NAQQĀLI

NAQQĀLI, professional Iranian storytelling tradition of epic and religious narratives. It is also known as dramatic storytelling. It can be performed with musical accompaniment or using a large canvas (*parda*) on which epic or religious heroes are depicted (*para-dāri*). It involves both oral and written traditions in which kingly, heroic, and religious tales have been transmitted. In 2011, it was listed by UNESCO as intangible heritage and included in the Urgent Safeguarding List (UNESCO, 2011).

History. The earliest known written records of Persian performing arts come from classical Greek authors and revolve around Cyrus the Great (q.v.; ca. 600-530 BCE). In the *Cyropaedia* (1.2.1), Xenophon (qq.v.) mentions that "Cyrus is still celebrated to this day by the barbarians in story and in song as the most handsome and generous of men, devoted to wisdom yet ambitious; he endured all kinds of danger and faced hardship in order to gain renown" (Llewellyn-Jones, p. 193). Such stories and songs may have been performed by singers like Angares who foretold the rebellion of Cyrus against the Median king Astyages (q.v.; Deinon F9 = Athenaesu, *Dinner of the Sophists* 14.633c-e, tr. in Llewellyn-Jones, p. 193; Ctesias, Books 7-11, 26, tr. in Llewellyn-Jones and Robson, pp. 165-70). In the Parthian (see ARSACIDS) period, religious and heroic stories in both verse and prose were used to educate the Persians: "From the age of five to twenty-four years they [the Persians] are taught to use the bow, to throw the javelin, to ride, and to speak the truth. They have the most virtuous preceptors, who interweave useful fables in their discourses, and rehearse, sometimes with sometimes without, music, the actions of the

gods and of illustrious men” (Strabo, *Geography* 15.3.18). These preceptors may have included the Parthian minstrel called *gōsān* (q.v.) who has been described as “entertainer of king and commoner, privileged at court and popular with the people; present at the graveside and at the feast; eulogist, satirist, story-teller, musician; recorder of past achievements, and commentator of his own time” (Boyce, 1957, pp. 17-18). The *gōsān*s played a pivotal role in transmitting and intermingling the three different strata of narratives: the kingly or Kayanid legend (see KAYĀNIĀN), tales of Parthian kings and princes, and the Sistani Cycle in which Rostam is the leading figure (Boyce, 1954, pp. 47-51; 1955, pp. 470-77). These provided the basis for the Iranian national legend. Under the reign of Yazdegerd III (r. 633-651 CE), the last of the Sasanian (q.v.) kings, the national legend transmitted orally over many centuries was committed to writing and came to be known as the *Xwadāy-nāmag* (see ḴODĀY-NĀMA). Though widely cited and accepted, this thesis has been recently questioned. As Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila (pp. 23-24; see also Omidsalar and Omidsalar, pp. 327-28) has shown, there is little evidence for epic tales that were sung or narrated in Sasanian times, and the Sistani Cycle was not an integral part of the *Xwadāy-nāmag* or its Arabic translation by Ebn al-Moqaffaʿ (q.v.; Hämeen-Anttila, pp. 174-99). It was as late as the 10th century that the Sistani Cycle was incorporated into Persian national history, a process that seems to have begun in the mid-8th century (Hämeen-Anttila, pp. 196-97; for a recent application of Boyce’s thesis, see Gazerani, 2013; 2016, pp. 40-42).

The historian Abu’l-Fażl Bayhaqi (q.v., 995-1077) lists poets (*šoʿarā’*), musicians (*moṭrebān*), and storytellers (*moḥaddeṯān* or *qawwālān*) among the courtiers of the Ghaznavid (q.v.) court. While poets were present on ceremonious occasions and recited poems with musical accompaniment, storytellers performed at private functions at the king’s command to narrate evening stories (Bayhaqi, pp. 153-54; tr. I, pp. 211-12; cf. de Bruijn, pp. 15-16), which had been widely practiced among the Iranians as Ebn al-Nadim (q.v.) observed in the 10th century (Dodge, II, pp. 712-17). They also acted as emissaries, delivering messages (Bayhaqi, p. 162; tr. I, p. 219). Bayhaqi also reports on the popularity of storytelling among the common people with a tone of disapproval; people were fond of listening to far-fetched tales (*ḵorāfāt*) of *div* s (q.v.), *pari*s (see PAIRIKĀ), and *ḡul* s (q.v.) in a desert, on a mountain, or at sea (p. 905; tr. II, p. 371).

In Ghaznavid times, *šāh-nāma-ḵᵛāni* (*Šāh-nāma* recitation) was practiced.

Among the *šah-nāma-ḵᵛān*s (*Šāh-nāma* reciters) the name of Kārāsi (d. 1030/31) has come down to us. Kārāsi was a courtier-poet of the Buyid (q.v.) princes before he served Sultan Maḥmud (r. 998-1030). In the so-called middle preface to *Šāh-nāma* manuscripts, Sultan Maḥmud is said to have preferred listening to Kārāsi to the poet ʿOnṣori (q.v.). Kārāsi was mentioned by his contemporaries at the Ghaznavid court as the teller of *Šāh-nāma* (*šāh-nāma-ḵᵛān*), *Hezār afsān*, and *Kār-nāma*. Around 1029, he became governor of Qazvin, though he was killed about a year later on account of his tyrannical rule (Dehḵodā's *Loğat-nāma*, s.v. Kārāsi; Eqbāl Āštiāni; Lesān, p. 7; Omidsalar and Omidsalar, p. 330; Peacock, p. 3; cf. Melikian-Chirvani, pp. 19-20). It should be noted, however, that what Kārāsi and other *šah-nāma-ḵᵛān*s recited then perhaps did not refer exclusively to Ferdowsi's work, which is not mentioned in extant sources dating from that period (cf. Clinton). It is more likely that *Šāh-nāma* was used as a generic term for kingly and heroic tales (Eqbāl Āštiāni, pp. 20-21, n. 2; Lesān, p. 7; Minovi, pp. 126-50). It is unknown whether it was recited in verse or prose (cf. Peacock, p. 3). The institution of *šāh-nāma-ḵᵛāni* seems to have continued well into the late 12th century (Melikian-Chirvani, pp. 33-34).

Storytellers (*qeṣṣa- ḵᵛān*s) were harshly criticized by religious authorities in pre-Mongol times. The author of *Ketāb al-naqż* (q.v.) reproached storytellers for leading the people astray by telling pagan stories about "Rostam, Sorḵāb, Esfandiyār, Kā'us, Zāl, and others" (Naṣir-al-Din Qazvini, p. 67).

