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The Antiquarian Imagination in Multilingual Daghestan - تخييل الأثري في ثقافة داغستان متعددة اللغات

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# The Antiquarian Imagination in Multilingual Daghestan<sup>1</sup>

Rebecca Ruth Gould

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Although it has cultivated a rich Arabic literary culture for much of the past millennium, few Arabists today are likely to be on familiar terms with Daghestan, a region that traverses the northeastern edge of the Caucasus mountains. In classical Arabic sources, Daghestan is referred to as a “mountain of tongues” (*jabal al-alsun*). The number of spoken languages ranges from seventy-two, according to al-Mas‘ūdī (2: 2), to three hundred, according to Abūl-Fidā’ al-Ḥamawī (71). Over the course of the past millennium, Daghestan’s many different peoples have created one of the most diverse literatures in Islamic literary history (see Saidov; Abdullaev; Gould, “Why Daghestan”; Kemper, *Herrschaft* 65-112). Yet, this is a region—and a literature—that Arabic studies has almost entirely ignored.

We need not look far for an explanation for contemporary Arabic studies’ neglect of Daghestan: During the entirety of the Soviet period, Daghestan was terra incognita for anyone living outside the Soviet Union. Even from within Soviet borders, travel to the region was rare and difficult. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Daghestan’s reputation for danger and fanaticism (inevitably of the “Islamic fundamentalism” variety) has added to the constellation of factors that keep this mountainous region off the well-trodden scholarly path; as remote for travelers of the mind, and of literatures, cultures, and histories, as it has long been for travelers on foot. The fact that the medium of most secondary scholarship on Daghestan is Russian acts as yet another barrier blocking access to the Arabic literary culture of Daghestan, thereby severing the literatures of the Caucasus equally from Islamic studies and from world literary history.

While situating Daghestani literature within the literary tradition of the Islamic world, this article undertakes a task somewhat different from what previous scholarship has done: I aim to reconceptualize the place of Daghestani literature within Islamic literary cultures. Each of the three texts presented here— *Gulistān-i Iram* (*Garden of Paradise*, 1841) by the nineteenth-century Persian polymath ‘Abbās Qulī Āqā Bākīkhānūf (d. 1847), *Āthār-i Dāghistān* (*Vestiges of Daghestan*, 1892) by the Lezgi poet, critic, and jurist Ḥasan al-Alqadārī (1834-1910), and *Nuzhat al-adhhān fī tarājīm ‘ulamā’ Dāghistān* (*Stroll through the Minds in the Generations of Daghestani Scholars*) by the Soviet Qumyq (Turkic) scholar Nadhīr al-Durgīlī (1891-1935)—in Persian, Azeri Turkic, and Arabic reveals a relation between a specific geography on the borderlands of multiple empires and an attraction to narrative forms specific to biographically and autobiographically inflected historiography. By adducing a relation between genre and geography for the narrative literatures of Daghestan, I aim to redraw the boundaries of Arabic and Persianate literary cultures, as well as of a broadly Islamicate cultural sphere that reached from Sarajevo to the Malay Archipelago to the Hejaz. Two of the three texts discussed here were composed in languages other than Arabic even while belonging to a broadly Arabic culture sphere. We might therefore transpose the linguistic concept of a *Sprachbund*, a group of languages that have come to resemble each other over time due to the geographic proximity and cultural contacts among their speakers (see Chirikba), onto the domain of textual culture, in recognition of the fact that the Arabic script delimits the conditions of literary production in all languages used by Muslims. While acknowledging the multilingualism of this culture, it is also worth registering that all three writers discussed here regularly composed works in Arabic, even when their best-known works were in Persian and Azeri Turkish. Neither peripheral nor hegemonic, Arabic defined the terms of Daghestan’s multilingual literary culture.

There are additional reasons for the paucity of scholarship on Daghestani Arabic literature as compared to other Islamic geographies. Compared to India, where, to a greater extent than in the Caucasus, Arabic carries “an almost absolute Islamic identity” (Qutbuddin 315), Daghestani literature is concentrated

within a small geography. South Asia's millions of Muslims far outnumber Daghestan's Arabic-literate demographic. What it lacks in size, however, Daghestan makes up for in heterogeneity: The many cultures and traditions that it comprises are marked by the many empires for which it constituted an outermost periphery, from the Sassanians to the armies of the Russian tsar. Among its many genres, Daghestani literature's particular strength is in the domain of narrative form.

By way of reconstructing Daghestan's Islamicate literary history, I consider three texts that exist in intertextual relations with each other. Two of these, *Garden of Paradise* and *Stroll through the Minds in the Generations of Daghestani Scholars*, respectively, conform either in full or in part to the genre of biographical dictionary (Arab. *ṭabaqāt*; Pers. *tazkira*) that was widespread throughout the Islamic world. While Bākīkhānūf's work has also been called a history, the third text, *Vestiges of Daghestan*, arguably conforms most closely to what is called history (*tārīkh*) in the Islamic tradition.<sup>2</sup> Given that, as Wadad al-Qadī notes, "several of the foremost compilers of [Arabic] biographical dictionaries have identified their respective works as works of history" (115), the genres of *ṭabaqāt/tazkira* and *tārīkh* are best seen as part of a continuum rather than as a dichotomy. In different ways, these literary genres constitute part of the archive of what I refer to as "Islamic antiquarianism."

Islamic antiquarianism means different things to different scholars depending on their disciplines. For some, antiquarianism refers to a fascination with antiquity (see Malcolm). For others, it references a method of inquiring into the past that privileges material evidence such as coins and architecture over textual sources (see Cooper). While both meanings are relevant to the present context, my primary interest here is with how antiquarianism organizes knowledge and relates to evidence in ways that contrast with the discipline and discourse of modern history, as I show below. I understand antiquarianism as a non-linear way of inquiring into the past that coexists with linear historiography, and which, in modernity, is increasingly eclipsed by it (see Momigliano, "Ancient"). Nietzsche describes this type of antiquarian as one for whom "the small, limited, crumbling, and archaic keep their own worth and integrity. . . The history of his city becomes for him the

history of his own self” (73). Like the Nietzschean antiquarian, these three authors expand and rewrite their own biographies by exploring their culture’s material pasts. Although their works are of great value to historians, their methodology tends more towards genealogical than linear history (see Gould, “Antiquarianism”). As I argue in this article, although their antiquarianism is sometimes latent and suppressed, and has therefore been ignored by scholarship to date, the antiquarian dimensions of their work usefully evoke ways of inquiring into the past that diverge from linear historiography, whether of the medieval past or the academic present.

The texts of al-Alqadārī and al-Durgilī were written in Daghestan. Although composed in northern Azerbaijan (near the border with Daghestan), Bākīkhānūf’s work is centrally concerned with Daghestan’s Islamic pasts. It treats Shirvan and Daghestan—two regions currently partitioned into the nation states of Azerbaijan and Russia, respectively—as a single geography. Its geographic orientation makes it a worthy predecessor to the texts of al-Alqadārī and al-Durgilī. Furthermore, according to the German Orientalist Friedrich Bodenstedt, who met Bākīkhānūf while both were residing in Tbilisi, the author’s original title for the Russian version of his text was *A History of Daghestan* (Buniatov, *Izbrannie* 337).

