# Exploring Patronage, Genre, and Scholar-Bureaucracy: The Trans-Imperial Career of Ḫᵛāndamīr (d. 1534)

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**ABSTRACT** This paper examines the life, career, and patronage of the great statesman and historian, Ġeyāṯ al-Dīn Ḫᵛāndamīr. Ḫᵛāndamīr lived and worked during a dynamic period of early modern Islamic history, marking the terminus of the great Timurid empire and the genesis of no less than three major polities in Iran, Central Asia, and South Asia: the Safavids, the Uzbeks, and the Mughals. During the first three decades of the sixteenth century, Ḫᵛāndamīr produced numerous texts across a multitude of genres, all the while dextrously navigating violent dynastic upheaval and negotiating new terms of patronage in different imperial settings. This paper examines a number of these patronized texts towards the objective of understanding more about how such "men of the pen" understood the act of patronage; specifically, Ḫᵛāndamīr's approach to text and genre may have been shaped by the terms and conditions of these different negotiated "trans-imperial" relationships.

**KEYWORDS** patronage, bureaucracy, scholar-bureaucrat, Timurid, Safavid, Mughal

## Introduction: Patronage and the Tradition of the Scholar-Bureaucrat

There is little doubting that Muslim literate societies across the Middle East, Iran, Central Asia and South Asia—when assessing ideas of civilizational contribution and legacy—have placed great emphasis on the notion of individuality and personality. One only needs to peruse the index of an academic monograph to encounter a surplus of personal names of rulers, scholars, notables, and poets. A typical medieval court chronicle, likewise, focuses exclusively on the names, identities, and actions of the highly placed and [in]famous. These observations here are not a prelude to a larger analysis regarding societal notions of individual and community and the privileging of the elite, nor a call-to-arms to seek and locate those 'lost voices' of Islamic history, although both are worthy pursuits that certainly deserve more attention. I only

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introduce this ontological predilection towards the celebration of luminaries and personages—be they theologians, poets, historians, scientists, etc.—because it is so closely connected, indeed intertwined, with the focus of this essay: the practice of patronage in the late medieval Islamic world. As scholars like Roy Mottahedeh, Patricia Crone, A.L. Udovitch, Marina Rustow, and others have discussed, patronage as a political and courtly concept was widespread and diverse in the classical and medieval periods (Mottahedeh 1980; Crone 1980; Udovitch 1977; Rustow 2008). While some have argued for a level of structuralism in defining the practice of patronage, it seems more reasonable to work in alignment with Mottahedeh and his endorsement of qualities like informality and fluidity when discussing how patrons and clients understood one another and their relationship (Mottahedeh 1980, 84–89). Nonetheless, Mottahedeh provides us with an operational taxonomy to explore the practice of patronage in medieval settings where terms like *baiʿat* (oath of allegiance), *neʿmat* (benefits accrued/given on the basis of patronage), *ḫedmat* (service), and *esteṣnāʾ* (nurturement) are used by individuals and groups while forming relationships with powerful notables or the state itself. At the same time, scholars are appreciative of questions about such terms, their linguistic etymology, and how they are applied and understood in a multiplicity of situations (Rustow 2008, 351). As Mottahedeh noted insightfully, the Buyid/Abbasid period saw shifts with respect to public and private definitions like patronage and loyalty:

> There was an increasing rigidity in many of the religiously sanctioned forms of proper public and private behavior. In private life, these forms continued to be widely used for their original purposes. But in public life, they were increasingly used not for their original purposes, but to indicate the continued respect by the user for the private application of Islamic norms. (Mottahedeh 1980, 27–28)

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I would argue that it was these dynamics in the private sphere which came to exert such a powerful influence for patrons and their sponsorship of the aforementioned 'luminaries and personages', who in turn were prolifically producing formative texts on various subjects. These texts, in turn, would be introduced and adapted to the ever-increasing, and no doubt unwieldy, discourse of civilizational knowledge (religious sciences, natural sciences, poetry, history, prophetic biographies, and esoteric knowledge) that educated Muslim elites were expected to not only be aware of, but to also engage with and provide commentary on. Of course, the biographies of famous poets and litterateurs provide detailed, and arguably embellished, stories about relationships between patrons and clients, but patronage in the literary realm as a greater lens of analysis and commentary has only recently begun to develop thanks to the work of Julie Scott Meisami (1987, 2001), Beatrice Gründler (2004), Jocelyn Sharlet (2011), Dominic Brookshaw (2019), and Christoph Werner (2017). The scholarly field dedicated to studying state patronage of sciences—religious, philosophical, scientific—is far more expansive, and we simply note here the contributions of Sonja Brentjes (2008a, 2008b, 2009), Ali Humayun Akhtar (2012), Omid Safi (2006), Dmitri Gutas (1998), Michael Chamberlain (1995), and Jonathan Berkey among others (1992). With this mind, it is evident that both disciplinary and polymathic scholarship was profoundly influenced by notions of patronage being formed during the late Abbasid period of the tenth to twelfth centuries. During the Mongol and post-Mongol periods, and the advent of Turkic and Turco-Mongol polities across the Middle East, Iran, Central Asia, and South Asia, the issue of patronage became not only more nuanced, but increasingly important for newly-Islamicized Turkic rulers seeking credibility as well as the numerous 'luminaries and personages' in need of protection and promotion of

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their scholarship. Of course, it was this period—the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—that profound religious, philosophical, and scientific innovations and changes were also taking place.[1]

This present discussion of late medieval Islamic patronage is principally focused on the [4] historian and *litterateur* Ġeyāṯ al-Dīn b. Homām al-Dīn Ḫʷāndamīr (1475–1535). A scion of a well-established family of scholarly administrators based in Timurid Khorasan, Ḫʷāndamīr produced a number of texts on behalf of his first major patron, Mīr ʿAlī Šīr Navāʾī, but the Uzbek and Safavid invasions of 1507 and 1510 violently convulsed his world of patron-client relations. The remainder of his career was spent exploring and navigating the new political landscape that was emerging in Iran, Central Asia, and India in the early sixteenth century. There is a growing, yet diverse, field of scholarship which has examined the issues of courtly, cultural, socio-economic, and scientific patronage in this remarkable period of dynastic inceptions, foundations, and dramatic expansion (Subtelny 1988; Paul 1991).[2] Less specific discussions of patronage as a phenomenon, but nonetheless containing important insights on its different manifestations during the late fifteenth to early sixteenth century, can be found in the work of John Woods (1999), Maria Subtelny (2007), Maria Szuppe (1992), Jean Aubin (1959, 1988), Chris Marckiewicz (2019), Mark Toutant (2016), Evrim Binbaş (2016), Chad Lingwood (2014), Rula Abisaab (2004), and Kathryn Babayan (2002).

What was notable about Ḫʷāndamīr was not necessarily his ability to negotiate various lit- [5] erary genres (history, poetry, epistolography, biography), but his success in seeking and securing patronage in a relatively short period with different dynasties which were not only varied in composition and mission but also competitive and often inimical with one another, namely the Timurids, the Uzbeks, the Safavids, and the Mughals. When Ḫʷāndamīr was roughly 30 years of age, the Timurid empire was exterminated by the newly arrived Uzbeks from the north; he survived Uzbek rule in Khorasan for three years before they themselves were pushed out by Šāh Esmāʿīl I (r. 1501–24) and the Safavids in 1510. He maintained a somewhat distant relationship with the Safavid authorities in Herat; he, in fact, served intermittently as vizier to two surviving Timurid princes who had accepted Safavid sovereignty, but also lived a while in self-exile in a small village called Pašt to the east of the Herat (Szuppe 1992, 56). He eventually secured the patronage of the Safavid administrator Ġeyāṯ al-Dīn Amīr Moḥammad to write a grand historical chronicle—later named the *Ḥabīb al-seyar*—which he began in 1521 and finished three years later under the patronage of Amīr Moḥammad's replacement, Ḥabībollāh Savağī (fl. early sixteenth c.). At some point after 1526 and the founding of the Mughal empire by Bābor (r. 1526–30), Ḫʷāndamīr made a decision to seek a new type of Timurid patronage in South Asia; he joined the court of Bābor in Agra in 1528, and continued to serve Bābor's son and successor, Homāyūn (r. 1530–56), from 1530 until 1534 as the court historian, but died serving on a campaign to Gujarat. And while he certainly brought copies of his various works to South Asia, he became more renowned—at least in the Mughal court—for his *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī* (a.k.a. *Homāyūn-nāmah*), a panegyric text celebrating the enthronement, courtly arrangements and ceremonies, and building architecture of Homāyūn in his early reign.

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1    Working on the idea of sacralised politics, scholars like Orkhan Mir-Kasimov, Shahzad Bashir, Matthew Melvin-Koushki, and Evrim Binbaş argue, in their respective work, for the fifteenth century as a profound period of change with respective to the rise and standardization of esoteric sciences and popularity of mystical philosophy in the central and eastern Islamic world. See Mir-Kasimov (2015), Bashir (2005), Melvin-Koushki (n.d.), and Binbaş (2016).

2    I would also like to mention Ertuğrul Ötken's recent presentation, "Nawa'i in the himaya process" at the 33rd meeting of the *Deutscher Orientalisten Tag* in Jena, Germany, 2017; Ötken (2013).

While contemplating patronage, it is also worth considering the notion of the 'scholar-bureaucrat' during this particular early modern period of innovation and change. First fashioned as a category in English by Cemal Kafadar in his seminal study, *Between Two Worlds*, the general idea of administrator-cum-scholar has existed in Arabo- and Perso-Islamic societies since the eighth century with individuals like Ebn al-Moqaffaʿ and Ebn al-Qodāma (Kafadar 1996; Fleischer 1986; Atçıl 2017; Mitchell 2009). Scholar-bureaucrats were invariably connected with state administration, and indeed it was in imperial spaces like revenue bureaucracy, chancelleries, or legal courts that such individuals brought their significant linguistic and scholarly training to bear. More often than not, they held official authoritative positions such as *vizier* (chief bureaucrat), *mostaufī* (comptroller), *monšī* (chancellery stylist), or *moftī* (legal jurist), and their oversight, maintenance, and occasional reform of an imperial administration was well-acknowledged. However, such scholar-bureaucrats were not entirely defined by their state identity and state vocation; to the contrary, their societal reputation and subsequent legacy is largely shaped by their contributions to multiple literary, historiographical, legal, and religio-intellectual traditions. It is this polymathic quality of such scholar-bureaucrats that can make categorization and nomination somewhat challenging; these are individuals who stood and operated in multiple epistemological spaces, producing valuable texts on various subjects while commenting and supra-commenting on others. Housed in administration, but so much more influential and wide-ranging in terms of scholarly production, such individuals were often styled rhetorically as 'Āṣaf-ǧāhs' of their era, a reference to the wise counselor and administrator to the great king and prophet, Solomon: Āṣaf b. Barḵeyāʾ. Indeed, Āṣaf b. Barḵeyāʾ is styled without fail as the progenitor of all viziers in a number of prosopographic histories dedicated to such men which are usually styled as *aḵbār al-vozarāʾ* and *dastūr al-vozarāʾ* (Arjomand 2013, 102–5).

Thus, we find a healthy tradition of scholar-bureaucrats in the Mongol and post-Mongol Islamic world who defy reduction; they operate in a multi epistemic world where salary allocations intersect with prosody and poetry, where chancellery *promulgatio*s and *intitulatio*s sit side-by-side with hagiography and shrine manuals, and where courtly historical chronicles co-exist with tax remittance. During the Ghaznavid, Seljuk, and Mongol periods scholar-bureaucrats tended to focus on history (*tāʾrīḵ*) in terms of their grand oeuvres, but therein we find a rich array of literary and poetic devices and textual traditions being represented. Notables, predictably, include Abo-l-Fażl Bayhaqī (d. 1077) and al-ʿOtbī (d. 982) of the Ghaznavid era, any one of the Ǧovainī family who had dominated the Mongol administration, Moḥammad b. Hendūšāh al-Naḵǧavānī (f. 1328–58), and of course the great administrator, Rašīd al-Dīn Fażlollāh Hamadānī (d. 1318). Moving into the Timurid, Safavid, and Mughal periods, one could cautiously assert that typical Perso-Islamic scholar-bureaucrats in the fifteenth and sixteenth century were increasingly invested in the eclectic and variegated nature of intellectual debate and religious inquiry. In the Timurid context, we only need to point to the careers of such scholar-bureaucrats as Šaraf al-Dīn Yazdī (d. 1454), Moʿīn al-Dīn Zamčī Esfezārī (fl. 1456–1510), Ḥosain Vāʿeż Kāšefī (d. 1504), and above all, Mīr ʿAlī Šīr Navāʾī (d. 1501) to develop an appreciation for not only the depth of their scholarly production but also its breadth and diversity.