In the Mongol period, too, storytellers were severely condemned. The famous 14th-century poet-satirist 'Obayd Zākāni (q.v.) sarcastically relates in Aḵlāq al-ašrāf (q.v.) that after conquering Baghdad, Hulāgu Khan (q.v.; r. 1258-65) ordered poets and storytellers to be drowned in the Tigris river, together with judges, Sufis, preachers, beggars, dervishes, in order to clear the earth from their malice (ed. Atābaki, pp. 172-73).

The *Fotowwat-nāma-ye solṭāni*, a treatise on spiritual chivalry (see JAVĀNMARDI) by Kamāl-al-Din Ḥosayn Wāʿeẓ Kāšefi Sabzevāri (q.v.; 1436/37-1504/5) is a rich reservoir of information on storytelling in the late Timurid period. After enumerating five benefits of reading and listening to stories (*qeṣṣa*), Kāšefi concludes that truthful historical events must be told by storytellers for the benefits of the audience; for if they are fictitious, the storytellers will commit a sin and the audience will be deprived of benefits (Kāšefi, p. 302; tr. p. 296). His prescriptions on storytellers (*ḥekāyat-guyān*; for his classification of oral performers, see below) offer a glimpse into

storytelling in his time. Novice storytellers performed in front of their masters (*ostād*) presumably as part of their training. Storytellers were required to tell stories suitable to their audiences, whom they had to entertain with fast ingenious narration. They occasionally inserted verses into prose narration. Verse in storytelling is compared to salt in the pot; if too little, the dish will become tasteless; but if excessive, too salty. Moderation must therefore be observed. Storytellers are instructed to avoid absurdities and exaggeration as well as ambiguities and metaphors. They should not be too greedy in collecting money during performance. In concluding performances, they should not be too quick or too slow; but strike the balance between them (Kāšefi, pp. 304-5; tr. pp. 297-98).

Present-day *naqqāl*s (storytellers) claim that *naqqāli* originated in the Safavid (q.v.; 1501-1722) period. According to a prominent *naqqāl*, Moršed ʿAbbās Zariri (1909-71), Shah Esmāʿil I (q.v.; r. 1501-24) appointed dervishes (see DARVIŠ ii. IN THE ISLAMIC PERIOD) to propagate Twelver Shiʿism. These dervishes were divided into seventeen groups (*selsela*), and each developed a specific manner of performance, specializing in certain types of narrative or addressed to a specific audience. Some were eulogists of the Imams, others recited verses at *zur-ḵāna* (q.v.), and still others performed storytelling for military personnel. To attract the audience's attention, however, they were obliged to tell heroic tales, which gradually became a discrete genre (Dustḵᵛāh, 1966, pp. 73-74; cf. Maḥjub, 1970, p. 43; Lesān, p. 13; Calmard, p. 333; Hanaway, 1974, introd., p. 8; 1996b). Despite Zariri's testimony, however, the terms *naqqāli*/*naqqāl* are relatively recent and probably go back no earlier than the Qajar period (Āydenlu, 2010, p. 39; cf. Aubin, p. 242). In the Safavid period storytellers were referred to as *qeṣṣa–ḵᵛān*s or *šah-nāma-ḵᵛān*s (Naṣrābādi, pp. 154, *šah-nāma-ḵᵛān*; 401, *so ḵan-sarā'i*; 414, *qeṣṣa–ḵᵛāni*; Monši, p. 191, *qeṣṣa–ḵᵛān* and *šāh-nāma-ḵᵛān*; for the difference between the two, see below). Some of the *šah-nāma-ḵᵛān*s were poets and composed epics in the meter of the *Š āh-nāma* (Naṣrābādi, pp. 307; 357; Falsafi, 1954, p. 265; Lesān, pp. 13-14).

Under the reign of Shah ʿAbbās I (q.v.; r. 1588-1629) coffeehouses (q.v.) were opened and widespread in Isfahan, Qazvin, and other cities though some probably existed during the long reign of Shah Ṭahmāsb I (r. 1524-76; Falsafi, 1954, p. 261; Āl-e Dawūd, p. 1; Bolukbāši, p. 41). Shah ʿAbbās occasionally visited coffeehouses unannounced and conversed with poets and literati (Falsafi, 1954, p. 264; Āl-e Dawūd, p. 1). He was also fond of listening to *šah-*

*nāma-ḵᵛān*s. He gave 300 *toman*s annually to ʿAbd-al-Razzāq the *šah-nāma-ḵᵛān* and 40 *toman*s to Mollā Biḵodi Gonābādi who was a renowned *šah-nāma-ḵᵛān* (Falsafi, 1954, pp. 265-66; Āl-e Dawūd, p. 1; Calmard, p. 333). These and other *šah-nāma-ḵᵛān*s and *qeṣṣa–ḵᵛān*s are listed in the *Taḏkera* of Mirzā Moḥammad Ṭāher Naṣrābādi (q.v.) who collected poems from recitations and poetry contests at coffeehouses during the reign of Shah ʿAbbās II (q.v.; r. 1642-66; Naṣrābādi, pp. 145; 307; 324-25; 357; 379; 401; 414). Adam Olearius (q.v.; 1599-1671), secretary to the ambassador sent by Frederik III, Duke of Holstein-Gottorp, to Moscow and Safavid Iran, describes how storytellers sat on high stools and told "all manners of legends, fables, and fantastic things" (Olearius, p. 558; Page, 1977, p. 20). Before the emergence of coffeehouses, storytellers performed in public spaces such as mosques, squares, busy streets, road sides, or graveyards (Maḥjub, 1970, p. 44; Bolukbāši, pp. 89-90; Jaʿfariān, p. 104). With the establishment of the coffeehouse in the Safavid period, storytelling became one of the most popular programs offered by coffeehouse proprietors who sought after talented *šah-nāma-ḵᵛān*s and *qeṣṣa–ḵᵛān*s, capable of attracting relatively stable and loyal audiences. (Dustḵᵛāh, 1966, p. 75; Maḥjub, 1970, pp. 44-45; Hanaway, 1996b; Emami, p. 2014; cf. Calmard, p. 333). Storytellers also benefited from this new venue as they could narrate longer and more complicated stories in serial form for ready-made audiences (Hanaway, 1971a, p. 144; 1996b). In this period, older romances such as *Eskandar-nāma* (Afšār, 1964; Southgate; Venetis) and *Qeṣṣa-ye Ḥamza* (ed. Šeʿār, 1968; Lang and Meredith-Owens; Pritchett; Calmard, pp. 325-26; Marzolph, 2011; Khan, 2019) were reworked and expanded into *Eskandar-nāma-ye haft-jeldi* (Qarāgezlu, 2004; 2009; Yamanaka) and *Romuz-e Ḥamza*, respectively, while a new romance like *Ḥosayn-e Kord-e Šabestari* was created (Afšār and Afšāri, 2006; Bayżāʾi, 1962a, p. 21; Maḥjub, 1970, p. 45; Hanaway, 1970, p. 11; idem, 1974, introd., pp. 8-9; Marzolph, 1999; Calmard, pp. 334-35). The prevalence of storytelling in the Safavid period did not escape the criticism of religious authorities. An eminent Shiʿi scholar, Sayyed Neʿmat-Allāh Jazāʾeri (1640-1700) condemned those who listened to songs or stories told by storytellers for worshipping Satan, and coffeehouses where storytelling was practiced were called "schools of Satan" (Jaʿfariān, pp. 148-49; Lesān, p. 14; Emami, p. 208). This prompted storytellers to include Islamic and Arabian tales into their repertoires (Āydenlu, 2010, pp. 39-40).

