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JONES, WILLIAM

JONES, Sir WILLIAM (b. London, 28 September, 1746; d. Calcutta, 27 April, 1794; Figure 1), orientalist and judge, son of William Jones FRS, and Mary Nix, the gifted daughter of a cabinet-maker. His father, a distinguished Welsh mathematician and collector of early Welsh manuscripts, was a friend of Sir Isaac Newton and Edmond Halley, and a close relation of the Anglesey polymath Lewis Morris, whose pioneering researches facilitated the Celtic revival. Jones senior did not live to see young William's third birthday, but his wife's advanced educational ideas ensured that her child's mind was continually stimulated. A seven-year-old prodigy, Jones started at Harrow in Michaelmas term 1753 on a scholarship, and soon exhibited a remarkable facility for languages, graduating from the Greek and Roman classics, to Hebrew and Arabic, and acquiring the nickname "the Great Scholar."

He matriculated at University College, Oxford on 15 March 1764 and was elected as a Bennet scholar on 31 October 1764. Here Jones initiated what proved a life-long reliance upon native informants by employing a Syrian named Mirzā to help him translate *Les mille et une nuits* back into Arabic, exemplifying the symbiosis between popular and academic Orientalism which was to distinguish his career. Oriental studies at Oxford stressed the centrality of Arabic for biblical scholarship, and both Thomas Hunt (1696-1774), who held chairs in both Arabic and Hebrew, and Robert Lowth, bishop of Oxford, former professor of poetry and author of *De sacra poesi Hebraeorum* (1753), encouraged Jones to read the Old Testament as figurative, rhythmic, and inspired Oriental literature. The manuscript treasures of the Pococke

collection facilitated his explorations of the linguistic connections between Arabic and Persian, firing his enthusiasm for Saʿdi, Hafez, and pre-Islamic Arabic poetry such as the *Moʿallaqāt*.

His acceptance in 1765 of the post of tutor to George John Spencer, Viscount Althorp, provided him with an entrée into the society of influential Whig magnates. In the summer of 1766 he fell in love with Anna Maria Shipley (1748-1829), daughter of the radical Bishop Jonathan Shipley (1713-88); was elected a fellow of University College; and offered the post of interpreter for Eastern languages by the Duke of Grafton, First Lord of the Treasury. Unwilling to submerge himself in dry documents, Jones displayed a typical mixture of naïveté, generosity, and complete lack of racial prejudice by suggesting his friend Mirzā for the Treasury post. Graduating BA in Michaelmas term 1768, Jones accepted a prestigious commission from King Christian VII of Denmark to translate from the Persian Mirzā Mahdi Khān Astarābādi's *Jāhāngošā-ye nāderi*, a life of the Iranian monarch and invader of Mughal India, Nader Shah (r. 1736-47). The publication of *Histoire de Nader Chah* (London, 1770) earned Jones election to the Royal Society of Copenhagen, but it was ironic that a writer who had declared in his preface that "power is odious," and was later a proponent of universal manhood suffrage, should begin his literary career with a translation of the life of a despotic conqueror. What irritated Jones most keenly was that he should be publishing a work of inferior merit when there was such a magnificent abundance of Persian literature which he longed to introduce to the West: "[I]t would have been the last manuscript in the world, which I should have thought of translating: out of so many *Persian* books of poetry, ethicks, criticism, science, history, it would have been easy to have selected one more worthy of the public attention; and the works of *Hafez* or Saʿdi might have been printed for half the expense and in half the time," (from the preface to the 1773 English version; unnumbered pages).

If, in fulfilling this commission, Jones was gratifying the militarist and absolutist whims of this increasingly schizophrenic brother-in-law of George III, the translator at least used the occasion to attack the cultural absolutism of Graeco-Roman classicism. Determined that his first publication should propound his conviction that it was time to look to Persia not for despotic role-models but for poetic enlightenment, he appended to the *Histoire* a celebration of Arabic and Persian verse, entitled "Un traité sur la poësie orientale." Translated and transliterated extracts were amplified by his inclusion of

twenty-four pages of odes by his beloved Hafez, rendered into elegant French.

