

REVIEW ARTICLE

Iran and Iranian Studies: Essays in Honor of Iraj Afshar. Edited by Kam-biz Eslami. 1st ed. Princeton, N.J.: Zagros Press, 1998. x, 357, 35 Pp. Bibliography. ISBN 0-966-34420-0 (cloth) N.p.

The decision to assemble a Festschrift for Iraj Afshar, the doyen of Iranian Persian language bibliographers, from contributions by a group of scholars based in Western institutions, and its superb realization in this book has proven to be significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, it has elicited essays of a uniformly high standard which significantly advance our knowledge in a wide range of fields. Secondly, by doing so, it pays proper homage to the breadth of Mr. Afshar's interests and the extent to which he has helped Western scholars in their investigatory endeavors (I might note in this context that he was very helpful in setting up the Persian section of the Middle East Department at the Harvard College Library). Thirdly, it reveals the degree to which he has initiated original research in several of these fields; as the editor points out in his preliminary note, "some of the contributions are actually based on, or closely related to, specific projects carried out by Iraj Afshar." (p. [ix]).

Fourthly, and most importantly to a reviewer whose interest in Iran, and concern with Iranian studies, dates back to the early sixties and who has been engaged with them intermittently ever since, this volume can be seen as the capstone of a process which at that early date had barely begun (indeed, could hardly be envisaged): the integration of serious Iranian and Western research across the whole field of Iranian studies.

In 1960 the fields of Iranian studies, in terms of the quality of research, lagged behind other major Middle Eastern areas such as Egypt and Turkey, not to mention South or East Asia, let alone Europe or North America. There were very few people in the field and limited contact between Western and Iranian researchers. A legacy of Western condescension and wildly exaggerated Iranian suspicions of Western (particularly British) interference still affected relations. Contacts did develop and improve in many respects rapidly until the 1979 Revolution, which, however, set back not only relationships but research itself, particularly in Iran.

During the last dozen years or so relations have steadily increased, helped particularly by a series of international conferences at which there have been both Iranian and Western participants, and much collaborative work

is now being undertaken. Large research institutes have been established in Tehran and are producing useful encyclopedias. The volume of scholarly book production has increased enormously. A new generation of scholars, more at ease with the West both psychologically and intellectually, is invigorating several fields. The use and citation of Western language material in publications in Persian is slowly improving.

As for the West, one might point to the establishment of research centers in Tehran such as the British Institute of Persian Studies as well as the founding of journals such as *Iran* (put out by the British Institute since 1963) and *Studia Iranica* (put out by the Association pour l'avancement des études iraniennes) since 1972. There was not much growth, however, in Iranian studies in either France or Great Britain (or in the rest of Europe for that matter) during these forty years, but a veritable explosion in the United States, fueled by a number of factors, including the National Defense Education Act of 1958, returning Peace Corps veterans in the sixties, and the ability of American universities to attract foreign scholars from both Europe and the Middle East. This has been reflected in the growth of the journal *Iranian Studies*, which began in a very small way in 1968 but has continually expanded to become a very substantial and important periodical, the primary outlet in North America for work of general scholarly interest on Iran and the most important source of book reviews in the field.

The distinction between “Western” and “Iranian” scholarship on Iran has been becoming increasingly blurred since the arrival of a large number of émigrés in Western countries since 1979, many of whom were scholars or have turned to scholarship since exile. This has resulted, among other things, in the establishment of journals such as *Iran nameh* and *Iranshenasi*, written mostly in Persian (including contributions by Western scholars) but published in the United States. And now a younger generation of scholars is emerging from among the émigrés’ sons and daughters, further blurring the distinction.

One of the most important single developments in the field since 1960 has been the publication since 1982 of the *Encyclopædia Iranica*, which has now reached its tenth volume. This has put the whole field on a firm scholarly foundation and provided the basic reference tool for further research. Although published in English in the United States, it would not have come into existence without the vision, ambition, drive, and immense hard work of an Iranian, Ehsan Yarshater. Furthermore it has drawn on the scholarly talents of a worldwide pool of contributors; articles by Western and Iranian scholars lie side by side in its pages.