The Qajar period (1779-1925) was the apogee of storytelling as witnessed by Western travelers (Marzolph, 2015, p. 271). Eugène Aubin (1863-1931), a

French diplomat, mentions that about 5 or 6,000 to 10,000 dervishes who belonged to the Sufi orders of Ḵāksār (q.v.) or ʿAjam practiced storytelling (*naqqāli*), *maddāḥi* (eulogizing the family of the Prophet), and other verbal arts. Some were itinerant performers and entertained farmers with marvelous tales on festive occasions; others were sedentary, mostly living in big cities like Tehran and Isfahan. They performed in mosques, bazaars, squares, and coffeehouses (Aubin, pp. 239-42). Qajar princes had *naqqāl-baši*s (chief storytellers) to narrate evening stories (Maḥjub ed., 1961, introd., pp. 17-21; Hanaway, 1985). Sir John Malcolm (q.v.; 1769-1833), a Scottish soldier, diplomat, and East India Company administrator depicted a scene of *naqqāli* in some detail (Malcolm, II, pp. 552-54). Other European travelers to Qajar Iran who documented storytelling include Vita Sackville-West (1892-1962), Douglas Craven Phillot (1860-1930), Charles James Wills (1842-1912), Sir Arnold Wilson (1884-1940), Benjamin Burges Moore (1878-1934), and James Silk Buckingham (1786-1855) (see further Floor, pp. 92-103; Marzolph, 2015, pp. 276-78).

Under the Pahlavi dynasty (1925-1979) *naqqāli* began to decline. Around 1929, *naqqāl*s were prohibited from narrating popular romances, including *Amir Arslān*, *Ḥosayn-e Kord-e Šabestari*, *Romuz-e Ḥamza*, and *Eskandar-n āma*, and could only use the *Šāh-nāma* of Ferdowsi if they had wanted to continue their trade (Zariri, introd., pp. 28, 32; Ṣadāqat-Nežād, introd., p. 7; Maḥjub, 1958, p. 531; Hanaway, 1971b, pp. 65-66; Šahri, V, pp. 510-11; Omidsalar and Omidsalar, p. 332; Floor, pp. 103-5; Yamamoto, 2010, p. 246; cf. Shirazi, p. 99). By this time, the distinction between *naqqāli* and *šah-nāma-ḵᵛāni* becomes somewhat clearer. The term *naqqāli* was used to refer to storytelling in general, and *šah-nāma-ḵᵛāni* was its sub-genre that concerned the *Šah-nāma* of Ferdowsi. It was also distinguished from the former in terms of its static performative style. *Šah-nāma-ḵᵛān*s sat on a chair with a book or *ṭumār* (lit. "scroll," a story text; see below) before them and retold stories from the *Šah-nāma*. *Naqqāl*s, on the other hand, frequently moved around and gesticulated to re-enact the scene they were narrating from memory (Bayżāʾi, 1962b, pp. 3, 5; Shirazi, p. 85; Bolukbāši, pp. 90-91; *Haft Laškar*, introd., pp. 26-27; cf. Šahri, vol. 5, p. 511; Floor, p. 85; Rubanovich, 2012, p. 655; 2015).

The introduction of printing to Iran at the beginning of the 19th century served to spread oral stories in the form of chapbooks to a wider audience, including women and children (Cejpek, p. 642; Hanaway tr. 1974, introd., p. 9; Marzolph, 1994a, pp. 93-94; 1994b). But the rise of the mass media almost banished *naqqāli* from coffeehouses. In the 1940s, radio broadcasting began in

Iran. In the wake of World War II, it rapidly superseded *naqqāli*. From the late 1950s television, cinema, and theatre became so popular that many storytellers were forced out of their jobs (Āl-e Dawūd, p. 3; Šahri, V, pp. 519-20; Zariri, introd., p. 32; Floor, pp. 104-6). During the years 1974-75, Mary Ellen Page could find only four full-time *naqqāl*s in Shiraz (Page, 1977, p. 30; 1979, p. 196). In the early 1990s, only one professional *naqqāl* could be found in Tehran (Yamamoto, 2003, pp. 23-24). More recently, however, Fāṭema Ḥabibizād, stage name Gordāfarid, who is the first ever woman *naqqāl* in Iran, revived the age-old tradition that had been a purely male preserve (Venetis, 2010, pp. 116-19; Marzolph, 2015, p. 281; cf. Miršokrā'i, p. 60; for transcripts of her performances, see Venetis, 2010, pp. 135-49; for her performance, see *Story of Gordāfarid*, a short documentary film by Ḥādi Afarida, 2012).

While the mass media replaced *naqqāli* and other traditional performing arts as the form of popular entertainment, it also functioned to preserve, revive, and refashion them. Parviz Kimiāvi's *Moġolhā* (The Mongols, 1973) symbolically depicts a *naqqāl* as a species endangered by television which is presented as a more dangerous phenomenon than the Mongol invasion (cf. Kéy, p. 49). Bahrām Bayżā'i uses traditional performing arts, including *naqqāli*, as a medium for his plays, screenplays, and films. The playwright and director Moḥammad Raḥmāniān offers a *naqqāli* type of "dramatic narration and performance as the means through which human morality is produced" (Talajooy, pp. 501, 508). Ḥamid Amjad, a playwright, employs *naqqāli* in his *Mehr va āʾinehā* (Mehr and the mirrors, 2000) as a narrative device (Talajooy, p. 514). Hossein Jamali experiments with *naqqāl*'s dramatic form to recount *Hamlet* in *Hamlet: The Retribution Affair*, in which all characters simultaneously play the role of both actor and narrator, in the manner of the traditional *naqqāl* who is seen as an archetypical adaptor (Anushirvani and Javidshad, pp. 26-27).

