Firdawsi's *Shahnama* in its Ghaznavid context

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Abstract

Firdawsi's *Shahnama*, the completion of which is traditionally to around 400/1010, is generally thought to have been a failure at first. It is said by both traditional accounts and much modern scholarship to have been rejected by its dedicatee Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna, and its contents of ancient Iranian legends, transmitted from earlier sources, are widely considered to have been out of step with the literary tastes of the Ghaznavid period. This article reassesses the reception of the Shahnama in the Ghaznavid period, arguing that evidence suggests neither its style nor contents were outdated, and that its tales of ancient Iranian heores had a great contemporary relevance in the context of the Ghaznavid court's identification of the dynasty as the heir to ancient Iran. The extent to which Firdawsi can be shown to have relied on pre-Islamic sources is also reevaluated

Key words

Firdawsi – *Shahnama* – Ghaznavids – pre-Islamic Iran – Persian poetry

The reception history of few books can be as well-known as the *Shahnama*: the allegedly cool reaction of sultan Mahmud of Ghazna (d. 421/1030) when presented with the work around the year 400/1010, and the biting satire on the ruler Firdawsi is claimed to have penned in response, together form part of the *Shahnama* legend.[2] Firdawsi's hostile reception by the rival poets of Ghazna, for instance, became a topic of miniature painting in manuscripts of the poem,[3] and lines such as the satire were interpolated to underline the point.[4] Today, the poem's initial flop is usually taken for granted, and has been attributed to both its form and its contents, which are assumed to be purely antiquarian,[5] bereft of any contemporary relevance. Ghazzal Dabiri, for instance, has compared the *Shahnama* with other roughly contemporaneous histories, especially that of Bal'ami, and poetry. She concludes that Firdawsi's concentration on Iranian material without any Islamic leavening must have seemed rather dated. Dabiri writes that, "The *Shahnama* was not initially well received *in general* because, as a history, it differs in aim,

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content, and execution from the histories that preceded it and immediately succeeded it in the Samanid and Ghaznavid courts respectively," while as poetry its form was completely unlike the *qasida*s favoured by the Ghaznavid court.[6] Even Julie Scott Meisami, who agrees with Rypka– in my view rightly – in arguing that Firdawsi saw in Mahmud the legendary King from the East prophesied to restore Iran's greatness, still regards the poem as "definitely outmoded...something of an anomaly: not quite literature and not quite history". The deliberate archaisms of the *Shahnama*'s language are seen as further evidence for the anachronistic nature of the work. [7] Rypka, meanwhile, connects the rejection of the *Shahnama* to the adoption of Arabic as the Ghaznavid chancery language in place of Persian in 401/1010-11, the year after the conventional date for the completion of the work.[8]

Yet there are ample reasons to doubt that the *Shahnama* was really considered quite as odd and old fashioned as existing scholarship would insist. There was a tradition of composing *Shahnama*s in the tenth century, of which the best known is the now lost prose one commissioned by the Khurasani nobleman Abu Mansur Ibn 'Abd al-Razzaq al-Tusi. In addition, the incomplete efforts of the Samanid poet Daqiqi were purportedly incorporated by Firdawsi into the *Shahnama*, while we know of several other *Shahnama*s that have not come down to us such as that of Abu'l-Mu'ayyad al-Balkhi. [9] Moreover, we have evidence from the Ghaznavid period for the enduring popularity of such works. The Abu Mansur *Shahnama* was evidently still circulating in the early eleventh century, for is mentioned by the polymath al-Biruni (d. 439/1048), who later himself received the patronage of the Ghaznavid court.[10] A certain Karasi-yi *Shahnama-Khwan*, or Karasi the Shahnama-reciter, who was eventually promoted to a provincial governorship, read prose *Shahnama*s to Mahmud of Ghazna,[11] while the contemporary court poet Farrukhi (d. 439/1037-8) mentions hearing verses from a *Shahnama-khwan*.[12] Mahmud's vizier, Fadl b. Ahmad, supported Firdawsi, according to the poet's own testimony,[13] and Firdawsi himself seems to have certainly had every expectation his work would be favourably received.[14] Mahmud's brother, Nasr, was the dedicatee of al-Tha'alibi's Arabic *Kitab Ghurar Muluk al-Furs*, 'Highlights of the Persian Kings', which discusses ancient Iranian history at length, and shares numerous similarities in content with Firdawsi's work, to the extent that they are often assumed to have a common source.[15] Moreover, the temporary adoption of Arabic by the Ghaznavid chancery seems to have no wider impact on Ghaznavid literary culture,

which continued to be conducted in both languages, albeit predominantly in Persian.[16] Court poets such as 'Unsuri and Farrukhi both refer to the heroes of the *Shahnama*, to whom they compare Mahmud, and on the basis of the allusions in their verses Melikian-Chirvani states that "Il n'est pas doûteux, en effet, que la version [of the *Shahnama*] de Ferdowsi a connu un succès immense, sans doubte immédiat."[17] The Ghaznavid palace at Ghazna was decorated with verse inscriptions praising the dynasty, some of which emulated the metre of the *Shahnama*,[18] while Farrukhi too composed verses the metre and form of which were evidently intended to recall Firdawsi's epic, even if elsewhere he describes the *Shahnama* as "lies".[19]

The enormous interest in the sort of legendary Iranian history recounted by the *Shahnama* is suggested by the slightly later composition in the Ghaznavid lands of secondary epics dealing with ancient Iranian themes. One example is the verse accounts of the deeds of the Iranian hero Faramarz (who is also mentioned in the *Shahnama*), the *Faramarznama*. This seems to have been aimed at a Ghaznavid courtly audience, legitimising and extolling the Ghaznavids' Indian campaigns through the implicit comparison with those of the legendary Faramarz.[20] Significantly, the language of the *Faramarznama* is characterised, like the *Shahnama*, by archaicisms and a lack of Arabic or Islamic influences, while the poet specifically identifies himself as "a slave (*ghulām*)" of Firdawsi.[21] From the mid eleventh century, both the *Tarikh-i Sistan* and the Persian history of Gardizi, the *Zayn al-Akhbar*, the latter written for a Ghaznavid patron, sultan 'Abd al-Rashid, give pre-Islamic Iranian history an important role.