His reputation as an Orientalist was growing, as was his sense of independence, which led to his decision to become a barrister, and he entered the Middle Temple, London, on 19 November 1770. From this point onwards the law and Oriental literature were to operate upon the career of 'Selim' Jones in an increasingly productive symbiosis. While embarking on his legal studies he was completing a work that was to make his international reputation as 'Oriental' or 'Persian' Jones, *A Grammar of the Persian Language* (1771) with "*Ketāb-e šakarestān dar naḥw-e zabān-e pārsi taṣnif-e Yunos-e Oksfordi*" inscribed in Persian on its title page. Its publication effectively marked the birth of Romantic Orientalism, revealing Jones's awareness of the reciprocal relationship of knowledge and power. Oriental literature was not to be ushered in on the shirt-tails of a Persian marauder, but it was to be engraved upon the aspiring and acquisitive hearts of East India Company employees. As Persian was the official language of the courts of India, Empire might become the vehicle of Orientalism. Commercial and self-"interest was the charm which gave the languages of the East a real and solid importance" (*Preface*, pp. viii-ix). A work of utility in the training of Company writers, Jones's *Grammar* taught the intricacies of language through an examination of exquisite literature. Incorporating an annotated "Catalogue of the Most Valuable Books in the Persian Language," it served as an invaluable primer of exotic Persian poems, introducing to the West "A Persian Song of Hafiz." Here are both prose and metrical versions of the first stanza of this much-anthologized "Turk of Shiraz" ghazal:

If that lovely maid of Shiraz would accept my heart, I would give for the mole on her cheek the cities of Samarcand and Bokhara.

Sweet maid, if thou wouldst charm my sight;

And, bid these arms thy neck infold;

That rosy cheek, that lily hand

Would give thy poet more delight

Than all Bocara's vaunted gold,

Than all the gems of Samarcand

(*Grammar*, pp. 129, 131)

The year 1771 also saw the publication of Jones's important *Dissertation sur la littérature orientale*, in which he further developed his comparativist stance, juxtaposing prose versions of odes by Hafez and Horace, and historical writings by Abu'l-Fedā with those of Xenophon. Only a generously endowed program of language study would reveal the full power and elegance of writers such as Ferdowsi, Mesiḥi, Neẓāmi, or ʾAmr al-Qays, but Jones was fully aware that the first step in raising public awareness was the production of adequate translations. To ignore such cultural treasure would be the prejudiced philistinism of Eurocentric 'savagery;' as he had forcefully expressed it in the Preface to his 'Persian Grammar': "We all love to excuse, or to conceal, our ignorance, and are seldom willing to allow any excellence beyond the limits of our own attainments: like the savages, who thought the sun rose and set for them alone, and could not imagine that the waves, which surrounded their island, left coral and pearls upon any other shore."

There is a certain rebarbative irony about his words "seldom willing to allow any excellence beyond the limits of our own attainments" when considered in connection with his third publication of 1771, the *Lettre à Monsieur A*** du P****. Here the narrowness of island patriotism was allowed to triumph over what might have proved cutting-edge international scholarly co-operation. The enterprising Orientalist Abraham-Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron (q.v.) had criticized the lack of heating in the Bodleian library at Oxford and, in his *Zend-Avesta* (1771), had falsely accused Thomas Hunt of professing a knowledge of Avestan. The stinging invective Jones delivered in the elegant French of his *Lettre* wrongly claimed that Anquetil-Duperron had been duped by the Parsis with modern forgeries, and this clash of egotisms not only tarnished the Frenchman's career, but seriously retarded Zend-Avesta studies for many years.

With his *Poems, Consisting Chiefly of Translations from the Asiatick Languages* (1772), Jones provided an influential mixture of his own poems inspired by Oriental writers, initiating the genre of the Romantic Oriental verse tale, together with translations to demonstrate, for example, "that some of the *Persian* songs have a striking resemblance to the sonnets of *Petrarch*" (p. v). Anxious to popularize at a variety of intellectual and cultural levels, he supplies for an ode to the spring by Mesiḥi an elegant verse translation, a precise prose translation, and a transliteration in Roman letters for the scholar of Turkish. Simultaneously scholar, artist, and communicator, Jones delighted "to demonstrate a species of literature, which abounds with so many new

expressions, new images, and new inventions" (p. viii).

