Encyclopædia Iranica

IRAN VIII. PERSIAN LITERATURE (2) CLASSICAL
*Article by* **Charles-Henri de Fouchécour**

*Published:* December 15, 2006
*Last Updated:* May 14, 2018

# IRAN VIII. PERSIAN LITERATURE (2) CLASSICAL

**IRAN viii**

(2) Classical Persian Literature

INTRODUCTION

Reviewing the origins of a specific literary history helps us find our bearings and provides us with reference points to chart its subsequent developments. This approach will be adopted here in our overview of classical Persian literature, a daunting task in itself given the range and abundance of the material on the one hand, and the need for brevity and conciseness in a survey on the other. In our study of the development of this literature over ten centuries, we will pay special attention to the early formation and origins of different literary genres in Persian works, even though the very notion of literary genres is somewhat arbitrary and a subject of continuing debate and shifting delineation (Fowler; Perkins). Nevertheless the approach is suitable for an overview, for it makes it possible to discuss, however briefly, broader themes and underlying aesthetic assumptions, and to venture beyond a mere recital of dates, titles, and short biographies of major figures of Persian literature.

Another major factor in a literary survey is the diachronic dimension: tracing literary developments through succeeding generations and centuries. Persian

literature lends itself well to this approach, since historical events certainly influenced literary history: the tenth century in Persian literature is not the eleventh, anymore than the eleventh is the twelfth, and so on. The fourteenth century serves as a transitional bridge between the previous and the subsequent periods: Mongol and Timurid, followed then by the Safavids in Persia and the Mughals in India. Given the importance of local courts and their patronage in sustaining poets and writers, it was inevitable that literature would be greatly influenced by schools of thought in different provinces of the Iranian world.

In the context of this article, the term literature is used to refer to the written word skillfully and imaginatively crafted. Some writings are therefore excluded. On the other hand, one of the salient features of classical Persian literature is the way it incorporates well-wrought and eloquent writings by historians and spiritual figures. The history of the Mongols by ʿAṭā-malek Joveyni, for example, is not only the scrupulous work of a great historian but is also written by an eminent man of letters, creating a masterly balance by juxtaposing his fine prose with judiciously chosen lines from poets of the past, and most notably Ferdowsi, to buttress his own historical observations and record the dramatic happenings of his lifetime against a backdrop of cosmic events and heroic archetypes of Iranian traditional history echoing the same predicament (Joveyni, tr., II, pp. 402-6; Fitzherbert, pp. 66-71). Another and earlier example, from the 11th century, is the famous *Tāriḵ-e masʿudi* by Abu'l-Fażl Moḥammad Bayhaqi (q.v.; d. 1077). This is the only extant part of a general history in thirty volumes; it narrates the events of the reign of the second Ghaznavid ruler, with many retrospective glances into past reigns and previous eras. Once again an admirable balance is maintained between the recital of events and inclusion of historical exempla, and the personal rumination of a thoughtful observer and fine stylist. Examining these writings from a literary perspective, and studying their use of the past heritage and shared cultural memory, would be highly instructive.

Regarding the chronological span of Classical Persian literature, we are referring here to the aesthetic and cultural concerns expressed in Persian between the ninth century, the advent of papermaking in Samarqand, and the mid-nineteenth century, when the first printing presses went into operation in Tabriz. Each of these events, papermaking and the printing press, had a radical impact on the literary milieu and redefined the relationship between narrators and their audience, and writers and readers (Bloom; Chaytor). The

classical period was a favorable time for princely patronage and the royal courts were often receptive to the arrival of great spiritual figures and free thinkers alike. A man of letters in this period was usually familiar with the arts and sciences of his time and revered for his learning. In the 12th century, for example, Ḵāqāni was a great *poeta doctus* (Beelaert, p. 3), honored both as *ḥakim* (sage) and *šāʿer* (poet).

*Persian between Arabic and Turkish.* Modern Persian, which is ultimately derived from Old Iranian (Lazard, 2003, pp. 95-102), belongs to the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European languages. Like Kurdish or Pashto, its grammar and lexicon stem from this linguistic family. Persian vocabulary is also characterized by a large input of loanwords from Arabic. The script is the other major element borrowed and adapted from Arabic, with calligraphy (q.v.) developing into one of the finest branches of Islamic arts. It is just as essential to the composition of poetry, and closely bound with Persian prosody and poetic imagery (Schimmel, 1992, pp. 227-44). The Iranians also immersed themselves in Muslim culture through the medium of Arabic. Their most eminent men of letters and the secretarial classes at court were well versed in Arabic as well as Persian. Bilingualism among the cultural elite was a notable feature of the era.

Far from bringing to an end the use of the Persian language, both spoken and written, in Persia or elsewhere, the successful invasion of Iran by the Arab armies in the seventh century merely heralded a process of evolution (Lazard, *Camb. Hist. Iran* IV, pp. 595-632). It was by this long process of evolution that Middle Persian, the language of the Sasanian court (ca. 225-651), was transformed into Persian (or more precisely “Neo-Persian,” i.e., the language of such early literary milestones as Ferdowsi’s *Šāh-nāma* and Balʿami’s translation and adaptation of Ṭabari’s *History*, thus explicitly acknowledging later developments and most notably the gradual development of the language into Modern Persian). The Middle Persian language itself survived among communities of Zoroastrians in Persia in the first three centuries after the rise of Islam, and significant religious texts in Middle Persian are extant from this period (Bailey; Tafazzoli). But it is in Classical Persian poetry, which relies so much on tradition and cultural memory, that the strong connections with the pre-Islamic past are displayed in sundry ways: in its meter (although adjusted to Arabic), as well as its vocabulary and major themes (Elwell-Sutton, 1976, pp. 168-222). It is through a diachronic study of Classical Persian poetry that we can study the import of loanwords and syntactical structures from Arabic.

Moreover, as Arabic vocabulary has itself evolved substantially through time, it is important to bear in mind the changes in usage and the different semantic associations of the same words when used in Persian and Arabic in different historical periods.

Another factor in the evolution of Middle Persian to Persian was the geographical spread of this language in the wake of the Arab conquest. Following the path of the Arab invasion, Persian spread from its own heartlands to Central Asia (Transoxania). For their conquests, the Arabs enlisted indigenous peoples in their armies. These local populations did not speak a standardized Persian and in many cases did not even use Persian among themselves. Nevertheless, the Persian of the time served as a *lingua franca* for these enlisted men. They were to spread this new version in the conquered provinces, from Azarbaijan to Central Asia, to the detriment of other Iranian languages or other dialects of Persian. Such was the case of Sogdian, a language belonging to an age-old culture that was largely engulfed by Persian. Thus Persian became, in due course, the court language of the first semi-independent Muslim principalities, most notably those founded in the Greater Khorasan.

With the appearance of translations and commentaries on the Qurʾan in Persian (Lazard, 1963, 1995), Persian began to exhibit its capacity as a malleable language for conveying religious ideas and spiritual meditations along with its other already well-established function as a medium for administrative and cultural affairs. The geographic progress of the language was now from a new direction, from Bukhara to Tabriz, and from Ghazni to Shiraz. For a while the province of Fārs in southern Persia preserved many of the distinct traits of Middle Persian, whereas Central Asia, the first site of the new culture inspired by Islam, was at the origin of ten centuries of scientific and literary Persian. But throughout the land, a significant part of pre-Islamic Iranian culture was preserved and this proved to be a highly significant phenomenon in the general history and culture of the Muslim world (Yarshater, 1998).

In the linguistic sphere, Persian transmitted to the Muslim world a substantial collection of Iranian art, tales, fables, myths as well as history, moral instruction, political advice, and religious treatises derived ultimately from the pre-Islamic era. The great literary achievements of the Abbasid age and the remarkable effervescence of Muslim spirituality owe much to the Iranian contribution, made through the medium of the Arabic language. Ṭabari (b.

Āmol, 839; d. Baghdad, 923) in his two monumental works, *History* and *Tafsir* (Commentary on the Qurʾan), or the great anthologist and scholar from Nishapur, Abu Manṣur Ṯaʿālebi (961-1038), in his prolific writings on literature and mores and manners, are eloquent representatives of this deeply entrenched Persian presence.

From the 9th century, Persian experienced an expansion from an opposite direction, this time at the hands of the Turks. After the end of the Omayyad period, high-ranked Turks in close proximity to the caliphs were a constant feature of the political and military structure of the caliphate. In the northeastern provinces of Persia, the system of *ḡolām*s (see BARDA AND BARDADĀRI iii) favored the enrollment of Turks in Muslim armies. They converted to Islam and adopted Persian and gained entry into the military hierarchy. Conquerors of a state that in one century extended from Baghdad to Anatolia and to the Indus, the Turks in turn were won over by Persian culture (Riāḥi, 1990), while maintaining control of their new states for centuries. After them, Mongol and Mughal patrons preserved the same tradition and exploited the same legacy.

If Tamerlane gathered an elite coterie of scientists, artists and men of letters in Samarqand by force and coercion, his successors were astute enough through their munificent patronage to make Herat of the fifteenth century an unparalleled center of the Persian literary world (Subtelny, 1984, 1986). The widespread popularity and influence of the voluminous poetry of ʿAbd- al-Raḥmān Jāmi (1414-92), spreading from Herat to India and into the Near East is a remarkable illustration of this cultural propagation. Istanbul to this day remains a treasure trove for Persian manuscripts (Riāḥi, 1990). Nestling between two seas and a gulf, the Iranian plateau provided an ideal location for the exchange of cultures: its own culture extending west towards the Mesopotamian rivers and east, to the Oxus (Amu Darya), and the Indus.

## THE BEGINNINGS OF PERSIAN POETRY

The distinction between poetry and prose has always been quite deliberate in Persian literature, with poetry given the pride of place. It distinguished itself clearly from prose not only in terms of rhyme and rhythm, but also in the artful play between explicit meaning or meanings and implicit nuances.

At the fountainhead of Persian literary history stands the figure of Rudaki (860-940) as an archpoet. The extant works of this poet at the court of the

Samanids in Bukhara contain the first masterpieces of Persian poetry (Nafisi, 1930-40). By its exemplary quality, this poetic corpus served as a model for subsequent generations. Rudaki, it seems, was the first to combine roles that were still distinguishable entities in the 9th century royal court: musician, poet and his declaimer/reciter, and copyist.

In the 12th century an anthologist of considerable stature, Neẓāmi ʿArużi, gives the following account of Ferdowsi: "When Firdawsí had completed the *Sháhnáma*, it was transcribed by 'Alí Daylam and recited by Abú Dulaf . . . So 'Alí Daylam transcribed the *Sháhnáma* in seven volumes, and Firdawsí, taking with him Abú Dulaf, set forth for Ghazna" (*Chahár Maqála* [The Four Discourses], tr. E. G. Browne, pp. 79-80). This shows how a great poet performed his epic art at the beginning of the 11th century. As pointed out above, a division of labor was still at work: Poet, copyist, and declaimer/narrator were three different entities. Medieval troubadours and itinerant minstrels in the West followed similar patterns.

Arabic poetry originated before the advent of Islam (5th-6th centuries) and has been the subject of much debate and analysis from the first centuries after the rise of Islam. The historic precedents of Persian poetry, however, are not similar or comparable. The Parthian *gōsān*s (q.v.) of the pre-Islamic era were minstrels who regularly appeared at ceremonial occasions and feasts, told epic tales, and recited lyrical poetry (Boyce, 1957, pp. 10-45). Their legacy provided material and inspiration for later works of classical Persian literature (*Vis o Rāmin*). Some Zoroastrian and Buddhist texts have also survived from the early days of Persian literature (Bailey; Boyce, 1968; Tafazzoli; Melikian-Chirvani, 1974).

*Persian poetry and aesthetics.* A Persian poem can be regarded as an objet d'art in itself: crafted to please the eye as well as the ear. But behind the art there are rules and techniques that already appear well-established in the works of Rudaki. However, allusions made by Šams-e Qeys (13th century) suggest that there was a period of less sure-footed literary attempts before the advent of this accomplished poet. At first, this hesitation was of a practical nature; theory was to follow. For example, Rādu-yāni's *Tarjomān al-balāġa*, dating back to the 11th century, is mostly an inventory of poetic figures and imagery.

In practice, in terms of rhythm, one shifted from pre-Islamic poetry relying on alternating stresses, periodically returning to the *ictus* (stress on a syllable in a line of verse), to a poetry based on the variation of long and short syllables, as

in Arabic poetry. We are better able to reconstitute these moments of transition and hesitation, in which the ancient rhythms were re-interpreted as new rhythms, and principles of Arabic rhyme prevailed once its alphabet was adopted (Lazard, 2002). In the poems of Rudaki, the new technique appears firmly ensconced. Assured and clear and yet flexible from this early period, it was only necessary to refine it slightly over the course of time. It was not until the 20th century that this traditional prosody was called into question. By favoring different schools of poetry, the patronage of princes contributed to the establishment of longstanding traditions, e.g., Khorasani, ʿErāqi, Azarbaijani, and Hendi (Indian) to name the most significant.

Court poets ever since Rudaki, or poets reciting their verses on religious occasions or in sufi gatherings since at least the time of Abu Saʿid Abi'l-Ḵayr (q.v.) in early 11th century, had to present themselves before an audience and prove their worth. The listeners were able to judge the poet's art and technique instantly, and they especially appreciated his ability to improvise in public. Improvisation (*badiha-sarāʾi*, q.v.) could spell immediate recognition and advancement for a great poet such as Farroḵi (q.v.). Art, technique, and improvisation were venues through which the poet encountered the expectations of his audience and, drawing on his own erudition to exert his authority, ventured to play a part in reshaping the prevailing poetic traditions.

