



IRANIAN IDENTITY III. MEDIEVAL ISLAMIC PERIOD

IRANIAN IDENTITY

iii. MEDIEVAL ISLAMIC PERIOD

Following the cultural shock and the crisis of identity that occurred in the first century after the fall of the Sasanids, the urban literati of Persian origin began to reconstruct the cultural idea of Iran within the Islamic society. A modified version of the pre-modern, Sasanid ethno-national identity, this new cultural identity does not bear much resemblance to the modern notions of political and “civic-national identity” (for definitions, see i, above; for the Sasanid period, see ii, above). The emergence of a new form of Persian as the literary language of Iran, as well as a gradual revival of Iranian traditional history, helped buttress the new Iranian cultural identity. The Persian cultural revival, beginning in the early Abbasid Caliphate, accelerated during the reign of Iranian regional dynasties and laid the foundation of Iranian cultural identity for centuries to come (see [IRAN iii. TRADITIONAL HISTORY](#)).

This manner of revival and reconstruction of the Iranian identity was unparalleled among the other ancient cultural areas that were incorporated into the Islamic world. Thus, while Syria and Egypt lost their languages under the hegemony of Arabic, Iran survived as the main cultural area in the emerging Islamic empire that maintained its distinct linguistic and cultural



identity (see, e.g., Frye, pp. 1-6).

A number of authors have recently questioned the revival and reconstruction of Iranian identity in the Islamic period. They contend that the idea of Iran and the continuity of its dynastic history is a modern construct, ‘invented’ by western Orientalists in the 18th and 19th centuries. Even the name “Iran,” they argue, had been rarely used in classical Persian literature, and its frequent use in the *Šāh-nāma* referred to the pre-Islamic era and not to its contemporary existence (Vaziri, 1993; Fragner, 1999). Such interpretations of Iranian identity seem to have been influenced by Eurocentric notions of national identity, drawn from Western civic-territorial experiences of nationhood and nationalism. Pre-modern, non-Western nations do not fit easily into this ethnocentric Western paradigm. The idea of nationhood in societies of Asia is often derived from fictive genealogical and territorial origins and vernacular culture and religion, whereas Western ideas of nationhood have been historically based on the specific boundaries, the development of legal-rational communities, and civic cultures (see Smith, 2004, pp. 132-34; see also i, above).

The present entry examines the revival of Iranian identity and repeated construction in Persian literature of its pre-modern ethno-national historiography from the 9th to the 18th century, long before the emergence of Western nationalism or ‘Orientalism.’ Iranian identity and the pattern of the use of the term “Iran” in Persian literature evolved in four main phases in the medieval Islamic era: a revival phase under the Persian regional dynasties; a rather complex phase under the Saljuqs, a resurgence phase under the Mongols and Timurids; and finally, the formation of a hybrid Iranian-Shi’ite identity under the Safavids.

IRANIAN IDENTITY IN THE EARLY ISLAMIC PERIOD

The resistance movements. The initial Persian response to the Arab domination seems to have manifested itself in various sectarian movements against the Umayyad rule either through participating in the Kharejite revolts or in the Shi’ite movements (see [IRAN ix/2.1. The Advent of Islam in Iran](#)). Influenced by pre-Islamic religious ideas, specially Mazdakism, Persian peasants and artisans took part in a series of rebellions against the Arab domination during the early Abbasid era, including those of Behā-farīd (q.v.), Sonbād the Magian, Ostādsis, Moqanna’, Bābak, and Māziār (see Sadighi, 1937; Yarshater, 1983b). There is some uncertainty, however, regarding the extent to which “national,” or more accurately “ethnic” sentiments, were involved in these revolts.



According to some historians, a strong “national” sentiment or even resurrection (*rastākiz*) was at the core of these rebellious movements (see, e.g., Zarrinkub, 1957, pp. 207-66). On the other hand, M. Rekaya sees these movements as last-ditch efforts by members of the old elite to hold on to their privileges and devoid of any “national” sentiments (Rekaya, 1973, 1974). Taking a historicizing perspective, H. A. R. Gibb, sees these anti-Arab and anti-Islamic movements as manifestations of Persian resistance “if nationalism is too strong or misleading a term” (Gibb, p. 66; see also Minorsky, 1955, p. 243). Regardless of motivations, it is plausible to assume that the participants in these movements were inspired by various elements of pre-Islamic Persian cultural heritage. The revival of the cultural idea of Iran in the context of the Islamic civilization, however, occurred primarily through the efforts of the Persian literati in the early part of the Abbasid Caliphate and under the rule of Persian regional dynasties.

Iranian regional dynasties. The rise of the Abbasid Caliphate in the mid-8th century—with strong Persian support—helped to bring about the downfall of the Umayyad rule with its policy of Arab supremacy (see Agha, 2003). The shift of the center of the Islamic empire from Syria to Iraq, the central province of the Sasanid empire bearing the rich legacy of Persian and Persianized Aramaean cultures, contributed further to the revival of Iranian identity (see Yarshater, 1998, pp. 54-74; see also Moḥammadi Malāyeri). Furthermore, the rise of *de facto* autonomous Iranian dynasties during the 9th and 10th centuries—in Khorasan (Taherids, 820-872, and Saffarids, 868-903), Central Asia (Samanids, 914-999), and the Caspian region, central, southern, and western Iran (Ziyarids, Kakuyids, and Buyids [q.v.], 932-1056)—contributed significantly to the revival of Persian cultural heritage (see Frye, pp. 186-212). The desire of these dynasties to identify themselves as “Iranians” was manifested in their invented genealogies, which described them as descendents of pre-Islamic kings, and legends as well as the use of the title of *šāhanšāh* by the Buyid rulers (*Tāriḵ-e Sistān*, pp. 200-202; Minorsky, 1955, pp. 244-45; Amedroz, 1905, pp. 393-99; Stern, 1971, p. 538; Bosworth, 1973, pp. 51-62; Madelung, 1969, pp. 168-83). These dynasties provided the Persian literati with the opportunity to revive the idea of Iran.

Persian literati. As an influential stratum in Iran’s social hierarchy in the Islamic society, the Persian literati or the “men of the pen” (*ahl-e qalam*), consisted of bureaucrats—including viziers, scribes (*dabirs*), and accountants (*mostawfis*)—men of letters and poets, historians and geographers,



philosophers and Islamic theologians, jurists, and scholars of traditional sciences. *Dabirs* (q.v.), who had survived as a distinct social class after the Arab conquest of Persia, constituted the core of the emerging Persian literati and civilian administration (see *DIVĀN* iv). They played a significant role in the transmission of pre-Islamic bureaucratic skills and lifestyles under the Arab caliphs and later under Iranian local dynasties and the Turkish potentates. In effect, they provided the social base for the institution of the vizierate. The vizier was the head of the supreme *divān*, and as such was the head of the government's bureaucracy. A common feature of medieval society was the existence of influential bureaucratic families of Persian origin, such as the Jeyhānis, the Bal'amis (qq.v.) and 'Otbis under the Samanids, the family of Neẓām-al-Molk in the Saljuq period, and, the Jovaynis (q.v.) and the family of Rašid-al-Din Faẓl-Allāh under the Il-khanids (see *DABIR* ii; Klausner, pp. 37-81). The *dehqāns* (q.v.) also helped the reconstruction of Persian culture from pre-Islamic to the Islamic period. As regional landed gentry, *dehqāns* administered local affairs and collected taxes during the late Sasanid era. In the early Islamic period, *dehqāns* played a significant part in the transmission of stories from the Iranian epic, *Šāh-nāma*, Iranian traditional history, and romances of pre-Islamic Iran (see also Tafazzoli, 2000).

Persian literati performed their task by contributing to the formation of the administrative apparatus of the Abbasid empire on the Sasanid model, translation of major works of traditional history and ethics from Middle Persian into Arabic and production of Persian recension of them, reconstruction of Persian genealogies for the Iranian regional dynasties, and initiation and promotion of the *šo'ubiya* literary movement.

The šo'ubiya movement. Those members of Persian literati and a number of Arab poets and prose writers, who were active in the *šo'ubiya* controversy during the 9th and 10th centuries, contributed significantly to the rise of Persian literature and the revival of Iranian cultural identity. Over time, the key term of the Qor'anic verse 49:13, characterized as the divine order for the equality of all peoples (*šo'ub*) within Islam, was used to refer to a diffuse literary movement known as *šo'ubiya*. The Persian literati used the verse to claim equality with, or supremacy to, the Arab aristocracy. The contrast between the glorious, pre-Islamic Persian civilization and the primitive and unsophisticated tribal lifestyle of the Arab Bedouins is the main theme of the *šo'ubi* literature, which generally satirizes Arabs for their diet of snakes, mice, lizards, and camel milk. Some of the *šo'ubis* went so far as to deny any virtue



in the Arab culture or even in Islam. A vivid example of the claim for Persian superiority may be seen in a poem by Ebrāhim b. Mamšād of Isfahan, a panegyric written for the Saffarid, Ya'qub b. Layṭ: "I am the son of the noble descendants of Jam, and the inheritance of the kings of Persia has fallen to my lot. ... I am reviving their glory, which has been lost and effaced by the length of time. ... Say then to all sons of Hashem: Return to your country in the Hejaz, to eat lizards and to graze your sheep. ... For I shall mount the throne of kings, by the help of the edge of my sword and the point of my pen" (cited in Yaqut, *Eršād al-arīb*, pp. 322-23; English tr. from Stern, 1971, pp. 541-42). The *šo'ubiya* controversy may be seen as a vivid manifestation of the revival of Iranian ethnic pride and the cultural identity of the time, a variant of pre-modern ethno-nationalism (for a nationalistic interpretation of the movement, see; Homā'i; Šafā, *Adabiyāt* I, 3rd ed., 1959, pp. 25-29; Zarrinkub, 2004, pp. 296-301; as well as Ignaz Goldziher, 1889, tr. 1966, pp. 137-200; and Samuel Stern, p. 545; for modernist denial of a nationalistic element in the movement, see G. Lecomte, p. xiii; and Fragner, 1999, pp. 16-18; for a balanced, historicizing view, see, Gibb, 1953; and Mottahedeh, 1976).

Reexamining the meaning of *šo'ub* in the Qor'ān commentaries, Mottahedeh has argued convincingly that the meaning of *ša'b* in many Persian commentaries, and other sources, does not refer to a large confederacy of genealogically arranged tribes or *qabā'el*, but to the territorial identification of non-Arab social groups. In this reading of the text, *šo'ub* clearly refers to Persians and other non-Arabs, who were for the most part sedentary peoples, identifying themselves with a locality. Iranian identity was, therefore, reconstructed mainly on the basis of a territorially oriented view of the origin of the Iranian peoples: those who lived in any part of the Iranian territory (*Irānzamin* or *Irānšahr*) and thus had presumably descended from fictive Iranian ancestors and shared a common Persian culture. This broad basis for the post-Islamic construction of Iranian identity seems to have survived until modern times, providing the foundation for the construction of a distinct Iranian "national identity."

The *šo'ubiya* literary movement not only signified the revival of Iranian ethnic pride, but also became a motivating force for preservation and dissemination of Iran's traditional history and cultural heritage with the aid of the emerging Persian literary language.

Persian literature and the revival of Iranian identity. It is widely acknowledged that the rise of the Persian literature during the 9th-11th centuries



significantly helped the reconstruction of a distinct Iranian cultural identity during the medieval Islamic era. Evolved from *dari* (q.v.), a vernacular of the eastern regions, the new literature soon developed from a simple, popular folk poetry to the language of the court and the bureaucracy, producing a stylistically refined and sophisticated poetry. Iran, for the first time in her long history, had a cultivated, standardized literary language that became a medium of communication widely accepted by all peoples within its boundaries. It expanded from Khorasan and Transoxania to the central, southern, and western regions and eventually became the *lingua franca* of the chancery and literati of most Islamic dynasties (see [IRAN viii. PERSIAN LITERATURE](#); see also Lazard; Wickens; Richter-Bernburg).