The genre of academic publication usually known as a Festschrift, honoring a scholar towards the end or at the end of his career, with contributions by his peers, colleagues and ex-students (but sometimes taking the form of a memorial volume after his death) is a well-established convention. Many scholars of Iran have been recipients of them. Western scholars have been honored mostly with contributions in Western languages published in the West and Iranian scholars with contributions published in Iran in Persian. (Iraj Afshar himself received a two-volume Festschrift from his Iranian colleagues in Persian: *Arjnāmah-i Īrāj: bih pās-i nīm qarn-i savābiq-i darakhshān-i farhangī va dānishgāhī-i Ustad Īrāj Afshār*, ed. Muḥsin Bāqirzādah, Tih-rān: Tūs, 1998).

Until the book under review was published an important exception was *A Locust's Leg: Studies in Honour of S. H. Taqizadeh* (London: Percy Lund, Humphries, 1962), co-edited by W. B. Henning and E. Yarshater. The articles are all in Western languages, and almost entirely by Europeans (there are four by Iranians). A memorial volume for the late Vladimir Minorsky (*Yād-nāme-ye Irānī-ye Minorsky = Yād-nāmah-i Īrānī-i Mīmūrskī*) was published by the University of Tehran in 1348/1969; slightly less than half the essays in this volume were in Persian and the remainder in Western languages, although as least five of these latter were written by Iranians.

The volume under review reveals the full international scope of Iranian studies. Four are by Iranians resident in North America, four by native Americans, five by Englishmen (two resident in North America), three by Dutchmen (two resident in North America), three by Frenchmen (one resident in England), one by an Italian, one by a German, and one by an Iranian resident in Denmark. Twenty-one of the articles are in English and one (by Gilbert Lazard) in French, although the articles by C.-H. de Fouchécour and Angelo Michele Piemontese have been translated (from French and Italian respectively) by Svat Soucek. In comparing it with the Taqizadeh Festschrift one becomes aware how the field of Iranian has broadened out from the traditional Orientalist concerns with philology, religion and pre-Islamic civilization to a whole range of new topics.

One also becomes aware of the extent to which North America now dominates the field of Iranian studies in the West, at least in terms of the location of its practitioners. In conjunction with that, one might also remark on the dominance of English: of the thirty articles in *A Locust's Leg*, seven are in French and four in German; in the Afshar volume, only one, as we have seen, is not in English. I think it not unreasonable to claim, therefore, that this volume represents a kind of “summing up” of the state of the field towards the end of the second millennium. It is written, in Western languages,

by scholars of all nationalities, resident throughout the Western world, to honor an Iranian scholar the great bulk of whose output has been in Persian, and epitomizes the irrevocable intermingling of Iranian and Western scholars and scholarship in the pursuit of Iranian studies.

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The editor of the volume, Kambiz Eslami of Princeton University, will be well-known to most readers of this journal, as he was for a long time the Persian cataloguer in the Princeton University library. He deserves the highest praise for conceiving the project, carrying it through, and ensuring the technical quality of the finished product (with a few minor quibbles, as detailed below). It has clearly involved an enormous amount of work; for, in addition to the usual concerns of an editor, he has provided several contributors with material research assistance (as acknowledged at the beginning of their essays. See, e.g., pp. 1, 42, 137, 238, 306, 341).

Most of the articles deal with aspects of Iran's past, and a largely post-Mongol past at that. In terms of a broad periodization, seven of the articles are concerned with topics from the Mongol/Timurid Period (1220–1501), six with the Safavid/Afsharid period (1501–1736) and five with the Qajar period (1794–1925). Slightly less than half of the whole (ten) deal with what might be termed traditional historical themes (political history, foreign relations, historiography, documents). These are the contributions of Charles Melville, François de Blois, Priscilla P. Soucek, Angelo Michele Piemontese, Ulrich W. Haarman, Rudi Matthee, Faridun Vahman, Willem Floor, Roger M. Savory, and Janet Afary.