The two essays appended to *Poems* are key documents in the emergence of Romanticism and the history of criticism. "On the poetry of the Eastern nations," seeks to invigorate tired classicism with energetic Arabian pastoral; his Bedouin tribesmen exemplified political resistance against centralized power, and introduced the West to the heroic hedonism of the pre-Islamic Arabian ode (*qaṣida*). Jones, keen to eradicate racial and political stereotypes of Oriental literature and Asian despotism, included a translation from Saʿdi's *Bustān* of the enlightened advice of King Anušervān to his son Hormoz; such poems "a century or two ago . . . would have been suppressed in *Europe*, for spreading with too strong a glare the light of liberty and reason" (*Works*, X, p. 354). The second essay, "On the arts, commonly called imitative," also emphasizes the primacy of lyric, offering a proto-Wordsworthian definition of poetry as "originally no more than a strong and animated expression of the human passions" (*Works*, X, p. 363). Such lyric subjectivity and classical reorientation is also reflected in his letter to the Hungarian Orientalist, Count Reviczki: "From my earliest years, I was charmed with the poetry of the Greeks; nothing, I then thought, could be more sublime than the Odes of Pindar, nothing sweeter than Anacreon, nothing more polished and elegant than the golden remains of Sappho, Archilochus, Alcaeus, and Simonides: but when I had tasted the poetry of the Arabs and Persians [. . .]" (*Works*, I. p. 78).

Jones was planning a history of Turkey and had he succeeded in a rather ambitious attempt to secure the post of ambassador at Constantinople, the history of Orientalism might have developed differently. As it was, 'Persian' Jones confirmed his intellectual priority in being elected a fellow of the Royal Society on 30 April 1772, and his social mobility in election to Dr Johnson's prestigious Turk's Head Club in the spring of 1773, joining such glitterati as Edmund Burke, Edward Gibbon (q.v.), Oliver Goldsmith, David Garrick, and Thomas Percy. A disciple of Locke and a friend of Adam Smith, Joseph Priestley, Richard Price and Benjamin Franklin, Jones always favored associations where merit secured a rival exclusivity to that of rank.

On 28 January 1774 he was called to the bar at the Middle Temple, and after a brief spell on the Oxford circuit, practiced on the Carmarthen circuit from 1775 to 1783. Jones proudly rediscovered the colonized land of his fathers, and was angered at the erosion of ancient Celtic liberties by a rack-renting Anglicized squirearchy. The reality of Welsh pastoral conditions ironized what he had seen of Ranelagh society 'shepherdesses,' and in defending poor

farmers and agricultural workers from powerful adversaries he honed a radical edge to his Whig politics.

Amidst these professional pressures, Jones still made time to produce important Orientalist writings. The publication of his *Poeseos Asiaticš Commentariorum* (1774) marked the fact that he had now championed and translated Oriental poetry in English, French, and Latin, the last of which was still to a large extent the language of international scholarship. His culturally sensitive translation of the pre-Islamic *The Moallakát, or, Seven Arabian Poems* (1782) revealed the classical Arabic tradition in all its muscular beauty. This celebration of the Bedouin mentality demonstrated a new and exciting strain of pastoral, an intoxicating and refreshing draft out of Arabia Felix, as stimulating as the first of the poet Ṭarafa's three pleasures:

First, to rise before the censurers awake, and to drink tawny wine, which sparkles and froths when the clear stream is poured into it.

Next, when a warrior, encircled by foes, implores my aid, to bend towards him my prancing charger, fierce as a wolf among the Gadha-trees, whom the sound of human steps has awakened, and who runs to quench his thirst at the brook.

Thirdly, to shorten a cloudy day, a day astonishingly dark, by toying with a lovely delicate girl under a tent supported by pillars.

("The poem of Ṭarafa," verses 58-60; *Works* X, pp. 32-33)

In leisure hours in west Wales, 'Druid' Jones hymned the delicacy of the maidens of Ceredigion. Fascinated by the researches into early Welsh undertaken by his Anglesey relations, the Morrises, he initiated the society of the 'Druids of the Teifi'. Jones as chief bard entertained the company on the banks of the river by Cilgerran castle with occasional verse anticipating Wordsworthian themes. An extempore piece written in an hour, "Kneel to the Goddess whom all Men Adore" (1780), records an Enlightened deist reaction to the anti-Catholic Gordon Riots of June 1780; it playfully urges his fellow Druids to teach Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Parsees, pagan Greeks and Romans that they all hymned one goddess-be she called Diana, Mary, Astarte, or Gangā. The impassioned syncretism of this lyrical *jeu d'esprit* prefigures the universalizing tendencies of his groundbreaking discourse "On the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India" (1784).