The desire to preserve the ethno-national history of Iran, as depicted in *k̄wadāy-nāmaqs*, may have been a motive for the Persian literati to promote a written literature in the late Sasanid period as well as New Persian literature in the early Islamic era. It was in these critical periods that the construction of Iranian identity by rearrangement of Persian mythologies, legendry narratives, and factual history took place: “A clear concept of Persian identity permeates the traditional history—a concept that may have originated in the Achaemenid period, but was definitely embraced by the Sasanids, who by calling themselves ‘kings of Iran and non Iran (*an-ērān*)’ clearly distinguished their own nation from the rest” ([IRAN iii. TRADITIONAL HISTORY](#), p. 300). The arranged “nationalistic spirit of Sasanid tradition,” as Ehsan Yarshater has noted, intended to promote ethnic pride leading to a sense of pre-modern “national identity” for Iranian people. He makes a clear distinction between a belief in the ‘primordial’ origin of Iranian people and Iran’s factual history. What is implied by his analysis is that it was the primordial feature of these myths and symbols, rather than the truth of their historical narratives, that provided the Iranian people with a sense of common origin as a pre-modern “nation.” These symbols and myths had long been used as ‘border guardians’ for preserving the cultural identity of Iranians against the inroads of non-Iranians (*anērān*), including the Turanians, and the Hephthalites (q.v.). Preserved and disseminated by the *šāh-nāmas*, these historical memories laid the foundation of Iranian cultural identity as preserved in classical Persian literature.

The first part of Ferdowsi’s (q.v.) *Šāh-nāma* reveals the roots of Iranian identity in ancient mythology. Ahura Mazda created the first man and the first king who laid the foundation of Iranian origin. It was the Kayanid Faridun



(see FARE'əDUN) who divided the world into three parts with peoples of distinct ethnic characters and identities. Examining the basic characters of his three sons, Faridun assigned them to rule over the people of similar characters. Iran, occupying the middle clime, the best part of the world, was assigned to Iraj (q.v.), while *Rum* (Greece and Rome), on Iran's western flank, was assigned to Salm, and Turān and China, on the eastern flank, were assigned to Tur. Salm, the king of Rum, is the prototype of the wise, patient ruler. Tur, the king of "Turān and Čin" (i.e., Central Asia) is characterized as being impatient, courageous, and passionate. Iraj, the king of Iran, partakes of both these traits in his character. He is wise, patient, and prudent yet able to act swiftly and boldly if warranted (*Šāh-nāma*, ed. Khaleghi I, pp. 104-55; for further discussion of Iranian ethnic character, see Ashraf, 1994).

Rooted deeply in Persian cosmology and cosmogony (q.v.), an important element of Iranian identity is the notion that Iran is destined to be buffeted forever by its external enemies, who, out of jealousy and fear, conspire continually against the kingdom and its people. The enemies of Iran, be they the wise Westerners or the fearless people of the East, are linked to the evil forces of Ahriman. *Iran* itself, came into being at the same time as *anērān* ("non-Iran" or "anti-Iran"). During the reign of the Kayanids a war breaks out among the three parts of the world, with the conflict between Iran and Turān reaching a new height. Alexander invades Iran, overthrows the Kayanids, and on the advice of his mentor, Aristotle, concocts the second major conspiracy against Iran by dividing the country into several regions, leading to the rule of local princes and governors (*moluk al-ṭawāyef*). This is done in the hope of obviating the Persian threat against the West (Greek and Roman world; for Aristotle's letter to Alexander, see Stern, 1970, pp. 25-34). Even worse is his pillaging of Persian cultural treasures of sacred knowledge, philosophy, science, and technology, some of which are translated while the original versions are destroyed. As a result, the translation of Greek works to Persian during the late Sasanid era and to Arabic during the early Islamic period may be seen as returning the Persian repertoire of knowledge back into the hands of their original possessors (see Bailey, p. 155; Ebn al-Nadim, p. 300; *Mojmal al-tawāriḵ wa'l-qeṣasá*, p. 10; see also Gutas, pp. 34-52).

Many of the myths surrounding these events, as they appear in the *Šāh-nāma*, were of Sasanid origin, during whose reign political and religious authority become fused and the comprehensive idea of Iran was constructed (see [IRAN iii. TRADITIONAL HISTORY](#); see also Gnoli, 1988; and ii, above).



The idea of fusing Zoroastrian and Abrahamic traditions through creating genealogical links between Persian kings and Biblical prophets, or even merging them into one as reflections of the same entity, as conceived, *inter alia*, by Ṭabari (d. 923), Bal'ami (q.v.; d. 963), and Gardizi (q.v.; d. 1050) led to legitimizing the roots of Iranian identity in Islamic society. The motivation behind forming this idea may be attributed to a scholarly obsession to forge a symbiosis of fecund and powerful systems of beliefs that happened to co-exist at the same time in the same cultural milieu, or to the lack of knowledge of pre-Parthian factual history, or to a genuine desire for legitimization of Persian roots—which seems to be the case for Gardizi and the translators of Ṭabari's *Tafsir*—or an amalgam of all these factors. Yet, regardless of motivation, the dissemination of this idea helped to legitimize the roots of Iranian identity for the devout Persian Muslims for the later centuries.

Treating the history of children of Abraham and ancient Persians synchronously, Ṭabari suggests that the Persians believe Kayomart (see [GAYŌMARD](#)) was Adam and Hušang-e Pišdād (see [HOŠANG](#)), Kayomart's grandson and successor, was the first man to rule over the seven regions of the earth. In fact, according to some Persian legends, Hušang was the son of Adam and Eve. The story of Solomon is followed by the story of mythical Persian kings. In his rendition of Ṭabari's history, Bal'ami quotes contradictory legends and beliefs about the creation of man and society in order to demonstrate the evolution of the Iranian and Arab wings of the Islamic civilization. Iranian and Abrahamic myths are brought together to form a unified body of mythology (Ṭabari, I, pp. 100 ff.; Bal'ami, pp. 112-17). Other Islamic historians, including Maqdesi (Moqaddasi; d. 1004) and Mas'udi (d. ca. 956), also attempted to reconcile and synchronize the Persian and Abrahamic traditions.

In the course of the intermingling of “Arab and Persian” aristocracy, one may note the emergence of a Persianized Islamic geographical notion that the region comprising the land of Persia and Arabia was selected by God as the center of the three climes (q.v.; *kešvars*) of the earth and were inhabited by the noblest of peoples. Thus, genealogies of both Persian and Arab nobility were honored in the new territory. In Gardizi's words, “And God created different peoples as the land including Mecca, Medina, Ḥejāz, Yemen, Iraq, Khorasan, Nimruz and parts of Šām (Syria) are known in Persian as Iran.” He further adds, that “from the beginning of the world until now [its] people have been respected and have been masters of all around them and none has been taken



as slave by other lands. ... the people of this mid-clime of the world are wiser, more courageous and more generous than others and their neighbors are inferior to them in all these respects” (see Gardizi, *Zayn al-akbār*, p. 255). Also implied in Gardizi’s conception of identity is the notion that territorial ties represent genealogical origins (for an informative survey of traditional cartography and the conception of borders and partitions in Islamic societies, see Hartley and Woodward, I/1.).

Still a novel idea to unify the Persian and Abrahamic traditions was conceived by translators of Ṭabari’s *Tafsir* (exegesis of the Qur’an) from Arabic to Persian. In an introduction to the translation they noted, “He [The Almighty God] said, ‘I have never sent a messenger except one conversant in the language of his people and a language comprehensible to them.’ Furthermore, the Persian language was known from the earliest times and from the time of Adam until the era of Ishmael the prophet all divine messengers and all rulers on earth spoke in Persian. The first person to speak in the Arabic tongue was Ishmael the prophet; and our Prophet came from amongst the Arabs and the Qur’an was sent down to him in Arabic; but here in this region the language is Persian, and the rulers here are of Persian descent” (tr. of Ṭabari’s *Tafsir*, 1960, p. 5).

The existence of a distinct cultural conception of being Iranian (*Irānīyat*) is most dramatically demonstrated in the trial of Afšin (q.v.) in 840. He was the hereditary ruler of Ošrusana and the commander who defeated Bābak’s (q.v.) 20-year-long rebellion to save the Abbasids. Afšin, who was accused of propagating Iranian ethno-national sentiment, said, “Didn’t I communicate to you [i.e., those who testified against him] my inner secrets and tell you about the concept of Persian national consciousness (*al a’jamiyya*) and my sympathies for it and for its exponents?” (Ṭabari, tr., XXXIII, p. 189). This episode clearly reveals not only the presence of a distinct awareness of Iranian cultural identity and the people who actively propagated it, but also of the existence of a concept (*al-a’jamiya* or *Irānīyat*) to convey it.

To examine some of the ways in which the idea of Iran and its pre-modern ethno-national history has found expression in Persian literature, we shall briefly survey in the following sections the territorial and ethnic vocabulary of the concept of “Iran” and its related terms, as well as the frequency and pattern of its usage in Persian literature during several periods of Iran’s history over a millennium, stretching from the 9th-10th to the 19th century.



Territorial and ethnic vocabulary for Iran. Territorial notions of “Iran,” are reflected in such terms as *irānšahr*, *irānzamin*, or *Fors*, the arabicized form of *Pārs/Fārs* (Persia). The ethnic notion of “Iranian” is denoted by the Persian words *Pārsi* or *Irāni*, and the Arabic term *ahl al-fors* (inhabitants of Persia) or ‘Ajām, referring to non-Arabs, but primarily to Persians as in *molk-e ‘Ajām* (Persian kingdom) or *moluk-e ‘Ajām* (Persian kings). The term Tāzik/Tājik found currency as a term referring to Persian people during the period of Turkic domination. The Persian term *kešvar* (country) was used in pre-modern times to denote both the clime (e.g., *haft kešvar* [q.v.] “seven climes”) and the dynastic realm or kingdom. The latter usage of the term only rarely conveyed the meaning of “country” in medieval historiography. The most common equivalent of *kešvar* was the Arabic *mamlakat* from the root *malaka*, meaning “to own or to rule” (e.g., *malek* “king” and *mālek* “owner”). *Mamlakat* was often used in Persian historiography for territorially defined kingdoms or dynastic realms and its constituent provinces, e.g., *mamlakat-e Irān* or *mamālek-e Irān* or *mamālek-e maḥrusa-ye Irān* “protected kingdom of Iran” (during the Mongol era and thereafter), *mamlakat-e Ḳorāsān* or *Fārs* or *Kermān* (see below). The Arabic terms *welāyat* and *eyālat* until recently referred to provinces. The old terms *waṭan* (Ar.) or *mihan* (Pers.) were used in classical Persian literature to refer predominantly to a person’s place of birth and habitation. One’s place of birth and residence was considered as the object of one’s love, admiration, and devotion (see Ashraf, 1993, pp. 159-64; 1994, pp. 521-50; Lambton, 1978, pp. 785-90). The term “Iran,” has stood for the kingdom of Iranian dynasties and the homeland of the Iranian people since the mythical foundation of the country by Faridun. *Irānšahr* (see [ĒRĀNŠAHR](#)), a Sasanid concept, conveys the meaning of the kingdom of the rulers of Iran. These territorial conceptions of Iran were, in particular, significant for identification of Iranian people, who were more concerned with their territorial ties, than Arabs, who were primarily identified with their lineage.

It is important to note that the term “Iran” constitutes only one of the elements that define Iranian identity in its ethnic, cultural, and territorial totality. This may be seen in such monumental works as Bayhaqī’s *History*, ‘Onsor-al-Ma‘ālī’s *Qābus-nāma*, Neẓām-al-Molk’s *Siāsat-nāma*, Neẓāmi’s *Haft peykar* and *Ḳosrow o Širin*, Hafez’s (q.v.) *Divān*, and Sa‘dī’s *Bustān* and *Golestān*. These works, while rarely mentioning “Iran,” present the various aspects of Persian cultural heritage and historical memories, including myths and legends, worldviews and moral values, mores and norms of social behavior, principles of political legitimacy and social relations, as well as imagined genealogical



origins of the Iranian people. Yet, the survey of the frequency and pattern of the usage of “Iran” and its derivatives in Persian literature must be taken into account in the context of claims by those authors who base much of their argument on the rarity of the occurrence of the usage of the word “Iran” in Persian literature in contradistinction to its frequent application in modern times, a radical innovation that they attribute to the writings of 18th and 19th century Orientalists who passed this legacy to the Pahlavi state, which in turn bolstered and institutionalized it through legislation in 1935 by changing the official name of the country from Persia to Iran (Vaziri, 1993; Fragner, 1999). These frequencies are driven from the indexes of selected historical writings. In interpreting them, however, caution must be exercised, since the criteria used by various indexers and the precision of their efforts may vary considerably from work to work. They are, nevertheless, suggestive of the pattern of the usage of the terms in each period. To simplify the findings of the survey the frequency of the use of the term “Iran” in each period is presented in terms of the average number of terms appeared in each of the historical works of that era.