All this suggests that neither its contents nor its form would have necessarily led to the *Shahnama* becoming a damp squib, and we should be cautious in crediting the stories of its contemporary failure. Our earliest source for the legend of Firdawsi's rejection by Mahmud is Nizami 'Arudi's *Chahar Maqala*, written in the mid twelfth century, more than a century later. Certainly, the Turkish ethnicity of the Ghaznavid dynasty was wholly irrelevant to their cultural patronage,[22] and in fact there is every reason why an epic on Iran might well have appealed to them. The Ghaznavids, although ruling territories which were peripheral to or even outside traditional definitions of Iranshahr, seem to have identified their lands as Iran, opposed to the Turan represented by the Al-i Afrasiyab across the Oxus, as the Qarakhanid dynasty was known at the time, after the Turanian king Afrasiyab of *Shahnama* fame.[23] Indeed, Gardizi, who dedicated his work to the Ghaznavid sultan 'Abd al-Rashid, states explicitly states in his section

dealing with the pre-Islamic wars of Iran against Afrasiyab that they continue to the present day (*miyān-i Īrān u Tūrān taʿaṣṣub u fitna ūftād tā bidīn ghāyat hanūz andarānand*).[24] Given this, it can hardly be coincidental that the longest of these panegyrics to Mahmud in the *Shahnama* directly precedes Firdawsi's description of the battle between Kaykhusraw and Afrasiyab, in the course of which Afrasiyab is defeated,[25] suggesting the poet did indeed have an eye to the potential contemporary relevance of the text. Further, it has been suggested that Firdawsi's descriptions of Faramarz's Indian campaigns may, just like the eponymous later Ghaznavid secondary epic, be intended to legitimise and celebrate his patron's military adventures in the sub-continent.[26]

As Gardizi's comments suggest, pre-modern historical writing was undertaken less out of antiquarian interest than with an eye to the past's continuing relevance and current meaning.[27] This may be the case even when a historical work makes no explicit link between past and present. For instance, as I have argued elsewhere, the Persian translation of al-Tabari's famous history made for the Samanid dynasty in the mid tenth century by the vizier Balʿami was designed to serve a contemporary political agenda, even though it does not once mention the Samanids, by promoting the same kind of piety-minded Islam that the dynasty supported.[28] The contemporary relevance of the *Shahnama*, has, however, remained poorly understood, beyond the fact that it was evidently intended in part to impart ethical advice.[29] In this paper, I wish to consider the *Shahnama* in its contemporary environment. Firstly, I wish to compare it with other historical works composed around the same time, in particular the slightly earlier Arabic *Ta'rikh Sini Muluk al-Ard*, which also evinces an interest in the pre-Islamic Iranian past and purports to be based on Middle Persian sources; I shall also make reference to Balʿami's history and al-Thaʿalibi's *Ghurar Muluk al-Furs* which we have mentioned as having been composed for Mahmud's brother. The aim of this comparison is to allow a more accurate assessment of the extent to which the *Shahnama* actually is, by the standards of the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, an archaicising work. Secondly, I wish to offer some reflections on what meaning the Iranian past might have had in the late tenth and early eleventh century.

The Shahnama*'s Contents and Sources in Comparative Perspective*

As mentioned above, Iranian history was a popular topic not just in the *Shahnama* but in both the Arabic and nascent Persian prose historiographical traditions. The latter two, however, parted company from the *Shahnama* by interweaving their accounts of Iranian kings with stories of Prophets, either in a separate section from the Kings of Iran or intermixed with them as in al-Tabari, Bal'ami and al-Tha'alibi.[30] Al-Tha'alibi goes the furthest down this route, by giving Iranian kings prophetic attributes and as it were annexing them to Islam, while still insisting that they possess the divine *farr* necessary for Iranian kingship. These attempts to synthesise the Iranian and Islamic traditions had been in vogue for a good century, if not longer, in some form or other. The earliest example in historiography is al-Dinawari, writing in Arabic in the late ninth century, but ever since the establishment of the 'Abbasid Caliphate, with its ambitions to represent itself as the legitimate heir to the Sasanian empire, similar efforts could be observed more generally in *adab* and literature. Firdawsi's concentration on purely Iranian themes without any prophetic history does seem at first glance quite different from the approach of contemporary or near contemporary historians, supporting the argument for the "anomalous" nature of the *Shahnama*.

The supposedly unfashionable contents of Firdawsi's text are attributed to him having followed remarkably closely his sources, most immediately the prose *Shahnama* commissioned by Abu Mansur Ibn 'Abd al-Razzaq, which is thought to have been derived from the *khwadāy-nāmag*, the Middle Persian book of kings, today lost in its original form apart from its preface. However, Firdawsi is generally thought to be an extremely accurate representative of the contents of this text, although Dick Davis has questioned this.[31] (I wish to leave aside here the debate as to whether Firdawsi may also have drawn on oral sources, and if so in what form, as I think it is evident from what follows that even if he did, he certainly had access to a written tradition too).[32] Rypka writes of the Abu Mansur version, which he describes as "the source actually used by Firdausī" that it was "the product of a group of four Eastern Iranian Zoroastrians ….[who] made use of the *Khodāy-nāma* in Pahlavi as well as other ancient documents".[33] More recently, Pourshariati has declared that "Ferdowsi in fact slavishly followed the sources which had been entrusted to him to compile his opus on Iranian national history".[34]

Firdawsi does on occasion claim to be transmitting a "Pahlavi book" (*daftar-i pahlavī*) or "an ancient book" (*nāma az gah-i bāstān*), preserved by Zoroastrian priests (*mōbedh*s).[35]

However, the internal evidence of Firdawsi's *Shahnama* also suggests we should be cautious about suggesting that either Abu Mansur's *Shahnama* or other materials at Firdawsi's disposal had a particularly close relationship with Middle Persian texts or with Iranian traditions circulating in Zoroastrian circles. Davis has noted that, "Ferdowsi did not actually know very much about the details of Zoroastrian belief; or if he did, he does not appear to have been interested in structuring his poem according to such beliefs."[36] Although Kolsoum Ghazanfari, who has researched the references to Zoroastrianism in the *Shahnama*, is keen to argue for Firdawsi's reliance on "accounts of the older works extant from the Sasanian era",[37] she also notes the inaccuracies the poet's description of Zoroastrian practices, and the "careful inclusion of several religious and social elements prevalent at the time of the *ŠN* [*Shahnama*]".[38] For instance, Firdawsi's presentation of Zoroaster and Zoroastrianism is adapted to suit contemporary tastes. Zoroaster is shown presenting himself as a prophet (*payghāmbar*)

<div dir="rtl">

به شاه کیان گفت پیغامبرم   سوی تو خرد رهنمون آورم[39]

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This, in a sense, represents exactly the same tendency as exemplified by al-Tabari, Bal'ami and al-Tha'alibi – the adaption of Iranian history into the framework of an Islamic salvation history of prophets and king; only here the Islamic prophets are not explicitly present. Moreover, there are instances where Firdawsi – or Firdawsi's source, which I shall for brevity in what follows refer simply to Firdawsi – clearly draws on Islamic traditions, even when these conflict with the outlines of Iranian national history that we can safely attribute to the *khwadāy-nāmag*s on the basis of citations and translations from them in other sources.

