



MOJMAL AL-TAWĀRIḲ WA'L-QEŞAŞ

MOJMAL AL-TAWĀRIḲ WA'L-QEŞAŞ, an anonymous chronicle from the 12th century in the Persian tradition of literary historiography.

The work concentrates on the Persian rulers before the advent of Islam, the Muslim conquests, and events related to **Hamadān**, indicating that the work probably originated there. The text includes elaborate lists of rulers and fictional narratives. The extant manuscripts are illustrated with maps and images, suggesting that the work was perhaps primarily written for the instruction of a member of the Saljuq nobility.

Manuscripts. Four manuscripts have been preserved in public collections in Paris (BNF MS pers., AF 62), Dublin (CBL MS pers. 330), Berlin (SSB SPK – Orientabteilung, MS pers., Or. 2371), and Heidelberg (MS pers., Cod. Heid. orient. 118). They were written in the 14th and 15th centuries, and their differences in vocabulary and orthography reflect both scribal taste as well as scribal errors (for a detailed description of all four MSS, see ed. Najmabadi and Weber, commentary pp. 35-44). In this entry, all *Mojmal al-tawāriḳ* references are to the most recent critical edition by Seifeddin Najmabadi and Siegfried Weber, followed by references to the Heidelberg manuscript, a pdf-file of which is available for free on the [website](#) of Heidelberg University Library (for a list of the leaves bound out of order, see ed. Najmabadi and Weber, commentary p. 38), and to the 1939 Tehran edition by Moḥammad Taqī Bahār.



The anonymous author. His own name is not recorded but his grandfather's name is given as Mohallab b. Moḥammad b. Šādi (ed. Najmabadi and Weber, p. 269/fol. 198a/ed. Bahār, p. 344), and this implies that the author himself did not intentionally remove all personal traces from his work. His grandfather's name also suggests that Abu 'Isā Šādi b. Moḥammad, the commander of Abu Najm Badr b. Ḥasanuya's army, might have been an ancestor. The author's focus on the [Buyids](#), the Zaydi Ḥasanids, and the Sayyids of Hamadān (ed. Najmabadi and Weber, pp. 354-55/fols. 252b-254a/ed. Bahār, pp. 459-60), together with his detailed knowledge of the Hamadān region (fols. 289b-290a/ed. Bahār, pp. 520-23/ed. Najmabadi and Weber, pp. 402-404), makes it likely that he lived in Hamadān or [Asadābād](#) and moved in court circles (ed. Najmabadi and Web, commentary pp. 17-20; cf. Meisami, pp. 206-207). The author mentions that he had traveled to Kufa, Najaf, Ḥella, Khuzestan, Susa, Isfahan, Shiraz, and it seems probable that he had visited Baghdad and Jerusalem as well. That he cites from a book written by his grandfather (ed. Najmabadi and Weber, p. 269/fol. 198a/ed. Bahār, p. 344) suggests that he may have come from a learned family.

The reason for writing the book. In his preface (ed. Najmabadi and Weber, p. 7/fols. 4b-5a/ed. Bahār, p. 8) the author states that the idea for this work originated in Asadābād where at the time there was considerable interest in everything concerning the kings of the Persians. While the author does not name a patron for his work, he mentions that he used to talk with a man of some eminence (*mehtari*) about these matters, and stresses that after a first false start he decided that his full attention was needed for the composition of a truly useful book.

The date of the compilation. The author dates the beginning of his work to 1126 (ed. Najmabadi and Weber, p. 7/fol. 5a/ed. Bahār, p. 9), during the reign of the caliph Mostaršed (r. 1118-35) and of the sultans [Sanjar b. Malekšāh](#) (d. 1157) and Maḥmud b. Moḥammad b. Malekšāh (r. 1118-31). Later he indicates that in 1131 (ed. Najmabadi and Weber, p. 312/fol. 224a/ed. Bahār, p. 405) he was still occupied with writing this book. If the author completed his work during these five years, later additions by others can be specified within the text. After the reign of Mostaršed, for example, his successors Rāšed (r. 1135-46), Moqtafi (r. 1136-60), Mostanjed (r. 1160-70), and Mostaži' (r. 1170-80) are mentioned (ed. Najmabadi and Weber, p. 350/ fol. 250b/ed. Bahār, p. 454). The author might still have been active during the caliphate of Moqtafi, but lists like those in the *Mojmal* clearly prompted subsequent readers to update



them later.

