



INDIA XIV. PERSIAN LITERATURE

The amount of Persian literature composed in the Indian subcontinent up to the 19th century is larger than that produced in Iran proper during the same period (Schimmel, p. 1). From the very beginning of the Muslim invasion of northern India, Persian, as the language of the Ghaznavid court, gradually achieved the status of the most prestigious language of an increasingly large region, whose subjects were mostly Indian and the rulers predominantly Turkish. The reputation of the Ghaznavid court in Lahore (or “little Ghazna” as it was sometimes referred to) as a literary center shifted, after the Ghurids’ (q.v.) territorial successes, to the new capitals of Multan and Delhi (1192). After the foundation of the Delhi Sultanate (q.v.) in 1206, the munificence of its rulers attracted many poets and scholars from Persia and Central Asia. Persian literary trends were thus assimilated and refashioned in the complex and intricately multi-layered cultural milieu of India. The mystical brotherhoods (esteemed by the population and influential within the court, especially the Češtiya, q.v., which supported music and poetry) and a hub of syncretistic beliefs had a strong impact on the way Persian developed as a literary medium in the different regions of India. With Moḥammad Toḡloq’s decision to transfer Delhi’s cultural elite to his second capital, Daulatabad (the medieval Deogiri, 1327), the influence and prestige of Persian culture spread further south. Under enlightened sovereigns and governors, like the Bahmanid (q.v.) minister Maḥmud Gāvān (1411-81), the Muslim courts that flourished in the Deccan (q.v.) between the 14th and 17th centuries became flourishing centers



of cultural production in Persian as well as in Arabic. After Timur's invasion (1398), which marked, especially for northern India, a deep hiatus in cultural activity, the age of the first six Mughal rulers (1525-1707) represented the heyday of Indo-Persian literature; it was replenished by fresh waves of talented émigrés from Safavid Persia and by increasing Hindu participation in Persian writing, particularly with the advent of Lōdi (Lodi) rule (1451-1526), when the knowledge of Persian language and literature began to filter through to the Hindu administrative class.

Akbar's (q.v.) reign, besides being the apogee of literary production, was also, thanks to his own munificence as well as the patronage of ministers such as 'Abd-al-Raḥīm Kān-e Kānān (q.v.), the most significant period of cultural and literary exchange between the Muslim and Hindu worlds, with a remarkable number of works being translated from Sanskrit into Persian and vice versa. With Awrangzēb (q.v.)—who suppressed the last great syncretistic experience when he put his elder brother Dārā Šokuh (q.v.) to death (1659)—the anti-Hindu and even anti-literary attitude of the empowered, orthodox Naqšbandi order found its political arm, thus progressively undermining the basis of cultural production. Later, a dearth of patronage and discontinuity of contacts between India and Persia led to the decline of Indo-Persian literature. After contributing enormously to the birth of Urdu language and literature, Persian, which had been the official language of the empire from 1582 to 1835, was ousted by English.

For about eight centuries Persian represented “the strongest factor in the unity and coherence of the Muslims of the subcontinent” (Bausani, p. 65) and, one may add, even of the entire elite taken as a whole. Every branch of Persian literature was present in India, with a remarkable proclivity for new experiments and innovations in new literary genres producing original contributions, both in content and form. The profusion of traditions and beliefs in India provided a fertile ground for poets and writers who used the potentials of Persian and its range and malleability to the full in exploiting these initially discordant features. The Persian work of one of the first masters, Amir Kōsrow of Delhi (q.v.; 1253-1325)—who referred to himself as a Turkish Indian (*Tork-e hendustāni*), as indeed he was—covers almost all the literary genres with a stamp of ingenuity and originality with few equals in all Persian literature.

Indian book production and publishing activity deserve a special mention. Indo-Persian ateliers rapidly achieved high standards, bringing forth



numerous innovations in the arts of calligraphy, manuscript illumination, and bookbinding. Moreover, with the introduction of lithography in the 19th century, India became the main center for the production of Persian books and journals.