The remaining part of this section will describe the frequency and pattern of usage of the term “Iran” in Persian literature under the Iranian regional dynasties, during whose rule the pre-modern ethno-national history of Iran was revived and the foundation of Iranian cultural identity was reconfirmed. These same frequencies and patterns of usage in literatures of the Saljuqid, Ilkhanid-Timurid, and Safavid eras will be treated in the sections that follow.

The usage of the term “Iran” in the early Persian literature. The period between the birth of literary Persian poetry in the late 9th century and the composition of the *Šāh-nāma* by Ferdowsi in the late 10th century marks the flourishing of the usage of “Iran” in the emerging Persian prose and poetry. A unique feature of this period is the creation of a corpus of Iranian epic literature and romances dealing with pre-Islamic Iran, using the pre-Islamic notion of Iran and its related terms (see Şafā, 1984, pp. 160-342). References to *Irān* and *Irānzamin*, its myths and legends, its kings and notables (*gozinān-e Irān*) begin to appear in a number of books of kings, including Mas‘udi Marvazi’s *Šāh-nāma* (ca. 912), Abu Manşuri’s *Šāh-nāma* (ca. 960; although we only have fragments in the form of a preface), and Daqiqi’s (q.v.; d. 976) 1,000 lines narrating the reign of Goštasp that were used by Ferdowsi (see Qazvini, 1953, pp. 5-90). It is, however, in Ferdowsi’s *Šāh-nāma* (d. 1019 or 1025), that the Iranian worldview and its mythological and legendary history, as well as its



later factual history (Parthian and Sasanid periods) is presented with utmost eloquence; in it the name “Iran” and its related terms are used 720 times and “Iranians” 350 times.

A group of Persian literati, who wrote in Arabic during the formative period of Islamic historiography, began to introduce specifically Persian themes and frequently referred to “Iran” and “Iranian” (or in its Arabicized form, Fors or ‘Ajām) in the context of Iranian traditional history. Beginning with the pioneering and influential translation of the *Kwadāy-nāmag* from Pahlavi into Arabic by Ebn al-Moqaffa’ (q.v.; d. 757; as well as a number of other translations), Persian literati continued to elaborate on the pre-Islamic traditional history of Iran. Notable among them were Ebn Qotayba’s (q.v.; d. 889) various works, including *‘Oyun al-akbār*, referring on various occasions to the Persian history and cultural heritage; Dinavari (d. 895), who dedicates a large part of his *Akbār al-ṭewāl* to the narratives of pre-Islamic Iran; Ṭabari (d. 923), who devotes a book of his monumental *History* to similar topics; Ḥamza Eṣfahāni (d. 962), who, with deep pride and passion for Iran (*ta’aṣṣob al-fors*), dedicates a large part of his *Seni moluk al-arz* to the narratives of pre-Islamic Iranian kings. Other historical works of the same category include Ebn Meskawayh’s (q.v.; d. 1030) *Tajāreb al-omam* and *Tahdīb al-akbār*, Ṭa’ālebi’s (d. 1038) *Ḡorar akbār moluk al-fors*, and Biruni’s (d. 1048) *Āṭār al-bāq-īya*. It was within this tradition that a number of prominent Arab historians too, wrote extensively on Iran’s history, including Maqdesi’s (d. 945) *Ketāb al-bad’ wa’l-ta’rik*, Mas’udi’s (d. 956) *Moruj al-dahab* and *Ketāb al-tanbih wa’l-eṣrāf*, and Ya’qubi’s (d. 987) *Ta’rik*. Mention must also be made of such influential works in Persian as Bal’ami’s (d. 962) redaction of Ṭabari’s history, which marks the beginning of Persian historiography, and Gardizi’s (d. 1050) *Zayn al-akbār*, whose concentration on Iran was extensive (for discussion on Persian historiography of this period, see Daniel, 1990, pp. 282-321; and Meisami, 2000, pp. 348-74). On average, on 76 occasions the term *Irān* and related concepts were used in each of the above historical works (including Ṭabari’s *Tārik* with 292 cases, and an average of 55 references without counting his work).

The significance of these works lies, not only in their frequent use of the terms *Irān* and *Irānšahr*, or *Fors* and *‘Ajām* but in the institutionalization in Islamic historiography of the traditional history of Iran as a major chapter in the history of the ancient world. Their narrative of Iran’s ancient history was repeatedly copied and presented in the later periods. As noted, the term “Iran” in these works refers to various aspects of Iran’s traditional history in the pre-



Islamic era. Such references, however, helped establish the idea of the territorial and genealogical origin of the Iranian people, which provided the foundation of Iranian cultural identity in the subsequent centuries. Another factor in the survival of Iran's ethno-national history may be the widespread reading and reciting of the *Šāh-nāma* by storytellers whose audiences included individuals from all walks of life. The focus of the Persian epic literature and historical writings of this period was mainly on pre-Islamic Iran, referring for the most part to the historical notion of Iran in the pre-Islamic era rather than to the contemporary living reality of Iran after the Islamic conquest.

Contemporary notions of "Iran" began to emerge in this period when the pioneers of Persian poetry started to use the term in reference, albeit symbolically, to contemporary events. Such references to the contemporary Iranian kings, kingdoms, rulers, commanders, sages, and lands are found in several *divāns* of Persian poetry from this period. For example, Rudaki (d. 941), calls a Saffarid governor of Sistān a nobleman of the Sasanid stock and "pride of Iran" (*mafkar-e Irān*), which implies a sense of continuity in Iranian identity from the Sasanid to the Samanid era (*Tārik-e Sistān*, pp. 319-20). Abu Šakur Balḳi (in *Āfarin-nāma* [947]; cited by Sajjādi, p. 751), refers to the "sage of Iran." Furthermore, reference to the contemporary conception of "Iran" flourished under the early Ghaznavids.

The Ghaznavid transitional phase. During the early Ghaznavid period, which marks the beginnings of Turkic domination, the cultural life and literary tradition of the Samanids continued. The early Ghaznavids were raised as slave soldiers in the Samanid military institution and spent a period of their character formation within the rich cultural ambience of the Persian court (Bosworth, p. 61). It was in this atmosphere that Persian literati invented genealogies to connect the Ghaznavids to the Sasanids. According to a genealogy cited by Juzjāni, Sebūktigin, through six generation from his father, was the descendant of Yazdgerd III's daughter (see Bosworth, p. 61). This genealogical invention is similar to the efforts by Persians to cast the fourth Shi'ite Imam as the maternal grandson of the last Sasanid king Yazdgerd III by supportive genealogies (see further below). As a result, there are references to "Iran" as a contemporary entity in the poetry of this period. A prominent poet of this period, Farroḳi Sistāni (d. 1030), mentions "Iran" over 30 times in his *Divān*, referring to Sultan Maḥmud and his sons as *šah-e Irān* (and Turān) and *kosrow-e Irān*, and also makes references to *irānšahr* and *irānzamin* (*Divān*, ed. Dabirsiāqi, index); 'Onṣori (d. 1040), refers to the "Iranian king" (*šah-e Irān*,



kosrow-e Irān), “Iranian kingdom” (*kešvar-e Irān*), and “Iranian lands” (*irānzamin* and *zamin-e irānšahr*; *Divān*, ed. Dabirsiāqi, Index); Manučehri (d. 1041), refers to “Iran” and “Turān” and *kosrow-e Irān*. References to “Iran” are also found in the *divāns* of Abu Ḥanifa Eskāfi (d. 1041) as well as in Asadi Ṭusi’s *Divān* (d. 1073). As’ad Gorgāni’s *Vis o Rāmin* (ca. 1072, Index) refers to “Iran” on 25 occasions (for surveys of references to “Iran” in Persian classical poetry, see Sajjādi, pp. 749-59; Matini, pp. 243-68; Šafi’i Kadkani, pp. 1-26).

Two novel developments under Sultan Maḥmud significantly helped the foundation of Persian hegemony. The first was the converting of all chancery records and correspondences from Arabic to Persian by the order of Maḥmud’s first vizier, Abu’l-Ḥasan Esfarā’eni (q.v.). Although his successor, Aḥmad b. Ḥasan Maymandi (q.v.), restored Arabic, Esfarā’eni’s practice marked the beginning of the establishment of Persian as the literary language of the chancery in the courts of the Turkish and Mongol dynasties in Iran, Central Asia, Muslim India, and Anatolia in the coming centuries. Furthermore, Sultan Maḥmud’s conquest of India marked the beginning of Persian influence in the subcontinent (see [INDIA ii](#)).

Although the hierarchical notion of “Turk and Tāzik,” which became prevalent under the Ghaznavids, dealt a blow to the use of the term “Iran,” the increasing hegemony of Persian language helped elevate Iran’s cultural heritage and its expression in the Persian literature of this period. Bayhaqi, for example, identified himself as a “Tāzik,” but used the term very rarely; his matchless *History* contains a wealth of Persian cultural memories, descriptions of the festivals of *nowruz* and *mehregān*, court grandeur and etiquette, as well as the Persian modes of social and political relations. In a telling passage on the occasion of the coronation of the Saljuqid, Sultan Ṭoġrel, Bayhaqi states that when “the audience hall appeared devoid of all splendor and glitter,” Judge Šā’ed addresses the Sultan, “May the lord’s life be long! Take note that this is Sultan Mas’ud’s throne that you are sitting on.... Such unforeseeable events do happen and one cannot know what further happenings will emerge from the Unseen.” The Sultan replies, “We are new to this land, and as strangers, unacquainted with the manners and customs of the Tāziks [Persian]” (cited from, *History of Bayhaqi*, annotated tr. with introd. by C. E. Bosworth and M. Ashtiany, forthcoming). This passage shows how the Ghaznavids were known for their familiarity, as well as sympathy, with Persian customs and how the rising Saljuq sultans were ignorant of Persian cultural heritage. It also signifies how a member of the religious ranks of



Persian literati was concerned with the Persian style of court etiquette and ceremony.

IRANIAN IDENTITY DURING THE SALJUQIDS

Iranian identity underwent a period of complex mutations with mixed consequences under the Saljuqids. In this period, the decline of Persian epic and the less frequent usage of the term “Iran” in Persian poetry and historiography coincided with the flourishing of Persian literature and spread of Persian hegemony in Islamic societies.

Turkic dynasties were for the most part military states bent on war and conquest and imposed an exogenous rule over their Persian subjects. However, the Persian literati took control over many organs of the state administration and from such positions of influence reintroduced their Persian cultural heritage. With the Turkic rise to power, the ‘sword’ and the ‘pen,’ which had been reunified in the Persian hands during the Iranian regional dynasties, were once again separated. The sword and the pen symbolically represented two pillars of the sovereignty of the ruling classes: “military class” and “administrative class” respectively (it should be noted here that the military contingents of Persian origin continued to function, but as a secondary force on command). Thus, the rise of the Turkic slaves and tribes to power in the 11th-12th centuries led to a new binary division of “Turk and Tāzik/Tājik” and less frequent usage of “Iran” in Persian historical and literary works of this period (for a useful survey of the usage of Tāzik/Tājik in Persian literature, see Dabirsiāqi, 1991).

The long period of Turkish rule in Iran could itself be divided into a number of distinct periods in terms of Iranian identity: the Ghaznavid transitional period with the continuity of Samanid tradition (see above); the Saljuq period, marking a complex situation for Iranian identity; the Mongol and Timurid phase, during which the name “Iran” was used for the dynastic realm and a pre-modern ethno-national history of Iranian dynasties was arranged; and the period from the Safavids to the end of the Qajars, when a clear Iranian-Shi‘ite identity, based on an amalgamation of Turk and Fārs elements, emerged. It is interesting to note that the Persian literati invented complete genealogies to connect both the first and the last Turkic dynasties that ruled Iran to the pre-Islamic dynasties: the Ghaznavids and the Qajars (see below).

