aṭṭār, *Lisān al-ghayb*, ed. Aḥmad Khwushniwīs 'Imād (Tehran, n.d. [preface dated 1344 Sh./1966]), pp. 149 and 188.
14. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, vol. 2, pp. 241f.
15. Arthur J. Arberry, *Classical Persian Literature* (London, 1958; 2nd ed. 1967), pp. 69–71; Peter L. Wilson and Gholam Reza Aavani, tr., *Nasir-i Khusraw*:

- Forty Poems from the Divan* (Tehran, 1977), pp. 81f.; Annemarie Schimmel, *Make a Shield from Wisdom: Selected Verses from Nāṣir-i Khusraw's Divān* (London, 1993), pp. 94–96; Hunsberger, *Nasir Khusraw*, pp. 194f.
16. Mahdī Muḥaqqiq. 'Chihra-yi dīnī wa madhhabī-yi Nāṣir-i Khusraw dar Dīwān', in *Yād-nāma-yi Nāṣir-i Khusraw* (Mashhad, 2535 Persian Imperial Year/1356 Sh./1976), p. 495.
 17. Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, ed. Valentin A. Zhukovskii (Tehran, 1336 Sh./1957), p. 425, tr. Reynold A. Nicholson, *The Kashf al-Mahjūb: The Oldest Persian Treatise on Šūfism* (London, 1911), p. 328.
 18. See especially vv. 18 and 20 of the *qaṣīda*: *qurbān-i nafs-i shūm-i la'im* and *sharr-i nafs* – a very unusual usage of the term *nafs* for Nāṣir-i Khusraw. For him, the soul (*nafs*) is normally a 'noble substance' (*gawhar-i sharīf*). In his *Khawān al-ikhwān*, ed. 'Alī Qawīm (Tehran, 1338 Sh./1959), ch. 43, p. 138, Nāṣir points out that for the religious scholars, it is the spirit (*rūḥ*) which is nobler than the soul, whereas it is the other way round for the philosophers.
 19. Summarised by Hunsberger, *Nasir Khusraw*, pp. 189–192.
 20. Hujwīrī visited Baṣṭāmī's tomb twice, the second time for a period of three months (see Hujwīrī, *Kashf*, p. 77; tr. Nicholson, pp. 68f.). Nāṣir says in the *Safar-nāma*, ed. Maḥmūd Ghanīzāda, p. 4, that he 'paid a visit (*ziyārat*) to Shaykh Bāyazīd-i Baṣṭāmī' on his way from Nishāpūr to Dāmghān; he left it on 8 Dhu'l-Qa'da 437/17 May 1046. Earlier in his life, he had apparently lived at the court of Sultan Maḥmūd (r. 388–421/998–1030) and his son Mas'ūd in Ghaznī (r. 421–432/1030–1041), and visited Lahore (cf. *Safar-nāma*, pp. 78 and 90).
 21. Nūr al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, *Bahāristān*, ed. Ismā'il Hākīmī (3rd ed., Tehran, 1374 Sh./1995–1996), p. 95. For an English translation of the same verses, see Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, vol. 2, p. 243; Browne, *ibid.*, p. 242, refers to them as the 'almost blasphemous verses'.
 22. 'Ayn al-Quḍāt al-Hamadhānī, *Tamhīdāt*, ed. 'Afīf 'Usayrān in *Muṣannafāt-i 'Ayn al-Quḍāt-i Hamadānī* (Tehran, 1341 Sh./1962) part II, p. 189. For further references and bibliography see Hermann Landolt, 'Ayn al-Quḍāt al-Hamadhānī [Part I]: Life and Work', *EI3*.
 23. 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Nāmahā-yi 'Ayn al-Quḍāt-i Hamadānī*, vol. 2, ed. 'Afīf 'Usayrān and 'Alīnaqī Munzawī (Beirut and Tehran, 1350 Sh./1972), pp. 7f.
 24. This *qaṣīda* can be found in the edition by Taqawī et al., pp. 364–368, with the relevant verses (38–43) on p. 366. In an additional note at the end of an article, Bertel's mentions that, in the opinion of Muḥtabā Mīnuwī, these verses should be attributed to Sanā'ī. See Andrey E. Bertel's, '*Nazariyāt-i barkhī az 'urafā wa shī'ayān-i ithnā 'asharī rāji' bi arzish-i mīrāth-i adabī-yi Nāṣir-i Khusraw*', in *Yād-nāma-yi Nāṣir-i Khusraw*, pp. 118f.
 25. 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Nāmahā-yi 'Ayn al-Quḍāt-i Hamadānī*, vol. 3, ed. 'Alīnaqī Munzawī (Tehran, 1377 Sh./1998–1999), Introduction, pp. 68 and 78.
 26. 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Nāmahā*, vol. 2, pp. 114f.
 27. 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, *Nāmahā*, vol. 2, p. 219.

28. 'Ayn al-Qudāt, *Nāmahā*, vol. 2, p. 303.
29. Forough Jahanbakhsh, 'The Pir-Murid Relationship in the Thought of 'Ayn al-Qudāt Hamadānī', in Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshṭiyānī et al., ed., *Consciousness and Reality: Studies in Memory of Toshihiko Izutsu* (Tokyo, 1998), pp. 129–147. Still indispensable for the emergence of the 'training shaykh' in classical Khurāsānī Sufism are two studies by Fritz Meier: 'Quṣayrīs *Tartīb as-sulūk*', *Oriens*, 16 (1963), pp. 1–39, and 'Hurāsān und das ende der klassischen šūfik', in *Atti del convegno internazionale sul tema: La Persia nel medioevo (Roma, 31 marzo – 5 aprile 1970)* (Rome, 1971), pp. 545–570. Both are now available in English in Fritz Meier, *Essays on Islamic Piety and Mysticism*, tr. John O'Kane with editorial assistance by Bernd Radtke (Leiden, 1999), respectively 'Quṣayrī's *Tartīb as-sulūk*', pp. 93–133 and, 'Khurāsān and the End of Classical Sufism', pp. 189–219. See also Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period* (Edinburgh, 2007).
30. Naser Shoarian-Sattari, 'Abū al-Qāsim al-Dargazīnī', *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, vol. 2, p. 427.
31. See Landolt, 'Ayn al-Qudāt al-Hamadhānī'. For a lengthy discussion, see Hamid Dabashi, *Truth and Narrative: The Untimely Thoughts of 'Ayn al-Qudāt al-Hamadhānī* (Richmond, 1999), pp. 475–536.
32. 'Ayn al-Qudāt, *Shakwa al-gharīb*, in *Muṣannafāt*, ed. 'Afif Usayrān, part III, pp. 10f.; tr. Arthur J. Arberry, *A Sufi Martyr: the 'Apologia' of 'Ain al-Qudat al-Hamadhani* (London, 1969), p. 34.
33. 'Ayn al-Qudāt, *Nāmahā*, vol. 2, p. 113.
34. 'Ayn al-Qudāt, *Nāmahā*, vol. 2, p. 115.
35. Contrary to what is suggested by Ghazālī in his *Kitāb al-Mustazhiri*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī, *Fadā'iḥ al-bāṭiniyya wa faḍā'il al-mustazhiriyya* (Cairo, 1383/1964), esp. paras 159–186 (pp. 79–90); partial tr. Richard Joseph McCarthy, *Freedom and Fulfillment* (Boston, 1980), esp. pp. 222–231, Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's principal argument for the necessity of a 'trustworthy teacher' does not necessarily amount to a pure and simple denial (*ibtāl*) of reason. Al-Shahrastānī's Arabic translation of Ḥasan's *Chahār Faṣl* rather points to the insufficiency of reason in knowing God without *ta'līm*; see al-Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-Milal wa'l-niḥal*, ed. Sayyid Muḥammad al-Kaylānī (Cairo, 1387–1388/1967–1968), vol. 1, pp. 195–199; French tr. Daniel Gimaret and Guy Monnot as *Livre des religions et des sectes* (Louvain, 1986), vol. 1, pp. 560–565. For an analysis of the difference between Ghazālī's and Shahrastānī's versions see Farouk Mitha, *Al-Ghazālī and the Ismailis: A Debate on Reason and Authority in Medieval Islam* (London, 2001), pp. 54f. As was pointed out by Gimaret, *Livre des religions et des sectes*, vol. 1, p. 561, n.80, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī had already noticed the difference and even explained Ḥasan's argument empathically by comparing reason to the pupil of the eye, and *ta'līm* to the light, while at the same time arguing for the exclusive validity of reason, and criticising Ghazālī for having failed to really do so. See Rāzī, *Munāzarāt Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī fī bilād Māwarā'*

- al-Nahr*, ed. and tr. Fathalla Kholeif, *A Study on Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and his Controversies in Transoxiana* (Beirut, 1966), Arabic pp. 39–42, translation pp. 62–65. It is also noteworthy that Rāzī refers not only to Shahrastānī but also discusses an otherwise non-extant Persian treatise by Ghazālī on the same issue, which may have indeed contained direct quotes from Ḥasan-i Šabbāh, especially given that the crucial word *basanda* (*Munāẓarāt* §102) can mean ‘sufficient’ and does not have to be read as *pasandīda*. Accordingly, the question is whether intellect is ‘sufficient’ or not, not whether it should be ‘accepted’ or not as Kholeif’s translation (p. 62) suggests.
36. For a major *geistes-* and *sozialgeschichtlich* survey of the background of this problem, see Joseph van Ess, *Die Erkenntnislehre des ‘Aḍudaddīn al-Īcī* (Wiesbaden, 1966), especially pp. 281–288. Van Ess suggests (*ibid.*, p. 287) that Rāzī’s dissatisfaction with Ghazālī’s presentation of the issue may have been influenced by ‘Alī b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Walīd’s *Dāmīgh al-bāṭil wa ḥatf al-munāḍil*, ed. Muṣṭafā Ghālib (Beirut, 1403/1982), vol. 1, pp. 273ff. However, this suggestion seems difficult to accept given that Rāzī’s *munāẓarāt* were held in 582/1186 in Transoxiana, whereas Ibn al-Walīd’s activity as a doctrinal writer had hardly begun before 584/1188, when he was appointed by Ḥātim al-Ḥāmidī as his deputy in Ṣan‘ā; cf. Ismail K. Poonawala, *Biobibliography of Ismā‘īlī Literature* (Malibu, CA, 1977), p. 156.
 37. ‘Ayn al-Qudāt, *Nāmahā*, vol. 2, pp. 114–115; see also van Ess, *Die Erkenntnislehre*, p. 287.
 38. ‘Abu’l-Ḥasan Karaqānī’, *Elr*, vol. 1, pp. 305–306.
 39. ‘Ayn al-Qudāt, *Nāmahā*, vol. 2, pp. 115–120.
 40. On the soul of the master as a mirror of God for the disciple, see ‘Ayn al-Qudāt, *Tamhīdāt*, pp. 9 and 30ff.; on the need for the *murīd* to obey the *pīr* even if the order appears to go against the religious conventions, see ‘Ayn al-Qudāt, *Nāmahā*, vol. 1, p. 270; on the need for a ‘prophet’ who can be seen presently, see ‘Ayn al-Qudāt, *Nāmahā*, vol. 2, p. 366.
 41. For example, ‘Ayn al-Qudāt, *Nāmahā*, vol. 2, pp. 166 and 430.
 42. For ample evidence for Nāṣir’s moral, social and political attitudes, i.e. his praising of the Fatimids and his spite and indignation vis-à-vis the Khurāsānī ‘*ulamā*’ and their supporters, the Saljūqs, see Jalāl Matīnī, ‘Nāṣir-i Khusraw wa madīḥa-sarā’i’, *Majalla-yi dānishkada-yi adabiyyāt wa ‘ulūm-i insānī*, 10, ii (1353 Sh./1974), repr. in *Yād-nāma-yi Nāṣir-i Khusraw*, pp. 465–492 and Ghulām-Ḥusayn Yūsufī, ‘Nāṣir-i Khusraw, muntaqidī ijtimā‘i’, in *Yād-nāma-yi Nāṣir-i Khusraw*, pp. 619–640; see also the index of the Taqawī edition of Nāṣir’s *Dīwān*, s.v. ‘Turk’.
 43. ‘Ayn al-Qudāt, *Nāmahā*, vol. 2, p. 219.
 44. Cf. Hunsberger, *Nasir Khusraw*, pp. 22–24.
 45. Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Dīwān*, ed. Mīnuwī and Muḥaqqiq, pp. 225–228; ed. Taqawī et al., pp. 439–441.
 46. Tr. Julie Scott Meisami as ‘That Which is Best’, in Hermann Landolt, Samira Sheikh and Kutub Kassam, ed., *An Anthology of Ismaili Literature: A Shi‘i*

Vision of Islam (London, 2008), pp. 271–275; originally published in Julie Scott Meisami, 'Symbolic Structure in a Poem by Nāṣir-i Khusrau', *Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies*, 31 (1993), pp. 103–117.

47. T. v. 5.
48. T. v. 6.
49. The 'logician' is probably Aristotle; cf. Aristotle, *Physics* III, 6, 207a 9–15.
50. The 'miller' is presumably the Universal Soul (cf. v. 15).
51. The 'cereal' = mankind (*mardum*); cf. Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Zād al-musāfirīn*, ed. Muḥammad Badhl al-Raḥmān (Berlin, 1923), p. 463.
52. Following Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī (as opposed to Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī): the individual soul is a particle (*juz'*) (not a 'trace' – *athar*) of the Universal Soul. T. v. 14.
53. T. v. 15. For the translation of *dahr* as 'unmeasured time' see Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Jāmi' al-ḥikmatayn*, ed. Henry Corbin and Muḥammad Mu'in (Tehran and Paris, 1332 Sh./1953), p. 118.
54. Perhaps to be understood as 'I would bow my head' (*kardī=kardamī* ?); cf. v. 29 *man biguftī*.
55. Against the Platonising idea of an eternal, empty space, held by the famous anti-Ismaili philosopher and physician Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Zakariyā al-Rāzī (Rhazes), Nāṣir-i Khusraw defends a thoroughly Aristotelian concept of space/place: see e.g. Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Zād al-musāfirīn*, ch. 9, pp. 96–109.
56. AQH v. 1. This verse is the first among the seven verses quoted from this *qaṣīda* by 'Ayn al-Quḍāt in Letter no. 75 (*Nāmahā*, vol. 2, pp. 114f.). It is also the one verse quoted much later by way of embedded citation (*taḍmīn*) in the *qaṣīda* attributed to Mir Findiriskī; see 'Abbās Sharif-i Dārābī-yi Shīrāzī, *Tuḥfat al-murād: Sharḥ-i qaṣīda-yi ḥikmiya-yi Mir Abu'l-Qāsim-i Findiriskī* (Tehran, 1337 Sh./1958 or 1959), Preface and pp. 170–172. Quṣṭā b. Lūqā al-Ba'albakkī (d. ca. 300/912) was a famous scholar and translator of Greek astronomical, mathematical, medical and philosophical works. His influential Arabic translation of the *Placita Philosophorum* (edited with a German translation and commentary by Hans Daiber as *Aetius Arabus: Die Vorsokratiker in arabischer Überlieferung*, Wiesbaden, 1980) was used and commented upon by Abū Bakr al-Rāzī; see also Mahdī Muḥaqqiq, *Filsūf-i Rayy* (Tehran, 1349 Sh./1970), pp. 100 f.
57. AQH v. 2.
58. AQH v. 5 (after v. 26).
59. AQH v. 3. T. v. 27.
60. T. v. 28.
61. T. v. 24. AQH v. 4 (with variant reading: *chākīr-i har kas budī* instead of *chākīr-u sāsīstī*).
62. T. v. 25.
63. T. v. 26.
64. AQH v. 6, with variant reading: *Man bigūyam az zabān-i Ibn-i Hayyān rāstī*,

- instead of *Man biguftī rāstī gar az zabān-i īn khasān*. It is not clear which Ibn-i Ḥayyān is meant. If this variant represents Nāṣir-i Khusraw's original, one could think of Jābir b. Ḥayyān, the famous alchemist. If it is only 'Ayn al-Qudāt's version, one would, rather, think of Harim b. Ḥayyān, the companion of Uways-i Qaranī; see Arberry, *A Sufi Martyr*, p. 32.
65. Cf. v. 26 above. For the use of *mawlā* in opposite senses (i.e. 'masters' and 'slaves'), see Qaṣida no. 2, v. 50; for a similar critique of egalitarianism, see Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Jāmi' al-hikmatayn*, pp. 156ff. I would like to thank Faquir Hunzai for these references. As in many other places, Nāṣir's target is here probably Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Zakariyā al-Rāzī.
 66. T. v. 41.
 67. Cf. v. 28 above. Here, the target is evidently the common 'traditionalist' Sunni position.
 68. T. v. 42. AQH v. 7 with variant reading: *Pusht-i īn mushtī muqallid kham ki kardī dar rukū', Dar bihisht ar na umīd-i qalya-u ḥalwāstī*, which is almost identical to the reading of the oldest extant MS (i.e. India Office Library MS 132 = MS. sīn in the Mīnuwī/Muḥaqqiq edition (see p. 630)). Still another variant of the same verse is attributed to Nāṣir-i Khusraw in *Haft Bāb-i Bābā Sayyidnā*, tr. in Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Order of Assassins: The Struggle of the Early Nizārī Ismā'ilīs against the Islamic World* (The Hague, 1955), p. 317 (referring to the text edited by Ivanow, *Two Ismaili Treatises*, p. 35); the verse reads as follows in Jalal Badakhchani's new forthcoming edition of *Haft Bāb*, p. 28: *kas naburdī nām-i firdaws-i barīn-rā bar zabān, gar na bahr-i/ murgh-u nān-u kulcha-u ḥalwāstī*.
 69. T. v. 38.
 70. Independently quoted variant by 'Ayn al-Qudāt in Letter no. 87, *Nāmahā*, vol. 2, p. 219: *ḥujjat-i amr-i khudāy ast ay pīsar dar mard 'aql, Amr az ū bar-khāstī gar 'aql az ū bar-khāstī*. Similarly, T. v. 40 has *ḥujjat-u amr ... bar mard*.
 71. T. v. 39.
 72. T. v. 43 (var.).
 73. T. v. 44.
 74. T. v. 45.
 75. T. v. 46 (var., plus one additional verse 47).
 76. T. v. 48.
 77. T. v. 49.
 78. T. v. 50 (var.).

A Dream Come True: Empowerment Through Dreams Reflecting Fatimid–Sulayhid Relations¹

Delia Cortese

The aim of this contribution is to revisit the early political history of the Sulayhid dynasty of Yemen (439–532/1047–1138). I will deal in particular with the dynamics that brought about the rise of an Ismaili *dāʿī*, ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī (d. 459/1067), from obscurity to become the founder of an important – yet short-lived – vassal dynasty in Yemen of the Shiʿi Ismaili Fatimid rulers of Egypt. If of limited consequence for the Fatimids *per se*,² the narratives informing us of the relationship between the Sulayhids and their Egyptian masters played a foundational role in the Ṭayyibī Ismailis’ reconstruction of their own origins and of their sacred history as a distinctive branch of Ismailism.³ Here I will explore the relationship between ʿAlī al-Ṣulayḥī and his master, the Cairo-based imam-caliph al-Mustanṣir bi’llāh (d. 487/1094), as illustrated in narratives of dreams attributed to, and/or claimed to have been dreamed by, ʿAlī himself following the sudden death of his son and heir apparent al-Aʿazz (d. 458/1065).⁴ When contrasted with the portrayal of this master–vassal relationship featured in Ṭayyibī sources that cover the Sulayhids, these dream narratives provide us with some valuable insights. They show how, in the face of spatial and temporal distances, ʿAlī is portrayed as legitimising his political and spiritual charismatic credentials on the basis of a visionary proximity to the imam and how his authority as a ruler is ultimately endorsed by God. The narratives also show how ʿAlī is invested with the power to avert or discourage tribal dissent and to secure the genealogical transmission of his authority through his bloodline. The contextualised analysis of these dream narratives will serve as the basis for making some remarks on the Ṭayyibīs’ own understanding of their history and of the spiritual pedigree of their leaders.⁵ As Toufic Fahd puts

it in relation to the function that dream narratives play vis-à-vis 'Abbasid history, 'The dream serves as a screen on which past history is projected, a history [that when the] chroniclers were unable to write [it] ... they used the dream as a subterfuge for telling it.'⁶

The Sulayhid dream narratives on which this study is based form the text of a yet unstudied, unpublished manuscript (MS Ar.I. 1283) dated 1905, from the Zāhid 'Alī collection of Ismaili manuscripts in the Library of The Institute of Ismaili Studies in London.⁷ There are four known extant manuscript copies of this text, but it was possible to consult only one manuscript for this paper.⁸ The manuscript used contains two narratives, the first entitled *Qiṣṣat al-ru'yā min wafāt al-walad al-sayyid al-fāḍil al-mu'tamad* ('The narration of the dream about the death of the son, the lord, the excellent, the reliable') and the second *Qiṣṣat al-ru'yā al-thāniya* ('The narration of the second dream'). Both narratives are seemingly autobiographical in that 'Alī al-Ṣulayhī is shown to be both the dreamer and the narrator, writing in person or seemingly dictating his account to a hypothetical, unnamed scribe.⁹

In the broader field of Islamic dream tradition, 'Alī's dreams fall within the *ru'yā* category, that is sleep visions that are believed to be true because – according to a commonly accepted Islamic belief – they are ultimately inspired by God.¹⁰ In turn, the word *ru'yā* expresses three different kinds of experience: enigmatic, visionary and oracular.¹¹ In mediaeval Islam, an epistemological classification of a dream image required – while considering a wide variety of criteria – an apparent understanding of hierognosis. The importance of the message conveyed in the dream would have to be proportional to the importance of the spiritual authority believed to have appeared in the dream or to have instigated the very occurrence of the sleep vision. In turn, the dreamer could see his social and cultural status enhanced on the basis of being 'chosen' as receiver of a sleep vision conveyed by a figure of authority.¹² On that basis, the narratives discussed here reflect dreams that could – from an Ismaili perspective – be classed as being of the highest order, given that 'Alī's interlocutor is indicated as being no less than the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mustanṣir in person.¹³ Of the several categories of dreams in the mediaeval Islamic context discussed by Gustave von Grunebaum, his category 'dream as a tool of political prophecy' is the most relevant here as it concerns predictions such as future political undertakings and achievements or the death of a ruler.¹⁴

‘Alī al-Ṣulayḥī’s dream world

What follows is a paraphrased translation of both texts. The first account, which runs from fol.1b to fol.10b of the manuscript, begins with a long laudatory formula. Here the line of ‘Alī al-Ṣulayḥī’s spiritual pedigree, and, through that, his Shi‘ī Ismaili credentials, can be retraced all the way back to the first Shi‘ī imam, ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. The account of the dream begins with the narration of an extraordinary event reported as having taken place during the night of 19 Ṣafar 458, that is twenty-eight days after the death of ‘Alī al-Ṣulayḥī’s son, the prince al-A‘azz. That night ‘Alī al-Ṣulayḥī has a dream in which he sees himself in a vast house sitting in front of the imam-caliph al-Mustanṣir dressed in a bright white garment, and he is complaining to God and to the imam, asking why he deserves (5a) the sorrow caused by the death of his son al-A‘azz. In the dream ‘Alī sees a broken pillar, a derelict house and desert behind the imam whose face shines like the sun, so much so that ‘Alī cannot withstand its light. During the vision the imam explains to ‘Alī that the broken pillar and its surroundings stand for al-A‘azz and calls on ‘Alī, his wife (i.e. Asmā’ bint Shihāb, d. 467/1074) and the rest of the believers not to despair. As the imam speaks (5b) light pours out of him, cascading like pearls and white sapphires. ‘Alī reaches over to him and embraces him. At this point the imam stands up and ‘Alī finds himself walking with him until they reach an incredibly big house which is a lush green. Inside it ‘Alī sees his other son (6a) ‘Abd al-Mustanṣir (that is, al-Mukarram) walking across gardens, wearing the most beautiful of green cloaks, surrounded by a group of thirty men from the Ḥimyārī, the Ḥijāzī and the Maghribī tribes. Al-Mukarram is seen leaning towards them (6b), smiling and laughing. His face is like the moon, with a brilliant light (*nūr sāṭi‘*) shining between his eyes. Some 140 men and women, sitting in the house and the gardens, are also all clad in green cloaks. ‘Alī al-Ṣulayḥī asks al-Mustanṣir who those people are and the imam replies that those are the believers who obeyed him through ‘Alī [al-Ṣulayḥī], who did not oppose (*lā ya’sūka*) ‘Alī and did not conflict with ‘Alī, and they are sitting at ease because of their obedience to God and to the imam through ‘Alī. ‘Alī’s son is their leader and intercessor. (7a) Al-Mustanṣir asks ‘Alī which of the two houses he thinks is best and ‘Alī replies that definitely the house in which his son al-Mukarram and the believers are is the best one. In that case, the imam says, ‘Alī should not to be upset since he, his wife and the believers are already in the house of goodness (*dār khayr*). The imam foresees lasting happiness for ‘Alī’s son and confirms that he is the leader of the believers. The imam lifts his head and invites ‘Alī to rejoice for what he has seen

about his son and the believers and suggests that the perishing of al-A'azz was destined. 'Alī should rejoice for that and announce the glad tidings to those believers who obey him. (8a) Al-Mustanşir praises all those who obey God, him and 'Alī, and instructs 'Alī to be tolerant towards those who do not obey him and oppose him despite the imam's love for them. 'Alī sees al-Mustanşir going through a magnificent, great door, and as he does so the door closes on that gathering of 'Abd al-Mustanşir and the believers. Beyond the door 'Alī sees countless people, wrapped in red and yellow shabby clothes. (8b) Al-Mustanşir says that those are the people among the Ḥijāzīs, the Ḥimyārīs, the Maghribīs and others from the people of the *da'wa* who did not obey the imam's command, were disloyal to 'Alī and displeased the imam's heart. They are the people of the *da'wa* who took the oath of allegiance (*dakhalū taḥta 'ahdī wa mīthāqī*) to the imam but did not do what he had ordered through 'Alī: those people are abominable and are excluded from the above-mentioned abode of bliss. The imam tells 'Alī to warn them about what he has seen (9a) so that they may mend their ways. Al-Mustanşir reiterates that whoever obeys 'Alī obeys the imam and that what is 'Alī's is the imam's. Whoever does not obey God and does not obey the imam, through 'Alī, will incur what 'Alī has seen happening to the disobedient ones from the people of the imam's *da'wa*, which the imam has placed under 'Alī's control. The imam has conferred on 'Alī authority over them and invites him to warn them about what he saw and leave the proof (that is, to leave a record of the dream) of what he saw for the sake of the believers so that they will not decrease and the rebels increase.

When 'Alī begins to wake up¹⁵ he is still with the imam and does not part from him until he is fully awake. (9b) 'Alī swears that the account is a faithful report of what he saw in his dream and poses the rhetorical question: Isn't this dream, O Brothers, strong proof and wholesome wisdom for whoever is rightly guided? He swears that the imam ordered him to communicate it to believers and the infidels.

The account of the second dream runs from fols 10b to 13b and is oracular in character. Having announced the matter of the first dream, 'Alī states that he was confronted by doubters, accusing him of delusion and fabrication. He was just in the process of exhorting them to believe him when, during the second night after the night of the first dream, 'Alī dreams once again of sitting in front of the imam who, looking at him, delivers a monologue, confirming and strengthening his message delivered in the first dream. He calls 'Alī his servant, *walī* (lit. 'friend') and helper in the religion of God and the imam's and in the *sunna* of

the imam's ancestor the Prophet of God and in the *sunna* of the imam's ancestors after him. Al-Mustanşir exhorts 'Alī al-Şulayhī to divulge, to the people of the *da'wa*, to whoever is included in his 'island' (*jazīra*) and to those who have taken the oath to God and to him, what he had ordered 'Alī to do in the first dream. In other words, he orders 'Alī to take charge of the people of the *da'wa*. Whoever agrees with 'Alī and follows God, the imam and 'Alī, and obeys 'Alī in whatever he orders and abstains from what is abominable, he will partake of what the imam showed in relation to 'Alī's son al-Mukarram and the believers among the people of the *da'wa* and those who responded to 'Alī's command. In contrast, (11b) for the minority who opposed 'Alī and disobeyed him and falsely testified their faith, what God decrees for them is what the imam showed 'Alī in the previous dream. There the people of the *da'wa* were languishing in the desert, exposed to the sun, crucified naked and with their heads exposed, excluded from what is bestowed upon those who obey the imam, God and 'Alī. (12a) The imam encourages 'Alī to divulge the message with no fear as he has God by his side and he is an established 'proof' (*ḥujja*) of God and the imam. Whoever obeys him has blessings as shown bestowed on 'Alī's son and the obedient believers while those who deride him, oppose God, 'Alī, and the imam will be damned. There is nothing else for 'Alī to do but to warn the people of the *da'wa* that whoever listens to his words, believes in his dream and follows his orders will prosper, be guided and succeed. Thus the second dream narrative ends.

The text of these dream narratives is clearly legitimising in purpose and ideological in nature.¹⁶ It is intended to show its aimed audience that 'Alī and al-Mustanşir are close; that al-Mustanşir has the Yemeni *jazīra* at heart and applies his gift of foreknowledge to forecast success for 'Alī and his son al-Mukarram in that region;¹⁷ that al-A'azz was meant to die for the better good of Yemen in order for 'Alī and his followers truly to succeed; that al-Mustanşir confers on 'Alī and his son both spiritual and secular authority to rule over the people of the *da'wa* and the regions they aspire to control. We also learn about al-Mustanşir's decree that whoever obeys him and God via 'Alī and, eventually, his son will be rewarded. However, whoever opposes him by opposing 'Alī will be punished. On the basis of the narrative, 'Alī's leadership is shown to follow in a line of authority that ultimately stems from God and that, via al-Mustanşir's endorsement of al-Mukarram as successor, is meant to be perpetuated in the Sulayhid line. Through the account of his dreams, 'Alī can be seen as receiving the imam's endorsement in shifting the criterion for establishing the leadership of the Yemeni *da'wa* from a form of appointment to a dynastic and

genealogical mode. We can also infer from the tone of the text that people need some persuading to accept the appointment of al-Mukarram as 'Alī's successor; that there are dissenting Yemeni tribes which are against 'Alī and which need to be warned of the consequences if they do not accept him; that some of the people of the *da'wa* have been breaking the oath of allegiance and need to be alerted to the consequences. One should note the shift of emphasis between the first and second dream narrative. The second one reveals 'Alī's efforts to strengthen his claim to authority through the words of the imam. Both dream narratives 'function as the displaced authority of the authorial "I": what the author cannot say on his own authority, he can support with testimony from an outside source through the narration of a dream or vision'.¹⁸

As far as genre is concerned, these Sulayhid narratives display literary conventions which are consistent with those found across the entire spectrum of Islamic 'political' dream narratives.¹⁹ Here are some examples: planetary activity surrounding the body of the figures in authority appearing in the dream; the symbolic association of a light-face as characteristic of figures with special charisma; the 'great house' metaphor; the juxtaposition of landscapes; the distinctive clothing and colour symbolism.

Unlike most mediaeval Islamic political and other dream narratives, 'Alī's narratives here are standalone accounts, that is, they do not reach us as part of broader texts or generic frameworks.²⁰ For instance, mediaeval biographies, historiographies and chronicles often feature dream narratives that could serve as devices to further legitimise the spiritual and political authority of the master or masters in whose honour the chroniclers were writing. The Sulayhids did not last long enough to generate a tradition of 'dynastic' chroniclers. Nevertheless, as discussed later in this paper, accounts of 'Alī's dreams, other than those narrated in the *Qiṣṣas*, were to be integrated by the Ṭayyibī Ismaili historian-cum-*dā'ī muṭlaq* Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn (d. 872/1468) in his *Uyūn al-akhbār*, in the section on al-Mustanṣir's reign dealing with the rise to power of the Sulayhids. In most dream narratives, the interpretation of the dream (*ta'bīr*) forms a separate part of the account and involves the intervention of a 'wise' third party.²¹ Here instead 'dream' and 'interpretation of the dream' are accomplished within the dream itself. The interpretation of the dream is revealed as part of the same sleep vision. Moreover the 'interpreter' of the dream is the same authority that appears to 'Alī, that is, the imam. This can be interpreted as a clear intent to add potency to the ideological character of the dream, to prevent accusations of misinterpretation and to

ensure that the 'correct' interpretation of the dream is transmitted.

'Alī al-Ṣulayḥī's material world

When contrasting the scenarios described as having taken place in 'Alī al-Ṣulayḥī's dream world with the salient events marking early Sulayhid history as presented to us by Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn, we find that, in the material realm, 'Alī's relationship with the imam was far from being a consistently close affair as 'Alī would have liked his contemporaries to believe. Reading through the lines of Idrīs' account we gather that al-Mustanṣir's initial attitude to 'Alī could at best be described as one of *laissez faire*. 'Alī had somehow to resolve the problems that the imam's physical and emotional distance posed, in order not to see his spiritual and political credibility compromised in what amounted to a single-handed effort to reinvigorate the Yemeni Ismaili *da'wa* which was languishing in a hostile and complex tribal environment.

After more than a century of obscurity since the 'glorious' days of the first major phase of Ismaili activity in Yemen through the mission of the famous *dā'i*, Maṣṣūr al-Yaman (d. 302/914), the Yemeni *da'wa* resurfaced tentatively with a line of *dā'is* who proved ineffective at gaining the allegiance of the all-important Yemeni tribal rulers (mostly pro-Zaydī at this stage).²² It was eventually one of these *dā'is*, Sulymān b. Amīr al-Zawahī, who appointed 'Alī al-Ṣulayḥī as his successor to lead the *da'wa* in Yemen. 'Alī eventually assumed the leadership towards the end of the reign of the imam-caliph al-Zāhir (d. 427/1036).²³ In the late summer of 439/1047 'Alī is reported to have informed the imam-caliph al-Mustanṣir in writing of his intention to declare the Ismaili *da'wa* openly in Yemen. Dutifully, al-Ṣulayḥī waited for the imam's permission to act but Idrīs' account of the events leads us to understand that an answer failed to arrive. In the meantime, 'Alī and his supporters were threatened by tribal adversaries. It is in the context of this breakdown in communications that we are shown 'Alī entering into oneiric contact with the imam. Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn reports that al-Ṣulayḥī dreamed that al-Mustanṣir gave him the order to openly declare the Fatimid *da'wa* and to build a fortress on the top of Jabal Maṣār. In the dream al-Mustanṣir also prophesied that al-Ṣulayḥī would one day control the entire province of Yemen. According to Idrīs' account 'Alī's dream seems to have had the desired effect since he gathered support from various tribal groups and raised funds for supporting the Ismaili *da'wa*. Ostensibly emboldened by his visionary endorsement, 'Alī is reported to have written letters to the people of Ḥarāz to declare his intention to

control the region.²⁴

At long last, in early 440/1048 messengers returned from al-Mustanşir to al-Şulayhī confirming al-Mustanşir's order that the *da'wa* in Yemen be openly proclaimed as well as his prophecy of victory.²⁵ It took a further fifteen years for 'Alī's prophetic dream to come true, as it was only by 455/1063 that Şan'ā' and all of southern Yemen was under al-Şulayhī's control.

The victory must have generated warm appreciation of 'Alī on the part of al-Mustanşir, since from this moment, having being a 'mere' *dā'ī*, 'Alī was reappraised. In a letter of thanks from the imam he is described as 'most sublime sultan, singular king, grand amir, support of the caliphate (*umdat al-khilāfa*), crown of the regime, possessor of the two glories, sword of the imam, victorious in religion, the order of the believers'.²⁶ Al-Mustanşir had his reasons: it was during his reign from 433/1041 onwards that the Fatimid empire began to experience territorial decline, and apart from the brief capture of Baghdad in 449/1058, Fatimid dominion was on the downturn until 'Alī's success in Yemen. This province was to become the last significant territorial holding of the Fatimids and an essential outpost for the revival and redirection of the *da'wa* and its ancillary activities, primarily trade.

Presumably emboldened by his new status as sultan and king, 'Alī appointed his son al-A'azz as his successor in the *da'wa*, thus *de facto* transforming the nature of the Yemeni *dā'ī*-ship into a dynastic monarchy to be passed on through his bloodline.²⁷ Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn informs us that al-Mustanşir agreed to al-A'azz's appointment in a letter dated Rajab 456/June–July 1064.²⁸ But, somewhat unexpectedly, on 22 Muḥarram 458/24 December 1065 al-A'azz died. In Şafar 458/January 1066 'Alī duly informed al-Mustanşir of his sad loss and, hardly a month after receiving 'Alī's communication, the imam-caliph is reported to have replied with a letter, dated Rabī' I 458/January–February 1066, offering condolences to 'Alī and enjoining him to appoint his other son, al-Mukarram, as his successor.²⁹ However, according to the dating that Idrīs gives, this letter – entrusted to two Sulayhid messengers who were at the imam's court at the time – appears not to have reached 'Alī until a year later, that is in Rabī' II 459/February–March 1067.³⁰ It is in the context of these postal 'inconsistencies' that the dream narratives ascribed to 'Alī can be appraised as historiographical 'gap fillers', so to speak, and, ultimately, as Ṭayyibī foundational stories projected back in time to validate the Sulayhids as a dynasty endowed with a special spiritual and secular authority. As successors of the Sulayhids in the leadership of the Yemeni *da'wa*, the Ṭayyibī

leaders reworked their own spiritual pedigree retrospectively so as to substantiate their own claims as rightful leaders of the Ṭayyibī community.

The dreams, ostensibly recorded by ‘Alī al-Ṣulayḥī *a posteriori*, are dated Ṣafar 458/January 1066 which is the same month when, Idrīs tells us, ‘Alī wrote to al-Mustanṣir to inform him of al-A‘azz’s death. In filling the gap between the death of al-A‘azz and the arrival of the envoys in Yemen confirming al-Mukarram’s succession, which was over a year long, the recording of the ‘true’ dreams served as:

1. A narrative device to give, retrospectively, greater weight and spiritual significance to the appointment of al-Mukarram as spiritual and political leader of the *da‘wa*, by presenting it as willed by the imam, rather than having occurred by default following the sudden death of the son ‘Alī had initially intended as his heir, the prince al-A‘azz.
2. A device to voice the imam’s sanctioning of genealogical descent as an acceptable mode to determine al-Mukarram’s right to succeed ‘Alī al-Ṣulayḥī as leader of the Yemeni *da‘wa*, a role typically determined by appointment.³¹
3. Evidence for the existence of a metaphysical line of communication between ‘Alī and the imam whereby, when they cannot contact each other by letter, they can resort to oneiric encounters.
4. Evidence that ‘Alī possessed the gift of foreknowledge: after all – if we accept Idrīs’ dating – it was not until a year after the occurrence of the dreams that ‘Alī received al-Mukarram’s appointment as successor confirmed in writing by the imam.
5. As warning against religious and political dissent.³²

In the light of what is reported by Idrīs vis-à-vis the circumstances of al-Mukarram’s designation as successor, one asks: why the need to record in writing ‘as proof for posterity’ such empowering dreams? In time – according to Idrīs’ sequence of events – ‘Alī did receive his much awaited letters of endorsement from the imam (not one, but two, one of which was addressed to al-Mukarram himself), reiterating his support for al-Mukarram and approving ‘Alī’s request to install his son as *walī al-‘ahd*. ‘Alī’s aspirations for his son came true: al-Mukarram’s appointment was publicly announced on 8 Jumādā I 459/27 March 1067 from the mosque in Ṣan‘ā.³³ By this time, al-Mustanṣir had bestowed more titles on ‘Alī al-Ṣulayḥī and valued – to some extent encouraged – his endeavours to calm (or take advantage of) the politically volatile climate

in Mecca. However, over the course of five years, the imam repeatedly turned down 'Alī's insistent requests to visit Cairo and to meet the imam in person.³⁴ But on Dhu'l-Qa'dā 459/September 1067, without having ever met al-Mustanşir, en route to Mecca and still determined to go to Cairo, 'Alī was murdered.

Considering the nature and charged content of the dream narratives analysed here, it is somewhat surprising to find that these *Qişşas*, either in the form of quotations or references or extracts, have left no trace in Ṭayyibī literature and Ṭayyibī-related historiography. Particularly notable is their absence as a source for the fourth/eleventh-century anonymous author of the biography of al-Mukarram (*Sīrat al-Malik al-Mukarram*), who does quote the dreams of al-Şulayhī but not those featured in the *Qişşas*. Also Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn, who in his *Uyūn* quotes the dreams featured in the *Sīra*, appears to have ignored the dream narratives presented in this paper. This conspicuous absence raises questions about the dating and attribution of these texts and, therefore, the ultimate function that these narratives were meant to perform for the audience they were written for.³⁵

The legacy

The recognition of the authority of the persons appearing in the sleep vision is the first crucial step towards the understanding of the dream and the weight to assign to it. However, the cognitive power of a dream does not rest on the belief that the dream may convey factual and objective data about the characters and events appearing in it. Rather it rests on the relevance that the recipient of the dream assigns to the information that the sleep vision conveys. The *a posteriori* quality implicit in the act of disseminating or publicising the content of a dream through a narrative indicates therefore that, at least in the eyes of the narrator, the dream's cognitive force has collective relevance for the intended audience of his narrative. Who would have a 'collective' investment in the recording of 'Alī's powerful sign of the spiritual and secular endorsement of his authority, disseminated via the recording of his 'true' dreams?

