



The Idea of the Just Ruler
in Persianate Art and Material Culture

Edited by Negar Habibi

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Faridun's mother Faranak sends gifts to her son, MSS 1030, folio 38. Tabriz, Iran, 1520s. Courtesy of the Khalili Collection.

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Introduction

The Idea of the Just Ruler in Persianate Art and Material Culture

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Abstract

Iranian kings, or those who reigned in lands under Persian linguistic and cultural domination, followed the idea of a Just Ruler: a pious king who looked after his subjects' divinity and spirituality in parallel to their earthly lives and needs. The Just Ruler extended righteousness and peace among his people while patronizing the construction of palaces, gardens, and new towns. The idea of a Just Ruler may be found in Sassanid monumental rock reliefs and written texts and then enriched and elaborated upon in the Islamic era by philosophers, poets, authors, and artists.

This issue of *Manazir Journal* focuses on how art and architecture served the representation of the Just Ruler in Persianate societies from Central Asia to Eastern Anatolia from the 14th to the 19th centuries. Illustrated books, architecture, and photography show how different kings and rulers referred to the Persian ideas of the Just Ruler by patronizing new constructions, richly illuminated books, and in the modern era, employing mediums such as photography and lithography for nationalizing the king's image.

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This issue of *Manazir Journal* investigates the idea of kingship in the Islamic Persianate world from the 14th to the 19th centuries and examines how it was culturally constructed and artistically represented. Persianate world refers to the regions under the cultural and linguistic influence of Persian, the language spoken on the Iranian plateau.¹ These lands stretched from Eastern Anatolia to Central Asia, passing through today's Azerbaijan, Iran, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

The idea of a Just Ruler in the Persianate world dates back to pre-Islamic Iran under dynasties such as the Achaemenid (559-330 B.C.) and Sassanids (224-651 A.D.) from which remain until today monumental architectural constructions or rock reliefs that project the idea of royal ideology. After the Muslim-Arab takeover in the 7th century, Muslim philosophers and authors enriched several of these ideas. From the 10th century onwards, Muslim dynasties such as Samanids (819-999) or Ghaznavids (977-1186) started ruling over the large lands of Khurasan and Transoxiana, while the Abbasid Caliphates (750-1258) controlled—at least nominally—the major parts of the Islamic world from Baghdad and Samarra in today's Iraq. The Samanid dynasty, nevertheless, traced their descent from pre-Islamic Iranian kings. Thus, not only did they seek to rebuild and revive the kingdom based on pre-Islamic Iranian beliefs, but they also revived the Persian language by patronizing poets and historians who recited, wrote, and translated historical and Qur'anic texts into Persian.² The new Persian language was written with the Perso-Arabic alphabet around the 8th-9th century and quickly became the main language of several monarchies and dynasties and the complementary *lingua franca* of the Muslim conquerors alongside Arabic during its spread throughout the Eastern Iranian world. From roughly the 10th century, Persian also became a language of learning and politics in Central and South Asia (Auer), eventually replacing Arabic as the primary medium for the expression of Sufism (Arjomand, "Persianate Islam").

Persian thus played an essential role in transmitting new religious and spiritual ideas highly tinted by Sufism and served as a vehicle for pre-Islamic political ideas and ideals, primarily based on the Sassanid's political legacy.

Persian literature and poetry were among the most effective means of reshaping and reviving the Just Ruler idea. Mythical kings appeared in the histories and epics of Ferdowsi's 11th-century *Shahnama* (Book of Kings) and Nizami's 12th-century *Khamsa* (Quintet). Their physical attributes, manners, and behaviours served as immortal models for the kings and emirs or sultans (Melville, 12-13). Patronizing the richly decorated copies of *Shahnama* became the hallmark of the true king until the 17th century in Iran, Turkey, India, and Central Asia.³

1. To read more on the Iranian plateau and the dynasties that ruled it, see Daryaei.

2. One may note Muhammad b. Jarir al-Tabari's (d. 923) *Great Commentary* of the Qur'an, or the Persian translation of his *History of Prophets and Kings*, as the most significant works translated into Persian. Abu Mansur Daqiqi (d. 976 or 980) was among a circle of four poets whom the Samanids commissioned to put into prose the ancient *Shahnama* (Book of Kings). It paved the way for the later versifications of the *Shahnama* by Ferdowsi.

3. For a brief art historical survey of *Shahnama's* illustrated copies, see Habibi, *Shahnameh* 15-19.

Persian scholarly texts also passed on the pre-Islamic idea of kingship; written by viziers and scholars, such as Nizam al-Mulk (1018-1092), or Najm al-Din Razi (1177-1256), to name but a few, these texts describe both kingly manners and the codes of rule. The idea of Persian kingship eventually shaped the identity and legitimacy of Muslim rulers in the lands under the cultural domination of the Persian language (Arjomand; Lambton; Tor).

This issue aims to demonstrate the continuity and vitality of the Idea of a just ruler in the Persianate world. However, we may not permanently analyze the dominant rhetoric or hegemonical discourses in one particular period. Instead, by analyzing the architectural and artistic productions in the Persianate societies over six centuries, we examine the shaping and reshaping, fluidity and flexibility of such an Idea. A topic that rarely appears in Persianate art historical studies.

Undeniably, Tamerlane (r. 1370-1405) or Shah 'Abbas I (r. 1587-1629) are among the rulers whose kingships have almost always been scrutinized alongside their architectural achievements and constructions (on Tamerlane, see Lentz and Lowry; on Shah 'Abbas, see Canby). Indeed, studies and surveys on Persianate art history often focus on one specific dynasty or ruler and their artistic achievements; the Idea of the Just Ruler and its implication in artistic patronage is not discussed as much. *The Idea of Iran* series, for instance, supported by the Soudavar Memorial Foundation, examines the rise and fall of different dynasties in Iranian lands from the *Birth of the Persian Empire* (Curtis and Stewart), also known as the Achaemenid Empire, in 550 B.C. to *The Contest for Rule in Eighteenth-Century Iran* (Melville). Each volume gives a detailed account of historical, societal and artistic achievements under the rule of a specific dynasty.⁴ The priority is not, however, specifically given to the Idea of the Just Ruler, but instead on how different kings and emirs dealt with the Idea of Iran. The main interest of these series is how the Persian language, arts, religions and society have been reshaped, employed and developed under the new dynastical ideologies and identities.

One of the most recent studies in which the idea of kingship is examined through architectural constructions in pre-Islamic, early-Islamic, pre-modern and modern Iran is *Persian Kingship and Architecture: Strategies of Power in Iran from the Achaemenids to the Pahlavis* (Babaie and Grigor). However, the focus is only on architecture, mainly from pre-Islamic eras, and how it influenced Iranian architecture.

This issue of *Manazir Journal* hopes to offer another reading of the history of Persianate art and architecture; we note how the kings and princes, as the ultimate art patrons, used architectural monuments and artistic productions to place themselves—as the legitimate kings—in the long historical lineage of Just Rulers in Iranian lands. Thus, the volume offers a comprehensive and chronological outlook on several rulers from different dynasties by focusing on some of their artistic or architectural highlights; by reading and analyzing them, the authors present a new reading of rulers' perceptions of the Just Ruler, and not merely their dynastical identities.

Azadeh Latifkar's article, "The Reinvention of *Padishah-i Islam* in the Visual Representations of Ghazan Khan" (published both in Persian and English), first gives a general review of the Iranian heritage of the Just Ruler at the end of the 13th and early 14th centuries. The Persian bureaucrats

4. The series *The Idea of Iran* were published from 2005 to 2022 by I. B. Tauris including *The Age of Parthians* (vol. 2); *The Sasanian Era* (vol. 3); *The Rise of Islam* (vol. 4); *Early Islamic Iran* (vol. 5); *The Age of the Seljuqs* (vol. 6); *The Coming of the Mongols* (vol. 7); *Iran After the Mongols* (vol. 8); *The Timurid Century* (vol. 9); and *Safavid Persian in the Age of Empires* (vol. 10).

and viziers of the Ilkhanid dynasty (1256-1335) had effectively revived the Persian idea of kingship by the end of the 13th century for the benefit of their Mongolian masters. It is precisely in this period that Ghazan Khan (1271-1304), the sixth Ilkhanid ruler and the first to convert to Islam, employed the Perso-Islamic heritage to make and propagate his image as the *Padishah-i Islam* (King of Islam). He justifies himself both as king of *Iranshahr* (Iranian lands) and the legitimate successor of the Prophet Muhammad. Latifkar then analyzes the illustrated manuscripts produced under the reign of Ghazan Khan and examines the idea of *Padishah-i Islam* reflected in art production.

The Ilkhanid dynasty was the Iranian branch of the Mongolian empire founded by Chinggis Khan; the conversion of Ghazan Khan led to a collective conversion to Islam of many Ilkhanid nobles, and *Yasa*, the Chinggisid laws, were replaced by Islamic ones. However, the Chinggisid descendants remained an essential element for the legitimacy of the new rulers' reigning over Iranian lands and beyond.⁵ Tamerlane, the founder of the Timurid dynasty (1370-1507) ruling over Central Asia and Iran some 150 years after the Mongol invasion, declared himself as being a descendant of Chinggis Khan (through marriage to Chinggisid princesses). He then developed a new idea of kingship, a combination of Islamic, Iranian, and Mongolian ideas and ideals. Elena Paskelava shows in her article, "Samarqand's Congregational Mosque of Bibi Khanum as a Representation of Timurid Legitimacy and Rulership," how this iconic Timurid monument, built in part by Tamerlane himself and his grand-son Ulugh Beg, paralleled the Ilkhanid monuments, not only in their functions or beauty but additionally as a means to highlight the Timurid idea of kingship in the territories beyond central Iranian land.

Our inquiry into the embodiment of the Persian idea of the Just Ruler in art and material culture follows its historical survey in the Safavid era (1501-1733). The Safavids are considered the first Persian dynasty ruling in Iranian lands since the Arab-Muslim conquest in the 7th century. The Safavid idea of kingship, their art, and their material culture have been the subject of numerous studies, making them, perhaps, one of the most investigated subjects in the field of Iranian Studies. Isfahan, the third capital from 1590 to 1733, has often been the object of insightful research, as numerous monuments erected under Shah 'Abbas the Great and his descendants still remain, more or less, intact (Babayan; Babaie; Emami). However, the first two kings' (Shah Isma'il and Shah Tahmasp) courtly artistic productions deserve further examination in order to shed light on yet unexplored aspects. Amir Mazyar, in his article "Art as an Image of the Shah; Art, Rhetoric, and Power in Shah Tahmasp's Letter to Sultan Selim II," delves into the very long letter sent to the new Ottoman Sultan Selim II that was written by the scribes of Shah Tahmasp's court (1524-1576). By assuming that historical texts serve as a vehicle for several revelations about artistic productions, Mazyar interprets Shah Tahmasp's letter as a mirror of the ideal king's divine image, true kingly manners, the profile of his kingdom and the factual meaning of a Just Ruler.

According to pre-Islamic texts, to rule over *Iranshahr*, a king must have been granted the "royal divine glory" (*farr*). The ancient Persian kings' divine charisma was made transitive and spread throughout the realm of Iran, making it prosperous and luminous (Soudavar, "Farr(ah)" and *The Aura of Kings*). The physical and artistic manifestation of this divine glory is the subject of Negar Habibi and Shervin Farrdinejad's contribution. Their article, "The Sacred King in the Shah Tahmasp

5. The Uzbek Sheybanids, for example, were Chinggisid descendants, ruling over western Central Asia from 1428 to 1599.

Shahnama: The Tree as a Generative Idea of the ‘Idea of Kingship’,” traces the pre-Islamic Zoroastrian concept of royal divine glory through its visual translations within the *Shahnama-yi Shahi* in the 16th century. Reviewing the *longue durée* idea of Iranian kingship perceived within the Safavid royal ideology in the reigns of the first two monarchs, Shah Isma‘il (r. 1501-1524) and Shah Tahmasp, they analyze nine paintings of the most luxurious copy of *Shahnama* to point out how the artists showed a Just Ruler’s divine glory and dignity.

Despite being successful in international commerce and making Iran one of the grand “gunpowder” empires in early-modern Islamicate world, the Safavids were removed from the world map by the Afghan invasion in the early 18th century. The Afghans, in turn, were overthrown by Nadir Shah Afshar (r. 1736-1747), one of the Safavid’s commanders-in-chief, who declared himself a new king and founder of the Afsharid dynasty (1736-1749). Mélisande Bizzoire gives a new account of these tumultuous moments, whose art production has only recently received adequate attention (Bizzoire; O’Brien; Motaghedi). In “De la poudre aux yeux : les stratégies artistiques de légitimation des souverains d’Iran (1722-1750),” Bizzoire examines the monuments erected by Ashraf and Mahmud Afghan, and notably by Nadir Shah in Isfahan, Qazvin, and Mashhad to examine how they justify these rulers’ ambiguous legitimacy in space and time, reaffirming their rightness as the Just Rulers in the lands previously governed by the Safavids.

The Qajar era (1789-1925) is also among the periods for which scholars have only recently shown interest (Diba and Ekhtiar; Roxburgh and McWilliams; Fellingner and Gibson); several unknown societal aspects and artistic materials from this period are still to be discovered. Two articles in this issue shed light on two different aspects of this period. In his article “Reflection of Identity in the Mirror of the Narrative Images: Reproduction of the Idea of the Just Rule in the Portraits of Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar,” Ali Boozari examines some of the illustrations of *One Thousand and One Nights*, the last monumental illustrated book in the Persian bookmaking tradition, where he explores the idea of the Just Ruler manifested in the portraits of Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar (1848-1896). Boozari’s article develops an interpretation of these paintings based on territorial conflicts and the idea of the Iranian kingdom and kingship in the middle of the 19th century.

Our survey of the Qajar period continues with “Visualizing Kingship in a Time of Change: Lens-Based Royal Portraiture during Late Qajar Rule” by Mira Xenia Schwerda, which gives a fresh account of the royal imagery, especially during the reigns of Muhammad ‘Ali Shah (r. 1907-1909) and Ahmad Shah (r. 1909-1925). Reviewing Iran’s hybrid social and political adjustments and developments in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Schwerda analyzes royal photographic portraitures both printed and painted, produced during this period in order to understand how new technologies and ideologies reshaped the image of the king and kingship in Iran.

Finally, Hamidreza Ghelichkhani’s essay in Persian is a study of calligraphy in the Persianate world. In “The Idea of the Just Ruler and the Art Patron in Persianate Calligraphy: The Colophons Made by Ja‘far Baysonqori and Muhammad Hussein Katib al-Sultan Shirazi,” Ghelichkhani explores two golden ages of Persian calligraphy, that of the Timurids and Qajars, in order to give an account of how the Just Ruler as an art patron was perceived and praised by the noblest masters of calligraphy. Furthermore, it addresses the way royal patronage persisted as an integral part of the characteristics of a Just Ruler during several centuries. His article also gives a detailed report on both calligraphers’ careers.

Our issue intends to provide a comprehensive image of the artistic and architectural expression of the Persian idea of kingship and the Just Ruler across six centuries. The authors give a vivid account of the *longue durée* Persian pre-Islamic ideals through consecutive dynasties in Islamic Persianate world. Their contributions offer new perspectives on how, at times, the return to these ideas was more palpable and tangible and how, at other times, Shiism and other spiritual schools, the visibility of a ruler, new technologies or imported ideas, completed or reshaped ancestral ideas. We are particularly delighted that we could include four articles by Iranian scholars currently living and working in Iran, Azadeh Latifkar, Hamidreza Ghelichkhani, Amir Mazyar and Ali Boozari.⁶ Their essays may serve as a *vitrine* to newly discovered materials, historical documents, and the state of scholarly research in Iran. Two of the articles are in Persian (Ghelichkhani, Latifkar), and Latifkar's text is accompanied by its English translation.⁷

We may add eventually that this issue focused only on the male rulers. Nevertheless, women as queen mothers, princesses and regents played significant roles in Persianate societies as developed by De Nicola, Matthee, Szuppe and Habibi, to name but a few. Indeed, scholars have started to pay more attention, and rightfully so, to the role of women in art historical and societal issues. We hope that these subjects will receive more attention in academic journals concerned with the study of art and material cultures of the Islamicate world.

6. We are most grateful to our Iranian colleagues who endeavored tirelessly, despite numerous internet blockages and a tumultuous climate in the universities from September 2022 onwards, to review and re-send their materials.

7. For Arabic, Persian, and Turkic source material, written in the Arabic script, we have used the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (IJMES) transliteration system in the English articles.

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About the author

Negar Habibi is an art historian and lecturer of the arts of Islam at the University of Geneva. She is the author of *'Ali Qoli Jebādār et l'occidentalisme safavide: une étude sur les peintures dites farangi sāzi, leurs milieux et commanditaires sous Shāh Soleimān* (Brill 2018) and several articles on painting productions, women patronage, and Iranian society in 17th-century Isfahan. Habibi's current project, financed by the Soudavar Memorial Foundation (SMF) and the subject of her second monograph, consists of studying the Jean Pozzi Islamic and Persian collections shared between several European museums. Habibi is also an SMF alumnus for a lectureship on the art and architecture of the Three Gunpowder Empires at the University of Geneva in 2019-2021.

The Reinvention of *Padishah-i Islam* in the Visual Representations of Ghazan Khan (Persian Version)

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Abstract

This article discusses how the visualization of Mahmud Ghazan, the sixth Ilkhanid ruler, was employed to construct and propagate his image as the *Padishah-i Islam* (King of Islam), thus justifying him both as king of *Iranshahr* (land of Iran) and the legitimate successor of the Prophet Muhammad. In a quest for visual translations of the Ilkhanid concept of *Padishah-i Islam*—an inseparable combination of the Persian notion of ideal kingship and prophethood—several illustrations from the Diez albums representing Ghazan or events of his reign have been identified, two of which have become subject to detailed iconographic analyses.

Two approaches to the visualization of Ghazan as *Padishah-i Islam* can be considered here. The first is Ghazan's birth scene where the visual narrative is covered in various formal and semantic layers; transformed into a symbolic narrative of a holy birth associated with those of the prophets. The second appears in the scene of Ghazan's enthronement, probably once illustrated as an unknown manuscript's frontispiece, the images' composition and components appear as a visual panegyric poem which applies an elaborate visual language that elevates Ghazan to the level of a divine king.

Keywords

Ideal Ruler, *Padishah-i Islam*, Mahmud Ghazan, *Farr-i Izadi*, *Diez Albums*

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بازآفرینی پادشاه اسلام در تصویرگری غازان خان

چکیده

این مقاله بحثی است در این باره که چگونه تصویرگری غازان، ششمین ایلخان مغول، در ساخت و تبلیغ تصویر او در مقام پادشاه اسلام به‌عنوان فرمانروای مشروع قلمرو ایران‌شهر و جانشین برحق پیامبر اسلام به کار گرفته شده است. در جستجوی بازنمود بصری ایده‌ی ایلخانی پادشاه اسلام که در آن پیامبری و ایده‌ی ایرانی شاه آرمانی به‌گونه‌ای جدانشدنی درآمیخته‌اند، تصاویری چند از مرقات دیتس که بازنمایی غازان یا رویدادهای دوران حکمرانی او هستند شناسایی و دو تصویر مورد تحلیل شمایل‌نگاشتی قرار گرفته‌اند. این بررسی‌ها دو رویکرد در بصری سازی پادشاه اسلام را آشکار می‌کنند. در مجلس ولادت غازان روایت بصری پیچیده شده در لایه‌های صوری و معنایی مختلف، همگام با متن تاریخی، بدل به روایتی نمادین از ولادتی مقدس، یادآور ولادت پیامبران، می‌شود. در صحنه‌ی جلوس غازان که گمان می‌رود سرلوحه‌ای باقی‌مانده از دست‌نویسی ناشناخته باشد، ترکیب‌بندی و اجزاء تصویر در قامت مدیحه‌سرایی بصری ظاهر می‌شوند که در آن زبان بصری پیچیده‌ای غازان را به مقام شاه-پیامبر برمی‌کشد.

کلمات کلیدی

پادشاه آرمانی، پادشاه اسلام، محمود غازان، فرّ ایزدی، مرقات دیتس

مقدمه

در شعبان سال ۶۹۴ هجری، حدود نیم‌قرن پس از انقراض خلافت عباسی به دست سپاهیان مغول، غازان خان، در میانه‌ی منازعات جانشینی با عمویش بایدو، در مجلسی با حضور شماری از امرای مغول کلمه‌ی توحید را بر زبان آورد و به اسلام گروید. برخلاف روایت رشیدالدین در تاریخ مبارک غازانی که مسلمان شدن غازان را ناشی از «هدایت ایزدی» می‌داند، به‌زعم چارلز ملویل،^۱ اسلام آوردن او در این برهه از زمان حرکتی استراتژیک برای جلب حمایت امرای تازه مسلمانان همچو امیر نوروز^۲ و هم‌چنین ایرانیان مسلمان بود (۱۶۰-۱۵۹ "Padishah-i Islam"). چهار ماه پس از واقعه‌ی اسلام آوردن غازان تبریز فتح شد و بایدو نیز پس از چندی تعقیب و گریز به دست امیر نوروز به قتل رسید. غازان در تبریز با نام اسلامی محمود و لقب پادشاه اسلام به‌عنوان ششمین ایلخان بر تخت سلطنت ایران نشست.^۳ به‌فرمان او مغولان جملگی به دین اسلام درآمدند، کلیساها و بتکده‌ها ویران شدند و مجموعه اصلاحاتی در قوانین حکومتی انجام شد که منجر به جایگزینی قوانین چنگیزی، یاسا، با قوانین اسلامی شد (بیانی ۲۱۳).

عنوان پادشاه اسلام به‌هیچ وجه عنوانی نوظهور یا منحصر به محمود غازان و جانشین او آلجایتو نبود و از سده‌ی پنجم هجری در متون فارسی، به‌ویژه در تقدیم‌نامه‌های آن‌ها، به‌عنوان لقبی برای شماری از فرمانروایان مسلمان حاکم بر مناطق شرقی و غربی ایران به کار رفته بود؛ از جمله خطاب به فرمانروایانی چون غیاث‌الدین کیخسرو از سلاطین سلجوقی رم در *راحة‌الصدور* نوشته‌ی راوندی (۳۸)، محمد بن سام غوری در *اسرارالتوحید* نوشته‌ی محمد منور (۸) و ابوالمظفر ایلتمش از ممالیک هند در *آداب الحرب و الشجاعة* اثر فخر مدبر (۱۶) و هم‌چنین در اشاره به سلطان سنجر در *اغراض السیاسة* اثر ظهیری سمرقندی (۴۰۶). القاب دیگری مانند سلطان اسلام و ملک اسلام، که معنای مشابهی دارند، به وفور در متون تاریخی دیده می‌شوند. در نگاه نخست، شاید این‌گونه به نظر برسد که غازان همانند هر یک از این پادشاهان مسلمان بنا به یک سنت سیاسی پادشاه اسلام لقب گرفته است، اما چنان‌که در ادامه خواهیم گفت استفاده از عنوان پادشاه اسلام

۱. Charles Melville .

۲. امیر نوروز فرزند امیر ارغون و برآمده از خاندانی مغول بود که پیش از تشکیل حکومت ایلخانان حکومت خراسان را بر عهده داشتند و تحت تأثیر ایرانیان روحانی و دیوانی از مدت‌ها پیش اسلام آورده بودند. با حمایت نوروز غازان به سلطنت رسید و فرماندهی لشکر خود را به او سپرد، اما سرانجام نوروز که خود به رقیبی برای غازان بدل شده بود را به قتل رساند (بیانی ۲۰۹، ۲۱۵).

۳. در متون تاریخی دوره‌ی ایلخانی و هم‌چنین بر روی سکه‌ها از غازان با عناوین پادشاه جهان، سلطان معظم، پادشاه اسلام شاهنشاه معظم غازان محمود، غازان محمود خلد الله ملکه، شاهنشاه معظم محمود غازان و سلطان اسلام نیز یاد شده است (Allsen ۳۲).

برای غازان به منظور مشروعیت بخشیدن به فرمانروایی حاکمی بیگانه بر ایران در راستای هدف سیاسی بزرگتری بود، که سقوط خلافت پس از شش قرن زمینه‌ی آن را مهیا کرده بود، و آن حکومت بر جهان اسلام از دل قلمرو باستانی ایران بود.

قرار دادن واقعه‌ی اسلام آوردن غازان در بستر تحولاتی که در نیمه‌ی دوم سده‌ی هفتم هجری ساختار سیاسی جهان اسلام را دگرگون کرده بود تصویری واضح‌تر از هدف پیش‌گفته را به ما نشان می‌دهد. فتح بغداد در ۶۵۶ هجری و قتل مستعصم، خلیفه‌ی عباسی، نقطه‌ی پایانی بر جایگاه نمادین خلافت در جهان اسلام بود. چنین دگردیسی‌ای در عرصه‌ی قدرت سیاسی و معنوی برای نخبگان ایرانی که مغولان را در فتح بغداد همراهی می‌کردند بسیار اهمیت داشت. بغداد، به‌عنوان پایتخت خلافت، در واقع در قلب قلمرویی که ایرانشهر نامیده می‌شد بنا شده بود. در اندیشه‌ی سیاسی ایرانی، ایرانشهر مرکز جهان و قلمرو حکومت پادشاهان آرمانی ایران بود. در متون مختلف نوشته‌شده در سده‌های نخستین اسلامی جغرافیاهای گوناگونی به ایرانشهر نسبت داده شده‌اند، اما عراق به مرکزیت تیسفون که تختگاه ساسانیان بوده دل و قلب ایرانشهر به شمار می‌آمد.^۴ بر همین اساس، در جنبش‌های رخ داده طی قرون نخستین اسلامی در نقاط مختلف ایران که هدف آن‌ها احیای پادشاهی ساسانی بود فتح بغداد و خلع خلفا از قدرت یکی از اهداف امرای ایرانی بود.^۵ با وجود این‌که به نظر می‌رسید با هجوم مغول رؤیای بلند پروازانه‌ی فتح ایرانشهر به تحقق پیوسته باشد، اما همان‌گونه که فرگنر معتقد است هدف ایلخانان و وزرای ایرانی آن‌ها احیای یک امپراتوری باستانی نبود، بلکه، هدف، احیای ایران به‌مثابه «قدرتی جدید در منطقه» بود که الگوی حکومت‌های اسلامی پیشین و حتی خلافت منقرض‌شده را دنبال کند (Fragner ۷۳). در چنین برهه‌ی حساسی غازان می‌بایست به هیئت پادشاه اسلام در می‌آمد تا فرمانروایی‌اش بر ایرانشهر و ساکنان مسلمان آن مشروعیت یابد (Kamola ۵۹).

لازمه‌ی حکومت بر ایرانشهر ظاهر شدن در مقام پادشاه فرهمند بود. مبانی فکری این موضوع طی دوران فترت خلفا در سده‌های پیشین توسط متفکران ایرانی همچون نظام‌الملک طوسی و امام محمد غزالی فراهم شده بود. در سیاست‌نامه‌ی نظام‌الملک مشروعیت شاه نه وابسته به انتخاب یا تأیید او از سمت خلیفه، بلکه ناشی از اراده‌ی خداوند بود. کتاب او با این جملات آغاز می‌شود:

ایزد تعالی در هر عصری یکی را از میان خلق برگزیند و او را به هنرهای پادشاهانه ستوده و آراسته گرداند و مصالح جهان و آرام بندگان را بدو باز بندد و در فساد و آشوب و فتنه بدو بسته گرداند و هیبت و حشمت او را در دلها و چشم خلائق بگستراند تا مردم اندر عدل او روزگار می‌گذرانند و ایمن می‌باشند و بقای دولت او می‌خواهند (۷).

این عبارات اشاره‌ای است به اندیشه‌ی پادشاه آرمانی که اساس اندیشه‌ی سیاسی ایرانی به شمار می‌رود و در آن شاه آرمانی که واجد فرّ ایزدی است، نماینده و برگزیده‌ی خداوند بر زمین به شمار می‌رود (طباطبایی ۱۳۴، ۱۴۵). در نصیحة الملوک، منسوب به غزالی، نیز شرح کاملی از مصادیق فرّ ایزدی ارائه شده که شامل خصوصیات ذاتی (گوهر شاهانه) و اکتسابی (هنرهای شاهانه) می‌شود:

اما تفسیر فرّ ایزدی دوازده چیز است؛ خرد و دانش و تیزهوشی و دریافتن هر چیزی و صورت تمام و فرهنگ و سواری و زین افزار (کاربستن) و مردانگی با دلیری و آهستگی و نیک‌خویی و داد دادن ضعیف و قوی و دوستی و مهتری نمودن و احتمال و مدارا به جای آوردن و رأی و تدبیر اندر کارها و اخبار سلف صالح را بسیار خواندن و سیر ملوک را نگاهداشتن و پرسیدن از کارهای ملوک پیشین [...] (۶۵).

برکشیدن غازان به‌عنوان پادشاه فرهمند و برگزیده از سوی خداوند را می‌توان در روایت اسلام آوردن او در تاریخ بناکتی مشاهده کرد.^۶ مؤلف از مجلس مشورتی سخن می‌گوید که پیش از واقعه‌ی اسلام آوردن غازان میان او و امیرانش برپا شده بود. در این مجلس امیر نوروز به پیشگویی منجمان و علمای اسلام مبنی بر ظهور پادشاهی بزرگ در حدود ۶۹۰ هجری اشاره

۴. درباره‌ی ایرانشهر و تداوم آن در دوره‌ی اسلامی نک. (Daryaei and Rezakhani ۸-۱۳) و برای قلمروهای جغرافیایی آن در متون سده‌های نخستین اسلامی، نک (Mottahedeh ۱۵۵-۱۵۷).

۵. از جمله افرادی که رویای فتح بغداد را در سر می‌پرورانید مردآویج زیاری بود، نک (Madelung ۲۱۱).

می‌کند که مقدر است تا دین اسلام که «مدرس» گشته است، به دست او «تازه» شود. او سپس می‌افزاید که نشانه‌ها و علامات این پادشاهی در چهره‌ی غازان هویداست و در صورتی که اسلام بیاورد «اولوالامر عهد» است و اطاعت از او بر «جمیع مسلمانان» واجب (بنکتی ۴۵۴). پس از قتل بایدو نیز امیر نوروز پیروزی غازان و پادشاه نجات‌بخش را در نامه‌هایی که به اطراف و اکناف مملکت فرستاد این‌گونه اعلام کرد که «پادشاه اسلام غازان است» (Melville, "Padishah-i Is-") ۱۷۲ lam).

در این مقاله به جستجوی نمودهای بصری بازتعریف جایگاه غازان در مقام پادشاه اسلام برآمده‌ام و به‌طور خاص بر دست‌نویس‌های مصور متمرکز خواهم بود. مورخانی که دست‌نویس‌های مصور دوره‌ی ایلخانی را پژوهیده‌اند، بر استفاده‌ی تبلیغاتی از این نسخه‌ها به‌منظور مشروعیت بخشی به حکومت مغولان تأکید ورزیده‌اند؛^۷ از جمله شیلا بلر^۸ که پژوهش‌های متعددی بر تصاویر شاهنامه‌ی بزرگ ایلخانی و جامع‌التواریخ رشیدی انجام داده است. به اعتقاد او، حامیان درباری در این دوران تاریخ و حماسه را به‌عنوان ابزاری برای مشروعیت بخشی به خود به کار می‌گرفته‌اند. تصاویر، از منظر بلر، صرفاً برای آراستن متن یا به مثابه روایتی بصری از متن پیرامون خود ترسیم نمی‌شدند، بلکه فراتر از این‌ها رویدادهایی برای مصور شدن برگزیده می‌شده‌اند که وقایع دوران مغول به قرینه‌ی آن‌ها درک شود و پیامی سیاسی به مخاطب آن‌ها منتقل شود (Blair, "Development of illustrated book" ۲۷۰). تصاویر شاهنامه‌ی بزرگ یکی از نمونه‌هایی است که از این منظر بسیار موردتوجه مورخان هنر اسلامی قرار داشته است و تفسیر تصاویر آن به‌عنوان رویدادهای دوران حکومت مغولان مورد توجه شماری از پژوهشگران قرار گرفته است.^۹ به‌رغم این‌که ایده‌ی توازی تصاویر شاهنامه و تاریخ مغول در ادامه از سوی بلر و دیوید مورگان^{۱۰} مورد انتقاد قرار گرفت^{۱۱} (Morgan, "Oleg Grabar and Sheila Blair" ۳۱-۵۲; Blair and Bloom ۳۶۴-۳۶۵)، اما پژوهش‌ها از اهمیت شاهنامه به‌عنوان ابزاری برای تبلیغات سیاسی ایلخانان سخن می‌گویند.^{۱۲} علاوه بر شاهنامه، تصاویر مهم‌ترین کتاب تألیف شده در عصر ایلخانی یعنی جامع‌التواریخ نیز از منظر بازتاب حکومت مغولان در رویدادهای تاریخی بررسی شده‌اند. در بررسی تصاویر جامع‌التواریخ دانشگاه ادینبرو^{۱۳}، ملویل بر نقش رشیدالدین در انتخاب مجالس مصور شده برای این نسخه تأکید می‌کند و توجه بیشتر به تصاویر مرتبط با بخش سلاطین ترک در قیاس با بخش پادشاهان باستانی ایران را عامدانه می‌داند (Melville, "Royal Image" ۳۵۴). از همین منظر نیز بازنمایی جنگاوری غزنویان و وقار سلاطین بر تخت نشسته‌ی سلجوقی را بازنمایی دو مرحله از تاریخ مغول یعنی فتوحات و تأسیس امپراتوری قلمداد می‌کند (۳۵۶).

نکته‌ی مهم در مورد پژوهش‌های پیش‌گفته تمرکز آن‌ها بر تاریخ شاهان باستانی و سلاطین مسلمان پیشامغول از منظر ایلخانان است. در اندک نسخه‌های مصور باقی‌مانده از جامع‌التواریخ بخش مربوط به ایلخانان و تصاویر آن باقی‌مانده است. به نظر می‌رسد تنها تصاویری که جهان ایلخانی در سده‌ی هشتم را بازنمایی می‌کنند، تصاویری محفوظ در مرقعات دیتس^{۱۴} هستند که از نسخه‌ای ناشناخته از تاریخ مبارک جدا شده‌اند.^{۱۵} پژوهشگران از دهه‌ی ۱۹۵۰ مرقعات دیتس را بررسی کرده‌اند. با دیجیتالی شدن این مرقعات، نقاشی‌هایشان در دهه‌ی ۲۰۱۰ موضوع مطالعات جدی‌تری قرار گرفتند. نتایج این

۶. در مورد اهمیت تاریخی این روایت، نک (Brack ۱۳۷-۱۴۶، ۳۲۲-۳۴۴).

۷. برای شرح مفصلی از کتاب‌آرایی دوره‌ی ایلخانی، نک (Azzouna, *Aux origines du classicisme* ۲۰۷-۳۶۳).

۸. Sheila Blair

۹. مهم‌ترین پژوهش‌ها با این رویکرد را بلر و گرابار و ابوالعلاء سودآور انجام داده‌اند، نک. Grabar and Blair, *Epic Images and Con-temporary History*, Soudavar, Abolala. "The Saga of Abu-Sa'id Bahador Khan. The Abu-Sa'idname"

۱۰. David Morgan

۱۱. See Morgan, "Oleg Grabar and Sheila Blair" 364-365; Blair, Sheila S., and Jonathan Bloom, "Epic Images and Contemporary History" 41-52.

۱۲. علاوه بر توجه به شاهنامه و تصویرگری آن شواهدی از متن و تصویر شاهنامه در کاشی‌های نصب‌شده در کاخ ایلخانان در تخت سلیمان به دست آمده است، نک (Ilkhanid Palace" ۲۴۲). هم‌چنین شاهنامه به‌عنوان تاریخ ایرانیان دریافت و سپردن تواریخ منظوم به تقلید از آن از سوی دربار ایلخانی و پس از آن‌ها جلایری حمایت می‌شد، از جمله می‌توان به ظفرنامه‌ی حمدالله مستوفی، غازان نامه‌ی نوری آژدری و شاهنشاه نامه‌ی احمد تبریزی اشاره کرد که در نیمه‌ی دوم سده‌ی هشتم هجری با تقلید از وزن و محتوای حماسی شاهنامه سروده شده‌اند، نک (Persian Historiography ۱۹۳-۱۹۷).

۱۳. Ms. Or.20

The Diez Albums ۱۴

۱۵. تصاویر مشابهی در مرقعی از کتابخانه‌ی کاخ توپقایی به شماره خزینه ۲۱۵۳ وجود دارند. تعلق این دسته به کارگاه‌های کتاب‌آرایی ایلخانی در تبریز نیازمند پژوهش‌های بیشتر است، نک. *A compendium of Chronicles* 93-98.

پژوهش‌ها در سمپوزیوم ۲۰۱۳ برلین ارائه و در کتابی با نام *مرفعات دیتس؛ زمینه و محتوا*^{۱۶} در ۲۰۱۶ منتشر شد. سه فصل از این کتاب که توسط ملویل، یوکا کادوی^{۱۷} و کلاوس پیتر هاسه^{۱۸} نگاشته شده‌اند به محتوای تصاویری اختصاص یافته‌اند که بارگاه ایلخانان و فرهنگ درباری آنان را به نمایش می‌گذارند. این تصاویر نقطه‌ی تمرکز من در این پژوهش خواهند بود. چنان‌که از عنوان این مقاله برمی‌آید در اینجا به‌طور خاص به بخشی از تاریخ ایلخانان خواهم پرداخت که موضوع آن شخص غازان، رویدادهای دوران سلطنت او و اعمال منسوب به او است و به جستجوی شواهد بصری‌ای برآمده‌ام که این موارد در آن‌ها بازتابانده شده‌اند. در تفسیر این شواهد، علاوه بر بستر سیاسی شکل‌گیری حکومت غازان، رویکرد ایلخانان به *شاهنامه* به‌مثابه تاریخ ایرانیان و الگوی پادشاهی آرمانی و هم‌چنین رویکرد آن‌ها به تاریخ‌نگاری اسلامی را در نظر داشته‌ام.

گوهر و هنر در تاریخ مبارک غازانی

یکی از مهم‌ترین منابع در ترسیم چهره‌ی محمود غازان در مقام پادشاه اسلام، کتاب *تاریخ مبارک غازانی* است که توسط رشیدالدین وزیر تألیف شده است و روایتی رسمی از تاریخ مغولان به شمار می‌رود. کار تألیف این کتاب، آن‌گونه که رشیدالدین در مقدمه می‌نویسد، در سال ۷۰۲ هجری به فرمان محمود غازان آغاز شده است.^{۱۹} کتاب با تاریخ نیاکان مغولان و شرح مفصلی از زندگانی چنگیز، فتوحات و جهانداری او آغاز می‌شود و در ادامه در بخش‌های مختلف به حکمرانی فرزندان و نوادگان او در سرزمین‌های فتح‌شده از جمله ایران می‌پردازد. هر بخش، که به یکی از خوانین مغول اختصاص یافته، از سه قسم تشکیل شده است. قسم نخست شرحی از خواتین و فرزندان خان و نسب اوست و دومین قسم به دوران حکومت خان می‌پردازد. قسم سوم دربرگیرنده‌ی حکایاتی است که طی آن‌ها، با بیان شماری از خصوصیات اخلاقی و عملی سیاسی خوانین مغول، بناست چهره‌ای از آن‌ها برای خوانندگان ترسیم شود.

داستان غازان در واپسین بخش کتاب روایت شده است. قسم اول، به نسب غازان، معرفی خواتین و فرزندان او، داستان ولادت او، شرحی از دوران کودکی و آراسته شدنش به دانش و مهارت‌های شاهی نزد پدر بزرگش آباقاخان اختصاص یافته است. تأکید مؤلف بر واقعه‌ی تولد غازان و رویدادهای دوران رشد و تربیت او از این جهت اهمیت دارد که در سایر بخش‌های کتاب، به‌جز بخش مربوط به چنگیز خان، تولد و کودکی سایر خوانین مورد توجه نبوده است. قسم دوم، شرحی است از جنگ‌های او با مدعیان سلطنت، اسلام آوردن او و وقایع دوران سلطنتش تا درگذشتش در همدان. قسم سوم، شامل چهل حکایت است که رشیدالدین آن‌ها را به‌دقت در راستای معرفی او به‌عنوان شاه فرهمند طرح‌ریزی کرده است. این حکایات را می‌توان به دو دسته‌ی اصلی تقسیم کرد: دسته‌ی نخست به ویژگی‌هایی از شخصیت غازان اشاره دارند که یادآور مصادیق فرّ ایزدی‌اند؛ دانش او از صناعات مختلف، عفت و عصمت او، فصاحت و بلاغت او در مناظره، درستی عهد و میثاق، سخاوتمندی و شجاعت و دوستی او در حق خاندان رسول (*تاریخ مبارک غازانی* ۱۶۱-۲۰۰). بخش دوم به مجموعه‌ای از تدابیر غازان در ترتیب امور کشور اختصاص یافته که به نام اصلاحات غازانی شناخته می‌شوند و در شرح آن‌ها بر عدالت او تأکید شده است (Morgan, *The Mongols* ۱۶۷-۱۶۹).

در نیمه‌ی نخست سده‌ی هشتم، کارگاه‌های سلطنتی متعددی تحت نظارت و حمایت رشیدالدین فعال بوده‌اند که در آن‌ها برنامه‌های منظمی برای استنساخ، تذهیب و مصوّر سازی کتاب‌های مذهبی و تاریخی، به‌ویژه تألیفات رشیدالدین، در جریان بوده است. از متن *وقف‌نامه‌ی ربع رشیدی* می‌توان برداشت کرد که *جامع‌التواریخ* از جمله آثار بوده که سالانه نسخه‌هایی از آن تهیه و به مراکز حکومتی ارسال می‌شده است (Azzouna, "Rashīd Al-dīn" ۱۹۲, ۱۹۶-۱۹۸). با این همه از نسخه‌های مصوّر شده در ربع رشیدی تنها سه نسخه‌ی ناقص شناسایی شده‌اند؛ نسخه‌ای به زبان عربی که در دانشگاه

۱۶. The Diez Albums: Contexts and Contents .۱۶

۱۷. Yuka Kadoi .۱۷

۱۸. Claus-Peter Haase .۱۸

۱۹. پس از درگذشت غازان در ۷۰۳ هجری، کتاب تحت حمایت الجایتو با افزودن شدن چند بخش دیگر تحت عنوان *جامع‌التواریخ رشیدی* کامل می‌شود، اما چنان‌که رشیدالدین اشاره می‌کند عنوان *تاریخ مبارک غازانی* برای بخش آغازین محفوظ می‌ماند (*جامع‌التواریخ* ۸).

ادینبرو^{۲۰} و مجموعه‌ی خلیلی^{۲۱} محفوظ است و دو نسخه‌ی دیگر به زبان فارسی که در کتابخانه‌ی توپقاپی، خزینه ۱۶۵۳ و خزینه ۱۶۵۴، نگهداری می‌شوند (Blair, *Compendium of Chronicles* ۲۷). متأسفانه هیچ‌یک از این سه نسخه شامل بخش مربوط به غازان نمی‌شوند.

در سده‌ی هجدهم مجموعه‌ای از قطعات خوشنویسی، طراحی و نقاشی‌های بسیار نفیس ایرانی توسط فردریش دیتس، دیپلمات و شرق‌شناس آلمانی، از کتابخانه‌ی توپقاپی به برلین منتقل شد و اکنون تحت نام *مرقعات دیتس*^{۲۲} در کتابخانه‌ی برلین نگهداری می‌شوند. مضامین و ویژگی‌های سبک‌شناختی ۴۴ تصویر از دو مرقع Diez A. fol. 70 و Diez A. fol. 71 موجب شده که مورخان هنر اسلامی آن‌ها را به نسخه‌ای مفقود از *تاریخ مبارک* منسوب کنند که در حدود ۷۲۰ هجری در کارگاه‌های ربع رشیدی در تبریز مصور شده است (Blair, *Compendium of Chronicles* ۹۳-۹۵; Kadoi ۲۴۶-۲۴۷). شناسایی و بازسازی ترتیب تصاویر این نسخه‌ی مُثله شده کار دشواری است؛ چراکه تصاویر از متن پیرامون خود کاملاً جدا شده‌اند و بدون ترتیب مشخصی در اوراق مرقع چسبانده شده‌اند. به قرینه‌ی نسخه‌هایی مانند *جامع‌التواریخ* پاریس^{۲۳} می‌توان چهار تصویر را به‌طور قطع به بخش داستان غازان منسوب دانست؛ ولادت غازان^{۲۴}، ختم قرآن^{۲۵}، بنای مقبره‌ی غازان از حکایت سیزدهم از قسم سوم^{۲۶}، شکایت بردن زن جوان به پادشاه از حکایت سی و هشتم^{۲۷} از قسم سوم^{۲۸}.

به‌جز مجلس ولادت غازان، که در ادامه نشان خواهیم داد چگونه در چهارچوب ایده‌ی مشروعیت‌بخشی بدو به‌عنوان شاه برگزیده معنادار می‌شود، سه تصویر دیگر با گروهی از خصیصه‌های پادشاه آرمانی مرتبط‌اند که در دسته‌ی هنرهای شاهانه قرار دارند. مجلس ختم قرآن روایتی بصری از رویدادی است که در کتاب به تفصیل شرح داده شده است و بازنمایی دین‌داری غازان است. تصویر دوبرگی از بنای مقبره و ساختمان‌های وابسته بدان نمایشی از ایده‌ی آبادانی است که از جمله وظایف شاهان و لازمه‌ی عدل آن‌ها بوده است. علاوه بر این، غازان نه تنها با ساختن مقبره خود را از پیشینیانش متمایز کرده است، بلکه تأثیرپذیری او از مقابر امامان و صوفیان در ساخت مقبره نیز نمایشی دیگر از دین‌داری اوست (AZ- zouna, *Aux origines* ۲۰۹). تصویر آخر، ذیل حکایت سی و هشتم، با عنوان «در فرمان دادن بساختن ایلچی‌خانه‌ها در ممالک و منع شحنگان و حکام از فرود آمدن به خانه‌ی مردم»، مصور شده است که به نقش او به‌عنوان پادشاهی عادل و مدبر اشاره دارد (*تاریخ مبارک* ۳۵۶-۳۶۰).

گذشته از هنر، گوهر شاهی نیز از درون‌مایه‌های اصلی *تاریخ مبارک* است. در میان تصاویر منسوب به *تاریخ مبارک* در مرقع دیتس سه جفت تصویر دوبرگی و یک تصویر تک‌برگ وجود دارد که در آن‌ها جلوس خان مغول در کنار خاتون خود در میان شماری از خواتین، شهزادگان و امرای مغول بر تخت بازنمایی شده است (تصویر: ۱).

۲۰. Ms. Or.20

۲۱. Mss. 727

۲۲. Diez A fol. 70-74

۲۳. این نسخه (شماره ۱۱۱۳ Persan) که در کتابخانه‌ی ملی فرانسه محفوظ است، ۱۱۳ تصویر دارد که ۲۶ مجلس آن رویدادهای بخش داستان غازان را به تصویر می‌کشند. تاریخ و محل کتابت و مصورسازی این دست‌نویس محل اختلاف نظر میان پژوهشگرانی مانند گروبه و کونل و ریشارد است. نک (Richard ۳۱۰).

۲۴. Diez A. fol. 70 S.8 Nr. 2

۲۵. Diez A fol. 70 S.8 Nr.1

۲۶. Diez A fol. 70 S.13

۲۷. Diez A fol. 70 S.18 Nr.2

۲۸. در *جامع‌التواریخ* پاریس تصاویر مذکور در این برگ‌ها قرار دارند؛ ولادت غازان (210v)، ختم قرآن (239r)، مقبره‌ی غازان (256v-257r) و شکایت بردن زن جوان به پادشاه (285v)؛ در مورد مجلس ختم قرآن و مقبره‌ی غازان هم‌چنین بنگرید به مقاله‌ی ملویل (Illustra- tion of Turko-Mongol" ۲۴۰-۲۴۱).



تصویر ۱: جلوس خان مغول و خاتونش بر تخت برگرفته از مرقعات دیز، منسوب به نسخه‌ای مفقود از تاریخ مبارک غازانی اثر خواجه رشیدالدین (تبریز، حدود ۷۲۰ هجری)، جوهر و آبرنگ مات بر روی کاغذ، کتابخانه دولتی برلین، Diez A fol. 70 S. 22.
Image courtesy of Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – PK ,Photo © Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – PK. URL

در بخش فوقانی این تصاویر که احتمالاً در قسم نخست هر بخش ترسیم می‌شده‌اند، زمانی کتیبه‌ای وجود داشته است که نام خان مصور شده در آن ذکر می‌شده است (Kadoi ۲۵۱) و زوده شدن این کتیبه‌ها مانع از شناسایی خان‌های نشسته بر تخت در تصاویر مرقع دیتس شده است. به‌رغم این، ملویل معتقد است عدم حضور افرادی با پوشش ایرانی نشان از این دارد که هیچ‌کدام از تصاویر بارگاه غازان را بازنمایی نمی‌کنند ("Illustration of Turko-Mongol ۲۳۷"). حتی در صورت عدم شناسایی خان نشسته بر تخت، این تصاویر جنبه‌ای از نگرش ایلخانان به تاریخ خود را به نمایش می‌گذارند که توسط رشیدالدین، به موازات ایده‌ی پادشاه آرمانی در فرهنگ ایرانی، در مشروعیت بخشی به حکومت آن‌ها به کار گرفته شده است و آن قائل بودن به تباری شاهانه برای ایلخانان است.

در اندیشه‌ی ایرانی، فرهنگمندی و در نتیجه حکومت بر ایرانشهر در گرو داشتن تباری شاهانه است (Shahbazi ۱۲۸). به همین سبب امرای ایرانی سده‌های نخستین اسلامی به شیوه‌های گوناگون نسب خود را به پادشاهان ساسانی می‌رساندند و حتی غزنویان ترک‌تبار نیز ادعای هم‌خونی با یزدگرد سوم را داشتند (Daryae and Rezakhani ۹). در مورد غازان، موضوع تبار شاهانه به‌گونه‌ای دیگر از جانب رشیدالدین دنبال شده است. مسئله‌ای که در اینجا نباید از نظر دور داشت نوع نگاه مغولان به چنگیز است. آن‌ها به چنگیز در قامت برگزیده‌ی الهی می‌نگریستند که کتاب یاسا را برای هدایت مغولان آورده بود و پادشاه یا فرماندهی بود که از سوی «آسمان» برای فرماندهی قبائل ترک و مغول فرستاده شده بود (بیانی ۱۶-۱۸). آن‌گونه که رشیدالدین در مقدمه‌ی تاریخ مبارک می‌نویسد، علاقه‌ی غازان به تاریخ نیاکان خود و سازمان‌دهی روایت‌های شفاهی و اسناد پراکنده‌ی مربوط به تاریخ مغولان که در خزانه یا در حافظه‌ی افراد باقی مانده بود انگیزه‌ی تألیف این کتاب بوده است (جامع‌التواریخ ۸). داشتن تبار چنگیزی یا مغولی در اینجا خود به یکی از عناصر سازنده‌ی مشروعیت بدل می‌شود، کما این‌که تیمور و مغولان هند نیز بعدها مشروعیت خود را بر پایه‌ی تبار مغولی خود بنا کردند.

نمونه‌ای از تأکید بر این تبار شاهانه را می‌توان در روایت فتح شام در تاریخ مبارک دید؛ آنجا که غازان اهالی تسلیم‌شده‌ی دمشق را مخاطب قرار می‌دهد و می‌پرسد من کیستم؟ و دمشقیان «به اتفاق آواز برآوردند که شاه غازان بن ارغون خان بن آباخان بن هولاکو خان بن تولوی خان بن چنگیز خان». پس از آن از نسب الملک الناصر قلاوون دوم، سلطان مملوک مصر و شام، می‌پرسد که «ناصر را پدر کیست، گفتند آلفی، گفت آلفی را پدر کیست که همه فروماندند و همگان را معلوم شد که سلطنت آن قوم اتفاقی است نه استحقاقی» (۱۲۸).^{۴۹} در نتیجه می‌توان گفت که پایه‌های سیاسی-مذهبی حکومت ایلخانان بر قداست پیامبر اسلام و جنبه‌ی الهی چنگیز قرار داشت و پادشاهی غازان تداوم پادشاهی پیامبر اسلام و چنگیز خان بود (Brack ۲, ۶-۷). از این منظر، می‌توان تصاویر بارگاه مغولان را تأکیدی بر شکوه تبار چنگیزی غازان و در خدمت تقویت ایده‌ی مرکزی کتاب یعنی آفرینش تصویری از غازان در مقام پادشاهی فرهنگمندان دانست.

ولادت پادشاه برگزیده

بدون تردید مجلس ولادت غازان مهم‌ترین تصویر در میان تصاویر منسوب به بخش غازان از تاریخ مبارک غازانی است (تصویر: ۲). پیش‌تر به منحصربه‌فرد بودن قسم نخست داستان غازان و شرح واقعه‌ی ولادت او در این بخش اشاره شد. در نگاه نخست، این مجلس بازنمایی صریحی از ولادت نوزادی سلطنتی است که به شیوه‌ی مرسوم کارگاه‌های ربع رشیدی در قابی مستطیل شکل، بر پس‌زمینه‌ی نخودی رنگ کاغذ و در فضایی داخلی با کمترین لوازم مصور شده است. در سمت چپ زنی به حالتی نیم‌خیز درحالی‌که سر و شانهاش را به بالشی زرین تکیه داده دیده می‌شود. زن قبایی سرخ‌رنگ بر تن دارد، بدون سرپوشی بر سر. در کنار او نوزادی پیچیده در پارچه‌ای سرخ‌رنگ دیده می‌شود و مادر دست خود را در حالتی حمایت‌گرایانه در کنار او گذاشته است. چهره‌ی مادر و نوزاد تا حد زیادی مخدوش شده است و جزئیات آن مشخص نیست، اما به نظر می‌رسد که مادر به سمت راست تصویر یعنی جایی که سه مرد نشسته‌اند می‌نگرد. در مقابل او سه زن بر کرسی‌هایی نشسته‌اند. جامه‌ی سرخ‌رنگ، کلاه بلند ایشان که بطن نام دارد و سرپوش ویژه‌ی خواتین مغول است، گوشواره‌های طلایی آن‌ها و همچنین نشستن آن‌ها بر کرسی نشان‌دهنده‌ی جایگاه سلطنتی ایشان است. حالت داستان دو تن از این خواتین به‌گونه‌ای است که گویی در حال سخن گفتن با مادر هستند. پشت سر این سه ندیمی با کلاه پردار مغولی به خدمت ایستاده است. در جهت مقابل و پشت سر مادر ندیمی دیگر، با جامه و کلاهی مشابه، درحالی‌که یک زانویش را خم کرده بر روی زمین نشسته و اندکی جلوتر ندیمه‌ای بخوردانی را بر فراز سر مادر و نوزاد گرفته است. این زنان همه به مادر و نوزاد می‌نگرند.

۴۹. درباره‌ی اهمیت تبار مغولی، نک. Brack 160



تصویر ۲: جلوس خان مغول و خاتونش بر تخت برگرفته از مرقعات دیز، منسوب به نسخه‌ای مفقود از تاریخ مبارک غازانی اثر خواجه رشیدالدین (تبریز، حدود ۷۲۰ هجری)، جوهر و آبرنگ مات بر روی کاغذ، کتابخانه دولتی برلین، Diez A fol. 70 S. 22.. Image courtesy of Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin - PK, Photo © Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin - PK.
URL

از سه مرد نشسته در سمت راست دو تن که جلوتر نشسته‌اند، شیء دایره‌ای شکلی شبیه به اسطرلاب در دست دارند و در مقابلشان بر زمین دو شیء دیگر شبیه به ساعت شنی دیده می‌شود. هر دو تن قباهایی بلند با آستین‌هایی گشاد بر تن دارند و عمامه‌هایی سفید به سر بسته‌اند.

در تاریخ مبارک به «منجمان ماهری» اشاره شده است که در زمان تولد شاهزاده حاضر بودند و به رصد کواکب پرداختند و «طالع مبارک برج عقرب به‌غایت مسعود یافتند» و «جمله اتفاق کردند که پادشاهی بزرگ در غایت عظمت و نهایت مهابت و شوکت باشد» (تاریخ مبارک ۳). وجود مردانی با ابزار رصد در سمت راست تصویر و همچنین شباهت این مجلس با مجلس مشابهی در جامع‌التواریخ پاریس که در همین بخش از کتاب مصوّر شده است (تصویر: ۳)، جای هیچ‌گونه تردیدی نمی‌گذارد که این مجلس روایتگر به دنیا آمدن غازان و پیشگویی منجمان از طالع او است.^{۳۰}

این مجلس، همچنین، یادآور مجلس ولادت پیامبر اسلام در جامع‌التواریخ ادینبرو است که احتمالاً در حدود ۷۰۸ هجری در کارگاه‌های کتاب‌آرایی ربع رشیدی مصوّر شده است (تصویر: ۴). بلر با اشاره به این‌که بازنمایی صحنه‌ی تولد پیامبر سابقه‌ای در هنر اسلامی نداشته است، آن را متأثر از نگاره‌های میلاد مسیح می‌داند که در اختیار نقاشان ربع رشیدی قرار داشته‌اند. به اعتقاد بلر، عبدالمطلب که در سمت راست این تصویر و بالای سر مادر پیامبر نشسته جایگزین یوسف شده است و سه زنی که در سمت چپ تصویر ایستاده‌اند، به جای سه مُغ یا سه پادشاهی مصوّر شده‌اند که به دنبال پیشگویی‌های منجمان در مورد میلاد مسیح روانه‌ی بیت‌الحم شدند تا بر بالین نوزاد حضور یابند (Blair, A Compendium of the History of the Mongols, ۶۹). این موضوع در مورد مجلس ولادت غازان نیز قابل بررسی است. در این صحنه بر بالین مادر و نوزاد خواتین سلطنتی و ندیمه‌ها حاضرند و تنها مردان حاضر در این مجلس زنانه سه منجم هستند. این حضور مردانه‌ی نابه‌جا می‌تواند اشاره‌ای صریح‌تر به سه مُغ مذکور باشد، به خصوص که هر دو دسته به گونه‌ای از آینده‌ی نوزاد سخن می‌گویند.

^{۳۰} تصویر دیگری از مجلس ولادت غازان در سده‌ی دهم در نسخه‌ای از جامع‌التواریخ (شماره Ms. IV. 1 در کتابخانه‌ی رضا در رامپور) مصوّر شده است که به تصویر نسخه‌ی پاریس شباهت بسیاری دارد (Rice 15۴) و می‌توان این احتمال را در نظر داشت که این دو تصویر بر اساس یک الگوی واحد که اکنون در دسترس نیست مصوّر شده باشند.



تصویر ۳: مجلس ولادت غازان خان برگرفته از نسخه‌ای از جامع التواریخ اثر خواجه رشیدالدین، (احتمالاً هرات، سده‌ی نهم هجری)،
Supplément Persan 1113, fol. 210v..Image courtesy جوهر و آبرنگ مات بر روی کاغذ، کتابخانه‌ی ملی فرانسه،
of gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France, Photo © Bibliothèque nationale de France.

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تصویر ۴: مجلس ولادت پیامبر اسلام برگرفته از نسخه‌ای عربی از جامع التواریخ اثر خواجه رشیدالدین، (تبریز، ۱۳۱۴)، جوهر و آبرنگ مات بر روی کاغذ، کتابخانه‌ی دانشگاه ادینبرو، Or.MS.20. fol.42r. Image courtesy of University of Edinburgh. URL Photo © University of Edinburgh.

مجلس میلاد مسیح که در دست‌نویسی به زبان سریانی، شماره Vat.sir.559 در کتابخانه‌ی واتیکان، در ابتدای سده‌ی هفتم، حدود صد سال پیش از جامع‌التواریخ، در دیر مارمتی^{۳۱} در حوالی موصل مصوّر شده (Smine 200)، می‌تواند به الگویی که نقاش مجلس ولادت غازان در اختیار داشته نزدیک باشد.^{۳۲} در این مجلس صحنه‌های مختلفی مرتبط با مسیح نوزاد بازنمایی شده‌اند. در بخش بالای تصویر که دیدار سه مغ با مریم و عیسی به تصویر کشیده شده است، حالت نیم‌خیز مریم، نگاهی که به سه مرد ایستاده در سمت چپ قاب دوخته و نوزادی که در کنار او بر تختی زرین آرمیده بی‌شبهت به مجلس ولادت غازان نیست. نکته‌ی قابل‌توجه این است که در تصویر متعلق به نسخه‌ی پاریس این ارجاعات بصری به الگوهای قدیمی جای خود را به ترکیب‌بندی دیگری داده‌اند که یادآور زندگی مجلل درباری است. به‌جای سه منجم دو منجم در پایین قاب مصوّر شده‌اند و مادر غازان بر روی تخت مجللی که در فضای باز قرار گرفته دراز کشیده است و در کنار او نوزاد در آغوش دایه در حال شیرخوردن است.

بدین ترتیب آیا بازنمایی ولادت خان مغول صرفاً تقلیدی از الگوهای مسیحی بوده که در دسترس هنرمندان کارگاه‌های ایلخانی بوده‌اند؟ شواهد به دست آمده از متن تاریخ مبارک نشان می‌دهند که مجلس ولادت غازان یک اقتباس بصری صرف نیست، بلکه انتخاب این مجلس برای مصوّر سازی و اقتباس از تصاویر مذکور کاملاً آگاهانه انجام شده است. درواقع، بازنمایی ولادت پیامبرگونه‌ی غازان با دیگر اشارات رشیدالدین که چهره و کردار او را با پیامبران مقایسه می‌کند کامل می‌شود. نخست این‌که در متن، همچون داستان ولادت پیامبر، از انتخاب دایه برای نوزاد سخن به میان آمده که یادآور تولد پیامبر اسلام و انتخاب دایه برای اوست. به دنبال آن به سخن گفتن او در گهواره اشاره شده است که سخن گفتن مسیح نوزاد را به خاطر می‌آورد. در ادامه رشیدالدین چهره و اخلاق غازان را به پیامبران مانند کرده است و می‌نویسد: «چون یوسف خوب‌روی و چون موسی نیکوخوی و چون عیسی با صباحت و چون محمد با ملاح» است (تاریخ مبارک

۳۱. Mar Matti

۳۲. این تصویر در این نشانی قابل‌دسترسی است؛ https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.sir.559/0035 (Accessed 21 Dec. 2022)

۶). این اشارات به این بخش ختم نمی‌شوند و در حکایت اول از قسم سوم نیز که تحت عنوان فنون کمالات پادشاه آمده، مؤلف غازان را با ابراهیم پیامبر مقایسه کرده که به «نور هدایت ربّانی» به خداوند ایمان آورد، بت‌ها را شکست و بتکده‌ها را ویران ساخت (۱۶۹).

شمایل پادشاه فرهمند

در میان برگ‌های مرقعات دیتس تصویری وجود دارد که ویژگی‌های شمایی آن پرسش‌هایی را برمی‌انگیزد و آن را شایسته‌ی کندوکاو بیشتری می‌کند (تصویر: ۵). این تصویر بسیار آسیب دیده است، بخشی از کاغذ در قسمت پایین و سمت راست کاملاً از بین رفته و در تمام بخش‌ها جزئیات چهره‌ها، دست‌ها و بعضی از چین و شکن‌های پارچه‌ها نیز محو شده‌اند. در مرکز این تصویر فردی با جامه‌ای طلایی و عمامه‌ای سفید بر تختی آبی‌رنگ جلوس کرده است. در طرفین تخت دو مرد با قبایه‌ی مجلل و کلاه‌های مزین به پر بر کرسی‌هایی نشسته‌اند. سه فرشته‌ی معلق بر فراز تخت با گردن و سینه‌ی عریان و دو بال زرین بازنمایی شده‌اند. این سه سربندهای زرین جواهرنشان بر سر دارند و در بازوهایشان حلقه‌هایی طلایی دیده می‌شود. فرشته‌ی میانی دقیقاً بر فراز سر فرد نشسته بر تخت قرار دارد و با دو دست بلندترین بخش تاج تخت را لمس می‌کند. قرار گرفتن او در محور تقارن تصویر موجب شده که او نیز همانند فرد نشسته بر تخت به صورت تمام‌رخ بازنمایی شود. نکته‌ی قابل‌توجه دیگر در مورد این فرشته آراسته شدن او با اشکالی شبیه به پرهای طاووس است. دو فرشته‌ی دیگر ظاهراً فقط به شاه و تخت او اشاره می‌کنند و به علت آسیب‌دیدگی این بخش از تصویر به‌درستی مشخص نیست که آیا شیء به خصوصی را حمل می‌کنند یا خیر.