Contents. In his preface the author identifies the history of the kings of the Persians as the focus of his work (ed. Najmabadi and Weber, p. 7/fols. 4b-5a/ed. Bahār, p. 8). The work consists of 25 chapters (sing. *bāb*), but chapters 2-7 contain only lists of names and chapter 25 is missing from all extant manuscripts. The advent of Islam in the 7th century allows the author to divide its contents into pre-Islamic and Islamic history. The text starts with a doxology, praising God and explaining the role of the prophets and kings. He then summarizes the main sources of his compilation, and provides a detailed table of contents (ed. Najmabadi and Weber, pp. 3-6/fols. 3a-4b/ed. Bahār, pp. 4-7). Although its headings do not always correspond to those used later in the text, the detailed table of contents allows the reader to easily consult the work for specific information:

1. The historical works and how they differ from each other.
2. The prophets (*peygāmbarān*).
3. The kings of Persia (*pādšāhān-e 'Ajam*).
4. The wise men of Rome (*ḥakimān-e Rum*) and some kings.
5. The kings of the Arabs (*moluk-e 'Arab*) and the Prophet's ancestors.
6. The caliphs.
7. The kings and sultans of Islam (*moluk o salāṭīn-e Eslām*).
8. Different versions of the history of Gayumart divided into 4 sections (sing. *faşl*).
9. The kings of Persia (*pādšāhān-e 'Ajam*), divided into three sections.
10. Which prophet (*peygāmbar*) and which priests (*mōbadān*), martyrs (*şahidān*), and notables (*ma'rufān*) lived during the reign of each king of Persia.
11. The Turks (*Torkān*).
12. The kings of India (*pādšāhān-e Hend*).
13. The kings of the Greece (*pādšāhān-e Yunān*).
14. The kings of Rome (*moluk-e Rum*).
15. The annals of the Egyptians/Copts (*tāriḳ-e sālḥā-ye Qebṭiān*).
16. The annals of the Israelites (*sālḥā-ye Esrāiliān*) and their kings and sages (*moluk o 'olamā*).
17. The kings of the Arabs (*moluk-e 'Arab*), divided into 5 sections (but the second section on the Lakhmids is missing).
18. The prophets.
19. The kings (*moluk*) of the Qorayş, the Arabs of Islam, from the birth of the Prophet (*peygāmbar*) until the writing of this book.
20. The lineage (*nasab*) of the kings (*moluk*) and sultans of Islam during the



days of the caliphs.

21. The titles (*laqab*) of the kings of Persia (*pādšāhān-e 'Ajam*), the names of cities, and the titles of the caliphs and the sultans after the Prophet (*rasul*).

22. The burial sites of the prophets, kings (*pādšāhān*), and caliphs.

23. Geography

24. The cities of Islam, which includes exhaustive sections on Asadābād and Hamadān.

25. Some scattered sections on the eminence of Islam consisting of histories about the caliphs, etc. (but this chapter is missing).

Since Bal'ami's *Tarjoma-ye tāriḳ-e Ṭabari* and Gardizi's *Zayn al-Aḳbār* are the only known near contemporary general chronicles, the *Mojmal* is of special importance (see HISTORIOGRAPHY iii. Early Islamic Period). Its outstanding historical value is manifested in the sections on Hamadān and Asadābād, where the author gives detailed information about local groups such as the Kurds and the local sites. Moreover, chapters 11 and 12 on the Turks and on India and in chapter 21 the remarks on the titles of the kings of the East (ed. Najmabadi and Weber, p. 323/fols. 231a-231b/ed. Bahār, pp. 420-22) are among the oldest extant sources about these topics. Finally, the work represents a rich source for 11th century Persian. For example, the Middle Persian word *gōsān* "minstrel" is immediately followed by the New Persian translation *konyāgar* (ed. Najmabadi and Weber, p. 56/fol. 37a/ed. Bahār, p. 69; cf. Boyce, p. 11), suggesting that the older word had become less common parlance.

Sources. The author seems to have known Ebn Rosta's *Ketāb al-a'lāq al-nafisa* and the anonymous *Tāriḳ-e Sistān*, since whole passages show striking similarities with these works. He also refers to a *Ketāb mamālek o masālek*, which could be Ebn Kordāqbeh's well known *Ketāb al-masālek wa'l-mamālek*.

(1) Several works with generic titles cannot be identified with specific extant texts with any degree of certainty:

1. *Farāmarz-nāma*.