The complex phase under the Saljuqs. Although the great Saljuqs reunified Iran



for the first time since the Arab conquest of Persia, the use of the term “Iran” to denote the dynastic realm was not encouraged. This can be attributed to further Islamization of Iranian society and institutionalization of the Islamic state with a universalistic outlook. In fact, the Saljuqs founded a religio-political system by combining the temporal authority of the sultan with the symbolic religious authority of the caliph. Neẓām-al-Molk played a pivotal role in the establishment of Islamic orthodoxy and universalism as an integral part of the Saljuqid state (Bondāri Eṣfahāni, pp. 66-67). The Neẓāmiya schools, which were created at his behest, contributed to the interconnection between the state and religious establishments and helped strengthen the status of civil administration and men of the pen vis-à-vis the men of the sword in the Islamic state. The literati of Persian origin, who were trained in both Persian literary tradition and Islamic law at these schools, continued to serve as bureaucratic agents in various Islamic governments in the ensuing centuries and were responsible for spreading the Persian language and culture throughout the Islamic world (see also Klausner, 1973; Lambton, 1980, pp. 203-82).

There was a decline in the usage of “Iran” in Persian historiography (see, Ṣafā, 1984, pp. 154-59; 1977, pp. 126-44, 158-60), with only few references, made to “Iran” or even “Tāzik” in the works of such historians of this period as Bondāri Eṣfahāni’s (d. 1100) *Tāriḳ-e selsela-ye Saljuqi*, and Nasavi’s (d. 1253) *Sirat-e Jalāl-al-Din Minkoberni*. The latter (pp. 47, 75) refers to “Iran” on two occasions: the first regarding Goštāsp (q.v.), king of Iran, and the second regarding Neẓām-al-Molk, the grand vizier (*dastur*) of Iran and Turān. Eṣfahāni’s *Rawẓāt al-jannāt fi awṣāf madinat al-Herāt* (p. 162) also has one reference to Neẓām-al-Molk as the grand vizier of *mamālek-e Irān*.

The decline of Persian epic literature and its eventual replacement by Islamic epics or a synthesis of Iranian and Islamic myths and legends must be considered as another distinct feature of this period. This synthesis pre-figures post-Mongol and Safavid developments. Thus, although the *‘Alī-nāma* contains both an implicit and explicit rejection of purely Iranian epics, the genre of *pand-nāma* anthologies, which quoted didactic lines from the *Šāh-nāma* side by side with moral dicta from Imam ‘Ali, are emblematic of this forthcoming fusion.

The decline in the number of references to “Iran” in this period is also evident in Persian poetry, as seen in the *divāns* of Sanā’i and Anvari. An illustration of the zealous, anti-Iranian Islamic attitude may be seen in the poems of Amir-



Mo'ezzi (d. 1147) and Sayf-al-Din Farġāni (q.v.; d. early 14th century). Unaware of the meaning and cultural significance of myths and legends, Amir-Mo'ezzi accuses Ferdowsi of lying and wild exaggerations in his treatment of Rostam (*Divān-e Amir Mo'ezzi*, p. 286). By contrast, the poet Sa'di, quite conscious of the social functions of myths, wrote: "The exploits of the champion Rostam and the brazen-bodied Esfandiār are narrated in fable in order to make rulers and kings realize that this world itself is a memento and a legacy derived from many people from the past" (*Kolliyāt*, p. 724). Farġāni, went so far, on the other hand, as to say that the soil and water of Iran are not suitable for a Muslim's prayer, because the Sasanid kings had rendered it *najess*, i.e., ritually impure (*Divān*, p. 31).

Yet, even in this period, one finds works of Persian epic, such as Irānšāh's *Kuṣ-nāma* and *Bahman-nāma* (ca. 1117), that make frequent references to "Iran," nearly 160 times in the former case and over 100 times in the latter (see Matini, p. 259). "Iran" is also mentioned in such important historical works as Ebn Esfandiār's (d. 1217, q.v.) *Tariḵ-e Ṭabarestān*, referring to "Iran" on six occasions and to Tāzik on 11 occasions. *Mojmal al-tawāriḵ wa'l-qeṣasā* (ca. 1126), refers to "Iran" on 29 occasions; Moḥamamd b. 'Ali Rāvandi's (d. 1238) *Rāḥat al-ṣodur* mentions 'Ajam in 17 cases; and Ebn Balki's *Fārs-nāma* (early 12th century) also refers to pre-Islamic Iran, its sovereigns, and foundation of cities on various occasions.

Although overt references to "Iran" are relatively rare in this period, abundant mention of its manifestations can be seen in Persian literature. 'Onsor-al-Ma'āli, well versed in Persian cultural heritage, authored *Qābus-nāma*, a rare handbook of cultural values and norms of social behavior in almost all major aspects of Persian everyday life. There is, however, no mention of "Iran" or "Tāzik" in this book, making merely six references to "Ajam" instead. Neẓām-al-Molk (d. 1092) in his influential work *Siāsat-nāma* simply refers to Persians as Tāziks, while making numerous references to Persian political and cultural heritage in narrating anecdotes and collective memories relating to Iran. In his collection of 'advices' from 75 kings, prophets, caliphs, and sages, Ẓahiri Samarqandi presents advices of 38 Iranian mythological, legendary, and historical figures from Jamšid to Sultan Sanjar (mostly from pre-Islamic times), 30 Arab caliphs, and seven Greek, Indian, and Chinese figures. Considering Jamšid as the founder of civilization, he begins the work with a long treatment of his contributions and advices. Similarly, Sa'di and Hafez—though of later period—who make few references to "Iran" or "Ajam" or "Tāzik" in their



prose or poetry make many references to the Iranian repertoire of myths and legends as well as Persian ideas, values, mores, and modes of conduct. In the same vein, Neẓāmi, while rarely using the term “Iran,” eternalizes the romances of pre-Islamic Iran in his *Ķamsa* (five *maṭnavis*).

It was also in the Saljuq era that Persian established itself as a literary language, not only on a par with Arabic, but more important than Arabic in certain genres, including mystical poetry (for the role of mystical literature in reconstruction of Iranian ethnic identity, see Meskoob, 1992). Furthermore, it was in this period that Persian, as the first *lingua franca*, began to spread in medieval Islamic civilization as a trans-regional means of communication of chancery and literati. In the course of time, ‘Persian hegemony’ established itself in the Ottoman empire, Central Asia, the Mughal empire in India, and South-East Asia (for the notion of “Persian hegemony,” see i, above).

THE IDEA OF “IRAN” UNDER THE MONGOLS AND TIMURIDS

The fall of the Abbasid Caliphate, the symbolic guardians of Islamic universalism, in the 13th century, accompanied by a shift from religious orthodoxy to relative religious tolerance and the unification of the Iranian plateau under the Il-khanids, signaled a new era in the history of Iranian identity. These developments provided the Persian literati with a new opportunity to rearrange the ethno-national history of Iran and reinstate—for the first time since the fall of the Sasanid empire—the usage of *Iran* and *Irānzamin* as appellation for their dynastic realm.

Also contributing to the new concept of Iran, its global location, and its place in history was the emergence of genuinely “universal” and “world” histories with divisions into different regions describing the mores and manners of the different civilizations, such as the Indians or the Franks (Europeans). It is in this vein that Rašid-al-Din’s *Jāme’ al-tawāriḵ* is often referred to as the first “world history,” reflecting the Mongol conception of universal rule and world domination. This new historical outlook was prompted by the Mongols’ sweeping advances, east and west, into Europe and elsewhere, combined with their own innate curiosity about different religions.

The prominent historians of this period frequently referred to *Iran* and *Irānzamin* both as historical notions and as contemporaneous entities. Rašid-al-Din Faẓl-Allāh (d. 1318) refers repeatedly to “Iran” in his monumental work *Jāme’ al-tawāriḵ*, as well as in his *Tāriḵ-e mobāarak-e Ķāzāni* and *Sawāneḥ al-*



afkār. He also makes a number of references to the country of Iran (*kešvar-e Iran*). This appears to be one of the first instances of the usage of the concept of country (*kešvar*) to denote the contemporary kingdom of Iran. On another occasion, he refers to the borders of Iran as extending from the Āmuya river to the Jhelum river in northern India (Āb-e Javn) in the east, and from Byzantium (Rum) to Egypt in the west (pp. 46, 73, 147). Other references to Iran include “Peoples of Iran” (*ahāli-e* or *kalāyeq-e Irānzamin*), “provinces of Iran” (*mamālek-e Irānzamin*), “Khan of Irānzamin,” and “sovereigns of Iran” (*moluk-e Iran*). Influenced by the new conception of the “world,” Rašid-al-Din, like many other historians and geographers, mentions Iran, Turān, Farang, Egypt and Morocco (Mağreb), Byzantium (Rum), India, and China in referring to the kingdoms of the time, signifying a distinct identity for Iran among major countries of the world (for a pioneering survey of resurgence of the use of the term “Iran” during the Mongol period, see Krawulski, 1978, pp. 11-17).

Other historical works, including Banākati’s (q.v.; d. 1330) *Tāriḳ-e Banākati*, Šabānkāra’i’s *Majma’ al-ansāb* (1333), Naḳjavāni’s (d. 1336) *Dastūr al-kāteb*, Ḥamd-Allāh Mostawfi’s (d. 1349) *Tāriḳ-e gozida*; and ‘Abd-al-Razzāq Samarqandi’s (d. 1371) *Maṭla’-e sa’dāyn wa majma’-e baḥrayn* make frequent references to Iran and its related terms. Describing a battle in which Sultan Ūljeytu barely defeats his adversaries, Samarqandi exclaims that “if it were not due to God’s benevolence nothing would have remained of the kingdom of Iran but name” (p. 43); On another occasion he outlines the borders of the Abu Sa’idi kingdom from Oxus to Euphrates and underlines that “Irānšahr consists of the cities lying between the two borders” (p. 121). Other historical works that make numerous references to “Iran” include Ḥāfez-e Abru’s (d. 1417) *Zobdat al-tawāriḳ* and *Joğrāfiā*, Tāj-al-Din Ḥasan Yazdi’s (d. 1453) *Jāme’ al-tawāriḳ-e Ḥasani*, and Mir Moḥammad b. Sayyed Borhān-al-Din Kāvānd-šāh’s (Mirkāvānd; d. 1497), *Rawzat al-ṣafā*.

Finally, it is noteworthy that, in a surviving collection of chancery correspondence between rulers of Iran and neighboring kingdoms from the early Timurid to the early Safavid periods, 19 references can be found to the contemporary notions of *Iran*, *Irānzamin*, *kešvar-e Irān* (country of Iran, p. 690), *šāhanšāh-e Irān* (king of kings of Iran), *aḥwāl-e Irān* (conditions of Iran), *moluk-e Irān* (rulers of Iran), *mamālek-e Irān* (provinces of Iran), *šahriār-e diār-e ‘Ajam* (the ruler of Iran), *sepahsālār-e Irān* (military commander of Iran), and *Irān o Turān* (see Navā’i, 1977, Index). On average, on 42 occasions the term Iran and related concepts were used in each of the above historical



works of this period, referring to both pre-Islamic and Islamic eras.

Reconstruction of pre-modern national history. The significance of the historiography and historical geography of this era is not limited to the frequent usage of “Iran” and related terms or even the reinstatement of the term *Irānzamin*. It extends to the reconstruction of new conception of Iran’s “pre-modern ethno-national history” in terms of a continuum of dynastic histories from the primordial mythological era to the Mongol period. This mode of presentation of Iran’s history, linking the traditional history of Iran, as reconstructed by the Sasanid literati, to the early Safavid period was a novel phenomenon. This sequence of the dynastic history of *Irānzamin* was constructed for the first time by Qāzi Nāṣer-al-Din ‘Omar Bayzāwi (q.v.; d. 1316) in his concise (95 pages), yet significant and influential, history of Iran, *Nezām al-tawārikò* (The arrangement of history). Bayzāwi was a prominent figure in the religious wing of the Persian literati, who served as the chief justice (*qāzi al-qoṣāt*) of Fārs province in the early Il-khanid era and made a number of well-known contributions in Arabic to Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic philosophy, and Arabic grammar. His only work in Persian was his arrangement of the ethno-national history of Iran. In his own words, “I have connected the sequence of governors and kings of Iran—which extends from the Euphrates to the Oxus, or rather from the Arab lands to the borders of Khojand—from Adam to the present day. I have divided it into four parts and written it in Persian so that its benefits might be more widespread” (tr. in Melville, p. 76). As Charles Melville (p. 70) has suggested, Bayzāwi’s rearrangement of Iran’s history from ancient times to the Mongol era “had a rather clear political agenda” and that “he was supported by people at the highest level of the court.”

