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# Firdawsi: A *Scholium*

by

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Hakim Abu'l-Qasim Mansur b. al-Hasan al-Firdawsi al-Tusi (ca. 940/41-ca. 1020/25), a middle-ranking aristocrat recognised by his *nom de plume*, Firdawsi ('paradisiacal'), was a central figure in the history of classical Persian literature.<sup>1</sup> His monumental epic poem, *Shahnama* ('Book of Kings'), conjures Homeric as well as Miltonic associations to the Iranian mind thus ensuring him a niche in the universal literary canon.<sup>2</sup> This mytho-poetic masterpiece, dealing with Persian legendary and recorded history from the first man to the Arab conquest in AD 652, has been continuously read, recited, remembered, and re-enacted across the Iranian-speaking oecumene straddling West, Central and South Asia for over a millennium.<sup>3</sup> Starting from the nineteenth century, a virtual school of *Shahnama* studies has flourished as successive generations of scholars interpreted and contextualised the text in published abridgements, translations and new editions. Animated productions of Rustam's adventures, as those of Hercules, are keenly enjoyed by adults and children in contemporary Iran and the diaspora.<sup>4</sup>

Although Firdawsi dedicated his work to Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni (r. 998-1030), his life was spent in the town of Tus, Khurasan, away from the courts of princes and paladins. For almost a generation, about thirty years, he quietly worked on his *magnum opus* and interspersed it with brief vignettes of his personal life for the reader. As Shahpur Shahbazi has noted:

Much has been written on Ferdowsī and his work, but even learned studies have given inharmonious results for the simple reasons that our sources are late, uncritical and contradictory, and that ... [t]he best authority is the *Šāhnāma* itself as the poet frequently breaks his narrative to insert a few lines about his age, work and thoughts.<sup>5</sup>

Firdawsi belonged to the traditional squirearchy or *dihqan* class emotively tied to its land and ancient Persian culture. His family most probably converted to Islam a few generations earlier thus making him heir to a hybrid Perso-Islamic civilisation.<sup>6</sup> Firdawsi's pride in pre-Islamic Persia, however, did not imply that he was an expert on ancient history or retained more than a superficial knowledge of the former imperial Zoroastrian faith.<sup>7</sup>

Scholarly consensus contends that the *Shahnama* was predicated on oral and written sources, both of which were available to Firdawsi.<sup>8</sup> Its antecedents lie in a legendary and quasi-historical Iranian worldview, the *Khwaday-namag* or 'Book of Lords', a 'compendium of moral and philosophical injunctions as delivered through the Persian poetical imagination' which connoted 'the earliest fictive renarration of a legendary history that puts the poetic occasion at the service of the ideological legitimization of the state apparatus and the Persian court.'<sup>9</sup> Written in (Zoroastrian or Book) Pahlavi towards the end of the Sasanian era, it was translated into Arabic as the *Siyar al-muluk* and several redactions appeared before the poet, Daqiqi (d. 977), Firdawsi's immediate model, with 'pulses, like Marlowe's' had attempted a New Persian versified version whose completion was interrupted by his murder. Daqiqi's composition, those 'few bugle notes which he had just begin to sound' was the 'herald of Firdausi', who ploughed additional written and oral sources to begin 'sowing the seeds of his words' into this monumental endeavour around 980.<sup>10</sup> He was about 71 years old when he finished it in some 60,000 couplets in 994 and, when aged 80, added a completion note dated February 25, 1010 to this final, revised version. Semi-legendary narratives and histories of pre-Islamic Iran, admittedly, are interpolated in the epic though inasmuch as Firdawsi sought not to compose a comprehensive account of that civilisation, 'the bulk of this epic had become attached to the most representative expression of Iranian thinking, which is the one recorded in Zoroastrian writings.'<sup>11</sup> It is indeed puzzling that he completely left out important figures such as Cyrus the Great or the archer Arash. But then the epic is episodic and by focusing on select epochs does skim down the ages wherein Mazdean evocations 'make the story more explicitly

human, almost as if freed of [Islamic] divine sanctions or moral standards, and hence makes the heroic deeds themselves more identifiably human in their passion and motivation'.<sup>12</sup> It merits no reiteration that 'mythological' and 'heroic' tales from the epic recounting the reign of legendary sovereigns such as Kayumars and Jamshid, and the heroic exploits of Rustam, Suhrab, Isfandiyar and Siyavash, were and still are the most often recited and reminisced. Dick Davis recently observed:

As with the Achaemenids, the historical record of the Parthians, who ruled Iran from the third century B.C.E. until the third C.E., is largely absent from the poem; this is almost certainly due to the success of the Sasanians in deliberately obliterating the memory of the dynasty they replaced.<sup>13</sup>

This is also evinced in the famous abridgement of the epic in seventeenth-century Mughal India where the large so-called 'historical' section of the *Shahnama* was left out altogether by Tawakkul Beg in his *Tarikh-i Shamshirkhani*. And it was this rendition, which formed the basis of almost all Indic translations of the Persian original, including the Urdu, Gujarati and Punjabi versions that appeared in the nineteenth century.<sup>14</sup>

The poetical and philosophical influences of the *Shahnama* have been profound on later Persian and Persianate literatures. One of Firdawsi's aims in crafting his verses was to revivify the language of '*ajam* (Iran) which, following the triumph of Islam, had become Arabicised. A heroic hymnist and national narrator, Firdawsi, the 'resurrector of Iranian national identity and people' (*zinda kunanda-yi milliyat va nizhad-i Iran*) artfully culled the disparate memories of a gracious past steeped in valour, justice, pleasure, love, tragedy, and redemption so that his subjugated kinsmen might hearken to a 'frank call to the good old days and ways, full of battles and marvels, but also of touching passages of charity and tenderness shown equally to friend and foe.' Firdawsi masterfully 'shades off a melodramatic situation until it becomes firmly integrated in the commonplace; and how he relieves, for those who will accept such relief, solemnity and high drama with the ironical, and sometimes even with the comic.'<sup>15</sup> With a moral compass directed at the transitory glories and atrocities of the human condition, Firdawsi's empathic imaginings earned him a reception among universal epicists.<sup>16</sup> Although a Muslim, he appears to have harboured a disdain for the Arabs and lamented their annexation and sacking of his homeland.<sup>17</sup> Composed in Dari, henceforth the literary medium of New Persian, the *Shahnama* is not entirely devoid of Arabic barring 'uncommon Arabic words which the poet avoids' for he was 'simply writing in the language current in his native Khorāsān.'<sup>18</sup> And yet, tellingly, the Arabic lexeme in its limited corpus most frequently encountered is *gham* ('grief') revealing Firdawsi's relentless upholding of the good, despite his overall pessimism, against the implacability of fate.<sup>19</sup>