Early in 1778 Jones had applied for the post of Puisne Judge in the Bengal

Supreme Court where he might unite his linguistic, legal, and literary avocations. He was ideally fitted for the post; to add to his skill as an advocate a distinguished reputation as a legal scholar had been established by a series of key studies of comparative law: *The Speeches of Isaeus Concerning the Law of Succession to Property in Athens* (1779); *Essay on the Law of Bailments* (1781); and *The Mahomedan Law of Succession to the Property of Intestates* (1782). His friend Burke sought his advice on Muslim law and upon the Bengal Judiciary Bill of 1781.

Throughout the years 1778-1783 Jones seemed simultaneously to qualify and disqualify himself for the Calcutta judgeship. His liberal opinions irritated the Lord Chancellor, Edward Thurlow, and his friendship with Benjamin Franklin, his pro-American stance, and his movements between Britain and France created press speculation and government suspicion. Despairing of the Calcutta post, he had applied for the lord almoner's professorship of Arabic in 1780, but ministerial supporters at Oxford were also wary of his reputation as a radical Whig, and he was passed over. Next he announced his decision to stand as a Whig candidate for the university, but the inclusion of copies of his pro-American ode "Ad libertatem" in letters to electors was ill-judged and, though his canvassers included Georgiana Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, Elizabeth Montagu, Charles James Fox, and John Dunning, the active London support of John Wilkes and Richard Price was perhaps counter-productive in Oxford. Jones withdrew from the election contest, but was soon supporting Wilkes on the hustings with his *Speech on the Nomination of Candidates to Represent the County of Middlesex* (1780), which advocated the reformist agenda of the association movement, criticized government policy in India, and boldly attacked the horrors of the slave trade.

Jones's political poems, including "Ode in imitation of Alcaeus" (1781), privately circulated amongst fellow members of the Club of Honest Whigs such as Richard Price and Joseph Priestley, Charles Dilly, Ralph Griffiths, Thomas Day, and Benjamin Franklin, were subsequently distributed gratis by Major John Cartwright's Society for Constitutional Information (to which Jones was elected in March 1782), and later republished in Thomas Spence's radical journal of the 1790s, *One Penny Worth of Pig's Meat* (the voice of Burke's "swinish multitude"). Even *The Muse Recalled; an Ode on the Nuptials of Lord Viscount Althorp and Miss Lavinia Bingham* (1781), an epithalamium on the occasion of his former pupil's marriage, composed at the insistence of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire (the groom's sister), was made the vehicle

of pro-American oppositional ideology. Jones's friends Henry Laurens, Arthur Lee, John Adams, and Benjamin Franklin were encouraging him to think of emigrating westwards to America.

His *Speech on the Reformation of Parliament* (1782) attacked untrammeled aristocratic power and maintained that political rights should not depend upon the ownership of land. Despite all this activity and thanks to the support of Lords Ashburton and Shelburne, in the spring of 1783 he was finally appointed to the Calcutta bench, knighted, and married to Anna Maria Shipley. As they sailed to India, Jones's radical pamphlet *The Principles of Government, in a Dialogue between a Scholar and a Peasant* (1782), written to convince Benjamin Franklin that the mysteries of the state might be made intelligible to the working man, was the subject of a notorious seditious libel trial at Wrexham.

Arriving in Calcutta on 25 September 1783, Jones immediately embarked upon a rigorous program of Indian studies, founding the pioneering Asiatick Society in January 1784. His enthusiasm galvanized the efforts of the founder members, many of whom were expert Persianists, such as William Chambers, Charles Hamilton, and Francis Gladwin (q.v.). This effectively marked the beginnings of Indology, and its research program encompassed Indian languages, literature, philosophy, civil and natural history. The organ of the Society, *Asiatick Researches*, was to transform Western conceptions of a marginalized Subcontinent, placing India at the centre of European Romanticism.