Collectively, these three texts by Lezgi, Qumyq, and Turkic authors compel us to rethink Arabo-Islamicate—indeed all nation-based—literary histories. Across their discrete Persian, Turkic, and Arabic origins, and in ways that test while also challenging the limits of their respective genres, these works reconstruct Daghestan’s intertextual genealogy from the beginnings of Islam in the Caucasus to colonial and Soviet modernity. Bākīkhānūf, al-Durgilī, and al-Alqadārī weave together discrete narrative strands while transcending, or, more precisely, sublimating in the sense of a Hegelian *Aufhebung* (incorporating while transforming), their multifarious genres, ranging across *tazkira*, *tārīkh*, *ṭabaqāt*, and other narrative forms. This crossing of the boundary of language as well as of genre is enabled by the multilingualism that characterizes Caucasus literary cultures.

In the interest of situating these works in time, I will begin with the Persian text that, in addition to writing the

history of Daghestan and Shirvan up to the Treaty of Gulistan (1813), also included the last major biographical dictionary of poets in Azerbaijan's literary history. I will then examine an antiquarian history in Azeri Turkish by the Lezgi al-Alqadārī that was produced in close dialogue with Bākīkhānūf's work. I will conclude by tracing how one of the last extant biographical compendia produced in Daghestan, by the Qumyq (Turkic) al-Durgilī, combined the antiquarian legacies of Bākīkhānūf and al-Alqadārī into a traditional *ṭabaqāt*. Each intertextual juncture affords an opportunity to observe how differently, and yet also how similarly, these authors of widely divergent backgrounds engaged with Daghestan's Arabo-Islamicate literary culture.

A comparative consideration of these three textual encounters is followed by a renewed look at how a serious account of the intertextual multilingualism at the heart of Daghestani literature can help to redraw the geography of Islamicate literary history, and displace the nationalist alignment of ethnos with identity that has for too long inflected nation-based literary history (see Pollock). Throughout this investigation, I aim to clarify what the endeavor to transnationalize the study of Islamicate literary culture stands to gain by taking serious account of Daghestan's multilingual textual histories.

### ***Tārīkh* as Method: Bākīkhānūf**

Of the three texts within the intertextual web woven in these pages, *Garden of Paradise* interfaces most directly with colonial rule, partly due to its author's extensive contacts with the colonial and intellectual elite of Russia and Europe and his knowledge of the Russian language. 'Abbās Qulī Āqā Bākīkhānūf served in the colonial administration, first as a secretary and interpreter, and later as a diplomatic negotiator for the Treaty of Turkmanchai (1828) that forced the Qajars to recognize Russian suzerainty over the khanates of Yerevan, Nakhchivan, and Talysh. Following the Russian-Ottoman War (1828), Bākīkhānūf was awarded a medal of St. Vladimir for his service to the Russian army during the siege of Kars (Floor and Javadi ix). He describes being hired as a Russian translator by the Russian general Alexei Ermolov (*Gulistān* 280).

Among Bākīkhānūf's many friendships with Russian authors, the best documented is his work with the Russian poet Aleksandre Griboedov (1795-1829), for whom he served as a translator prior to the latter's tragic death in Tabriz (see Bakikhanova). Bākīkhānūf's work was known to the Orientalist Bodenstedt who translated his poetry into German (Ra'īs'niyā 192).

*Garden of Paradise* is the only one among the three texts discussed in this article that was translated into Russian by its author, although many decades passed before its publication. Bākīkhānūf finished his translation, which he called *Istoriī vostochnoi chasti kavkaza* (*A History of the Eastern Caucasus*) in 1843, but it was not published until 1926. When it was finally published, only his Persian title, *Gulistān-i Iram*, was used. The preface to the Russian translation, omitted from the 1926 publication, was published for the first time by Buniatov et al. (131, commentary on 300). In part due to the relatively more quiescent relations between Persianate Azerbaijan and the Russian empire as compared to the north Caucasus, many works composed in Persian during the nineteenth century were translated into Russian, and sometimes appeared in that language before they appeared in Persian.

Some post-Soviet scholars maintain that the Orientalists who had been assigned by the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences to review Bākīkhānūf's Russian text, B. A. Dorn and M. F. Brosset, advised against the work's publication (Oghlu 333). Soviet accounts by contrast maintain that the responsibility for blocking the publication of Bākīkhānūf's work lies with the Russian administration, and in particular with A. I. Chernyshev, head of the Ministry of War, who was entrusted with deciding on the publication of the text (Buniatov, "Ot redaktora" 5). Whether the blame lies with these eminent Orientalists or with colonial administrators, the difficult publication history of Bākīkhānūf's work contrasts with its contemporary importance, as both a significant work of literature from the Caucasus and a historical and antiquarian reflection on it in the premodern period (see Gould, "The Persianate").

Further reinforcing the ties between the text and colonial power, the very title that Bākīkhānūf assigned to his work is at once a reference to a verse in the Quran about the Garden of

Iram (89.6-8) and an allusion to the Qarabagh village where the Treaty of Gulistan was signed by Russia and Iran in 1813. As Bākīkhānūf notes, the terms of this treaty required Qajar Iran to yield to Russia the lands and the khanates of Ganjeh, Qarabagh, Talesh, Sheki, Shirvan, Baku, Qobbeh and Darband, and the entirety of Daghestan, Georgia, and the northern Caucasus. That these highly unfavorable terms, which resulted in Iran losing “most of her Caucasian possessions,” were celebrated in a major work of Persian historiography is suggestive of Bākīkhānūf’s conflicting affiliations (Kazemzadeh 5). As the regional details of the preceding enumeration suggest, *Garden of Paradise* is a local history. As such, it belongs to a long tradition of Persian local histories which abound in antiquarian themes. As Parvaneh Pourshariati remarks of another local history, *Tārīkh-i Bayhaq*, these antiquarian themes “occur mostly at well-defined junctures: when discussing the origins of a place, its founder, the etymology of its name, and the narrative of the Islamic conquest” (136). So too with *Garden of Paradise*, which draws on ancient Greek, Roman, and Armenian sources to speculate on the etymologies and histories of local myths and ethnonyms. As with other Persian local histories, the antiquarian dimension is incorporated into a broader historical project, but also remains distinct from it.

Unlike the two other texts considered in this intertextual web, which open with Daghestan’s geography, *Garden of Paradise* opens with a discourse on the science of history (*‘ilm-i tārikh*). Bākīkhānūf’s discourse has parallels within both medieval Persian historiography and the Russian historiographic tradition (see Ādamīyat), but the specific uses to which he puts his philosophical defense of historical reflection suggest a deeper attachment: This preface serves as a prelude to the conclusion, which is a justification not just of the author’s method, but of his very self. Comparing history to a political regime that, “without oppression and tyranny” (1), makes mankind adhere to its rules, Bākīkhānūf advocates a turn to the discipline that can bring to life worlds thousands of years old. Although he refers to this discipline as *tārīkh*—a term generally seen as synonymous with history—Bākīkhānūf’s *tārīkh* encompasses antiquarian methodologies, including non-linear reflection on synchronous



events and engagement with material culture. *Tārīkh* functions as a silent speaker (*gūyā-yī ast khāmūsh*), imparting the advice of the ancestors (*waṣāyā-yi aslāf*) to their descendants (*akhlāf*), and explaining “the conditions [*awṣāf*] of poverty and wealth as well as of progress and decay [*taraqqī va tanzīl*]” (2).