The *Shahnama*<sup>20</sup> gave rise to a few spin-off epics composed in the same metre and style about the adventures of characters who are either minor or absent in Firdawsi's text, such as *Faramarznama*, *Borzunama*, and one on Rustam's daughter, *Banu Gushaspnama*.<sup>21</sup> Timurid, Safavid, Mughal and Ottoman panegyrists would later versify the conquests of their patron-kings in similar paeans. Such *Shahnama*-modeled *masnavis* also celebrated the deeds of living monarchs who, as patrons, purposefully integrated it with the epic tradition in order to bolster their legitimacy. Indeed an imperial office for such writers of Persian-language *Shahnamas* or *shahnama-gu* was to be found for a while at the Sublime Porte.<sup>22</sup>

Firdawsi's complex ideas on the capricious working of fate and the cyclical nature of time also exerted an influence on Persian poets and writers, classical and contemporary, in all kinds of innovative ways. The production of *Shahnama* manuscripts also went hand in hand with the history of Persian painting, especially the illuminated arts of the book. Some of the most exquisite Islamic miniatures – the acme of Muslim fine arts – are to be found in sumptuous manuscripts of the epic produced in royal ateliers, especially of the Timurid and Safavid dynasties.<sup>23</sup>

In India, the K R Cama Oriental Institute has consistently promoted academic research and public interest in Firdawsi's *Shahnama*. The earliest work to be published by the Institute, after its inception in

1916, was Theodor Nöldeke's, *The Iranian National Epic, or, The Shahnamah*.<sup>24</sup> Following this rapidly acknowledged classic treatment, the Institute next published Sir J C Coyajee, *Studies in Shāhnāmeh* (Bombay, 1939 = *Journal of the K R Cama Oriental Institute*, Volume 33).<sup>25</sup> This was a collection of six essays on comparative theology and mythology based on the author's Government Fellowship Lectures delivered a year earlier, in 1938, at the Institute. Among several initiatives to commemorate the Institute's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in December, 1991 was an English edition of Arthur Christensen's *Les Gestes des Rois dans les Traditions de l'Iran Antique* (Paris, 1936), that Danish Iranist's four Bai Ratanbai Katrak Lectures delivered at the Sorbonne in Paris, 1934. This important work was now disseminated to a wider readership when the Institute commissioned a translation from the London-based Parsi scholar, Farrokh Vajifdar, *The Epic of the Kings in Ancient Iranian Traditions* (Bombay, 1991; repr. 1996).<sup>26</sup> Earlier in the year, the Institute organised a 'Firdaosi Festival' in February, 1991, and anticipated by a decade, anniversaries convened during 2010-12 to mark the millennium of the completion of the epic.<sup>27</sup> Two years later also appeared Arthur Christensen's *Les Kayanides* (Copenhagen, 1931) as translated by F N Tumboowalla, *The Kayanians* (Bombay, 1993).<sup>28</sup> Thanks to the generous benefaction towards reprinting pioneering studies on Zoroastrianism by the late Zartoshty Brothers during the closing years of the last century, the Institute reissued J D Khandalawala, *An Introduction To The Shah-nameh Of Firdousi From The French Of Jules Mohl* (Bombay, 1898; repr. 2001), a work originally published by the Bombay Parsee Punchayet.<sup>29</sup> In 2003 the Institute reprinted the sometime Marchioness of Winchester or Bapsy Paulet née Pavry, *The Heroines Of Ancient Persia: Stories Retold From The Shahnama Of Firdausi* (Cambridge, 1930; repr. London, 1954). Also, in 2003, the Institute published its *Proceedings of the All India Seminar on Firdawsi and his Shahnameh* held in Bombay (Mumbai), 9-11 November, 2001.

Exactly a decade on, in recognition of *Shahnama* millennium, an international seminar, the sole South Asian initiative, was held at the Institute in Bombay (Mumbai), 8-9 January, 2011. This brought together a truly diverse group of scholars from across disciplines some of whose papers are now presented herein. Those read in Bombay by other delegates have been separately published in Olga Davidson and Marianna Shreve Simpson (eds.), *Ferdowsi's Shāhnāma: Millennial Perspectives* (Boston, 2013). Two contributions reprinted therefrom here are those of Firuza Melville and the co-editor of this volume, Sunil Sharma.

The first study in this collection, 'The *Shāhnāma* Manuscript Tradition: The Next 1000 Years?', was the keynote address delivered by Charles Melville. It affords a survey of *Shahnama* studies and highlights various conferences and exhibitions organised around the world to accompany earlier landmark dates and the millennium of the completion of the work. Melville also discusses the *Cambridge Shahnama* project, a database and an invaluable resource for scholars and students of manuscript illustrations of the text. The next four papers are broadly concerned with pre-Islamic Persian elements conspicuous in the epic. In 'Parthian Heritage-Persian Culture: How the *Shahnama* became the Persian "national" epic', Albert de Jong foregrounds the national setting of this text by examining the 'Parthian' or northeast background, a *communis opinio* although adumbrated but unanalysed until now. Kolsoum Ghazanfar's 'Ahriman and *diws* in the *Shahnama*', after marshalling all attestations of the arch fiend and his acolytes, distinguishes their roles and functions in Mazdean cosmology and, once Islamically rehabilitated, in the epic's schemata. A brief overview of that world conqueror who straddles the mythological-heroic and historical divide, Sikandar or Iskandar in the Persian tradition, is discussed in 'Alexander in the *Shahnama*' by Syed Akhtar Husain. S A Hasan's 'The Rise of the *Simurgh* in the *Shahnama*' comments on the background and history of the mythological bird that plays an important role in the Persian epic.