Since the first half of the sixth/twelfth century, the spiritual and secular leadership of the Ṭayyibīs of Yemen first, and then of the Ismaili Dā'ūdī Bohras of India, has rested on the figure of the *dā'ī muṭlaq* (lit. 'absolute missionary'). This is a leader invested with supreme spiritual and secular authority to guide the Ṭayyibī community on behalf of the hidden Ṭayyibī imam. When retracing the origins of the spiritual credentials attached to the position of *dā'ī muṭlaq*, we observe a number of doctrinal 'adjustments'

that scholarly *dā'īs muṭlaq* of the Ṭayyibīs had to make *a posteriori* in order to demonstrate a continuous link between their spiritual charisma and the spiritual authority of the Fatimid imams. The formation of the role of *dā'ī muṭlaq* as the spiritual leader of the Ṭayyibīs and their successors, mainly though not exclusively, passed on dynastically to this day, is said to have been masterminded by the widow of al-Mukarram, Queen Arwā (d. 532/1138). In 526/1132 she declared that the chief *dā'ī* of her time, al-Dhu'ayb b. Mūsā al-Wādī'ī al-Hamdānī (d. 546/1151), was *dā'ī muṭlaq*, thus marking the foundation of a distinctive Ṭayyibī *da'wa* hierarchy and system in Yemen that would be independent from that in Cairo. In time the Ṭayyibī *da'wa* also became independent of the Sulayhid regime which ended with the death of Queen Arwā. For a *dā'ī muṭlaq* to be able to claim the spiritual charisma attached to his role, it would be logical to expect that, in turn, the initiator of such a role, in this case Queen Arwā, would have a high spiritual status. This would grant this person the authority, albeit nominally, to take the initiative of forming an altogether new role in the *da'wa* leadership. Indeed Queen Arwā stands out as a unique example in the history of Islam of a woman believed to have been formally bestowed with spiritual authority of the highest order. In fact, according to correspondence preserved in the Ṭayyibī tradition, the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mustanṣir made the queen a *ḥujja*, the second highest spiritual rank after that of the *bāb* (lit. 'gate') who, as head of the central *da'wa*, was next to the imam-caliph in the *da'wa* hierarchy as structured at the time of al-Mustanṣir. The belief in the bestowal of the rank of *ḥujja* on Queen Arwā served to legitimise the spiritual ascendancy of the *dā'īs muṭlaq* by situating the origin of their rank in a spiritually endowed source.³⁶

As an Ismaili denomination, the Ṭayyibīs of Yemen (and their successors in India) owed their origins to Queen Arwā and the fact that a large faction of her followers pledged their support, after the death of the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Āmir, to his infant son al-Ṭayyib as his rightful successor. This challenged the claims of the Ḥāfiẓī *da'wa* in Cairo which defended the rights of al-Āmir's cousin al-Ḥāfiẓ, who actually succeeded to the Fatimid caliphate. Al-Ṭayyib is believed to have died in infancy and the very evidence for his existence has been subjected to scrutiny.³⁷ In any event, the elusiveness of al-Ṭayyib was 'resolved' by his supporters by resort to the doctrine of occultation. The belief in al-Ṭayyib's concealment gave the Ṭayyibīs a name and a defined identity that would separate them doctrinally and politically from their Cairo-based rivals, the upholders of the Ḥāfiẓī imamate of the later Fatimids. But an occulted, infant imam would eventually be of little consequence to the Ṭayyibī leaders in terms

of enabling them to link their spiritual pedigree to an explicit designation (*naṣṣ*) by an imam. The empowerment of the Sulayhids through the meta-physical transmission of spiritual and secular authority, from imam to *dā'ī* (and the subsequent elevation of the status of the *dā'ī* to monarch) as recounted in the dream narratives presented here would resolve this epistemological problem since it would make the emergence of the Ṭayyibī leadership, as spiritual and ideological successors of the Sulayhids, ultimately the outcome of a divine design. The redaction of these dream narratives could be therefore regarded as a late Ṭayyibī reconstruction, possibly dating to the period after Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn. This was a time when Ṭayyibī history came to be marked by internal dissent and factionalism and, therefore, when laying claim to 'the past' by a faction must have been of paramount importance in defending its legitimacy against the claims of a rival group. The stories in the *Qisṣas*, whilst also serving as a severe warning against dissent, functioned as foundational political myths. Their role was to fill obscure gaps in the narrative of the resurfacing of the Ismaili *da'wa* in Yemen and 'resolve' shifts in the quality of authority, from mundane to supernatural, first in the Sulayhid and then the subsequent Ṭayyibī franchising of the Fatimids' distinctive brand of spiritual power.

Notes

1. I wish to express my gratitude to the British Academy for awarding me an Overseas Conference Travel Grant that allowed me to present a paper based on this study at the Middle Eastern Studies Association (MESA) conference in Montreal, Canada, in November 2007. Previous to that event I presented preliminary remarks based on this research at the Colloquium on Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamlūk Eras, University of Ghent, Belgium, in May 2007. I also owe my thanks to many friends and colleagues who greatly assisted me in developing and completing this work. I am particularly grateful to Professor Eric Ormsby, The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, and Mr Alnoor Merchant, the Library of The Institute of Ismaili Studies, for facilitating my access to the manuscript on which this research is based. A big thank you goes to Drs Marzia Balzani and Simonetta Calderini, Roehampton University, London, Dr Iain Edgar, University of Durham, Professor Yehoshua Frenkel, University of Haifa, Professor Heinz Halm, University of Tübingen, and Professor Sholeh A. Quinn, UC Merced, University of California. While I have benefited from their invaluable advice in writing this paper, I am solely responsible for any shortcomings it might feature.
2. The relationship between the Fatimids and the Sulayhids, is, by and large, ignored in contemporary Fatimid sources containing historical informa-

- tion on the Fatimids and in later historiographies dealing with them.
3. The Ṭayyibis emerged, mostly in Yemen, as a faction that, upon the death of the Fatimid caliph al-Āmir (d. 524/1130), upheld the succession rights of his alleged son al-Ṭayyib against the claims of those who supported al-Āmir's cousin, al-Ḥāfiẓ (d. 544/1149). The Ṭayyibis believed that al-Ṭayyib went into occultation as an infant, thus initiating a period of *ṣatr* (concealment) that continues to this day.
 4. There is extensive academic literature dealing with dreams in Islamicate contexts. Among recent works see Louise Marlow, ed., *Dreaming Across Boundaries: The Interpretation of Dreams in Islamic Lands* (Cambridge, MA, 2008), and John C. Lamoreaux, *The Early Muslim Tradition of Dream Interpretation* (New York, 2002). Both publications provide comprehensive coverage and bibliography of previous scholarly work done on the subject.
 5. For other examples in Islamic historiography of dream narratives functioning as dynastic foundational stories to show how God singles out a specific person or family for future rule, see Sholeh A. Quinn, 'The Dreams of Shaykh Ṣafi al-Dīn in Late Safavid Chronicles', in Marlow, ed., *Dreaming*, p. 222.
 6. Toufic Fahd, 'The Dream in Medieval Islamic Society', in Gustave von Grunebaum and Roger Caillois, ed., *The Dream and Human Society* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966), p. 352. In this article, Fahd also highlights the ideological character of 'Abbasid dream narratives as devices to reinforce the supernatural character of claimed political legitimacies and authority. In recent times, the 'political' power of dreams came to be questioned by senior Ayatollahs such as Abolfazl Moussavian in the context of Iran's parliamentary elections of March 2008. See Roula Khalaf and Najmeh Bozorgmehr, 'Qom Highlights Iran Power Battle', *The Financial Times* (8 March 2008), <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/067fa5c4-ecb3-11dc-86be-0000779fd2ac.html>.
 7. For a full description of the manuscript see Delia Cortese, *Arabic Ismaili Manuscripts: The Zāhid 'Alī Collection in the Library of The Institute of Ismaili Studies* (London, 2003), no. 114, pp. 129–130.
 8. The known copies are in the following collections: (1) Zāhid 'Alī, now in the Library of The Institute of Ismaili Studies; (2) Shaykh Muḥammad 'Alī al-Hamdānī, Surat, India, now in the Abbas Hamdani Collection (still uncatalogued) recently donated to the Library of The Institute of Ismaili Studies; (3) Dā'ūdī Atba'-i Malak Wakīl, Mumbai, India, transcribed from the collection of 'Abd-i 'Alī Imād al-Dīn; (4) the Library of the *dā'wa*, *al-Khizāna al-Āmira*, Mumbai, being the Dā'ūdī Bohra literary heritage collection kept under the tutelage of the current *dā'i-muṭlaq*, Sayyidnā Muḥammad Burhān al-Dīn.
 9. Within the corpus of early and mediaeval Islamic dream literature, autobiographical dream narratives are rare. John C. Lamoreaux, 'An Early Muslim Autobiographical Dream Narrative: Abū Ja'far al-Qāyīnī and his Dream of

- the Prophet Muḥammad', in Marlow, ed., *Dreaming*, p. 79.
10. Toufic Fahd and Hans Daiber, 'Ru'yā', *EI2*, vol. 8, pp. 645–649.
 11. Cf. Lamoreaux, *The Early Muslims*, pp. 84–85.
 12. Cf. Marlow, ed., *Dreaming*, p. 5.
 13. Shi'i traditions rank at the same level the appearance in dreams of the Prophet or the imam. If either of them orders a ruler to do good the vision is automatically taken as a true one and must be accepted as genuine. Cf. Khalid Sindawi, 'The Image of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib in the Dreams of Visitors to His Tomb', in Marlow, ed., *Dreaming*, pp. 187–188.
 14. Gustave von Grunebaum, 'The Cultural Function of Dream as Illustrated by Classical Islam', in von Grunebaum and Caillois, ed., *The Dream*, pp. 18–20.
 15. The indication of the exact timing of the occurrence of the dream is a typical device used to add a greater sense of veracity to the narrative. Cf. Lamoreaux, *The Early Muslims*, p. 83, on the significance of the hour of the night and even the season of the year in determining how seriously the dream ought to be taken.
 16. On the function of dreams as legitimising devices in Islamic contexts see Leah Kinberg, 'The Legitimization of the *Madhāhib* Through Dreams', *Arabica*, 32 (1985), pp. 47–79.
 17. The theme of the imam-caliph al-Mustanṣir's prodigious power of foreknowledge, pointing to the Ṭayyibī understanding of the predestined and supernatural nature of al-Mukarram's succession to 'Alī al-Ṣulayḥī, is also found in the fourth/eleventh-century *Sīrat al-Malik al-Mukarram*. This is the anonymous biography of al-Mukarram, where al-Mustanṣir is shown to have had knowledge of al-A'azz's death before he was actually informed of it and to have sent a *siḡill* of al-Mukarram's appointment as successor before receiving a request from his father. See Mohammed Shakir, '*Sīrat al-Malik al-Mukarram*: an Edition and a Study' (Ph.D. thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1999), part 1, pp. 17–18; part 2, p. 6.
 18. Patricia Cox Miller as cited in Marlow, ed., *Dreaming*, p. 6.
 19. Cf. Sholeh A. Quinn, 'The Dreams of Shaykh Safī al-Dīn and the Safavid Historical Writing', *Iranian Studies*, 29 (1996), pp. 127–147; Iain R. Edgar, 'The "True Dream" in Contemporary Islamic/Jihadist Dreamwork: A Case Study of the Dreams of Taliban leader Mullah Omar', *Contemporary South Asia*, 15 (2006), pp. 263–272; Iain R. Edgar, 'The Dream Will Tell: Militant Muslim Dreaming in the Context of Traditional and Contemporary Islamic Dream Theory and Practice', *Dreaming*, 14 (2004), pp. 21–29.
 20. Cf. Marlow, ed., *Dreaming*, p. 10.
 21. *Ibid.*, pp. 7–8.
 22. Farhad Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs: Their History and Doctrines* (2nd ed., Cambridge, 2007), p. 208.
 23. On the line of Yemeni *dā'īs* before 'Alī al-Ṣulayḥī and the circumstances of 'Alī's appointment to the leadership of the Yemeni *da'wa*, see Ḥusayn F.

- al-Hamdānī with Ḥasan S. Maḥmūd al-Juhanī, *al-Ṣulayḥiyyūn wa'l-ḥaraka al-Fāṭimiyya fi'l-Yaman* (Cairo, 1955), pp. 49–61.
24. Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn, *'Uyūn al-akhbār wa funūn al-āthār*, vol. 7, ed. Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid, with summary tr. by Paul E. Walker and Maurice A. Pomerantz, *The Fatimids and their Successors in Yemen: The History of an Islamic Community* (London, 2002), pp. 33–35 English; pp. 5–11 Arabic.
 25. Ibid.
 26. Ibid., p. 38 English; p. 22 Arabic. According to the fourth/eleventh-century anti-Sulayhid author Muḥammad b. Mālīk al-Ḥammādī al-Yamanī, gifts were exchanged at this point between 'Alī al-Ṣulayḥī and al-Mustanṣir. 'Alī sent to the imam-caliph 70 swords with agate hilts, 12 daggers with agate handles, 5 embroidered robes, as well as bowls and ring-stones made of agate, Kabulite myrobalans, musk and ambergris. In return, al-Mustanṣir, besides awarding 'Alī governorship and titles, presented him with banners. See Muḥammad b. Mālīk al-Ḥammādī al-Yamanī, *Kashf asrār al-bāṭiniyya wa akhbār al-Qarāmiṭa*, tr. Muhtar Holland as *Disclosure of the Secrets of the Bāṭiniyya and the Annals of the Qarāmiṭa* (Doha, 2003), pp. 124–125.
 27. The questions of the accommodations in the structure of the Yemeni *dā'wa* that resulted from this change in the nature of the Yemeni Ismaili religious leadership are partly discussed by Abbas Hamdani, 'The Dā'ī Ḥatīm Ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ḥamidī (d. 596H/1199AD) and his book *Tuḥfat al-Qulūb*', *Oriens*, 23–24 (1970–1971), pp. 262–263. He speculates about the reasons for the five-year mission at al-Mustanṣir's court of the Yemeni Qāḍī Lamak, sent to Cairo by 'Alī al-Ṣulayḥī in 454/1062. Hamdani suggests that the separation between religious and political leadership in Yemen was introduced by Lamak b. Mālīk al-Ḥammādī during the reign of al-Mukarram. In his *Tuḥfat al-qulūb*, the *dā'ī* al-Ḥamidī states that Lamak returned to Yemen from his mission having been nominated chief *dā'ī* by the imam-caliph. This appointment brought about an accommodation whereby al-Mukarram, who had inherited both the *dā'ī*ship and the monarchy from his father, was made *dā'ī* with responsibility for the state while Lamak was *dā'ī* with responsibility for the *dā'wa* proper, that is the religious affairs.
 28. Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn, *'Uyūn al-akhbār*, p. 53 English; p. 99 Arabic. Shakir, *Sīrat*, part 2, p. 39, refers to a *siḥill* (epistle) indicating Rabī' II 456/March 1064 as the date of 'Alī al-Ṣulayḥī's appointment of al-A'azz.
 29. At this point Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn, *'Uyūn al-akhbār*, pp. 53–54 English; pp. 98–101 Arabic, inserts the story mentioned earlier, taken from *Sīrat al-dā'ī al-Mukarram al-Ṣulayḥī*, where the imam-caliph al-Mustanṣir miraculously has knowledge of the death of al-A'azz before messengers from Yemen reach him in Cairo.
 30. Ibid. p. 55 English; pp. 102, 103 Arabic. The Fatimids relied primarily on pigeon homing and merchant networks for their postal needs rather than using a *barīd* (postal) system. This made the postal service somewhat unreliable and, especially, when using merchant networks, it is difficult to estab-

- lish the average speed at which the distance between far-flung destinations was covered. On the Fatimid postal system see Adam J. Silverstein, *Postal Systems in the Pre-Modern Islamic World* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 121–125.
31. Hamdani, 'The Dā'i', p. 278, stresses that prominent Fatimid and Ṭayyibī literature dealing with the organisation of the Ismailī *da'wa* does not mention hereditary succession as a condition or qualification for holding the office of *dā'i*. In time, however, the role of leader of the Ṭayyibī *da'wa*, the *dā'i muṭlaq*, became mostly dynastically transmitted.
 32. The history of the post-Ṣulayḥī Yemenī *da'wa* is characterised by internal dissent. The Ṭayyibīs, who indeed emerged as a dissenting group, became spilt between the mid-sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries into disputing branches, namely the Dā'ūdīs, the Sulaymānīs and the 'Alawīs. In turn, each of these groups experienced internal factionalism.
 33. Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn, *ʿUyūn*, pp. 55–56 English; pp. 102–109 Arabic.
 34. These five years, from 454/1062 to 459/1067, coincide with the great famine and plague that hit Egypt during the reign of al-Mustaṣṣir. Abbas Hamdani suggests that 'Alī al-Ṣulayḥī's keenness to visit the imam during this time had had to do, among other reasons, with his ambition to appear in Egypt as saviour of the country, the role that the Armenian governor of Damascus Badr al-Jamālī was eventually to play in 466/1074. In response, the imam not only dissuaded 'Alī from making the journey but, in a patent attempt to divert his attention elsewhere, he suggested that 'Alī should conquer the Ḥaḍramawt. Hamdani, 'The Dā'i', p. 261.
 35. The very concept of 'authorship' involved in the transference of the dream from an experiential level to become literary product raises questions as to the very idea of an 'author' of a dream narrative. See Norman N. Holland as cited in Marlow, ed., *Dreaming*, p. 10. Shakir, 'Sirat', does not question the authenticity of 'Alī al-Ṣulayḥī's authorship of the *Qiṣṣas*, therefore dating the text to the second half of the fourth/eleventh century, part 2, p. 66 and p. 78. In the broader context of scholarly debates over the 'authorship' of mediaeval Islamic dream narratives, Hagar Kahana-Smilansky sustains the diverging view that '*Prima facie* there is no reason to doubt that an autobiographical dream is based on real experience'. Hagar Kahana-Smilansky, 'Self-Reflection and Conversion in Medieval Muslim Autobiographical Dreams', in Marlow, ed., *Dreaming*, p. 102.
 36. For a full discussion of Queen Arwā and the question of her *ḥujjashīp*, see Delia Cortese and Simonetta Calderini, *Women and the Fatimids in the World of Islam* (Edinburgh, 2006), pp. 129–140.
 37. For a full discussion of the controversies surrounding the figure of al-Ṭayyib as successor of al-Āmir see Samuel M. Stern, 'The Succession to the Fatimid Imam al-Āmir, the Claims of the Later Fatimids to the Imamate, and the Rise of Ṭayyibī Ismailism', *Oriens*, 4 (1951), part 2, pp. 193–255; repr. in Samuel M. Stern, *History and Culture in the Medieval Muslim World* (London, 1984), article XI.

From the 'Moses of Reason' to the 'Khidr of the Resurrection': The Oxymoronic Transcendent in Shahrastānī's *Majlis-i maktūb ... dar Khwārazm*

Leonard Lewisohn

Introduction

Born in 479/1086–1087 in the northern frontier of Khurāsān in Persia,¹ 'Abd al-Karīm Tāj al-Dīn al-Shahrastānī was the most important theologian in the Islamic philosophical tradition to renew and reinvigorate Ghazālī's polemic against Avicennian Peripatetic rationalism.² His education in the Islamic sciences was comprehensive, having studied with students of the great Sunni theologians, Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085) and the latter's student Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), in Nishāpūr. His studies covered the fields of Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr*), scholastic theology (*kalām*) of the Ash'arī school and the Prophetic traditions (sing. *ḥadīth*). He learned jurisprudence (*fiqh*) under Abu'l-Muẓaffar Aḥmad al-Khawāfi, a pupil of Juwaynī. This study of Sunni traditionalism was also supplemented by attendance at the classes of the son of the famous mystic Abu'l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072) of Nishāpūr, author of *al-Risāla fī 'ilm al-taṣawwuf*, 'probably the most widely read summary of early Sufism'.³ During the second decade of the twelfth century CE, Shahrastānī held a chair at the celebrated Nizāmiyya college in Baghdad for three years. Amongst his many pupils was the maternal uncle of the famous Shi'i theologian Naṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 673/1274), who would later go on to teach Ṭūsī's father. During the following decade, Shahrastānī took up a post in the chancellery of the Saljūq sultan Sanjar, which he maintained until he retired to his native village Shahrastān (currently in the Republic of Turkmenistan), where he died in 548/1153.⁴

Shahrastānī's most celebrated work, the *Kitāb al-Milal wa'l-niḥal*,⁵ was a kind of encyclopaedia of religious ideas and denominations that

was dedicated to analysing the various sects and religions of the world. The chapters of this work, as Guy Monnot observes, 'as a carefully crafted whole ... remained, until the eighteenth century, totally unique. They represent the high point of the Muslim histories of religion.'⁶ In respect to the esoteric traditions of Islam, perhaps the important aspect of this encyclopaedia is its discussion of extra-Islamic religious communities and faiths, in particular Zoroastrians, Jews, Manichaeans, Sabians and Arab pagan cults, not to mention Hindu sects and thinkers.⁷

Although an intense anti-philosophical polemic, particularly against Peripatetic rationalism, pervades most of his works, the most significant of these attacks is found in his *Kitāb al-Musāra'a* (or *Kitāb Muṣāra'at al-falāsifa*), a refutation of Avicenna.⁸ As an Ash'arī theologian, Shahrastānī's best-known work is his *Kitāb Nihāyat al-aqdām fī 'ilm al-kalām*,⁹ which addresses the full range of Muslim theological sects and denominational differences from a Sunni perspective.

Despite his strong Ash'arī theological background and staunch public affiliation with Sunnism, the significance of the presence of the numerous Ismaili terms, ideas, indications and allusions in his various works still remains puzzling.¹⁰ For instance, concerning Shahrastānī's Qur'anic commentary, *Mafāṭiḥ al-asrār wa maṣābiḥ al-abrār*,¹¹ his largest work,¹² estimated to be 'equal, and sometimes superior to those of Ṭabarī or Rāzī in terms of precision, breadth, antiquity and variety of sources quoted',¹³ a contemporary Iranian scholar wrote:

By studying this work one becomes intimately acquainted with the basic ideas and thoughts of this great thinker, allowing us to conjecture that beneath the cover of his Ash'arī and Shāfi'ī theology, he was not unacquainted with the teachings and esoteric hermeneutics (*ta'wīlāt*) of the Ismaili denomination.¹⁴ ... It is probable that Shahrastānī followed their method, even if he did not allow himself to publicly declare himself a follower of the Ismaili faith.¹⁵

In this respect, it is important to note that the Shi'ī theologian Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī in his autobiographical work *Sayr wa sulūk* referred to him as *dā'ī al-du'āt*,¹⁶ an Ismaili title meaning 'the supreme missionary'. Shahrastānī's Ismaili affiliation, if only on the basis of this assertion alone, is considered as confirmed beyond all reasonable doubt by many scholars,¹⁷ although by some it is still 'treated with caution',¹⁸ while others claim the title was 'merely honorary'.¹⁹ But the fact remains that notwithstanding his Shāfi'ī Sunnism and his high rank in the Sunni community, in three of his works – his Qur'an commentary, the *Mafāṭiḥ al-asrār wa maṣābiḥ al-abrār* (*Keys*

to the *Arcana and Lamps of the Godly*), the *Kitāb al-Muṣāraʿa*, and the *Majlis-i maktūb* – are found signs of a definite predilection for aspects of Ismaili doctrine and thought. On the basis of these works, then, as Wilferd Madelung and Toby Mayer judiciously comment, 'some of his core beliefs and religious thought' could be described as Ismaili.²⁰ Yet a study of Shahrastānī's terminology, comparing it with that of other authors that influenced, and were influenced by, him – particularly the likes of Ghazālī and Ṭūsī – which would definitely resolve this 'Ismaili issue', is still lacking.

Shahrastānī's character typology of Moses and Khidr

Shahrastānī's only Persian work, *Majlis-i maktūb-i Shahrastānī mun'aqid dar Khwārazm* (A Public Lecture in a Congregation held by Shahrastānī in Khwārazm), contains a long esoteric commentary on the meaning of the story of Moses and Khidr from Q. 18:67–82.²¹ It is by far the most profound, lucid and beautiful commentary on the tale I know of, excelling any prose or verse commentary on the subject by any of the Sufis I have found to date. The profound meditative spirituality and the soaring visionary insights of Shahrastānī's depiction of Moses and Khidr to my knowledge are not equalled by other commentaries on this tale in Persian literature.²² This work takes the form of a dissertative dialogue, in the Platonic sense, as between Socrates and some other disputant, with Khidr playing here the Socratic role. In Persian literature, this passage may also be compared to Rashid al-Dīn Maybudī's sublime depiction of the Qur'anic story of Adam and the angels in his Qur'an commentary, *Kashf al-asrār*, and to the account of the same legend given by Aḥmad Sam'anī (d. 534/1140) in his *Rawḥ al-arwāḥ*.²³ At the same time, he opens up entirely new vistas to the reader on the meaning of time, eternity, sin, punishment, prophecy, sainthood and a host of other topics. Among its major themes, the treatise elucidates the concepts of creation (*khalq*) and the divine Command (*amr*); the role of angels in the hierarchy of the cosmos, the various stages of human evolution and the cycles of prophecy.

The account of Moses' abortive discipleship of Khidr given in Q. 18:65–82 is well known and need not be repeated here.²⁴ For the purposes of the present essay, suffice it to say that in the Qur'anic account there appear several fundamental motifs presented in succinct, almost epigrammatic, form that are later more fully deciphered and expounded by a host of authors from different schools of Islamic philosophy, theology and mysticism. The six most important of these motifs, to which nearly all Muslim

authors allude when interpreting the tale, can be itemised under the following rubrics:

1. *Esoteric knowledge.* Khidr is the perfect mystic who is both adept at and possessor of 'esoteric knowledge' (*'ilm-i ladunī*) or knowledge by divine inspiration, as the Qur'an says: *We have taught him knowledge proceeding from us* (*'allamnāhu min ladunnā 'ilman*, Q. 18:65).
2. *Character typology.* In Islamic mystical and philosophical texts, Moses and Khidr represent two fixed, stock character types: rationalist theologian vs. inspired saint. Khidr is thus a symbol of the inspired divine knowledge which transcends time, space and causality, while Moses personifies pedestrian reason bound to regulations based on hair-splitting *shari'a* rationalism and *kalām* theology.
3. In *Sufi psychology*, Moses represents human reason, fantasy, nomocentric legalism and prophecy, while Khidr symbolises divine inspiration, the higher intuitions of metaphysical imagination, sainthood, the esoteric faith and the Religion of Love.
4. The *spiritual guide*. Khidr symbolises the spiritual guide par excellence, whether this be the Ismaili imam/*hujjat*/the Sufi master; Moses typifies the wavering follower (*murid*) of the imam/*hujjat*/the Sufi master.
5. *Paradoxical behaviour.* Khidr's paradoxical behaviour and shocking actions are always allegorically interpreted as expressive of hidden spiritual meanings decipherable by hermeneutical exegesis (*ta'wīl*).
6. *Immortality and transcendence of temporality.* In a number of commentaries on the tale, Khidr represents a knowledge of eternity that transcends temporal duration and soars beyond the mutable transient sphere of all that which is past, present or to come. Khidr is immortal according to legend, having drunk of the water of life in the land of darkness and is more or less identical to the prophet Ilyās (Elijah).

Although all six motifs are present in Shahrastānī's account, there will not be enough space to explore them all in this chapter, so only those motifs most immediately relevant to the subject under discussion will be examined below. Here it is necessary to give an overview of the seven basic theological/theosophical notions that appear in Shahrastānī's character sketches of the personalities of Moses and Khidr in the *Majlis*. The following summary should provide a useful itemisation of the basic themes that the text presents:

1. Moses represents a black-and-white, *sharī'a*-centric viewpoint, vainly attempting to strictly weigh Khiḍr's actions in the balance of Islamic Law, on the supposition that iniquity is solely determined by disobedience and probity by obedience to that Law.
2. Moses inhabits the realm of doubt and vague suspicions (*shakk u shubhat*), whereas Khiḍr dwells in the realm of certitudes (*yaqīn*).
3. Moses inhabits the narrow temporal realm divided up artificially into past, present and future. From Khiḍr's standpoint, such temporal distinctions are irrelevant since he considers the past, present and future to be 'all one'. Khiḍr claims that time and space obey his dictates, and maintains that the judgements he passes cannot be subjected to any temporal or spatial conditions.
4. Khiḍr's knowledge hails from the realm of the Oxymoronic Transcendent where contraries embrace and merrily court each other side by side. Moses' mind is blind, unable to fathom how the unifying force of divine love can blot out these contraries, so that Khiḍr's paradoxes only arouse in him further indignation and perplexity.
5. Khiḍr's judgement relies on divine foreknowledge (*'ilm*), and his teaching (*ta'līm*) is based on a symbolic, esoteric hermeneutics (*ta'wīl*) which gives him an insight into the original gist and intent of every word or deed. All events have already been finalised and actualised (*mafrūgh*), says Khiḍr, who sees everything impending and in an inchoative state (*musta'naf*) as having already occurred – the future and the past being for him illusory divisions of a single, undivided temporal structure.
6. For Moses, there do not seem to be any explicitly clear ethical values underlying Khiḍr's judgements. Khiḍr explains himself in an *ex cathedra* manner as follows: 'in the realm of causelessness (*'ālam-i bī-sababī*), judgements are made without any (underlying) causes; judgements are made according to the Command (*farmān*).⁷ The terms *amr* or *farmān* (divine order) in Shahrastānī's lexicon draw on both Ismaili and Ghazālīan terminology, referring to a realm outside space and creation that is the original homeland of the divine spirit (*rūḥ*), the spiritual world composed of celestial intelligences.²⁵ This realm is always contrasted to the mutable realm of material creation (*khalq*),²⁶ the realm of cause and effect (*'ālam-i sabab*) in which Moses remains stranded.
7. The theory of the two rulings or rules (*ḥukm*) as elaborated by Khiḍr to Moses, relates, in the first place, to the world of becoming which is impending or inchoative (*musta'naf*) and yet is to be fulfilled, so

that its judgements are based on Canon Law (*sharī'a*). The second rule concerns what has been preordained in eternity where judgements are based on a clairvoyant foreknowledge of the resurrection (*qiyāmat*). According to the second rule, all temporal actions and events have already been elaborated, actualised (*mafrūgh*) and completed. *Mafrūgh* and *musta'naf* are well-known terms in the Ismaili lexicon. Jalal Badakhchani points out that,

The terms 'primordial decree' (*ḥukm-i mafrūgh*) 'and 'subsequent decree' (*ḥukm-i musta'naf*) are related to the notions of 'primordial past' (*mafrūgh*), i.e. the realm of predestination, and 'subsequent future' (*musta'naf*); i.e. the realm of free will. According to Shi'i theology, mankind dwells between these two realms. ... [so that] a person's spiritual perfection depends on divine grace as well as personal effort. Shahrastānī, in his commentary on the Qur'an, dedicates an entire chapter to the explanation of these principles.²⁷

So *musta'naf* signifies the realm of the law, which is in a condition of constant change and becoming, and *mafrūgh* alludes to the rule of the resurrection which has already been achieved and actualised through preordained destiny (*taqdīr*).²⁸ Moses typifies the Muslim jurist who judges matters strictly by the *sharī'a*; Khidr typifies the judge whose decisions rest on a vision of the laws of eternity. As Khidr explains to Moses, 'I am a judge (*ḥākim*) whose rule is over the eternally actualised, while you are a judge whose authority is over what is impending and inchoative. I am a man of spiritual hermeneutics (*mard-i ta'wīl*); you are a man of literal exoteric religion (*mard-i tanzīl*). I pass judgement over and command the esoteric interior reality of things (*bāṭin*); your mandate is over exoteric external phenomena (*ẓāhir*).'²⁹

Shahrastānī on Time, Eternity and the Oxymoronic Transcendent

Besides the strongly worded Shi'ism of the *Majlis*,³⁰ one also finds a great many Ismaili technical terms in it: in fact, there are many of exactly the same terms that later appear in Tūsī's great Ismaili philosophical text, the *Taṣawwūrāt* (or *Rawḍa-yi taslīm*).³¹ The most important of these terms, mentioned in the fifth and seventh points above, are *mafrūgh* and *musta'naf*, both of which relate to the theory of the two rulings or rules. *Mafrūgh* refers to the eternal decree that has already been elaborated, actualised and conclusively terminated by God. Whereas in the sphere of *mafrūgh* everything has already been predetermined, having literally

'undergone the resurrection' already, everything is mutable in the realm of the inchoative (*musta'naf*), which is that of impending or incipient degree still in the process of becoming (*musta'naf*), and which belongs to the domain of human laws.³² In his Qur'anic commentary, Shahrastānī contrasts the exoteric exegesis of the Qur'an (*tafsīr*) to its esoteric interpretation or *ta'wīl*. He notes that while the exoteric exegesis is focused on temporal concerns conditioned by events still in flux (*mustā'naf*), the science of *ta'wīl* focuses on hermeneutics, which is the knowledge of archetypal meanings or intelligible realities (*ma'anī*) pertaining to the eternal verities of Providence that are already effectively completed and 'foreclosed' (*mafrūgh*).³³

If we examine the structure of reality and time/eternity as outlined in the *Majlis*, we find, altogether, three realms:

1. The first pertains to the realm of becoming (*mustā'naf*) where everything is subject to the realm of exoteric time in which consequences have causes, wages demand prior work, and punishment is occasioned by sin.
2. The second is an eternal and timeless realm, which Shahrastānī calls 'the world of causelessness' (*'ālam-i bī-sababī*). In this realm, the resurrection has already occurred.
3. The third and last realm pertains to what I have termed the 'Oxymoronic Transcendent' because it can be explained only in surrealistic, often literally absurd, images which take the form of either literary oxymora, or else apparently senseless statements, that is to say, paradoxes. The 'Oxymoronic Transcendent' uses a numinous symbolic language drawn from scripture and poetry to express a natural language of spiritual knowledge which, to our modern sensibility at least, blind to the language of myth and symbol and nurtured on Protestant iconoclastic materialism, appears meaningless.

Diagram 1: Shahrastānī and the Oxymoronic Transcendent
 Shahrastānī's Three Realms of Time and Eternity:
 Exoteric, Esoteric and the Oxymoronic Transcendent

1. The Realm of Causes (*‘ālam-i sabab*)

The Teachings of the Law of Moses (*ta’lim-i zāhir-i shari‘at*)

The Realm of Causes and Consequences

Work and Wages – Sin and Punishment

Temporal Change, Becoming, Mutability

<i>ḥukm-i musta’naf</i>	<i>kawn-i mushābahat</i>	<i>ḥukm-i zāhir</i>
<i>qāḍi-yi shari‘at</i> =	<i>mard-i tanzīl</i> =	<i>Mūsā</i>

2. The Realm of Causelessness (*‘ālam bi-sababī*)

The Esoteric Lore of Khidr (*ta’wīl-i bāṭin-i qiyāmat*)

The Realm of the Divine Command and Providence

Wages without Work, Harmonious Maturity of Acts

The Immutable Conditions of Timeless Eternity

<i>ḥukm-i mafrūgh</i>	<i>kawn mubāyanat</i>	<i>ḥukm-i bāṭin</i>
<i>qāḍi-yi qiyāmat</i> =	<i>mard-i ta’wīl</i> =	<i>Khidr</i>

**3. The Realm of the Oxymoronic Transcendent: The *Coincidentia*
Oppositorum of Time and Eternity**

The Angel: One Half Made of Fire, One Half Made of Snow

The Gazelle: One Half Cooked and One Half Raw

Shahrastānī uses two oxymora to describe this realm. The first concerns the Prophet's image of an angel that God created half from fire and half from snow. Yet, the fire does not melt the snow nor does the snow extinguish the fire, God having united together fire and snow. The second image, which he explicitly identifies with the first image, is that of a living gazelle, one half of which is cooked, and the other half raw. Khidr is able to eat of the cooked side, but Moses cannot, being forced to make a fire for himself to cook the raw side.³⁴ Shahrastānī's explanation of the oxymoron of the angel in his *Mafātīḥ al-asrār* in this context merits citation:

[Examining] the image of the angel, half of which was fire and half of which was ice, [it should be understood that] the fire side relates to what

has been already actualised and consummated (*mafrūgh*), and the ice side to what is still in the process of becoming (*musta'naḥ*). Just as fire does not melt ice nor ice extinguish fire, likewise the rule of what is already actualised and consummated does not invalidate the rule of what is still in the process of becoming. Therefore the Prophet of God transposed those speculations [made by Abū Bakr and 'Umar] to that 'angel'. Then, when they requested him to set the matter straight, after the decree [was given by the Prophet], they asked, 'If the matter is finished with, then what is action for?' and he replied, 'Act! For all is disposed towards what it has been created for.' Thus, he ruled in favour of both their judgements, since his statement 'Act!' alludes to the rule of what is still in the process of becoming, and his saying that 'all is disposed towards what it has been created for' alludes to the rule of what has been already actualised and consummated.³⁵

In short, the nature of Khiḍr's realm can only be expressed by paradoxes and transcendent oxymora. The oxymoron of the gazelle, one side cooked and one side uncooked, depicts Khiḍr's situation perfectly. The gazelle itself symbolises the present moment which flies past too quickly for mortal men to catch; its uncooked side is the past that seems unbaked and which cannot be eaten in any case; its cooked side is the future which is already roasted and ready for consumption for the immortal man, Khiḍr. Moses is stranded unbaked in the past, he doesn't understand what is happening, that is, he cannot catch up with (the gazelle's fleeting past) the present moment, much less comprehend the baked side of eternity's sunrise, where the future has already been actualised.

In the wider context of world mysticism, it should be stressed that this oxymoronic realm is a commonplace in mystical, particularly Spanish Catholic, literature as well. St Teresa of Avila (d. 1582), the famous Carmelite mystic, expresses the connection between the fire of love's divine passion and the water of love's grief (tears) as follows:

If the water which falls on our fire comes from heaven, it will not extinguish it; it will rather quicken it. The fire and water are not opposites, but come from the same land. Do not be afraid that one element will destroy the other; on the contrary, each helps the other achieve its effect. The water of true tears – tears which are shed in real prayer – is a gift of the King of Heaven and this water makes the fire burn with a stronger and lasting flame. The fire, in turn, helps the water in its cooling. O my God! How beautiful, how wonderful it is, that fire should cool.³⁶

Khiḍr's/ Shahrastānī's penchant for these literary oxymora is typified by the following passage:

I [Khidr] reside in the realm of causelessness (*‘ālam-i bī-sababī*), where I am delegated to represent what is cooked and mature. I act as an envoy of that which was eternally actualised (*niyābat-i mafrūgh*), so I demand that my food be cooked. In my world, all deeds, all affairs are matured and seasoned. All trees swarm with fruit and those fruits all are ripe and mature. All beings have already been. All intelligences have already become perfectly developed and mature. All souls have reached the peak of perfection. All temperaments have realised harmony and balance ...

Shahrestānī's allegory of Moses and Khidr: Between Ismailism and Sufism

It cannot be disputed that Shahrestānī's analysis of the story of Moses and Khidr in the *Majlis* is, to a large degree, based on Ismaili doctrines. Diane Steigerwald is entirely right to argue that 'in order to understand the deep meaning of this story, it is necessary to understand Khidr's status in Nizārī Ismaili philosophy. Then everything becomes clear in Shahrestānī's exposition.'³⁷ She elaborates this basic thesis as follows:³⁸

In Nizārī Ismailism, Khidr has the status of *hujjat*,³⁹ as opposed to the speaking Prophet (*nātiq*), the *hujjat-i imām* is infallible.⁴⁰ His knowledge is of divine nature, since he benefits from the divine assistance (*ta'yid*).⁴¹ He is the epiphany of the universal intellect (*'aql-i kullī*) in this physical world. For this reason Shahrestānī describes Khidr as being beyond time and space, as having his judgement based on divine knowledge (*'ilm*) and divine will (*mashiyyat*), as being the governor of the accomplished world since his essence is perfect as the intellect (*'aql*).⁴² The intellect's level in the Fatimid Ismaili hierarchy is often associated with the divine Word.⁴³

This Ismaili theory of the immaculate imam and his immediate spiritual double, the *hujjat*, was further elaborated in later Nizārī Ismaili doctrinal works of the Anjudān period in Iran, in particular in the treatise *Faṣl dar bayān-i shinakht-i imām* by Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (d. after 960/1553). In this work, the *hujjat* appears as 'a divinised Sufic *pīr*'.⁴⁴ The *hujjat* is also explicitly excused from following any of the commands of the *sharī'a*; in fact, part and parcel of the truth (*haqīqat*) that he manifests lies in the fact 'that he absolutely does not observe the prescriptions of the *sharī'a*'.⁴⁵ His behaviour in this respect has distinct similarities to Khidr's antinomian morality in the Qur'anic account.