In line with global antiquarianism (Meganck 19-36), Bākīkhānūf’s defense of *tārīkh* is also a defense of erudition. As the author says, “an action founded on knowledge [*ilm*] lasts for eternity” (2). In the absence of such learning, and in the absence of narratives that can inform readers about the past, the reader is left stranded, wandering through a desert devoid of any signpost. Such undirected travel, Bākīkhānūf warns, is dangerous. His history is intended to lead readers away from such ominous routes, and to guide them towards the illumination generated from engagement with times past. While Bākīkhānūf is reflective about the meaning of *tārīkh* and his relation to it, his conception of historiographic writing is capacious: It includes personal reflection, political geography, as well as citations from poetry, myths, and other non-linear sources of knowledge about the past. This capacious understanding of his sources is one aspect of his antiquarianism.

Although Bākīkhānūf’s horizons are enriched by his knowledge of developments in early nineteenth-century European historiography, his illuminations are intimately linked to prior Persian and Arabic precedents, particularly those relating to the Caucasus. Bākīkhānūf’s Soviet editor Ziya Buniatov captures the multilingual dimensions of Bākīkhānūf’s historiographic vision when he claims that Bākīkhānūf was the “last chronicler of the middle ages and the first . . . historian of modernity, in whose work eastern classical traditions organically interwove with the [contemporaneous] Russian and European sciences” (“Ot redaktora” 4). While Buniatov’s nationalist bias sometimes clouds his vision, he is correct with respect to Bākīkhānūf’s multiple affiliations.

Most important for present purposes, however, is Bākīkhānūf’s disciplinary orientation. Bākīkhānūf’s *tārīkh* is also a geography, along the lines of prior works by above-cited authors such as al-Mas‘ūdī and al-Ḥamawī, of “the borders, lands, the reason for the names, the situation, languages, and religions of the country of Shirvan and Daghestan” (a section which takes

up pp. 3-30). It is also a history of the world, beginning with antiquity, and a biographical dictionary of the “people of the country of Shirvan and neighboring places who are writers or have distinguished themselves by other accomplishments” (a section which takes up pp. 197-216).

Neither of the two Daghestani authors who followed in Bākīkhānūf’s footsteps, al-Alqadārī and al-Durgilī, reflects explicitly on *tārīkh* as a method. Methodologically, they further develop Daghestani literature’s antiquarian tradition. At the same time, the narrative sequence used by both later authors, along with their world-historical framework, is taken directly from Bākīkhānūf’s *Garden of Paradise*. Equally, their thinking about narrative—particularly with respect to Daghestan’s multilingual and multiethnic pasts—mirrors that of Bākīkhānūf, as does the interface these works project between the authorial self and the genres of biographical reflection. Bākīkhānūf’s *Garden of Paradise*, a work to which we will return frequently in the pages to come, ends where our next author, Ḥasan al-Alqadārī, begins: on the borders of Daghestan, and immersed in the project of crafting an authorial self.

### Antiquarian Traces: al-Alqadārī

Ḥasan al-Alqadārī’s *Vestiges of Daghestan* was completed in 1892 but only published in 1894-1895, after extensive negotiations with the censors. The same government that blocked the publication of this work had first imprisoned and then exiled the author to central Russia from 1879 to 1893 for his alleged participation in the 1877 uprising against tsarist rule, a charge he denied. Like Bākīkhānūf, al-Alqadārī alighted on a polysemic title for his work. The key word in his title is *āthār*, meaning traces, remains, gleanings, vestiges; its use here situates the author firmly within an antiquarian tradition. Among the most comprehensive definitions of the term is the one found in Dekhoda’s Persian dictionary, and supplemented with examples from the poets ‘Unṣurī, Daqīqī, Mas‘ūd Sa‘d Salmān, and the historian Bayhaqī, as “things that remain in place from a person” (92). This formulation captures the two crucial elements of *āthār*: They are things (*chīz-hā*) left over, objects that have survived

the passage of time, and are associated with our contingency and our mortality, as reflected in fragments from the past.

Probably the most proximate point of reference for al-Alqadārī was the use to which Bākīkhānūf put *āthār* in his *Garden of Paradise*. In the opening section, Bākīkhānūf underscored the importance as well as the challenges of narrating the past through its material remains. “Neither history books nor remains [*baqāyā-yi āthār*],” writes Bākīkhānūf, “can describe in detail the events of the past” (3). While this statement would seem incompatible with the conception of *āthār* as a source of positive historiographic knowledge, Bākīkhānūf, in fact, suggests their alignment. The reason why *āthār* are unable to fully evoke the past is specific to Daghestan, abodes (*diyār*) where, due to the comings and goings of many different tribes (*tawāif*), chaos and upheaval always reigned. Given this tumultuous history, Bākīkhānūf states, many historical books (*makatīb-i akhbār*), buildings, and ruins have perished. Bākīkhānūf further explains that the books of other nations (*kutub az milal-i dīgar*, 4) have been silent about such events. Hence the motivation for his narrative: to bring to life the material and textual monuments that have been reduced to ruins over the course of Daghestan’s long history.

Bākīkhānūf invokes *āthār* again elsewhere in an elaborate and precedent-setting statement concerning the historical method. “From what was available,” Bākīkhānūf summarizes:

I gathered different subjects, connected them and compared whatever was remaining with oral history. In writing a history, it is necessary . . . to provide references to every subject from trustworthy sources, as well as to correspondence and edicts of kings, coins, remains of monuments [*āthār*], and different sayings of different people on related subjects. (4)

The signification of *āthār* in this second context—as monuments or ruins—is more concrete than in Bākīkhānūf’s early usage. Both passages doubtlessly shaped al-Alqadārī’s understanding of *āthār* and inspired him to name his contribution to Daghestani historical narrative in their image.

For both Bākīkhānūf and al-Alqadārī, *āthār* are material objects embedded with authorial consciousness; they signify the materiality and the mortality of earthly existence. As the opposite of transcendence, *āthār* epitomize, and memorialize, decay. They crystallize memory, for a place or for a person. They do so—importantly—outside a historicist framework and without imitating linear history. The antiquarian methodology of these two texts enriches Daghestani narrative; we witness here how genre is shaped by geography, as writers situated on the edges of empires pioneered new approaches to narrating the past. For writers focusing on Daghestan, linear narratives centered on single ethnicities were implausible and unappealing. Multilingual antiquarian approaches better suited their cosmopolitan agendas.