*Technical elements and aspects of Persian poetry.* The minimal unit of a Persian poem is a line of verse formed in two parts, each containing the same number of syllables and set to the same rhythm. Indebted to Arabic poetry, this distich form is called a *bayt*, with the long and short syllables arranged according to codified schemes. The principles of these schemes are borrowed from Arabic, though it must also be borne in mind that the great Persian meters are not very common in Arabic and are most likely adapted from ancient Persian stress systems. Such is the case of the quatrain, the *robāʿi*, so typical of Persian and known before Islam (Elwell-Sutton, *Camb. Hist. Iran* IV, pp. 633-57). It is also the case for the *motaqāreb*, a reinterpretation of a stressed rhythm found in Middle Persian, and the meter used for many famous long narrative poems in Persian, including Ferdowsi's *Šāh-nāma*. The specialized use of this meter and some others is in itself a clear indication of the way literary genres existed and were formally distinguished from each other through the use of specific meters. Ultimately, however, the beauty of a Persian poem also lies in its public recitation and oral performance (a relatively new and important field of research), where many other factors intervene. In turn, rhyme is essential

for the poetic effect of a Persian poem. It was the imitation of Arabic poetry that let to its widespread use. A simple voiced refrain at first, it soon became more complex and codified.

In a Persian poem, the arrangement of rhymes defines its form. A form is considered classical when both parts of the first *bayt* rhyme. The most common and simple poem consists of two bayts, the quatrain, whose second bayt must rhyme with the first bayt (a-a-b-a). Normally the first bayt (or distich) of the entire poem carries the rhyme, its two hemistiches rhyming with each other. The *maṯnawi* is a poem with a special meter with each hemistich rhyming with its counterpart and with the rhyme changing with each line. It is thus free from the constraints of mono-rhyme and malleable enough to be used in long poems. On the contrary, in the ghazal, also in a special meter, all the bayts rhyme, and ghazals are, in contrast to maṯnawis, relatively short. The *qaṣida*, an older and more developed form than the ghazal, resembles the latter in form and is also in mono-rhyme but can vary greatly in length and usually contains three distinct thematic parts (see The Qasida, below). It should be noted that the qaṣida, the ghazal, and the quatrain were the three forms on which Persian medieval manuals dealing with rhetoric, prosody and poetic imagery (and often echoing Arabic manuals) concentrated, and quotations from them were the main focus of analysis, giving them a privileged position vis-à-vis other important forms, most notably that of the maṯnawi and its varied subject matter, which received relatively less attention in the earlier works on poetry.

*Between form and meaning: poetic figures and genres.* For Rāduyāni in the 11th century, and Rašid-al-Din Waṭwāṭ (d. 1182) in the 12th, the first writers of treatises on Persian poetry (see *ḤADĀʾEQ AL-SEḤR*), meter and rhyme were such all-embracing characteristics of Persian poetry that they did not think it necessary to dwell upon them. Their manuals (Waṭwāṭ drew mainly on Rāduyāni) deal with important rhetorical figures of Persian poetry and show signs of indebtedness to earlier Arabic treatises concerned with Arabic poetry. But although the terminology is derived from Arabic, the selection itself and the numerous Persian examples bear witness to a well-established and original practice. Šams-e Qeys (13th century) was familiar with the works of his predecessors and built upon them. Like them, his point of departure was the practice of Persian poets. His attempt at classification is so amply documented with citations that his treatise can also be regarded as a valuable anthology of poetry. The finest work in this genre was written in the 15th

century by Ḥosayn Wāʿeẓ-e Kāšefi, friend and disciple of Jāmi, a man held in very high esteem in the Timurid court at Herat (Simidchieva, pp. 509-30).

For Kāšefi and the tradition before him, the perfection of a poem lies in the notion of *tafwif*; the word refers to the embroidering of a tapestry (Šams-e Qeys, pp. 329-35; Kāšefi, pp. 84-85). The poet should be able to weave seamlessly and bring together (as the word tafwif suggests) all the required elements in a poem, rhyme, rhythm, words, expression, and meaning, in such a manner that they form a unified entity. In short, in its harmonious structure a poem should resemble a beautiful tapestry. To Šams-e Qeys' provisions, Kāšefi adds the further stipulation that a poem can be said to be perfect if it is encrusted with precious stones (the literary figure of *tarṣiʿ*), implying that the words of the poem should be in total harmony in terms of rhyme and their final letters. This literary figure would be at its most perfect if the words contained the same letters and vowels, all the while differing in meaning (the poetical figure *tajnis-e tāmm*; Kāšefi, p. 84). In total, ninety-five rhetorical figures are there to be used on an accomplished poet's palette. In the inventory of elements most valued by our theoreticians, we find, in order of priority in their treatises: letters, then words followed by phrases, and finally the poem viewed as a whole. The other major consideration is the script itself. The crucial role of the calligraphy, including the shape of the letters, is evident throughout the manuals of poetry and much discussed.

The question of thematic genres in Persian poetry requires further study, given the wealth of the material and the frequent references in traditional manuals and anthologies. Waṭwāṭ and Kāšefi, for example, refer to "an all-enveloping discourse" (*kalām-e jāmeʿ*), a didactic summing up of the vicissitudes of life, "a poem comprised of exhortations, advice, complaint against fate and the tide of events, and a recital of remarkable happenings in different times" (Kāšefi, p. 146). Before him, Waṭwāṭ had praised Masʿud-e Saʿd-e Salmān for the way he had, in his poems from prison (*ḥabsiyāt*), excelled at *kalām-e jāmeʿ*, a fusion of complaint and advice (Waṭwāṭ, pp. 81-82). One still speaks of *bahāriya* (description of spring), *faḵriya* (poems of heroic boasting), *šakwāʾiya* (lament of separation from the beloved), *marṯiya* (funereal ode). The poet is judged by the way he handles a genre in a given set of circumstances; and his poetic craft is a social phenomenon: an oral form put into writing, a text to be declaimed in a culture in which the memory and the ear, as well as the eye nourished by the art of calligraphy, all play their parts.

*Persian prose.* Remnants of early prose have survived, mostly religious, including fragments of Manichean texts in Persian dating from the 10th century. The most interesting examples of this ancient prose are the Judeo-Persian texts, Persian texts using the Hebrew alphabet (Moreen). Inscriptions on tombs in Judeo-Persian date from 752, while a dated commercial letter survives, perhaps from the 8th century (Henning, 1958; Moreen, p. 22, note 2). Fragments of translations of the Pentateuch in Persian are also quite ancient (Lazard, 1968; Boyce, 1968).

Persian literary prose seems to have been born in the 10th century at the court of the Samanids (819-999) in Bukhara. Persian served as the language providing access to Islamic culture: commentaries on the Qurʾan, jurisprudence, theology, ethics, science, and the already existing works of mystical spirituality. Ever since the end of the 10th century, Persian prose has proved its potential of being capable of producing works of great range and quality in a highly original manner to suit different subjects, including history, geography, mathematics, astrology/astronomy, medicine, and the natural sciences. Written Persian, as pointed above, made its literary debut in northeastern Persia, Khorasan, and Central Asia. At first it remained close to the spoken language, and one notices local vernacular expressions in the first Persian commentaries on the Qurʾan that catered to the believers in the region. This is the original language for Persian literature as a whole. The major genres—early popular fiction, mystical writings, stories and fables, hagiographies, regional histories, historical chronicles, and philosophic and scientific treatises—were inaugurated in this language. At the same time, and similar in its role to that of Latin in the West, Arabic maintained its status as the major cultural language of reference in religious and scientific matters, while Persian prose was highly instrumental in conveying knowledge from these fields to the public at large.

However, in terms of both the writers and the sources that they used or were inspired by, the influence of Persian culture on literary Arabic prose needs to be briefly mentioned and illustrated by recalling the names and achievements of early writers in Arabic who were of Persian descent and greatly indebted to their heritage: ʿAbd-al-Ḥamid b. Yaḥyā (q.v.; d. 750), master of the epistolary genre; Ebn al-Moqaffaʿ (q.v.; d. 756), initiator of Arabic prose as a literary form in its own right; and Sahl b. Hārun (d. 830), whose eloquent prose and adaptations of fables into Arabic were much savored by his contemporaries. Moreover, many of the greatest historiographers writing in Arabic were of

Persian descent. As already mentioned, in the case of Ṭabari, perhaps the most significant among them, a richly textured Persian version was soon produced at the Samanid court.

*Development of poetry and prose.* The historical evolution of Persian poetry was a slow and gradual process. Its forms and themes were, as we have seen, established early on, and most of the subsequent improvisations and poetical innovations were conceived as adjustments and elaborations and not as attempts at overall reconstruction and radical change. It flourished through refinement, nourishing and invigorating its poetic imagery by drawing on the sciences and philosophic and religious ideas current at the time. The major schools or literary movements belonged to, and were informed by, circles patronized by the royal courts, and when the patronage of the poetry gradually became more diffused and it gained a wider audience among the urban and religious classes, it still retained much of its earlier courtly traits.

Persian prose evolved more freely. The sensibility of writers to their social matrix led to a greater variety in styles and subjects treated. The influence of Arabic literature and the vicissitudes of history proved crucial. The patronage of the first Iranian Muslim principalities and kingdoms (Bosworth, 1969; Frye, l975) particularly the Samanids, followed by the Ghaznavids and the Saljuqs, enabled Persian prose to find its own particular identity and characteristics. In other words, the transition between a pre-Islamic past, and a present adapted to new cultural expectations, was well negotiated. Subsequently, the endeavor by the Saljuq Turks to conform to the orthodoxy in Baghdad in order to dominate the Muslim world in the east brought about a distinct change in Persian style. From the 12th century, Persian prose felt the impact of a rapidly spreading Arabic, which in turn contributed to a transformation from the ‘Khorasani’ style in the northeast to an ‘Erāqi’ style in the west (Maḥjub). The impact of Arabic belles-lettres is palpable in specimens of Persian prose. For example, the Persian translation of *Kalila wa Dimna* by Naṣr-Allāh Monši is replete with apposite allusions and quotations from Arabic, exhibiting and disseminating a prodigious range of lexical knowledge.

In the latter part of the 13th century, the entire Iranian world went through the upheavals of the Mongol invasion. A substantial number of literati were able to seek refuge to the west in Anatolia and to the east in India, thus heralding the subsequent flowering of Persian literature in these lands. The westward migration of the family of Jalāl-al-Din Rumi **(**1207-73),originally from Balk̲, is an example. But Fārs, the perennial Persia, was spared, and the

case of Rumi's contemporary, Saʿdi of Shiraz (1213-1292), offered a different perspective. In his prosimetrical masterpiece, the *Golestān* (q.v.), Saʿdi initiated a return to clarity and precision in syntax, while maintaining a poise of erudite sophistication, creating a movement and many imitators in the process. For their part, ever since 1256 when they entered Persian territory, the Mongol overlords were shrewd enough to bring into their service eminent men of letters and thinkers, chosen especially for their specialization in such fields as theology, philosophy, and local and universal history. The great historian of the Mongols, Joveyni (cited earlier), and the great polymath of his century, Naṣir-al-Din Ṭusi (1201-74), both hail from this period. Both wrote in a literary style of the highest caliber. In the poetry of Hafez of Shiraz in the 14th century (b. ca. 1325-d. ca. 1390), lyrical Persian poetry reached its apogee. The successors to Tamerlane, the Timurids of Herat, reaped the fruit of poetry and prose that had by then blossomed into full maturity, particularly in Jāmi's substantial corpus. From the following centuries, a great deal of Persian poetry and historical writing survives both from Persia under the Safavids (16th–18th centuries) and from India under the Mughal rulers. In Persia, literary achievements began to stagnate, though some new developments can be discerned with the expansion of the Shiʿa faith. In India, a number of Persian poets were well received by wealthy patrons, and the poetry produced in 'the Indian Style' (*sabk-e hendi*), with its subtle imagery and languorously sensual diction, found a ready market. In turn, and partly as a reaction, a neo-classical literary movement advocating a return to earlier aesthetic norms (*bāzgašt-e adabi*, q.v.) appeared in Persia itself from the mid-18th century; it in turn was gradually subsumed into the modern period, culminating in the emergence of modern Persian literature with its close affinities with literary developments in the West.

## LYRICAL PERSIAN POETRY

The *qaṣida* and *ghazal* (see also ealier sections) take pride of place in Persian lyrical texts. They contain, on the one hand, panegyrics, and on the other, courtly love songs (*chansons courtoises*) and mystical lyrics: in essence two different registers of love songs. The panegyric may include advice, and thus concern itself with morality and politics; or it may be about nature, festivals, or historical events. The registers of love traditionally belong to richer and more codified literary genres. These two forms of writing, as well as the quatrain (*robāʿi*), are found in the oldest texts that have come down to us. Other forms of poetry do exist, but these are secondary and belong to later

periods. There is of course much more to be said about Persian lyrical poetry, which has come down to us in manuscripts, and its origins, including its relationship and affinities with the rich tradition of oral poetry.

*The Qaṣida.* The aim of a writer of a qaṣida (as implied by its name) is to sing the praises of an individual and often, in return, to reap a reward. The poet draws on and enhances the patron's historical reputation. Usually a poem of some twenty to sixty lines in mono-rhyme, the qaṣida has a tripartite structure. The first part, the *nasib*, a kind of *captatio benevolentiae*, evokes the occasion for the poem: a festival, especially of spring, a victory, or even a natural or communal tragedy such as an earthquake or the sack of a city. The central section is an ode to a prince or some other figure of secular or religious eminence. Within the lyrical outpourings, there are allusions, often biographical and political, which need to be deciphered (Meisami, 1990, pp. 31-44). In the last part, the poet points to the great merits of his poem, perhaps noting his own superiority over rival poets, and hints at what might be a fitting reward for his poetic product. The lines at the very beginning and end of the poem, as well as the verses linking the different sections, usually receive special attention and are crafted with special care.