در یکی از نخستین پژوهش‌های انجام‌شده بر مرقع دیتس، محمت شوکت ایشیرواوغلو^{۳۳} برخی از خصوصیات نقاشی دوره‌ی سلجوقی در بازنمایی چهره‌ها و تخت‌شاهی را دلیل موجهی یافته تا تصویر مذکور را در رده‌ی تصاویر مغولی-سلجوقی مرقع دیتس طبقه‌بندی کند (İpşiroğlu ۱۲). رده‌بندی مذکور را می‌توان به‌مثابه مرحله‌ای انتقالی در نقاشی ایرانی در نظر گرفت. این مرحله با فعالیت مجدد کارگاه‌های کتاب‌آرایی بغداد در نیمه‌ی دوم سده‌ی هفتم آغاز می‌شود و با تأسیس کارگاه‌های ربع رشیدی در تبریز در دهه‌ی نخست سده‌ی هشتم هجری به پایان می‌رسد و طی آن به تدریج عناصر مغولی و نقش‌مایه‌های وارداتی از شرق دور با شیوه‌های پیشین در هم می‌آمیزند. بازنمایی مردانی با کلاه پرداز مغولی، استفاده اغراق‌آمیز از طلا در پس‌زمینه و همچنین تزئینات جامه‌ها، نیز تصویر مرقع دیتس را از لحاظ سبک‌شناختی هم‌ردیف با تصاویر شاهنامه‌های کوچک قرار می‌دهد که به کارگاه‌های بغداد در ابتدای سده‌ی هشتم منسوب شده‌اند (Simpson, *Illustration of an Epic* ۲۷۲). علاوه بر این برخی خصوصیات چهره‌پردازی و همچنین نوع پرداخت جامه‌ها را نیز می‌توان مهر تأییدی بر انتساب این تصویر به ابتدای سده‌ی هشتم دانست (Haase ۲۸۰).

ترکیب‌بندی تمام صفحه‌ای سه‌بخشی که در مرکز آن فرمانروایی در میان جمعی از درباریان بر تخت نشسته است و دو موجود آسمانی بر فراز سرش سایبانی را نگاه داشته‌اند، حداقل از سده‌ی ششم در کارگاه‌های کتاب‌آرایی بین‌النهرین، به‌خصوص در ناحیه‌ی شمالی آن به مرکزیت موصل، در سرلوحه‌ی کتاب‌ها مصور می‌شده است.^{۳۴} مجالس مشابهی در سرلوحه‌های شماری از دست‌نویس‌های باقی‌مانده از کارگاه‌های کتاب‌آرایی ایلخانی نیز مصور شده‌اند که از جمله می‌توان به سرلوحه‌ی *تاریخنامه*، محفوظ در نگارخانه‌ی فریر در واشنگتن، اشاره کرد (تصویر: ۶). قیاس تصویر مرقع دیتس و سرلوحه‌ی *تاریخنامه* که به ابتدای سده‌ی هشتم منسوب شده است^{۳۵} به‌وضوح تعلق تصویر نخست به خانواده‌ی تصاویر سرلوح را نشان می‌دهد. این موضوع پرسشی را پیش می‌کشد که از مهم‌ترین مسائلی است که در مواجهه با سرلوحه‌های مصور ذهن پژوهشگران را به خود مشغول می‌دارد، فرد تصویر شده بر سرلوحه کیست؟

۳۳. Mehmet Şevket İpşiroğlu

۳۴. در سده‌های ششم و هفتم موضوعاتی نظیر مضامین کیهان‌شناختی، تصویر مؤلف یا مؤلفان کتاب، تقدیم کتاب از سوی مؤلف به حامی یا تصویری از حامی کتاب در قامت شاهی نشسته بر تخت یا سوار بر اسب را بر سرلوحه‌ی نسخ بازنمایی می‌کردند (In the "beginning" ۲۱۳). به‌غیر از مضامین کیهان‌شناختی سایر مضامین را می‌توان در سرلوحه‌های مصور باقی‌مانده از دوره‌ی ایلخانی مشاهده کرد، اما به تدریج نمایش شکوه بارگاه شاه حامی بدل به مضمون اصلی سرلوحه‌ها شد، نک (Une Brave Histoire" ۶۱).

۳۵. برای این نسخه و مباحث مربوط به تاریخ و آیکونوگرافی آن، نک (Fitzherbert ۱-۱۱).



تصویر ۵: جلوس شاه بر تخت بر گرفته از مرقدات دیز، منسوب به سرلوحه‌ی جدا شده از نسخه‌ای مفقود (احتمالاً بغداد یا تبریز، حدود ۷۰۰ هجری)، جوهر و آبرنگ مات بر روی کاغذ، کتابخانه دولتی برلین، -Image courtesy of Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – PK, Photo © Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – PK. URL



تصویر ۶: . جلوس شاه بر تخت بر گرفته از سرلوحه‌ی جلد نخست تاریخنامه اثر بلعمی (احتمالاً بغداد یا موصل، حدود ۷۰۰ هجری)، جوهر و آبرنگ مات و طلا بر روی کاغذ، ۴۲.۲ در ۲۸.۷ سانتی متر، نگارخانه‌ی فریر، F1957.16. Image courtesy of Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art Collection, Photo © Freer Gallery of Art. URL

این پرسش که با کارکرد سرلوحه‌ها به‌عنوان تقدیم‌نامه‌ها یا تجلیل‌های مصوّر از نویسندگان یا حامی کتاب مرتبط است (۲۴۲ "In the beginning" Simpson)، به‌خصوص در مورد تصاویری این‌چنین که از زمینه‌ی اصلی خود جدا شده‌اند، پاسخ روشن و آسانی ندارد. در مورد تصویر مرقع دیتس، به نظر می‌رسد جلوس فرمانروایی با عمامه‌ای مجلل در میان مردانی که کلاه‌های پرداز مغولی بر سر دارند و سایر نشانه‌هایی که در ادامه به آن‌ها اشاره خواهیم کرد، می‌تواند مبنایی بر این گمان باشد که فرمانروای نشسته بر تخت محمود غازان است. لازم به توضیح است که هدف من ارائه‌ی پیشنهادی برای امکان وجود چنین تفسیری از این تصویر است، چراکه عدم آگاهی از نسخه‌ای که این تصویر بر سرلوحه‌ی آن نقش شده شناسایی فرد نشسته بر تخت را دشوار می‌کند، با این وجود برخی خصوصیات شمایل‌نگاشتی ویژه در نمایش این جلوس شاهانه نشان می‌دهد که تحلیل این تصویر نمی‌تواند یکسره بیهوده باشد.

بنا به سنت سرلوحه‌نگاری فرد مصوّر شده می‌تواند نویسنده‌ی کتاب یا حامی آن باشد. بلر در بررسی تصاویر سرلوحه در سده‌ی هفتم و هشتم قراردادی بصری را مشاهده کرده است که بر اساس آن تصاویر نویسندگان به‌صورت سه رخ بازنمایی شده‌اند، گویی در حال روایت متن خود هستند، اما شاهان یا حامیانی که با نمایش در حالتی شاهانه از آن‌ها ستایش شده است، به پیروی از سنت مرسوم در جهان باستان متأخر که به جهان اسلام راه یافته بود به‌صورت تمام‌رخ بازنمایی شده‌اند (Blair, "Une brève histoire" ۵۷). در تصویر مورد‌بحث نمادهای شاهانه واضح‌تر از آن هستند که بتوان این تصویر را تجلی از نویسنده‌ی این کتاب ناشناخته دانست. همان‌گونه که پیش از این نیز اشاره شد به نظر می‌رسد عمامه‌ای که شخصیت اصلی این صحنه به‌جای تاجی شاهانه بر سر دارد می‌تواند کلید این معما باشد. آیا این فرد ممکن است پیامبر اسلام یا فرمانروایی عرب هم‌چون خلیفه باشد که در تصاویر با عمامه بازنمایی می‌شده‌اند؟ بدیهی است فرد نشسته در میان امرای مغول نمی‌تواند خلیفه باشد؛ اما فرضیه پیامبر بودن او شایسته‌ی بررسی بیشتر است.

پیامبر نشسته بر تخت ازجمله مضامینی است که در تصویرسازی‌های دوره‌ی ایلخانی دیده می‌شود؛^{۳۶} ازجمله در دو دست‌نویسی که حدود ۷۰۰ هجری مصوّر شده‌اند، یعنی شاهنامه‌ی فریر (تصویر: ۷) و مرزبان‌نامه.^{۳۷} نکته‌ی قابل‌توجه این است که در دیباچه‌ی هر دو نسخه در یک برگ تصویری از پیامبر و در برگ دیگر تصویری از حامی نسخه در حالت نشسته بر تخت مصوّر شده است و تنها در تصاویر مربوط به پیامبر فرشته‌هایی بر فراز تخت ترسیم شده‌اند. پیامبر نشسته بر تخت در دیباچه‌ی شاهنامه‌ی فریر از دو جهت از سایر شاهان مصوّر شده در این نسخه متمایز است؛ نخست این‌که او تاج بر سر ندارد و عمامه‌ی او نیز با سرپوش بلندی پوشانده شده است، و دوم حالت نشستن او بر تخت و بازنمایی او به‌صورت سه رخ است. شاهان نشسته در شاهنامه‌ی فریر با سینه‌ای گشاده به‌صورت تمام‌رخ بازنمایی شده‌اند، درحالی‌که به‌صورت چهارزانو بر تخت تکیه زده‌اند و همواره یکی از چکمه‌های آن‌ها از زیر دامن بلند قبایشان نمایان است (تصویر: ۸). حالتی که در شمار زیادی از تصاویر این دوره ازجمله در تصویر دیتس نیز دیده می‌شود. بدن پیامبر اما اندکی به سمت راست چرخیده، گویی در حال گفتگو با افرادی است که پیرامون او نشسته‌اند. جامه‌ی بلندش نیز کاملاً روی پاهایش را پوشانده است. بازنمایی چهره‌ی پیامبر به‌صورت سه رخ یادآور یافته‌ی بلر در مورد تمایز بازنمایی نویسندگان و حامیان در سرلوحه‌ها است، گویی در مورد پیامبر نیز از کاربرد قراردادهای مخصوص شمایل‌نگاری شاهان پرهیز شده است. چیدمان شاهانه‌ی تصویر مرقع دیتس و نشانه‌هایی چون شیرهای نشسته در پایین تخت و نیز کمانی که در دست فرمانروا است، از نشانه‌های مخصوص شاهی به شمار می‌روند و آن را از شمایل‌نگاری پیامبر اسلام متمایز می‌کنند. در تصاویر پیامبر در شاهنامه‌ی فریر و مرزبان‌نامه، پیامبر در میان خلفای راشدین و اصحاب خود نشسته است، اما در تصویر دیتس وجود دو امیر مغول در دو سوی تخت که بلندی مقامشان از نشستن آن‌ها بر کرسی مشخص است، پرده‌داران ایستاده پشت تخت، و حاجیان و نگهبانان در بخش پایین تصویر و مقابل تخت، آرایشی کاملاً درباری و در تضاد با شیوه‌ی بازنمایی جلوس پیامبر در میان اصحاب است.

^{۳۶} کریستین گروبر در فصل نخست کتابش یگانه‌ی ستودنی به‌صورت مفصل به بازنمایی شاه-پیامبر نشسته بر تخت پرداخته است. نک. Gruber 34-81.

^{۳۷} شماره‌ی Ms. 216, fol. 2r در کتابخانه‌ی موزه‌ی باستانشناسی استانبول. برای مشاهده‌ی تصویر، نک. Gruber 53.



تصویر ۷: جلوس پیامبر اسلام در جمع خلفای راشدین برگرفته از نسخه‌ای از شاهنامه‌ی فردوسی موسوم به شاهنامه‌ی کوچک فریر (احتمالاً بغداد، حدود ۷۰۰ هجری)، جوهر و آبرنگ مات و طلا و نقره بر روی کاغذ، ۹.۸ در ۱۱.۵ سانتی متر، نگارخانه‌ی فریر، F1929.26. Image courtesy of Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art Collection, Photo © Freer Gallery of Art. URL



تصویر ۸: جلوس سلطان محمود غزنوی در میان درباریان برگرفته از نسخه‌ای از شاهنامه‌ی فردوسی موسوم به شاهنامه‌ی کوچک فریر (احتمالاً بغداد، حدود ۷۰۰ هجری)، جوهر و آبرنگ مات و طلا و نقره بر روی کاغذ، ۹.۸ در ۱۱.۵ سانتی متر، نگارخانه‌ی فریر، F1929.26b. Image courtesy of Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: فریر، Freer Gallery of Art Collection, Photo © Freer Gallery of Art. URL

بدین ترتیب چرا وجود عمامه می‌تواند شناسایی پیکر نشسته را به‌عنوان غازان موجه سازد؟ به‌منظور روشن‌تر شدن این موضوع لازم است وقایع سال ۶۹۷ هجری در تواریخ دوره‌ی مغول مرور شوند. در تاریخ مبارک و تاریخ و صاف به عمامه گذاشتن غازان در نیمه‌ی محرم این سال اشاره شده است. درحالی‌که رشیدالدین در جمله‌ای کوتاه به این واقعه اشاره کرده،^{۳۸} و صاف این واقعه را مفصل‌تر شرح داده است.^{۳۹} در روایت و صاف عمامه‌ی غازان با عبارت تیجان (جمع تاج) مروت وصف شده و هم‌چنین برای عمامه بر سر نهادن فعل مَتَوَّج شدن (به معنای تاج بر سر نهادن) به کار رفته است. در این شرح در مورد تغییر پوشش امرای مغول به عمامه به‌طور خاص اشاره نشده است و صرفاً آمده که به جامه‌ی اصحاب دین درآمدند. در مورد اخیر حتی اگر مقصود و صاف پوشیدن قبا و عمامه به سبک ایرانیان باشد، با استفاده از فعل مَتَوَّج شدن عمامه را تاجی شاهانه مخصوص غازان دانسته است. علاوه بر این، از متن تاریخ و صاف می‌توان چنین برداشت کرد که عمامه بر سر گذاشتن در این برهه‌ی زمانی خاص که غازان آماده‌ی حمله‌ی مجدد به شام بود و از طرفی مشروعیت او با قتل امیر نوروز خدشدار شده بود، عملی نمادین بود که با رشته‌ای از اقدامات در بزرگداشت اسلام و جدیت بیشتر در برقراری شعائر اسلامی دنبال شد. درواقع غازان از بیم آن‌که حامیان مسلمان خود را از دست دهد، بیش از گذشته به اجرای قوانین اسلام اهتمام ورزید و آن‌گونه که در تاریخ و صاف آمده، در این کار «مبالغه ورزید». نکته‌ی مهم دیگری که در ادامه‌ی این روایت ذکر شده، اشاره به این فرمان غازان است که هیچ تاجیکی (در اینجا به معنای غیر ترک و مغول) مجبور به پوشیدن کلاه مغولی نیست. این فرمان نیز احتمالاً به‌منظور همراه ساختن بیشتر ایرانیان به‌عنوان گروه اصلی هواخواهان امیر نوروز صادر شده بود (بیانی ۲۱۶) و درعین‌حال نشان از این دارد که کلاه مغولی در میان جماعت مغول کنار گذاشته نشده است.

مسئله‌ی دیگر به حضور سه فرشته بر فراز تخت باز می‌گردد. شیوه‌ی بازنمایی این فرشته‌ها در این تصویر از دو جهت نامعمول است. در تصاویر جلوس شاهان و پیامبران همواره دو فرشته بر فراز تخت شاه معلق‌اند و دستاری را بر فراز سر او نگاه داشته‌اند. در سرلوحه‌ی دیتس اما دستار سایه‌افکنی در دست فرشتگان دیده نمی‌شود و علاوه بر این فرشته‌ی سوم هم به دو فرشته‌ی همیشگی اضافه شده است. عدم پیروی از یک الگوی مرسوم در دو حالت می‌تواند اتفاق بیفتد؛ یا الگویی دیگر در دسترس نقاشان بوده است یا نقاشان با تغییر الگوی اصلی قصد رساندن پیامی متفاوت را داشته‌اند. قدیمی‌ترین بازنمایی‌های فرشتگان دستار به دست در سنگ‌نگاره‌های ساسانی، به‌عنوان نشانه‌ای از پیروزی شاهان در نبرد، ترسیم شده‌اند (Soudavar, *Aura of Kings* ۱۳). در تصاویر سده‌های ششم و هفتم این دستار به‌صورت منحنی و در دست دو فرشته بر فراز سر فرمانروایان بازنمایی شده است که به‌زعم رابرت هیلنبراند^{۴۰} تداعی‌گر قرارگرفتن دو فرشته پیرامون طاق است که طی قرن‌ها نشان پیروزی بوده است (۲۱۰). از سوی دیگر دستار و طاق با سایه انداختن بر سر شخصیت‌های بلندمرتبه مرتبط‌اند که در خاور نزدیک باستان نیز مرسوم بوده است و این‌گونه به نظرمی‌رسد که در دوره‌ی اسلامی نیز تداوم پیدا کرده است (۲۱۰). انوری، شاعر مدیحه‌سرای سده‌ی هفتم هجری، در قصیده‌ای این معنا را این‌گونه بیان کرده است؛

شاد باش ای پادشاه کز حفظ یزدان تا ابد بر سر تو سایه‌ی چترست و نور افسرست

اما حضور این فرشته‌ها بر فراز تخت شاهی بدون دستاری در دست را چگونه باید تفسیر کرد؟ در تصویری که نویسندگی عجایب‌المخلوقات در سده‌ی پنجم از جلوس سلیمان در تختگاه اصطخر ارائه می‌کند جبرئیل در سمت راست و ملک‌الموت در سمت چپ، بر فراز تخت او، ایستاده‌اند (طوسی ۱۷۸). اشاره‌ی طوسی به دو تن از فرشتگان مقرب الهی سرخ ارزشمندی برای ادامه‌ی مسیر به دست می‌دهد. بخشی از بدن فرشته‌ای که در وسط قرارگرفته و نقش اصلی را دارد با اشکالی شبیه به پر طاووس پوشانده شده است. طاووس پرنده‌ای است که در فرهنگ اسلامی نماد بهشت و

۳۸. رشیدالدین می‌نویسد «پادشاه در منتصف محرم سنه سبع و تسعین و ستمائه با تمامت امرا دستار بست» (تاریخ مبارک ۱۱۷).

۳۹. «بعدما که کار نوروز مکفی گشت و مستکفی ایام بوجود عدل که خلیفه الله عهد است مکتفی پادشاه جهان در تعظیم شعار شرع مطهر و تفخیم امور دین پیغمبر مبالغه زیاده فرمود و بر شیوه عدل و رأفت توفیر نموده بعنائم که تیجان [تیجان؟] مروت بود متوج گشت. بیت- دستار چو سله داری و روی چو مه/ زین روی تو را سلمه الله گویند- و امرا و مقربان حضره موافقت را بزنی [؟] ارباب معرفت متزین شدند و حکم برلیغ شد که هیچ تاجیک بکلاه مغول ملتبس [؟] نگردد» (MS.PERS.116, fol. 311v)

۴۰. Robert Hillenbrand .۴۰

خورشید است.^{۴۱} در شعر فارسی نیز گاه از جبرئیل با عنوان طاووس ملائکه یاد شده است.^{۴۲} در حدیثی منسوب به پیامبر نیز اشاره شده است که جبرئیل ششصد بال از جنس مروارید دارد که آن‌ها را همچون پرهای طاووس می‌گشاید.^{۴۳} با توجه به این شواهد آیا می‌توان فرشته‌ی بازنمایی شده بر فراز سر شاه نشسته بر تخت را نمادی از جبرئیل دانست؟ یکی از قصاید حسن غزنوی، از مدیحه‌سرایان سده‌ی پنجم هجری، با ابیاتی آغاز می‌شود که حضور جبرئیل بر فراز تخت بهرام شاه غزنوی را تصویرسازی می‌کند (۸۱). او سروده است:

سزد گر جبرئیل آید بر این پیروزه گون منبر	کند آفاق را خطبه بنام شاه دین پرور
بنازد قالب چتر و بیازد قامت رایت	ببالد پایه تخت و بخندد پایه افسر
فلک را کله بر بندد ز طاووسان فردوسی	به جای جامه‌ی رنگین همه بافند پر در پر

در بیت نخست مقصود از «آفاق را خطبه به نام شاه کردن» این است که او را به‌عنوان فرمانروای جهان برگزیند و اشاره‌ی واضحی بر تأیید شاه از سوی خداوند به‌واسطه‌ی جبرئیل است. به‌رغم بیان اغراق‌آمیز این ابیات که از خصوصیات مدیحه‌سرایی‌های فارسی است، این موضوع یادآور یکسان انگاشتن جنبه‌ی الهی پادشاه با پیغمبری در اندیشه‌ی ایرانی است که از سده‌های نخستین اسلامی در میان نویسندگان و مورخان مسلمان بدان توجه شده بود (طباطبایی ۱۶۰). شهاب الدین سهرودی نیز در *الوواح عمادیه* می‌نویسد که شاهانی مانند فریدون و کیخسرو از طریق سخن گفتن خداوند با ایشان به‌وسیله‌ی «روح القدس» به «نور و تأیید» یا فرّ کیانی دست‌یافته‌اند (۱۸۶-۱۸۷).^{۴۴}

چنان‌که اشاره شد امیر نوروز غازان را «اولوالأمر عهد» خطاب می‌کند. این اصطلاح برگرفته از آیه‌ی ۵۹ سوره نساء است که در آن مؤمنان به اطاعت از خداوند، پیامبر و صاحبان امر فرا خوانده شده‌اند،^{۴۵} و در آن صاحبان امر اشاره‌ای به «جانشینان پیامبر است که نماینده‌ی مرجعیت او در زمان فقدانش هستند» (بلنکینشیپ ۳۱۸). با معرفی غازان به‌عنوان اولوالأمر در واقع او را به‌عنوان جانشین پیامبر معرفی می‌کند که منطبق است با نظریه پادشاهی آرمانی در دوران اسلامی (طباطبایی ۱۶۳). بر همین اساس است که پادشاه بر خلیفه برتری می‌یابد چراکه برخلاف خلیفه او بلا واسطه از خداوند تأیید می‌گیرد و مقصود از این تأیید همان فرّ ایزدی است (همان ۱۶۴). این موضوع در سرلوحه‌ی *تاریخنامه‌ی فریر* به‌گونه‌ای دیگر نمایش داده شده است. در این تصویر (تصویر ۶) بر فراز سر شاه نشسته بر تخت، درون قابی مستطیل شکل مزین به نقوش اسلیمی، آیه‌ی ۲۶ از سوره‌ی «ص» نوشته شده است (تصویر: ۹).^{۴۶} این آیه در ادبیات سیاسی اسلام آیه‌ی مهمی است، چراکه تنها آیه‌ای از قرآن کریم است که در آن واژه‌ی خلیفه در معنایی سیاسی به کار رفته است (قاضی ۵۶۵). کمتر از یک سده پیش از تسلط مغولان بر ایران، نجم‌الدین رازی (و ۶۴۵ ه.ق) در *مرصادالعباد* این آیه را در راستای ایده‌ی سیاسی خود یعنی پیوند دین و پادشاهی تفسیر کرده است.

۴۱. برای شرحی مفصل از *آیکونوگرافی طاووس* نک. دانشوری ۵۱-۵۸.

۴۲. از جمله در این ابیات: طاووس ملائکه بریدت / سرخیل مقربان مریدت (جمال‌الدین اصفهانی)، زیر طاق عرش طاووس ملایک جبرئیل / از نثار تو شده یاقوت پاش و درفشان (انوری)، طاووس ملائک بنوا مدح تو خواند / اندر قفس سدره چو قمری و چو دراج (سوزنی سمرقندی).

۴۳. «و اخرج ابوشیخ من الطريق اسحاق الهاشمی عن ابن عباس عن النبی صلی الله علیه و آله قاله: جبرئیل له ستمائة جناح من لؤلؤ قد نشرها مثل ریش الطواریس» (سیوطی ۱۲)

۴۴. طباطبایی نقش سهروردی در تداوم فرهنگی ایران را از طریق تأسیس حکمت اشراق و تجدید اندیشه‌ی سیاسی ایران شهری می‌ستاید. برای توضیحات بیشتر در این باره بنگرید به طباطبایی ۱۵۳-۱۵۷.

۴۵. يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِن تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا.

۴۶. يَا دَاوُودُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ. ترجمه: ای داوود ما تو را در زمین خلیفه [و جانشین] گردانیدیم پس میان مردم به‌حق داوری کن.



تصویر ۹: جزئیاتی از تصویر: ۶.

از نظر او اشاره به خلافت داوود در این آیه بدین معنا است که پادشاهی همان خلافت خداوند است و پادشاهی می‌تواند تا مرتبه‌ی پیامبری تعالی یابد (Crone ۲۵۳).^{۴۷} بدین ترتیب مشاهده می‌شود که چگونه کارگزاران ایرانی دربار ایلخانی ایده‌های متداول در ایران سده‌های میانی را برای مشروعیت بخشی به حکومت غازان به کار می‌گیرند. در نهایت با وجود این‌که هنوز در مورد نقش دو فرشته‌ی سمت چپ و راست در این تصویر می‌توان پرسش‌هایی را مطرح کرد، اما مجموعه‌ی شواهد می‌تواند تا اندازه‌ای حضور فرشته‌ای حامل پیام الهی را بر فراز تخت پادشاهی زمینی موّجه کند.

پادشاه نشسته بر تخت در تصویر دیتس با دو شاخصه‌ی مهم دیگر پادشاه آرمانی نیز همراه شده است؛ تیر و کمان و تخت متکی به دو شیر (تخت شیر). بازنمایی شاه در حالت جلوس بر تخت شیر از جمله تصاویر محبوب در سرزمین‌های اسلامی بوده است. اگرچه نمی‌توان منشأ این تصویر را به‌درستی مشخص کرد، اما نماد شیر در رابطه با دو شاه یعنی سلیمان و بهرام پنجم، مشهور به بهرام گور، در روایت‌های داستانی و اسطوره‌ای متعلق به دوره‌ی اسلامی ظاهر می‌شود. در مورد سلیمان، شیر به‌عنوان نگهبان در پایین تخت نشسته است و از جلوس شاه بیدادگر بر آن ممانعت می‌کند (نیسایوری ۳۰۳، ۱۱۴ Soucek). در روایت بهرام گور نیز شیر محافظ تاج و تخت شاهی است. در این روایت اسطوره‌ای که در متون تاریخی و ادبی از جمله شاهنامه و هفت‌پیکر نظامی نقل شده است، بهرام گور شایستگی‌اش برای جلوس بر تخت پادشاهی ایران را با ربودن تاجی از میان دو شیر بسته‌شده در پایه‌های تخت شاهی اثبات می‌کند. در روایت اخیر اگرچه بهرام با گرز مشهورش مغز شیران را متلاشی می‌کند، اما در روایت‌های فارسی مهارت او در تیراندازی با کمان ستایش شده است. در داستان بهرام گور و آزاده که بازنمایی بصری آن در سده‌های میانه محبوبیت فراوانی داشت، او با پرتاب یک تیر گوش و پای آهوئی را به هم می‌دوزد. رشیدالدین در شرح شکار کردن و تیراندازی غازان در سال ۷۰۱ هجری مهارت او در تیراندازی را با بهرام گور مقایسه می‌کند. در این روایت غازان با پرتاب یک تیر نه زخم بر بدن آهوئی می‌زند. رشیدالدین سپس مدعی می‌شود که «از این قضیه حکایت بهرام گور که به حیلت پای آهوئی با گوش او به هم به تیر زده و مردم از آن تعجب‌ها نمایند و از هزار و پانصد سال باز بر دیوارها و کتاب‌ها نقش می‌کنند به‌کلی منسوخ شد» (تاریخ مبارک ۱۳۳).

شاهد دیگر را می‌توان در *غازان نامه* یافت که تاریخ منظوم ایلخانان تا پایان حکمرانی غازان است و توسط شاعری به نام نوری ازدری، در نیمه‌ی دوم سده‌ی هفتم، در دربار سلطان اویس جلایری سروده شده است (نوری ازدری ۶). شاعر در این کتاب که همانند سایر تواریخ منظوم دوره‌ی ایلخانی بر وزن *شاهنامه* سروده شده است، ضمن روایت رویدادهای تاریخی، تصویری اسطوره‌ای از غازان پرداخته است. او آمیزه‌ای از روایت‌های *شاهنامه* و *اسکندرنامه*ی نظامی را برای ساخت چهره‌ای از غازان در قامت پادشاهی ایرانی که حکیم و عادل است به کار گرفته است (Melville, "History and Myth" ۱۴۲). در روایت او غازان پادشاهی است شبیه به شاه-قهرمانان ایرانی در *شاهنامه* و اعمال شگفت‌انگیزی بدو

۴۷. در مورد اهمیت آیه‌ی مذکور در این سرلوحه هم‌چنین بنگرید به Fitzherbert 53-54.

نسبت داده شده است؛ از جمله نبرد با دیوان، کشتن اژدها و دستیابی به گنج اسکندر. وصف او به عنوان پادشاه اژدها کش و راهنمایی او به گنج‌های شاهانه یادآور روایت بهرام گور در شاهنامه است. در نهایت، با در نظر داشتن شباهت‌های میان غازان و بهرام گور در متون تاریخی ایلخانی، شاه کماندار نشسته بر تخت شیر را می‌توان غازان دانست، در حالی که با نمادهای منسوب به بهرام گور که خود نمادی از خاطره‌ی پادشاهی ایرانی است بازنمایی شده است. علاوه بر این، عمامه و فرشته‌ی حامل وحی نیز نشان از مشروعیت او به عنوان پادشاهی مسلمان هستند. در واقع خاطره‌ی پادشاهی ایرانی و ایده‌های اسلامی در مورد شاه در بازنمایی غازان در هم آمیخته‌اند.

نتیجه‌گیری

آفرینش تصویر غازان در مقام پادشاه اسلام علاوه بر برنامه‌های تاریخ‌نگاری رشیدالدین، به سنت‌های روایتگری بصری و زبان نمادین به میراث رسیده به کارگاه‌های سلطنتی ایلخانان متکی بوده است. مجلس ولادت غازان گرچه در نگاه نخست بازنمایی بصری روایت تاریخی واقع‌ی تولد غازان است، اما انتخاب آن برای مصور شدن و ارجاعات نهفته در آن، تصویر را از یک روایت بصری ساده و صریح به جزئی از یک ساختار نمادین بدل می‌کند که در خدمت ساخت و پرداخت تصویری از محمود غازان به عنوان پادشاه آرمانی است. با کنار هم قرار گرفتن تصویر، تاریخچه‌ی آن و متن تاریخی، لایه‌های معنایی جدیدی آشکار می‌شوند. کارکرد این تصویر در تاریخ مبارک غازانی، در امتداد شیوه‌ای است که رشیدالدین در نقل و سازمان‌دهی رویدادهای زمانه‌ی غازان برمی‌گزیند، به این معنا که مجموعه‌ی این روایت‌های بصری در مجاورت همدیگر و متن، کلیت یکپارچه‌ای را می‌سازند که آفریننده‌ی مفهوم پادشاه آرمانی است.

علاوه بر روایت‌های بصری، آفرینش تصویری نمادین از شاه آرمانی شیوه‌ای دیگر در انتقال پیام سیاسی است. چنان‌که در مورد سرلوحه‌ی متعلق به مرقع دیتس مشاهده می‌شود، دیگر با بیان تصویری روایت مشخصی مواجه نیستیم، بلکه تمامی اجزاء تشکیل‌دهنده‌ی تصویر از ترکیب‌بندی گرفته تا نقش‌مایه‌های نمادین در خدمت بیان ایده‌ی پادشاه اسلام، آن‌گونه که از متن تاریخ مبارک و سایر متون دریافت می‌شود، هستند. در مقام مقایسه با ادبیات که در فرهنگ ایرانی پیوند نزدیکی با هنر دارد، سرلوحه‌ی دیتس گویا قصیده‌ای است که در مدح غازان سروده شده است. شیوه‌ی بیان آن به انتخاب شاعرانه‌ی کلمات و به کار بردن صنایع ادبی و نمادها به منظور بیان خیال‌انگیز یک مفهوم در شعر شباهت دارد. در نهایت، تمامی اجزاء تصویر در کنار یکدیگر با همهی خصوصیات زیباشناختی و نمادینشان در جهت یک هدف مشخص، که خلق تصویری نمادین از غازان است، قرار می‌گیرند. در مجموع هر دو تصویر با نمایش پادشاهی پیامبرگونه بازتاب ایده‌ی پادشاه آرمانی هستند که در آن پیامبر و پادشاهی از یکدیگر تفکیک ناپذیرند. روایت بصری ولادت غازان در برکشیدن این ولادت شاهانه به مقام یک ولادت الهی با روایت‌های تاریخی مکتوب و بصری همراه می‌شود و زبان نمادین سرلوحه‌ی متعلق به مرقع دیتس، همچون مدیحه‌سرایی در ادبیات فارسی، ستایشی از غازان در مقام پادشاهی آرمانی با تأیید الهی است.

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سپاسگزاریها

مایلم از دکتر امیر مازیار سپاسگزاری کنم چراکه بخشی از ایده‌های مطرح‌شده در این مقاله طی گفتگوهایی که در جریان نوشتن رساله‌ی دکترایم در دانشگاه هنر تهران با ایشان داشتم صیقل‌خورده‌اند. همچنین از اعتماد و حمایت دلگرم‌کننده‌ی دکتر نگار حبیبی طی نوشتن این مقاله بسیار متشکرم. از داور مقاله نیز به جهت پیشنهاد برخی منابع و ایده‌ها که به من در بازنگری متن اولیه یاری رساندند بسیار ممنونم. بدیهی است که مسئولیت کاستی‌ها با من است.

About the author

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The Reinvention of *Padishah-i Islam* in the Visual Representations of Ghazan Khan (English Version)

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Abstract

This article discusses how the visualization of Mahmud Ghazan, the sixth Ilkhanid ruler, was employed to construct and propagate his image as the *Padishah-i Islam* (King of Islam), thus justifying him both as king of *Iranshahr* (land of Iran) and the legitimate successor of the Prophet Muhammad. In a quest for visual translations of the Ilkhanid concept of *Padishah-i Islam*—an inseparable combination of the Persian notion of ideal kingship and prophethood—several illustrations from the Diez albums representing Ghazan or events of his reign have been identified, two of which have become subject to detailed iconographic analyses.

Two approaches to the visualization of Ghazan as *Padishah-i Islam* can be considered here. The first is Ghazan's birth scene where the visual narrative is covered in various formal and semantic layers; transformed into a symbolic narrative of a holy birth associated with those of the prophets. The second appears in the scene of Ghazan's enthronement, probably once illustrated as an unknown manuscript's frontispiece, the images' composition and components appear as a visual panegyric poem which applies an elaborate visual language that elevates Ghazan to the level of a divine king.

Keywords

Ideal Ruler, *Padishah-i Islam*, Mahmud Ghazan, *Farr-i Izadi*, Diez Albums

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Introduction

Half a century after Hulagu Khan conquered Baghdad in 1258, Ghazan Khan (r. 1295-1304), the sixth Ilkhanid ruler, proclaimed the *Shahadah* and converted to Islam. This event occurred during the Mongol emirs' assembly which was held while Ghazan was fighting against his uncle, Baidu, over the throne in 1295. Though Rashid al-din (1247-1318), the Ilkhanid minister and court historian, stated that Ghazan's conversion resulted from "God's guidance," according to Charles Melville, it was additionally a strategic decision aimed at support from the Iranians and new Muslim emirs such as Nowruz ("Pādshāh-i Islam" 159-160).¹ Four months later, Baidu was defeated and murdered by Nowruz, and the Ilkhanid capital, Tabriz, was conquered. Ghazan sat on the throne with a new Islamic name, Mahmud, and the honorific title *Padishah-i Islam*.² Following his command, the Mongols immediately converted to Islam, and a new era began; the churches and Buddhist monasteries were destroyed and the Chinggis law (*Yasa*) was replaced by Islamic law (Bayani 213).

It is worth mentioning that the title *Padishah-i Islam* (King of Islam) was by no means confined to the Ilkhanid rulers. In several Persian texts from the 12th century onwards, numerous Muslim rulers who reigned over both eastern and western territories were addressed as *Padishah-i Islam*, especially in book dedications.³ Furthermore, many titles with a similar meaning, such as *Sultan-i Islam* and *Malek al-Islam*, could be found in such historical texts. It may seem that addressing Ghazan as *Padishah-i Islam* was merely a courtly ritual in Islamic lands, but as I discuss below, applying this title to Ghazan was a conscious political act. Beyond simply legitimizing an alien king to rule over Iran, the Ilkhans and their Iranian viziers also pursued the ambitious goal of governing the Islamic world from the heart of the ancient Iranian territory; an ambition that was pursued for centuries, and the fall of the Caliphate prepared the ground for this goal after six hundred years.

Exploring Ghazan's conversion in the context of the transformations that changed the Islamic world in the second half of the 13th century could provide us with a more complete picture of the above-mentioned goal. The conquest of Baghdad in 1258 and the execution of the Abbasid caliph, al-Musta'sim, terminated the symbolic role that the Caliphate had played in the medieval Islamic world for the previous six centuries. The transformation of political and spiritual power was crucial for Iranian elites who accompanied the Mongols in the conquest of Baghdad. As an Islamic city, Baghdad was built in the territories called the heart of *Iranshahr*, the ideal realm of Persian ideal rulers. In Iranian political thought, *Iranshahr* was perceived as the center of the world and the realm of the ideal kings. Various geographical locations were attributed to it in sources from the early Islamic centuries. Despite Muslim writers' disagreement at the time on the precise boundaries of *Iranshahr*, Iraq and its center, Ctesiphon, the former Sassanid royal capital, was widely considered as the heart of *Iranshahr* (Daryae and Rezakhani 8-13; Mottahedeh 155-157).

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1. Amir Nowruz came from a Mongol family and was among the first Mongols to convert to Islam, and an influent supporter of Ghazan. He eventually became Ghazan's emir, but was killed on Ghazan's order when he became a serious pretender to the throne (Bayani 209, 215).
 2. In historical texts and Ilkhanid coins, Ghazan was also addressed as "Ruler of the World" (*Padishah-i Jahan*), "Sultan Supreme" (*Sultān-i Muazzam*), "Ghazan Mahmud/May God Prolong his Reign" (Ghazan Mahmud *Khallad Allah Mulki*), "Ruler of Islam/Emperor, the Supreme, Ghazan Mahmud" (*Padishah-i Islam Shahan-shah-i Muazzam Ghazan Mahmud*), "Sultan of Islam/Ghazan Mahmud" (*Sultan-i Islam, Ghazan Mahmud*) (Allsen 32).
 3. These were, for example, Seljuk Sultan Giath al-Din Kaykhusraw (Ravandi 38), Muhammad ibn Sam-i Ghuri (Ibn Munawwar 8), and Abul Muzaffar Iltutmish of the Mamluk dynasty of Delhi (Fakhr-i Mudabbir 16).

Consequently, the conquest of Baghdad and the overthrow of the Caliphate became a prerequisite for the Iranian movements of the early Islamic centuries, whose ambition was the revitalization of the Sasanian Empire (224-651). Even though it seems that the Mongol invasion made the ambitious dream of conquering *Iranshahr* achievable, as Fragner argues, in the context of the 13th century, the revival of an ancient empire was not what the Mongol rulers nor their Iranian vizier envisioned. Their goal was, instead, to reinvent Iran as a “new regional power” following former Islamic models, even that of the extinct Caliphate (73). At this critical juncture, Ghazan was presented as *Padishah-i Islam* in order to legitimize his rule over *Iranshahr* and its Muslim residents (Kamola 59).

In order to rule over *Iranshahr*, a king must have been granted *Farr-i Izadi* (divine glory). This ancient concept was theorized by Iranian-born thinkers such as Nizam al-Mulk (d. 1092) and al-Ghazali (d. 1111) as the emergence of Turk dynasties in eastern territories caused a decline in caliphal power. In his book *Siyar al-Muluk* or *Siyasatnama*, Nizam al-Mulk stated that the legitimacy of a king does not depend on being appointed or approved by the caliph but is obtained only by God's will. His book begins with a brief description of an appointed king:

In every age and time, God (be He exalted) chooses one member of the human race and, having endowed him with godly and kingly virtues, entrusts him with the interests of the world and the well-being of His servants; He charges that person to close the doors of corruption, confusion, and discord, and He imparts to him such dignity and majesty in the eyes and hearts of men, that under his just rule, they may live their lives in constant security and ever wish for his reign to continue (Nizam al-Mulk 9).

These words clearly indicate the revival of the Persian concept of the ideal king, to whom the *Farr-i Izadi* is dedicated, as the representative of God on earth (Tabatabai 134, 145). In *Nasihah al-Muluk*, a book attributed to al-Ghazali, the author lists embodiments of *Farr-i Izadi*, including inherent characteristics (*gawhar-i shahi*) and acquired skills (*hunarha-i shahana*):

The divine effulgence [*Farr-i Izadi*] is expressed in sixteen things; intelligence, knowledge, sharpness of mind, ability to perceive things, perfect physique, literary taste, horsemanship, application to work, and courage; together with boldness, deliberation, good temper, impartiality towards the weak and the strong, friendliness, magnanimity, maintaining tolerance and moderation, judgment and foresight in business, frequent reading of the reports of the early Muslims, and constant attention to the Biographies of the Kings and inquiry concerning the activities of the Kings of Old [...] (al-Ghazali 74).

We see in Ghazan's conversion account in *Tarikh-i Banakati*, that the process of elevating Ghazan to the status of the Just Ruler and a ruler who was selected by God is adequately demonstrated. In this text, written during the reign of Ghazan, he is presented as the savior of Islam. The author reported an assembly just before the conversion of Ghazan to Islam. There, Amir Nowruz referred to a prediction made by astrologers and Islamic scholars that a great king would emerge circa 1290 and turned the religion of Islam, which had become “threadbare” (*mundaris*) by that time, into a “fresh” (*taza*) religion. Nowruz also pointed out that the signs of the savior king were obvious in Ghazan. If he converted to Islam he would be the one in authority (*Ulu'l-amr*), and all Muslims

would owe him obedience (Banakati 454). A few weeks later, following the defeat of Baidu and his murder in the wars of succession, Nowruz announced Ghazan's victory in numerous letters written to different parts of the country and declared that "Ghazan is the *Padishah-i Islam*" (Melville, "Pādshāh-i Islam" 172).

Focusing on illustrated manuscripts, in this article, I deal with the visual representations of Ghazan that aimed to legitimate him as *Padishah-i Islam*. Art historians who have explored the arts of the book in Ilkhanid Iran have confirmed the use of the book as a tool in Ilkhanid propaganda.⁴ Sheila Blair, who has conducted in-depth research on Ilkhanid manuscripts, especially on a splendid manuscript of Ferdowsi's *Shahnama* (Book of Kings) known as the Great Mongol *Shahnama*, and *Jame' al-Tawarikh* (Compendium of Chronicles), argues that Ilkhanid patrons applied the history and epic as means to legitimize their domination over Iran. According to Blair, illustrations were not simply a way of beautifying the books or providing a visual narrative of the text. Moreover, each scene is chosen and painted in a way to express a contemporary political situation or to propagate a political message ("Development of the Illustrated Book" 270). The Great Mongol *Shahnama* is a typical example of interpreting *Shahnama* scenes as contemporary Mongol history.⁵ Though this idea was later criticized by Blair and Bloom as well as David Morgan for lack of evidence (Morgan, "Oleg Grabar and Sheila Blair" 364-365; Blair and Bloom, "Epic Images and Contemporary History" 41-52), the importance of the *Shahnama* in the Ilkhanid Propaganda is confirmed by a body of research done on various aspects of Ilkhanid Art.⁶

In addition to the *Shahnama*, paintings from *Jame' al-Tawarikh*, the most important book from the Ilkhanid era, have been the subject of various research. Exploring the paintings from the Arabic manuscript of *Jame' al-Tawarikh*, Ms. Or. 20, now kept in the Edinburgh University Library, Melville argues that Rashid al-Din supervised the selection of the illustrated scenes. He suggests that the abundance of paintings describing the Turk rulers compared with the lack of pictures of ancient kings of Iran was intentional ("Royal Image" 354). Thus, he interpreted the representation of Ghaznavids' militancy and the dignity of the Seljuk enthroned sovereigns as an allusion to two phases of Mongol history: the conquests and the establishment of the empire (356).

It is important to note that previous research was mainly focused on how the Ilkhanids perceived the history of the ancient kings and pre-Mongol Islamic rulers of Iran. As I will discuss in the following sections, none of the preserved Ilkhanid manuscripts of *Jame' al-Tawarikh* from the 14th century includes the chapters of Ghazan and his successors. The only images from the 14th century that illustrate the Ilkhanid courts are among the fascinating selections of Persian painted pages in the Diez Albums preserved in the collection of the Oriental Department at the Berlin State Library.⁷

4. For a comprehensive account of Ilkhanid book projects, see Azzouna, *Aux origines du classicisme* 207-363.

5. Grabar and Blair carried on the most important research with this approach; see also Soudavar, "The Saga of Abu-Sa'id Bahador Khan."

6. Archaeological evidence from the Ilkhanid palace at Takht-i Sulayman shows that *Shahnama* text and image are not restricted to book production projects (Blair, *Ilkhanid Palace* 242). Moreover, the *Shahnama* was perceived as relating Iran's history, so composing verse histories imitating the *Shahnama* in form and content was supported by Ilkhanid and Jalayirid patrons (Melville, *Persian Historiography* 193-197).

7. There are also similar images in Istanbul album H.2153, probably from the same workshops, but their dating is debatable (Blair, *A Compendium of Chronicles* 93-98).

Scholars of Persian art have explored the Diez Albums since the 1950s. However, the paintings became subjects of extensive studies in the 2010s following their digitisation. The results were presented at a Berlin symposium in 2013 and published in *The Diez Albums: Contexts and Contents* in 2016. Three chapters of the book, written by Charles Melville, Yoka Kadoi, and Claus-Peter Haase, deal with the contents of the images which represent Mongol courts and their court culture. These images are at the center of my study. As the title of this article suggests, I have specifically concentrated my focus on the sections of Ilkhanid history where Ghazan, events of his reign, and measures attributed to him are the main subject, and I have sought for visual evidence that reflects them. I interpreted the visual evidence in the context of the Ilkhanid political situation, their reception of the *Shahnama* as the history of Iran, and their approach to Islamic historiography.

Gawhar and Hunar in *Tarikh-i Mubarak-i Ghazani*

One essential source that portrays Mahmud Ghazan as the *Padishah-i Islam* is *Tarikh-i Mubarak-i Ghazani* (The Blessed History of Ghazan), an official narrative of the Mongols' history, compiled by Rashid al-Din as the first part of his *Compendium of Chronicles*. According to its introduction, the book's writing began in 1302 following Mahmud Ghazan's royal command.⁸ *Tarikh-i Mubarak* starts with the history of his Mongol ancestors, a detailed biography of Chinggis Khan, including his early life, battles, conquests, and reign, followed by chapters narrating the rule of his sons and grandsons in conquered lands, including Iran. Each chapter consists of three parts (*qism*): the first is dedicated to family (wives, children, and the family tree), the second part describes the reign of each khan, and the third consists of various anecdotes related to their life and reign.

The story of Ghazan is told in the final chapter. The first part begins with a description of Ghazan's ancestry, introducing his wives and children, and continues with accounts of his birth and childhood when he was being groomed for kingship with royal knowledge and skills under the supervision of his grandfather Abaqa Khan. The author's emphasis on his birth is significant considering that in chapters dedicated to other Mongol khans, except in the biography of Chinggis Khan, their birth and early years are not recounted. The second part is dedicated to succession wars, conversion to Islam, and the events of his reign until his death in 1303. The third part consists of forty anecdotes about his personality and the political and economic reforms he made during his reign. Carefully designed, this part aims to fulfill a political idea, to introduce him as a king with divine glory (*Padishah-i farahmand*). Numerous anecdotes about his characteristics could be considered examples of divine glory; his knowledge of various arts, being infallible and chaste, being eloquent in debate, his adherence to agreements, generosity, courage, and being in service of the prophet's family (Rashid al-Din, *Tarikh-i Mubarak* 161-200). The other group of accounts describes a set of measures known as Ghazan's reforms (*Islahat-i Ghazani*) where we see an emphasis on the implementation of justice (Morgan 101-103).

In the first half of the 14th century several royal workshops were active under the supervision of Rashid al-Din, in which religious and historical books, especially his own compilations, were copied, illuminated and illustrated. According to the endowment deed of the *Rab'-i Rashidi*, manuscripts of *Jame' al-Tawarikh* were produced in these workshops annually and sent to different

8. The book was eventually finished under the patronage of Sultan Uljaitu, Ghazan's brother and successor, but its title remained unchanged (Rashid al-Din, *Tarikh-i Mubarak* 8).

parts of the country (Azzouna, "Rashīd Al-dīn" 192, 196-198). However, today, only three mutilated manuscripts remain: a copy in Arabic divided between the University of Edinburgh library (Ms. Or.20) and the Khalili collection (Mss. 727), and two copies in Persian in the Topkapi Palace library (H. 1653 and H.1654) (Blair, *A Compendium of Chronicles* 27). None of these copies include the story of Ghazan.

In the 18th century, some illustrated folios that once belonged to a missing copy of *Tarikh-i Mubarak-i Ghazani* were acquired and taken to Berlin by Heinrich Friedrich von Diez, a German diplomat, orientalist and book lover. These are among the other paintings, drawings and calligraphy work now preserved in the Diez Albums. (Diez A, fol. 70-74). Art historians have attributed these paintings to the *Rabʿ-i Rashidi* workshops around 1320 through the identification of their stylistic features (Kadoi 246-247; Blair, *A Compendium of Chronicles* 93-95). Identifying the subject of each image and reconstructing the mutilated manuscript is difficult because the images were cut from their original setting and pasted into an album folio according to their size and color palette. However, comparing the Diez illustrations with those of a 14th-century manuscript of *Jameʿ al-Tawarikh* in the French National Library (Persan 1113),⁹ four images from Diez Albums undoubtedly illustrate events from the Ghazan chapter. The first is Ghazan's birth (Diez A, fol. 70, p. 8, no. 2). The second is the painting that represents men reciting the Quran in luxurious tents (Diez A fol. 70, p. 8, no. 1). The third is the Ghazan mausoleum as described in the thirteenth anecdote of the third part of Ghazan's story (Diez A, fol. 70, p. 13), and the last is a young woman's encounter with Ghazan from the thirty-eighth anecdote (Diez A, fol. 70, p.18, no. 2).¹⁰ Aside from the birth scene which will be explored later, the other scenes are related to Ghazan's royal skills (*hunar*). The Quran reciting scene is a visual narrative of an event described in detail in the book and represents his religiosity. The double-page painting of Ghazan's mausoleum and related buildings is a manifestation of *abadani*, which means development and construction, and it is a prerequisite to be a just ruler. Moreover, by building a dome over his grave, Ghazan dissociates himself from his ancestral burial rituals. Again, his being impressed by the mausoleums of Imams and Sufis is a sign of his religiosity (Azzouna, *Aux Origines* 209). The last image depicts Ghazan's command to provide housing for state emissaries and prohibit officers from staying in people's houses¹¹ which is also related to his role as an astute and just ruler (Rashid al-Din, *Tarikh-i Mubarak* 360-356).

The royal lineage is one of the main themes of the *Tarikh-i Mubarak-i Ghazani*. In addition to the scenes mentioned earlier, there are four paintings of the Mongol court, one a single page and three double pages, in the Diez Albums. In each painting, a Mongol khan and his consort are enthroned flanked by several princes, princesses, courtiers and attendants (fig. 1).

9. The date and place of copying and illustrating of this manuscript is a point of disagreement between scholars such as Ernst J. Grube, Ernst Kühnel and Francis Richard. While Grube attributed the manuscript to Tabriz workshops of the first half of the 14th century, Kühnel and Richard insist that it is a production of Timurids workshops in 15th century Herat. Richard (310) also believes that the illustrations were added sometime after copying the manuscript. Of the 113 illustrations in this manuscript, 26 belong to the Ghazan chapter.

10. In the Paris manuscript, the mentioned images are as follows: Ghazan's Birth (210v), Reciting the Quran (239r), Ghazan's mausoleum (256v-257r), and the encounter of a woman and Ghazan (285v). For some notes on the Quran recitation and Ghazan's mausoleum scenes, see Melville, "Illustration of Turko-Mongol" 240-241.

11. All translations of *Tarikh-i Mubarak-i Ghazani* are my own, unless otherwise attributed.



Figure 1: *A Mongol Khan and His Consort Enthroned* from *Diez Albums*, attributed to an unknown manuscript of *Tarikh-i Mobarak-i Ghazani* (Tabriz, circa 1320), Ink and opaque watercolor on paper, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – PK, Diez A fol. 70 S. 22. Image courtesy of Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – PK Photo © Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – PK. URL

It is assumed that enthroned khans were identified according to the inscriptions once written in a box on top of the pages (Kadoi 251). The removal of these inscriptions has prevented us from recognizing the enthroned figures. However, Melville believes that none of these paintings illustrate Ghazan's court due to the absence of men in Persian clothing ("Illustration of Turko-Mongol" 237).

Therefore, whether the enthroned sovereign is identified or not, the court scenes demonstrate the Ilkhanids' attitude toward their history. Rashid al-Din bolstered their enthusiasm for their ancestral history and the Persian notion of the ideal king to legitimize Mongol rule over Iran. It must be taken into account that according to Persian political ideas, to be granted *Farr-i Izadi* and rule over *Iranshahr*, one must be of royal descent (Shahbazi 128). That is why the Iranian kings from local dynasties in the early Islamic centuries traced their lineage back to Sasanian kings. Even the Ghaznavids claimed to be descended from Yazdegerd III, the last Sasanian king (Daryaei and Rezakhani 9). However, Rashid al-Din dealt with Ghazan's royal lineage differently. The Mongols regard Chinggis Khan as a prophet, a selected man who brought the holy book (*Yasa*) and a king sent by the heavens to take command of the Turks and the Mongols (Bayani 16-18). As Rashid al-Din states in the introduction, what motivated him to write *Tarikh-i Mubarak* was Ghazan's enthusiasm for the history of his ancestors and a need to organize the oral narratives and scattered documents of the history of the Mongols (8). So, being from the Chinggisid lineage became a legitimizing factor and even Timurids and Mughals built their legitimacy upon their Mongol ancestry.

The importance of the royal lineage is exemplified in the narrative of the conquest of the Levant by Ghazan from *Tarikh-i Mubarak*. There, Ghazan addressed the surrendered residents of Damascus and asked them, who am I? The crowd said, you are the King Ghazan, son of Arghun Khan, son of Abaqa Khan, son of Hulagu Khan, son of Tolui Khan, son of Chinggis Khan (128). Afterward, Ghazan asked them about the descendancy of al-Malik al-Nasir ibn Qalawun II, the ninth Bahri Mameluke sultan of Egypt and the Levant. He asked who his father was; they answered he was Alfi. He asked who Alfi's father was. Then all of them remained silent. So, everybody knew that the reign of [the Mamelukes] was accidental, and not by merit (Rashid al-Din, *Tarikh-i Mubarak* 128)¹². Given this, the religious and political aspects of Ilkhanid rule were rooted in the sanctity of the Prophet Muhammad and the spiritual aspects of Chinggis Khan. Thus, the reign of Ghazan was a continuation of the reign of the Prophet and Chinggis Khan (Brack 2, 6-7).

From this point of view the Mongol court scenes, which insist on the glory of Ghazan's Mongol descent, also reinforce the book's central idea of producing the image of Ghazan as a sovereign with royal glory.

12. On the importance of Mongol lineage for Ilkhanids also see Brack 159-160.

The Birth of the Appointed King

It is without a doubt that the birth scene is the most important of the paintings attributed to Ghazan's story (fig. 2). As mentioned above, the first part of Ghazan's story and the depiction of his birth are almost unique in this book. At first sight, the painter represents a royal birth using a plain visual language with stylistic features belonging to the Ilkhanid workshops of *Rab'-i Rashidi*. The figures are painted on light brownish-yellow backgrounds in relatively elongated rectangular frames and the interior space is depicted with minimal accessories. A leaning woman wearing a red robe and no headdress is painted on the left resting her head and shoulders on a golden pillow while placing her arm in a supportive gesture next to an infant wrapped in a red cloth. Although no facial detail is recognizable due to the distortion of the mother's and child's faces, it seems that the mother looks towards the right, where three men are sitting. Three women are seated in the middle of the scene in front of the mother. Besides sitting on chairs, their royal status is evident from their red robes, long headdresses called *boqtaq*, unique to Mongol *khatuns* (high-ranked Mongol women), and golden earrings. In this scene, there are also three maids: one is standing behind the mother wearing a hat adorned with feathers, the second, in similar clothes and hat, sits on the floor with a bended knee and the third stands in front of the mother and holds a thurible in front of her. On the right, two men sit in the front and one in the back. They wear long robes with wide sleeves and white turbans. The men in the front hold round objects, probably astrolabes, and two other objects similar to hourglasses are in front of them on the floor.



Figure 2: *Ghazan Khan's Birth Scene* from Diez Albums, attributed to an unknown manuscript of *Tarikh-i Mobarak-i Ghazani* (Tabriz, circa 1320), Ink and opaque watercolor on paper, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – PK, Diez A fol. 70 S. 8 Nr. 2. Image courtesy of Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – PK, Photo © Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – PK. URL



Figure 3: *Ghazan Khan's Birth Scene* from from a manuscript of *Jami- al -Tawarikh* (the Compendium of Chronicles) by Rashid al-Din (probably Herat, 15th century), Ink and opaque watercolor on paper, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Supplément Persan 1113, fol. 210v. Image courtesy of gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France, Photo © Bibliothèque nationale de France. URL

In *Tarikh-i Mubarak*, Rashid al-Din has referred to “skilled astronomers” being present at the moment of Ghazan’s birth. They observed the positions of the stars and predicted an extremely blissful fortune for the newborn and were in agreement that “he would be a great king with extreme magnificence and majesty” (3). By comparing the abovementioned painting with one of the *Jame’ al-Tawarikh* folios located in Paris which depicts a similar scene within the section on Ghazan’s birth, there is no doubt about the subject of the Diez painting (fig. 3).¹³



Figure 4: *The Prophet Muhammad Birth Scene* from a manuscript of *Jami- al -Tawarikh* (the Compendium of Chronicles) by Rashid al-Din (Tabriz, 1314), Ink and opaque watercolor on paper, University of Edinburgh Library, Or.MS.20. fol.42r. Image courtesy of University of Edinburgh Photo © University of Edinburgh. URL

Furthermore, the scene is similar to Muhammad's birth scene found in a *Jame' al-Tawarikh* folio housed in Edinburgh, illustrated around 1308, also in *Rab'i Rashidi* (fig. 4). Finding no previous painting of the Prophet's birth, Blair believes that this painting is influenced by nativity scene paintings that were provided as models for painters working at Tabriz's workshops. According to Blair, in the *Jame' al-Tawarikh* painting, Joseph was replaced by the Prophet's grandfather, 'Abd al-Muttalib, who sat on the right. On the other side, three standing women were painted instead of the Magi who traveled to Bethlehem to visit the infant Christ (*A Compendium of Chronicles* 69). In Gazan's birth scene, there are also three men, the astronomers. While there is no other man, this unusual presence could be related to the Magi in the number and their functions in both narratives that link them to the predictions of the infant's future.

A Nativity scene in a Syriac manuscript from the Vatican Library (Vat. sir. 559, fol 16r) may be similar to the models that Ilkhanid painters had referred. The manuscript was produced for the Monastery of Mar Matti near Mossul in 1219, almost 100 years before the birth scene in the Diez Albums has been painted. Several scenes related to the infant Christ were painted in a single frame here.¹⁴ In the upper part, where the Magi visit the mother and the child, the half-risen gesture of Mary, her gaze at the three men standing on the left, and the newborn lying beside her on a golden bed are similar to Ghazan's birth scene. Textual evidence demonstrates that it was not

13. Another image of Ghazan's birth in a 17th century manuscript of *Jame' al-Tawarikh* (Ms. IV.1 in Reza library at Rampur, Uttar Pradesh) resembles the painting of the Paris manuscript (Rice 154). Both scenes have probably been painted according to a model unavailable now.

14. The image is available online, see: https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.sir.559/0035 (Accessed 30 Aug. 2023).

merely a visual adaptation and that painting this particular scene according to the nativity scene was done intentionally. In the paragraphs following Rashid al-Din's account of Ghazan's birth in *Tarikh-i Mubarak-i Ghazani*, he compared Ghazan with a prophet. First, he pointed to selecting a wet nurse for newborn Ghazan and then wrote about his ability to talk while still in the cradle. Both of these can be considered allusions to the prophets Muhammad and Christ. He also compared Ghazan's appearance and deeds with the prophets: he is handsome as Joseph, courteous as Moses, bright as Christ and well-spoken as Muhammad (6). These implications are not restricted to the first part of Ghazan's story. In the first anecdote of the third part, he compared Ghazan with Abraham, who converted to the worship of God in the light of divine guidance, broke the idols, and destroyed the temples (169).

The Icon

Here I turn to a detailed examination of a single image from the Diez Albums that has a peculiar iconography (fig. 5). The separated folio, now pasted in Diez A fol. 71, is seriously damaged with most of the faces, hands, and draperies having lost detail and color. In the center, a man in a golden robe wearing a white turban is enthroned on a blue throne flanked by two seated men in luxurious robes and feather hats. Three angels with bare chests and golden wings hover over the throne. The angel in the middle is directly above the head of the enthroned figure and slightly touches the highest part of the throne. The most noteworthy elements are the angel's full-face representation, and the peacock feather ornamentation on the lower part of her body. While it is unclear if they hold any objects in their hands due to the severe damage of the image, we see the other two angels point their fingers toward the throne from either side.

*In one of the earliest studies on the Diez Albums, Mehmet Şevket İpşiroğlu assumed it reasonable to put this royal scene into the category of Seljuk-Mongol style by identifying some stylistic features in the faces and the throne (İpşiroğlu 12). This category indicates a transitional phase in Persian painting in the medieval period. During this phase, which began in the second half of the 13th century in Baghdad and ended with the establishment of the Rashidi workshop in Tabriz, the Seljuk style gradually mixed with eastern motives. However, the feather hats and generous use of gold, especially in backgrounds, clothes and accessories, are indicative of the small Shahnamas attributed to Baghdad workshops around 1300 (Simpson, *Illustration of an Epic* 272). Moreover, some details in painting portraits and draperies also confirm its attribution to the early 14th century (Haase 280).*



Figure 5: *An Enthroned Ruler (Probably Ghazan)* from Diez Albums, attributed to a detached frontispiece from an unknown Manuscript (probably Baghdad or Tabriz, 1300), Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – PK, Diez A fol. 71, S. 46, Nr. 4. Image courtesy of Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – PK, Photo © Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – PK. URL

Illustrating this trichotomous composition in which a ruler is enthroned in the center among his courtiers and attendants with angles, sometimes holding a ribbon, flying over his throne, in the opening pages of the manuscripts was prevalent at least from the 12th century in Mesopotamian workshops (Simpson, "In the Beginning" 213; Blair, "Une brève histoire" 61). Similar frontispieces from Ilkhanid manuscripts are known, including the one at the beginning of an illustrated manuscript of *Tarikhnama*, now in the Freer Gallery (fig. 6). Both attributed to the early 14th century, the *Tarikhnama* frontispiece and the Diez painting have similar features that extend beyond just their subject matter, such as their composition and the way the enthroned figure is represented.¹⁵

Compared with other illustrated frontispieces belonging to the same period, these similarities confirm that the Diez painting was once illustrated as a frontispiece of an unknown manuscript. Now a significant question regarding a manuscript frontispiece must be discussed: who is the enthroned figure?

This question related to the frontispieces' function as visual dedications praising the patron often has no straightforward answer especially in the cases like Diez's frontispiece where the painting is detached from its original setting (Simpson, "In the Beginning" 242). In the case studied here, as I argue below, the figure with a turban, holding a bow and enthroned among a group of men with Mongol feathered hats is most likely Ghazan Khan, *Padishah-i Islam*. I propose primarily an interpretation of this image since our lack of knowledge about the original manuscript makes it challenging to identify the enthroned figure. However, as I will argue further, some iconographic features in this folio will show that a symbolic analysis is not useless.

According to the frontispiece tradition, the figure can be the book's author or his patron. While exploring frontispieces from the 12th and 13th centuries, Blair observes a visual convention according to which the author's portraits were painted in three-quarter view, possibly reciting their book. However, rulers or patrons were portrayed full-faced and in royal settings (Blair, "Une brève histoire" 57). Moreover, in the Diez frontispiece, the royal symbols are so evident that it is hard to identify the seated figure as the author. As mentioned, wearing a turban instead of the usual crown may be the key to identify the enthroned figure. Does he represent the Prophet Muhammad, an Arab ruler or maybe a caliph? The caliph cannot be represented while enthroned among Mongol emirs and attendants, but whether it represents the Prophet or not deserves more investigation.