In keeping with the poetics of *āthār*, al-Alqadārī declares at the opening to his text that he wishes to inform the reader, as well as his patron Ḥājī ‘Abdullah Effendī, about the “forgotten” country of Daghestan. As if recalling the promise with which he opened his work, al-Alqadārī ends it with a dialogue in verse between himself and his pen. This question-and-answer (*su’āl va jawāb*) poem originates in the Near Eastern genre of the debate poem (*munāẓara*) attested in Sumerian, Akkadian, Aramaic, Syriac, and Pahlavi, among other ancient literatures (see Reinink et al.). The *munāẓara* is often staged in Arabic as a conversation between a pen and a sword (see Gelder, “The Conceit”; Gully). When it occurs in Arabic, the debate is often in prose, in the form of a *maqāma* (ornate prose); when it occurs in Persian, the debate is generally given in verse (Abdullaeva 257). Writing in the intermediate literature of Azeri Turkish, al-Alqadārī follows the Persian tradition in this regard.

Building on, while also departing from, Arabic norms via Persian genre conventions, al-Alqadārī stages a conversation between himself, a forlorn author, and his pen in verse. While the question-and-answer genre is richly developed in classical Persian literature (see, for example, Abdullaeva 262-65), al-Alqadārī inflects this genre with a voice—and an anguish—all his own. He describes how his pen, having heeded the wisdom of Plato that all feelings are contingent accidents (*‘arazlar*), refuses to go out into the sea in search of new ideas:

My pen has stopped in the harbor. “My heart is filled with blood,” it said, “Now I must get out of this sea!”

I said, “O reed that dives into the Black Sea and into the Red,  
Don’t stay there, don’t let the hidden gem remain concealed!”

It said, “This is the Caspian Sea, there one does not find a gem.  
All that one finds here are contingencies.”

The author tries to persuade his pen to carry on and dive into the water, amid all the uncertainty and contingency of life on earth:

I said, “No problem! Pile up the contingencies one on top of the other,  
Let us make from them a thought [like a] well-proportioned ornament!”

It said, “To make an ornament out of affections is a difficult thing,  
For Plato has written that affections without essence will fade.”

I said, “O useless reed, you’ve turned me upside down,  
What to do?! Now, at present our effort is in vain.”  
(*Āthār* 251-52; also see the version in *Asari* 161-62)

In these verses, we see the craft of writing about the past personified. The pen becomes a vehicle for the author’s desire to overcome contingency, and the chronicler of times past becomes in effect a poet (who uses here the pen name that al-Alqadārī also uses in his poetry collection *Diwān al-Mamnūn*) addressing the passage of time. For the historian as for the antiquarian, one writes about the past in order to connect with a permanent truth.

Due to *āthār*'s polyvalent poetics, revealed in this question-and-answer poem and elsewhere in al-Alqadārī's text, *Āthār-i Dāghistān* may be more accurately rendered in English as *Vestiges* (or *Monuments*) of *Daghestan* than the historicist subtitles with which it is often associated. For example, the subtitle *Istoricheskie svedeniia o Dagestan (Historical Information about Daghestan)* was grafted onto the text by al-Alqadārī's son Ali Gasanov in his 1929 Russian translation, published in a Soviet world radically different from the one in which the text was written. This translation has become normative in Russian scholarship on this work, as seen in V. G. Gadzhiev's Russian edition *Asari-Dagestan*, published in 1994. Similarly, the modern Turkish edition *Âsâr-i Dağistan: Dağistan hakkında tarihi belgeler* by Musa Ramazan (published in 2003) directly translates the Russian subtitle; strangely, given that al-Alqadārī wrote *Āthār* in Azeri Turkish, this modern Turkish work is a direct translation from Gasanov's Russian, which bypasses the original text entirely. Bākīkhānūf's *Garden of Paradise* was subjected to a similarly anachronistic historicist rewriting: In a 2004-2005 reprint of the 1970 edition, the subtitle was retroactively changed to *Tārīkh-i Shīrvān va Dāghistān az āghāz tā jang'hā-yi Irān va Rūs (The History of Shirvan and Daghestan from the Beginning to the War between Iran and Russia)*. Notwithstanding the anachronistic historicism of nearly all modern editions, al-Alqadārī's monuments remain as metaphors suspended outside linear time; they build on, yet also move beyond, Bākīkhānūf, generating an antiquarian conception of time.

A few decades before al-Alqadārī evoked Daghestan's past, the Urdu critic Sayyid Aḥmad Khān had turned to the concept of *āthār* to develop an antiquarian account of late-Mughal Delhi in his *Āthār al-Ṣanādīd (Vestiges of the Past, 1846; see Naim)*. Sayyid Aḥmad Khān was building on a long precedent: Already in 1000 CE, the Turkic Central Asian scholar al-Bīrūnī had composed his *Kitāb al-āthār al-bāqīya 'an al-qurūn al-khāliya (The Remaining Vestiges of Bygone Generations)*, which, in true antiquarian fashion, is a comparative study of the calendars of different cultures and civilizations. Much later, al-Jabartī's history of Egypt *'Ajā'ib al-āthār fī-l-tarājim wa-l-akhbār (The Wonders and Works in the Generations of Narratives, 1805-1825/1826)*

deployed *āthār* in the service of biographical narrative. In different ways, all of these works render memory as a material process, an attachment to the things of this world, and a bridge between past and present. They also all participate to varying degrees in the antiquarian project, which is marked by (among other things) “the collection and arrangement of material thematically” (Kelly 540), rather than chronologically.

These deployments of *āthār*, which belong to a tradition extending across the entirety of Islamicate literature, resonate in particular with Italian historian Arnaldo Momigliano’s account of antiquarianism as a mode of inquiry (see Momigliano, “Ancient History” and *The Classical*; Miller, *Momigliano*; Gould, “Antiquarianism”). In his groundbreaking essay “Ancient History and the Antiquarian” published in 1950, and subsequently in his Sather Lectures of 1962 (published only in 1990 [see *The Classical*]), Momigliano divided ancient and modern ways of knowing the past into two distinct disciplinary trajectories. Distinguishing between synchronic and diachronic approaches to studying the past, Momigliano proposed that the epistemologies of Herodotus, Varro, and other ancient antiquarians were organized on a synchronic axis. Due to their synchronic relation to time, ancient antiquarians were more likely to engage with the deep past than with the recent past. Equally, antiquarian epistemology traversed poetry, myth, and political theory, while the historical method of classical and early modern scholars was more likely to be linear and linked to the agendas of a dominant ruling power. While many aspects of Momigliano’s schema have been contested in subsequent scholarship (see Williams; Cornell; Miller, *Momigliano*), his 1950 article largely succeeded in setting the terms for later generations of scholars.