Performance and audience. In the late 19th or early 20th century, *naqqāl*s performed mostly during winter evenings and the month of Ramadan (Maḥjub, 1958, p. 531; Sādāt Eškevari, p. 147; Miršokrā'i, p. 60; *Haft Laškar*, introd., p. 27; Omidsalar and Omidsalar, p. 332; Floor, p. 101). A *naqqāli* performance started at two or three o'clock in the afternoon (Šahri, IV, pp. 493-94) and lasted about an hour (Šahri, V, pp. 516-17). Before a *naqqāl* began the day's performance, he had his apprentice or son recite verses by classical poets and then called for a *ṣalavāt*, a prayer recited by Shiʿite Muslims (*Allāhomma ṣall ā ʿ alā Moḥammad wa āl-e Moḥammad,* "May

God bless Moḥammad and his family”) to signal the commencement of the performance (Bayżāʾi, 1962a, pp. 30-31). A performance was divided into four parts, of which the first three were dedicated to the recitation of verses from the *Šāh-nāma* and its prose retelling. During prose narration, the storyteller bustled about, moving his hands and head, walking, sitting down, rising up, clapping his hands, brandishing a stick, giving a battle cry, and impersonating an old man to enlighten his audience (Miršokrāʾi, pp. 60-61). In the final part, he asked for money from his audience, which had been practiced since medieval times as described in the 12th-century popular romance, *Samak-e ʿAyyār* (Ḵānlari, 1968-1974, III, pp. 62-63; 244; VI, pp. 101, 286, 295; V, pp. 15-16; Gaillard, 1987, pp. 165-66; Floor, p. 88; Rubanovich, 2012, pp. 663-64) and the *Fotowwat-nāma-ye solṭani* (see above). Remuneration was much higher for a special program called *Sohrāb-koši* (*-košān*), *Siyāvaš-koši* (*-košān*), or *Esfandiyār-koši* (*-košān;* the killing of Sohrāb, Siyāvaš, or Esfandiyār) in which an innocent young hero is killed by his father or a world-champion. On such occasions, the coffeehouse was profusely decorated and many candles and lamps were lit (Šahri, V, pp. 517-18; Floor, p. 100), or it was covered with black cloth and equipment for mourning was prepared (*Haft Laškar*, introd., p. 27; Seyed-Gohrab, p. 446). Some spectators who could not bear the death of the hero gave money or, in rural areas, a cow or sheep to the storyteller so that he could be spared. At the end of the program, the audience asked the storyteller to recite *rawża* (lit. recitation from *The Garden [of Martyrs]*) and pray for Sohrāb and other heroes (Bayżāʾi, 1972a, pp. 31-32; Miršokrāʾi, pp. 60-61; Āydenlu, 2010, pp. 40-42; for a transcript of *Sohrāb-koši*, see Shirazi, pp. 170-75).

In modern *naqqāli* stories are told in installments; each lasts about one and a half hour (Page, 1977, p. 55; 1979, p. 197; Yamamoto, 2003, p. 24). Some storytellers perform twice a day and complete the story in six months; others tell the story in one session a day for a period of one and a half years (Page, 1979, p. 197). Moršed Vali-Allāh Torābi (1936-2013) completed the *Šāh-nāma* in six months with one session a day (Yamamoto, 2003, p. 24). According to Page (1977, pp. 55; 57-58; 1979, p. 197), the storyteller begins the day’s performance with the Islamic formula, *besmellāh* (q.v.) “in the name of God” (cf. Omidsalar and Omidsalar, p. 336). But, Moršed Zariri instead constantly called for *ṣalawāt* prayers as he was reading aloud poems that praise God (Dustḵᵛāh, 1966, p. 78). Moršed Torābi also often calls for a *ṣalawāt* which requires the active participation of the audience, and is thus more effective in attracting their attention than merely reciting *besmellāh* (cf. Page, 1977, p. 57). Despite

such minor and individual differences the storytellers seem to follow a relatively fixed procedure in performance.

The following description of oral performance is based on a typical performance by Moršed Torābi (Yamamoto, 2003, pp. 24-25; 2010, pp. 253-54): He first prepares what he calls a *sardam* (platform) by piling up chairs and tables on which he places his *ṭumār*. About four o'clock in the afternoon, he hands over a stick to his pupil who strikes the gong hanging from the ceiling. In so doing, the pupil calls for a *ṣalawāt* and recites verses that conclude with another *ṣalawāt*. He then returns the stick to Torābi, who also recites a *ṣalawāt* and a few poems, followed by yet another *ṣalawāt*. After several exchange of *ṣalawāts* with his audience, Torābi begins to tell the story. His narrative performance is divided into three sections, and each lasts roughly thirty minutes. The beginning and end of each section is marked by *ṣalawāt* prayers and recitation of verses, which Torābi performs on the *sardam,* whereas he tells the prose story in the center of the coffeehouse. The contrast between prose and verse is thus reflected in the physical position the storyteller takes. During a brief intermission of poetic recitation, the audience becomes noticeably quiet and concentrates on what the storyteller tells or recites. When he narrates the story, he moves around the coffeehouse while brandishing his stick. He plays multiple characters and modulates his tone according to the scene. In the final section, he stops storytelling at a critical moment in the story and solicits money from the audience, calling for prayers for the Prophet and his family all the while (cf. Page, 1977, pp. 55-91).

It seems that the formal structure of performance, whether in *qeṣṣa-ḵᵛāni* or *naqqāli*, has not changed much since the 17th century when ʿAbd-al-Nabi Faḵr-al-Zamāni, a Qazvin-born storyteller who operated in Mughal India (Khan, 2015, pp. 191-94; 2017), compiled *Ṭerāz al-aḵbār* (ed. Hāj-Sayyed Javādi, 2013), a manual for storytellers (*qeṣṣa-ḵᵛān*s) who specialized in *Qeṣṣa-ye Ḥamza* (completed in 1631/2; for its outline and critical appraisal, see Šafiʿi Kadkani). In the introduction to this work, Faḵr-al-Zamāni explains five major components of oral performance: *dar-āmad* (going in); *monāseb-ḵᵛāni* (suitable recitation); *moraṣṣaʿ-ḵᵛāni* (ornate recitation); *bar-āmad* (going out); *pāvand-ḵᵛāni* (fettered recitation). *Dar-āmad* is a poetic lead-in and consists of three styles: Iranian, Turanian (Central Asian), and Indian. In the Iranian style the storyteller recites verse passages appropriate to the story that he is going to tell on that day and that falls in one of the following four categories that descriptively define the Story of Amir