However, although the equation that 'Khidr = the Ismaili *hujjat*' may be true in the denominational sense of the word, to interpret Shahrestānī's

vision of Khidr's esoteric personage entirely as a disguised Ismaili allegory of the mystical hierarchy of adepts, as I hope to show below, simplistically restricts the broader, cosmopolitan scope of Shahrastānī's theosophical references. Ismaili esoteric doctrines do not really explain every detail in Shahrastānī's portrayal of Khidr's strange apophatic theology. Despite the quite substantial and solid evidence advanced by scholars such as Farhad Daftary⁴⁶ and Diane Steigerwald to prove, in her words, that 'Shahrastānī clearly belongs to the Nizārī Ismaili tradition',⁴⁷ the 'Sufi colouring', as Steigerwald calls it, of the figure of Khidr is undeniable.⁴⁸ In this connection, it should be mentioned that later Ismaili authors of the Mongol and Timurid period drew heavily on Sufi poets and ideas to buttress and expound their own beliefs, as can be seen in Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī's own citation of several verses from Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī's *Mathnawī*⁴⁹ regarding the superiority of Khidr to Moses when he tries to explain the Ismaili idea that all references to the prophets and Paradise in the Qur'an should be allegorically interpreted as indicating the *hujjat*.⁵⁰ Since Shahrastānī's hermeneutical exegesis of the figures of both Khidr and Moses is heavily coloured by current and antecedent depictions of these figures in the Persian Sufi tradition, in what follows I will briefly draw attention to some of these portrayals, citing Shahrastānī's own exposition wherever possible, while mentioning the six above-cited motifs utilised by Muslim interpreters of the tale.

Regarding the motif of *character typology*, in the *Majlis* Shahrastānī identifies the knowledge of Moses as restricted and confined to legalistic matters pertaining to Canon Law, a view, of course, not particular to him, but held in common with many of the earliest Sufis, such as Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021),⁵¹ as well as Sufis of the later classical period, such as Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240) in particular.⁵² Moses thus appears as representative of a purely exoteric viewpoint (*ẓāhir*) of the letter of the divine revelation (*tanzīl*), and the lore of Khidr, 'un personnage énigmatique',⁵³ is characterised as one who 'passes judgment on and commands the esoteric interior reality of things (*bātin*)'. As Khidr announces to Moses, 'I am a man of spiritual hermeneutics (*mard-i ta'wīlam*); you are a man of literal exoteric religion (*mard-i tanzīl*).'

Regarding the motif of the *spiritual guide*, in the Persian Sufi tradition the Sufi master's purported infallibility vis-à-vis his disciples derives directly from the same chapter and verses of the Qur'an concerning the tale of Moses and Khidr, i.e. Q. 18:67–82.⁵⁴ He also has cosmological functions reminiscent of the concept of the Perfect Man in Sufism, the *insān kāmīl* being identified by Ibn 'Arabī as a *majma' al-baḥrayn* (the place

where the two seas meet, Q. 18:61).⁵⁵ This conventional doctrine is contradicted by the paradoxical fact that in the Sufi esoteric hierarchy, Khidr occupies a position that actually transcends the rank and role of the Sufi master (*shaykh*, *pīr*, *murshid*), insofar as he is the supreme master of all those who refuse to adopt – or who at least claim under the mantle of his investiture to be able to dispense with – any human master, by tracing their *ṭarīqa* affiliation trans-historically directly back to him.⁵⁶ Thus he is the sole initiatory figure in the history of Sufism to stand outside the cumulative religious tradition of Islam, his mortality pre-dating and his immortality transcending normative historical prophetology. For this reason, he is not a figure easily integrated into Sufi doctrinal tradition. He rather hovers in an imaginal space beyond chronological time, from whence his paradoxical presence pervades the entire hiero-history of Islamic mysticism.

I think it is wrong, nonetheless, to argue – as did Massignon – that Khidr's uniquely elevated position in Sufism allows the mystic to completely dispense with prophecy,⁵⁷ since most Sufis were always careful to point out the theological absurdity of the view which would interpret Khidr's superiority to Moses implying the pre-eminence of the cycle of Sufi sainthood (*wilāyat*) over the prophetic tradition (*nubuwwat*). As Abū Naṣr Sarrāj al-Ṭūsī (d. 378/988) in his *Kitāb al-Luma'* put it:

The prophets have an understanding of the rank of messengership (*risālat*) and prophethood (*nubuwwat*) while the saints have not any such expertise. If even one intelligential ray of the Mosaic light had shone upon Khidr, he would have been utterly annihilated. God, however, did not vouchsafe Khidr this degree so that Moses would be made purer and more elevated. Strive to understand this point, so you may apprehend how it is that sainthood (*wilāyat*) and friendship with God derives all its illumination from the lights of prophethood (*nubuwwat*), to which it never may attain. So how can saintship ever be considered superior to prophethood?⁵⁸

The point made by Sarrāj al-Ṭūsī here is that Moses' outward humiliation was actually a kind of esoteric elevation – one might here recall certain Sufi masters such as Bāyazīd who professed themselves to have received nuggets of true wisdom from cats or dogs, although no one of course would ever dream of entering the names and biographies of such creatures alongside the masters themselves in the history books. Likewise, whatever the virtues of *walāyat* that set it apart from – and occasionally above – *nubuwwat*, the superior qualities of the prophet always upstage whatever inclusive virtues are possessed by the saint.

A similar interpretation was advanced two centuries later by Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī (d. 520/1126) in his celebrated Sufi commentary on the Qur'an, when he glossed Q.18:65–66 with this explanation:

Beware! Do not imagine that just because Moses was sent back to school to be the student of Khidr, that Khidr thereby was his better. Certainly not! Never! For – after Muḥammad – there has never been a prophet of such expansive disposition nor one so intimate with God as was Moses. However, Khidr functioned as a forge of ascetic discipline for Moses. The case resembles one who wishes to refine and purify silver, to which purpose he lights a fire in the forge so that the superiority of the silver over the fire beneath the forge – rather than the forge's fire over the silver – becomes apparent.⁵⁹

In respect to the motif of *esoteric knowledge* in Islamic mysticism, one of the most interesting aspects of Khidr's virtues is the fact that the knowledge he communicates is always characterised by a certain strangeness and paradox, especially when his lore is contrasted and compared to the sober logocentrism and temporal, legalistic truths of prophets such as Moses. In the *psychology* of Sufism in particular, the characters of Moses and Khidr came to function as motifs that exemplified the differences between the conjectural faculty that operates by vain opinion (*wahm*) – which is, as Shakespeare says, 'but a fool, that makes us scan/The outer habit for the inward man'⁶⁰ – and the clairvoyant understanding based on divine revelation (*wahy*) and which is infused with mystical 'inspiration (*ilhām*)'.⁶¹ Rūmī thus diagnoses Moses' objections to Khidr as typical of the distortions of the human conjectural faculty: Moses was afflicted with fantastic *vana opinio* and weak *vis aestimativa*; hence, 'despite all his brilliance and art (*bā hama-yi nūr u hunar*)',⁶² the higher insights of Khidr to him remained concealed. Defending the slaying of the boy by Khidr, Rūmī remarks that since the saint is 'a recipient of the divine revelation and one whose prayers are answered (*wahy u jawāb*), whatever he does or says is the essence of truth'. Even murder may thus be justified because 'he is the hand of God (*ū dast-i khudā'st*)'.⁶³ In contrast to Moses' misconceptions based on fantasy, the spiritual level of Khidr, Rūmī remarks, corresponds to the degree of Muḥammad's spirit of prophecy (*rūḥ-i wahy*), which is beyond, and invisible to, human reason.

Diagram 2: Rūmī's Psychology of the Moses-Khiḍr Story⁶⁴

4. The Realm of the Logos (*martaba-yi rūḥ-i waḥy*)

Esoteric Knowledge of Experiential Visionary Realisation
(*‘ālam-i taḥqīqī*)

The Harmony of the Apparent Incongruity of Khiḍr's Actions
Comprehended by the Prophet's/Prophetic Spirit or Logos

<i>‘ilm-i Khiḍr</i>	<i>‘ilm-i ḥāl</i>	<i>rūḥ-i waḥy</i>	<i>shuhūd ‘ālam-i</i>
		<i>Muḥammad</i>	<i>ghayb</i>

3. The Realm of Human Reason (*‘ālam-i ‘aql*)

Exoteric Traditional Knowledge Based on Servile Imitative Following
of Religious Precedent and Authority (*‘ilm-i taqlidī*)

The Realm of Moses, Who is Perplexed by the Apparent
Incongruity of Khiḍr's Actions

<i>‘ilm-i Mūsā</i>	<i>rūḥ yā jān-i ḥayawānī</i>	<i>ḥukm-i bāṭin</i>
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2. The Realm of the Human Vital Spirit

(*ruḥ-i ḥayawānī*, i.e. *anima bruta*)

<i>ruḥ-i ḥayawānī</i>	<i>jān-i makhfi</i>
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1. The Material, Physical Realm of the Body (*jism-i ṣāḥir*)

Parenthetically, it should be noted here that this is more or less the same view propounded by Shahrastānī (and later by Khayrkhawāh-i Haratī who cites Rūmī's *Mathnawī* to defend the rank of the *ḥujjat* as equivalent to that of Khiḍr)⁶⁵ when he asserts that Khiḍr's spiritual degree hails from the realm of causelessness (*‘ālam-i bī-sababī*), whence the clairvoyant adept perceives consequences before their physical causes become actually manifest. When Moses objects to Khiḍr's justification of the murder of the boy – that he is pre-destined to become a heretic when he grows up ('How can you ordain a heresy to be present, or judge that an act of infidelity has taken place, when no act of infidelity itself has been committed?') – Khiḍr retorts by saying that the knowledge he possesses embraces all Providence, irrespective of time past or time present:

In the realm of causes (*‘ālam-i sabāb*), causes occur before judgements about them, but in the realm of causelessness (*‘ālam-i bī-sababī*), judge-

ments are made without any (underlying) causes; judgements are made according to the Command (*farmān*);⁶⁶ they are made according to knowledge ('*ilm*), and according to the disposition of Providence (*mash-īyyat*). 'So this is what divine Providence has ordained for you, it is not Your speech (*qawl*). It is by Your divine will, without interdiction.' That which is apparent and known has been already ordained (in pre-eternity), and that which is intended to be has already been fixed by decree.

Rūmī's psycho-spiritual analysis of Khidr's preposterous and perplexing conduct in this respect echoes Shahrastānī's theodicy here:

The intellect of the Prophet was not veiled to anyone, but his spirit of prophecy could not be grasped by just every soul. His spirit of prophecy has its own type of harmonious congruity that is incomprehensible to reason, for it is exceptionally exalted. Sometimes the rationalist regards that spirit as madness, sometimes he is perplexed and bewildered by it, since he is prevented from understanding until he actually *becomes* it. This situation resembles the harmony and concord underlying the conduct of Khidr, before which Moses' intelligence was troubled. Khidr's actions all seemed lacking in congruity and harmony to Moses because Moses did not possess his mystical state (*hāl*).⁶⁷

Rūmī explains here that the harmony of the spirit of divine revelation (*rūḥ-i waḥy munāsibhā'ast*) possessed by the prophets is invisible and in fact inaccessible to ordinary rational modes of perception.

In the tenth section of the third chapter of Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī's (d. 654/1256) manual of Sufi doctrine, the *Mirṣād al-'ibād* – which is an exposition of the Sufi master-disciple theory inspired by the scriptural account of the Khidr–Moses relationship – Moses' lack of insight and lack of mystical consciousness is explained as deriving from literalism. Moses' exoteric logocentric understanding fails to comprehend that certain truths must remain ultimately ineffable. For the purposes of understanding Shahrastānī's vision of Khidr's apophatic theology at least, what he explains about the ineffability of Khidr's esoteric vision here is quite significant.

There is no doubt, Rāzī underlines, that Moses communed directly with God, that he heard and in fact spoke to God, which is why he is termed 'the one who spoke to God' (*kalīm Allāh*) in the Islamic tradition. The most famous of the various Qur'anic verses attesting to Moses' capacity for supernatural interlocution concerns the oxymoronic image of the burning bush that hailed Moses *from the right side of the valley*, announcing, 'I am God' (Q. 28:30). Yet despite his reception of such divine

communications, Moses still lacked Khidr's inner vision. Rāzī explains this by asserting that his communion was still veiled by the intermediation (*wāsiṭa*) of words and speech, and so lacked perfection. The pre-eminence of Khidr's vision, on the other hand, derived from its ineffability and the transcendence of the literal letter of revelation:

The speech of God, it should be understood, is beyond letters, sounds or voice. Moses was only able to hear God by mediation of letters, sounds or voice. If he had been able to hear God without the mediation of these things, he would not have been ordered to keep the company of Khidr.

The term 'intermediation/intermediary (*wāsiṭa*)' here is of fundamental significance. Moses' theology belongs to the literal form of external religion; compared to Khidr he incarnates a spiritual comedown or declension into religious dogma (*tanzīl*). It is for this reason that Shahrastānī's Khidr rebukes Moses as being merely a *mard-i tanzīlī*, someone who has remained stuck in the lower domain of positive religion, and so is unable to comprehend the highest reaches of negative contemplation. Rāzī, likewise, explains this aspect of Moses' spiritual limitation in the following passage in which he tells us that the Khidr's pre-eminence in knowledge lay in his 'submitting to being taught from the divine presence without any intermediary (*ta'allum-i 'ulūm azḥaḍrat bi-wāsiṭa*)',

And that [pre-eminence] can only be realised when the blemish and stain of all the spiritual, intelligible, traditionally narrated sciences as well as what is learned through the senses/sensory experience (*'ulūm-i rūḥānī u 'aqlī u sam'ī u ḥissī*) is washed clean from the slate of the heart. For as long as there is any trace of these types of sciences left as a mark upon the heart's slate, they will preoccupy the heart and hinder its capacity to receive knowledge directly from the divine presence without any intermediary. Although Moses had acquired knowledge of the Torah, his knowledge was still obtained by the intermediary of the stone tablets: *And we inscribed for him, upon the tablets.* [Q. 7:145] So, one of the benefits in keeping the company of Khidr for Moses lay in his becoming disposed and susceptible to receive the divine writ directly from God in his heart without the inconvenience of reading those stone tablets.⁶⁸

In a word, as can be seen from the various Sufi exegeses (Sulamī, Maybudī, Rūmī, Rāzī) of the story cited above, Shahrastānī's exegesis of the Moses and Khidr legend in the *Majlis* shares much in common with traditional Sufi hermeneutics. Even if much of his terminology may be of Ismaili provenance, his exegesis owes just as much to the mystical culture of the

Persian Sufi tradition as to the theology of classical Ismailism.

From Shahrastānī's Khiḍr to Shelley's Ahasureus

In the foregoing section, I have drawn attention to some of the key Sufi interpretations of Moses' literal-minded exoteric personality, Khiḍr's enigmatic character and esoteric lore, and indicated how the motifs of their *character psychology*, Khiḍr as *the spiritual guide*, Khiḍr's *esoteric knowledge* and the *Sufi psychology* of both figures in the Islamic mystical tradition can aid our understanding of Shahrastānī's literary portrayal and metaphysical allegory of their relationship, and also place his *Majlis* in the broader context of mystical Islam. However, Shahrastānī's visionary insights into Khiḍr's deeds and words also belong to the far more significant and yet broader context of comparative world mysticism and literature, to which I would here like to draw attention.

As will have been noticed by the discerning reader, in the last section little was mentioned about the motif of Khiḍr's *immortality* in the Sufi tradition. It is to this aspect of his character that I would now like to turn in what follows, endeavouring to show the timelessness of his character as he appears under the guise of Elijah in the poetry of William Blake and the figure of the mysterious Wandering Jew who is named Ahasureus in Shelley's epic poem *Hellas*. To introduce these literary comparisons it will be useful first to refer to Henry Corbin's and Carl Jung's interpretations of this motif, which assist us in understanding the motif of his *immortality* within wider spiritual and intellectual contexts.

Shahrastānī characterised Khiḍr as a transcendent being of immortal vision who is beyond place and time, situated in the realm of the 'resurrection of the life hereafter' (*qiyāmat*). Khiḍr exemplifies the esoteric dimension (*bāṭin*) of the adept who understands the Scripture through its inner hermeneutic exegesis (*ta'wīl*). As Henry Corbin explains:

Khiḍr initiates Moses 'into the science of predestination'. Thus he reveals himself to be the repository of an inspired divine science, superior to the law (*sharī'a*); thus Khiḍr is superior to Moses in so far as Moses is a prophet invested with the mission of revealing a *sharī'a*. He reveals to Moses precisely the secret, mystic truth (*ḥaqīqa*) that transcends the *sharī'a*, and this explains why the spirituality inaugurated by Khiḍr is free from the servitude of the literal religion.⁶⁹

In his commentary on Q. 18:65–82, Carl Jung touches on perhaps the most fascinating aspect of Shahrastānī's vision of Khiḍr's personality, namely

the motif of *immortality* and *transcendence of time*. Jung also draws attention to the motif of the *spiritual guide*, underlining that the psychological function of Khidr is as being a symbol of the initiate's higher immortal Self: 'He is analogous to the Second Adam. ... He is the counsellor, a Paraclete, "Brother Khidr". Anyway Moses accepts him as a higher consciousness and looks up to him for instruction.'⁷⁰ Jung identifies Khidr with the fish which Moses' servant, while travelling, had left behind at *the place where the two seas meet* (Q. 18:61), and which then miraculously revived and found its way into the ocean. It is at this juncture in the story that Khidr appears, which makes him 'mysteriously connected with the disappearance of the fish. It looks almost as if he himself had been the fish. ... Where the fish disappears, there is the birthplace of Khidr. The immortal being issues from something humble and forgotten, indeed, from a wholly improbable source. This is a familiar motif of the hero's birth and need not be documented here.'⁷¹ Jung concludes that both tales in this Qur'anic Sura – of Moses and his servant (Joshua ben Nun), and of Moses and Khidr – are connected to the symbolism of rites of death and rebirth. Khidr functions as a projection of the timeless sense of immortality that is realised during this experience:

The intuition of immortality which makes itself felt during the transformation is connected with the peculiar nature of the unconscious. It is, in a sense, non-spatial and non-temporal. ... The feeling of immortality, it seems to me, has its origin in a peculiar feeling of extension in space and time.⁷²

Setting aside the obvious theological differences between Jung's archetypal psychology and traditional Islamic metaphysics, the motif of *immortality* to which Jung draws attention clearly illuminates the psychological effect one experiences when reading Shahrastānī's dramatic literary evocation of the soaring flights of Khidr's meditations on the laws of eternity that never deign to condescend to solve the petty moral and religious dilemmas of this lower temporal realm. Shahrastānī evokes this motif of *immortality* in the *Majlis* using well-known Nizārī Ismaili terminology, viewing Khidr as an adept in the mysterious and timeless 'justice of the resurrection' that occurs at the end of time.⁷³ And (as Jung postulated) the figure of Khidr portrayed by Shahrastānī likewise functions as a symbol of the self's immortality, alluding to the motif of an *esoteric knowledge* that is beyond time and space. In a key passage, we read how Khidr rebukes Moses for his purely mundane orientation:

Yesterday, today and tomorrow are all temporal: they all pertain to time. And you, of course, being a temporally-bound man, a man of 'the times', you pass judgement according to 'the times'. But I am not a 'man of the times': yesterday, tomorrow and today to me are all one. Whatever shall come into existence in the future has already occurred for me. The tyrant who 'shall come in the future' has already visited me. The infidelity of that child, that is bound to occur, has for me already happened. The wall that shall crumble for me has already fallen down. Therefore, I don't pass judgement according to 'the times', for the judgement I pass is not a temporal one; it transcends time. You must spend an entire year wandering about to find me, whereas I can find you instantaneously, in a single moment travelling from East to West. Time and Space obey my dictates. I transcend Space and Time, so that all the judgements I pass are not subject to temporal or spatial conditions, nor pertain to what is temporal.⁷⁴

Having shown, I hope, how Jung may help to illuminate Shahrastānī's exegesis of the motif of *immortality* in this tale, I will now conclude by turning to an important literary parallel to Khidr in English romantic literature, which sheds even more light on this motif.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (d. 1822) was an unrivalled master of mythological themes and complex symbolic figures, in the handling of which he stands with Spenser, Milton, Blake, Coleridge and Keats above all other English poets except Shakespeare.⁷⁵ He was profoundly learned not only in the Platonic tradition (having translated the *Symposium* from Greek into English), but was well versed in Indian, Kabbalistic and Hermetic works of metaphysical gnosis. Furthermore, he was deeply influenced by Persian Sufi poetry, having composed imitations of some of the ghazals of Ḥāfiz.⁷⁶ It is thus entirely in order to compare his type of Platonic hermeticism with traditions of Islamic gnosis such as Shahrastānī's as well as works in the Sufi tradition. The comparisons about to be made are also particularly apt insofar as Shelley's verses cited are spoken by the figure of the Wandering Jew – Ahasureus – who has also sometimes been conflated with Khidr by Muslim authors.⁷⁷ In the poem, Ahasureus addresses a Muslim sultan – Mahmud – whose kingdom in Greece (and hence the title of Shelley's dramatic poem: *Hellas*) is on the verge of being overthrown. Many of the motifs attributed to Khidr in Islamic literature also typify and characterise Ahasureus. Like Khidr, Ahasureus possesses *esoteric knowledge*: he is famous for having 'attained sovereignty and science/Over those strong and secret things and thoughts/Which other fear and know not'.⁷⁸ Ahasureus is described as one who dwells in a sea cavern⁷⁹ which, in symbolic terms, is the same mythological realm of impenetrable darkness to which Khidr is associated by legend.⁸⁰ As with Khidr, the motif of

immortality also characterises Ahasureus.

Just as with Moses' pursuit of Khidr's esoteric lore, Sultan Mahmud seeks the wisdom of Ahasureus in order to reveal the future of his temporal worldly kingdom to him, believing him to be an expert in the art of prognostication. As we read the following oracular utterance of Ahasureus, the Wandering Jew, it is clear that it expresses perfectly, albeit by poetic paraphrase, Shahrastānī's/Khidr's evocations of a timeless wisdom for which 'yesterday, tomorrow, and today ... are all one'. Like Shahrastānī's dramatic speeches addressed to Moses in the *Majlis* and put into Khidr's mouth, Ahasureus' predictions to Sultan Mahmud are all couched in confusing paradoxes describing the weird realm of the Oxymoronic Transcendent. His pronouncements astonish and confound the worldly Mahmud. Asking the Wandering Jew to predict the outcome of his next battle, Ahasureus replies

Sultan! Talk no more
Of thee and me, the future and the past;
But look on that which cannot change—the One,
The unborn and the undying. Earth and Ocean,
Space, and the isles of life or light that gem
The sapphire floods of interstellar air,
This firmament pavilioned upon chaos,
With all its cressets of immortal fire,
Whose outwall, bastioned impregnably
Against the escape of boldest thoughts, repels them
As Calpe the Atlantic clouds—this Whole
Of suns, and worlds, and men, and beasts, and flowers,
With all the silent or tempestuous workings
By which they have been, are, or cease to be,
Is but a vision; all that it inherits
Are motes of a sick eye, bubbles, and dreams;
Thought is its cradle and its grave, nor less
The future and the past are idle shadows
Of thought's eternal flight—they have no being;
Nought is but that which feels itself to be.⁸¹

Mistake me not! All is contained in each.
Dodona's forest to an acorn's cup
Is that which has been or will be, to that
Which is—the absent to the present, Thought
Alone, and its quick elements, Will, Passion,
Reason, Imagination, cannot die;
They are what that which they regard appears,

The stuff whence mutability can weave
 All that it has dominion o'er—worlds, worms,
 Empires, and superstitions. What has thought
 To do with time, or place or circumstance?
 Wouldst thou behold the future?—ask and have!
 Knock and it shall be opened—look and lo!
 The coming age is shadowed on the past
 As on a glass.⁸²

Ahasureus' message of timeless universal wisdom beyond the reach of human reason and imagination is more or less identical with the transcendental truths spoken by Khiḍr in Shahrastānī's exegesis of Q. 18:65–82, representing the same prophetic voice of truth surpassing the vagaries of conventional morality and the vicissitudes of temporal truths.

To my mind, perhaps the most significant philosophical aspect of Shahrastānī's imaginary dialogue between Moses and Khiḍr is his emphasis on the Sufi motif of Khiḍr's *immortality*, his transcendence of 'all that mutability holds sway o'er', as Shelley says. Shahrastānī's use of Ismaili terminology to expose and expound this fundamental theme of comparative world mysticism not only enriches the Islamic tradition but, if interpreted in terms of the kind of prophetic consciousness found in the poetry of a Blake or a Shelley, proves indeed that the figures of Idrīs (Enoch/Hermes), Ilyās (Elijah), Jesus and Khiḍr, who are often viewed in the Islamic tradition as prophets withdrawn from the eyes of men and who inhabit the hidden realm (*ghayb*),⁸³ are still actually eternally living beings, regardless in which religious spheres their literary incarnation may appear today. Perhaps this is the message of Blake's verses:

Los⁸⁴ is, by mortals nam'd Time, Enitharmon⁸⁵ is nam'd Space:
 But they depict him bald & aged who is in eternal youth
 All powerful and his locks flourish like the brows of morning:
 He is the Spirit of Prophecy, the ever apparent Elias.
 Time is the mercy of Eternity; without Time's swiftness,
 Which is the swiftest of all things, all were eternal torment.
 All the Gods of the Kingdom of Earth labour in Los's Halls:
 Every one is a fallen Son of the Spirit of Prophecy.⁸⁶

In its imaginative scope and philosophical depth – with Moses and Khiḍr debating a series of wide-ranging themes encompassing the literal revelation of external religion (*tanzīl*) vs. its esoteric exegesis (*ta'wīl*), freewill vs. predestination, the causeless truths of eternity vs. the temporal laws of this world – Shahrastānī is stunning in his daring and depth. In the end,

Khiḍr's apparently irrational abrogation of religious laws is shown to be an exact mirror-image of the wild events that took place in Moses' own youth. The ever-living sage's conduct is thus justified on solid scriptural-theological grounds and pedagogical principles by Shahrastānī, and even analysed in terms of the psychology of Moses' personality!⁸⁷ With its startling insights, Shahrastānī's treatise remains an illuminating commentary on the Moses–Khiḍr legend that is unequalled in the annals of Persian literature. This work is a wonderful example of how the 'sober' Muslim theological imagination can scale the peaks of apophatic theology, articulating the same ecstatic insights that one normally associates only with the likes of 'drunken' Sufis such as Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj, Rūzbihān Baqlī or Rūmī.

Notes

1. Guy Monnot, 'al-Shahrastānī', *EI2*, vol. 9, p. 214. Most of the circumstances for Shahrastānī's biography can be found in Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān wa anbā' abnā' al-zamān*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī'l-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd (Cairo, 1367/1948), vol. III, pp. 403ff. (no. 583); tr. William MacGuckin de Slane, *Ibn Khallikān's Biographical Dictionary* (Paris, 1892–1897), vol. 2, pp. 675f.
2. Henry Corbin, *Histoire de la philosophie islamique* (Paris, 1964), pp. 261–262.
3. Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1975), p. 88.
4. Guy Monnot, 'al-Shahrastānī', *EI2*, vol. 9, p. 215.
5. Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-Milal wa'l-niḥal*, ed. William Cureton (London, 1842–1846); tr. Adbul-Khalīq Kāzī and J. G. Flynn as *Muslim Sects and Divisions in Kitāb al-Milal wa'l-Niḥal* (London, 1984); French tr., Daniel Gimaret, Jean Jolivet and Guy Monnot, *Livre des religions et des sectes* (Louvain, 1986–1993); Persian tr. by Muṣṭafā Khāliqdād Hashīmī (wr. 1021/1612) in Sayyid Muḥammad Riḍā Jalālī Nā'inī, ed., *Tawḍīḥ al-milal: tarjuma-yi Kitāb al-Milal wa'l-niḥal* (Tehran, 1358 Sh./1979).
6. Guy Monnot, 'al-Shahrastānī', *EI2*, vol. 9, p. 216.
7. Shahrastānī's section on Hindu and Buddhist sects and schools ('*Ārā' al-Hind*') from the *Milal* was translated by Bruce Lawrence as *Shahrastānī on the Indian Religions* (The Hague, 1976).
8. Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-Muṣāra'a al-falāsifa*, ed. and English tr. Toby Mayer and Wilferd Madelung as *Struggling with the Philosopher: A Refutation of Avicenna's Metaphysics* (London, 2001).
9. Shahrastānī, *Kitāb Nihāyat al-aqdām fī 'ilm al-kalām*, ed. and tr. Alfred Guillaume as *The Summa Philosophiae of al-Shahrastānī* (London, 1934).
10. See Sayyid Muḥammad Riḍā Jalālī Nā'inī, *Sharḥ-i ḥāl wa āthār-i Hujjat*

al-Haqq Abu'l-Faṭḥ Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm b. Aḥmad Shahrastānī, *bih inḍamām-i Majlis-i maktūb-i Shahrastānī* (Tehran, 1343 Sh./1964), pp. 9–10.

11. Shahrastānī, *Tafsīr al-Shahrastānī al-musammā Mafāṭīḥ al-asrār wa maṣābiḥ al-abrār*, ed. Muḥammad 'Alī Ādharshab, vol. 1 (Tehran, 1997); repr. 2008, with different pagination in 2 vols. (vol. 1: Q.1–Q.2:123; vol. 2: Q. 2:124–286); this full commentary is not extant, and the existent MS only covers the first two suras of the Qur'an; a facsimile edition was published in Tehran in 1368 Sh./1989; English trans. by Toby Mayer as *Keys to the Arcana: Shahrastānī's Esoteric Commentary on the Qur'an: A Translation of the Commentary on Sūrat al-Fāṭiḥa from Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī's Mafāṭīḥ al-asrār wa maṣābiḥ al-abrār* (London, 2009).
12. See Jalālī Nā'inī, *Sharḥ-i ḥāl*, p. 47.
13. Guy Monnot, 'al-Shahrastānī', *EI2*, vol. 9, p. 216.
14. Jalālī Nā'inī, *Sharḥ-i ḥāl*, p. 47.
15. Jalālī Nā'inī, *Sharḥ-i ḥāl*, p. 51. See also Diane Steigerwald, *Majlis: Discours sur l'Ordre et la création* (Quebec, 1998), p. 26.
16. See Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Sayr wa sulūk*, ed. and tr. S. Jalal Badakhchani as *Contemplation and Action: the Spiritual Autobiography of a Muslim Scholar* (London, 1998), p. 26, sec. 26.
17. Ibid., Badakhchani's tr., pp. 55–56, note 4; Jalālī Nā'inī, *Sharḥ-i ḥāl*, p. 51. For the number of other scholars who also support the thesis that he was a crypto-Ismaili, see Diane Steigerwald, *Majlis*, pp. 23 and 58, notes 58–61.
18. Guy Monnot, 'al-Shahrastānī', *EI2*, vol. 9, p. 216.
19. Mayer and Madelung, *Struggling with the Philosopher*, Introduction, p. 6.
20. Ibid, p. 4.
21. Shahrastānī, *Majlis-i maktūb-i Shahrastānī mun'aqid dar Khwārazm*; the Persian text has been published twice – first, on the basis of a single manuscript in Tehran, in *Sharḥ-i ḥāl*, ed. Jalālī Nā'inī (Tehran, 1343 Sh./1964), and then using two manuscripts in *Dū maktūb*, ed. Jalālī Nā'inī (Tehran, 1369 Sh./1990). Diane Steigerwald reprinted this latest edition in her *Majlis*, with a parallel French translation accompanied by a comprehensive introduction on Shahrastānī's life and theological thought.
22. Steigerwald, *Majlis*, Introduction, pp. 29–31, provides a brief overview of some Sufi accounts of the tale, but a proper survey of authors who have written on this subject remains to be done.
23. See William C. Chittick, 'The Myth of Adam's Fall in Aḥmad Sam'anī's *Rawḥ al-arwāḥ*', in Leonard Lewisohn, ed., *The Heritage of Sufism*. Vol I: *Classical Persian Sufism from its Origins to Rumi* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 337–359.
24. This is not the place to enter into an exhaustive study of (a) the role of al-Khidr/al-Khaḍīr/al-Khaḍīr in early Near Eastern mythology, or (b) the place of Khidr in later Qur'an commentaries, nor (c) his role in later Islamic esotericism. For (a), see Arent J. Wensinck, 'al-Khaḍīr', *EI2*, vol. 4,

- pp. 902–905; for an interesting, albeit somewhat superficial, account of (c), see Peter Wilson, *Sacred Drift* (San Francisco, 1993), pp. 138–146; idem, ‘The Green Man: The Trickster Figure in Sufism’, *Gnosis Magazine* (Spring, 1991), pp. 22–26.
25. Steigerwald, *Majlis*, Introduction, p. 35.
 26. Ibid., pp. 27–28, 34–39.
 27. S. Jalal Badakhchani’s comment in Ṭūsī, *Contemplation and Action*, p. 70, n.39.
 28. Cf. Steigerwald’s discussion of these terms, *Majlis*, Introduction, p. 47.
 29. Nā’īnī, *Sharḥ-i ḥāl*, p. 33; Steigerwald, *Majlis*, Persian text and French tr., p. 105.
 30. For instance, Shahrastānī writes: ‘The monotheist (*muwaḥḥid*) can be clearly discerned and separated from the polytheist (*mushrik*) by the (profession of faith) “There is no deity but God” (*Lā ilāha illā Allāh*); the Muslim is divided from the infidel (*kāfir*) by his acknowledgment that “Muḥammad is the Prophet of God”, but the faithful believer (*mu’min*) and the hypocritical believer (*munāfiq*) will go either to Paradise or Hell depending on their love for or hatred of ‘Alī’; see Nā’īnī, ed. *Sharḥ-i ḥāl*, p. 20; Diane Steigerwald, tr., *Majlis*, p. 94 (Persian text and French tr.).
 31. Other terms adopted by Ṭūsī in his *Taṣawwūrāt* from Shahrastānī’s lexicon included ‘the realm of illusory similitudes (*kawn-i mushābahat*)’, which he contrasts to ‘the realm of clear discrimination and distinction (*kawn-i mubāyanat*)’; see Nāṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa-yi taslīm*, ed. and tr. by Sayyad Jalal Badakhchani as *Paradise of Submission: A Medieval Treatise on Ismaili Thought* (London, 2005), pp. 43, 44, 53, 57, 61–64, 78, 116, 121. Any future study of the genesis and development of Ismaili terminology in Saljūq and Mongol Persia would do well to concentrate on such key terms in Shahrastānī’s esoteric lexicon.
 32. Elaboration of these terms can be found in Shahrastānī’s *Mafātīḥ al-asrār*, pp. 185–186=facsimile edition, pp. 21 (b)–23 (b); see also Mayer, *Keys to the Arcana*, Arabic text pp. 55–60; tr. pp. 113–118; see also Steigerwald, *Majlis*, Introduction, p. 27; Mayer, *Keys to the Arcana*, Introduction, pp. 28–30.
 33. Shahrastānī, *Mafātīḥ al-asrār*, vol. 1, p. 179. I am indebted to Dr Toby Mayer for drawing my attention to this passage; see Mayer, *Keys to the Arcana*, Arabic text p. 50; tr. p. 108.
 34. This story is repeated by ‘Azīz Nasafī (d. between 1281 and 1300) in his ‘Treatise on the Meaning of Heaven and Hell’ (*Risāla dar biyān bihišt va dūzakh*), in *Majmū’a-yi rasā’il mashhūr bih Kitāb al-Insān al-kāmil*, ed. Marijan Molé as *Le Livre de l’homme parfait (Kitāb al-Insān al-Kāmil): recueil de traités de soufisme en persan* (Tehran, 1379 Sh./2000–2001), pp. 299–310.
 35. Shahrastānī, *Mafātīḥ al-asrār*, vol. 1, ch. 10, p. 185. I am indebted to Dr Toby Mayer for drawing my attention to, and translation of, this passage (which I have considerably modified); for his own translation see Mayer, *Key to the*

Arcana, p. 114.

36. Teresa of Jesus, *Camino de perfección*, in P. Silverio de Santa Teresa, ed., *Obras de Sta. Teresa de Jesús* (Burgos, 1916–1919), vol. 3, p. 102; cited by Eleanor McCann, 'Oxymora in Spanish Mystics and Metaphysical Writers', *Comparative Literature*, 13 (1961), pp. 21–22.
37. Diane Steigerwald, 'The Divine Word (*Kalima*) in Shahrastānī's *Majlis*', *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses*, 25 (1996), p. 341.
38. Since her assertions are based on precise Ismaili sources which are integral to her argument, her four footnotes in this quotation are also reproduced here as nos 39–43 below, in a modified style.
39. Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī, *Qīṭa'āt*, in the lithographed edition by Sayyid Munīr Badakhshānī, *Kitāb-i Khayrkhwāh-i Muwaḥḥid Waḥdat* (Bombay, 1333/1915), sect. 27, fol. 22; see Henry Corbin, *Trilogie ismaélienne* (Paris and Tehran, 1961), p. 31, n.18.
40. Abū Ishāq Quhistānī, *Haft Bāb*, p. 50, and Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī, *Kalām-i Pīr*, ed. Wladimir Ivanow (Bombay, 1935), p. 94; the latter is apparently a plagiarised version of Quhistānī, *Haft Bāb* (see Daftary, *Ismaili Literature*, p. 124).
41. Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī, *Faṣl dar bayān-i shinākht-i imām wa ḥujjat*, ed. Wladimir Ivanow in 'Ismailitica', *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 8 (1922), p. 23, fol. 15v; this work was also translated by Ivanow as *On the Recognition of the Imam* (Bombay, 1947).
42. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Ideals and Realities of Islam* (London, 1975): 'The first being in the created order is the First Intellect, or Universal Intellect, which is identified with the Divine Word. It is a reality that at once veils and reveals the Supreme Name, Allah', p. 167.
43. Steigerwald, 'The Divine Word', pp. 342–343. Elsewhere (*Majlis*, Introduction, p. 46) she notes: 'In order to fathom the profound meaning of this story, we must understand the status Khidr has in Ismaili gnosis, and then, as if by magic, everything becomes clear in Shahrastānī's argument, which leads one to the belief that he was an Ismaili. Khidr, in Nizārī Ismailism, has the status of *ḥujjat-i imām* (proof of the imam), who is second in importance after the imam. Unlike to the Speaker-Prophet (*nāṭiq*), the *ḥujjat* is infallible, thus resembling the Perfect Man (*al-insān al-kāmil*) of the Sufis. He is the place of the manifestation (*maẓhar*) of the Universal Intellect (*'aql-i kullī*).'
44. Ivanow, *On the Recognition of the Imam*, Introduction, p. 10.
45. Harātī, tr. Ivanow, *On the Recognition of the Imam*, p. 43 (fol. 13).
46. Farhad Daftary, *The Ismā'ilis: Their History and Doctrines* (2nd ed., Cambridge, 2007), pp. 340, 379f.
47. Steigerwald, 'The Divine Word', pp. 342–343.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 352.
49. Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, *Mathnawī*, ed. Reynold A. Nicholson as *The Mathnawī of Jalālu'ddīn Rūmī* (London, 1925), vol. 1, vv. 224, 237.