The qaṣida already appears in a fully-fledged form in the 9th century in the extant works of Rudaki. Although the genre owes much to its Arabic prototype, the phenomenon of courtly praise–poems is well attested in the pre-Islamic court of the Sasanians. Rudaki and his Samanid panegyrics were followed by the circle of poets at the courts of the Ghaznavids and Saljuqs, as well as smaller circles formed around princes, and atābaks (q.v.) and local governors up to the Qajar period and the end of the 19th century. Among the most significant panegyrists of the 11th century, one may cite ʿOnṣori of Balḵ (d. 1039), Farroḵi of Sistān, Manučehri of Dāmḡān (d. 1040), and Moʿezzi of Nishapur (d. before 1127). Away from these royal courts, one can mention Nāṣer-e Ḵosrow (d. 1072), the eminent Ismāʿili figure, famous for his travelogue, as well as his divan of poetry, containing panegyric odes with a strong note of religious asceticism and piety.

The poems of two celebrated panegyrists dominated the 12th century and were regarded as the apogee of the form for later generations: the sophisticated odes of Anwari (q.v.) of Abivard (d. 1189), panegyrist at the court of Sultan Sanjar (1084-1157), and those of Ḵāqāni from Shervān (d. 1199) in the Caucasus. Towering figures in this genre, they both merit the title *poeta doctus* for being steeped in the sciences of their time. Ḵāqāni was able to use the

qaṣida and its related poetic forms to compose a poem of some 3,000 *bayt*s (*Toḥfat al-ʿerāqayn*) of great complexity. Remorseful for coveting gold from his patrons, the poet sends the Sun (his alter ego, emblematic of his own vices and virtues) on a pilgrimage to the sacred sites of Islam to sing the praises of the Kaʿba and the Prophet.

Changes in urban life in the Saljuq period contributed to the evolution of the qaṣida. They were by then often composed outside the court and for a different audience, tending towards philosophical, mystical, and religious ruminations. During the 13th century, the panegyric ode was largely supplanted by the ghazal, whose popularity grew rapidly during the Mongol period in Persia. The divan of Saʿdi of Shiraz contains a number of accomplished panegyrics, but he also wrote ghazals of great beauty, excelling in this poetical form to such an extent that his successors took him as their model and master.

*The ghazal.* In Arabic, the word “ghazal” designates the love song of a male lover addressed to a woman. The word *tagāzzol*, from the same root, refers to the description of the sorrows of love, and the ghazal is thus essentially the elegiac plaint of the poet-lover. In its form, the ghazal is similar to the qaṣida, but in content it confines itself to tagāzzol, as defined above. In a qaṣida, the poet cites the name of his patron between the first and the second part of the poem, while in a ghazal, the poet’s own name, or pen-name, appears at the end. This shift in the name of the person addressed points to a fundamental difference between the qaṣida and the ghazal and their perspectives on the role of the persona of the poet. As love lyrics, the ghazal often exploits the ambiguities that are born in the blurring of the distinction between sacred and profane love. In the case of mystical ghazals too, the art of suggestion is often the key to the success of the poem. The ghazal flourished during the time of Rumi and Saʿdi. Both were indebted to Farid-al-Din ʿAṭṭār (q.v.) of Nishapur and Sanāʾi of Ghazna. In the 14th century, Hafez used the ghazal almost as his sole medium for the manifestation of his poetic genius.

*Hafez of Shiraz*. As the successor to Saʿdi in the art of the *ghazal*, Hafez (q.v. for a series of articles) surpassed his master. He lived, like Saʿdi, in the courtly world of small princedoms, but in more politically fraught conditions. He too kept company with several spiritual figures and mentors who have not yet been clearly identi-fied. However, in contrast to Saʿdi, whose work contains many autobiographical details, combining fact and fiction (Boyle, pp. 1-8), Hafez is more introspective and allusive. His divan, a monumental collection

of poems (nearly five hundred ghazals), is the product of fifty years of intense creativity. So impassioned is his expressive style that his words at once turn into a captivating song. A virtuoso of analogical language, so typical of Persian lyricism, Hafez followed the path of antinomian mystical poets weary of the false religiosity of many clerics but highly appreciative of those humane archetypes celebrated in the quatrains of Omar Khayyam.

*The quatrain*. Though unknown in Pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, the quatrain was already a very popular form of verse in Persian at the time of Rudaki, and there is evidence of its existence even before him. For example, Ebn Ḵordāḏbeh in his *Ketāb al-masālek wa'l-mamālek* (p. 26) cites an example composed before 844. Both its meter, a re-interpretation of the pre-Islamic accentual stress, and its possible early antecedents, the *tarāna*, a short sung poem of two lines (Elwell-Sutton, pp. 171, 252) and the do-bayti (q.v.; a quatrain of sung poetry often in a dialect form) attest to its pre-Islamic origins. Over more than ten centuries, most Persian poets tried their hand at composing quatrains. Its very brevity provided the ideal venue for a memorable and pithy statement and explains its wide popularity. At the time of Abu Saʿid (d. 1049) and the celebrated quatrains attributed to him, another name too is worthy of mention: Bābā Ṭāher (q.v.), who was still alive in 1055 when Tōḡril Beg entered his home town of Hamadān, according to a moralizing anecdote in *Rāḥat al-ṣodur* (Rāvandi, pp. 98-99). According to traditional accounts, he lived a solitary life in the mountains in the vicinity of Hamadān. His do-baytis were deemed significant enough to have merited a commentary by the famous spiritual figure from Hamadān, ʿAyn-al-Qożāt (q.v.; executed in 1131). The use of local dialects in his poetry has meant that they fall into the category of *fahlaviyyat* (q.v.; poetry written in the old dialects of western and northwestern Persia).

It was the poet and mathematician Omar Khayyam from Nishapur (d. 1123) who made the Persian robāʾi world famous, particularly through Edward FitzGerald's (q.v.) adaptations into English. Khayyam's bold spirit of enquiry and his questioning of accepted wisdom had a mixed and often hostile early reception in Persia (ʿAṭṭār, *Elāhi-nāma*, p. 215, ll. 5169-83). The earliest robāʾis attributed to Khayyam appear in isolated quotations in works by Faḵr-al-Din Rāzi (q.v.; before 1210) and Najm-al-Din Rāzi (1223; Fouchécour and Rosenfeld, pp. 829-30). Gradually a Khayyamian corpus of robāʾis appears in which the themes of mutability and transience and the need for resigned fortitude in the face of the celestial wheel appear in the foreground. The question of

authenticity of the poems and the intrinsic 'wandering' nature of their transmission and authorship remain unresolved, but it is evident that Khayyam was the instigator of a way of thinking and an outlook which profoundly affected the course and content of Persian literature throughout its subsequent history.

THE PERSIAN EPIC A complex literary phenomenon, the Persian epic honors heroic figures that do not necessarily bear the divine traits of Greek heroes. It narrates their heroic deeds but is neither a unified epic in the manner of Gilgamesh, nor a compendium of *chansons de geste*. Using myth as its canvas, this epic form mixes history with legend. The diversity of sources is noticeable in its construction. Its usual form is a long narrative poem; and one monumental work dominates the entire genre: Ferdowsi's *Šāh-nāma*.

*Sources of the Persian Epic.* Religious beliefs and myths, as well as historical events from time immemorial belonging to the Iranian cultural sphere constitute the deepest stratum of the epic literature—oral at first, then written (see IRAN iii. THE TRADITIONAL HISTORY OF PERSIA). Some elements go back to even before the Avesta, others date from Scythian times, the Zoroastrian age, or the religious debates of the Sasanian era. The *Bundahišn* (q.v.), a Zoroastrian text written in Middle Persian, gathers many an ancient element in one book. It constitutes a kind of Book of Genesis. In time, royal deeds, dynastic chronicles, romances, and various legends of past ages began to feature in these compositions. Such was the case for the great Parthian or Scythian families, or the famous *Alexander Romance* (see ESKANADAR-NĀMA and CALLISTHENES). Various didactic and scientific texts were also included, acting as a bond, wielding the various materials together.

A compilation in Middle Persian was no doubt made at the initiative of Sasanian rulers. It contained military treatises as well as rules of conduct expected of the different classes in society. 'Books of the Crown,' laudatory chronicles of the lives of royalty, were composed during the lifetime of these monarchs (Jahiz, French tr. Pellat). Also known are instruction books of a moral and religious nature written in a question-and-answer form. We know that at least on two occasions this material was given an orderly arrangement. First, under Ḵosrow I (531-579), the task of glorifying the king, placed at the center of a dynastic history, was embarked upon, as mentioned by Ferdowsi. Then, under Yazdegerd III (632-651), the work was completed. Though this version was later lost, it was available at the time of Ebn al-Moqaffaʿ, who translated it into Arabic prose. We are only familiar with the general contents

of this translation and other sources thanks to later bibliographic references in literature, including those in Ebn al-Nadim's great bibliographical inventory, *al-Fehrest* (q.v.) and hence able to verify that this text served as the basis for the Persian epic. However, it was in prose, and this, at a time when cultural memory as the guardian of faithful transmission systematically preferred poetry, was a great handicap and obstacle to its appeal to a wider audience.

In the interim between Ebn al-Moqaffaʿ's text and the poem by Ferdowsi, many important texts appeared, particularly a chronicle of Syriac and Persian provenance, as well as the famous chronicle by Ṭabari (911). The former source, which appeared first in the Syriac milieu of the early Islamic period, was translated into Arabic and appears to have had close affinities with the actual Persian chronicles that had been extant in the first two centuries after the rise of Islam. The five surviving 'Royal chronicles' which appeared in Arabic between the 8th and the 10th century depend largely on this particular chronicle for their information (Grignaschi, 1969, 1973). The creation and composition of these texts illustrate an important dilemma for the first Islamic centuries: the necessity to allow for and incorporate significant historical narratives and milestones well before the advent of the Prophet and the victories of the Arabs. Once the adjustments were made, a first compilation in Persian prose was completed in 957 by four scholars (with distinctly Persian names) under the direction of Abu Manṣur, the governor of Ṭus. At the same time, around the end of the tenth century, Abu Rayḥān Biruni (q.v.), an Iranian writing mostly in Arabic, completed his *Chronicle of Ancient Nations* (*al-Āṯār al-bāqia*, q.v.). The Persian poets also set off to work, basing their epic tales, even before Ferdowsi, on the Persian prose text mentioned above, entitled *Abu Manṣur's Book of Kings*. Some of these texts have been lost; others were left unfinished (Osmanov). The most famous is by Daqiqi (q.v.), who did not conceal his faith in Zoroastrianism. Eventually, Ferdowsi makes his entrance, and in doing so preserves Daqiqi's poem, which contains a narrative account of Zoroaster's life, by inserting it into his own vast masterpiece.

*Ferdowsi.* Originally from a family of landowners (see DEHQĀN i) in Ṭus in Khorasan, he belonged to a social class that maintained its cultural links with the pre-Islamic past of the country. He was probably born around 940; and at the age of 71, in 1010, he believed he had at last completed his great poem, the *Book of Kings* (*Šāh-nāma*). He put the finishing touches on it when he was "approaching eighty;" and he died around 1020.

We associate his life with the composition of his poem. He began to compose it at the end of the Samanid reign, a dynasty celebrated for its cultural sophistication and sympathies for pre-Islamic Iranian courtly traditions, but completed it under the rule of the first Ghaznavid, Sultan Maḥmud, a monarch of Turkish descent. At the dawn of an era when the Turkish rulers were embracing Islamic culture wholeheartedly and their poets and panegyrists were consequently distancing themselves from the pre-Islamic past, Ferdowsi had managed to paint a vast canvass depicting the Iran of the bygone days, a poetic creation which would inform and inspire subsequent generations. He dedicated his book to Maḥmud of Ghazni and received a paltry reward. It is also true that in the process of glorifying Iran, he was not too kind to the Turks. Furthermore, by openly declaring his Shiʿite faith, he displeased Maḥmud, the self-declared champion of Sunni orthodoxy. In spite of his fame and support from various patrons, the poet ended his days in distress and discomfort.

The *Book of Kings* (*Šāh-nāma*). The earliest extant manuscript, which contains only the first part of the *Šāh-nāma*, dates from 1217, two centuries after the poet's death. It was discovered in the Laurentian Library in Florence in 1980 by Angelo Michele Piemontese. Among other important manuscripts one can mention a 16th-century copy of a manuscript dated 1276, which contains the entire text and is preserved in the British Library. There are many other manuscripts of good quality in existence, and most probably Ferdowsi left more than one redaction of his poem. Given this complex and uncharted textual history, the major critical edition begun by Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, of which six volumes have already been published, cannot be said to be definitive in the strict sense of the term (Cerquiglini).

Some of the texts that Ferdowsi had drawn upon in his *Book of Kings* have come down to us. The most famous is a Pahlavi text, *The Testament of Ardašir son of Pābag*. We are therefore able to assess the poet's close adherence to his sources, as well as his remarkable ability to weave the material available to him in a sequential narrative, endowing his poem with a sense of order and cohesion. The medieval manner of composition is evident in his skillful use of the narrative formulae—often repeated to enable declamation of well-defined episodes divided into delineated parts (Fouchécour, 1976).

The *Book of Kings* tells the story of Royal Glory (*farr*; see FARR[AH]) and its vulnerable and only too human supporting cast of characters. In its early sections it introduces three civilizing world rulers. However, in a moment of

excessive pride, Jamšid, the third amongst them, instigates a fall that shatters the initial universal harmony. A world divided into three kingdoms emerges; only Iran at the center inherits the Royal Glory. But the country's welfare and safety depend on a noble family of Sakas from Sistān, eventually led by its most famous and long enduring leader and hero, Rostam, the crown-bestower (*Tāj-baḵš*). The three Iranian kings and princes, Key-Kāvus, Siāvaš and Key-Ḵosrow, are emblematic figures of willful capriciousness, innocence and martyrdom, and legitimate vengeance, respectively. Rostam is actively involved in all their adventures. However, he refuses to convert to the 'good faith' of Zoroaster. Having served as mentor and companion in arms to Esfandiār, son of King Goštāsp (q.v.), circumstances force him to bring the downfall and death of the prince in a dramatic duel—a climactic moment in the *Book of Kings*.