Returning (finally) to the career and scholarship of our subject of study, Ġeyāṣ al-Dīn Ḵ<sup>v</sup>āndamīr, we find a greater continuity of these aforementioned Perso-Islamic traditions, but with certain qualifications worth considering. While he was born, raised, educated, and trained in the city of Herat, Ḵ<sup>v</sup>āndamīr was forced to adopt the life of a peripatetic scholar-

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bureaucrat during the inchoate days of Timurid collapse and Uzbek-Safavid contestation over control of Khorasan. This notion of peripateticism of course complicated enormously his practicing of patronage, but medieval Islamic civilization is in many ways defined by the movement of scholars—sometimes voluntarily, sometimes coercively—and thus Ḫᵛāndamīr was indeed part of a greater tradition of 'mobile' patronage politics. There has been less discussion in contemporary scholarship about this particular category, but interesting analyses have been offered by Ertuğrul Ötken (2013), Abdurrahman Atçil (2016), and Shawqat Toorawa (2004). Most recently, Quinn has elaborated further on the historiographical import of historians like Ḫᵛāndamīr with her superlative publication, *Persian Historiography Across Empires: The Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals* (*Persian Historiography Across Empires: The Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals* 2020). Also worth noting is the very recent scholarship of Philip Bockholt (2019, 2021), who has worked comprehensively on Ḫᵛāndamīr's *Ḥabīb al-seyar.* In this spirit, I am principally interested in exploring Ḫᵛāndamīr's administrative and scholarly career with these issues of mobile patronage politics in mind; as we explore the particular relationships of Ḫᵛāndamīr with his various patrons, we can better understand the nature and trajectory of his scholarly production as he navigated the dynastic landscape of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries in the eastern Islamic world. The peripatetic nature of Ḫᵛāndamīr's career was noted by Sholeh Quinn (2015) in her excellent analysis of the historian and the patronage by the Mughal emperor Homāyūn of the well-known text, the *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī*.

And as we develop more nuanced insights into scholarly output and the issue of motive, [9] interesting possibilities emerge regarding questions of textual categories and genres, and how scholars like Ḫᵛāndamīr were able to push epistemic borders in fascinating ways during a period of such innovation and change. Also worth considering, as Quinn has certainly demonstrated, Ḫᵛāndamīr was capable of recycling textual traditions that he had inherited from various medieval historiographical and literary canons, and while doing so, altering them significantly depending on the particular patron and dynasty involved. However, while Quinn examines his career and writing solely through a Safavid-Mughal analysis, this article is keen on examining Ḫᵛāndamīr's approach to text and patronage from his Timurid beginnings, through his complicated career under the Uzbeks and Safavids, and concluding with his twilight years in Mughal India. Over the duration of his professional career, Ḫᵛāndamīr produced eight texts—consisting largely of prose, but also including extensive poetry and prosimetrum—under the auspices of four dynasties:

**Table 1**

| Title (Subject)[3] | Year | Dynastic Setting |
|---|---|---|
| *Maᵓāṣer al-molūk* (collection of political maxims) | ca. 1498 | Timurid |
| *Ḫolāṣat al-aḫbār fī bayān aḥvāl al-aḫyār* (concise world history) | ca. 1500 | Timurid |
| *Makārem al-aḫlāq* (panegyric biography of Mīr ʿAlī Šīr) | 1501 | Timurid |
| *Dastūr al-vozarāᵓ* (prosopography of viziers) | 1508–09 | Uzbek |
| *Nāmah-ye nāmī* (collection of model epistles) | 1520 | Safavid |
| *Montaḫab-e Tāᵓrīḫ-e Vaṣṣāf* (no surviving text) | ? | Safavid |
| *Ḥabīb al-seyar fī aḫbār afrād al-bašar* (multi-volume universal history) | 1524 | Safavid |
| *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī* (celebration of Homāyūn's coronation, | 1534 | Mughal |

| Title (Subject)                                          | Year | Dynastic Setting |
| ------------------------------------------------------- | ---- | ---------------- |
| courtly organization, and architectural program)        |      |                  |

For the purposes of this present discussion, we will be focusing on five texts, some well-known, some less so, produced by Ḫʷāndamīr over the years: *Makārem al-aḫlāq* (1501), *Dastūr al-vozarāʾ* (1508–09), *Nāmah-ye nāmī* (1520), *Ḥabīb al-seyar* (1524), and the *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī* (1534). What follows is far from an exhaustive textual analysis, but rather an overview of the sources with an eye towards the preamble (*dībāčah*) of each text and the dedicatory space where Ḫʷāndamīr would: 1) discuss his motivation for writing the text in question, 2) describe his relationship with his patron, and 3) hint at his adaption and innovative approach to existing traditions and historico-literary genres. I am also interested in issues of textual provenance and intertextuality, and how Ḫʷāndamīr chose to edit and alter texts in response to specific religio-political environments and relevant relationships of patronage. Ḫʷāndamīr could be remarkably selective and adaptive in such compilations of texts, as Sholeh Quinn (2015) has recently demonstrated in her comparison of certain historical sections which appear in both the *Ḥabīb al-seyar* and the *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī*.

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## Celebrating Patronage: the *Makārem al-aḫlāq* (1501)

The *Makārem al-aḫlāq* has been widely presented as a 'panegyric biography' of Mīr ʿAlī Šīr Navāʾī, the famous statesman, poet, and literary scholar who in many ways defined the cultural legacy of the Timurid empire under Sultan-Ḥosain Bāiqarā (r. 1470–1506). Himself a prolific poet in Chagatai Turkish and a scholar of languages, Mīr ʿAlī Šīr also used his position as chief administrator in the 1480s and 1490s to oversee the construction of dozens of religious institutions, shrines, tombs, hospitals, as well as a wide array of public works throughout Khorasan. His relationship with the dominant Naqšbandī Sufi Order under the Aḥrār family and its famous poet-spokesman, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ğāmī (d. 1492), is also considered a key aspect of his legacy in Khorasan and Central Asia. Mīr ʿAlī Šīr had been a patron to many of the literati and poets of Herat during its cultural apex in the late fifteenth century, including Ḫʷāndamīr's grandfather, Mīrḫʷānd (d. 1498), who by Ḫʷāndamīr's own admission was one of the most important people in his life; his greatest historical work, the *Ḥabīb al-seyar*, is largely based on Mīrḫʷānd's *Raużat al-ṣafāʾ*. However, there is also little doubt regarding the impact of Mīr ʿAlī Šīr on Ḫʷāndamīr as a young and budding scholar in the late 1490s. He had provided access to his personal vizierial library so that Ḫʷāndamīr could write his first two texts in 1498 and 1499-1500: the *Maʿāṣer al-molūk* and the *Ḫolāṣat al-aḫbār fī bayān aḥvāl al-aḫyār*. Thus, when Ḫʷāndamīr produced the *Makārem al-aḫlāq* one year later in 1501, it was clear that this particular text was the product of a vibrant and successful patron-client relationship. However, as Ḫʷāndamīr relates in the preface (*dībāčah*), his patron had passed away before he was able to finish the text. It is this posthumous quality that likely explains why the *Makārem al-aḫlāq* is such a bold recognition of the singular impact of Mīr ʿAlī Šīr on late Timurid society. And while Ḫʷāndamīr was clearly celebrating this legacy first and foremost, there are interesting aspects regarding the *Makārem al-aḫlāq* and its organization

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3     I'd like to thank Sholeh Quinn for sharing a draft of her article on Ḫʷāndamīr ("A Historian on the Move"), in which she provided very helpful tabular information on Ḫʷāndamīr's textual legacy.

to suggest that Ḫᵛāndamīr saw therein opportunities to use the genre of 'noblest of moral attributes' (*makārem al-aḫlāq*) literature in innovative ways with a greater objective of profiling particular aspects and institutions of Timurid society.

The phrase 'makārem al-aḫlāq' references an amorphous genre of literature which is be-          [12]
lieved to date back to at least the ninth century (Bellamy 1963, 108). Generally translated as 'the noblest of moral attributes', *makārem al-aḫlāq* became a popular prose genre for Arab Muslim authors who were keen to offer prescriptive manuals of model behavior and piety, and, with time, it became commonly associated with ethics literature. More often than not, such Arab authors picked up the tools of biography and hadith sciences to concentrate on how the prophetic life and career (*sīrat*) of Moḥammad could inspire an understanding of proper ethics, but other *makārem al-aḫlāq*s could be simply collections of Qurʾānic verses, hadiths, aphorisms, and poetry regarding key characteristics like generosity, knowledge, and piety. The Qurʾānic anchor for the phrase *makārem al-aḫlāq* is 68: 4, wherein God addressed the prophet directly: "and you [stand] upon a mighty character" (*wa-innaka ʿalā ḫuluq-in ʿaẓīm-in*) (DeYoung 2014, 169). As the genre grew in popularity, *ḥadīṯ* scholars and exegetes from both Sunni and Shi'i traditions, such as Ibn Abī al-Dunyā (d. 894), al-Ṭabarī (d. 923), al-Saʿlabī (d. 1037), and al-Ṭabarsī (d. 1153), produced their own particular visions of *makārem al-aḫlāq* to begin expanding and connecting this blossoming ethics genre with hadiths and historical statements wherein the phrase *makārem al-aḫlāq*, or variations (*aḫlāqī, ḫoloq, ḫalaqī*), are believed to have appeared (Saleh 2014, 115–18). It should be noted that this genre stands apart from the healthy and vibrant tradition of courtly advice literature (*pand, andarz, naṣīḥat*), which, citing the ancient pre-Islamic Iranian past, also began to flourish in Persia in the twelfth century (Fouchécour 1986, 3–7).

Turning to Ḫᵛāndamīr's own *Makārem al-aḫlāq*, it certainly appears that he was working          [13]
within the general parameters of this genre as it had been developing since its initial surge of popularity in the ninth and tenth centuries. As we shall see, he uses typical Qurʾānic exegesis and hadith sciences to envision ethics and moral behavior within a Qurʾānic-prophetic framework, and we find no obvious references to pre-Islamic Iranian heritage or styles of philosophical ethics which had been popularized in the famous *aḫlāqī* texts by scholars like Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī (d. 1274), Ǧalāl al-Dīn al-Davānī (d. 1502), or Ḥosain Vāʾeẓ Kāšefī. As the following tabular presentation of the 12 chapters which constitute the *Makārem al-aḫlāq* indicates, Ḫᵛāndamīr nonetheless strikes a singular stance in his interpretation of personal and societal ethics wherein reason, intelligence, epistolography, and poetry are all accorded individual chapters alongside chapters dedicated to moral and ethical categories.