The best example of this is the story of Alexander,[40] whom Firdawsi depicts as a proto-Muslim, travelling like a hajji to the Ka'ba.[41] Alexander is held to have established the Quraysh in Mecca, and at the end of his life is depicted travelling east to confront Gog and Magog against whom he builds a protective wall. This is derived from the Qur'anic figure of Dhu'l-Qarnayn.[42] Indeed, in keeping with the Muslim tradition, Alexander is depicted in a broadly positive light, less as a conquering general than as a searcher after truth, even in the account of his campaigns in India. Firdawsi also adopts the legend, based ultimately on pseudo-Callisthenes, which gives Alexander a Persian lineage – and the etymology for his name – through his Greek mother's short lived relationship with Darius.[43] Firdawsi thus achieves the union of Islam and Persian

kingship that his Arabophone contemporary al-Thaʿalibi was striving for, and indeed earlier Arabic writers like al-Dinawari. This is diametrically opposed to the traditional Iranian depiction of Alexander, which is given by Hamza al-Isfahani, the mid-tenth century writer whose surviving Arabic *Ta'rikh Sini Muluk al-Ard* is rich in Iranian traditions, as we will discuss below. According to Hamza, Alexander was a figure of unspeakable evil who destroyed Iran and killed its priests: precisely a reflection of the material we find in Zoroastrian sources.[44]

Until recently, it was thought that there was a Middle Persian tradition about Alexander which is reflected in Firdawsi.[45] Yet this thesis relies on the idea which recent scholarship has now entirely discredited, that that the Syriac version of the Alexander-Romance was translated from a Pahlavi original.[46] In fact, as Ciancaglini puts it: "there is no trace of any Middle Persian translation of the *Alexander Romance*."[47] In other words, the only Middle Persian version of the Alexander legend for the existence of which there is any evidence is deeply hostile; this is the tradition preserved by our Zoroastrian sources, and among the Muslim ones, by Hamza, and indeed also by Gardizi, which confirms that this version was circulating in the eastern Iranian world where Firdawsi was active.[48] Indeed, the presence of certain elements from this tradition are possibly to be identified in the *Shahnama* itself,[49] but its general contours were rejected by Firdawsi in favour of the Islamic Alexander.

In this instance, at least, Firdawsi is participating in the same effort to Islamise Iranian history as Balʿami and al-Thaʿalibi, in contrast to the traditional Iranian position adopted by Hamza. Indeed, surely Firdawsi's ultimate source, whether first, second or third hand, is actually Arabic-language. Quite apart from the depiction of Alexander visiting the Kaʿba, Firdawsi's account of great clash between Philip of Macedon and Darius after which Philip surrenders his daughter to the Persian king is located at Amorium,[50] a location of little importance to an Iranian readership but a vital point on the Byzantine-Arab front line, repeatedly sacked by Arab armies, most memorably by the Caliph al-Muʿtasim in 836, whose exploits were commemorated in a famous *qasida* by Abu Tammam. An Arabic-language source might therefore well have had reason to "contemporise" events by placing them at Amorium, the Arabic spelling of which is preserved in Firdawsi.[51] The idea of an Arabic source is strengthened by the brief presence of Arab raiders at the beginning of the story, led by a certain Shuʿayb b. Qutayba, again, not likely to be a name in this spelling inherited from any Middle Persian source.

Alexander is not the only point of comparison between the *Shahnama* and the Islamic historiographical tradition.[52] The treatment of Yazdagird III, the last shah, shows perhaps the most striking parallels, for Firdawsi's text follows the narrative lines set down by Bal'ami (at least as represented in the published edition).[53] Both Bal'ami and Firdawsi focus on the two key events of his battle against the Arabs at Qadisiyya[54] and his death in Khurasan, in a mill near Marv, betrayed by his vassal, Mahuya, governor of Marv.[55] Both have very similar accounts of the letters sent by the Persian general Rustam Farrukhzad to summon help before the battle, and of the Arab general Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas's efforts to persuade the Iranians to convert, promising them that in that case Yazdagird will keep his throne.[56] Although Rustam Farrukhzad's famous prophecy of the end Sasanian rule and Iran's future under the Arabs[57] does not have an exact parallel in Bal'ami, the prose text of the latter does tell us that he "knew the science of the stars well, and there was no astrologer like him in that time, and he knew that the rule of the Persians (*'ajam*) would be overthrown".[58] This suggests an awareness of the same tradition of Rustam's prophecy. There are of course differences of detail too: Firdawsi has Rustam killed by Sa'd himself, whereas Bal'ami attributes it to an Arab called Hilal,[59] while Firdawsi is rather fuller on the Persian preparations to flee east, although both texts mention Yazdagird's intention to seek the help of the Turkish and Chinese rulers.[60]

As with the story of Alexander, the philological evidence of purely Arab forms of names suggests the use of an Arabic language source, even if mediated through a New Persian translation. Firdawsi's use of the correct spelling of the Arab commander Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas with its characteristically Arabic letters *'ayn* and *ṣād* is unlikely to be derived from any documents that had been transmitted through Middle Persian. Moreover, the account of the last days of the Sasanian empire that has come down to us in Hamza al-Isfahani is quite different: Hamza al-Isfahani mentions Qadisiyya only in passing, and in keeping with his local interests, has Isfahan as the place where Yazdagird made his last base before retreating to Khurasan. Rustam Farrukhzad appears as just one among several commanders.[61] There were thus alternative traditions derived from the *khwadāy-nāmag* literature and related Middle Persian texts which did not make it into Firdawsi's *Shahnama*, nor does it necessarily always represent the traditional Iranian view of history, as its presentation of the Islamised Alexander suggests.