15. For *Tarikhnama* manuscript dating and Iconography, see Fitzherbert 1-11.



Figure 6: *An Enthroned Ruler* on the frontispiece of the first volume of a *Tarikhnama* (Book of history) by Bal'ami (probably Baghdad or Mussel, 1300), Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 42.2 x 28.7 cm, Freer Gallery of Art, F1957.16. Image courtesy of Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art Collection, Photo © Freer Gallery of Art. URL

The enthroned Prophet is among the illustrated scenes in some Ilkhanid manuscripts such as the Freer small *Shahname* (fig. 7) and the *Marzbannama*.¹⁶ Several considerations regarding these images must be taken into account. First, both manuscripts are dated around 1300.¹⁷ Second, both images are illustrated in the book's preface, followed by an image of the patron in a royal setting. Third, the flying angels were only painted over the Prophet's throne. Fourth, in two ways, the enthroned Prophet, especially in the Freer *Shahnama*, differs from the enthroned kings in the same manuscript as he does not wear a crown but a turban covered with a long shawl and is represented in a three-quarter view. The enthroned kings are represented in frontal view with open chests. They are seated crossed legs with a boot always visible though wearing a long robe (fig. 8). This gesture is familiar in several royal images in Ilkhanid paintings as well as in the Diez frontispiece. In contrast, the Prophet slightly turns to the right as if he is talking to his fellows, and his long robe covers his feet completely. The three-quarter view presentation is in line with Blair's distinction between portraying authors and their patrons in frontispieces. Moreover, the painter deliberately avoided royal iconographic conventions in representing the enthroned Prophet. A complicated setting accompanied by royal attributes, two lions, and the golden bow distinguishes this painting from an iconography of the enthroned Prophet.

In the Freer *Shahnama* and *Marzbannama*, the Prophet is enthroned among the Rashidun caliphs as well as his companions. In the Diez frontispiece, several attendants fill the scene and two men (probably emirs) are seated by the throne while two other men are holding parasols behind the throne. The *hajibs* and royal guards also stand in the lower part.

Returning to the main question, how could the turban be interpreted as an attribute of Ghazan khan? To cast light on this issue, we must have a look at the 1297 events. According to *Tarikh-i Mubarak* and *Tarikh-i Wassaf*, Ghazan was crowned with a turban in *Muharrim* of 697 A.H. (1297). While Rashid al-din briefly reported the event (*Tarikh-i Mubarak* 117), Wassaf provided a more detailed description. In his narration, he pointed to Ghazan's turban with the word *Tijan* (a plural form of *Taj* that means crown) and used the verb *motavaj shodan*, which means to crown.

Moreover, using highly elaborate language, he pointed to a change in the Mongol emirs' clothing, describing that they dressed as believers without mentioning the turban as a part of their new uniform. Even though by believers' clothing, he meant that Mongol emirs were dressed in Iranian robes and turbans, the specific use of the verb "to crown," indicates that the writer perceived the turban as a royal crown for Ghazan.¹⁸

According to *Tarikh-i Wassaf*, wearing the turban should be considered a symbolic and strategic act at a critical juncture as Ghazan was planning his second attack on the Levant. Additionally, Ghazan's legitimacy at that time had become vulnerable due to the execution of Amir Nowruz. Being afraid of losing his Muslim supporters, Ghazan exaggerated the importance of Islamic laws, according to Wassaf. The other significant point in the Wassaf narrative is Ghazan's decree that no one can force Tajiks (here meaning non-Turk or non-Mongol) to wear a Mongol hat.

16. Christiane Gruber has done an extensive study of the enthroned prophet-king, see Gruber 34-81.

17. *Marzbannama* (Ms. 216) is preserved in Archaeology Museum Library, Istanbul. For the enthroned prophet scene in its preface, see Gruber 53.

18. For Ghazan's coronation account in *Tarikh-i Wassaf* I refer to this manuscript, MS.PERS.116, fol. 311v.



Figure 7: *The Prophet Muhammad Enthroned and the Four Orthodox Caliphs* from a *Shahnama* (Book of kings) by Firdawsi (probably Baghdad, 1300), Ink, opaque watercolor, gold and silver on paper 9.8 x 11.5 cm, Freer Gallery of Art, F1929.26. Image courtesy of Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art Collection, Photo © Freer Gallery of Art. URL



Figure 8: *Sultan Mahmud Enthroned Among Courtiers* from a *Shahnama* (Book of kings) by Firdawsi (Probably Baghdad, 1300), Ink, opaque watercolor, gold and silver on paper, 9.8 x 11.5 cm, Freer Gallery of Art, F1929.26b. Image courtesy of Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art Collection, Photo © Freer Gallery of Art. URL

This command was probably issued to gain the support of the Iranians as the leading group of Nowruz' followers (Bayani 216). At the same time, it shows that the Mongol community did not abandon the Mongolian hat.

Turning to the three flying angels over the throne, two unusual things become readily apparent. Illustrating two hovering angles holding a ribbon over the enthroned figure is the standard way of painting them in the enthronement scenes. This being said, in the Diez frontispiece, there are three angels over the throne, and none of them holds a ribbon. There are two possible explanations for why the painter has avoided a typical pattern: he used other models or intended to convey a different message by altering the prevalent pattern.

In the ancient representations of flying angels on Sassanid reliefs, they hold small ribbons as a sign of victory (Soudavar, *Aura of Kings* 13). In the 12th and 13th centuries, the short ribbons were replaced by a much longer ribbon placed in a curved form over the ruler's head. Its shape bears in mind the victory arch with two angels on both sides, according to Hillenbrand (210). Furthermore, in the ancient Near East, the arch and ribbon are associated with casting shadows by a parasol over dignitaries' heads (210). This practice continued during the Islamic period and was reflected in literary texts as a sign of divine endorsement and protection.¹⁹

How do we then consider the flying angels with no ribbon in their hands? In *Aja'eb al-Makhlūqat* (Wonders of Creation), written in the 11th century, the author describes Solomon's court in the ancient city of Istakhr. According to Tusi, two archangels stood over Solomon's throne, Gabriel on the right and Israfil on the left (178). This provides us a valuable clue.

As mentioned, something like a peacock tail adorns the lower body of the central angle in the Diez frontispiece which is a clear symbol of paradise and the sun, both divine symbols in Islamic culture.²⁰ Moreover, Gabriel is described as the peacock of the angels in Persian poetry (Latifkar 27n42). In a hadith quoted from Muhammad, "Gabriel has six hundred wings [adorned] with pearls, and he spread them out like peacocks' feathers" (Al Suyuti 121). Thus, does this textual evidence suggest that the central angel represents Gabriel? In other words, is it convincing to identify the flying figure supporting the throne of an earthly sovereign as the angel of revelation?

Such an image is not unprecedented in Persian poetry. For instance, in the 12th century, Hasan Gaznavi praised Bahram shah of Ghazna by depicting Gabriel over his throne (81). In the introductory verse, the poet describes his patron's court as a place worthy of Gabriel's presence which means the divine approval of Bahram Shah. He also points out that God appoints the king to rule the world from the east to the west (*Afaq*). Being appointed by God to rule correlates the ideal kingship with prophethood. This idea was noticed in the early Islamic centuries among Muslim historians and thinkers such as Shahab al-Din Suhrawardi (Tabatabai 160). In *Alvah-i 'Imadi*, he wrote that pre-Islamic kings such as Fereydun and Kay Khosraw were granted *Farr-i Izadi* by God talking to them through the Holy Spirit (Suhrawardi 186-187).²¹

19. In one of his panegyric poems, Anvari (d. 1189) enunciates that the parasol over his patron's head and the brilliant crown on his head are signs of God's eternal protection: شاد باش ای پادشاه کز حفظ یزدان تا ابد / بر سر تو سایه‌ی چترست و نور افسرست

20. For the iconography of the peacock in medieval Persian culture see Daneshvari 49-64.

21. Tabatabai admires Suhrawardi's influence on Iran's cultural continuity by founding the Illuminationist Philosophy (*falsafa-ye ešrāqī*) and reviving the political concept of *Iranshahr* (Tabatabai 153-157).

In Ghazan's conversion ceremony, Amir Nowruz addressed Ghazan Khan as *Ulu'l-amr*. This term is driven from the Quran (An-Nisa 4: 59), where the believers were addressed to obey God, the Prophet, and "those having authority among you," referring to "the appointees of the Prophet representing his authority in his absence" (Blankinship 567). Thus, by addressing Ghazan as *Ulu'l-amr*, Nowruz introduces him as the Prophet's successor, which coincides with the concept of the ideal ruler in the Islamic period (Tabatabai 163). That is why the king is higher in position than the caliph since the king is God's immediate appointee, and this divine approval is the mentioned *Farr-i Izadi* (164). A combination of textual and visual manifestations of divine approval can be found in the *Tarikhnama* manuscript's frontispiece. In an elaborated rectangular frame located on the top, over the head of the enthroned ruler, part of a verse from the Quran (Saad 38: 26) has been written (fig. 9). This verse is significant in Islamic political thought because it is the only verse in the Quran in which the word caliph is used in a political sense (Kadi 277-278). Less than a century before the Mongol invasion, Najm al-Din Razi (d. 1256), a Persian Sufi, had interpreted this verse in his book *Mersad al-'ebad* to support his idea of the unity between religion and kingship (232-244).

According to him, referring to David as God's caliph on earth shows that "kingship is *khilafa* of God and that justice is of its essence" and "kingship over men may be joined to the rank of prophethood" (Crone 253).²²



Figure 9: *An Enthroned Ruler* on the frontispiece of the first volume of a *Tarikhnama* (Book of history) by Bal'ami (probably Baghdad or Mussel, 1300), Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 42.2 x 28.7 cm, Freer Gallery of Art, F1957.16. Image courtesy of Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art Collection, Photo © Freer Gallery of Art. URL. Detail (cf. fig. 6).

22. Also see Fitzherbert 53-54 on the significance of this verse for the frontispiece.

Thus, it is evident how the Iranian courtiers apply a prevalent idea to legitimize Ghazan's rule over Iran. Returning to the Diez frontispiece, though identifying two angels on the right and left sides is still debatable, I believe this evidence can justify the presence of an angel carrying the divine message over the king's throne.

The enthroned ruler on the Diez frontispiece is accompanied by two essential attributes of the ideal king: the bow and arrow, and the lion throne. A king enthroned on the lion throne is among the popular images in Islamic lands. Though it is impossible to fully determine this image's origin in Islamic narratives, the lion is related to two kings, Solomon and Bahram IV, the latter also known as Bahram Gur. In the story of Solomon, lions appear as the guardians of his throne and prevent the unjust king from accessing it (Neysaburi 303; Soucek 114). The lion also protects the royal throne and crown in the narratives of Bahram Gur found in Ferdowsi's *Shahnama* and Nizami's *Haft Peykar* (Seven Portraits). To be enthroned as the King of Iran, Bahram Gur had to prove his legitimacy by getting the crown from the throne guarded by two lions. According to Ferdowsi and Nizami, he kills the lions with his famous mace. Still, in Persian literature, he is generally praised for his skill in archery, especially in the story of Bahram and Azade where he sticks a deer's ear with its leg. The visual representations of this story were popular in medieval centuries. In an account of Ghazan hunting in 701 A.H. (1301 A.D.) from *Tarikh-i Mubarak*, Rashid al-Din compares Ghazan's skills in archery with that of Bahram Gur. He wrote that Ghazan shot a deer with one arrow and made nine wounds on its body. Then he claimed that after Ghazan's magnificent shot, the image of Bahram Gur was no longer being painted on walls or in books (*Tarikh-i Mubarak* 133).

Another piece of evidence is found in *Ghazan-Nama*, a verse chronicle of the Ilkhanid dynasty, composed by Nouri Azhdari for Sultan Sheikh Uways, the Jalayirid ruler of Iraq (Nuri Azhdari 6). Similar to the verse chronicles of the Ilkhanid era, Azhdari imitates the *Shahnama* in form and meaning. Though the narratives of Ghazan's reign are at the book's core, a mythical image of him is presented as the "philosopher king and just ruler" based on narratives of Iranian kingship from the *Shahnama* and the *Iskandarnama* by Nizami (Melville, "History and Myth" 142). Azhdari's portrayal of Ghazan is comparable to the Iranian king-heroes with marvelous deeds, including fighting with beasts, killing a dragon, and obtaining Alexander's treasure. Portraying him as a dragon slayer and being led to royal treasures is reminiscent of Bahram Gur's narrative in *Shahnama*. To conclude, reading this image in the light of the analogy between Ghazan and Bahram Gur in Ilkhanid historical texts, the archer king seated on the lion throne in the Diez frontispiece can be interpreted as Ghazan. He is portrayed with symbols attributed to Bahram Gur as a symbol of the ideal king. Additionally, the turban and the revelation angel indicate his legitimacy as a Muslim ruler. Thus, the memory of Persian kingship is combined with Islamic ideals in Ghazan's image.

Conclusion

To create and present the image of Ghazan khan as *Padishah-i Islam*, in addition to Rashid al-din's extensive programs of historiography, inherited visual traditions and the symbolic structure and language were used in Ilkhanid royal workshops. Ghazan's birth scene, while at first glance a simple visual narrative of a blessed birth, also proposes a selection of intertextual references that transformed it from a straightforward visual narrative to part of the symbolic framework in which the imagery of Ghazan as an ideal king was created. In other words, the juxtaposition of the im-

age with its history and the historical text created new layers of meaning. The painting functions similarly to the method that historians such as Rashid al-din used to narrate and orient the events of Ghazan's reign. Hence the visual and textual narratives integrate as a whole in order to form the concept of a savior king or ideal ruler.

In addition to visual narratives, the creation of symbolic images of the ideal king is another way to transmit a political message. As in the case of the Diez frontispiece, no specific narrative has been visualized. Instead, all of the image components, from the composition to symbolic motives, express the idea of *Padishah-i Islam*. The ancient form of a royal figure enthroned on a lion throne is combined with other motives to create new form and meaning in the sociopolitical context of the 14th century. Moreover, compared with literature that goes hand in hand with art in Persian culture, the Diez frontispiece is similar to a panegyric poem praising Ghazan Kan. The visual language of the painting and the imaginative expression of the concept of the ideal ruler are identical to how a poet chooses his words and applies stylistic devices. Therefore, all symbolic and aesthetic components of the image or poem follow the particular aim of making a symbolic image of Ghazan.

These two paintings which represent a king with prophetic features, illustrate the concept of the ideal ruler in which kingship and prophethood are inseparable. With all of its references, the visual representation of Ghazan's birth follows the textual and visual narratives in elevating a royal birth to a divine one. However, the symbolic language used in the Diez Album painting, as is seen in panegyric poetry, praises Ghazan as an ideal king that has been granted divine approval.

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Samarqand's Congregational Mosque of Bibi Khanum as a Representation of Timurid Legitimacy and Rulership

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Abstract

The Bibi Khanum Congregational Mosque is the largest Timurid monument in Samarqand. Commissioned by Timur himself after his military campaign in India in 1399, the architecture of the mosque can be interpreted as a visual representation of Timur's ambitions to surpass the architectural achievements of the preceding Islamic dynasties. Striving for political legitimacy beyond the legacy of Chinggis Khan, Timur imitated and even exceeded the monumental scale of the architectural ensembles in the Ilkhanid capitals of Tabriz and Sultaniyya. In an attempt to ensure the continuity of the Timurid dynasty, Timur's successors adopted Yuan iconography and visual vocabulary so as to forge an ancestral and artistic genealogy that directly related the Timurids with the Mongols via the aesthetic legacy of the Ilkhanids and the Yuan. Their cultural production thus secured the continuity of the Timurid royal patrons as just successors of Chinggis Khan.

Keywords

Timurid architecture, Mosque, Samarqand, Ilkhanid, Yuan, Ming

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Introduction

The Bibi Khanum Congregational Mosque founded in May 1399 in Samarqand was conceived as the most monumental expression of Timur's rule (1370-1405). The mosque (fig. 1) was the greatest building project initiated during Timur's lifetime and still stands today, having been restored in the 20th and 21st centuries. It is unlikely that Timur saw its completion as he died several months after the foundations of the main entrance portal were restructured. Undoubtedly, the building was completed under Timur's successors in the first half of the 15th century. This essay explores the architecture of the mosque as a representation of Timurid legitimacy related to Ilkhanid architectural prototypes in Sultaniyya and Tabriz on the one hand, and as an epitome of Timurid continuity by evoking Yuan iconography attested by the cultural exchanges between the Timurid and the Ming courts under Shah Rukh (r. 1409–1447) on the other. More specifically, this article focuses on the construction of the mosque under Shah Rukh's eldest son and governor of Samarqand, Ulugh Beg (r. 1409-1449) as an expression of his ambition for supreme legitimacy in Transoxiana. The mosque is analysed as Ulugh Beg's attempt to forge ancestral and artistic genealogy that directly related the Timurids and the Mongols via the aesthetic legacy of the Ilkhanids and the Yuan, thus securing the continuity of the Timurid empire as just successors of Chinggis Khan. After 1409, Shah Rukh moved the Timurid capital to Herat and Samarqand was attempting to preserve its primary role as a cultural and architectural centre across the vast Timurid realm.



Figure 1: *The Ruins of the Bibi Khanum Mosque at the end of the 19th century.* Postcard from the private collection of Elena Paskaleva. Publisher: Izdanie A.L. Kirsner, 1920s.

The architecture of the mosque has been discussed by several scholarly studies (Masson and Pugachenkova, *Bibikhonim*, "Shakhri"; Ratiia; Pugachenkova; Man'kovskaia; Barthold,¹ *Four studies*, "Mechet' Bibi-Khanym", "O pogrebini Timura"; Pinder-Wilson; Golombek and Wilber; Lentz and Lowry; Hillenbrand; Bulatova and Shishkina) that have all stressed on its monumentality. The massive scale of the Bibi Khanum Mosque has always been associated with Timur's struggle for power and legitimacy as the studies focus on the grandiose imagery found in both architectural projects or ruthless military deeds (Lentz and Lowry 36; Manz, "Tamerlane's Career and Its Uses"). Although envisioned during Timur's lifetime as the most significant building in the capital Samarqand, Timur did not live long enough to see the mosque's completion. Moreover, Timur may not have witnessed the final stages of the other two monumental structures usually associated with his rule: the Yasawi Shrine in Turkistan (present-day Kazakhstan) and the Aq Saray Palace in Shahr-i Sabz (present-day Uzbekistan). Based on their epigraphy and exterior decoration, the completion of both monuments can be attributed rather to the 1420s. The only surviving memorials that were completed under Timur are one or two-chamber mausoleums which were built on a considerably smaller scale. In this sense, the monumentality of the Bibi Khanum Mosque may have been ascribed to Timur by contemporary historiography (Ibn 'Arabshah; Yazdi²) and travelogues (Clavijo) in order to magnify his persona as a dynastic founder. However, the architectural evidence points out at a later completion date and most certainly to an iconographic programme developed by Timur's successors in the first half of the 15th century.

Timurid Samarqand at the Turn of the 15th Century

The great Central Asian ruler Timur (ca. 1336-1405), known in the west as Tamerlane, was the embodiment of Eurasian identity. Through political and military action, Timur created a vast empire that extended from Anatolia to India in the 14th and 15th century. He is also one of the few mortals to have given their name to a distinct architectural style that was developed by his successors on the territories of present-day Afghanistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Labelled by architectural historians as "metropolitan Timurid," this style is characterized by symmetrical open courtyard compounds with two or four *iwans* (monumental vaulted portals), large ribbed double-shell domes on high drums, extensive epigraphic programmes both in the interiors and exteriors of all structures using a variety of calligraphic scripts ranging from colossal geometric or floral Kufic to monumental *thuluth*.³ The exteriors were decorated with polychrome revetments utilizing almost all artistic techniques used in Islamic architecture such as glazed and unglazed brick, tile mosaic, cuerda seca, carved terracotta and majolica.

Timur aimed to recreate the Mongol empire and gain supremacy over the Islamic world. Although he was a member of the tribal aristocracy, he was neither a direct descendant of Chinggis Khan, nor a chief of his own tribe, the Barlas, who lived in Shahr-i Sabz. Without either of these mandates, Timur could not obtain the title of a khan, a symbol of sovereignty in the steppe, and could

1. The name Barthold is used in the article according to the common English spelling.

2. Although Yazdi's *Zafarnama* is the best-known historiographical source on Timur, it was not written during Timur's lifetime and was based on Nizamuddin 'Ali Shami's *Zafarnama*, completed in 1404, the only surviving chronicle written during Timur's reign. For more details on Timur's historiography, please refer to John Woods ("The Rise of Timūrid Historiography").

3. All author names, titles and Russian words written in the Cyrillic script, have been transliterated according to the Library of Congress (LOC) system.

not become a caliph, the supreme spiritual leader of the Islamic realm (Manz, "Tamerlane's Career" 3). Through dynastic marriages to Chinggisid princesses, Timur gained the title of a royal son-in-law (Mongolian *güregen*) and ruled on behalf of appointed Chinggisid puppet khans who had little ceremonial authority. Timurid historiography represented him as a supreme leader initiating enormous building projects and a ruler with supernatural powers; he was referred to as *Sahib Qiran* meaning lord of the auspicious conjunction (Chann; Moin). Timur's quest for legitimacy has been widely discussed in the seminal works of Beatrice Forbes Manz (*The Rise and Rule; "Tamerlane's Career"; Power, Politics and Religion*) and John Woods ("The Rise of Timūrid Historiography"; *The Timurid Dynasty; "Timur's Genealogy"*). Here, I would like to focus on the attempts of Timur's grandson Ulugh Beg to justify, and at the same time, underline the Mongol lineage of his rule in Samarqand at a time when the main capital of the empire had been moved to Herat.

Ulugh Beg was the eldest son of Shah Rukh (1377-1447) and Gawhar Shad Agha (1376-1457). Neither of his parents was of a Chinggisid descent. Shah Rukh was born by the Timurid concubine Taghay Tarkan Agha Qarakhitay (Woods, *The Timurid Dynasty* 19); Gawhar Shad was the daughter of the Timurid *amir* (military leader) Ghiyath al-Din Tarkhan, whose ancestor had obtained the honorific title of Tarkhan from Chinggis Khan for saving his life (Barthold, *Four Studies* 43; Manz, "Gowhar-Shad Agha"). Gawhar Shad was a competent ruler and the most renowned female building patron of the Timurid dynasty (Arbabzadah). All of her three sons, Ulugh Beg (1394-1449), Baysunghur (1397-1433) and Muhammad Juki (1402-1445) were intellectuals and patrons of the arts who left their profound legacy in the major Timurid cities of Samarqand, Herat and Shiraz respectively.

Ulugh Beg's name at birth was Mirza Muhammad Taraghay but very soon he received the Chaghatay designation *Ulugh Beg* meaning "Great Prince."⁴ According to Barthold, this Turkic title was used only for Timur, who was called *beg* and *ulugh-beg* meaning The Great Amir (*Four Studies* 44). It is not clear why Shah Rukh's son was given a title that could have been borne only by Timur. Ulugh Beg was born on 22 March 1394 in Sultaniyya in the *ughruq* (family camp) of Timur's chief Chinggisid wife Saray Malik Khanum, who stayed for eleven months in the former Ilkhanid capital during Timur's five-year military campaign. Additionally, between 1400-1401 and 1402-1403 the queens and the princes lived for a long time in Sultaniyya (Barthold, *Four Studies* 45). The young boy was entrusted to Saray Malik Khanum's care and most likely remained with his queen guardian until Timur's death in 1405 (*Four Studies* 47).

Saray Malik Khanum was a Chinggisid princess and daughter of the Chaghadayid Khan Qazan who controlled huge areas of Khurasan in the 13th and 14th centuries. At first, Saray Malik Khanum was married to Amir Husayn, the supreme amir of the Chaghatays with a residence in Kabul and later in Balkh. In 1370, Timur dethroned Amir Husayn and was declared the sovereign governor of the Chaghatay Ulus. Amir Husayn was killed and Saray Malik Khanum became Timur's primary wife, who enjoyed exclusive rights and respect in the Timurid family. However, Saray Malik Khanum was most certainly older than Timur and she had passed the childbearing age by 1370. The other Chinggisid wife whom Timur married in 1378, Tuman Agha, was the daughter of Qazan Khan's son, Amir Musa, the brother of Saray Malik Khanum; she also remained childless. It was only on the account of these dynastic marriages to Chinggisid princesses that Timur could

4. Timur's father was called Taraghay. East Middle Turkic was spoken in Central Asia between the 14th and early 20th centuries.

use the title of *güregen* that secured him the mandate required in order to rule across Transoxiana and Khurasan. Yet neither of Timur's Chinggisid wives bore him any children which makes the attempts of Timur's descendants to fabricate a Chinggisid lineage even more significant.

Timur consolidated his power in 1370 and chose Samarqand, an important trading hub along The Silk Road, as the capital of his growing empire. Samarqand is one of the oldest cities in the world situated in the Zarafshan Valley on the territory of present-day Uzbekistan. During the time of the Achaemenid empire (c. 550-330 BC), Samarqand was the capital of the Sogdian governors and merchants, who continued to control the trade routes from Imperial China to Byzantium until the 11th century. In 329 BC Samarqand was conquered by Alexander the Great and adopted the Greek name Marakanda. Subsequently, the city was ruled by a succession of Iranian and Turkic dynasties and by the 10th century had a population of approximately 500,000. Until the Mongol invasion by Chinggis Khan in 1220, Samarqand was a thriving urban centre with thousands of craftsmen and prolific building activity. The Mongol armies devastated the cultural layers accumulated by previous dynasties causing the city to lose, for about a century, its primary economic and artistic importance in Transoxiana.

Unlike his Mongol predecessors, Timur was focused on establishing control over the sedentary territories; the cities were his targets. In all subjugated lands he founded permanent garrisons and military strongholds, assigning governorships to individuals from among his family or loyal amirs with the governors being responsible for the enforcement of taxation on the settled populations. Thus, with an immense wealth flowing toward the newly designated capital from levy and war spoils, Timur had the means to construct an ostentatious capital city. From across all conquered provinces and urban centres, he summoned the most skilful craftsmen and artisans to Samarqand. The site to the south of the old Afrasiyab elevation was designated as the new Timurid city that quickly developed into a monumental capital. Despite the splendour of all new constructions, the court life took place in the verdant quadripartite gardens surrounding Samarqand (Golombek, "The Gardens of Timur" 141). In order to augment the importance of his capital and to profess its opulence, Timur surrounded it by villages bearing the names of the largest Islamic capitals: Sultaniyya, Shiraz, Baghdad, Damascus and Cairo (Barthold, *Four Studies* 41). By 1404 Samarqand had one hundred fifty thousand citizens (Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane* 288). Timur employed architecture and new urban solutions as a tool to legitimize his rule on a grand scale and to assert himself as an heir to major Islamic empires.

The Construction of the Bibi Khanum Mosque

According to detailed information provided in the historiographic sources by Ibn 'Arabshah, Yazdi and Clavijo, at the end of the 14th century, Timur spent his vast resources on a new Friday mosque to the south of the Iron gate in Samarqand. Timur began the construction of the Bibi Khanum Mosque after his military campaign in India; the monument meant to commemorate his conquest of Delhi. Timur set out on his India campaign in March 1398 and gloriously returned to Samarqand in April 1399. Based on the political link to India and the architectural similarities, some scholars (Welch and Crane; Golombek and Wilber 259) have attributed the design of the Bibi Khanum Mosque to the Jahanpanah Mosque in Delhi, which is also based on the four-*iwan* plan, the chosen architectural layout for Timur's own congregational mosque (fig. 2a). Although researchers usually refer only to the Delhi mosque with domed structures behind the

iwans, the compound was much larger and consisted of a *madrasa*, an additional mosque in the north section, and the mausoleum of Firuz Shah Tughluq (1351-1388). The complex was built during the reign of Muhammad Shah Tughluq (1325-1351) or perhaps his successor, Firuz Shah (r. 1351-1388).

This possible Indian artistic inspiration is additionally attested by period sources. A native of Damascus, Ibn 'Arabshah (d. 1450) was captured by Timur in 1400 and brought to Samarqand; he wrote the scathing history of Timur's rule. Although Ibn 'Arabshah stayed in the capital only for eight years, his eyewitness rendering of the last years of Timur's reign and subsequent dead provide a vivid description of the events:

Timur had seen in India a mosque pleasant to the sight and sweet to the eye; [...] and being greatly pleased with its beauty, he wished that one like it should be built for him at Samarkand, and for this purpose chose a place on level ground and ordered a mosque to be built for himself in that fashion and stones to be cut out of solid marble [...]. (222)

The campaign in India was indeed a huge military and political success for Timur, who brought back with him not only skilled workers from Hindustan but also ninety-five elephants that drew enormous carts transporting the massive stones with which the Bibi Khanum Mosque was to be constructed. The stones were used for the 480 columns, each seven *gaz* (cubits) high, which would support the shallow domes of the gallery around the main courtyard; initially the gallery was supposed to have two storeys (Man'kovskaia and Tashkhodzaev, "Novye istoriko-arkhitekturnye" 54). Carved stone was applied in the decoration of the main portal and the dome chamber. The Timurid court chronicle, the *Zafarnama* (Book of Victory), by Sharaf al-Din 'Ali Yazdi, completed in 1425, (Woods, "The Rise of Timūrid Historiography" 100) sheds more light on the auspicious commencement date of the large-scale project and the manpower required for its completion:

On Sunday, the fourteenth of the blessed month of Ramadan in the year 801 [...], the most skilful engineers and well-trained masters, at the lucky moment and most propitious time, laid its foundations. The workers and dexterous artisans, each one of which was the master craftsman of his country and unique in his realms, made manifest the subtleties of ingenuity and skill in constructing foundations and lending strength to the structure. Two-hundred men worked inside the masjid itself, such as the stone-gravers of Azerbaijan, Fars, and Hindustan; and five-hundred persons were constantly in the mountains, cutting stone to be transported to the city. The various types of craftsmen and artisans who had been gathered in the capital from all parts of the inhabited world, each one in his own assignment laboured to his utmost capacity. (Golombek and Wilber 258)

According to the description of the Bibi Khanum Mosque in *Maṭla'ī sa'dayn va majma'ī baḥrayn* (The Rise of the Two Auspicious Constellations and the Junction of the Two Seas) presented by 'Abd al-Razzaq Samarqandi (1413-1482) quoted in Yakoubovsky (279), masters from Basra and Baghdad modelled the *maqṣura*, the *sufas* and the courtyard after structures in Fars and Kirman. Silk carpets covered the open spaces. Craftsmen from Aleppo lit gilded lamps similar to heavenly stars in the inner domes of the mosque (Yakoubovsky 280).

The new site chosen and cleared for the mosque (Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane* 280) could accommodate its monumental dimensions with an open courtyard measuring 109 meters wide and 167 meters long that could hold up to ten thousand worshippers. The building is based on the four-*iwān* plan (fig. 2a and fig. 2b). The four-*iwān* scheme, marking the four cardinal points with vaulted *iwāns* surrounding a rectangular open courtyard, has been traced back to the Parthian palaces of Assur (Pope 30) and is associated with the Sasanian period (224 BC-651 AD) (Ardalan 70). Originally, the scheme was used as a palace plan representing royal and divine power. Later, with the advent of Islam and after the 10th century, the four-*iwān* plan was widely adopted for religious compounds such as mosques, madrasas, caravanserais, and domed *khanāqahs* (Sufi lodges).

Following the palace and *madrasa* architectural examples of the Seljuks (1037-1307), the Qarakhanids (the Turkic ruling dynasty of Central Asia between 999-1211 with Samarqand as their capital) and the Ilkhanids who all built four-*iwān* royal monuments, Timur may have chosen the four-*iwān* plan in order to embody his ambitions of an heir to the glorious Islamic empires. The four *iwāns* of the courtyard marked ideally the four corners of the world that were also signified by the four corner minarets.

It is unlikely that Timur would have envisaged the overall architectural design and epigraphic programme of a monument that could not directly contribute to his claims for imperial rulership across Iran and Turan. It is also plausible to look for architectural prototypes within the Ilkhanid capitals that may have influenced the Timurid architectural iconography throughout his reign. The Ilkhanids, who were descendants of Chinggis Khan, ruled Iran and the adjacent lands in Iraq and Anatolia from 1256 to 1335. In view of his endeavours to revive the Mongol empire and to present himself as a legitimate heir to Chinggis Khan, Timur may have followed Ilkhanid architectural paradigms.

In particular, the Congregational Mosque of Bibi Khanum can be analysed in connection with Ilkhanid mosques and mausoleums, erected in the capitals of Tabriz and Sultaniyya. Tabriz was the royal capital of the Ilkhanid ruler Ghazan Khan (r. 1295-1304) who converted to Islam in 1295 (Melville). Sultaniyya was the capital of his brother and successor Uljaytu (r. 1304-1316). The architectural heritage of these Ilkhanid sultans, who were born Christian, and ruled in Iran in the late 13th to early 14th centuries, bridges the artistic vocabulary of Byzantine and Islamic architecture (Askarov 30-40).

Aspiring to surpass the monumentality of the Ilkhanid capitals posed technological problems to the Timurid builders. Although the Bibi Khanum Mosque had the largest dome span in the history of Islamic architecture, according to Ibn 'Arabshah (223), the mosque was left in ruins after Timur tried to increase the height of its main entrance.

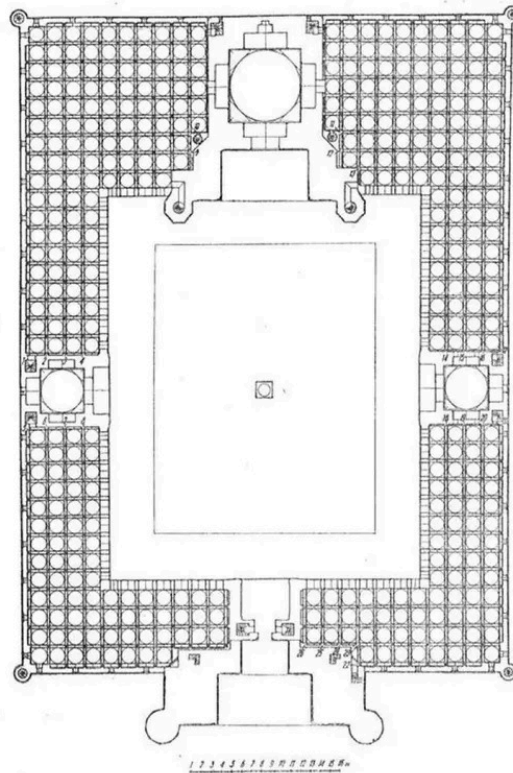


Рис. 73. Проект реставрации плана мечети Биби-ханым.



Figure 2: a) Plan of the Bibi Khanum Mosque after Man'kovskaia, 1965; b) View of the inner courtyard of the Bibi Khanum Mosque depicting the main entrance *iwān* (in the middle) and the side domed chambers, photographed by Elena Paskaleva, 2019.

After Timur came back to Samarqand in the autumn of 1404, he found out that the main portal of his mosque was lower than the portal of the adjacent *madrasa* built by Saray Malik Khanum, his chief wife. Timur immediately ordered the restructuring of the entrance *iwān* and demanded for deeper foundations to be dug. He was fervently supervising the building activities. However, Clavijo describes the health of Timur at the time (November 1404) as very fragile:

The Mosque which Timur had caused to be built [...] seemed to us the noblest of all those we visited in the city of Samarqand, but no sooner had it been completed than he began to find fault with its entrance gateway, which he now said was much too low and must forthwith be pulled down. [...] Now at this season Timur was already weak in health, he could no longer stand for long on his feet, or mount his horse, having always to be carried in a litter. [...] Thus the building went on day and night until at last a time came when it had perforce to stop [...] on account of the winter snows which began now constantly to fall... (By November) His Highness was in a very weak state, having already lost all power of speech, and he might be at the very point of death [...]. (*Embassy to Tamerlane* 284)

Timur died shortly afterwards, allegedly on 18 February 1405 in Otrar. Given his poor health and the harsh winter of 1404, it is quite unlikely that the Bibi Khanum Mosque could have been completed under his reign. Judging by the dilapidated state of the remains in the late 19th century (fig. 1), we can assume that the surviving structures—the main portal and the three domed units—were undoubtedly constructed under Timur’s successors.

The most likely royal patron to have taken over the completion of the Friday mosque, was Timur’s grandson Ulugh Beg who was proclaimed governor of Samarqand by his father Shah Rukh in 1409. Any building activity throughout the fight for succession (1405-1409) is rather improbable as the years were characterized by a depletion of the royal treasury and chaotic struggles for power within Timur’s immediate family.

Ulugh Beg reigned for forty years in Samarqand and was able to secure a safe environment in which the city flourished, allowing for several major building projects to be accomplished. The only direct reference that links Ulugh Beg with the Bibi Khanum Mosque is the monumental Quranic stand that adorns the centre of the courtyard since 1875 (fig. 3). The stand was commissioned by Ulugh Beg and was initially placed in the main sanctuary (Ratiia 32). The text reads: “The great sultan, merciful khagan, patron of the faith, guardian of the Hanafi madhab, the purest sultan, son of a sultan, himself son of a sultan, satisfier of the world and the faith, Ulugh Beg Gurgan” (Lapin’ 9).⁵

5. In 1404, at the age of ten, Ulugh Beg was married to his cousin Agha Biki, whose mother was a direct descendent of Chinggis Khan. Thus, Ulugh Beg could use the epithet *Gūrgān* (Mongolian *gūregen*), “royal son-in-law,” which had originally been used for Chinggis’ sons-in-law.



Figure 3: A woman crawling under the Qur'anic stand by Ulugh Beg, photographed by Elena Paskaleva, 2019. Stone, 230 x 200 cm.

The stand was most likely erected for the largest, and unfortunately, dispersed copy of a monumental Quran, often attributed to Baysunghur, but likely created by the calligrapher 'Umar 'Aqta (Ahmad 64). Each page measuring 1.7 by 1 meter contains seven lines of text in the *muhaqqaq* script which covers only one side of the heavy sheets which were locally produced by ladling pulp into floating moulds resting in water (Bloom 67). The Quran was thus very heavy and had to be transported with the aid of a cart.

Ulugh Beg is believed to have memorized the Quran with all seven variant readings. His Quranic stand as a material expression of piety is made of carved stone in relief and clearly bears his name. Its rich arabesques and poly-lobed details can be attributed to the iconography of Yuan porcelain prototypes that may have entered the Timurid court via the active caravan trade between Central Asia and China. With this in mind, China should not be regarded only as a trade partner as it was the home of the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) established by Kubilay Khan (d. 1294). Although Chu Yüan Chang, a humble plebeian turned general, succeeded in overthrowing the Mongol dynasty in 1368 and proclaimed himself as emperor, taking the title of Hung Wu (1328-1398), the significance of the Yuan legacy for the Timurids should not be underestimated. Under Timur, there were several embassies to Ming China. Even though the exchange of royal gifts and the intensity of the trade relations increased under Shah Rukh and Ulugh Beg (Roxburgh, "The Narrative of Ghiyath al-Din Naqqash"), the first Timurid embassy arrived in China in 1387, followed by yearly tributes of horses and camels to the Ming court. The first known Chinese

embassy to Timur was established in 1395. The Ming chronicles, *Ming Shi* and the *Ta Ming i t'ung*, and the Ming Geography *Shi Si yü ki* refer to Samarqand as the “city of abundance”, and mention “a beautiful building set apart for prayer to Heaven” situated in the north-eastern part of the city.⁶ It is highly probable that they refer specifically to the Bibi Khanum Mosque which had pillars of “*ts'ing shi* (blue stone), with engraved figures.” Even today, the stone of the Quranic stand has a blue-greyish tinge to it. According to the chronicles, “there is in this building a hall where the sacred book is explained. This sacred book is written in gold characters, the cover being made of sheep’s leather” (Bretschneider 258-270). The fact that the Ming chronicles explicitly mention the location of the richly-decorated mosque and refer to a particular Quran, only stress the importance of their artistic qualities and their symbolic association with the rulers of Samarqand.

Stylistic Ilkhanid Prototypes of the Domed Sanctuaries at the Bibi Khanum Mosque

The primary architectural innovation in the Bibi Khanum Mosque is its open courtyard compound and three domed sanctuaries: the largest one to the west constitutes the main mosque with two smaller units to the north and to the south; the exact function of these lateral chambers has never been identified (Ratiia 31). The main sanctuary contains the *qiblah* (prayer wall towards Mecca) and the *mihrab* (prayer niche) situated on the longitudinal axis. However, the *qiblah* of the Bibi Khanum Mosque is not ideally oriented towards Mecca. One argument for this orientation can be traced back to Babur who discusses the orientation of the *qiblah* of the Ulugh Beg Madrasa in Samarqand and mentions that it differs “greatly” from the orientation of the Muqatta’ Mosque, the latter of which was determined astronomically (Thackston, *The Baburnama* 58). The *qiblah* orientation of the Ulugh Beg Madrasa is almost parallel to the orientation of the Bibi Khanum Mosque (the difference between the two is about two degrees). Thus, the orientation of the main compositional axis can be related to other royal building projects in Samarqand constructed under Ulugh Beg.

The architectural design of the Bibi Khanum Mosque is unique not only because of its Timurid architecture, but also because it remains the earliest mosque compound in the Islamic world with three separate domed units. Each unit is based on a square cruciform plan with a domed interior defined by four axial arched recesses with double-shell domes resting on high cylindrical drums.

For the first time in a Timurid building, the main mosque is situated along the longitudinal axis. The earliest surviving example of such an arrangement, within a four-*iwān* plan, is the Ilkhanid Congregational Mosque at Varamin (commissioned 1322-1323, completed 1325-1326), in which the domed sanctuary dominates the whole compound (Komaroff 121-123). The concept of a prayer hall with a prayer niche opposite the main entrance was utilized already in Umayyad and Abbasid mosques (Blair, “Ilkhanid Architecture” 74).

In late 1404 Timur resided at the *madrassa* of Saray Malik Khanum while he was supervising the construction of the Bibi Khanum Mosque (Thackston, *A Century of Princes* 90). The *madrassa* of his chief Chinggisid wife was situated across the road from the mosque, with their main entrances symmetrically arranged along the new trading route that connected the Iron gate of Samarqand

6. Situating the Bibi Khanum Mosque in the north-eastern part of the city can be accurate if we regard the location of the mosque in terms of the Timurid citadel. In the present urban plan of Samarqand, the mosque is situated in the north-western quadrant.

with the new bazaar (Registan) at the beginning of the 15th century. The madrasa was completely destroyed by the Amir of Bukhara ‘Abdullah Khan II at the end of the 16th century (Man’kovskaia and Tashkhodzhaev, *Bibikhonim* 15) and only the mausoleum survived (Zakhidov 71). According to the reconstruction suggested by Ratiia (14), the madrasa was based on the four-*iwan* plan and was similar in scale with the mosque. Furthermore, Ratiia proposes that the mausoleum was situated along its perpendicular axis and incorporated into the centre of the southern wall. Zakhidov disagrees with this statement and points out the obvious disparity that the perpendicular axis of the madrasa would have stretched beyond the city wall. The present urban situation proves that the madrasa was much smaller in scale and the remaining mausoleum was most likely along its longitudinal axis (fig. 4).



Figure 4: Present view of the Bibi Khanum Mosque (to the right) and the Bibi Khanum Mausoleum (to the left). Photographed by Elena Paskaleva, 2019.

It is very difficult to determine exactly the plan of the madrasa, yet given its smaller scale, it is rather unlikely that it followed the four-*iwan* scheme. It is believed that Saray Malik Khanum herself was buried in the madrasa (Zakhidov 60-61). However, the female burials discovered at the Bibi Khanum Mausoleum in 2005 were of a later date. The trend of a domed funerary chamber within a royal madrasa was continued down into the 15th century in Khurasan, where the majority of the nobles in the court of Herat were buried in madrasas that they commissioned themselves (O’Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan* 21).

Based on the orthogonal proximity of the two buildings, we can conclude that the Bibi Khanum Mosque formed a *kosh* with the Saray Malik Khanum Madrasa. The *kosh* is an architectural ensemble of two or three buildings oriented towards each other with their main façades, generally symmetrically aligned along the same axis, forming a square between them. The earliest example of a *kosh* in Samarqand is from the 11th century and is comprised of the four-*iwan* Qarakhanid royal madrasa from 1066 built across from the *gurkhana* (burial chamber) of the Qutham Abbas shrine at Shah-i Zinda (Nemtseva). It may be possible that the Timurids imitated the compositional principle of the *kosh* in order to stress the continuity of their Turkic empire on the territory of Transoxiana.

Additionally, there are two important similarities between the Bibi Khanum Mosque and the architecture of Ilkhanid capital of Sultaniyya. The first is that Uljaytu's Congregational Mosque was built as a *kosh* across from the madrasa of his favourite wife (Blair, "The Mongol Capital" 145-146). In 1385, Timur occupied Sultaniyya, which was proclaimed capital by Uljaytu in 1304. It is very likely that Timur was familiar with the remains of the monumental Congregational Mosque which did have a four-*iwan* plan and a domed sanctuary along the main longitudinal axis if we follow the descriptions by the 17th century travellers Olearius and Struys. The latter was depicted by Matrakçı (1537-1538), Istanbul University Library, Yildiz T 5964, fol. 32r (fig. 5).



Figure 5: The Ilkhanid capital of Sultaniyya as depicted by Matrakçı in 1535. Istanbul University Library, Yildiz T 5964, ff. 31v-32r. Image courtesy of Istanbul University Library, photographed by Elena Paskaleva.

According to Rogers, Timur “admired” Uljaytu’s mosque and Timur’s architects might have been inspired by it (21). Further Rogers suggests that the Sultaniyya Mosque “was the prototype” of Bibi Khanum (21). To prove his argument, he analyses the similarity between the entrance *iwān* of Uljaytu’s mosque flanked with polygonal minarets as drawn by François Préault in 1808 (fig. 6 left) and the impressive sanctuary *iwān* of Timur’s mosque with its massive octagonal pylons (Rogers 21). In the Samarqand mosque, the main sanctuary is flanked by enormous decagonal socles and shafts (fig. 6 right). Agreeing with Rogers, Blair comments that “the portal of Uljaytu’s mosque at Sultaniyya, known only from drawings by Préault and others, closely resembles the portal of the mosque of Bibi Khanum” (Monumentality 151).

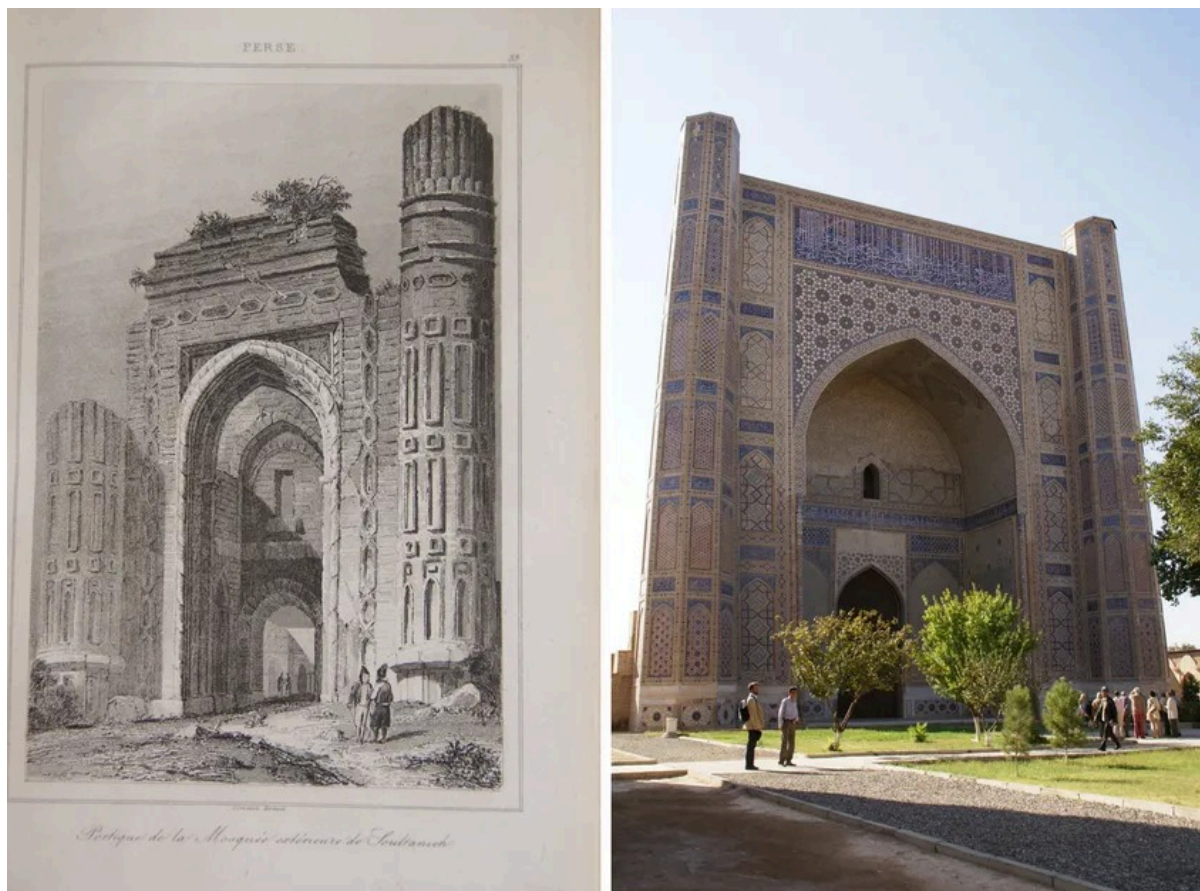


Figure 6: Left: Sultaniyya, Friday Mosque (1300s), main entrance. Print from Dubeux, Louis. *La Perse*. Paris: Firmin Didot, 1841, plate 33; Right: Main sanctuary seen from the east, photographed by Elena Paskaleva, 2019.

To recapitulate, both Timur and Uljaytu’s royal *kosh* ensembles consisted of a mosque based on the four-*iwān* plan and a madrasa; the main mosque sanctuary with a high *qiblah* dome was located along the longitudinal axis and both mosques had monumental projecting entrance arched portals with double buttress minarets. The compounds were paved and covered with multiple small domes above the galleries.

The second similarity originates in the complex around Uljaytu's mausoleum (1304-1313) which was also organised according to the four-*iwan* plan, whereby the *iwans* were connected by arcades around the courtyard and the tomb was situated in the south *iwan* (Blair, "The Mongol Capital" 144). Blair stresses the fact that Uljaytu's tomb complex followed the four-*iwan* plan of the Tabriz tomb complexes of Ghazan (d. 1304) and Rashid al-Din (d. 1318). According to Olearius and Struys, there were an adjacent *khanaqah* and a *madrasa*.

In Timur's Congregational Mosque, the corners of the rectangular compound are defined by four minarets. Sharaf al-Din 'Ali Yazdi describes them in his chronicle: "In each of the four corners is a minaret, whose head is directed toward the heavens, proclaiming: 'Our monuments will tell about us' which reaches to the four corners of the world" (Golombek and Wilber 259). Furthermore, the two monumental gates—the entrance *iwan* and the sanctuary *iwan*—are both flanked by imposing buttress-like minarets bringing the total minarets to eight. The eight minarets of the Bibi Khanum Mosque (fig. 7) might metaphorically correspond to the eight minarets of Uljaytu's mausoleum.



Figure 7: An architectural model of the Bibi Khanum Mosque depicting all domed chambers and multiple minarets. Image courtesy of the Amir Timur Museum in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, photographed by Elena Paskaleva, 2016.

Blair discusses the latter as a representation of Uljaytu's striving for broader power and authority as a protector of the Holy Cities and a leader of the Islamic world, whereby multiple minarets were interpreted as a reference to the holiest sanctuaries of Islam (Blair, "The Epigraphic Program" 72). The particular orthogonal organization of the three domed sanctuaries with an open courtyard compound, so characteristic of the Bibi Khanum Mosque, can be also traced back to Ilkhanid architectural examples in Tabriz.

The funerary complex of Ghazan Khan, the Ghazaniyya in the southern district of Shanb in Tabriz, consisted of a hospice, hospital, library, observatory, academy, fountain, pavilion, and two *madrasas* (Wassaf 382-384; Blair and Bloom 6; Wilber 124). According to Rashid al-Din, the idea of this complex known as the Gates of Piety came to Ghazan after he visited the shrines of Bastami and 'Ali (Kamola 92). The tower-mausoleum had a twelve-sided plan and was crowned by a dome (Godard 263). Wilber visited Tabriz in the 1930s and has reconstructed the mausoleum based on his measurements and on the contemporary (14th century) accounts of Ibn Battuta and Wassaf (124-126).

Analysing a miniature from Rashid al-Din's *Jami' al-Tawarikh* (BnF Supplément Persan No. 1113, 256v-257r), Wilber argues that Ghazan's mausoleum was flanked by a domed *madrasa* (to the left) and a domed *khanaqah* (to the right) (fig. 8).⁷ All three domed buildings were arranged around a central courtyard. This appears to be what Ibn Battuta describes as well: "We were lodged in a place called Shām where the tomb of Ghāzān...is located. Adjacent to this tomb is a splendid religious school (*madrasa*) and a monastery (*khanaqah*) where travellers are fed" (quoted by Wilber 125). Thus, we can conclude that the central complex of the Ghazaniyya consisted of three domed structures: the main mausoleum on the longitudinal axis, the *khanaqah* and the *madrasa* on the perpendicular axis forming most likely a *kosh*. This solution of three domed compounds oriented along two orthogonal axes is almost identical with the plan of the Bibi Khanum Mosque and the position of its domed chambers.

The Timurid dynastic ensemble of Gur-i Amir (late 14th century to 1440s) follows the same architectural configuration: the octagonal tomb, in which Timur was subsequently buried, is situated along the longitudinal axis to the south; the two-*iwan*, two-storey *madrasa* to the east and the domed cruciform *khanaqah* to the west are located along the perpendicular axis. It is highly probable that the Gur-i Amir complex also followed the architectural plan of the Ilkhanid mausoleums in Tabriz and Sultaniyya.

The *khanaqah* as part of the funerary complex testifies the elevated status of Sufism at the beginning of the 14th century. Blair notes that "in Iran, Sufism had become an institutionalized practice linked to government" (Blair, "Ilkhanid Architecture" 79). Similarly, Sufism was institutionalized during Timur's reign (Askarov 26-29). As a result, royal *khanaqahs* were commissioned in close proximity to royal (funerary) *madrasas*. In Herat of the 15th century, many patrons built joint complexes of *madrasas* and *khanaqahs*, whereby the teachers were "moving freely from one to the other" (O'Kane, "Poetry, Geometry" 23).

7. The manuscript was produced for the Timurid ruler Shah Rukh (1377-1447); it carries an imprint of Shah Rukh's library seal on fol. 191a. The text is a copy of the first volume of *Jami' al-Tawarikh* recording the history of the Mongols from Chinggis Khan until the reign of Ghazan Khan (r. 1295-1304).



Figure 8: The Ghazaniyya, Tabriz, representation of the mausoleum (in the centre), adjacent madrasa (Islamic school, left) and khanaqah (Sufi lodge, right). Rashid al-Din. *Jami' al-tawarikh* (Compendium of Chronicles), dated ca. 1420–1430, MS Supplément Persan 1113, ff. 256v-257r., 320 × 230 mm. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

URL: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8427170s.r=Persan%201113%2C?rk=21459;2>

Accessed 18 Sept. 2023. Image courtesy of Bibliothèque nationale de France, photographed by Département de la Reproduction.

According to O’Kane, this architectural phenomenon “is strong evidence of the way in which Sufism had penetrated the fabric of Timurid society in Herat” (23). Likewise in Samarqand, the *khanaqah-madrasa kosh* ensembles were repeated at Gur-i Amir and at Registan Square by Ulugh Beg.

Timur visited Tabriz in 1385 during his campaign in Iran (Rashidzada 472). He went, in particular, to the district of Shamb where the Ghazaniyya was situated, and recited a Quranic verse at the mausoleum followed by a visit to the *madrasa* and the *khanaqah*.

The following analysis shows that Timur had first-hand experience with the Ilkhanid monuments in Tabriz and Sultaniyya. His grandson, Ulugh Beg was born in Sultaniyya and, as shown above, spent considerable time at the beginning of the 15th century in the city in the family camp of Timur’s chief Chinggisid wife Saray Malik Khanum. Appropriating the architectural monumentality of the Ilkhanid capitals in the Timurid stronghold of Samarqand would have reinforced the Timurid claims as just heirs to the Mongol Empire.

Epigraphic Parallels between Ilkhanid and Timurid Royal Patronage

Timur saw himself as a reviver of the Mongol Empire. Accordingly, his successors might have copied Ilkhanid royal epigraphic programs in order to stress the continuity between the Timurid and the Mongol empires. I would like to focus here on very specific references to ‘Ali that may have reinforced Timurid claims for just rulership across the Islamic world.

The genealogical references connecting Timur to ‘Ali can be attested only in the extensive Timurid genealogy presented at Gur-i Amir. There is one inscription on the marble plinth over the tomb in the crypt, superseded by a lengthy religious text, and one on the jade cenotaph in the main mausoleum (Semenov, “Nadpisi na nadgrobiiakh”, vol. 2, 49-62; “Nadpisi na nadgrobiiakh”, vol. 3, 45-54). The latter must have been created after 1425 when Ulugh Beg brought the jade piece from Mongolia in 1424, i. e. about twenty years after Timur’s death (Woods, “Timur’s Genealogy” 85). A partial English translation of the inscription reads:

[...] And no father was known to this glorious (man), but his mother (was) Alan-quva. [...] She conceived him through a light which came into her from the upper part of a door and it assumed for her the likeness of a perfect man.⁸ And it (the light) said that it was one of the sons of the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Ali son of Abu Talib [...]. (Grabar 78)

According to Grabar, these inscriptions can be interpreted as the key to Timurid ideology and legitimization on three different levels (78-79). Firstly, Chinggis Khan and Timur both have the same predecessor, the Mongol Amir Tumananay. Timur descended from Tumananay’s son Kachulay and Chinggis Khan from Tumananay’s other son Kaudy. This lineage directly relates Timur to Chinggis Khan and thus presents him as a legitimate heir to the Mongol Empire. Secondly, Timur’s family tree can be traced down to ‘Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad. Through this genealogy Timur’s rule is legitimized across the whole Islamic world. Thirdly, ‘Ali is a central figure in the mystical tradition of Sufism which flourished under Timur and his descendants (Muminov 2001). Although Grabar states that “it seems clear that he [Timur] was under strong Shi’ite influences” (79), I argue that the references to ‘Ali should not be understood as a Timurid affiliation to Shi’ism. They can be rather seen as part of the Timurid family’s attempts to profess themselves as righteous leaders of the religious community and as the ultimate religious authority across the Muslim world. As summarized by Woods: “linking the houses of ‘Ali and Chinggis Khan, this claim combines the two most powerful notions of dynastic legitimacy current in the post-Abbasid, late Mongol Iran and Central Asia” (Woods, “Timur’s Genealogy” 88).

Timur’s shortened genealogy formed part of the foundation inscription of the Bibi Khanum Mosque (Sela 15). It was engraved on the arch of the entrance *iwān* that partially collapsed during the devastating earthquake on 5 September 1897. These inscriptions were, however, recorded, translated and published by Lapin’ in 1895 (9-10). At present, the entrance *iwān* has been rebuilt with three parallel pointed arches following the earliest photographs. However, the foundation inscription has not been restored.

8. Quran (19:17).

Golombek and Wilber have published a translation of the carved stone inscription above the mosque entrance reconstructed by using photographs from the *Turkestan Album*:

The great sultan, pillar of the state and the religion, Amir Timur Gurgan b. Taraghay b. Burgul b. Aylangir b. Ichil b. al-Amir Karachar Noyan, may God preserve his reign, was helped (by heavenly favor) to complete this jami' in the year 806. (258)

In the Bibi Khanum Mosque, the shahada "There is no God but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah" is depicted in Kufic script on the inner side of the vaulted arch of the main entrance and on the rotated square dado. The same inscription can be found on the *madrassa* in the Ghazan Khan ensemble in Tabriz (fig. 8). According to Wilber, the *madrassa* is represented to the left of Ghazan's Mausoleum on Supplément Persan 1113, 256v-257r; the inscription reads (125):

لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله

There is no God but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah

Square Kufic inscriptions reading "Ali" executed by glazed brick in the *banna-i* technique can be found on several Timurid buildings. At the Aq Saray palace at Shahr-i Sabz, "Ali" can be seen on the vault of the entrance *ivan* and at the top of the cylindrical shaft of the northern *guldasta*. The Kufic on the entrance vault reads "Allah, Muhammad" in light blue glazed brick and "Ali" in a stylized frame of dark blue glazed brick. The base of the dome of Uljaytu's mausoleum is embellished by a circular band comprising trefoils in rectangular Kufic reading "Allah, Muhammad, 'Ali" (Blair, "The Epigraphic Program" 44). This similarity is striking and points to the epigraphic and artistic influences that Ilkhanid monuments might have had on Timurid architecture.

Furthermore, there are at least three other square Kufic inscriptions reading "Ali" on the Bibi Khanum Mosque: on the back side of the pylons of the main sanctuary and to the right of the entrance to the sanctuary as a dado reading "Muhammad, 'Ali". These inscriptions have not been restored, as can be seen on the earliest photographs of the mosque taken by Bogaevskii from the 1870s and by Sarre from around 1900 (Paskaleva, "The Timurid Mausoleum" 185). Unfortunately, the exact position of the inscriptions and their proper organisation in a catalogue has never been published.

Another similarity between the epigraphic programmes of Uljaytu's Mausoleum and the Timurids, who completed the construction of the Congregational Mosque in Samarqand, is the usage of Surat *al-Baqarah* (Quran 2). When discussing the monumentality of Bibi Khanum, Babur comments that "the inscription on the mosque, the Koranic verse, 'And Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the house' etc., is written in script so large that it can be read from nearly a league away" (Thackston, *The Baburnama* 57).

Blair detects partially the same inscription in interlaced Kufic around the interior dome at the level of the windows at Sultaniyya: "(And when Abra)ham, and Ishmael with him,/ raised up the foundations of the House:/ 'Our Lord, receive this from us; Thou art/ (the All-hearing, the All-knowing)" (Quran 2:127-128; Blair, "The Epigraphic Program" 53). The Throne Verse (Quran 2:255), was also used on the arch of the north portal at Sultaniyya, as well as on the soffit of the east bay in the in-

terior (Blair, “Monumentality” 158). As part of the epigraphic restorations between 1991 and 1996, the two verses of *Surat al-Baqarah* (Quran 2:127-128) were added on top of the main sanctuary *iwān* of the Bibi Khanum Mosque (fig. 9). There is no material evidence (archival photographs or prints) that illustrate the original inscription. It was lost prior to the documenting efforts of the Russian archaeologists; the Uzbek restorers used the reference by Babur as a guide (Paskaleva “Epigraphic Restorations” 10).

The square Kufic inscription around the drum of the main sanctuary dome at Bibi Khanum reads لله البقاء (Everlastingness). The same inscription, in a trefoil and repeated five times covers the base of Uljaytu’s exterior dome at Sultaniyya (Blair, “The Epigraphic Program” 44).

All these examples illustrate a carefully crafted genealogy and selection of key epigraphic passages from the Quran used in earlier Ilkhanid royal commissions that have been appropriated to legitimize the Timurid rule beyond the borders of Transoxiana. In the years after Timur’s death and the ensuing struggle for succession, there was an ideological necessity to position the already weakened empire within a context of global rulership. Additionally, Ulugh Beg’s dominion was marginalized when his father Shah Rukh moved the Timurid capital from Samarqand to Herat in 1409. Although the newly crafted genealogy linking Timur to Chinggis Khan, as well as to ‘Ali, has been recorded in subsequent literary sources, the only two buildings that actually display it as part of their epigraphic programme are the Gur-i Amir Mausoleum and the Bibi Khanum Mosque. The dating of the inscriptions to 1425 indicates that Ulugh Beg was the royal patron who commissioned them.



Figure 9: New epigraphic band on the main sanctuary depicting the two verses of Surat *al-Baqarah* (Qur'an 2:127-128), photographed by Elena Paskaleva, 2019.