Hastings's Orientalist government attempted to mirror the cultural sensitivities of the Mughal Emperor Akbar whose court had been famed for religious tolerance, and bolstered by philosophical investigation and artistic collaboration between Muslim and Hindu. The Governor-General's attempts to underpin notions of legitimacy and continuity thus involved the patronage of works such as Francis Gladwin's translation of the *Āʾin-e Akbari* (Institutes of Akbar; see AKBAR-NĀMA), providing valuable insights into Mughal statecraft and political theory. The practicalities of governance coincided with his own Orientalist intellectual avocations as (in the best Mughal tradition) he patronized texts reflecting Hindu tradition and Mughal culture to foster reconciliation and mutual respect.

Inheriting Hastings's project to codify Muslim and Hindu law, Jones's close collaboration with native informants and his friendship with Charles Wilkins,

translator of *Bhāgvāt-Gēētā* (1785), would ultimately lead to his learning the "language of the gods." But in 1784 Jones's enthusiasm for Sanskrit literature, expressed in a letter to his friend Richard Johnson (who published the first lithograph edition of Hafez in 1791; see HAFEZ vi) with all the *bhakti* (loving devotion) of a devout Hindu, derived from his reading of Persian translations: "I am in love with the *Gopia*, charmed with *Crishen*, an enthusiastick admirer of *Rām*, and a devout adorer of *Brimha-bishen-mehais*: not to mention that *Jūdishteir*, *Arjen*, *Corno*, and the other warriors of the M'hab'harat appear greater in my eyes than Agamemnon, Ajax, and Achilles appeared, when I first read the Iliad" (*Letters*, II, p. 652).

So whereas it might seem that the beauties of Sanskrit literature proved an even greater revelation than that of Arabic and Persian poetry, the mediating role of Mughal translations facilitated and was fundamental to his delighted discovery of Hindu culture. The path-breaking essay, "On the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India," (1784) exploited cultural relativism and a syncretic approach to familiarize Europe with the 'alien' beliefs of the Subcontinent. His subsequent learning of Sanskrit, undertaken initially for practical legal reasons, led to world-changing ideas concerning both Indo-European linguistics and the common identity of Platonic and Vedantic metaphysical thought, which he published in his "Third Anniversary Discourse: On the Hindus" (1786): "The *Sanscrit* language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the *Greek*, more copious than the *Latin*, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed that no philologer could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which perhaps no longer exists: there is a similar reason, though not quite so forcible, for supposing that both the *Gothick* and the *Celtick*, though blended with a very different idiom, had the same origin with the *Sanscrit*; and the old *Persian* might be added to the same family" (*Works*, III, p. 34).

He was discovering similitude and inter-relationship everywhere and it is likely that the work of Persian intellectuals played a far from ancillary role in the development of Jones's ideas. Jones knew the philological works of the eighteenth-century Mughal writer, Serāj-al-Din ʿAli Khān Ārzu (d. 1756), and would have read in his *Serāj al-loḡat* of the correspondence (*tawāfoq*) between Persian and Sanskrit. Daily collaboration with Muslim *mawlavis* had brought

him close to the Muslim intelligentsia of Bengal. Jones praised the work of his friend Seid-Gholam-Hossein-Khan (Ḡolām-Ḥosayn Ṭabāṭabāʾi; 1727-1806) whose fascinating history of India from the time of Aurangzeb (Awrangzēb) down to 1781, the *Siyar-e Motaʾaḵḵarin* (*Sëir Mutaqherin*, *View of Modern Times*) was published in Calcutta in 1789 (*Works*, III, p. 214). In his "Sixth Anniversary Discourse: On the Persians" to the Asiatic Society (1789) he acknowledged both his excitement and a debt of gratitude "to *Mír* MUHAMMED HUSAIN, one of the most intelligent *Muselmàns* in *India*" at being introduced to the *Dabistan* (see DABESTĀN-E MAḌĀHEB) which "cast a gleam of light on the primeval history of *Iràn* and of the human race" (*Works*, III, p. 110). This excitement was shared in Calcutta, and almost immediately the enterprising Francis Gladwin set about translating the *Dabistan*, selections from which he speedily published in his periodical, *The New Asiatic Miscellany* (1789).