Firdawsi's claim to be using ancient sources should perhaps therefore be seen in the light of his self-conscious antiquarianism, a literary fiction rather than unambiguous evidence of the use of Middle Persian sources transmitted into New Persian via the Abu Mansur text or other *Shahnama*s.   Moreover, despite the claim of the Abu Mansur text's preface that this *Shahnama* was based on 'books of the kings' collected in Khurasan, it is certain this was supplemented, at the least, by Islamic material, including some relating to prophets, [62] and Arabic sources such as Ibn al-Muqaffa' (d. 142/759) and Hamza al-Isfahani (d. after 350/961), who composed translations or adaptations of earlier Persian sources, are specifically mentioned.[63] At no point does the preface explicitly state any sources were Persian language. It is true that the preface does give an impressive sounding list of textual authorities, but this does not represent an "authentic" Iranian tradition to which the compilers had access but is simply lifted directly, word for word from Hamza al-Isfahani's Arabic *Ta'rikh Sini Muluk al-Ard*: Ibn al-Muqaffa', Muhammad b. al-Jahm al-Barmaki, the book of the "kings of Pars" taken from the library of al-Ma'mun (*al-mustakhraj min khizānat al-Ma'mūn*, the identical phrase is used in both the Abu Mansur *Shahnama* preface and Hamza), the histories of Zadoy b. Shahoy, Bahram al-Isfahani, the 'book of the Sasanians' of Hashim b. Qasim al-Isfahani, and the history of Musa b. 'Isa al-Khusrawi. Thus, if, as the text implies, the authors of the Abu Mansur *Shahnama* had to resort to Hamza al-Isfahani to get access to materials dealing with the Iranian past, this suggests that what was otherwise available was limited and unsatisfactory. Moreover, Hamza is known to have made a composite text bringing together several earlier *khwadāy-nāmag*s, as well as drawing extensively on other Arabic sources, [64] so his work does not even purport to represent a verbatim record of its sources, even if it gives, in some unknown degree, their gist.

Hamza was widely used by later Arabic-language authors. Biruni also cites Zadoy b. Shahoy's book *'Illat A'yad al-Furs*, which he indicates he has seen personally,[65] but mentions other authorities such as the aforementioned Musa b. 'Isa on the authority of Hamza.[66] Hamza's materials circulated among Persian authors at an early date. The list of sources presented by the Abu Mansur *Shahnama* is also repeated more or less verbatim in Bal'ami's translation of al-Tabari, where the text presents it as a citation from Hamza al-Isfahani on the authority of Ibn al-Muqaffa'(*dar Shāhnāma-yi buzurg Ḥamza-i Iṣfahānī īdūn gūyad kih pisar-i Muqaffa' ya'nī 'Abdallāh az gāh-i bīrūn-i Adam...*).[67] It is possible, though far from certain, that these represent

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part of the original composition of Bal'ami, which was begun in 352/962, two years after Hamza completed his own book. This must also have been roughly the date the Abu Mansur preface was composed, given its references to Hamza, although elsewhere the compilation of the Abu Mansur materials is dated to 346/957.[68] However, given the numerous interpolations into Bal'ami's text, which cannot be certainly reconstructed in its tenth century form or forms,[69] it is equally, if not more likely, that these texts were inserted later, just as, for example, variant texts of Bal'ami offer alternative accounts of Yazdagird's end.[70]

Without getting too bogged down in an intractable discussion as to who borrowed what from where, which may never be proved owing to the absence of contemporary manuscripts of any of these works and the extensive interpolations to which Bal'ami and Firdawsi's works can be clearly demonstrated to have been subjected, one key point stands out. Material from the Abu Mansur *Shahnama* tradition, which itself drew on Hamza as a source (although, in fairness, we cannot know for sure precisely for which passages it used Hamza), was considered suitable for incorporation into Bal'ami's synthesis of Iranian and Islamic history. This underlines the lack of a rigid distinction between the archaicising Abu Mansur/Firdawsi tradition and the Islamising, pietistic agenda of Bal'ami. Whether or not whether Firdawsi may have used Bal'ami as a source – which should not be excluded from possibility –his narrative is, at least in part, evidently based on the same sources and follows the same lines as one which was incorporated into works by authors that were paragons of Islamic, Sunni piety.

It is worth underlining that there is no necessary connection between the language in which an author wrote and the sources at his disposal or his attitude towards the past.[71] Hamza, writing in Isfahan in Arabic, seems to preserve, albeit it in attenuated form, some of the viewpoint of the Zoroastrian tradition and the *khwadāy-nāmag*s. Similarly, the earliest prose work associated with the Ghaznavid court to attempt to link the dynasty with ancient Iran, al-Tha'alibi's *Ghurar Muluk al-Furs*, was written in Arabic.[72] In contrast, the language of the Persian version of al-Tabari disguises the opposite extreme - the more or less total absence of anything specifically Persian about these works other than the language. Al-Tabari was freely adapted by Bal'ami, but if anything it was to diminish the Persian role in history rather than to enhance it: the evidence of extant manuscripts of Bal'ami suggests he devoted if anything less space to Iranian history than al-Tabari had.[73] In all likelihood it simply did not seem very

important to the translators of these works that were meant to inculcate Islamic piety, not Persian national feeling. Thus merely the fact of Firdawsi writing in Persian does not imply he had any special access to written Persian language accounts of Iranian national history handed down from posterity. Indeed, the image of Firdawsi as a passionate traditionalist seeking to preserve his country's dying culture and keeping rigorously to the traditions inherited from the Iranian forefathers is not entirely borne out. The evidence of the Abu Mansur preface suggest that these ancient traditions were in sufficiently short supply that they had to be reimported into Persian from Arabic intermediary texts. One of the most important of these intermediaries, cited by Bal'ami, the Abu Mansur preface and Biruni, was Hamza al-Isfahani, seems to be the major source for the transmission of Iranian materials back into Persian as well as to later Arabic-language writers, albeit in a new garb. Hamza, as we shall see, was also writing with an eye to contemporary concerns.