The next two papers deal with the manuscript tradition in India. In 'The Production of Mughal *Shahnamas*: Imperial, Sub-Imperial, and Provincial Manuscripts', Sunil Sharma discusses the place of Firdawsi's epic in the culture of Mughal India, as gift and collectible object, and ultimately a book of stories. In 'Some Rare *Shahnama* Manuscripts Preserved at Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library

(Patna)', Imtiaz Ahmad, the director of this library, describes the codicological features of some important *Shahnama* manuscripts, both illustrated and non-illustrated copies, in one of the most important Persian collections in India. Four papers are on the larger topic of the 'Influence of Firdawsi's *Shahnama* on the *Panj Ganj* of Nizami', by Sabar Havewalla; 'The *Shāhnāma* cycle and the Digenes Akritas epic novel', by Evangelos Venetis; 'The Legend of Siyāvosh or the Legend of Yusof?', by Firuza Melville; and 'An Annotated Micro-history and Bibliography of the Houghton *Shahnama*', by Burzine Waghmar. Havewalla provides a comparative-contrastive survey of three protagonists of Firdawsi's epic as reflected in Nizami's enduring quintet. Venetis examines, based on internal evidence in the Byzantino-Seljuq epic narrative, near similar depictions of martial men and women with its Persian counterpart which, given temporal and spatial propinquity, cannot be entirely ruled out; and Melville explicates, on the basis of painted and poetic sources, the seductive wiles of women as depicted in the liaisons of Yusuf-Zulaykha and Siyavush-Sudaba, and how Firdawsi came to be attributed as the versifier of another composition on the former, whose original narrative stretches back to initially Biblical, and subsequently, Qur'anic origins. Waghmar brings down the curtain on the twentieth century by detailing a Firdawsian tragedy of hubris and avarice with the acquisition and dispersal of arguably the most important illuminated codex of this epic in the possession of the late Arthur Houghton, Jr.

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## References

The following bibliographical notes, admittedly prolix, are with a view to providing the student of *Shahnama* and Persian studies, in South and Central Asia but particularly present-day Iran, a *fin-de-siècle* survey of the extant literature in primarily English sources. Scholars elsewhere, in keeping with the millennial commemorative, will hopefully not disregard this *raisonné*.

- 1 The authoritative compilation among *compendia* is now *Encyclopædia Iranica*, vol. IX, s.v. 'Abu'l Qāsem Ferdowsi i. Life' (by Dj Khaleghi Motlagh), pp 514-23, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/ferdowsi-i>; good summations are in *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*, Micropædia, vol. 4, s.v. 'Ferdowsi' (by J A Boyle), pp 735-36; and *Encyclopedia of Asian History*, vol. 1, s.v. 'Firdausi' (by Manouchehr Kasheff), Ainslie Embree (ed.), New York, 1988, pp 467-68. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st ed., vol. 1, s.v. 'Firdawsī' (by Cl Huart), pp 110-11; and *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., vol. II, s.v. 'Firdawsī' (by Cl Huart *et al.*), pp 918-21 are satisfactory write-ups but in neither editions are exclusive entries on the *Shahnama* for which refer to *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought*, s.v. 'Shahnama' (by Franklin Lewis), Gerhard Bowering *et al.* (eds.), Princeton, 2013, pp 492-93.
- 2 A comparative-contrastive discussion with the *Iliad* is in Amin Banani, 'Ferdowsi and the art of tragic epic', in *Persian Literature*, Ehsan Yarshater (ed.), Columbia Lectures on Iranian Studies 3, New York, 1988, pp 117-19 (= *idem*, *The Epic of the Kings: Shāh-Nāma by Ferdowsi*, 1996, pp xxi-xxii.) Fuller reference to the latter is in n 13 which abbreviated reprint is of the original version published in 1988. A sequel to this discussion is in *idem*, 'Reflections on Re-reading the Iliad and Shahnameh', in *The Necklace of the Pleiades: Studies in Persian Literature presented to Heshmat Moayyad on his 80th birthday*, Franklin Lewis and Sunil Sharma (eds.), Iranian Studies 4, Amsterdam and West Lafayette IN, 2007, pp 63-68; repr. *Encyclopædia Iranica*, s.v. 'Shāh-Nāma-Excursus' (by Amin Banani), <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/shahnama-excursus>; English and Persian versions are, at the time of writing, still online at the late Professor Banani's website: <http://www.aminbanani.com>
- 3 The *Stand der Forschung* on all aspects of *Shahnama* studies is likely to be *Heroic Epic: The Shahnameh and its Legacy, A History of Persian Literature IV*, London and New York, (*in work*).
- 4 For just such a readership is Mahmoud Omidshahar, *Iran's epic and America's empire: a handbook for a generation in limbo*, Santa Monica CA, 2012.
- 5 A Shahpur Shahbazi, *Ferdowsi: a critical biography*, Cambridge MA, 1991; repr. Costa Mesa CA, 2010, p 1. See, generally, Iraj Afshar, *Bibliography on Firdawsi*, Tehran, 1968; *idem*, *Kitabshinasi-yi Firdawsi: fihrist-i asar va tahqiqat dar bara-yi Firdawsi va Shahnama*, Silsila-yi intisharat-i anjuman-i asar-i milli 59, Tehran, 1968.
- 6 *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., vol. II, s.v. 'Diḥkān' (by A K S Lambton), pp 253-54; *Encyclopædia Iranica*, vol. VII, s.v. 'Dehqān' (by Ahmad Tafazzoli), pp 223-24; Ahmad Tafazzoli 'Dehqāns', in *idem*, *Sasanian Society: I. Warriors II. Scribes III. Dehqāns*, Ehsan Yarshater Distinguished Lectures in Iranian Studies 1-Center for Middle Eastern Studies, New York, 2000, pp 38-59; Ahmad Tafazzoli, 'Naqsh-yi siyasi: ijtimā'iy va farhangi-yi dihqanan dar sadiha-yi nakhustin dawran-i islami', *Iran Nameh* XV, 4 [Gholam Hossein Sadighi: A Commemorative], 1997, pp 579-90; <http://fisiran.org/fa/irannameh/volxv/dehqans-iran>
- 7 An instance of Firdawsi's doctrinal conformity with a now islamised Persia is evinced when Isfandiyar embarked for his showdown and eventual death at the hands of Rustam. Dismissing the ominous obduracy of his camel which refused to budge on the road towards Zabul, he exclaimed: 'A noble warrior whose audacity/Lights up the world and brings him victory/Laughs at both good and evil, since he knows/Both came from God whom no one can oppose.' The attribution of both

goodness and malevolence to a single godhead was anathema to Mazdean, not Muslim, dogma. How ironic then that Isfandfaryar, the epic's Zoroastrian zealot, is declaiming it. See Abolqasem Ferdowsi, *Rostam: Tales of Love and War from the Shahnameh*, Dick Davis (tr. and introd.), Washington DC, 2007; London, 2009, p 210.