What might be called the antiquarian turn in modern intellectual history that was instigated by Momigliano uses the historian/antiquarian distinction to explicate the organization of scientific knowledge, and in particular to distinguish between diachronically organized history and synchronically and spatially organized social sciences such as anthropology, sociology, and geography (Miller, “Major Trends”). Inasmuch as global early modernity witnessed the emergence of many new forms of

knowledge, in many cases on the peripheries of Islamic empires (Gould, “*Ijtihād*”), the historian/antiquarian distinction also bears on the literary culture of multilingual Daghestan. In Momigliano’s typology of the disciplines, antiquarian inquiry is distinct from, yet also parallel to, early modern history. With Bākīkhānūf and al-Alqadārī, who felt the need to memorialize the ruins (*āthār*) of the present while inquiring into the past, the intermingling of antiquarian and historical knowledge is evident everywhere. Both in terms of form and content, Bākīkhānūf and al-Alqadārī demonstrate the intermingling of historical and antiquarian inquiry in Daghestani modernity. Although, with the increasing influence of modern European scholarship on these colonial geographies, the former was gradually becoming ascendant over the latter, both authors begin and conclude their texts with antiquarian autobiographical discourses, while allowing for diachronic historical methods to structure their middle sections.

Like Sayyid Aḥmad Khān’s Urdu-language *Āthār al-Ṣanādīd* (1846), and in contrast to the texts of both Bākīkhānūf and al-Durgilī, al-Alqadārī’s *Āthār* is a work of vernacular historiography. Writing in an Azeri Turkic that would have been legible to nearly all literate readers in his milieu yet is inaccessible to the vast majority of his readers today, al-Alqadārī integrated Daghestan within global Islamic history. With respect to its linguistic medium, al-Alqadārī’s *Āthār* steers a path distinct from that of Bākīkhānūf who, although Azeri Turkic was his first spoken language, composed his local history in a cosmopolitan Persian idiom and later translated it into Russian, thereby maximizing his readership and addressing multiple global audiences. Although al-Alqadārī could have easily composed *Āthār* in Arabic—as he did other major works, being a multilingual writer who wrote prolifically in Arabic—he still chose Azeri. This vernacular turn in Daghestani historiography was eventually reversed by al-Durgilī, as I will demonstrate later; for the time being, it is worth examining in greater detail the text of *Āthār* to both understand its reception history and make sense of its author’s historical method.

Whereas Bākīkhānūf begins his work with a methodological prolegomenon on the significance of history, al-Alqadārī opens,



in a typically antiquarian mode, with an account of Daghestan's geography. This divergence may be a function of the different ways in which their texts are divided. *Garden of Paradise* consists of five chapters (*ṭabaqāt*), a preface opening with *bismillāh* (in the name of God), an introduction (*muqaddama*), and a conclusion (*khātima*) treating the "people of the province of Shīrvān who are writers [*ṣāhib-i ta'līf*] or who have other virtues meriting description" (252). This final concluding section to Bākīkhānūf's work is effectively a biographical compendium (called *tazkira* in Persian tradition) of the sort that characterizes al-Durgilī's work in its entirety.

Inasmuch as it examines the "borders [*ḥudūd*] and land . . . of Shīrvān and Daghestan" along with the "reasons for the names, situations [*aḥvāl*], language, and religions" found in this region (4), Bākīkhānūf's introduction serves the same purpose as that of al-Alqadārī's introduction. Al-Alqadārī's *Āthār* consists of twelve chapters (*abwāb*), three prefatory poems, including a lyric poem (*ghazal*) addressed to his patron, and a conclusion. Bākīkhānūf's work begins scientifically, with an introduction. The opening section documents "the populations of Daghestan and the neighboring regions at the present time, the language and dialects that have spread here, and the faiths of the peoples who lived here before Islam" (3). Al-Alqadārī's introduction is followed by twelve historiographic chapters, and finally a conclusion that, like Bākīkhānūf's, assembles together in one place memories and citations from the major poets and intellectuals of Daghestan's past. The main difference is that Bākīkhānūf begins in a more distant antiquity.

Both Bākīkhānūf's and al-Alqadārī's conclusions offer histories of the present, narrated through anecdotes, autobiography, and poetry, rather than through the annals of imperial conquest that occupy the intermediary, more traditionally historical, chapters. Al-Alqadārī carries the autobiographical dimension of his narrative even further than Bākīkhānūf, although he is clearly inspired by the latter's example. This inward turn becomes particularly poignant on the numerous occasions when al-Alqadārī mourns in verse his deceased friends and acquaintances, including his patron Ḥajjī Yūsuf Khān, for whom he worked for six years,

and in whose honor he composed an elegy (*marthiya*, *Āthār* 226). Al-Alqadārī's inward turn is further attested by a poem (*qaṣīda*) appended to *Āthār*, along with a prose preface, following the completion of the first draft in 1890. In this appendix, al-Alqadārī tells of how cholera swept through his village, Alqadār, in 1892, killing one of his sons and numerous other villagers.

An additional convergence between *Āthār* and *Garden of Paradise* concerns the permeation of both texts by an authorial self. This quality further embeds both works within an antiquarian epistemology, to the extent that antiquarianism becomes as much about the relation between the author and the subject as it is about the subject itself. The authorial self emerges most clearly in the authors' participation in the self-naming tradition of Persian and Ottoman poetics: Bākīkhānūf refers to himself in his poetry as al-Qudsī ("the holy one") and al-Alqadārī refers to himself as al-Mamnūn ("the thankful one"). While pennames are not standard in Arabic, they are commonplace in Persian and Ottoman poetry (see Koerbin). In Persian, this device is referred to as *takhalluṣ*, a term used to describe an important transition in a *qaṣīda* (see De Bruijn; Meisami 108-10; Gelder, *Beyond the Line* 143); the Ottoman variant is *makhlaṣ*. Although al-Alqadārī primarily wrote in Arabic and Azeri, since there was not much precedent for this practice in the Arabic tradition, his use of the *takhalluṣ* was likely influenced by Bākīkhānūf's prior example.

Further evincing the geographic, cultural, and religious range of Caucasus multilingualism, shortly before Bākīkhānūf and al-Alqadārī adopted their *takhalluṣ*, the Georgian poet Bessarion Gabashvili (1750–1791) did the same by calling himself Besiki. As with al-Alqadārī, the adoption of a *takhalluṣ* was an unusual step when viewed from the vantage point of Arabic and Georgian literary norms. In the case of Bākīkhānūf, the *takhalluṣ* al-Qudsī is used when he introduces himself to the reader in the final concluding section (283, 287). While al-Alqadārī follows Bākīkhānūf in introducing his authorial persona at the end of his narrative, the use of the *takhalluṣ/makhlaṣ* in the concluding verses for the Arabic, Turkic, and Persian poems that occur throughout *Āthār* (219, 242-43) evoke longstanding traditions within Islamicate historiography.

Just as Bākīkhānūf refers to himself as a “humble author” (2), but without invoking his *takhalluṣ*, al-Alqadārī opens the section of his chapter dealing with himself in a tone of reflexive humility that is at once nostalgic and informative. “I, the unhappy gatherer of this information,” he writes, “vegetate in a corner inhabited by enlightened scholars” (249). These are the scholars whose lives he has just narrated. “Like a barren and crooked tree,” he continues, “I am their neighbor and companion in life. I therefore deem it appropriate to speak of myself.” Like his engagement with the question-and-answer genre in his dialogue with his pen, this transmission of the authorial self across languages is but one example of how Daghestani writers incorporated the conventions of multiple cosmopolitan literary cultures into their various vernacular languages.