Lyrical poetry. The court poetry in India was, as it had been in earlier decades in Iran itself in such courts as those of the Samanids and the Ghaznavids, characterized by the preeminence of the *qasida* (panegyric ode). The first renowned master in this form was Abu'l-Faraj Runi (q.v.; d. 1091), who spent most of his life in Lahore as the panegyrist of Sultan Ebrāhim b. Mas'ud and Mas'ud III. His *divān* influenced Anwari's (q.v.) art. His younger rival, Mas'ud Sa'd-e Salmān (b. Lahore, 1046; d. Ġazni ca. 1121), was a great innovator, inaugurating the genre of *ḥabsiyāt* (prison poems), of which there are many later examples in Indo-Muslim literature; prison also appeared as a theme in the poems of Ġāleb and many writers of the British period (Schimmel, p. 11). Mas'ud also introduced the Sanskrit genre of the *bārāmāsa*, poems describing the seasons and the months of the year. Of Indian origin were both Tāj-al-Din Rezā (d. after 1265), the panegyrist at the court of Iltutmeš (1210-36), and Šehāb-al-Din Maḥ-mera, the panegyrist of Rokn-al-Din Firuzšah (1236) and an acknowledged influence on Amir Ƙosrow. Šehāb was the first to introduce spiritual themes within the spectrum of the *qasida*. The *qasida* still found original interpreters in the various courts, such as Badr Čāči (q.v.; d. 1346), renowned for his abstruse and recondite style, which was much appreciated by Sultan Moḥammad b. Toġloq and highly prized by the subsequent literary tradition. However, it is in the art of the *ġazal* (lyric) that Indo-Persian poets produced their most subtle innovations. Ḥasan Sijzi (ʿAlā-e Sanjari, d. 1336) and Amir Ƙosrow, both very close to the Češti circle of Neẓām-al-Din Awliā' in Delhi, are counted among the founders of the Indo-Persian *ġazal*. Whereas Ḥasan was called "the Sa'di of India," because of his sweet, monothematic lyrics, the creation of a didactic style in which an entire proverbial phrase or sentence is encapsulated within each verse of a *ġazal* may be ascribed to Amir Ƙosrow. More generally, in Ƙosrow's lyrical work one can detect the first traces of what would later become the typical Indian Style (*sabk-e hendi*). As well as lyrical poetry, he also wrote excellent panegyrics for many of the sultans and governors under whose rule he worked.

It is not surprising that the conceptual and refined Indian Style found its first home and produced its finest products in a land where a widespread and highly recondite, mystical background was combined with typically courtly



literary activity. Through Ḥasan-e Dehlavi passes a more mystical line in Indo-Persian poetry, which can be considered apart, including names like Qoṭb Jamāl-al-Dīn Aḥmad Hānsawī (d. 1260), Šāh Bu ‘Alī Qalandar (d. 1323), and the later Mas‘ud Beg (d. 1397), a former courtier of Firuzšāh Toḡloq who later devoted himself to Sufism and a life of meditation, and Moḥammad Gisuderāz (q.v.; d. 1422), the Češti holy man of Golconda, close to the Bahmanid court. On the other hand, there were numerous poets belonging to the courtly line, particularly in the heyday of the Mughal empire with the great inflow of poets from Persia. At the munificent court of Akbar (1556-1605), Ġazzālī of Mašhad (d. 1572) was the first poet-laureate (*malek al-šo‘arā’*), followed by Fayzi (q.v.; Abu’l-Fayz, also known as Fayzi Fayyāzi, 1547-95), who introduced historical themes into his lyrical works and was, like Abu’l-Qāsem Kāhi (d. 1580), an ardent follower of the *din-e elāhi* (Divine faith). Fayzi’s impeccable but cold and somewhat impersonal technique was often contrasted with the more emotional and personal style of the qasidas of ‘Orfi of Shiraz (d. 1591), as the two antithetic but co-existing components of Mughal poetry. During this age many Hindu poets writing in Persian earned great fame, such as Rājā Manohar Dās and Bhupat Rā’i Sawā’i Biḡam (Gorekar, pp. 76-77). Among the great and renowned poets of Jahāngir and Šāh Jahān’s courts, Ṭāleb of Āmol (d. 1626), Qodsi of Mašhad (d. 1656), and Abu Ṭāleb Kalim (d. 1650) deserve to be mentioned, as well as Sā‘eb of Tabriz, (d. 1677), who spent six years in India. In this lively context, the so-called Indian Style consolidated its main features into the light lyrical structure: a new kind of imagery, more free in abstractions and connections; a more open poetical language, filled with new coinages, popular expressions, and even foreign words, especially from Hindi; a wider sphere of subjects conveying moral themes, social criticism, philosophical and theological arguments (Šafi‘i-Kadkani, pp. 151-64). Close to Dārā Šokuh’s circle were Čandra Bhān Barahman (q.v.; d. 1661), the Hindu author of simple verses, far from the vogue of the Indian Style, and Sarmad (d. 1659), a Jewish convert to Islam and the author of numerous mystic quatrains. After the austere reign of Awrangzēb, who abolished the title of the poet-laureate, poetry took refuge either in an increasingly abstract world of recondite imagery, or adopted a more personal and introspective mood. The Indian Style reached its peak with Ġani Kašmiri (q.v.; d. 1661) and his highly polished gnomic poetry, with Nāšer ‘Alī Serhendi (d. 1697) composing intensely spiritual Sufi poems, as well as ‘Abd-al-Qāder Bidel (q.v.) of Patna (d. 1721), among the most celebrated authors in Persian literature, enlivening his vast poetical oeuvre of lyrical works with an original philosophy based on the combination of modern naturalistic queries and a deeply personal attitude to