- 8 Dick Davis, 'The Problem of Ferdowsi's Sources', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116, 1996, pp 48-56 is a sensible, plausible examination steering clear of partisans endorsing either the oral or written wellsprings of Firdawsi's creativity. None of those arguments need detain us here. Suffice to note it is a *non liquet* and that it would be prudent to take a cue from Davis who posits that Firdawsi probably used 'for the legendary part of the poem (up to the advent of the Sasanians) ... versified, rather than written, prose sources, or if he used written sources these were in verse and derived from oral tradition.' Also see idem, *The Musician in the Garden: on translating Ferdowsi's Shahnameh*, The Annual Noruz Lecture Series, Bethesda MD, 2004, <http://fis-iran.org/en/programs/noruzlectures/translating-shahnameh>; tr. 'Khaniyagari dar bagh: sukhani dar tarjumah-yi Shahnama-yi Firdawsi', *Iran Nameh* XXI, 4, 2004, pp 413-27, <http://fis-iran.org/fa/irannameh/volxxi/translating-shahnameh>; on the contrived bypassing of the Achaemenids in the officially sanctioned worldview of the Sasanians see Ehsan Yarshater, 'Were the Sasanians heirs to the Achaemenids?' in *La Persia nel Medioevo*, Accademia nazionale dei Lincei 160, Rome, 1971, pp 517-31; and Touraj Daryaee, 'Keyanid History or National History? The Nature of Sassanid Zoroastrian Historiography', *Iranian Studies* 28, 1995 [1996], pp 129-41.
- 9 Hamid Dabashi, *The World of Persian Literary Humanism*, Cambridge MA, 2012, p 57; q.vv. E G Browne, 'The Pre-Muhammadan Literature of the Persians, with some account of their legendary history, as set forth in the Book of Kings', in idem, *A Literary History of Persia*, vol. I, London, 1902, pp 88-123; Gustave von Grunebaum, 'Firdausi's concept of history', in *Mélanges Fuad Köprülü*, Istanbul, 1953, pp 177-93 (= idem, *Islam: Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition*, 2nd ed., London, 1961; repr. 1964, pp 168-84); Ehsan Yarshater, 'Iranian Common Beliefs and Worldview', and idem, 'Iranian National History', in *The Cambridge History of Iran: the Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods*, vol. 3(1), Ehsan Yarshater (ed.), Cambridge, 1983; repr. 1996, pp 341-478; Dick Davis, *art. cit.*, 1996, pp 48-56; Werner Sundermann, 'Firdausi und das Schāhnāme', in *Schāhnāme: Das persische Königsbuch: Miniaturen und Texte der Berliner Handschrift von 1605*, Volkmar Enderlein and Werner Sundermann (eds.), Leipzig and Weimar, 1988, pp 5-29; A Shahpur Shahbazi, 'On the *Xwādāy-nāmag*', in *Iranica Varia: Papers in honor of Professor Ehsan Yarshater*, D Amin et al. (eds.), Acta Iranica 30, Leiden, 1990, pp 208-29; Julie Scott Meisami, 'The Past in service of the Present: Two views of history in Medieval Persia', *Poetics Today* 14, 3, 1993, pp 247-75; eadem, 'The *Šāh-nāme* as Mirror for Princes: A Study in Reception', in *Pand-o sokhan: Mélanges offerts à Charles-Henri de Fouchécour*, Christophe Balaÿ et al. (eds.), Bibliothèque iranienne 44, Tehran, 1995, pp 265-73; Afshin Marashi, 'The Nation's Poet: Ferdowsi and the Iranian National Imagination', in *Iran in the 20th Century: Historiography and Political Culture*, Touraj Atabaki (ed.), *International Library of Iranian Studies* 20, London and New York, 2009, pp 93-111; Parvaneh Pourshariati, 'The Parthians and the Production of the Canonical Shāhnāmas: of Pahlavī, Pahlavānī and the Pahlav', in *Commutatio et Contentio: Studies in the Late Roman, Sasanian, and Early Islamic Near East in Memory of Ze'ev Rubin*, Henning Börm and Josef Wiesehöfer (eds.), Reihe Geschichte 3, Düsseldorf, 2010, pp 347-92; tr. 'Shahnama va partiyān: bazkavi-yi pahlav, Pahlavi va pahlavani', *Iran Nameh* XXVI, 1-2, 2011, pp 117-54; Kolsoum Ghazanfari, *Perception of Zoroastrian Realities in the Shahnameh: Zoroaster, Beliefs, Rituals*, Berlin, 2011; Maria Macuch, 'The Pre-Islamic Roots of Firdausi's *Shahnama*', in *Heroic Times: A Thousand Years of the Persian Book of Kings*, Julia Gonnella and Christoph Rauch (eds.), Munich, 2012, pp 22-27.
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- 11 Ilya Gershevitch, 'Iranian Literature', in *Literatures of the East: A Survey*, Eric Caedel (ed.), Wisdom of the East Series, London, 1953; repr. New York, 1959, p 64. The editor is misspelt as Ceadel *passim* in this American imprint. The tenacity of the pre-Islamic past is eloquently summarised in Bernard Lewis, 'Iran in History', in his *From Babels to Dragomans: Interpreting the Middle East*, Oxford and New York, 2004; repr. 2005, pp 43-52. Ehsan Yarshater's wide-ranging disquisitions on this transition in recent years make for compulsory reading. Besides his *fin-de-siècle* exposition, 'The Persian Presence in the Islamic World', in *The Persian Presence in the Islamic World*, Richard Hovannisian and Georges Sabagh (eds.), 13th Giorgio Levi Della Vida Biennial Conference Proceedings, Cambridge, 1998, pp 4-125, also see idem, *In Search of the Secret of Survival: Reflections on the Khurasanian Cultural Resurgence*, The Annual Noruz Lecture Series, Bethesda MD, 1997, <http://fis-iran.org/en/programs/noruzlectures/khurasanian-resurgence>; tr., with slight revisions, 'Dar justju-yi raz-i baqa': masa'il-i rastakhiz-i farhangi-yi khurasan', *Iran Nameh* XV, 4, [Gholamhossein Sadiqi: A Commemorative], 1997, pp 539-68, <http://fis-iran.org/fa/irannameh/volxv/cultural-resurgence-khurasan>; idem, 'Mururi bar tarikh-i siyasi va farhangi-yi iran az islam', *Iran Nameh* XVII, 2 [Ahmad Tafazzoli: A Commemorative], 1999, pp 185-213, <http://fis-iran.org/fa/irannameh/volxvii/pre-islamic-history>; idem, 'Resurgence of Iranian Identity after Conversion to Islam', in *The Rise of Islam*, Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis and Sarah Stewart (eds.), The Idea of Iran 4, London, 2009, pp 5-12; idem, 'The Persian Phase of Islamic Civilization', in *The Gift of Persian Culture: its Continuity and Influence in History*, Peter Chelkowski (ed.), Reza Ali Khazeni Memorial Lectures in Iranian Studies 1, Salt Lake City, 2011, pp 57-70; idem, 'Ventures and Adventures of the Persian Language', in *Persian Language, Literature and Culture: new leaves, fresh looks*, Kamran Talattof (ed.), London and New York, 2015, pp 195-215. A recent synthesis is in Fereshteh Davaran, 'Iranian persistence in the Islamic era', in eadem, *Continuity in Iranian Identity: Resilience of a Cultural Heritage*, ISIS Iranian Studies 7, London and New York, 2010; repr. 2014, pp 136-69. The learned if occasionally idiosyncratic conclusions of this transition form an important segment of that Italian Persianist and polymath, Alessandro Bausani, *Religion in Iran: from Zoroaster to Baha'ullah*, J. Marchesi (tr.), New York, 2000. Seyyed Hossein Nasr too has delved on this in his popular, principally mystical, meditations: 'Cosmographie en l'Iran pré-islamique et islamique: le problème de la continuité dans la civilization iranienne', in *Arabic and Islamic Studies in honor of Hamilton A R Gibb*, George Makdisi (ed.), Leiden, 1965, pp 507-24; tr. 'Cosmography in Pre-Islamic and Islamic Persia: the question of the continuity of Iranian culture', in idem, *The Islamic Intellectual Tradition in Persia*, Richmond, 1996, pp 10-27. It was also translated and published earlier as a commemorative booklet for the 1971 imperial Iranian celebrations as *Cosmography in Pre-Islamic and Islamic Persia*, Tehran, 1971; q.vv. idem, *A Journey through Persian History and Culture*, Iqbal Academy Brochure 10, Lahore, 2000; idem, 'Islam in Persia to the threshold of the new Islamic century', in his *Islam and the Plight of Modern Man*, rev., exp. ed., London and New York, 1975; Cambridge, 2002, pp 151-84. Minou Reeves, *Europe's Debt to Persia from Ancient to Modern Times: Religion, Philosophy, Astronomy, Mathematics, Medicine and the Sciences*, Reading, 2013 is a broad sweep of *thema* and *topoi* demanding circumspect reading as also does Hamid Dabashi, *Persophilia: Persian Culture on the Global Scene*, Cambridge MA, 2015.
- 12 Marshall G S Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam, Conscience and History in a World Civilisation: the Expansion of Islam in the Middle Ages*, vol. 2, Chicago and London, 1974; repr. 1977, p 158.
- 13 Abolqasem Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh: the Persian Book of Kings*, Dick Davis (tr.), Azar Nafisi (foreword), London and New York, 2007, p xxiv. By adding this most representative work of Persian literature to its list of universal classics, Penguin Books has fulfilled a long-standing *desideratum*. An earlier initiative of Penguin must also be noted in presenting a significant segment of the *Shahnama* as Ferdowsi, *The Legend of Seyavash*, Dick Davis (tr. and introd.), Harmondsworth, 1992; repr. Washington DC, 2004. Anglophone readers will still depend on the