These examples drawn from the poetry and prose of Bākīkhānūf and al-Alqadārī bring to mind the relation between the antiquarian imagination and the authorial self that has been remarked by scholars of antiquarianism in other geographies. Early modern English antiquarian William Burton cleared a space for his authorial self that reflects these tendencies in his *Description of Leicestershire* (1622). Accounting for the genesis of his work, Burton states: “I gaue way in some sort to my owne desire, choosing rather to recreate my selfe in this kinde, then either to be misemployed, or altogether idle” (qtd. in Williams 93). Burton’s emotive antiquarianism resonates with that of Bākīkhānūf and al-Alqadārī, reminding us, as Williams notes, that:

[P]leasure and desire intermingled are never far from the surface in [antiquarian] texts, and it would not be reaching too far to entertain the idea of an emotive theorization of antiquarianism, one in which the desire for knowledge of a thing leads into the pleasure of understanding. (93-94)

In a similar vein, Momigliano remarks on the near impossibility of separating “antiquarianism from biographical research” (*The Classical* 155; see also Momigliano, *The Development* 13).

Biographical antiquarian inquiry makes palpable the *experience* of time and not merely its objective form, hence Bākīkhānūf's emphasis, in the *bismillāh* section of *Garden of Paradise*, on imparting experience (*tajruba*) to his readers (2).

As noted above, notwithstanding the creativity of al-Alqadārī's antiquarian imagination, all subsequent editions of *Āthār*, in modern Turkish as well as Russian, portray the text as a compilation of information (*svedenie* in Russian, *belgeler* in Turkish) about the past. For al-Alqadārī's modern commentators, antiquarianism stands in need of justification, while history speaks for itself. Given the presuppositions al-Alqadārī's editors bring to the text, it is not entirely surprising that many of them have found it lacking. One of the most striking and influential dismissals of al-Alqadārī's text occurs in the "translator's afterword" to the 1929 Russian edition, which, as noted above, was translated by al-Alqadārī's son, Ali Gasanov.

Gasanov completed his education in pre-revolutionary St. Petersburg and was known during his lifetime as the "professor of the East" (Yusufov 4). In his afterword, Ali Gasanov takes his father to task for the excesses of his language, noting the very same "flaws" that likely disturbed Dorn and Brosset when they were asked by the Russian government to evaluate *Garden of Paradise* as a work of modern scholarship. *Vestiges of Daghestan*, writes Gasanov, "is not a work of scholarship [*nauchnyim trudom*]," nor does it "fulfill our requirements in the sphere of historiography" (209). Gasanov explains al-Alqadārī's failure to live up to "modern" scholarly norms in culturally essentialist terms. "Raised exclusively on the literary works of the Muslim East," al-Alqadārī, in Gasanov's view, exhibits an unfortunate tendency to turn "from prose to poetry" in his narration of historical events, and to suffuse his prose with "excessive emotions and reflections, to frequently invoke the name of God and the Prophet, and, finally, [to indulge in] autobiography" (209). Indeed, for Gasanov—who elsewhere insists at great length on the superiority of Soviet norms to premodern Arabo-Islamicate ones—al-Alqadārī's flaws characterize the "Eastern literary style" in general (214). Such historicizing editorial judgments effectively purged not just

the source text's precolonial affiliations, but also the affective registers of al-Alqadārī's antiquarian imagination.

Gasanov determines that his father's poetic citations, lyrical digressions, and autobiographical asides impart to the exposition the quality of "a free-flowing conversation from the same Eastern milieu," which in turn has the effect of "depriving many passages [in the text] of any clear historical value" (209-10). In the hindsight of nearly a century, Gasanov's critique reads ironically like the rejection of *Garden of Paradise* by the St. Petersburg academic elite, albeit with an even greater degree of intimacy—given the father-son relation—and intensity. Subsequent commentators have attested that autobiography is one of the most outstanding features of al-Alqadārī's prose (see Kemper, "Daghestani"; Krachkovskii, "Arabskaia literatura" 618). Additionally, other Daghestani texts with which *Āthār* exists in a dialogic relation are similarly rich with respect to their autobiographical inflections.

Daghestani literature is particularly rich in biographical narrative, and the three texts studied here are outstanding examples of this genre. Daghestani scholar Shamil Shikhaliev describes how, beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century, the genre of biography enters more widely into the Arabic-Islamic tradition. Indeed, the preponderance of this genre is a feature of modern Daghestani literature. The highly developed tradition of biographical dictionaries in the Islamic world has led al-Qadi to observe that "few cultures . . . have been as prolific in producing biographical dictionaries in premodern times as the Arab branch of Islamic culture" (116, see also 94). Building on its achievements in the premodern period, modern Arabic biographical writing pioneered new ways of conceptualizing subjectivity that further developed nascent antiquarian traditions (see Ostle and Wild).

The next section of this article takes up al-Qadi's observation regarding the distinctiveness of the Arabo-Islamicate biographical tradition through an examination of al-Durgili's biographical dictionary, one of the last such works of Daghestani Arabic literature. The florescence of the Daghestani biographical tradition constitutes a subchapter within Daghestani antiquarianism.

As a world of learning constituted by scholars across divergent territories who found a common medium in Islamic traditions and discursive forms, biographical compendia (*ṭabaqāt* and *tazkira*) created affiliations across vast geographies and among multiple cultures. Shedding light on what Ira Lapidus has called the “world system of Islamic societies,” (197) these genres helped to extend the boundaries of early modern Arabic culture, which spread from Africa to South Asia and the Caucasus.

### ***Ṭabaqāt* and Arabic Transnationalism: al-Durgilī**

Nadhīr al-Durgilī’s *Stroll through the Minds in the Generations of Daghestani Scholars* is one of the last major *ṭabaqāt* of Daghestani Arabic literature. Unlike the two other texts studied here, al-Durgilī’s biographical dictionary was written after the onset of Soviet rule. The imprint of Soviet modernity is, however, not immediately evident in the text, which is mostly concerned with the nineteenth century and earlier. *Nuzhat* is a compendium in the literal sense that, unlike *Garden of Paradise* and *Āthār*, it consists almost exclusively of a sequence of entries describing the lives of specific Daghestani scholars. The work contains no grand preface on the order of Bākīkhānūf’s defense of historical knowledge, or heart-wrenching conclusion on the order of al-Alqadārī’s parting lament. What al-Durgilī’s work does contain is an ambitious synthesis of Daghestan’s past. Al-Durgilī aims at recapitulation, but under new conditions, and in a linguistic medium that has been shaped by Persian and Turkic literary traditions.