Ḥamza: *razm* (battle); *bazm*(feasting); *ʿāšeqi* (love); and *ʿ ayyāri* (trickery; see ʿAYYĀR). He then praises his predecessors in storytelling and gradually moves on to the eulogizing of Amir Ḥamza, followed by a few metrical lines (Maḥjub, 1991, pp. 193-94; Khan, 2017, p. 61). In *monāseb-ḵᵛāni,* the storyteller must weigh his words in a manner suitable to the story he is recounting (Maḥjub, 1991, p. 194; Khan, 2017, p. 62). *Moraṣṣaʿ-ḵᵛāni* is a specific form of *monāseb-ḵᵛāni* in which the storyteller gives the gist of a new episode in ornate prose or in verse before *monāseb-ḵᵛāni* (Maḥjub, 1991, p. 194; Khan, 2017, p. 62). In *bar-āmad*, the storyteller keeps the audience in suspense by refusing to conclude the episode he has been narrating, however much they may insist on listening to its ending (Maḥjub, 1991, p. 195; Khan, 2017, p. 61). In *pāvand-ḵᵛāni*, he resolves the suspense by concluding the episode (Maḥjub, 1991, p. 195; Khan, 2017, pp. 61-62). Faḵr-al-Zamāni also gives instructions on performance for each of the four paradigmatic categories of the narrative. During narrative recitation, the storyteller sits on one knee and carefully chooses his words, but in battle scenes he sits on his knees and acts them out as if he is actually wielding a sword or mace to excite the audience's imagination. Courtly scenes must be performed pompously and gracefully whereas in love scenes the storyteller must play both the lover and the beloved with supplications and blandishments. In trickery, he plays a comic character (Maḥjub, 1991, p. 194; Khan, 2015, p. 203). *Ṭerāz al-aḵbār* clearly shows that verse and elaborate descriptive passages, which have been long ascribed to copyists or scribes who are assumed to have improved the storyteller's plain and paratactic language (cf. Hanaway, 1974, introd., pp. 18-20), are part and parcel of oral performance (cf. Rubanovich, 2006, pp. 250-51). The storyteller is fully capable of changing his manner of storytelling to suit the occasion, resulting in mixed form where straightforward narration co-exists with ornate poetic descriptions. Similarities between Faḵr-al-Zamāni's five performative components and Moršed Torābi's performance (the poetic lead-in; verse passages; the creation of suspense by leaving an episode incomplete with its eventual resolution [cf. Yamamoto, 2003, pp. 31-34]; and suitable recitation throughout the performance) point to the continuity of the storytelling tradition from the Safavid/Mughal period down to the late 20th century.

Modern *naqqāli* is generally performed for coffeehouse patrons who often belong to the lower classes; mostly elderly men who typically live in poorer districts (Āl-e Dawūd, p. 3). Torābi's audience mostly lived in the neighborhood of the coffeehouse where he performed and did not include women, whom he

did not allow to attend his performance. This has changed since the emergence of Gordāfarid who performs in theaters and public spaces for mixed audiences. Audience members pay their respect to professional storytellers by calling them by the title *moršed* (spiritual teacher; cf. Page 1977, p. 43; 1979, p. 209).

Storytellers. In the Timurid period (1370-1507), storytellers were counted among *ma*ʿ*areka-girān* (popular entertainers) who were divided into *ahl-e soḵan* (orators), *ahl-e zur* (athletes), and *ahl-e bāzi* (players). The first of these included *maddāḥān* (eulogists), *qeṣṣa-ḵᵛānān* (storytellers), and other verbal artists. Eulogists praised the Prophet and Imams and told religious tales in verse (Kāšefi, pp. 279, 280-92; tr. pp, 275, 277-88) whereas storytellers told tales of historical personages and marvels. *Qeṣṣa-ḵᵛānān*s were distinguished from *afsāna-ḵᵛānān* (fabulists) and *naẓm-ḵᵛānān* (reciters of poetry) in terms of narrative genre and form (Kāšefi, p. 302-5; tr. 296-98). In the Safavid period, too, *qeṣṣa–guyān*(storytellers) belonged to a professional organization, along with *šāh-nāma-ḵᵛān*s, dervishes, wrestlers, acrobats, rope-dancers, jugglers, and puppeteers (Keyvani, p. 53). It was not uncommon for individual entertainers to switch their jobs within the bounds of *ma*ʿ*areka-giri*. A 17th-century *šāh-nāma-ḵᵛān*, Ḥosayn (Ḥosaynā) Ṣobuḥi, was originally a vagabond dervish who came to perform *Šāh-nāma* and *Qeṣṣa-ye Ḥamza* after entering into a khan’s service (Naṣrābādi, p. 357; Floor, p. 91). A 19th-century storyteller, Ḥāji Aḥmad, learned snake-charming and juggling from his uncle when he was young. He later joined the Sufi order of ʿAjams, introduced by his Sufi mentor, who taught him the recitation of the *Eskandar-nāma* (q.v.). After his pilgrimage, he began to tell *Šāh-nāma* stories and *Eskandar-nāma* at coffeehouses, mosques, and private houses in Tehran (Aubin, pp. 246-48). As Page has pointed out (1977, p. 48), modern “*naqqāli* is not an inherited profession,” but rather a matter of personal preference. One of the storytellers she worked with was an artisan and the other a dervish before he took up *naqqāli* (Page, 1977, pp. 28, 31). Moršed Zariri spent his formative years wandering from place to place with dervishes and experienced various jobs until he became a *naqqāl* (Zariri, introd., p. 26). Moršed Torābi was born into a family of *ta*ʿ*ziya-ḵᵛān*s (performers of the passion play; see TAʿZIA) and practiced *ta*ʿ*ziya-ḵᵛāni* himself. One day, he was so impressed by a *naqqāli* performance that as soon as he went home he asked his father’s permission to become a *naqqāl* himself (Torābi, p. 14).