Jones's essay "On the Mystical Poetry of the Persians and Hindus" (1792) reflects further attempts at detecting similitude and syncretism in a synthesis that includes his beloved Saʿdi and Hafez. Having cited a passage from the mathematician and theologian Isaac Barrow (1630-1677), Jones comments that it "differs only from the mystical theology of the *Súfis* and *Yógis*, as the flowers and fruits of *Europe* differ in scent and flavor from those of *Asia*, or as *European* differs from *Asiatick* eloquence; the same strain, in poetical measure would rise up to the odes of SPENSER on *Divine Love* and *Beauty*, and, in a higher key with richer embellishments, to the songs of HAFIZ and JAYADÉVA, the raptures of the *Masnavì*, and the mysteries of the *Bhágavat*" (*Works*, IV, p. 216).

Jones reveals his fascination with the mystical allegories of Sufism whereby to the zealous admirers of Hafez a glass of Shiraz might signify a toast to sublime devotion; to illustrate this he cites in full a literal translation of "a most extraordinary ode" by the celebrated Eṣmat-e Boòḵāri (q.v.; d. 1436):

At the end of the street, there advanced before me a damsel with a fairy's cheeks, who, in the manner of a pagan, wore her tresses dishevelled over her shoulder like the sacerdotal thread. I said: *O thou, to the arch of whose eye-brow the new moon is a slave, what quarter is this and where is thy mansion?*

She answered: *Cast thy rosary on the ground; bind on thy shoulder the thread of paganism; throw stones at the glass of piety; and quaff wine from a full goblet;*

Intoxicating stuff, and insofar as the damsel wears her tresses in the style of the Brahman's sacred thread which she advises the poet to bind on his shoulder, this mystical ode serves to some extent to prepare the metropolitan reader for the bold luxuriance and divine eroticism of that more explicit Hindu "Song of Songs," Jayadeva's *Gītagovinda*, which explores the mutual attraction of the *gopi* (cowherdess/milkmaid) Rādhā and the divine Krishna, and which Jones's essay introduces.

Jones reveals his admiration for the eldest son of Shah Jahān, the scholar prince Dārā Šokōh (q.v.), who had inherited the syncretic mantle of his great-grandfather, Akbar, composing a Persian text entitled *Majmaʿ al-baḥ-rayn* (The Mingling of the Two Oceans) that maintained that the fundamental tenets of Hinduism were essentially monotheistic and identical with those of Islam. Jones also followed Dārā Šokōh's lead in being drawn to the late Vedas, the *Upanishads*. Dārā Šokōh had assembled a team of pandits from Benares to translate the *Upanishads* into Persian, producing in 1657 the *Serr-e akbar* (The Great Secret). Jones also loved revealing great secrets and, although Anquetil-Duperron had translated four of the *Upanishads* from the *Serr-e akbar* into French in 1787, and later published the influential *Oupnek'hat* (1802) which included the entire fifty-one *Upanishads* of the *Serr-e akbar*, Jones's *Isa-Upanishad* was the first direct translation of an *Upanishad* from the Sanskrit into a Western language.

Even while Jones was introducing to Europe the disconcerting concept of classical India as the *fons et origo* of world understanding; composing his "Hymns to Hindu Deities" to familiarize the West with Hindu mythology; or delighting German Romanticism with his 1789 translations of Kālidāsaδs *Śakuntalā*, or Jayadeva's *Gītagovinda*, he continued to study his favorite Persian classics and enthusiastically read contemporary Hindustani poets, such as Mir Taqi, Mir Sauda, and Mir Muhammed Husain. He listed some of his favorite Sufi poets in "On the Mystical Poetry of the Persians and Hindus," including "SÀIB, ORFÌ, MÍR KHOSRAU, JÀMI, HAZIN, and SÀBIK, who are next in beauty of composition to HAFIZ and SADI," mentioning also "MESÍHI, the most elegant of their *Turkish* imitators; [. . .] a few *Hindi* poets of our own times, and [. . .] IBNUL FÀRED, who wrote mystical odes in *Arabick*" (*Works*, IV, p. 232). Included within a British Library collection of documents reflecting Jones's Persian studies in India is his contemporary Indian blind-stamped leather-bound book containing transcriptions and translations of quatrains by the Indo-Persian Sufi poet, Amir Ḵosrow (q.v.; 1253-1325), a key figure in the