Although a number of later historians, including Rašid-al-Din and Banākati, frequently cited *Nezām al-tawārik* and adopted its reordering of Iran’s history, it appears that Bayzāwi’s rearrangement of Iran’s ethno-national history into “four periods” was followed in a more systematic and substantively expanded version by Ḥamd-Allāh Mostawfi (q.v.; d. 1349) in his influential work *Tāriḳ-e gozida*. Mostawfi elaborates on the dynasties that ruled Iran in four sections (*bābs*): first, the pre-Islamic dynasties of the Pišdādids, the Kayānids, the Moluk al-ṭawāyef (Arsacids), and the Sasanids; second, the Umayyad rule in Iran; third, the Abbasid rule in Iran; and fourth, the dynasties that ruled Iran since the early Islamic era. These dynasties were: the Saffarids and the Samanids, who ruled a part of Iran; the Ghaznavids, who ruled most of Iran in



their initial 30 years; the Ghurids; the Daylamites and the Buyids; the Saljuqs, some of whom ruled over all of Iran and some over only parts of Iran; the K̄wārazmšāhs; the Atābakān (q.v.) of Fārs and Syria; the Ismā'īlis of Iran and Egypt; the Qarākatāys of Ker-mān; the Atābakān of Lorestān; and, finally, the Mongol dynasty.

As [Table 1](#) illustrates, Bayzāwi devotes over three-fourths of his work to kings of Persia, whereas Mostawfi allocates only one-half of his history to them. It is important to note that, although Mostawfi devotes a larger portion of his history to the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs, he consciously covers them in terms of their “rule in Iran” and not in the world of Islam in general: *moddat-e molkešān be Irān* (p. 10). A unique feature of the contributions of Bayzāwi and Mostawfi is their exclusive focus on Iran’s history from the creation of man and society in Iran to the Mongol era, which sets their work apart from Jovayni’s *Jahāngošāy*, exclusively a history of the Mongols, or Rašid-al-Din’s *Jāme’ al-tawārikò*, a comprehensive world history from its beginning through the Mongol era.

The influence and popularity of both Bayzāwi’s and Mostawfi’s rearrangement of the history of Iran is indicated by the large number of surviving manuscripts of their works from the 13th to the 19th centuries, 58 and 95 respectively (compared to other popular works such as Banākati’s with 31, Juzjāni’s with 23, and Šabānkāra’i’s with 13 surviving manuscripts). Of Bayzāwi’s work, 27 copies were produced in the Safavid period and 14 during the Qajar era (see Melville, Tables 1 and 2, pp. 73-74). It seems plausible, therefore, that a proportionately large number of manuscripts of Mostawfi’s work may also have been produced during the Safavid and Qajar periods. Indeed, Mostawfi’s influence seems to have surpassed that of Bayzāwi’s, as he is cited in later historical works more frequently. For example, Mirk̄vānd in *Tārik-e rawzat al-sĀafā* refers to Mostawfi on 16 occasions and to Bayzāwi in only 8 cases, and K̄vāndamir in *Ḥabib al-siar* refers to Mostawfi on 56 occasions and to Bayzāwi on only 3 occasions.

It was through the popularity of these works that the new, fourfold paradigm of Iran’s history, which displays a more ethno-nationalistic spirit, enjoyed a prolonged success in Persian historiography in the ensuing centuries. Another important feature of this mode of reconstruction of the dynastic history of Iran is a clear geographical awareness of Iran or Irānzamin both in its totality and its constituent parts, combining the historical depth of the idea of “Iran” with its geographical breadth.



Mostawfi's significant contribution to the pre-modern "ethno-national history of Iran" is supplemented by his geography, *Nozhat al-qolub*. The latter work's importance derives from its treatment of the contemporary geographical notion of Iran, as well as its boundaries and provinces. Prefacing his work with a description of the two holy sites of Mecca and Medina, outside of Iran's boundaries, Mostawfi begins his treatment of Iran by discussing different views on the foundation of Iran by Iraj (q.v.) and its place in the world's seven climes. He suggests that all commentators (Greeks, Indians, and Persians) agree that Iran, located at the center of the inhabited world, is its best part, harking back to the old Sasanid notion of Irānšahr. According to Mostawfi, the boundaries of Irānzamin stretch from the Sind river (in India) to K̄vārazm and Transoxania in the east to Byzantium and Syria in the west. Being aware of the depth and breadth of the historical geography of Iran, Mostawfi reiterates that he is treating only those outer lands that are located on the frontiers of the kingdom of Iran, although "some, at times, have been under the sway of the sovereigns of Iran, and even in these parts some cities have been in fact founded by the sovereigns of Iran" (tr. Le Strange, pp. 23-24). Mostawfi describes the provinces of Iran in 20 chapters, beginning with Iraq ('Erāq-e Arab) or "the heart of Irānšahr," and 'Erāq-e 'Ajam (western provinces), followed by Arrān and Muḡān, Šervān, Georgia, Byzantium, Armenia, Rabi'a, Kurdistan, Khuzestan, Fārs and the Persian Gulf, Šabānkāra, Kermān, Mokrān and Hormuz, the province between Kermān and Qohestān (present day Baluchistan), Nimruz, Khorasan, Māzandarān, Qumes and Ṭabarestān, and finally, Jilānāt (Gilan). This mode of conceptualizing Iran's history and geography has been followed by other historians since the 13th century.

THE "IRANIAN-SHI'ITE" IDENTITY UNDER THE SAFAVIDS

Iran regained its political unity and was given a new distinct religious identity under the Safavids. Shi'ism became the official state religion and henceforth played an important role in the reconstruction of a new ethno-religious identity for the Iranian people. Furthermore, the rise of the Safavid empire coincided with the rise of the Ottoman empire in West Asia and North Africa, the Mughal empire in India, and the Uzbek empire in Central Asia, all adhering to Sunnite Islam. The formation of these political entities helped create a distinct Iranian-Shi'ite political identity among these polities. It also helped to expand the hegemony of Persian language in much of the Islamic world. Persian literature was produced from Anatolia to Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent (see Golčīn-Ma'āni, *Bā kārvān-e Hend*).



Under the Safavids, a number of important measures were taken to blend religious and ethno-national traditions, while closely following the historiography of the Mongol-Timurid era (for a survey of Safavid historiography and its connection with Timurids, see Quinn, 2000, pp. 28, 49-50, 52).

“*Iran*” in *Safavid historiography*. Ġiāt-al-Din K̄vānda-mir (d. 1524), the first prominent Safavid historian, was one of the last historians of the Il-khanid-Timurid era and the grandson of Mir Moḥamamd Mirk̄vānd, author of the influential history, *Rawzat al-sĀafā*. In preparing his general history, *Ḥabib al-siar fi aḳbār afrād al-bašar*, K̄vāndamir followed the style of *Rawzat al-sĀafā* and that of such popular historical works as *Nezām al-tawārikò* and *Tāriḳ-e gozida* (see above). The frequency of the usage of *Iran*, *Irānzamin* and related terms in the three volumes of *Ḥabib al-siar* (completed in 1524) reveals the evolution in the usage of these terms in the Islamic era. The frequency is relatively high in volume I, with 28 references to events of the pre-Islamic period; it drops sharply to 12 in volume II, treating the history of the Islamic period up to the Mongol era; and it leaps to 69 references in volume III, dealing with the Il-khanid-Timurid, and early Safavid periods. Other representative works of this period also make frequent references to “Iran,” including ‘*Ālamārā-ye Šāh Esmā’il*, ‘*Ālamārā-ye Šāh Ṭahmāsp*, Ḥasan Beg Rumlu’s (d. 1577) *Aḥsan al-tawārik*, Ebn Karbalā’i’s (d. 1589) *Rawzāt al-jenān*, Malekšāh Ḥosayn Sistāni’s (d. 1619) *Ehyā’ al-moluk*, Mollā ‘Ab-al-Nabi Faḳr-al-Zamāni’s *Taḍkera-ye meykāna* (1619); Eskander Beg Rumlu’s (d. 1629) *Aḥsan al-tawārik*; Wāleh Ešfahāni’s (d. 1648) *Ḳold-e barin*, Naširi’s (d. 1698) *Dastur-e šahriārān*.

Finally, Moḥammad Mofid Bāfqi (d. 1679), in addition to making numerous references to “Iran” and “Ajam” in his *Jāme‘-e Mofidi* (q.v.), refers to distinct borders of Iran and its neighbors, India, Turān, and Byzantium as well as the influx of people from those lands to Iran. In a number of cases, he describes the nostalgia of those Iranians who migrated to India but were later compelled to return by their love for their homeland (*ḥobb al-waṭan*; see below). He makes a number of insightful comments about Iranian identity and various features of the lands of Iran in his historical geography of Iran, *Moktašar-e Mofid*. Adopting the model of Mostawfi’s *Nozhat al-qolub*, he makes some 20 references to *Iran*, *Irānzamin*, and *Irānšahr*, as well as the borders of Iran’s territory, in the introduction to his work. He makes numerous references, furthermore, to Persian mythological and legendary figures in the traditional



history of Iran as founders of a large number of cities in Yazd, Iraq, Fārs, Azarbaijan, and other parts of Iran. Finally, he provides readers with a useful list of Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman.

On average, on 62 occasions the term Iran and related concepts were used in each of the above historical works of the Safavid era.

It is also noteworthy that, from the beginnings of relations between Iran and the West in this period, the Iranian officials tended to consider their distinctive culture and civilization to be unique and superior to all others, including the Western countries (for a survey of the superiority trait among Iranians of the Safavid era, see Matthee, 1998).

Religion and ethno-national identity. Contrary to the views of those who deny the role of religion in the formation of ethno-national identities, it may be noted that in most European societies local churches played an important part in creating and maintaining a sense of national identity, particularly at times of social and political crisis. Eric Hobsbawm argues that, although religion may appear as a rival to nationalism in attracting people's loyalties, in actual fact it has acted as a catalyst for nationalism both in pre-modern and modern times. As examples of this process he cites the contributions made by Zoroastrianism in the formation of the Iranian ethno-national identification in the Sasanid era and the role played by Shi'ism at the time of the Safavids (Hobsbawm, pp. 69, 137). The evidence pointing to the symbiosis of Persian and Shi'ite traditions includes the use of combined Shi'ite and Iranian titles by the Safavid shahs, the dissemination of the genealogy for the Imams as maternal descendants of the last Sasanid king, invention of the tradition of *hobb al-waṭan mena'l-imān*, and dissemination of various traditions attributed to the Imams providing religious legitimacy to the observance of the Persian New Year and its accompanying rites.

The Safavid kings called themselves, among other appellations, the "dog of the shrine of 'Ali" (*kalb-e āstān-e 'Alī*), while assuming the title of Šāhanšāh (the king of kings) of Iran. It must be remembered that the title of the king of Iran was also used by Āq Quyunlu rulers (the direct predecessors of the Safavids) who presented themselves as successors to the glorious mythical kings of ancient Persia (Faridun, Jamšid, and Kaykāvus). Even Ottoman sultans, when addressing the Āq Quyunlu and Safavid kings, used such titles as the "king of Iranian lands" or the "sultan of the lands of Iran" or "the king of kings of Iran, the lord of the Persians" or the "holders of the glory of Jamšid and the vision of



Faridun and the wisdom of Dārā.” They addressed Shah Esma‘il as: “the king of Persian lands and the heir to Jamšid and Kay-ḵosrow” (Navā‘i, pp. 578, 700-702, 707). During Shah ‘Abbās’s reign (q.v.) the transformation is complete and Shi‘ite Iran comes to face the two adjacent Sunni powers: the Ottoman Empire to the west and the Kingdom of Uzbeks to the east.

The maternal Iranian origin of the Imams. With the spread of Shi‘ism in Iran, the idea of the maternal linkage of the Imams with Sasanid stock (real or imagined) was disseminated. The Persian Shi‘ites are proud of the lineage of the Imams as maternal descendants of Yazdegerd III, the last Sasanid king. According to tradition, the fourth Shi‘ite Imam (‘Ali b. Ḥosayn, Ḥaẓrat-e Sajjād), is reported to have said: “I am proud to descend from the lineage of my father, Imam Ḥosayn, coming from Qorayš, the noblest of Arab tribes, as I am of the lineage of my mother, princess Šahrbānu, descended from Persian stock, whom the Prophet himself called the noblest of non-Arab peoples” (Dehḵodā, III, p. 1537; Qomi, p. 196; Ebn al-Balḳi, p. 4). The marriage of the Persian princess with the third Imam has been described as having taken place at a dramatic audience of ‘Omar, the second caliph, at which a princess, the daughter of Yazdegerd III, is presented among the booties of the Arab army. At the critical moment when ‘Omar orders the selling of the princess into the slave market, Imam ‘Ali appears on the scene and opposes the verdict on the grounds of a Prophetic tradition that forbids “the sale of the royal offspring in Islam.” When Imam ‘Ali prevails, he leaves her to the patronage of Salmān Fārsi (a legendary Persian companion of the Prophet) to arrange for her marriage to a man of her choice. Šahrbānu chooses to marry Imam Ḥosayn and gives birth to the fourth Shi‘ite Imam. In this imaginary narrative, all Imams from the fourth to the twelfth (the Mahdi, the Lord of the Age) are maternal descendents of the last Sasanid king (see, ‘Onṣor-al-Ma ‘ālī, *Qābus-nāma*, pp. 137-38). Considering that the Safavids had also invented a genealogy linking their lineage to the Imams, belief in this narrative also signifies the Persian genealogical roots of the Safavids.