The meaning of the Iranian past in the tenth to eleventh centuries
Hamza's *Ta'rikh Sini Muluk al-Ard* exemplifies some of the ways in which an Iranian antiquarianism could be combined with contemporary political concerns and a certain local patriotism. The work contains much information about the author's hometown of Isfahan, and particular concern of Hamza is to associate the foundation of various villages, districts and fire temples with pre-Islamic Iranian rulers, usually the legendary Kayanids rather than the Sasanids.[74] The interest in fire temples is particularly telling when put alongside other passages in which Hamza seems to predict the imminent end of Islam.[75] Yet the Prophet and the history of Islam are included too, albeit it in rather brief form, and his account of hijri history culminates in the humiliating murder of the Caliph al-Muqtadir and the exposure of his naked body.[76] If anything, this seems like a riposte to al-Dinawari, the ninth-century historian who was one of the first to attempt to create an Irano-Islamic synthesis in his history, which ends with the killing and exposure of the naked body of Afshin, the 'Abbasid general exposed as a heretic for his sympathies for the old Iranian faith, symbolising the victory of Islam.[77]

From the very start of his work, Hamza emphasises that his theme is above all the rise and fall of states, the transfer of power. Yet he also clearly has a particular target in mind. When

dealing with the Prophet's birth, he describes the planetary conjunctions that foretell the end of Islam in his own lifetime, referring to the Zoroastrian apocalyptic tradition that a force from the west would destroy Islam. His account of Islamic history is devoted above to unusual events, such as earthquakes, which we know from other contemporary sources, like Maqdisi's *Kitab al-Bad' wa-l-ta'rikh* (composed 355/966), were seen as portents of the end of days.[78] Yet Hamza's work concludes with praises of the nascent Buyid empire: it is hard to avoid the conclusion that he saw in Hasan and 'Ali b. Buya a hope for the revival of the past traditions of Iranian kingship and end to Arab rule, and of course as is well known, the Buyids did indeed adopt some of the trappings of Iranian kingship such as the title of *shāhanshāh*.[79]

If Hamza's sympathies were with the old faith, he remained a Muslim and of course he wrote in Arabic, and we must not forget this side of Hamza's literary persona. Alongside the *Ta'rikh* with its stridently Iranocentric focus, apparently an interpretation of Isfahan's dying pre-Islamic culture for, presumably, an Arabic-speaking Isfahani audience that did not know Middle Persian but remained conscious of its Iranian roots, Hamza composed a collection of Arabic proverbs, and an early edition of the poems of Abu Nuwas.[80] Thus despite Hamza's antiquarianism he was also a fully fledged participant in the Arabic literary culture in which he himself expressed himself. Nor were his sympathies unique. As mentioned, apocalyptic prophecies are well known from Zoroastrian texts, but they also seem to have been current among individuals in Khurasan with Muslim names. Al-Biruni provides some useful titbits of information on this in his *al-Athar al-Baqiyya* which was composed ten years before the traditional completion date of the *Shahnama*. In 319/931, a certain Ibn Abi Zakariyya' appeared, who "ordered [his followers] to worship fire and honour it, and cursed the Prophets of old and their companions."[81] Around the same time, Abu 'Abdallah al-'Adi whom al-Biruni describes as "an open partisan of Zoroastrianism, who hoped for the appearance of the resurrected saviour" wrote a book on planetary conjunctions[82] – the same theme that Hamza had treated – apparently predicting that "a man would emerge who would restore the Zoroastrians' state (*dawlat al-majūsiyya*), and conquer the entire earth, and bring an end to the rule of the Arabs and so on". As al-Biruni sarcastically comments, some of his calculations about the return of Sasanian rule failed to work out, but he too put his hope in the Buyid dynasty. Al-Biruni says: "When the Buyid dynasty of 'Ali b. Buya, called 'Imad al-Dawla, appeared in the planetary conjunctions,

[he said] this is the one promised with regard to the return of kingship to the Persians".[83] Similarly, Mardawij, founder of the Ziyarid dynasty of Gilan, seems to have hoped to destroy not just Arab hegemony but also Islam, and aimed to reconstitute an Iranian empire.[84] Moreover, those hoping for a revival of ancient Iranian rule were not the only ones harbouring apocalyptic expectations around this date: the Ismailis were another growing constituency in Khurasan, and their theologians sought to incorporate Zoroaster into their own cosmology.[85] It is striking that many historians active in the eastern Islamic world show a great interest in the timespan allotted to the world: Bal'ami, al-Maqdisi, Hamza, among others. Perhaps one intention of these works is either to promote or rebut these apocalyptic predictions, depending on their viewpoint.

With the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that the more extreme political manifestations of these hopes had waned by the eleventh century, although Ghaznavid authors do mention the continued existence in their own time of small groups of followers of the ninth-century anti-Muslim rebel al-Muqanna'.[86] The Buyids also sought a *Shahnama* hero as their ancestor to mask their humble origins, even if their efforts ending in confusion, with the Iranian Bahram Gur proclaimed to be their ancestor as well as asserting a noble Arab descent. Indeed, numerous rulers or rulers of the period linked themselves to heroes of the *Shahnama*.[87] Al-Biruni tells us that Abu Mansur Ibn 'Abd al-Razzaq's *Shahnama* explicitly asserted the latter's descent from Manuchichr.[88] The Samanids claimed descent from Bahram Chubin, the Sasanian general, while the Ziyarids of Gilan ultimately traced their ancestry back on their maternal side to Qubad, father of Anushirwan.[89] As noted above, the Qarakhanids seem to have claimed descent from Afrasiyab. Such pretensions to inherit ancient Iranian kingship on the part of their contemporary rivals and predecessors may have presented a serious challenge to the Ghaznavid efforts to portray themselves as rulers of Iran outlined above,[90] and the dynasty sought to compete. Juzjani, writing in the early thirteenth century, citing the lost chronicle of Abu'l-Qasim 'Imadi, says of Mahmud of Ghazna's father Sebüktegin that

"he was one of the descendants of the emperor Yazdagird [III], and when Yazdagird was killed in a mill in the land of Merv, at the time of the Caliphate of the Commander of the Faithful 'Uthman, the followers and partisans of Yazdagird fled to Turkestan and intermarried with [the local people]. And in two or three generations they became Turks. Their palaces still

stand in that place, and their genealogy is as follows... Amir Sebüktegin b. Juq Qarabjikim b. Qara Arslan b. Qara Milat (?) b. Qara Yaghman b. Firuz b. Yazdagird [b.] the emperor of Persia [*shahriyār al-fārs*]."[91]

It seems, however, that such a genealogy did not play a prominent role in Ghaznavid efforts to legitimate themselves in the eleventh century, given the lack of explicit references to Yazdagird in contemporary Ghaznavid panegyrics, which prefer to compare the dynasty to figures such as Alexander and Anushirwan rather than explicitly claim descent from them.[92] Firdawsi, for his part, calls Mahmud a new Faridun, the embodiment of justice and generosity who overthrew the Arab tyrant Zahhak:

<div dir="rtl">

خروشی شنیدم ز گیتی بلند * که اندیشه شد تیز و تن بی گزند

که ای نامداران و گردن کشان * که جست از فریدون فرخ نشان

فریدون بیدار دل زنده شد * زمان و زمین پیش او بنده شد

به داد و بخشش گرفت این جهان * سرش بر تر آمد ز شاهنشاهان

فروزان شد آثار تاریخ او * که جاوید بادا بن و بیخ او[93]

</div>

I heard a cry from on high, at which my thoughts quickened and my body revived,
"Oh famous and proud men who sought a sign of Faridun the fortunate,
Faridun of the wakeful heart has come to life, time and earth are slaves before him.
With his justice and generosity he has seized this world, his head is higher than the kings of kings!
His annals are radiant, may his root and foundation be eternal."