*Ṭumār*s. In present-day Iran, there seems to have been no formal training

system for *naqqāli*. Ḥabib-Allāh, one of the storytellers with whom Page worked, had a teacher (*ostād*). He was given a section of the *Šāh-nāma* each day to learn by heart. He continued this for over a year to memorize the text completely (Page, 1977, pp. 32-33). The training of a*naqqāl* is not completed, however, until he acquires at least one *ṭumār* (lit. scroll, a story text). According to Moršed Torābi (p. 14), "One would not be a *naqqāl* if one did not have a *ṭumār.*" During his training, the apprentice copies his teacher's *ṭumār*s. By the time he has finished copying them, he can be said to have mastered the art of *naqqāli*. Like most of the former *naqqāl*s, Moršed Zariri was illiterate when he began *naqqāli*. He used to get someone to transcribe *ṭumār*s for him. After listening to and memorizing their recitation, he performed *naqqāli* in front of the audience. Later in his career, however, he learned how to read and write and composed a magnificent *ṭumār* (Zariri, introd., pp. 26, 28; see below).

Although *ṭumār*s are often referred to as a mere "prompt book[s]" (Page, 1977, p. 129; 1979, p. 201; Seyed-Gohrab, pp. 444; 447; 457, n. 16), some are in fact complete narrative documents (Afšāri, p. 476; Ṣadāqat-Nežād, introd., p. 6). *Ṭumār*s of this type were often written by talented storytellers on the basis of their experience in oral performance, their study of classical poetry and the *ṭumār*s they collected over the years at the last stage of their career. Moršed Zariri's *Dāstān-e Rostam va Sohrāb* (The Story of Rostam and Sohrab; Yamamoto, 2003, pp. 29-50) is an excerpt from such a *ṭumār*, now published as *Š āh-nāma-ye naqqālān-e panj-jeldi bā qāb va sidi* (Dustḵᵛāh ed., 2020; Dustḵᵛāh, 2015).Other *tumār*s include *Ferdowsi-nāma* (Enjavi Širāzi, I, pp. 261-311; III, pp. 309-27); *Ṭumār-e kohan-e Š āh-nāma-ye Ferdowsi* (Ṣadāqat-Nežād); *Haft Laškar,* compiled by a group of storytellers in the nineteenth century; *Moškin-nāma (Ṭumār-e naqqāli*; Torābi and Fatḥ-ʿAli Beygi eds., 2001; cf. Maḥjub, 1970, pp. 49-50); *Ṭumār-e naqq āli-ye Šāh-nāma*(Āydenlu ed., 2013; cf. Āydenlu, 2011; 2012; 2013; Hämeen-Anttila, p. 173); *Ṭumār-e jāmeʿ-ye naqqāli-ye Šāh-nāma*(Šarif-Nāyegoli ed., 2019), and the *Eskandar-nāma* (see above). Complete *ṭumār*s were naturally much sought after, but were confined in the closed circle of the *naqqāl* and his students. Some *naqqāl*s went as far as to write *ṭumār*s in coded language to protect their trade secrets (Ṣadāqat-Nežād, introd., pp. 5-6).

Critical editions of *ṭumār*s have revealed some of the storytellers' trade secrets. The basic unit of the *ṭumār* is an episode, which can be easily identified by both "narrative markers" signaling a change of topic (e.g., *amm ā* [but], *al-*

qeṣṣa [in short], *amm ā rāvi guyad* [but the storyteller says]) and "temporal markers" indicative of a new, often unexpected turn in a time-sensitive sequence (e.g., *čun* [when], *pas* [then], *ān gāh* [at that time]; for narrative/temporal markers in Moršed Zariri's *Dāstān-e Rostam va Sohrāb*, see Yamamoto, 2003, pp. 34-42; for those in *Haft Laškar*, see Yamamoto, 2018, pp. 109-11). The choice of narrative/temporal markers entirely depends on each storyteller and at times can help to determine his individual style (Yamamoto, 2018, pp. 111-12). Similar markers have been observed in popular romances, and are called variously "conventional opening phrases" (Hanaway, 1970, pp. 249-53; 1971a, p. 67; 1971b, pp. 148-50; 1974, introd., p. 15), "formulas" (Marzolph, 1999, pp. 279; 281; 287-99; cf. Mašdi Galin Ḵānom's formulas in Elwell-Sutton ed.), "formules" (Gaillard, 1987, pp. 85-87), or "meta-communicative markers" (Rubanovich, 2012, pp. 664-67). In otherwise unpunctuated manuscripts, they primarily serve as "indentation used today to mark the beginning of a new paragraph" (Hanaway, 1970, pp. 249-50). Being conventional literary devices, they do not necessarily reflect an interaction between the storyteller and his audience (cf. Rubanovich, 2012, pp. 664-69). Moršed Zariri for example used only four narrative/temporal markers in a performance session (Dustḵᵛāh, 1966, pp. 81; 84; 86; 97) whereas in the corresponding part of the *ṭumār* he employed eight (Zariri, 1990, pp. 35^2; 36; 37^2; 39; 40^2). To indicate shifts in narrative focus during performance, he used *ṣalawāt* prayers, verse citations, direct address to his audience in the form of running commentaries, and the impersonation of multiple characters presumably accompanied by a change in tone, besides regular narration (Dustḵᵛāh, 1966, pp. 78-88). These elements, which are difficult to predict on the basis of textual analysis, underscore the importance of performance and contextual information (cf. Yamamoto, 2003, pp. 16-19).

*Popular romances as earlier ṭ umār*s. Maḥjub (1970, pp. 50-51) compared a legendary modern storyteller, Ḥāj Ḥosayn Bābā, also known as Moškin, who mastered the art of storytelling, composed poetry, read numerous *ṭumār*s, and wrote one (*Mo škin-n ā ma*, see above), with authors/compilers of medieval or even pre-modern popular romances, whereby opening up the possibilities of re-interpreting them as *ṭumār*s. Samak-e ʿayyār (q.v.) by Farāmarz b. Ḵodādād b. ʿAbd-Allāh al-Kāteb al-Arrajāni (Ḵānlari, 1968-74; Razavi) is the earliest known example of a *ṭumār*. Farāmarz calls himself *jam ʿ -konanda-ye in ketāb* (compiler of this book, I, p. 1), *mo'allef-e aḵbār* (editor of histories), and *rāvi-ye qeṣṣa* (teller of stories, I, pp. 76-77). This generally agrees with the narrator's self-designation as *mo'allef-e aḵbār* (58 examples), *rāvi-ye qeṣṣa* (47