The love of homeland. On a number of occasions in the Safavid period—apparently for the first time—the notion of *waṭan* and the love for it were extended from the love of birthplace and residence to Iran. Šafi‘i Kadkani argues, for example, that the Hadith of *ḥobb al-waṭan mena’l-imān* might have been invented by Persians, who were more concerned with territorial ties, than Arabs, who were primarily identified with their lineage. Šafi‘i argues that Jāḥeẓ did not refer to the tradition in his comprehensive



treatment of the subject, *al-Ḥanin ela'l-awṭān*; it is rarely found in Sunnite Hadith collections; and the main references to it could be found in Moḥammad Bāqer Majlesi's *Behār al-anwār* and Shaikh 'Abbās Qomi's *Safinat al-beḥār* (Šafi'i Kadkani, p. 12). Moḥammad Mofid Bāfqi, a contemporary of Majlesi, in his *Jāme'-e Mofidi* reports that when a prominent statesman, Mirzā Moḥammad Amin, had been serving as the vizier of the Qotbshahids of Deccan (q.v), he became nostalgic and returned to Iran for the love of his homeland (*ḥobb-e waṭan and ārezu-ye āmadan-e be Irān*). Other examples include a certain Mirzā Eshāq Beg and Captain Āqā Aḥmad, who migrated to India and later returned to Iran, or that of Mofid himself, who decided to return to Iran from India in accordance with the Hadith of *ḥobb al-waṭan mena'l-imān*, in spite of the comfort and hospitality extended to him in Šāh Jahānābād (*Jāme' ...*, III, 1, pp. 92, 453, 475, 804). Still another case is the poet, Naw'i Kabušāni (d. 1610), who, becoming nostalgic during his long residence in the court of the Indian king, Akbar, laments in a moving poem that "my tears flow to cleanse the land of Iran" (cited in Šafi' Kadkani, p. 5).

Commemorations of Nowruz and 'Āšurā. Commemorations of historic events in pre-modern societies served as the central vehicle for connecting collective memory with ethnic or ethno-national identification. Placing commemorations of seminal cultural events in their historical setting is an indication that the two distinct yet related ethno-national and religious events, *Nowruz* and *'Āšurā* (celebrations of New Year's day for 13 days and the martyrdom of Imam Ḥosayn, the third Shi'ite Imam, for 10 days), are of utmost significance in the reconstruction of Iranian identity under the Safavids. Initiated in Baghdad in the year 963 by order of the Buyid ruler, Mo'ezz-al-Dawla, the commemoration of *'Āšurā* (q.v.) was added to the celebrations of *Nowruz* and *Mehragān*. When *'Āšurā* coincided with the other two celebrations, the ethno-national festivals were observed on the next day; this scenario occurred in the year 398/1008, when *'Āšurā* coincided with *Mehragān* (see Faqihī, pp. 466-67). These dual commemorations became well established under the Safavids and together laid the foundations for the "Iranian-Shi'ite" identity for over 500 years.

The commemoration of the martyrdom of Imam Ḥosayn has many similarities to that of the martyrdom of Siāvuš (*Sug-e Siāvuš*) in pre-Islamic Persian mythology, which was commemorated in Soghdiana and Chorasmia until the early Islamic era and in some villages in Kuhgiluya even until recent times. Given that the two rites display a number of basic common features, some



writers have suggested that ‘Ašurā may have gradually substituted the mourning for Siāvuš over time (see Meskoob, *Sug-e Siāvuš*, pp. 80-89). In fact, the similarities of the two commemorations may partially explain the pervasive popularity of Āšurā among Persians. As Yarshater (1979, pp. 88-94) concludes in his comparison of the two rituals: “The martyrdom of Hussein and his kin found a ready ground in Persian tradition in order to develop into an inspiring and elaborate mourning drama. It inherited the major feature of a long-standing practice which had deep roots in the Persian soul.”

While Āšurā inherited basic features of the ritual of Siāvuš, Nowruz found religious legitimization by invention of a number of traditions attributed to Shi‘ite Imams from the Buyid to the Safavid periods. The historical narratives concerning the celebration of Nowruz indicate that, despite the objection of zealous Islamic universalists, Persians at large continued to celebrate Nowruz from the advent of Islam to the present time. The length, the joyful collective mood, and the grandeur of Nowruz celebrations in Iran and many parts of Central Asia is unparalleled in comparison to all of the religious and ethno-national festivals in other Islamic societies (see ČAHĀRŠĀNBASURI; HAFTSIN; [NOWRUZ ii. ISLAMIC PERIOD](#)).

The contested, yet mutually supportive nature of the two distinct commemorations of Nowruz and ‘Ašurā has made observance of the Persian New Year the subject of longstanding controversy in Shi‘ite jurisprudence. This controversy between those who espouse Nowruz’s legitimacy and those who condemn it as a pagan and un-Islamic practice in Iran may be traced to the Buyid period. When Shi‘ism was formally declared the state religion under the Safavids and the observance of both Nowruz and ‘Ašurā formed the two major wings of state festivals, a revised and expanded version of the book on Nowruz and the Persian calendar was prepared and incorporated (as a volume of some 90 pages in a set of 110 volumes) into the encyclopedic collection of Shi‘ite traditions, *Behār al-anwār* by Mollā Moḥammad Bāqer Majlesi, the major religious figure in the Safavid state. Of various traditions presented in *Behār al-anwār* on the celebration of Nowruz, two stand out as of central importance: one attributed to Imam Ja‘far al-Šādeq (q.v.), sanctifying the celebration, and the other attributed to Imam Musā al-Kāžem, condemning it as un-Islamic. *Behār* narrates the story of a certain Mo‘allā b. Kōnays, who pays a visit to Imam Šādeq on Nowruz. Explaining the significance of Nowruz, as “the day of the primal covenant with mankind, the day of the first rising of the sun, and the day of various other events in the lives of the prophets



concluding with the defeat of the antichrist Dajjāl by the Qā'em," the Imam maintains that it is "one of our days [i.e., holy days] and one of the days of our Shi'a, which the Persians have kept, although you [presumably the Arabs] have tried t

o suppress it" (Majlesi, *Behār al-anwār* LIX, p. 92, as tr. and cited by Walbridge, p. 83). The adversaries of Nowruz rely on a tradition attributed to Imam Musā al-Kāẓem, when the Caliph al-Manṣur called upon him regarding the legitimacy of the observance of Nowruz, and he replied: "I have examined the traditions of my grandfather, the Messenger of God, and found nothing about this holiday. It is a Persian custom that Islam has destroyed" (*Behār*, loc. cit., as tr. and cited by Walbridge, p. 83). While suggesting that this tradition has been frequently attributed to Imam al-Ṣādeq in numerous sources, Majlesi, in a scholarly manner, leaves the door open for the readers to decide the issue for themselves. Also of importance in the controversy is the fact that, since the time of Shaikh al-Ṭā'efa Ṭusi, one of the founding fathers of Shi'ite law in the 11th century, the obligatory fast and prayer of Nowruz has become a part of Shi'ite law, but the date of Nowruz has been the subject of continued controversy. Furthermore, Shaikh 'Abbās Qomi, in his influential modern collection of Shi'ite prayers, *Mafātiḥ al-jenān*, talks in support of the tradition attributed to Imam al-Ṣādeq to sanctify the celebration of Nowruz: "On the day of Nowruz wash [perform ablution] and dress in your cleanest clothes ..." (as cited by Walbridge, pp. 89-90). The pervasive celebration of Nowruz among people from all walks of life may also be observed by comparing it to the other main Islamic festivals, with the exception of Āšura. The celebration of Nowruz surpasses the two main Islamic festivals: the festival of fast-breaking (*Id-e Feṭr*), during the holiday that follows the completion of the holy month of fasting (Ramazān), and the festival of sacrifice (*Id-e Qorbān* or al-Aẓḥā).

The significance of Nowruz is further indicated by its special place in the chronicles of Safavid historians, featuring detailed descriptions of the grandeur of Nowruz festivities, even when it coincided with 'Āšurā. Nowruz festivities on 21 March 1611 occurred on Friday, 6 Mo-ḥarrām 1020, the day on which Shi'ites commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Ḥosayn. Shah 'Abbās honored both days, mourning on the day of 'Āšurā and celebrating Nowruz on the following day. The grandeur of the celebration of Nowruz 1611 is well illustrated in the chronicle *Āla-mārā-ye 'Abbāsi*: "The Shah then ordered a great feast to be prepared in the Bāḡ-e Naqṣ-e Jahān to which all classes of society were invited. ... Each group was allotted its own particular place in the



park, and gold tents and canopies of silk and Chinese brocade were set up. Booths, embellished in curious remarkable ways and illuminated with lamps, were erected in front of each group. Pages plied the assembled gathering with cheering draughts, and the merrymaking went on for several days” (tr. Savory, 1978, p. 1037).

CONCLUSION

Transcending local, regional, as well as kinship and tribal horizons, a relatively coherent historical and cultural conception of Iranian identity was developed in the long pre-modern history of Iran. The identity of Iranians was largely drawn from their territorial ties. They were identified, for the most part, with their places of birth or residence, which were in turn located in the lands of Iran or kingdom of Iran (*irānšahr*, *irānzamin*, *molk-e Irān*, *mamlekat-e Irān*, *kešvar-e Irān*). They assumed that their ties to the historical conception of the lands of Iran were also manifestations of their common imagined ancestry, deeply rooted in Persian mythologies and traditional history. Even the Persianized ruling Turkic and Mongol men of the sword presented themselves as the heirs of Persian kings and *amirs* in a continuum from primordial times to the end of the Qajar period, and as such they were considered to be Iranian. Belief in Iran’s cultural distinctiveness, commemoration of the national festival of Nowruz, dissemination of the idea of “Iran” through *naqqāli* and *Šāh-nāma k̄vāni* to the masses, and the popularity of Persian poetry among people from all walks of life continued to serve as the foundation of Iranian cultural identity in modern times.

It is interesting to note that the glorification of pre-Islamic Iranian history and culture recurred in the Safavid period, with many imaginative linguistic inventions, with the Āḍar Keyvāni religious and literary movement (q.v.), a pseudo-Zoroastrian sect (see also [DABESTĀN-E MAḌĀHEB](#); [DASĀTIR](#); for its influence during the 19th century, see Tavakoli-Targhi, 2001, pp. 86-95). Following this movement in the 19th century, a Qajar prince, Jalāl-al-Din Mirzā, identifying himself as being of Persian stock, prepared the first textbook of Iran’s pre-modern ethno-national history from the time of creation to the mid-19th century. It was within this broad framework of historical awareness and cultural consciousness that Iranian identity entered the age of nationalism of the 19th and 20th centuries (see iv, below).



BIBLIOGRAPHY

‘Abd-al-Razzāq Samarqandi, *Maṭla‘-e sa‘dayn wa majma‘-e baḥrayn* I, ed. ‘A.-Ḥ. Navā‘i, Tehran, 1974.

Salih Said Agha, *Revolution which Toppled the Umayyads: Neither Arab nor Abbasid*, Leiden, 2003.

‘Ālamārā-ye Šāh Esmā‘il, ed. ‘A. Montazer-e Šāḥeb, Tehran, 1970.

‘Ālamārā-ye Šāh Ṭahmāsb, ed. I. Afšār, Tehran, 1991.

H. F. Amedroz, “The Assumption of the Title of Shahanshah by the Buwayid Rulers,” *Numismatic Chronicle*, 4th series, 5, 1905, pp. 393-99.

Amir Mo‘ezzi, *Divān-e Amir Mo‘ezzi*, ed. ‘A. Eqbāl-Āštiāni, Tehran, 1939.