2. *Piruz-nāma*.

3. *Sekandar-nāma*.

4. *Qeşaş al-anbiā'* (for works with this title, see the indices in GAS and Storey; however, parallels to Ṭa'labi's famous book are obvious).

5. *Ketāb al-ansāb*.

6. *Adab al-moluk*.

7. *'Ajā'eb al-'olum*.

6. *Majmu'a-ye Bu Sa'id-e Ābi*.



(2) The author mentions a number of works that are lost:

1. 'Abd-al-Raḥmān b. 'Isā al-Kāteb al-Hamadāni's *Hamadān-nāma* or *Ketāb-e Hamadān*.
2. Ḥamza al-Eşfahāni's *Ketāb Eşbahān va akbārehā*.
3. Ebn al-Moqaffa's *Siar al-'ajam*.
4. Bahrām Mōbad Şāpur's *Ketāb-e tāriḳ-e pādşāhān* (probably identical with the translator Bahrām b. Mardānşāh, mentioned by Ebn al-Nadim, ed. Flügel, I, p. 245; ed. Tajaddod, p. 305)
5. 'Ali b. Ḥamza's *Qalā'ed al-şaraf fi mafāker Eşbahān*.
6. Abu'l-Mo'ayyad Balḳi's *Akbār-e Narimān*, *Akbār-e Lohrāsf*, and *'Ajā'eb al-donyā'*.
7. *Ketāb-e şurat-e Sāsāniān*, which is also cited as *Ketāb al-şovar* (for the claim that the work was extant in 303/915-16, see Mas'udi, p. 106).

(3) The author knew of Mo'ezzi's poems and of *Vis o Rāmin* and *Wāmeq o 'Adrā*, and mentioned traditions (*ḥadit*) of Ebn Meqsam (878-965), Şa'bi (640-721), Dağfal (d. 685), and 'Aṭā' – who could be 'Aṭā' b. Dinār al-Hoḍali al-Meşri (d. 744) or 'Aṭā' b. Abi Moslem Maysara al-Ḳorāsāni (670-757; for both, see GAS, vol. I, pp. 32-33).

(4) There are other works whose titles appear in the *Mojmal* (for a complete list of mentioned titles, see the index in ed. Najmabadi and Weber, pp. 461-62):

1. Ṭabari's *Ta'riḳ al-rosul wa'l-moluk* and Bal'ami's *Tarjoma-ye tāriḳ-e Ṭabari*.
2. Ḥamza al-Eşfahāni's *Ketāb ta'riḳ seni moluk al-arż wa'l-anbiā'*.
3. Aḥmad b. Abi Ya'qub Ya'qubi's *Ta'riḳ*.
4. 'Otbi's *Tāriḳ-e Yamini*.
5. Ebn Qotayba's *Ketāb al-ma'āref*.
6. Ferdowsi's *Şāh-nāma*.
7. Esfarāyeni's *Tāj al-tarājem*.
8. Şiravayh b. Şahradār Daylami's *Riāz al-ons le' 'oqalā' al-ens fi ma'refa aḥādīt al-nabi wa-ta'riḳ al-ḳolafā'* (for the only extant MS arab. of this work, see GAL S I, p. 586).
9. Abu Sa'id Ḳarguşi's *Şaraf al-nabi*.
10. Abu'l-'Abbās Aḥmad al-Ṭabari al-Bağdādi's *Ketāb al-ma'refa* (known also as *Dalā'el al-qebila*, cf. GAS, vol. I, pp. 496-97).
11. Asadi Ṭusi's *Garşāsp-nāma*.
12. Şābi's *Ketāb al-tāji*.
13. Ḥakim Irānşān (Irānşāh)'s *Bahman-nāma*.
14. Ḥakim Irānşān (Irānşāh)'s *Kuş-nāma*.



Method and features. The *Mojmal* is a historical handbook. Since the author is continuously correcting or commenting on his sources, which are occasionally supplemented with his own original writing, he does not consider himself a simple copyist or mere compiler.