50. Harātī, tr. Ivanow, *On the Recognition of the Imam*, p. 30 (fol. 7).
51. Cf. Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī, *Ḥaqā'iq al-tafsīr*, ed. Sayyid 'Umrān (Beirut, 1421/2000), vol. 1, p. 415, commentary on Q. 18:69.
52. See Ian R. Netton, 'Theophany as Paradox: Ibn al-'Arabī's Account of al-Khaḍir in his *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*', *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society*, 11 (1992), pp. 11–22; Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* (Cairo, n.d.), vol. 2, ch. 161, pp. 260–262, and Denis Gril's analysis and translation of this chapter in 'Le terme du voyage', in Michel Chodkiewicz, with William C. Chittick et al., ed., *Les Illuminations de La Mecque/Textes choisis* (Paris, 1988), pp. 339–347; see also Steigerwald, *Majlis*, Introduction, pp. 29–31.
53. This is the apposite phrase of Steigerwald (*Majlis*, Introduction, p. 28) who also provides an excellent overview of the significance and role of Khidr in Twelver Shi'i, Sufi and Ismaili teachings, pp. 28–33.
54. See Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mirṣād al-'ibād min al-mabdā' ilā'l-ma'ād*, ed. Muḥammad Amīn Riyāḥī (2nd ed., Tehran, 1986), pp. 336ff; Rūmī, *Mathnawī*, vol. 1, pp. 224–237.
55. Michel Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints: Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn 'Arabī*, tr. L. Sherrard (Cambridge, 1993), p. 70.
56. Henry Corbin, *En Islam iranien: aspects spirituels et philosophiques* (Paris, 1971–1972), vol. 3, p. 25.
57. He stated that the higher esoteric standard of Khidr enables the mystic who receives initiation from him to effectively become emancipated from the tutelage of the prophetic law; see Louis Massignon, *Essay on the Origins of the Technical Language of Islamic Mysticism* (Notre Dame, IN, 1997), p. 91.
58. Abū Naṣr Sarrāj al-Tūsī, *Kitāb al-Luma' fi'l-taṣawwuf*, tr. into Persian by Mihdi Maḥabbatī (Tehran, 1382 Sh./2003), book 14, *bāb* 21, p. 441.
59. Abū'l-Faḍl Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī, *Kashf al-asrār wa 'uddat al-abrār*, ed. Ali Asghar Hekmat (Tehran, 1331–1119 Sh./1952–1960), vol. 5, p. 728.
60. William Shakespeare, *Pericles*, II: 2: 55–56.
61. Rūmī, *Mathnawī*, I: 237.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.: 225.
64. Rūmī, *Mathnawī*, ed. Nicholson, vol. 2, pp. 3253–3267.
65. See notes 13–14 above.
66. Steigerwald, *Majlis*, p. 122, n.154, explains that, 'This term is intimately connected to *ta'lim*, which is the teaching of the Imām in Nizārian Ismailism, whose teaching is the source of the *ta'wil* of the earlier revelations. It is the responsibility of the *hujjat* to transmit this teaching, because the Imam is *ṣāmit* (silent). This is contrary to the advocates of following personal opinion and individual reason (*aṣbāb al-ra'y wa al-'aql*).'
67. Rūmī, *Mathnawī*, II: 2259–2263.
68. Rūmī, *Mirṣād al-'ibād al-mabdā' ilā'l-ma'ād*, ed. Muḥammad Amīn Riyāḥī (2nd ed., Tehran, 1986), p. 339.
69. Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabī*, tr. Ralph

- Manheim (Princeton, 1969), p. 55.
70. Carl G. Jung, 'Concerning Rebirth', in Jenny Yates, ed., *Jung on Death and Immortality* (Princeton, 1999), p. 61.
71. Jung, 'Concerning Rebirth', pp. 60–61.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
73. Farhad Daftary, *A Short History of the Ismailis: Traditions of a Muslim Community* (Edinburgh, 1998), pp. 141–142. It may be pointed out that this juxtaposition of the wisdom of the resurrection (*qiyāma*) to the knowledge of the law (*sharī'a*) is completely typical of Nizārī Ismaili thought of the same period, as Steigerwald, *Majlis*, Introduction, pp. 41–42, notes: 'Shahrastānī uses the term *Qiyāmat* (Resurrection), which is part of the vocabulary of the Shi'is. Resurrection means the "spiritual birth" or eschatological event during which the hidden meaning of revelation will be revealed in its fullness. Shahrastānī does not use this term in the sense of a "spiritual birth" that liberates the human being from the servitude of the law (*sharī'at*).'
74. Jalālī-Nā'inī, *Sharḥ-i ḥāl*, pp. 30–31; Steigerwald, *Majlis*, p. 103 (Persian text and French tr.).
75. Kathleen Raine, 'A Defence of Shelley's Poetry', in her *Defending Ancient Springs* (Suffolk, 1985), p. 145.
76. See Farhang Jahanpour, 'Western Encounters with Persian Sufi Literature', in Leonard Lewisohn and David Morgan, ed., *The Heritage of Sufism: Late Classical Persianate Sufism (1501–1750). The Safavid and Mughal Period* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 50–51.
77. Arent J. Wensinck, 'al-Khaḍir', *EI2*, vol. 4, p. 904.
78. Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Hellas*, II: 159–161, p. 324.
79. *Ibid.*, II: 164, p. 325.
80. Wensinck, 'al-Khaḍir', *EI2*, vol. 4, pp. 904–905.
81. Shelley, *Hellas*, II: 766–805, p. 334.
82. *Ibid.*: 792–806, p. 334.
83. See Douglas Crow, 'Ghaybah', in Mircea Eliade, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 5, p. 540.
84. Blake's term for the creation imagination of the inspired poet, which is the spiritual sun (Los = Sol), symbolic of Elijah, Khiḍr, Gabriel.
85. Blake's term for the Eternal Feminine. She is the Zenith of Harmony (Enitharmon), and corresponds exactly to the metaphysical role of *Malāḥat* (aesthetic and spiritual harmony) in the Persian Sufi tradition.
86. William Blake, *Complete Writings*, ed. G. Keynes (London, 1972), *Milton*, 24: 68–76.
87. The 'three key deeds' which Khiḍr performs are compared by Shahrastānī's Khiḍr to events that occurred to Moses himself. This is also a feature typical of other esoteric commentaries on this tale; on which, see Gril, 'Le terme du voyage', pp. 342, 572, n.46.

Poems of the Resurrection:
Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib
 and his *Dīwān-i Qā'imīyyāt*

S. Jalal Badakhchani

My first acquaintance with Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd's *Dīwān-i Qā'imīyyāt* ('Poems of the Resurrection') was in the summer of 1964 when, in the company of a team of health workers, I was travelling among villages inhabited by Ismailis in the Iranian province of Khurāsān. For a few days we happened to stay in Yahn, a small village some 36km north of Birjand. Our host was Mr Barzgar, better known among the villagers as Ākhūnd Mullā Murtaḍā, whom I found to be a man of great learning and insight. During the day, when my colleagues were attending to their work, I had the opportunity to collect first-hand information about Ismaili authors, scholars and their literature produced in southern Khurāsān, that is, the historical Quhistān, a prominent centre of the Nizārī Ismaili mission (*da'wat*) in mediaeval times.

During our conversations, Mr Barzgar referred to the existence of a collection of poems compiled some seven hundred years earlier entitled *Dīwān-i kabīr-i Qā'imīyyāt* ('The Great Collection of Poems of the Resurrection'), a copy of which had recently been discovered while renovating an old building. 'The manuscript contains only two volumes of the *Dīwān*,' he said, 'hidden for centuries in the cavity of a wall, plastered over, safeguarding its existence from enemies.' He added sorrowfully: 'Out of the original seven volumes only that portion has survived to our times.' In response to my inquiry whether the manuscript was seen by Wladimir Ivanow, the famous orientalist and expert on Ismaili literature,¹ Mr Barzgar replied with a smile on his face: 'Ivanow came to us, but we did not disclose the existence of this book to him, because no one owns the complete collection.' Mr Barzgar further added, 'The only copy that exists in our village belongs to the family of Mr Shafī' Riḍā'ī.'

Mr Riḍā'ī's copy, hereafter referred to as 'D', which he kindly lent to me, is a relatively complete text of volumes one and two, except for the first few pages of the poet's introduction, which are missing. It is dated 10 Ramaḍān 1105 (i.e. 5 May 1694), and is written in broken *nasta'liq*, with page dimensions of 18x28cm with fourteen to sixteen lines per page. The scribe was a certain Mirzā 'Alī, the son of 'Abd al-Mu'min, who copied the book for his brother while acting as schoolmaster in Mā'ūsḵ (currently pronounced Māhūsḵ), a village approximately 48km north-east of Bīrjand and still inhabited by Ismailis. At the time, I could not make a copy of the manuscript for myself and all my efforts to trace another copy proved fruitless.

After almost thirty-three years, in 1997, when I was preparing a list of Persian manuscripts at the Library of The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, I had a second encounter with the *Dīwān-i Qā'imīyyāt*. In this instance, too, it was not a complete version, but scattered materials photographed unprofessionally from an original manuscript in Iran. Based on what could be retrieved from the defective photocopies, hereafter referred to as 'N', and notes prepared by Mr Ghiyāth al-Dīn Mīrshāhī, an Ismaili dignitary with a special interest in collecting literary materials, a total of 146 odes (*qaṣīdas*) of various lengths (twelve to sixty-five couplets) and a few additional fragments (*qiṭ'a*) of four to five couplets were collected. At the margin of one ode, the unknown scribe of this collection has added: 'Copied in the year 1101 [1689], from a manuscript dated 855 [1451]', which makes it almost five years older than 'D'. This copy was the nucleus of my work on the *Dīwān* until June 2008, when manuscript 'D' along with yet another incomplete copy of the *Dīwān*, hereafter referred to as 'M', were transferred to the library of The Institute of Ismaili Studies. Manuscript 'M' is made up of two different manuscripts bound together. Part one, dated 29 Sha'bān 806/12 March 1404, contains 109 odes, specially prepared with colourful margins that have faded with the passage of time. Part two, undated, contains twenty-five odes with a colophon much resembling that of manuscript 'D', and thus either itself or a copy of it might have been the origin of 'D'. Both parts had been professionally prepared and the majority of the odes in part one had been given titles and dates of compilation. This manuscript, I am told, had survived among the remote offspring of Aga Khan I, Ḥasan 'Alī Shāh, who migrated to India in the later part of the nineteenth century. The approximate dimensions of 'M' are the same as manuscript 'D'.

Having access to three manuscripts of the *Dīwān*, I was able to prepare the final version of the extant two volumes. The entire collection of what

we have currently at our disposal consists of 157 odes (totalling 4,779 couplets). As for the quality of these manuscripts, both parts of 'M' have the most legible script. 'D' is also professionally prepared, but its value is undermined by the absence of titles for the poems and, probably an intentional act on the part of the scribe, the deleting of some lines that he either could not understand or considered faulty in the first place. In this respect, 'N' is superior to 'D' as most of the poems therein are complete, even though they were photographed carelessly.

Manuscript 'M' constitutes the basis upon which I am preparing a critical edition of the poems.² In total, twenty-eight odes are missing in 'M', eight odes are missing in 'D' and eleven odes in 'N'. The discrepancy in the number of odes in the existing manuscripts indicates that the original version might have been larger than what we have now at hand. Such an assumption becomes more tenable if we draw a relationship between the poet's life-span and the length of the *Dīwān*. According to ode 8, the existing two volumes were put together in Muḥarram 631 (i.e. October 1233), when Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd prepared a special copy to be presented to the Ismaili imam of his time, 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. 653/1255), the great grandson of Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām (d. 561/1166). The poet himself died at Alamūt probably a few years after 640/1243, when the final version of the *Rawḍa-yi taslīm* (the lectures on Ismaili doctrine by the philosopher-scientist Naṣīr al-Dīn Tūsī) was produced.³ It seems unlikely, however, that a talented poet like Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd, who composed two lengthy odes in one day, odes 139 and 141, did not compose any poems during the latter years of his life. Moreover, in the present collection we cannot trace the origin of some of the odes that the poet is known to have composed.⁴ Another complicating factor is that not all poems in the collection belong to Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd.⁵ This suggests that a large portion of the original *Dīwān* might have been the collective work of several Ismaili poets of his time or the earlier periods, such as 'Amīd 'Alī, Jamāl and Ra'īs Ḥasan, which probably confirms the tale of 'seven volumes'.⁶

Our poet, Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib, whose name is recorded differently as Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan,⁷ Sayyid al-Du'āt Ṣalāḥ al-Dawla wa'l-Dīn, Munshī-yi Jahān, Mubdi' al-Naẓm wa'l-Nathr Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd,⁸ Malik al-Kuttāb Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ḥasan,⁹ Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ-i Munshī,¹⁰ and Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ-i Birjandī,¹¹ is the author of a prose treatise entitled *Haft bāb* ('Seven Chapters') wrongly attributed to 'Bābā Sayyidnā', that is, Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, because of the resemblance of their names.¹² He is also the author of a lost treatise on Ismaili history composed before 630/1232 during his service to the *muḥtasham* (governor) Shihāb al-Dīn, when the latter was in

command of Gird Kūh.¹³

Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd was probably born in the vicinity of Qazwīn during the first half of the sixth/twelfth century and at a young age joined the Ismaili community or, to use his own expression, the *qā'imiyān*.¹⁴ Evidently, at the time of the proclamation of the doctrine of *qiyāmat* (p; *qiyāma*, ar: resurrection) by Imam Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām in 559/1164, he was very young since in reference to himself, he uses the plural pronoun 'we'¹⁵ when referring to his witnessing of the event.

At the time when Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī was considering his conversion to the Ismaili faith, Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd was living at Gird Kūh and acting as secretary (*munshī*) for the *muḥtasham* Shihāb al-Dīn, because the latter's reply to Ṭūsī's letter is in his hand.¹⁶ The poet continued to serve Shihāb al-Dīn when he was subsequently appointed to the governorship of Quhistān. Some of our sources give Ḥasan the *nisba* Bīrjandī, which alludes to his long stay in Quhistān and particularly in the city of Bīrjand.¹⁷ In or around the year 630/1232, probably in the company of Ṭūsī, he appears to have moved to Alamūt, the centre of Nizārī Ismaili political power at the time.

During his stay in Alamūt or Maymūn Dizh, Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd remained a close associate of Ṭūsī, collecting and compiling his voluminous writings. Among these, the *Rawḍa-yi taslīm* was completed on 15 Shawwāl 640/7 April 1243.¹⁸ Ḥasan's close personal and intellectual relationship with Ṭūsī enabled him not only to have a good grasp of the philosopher's ideas and understanding of Ismaili thought but also to render them in poetic form. In the critical edition of the *Dīwān-i Qā'imīyyāt*, I have attempted to identify the majority of instances that appear to directly reflect the thinking of Ṭūsī as found in his Ismaili treatises such as *Rawḍa-yi taslīm*, *Sayr wa sulūk*, *Āghāz wa anjām*, *Tawallā wa tabarrā*, *Maṭlūb al-mu'minīn*,¹⁹ and probably other treatises that have been lost with the passage of time.²⁰

Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd lived during one of the most turbulent periods in the history of the Nizārī Ismailis. Having emerged from more than a century of militant struggle against the Saljūqs, the Ismailis of Iran were confronted by the hostility of a new and much more powerful adversary, the Mongols, who were on a quest for world power. Having devastated Transoxiana, the Mongols were now poised to enter Khurāsān. It is understandable, therefore, to see some reference to these troubling events find their way into the *Dīwān*.²¹

As mentioned earlier, the *Qā'imīyyāt* includes a number of poems by Ḥasan's contemporaries which, due to the absence of pen names, cannot

be accurately attributed.²² An example of this is an ode composed probably by 'Abd al-Raḥīm, father of the Ismaili *muḥtasham* of Quhistān Nāṣir al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Maṣṣūr (d. 655/1257). On the evidence of the poem, it appears that it was engraved on the foundation stone of the castle of Tūn during the time of the imam Nūr al-Dīn A'lā Muḥammad (d. 607/1210):

During the reign of a man who is obeyed by mankind,
 Lord Muḥammad, son of [Ḥasan] 'alā *dhikrihi*'l-salām,
 Eternally, he is the aspiration of existence in its quest for perpetuity and
 good order;
 That Resurrector, who out of bounty and generosity,
 Has stood firm, seeking betterment for all people
 At the time when his message is reaching everyone,
 O mankind, the *Qiyāmat* has been proclaimed.
 On an auspicious sign was laid the foundation
 And in three months this castle was built;
 On the Hijrī calendar it was *khā*, *kāf* and *hā*, seventeen days elapsed from
 the month of Ramaḍān.²³
 May the castle survive forever and bring a good omen for its inhabitants,
 And may all its inhabitants be servants of the imam of the time
 Peer of the faithful and lord of the people with certainty
 Son of Ḥasan, Muḥammad, beloved of everyone
 Divine shadow, the truthful light, whose eternal grace may forever bless
 his servants
 To serve him is pure blessing and absolute fortune, for anyone blessed to
 be honoured by it.
 In the whole world there is no lower creature than this humble servant,
 Dust in the path of his servants, namely 'Abd al-Raḥīm.
 When, in his blessed name, I laid the foundation of this building, and
 supplicated to God Almighty, my last words were:
 May this castle be the abode of the good people and May God protect it
 from the evil eye.²⁴

In the following fragment, which might have been composed on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the castle, Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd confirms 'Abd al-Raḥīm's governorship of Tūn:

O God, protect the city of Tūn from mishaps,
 Make it the abode of happiness, bliss and joy.
 Bestow eternal good fortune and wealth
 Upon the one who resides in this lofty place,
 Sustain its government with the command of the Lord of the time
 at the hand of the great king 'Abd al-Raḥīm.

And bless the humble mind of Ḥasan, in his praise to
shine as a glittering gem and a virgin pearl.²⁵

From a theological perspective, although the *Qā'imīyyāt* is permeated with what is generally known as 'exaggerative expression' (*ghulūww*) in eulogy of the Ismaili imams, the analysis of applied vocabulary and comparison with what we find in early Shī'i literature shows that none of these terms are alien to the general lines of Shī'i thought, especially when the doctrine of imamate and its relation to prophethood becomes the main issue.

For Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd, following the same approach as his patron Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī, the imam who succeeds the Prophet as 'leader of the community' must possess three distinctive features: he should be from the Prophet's progeny (*ahl al-bayt*); he must have a clear designation for his post; and he should summon people to the knowledge of the Divine.²⁶ The imams of the Alamūt period were believed to have these attributes and, according to our poet, rightly deserved to be addressed with such inspiring epithets. The main concern of Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd in the *Dīwān* is to produce a vivid description of the doctrine of *qiyāmat* and convey its message to the readers. In the words of Farhad Daftary,

It [i.e. the *qiyāmat*] implied a complete personal transformation of the Nizāris who henceforth were expected to perceive their imam in his true spiritual reality. The imam in his eternal essence was defined as the epiphany (*mazhar*) of the word (*kalima*) or command (*amr*) of God. In Shī'i thought, the imam had always been considered as the *hujja* or proof of God. But in the Paradise of the *qiyāma*, the present Nizārī imam became the manifestation of the divine word or order to create, that is to say, the cause of the spiritual world. It was essentially through this vision of the imam that men could find themselves in Paradise, and not by being in Rūdbār, Quhistān or any other particular locality. More specifically, this vision did not consist of merely knowing the identity of the true imam of the time, or of seeing the body of that imam. It required the metaphysical transcending of the person of the imam so as to enable the believer to see the unveiled truth. As a result, the believer would view the world from the imam's viewpoint, enabling him to lead a purely spiritual life, which was the afterlife expected by the Ismā'ilis. This view of the universe, and of the imam in particular, would lead the individual to a third level of being, in effect a world of *bāṭin* behind the *bāṭin*, the ultimate reality or *ḥaqīqa* [read *qiyāma*], contrasted to the worlds of the *sharī'a* and its *bāṭin* as interpreted by the ordinary Ismā'ili *ta'wīl*.²⁷

In the development of Persian poetry and its Ismaili component, to quote Shafi'i Kadkani's remark: 'The *Qā'imīyyāt* is a masterly poetical work

much richer in Ismaili terminology, not only of the *Dīwān* of Nāṣir-i Khusraw, his predecessor, and Nizārī Quhistānī, who flourished after him, but also of the prose writings of Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī.²⁸ The importance of Ḥasan's works lies in the fact that, until the discovery of a more reliable text on the Nizārī Ismaili doctrine of *qiyāmat*, his writings remain the most extensive and contemporary interpretation to survive up to our time. Although Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd was neither a practising theologian, nor even an outstanding exponent of Persian prose writing, he was certainly a master poet, and his long-lasting friendship and professional collaboration with Ṭūsī should be regarded as a measure of the accuracy of his theological articulations.

The proclamation of the *Qiyāmat* by Imam Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām left a profound and wide-ranging impact on Nizārī Ismaili thought of the late Alamūt period. A comparison between the traditional (that is, Fatimid) and the Nizārī versions of Ismaili doctrine is beyond the scope of the present paper. But insofar as it relates to the works of Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd, both in his *Haft bāb* and the *Dīwān*, it is worth mentioning that by the time he composed these works, the theological vocabulary of Ismaili literature had already undergone a major transformation. While the Nizārī Ismaili *da'wat* of the time continued to adhere to the foundational principles of classical Shi'i and Fatimid Ismailism, there emerged an additional set of conceptual formulations to reflect the new intellectual and spiritual vistas that opened out in the age of the Resurrection.

An interesting aspect of the doctrine of *qiyāmat* as exhibited in the *Dīwān*, which does not conform to the narratives of non-Ismaili historical and theological writings, pertains to the relationship between the Resurrector (*qā'im*) and the religious law (p. *sharī'at*; ar. *sharī'a*). In the Sunni, often anti-Ismaili, historical sources, such as *Tārīkh-i jahān-gushā* by 'Aṭā-Malik Juwaynī, *Jāmi' al-tawārikh* by Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh, and *Zubdat al-tawārikh* by Abu'l-Qāsim Kāshānī, Imam Ḥasan 'alā dhikrihi'l-salām is depicted as having abrogated the *sharī'a*.²⁹ In the *Dīwān-i Qā'imīyāt*, however, the *qā'im* is essentially portrayed as the agent of the perfection of the religious law.³⁰ This conforms to Ṭūsī's representation in the *Rawḍa* where he says:

He [i.e. Prophet Muḥammad] warned mankind and conveyed the glad tidings about the Resurrector who would bring about the Resurrection, and since he was the last herald and conveyor of the glad tidings of the Resurrection, he said: 'The Hour and I were sent together, like these two forefingers,'³¹ meaning, 'Both the Resurrector and I have come together like two forefingers that are stretched out beside each other ...' Since it

was intended that there be no further religious law after Muḥammad, and since the mission and religious laws of all previous Prophets were to be terminated by means of his own mission [in summoning people] to the Resurrection, he was thus the Seal of all the Prophets and their various legal codes (*sharāyi*). The legal statutes of each Prophet who succeeded the Prophet who preceded him were all aimed at perfecting those previous laws, not their abrogation. But that perfection has, from the exoteric and formal point of view, appeared like abrogation not perfection, because until something is changed from one state to another 'it cannot be given the form which is the aim of the perfection of that thing. For example, until the sperm changes its state through alteration and modifications, it will not move on from the form in which it is and pass through the stages of coagulated blood, embryo, flesh and bone—in attaining to each of which it moves closer to the soul—and so it will not attain the completeness of the human form. One must understand the process of perfecting and abrogating (*ibṭāl*) religious laws in the same manner. If [for instance] a religious statute instituted by one Prophet remains unchanged and is not followed by another edict instituted by the Prophet who succeeds him, then in the end, the Lord of the Resurrection (*qā'im-i qiyāmat*) will be unable to exercise his [proper] spiritual authority, and consequently, those who are subject to this [outdated] religious edict will never be able to progress from the way to the aim, from the letter to the spirit, from deceptive similitudes to what is distinctly clear, from relativity to reality, and from legalistic religion (*sharī'at*) to the Resurrection (*qiyāmat*).³²

Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd presents a very similar description in one of his odes on the subject:

In obedience to God's command, the Prophets guided people to the eternal life.

They said: The commandment of the Resurrection is absolute existence, whereas the periods of religious laws are possible beings.

They said: When the period of the *sharī'at* is fulfilled, all ambiguities will turn into distinctions.

They said: In the period of Resurrection, through the eternal Divine Command, the pillars of the *sharī'at* will obtain their perfection.³³

In another composition, he reflects on the relationship between *sharī'a* and the *qiyāma*:

In comparison, the *sharī'at* is like matter and the *qiyāmat* the form; the *qiyāmat* a ring and its esoteric meaning the [mounted] gem.

Yes, in this world, when they beat the drum of the Resurrection that will be the moment when the world will witness the splendour of his

manifestation.

In the realm of the *sharīʿat*, when you speak of the Imam, the *Qāʾim* and God, that is how it should be.

But in the realm of the Resurrection, by the dictate of truth, you have to perceive all the three as one.³⁴

A close scrutiny of the *Dīwān-i Qāʾimiyyāt* does not reveal any explicit indication to support the allegation of Persian historians that the religious law was abrogated following the proclamation of the *Qiyāmat*. It appears as if the Persian historians mentioned earlier, who all wrote after the fall of Alamūt in 654/1256, totally neglected the subsequent developments of Ismaili religious thought that took place during the reigns of the imams Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan (d. 618/1221) and ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. 653/1255). The only possible explanations are that either they were not aware of these developments or that they disregarded them for not conforming to their anti-Ismaili stance. Interestingly enough, the poet uses the term abrogation (*naskh*) – a technical term denoting fundamental change in the application of the *sharīʿa* – only once, and that denoting the abrogation of heavenly rank (*naskh-i martaba-yi āsmiyyān*):

That Great Resurrection (*qiyāmat-i kubrā*), which the Qurʾān describes in time and space, will be proclaimed.

Time will shine with Divine Light, and earth as a result, will abrogate heaven's rank.³⁵

It is clear from these lines that for Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd and his contemporaries, the doctrine of *qiyāmat* constituted not a revocation of the religious law, but rather a summons for spiritual transformation in the quest for the knowledge of the Divine.

From a different perspective, within the rich heritage of Persian poetry and its Ismaili constituent, the *Dīwān-i Qāʾimiyyāt* is a masterpiece containing a rich interweaving of religious motifs and poetical constructions, and one which hitherto has remained hidden. Its publication, it is hoped, will open a window for new areas of investigation and literary appreciation. In term of its place in the poetic heritage of the Ismailis, the *Dīwān* is a lively continuation of the poetic tradition established by Nāṣir-i Khusraw (d. after 462/1070) and continued by Nizārī Quhistānī (d. 720/1320), Ḥusayn b. Yaʿqūb Shāh-i Šūfī (ca. eighth/fourteenth century), Khākī Khurāsānī (d. after 960/1056) and many other Nizārī Ismaili poets.

Notes

1. Although Ivanow does not mention Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd's *Dīwān* in his *Ismaili Literature: A Bibliographical Survey* (Tehran, 1963), he had seen some poems of Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd in what he termed the 'Kerman Manuscript', including an ode in praise of the *fidā'is* (Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd, *Dīwān*, ode: 75), which he wrongly attributed to Ra'īs Ḥasan, an Ismaili poet who flourished a generation earlier, and he published the text with an English translation in *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, New Series, 14 (1938), pp. 63–72.
2. Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib, *Dīwān-i Qā'imīyyāt*, ed. S. Jalal Badakhchani, with an introduction and glossary of technical terms by Muḥammad Riḍā Shafī'ī Kadkanī (Tehran, forthcoming).
3. Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa-yi taslīm*, ed. and tr. by S. Jalal Badakhchani as *Paradise of Submission: A Medieval Treatise on Ismaili Thought* (London, 2005), p. 170, Persian text, pp. 211–212.
4. See, for instance, the references in odes 91: 2805; 94: 2902.
5. See, for example, odes 76 and 100.
6. In odes 78, 86, 132 and 136, Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd mentions their names and imitates their style of poetry. Odes 4 and 79 are imitations of the famous poet Sanā'ī Ghaznawī (d. 525/1131). Sanā'ī here is addressed as an Ismaili *dā'ī* with the title 'Candlelight and Crown of Preachers (*sham' wa tāj-i dā'iyān*)'. In the oldest manuscript 'M', described below, a complete ode of Sanā'ī is merged into the *Dīwān*.
7. MS D, fol. 4a.
8. Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa-yi taslīm*, p. 170; Persian text, p. 212 where he is described as: 'Most noble among preachers, prudent measure (*ṣalāḥ*) for kingdom and religion, the world famous secretary (*munshī*), producer of poetry and prose, Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd, may his grandeur prevail.'
9. Ṭūsī, *Sayr wa sulūk*, ed. and tr. by S. Jalal Badakhchani as *Contemplation and Action: The Spiritual Autobiography of a Muslim Scholar* (London, 1998), p. 30, Persian text, p. 6.
10. Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh: Qismat-i Ismā'īliyyān va Fātimīyān va Nizāriyān va dā'iyān va rafīqān*, ed. Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazūh and Muḥammad Mudarrisī Zanjanī (Tehran, 1338 Sh./1959), pp. 153–161.
11. Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Majmū'a-yi rasā'il*, ed. Mudarris Raḍawī (Tehran, 1335 Sh./1956), p. 123.
12. *Haft Bāb-i Bābā Sayyidnā*, in Wladimir Ivanow, ed., *Two Ismaili Treatises* (Bombay, 1933), pp. 4–44. This work is listed as anonymous in Farhad Daftary, *Ismaili Literature, A Bibliography of Source and Studies* (London, 2004), pp. 47, 162. For the English translation see Marshall G. S. Hodgson, 'The Popular Appeal of the Qiyāma', in his *The Order of Assassins: The Struggle of the Early Nizārī Ismā'ilīs against the Islamic World* (The Hague, 1955; repr. New York, 1980), pp. 279–324. I am in the process of preparing a

new edition based on newly found manuscripts of the text.

13. Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi'*, pp. 153–161.
14. As he calls them in the most complete version of *Haft bāb*, part of a collection at The Institute of Ismaili Studies Library, MS 64 (copied 1330/1911, fols 2–35).
15. In Ivanow's edition of the *Haft Bāb*, the word is in singular: '*bididam*' (I saw), in the oldest manuscript mentioned above '*bididim*' (we saw), and in the *Dīwān*, ode 46, no. 1399, '*bididand*' (they saw).
16. Ṭūsī, *Sayr wa sulūk*, p. 31; Persian text p. 6.
17. See Mudarris Raḍawī, the editor of Ṭūsī's *Majmū'a-yi rasā'il*, p. 123, citing from Aḥmad Amin Rāzī, *Tadhkira-yi haft iqlīm*, in which part of ode 58 is attributed to 'Ra'īs Ḥasan-i Ṣalāḥ Bīrjandī'.
18. Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa*, p. 170, Persian text, p. 211.
19. Ṭūsī, *Āghāz wa anjām: muqaddima wa sharḥ wa ta'līqāt*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥasanzāda Āmulī (Tehran, 1366 Sh./1987); *Tawallā wa tabarrā* (printed with Ṭūsī's *Akhlaq-i muḥtashimī*), ed. Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazūh (Tehran, 1339 Sh./1960), pp. 562–570; *Maṭlūb al-mu'minīn*, ed. Ivanow in *Two Ismaili Treatises*, pp. 43–55. For a new edition and English translation of these three texts see S. Jalal Badakhchani, *Shi'i Interpretations of Islam: Three Treatises on Islamic Theology and Eschatology* (London, 2011).
20. An example of this category is his elaboration on the three parameters of the doctrine of *qiyāmat*, that is, *qiyām*, *thawāb* and *ba'th*, which is based either on a missing treatise by Ṭūsī or earlier authors. In his *Haft bāb*, Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd does not mention these parameters.
21. Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd, *Dīwān*, odes 49, 114, 124 and 133. For a historical overview see Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs*, pp. 382–388. Another example is Ivanow, 'An Ismaili Poem'.
22. Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd, *Dīwān*, author's introduction and ode 71: 2107–2111.
23. *Khā*, *kāf* and *hā* equals 628, so the exact date is Saturday 17 Ramaḍān 628/26 July 1231. At the time, Ismailis celebrated 17 Ramaḍān as the feast of Resurrection ('*īd-i qiyāmat*).
24. Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd, *Dīwān*, ode 100: 3020–3032.
25. *Ibid.*, ode 74: 2191–2195.
26. See Ṭūsī, *Sayr wa sulūk*, pp. 43–44; Persian text, pp. 14–15.
27. Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs*, p. 364.
28. M. R. Shafī'i Kadkanī's foreword to *Dīwān-i Qā'imīyyāt*.
29. See 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭā-Malik Juwaynī, *Tārīkh-i jahān-gushā*, ed. Mīrzā Muḥammad Qazwīnī (Leiden and London, 1912–1937), vol. 3, pp. 225–230, 237–239; tr. John A. Boyle as *The History of the World-Conqueror* (Cambridge, MA, 1958), vol. 2, pp. 688–691, 695–697; Jamāl al-Dīn Abū'l-Qāsim Kāshānī, *Zubdat al-tawārikh: tārikh-i Ismā'īliyya va Nizāriyya va malāḥida*, ed. Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazūh in *Revue de la Faculté des Lettres, Université de Tabriz*, Supplément no. 9 (1343/1964), pp. 201–202, 204; and Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi'*, pp. 164–166, 168–169. For an overview of the

- qiyāmat* doctrine based on historical sources see Daftary, *The Ismā'īlis*, pp. 358–367.
30. Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd, *Dīwān*, ode 62: 1870 'They said, when the cycle of religious law comes to an end, the *qā'im*, as required by his rank, will perfect it.'
 31. Cited in Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (Cairo, 1932), vol. 6, p. 206.
 32. Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa*, pp. 139–140, Persian text, pp. 173–174.
 33. Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd, *Dīwān*, ode 31: 968–972.
 34. *Ibid.*, ode 46: 1393–1397.
 35. *Ibid.*, ode 62: 1871. Further, ode 142 is devoted to the celebration of the feast at the end of the month of Ramaḍān, '*id-i fiṭr*', which confirms that the practice of fasting was observed.

Further Notes on the Turkish Names in Abu'l-Faḍl Bayhaqī's *Tārīkh-i Mas'ūdī*

C. Edmund Bosworth

Introduction

In what was regrettably the final volume to appear of the journal *Oriens* – a volume of studies in honour of Professor Franz Rosenthal, happily appearing just before his death – I published an article 'Notes on some Turkish names in Abū'l-Faḍl Bayhaqī's *Tārīkh-i Mas'ūdī*'.¹ In this article, before listing and attempting to elucidate these personal names, I discussed the lexicographical works and materials which we possess for this task and the previous publications in this field by Turcologists.² I noted the paucity of these *Hilfsmittel* and some of the egregious mistakes made by one writer who tried to elucidate Turkish, Mongolian and Chinese (sic) names in Bayhaqī's *History* (written 451/1059) without apparently knowing any of these three languages.³

It was only after this article had been written that there came to my notice a work which had appeared in Turkey a few years previously, the posthumously published work of the well-known historian of Saljūq Turkey, Faruk Sümer, on the Turkish names in Islamic history up to the Saljūqs and in the ensuing period of the Anatolian beyliks and the Türkmen dynasties of the central Islamic lands entitled *Türk devletleri tarihinde şahis adları*.⁴ A section entitled 'Samaniler ve Gazneliler türkce adlar'⁵ is essentially a dictionary of Turkish names appearing in pre-Islamic and Islamic historical sources, with the personages in question placed in their historical settings; the apparent basic meaning of the names is sometimes, though not always, noted, but the compiler's aim was primarily to achieve a historical listing of the names and not to attempt detailed philological explanations of them. Nevertheless, information from this work will be

noted below where it seems helpful.

The great Hungarian Turcologist László Rásonyi (1899–1984) won a prize offered in 1932 by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences for the compilation of an onomasticon of Turkish anthroponyms and ethonyms, making a collection of over 60,000 names and variants by the various Turkish-speaking peoples from the opening of known Turkish history (essentially from the sixth century AD) to the first half of the twentieth century. Unfortunately, the demands of a busy academic career and the onset of blindness towards the end of his life meant that he was never able to put this collection into publishable form, and all we have had until recently has been the provisional list of entries made by Imre Baski, *A Preliminary Index to Rásonyi's Onomasticon Turcicum*.⁶ This has been useful as an indication of the richness of the material, although it inevitably lacked any explanation of the names listed and of their provenance. In my 'Notes on some Turkish names' I had to use existing works, foremost amongst which were of course the two modern milestones in Turkish lexicography, Gerhard Doerfer's *Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen*⁷ and Sir Gerard Clauson's *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish*.⁸

A great step forward is the recent publication of Rásonyi's work in full, published as *Onomasticon Turcicum, Turkic Personal Names as Collected by László Rásonyi* (henceforth, R), thanks to the labours of Baski and the sponsorship of the Denis Sinor Institute for Inner Asian Studies at Indiana University.⁹ The lengthy introduction, put together by Baski on the basis of the many articles which Rásonyi wrote over the years on the topic of Turkish onomastic, contains a most valuable survey of the principles discernible in Turkish name-giving, the categories of these names and their grammatical structures; any future researcher in this field should take it thoroughly to heart before undertaking any work of their own. The main body of the *Onomasticon*, then, has alphabetically arranged entries, with the occurrences of the personal and tribal names found in the written corpus of materials for the Turkish languages, with translations and explanations where this is possible; obviously, many of these last must be tentative.

Of course, work on Turkish onomastic did not stand still in the thirty or forty years which have elapsed since the works of Doerfer and Clauson appeared. This is not the place to attempt a detailed listing or critique of the advances made during this period (in any case, beyond the present writer's sphere of expertise), but he would like merely to mention here that he has benefited much by the works of Peter B. Golden, such as his *Khazar*

Studies: An Historico-Philological Inquiry into the Origins of the Khazars, and other writings.¹⁰ Moreover, Professor Golden has kindly read through a draft of this article and has made many useful observations and suggestions; these are duly acknowledged below.

The names

(1) Bāytūz (Gh 450, F 582)¹¹

This was the leader of the group of Turkish former *ghulāms* of the Samanids who had established themselves at Bust in the mid-fourth/tenth century, and who were overthrown by Sebüktegin (r. 366–387/977–997) as part of his policy of expansion into southern Afghanistan.¹² Rásonyi (R I:105) could only tentatively suggest for this name the combination of two components: *bay* ('rich, noble person')¹³ + *tuz* ('salt'),¹⁴ noting a few usages of this as the first component in names. However, Professor Golden feels that there may be other possibilities for the second component, such as *töz-*, *tüz-* ('to suffer, endure', 'to arrange, set in order'),¹⁵ and *toz* ('birch bark', especially the kind wrapped round bows).¹⁶ Yet this, he goes on to say, does not exhaust all the possibilities, if we have here an example of the sound change from Old Turkic /dh/ > Middle Qipchaq /z/ (roughly speaking, that of the period between the eleventh and the fourteenth–fifteenth centuries AD), noted by Kāshgharī¹⁷ as occurring in the speech of some of the Qipchaq, Yimek, etc. This could yield *toz* from *tōdh-* ('be satiated'),¹⁸ later *toy-*, with a further sound shift /z/ > /y/.

(2) Begtüzün (Gh 640, F 865)

This commander of the last Samanids, almost certainly a *ghulām*, was governor of Nishāpūr in 388–389/998–999 and an opponent of Maḥmūd of Ghazna (r. 388–421/998–1030) when the latter rose to power in Khurāsān.¹⁹ The first component is the familiar *beg/bek* ('chief') and the second, *todhun*, *tudhun*. This last was a title in the Old Turkish administrative hierarchy, according to Chinese sources, a hereditary title for high officials not of royal blood who supervised conquered territories left under the nominal rule of their indigenous princes; at the other end of the Turkish world, it is also attested in Byzantine sources on the Khazars.²⁰ By Samanid times, it had, like *tégin*, gone down in the social scale within the Islamic milieu.²¹ But again, Professor Golden notes that a form *tuzun* could have existed in Common Turkic at this time; examples are lacking, although later Rus' sources mention the *trunove* as leaders of the Bulghārs on the middle Volga, a name which would involve the sound shifts

tudhun > *tuzun* > *turun*, the latter shift characteristic of Bulghārīc Turkic. Nevertheless, his personal feeling is that we could well have here *tüzün* ('self-controlled, well-behaved, gentle'),²² and that *beg* could be *bek* < *berk* ('firm, solid' = 'very'); good behaviour and gentleness are not qualities to be associated with this particular ambitious and bellicose commander in Khurāsān, but the name would doubtless have been given to him as a child.

(3) *Khumārtāsh* (*ad* 'Notes on some Turkish names', 306–307)

Rásonyi (R I, 290–291) has many examples for the first component from Ghaznavid, Saljūq and Khwārazm-shāhī usage onwards, with two ranges of meaning: first, 'gambling', which must come from Arabic *qimār*, and does not seem appropriate here; and second, 'intense emotion, wish', which does have some semantic connection with the meaning, given in 'Notes on some Turkish names',²³ of 'memento, keepsake', 'well-remembered', since one needs an effort of the emotions and memory to achieve remembrance of a person or thing. Sümer suggests for this element the associated ideas of 'encouragement, consolation'.²⁴ Professor Golden further suggests a meaning from the Middle Qipchaq *qumar* ('inheritance, heritage, estate')²⁵ Old Turkic *qumār* ('legacy, memento').

(4) *Nūshtegin* (*ad* 'Notes on some Turkish names', 308)

Rásonyi (R I, 65) has for the first component, *anush*, the meaning 'faithful', citing the Khīwan historian Abu'l-Ghāzī (fl. eleventh/seventeenth century); this would provide a parallel etymology to the Iranian one given in 'Notes on some Turkish names'. The most famous Anūshtegin was the commander of the Great Saljūqs, Anūshtegin Gharcha'i, governor of Khwārazm for the Saljūq sultan Malik Shāh (r. 465–485/1072–1092) from ca. 470/1077 and precursor there of the line of shāhs begun at his death in 490/1097 by his son Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad.²⁶ For the component *tégin*, see below.

(5) *Öge* (Gh 496, F 647: ?W.K.)

This is the name of a messenger sent by the sons of the Qarakhanid ruler of Bukhārā and Samarqand 'Alitegin (d. 425/1034) in 427/1035 to the Saljūq sultan Mas'ūd (r. 421–432/1030–1041);²⁷ he had apparently the given name of Mūsātegin and must have been a person of significance at the Qarakhanid court, perhaps a member of the ruling family. The term *Öge* is explained by Kāshgharī, as an appellation for 'a person of superior

intelligence'.²⁸ It was in fact an important title in the Old Turkish ruling structures, apparently equivalent to 'counsellor, aide', something like the Arabic vizier.²⁹

(6) Qadīr (Gh 77, F 88, etc.)

This was the *onghun* name of Sultan Maḥmūd's ally against 'Alitegin, the Great Qāghān of the Qarakhanid confederation, Yūsuf b. Hārūn (or Ḥasan) Bughra Khān of Balāsāghūn, Kāshghar and Khotan (r. 416–423/1025–1032).³⁰ Its usage by Turkish peoples seems to be ancient; Golden has noted, on the evidence of an Armenian historian, a Khazar commander who raided through the Caucasus of the mid-seventh century apparently with the name *Qadīr Ilteber.³¹ The basic meaning of *qadhīr/qadīr* is 'brutal, violent, tyrannical, oppressive', hence as a royal appellative, 'powerful, mighty'. Because of the identical consonantal ductus in Arabic script, it was often confused with the semantically close Arabic word *qadr* ('power, might'), and with the corresponding adjective *qādir* ('powerful, mighty').³²

(7) Qalpāq (Gh 679, F 926)

This man was a commander in Maḥmūd's army which in 408/1017 invaded and annexed Khwārazm to the Ghaznavid empire.³³ In later Turkish, *qalpaq* is well known as a cone-shaped, sheepskin hat, used for protection in the harsh steppe winter, but the information on the word as a personal name refers to very late Türkmen usage.³⁴ Its appearance in Bayhaqī, however, implies that it has a much longer history as a personal name.