A. J. Arberry, “Persian Literature,” in idem, ed., *The Legacy of Persia*, London, 1968, pp. 199-292.

Ahmad Ashraf, “Boḥrān-e howiyat-e melli wa qawmi dar Irān” (The crisis of national and ethnic identities in Iran), in *Iran Nameh/Irān-nāma* 12/3, Summer 1994, pp. 521-50.

H. W. Baily, *Zoroastrian Problems in the Ninth-Century Books*, Oxford, 1943.

Abu ‘Ali Moḥamamd Bal‘ami, *Tāriḳ-e Bal‘ami*, ed. M.-T. Bahār, Tehran, 1962.

Faḳr-al-Din Dā‘ud Banākati, *Tāriḳ-e Banākati, rawzat ola‘l-albāb fī ma‘refat al-tawāriḳ wa‘l-ansāb*, ed. J. Še‘ār, Tehran, 1969. Qāzi Nāṣer-al-Din ‘Omar Bayzāwi, *Nezām al-tawārikò*, ed. Šams-Allāh Qadri, Hyderabad, 1930; ed. B. Karimi, Tehran, 1936.

Abu Rayḥān Biruni, *Ketāb al-āṭār al-bāqia ‘an al-qorun al-kālia*, ed. Eduard Sachau as *Chronologie orientalischer Völker von Albērūnī*, Leipzig, 1878; several reprints.

François de Blois, “A Persian Poem Lamenting the Arab Conquest,” in C. Hillenbrand, ed., *Studies in Honor of Clifford Edmund Bosworth II*, Leiden,



2000, pp. 82-95.

Bondāri Eşfahāni, *Tāriḳ-e selsela-ye Saljuḳi: zobdat al-noşra wa noḳbat al-’oşra*, tr. M.-H.r Jalili, Tehran, 1977.

C. E. Bosworth, “The Heritage of Rulership in Early Islamic Iran and the Search for Dynastic Connections with the Past,” *Iran* 11, 1973, pp. 51-62.

John A. Boyle, “The Evolution of Iran as a National State,” *Acta Iranica* 3, 1974, pp. 327-38.

E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, 4 vols., Cambridge, 1956.

Claude Cahen, “Tribes, Cities, and Social Organization,” in *Camb. Hist. Iran* IV, pp. 305-28.

Sayyed Moḥamamad Dabirsiāqi, “Tāt o Tājik o Tāzik,” in I. Afşār, ed., *Nāmvara-ye Doktor Maḥmud Afşār* VI, Tehran, 1991, pp. 3374-421.

Elton L. Daniel, “Manuscripts and Editions of Bal’ami’s *Tarjomah-i Tāriḳ-i Ṭabari*,” *JRAS*, 1990, pp. 282-321.

‘Ali-Akbar Dehḳodā, *Amtāl o ḥekam*, 4 vols., Tehran 1959-60.

Abu Ḥanifa Dinavari, *al-Aḳbār al-ṭewāl*, ed. Vladimir Guirgass, Leiden, 1888.

Ebn al-Balḳi, *Fārs-nāma*, ed. Guy Le Strange and R. A. Nicholson as *The Fārsnāma of Ibnu’l-Balkhī*, GMS, Cambridge, 1921.

Ebn Beṭriḳ (Eutychius), *Annales*, ed. L. Cheikho, Beirut, 1906-09.

Ebn Esfandiār, *Tāriḳ-e Ṭabarestān*, tr. E. G. Browne as *An Abridged Translation of the History of Tabaristan*, Leiden and London, 1905; ed. ‘A. Eqbāl-Āştiāni, 2 vols., Tehran, 1941.

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

Ebn Meskawayh, *Tahḍīb al-aḳlāq*, ed. C. Zurayk, Beirut, 1966, tr. C. Zurayk as *The Refinement of Character*, Beirut, 1968.

Ebn al-Nadim, *Ktāb al-fehrest*, ed. R. Tajaddod, Tehran, 1971.



Ebn Qoṭayba, *al-Ma'āref*, ed. Tarwat 'Okāša, Cairo, 1960.

Idem, *'Oyun al-aḳbār*, ed. A. Zaki 'Adawi, 4 vols., Cairo, 1925-30.

Mo'in-al-Din Esfazāri, *Rawzāt al-jannāt fi awṣāf madinat al-Herāt I*, ed. M. Eshāq, Calcutta, 1961.

Eskandar Beyg Torkamān, *Tārik-e 'ālamāra-ye 'abbāsi*, 2 vols., ed. I. Afšār, Tehran, 1955-56; tr. Roger Savory as *History of Shah 'Abbas the Great*, Boulder, Colo., 1978.

Estakri, *Masālek wa mamālek*, Tehran, 1961.

Mollā 'Abd-al-'Ali Faḳr-al-Zamāni, *Tadkera-ye meykāna*, ed. A. Golčīn-e Ma'āni, Tehran, 1961.

'Ali-Aṣḡar Faḳīhi, *Āl-e Buya wa awzā'-e zamān-e išān*, Tehran, 1978.

Sayf-al-Din Moḡammad Farḡāni, *Divān-e Sayf-al-Din Moḡammad Farḡāni I*, ed. D. Ṣafā, Tehran, 1962.

Farroki Sistāni, *Divān-e Farroki-e Sistāni*, ed. M. Dabirsiāqi, Tehran, 1976.

Ferdowsi, *Šāh-nāma*, ed. Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, Bib. Pers., Persian Text Series, N.S. 1, New York, 1987-.

Bert Fragner, *Die "Persophonie": Regionalität, Identität und Sprachkontakt in der Geschichte Asiens* (Persophonia—regionalism, identity, and language contacts in the history of Asia), Halle an der Saale, 1999.

Richard Frye, *The Golden Age of Persia*, London, 1975.

'Abd al-Ḥayy Gardizi, *Zayn al-aḳbār*, ed. 'Abd-al-Ḥayy Ḥabibi, Tehran, 1968.

H. A. R. Gibbs, "The Social Significance of the Shuubiya," in *Studia Orientalia Ioanni Pedersen Dicata*, Copenhagen, 1953, pp. 105-14; repr. in idem, *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, Princeton, 1962, pp. 62-73.

Gherardo Gnoli, *The Idea of Iran: An Essay on Its Origin*, Rome, 1989.

Aḡmad Golčīn-e Ma'āni, *Kārvān-e Hend: dar aḡwāl o āṭār-e šā'erān-e 'aṣr-e Ṣafawi ke be Hend raftand*, 2 vols., Mašhad, 1990.



- Ignaz Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien* I, Halle, 1889; ed. S. M. Stern, tr., C. M. Barber and S. M. Stern, as *Muslim Studies* I, London, 1966.
- As'ad Gorgāni, *Vis o Rāmin*, ed. M. Minovi, Tehran, 1958.
- G. E. von Grunebaum, "Firdausi's Concept of History," in idem, *Islam, Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition*, London, 1961, pp. 168-84.
- Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, London, 1998.
- Ḥāfez-e Abru, *Zobdat al-tawāriḵ* I, ed. K. Ḥājj Sayyed-jawādi, Tehran, 1993.
- Idem, *Jogrāfiā-ye Ḥāfez-e Abru*, 3 vols., ed. S. Sajjādi, Tehran, 1996-99.
- Ḥamd-Allāh Mostawfi, *Nozhat al-qolub*, ed. M. Dabirsiāqi, Tehran, 1957.
- Idem, *Tāriḵ-e gozida*, ed. 'Abd-al-Ḥosayn Navā'i, Tehran, 1960.
- Ḥamza Eṣfahāni, *Ketāb ta'riḵ seni moluk al-arż wa'l-anbiā'*, ed. and Latin tr. J.-M.-E. Gottwaldt, 2 vols., St. Petersburg and Leipzig, 1844-48.
- William Hanaway, "Alexander and the Question of Iranian Identity," *Acta Iranica* 16, 1991, pp. 93-103.
- J. Brian Harley and David Woodward, eds., *Cartography in the Traditional Islamic and South Asian Societies* II/1 *Islamic Cartography*, Madison, 1992.
- Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge, 1990.
- Jalāl Homā'i, *Šo'ubiya*, ed. M. Qodsi, Isfahan, 1984.
- 'Aṭā-Malek Jovayni, *Tāriḵ-e jahāngošāy* I, ed. M. Qazvini, Leiden, 1911.
- Menhāj-e Serāj Juzjāni, *Tabaqāt-e nāšeri*, ed. 'A. Ḥabibi, Kabul, 1963.
- Ġiāṭ-al-Din Kṡāndamir, *Tāriḵ ḥabib al-siar*, ed. M. Dabirsiāqi, 4 vols., Tehran, 1954.
- Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier Fictions: Shaping the Iranian Nation, 1804-1946*, Princeton, 1999.
- Carla Klausner, *The Seljuk Vizierate: A Study of Civil Administration 1055-1194*,



Cambridge, Mass., 1973.

Dorothea Krawulsky, *Īrān—Das Reich der Īlḥāne: Eine topographisch—historische Studie*, Weisbaden, 1978.

Ann K. S. Lambton, “Ḳawmiyya iii. in Persia,” in *EI2* IV, 1978, pp. 785-90.

Idem, “The Internal Structure of the Saljuq Empire,” in *Theory and Practice in Medieval Persian Government*, London, 1980, pp. 203-82.

Idem, *Qajar Persia: Eleven Studies*, Austin, 1987.

Gilbert Lazard, “The Rise of the New Persian Language,” *Camb. Hist. Iran* IV, 1975, pp. 595-632.

G. Lecomte, *Ibn Qutayba: l’homme, son šuvre, ses idées*, Damascus, 1965.

R. Levy, “Persia and the Arabs,” in A. J. Arberry, ed., *The Legacy of Persia*, London, 1968, pp. 60-88.

Wilfred, Madelung, “The Assumption of the Title Shahanshah by the Buyids and the ‘Reign of the Daylam’ (Dawlat al-Daylam),” *JNES* 28, 1969, pp. 168-83.

Moḥammad Bāqer Majlesi, *Behār al-anwār* LIX ed. Jawād ‘Alawi and M. Āḳundi, Tehran, 1949.

Malekšāh Ḥosayn Sistāni, *Eḥyā’ al-moluk*, ed. M. Sotudha, Tehran, 1965.

Moṭahhar b. Ṭāher Maqdesi, *Ketāb al-bad’ wa’l-ta’riḳ*, ed. and tr. Clément Huart as *Le livre de la création et de l’histoire*, 6 vols., Paris, 1899-1919; Persian tr. M.-R. Šafi’i Kadkani, as *Āfarineš wa tārikò*, 6 vols. in 2, Tehran, 1975.

Moḥammad-Ḳalil Mar’āši Šafawi, *Majma’ al-tawāriḳ*, ed. ‘A. Eqbāl-Āštiāni, Tehran, 1950.

Mas’udi, *Moruj al-dahab*, ed. and tr. Charles Barbier de Meynard and Abel Pavet de Courteille as *Les prairies d’or*, 9 vols., Paris, 1861-1917; rev. ed. Charles Pellat, 7 vols., Beirut, 1962-79.

Idem, *Ketāb al-tanbih wa’l-ešrāf*, ed. M. J. de Goeje, BGA, Leiden, 1894.

Jalāl Matini, “Iran dar goḏāšt-e ruzgārān: dawrān-e eslāmi,” *Iranshenasi/Irān-šenāsi* 4/2, 1992, pp. 243-68.



Rudi Matthee, "Between Aloofness and Fascination: Safavid Views of the West," *Iranian Studies* 31/2, 1998, pp. 219-46.

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

Idem, "Why Write History in Persian? Historical Writings of the Samanid Period," in C. Hillenbrand, ed., *Studies in Honour of Clifford Edmund Bosworth II*, Leiden, 2000.

Charles Melville, "From Adam to Abaqa: Qāḍī Baiḍāwī's Rearrangement of History," in *Studia Iranica* 30, 2001, pp. 67-86.

Shahrokh Meskoob, *Sug-e Siāvus̄ (dar marg o rastākiz)*, Tehran, 1971.

Idem, *Iranian Nationality and the Persian Language*, tr. M. Hillmann, ed. J. Perry, Foreword and Interview with the Author by Ali Banuazizi, Washington, D.C., 1992.

Vladimir Minorsky, "Persia: Religion and History," in G. E. von Grunebaum, ed., *Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilization*, Chicago, 1955, pp. 173-90; repr. in V. Minorsky, *Iranica: Twenty Articles, Bist maqāla-ye Minorski*, Tehran, 1964, pp. 242-59.

