



ĠAFFĀRI QAZVINI, AḤMAD

ĠAFFĀRI QAZVINI, AḤMAD (احمد غفاری قزوینی, b. Qazvin; d. Debal, Sindh, 975/1568), 16th-century Persian scribe and historian who authored two universal histories and dedicated them to Shah Ṭahmāsp Ṣafavi (r. 1524-76).

Life. Aḥmad Ġaffāri came from a family of scholars and bureaucrats in Qazvin. They were descendants of the reputed Šāfeʿi Sunni jurist and scholar, Najm-al-Din ʿAbd al-Ġaffār Qazvini (d. 665/1266), who had authored the *al-Ḥāwī al-ṣaġīr fiʾl-foruʾ*, a widely used textbook of the Šāfeʿi jurisprudence (Ḥāji Ḳalifa, I, cols. 625-27; Modarres, III, p. 141; Algar). Ġaffāri's paternal grandfather, ʿAbd-al-Ġaffār, held the post of army judge (*qāzi-e moʿaskar*) under the Āq Qoyunlu, hence the *nesba* Ġaffāri (Ġaffāri, 1964, p. 253). Therefore, John E. Woods is wrong when he claims that the family's *nesba* was Ġefāri, suggesting that they claimed descent from Abu Ḍarr Ġefāri, the reputed companion of the prophet Moḥammad (Woods, p. 291). According to a 16th-century *taḍkera*, Aḥmad Ġaffāri's father, Moḥammad (d. 932/1525), was a cousin of the influential late Āq Qoyunlu grand vizier, Qāzi ʿIsā b. Šokr-Allāh Sāvaji (d. 896/1491), and served as chief judge of Rayy under Shah Esmāʿil (r. 907-30/1501-24). Moḥammad Ġaffāri, who composed poetry under pen name Weṣāli, is reported to have been paid an annual salary of twelve *tumāns* in his capacity as chief judge of Rayy (Ṣafavi, pp. 73-74).

Aḥmad Ġaffāri settled into a scribal career under Shah Ṭahmāsp. He excelled in his job as a court scribe and eventually ended up working for Shah Ṭahmāsp's younger brother, Prince Sām Mirzā (Ṣafavi, p. 74). It was during the years in service of Sām Mirzā that Ġaffāri wrote the *Tāriḳ-e negārestān* and



dedicated it to Shah Ṭahmāsp. Later in the reign of Shah Ṭahmāsp, Ġaffāri traveled to the Hejaz as a hajj pilgrim. In 975/1568, he left Hejaz for Mughal India, but while on his way to Agra, he died in the port city of Debal in the province of Sindh located near modern Karachi, Pakistan (Rāzi, fol. 229v).

Works. Tārīḳ-e negārestān. This is a universal history and consists of more than six hundred historical anecdotes highlighting the administrative skills and military feats of scores of kings, military conquerors, prophets, and high-ranking bureaucrats. Ġaffāri finished it in Ramaẓān 959/September 1552 (Ġaffāri, 1961, p. 350). The *Tārīḳ-e negārestān* concludes with an anecdote detailing the arrest and execution of the Timurid prince Abu Saʿid by the Āq Qoyunlu troops of Uzun Ḥasan (r. 857-82/1453-78) on 22 Rajab 873/5 February 1469. It is organized into the preface, more than six hundred historical anecdotes and tales, and a brief epilogue, wherein Ġaffāri praises Shah Ṭahmāsp as precursor of the [Hidden Imam](#), relating the Safavid monarch to the prophecy made in the Qorʾān that “the earth will be inherited by My righteous servants” (21:105).