Overlooked in Ferdowsi's sources, the Achaemenids and the Arsacids are mostly passed over in the *Book of Kings*, the Arsacids celebrated by a recital of their names in a few lines. The heroic figure that follows Rostam is Alexander. In his work, Ferdowsi integrates a rare and intriguing version of the *Alexander Romance*—redrawn with psychological finesse. First shown as a liberator, Alexander ends up as the great divider of Iran. He attempts to benefit from the Royal Glory of the Iranians, only to taste the bitter fruit of usurped grandeur: death.

Faithful to his sources, the poet then created the foil to Alexander, the character of Ardašir, the founding ruler of the Sasanian dynasty. He unites Iran by making a pact with his people, based on justice and faith in one single religion, Zoroastrianism. Later in the Sasanian section the ideal figure of Ḵosrow Anušervān (Ḵosrow I) is described in some detail. According to the sources of the book, it is in this monarch that Royal Glory appears in its clearest manifestation. All the traits of other royal figures in the book are combined in this central character. The history of the Sasanians is then continued in the manner of traditional chronicles until an evil day, a Satanic or Ahrimanic moment, when the last king of the dynasty is betrayed and, while on the run from the Arab armies, killed by a miller.

Throughout his narrative, Ferdowsi pursues a fecund thematic idea characteristic of the epic tradition that portrays the vulnerable yet heroic man confronting his relentless destiny. Salvation lies in wisdom, for it, above all else, makes man aware of the dehumanizing cycle of Time-Destiny. By maintaining his distance from Chronos, man escapes from the illusory nature

of this world. Only genuine fame (*nām*) derived from selfless and heroic conduct is worth striving for and fit to be left as a memento.

Ferdowsi exploits substantial portions of the ancient epic material available in his time. The remaining parts dealt with individual heroes and were drawn upon by other poets (Molé, 1943). It was left to others, including Asadi of Ṭus (q.v.; 11th century), to recreate and exploit other available epic material, in his case, in the *Book of Garšāsp* (see *GARŠĀP-NĀMA*). From the 12th century onward, extremely interesting epics of more popular nature begin to appear. They further elaborate and amplify earlier accounts of Darius III and Alexander the Great (Dārā and Eskandar). They introduce heroes and heroines in whose ethical code ruse and clever stratagems, rather than military might and muscle, are legitimate instruments for fighting injustice and evil. *Samak-e ʿayyār*, a monumental book in prose, is its finest example (Ḵānlari; Gaillard).

Ferdowsi's *magnum opus* has exercised enormous influence on Iranian cultural history over the centuries. His work has served as a literary mold from which one can make fresh heroic and saintly paradigms. Inspired by Ferdowsi, many rulers in history have commissioned court poets to celebrate their reigns in eulogistic verse chronicles that have also served as valuable historical sources for later historians.

THE MEDIEVAL PERSIAN FICTION

Although genres like the 'novel' or 'romance' belong to the Western literary tradition, and imply assumptions and expectations rooted in a different cultural and religious milieu, one finds *dāstān*s "stories" that may be categorized as such with important reservations (see also FICTION i. TRADITIONAL FORMS). The Medieval Persian novel can be described as a fictional narrative featuring an individual adventure, lying somewhere between the borders of *chanson de geste* and a historical work. In contrast to the epic, which remains strongly attached to its locality and language and adheres to a distinct national identity, the medieval novel or romance is a more portable commodity (for example, see *FIRUZŠĀH-NĀMA* **)**traveling easily from place to place and decade to decade, rendering the study of its origin and sources much more challenging and difficult (Lyons).

*Some Greek, Iranian, and Indian sources of the Medieval Persian fiction*. Ferdowsi's *Book of Kings* con-tains many self-contained episodes and stories of various origins, taken from Middle Persian sources. Zāl and Rudāba, Rostam

and Tahmina, Bižan (q.v.) and Maniža, Alexander and Queen Qeydāfa, Ḵosrow and Širin, are some of the celebrated paired lovers described in some detail by the poet. However, *Vis o Rāmin*, the Parthian romance that had a great impact on later Persian literature was unknown to Ferdowsi. Originating from Achaemenid Persia, the ancient novel *Abradatas* (q.v.) *and Panthea*, appears in the *Cyropedia* (q.v.) by Xenophon (d. 354 B.C.E.), and *Zariadres and Odatis*, reported by Chares of Mitylene (q.v.; Alexander's contemporary) has been transmitted to us by Athenaios (q.v.; Athenaeus) of Naucratis in his *Deipnosophistai* (q.v.). In the first story, love leads Panthea to commit suicide beside the dead body of her spouse (Davis, 2002, pp. 26-29); the other is an adventure of two lovers, Zariadres and Odatis, who first meet in a dream and then recognize each other at a feast.

Greco-Egyptian and Alexandrian in origin, the *Romance of Alexander* is found in several different versions, all heavily Persianized. A fictionalized biography of the Buddha, originating in India and translated into Middle Persian, is extant in an Arabic translation, as well as in later Persian versions; it had a wide circulation and was translated into many languages including Ethiopic and Georgian as well as into Western European languages under the title, *Barlaam and Josaphat* (see BARLAAM AND IOSAPH). A fragment of a versified version of this in Middle Persian and Manichean script survives as an example of Persian hagiography.

Some current research is in process on the Greek origin of many famous narratives in Persian (Hägg and Utas). One such example is the story of *Salamān and Absāl*, which was translated early into Arabic and was used by Avicenna in one of his philosophic tales (Corbin, 1954; Arberry, 1956). It was later turned into a magnificent narrative poem by Jāmi in the 15th century, based on an account by Naṣir-al-Din Ṭusi in his commentary on Avicenna's *Ešārāt* (See Rowšan under Jāmi, p. 223). The Biblical, then Qurʾanic account devoted to Joseph provided an opportunity to explore the adventure of Joseph (Yusof) and Zoleyḵa (Zuleika, Potiphar's wife) in novel form. Persian literature is made up of a large number of narrative accounts derived from countless sources, revitalized in the course of re-telling by new interpretations and original glosses on their significance. For example, by turning the Arabic tale of *Leyli and Majnun* into Persian verse of remarkable beauty, Neẓāmi of Ganja gave it its most sublime expression.

*Vis o Rāmin*. Faḵr-al-Din Asʿad Gorgāni (q.v.) composed his literary masterpiece *Vis o Rāmin* (Minorsky; Molé, 1960) around 1054 at the provincial

court of the governor of Isfahan, who was a vassal of the Saljuq sultan Togrïl (1038-63). There is also a Georgian version, the *Visramiani*, traditionally attributed to Sargis Tmogveli, a 12th-century Georgian writer and statesman (see GEORGIA iv. LITERARY CONTACTS WITH PERSIA).

The novel describes the plight of Vis, the daughter of the queen of Media, who is a vassal of the king of Parthia (the reference here is to the historical context of the romance: Gorgāni's source is a Middle Persian version; see Lazard, 1983, pp. 34-39). Vis is finally forced to marry the king of Parthia after having been married to her own brother. At the Parthian court, she and Rāmin, the Parthian king's much younger brother, already in love with each other, manage to consummate their love with the help of the nurse who had tended to them both in their infancy. She also manages through magic to render the old Parthian king impotent. All ends well: the king dies; Vis and Rāmin rule happily. This, however, is only half the story in the novel. Most of the second part consists of letters exchanged between Vis and Rāmin during their clandestine love affair (Gandjei). The story is an examination of this kind of amorous exchange. At the crossroads where the paths of action and love diverge, the partners are forced to make a choice: to sacrifice one for the other. Heroism is depicted as natural to the female hero, who immediately reveals herself to be the self-assured guide for her lover in matters of love. Gorgāni's novel provides a plot line and leitmotif to the whole lineage of Persian novels that it engenders, beginning with those of the master of this genre, Neẓāmi of Ganja. Whereas the medieval Western romance places emphasis on the psychology of the characters, the Persian narratives concentrate on the lyrical expression of the sentiments expressed by the characters. These lyrical intentions also explain the reason why these epistolary novels were put into verse.

*Neẓāmi's Five Treasures* (*Panj ganj*). Eliās Abu Mo-ḥammad Neẓāmi of Ganja was born around 1141 of a Kurdish mother and a father named Yusof. He was born and died in Ganja, located west of the Caspian Sea, in a domain ruled by the Saljuq atābaks, far from the main centers where Persian literature came into being, but in close contact with Christian communities. Though he dedicated his poems to princes and was rewarded accordingly, he managed to maintain his independence from them. His poetry shows a keen interest in the life of ordinary people as well as much curiosity about ancient historical sites and the legends surrounding them. In his poems he addressed his son on three different occasions, when he was 7 years, then 14, and finally 21.

The first of his five (see below) 'Treasures' was influenced by Sanāʾi of Ghazna's (d. 1131) monumental *Garden of Truth* (*Ḥadiqa al-ḥadiq wa šariʿa al-ṭariqa*; q.v.). The other 'Treasures' were medieval romances. Ḵosrow and Širin, Bahrām-e Gur, and Alexander the Great, who all have episodes devoted to them in Ferdowsi's *Book of Kings*, appear again here at the center of three of four of Neẓāmi's narrative poems. The adventure of the paired lovers, Leyli and Majnun, is the subject of the second of his four romances, and derived from Arabic sources (Giffen; Vadet). In all these cases, Neẓāmi reworked the material from his sources in a substantial way. He also left behind some fine lyrical poetry.

*The narrative poetry of Neẓāmi: pinnacles of medieval poetic thought*. Highly individualized, Neẓāmi's work bears all the hallmarks of his predilection for hermetic and esoteric writings and sciences. Although there were thriving sufi associations in existence at the time, he did not himself become a member of any specific group. He maintained that the Word was his refuge and monastery. His first major poem, the *Treasury of Secrets* (*Maḵzan al-asrār*), already referred to, was composed in 1174. Designed as a series of ethical counsels for the benefit of the prince, it reflects the writing of a sage secluded from the world. Taken together with its prototype, the already mentioned work by Sanāʾi, it suggests an attempt by men of spiritual eminence to replace some of the functions of court counselors and advisors in the sphere of courtly education. Twenty chapters, each containing a didactic message and an exemplum serving as an attractive illustration, are mostly aimed at a prince or ruler. The poem continued to enjoy great popularity in later periods and courts.

The death of his beloved wife, and the perusal of Gorgāni's *Vis o Rāmin*, inspired Neẓāmi's second major narrative poem: *Ḵosrow and Širin* (1181), his first masterpiece. It has a complex structure with several genres exploited simultaneously; and contains many verbal exchanges and letters, all imbued with lyrical intensity. Širin, an Armenian princess, is of the same proud and aristocratic mettle as Vis, both ardently faithful to their declared love and daring enough to force the hand of Fate, a Destiny that plays, in the case of Širin, upon the weaknesses and youthful foibles of her lover, Ḵosrow Parviz, grandson of Ḵosrow I. The latter must endure long journeys, physical and spiritual, before returning to Širin, his true love. Like Panthea, Širin commits suicide over the body of her murdered husband. Pure and selfless love is represented here embodied in the figure of Farhād (q.v.), secretly in love with

Širin, who finally falls victim to the king's ire and jealousy.

It is precisely this pure love, in the great Arab tradition of courtly love (*hobb al-ʿoḏri*) that inspired Neẓāmi's *Leyli o Majnun*, dedicated to the ruler of Širvān in 1188. The legal interdiction of marriage between Majnun and Leyli, in love with each other ever since their childhood, drives Majnun to his madness (Khairallah), the very subject of Neẓāmi's poem. But the poem also delves into the kind of wisdom that only love can inspire. Leyli is married, becomes a widow, and eventually dies. Upon her tomb dies Majnun, the prelude to his entry into the blissful state of celestial union.

Eight years later, Neẓāmi completes a very different kind of narrative. It is no longer love and death at work in the plot, but love of women hindering the prince's obligation to justice. This is the story of the *Seven Princesses* (The Seven Portraits, *Haft Peykar*; q.v.). The king, Bahrām-e Gur, gathers seven princesses from seven countries of the world. He settles them in seven pavilions painted according to the seven planets that rule the days of the week. Every night he visits one of them; each narrates a story corresponding to her particular color. These tales with their underlying didactic messages are meant to provide an education for a prince in love. Having heard the seven tales, Bahrām discovers that in his absence his vizier had squandered the treasury and committed many atrocities. The grievances are redressed and justice is restored before Bahrām himself vanishes into a cavern while hunting onagers. The recent translation and commentary, by Michael Barry (*Le Pavillon des Sept Princesses*, Paris, 2000) offers new insights and complements the entry on the poem in *EIr*.

Later in life, Neẓāmi concentrated his efforts even more on the moral upbringing and pedagogic formation of the prince. His *Romance of Alexander* (see *ESKANDAR-NĀMA* and *ESKANDAR-NĀMA* OF NEẒĀMI), a poem of 10,000 distiches, was completed at around 1203. As he tells us, at the time he was 63 years old (his death date inscribed on his tomb is given as 1209). Divided into two books (*Šaraf-nāma* and *Eqbāl-nāma*), the poem narrates the three stages in Alexander's life: first as the conqueror of the world; then as a seeker after knowledge, gaining enough wisdom to acknowledge his own ignorance; and finally as a prophet, traveling once again across the world, from west to east, and south to north to proclaim his monotheistic creed to the world at large.