examples), *ḵodāvand-e ḥadiṯ* (*aḵbār; ḥekāyat*, possessor of stories, 8 examples), and *bā-ham-āvaranda-ye ketāb/qeṣṣa* (assembler of the book/stories, 2 examples). He thus emphasizes his dual role as both compiler and storyteller, which is not mutually exclusive, given the oral-literary nature of *ṭumār*s. One of his sources was probably Ṣadāqat Abu'l-Qāsem whom he describes as *rāvi* (storyteller) and *moṣannaf-e ketāb* (author of the book, I, pp. 76-77, etc.; cf. Gaillard, 1987, pp. 10-11; 2009; for his motive for compiling the narrative, see Rubanovich 2012, p. 659). The *Dārāb-nāma* (q.v.) by Mawlānā Ḥāji Moḥammad Ṭāheri Biḡami (q.v.), otherwise known as Firuzšāh-nāma (q.v.; Ṣafā, 1960-62; Hanaway tr., 1974) was also compiled by a professional storyteller (*qeṣṣa-ḵᵛān*; Maḥjub, 1970, p. 50; Hanaway tr. 1974, p. 20) in 1483. Biḡami composed this romance for his fellow storytellers and other verbal artists whom Kāšefi grouped as *ahl-e soḵan* (oral performers, see above; Rubanovich, 2012, pp. 661-62). Intended for "inner consumption" (Rubanovich, 2012, p. 662), the *Firuzšāh-nāma* was a *ṭumār* that served as a manual as well as an exemplary story. *Amir Arsalān* (q.v.) was reportedly taken down by a daughter of Nāṣer-al-Din Shah Qajar (r. 1848-96) who listened to the performance of the king's storyteller, Moḥammad ʿAli Naqib-al-Mamālek or Mirzā Aḥmad Naqib-al-Mamālek Širāzi (Maḥjub ed., 1961, introd., pp. 12-14; Sidān).

Repertoire. Up until the Pahlavi regime's forced telling of the *Šāh-nāma* of Ferdowsi, the following works seem to have formed the repertoire of *naqqāli*. It is important to note that this does not mean individual storytellers could narrate all of these works; they usually specialized in one or two of them and their repertoires were heavily influenced by their audience's preference (Maḥjub, 1958, p. 531; Maḥjub ed., 1961, introd., p. 2; 1970, p. 42; Bayżā'i, 1962a, p. 21; Dustḵᵛāh, 1966, p. 74; Hanaway, 1971b, pp. 65-66; Page, 1977, pp. 37, 49; 1979, p. 211; Yamamoto, 2003, pp. 25-28; 2010, pp. 250-51): *Samak-e ʿAyyār* (see above); *Qeṣṣa-ye Ḥamza* (see above); *Abu Moslem-nāma* by Ṭarsusi (Yaḡmā'i, n.d.; Esmāʿili, 2001; Mélikoff; Maḥjub, 1990; Calmard, pp. 318-21; Floor, pp. 88-89); the *Dārāb-nāma* of Biḡami (see above); the *Dārāb-nāma* of Ṭarsusi (Ṣafā, 1965-67; Gaillard, 2005); the *Eskandar-nāma* (see above); the *Ḵāvarān-nāma* (q.v.) of Ebn Ḥosām Kᵛāfi (q.v; Ṣafā 1970, pp. 377-79; Shani, 2015; 2018; Rubanovich, 2017); the *Moḵtār-nāma* by ʿAbd al-Razzāq Beyk b. Najafqoli Ḵān Donbāli known as Maftun (Ṣafā, 1970, p. 383; Tauer, pp. 450-51; Calmard, pp. 321-23); and the *Šāh-nāma*.

A *naqqāli* version of the *Šāh-nāma* ends before the reign of Alexander and

includes later epics, inserted in more or less chronologically appropriate places in Ferdowsi's *Šāh-nāma* (Mohl, 1838, I, pp. liv-lxxiii; Massé, 1935, pp. 263-68; Molé, 1951; 1952; 1953; Hanaway, 1970, p. 229; Yamamoto, 2003, pp. 110-14; de Blois, pp. 465-82; van Zutphen, 2014, esp. pp. 76-79; Rubanovich, 2015). They may include the following: the *Garšāsp-nāma* (q.v.) by Asadi Ṭusi (q.v.; Yaḡmāʾi, 1938; Huart and Massé, 1926-51; Ṣafā, 1970, pp. 283-89; Yamamoto, 2003, pp. 114-20; van Zutphen, 2014, pp. 89-91), the *Sām-nāma* (Ṣafā, 1970, pp. 335-40; van Zutphen, 2014, pp. 93-95), the *Barzu-nāma* (Dabir-Siyāqi, 2003; Nahvi, 2005; Rahmoni and van den Berg, 2013; Ṣafā, 1970, pp. 303-10; Hanaway, 1989; de Blois, pp. 469-72; van den Berg, 2006; 2009; 2012; 2015, pp. 197-200; 2018; van Zutphen, 2014, pp. 121-29; Yamamoto, 2018), the *Farāmarz-nāma* (Sarmadi, 2004; van Zutphen and Ḵaṭibi, 2016; van Zutphen, 2017; Ḵaṭibi and Ḡafuri, 2020; Ṣafā, 1970, pp. 294-96; de Blois, pp. 472-74; van Zutphen, 2012; 2014, pp. 279-550; Ḵaṭibi, 2020), the *Bānu Gošasp-nāma* (Karači, 2003; Ṣafā, 1970, pp. 300-302; de Blois, pp. 468-69; van Zutphen, 2014, pp. 105-9; 2018), the *Bahman-nāma*(q.v; ʿAfifi, 1991; Ṣafā, 1970, pp. 289-94; de Blois, pp. 465-68; van Zutphen, 2014, pp. 134-37; 212-18); the *Šahriyār-nāma* (Ṣafā, 1970, pp. 311-15; van Zutphen, 2014, p. 75; Szuppe), the *Jahāngir-nāma* (Ṣafā, 1970, pp. 329-35; de Blois, p. 475; van Zutphen, 2014, pp. 114-18), and the *Āḏar-borzin-nāma* (Ṣafā, 1970, pp. 315-16; van Zutphen, 2014, pp. 137-38).

As Page has pointed out (1977, p. 37), some of the later epics were told on their own (cf. Hanaway, 1974, introd., pp.17-18). Apart from these works that ultimately derived from medieval epics and romances, new works were created in the Safavid and the Qajar period; Ḥosayn-e Kord-e Šabestari (q.v; see above) and *Amir Arsalān* (see above). These works have at least one feature in common: emphasis on Shiʿite Islam. Many focus on religious figures (*Abu Moslem-nāma*, *Ḵāvarān-nāma*, *Moḵtār-nāma*, and *Ḥosayn-e Kord*). In the *Haft Laškar*, Tahmuraṯ is called amir (p. 1) and pre-Islamic heroes like Rostam defeat their enemies by yelling "Allāh o Akbar," destroy idol temples, and convert pagans to Islam (pp. 3, 83, 113, etc., 31 examples; cf. Soroudi). Such Islamization of the *Šāh-nāma* and later epics curiously synchronizes with the current status in the Middle East and shows the continuous relevance of *naqqāli* in post-modern world.