**Table 2**

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|---|---|
| Introduction | Explaining the virtue (*fażīlat*) of *makārem al-aḫlāq* and narrating the felicitous birth (*velādat bā-saʿādat*) of Mīr ʿAlī Šīr |
| Chapter 1 | Explaining honour and dignity of reason and intelligence (*ʿaql va edrāk*) |
| Chapter 2 | Explaining the virtue of knowledge (*ʿelm*) and ranks of religious scholars (*martabah-ye ʿolamāʾ*) |
| Chapter 3 | Explaining the virtue of poetry and the highly-ranked poets (*ʿaẓam-šān-e shoʿarā*) |
| Chapter 4 | Explaining the virtue of *enšāʾ* and the scholars of eloquence (*afāżel-e soḫān-ārā*) |

**Table 2**

| | |
|---|---|
| Chapter 5 | Explaining the distribution of reward (*andāḫtan-e ẕaḫāʾr-e ʿoqbā*) and avoiding the earthly realm (*eʿraż az donyā va māfi-hā*) |
| Chapter 6 | Explaining the patronage (*raʿāyat*) of the notables (*arkān*) who support the Prophetic *Šarīʿah* |
| Chapter 7 | Explaining kindness and compassion (*raʾfat va raḥmat*) |
| Chapter 8 | Explaining humility (*tavāżoʿ*) |
| Chapter 9 | Explaining generosity and munificence (*ǧūd va saḫāvat*) |
| Chapter 10 | Explaining subtle phrases and pleasantries (*laṭāʾef va maṭāʾebat*) |
| Conclusion | Strange events and miraculous stories (*ġarāʾeb va ʿaǧāʾeb-e ḥekāyāt*) |

We find, almost immediately, indicators in Ḫ<sup>v</sup>āndamīr's preface that the *Makārem al-aḫlāq* reflects the prevalence and popularity of Sufi philosophical concepts, language, and vocabulary in late Timurid Iran and Central Asia. It should also be noted that this preface (*dībāčah*) was written and appended *after* the text had been completed; as Ḫ<sup>v</sup>āndamīr explains in the preface, Mīr ʿAlī Šīr had passed away shortly before its completion and the author felt that some prefatory explanation was needed. The opening words of the preface, using metaphors of pen and paper (*qalam-e qodrat, ṣaḥāʾef-e maḫlūqāt*), highlights God's epiphany to humankind by referencing the famous Hidden Treasure *ḥadīs̱*: "I was a Hidden Treasure…I created the world so I could be known" (*kuntu kanz-an maḫfī-an….fa-ḫalaqtu al-ḫalqa li-uʿraf*). It is with this divine epiphany, Ḫ<sup>v</sup>āndamīr writes, that the "ornamented jeweled tools which allow mystical knowledge of God now became apparent" (Ḫ<sup>v</sup>āndamīr 1999, 39).[4] This 'Hidden Treasure' *ḥadīs̱* is a popular signifier of the much more significant mystico-philosophical tradition first established by Ibn ʿArabī, which stressed the beauty of God's creative act and creation, as well as the inability to appreciate this beauty without acknowledging the idea of Gnosticism (*maʿrefat*). The opening words of the preamble, interestingly, employ thanks and gratitude to God's bounty and generosity (*ʿenāyat-aš, makramat-aš*) towards humankind, and more specifically, towards those 'lords of Truth and Gnosticism' (*arbāb-e taḥqīq va ʿerfān*) (Ḫ<sup>v</sup>āndamīr 1999, 40). Ḫ<sup>v</sup>āndamīr invokes the Prophet Moḥammad and the pantheon of exalted beings and angels who 'circle his harem in the way of service'. Here, he adds a line of Amīr Ḫosrau's poetry which continues the metaphor of service: "Behind the curtain in the great hall of Creation/Jesus is the server and Ḫeżr is the cup-bearer at His table" (Ḫ<sup>v</sup>āndamīr 1999, 40). Ḫ<sup>v</sup>āndamīr profiles Moḥammad as *al-mošarraf* who received the 'excellent speech' (*ḫeṭāb-e mostaṭāb*) of Qurʾān 68:4: 'and you [stand] upon a mighty character' which, as mentioned, is the scriptural anchor to the entire *makārem al-aḫlāq* tradition. However, as Saleh has pointed out, tenth- and eleventh-century Arab writers also argued that pre-Islamic Arabs were "possessed of a natural moral code that somehow corresponded with the Islamic moral code" (Saleh 2014, 115). Ḫ<sup>v</sup>āndamīr endorses this Qurʾānic quote of "you [stand] upon a mighty character' by listing names associated with the elite of Arab society: Moṣṭafā, Moʿallā, Moǧtabā, Mozakkā, Mohtadī, Hāšemī, Moqtadī, and Qoraišī" (Ḫ<sup>v</sup>āndamīr 1999, 40). Moreover, this moral quality was passed along to Moḥammad's family, companions, kinsmen, and friends (*āl va aṣḥāb va ʿašīrat va aḥbāb-e ū*), who would properly hold up the pillars of Islam and the rules of Šarīʿah. Turning to the subject at hand (*ammā baʿd*), Ḫ<sup>v</sup>āndamīr narrates that it was not hidden to sagacious ones that—after some time—there was an individual who would receive God's

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4     All translations by the author unless otherwise noted.

light, and become the chief employee of the world's kings (*mostaḫdam-e sanādīd-e āfāq*), the embodiment of the most noble moral characteristics (*mostaġmaʿ-e makārem-e aḫlāq*), the chief of the lords of knowledge and Gnosticism (*qodvah-ye arbāb-e ʿelm va ʿerfānī*), the *qeblah* of the master of verification and certainty (*qeblah-ye aṣḥāb-e taḥqīq va īqān*), the guarantor of imperial state (*moʾtamen-e daulat-e ḫāqānī*), and the confidant of sultanic excellency (*moqarreb-e ḥażrat-e solṭānī*): Mīr ʿAlī Šīr Navāʾī (Ḫʷāndamīr 1999, 41).

At this juncture in the *Makārem al-aḫlāq*, Ḫʷāndamīr begins to introduce the notion, lan-    [15]
guage, and vocabulary of patronage. Using classical metaphors of gardening and watering, Ḫʷāndamīr states that from the beginning of his childhood (*az mabādīʾ-e senn-e ṣebā*) until the last days of his youth (*avāḫer-e auqāt-e šabāb*), the "young shoot of his existence" was irrigated and cared for by Mīr ʿAlī Šīr. Ḫʷāndamīr invokes the Arabic saying (*kalemāt*): "thanks to the benefactor is a necessity" (*šukr al-munʿim wāǧib-un*) (Ḫʷāndamīr 1999, 41). On the one hand, the notion of 'Thanking God, the Benefactor" is a powerful one in Islamic ethics (Reinhart 1995, 107–20), but it is possible that Ḫʷāndamīr was quoting the mystic poet Rumi and referencing his cautionary tale of the people of Saba who took God's bounty and generosity for granted (Rūmī 2002, 6:96). "How much service" Ḫʷāndamīr rhetorically asks, "must I perform to in order to satisfy this oath and pay back even *some* of his never-ending benefaction?"(*āyā beh kodām ḫedmat qeyām namāyam tā az ʿohdah-ye ada-ye šokr-e baʿżī az neʿam bī-karān-aš bīrūn āyam?*) (Ḫʷāndamīr 1999, 41). The terms used here by Ḫʷāndamīr—*ḫedmat, ʿohdah, neʿam*—constitute the standard vocabulary of patronage, and indeed in doing so, he is underscoring the formality of his indebtedness to Mīr ʿAlī Šīr. Finally, the guide of reason spoke reason to his soul's ear (*ʿāqebat moršed-e ʿaql dar gūš-e ǧān goft*) and pointed out how Mīr ʿAlī Šīr's reputation and excellent qualities were already well-known throughout the world. Ḫʷāndamīr realized, however, that with some preparation, he could focus on Mīr ʿAlī Šīr's qualities (*fażīlat*), most noble moral attributes (*makārem-e aḫlāq*), and greatest refinements of etiquette (*maḥāsen-e ādāb*). While doing so, he could also highlight "some of the sublime biographies, agreeable personalities, miraculous conditions, and strange events" which his patron inspired, including "magical poetry" (*ṭabʿ-e- seḥrāṣār*) and "delicate pen of art" (*ḫamah-ye laṭāʾef-negār*). Accomplishing this, it was possible that Ḫʷāndamīr could bring "a trifle" (*daqīqahʾī*) of his debt to rest and repay "a mote" (*ẕarrah-ʾī*) of his obligation of thanks (*ʿohdah-ye šokr-e neʿmat*) to this exalted excellency (Ḫʷāndamīr 1999, 42). Moreover, Ḫʷāndamīr hints at the eschatological import of recording Mīr ʿAlī Šīr's legacy as patron: the memory of Mīr ʿAlī Šīr's praiseworthy deeds will remain fixed on the pages of fortune until the Hour of Judgment *(tā qeyāmat-e sāʿat va sāʿat-e qeyām ẕekr-e aʿmāl-e ḥamīdah va afʿāl-e pasandīdah-ye ān ḥażrat bar ṣafaḥāt-e rūzgār va aurāq-e layl va nahār bāqī va pāydār mānad)* (Ḫʷāndamīr 1999, 42). Tragically, Mīr ʿAlī Šīr Navāʾī passed away before he could make a clean copy of the draft (*savād beh bayāż ravad*), and thus Ḫʷāndamīr was all the more motivated to produce this bio-panegyric in a timely fashion.

Following the *dībāčah*, Ḫʷāndamīr presents the formal introduction (*moqaddemah*) which    [16]
is entitled "Explaining the Virtue of *Makārem-i Aḫlāq* and Narrating the Felicitous Birth of that Protector of the Nobles of the World" (*dar bayān-e fażīlat-e makārem-e aḫlāq va ẕekr-e velādat bā-saʿādat-e ān malāẕ-e akāber-e āfāq*). In the opening lines, he provides a rationale for the concept of *makārem al-aḫlāq* which is essentially an adoption and paraphrasing from elements of the pre-existing ethics tradition. According to the work of preceding scholars and prescient ones, the phrase "whosoever is destined to be good will be exalted with praiseworthy virtues" (*man yurida Allāh bihi ḫayr-an yaǧʿala lahu ḫuluq-an ḥasan-an*) is illuminating and

manifest (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 47). The Prophet Moḥammad is the ultimate receptacle in this regard, and the lynchpin for this is Qurʾān 68: 4 'and you [stand] upon a mighty character.' Indeed, thousands of earlier prophets and divine messengers had been sent to teach proper morals and behaviour with limited success but it was the Prophet Moḥammad who stated: "I was sent with perfect noble qualities" (*buʿittu li-utammima makārim al-aḫlāq*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 48). Ḫᵛāndamīr provides a short commentary on this statement and its significance towards developing the idealization of noble character (*fażīlat-e makārem-e aḫlāq*) as well as the dignity of excellent conduct (*manzalat-e maḥāsen-e ādāb*). With the prophetic exemplar in mind, Ḫᵛāndamīr introduces the mid-fifteenth-century birth of Mīr ʿAlī Šīr during the reign of Šāh-Roḫ as an especially significant divine act of creation. The singularity of this event is underlined by a poetic quotation from Ğāmī and his description in the *Haft Aurang* of God's creation of the beautiful and unworldly Yusuf: "a breath from the garden of the soul creates a young plant in the way that a crescent moon appears from the sky of the soul" (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 49). Mīr ʿAlī Šīr's auspicious birth date is the 17 Ramażān in the *heğrī* year 844 (Feb. 18, 1441), the significance of which is linked by Ḫᵛāndamīr to the revelation of the Qurʾānic verse 19:12, "And We gave him judgment [while he was still] a boy." 17 Ramażān is especially significant in Ḫᵛāndamīr's eyes because—according to many exegetes—this date signifies the beginning of the revelation of the Qurʾān to the Prophet Moḥammad. Moreover, not only did the Battle of Badr take place on this date, but it was also on 17 Ramażān that ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭāleb was murdered by a Ḫāreğī; Ḫᵛāndamīr adds that some scholars agree that the night of power (*šab-e qadr*) took place on 17 Ramazan (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 49–50). Mīr ʿAlī Šīr's genius was discovered at the age of four, and he was sent to a *maktab* to begin his formal education. In a short time, he demonstrated his peerless stature and became famous as had been destined on the pages of fortune (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 51). The introduction concludes, appropriately, with a line of poetry: "with noble fortune, he became a verifier (*moḥaqqeq*)/such is the meaning of the utterance of *makārem al-aḫlaq*!" (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 51).