Idem, "The Older Preface to the Shahnama," *ibid.*, pp. 260-73.

Idem, "The Iranian Intermezzo," in *Studies in Caucasus History*, London, 1953, pp. 110-16.

Moḥammad Kāvandšāh Mirkāvānd, *Tāriḵ-e rawzat al-sāafā XI*, ed. M.-J. Maškur, Tehran, 1972.

Moḥammad Mofid Mostawfi Bāfqī Yazdi, *Jāme'-e mofidi*, vols. 1 and 3, ed. I. Afšār, Tehran, 1961-63.

Idem, *Moḵtaṣar-e Mofid dar aḥwāl-e belād-e welāyāt-e Irān*, ed. Seyfeddin Najmabadi, Wiesbaden, 1989.

M. Moḥammadi Malā-yeri, *Tāriḵ wa farhang-e Irān dar dawrān-e enteqāl az 'aṣr-e Sāsāni be 'aṣr-e eslāmi*, 5 vols., Tehran, 1993-2003.

M. Mo'in, *Mazdayasnā wa adab-e fārsi I*, 3rd ed., Tehran, 1976.



- Mojmal al-tawāriḳ wa'l-qeṣasá*, ed. M.-T. Bahār, Tehran, 1939.
- David Morgan, *Medieval Persia, 1040-1797*, London, 1988.
- Roy P. Mottahedeh, "The Shu'ubiyah Controversy and the Social History of Early Islamic Iran," *IJMES* 7, 1976, pp. 161-82.
- Mohammad b. Hendūšāh Nakjavāni, *Dastur al-kāteb fī ta'yin al-marāteb*, ed. A. 'Alizāda, 3 vols. Moscow, 1964-76.
- Idem, *Tajāreb al-salaf*, ed. 'A. Eqbāl-Āštiāni, Tehran, 1965.
- Naršaki, *Tārik-e Boḳārā*, ed. M.-T. Modarres Rażawi, Tehran, 1940; 2nd ed. Tehran, 1972; tr. R. N. Frye as *The History of Bukhara*, Cambridge, Mass., 1954.
- Šehāb-al-Din Nasavi, *Sirat-e Jalāl-al-Din Minkoberni*, ed. M. Minovi, Tehran, 1965.
- Moḥammad-Ebrāhim Naširi, *Dastur-e šahriārān*, ed. Moḥammad-Nāder Naširi Moqaddam, Tehran, 1994.
- 'Abd-al-Ḥosayn Navā'i, ed. *Asnād wa mokātabāt-e tāriḳi-e Irān az Timur tā Šāh Esmā'īl*, Tehran, 1977.
- Nehāyat al-erab*, abr. tr. E. G. Browne, *JRAS*, 1900, pp. 195-259.
- Neẓām-al-Molk, *Siar al-moluk (Siāsat-nāma)*, ed. Hubert Darke, Tehran, 1976; tr. Darke as *Siasat-Namah. The Book of Government or Rules for Kings*, London, 1960.
- 'Onšor-al-Ma'āli Kaykāvus b. Eskandar, *Qābus-nāma*, ed. Ğ.-H. Yusofi, Tehran, 1966.
- 'Onšori, *Divān-e 'Onšori*, ed. M. Dabirsiāqi, Tehran, 1963.
- 'Onšor-al-Ma'āli Kaykāvus b. Eskandar, M. Qazvini, "Moqaddama-ye qadim-e Šāh-nāma," in idem, *Bist maqāla-ye Qazvini*, ed. 'A. Eqbāl-Āštiāni, Tehran, 1953, II, pp. 5-90.
- Ḥasan b. Moḥammad Qomi, *Tāriḳ-e Qom*, ed. Jalāl-al-Din Ṭehrāni, Tehran, 1934.
- Shaikh 'Abbās Qomi, *Mafātiḥ al-jenān*, Tabriz, 1908 (various printings).



Sholeh A. Quinn, *Historical Writing During the Reign of Shah 'Abbas: Ideology, Imitation, and Legitimacy in Safavid Chronicles*, Salt Lake City, 2000.

Rašid-al-Din Fażl-Allāh, *Tāriḳ-e mobārak-e Ġazān Khan*, ed. Karl Jahn, London, 1940.

Idem, *Jāme' al-tawāriḳ* III, ed. 'A.-'A. 'Alizāda, Baku, 1957.

Idem, *Sawāneh al-afkār-e rašidi*, ed. M.-T. Dānešpažuh, Tehran, 1979.

Moḥammad b. 'Ali Rāvandi, *Rāḩat al-šodur wa āyat al-sorur dar tāriḳ-e Āl-e Saljuq*, ed. M. Eqbāl, new ed. with notes and references, M. Minovi, Tehran, 1985.

Mohammad Rekaya, "La Place des provinces sud-caspiennes dans l'histoire de l'Iraq: particularisme regionale ou role 'nationale'?" *Revista degli studi orientali* 68, 1974, pp. 115-52.

Idem, "Mazyar, resistance ou integration d'une province iranienne au monde musulman," *Studia Iranica* 2/2, 1973, pp. 143-92.

Lutz Richter-Bernburg, "Linguistic Shu'ūbiya and Early Neo-Persian Prose," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 94/1, 1974, pp. 55-64.

ḩasan Beyg Rumlu, *Aḩsan al-tawāriḳ*, ed., 'A.-ḩ. Navā'i. Tehran, 1978.

Moḥammad b. 'Ali Šabānkāra'i, *Majma' al-ansāb*, ed. M. H. Moḩaddet, Tehran, 1984.

Sa'di, *Kolliyāt-e Sa'di*, ed. M-'A. Foruḡi, Tehran, 1983.

G.-H. Sadighi, *Les mouvements religieux iraniens au IIe et au IIIe siècle de l'hégire*, Paris, 1938; Persian tr. by the author as *Jonbešhā-ye dini-e Irāni dar qarnhā-ye dovvom wa sevvom-e hejri*, Tehran, 1993.

Ḩabiḩ-Allāh Šafā, *Tāriḳ-e adabiyāt dar Irān*, 6 vols. in 9, Tehran, 1953-92.

Idem, *KolāsĀa-ye tāriḳ-e siāsi, ejtemā'i wa farhangi-e Irān az āḡāz tā pāyān-e 'asĀr-e Šafawi*, Tehran, 1977.

Idem, *ḩemāsa-sarāyi dar Irān*, Tehran, 1984.

Moḩammad-Rezā Šafi'i Kadkani, "Talaqqi-e qodamā' az waṭan," *Alefbā* 2, 1973,



pp. 1-26.

Žiā’-al-Din Sajjādi, “Nām-e Irān dar naḳostin aš’ār-e fārsi,” in I. Afšār, ed., *Nāmvāra-ye Doktor Maḥmud Afšār II*, Tehran, 1986, pp. 248-59.

Bertold Spuler, *Iran in früh-islamischer Zeit; Politik, Kultur, Verwaltung und öffentliches Leben zwischen der arabischen und der seldschukischen Eroberung*, Wiesbaden, 1952; tr. J. Falāṭuri, as *Tāriḳ-e Irān dar qorun-e naḳostin-e eslāmi*, Tehran, 1970.

Idem, “Iran: The Persistent Heritage,” in G. E. von Grunebaum, ed., *Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilization*, Chicago, 1955, pp. 67–82.

Idem, “The Evolution of Persian Historiography,” in B. Lewis, P. M. Holt, eds., *Historians of the Middle East*, London, 1962, pp. 126-32.

S. M. Stern, “Ya’qub the Coppersmith and Persian National Sentiment,” in C. E. Bosworth, ed., *Iran and Islam: In Memory of the Late Vladimir Minorsky*, Edinburgh, 1971, pp. 535-56.

Idem, *Aristotle on the World State*, London, 1968.

Abu Maṣṣur Ṭā’ālebi, *Ġorar aḳbār moluk al-fors*, ed. and tr. Hermann Zotenberg as *Histoire des rois des Perses*, Paris, 1900.

Moḥammad b. Jarir Ṭabari, *Ketāb ta’riḳ al-rosol wa’l-moluk*, ed. M. J. de Goeje et al., 15 vols., Leiden, 1879-1901; repr. Leiden, 1964; tr. by various scholars as *The History of al-Ṭabari*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater, Albany, N.Y., 1985-.

Idem, *Tarjoma-ye tafsir-e Ṭabari I*, ed. Ḥabib Yaḡmā’i, Tehran, 1960.

Aḥmad Tafazzoli, *Tāriḳ-e adabiyāt-e Irān-e piš az Eslām*, ed. Ž. Āmuzgār, Tehran, 1997.

Idem, *Sasanian Society: I. Warriors, II. Scribes, III. Dehqāns*, New York, 2000.

Tāj-al-Din Ḥasan b. Šehāb Yazdi, *Jāme’ al-tawāriḳ-e ḥasani, baḳš-e Timuriān pas as Timur (855-57)*, ed. Ḥ. Modarresi Ṭabāṭabā’i and I. Afšār, Karachi, 1977.

S. Ḥ. Taqizādeh, “Manša’-e asĀli wa qadim-e Šāh-nāma,” *Kāveh* 5/10, October 1920, pp. 9-14; repr. in *Hezāra-ye Ferdowsi*, Tehran, 1943, pp. 17-107.



Tāriḳ-e Sistān, ed. M.-T. Bahār, Tehran, 1956; tr. Milton Gold as *The Tāriḳh-e Sistān*, PHS, Rome, 1976.

Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran: Orientalism, Occidentalism and Historiography*, New York, 2001.

Mostafa Vaziri, *Iran as Imagined Nation: The Construction of National Identity*, New York, 1993.

Moḥammad Yusof Wāleh Eṣfahāni, *Ḳold-e barin: Irān dar ruzgār-e Safawiān*, ed. Mir Hāšem Moḥaddet, Tehran, 1972.

John Walbridge, "A Persian Gulf in the Sea of Lights: The Chapter on Nawruz in the Bihār al-Anwār," *Iran* 35, 1997, pp. 83-92.

G. M. Wickens, "Persian Literature; and Affirmation of Identity," in Roger M. Savory, ed., *Introduction to Islamic Civilization*, Cambridge, 1976, pp. 71-78.

Aḥmad b. Abi Ya'qub Ya'qubi, *Ketāb al-boldān*, ed. M. J. de Goeje, BGA, Leiden, 1892; 2nd ed., Leiden, 1967.

Idem, *Ta'riḳ*, ed. M. T. Houtsma as *Historiae*, Leiden, 1883.

Yāqūt, *Eršad al-arib elā ma'refat al-adib*, ed. D. S. Margoliouth, GMS, 7 vols., Leiden, 1907-26.

Ehsan Yarshater, "Were the Sasanians Heirs to the Achaemenids?" in *La Persia nel Medioevo*, Rome, 1971, pp. 517-31.

Idem, "Safavid Literature: Progress or Decline," *Iranian Studies* 7/1-2, 1974, pp. 217-70.

Idem, "Ta'zia and Pre-Islamic Mourning Rites in Iran," in Peter Chelkowski, ed., *Ta'zieh Ritual and Drama in Iran*, New York, 1979, pp. 88-94.

Idem, "Iranian National History," in *Camb. Hist. Iran* III/1, 1983a, pp. 359-477 (with extensive bibliography).

Idem, "Mazdakism" in *Camb. Hist. Iran* III/1, 1983b, pp. 991-1024.

Idem, "Čerā dar Šāh-nāma az pādšāhān-e Mād wa Haḳāmaneši dekr-i nist?" *Iran Nameh/Irān-nāma* 3/2, 1984, pp. 191-213.



Idem, "The Persian Presence in Islamic World," in R. Hovannesian and G. Sabagh, eds., *The Persian Presence in Islamic World*, Cambridge, 1998, pp. 4-125.

Zahir-al-Din Mar'aši, *Tāriḳ-e Ṭabarestān wa Ruyān wa Māzandarān*, introd. M.-J. Maškur, ed. M.-Ḥ Tasbiḥi, Tehran, 1966.

Moḥamad b. 'Ali Zāhiri Kāteb Samarqandi, *Aḡrāz al-siāsa fī a'rāz al-riāsa*, ed. J. Še'ār, Tehran, 1970.

'Abd-al-Ḥosayn Zarrinkub, *Do qarn-e sokut*, Tehran, 1957.