Chinese Artistic Influences Introduced by Ulugh Beg

While several authors have translated and commented on the epigraphy of the Samarqand monuments built under Timur and Ulugh Beg (Lapin'; Blair, "Monumentality"), there are surprisingly few studies on the ways that Chinese influenced Timurid iconography. These references can be exclusively observed in the architecture of Samarqand (Borodina, "Dekorativnaia sistema"; Paskaleva, "Remembering the Alisher Nava'i Jubilee"). These exchanges have been widely described as Islamic *Chinoiserie*, a process that started much earlier sometime at the end of the 13th century (Kadoi, *Islamic Chinoiserie*; Crowe "Some Timurid Designs"; Necipoğlu, "From International Timurid to Ottoman"). However, the Chinese motifs and craftsmanship techniques were not directly appropriated, and were instead transformed in accordance with local Islamic aesthetics, availability of materials and pigments, and craftsmanship traditions. The westward transmission of Chinese designs was further encouraged by the thriving artistic, political and commercial exchanges between the Ming and the Timurid courts in the first half of the 15th century. These creative endeavours resulted in a sophisticated cultural production across the Turco-Persianate world.

In Samarqand, there are multiple examples of appropriated Chinese iconographic designs in the interior and exterior decoration of the major Timurid monuments built during the first half of the 15th century. Unfortunately, the majority of these artifacts have been either lost or were heavily restored in the 20th and 21st centuries.

According to Borodina, the papier-mâché technique was imported from China and it was applied for the first time in the Bibi Khanum Mosque in Samarqand (“Dekorativnaia sistema” 117). The cotton paper was inexpensive, locally produced and sometimes repurposed for decoration. The architectural details were pressed into *ganch* (a form of local gypsum) moulds and consisted of seven or eight sheets of paper fixed together with starchy vegetable glue. In addition, papier-mâché was the only decoration applied on the interior domes. Each detail of the relief decoration was separately created and attached with iron nails onto the walls in order to form larger compositions. The upper surface of the papier-mâché ornaments was primed with *ganch* and gilded; the papier-mâché was used to create a relief surface under the gilding. In separate instances, *ganch* reliefs pasted over with paper were also applied under the gold surface. Examples of the latter practice can be found not only in the Bibi Khanum Mosque but also in the Tuman Agha Mausoleum at Shah-i Zinda and at Gur-i Amir.

The Samarqand paper was famous for its quality and durability, and was even exported. There were paper mills and storage facilities along the water canals (*aryks*) coming out of the Siyob bazaar in the north-west of Samarqand. Borodina suggests that the same type of local paper was also used for transferring architectural epigraphy onto the walls. At Gur-i Amir, the papier-mâché was introduced during the redesigning of the main interior in the 1420s; the pre-existing contra relief applied during the first stage of construction (early 15th century) was considered to be “unimpressive” (Borodina, Report C6931 5). Clearly, the usage of papier-mâché can be attributed to the rule of Ulugh Beg, which proves that the interior decoration of the Bibi Khanum Mosque was executed under his patronage by using techniques that could have only developed in Samarqand in the first half of the 15th century.

If we further analyse the traces of interior decoration used in all three domed chambers of the Bibi Khanum Mosque, we can identify the outlines of rectangular arched surfaces framing landscape designs and floral ornaments in blue, yellow and red-brown. The remnants are barely discernible due to fire damage that has caused irreversible loss of the original decoration. In particular, the southern domed chamber was completely redecorated in 2015-2016 (fig. 10 and fig. 11). In this new visual vocabulary, there are freely drawn plant motives and wispy fruit-laden trees arranged in parallel polylobed or star-shaped medallions above the dado. However, it is not very clear whether these were merely transferred from similar decoration from the adjacent Bibi Khanum Mausoleum or based on actual recoded traces found earlier in the mosque.

The interior wall surfaces of the main mosque are also decorated with fine graphic details highlighted in blue over the white stucco surface, including spirals and twelve-pointed stars. We can identify similarities with other buildings erected by Ulugh Beg, such as the Gök Gunbad Mosque in Shahr-i Sabz (1435), and several mausoleums at the Shah-i Zinda necropolis including the Double-dome Mausoleum (known also as Qadi Zada al-Rumi, c. 1430s). Although the Shah-i Zinda mausoleums have been extensively restored in recent years, remains of the cobalt blue spiral ornaments on their white stucco walls and muqarnas vaults can still be discerned.



Figure 10: Interior of the southern domed chamber of the Bibi Khanum Mosque before restorations, photographed by Elena Paskaleva, 2013.

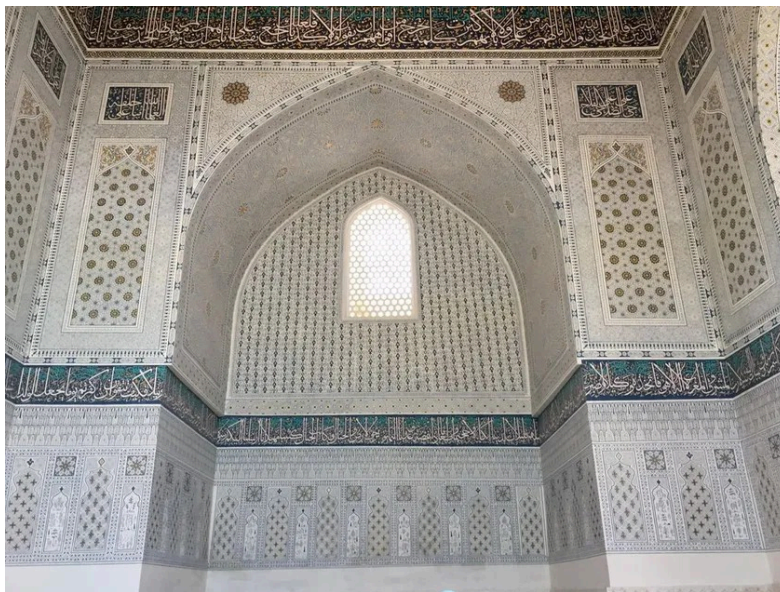


Figure 11: Interior of the southern domed chamber of the Bibi Khanum Mosque after restorations, photographed by Elena Paskaleva, 2019.

The above examples were used in the interior decoration of mausoleums and mosques. Although they can be associated with Islamic representations of the abundance of Paradise, their colour schemes and geometry is reminiscent of Chinese lobed and quatrefoil medallions. The appropriation of Yuan and Ming designs in the architectural decoration of the Timurid monuments is a process that started with the arrival of Chinese artefacts into the Timurid artistic workshops and their transformation via the medium of paper into decorative stylized and geometricized patterns which could be quickly executed with the dexterity of a brush. Their inclusion led to a form of decoration that was economical and vibrant.

Conclusion

Although conceived by Timur as the greatest large-scale project in his imperial capital Samarqand, the Bibi Khanum Mosque remained most likely unfinished by the time of Timur's death in 1405. By analysing the design of the three domed chambers, framing minarets, and gigantic *iwans*, I have stressed the architectural parallels with major royal commissions by the Ilkhanids in their capitals Tabriz and Sultaniyya. This article also focused on the epigraphy and the Chinese decorative patterns used in the mosque. My main objective was to show that the Bibi Khanum Mosque was probably completed under Timur's successor and ruler of Samarqand Ulugh Beg in the first half of the 15th century. In order to legitimize his reign and to stage himself as heir to the Mongol empire, Ulugh Beg skilfully combined the monumentality propagated by the dynastic founder and derived from Ilkhanid architectural models with the reinterpretation of Yuan and Ming visual vocabulary. The dynastic ideology coded in his buildings in the form of genealogical inscriptions directly relating Timur to Chinggis Khan and 'Ali justified Ulugh Beg's mandate to rule. The Bibi Khanum Mosque can thus be interpreted as an artistic manifesto elevating not only the building itself but also the capital of Samarqand as the centre of Islamic rulership beyond the realms of Transoxiana.

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Art as an Image of the Shah Art, Rhetoric, and Power in Shah Tahmasp's Letter to Sultan Selim II

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Abstract

In 1566, after Sultan Suleiman's death, Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524-1576) sent condolences and congratulations to Sultan Selim II (r. 1566-1574) along with several gifts, including a magnificent Quran and an exquisite illustrated Shahnama copy, noteworthy in Iranian art history. However, the letter accompanying these gifts has often been overlooked, perceived as containing mere courtesies.

This letter marked a significant exchange between Safavid kings and Ottoman sultans, with participation from secretaries across Iran. Its authors aimed to portray an idealized king and their notable characteristics, demonstrating that the actions of these rulers (Sultan Suleiman, Sultan Selim, and particularly Shah Tahmasp) aligned with this ideal. Art-related activities were among these characteristics.

The authors detailed the Safavid king's palace, garden, and the artistic gifts to highlight their connection with the king's ideal image. This article explores the letter as a literary and artistic medium, delving into its intricate rhetoric as a tool for representing royal authority. Additionally, it addresses how the authors' descriptions of artworks as integral to the king's image conveyed political meaning, illustrating how art reflected royal power in public and political spheres.

Keywords

Safavid Art, Shah Tahmasp, Rhetoric, Sa'adatabad, Shahnama

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The Historical Background of the Letter

After the death of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent in 1566 and the succession of Sultan Selim II (r. 1566-1574), Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524-1576) sent a letter to the Ottoman court condoling the death of Sultan Suleiman and congratulating the succession of Sultan Selim. During this period, the Safavid and Ottoman empires enjoyed a relatively stable peace after the signature of the Amasya Peace Treaty in 1555, which ended years of bloody conflict between the two empires. Shah Tahmasp's letter was written in response to a message from Sultan Selim. It was a typical diplomatic missive regarding the relations between the courts and expressed adherence to the provisions of the peace treaty and interest in its continuation after the death of Sultan Suleiman.

Nevertheless, Shah Tahmasp's letter was unique. According to Safavid historians such as Qadi Ahmad Qumi and Rumlu, the Shah summoned scribes and secretaries from all over Iran to write the letter over a period of eight months (Qumi 477; Rumlu 567). It is the most extended letter written in the history of Safavid-Ottoman relations with its length reaching seventy cubits (about eighty meters) (Qumi 478). It was written in a magnificent style and sent to the Ottoman court with the king's high envoys and numerous precious gifts (Qumi 478).

The caravan, consisting of seven hundred men and nineteen thousand beasts, was greeted gloriously upon its arrival in Edirne early in 1568, two years after the death of Sultan Suleiman. Ottoman historians and ambassadors from other countries who were at the Ottoman court recorded this event and the associated celebrations (Arcak 33-73). Several images of the ceremony have been depicted and recorded in Ottoman historical manuscripts such as Selim Khan's *Shahnamei* by Lokman (Topkapi Palace Library, MS 3595, fols. 53v, 54r). The letter was politically successful, maintaining good relations between the two empires, and ensured peace which lasted until the death of Sultan Selim II.

Amongst the gifts sent along with the letter, two splendid works drew the attention of art historians, namely *Mushaf 'Ali*¹ and Shah Tahmasp's *Shahnama*, arguably the most glorious illustrated *Shahnama* in Iran. However, little attention has been paid to the letter and its content.² From an art-historical perspective, one of the notable aspects of this letter is the description of the gifts that accompanied it, including Shah Tahmasp's *Shahnama* and some other art productions related to Shah Tahmasp's court workshop. These kinds of descriptions are not very common in historical texts, and art historians have yet to consider this material. Colin Mitchell's research, published primarily in his book *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran: Power, Religion and Rhetoric* (2009), is a rare example of studies on the rhetorical features of Shah Tahmasp's letter and its political significance and meaning. Mitchell also deals with the letter's descriptions of artworks and focuses on the relationship between rhetoric and politics by showing how rhetorical and literary strategies construct and legitimize the image of royal power. However, his study focuses solely on the rhetorical description of these artworks in relation to royal politics and rhetoric and does not take into account the independent results about the works themselves and their relationship with politics. Mitchell concentrates on the political importance of rhetoric, showing how, in this letter, many

1. The Shah's letter does not mention if it is the *Mushaf* written by the first Shiite Imam, 'Ali. Other sources do not precise either (Arcak 62).

2. Only two studies focused on the contents of the letter: Babayan 326 and Mitchell 128-137. Arcak's detailed account of the event provides no reference to the content of the letter.

imaginative metaphors and illustrations serve to legitimize the basis of royal power (128-137), as if Shah Tahmasp, in the beautiful and literary expressions, reminds the letter's readers and his rivals, of the foundations for the legitimacy of his monarchy.

On the basis of Mitchell's research, this article centres on the letter's descriptions of artworks in order to understand the political intentions of their creation. In what follows, I examine these descriptions and bring to the fore the political meaning of the king's image representations. Furthermore, I suggest that Shah Tahmasp's letter, as a piece of rhetoric, may also be considered a work of art with a political dimension.

The Letter and its Content

In appearance, the letter contains long, tedious, and highly exaggerated praises about Sultan Suleiman, Sultan Selim, and Shah Tahmasp himself, which are recited repeatedly and can be found throughout the text. It mainly announces the continuation of good relations with the Ottoman court and the establishment of the peace of Amasya. Among the Safavid sources, the whole letter is recorded only in the *Khulasat al-Tawarikh* of Qadi Ahmad Munshi Qumi, one of its authors (Qumi 478).³ It is interesting that in a copy of Qumi's book dated some hundred years later, the scribe did not include the text of this letter and wrote:

This letter was contained in the original manuscript and did not add anything to the listeners' ears and intelligence except discomfort and pain. A letter that is seventy cubits long and is approximately fifty thousand verses and not read in a meeting does not bring pleasure to the listeners, and the readers do not benefit from it. Each phrase is repeated a thousand times. Hearing a non-religious man's condolences is nothing but boredom. It was not written for that reason. (Qumi 478)⁴

This may be why modern historians and scholars have paid little attention to the letter's content. However, resituating the letter in the context of the political relations of the early modern era and the various tools used to shape political relations between governments, brings to the fore its relevance. One may conclude that the main objective of the kings' prolonged and repeated descriptions and praises is to depict the "image" of the king. The authors, with exaggerated credits to three sultans and kings, suggest that they are the supreme and perfect example of the idea of the kingdom. It does not matter if these descriptions do not correspond to reality; the writers' conception of the image they create of an ideal kingdom is what is essential. These constructions are relevant for the understanding of the era's historical events. It is clear that this constructed image also had great political significance in its time as the expression of the foundations of royal legitimacy and of a powerful kingdom. In this article, my concern is not that much the image of the king than the artistic aspects of the image. When the authors describe their ideal image of the

3. Abdulhosein Navaie, who collected all the letters related to the reign of Shah Tahmasp, does not mention the letter cited by Qumi. Instead, another relatively shorter text is quoted after Faridun Beg (Navaie 460-471). Did Qadi Ahmad mention the main letter? The answer is hard to say, but other historical sources highlighted the letter's significant length (see, for example, Rumlu 567). Nonetheless, what we are looking at here is not about the authenticity of the letter quoted by Qadi Ahmad but rather his descriptions of artworks and the significant role he considered for them.

4. All translations are my own unless stated otherwise.

kingdom, they are also referring to the components related to the realm of art. Or in other words, they valorise art forms as an aspect of the idea of the ideal kingdom. Behind the artworks created under the sponsorship of the court, one discovers the hidden political meanings of which this letter is evidence. The artistic elements mentioned in the letter are the king's rhetoric, his palace with its paintings, decorations and gardens and Shah Tahmasp's *Shahnama*.

Royal Rhetoric

The crucial feature of Shah Tahmasp's letter is its rhetoric;⁵ indeed, the main purpose of sending it was to present and offer royal rhetoric. This is why such a wide range of authors came together to write it, and that so much time was spent writing it. Thus, this letter was not a long missive in vain. Rumlu, in a short phrase, describes the letter as "marked by its rhetoric (*balaghat*)" (567). Rhetoric was associated with activities such as poetry, painting, and music and was not excluded from art as in modern Western art history.⁶ The most basic rhetoric text in the ancient world is Aristotle's *Rhetoric*; which clearly correlates to Aristotle's treatise on poetics, and mutual references are made in the two books. The same relationship appears in Islamic tradition and in the texts of Muslim philosophers such as Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina (Ibn Sina). Outside the Islamic philosophical tradition, rhetoric and poetry were always considered jointly. If poetry was accepted as an art and placed next to the painting and other mediums, so should rhetoric. Thus, rhetoric is not only close to poetry but also is related to calligraphy. It suffices to mention the 15th-century *Dastur al-Katib fi tai'n al-maratib* (*The Guide for Writers to Understand Orders*, Shams Monshi 1390), a critical book and manual on the art of the literal and rhetorical writing (*Insha*) for royal secretaries. Calligraphy is the central theme of the second chapter, which is very similar to the calligraphic treatises of the Safavid period. One may note that Qadi Ahmad Qumi, a master of rhetoric as seen in the Shah Tahmasp letter, is himself the author of one of the rarest artistic treaties in the Safavid period, *Gulistan-i Hunar*, where he recites the detailed descriptions of masters of painting and calligraphers. There was a close connection between the rhetoricians, calligraphers, and painters in the Safavid royal court. Therefore, rhetoric can be considered as an artistic medium, and sending such letters can be understood as sending a very delicate, precise, and eye-catching work of art. But why then would such a work have been sent to the Ottoman court?

5. I mean the classic definition of rhetoric as given in the Oxford dictionary: "The art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing, especially the exploitation of figures of speech and other compositional techniques". (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., 1989)

6. Even in the 18th century, Kant in his classification of "fine arts" included rhetoric and placed it next to poetry (151). But Hegel excluded it in his list of fine arts in the 19th century (82-90). Subsequently, rhetoric was gradually no longer considered much in the histories of art.

In the letter, rhetoric is mentioned as one of the essential components of the image of the king. This letter begins with exaggerated descriptions of the characteristics of the young King, Sultan Selim, and long phrases are used to depict his rhetoric. Such descriptions and praises have no basis in reality, especially concerning the young king, but it was expected that when praising the king, part of this praise should be praising of his rhetoric:

Blessed is the wise man [Sultan Selim] who, at the time of his invigorating speech, blossoms the buds of meanings in the garden of speech and makes the garden of speech green and watered it by the rain of the cloud of eloquence and the clear water of rhetoric. From his unique expressions, the breezes of attention and honour and the scents of love and affection blow on the garden of hearts of sincere believers, and the breezes of divine approval and the fruits of infinite conquests reach the souls of the faithful lovers. (Qumi 491)

This perfected rhetoric is then attributed to Sultan Selim's letter, which is praised as:

A letter with the smell of amber, whose charming face and musk line represent the face of *Hoor 'Ein* (Houries). Chinese artists envy this letter because of its perfected ornament and beauty. And the soul in the description of it sings that: your literacy drew on the pages of the days the Amber Lines / The case of Ferdowsi's zeal and jealousy of Chinese art. (Qumi 493)

The interesting point in this description is the comparison of the art of rhetoric with the art of Ferdowsi as a poet, the skill of Chinese painters and the art of calligraphy: rhetoric should be seen as an artistic medium.

One may also note the key phrase in the middle of the description connecting rhetoric and kingship: "The word of the kings is the king of the word (*kalam al-muluk, muluk al-kalam*)" (492). This phrase, a very common proverb in Iranian and Muslim cultures, shows precisely that one of the necessary characteristics of the king is his rhetoric, and that royal speech should be considered as the king of rhetoric. The reason for this particular emphasis on rhetoric was its place in politics and ethics in the pre-modern world. As stated in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and continued throughout the Islamic philosophical tradition such as Ibn Sina's *Rhetoric*, the most critical qualities of rhetoric are "deliberative, forensic and epideictic" (Aristotle 1358 b; Ibn Sina 55) i.e., its use in legal, judicial, and ceremonial affairs. Rhetoric is a tool for governing society, and it derives its power from its influence due to its use of imagination and aesthetic devices. The king must use the power of the word if he wants to govern the society properly, subdue the people, and put the enemies and rivals in their place.

From this last point, it is clear that rhetoric is not merely a literary-aesthetic matter. Royal speech and parole gain power and influence because they effectively cover the political content intended by the king in the guise of eloquence and rhetoric. The Shah's rhetoric is an aesthetic formulation of the monarchy's ideology. It is this special position of rhetoric that should be acknowledged in the letter of Shah Tahmasp. Here rhetoric has the vital task of showing "the actual image of the king" as "the ideal image of the king", and this idealization is achieved through imaginary devices that form the "rhetoric of the text", thus consolidating the king's power. Let us now turn to other artistic components in the letter that describe the king's image.

The King's Palace and Garden

Shah Tahmasp's letter to Sultan Selim II begins with many praises of the young Sultan, and continues by recalling his father, Sultan Suleiman, giving a lengthy description of his last war, in the middle of which the elder Sultan passed away. By narrating the reaction of Shah Tahmasp and the Safavid court to the news of the Sultan's death, the authors bring the narration and attention to Shah Tahmasp in an interesting way. The beginning of the third part of the letter is dedicated to Tahmasp, his court, and the description of the gifts that were sent, as a narrative strategy to draw the image of Shah Tahmasp. What is particularly remarkable in this part, is the number of descriptions devoted to Sa'adatabad, the palace and garden of Shah Tahmasp in Qazwin. Sa'adatabad (literary the place of happiness) was a small new town founded in Qazwin by the king. Reviewing the letter's descriptions and other Safavid sources reveals the crucial importance of Sa'adatabad for Shah Tahmasp. The city and its extensive urban plan in Qazwin were undoubtedly a source of inspiration for Shah Abbas I. and his new capital Isfahan.⁷ Sa'adatabad's descriptions commence with the feasts given in Qazwin when the news of Sultan Suleiman's succession reached the Safavid capital: "It spread a celebration of happiness on the porch that was founded by happiness and looked like Iram Palace, which had not been seen there since the construction of the heavens." (Qumi 510)

The letter's authors equate the royal palace and its gardens with Paradise, and the descriptions of the inhabitants of Sa'adatabad's happiness and celebrations that took place continue over several pages. The description of the king's palace, garden and their prosperous lives is part of the king's image and reflects and symbolizes his power, property, peace and the security that his government exudes. The letter's readers are thus obliged to consider these as part of the purpose of constructing Sa'adatabad itself as the palace and its garden provided such a position for Shah Tahmasp.

While the letter does not pay much attention to the characteristics of the palace's structure, three aspects are highlighted: decorations and wall paintings of the palace, the Sa'adatabad Gardens, and the palace's Square. Looking first at a description of the palace's decoration, we see the description of the paintings on the walls of the palace:

God Almighty. What a wonderful building! What a refreshing palace; Its doors and walls, with its paintings and decorations, are more beautiful than the Chinese painting; The master painters painted it, and its paintings are rare in the whole world. They have skilfully unveiled a banquet on the door and wall everywhere in the palace. On its wall flowers are made by plaster and from the clay flowers bloomed. (Qumi 511)

'Abdi Beyk Shirazi, the famous Safavid poet in service of Shah Tahmasp's court, gives precise descriptions of the wall paintings in his *Jannat-i 'Adn* (Gardens of Paradise), which give us a better idea of the palace's paintings. According to 'Abdi Beyk, they were mainly lyrical scenes that served as part of the royal pleasure-seeking atmosphere and provided a colourful and attractive environment. As we shall see, this function of court paintings finds a parallel in the garden's function.

7. On Shah Tahmasp's Qazwin, see Babaei 47-55.

The description of the palace's garden serves as another significant part of Shah Tahmasp's letter presenting several details:

What can I say about the garden of Saadat? Saadat turns fortune towards me. It is adorned like the garden of Heaven; in it are fruits of every kind you may wish. This odiferous garden is like paradise; its water is from the streams of Heaven. (Qumi 519; Mitchell's translation)

Further in the letter, the Sa'adatabad garden is compared with the gardens of Paradise: "Sa'adatabad which is equal to the rose-garden of Iram and the garden of Paradise and similar to heavenly gardens in the hereafter." (Qumi 520) Shah Tahmasp paid particular attention to the garden in Sa'adatabad, and mainly to the construction of the palace. A reason for the importance bestowed upon this garden by the king is that he ordered 'Abdi Beyk to describe it in a complete and literary way. *Jannat-i 'Adn* is full of detailed descriptions of Sa'adatabad, and particularly its gardens (see Losensky 1-29).

Interestingly, the letter not only describes the garden, its vastness and the variety of its trees and plants, but also the royal pleasures occurring in these places:

In those paradisiacal fields, where the sun and moon meet, flasks of silver and goblets of gold are filled with liquor mixed with cloves and cinnamon in commemoration of: "And they will be given [in Heaven] a cup of wine mixed with zanjabil." [76; *Al-Ensan* (the Man): 17]. The moon-faced cup-bearers held; gilded porcelain decanters. The decanter was happy with its fortune; because the hands of the rosy-cheeked ones were on its neck. And the goblet's mouth has stayed open out of happiness; because it has kissed the lips of the coquettish ones. From every direction, the youthful ones who are like the servants of heaven—who have girded themselves with the belt of submission—carry porcelain dishes full of fruits [in accordance with 56: 32-33], "and fruit in abundance whose season is not limited, nor its supply forbidden." (Qumi 521; Mitchell's translation)

As it is clear from this passage, the pattern evokes the Islamic texts' descriptions of Paradise, where all kinds of foods and drinks and all sorts of sexual and non-sexual pleasures that are usually forbidden and prohibited in Islamic law are found in the garden. As Mitchell highlights: "Openly hailed as a second paradise, Sa'adatabad is lauded for much more than its seraphic setting, and we find its denizens cast in a distinctly eschatological light. [...] The soteriological implications of Tahmasep imperial garden indeed border on self-indulgence." (Mitchell 132)

All these details found within the text about the Sa'adatabad garden leave no doubt that the authors of the letter have made its description an essential part of the image of the King and present the splendor of his palace in direct competition with the palaces of Ottoman kings. What is the importance of these gardens for the image of the King? The answer can be found in *Jannat-i 'Adn*: "Shah, who is the shadow of God (*zil Allah*) in all things; His garden is also an example of Paradise." ('Abdi Beyk 157)

In this verse, it is stated that the king is the shadow of God on earth, and since Paradise, with its strange descriptions in the Quran and Islamic texts as “the garden of God”, the king, like God, has a garden similar to him. The attribution of Islamic gardens to paradise has been frequently mentioned in contemporary research on Islamic art, and is typically accompanied by a mystical and spiritual meaning. Nevertheless, these Safavid gardens have the opposite meaning, signifying worldly power and earthly pleasures. In Islamic culture, “earthly paradise” has a reprehensible meaning and is attributed to people like Shaddad, who were enemies of God and were annihilated by him.⁸ However, the Safavid kings “rightly” own these heavenly gardens with all their pleasures because they are the shadow of God on earth. This concept of the king, which originates in the Persian idea of the Just Ruler, is different from the dominant Islamic image of the Caliphate (Babaie 11). The concept of kingship was developed in Iran before the Safavids but peaked under their rule. Thus, Shah’s garden as an earthly paradise is a particular part of the image of the Persian king, which serves as a demonstration of his celestial power.

Considering Isfahan’s royal gardens, Babaie specifies “the architectural accommodation of feasting [as having] represented a markedly idiosyncratic practice of absolute rule in the early modern age.” (Babaie 1) Shah Tahmasp’s letter confirms this claim. This political content of architecture was also effective: the vivid descriptions of travellers and foreign ambassadors of the royal gardens and the pleasures they saw in it offer us insight into how they were influenced and impressed by the Shah’s image (Babaie 224-239). These descriptions are very similar to the descriptions of Shah Tahmasp’s letter of Sa’adatabad garden and show the gardens of Safavid kings as an extraordinary and dreamy place and a sign of the Shah’s glory, wealth, and power. The third part of the description of Sa’adatabad is related to its square, which we will discuss in the next section, in relation to the royal gifts which accompanied the letter itself.

The *Shahnama* and Other Gifts

As mentioned above, precious gifts were sent to the court of Sultan Selim II along with the letter. The most remarkable of these gifts was Shah Tahmasp’s *Shahnama* though magnificent pieces of jewellery were also offered. According to Ottoman historians and foreign ambassadors who attended the gift-giving ceremony, the gifts looked very dazzling (Arcak 66). Naturally, sending such gifts was typical between royal courts as a part of political diplomacy. However, this does not necessarily justify Shah Tahmasp’s offering of gifts of such quality and rarity. As a masterpiece of Persian art, one would imagine that the royal *Shahnama* would have been kept in the Safavid royal treasury. We know that Shah Tahmasp had a taste in arts and even had some training in painting (Rumlu 488). The most significant masters of painting, calligraphers and illuminators were in charge of this masterpiece. The king undoubtedly recognized its high artistic, historic, and mercantile value. There are varying theories as to why the Shah offered the royal *Shahnama*: Qazwini proposes that it was the king’s repentance (231), as a main motivation for the gift. Others, such as Robert Hillenbrand, suggest that a “change in priorities of Shah” may have been caused by the good relationship between the two courts, while Arcak argues that the “Safavid Shah intended to proclaim his superiority as patron of the arts.” (71). Mitchell also suggests that “the presenta-

8. A personage associated with the legendary town of Iram, to whom is attributed its foundation (Webb).

tion of this unsurpassed *Shahnama* reinforced clearly the profile of the Safavid ruler as a cultural patron par excellence to the young ascending sultan" (129). It is therefore interesting to take a closer look at what the letter says about the royal *Shahnama* as a gift.

In general, the letter's authors use a narrative technique to describe the royal gifts. Their descriptions come right after "the arrival of the good news" Sultan Selim's succession to the Safavid royal court, where joy extended beyond the palace and into the "four sides of Saadat Square and the new bazaar that was built" (Qumi, 514). It is in this bazaar that the shopkeepers and the artisans displayed their excellent goods; the letter continues by describing what was offered in these shops, which corresponded to the gifts that were sent with the letter:

Each group of artisans decorated their shops separately. The jewellers hung their jewels beautifully, and every kind of jewel was found in large numbers, including rubies and diamonds (*yaqut, la'al, dorr*). Very expensive swords and crowns, each worth as much as a country's tax, were decorated with various jewels. (Qumi 515)

In this indirect method of narration, beautiful and praiseworthy rhetoric is used again. On one hand, the letter enumerates the gifts, describes them in detail and expresses their value, while on the other, it does not mention that they are gifts, seemingly to hide the boastful character of the description. Other points can be deduced from this type of expression: unlike the previous two cases, these gifts are not defined as properties of the king or the royal court but as objects that are in "Saadat Square" and in its bazaar's all over the country.

This description attests to the comfort and enjoyment of the palace and garden. It shows that outside the palace, under the rule of the Shah, all craftsmen and artisans (*har senf mardum-i sani' u sharif*) in Iran were so prosperous that such unique gifts were found in every market. There is a reference to Shah Tahmasp's position as a supporter and promoter of arts and crafts: "To shorten the speech: the supreme justice of *Shah Adel* (Just King) watered the field of hope of friends" (Qumi 519).

These depictions of objects are related to their beauty, value, and price. Their beauty has been compared with natural and celestial objects: "Pleiades (*Suraya*) is ashamed of the jewellery necklaces, and the sea is ashamed of the beautiful diamonds. The beautiful golden patterns of the swords are more beautiful than the moon and the sun. Beautiful sweethearts (*Butan*, i.e., the gifts) flirt in stores and are at war with each other, but not a real war. Everyone has adorned themselves with gold, and the heavens are jealous of them" (Qumi 515). However, the most detailed descriptions are dedicated to the *Shahnama*:

When the atelier of bookbinding was prepared/a great rise arose from the city. The atelier is like a cypress in the garden/it is a new rose from a rose garden. From that atelier—that good-natured cypress/the rose garden of paradise is ashamed what an atelier! which was the envy of the abode of faeries/From the image [of the atelier], reason was stupefied This youth [i.e., book] sitting in the atelier/who is [such] an image that reason is perplexed by it The face of this youth [i.e., book] is so unique/that Bihzad went into a trance by its image when the dust of the down [on his lip] turns black [i.e., when his script is written]/no

one will care anymore about the calligraphy of Yaqüt in every ornament and beauty, in every way and manner/piled up a hundred sections [of the book] From the poems of the well-known Firdausi/who had done justice to the word in the age. A *Shah Namah* was proffered/ and his atelier was beautified by this gift it was gilded and illuminated most gloriously/it was bound with a hundred ornaments. Its script was written by the master all over/its writing is illuminated like the light of the eye. From the work of the pupils who have trained with *Zarin-qalam*/each page had a design sketched on it one painting was done by Bihzad/But he departed and left behind regret (Qumi 516; Mitchell's translation).

This excerpt refers to how the *Shahnama* was prepared, and in particular, to Behzad's key role. The latter is described as the one who "painted for kings" (*az bahr-i shahan nemudi raqam*) i.e., he is a "painter of kings" (Qumi 516).

Most of these descriptions are related to the beauty of this work, which surpasses all other works of art before it. Therefore, the significant status of this work was fully confirmed and acknowledged. Although there is no specific reference to the Shah in the various metaphors and similes that describe this work, one should recall that the title is significant *Shahnama* (Book of Kings) and inherently illustrates imperial power. The Safavid kings wanted to show that the *Shahnama* was one of the sources of their legitimacy and the letter's authors distinguished this book as the highest among all of the other books and gifts. In a letter that is supposed to depict the power of the Shah and its elements, the description of *Shahnama* also finds a suitable place: the "Book of the Shah." Furthermore, throughout this letter, the content of *Shahnama* forms one of the primary sources of imagery that have been used to describe the royal greatness and authority or the origin of the Shah's legitimacy: the critical figures of *Shahnama* (Kei khusraw, Jamshid, Fereydun, Darab and Rustam) are used frequently in order to describe Suleiman and Selim.⁹

From the point of view of the letter's authors, who naturally reflected the court's view, this *Shahnama* had great value and importance. The craftsmanship of the *Shahnama* showed the skill of the royal workshop, and the book's high value and content formed the basis of the legitimacy of the Safavid kings. The detailed description of the *Shahnama's* value and its illustration in Shah Tahmasp's letter, which depict the image of the king, all attest to the political dimension of the *Shahnama's* production. Thus, one of the primary purposes of sending the royal *Shahnama* was to remind the young sultan of the ancient foundations of the legitimacy of the Safavid kings and its continuation.

9. Mitchell considers the prominence of the *Shahnama* discourse significant in this work and sees it as an alternative to the Shiite discourse, which is practically absent in this letter (134).

Conclusion

In current research on Islamic art, little value has been given to historical texts and documents by considering them as works of art. In this article, I have examined one of these texts, a letter, the study of which reveals the multiple dimensions of Persian art during the Safavid period. As I have shown, the main goal of Shah Tahmasp's letter to Sultan Selim II was to depict the idea of the Shah as understood in the Safavid court. In this depiction, the Shah has a combination of attributes that date back to the image of the Shah in ancient Iran. The king is the shadow of God on earth, and his vast power and politics are manifested in the actions and works that emanate from him. The letter depicts various aspects of royal power and implicitly states how each of these aspects reinforces and expands the idea of the Shah. Some of these works and actions are related to the realm of royal art and architecture. The content and form of these artworks are described as royal power. Examining this letter reveals the complex interrelations between power, thought and art behind the court's constructions, for which little textual evidence is available. Furthermore, one should consider rhetoric along with painting, calligraphy, and architecture and understand this letter as a result of the art of rhetoric as that pursues the same political goals. In the royal court, patrons of art viewed these works as manifestations of their power, and saw, in their creation and exchange, forms of empowerment and the expansion of the basis of their legitimacy.

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The Sacred King in the Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama* The Tree as a Generative Idea of the “Idea of Kingship”

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Abstract

This paper aims to trace the pre-Islamic Zoroastrian concept of “royal divine glory” (*farr*) through its visual translations within the Iranian manuscript cultures in the Safavid period, specifically in the illustrations of the *Shahnama-yi Shahi* in the 16th century. Reviewing the *longue durée* idea of Iranian kingship perceived within the Safavid royal ideology in the reigns of the first two monarchs, we delve into the *Shahnama* paintings to see the artists’ assets for showing the divinity and dignity of Iranian kings and how they managed to mark a difference between the profane and Shiite iconographies. We took as case studies nine illustrations of Zahhak’s story, the most tyrannical legendary King in Shah Tahmasp’s *Shahnama*. Indeed, to analyse the artistic manifestations of the Royal *farr*, we examined the scenes where the “true” king is literally absent.

Keywords

Farr, Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama*, Zoroastrianism, Natural Elements, Plane Tree, Cypress

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Introduction

In Zoroastrianism, the ancient Iranian religion, the concept of *farr(ah)* (lit. “glory, (good) fortune”),¹ particularly its specific form *xwarrah ī kayān/farrah ī kayān* (“royal auspiciousness/glory”),² presents among other things the divine recognition that gives dignity to a king and makes him legitimate to reign over the people and the world (Farridnejad, *Die Sprache der Bilder* 340-347). According to the *Avesta* (Yt. 19), royal *farr* is reserved only for a certain circle of gods and humans, namely Ahura Mazdā (the supreme god of the Zoroastrian pantheon), other divine beings (e.g. the *frawahrs*³ and the Yazatas), the Soshyans (the eschatological redeemers), the prophet Zarathustra as well as the mythical kings of the Kayanid dynasty (Farridnejad, *Die Sprache der Bilder* 341; Humbach and Ichaporia, 30-57; Hintze 22). It is clear from this division that the bestowal of the “royal glory” (*farrah ī kayān*) was of special significance as a symbolic act for the political as well as religious Sasanian (224-651) kingship ideology during late antiquity (Farridnejad, *Die Sprache der Bilder* 341).

One of the last important literary and ideological treatments of the concept of the *farrah ī kayān* was developed under the Sasanians, as it is stated in the *Kārnāmag ī Ardaxšīr ī Pābagān* (“Book of the Deeds of Ardashir, Son of Pabag”), a Middle Persian prose text that narrates the life story of Ardashir I (r. 224–239/40), his ascent to the throne, as well as the battle against the last king of the Parthian Empire, Ardawan IV (216–224); a battle which led to Ardashir’s victory and the founding of the Sasanian Empire in CE 224. The visual “translation” of “royal *farr*” is also attested within Sasanian royal art, most specifically in the monumental reliefs, which date mainly to the 3rd and 4th centuries. The so-called Sasanian “investiture scenes” were one of the most popular themes of the early Sasanian reliefs, which generally show the kings receiving the symbol of the *farrah ī kayān* from the gods as a sign of legitimation and divine confirmation (Farridnejad, *Die Sprache der Bilder* 332-333).⁴ These themes remained popular in Iran until the 19th century.⁵

Being the official state religion of the last great Persian Empire before the advent of Islam, Zoroastrianism has survived after the fall of the Sasanian Empire as a minority religion with great cultural and religious impacts on Islamicate Iran as well as the Persianate world. Among the fundamental ideas of both religious and cultural importance, Ferdowsi’s *Shahnama* (Book of Kings), which stands on an older tradition of the previous *Shahnama* and the Sasanian *Khwadāy-nāmags*, was an important source for preserving and transferring the pre-Islamic mythological, cultural, and religious motives of the older Zoroastrian tradition, including *farrah ī kayān*. For instance, the myth of Jamshid in the *Shahnama*,⁶ delivers the central myth, which reflects the character and function of *farr*. Jamshid is privileged and legitimized by his divine *farr* and rules the world, until

1. The paper employs the following language abbreviations: Av. = Avestan, MP = Zoroastrian Middle Persian (Pahlavi), and NP = New Persian.

2. Av. *kauuaēm xʷarānah-*.

3. Av. *frawuašj-*.

4. For a detailed analysis of the Sasanian investiture reliefs, see Farridnejad, *Die Sprache der Bilder* 338-359.

5. For some examples in the Safavid era, see Allen and Carey; for Qajar art, see Motaghedi.

6. Av. Yima, with the epithet *xšaēta*, MP. Jam.

he loses it through sinful commitments. Indeed, *farr* is not everlasting and can also be lost. Furthermore, not all the kings have this divine privilege; some, like Jamshid, lost it by their arrogance and vanity, and some, like Zahhak, never had any at all.

In Ferdowsi's *Shahnama*, *farr* appears as a light radiating from the King's face. However, in Persian-Islamic artistic tradition, enlightened faces belong to the Islamic saints. From the 16th century onward, particularly, the Prophet Muhammad's and Shi'i imams' faces were covered with a luminous veil or fire flame showing their holiness and divinity. The same period coincided with the emergence of the Safavid dynasty (1501-1733) and the production of one of the noblest and most majestic illustrated *Shahnama* in Iranian history.

Created for the second Safavid king, Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524-1576), the royal 16th-century *Shahnama* is one of the finest manuscripts produced in the Islamicate world. Although indebted to the technical and artistic achievements of the previous periods, the visual experience of Shah Tahmasp's *Shahnama* generated a new dialogue between different visual forms, people, and natural elements. The manuscript thus provides the most ideal artistic experience seen in Persianate manuscript paintings, which continued until the modern era (Welch; Hillenbrand, "The Iconography of the Shah-Nama-yi Shahi"; Canby). Since the visual manifestation of *farr* was already used within Islamic ideas, one may wonder how it has been shown in the *Shahnama*'s profane illustrations. Indeed, one of the very first illustrations of Shah Tahmasp's *Shahnama*, on the praise of the Prophet Muhammad and *Ahl al-bayt* (the Prophet's sacred family), portrays them with veiled faces with golden flames surrounding their heads (fol.18v).⁷ What were the artist's methods used to represent the secular idea of *farr*, which was already engaged and employed as a religious concept?

In looking for an answer, we decided to search for the visual manifestation of the very concept of "divine glory" by specifically observing its "absence". To find the idea of kingship perceived within the Safavid royal ideology, we examine the paintings in which the true and legitimate King is absent. We then compare the outcome with other illustrations of Shah Tahmasp's *Shahnama* and other 16th and 17th-centuries illustrations. Doing so will help us understand how the idea of Iranian kingship and its manifestations are precisely "narrated" in the pictures of the Just Ruler and in his absence. Reviewing the scenes related to Zahhak's reign, the most tyrannical legendary king ruling in Iran, and its nine illustrations in Shah Tahmasp's *Shahnama* seems to be an appropriate starting point. Zahhak's myth demonstrates, *par excellence*, the reign of misery and darkness in the absence of a legitimate Iranian king. It symbolized an age marked by sorcery and the dark magic of demons and tyrants in the absence of divine *farr*, which caused long periods of sorrow and misery.

7. "Parable of the Ship of Shi'ism," fol. 18v, from the *Shahnama* (Book of Kings) of Shah Tahmasp, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, MET.1970. 301.1: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/452110?searchField=AccessionNum&ft=1970.301.1&offset=0&rpp=40&pos=1>. Accessed 30 Aug. 2023.

Zahhak's Story: A Synopsis

A detailed description of the thousand years of reign of terror of the serpent king Dahāg⁸ as well as his demonic genealogy is preserved within the Zoroastrian Middle Persian (Pahlavi) texts, among others in *Dēnkard* (9.21.12-16) and *Bundahišn* (31.6). In the *Shahnama*, Zahhak (an Arabized form of MP. Dahāg) is also portrayed as a demonic and cruel non-Iranian ruler of Iran.

The story of Zahhak begins during the reign of Jamshid, a legendary divinely glorified Iranian king much appreciated in the *Shahnama* for granting peace, generating justice and prosperity in the world, as well as creating artifacts and handicrafts. Near the end of his 700-year-reign, proud of his long-life achievements, he began considering himself not only the absolute ruler of the world but its creator. His decline then started as his *farr* was withdrawn.

Jamshid lost his wisdom and good fortune, and his reign fell in chaos. Meanwhile, in the Arab lands, located on the western border of Iranian territory, lived a young but diabolic prince named Zahhak, who began his reign by murdering his noble father under the auspices of Ahriman ("demon," God's adversary in the Zoroastrian tradition). At the beginning of his reign, Ahriman reappeared again and kissed Zahhak's shoulders, where two diabolic and fierce serpents appeared and to whom young human brains soon became the daily feed. Zahhak also forcibly married Jamshid's two beautiful daughters (or sisters) after defeating and killing him. Ruling with murder and injustice for one thousand years, Zahhak one night had a nightmare predicting the birth of a new king gifted by the lost divine *farr*, who would put an end to Zahhak's tyranny and life. The newborn king's name was Fereydun⁹, a descendant of Jamshid. With the help of the heroic rebel Kava, the blacksmith, Fereydun was able to wrest the kingdom from Zahhak and release the Iranian land from his tyranny. According to the legend, Zahhak is still chained in Mount Damavand, until the end of time, when he will finally be killed.

Zahhak's Illustrations in the *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp

*The Death of Shah Mardas*¹⁰

The Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama* illustrates this story as occurring in a very green garden, just as it is mentioned in the text: "King Mardas owned a fine orchard, and he would go there in the dawn's darkness, to wash his head and body, and to pray." (54)¹¹

A green garden with cypress and trees in flower (probably almond and peach) are shown here; a spring-blessed garden attesting to the King's good fortune. He is, however, now lying dead in a pit dug by Eblis (the Qu'ranic designation of the Devil), who filled the pit in with soil before going on his way. Two lines of the text on four colons effectively show the soil covering the deep pit. In a red costume, the King's servant is biting his finger as a sign of wonder and sorrow; he leads the

8. Av. Aži Dahāka; MP. Az[i]dahāg; NP. Azhdaha.

9. Av. Ōraētaona, MP. Frēdōn.

10. Folio 25v from the Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama*, Khalili Collection, London, MSS 1030, <https://www.khalili-collections.org/collections/islamic-art/khalili-collection-islamic-art-the-death-of-king-mirdas-mss1030-folio25/>. Accessed 30 Aug. 2023.

11. All translations are by Dick Davis.

eyes to two cypresses in the garden, who alongside the curving branches of the three blossom trees point to the real culprit: “the evil offspring son who broke faith with his noble king father” (54) and became complicit in his murder. This breaking faith from the father is shown very well in the architectural plan of the King’s palace: Zahhak is located in a tidy balcony outside the main building, whereas a woman belonging to the king’s household is shown inside. The dark blue sky may show the time of the day, the dawn’s darkness where the King Mardas used to pray; it may also serve as a presage, forewarning the reader of the coming dark days.

*The Snakes Appear on Zahhak’s Shoulders*¹²

Zahhak is illustrated in the center of the image, framed in a closed and tidy architectural setting (fig. 1). Leaning on a cushion, the two fierce snakes jump out of his shoulders, threatening the men gathering around the young king. The latter are probably the doctors giving their opinions to the miserable king who looks distressed by his anguished brows and eyes, and who is gesturing towards the snakes with both hands. Whereas all the men in the palace show their surprise and bewilderment by the hands’ gestures, there is one young man, in the bottom left corner, grabbing his head with two hands; he is recalling the following verses of the story, where the King orders sacrificing humans for taking their brains for his snakes.

The scene is undoubtedly very colorful, and the environment seems, at first glance, to be joyful. Carpets and different types of tiles lavishly decorate the interior of the palace and there are two magnificent mural paintings on the niches, showing two angels bringing wine and food in the golden vessels. These angels, the divine messengers, are certainly derived from the pre-Islamic reliefs, and have been employed several times in Persian-Islamic painting; they are specially seen in illustrations of the Prophet Muhammad from the 13th to the late 14th centuries, saluting him, bringing the divine light, perfume, and glory to the God’s latest *élu*.¹³

They are, however, blocked and stagnated in their frames in this painting with no access to the seated King; the blue and white tiles and the golden window arch barricade the angels’ descent. They look somewhat frozen, recalling the “idea” of the Divine who is no longer existent.

The window behind Zahhak shows a barely bloomed tree and a purple hollyhock. The window frame, however, cuts the tree whose bottom branches, those near Zahhak, are dried and dead. A look at the flower shows a tragic end as the snake in Zahhak’s left shoulder is biting and cutting it savagely. The dark stormy clouds also announce the woeful fate in the golden outdoor sky.

As is the case for the lavishly decorated pavilion, nature in the garden seems joyful. We are still in the reign of the Great Jamshid, just like the tree shown in the backside of the painting; even if Jamshid is now disgraced and his *farr* is removed, the world enjoys the last moments of peace and prosperity. However, Zahhak would find the hidden Jamshid and cut him in half, just as the window’s frame behind him cuts the tree.

12. Folio 26v from the Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama* (between 1522-1535, Tabriz), attributed to Sultan Muhammad, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMOCA). Reproduced in *Shahnama-yi Shah Tahmasp*, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, 2021, 29/308.

13. For a detailed study on Prophet Muhammad’s images see Gruber, *The Praiseworthy One*.



Figure 1: *Iblis Kisses Zahhak's Shoulder and the Snakes Grow*, folio 26v from the *Shah Tahmasp Shahnama* (between 1522-1535, Tabriz), attributed to Sultan Muhammad, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art. Reproduced in *Shahnama-yi Shah Tahmasp*, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, 2021, 29/ 308. Photographed by Mohsen Mohamadkhani for Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art.

*Zahhak Receives the Daughters/Sisters of Jamshid*¹⁴

The dragon head shape of the throne's feet and the tiger heads under the balcony on the right side of the palace may recall Zahhak himself described as a serpentine/*Azhdaha*/dragon creature in the Arab Lands (56) and his reign which lasted:

a thousand years, and from end to end the world was his to command. The wise concealed themselves and their deeds, and devils achieved their heart's desire. Virtue was despised and magic applauded, justice hid itself away while evil flourished; demons rejoiced in their wickedness, while goodness was spoken of only in secret. (58)

Overall, there are many convoluted arabesques on the decorative program around Zahhak; on the curtains, the throne, the white cushion, the tiles, and even on the princess's tunic, as if the arabesques are tying up her arms and imprisoning her. Just like the snakes are turned toward the King and encircling him, so are the decorations in the center of the image. The large arabesque in the lower part of the throne also retreats from the snakes' curves. Outside the center of the image, the decorations are more geometric and less invading.

The large window is removed, and heavy curtains replace the descending angels seen in the mural paintings; the divine messengers are now literally occulted. Instead, a fine tableau of a golden jar and flowers on a white background is framed on the left wall. A *nature morte*, which may recall the symbolic idea of glorious nature, is now dead and firmly framed.

The garden on the right side of the page is essentially unchanged from the previous scene; the same trees, maybe as the souvenir of Jamshid's reign, are recalling other heirs, his daughters. It even seems that the large *chenār* (plane tree) behind the palace walls with two main branches alludes to Jamshid and his two daughters/sisters. As we see below, representing a "true" king and/or the "idea of Iranian kingship" by a tree and their descendants by flowers or the tree's branches is reiterated several times in other Safavid illustrated books and paintings.

*Zahhak's Nightmare*¹⁵

Zahhak, who so far was covered with gold and had the most prestigious and central place in the illustrations, is now retired in the second plan on the upper left side, as small and weak as other characters in the composition. He seems undersized in his high walled chamber. Zahhak looks even more feeble, old with a white beard, and cut off by the balcony's golden railing. This golden rectangular is the only majestic part that depicts Zahhak as king; even Zahhak's snakes seem less frightening. One may also note that the two green supports that hold the balcony outside the building are no longer decorated by a tiger or dragon's head.

14. Folio 27v from the Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama*, Khalili Collection, MSS 1030: <https://www.khalilicollections.org/collections/islamic-art/khalili-collection-islamic-art-zahhak-receives-the-daughters-of-jamshid-mss1030-folio27/>. Accessed 30 Aug. 2023.

15. Folio 28v from the Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama*. MIA, MS.41.2007: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Unknown,_Iran,_16th_Century_-_Page_from_the_Shahnama_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg. Accessed 30 Aug. 2023.

The composition is filled with human figures of the same size as Zakhak, semi-dazed and semi-shocked by the King's cry. Zakhak is surrounded by his female household and one of Jamshid's daughters/sisters, Arnavaz. An ornate closed door behind him seems to block access to the King's chamber, suggesting a complex issue with no apparent solution.

The natural landscape still generates symbolic ideas, facilitating the story's reading and interpretation. A golden crescent moon shines in the dark blue sky in the middle of spiral white clouds. This narrow section of nature in the middle of the scene with a cypress and a blossom tree seems to belong to another space and time than that of the garden outside of the palace on the right side of the illustration. The contrast of pinkish flowers on the dark blue sky illuminates this small part of the painting, whereas the trees in the garden, barely bloomed, seem somber and less magnificent.

In this landscape, one finds the true meaning of Zakhak's nightmare explained in the accompanying verses: "soon, a new hero will be born; he looks like a tree as high and green as a cypress heading up to the moon and blossoms like the fruit tree in the Spring" (61). Fereydun, a new king, will end Zakhak's tyranny, just as the glorified trees spring out in the middle of Zakhak's palace.

*Zakhak's Fate is Told*¹⁶

Zakhak's palace, showing the throne room, consists of a high-walled building that surpasses the upper framework of the text (fig. 2). According to Ferdowsi, Zakhak's palace had walls "shone like the planet Jupiter in the heavens and were so high that they seemed to reach for the stars" (68). A high *ivan* (a large vaulted hall, closed on three sides and open to a court on the fourth) decorated by blue and polychrome tiles shows a large barely decorated room with white walls. At the center of the piece stands a huge golden throne whose gray-bearded beholder is now fainted, bare head with his feet under the throne.

Narrower than in the previous scenes, the building only occupies half of the composition; thus, more ground is given to nature. A mostly devoid hilly landscape shows only two parterres, and a dark blue sky occupying the higher part of the scene sits harmoniously with the building's blue decoration. Nevertheless, a delicate blossom tree is rising behind the barren hill, its pinkish flowers shining in the sky like the stars, recalling the pinkish flower in the last scene. This tree is so high that it actually reaches the spiral-shaped white clouds. Two cypresses and another flowering tree complete the outside scene, as if announcing the arrival of the other tree behind the hill.

16. Folio 29v from the Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1970.301.4.



Figure 2: *Zahhak's Fate is Told*, folio 29v from the Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama* (between 1522-1535, Tabriz), attributed to Sultan Muhammad, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1970.301.4. Photo courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Public Domain.

*Zahhak Slays the Sacred Cow Barmaya*¹⁷

The golden and feathered-crowned Zahhak, the King leading the carnage, is mounted on a light grey horse, slaying Barmaya, the sacred cow provided milk to Fereydun for four years. Zahhak's men are killing other animals. In the upper left part of the painting is a building where Fereydun once lived, now abandoned, as Fereydun left to settle down on Damavand Mountain. The open doors, windows, and empty balcony perfectly show the uninhabited house. Zahhak will burn and raze it after terminating the massacre of the animals. Nonetheless, the building's garden looks vibrant, green, and joyful. There are three cypress trees located behind the tall plane tree, only one of which is ornate with white almond blossoms.

The idea of a tree as a symbol of the true king is again emphasized in this episode. Zahhak (shown without the snakes) occupies the center of the page, framed by a barren desert hill. However, his size and colors are not on par with the tall green *chenār*, the oriental plane tree raised at the top of the hill just above him. In contrast to the area around Zahhak, there are several flowers and greenery around the silver river (now oxide), which flows from a spring at the foot of the tree.

All these elements narrate the following chapters of the story; the golden sky announces the glorious days which will be brought by Fereydun and his "Jamshid's imperial *farr*", represented here by the plane tree. The three cypresses announce in turn the descendants of Fereydun, his three famous sons: Iraj, Salm and Tour. As Ferdowsi recounts, Salm and Tour become the kings of other lands in Turan, and murder their younger brother Iraj, the King of Iran, here shown by the blossom cypress.

Thus, nature and its elements, mainly trees, seem to substitute the hallowed radiant-faced king(s), promising the "idea" of a true king. Fereydun, a descendent of Jamshid, is figuratively absent in this painting, as was Jamshid himself absent in previous pages, but a tall green tree symbolically represents them both. Nature, furthermore, continues to anticipate the story.

*Kava Tears up the Letter*¹⁸

Zahhak, with a white beard, sits on his golden throne, his black snakes fierce and tormenting him. Zahhak looks at Kava, standing in a blue tunic with his famous blacksmith leather, tearing up the testament drafted by Zahhak, which attested to his justice and kindheartedness (fig. 3).

As soon as he leaves Zahhak's palace, Kava gathers men around him seeking Fereydun, and the decline of Zahhak takes the final turn. Nature in its magnificence, with natural or supernatural elements, announces this near victory. This scene presents the most prosperous and joyful nature among the illustrations of Zahhak's story. The hill in the garden appears as a most luscious symbol of Spring where the blossoms and many other trees are grown; tufts of grass and flowers covering the green hill. Not only is the sky golden with blue clouds, but the latter are pointing to three descending angels. They are no more the frozen images fixed and hung on the walls, but active and bringing *farr* and fortune.

17. Folio 30v from the Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama*, Khalili Collection, MSS 1030: <https://www.khalilicollections.org/collections/islamic-art/khalili-collection-islamic-art-zahhak-slays-the-sacred-cow-barmayah-mss1030-folio30/>. Accessed 30 Aug. 2023.

18. Folio 31v from the Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama*, TMOCA, 31-V.



Figure 3: *Kava Tears Up Zahhak's Letter*, folio 31v from the Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama* (between 1522-1535, Tabriz), attributed to Qadimi, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Reproduced in *Shahnama-yi Shah Tahmasp*, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, 2021, 34/303. Photographed by Mohsen Mohamadkhani for Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art.

This painting's composition recalls another episode from Fereydun's reign.¹⁹ In both paintings, the kings sit on a golden throne surrounded by their men, with a garden on the right side of the page. Both kings' thrones are under lavishly decorated tents, but where the demons surround Zakhak's upper parts of the tents, Fereydun's tent is attended by angels. The angels are indeed shown in both paintings. In Fereydun's, they are situated in the interior and the main part of the illustration, floating in the air and pouring light to Fereydun. However, in Zakhak's scene, the angels are speaking with an observer behind the hill; they are also situated in the margin of the painting and not in its interior, delimited by the sections of text. Whereas in Fereydun's scene, the angels are the active actors of the scene, in the Zakhak's, they have a secondary and not yet performed role.

*Fereydun Strikes Zakhak with the Ox-headed Mace*²⁰

Here, one last shot of Zakhak's palace located in Jerusalem is presented, inhabited now by Fereydun. He removed the evil charms and witchcraft from the palace, and liberated Jamshid's beautiful daughters/sisters from Zakhak's dark magic. They both are shown sitting on the throne as they accompany, day and night, the new King of Iran.

The throne chamber is the same as in "Zakhak's fate is told" (fig. 2); both buildings have a large and high *iwan* decorated with blue and polychrome tiles, a white wall behind the throne, and silver windows on each side of the walls. However, the wall behind the throne in this current scene shows a slight alteration in its decoration. Whereas the walls behind the throne are entirely white in the previous scene, here, the scenes of *girift-u-gir* (lit. caught and stuck) between the lions and gazelles are painted in blue on the walls. Thus, even if nature is somehow tangibly absent, it virtually exists as an image on the walls, recalling the real fight happening on the bottom side of the painting where Fereydun strikes Zakhak with his ox-headed mace.

Moreover, the Angel Soroush²¹ is now literally accompanying Fereydun—as also mentioned in the text—descending vertically from the sky. Just above his head, as if he recites the divine words, is written in a masterful *Naskh* inscription on the top of the arc of *iwan*: May all your efforts be at your pleasing, God of the universe protects/bless you (*bi kam-i tu bad hama kar-i tu, khudavand-i giti negahdar-i tu*).

*The Death of Zakhak*²²

Zakhak, in blue underwear and red pantaloons, is enchained in a cave on top of the mountain. The mountain is so high that it reaches the stormy clouds; several dragon heads are hidden in these clouds, as if they were to soon devour Zakhak. He is simultaneously threatened not only by

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19. "Fereydun's mother Faranak sends gifts to her son", folio 38v from the Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama*, Khalili Collection, London, MSS 1030, 38b, <https://www.khalilicollections.org/collections/islamic-art/khalili-collection-islamic-art-ten-folios-from-copy-of-firdawsis-shahnamah-made-for-shah-tahmasp-mss1030-folio-38/>. Accessed 30 Aug. 2023.
 20. "Fereydun Strikes Zakhak with the Ox-headed Mace", folio 36v from the Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama*, Tabriz, Freer Gallery of Art, F1996.2: <https://asia.si.edu/object/F1996.2/>. Accessed 30 Aug. 2023.
 21. Sraoša (MP Srōš) occupies a prominent position in Zoroastrianism as an important *yazata* (divine being). His widespread popular appeal led to his recognition in Iranian Islam as the angel Soroush. For Staoša in Zoroastrianism see: G. Kreyenbroek, *Sraoša in the Zoroastrian Tradition*, Leiden, 1985.
 22. "The death of Zakhak", folio 37v from the Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama*, attributed to Sultan Muhammad, Agha Khan collection, AKM155, <https://agakhanmuseum.org/collection/artifact/the-death-of-zakhak-akm155>. Accessed 30 Aug. 2023.

these dragon-shaped clouds but also by the mountain's rocks encircling and pointing at him; it is as if the cave will soon be closed by the circular movement of the stones and rocks. Zahhak is going to be devoured by nature.

The Tree as a Generative Idea of the "Idea of Kingship": Towards a New Visual Trope

Among the nine illustrations reviewed here, eight contain natural scenes like gardens or wild and non-constructed landscapes. The main actors in both categories are the plane trees or cypresses embraced with blossom, almond, or peach trees. A look at 258 illustrations of Shah Tahmasp's *Shahnama* also champions trees as a primordial element in the decorative program of the manuscript.²³ They arise in the royal gardens or the middle of battle scenes. Not only do they assist the narration and predict the future, they also seem to be the Kings' hallmarks. They emerge by the true king and, in some cases, accompany the heroes such as Zal (fols. 73v²⁴ or 104r²⁵ to name a few examples). Zal is, indeed, an interesting case; in Ferdowsi's *Shahnama*, Zal is calling *farr*, fortune and grace, the wings of Simurgh—a legendary bird with supernatural powers.²⁶ The bird offered him its feathers by saying: "be always in the shadow of my fortune and grace (*saya-yi farr-i man*)" (Schmidt). Simurgh physically accompanies Zal in three folios, mainly at the beginning of Zal's story when he lives in the mountain with her. Nevertheless, in several other episodes, a tree, mainly a high cypress, sits right behind the hero, who becomes, in turn, the King of Zabu-listan. One may also note that Simurgh is closely related to the concept of trees, as reported in the Zoroastrian texts. He/she is housed on a tree which "has good and potent medicine, is called all-healing, and the seeds of all plants are deposited on it. When the bird rises, a thousand shoots grow from the tree, and when he (or she) alights, he breaks a thousand shoots and lets the seeds drop from them" (Schmidt).

In Shah Tahmasp's *Shahnama*, trees occupy a considerable space in the royal scenes where the legendary Iranian kings are represented; in "Kay Khusraw is discovered by Guiv,"²⁷ for instance, the area surrounding the future king of Iran, son of Siavush, is a greenery scene full of flowers (fig. 4). The prince's realm, painted in blue and green, is distinguished remarkably from the barren white hillock all around. This microclimate around the King shows a flamboyant nature with hollyhocks, iris, and blossom trees. The Prince is standing on the top of this vegetation by a water source; he holds a wine goblet or grail in one hand and, with the other, one of the branches of an interlaced tall blossom tree standing by him. In the Perso-Islamic illustration tradition, several scenes show seated kings holding a grail in one hand and a scarf or handkerchief in the other.

23. For a general look at Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama's* illustrations see Canby; see also *Shahnama-ye Shah Tahmasp*.

24. "Zal Consults the Magi", folio 73v from the Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama*, attributed to Sultan Muhammad, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1970.301.8, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/452117>. Accessed on 30 Aug. 2023.

25. "Zal Slays Khazarvan", folio 104r from the Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama*, attributed to 'Abd al-Vahhab, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1970.301.15, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/452124>. Accessed 30 Aug. 2023.

26. Simurgh, Sēmurw (Pahlavi), Sīna-Mrū (Pāzand), is a fabulous, mythical bird. The name derives from Avestan *mərəγō saēnō* 'the bird Saēna', originally a raptor, either eagle or falcon, as can be deduced from the etymologically identical Sanskrit *śyenā*. See Schmidt.

27. Folio 210v from the Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1970.301.32: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/452141>. Accessed on 30 Aug. 2023.



Figure 4: *Kay Khusraw is Discovered by Guiv*, folio 210v from the Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama* (between 1522-1535, Tabriz), attributed to Qadimi, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1970.301.32. Photo courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Public Domain.