Research History. It was in the late 1950s through 1970s that, alarmed by the rapid erosion of the tradition, Iranian scholars began to seriously study *naqqāli*. They published a series of articles on its history,

performance, *ṭumār*s, and repertoire (Maḥjub, 1958; Maḥjub ed., 1961, introd., pp. 1-68; 1970; 1991; Bayżāʾi, 1962a-b; Dustḵvāh, 1966; 1967; Sādāt Eškevari; Shirazi; Lesān; Miršokrāʾi). The second wave of *naqqāli* studies in Iran came in the 1990s when they published *ṭumār*s (Zariri; Ṣadāqat-Nežād; *Haft Laškar*). In the 21st century, a younger generation of Iranian scholars have taken a renewed interest in *naqqāli* and published a number of articles and books (e.g., Jaʿfariyān; ʿĀšurpur; Najm; Rāzi; Āydenlu). Special mention must be made of the publication of a *ṭumār* of the *Eskandar-nāma* (ed. Ḏekāvati Qarāgezlu, 2004 and 2009) and of the *Ṭerāz al-aḵbār* (ed. Ḥāj-Sayyed Javādi, 2013; cf. Maḥjub, 1991; Šafiʿi-Kadkani; Khan, 2015; 2017).

William L. Hanaway Jr. (q.v.; 1929-2018) was one of the first Western scholars who paid attention to *naqqāli*, which he regarded as the creative mechanism for the genesis of Persian popular literature (Hanaway, 1970, p. 16; 1971a, pp. 143-45; 1971b, p. 60; 1974, pp. 1-24; 1996b). In the mid-1970s, Mary Ellen Page conducted fieldwork on *naqqāli* in Shiraz. By closely comparing oral, written, and literary versions of the Iranian national legend, she argues that while the *ṭumār*, rather than the *Šāh-nāma* of Ferdowsi, is a "stabilizing force at work in the storytelling tradition," "there is still a great deal for individual variation" (Page, 1977, pp. 150-51; 1979, pp. 200-201). Claims about *naqqāl*'s "creativity" were extended further by Olga M. Davidson, who described Ferdowsi as "a *naqqāl*—the definitive *naqqāl*—of the *Shāhnāma* tradition" on the ground that "thematic convergences between Ferdowsi and a *naqqāl* are in effect no different from the convergences between two different *naqqāl*s". She, however, discerned in the semi-versified introduction of *naqqāli* "vestigial aspects of an earlier stage in the art-form of the *naqqāl* when his medium was indeed all poetry" (Davidson, 1985, pp. 129-30; 1994. pp. 58-59). While her thesis on the oral and poetic origin of the *Šāh-nāma* found some support in Dick Davis's independent attempt to apply the oral formulaic theory developed by Milman Parry (1902-35) and Albert B. Lord (1912-91) to the *Šāh-nāma* of Ferdowsi (Davis, 1996), it was criticized by Mahmoud and Teresa Omidsalar who argue that "there is no evidence to indicate that the Iranian epic tradition in its nonliterary form was transmitted in any way other than by prose narration" (p. 328; cf. Omidsalar 1995 and 1996; see also Davidson's rebuttal to Omidsalar, 1996; 1999, repr. in Davidson 2000, pp. 9-28; cf. Khaleghi-Motlagh, 1998; 2002; Matini). In the early 1990s, Kumiko Yamamoto, who worked with Moršed Torābi, suggested an oral performance model from her observations of his performances. The model showed how serialization, typical of *naqqāli*, affects the structure of *ṭumārs* and *Šāh-nāma* stories

(Yamamoto 2003, pp. 51-52; 81-109). In 2006 through 2008, Evangelos Venetis did field research on storytelling in Iran, with special focus on provincial and rural areas: Khorasan and Firuzkuh (Venetis, 2012). In Mashhad, he encountered a storyteller who sang the tale of Siyāvaš while playing the *tār*(lute; Venetis, 2010, pp. 110; 125; 2012, pp. 304-5). A *šāh-nāma-ḵᵛān* in Firuzkuh used a printed text of the *Šāh-nāma*instead of a *ṭumār*. Being a poet himself, he composed poems extempore which he interpolated into *Šāh-nāma* stories (Venetis, 2012, pp. 305-307). As valuable as these storytellers may be in their own right, they are not comparable to storytellers like Moršeds Zariri and Torābi as their performances lasted only fifteen to twenty minutes (Venetis, 2012, pp. 304; 306). As witnessed by Venetis, storytelling saw a further decline in recent years, with the state as the sole sponsor (the Iranian Organization of Culture and Tourism and the Iranian Broadcasting Channel [IRIB]; Venetis, 2010, p. 111). And yet *šāh-nāma-ḵᵛāni* has survived and can be still observed in Central Asia, where according to Ravshan Rahmoni *Šāh-nāma* stories have been told in prose (Rahmoni, 2016, introd., p. 15). In the introduction to a collection of Tajiki oral tales from the *Šāh-nāma,* Rahmoni refers to a prose *Šāh-nāma*, *Baḥr al-tawāriḵ* by ʿAbd-al-Qabā'i Vāras Boḵārā'i who was a *rāvi* (storyteller), poet, and *šāh-nāma-ḵᵛān* (1650-1730; Rahmoni, 2016, introd., pp. 15-24). This work begins with the reign of Kayomarṯ (q.v.), son of Adam and continues into the accession of Dārā (q.v.). Just like *ṭumār*s, it also contains other epics and historical accounts. Barzu, grandson of Rostam, whom Ferdowsi left out in the *Šāh-nāma* and who is a local hero among Tajiks (Rahmoni, 2012; Rahmoni and van den Berg, 2013), kills Bahman, who has become a dervish (Rahmoni, 2016, introd., p. 22). The text is punctuated with narrative markers (e.g., *rāvi guyad* [the storyteller says]; *al-qeṣṣa* [in short]; *bāz āmadim bar sar-e soḵan-e awwal* [we came back to the beginning of the first episode]; Rahmoni, 2016, introd., pp. 18; 22) written in red ink. When compared with *ṭumār*s, it will shed new light on *šāh-nāma-ḵᵛāni* in the 17th to 18th century, when information on the Iranian counterpart is scant, if not non-existent (cf. Āydenlu, 2011), as well as on the fascinating yet ambiguous relationship between *šāh-nāma-ḵᵛāni* and *naqqāli.*

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