It is worth noting that the following two chapters of the *Makārem al-aḫlaq* are dedicated      [17]
to a) "Honour and Virtue of Reason and Intelligence" (*šaraf va fażīlat-e ʿaql va edrāk*) and b) "Virtue of [Religious] Knowledge and the Ranks of the [Religious] Scholars" (*fażīlat-e ʿelm va martabah-ye ʿolamāʾ*). Ḫᵛāndamīr's distinction between the two, and his ranking of reason (*ʿaql*) before religious knowledge (*ʿelm*), bears mention since a number of earlier medieval texts on ethics, such as Meskavaih's (d. 1030) *Tahẕīb al-aḫlāq va-taṭhīr al-aʿrāq*, Rāġeb al-Esfahānī's (d. 1108) *Ẕarīʿah elā makārem al-šarīʿah,* and al-Ġazālī's (d. 1111) *Kīmeyāʾ-e saʿādat*, were organized with comparable epistemological imperatives; others, like Abī al-Dunyā and Rašīd al-Dīn Ṭabarsī eschew discussions on topics like reason and knowledge on their own basis, but rather treat them exclusively through the biographies of the Prophet and his family (Bellamy 1963, 109–10). The notion of epistemological hierarchies is especially strong among medieval philosophers and writers, and Ḫᵛāndamīr's opening chapters place him within a specific tradition associated with the aforementioned 'scholar-bureaucrats' who first emerged in the Abbasid period; here, distinguished scribes and scholarly administrators, like Qodāma b. Ğaʿfar (d. 948), Ebn Farīġūn (d. 955), and al-Ḫᵛārazmī (d. 985), approached knowledge and intellect through, among other things, notions of communication, speech, and writing (Heck 2002, 31–33). In his own first chapter on ʿaql, Ḫᵛāndamīr begins with the Prophetic ḥadīṯ: "he who has no reason has no religion" (*lā dīn l-man lā ʿaql lahu*). What follows is a composite of prose, poetry, and prosimetrum which both rationalizes and champions the role of reason, and interestingly, there is little by way of scriptural proof-texts or references to the

Prophetic sonnah. Without the "light of reason" (*nūr-e ʿaql*), "one can never light the lamp of faith and Islam in the home of one's heart" (*čerāġ-e dīn va Eslām dar ḫānah-ye del-e vay bar-afrūḫtah na-gardad*) (Ḫʷāndamīr 1999, 53). In turn, a *robāʿī* is presented:

> Reason (*ʿaql*) is what provides the foundation for everything in the world/Reason is what strengthens the work of state and faith    [18]

> In his holy excellency and the rows of collected souls/Every splendour and magnificence which can be seen comes from reason (Ḫʷāndamīr 1999, 53)    [19]

Ḫʷāndamīr alternates from Persian poetry to Arabic para-scripture by quoting the famous    [20]
hadith of reason (*hadīṯ al-ʿaql*): "Indeed, God, when He created reason, He said to it, 'Come', and it came. Then He said: 'Go back' and it went back. So, God said: 'Be my glory and beauty, I have not created anything nobler than you. By you, I will take and by you, I will give'" (Ḫʷāndamīr 1999, 54). Ḫʷāndamīr then follows with another *robāʿī*:

> Reason (*ʿaql*) is what makes orderly the work of the world/and its twinning with the bases of faith is firm    [21]

> Everywhere where there is a sultan with no reason in him/any justice which comes from him is annulled.    [22]

Ḫʷāndamīr's evaluation of reason, and its underpinning of all society, seems to better re-    [23]
flect contemporary medieval discussions of justice and sovereignty taking place in the Perso-Islamic tradition in poetry, history, and political advice literature. In this vein, the Timurid author presents a *maṣnavī* which is part quotation and part paraphrase from Ferdausī's section 'Praise for Intelligence' (*setāyeš-e ḫerad*) in the beginning of the *Shāh-nāmah*:

> Guiding intelligence and exhilarating intelligence/Will take one by the hand to earth and heaven    [24]

> Intelligence was the crown of kings/Intelligence was the book of nobles    [25]

> Whomsoever shall not be favoured by intelligence/Will not be ranked among the prescient ones    [26]

> If you discover the root of intelligence in the world/You will remain happy in both earth and heaven[5]    [27]

In recent literature, there has been a concerted effort to reinterpret the *Šāh-nāmah* as more    [28]
than an epic poem replete with legendary kings, chivalric heroes, and mythic creatures; we would be better served to see this text through the lens of political advice and ethics literature (Askari 2016). This non-attributed poetry was clearly inspired by and paraphrased from the *Šāh-nāmah*, and, as such, is reminiscent of similar strategies used by Timurid contemporaries when dealing with the *Šāh-nāmah* (Bernadini 2012, 161). In Ḫʷāndamīr's estimation, Mīr ʿAlī Šīr was the perfect embodiment of this idea of intelligence and its application in sovereignty and statecraft. As proof, Ḫʷāndamīr narrates two particular stories regarding the crucial role played by Mīr ʿAlī Šīr Navāʾī during a crisis in 1469–70 when his sovereign patron

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5    The first line of this quote is directly copied from the *Shāh-nāmah*, while the remaining three reflect the spirit of Ferdausī's praise of intelligence. See Ferdausī (2002, 1, line 19).

Solṭān-Ḥosain Bāyqarā faced a serious challenge from his Timurid cousin, Moḥammad Yādgār (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 55–58). The second chapter on knowledge (ʿelm) follows a similar pattern with respect to the use of Qurʾānic and prophetic proof texts in combination with poetry; some of the poetry can be attributed to the great Timurid poet, Ğāmī. Interestingly, Mīr ʿAlī Šīr is not himself brandished as a singular possessor of ʿelm but a great patron and protector of its custodians, the ʿolamā. Ḫᵛāndamīr highlights his status as a refuge for religious scholars and their writing of prominent (and relatively orthodox) texts such as Taftāzānī's *Šarḥ-e Farāʾeż*, Ğamāl al-Dīn ʿAṭāʾollāh Aṣīlī's *Raużat al-aḥbāb fī sīrat al-nabī va-l-āl va-l-asḥāb*, and Vāʿeż Kāšefī's *Tafsīr-e fārsī*, among others. Ḫᵛāndamīr also profiles a number of madrasahs and other public religious buildings which were initially built or renovated by Mīr ʿAlī Šīr (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 64–65).

We discover more fulsome presentations of Mīr ʿAlī Šīr in the third and fourth chapters, respectively on poetry and *enšāʾ*. The Timurid vizier's literary contribution in both the Turkish and Persian languages (such as the famous *Mağāles al-nafāʾes*) is certainly profiled, but what is interesting is Ḫᵛāndamīr's editorial decision to highlight—in separate chapters—the phenomenon of both poetry and belletristic prose writing, both of which are subjects which would not necessarily be considered 'virtues' and thus eligible for inclusion in a typical *Makārem al-aḫlāq*. In the chapter on poetry, he defends the practice of poetry in both Qurʾānic and prophetic terms, as well as referring to the poetry of the companions, particularly ʿAlī. Ḫᵛāndamīr discusses and quotes Mīr ʿAlī Šīr's own poetry, both in Persian and in Turkish, while also profiling the literary art of crafting chronograms and *moʿammās*. Likewise, *enšāʾ* and the prose tradition is discussed elaborately with Qurʾānic verses and *ḥadīṯ*, and Ḫᵛāndamīr lists a lengthy number of prose texts which were written by Mīr ʿAlī Šīr Navāʾī, including of course, the *Mağāles al-nafāʾes*, as well as his patronage of a number of other scholarly texts including the *Šavāhed al-nobovvat* by Ğāmī, a text on the science of music (*Resālah fī ʿelm-e mūsīqā*), a hagiography by Kamāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Vasīʿ, his grandfather's opus magnum, the *Raużat al-ṣafāʾ*, and of course Ḫᵛāndamīr's first two works. [29]

Thus far we can safely designate Ḫᵛāndamīr's interpretation of the literary tradition *makārem al-aḫlāq* as being 'scholar-bureaucratic' in a number of ways, namely epistemological hierarchy, the primacy of the state and its ability to enforce sovereignty, and the valuing of secretarial culture as an important state institution. However, Ḫᵛāndamīr also uses the *makārem al-aḫlāq* to profile Naqšbandī Sufism and its power and influence in Timurid society. While there have been general references and allusions to Sufi philosophy and the ephemeral nature of earthly existence, Ḫᵛāndamīr uses the 5ᵗʰ chapter ("Dispersing Gifts while Avoiding the Earthly Realm") to showcase Mīr ʿAlī Šīr as the Naqšbandī patron par excellence. This chapter begins with the well-known *ḥadīṯ-e qodsī*, "I was a hidden treasure; I loved to be known. Hence, I created the world so that I would be known" (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1999, 87). As Ḫᵛāndamīr explains, Sufi masters have interpreted this 'Hidden Treasure' *ḥadīṯ* to mean that the created world and the humans who inhabit it are reflections of God's perfection; thus, we should not necessarily reject the earthly realm outright but strive to discover its divine hidden secrets while also knowing the qualities of how to govern humankind appropriately. [30]

Mīr ʿAlī Šīr is profiled as the exact point of balance between these mystical and earthly imperatives. Very early on, he demonstrated his Sufi orientation by "scattering favours on the earthly realm with his sleeve of non-existence" (*āstīn-e ʿadam-e eltefāt bar donyā va mā-fī-hā fešānd*), while at the same time demonstrating how "the dust of love for possessions of this ephemeral world and the particles of attachment to things of this current world did not collect [31]

on his skirt of inclination" (*ġobār-e maḥabbat-e amvāl-e fānī va gard-e mavaddat-e asbāb-e in-ğahānī bar dāman-e hemmat na-nešānd*) (Ḫʷāndamīr 1999, 88). At the age of 4, after beginning his studies in a *maktab*, Mīr ʿAlī Šīr demonstrated an innate genius for understanding the manifestation of the divine on earth; this endowed quality grew into fruition as Mīr ʿAlī Šīr associated freely with Sufis, most notably with the Naqšbandī Order and the preeminent family of Ḫʷāğah ʿObaidollāh Aḥrār. With the accession of Solṭān-Ḥosain Bāiqarā in 1470, Mīr ʿAlī Šīr became an imperial confidant and was charged with kingly and financial affairs; in turn, he became preoccupied with supporting the Sufis, and arranged a number of tax exemptions and financial reliefs. Ḫʷāndamīr also relates how he became quite absorbed with the "books of the dervishes" (*kotob-e darvīšān*) and "Sufi texts" (*nosaḫ-e ṣūfīyah*), particularly those by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ğāmī, as well as a number of hagiographical texts. It is for these reasons that Mīr ʿAlī Šīr intensified his career as patron and benefactor by building a number of Sufi institutions: *ḫānqāhs* (hermitages), *emārats* (lodges), *rebāṭs* (monasteries), and *ḥauzahs* (cisterns). Ḫʷāndamīr describes 12 specific Sufi shrine complexes, including the Ḫānqāh-e Eḫlāṣīyah and the Ḫānqāh-e Ğamāʿat-Ḫānah of Herat, which were built throughout Khorasan in cities such as Mashhad, Nishapur, and Marv. Thereafter, Ḫʷāndamīr provides a list of named public works which were commissioned on the basis of endowment deeds (*waqfs*) which were in turn connected with Sufi orders such as the Naqšbandīs; the totals for these are: 53 *rebāṭs*, 20 *ḥauzahs*, 16 bridges, and 9 *ḥammāms* (bathhouses) (Ḫʷāndamīr 1999, 91–94).

Ḫʷāndamīr's specificity regarding Mīr ʿAlī Šīr Navāʾī's acts of patronage—be they musi- [32]
cology texts, illustrated manuscripts, or Sufi hermitages—highlights his *Makārem al-aḫlāq* in a powerful and unique way. Ḫʷāndamīr uses the *makārem al-aḫlāq* genre as both a skeletal and malleable framework to include necessary opening chapters on the concept of 'most noble moral attributes' to highlight God's creation of humankind as rational, cognizant entities who are fully realized as such with the revelation of Islam and the Qurʾān. However, Ḫʷāndamīr takes authorial license as an active scholar-bureaucrat to use formal chapters to highlight the superiority of poetry and epistolography as manifestations of intellect; moreover, there is a powerful epistemic quality here which allows representation and articulation of hidden essences and realities. Further in the text, theoretical discussions on the importance of the religious sciences and asceticism, in turn, become inventories of Navāʾī's patronage. Thus, Ḫʷāndamīr creatively uses this genre of *makārem al-aḫlāq* to best represent and account for the wide ranging, multivalent nature of Mīr ʿAlī Šīr Navāʾī's career as a powerful Sufi scholar-bureaucrat who stood at the intersection of politics and administration.

## Soliciting Patronage: The *Dastūr al-vozarāʾ* (1509–10) and the *Nāmah-ye nāmī* (ca. 1520)

After the death of the Solṭān-Ḥosain Bāiqarā in 1506, and the final fragmentation a year [33]
later of what was left of the Timurid empire by the Uzbeks, Ḫʷāndamīr entered a phase of his career which was marked by violence, distress, and uncertainty regarding employment and patronage. During the Uzbek occupation of Herat between 1507 and 1510, Ḫʷāndamīr was arguably at his lowest point; property was confiscated, fines were levied, and goods were extorted (Szuppe 1992, 72–73; de Bruijn 1978, 1021). In the *Ḥabīb al-seyar*, Ḫʷāndamīr remembers how the Uzbeks requisitioned a number of sheep from his personal estate:

> we were forced to exchange the staffs (*ʿaṣāhā*) we held as official comptrollers' [34]

insignia [instead] for shepherd's crooks (*čūb-hā-ye čūpānī*) and drive the sheep before ourselves all the way home. Several days prior to this, the people of Ḥosh Bazaar [in Herat] had seen us dressed luxuriously and riding fine horses, and when they saw us, they laughed in amazement (Ḫʷāndamīr 1954, 4:383).[6]

Ḫʷāndamīr's depiction of Uzbek rule in Herat and the Haravi Valley was stark, and his comments on the Uzbek refusal to patronize and actively support maintenance are clear: "there was a shortage in the budgets of *ḫānqāh*s, caravanserais, and shrines, and in contrast to the days of the Timurids…there was a significant deficit…and charitable institutions began to decline. Until this present day, no wealthy person has been provided to repair and restore those institutions" (Ḫʷāndamīr 1954, 4:383). Unable to secure an active patron, and contending with an acerbic and repressive political environment, Ḫʷāndamīr retreated from active public life.