Even if such claims for the Ghaznavids were restricted to the realms of poetic simile, the dynasty was surrounded by contemporaries, rivals and immediate predecessors who sought to use the Iranian past as a means of legitimising their own rule, and in the case of Abu Mansur of Tus, using precisely a *Shahnama* to accomplish this.

Conclusion

The present article has attempted to establish that in neither form nor content was the *Shahnama* as old fashioned or antiquarian as commonly believed. In form, the work found emulations in the works of Ghaznavid court poets like Farrukhi and the verses decorating Ghaznavid palaces, while later works composed in the Ghaznavid territories such as the *Faramarznama* confirm the enduring popularity of epics on ancient Iranian themes. It is true that we do not have an extant work from the turn of the eleventh century that closely resembles the *Shahnama* in form, but this could be said for almost any other work of Ghaznavid or even Samanid literature beyond panegyric poetry. One searches in vain for an exact equivalent to Tha'alibi's *Ghurar*, Bayhaqi's *History of Mas'ud*, or al-'Utbi's great *Kitab al-Yamini* denouncing the Ghaznavid dynasty. Perhaps just not enough material has survived to allow us to assess anachronism or otherwise, Furthermore, the *Shahnama* drew on the same corpus of sources used by other writers in the Islamic tradition at the time, and Firdawsi did not enjoy some sort of privileged access to ancient Iranian materials, which, in any event, were in good measure transmitted to early New Persian writers through their Arabic translations or adaptations by Ibn al-Muqaffa' and Hamza al-Isfahani. In sum, then, the evidence does not support the traditional accounts of the *Shahnama*'s failure. Certainly, it may have been the subject of negative reactions on the part of certain rival court poets, but the very existence of such allusions in the works of Farrukhi suggests that the *Shahnama* was already well-known to both the poet and his audience.

In terms of content, the *Shahnama* could have had relevance to a Ghaznavid audience in multiple ways. On the one hand it could be read as an allegory for Mahmud, with various of its heroes standing for the sultan. Stories of Kaykhusraw with his wars against Afrasiyab, Faramarz with his campaigns into India, and Faridun, the reviver of Iranian kingship, could all have played a role in legitimising Ghaznavid rule and military exploits across the Oxus and into India. The verses cited above comparing Mahmud to Faridun are the most direct instance of this, but the placement of panegyrics of Mahmud suggests such an allegorical reading is likely elsewhere. This supposition is strengthened by the existence of another, slightly later, eleventh-century Persian epic, Gurgani's *Vis and Ramin* (composed c. 441/1050), dedicated to the Seljuq Sultan Tughril, which also claimed to draw on 'Pahlavi' legends but was evidently intended to be read as an allegory on contemporary politics.[94] Doubtless one reason for the composition of such texts was the interest in the revival of Iranian kingship in the tenth century among dynasties such as

the Ghaznavids' Buyid rivals, and rulers' or nobles' search for genealogies linking themselves to *Shahnama* heroes, as with Abu Mansur Ibn 'Abd al-Razzaq. This would have given the topic of ancient Iranian kingship a distinct contemporary relevance, and indeed, possibly stimulated demand for a Ghaznavid court version of the epic. Clearly, the *Shahnama* cannot simply be reduced to a piece of contemporary political propaganda, but nor can this aspect of it be overlooked in interpreting the poem.

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[1] It is an honour to dedicate this article to the memory of Edmund Bosworth. A preliminary version was presented at the The Shahnama Millennium Conference organised by the Shahnama Centre, University of Cambridge, in 2010. I am also grateful to Charles Melville for comments on a draft of this paper.

[2] For the traditional account of the work's reception see Nöldeke, *Das Iranische Nationalepos*, 26-34; Safa, *Hamasa-sarayi dar Iran*, 184-190; Shahbazi, *Ferdowsi*, 2-8; for surveys of the mediaeval reception see Rubanovich, "Tracking the *Shāhnāma* Tradition" and Askari, *The Medieval Reception of the* Shāhnāma, 8-85.

[3] See Davidson, "A Pictorial Aetiology of Ferdowsi."

[4] Shahbazi, *Ferdowsi,* 97-103; Meisami, *Persian Historiography*, 44, 46 n. 13, 51-3; Omidsalar, *Poetics and Politics of Iran's National Epic*, 85-86; for a review of debates on this issue, see Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Ferdowsi. ii. Hajw-nāma".

[5] E.g. Nöldeke, *Das Iranische Nationalepos*, 35-36, 47

[6] Dabiri, "The *Shahnama*," 26.

[7] Meisami, *Persian Historiography*, 53; cf. Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature*, 156-7, 161.

[8] Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature*, 157.

[9] Minorsky, "The Older Preface to the *Shāh-nāma*"; Safa, *Hamasa-sarayi dar Iran*, 160-171; Shahbazi, *Ferdowsi,* 33-38; Omidsalar, *Poetics and Politics of Iran's National Epic*, 48-61; van Zutphen, *Farāmarz, the Sistāni Hero***,** 22-25; on the Daqiqi section see Davis, "Religion in the *Shahnama,"* 340.

[10] Al-Biruni, *al-Athar al-Baqiyya*, 45.

[11] Ashtiyani, "Karasi-yi Shahnama-khwan"; on the post of Shahnama-khwan, which seems to have also existed at royal courts in the twelfth century, see also Melkian-Chirvani, "Le livre des rois," 33-37.

[12] Melikian-Chirvani, "Le livre des rois," 20; Farrukhi, *Diwan*, 65.

[13] Firdawsi, *Shahnama,* IV, 171, l. 27.

