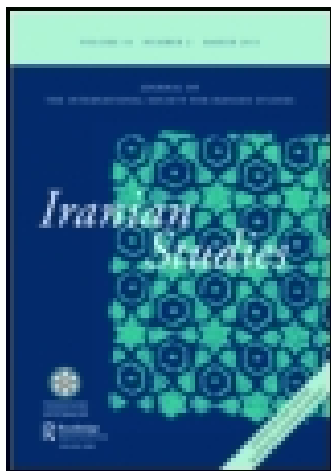


This article was downloaded by: [Paola Orsatti]

On: 23 July 2014, At: 01:10

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Iranian Studies

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cist20>

Nationalistic Distortions and Modern Nationalisms

Paola Orsatti

Published online: 18 Jul 2014.

To cite this article: Paola Orsatti (2014): Nationalistic Distortions and Modern Nationalisms, *Iranian Studies*, DOI: [10.1080/00210862.2014.903606](https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2014.903606)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2014.903606>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

Review article

Paola Orsatti

Nationalistic Distortions and Modern Nationalisms

On the Modern Politicization of the Persian Poet Nezāmi Ganjavi, Siavash Lornejad and Ali Doostzadeh, Yerevan: Caucasian Centre for Iranian Studies, 2012 (Yerevan Series for Oriental Studies, edited by Garnik S. Asatryan, vol. 1, ISBN 978-9-9930-6974-4, 215 pp.¹

When in summer 2012 Siavash Lornejad and Ali Doostzadeh sent me a pdf copy of their forthcoming book *On the Modern Politicization of the Persian Poet Nezāmi Ganjavi*, I was immediately captivated by the interest of their argument and agreed to write both a blurb for the cover of the book and a longer review. It is indeed a useful and interesting work, which represents a clear and documented refutation of

Paola Orsatti is Associate Professor—Persian Language and Literature University “Sapienza” of Rome, Italy.

the political exploitation of one of the most important poets of Persian literature, Nezāmi Ganjavi (ca. 1137–1209), and a contribution to the advancement of the studies on this poet, his epoch and his work.

Starting from a rich bibliography, also including Russian titles, Lornejad and Doostzadeh provide a full review of what politicized authors—i.e. authors writing with a political aim, often extraneous to research and historical truth—published about Nezāmi during approximately the last century. They recognize two kinds of politicized arguments: the first one originates from the purpose of creating and consolidating an Azerbaijani national identity, to which Nezāmi—as an outstanding representative of a pretended “Azerbaijani literature”—is ascribed. Indeed Ganje, the city where Nezāmi was probably born and spent all his life, is in the territory of today’s Republic of Azerbaijan, independent—after the fall of the Soviet Union—since 1991; it is on this basis that he is defined by politicized authors as an “Azerbaijani poet.” This kind of argument had been already put forward by authors writing under the past Soviet regime, and is presently carried on by the Republic of Azerbaijan in the framework of its cultural policy. The other kind of ideological exploitation of Nezāmi’s figure and work arises out of pan-Turkish movements, even inside Iran. These two mainstreams of ideological attitude towards Nezāmi have a commonality: the wish of downplaying the Persian cultural and literary heritage within the Caucasian region, while also claiming that Nezāmi was ethnically of Turkish origin.

In Part I (pp. 7–20), Lornejad and Doostzadeh dismiss some anachronistic and distorted labeling: leaving aside the fact that Nezāmi wrote all of his works in Persian, he can hardly be defined as an “Azerbaijani poet” because the region where Ganje is located was called—until very recent times—Arrān, a region of Eastern Transcaucasia (Caucasian Albania). It was only in 1918, with the proclamation of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan, that the name Azerbaijan was also extended to include Arrān.