*Neẓāmi's legacy*. The work by the poet of Ganja had such a profound impact on the history of Persian classical literature that it can be regarded as a

watershed in its literary history. His strength lies in his narrative techniques, the range and fecundity of his sources, and the masterly way he draws upon them and transforms them into a harmonious work of art. The manuscripts of his poems are frequently illuminated and contain some of the finest miniatures and book illustrations by celebrated artists. The earliest extant manuscripts date a century after his death, an unusual occurrence given the history of the survival of Persian poetical manuscripts.

Over the centuries, there have been many imitators of Neẓāmi's five poems (Ḵamsa). Some tried to simplify Neẓāmi's complex diction and style, while others sought to adapt them to the expectations of different audiences. Each century had at least one significant imitator and adapter of Neẓāmi. Amir Ḵosrow Dehlavi (q.v.) at the end of the 13th century, Ḵwāju of Kermān and Ḥātefi (q.v.) in the 14th, Jāmi and ʿAlišir Navāʾi in the 15th century are among the most successful poets who embarked on an imaginative refashioning of Neẓāmi's narratives to create new and fine narrative poems of their own. Jāmi's *The Book of Alexandrine Wisdom* (*Ḵerad-nāma-ye eskandari*) is a successful poetical exercise in the genre of a mirror for princes.

DIDACTIC PERSIAN LITERATURE

Relatively few Persian texts miss an opportunity to teach. Some texts go about this overtly and are especially designed for it. Others are not so explicit but convey their didactic message implicitly through the medium of the narrative. This is particularly true of historical works. They infuse the events with a sense of meaning and didactic significance, suggest codes of conduct, and attempt to achieve a sense of communal consensus based on their ideals. In the words of Claude Cahen, history written by medieval Muslims "is a variation on Mirrors for Princes from the Sasanian tradition" (Cahen, p. 82).

The art of rhetoric is the art of persuasion, which is why it is linked to the art of poetry, as in Persian literature. The beauty of these literary texts has enchanted many generations and made them receptive to the didactic messages embedded in them. The sheer expressive power of these accounts (*ḥekāyat*, *qeṣṣa*, tale, fable, and romance) first entertains the readers, then prods and awakens their desire to learn, and eventually has a formative influence on their thoughts and feelings. The message conveyed may be strictly moral or moral and political, or even spiritual in nature.

*From anecdote to frame story.* The shortest and most common form of story is

the *ḥekāyat*, an anecdote to be told. Its kernel is an exemplum, drawn from experience and formulated in a way so that it can easily be committed to memory. The exemplum is embedded in the dialogue or the narrative of the conduct of one or more characters in a story.

In the 12th century, the famous *Memorial of Saints* (*Taḏkerat al-awliyāʾ*) by ʿAṭṭār towers above an early series of works at first constructed from hagiographical accounts meant for spiritual edification. Other collections of stories too began to appear, containing short stories on different topics not necessarily restricted to strictly religious or mystical themes. The first work to have come down to us in this form was composed by Sadid-al-Din ʿAwfi (q.v.) slightly before 1233. His *Collection of Stories* (*Jawāmaʿ al-ḥekāyāt*) is noteworthy for its classification of anecdotes according to their subject matter (Nizámu'd-dín). In India, it served as an anthology introducing some of the best samples of stories from Persian sources and background.

Another kind of anthology consisted of furnishing a more deliberate didactic introduction to a collection of appropriately chosen stories. Jalāl-al-Din Rumi's *Maṯnawi-e maʿnawi*, a long work divided into six books, is the finest example. Lastly, there are stories specially crafted to teach a lesson. In one or more extended accounts that serve as a general frame story, other shorter stories (differing in number) are arranged. This is the case with some of the most well-known Persian Mirrors for Princes.

One may cite the example of three famous works composed as a collection of stories. The *Thousand Tales* (*Hazār afsān*), no longer extant but still known to Arab bibliophiles of the tenth century (Ebn al-Nadim), had the same frame story as the *Thousand and One Night*s—that of Scheherazade (Šahrzād) and Dināzār (Persian names). *Kalila wa Dimna* is the title of the first story in a very old collection of long narrative accounts of Indian origin. The text was rendered into Middle Persian at the court of Ḵosrow I, and then translated into Arabic and Persian (de Blois, 1990). It is not a frame story, but its didactic thrust lends it a certain unity. Each story deals with a subject meant for the education of the prince and his courtiers. Lastly, the *Book of Samak the Chivalrous Trickster* (*Dāstān-e Samak-e ʿayyār*) is one of the oldest popular Persian stories. Committed to writing from the 12th century onwards, it maintains its oral structure: it is a very long account, divided into relatively independent and separable units. In fact, it is a complex double narrative: the story of a prince and of Samak, the leader of a group of young men united by an oath of allegiance. It has its roots in an old institution harking back to the

Sasanian period (Zakeri).

*Mirrors for Princes.* Court patronage directed many a literary composition in its favor. In return, however, writers and poets did not hesitate to speak the truth to their patrons. This occurred in the Mirrors for Princes as well as in many a lyrical poem. By highlighting qualities essential in good governance, the mirrors alerted the patron and his entourage to their own actual shortcomings and abuses of power. The fact that the audience for these manuals included influential circles at court added to their social and political impact; and a large corpus of advice literature was written for the kings and princes of different dynasties, from the Sasanian period onwards. The *Secretum Secretorum* (*Serr al-asrār*), which proved to be highly influential in the West during the medieval period, owes its origins to the Persian secretaries and officials who introduced it to the court of the Omayyads in the course of the 8th century (Grignaschi; Ryan and Schmitt).

In the 12th century the *Book of Kalila wa Demna*, cited above, attained the heights of rhetorical excellence in the version by Naṣr-Allāh Monši, a courtier of the Ghaznavids, and served as a model for subsequent collections. For example, the *Book of Marzbān* (*Marzbān-nāma*, 13th century) rendered into fine Persian a collection of original tales (known from the 10th century) from the province of Ṭabarestān. The *Book of Sindbad* (*Sandbād-nāma*), a collection of stories within a framed narrative, originated in India and was translated into Middle Persian. Much later, it was narrated in elegant Persian by Ẓāheri of Samarqand at the court of the Qarakhanids. The plot describes how in seven days seven viziers rescue a young prince from death and save him from false accusations of seduction. The book is a political treatise containing a favorite medieval theme, ‘the wiles of women.’ Another example of a similar structure is the *Book of Baḵtiār*, originating in a Middle Persian source that was then translated into Arabic and subsequently into Persian. Here the viziers’ misdeeds are described and denounced in ten stories.

In the 11th century, the *Qābus-nāma*, written by Prince Keykāvus of Ṭabarestān, shortly after 1082, introduces a different kind of a mirror and at times offers somewhat sardonic counsel, while the overall content is supported by a well-articulated argument. The various anecdotes that embellish its elegant prose are culled from the historiography of the period and buttress the pragmatic assertions in the book. It contains forty-three chapters that deal with morality, behavior, and customs successively, and describe various occupations and professions. A final and completely different

chapter is an invaluable treatise on the noble and chivalrous conduct in the kind of milieu frequented by Samak, referred to earlier. At the end of the 11th century, Neẓām-al-Molk, the renowned vizier of the Saljuqs, wrote his *Book of Government* or *Rules for Kings* (*Siyar al-moluk* or *Siyāsat-nāma*), a major work in simple yet elegant prose containing political comment on contemporaneous history.

In turn, the *Book of Advice to Kings* (*Naṣiḥat al-moluk*) is the work of the great theologian Moḥammad Ḡazāli (q.v.), completed circa 1105. An introduction deals with the fundamentals of faith for a prince in power. Seven stylistically eloquent chapters then examine the exercise of power and its pitfalls; the book became a classic of its genre. Also worth citing is the *Book of Political Aims* (*Āgraż al-siyāsat*) written shortly after 1157 by Ẓāheri, noted above. It is a part legendary, part historical account of 74 kings, their lives, and the maxims attributed to them.

*Moral literature.* A traditional literature of brief aphoristic sayings similar to proverbs has existed in Persian literature from very early on. Even before Islam, Zoroastrian catechisms were in this genre (Aturpāt-i Ēmētān). Gathered in large collections, these maxims provided a rich harvest for more elaborate works. Ferdowsi's *Book of Kings* contains many collections of moral and political advice originating in Middle Persian sources. In about 945, Abu Šakur (see ABU ŠAKUR BALḴI) wrote a long didactic poem (which has survived) composed of maxims.

Sufi treatises drew heavily from similar collections. Well-known Persian works, already cited, such as Ḡa-zāli's *Alchemy of Happiness* (*Kimiyā-ye saʿādat*), *The Garden of Truth* by Sanāʾi, and Saʿdi's *Golestān*, are indebted to this kind of literature. Neẓāmi took an innovative approach by inventing collections of advice of his own which attempt to show that, confronted with their destiny, human beings are nevertheless able to strive towards intellectual and moral perfection.

Notable Iranian writers in turn composed works in Arabic on ethics inspired by Greek thought. The treatises by Fārābi, Avicenna, and Ebn Meskawayh (qq.v.) are well known documents of ethics and moral philosophy. In Persian, Naṣir-al-Din Ṭusi (1201-1274) excelled in this subject with his *Nasirean Ethics* (*Aḵlāq-e nāṣeri*; q.v.). In two chapters of his *Taṣawworāt* (Reflections), he clarified his thought in personal terms and from the perspective of Ismaʿili philosophy. Ṭusi's *Ethics* is based on the Greek tripartite division of morality:

the individual, the family, and the polis, concluding with a collection of advice to the prince in Persian that has traditionally been attributed to Plato. Ṭusi considered this work to be an epitome of all that he had valued in his predecessors.

The great legacy of these important moralists was to create a language of morals in Persian that would inspire the succeeding generations and provide them with a vehicle for further speculations. Later, in the 14th century, a period of intense political turmoil, ʿObeyd-e Zākāni's (1300-1371) satirical work managed to create the most radical expression of a morality turned immoral in order to unsettle and lampoon a society and depict it in a way which would have been unrecognizable to previous generations.

*Sufi literature in Persian.* Sufism played a major role in the process of Islamization of the Iranian world. The literary expression of its doctrine suited its didactic approach, which entailed initiating, then guiding its audience on the spiritual path. Its devotional intensity inspired monumental works in Persian literature. Sufism sought perfection of the soul. Moving from austerity to asceticism, it soon advocated the path of love. It prompted its audience to reach beyond themselves, leading them to recognize the true self. Sufism could also lead to a form of ecstatic mysticism. Literary works ensued to comment upon this and guide the seeker along the path. One must recall here that two schools of Greek philosophy, Stoicism and Neoplatonism, had a great influence on the history of the three great monotheistic religions.

At its most basic, Sufism is a relationship between a master and his disciple, between the Beloved as the heralding angel and the Lover as the seeker. A number of Sufi movements were formed based on this relationship, but not before the 13th century. In the Iranian cultural sphere, two Sufi tendencies first stood out. In the partially Islamicized rural environment of Khorasan, Ebn Karrām (d. 869) headed a pietistic movement with a substantial following, while in the more urban milieu Hamdun al-Qaṣṣār (d. 884) encouraged an intimate form of piety focusing on self-blame as a form of asceticism. It is mainly this *malāmati* movement that greatly influenced Iranian Sufism and its literary production.

Poetry by Hafez, who was not a Sufi, can be read from this perspective. The Karrāmi movement met with early opposition and suppression because of its political implications (Šafiʿi-Kadkani, 1999). In this early period of Sufi propagation, a great and solitary, though oft-visited, master appeared: Bāyazid

Besṭāmi (q.v.; d. 874). He left behind a legacy of maxims in Persian that had a lasting influence. In these one senses an Indian influence and a highly developed consciousness of one who has attained union with God (Zaehner).

At the beginning of the following century a remarkable figure, Manṣur-e Ḥallāj (q.v.), found Khorasan receptive to his radical form of mysticism. He was eventually martyred in Baghdad in 922 for having dared to testify to his union with the Almighty/Truth. Mystical love, which is at the origin of all literary expression in Iranian Sufism, truly asserted itself with Ḥallāj. A third important phase in the history of Iranian Sufism occurs with the monumental work in Arabic of Ebn al-ʿArabi (q.v.) who was born in Murcia, traveled much, and finally settled in Anatolia. He died in 1241 during a sojourn in Damascus, at the time when Jalāl-al-Din Rumi was teaching in Konya.

His disciple and interpreter, Ṣadr-al-Din Qunawi (d. 1274), spread his master's thoughts throughout the Iranian cultural sphere. For example, Jāmi's literary output at the court in Herat during the 15th century was accomplished under the influence of the Andalusian master and determined the principal direction of Sufi thought in Sunnism to this day.

The great figure of Najm-al-Din Kobrā (d. 1220) is a good example of a founder of a Sufi order (Molé, 1961). He trained many disciples of renown, including Najm-al-Din Rāzi Dāya (d. 1256; see DĀYA), whose literary output includes the well-known, long treatise, the *Path of God's Bondsmen* (*Merṣād al-ʿebād*). The work has had a lasting influence on Iranian Sufism and is noted for its eloquence as well as for its valuable discourse on a range of Sufi doctrines and beliefs. In the history of Iranian Sufism, one should take note of the Ḡazāli brothers: Abu Ḥāmed Moḥammad (d. 1111) and Aḥmad (d. 1126) as well as the disciple of the latter, ʿAyn-al-Qożāt al-Hamadāni, mentioned in an earlier section. These masters of Iranian Sufism produced works in Persian and Arabic that contain sophisticated mystical and doctrinal arguments couched in magnificent prose.