prose abridgment of the late Reuben Levy, which closely follows the three-volume edition by J A Vullers, Leyden, 1877-84. (Vullers, note, was based on a collation of Mohl's and Macan's Paris and Calcutta editions respectively.) *The Epic of the Kings: Shāh-Nāma by Ferdowsi*, Reuben Levy (tr.), Ehsan Yarshater (foreword), Amin Banani (preface), Dick Davis (new introd.), Persian Heritage Series 2, Costa Mesa CA, and New York, 1996 was an abridged edition. Earlier reprints were London, 1967, 1985, and, a Penguin-Arkana imprint, 1990. The text of the latest 1996 reprint, unfortunately, stands unrevised since 1967 for, the absence of a badly-needed index apart, it retains numerous typos, varying transcriptions and archaisms, all of which were pointed out by Richard Frye, recently deceased, in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 88, 1968, pp 387-88. It is mitigated, however, by Davis's comprehensive introduction and prefaced by Banani's 'Ferdowsi and the art of tragic epic', a succinct study published earlier in *Persian Literature*, Ehsan Yarshater (ed.), Columbia Lectures on Iranian Studies 3, New York, 1988, pp 109-19, which still repays reading in the original (*supra* n 2) and not in the condensed reprint here, a timely *caveat lector* in Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak's review, *Middle East Journal* 51, 1997, pp 617-18. Another detailed review of this 1996 edition is by Olga Davidson in *Iranian Studies* 33, 2000 [2001], pp 217-20. An addition to Penguin classics is Abolqasem Ferdowsi, *Rostam: Tales of Love and War from the Shahnameh*, Dick Davis (tr. and introd.), Washington DC, 2007; London, 2009.