mystical experiences and meditation (Bausani, 1958, pp. 59-61, 76-86; Šafi'i-Kadkani, 1988, *passim*). At the end of the emigration period, Moḥammad 'Ali Ḥazin Lāhijī (d. 1766) was the last renowned poet to leave Persia for India. With the arrival of the British and the growing need for a native response to the encounter with European culture, Indo-Persian poetry gradually left its role, which passed into the hands of Urdu literature, by that time more popularly rooted in the new social context. Mirzā Asad-Allāh Khan Ġāleb (q.v.; d. 1869), "the last classical poet of India" (Gorekar, p. 82), whose work is an "uninterrupted elegy on the end of the Mogul power in India" (Marek, p. 731), wrote both in Persian and Urdu, as did the progressive thinker Moḥammad Eqbāl (q.v.; Muhammad Iqbal, d. 1938), the incarnation of the final phase with his deeply political poems.

Narrative and didactic literature. It was in India that a new development of great significance in the history of Persian narrative poetry first appeared: Amir ẖosrow's response (*jawāb*) after about a century (1298-1301) to Neẖāmi of Ganja's *Ḳamsas* (five narrative poems), thereby establishing a vogue which lasted until the dawn of the 20th century. The five poems of Amir ẖosrow drew on Neẖāmi's themes with a high degree of refashioning. The two *ḳamsas* were often regarded as an organic pair, as the manuscript tradition shows; in many codices they are presented together, one written on the margins of the other. The two *ḳamsas* gave birth to a line of literature that was most widespread in the subcontinent, as well as in Timurid and Safavid Persia (see *Ḳān*, *passim*). Amir ẖosrow's *Hašt Behešt*, was, moreover, the first Persian book to be directly translated into a modern European language (Italian, Venice, 1557; see Piemontese, pp. 143-61). Most of the Indo-Persian poets wrote some maṭnawī besides their lyrical divāns. The didactic maṭnawī was drawn on many times, in imitation of Neẖāmi's *Maḳzan-al-asrār* and Amir ẖosrow's *Maṭla'-al-anwār*, as was the romantic maṭnawī, in the wake of *Leyli o Majnun* and *ẖosrow o Širin*. The epic of Alexander the Great (*Eskandar-nāma*) was rarely taken up (in the Mughal age by Ḥosayn Sanā'i Mašhadi, d. 1588, and Badri [Badr-al-Din] Kašmiri, q.v., as a section of his immense *Rosol-nāma*, about 1580). It was usually replaced by poems in praise of later or contemporary sovereigns, in the same way that Ferdowsi's *Šāh-nāma* often was imitated; that is, writing was directed towards the legitimization of new dynasties by praising their deeds and forging lineages connecting them to great monarchs of the past. Such works therefore fall more under the rubric of historiography than of literature.