Here we should take note of some other important texts in Iranian Sufism. In the 10th century, Sufi apologists found it necessary to defend their tenets against possible objections by theologians apprehensive about the emerging movement of Sufism. Thus al-Sarrāj of Ṭus (d. 988) and al-Kalābādi (d. 995) from the Bukhara region, both influenced by Ḥallāj, wrote two influential texts in Arabic. In the following century, in Nishapur, Qošeyri (d. 1072) followed suit through a famous epistle (*Resāla*) that he wrote in Arabic and which was soon

translated into Persian. His disciple, Hojviri (q.v.; d. ca. 1074) was the author of the first treatise on Sufism written in Persian. Benefiting from the work of his predecessors, he composed *The Revelation of the Hidden* (*Kašf al-maḥjub*), rich in both content and style. These works form the basis of Sufi philosophy.

However, the literary expression of Sufism, as opposed to the many descriptive and explicatory treatises on its nature, was already in progress before, especially thanks to Abu Saʿid Abi'l-Ḵayr (q.v.; d. 1049). It was largely due to him that Sufism asserted itself in Persian literature. At first a fervent ascetic, he became an inspiring preacher in Nishapur, personally reciting his own compositions of quatrains. Written by one his descendants, his biography is an early example of the hagiographic genre from this period. His predecessor, ʿAli Ḵaraqāni (d. 1033), was an ascetic established near Besṭām (q.v.), where his hermitage was often visited. Many of his sayings and prayers have survived. A spiritual disciple of Bāyazid Besṭāmi (q.v.), he in turn was the master of the famous ʿAbd-Allāh An-ṣāri (q.v.) of Herat (d. 1089), a major figure in Sufism (de Laugier de Beaurecueil), influenced by the rigors of Hanbalism and the demands of divine love. Though his work is in Arabic, some letters and his ardent prayers and meditations (*Monājāt*) survive in Persian.

In the early 12th century, the already mentioned *Garden of Truth* by Sanāʿi served as a model for generations of poets. An unfinished work, composed in more than 10,000 bayts, it has an encyclopedic range and is the work of a remarkable storyteller with a sharp eye for the weaknesses and the corruption of his contemporary world. His verses are a testimony to his personal beliefs and spiritual thoughts as well as his attachment to the court at Ghazni (de Bruijn). This mode of conduct, keeping one's own entity separate and intact from centers of power and opulence but persisting in giving one's opinion and offering advice to the court and its notables, became the modus operandi for many a Sufi poet.

ʿAṭṭār was born in Nishapur (ca. 1119) and lived there until his death (ca. 1190). His *Divan*, a vast collection of short and intensely spiritual poems, merits a study on its own. It has perhaps been overshadowed by the popularity of his long narrative poems describing the path of mystical initiation. These, most of which have been translated into French and English, include the *Conference of the Birds* (*Manṭeq al-ṭayr*), *The Book of the Divine* (*Elāhi-nāma*), *The Book of Adversity* (*Moṣibat-nāma*), and *The Book of Mysteries* (*Asrār-nāma*). As for *The Memorial of the Saints* (*Taḏkerat al-awliyāʾ*), it is the first major collection of hagiographic lives in Persian literature and a fine

example of Persian prose of the 12th century. ʿAṭṭār's authority was such that some twenty other *maṯnavi*s have been attributed to him (Ritter).

Jalāl-al-Din Rumi, rightfully claimed to inherit the mantle of Sanāʾi and ʿAṭṭār. Son of Bahāʾ-al-Din Mo-ḥammad Walad (q.v.; a famous preacher whose sermons are extant and have been published), he was born in Balḵ in 1207. The family was living in Samarqand, when, as the Mongols approached, they had to flee westwards towards Anatolia, settling finally in Konya, where his father had been invited to preach by the reigning Saljuq prince. Jalāl-al-Din succeeded his father (Schimmel, 1978; Lewis).

However, all that changed when in 1244 an errant dervish, Šams-al-Din of Tabriz, undertook the re-education of the brilliant Jalāl. He took him on the mystic path that leads "to the station where the Beloved resides," where the lover loses his identity in the beloved. Thus begins Rumi's Divan, dedicated to Šams, "sun of God"—of God discovered through the prism of His herald.

Every lover knows that the test of separation is inevitable, befalling him inexorably. The envious drove Šams away, and Rumi's intense poems become the salve on the wound of separation. His magnum opus, *Maṯnawi maʿnawi-e mowlavi*, an immense and somewhat unruly masterpiece, begins on a note of separation. The poem consists of six books, containing three to four thousand distiches each. It remained unfinished upon Rumi's death in 1273. A long succession of spiritual tales, interspersed with digressions of a doctrinal nature, in turn illustrated by stories, the poem was first recited in declamatory style in public sessions, where ecstatic dances were held.

As Sufism matured it tended to become institutionalized in orders. This was not accomplished by Jalāl-al-Din but by his son and successor, Solṭān Walad. Author of a number of works, he is the true founder of the *Mowlaviya* order. As previously mentioned, Ebn al-ʿArabi lived in Konya; and Mowlavi died there in 1273. Ṣadr-al-Din Qunawi, who died here as well in 1274, knew both masters. ʿErāqi of Hamadān (d. 1289), who had returned from Multan in India, also settled in Konya. He knew Qunawi, and his poetry and his didactic work in prose, *Lamaʿāt* (Flashes), were influenced by the doctrines of Ebn al-ʿArabi. ʿErāqi contributed to the eastward expansion of Persian Sufism, which was then flourishing in Anatolia. Ghazals by ʿErāqi are among the most often sung today. However, ʿErāqi's spiritual contribution is linked to the specifically Iranian tradition that developed from Ḥallāj and such masters as Aḥmad Ḡazāli.

*Classical literature in its maturity: the work of Saʿdi.* Jalāl-al-Din Rumi (1207-1273) and Saʿdi (ca. 1209-91) lived in the same century. Sheltered in Konya, Rumi had imported spirituality from Khorasan. Saʿdi lived in Fārs, a province spared by the Mongol Hülegü (q.v.). Under the government of the Salghurids, Fārs had not therefore experienced the cultural rupture and social turmoil experienced by other provinces. Saʿdi's work represents a peak in the historical development of Persian literature. The 13th century also brought the first phase of the successful propagation of Persian literature in India; and, with Joveyni as a prime example, it was the great century of Persian prose as used by historians in the service of the Mongols.

Saʿdi's work in Shiraz is at the confluence of different literary genres and approaches, narrative, moral, and political, as well as the most classical literary expression of Sufism. His major works, the *Saʿdi-nāma* (later named the *Bustān*; q.v.) and the *Golestān*, are a faultlessly seamless tapestry of anecdotes and stories with commentary. Without the ghazals of his Divan, we would not have those of the following century, especially of Hafez. Without the ribaldry of his facetious remarks (*Ḵabiṭāt*), ʿObeyd-e Zākāni would not have had a worthy predecessor. During his lifetime his reputation extended far beyond Fārs. With Saʿdi, a seemingly effortless but meticulously crafted diction, influenced by Arabic but firmly grounded in the everyday Persian of the time, rediscovered its authentic power and verve and served as a model of clarity and aesthetic virtuosity for the subsequent generations. Like Neẓāmi, Saʿdi, was a fervent believer in the power of speech and the inestimable value of language. His work was in ways a summation of the cultural achievements of the previous three centuries. For a long time, the cultured Iranian individual recognized himself in the mirror of Saʿdi, the sage.

Saʿdi's work contains several personal references and biographical details. Yet, here as elsewhere, as pointed out before, one must differentiate between the man and the literary persona conjured up by the writer. This character, let's say Saʿdi, would have visited the length and breadth of the Islamic world, from North Africa to India to Khotan. He would have even been a prisoner of the Franks, or so this seasoned and well-traveled writer (*jahān-dida*) tells us. Saʿdi studied in Baghdad, made the pilgrimage to Mecca, met great spiritual masters. Wisely he returned to Shiraz at the outset of the Mongol invasion in 1256; and two years later, he dedicated the *Bustān* and then the *Golestān* (undoubtedly the fruit of many years' labor) to Abu Bakr b. Saʿd (q.v.) the Salghurid ruler. We sense his involvement in the ordinary lives of the citizens

in Shiraz, visiting the court and its patrons, and maintaining links with spiritual personalities in the capital.

More classical in form than the *Golestān*, the *Bustān* is a long didactic poem in nine chapters, dealing successively with the justice of the prince, his kind deeds, human and divine love, humility, acceptance of fate as determined by Providence, education, recognition, and finally repentance. But all this is woven into a sea of stories told in a most beautiful language. The *Golestān* conveys similar lessons delivered in a lighter style in the form of sessions. Written mainly in prose, these are in general anecdotes drawn from daily life and illustrate a lesson distilled in one or two beautiful distiches. The work belongs to the *maqāmāt* tradition and had many imitators. For Saʿdi two characters predominate in society: the prince and the dervish. They represent the two pillars of society: political power and religious institutions. Traditional Iranian thought opposed the Greek vision of the prince-philosopher but later revised it with the proviso that no prince can act wisely without an advisor. This became the political justification for Persian literature itself, as it manifested its own potentials and scope as just such an advisor.

## A SECOND CLASSICAL PERIOD OF PERSIAN LITERATURE

In the founding period we have just examined, Persian literature revealed the breath of its expression, and the possible paths for its future were delineated. With the Mongol power on the wane, a new period begins in the 14th century, enabling local dynasties to flourish. Tabriz, Shiraz, Kermān, and Baghdad became the seat of power for princes who competed with each other as generous patrons of the arts, friends of Sufi circles, and supporters of religious schools.

In literature, the achievements of the founding period were consolidated and became the norm. Sufism became the principal form in Persian literary expression, and the ghazal became the favorite lyrical medium. The long narrative poems by Neẓāmi now served as models for descriptive spiritual diaries. Neẓāmi's *The Treasury of Mysteries* and Saʿdi's *Golestān* were regarded as models for teaching moral precepts. The elegant prose of historians that originated in the 13th century now combined a concern for historiography with an attempt to achieve elegance in style. The 15th-century taste was one of fastidious refinement. The epic was transmuted into a panegyric of a ruling prince or a hagiography of a Shiʿite imam.

Much of the poetry was still composed at the princely courts. Ḵʷāju of Kermān (d. 1352), an intrepid traveler, was attached to the court at Shiraz and composed a divan rich in ghazals, as well as narrative poetry, *The Five Treasures*, an imitation of Neẓāmi. He was the disciple of the Sufi thinker Alāʾ-al-Dawla Semnāni (q.v.) a severe critic of Ebn al-ʿArabi. ʿObeyd-e Zākāni (d. 1369) is the moralist and critic that Hafez had known at court, as in the case of Ḵwāju. Salmān Sāveji (d. 1376), a formidable rival to Hafez in the art of the ghazal, dominated the literary circle at the court of the Jalāyerids. Two poets established convents (*ḵānaqāh*s) frequented by princes. In Kermān, ʿEmād-al-Din Faqih (q.v.; d. 1371), a fine imitator of Neẓāmi, managed a ḵanaqāh often visited by the Shiraz court. In Tabriz, Kamāl of Ḵojand (d. 1390), a poet highly admired by Hafez, brought with him the spiritual atmosphere of Khorasan and kept a famous convent visited by many seeking advice. The local rulers gave much financial support to theologians and the century produced many theological commentaries in Persian, including that of Jorjāni's (d. 1413).

In the 15th century, the Timurid princes (descendants of Tamerlane) made Herat the unrivalled center of Persian literature. A notable trait of these patrons was their love of fine manuscripts. They sponsored workshops where the finest master copyists dedicated themselves to the arts of the book. Famous were the workshops of the Timurid prince Baysonḡor (q.v.) in Samarqand, as well as those in Shiraz. Kamāl-al-Din Behzād (q.v.; d. 1535) was the master miniaturist of the latter-day Timurids and early Safavids. In Timurid literature two figures stand out: Jāmi (1414-92) and Waʿeẓ-e Kāšefi (circa 1415-1504). These men, who graced almost the entire century, were linked to each other by Naqšbandi Sufism; they took an avid interest in all the sciences and learning of their time and produced literary works of the finest quality. Kašefi, for example, rewrote to great effect the tales of *Kalila wa Dimna*, composed a narrative account of the death of the Prophet of Islam and his close descendants, the *Garden of Martyrs* (*Rowżat al-šohadāʾ*), still popular in Iran, as well as producing brilliant works on astrology, alchemy, and rhetoric. As pointed out by Angelo Michele Piemontese, with these poets the classical era of a humanist tendency ends.

The history of Persian literature from the 16th to 18th centuries is today a new and promising field of study. A pioneer in this area was the late Ḏabiḥ-Allāh Ṣafā (Zabihollah Safa). A major source for this history is the taḏkera literature—impressive anthologies of the period, compiled with encouragement from the courts. These collections provide a vivid image of the

literary scene during these centuries. A decisive factor intervenes during the mid-16th century: the Safavid princes' gradual loss of interest in Persian poetry, imbued as it was with Sufi teachings. In Persia, Shiʿism sought to guide literature towards its own goals and aspirations. The consequence of this was a kind of internationalization of Persian literature, toward India, as well as towards Ottoman-dominated countries and Central Asia. However, this process had already started owing to the widespread popularity and circulation of works by Jāmi in these cultural spheres.

India distinguished itself mainly because the courts of the Mughal princes attracted and welcomed many a poet from Tabriz, Shiraz, and Isfahan. It all began when Homāyun, who had spent some time in exile in Persia, was able to regain his throne in Delhi. A typically Indian style of Persian literature, *sabk-e hendi*, began to emerge. This style is characterized by its penchant for realism, the use of popular diction, and a complex interplay between imagery and a mode of intellectualism with refined expression akin to mannerism. According to Ehsan Yarshater, this represents the break away from classical poetry (Yarshater, 1986). Many official histories of the Mughal era began to appear, written in Persian, and major texts from Indian literature were also translated into Persian.