Slightly more than half (twelve) have a primary focus on either the artistic/visual (the editor himself, Abolala Soudavar, Sheila S. Blair, B. W. Robinson, Jan-Just Witkam) or the linguistic/literary (C.-H. de Fouchécour, Jerome W. Clinton, Gilbert Lazard, Geoffrey Roper, John R. Perry, Paul Sprachmann), with one excursus on cooking (M. R. Ghanoonparvar). I will deal with these contributions in roughly ascending order of my expertise, i.e., art-historical, linguistic, literary, and finally historical.

In his own contribution, the editor provides much additional information on the fifteenth-century painters Ustād Manṣūr and his son Shāh Muḥaffar. He proposes to identify the first-named as Manṣūr ibn Muḥammad al-Shirāzī, two of whose documents appear in a collection entitled the *Farā'id-i Ghīyāṣī* (pp. 71–72). The text is supported by illustrations and documents in facsimile, which latter are also very usefully printed in a modern Arabic font.

In a fascinating piece of detective work, Abolala Soudavar shows that a large Chinese Ming Dynasty blue and white dish displayed in the “Romance of the Taj Mahal” exhibition at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1989 and thought to have come from the Ardabil shrine collection, was “actually part of an earlier collection gathered by the great aunt of Shah ‘Abbas I, the princess Mahin Banu, better known as Sultanum (925–69/1519–62) and endowed to the shrine of the Eighth Shi‘ite Iman Riza at Mashhad” (p. 127). The dish was looted by the Uzbeks from Mashhad in 1590, and probably sent to Transoxiana, whence it came into the hands of Shah Jahan. The author then speculates on the attempts to disguise its provenance as “[acceptance] of a previously endowed plate . . . [was] a clear violation of Islamic law” (p. 130).

Sheila Blair reviews the scholarship on the two famous “Ardabil” carpets (one in London, one in Los Angeles), and concludes that they did indeed come from the Ardabil shrine and were intended as prayer rugs. B. W. Robinson discusses a manuscript of Rūmī’s *Masnavī* from the 1860’s, with some illustrations by one Yaḥyá, the youngest of three sons of Abū al-Ḥasan Khān Ghaffārī Ṣanī‘ al-Mulk, and illustrates eight of them. A list of Mīrzā Yaḥyá’s known works by Yaḥyā Zūkā’ (Zoka) of Tehran is appended.

Jan Just Witkam describes the enormous collection of photographs of Iran (and other places) taken by Albert Hotz, a Dutch merchant with numerous offices and affairs there in the later nineteenth century. Interestingly, from a librarian’s point of view, there are in addition “about eighty boxes” of “all sorts of smaller publications and pamphlets” (p. 283). The whole is clearly a very important source for the history of Qajar Iran, and deserves extensive exploitation.

To turn now to the literary and linguistic, Jerome W. Clinton discusses the role of translation (by which he means “the transfer both of literary technique and of content” (p. 289)), in the formation of New Persian literature, and shows that primarily poetry was involved. This drew both on Middle Persian and Arabic, which latter language also included a “large body of translations from Middle Persian, including texts like *Kalīlah wa-Dimnah*” (p. 293). Arabic was more significant for lyric poetry, Middle Persian for narrative. There were no translations of *Jāhiliyyah* poetry. There is also a section on “Contemporary attitudes toward translation.” The path taken by Persian was followed by later Islamic languages such as Turkish and Urdu.

C.-H. de Fouchécour discusses a fifteenth-century manual of behavior, the *Anīs al-nās*, by a certain Shujāʿ, of which a critical edition was published by Iraj Afshar in 1350/1971. The author composed it with the *Qābūs' nāmāh* in front of him and dedicated it to the governor of Shiraz in the early fifteenth century (Ibrāhīm Sulṭān ibn Shahrukh, the subject of Priscilla Soucek's article), but is not a "Mirror For Princes", but rather a "Manual for the Honest Man," of the middle level of society. De Fouchécour shows that the main differences between the *Qābūs' nāmāh* and the *Anīs* were caused by the impact of the great literary figures of the intervening centuries, such as Rūzbihān and Sa'dī. Some of these the author quotes at length; but some are not acknowledged at all. Particularly interesting is the extraordinary impact of Ḥāfiẓ "almost forty years after the poet's death" (p. 51).