[14] Firdawsi, *Shahnama*, IV: 171, ll. 32-3:

<div dir="rtl">

پیوستم این نامه باستان * پسندیده از دفتر راستان

که تا روز پیری مرا بر دهد * بزرگی و دینار و افسر دهد

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[15] al-Thaʻâlibî, *Histoire des Rois de Perse*, v-vi; Omidsalar, *Poetics and Politics of Iran's National Epic*, 50-53; Peacock, "Early Persian Historians," 66-67; also Davis, "The Problem of Ferdowsî's Sources".

[16] The principal exception is ʻUtbi's Arabic al-*Yamini*, a highly complex work devoted to the exploits of Mahmud and his father Sebüktegin; however, this was certainly destined, at least in the form in which it has reached us, for an audience of fellow bureaucrats (see Peacock, "ʻUtbī's *al-Yamīnī*").

[17] Melikian-Chirvani, "Le livre des rois," 15.

[18] Bombaci, *The Kufic Inscription in Persian Verses*; Allegranzi, "The Use of Persian in Monumental Epigraphy from Ghazni," 26-27.

[19] Melikian-Chirvani, "Le livre des rois," 19-20; Farrukhi, *Diwan*, 248-249; cf. Farrukhi, *Diwan*, 344, a panegyric to Mahmud in the form of a dialogue between the poet and his beloved:

گفتا: چنو دگر به جهان شه بود؟ * گفتم ز من مپرس به شهنامه کن نگاه

گفتا: که شاهنامه دروغست سربسر * گفتم تو راست گیر و دروغ از میان بکاه

He said, "Is there another king like him in the world?"; I said, "Don't ask me, look in the *Shahnama*".

He said, "The *Shahnama* is full of lies"; I said, "Do what's right and get rid of the lies."

[20] Van Zutphen, *Farāmarz, the Sistāni Hero*, 539-546, 557-561.

[21] Van Zutphen, *Farāmarz, the Sistāni Hero*, 336, 338.

[22] Cf. Omidsalar, *Poetics and Politics of Iran's National Epic*, 100-106.

[23] Cf. Mottahedeh, "Finding Iran in the Panegyrics of the Ghaznavid Court," 131-3; Omidsalar, *Poetics and Politics of Iran's National Epic*, 104-105; Omidsalar cites and translates a passage from the Ghaznavid panegyrist Farrukhi's *Diwan* (Farrukhi, *Diwan,* 256-257) that in his translation attacks the 'Turks'; however, the original text makes it clearer that the target of Farrukhi's wrath is the Qarakhanids, referred to by their titles of khan (*az khānān dūstī nabāyad.... nayarzad īn khānān ba-pāk andīsha-yi khusraw*). The poet warns against the Qarakhanid offer of friendship, motivated by their desire for a clear southern front while they campaign against China. Farrukhi's point is the untrustworthy nature of the Qarakhanids, not a more general desire to attack 'Turks' as a group. The Qarakhanids themselves (or at least their court poets in their panegyrics) accepted and adopted this identification with Afrasiyab, see Melikian-Chirvani, "Le livre des rois," 25-30; Melikian-Chirvani, "Conscience du passé," 146-147.

[24] Gardizi, *Zayn al-Akhbar,* 75.

[25] Firdawsi, *Shahnama*, IV: 170, l. 20-174, l. 72.

[26] Van Zutphen, *Farāmarz, the Sistāni Hero*, 557.

[27] Cf. Meisami, *Persian Historiography*, 6-13, 283-286; Melville, "The Historian at Work".

[28] Peacock, *Mediaeval Islamic Historiography.*

[29] Askari, *The Medieval Reception of the* Shāhnāma.

[30] Peacock, *Mediaeval Islamic Historiography*; Peacock, "Early Persian Historians".

[31] On the *khwadāy-ñamag*s see Shahbazi, . "On the *Xwadāy-nāmag*", Omidsalar, *Poetics and Politics of Iran's National Epic*, 36-39, Wood, "The Christian Reception of the *Xwadāy-nāmag*"; for the arguments against Firdawsi's use of Abu Mansur see Davis, "The Problem of Ferdowsî's Sources".

[32] For the debate on Firdawsi's sources and orality see Yamamoto, *The Oral Background of Persian Epics*; Omidsalar, *Poetics and Politics of Iran's National Epic*; Davidson, *Poet and Hero* and Davis, "The Problem of Ferdowsî's Sources".

[33] Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature*, 152.

[34] Pourshariati , *Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire*, 13; cf. Shahbazi, *Ferdowsi,* 57, Omidsalar, *Poetics and Politics of Iran's National Epic*, 63-69.

[35] Firdawsi, *Shahnama,* I: 12, 14. Also on Firdawsi's references to his sources see Davis, "The Problem of Ferdowsî's Sources" and Omidsalar , *Poetics and Politics of Iran's National Epic*, 56-57.

[36] Davis, "Religion in the *Shahnama*," 338.

[37] Ghazanfari, *Perceptions of Zoroastrian Realities in the Shahnameh*, 35.

[38] Ghazanfari, *Perceptions of Zoroastrian Realities in the Shahnameh*, 243.

[39] Firdawsi, *Shahnama,* V: 80; cf. Ghazanfari, *Perceptions of Zoroastrian Realities in the Shahnameh,* 39.

[40] Firdawsi, *Shahnama*, V: 3-129.

[41] Firdawsi, *Shahnama,* VI: 48-52. For a discussion of this episode see Simpson, "From Tourist to Pilgrim."

[42] See Hillenbrand, "The Iskandar Cycle," and Hanaway, "Iskandar-nama" for the *Shahnama*'s presentation of Alexander.

[43] Firdawsi, *Shahnama,* V: 522-3. In Bal'ami, Alexander is depicted as marrying Darius's daughter (Bal'ami, *Tarikhnama*, I: 487, 488).

[44] Hamza al-Isfahani, *Ta'rikh Sini Muluk al-Ard*, 33-4; Yarshater, "Iranian National History," 377-378.

[45] See Manteghi, "Alexander the Great in the *Shāhnāmeh*" with references to earlier scholarship.

[46] Ciancaglini, "The Syriac Version of the Alexander *Romance*"; cf. Frye, "Two Iranian Notes"; Hanaway, "Iskandar-nama".

[47] Ciancaglini, "The Syriac Version of the Alexander *Romance*," 138. My comments in Peacock, *Mediaeval Islamic Historiography*, 117 should be adjusted in light of this.

[48] Gardizi, *Zayn al-Akhbar*, 81-2.

[49] Manteghi, "Alexander the Great in the *Shāhnāmeh*," 164-168.