- 14 Jan Marek, 'Persian Literature in India', in Jan Rypka *et al.*, *History of Iranian Literature*, K Jahn (ed.), Dordrecht, 1968, pp 713-34; two recent, detailed surveys of literature under the Mughals may be consulted in Wheeler Thackston, 'Literature', in *The Magnificent Mughals*, Zeenut Ziad (ed.), Karachi, 2002, pp 83-112; and Annemarie Schimmel, 'Languages and Literatures', in eadem, *The Empire of the Great Mughals: History, Art and Culture*, Corinne Attwood (tr.), Burzine K Waghmar (ed.), London, 2004; repr. New Delhi and Lahore, 2005, pp 229-61 (with comments and corrections in the reviews of Mansura Haidar, *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 38, 2007, pp 255-57 and Sunil Sharma, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 128, 2008, pp 188-90); *Encyclopædia Iranica*, vol. XIII, s.v. 'India xiv: Persian Literature in India' (by Mario Casari), pp 48-53, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/india-xiv-persian-literature-in-india>; attention is also invited to two state-of-the-art scholastic projects: *Persian Poetry from outside Iran: the Indian subcontinent, Anatolia, and Central Asia after Timur*, *A History of Persian Literature* VIII, London and New York (in work); *Persian Prose from outside Iran: the Indian subcontinent, Anatolia, and Central Asia after Timur*, John Perry (ed.), *A History of Persian Literature* IX, London and New York, (forthcoming). Historical overviews are in John Standish, 'Persian Influences on Mughal India', in his *Persia and the Gulf: Retrospect and Prospect*, Richmond, 1998, pp 33-49; and Juan Cole, 'Iranian Culture and South Asia, 1500-1900', in *Iran and the Surrounding World: Interactions in Culture and Cultural Politics*, Nikki Keddie and Rudolph Matthee (eds.), Seattle, 2002, pp 15-35.
- 15 G M Wickens, 'The Imperial Epic in Iran', in *Commémoration Cyrus: Hommage Universel III*, J Duchesne-Guillemin (ed.), Acta Iranica 3, Tehran and Liège, 1974, p 275; *idem*, 'Persian literature: an affirmation of identity', in *Introduction to Islamic Civilisation*, Roger Savory (ed.), London and New York, 1976; repr. 1994, p 73. Still valuable are the following: E G Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, 4 vols., The Library of Literary History 6, London and Cambridge, 1902-24; repr. Bethesda MD, 1997; New Delhi, 1997; London and New York, 1999; Lahore, 2003. A V Williams Jackson, *Early Persian Poetry: from the Beginnings down to the time of Firdausi*, New York, 1920; repr. 1975; E Denison Ross, 'Persian Literature', in *idem*, *The Persians*, Oxford, 1931, pp 122-35; Reuben Levy, *Persian Literature*, Language & Literature Series, London, 1923; repr. 1955; *idem*, *An Introduction to Persian Literature*, UNESCO Introductions to Asian Literatures 1-Persian Heritage Series 1, New York and London, 1969; A J Arberry, 'Persian Literature', in *The Legacy of Persia*, A. J. Arberry (ed.), Oxford and New York, 1953; repr. 1989, pp 199-229 (= *The Islamic Art of Persia*, New Delhi, 2001, pp 199-229); Ehsan Yarshater, 'Literature: Persian



- Literature', in *The Cambridge History of Islam: Islamic Society and Civilisation*, vol. 2B, P M Holt *et al.* (eds.), Cambridge, 1970; repr. 1990, pp 671-82; Marshall G S Hodgson, 'The Bloom of Persian Literary Culture and its Times, c. 1111-1274', in *idem*, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp 293-328; Gilbert Lazard, 'The Rise of the New Persian Language', in *The Cambridge History of Iran: from the Arab invasion to the Saljuqs*, vol. 4, R N Frye (ed.), Cambridge, 1976; repr. 1999, pp 595-632; George Morrison, 'Persian Literature (Belles-lettres) from the earliest times to the time of Jāmī', in *History of Persian Literature from the Beginning of the Islamic Period to the Present Day*, George Morrison (ed.), Handbuch der Orientalistik IV.2.2, Leiden and Cologne, 1981, pp 4-81; A Afsahzod, 'Oral tradition and the literary heritage: Persian literature', in *History of Civilizations of Central Asia: the Age of Achievement, A.D. 750 to the end of the fifteenth century*, vol. IV, pt. 2, C E Bosworth and M S Asimov (eds.), Paris, 2000; repr. New Delhi, 2003, pp 369-78; William L Hanaway, 'Secretaries, Poets and the Literary Language', and John Perry, 'New Persian: Expansion, Standardization and Inclusivity', in Brian Spooner and William L Hanaway (eds.), *Literacy in the Persianate World: Writing and the Social Order*, PMIRC 4, Philadelphia, 2012, pp 70-94, 95-142.
- 16 For an overview see William Hanaway Jr, 'The Iranian Epics', in *Heroic Epic and Saga: An Introduction to the World's Great Folk Epics*, Felix Oinas (ed.), Bloomington and London, 1978, pp 76-98 as well as *idem*, 'Epic Poetry', in *Persian Literature*, 1988, pp 96-108; q.vv. Jan Rypka, 'The Samanids (Middle of 3rd/9th century to end of 4th/10th): the Epic Tradition in Iran', in Rypka *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp 151-66; Olga Davidson, 'Persian/Iranian Epic', in *A Companion to Ancient Epic*, John Miles Foley (ed.), Oxford, 2005, pp 264-76; Richard Davis, 'Epics, Persian', in *Medieval Islamic Civilization: an Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, Josef Meri (ed.), Abingdon and New York, 2006, pp 232-33.
- 17 He was an avowedly Shi'i Muslim. *Vide* Khaleghi Motlagh, *art. cit.*, p 514 and *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, vol. 2, s.v. 'Persian Language and Literature' (by Franklin Lewis), Richard Martin (ed.), New York, 2004, p 526. The most recent analyses are in Carlo G Cereti, 'Zoroastrian Apocalypics in the Šāhnāma', *The Classical Bulletin* 83, 2, 2007, pp 183-202; Touraj Daryaee, 'Apocalypse now: Zoroastrian reflections on the early Islamic centuries', *Medieval Encounters* 4, 1998, pp 188-202; and *idem*, 'The fall of the Sasanian empire to the Arab Muslims: from *Two Centuries of Silence* to *The Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire: the Partho-Sasanian Confederacy and the Arab Conquest of Iran*', *Journal of Persianate Studies* 3, 2010, pp 239-54.
- 18 Amir Abbas Haidari, 'Persian Literature: Classical and Modern Literature', in *A Guide to Eastern Literatures*, D M Lang (ed.), London, 1971, p 116. An essential overview is in Gilbert Lazard, *The Origins of Literary Persian*, The Annual Noruz Lecture Series, Bethesda MD, 1993, [http://www.fis-iran.org/en/programs/noruz\\_lectures/literary-persian](http://www.fis-iran.org/en/programs/noruz_lectures/literary-persian); tr. 'Rishaha-yi zaban-i farsī-yi adabī', *Iran Nameh* XI, 4, 1993, pp 569-86. A somewhat similar analogy is the near contemporaneous burst of Pahlavi literary activity among Zoroastrian clerics attempting to preserve their beleaguered heritage in the ninth century AD. Its defensive divines did not deliberately eschew the Arabic vocabulary of their persecutors to compile the Mazdean encyclopaedic narrative, *Dinkard* (lit. 'acts of the religion'), in pure Middle Persian, correctly, Book Pahlavi. They could, even at this late stage, adequately and articulately recall their theological heritage replete with Pahlavi expressions and its associated Avestan evocations for 'le vocabulaire mazdéen est riche en résonances', as was pointed out by that venerable Dominican, Jean de Menasce, in his 1946 Bai Ratanbai Katrak lectures at the Sorbonne, *Une Encyclopédie Mazdéenne: Le Denkard*, Bibliothèque de l'École des hautes études sections sciences religieuses LXIX, Paris, 1958, p 77. Also *idem*, 'Zoroastrian Literature after the Muslim Conquest', in Frye (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp 543-65 and *idem*, 'Zoroastrian Pahlavī Writings', in Yarshater (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp 1166-195; J C Katrak, 'Glimpses of extinct Pahlavi Literature', in *Iran Society Silver Jubilee Souvenir*, M Ishaque (ed.), Calcutta, 1970, pp 191-98;