Among the many poets of the time, a few will be mentioned in this summary. Through the impact of his work, Feḡāni from Shiraz (q.v.; d. 1519) is the poet who marked the literary transition between the Timurid period (he was acquainted with Jāmi in Herat) and the subsequent era (Losensky). ʿOrfi (q.v.; 1555-91), also from Shiraz, was one of the first poets to settle in India, where his accomplished poetry was highly esteemed even as far as the court of Akbar. Ṣaʿeb (q.v.; d. about 1670), born to a family originally from Tabriz, was drawn to the court in Isfahan at the time of Shah Abbas the Great. A seven-year stay in India under the rule of Shah Jahan made him an innovator in the Indian style. He returned to settle in Isfahan, where he became poet laureate to Shah Abbas II. A prolific poet, he especially favored the ghazal and showed much originality in its composition. In Baghdad, Fożuli (q.v.; d. 1556) was an eminent man of letters, primarily a Turkish poet but also recognized today for the quality of his lyrical poetry in Persian.

As for the Safavids, they encouraged the composition of qaṣidas in praise of the Prophet and the Imams, as well as a rich strophic poetry of a popular religious type, often recited as elegies in Shiʿite ceremonials. In this context, quatrains also became important and experienced a revival. The decline of the

dynasty began gradually after the reign of Shah Abbas II (1662), and the literary world suffered owing to the deteriorating political conditions. The time was yet to come when, by turning to the literature of the earlier centuries, hopes for a revival of Persian letters were to materialize.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

General References. *The Cambridge History of Iran*, 7 vols., Cambridge, 1968-91.

Most volumes contain sections on the literature of the period. Ehsan Yarshater, "Iranian Historical Tradition," Vol. III/1, Pt. 3., pp. 343-477, and Gilbert Lazard, "The Rise of the New Persian Language," IV, Chap. 19, pp. 595-632, provide valuable insights into the formation of Persian classical literature. ʿAbd-al-Rasul Ḵayyāmpur, *Farhang-e soḵanvarān*, Tabriz, 1961; rev. ed. 2 vols, Tehran, 1989 (a meticulous work of reference for the bio-bibliography of Persian poets). *Dictionnaire Universel des Littératures*, ed. Béatrice Didier. 3 vols., Paris, 1994, I, pp. C-CII; III, pp. 4298-4300 (on Iranian and Turkish worlds), pp. 4319-25 (on authors between the 6th and the 15th century).

*Encyclopaedia Iranica* contains biographical articles on all major Persian writers as well thematic articles on different genres and literary terms, etc. The online list should be consulted for the latest contributions beyond the letter I. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.; see particularly J. T. P. de Bruijn, "Iran vii.–literature," in *EI2 IV*, pp. 52-75, for a succinct overview and bibliography. C. A. Storey, *Persian Literature: A Bio-bibliographical Survey*, Leiden, 1927-.

Idem, *Persidskaya literatura: Bio-bibliograficheskiĭ obzor*, ed. and tr. Yu. E. Bregel, 3 vols., Moscow, 1972.

[Storey/de Blois] François de Blois, *Persian Literature: A Bio-bibliographical Survey Begun by the late C. A. Storey*, vol. V, parts 1-3; 1992-97.

Literary history. A. J. Arberry, *Classical Persian Literature*, London, 1958.

Muhammad Abd al-Ghani, *A History of Persian Language and Literature at the Mughal Court*, 2 vols., 1929-30; repr., 2 vols., London, 1972.

Alessandro Bausani and Antonino Pagliaro, *Storia della letteratura persiana*, Milan, 1960.

E. E. Bertel's et al., *Istoriya Literatury i Kul'tury*, Moscow, 1988.

Mary Boyce, "Middle Persian Literature," in *HO* I/IV, 2/1, Leiden, 1968, pp. 31-66.

E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, 4 vols., London, 1902-24.

J. T. P. de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, *An Introduction to the Mystical Use of Classical Persian Poems*, Richmond, Surrey, 1997.

George Morrison, ed. *History of Persian Literature from the Beginning of the Islamic Period to the Present Day*, *HO* I/ IV, 2/2., Leiden and Cologne, 1981, includes contributions by George Morrison, "Persian Literature (Belles-Lettres) from the Earliest Times to the Time of Jāmī," pp. 4-81; Julian Baldick "Medieval Ṣūfī Literature in Persian Prose," pp. 83-109; Idem, "Persian Ṣūfī Poetry up to the Fifteenth Century," pp. 111-32; M.-R. Shafīʿī Kadkanī, "Persian Literature (Belles-Lettres) form the Time of Jāmī to the Present Day," pp. 133-206.

Saʿid Nafisi, *Tārīḵ-e naẓm o naṯr dar Irān*, 2 vols., Tehran, 1965. A. M. Piemontese, *Storia della Letteratura Persiana*, 2 vols., Milan, 1970.

Jan Rypka et al., *History of Iranian Literature*, ed. Karl Jahn, Dordrecht, 1968.

Šebli Noʿmāni, *Šeʿr al-ʿajam*, tr. into Persian by M.-T. Faḵr-e Dāʿi Gilāni, 5 vols., Tehran, 1939; 2nd. ed. 1956.

Ḏabiḥ-Allāh Ṣafā (Zabihollah Safa), *Tārīḵ-e adabiyāt dar Irān*, 1953-; I-V, Tehran, 1954-83.

Aḥmad Tafażżoli, *Tārīḵ-e adabiyāt-e Irān piš az Eslām*, Tehran, 1997. Ehsan Yarshater, ed., *Persian Literature*, Bib. Pers., Albany, N.Y., 1988.

Michaël I. Zand, *Nur-o ẓolmaṭ dar tārīḵ-e adabiyāt-e Irān*, tr. Asadpur Pirānfar, Tehran, 1972; Eng. tr. as *Six Centuries of Glory. Essays on Medieval Literature of Iran and Transoxania*, Moscow, 1967.

ʿAbd-al-Ḥosayn Zarrinkub, *Seyri dar šeʿr-e fārsi*, Tehran, 1984 (a good anthology with critical comments).

Taḏkeras and critical anthologies. Loṭf-ʿAli Beyg Āḏar, *Ātaškada*, ed. Ḥasan Sādāt-e Nāṣeri, 3 vols., Tehran, 1958-62.

Moḥammad ʿAwfi, *Lobāb al-albāb*, ed. E. G. Browne and M. Qazvini, Leiden and London, 1906.

Aḥmad Edārat¨i-Gilāni, *Šāʿerān-e ʿaṣr-e Rudaki*, Tehran, 1991 (a comprehensive account of poets in the 3rd-5th centuries A.H. which complements de Blois and Modabberi and Lazard, s.v. in providing a full account of the earliest specimens of poetry in Persian).

Badiʿ-al-Zamān Foruzānfar, *Soḵan wa soḵanvarān*, 2 vols., 1929-33; 2nd ed., partially revised, Tehran, 1971 (still valuable for the author's astute introductory comments on different poets.) Dawlatšāh Samarqandi, *Taḏkerat al-šoʿarāʾ*, ed. E. G. Browne as *The Tadhkiratu'sh-shu'ará ("Memoirs of the Poets") of Dawlatsháh . . .* , Leiden and London, 1901.

Aḥmad Golčin-e Maʿāni, *Kārvān-e Hend. Dar aḥwāl wa āṯār-e šāʿerān-e ʿaṣr-e ṣafawi ke be Hend raftand*, 2 vols., Mašhad, 1990.

Idem, *Tāriḵ-e taḏkerahā-ye fārsi*, 2 vols., Tehran, 1969-71.

Vera Basch Moreen, *In Queen Esther's Garden, An Anthology of Judeo-Persian Literature*, New Haven, 2000.

Moḥammad Badr-e Jājarmi, *Munes al-aḥrār men daqāʾeq al-ašʿār*, ed. Mir Ṣāleḥ Ṭabibi, 2 vols., Tehran, 1959-71.

Moḥammad ʿAli Ḥazin-e Lāhiji, *Taḏkerat al-moʿāṣerin*, ed. M. Sālek, Tehran, 1996.

Maḥmud Modabberi, *Šarḥ-e aḥwāl o ašʿār-e šāʿerān-e bi-diwāŋ*, Tehran, 1991.

Jamāl Ḵalil-e Šervāni, *Nozhat al-majāles*, ed. Moḥammad Amin Riāḥi, 2nd. ed., Tehran, 1996.

Reżāqoli Khan Hedāyat, *Majmaʿ al-foṣaḥāʾ*, ed. Maẓāher Moṣaffā, 2 vols. in 6, Tehran, 1957-61.

Gilbert Lazard, *Les premiers poètes persans (IXe-Xe siècles): Fragments rassemblés, édités et traduits*, 2 vols., Tehran and Liège, 1964.

Henri Massé, *Anthologie persane (XIe-XIXe siècles)*, Paris, 1950, repr. 1996.

Moḥammad Ṭāḥer Naṣrābādi, *Taḏkerat al-šoʿarā*, ed. M. Nāji Naṣrābādi, 2 vols., Tehran, 1999.

ʿAli-šir Navāʾi, *Majāles al-nafāʾes*, tr. Faḵri Herāti and Ḥakim Shah Moḥammad Qazvini, ed. ʿA.-A. Ḥekmat, Tehran, 1944.

ʿAbd-al-Nabi Qazvini, *Taḏkera-ye meyḵāna*, ed. Aḥmad Golčin-e Maʿāni, Tehran, 1961.

Amin Aḥmad Rāzi, *Haft eqlim*, ed. Jawād Fāżel, 3 vols., Tehran, 1961.

Sām Mirzā Ṣafawi, *Toḥfa-ye sāmi*, ed. Ḥasan Waḥid Dastgerdi, Tehran, 1935.

Historical texts and Mirrors for Princes. Anon., *Baḥr al-Fawāʾed*, tr. Julie Scott Meisami as *The Sea of Precious Virtues (Bahr al-Favâʾid). A Medieval Mirror for Princes*, Salt Lake City, 1991.

Abu ʿAli Moḥammad Balʿami, *Tāriḵ-e Balʿami*, ed. M.-T. Bahār, Tehran, 1962.

Idem, *Tāriḵ-nāma-ye Ṭabari gardānida-ye mansub be Balʿami*, ed. Moḥammad Rowšan, 3 vols., Tehran, 1987 (supplements Bahār's ed. by including the later volumes after the rise of Islam and the early caliphate).

Abu'l-Fażl Bayhaqi, *Tāriḵ-e masʿudi*, ed. ʿA.-A. Fayyāż, Mašhad, 1971.

ʿAlāʾ-al-Din ʿAṭā Malek Joveyni, *Tāriḵ-e jahāngošā*, ed. Moḥammad Qazvini, GMS, 3 vols., Leiden and London, 1906-37; tr. J. A. Boyle as *The History of the World-Conqueror*, 2 vols., Manchester, 1958.

Moḥammad Ḡazāli, *Naṣiḥat al-moluk*, tr. F. R. C. Bagley as *Ghazâli's Book of Counsel for Kings*, London, 1964.

Kaykāvus b. Eskandar b. Qābus, ʿOnṣor al-Maʿāli, *Qābus-nāma*, tr. Reuben Levy as *A Mirror for Princes; the Qabūs-nāma*, London and New York, 1951.

Moḥammad b. ʿAli Rāvandi, *Rāḥat al-ṣodur wa āyat al-sorur*, ed. M. Eqbal, London, 1921.

Manuals of rhetoric and prosody. Moḥammad b. ʿOmar Rāduyāni, *Tarjomān al-balāga*, ed. Ahmed Ateş, Istanbul, 1949.

Šams-al-Din Moḥammad b. Qays Rāzi, *al-Moʿjam fi maʿāʾir aš ʿār al-ʿajam*, ed. Moḥammad Qazvini and M.-T. Modarres Rażawi, Tehran, 1959.

Rašid-al-Din Moḥammad Waṭwāṭ, *Ḥadāʾeq al-Seḥr fi daqāʾeq al-šeʿr*, ed. ʿA. Eqbāl-Aštiāni, Tehran, 1929; repr. 1994.

General bibliography (including monographs on poets, and references in the text). A. J. Arberry, *FitzGerald's Salaman and Absal, A Study*, Cambridge, 1956.

Farid-al-Din ʿAṭṭār, *Elāhi-nāma*, ed. Fuʾad Ruhani (Foʾād Ruḥāni), Tehran, 1960.

Bābā Ṭāher ʿOryān, *Quartine (do-beyti)*. ed. and tr. into Italian by Gabriele Rebecchi, Istituto Culturale della Republica Islamica dell'Iran in Italia, Rome, 1990.

Aturpāt-i Ēmētān, *The Wisdom of the Sasanian Sages (Dēnkard VI)*, tr. Shaul Shaked, Boulder, Col., 1979.

H. W. Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems in the Ninth-Century Books*, Oxford, 1943; repr. with a new introd., London, 1971.

Christophe Balay, Claire Kappler and Živa Vesel, *Pand-o Sokhan: Mélanges offert à Charles-Henri de Fouchécour*, Tehran, 1995.

A. L. F. A. Beelaert, *A Cure for the Grieving: Studies on the Poetry of the 12th-Century Persian Court Poet Khāqānī Širwanī*, Bruges, 1996.

François de Blois, *Burzōy's Voyage to India and the Origin of the Book of Kalīlah wa Dimnah*, London, 1990.

Jonathan M. Bloom, *Paper Before Print: The History and Impact of Paper in the Islamic World*, New Haven, 2001.

C. E. Bosworth, "The Development of Persian Culture under the Early Ghaznavids," *Iran* 6, 1968, pp. 33-44.

Idem, "The Tāhirids and Persian Literature," *Iran* 7, 1969, pp. 103-6.

Idem, "The Interaction of Arabic and Persian Literature and Culture in the

10th and Early 11th Centuries," *al-Abḥāṯ* (al-Abhath) 27, 1978-79, pp. 59-75.