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However, the absence of immediate patronage did not dissuade Ḫʷāndamīr from scholarly production. In 1509, during the Uzbek intermezzo in Herat, he produced a prosopography, the *Dastūr al-vozarāʾ*, which details the lives and maxims of dozens of famous viziers beginning with the legendary Solomonic minster, Āṣaf b. Barḫeya (Āṣaf-ğāh), and concluding with Timurid bureaucrats like Maǧd al-Dīn Moḥammad and Šaraf al-Dīn Marvārīd. As noted by Said Arjomand, such *dastūr*s emerged as a textual tradition in the Seljuq period thanks to Neẓām al-Molk's profiling of the vizierate as an invaluable institution of governance: "every king who has attained greatness…has had good viziers!" he exclaimed (Arjomand 2013, 101). Over the following centuries, several prosopographies and histories of viziers had been produced in both Arabic and Persian, and Ḫʷāndamīr's contribution stands as a Timurid continuation of Mongol-era texts like Naṣīr al-Dīn Monšī Kermānī's *Nasāʾem al-asḥār men laṭāʾem al-aḫbār dar tārīḫ-e vozarāʾ* (c. 1325) (Arjomand 2013, 104–5). The *dībāčah* itself is an effusive defense of the *ahl al-qalam*, citing Qurʾānic and prophetic proof texts, as well as supporting panegyric poetry (Ḫʷāndamīr 1939, 1–2). There is no doubting that Ḫʷāndamīr echoes here Neẓām al-Molk's argument regarding the centrality of the vizierate to proper sovereignty and governance: "there is not a single sultan who can work without the help of the august pen of the great vazirs!" (Ḫʷāndamīr 1939, 3). "Some great prophets and messengers of lofty station" (*baʿżī az anbeyāʾ-e bozorgvār va rosol-e ʿālī-meqdār*), Ḫʷāndamīr continues, believed that "an imperial court constitutes a house where viziers and ministers cooperate and arrange petition" (Ḫʷāndamīr 1939, 3). On this matter, help and guidance was given with Qurʾān 20: 29–30: "And appoint for me [said Moses] a minister from my family, Aaron my brother." Indeed, "any bureaucrat who weaves the threads of intellect and ingenuity" (*har mošīr keh be-ṭarāz-e āṣar-e ʿaql va kayāsat moṭarraz bāšad*) will ultimately "open the doors of the treasury of secrets for the emperor" (*pādšāh-e kāmkār abvāb-e ḫazānah-ye asrār pīš-e u gošāyad*) (Ḫʷāndamīr 1939, 4).

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Fascinatingly, Ḫʷāndamīr talks about how this perfect juncture of kingship and vizierate had taken place "in these august days" (*dar īn aiyām-e ḫoğasta*), and begins introducing the lengthy titulature of Solṭān-Ḥosain Bāiqarā, who is formally introduced as 'Abo-l-Fatḥ Solṭān Ḥosain Bahādor Ḫān' (Ḫʷāndamīr 1939, 4–5). The formulaic blessing (*doʿā*) which normally appears in such setting, however, has been slightly altered by Ḫʷāndamīr: "may the banners of the *friends* (italics mine) of his state never cease being raised in victory'" (*lā zālata rāyat awliyāʾ dawlatihi rafīʿah manṣūrah*) while "the standards of the enemies of his kingdom should

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6      For an English translation, see Thackston (1994, 2:542).

be forever chopped down in defeat" (*aʿlām aʿdāʾ mamlakatihi ḫafīẓah maksūrah*). What is curious about this textual space is the fact that the *Dastūr al-vozarāʾ* was written in 1509–10, at least three years after the death of Solṭān-Ḥosain Bāiqarā, and two years after the centralized collapse of the Timurid empire based in Herat. However, there were several notable Timurid princes who were still contesting Uzbek rule in Khorasan, but they were scattered and limited in scope. Facing the rise of the Safavids in the west, and the occupation of the Uzbeks of his home province, Ḫᵛāndamīr likely invoked the deceased Solṭān-Ḥosain as a dedicatee in the hopes of demonstrating his sense of Timurid loyalty at a time when no viable or charismatic political leadership existed.[7] Indeed, Maria Szuppe highlighted Ḫᵛāndamīr's intense dedication and fidelity to the Timurid dynasty during his entire career: "at no point during his life did he ever abandon his Timurid loyalties" (Szuppe 1992, 147). This interpretation is in fact corroborated by the fact that the actual dedicatee is Kamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd Sāġarčī, who had been employed by Moḥammad Šaybānī Ḫān after conquering Khorasan. The Sāġarčīs were a typical family of Timurid *dīvāneyān* (administrators), and Ḫᵛāndamīr clearly respected Kamāl al-Dīn and his potential. However, nowhere in the *dībāčah* does he acknowledge the Uzbeks as the ruling dynasty of the day, and more interestingly, Kamāl al-Dīn would later be named—in a matter of months—as the *ṣāḥeb-dīvān* (top position in the administration) for all of Khorasan by Šāh Esmāʿīl I after pushing the Uzbeks themselves from power in Khorasan (Mitchell 2009, 27; Ḫᵛāndamīr 1954, 4:513). Clearly, Ḫᵛāndamīr knew an opportunity when he saw one, and thus the dedication of *Dastūr al-vozarāʾ* to Sāġarčī at this time makes sense. Having said this, none of the typical language associated with the mechanics of patronage appears here, and we are compelled to see this as more of an overture to a possible relationship.

Ḫᵛāndamīr's prefatory remarks about the provenance of this project alludes to the depressing conditions of Uzbek-controlled Khorasan and their unwillingness to patronize local elites. Learned ones (*ṭavāʾef-e afāżel*) are "ruined people" (*foqqāḥ-zadagān*) while nobles ones (*šarāʾef-e amāṣel*) themselves are now "oppressed ones" (*setam-dīdagān*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1939, 6). He clearly stocks much promise in Kamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd Sāġarčī, writing "if the clouds of [Sāġarčī's] mercy—at this time—do not provide a canopy over the heads of the inhabitants of the region of Khorasan, the existence of these who are like dirt-dwellers will be burned by the sun of calamities" (*agar ṣāḥeb marḥamat-aš dar īn auqāt sāyah bar farq-e sākenān-e deyār-e Ḫorāsān na-andāḫta vuǧūd-e amṣāl-e mā ḫāksārān dar āftāb-e ḥavādeṣ be-sūḫtī*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1939, 7). In a similar tone, and likely alluding to the Uzbek situation, he warns that if Sāġarčī does not provide justice (*ʿadālat*) and benefits (*eḥsān*), "those wandering the desert of perplexity will become lost in the nightfall of oppression and hatred" (*sar-gašta-gān-e vādī-ye parīšānī dar ẓalām-e ẓolm va ʿedvān mafqūd būdī*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1939, 7). Alternating between admonition and sycophancy, Ḫᵛāndamīr recalls Sāġarčī's recognition of his existence, and how this was a personal gift (*tohfah-ye ḫod*) which pulled Ḫᵛāndamīr from his "daily drudgery" (*meḥnat-e ayyām*). In a feeble attempt at repayment, Ḫᵛāndamīr decided to write the *Dastūr al-vozarāʾ* for Sāġarčī's consideration, and in doing so, would present this gift "from biographies and sayings of viziers" (*az seyar va maʿāṣer-e vozarāʾ*).

Not unlike his creative innovation regarding the content and structure of the *Makārem al-aḫlāq*, Ḫᵛāndamīr uses the tradition of vizierial histories to fashion a particular epistemology. For him, the idea of garnering knowledge from either non-Islamic or pre-Islamic

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7    Saʿīd Nafīsī, the editor of the *Dastūr al-Vozarāʾ*, suggests that this inconsistency is a result of two
     manuscripts—written at different times—being joined together. This seems highly unlikely for a scholar-
     bureaucrat of Ḫᵛāndamīr's training and reputation.

sources was not especially problematic; like many scholar-bureaucrats of the medieval period, Ḫʷāndamīr was reluctant to eschew those ancient traditions of the Irano-Mediterranean frontier—Sasanian, Roman, Greek, Egyptian—on the basis of their ignorance (*ğāhelīyat*) of Islam. Indeed, he confronts the issue quite directly: "the affairs of some of that exalted group (*ṭabaqah-ye ʿālī-šān*) who were occupied with vizierial duties *before* (italics mine) the time of the Prophet are *not* mentioned in the books of history (*az kotob-e tavārīḫ mostafād na-gašt*)" (Ḫʷāndamīr 1939, 8). With the blessing of such a realization, this particular treatise of the *Dastūr al-vozarāʾ* has constructed a foundation (*maṣdar*) by mentioning the great pre-Islamic viziers, namely Āṣaf b. Barḫeyā and Būẕarğ-mehr (Ḫʷāndamīr 1939, 8). Moreover, Ḫʷāndamīr declares he will not conceal the "miraculous circumstances" (*ġarāʾeb-e ettefāqāt*) of that period which witnessed "the pen of originating rhetoric" (*qalam-e balāġat-nežād*) arranging the bases for foundation which in turn allowed the laying of the path of reason (*ʿaql-e hedāyat*) (Ḫʷāndamīr 1939, 8). Correspondingly, Ḫʷāndamīr presents his first two significant chapters on the sayings and deeds of the legendary Āṣaf b. Barḫeyā and Būẕarğ-mehr. Ḫʷāndamīr's innovative ideas on secretarial and vizierial culture become clearer after a comparison with texts like the *Nasāʾem al-asḫār men laṭāʾem al-aḫbār* of Kermānī. The introduction of the *Nasāʾem al-asḫār* is consistent with regard to its enthusiastic profiling of viziers and their invaluable service to the success of Perso-Islamic sultanates and kingdoms. However, there is no mistaking the scope and frequency of Qurʾānic and Prophetic proof texts between the two; Ḫʷāndamīr cites roughly a dozen ayahs and hadiths in his *dībāčah*, while Kermānī's introduction contains significantly more, while also focusing on the provenance of administrative writing in the fledgling Prophetic community of seventh-century Mecca. Kermānī makes no explicit mention of any popular, pre-Islamic viziers in his preamble, and formally begins his prosopography on "the Viziers of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs" (*vozarāʾ-e ḫolafāʾ-e rāšedīn*) (Kermānī 1985, 12).