Basing themselves on a thorough analysis of historical sources and on what authors such as Nezāmi himself and Khāqāni Sharvāni (d. between 582/1186 and 595/1199) say in their works, the two authors of the book under review show that, for medieval authors, Arrān and Sharvān (the two main regions of Eastern Transcaucasia) were different from Azerbaijan: “In the 12th century, the name Azerbaijan was almost unanimously used for the geographical region of North Western Iran whose boundary in the north was with Arrān (including Ganja), Sharvān and Armenia” (pp. 8–9). The rare cases in which Azerbaijan is considered in historical sources as also including Arrān and Sharvān are analyzed in note 26 (pp. 9–10): they are taken back to the Sasanid division of Iran into four provinces only. Lornejad and Doostzadeh therefore conclude: “To even use the term ‘Azerbaijan’ for Ganja of the 12th century is an anachronism in the sense that the area at that time was geographically known as Arrān” (p. 11).

By gathering and commenting on a number of passages from Nezāmi’s and Khāqāni’s work (pp. 13–16), Lornejad and Doostzadeh reject the claim—voiced by some politicized authors—that in Nezāmi’s times there was no idea of Iran, given that only during the Safavid period was this country reunited under a single government. For medieval authors Iran/‘Ajam did exist and Azerbaijan, as well as the Eastern Trans-Caucasian regions of Arrān and Sharvān, were considered parts of Iran. Lorne-

jad and Doostzadeh conclude: “Nezāmi considered the variety of rulers whom he has praised as rulers of part of Iran or the Persian realm (*molk-e ‘Ajām*)” (p. 20). To strengthen their argument, one could add that Gherardo Gnoli had already shown that the idea of Iran as a political and religious entity—and not only as a geographic, ethnic and linguistic concept—goes back to Sasanid times.² It would seem highly improbable that such an idea could have been forgotten in Islamic times, even in the political division of medieval Iran.

As to the label of “Azerbaijani,” the authors of the book show that “at the time of Nezāmi Ganjavi there was neither such a concept or self-identification, nor an ethnic group called ‘Azerbaijani’, ‘Azerbaijani Turkish’, ‘Azeri’ or ‘Azeri-Turkish’ ... In the 12th century, the correct term for referring to Turkish-speaking people of the area was Oghuz/Ghuzz and Turcoman” (pp. 18, 20). Therefore, those modern scholars who claim that Nezāmi was ethnically of Turkish origin should at least define him as “Oghuz Turk” rather than as “Azerbaijani.” Just as the term “Azerbaijani” has been retroactively applied to Nezāmi and other poets springing from the region of modern Azerbaijan, the modern linguistic situation of Azerbaijan (both “Iranian Azerbaijan” and the territory of today’s Republic) has also been projected backwards, with the purpose of “retroactively Turkifying many of the peoples and kingdoms that existed prior to the arrival of Turks in the region” (p. 18). Indeed, in Part IV Lornejad and Doostzadeh show that the ethno-linguistic situation of Arrān in the twelfth century was very different from today’s, and that the definitive Turkization of Azerbaijan—apart from the existence of linguistic minorities even today—can be probably dated not earlier than the fourteenth century (note 76, pp. 18–19).

In Part II (pp. 21–84) the authors of the book analyze the attitude that scholars pertaining to the Soviet bloc, especially Evgenij Eduardovič Bertel’s (1890–1957) and Jan Rypka (1886–1968), had about Nezāmi. Soviet Orientalism was very politicized. In a report, published in *Pravda* on 4 March 1939, Stalin himself spoke of Nezāmi, stating that the poet had been “compelled to resort to the Iranian language, because he was not allowed to address his own people in his native [Turkish] language” (p. 22). Neither Bertel’s nor Rypka ever openly claimed that Nezāmi’s father was Turkish; but they followed the Soviet guidelines by stressing the ethnic identity of every Persian poet to the detriment of Persian cultural heritage. This attitude, however—as noted by Lornejad and Doostzadeh—can be referred not only to a nationalistic view, but also to “a territorial principle of historical continuity in the sense of the USSR historiography, where people of a region are autochthonous and only the elites are changed due to invasions” (p. 25). Rather, the authors of the book under review focus their criticism on the invention of an “Azerbaijani school of Persian poetry,” also called “Trans-Caucasian School of Persian poetry,” first theorized by Bertel’s and accepted by many other scholars also outside the former USSR (pp. 32–49).