(8) Qāyī Oghlan (ad 'Notes on some Turkish names', 309)

Rásonyi (R II, 404) notes that, as well as being a tribal name, *qayī* has the simple meaning of 'hard, strong'.

(9) Q.W.N.SH. (Gh 445, F 575)

This was the commander-in-chief of the army of 'Alitegin's sons in Transoxiana in 426/1034–1035, with the name later written as *t.w.n.sh*.³⁵ It is only the first form, however, that yields possible sense, and the attestations here are very late; Rásonyi (R II, 471) gives *qonīsh* as a component of names frequently occurring in Kazakh of the nineteenth century with the meaning 'residence, abode, staying for the night when on a journey'. Professor Golden regards Rásonyi's suggestion as possible, but would asso-

ciate the name rather with Middle Qipchaq *qonush-* ('to raid'), in particular, to employ the tactic on the battlefield of a feigned withdrawal and then a return to the attack.³⁶ Also, given Bayhaqī's spelling of the name on occasion as *t.w.n.sh*, the possibility of a corruption *t.w.t.sh* ('Tutush') cannot be excluded.

(10) Satī (Gh 327, F 417, etc.)

This was the name of a son of the Khwārazm-šāh Altūntāsh (r. 408–432/1017–1041), governor of Khwārazm for Maḥmūd and Mas'ūd, who was kept at Mas'ūd's court as, in effect, a hostage for his father's good behaviour, dying in possibly suspicious circumstances in 425/1034. As noted in 'Notes on some Turkish names', the verbal stem *sat-* ('to sell') was productive of various forms, obviously appropriate for slaves who had been purchased.³⁷ Rásonyi (R II, 641–642) gives many examples of the name Satī (lit. 'selling, sale'), from Uyghur Qaghanate times (i.e. third/ninth century) onwards.

(11) Sāwtegin (ad 'Notes on some Turkish names', 309–310)

Rásonyi (R II, 644) has an alternative etymology for the first element: *sāw* ('healthy'), with other examples of its use in compound names. Professor Golden, however, notes a slight problem here: that it is not certain that the sound shift *gh* > *w*, as in *sagh* > *saw* ('sound, healthy') had occurred in Qipchaq at this time (i.e. mid-fifth/eleventh century) although the Old Rus' chronicles mention at the end of this century a Coman with the name Saouk, suggesting that the change had in fact taken place.

(12) S.N.K.W.Y. (ad 'Note on some Turkish names', 310)

Rásonyi (R II, 680) lists *süngü* ('lance, spear, pike'), citing Houtsma (the anonymous text in question dates from the eighth/fourteenth century), where it is noted as a personal name and, in the form *süngüchi* ('lance, spear-maker'), as a noun of profession.³⁸ The person bearing this name could well have been a lance-wielder, since he is mentioned as being, towards the end of Mas'ūd's reign, commander of the palace guard (*amīr-i ḥaras*; Gh 659, F 893), though the connection may be purely fortuitous.

(13) Sübāshī (ad 'Notes on some Turkish names', 310)

Rásonyi (R II, 677) surmises that this was an Oghuz title. This is confirmed by the fact that the traveller Aḥmad Ibn Faḍlān, who journeyed from Khwārazm to the kingdom of Bulghār on the middle Volga

in 309–310/922, encountered amongst the Oghuz nomadising north of the Aral and Caspian seas their war leader (*ṣāhib al-jaysh*, obviously a rendering of *sū bashī*),³⁹ and also confirmed by the attribution of the title, according to Kāshgharī, to the eponymous founder of the Saljūq dynasty, Saljūq b. Duqāq (fourth/tenth century).⁴⁰

(14) Tégin (Gh 410, 589, 604, F 529, 782, 804)

This is found as a name *tout court* for a commander of the Buyid ruler of Rayy and the Jibāl, Majd al-Dawla (r. 387–420/997–1029), who was keeper of the royal wardrobe, and for two of Mas'ūd's commanders, a chamberlain called Tegin-i Saqlābī, and a certain Tegin *j.y.l.m.y* (the latter word unexplained) who may have been head of the *ghulāms* billeted in the royal palace barracks. Golden points out that the early Turk empire meaning of 'prince, immediate male relative of the Qāghān' had to some extent been forgotten by Kāshgharī's time; unaware of the title's glorious past in Orkhon Turkish times, Kāshgharī defines it as *'abd*, with a rather forced explanation that *tégin* by itself was a title of respect used by sons addressing their father (hence like the later Persian use of *banda* referring to oneself when in an inferior social relationship), but when used by slaves was compounded with another element.⁴¹ Much more probable is Golden's own explanation that *tégin* was widespread from the third/ninth century onwards as an element in the names of military slaves (*ghilmān*, *mamālīk*) in the armies of the 'Abbasids and then of their successor states like the Samanids and Buyids, and it thereby became associated with slave status; for such soldiers there are numerous examples: see Rásonyi (R II, 727).

(15) T.K.L.Y. (*ad* 'Notes on some Turkish names', 310–311)

Rásonyi (R II, 728) notes *teke* ('ram, he-goat'), with Uyghur usage in the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, so that *tekeli* would mean 'having a he-goat', or perhaps 'like a ram', i.e. 'having its strength'. Professor Golden adduces the existence of *tügli* 'hairy' in Middle Qipchaq.⁴²

(16) Üker (Gh 465–466, F 604–605)

Üker or Öger would appear to be the likely rendering of *'w.k.'r*, a commander of the sons of 'Alitegin involved in the attack on the Ghaznavid-held fortress at the Oxus crossing-point of Tirmidh in 426/1035. Rásonyi (R II, 592) lists Öker as part of a nineteenth-century Kazakh name, Ökerbay, but without any suggestion regarding its meaning; Clauson has the

verbal stem *ögir*- ('to be joyful, rejoice'), from which a personal name seems semantically feasible.⁴³

Notes

1. Clifford Edmund Bosworth, 'Notes on some Turkish names in Abū'l-Faḍl Bayhaqī's *Tārīkh-i Mas'ūdī*', *Oriens*, 36 (2001), pp. 299–313.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 299–302.
3. Qiyām al-Dīn Rā'ī, 'Lughāt-i Turkī, Mughūlī, wa Chīnī dar *Tārīkh-i Bayhaqī*', in *Yad-nāma-yi Abū'l-Faḍl-i Bayhaqī* (Mashhad, 1350 Sh./1971), pp. 182–198.
4. Faruk Sümer, *Türk devletleri tarihinde şahis adları*, ed. Turan Yazgan (Istanbul, 1999), 2 vols.
5. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 535–552.
6. Imre Baski, *A Preliminary Index to Rásonyi's Onomasticon Turcicum* (Budapest, 1984).
7. Gerhard Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen* (Wiesbaden, 1963–1975), 4 vols.
8. Gerard Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish* (Oxford, 1972).
9. László Rásonyi and Imre Baski, *Onomasticon Turcicum, Turkic Personal Names as Collected by László Rásonyi* (Bloomington, IN, 2007), 2 vols, henceforth R.
10. Peter B. Golden, *Khazar Studies. An Historico-Philological Inquiry into the Origins of the Khazars* (Budapest, 1980); 'The Terminology of Slavery and Servitude in Medieval Turkic', in Devin DeWeese, ed., *Studies on Central Asian History in Honor of Yuri Bregel* (Bloomington, IN, 2001), pp. 27–56; 'Khazar Turkic Ghulāms in Caliphal Service. Onomastic Notes', *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, 12 (2002–2003), pp. 15–27; 'Khazar Turkic Ghulāms in Caliphal Service', *Journal Asiatique*, 292 (2004), pp. 279–309; 'Khazarica: Notes on Some Khazar Terms', *Turkic Languages*, 9 (2005), pp. 205–222.
11. These sigla and numbers refer to the page numbers of the two different editions of Abū'l-Faḍl Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh-i Mas'ūdī*, ed. Qāsim Ghanī and 'Alī Akbar Fayyād (Tehran, 1324/1945) (siglum: Gh); and ed. 'Alī Akbar Fayyād (Mashhad, 1350/1971) (siglum: F).
12. C. E. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids, their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran 994–1040* (Edinburgh, 1963), pp. 37, 42–43; R, I, 105; repr. with updated bibliography (Beirut, 1973).
13. See Bosworth, 'Notes on some Turkish names', p. 304.
14. See R II, 805.
15. Clauson, *Etymological Dictionary*, pp. 572–573; Sümer, *Türk devletleri tarihinde şahis adları*, vol. 2, p. 543; Recep Toparlı, Hanifi Vural and Recep Karaatlı, *Kıpçak türkçesi sözlüğü* (Ankara, 2003), p. 283.

16. Clauson, *Etymological Dictionary*, p. 571; Toparlı, et al., *Kıpçak türkçesi sözlüğü*, p. 28.
17. Maḥmūd b. Husayn al-Kāshgharī, *Dīwān lughāt al-turk*, Facsimile and Turkish tr. Besim Atalay (Ankara, 1939–1943), 5 vols, vol. 1, p. 32; English tr. Robert Dankoff and James Michael Kelly, *Compendium of the Turkic Dialects (Dīwān Lūyāt at-Turk)* (Cambridge, MA, 1982–1984), 2 vols, vol. 1, p. 85.
18. Clauson, *Etymological Dictionary*, p. 451.
19. Wilhelm Barthold [=Vasily Vladimirovich Barto'ld], *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion*, tr. Tatiana Minorsky and ed. C. E. Bosworth (3rd ed., London, 1968), pp. 265–268. Originally published as *Turkestan v ēpokhu mongol'skago nashestviya* (St Petersburg, 1898–1900).
20. Gyula Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica. I. Die byzantinischen Quellen der Geschichte der Türkvölker, II. Sprachreste der Türkvölker in den byzantinischen Quellen* (Berlin, 1958; 3rd repr., Leiden, 1983), vol. 2, pp. 317–318; Golden, *Khazar Studies*, vol. 1, pp. 215–216.
21. Clauson, *Etymological Dictionary*, p. 457; R II, 787.
22. Clauson, *Etymological Dictionary*, p. 576.
23. Bosworth, 'Notes on some Turkish names', pp. 307–308.
24. Sümer, *Türk devletlerin tarihinde şahis adları*, pp. 545–556, and see pp. 714–715.
25. Toparlı, et al., *Kıpçak türkçesi sözlüğü*, p. 162.
26. C. E. Bosworth, *The New Islamic Dynasties. A Chronological and Genealogical Manual* (Edinburgh, 1996), pp. 178–179, no. 89.
27. Barthold, *Turkestan*, pp. 281ff., 295–298; Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*, p. 23ff.; 'Additions to the New Islamic Dynasties', in Yasir Suleiman, ed., *Living Islamic History: Studies in Honour of Professor Carole Hillenbrand* (Edinburgh, 2010), pp. 14–31, no. 90.
28. Al-Kāshgharī, *Dīwān lughāt al-turk*, vol. 1, p. 11; Eng. tr., Dankoff and Kelly, vol. 1, p. 74.
29. Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente*, vol. 2, pp. 157–159, no. 614; Clauson, *Etymological Dictionary*, p. 101.
30. Barthold, *Turkestan*, pp. 280–285, 294–295; Muḥammad Nāẓim, *The Life and Times of Sulṭān Maḥmūd of Ghazna* (Cambridge, 1931), pp. 54–55; Bosworth, 'Additions to the New Islamic Dynasties', no. 90.
31. Golden, *Khazar Studies*, vol. 1, p. 197.
32. Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente*, vol. 3, pp. 378–380, no. 1381; Clauson, *Etymological Dictionary*, pp. 603–604; Golden, *Khazar Studies*, vol. 1, p. 198; R I, 401. Already in Kāshgharī, tr. Atalay, vol. 1, p. 364, tr. Dankoff and Kelly, vol. 1, p. 281.
33. Barthold, *Turkestan*, pp. 275–279; Nāẓim, *Sulṭān Maḥmūd*, pp. 56–60.
34. Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente*, vol. 3, pp. 494–495, no. 1506, and R II, 413.
35. Gh 464, 470, F 604, 611.

36. Toparlı et al., *Kıpçak türkce sözlüğü*, p. 153.
37. Bosworth, 'Notes on some Turkish names', p. 309, s.v. Satılmış.
38. Martijn Theodoor Houtsma, *Ein türkisch-arabisches Glossar* (Leiden, 1894), p. 78.
39. Ahmed Zeki Velidi Togan, *Ibn Faḍlāns Reisebericht* (Leipzig, 1939), §34, text pp. 15–16, Ger. tr. pp. 28–30 and Excursus 34a at pp. 141–142.
40. C. E. Bosworth and Gerard Clauson, 'Al-Xwārazmī on the Peoples of Central Asia', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1965), p. 11; also in C. E. Bosworth, *The Medieval History of Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia* (London, 1977); Sümer, *Türk devletleri tarihinde şahis adları*, vol. 2, p. 550.
41. Golden, 'The Terminology of Slavery and Servitude', pp. 52–53; see also his *Khazar Studies*, vol. 1, pp. 186–187 and 'Khazar Turkic Ghulāms in Caliphal Service: Onomastic Notes', *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, 12 (2002–2003) p. 27.
42. Toparlı et al., *Kıpçak türkce sözlüğü*, p. 286; Clauson, *Etymological Dictionary*, p. 433.
43. Ibid., pp. 113–114.

A Book List from a Seventh/Thirteenth-Century Manuscript Found in Bāmyān¹

Iraj Afshar

This brief note describes a list of manuscripts that were owned by a unknown bibliophile from Bāmyān, in modern-day Afghanistan, around the seventh/thirteenth century. As it is an invaluable document, I would like to offer it to my friend Farhad Daftary in this commemorative volume. The list was discovered by Mohammad Shafi of Lahore in an additional sheet which was attached to a folio belonging to the *unicum*, or only extant manuscript, of *Wāmiq wa 'Adhrā'*, a Persian *mathnawī* written by Abu'l-Qāsim Ḥasan b. Aḥmad 'Unṣurī (d. 441/1049).²

The rest of the manuscript consists of twenty-four folios and was found inside the paper cover of another manuscript, written in Arabic and entitled *al-Kitāb al-Mukhtaṣar min Kitāb al-Waqf*, a work devoted to the recitational pauses (*wuqūf*) of the Qur'an.³ Mohammad Shafi edited the *Wāmiq wa 'Adhrā'* folios, but the work was only published, together with facsimile plates, four years after his death in 1963 by his son, Aḥmad Rabbānī, by means of a grant received from the then shah of Iran. Mohammad Shafi published the first two lines of the page attached to the manuscript, but not the contents of the book list included on the page, which I will describe below.

The extra sheet of paper is attached to the *Wāmiq wa 'Adhrā'* manuscript folio in such a way that only four verses (*bayts*) and three hemistichs (*miṣra's*) are readable. It contains a book list consisting of some twenty works that belonged to and were kept in the house of the otherwise unknown scholar 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Zakī b. Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Bāmyānī. In the *nisba* (Bāmyānī), the only dotted letter is the *bā'*, while the letters *yā'* and *nūn* are dotless, but it is highly probable that it refers to Bāmyān and not to any other place. Mohammad Shafi's introduction does not provide

any information about the identity of this man, and I have not been able to find any reference to him in the standard reference sources.

The list is undated, but, as Mohammad Shafi says, the manuscript of the *Kitāb al-Waqf* was copied on 15 Ramaḍān 526 (i.e. 30 July 1132).⁴ It is therefore reasonable to assume that the attached list naturally belongs to a later date. This is further supported by the fact that it is written in the *ta'liq* calligraphic script, a style that was popularised about a century later, which indicates that it is likely that the manuscript 'was written in the seventh/thirteenth century at the earliest.⁵

The order of the books in the list, their titles and the style of the columns are reminiscent of the *siyāqī* genre. The hand-list, which is reproduced here in table form with the titles numbered from one to twenty, was written in three columns (see tables on pp. 456 and 457).

The first column contains seven items, which are referred to by the genre they belong to (*tafsīr*, *fiqh*, *sh'ir*), but no titles are given (except for no. 7). The second column consists of six items, three of which have specific identifiable titles – *Kalīla wa Dimna* and the *Dīwāns* of Mas'ūd-i Sa'd (d. 525/1130) and Sanā'i (d. 535/1140) – while the other three are generic (sermons, magic and a compendium of various subjects). One of the items, a collection of sermons (*da'awāt*), is said to comprise four volumes. The third column lists four books.

It is noteworthy that out of the twenty manuscripts included in the list, five are well known while others remain obscure. The known works were written near to the time the list was compiled, around the fifth–sixth/eleventh–twelfth centuries, as we can see from the authors' dates:

- no. 7: probably refers to the *Garshāsb-nāma* by Abū Naṣr Aḥmad b. Maṣṣūr 'Asadī Ṭūsī' (d. 465/1073);
- no. 8: the *Dīwān* of Abū'l-Majd Majdūd b. Ādam 'Sanā'i Ghaznawī' (d. 535/1141);
- no. 9: the Persian translation of *Kalīla wa Dimna* by Naṣr Allāh Munshī (wr. sometime between 541/1146 and 552/1157);
- no. 10: the *Dīwān* of Mas'ūd-i Sa'd-i Salmān (d. 525/1130); it should be pointed out that no. 19, judging by the title (*The Dīwān of the 'anti-Mas'ūd'*), could be a work satirising the *Dīwān* of Mas'ūd-i Sa'd written by a certain Nāṣir Shamsa.⁶
- no. 17: *Maqāma-yi Ḥamīdī*, by Ḥamīd al-Dīn Abū Bakr 'Umar 'Ḥamīdī' (d. 559/1163).

Notes

1. This article was translated from the Persian by Rahim Gholami.
2. Abu'l-Qāsim Ḥasan b. Aḥmad 'Unṣurī, *Mathnawī Wāmiq wa 'Adhrā'*, introduced, edited and commented on in the margins by the late Dr Mawlawī Muḥammad Shafī' [Mohammad Shafi] 'Sitāra-yi Pākistān', ed. Aḥmad Rabbānī (Lahore, 1967), pp. *nūn* + 129 (introduction) + 78 (Urdu introduction) + 20 (notes and table of contents) + 28 (edited text) + 23 (facsimile text) + 8 (English Introduction). For a description of this edition see the review by C. Edmund Bosworth, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 1, ii (1970), pp. 184–186.
3. This work was commissioned for 'Atiq b. Muḥammad b. Khusraw Hirawī, the author of the famous *Tafsīr*.
4. See Mohammad Shafi's Persian introduction to *Wāmiq wa 'Adhrā'*, p. 2.
5. Aḥmad Munzawī, *Fihrist-i mushtarak-i nuskhahā-yi khaṭṭī-i Fārsī-yi Pākistān* (Islamabad, 1986), vol. 7, p. 12, also comments on this and refers to the same possibility.
6. This author's name does not appear in sources like Sa'id Nafisi's *Tārīkh-i naẓm wa nathr-i Fārsī* (Tehran, 1344 Sh./1965) or 'Abd al-Rasūl Khayyāmpūr's *Farhang-i sukhanwarān* (Tabriz, 1340 Sh./1961).

صاحب
 سرای زکی بن محمد بن علی عبد الحمید البامانی
 تفصیل
 کتابها کی از هر جنس [و] نوع است^۲

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| [۱۷] مقامه حمیدی | [۸] دیوان سنائی | [۱] تفسیر: سه پاره یکی از اول، دو از آخر |
| [۱۸] کتاب اصول باری [= پارسی] | [۹] کلیله و دمنه | [۲] تفسیر: یک مجلد در [کلمه‌ای ناخوانده] ^۴ |
| [۱۹] دیوان نامسعود ناصر شمشه | [۱۰] دیوان مسعود سعد | [۳] ترسل با فقه در یک مجموعه |
| [۲۰] سفینه ۱ عدد دیگر | [۱۱] سفینه دیگر بر هر موضوع | [۴] سفینه شعر [این طور خوانده شد] |
| | | نامحلی [نامشخص] |
| | [۱۲ تا ۱۵] دعوات چهار عدد | [۵] حمایی یک عدد ^۵ |
| | [۱۶] کتاب نیرنجات | [۶] ادوات یک عدد |
| | | [۷] کرشاسب یک عدد ^۶ |

^۱ محمد شفیع سری خوانده زیرا کاتب الف را به سر «یا» چسبانیده (تعلیق وار) همانطور که در کلمات دیوان الف را به نون یا در «از» الف را به «ز» متصل ساخته است.

^۲ محمد شفیع فقط این چهار سطر را نقل کرده است.

^۳ روی سه و دنباله خط کشیده و یکسره نوشته شده.

^۴ روی سراسر این مورد خط کشیده شده.

^۵ مشخص است که در رساله یا کتاب بوده.

^۶ شاید قرآن منظور باشد.

^۷ ظاهراً کرشاسب نامه اسدی طوسی.

The owner of the house (*ṣāhib-i sarā-yī*¹) Zakī b. Muḥammad
b. 'Alī 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Bāmyānī

List of books pertaining to different genres [and] subjects²

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| [1] Qur'an
Commentary (<i>tafsīr</i>) ³ –
three parts, ³ one from
the beginning and two
from the end | [8] <i>Dīwān-i Sanā'i</i> | [17] <i>Maqāma-yi
Ḥamīdī</i> |
| [2] Qur'an
Commentary (<i>tafsīr</i>)
– one volume on ...
[illegible word] ⁴ | [9] <i>Kalīla wa Dimna</i> | [18] A book of
Persian gram-
mar (<i>Kitāb-i
uṣūl-i Bārsī</i> =
<i>Fārsī</i> ⁵) |
| [3] Letter-writing
(<i>tarassul</i>) and
Jurisprudence (<i>fiqh</i>) in
one volume (<i>majmū'a</i>) ⁶ | [10] <i>Dīwān-i Mas'ūd-i Sa'd</i> | [19] <i>Dīwān-i
nā-Mas'ūd-i
Nāṣir-i Shamsa</i> |
| [4] A Collection
(<i>safīna</i>) of poetry ...
[illegible word] ⁷ | [11] Another collection of
various subjects | [20] A
Collection [of
various subjects]
– another copy |
| [5] <i>Ḥamāyilī</i> ⁸ – one
copy | [12–15] Sermons (<i>da'awāt</i>)
four copies | |
| [6] Grammatical
Terms (<i>adawāt</i>) one
copy | [16] Book of Magic (<i>Kitāb-i
Nīranjāt</i>) | |
| [7] <i>Karshāsb</i> ⁹ – one
copy | | |

Notes to table

1. Mohammad Shafi read this word as *sarī*, since the scribe, following the *ta'liq* style, writes the letters *alif* and *yā'* together in the same way as he wrote the words *dīwān* and *az*, where he attached the letter *alif* to the *nūn* and to the *zī*, respectively.
2. These are the two lines (four in the Fārsī manuscript) cited by Muḥammad Shafi'.
3. The words *sih* ('three') and *dunbālah* ('continuation') are struck through and written as one word.

4. The title of this work is struck through.
5. i.e. *Pārsī*.
6. This refers to two *risālas* or *kitābs* put together in one volume.
7. The illegible word could be read as *bāmyānī* (i.e. 'Bamyānī poetry') or as *yak mujallad* ('one volume').
8. This might refer to the Qur'an.
9. i.e. *Garshāsb*.

What's in a Name? Tughtegin – ‘the Minister of the Antichrist’?¹

Carole Hillenbrand

‘No voice was heard but was afflicted with sorrow, mindful of his generous actions. ... This blessed amir [Tughtegin] had gone to the utmost lengths in enforcing justice and restraining from oppression’ (obituary of Tughtegin).²

Introduction³

The years immediately preceding the Crusader capture of Jerusalem in 492/1099 were a period of great turmoil for the Muslim rulers of Syria and Palestine. As is well known, their disunity and mutual rivalries eased the way for the Crusaders, who were able to establish four states in the region by 502/1109. The majority of the Muslim leaders during this key period of Crusader success were Turkish military commanders who had accompanied the Saljūq royal prince, Tutush, and his young sons, Duqāq and Riḍwān, to Syria in the power vacuum left further east by the death of the brother of Tutush, the Saljūq sultan Malikshāh, in 485/1092.

The coming of the Turks in vast numbers to the Arab and Persian lands from the early fifth/eleventh century onwards proved to be a momentous new phase in the history of the Islamic world. Traditionally the Turks, many of whom crossed into Muslim territory under the leadership of the Saljūq family, are presented in the mediaeval Arabic and Persian sources as pious Sunni Muslims who had converted to Islam before their major invasions began. This portrayal of the Turks, who went on to govern the heartlands of the Dar al-Islām for many centuries, is not surprising. Their Arab and Persian bureaucrats, court chroniclers and poets needed to put a brave face on political realities and to help to forge the alliance between the military force of the Turks and the long-established prestige of the

Sunni Arab and Persian religious classes.

No doubt, over time, some of the Turkish sultans did indeed grow into the role given them by their biographers, court poets and chroniclers – namely, that of defenders of Sunni Islam and fighters of *jihād* against the infidel invaders. But alongside the panegyrics accorded them by such writers, there was always a tendency on the part of some writers, such as Usāma Ibn Munqidh⁴ and Ibn al-‘Adīm,⁵ to look with distaste at the *mores* of the alien Turkish newcomers, only a few generations removed from the nomadic life in the steppes, and to present them as a violent, drunken, barbarian ‘Other’.

Yet, even familiarity and enforced co-existence with the Turkish-speaking newcomers – military commanders, their private armies and their Turcoman auxiliaries – did not create any real understanding or analysis of the nomadic background, traditions and Shamanistic beliefs and rituals of the Turks. So the stories in Muslim sources which shed a light on the continuing existence of such vestiges of the pre-Islamic Turkish past remain unexplained in ethnographical terms. These stories come across in a different light altogether. They are used as religious and cultural ammunition against the Turks whose strange antics are savoured and mocked by a more sophisticated Arab and Persian readership. Thus the conquered can get their own back on the conquerors.

As for the descriptions of the Turks written by Crusader chroniclers, they too devote regular attention to this topic, often giving detailed descriptions of Turkish military tactics. These historians, unlike most of their Arab or Persian counterparts, are, of course, not held back by any reasons of political expediency from writing what they wish to say about the Turks. So Crusader chroniclers, writing a language inaccessible to the enemy, are free to include less favourable and more sensational stories about the Turks. These anecdotes were intended to fascinate and shock their countrymen back in Europe and to reinforce religious and cultural stereotypes.

This study examines in detail one such story about the Turks, told in both Muslim and Crusader sources; it concerns the killing of the Crusader ruler of Tiberias, Gervase of Basoches, by the Turkish military ruler of Damascus, Tughtegin, in 501/1108.⁶ The broad outline of Tughtegin’s career in the early years of the Crusader presence in the Levant has been traced already in secondary sources and need not be rehearsed again here.⁷ Suffice it to say that in the early years of the Crusader presence in Syria and Palestine, Tughtegin pursued a policy of limited and gradual local expansionism against the Franks, but on occasion he could also see the

necessity of forging short-lived, opportunistic alliances with them when the small city-states of Syria were threatened from outside.⁸

**The death of Gervase of Basoches,
lord of Tiberias, in 501/1107–1108**

The Crusader leader Gervase of Basoches received the fief of Tiberias in 498/1105; but he did not live long enough to enjoy this role to the full. His death in 501/1107–1108 is recorded in a number of sources, both Muslim and Crusader.

The key account of this event is that of Albert of Aachen, a chronicler who is 'remarkably impartial towards the enemy, the Muslims',⁹ and who is aware of the differences amongst the enemy between the Turks – former nomadic warriors who are now a ruling elite – and Saracens, the term he gives to the indigenous Muslim inhabitants of Syria and Palestine.¹⁰

Albert of Aachen's account of Gervase's killing is detailed and shocking. To his audience back home in Europe it might even have seemed amazing and almost unbelievable:

Gervase was brought out in the middle of the town of Damascus, and after much mockery he was shot through by the Turks' arrows and gave up the ghost. Gervase, eminent knight, having died in this way, Soboas,¹¹ one of the most powerful of the Turks, ordered his head to be cut off, and the skin of his head, with his hair which was white and abundant and had not been cut for a long time, to be pulled off and dried, because it was wonderfully ornamental and so that it might always be borne aloft on the tip of his spear, as a token and memorial of the victory and to stir up the grief of the Christians.¹²

Similar details to those given by Albert of Aachen can be found in the account of another Crusader author, Guibert of Nogent, who relates that Gervase was killed by arrows, the crown of his head was removed and a cup was made from his skull.¹³

What of the Muslim accounts of this episode? Most of these go so far as to mention that Gervase was killed whilst he was Tughtegin's prisoner, but they generally gloss over certain macabre details. One should begin with the narrative of Ibn al-Qalānisi, the city chronicler of Damascus and the panegyrist of Tughtegin's family. He is deliberately evasive. Unusually, he takes the trouble to avoid the customary practice of Muslim chroniclers, which is to vilify Frankish leaders. Instead, Ibn al-Qalānisi praises Gervase in fulsome terms as:

One of the chiefs of the Franks who were noted for knightliness, courage, gallantry, and prowess in combat, a man of the stamp of King Baldwin in his leadership of the Franks.¹⁴

This unusual outburst of admiration for a Frankish enemy from the pen of Ibn al-Qalānīsī must be, in part at least, a stratagem to divert the reader's attention away from the horrors of the way in which Gervase was killed. It is possible too that Ibn al-Qalānīsī wishes here to enhance the prestige of Tughtegin who has managed to capture a personage of royal status, the nephew of none other than King Baldwin of Jerusalem himself. Writing later in the twelfth century at the court of Tughtegin's successors, Ibn al-Qalānīsī would not have dared to divulge the details of what happened to Gervase. All that Ibn al-Qalānīsī says rather obliquely in his description of the events which, it is clear from other accounts of the episode, preceded the killing, is that Gervase offered a ransom – in the Frankish-Muslim conflict, often a more attractive option than killing – for the release of himself and his companions. But Tughtegin refused to accept this. At this point in his account, Ibn al-Qalānīsī writes somewhat flatly: 'Gervase and those of his companions who were in captivity with him were executed.'¹⁵ Another Muslim source, Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, suppresses details of the death altogether, stating simply that Gervase and his associates were sent as a gift to the sultan.¹⁶

In the account of Ibn al-Athīr, in which, incidentally, he puts Gervase's death a year later, in 502/1108–1109, he stresses Tughtegin's inspirational leadership. Tughtegin was equipped with two thousand cavalry and a large body of infantry whilst 'the nephew of the Frankish king' (he does not mention Gervase by name), had four hundred cavalry and two thousand foot soldiers.¹⁷ So Tughtegin had the upper hand as far as cavalry was concerned. Nevertheless, at the height of battle the Muslims began to flee. Tughtegin dismounted and, shouting to his men, he revived their courage. They therefore returned to the battle and routed¹⁸ the Franks.

Having first praised Tughtegin's leadership, Ibn al-Athīr then turns to Tughtegin's treatment of Gervase. In the spring of 501/1108, he and his men fell into the hands of Tughtegin. Ibn al-Athīr relates that, having refused Gervase's offer of a ransom of thirty thousand dinars and the freeing of five hundred Muslim captives, Tughtegin 'was not satisfied with anything but his conversion and, when he would not agree, killed him with his own hand. He sent the prisoners he made to the caliph and the sultan.'¹⁹ So Ibn al-Athīr goes so far as to say that Tughtegin personally killed Gervase.

Not all the Muslim sources shrink from recounting the gory details of

Gervase's death. Clearly, stories similar to that told by Albert of Aachen and Guibert of Nogent must have been circulating in the Levant. They are eventually mentioned, in rather laconic but frank fashion, by the much later Muslim historian, Ibn al-Furāt (d. 807/1405). He provides the gruesome detail that Tughtegin hollowed out Gervase's skull while he was still alive and drank from it.²⁰

It (Tiberias) remained in their (Frankish) hands until Zāhir al-Dīn (Tughtegin) attacked the Count, the Lord of Tiberias, in Shawwāl in the year 501 [i.e. 14 May–11 June 1108]. He hollowed out the skull of his head while he was still alive, and drank wine in it, while he was looking at him (*sic*). He lived for an hour, then he died.

This extraordinary account is provided with a useful footnote by Ursula and Malcolm Lyons, the editors and translators of this text.²¹ They suggest two possibilities to unravel the narrative; firstly, perhaps the skull was turned to face Tughtegin while he was drinking from it, or, secondly, Tughtegin was looking at Gervase's body. In another part of his history, the Lyons point out that Ibn al-Furāt gives a different account in which Gervase's skull is washed out with salt and water.²² Tughtegin then poured wine into it and drank from it, as did his associates.

But what was behind this savage killing? Why did Tughtegin refuse much needed ransom money? Was Tughtegin's judgement blinded by his intake of alcohol, as was often recorded in stories about Turkish leaders? Did he have some personal grudge against Gervase? It should be remembered that Tughtegin had a fearsome reputation among Crusader writers. Walter the Chancellor describes him as 'the investigator and discoverer of various tortures'.²³ So this incident is by no means the only occasion when his cruelty is mentioned, but it is certainly the most memorable. The French scholar Mouton remarks in his short discussion of this episode that this treatment of Gervase was intended to frighten off other Crusader warriors from attacking the territory of Damascus. The communal drinking from his skull was a symbol of a total victory over an enemy.²⁴

The following discussion will highlight two key aspects of the story, Gervase's scalping and his skull being used as a drinking vessel.

The scalping of Gervase

The practice of scalping the heads of enemies in war is long testified far into antiquity in Central Asia. Herodotus writes as follows about the Tauri tribe of the Scythians:

Any one of them who takes a prisoner in war, cuts off his head and carries it home, where he sets it high over the house on a long pole. ... The heads are supposed to act as guardians of the whole house over which they hang.²⁵

In probing the surface of the narrative of Albert of Aachen, a good starting point is an analysis of Tughtegin's name. Given the understandable difficulties experienced by both Crusader and Muslim chroniclers in rendering the personal names of the other side, especially across the divide of different scripts, it is not surprising that extra curiosity is not evinced about the actual meaning of such 'outlandish' names. In the case of Tughtegin, Crusader sources make valiant attempts with such versions of his name as Doldequinus,²⁶ Dochinus²⁷ and Duodechinus.²⁸ On one occasion, Albert of Aachen underlines his uncertainty about the name by calling Tughtegin 'Dochinus or Duodechinus'.²⁹

What does the name *Tughtegin*/*Tuğ Teğın*/*Toğ Teğın*³⁰ in these various forms mean? The name has two parts. The first part – *tugh*/*tuğ*/*toğ* – has several meanings, one of which is 'standard, flag, tail-trophy'.³¹ Rásonyi defines the word, which he writes as *tugh*, more precisely, as 'horsetail standards'. The *tugh* denotes royal authority. The second part of the name – *tégin* – is a very old honorific title meaning 'prince'³² or 'male relation of the khan'.³³ So the whole composite name would seem to mean 'prince bearing a horsetail standard'.

By the sixth/twelfth century, it is clear that this grandiose personal name, despite its royal connotations, could be given to an individual who was not of royal Turkish lineage. Two striking examples spring to mind in this context: firstly, the Tughtegin we have been discussing – the governor of Damascus and founder of the short-lived Burid dynasty – and, secondly, Tughtegin, the brother of Saladin (Salāḥ al-Dīn).³⁴ The first of these important figures was, as already mentioned, a Turk, a former slave, manumitted by the Saljūq prince Tutush. So the name must have suffered semantic depreciation and could be applied to non-royal but prestigious Turkish military commanders.³⁵ Saladin's brother, on the other hand, was not a Turk; he was probably given the name Tughtegin as a conscious echo of an illustrious predecessor who had fought against the Franks.³⁶ It will be argued below that Tughtegin of Damascus, coming from a fully Turkish milieu, probably did understand the connotations of his own name. However, it is difficult to know whether the same knowledge could be attributed to Saladin's brother, a Kurd, who lived much later on in the sixth/twelfth century.

In the context of this discussion it is important to go back to the origin

of the *tugh*. One definition of it describes it as: 'a scrap saturated with the enemy's blood fixed on a pole'.³⁷ *Tughs* had totemistic importance, and those who raised high the totem and rode with it into battle believed that they were gaining special powers from it. The use of the *tugh*, carried aloft by a mounted Turkish warrior, galloping at speed into battle, is vividly illustrated in the Rashīd al-Dīn *Jāmi' al-tawārikh* manuscript of 714/1314, in the Edinburgh University Library (see Fig. 1 overleaf).³⁸

In the context of the story of Gervase's death, it is important to mention the special features of *tughs* so clearly demonstrated in exhibits found in museums in Europe and Turkey (see Fig. 2 overleaf).³⁹ Such *tughs* resemble not only a horse's tail but also a human being's flowing locks – the very detail carefully emphasised in Albert of Aachen's account, where Gervase's hair is described as 'abundant and had not been cut for a long time', 'wonderfully ornamental' and 'it might be always borne aloft on the tip of his spear'.⁴⁰ In other words, Gervase's hair is seen as an extraordinary trophy, a remarkable *tugh*.

It is probably no more than a coincidence that the very warrior who would probably have gone on to carry the *tugh* that was composed of the hair of the ill-fated Gervase, should have been called Tughtegin. Be that as it may, the special powers inherited from such a venerable white-haired old man would have been recognised by Tughtegin as an enhancement to his own status as a great warrior and commander.

The use of Gervase's skull as a drinking vessel

The earliest known Turkish people, the Hsiung-Nu, as well as the non-Turkish Scythians, made drinking bowls from the skulls of prestigious fallen enemies.⁴¹ Wine would be poured into such a 'bowl' and then mixed with the blood of a sacrificial victim and stirred with a sword. Esin writes tellingly that: 'amongst the Hiung-Nus, the Scythians and the proto-Bulgars, the cup became occasionally the skull of the vanquished enemy and the ambrosia was spilled blood'.⁴²

The Friulan Franciscan friar Odoric of Pordenone, describing the customs of Tibet in the early fourteenth century, writes that: 'The son eats his father's head and of the skull he makes a goblet, from which he and all the family always drink devoutly to the memory of the deceased father.' He adds sententiously that the people in this region also have 'many other preposterous and abominable customs'.⁴³

As late as the early sixteenth century (916/1510), Shah Ismā'il I treated the corpse of his defeated Öz-Beğ enemy, Shaybak Khān, in similar

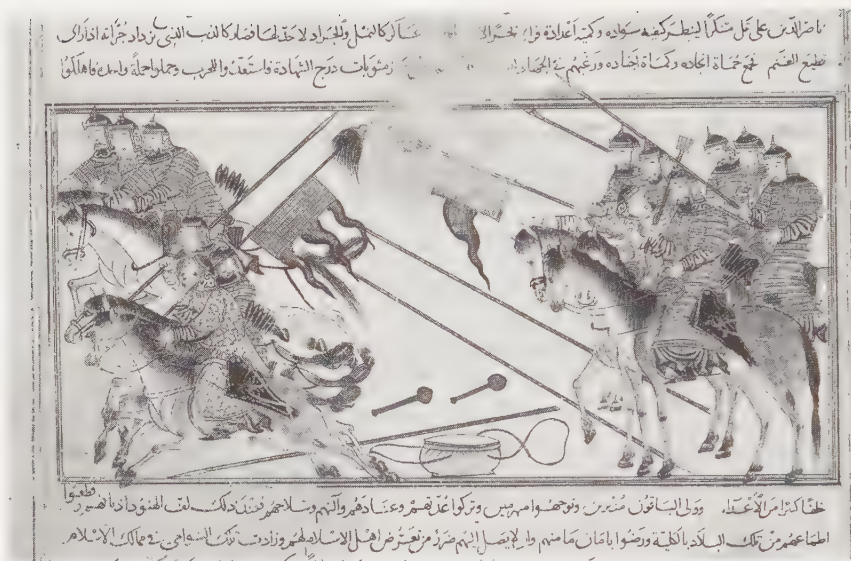


Fig. 1: A mounted Turkish warrior, galloping at speed into battle, carrying a *tugh*, from the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* of Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb.



Fig. 2: Ottoman *tughs* captured at the Battle of Vienna, 1683, offering of King John Sobieski to the Church of St Ann, Cracow.

fashion. He gave orders for the skull to be removed and for it to be encased in red gold. He then drank wine out of 'that golden skull'.⁴⁴ With these examples alone, there is clear evidence of a continuing tradition of skulls being used as drinking vessels amongst the peoples of Asia.

Concluding remarks

Reactions to this event on the part of the mediaeval chroniclers are varied. On the Crusader side, William of Tyre, writing many years later, does not mention it. Albert of Aachen, on the other hand, concentrates on the scalping in very graphic detail, no doubt in horror at the perceived barbarity of the deed and to underline to his Christian European readership the despicable *mores* of the infidel. On the Muslim side, Ibn al-Qalānisi, writing in the employ of Tughtegin's descendants in Damascus, glosses over the event, as does Ibn al-Athīr, who, in any case, relies closely on the narrative of Ibn al-Qalānisi for his version of the history of early sixth/twelfth century Syria. A much later writer, Ibn al-Furāt, gives an unvarnished account which in its turn focuses on the part of Gervase's tale which involves his skull being used as a drinking vessel. Here the *topos* of Turkish barbarian warriors drunk after victory on the battlefield is no doubt too tempting for this author to omit.