Ḫʷāndamīr's situation in the next three years is difficult to follow. His own chronicle, the *Ḥabīb al-seyar*, describes how Kamāl al-Dīn Sāġarčī had indeed survived the Uzbek-Safavid transition, and "shortly after, gained the shah's favour and was appointed vizier and chief of divan, in which office he attained great power and influence and became a confidant to the shah" (Ḫʷāndamīr 1954, 4:514). However, there are no references by Ḫʷāndamīr to Sāġarčī as a personal patron during this period; it seems reasonable to conclude, then, that either a) Sāġarčī refused Ḫʷāndamīr's overtures, or b) Ḫʷāndamīr decided to disassociate himself quietly from any connection with the Safavids, at least for the time being. Given the need for experienced talent in Herat, as well as the stature of Ḫʷāndamīr's family in the city, it seems unlikely that Sāġarčī would knowingly rebuff the well-established scholar-bureaucrat. In any event, Ḫʷāndamīr withdrew to the village of Pasht in the neighboring province of Ġarğestān and remained there until 1514. At this time, there was a brief surge of Timurid sovereignty with the arrival in Ġarğestān of Moḥammad-Zamān Mīrzā, the son of Solṭān Badīʿal-Zamān Mīrzā and grandson of Solṭān-Ḥosain Bāiqarā. Initially, Moḥammad-Zamān Mīrzā had accepted, along with his father, a life of political exile and refuge in Safavid Iran, but in 1514 had mounted a campaign to restore the Timurid house in Khorasan. Safavid notables organized their military forces, and subsequently pushed the young rebellious Timurid prince eastwards to Ġarğestān, where he eventually came across Ḫʷāndamīr and his quiet seclusion in Pasht. The mechanics of patronage were inescapable for Ḫʷāndamīr, and as he stated somewhat stoically: "it was incumbent upon me to recognize my gratitude for the education (*ḥoqūq-e tarbeyat*) and beneficences (*ʿenāyat*) I had received from [Solṭān-Ḥosain Bāiqarā] and Solṭān

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Badīᶜ al-Zamān Mīrzā" (H̱ᵛāndamīr 1954, 4:397).[8] H̱ᵛāndamīr was informed by the prince: "as is according to custom, you were in the service of our fathers, and now you must serve us" (*be-dastūrī keh dar molāzamat-e ābāʾ-ye mā mī-būdah men baᶜd ḫedmat-e mā mī-bāyad kard*).[9] In no way (*be-hīč vağh*) could the scholar-bureaucrat remove himself (*mofāreqat*) and get away (*mobāᶜedat*), and thus found himself press-ganged into the prince's retinue. While most modern biographical treatments of H̱ᵛāndamīr suggest that he remained in Ġarğestān during this period (Szuppe 1992, 56; de Bruijn 1978, 1021), it would appear that he was relatively active: he accompanied Moḥammad-Zamān Mīrzā during his conquest of Balkh in 1516, and was later sent from Pasht to Balkh as an official envoy. More telling, however, was his participation in a battle at Čerāġdān in 1517 between the Timurid prince and Safavid forces; after losing to the Safavids, Moḥammad-Zamān Mīrzā decided to push on to Qandahar but H̱ᵛāndamīr obtained permission to make a stop in Ġarğestān on account of his destroyed armour (*rāqem-e ḥorūf be-sabab-e etlāf-e yarāq eğāzat yāftah dar Ġarğestān tavaqquf namūd*) (H̱ᵛāndamīr 1954, 4:403).[10] Moḥammad-Zamān Mīrzā continued campaigning, but was soon defeated and imprisoned; he was eventually brought to Kabul, where he was released and exonerated after some time by his Timurid cousin and future dynastic-founder, Ẓahīr al-Dīn Bābor. Indeed, Bābor ceremoniously returned the right to govern Balkh to Moḥammad-Zamān Mīrzā, while at the same time arranging a marriage between the prince and his daughter (Bābor 1921, 365).

Between 1514 and 1517, H̱ᵛāndamīr had entered, or been forced into, an exclusively   [41]
Timurid client-patron relationship; moreover, at one point during this period, H̱ᵛāndamīr had actively fought against two prominent Safavid notables based in Khorasan, Aḥmad Solṭān Afšār and Ebrāhīm Solṭān Mūsālū, the latter being the brother of Amīr Solṭān Mūsālū who had been appointed governor of Herat and tutor (*lala*) to the prince-heir, Ṭahmāsp, one year earlier in 1516 (Mitchell 2009, 215). This might strike some as surprising since H̱ᵛāndamīr is often celebrated as a Safavid historian and propagandist, but the narrative certainly indicates that, at least until 1517, H̱ᵛāndamīr kept this millenarian-tinged Sufi-Shi'i dynasty—originally Āẕarbāiğānī in orientation—at some distance from himself. Initial years of Safavid rule in Herat had been decidedly rocky, mostly on account of the apocalyptic and antinomian outlook of Šāh Esmāᶜīl and his Qezelbāš followers between 1501 and 1510. Starting in 1516, however, civic governance in Herat improved considerably when the city was decreed by the shah to be the official seat of governorship for the *valī ᶜahd*, or princely heir (Mitchell 2021, 86). In particular, it was the gubernatorial tenure (1521–29) of prince Sām Mīrzā, and his Qezelbāš handler/tutor, Dūrmīš H̱ān Šāmlū, which saw the calmest period since the halcyon dates of Solṭān-Ḥosain Baiqarā (Szuppe 1992, 94). Also, the stabilizing impact of certain key Herātī administrators after 1516, like Amīr Moḥammad-e Mīr Yūsof, Ḥabībollāh Sāvağī, as well as Mīrzā Šāh Ḥosain Eṣfahānī, has to be noted. It is the contention here that H̱ᵛāndamīr learned of his home city's recovery and resurgence under the Safavids and decided to re-locate from Ġarğestān to Herat so as to seek out patronage in a new dynastic milieu.

H̱ᵛāndamīr's next textual contribution as a scholar-bureaucrat was the *Nāmah-ye nāmī*, a   [42]
collection of model letters, decrees and edicts in the style of the well-established literary tradition of *enšāʾ*. While the bulk of these model texts have Timurid provenance, there is an occasional document which appears to be written on behalf of the Safavid state, such as Šāh Esmāᶜīl's famous decree that the famous painter Kamāl al-Dīn Behzād be transferred from

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8    My translation is slightly different than what Thackston provides (see Thackston 1994, 2:550).
9    Again, my translation is slightly different (see Thackston 1994, 2:550).
10   I have translated this slightly different (see Thackston 1994, 2:553).

Herat to Tabriz.[11] In the *dībāčah*, Ḫʷāndamīr writes that at the time of the compilation he was "around" (*ḥodūd*) forty-six years of age; knowing that he was born in 880 heǧra, this dates the *Nāmh-yi nāmī* at roughly 926 heǧra, or 1520 C.E. As a *maǧmūʿah* ("collection") of high-level, yet disparate, chancellery material produced by himself as well as past and present notables in Herat, such as Saif al-Dīn Taftāzānī (d. 1514) and Mīr Moḥammad Yūsof (d. 1521), the *Nāmah-ye nāmī* was almost certainly not assembled in Pasht, but rather in Herat; while some of the profiled documents were written by Ḫʷāndamīr himself, such as some correspondence from Moḥammad-Zamān Mīrzā to Bābor, he would have needed to consult and copy from state and private collections to give the *Nāmah-ye nāmī* its wide range and substance. Gottfried Hermann provided a summary and partial transcription of Ḫʷāndamīr's manual, and as such we are provided a epistolographic taxonomy and hierarchy of Ḫʷāndamīr's vision of Heratī society: rulers, amīrs, religious officials, viziers, accountants, scribes, saiyeds, ʿolamā, preachers, physicians, astrologers, calligraphers, painters, merchants, architects, bookbinders, archers, singers, musicians, artisans, moneychangers, bakers, druggists, cooks, tailors, saddle-makers, carpenters, ironmongers, vegetables merchants, and bath-house managers (Hermann 1968, 29–36).

The opening lines of the *Nāmah-ye nāmī* embrace the spirit of rhetoric, offering poetry and    [43] rhymed prose arrangements to highlight speech and rhetorical utterance and their special, intimate relationship with the Divine. The poetry is interspersed with Qurʾānic references which predictably invoke the imagery of the Pen (*al-qalam*) and the Tablet (*al-lauḥ*), and these are dedicated to profiling God's creation of the universe. These divine encomiums transition to Moḥammad, and likewise we see the Prophet framed as the reification of knowledge through which Divine utterance is channeled. Here, he invokes Ǧāmī's *Haft Aurang*, and writes how "the first offspring of divine power is the Pen/from whose nib, the two worlds are beautifully inscribed." Moreover, "the best fruit of that new sapling (i.e. humanity)/is none other than the speech of the most perfect race" (Ḫʷāndamīr 1520, f. 2b). Ḫʷāndamīr also makes adept use of rhymed prose (*tasǧīl*) and arrangements of parallel rhymed phrases (*tarṣīʿ*) as he describes—in predictably hyperbolic terms—how the *monšī*, or literary stylist, is the ultimate guardian and practitioner of this sacred craft (Ḫʷāndamīr 1520, f. 2b). In many ways, Ḫʷāndamīr's presentation is reflective of contemporary philosophical principles in the Perso-Islamic world. Knowledge and reason were of fundamental importance, and they were intertwined by the faculties of speech and utterance. Indeed, he uses mystical poetry consistently to describe how thought and idea would be doomed to suffer non-existence if not for the life-giving, generosity of speech.

Ḫʷāndamīr formally introduces himself and his status as a harvester of previous works on    [44] rhetoric, and in this sense we are to understand that he is consciously including himself in a long and vibrant tradition of scholar-bureaucrats who choose to make their mark on literary history by proffering their own compilations of *enšāʾ* (Ḫʷāndamīr 1520, f. 3b). Ḫʷāndamīr talks of the epistemological interdependence of *enšāʾ* and the writing of history, and thus references his own historiographical contributions, including the *Ḫolāṣat al-aḫbār fī bayān aḥvāl al-aḫyār*, the *Maʿāṣer al-molūk*, the *Makarem al-aḫlāq*, the *Dastūr al-vozarāʾ*, and his abridgement, or *Montaḫab*, of the *Tārīḫ-e Vaṣṣāf* (Ḫʷāndamīr 1520, f. 4a). He deliberately highlights the importance of patronage in terms of his past career: with divine and imperial bounty, these works were brought into existence from non-existence (*az katm-e ʿadam ẓohūr āmad*).

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11    A good overview of the *Nāmah-ye nāmī* and its significance for Behzād's decree is provided by David Roxburgh (see Roxburgh 2001, 24–25).

Nonetheless, Ḫᵛāndamīr's tone here is somewhat maudlin, quoting two *robāʿīs* attributed to the Sufi master, Abo-l-Ḫair (d. 1049) which, in archly theosophical terms, laments the decayed nature of the present world and one's obsession with this earthly existence (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1520, f. 4a). He references a difficult period of his recent past, whereby he wandered with a disturbed soul (*del-e parišān*) and a perplexed state of mind (*damaġī-ye mošavvaš*); entwining his foot in the skirt of seclusion (*pāy dar dāman-e ʿozlat pīčīdah*), he had been quaffing in a deep sea of wine (*dar baḥr-e ʿamīq-e modāmat ġūṭah mī-khordam*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1520, f. 4b). There are no explicit references to places or individuals here, but it is likely that he is referring to his troubled years after the collapse of the Timurid empire and semi-retirement to Pasht and nearby Mount Zagh (Crow Mountain) in Ġarġestān.

Eventually, he was able to "clear the rust of anxiety from his mind" and began walking into the oasis of amazement with "steps of cognition" (*bedāyat-e ḥayrat be-qadam-e fekrat*) in the spirit of overall recovery recommended by Qurʾān 94:5–6: "for indeed, with hardship [there is] ease, and with ease [there is] hardship." Ḫᵛāndamīr follows this scripture with a line of Neẓāmī's poetry: "In abundant despair, there is hope/The end of black night is white" (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1520, f. 4b). And with these happier times, Ḫᵛāndamīr decided to produce several lines (*saṭrī čand*) on letters and decrees (*makātīb va manāshīr*), with an eye towards appropriate phrases (*ʿebārat-e lāʾeqah*) and suitable allusions (*ešārāt-e rāʾeqah*). No patron is identified here, nor are there any textual references to the Safavids, the Qezelbāš, or Shiʾism in general. The introductory praise at the beginning of the *Nāmah-ye nāmī* invokes God and Moḥammad but makes no reference to ʿAlī and the Imams. Ḫᵛāndamīr simply writes: "it is hoped that this *Nāmah-ye nāmī*—having been approved in the eyes of the ruling lords and the learned ones—will distinguish the author with various types of favours" (*čašm dāšt čonam-ast keh īn Nāmah-ye nāmī dar naẓar-e arbāb-e daulat va eqbāl va aṣḥāb-e fażīlat va afżal-e mostaḥsan nemūdah moʾallef be-aṣnāf-e tavāʾef eḥteṣāṣ yābad*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1520, f. 5a). Rather than specifying one individual in his soliciting of patronage, Ḫᵛāndamīr praises the good opinions and praiseworthy inclinations of important grandees and notables in the city (*partau-e eqbāl-e żamāʾer-e tāmm-e karam va forūġ-e taḥsīn-e ḫavāṭer-e akāber-e lāzem al-eḥterām bar vaġanāt-e aḥvāl-aš bād*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1520, f. 5a). Ḫᵛāndamīr's strategy to ultimately secure patronage was built upon seeking approval and inclusion by the nobles, grandees, and fellow scholar-bureaucrats of Safavid Herat: "this miraculous text created a tumult by the remembering of individual names and titles, and if they were to name it 'Increasing Fame' (i.e. *Nāmah-ye nāmī*), it would be very appropriate" (*čon īn nāmah-ye badīʿah-ye hangāmah az ẕekr-e nām va alqāb nāmī gašt, agar ān-rā Nāmah-ye nāmī nām nahand lāʾeq ḫᵛāhad būd*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1520, f. 5b). This novel approach to securing patronage, i.e., corporate over individual, is consistent with Ḫᵛāndamīr's innovative approach to such relationships; moreover, there is no explicit referencing of Shiʾi personalities or slogans, suggesting that the Timurid scholar-bureaucrat hoped to reach out to the 'traditional' base of administrators who had survived the transition in Herat from Uzbek to Safavid rule, and not the Safavid dynasty itself.