[50] Firdawsi, *Shahnama*, V: 519-520.

[51] Manteghi, "Alexander the Great in the *Shāhnāmeh*," 165-166 attempts to prove a connection between Amorium and Zoroastrianism, suggesting a means of transmission, but this seems extremely unlikely to me, and the preservation of the initial *'ayn* of the Arabic spelling of the name ('Amuriyya) confirms conclusively Firdawsi's ultimately Arabic source.

[52] Cf. Davis, "Religion in the *Shahnama*," 340-341.

[53] Firdawsi, *Shahnama*, VIII: 409-488; Bal'ami 1999, III: 441-454, 490-501, 506-541. See also discussion of this by Wood, "The Christian Reception of the *Xwadāy-nāmag*."

[54] Firdawsi, *Shahnama*, VIII: 412, l. 31-439, l. 329; Bal'ami, *Tarikhnama*, III: 441-2, 444-6, 451-452.

[55] Firdawsi, *Shahnama*, VIII: 457, l. 545-468, l. 683.

[56] Firdawsi, *Shahnama*, VIII: 425, l. 178-426, l. 193; Bal'ami, *Tarikhnama*, III: 444-5.

[57] Firdawsi, *Shahnama*, VIII: 413, l. 35-421, l. 131

[58] Bal'ami, *Tarikhnama,* III: 446.

[59] Bal'ami, *Tarikhnama,* III: 451; see also the discussion in Melville, "The Historian at Work," 89-91.

[60] Firdawsi, *Shahnama*, VIII: 441, l. 342; Bal'ami, *Tarikhnama,* III: 538.

[61] Hamza al-Isfahani, *Ta'rikh Sini Muluk al-Ard*, 48-49

[62] Minorsky, "The Older Preface to the *Shāh-nāma*," 141-3: the Abu Mansur preface associates the Islamic Adam with Iranian Kayumarth, and remarks on the regular appearance of prophets; cf. Davis, "The Problem of Ferdowsî's Sources," 51-2.

[63] Minorsky, "The Older Preface to the *Shāh-nāma*," 136; Omidsalar, *Poetics and Politics of Iran's National Epic*, 50-51.

[64] Hamza al-Isfahani, *Ta'rikh Sini Muluk al-Ard*, 10, 50, and see also Pourshariati , "Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī and Sāsānid Historical Geography," 119-121; Peacock, "Early Persian Historians," 62-63.

[65] al-Biruni, *al-Athar al-Baqiyya*, 53, 163, 263, 267.

[66] al-Biruni, *al-Athar al-Baqiyya*, 135.

[67] Bal'ami, *Tarikhnama*, I: 5; Minorsky, "The Older Preface to the *Shāh-nāma*," 269.

[68] Minorsky, "The Older Preface to the *Shāh-nāma*," 266, 269 n. 5.

[69] See Peacock, *Mediaeval Islamic Historiography*, chapter 2.

[70] Peacock, *Mediaeval Islamic Historiography*, 143.

[71] Cf. Peacock, "Early Persian Historians".

[72] Although al-Tha'alibi makes no reference to the legend of the Ghaznavids' descent from the Sasanian Yazdagird III (see Bosworth, "The Heritage of Rulership in Early Islamic Iran," 61), he achieved this by representing the Ghaznavids as the latest dynasty in a series stretching back to Kayumarth/Adam.

[73] Peacock, *Mediaeval Islamic Historiography*.

[74] Hamza al-Isfahani, *Ta'rikh Sini Muluk al-Ard*, 31-32; Pourshariati, "Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī and Sāsānid Historical Geography," 114-117.

[75] Hamza al-Isfahani, *Ta'rikh Sini Muluk al-Ard*, 124, and the discussion in Peacock, "Early Persian Historians," 64-65.

[76] Hamza al-Isfahani, *Ta'rikh Sini Muluk al-Ard*, 163.

[77] al-Dinawari, *Al-Akhbar al-Tiwal*, 402-406.

[78] On al-Maqdisi's account of the signs of the end of time see Tahmi, *L'Encyclopédisme musulman a l'âge classique*, 103-125

[79] Madelung, "The Assumption of the Title *Shāhānshāh*"; Bosworth, "The Heritage of Rulership in Early Islamic Iran," 57.

[80] Rosenthal, "Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī"; Pourshariati, "Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī and Sāsānid Historical Geography," 118-119.

[81] al-Biruni *al-Athar al-Baqiyya*, 260.

[82] al-Biruni, *al-Athar al-Baqiyya*, 260.

[83] al-Biruni *al-Athar al-Baqiyya*, 260.

[84] Madelung, "The Assumption of the Title *Shāhānshāh*," 86-7; Bosworth, "The Heritage of Rulership in Early Islamic Iran," 56-7.

[85] See Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs*, 235-246 on the eastern Ismailis in this period, esp. 239-40 for Zoroaster in their cosmology. Daftary states of two tenth century Ismail Khurasani *dā'ī*s that, "Al-Nasafi and al-Razi also devoted much energy and creative thinking to accommodating a number of pre-Islamic religions, notably those of the Zoroastrians, Manichaeans and Sabaeans, within their scheme of the seven revelational eras of sacred history, assigning these religions to specific *dawr*s and *natiq*s." (Daftary, "Cyclical Time and Sacred History").

[86] Crone, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran*, 179-180.

[87] al-Biruni, *al-Athar al-Baqiyya*, 45-46; Bosworth, "The Heritage of Rulership in Early Islamic Iran".

[88] al-Biruni, *al-Athar al-Baqiyya*, 45: ...*kamā fu'ila li-Ibn 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṭūsī min ifti'āl nasab lahu fi al-Shāhnāma yantamī bihi ilā Manūshjihr.*

[89] al-Biruni, *al-Athar al-Baqiyya*, 45-46. For further examples and discussion see Bosworth, "The Heritage of Rulership in Early Islamic Iran".

[90] For Ghaznavid-Buyid rivalry, which was especially intense over Kirman, see Busse, *Calif und Grosskönig*, 92, 165, 215; Bosworth, "The Banū Ilyās of Kirmān".

[91] Juzjani, *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, I: 226; cf. Bosworth, "The Heritage of Rulership in Early Islamic Iran," 61.

[92] Melikian-Chirvani, "Le livre des rois," 14-16.

[93] Firdawsi, *Shahnama*, IV: 172, l. 45ff.

[94] Molé, "*Vis u Ramin* et l'histoire seldjoukide".