Early on in his narration of the spread of Islam to Daghestan, al-Durgilī lists the Arabic works he regards as precedents to his own: Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī’s (1179-1229) thirteenth-century geography *Mu‘jam al-buldān* (*The Compendium of Lands*), al-Zabīdī’s (d. 1791) lexicon *Tāj al-‘Arūs* (*The Bride’s Crown*), and Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī’s (d. 1370) biographical dictionary of Shāfi‘ī jurists *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfi‘iyya al-kubrā* (*Biographies of the Great Shāfi‘īs* [al-Durgilī 9]). Concerning this last work, al-Qadi notes that it is “structured according to centuries . . . because al-Subkī believed that a paramount position should be given to the

tradition of the Prophet which says that there will be a reformer (*muḥaddid*) of Islam at the beginning of every century” (107). Al-Durgilī does not explicitly reproduce al-Subkī’s century-by-century delineation, but the fact that he calls two of the Daghestani scholars he treated in his work—Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ghāzīghumūqī (80) and Imam Shamil (87)—*muḥaddids* suggests that, like his Shāfi‘ī predecessor, he was concerned to demonstrate that the renewal of Islam persisted in recent Daghestani history.

Poetry features strikingly in all three works discussed in this article, with citations often overtaking chronological exposition for a given entry. Heather J. Sharkey remarks on a similar tendency to turn everyday figures into poets in Sudanese *ṭabaqāt*, in which authors “frame . . . political activities in literary terms, so that even men who are best-known as political figures . . . are cast . . . as poets, essayists, public speakers, short story writers, and the like” (24). As a revealing illustration of this tendency, more is said in *Nuzhat* about al-Alqadārī’s poetry than about the non-poetic works for which he was better known. Another example of this tendency to privilege poetry over prose is the entry on Sa‘īd al-Harakānī (d. 1834), who is more reputed as a scholar of Islamic law than a poet, and yet whose poetry is given more space by al-Durgilī than his writings on Islamic law (74). Across the *ṭabaqāt* genre, public figures are represented as creators of literature, and their acts are explained and remembered through the verses they produce.

One consequence of the genre’s tendency to render non-literary events and personas in literary form is that biographical dictionaries also serve as poetry anthologies (Daghestani examples include Gaidarbekov in Arabic, and Khūsenil vas Sirazhudin and Mavraev as well as Khaibullaev in Avar). They gather together materials that would not be linked by more linear historiographic studies. Consider, for example, al-Durgilī’s striking commentary on a poetic elaboration (*takhmīs*) by Sheykh ‘Umar al-Kudali of a *qaṣīda* attributed to the jurist al-Shāfi‘ī (767-820). As if in dialogue with modern advances in textual criticism, al-Durgilī recounts his attempts to trace the citation to al-Shāfi‘ī: “I copied it down from several collections,” he recalls, adding:

Daghestan has an ancient custom, still preserved in the present, of placing stones and making marks on a grave. The name of the deceased, his father, the date of his death, and something pertaining to his personality are inscribed on these stones in beautiful calligraphy. In all the graves in Daghestan, the inscription is in Arabic. Each stone is roughly three times the length of the deceased's forearms. (62)

Throughout such apparent digressions, al-Durgilī embellishes, elucidates, and otherwise elaborates on his poetic citations, drawing on ethnographic methodologies, again in antiquarian fashion (see Chin). He thereby also registers his temporal distance from scholars whose lives and legacies he describes. The poetics of *āthār* that were first realized in Caucasus literatures by Bākīkhānūf and al-Alqadārī are thus given new life in this third Daghestani narrative.

The author of *Nuzhat* is conscious of writing in a time of change. As has been noted, with the florescence in historical writing in Arabic that followed in the wake of the Russian occupation, “for the first time in Daghestani historical literature the historical personality comes to the fore, with very detailed biographical data” (Shikhsaidov 34). Al-Durgilī was writing towards the end of this new era in Daghestani literature. M. G. Nurmagomedov (1909-1997) was personally acquainted with the author, and wrote about him in his own *ṭabaqāt*: *Ṭabaqāt al-a’yān fī wafiyāt ba’d aslāf Dāghistān* (*Biographies of the Leaders in the Deaths of Certain Venerable Daghestanis*). But the only well-known *ṭabaqāt* written after al-Durgilī’s is Ali Kaiaev’s (d. 1943) Turkic-language *Tarājim-i ‘ulamā’-i al-Dāghistān* (*Biographies of the Scholars of Daghestan*). When al-Durgilī’s editors called al-Alqadārī the author of “the first representative of the autobiographical genre in Daghestani” literature (Shikhsaidov et al. 18), they were signaling the precedent al-Alqadārī set for subsequent generations of antiquarians and historians, and which Bākīkhānūf had earlier set for al-Alqadārī.

Al-Durgilī’s sense of decline, of living in the end times— with Daghestan beset by disasters even more severe than the



famine that haunted al-Alqadārī—drives the author’s impulse to render Daghestan’s past in narrative form. His writing of decline is punctured by loss, as well as longing for a narrative that is not subject to decay. Consider the following opening:

Warriors entered our country . . . accompanied by scholars and experts in *ḥadīth*. Part of this group returned [to Arab lands] after they accomplished their mission, while another part remained in Daghestan until their death. After this [first stage], scholars appeared in Daghestan, then sheykhs, and masters of the pen, people of good morals and high birth. Century after century, up until our present fourteenth century [= twentieth century CE], have been times of great unhappiness, as anyone with eyes can see. We don’t see among ourselves anyone who would adorn the necks of our scholars and sheykhs with mercy, or assemble together their biographies and legacies. (3)

Viewed against the background of Arabo-Islamic literature, al-Durgilī’s anguish sounds a familiar note. Franz Rosenthal has shown how the “complaint against the times” suffused certain poetic styles from the beginnings of Arabic literary history (1-58). Al-Durgilī arrives on the scene just in time to address the documentary lacuna that drives his lament, and to render the lives of the scholars, sheykhs, and writers of Daghestan from times past in ways that have enabled them to signify for posterity.

Amid the emergence of a new relationship to the peripheries of the Islamic world, the Daghestani intellectual Sa‘īd al-Harakānī was keen to make his fellow Daghestanis perceive their native land as inferior, compared to ancient centers of learning, such as Damascus. As al-Durgilī records, al-Harakānī complained that the Daghestanis of his day

despise the useful sciences and violate our traditions [*sunna*], they practice innovation [*bid‘a*], and submit to their passions, making them into idols. They don’t pay their debts, and their intentions are bad. . . . If

you, oh brother, wish to be near the blessed ones and to God, then you must abandon this abode. If you reside in Damascus, then you will earn God's mercy, because, among all the cities, Damascus is the bride among women, a habitation for saints [*abdāl*] and a residence for the blessed. (75)

Yet, even while Daghestan was perceived as inferior relative to Damascus, it was recognized, by al-Durgilī as well as by many scholars whose lives he narrates, as a regional center of Arabic learning (Gould, *Writers and Rebels* 11). Al-Durgilī describes how, thanks to Daghestani scholars who traveled from Egypt to acquire the foundations of classical Arabic learning and who then returned to their homeland to share the skills they had acquired:

Daghestan was transformed into a center for many disciplines . . . and Arabic sciences such as grammar (syntax and morphology), and other valuable disciplines were much in demand. Scholars came here from other regions, such as the land of Kazan, to acquire learning. The scholars of Kazan said that they received fundamental knowledge of the Arabic sciences [in Daghestan]. (26)

Al-Durgilī proudly quotes the Tatar historian who later settled in Mecca Muḥammad Murād al-Ramzī (also known as al-Qazānī, d. 1934) to demonstrate that a certain Tatar sheykh had acquired his perfect Arabic in Daghestan (see al-Ramzī; Reichmuth 35-36).