## Secured Patronage: the *Ḥabīb al-seyar* (1524) and the *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī* (1534)

However, in the period of 1520–21, Ḫᵛāndamīr formally declared his status as a client of the Safavid dynasty and began writing his opus magnum, the *Ḥabīb al-seyar*. As stated, this universal chronicle is largely based on the work of his grandfather, the *Raużat al-ṣafā*, but with

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added chapters on the reigns of the last Timurids (Solṭān-Ḥosain Bāiqarā, Badīʿ al-Zamān, and Moḥammad-Zamān), the rule of Šāh Esmāʿīl, and a concluding chapter (ḫātema) on "the miracles and oddities of the earth and the wonders and accidents of the world" (*badāyeʿ va ġarāʾeb-e robʿ-e maskūn va ʿağāʾeb va vaqāyeʿ-e ğahān-e būqalamūn*). Ḫʷāndamīr's introduction to the *Ḥabīb al-seyar* is also his own, as he recounts the conditions which led to his inclusion into Safavid Herat and opportunities to develop links of patronage with notables like Amīr Moḥammad Yūsof and Habībollāh Sāvağī. What is particularly worth noting is Ḫʷāndamīr's paralleling here of the two scholastic-bureaucratic traditions of history and belle-lettrism. Referencing his life-long interest in history, he mentions how he arrived at a special stage (*marḥala*) of his life at around the age of 47/48 (*ḥodūd-e arbaʿīn-e haft hašt*) when he became especially preoccupied with "the study of books of history and giving great attention to the craft of *enšāʾ*" (*moṭalāʿa-ye kotob-e tārīḫ va momārasat-e ṣanʿat-e enšāʾī*). This dating (1521), indeed, corresponds with the *dībāčah* of the earlier *Nāmah-ye nāmī* and its 1520 dedication to a group of unnamed notables in Safavid Herat. It is clear that Ḫʷāndamīr's work on the *Nāmah-ye nāmī* a year earlier had influenced his conception of historiography; in the *Ḥabīb al-seyar,* he describes his objective of understanding "the great ones of kingship and religion" (*ozamāʾ-e molk va mellat*) but to do so required being on "the path of *enšāʾ*" (*selk-e enšāʾ*) and "perfecting and ranking the various documents" (*monšaʾ mokammal va morattab gardānīd*) (Ḫʷāndamīr 1954, 1:4). It was this approach, Ḫʷāndamīr states, that allowed him to produce all of his treatises to date which, in turn, earned him the recognition of contemporary Herati society (*zomrah-ye az abnāʾ-e zamān*) and inclusion among its greatest scholars (*fożalāʾ-e soḫandān eqterān yāft*) (Ḫʷāndamīr 1954, 1:4). It was at this time, specifically the year 1521, that Ḫʷāndamīr came to the attention of Amīr Moḥammad Yūsof, who showed his own inclination towards the "art of biographies and traditions" (*fann-e seyar o aḫbār*), and how he commissioned the "writing of a collection" (*be-enšāʾ-e mağmūʿah*) which organizes and arranges all the events of the world (Ḫʷāndamīr 1954, 1:5). With patron secured, Ḫʷāndamīr began his project in earnest, with plans to make it into 12 chapters, or "knots" (*davāzdah ʿoqad*), about the prophets, caliphs, and sultans. However, the project—and Ḫʷāndamīr's patronage—came to a crashing halt when Amīr Moḥammad Yūsof was accused of corruption, arrested, and executed soon after on 13 June 1521 (Szuppe 1992, 91).

After a period of months, the Safavid prince Sām Mīrzā—never explicitly named but referred to as *nauvāb-e kamyāb-e šāhī*—arrived in Khorasan to guarantee justice, beneficence and good order (Ḫʷāndamīr 1954, 1:6). In particular, Ḫʷāndamīr draws attention to the prince's confidant (*moqarreb*), Dūrmīš Ḫān Šāmlū, who was understood to be a vice-gerent, tutor, and advisor to Sām Mīrzā (Ḫʷāndamīr 1954, 1:7). However, it is the new chief administrator, Ḥabībollāh Sāvağī, who is described with extensive and appropriate titulature as the new source of patronage, including "renewer of the customs of majesty" (*moǧadded-e rosūm-e ğalālat*) and "restorer of the greatest scholars among the descendants of Asaf [Barkhiya]" (*marǧaʿ-e afāżel-e aʿāẓem-e banī ādam-e āṣaf*) (Ḫʷāndamīr 1954, 1:8). Ḫʷāndamīr notes how Ḥabībollāh was particularly "mindful of the conditions of the saiyeds, the ulama, and the eloquent ones" (*aḥvāl-e sādāt va ʿolamāʾ va fożalāʾ pordaḫt*) as well as the groups of writers and artists (Ḫʷāndamīr 1954, 1:8). In this environment, Ḫʷāndamīr turned his mind to his unfinished chronicle, and before long he came to the attention of Ḥabībollāh, who ordered that "the completion of these parts come about on the pages of revelation with the pens of diligence"(*tatimmah-ye īn ajzā-rā be-eqlām bar ṣafḥah-ye ẓohūr āvarad*) (Ḫʷāndamīr 1954, 1:8). After consulting the final copy of the manuscript, Ḫʷāndamīr relates how "it was [Ḥabībol-

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lāh] himself who confirmed that, at this moment, I was to turn away from writing vain royal decrees on missives, while also excusing the tongue of [my] pen and the pen of [my] tongue from writing the exposition of traditions and stories" (*bā-ḫod moḥaqqaq dāšt keh yek-bargī tauqīᶜ-e boṭlān bar roqᶜa enšāʾ goshād va dīgar zabān-e qalam va qalam-e zabān-rā az taḥrīr-e taqrīr-e aḫbār va as̱ār moᶜāf dārad*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1954, 1:9). Thus, Ḫᵛāndamīr celebrates the formal conclusion of his grand oevre by naming it "Companion of the Biographies" (*Ḥabīb al-seyar*), and in doing so, onomastically acknowledges Ḥabībollāh as a friend and supporter of both himself and the discipline of history.

As noted earlier, Ḫᵛāndamīr approached textual genres with a spirit of innovation and adap-   [48]
tion throughout his career. With regard to the *Ḥabīb al-seyar*, Sholeh Quinn, Shahzad Bashir, and Philip Bockholt have done the most recent and extensive work on the degree to which Ḫᵛāndamīr's chronicle worked within the genre of universal chronicles and other textual tradi-tions in terms of structure and content (Quinn 2015; Bashir 2015; Bockholt 2021). As Bashir noted, Ḫᵛāndamīr was comfortable with a certain parallelism in his structuring of history, whereby Qurʾānic-Prophetic conceptions of the creation of the universe and the pre-Islamic past were presented alongside Iranian notions of ancient and legendary history (Bashir 2015, 220). Quinn has approached the *Ḥabīb al-seyar* through a closer hermeneutic lens, comparing passages of the *Ḥabīb al-seyar* and the *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī* with anterior texts; for instance, she has demonstrated his use of a thirteenth-century Shīᶜī scholarly text, ᶜAlī b. ᶜĪsā al-Erbelī's *Kašf al-ġommah fī maᶜrefat al-aʾemmah*, to expand his grandfather's discussion of the Twelve Imams in the *Raużat al-ṣafāʾ* (Quinn 2015, 180). As she explains, Ḫᵛāndamīr clearly 'Shi'itized' parts of the *Ḥabīb al-seyar* for the benefit of his Safavid patrons in Herat (Quinn 2015, 183). Exam-ining here such issues through the lens of the *dībāčah*, there is certainly evidence to support these conclusions. Indeed, Ḫᵛāndamīr includes praise of ᶜAlī and the Imams in the appropriate opening spaces of the *dībāčah*, while no such benedictions appeared in any of the preambles discussed thus far. Moreover, in his subsequent defense of the importance of writing and the study of history, he talks about the need to record the miraculous events of the world with appropriately sophisticated language and literary devices; such advanced language is com-mensurate with the ineffable qualities of the Prophetic experience and the hidden meaning of the realities described by Moḥammad and the Imams (*ṭavāʾef-e aʾemmah*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1954, 1:3). More importantly with regard to genre, Ḫᵛāndamīr presents a relatively assertive episte-mological construct whereby history and *enšāʾ* not only reinforce one another, but in fact are interdependent in any attempt to recover and represent the past. For Ḫᵛāndamīr, chronicles and written histories cannot be separated from the co-existing tradition of *enšāʾ*, and the styl-ized prose of recorded speeches, testimonials, written communications, state documents, and administrative decrees. The *dībāčah*, and indeed the entirety of the *Ḥabīb al-seyar*, relishes in the use and manipulation of different Persian literary devices, such as *taǧnīs, tarṣīᶜ, esteᶜārah*, and *saǧᶜ*, and *tašbīh*, which are of course the popular tools of the *enšāʾ* craft and its practi-tioners, the *munshis*. Ḫᵛāndamīr himself was a product of a part of Timurid society which approached Persian poetry and stylized prose with more elaboration and a conscious sense of aesthetic adornment; indeed, once could reasonably highlight the Timurid period as the "age of the *monšī*." The editor of the *Ḥabīb al-seyar*, Ǧalāl al-Dīn Homāʾī, in fact included in his introduction a separate section on the conspicuous use and application of stylized prose by Ḫᵛāndamīr (*sabk-e naṣr va enšāʾ-e Ḥabīb al-seyar*) (Homāʾī 1954, 37–41).

In 1527, Ḫᵛāndamīr learned that his former patron and ruler of Balkh, Moḥammad-Zamān   [49]
Mīrzā, had decided to follow his father-in-law and political supporter, Ẓahīr al-Dīn Babor, to

the Indo-Gangetic plains. Life in Safavid Herat had grown complicated in recent months for Ḫᵛāndamīr: Dūrmīš Ḫān Šāmlū passed away in 1524, and Ḥabībollāh Sāvaǧī was murdered in 1526 by rowdy Qezelbāš troops. Ḫᵛāndamīr likely concluded that Herat's recent status as a sanctuary of stability and patronage was coming to a close, and therefore decided to seek patronage among the new and fledgling dispensation of Timurid rule in South Asia. He formally presented himself to Bābor's court in Agra in 1528 and accompanied the Timurid ruler a year later during his campaign in Bengal where, coincidentally, he finished one of his versions of the *Ḥabīb al-seyar* (de Bruijn 1978, 1021). Ḫᵛāndamīr did not produce any prose texts on behalf of Bābor during these two years, all the more surprising given Bābor's love of poetry and literary fashioning, and his own self-profiling as a renaissance Timurid prince and patron (Dale 1996, 642–43). After Bābor passed away in 1530, his son Homāyūn assumed the Mughal throne and Ḫᵛāndamīr, now aged roughly 55, prepared himself to plot yet another career course towards patronage with a young ruler who had been raised and surrounded by Timurid notables, religious personalities, and administrators. However, Homāyūn's upbringing and junior career was decidedly peripatetic, moving among and between cities and citadels of Central Asia and Afghanistan with his ambitious father, and it is clear that Homāyūn viewed his new and sudden sovereignty in north-central India as unique and unprecedented. It is possible that the emphasis in the *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī* on spatial power, spatial relationships among courtiers, and immovable monuments of sovereignty were responses to the transitory and mobile nature of his father's life as a competing Timurid prince. On the other hand, Ḫᵛāndamīr's first panegyric, the *Makārem al-aḫlāq*, also included spatial dynamics of patronage, with chapters on buildings and public works (Quinn 2015, 176). Suffice it to say, Homāyūn's vision of his court—and its celebration by Ḫᵛāndamīr—proved to be ephemeral, and like his Timurid father and so many Timurid forebearers, Homāyūn was forced into a life of temporary exile when Shīr Šāh Sūrī (d. 1545) forced him to leave India and seek refuge in Safavid Iran.