development of Rekhtah (the early name for Hindi/Hindvi/Urdu) and of *sabk-e hendi* (Indian-style diction and imagery). Ḵosrow's parentage (an Indian mother and a Turkish father), his life and his Arabic, Persian, and Hindi writings anticipate the cultural synthesis between Hindu and Muslim civilization that was later to flourish at the court of Akbar. Jones seems particularly attracted to the polymathic versatility of this "Indian parrot" and Turco-Indic 'Renaissance man,' whose love of India mirrored that of Jones. Jones's translation of a Ḵosrow quatrain exemplifies the semiotics of syncretism:

I went to recreate myself on the bank of a rivulet

I saw on the brink of the stream a *Hindú* woman.

I said: "My idol, what is the price of your locks?"

She cried out: "Dur dur múy": that is, in *Hindy*,

"Keep your distance, sirrah!"

(in *Persian*, "a pearl for each hair"; BL MSS Eur C 274)

Jones as poet and linguist obviously loved such bilingual *jeux d'esprit*; he was fascinated by aspects of intercultural relationship in this riverside meeting at the ghat or *tirtha* (Hindu sacred place often at a river confluence), not least, the importance in both Hinduism and Islam of water for recreation and for ritual purification (or indeed both, if we consider Krishna sporting with the *gopis* in the Yamuna river).

The unremitting labor of Jones's key project of producing an exhaustive digest of Hindu and Muslim law to legitimize British rule through the recovery of native traditions, monopolized his time when not presiding on the judicial bench. Even in snatched moments in Court, however, he found time to pen helpful notes in favor of indigent Persian poets: "Mirza Zairuddin Ishky is a man of genius and probity. I presented the Governor General last year with his works, and an Ode which I translated. He has been so poor that he has been forced to sell his darling books: [. . .] It would be very honourable to him if the Governor would favour him with a recommendatory letter to the Nabob Vizier. His literary merit I can answer for" (*Soldiering in India*, p. 345).

In a letter to Governor-General Sir John Macpherson, Jones expressed his firm

belief in the symbiosis of commerce and culture that would be encouraged by increased trade with the Persian Gulf: “My soul expands, like your blossom, at the idea of improved commerce; no subject to me is more animating. I have an idea for you, not a blossom, but as yet a germ only. What if Persia should now flourish! And what if the present king, Jaffier Khan, be really as great a man as represented! Persia wants many manufactures of India, and her king would be a valuable ally” (*Letters*, II, pp. 699-700).

The products of his long collaboration with Indian legal scholars appeared in the early 1790s. *Al Sirájiyyah, or, The Mohammedan Law of Inheritance* (1792) settled the question of the existence of property rights under the Mughal constitution, and the *Institutes of Hindu Law, or, The Ordinances of Menu* (1794) helped to produce a renaissance in *dharmasastra* literature in India. Such labors necessitated that Jones’s own theoretical program as charted by his anniversary Discourses and his speculations concerning the monogenesis of mankind had to take second place. But he “burn[ed] with a desire of seeing Shiraz” for Persia was integral to Jones’s researches, a centrality underscored by geography: “the central position of *Iràn*, which is bounded by *Arabia*, by *Tartary*, and by *India*; [. . .] *Persia* seems likely to have sent forth its colonies to all the kingdoms of *Asia*.” His projected return to Europe was to be via the Persian Gulf; his passionate desire was to see “*Persia*, the most delightful, the most compact, the most desirable country of them all,” to view its cultural treasures, to meet its talented poets, and to decipher the ‘runic letters’ on the pillars of Persepolis (the prospect of which had fascinated him since his translation of the *Histoire de Nader Chah*) in the light of Indo-Persian linguistic and ethnological affinities. Sadly, in the very spring when he had planned to visit the tomb of Hafez, he himself lay dying in Calcutta, where he finally succumbed to a severe liver infection on 27 April 1794. ‘Persian’ Jones was never to see Shiraz. His enduring commitment to a syncretic East-West synthesis and his unshakeable belief in cultural pluralism prompted Brahman pandits to weep openly with Muslim *maulavis* at the news of his tragically premature death.

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