- R F Gorvala, 'Development of Persian from Pehlavi', in *History of Persian Literature*, Yunus Jaffrey (ed.), New Delhi, 1981, pp 23-27; Mary Boyce, 'Middle Persian Literature', in *Iranistik: Literatur*, Ilya Gershevitch *et al.* (comp.), Handbuch der Orientalistik IV.2.1, Leiden and Cologne, 1968, pp 31-66 remains an elegant, indispensable treatment as does *eadem*, 'Parthian Writings and Literature', in Yarshater (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp 1151-165. The most recent conspectus is Maria Macuch, 'Pahlavi Literature', in *The Literatures of Pre-Islamic Iran: A Companion Volume I to A History of Persian Literature*, Ronald Emmerick and Maria Macuch (eds.), A History of Persian Literature XVII, London and New York, 2009, pp 116-96, especially pp 172-83. *Encyclopædia Iranica*, s.v. 'Middle Persian Literature i. Pahlavi Literature' (by Carlo G Cereti), <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/middle-persian-literature-1-pahlavi>; the sole, one volume guide is *idem*, *La Letteratura Pahlavi: Introduzione ai testi con riferimento alla storia degli studi e alla tradizione manoscritta*, Milan, 2001, overdue and far more comprehensive than the half-century standby, J C Tavadia, *Die mittelpersische Sprache und Literatur der Zarathustrier*, Iranische Texte und Hilfsbücher 2, Leipzig, 1956. Available now for a wider readership is Mohammad Mohammadi-Malayeri, *Iranian Civilization and Culture: before Islam and its Impact on Islamic Civilization and Arabic Literature*, Shahrokh Mohammadi-Malayeri (tr. and foreword), New Delhi, 2012 which complements the pioneering K Inostransev, *Iranian Influence on Moslem Literature*, part I, with supplementary appendices from Arabic sources by G K Nariman (tr.), Bombay, 1918. *Caveat lector* that it is cited, incorrectly and universally, including recent imprints, as authored by M Inostransev; *vide Encyclopædia Iranica*, vol. XIII, s.v. 'Konstantin Alexandrovich Inostransev' (by Aliy I Kolesnikov), pp 147-48, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/inostrantsev>. Bertold Spuler, *Iran in the Early Islamic Period: Politics, Culture, Administration and Public life between the Arab and Seljuk Conquests, 633-1055*, Gwendolin Goldbloom and Berenike Walburg (tr.), Robert G Hoyland (ed.), Iran Studies 12, Leiden, 2014, an English edition of the 1952 German original now fulfills a long-standing need for an authoritative account of the period also admirably surveyed in Richard Frye, *The Golden Age of Persia: the Arabs in the East*, History of Civilisation, London, 1975; repr. 2000; *idem*, *Asr-i zarrin-i farhang-i Iran*, Masud Rajabniya (tr.), Tehran, 1980; repr. 1996; *q.v.* *idem*, 'Pre-Islamic and early Islamic Cultures in Central Asia', in *Turko-Persia in Historical Perspective*, Robert L Canfield (ed.), School of American Research advanced seminar, Cambridge, 1991; repr. 2002, pp 35-52; *idem*, 'Continuities from Pre-Islamic Iran', in *op. cit.*, Chelkowski (ed.), pp 36-56. A graduand may begin with *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*, Micropædia, vol. 21, s.v. 'The Sāsānian Period' (by A D H Bivar and M J Dresden), pp 954-59 and 'Iran from 640 to the Present: The Advent of Islām (640-829) – The "Iranian intermezzo" (821-1055)' (by several editors), pp 959-64 followed by *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., vol. IV, s.v. 'Iran v. History: (a) To the Turkoman Invasions' (by A K S Lambton), pp. 13-33.
- 19 Examined exhaustively in M D Moïnfar, *Le vocabulaire arabe dans le Livre des Rois de Firdausi*, Wiesbaden, 1970, pp 61-66; *q.v.* John Perry, 'The Origin and Development of Literary Persian', in *General Introduction to Persian Literature*, J T P de Bruijn (ed.), A History of Persian Literature I, London and New York, 2009, pp 55-56: '706 words are of Arabic origin, and occur collectively a total of 8,982 times; this yields 8.8% of Arabic in the vocabulary, with a collective frequency of occurrence of 2.4%.' *Encyclopædia Iranica*, s.v. 'Šāh-Nāma v. Arabic words' (by John Perry), <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/sah-nama-v-arabic-words>; an examination of the whole question is in Gilbert Lazard, 'Les emprunts Arabes dans la prose Persan du X<sup>e</sup> au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle: aperçu statistique,' in *idem*, *La Formation de la Langue Persane*, Travaux et memoires de l'Institut d'études iraniennes 1, Paris, 1995, pp 163-77 (= *Revue de l'École Nationale des Langues Orientales*, 2, 1965, pp 53-67).
- 20 Mahmoud Omidshah, *Poetics and Politics of Iran's National Epic, The Shāhnāme*, Literatures and Cultures of the Islamic World, New York, 2011, pp 47ff., rightly reminds that the lemma *Shahnama*, in the first place, was deployed for narrative fables of kings and heroes even prior



to Firdawsi: the *Shahnama* of Abu Ali Muhammad b. Ahmad of Balkh; the prose *Shahnama-yi buzurg* or ‘Great *Shahnama*’ of the first half of the tenth century by Abu al-Muayyad of Balkh; and the prose *Shahnama* of Abu Mansur Asadi-Tusi completed in AD 957.