Gilbert Lazard gives the text (in his own Roman transliteration) of a folk tale he recorded in the village of Giv south of Birjand, together with a translation into French. Geoffrey Roper provides an account of the printing and publishing of material in Persian in England in the seventeenth century, at both Oxford and Cambridge, for the first time, with four pages of facsimiles. John Perry describes the last years of the Indo-Persian lexicographical tradition (the later nineteenth century), when Persian was no longer a living language in North India, but very few dictionaries were being produced in Iran itself, which was largely cut off from this sub-continental tradition. He ends with the *Farhang-i Nafīsī* of Nāẓim at Atibba', completed in 1924 and published between 1940 and 1956, which drew from Iranian, Indian and European traditions of lexicography and launched Iran onto the path of modern lexicography.

Paul Sprachmann gives an interesting survey of attitudes towards the veil in the Iran of the late Qajars and Riza Shah, and quotes in translation a long segment of Iraj Mirza's *Ārifnāmāh*, showing how an excessively literal concern with the veil could lead to the most astonishing license.

The historical section begins with Charles Melville's contribution, which is an extremely scholarly and useful piece of *Quellengeschichte*. He explores the issue of the sources for Ḥafiz-i Abrū's *Zayl-i Jāmi' al-tavārīkh-i Rashīdī*, "the essential source for the history of the turbulent period between the end of the Ilkhanate and Timur's campaigns in Iran" (p. 1). He identifies the basic sources for the three sections of the work, and shows that one of them, Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazvīnī's *Zafarnāmāh*, "calls for more serious consideration than it has received" (p. 10). He also shows that Ḥafiz-i Abrū relied on many more contemporary sources than has been fully realized, some known, some not.

François de Blois gathers some information about the Iftikhariyan, “a family of local notables who played a significant if fairly short-lived part in the history of Qazvin . . . during the greater part of the 7th/13th century” (p. 13). One of the family was a considerable poet, whose work de Blois characterizes as “an interesting new source for the political history of Ilkhanid Iran” (p. 20).

Priscilla P. Soucek shows that Ibrāhīm Sulṭān ibn Shahrukh ibn Tīmūr (796–838/1394–1435), ruler of Shiraz in the early fourteenth century, best known as a scholar and calligrapher, had a life with a very significant military dimension, which was recorded in contemporary chronicles. Soucek is also able to identify the painting of him in battle in an ms. of the *Shāhnāmāh* in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Add. 176). The battle was the Timurid victory at Salmās in 1429.

Angelo Michele Piemontese enlarges on the history of Iranian-Italian relations in the fifteenth century by identifying the nuncios sent by Pope Sixtus IV (1471–1484). He also publishes a Latin text of a translation (made at Caffa) of a letter from Uzun Hasan to Sixtus’s predecessor, Paulus II, describing his victories and asking the Pope to respect his obligations to attack the Ottomans. An English translation is appended. A second appendix publishes the text and translation of a parchment codex in the Archivio di Stato, Milan, containing a “list of phrases used by the Roman curia to address Uzun Hasan” (p. 91).

Ulrich W. Haarmann draws attention to the neglect of travelers from the Muslim East as sources for the history of the Mamluks in Egypt and Syria. He considers in particular the famous Faḏl Allāh ibn Rūzbihān Khunji, who wrote one of his two works in Arabic about his experiences in their territories (he spent several months there while on the two Hajj journeys in 877–9/1473–4 and 886–7/1481–2), specifically the fire in Medina in 1481 (this account was published in facsimile by Iraj Afshar). A lot more information is found in his works in Persian, particularly the *Tārīkh-i ‘āla-mārā-yi Amīnī*. Driven into Transoxianian exile by the victory of Isma’il Safavi, he came to idealize the Mamluk sultans as prime defenders of Sunni Islam.