As a result of cultural exchange on Indian soil, many an author composed Persian *maṭnawis* based on folkloristic Hindu subjects. Among the early ones, Ḥasan-e Dehlavi wrote the *Ešq-nāma*, or *Ḥekāyat-e 'ašeq-e nāgōri*, based on a tale from Rajasthan. There are numerous examples in the Mughal age: *Nal o Daman* by Fayzi, taken up from a theme in *Mahābhārata*, *Suz o godāz* by Naw'i Kabušāni (d. 1610), written for Kān-e Kānān in Borhān-pur, and *Rat padam* by 'Abd-al-Šokur Bazmi of Kanauj (d. 1662). From Sanskrit literature many collections of stories were translated into Persian. The Persian model of this genre had, moreover, already appeared in India four centuries earlier: the *Jawāme'-al-ḥekāyāt wa lawāme'-al-rewāyāt*, completed by Moḥammad 'Awfi (q.v.) at Iltut-meš's court in Delhi (1228). The *Ṭuṭi-nāma* or *Jawāher al-asmār*, of Zīā'-al-Din Naḵšabi Badā'uni (d. 1350) collected 52 cyclic stories on morality arranged on the basis of Sanskrit text. Under Akbar Persian versions of the two great Indian epics were made: the *Mahābhārata* (*Razm-nāma*), and the *Rāmāyana*. Fayzi (Fā'ezi) was probably the translator of *Kathāsaritsāgara* (The ocean from the rivers of storytelling), by the Kashmiri poet Somadeva; and the popular *Singhāsan battisi* (Thirty-two throne stories) had several versions. In the late Mughal age the didactic tradition of *maṭnawī* acquired a new philosophical and scientific dimension in Bidēl's works (*'Erfān*, *Ṭelesm-e ḥeyrat*, and *Ṭur-e ma'refat*) and later went through Gāleb's religiosity (a *maṭnawī* on the Prophet Moḥammad's prophethood), culminating finally in Eqbāl's *maṭ-nawis*, explicitly inspired by Rumi's *Maṭnawī-e ma'nawī*, as well as by European literature. His most celebrated work is *Jāvid-nāma*, a journey of initiation into the other world in the form of a *maṭnawī* interspersed with *gāzals*.

Historiography. As this topic is treated at length in its own entry (see xvi. below), only a brief sketch will be given here to delineate the relationship between historiography and literature. Indian traditional culture was lacking in the concept of historiography. This genre was introduced by the Muslim conquerors; under the patronage of the rulers who were themselves Turkic in origin, it flourished in Persian and produced in India an enormous amount of historical chronicles. As for universal histories, the *Ṭabaqāt-e nāšeri* of Menhāj al-Serāj Juzjāni (d. 1260) is one of the earliest Persian universal histories, compiled for Sultan Nāšer-al-Din Maḥmud of Delhi (1246-1266), narrating events from the Creation to the Mongol invasion. The *Tā'riḵ-e Moḥammadi* was composed by Moḥammad Behāmād Kāni for the Kālpi sultans in the 15th century. From the Mughal age it is worth mentioning the *Tā'riḵ-e ilči-e neẓāmšāhi*, written by Kur-šāh b. Qobād al-Ḥosayni, ambassador to Shah