As one of the earliest examples of Persian historiography, the *Mojmal* displays its typical features. For example, the author frequently relies on direct speech to enhance the truthfulness of the reported events. The text is peppered with Quranic references and lines of Arabic or Persian poetry (e.g., A'šā Hamdān, Ferdowsi). In the section on early Islamic history a few passages are given in Arabic, but Arabic sources are often translated into Persian, the court language of the time (ed. Najmabadi and Weber, p. 7/fol. 4b/ed. Bahār, p. 8: *ba'zi az Tāzi be Pārsi tarjama kardan ka 'ādat-e noṭq-e waqt ast*). The author's scholarly ambitions are evident in the first chapter (ed. Najmabadi and Weber, pp. 9-11/fols. 5a-7a/ed. Bahār, pp. 9-12) in which he describes his methods for resolving contradictory chronology in his sources. An example for this method is his treatment of Gayumart (Gayōmart), which concerns the Iranian creation myth (cf. Christensen, vol. I). At first, the author states that Gayumart and Adam are the same person (ed. Najmabadi and Weber, p. 10/fol. 6b/ed. Bahār, p. 11). But in chapter 8 (ed. Najmabadi and Weber, pp. 21-22/fols. 11a-12b/ed. Bahār, pp. 21-23) the author summarizes four different traditions about Gayumart, and in the fourth tradition, Gayumart is identified with Seth (Šet), a son of Adam. In the following chapter 9, after having refined his calendar calculations, the author concludes that Gayumart cannot be identified with Adam (ed. Najmabadi and Weber, p. 67/fol. 44b/ed. Bahār, p. 84).

The author combines the genres of historiography (Ar. *ta'rik*, pl. *tawārik*) and story telling about prophets, miracles and the like (Ar. *qeşsa*, pl. *qeşaş*)—as indicated in his title *Mojmal al-tawārik wa'l-qeşaş*. The author often concludes his summaries of events with the expression “God knows best” (Ar. *Allāh a'lam*), which is widely used in Islamic scholarship to defer final judgement on any matter. The work's contents, however, are not limited to historiography and story telling, as they include a general account of the earth and a description of some important cities.

Illustrations. In all four manuscripts, chapter 23 has some maps and illustrations, and this observation suggests that the author wrote this chapter as an illustrated text. There is also in all four a diagram (Figure 1) of the Haft eqlim (*Haft keşvar*, lit. “seven regions or climes”) in which seven circles



represent the traditional Iranian world view: the central region of Iran is adjacent to the regions of the Arabs and the Turks as well as to the regions of Africa, Rome, China, and India (ed. Najmabadi and Weber, p. 367/fol. 263a/ed. Bahār, p. 478). Six miniature paintings show the Ka'ba (Figure 2; ed. Najmabadi and Weber, unnumbered pl. between pp. 372-73/fol. 267b/ed. Bahār, p. 483), the mosques of Medina (Figure 3; ed. Najmabadi and Weber, unnumbered pl. between pp. 374-75/fol. 268a/ed. Bahār, p. 484) and Jerusalem (Figure 4; ed. Najmabadi and Weber, unnumbered pl. between pp. 376-77/fol. 270a/ed. Bahār, p. 487), as well as Rome as a labyrinth (Figure 5; ed. Najmabadi and Weber, unnumbered pl. between pp. 378-79/fol. 197b/ed. Bahār, p. 489; in the Heidelberg MS this leaf is bound out of order; for the iconographic tradition of Rome as a labyrinth, see Casari) and the lighthouse of Alexandria (Figure 6; ed. Najmabadi and Weber, unnumbered pl. between pp. 380-81/fol. 273a/ed. Bahār, p. 495). The series concludes with a seventh miniature, in which a man sits on a tree while below him, in a sea, a drowning man is surrounded by large fish (Figure 7; ed. Najmabadi and Weber, unnumbered pl. between pp. 390-91/fol. 280b/ed. Bahār, p. 505; missing in the Dublin MS, though space has been reserved for it); this image occurs in the section (ed. Najmabadi and Weber, pp. 384-95/fols. 275a-285a /ed. Bahār, pp. 498-511) on the City of Gold (*Šārestān-e zarin*; cf. Dehḳodā) and the City of Brass (*Šārestān-e ruyin*; cf. Dehḳodā). Only in the manuscripts in Paris (ed. Bahār, p. 471) and Heidelberg (Figure 8; fols. 258b-259a), a map of the world precedes the diagram of the Haft eqlim. Within the circle that marks the known parts of the world, the east is located on the left side. The map shows the wall of Gog and Magog and the Nile with its sources, as well as China, India, Sri Lanka (*Jazira-ye Serendib*), Europe (*Afranja*), and some important cities such as Jerusalem, Tangier, Alexandria, and Mecca.

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