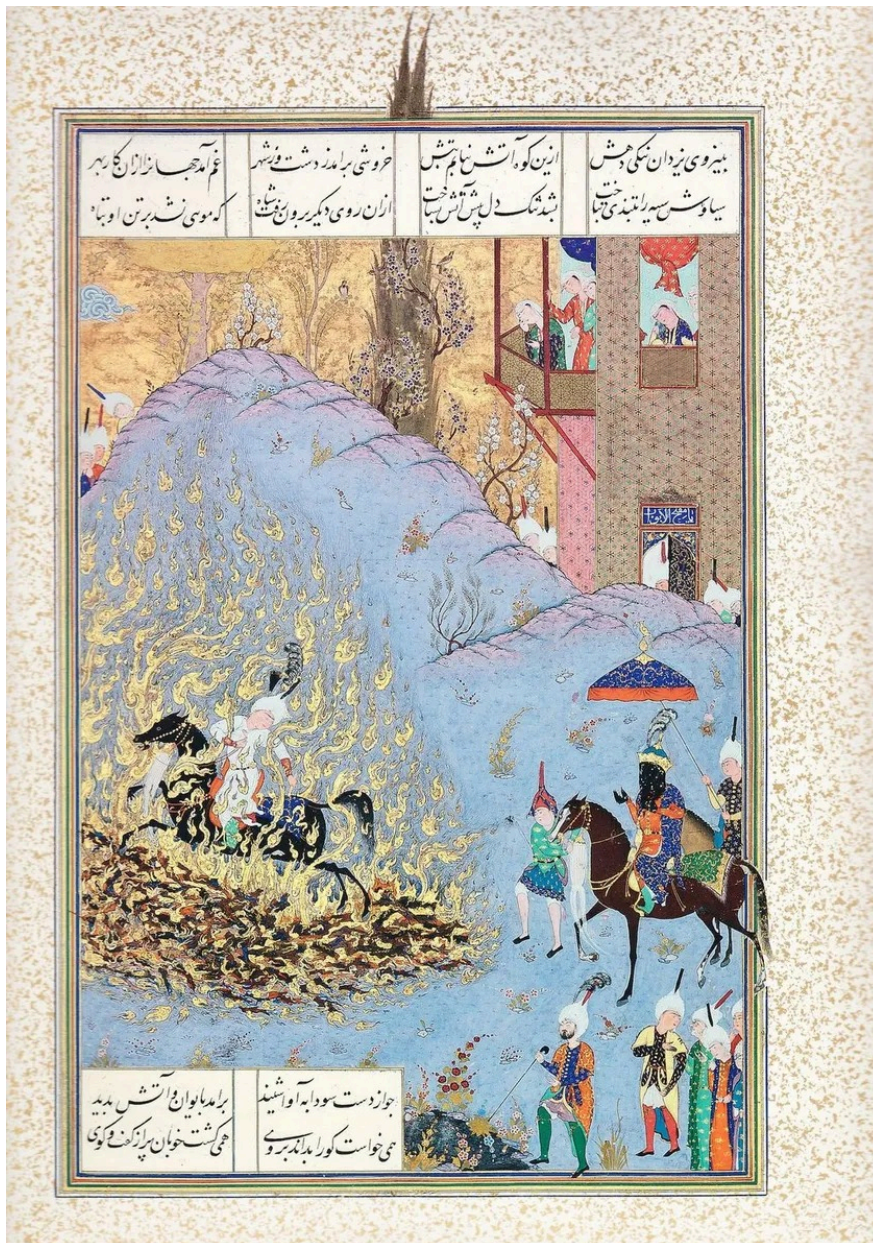


Figure 5: *Siavash Passing Through the Fire*, folio 166r from the Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama* (between 1522-1535, Tabriz), attributed to ‘Abd al-Vahhab, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art. Reproduced in *Shahnama-yi Shah Tahmasp*, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, 2021, 123/214. Photographed by Mohsen Mohamadkhani for Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art.

One may read the tree's presence and its physical interaction with Kay Khusraw in the same manner, especially by taking into account Ferdowsi's words on the young prince: "a handsome young man, cypress-tall [...] God-given *farr* was apparent in his stature, and wisdom in his mien." (370)

Interestingly enough, Kay Kavus, the prince's grandfather, one of the most avid and impulsive kings in the *Shahnama*, not admired by either people or heroes, is seldom shown near any trees. Amongst twelve episodes concerning Kay Kavus, only five scenes represent trees, but in most of them, the King is accompanied by a legendary hero or his noble heirs, such as Siavush or Kay Khusraw. In "Siavush passing through the fire"²⁸, the infamous king is shown with a dark veil covering his face and a black glove covering his hands on the right side of the painting (fig. 5). In contrast, a golden plane tree is on the upper side of the image, in line with the young prince in the middle of the golden fire.

The paintings in Shah Tahmasp's *Shahnama* demonstrate a hegemonic and inclusive vocabulary regarding the divinity and glory of the legendary kings. Gardens or landscapes sublimely rich in flowers, rivers and trees, and specially the precise and deliberate position of trees are among the ways the legendary and mythical kings, those endowed by the divine glory and *farr*, are represented and distinguished from ordinary people or rival kings.²⁹

Trees, whether the planes or cypresses interlaced by blossom trees, accompany the kings or princes in several other Safavid book illustrations and single sheet album paintings. In "Sultan Sanjar and the Old Woman" in Shah Tahmasp's *Khamsa* of Nizami (Quintet)—produced in Tabriz a bit later than *Shahnama* between 1539-1543³⁰—a giant plane tree occupies the upper part of the painting, standing in the same vertical line as the Sultan. The tree is, however, surrounded by several rocks, as if they will soon devour the tree (similar to Zahhak's death on the mountain). Sun is brightening in the upper left side of the painting, but several clouds are covering it. The tree reveals the ruler, but the rocks and clouds predict the unfortunate end of Sultan Sanjar's reign. Although conquering Khurasan, his reign ends soon as he is not a just ruler.

The plane tree also occupies a central place in a folio of Shah Tahmasp's *Falnama* (the Book of Omens), produced in Qazvin during 1550-1560 (fig. 6).³¹ The painting illustrates the death of Dara, the last Achaemenid king, and the shift of power to Alexander the Great. Whereas the protagonists occupy the lower part of the painting and a golden sky the upper part, a robust plane tree sits in the center of the page. Two flowers rise on each side of the tree, one in blue and the other in red, recalling the tunics of Alexander and Dara, respectively. According to Iranian literature and mythology, Alexander was not a foreign king, but one with "Iranian blood" from his father as he was Dara's half-brother. One may then wonder if the sturdy tree, with the flowers near its base, represent the "idea of Iranian kingship" and the power transfer between two true kings.

28. "Siavush passing through the fire", folio 166r from the Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama*, attributed to 'Abd al-Vahhab, TMOCA.

29. It is curious to note that the images concerning the Sassanid kings do not faithfully follow the visual tropes used in the imaginary and mythical parts.

30. "Sultan Sanjar and the Old Woman", folio 18r from the Shah Tahmasp *Khamsa*, 1539-1543, Tabriz, British Library, Or 2265, https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=or_2265_fs001r. Accessed 30 Aug. 2023.

31. MAH 1971-0107-0034: <https://collections.geneve.ch/mah/oeuvre/iskandar-reconfortant-dara-pendant-que-ses-deux-meurtriers-sont-pendus/1971-0107-0034>. Accessed 30 Aug. 2023.



Figure 6: *The Death of Dara*, folio from the Shah Tahmasp *Falnama* (between 1550-1560, Qazvin), attributed to Aqa Mirak, Courtesy of the MAH Museum of Art and History, Geneva, Legs Jean Pozzi 1971, 1971-0107-0034. © Musée d'art et d'histoire, Ville de Genève, photographed by André Longchamp.



Figure 7: *The Discovery of Kay Khusraw by Giv*, Isfahan, mid-17th century, Courtesy of the MAH Museum of Art and History, Geneva, Legs Jean Pozzi 1971, 1971-0107-0361. Image courtesy of Musée d'art et d'histoire, Ville de Genève, photographed by André Longchamp.

Trees as a kingly symbol also appear in several textless album pages; a mid-16th-century page in Qazvin style now in Cleveland Art Museum effectively shows Shah Tahmasp kneeling pensively on a carpet under a willow on the banks of a stream;³² it may come from an Indian interpretation of the same scene now in the V&A.³³ Another 17th-century page in Geneva's collection represents probably "Kay Khusraw is Discovered by Giv" (Robinson 140) (fig. 7). Produced in Isfahan in the manner of Riza-yi 'Abbasi, one of the figures with armor, helmet and bow seems to be a warrior, probably Giv, whereas the other figure, coiffed with a golden crown, may be the Iranian Prince. His manner of sitting with one leg bent, holding a sash in one hand and a crown on the head reveal undoubtedly his high rank and kingly position. A curved tree shapes an arc around the king and presumably attests to his blessed rank.

Tree as a hallmark of the king systematically presented in the early Safavid paintings may be seen, in a more sporadic way, in other periods before the advent of Safavids. For instance, a copy of *Khamsa* dated to 1406-1410 represents Khusraw at Shirin's castle.³⁴ Like Sultan Sanjar, a tall plane tree—perfectly harmonious with Khusraw's green cap—arises on the same line in the page's upper part. A folio of a 15th-century *Khamsa* also shows Alexander leaning on a tree while discussing with the Seven Sages.³⁵

As a symbol of the "idea of kingship", trees date far beyond the Islamic era in Iran. There is, indeed, a significant reference to the close connection between the cypress tree and the notion of divine kingship as the legitimate patron of the religion in the Zoroastrian tradition. There are a number of celebrated cypresses, which were also remembered by later Muslim authors in both Persian and Arabic sources (Farridnejad, "Zoroastrian Pilgrimage Songs" 131-132). The first and most important of the famous cypresses is that of Kashmar in Balkh-i Bami (in the district of Tarshiz in Khurasan). This cypress plays a significant symbolic role in the narrative of the foundation of the Zoroastrian religion, commemorating the conversion of King Gushtasp³⁶ by Zarathustra. The narrative is composed by Abu Mansur Ahmad Daqiqi (d. c. 976) in *Shahnama*, according to which, the prophet Zarathustra brings a miraculous cypress tree from Paradise which was planted either by Zarathustra himself or by the newly converted King Goshtasp at the gate of the Fire Temple of Kashmar. The tree bears an inscription carved in the trunk commemorating the conversion of the King, who embraced the "good religion" (i.e. Zoroastrianism) and became its patron. This tree became a famous place of pilgrimage, remembered well into the 10th century and beyond (Dahlén 132-33; Farridnejad, "Zoroastrian Pilgrimage Songs" 131-132).

Lionel Bier suggests that "early Muslim rulers looked to their Sassanian predecessors for means by which to express a concept of kingship in architectural as well as ceremonial terms" (cited in Babaie 180). A review of the early Safavid paintings suggest that the Safavid kings also looked at Iran's pre-Islamic idea of kingship. The Safavid written sources likewise allude to this fact. Shah Isma'il (r. 1501-24), the first political ruler of the dynasty, connected the legacy of his dynasty to

32. Cleveland Art Museum 1917.1078 <https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1917.1078>. Accessed 30 Aug. 2023.

33. V&A 1006AW8736 : <https://www.vandaimages.com/1006AW8736-Shah-Tahmasp-I-of-Persia-in-meditation-by-Sahifa.html>. Accessed 30 Aug. 2023.

34. Freer Gallery of Art, F1931. 36: <https://asia.si.edu/object/F1931.36/>. Accessed 30 Aug. 2023.

35. MAH 1971-0107-0015: <https://collections.geneve.ch/mah/oeuvre/iskandar-et-les-sept-sages/1971-0107-0015>. Accessed 30 Aug. 2023.

36. Av. Vīštāspa.

the pre-Islamic Iranian kings “by forging a (fictitious) genealogy linking the last Sassanian king, Yazdegerd III, to the Shi’i third Imam, Hussein, by way of a presumed marriage with the King’s daughter, Shahrbanu” (Matthee, “The Idea of Iran” 85). Shah Isma’il, indeed, linked himself to pre-Islamic kings and heroes, such as Fereydun and Jamshid, and gave his children Persian names from the *Shahnama*, such as Sam Mirza, Bahram Miraz or Farangis Khanum (*Tarikh-i Safaviyan* 7, 32).³⁷ In some Safavid texts, we read that *farrah-i izadi* radiates Shah Isma’il’s face, confirming his celestial rank, making his enemies—mainly the rival local governors of different Iranian provinces—attest to his divine kingship (*Alam-ara-yi Safavi* 400, 487).³⁸ We also read that Isma’il is the chosen king, who is throned with the divine affirmation to become the *Khalifat fi al-arz* (King on earth) (Qazvini 7). Shah Tahmasp also continued to be venerated as a god-like figure.³⁹

Nevertheless the Safavid idea of kingship, even after the death of the dynasty’s founder, was animated and legitimized by the correlation of faith and dynasty. Inventing new religious-political policies and introducing the Twelver Imam Shi’i to Iran as the official state religion, the Safavids also saw themselves as the inheritors of the legacy of the Shi’i imams. Shah Isma’il audaciously asserted that he was synonymous with the pre-existent Mystery of God, the Light of Muhammad, as well as “engendered from the same metaphysical fabric as ‘Ali, the Prince of the Faithful (*Amir al-Mu’menin*)” (Gruber 55; Csirkes 371). He, indeed, claimed to be of divine nature in his *Divan* (in Turkish), when he says “*velî kim ism ile Şâh İsmâîldür Khaṭâyîdür ‘Alîning çâkeridür* : The saint/But he whose name is Shah Ismail, is Khatâyî, slave to ‘Alî” (Csirkes 374-375).

As Twelver Shi’ism became the official faith, the King was the trustee of the divine, and his mandate was to be the enforcer of God’s will and the executive officer of the Twelfth Imam. However, as Rudi Matthee points out, “Safavid Iran was salvific in presentation but essentially a dynastic enterprise” (“The Idea of Iran” 95). Thus, “realm and faith were twinned, *al-mulk va al-din tu’aman*” as mentioned in *Ahsan al-Tawarikh* describing Shah Isma’il’s II (r. 1576-1577) governorship (Rumlu 623). The same source mentioned that “the endurance (*istiḳamat*) of a kingdom is not achieved without the strength (*istihkam*) of the Shari’a rules [...] God gives the kingdom to who celebrates and officializes the religion: *ta’vil tu’aman nabud gheyr as an ki mulk, an ra dahad khuday ke din ra shu’ar kard.*”⁴⁰ (Rumlu 623)

In his study on Shah Ismail’s *Divan* (Book of Poetry), Ference Csirkes shows how the Safavid shahs relied on an impressively variegated range of legitimization, including, among others, “Alid messianic rhetoric (to mobilize their zealot nomadic adherents); Turco-Mongol symbols and apocryphal legends (to accentuate martial traditions and a sense of loyalty to Steppe); legalistic and orthopraxis aspects of Twelver Shiite doctrine; ancient, pre-Islamic Iranian notions of divine kingship and statecraft” (389).

37. The use of pre-Islamic kings and appealing their legendary power continued till the reign of the last king, Sultan Hussein (r. 1694-1723), who recalled Jamshid’s and Kay Qobad’s names and powers in his enthronement’ *khutba*, see Matthee, *The Pursuit of Pleasure* 85.

38. The term *farrah-i izadi* (“divine glory”) replaces in majority of cases the specific form of Zoroastrian *farrah i kayân* (“royal glory”) within the non-Zoroastrian New Persian text.

39. See Matthee, *Persia in Crisis* 15.

40. See also Matthee, “The Idea of Iran” 95, and note 72.

The Safavid political ideology makes, indeed, an apparent reference to the notion of pre-Islamic, precisely Sassanian's, royal ideology, which is the close connection and correlation between the state and faith. This is reflected, among other places, in some Pahlavi texts such as the *Kārnāmag ī Ardaxšīr ī Pābagān* (KAP) and also *The letter of Tansar* (LoT from a lost original in Middle Persian). In KAP, we read: "Know the kingship and religion are twin brothers, no one of which can be maintained without the other; for religion is the foundation of kingship, and kingship is the guardian or religion. Kingship cannot subsist without its foundation, and religion cannot subsist without its guardian". In LoT, one reads: "For church and state are born of the one womb, joined together and never be sundered" (Boyce 109; Gnoli 170).

We may ultimately remind that the middle-Persian term *Iranshahr* (land of Iran) was introduced by the Sassanians and was employed many times by Iranian Muslim viziers, princes, and kings. The Safavids also resuscitated the idea, as is seen in several 16th and 17th century chronicles and the non-official treaties such as *Mukhtasar-i Mufid*. Written by Muhammad Mufid Maustufi, this is one of the rare Safavid geographical works, which shows its author's keen interest in Iranian dynasties and the formation of an Iranian identity both as an ancestral and Shi'i civilization (21).⁴¹ We may thus conclude that the Sassanian "Idea" of kingship remained palpable in the Safavid era, manifested in written and artistic sources.

Pictures from the Safavid period not only functioned as a visual intensification of the reading experience but also, as emphasized by Gruber, "carried within their iconographic makeup subtle message about a particular Safavid monarch's nature or the specific religious system that he aspired to deploy and implement" (50); we may add to her statement that the early Safavid images also carried the *longue durée* idea of kingship that the monarchs sought to reveal: the portrait of a chosen divine king as the patron and guardian of religion and state. The ancestral Sassanian Zoroastrian concept of Tree has been used as a new visual trope for showing the King's divinity and dignity.

Conclusion

Our study of the royal *Shahnama* concerns a period in Tabriz, the first Safavid capital, when Shah Tahmasp was not yet imbued in his newly-created entourage of "imported" orthodox Shi'i theologians. Though he did not follow his father's messianic rule and undertook several significant religious and military reforms, Shah Tahmasp kept some of the ideas of Iranian kingship promoted by Shah Isma'il and patronized the production of the most glorious and magnificent copy of what modern historians call the "Iranian identity card", *Shahnama* (Melville 3).

The folios in the *Shahnama* briefly reviewed here were produced before the King eventually declared repentance for his sins in 1556.⁴² Shah Tahmasp repented, indeed, for the "forbidden acts" such as drinking and smoking and later issued an Edict of Sincere Repentance in which he outlawed the secular arts throughout his lands. However, the longevity of the new visual paradigm and tropes created before this period is tangible in the artworks produced in later periods. Just as

41. For more reading, see "The Idea of Iran" 93-95.

42. The process of Shah Tahmasp's repentance stretched from 1526 until 1556, see *The Pursuit of Pleasure* 72-80.

his heirs, especially Shah 'Abbas I (r. 1587-1629) continued and perfected Tahmasp's geopolitical reforms, the visual tropes, both in the religious and profane arts introduced by him, continued to be exercised throughout 17th-century Iran.

According to Gruber, representing Prophet Muhammad and Shi'i Imams with radiant faces, exposing their divine invisible light, and the accompaniment of angels, is one of the main themes employed in the illustrations commanded by the first two Safavid kings ("When Nubuvat Encounters Valāyat"). The secular illustrations in the same period borrowed some of the Islamic divinity's manifestations, especially the angels emitting light, to indicate the glorified chosen king. The artists, however, systematically employed other idioms, specifically trees, as hallmarks of a true and Just Ruler. Future research will hopefully elucidate different significations and symbolic meanings and narrations of trees in Iranian religious and historical literature. Moreover, our paper did not explore the degree to which the 16th-century Safavids were conscious of the pre-Islamic ruins by using their visual tropes in contemporary manuscript paintings.⁴³ Instead, we pursued the perpetuated "idea" of kingship from the Sassanian period, where both notions of *farr* and tree were commonly used in the Idea of Iranian Kingship.

Nature and its elements have been used in *Shahnama* illustrations since the 14th century (See Hillenbrand, *The Great Mongol Shahnama* for instance). However, in the 16th-century royal *Shahnama*, they appear as a narrative assistant to facilitate the reading, anticipate the coming episodes, and eventually use the tree to signify the true king and his glorified divine *farr*.

43. In their recent study, Lindsay Allen and Moya Carey analyzed the pre-Islamic carved figures in early 17th-century paintings and showed the visual vestige of the past in the Safavid paintings. Painted as grey panels with dark outlines, sometimes with white or gild highlights to indicate stonework, these figures were, according to the authors, "Safavid responses to Achaemenid Persepolis as a semi-exposed, emergent and spoliated ruin" (280).

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De la poudre aux yeux Les stratégies artistiques de légitimation des souverains d'Iran (1722-1750)

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Abstract

When asked to provide his son Nasrallah's genealogy during his marriage to a Mughal princess, Nader Shah replied, "He is the son of the sword, the grandson of the sword, the great-grandson of the sword, and so on for seven generations." Nader and his successors, emerging from humble backgrounds and ending the prestigious Safavid dynasty's rule in Iran, faced a daunting challenge in legitimizing their rule. Unlike the Safavids, they couldn't rely solely on lineage or religious authority. While military victories played a role in their rise to power, it doesn't explain the enduring changes in Iran during this period. Art, architecture, and material culture became potent instruments in their quest for legitimacy. Palaces, ceremonial displays, and the adoption of Safavid customs conveyed regal status. Simultaneously, the construction and restoration of religious monuments portrayed devotion and highlighted distinctions from Sunni restoration and Turkish influences. Through grand structures, inscriptions, opulence, and generous gifts, rulers like Ashraf, Mahmud, and Nader embedded their legitimacy in the physical landscape, aiming to leave a lasting imprint in people's minds and assert their rightful sovereignty on the world stage.

Keywords

Iranian Art, Iranian History, Nader Shah, Afsharid Period, Artistic Propaganda

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Introduction

En 2006, Ernst S. Tucker publiait un court ouvrage intitulé *Nadir Shah's Quest for Legitimacy in Post-Safavid Iran*. Il y mettait en évidence que Nader Shah (r. 1736-1747) avait été l'un des premiers souverains à vouloir « définir une légitimité politique en Iran dans un contexte moderne ». Pour cela, il aurait « inventé une tradition », qui reposait sur deux aspects principaux : en premier lieu, la revendication d'une turcité qui lui permettait de prétendre à une domination impériale aussi bien sur l'Iran que sur l'Inde, l'Empire ottoman ou l'Asie centrale, ensuite la recherche d'une voie religieuse médiane en essayant de faire reconnaître par les sunnites, sans succès, le *madhhab ja'fari* comme cinquième école juridique de l'islam. À cela s'ajoute l'exaltation d'une ressemblance entre son destin personnel et celui de grands conquérants, Timur et Gengis Khan en tête, comparaison destinée à diminuer l'opprobre que pouvaient lui attirer ses origines modestes (Tucker, *Nadir Shah's quest* 9-14)¹.

S'appuyant essentiellement sur les sources écrites – chroniques contemporaines et plus tardives, archives indiennes et ottomanes –, Tucker a toutefois en partie laissé de côté un aspect important des stratégies de légitimations de Nader Shah : l'art et l'architecture. Rien d'étonnant à cela, la période ayant été quasiment passée sous silence jusqu'ici par les historiens de l'art. « Les horreurs des invasions et leurs conséquences chaotiques n'étaient pas propices au mécénat artistique », considèrent ainsi Sheila Blair et Jonathan Bloom dans leur manuel *The Art and Architecture of Islam 1250-1800* (Blair et Bloom 182), confirmant l'observation que faisait soixante-dix ans plus tôt Laurence Lockhart dans sa biographie de référence : « Les arts, à l'exception de ceux de la guerre, n'ont pas fleuri au temps de Nader ; c'était une période où l'épée était bien plus puissante que la plume. » (*Nadir Shah* 276)

Pourtant, un travail de recensement des œuvres datées ou facilement datables permet de mettre en évidence la poursuite d'une production artistique non-négligeable après la chute d'Ispahan en 1722 et jusqu'à l'arrivée des Zand en 1750 : manuscrits soigneusement calligraphiés et enluminés, œuvres peintes et laquées, huiles sur toile, textiles, architectures civiles, religieuses et militaires, armes ornées (Bizoirre 86-89, 95-102). Giovanni Curatola a même proposé d'y voir la naissance d'un nouveau style, le « baroque indo-persan » (44), tandis que Layla Diba a proposé de voir dans le XVIII^e siècle « le prélude d'une nouvelle ère de l'histoire de l'art persan » (159). Si la définition d'un style spécifique, qui repose essentiellement sur l'analyse d'un monument, reste discutable, il existe une réelle continuité dans les arts picturaux entre la fin de la période safavide et le début de la période qajare. Il est par ailleurs probable que des œuvres céramiques et métalliques aient également continué à être produites, bien que l'absence d'indices précis ne permette que rarement de les dater.

Alors même que la personnalité des souverains qui règnent sur l'Iran après la chute d'Ispahan n'a presque rien à voir avec celle des dynastes safavides du XVII^e siècle, l'activité artistique et architecturale est largement due à un mécénat royal ou princier. Elle est en effet essentielle pour afficher une légitimité à régner. L'étudier permet donc à la fois de compléter et de nuancer par-

1. Dans un récent article, Ernest Tucker est revenu sur ces différentes composantes d'une « idée de l'Iran » s'éloignant de celle des Safavides. Il y met en avant une construction idéologique en quatre temps : avant la prise de pouvoir par Nader, au moment de son couronnement à Moghan, au moment de la conquête indienne et enfin au concile de Najaf ("Nader Shah's Idea of Iran").

fois les analyses d'Ernest Tucker. En effet, la stratégie de Nader n'est pas entièrement novatrice : elle se rapproche de celle déployée par les souverains afghans, Mahmud (r. 1722-1725) et surtout Ashraf (r. 1725-1729), qui souffrent du même déficit de légitimité que leur rival afsharide². Par ailleurs, l'activité artistique met aussi en évidence d'autres stratégies de légitimation chez Nader, notamment le fait de se présenter en protecteur des populations.

Imposer visuellement sa stature royale : dans l'espace

Les principes de la propagande en Iran dans le second quart du XVIII^e siècle ne diffèrent pas fondamentalement de ceux de la publicité actuelle : il faut être vu, et porter une image positive, tout en faisant passer pour naturelle une position qui ne l'est pas nécessairement. C'est pourquoi une grande part de la commande architecturale prend place dans des lieux particulièrement visibles et symboliques, notamment dans les grandes villes : Ispahan, Qazvin et Mashhad notamment.

Ces commandes concernent tout particulièrement des palais, lieux du pouvoir par excellence. Ainsi, Ashraf, second souverain afghan fait-il réaliser à Ispahan un « nouveau jardin appelé Ashrafabad, qui dominait complètement ses pensées » (Floor, *The Afghan Occupation* 253). Rostam al-Hokama, auteur du début du XIX^e siècle dont le texte s'appuie sur des récits familiaux, l'évoque comme un « *tar-e chehel sotun* » (hall aux quarante colonnes) édifié près du pont du Shahrestan, dans les environs du village de Khoraskan (Rostam al-Hokama 168-169, 196). Cette appellation laisse envisager un pavillon précédé d'un porche à colonnes situé dans un jardin, mais les *topoi* littéraires qu'il emploie ne permettent pas plus de précision. L'édifice aurait été, selon le même auteur et selon les archives de la Compagnie néerlandaise des Indes orientales (Vereenigde Oost-indische Compagnie ou VOC), démantelé par Shah Tahmasp II à son retour sur le trône (Floor, *Rise and Fall* 16). Il aurait été retrouvé récemment par l'archéologue 'Ali Reza Ja'fari Zand au lieu-dit Teppeh Ashraf, à environ sept cents mètres à l'est du pont, sur un ancien site sassanide.

Le même souci de visibilité préside sans doute à la réalisation, dans l'*iwan*³ de la madrasa mozafaride de la mosquée du vendredi d'Ispahan, située à l'arrière de l'*iwan* oriental de la cour, d'une double inscription en arabe et en persan, où le nom de Ashraf accompagné du titre « sultan des sultans » est mis en exergue (fig. 1). Le souverain, dont la position est pourtant particulièrement précaire, s'inscrit ainsi à la fois dans un monument emblématique au cœur de la cité, dans une histoire pluricentenaire et dans la continuité des souverains safavides, imitant une inscription réalisée pour Shah Soltan Hossein dans la même mosquée.

Vers 1735, c'est une autre ville remarquable que choisit Nader pour ériger un palais au nom d'Abbas III, dont il est le régent : Qazvin. Ancienne capitale de Shah Tahmasp I^{er}, elle porte, comme Ispahan, le titre de *dar al-saltaneh* (littéralement « demeure de la monarchie »), marque du prestige régalien accordé à une ville. Ce choix peut avoir un aspect pratique : proche du Caucase et de la Caspienne, Qazvin est plus facilement accessible depuis les champs de bataille qu'Ispahan.

2. Les souverains afghans appartiennent à la dynastie Hotaki, qui dirige la tribu des Ghilzai à partir de Qandahar. Nader, quant à lui, appartient à la tribu turque des Afshar, et met en place la dynastie afsharide.

3. L'*iwan* est une forme architecturale qui tire ses origines de l'architecture iranienne préislamique. Il s'agit d'une vaste salle voûtée, ouverte sur un côté par un grand arc.



Figure 1: Grande mosquée d'Ispahan, iwan de la madrasa mozaffaride, détail de la double inscription commandée par Ashraf Shah, 1139/1726-27, Mehr 'Ali Mowlavi (calligraphe) et Ya'qub Khan (potier). Photographie de Mélisande Bizoïrre, 2016.

Mais il permet aussi à Nader de s'inscrire dans une lignée historique tout en s'éloignant de la capitale utilisée par les dynastes safavides depuis plus d'un siècle. Les archives de la VOC nous apprennent d'ailleurs que la cour délaisse alors Ispahan (Floor, *Rise and Fall* 19).

Détruit au cours du XX^e siècle, de même qu'une grande partie du complexe royal safavide de Tabriz, le palais nous est principalement connu grâce à une longue description du voyageur britannique Jonas Hanway (I 231). Elle permet de nous représenter un jardin séparé, enclos de murs, coupé en quatre parties, doté d'un bâtiment principal ouvert par un *iwan*. Un harem indépendant prend place dans l'un des quatre quarts du jardin et possède des pièces souterraines (*serdab*). L'ensemble est construit en briques, orné de verres colorés dans les fenêtres (*orosi*), de stucs ainsi que de miroirs. À deux reprises, Hanway parle de « goût indien » pour évoquer les peintures, probablement pour désigner des décors de fleurs et d'oiseaux (*gol-o morgh*), déjà utilisés au XVII^e siècle.

Comme tout palais, celui de Qazvin est un lieu d'affichage politique à la fois destiné à une propagande intérieure et extérieure. Rien d'étonnant qu'un voyageur comme Hanway s'y promène, pas plus que d'y voir un ambassadeur russe, comme le signalent les archives hollandaises : « L'ambassadeur russe, qui était fort respecté par Nader, était attendu à Qazvin, où le palais royal avait été

embelli. » (Floor, *Rise and Fall* 52). Néanmoins, ces mêmes archives indiquent également que le palais est finalement très peu utilisé : « Nader avait fait payer aux habitants de Qazvin le coût d'un nouveau palais, au total cinq mille *tumans*, en sus de leurs taxes normales. Nader avait dit que le bâtiment était trop beau pour lui et qu'il préférerait vivre dans une tente. En ce qui le concernait, les Qazvinis pouvaient bien en faire ce qu'ils voulaient. » (Floor, *Rise and Fall* 60).

Pour celui qui prendra, quelques mois plus tard, le pouvoir à titre personnel, le prestige régalien attaché à Qazvin ne contrebalance sans doute pas suffisamment son lien avec la dynastie safavide. Au contraire, le Khorasan, sa région natale, est moins marqué par une histoire politique. Nader y exerce un pouvoir sans partage dès 1729, puisque Tahmasp II lui confère dès la reprise d'Ispahan la souveraineté sur les provinces de Mashhad, de Kerman et du Mazanderan (Lockhart, *The Fall* 335-336)⁴. La ville sainte de Mashhad, prestigieux centre de pèlerinage, est donc au centre de ses attentions. Vers 1732, année où il évince Tahmasp II pour prendre la régence de 'Abbas III, il y fait édifier un premier pavillon de plaisance, mentionné dans les sources sous le nom de *Hasht Behesht* (littéralement « huit paradis »), situé dans le *Chahar Bagh* (littéralement « quatre jardins ») (Mervi, vol. 1, 202-203).

Mais il porte surtout l'essentiel de ses efforts sur le mausolée : en 1729, il fait ainsi doré l'un des deux minarets de la cour principale, dit minaret de Tahmasp ; en 1732-1733, il commande la dorure de l'*iwan* de la cour, connu depuis lors sous le nom d'*iwan naderi*, et doté d'une longue inscription à sa gloire (fig. 2) ; enfin, en 1733-1734, il fait édifier un second minaret à l'image du premier. Il est également le commanditaire d'une fontaine et de la dorure du dôme, ainsi que de mobilier, notamment une porte plaquée d'argent. Chacune de ses interventions est soulignée par une inscription dédicatoire datée (Zarrabi 43-44), et dûment mentionnée par ses différents chroniqueurs (Mervi, vol. 1, 201-204 ; Astarabadi, *Tarikh-e Jahangosha* 62 ; Hazin 252).

Pourquoi tant d'interventions au mausolée de Mashhad – auxquelles il faut ajouter plusieurs dons de textiles, de livres et de mobilier ? Certainement pas par dévotion personnelle. Nader fait preuve, tout au long de sa vie, d'un complet opportunisme en matière religieuse, et n'hésite pas dans le même temps à dépouiller les tombeaux de leurs *waqfs* (Sefatgol ; Tucker, *Nadir Shah's Quest* 39). Là encore, son désir est avant tout de se poser en souverain, alors même que son statut reste ambigu. Ainsi, dans l'inscription de l'*iwan* doré, il est désigné comme *vali malek-e khorasan* (« seigneur du Khorasan »), mais il se donne aussi le titre de *tajbakhsh* (« le porteur de couronne ») et se compare à l'empereur moghol, à l'empereur « romain »⁵ et au *khaqan*⁶. Mohammad Kazem Mervi souligne par ailleurs le lien qu'il tisse ainsi avec d'illustres timurides : 'Ali Shir Nava'i, commanditaire originel de l'*iwan*, et Shah Rokh, fils de Timur, auquel il attribue le minaret de Tahmasp. Aucune mention, par contre, des deux souverains safavides qui ont commandité le minaret et la dorure du dôme, à savoir Shah Tahmasp I^{er} et Shah 'Abbas⁷, bien que la source soit marquée par une idéologie pro-safavide.

4. Nader y frappe un monnayage spécifique, anonyme (Album XIX).

5. Même s'il s'agit d'un *topos* littéraire, il faut probablement entendre ici « ottoman ».

6. Le terme de *khaqan* peut s'appliquer à différents souverains turcs ou chinois, mais il s'agit peut-être d'une référence aux Khans d'Asie centrale, auxquels Nader s'est trouvé confronté quelques années plus tard lors de la campagne du Turkestan, au retour de l'Inde.

7. Shah Tahmasp I^{er} et Shah 'Abbas avaient tous deux ordonné la dorure du dôme et du minaret de Tahmasp (Ringgenberg 33-34).



Figure 2: Iwan doré du mausolée de l'imam Reza à Mashhad, inscription, 1145/1732-33 et 1146/1733-34 Mo-hammad 'Ali ibn Soleiman al-Razavi (calligraphe), Mohammad Taher ibn ostad Masih Shirazi (orfèvre). Photographie de Mélisande Bizoirre, 2016.

L'usage même des métaux précieux, et notamment de l'or, est symptomatique. Dans l'inscription, il est mentionné comme une marque de « générosité », mais il permet surtout une visibilité maximale. Tout pèlerin arrivant à Mashhad aperçoit, de loin, le rayonnement du dôme et des minarets, et tout visiteur du tombeau ne peut être qu'impressionné par le luxe de l'*iwan*. On retrouve par ailleurs cette pratique de la dorure dans deux autres interventions commanditées dans deux mausolées chiites d'Irak en 1743-1744 : celui de Hossein à Karbala (Astarabadi, *Tarikh-e Jahangosha* 395 ; 'Abd al-Karim 110) et celui de 'Ali à Najaf (Mervi, vol. 3, 924-926 ; Astarabadi, *Tarikh-e Jahangosha* 394-395 ; 'Abd al-Karim 110 ; Bahreman 65, 74). L'intérêt de Nader pour ces monuments situés en territoire ottoman est là encore purement politique : il s'y trouve en campagne, et entame à cette date des négociations de paix avec Ahmad Pacha, maître de Bagdad. Au même moment, il convoque le concile de Najaf, rassemblement de religieux censé donner sa bénédiction à l'établissement d'une cinquième école juridique, le *madhhab jafari*, qui permettrait aux Iraniens d'être considérés comme musulmans à plein titre par les sunnites. Il s'agit donc avant tout d'une démonstration de pouvoir dans un moment diplomatiquement sensible. Elle est toutefois en partie atténuée par le fait qu'une partie au moins des fonds est fournie non pas par Nader lui-même, mais par ses épouses, mères des princes les plus âgés : Razieh Soltan Begom à Karbala et Gowhar Shad Begom à Najaf (Astarabadi, *Tarikh-e Jahangosha* 395).

S'imposer à la vue

Le caractère clinquant de la commande architecturale sous Nader se retrouve dans le lieu qu'il habite au quotidien : le camp (*ordu*). Alors que les palais demeurent la plupart du temps des coquilles vides, dont la fonction semble purement monstrative, le camp est l'endroit où le souverain passe le plus clair de son temps. Son organisation n'est pas spécifique à la période nadérienne : elle est largement partagée par les gouvernants de culture turque qui dominent l'est de l'Asie, de la Chine à l'Iran, depuis les Seldjoukides au moins (Bosworth et Morgan ; O'Kane ; Andrews), et est conçue pour exalter la royauté, notamment grâce à la vaste tente d'audience rouge qui en marque le centre. Plusieurs sources fournissent des descriptions de ce camp sous Nader, complétées par des représentations (Abraham de Crète 70 ; Astrarabadi, *Tarikh-e Jahangosha* 267 ; Hanway I 245-246 ; *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* II, ap. p. 514)⁸ : elles nous permettent de nous figurer un espace hiérarchisé, mais constamment changeant, en taille comme en matériaux, au gré des événements, des saisons et de la durée des stations.

Deux occasions cependant se détachent dans l'histoire du camp de Nader : le couronnement dans la plaine de Moghan dans les premiers mois de 1736 et le retour d'Inde en 1739-41. Dans ces moments, l'*ordu* est d'une taille particulièrement imposante, et la stature royale est soulignée par la commande de deux tentes d'apparat. La première, celle du couronnement, dite *naderi*, est documentée par plusieurs auteurs et une image, qui ne correspondent pas tout à fait. On note néanmoins des éléments de concordance : il s'agit d'une grande tente barlongue, supportée par plusieurs rangées de colonnes surmontées de globes dorés ou argentés ; son aspect extérieur simple, en soie rouge, contraste avec le décor interne de tentures, tapis et séparations.

La seconde, réalisée au retour d'Inde, est conçue comme un écrin au trône du paon. Très nettement, il s'agit de créer un marqueur d'opulence, dont la richesse est visible aussi bien dans les tissus utilisés, dans l'incrustation de nombreux bijoux et dans la décoration par des images figurées, peut-être sur le thème de la cour du roi Salomon. Là encore, les sources ne concordent que très partiellement, s'accordant essentiellement sur le lieu de fabrication (Hérat), la préciosité et les dimensions gigantesques de l'ouvrage. D'après 'Abd al-Karim, Nader aurait fait détruire une première version doublée de satin vert « parce que les bijoux n'apparaissaient pas à leur avantage », pour favoriser une tente rouge sur un modèle indianisant (26-28), mais aucun autre auteur n'en fait mention (Astarabadi, *Tarikh-e Jahangosha* 347 ; Mervi, vol. 2, 777 ; Vatatzès 275-276 ; Rostam al-Hokama 216). La tente est tellement lourde qu'elle ne peut pas quitter Hérat, où elle a servi lors des festivités du nouvel an jusqu'à son démantèlement dans les années de chaos qui ont suivi la mort de Nader Shah.

8. Voir aussi les deux cartes du camp de Naderabad : Harvard Map collection, digital maps, hollis ID 009704844, <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL:595242> ; Stockholm, Bibliothèque nationale de Suède, KoB E 50 nr 616 (Arne 1947).

Créées pour mettre en valeur le pouvoir royal, ces deux tentes s'inscrivent plus largement dans une culture matérielle qui fait la part belle aux pierres précieuses et à l'orfèvrerie. On ne revient pas sur le destin bien connu de certaines pierres remarquables ramenées d'Inde⁹, mais plus généralement, Nader s'affiche au milieu du scintillement perpétuel de ses « harnais de chevaux, fourreaux d'épée, carquois, boucliers, étui à lance et masses d'armes [ainsi que de] *sandali*, ou chaises de différentes tailles » (Abd al-Karim 26). Jonas Hanway mentionne qu'il dispose de quatre jeux de harnachements faits de quatre types de pierres différentes : rubis, émeraudes, diamants et perles (I 254-255). Cette description fait écho à un portrait équestre conservé au Museum of Fine Arts de Boston (fig. 3) : le cheval y porte une bride, une martingale et une croupière ornées de rubis, que mettent en valeur des rangées de perles. Les mêmes pierres, accompagnées d'émeraudes, se retrouvent à l'arrière du tapis de selle, sur les étriers et sur un petit tambour que Nader porte à l'avant de sa selle, probablement destiné à transmettre des ordres. La selle, quant à elle, est dotée d'un pommeau orné d'émeraudes et de diamants, tandis que derrière la jambe apparaît un brocart à décor floral. Les autres représentations de Nader à cheval, présentes dans une copie illustrée du *Tarikh-e Jahangosha* datée de 1757, mettent en scène des harnachements semblables, dont les pierres varient (Borumand 96, 104, 109, 147, 253, 299, 322, 357).

D'autres portraits représentent Nader en pied, à genoux ou en buste. Eux aussi font la part belle à la joaillerie : ornements de tête (aigrette et rangées de perles autour du *kolah-e naderi*¹⁰), de cou (colliers de perles), de bras (*bazuband*), de taille (*kamarband*), armes et objets y sont systématiquement incrustés de pierres précieuses¹¹ (fig. 4).

Cette démonstration de luxe n'est d'ailleurs pas réservée à la personne du souverain, mais à la cour tout entière. Hanway indique ainsi que « Nader, selon la coutume des rois persans, avait pour politique d'obliger certains, et d'encourager tous les membres de son armée à utiliser des équipements coûteux » et évoque des harnachements, des haches d'arçon, des poignées et fourreaux de poignards plaqués d'argent ou d'or, ainsi que des étriers d'argent (I 254). Il faut encore ajouter à cela les textiles à fils d'or et d'argent distribués lors d'occasions spécifiques en tant que robes d'honneur (*khal'at*), mentionnés en général par centaines, voire par milliers lors des fêtes du nouvel an persan (*nowruz*) ou de la célébration de victoires. C'est donc tout l'entourage royal qui est encouragé à s'accoutrer de luxe, et à exhiber de manière permanente sa richesse.

Cet usage immodéré de matériaux précieux et brillants était déjà présent chez les Afghans, qui se livrent à de nombreux pillages et exactions afin d'obtenir des tissus ou des vaisselles d'or – bien que certaines commandes ne puissent être satisfaites du fait de la disparition des tisserands, tués ou enfuis lors du siège ou peu après. Le modèle à imiter, voire à dépasser, est celui des grandes cours impériales du temps, safavide, moghole, ottomane, voire russe, avec lesquelles sont échangées régulièrement des ambassades, et qu'il s'agit d'éblouir pour mieux les contrôler. Ce faste curial doit donc être conçu avant tout comme un écran qui permet de revendiquer une stature royale tout en masquant la fragilité du pouvoir.

9. Citons, pour les diamants, le *kuh-e nur* et le *darya-ye nur*, pour les rubis le *rubis timur*, ou *'ayn al-nur*.

10. Le *kolah-e naderi* est un couvre-chef à quatre pointes inventé par Nader, porté essentiellement par les dignitaires afsharides, ainsi qu'à la cour d'Ahmad Shah Dorrani jusqu'au début du XIX^e siècle. On le retrouve occasionnellement sur des peintures qajares, témoignant sans doute de l'appartenance de son porteur à la tribu afshare.

11. Janet O'Brien considère aussi cette débauche de bijoux comme une représentation, littérale et symbolique, de la « luminosité de la gloire divine (*farr* de Nader) » (65).



Figure 3: *Portrait équestre de Nader Shah devant une scène de bataille*, peinture et or sur papier, 22,9 x 16,9 cm, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 14.646. Photograph © 2023, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



Figure 4: *Portrait de Nader Shah*, Huile sur toile, 1,97 x 1,17 m, Londres, Victoria and Albert Museum, IM.20-1919 © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Valoriser sa personne et sa lignée : un ancrage territorial lié à un parcours personnel

Si la visibilité est essentielle dans la politique de propagande des souverains du second quart du XVIII^e siècle, elle n'est pas leur unique guide. Toutes les commandes architecturales ne sont pas situées dans des lieux de passage ou de prestige, notamment dans le cas de Nader. Certaines sont plus spécifiquement liées à son parcours personnel. C'est le cas, par exemple, de deux monuments commémoratifs mentionnés dans les sources, qui n'ont pas d'équivalent connu en Iran : le monument de la bataille d'Eghvard et le Mowlud Khaneh (littéralement « Maison (ou pavillon) de la naissance »).

Le premier a été érigé à la suite d'une bataille décisive dans le Caucase, le 19 juin 1735, par des Arméniens. Il est mentionné dans une seule source, la chronique d'Abraham de Crète, qui en a supervisé en partie la réalisation. Ainsi décrit-il le bâtiment :

Je m'empressai ensuite d'exécuter le pavillon commandé par le khan [Nader] sur l'emplacement de sa tente, et dont il m'avait chargé avec le mélik Mertoum [...]. L'édifice terminé ressemblait à une tente, avec coupole ; en-dessous il y avait une excavation où les eaux se réunissaient, quand il pleuvait en haut de la colline ; celles-ci y étaient amenées par un conduit et s'y rassemblaient, comme dans une glacière, dominée par l'édifice. L'excavation était-elle remplie, le surplus s'écoulait par une sorte de canal et s'épanchait dans la vallée. (Brosset II 276).¹²

Le second commémore, comme son nom l'indique, la naissance de Nader, et se situe au lieu de cette naissance. On le trouve dans plusieurs sources, mentionné sous le nom de *Mowludgah* ou *Mowlud khaneh* mais selon les auteurs, l'histoire diffère légèrement. 'Abd-al-Karim confond le monument avec la ville de Khivabad, construite par Nader au retour de la campagne du Turkestan, en 1741 ('Abd al-Karim 71-72). Au contraire, les deux biographes du souverain ne font pas le rapprochement, mais ne donnent pas les mêmes indications de localisation. Mirza Mahdi évoque un « magnifique bâtiment » (*emarat-e 'alieh*) à « Dastjerd, dans la vallée de Joz », tandis que Mohammad Kazem Mervi parle d'« une coupole (*gonbad*) et une salle d'audience (*bargah*) immenses » dans le bourg de Chavoshi (Astarabadi, *Tarikh-e Jahangosha* 27 ; Mervi, vol. 2, 824). Il n'a pas été possible de retrouver ce monument, qu'il faut sans doute situer dans la région de Dargaz.

Dans ces deux exemples, au contraire de ceux précédemment évoqués, ce n'est pas le lieu qui appelle le monument, mais le monument qui crée le lieu. Nader marque symboliquement l'espace soit juste avant de prendre le pouvoir, soit au moment de son triomphe, au retour de l'Inde et du Khwarezm, créant son territoire en y imprimant son destin.

Le principal endroit où Nader impose sa marque est une forteresse naturelle du Khorasan qui a gardé la trace du conquérant dans son onomastique même : Kalat-e Naderi (Tucker, « Nader Shah's Idea of Iran » 43-47). Certes, la localité était connue et habitée bien avant le XVIII^e siècle, puisqu'elle est considérée comme le lieu où s'est déroulé un épisode du *Shah Nameh* (*Livre des Rois*), la défaite de Farud, demi-frère de Kay Khosrow. Elle a connu la construction de fortifications

12. Dans sa traduction, Bournoutian propose que la cavité ait été dans la coupole, ce qui semble moins logique, à moins que l'édicule ait été conçu comme un réservoir (Abraham de Crète 45).

à l'époque ilkhanide, dont témoignent encore plusieurs tours construites sous Arghun Shah (De Planhol). Toutefois, pour Nader, l'endroit est surtout associé à Timur (Tucker, « Seeking » 334-336) ; il a d'ailleurs essayé de déplacer la pierre tombale en jade de celui-ci de Samarkand à Kalat, une opération qui a sérieusement endommagé l'œuvre, avant que l'idée ne soit abandonnée.

Cependant, même si pour Nader, cette symbolique est sans doute importante, le site reste relativement mineur dans l'histoire iranienne, en comparaison des villes citées précédemment. Son éléction par le souverain afshar comme lieu majeur de ses entreprises architecturales s'explique donc également par d'autres critères. Le site est particulièrement facile à défendre, enfermé entre de hautes montagnes – au XIX^e siècle, plusieurs Britanniques le visitent d'ailleurs avec l'espoir d'en faire un fort. Mais il est surtout familier à Nader, depuis son enfance, au point que dès 1726, il proposait déjà d'y enfermer son ennemi Fath 'Ali Khan Qajar. C'est donc pour lui un lieu important à de nombreux titres, mais qui demeure suffisamment mineur dans l'histoire pour pouvoir porter sa marque personnelle et devenir sa ville.

Ainsi, Nader investit-il largement le site, comme en témoignent à la fois les sources et des restes archéologiques et architecturaux. Malheureusement, les auteurs, notamment Mirza Mahdi, se contentent souvent de listes peu précises, qui semblent devoir davantage à la littérature qu'à la réalité. Mohammad Kazem Mervi développe ainsi longuement une histoire autour d'un trésor, conçu pour abriter le butin d'Inde (Mervi, vol. 2, 824-825). Mais le voyageur grec Basile Vatatzès offre un résumé plus intéressant :

Ce Kalat donc [...], une fois qu'il fut édifié par le *shah* Nader, offrit aux regards un spectacle grandiose et d'une grande magnificence, source, dirais-je, d'une admiration et contemplation qui ne sont pas des moindres. Cela réclamerait un grand et long discours si l'on voulait décrire en détail les bâtiments qu'y fit édifier le *shah* Nader. En effet il fit édifier des temples très vastes et des palais magnifiques et immenses, tels que jamais auparavant peut être la royauté des Perses n'avait eu le bonheur d'en avoir. [...] En outre le *shah* Nader fit construire, en ce même Kalat, son propre tombeau d'une architecture extraordinaire et d'une magnificence dépassant presque toute autre. [...] En plus de tout cela et en plus des édifices de toute sorte et de toute magnificence qu'il avait fait ériger à l'intérieur de cette forteresse naturelle de Kalat, le *shah* Nader, pour en renforcer la sécurité (puisque elle avait été désignée par le *shah* Nader lui-même comme le siège royal de la royauté perse), fit construire dans les deux failles susdites permettant l'entrée à Kalat douze portes de fer, je veux dire à la fois en fer et aux serrures impossibles à forcer, séparées l'une de l'autre par une petite distance, d'une solidité absolue, en fer massif, impossibles à ébranler. Mais toutes ces constructions susdites opérées en dernier à Kalat par le *shah* Nader, furent menées à bien en à peine cinq ans, et pourtant totalement achevées, comme cela a été expliqué plus haut. (271-272)¹³

S'il faut faire la part des exagérations, imprécisions et libertés propres à l'auteur, ce texte offre en quelques lignes, le panorama le plus exact des bâtiments entrepris par Nader : des édifices résidentiels, commerciaux et palatiaux en matériaux périssables, mais aussi en moellons, comme

13. Nous remercions vivement René Bondoux pour la traduction de ce passage.

en témoignent les restes présents à Khesht, au nord de la ville même de Kalat¹⁴ ; un tombeau au cœur de la ville, connu de nos jours sous le nom de Kakh-e Khorshid ; des fortifications, et peut-être une mosquée, ou du moins une restauration de la mosquée Gonbad-e Kabud, dont les origines semblent ilkhanides et qui a été reprise ensuite sous Fath 'Ali Shah. Le littérateur oublie cependant un certain nombre d'éléments : des installations hydrauliques (Mervi, vol. 2, 824 ; Astarabadi, *Tarikh-e Jahangosha* 376 ; 'Abd al-Karim 70-71) et surtout la *Katibeh naderi* (« inscription de Nader »), qui n'est mentionnée dans aucune source (fig. 5).

Cette monumentale inscription rupestre, située à l'entrée ouest de Kalat, a été reconnue dès 1905 par Percy Sykes comme rédigée pour Nader (574), mais n'a été traduite qu'en 1977 par Tourkhan Gandjeï (Gandjeï). Rédigée en turc, elle fait, sur un mode poétique, l'apologie de Nader en juste roi, reprenant un certain nombre de qualités dévolues aux souverains dans la lignée des modèles véhiculés par la culture de cour, notamment par les Miroirs des princes.



Figure 5: *Katibeh Naderi*, Kalat-e Naderi, vers 1160/1747. Photographie de Mélisande Bizoirre, 2016.

14. Mirza Mahdi mentionne trois lieux qui auraient fait l'objet d'attentions de la part de Nader : Khesht, Gard et Qushchi. Il parle notamment de palais en bois et en torchis, comparant l'usage de la paille à de l'or. Ses descriptions, très littéraires, ne correspondent pas aux restes présents à Khesht : des pans de murs en moellons. Des restes de bâtiments sont visibles à la photographie satellite sur plusieurs autres endroits du plateau, notamment au sud du village de Garu, mais nécessiteraient des investigations archéologiques pour vérifier leur nature et leur datation. (Astarabadi, *Dorreh-ye Nadereh* 530-534).

Nader y est décrit comme la manifestation d'un choix divin, qui dispose d'une belle apparence et de qualités morales, notamment la générosité et la sagesse.

Si la turcité est sensible dans la langue employée, le modèle de l'inscription rupestre monumentale ne doit pas, lui, être cherché du côté de Timur ou de Gengis : Nader puise dans une tradition qui remonte à l'Antiquité iranienne, et qui a déjà été remise à l'honneur sous les Safavides. Ainsi, sur le site de Bisotun, se trouve une inscription monumentale énonçant un *waqf* du vizir safavide Shaikh 'Ali Khan Zanganeh, évidemment inspiré par les décors antiques du site ; de même, on trouve de nombreuses inscriptions safavides, notamment funéraires, sur le site de Haftad Qal'eh, près d'Arak. Néanmoins la *Katibeh-ye Naderi* reste exceptionnelle tant par ses dimensions que par son contenu et la qualité de sa réalisation, bien qu'elle soit demeurée inachevée.

Des mausolées pour construire une lignée

Bien qu'une grande partie de son œuvre de propagande soit conçue autour de son destin personnel, Nader ne se pense pas comme un souverain isolé, unique. Comme tous ses pairs, il se situe lui-même au cœur d'une lignée et d'une dynastie, qu'il contribue à fonder. Sur ce point encore, il ne diffère pas fondamentalement des souverains afghans qui le précèdent. Ces considérations se manifestent tout particulièrement dans l'architecture funéraire. Ainsi, si plusieurs mausolées de saints font l'objet de restaurations, ceux qui sont édifiés *ex nihilo* ont tous un rôle politique et sont, pour la plupart, destinés à mettre en évidence une légitimité dynastique.

Deux de ces tombeaux sont édifiés à la période afghane : celui de Nasrallah, général de Mahmud, et celui de Mahmud lui-même. Le premier semble avoir été honoré d'une construction près du cimetière arménien en raison de son aura guerrière, et non pour des raisons familiales, si l'on en croit le père Krusiński, qui le présente en outre comme un zoroastrien (II 249-250). Celui de Mahmud, quant à lui, est édifié à la suite de sa mort dans des conditions douteuses par Ashraf sur la rive sud du fleuve Zayandeh Rud, près du pont Khwaju dans un jardin clos, peut-être à Sa'adatabad. S'il n'est pas certain qu'Ashraf soit directement à l'origine du décès de son prédécesseur, les deux cousins nourrissaient sans aucun doute de profonds griefs l'un envers l'autre, Mahmud ayant notamment ordonné l'enfermement d'Ashraf et Ashraf ayant comploté contre Mahmud pour l'évincer du pouvoir. La raison de l'édification de ce tombeau est donc purement politique, et vise à affirmer la continuité d'un pouvoir encore très fragile, ainsi que le note d'ailleurs Jonas Hanway :

Mahmud, lorsqu'il fut près de sa mort naturelle, fut enlevé par violence, ainsi qu'il a déjà été raconté ; pourtant, comme il était le fondateur de la domination des Afghans en Perse, ils érigèrent, au prix d'une dépense considérable, un magnifique mausolée à sa mémoire (IV 34).

De ces deux tombeaux, il ne reste aujourd'hui que des traces dans les sources écrites. Celui de Mahmud aurait été détruit par la foule dès le retour des Safavides dans la capitale, en 1729, et les archives françaises indiquent qu'on aurait édifié à son emplacement des latrines publiques, détail

repris par la suite par plusieurs auteurs. Le mausolée de Nasrallah doit sans doute être identifié à celui du « sorcier Dara Shah »¹⁵ que mentionnent les archives de la VOC, et sur lequel Tahmasp tirait quatre à cinq fois par jour (Floor, *Rise and Fall* 16).

Nader, pour sa part, est à l'origine de la construction de trois mausolées. L'un, attesté par une lettre du père Bazin, médecin de Nader dans les dernières années de sa vie, est destiné à sa mère (*Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* III 56). Un petit édicule édifié près de la ville de Lar, dans le Fars, est connu traditionnellement comme le « mausolée de la mère de Nader », mais l'identification semble peu probable car le lieu est très éloigné de l'endroit où se trouvait alors Nader. L'édifice, simple tombe carrée sous coupole, de huit par neuf mètres de côté, sans inscriptions, ne trouve par ailleurs pas de correspondance avec les autres réalisations architecturales de Nader. L'emplacement de la tombe de la mère de Nader reste donc à définir.

Deux autres mausolées construits sur ordre de Nader sont quant à eux connus *de visu* : l'un est le Kakh-e khorshid édifié à Kalat-e Naderi (Curatola ; Ghassemi ; Babaie). Sa fonction funéraire, bien que remise en cause par Giovanni Curatola, ne fait guère de doute. Elle est avérée par trois éléments : l'usage d'inscriptions coraniques faisant référence au Jugement dernier (sourate 78 *al-naba'*, « L'Annonce » ; sourate 37 *al-Saffat*, « Ceux qui sont placés en rangs », 180-182) ; la mention, par Basile Vatatzès et Mohammad Kazem Mervi de l'édifice comme un tombeau (*maqbareh*) et enfin la proximité de l'architecture avec les mausolées timurides et indiens, tant dans la forme que dans le décor, ainsi que l'usage d'une coupole côtelée qui rappelle la tour funéraire de Radkan, où Nader est passé.

Le second serait plus ancien : Mohammad Kazem Mervi mentionne sa construction avec les autres travaux de Mashhad en 1732-1733 (I 204). Elle est attestée à la fois par les sources (Hazin 252-253 ; 'Abd al-Karim 75-76) et par une image prise par Antonio Gianuzzi au milieu du XIX^e siècle, soit après sa destruction par les premiers shahs qajars, mais bien avant son remplacement par l'actuel musée Naderi (fig. 6). On y voit dans une cour ou donnant sur une ruelle, une façade composée d'un *iwan* principal entouré de quatre arcs latéraux. En 1825, James Fraser, qui visite la ville, indique que la tombe avait été conçue pour les restes de Nader et de son fils, Reza Qoli Mirza, une information qui n'est pas attestée auparavant, et qui pourrait relever de la légende, de même que l'idée que Mohammad Reza Qajar ait pu y déterrer les ossements de Nader, a priori laissés au lieu de son assassinat (*Narrative* 462).

La construction de deux tombes n'a pas de sens d'un point de vue purement funéraire dans une culture où le corps garde son intégrité après la mort. Leur rôle est donc là encore d'inscrire dans le paysage urbain l'existence de Nader et de sa lignée.

15. Krusiński évoque le personnage en utilisant lui aussi le terme de « sorcellerie » (II 249-250). Il semble qu'un culte se soit développé autour du tombeau.

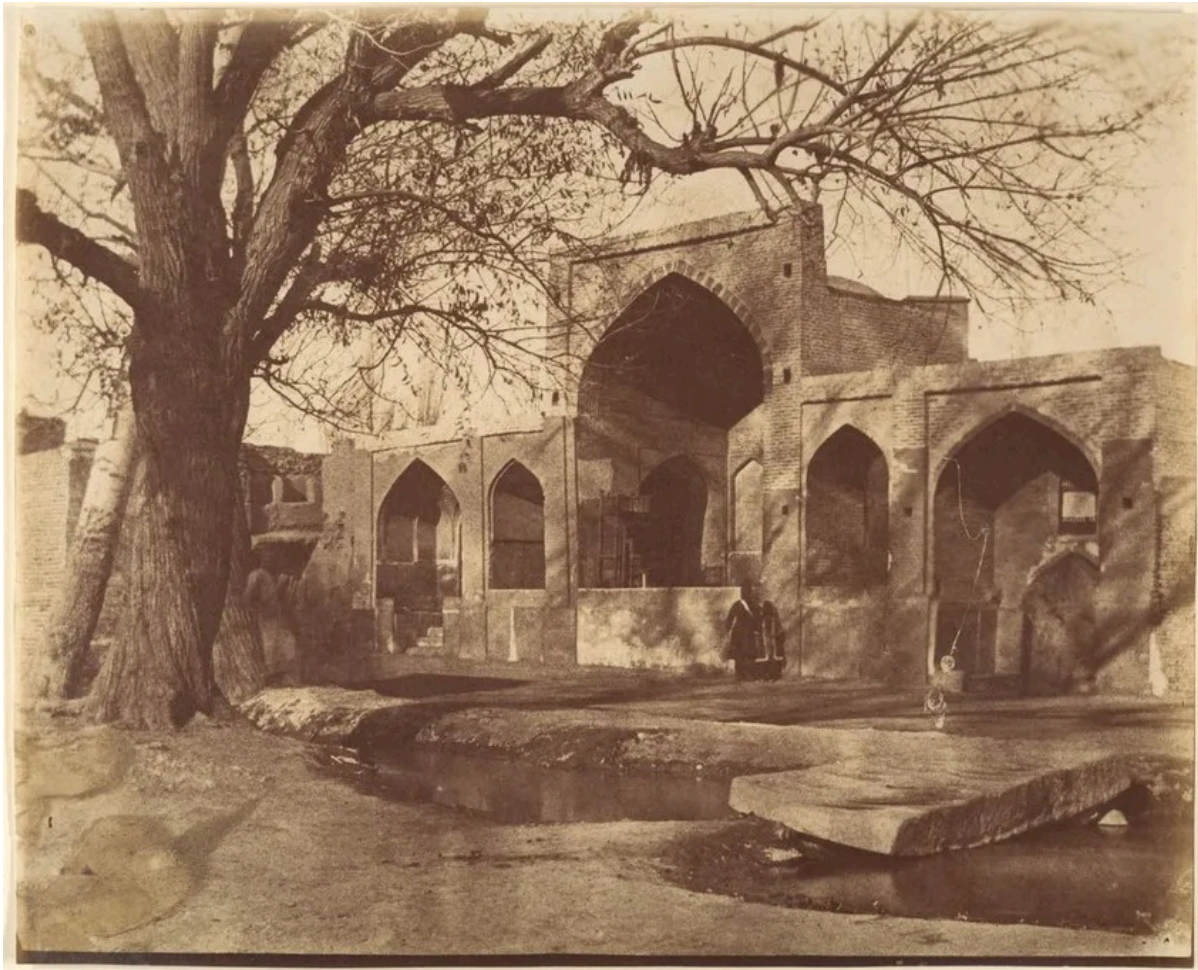


Figure 6: Photo de la tombe de Nader Shah à Mashhad, Antonio Gianuzzi, milieu du XIX^e siècle, épreuve sur papier albuminé, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1977.683.35. Image courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Public Domain.

Portraits familiaux

L'idée de lignée se retrouve dans l'art du livre, notamment dans deux ou trois portraits mettant en scène Shah Rokh et son grand-père Nader Shah, que Marcus Fraser attribue à Mohammad Reza Hendi (« Muhammad Riza-i Hindi » 189-193). La plus célèbre se situe dans l'*Album de Saint-Pétersbourg*, où les deux portraits sont disposés sur une même page, chacun dans une fenêtre, et se répondent (fig. 7). Cette disposition est présente à cinq autres reprises dans l'album sur des pages indiennes, qui mettent en rapport un souverain moghol avec son fils ou son petit-fils¹⁶.

16. Shah Rokh, qui a 13 ans au moment de l'assassinat de Nader et du début de la compilation de l'*Album*, pourrait avoir été son commanditaire ou son destinataire. A. Botchkareva, soulignant le caractère impérial de l'iconographie, estime que l'album aurait pu être une commande de Nader pour Shah Rokh, mais les dix marges datées les plus anciennes remontent à 1747-48, soit de l'année même de la mort de Nader, qui a lieu le 11 *jomada II*, soit en milieu d'année et une est datée 1748-49. Deux ou trois pages portent la date de 1751-52, puis l'essentiel des marges ont été réalisées entre 1755-56 et 1758-59. Il pourrait s'agir d'une commande de Shah Rokh lui-même, ou de l'un de ses partisans, qui aurait été interrompue lorsque celui-ci a été privé de la vue en mars 1750. L'ouvrage aurait alors été repris par Mirza Mahdi Astarabadi, qui l'aurait



Figure 7: Page de l'album de Saint-Pétersbourg avec portraits de Nader Shah et Shah Rokh, Mohammad Reza Hendi, Peinture et or sur papier, 47,4 x 30,8 cm, Chicago Art Institute, 1919.952. Image courtesy of the Chicago Art Institute, Public Domain.

doté d'une reliure plus ancienne, prise dans ses propres collections et portant son nom. L'état d'inachèvement de l'ouvrage s'expliquerait par le décès de Mirza Mahdi, dont les traces se perdent en 1758-59 ou 1759-60 (Lockhart, *Nadir Shah* 294 ; Perry).