Stories about the Turks, such as the tragic end to the life of Gervase of Basoches, analysed above, were narrated to titillate and mock and were written with feelings of religious or cultural superiority on the part of Muslim and Crusader sources alike. To the Muslims, the Turks were both their overlords and also a barbarian 'Other'. To the Crusaders, the Turks were another 'Other', even more alien than the infidel Arabs (or Saracens, as they were often called).

However, both Muslim and Crusader narratives, when analysed, suggest, unwittingly but persuasively, through the tales they tell of Turkish customs dating back to the rituals of the Inner Asian nomads and to their pastoral hunter lifestyle, that the process of sedentarisation and Islamicisation amongst the Turks must have been much slower and more protracted than the Sunni Muslim sources would have us believe. Certainly the story of Gervase's killing, featuring as it does the enactment of pre-Islamic Turkish rituals in the very heart of Damascus – a Muslim city since the seventh century AD – is thought-provoking. It highlights the difficulties that the sedentary Muslim Arabs (and the Persians further east) must have experienced in coming to terms with these new and powerful overlords. In the case of Gervase's death, it is the precise

account of a Crusader author, Albert of Aachen (whatever his motivation may have been), which is the most valuable testimony.

Notes

1. This title is given to Tughtegin by the Crusader chronicler Walter the Chancellor in his *Bella Antiochena*, tr. Thomas S. Ashbridge and Susan B. Edgington as *Walter the Chancellor's The Antiochene Wars. A Translation and Commentary* (Aldershot, 1999), p. 165.
2. Ibn al-Qalānisi, *Dhayl ta'rikh Dimashq*, ed. Henry F. Amedroz (Leiden and Beirut, 1908) as *History of Damascus 363–555 A.H. from the Bodleian MS. Hunt 125, being a continuation of the history of Hilāl al-Sābī*, p. 219; tr. Hamilton A. R. Gibb as *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades* (London, 1932), pp. 184–185.
3. It is an honour and great pleasure to write a contribution for the *Festschrift* of Dr Farhad Daftary, who has done so much valuable research on mediaeval Islamic history.
4. Usāma Ibn Munqidh, *Kitāb al-I'tibār*, tr. Philip K. Hitti as *Memoirs of an Arab-Syrian Gentleman, or An Arab Knight in the Crusades: Memoirs of Usāmah ibn-Munqidh (Kitāb al-I'tibār)* (Beirut, 1964).
5. Ibn al-'Adim, *Bughyat al-ṭalab fī ta'rikh Ḥalab*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār (Damascus, 1988).
6. His full names were Abū Maṣṣūr Tughtegin b. 'Abd Allāh. His honorific titles (*laqabs*), acquired whilst he was ruler of Damascus, were Zāhir al-Dīn and Sayf al-Islām. Most often in the Islamic sources which recount his career he is simply mentioned as Atabeg or Atabeg Tughtegin. Perhaps it is worth noting that Tughtegin's father is here called 'Abd Allāh, an indication that he was a Muslim – this title was also often used to denote a Muslim slave – and thus showing that Tughtegin's family had converted to Islam at least one generation back; cf. Ibn Taghribirdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa'l-Qāhira* (Cairo, 1939), vol. 5, p. 234. Not all these names are mentioned in all the sources; see Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, tr. William M. de Slane as *Ibn Khallikan's Biographical Dictionary* (Paris, 1842–1871), vol. 1, p. 274; Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān fī ta'rikh al-a'yān* (Hyderabad, 1951), p. 127.
7. See Taef K. El-Azhari, *The Saljūqs of Syria during the Crusades 463–549AH/1070–1154 AD* (Berlin, 1997), pp. 171–229; Jamal al-Zanki, *The Emirate of Damascus* (Ph.D. thesis, University of St Andrews, 1989); Anne-Marie Eddé, 'Tugtigin', in Alan V. Murray, ed., *The Crusades: An Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, CA, 2006), vol. 4, pp. 1204–1205; Jean-Michel Mouton, *Damas et sa principauté sous les Saljoukides et les Bourides, 1076–1154* (Cairo, 1994). The achievements of Tughtegin and his family dynasty, the Burids, are also recorded in a monograph in Turkish but this book contains little proper analysis; Coşkun Alptekin, *Dimaşk Atabegleği*:

Tog-Teginliler (Istanbul, 1985).

8. The most important source for the life of Tughtegin, ruler of Damascus for almost thirty years, is the town chronicle of that city written by Ibn al-Qalānīsī (d. 554/1160), *Dhayl ta'riḥ Dimashq*. Roger le Tourneau's French translation, *Damas de 1075 à 1154* (Damascus, 1952) is fuller than Gibb's. Despite his obvious bias towards his Turkish overlords and his convenient omissions and obfuscations of negative information, Ibn al-Qalānīsī is a keen observer of events and he has a good grasp of dates. His evidence is invaluable as a starting point for writing the life of Tughtegin.
9. Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana. History of the Journey to Jerusalem*, ed. and tr. Susan B. Edgington (Oxford, 2007), p. xxxv.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Edgington mentions this person as 'unidentified' in her translation; see Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, p. 770, n.2. However, it would seem quite probable that this is a valiant but garbled attempt by Albert to write the Turkish word *su-başı* (police superintendent), the official who would customarily be charged with the carrying out of a public execution, which this event probably was.
12. Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, pp. 770–771.
13. Guibert of Nogent, cited by Edgington, Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, p. 771. Surprisingly, in view of their general hostility to the Turks, the usual Eastern Christian sources say nothing about Tughtegin's killing of Gervase.
14. Ibn al-Qalānīsī, *Dhayl ta'riḥ Dimashq*, ed. Amedroz, p. 161; tr. Gibb, p. 86.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
16. Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, p. 25. A contemporary of Ibn al-Qalānīsī, Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-'Azīmī, in his very fragmentary chronicle, *Ta'riḥ Ḥalab*, devotes only one short sentence to Tughtegin's military encounter with Gervase; see Claude Cahen, ed., 'La chronique abrégée d'al-'Azīmī', *Journal Asiatique*, 230 (1938), p. 379.
17. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fi'l-ta'riḥ*, tr. Donald S. Richards as *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir for the Crusading Period from al-Kamil fi'l ta'riḥ. Part 1. The Years 491–541/1097–1146: The Coming of the Franks and the Muslim Response* (Aldershot, 2006), vol. 10, p. 327.
18. Reading *kasara* rather than *kabasa* in the text; *ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*, p. 142.
20. Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'riḥ al-duwal wa'l-mulūk*, partial ed. and tr. Ursula and Malcolm C. Lyons (Cambridge, 1971), vol. 1, p. 55.
21. Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'riḥ al-duwal*, vol. 1, p. 223, 55.16.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 223; Mouton, *Damas et sa principauté*, p. 171. Salt seems to have been used in trepanning operations on the skull, as in the famous instance involving a woman possessed of a devil, mentioned by Usāma b. Munqidh in his memoirs. In her case, it is a Frankish doctor who performs the deed: 'he peeled off the skin at the middle of the incision until the bone of the skull

- was exposed and rubbed it with salt.' Of course, the woman died; Usāma b. Munqidh, *Kitāb al-I'tibār*, tr. Hitti, p. 162.
23. Walter the Chancellor, *Bella Antiochena*, p. 160. Walter mentions a typical example of Tughtegin's barbarous punishments in the case of Robert the Leper; see pp. 159–161.
 24. Mouton, *Damas et sa principauté*, p. 171.
 25. Herodotus of Halicarnassus, *The Histories*, tr. Aubéry de Sélincourt (London, 1954), p. 276.
 26. William of Tyre, *Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum*, ed. Robert B. C. Huygens as *Willelmi Tyrensis 'archiepiscopi chronicon* (Turnhout, 1986); tr. Emily A. Babcock and August C. Krey as *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea* (New York, 1943), p. 501, n.84.
 27. Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, pp. 766, 834, 852, 854, 856, 874.
 28. *Ibid.*, pp. 834, 840, 850. Albert also calls Tughtegin 'Hertoldinus'. Edgington, *ibid.*, p. 774, n.2, rightly suggests that this other name given to Tughtegin is an attempt to reproduce in Latin Tughtegin's honorific title, Ḡāhir al-Dīn.
 29. *Ibid.*, p. 834.
 30. Sümer gives both the versions *Tuğ Teğın* and *Toğ Teğın*; see Faruk Sümer, *Türk devletleri tarihinde şahıs adları*, ed. Turan Yazgan (Istanbul, 1999), pp. 699, 737.
 31. Maḥmūd al-Kāshgārī, *Diwān lughāt al-turk*, tr. Robert Dankoff and James M. Kelly as *Compendium of the Turkic Dialects (Diwān Luyāt at-Turk)* (Cambridge, MA, 1982–1985), vol. 3, p. 199; see also Gerard Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-century Turkish* (Oxford, 1972), p. 469; Hans-Wilhelm Haussig, 'Herkunft, Wesen und Schicksal der Hunnen', in Hans R. Roemer, ed., *History of the Turkic Peoples in the Pre-Islamic Period* (Berlin, 2000) p. 278; B. Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran* (Leiden, 1985), p. 331; Jean Sauvaget, 'Noms et surnoms de Mamelouks', *Journal Asiatique*, 238 (1950), p. 50; Albert von Le Coq, 'Türkische Namen und Titel in Indien', *Aus Indiens Kultur* (1927), p. 2; Emel Esin, 'Tös and Moncuğ. Note on Turkish Flag-pole Finials', *Central Asiatic Journal*, 16 (1972), pp. 25, 32; Haussig, 'Herkunft', pp. 277–278; Clement Huart, 'Tūgh', *EI*, vol. 4, p. 820; the bearer of the standard was called the *tūgh-beği*. C. Edmund Bosworth, 'Tūgh', *EI2*, vol. 10, p. 950. The other possible meaning of *tuğ/toğ* ('full, satisfied, sated') fits less well; see László Rásonyi and Imre Baski, *Onomasticon Turcicum. Turkic Personal Names as Collected by László Rásonyi* (Bloomington, IN, 2007), vol. 2, p. 764. I am grateful to Edmund Bosworth for giving me the information from this valuable new onomasticon.
 32. Clauson, *Etymological Dictionary*, p. 483; Rásonyi, *Onomasticon Turcicum*, vol. 2, p. 727; Edwin G. Pulleybank, 'The Hsiung-nu', in Roemer, ed., *History of the Turkic Peoples*, p. 64.
 33. Rásonyi, *Onomasticon Turcicum*, vol. 2, p. 727.
 34. For the activities of this brother of Saladin in Damascus, see Malcolm C. Lyons and David E. P. Jackson, *Saladin. The Politics of the Holy War*

(Cambridge, 1982), pp. 39, 83.

35. Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, pp. 330–331.
36. Indeed, Saladin's brother also bore exactly the same honorific titles as Tughtegin of Damascus – *Ẓāhir al-Dīn*, *Sayf al-Islām*.
37. Whitney Smith, *Flags Through the Ages and Across the World* (New York, 1975), p. 12; Zdzisław Żygulski, Jr., *Ottoman Art in the Service of the Empire* (New York and London, 1992), pp. 71–73.
38. Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārikh*, Edinburgh University Library MS Arab 20, fol. 109r.
39. These are *tughs* now in Cracow, illustrated in Żygulski, *Ottoman Art*, p. 78.
40. Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, p. 771.
41. Pulleybank, 'The Hsiung-nu', pp. 52, 69.
42. Emel Esin, '“And”. The Cup Rites in Inner-Asian and Turkish Art', in Oktay Aslanapa and Rudolph Naumann, ed., *Forschungen zur Kunst Asiens. In Memoriam Kurt Erdmann* (Istanbul, 1969), p. 227.
43. Odorico da Pordenone, *Relazione del viaggio in Oriente e in Cina (1314?-1330)* (Pordenone, 1982), p. 65; cf. also H. Yule, ed. and tr., *Cathay and the Way Thither* (London, 1916; repr., New Delhi, 1998), p. 254.
44. Mohammad K. Youssef-Jamali, *The Life and Personality of Shah Ismail I (892-930/1439-1524)* (Işfahān, 1998), p. 213, quoting *Rawḍāt al-ṣafawiyya*, fol. 78a.

Safavids and 'Subalterns': The Reclaiming of Voices

Andrew J. Newman

From the 1970s many of the 'big ideas' that have informed intellectual developments in Islamic and Middle Eastern studies and assisted in the challenge to such of the then dominant analytical paradigms as 'modernisation theory' and 'orientalism'¹ have had their origins outside the field.

To be sure, the early years of the decade featured some, apparently self-generated, efforts in the US and UK branches of the field to challenge the analytical parameters and conventional wisdoms then dominating the field. Some prominent, if short-lived, journals were produced as part of this process.²

But arguably the field's premier intellectual event of the decade – the 1978 publication of *Orientalism* – in fact, came from outside. Its author, Edward Said (d. 2003), a Palestinian, educated at Princeton and Harvard, was at the time a member of Columbia University's Department of English and Comparative Literature. Said was himself influenced by another 'outsider', the post-structuralist French philosopher, historian and sociologist Michel Foucault (d. 1984), many of whose key books were available in English translation by the late 1970s.³

Other influential volumes from without the field that appeared in this period included the 1973 English translation of Fernand Braudel's 1949 *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, which opened the eyes of some academics to the contributions and analyses of the *Annales* School and, in 1974, *The Modern World System* whose author, Immanuel Wallerstein, is a sociologist and a specialist in African Studies.⁴ Translations of the French works of the Egyptian economist Samir Amin began to appear in this period as well, encouraging interaction with 'dependency/underdevelopment theory', a discourse whose origins also

lay outside the field.⁵ The most trenchant critiques of both world system and underdevelopment theory in turn also originated from outside the field.⁶

What trajectory the field might have taken as a result of continued interaction with these 'foreign' discourses is a moot point: in January 1978, anti-shah street demonstrations broke out in Iran. One year later to the month, the shah fled Iran and on 1 February 1979 the Ayatollah Khomeini returned to the country.

Whatever the impact of the Iranian revolution – and the religious guise it quickly assumed – for Iran and its people, let alone the peoples of the Middle East, its impact on Middle Eastern studies was problematic.⁷ On the one hand, the field might seem to have been offered a new lease on life as the combination of an essentialist approach and modernisation theory as applied to Iran and the region as a whole was now revealed as an idea entirely without merit.

On the other hand, however, in the rush to offer explanations for the failure of the field to predict the resurgence of Islam, many scholars and commentators simply adopted variants of the very orientalist paradigms of analysis that were under challenge in the 1970s. The subsequent 'collapse of communism' in 1989 and the first Gulf War in 1991 only further encouraged the resurgence of such paradigms, with the occasional nod to contemporary events and trends.⁸

The revival of orientalist analyses can also be seen in fields of research that only became sufficiently populated to achieve 'discipline' status in the aftermath of the events of 1979. Both Shi'i studies and Safavid studies, for example, became discrete areas of inquiry only in the aftermath of the Revolution.⁹

The exponential expansion of Safavid studies in particular began in the mid-1980s and has resulted not only in the demarcation of a distinct field but the appearance of myriad subfields and sub-discourses. The latter range from women and the family to popular literary expression. Nevertheless, most post-1979 authors remain beholden to an understanding of the Safavid period – whose dates are, conventionally, given as 1501–1722 – that can be traced, at least, to the early years of the last century. Most notably the second Safavid century, for example, is still generally portrayed as having begun with a burst of cultural and intellectual achievement, in an atmosphere of military, political and economic stability – ascribed solely to the presence of the 'strong' shah, 'Abbās I (r. 995–1039/1587–1629) – only to end in the darkness of fanatical religious orthodoxy amid military, political and economic chaos, the result

of 'weak' leadership at the centre. Whatever their specific sub-discipline, scholars in the field of Safavid studies still generally take as given the inevitable decline and fall of the Safavid state, the latter still conventionally represented by the 1722 Afghan capture of Işfahān.¹⁰

* The advent of the subaltern

'Subaltern studies' refers to the importance of 'subordinate' groups in the making of history. The latter are usually defined as encompassing the urban and rural under-classes, the majority in any society, although generally the term is said to refer to all non-elites, including women. Most often the discourse concentrates on instances of social protest as points whereat the 'subalterns' make their 'voices' heard in response to, or even independent of, the manipulations of the elite.

The conventional understanding of the origins of this discourse looks to the work of the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (d. 1937) but notes that the concept of 'history from below', of which subaltern studies has been said to be a spin-off, has been extant since at least the 1960s, with the appearance of *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), written by Edward P. Thompson (d. 1993).¹¹ While other fields did take notice of the work of such scholars as Gramsci and Thompson, Middle Eastern studies was not overly influenced thereby prior to 1979.¹²

'Subaltern studies' as a distinct, named field, is usually understood to have risen to prominence in the late 1970s among historians of the subcontinent. Beginning in 1982, under the editorship of Ranajit Guha, the offices of the Oxford University Press in New Delhi began to publish volumes in the series 'Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society'. By 2001, some eleven volumes, comprising more than 47 essays, had appeared. In 1988 Guha co-edited a single volume entitled *Selected Subaltern Studies*, with a foreword by Said himself. In 1997 Guha edited *A Subaltern Studies Reader*, and in 2001 David Ludden published *Reading Subaltern Studies*, with an appendix listing the contents of the first ten volumes in the series.¹³

Interest in the subaltern spread, in Third World studies, at least: in the 1990s a Latin American subaltern studies group was established,¹⁴ and the analysis also attracted the attention of scholars in Middle Eastern studies. Prominent contributors to 'subaltern' discourse discussion include, for example, Asef Bayat and, more recently, John Chalcraft. Works by these two and others featured in the volume *Subalterns and Social Protest* edited by Stephanie Cronin, published in 2008.

As in the case of the study of the subcontinent so in Middle Eastern studies, it is the 'modern' period that has preoccupied those searching for the subaltern.¹⁵ In Cronin's volume, for example, only two of the twelve articles address pre-nineteenth-century trends and events; none of the three papers on Iran address pre-nineteenth-century Iranian history. The few examples of recourse to the 'history from below' approach in Middle Eastern studies, as with the essays in Cronin's volume, have also focused on 'the modern'.¹⁶

Safavid 'Voices From Below'

In the West, to date, the preoccupation of Safavid studies with the urban owes itself to an over-reliance on the plethora of readily available contemporary Western-language sources. The latter include accounts produced by European travellers who themselves often spoke little Persian and spent most of their time in the capital, Iṣfahān, as well as materials generated by Western commercial and political operatives and missionaries, all largely urban-based sources.

Although over the two centuries conventionally allotted the Safavid period Iran remained predominantly a rural society, it is, nevertheless, also true that Iran's cities grew in size and complexity over the period, particularly in the seventeenth century.¹⁷

The urban scene was a 'vibrant' one, and urban subaltern voices are audible, if only indirectly, at least from the latter years of the reign of 'Abbās I.

Firmāns (royal decrees) issued over the period granting concessions to various guilds attest, for example, to the expansion of urban society over this period, to the growing strength of these guilds and to economic crises. In 999/1590 and 1022/1613 *firmāns* granting tax concessions were carved in Kāshān's famous 'Imādī Mosque'.¹⁸ In 1014/1606, in response to repeated protests, a *firmān* inscribed in the Congregational Mosque of Yazd, repealed a tax on the city's guild of weavers; weavers were by this time a very powerful force in the country.¹⁹

In the capital of Iṣfahān itself, the Shāh Mosque contains the texts of a 1035/1625 *firmān* reducing taxes on rope-makers and another, dated to 1038/1628, reducing taxes for other named guilds. A 1038/1629 *firmān* in the same mosque reduced taxes on barbers, among other tradesmen.²⁰

The contemporary elite's concern with disquiet among urban merchant, artisan and craft elements in particular is attested by a European who, arriving in Iran in the 1040s/1630s, noted that 'Abbās I, fearful of the

activity in some of Iṣfahān's coffeehouses – patronised by artists, poets, musicians, storytellers, and Sufis – had sent clerics to monitor their activities and preach sermons or lead the prayers.²¹

The three Iṣfahān *firmāns* and the shah's concern with coffeehouse activities coincided with changes in the spiritual expression among the lower orders, notably the rise of an urban-based Sufi-style, messianic veneration for Abū Muslim (d. 137/755), the Iranian 'Alid agent of the 'Abbasid movement in Khurāsān. This kind of tradition was not new in Iran or in the Safavid period but its appearance in the early seventeenth-century urban setting can be dated by the appearance between 1036/1626 and 1038/1629 of essays attacking the veneration of Abū Muslim.²²

Socio-economic and political crises in the reigns of 'Abbās I's successors

In the immediate aftermath of 'Abbās I's death and the accession of his grandson Ṣafī (r. 1038–1052/1629–1642), a messianic rebellion erupted in Gīlān, along the Caspian, which attracted thousands and brought about widespread plundering in the area. That merchants and royal warehouses containing silk, a valuable export commodity, were special targets for rioters suggests an economic dimension to the uprising.²³

Within months also a son of 'Abbās, other members of the royal family and several court figures, were implicated in a plot to topple Ṣafī and were executed.

In June 1039/1631, two years after Ṣafī's accession, one Darwīsh Riḍā, son-in-law of a Safavid general, launched a rising in the former Safavid capital of Qazvīn. He proclaimed himself 'Lord of the Age' (*ṣāhib al-zamān*), a distinctly Shi'i reference to the hidden Twelfth Imam which, combined with an overtly Sufi discourse, recalled aspects of Safavid millenarianism prevalent during the early sixteenth century. Before being crushed, the rebels were forced to retreat to the city's famous shrine, where the imminent revival of its dead *sayyid* guardian, predicted by the self-proclaimed 'Mahdī', drew considerable crowds. Material concerns were an issue in this rising as in that in Gīlān.²⁴

In 1041/1632 the remaining members of the alliance of ministers and clerics loyal to Ṣafī's grandfather 'Abbās were removed – some violently – from positions of influence at court; all remaining potential rivals for the throne were eliminated and in 1044/1634 a new grand vizier, Sarū Taqī, was appointed.

The enemies of the Safavids were not slow to take advantage of the

opportunity for territorial aggrandisement offered by these internal upheavals. Within six months of Šafi's accession the Ottomans occupied Hamadān and attacked Baghdad. In 1045/1635 the Ottomans briefly seized Tabriz. In 1048/1638 the Moghuls took Qandahār and the Ottomans captured Baghdad and the Shi'i shrine cities of Najaf and Karbalā'. The Uzbeks also commenced what would be a total of eleven invasions of the Safavids' eastern marches during Šafi's reign, and the Portuguese plundered the town of Qishm on the Persian Gulf island of the same name. In the treaty of Zuhāb, signed with the Ottomans in May 1049/1639, the Safavids were forced to acknowledge the loss of all of eastern 'Iraq.

The centre was already in a dire financial situation. Substantial payments had been made to palace and provincial notables to guarantee their acceptance of Šafi's accession. Together with the disruption of East-West overland trade during the Ottoman wars and the fall in silk revenues with the Gilān uprising, it meant that a financial rethink was in order. 'Abbās I's project to divert the waters of the Kārūn river through the capital was cancelled, as was the court's 1027/1619 monopoly on the silk trade; it is likely that the latter measure was taken in return for a substantial, much needed 'gift' from the capital's Armenian merchant community. On his appointment as grand vizier, Sarū Taqī moved to assert central control over lands in Fārs province, to investigate the flow of taxes to the centre, to monitor closely the silk production in the Caspian region and to increase levels of taxation throughout the realm.²⁵

In the years immediately following Šafi's death and the accession of his son as 'Abbās II (r. 1052–1077/1642–1666), intrigue amongst the ruling elite continued apace. Finally, in 1055/1645, a palace coup ended Sarū Taqī's vizierate. The vizier himself was killed and a new elite configuration, composed of elements that had dominated the court in the last years of 'Abbās I's reign, came to power.

These same years also witnessed the aggravation of the outflow of specie. Earlier in the century both the English East India Company (EIC) and the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, VOC) had been purchasers of Iranian silk but by this time both were buying cheaper silk elsewhere. The EIC, which ceased all purchases of Iranian silk in 1052/1642, and the VOC, which purchased no silk between 1055/1645 and 1061/1651, were converting all trade profits to specie that they then exported, with the assistance of local Armenian, Banyan (Indian) and Jewish merchants. In 1055/1645 and ca. 1058/1648 'Abbās II's new vizier, Khalīfa Šulṭān (d. 1064/1654–1655), devalued the coinage in the hope of stemming the trade and launched a campaign to

convert these minorities to Islam.²⁶ The Dutch further curtailed their purchases of Iranian silk after 1063/1652, despite a treaty that year with Iran which promised further such purchases and contained further curbs on the outflow of specie.

The specie crisis was further aggravated by the harsh winter of 1064/1654–1655, itself marked by severe famine and rampant inflation. The vizier Khalifa Şulţān died that same winter and was replaced by Muḥammad Bek who made further efforts to curb the outflow of specie. Like his predecessor, Muḥammad Bek, himself an Armenian convert, also moved against the minority groups associated with the specie export trade – notably local Jewish and Armenian merchants – trying to convert the former and expel the latter from the city proper, thereby singling out those local elements most involved in the export of specie as scapegoats for current economic hardship.²⁷ In 1064/1659 a new tax survey was undertaken and the vizier also cut some military expenditure.

The spiritual struggle

The centre's efforts to deal with the practical impact of these crises on the social fabric are attested in the source material. In 1046/1636 four *firmāns* were issued lowering taxes on a variety of groups, including guilds and the urban poor; the simultaneous raising of the taxes on other constituencies, the Armenians in particular, was most likely intended to permit lowering the taxes levied on the former.²⁸

The court also attempted to divert popular attention. State-sponsored ceremonies commemorating the martyrdom of the third imam al-Ḥusayn, at Karbalā' in 61/680 in the month of Muḥarram, were 'ramped up' in this period, according to European visitors, with special attention being devoted to organising the 'popular' contributions. Efforts were also made to expand the court's links with the religious establishment and its identification with Persian culture.²⁹ The court's several scapegoating anti-minority campaigns, noted above, may also be counted as efforts to counter the practical impact of the economic crisis.

ʿAbbās I's successor Şafi continued his grandfather's policy of sending clerics into the capital's coffeehouses. In the late 1050s/1640s the vizier Khalifa Şulţān decided to close down the taverns and ban certain forms of coffeehouse entertainment, concomitant with his anti-minority campaign, pointing out the court's continued concern with these as focal points for ongoing 'popular' spiritual unrest encouraged by the crisis in the economic situation. Such unrest in this period is also attested to by the

1065/1655 and 1068/1657 dismissals of key local officials by Muḥammad Bek, in response to protests from the guilds of Iṣfahān.

**The anti-Sufi polemic from the 1060s/1650s:
a window into 'the popular'**

That elements of the populace were as enamoured of Sufi-style discourse in the years after 'Abbās I's death as during the latter years of his reign is attested to by the continuation of the anti-Sufi discourse thereafter. Thus in the two decades beginning in 1043/1633–1634 – that is during the reigns of Ṣafī and his son and successor 'Abbās II – some twenty essays were written attacking the popularity of Abū Muslim and the urban storytellers said to be promoting the tradition, and singling out one particular cleric, Taqī al-Majlisī (d. 1070/1659), for especially harsh criticism.

During his vizierate, Sarū Taqī was overtly hostile to alternative, Sufi-style messianism of the type that had appeared in the last years of 'Abbās I's reign. Links between the court and certain senior clerics of 'Abbās I's day who were sympathetic to Sufi-style inquiry were severed and middle-level clerics, hostile to those doctrines and practices, such as 'Alīnaqī Kamrā'i and Ḥabīb Allāh al-Karakī, both known for their overt hostility to Sufism, were appointed to key religious posts. Their presence at court no doubt encouraged the production of further anti-Sufi essays.

By contrast, during the vizierate of Sarū Taqī's successor Khalīfa Ṣulṭān, the court reached out to the practitioners of Sufi-style modes of piety as part of a larger strategy to bring the more radical of the contemporary spiritual movements under the influence, if not the control, of the court and thus minimise any danger to the stability of the realm, and the capital city in particular. In 1065/1654, after the death of Iṣfahān's *Shaykh al-Islām* Kamrā'i in 1060/1650 and that of al-Karakī the *Ṣadr* (in effect the head of the religious establishment) in 1063/1652–1653, 'Abbās II called the same Taqī al-Majlisī and his like-minded colleague Fayḍ Kāshānī (d. 1091/1680), who were well known for their predispositions for philosophical and 'irfānī-style (or gnostic) inquiry, to court as part of this process.³⁰

The polemic continued apace. Indeed, beginning in the 1060s/1650s, anti-Sufi essay writers began to focus their attacks on particular Sufi groups and their allegedly unorthodox doctrines and practices. Initially authors combined these with attacks on the veneration of Abū Muslim. Gradually, however, the essay writers became increasingly concerned with named Sufi groups and the 'extreme' beliefs and activities of their members.

Three texts produced in these years illustrate this tendency. The first, the Persian-language *Ḥadiqat al-Shi'a*, although attributed to Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ardabili (d. 993/1585), was a history of Islam and Twelver Shi'ism written in 1058/1648 in the Deccan into which, sometime before 1060/1650, was inserted a diatribe against the Abū Muslim tradition and Sufism.

The attack on the latter included a fierce assault on the doctrines and practices of twenty-one named Sufi groups unprecedented in the anti-Abū Muslim literature produced hitherto.³¹

The named groups were accused of believing in such heretical doctrines as incarnation (*ḥulūl*), unitive fusion (*ittiḥād*) and the unity of existence (*waḥdat-i wujūd*). Some were said to claim partnership (*mushārīka*) with God, while others were said to believe in reincarnation (*tajjāsūm*) and predestination (*jabr*), to claim mystical illumination (*kashf*) and miraculous grace (*karamāt*) and to have rejected the authority of the 'ulamā' and formal theological knowledge ('*ilm*) in favour of esoteric knowledge ('*ilm-i bātin*). Other groups were accused of abandoning such required practices as daily prayer, fasting and the Pilgrimage, and of wearing such unsuitable clothing as wool, felt hats and yellow garments, as well as associating with the insane.

The author also attributed to these groups practices that were clearly deviant, if not degenerate. The latter were mainly of a sexual nature, e.g. adultery, sodomy and sexual relations with children or Sufi novices. The author stated, for example, that the Waṣīliyya branded as an unbeliever (*kāfir*) any of their members who refused the advances of another member, while one who accepted them was said have attained the level of friendship (*wilāya*) with God. These groups were also accused of such other unorthodox practices as drinking wine, dancing (*raqs*), singing (*ghinā'*), and spiritual audition, i.e. listening to poetry or music (*samā'*), and taking part in gatherings where there was handclapping.

The Ilḥāmiyya, for example, were said to disdain pursuit of theological learning and knowledge of the science of the afterlife for the study of poetry and witticisms, popular ditties (*tarannūmāt*), melodies (*naghmāt*), minstrelsy (*mutrib*), singing and songs (*surūd*). They were said to memorise poetry with blasphemous (*mulḥid*) tendencies and to claim that 'we learn in an instant all that which the exoteric scholar ('*ālim*) understands during his entire life of reading and studying and considering', and to argue that, for them, the licit (*ḥalāl*) and illicit (*ḥarām*) were the same.³²

The author's references to some of the groups clearly suggest that these were active in his own time. In his lengthy discussion of the first

group, the Waḥdatiyya – who were said to adhere to *jabr*, claim *kashf* and *karamāt* – for example, the author said he attended a gathering (*majlis*) of the group. The seventh group – the Mubāhiyya – were accused of theft, as well as sexual deviation. Some of the Kāmiliyya – the fourteenth group – were said to advocate the abandonment of any attempt to earn a living (*kasb*), to take their meals in other people's houses, to frequent the bazaar and distract traders from their work, to take part in gatherings where there was handclapping, dancing and singing and to promote sexual relations with children. The eighteenth group – the Jūriyya – were accused of taking loans and failing to repay them and of thieving.

In discussing the twentieth group, the Jumhūriyya, the author noted that it was accepted that while there were originally two Sufi groups – the Ḥulūliyya and Ittiḥādiyya – most of the branches of these two groups were extinct and the majority of the Sufis seen in his time were of the Jumhūriyya. These, he said, believed that within everyone is something of the Divine, and that the flesh of pigs and dogs was pure. They also upheld the practice of sitting in seclusion for forty days. In describing the twenty-first group, the Zarrāqiyya, he noted that some of the eighteenth – the Jūriyya – and the Zarrāqiyya had joined forces 'in our own time' as he put it to deceive the common people ('*awwām*). Of the Zarrāqiyya he noted that 'some of them go to the houses of people who are weak-minded and tempt them ... some go to the shops of the some of the bazaaris who are ignorant of the rules of the faith, sit down in front of them and with their conversations are able to deceive them'. The Zarrāqiyya were also accused of rejecting clerical authority and the *sayyids* (the descendants of the Prophet) promoting sexual relations with children and men, dancing, singing, *samā'*, swooning, as well as handclapping.

In 1060/1650 there appeared the short Persian-language essay *Ṣalwat al-Shī'a*. The author was probably one Mīr Lawḥī (d. after 1083/1672), a prominent figure in both the physical and verbal attacks on Taqī al-Majlisī. Though, in the main, it was an attack on the Abū Muslim tradition, the author also addressed, and roundly condemned, the singing, handclapping, whirling and swooning practised by the Zarrāqiyya, the twenty-first group in the earlier *Ḥadiqa*; indeed Mīr Lawḥī's reference to this work, and its author as the long-dead al-Ardabilī, assists in the dating of its appearance including the anti-Sufi sections discussed above. In the course of the essay Mīr Lawḥī, defining 'this time' as between 1050/1641–1642 and 1060/1650, noted that many contemporary Shī'i scholars, including Kamrā'i and al-Karakī, had produced *fatwas* condemning the actions of the Zarrāqiyya.³³

Some time before the death of Taqī al-Majlisī in 1070/1659, one Muḥammad Ṭāhir Qummī (d. 1098/1687) produced a short essay entitled *Radd-i ṣufiyya*, also in Persian. Like *Ḥadiqa*, which this author accepted had been written by al-Ardabīlī, the essay was in two parts, respectively attacking Sufism generally and denouncing the doctrines and practices of twenty named Sufi groups. Otherwise, however, *Radd's* entries on the names, doctrines and practices of the twenty were shorter, but otherwise nearly perfect, copies of the entries in the corresponding section of *Ḥadiqa*, suggesting that Muḥammad Ṭāhir was the author of those sections in the earlier work.³⁴

Comparison of several of Qummī's descriptions of the doctrines and practices of the named groups, in *Radd's* second section, with those in the earlier *Ḥadiqa* repay attention. Qummī's third entry, the Shamrākhiyya (*Ḥadiqa's* sixth), was simply the first seven lines of *Ḥadiqa's* entry on deviant sexual practices. Qummī's fifth group was virtually a carbon copy of *Ḥadiqa's* ninth, the Ḥālīyya. Both authors condemned participation in handclapping, *samā'*, dancing, playing instruments and swooning, the latter said to effect nearness to God. Qummī's entry for his seventeenth group, the Ilḥāmiyya, was a shortened version of *Ḥadiqa's* fifteenth entry. Both concentrated on members' love of music and singing to the exclusion of religious study.

Although in this short essay Qummī excised many references to the activities of the various groups, many such references remained. The Zarrāqiyya were Qummī's twentieth and *Ḥadiqa's* twenty-first group, the last named in both. Most of al-Qummī's entry was available in the earlier work. Qummī did not note the Zarrāqiyya in the bazaar as was noted in *Ḥadiqa*, but he did refer to their activity in his own time. But the *Radd* did detail – as had *Ḥadiqa*, at greater length – their love of *samā'*, dancing, and other forms of musical expression, and their wearing of felt hats and honey-coloured shawls. Qummī also noted, as had *Ḥadiqa's* author, their claims to *kashf* and *karamāt* and their dislike of the '*ulamā'*'.

Summary and conclusion

With its emphasis on the modern period, subaltern studies seems less well suited to assist in the untangling of any realities discernible from the anti-Sufi discourse than the 'history from below' approach of those British social historians who were more fascinated with the pre-modern, who examined the socio-political as well as the religious realms, who regarded them all as of a piece, certainly a key characteristic of the pre-modern, and

who were as comfortable with the indirect evidence as much as the direct.

Indeed, by contrast with modern subalterns, any extant primary source material directly created by the pre-modern rural and urban under-classes is likely to be scant. In that, to date, the information on the Sufi groups' beliefs and practices discussed above derives mainly from hostile sources, there are parallels with the information available on such groups as the Ranters in seventeenth-century England. The Ranters, at least, have attracted some scholarly attention.³⁵ By contrast, scholars of Safavid-period religious discourse have, to date, generally confined their attention to elite voices and disregarded these voices as depicted in the anti-Sufi discourse of the day,³⁶ nor have they pursued references to such voices 'from below', urban or rural, even when these are also well attested in contemporary non-religious primary sources.³⁷

As noted in the sources cited herein, the English Ranters were charged with holding unorthodox and generally anti-establishment beliefs and practices, including the belief that acts conventionally understood as sinful were not so because of the indwelling of the Divine. If it is unclear to what extent the actual details of beliefs and practices of Sufi groups from the Safavid period, let alone any changes to them during this period, can be delineated based solely on the available but indirect evidence – for example, can one infer from the disappearance of diatribes against Abū Muslim, beginning with Qummi's *Radd*, that contemporary practitioners of the Sufi-style inquiry themselves had abandoned their focus on him? – the marked anti-establishment nature of the 'Sufi' discourse is plainly in evidence. The authors of all three treatises cited above consistently highlighted the distinctly alternative systems of doctrine and practice of these groups and, as well, the alternative sources of knowledge that members postulated as the bases thereof. Some of *Hadīqa*'s groups rejected formal knowledge (*'ilm*) in favour of recourse to esoteric (*bāṭin*) forms, including the study of poetry and singing. The Jumhūriyya, allegedly the most active of the groups in the Safavid period, believed – as did the Ranters – that something of the Divine was present within everyone.

Recourse to such alternative sources of knowledge would seem to have encouraged, among some of them, not only the abandonment of such key pillars of the faith as prayer, fasting and the Pilgrimage, but also the taking up of various other, more extreme, forms of behaviour and beliefs and the rejection of that institutional establishment that upheld both orthodox belief and behaviour and, not coincidentally, its own authoritative role in the definition of and practice thereof. Thus the Zarrāqiyya, a group

clearly understood to be active in the period, were charged both with a litany of extreme behaviour and with rejecting clerical authority and the *sayyids*, and with actively attempting to deceive the masses.

To be sure, some of the more fantastic charges levied against the groups mentioned by the authors of the above-cited three texts had a history,³⁸ and the recitation of these charges was clearly an attempt to 'tar' Safavid-period groups with the 'brush' of past unorthodox beliefs.

Whatever the reality of the beliefs and behaviour of these seventeenth-century groups, at the very least it can be agreed that, in the midst of and no doubt encouraged by the socio-political and, especially, economic upheaval briefly described here, these elements 'were forsaking the intercessory and interpretative authority claimed by orthodox elements to seek solace and meaning in a more direct, immanent and intimate relationship with the divine'.³⁹

That authority was claimed by contemporary scholars in the Uṣūlī Shī'ī tradition such as Kamrā'ī and al-Karakī who occupied key, court-appointed positions in the period and whose hostility to this sort of inquiry has been noted. It has also been suggested, elsewhere, that the same authority was upheld by such moderate Akhbārī figures as Fayḍ Kāshānī and Taqī al-Majlisī: both consistently upheld the necessity of recourse to clerics trained, and holding positions of authority, in both the interpretation of doctrine and daily practice and, also, denounced 'popular' Sufi activity. It should not, therefore, be that surprising that over the period a range of scholars of the period were equally vociferous in their denunciation of 'popular' discourse.⁴⁰

Notes

1. 'Modernisation theory' in Middle Eastern studies long predated the 1970s. See, for example, Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (New York, 1958). The economic prescription behind modernisation theory may be said to be on offer in Walt Rostow (d. 2003), *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge, 1960). In the mid-1970s, Gustave von Grunebaum's (d. 1972) *Medieval Islam* (Chicago, 1946) was often said to be the best example of the orientalist project.
2. *Middle East Report and Information Project (MERIP)*, now *Middle East Report*, dates from 1971. No longer extant journals included *Khamsin* (1975–86), *Review of Middle East Studies* (six issues, published 1975–93) and *Review of Iranian Political Economy and History (RIPEH)* (1976–81). Appearing in the latter years of the decade, within the Middle East Studies

- Association of North America (MESA), AMES, with the 'A' standing for 'Alternatives', was similarly short-lived.
3. Many of these translations were in print well before the appearance of such works as Colin Gordon, ed. and tr., *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977* (New York, 1980) and Paul Rabinow, ed., *Foucault Reader* (New York, 1984). Foucault's 1978 sojourn in Iran and subsequent meeting with Ayatollah Khomeini (d. 1989) in Paris the same year and his subsequent praise of the Revolution were problematic. For a recent, full assessment of Foucault's 'Iran experience', see Janet Afary and Kevin B. Anderson, *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seductions of Islamism* (Chicago, 2005).
 4. Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II* (Paris, 1949), tr. Siân Reynolds as *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean world in the age of Philip II* (London, 1973); Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York, 1974).
 5. When, in 1976, the Braudel Center for Study of Economies, Historical Systems, and Civilization was established at SUNY, Binghamton, Wallerstein was its first director. Samir Amin's works included the translation of his 1970 *Accumulation on a World Scale: A Critique of the Theory of Underdevelopment* (New York, 1974) and the translation of his 1973 *Imperialism and Unequal Development* (New York, 1977). 'Dependency' theory was first made popular by André Gunder Frank, whose *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America: Historical Studies of Chile and Brazil* (New York, 1967) reveals his interests as also lying outside the field. To be sure Frank was building on the work of two other 'outsiders', Raul Prebisch and Hans Singer.
 6. See Robert Brenner, 'The Origins of Capitalist Development: A Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism', *New Left Review*, 104 (1977), pp. 25–92, which remains seminal reading. Brenner, now at UCLA, is an expert on European social history.
 7. In the immediate aftermath of the Revolution appeared Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1983), another influential work originating outside the field. My thanks to Gene Garthwaite for reminding me of this volume. Anderson carefully identified himself (rev. ed. 1991, p. ix) as a specialist in Southeast Asia. While Anderson's contribution may be said to have been more influential some years later by contrast, however, the very same year appeared Andrew Watson's *Agricultural Innovation in the Early Islamic World: The Diffusion of Crops and Farming Techniques, 700–1100* (Cambridge and New York, 1983). This volume merited the special attention of an annual meeting of MESA within years of its publication, being understood by some at the time as suggesting that overgrazing explained the failure of the Middle East

to industrialise.