Ṭahmāsp's court, covering the years up to 1562, and the *Tā'riḳ-e alfi*, commissioned by Akbar for the year 1000 of the Hejra (1591-92) from a group of savants, among whom 'Abd-al-Qāder Badā'uni (q.v.; d. 1615) was the most distinguished. It is in local histories that Indo-Persian historiography offered its most significant contributions, in the wake of the Ghaznavid and Ghurid traditions. A favorite Indo-Persian contribution was the chronicle in verse, probably the outcome of an extension of eulogistic qasida or of commemorative epigraphs. Comprehensive histories of Muslim India were written in this form, such as two works composed for the Deccan's Bahmanid dynasty: 'Eṣāmi's (q.v.) *Fotuḥ al-salāṭin* (1351) for the first ruler 'Alā-al-Din Ḥasan (1347-58), concerning the period from the Ghaznavids to the time of the Bahmanid defection from the Toḡloqs (middle of the 14th century), and the *Bahman-nāma* by Āḍari of Esfarā'en, for Aḥmad I Wali (1422-36). A *Šāh-nāma* was written for Moḥammad Toḡloq and is ascribed, somewhat doubtfully, to Badr Čāči. The tradition of historical chronicles in verse lasted to the early 19th century and the *Jārj-nāma* (The book of [King] George) by Mollā Firuz b. Kāus. The five historical maṭnawis of Amir Ḳosrow, by contrast, were dedicated to single figures, and they are often interspersed with lyrical verse to break the sequence of the double-rhymed verses. Besides the *Āšeqa* on 'Alā'-al-Din Ḳalji's son, and the *Toḡloq-nāma* on Giāt-al-Din Toḡloq, the *Noh sepehr* was also an original amalgam of historical, ethnological, and scientific speculations. Many epic poems dedicated to Mughal emperors, such as the *Jahāngir-nāma* of Ṭāleb of Āmol, and the *Šāhjahān-nāma* of Abu Ṭāleb Kalim, followed the same pattern.

In prose, relevant general histories of India were written in Akbar's time: the *Ṭabaqāt-e akbari* of Neẓām-al-Din Aḥmad of Herat (d. 1594), which began with the Ghaznavids, and 'Abd-al-Qāder Badā'uni's *Montaḳab al-tawāriḳ*, which was strongly critical of Akbar's religious policy. The famous *Golšan-e ebrāhimi* was composed by Ferešta for Ebrāhim 'Ādelšāh of Bijāpur in the period 1606-23. As an example of a history in prose devoted solely to a single dynasty, one could mention the important *Tā'riḳ-e firuzšāhi*, written by Zia'-al-Din Barani (q.v.; d. after 1360) for Firuzšāh III Toḡloq (1351-88), which deals with the history of the Sultanate from 1265 to 1357. Following the author's death, it was completed by the *Fotuḥāt-e firuzšāhi* of Šams-e Šerāj 'Afif, devoted entirely to Firuz's reign. Abu'l-Faẓl 'Allā-mi (q.v.; d. 1602), Fayzi's (Fā'ezi) brother and intimate friend and supporter of Akbar, wrote two important historical works, the *Akbar-nāma* on his emperor's life and reign and the *Ā'in-e akbari*, on the socio-economical and institutional situation of the empire. After Mir Ġolām-



‘Ali Āzād’s numerous works (d. 1786), the last relevant historical text is usually considered to be the *Siar al-mota’kkerin* of Ġolām-Ḥosayn Kān Ṭabāṭabā’i, covering the period from Awrangzēb’s death to 1781. A particular sub-genre in Indo-Persian historiography is that of autobiography, to which belong the memoirs of Bābor (written in Turki but translated soon afterwards into Persian by Kān-e Kānān), and that of Jahāngir. Also to this genre one may ascribe some original philosophical, naturalistic, or literary treatises filled with notes and accounts on the authors’ lives, such as Čandra Bhān Barahman’s *Čahār čaman*, or ‘Abd-al-Qāder Bidel’s *Čahār ‘onşor*. Many actual autobiographies were composed between the 18th and 19th centuries, including the *Taḍkerat al-aḥwāl* of Ḥazin Lāhijī (q.v.; 1742). As to the genre of *taḍkera* dealing with brief biographies of poets with selections from their poems, the first extant example comes from India: ‘Awfi’s *Lobāb al-albāb*, composed (1220) at Uččh at the court of Nāşer-al-Din Qabāja, for his vizier, ‘Ayn-al-Molk. There was subsequently a great proliferation of the genre in all regions where Persian was the main literary language. Several *taḍkeras* were composed in India especially after the beginning of the decline of the role of Persian poetry in the 18th century. While the heart of Indo-Muslim literary production gradually shifted from Persian to Urdu, scholars took it upon themselves to preserve a historical record of a literary tradition on the wane. A Hindu author, Lakşmi Narayān Şafiq (d. 1745), composed two important biographical anthologies of poets: *Gol-e ra’nā*, dealing with the poets of Indian origin writing in Persian, and *Şām-e ġaribān*, about poets of Persian origin who had settled in India.