L'album Dorn 489 de la Bibliothèque nationale de Russie recèle également un portrait de Shah Rokh daté 1752-53 qui pourrait avoir été conçu comme un pendant à un portrait de Nader Shah conservé à la bibliothèque du Golestan, dans l'album 1367 (Atabay III, ap. 280). Enfin, une page passée en vente à Sotheby's en 1980¹⁷ présente deux hommes agenouillés et en interaction, portant toutes deux le *kolah-e naderi*, un couvre-chef à quatre pointes inventé par Nader et qui s'impose à la période afsharide. L'homme à gauche, jeune, semble en conversation avec l'autre, plus âgé, barbu, installé sur un tapis et contre un coussin, tenant un document à la main. Identifié au moment de sa vente comme un « portrait inachevé de Nader Shah et de son fils », ce portrait double, dont on ne connaît qu'une reproduction de qualité médiocre, est considéré par Marcus Fraser comme une œuvre de Mohammad Reza Hendi représentant le souverain afsharide et probablement son petit-fils (193). Si l'attribution au peintre indien semble pertinente, l'identification reste cependant sujette à caution, le personnage âgé ne portant aucun symbole de royauté : ni aigrette, ni ornements de bras, ni armes à la ceinture. Il est possible qu'il s'agisse d'un dignitaire de la période, tout comme le secrétaire et historiographe Mirza Mahdi Khan Astarabadi est représenté dans une autre page (Karimzadeh-Tabrizi II 1008, fig. 94)¹⁸.

L'image de Nader est en effet fixée par plusieurs portraits (O'Brien). Beaucoup sont postérieurs, réalisés en Inde ou en Iran, ce qui rend l'attribution souvent complexe. Un seul, conservé à l'Hermitage (VP-552), est daté 1743-1744 et signé d'un certain Bahram *naqqash bashi* (Adamova cat. 72). Deux à l'huile sur toile – technique qui ne semble alors maîtrisée qu'en Iran – ont été acquis en Inde et sont conservés en Angleterre : l'un à la British Library (Foster 44) a été acheté au Bengale entre 1760 et 1767 et rappelle fortement les portraits de Mohammad Reza Hendi dans sa composition ; l'autre, au Victoria and Albert Museum (IM.20-1919) (fig. 8), a pu être attribué au même artiste par Layla Diba (Diba et Ekhtiar 138-139, fig. 19 ; O'Brien 61-66), mais son attribution est remise en cause par Marcus Fraser, qui y voit plutôt une œuvre de la fin du XVIII^e siècle (203-204).

Outre les pages déjà mentionnées dans l'*Album de Saint-Pétersbourg* et l'album 1367 de la bibliothèque du Golestan, on connaît également un portrait équestre conservé au Chicago Museum of Fine Arts (14.646, fig. 3) et peut-être un portrait à la chasse¹⁹. Dans toutes ces représentations, Nader présente une image quelque peu figée, de trois quarts, les yeux tournés vers le spectateur, un poing sur la hanche, une arme ou un bijou à la main (sauf lorsque le cadrage ne le permet pas), avec une parure de bijoux particulièrement soignée, comme nous l'avons déjà évoquée *supra*. Ce modèle est en partie repris par son successeur, 'Adel Shah, dans deux portraits restés inachevés (Soudavar 382, n^o 154 ; Atabay III 321-327).

17. 21-22 avril 1980, lot 90.

18. Plusieurs portraits de dignitaires anonymes portant le *kolah-e naderi* sont également présents dans les collections : British Museum, 1974,0617,0,3.20 et .68 ; Golestan, 1637, fol. 24 ; Genève, Musée d'art et d'histoire, 1971-107/106 ; Christie's, 28 avril 1998, lot 113. On peut de la même manière mettre en doute l'identification à Nader du personnage recevant un ambassadeur ottoman sur la page publiée dans l'exposition *Royal Persian Painting* (Diba et Ekhtiar 142, cat. 21), qui pourrait être un haut dignitaire plutôt que le souverain en personne.

19. Christie's, 10 octobre 2006, lot 141.



Figure 8: *Portrait de Nader Shah, le roi de la Perse, (1732–1747). v.1740. Huile sur toile, Foster 44. 127 x 99 cm, British Library, Londres. Courtesy of the British Library Board.*

Les portraits princiers de l'époque afsharide mettent également en valeur la notion de lignée et de famille par les femmes, à travers des portraits de couples, sur une même page ou en regard²⁰. Les protagonistes, qui tiennent ou s'échangent des objets symboliques – coupes, fleurs – peuvent rarement être identifiés avec certitude, et les datations sont souvent soumises à caution. Néanmoins, la collection David a récemment acquis un portrait de couple signé Mohammad Reza Hendi et daté 1749-50, et qui pourrait représenter Reza Qoli Mirza et son épouse Fatima Sultan (Fraser, « Muhammad Riza-i Hindi » 188-190, cat. 1). La réalisation d'un tel portrait sous le règne de Shah Rokh, leur fils, a évidemment un rôle légitimant, mettant en évidence l'existence du double lignage safavide et afsharide qui fonde son droit à régner, souligné dans les sources (Tucker, « Explaining » 96).

Mettre en scène un projet politique : la religion comme support de légitimité

Considérés par nombre de leurs contemporains au mieux comme des pis-aller, au pire comme des usurpateurs, des souverains comme Ashraf ou Nader ne peuvent pourtant se reposer sur une légitimité purement lignagère. C'est donc aussi leurs projets politiques qui fondent leur droit à régner. Ils s'affichent notamment dans les inscriptions qu'ils commandent, et reposent sur trois piliers : l'élection divine, l'universalité et l'adhésion populaire.

L'inscription que fait réaliser Ashraf dans la Grande Mosquée d'Ispahan en 1727 comporte, outre son panégyrique, une longue bande calligraphiée à caractère religieux (fig. 1). Elle loue tout d'abord le prophète, puis l'imam 'Ali, les trois califes Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, 'Omar al-Faruq, 'Othman et enfin l'imam Reza, créant un étrange mélange entre figures imamites révérees par les chiites et califes « bien guidés » appréciés par les sunnites. Les figures des trois premiers califes et surtout de 'Omar sont clivantes. Considéré comme *al-faruq*, « l'équitable » dans la culture sunnite, ce dernier est particulièrement mal considéré par les chiites, et son meurtre par un esclave persan est célébré chaque année sous les Safavides lors des cérémonies du *'Omar koshti* (meurtre de 'Omar)²¹. Dans une optique de légitimation, les Afghans se posent en effet en champions de l'orthodoxie sunnite. Mir Vais, le père de Mahmud, qui est à l'origine de la révolte afghane, n'a-t-il pas obtenu lors d'un pèlerinage à La Mecque en 1708, un décret (*fatwa*) des autorités de la ville sainte l'autorisant à se révolter contre la tutelle persane chiite, considérée comme « hérétique » ? (Tucker, *Nadir Shah's Quest* 23) Cette légitimation par le sunnisme apparaît sur les monnaies de Mahmud et Ashraf Shah, qui portent la forme sunnite de la *kalima*²² (Album pl. 12, n^{os} 214-220) et dans les violences exercées contre certains clercs chiites au moment de la prise de pouvoir (Sefatgol 215). C'est pourtant à un entre-deux que se livre Ashraf en 1727 dans son inscription, valorisant à la fois des figures du sunnisme et du chiisme duodécimain. Il faut peut-être voir dans ce demi-revirement un acte politique de conciliation, visant à la fois à affirmer sa légitimité religieuse sans s'aliéner la population d'Ispahan.

20. Cambridge, Harvard Art Museums, 1960.76 et 1960.77 ; Sotheby's, 22 mai 1986, lot 175. Certains portraits féminins étaient aussi peut-être conçus avec un pendant masculin : Christie's, 10 octobre 2000, lot 95 ; New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 30.95.174.32.

21. Sur le rituel de malédiction des trois premiers califes (*sabb* et *la'n*) mis en place sous les Safavides, voir Algar. Cette célébration est par la suite l'un des points évoqués au concile de Najaf et sur lesquels Nader accepte de transiger pour permettre la mise en place de son *madhhab ja'fari* (*Nadir Shah's Quest* 87-89).

22. La *kalima* est une formule rappelant l'unicité de Dieu : « Il n'y a de dieu que Dieu et Mohammad est son prophète ». Les chiites ajoutent ensuite la mention « et 'Ali est l'ami de Dieu ».

Cette voie médiane est en tout cas assumée par Nader dans son *madhhab ja'fari*. Lui aussi n'hésite pas à jouer sur la corde religieuse pour affirmer son pouvoir, en se présentant comme un croyant sincère et un protecteur de l'islam. Paradoxalement, ce n'est pas dans l'inscription du mausolée de Mashhad, mais dans celle, plus tardive, de Kalat, que cet aspect est le mieux mis en valeur, ce qui s'explique par le mûrissement de son projet impérial. Sur vingt-deux vers, seize ont un caractère religieux. Nader y fait acte de foi à la première personne, s'exprimant notamment en ces termes :

Toi qui m'as donné le sultanat et une armée ; toi qui m'as donné la couronne, la ceinture, la pompe et la coiffe. / Tu es le protecteur de mon pouvoir, et j'ai placé mes espoirs en Toi. J'ai déposé ma confiance sincère en Toi et cette croyance est mon soutien. / Puisse Dieu dégrader ceux qui dénie mon autorité ! Puisse-t-il aveugler les ennemis qui ne voient pas le soutien de Dieu ! (d'ap. Gandjeï).

Alors que les souverains afghans et Nader regardent davantage vers le sunnisme pour des raisons politiques, Shah Rokh, lui, se pose en rétablisseur du chiisme. Héritier des Safavides par sa mère, Afsharide attaché au Khorasan par son père, il choisit naturellement le mausolée de Mashhad pour affirmer ce revirement en lui offrant en *waqf* une grille d'acier (*zarih*) destinée à protéger la tombe de l'imam Reza. Portant à chaque entrecroisement un décor de pierres précieuses cerclées d'or, probablement prises sur le butin de Delhi qu'il s'est accaparé, l'objet est marqué d'une inscription dédicatoire à son nom et datée 1747-48 ('Alemzadeh 89-90). Cet acte de dévotion nettement politique fait écho aux premières monnaies frappées par Shah Rokh après la mort de Nader où le prince se désigne comme le « chien du mausolée de Reza » (*kalb-e astan-e Reza*), ainsi que dans son sceau, qui porte la mention « de Shah Rokh, pour la religion et l'État safavide » (*ze shahrokh bejahat-e din o dowlat-e safavi*).

Le projet impérial de Nader

Si l'on en croit Ernest Tucker, le projet impérial de Nader serait né dans les années 1730. D'après lui, le traité de Zohab, signé en décembre 1733, constitue le premier témoignage de l'évolution de Nader sur la question de la légitimité royale, où il développe le concept d'une descendance « turkmène » qui lui offrirait un droit sur le trône ottoman. C'est à partir de cette date que la turcité prend une place centrale dans son système idéologique et qu'il développe un lien symbolique avec les grands conquérants turco-mongols, notamment Timur et Gengis (*Nadir Shah's Quest* 37). Comme on l'a vu *supra*, l'inscription de l'*iwan* doré de Mashhad, datée de 1732-1733 et 1733-34, semble peu ou prou corroborer cette chronologie, puisqu'elle insiste à la fois sur le caractère ethnique de Nader, désigné comme « Afshar », et sur une légitimité impériale consacrée par la turcité qu'il partage avec l'empereur moghol et le *khaqan*.

Au retour d'Inde, ce projet impérial s'est exacerbé, et s'exprime pleinement dans le style indianisant utilisé au Kakh-e Khorshid, son mausolée à Kalat (fig. 9). Alors qu'à Mashhad, le tombeau avait été réalisé dans un style persan traditionnel, à Kalat, l'usage d'un grès rouge, le décor sculpté et les motifs trahissent nettement une influence indienne, qui transite à la fois par les personnes – nombreuses sont les sources qui mentionnent la déportation d'artisans indiens²³ – et par des éléments matériels, notamment les textiles. Certes, l'indianisme n'est pas nouveau ; il existe avant la période afsharide en Iran, tant dans la peinture que dans le décor architectural et les ob-

jets mobiliers, laques ou textiles notamment, au point qu'il est souvent difficile de distinguer productions iraniennes et indiennes. Ce goût continue d'ailleurs d'être exploré sous Nader par des artistes persans, comme en témoignent par exemple un plumier signé 'Ali Ashraf (Smithsonian Institution, S2014.17.19) ou une copie, par un certain 'Ali Qoli, d'une page représentant une pirolle verte (Sotheby's, 18 avril 2007, lot 28). Mais la voie ici suivie diffère totalement de ces productions destinées aux amateurs lettrés. Styles, techniques et motifs sont différents, quand bien même ils relèvent d'un goût partagé dans l'ensemble du monde islamique pour les décors de fleurs et d'oiseaux. Nader importe donc en Iran un petit morceau d'Inde, qui reste sans équivalent, et qui témoigne des ambitions de celui qui a recouronné de ses mains Mohammad Shah, l'empereur moghol.



Figure 9: *Kakh-e Khoshid* à Kalat-e Naderi, vers 1160/1747. Image courtesy of Wikimedia commons, CC BY-SA 3.0, photographié par Hamid Hashemi Pour.

23. Reza Shabani propose un relevé quasi exhaustif des sources, notamment indiennes, dans son commentaire du *Tarikh-e Nadershahi* (Mohammad Safi Tehrani et Shabani 354-358).

Nader, protecteur du peuple ?

Un dernier aspect de la propagande nadérienne semble avoir jusqu'ici moins attiré l'attention des historiens : le fait que le souverain afshar soit présenté régulièrement dans les sources comme un protecteur des populations. Ce caractère transparait tout particulièrement dans les textes qui entourent les restaurations et constructions urbaines : ainsi, à Chiraz en 1730-31, dans une ville ravagée par les Afghans, Nader aurait donné, selon une source tardive, un chandelier d'or et mille cinq cents *tumans* pour la réparation du sanctuaire de Shah Cheragh (Fasai 168 ; Tucker, *Nadir Shah* 46) ; la même année, il aurait également fait réparer le barrage de Shushtar (Astarabadi, *Tarikh-e jahangosha* 117 ; Shushtari 88-89). Enfin, en 1735-36, Nader aurait ordonné la reconstruction du barrage de Merv (Astarabadi, *Tarikh-e jahangosha* 258-259 ; Mervi, vol. 1, 431 ; 'Abd al-Karim 52-53). Dans les trois cas, peu d'intérêt politique et idéologique s'attache à ces travaux, si ce n'est le besoin d'obtenir une reconnaissance locale. Les ouvrages hydrauliques semblent avoir particulièrement attiré son attention, comme le montrent ses réalisations à Kalat et Mashhad également.

Cet aspect protecteur apparait aussi nettement dans la glose qui entoure ses réalisations urbaines. La construction de Naderabad, au sud de Qandahar, est liée à des circonstances militaires ; mais celle de Khivabad, actuellement au Turkménistan, est présentée dans les sources comme un acte de charité, puisque la ville est destinée à recueillir des prisonniers persans libérés lors de la campagne du Khwarezm – douze mille selon Mirza Mahdi, trente mille selon Mohammad Kazem Mervi, qui indique qu'« on [leur] fit présent de riches et opulents biens, objets, aliments, bêtes et bestiaux et autres fournitures indispensables aux hommes », afin de créer une « ville agréable et prospère » (Astarabadi, *Tarikh-e Jahangosha* 359-360 ; Mervi, vol. 1, 16 et II, 825-826 ; Mohammad Safi Tehrani 253-254). 'Abd al-Karim, peu favorable au pouvoir, a cependant une vision quelque peu différente de la situation ; il précise, plein d'ironie, parlant des prisonniers rapatriés, « les rares qui, mécontents de leurs maîtres, retournèrent dans leur patrie, eurent très vite raison de se repentir de leur folie » ('Abd al-Karim 47-48). L'histoire semble donner raison à la seconde version, puisque le site aride et isolé ne semble être resté habité que très peu de temps et était désert un siècle plus tard.

Un écart encore plus net s'observe entre la réalité et les sources officielles sur les raisons qui poussent Nader à édifier Aq Su, la troisième ville créée par Nader pour remplacer Shamakhi à l'automne 1735. Bien qu'elle soit restée plus longtemps habitée que Khivabad, elle semble avoir été placée dans un site peu favorable, et non pour le confort des populations²⁴.

La distorsion entre propagande et réalité est l'un des traits les plus évidents de la stratégie idéologique mise en place par les souverains afghans et afsharides dans leurs commandes artistiques et architecturales. Tous confrontés à un manque de légitimité, ils utilisent des techniques semblables dans un même but : affirmer leur droit au trône. Pour cela, ils investissent le territoire, se mettent en scène dans des cadres rutilants et mettent en valeur aussi bien leur personne que leur lignée.

24. Comparer notamment le récit du *Tarikh-e Jahangosha*, favorable à Nader, qui évoque un lieu « impropre » et difficile à défendre (247), et ceux de Abraham de Crète (108-109), Vatatzès (217) et Hanway (I, 387 et IV, 115-116), qui évoquent une destruction de la ville de Shamakhi par Nader dans un moment de fureur, et une construction de Aq Su dans un lieu peu propice.

Ils se posent aussi en rois justes, exhibant dans des inscriptions les qualités souveraines mises en exergue depuis plusieurs siècles dans la littérature, notamment dans les Miroirs des Princes : élection divine, protection de la religion, relation privilégiée avec des figures historiques remarquables, valeur militaire, justice et sagesse. Ainsi, là où la royauté est faible, on s'affiche en « sultan des sultans » et on s'habille de vêtements tissés d'or ; lorsque le pouvoir est saisi par la force, on met en valeur la lignée ; et tandis qu'on dépouille les clercs de leurs prérogatives et les institutions religieuses de leurs *waqfs*, on se met en scène en élu de Dieu et protecteur de la religion.

Néanmoins, leur stratégie évolue au gré des événements et manque parfois de cohérence. Elle n'atteint pas non plus le même niveau de complexité. Alors que les Afghans, rapidement défaits, ne parviennent pas réellement à s'imposer comme champions du sunnisme et souverains à part entière, Nader, plus heureux dans les armes, est capable de développer une véritable idéologie artistique, sensible aussi bien dans les sources que dans ses réalisations matérielles. Privilégiant souvent l'apparat à l'esthétisme, elle suit un destin personnel aussi bien qu'elle le forge.

Annexe : inscriptions monumentales

1. *Inscription d'Ashraf dans la « madrasa mozaffaride » de la Grande Mosquée d'Ispahan (d'ap. la lecture présentée dans Honarfar, 144-145)*

Inscription inférieure (en arabe) :

الحمد لله الذى تفرد بالوحدانية والبقاء و تقدس عن الامثال والاكفاء و اشهد شهادة صادقة والانبياء و نشهد نبياً بعثه الله رحمة لاهل الارض والسماء صلى الله عليه و على آله و اصحابه خيرالال و خيرالاصحاب الذين آمنوا و جاهدوا فى سبيل الله سيما على الامام الذى بمفاخر صدقه يضرب الامثال الموصوف فى القرآن يلتقوا قوى لما ينال خليفة رسول الله على التحقيق امير المؤمنين ابى بكر الصديق رضى الله عنه و على الامام الذى يضرب بمآثر عدله الامثال و يمضى عن الاسلام اصول الكفر والضلال خليفة رسول الله على التحقيق امير المؤمنين عمر الفاروق و على الامام التقى الوقور كالراسيات من الجبال خليفة رسول الله على التحقيق امير المؤمنين عثمان ذى النورين الزكى و على الامام الكبير النوال خليفة رسول الله على التحقيق امير المؤمنين على الرضى السخى الوفى و سلم تسليماً كتبه على المولوى فى ١١٣٩

Louange à Dieu, l'unique, l'éternel, il n'a ni semblable ni égal. J'en témoigne sincèrement et nous attestons qu'Il a envoyé son Prophète, miséricorde pour les habitants de la terre et du ciel, que la paix et le salut soient sur Lui, sa famille et ses compagnons, la meilleure des famille et les meilleurs des compagnons, ceux qui ont cru et combattu dans le chemin de Dieu, surtout l'imam 'Ali qui est donné en tant qu'exemple par les vertus de sa sincérité et qui est décrit dans le Coran pour sa piété. Bénédiction sur le vicaire du Prophète de Dieu, le prince des croyants, Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, que Dieu l'agrée ; ainsi que sur l'imam, exemple de justice, qui a purifié l'islam de toute sorte d'infidélité et d'égarement, le vicaire du Prophète de Dieu et certainement le prince des croyants, 'Omar al-Faruq ; et sur l'imam pieux ; le décent, à l'instar des montagnes culminantes, le vicaire du Prophète de Dieu, le prince des croyants, 'Osman, l'homme au deux lumières, le bon ; et sur l'imam de grande générosité, le vicaire du Prophète de Dieu, le prince des croyants, 'Ali al-Reza, le généreux, le fidèle, avec les salutations. Écrit par 'Ali al-Mowlavi en 1139.

Inscription supérieure, cartouches sur fond bleu (en arabe) :

Selon l'ordre du sultan, *khaqān* de son temps
Celui dont la majesté n'a pas d'égal en Iran
Celui dont le nom est Ashraf, « sultan des sultans »
Celui qui a submergé le peuple de ses dons
Il a illuminé les serviteurs par sa beauté
En édifiant cette grande mosquée
Il est le généreux, aux faveurs parfaites et bien connues
À la demande du serviteur Za'faran et
À la charge de Ya'qub Khan
Dépassant ses semblables par ses aptitudes
Écrit par l'humble Mehr 'Ali al-Mowlavi 1139.

لقد امر السلطان خاقان عصره
و من فاق فى ايران عز جلاله
و اشرف سلطان السلاطين اسمه
و منه استفاض الناس حسن نواله
افاض على العباد فيض جماله
بتعمير هذا المسجد الجامع الذى
هو الفاضل المعروف فضل كماله
بتغيب مولى زعفران و انه
تصدى له يعقوب خان وانه
يفوق على الاقران حسن خصاله
كتبه الفقير مهر على المولوى ١١٣٩

Inscription supérieure, cartouches quadrilobés sur fond marron (en persan, répété deux fois) :

De l'ami sincère, les lumières de la vérité	ز صدیق است انوار صداقت
De [l'homme] clairvoyant, les mystères de la justice	ز فاروق است اسرار عدالت
Du possesseur des lumières, la faveur et la lumière de la miséricorde	ز ذی النورین فیض و نور
Des lumières de 'Ali, l'amour de la sainteté	رحمت ز انوار علی حب ولایت

2. *Inscription de Nader dans l'iwan doré de Mashhad (en persan)*

Cette inscription a été lue par Percy Sykes (1135) et par l'Astan-e Qods-e Razavi. Mohammad-'Ali Karimzadeh Tabrizi a aussi publié une lecture de la ligne de signature aujourd'hui disparue (II, 904-905, n° 1072). Nous proposons quelques amendements.

بر در صحنش چو زائر از صداقت جبهه سا است	حبذا از این منظر عالی که فردوس برین	1
و از فضایش عالم انوار در کسب ضیا است	آسمان زین آستان فیض سعادت میبرد	2
دیده‌ی سیاه را مانند ثابت توتیاست	چشم انجم روشن از گرد و غبار درگهش	3
دیده امید چون کشکول در دست گداست	شهر یاران را از این ایوان کیوان روز و شب	4
شکل خورشیدی عیان اینجا زهر خشت طلاست	ماه را از مهر میبخشد ضیا آئینهاش	5
آشیان مرغ آمین است یا دست دعاست	رسته از صحن جنان گلدستهای زرین مهر	6
کز فروغ آن منور تا ابد صحن سماست	یا فروزان مشعل نوری است در دست زمین	7
مغفرت در جستجوی و معصیت در دست و پاست	جان فدای روضه کز فضل رب العالمین	8
رستن گلهای عفو از تخم عصیان جابه جاست	فیض رحمت بین کز اندک اشک در یکطرفه عین	9
کز غلامان در سلطان علی موسی رضاست	کرد تجدید بنا این جا سکندر طالعی	10
آن که در هر کار امیدش بتوفیق خداست	²⁵ کلب درگاه امیرالمؤمنین نادر قلی	11
نیت صافش بحق از روز اول آشناست	والی ملک خراسان آنکه از اخلاص و صدق	12
بر کفش مانند نرگس متصل جام طلاست	دید تا فیض نظر از ساقی کوثر مدام	13
بر تمامی خلق ایران تا قیامت فخرهاست	²⁶ هم ز فیض نسبت او در جهان افشار را	14
این طلا را هر که دست افشار میگوید رواست	چون ز دست جود او اینجا بمصرف میرسد	15
فتنه و آشوبها ساکن ²⁷ بکنج انزواست	تاجبخش عرصه عالم که از شمشیر او	16

25. Autre possibilité : کلب درگاه علی امیرالمؤمنین نادر :

26. Astan-e Qods : هم زمین فیض او اندر جهان افشار را :

27. Astan-e Qods : پنهان :

آن که از چنین جبین و قهرمان صولتش	17
رای هند و قیصر و خاقان بمخت مبتلاست	
کشگر اوزین اخطاب غیب کاصحاب شد (؟) ²⁸	18
در حقیقت حامی شرع مبین مصطفی‌ست	
شحنه عدلش ²⁹ در آن ملکی که شبگیری کند	19
دزد را رنگی نباشد گر همه دزد حناست	
خواه میش از کرکان بود در عهد او	20
شیر و آموراز عدل او بیک مرتع چراست	
در قزلباشی علم تا کشته شخص همتش	21
صفه ³⁰ و گلدسته صحن مقدس از طلاست	
شد بتوفیق خدا ایوان و گلدسته تمام	22
باد باقی تا اثر از گردش دوران ³¹ بپاست	
از زبان کعبه گفتم بهر تاریخش ندیم	23
دمبدم زان صفه و ایوان هویدا صد صفاست	
کتبه محمد علی بن سلیمان الرضوی غفر الله	24
فی شهر سنة خمس و اربعین و مائة و الف ۱۱۴۵	
و کتبه ثلث و نستعلیق که در این ایوان زرنشان عالی بخط این بنده عاصی محمد علی الرضوی است	disparu
قظاعی آن بید اهتتمم محمد طاهر ولد استاد مسیح شیرازی به اتمام رسید ۱۱۴۶	

1. Louée soit cette vue magnifique, cette cour devant laquelle même le sublime paradis est tel un pèlerin en admiration posant le front par terre.
2. Le ciel est rempli de bonheur au contact de ce mausolée et le monde des lumières obtient de la lumière de ce lieu.
3. Les yeux des étoiles brillent au contact de la poussière de ce lieu, comme un maquillage augmente la noirceur de l'œil.
4. Jour et nuit, les fidèles placent leur espoir en cet *ivan*, comme un mendiant qui tend son bol et espère.
5. Son reflet donne son éclat à la lune et dans chaque brique dorée se distingue la forme du soleil.
6. Le minaret doré comme le soleil qui s'élève dans cette cour paradisiaque, c'est le nid de l'oiseau Amin ou les bras [qui s'élèvent] en prière.
7. Ou encore une torche dans des mains de terre, dont la lumière illumine éternellement la cour céleste.
8. Vouées soient les âmes à ce mausolée car grâce à Dieu, la bénédiction est en chemin et le péché s'éloigne.
9. Vois la grâce de Dieu qui, une larme au coin de l'œil, fait pousser les fleurs du Pardon à partir des graines de péché.

28. Sykes : کشگر او را خطاب از غیب شد اصحاب دین : Astan-e Qods ; شکر اوزین خطاب غیب کزاصحاب شد

29. Astan-e Qods : عالم

30. Sykes : صفه و گلدسته و صحن و مقدس زو طلاست : Astan-e Qods ; صفه و گلدست صحن مقدس را طلاست

31. Sykes : دورای

10. Eskandar Talei a fondé ici cet édifice, lui l'esclave de Sultan 'Ali Musa al-Reza.
11. Celui qui place son l'espoir en Dieu pour toute chose est le chien d'Amir al-Mu'menin, Nader Qoli.
12. Le seigneur (*vali malek*) du Khorasan, pur et loyal. Sa pure intention est connue de tous depuis le premier jour.
13. Les yeux ont la faveur de voir l'échanson de la source éternelle de Kawsar, qui tient dans sa main un verre en or tel un narcisse.
14. De même, grâce à sa présence dans le monde, lui l'Afshar, tout le peuple d'Iran connaît l'honneur jusqu'à la fin du Monde.
15. Il a enrichi ce lieu de sa main généreuse. On dit que cet or coule de sa main et c'est bien vrai.
16. Lui qui porte la souveraineté du Monde, face à son sabre, les rebellions et les conflits se terrent.
17. Face à son visage et sa présence héroïques, ni l'Inde, ni l'empereur des Roums, ni le *khaqan* n'ont de mot à dire.
18. Il a été choisi par l'au-delà et en vérité, il est le protecteur de la loi manifeste de Mohammad.
19. Quand dans ce royaume, ses gardiens de la justice font leur ronde, un voleur ne peut rien, et tous les voleurs sont dans l'embarras.
20. À son époque, les brebis et les loups sont frères et grâce à sa justice, le lion et les bêtes sont sur le même pâturage.
21. Les soldats de sciences se sont sacrifiés (?). L'estrade (*sofeh*) et le minaret de la cour sainte sont en or.
22. Grâce à Dieu, l'*iwan* et le minaret ont été achevés, et jusqu'à fin des jours, le vent y soufflera.
23. Dans la langue de la Ka'ba, j'ai dit que celui qui fréquente ce lieu, voit cent merveilles dans sa cour et son *iwan*.
24. Écrit par Mohammad 'Ali ibn Soleiman al-Razavi, que Dieu lui pardonne ses péchés, en l'année mil cent quarante-cinq 1145.

Les écritures en thuluth et nasta'liq qui ont été réalisées dans ce magnifique *iwan* doré sont de l'esclave pécheur Mohammad 'Ali al-Razavi, et sa découpe a été permise par les efforts de Mohammad Taher fils de *ostad* Masih Shirazi, achevé en 1146.

Inscription de Nader à Kalat-e Naderi (*katibeh-ye naderi*) d'après Gandjeï (en turc)³²

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
ابتدا حمد خدای احد فرد قدیم
قادر لمیزل و عالم و دانا و حکیم
او که بو کون و مکانی یارادوب قدرتدن
او که هر [بو] بحر و بری خلق ایلیوب [/ ایدوب] شوکندن
ایکی عالمده او [در / دور ؟] بنده لره یاور و یار
حکمتندن کورونور بنده لره هر آثار
خلق عالم هامی محتاج دراول در کاهه
او ویروب [/ وروب] نور وضیا کوکبه مهر و ماهه
حمد حقدن صونکره اولدی قلمم نور افشان
بثنا کستری ختم رسل فخر جهان
[...] نبی [...] ایل احمد محمود
کیم خدادن (؟) اوله دایم اونکا صلوات (؟) و سلام
آل و اصحابنه هم رحمت بسیار اوله
اوله حق یاورى هر کیم اولاره یار اوله
حمد حق نعت نبی دن صونکره با صدق زجان
فرض در بنده لره مدح شهنشاه جهان
اول شهنشاه فلک مرتبه و چرخ سریر
شاه نادر که ادی تک اونکا یوق مثل و نظیر
دیمک اولمز او [بو] شهنشاه که [ار مه ؟] پیغمبر
یا مقرب ملکی دور (؟) اولوب از نوع بشر
لیک چون قدرت حق ظاهر [/ فائز] ایدوب بیش از بیش
مظهر حق اونا هر کیمسه دیسه حقی دیمیش
نسبت ایله (؟) شرف و فخر اوجاق تیمور
حسبت ایله بجهان شاه شهان در مشهور
مصطفی خلق و مسیحا دم و یوسف طلعت
بو علی دانش و حاتم کف و لقمان حکمت
قابلیتله اونکا ویردی [/ وردی] خداوند کریم
تاج و تخت شهی و عدل و کرم خلق عظیم
هر [/ میر] شرافت که دیسم شاه شهان در کامل

32. Traduction de Gandjeï, revue par l'auteure avec l'aide de Rafi Khankhajah

هر جهتن [/ مر حمتدن] اونکا الطاف خدادر شامل
 اعتقادی بویورور اول شه پاکیزه نهاد
 باقلمیش صدق خداونده ایدرلر بیله یاد
 اله کیرمز بیله دولت بسپاه و شمشیر
 اوله بیلمز بیله اقبال بعقل [/ بفضل] و تدبیر
 سن ویروب سن بکا (؟) بو سلطنت و سپاه
 سن ویروب سن بکا تاج و کمرو فر و کلاه
 دولتم حافظی سن سن سنکا در امیدوم
 من سنکا باقلمیشم صدق بو در تایبوم
 دولتم منکرینی سن ایله (؟) یک [...] و ذلیل
 دشمنیم کورلوقنه یاور اول ای رب جلیل
 چونکه صدقی بیله در حقنه از روی یقین
 بو سبیدن اونکا الطاف خدا اولدی معین
 النی دوتدی خداوند (؟) جهان قدرتن
 کامیاب ایتدی اونی معدلت و شوکتدن
 (بخت و اقبال ایله هیچ کیم بیله اولمز باقی ؟)
 (کون کیمی [/ کیمی / کسی ؟] دولت عالم روشن طاقی ؟)
 شاخ کل نشو (؟) و نما بولسه نم فیضندن
 که بواشعار اولوب (؟) مدح سرا کلیندن

Basmala

Tout d'abord loué soit Dieu l'unique, le Premier en tout, l'Omnipotent, l'Eternel, l'Omniscient et le Sage.

Lui dont la Puissance a créé ce monde et l'espace, Lui dont la Majesté a donné vie à toutes les mers et à toutes les terres.

Dans les deux mondes Il est Celui qui aide et l'ami de ses serviteurs. Toute création devient manifeste à Ses serviteurs par Sa sagesse.

Tous les peuples de la terre ont besoin de son Seuil. Il a donné lumière et splendeur aux étoiles, au soleil et à la lune.

Après avoir loué Dieu, mon calame a été illuminé par l'eulogie du Sceau des Prophètes, la gloire du monde.

Le Prophète [...] de la tribu d'Ahmad Mahmud [...], celui qui est pour Dieu, sur lui le salut et la paix.

Et puisse sa Divine miséricorde être avec sa famille et ses compagnons, puisse Dieu aider quiconque les aide.

Après avoir loué Dieu et fait l'eulogie du Prophète, avec franchise et sincérité, il incombe aux serviteurs de faire le panégyrique du roi des rois du monde.

Le roi des rois, dont le rang est aussi haut que le firmament, et les cieux forment le trône, Nader Shah, qui, comme son nom, est sans égal ni pair.

Mais puisqu'il a démontré la puissance de Dieu plus que quiconque avant lui, qui l'appelle la manifestation de Dieu dit la vérité.

Par son sang glorieux, il vient de la souche de Timur, et par sa famille et sa race, il est renommé dans le monde en tant que roi des rois.

Il a le sens moral du Prophète, le souffle de Jésus, et l'apparence de Joseph, la connaissance de 'Ali, la générosité de Hatam et la sagesse de Loqman.

Dieu le Généreux lui a offert, en raison de ses capacités, la couronne royale et le trône, la justice, la générosité et un tempérament noble.

Quelle que soit la noblesse que je pourrais mentionner, il est parfait. En tous points, les faveurs divines l'entourent.

Ce roi aux pures dispositions, ayant investi Dieu de toute sa confiance, fait acte de sa croyance comme suit :

« Cette fortune ne peut être obtenue par la flèche ou l'épée. Une telle félicité ne peut être rendue possible que par la sagesse ou la clairvoyance »

« Toi qui m'as donné le sultanat et une armée. Toi qui m'as donné la couronne, la ceinture, la pompe et la coiffe »

« Tu es le protecteur de mon pouvoir, et j'ai placé mes espoirs en Toi. J'ai déposé ma confiance sincère en Toi et cette croyance est mon soutien ».

Puisse Dieu dégrader ceux qui dénie mon autorité ! Puisse-t-Il aveugler les ennemis qui ne voient pas le support de Dieu ».

[...]

et pour cette raison, les faveurs de Dieu l'ont aidé.

Car c'est certain, il croit en Dieu, et c'est pour cela que Dieu lui a accordé son soutien et ses faveurs.

Par son pouvoir, Dieu l'a soutenu dans sa suprême position et sa noblesse, Dieu lui a donné ses succès.

Par chance, nul ne sera éternel, l'univers ne restera pas un arc brillant comme le soleil.

Si la tige d'une fleur reçoit la moisissure de Ta faveur, ces poèmes seront tout entiers Ton éloge, pour mon compte, Ta très humble créature.

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Currently working at the French National Library, she teaches the history of Islamic arts at the École du Louvre and the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INALCO) in Paris. Her research focuses on Iranian art during the late modern period (17th-19th centuries).

Reflection of Identity in the Mirror of Narrative Images Reproduction of the Idea of the Just Rule in the Portraits of Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar

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Abstract

The concept of “Just Rule” historically served to shape a king’s image and bolster the monarchy’s structure, often emulated by courtiers seeking to be part of the inner circle and perpetuating the idea of a Just Ruler. Influenced by the king’s interests, figures like Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar (r. 1848-1896) fostered monarchic strength through praises and art, particularly in the Nasiri era.

These illustrations, blending literature and visual art, became sought-after for adorning manuscripts and enhancing printed books during this period. This study examines Nasir al-Din Shah’s portrayal in the *One Thousand and One Nights* manuscript (1852-1859), overseen by Abul-Hassan Ghaffari, Sani’ al-Mulk (d. 1865). Characters resembling Nasir al-Din Shah appear throughout the manuscript. The study aims to analyze these images in relation to the manuscript’s content and their role in the discourse on portrait illustrations. Additionally, it explores how the idea of Just Rule was perpetuated by the patrons and artists involved in creating this manuscript.

Keywords

Qajar Art, Persian Court, Illustrated Manuscript, One Thousand and One Nights, Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar

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Introduction

Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar (r. 1848-1896), the fourth king of the Qajar dynasty, ascended to the throne when he was eighteen. He was three years old when his father, Muhammad Shah (r. 1797-1834), succeeded Fath 'Ali Shah (r. 1834-1847). As the oldest son of Muhammad Shah, Nasir al-Din Mirza was appointed as the crown prince in 1835, and until his coronation, he was under the tutelage of his uncle, Bahman Mirza (1810-1883), in Tabriz (Bamdad 246).

After his father's death in 1848, Nasir al-Din Mirza and his tutor and spiritual mentor, Mirza Taqi Khan Farahani (*Amir Kabir*) (1807-1852), travelled to Tehran, where he was crowned as Nasir al-Din Shah on Saturday night (the 22nd of the same month). Before arriving in Tehran, he appointed Mirza Taghi Khan as *Sadr-i 'Azam* (the prime minister), giving him the title *Atabak*. Nasir al-Din Shah, who had several literary and artistic interests, was assassinated by Mirza Riza Kirmani in the Shah 'Abdul-'Azim Shrine on 30 April 1896. Henceforth, the era of Qajar cultural glory began to wane.

The young Nasir al-Din Mirza studied literature, culture, and arts under the tutelage of great scholars in the Qajar period during his fifteen years stay in Tabriz where he studied science and the Turkish language. It is there he also became familiar with some Persian literature. During this period, Nizam al-'Ulama was his tutor in Tabriz.¹

As a Qajar prince interested in literature and arts, Nasir al-Din Mirza's uncle, Bahman Mirza, and his great library in the *Arg* (Citadel) of Tabriz played an influential role in shaping the mentality of Nasir al-Din Mirza during his childhood. Appointed as Vicegerent of Azerbaijan (1839-1847), Bahman Mirza was a learned Qajar prince whose name, recommendation and support can be seen in his writing and translation of many exquisite books. He is known as the author of *Tazkera al-Shu'ara-i Muhammad Shahi* (Biography of Poets of the Reign Muhammad Shah) dated 1834 (Bamdad 196).

One Thousand and One Nights is considered one of the most important books translated and prepared by order of Bahman Mirza. The book is the Persian translation of the Arabic *Alf Laylah wa Laylah*, which is known in English as *The Arabian Nights*. The book consists of an initial story as well as a series of interrelated and embedded tales that are told by Queen Shahrazad to the king whose narration supposedly continues for one thousand and one nights.

Researchers have acknowledged the Iranian origin of the book, tracing its early version back to Persian literature. Early indications of these origins can be found in the works of two Arab historians: *Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems* by Al-Masudi (896-957) and *Al-Fihrist* by Ibn al-Nadim (d. 995); having added some tales to the book, the Arabic authors and narrators finally titled the book as *Alf Laylah wa Laylah* (Atabay). During the Qajar era, however, Bahman Mirza commissioned a Persian translation of the book. 'Abdul-Latif Tasouji (1880) translated the work from the Egyptian Bulaq edition (published in 1835),² and Mirza Muhammad 'Ali Isfahani, known as *Shams-ul-Shu'ara* (the Sun of Poets), with the pen-name Soroush, composed some of the poems and added vers-

1. For more information about Nasir al-Din Shah's life, see Amanat, "Court Patronage"; *Qeble-ye 'Alam*; and about Nasir al-Din Shah as an artist, see Tahmasbpour; Ghaziha; Abd-Amin.

2. For more information, see Marzolph, "The Persian Nights"; Marzolph and van Leeuwen.

es of other poets in the freshly translated text (*One Thousand and One Nights* 1–2).³ Prepared in 1844–1845, the translation was lithographically published in two volumes on 25 October 1845 in Tabriz.⁴

The young Nasir al-Din Mirza probably had access to the book, hence its possible important role in his education. Following the royal tradition when he accessed the throne, Nasir al-Din Shah established a royal bookbinding workshop and ordered an illustrated copy of *One Thousand and One Nights*. Abu Al-Hassan Ghaffari (d. 1865), and his thirty-four apprentices prepared this unparalleled and exquisite version under the management of Hussein 'Ali Khan Mu'ayyir al-Mamalik (1798–1857) in *Majma' al-Sanaya' Nasiri* (Nasiri Center of Art and Craftsmanship) (Yousefifar 42–64).⁵

Ordering an illustrated version of a fictional tale, such as *One Thousand and One Nights* in the royal workshop is an interesting case when compared with previous kingly commands which were primarily concerned with the illustrated exquisite copies of the historical, epic, and heroic stories of Ferdowsi's *Shahnama* (Book of Kings) or Nizami's *Khamsa* (Quintet). More importantly, this copy remains the only manuscript from the Nasiri Court, the only illustrated manuscript of the Persian translation of the Arabic *Alf Laylah wa Laylah* and the only Persian manuscript with 3655 illustrations distributed in 1136 double folios.⁶ Additionally, it is considered the last illustrated manuscript produced at the Iranian royal court.

The exorbitant cost of the book indicates the significance of this version for the young king; 6850 Tomans, the equivalent to one-sixth of the total cost for the construction, decorations and furnishing of the multi-story *Shams al-Imara* mansion in *Arg-i Shahi* (Royal Citadel, today in Gulistan Palace), were spent to make this copy. A newly-found document also refers to the final cost as being more than the initial amount set in the contract (Bakhtiar 130–132; Boozari and Shafiei 233–251). The young king's interest in this book was known to the courtiers and influential people, who, in turn, used the illustrated or printed copies as a basis to converse with the young king, mostly to adulate and venerate the monarchical status and garner the king's attention as well as, perhaps, to a lesser extent, give the young king admonitions concerning ethics and statecraft.⁷

3. *Alf Laylah wa Laylah*, 1261 A.H./1845 A.D., Ali Khoshnevis (scribe), published under the auspices of Bahman Mirza at the publishing house of Tabriz Dar al-Saltana.

4. After the ascension of Nasir al-Din Shah to power, Bahman Mirza's library was added to the Royal Library in Tehran.

5. For more information about this copy and Abu Al-Hassan Ghaffari, see Atabay; Zoka; Boozari, "Noskhe-yi khatti-yi Hezar-u-Yek-Shab".

6. The copy is gathered in six volumes: vol.1: 662 illustrations; vol. 2: 531 ills.; vol. 3: 615 ills.; vol. 4: 496 ills.; vol. 5: 645 ills.; vol. 6: 506 ills. *Alf Laylah wa Laylah*, 1269 A.H./1852 A.D. (the end of the writing process), 1276 A.H./1859 A.D. (the end of the illustrating process), 2280 pages. Muhammad-Hussein Kateb ul-Sultan Tehrani (scribe), Mirza Abu Al-Hassan Ghaffari, known as Sani' al-Mulk, and his apprentices (painters), Ghulam-'Ali Muzahhab-Bashi and Mirza Ahmad Muzahhab (illuminators), Mirza Jani Jeldsaz (cover binder), Mirza Yousef Sahhaf (bookbinder), now held in Gulestan Palace in Tehran (2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, and 679). The author is grateful to the Gulestin Palace Library (Tehran), which provided access to information and images of the manuscript.

7. This strategy can be seen in the Safavid and Qajar manuscripts. On the image of Shah 'Abbas in the guise of the heroes of *Shahnameh*, see Rizvi. About the image of Fath 'Ali Shah in *Shahnama*, see Rettig. Also, in some 19th-century Persian lithographed editions of Nizami's *Khamsa* (Quintet), Khosrow is occasionally depicted as Nasir al-Din Shah.

To communicate reformist or sycophantic messages, the illustrators or patrons replaced the fictional kings with the portraits of Nasir al-Din Shah—supposedly to ascribe positive traits of the fictional kings to him. Among the 3655 illustrations in the manuscript of *One Thousand and One Nights*, 32 illustrations contain Nasir al-Din Shah's portrait. The present study focuses on the 19 illustrations that reinforce monarchical status and adulate the king's rank. The other thirteen illustrations that are not studied here focused on a more didactic and reformist approach.

Nasir al-Din Shah's Portrait in the Illustrations of the Manuscript of One Thousand and One Nights

Nasir al-Din Shah's portrait can be seen in historical as well as factual characters in the illustrated manuscript of *One Thousand and One Nights*. The historical characters mainly belong to the Arab lands, though the story is factual. These characterizations which embody the personal traits of the historical characters were used to make the story more credible. In these stories, the king is characterized as a famous religious ruler. The artists consciously used this characterization strategy to arrange the illustration elements within a more purposeful discourse. By portraying the king as a strong and prosperous monarch, they aimed to support the discourse of monarchy.

Nasir al-Din Shah replaces, notably, three sovereigns in the illustrations: the first is the most famous 'Abbasid caliph, Harun al-Rashid (r. 787-809) in "Mu'in the Vizier is Standing Before the King" (Night 35, vol. 1, fol. 145a), and "Caliph is Talking to Ja'far" (Night 44, vol. 1, fol. 177a). The second ruler is Alexander the Great (r. 336-356 B.C.), in "He is the King on a Trip to the Nature for Recreation" and "A Certain Tribe of Poor Folk" (both in Night 461, vol. 3, fol. 207a). The third monarch is Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Marwan (r.717-720), the eighth Umayyad caliph, in "The Judge is Talking to King Nu'man" (Night 78, vol. 1, fol. 241a).

The written sources recognize Harun al-Rashid as a powerful, wealthy and just king; Alexander the Great as wealthy, a powerful warrior and a conqueror; and 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz as a Just Ruler and Islam-oriented king. Our study presupposes such characteristics as being considered the essential elements of true kings. Alexander the Great and 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz do not play active roles as heroes in the tales; they only command their subjects to recite new stories; they are, though generally, considered as Just Rulers. Harun al-Rashid as well is not actively present in the tales, yet his imperceptible presence is predominant in the story. We see that the narrative is shadowed by a cloud of fear and horror attributed to Harun al-Rashid's power, the fear that makes the two protagonists not daring to unite with one another. As a result, the narrative structure and this idea of the absolute king reinforce the cliché of Harun al-Rashid as the powerful figure.

While these historical characterizations are present within the manuscript, Nasir al-Din Shah more often replaces fictional kings and characters with no corresponding figures in the real world. In various scenes, Nasir al-Din Shah substitutes different kings, imbued with various meanings and symbols. Here we see a true work of artistic valor as the artist adorns the king with distinct qualities and personal traits in order to arrange the configuration of various discourses. Concerning the function of character in various stories, the analysis of the illustrations with the portrait of Nasir al-Din Shah shows two main groups: the passive king and the adventurous king.

The Passive King

In many of the tales the king is depicted as a passive ruler that lacks any exceptional characterization within the text. As a passive ruler, the king is presented only as being the ultimate figure of the state and a guarantee for its maintenance; he plays only an onomastic role. The illustrations depict the king in an ideal form that does not go beyond the conventional sense of being a king. Examples of such depictions include the king in the tale of “The Hunchback” (Nights 26-33, vol.1, fol. 90b-93b), King Nasir in the tale of “Al-Malik Nasir and the Three Chiefs of Police” (Nights 341-343, vol. 3, fol. 175a-176b), and King Pars in the tale of “Ebony Horse” (Nights 354-368, vol. 3, fol. 41a-57a).

In the first tale, the king (*Malik*) asks the convicts and the accused, who are from different guilds and religions, to narrate a story stranger than the one that occurred the previous night (i.e., the murder of the hunchback). If the king finds the stories attractive, he will forgive them; otherwise, the convicts are doomed to death. In the second tale, coming to the king to present reports, the governor (*Wali*) should recount the strangest events in his administrative division. If the king does not like the narration, the governor will either return to his division empty-handed or be removed from his position and power. In the third tale, three sages are asked to present their art and craft to the king. If the king finds them beautiful, they will be gifted with the opportunity to marry the princess.

Concerning the first and second tales, the king asks the other characters to narrate a story, which results in a series of entangled narrations whose end is to be decided by the king. The king asks others, mainly among his subordinates, to recount a story for him. If the king likes the story, the subordinate narrator will be either liberated from death punishment or given gifts. Otherwise, the narrator will be punished.

The two illustrations of the tale of “The Hunchback” depict Nasir al-Din Shah as the king who commands the story. It is about a tailor and his wife who invite a hunchback to dinner. The tailor places a large piece of fish into the hunchback’s mouth, making him choke. The tailor and his wife took the hunchback to a Jewish person. This later brings the hunchback to a Christian, and the Christian leaves him in the street to die, where finally, a night watchman finds him. The day after, all of the characters involved in the story are arrested and sent to the court in front of the king for the crime of killing the hunchback. The king asks them to narrate a story stranger than the tale of “The Hunchback” so he may spare their lives (fig. 1a). They each recount an event of their own lives, but the king does not appreciate those told by the Jewish or the Christian. However, the tailor takes his turn to tell a story about a talkative barber (*Dallak*) known as the Silent Sheikh. The king summons the Silent Sheikh to the court. After narrating his story, the Silent Sheikh notices the presumably dead Hunchback, puts his hand to his throat, and gets the fishbone out. The hunchback sneezes and comes back to life. The king forgives everyone (fig. 1b).⁸

8. For a detailed summary of the tale of “The Hunchback”, see *Arabian Nights Encyclopedia* 282.



Figure 1: Above: *The Christian, the Governor, and the Tailor are Standing before the King.* (Night 26, Vol. 1, fol. 47a); Below: *The Silent Sheikh gets the Morsel out of the Hunchback's Throat in the Presence of the King.* (Night 33, Vol. 1, fol. 69a). From the Tale of "the Hunchback". *One Thousand and One Nights*, under the supervision of Sani' al-Mulk, watercolor, 15 x 7.5 cm (approximately), Tehran, 1859. Courtesy of the Gulistan Palace Library.

The message of these tales and their illustrations is clear. Nasir al-Din Shah replaces the king in two sections; one in the middle of the tale, following the hunchback's death when the king orders those involved to tell him their stories, and the other at the end when the hunchback comes back to life.

In both scenes, the king is sitting on the couch with attendees from different professions (the doctor, the tailor, the barber, the military administrator, and the governor) and different faiths (Islam, Judaism, and Christianity). They are all standing before the king in a humble manner. This posture is held for only a brief moment as the tale continues and several nights pass for the young king in these stories. The king (Nasir al-Din Shah in the illustration) is simply a listener, and the other characters recount their stories. Showing a keen interest in hearing new and innovative stories, the king is hidden behind a motionless and passive character despite being the initiator and producer of the story's narrative. With this in mind, one must not forget that while passive, it is the king who holds the characters' lives in his hands.

The position of the figures and their physical size, the replacement of the king with Nasir al-Din Shah, the use of characters from different guilds and religions before the king, and the depiction of the interior space in association with the infinite exterior space are strategies used by the artist to reproduce the concepts of guardianship (*Wali Amr*) of all religions and of all guilds, the discipline of affairs (in the form of courts), the domination of the world, and the royal will concerning the life and death of the masses, thus supporting the dominant discourse of monarchy (or *Saltanat*).

In the second story, the tale of "Malik Nasir and the Three Chiefs of Police," the king, Malik Nasir, asks his governors in Cairo, Bulaq, and ancient Egypt to recount their strangest life events (fig. 2). Each governor tells a story, the quality of which determines whether or not they can keep their power and save their lives (*Arabian Nights Encyclopedia* 224-225).

Again, Nasir al-Din Shah takes the place of another king, whose name is Malik (king) Nasir. The painter made the best use of the phonological similarity between the two kings, as their names are Nasir. This strategy is frequently observed in the illustrations of *One Thousand and One Nights*; for instance, King Muhammad is portrayed as Muhammad Shah Qajar (Night 33, vol. 1, fol. 137a). Inhabiting a neutral character King Nasir (Nasir al-Din Shah in the illustration) invites the governors to narrate a story.

The artist attributes King Nasir's qualities to Nasir al-Din Shah, and endeavours to recall the discourse of monarchy by portraying Nasir al-Din Shah as the Caliph and guardianship of all Muslims; he is the monarch of a vast country and still expands his kingdom and earthly domination. King Nasir represents the absolute sovereign of many governors (including those of Egypt), and his replacement with the actual Iranian king depicts the latter's kingship. Nasir al-Din Shah is then an authoritative king with many yes-men, controlling a vast territory; an image which eventually concords with hegemonic monarchy discourse.

In the third tale, the tale of "Ebony Horse", three sages are led before King Pars so they may show him their newest inventions; the most impressive of which will allow the respective sage the right to marry the king's daughter. The first sage presents a golden peacock, which flaps its wings every hour (corresponding to the hour) and sings. The second sage has a silver trumpet that, if installed above the city gate, blows whenever an enemy enters the city. The king then gives the first and second sages some gifts and wages.



Figure 2: *King Naser Summons his Governors, and They Narrate*; from the Tale of “Al-Malik of Nasir and the Three Chiefs of Police” (Night 340, Vol. 3, fol. 7b). *One Thousand and One Nights*, under the supervision of Sanī al-Mulk, watercolor, 15 x 7.5 cm (approximately), Tehran, 1859. Courtesy of the Gulistan Palace Library.

Afterwards, the third sage presents a horse of ebony that can fly and move the passenger to any location he wishes. The prince, in the presence of his father (Nasir al-Din Shah in the illustration), volunteers to test the horse (fig. 3). The horse moves into the air and returns. With the advent of this ebony horse, the love story of the king’s son begins (*Arabian Nights Encyclopedia* 172-174).

In this illustration, Nasir al-Din Shah is depicted as a king interested in scholars and inventions. The inventions are tools of various kinds, the most important of which is the ebony horse. The horse is the means by which the prince leaves his royal palace, marries another king’s daughter, and eventually returns. In other words, the horse is an evil symbol, on the one hand, as it removes the prince from his territory, and on the other, a good symbol as it allows him to marry a princess from another territory. Supposing the ebony horse is considered a symbol of modern technology, the prince’s trip can be understood as an attempt to expand the monarchical territory by allying with another kingdom or, in other words, adding other territories to Iran by using modern technologies. The illustrations seem to imply that deploying modern technology can guarantee the monarchy’s survival and the kingdom’s expansion.

As an alternative reading, the three sages can be seen as representatives of three major powers: Russia, England, and France. Within this reading, the peacock clock becomes a symbol of the clock gifted to Nasir al-Din Shah by Queen Victoria (r. 1837-1901) which was decorated with a statue of a peacock. The silver trumpet serves as a symbol of Russia that guaranteed the security and establishment of the Qajar dynasty in the Treaty of Turkmenchay (1828).



Figure 3: Above: *Three Sages are Sitting and Talking before the King*; Below: *The Third Sage is Explaining the Characteristics of the Ebony Horse*. From the tale of the "Ebony Horse" (Night 354, Vol. 3, fol. 19b). *One Thousand and One Nights*, under the supervision of Sani' al-Mulk, watercolor, 15 x 7.5 cm (approximately), Tehran, 1859. Courtesy of the Gulistan Palace Library.

Finally, the ebony horse may symbolize France, a country believed to have sent many modern technologies, including military equipment, to 19th-century Iran. Both interpretations aim to re-define the discourse of monarchy through the bolstering of the narrative structures surrounding the ideas of an absolute king and royal marriage.

Showing the new inventions' significance and the transition from traditional to modern technology, the artists also refer to the king's prime minister, Amir Kabir's political goals: deploying new tools and using the latest science and technology to expand knowledge in Iran. Amir Kabir was aware of the need for more scientific institutions in Iran and established *Dar al-Funun* (Polytechnic School) in 1851. New scientific principles such as engineering, medicine, pharmacy and mining were taught to young Iranians by several European instructors.

The Adventurous King

The illustrations associated with the tales of "Janshah" and "Taj al-Muluk and Dunya" depict the king as an active and influential figure, contrasting the passive attitude discussed above. The tale of "Janshah" narrates how the king of Kabul, Tighmus, although of advanced age, had no son to succeed him. Therefore, on the advice of his vizier, he married the daughter of the king of Khurasan. He prepared many gifts, which he sent to her by his viziers and deputies (fig. 4b); the new queen gave birth to a son, Janshah. (fig. 4a)

In this tale's illustrations (Nights 496-527, vol. 3, fol. 272b-323a), Nasir al-Din Shah takes the role of two characters: the king of Kabul in eight illustrations, and his son, Prince Janshah, in one illustration. King Tighmus is described as an absolute king (*padishah-i mutlaq*) and a compassionate father who puts great effort into his son's felicity. Prince Janshah is, in turn, a young and adventurous conqueror who finds his beloved wife on his brave journey and makes several conquests. When represented as Janshah, Nasir al-Din Shah is depicted as dynamic and active, readily accepting the pains and discomfort of the journey required to marry his beloved and finally achieving his goal after enduring great efforts and conflicts. On his journey, he succeeds in annexing other territories to his father's kingdom, epitomizing a warrior and a hardworking and powerful king.

During a hunting expedition, Janshah finds himself lost on an island. Tighmus sends people to search the island, but in vain (fig. 4c). Upon their return to the king, we learn that Janshah has fallen in love with a fairy-born woman named Shamsa. She invited the prince to the Castle of the Jewels without giving him the address. The prince could marry Shamsa only if he could find the Castle. Janshah returns to his father and consults with him (fig. 4d); the king gathers the merchant, and they start looking for the Castle of the Jewels (*Arabian Nights Encyclopedia* 238-241) (fig. 4e).

At this point, the story shifts focus since the king of India, King Kafid, a long-time enemy of the king of Kabul, realizes that the latter is preoccupied with his son. Thus, King Kafid decides to retaliate by starting a war. King Tighmus consults with his viziers (fig. 4f) and writes a letter to King Kafid to dissuade him. Paying no attention to King Tighmus's requests, King Kafid declares war with a coarse reply to King Tighmus's letter (fig. 4g). After a series of magical tales, King Kafid and his troops are defeated, and Shamsa is found. King Kafid is brought as a captive to King Tighmus, but Shamsa, blessed by finding her love, asks for his forgiveness (fig. 4h-i). The two illustrations of

the Indo-Iranian wars depict King Kafid kneeling before Nasir al-Din Shah, with his hands tied together, begging him for forgiveness. The Iranian king holds in his hands the life of the Indian one. The illustration shows the vast Indian territory dominated and controlled by Nasir al-Din Shah.

The exact date of these illustrations has yet to be determined. We can speculate, however, that they were completed sometime after 1857, when Iran agreed to withdraw from Herat, releasing Afghanistan from the control of the Iranian court. However, the illustrations may have been completed before the Treaty of Paris (1857) when Iran's influence had already diminished in Afghanistan.⁹ In both cases, sovereignty over Afghanistan had been crucial for Iran. The replacement of the king of Kabul and his son and, within the framework of the manuscript, the king of Khurasan (a symbol of Iran) with Nasir al-Din Shah, can be seen as referring to Iran-Afghanistan relations and the Iranian king's desire to maintain his power on the Eastern parts of his realm.

The illustrations that present Nasir al-Din Shah as an adventurous king, reviving the discourse of monarchy, also employ a specific structure called royal marriage. Within this framework, Nasir al-Din Shah takes the place of both the father and the son. We see the son expanding the kingdom by marrying a princess from another territory, emphasizing that he is a conqueror who expands his kingdom.

Through royal marriage, the artist also introduces Nasir al-Din Shah as the king of Iran and Afghanistan. The continuation of the monarchy throughout the marriage between Janshah and Shamsa and Janshah's conquests enabled the painter to present Nasir al-Din Shah as the king of Iran and Afghanistan, endorsing the idea that their union guarantees the survival of the monarchy. These illustrations reproduce the discourse of monarchy by deploying the narrative structure of the true king and tropes such as the wealthy, noble and powerful monarch who ruled Iran and Afghanistan and also governed India.

In the continuity of the aforementioned concept of royal marriage, the second story in the illustrations of the Adventurous King is the tale of "Taj al-Muluk and Dunya" (Nights 107-157, vol. 1, 293a-357a). Here, the main character is a princess, Dunya, and Nasir al-Din Shah replaces all the central male figures. Besides showing the marriage between two royal families, the artist presents other essential issues, such as the male child becoming the crown prince, the expansion of the kingdom and conquests. We also see the love-making scenes between the King and the Princess, which recall the global conception of the royal marriage. This constitutes the King's identity, prolongs his descendant, expands his kingdom, and accentuates the nobility embodied in the idea of his marriage with another royal family.

9. The Treaty of Paris marked the end of the hostilities of the Anglo-Persian War. According to this treaty, Iran renounced its claim on Herat. The city joined Afghanistan in 1863, which Iran recognized as a country. Iran also committed to only accepting the British Empire as a mediator in the event of a dispute with Afghanistan. For more information about the relationship between Afghanistan and Iran in the Qajar era, see Farmanfarmaian; Kazemzadeh; Safari.



Figure 4: a) He is King Tighmus of Kabul who Has Summoned Fortune-Tellers to Tell his Fortune; b) The King of Kabul Sends his Vizier to Propose to the Daughter of the King of Khorasan (Night 496, Vol. 3, fol. 134b); c) Sitting on a Chair, Janshah is Sending Slave-Soldiers to Search the Island (Night 499, Vol. 3, fol. 138a); d) King Tighmus Offers Janshah Consolation; e) The King Gathers the Merchant Looking for the Castle of the Jewels (Night 513, Vol. 3, fol. 148b); f) The King Summons the Viziers (Night 514, Vol. 3, fol. 150b); g) They Have Brought the Reply to King's Letter, Before His Majesty (Night 515, Vol. 3, fol. 152a); h) King Kafid is Chained and Brought to King Tighmus (Night 527, Vol. 3, fol. 160b); i) King Kafid is Led to Before King Tighmus in Order to be Dismissed (Night 527, Vol. 3, fol. 162a). From the tale of "Janshah". *One Thousand and One Nights*, under the supervision of Sani' al-Mulk, watercolor, 15 x 7.5 cm (approximately), Tehran, 1859. Courtesy of the Gulistan Palace Library.

The story is about Suleyman Shah of the Green Land, a city near Isfahan, who wishes to have a noble wife and family. The Shah's vizier advises him to marry the daughter of King Zahr Shah of the White Land. After the wedding, the king (Nasir al-Din Shah in the illustration) resides in the court to manage the affairs (fig. 5a). Soon after, the queen gives birth to a son named Taj al-Muluk. Having seen an image of Dunya, the daughter of King Shahrman of Waq Island, the young Taj al-Muluk falls in love with her. After a series of events, they get married. This advantageous marriage leads to Taj al-Muluk territory's expansion and the monarchy's continuation. In three instances, the artist substituted Nasir al-Din Shah's portraits for the main characters: Taj al-Muluk, his father and his father-in-law. In one scene, we see Nasir al-Din Shah's portrait twice since he represents both fathers of Taj al-Muluk and Dunya (*Arabian Nights Encyclopedia* 406-408) (fig. 5b).