Thus situated between province and metropole, remote from Baghdad, Cairo, and Damascus and yet a center of Arabic learning for Muslims of the Russian empire, Daghestan cultivated a unique transregional Arabic literary culture. The flow of Arabic manuscripts into Daghestan generated a “literary tradition and its own proper centers of education, which spread its own influence to many regions of the North Caucasus, the Crimea, and the Volga region” (Shikhsaidov 49). The narrative forms and genres generated from within this imperial periphery reflect and refract Daghestan's complex cultural and political geography.

## Daghestan's Antiquarian Cosmopolitanism

As the texts introduced here demonstrate, Daghestan's position within the "Arabic cosmopolis" (see Ricci) helps us map the networks through which Arabo-Islamicate literary culture circulated, before and during modernity. While drawing on a rich classical Arabic tradition dating back to the early Islamic period, al-Durgilī transformed this tradition internally by engaging with local precedents, in particular Bākīkhānūf and al-Alqadārī. Al-Durgilī's Arabic biographical compendium was inspired by the texts that preceded his. However, unlike his two major predecessors, he narrated Daghestan's history in Arabic, rather than in the vernacular or in a competing cosmopolitan language such as Persian. By returning to Arabic through the mediation of a Persian and Turkic text, *Nuzhat* testified to the capacity of Islamicate literary culture to cross boundaries of geography, ethnicity, and empire. That al-Durgilī's Arabic was enriched by cognate texts in different languages attests to the fertility and multiplicity of transregional literary cultures in the Caucasus.

Inasmuch as it connected the scholars of Daghestan to their counterparts in Yemen, Damascus, and Mecca and enabled Daghestani scholars such as Ali Kaiaev to share a common language with influential Cairo-based reformers such as Rashīd Riḍā (Medzhidov and Abdullaev 38), Daghestani Arabic was a transregional literature. At the same time, Arabic was vernacularized when Daghestani writers from al-Alqadārī to al-Durgilī turned to the *ṭabaqāt* genre to narrate local Daghestani histories. Conjoining the two facets, the rubric "Arabo-Islamicate" (as a global Islamic sensibility that relied on Arabic as its primary medium of expression yet which also facilitated vernacularization by rendering local languages in written form), *Nuzhat* laid the foundations for a transregional Arabic literature that traversed post-Soviet domains. It did so in an antiquarian disciplinary modality that was historical in many respects, but in ways that cannot be encompassed by modern historicism. When he undertook to chronicle Daghestani scholars' life-worlds in Arabic, al-Durgilī joined Bākīkhānūf and al-Alqadārī in conceiving literary culture as

non-continuous with ethnicity, and, already deep into Soviet modernity, as inimical to the nation-state. I have aimed to show here how these twinned interventions unfolded in relationship to each other, and in large part by drawing on the latent potential of antiquarian methodologies to rewrite the monolingual script of history, which was more likely to produce narratives that served the state. In brief, al-Durgilī's cosmopolitan Arabic was a function of the multilingual antiquarianism that he shared with Bākīkhānūf and al-Alqadārī.

Was Daghestani Arabic local or global, cosmopolitan or vernacular? Did it entail a “transethnic attraction, transcending or arresting any ethnoidentity the ruling elites themselves might possess,” as Sheldon Pollock has claimed for cosmopolitan vernacular cultures of South Asia? (13), or were these authors instead relentlessly focused on articulating a uniquely Daghestani identity? Did Daghestani literature carry the burden of the empires that contributed to making Persian and Arabic global languages, or did these change as they became responsive to indigenous forms of expression? In the end, these three antiquarian narratives teach us that we do not need to choose among these binaries, for each bridges the gap between the local and the global, and between history and antiquarianism. Confounding contemporary dichotomies, the authors discussed in these pages generated methods of reflecting on the past that moved freely between the historical and antiquarian modes. Their epistemic flexibility was due to the cosmopolitan geographies from which they wrote, as well as to the relatively fluid relations among disciplines that have been calcified in modernity. Arabic in Daghestan functioned both as a cosmopolitan—which is to say global—language and as a tradition that was perpetually subject to revision and refashioning by the antiquarian method.

What then is at stake in using the term “antiquarian” with reference to Daghestani textual culture? Why not simply refer to the works of Bākīkhānūf, al-Alqadārī, and al-Durgilī discussed here as histories, as the few scholars who have discussed these works in detail to date have done? I have argued here that it is precisely due to their antiquarian dimensions that these works have been marginalized in modern historical scholarship. By

reading these works not simply as histories—that is, as sources of information on the Caucasus—but as antiquarian inquiries that are of interest apart from their historical value, we stand a better chance of recovering and understanding the cosmopolitan dimensions of Caucasus literatures before modernity. History, as currently practiced in the contemporary academy, is inadequate as a framework to bring about this transformation. There is too much subjectivity and too little linearity for these works to be easily accommodated by traditional historical rubrics. For a fuller understanding of what Bākīkhānūf, al-Alqadārī, and al-Durgilī were doing when they inquired into past ways of being and knowing, we must turn to literature, philology, and other sciences concerned with the representation of material and textual pasts.

Beyond arguing for an antiquarian approach to sources that are commonly categorized as works of history, I have tried to show in these pages the value of viewing antiquarian epistemologies through the lens of Islamic culture. It goes without saying that the rich body of scholarship on ancient and early modern antiquarianism which has to date focused predominantly on Europe—the rich traditions documented in Schnapp, Chin, Cooperson, and Miller and Louis notwithstanding—cannot easily or seamlessly be mapped onto the Islamic world. Nor have I tried to do so; my interest is in antiquarianism as an epistemology rather than a discipline frozen in time. I take as a given Kelsey Jackson Williams’s argument that “antiquarianism should be understood as something inherently amorphous, recognizable but fluid, and freely shading into the practices of other disciplines” (88-89). Rather than seeking to impose any of the many finely-wrought dichotomies pertaining to the origins and purpose of antiquarian inquiry onto the heterogenous work of Bākīkhānūf, al-Alqadārī, and al-Durgilī, I have instead focused on what might be gained by placing their writings within the more capacious framework that antiquarianism provides. As I see it, such a framework helps us make sense of the autobiographical and biographical investments that animate each of these texts, as well as their interdisciplinarity, their cosmopolitan agendas, and their relative distance from the state-sponsored narratives that were more likely to be expressed in monolingual form. Above all, reading these Daghestani

authors through an antiquarian lens—and allowing these texts to both define and redefine what is meant by antiquarianism on a global scale—enables us to understand multilingualism as less of an anomaly than the arc of modern scholarship suggests.

## Notes

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- <sup>2</sup> Al-Alqadārī was of Lezgi descent, and spoke as his first language the non-Indo-European Lezgi language, which is indigenous to the Caucasus. The correct rendering of his name is al-Alqadārī (from the village of Alqadar, in southern Daghestan), not al-Qadri, as given in Bartol'd.

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