Mary Boyce, "The Parthian Gōsān and the Iranian Minstrel Tradition," *JRAS* 18, 1957, pp. 10-45.

J. A. Boyle, "The Chronology of Saʿdi's Years of Travel," in R. Gramlich, ed., *Islamwissenschaftliche Abhandlungen Fritz Meier zum sechzigsten Geburstag*, Wiesbaden, 1974, pp. 1-8.

J. T. P. de Bruijn, *Of Piety and Poetry: The Interaction of Religion and Literature in the Life and Works of Ḥakīm Sanāʾī of Ghazna*, Leiden, 1983.

Claude Cahen, "Notes sur l'histriographie dans la communauté musulmane médiévale," in *L'enseignement en Islam*, *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*, Hors Série 13, pp. 81-88.

Bernard Cerquiglini, *Eloge de la variante: histoire critique de la philologie*, Paris, 1989.

Henry Corbin, *Avicenne et le récit visionnaire*, 2nd. ed. Tehran, 1954; tr. W. R. Trask as *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, London, 1960.

H. J. Chaytor, *From Script to Print; an Introduction to Medieval Literature*, Cambridge, 1945.

Jerome W. Clinton, *The Divan of Manūchihrī Dāmghānī. A Critical Study*, Minneapolis, 1972.

Dick Davis, *Epic and Sedition: The Case of Ferdowsi's Shāhnāmeh*, Fayetteville, Ark., 1992.

Idem, *Panthea's Children: Hellenistic Novels and Medieval Persian Romances*, New York, 2002.

Olga M. Davidson, *Poet and Hero in the Persian Book of Kings*, Ithaca and London, 1994; rev. ed., 2006.

Ebn Ḵordāḏbeh, *Ketāb al-masālek wa'l-mamālek*, ed. M. J. de Goeje, BGA, Leiden, 1889; 2nd ed., Leiden, 1967.

L. P. Elwell-Sutton, "The "Rubāʿī" in Early Persian Literature," in *Camb. Hist. Iran* IV, pp. 633-57."

Idem, *The Persian Metres*, Cambridge, 1976.

Abu'l-Qāsem Ferdowsi, *Šāh-nāma*, ed. Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, Bib. Pers., Persian Text Series, n.s. 1, New York, 1987; ed. and tr. Jules Mohl, 7 vols., Paris, 1838-78; ed. E. E. Bertel's et al., 9 vols., Moscow, 1960-71; new ed., ed. R. M. Aliev and M.-N. O. Osmanov, Tehran, 1971-.

Teresa Fitzherbert, "Portrait of a Lost Leader. Jalal al-Din Kharazmshah and Juvaini," in J. Raby and T. Fitzherbert, eds., *The Court of the Il-khans 1290-1340*, Oxford, 1996, pp. 63-77.

Richard Nelson Frye, *The Golden Age of Persia: The Arabs in the East*, London, 1975.

Charles-Henri de Fouchécour, *La description de la nature dans la poésie lyrique persane du XIe siècle. Inventaire et analyse des thèmes*, Paris, 1969.

Idem, "Une lecture du *Livre des Rois* de Ferdowsi," *Stud. Ir.* 5/2, 1976, pp. 171-201.

Idem, *Moralia; Les notions morales dans la littérature persane du 3e/9e au 7e/13e siècle*, Paris, 1986.

Idem and B. A. Rosenfeld, "ʿUmar Khayyam," in *EI2* X, pp. 827-34, Leiden, 2000.

Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes*, Oxford, 1982.

Marina Gaillard, *Le Livre de Samak-e ʻAyyâr. Structure et idéologie du roman persan médiéval*, Paris, 1987.

T. Gandjei, "The Genesis and Definition of a Literary Composition: the *Dah-nāma* ('Ten love-letters')," *Der Islam* 47, 1971, pp. 59-66.

Lois Anita Giffen, *Theory of Profane Love among the Arabs: The Development of the Genre*, New York, 1971.

Daniel Gimaret, ed., *Le livre de Bilawhar et Būḏāsf selon la version arabe ismélienne*, Geneva and Paris, 1971.

Mario Grignaschi, "Quelques spécimens de la littérature sassanide conservés dans les bibliothèques d'Istanbul," *JA* 1966, pp. 1-142.

Idem, “La *Nihātu-l-ʿarab fī akhbāri-l-Furs wa-l-ʿArab* (première partie),” *Bulletin des Etudes Orientales* 22, 1969, pp. 15-67.

Idem, “*La Nihātu-l-ʿarab fī akhbāri-l-Furs wa-l-ʿArab* et les *Siyaru Mulūki-l-ʿAjam* du Ps. Ibn-al-Muqaffaʾ,” *Bulletin des Etudes Orientales* 26, 1973, pp. 83-124.

Thomas Hägg and Bo Utas, *The Virgin and her Lover, Fragments of an Ancient Greek Novel and a Persian Epic Poem*, Leiden and Boston, 2003.

W. B. Henning, “Mitteliranisch,” in B. Spuler, ed., *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, 1, Abt., 4. Bd. *Iranistik*, 1. Abshnitt: *Linguistik*, Leiden and Cologne, 1958, pp. 79-80.

ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān Jāmi, *Salāmān o Absāl; (wa maqulāti dar tamṯil-šenāsi)* ed. with introd. and notes by Moḥammad Rowšan, Tehran, 1994.

Asʿad E. Khairallah, *Love, Madness, and Poetry: An Interpretation of the Mağnūn Legend*, Beiruter Texte und Studien, Bd. 25, Beirut and Wiesbaden, 1980.

Parviz Nātel Ḵānlari, *Šahr-e Samak*, Tehran, 1985.

Arona Krasnowolska, *Some Key Figures of Iranian Calendar Mythology (Winter and Spring)*, Cracow, 1998.

Gilbert Lazard, *La langue des plus ancients monuments de la prose persane*, Paris, 1963.

Idem, “La dialectologie du judéo-persan,” in *Studies in and Booklore* VIII/2-4, 1968; repr. in *La formation de la langue persane*, Paris, 1995, pp. 27-48.

Idem, “La source en ‘fârsi’ de *Vis-o-Râmin*” in *Trudi Tblisskogo Ordena* 241, 1983, pp. 34-39.

Idem, “Encore la versification pehlevie,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 26, 2002, pp. 130-39.

Idem, “Du pehlevi au persan: diachronie ou diatopie,” in Ludwig Paul, ed., *Early Judaeo-Persian and the Emergence of New Persian*, Wiesbaden, 2003, pp. 95-102.

Serge de Laugier de Beaurecueil, *Khwādja ʿAbdullāh Anṣāri, Mystique*

*Hanbalite*, Beirut, 1965. Franklin D. Lewis, *Rumi—Past and Present, East and West*, Oxford, 2000.

Paul E. Losensky, *Welcoming Fighānī: Imitation and Poetic Individuality in the Safavid-Mughal* Ghazal, Costa Mesa, Calif., 1998.

M. C. Lyons, *The Arabian Epic. Heroic and Oral Story-telling*, 3 vols., Cambridge, 1995.

Moḥammad Jaʿfar Maḥjub, *Sabk-e ḵorāsāni dar šeʿr-e fārsi*, Tehran, 1967.

Jawād Maqṣud, *Šarḥ-e ahwāl o āṯār wa do-bayti-hā-ye Bābā Ṭāher-e ʿOryān*, 1st ed., Tehran, 1975; 3rd ed., 1997.

Julie Scott Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry*, Princeton, 1987.

Idem, "Ghaznavid Panegyrics: Some Political Implications," *Iran* 28, 1990, pp. 31-44.

Idem, *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century*, Edinburgh, 1999.

A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, "L'évocation littéraire du bouddhisme dans l'Iran musulman," *Le Monde Iranien et l'Islam* 2, 1974, pp. 1-72.

Idem, "The Wine-Bull and the Magian Master," in Ph. Gignoux ed., *Recurrent Patterns in Iranian Religions*, Cahiers Studia Iranica, Paris, 1992.

Daniela Meneghini, *Letteratura persianan in epoca selgiuchide (429-615/1037-1218)*, Venice, 2004.

V. Minorsky, "Vis u Rāmīn, A Parthian Romance," final rev. version in V. Minorsky, *Iranica. Twenty Articles*, Publications of the University of Tehran Vol. 775, Tehran, 1964, pp. 151-99.

Marijan Molé, "L'épopée iranienne après Firdousi," *Nouvelle Clio* 5, 1943, pp. 377-93.

Idem, "Vis u Rāmīn" et l'histoire seldjoukide," *Annali* (Naples), N.S. 9, 1960, pp. 1-30.

Idem, "Les Kubrawiya entre sunnisme et shiisme aux huitième et neuvieme

siècles de l'hégire," *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* 29, 1961, pp. 61-142.

Idem, *Les Mystique Musulmans*, Paris, 1965.

A. H. Morton, "The *Mu'nis al-aḥrār* and Its Twenty-ninth Chapter," in M. L. Swietochowski and S. Carboni, *Illustrated Poetry and Epic Images. Persian Painting of the 1330s and 1340*, New York, 1994.

Saʿid Nafisi, *Aḥwāl o ašʿār-e Rudaki*, 3 vols., Tehran, 1930-40; 2nd ed., Tehran, 1962.

Nezāmi Ganjavi, *Haft Paykar*, tr. with intr. and notes by Julie Scott Meisami as *The Haft Paykar: A Medieval Persian Romance*, Oxford and New York, 1955.

Muḥammad Niẓámu'd-dín, *Introduction to The Jawámiʿu'l-ḥikáyát wa lawámiʿuŕ-riwáyát*, London, 1929.

M. N. Osmanov. "*Ḵodāy-nāma*hā wa *Šāh-nāma*-ye maʾḵaḏ-e Ferdowsi," *Jašn-nāma-ye Moḥammad Parvin-e Gonābādi*, ed. M. Abu'l-Qāsemi, Tehran, 1975, pp. 287-332.

David Perkins, *Is Literary History Possible*, Baltimore, 1993.

Charles Pellat, tr., *Le Livre de la couronne: Kitāb at-tāǧ (fī aḫlāq al-mulūk)*, attributed to Jahiz, Paris, 1954.

Francis Richard, "Un cas de 'succès littéraire' : la diffusion des oeuvres poétiques de Jâmî de Hérât à travers de le Proche-Orient," in F. Richard, *Le livre persan*, Paris, 2003.

Moḥammad Amin Riāḥi, *Zabān o adab-e fārsi dar qalamro-ye ʿoṯmāni*, Tehran, 1990.

Idem, *Sarčašmahā-ye Ferdowsi-šenāsi*, Tehran, 1993.

Hellmut Ritter, *Über die Bildersprache Niẓāmīs*, Berlin and Leipzig, 1927.

Idem, *Das Meer der Seele: Mensch, Welt und Gott in den Geschichten des Farīduddin ʿAttār*, Leiden, 1955, tr. into Eng. by John O'Kane with ed. assistance of Bernd Radtke as *The Ocean of the Soul: Man, the World and God in the Stories of Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār*, Leiden and Boston, 2003.

W. F. Ryan and Charles B. Schmitt, eds., *Pseudo-Aristotle, The "Secret of Secrets," Sources and Influences*, Warburg Institute Surveys 9, London, 1982.

Annemarie Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun, A Study of the Works of Jalāloddin Rumi*, 1978.

Idem, *A Two-Colored Brocade: The Imagery of Persian Poetry*, Chapel Hill, 1992.

Moḥammad-Reżā Šafiʿi-Kadkani, *Ṣowar-e ḵiāl dar šeʿr-e fārsi*, 2nd ed., Tehran, 1979.

Idem, *Jāneb-e ʿerfāni-ye maḏhab-e Kerāmmia*, Tokyo, 1999.

Marta Simidchieva, "Imitation and Innovation in Timurid Poetics: Kashifi's *Badāyi' al-afkār* and its Predecessors, *al-Mu'jam* and *Ḥadāiq al-siḥr*," *Iranian Studies* 6/4, 2003, pp. 509-30.

The entire issue of the journal is devoted to Kāšefi. M. E. Subtleny, "Scenes from the Literary Life of Timurid Herat," in *Logos Islamikos: Studia Islamica in honorem Georgii Michaelis Wickens*, ed. R. M. Savory and D. A. Agius, Toronto, 1984, pp. 137-55.

Idem, "A Taste for the Intricate: the Persian Poetry of the Late Timurid Period," *ZDMG* 136, 1986, pp. 56-79.

Wheeler M. Thackston, *A Millennium of Classical Persian Poetry. A Guide to the Reading and Understanding of Persian Poetry from the Tenth to the Twentieth Century*, Bethesda, Md., 1994. F. Thiesen, *A Manual of Classical Persian Prosody*, Wiesbaden, 1982.

Bo Utas, "The Literary Expression of Persian Sufism," in *Mysticism*, Coll. Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis V, Uppsala, 1970, pp. 206-19.

Jean Claude Vadet, *L'esprit courtois en Orient dans les cinq premiers siècles de l'Hégire*, Paris, 1968.

Ehsan Yarshater, "Persian Poetry in the Timurid and Safavid Periods," in *Camb. Hist. Iran* VI, 1986.

Idem, "The Indian or Safavid Style: Progress or Decline?" in E. Yarshater, ed., *Persian Literature*, New York, 1988, pp. 249-88.

Idem, “The Persian Presence in the Islamic World,” in Richard G. Hovannisian and Georges Sabagh, eds., *The Persian Presence in the Islamic World*, Cambridge, 1998.

R. C. Zaehner, *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, Oxford and London, 1960.

Mohsen Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers in Early Muslim Society: The Origins of ʿAyyārān and Futuwwa*, Wiesbaden, 1995.

Ricardo Zipoli, *Encoding and Decoding Neopersian Poetry*, Rome, 1988.