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MAQRIZI, TAQI-AL-DIN AḤMAD B. ʿALI

MAQRIZI, TAQI-AL-DIN AḤMAD b. ʿAli (d. 845/1442) was an Egyptian historian and polymath of the Mamluk period, who spent parts of his life in Syria and Mecca. In a series of works, he covered a wide range of history, writing, among others, a Life of the Prophet Moḥammad (*Emtāʿ al-asmāʾ*) and a trilogy on the history of Egypt, of which two parts have been preserved, one on the Fāṭimids (*Etteʿāẓ al-ḥonafāʾ*) and the other on the Ayyubids and Mamluks (*Soluk le-maʿrefat al-moluk*). He also wrote two massive biographical dictionaries (*al-Moqaffā* and *Dorar al-ʿoqud*) focused on Egypt and a large book on the topography of that country (*al-Mawāʿeẓ wa'l-eʿtebār*, usually known as *al-Ḵeṭaṭ*). In addition to his major historical and genealogical works he wrote a number of shorter tractates, many of which are centered on Egypt, but others testify to his interest in a wide number of further topics, such as economics, minerology, apiculture, theology, the history of Ethiopia, and the geography of Ḥażramawt. Maqrizi did not publish works specifically on Iran.

Maqrizi's last work was *al-Ḵabar ʿan al-bašar*, which covers the history of the world before Islam in six volumes. It was begun in 1433, and Maqrizi was still working on it when he died. An inferior edition of the work, based on insufficient manuscript material, was published by Ḵāled Sowaydi and ʿĀref ʿAbd-al-Ḡani in 2013. A critical edition with full translation and commentary will be published in the series Bibliotheca Maqriziana, some volumes of which have already appeared, among them the first part of the section on "Persia and

its Kings," covering Iran's history from the Creation until the end of the Ašḡanians (Arsacids). The second part covers the Sasanians until the Arab-Islamic conquest.

While in his other works Maqrizi discusses Iran only sparingly, in the *Ḵabar* he devotes considerable space to it (Maqrizi, 2013, VI, 45–229), using numerous sources, which he quotes extensively, judiciously abbreviating and modifying the quotations to create a running narrative and often using several sources to give a full range of information, occasionally in different, competing versions. Maqrizi's main sources are unsurprising: Ṭabari (d. 923); Ḥamza Eṣfahāni (d. 961 or 971); Meskawayh (d. 1030); Biruni (d. ca. 1050); and Ebn Ḵaldun (d. 1406). Accordingly, he follows the general model of Persian history in Arabic historiography, with its basic division of Persian history into the four dynasties of the Pišdādiān, Kayāniān, Ašḡaniān, and Sasanians.

What makes Maqrizi's *Ḵabar* particularly interesting is that the author quotes extensively from *Ketab Horušiuš*, the probably 10th-century Arabic translation of Paulus Orosius' (early 5th century) Latin *Historiarum adversum paganos libri viii*. The same book had already been used by Ebn Ḵaldun, but though Maqrizi knew and used Ebn Ḵaldun's book, he also used *Ketab Horušiuš* directly and quotes several passages that are not given by Ebn Ḵaldun. Some of these fall into the lacunae of the defective unique manuscript of *Ketab Horušiuš*.

Following Orosius, Maqrizi is able to provide significant additions to the received version of the earliest Persian history in Arabic. Usually, Islamic historiography almost completely ignores the Achaemenids and only mentions the two Dariuses in connection with the *Alexander Romance*. In the standard version, Darius the Elder and Darius the Younger are seen as the last of the Kayaniān.

Orosius brings a large number of other Achaemenids on stage and narrates the main events of their history according to Greek sources, with no connection to the legendary Kayaniān, who were unknown to him. In addition, Orosius discusses the Persian wars of the Greeks in some detail, and he tells the history of Alexander the Great differently from how Islamic sources usually told it. Maqrizi presents all this competing information in a concise form alongside the standard version of the Arab-Islamic historiography.

Besides bringing new information on early Persian history into post-Mamluk Arabic historiography – there is no indication that Maqrizi's work would have influenced Persian historiography – this creates a tension by introducing the Achaemenids into Persian history, where the standard model already offered a continuous chain of kings from the Creation until the Arab-Islamic conquest, leaving no room for an additional dynasty.

Maqrizi is well aware of this and problematizes the issue. In the similar case of the few Babylonian and Assyrian kings known to the Arabs mainly from the Biblical tradition, Maqrizi prefers harmonizing the different versions of the past by taking the Mesopotamian kings as vassal kings or governors of the Persian kings, as was common in the Arab-Islamic historiography. Thus, he considers the Biblical Nebuchadnezzar to have been the governor of Iraq for the Pišdādiān, rather than a king on his own right (Maqrizi, 2018, §106).

In a few cases, Maqrizi takes recourse to a similar policy with the Achaemenids, equating, e.g., Cyrus with Kay Ardašir Bahman (Maqrizi, 2018, §168). His main strategy in dealing with the Achaemenids and the legendary kings is different, though. Maqrizi presents both versions extensively and then discusses the contradiction (Maqrizi, 2018, §168). He points out that though a reliable source, Orosius was the historian of Greeks and Romans/Byzantines rather than of Persians themselves, whereas the standard version comes from Persian historians. He goes on to say that one should trust native, rather than foreign, historians, and for this reason he prefers the standard version of Persian history. In this case, obviously, Maqrizi's basically sound principle leads him to prefer the legendary history of Iran to the more factual one.

In his discussion of Zarathustra, Maqrizi (Maqrizi, 2018, §§8, 135–38, 141) takes a rather negative stance, although at the same time he does introduce Zarathustra as an ancient sage and lets him predict in the *Avesta* the coming of Moḥammad, which would raise the Zoroastrian book to a status equivalent to that of the Gospels. Alexander the Great is taken, as usual, to be the son of Darius the Elder, thus safeguarding the dynastic principle. Maqrizi also has a long discussion on whether the Qurʾanic Ḏu'l-Qarnayn can be identified with Alexander, in the end (Maqrizi, 2018, §§225–26) refuting the idea. Maqrizi also synchronises the early history of Iran with South Arabian history.

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