In these illustrations, Sulayman Shah of the Green Land and King Shahrman of Waq Islands represent kingship in Iran and faraway countries or, in other words, the entire world. Taking the role of the father, the son, and the bride's father, Nasir al-Din Shah, called in Qajar sources as *Qiblah-i 'Alam* (Pivot of the Universe), brings faraway territories under his rule through royal marriage.

Of the three illustrations, two incorporate the images of marriage consummation and the birth of a child. The result of the marriage is a qualified prince who, as a successor, protects and expands the father's kingdom. It should be remembered that the crisis of succession plagued Nasir al-Din Shah. The crown princes, born from a Qajar family and the official wives of Nasir al-Din Shah, were dying one after another after being appointed as the crown prince.¹⁰

Before the manuscript had been finished, three crown princes of Nasir al-Din Shah had already died, and Muzaffar al-Din Mirza was appointed as the crown prince. Therefore, the illustrations depicting the birth of a son or scenes of marriage consummation refer to the succession and the ensuing continuation of monarchy within the Qajar family. Using the narrative structure of royal marriage as the story's foundation, the painter seemingly tries to allay Nasir al-Din Shah's concern over the durability of the monarchy and expansion of the kingdom and gives him hope of calmness and success.

Moreover, Taj al-Muluk was, in fact, the daughter of Amir Kabir and 'Ezzat al-Dowla, Nasir al-Din Shah's sister. Not soon after her birth, she got engaged to Muzaffar al-Din Mirza by order of the king's mother. Although Muzaffar al-Din Mirza was not accepted seriously, since there were other sons in succession order, he was ultimately appointed Nasir al-Din Shah's successor due to his brothers' subsequent death. Muzaffar al-Din Mirza and Taj al-Muluk had three children by their marriage, including Muhammad 'Ali Mirza who became Muhammad 'Ali Shah in 1907.

10. Sultan Mahmoud Mirza (1848–1849) from Galin Khanum, appointed as the crown prince in 1849; Mo'ain ul-Din Mirza (1851–1856) from Taj Al-Dola, in 1851; Amir Muhamamd Qasem Mirza (1852–1857) from Jeyran Tafreshi, in 1856; and finally, Muzaffar al-Din Mirza (1852–1906) from Shokouh Al-Saltana in 1857 (Bamdad 53–54; 135–136; 464–467; 120–135).



Figure 5: a) *Sending a Messenger to the King* (Night 108, Vol. 1, fol. 147b); b) *The wedding Vow Between Princess Dunya and Taj al-Muluk* (Night, 136, Vol. 1, fol. 179a). From the tale of "Taj al-Muluk and Dunya". *One Thousand and One Nights*, under the supervision of Sani' al-Mulk, watercolor, 15 x 7.5 cm (approximately), Tehran, 1859. Courtesy of the Gulistan Palace Library.

Conclusion

The narrative structures observed in the illustrations prepare a suitable ground for producing the discourse of monarchy. Each discourse is itself a micro-discourse constituting the dominant discourse. Qajar Iran (1789-1925) was characteristically dominated by the absolute monarchy or kingship (*Saltanat*), with dissenting voices hardly being heard. Accordingly, the artist(s) of *One Thousand and One Nights* joined the dominant discourse by reproducing the ideas and concepts which reflected absolute monarchy.

Presenting Nasir al-Din Shah as *Qiblah-i 'Alam*, the illustrations analysed in this article depict the king as dominating the people from different professions and religions. The king possesses power and wealth, and his nobility, legitimacy, protection of Islam, and justice place him in a position similar to early Islamic caliphs. Identifying Nasir al-Din Shah with Alexander the Great additionally depicts the king as a conqueror who expands his kingdom. In some cases, the royal marriage with a noble family from another territory leads to the continuation of the king's monarchy and expansion of his kingdom, again presenting the king as a momentous conqueror through means not limited to war. Therefore, the illustrations discussed above portray Nasir al-Din Shah as a powerful king in all religious, political, economic, personal, and social terms.

The illustrations emphasize the values associated with the pillars of the monarchy and absolute rule while marginalizing oppositional, reformist discourse. The dominant discourse of the monarchy was constituted by the juxtaposition of signs pivoting around the focal signifier Nasir al-Din Shah; signs such as power, righteousness, security, wealth, the vast country, the legendary king, the conquest and expansion of the kingdom, nobility, legitimacy, the continuation of the State, the crown prince, territorial integrity, eternal luxurious life, royal marriage, and the guardianship of Muslims. Within this framework, Nasir al-Din Shah is the Pivot of the Universe. The world pivots around him focused on the institution of the royal court; the meaning system of this discourse reproduces the traditional conception of power. The authoritative king and absolute ruler are two elements foregrounded in the discourse of monarchy, and any other form of State and power is deemed illegitimate or illegal.

It is not unexpected to observe the reproduction of the discourse of monarchy by the court artists whose lives and living depended on their cooperation with the institution of monarchy. Given Nasir al-Din Shah's interest in *One Thousand and One Nights* since his childhood, not only Sani' al-Mulk but also other agents involved, including Hussein 'Ali Khan Mu'ayyir al-Mamalik (the steward or *Mubashir*), Soroush Isfahani (the poet), and 'Abdul-Latif Tasouji (the translator), used the book in order to get closer to and to please this institution, thus reproducing the validity and arguments of the monarchy. Soroush's grandiloquent poems on the lacquered cover of the manuscript and the last page of the printed illustrated version (1855) show his eagerness for the royal cause. Tasouji's introduction is also full of glamorously laudatory remarks about the young king as the focal point of monarchy, highlighting his glory, forgiveness, wisdom, greatness, sagacity, and patronage of the arts.

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Ali Boozari, an Assistant Professor at Tehran University of Art, specializes in 19th-century Persian arts, particularly delving into the history of illustration and the printing industry within Iran. He focuses on picture books, Persian illustrated lithographed books and the Persian versions of the *One Thousand and One Nights*. In recent years, he has been awarded several fellowships to study the first Persian translation of *One Thousand and One Nights*, preserved in the Bodleian Library (Oxford, 2018). Furthermore, he conducted research at the International Youth Library (Munich, 2022), focusing on the illustrated books related to *One Thousand and One Nights*. His current research focuses on the Persian Incunabula in the 19th century.

Visualizing Kingship in a Time of Change

Lens-Based Royal Portraiture during Late Qajar Rule in Iran (1848-1925)

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Abstract

Despite artistic engagement with photography in Iran almost immediately after the invention of the daguerreotype in 1839, the field of Islamic art history has had difficulty accepting the modern period and the medium of photography as part of its discipline. Studies on painted Iranian portraiture have often stopped before the introduction of photography, and only in more recent years has photographic portraiture and its influence on painting been examined. Due to this nascent state of the field, large gaps exist even on more traditional topics, such as the question of royal portraiture. This article presents the first examination of photographic royal portraiture and the visualization of kingship during the Iranian Constitutional Revolution (1905-1911). This topic, in comparison with earlier Iranian painted royal portraiture, has received considerably less attention. Photographic portraiture, together with printed and painted examples, from the reigns of the Qajar rulers Nasir al-Din Shah (r. 1848-1896), Muzaffar al-Din Shah (r. 1896-1907), Muhammad 'Ali Shah (r. 1907-1909), and Ahmad Shah (r. 1909-1925), will be analysed in connection with social and political developments in order to better understand the development of royal image making during a time of political turmoil.

Keywords

Portraiture, Qajar, Iran, Photography, Revolution, Constitutional Revolution, Kingship

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Introduction

Since the beginnings of the Qajar dynasty (1789-1925), royal portraiture communicated the ruler's self-image to audiences near and far. Images of the ruler fulfilled different roles in the Qajar period: they represented or even stood in for an individual; they had ceremonial functions or were used in a display of allegiance; some connected an individual ruler to a larger dynasty, history, or culture; other paintings of rulers referenced historical or mythical figures, sometimes merging them with the figure of the ruler; they contributed to the legitimisation of the ruler by depicting them as divinely ordained or religiously legitimated; and some emphasized the gender of the ruler and the successful continuation of male lineage. Royal portraiture functioned as a representation of authority, often underlining political and military power, and many images depicted power by emphasizing material richness and grandeur.¹ Such representations played an important part in the larger program of the ruler's or the court's image making, they came in a variety of sizes and media—not just “miniature” paintings in manuscripts—had varied audiences, and sometimes the portraiture functioned differently at home and abroad.² Perhaps the most iconic royal depictions of the Qajar era date to the period of Fath 'Ali Shah (r. 1797-1834), whose life-size painted portraits emphasized his long, tapering beard and slim waist, and depicted the ruler adorned in jewels and armed with dagger and sword, were sent to foreign courts (Diba with Ekhtiar; Leoni; Rettig). During the reign of his grandson Muhammad Shah (r. 1834-1848), the recipients of these painted gifts reciprocated by sending a technological innovation to the Persian court that made a different type of portraiture possible: the daguerreotype camera (Schwerda, “Iranian Photography”; Tahmasbpour, “Photography”). The cameras sent by the British and the Russian courts were first operated by an ambitious Frenchman named Jules Richard (1816-1891), who photographed the young crown prince Nasir al-Din Mirza (r. 1848-1896) and his sister 'Izzat al-Dawla (1834/5-1905) on the 15th of December 1844, in Tabriz. Sadly, the whereabouts of these daguerreotype portraits remain unknown (Adele with Zoka; Mahdavi).³ Fourteen years later, another Frenchman, Frances Carlhian (1818-1870), became Nasir al-Din's personal photography instructor. Soon a darkroom with the suitable equipment for the newest photography technology, the wet collodion process, was set up for the king, the position of court photographer was established, and the subject of photography was introduced at Iran's first polytechnical college, the Dar al-Funun (Ekhtiar, “Nasir al-Din Shah”; Ringer, 67-108; Gurney and Nabavi).

1. For a bibliography on the topic, see Diba, “Images of Power”.

2. I have used the term “miniature” here to refer to its frequent use in the discussion of Persian painting in Western scholarship. However, one should critically note that the term “miniature” is neither a literal translation of the terminology used in the contemporary written sources (e.g. *naqqashi* [painting], *tasvir* [image], and *timsal* [representation]) nor is all of Persian painting in the “miniature” format (e.g., murals).

3. Only a written list confirming the existence of the portrait has been preserved.

Patron, Collector, and Maker of Photographic Portraiture: Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar (r. 1848-1896)

Based on the existing published research, if one thinks of photographic royal portraiture in modern Iran, one is led directly to Nasir al-Din Shah (r. 1848-1896). The king's own sustained interest in photography and the portraits he took of his family and surroundings (including a self-portrait with his wives) have deservedly received wide attention (Behdad, "Royal Portrait Photography", *Camera Orientalis*; Pérez González and Sheikh, "From the Inner Sanctum"; Tahmasbpour, *Nasir-od-din*; Masoumi Badakhs). He was also a favourite subject of foreign photographers temporarily residing in or visiting Iran, including the early salt print portraits by the European photographers Henri de Couliboeuf de Blocqueville (active 1858-1866) and Luigi Montabone (1828-87) (Bonetti figs. 2 and 11). On his travels outside Iran, Nasir al-Din Shah would seek out famous photographers, including Nadar, W. & D. Downey, A.J. Melhuish, Herbert Rose Barraud, Abdullah Frères, and Count Stanislaw Julian Ostorog (known as Walery), to repeatedly have his likeness taken (Chi 7-22).

An example of the shah's interest in being portrayed is the photograph taken by the British photographer Herbert Rose Barraud (1845-1896) on the king's third and final trip to Europe in 1889 (fig. 1). In this seated studio portrait, the ruler's facial expression is regal and serious. Yet while the face mirrors intense concentration, the shah must have moved one of his hands just before the image was taken, demonstrating that even the best-planned photograph still includes an element of chance. Photographic cards based on earlier portraits of the shah, known as *cartes-de-visite* or cabinet cards, depending on the size, were exchanged or given away as souvenirs or tokens of friendship (Plunkett; McCauley). These photographic objects also became the currency of Victorian celebrity culture, eagerly collected by those who did not have the good fortune of personally knowing those depicted.

Nasir al-Din Shah actively supported Iranian and Iran-based photographers and commissioned portraits from 'Abdullah Mirza Qajar (1850-1909) (Zuka 98-108; Afshar) and Antoin Sevruguin (1840s-1933) (Barjesteh van Waalwijk van Doorn and Vogelsang-Eastwood; Bohrer; Scheiwiller, "Relocating Sevruguin"; Sheikh, "Sevruguin va taşvirsazi"; Vorderstrasse). Sevruguin's striking portraits of the king, which depict him at the height of his power, received special academic and curatorial attention.⁴ One reason for this was their visual attractiveness, technical skill, and variety. In addition to more traditional portraiture, some of Sevruguin's photographs provide a glimpse into what might be Nasir al-Din Shah's day-to-day life, showing him during activities, e.g. on the hunt, with the barber, supervising the unpacking of boxes in his museum at the Gulistan Palace, etc.⁵ Another reason for the popularity of Sevruguin's photographs in academic discourse was their availability: Sevruguin's images, produced with the wet collodion process and printed on albumen paper, existed in multiple copies—unlike previous photographic portraits of the king which were

4. It should be mentioned that Antoin Sevruguin was at the helm of a family studio. His brothers, children, and wife were involved in the production of his images. While nowadays all these images are credited solely to him, many were likely produced in a team effort.

5. These photographs are situated on the border between posed and non-posed. None of them are snapshots. Many of them were likely not intended to be shared with the public. Even though these images are well-known, have been written about, and reproduced countless times, their explicit context, intention, and usage still requires more research.

made as only a single copy (daguerreotypes or salt prints)—and travelled the world. While these images were not affordable for the masses in Iran, copies of the photographs were purchased by or gifted to the Iranian elites as well as foreigners, who later donated or sold the Sevruguin photographs to Western institutions, including the National Museum of Asian Art in Washington D.C.⁶ The photographs were also sent abroad by the court, for example to the Ottoman Empire, and two albums of Sevruguin photographs are today preserved in the archives of the Yıldız Palace in Istanbul (shelf marks 11/1255 and 11/1256).

At the same time as Sevruguin's portraits of Nasir al-Din Shah were taken, Iranian painters, such as Mirza Muhammad Ghaffari (1848-1941), known as Kamal al-Mulk, made use of photography in their work (Ashraf with Diba; Diba, "Muhammad Ghaffari", "Qajar Photography"; Roxburgh). Layla Diba discusses how in Iran the appreciation of photography by painters differed from photography's reception in the West and how photography functioned as a shortcut to realism: "The enthusiastic adoption of photography by Qajar artists and intellectuals as a means of equalling the achievements of European paintings stands in marked contrast to how photography was received by the painting establishment in Europe. In Europe, its influence was short-lived and pictorial realism was soon replaced by Impressionism, whereas in Iran 'realism' remained the standard to which all artists were held until the middle of the twentieth century." ("Qajar Photography" 92) Additionally, printed portraits of the king and his entourage were also circulated through the first illustrated newspapers published in Iran (Sattari).

However, Nasir al-Din Shah's likeness was not only circulated through print at home, he had also become a favourite of the illustrated press during his trips to Europe, and many more or less realistic depictions of his activities abroad were published (Motadel). With all this material available, it is unsurprising that the existing scholarship on the history of Iranian photography has until now prioritised the rich photographic holdings of this period. However, it is worth the time and effort to examine how portraiture changes and develops after the momentous period of Nasir al-Din Shah.

6. The National Museum of Asian Art owns a large collection of glass plates and albumen prints by Sevruguin. The collection consists of several private collections, including the Myron Bement Smith Collection (66 albumen prints purchased in 1928; 98 albumen prints collected in 1934; 695 glass negatives purchased in 1951) and the Stephen Arpee Collection (one album of 99 albumen prints and a collection of 62 loose albumen prints). The majority of the images has been digitized and is available online, <https://asia.si.edu/research/iran-in-photographs/antoin-sevruguin/albums/>. Accessed 17 Jul. 2022.



Figure 1: Herbert Rose Barraud, *Portrait of Nasir al-Din Qajar Wearing Formal Attire*, 1889, carbon print (Collection of Azita Bina and Elmar W. Seibel).

The Photographic Experiments of Muzaffar al-Din Shah (r. 1896-1907)

Having waited to be crowned king for nearly half a century, Muzaffar al-Din Mirza left Tabriz, the crown prince's place of residence, for the capital Tehran in 1896 after his father had been assassinated.⁷ Muzaffar al-Din was infected with his father's passion for photography early on.⁸ The city of Tabriz had been the perfect environment for any interest in visual technologies. It was here that the first daguerreotypes in Iran had been taken and that the printing press had been introduced to Iran. The multi-ethnic city in the north of Iran had also attracted a number of professional photographers, including Antoin Sevruguin and his brothers, who had established their first studio there. During his long years as crown prince Muzaffar al-Din had his portrait taken in different poses and places, with changing accessories and clothes. One portrait from around 1887 shows the crown prince in a leisurely outfit with checked trousers, standing in a relaxed manner in front of a painted backdrop depicting a piano in a photo studio in Tabriz (fig. 2). Photographs such as this one speak to the prince's creativity, playfulness, and interest in experimentation, but also to a certain nonchalance or ease that his father sometimes lacked (Tahami and Jalali; Chi 24-33).⁹

Another example illustrating Muzaffar al-Din Shah's long-standing passion for photography is the composite birthday portrait created at the very beginning of his reign (fig. 3). The collage consists of nine different portraits depicting Muzaffar al-Din as both crown prince and monarch. The inscription on the photographic composite portrait explains that the portraits "were taken during the celebrations of his happy and blessed birthdays." We have evidence for elaborate celebrations of the birthdays of Qajar rulers from the time of Fath 'Ali Shah onward, for whom his favourite daughter Zia al-Saltana (1799-1873) organized the festivities (Brookshaw). Nasir al-Din Shah introduced the modern tradition of photographically capturing royal birthdays and anniversaries of rule. The composite birthday portrait presented to Muzaffar al-Din Shah in 1897 paid attention to global photographic trends as re-photographed collages of single photographs had become extremely fashionable (Elliott 66-83).

7. Nasir al-Din Shah had been assassinated by Mirza Riza Kirmani in 1896. For a discussion of this event and the photographs taken of the assassin after he had been captured, see Schwerda, "Death on Display".

8. A number of photographs of the young crown prince exist, including a portrait taken by Luigi Montabone in 1862 (see Bonetti and Prandi, fig. 15) and a French engraving depicting Nasir al-Din Shah and his son, based on photographs by Carlhian and Couliboeuf de Blocqueville (Bonetti and Prandi, fig. 14).

9. Alireza Nabipour and Reza Sheikh have made similar observations in their examination of the photograph albums in the Gulistan Palace: "A significant contrast can be observed between the photographic styles adhered to by court photographers during the Naseri and Mozaffari eras. The two kings differed as to how they chose to compose themselves in front of the camera. Setting aside official photographs, increased thematic variation can be observed among photographs of the Mozaffari era. An ease to dare to experiment with new ideas is evident." (Nabipour and Sheikh 298).



Figure 2: Unidentified photographer, *Muzaffar al-Din Mirza*, Tabriz, ca. 1887, unidentified photographic process (Album Khana, Gulistan Palace). Reproduced in Tahami and Jalali 24.

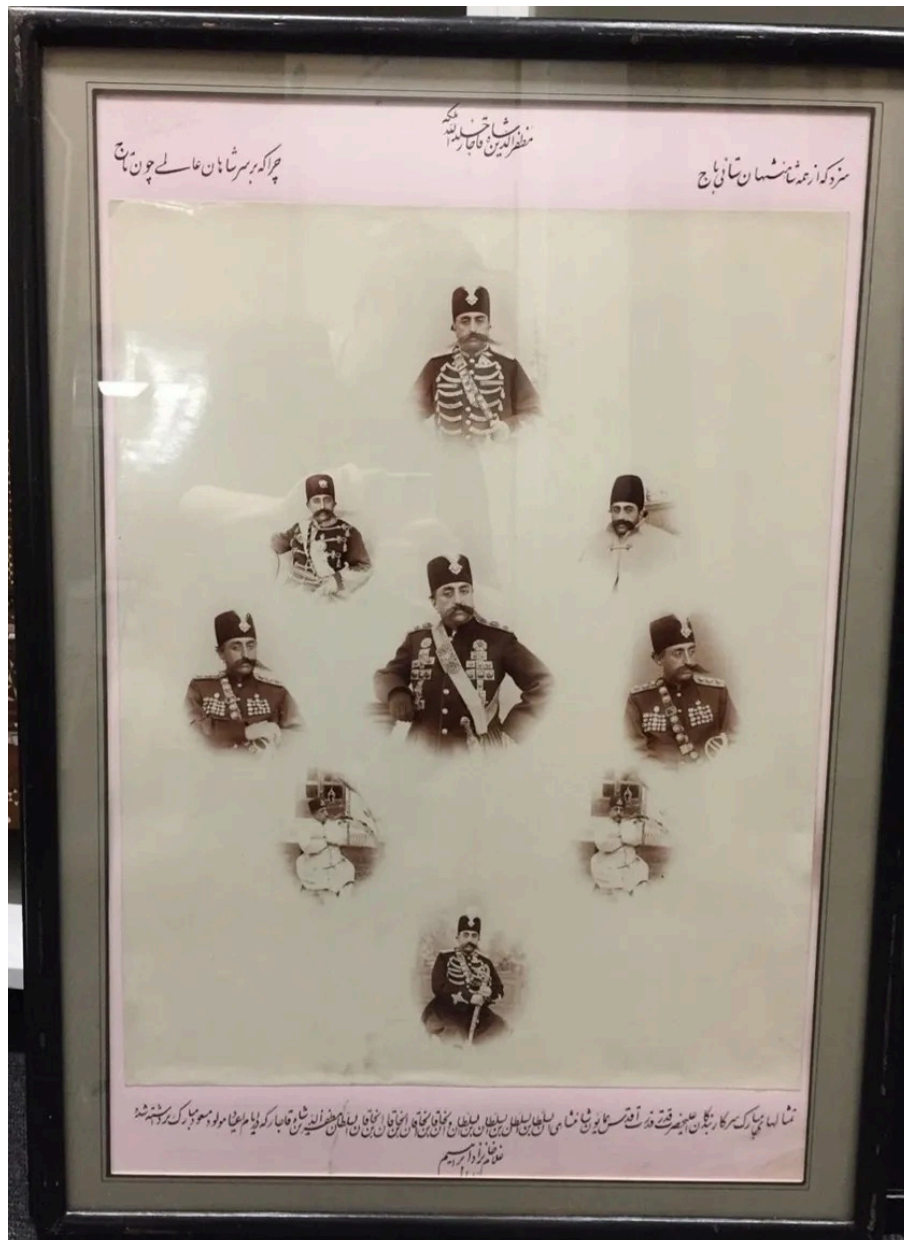


Figure 3: Mirza Ibrahim Khan, *A Composite Photograph of Nine Birthday Portraits of Muzaffar al-Din Shah Qajar*, dated AH 1315/1897, gelatin silver print. Courtesy of Bonhams 1793 Ltd.

The collage also demonstrated the shah's close relationship with Mirza Ibrahim Khan Sani' al-Saltana (1874-1915), his court photographer in Tabriz and in Tehran, on whom he not only conferred the title *'akkas-bashi* ([chief] photographer) but in the same year, 1897, also offered the hand of his wife's sister, Zivar al-Sultan Tal'at al-Saltana (dates unknown), in marriage (Gaffary). The king's photographer thus became literally part of the royal family. Mirza Ibrahim Khan (1874-1915) was the son of Mirza Ahmad Sani' al-Saltana (b. 1848), who had become Nasir al-Din Shah's court photographer after having studied photography, engraving, and porcelain making in Europe for seven years (Gaffary). The fourteen-year-old Mirza Ibrahim accompanied his father to Europe, where he participated in his studies and, after his return to Iran, joined the court of the crown prince in Tabriz. He and Muzaffar al-Din had therefore known each other for many years when the latter became king. This familiarity, but also their mutual respect, is evident in the portraiture.¹⁰

In 1900, 1903, and 1905, Muzaffar al-Din Shah went on trips to Europe and took his photographer Mirza Ibrahim with him. Unlike his father's trips, Muzaffar al-Din's trips were built around long stays in spa towns like Contrexéville in France or Carlsbad in the Austrian-Hungarian Empire due to his poor health. Despite this, he had ample time to inform himself about the newest technological developments, including the introduction of the picture postcard and the discovery of early cinematography. The latter was described by the shah with interest in his travel diary (Qajar 146). This newly found interest resulted in Mirza Ibrahim training as a cameraman and film projector on their first European trip together, while also documenting the travels photographically (Gaffary). On the king's second trip to Europe, Mirza Ibrahim again made sure to visually document the events and the two published travelogues of Muzaffar al-Din Shah (which are yet to be translated into English) were illustrated with these photographs (Qajar, *Safarnama-ye Farangistan: Safar-i avval*; *Safarnama-ye Farangistan: Duvvumin safarnama*).¹¹ Mirza Ibrahim also found time to study new developments in printing on that trip and purchased the necessary equipment to establish his own printing company after his return to Iran. His interest in technological developments is also apparent in extraordinarily large-sized portraits, which he made of Muzaffar al-Din Shah. On one portrait, a beautifully calligraphed inscription tells us that the photograph was taken by Mirza Ibrahim to document the celebration of Nowruz in March 1898, and an additional, much smaller inscription, potentially in the hand of the photographer, states that he reprinted the image in the spring of 1901 after enlarging it fourteen times.¹² Printing such a large image was technically sophisticated and it attests to the careful archiving and reusing of the photographs in the palace. Today over one thousand photo albums and more than forty thousand photographs are kept in the photographic archives of the Gulistan Palace, demonstrating both the Qajar passion for photography and the interest in keeping a record for future generations (Simsar; Tahami and Jalali; Nabipour and Sheikh).

10. One example for this is a portrait of Muzaffar al-Din Shah with a globe from 1901 by Mirza Ibrahim Khan. The portrait was sold at Bonhams in 2019, more information, including a reproduction of the image, can be found here: <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/25434/lot/116/?category=list&length=219&page=1>. Accessed 3 May 2022.

11. The second travelogue even mentions the photographer on the title page (Qajar, *Duvvumin safarnama*).

12. This portrait depicting Muzaffar al-Din Shah in uniform, his chest sparkling with diamonds, made in 1901, was sold by Bonhams in 2019. More information, including a transcription and translation of the inscriptions, can be found here: <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/25434/lot/115/?category=list&length=219&page=1>. Accessed 17 July 2022.



Figure 4: Enlarged by the court photographer Mirza Ibrahim Khan, *A Large-Sized Portrait of Muzaffar al-Din Shah Qajar*, dated 1323/1905, gelatin silver print (private collection). Inscribed: *Hasb al-amr-e mo-barak-e a'la-hazrat-e homayuni ruhana fadahu dar 'akkas-khaneh-ye mobarakeh agrandisman shod gholam-e khanazad Ibrahim ibn sani' al-saltanah 1323*, 'By the order of the blessed, His Majesty [Muzaffar al-Din Shah], the monarch—may our soul be sacrificed for him—that was enlarged in the Royal Photography studio,' signed: 'The servant at court, Ibrahim ibn Sani' al-Saltanah, 1323 (1905-06)'.

A second even larger portrait, with the dimensions 119 x 85 cm, confirms that Mirza Ibrahim successfully mastered the difficult technical skill necessary to enlarge photos, to which he refers in the portrait's Persian inscription by using the French name for the process, *agrandissement* (fig. 4). The monumental portrait depicts a seated Muzaffar al-Din looking straight at the viewer, dressed in a western suit with a flower attached to his lapel and his arms resting on a cane. No diamonds are attached to his chest, nor does his lambskin hat bear embellishments. This life-size portrait might be similar to his progenitors' portraits in size, yet it could not be more different. The king's choice of clothing signifies the increased contact with Europe and the cane, which has filled the place usually taken by swords and daggers in his forefathers' pictures, points to his failing health. In addition to the portraits taken of the king by his court photographers, a large number of commercial portraits in the shape of picture postcards had also come into circulation. These were mainly photographs taken by European photographers and depicting the king and his entourage during his trips to European spa towns.¹³ Whereas Nasir al-Din Shah's likeness had been disseminated on the *carte-de-visite*, at the beginning of the twentieth century the postcard had begun to take the spotlight and was reaching larger audiences (Cure).

The stunning and somewhat melancholic portrait of Muzaffar al-Din Shah was taken at the end of 1905 (fig. 4), at the beginnings of a time of revolutionary turmoil. Less than a year later Muzaffar al-Din Shah would sign the constitution on his deathbed and usher in a new era.

Depicting the Rise and Fall of Muhammad 'Ali Shah (r. 1907-1909)

While a large number of photographic images exist of his grandfather Nasir al-Din Shah and his father Muzaffar al-Din Shah, there are comparatively few images taken of Muhammad 'Ali Shah (r. 1907-1909). The main reason for this might be his very short period of rule during a tumultuous period in Iran's history. Similar to the absence of images of the founder of the Qajar dynasty, Aqa Muhammad Shah (r. 1789-1797), a lack of time and resources, and a lack of concrete power, hindered a concentrated form of image making during this later period. Due to this dearth of portraiture of Muhammad 'Ali Shah, most publications on royal Qajar portraiture focus on the rulers before him and spend little or no space covering his rule or that of his son Ahmad.¹⁴ Yet, despite the small number of images, it is worth examining how Muhammad 'Ali Shah engaged with portraiture during his short and intense rule in a politically turbulent period (Shablovskaja).

A small number of official photographic portraits taken of Muhammad 'Ali Shah after he had been crowned king exist. Interestingly, the small corpus of images heavily features images related to the shah's coronation, which is a break with the image program of his three direct predecessors, who did not pay much attention to memorializing this event. One example for this is the photograph of a seated Muhammad 'Ali Shah, wearing a heavy crown, which was circulated by the Bains News Service (fig. 5). What this and the other formal photographs of Muhammad 'Ali Shah have in common is that they depict a serious looking monarch who appears to be burdened by the weight of the crown and other regalia and who unlike his predecessors does not seem to enjoy sitting in front of the lens.

13. While postcards featuring Muzaffar al-Din are in many archives and private collections, they have so far received little attention. Three examples, showing the shah during visits to spas, from the collection of the Institute for Iranian Contemporary Historical Studies in Tehran, can be seen here: Muzaffar al-Din Shah taking healing waters in Belgium, http://www.iichs.ir/Upload/Image/2019/12/Original/b5ffa089_73f6_45ef_b80d_c1995a8644ad.jpg; Muzaffar al-Din Shah taking a walk in the spa's park, http://www.iichs.ir/Upload/Image/2019/12/Original/58b4cba3_8dee_4c28_b5b1_fb07d07e534a.jpg; and Muzaffar al-Din Shah gazing from his hotel window, http://www.iichs.ir/Upload/Image/2019/12/Original/f99a0a5e_2037_4647_92c0_135dd7510cff.jpg. All accessed 16 July 2022.

14. This lack of material is also reflected in the lack of academic attention to the portraiture of Muhammad 'Ali Shah and Ahmad Shah. Whereas Nasir al-Din Shah and Muzaffar al-Din Shah have their own sections in the catalogue of the exhibition *The Eye of the Shah* (ed. Jennifer Chi), for example, this is not the case for their two predecessors, who are reduced to just one image each. The exhibition catalogue *Royal Persian Paintings: The Qajar Epoch, 1785-1925* (ed. Layla S. Diba with Maryam Ekhtiar), concentrates on the period of Nasir al-Din Shah mostly and the reigns prior to that, despite the all-encompassing title, which would have suggested that Muhammad 'Ali Shah's and Ahmad Shah's reigns would also be treated in detail. These are just two of many examples.



Figure 5: Unidentified photographer, *Muhammad Ali Shah as the New King*, rephotographed, 1907, Bain News Service (Library of Congress), <https://www.loc.gov/item/2004671397/>. Accessed 16 July 2022.

Besides this lack of charm or playfulness, the interest in novelty or modernity that was apparent in Nasir al-Din Shah's and Muzaffar al-Din Shah's imagery is also absent here—with perhaps the exception of a velvet jacket emblazoned with Muhammad 'Ali Shah's image and a painted portrait with a photographic background now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which illustrate some interest in visual and artistic innovation—the formal photographic portraiture of Muhammad 'Ali Shah appears to be almost going backward in time aesthetically and technically.¹⁵ The photograph circulated by Bains in 1907 (fig. 5) is fully centered on the large, seated figure of the shah and emphasizes his power through what he is wearing; the royal robe (*khil'at*) made from expensive gold brocade (*zaribaf*) and the tall, jewel-encrusted crown (Floor). The Kayanid crown, which features here, was the symbol of the Qajar dynasty and perhaps the best-known item of the Iranian crown jewels (Amanat). The crown originated from the time of the first Qajar ruler, Aqa Muhammad Shah, and was possibly made to his instructions. The golden dome of the crown was embellished with gemstones and pearls, likely captured from the Zand dynasty (1750-79). Aqa Muhammad Shah's successor Fath 'Ali Shah later had a new version of the Kayanid crown made, reusing the same jewels, and keeping the illustrious name. The king frequently wore the crown on official occasions, and in Abbas Amanat's words, "The dazzling king in his magnificent attire and regalia was a reminder to neighbouring powers, including the British, the Russians, and the French, of the political stability and continuity that had resumed in Iran." (29) After Fath 'Ali Shah's reign the crown was only worn at coronation and it nearly completely disappears from royal portraiture as Muhammad Shah, Nasir al-Din Shah, and Muzaffar al-Din Shah favoured comparatively less ostentatious markers of royalty such as the aigrette and *bazubandha* (armbands). In contrast, the portrait of Muhammad 'Ali Shah relies heavily on the symbolism of the crown and the robe to visualize royal authority and power. The emphasis on the Kayanid crown in the portraiture of Muhammad 'Ali also suggests the possibility of a conscious link to his powerful predecessor Fath 'Ali Shah. Furthermore, the focus on crown and robe underlines the connection between political power and material wealth at a time when the royal coffers were actually empty. A different photograph from this same series, taken in 1907 by an unidentified photographer, was used for a North American postcard two years later, in 1909, after Muhammad 'Ali Shah had tried to abort political reforms and reintroduce absolute monarchy (fig. 6). For the first time since the period of Fath 'Ali Shah, the Kayanid crown took centre stage in royal portraiture again. It is as if the new shah had to visually underline his right to the throne and wanted to connect his rule to a time where the introduction of a parliament was unheard of. In these two and several similar photographs, the focus on the oversized Kayanid crown appears to visualize royal authority and wealth while Muhammad 'Ali, through his wearing of the crown, seemingly paid homage to Qajar cultural tradition. Yet, in reality, little wealth and belief in family legacy remained, and so Muhammad 'Ali Shah soon pawned the imperial crown at a European bank in Tehran and, after his dethronement in 1909, took those crown jewels that he hadn't pawned with him into exile (Bayat 107, fn. 32).

15. The velvet jacket, which was sold at Bonhams in 2009, was likely made for a lady of the court at the time of the coronation, more information and a number of images of the jacket can be found here: <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/16851/lot/168/?category=list&length=389&page=1>. Accessed 17 Jul. 2022. The object at the Metropolitan Museum of Art is a painted portrait on a photographic background, not a hand-coloured photograph, as examination by the museum's Paper Conservation Lab has demonstrated (oil paint on a silver gelatin print), more information can be found here: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/822467>. Accessed 17 July 2022.



Figure 6: Unidentified photographer, *Postcard Depicting Muhammad Ali Shah*, published by F. H. Alt in 1909, collotype postcard. Courtesy of the Collection of Kenneth X. and Joyce Robbins, Maryland.

The first photograph of Muhammad 'Ali as Shah, printed in the *London Illustrated News* in January 1907, featured the by-line Walery, referring to the photographer Count Stanislaw Julian Ignacy Ostorog (1863-1935) (fig. 7). The photograph depicts Muhammad 'Ali Shah seated in uniform with his sword, three of his courtiers are behind him. The photograph lacks the elegance paired with authority of the first portrait of Nasir al-Din Shah, who is seen focused yet full of interest (fig. 1); the grandson and his entourage look as if being photographed is a duty, and one that makes them slightly uncomfortable.

This is also the case for several of the other official portraits of Muhammad 'Ali Shah. The other portraits appear to suggest that the shah neither had the time, resources, interest, nor the natural charm needed for successful royal image making.¹⁶ Indeed, he would have been hard-pressed to find a positive audience for such images as his rule faced widespread criticism in Iran and he was finally forced to abdicate in 1909. This dethronement was not only pursued by the Constitutionalists of Tehran and Tabriz. The religious authorities in Najaf also did not hold back about their disappointment in Muhammad 'Ali in a telegram sent to Tehran: "The deposition of Muhammed 'Ali Mirza, due to his great betrayal of religion, government, and nation, is obligatory by *shar'* [religious] and *qanun* [constitutional] law." (Bayat 106).

Yet despite this relatively small investment in image making compared to his predecessors, Muhammad 'Ali Shah's image was distributed around the globe during his brief reign, mainly through illustrated newspapers and postcards. In 1909, the Ottoman journal *Resimli Kitap* discussed the abdication of Muhammad 'Ali Shah and featured two photographs of him, one with his father and predecessor, and the other depicting him with his own son and successor (*Resimli Kitap*, June 1909, 895). In the following year, the same journal only featured representations of his predecessor Muzaffar al-Din and his successor Ahmad Shah as personifications of Iranian constitutionalism. The figure of Muhammad 'Ali Shah had already disappeared, an example of a strategic erasure, which would also be performed in Qajar portraiture (*Resimli Kitap*, June 1910, 820).

Another interesting example that demonstrates how far his image was circulated and which appears to foreshadow the brevity of his rule is from the Chinese weekly *Dongfang Zazhi* (The Eastern Miscellany) (fig. 8).¹⁷ The photograph introduces the then-newly crowned Iranian shah and visualizes the beginning of his rule by depicting Muhammad 'Ali in a similar uniform to that of the previous image, with the sword at his side. As the background has been removed and the image pasted in the middle, the new ruler appears somewhat forlorn. The caption informs us that this is "the current king of Persia, Mi-sa." (*Bosi jin wang Misa*).¹⁸

16. Two photographic prints of portraits from the same time period in the Nelson Collection, which depict a similarly sombre Muhammad 'Ali Shah, can be seen here. The first one also features the Kayanid crown: <https://www.thenelsoncollection.co.uk/artists/70-not-known/works/10090/>, whereas the second shows the shah in uniform, <https://www.thenelsoncollection.co.uk/artists/70-not-known/works/10084/>. Both accessed 17 July 2022.

17. For a discussion of images of Iran in Chinese periodicals, see Wang. *Dongfang Zazhi* has been digitized and is accessible here: <https://archive.org/search?query=%E6%9D%B1%E6%96%B9%E9%9B%9C%E8%AA%8C>. Accessed 3 March 2022. I would like to thank Eric Schluessel for his help in going through the journals with me and translating the captions.

18. Mi-sa might have been adapted from Mirza, which was mistakenly understood to be the new ruler's name.



Figure 7: Walery, *The New Shah: Muhammad Ali Mirza*, in: *The Illustrated London News*, 19 January 1907, p. 87 (Widener Library, Harvard University).

On the previous page of the journal, before the reader turns the page to see Muhammad ‘Ali, another figure bears striking similarities to him: a moustachioed man dressed in a similar ceremonial uniform, holding a sword (fig. 8). This is King Kojong (r. 1864-1907; emperor from 1897), who believed that in order to become a modern nation-state Korea had to engage with Meiji Japan and the Western powers. Yet in late 1905, Japan took partial control of Korea and later replaced Emperor Kojong with his son Sunjong, a mere figurehead, in 1907 (Park 226). The replete visual similarities appear to almost foreshadow Muhammad ‘Ali’s dethronement and replacement with his son, which was later reported, yet not illustrated, under the title “How Regretful the Dethroned Persian King Is (*Ke’ai Boshi zhi Fei-huang*)” (Wang, 371, footnote 6).



Figure 8: Unidentified photographers, *Muhammad ‘Ali, the New Shah of Iran and Yi Hui, the Former Emperor of Korea*, reproduced in: *Dongfang zazhi*, no. 4, issue 6 (1907), 8-9. Accessible here: [<https://archive.org/details/dongfangzazhi-1907.08.03/page/n8/mode/2up>].

Even though from an earlier period, the lines from this Muharram elegy appear to describe Muhammad 'Ali Shah's situation well, especially his later failed return from exile:¹⁹

فارس افلاک را در قصد شاه کم سپاه
آه آه رزم جوی و کینه خواه
خود ز اکلیل و ثریا جوشن و مغفر نگر
در نگر کینه اختر نگر

*The horseman of Heavens is after the King with his small army
woe he's belligerent and vengeful
Even the Pleiades and Iklil wear armour and helmet, look
consider it look at the rancour of Heaven*

As we shall see below the same elegy would later be appropriated in a very different context to refer to Muhammad 'Ali's young son, the crown prince Ahmad Mirza, and it will provide us with a better understanding on how to understand his imagery.

Ahmad Shah (r. 1909-1925) , the Boy King as the Ideal of the Constitutionalist Ruler

After Muhammad 'Ali and his harem's departure into exile in Odessa, his young son Ahmad was made ruler against his will. He was proclaimed shah in the presence of those who now shared political power in Iran: The Constitutionalist politicians and *mujahidin*, the ulama, the remaining Qajar grandees, and the foreign embassy officials. Azud al-Mulk Nayib al-Saltana, an elderly Qajar prince, was made regent (Bayat 106, fn. 31). On the images of the new ruler his tender age is directly apparent.²⁰ An Iranian collaged postcard features a portrait of the young shah in the typical ceremonial uniform, which had been worn by his predecessors, with a sword almost too large for him and a cap embellished with an aigrette instead of the large, towering Kayanid crown (fig. 9). In direct contrast with his father, he is depicted as the ideal of a Constitutionalist ruler. Above the image of Ahmad Shah are two flags and an emblem adorned with the sword-wielding sun-lion symbolising the Qajar dynasty, directly underneath the flags are florally bordered rectangular fields, which are inscribed with "Souvenir of the Iranian Revolution, 1324-1327" (*yadgari rivulusiyuun-i Iran 1324-1327*) and "Long live the Constitutional Movement of Iran" (*zindabad mashruṭa-yi Iran*), visually and textually linking the Qajar dynasty to the new political reforms.

19. The translation is taken from Roxane Haag-Higuchi's article on Muharram elegies, which provides the full poem and explains the context of the elegy (61). I would like to thank Houchang Chehabi for bringing this book to my attention and for kindly lending me his own copy.

20. For the painted portrait of a rosy-cheeked, young Ahmad Shah by Mir Sayyid Husayn Arjangi, known as Mir Musavvir (Iran, 1910) see Fellingner with Guillaume, 127. A photograph by Sevruguin, which depicts a young boy in royal uniform and of which countless copies were made at the time, has been identified as both a young Ahmad Shah or Malijak, Nasir al-Din Shah's favourite young companion: a digitized copy at the Brooklyn Museum can be accessed online here: <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/161206>. Accessed 17 July 2022). For a rare photographic portrait, which depicts Ahmad Shah somewhat older (Chi 150).



Figure 9: Unidentified photographer, *Postcard Depicting Ahmad Shah Qajar as a Constitutionalist Monarch*, published by Murad Ibrahim Shalem, Gulistan Store, Lalezar Avenue, Tehran, ca. 1909, collotype postcard. Courtesy of the Collection of Kenneth X. and Joyce Robbins, Maryland.

The young shah is surrounded by miniature portraits of some of his royal predecessors in the shape of stamps, with Muzaffar al-Din, under whose rule the constitution was introduced, taking pride of place. The young ruler's image is captioned in French as "Constitutionalist king" (*roi constitutionnel*), followed by a benediction in Persian, which also describes Ahmad as a Constitutionalist monarch: "May God protect Sultan Ahmad Mirza, Padishah of the Constitutionalist Movement of all of the Iranian lands from any calamities" (*a'lahazrat-i humayuni Sultan Ahmad Mirza padishahi mashruṭa-yi kul-i mamalik-i Iran saniha allah 'an alhadathan*). The postcard celebrates Ahmad Shah as a Constitutionalist monarch and links him as the ruler to the Constitutionalist movement, making them inseparable.

At the same time, this postcard as a celebration of political reform is also an example of the engagement with and participation in novel forms of communication and thought, including new vocabulary, concepts, such as *mashruṭa* and *rivuluusiyun*, and an emphasis on the importance of a faster, wider communication through the postal service, of which this postcard and the stamps it features is a part itself.²¹ As an example of collage, embracing new forms of art and visual culture, the postcard is more closely related to those images circulated by Muzaffar al-Din Shah than to those by Ahmad Shah's direct predecessor, Muhammad 'Ali. While this postcard was in circulation, Ahmad Shah was also celebrated as a Constitutionalist monarch in new verse. The earlier Qajar elegy, previously quoted, had been fully transformed:²²

ای شهنشاه جوان شیران جنگ آور نگر در نگر عالمی دیگر نگر
ملتی را راحت از مشروطه سر تا سر نگر در نگر عالمی دیگر نگر
پادشاهی کن که دوران جهان بر کام تست رام تست شاه احمد نام تست
در محامد خویش را همنام پیغمبر نگر در نگر عالمی دیگر نگر

Oh young King of Kings, look at the belligerent lions

consider it look at a different world

Look at a nation, completely at ease by virtue of the constitution

consider it look at a different world

Rule, the course of the world complies to your wish

submits to you King Ahmad is your name

In praiseworthiness, regard yourself the prophet's namesake

consider it look at a different world

(Haag-Higuchi, 61)

21. On photography as a key art form engaging with these novel political and social concepts, see for example Sheikh 2010, Helbig, Scheiwiller 2017, Pérez González 2018, and Schwerda 2020.

22. While the poem has previously been reprinted by E.G. Browne in "Press and Poetry," it was published there without translation. The English translation reproduced here is that of Roxane Haag-Higuchi.

As Roxane Haag-Higuchi writes, “This early Qajar elegy was transformed into a triumphal song about the end of the period of lesser despotism (*istibdād-i saghīr*) and the enthronement of Ahmad Shāh in 1909, published in *Nasīm-i shumāl* on 1 August 1909. The change of mood is obvious in the refrain which transforms the fatalistic ‘consider it, look at the rancour of the stars’ into the optimistic, future-oriented ‘consider it, look at a different world.’” (61). Haag-Higuchi’s explanation may guide us in understanding why images of a young and shy-looking Ahmad Shah were so popular—there appear to be fewer images of him at a more mature age—as his young age was linked to a new beginning and to a youthful optimism for the changing world.

At the same time, Ahmad Shah’s young age and the introduction of a regent for him also emphasized his lack of experience and concrete power; a vacuum that was filled by the parliament and the Constitutionalist ministers. While the previous postcard closely linked Ahmad Shah to the Constitutionalist Movement (*mashruṭa*) primarily through captions, benedictions, and the title *padishah-i mashruṭa-yi Iran* or *roi constitutionnel*, a different strategy of political symbolism is followed by a contemporary oil painting of Ahmad Shah (fig. 10).²³

The painting by Assad-Allah al-Husayni Naqqash-bashi, whose work was likely aided or influenced by photographs, also depicts Ahmad Shah as a Constitutionalist monarch. However, in the portrait the artist visualized and defined this new kind of kingship by emphasizing the sharing of power with not only the parliament but also a much more powerful cabinet of ministers. Many earlier painted and photographic royal portraits had solely focused on the king or, if introducing an entourage, still visualized the king’s special position and emphasized his power (e.g. Fath ‘Ali Shah’s ceremonial *saf-i salam* [greeting queue] portraits) (Diba, “Images of Power” 36-9; Diba, “From the Miniature”).

In this painting of Ahmad Shah and his cabinet, the king, while still at the centre, has become one amongst a group. The men that surround him and the crown prince to the left share his space, and unlike in the earlier ceremonial group portraits from Fath ‘Ali Shah’s reign, Ahmad Shah is not provided with an additional elevation or other manners of spatial separation. The painting draws on traditional markers of power and kingship by depicting the men’s robes of honour or ceremonial uniforms, their jewel-encrusted medals, the black fur caps emblazoned with the sun-lion or the royal aigrette, while adding new elements, such as the physical closeness of the cabinet to the king, the older men’s taller size as compared to the ruler, and the listing of all of the men’s names. Some of the medals contain miniature portraits, which again give Muzaffar al-Din Shah, the first Constitutionalist king, an elevated position, while purposefully excluding his successor, the tyrant Muhammad ‘Ali Shah – a novel measure of erasure or ‘cancellation’ that had not taken place in Qajar portraiture before. The group portrait (fig. 10) and the postcard (fig. 9) also symbolised links to the West and to modernity by being painted in oil or printed in the form of a collage as a collotype, and visualised new ideas and concepts, which had been introduced to Iran, thereby commenting on political and social change that took place during the early twentieth century.

23. This painting featured in the exhibition *The Prince and the Shah: Royal Portraits from Qajar Iran*, which took place at the Freer | Sackler in 2018 and was curated by Simon Rettig. A detailed, high-res image of the painting can be found here: <https://asia.si.edu/object/S2013.4/>. Accessed 1 June 2022).



Figure 10: Assad-Allah al-Husayni Naqqash-bashi, *Ahmad Shah and His Cabinet*, Iran, 1910/1915, oil on canvas. Courtesy of the National Museum of Asian Art, Smithsonian Institution, Gift of the Farough and Jean Farman-Farmaian Family: Lehla Farman-Farmaian Dowlatshahi, Susan Farman-Farmaian Gharib, Valli Farman-Farmaian, and Marjan Farman-Farmaian Hosseinpour, S2013.4

Conclusion

Lens-based royal portraiture produced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in Iran provides a fascinating insight into a period of intertwined social, political, technological, and artistic change. In this article I have demonstrated how the political exigencies of the day, paired with the personality of different rulers, affected both the style and technology of the imagery. Yet, at the same time, aesthetic trends and technological developments also influenced royal image making, or, as in the case of Muhammad 'Ali Shah, were consciously rejected.

The large body of photographic royal portraiture demonstrates that photography was embraced by late Qajar rulers. Both Nasir al-Din Shah and Muzaffar al-Din Shah were intrigued by the technology and had close relationships with their photographers, and in the case of Nasir al-Din Shah even took photographs themselves. The myriad photographic portraits of Nasir al-Din Shah taken in Iran and abroad provide us with information about how the shah wanted to be seen and demonstrate his interest in the nuances of staging and posing for portraiture as well as in photography and printing culture's technological advancements.

The illustrated European press was fascinated with the lives of the Persian shahs and we know that Nasir al-Din Shah had European newspapers and travelogues read to him, and followed how he was depicted abroad. The artists of the French illustrated journal *L'Illustration* devoted three issues to the Shah's trip to Paris in 1873 and, with artistic liberty, drew how they imagined him in both the bath and the bedroom, demonstrating the French audience's interest in the everyday life of the monarch.²⁴ As mentioned earlier, similar quotidian scenes, which are quite unusual for royal portraiture, were later photographically documented by Sevruguin; what prompted these photos or even if the images were meant to circulate beyond the palace is still unknown. Perhaps they were even inspired by the detailed, yet mostly fantastical reporting of the most mundane details of the shah's travels in the French and English illustrated press. During the reign of Nasir al-Din Shah's son, Muzaffar al-Din Shah, it had become easier and faster to reproduce photographic images, as demonstrated by the many postcards depicting the ruler on his travels, and so a control of image circulation became even less possible.

It is recorded that Fath 'Ali Shah contributed to the making of his own image by posing for paintings and directing the artist (Ekhtiar, "From Workshop and Bazaar" 52). While we know that Nasir al-Din Shah and Muzaffar al-Din Shah commissioned their own photographic likenesses, and hired and communicated with photographers—in the case of the former also had the skill both to draw and take photographic images himself—we know less about their concrete involvement in the making of official portraiture. Furthermore, we have even less information for the last two Qajar rulers, Muhammad 'Ali Shah and Ahmad Shah. Relevant accounts by photographers of this period have also not yet come to light. This is unfortunate as they would provide insight into the artist's perspective and might change our understanding of specific developments. However, we do know that the painter Kamal al-Mulk, who had been crucial for the development of modern painting in Iran and had painted many likenesses of Nasir al-Din Shah, refused to paint Muhammad 'Ali Shah's portrait because the artist was committed to supporting the Constitutional Revo-

24. *L'Illustration*, no. 1586, 19 July 1873. For the discussion of a drawing by Nasir al-Din Shah, which was reproduced in an earlier issue of the same journal, no. 1584, 5 July 1873, see Florence Hellot-Bellier 35.

lution.²⁵ Other artists might have shared his belief, which may contribute to explaining the small number of portraits of Muhammad 'Ali Shah. While this examination has demonstrated that the rulers engaged with the arts (specifically the camera) in different ways and that the visual definition of kingship and power was modified according to the current shah, many open questions remain: How much did the rulers of the late Qajar period engage with painters and photographers, did they participate in directing their image? Was this also the case for the young Ahmad Shah, for example? How far was this kind of image-making centrally orchestrated? Perhaps, more research will reveal a much more diverse corpus of images, thereby suggesting less royal influence on image making in the late Qajar period. One avenue to research this question further will be the engagement with written primary sources, e.g. diaries, letters, and travelogues written by the rulers, the courtiers, and the artists. Another further avenue will be to investigate caricatures and other critical imagery, which circulated at the same time as the royal imagery.

Regrettably, the period from Muzaffar al-Din Shah to the end of the Qajar era has, so far, received little attention from historians of art or visual culture despite the existence of ample source material. In the past, this neglect of Qajar art as compared to earlier Iranian art was often based on the problematic idea of decline and the inaccurate belief that the Timurid and Safavid dynasties were allegedly being further removed from foreign and modern influences and thus as examples of a "more purely Islamic or Persian art" more worthy of study (Gruber). During the last few years this has finally changed as the number of exhibitions and books on Qajar art have demonstrated (Schwerda, "The Prince and the Shah"). It is to be hoped that both the arts of the Qajar court during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and the arts and popular culture outside of the court at this time, including the history of photography, will continue to receive more attention. As this essay has demonstrated, many fascinating questions remain open.

25. "Kamāl-al-Molk was a freedom-loving artist and an ardent supporter of the Constitutional Revolution from the very start, often making sarcastic asides aimed at those opposed to constitutional reform. In spite of facing severe financial difficulties during this period, Kamāl-al-Molk refrained from painting the portrait of Moḥammad-'Ali Shah, heedless of pressure from the courtiers and the monarch's offer of a substantial sum for the work." (Ashraf with Diba, unpaginated)

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The Idea of the Just Ruler and Art Patron in Persianate Calligraphy

The Colophons Made by Ja'far Baysonqori and Muhammad Hussein Katib al-Sultan Shirazi

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Abstract

Ja'far Tabrizi (1383–1455) is one of the most famous Timurid calligraphers and was the chief of prince Baysonqor's (1397–1433) library. Under his supervision, some of the most prestigious Herati manuscripts were created. Muhammad Hussein Shirazi (1825–1900) is one of the Qajar calligraphy masters, honored with the title Katib al-Sultan (the King's calligrapher). He copied some of the most prestigious Persian masterpieces during his lifetime. In the colophons of their numerous manuscripts, both calligraphers praised their respective princes and kings, providing a resource from which one may learn about the ideas of the just ruler as the governor and as the patron of the arts in the Timurid and Qajar periods. In reviewing these colophons, this article aims to identify the idea of kingship, especially in the patronage of the arts of the book and calligraphy, narrated and praised in two different historical and social contexts in the Timurid and Qajar periods; widely considered the golden ages of Persian calligraphy. This study shows how the tradition of patronage did endure for some five centuries.

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جایگاه و توصیف پادشاه و حامی هنر در انجامه‌های جعفر بایسنغری و محمدحسین شیرازی کاتب‌السلطان

چکیده

جعفر تبریزی (حدود ۷۸۵-۸۵۹ ق.) از مشهورترین خوشنویسان دوره تیموری است که افزون بر کتابت آثار، به مقام کتابداری بایسنغر میرزا نائل شد و سرپرستی تهیه بسیاری از نفایس مکتب هرات زیر نظر او صورت پذیرفته است. محمدحسین شیرازی (زنده در ۱۳۱۸ ق.) از برجسته‌ترین خوشنویسان دوره قاجار است که به القاب کاتب‌السلطان، کاتب‌الصداره و مستوفی دیوان اعلی مفتخر شد و بسیاری از آثار معروف ادبیات فارسی را به بهترین شکل ممکن کتابت کرده است. این دو خوشنویس در انجامه‌نسخه‌هایی که کتابت کرده‌اند از پادشاه و شاهزادگان دوره خود به‌عنوان بزرگترین حاکمان ایران یاد کرده‌اند و از ایشان با توصیفات مفصل به ستایش پرداخته‌اند. هم‌چنین از جایگاه و اهمیت پادشاه در حمایت و گسترش هنر یاد کرده و خدمات او را برشمرده‌اند.

در این مقاله این دو خوشنویس که نزدیک‌ترین هنرمندان از نظر موقعیت هنری به پادشاه زمان خویش بودند، به‌عنوان نمایندگانی از هنر خوشنویسی دو دوره طلایی هنر ایران، یعنی عصر تیموری و قاجار در هرات و تهران انتخاب و معرفی شده‌اند تا اثبات شود که سنت حمایت حاکمان از تولید آثار هنری از سده نهم تا چهاردهم هجری به مدت پنج سده استمرار داشته است. پس از آن با نقل انجامه‌های آثار این دو خوشنویس، به معرفی و چگونگی توصیفاتشان از پادشاه، ارتباطشان با مرکز قدرت و حامی هنری پرداخته شده است. در پایان تصویری که از پادشاه ارائه کرده‌اند و نقش پادشاه در حمایت از هنر کتابت و کتاب‌آرایی در دو دوره تاریخی یادشده با هم مقایسه شده است.

واژگان کلیدی

کتابت، خوشنویسی، جعفر تبریزی بایسنغری، محمدحسین کاتب‌السلطان شیرازی، توصیف پادشاه، حامیان هنر.

جعفر بایسنغری

جعفر تبریزی، فرزند علی در حدود سال ۷۸۵ هجری در تبریز چشم به جهان گشود. گویا در دوره حکومت جلال‌الدین میرانشاه (فرزند تیمور) در آذربایجان (۸۰۷-۸۱۰ ق.) به دربار راه مییافته است. جعفر تا سال ۸۲۰ خود را «جعفرالحافظ التبریزی» میخواند و به حافظ قرآن بودن خویش افتخار می‌کند. وی در همان زمان سفری به یزد می‌کند (حدود ۸۲۰ ق.) و مدتی در این شهر رحل اقامت می‌افکند. (بیانی ۱۱۵)

با رونق یافتن هنرش تصمیم گرفت تا راهی هرات، پایتخت تیموریان، شود. وی در هرات مورد تشویق و حمایت بایسنغر بن شاهرخ (۸۰۲-۸۳۷ ق.) قرار گرفت و به‌همین مناسبت در بیشتر آثار ۸۲۵ ق. و پس از آن، خود را «جعفرالبایسنغری» معرفی می‌کند. (قلیچ‌خانی، درآمدی بر خوشنویسی ایرانی ۱۱۲)

جعفر در زندگی هنری‌اش به مقامات ارجمندی همچون کتابداری کتابخانه بایسنغر میرسد. ریاست کتابخانه را می‌توان مهم‌ترین و کلیدی‌ترین جایگاه هنری دانست؛ چرا که رییس کتابخانه شاهی می‌توانست در چگونگی انجام و کیفیت آثار هنری تولید شده، نقش تعیین‌کننده‌ای داشته باشد. انتخاب و نظارت بر کار موصوران، مذهبیان، وصالان، قطاعان، مجلدان و... آن هم در هرات هنر، مقام شایسته‌ای برای وی بوده است و با مشاهده آثار فراهم آمده این کتابخانه که اکنون برجای است و مراجعه به تذکره‌ها و منابع در مییابیم که وی از انجام مسئولیتی چنین خطیر سرافراز بیرون آمده است. (بیانی ۱۱۷)

نسخه‌ای از «عرضه داشت» به خط جعفر در مرقد فاتح (سلطان یعقوب) موزه توپ‌قاپ‌سرای وجود دارد که گزارش مراحل کار جمعی از هنرمندان کتابخانه شاهی است.

جعفر پس از درگذشت بایسنغر تحت حمایت میرزا علاءالدوله، فرزند وی، می‌آید. اگر قطعه‌ای با رقم: «جعفر ۸۵۹» که در مرقع مالک دیلمی است را اصیل و از او بینداریم، وی تا سال ۸۵۹ زنده بوده و بیش از هفتاد سال زیسته است. (بیانی ۱۳۲)

درگذشت بایسنغر (۸۳۷ ق.) برای تمام هنرمندان هرات و بویژه هنرمندان کتابخانه شاهى، فاجعه‌ای بزرگ بود. در این میان هنرمندی چون جعفر که به اوج توانایی در اداره کتابخانه و تولید نسخه‌های خطی رسیده بود و از نزدیکان بایسنغر بشمار میرفت، بسیار اندوهگین و افسرده گشت. در همان زمان، گروهی از شاعران، تصمیم گرفتند تا سفینه‌ای حاوی مرثیه‌هایشان را در قالب تسلیت‌نامه‌ای به حضور شاهرخ (پدر بایسنغر) ارائه کنند.

در نسخه خطی این سفینه^۱ که به خط نستعلیق ظهیرالدین اظهر است، سروده‌هایی از یازده سخنور کتابت شده که از درگذشت ناگهانی میرزا بایسنغر و از کج رفتاری‌های روزگار سخن گفته‌اند.

نام ایشان از این قرار است: کمال‌الدین جعفر الشهیر به خطاط / مولانا زاهدی / مولانا جلال کرمانی / امیرجلال‌الدین یوسف المشتهر به امیری / مولانا لطفی / مولانا ولی / مولانا آصفی / مولانا واحدی / منشی / مولانا زین‌الدین / محمد جرده.



تصویر ۱: جُنگ مرثیه‌ها برای بایسنغر، به خط نستعلیق اظهر در هرات (نیمه نخست سده نهم هجری)، محفوظ در کتابخانه ملی تبریز (ش ۳۹۶۷). عکاسی از مؤلف.

۱. - این نسخه متعلق به کتابخانه حاج محمد نخجوانی بوده و اکنون با شماره ۲۹۶۷ در کتابخانه ملی تبریز است.

برخی از تذکرها، طبع موزون جعفر را ستوده و اشعاری را از او نقل کرده‌اند و یادآور شده‌اند که تخلصش «جعفر» بوده است.

مرثیه جعفر در سفینه یادشده در سوگ بایسنغر از این قرار است و از نظر اصطلاحات خوشنویسی و کتاب‌آرایی بسیار جالب و قابل مطالعه است:^۲

عرصه آفاق را ای چرخ ویران کرده‌ای ^۳	کعبه اقبال را با خاک یکسان کرده‌ای
ماه اوج سلطنت را در حضيض افکنده‌ای	مهر را از آتش این غم فروزان کرده‌ای
ساختی مصر خراسان را سیه چون ملک هند	خلق را نیلی بسر بر تن سیه زان کرده‌ای
نقد جان شاه عالم در شب ای دزد اجل	برده ای از ترس جان در خاک پنهان کرده‌ای
گرد زلف مشکبارش گرد غم افشاندن‌های	من چه گویم آنچه با جمعی پریشان کرده‌ای
گر سیه چشمان بگیرند از غمش نبود عجب	زانکه بادام سیه در خاک ریزان کرده‌ای
آن محمد خُلق را تا بردی از صدر جلال	چون اویسم در قرن مهجور و حیران کرده‌ای
بایسنغر خسرو ایران و توران درگذشت	سیل اشک ما ز سر بگذشت بشنو سرگذشت

*

شهریارا تا برفتی از سر اهل هنر	شد کتاب صبر ما آبتر، ورق زیر و زیر
یافتی از لطف شه هر کهنه خطی عمر نو	بشکند پشتش کنون چون رفت پشتیوان ز سر
از مرقع ناله‌ها آید بگوش جان مرا	صورت بیجان مگر گشتند از این غم باخبر
خواندن اشعار بی‌معنی شد و صورت حرام	پادشاه صورت و معنی ز عالم شد مگر
قطعه یاقوت دادی قطعه یاقوت را	صیرفی کو تا شناسد لعل و یاقوت از حَجَر؟
گشت خط منسوخ و صورتگر بجان درمانده	است چون عطا نبود دگر جدول کش از خون جگر
داشتی صد برگ جلد نسخه‌ها از زر کنون	ای مُذهَّب مشکلت از زر نگردد حل دگر
می‌نویسم جُنگ و دردم می‌شود تر ز آب چشم	کرده‌ام بعد از تو شاه‌ها خط خود را خوبتر
بر خط جعفر همی‌پاشند زر زان وجه شد	نام زر جعفری در جمله عالم مُشتهر
هر کرا از در بدر نگذاشتی از عَزّ و ناز	ز آستانت مانده دور اکنون فتاده در بدر
شد هرات از سیل اشک مردمان رشک فرات	ماه چون در برج آبی کرد ازین منزل سفر
نسخه‌ها رفتند در جلد سیاه از سوگ و درد	بسته بر سر جدول زر هم کبود از لاجورد

*

۲ - اصطلاحاتی همچون: مرقع، قطعه یاقوت، صیرفی، جدول، مذهَّب، نسخه، جُنگ، سرخ، نک: زرافشان . این ابیات از اصل نسخه کتابخانه ملی تبریز خوانده شده است.