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The four articles which deal with the Safavid/Afsharid period are of the most interest to me, as this is the area of my own expertise. Faridun Vahman provides us with the texts and translation of three Safavid documents in the Danish archives. Two (the same letter in different versions) are from Shāh Ṣāfi in response to the Holstein embassy sent in 1635, and one was brought with an official delegation in 1691. This delegation was requesting

compensation for merchandise seized from Iranian Armenian merchants by a Danish ship. The documents are reproduced in facsimile, but the list of merchandise, for example, is almost too small to read; translations are appended. There are a number of small errors in the text (for Holsten [p. 178] read Holstein, or rather Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorp; for Brüggerman read Brüggegan [ibid]; for Schleaswig [p. 179 n. 1] read Schlesswig). The bibliography of Olearius, the secretary and chronicler of the embassy to Šāfi is, apart from the Persian translations of his work, completely inadequate. Reference should have been made to my article, "Adam Olearus and literature of the Schleswig-Holstein missions to Russia and Iran, 1633–1639," in *Études Safavides*, ed. Jean Calmard, (Tehran 1993), pp. 31–57, which contains a comprehensive bibliography.

In a brief contribution, M. R. Ghanoonparvar considers two Safavid texts which deal with cooking. The first, from the early sixteenth century, discusses in great detail the preparation of food and is apparently the first known Persian cookbook per se, with measurements and step-by-step directions. The second, by a chef to Shāh ʿAbbās I, is more general, written in a more florid style, but contains much interesting information, included recipes supposedly devised by the Safavid Shahs themselves. Many of the recipes would be recognizable to a modern Iranian.

Willem Floor mines the incomparable Dutch archives to excellent effect, as he has done so often in the past, to provide new information on the important subject of Nādir Shāh's decision to invade India. He shows that Nādir was contemplating such an action "well before" 1150/1737–8 (p. 198). He appends translations of a number of important documents.

Roger Savory provides some additional information on the famous visit of the three Qajar princes (sons of Ḥusayn ʿAlī Mīrzā who unsuccessfully contested his brother Muḥammad Shāh's accession to the throne in 1250/1835) to Britain. The visit achieved very little beyond the production of some interesting literature, but reveals how many distinguished Englishmen speaking fluent Persian were able to make princes feel at home.

To this reviewer, the highlight of the volume is Rudi Matthee's extended (30 pp.) article on Iran's Ottoman diplomacy. Anyone with even a casual interest in Safavid history must often have wondered why the Safavids, in the person of Shāh Sulaymān I, did not take advantage of the Ottoman defeat before the walls of Vienna in 1683 and subsequent retreat to attempt to recapture Baghdad and Mesopotamia. This territory not only formed part of the Safavid patrimony bequeathed by Ismāʿīl I and reclaimed by ʿAbbās I after its first loss to the Ottomans, but also contained the four great Shiʿi

shrines of Kazimayn, Samarra, Najaf and Kerbela. The full answer may never be known, but Professor Matthee takes the argument several giant strides forward. He adduces evidence to show that to the Safavid court, peace with the Ottomans had its advantages, particularly in terms of the free movement of goods and merchandise and non-hindrance of Iranian pilgrims going to Mecca. There was certainly awareness of the weakness of the army, in particular of the Qizilbash, whose position had been earlier undermined by Mīrzā Muḥammad Saru Taqī and the Inner Palace. There was fear that an attack on the Ottomans might lead to the creation of a Mughal Uzbek-Ottoman Sunni alliance against the Shi'i Safavids. To the reiterated appeals of the numerous European states for an alliance against the Ottomans, the Iranians retorted that the Christians had never failed to conclude a separate peace with the foe. Privately there was a concern that if the Ottomans were defeated the Europeans might then turn on the Safavids.

In the formulation of Safavid policy, it was not always clear who was in charge. The traditional European portrayal of Sulaymān as a weak, dissolute and spineless drunk who spent far too much time in the harem is almost certainly overdrawn. While a full picture of the Safavid Shah has not yet emerged from its sources, it does become clear from Matthee's evidence that he played a far more active role than he has been given credit for. What is clear is that the grand *vazir*, Shaykh 'Alī Khān, was "rumored to harbor anti-Christian and secret Sunni convictions" (p. 153). He also had land-holdings on the Mesopotamian frontier which would surely have suffered in any renewed hostilities. Be that as it may, he was almost certainly aware of the extreme financial weakness of the Safavid state, and was endeavoring to raise money rather than spend it on military ventures.

To arrive at these conclusions has involved the exploitation of primary and secondary sources in an astonishing variety of languages: Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Latin, Persian, Polish, Russian, and Turkish. It is a *tour-de-force*. Two primary sources in Italian with English translations are appended.