Belles-Lettres. Critical analysis of the Persian language and literary styles in India began early, and its development there was unequalled. As an important branch of literary as well as administrative style, epistolography also flourished. Amir Kōsrow’s *E’jāz-e kōsravi* is a masterpiece in this genre, and can be described as a wide-ranging treatise on the rhetorics of prose literature. Collections of letters by eminent figures were very common, for example the *Riāz al-enşā* by the Bahmanid minister Maḥmud Gāvān. With the institution of the Mughal chancellery, Indo-Persian epistolography achieved a particularly high status, at the crossroads of Persian, Turkish, and Indian administrative traditions (Mohiuddin, *passim*). The *Badi’ al-enşā* of Maulānā Yusofi, munshi (*monşī*) to the emperor Homāyun, became very popular, and a noteworthy collection of documents redacted for Akbar by the historian Abu’l-Faẓl was published by his nephew as *Mokātabāt-e ‘allāmi* (1606). In later Mughal times, when Persian emigration was over, epistolography became an almost



exclusive prerogative of the Hindu eclectic community of the Kāyasthas (Ahmad, 1969, p. 87). However, the greatest legacy of India in the field of linguistic inquiry into Persian was the production of dictionaries. This commendable activity was already flourishing in peripheral regions during the 15th century. At that time the *ʿAdāt al-fożalāʾ* (1419), which arranged Persian words in alphabetical order with sentences quoted from earlier poets, was compiled by Badr-al-Din Moḥammad of Delhi for the sovereigns of Dhār, and the more wide-ranging *Šaraf-nāma-ye ebrāhimi* (1448) was redacted by Ebrāhimi Qawām Fāruqi for the king of Bengala, Bārbakšāh. Increasing Hindu interest in Persian under the Lodi reign led to the realization of some important new dictionaries. The *Toḥfat al-saʿadat* (or *Farhang-e sekandari*), a work of Ziaʾ-al-Din Moḥammad, registered many compounds for the first time (1510). The *Muʾayyed al-fożalāʾ* (1519), a work by Šeyḵ Moḥammad b. Šeyḵ Lād of Dehli, was divided according to the derivation of words from Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. From the Mughal era, the *Farhang-e jahāngiri*, a benchmark in this genre, had actually been commissioned by Akbar from Jamāl-al-Din Ḥosayn Inju but was completed only in 1612. By the middle of the 17th century the *Borhān-e qāṭeʾ* (q.v.) of Moḥammad Ḥosayn b. Ḳalaf of Tabriz, dedicated to ʿAbd-Allāh Qoṭbšāh of Golconda, appeared, as did the *Farhang-e rašidi*, of ʿAbd-al-Rašid Tattavi, which “constitutes the first essay of a critical nature in Persian philology” (Tauer, p. 431). In the 18th century, the increasingly complicated poetical style made new lexicographic works necessary, like Monši Moḥammad Bādšāh’s *Farhang-e ānandrāj*, and the enormous work, Tek Čand Bahār’s *Bahār-e ʿajam*.

Religious literature. Indo-Persian originality in the religious literary field was due to the convergence of two different factors. On the one hand India had been a favorite destination of Muslim Sufis and missionaries from early times, with some important brotherhoods taking root there. On the other, the Muslim conquerors constantly had to face different religious identities: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, as well as Christianity and Zoroastrianism. So, although the traditional orthodox (Sunnite or Shiʿite) theological literature was produced there, it is in the mystical and syncretistic literature that India made its greatest contribution to religious thought and literature. The most ancient Persian treatise on Sufi doctrine was written on Indian soil, the *Kašf al-maḥjub* by Hojviri (q.v.; popularly known in India as Dātā Ganjbaḳš), who was born in Ġazni but settled and died in Lahore (ca. 1071). The Sufi literature in India was usually more pragmatic than theoretical in substance: the *malʿuzāt* (collected sayings of the saints) compiled by Ḥasan-e Dehlavi (*fawāʿed al-fuʿād*); the