۳ - در اصل نسخه بنابر رسم‌الخط آن دوره، ردیف این شعر یعنی «کرده‌ی» به شکل «کرده» نوشته شده اما در دیگر موارد، از جمله واژگان مرکب، رسم‌الخط اصل نسخه حفظ شده است.

قرص ماه زانکه ما خوانی نمی‌خواهیم بعد از پادشاه
این زمان افکنده بر خاک و بر سر خاک راه
باز گو تا چون نویسم این زمان طاب ثراه
از زبان کلک‌ها نامد برون جز آه و آه
حال من چون خط پریشان گشته خط اینک گواه
چون نخوانندش دگر هرگز به نزد پادشاه
میکنم صد صفحه را اکنون ز دود دل سیاه
سروها را خواهم آبی دادن از خون جگر

نیست اکنون درخور ما خوان مهر و
شهریارا هر کرا از خاک ره برداشتی
من که اللهم خَلِّد در قلم آوردمی
تا مُحَقِّق گشت بر کُتَّاب عالم این خبر
تا بتوقع اجل شد نامه عمرش سجل
نسخ و تعلیق از غبار غم نسازد چهره پاک
می‌نوشتم صفحه‌ای از جُنگ برگشت آن‌ورق
باغ شد بی‌آب گویی رفت آب از جو مگر

*

جمله در آب سیه غرقند خاص اهل قلم
سرخ گردد باب و فصلش ز اشک چشم دمیدم
در قلم آرم الف دالی شود خم چون قدم
ور ز درج سلطنت کم شد دری زین هم چه غم
باد بر خلق جهان تابنده از لطف و کرم
شادمانی بخش چون هستند با إخوان بهم
بیش دادی حرمت شاها گر از اقران کم
باد چون جعفر هزارش بنده تا یوم الحساب

گر سیه پوشند خلق از ماتم سلطان رواست
چون نویسم فصل از باب غم او در کتاب
گشته خم قد من از درد شهنشه هرگهی
گر گلی کم شد ز گلزار جهان آخر چه شد
آفتاب دولت سلطان اعظم شاهرخ
شه علاءالدوله را در سایه این پادشاه
از برای حرمت روح شهنشاه جهان
تا که القاب شهنشه را نویسد در کتاب

آثار برجای مانده:

در این‌جا نسخه‌هایی از جعفر که تاکنون شناسایی شده و دارای انجامه هستند، به‌ترتیب تاریخی معرفی می‌شود. پس از آن به معرفی قطعات و رقع‌هایی که در مرقعات موجود است، می‌پردازیم. یادآوری می‌کنم که تمام این انجامه‌ها از روی اصل نسخه‌ها یا تصاویرشان، توسط نویسنده مقاله خوانده شده است.

۱- کلیات همام تبریزی، کتابت نستعلیق. در کتابخانه ملی پاریس (ش ۱۵۳۱ sup)

انجامه: «تمت الدیوان بعون الله و حسن توفیقه علی ید العبد الفقیر المحتاج الی رحمہ الله تعالی جعفر بن علی التبریزی انجح الله آماله فی ثالث صفر ختم بالخیر و الظفر لسنه ستّ عشر و ثمانمائه [۸۱۶]» و نیز: «کتبه الفقیر الحقیق المحتاج الی رحمہ الله تعالی و غفرانه جعفر التبریزی الحافظ انجح الله آماله فی رابع عشرین جمادی الثانی سنه ست عشر و ثمانمائه [۸۱۶] هجریه نبویه»

۲- خسرو و شیرین نظامی گنجه‌ای، کتابت نستعلیق، در کتابخانه انستیتوی زبان‌های شرقی، سن پترزبورگ. (بیانی ۱۲۰)
انجامه: «تمام شد کتاب خسرو و شیرین از گفتار ملیح الکلام نظامی گنجه رحمة الله علیه فی شهر سنه اربع و عشرین و ثمانمائه [۸۱۴] کتبه المفتقر الی رحمہ الله الغنی الاکبر، ابن علی، جعفر البایسنغری تجاوز الله عن سیاته بمحمد و آله»



تصویر ۲: انجامه دیوان حسن دهلوی، به خط نستعلیق جعفر بایسنغری در هرات (۸۲۵ هجری)، محفوظ در کتابخانه مجلس شورای اسلامی (ش ۴۰۱۷). عکاسی از مؤلف.

- ۳- دیوان حسن دهلوی، کتابت نستعلیق عالی. در کتابخانه مجلس شورای اسلامی، تهران (ش ۴۰۱۷)
انجامه: «کتابه العبد المحتاج الى الله الغنى جعفر البایسنغری احسن الله احواله فى الدراين فى خامس عشرین و ثمانمائه الهجرية [۸۲۵ ق] بدارالسلطنه هرات حمیت عن الآفات و البلیات، تم.»
- ۴- اندرزهایی از اسکندر، کتابت نستعلیق عالی، در کتابخانه چستریتی، دویلین. (Ar ۴۱۸۳)
با انجامه: «کتابه جعفر البایسنغری احسن الله احواله فى سنة تسع و عشرين و ثمانمائه [۸۲۹].»
- ۵- گلستان سعدی، کتابت نستعلیق، در کتابخانه چستریتی، دویلین. (Per ۱۱۹)
نسخه دارای ۸ مجلس نگارگری است و همچون شاهنامه بایسنغری، متعلق به کتابخانه بایسنغر بوده است. انجامه: «نمق هذه السطور و حرر ذلك الذبور توسلاً الى الحضرة العلیه و توصلاً الى السده السنیه اعنى السلطان الاعظم سلطان سلاطین عالم، مالک رقاب الامم مولى ملوک العرب و العجم، غوث امهدی و غیاث الدین من خضعت له ملوک الوری طوعاً و اذعاناً السلطان بایسنغر بهادرخان خلدالله تعالی ملکه و سلطانه و اوضح على العالمین بره و احسانه، اقل عبادالله الباری جعفرالبایسنغری فى سنة ثلثین و ثمانمائه [۸۳۰] الهجرية، بدارالسلطنه هرات حماها الله تعالی عن الآفات.» (بیانی ۱۲۰)
- ۶- شاهنامه فردوسی در کتابخانه کاخ گلستان، تهران (ش ۷۱۶)،
که به شاهنامه بایسنغری مشهور شده و دارای ۲۲ مجلس نگارگری است. کتابت نستعلیق، عناوین کوفی تزیینی، ثلث و رقاع بر کاغذ ختایی نخودی رنگ. این نسخه ارزشمند در سال‌های ۸۲۹ تا ۸۳۳ تهیه شده است.
- انجامه: «قد وقع الفراغ من تحریر هذا الكتاب الشریف الشریف و تسطیر ذلك الرق المنيف باشاره الخان بن الخان سلطان سلاطین العهد و الزمان، حارس ممالک الربع المسکون، مالک رقاب ذوی‌الحركة و السکون، الذى لم یلمح بمثله الافلاک مادام السمک و السمک، خلاصه ادوار العناصر و الملوان، مظهر لطایف، ان الله یامر بالعدل و الاحسان غیاث السلطنه و الدنیا و الدین بایسنغر بهادر سلطان خلدالله تعالی ملکه و سلطانه على يد العبد الضعیف المفتقر الى رحمه الله الباری جعفرالبایسنغری اصلح الله احواله فى الخامس من جمادى‌الاولی سنة ثلاث و ثلثین و ثمانمائه [۸۳۳] هلاویه و الحمد لله اولاً و آخراً»
- ۷- دیوان حافظ، کتابت نستعلیق، در موزه آثار ترک و اسلام استانبول.
با انجامه: «تم الديوان بعون الملك المئان على يد العبد الفقير المحتاج الى رحمه الله و غفرانه جعفرالبایسنغری احسن الله احواله فى الدراين ببلده هراه حماها الله تعالی عن البلیات»
- ۸- گلشن راز از شیخ محمود شبستری، کتابت نستعلیق. در کتابخانه آستان قدس رضوی، مشهد (ش ۱۰۵۷۹).
انجامه: «کتابه العبد الاحقر الافقر جعفرالبایسنغری اصلح الله تعالی شأنه»
از جعفر قطعات و رقعهای بسیاری به خط نستعلیق و خطوط ششگانه باقی مانده است که در اینجا به اختصار معرفی می‌شود. (بیانی ۱۲۱)
- چهار صفحه از مرقعی بزرگ در کتابخانه دانشگاه توپینگن، آلمان، که در آن هر هفت قلم (نسخ، ثلث، رقاع، توقیع، محقق، ریحان و شکسته تعلیق) را در کنار نستعلیق با نهایت استادی کتابت کرده است. رقم و تاریخ یکی از قطعه‌ها: «خدم بکتابتها الفقیر احقر عبادالله تعالی و اوجهم الى عفوه و غفرانه جعفرالحافظ التبریزی احسن الله عواقبه فى يوم الاثین رابع عشر ربیع الثانی لسنة عشرين و ثمانمائه [۸۲۰] هجرية نبویه بدار العباد یزد، صانها الله عن الحدثان صاحبه و مالکه حسن بن اسدالله الحسینی اصلح الله شأنه»
- قطعه‌ای در مرقع گلشن در کتابخانه کاخ گلستان کتابت نستعلیق، با رقم: «کتابه العبد المذنب جعفرالکاتب تجاوالله عنه على طریق واضع‌الاصل على ابن حسن السلطانی رحمه الله بدارالسلطنه هراه حمیت عن الآفات.»
- قطعه‌ای به خط رقاع عالی با رقم و تاریخ: «خدم بکتابه المفتخر بعبودیه... جعفرالکاتب التبریزی احسن الله آماله فى اوائل ربیع الاخر سنة اثنی و عشرين و ثمانمائه [۸۲۲ ق]» در مجموعه ابوالعلاء سودآور.

- قطعه‌ای به قلم نستعلیق که صفحه آخر *جنگ اشعار* بوده و دارای دو رقم و تاریخ است: «کتب هذه السفینه الفقیر الراجی الی رحمہ اللہ تعالی و غفرانہ جعفرالبایسنغری احسن اللہ احوالہ فی الدارین فی سنہ سبع و عشرين و ثمانمائه [۸۲۷ ق] بدارالسلطنہ ہرات حماہا اللہ تعالی عن الافات» و «کتب هذه المجموعه و انا الفقیر الراجی الی رحمہ اللہ تعالی و غفرانہ جعفرالبایسنغری احسن اللہ احوالہ و انجح بالخير و السعاده آمالہ فی سنہ سبع و عشرين و ثمانمائه [۸۲۷ ق] بدارالسلطنہ ہرات حماہا اللہ تعالی عن الافات و البلیات» در موزہ ملی ایران.
- عرضه داشت به خط نستعلیق در مرّقع سلطان یعقوب (فاتح) در موزہ توپ‌قاپی سرای استانبول (ش 2153-98A H). هم‌چنین قطعه‌هایی در مرّقات موجود در موزہ توپ‌قاپی استانبول به قلم‌های ثلث، نسخ، رفاع، ریحان، توقیع، شکستہ تعلیق و نستعلیق، که تاریخ کتابت بسیاری از آنها میان ۸۲۰ تا ۸۳۳ ق است. با این رقم:
- کتبہ العبد الفقیر الحقیر المحتاج الی رحمہ اللہ تعالی و غفرانہ جعفرالتبریزی فی سنہ ثلث و ثلثین و ثمانمائه [۸۳۳] من الہجرہ النبویہ.
- مشقہ جعفر فی سنہ تسع و خمسين و ثمانمائه [۸۵۹ ق]
- کتبہ جعفرالبایسنغری
- کتبہ جعفرالتبریزی... فی سنہ ثلاث و ثلثین و ثمانمائه [۸۳۳ ق]
- خدم بکتابتہا ... جعفرالبایسنغری
- مشقہ العبد ... جعفرالبایسنغری
- کتبہ اضعف عباد اللہ تعالی و احوجہم الی عفو اللہ و غفرانہ جعفرالبایسنغری حامداً لله تعالی علی نعمہ و مصلياً علی نبیہ محمد و آلہ الطاہرین.
- فی مدح السلطان الاعظم و الخاقان الاعدل الاکرم معز الحق و السلطنہ و الدنيا و الدين غياث الاسلام و المسلمین بایسنغر بہادرخان خلد اللہ ملکہ و سلطانہ خدم بکتابتہا الفقیر الی اللہ الغنی جعفرالبایسنغری عفا اللہ عنہ.
- کتبہ اضعف عباد اللہ تعالی جعفرالتبریزی احسن اللہ احوالہ فی الدارین فی سنہ ثلاث و ثلثین و ثمانمائه [۸۳۳].
- اللهم متّع و خلد دولہ السلطان ابن السلطان ابن السلطان جلال السلطنہ و الدنيا و الدين علاء الاسلام و المسلمین خلد اللہ تعالی شأنہ اللهم اید دولہ السلطان الاعظم علاء الدولہ خلد ملکہ، کتبہ جعفرالبایسنغری.
- برسم خزانه کتب ... بایسنغر بہادرخان... خدم بکتابتہا العبد الغریب الغریق فی بحار الفراق و الحریق بنار الاشتیاق جعفرالتبریزی ختم اللہ، آمالہ بالخیر و الحسنی فی سنہ ثلاث و ثلثین و ثمانمائه [۸۳۳] الہجریہ النبویہ.
- کتبہ اضعف عباد اللہ تعالی و احوجہم الی عفو اللہ و غفرانہ جعفرالبایسنغری احسن اللہ عواقبہ بالحسنی.
- کتبہ العبد المحتاج الی رحمہ اللہ و غفرانہ جعفر عفا اللہ عنہ.
- کتبہ العبد جعفر فی سنہ ثلثین و ثمانمائه [۸۳۰].
- کتبہ العبد المذنب المحتاج الی رحمہ اللہ و غفرانہ جعفرالتبریزی تجاوز اللہ عن سیاتہ بالنبی محمد و آلہ
- کتبہ جعفرالتبریزی البایسنغری
- کتبہ العبد جعفر عفا اللہ عنہ
- مشقہ العبد الفقیر الحقیر جعفر تجاوز اللہ عن سیاتہ بمحمد و آلہ.^۴

^۴ - در پایان غزلی از حافظ به قلم نستعلیق و آغاز: «لمولانا محمد الحافظ الشیرازی... روی تو کس ندیدہ ہزارت رقیب است...» به نقل از: بیانی ۱۰۵۵.

محمدحسین شیرازی

محمدحسین را آن‌گونه که باید نمی‌شناسیم؛ با این حال وی اطلاعات بسیاری را در انجامة آثارش آورده است که ما را در شناسایی زندگی هنری‌اش یاری میکند. وی در اواخر نیمه اول سده سیزدهم در شیراز چشم به جهان گشود. پدرش حاج محمدعلی تاجر شیرازی و مادرش دختر حاج میرزا محمد تاجر شیرازی بوده است. (بیانی ۶۸۹)^۵ بنا به نوشته خویش^۶ در ایام جوانی پس از این که خطش سر و سامانی یافته به تهران آمده است و توسط یکی از خاصان دربار به نزد ناصرالدین شاه شرفیاب شده و اوراقی از مثنوی مولوی را که در حال کتابت بوده به شاه عرضه داشته است. شاه نیز از هنر وی تمجید و او را به تکمیل مثنوی مأمور میکند. این اتفاق در سال ۱۲۷۹ رخ میدهد و بنابر انجامة دیوان حافظ^۷ که در ۱۲۷۹ کتابت کرده است، از همین سال ملقب به «کاتب‌السلطان» می‌گردد. بنابر رقمه‌ایش وی در سال ۱۲۷۴ ق. «کاتب‌الصداره»^۸ و در ۱۲۷۵ ق. ملقب به «کاتب‌السلطان»^۹ شده است و در حدود چهل سالگی به بالاترین افتخارات دوره خویش دست یافته است.

چنانچه وی نخستین اثر تاریخ‌داری^{۱۰} (سال ۱۲۶۰ ق.) را در حدود بیست سالگی نوشته باشد، در ۱۲۷۹ در حدود چهل سالگی و دوره پختگی خویش بوده و ناصرالدین شاه به وی دستور کتابت دیوان شاعران ترکستان (سبک خراسانی) را داده است. محمدحسین در انجامة دیوان منوچهری دامغانی^{۱۱} اظهار داشته که این وظیفه را به سال ۱۲۸۴ ق. در بهترین شکل ممکن به پایان برده است.

محمدحسین در شمار پُرکارترین کاتبان نستعلیق قرارداد و خوشبختانه بسیاری از آثارش^{۱۲} امروزه شناخته و معرفی شده است. با توجه به تاریخ آثار وی پیداست که وی بیش از پنجاه سال به کتابت اشتغال داشته است و پُرکارترین سال‌های آفرینش آثارش ۱۲۷۲ تا ۱۲۸۴ ق. است و در اواخر دوره ناصرالدین شاه که به میان سالی رسیده، قدری کم‌کارتر شده است و در نخستین سال‌های سلطنت مظفرالدین شاه کاتب مقرر بوده است. بنابر تاریخ آخرین اثر محمدحسین در ۱۳۱۸ درمی‌یابیم که دست‌کم تا این سال در تهران می‌زیسته است و شوربختانه از تاریخ دقیق درگذشت و مزار وی اطلاعی در دست نیست. در نتیجه محمدحسین در میان سالهای ۱۲۶۰ تا ۱۳۱۸ نزدیک به شصت سال به کتابت حرفه‌ی نستعلیق اشتغال داشته و حدود هشتاد سال زیسته است و این ایات که در انجامة یکی از آخرین آثارش نوشته، حسب حال کهنسالی خویش است:

تا بُوَدم زنده در آفاق نام تا بُوَدم شفقت شه دستگیر

مشق قلم همچو کمان کرد خم عاقبتم قامت مانند تیر

شهرت مُلک من و شمشیر شاه هر دو شد از لطف حق آفاق‌گیر^{۱۳}

محمدحسین انجامة‌های برخی از آثارش را کوتاه و کاملاً بر مبنای سنت‌ای کتابت بسان دیگر کاتبان نگاشته است؛ این دسته از آثارش شامل مرقعاتی چون مناجات‌امه خواجه عبدالله است. وی در بیشتر کتابت‌ای پُرکارش، بر خلاف سنت معمول کاتبان، به انجامة‌های مفصل دست زده است و در آنها اطلاعات و نکات سودمندی را بیان کرده است.

۵. - هم‌چنین در قطعه‌ای به سال ۱۲۷۸ ق. در کتابخانه ملی ملک.

۶. - در انجامة مثنوی مولانا، نسخه کتابخانه کاخ گلستان، ش ۶۸۱.

۷. - مجموعه دکتر اصغر مهدوی.

۸. - دستور‌الوزاره و سیر الملوک، کتابخانه ملی ایران، ش ۱۸۶۹۲.

۹. - مناجات خواجه عبدالله انصاری، کتابخانه دکتر اصغر مهدوی.

۱۰. - در کتابخانه کاخ گلستان، تهران (ش ۵۷۹) و در کتابخانه آستان قدس رضوی، مشهد (ش ۱۸۹۵۹).

۱۱. - کتابخانه کاخ گلستان، تهران، ش ۴۲۹.

۱۲. - نک: محمدحسین شیرازی، ۱۳۹۴.

۱۳. - کتابخانه مجلس شورای اسلامی، تهران (ش ۲۲۶۸).

محمدحسین شیرازی از معدود خوشنویسانی است که در انجامه نسخه‌ها، نکات و توضیحات بسیاری درباره خود ارائه کرده است و به یقین می‌دانسته که بهترین و ماندگارترین محل برای بیان افکار و احساساتش چنین صفحه‌ای از روزگار است. از نثرهایی که در انجامه نسخه‌های گوناگون که گاه چند صفحه را در برمی‌گیرد، به راحتی می‌توان دریافت که قلمی جذّاب و پخته دارد و افزون بر ادب فارسی، در ادب عرب نیز تبخّر و تسلط لازم برای یک هنرمند را دارد. از جمله نکاتی که از آثارش برمی‌آید این است که خود را مدیون دربار قاجار می‌داند و از این که شاه در «بضاعت مزاجه او بعین عنایت نظر فرموده و متحلی بزیور قبول آن درگاه شده» (محمدحسین شیرازی ۳۲) بسیار خرسند است و به این که «در میان ارباب این صنعت بمزید اعتبار استظهار جوید» (همان ۲۸) فخر و مباهات بسیار می‌کند. از آثاری که پیش از ۱۲۷۹ کتابت کرده مستفاد می‌شود که همچون بیشتر خوشنویسان، علاقه وافری به ورود در حلقه کاتبان سلطان داشته و امیدوار بوده است که دیوان پادشاه را کتابت کرده تا «شاید از برکت انفاس همایون چون در محضرش تحفه بری خود را از محنت و رنج بری بداری» (همان ۲۰) و پس از نایل شدن به این افتخار، تا پایان عمر این رابطه را هر چه بیشتر و مستحکم‌تر حفظ کرده است و در اواخر عمر افزون بر «کاتب السلطان»، از لقب «مستوفی دیوان اعلی»^{۱۴} نیز در رقم‌های خویش بهره برده است.

آثار برجای مانده

محمدحسین شیرازی در شمار کاتبان پُرکاری قرارداد که توفیق الهی سبب ماندگاری بسیاری از آثارش گشته است. از آنجا که بیشتر آثار محمدحسین در کتابخانه‌ها، موزه‌ها و مجموعه‌داران معتبر جای دارد، خوشبختانه بسیار سالم و به دور از آفات باقی مانده‌اند. با توجه به تاریخ آثار وی پیداست که وی بیش از پنجاه سال به کتابت اشتغال داشته است و عیار آثارش فراز و فرود چندانی نداشته است.

در اینجا آثاری را که شناسایی کرده و دیده‌ام، به ترتیب تاریخی معرفی می‌کنم و بخش‌هایی از متن انجامه‌های مفصل او را نیز ارائه کرده‌ام. یادآوری می‌کنم که تمام این انجامه‌ها از روی اصل نسخه‌ها یا تصاویرشان، توسط نویسنده مقاله خوانده شده است.

۱- خلد برین از محمد یوسف واله قزوینی. کتابخانه کاخ گلستان، تهران (ش ۵۷۹). کتابت نستعلیق به دستور حاج میرزا آقاسی، انجامه: «حسب الامر قدر قدرگردون ... الحاج میرزا آقاسی ادام الله ... این کتاب مستطاب باختتام پیوسته علی ید الاقل العباد محمدحسین شیرازی فی عشر آخر صفر المظفر فی سنه ۱۲۶۰»

۲- مخزن الاسرار نظامی، کتابت نستعلیق. کتابخانه دانشگاه استانبول (ش ۴۶۶). انجامه: «بجهت پیشکش ... اعتمادالدوله العلیه العالیه و اعتضادالسلطنه ... میرزا آقاخان نوری صدر اعظم ... سمت تحریر یافت ... کتبه العبد محمدحسین الشیرازی غفرالله له ۱۲۷۱»

۳- دیوان ناصرالدین شاه قاجار، کتابت نستعلیق. کتابخانه مجلس شورای اسلامی، تهران (ش ۵۰۹۸).

انجامه: «هو العزیز از آنجا که مضمون این اشعار آبدار از مکنونات صدف خاطر حضرت شهریار تاجدار جهان‌مدار در قالب عباراتی ... بخاطر فاتر این قاصر محمدحسین شیرازی که مدتی عمر خود را مصروف صنعت خط نموده تا از میان این فرق، گوی مسابقت روده چنین رسید که حیف باشد با این همه رنج، تحصیل گنج سعادت نمایی این معانی بکر که بیرویت و فکر از طبع همیون صادر آمده بهتر آنکه بحجله خط نیک نیز آرایش یابد شاید از برکت انفاس همایون چون در محضرش تحفه بری خود را از محنت و رنج بری بداری از حُسن تربیتش محظّ مرحمت شایان و مهبط عواطف نمایانت فرماید و الحمد لله علی اتمامه و الشکر علی انعامه حرّه فی شهر جمادی الاول ۱۲۷۲»

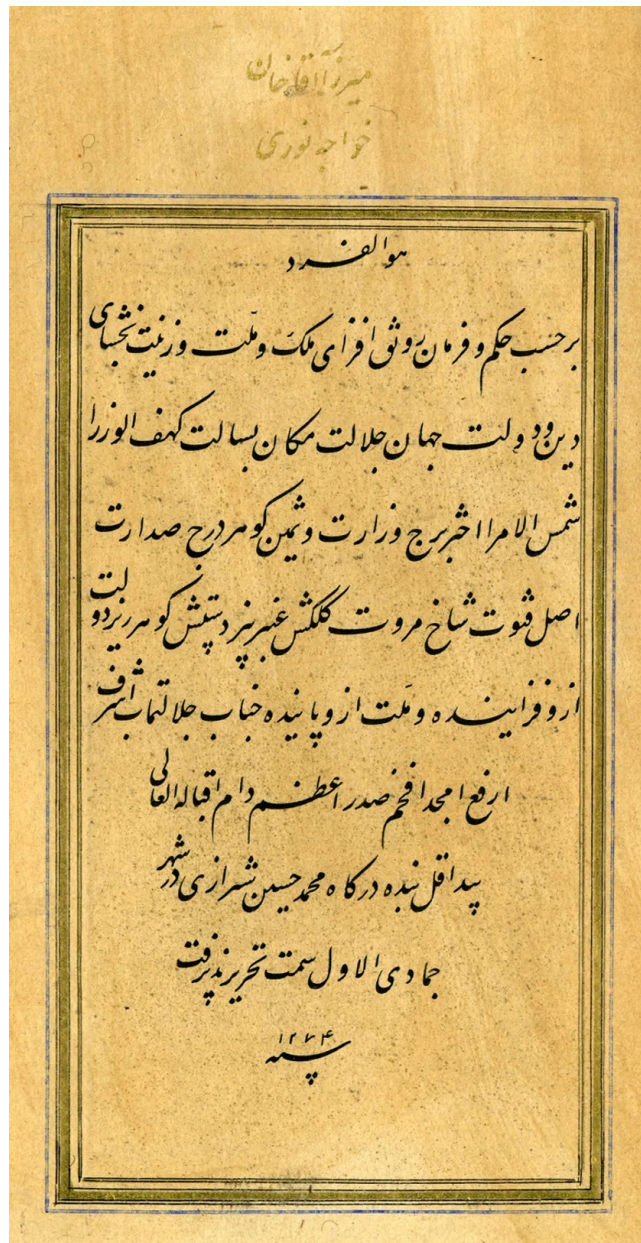
۴- المختصر فی معرفه التقاویم، کتابت نستعلیق. مدرسه منصوریه^{۱۵}، شیراز.

انجامه: «محمدحسین شیرازی ابن حاج محمد در ۶ ذیحجه ۱۲۷۲» در

۵- مناجات خواجه عبدالله انصاری، کتابت نستعلیق. موزه رضا عباسی، تهران. انجامه: «کتبه العبد المذنب محمدحسین الشیرازی غفر له ۱۲۷۳»

۱۴ - انجامه نسخه احوال سلطان محمود غزنوی، تألیف عباسقلی سپهر، کتابخانه مجلس شورای اسلامی، تهران، ش ۲۲۶۸

۱۵ - هنوز نسخه را ندیده‌ام. به نقل از فهرستواره دستنوشته‌ای ایران، ج ۹، ص ۲۲۸.



تصویر ۳: انجامه رساله، به خط نستعلیق محمدحسین شیرازی در تهران (۱۲۷۴ هجری)، محفوظ در کتابخانه ملی ملک (ش ۵۲۴). عکاسی از مؤلف.

۶- صناعات از میرفندرسکی^{۱۶}، کتابت نستعلیق، دانشکده هیات دانشگاه فردوسی (ش ۲/۴۵۲)، مشهد. : با انجامه: «محمدحسین شیرازی در ۲۵ ذیقعدة ۱۲۷۴ ق.»

۷- مرقع، شامل اشعاری در مدح پادشاه. کتابخانه کاخ گلستان، تهران (ش ۱۴۸۹).

با انجامه: «الفقیر الحقیق المذنب بنده درگاه خلیق پناه محمدحسین شیرازی غفر له ۱۲۷۴»

۸- مناجات خواجه عبدالله انصاری، کتابت نستعلیق. کتابخانه کاخ گلستان، تهران (ش ۱۴۹۳). با انجامه: «العبد المذنب بنده درگاه خلیق پناه محمدحسین شیرازی ۱۲۷۴»

۹- اخلاق ناصری، به خط نستعلیق، دانشکده هیات دانشگاه فردوسی (ش ۱/۴۵۲)، مشهد.

با انجامه: «محمدحسین شیرازی در ۲۵ ذیقعدة ۱۲۷۴ ق.»

۱۰- رساله، در کتابخانه ملی ملک، تهران (ش ۵۲۴) که در حاشیه صفحه انجامه، نام «میرزا آقاخان نوری»^{۱۷} نوشته شده است. با انجامه: «هو الفرد بحسب حکم و فرمان رونق‌افزای ملک و ملت ... جناب جلالت‌مآب اشرف ارفع امجد افخم صدراعظم دام اقباله العالی، بید اقل بنده درگاه محمدحسین شیرازی در شهر جمادی‌الاول سمت تحریر پذیرفت سنه ۱۲۷۴»

۱۱- مناجات خواجه عبدالله انصاری، کتابت نستعلیق. در کتابخانه آقای دکتر اصغر مهدوی. با انجامه: «بجهت پیشکش جناب جلالتمآب ... مستوفی الممالک دام اجلاله العالی، فقیر کاتب الحضرة السلطانی محمدحسین شیرازی تحریر نمود ۱۲۷۵»

۱۲- دستورالوزاره و سیرالملوک^{۱۸} از خواجه نظام الملک توسی. در کتابخانه ملی ایران (۱۸۶۹۲). کتابت ممتاز نستعلیق. انجامه دستورالوزاره: «قد ختم الكتاب بعون الملك الوهاب از آنجا که خواجه ایران و ... جناب جلالت‌مآب ارفع امجد اشرف اکرم اعتمادالدوله العلیه صدراعظم میرزا آقاخان لازال مؤید الاحیاء الدین و نصر المجاهدین ... غلام فدویرا که برآورده حضرتم و پرورده نعمت و بدولت قربت سرفرازم و بشرف وفادت از دیگران ممتاز، احضار نموده بنگارش این کتاب مستطاب مأمور فرمودند و این بنده احراز الحقوق النعمه و احتراز العقوق النقمه بعد از قلیل مدتی از عهده این کار تفصی جست. امید که مقبول طبع مهر مآثر شده بر قلم نفایه و رقم پیمایه فقیر پرده عفو و اغماض فرو پوشند و انا العبد المذنب کاتب‌الصدارة محمدحسین شیرازی غفرالله له فی شهر شوال سنه ۱۲۷۴».

انجامه سیرالملوک: «تم کتاب سیرالملوک بعون الملك المعبود ... جناب جلالتمآب امجد ارفع افخم اعتمادالدوله صدراعظم میرزا آقاخان دام بقاؤه و زید فی العز ارتقاؤه ... بنده فدویرا که ریب نعمت و صنیع حضرتم بنگارش این کتاب مأمور فرمود. بنده فدوی احراز الحقوق النعمه و احتراز العقوق النقمه حسب الاستطاعه و علی قدر الطافه در اندک زمان از عهده اینکار تفصی جست. امید که بمقتضای کرامت ذاتی و سماحت جلی بر قلم پیمایه و رقم نفایه این فقیر خرده نگیرند و عذر قلت بضاعت و عدم استطاعت بپذیرند و انا العبد المذنب کاتب‌الصدارة محمدحسین شیرازی عفی عنه تحریراً فی شهر ذی الحجه الحرام ۱۲۷۴».

۱۳- نی‌نامه جامی. در کتابخانه ملی ملک، تهران (ش ۵۲۴). گویا این اثر مشق نقلی از نی‌نامه‌های به خط میرعلی الکاتب است (در کتابخانه مرکزی دانشگاه تهران)^{۱۹} که در سال ۹۴۰ ق. کتابت شده است. با انجامه: «بجهت پیشکش بزم حضور خواجه ایران و قدوه جهان فخر اسلاف و شرف اخلاف مطلع اقبال و مطمح آمال جامع بخت و هنر صاحب اصل و گوهر رضی‌لدوله و صفی‌المله جناب جلالتمآب امجد اکرم امین‌الدوله العلیه [فرخ‌خان^{۲۰}] سمت تحریر پذیرفت ... و انا العبد المذنب محمدحسین شیرازی سنه ۱۲۷۵».

۱۶ - نسخه را هنوز ندیده‌ام.

۱۷ - نسخه‌ای از مخزن‌الاسرار نظامی نیز در کتابخانه دانشگاه استانبول (به شماره ۴۶۶) نگهداری می‌شود که به میرزا آقاخان نوری صدر اعظم پیشکش شده است؛ همچنین نسخه شماره ۱۸۶۹۲ کتابخانه ملی ایران.

۱۸ - کتابت خفی ممتاز، ۴۰۲ صفحه در ابعاد ۲۴۳ در ۱۵۰ سانتیمتر.

۱۹ - این اثر با مقدمه دکتر مظفر بختیار در سال ۱۳۸۰ توسط مرکز نشر دانشگاهی منتشر شده است.

۲۰ - الحاقی است.

۱۴- شش دفتر مثنوی مولانا، کتابت نستعلیق. در کتابخانه کاخ گلستان، تهران (ش ۶۸۱). با انجامة: «یکچند در محروسه شیراز که شیرازه آبادش بدست حوادث مگسلاذ بنده خاکسار بر حسب شوق فطری عنان همت بتحصیل خط نستعلیق معطوف داشت و اوقات شبانه روزی را بتکمیل این فن شریف مصروف تا قلم از بنان سوده گشت و بنام از قلم فرسوده پس از یکچند که مداد و ليقه‌ام رام دست و سلیقه شد و ناظران بر نقش قلم تحسین کردند و مطالعان بر حُسن رقم آفرین گفتند با خود گفتم اگرچه در نظر قاصر این صور از جمالی و این نقوش خالی از کمالی نیست ولی تحدید این کم و کیف را حکیمی خبیر باید و تعیین این نقد و زیف را ناقدی بصیر پس صفحه چند از کتاب مثنوی مولوی نگاشته دل بر کربت غربت نهادم و راه دارالخلافة باهره پیش گرفتم و همت بر آن گماشته که این قطره را بدریا پیوندم و این ذره را بخورشید رسانم تا در ضمن معاشرت اصناف ناس یکی از خاصان درگاه آسمان جاه متعهد شد که اوراق مسطور را بملاحظه علیه رساند و باین وسیله اگر مقتضی شد این ذره را در مقابله آفتاب عالمتاب بدارد تا روزی پیاپمردی آن مقرب درگاه کیوان‌جاه این خاکسار را کلاه افتخار باآسمان رسیده شرف خاکبوس حضور آفتاب ظهور دست داد و اعلیحضرت آسمان بسطت خلاصه دودمان سلطنت کبری و نقاوه خلافت عظمی وارث تخت جم حامی ملک عجم افضل من لبس التاج و عدل من جلس علی السریر السلطان ابن السلطان ابن الخاقان ابن الخاقان ابن الخاقان شاهنشاه عالم پناه ولی النعم کل ممالک محروسه ایران ناصرالدین شاه قاجار لازال مؤید الرفع قواعد الانصاف و هدم اساس الاعتساف، این خاکسار جان نثار را بعد از تحسین و سرافرازی ملوکانه بصنوف عطیات به بیان کرامت ترجمان مخاطب فرموده به تتمیم این کتابم مأمور فرمودند و این بنده برحسب حکم محکم شاهانه و امر نافذ خسروانه وجود نابود خود را بملازمت نگارش موقوف و اوقات شبانه روزی را بمواظبت کتابت مصروف داشت ... و انا العبد کاتب الحضرة السلطانی محمدحسین الشیرازی غفرالله ذنوبه و سترالله عیوبه تحریراً فی شهر رمضان المبارک سنه ۱۲۷۹» .

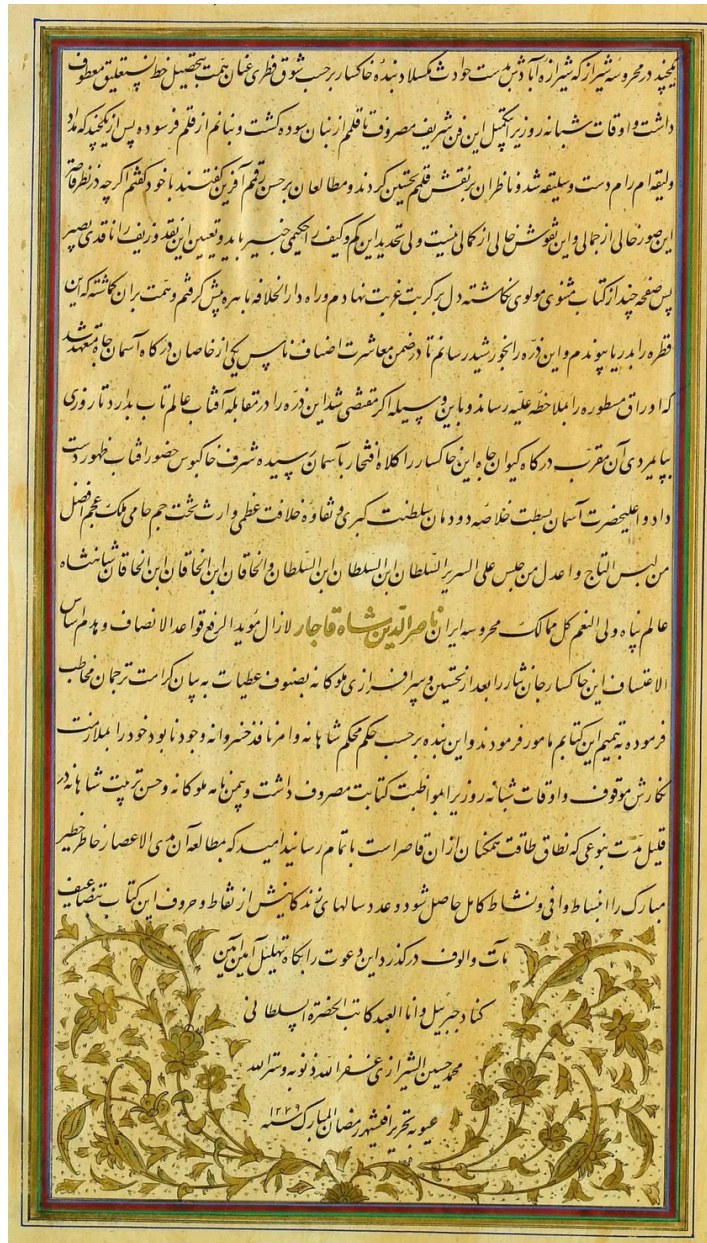
۱۵- دیوان حافظ در کتابخانه دکتر اصغر مهدوی، کتابت نستعلیق. با انجامة: «بر حسب فرموده سرکار جلالت دستگاه ... میرزا محمدشفیع مستوفی شیرازی^{۲۱} دام اجلاله و اقباله نوشته شد و انا العبد کاتب الحضرة السلطانی محمدحسین الشیرازی غفرالله ذنوبه و ستر عیوبه سنه ۱۲۷۹» .

۱۶- گلستان سعدی، کتابت عالی نستعلیق. کتابخانه کاخ گلستان، تهران (ش ۱۴۴۶). با انجامة: «... و عوام آمده و قلم شوقش از ادای اینخدمت زمانی خستگی و کلال نه‌پذیرد و دست و لوعش از استدامه اینطاعت آنی قرار و آسایش نگیرد تا در این ایام که آخر فصل ربیع و گلستانست کتاب گلستانی باتمام رسانید ... و انا العبد کاتب الحضرة السلطانی محمدحسین شیرازی که بر حسب امر اقدس همایون بتعلیم خط شاهنشاهزاده اعظم اجل افخم نایب السلطنه العلیه روحی فداه سرافرازم شهر ذیحجه ۱۲۸۰» .

۱۷- تاریخ نجیر ناصری، در کتابخانه کاخ گلستان، تهران (ش ۸۴۲). کتابت جلی ممتاز، با انجامة: «و انا العبد کاتب الحضرة السلطانی محمدحسین شیرازی فی شهر ذیقعدۀ سنه ۱۲۸۲» .

۱۸- دیوان حافظ، کتابت عالی نستعلیق در کتابخانه دکتر اصغر مهدوی. با انجامة: «چون این بنده عمر خود را همواره مصروف خط نستعلیق داشته و بعون الله و تأییده پایه این فن را بجایی رفیع گذاشته که در نظر همه ارباب این صنعت، خط این بی‌بضاعت زیور کمالی تمام یافته و تمام آنکه شود بحقیقت که پسندیده آید در حضرت ... مستوفی‌الممالک ... و این بنده درگاه را بین الامثال مفتخر نمایند. حرّه و انا العبد الجانی کاتب الحضرة السلطانی محمدحسین شیرازی غفرالله له فی شهر ذیحجه الحرام سنه ۱۲۸۳» .

۲۱ - شاید این میرزا محمدشفیع مستوفی شیرازی، همان خاصه دربار باشد که وی را به ناصرالدین شاه معرفی کرده است چراکه این دیوان حافظ با مثنوی مولانا در یک سال کتابت شده‌اند و محمدحسین این دیوان را برای سپاسگزاری به نام محمدشفیع کرده باشد. بیانی، ص ۶۹۲.



تصویر ۴: انجامه مثنوی مولانا، به خط محمدحسین شیرازی (۱۲۷۹ هجری)، محفوظ در کتابخانه کاخ گلستان (ش ۶۸۱). عکاسی از مؤلف.

۱۹- دیوان منوچهری دامغانی و عنصری بلخی در کتابخانه کاخ گلستان، تهران (ش ۴۲۹). کتابت عالی نستعلیق. با انجامه: «هوالعزیز چون پادشاه جمجاه ملک رقاب امم وارث دیهیم جم غیث‌الندی غوث‌الوری فلك الهمم لیث الوغا بدرالدجی ملک الامم رتبت افزای تخت کیهان خدایی شکوه اندوز قاعده فرمانروایی باسط بساط عدل و انصاف ماحی رسوم جور و اعتساف مشید اساس ملک و دین ظل‌الله فی الارضین شاهنشاه گردون بارگاه نامدار السلطان بن السلطان بن السلطان و الخاقان بن الخاقان ناصرالدین شاه قاجار لازال منصوراً بنصرالله و مؤید بتأییده همواره در بضاعت این بنده درگاه بنظر مرحمت و تشویق دیده و بعنایت رجوع خدمت سرافراز فرموده‌اند؛ لهذا خط این بی بضاعت زیوری تمام یافته و بکسوتی شاهدانه در نظر خاص و عام جلوه‌گر آمده سزد که باین موهبت سر افتخار باوج ماه رساند و در میان ارباب این صنعت بمزید اعتبار استظهار جوید چنانکه امر همایون در حق این بنده باستکتاب دواوین شعرای ترکستان شرف نفاذ یافته بود و بنده درگاه آسمان جاه این خدمت را بانجام رسانید و لله المنه و التأيید و انا العبد کاتب الحضرت السلطانی محمدحسین شیرازی فی شهر ذی حجه الحرام سنه ۱۲۸۴.

۲۰- ترجمه فارسی قرآن کریم، در کتابخانه کاخ گلستان، تهران (ش ۹۰). خط نستعلیق کتابت جلی ممتاز. با انجامه: «چون پادشاه جمجاه ... ناصرالدین شاه قاجار ... همواره در بضاعت این بنده درگاه بنظر مرحمت و تشویق دیده و بعنایت رجوع خدمت سرافراز فرموده‌اند لهذا خط این بی‌بضاعت زیوری تمام یافته و بکسوتی شاهانه جلوه‌گر آمده سزد آنکه باین موهبت سر افتخار باوج ماه رساند و در میان ارباب این صنعت بمزید اعتبار استظهار جوید چنان که امر همایون در حق این بنده باستکتاب ترجمه کلام‌الله مجید شرف نفاذ یافته بود و بنده درگاه آسمان جاه، این خدمت را بانجام رسانید ... و انا العبد کاتب الحضرت السلطانی محمدحسین شیرازی غفر ذنوبه و ستر عیوبه سنه ۱۲۹۰» .

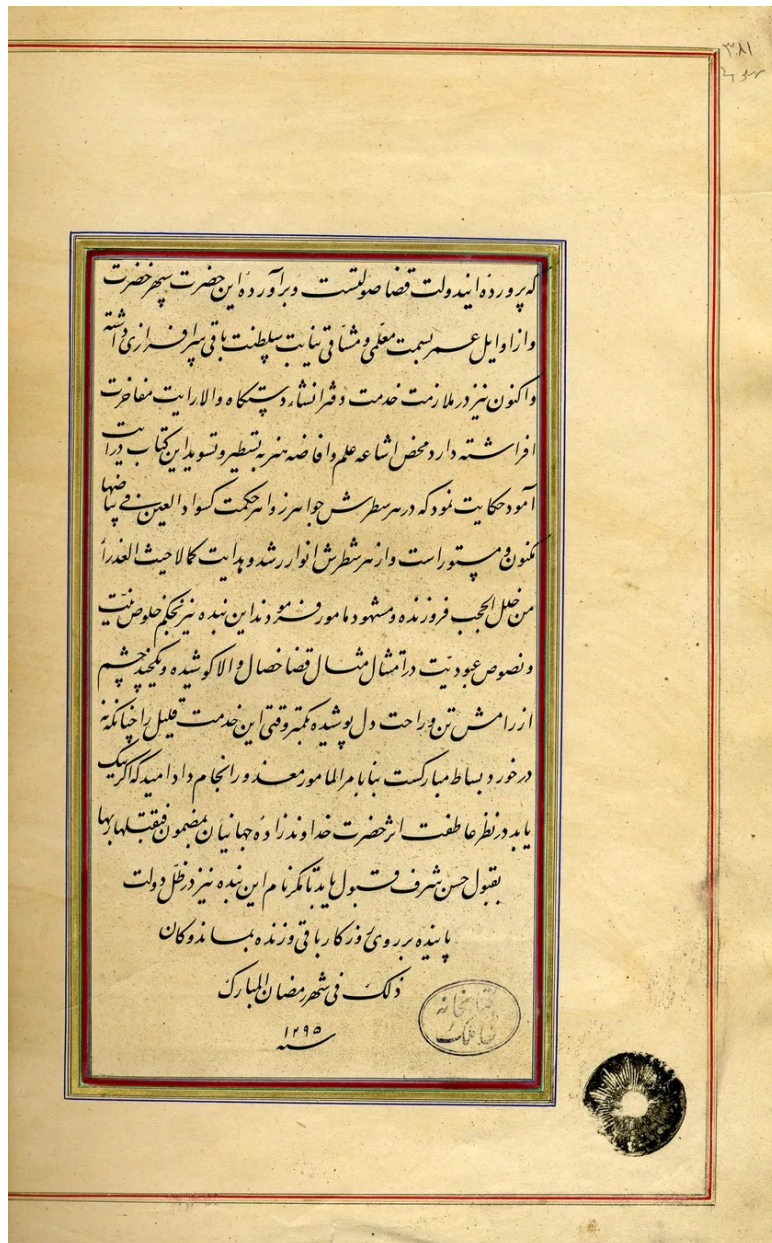
۲۱- کلیله و دمنه بهرامشاهی در کتابخانه ملی ملک، تهران (ش ۵۹۶۲). کتابت ممتاز خط نستعلیق. با انجامه: «لاجرم بنده فدوی و خانه‌زاد معنوی محمدحسین شیرازی ملقب بکاتب السلطانرا که پرورده ایندولت قضا صولتست و برآورده این حضرت سپهر حضرت و از اوایل عمر بسمت معلمی و مشاقتی نیابت سلطنت باقی سرافرازی داشته و اکنون نیز در ملازمت خدمت دفتر انشاء دستگاه والا درایت مفاخرت افراشته دارد ... امید که نیک یابد در نظر عاطفت اثر حضرت خداوندزاده جهانیان بمضمون فتقبلها ربها بقبول حسن شرف قبول یابد تا مگر نام این بنده نیز در ظل دولت پاینده بر روی روزگار باقی و زنده بماند و کان ذلک فی شهر رمضان المبارک سنه ۱۲۹۵».

۲۲- سفرنامه سوم ناصرالدین شاه به قم، در کتابخانه آستان قدس، مشهد (ش ۱۰۴۲۹). کتابت خط نستعلیق. با انجامه: «بر حسب امر قدر قدر حضرت مستطاب شاهنشاهزاده اعظم باذل دریادل نایب السلطنه امیرکبیر و وزیر جنگ روحنا فداه به بنان خانه‌زاد دولت جاویدنشان کاتب الحضرة السلطان محمدحسین شیرازی غفر له سمت تحریر پذیرفت فی شهر رجب المرجب سنه ۱۳۰۰».

۲۳- مفتاح الفتوح، در کتابخانه ملی ملک، تهران (ش ۵۵۷۲). کتابت خط نستعلیق. با انجامه: «چون در این سال فرخنده فال خجسته مآل که سال طلوع کوكب سلطنت و اجلال و درخشیدن نیر فتح و اقبال و سنه مبارکه میلاد سعادت بنیاد یگانه یرج سلطنت و شهریاری و ... امیرزاده اسعد اکرم فتحعلی‌خان طول‌الله عمره و ادام‌الله ایام شوکته میباشد ... این چاکر آستان عدالت بنیان کاتب الحضرة السلطان محمدحسین شیرازی آن قصاید و اشعار را مدون ساخت و مسمی بمفتاح الفتوح نمود».

۲۴- الهی نامه، در کتابخانه کاخ گلستان، تهران (ش ۱۴۸۳). کتابت خط نستعلیق. با انجامه: «العبد المذنب الراجی کاتب الحضرت السلطان محمدحسین شیرازی غفر ذنوبه و ستر عیوبه فی دارالخلافة طهران سمت تحریر پذیرفت سنه ۱۳۰۴».

۲۵- مناجات خواجه عبدالله انصاری، در کتابخانه آستان قدس، مشهد (ش ۱۰۵۶۰). کتابت خط نستعلیق. با انجامه: «... الفقیر الحقیر المذنب کاتب الحضرت السلطان محمدحسین شیرازی غفر ذنوبه و ستر عیوبه فی دارالخلافة طهران سمت تحریر پذیرفت سنه ۱۳۰۵».



تصویر ۵: انجامه کلیله و دمنه، به خط نستعلیق محمدحسین شیرازی (۱۲۹۵ هجری)، محفوظ در کتابخانه ملی ملک (ش ۵۹۶۲). عکاسی از مؤلف.



تصویر ۶: انجامة مفتاح الفتوح، به خط محمدحسین شیرازی (بدون تاریخ)، محفوظ در کتابخانه ملی ملک (ش ۵۵۷۲). عکاسی از مؤلف.

۲۶- احوال سلطان محمود غزنوی تألیف عباسقلی سپهر، در کتابخانه مجلس شورای اسلامی (ش ۲۲۶۸). کتابت خط نستعلیق. با انجامة: «بنده درگاه آسمان جاه را که خط نستعلیق زیور کمال پذیرفته کسوتی شاهانه و بدیع پوشیده پرورده و برآورده این دولت قضا صولت بر قابلیت و استعداد و حسن سلیقه او حمل نتوان کرد بلکه خداوند جهان ... مظفرالدین شاه قاجار در بضاعت مزجاه او بعین عنایت نظر فرموده و متحلی بزبور قبول آن درگاه شده باستکتاب این کتاب امر و مقرر فرمودند ... بنا بامر المأمور معذور انجام داد مگر باشد که روزی نظری در این کتاب فرمایند و کمترین بنده درگاه کیوان‌جاه را بمراحم ملوکانه سرافراز و محظوظ فرمایند تا بنده جان‌نثار را کلاه افتخار به اوج ماه رسد و مزید و اعتبار بین الامائل و الاشباه شود ... و انا العبد الکاتب الحضرت السلطانی محمدحسین شیرازی مستوفی دیوان اعلی غفر ذنوبه و ستر عیوبه فی سنه ۱۳۱۶ ...».

۲۷- مرقع اشعار منسوب به خیام در کتابخانه ملی ایران به قلم کتابت نستعلیق عالی با انجامة: «العبد کاتب السلطان محمدحسین شیرازی غفر ذنوبه و ستر عیوبه ۱۳۱۷».

هم‌چنین قطعه‌ها و سیاه‌مشق‌های بسیار^{۲۲} در مجموعه‌های دولتی و خصوصی.

روایت خوشنویسان از پادشاه

جعفر تبریزی و محمدحسین شیرازی هر دو از استادان نامدار و طراز اول دوره خود بودند. در نیمه نخست سده نهم هجری، شاهرخ گورکانی هنوز زنده بود و در اصل فرزندش، بایسنغر، نماینده او در هرات بود. با این حال رفتار جعفر با بایسنغر کاملاً همانند یک پادشاه^{۲۳} است و از آنجا که بایسنغر خوشنویس و حامی هنرمندان است، به شایستگی مورد ستایش او قرار گرفته است. آوردن القاب از نخستین سده‌های دوران اسلامی، آیین و قواعدی داشته است. در کتاب‌های دستور منشآت و ترسل، چگونگی خطاب قرار دادن و دعا کردن پادشاه و هریک از ارکان دولت بیان شده و برای نمونه در آیین دبیری آمده است که «در القاب، برترین درجتی آن است که به دین بود، آنگاه به اسلام، آنگاه به ملوک و سلاطین، آنگاه به دولت، آنگاه به ملک ... در خطاب و القاب از برترین درجه ابتدا کردن و بر ترتیب نزول کردن تا به آخر» (میهنی ۱۱) و در برخی از کتاب‌ها همچون دستورالکاتب فی تعیین المراتب، انواع القاب سلاطین دسته‌بندی و بیان شده است. (شمس منشی ۷۱)

جعفر در اشعار و انجامة‌هایش از بایسنغر با این اسامی، القاب و توصیفات یاد می‌کند:

ماه اوج سلطنت. محمد خُلق. خسرو ایران و توران. سلطان. شهنشاه جهان. القاب شهنشه.
السلطان الاعظم، سلطان سلاطین عالم، مالک رقاب الامم، مولی ملوک العرب و العجم ... سلطان
بایسنغر بهادرخان، الخان به الخان سلطان سلاطین العهد و الزمان، حارس ممالک الربع المسکون،
مالک رقاب ذوی‌الحركة و السکون، الذی لم یلمح بمثله الافلاک مادام السمک و السماک، خلاصه
ادوار العناصر و الملوان، مظهر لطایف، ان الله یامر بالعدل و الاحسان غیاث السلطنه و الدنيا و
الدین بایسنغر بهادر سلطان. السلطان الاعظم و الخاقان الاعدل الاکرم معز الحق و السلطنه و الدنيا
و الدین غیاث الاسلام و المسلمین بایسنغر بهادرخان. بایسنغر بهادرخان ...

و بایسنغر را با این عبارات دعا کرده است:

خُدالله تعالی ملکه و سلطانه و اوضح علی العالمین بره و احسانه. خُدالله ملکه و سلطانه.

۲۲ - نک: خیال خط، پیکره، ۱۳۹۷.

۲۳ - در اینجا به توصیفات جعفر از دیگران همچون علاءالدوله نپرداخته‌ایم.

در آیین دبیری آمده: «هرکجا محترمی را یاد کنند، دعا نکردن و تقصیر در آن اهانتی شمارند»^{۲۴} و در *دستورالکاتب* فهرستی از دعاهای عربی که پس از القاب سلاطین باید نوشته شود، یاد شده است^{۲۵}؛ با این حال جالب است که جعفر در *انجامه شاهنامه*، بایسنغر را دعا نکرده و شاید القاب مفصل درباره بایسنغر را کافی دانسته است و یا نخواسته که ادامه انجامه در یکی دو سطر به صفحه بعد منتقل شود و زیبایی انجامه نیز مورد نظرش بوده است.^{۲۶}

با توجه به آثار بازمانده از دو خوشنویس مورد بحث، روشن است که محمدحسین شیرازی در آرامش بیشتر و دوره طولانی‌تری به کتابت پرداخته است و از این رو نسخه‌های بیشتری را استنساخ کرده است. محمدحسین در انجامه‌هایش از پادشاه با اسامی، القاب و توصیفات زیر یاد کرده است:

حضرت شهریار تاجدار جهان مدار. بنده درگاه خلاق پناه. اعلیحضرت آسمان بسطت خلاصه
دودمان سلطنت کبری و نقاوه خلافت عظمی وارث تخت جم حامی ملک عجم افضل من لبس
التاج و اعدل من جلس علی السریر السلطان ابن السلطان و الخاقان ابن الخاقان
ابن الخاقان شاهنشاه عالمپناه ولی التعم کل ممالک محروسه ایران ناصرالدین شاه قاجار. پادشاه
جمجاه مالک رقاب امم وارث دیهیم جم غیث‌الندی غوث‌الوری فلک الهمم لیث الوغا بدرالدجی
ملک الامم رتبت افزای تخت کیهان خدایی شکوه اندوز قاعده فرمانروایی باسط بساط عدل و
انصاف ماحی رسوم جور و اعتساف مشید اساس ملک و دین ظل‌الله فی الارضین شاهنشاه
گردون بارگاه نامدار السلطان بن السلطان و الخاقان بن الخاقان ناصرالدین
شاه قاجار. خداوند جهان ... مظفرالدین شاه قاجار.

و پادشاه را با این عبارات دعا کرده است: «لازال مؤید الرفع قواعد الانصاف و هدم اساس الاعتساف. اللهم انصر جیشه و ابد عیشه و اخذل اعدائه و اطل بقائه. لزال منصوراً بنصرالله و مؤید بتأییده.»

همچنین به داشتن مقام و جایگاه هنری ارزشمند خود افتخار می‌کند:

این قاصر محمدحسین شیرازی که مدتی عمر خود را مصروف صنعت خط نموده تا از میان این
فرق، گوی مسابقت ربوده. بر حسب امر اقدس همایون بتعلیم خط شاهنشاهزاده اعظم اجل افخم
نایب السلطنه العلیه روحی فداه سرافرازم. لهذا خط این بی بضاعت زیوری تمام یافته و بکسوتی
شاهدانه در نظر خاص و عام جلوه‌گر آمده سزد که باین موهبت سر افتخار باوج ماه رساند و در
میان ارباب این صنعت بمزید اعتبار استظهار جوید. پرورده این دولت قضا صولتست و برآورده
این حضرت سپهر حضرت و از اوایل عمر بسمت معلمی و مشاقی نیابت سلطنت باقی سرافرازی
داشته و اکنون نیز در ملازمت خدمت دفتر انشاء دستگاه والا درایت مفاخرت افراشته دارد. بنده
جان نثار را کلاه افتخار به اوج ماه رسد و مزید و اعتبار بین الامائل و الاشباه شود.^{۲۷}

۲۴. - میهنی، ۱۳۸۹: ۱۱.

۲۵. - شمس منشی، ۱۳۹۰: ۷۴.

۲۶. - همچنین در *انجامه کلیات همام تبریزی*، خسرو و شیرین نظامی، دیوان حسن دهلوی، اندرزهایی از اسکندر، دیوان حافظ و گلشن راز از بایسنغر میرزا یاد نکرده و طبیعی است که این آثار را برای هدیه به دیگران نگاشته باشد. با این حال جعفر در *انجامه‌هایش* از دیگر بزرگان نام نبرده است، ولی محمدحسین شیرازی از دیگر حامیان هنری یاد کرده و به ستایش آنها نیز پرداخته است.

۲۷. - محمدحسین نیز برخی از آثارش را برای میرزاآقاخان نوری و دیگر دولتمردان کتابت کرده و در آنها به توصیف پادشاه پرداخته است، همچون *خلد برین، المختصر فی معرفه التقاویم، مناجات خواجه عبدالله انصاری* (چند نسخه)، *صناعات از میرفندرسکی، اخلاق ناصری، رساله دستورالوزاره و سیرالملوک*، *ننامه جامی*، *دیوان حافظ*، *تاریخ نجیر ناصری*، *سفرنامه سوم ناصرالدین شاه به قم*، *مفتاح الفتوح*، *الهی نامه*، *مرفع اشعار منسوب به خیام*.

نتیجه‌گیری

جعفر تبریزی (بایسنغری) و محمدحسین شیرازی (کاتب‌السلطان) دو خوشنویس نامدار از دورهٔ تیموری و قاجار بودند که در زمان خودشان به بالاترین مناصب هنری و شهرت رسیدند و پس از درگذشتشان نیز آثارشان در معتبرترین موزه‌ها و کتابخانه‌های ایران و جهان جای گرفته است. انجامه‌های نخستین دست‌نوشته‌های فارسی تا اواخر دورهٔ قاجار، بنابر سنت به‌زبان عربی نگارش می‌یافت. با این‌حال محمدحسین شیرازی در انجامه‌های مفصل خویش، ناچار شده تا در کنار زبان عربی، حسب حال خود را به‌زبان مادری‌اش بنگارد.

جعفر از حدود چهل سالگی، ملقب به بایسنغری شد و نزدیک به سیزده سال از اوج حیات هنری‌اش را در ارتباط بایسنغری گذراند و درگذشت بایسنغری مانع ادامهٔ حیات هنری و اشتها او در میان‌سالگی شد و دورهٔ حکومت علاءالدوله هرگز قابل مقایسه با دورهٔ بایسنغری نبود. بایسنغری هنرمندان طراز اول را در کتابخانه‌اش گردآورده بود و جعفر را به مقام کتابداری یا همان ریاست پروژه‌های هنری گماشته بود و در نتیجه مجری افکار و سلاطین هنری بایسنغری بود و از سویی مشاور او نیز به‌شمار می‌رفت. جعفر در انجامه‌های خویش و اشعاری که در رثای بایسنغری سروده است، از او با عناوین «ماه اوج سلطنت، شاه عالم، محمد خُلق، خسرو ایران و توران» یاد کرده و به ستایش او پرداخته است. این ستایش‌ها چنان‌که از مرثیهٔ او برمی‌آید، در نهایت احساس و اندوه بوده و نشان می‌دهد که به هیچ حامی هنری دیگری که بتواند جای بایسنغری را بگیرد، امید ندارد. جعفر بیش از شاه‌رخ که پادشاه است، بایسنغری را حامی بی‌بدیل هنر می‌داند و پیش‌بینی کرده بود که امور کتابخانهٔ شاهی هرگز به وضعیت دوران بایسنغری بازخواهد گشت.

محمدحسین شیرازی در حدود چهل سالگی (۱۲۷۹ ق.) به دربار ناصرالدین شاه راه یافت و ملقب به کاتب‌السلطان شد و از خوش‌اقبالانی تا پایان سلطنت ناصرالدین شاه (۱۳۱۳ ق.) در اوج عزت می‌زیست و این اعتبار را تا اواسط پادشاهی مظفرالدین شاه قاجار (۱۳۱۸ ق.) نیز حفظ کرد. محمدحسین در کنار پادشاه، ارتباط خویش را با درباریان صاحب‌نام حفظ کرد و برای آنها نیز آثار بسیاری را کتابت نمود. او با عناوین «حضرت شهریار تاجدار جهان مدار، نامدار السلطان بن السلطان بن السلطان و الخاقان بن الخاقان ناصرالدین شاه قاجار» از پادشاه یاد کرده و از این‌که او قدردان هنرش بوده، سپاسگزار است.

تجلیل این دو خوشنویس از پادشاهان دورهٔ خویش، تأییدکنندهٔ این نکته است که هنر ایران تا دورهٔ انقلاب مشروطه، هنری درباری و وابسته به حمایت پادشاه بود و هنرمند نه فقط به ستایش پادشاه زمانهٔ خویش، که به تمجید و تشکر از حامی و پشتیبان هنری خود می‌پرداخت. دو شخصیت پادشاه و حامی هنری در توصیفاتی که در انجامه‌ها آورده‌اند، به یک فرد واحد تبدیل شده و از این‌رو شایستهٔ هرگونه مدح و ستایش بودند.

شمار آثاری که جعفر استنساخ کرده و از پادشاه یاد کرده، نسبت به محمدحسین کمتر است و طولانی‌ترین انجامهٔ وی در شاهنامهٔ بایسنغری به چهار سطر می‌رسد، در حالی که محمدحسین انجامه‌هایی طولانی و گاه چند صفحه‌ای دارد و می‌کوشد تا گونه‌ای زندگینامهٔ خودنوشت را در آنها مکتوب کرده و در سایهٔ تمجید از حامیان هنری، جزئیات زندگی هنری خویش را نیز در آنها جاودانه سازد.

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