8. See Yahya Sadowski, 'The New Orientalism and the Democracy Debate', *Middle East Report*, 83 (1993), pp. 14–21 and p. 40, repr. in Joel Beinin and Joe Stork, ed., *Political Islam: Essays From Middle East Report* (Berkeley, CA, 1997), pp. 33–50.
9. On Shī'i studies, see Andrew J. Newman, *The Formative Period of Twelver Shi'ism: Hadith ās Discourse Between Qum and Baghdad* (Richmond, Surrey, 2000), pp. xiii–xxvii.
10. Andrew J. Newman, *Safavid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire* (London, 2006), pp. 2–7.
11. See the editor's introduction in Stephanie Cronin, ed., *Subalterns and Social Protest: History from Below in the Middle East and North Africa* (London, 2008).
12. Exceptions to this generalisation include Peter Gran, *The Islamic Roots of Capitalism* (Austin, TX, 1979). In Iranian studies Ervand Abrahamian's 'The Crowd in Iranian Politics, 1905–1953', *Past and Present*, 41 (1968), pp. 184–210, took as its starting point George Rudé, *The Crowd in History, 1730–1848* (New York, 1964), a book by a practitioner of 'history from below'. The journal *Past and Present* itself was founded in 1952 by, among others, the same Edward P. Thompson. In his *The Unknown American Revolution* (New York, 2005; London, 2006), pp. xxvii–xxviii, the American historian Gary Nash, for whom the 'history from below' approach has been fundamental since the 1960s, paid tribute to the English historian Christopher Hill (d. 2003), a scholar of the English Revolution whose preoccupation with the 'history from below' approach may be said to have predated the appearance of the term itself.
13. Ranajit Guha and Gayatri C. Spivak, ed., *Selected Subaltern Studies* (New York, 1988); Ranajit Guha, ed., *A Subaltern Studies Reader* (Minneapolis, 1997); David Ludden, *Reading Subaltern Studies* (New Delhi, 2001).
14. Latin American Subaltern Studies Group, 'Founding Statement', *Boundary 2*, 20 (1993), pp. 110–121. See also: <http://digitalunion.osu.edu/r2/summer06/herbért/index.html>.
15. In the case of the subcontinent an exception is Seema Alavi, *Islam and Healing: Loss and Recovery of an Indo-Muslim Medical Tradition, 1600–1900* (New Delhi, 2008).
16. See the works cited in Cronin, *Subalterns and Social Protest*, especially nn.10–12, 24, 26; nearly all of the secondary sources cited postdate 1979. See also n.11.
17. Luṭf Allāh Hunarfar, *Ganjīna-yi athār-i tarikhī-i Iṣfahān* (Iṣfahān, 1344/1965–1966), pp. 725f., estimated that over the period Iṣfahān grew from six to forty quarters. See also Newman, *Safavid Iran*, pp. 103, 231, n.89.
18. Ḥasan Narāqī, *Āthār-i tārikhī-yi shahristānhā-yi Kāshān wa Naṭanz* (Tehran, 1348/1969), pp. 224–230; 'Abd al-Raḥīm Kalāntar Ḍarrābī (Suhayl Kāshānī), *Tarikh-i Kāshān*, ed. Iraj Afshar (Tehran, 2536 Persian Imperial

- year /1341/1977), pp. 532–534.
19. Mehdi Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life in the Later Safavid Period* (Berlin, 1992), p. 159.
 20. Hunarfar, *Ganjīna*, pp. 444–445, 434–436; Keyvani, *Artisans*, p. 135. Indeed, interested parties in the traditional centre of the city, located near Maidan-i Hārūn-i Wilāyat, forced ‘Abbās I to check his plans to expand that area of the city in the years following his accession and, instead, to opt for a new site which eventually became the famous Maidan-i Naqsh-i Jahān. See Mīrzā Ḥasan Junābādī, *Rawḍat al-Safawiyya*, ed. Ghulām Ridā Ṭabātābā’i Majd (Tehran, 1378 Sh./1999), p. 759; this chronicle was completed in 1625–1626.
 21. Kathryn Babayan, ‘The Waning of the Qizilbash: The Spiritual and the Temporal in Seventeenth-Century Iran’ (Ph.D. thesis, Princeton University, 1993), p. 262, n.632, citing Jean Baptiste Tavernier, *Les Six voyages de Jean Baptiste Tavernier* (Amsterdam, 1679), vol. 2, p. 132. Tavernier first arrived in Iran several years after the death of ‘Abbās I in 1629.
 22. Babayan, ‘The Waning’, pp. 140, 424, n.584.
 23. The revolt was crushed but soon thereafter someone claiming to be the brother of the rebel himself launched a second rising in Māzandarān. See Muḥammad Ma’sūm Iṣfahānī, *Khulāṣat al-siyar*, ed. Iraj Afshar (Tehran, 1368/1989), pp. 49–54; Newman, *Safavid Iran*, p. 75.
 24. Iṣfahānī, *Khulāṣat*, pp. 117–121. Iṣfahānī (p. 121) notes the ‘strange sciences’ (*‘ulūm gharība*) by which were produced luxurious goods seen in the darvish’s house. See also Babayan, ‘The Waning’, pp. 103–104, 148f.
 25. Newman, *Safavid Iran*, pp. 75–76.
 26. Mathee noted the connection between the economic situation and court moves against these minorities. See Rudi Mathee, ‘The Career of Mohammed Beg, Grand Vizier of Shah Abbas II (r. 1642–1666)’, *Iranian Studies*, 24 (1991), pp. 23, 27, and the following note.
 27. Mathee, ‘The Career’, especially pp. 23, 27–29; see also Rudi Mathee, *The Politics of Trade in Safavid Iran, Silk for Silver 1600–1730* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 164–165.
 28. Iraj Afshar, ‘Similar Farmans from the Reign of Shah Safi’, in Charles Melville, ed., *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society* (London, New York, 1996), pp. 285f.
 29. Pace Olearius, who arrived in Iran in 1637. See Newman, *Safavid Iran*, pp. 78, 207, n.35.
 30. Andrew Newman, ‘Fayd al-Kashani and the Rejection of the Clergy/State Alliance: Friday Prayer as Politics in the Safavid Period’, in Linda Walbridge, ed., *The Most Learned of the Shi’a, The Institution of the Marja’ Taqlid* (New York, 2001), pp. 40f.
 31. Al-Muqaddas Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ardabili (attrib.), *Ḥadiqat al-Shi’a* (Tehran, 1343/1964), pp. 556f. On his work see also Andrew Newman, ‘Sufism and Anti-Sufism in Safavid Iran: The Authorship of the *Ḥadiqat al-Shi’a* Revisited’, *Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies*, 37

- (1999), pp. 95–108.
32. Ardabili (attrib.), *Ḥadīqat al-Shī'a*, pp. 556f.; Newman, 'Clerical Perceptions of Sufi Practices in Late Seventeenth-Century Persia: Arguments Over the Permissibility of Singing (*Ghinā'*)', in Leonard Lewisohn and David Morgan, ed., *The Heritage of Sufism, Vol. III: Late Classical Persianate Sufism: the Safavid and Mughal Period (1501–1750)* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 135–164.
 33. Mīr Lawhī, *Ṣalwat' al-Shī'a*, in Rasūl Ja'fariyān, ed., *Mīrath-i Islāmī-yi Īrān* (Qumm, 1374/1995), vol. 2, pp. 339–359, esp. 344, 345, 348–349, 351, 354. See also Newman, 'Sufism and Anti-Sufism', pp. 98f.
 34. Three copies of this text were examined: (a) MS 5185, Majlis Library, Tehran; (b) MS 4014/7, Ayatollah Mar'ashī Library, Qumm; and (c) *Radd-i Ṣūfiyya*, in Rasūl Ja'fariyān, ed., *Mīrath-i Islāmī-yi Īrān* (Qumm, 1374/1995), vol. 2, pp. 131–150, which contains only the first section of *Radd-i ṣūfiyya*. See also Newman, 'Sufism and Anti-Sufism', especially n.39.
 35. For a review of the literature on the Ranters, see J. F. McGregor et al., 'Fear, Myth and Furore: Reappraising the "Ranters"', *Past and Present*, 140 (1993), pp. 155–194; Gerald E. Aylmer, 'Did the Ranters Exist?' *Past and Present*, 117 (1987), pp. 208–219. The contributions of Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (New York, 1957); idem, 'The Ranters: The "Underground" in the England of 1656', *Encounter*, 34 (1970), pp. 15–25; Arthur L. Morton, *The World of the Ranters: Religious Radicalism in the English Revolution* (London, 1970); and Christopher Hill, *A World Turned Upside Down* (New York, 1972), cited by Aylmer, are the earliest of the recent secondary sources on the Ranters. See also Newman, 'Sufism and Anti-Sufism', n.49. By the eighteenth century American radicals were producing their own records, in the process of which, as noted by Nash, *The Unknown American Revolution*, p. 108, some identified themselves with the seventeenth-century English tradition.
 36. See, most recently, Robert Gleave, 'Scriptural Sufism and Scriptural Anti-Sufism: Theology and Mysticism Amongst the Shī'i Akhbāriyya', in Ayman Shihadeh, ed., *Sufism and Theology* (Edinburgh, 2007), pp. 158–176. Only Babayan devoted any attention to the anti-Sufi discourse; see, especially, her 'The Waning', pp. 140f; idem, 'Sufis, Dervishes and Mullas: The Controversy over the Spiritual and Temporal Dominion in Seventeenth-century Iran', in Charles Melville, ed., *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society* (London and New York, 1996), pp. 117–138. Nevertheless, her *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs: Cultural Landscapes of Early Modern Iran* (Cambridge, MA, 2002), pp. 409–410, 420, 422–429, contained no major further exploration of this discourse. Neither those other secondary source authors cited above who referred to the 'lower orders' appeared or any others have investigated these voices any further. Similarly, reference to messianic, dervish-style anti-clericalism among Armenian artisans in this period by Ina McCabe, *The Shah's Silk for Europe's Silver* (Atlanta, GA, 1999), pp. 183–184, has yet to be pursued.

37. See, for example, the references in Muḥammad Ṭāhir Naṣrābādī's well-known *Tadhkira-yi Naṣrābādī*, ed. Ḥasan Waḥid Dastgirdī (Tehran, 1938), written between 1673–1674 and 1679, and Walī-qūlī Shāmlū b. Dāwūd-qūlī's *Qīṣaṣ al-Khāqānī* (MS Or. 7656, British Library), dating from the same period. On these and other sources, see Newman, *Safavid Iran*, pp. 92, n.78, 96, and 96, nn.26–29.
38. See, for example, Julian Baldick, *Mystical Islam* (London, 1989), pp. 102–103, 43–45.
39. Newman, *Safavid Iran*, p. 84.
40. Fayḍ carefully distanced himself from such 'popular' inquiry, especially as his own 'high', 'irfānī'-style inquiry was often identified therewith by opponents. On both Maljīsī and Fayḍ, see Newman, 'Fayḍ al-Kashanī', pp. 40f. Fayḍ's teacher, Mulla Sadra (d. 1050/1640), in his 1027/1617–1618 *Kaṣr al-aṣnām al-jāhiliyya*, ed. Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazhūh (Tehran, 1340 Sh./1961), had noted that artisanal elements were abandoning their professions to associate themselves with Sufi movements which he, also, condemned. See Newman, *Safavid Iran*, pp. 69, 199, n.136. On Bāqir al-Majlisī's critique of 'popular' Sufism and his explanation of his father Taqī's association therewith as an effort at conversion, see Newman, *Safavid Iran*, pp. 226–227, n.51. Nash, *The Unknown American Revolution*, p. 108, noted that those who attacked eighteenth-century American radicals in the South emerged more famous than the radicals themselves, a situation which clearly obtains in Safavid studies.

Compromise and Conciliation in the Akhbārī–Uṣūlī Dispute: Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī's Assessment of 'Abd Allāh al-Samāhījī's *Munyat al-Mumārisīn*

Robert Gleave

Introduction

In his magisterial history of Ismaili Shi'ism, Farhad Daftary makes an oblique comparison between the thought of the Fatimid jurist al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān (d. 363/974) and the system of Imāmī jurisprudence developed by the early Imāmiyya and later maintained by the Twelver Shi'i Akhbārīs:

It may be noted ... that in the Fāṭimid age and earlier, the Imāmīs had not yet accepted *ijtihād* (the individual jurist's effort in forming an opinion on the legal rules), which in later times continued to be rejected by the Akhbārī school of Twelver Shi'i law. The Fāṭimid Ismailis, with their imam ruling at the head of the community, never recognised any kind of *ijtihād* and *taqlīd* (the following of another's *ijtihād*). In other words, Fāṭimid law rejected adjudication or legal interpretation from sources other than the imams. Al-Nu'mān, in a work composed after 343/954 on the principles of law (*uṣūl al-fiqh*),¹ in conjunction with most of the Imāmī scholars of his time, clearly recognizes the Qur'an, the Sunna of the Prophet and the dictum or teachings of the imams (*qawl al-a'imma*) as the only sources of law.²

A number of points come out of this interesting comparison. Firstly, Daftary correctly recognises that the *ijtihād/taqlīd* system prevalent within early classical Sunni *uṣūl al-fiqh* (the theory of legal interpretation) had little impact upon Shi'i jurisprudence (whether it be Ismaili or Imāmī) except as a doctrine to be refuted within a polemic context. In this sense, the later Safavid Akhbārī scholars had an easier task when wishing to portray themselves as adhering to the 'way of the ancients',

that is, to the jurisprudence of the first generations of Imāmī jurists after the occultation in 260/874. Since there are bountiful reports in the early collections condemning *ijtihād* (and, often used as a synonym, *qiyās* also), the Akhbārīs had a greater body of textual evidence with which to argue that *ijtihād* was condemned by both the imams themselves and the great scholars of early Imāmī Shi'ism.³ The Safavid *mujtahids* (or Uṣūlīs as they were also called) had the more demanding undertaking: that is, demonstrating that the *ijtihād* condemned within the early Imāmī tradition was quite distinct from the *ijtihād* that they advocated.⁴ In this article, I present a short piece by a late classical Akhbārī author, Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī, who (unusually for an Akhbārī) argues that both *mujtahids* and Akhbārīs were present in the early period of Imāmī jurisprudence. This contrasts with the usual Akhbārī analysis which denies the existence of *mujtahids*, limiting the doctrinal acceptance of *ijtihād* to the phase after the juristic period through to the time of al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥilli (726/1325).⁵

Secondly, al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān's work of *uṣūl al-fiqh* (the *Ikhtilāf uṣūl al-madhāhib*) referenced here by Daftary could, in truth, be described as a refutation of the whole discipline of *uṣūl al-fiqh*. Nuʿmān allows very little of that science to survive within a Shi'i context. In this, Nuʿmān's work has certain similarities with the later Safavid Akhbārī works, such as *al-Fawā'id al-madaniyya* of Muḥammad Amīn al-Astarābādī and *Naqḍ al-uṣūl al-fiqhiyya* of Muḥsin Fayḍ al-Kāshānī.⁶ Baḥrānī, on the other hand, was one of the few Akhbārīs to seriously engage with the *uṣūl al-fiqh* tradition. In the prologues to his work of *fiqh*, *al-Ḥadā'iq al-nāḍira*,⁷ he offers a detailed Akhbārī alternative to the dominant Uṣūlī paradigm of legal theory.⁸

Thirdly, al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān's position, outlined by Daftary, that only the Qur'an, Prophetic *sunna* and the dicta and actions of the imams may act as sources of law, is clearly analogous to the prevalent Akhbārī notion that there are two sources of law (Qur'an and *sunna*, the latter including the dicta and actions of the imams) rather than the four sources of the *mujtahid*-Uṣūlīs (which included also consensus and reason). Whilst admitting that this is an important debate within the Shi'a, Baḥrānī (once again, in contrast to his Akhbārī colleagues) reduces the importance of the dispute over sources, by pointing out that the internal differences within the two schools are so great that this eclipses the significance of the differences between the schools.⁹

Finally, Daftary astutely observes that the Fatimid jurists did not recognise *ijtihād* or *taqlīd* 'of any kind', and this, in part, was due to the presence of their imam. The need for *ijtihād* (and the concomitant community

requirement of *taqlīd*) disappears when an ultimate and indisputable legal authority (the imam) is present. This position also mirrors the position of most Akhbārīs who argue that since *ijtihād* was not permitted when the imams were present, it cannot suddenly become permitted during the occultation.¹⁰ Baḥrānī, however, in the piece translated and analysed below, argues that there is a distinctive difference between the period of the imam's presence (*ḥudūr*) and that of his absence (*ghayba*). During the occultation, he argues, there is a need for scholars. Only they can read and present the content of the revelatory texts to the community. He, an Akhbārī, explicitly rejects a simplistic understanding of the Akhbārī slogan, 'all the community is follower of the imam'. This slogan had, he feared, given the impression that Akhbārīs were advocating some sort of populist, 'free-for-all' in the interpretation of texts. This, he asserted, was not only an incorrect understanding of Akhbārism, but it was also not defensible within any Shi'ī juristic system.

In this sense, Baḥrānī's critique of the Akhbārī-Uṣūlī conflict (presented below) is his attempt to persuade the reader that the rejection of *ijtihād*, which lies at the heart of the Akhbārī movement, need not lead to a thoughtless anti-intellectualism; in this sense, he could be said to share some common concerns with the scholar-jurist al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān.

Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī and the Akhbārī-Uṣūlī conflict

The late-classical Imāmī scholar Yūsuf b. Aḥmad al-Baḥrānī (d. 1186/1772) produced an impressive body of material, most of it relating to jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and its principles (*uṣūl*). Perhaps the most interesting aspect of his intellectual legacy is the recurrent question of whether he can be considered an advocate of the Akhbārī trend (or school) of Imāmī jurisprudence, considering his reformulations of Akhbārī juristic notions of reason and revelation. As I have explained elsewhere, whether any scholar is described as an Akhbārī is hardly a neutral act of classification.¹¹ It depends, in large part, on the definition of Akhbārism being employed, and that definition is almost inevitably influenced by one's assessment of the importance of the Akhbārī school. Within the Imāmī tradition, the debate over the definition of Akhbārism is a foil for a debate over whether the Akhbārī movement should be considered an innovation (*bid'ā*) or original Shi'ism. The opponents of Akhbārism naturally tend towards the former explanatory framework, whilst Akhbārīs themselves advocate the latter. The views of Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī presented in this paper represent an interesting variant on these established characterisations.

Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī's theoretical construct of Imāmī jurisprudence, as laid out in his voluminous and unfinished work of jurisprudence *al-Ḥadā'iq al-nāḍira*, generally conforms to Akhbārī legal theory: at no point did he incorporate the notion of *ijtihād*. His jurisprudence is, I believe, a conscious attempt to construct a legal theory without reference to *ijtihād*, either as a convenient terminological marker, or in substantive terms (i.e. as a real exegetical procedure). The result is a version of Akhbārism which surpasses the primarily reactive and polemical expressions of the school's doctrines found in earlier works of Akhbārī jurisprudence. His rigour in applying the principles of *uṣūl* to the details of *fiqh* probably explains the enduring popularity of the work,¹² despite the fact that his methodology runs counter to the dominant Uṣūlī mode of modern Imāmī jurisprudence.¹³ His views on specific issues are regularly unconventional, yet this does not seem to prevent his work being a major source for juristic training in the seminaries of contemporary Shi'ism.

Baḥrānī's Akhbārī *Uṣūl al-fiqh* is most clearly and succinctly laid out in the prologues (*muqaddimāt*) to *al-Ḥadā'iq al-Nāḍira*.¹⁴ I say this notwithstanding the fact that in these prologues, he never identifies himself as an Akhbārī and he even explicitly criticises the so-called founder of the Akhbārī school, Muḥammad Amin al-Astarābādī (d. 1036/1626–1627). His most overt criticism of Astarābādī can be found in the twelfth (and last) of these prologues, and involves a rejection of the bitterness, insult and abuse introduced into the normally polite and self-deprecating discourse of Imāmī jurisprudence.¹⁵ Baḥrānī explains that he was, in his early career, a propagator of Akhbārī ideas. He wrote a book entitled *al-Masā'il al-Shīrāziyya* ('The Questions of Shīrāz', either lost or, if extant, not yet published) refuting a *mujtahid* colleague. However, he now feels that any continuation of the dispute will be harmful to the Shi'a and that the insults and antagonism between Akhbārīs and Uṣūlīs should end. He outlines three reasons why it is intellectually pointless and practically harmful to prolong the dispute any further. First, the Shi'a have started to insult each other, on occasions even accusing each other of unbelief. Apart from the obvious damage to community unity this is doing, it is hypocritical: the Shi'a accuse the Sunnis of doing precisely this as they divide their religion into four *madhabs*. Second, the differences between the Akhbārīs and Uṣūlīs are not so serious. He outlines three differences. These three are, in fact, subject to such wide internal debate within the two schools that it is meaningless to describe them as 'school' differences. In fact, they are merely examples of areas of natural disagreement between Shi'i scholars. Third, in the early period of Imāmī

thought, *mujtahids* and Akhbārīs were both present. They had healthy debates which did not descend into accusations of unbelief. It is always desirable to follow the way of the ancients (*al-mutaqaddimīn*, i.e. earliest Imāmī scholars). For them, different opinions needed to be recognised as such, but any dispute and argumentation between scholars should not lead to insult. Baḥrānī blames Astarābādī for introducing unpleasantness into the debate. Baḥrānī says this, even though he considers Astarābādī to have held many opinions which were correct and sound.

This twelfth prologue, which could be subjected to a more detailed analysis than the brief synopsis presented here, is largely based on Baḥrānī's previous musings on the differences between Akhbārīs and Uṣūlīs. With *al-Masā'il al-Shirāziyya* unavailable to us, one turns to a passage in Baḥrānī's *al-Durar al-Najafiyya* ('The Najafī Pearls').¹⁶ Each chapter within this work is headed *Durra Najafiyya* ('A Najafī Pearl' or 'A Pearl of Najaf') and the title of the relevant section within that volume could be translated 'On Arbitrating between the Akhbārīs and the *mujtahids*, since all of them agree on Religion itself'.¹⁷ This 'Najafī Pearl' on the difference between the two schools is translated in the second part of this article. The relationship between this exposition and that found in Baḥrānī's *al-Ḥadā'iq* is parasitic. In many places within the prologue the wording is simply lifted from *al-Durar*. In other places, the wording is changed slightly, but the later prologue is clearly based on (and could be seen as a refinement of) the earlier *al-Durar*. At one point in the twelfth prologue, al-Baḥrānī explicitly references *al-Durar*, saying that the reader can consult his discussion there.

Having said that, the purpose of the *Durra Najafiyya* on the differences between Akhbārīs and Uṣūlīs is quite distinct from that of the twelfth prologue. In the prologue, Baḥrānī is concluding his systematic account of his legal theory. This is the legal theory which he then employed within the *furū'* section of *al-Ḥadā'iq al-Nāḍira*. This legal theory, outlined in the preceding eleven prologues, is undeniably Akhbārī in both tone and substance. His avoidance of the label Akhbārī throughout, even though his theory is quite obviously a considered version of Akhbārī jurisprudence, is, at least initially, curious. One possible explanation is his irenic intention generally in the prologues, made explicit in the twelfth prologue. The damage caused by the Akhbārī-Uṣūlī dispute should be put to one side and the points of dispute between the two schools, though real, should not lead to intra-community tensions. On all the three points of difference that he describes in the prologue, his own position (as outlined in the previous prologues) is Akhbārī. However, his passionate defence of the

Akhbārī position does not, in his view, justify calling the *mujtahid*-Uṣūlīs unbelievers.

This contrasts with Baḥrānī's purpose in the earlier *al-Durar al-Najafiyya*. Here, his target is more specific – he is criticising a particular Akhbārī author, 'Abd Allāh al-Samāhījī (d. 1135/1722), for exacerbating the dispute between Akhbārīs and Uṣūlīs by writing a list of forty-three differences between the schools.¹⁸ This list can be found in Samāhījī's *Munyat al-Mumārīsīn*, and became the definitive list of differences, trotted out by subsequent Akhbārīs and Uṣūlīs. Scholars of both schools wished to reiterate the invalidity of the opposing view, and Samāhījī's list of differences (sometimes numbering 40, sometimes 43)¹⁹ was an invaluable instrument in this polemical exchange. For this reason, Baḥrānī felt the need to debunk Samāhījī's list, even though he himself espoused a juristic theory which was basically Akhbārī. Baḥrānī, in *al-Durar*, selects eight supposed differences between the schools, and demonstrates that, on closer inspection, the points of difference collapse into one another. Samāhījī, he argues, is multiplying differences between Akhbārīs and Uṣūlīs in order to emphasise the differences between the schools. This has, in turn, encouraged internecine conflict. This multiplication of differences, then, is a 'waste of ink' and 'serves no purpose'.²⁰

With this quite distinct aim, it is unsurprising that the material in *al-Durar* underwent some reordering and rearrangement when it was represented in *al-Ḥadā'iq*, but that need not concern us here.²¹ The section translated below is divided into an introit ('Preamble' in the translation below), two subsections (in the translation below, '0: Introduction' and '1–8: The Points of Difference between Akhbārīs and *mujtahids*' respectively) and some final remarks ('9: Conclusions'). The two subsections contain the bulk of the piece. In the first, Baḥrānī outlines for the first time the material which was to be refashioned in the twelfth prologue of *al-Ḥadā'iq al-nāḍira*. He outlines the reasons why the dispute should be toned down, and these are reproduced in the twelfth prologue almost word for word (sections [0.2.1], [0.2.2] and [0.3] in the translation below). He also blames Astarābādī for the vitriolic nature of the dispute ([3.2.2]) and defends al-'Allāma al-Ḥillī ([3.3]). Notwithstanding his own criticism of Ḥillī elsewhere in *al-Ḥadā'iq* (and indeed within *al-Durar*), Baḥrānī here makes great play of Ḥillī's achievements, both in terms of scholarship, but also in terms of community recruitment. It was not fitting of Astarābādī to insult him in this way.

The second subsection (section [1] through to [8]) is perhaps more significant since only a small section of it was reused within the much

better known *al-Ḥadā'iq al-nāḍira* ([1.1–1.2.2], [2.1–2.2.2], though with substantial sections of text omitted in the representation in the twelfth prologue). This subsection consists of citations (or near citations) from Samāhijī's text, in which a difference between the two schools is described, followed by an 'answer' (*jawāb*) by Baḥrānī. In the 'answer', the apparent difference is dissolved, or collapsed into a previous difference, or accepted as a natural consequence of scholarly debate. The presentation is often elliptical, assuming audience familiarity with the details of the disputes described in Samāhijī's *Munyat al-mumārisīn*. therefore, a brief contextualisation of the disputes mentioned by Baḥrānī is appropriate.

Commentary on the differences between Akhbārīs and Uṣūlīs listed by Baḥrānī

[1] *The dispute over the number of sources of the law*

Baḥrānī admits there is a significant difference between the two schools, with the *mujtahids* arguing for consensus (*ijmā'*) and the 'indicator of reason' (*dalīl al-'aql*). However, the proponents of the schools differ amongst themselves. Some Akhbārīs do not accept the Qur'an as a legal source, and most *mujtahids* propose such restrictive conditions on the use of *ijmā'* and *dalīl al-'aql* that they actually become irrelevant in practical terms. *Dalīl al-'aql* is glossed as comprising two principles – 'the presumption of fundamental permission' (*al-barā'a al-aṣṣliyya*), and 'the presumption of continuity' (*istiṣḥāb al-ḥāl*). The former is the 'practical principle' (i.e. one of the *uṣūl 'amaliyya*) that when there is no specific indicator which demonstrates an action to be legally classified as obligatory or forbidden, that action must be considered permitted. The latter is the notion that an established legal classification must be assumed to continue to be valid until there is certain evidence that the classification should change. Both principles were subject to dispute amongst the *mujtahid*-Uṣūlīs.

[2] *The three-fold/two-fold division of assessments*

Whilst the Akhbārīs accept that there are some actions which are ultimately unclassifiable because they are not mentioned in the revelatory texts, the *mujtahid*-Uṣūlīs argue that actions not mentioned in the texts are to be considered permitted. Baḥrānī, once again, indicates that there were Akhbārīs who advocated the Uṣūlī position here, and hence this is

not a point of difference between the schools. Furthermore, this dispute is really a dispute about the ‘presumption of fundamental permission’, and therefore is really a repetition of the dispute outlined in [1] above.

[3] *The obligatory nature of ijtihād*

This was Samāhijī’s first point, and is perhaps the central element of the Akhbārī–Uṣūlī dispute, with Akhbārīs being defined by their rejection of *ijtihād*. Baḥrānī attempts to downplay the significance of this division here, saying it is merely a matter of terminology. Akhbārīs may not call their scholars *mujtahids*, and may not describe what they do as *ijtihād*, but they still advocate a scholarly class (the ‘*ulamā*’) who are responsible for explaining the texts to the general population. Deriving legal rulings from the sources is no simple task, Baḥrānī argues – and this is the case whether the scholar attempting to do this is a *mujtahid* or an Akhbārī. The difference for Baḥrānī is not over *ijtihād*, but over whether the scholar to whom the people turn for legal guidance relies upon the Qur’an and the *sunna* of the Prophet and imams, or whether he uses consensus and rational indicators in his legal derivation. So, in conclusion, this difference, in fact, collapses into the dispute [1] outlined above.

[4] *The acceptability of rulings based on the mujtahid’s opinion (ẓann)*

Ẓann is the opinion a *mujtahid* comes to having employed his effort (*ijtihād*) in finding a legal ruling. The dispute here, then, concerns whether the results of a *mujtahid*’s efforts are acceptable bases for the deeds of a believer. The Akhbārīs claim that they act purely on ‘certainty’ and ‘knowledge’ (*yaqīn* and ‘*ilm*’ respectively), not ‘opinion’ (*ẓann*). Baḥrānī’s response is rather unstructured here. He mixes up his response to the difference with his description of the dispute (i.e. there are elements of his response in [4.1] which should, in truth, be in [4.2] – his ‘answer’). However, his position is not difficult to delineate. The Akhbārīs consider themselves to be basing their rulings on certainty, not mere opinion. However, what they count as certainty is ‘customary’ certainty – that is, not certainty as might flow from a mathematical or logical proof, but a certainty which can act as the basis for action. It can be contradicted and is not ‘absolute’ (*muṭlaq*). The implication here is that the difference is purely terminological. That is, customary certainty can be contradicted, as can the *mujtahid*’s opinion – therefore they are not as different as Samāhijī portrays them. In fact they are best bracketed together, and contrasted with absolute knowledge

which cannot be contradicted.

[5] and [6] *Classification of the reports from the imams*

These two points are given a combined response by Baḥrānī. However, he cannot resist an aside when describing point [5]. The *mujtahid*-Uṣūlī four-fold classificatory schema for reports is terminological, he says, whilst the two-fold Akhbārī schema is what is ‘based on meaning’. The dispute here concerns how one comes to know, and therefore follow, the words of the imam. The Akhbārīs argue that one comes to know them through the recorded accounts of their words and actions (the *akhbār*). The Uṣūlīs do not disagree, but are merely more sceptical over the reliability of these reports. Hence, they have four categories of report with different levels of reliability, or, perhaps more accurately, they have four categories with different levels of utility as legal proofs: sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*), good (*ḥasan*), reliable (*muwaththaq*) and weak (*ḍaʿīf*). The Akhbārīs, on the other hand, present a simple two-fold schema (sound and weak). Baḥrānī’s position is that the real distinction is between reports that can be used as legal evidence and proofs that cannot – that is, his position is basically that of the Akhbārīs. He rejects the four-fold terminology as an innovation by al-ʿAllāma al-Hillī. Interestingly, he argues that if the *mujtahids* were to be true *mujtahids* and follow the way of the ancient *mujtahids*, then they should reject the four-fold classification system, because it was invented by a latter *mujtahid* (i.e. Hillī). Once again, the differences between the *mujtahids* mean this cannot be a point of difference between the two schools. Continuing this line of argument, Baḥrānī argues that even though a *mujtahid* scholar may support the four-fold categorisation of *ḥadīths*, when one looks at the scholar’s practical jurisprudence (i.e. his works of *furūʿ al-fiqh*), one sees he actually subscribes to the two-fold Akhbārī classification scheme. The list of *ḥadīth*-related procedures listed in [6.2.2] would lead to a report being considered unsound or weak. And yet, one finds *mujtahids* using them all the time in their books of derived jurisprudence (*furūʿ al-fiqh*). Once again, to use this as a point of difference between the schools is pointless.

[7] *The two-fold division of the community*

The *mujtahid*-Uṣūlīs, as is well known, divided the community into *mujtahid* and *muqallid* (the latter being the follower of the former). The Akhbārīs refuted this distinction and proclaimed the slogan that the

community as a whole are followers (*muqallidīn*) of the imam, not the *mujtahid*. Baḥrānī explains that he has already dealt with this question in [3] above (which, in turn, actually collapses into [1]). What is interesting in an additional comment here ([7.2.3]) is Baḥrānī's view that in following the scholar, the community is following that scholar's opinion as to the law, whether the scholar is an Akhbārī or a *mujtahid*. In other words, here Baḥrānī considers it perfectly possible for two Akhbārī scholars to differ over the meaning of a report (he argues that one encounters this very often). The implication here is that this is no different from the *mujtahid* claim that *mujtahids* may differ over a particular legal issue (i.e. there is 'difference of opinion' or *ikhtilāf*), but that this is not problematic, as the *mujtahid* is charged with 'trying his hardest on the basis of the available evidence', not with finding the right answer.

[8] *The permissibility or otherwise of ijtihād during the occultation*

The Akhbārīs, predictably, do not consider *ijtihād* permitted either during the presence of the imam or during his occultation. The *mujtahid*-Uṣūlīs, on the other hand, do. Baḥrānī states from the outset that this dispute in fact collapses first into the third of the differences described above ([3]) and ultimately into the first dispute ([1]). There is little need to posit this as yet another point of difference between the schools. Baḥrānī argues that yet another problem with Samāhijī's presentation is his restriction of the meaning of the term *ijtihād* to 'adopting views not based on the Book and the Example' (i.e. Qur'an and *sunna* [8.2.3]). In fact, Baḥrānī argues, one can return to the true meaning of *ijtihād* (expenditure of effort in acquiring rulings from the legal sources) and say that Akhbārīs and *mujtahids* are both involved in *ijtihād*. They differ over the constituent elements of the legal sources (that is point [1] above). Even if the *mujtahids* do accept elements which are not acceptable to Akhbārīs, he continues, one in fact sees the *mujtahids* abandoning their legal theory when performing their substantive jurisprudence, so, in truth, the *mujtahids* also follow the way of the Akhbārīs. Furthermore, on occasion the results of a *mujtahid*'s reasoning by means of rational indicators results in the same ruling as that of the Akhbārī who follows the Qur'an and *sunna* because reason and the law are ultimately consonant.

Baḥrānī's final position, as laid out in his analysis of these so-called differences between Akhbārīs and Uṣūlīs, is that there is a real dispute here, and it concerns the composition of the legal sources from which legal indicators can be produced and can then be used in the derivation of legal

rulings. On the one side, there are those who take their legal rulings from the Qur'an and the *sunna* alone. On the other, there are those who supplement these two with *ijmā'* (consensus) and the indicator of reason (*dalīl al-'aql*). The crucial point for Baḥrānī here is that there are *mujtahids* who take their rulings from the Qur'an and *sunna* alone and restrict the use of consensus and the indicator of reason such that they are useless as indicators. All the other elements of the dispute ultimately flow from this one point of difference and this is not a point of difference between Akhbārīs and *mujtahids* but between Akhbārīs and some *mujtahids* on the one hand and other *mujtahids* on the other. Even when the fundamental nature of this dispute has been established, Baḥrānī is arguing that the difference here is not one which should split the community but instead constitutes one of the 'issues on which there has been divergence' (*al-masā'il al-khilāfiyya*) from the earliest period, and which has not caused a fissure in the community in the past. Debates need to be had, and wrong positions exposed as such, but this should not lead to the disintegration (and therefore the weakening) of the Shī'a.

Conclusion

In the passage, one gets a snapshot of Baḥrānī's juristic development which culminated in the prologues to his *al-Hadā'iq al-Nāḍira*. The prologues are the only place in which Baḥrānī lays out his jurisprudence in systematic detail, and are clearly the end point of a process of development which saw him swing from being an ardent Akhbārī to being more accepting of certain fundamental *mujtahid*-Uṣūlī assumptions and then back to a more confirmed Akhbārism. The accuracy of the widespread assessment of Baḥrānī as a 'moderate' Akhbārī²² is contingent upon the point at which the assessment is made. His early period, by his own account, seems to have been thoroughly Akhbārī as he engaged in polemic against the *mujtahids*. Access to his *al-Masā'il al-Shirāziyya* may confirm this self-assessment. His 'middle period', during which the text below was written, sees him condemning the bitter tone of the dispute initiated by Astarābādī. What he does not do, however, is relinquish the idea that Akhbārīs have existed throughout Imāmī history, a point which most Uṣūlīs denied in their attempt to portray the Akhbārīs as innovators. This assertion makes his approach a development of, rather than a break from, the Akhbārī tradition begun by Astarābādī and maintained through the Safavid period.

Baḥrānī does attempt to incorporate certain elements of *mujtahid*-

Uṣūlī thinking into the reformulated Akhbārism of this middle period. However, these are rejected in his final formulation in the prologues to *al-Ḥadā'iq al-nāḍira*. Two examples of this characteristic can be given. First, it is quite unusual for an Akhbārī to adopt the position outlined in section [7], namely that Akhbārī scholars who follow a properly formulated Akhbārī jurisprudence might come out with different opinions. This is not admitted in the prologues and it is difficult to see how it would fit into the juristic system outlined there. One could conclude that, here, Baḥrānī is testing out an idea which he eventually rejects in his final formulation. Secondly, and more explicitly, at one point [8.2.2] in the passage translated below, Baḥrānī argues against the Akhbārī idea that any difference of opinion (*ikhtilāf*) is due to differences in the *akhbār* themselves and is not an inevitable consequence of human involvement in the interpretive process. Baḥrānī, arguing against this, states that differences amongst the Akhbāris can also be due to 'different understandings' of the *akhbār*. These two points are, of course, linked: they both represent an acceptance on Baḥrānī's part of *ikhtilāf* amongst the Shi'i scholars. As I have noted elsewhere, his whole juristic theory is aimed at reducing, if not eliminating, differences of opinion amongst the scholarly elite. This is done through two mechanisms: (1) the employment of a complex set of hermeneutic tools which bring certainty as to the *akhbār*'s meaning, and (2) a promotion of the principle that a scholar should identify and follow the most cautious course of action (*al-aḥwaṭ*) out of those sanctioned by *akhbār* when they appear to be in contradiction. Such a system is designed to engender in the individual believer (*mukallaf*) the certainty that the action they are performing fulfils the demands of God in the *sharī'a*. Sometimes it may surpass that demand, but occasional overzealousness in the performance of ritual is, in Baḥrānī's view, a small price to pay for ensuring total obedience to the law. Even in this thumbnail sketch, it is difficult to see how even a rudimentary element of *ikhtilāf* could be introduced into Baḥrānī's system. The passage below, then, provides further background material for understanding the later, and more influential, theory of this important thinker of the Akhbārī Shi'i school.

TRANSLATION

A Najafī Pearl: On Arbitrating between the Akhbārīs and the *Mujtahids*, since they all agree on Religion itself²³*by Yūsuf b. Aḥmad al-Baḥrānī*

[Preamble]

Know – May God the Exalted One strengthen you by his power – that questions from students concerning the difference between the *mujtahids* and the Akhbārīs have become numerous. Respondents [to these questions] have multiplied the differences on this matter until our Shaykh, the sound *muḥaddith*, al-Shaykh ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥājī Ṣāliḥ al-Baḥrānī²⁴ (may God sanctify his secret), being one of the stalwart, strict Akhbārīs, has listed them as forty-three in number.²⁵

[0: Introduction]

[0.1] I was, in the beginning, one of those who travelled along this road, and I engaged in much disputation with a contemporary *mujtahid* colleague. I have already written a book, named *The Questions of Shīrāz*. [It comprises] an extensive discussion including a bundle of clarificatory discussions and a sufficient number of reports, all relating to this [topic] and supporting what was [set forth] there.²⁶

[0.2] However, it has become clear to me – after giving consideration to the truth of the matter, and after having examined the views of the different groups mentioned by those learned scholars – that this door should be closed, and the curtain and screen which has covered it should be drawn back. [I felt this] even though people of great merit have opened up [the debate] on this topic and have expanded the areas of both discussion and agreement [between the parties].