This quality of uniqueness associated with the fledgling Mughal court, along with Ḫᵛāndamīr's own innovative style regarding textual production and genre, combined to create the sui genesis *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī*. Commissioned directly by Homāyūn, this text ("The Institutes of Homāyūn") is a wide-ranging celebration of not only Homāyūn himself, but also a detailed presentation of the physical arrangement and social hierarchy of his court, the duties and obligations of his courtiers, the cosmological and astrological itineraries which influenced policies and decision-making, the timing and mounting of festivals and celebrations, as well as a number of prominent buildings and public works in cities like Delhi and Agra. Ḫᵛāndamīr recounts in the *dībāčah* that he met Homāyūn in the fort at Gwalior in 1533, and was informed how "it is right and proper that the inventions of my [i.e. Homāyūn's] auspicious mind (*moḫtaraʿāt-e żamīr-e eqbāl*)…should be chronicled" (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1993, 255).[12] Ḫᵛāndamīr appears to have been struck by the singularity of Homāyūn's innovations in the Mughal court, and it is these "peerless inventions" (*moḫtaraʿāt-e bī-ʿadīl*) that he now endeavoured to celebrate by opening "the doors of clearness and distinction" (*abvāb-e tabāyon va tafṣīl*) (Ḫᵛāndamīr 1993, 256; Prashad 1940, 14). The timing of this commission may have been no accident; Ḫᵛāndamīr's former patron, Moḥammad-Zamān Mīrzā, had struggled with the shift in sovereignty between Bābor and his son, and had rebelled unsuccessfully after Homāyūn's accession in 1530, and again in 1534 (Neẓām al-Dīn Aḥmad 1936, 3:46–47; Bosworth 2010). Homāyūn's experimental adaption of a typical Timurid court in a new South Asian environment may have provided an opportunity for Ḫᵛāndamīr to erase any doubts

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12      For English, see Prasad (1940, 14).

whatsoever regarding his loyalty to this particular Timurid lineage. Also worth noting is that this was the first occasion where H̬ᵛāndamīr had been commissioned by a sovereign ruler to write a treatise; previously, H̬ᵛāndamīr had operated in the more informal world of network patronage among viziers, notables, and senior functionaries, where texts were written either by way of soliciting or recompensing offers of patronage.

The unique subject matter of the *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī*, and the unprecedented context regarding its author and his commissioning by Homāyūn, are manifested in a number of ways in the formal preamble, or *dībāčah*. The opening section, predictably, praises God and his divine creation of the universe, earth, and humanity; and while Moḥammad is praised in both prose and verse, there is no explicit mention of ʿAlī and the Imams but simply the "guiding descendants" of the Prophet (*āl al-hādīn*) (H̬ᵛāndamīr 1993, 250; Prashad 1940, 3). The absence of any overt recognition of the Imams is consistent with Quinn's observation that H̬ᵛāndamīr 'shi'itized' and 'de-shi'itized' his texts depending on his religio-political environment. Particular attention is paid to God's endowing of prophets and kings with the requisite abilities for one to speak religious truth and the other to enforce and guarantee religious laws. At this juncture, Homāyūn is indirectly introduced as "he who excels all in prosperity, and who is far in advance of others in the field of justice"; in fact, H̬ᵛāndamīr exceptionalizes Homāyūn— "the most glorious of all sultans"—on the basis of his distinguished pedigree and exalted lineage (*ʿalavī nasab va samāvī ḥasab*), which are likely references to his Timurid and Mongol ancestry (H̬ᵛāndamīr 1993, 252; Prashad 1940, 6). And while Homāyūn's actual sovereign territory may have been north-central India, the geographical scope of his reputation and magnetic pull was significantly larger: "…those from the farthest borders of Turkestan to Hindustan have found rest under the shadow of his never-ceasing kindness, and [those] of the desert of mischief from the farthest territories of Iran and Azerbaijan, Kabul and Zabulistan seek the protection of his never-ending state" (H̬ᵛāndamīr 1993, 253; Prashad 1940, 7). A series of sovereign exemplars are profiled by H̬ᵛāndamīr as metaphorical embodiments of Homāyūn: thus, he rules with the dignity of Alexander the Great, the power of Solomon, and the hero-qualities of Rostam; concurrently, he is also the Ardašīr and the Anū Šīrvān of the age (H̬ᵛāndamīr 1993, 253; Prashad 1940, 9–10).

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After formally invoking the sovereign's full name—Moḥammad Homāyūn Pādšāh-e Ġāzī— H̬ᵛāndamīr introduces himself and how he was taken into the service of the king (*šaraf-e molāzamat-e īn pādšāh-e ḥelāfat-panāh daryāft*) (H̬ᵛāndamīr 1993, 255; Prashad 1940, 11). It was clear that the ruler saw in the aged Timurid scholar-bureaucrat an adroit propogandist. Thus, H̬ᵛāndamīr was fully cognizant that his duty was to reveal and popularize "the issuances of his work, the news of his deeds, the discoveries of his skillful disposition, and the inventions of his sharp nature" (*ṣāderāt-e aʿmāl va vāredāt-e afʿāl va mobadaʿāt-e ẕehn- e waqqād va moḥtaraʿāt-e ṭabʿ-e naqqād*) (H̬ᵛāndamīr 1993, 255; Prashad 1940, 11). Allowing that the *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī* was no history, he saw it in comparable order (*ham-čenān-čeh*) to other great celebrations in the Perso-Islamic tradition: "the eulogistic pages of ʿOtbī and ʿOnṣorī" (*ṣafaḥāt-e madḥāt-e ʿOtbī va ʿOnṣorī*) about the Ghaznavid ruler Maḥmūd along with "precious panegyrical gems of poetry of Moʿezzī and Anvārī" (*farāʾed-e qaṣāʾed-e Moʾezzī va Anvarī*) about the Seljuq ruler Sanǧar (H̬ᵛāndamīr 1993, 255; Prashad 1940, 12). And while Homāyūn was the patron, and in a greater sense the architect of this particular panegyric, H̬ᵛāndamīr was more concerned, as he has been in other similar circumstances, with ensuring acceptance and inclusion by the notables and scholars of the court in question: "through God's grace, it is hoped that the eminent courtiers of this noble assembly will honour these on account of

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the beneficial things of the age with their acceptance" (Ḫˇāndamīr 1993, 256; Prashad 1940, 12).

The *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī* represents a new genre of sorts in Persian court literature, which must have inspired people like Abo-l-Fażl (d. 1602) while writing monumental texts like the *Āyena-ye Akbarī* for Akbar the Great (r. 1556–1605). However, there remains a historiographical penchant among some scholars to depict Homāyūn's reign as an unnuanced continuation of Bābor's reign and Timurid Central Asian court practices as a whole (Balabanlilar 2010, 132–33). Azfar Moin has pointed out the importance of the Timurid legacy, while also highlighting the innovative and unprecedented nature of court cosmologies and the degree to which Homāyūn's reign deserves more interest and research (Moin 2012, 112–13). A recent article by Taymiya Zaman reviews ideas of literary genre in the early sixteenth century Mughal court with no mention of either Ḫˇāndamīr or the *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī;* fascinatingly, she mentions a Herati scholar, Qāżī Iḫteyār al-Dīn, who moved to Kabul after the collapse of the Timurids and, under the patronage of Bābor, wrote a text entitled the *Aḫlāq-e Homāyūnī* (Zaman 2011, 680–81). While the text is only referred to in passing by Zaman, one wonders whether or not there wasn't a deeper and more complex relationship between this particular text and the one produced by Ḫˇāndamīr on behalf of Bābor's son some two decades later.

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## Conclusion

Ḫˇāndamīr, a scholar-bureaucrat who spent much of his career subtly challenging and re-aligning literary and scholarly genres, should be considered at least a component during this fascinating dynamic period of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The respective contributions by Ḫˇāndamīr to a variety of literary traditions—ethics, vizierial prosopography, epistolography, chronicle-writing—portray an individual who was as much aware of past traditions as he was interested in fashioning new ones. His *dībāčah*s, without a doubt, reflect his respect and admiration for past generations of scholars and "eloquent ones" (*fożalāʾ*). On the other hand, Ḫˇāndamīr began his career early on with literary gestures and projects, like the *Makārem al-aḫlāq,* which were arguably forerunners of the age of literary genre innovation seen in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For Ḫˇāndamīr, the *dībāčah* of these different works functioned as para-textual spaces where he could introduce, discuss, and rationalize how and why he was fashioning particular epistemologies. The highlighting of intellect (*ʿaql*) in the *Makārem al-aḫlāq,* for instance, is buttressed by his emphasis on recognizing the importance of rational bureaucracy and administration in medieval Islamic societies; this rationality, in Ḫˇāndamīr's estimation, is decidedly pre-Islamic in origin, but like many educated Sufi Muslims he sees no contradiction between the enlightened ancient age and the superiority of Qurʾānic revelation and ongoing divine inspiration from Sufi shaikhs and brotherhoods. Like past 'mobile scholars', Ḫˇāndamīr was forced to make his way dextrously through a period of intense change and violence, and in some cases, he needed to show caution and discretion. However, in doing so, Ḫˇāndamīr played a large part in buttressing the appeal of Perso-Islamic culture which had been shaping South Asia since the eleventh century.

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The notion of a wide-ranging Perso-Islamic culture has very recently been re-articulated thanks to the respective work of Richard Eaton and Emma Flatt. Working with Sheldon Pollock's seminal study *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men,* scholars like Eaton and Flatt have used the notion of a Sanskrit 'cosmopolis'—i.e., an elite vision of Hindu South Asian society which is shaped directly by the prescriptions and admonitions found in Sanskrit literary

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culture—and applied it to the Muslim Indian experience in the medieval and early modern period (Eaton 2019; Flatt 2019). In this sense, there is a compelling argument for the existence of a competing and complimentary 'Persian' cosmopolis shaping the courts of northern India, Gujarat, Bengal, and the Deccan. The emergence of this cosmopolis in South Asia, shaped by epic and mystical poetry, as well as Sufi hagiographies, chronicles, the belletristic tradition, ethics literature, and philosophy, began in the eleventh century during the Ghaznavid period. The Persian 'cosmopolis' can be seen as a composite of literary texts and traditions which made their way to South Asia from 'Greater Iran', which in turn combined with those indigenous Persian textual contributions provided by medieval Muslim South Asians, such as great medieval poets and writers like Amīr Ḫosrau, Masʿūd Saʿd Salmān, Maḥmūd Gāvān, and Nezām al-Dīn Auleyāʾ.

The culmination of this Persian cosmopolis arguably took place during the height of the Mughal empire in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Building on the foundational work of Timurid rulers like Bābor and Homāyūn, Mughal successors like Akbar, Ğahāngīr and Šāhğahān patronized and encouraged the proliferation of Persian as the dominant literary and administrative language, while notables and elites followed suit in their regional and local milieus (Alam 1998). Perhaps the most profound characteristic of this Persian cosmopolis in central and local Mughal courts was the entry, participation, and eventual domination by the Hindu scribal class. As Rajiv Kinra (2015) has argued successfully, the emergence of administrative and belletristic Persian in the Mughal court was inseparably enmeshed with generations of Hindu scribes, accountants, reporters, auditors, and clerks of every level. The early transition of the Timurids from Central Asian imperial interlopers to Mughal Indian indigenous emperors was clearly a part of this greater cosmopolitan narrative. To better understand how the Mughals were able to intensify and expand the existing parameters of the Persian cosmopolis, I think it is helpful to re-evaluate the role and contribution of Timurid mobile scholar-bureaucrats like Ġeyāṯ al-Dīn Ḫʷāndamīr. His chronicle *Ḥabīb al-seyar* exerted a powerful historiographical influence on sixteenth and seventeenth century Indo-Islamic historians, while the *Makārem al-aḫlāq* and the *Qānūn-e Homāyūnī* certainly inspired the tone and structure of the *Āyena-ye Akbarī* by Abo-l-Fażl and subsequent texts which describes charismatic individuals, court arrangements, and administrative organization in the Mughal environment. The Timurid fascination with belle-lettrism was conveyed to the Mughal court thanks to texts like the *Nāmah-yi nāmī*, and the surge in popularity for *enšāʾ* would become a striking feature of the Persian cosmopolis both in northern and Deccani India (Flatt 2019, 167–209).

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