- 21 *Encyclopædia Iranica*, vol. VIII, s.v. ‘Epics’ (by F de Blois), pp 474-77, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/epics>; *vide* n 16 for additional references.
- 22 Paul Losensky, ‘Persian Poetry iv. Genres’, in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, Roland Greene *et al.* (eds.), 4th ed., Princeton and Oxford, 2012, p 1023. *The Houghton Shahnameh*, Stuart Cary Welch and Martin Bernard Dickson (introd. and described), vol. I, Cambridge MA, and London, 1981, p 271.
- 23 *Encyclopædia Iranica*, s.v. ‘Šāh-Nāma iv. Illustrations’ (by Marianne Shreve Simpson), <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/sah-nama-iv-Illustrations>; *Encyclopædia Iranica*, vol. XIII, s.vv. ‘India xx. Persian Influences on Indian Painting’ and ‘India xxi. Indian Influences on Persian Painting’ by Barbara Schmitz, pp 65-81, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/india-xx-persian-influences-on-indian-painting>; <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/india-xxi-indian-influences-on-persian-painting>
- 24 His magisterial *Das Iranische Nationalepos*, William Geiger and Ernst Kuhn (eds.), *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, vol. II, Strassburg, 1896 and separately also as a distinct tome; 2nd ed., Berlin and Leipzig, 1920; repr. 1979. An able English translation was that of the Russian orientalist, Leonid Bogdanov, in two consecutive volumes of the *Journal of the K R Cama Oriental Institute* (= *JCOI* 7, 1930), a reprint necessitated because *JCOI* 6, 1925, was presently exhausted upon publication; repr. Philadelphia, 1979. A Persian translation was prepared by that noted *littérateur*, Buzurg Alavi, *Hamasa-yi milli-yi Iran*, Tehran 1948; 3rd ed., 1978. Sir Muhammad Iqbal’s Urdu translation, *Tarikh-i razmiyat-i Iran*, has appeared in a new edition by M Ikram Chaghatai, Lahore, 2009. A new *prolegomenon* broadly along these lines is Patrick Ringgenberg, *Une introduction au livre des Rois (Shāhnāme) de Ferdowsi: la gloire des Rois et la sagesse de l’épopée*, Paris, 2009.
- 25 Two Persian editions appeared: *Pizhuhish dar Shahnama*, M Gharawi (tr.), Tehran, 1977; and *Pizhuhishha-yi dar Shahnama*, Jalil Dustkhwah (tr.), Isfahan, 1992. A prequel to J C Coyajee, *JCOI* 33, 1939, was his *Cults & Legends of Ancient Iran & China*, Bombay, (193[6]), an amateur comparative examination of Chinese and Persian mythical fables. See therein his chapters on ‘Some Shahnameh Legends and their Chinese Parallels’, pp 1-44; and ‘The Shahnameh and the Fêng-Shên-Yên-I’, pp 99-134. They make, in the main, for interesting reading despite being the musings of a ‘scholar-gentleman’. Coyajee’s three Persian editions are: *A’inha va afsanha-yi Iran va Chin-i bastan*, Jalil Dustkhwah (tr.), Tehran, 1976; 2nd ed., 1983; republished as *Bunyadha-yi ustura va hamasa-yi Iran: shanzdah guftar dar usturashinasi va hamasa pizhuhi-yi sanjishi*, Jalil Dustkhwah (tr.) with additional notes on methodology by Mehrdad Bahar, Tehran, 2001; and *Usturaha-yi Iran va Chin: risha shinasi-yi usturaha-yi Shahnama va Fang shin yin iy, bazkaft-i istilahat-i Avistayi va barrasi-yi khwastgah-yi sufigari dar sharq*, Hushyar Karim Tari (tr.), Tehran, 1999.
- 26 Two decades prior to Vajifdar’s English version appeared a Persian edition, *Karnama-i shahan dar riwayat-i Iran-i bastan*, Baqir Amir-Khani and Bahman Sarkarati (tr.), Tabriz, 1971.
- 27 H N Modi, ‘History and Activities of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute’, in *Platinum Jubilee Volume: K R Cama Oriental Institute*, Bombay, 1991, p 9. Enactments of the life and times of Suhrab-Rustum, a perennially popular theme, were performed by students from the neighbouring Champion School and The Cathedral & John Connon High School. It might be pointed out here that Behramgore Anklesaria and Jamshed Unvala, two Parsi *Pahlavisants*, were part of the Indian delegation at the Ferdowsi Millenary Celebration of the imperial Persian government. An international congress of Iranists convened at Tehran’s Dar al-Funun, October 1-4, 1934 followed by a closing ceremony at Firdawsi’s tombstone, Tus, October 12, 1934. A bronze statue of the

poet, the first initiative of its kind in the nationalist period, was donated by Bombay's Parsis and installed in the presence of Riza Shah Pahlavi. It is now in the courtyard of the Faculty of Letters, Tehran University. Anklesaria was the then joint honorary secretary of this Institute (1925-44) as subsequently was Unvala (1945-54). Anklesaria, however, had visited Persia even earlier when he presented a casket to Shah Riza Pahlavi on behalf of Indian Parsis and lectured on Zoroastrian topics to audiences nationally. A Gujarati account of that sojourn was authored by his wife who accompanied him in 1930. See Mehrbanu Anklesaria, *Pahalvi Iran ma musafiri, khas chitron sahit* [Travels in Pahlavi Iran: with illustrations], Bombay, 1932, and Marashi, *art. cit.*, 2009, p 109. Public recitals of the *Shahnama* in Bombay were also held on the occasion of the 2,500 anniversary celebrations of Cyrus the Great by school children as well as adults. See Jehangir Shroff, 'Report of "Cyrus The Great" 2500th Anniversary Celebrations Week', in *Kurus Memorial Volume Bombay: Essays on Indology and Indo-Iran Relations in memory of CYRUS celebration held in the city of Bombay on the 2500th anniversary of the Foundation of the Persian Empire*, Bombay, 1974, pp xxv-xxvi. This was a joint publication of the Iran Cultural House, Indo-Iranian Cultural Society and the K R Cama Oriental Institute. Following these global celebrations, a Foundation for Shahnama Studies was established under the direction of the renowned scholar, educationist and man-of- letters, Mujtaba Minuvi, in Tehran, 1972, see Shahbazi, *op. cit.*, p 17.

- 28 A Persian edition was prepared as *Kiyaniyan*, Zabiullah Safa (tr. and ed.), *Majmu'a-yi Iranshinasi* 6, Intisharat-i Bungah-i tarjuma wa nashr-i kitab 42, Tehran, 1957; repr. 1976.
- 29 For the Persian edition see *Dibacha-yi Shahnama*, Jahangir Afkari (tr.), Tehran, 1966; republished as *Dibacha-yi Shahnama-yi Firdawsi*, Los Angeles, 1989.