[0.2.1] Firstly: [the dispute] has led to slander between the scholars of the two groups, and [feelings of] contempt between the great minds of the two groups. The scholars of each group have insulted those of the other. On occasions, [the dispute] has been drawn into matters of religion itself, which are usually reserved for implacable opponents – such as when the Shi‘a condemn [the Sunnis] for their practice of dividing their religion and their school into four schools, and also the manner in which the leaders of the four schools condemn each other.

[0.2.2] Secondly: having reflected with an intense sense of justice and avoiding the way of excess and deviance, [I have concluded that] most, or,

rather, all, of what they²⁷ consider to be elements of division between the two [schools] and what they construct as distinctions between the two groups do not, in truth, necessitate any division. This I will make clear to you in the following, with an explanation, the clarity of which those of sound disposition and understanding yearn for.

[0.3] The early period was full of *muḥaddiths*²⁸ and *mujtahids*. However, the clamour of this dispute was never raised. One of them did not insult another by describing him in these terms, even though they disputed with each other over the details of issues and differed over the priority of indicators [of the law], as the scholars of every group have done, and continue to do so, generation after generation. In those days, the most fitting and appropriate [stance] for the possessors of faith, and the most proper and the strongest position concerning this topic, was that it be said:

The scholars of the true sect and great experts on the true *sharī'a* (may God Most High raise their levels to the highest of heights, and add them to the noble ones from the first to the last) only acted in accordance with the school and way of the sinless imams which they [the imams] have made clear to them [the scholars].

The loftiness of their station, brilliance of their proofs, their piety, their godliness which was famous, or rather indisputably transmitted through the days and the ages, all of these [qualities] prevented them from deviating from this sure path and straight course. Perhaps some of them did deviate from this path, be they Akhbārī or *mujtahid*, out of ignorance or presumption, or a lack of knowledge, or a paucity of understanding on some issues, or for other similar reasons. However, this did not lead to mutual imprecation or insults concerning the principle of *ijtihād*. All of the matters, which they have made points of division, were of this type, whether they were issues over which there had been different options, and over which views and ideas had clashed in the past, or whether that view came about because of one of the aforementioned reasons or their like – as will be made plain to you, God willing.

[0.4] You know that all *mujtahids* and Akhbārīs differ on various questions. Indeed, perhaps one of them disagreed with his own [group], but this never led to mutual imprecation and insult. The leader of the Akhbārīs, al-Ṣadūq²⁹ (may God Most High have mercy on him), did tend towards a group of strange opinions with which neither *mujtahid* nor Akhbārī would agree, but this did not lead to him being insulted, nor to any attack on his knowledge or greatness.

[0.5] The clamour of this dispute and the perpetration of this deviation

only came about since the time of the author of *The Benefits of Madīna*³⁰ (may God bless him and repay him with his pleasurable mercy). He let loose the tongue of insult on [his] colleagues. He went on at great length concerning it and multiplied the transgressions which were not appropriate for a good scholar such as he. Even if he was right on some of the issues which he mentioned in that book, they should not have gone beyond the matters which we have mentioned on which there is [acceptable] difference of opinion. Rather, they are included in what we have called ‘different approaches’. The most appropriate course of action for one such as he would have been to carry [those scholars] on a camel litter of proper behaviour and wisdom, even if he found nothing within their arguments which might have prevented them from being abominable.

[0.6] This is because they (may God be pleased with them) [i.e. the *mujtahids*] have never ceased expending effort to uphold religion and revive the way of the Prince of the Messengers [i.e. the Prophet Muḥammad]. This is particularly true of Āyat Allāh al-‘Allāma³¹ whom he [Astarābādī] went to great lengths to insult and defame. [Al-‘Allāma] forced indubitable proofs and arguments on the enemy’s scholars and on those who oppose [i.e. the Sunnis], such that a great number were brought to salvation through him. They all entered this great faith, the great and the small, the rich and the poor. He wrote books which plumbed the depths of research and the intricacies of investigation; anyone who came after him could only gather the pearls he had scattered. [Anyone who came after him] could merely draw upon what flowed from his sea. He had skills which were greater than [Astarābādī’s] and other scholars of the Saved Sect. Hence he is worthy of beautiful praise and greater honour and veneration, not condemnation and the accusation of ruining religion which [Astarābādī’s] pen had the audacity to advance against him (may his secret be sanctified) and against others *mujtahids*.

[0.7] When you know this, then know also that the differences that our Shaykh, the sound one, referred to above,³² mentions and the divisions he went on about at great length are, in large part – mostly rather – long-winded without point and inconclusively repetitious. In demonstrating this claim, we shall mention here only what is fundamental for them, and what is the most pertinent of what he and others have explicitly stated.

[1–8: The points of difference between Akhbārīs and *mujtahids*]

There are different points [of difference between Akhbārīs and *mujtahids*]:

[1.1] First: For the *mujtahids*, there are four indicators [of the law]: the Book, the Example, the consensus and the indicator of reason.³³ For the Akhbārīs, there is only the Book and the Example. Some of them restrict this to the Example alone, based on the view that the Book cannot be interpreted or form the basis for action, except when there is an explanation from the People of the House (God's blessings be upon them). This is the most pertinent of the different points of dispute for them.

[1.2] The Answer:

[1.2.1] It is obvious that the *mujtahids* do include consensus as one of the legal indicators in the books of legal theory, and perhaps they even make it have priority [over other indicators] in their books of applied [jurisprudence]. However, in the areas of verification and discussion concerning the issues, their most expert astute-minded scholars dispute vehemently whether this aforementioned consensus has taken place [or not]. They engage in vitriolic attack on it and take up opposing positions which hold no hope of being reconciled. This is obvious to anyone who studies [their] works of applied jurisprudence, such as *The Honoured One*, *The Paths*, *The Perception*, *The Remembrance* and *The Treasure* of the great scholar Khurāsānī, and other [works].³⁴ This, praise be to God, is obvious to anyone who consults the aforementioned books. At that time, the issues on which there was a claim that consensus was proven were [in fact] issues of dispute amongst the scholars – be they *mujtahid* or Akhbārī. So it is not appropriate that this become a point [of dispute] in this matter.

[1.2.2] Secondly, concerning the indicator of reason, which is glossed as the presumptions of fundamental permission and continuity:³⁵ There is dispute amongst the *mujtahids* concerning its probative force, as can be found in more than one place [in their writings]. The experts amongst them reject it. Muḥaqqiq,³⁶ at the beginning of his book *The Honoured One*, and the expert Shaykh Ḥasan in his book *The Signposts*,³⁷ and other [scholars] in other [places], have described the principles of fundamental permission and continuity in such a way that prevents one having any objection to [their description] on this matter. Some of them, such as the Sayyid al-Sanad in *The Perception*,³⁸ allow action on the basis of the principle of fundamental permission, but forbid action on the basis of the principle of continuity. Whatever confirms this position on this topic will be presented to you. At that time, this issue was also one of the issues on which there was dispute amongst the scholars. So it is not appropriate that this become a point [of dispute] in this matter [either] – and this is obvious to those who possess understanding.

[2.1] Second, for the Akhbārīs, things are of three types: clearly permit-

ted, clearly prohibited, and those without clarity which are between them. For the *mujtahids*, there are only the first two.

[2.2] The Answer: In this, there are [different points to be made]:

[2.2.1] Firstly: this difference of opinion is based on the permissibility, or lack of it, of acting on the basis of the principle of fundamental permission. For one who relies on [this principle] and supports it, things will be either permitted or forbidden. For one who forbids it, the position on the three-fold [division] will take priority. So, this issue merely refers back to the first [issue], and it is no more than an expansion of numbers [of differences] and a waste of ink.

[2.2.2] Secondly: As has already been presented in the section concerning the issue of the principle of fundamental permission, this was the view of the Shaykh of the True Sect and the Leader of the Right Community, al-Shaykh [al-Ṭūsī],³⁹ and his teacher, al-Mufīd.⁴⁰ The citation from [Ṭūsī's] book *The Readiness*⁴¹ has already been presented and [his view] was the three-fold [division] – just as has been attributed to the Akhbārīs. But these two great figures are two pillars of the *mujtahids*. And, like them, Muḥaqqiq in his *The Honoured One* holds the same opinion. At that time, this opinion was not unique to the Akhbārīs. Al-Ṣadūq's statement in his book *The Beliefs* is explicit, and in *The Jurist* it is obvious.⁴² [His position is] that which has been described as 'the two-fold position' – and this is attributed to the Uṣūlīs. In the book *The Beliefs*, he says:

Chapter on the belief in caution and permission. The Shaykh (may God have mercy on him) said: 'We believe that all things are unrestricted until there is a prohibition which refers to one of them.'⁴³

Things for him were either permitted or forbidden, just as they are for the *mujtahids*. However, he was the leader of the Akhbārīs and the one whom they consider the founder of this way.

[2.2.3] From this, it should be clear to you that this point [of dispute] cannot appropriately be called a difference. Rather, it is one of the issues about which the scholars debated – just as has already been mentioned.

[3.1] Thirdly: The *mujtahids* make *ijtihād* obligatory either as an individual duty or as an optional duty. The Akhbārīs forbid it and [instead] make it obligatory to abide by transmissions – whether they are from the Sinless One himself,⁴⁴ or from one who relates from him, with any number of intermediaries. This is just as our Shaykh,⁴⁵ the sound one, who has already been mentioned, relates it in his aforementioned book [i.e. *Munyat al-Mumārīsīn*].

[3.2] The Answer:

[3.2.1] There is no doubt that the people, during the time of the imams (upon them be peace), were commissioned with referring to them and taking [their rulings] from them either by direct speech or through an intermediary or intermediaries. There is no dispute on this amongst the generality of the scholars, Akhbārī and *mujtahid* alike. However, during the time of the occultation, our own time and times like this one, the people are either scholars or they are unlearned. Or, using an alternative terminology, they are either jurists or non-jurists. Or, using a third terminology, they are either *mujtahids* or followers. We have already made this clear in our *Fourth Benefit* of these *Benefits*, concerning a commentary on the accepted tradition of ‘Umar b. Ḥaṣṣala.⁴⁶ [I explain there that] this scholar and jurist, to whom it is obligatory to refer, must have the ability to derive legal rulings from the individual indicators. Not everyone in the general populace or amongst the common folk can acquire rulings from these sources and derive them from them. This is obvious to anyone who considers what we have presented at the aforementioned place. The *ijtihād* which the *mujtahids* make obligatory is only equivalent to ‘expending effort to acquire rulings from the legal indicators and derive them from them by the accepted means and the accepted principle.’

[3.2.2] There is no doubt that it is not permitted to take rulings from, or rely on the *fatwā* of anyone who has not reached this scholarly level, and this elevated rank. From this, it should be clear to you that his statement, ‘The Akhbārīs make it obligatory to abide by transmissions’, is, if understood unconditionally, forbidden. One has learned exactly this: for an ordinary person from amongst the people to adopt a transmission during the period of the occultation is an obviously invalid [course of action], and this needs no explanation. Why is this [invalid]? [Because] the transmissions he might come across may be unqualified or qualifying, unclear or ambiguous, and they will contradict [each other] in terms of legal rulings. Deriving a legal ruling from them requires a significant amount of ability and a devout, well-grounded skill – as we have already mentioned in the place referred to above.⁴⁷ Where might the commoner seek this knowledge? He must, without doubt, refer to a scholar who has the abilities just mentioned.

[3.2.3] Agreeably, there does remain one other matter to discuss. If this jurist relies, in his derivation of rulings, on the Book and the Example, this is something that, all agree, confirms [that the commoner should] rely on him. If, however, he only relies on other indicators, such as consensus or the indicator of reason, or such things, then this is what the Akhbārīs deny, and insult the *mujtahids* for doing. At this point, one should refer

this point to the first point above. Counting this as a point of difference in itself is simply an embellishment, [designed] to increase the number [of differences], and a waste of ink. You will have already learned from the answer to the first point of difference [above] that there was dispute amongst the *mujtahids* concerning the indicators apart from the Book and the *sunna*. This point [of dispute] cannot appropriately be called a point of difference between the two groups. Rather, it is one of the matters which have already been explained on which there has been dispute.

[4.1] Fourthly, the *mujtahids* permit adopting legal rulings on the basis of opinion. The Akhbārīs forbid this, and give no opinion except with knowledge. Knowledge for them is [information] which is certain and accords with the thing in itself, commonly [understood] and essential. This is what comes from the Sinless One, and they do not, customarily, permit any mistake in this. This is what the Lawgiver,⁴⁸ as well as the scholars of language and everyday practice, call ‘knowledge’. Opinion, on the other hand, is what comes from *ijtihad* and deriving [legal rulings] without reference to the transmission [of the imams]. They never call ‘adopting [the ruling from a] transmission’, mere ‘opinion’. To prove that acting on the basis of opinion is forbidden, [the Akhbārīs] give proofs from the Book and the Example. The objection that the one who acts on the basis of the reports [of the imams] is not himself devoid of acting on the basis of opinion is not permitted. This is because [action on the basis of the reports of the imams] is not usually termed [acting on] ‘opinion’ – not in language, not in common practice and not in the law. [Furthermore,] the permissibility of a possible contradiction of something does not mean that [the thing is distinct from knowledge] because legal knowledge is something that does permit the possibility of contradiction, by custom and by common understanding – [legal knowledge] is not absolute. This is because the permission to adopt what transmitters say has come along with a prohibition on [acting on] ‘opinion’, and contradiction in the [imams’] statements is not permitted. In this way, our Shaykh,⁴⁹ mentioned above, confirms this in the book mentioned above.

[4.2] The Answer: The answer here is taken from what we have already made clear in the *Fifteenth Benefit* of these *Benefits* concerning the commentary on the accepted report of ‘Umar b. Ḥanzala,⁵⁰ and from the *Pearl* on the dispute with the author of *The Benefits of Madīna*⁵¹ on this precise issue. There is no need to lengthen the response by repeating it here. Consult that [section] – it will become clear to you what is claimed, and it will be clear to you which is the preferable and stronger [position].

[5.1] Fifthly, the *mujtahids* divide the *ḥadīths* into four types: ‘sound’,

‘good’, ‘reliable’ and ‘weak’. The Akhbārīs [divide them] into ‘sound’ and ‘weak’. The truth is that if it is permitted to act on the basis of the ‘good’ and the ‘reliable’, which are not ‘sound’, then [in reality] they are ‘sound’. If not, they are ‘weak’. The four-fold division is terminological, and the two-fold distinction is based on meaning.

[6.1] Sixthly, the *mujtahids* understand ‘sound’ to mean whatever has been transmitted by a reliable just Imāmī from someone with the same qualities, back to the Sinless One. ‘Good’ means that their transmitters, or one of them, is an Imāmī who may be praiseworthy, but is not recorded as declared to have been reliable. Then he [Samāhijī] mentions the categories ‘reliable’ and ‘weak’ in accordance with their definitions, until he says, ‘The Akhbārīs understand “sound” as meaning “it has been confirmed and proven to have come from the Sinless One”.’ The types of soundness differ. Sometimes it is through transmission by multiple chains of authorities; sometimes it is through isolated reports which have been elevated through external indicators which demonstrate the soundness of the report. He then mentions the external indicators which necessitate the soundness of the reports, in the same manner as the Shaykh did in *The Readiness*,⁵² and other have done [elsewhere].

[6.2] The Answer: These two differences, even though he [Samāhijī] has made them into two differences in order to multiply the number [of differences], refer to a single matter. This is obvious to anyone who has given it any thought. So the reply is:

[6.2.1] First, this terminology, by common agreement, only came about during the time of al-‘Allāma (may God perfume his grave).⁵³ It is an innovatory terminology of the modern *mujtahids*. The way of the ancient *mujtahids* – like al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and his Shaykh Mufid and al-Sayyid al-Murtaḍā⁵⁴ and their contemporaries and their successors up until the time of al-‘Allāma – was, in relation to these two differences, simply the way of the Akhbārīs. So how can this point [of dispute] appropriately be called a point of difference between the *mujtahids* and the Akhbārīs in an unqualified manner, when the founding fathers of the *mujtahids* did not see it this way, and did not mention [this terminology] at all? This is nothing more than a clear error and disgraceful lurch. If this claim is confirmed in relation to some of the *mujtahids*, then it is permitted for an opponent to turn it around and say, ‘the *mujtahids* and the Akhbārīs agree on the non-existence of this terminology, and the invalidity of whatever is derived from it’, basing this on the fact that the earlier [*mujtahids*] are reliable.

[6.2.2] Second, even though those who propound this typology openly

support it, you see most of them in their works of derived [jurisprudence] not deviating from the statement of the earlier scholars, as they [recommend] action on the basis of reports which are weak by their calculation. They hide their deviation from the classification with excuses. For example, they accept the reports of Ibn Abi ‘Umayr⁵⁵ which have incomplete chains of transmission. [They do the same] with others like him about whom all [of the scholars] have agreed that what he says ‘is sound’ is [in fact] sound. But [according to their terminology] they will not transmit other than from someone who is trustworthy. Another example is that they declare some reports to be ‘sound’ when the [chain of transmission of the report] includes one of the shaykhs of *ijāza*⁵⁶ even though [the shaykh of *ijāza*] will not have been recorded as being reliable. Another example is [claiming] that a report in *The Jurist* is ‘sound’ on the basis of what its author says in the introduction of the book. Another example is [that they accept] a transmitter whom the authors of *The Sources*⁵⁷ say is ‘weak’ in transmitting reports. Another example is [their claim] that [the truth of] a report is compelling by virtue of it being well known. Another example is [their claim that] a [report] is agreed upon as a basis for action on the basis of its contents alone. And there are other examples which one who studies their statement will come across.

[6.2.3] In sum, if you study their statements, you find that they do not differ from the way of the ancients, except on rare occasions. So, their simply mentioning this division and terminology, as he accuses them of doing, when taken into account with their practice, as we have said, does not necessitate a true, meaningful difference [between the two groups]. And so, in sum, his statement here (may God sanctify his soul) has no benefit to anyone who desires to learn – it merely serves to increase the level of debate.

[7.1] Seventhly, the *mujtahids* restrict the community to two groups – *mujtahid* and follower – and amongst the Akhbārīs, the community as a whole follows the Sinless One, and there are no *mujtahids* at all.

[7.2] The Answer:

[7.2.1] You already know, from my answer to the *Third Difference* [above], that the people, during the time of the occultation, are only [divisible] into the two categories mentioned previously, whether one describes these two groups with the terms *mujtahid* and follower, or with the terms scholar and unlearned, or with the terms jurist and commoner. It is obvious that the terminology, whatever it may be, has a single meaning. Dispute and difference of opinion only appear over whether, in deriving legal rulings, the scholar, or jurist, or *mujtahid* relies on something

other than the Book and the Example. Otherwise, when his sources, from which he derives the rulings, are restricted to these two indicators, there is no dispute over [the fact that] it is obligatory to follow him so long as the other qualifications of him being observant, pious, virtuous and the others, are met. This [is the case] whether he is called a *mujtahid* or an Akhbārī. So this point can be referred back to the first point, as is obvious.

[7.2.2] When [Astarābādī] says, ‘the community as a whole follows the Sinless One’, this, when stated without qualification, is a point of dispute. ‘Following’⁵⁸ is – as they already know – defined as ‘accepting the opinion of another without [knowing] the indicators [he has used]’. This idea cannot be applied to the commoner. Rather, it can only be applied to the Akhbārī jurist, because [reaching] a ruling requires [the ability to] derive [rulings] and extensive contemplation of the sources – just as we have already made clear in the *Pearl* on the dispute with the author of the *Benefits of Madīna* concerning the differences in understanding the various levels of perception.⁵⁹ The bulk of the differences between the scholars occur for this reason only. Hence, the Akhbārīs differ [amongst themselves] on issues, just like the *mujtahids* do – we have already explained most of this in the *Pearl* alluded to previously.

[7.2.3] So, the commoner should only take rulings from this Akhbārī who gives rulings on the basis of what he understands from the reports [of the imams]. This is how his ruling is, and hence how can the [commoner] [otherwise] be a follower of the imam? For another Akhbārī may give a different opinion, based on what he understands and perceives. At that point, how is it possible for one to say, ‘These Akhbārī scholars, even though they have different opinions, are all followers of the imam, and those who follow them are also followers of the imam’? What is this other than obvious arbitrariness?

[8.1] Eighthly, the *mujtahids* say that during the occultation, one should seek knowledge through *ijtihād*, and during the presence [of the imam] one should take it from the Sinless One – even if [it comes] through intermediaries. In these [latter] circumstances *ijtihād* is not permitted. This is, in fact, the position of the Akhbārīs. The Akhbārīs, however, do not make any distinction between the time of the occultation and the time of presence. Rather, [they say], what Muḥammad permitted is permitted until the day of resurrection, and what he prohibited is forbidden until the day of resurrection. There is no other position, and no other position can come about – just as is found in the *ḥadīths*.⁶⁰

[8.2] The Answer:

[8.2.1] This point also refers back to the differences in the indicators.

When a scholar – whether he is called a *mujtahid* or an Akhbārī – relies only upon the Book and the Example in [deriving] the legal rulings, then there is no dispute that what [the ruling] is based upon is sound, and there is no dispute that it is permitted to adopt legal rulings from him, and act on the basis of his opinion. As for the statement that the period of occultation and the period of presence are the same for the people, then this is a plain error, once you have understood the answer to the *Third Difference* ([3.3] above). The meaning of the *ḥadīth* just mentioned refers only to when one says that *ijtihād* is permitted in the way the Sunnis say it is, based on opinions, analogies and rational proofs – these differ, and form different answers, all the time.

[8.2.2] Agreeably, these [sources – namely opinions, analogies and rational proofs] may agree with the Book and the Example on a particular issue on which there is a difference of understanding and a conflict of views. This has occurred amongst the scholars in every age and place, be they *mujtahid* or Akhbārī. We have already explained this in the *Pearl* devoted to the discussion with the author of *The Benefits of Madīna*.⁶¹ This is the case even if the Akhbārīs deny it, and claim that the differences which occur amongst [the scholars] have only come about because of the differences within the reports [of the imams] themselves. However, we have already laid out, in the aforementioned *Pearl*, the refutation of this claim. We have made it clear that the difference of opinion amongst them, in relation to the differences amongst the *mujtahids*, may have come about due to differences in the reports themselves. However, it may also have come about because of different understandings [of the reports] – and that is the ultimate source of most of the rulings.

[8.2.3] In sum, then, his view⁶² on all of these points of difference is that *ijtihād* means adopting opinions and views which are not based on the Book or the Example. This is true, if the unqualified meaning of *ijtihād* is restricted to this meaning. However, *ijtihād* – as they know – is simply the expenditure of effort in acquiring rulings from the legal sources. The dispute between Akhbārīs and *mujtahids* here is on the means of verification in relation to these sources. The Akhbārīs restrict them to the Book and the Example, or, according to the opinion of some of them, to the Example alone. The *mujtahids* expand these sources to the four well-known ones. This is the case, even though, in their books of derived jurisprudence, they dispute over what might contradict the Book and the Example – just as we have already mentioned concerning this topic, and concerning other topics in the course of the previous *Pearl* in this book.

[9: Conclusions]

[9.1] So, the acknowledgement of *ijtihād* is accurate when applied to someone who restricts the derivation of legal rulings to the Book and the Example. This is so, even if the Akhbārīs avoid describing him as such, due to their attack on the *mujtahids* – an attack which is out of place, as is obvious to any just person.

[9.2] How is this? Some *mujtahids*, on some of the details of rulings, depart from adopting [the rulings] from the Book and the Example, and act on opinion-based forms of derivation only. However, this does not lead to an attack against the basis of *ijtihād* [itself], according to the definition we have mentioned. One of the Akhbārīs deviates in his understanding of a report from the general understanding of the most learned scholars, and so that becomes an opinion which is clearly unfounded to all who possess understanding. However, this does not lead to an attack on the way of the people of the reports – as was the case with al-Ṣadūq (may his secret be sanctified) on numerous occasions with regard to legal rulings. God knows best.

Notes

1. Farhad Daftary is here referring to al-Qāḍī Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nu'mān b. Muḥammad's *Ikhtilāf uṣūl al-madhāhib*, ed. Shamoona T. Lokhandwalla (Simla, 1973).
2. Farhad Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs: Their History and Doctrines* (2nd ed., Cambridge, 2007), p. 171.
3. See Norman Calder, 'Doubt and Prerogative: The Emergence of an Imāmī Shī'ī Theory of *Ijtihād*', *Studia Islamica*, 70 (1989), pp. 57–78.
4. In a modern context, this is what Hossein Modarressi claims in *An Introduction to Shī'ī Law: A Bibliographical Study* (London, 1994), pp. 29–30.
5. Al-'Allāma al-Ḥillī Ḥasan b. Yūsuf al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325).
6. On these works, see Devin Stewart, 'The Genesis of the Akhbārī Revival', in Michel Mazzaoui, ed., *Safavid Iran and her Neighbors* (Salt Lake City, UT, 2003), and Robert Gleave, *Scripturalist Islam: The History and Doctrine of the Akhbārī Shī'ī School* (Leiden, 2007), p. 154.
7. See Yūsuf b. Aḥmad al-Baḥrānī, *al-Ḥadā'iq al-nādira fī aḥkām al-'itra al-ṭāhira*, ed. Muḥammad Taqī al-Īrwānī (Qumm, 1984), 25 volumes.
8. I have given a detailed description of this theory in my *Inevitable Doubt: Two Theories of Shī'ī Jurisprudence* (Leiden, 2000).
9. I examine the debate within Akhbārism over these sources of law in Gleave, *Scripturalist Islam*, pp. 216–267.
10. See Etan Kohlberg, 'Aspects of Akhbārī Thought in the Seventeenth and

- Eighteenth Centuries', in Nehemia Levtzion and John O. Voll, ed., *Eighteenth Century Renewal and Reform in Islam* (Syracuse, NY, 1987), pp. 133–155.
11. See Gleave, *Scripturalist Islam*, pp. 1–30.
12. The work is, for example, cited extensively in the works of modern jurists such as Sayyid Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm (d. 1970), Ruhollah Khomeini (d. 1989) and Abu'l-Qāsim al-Khu'ī (d. 1992).
13. I examine the close relationship between Baḥrānī's *uṣūl* and *furū'* in my 'Marrying Fātimid Women: Legal Theory and Substantive Law in Shī'i Jurisprudence', *Islamic Law and Society*, 6 (1999), pp. 38–68.
14. Baḥrānī, *al-Ḥadā'iq*, vol. 1, pp. 1–170.
15. The twelfth prologue is found on pp. 167–170 and is analysed in Gleave, *Inevitable Doubt*, pp. 247–253.
16. Yūsuf b. Aḥmad al-Baḥrānī, *al-Durar al-Najafiyya min al-multaqaṭāt al-Yūsufiyya* (lithograph, Tehran, 1314). The new typeset edition of the work was published in Beirut in 2002. References here are to the lithograph edition.
17. *Fi'l-muḥākama bayn al-Akhbāriyyīn wa'l-Mujtahidīn wa-jamī'uhum 'alā al-ittifāq fi'l-dīn*. Baḥrānī, *al-Durar*, p. 3 (contents page). It is not clear whether Baḥrānī himself is responsible for the titles of these chapters of *al-Durar al-Najafiyya*, since the piece itself, found in pp. 253–256 (the page numbering in the contents list is incorrect), does not have a title other than 'Durra Najafiyya' ('A Najafī Pearl').
18. On Samāhijī's position as teacher and donor of *ijāzas*, see Sabine Schmitdke, 'The *ijāza* from 'Abd Allāh b. Šāliḥ al-Samāhijī to Nāṣir al-Jārūdī al-Qaṭifī: A Source for the Twelver Shī'i Scholarly Tradition of Baḥrayn', in Farhad Daftary and Joseph W. Meri, ed., *Culture and Memory in Medieval Islam: Essays in Honour of Wilferd Madelung* (London, 2003), pp. 64–85.
19. These have been expertly edited ('The Akhbārī–Uṣūlī Dispute in Late Safavid Iran: 'The Nature of the Akhbārī/Uṣūlī Dispute in Late-Safawid Iran. Part 1: 'Abdallāh al-Samāhijī's "Munyat al-Mumārīsīn"', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 55, 1992, pp. 22–51) and analysed ('The Nature of the Akhbārī/Uṣūlī Dispute in Late-Safawid Iran. Part Two: The Conflict Reassessed', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 55 (1992), pp. 250–261) by Andrew Newman. His manuscript copies list only forty differences. It is possible that there were additional versions of Samāhijī's points in circulation. Clearly the version to which Baḥrānī's had access had forty-three differences.
20. I had already noticed this tendency in Samāhijī's list when comparing it with previous (and subsequent) lists. See Gleave, *Scripturalist Islam*, pp. 205–208.
21. Whilst the paragraphs [Preamble], [0: Introduction], [1] and [2] below are all found either word for word or with minor changes within *al-Ḥadā'iq*, Baḥrānī reorders them in the latter text. In *al-Durar*, the aim is to first explain why he considers the Akhbārī–*mujtahid* dispute to be in need of

- 'closure'. These are broadly those which form the structure of the twelfth prologue in *al-Ḥadā'iq*.
22. Muḥammad b. Ismā'il Abū 'Alī al-Ḥā'irī writes that he was an Akhbārī but abandoned that school or a middle way (*Muntahā al-Maqāl fī aḥwāl al-rijāl*, ed. Mu'assasat Āl al-Bayt (Tehran, 1885), p. 334); see also Muḥammad Bāqir b. Zayn al-'Ābidīn al-Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt fī aḥwāl al-'ulamā' wa'l-sādāt* (Qumm, 1970–72), vol. 8, p. 204. Tunukābunī writes 'he was one of a generation of Akhbārīs, but he was not an extremist' (*muta'aṣṣib nabūd*) (Muḥammad b. Sulaymān Tunukābunī, *Qīṣaṣ al-'ulamā'*, Tehran, n.d., p. 271). See Etan Kohlberg, 'Baḥrānī, Yūsuf', *EI*, vol. 3, pp. 529–530. Kohlberg, in this article, recognises the change between *al-Durar al-Najafiyya* and *al-Ḥadā'iq al-nāḍira*, and gives a brief summary of the passage translated here. For the function of this within the Shi'i tradition, see my 'The Akhbārī-Usulī Dispute in *Tabaqat* Literature: An Analysis of the Biographies of Yusuf al-Bahrani and Muhammad Baqir al-Bihbihani', *Jusur*, 10 (1994), pp. 79–109.
 23. Baḥrānī, *al-Durar al-Najafiyya*, pp. 253–256.
 24. Namely, 'Abd Allāh al-Samāhījī mentioned above n.18 and 19.
 25. See above, n.19.
 26. This work has not, to my knowledge, yet appeared in any manuscript catalogues. It was listed by Baḥrānī himself amongst the works he lost during the taking of Fasā (probably a reference to its capture by Nādir Shāh ca. 1747). Though 'Alī b. al-Ḥasan al-Baḥrānī (d. 1340/1920–1921) in his *Anwār al-badrayn fī tarājim 'ulamā' al-Qaṭif wa'l-Aḥsā' wa'l-Baḥrayn*, ed. 'Abd al-Karīm Muḥammad 'Alī al-Bilādī (Beirut, 2003) mentions a *Jawābāt al-Masā'il al-Shirāziyya* (p. 198) amongst Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī's writings, this appears to be an inaccurate description since Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī claims to have seen a copy of *al-Masā'il al-Shirāziyya* and it is not an answer to questions, but an incomplete, independent work of *fiqh* (Ṭihrānī, *al-Dhari'a ilā taṣānīf al-Shi'a*, ed. Aḥmad al-Munzawī, Tehran, 1987, vol. 20, pp. 353–354).
 27. 'they' clearly refers to Akhbārī scholars, like Samāhījī, who wish to list and stress the differences between the Akhbārīs and the *mujtahids*.
 28. Baḥrānī uses the term *muḥaddith* as a synonym for Akhbārī. It refers, of course, to the Akhbārī emphasis on *ḥadīths* as the only source of religious knowledge. However, in the early period, it also refers to those who transmit *ḥadīths* (whether they held to them being the only source of religious knowledge or not).
 29. The prolific early Imāmī *ḥadīth* collector al-Shaykh al-Ṣādūq Muḥammad b. 'Alī Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī (d. 381/991–992).
 30. *Al-Fawā'id al-Madaniyya*, written by Muḥammad Amīn al-Astarābādī (d. 1036/1626–1627), the alleged 'founder' of the Akhbārī school. It was originally published in a lithograph edition in the nineteenth century and more recently has been edited by Nūr al-Dīn Mūsawī (Qumm, 2003).

31. The use of Āyat Allāh here is, of course, interesting, but it also predates the nineteenth-century formalisation of the term in which it referred to one who has gained a specific rank within the scholarly hierarchy. Here the term is employed merely as a mark of respect.
32. A reference to Samāhijī.
33. Respectively, *al-Kitāb*, *al-sunna*, *al-ijmāʿ* and *dalīl al-ʿaql*.
34. These works being (respectively):
 1. *al-Muʿtabar* by al-Muḥaqqiq al-Awwal Najm al-Dīn Abu'l-Qāsim al-Ḥillī (d. 676/1277)
 2. *Masālik al-afḥām* by al-Shahīd al-Thānī Zayn al-Dīn b. ʿAlī al-ʿĀmili (d. 966/1559) (published by Muʿassasat al-Maʿārif al-Islāmiyya, 15 vols, Qumm, 1413/1933)
 3. *Madārik al-aḥkām* by Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Mūsawī al-ʿĀmili (d. 1009/1600) (published by Muʿassasat Āl al-Bayt li-Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth, 8 vols, Qumm, 1410/1990)
 4. *Dhikrā al-Shīʿa* by al-Shahīd al-Awwal Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Makki al-ʿĀmili (d. 786/1384) (published by Muʿassasat Āl al-Bayt li-Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth, 4 vols, Qumm, 1419/1999)
 5. *Dhakhīrat al-maʿād* by Muḥammad Bāqir b. Muḥammad Muʿmin al-Sabzawārī (d. 1090/1679) (lithograph, published by Muʿassasat Āl al-Bayt li-Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth, Qumm, n.d.).
35. The principle of the 'presumption of fundamental permission' (*al-baraʿa al-aṣliyya* or *baraʿat al-aṣl*) is the principle that unless there is a specific prohibition in the revelatory texts against a particular action, the action is to be considered permitted. The principle of the presumption of continuity (*istiṣḥāb al-hāl*) is the principle that the assessment of an action remains as it was previously unless a change is known to have come about which changes the assessment of the action. I describe both principles in Baḥrānī's thought in detail in *Inevitable Doubt*, pp. 96–101.
36. Al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī, famous Shiʿi jurist and author of *al-Muʿtabar*, an important and much studied work of *fiqh*.
37. *Maʿālim al-dīn* by Shaykh Ḥasan b. Zayn al-Dīn al-Shahīd al-Thānī (d. 1011/1602) (published by Muʿassasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, Qumm, n.d.).
38. Sayyid al-Sanad is the penname of Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Mūsawī al-ʿĀmili (d. 1009/1600), author of *Mādarik al-aḥkām*, mentioned above, n.32.
39. Shaykh al-Ṭāʾifa Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067).
40. Al-Shaykh al-Mufid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Nuʿmān al-Baghdādī (d. 413/1022).
41. Al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, *Uddat al-uṣūl*, ed. Muḥammad Riḍā al-Anṣārī (Qumm, 1996).
42. Al-Shaykh al-Ṣādūq's *al-Iʿtiqādāt fī dīn al-imāmiyya*, ed. Ghulām Riḍā Māzandarānī (Qumm, 1992) and *Kitāb Man lā yaḥḍuruḥu al-faqīh*, ed. ʿAlī Akbar al-Ghaffārī (Qumm, 1415/1995) respectively.
43. Al-Shaykh al-Ṣādūq, *al-Iʿtiqādāt fī dīn al-imāmiyya*, p. 113.

44. This is a general reference to all of the imams.
45. A reference to Samāhijī.
46. A famous companion of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. This is an internal reference to another section of *al-Durar al-najafiyya*, the twelfth section (or 'pearl', *durra*) in which the famous delegation *ḥadīth* of 'Umar b. al-Ḥaṇẓala is examined (for a translation of the *ḥadīth* in question, see Gleave, 'Two Classical Shi'i Theories of *qada'*', in Gerald R. Hawting, Jawid A. Mojaddedi, and Alexander Samely, ed., *Studies in Islamic and Middle Eastern Texts and Traditions in Memory of Norman Calder* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 119–120). This section is divided into 16 'Benefits' (*fawā'id*, sing. *fā'ida*) and a conclusion and is found at *al-Durar al-Najafiyya*, pp. 45–68. The 'Fourth Benefit' referred to here is found at pp. 48–54.
47. Namely in the Fourth Benefit within the Twelfth Pearl of *al-Durar al-Najafiyya*.
48. *Shāri'* – a reference to God in his role as provider of the Law to humankind.
49. Namely Samāhijī.
50. See above n.46. The 'Fifteenth Benefit' can be found at *al-Durar al-Najafiyya*, pp. 62–64.
51. This 'Pearl' is the nineteenth in *al-Durar al-Najafiyya* and can be found at *al-Durar al-Najafiyya*, pp. 86–93.
52. See above, n.36.
53. Namely al-'Allāma al-Ḥillī.
54. Al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī is Shaykh al-Ṭā'ifa mentioned above, n.39; for Shaykh Mufid, see above, n.40; al-Sayyid al-Murtaḍā is 'Alam al-Hudā 'Alī b. Ḥusayn al-Mūsawī (d. 436/1044).
55. Muḥammad b Abī 'Umayr (d. 217/832–833), a prolific early Imāmī author and collector of *ḥadīths*. In many cases, the reports he presents are *mursal* (i.e. with incomplete chains of transmission), hence for some subsequent Imāmī thinkers these *ḥadīths* are of dubious authenticity. See Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, ed. Mūsā al-Shubayrī al-Zanjānī (Qumm, 1987), p. 326.
56. A reference to the scholars to whom has been given permission (*ijāza*) to transmit, comment on and teach texts.
57. A reference to *al-Uṣūl* – the collections of *ḥadīths* attributed to companions of the imams from which the authoritative Shi'i collections of *ḥadīths* were formed.
58. The word used here is *taqlīd* – sometimes translated as 'imitation' it describes the relationship of all those who are not *mujtahids* to those who are *mujtahids*. The former are commanded to 'follow' the latter.
59. See above, n.46.
60. The reference here is to the *ḥadīth* '*ḥalāl Muḥammad ḥalāl ilā yawm al-qiyāma wa-harāmuhu ilā yawm al-qiyāma*'. See Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan Abū Ja'far al-Qummī, *Baṣā'ir al-darajāt fī faḍā'il āl Muḥammad*, ed. Mirzā Muḥsin Kūcha Bāghī Tabrizī (Tehran, 1961), p. 168; Abū Ja'far Muḥammad

b. Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, ed. 'Alī Akbar al-Ghaffārī (Qumm, 2003) vol. 1, p. 58.

61. See above, n.46.

62. That is, Samāhījī's view.

Bibliography

This is a comprehensive bibliography of the sources cited in this volume. Where authors have used different editions of the same work, all details have been given; when translations of primary texts are given, this does not necessarily mean that they have been used by all authors. For convenience of reference, each source is followed by the initials of the author in whose article it is found, in square brackets, as follows: Iraj Afshar [IA]; Hamid Algar [HA]; Omar Alí-de-Unzaga [OA]; Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi [AM]; Jalal Badakhchani [JB]; Carmela Baffioni [CB]; C. Edmund Bosworth [CEB]; Delia Cortese [DC]; Patricia Crone [PC]; Daniel De Smet [DS]; Robert Gleave [RG]; Hamid Haji [HH]; István Hajnal [IH]; Abbas Hamdani [AH]; Carole Hillenbrand [CH]; Alice C. Hunsberger [ACH]; Hermann Landolt [HL]; Leonard Lewisohn [LL]; Wilferd Madelung and Paul E. Walker [M&W]; Andrew Newman [AN]; Ismail K. Poonawala [IP].

Abbreviations

- EI2 *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, ed. H. A. R. Gibb et al., New ed., Leiden: Brill, 1960–2004.
- EI3 *The Encyclopedia of Islam, Three*, ed. M. Gaborieau et al., Leiden: Brill, 2007–.
- EIr *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. E. Yarshater. London and New York: Encyclopaedia Iranica Foundation, 1982–.
- EQ *The Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, ed. Jane D. McAuliffe, Leiden: Brill, 2001–2006.

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- ‘Abdān b. al-Rabīṭ (attrib.). *Kitāb Shajarat al-yaqīn*, ed. ‘Ārif Tāmīr. Beirut, 1982; see also Abū Tammām, and Abū Firās al-Maynaqī. [DS]
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Astronomers at work in the observatory
at Marāgha, watercolour, from a manuscript of the
Jāmi' al-tawārikh of Rashīd al-Dīn dated 1004/1596.

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