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At the end of the book there is a separately (1–35) paginated section of Iraj Afshar's bibliography primarily in Persian which is limited "to titles published in book format and in monographic collections of articles, as well as those published in the journal *Farhang-i Īrān Zamān*" (p. 4). This of course will be of great use to a librarian, as will the bibliographies appended to each contribution (particularly those that have an important reference

component, such as the contributions of Perry and Roper). The headings under which these are entered are capitalized throughout; it might have been better to have capitalized only the surname or first word of the entry.

To a librarian, not the least attractive aspect of this book is the physical quality of its presentation to the reader, or, as the unfortunate phrase has it, its "production values." It is printed on acid-free paper, sewn in signatures, and has a strong and durable cloth binding. The Roman font is clear and attractive; the Persian font is pleasant too, and the titles in the bibliographic annex are reproduced in an italic form. I have only one small criticism: the font for the few works in English is too large (Annex, pp. 4, 22, 30, 33). The footnotes for the entire English text are where they should be (but all too often aren't, even in university press publications): at the bottom of the appropriate page.

One slightly more significant problem is that, presumably owing to the exigencies of computer typesetting, the text does not always occupy as much space on the page as it might. Quite substantial areas are sometimes left blank at the bottom of a page, with part of a paragraph being transferred to the next page even where it apparently could quite easily be accommodated on one page (e.g., pp. 178, 179; 234, 235). The size of font used for quotations in the text and for footnotes is the same: it seems to be too much today to ask for three different sizes for text, quotation, and footnote that was the scholarly norm forty years ago.

In the bibliographical citations, the conventions followed are partially those of a machine readable cataloguing record. Titles are given without every significant word being capitalized, as is called for by the standard paradigm for languages such as English. This creates a uniform format of considerable elegance on the page. In addition, other title information is separated from the title proper by (space)(colon)(space)(although with occasional lapses) rather than the usual (colon)(space). When I first came across this MARC Form as a cataloguer, it was difficult to accept, but now seems to me as appropriate to a regular bibliographical citation as to a cataloguing record. The same could be said of other MARC conventions, such as the (space)(semi-colon)(space) separating two imprint statements (e.g., under Jahn, p. 11), or two statements of responsibility (p. 56, under Nasir-i Khusraw).

The Library of Congress transliteration system for Persian (including diacritics) is followed with exemplary accuracy except that the character for a prime used to separate the final form of a letter from the next letter in words which are considered a lexical unit is represented by an apostrophe or

single close quotation mark, which is also used to represent the hamzah. The form *tarjumah*, following the Persian pronunciation, rather than *tarjamah*, which is the Library of Congress preference, is also used. The second edition of Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules calls for the name of a publisher to be given “in the shortest form in which it can be understood and identified internationally” (p. 33) and this rule is followed for Iranian publishers, principally involving the omission of the phrase “*Intishārāt-i*” if it occurs before a name. This is a decision of which I heartily approve, but the rule is not necessarily followed for other languages. One curiosity is the retention of the English county to identify a place-name which also occurs outside Great Britain (e.g. Cambridge [Cambridgeshire] under Browne, p. 11) which was briefly national cataloguing policy but soon dropped in the favor of the country; e.g., Cambridge [England].

In a work of this linguistic and technical complexity it would be surprising if there were not a number of mistakes. Some I have noted include *muqattaat* for *muqatta'at* (it has not been possible to reproduce the diacritics of the original); *Danishgah-i Milli Iran* for *Danishgah-i Milli-i Iran* (p. 87); the use of a comma rather than a semi-colon to separate the two statements of responsibility in the last entry under Khvand Amir (ibid.), the failure to italicize *Humayun'namah* (p. 88, under entry Shihāb al-Dīn Munshī) and on p. 276, the division of the city of Sultanabad into the S at the end of the line and remainder of the work in the next line. The title *Anīs al-nās* has picked up a stray *ayn* in the table of contents and the heading on p. 42. But in general the technical standards are quite extraordinarily high.

All in all, a superb piece of work which does full justice to the honoree. Congratulations to all concerned.

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