The *Tārīḳ-e negārestān* was compiled with the objective of providing Shah Ṭahmāsp and other members of the Safavid royal family with an educational text on the lessons of history. In the preface, Ġaffāri tells us that he decided to compose the *Tārīḳ-e negārestān* based solely on anecdotes and historical tales, so that his readers could have a better understanding of the rise and fall of dynasties without being obliged to get the drift of a dull, lengthy narrative line (Ġaffāri, 1961, pp. 3-4). He also cites the titles of more than forty universal histories, court chronicles, local histories, and biographical dictionaries of poets as the primary sources on which the *Tārīḳ-e negārestān* is based.

In 976/1569, an illuminated and illustrated copy of the *Tārīḳ-e negārestān* was prepared in Iran. This decorated copy is now in the Walters Art Museum, and a description of it is available online ([Walters Ms. W.598, History of Nigaristan](#)). The *Tārīḳ-e negārestān* was first printed as a lithograph in Bombay in 1859. In the opening years of the 17th century, the Ottoman Sufi and religious scholar, Altıparmak Mehmed Efendi (d. 1033/1623-24), translated it into Turkish as *Nüzhet-i cihan ve nâdire-i zaman*. Two copies of Mehmed Efendi’s translation are now kept in the Süleymaniye Library and the Yeniciami Library in Istanbul (Karaismailoğlu, p. 542). Another Turkish translation of the *Tārīḳ-e negārestān* was prepared in the 17th century by the Ottoman *Şayḳ-al-eslām* and poet Zekerıyyâzâde Yahyâ Efendi (d. 1053/1644;



Kaya, p. 246). The *Tāriḳ-e negārestān* was one of the most popular titles in the field of history in pre-modern Iran. More than one hundred manuscripts of this volume are described and catalogued in various libraries in Iran (Darāyati, X, pp. 812-15).

Nosaḳ-e jahānārā. This is a universal history that chronicles the history of Abrahamic prophets and pre-Islamic and Islamic dynasties of Iran, Mesopotamia, Greece, Yemen, and Central Asia, up until the reign of Shah Ṭahmāsp. It is organized into three parts (*nosḳa*). The first part deals with the prophets. The second part is about the pre-Islamic Iranian (*‘ajam*) and the non-Iranian (*ḡayr-e ‘ajam*) Islamic-era dynasties of Iran and its neighboring lands. In the last part, Ğaffārī focuses his narrative on the [Safavids](#). The closing part has an annalistic framework, wherein Ğaffārī chronicles each year’s events separately.

Besides its historiographical value as a primary source on the history of local dynasties of Iran, the special importance of Ğaffārī’s chronicle lies in its coverage of the Āq Qoyunlu and the early Safavids. He narrates a detailed account of the Āq Qoyunlu period, providing the dates of all major events during the years leading up to Shah Esmā‘il’s rise to power. When dealing with the early Āq Qoyunlu, Ğaffārī draws primarily on Abu Bakr Ṭehrānī’s *Ketāb-e Diyārbakriya*, and concerning the late Āq Qoyunlu, he uses details supplied by his father and grandfather, who both worked for the Āq Qoyunlu and early Safavid bureaucracies (Woods, p. 222).

A good deal of Ğaffārī’s account of the lives and times of Shaikh Ṣafi-al-Din Eshāq Ardabili (d. 735/1334) and his immediate successors is based on the *Ṣafwat-al-ṣafā*, a biography by [Ebn Bazzāz](#) Ardabili of Shaikh Ṣafi-al-Din, the founder of the Ṣafaviya Sufi order. His account of [Jonayd](#), a patrilineal descendant of Shaikh Ṣafi-al-Din, and his son Ḥaydar is garbled and, given what we know about their careers as military chiefs and spiritual leaders of the Ṣafaviya Sufi order from Ḥayātī Tabrizī’s chronicle, the *Nosaḳ-e jahānārā* suffers from major historical gaps and narrative inconsistencies. Ğaffārī’s account of the first two Safavid monarchs ends *sub anno* 972/1564-65. Ğaffārī’s chronicle was first published in Tehran in 1964 under a new title as the *Tāriḳ-e jahānārā*.



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