maktubāt (letters of guidance on mystical doctrines and practices); and the numerous hagiographical lives of Sufi masters, particularly from Moḥammad Toḡloq's reign onwards. Court intellectuals were also involved in these literary undertakings, such as Sekandar Lodi's poet Jalāl Kān Jamālī (d. 1536), author of the collection *Siar al-āre-fin*, which started with Mu'in-al-Din Češti and ended with his spiritual teacher, Samā'-al-Din Kambuh. At Mughal courts some important Sanskrit texts were translated into Persian, such as the *Yoga Vāsiṣṭha* and the *Bhagavadgītā* (by Abu'l-Faẓl). Fifty chapters from the *Upaniṣad* texts were translated by Dārā Šokuh, with the title *Sirr-e Akbar* (The greatest secret or The secret of Akbar). Aiming at the unification of Islam and Hinduism, Dārā left numerous writings on Sufi subjects, from the *Ḥasanāt al-ārefīn*, belonging to the *malfuzāt* line, to the *Safīnat al-awliyā'* and the *Sakinat al-awliyā'*, basically collections of hagiographies. His most important book is the *Majma'al-baḥrayn*, a comparative essay that strives to find points of contact between Hinduism and Islam. Of later theologians, the works of the Naqšbandi leader Aḥmad Serhendi (d. 1624), and those of the reformer Šāh Wali-Allāh of Dehli (d. 1762), author of the most celebrated Persian translation of the Qur'ān, were in different ways original and very influential also out of India.

Sciences. It was particularly in India that Persian language became widely used as a means of scientific transmission—a role that in the Muslim world was traditionally given to Arabic. According to a first partial survey of the manuscripts concerning scientific issues conserved in the Indian libraries, 1,671 works are in Persian, whereas 1,219 are in Arabic. Between the 16th and 18th centuries, India witnessed a renaissance of scientific studies, by that time declining elsewhere in the Muslim world. More than innovative research, these studies were rather the reorganization of the existing Muslim scientific heritage, in part compared with the contribution of the Hindu tradition. A main result was the production of important Sanskrit-Persian technical dictionaries (Casari and Speziale, 2001). For mathematics, apart from some relevant commentary on classic texts, the most significant effort is represented by the translations of *Lilāvāti* (1587, on arithmetic, by Fā'eẓi) and *Bijagaṇita* (1635, on algebra, by 'Aṭā'-Allāh Rašidi), both Sanskrit works by Bhāskara (12th century). For astronomy, more important than a handful of translations from Sanskrit was the *zij* literature. The oldest Indo-Persian *zij* (*Zij-e nāṣeri* written for Sultan Nāṣer-al-Din Maḥmud, 1246-1265) was even earlier than the renowned *Zij-e ilkāni* compiled by Naṣir-al-Din Ṭusi's group of scholars (1271). However the most famous Indian *zij* was the later *Zij-e moḥammad-šāhi* (1728),



drafted under the guidance of Amber's Maharaja Jay Singh, and widely diffused in Central Asia. In medicine too a remarkable amount of literature in Persian was produced. The first known text of the so-called *yunāni* (Greek) medicine was the Persian translation of Biruni's pharmacopoeia *Kitāb al-ṣaydana*, by Abu Bakr 'Oṭman of Kašān under Iltutmeš. The medical texts in verses of Yusof b. Moḥammad, working under Bābur and Homā-yun, were well known. The greatest development was reached under Šāh Jahān. The *Ṭebb-e dārā-šokuhi*, the last important medical encyclopedia realized in the Islamic world, was dedicated to the king's son by the author, Nur-al-Din Moḥammad of Shiraz. Great systematic treatises were also later written by the famous doctor Akbar Arzāni (*Ṭebb-e akbari*, 1700).

The knowledge and analysis of Indo-Persian literature is still severely limited by the difficulties of access to the enormous amount of manuscripts conserved in the Indian libraries. Moreover, only a relatively small number of studies have been devoted to Indo-Persian literary topics, particularly when compared to the magnitude of the literature itself. However, the originality and importance of Indian contribution to the history of Persian literature, which is to be seen in almost every branch of literary production, deserves further and more thorough researches.

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