In their effort to dismiss such a school, Lornejad and Doostzadeh reprise and discuss the traditional categorization of Persian poetry into three styles: the Khurasani, the Iraqi and the Indian styles (pp. 37–41), arguing that this traditional division is better suited to represent the development of Persian poetry than other categorizations; and that, in particular, the traditional definition of an “Iraqi style” of Persian poetry is better suited to

represent what other authors call “Azerbaijani School.” Of course, it is not only a mere question of labels, as the authors of the book also criticize some assumptions in the characterization of the “Azerbaijani school.”

The part of their argument which seems less convincing is when they quote—often without a context—a series of lines from Hāfez, Khāqāni, Zo’l-Faqār Sharvāni and Nezāmi (taken from an article by Ahmad Zākeri on *Keyhān-e Farhangī*, 1997, quoted by them; *non vidi*), to show that these poets themselves defined their style or their poetry as pertaining to the Iraqi style. One line from one of Hāfez’s poems seems effectively to mean that the poet considered his poetry to pertain to the Iraqi style:

غزلیات عراقیست سرود حافظ که شنید این ره دلسوز که فریاد نکرد
ghazaliyyāt-e ‘erāqi-st sorud-e Hāfez / ke shenid in rah-e del-suz ke faryād nakard?
 “Hāfez’s songs are Iraqi ghazals. / Who heard this heart-burning melody without crying?”³

However, among the commentators on Hāfez, both a European scholar, Charles-Henri de Fouchécour, and an Iranian one, Hoseyn-‘Alī Heravi, state that in this line the poet refers to the great Iranian mystic ‘Erāqi (d. 1289).⁴ Fouchécour adds that ‘*erāqi*’ also refers to the name of a musical mode. Indeed, in the preceding line of the same poem Hāfez says:

مطربا پرده بگردان و بزن راه حجاز که به این راه بشد یار و ز ما یاد نکرد
motreb-ā parde begardān o bezan rāh-e Hejāz / ke be in rāh beshod yār o ze-mā yād nakard
 “O minstrel, change your tune and play the melody of Hijaz, as the Friend has gone along this way, without remembering us.”⁵

In this line the poet asks the musician to change the musical mode (*parde*) which accompanies his ghazals and to play the melody of Hijaz (this too is a musical mode), also alluding—given the double meaning of *rāh* “musical mode” and “road, path, way”—to the way to Hijaz where the Friend had gone. (Manuscripts, however, also have *rāh-e ‘Erāq*, “the melody/way of Iraq.”) This line recalls a line from Sa’di quoted under one of the entries ‘*erāqi*’ (“a musical mode”) in Dehkhodā’s *Loghatnāme*, which Hāfez may have intended to imitate:

بعد از عراق جایی خوش نایدم هوایی مطرب بزن نوایی زان پرده عراقی
ba’d az ‘Erāq jā-yi khwāsh n-āyad-am havā-yi / motreb bezan navā-yi z-ān parde-ye ‘Erāqi
 “Apart from Iraq, I do not like any other place. Oh minstrel, play a melody from the Iraqi musical mode!”⁶

Therefore, in Hāfez’s line the poet is not saying that his ghazals are written according to the Iraqi style of Persian poetry, but is referring to the musical Iraqi mode, perhaps a mode better suited for singing his ghazals. A secondary meaning implying that

“Hāfez’s songs are ghazals (inspired by the works) of Fakhr al-Din ‘Erāqi” cannot be excluded, as a list of correspondences—given by Hoseyn ‘Ali Heravi—between some lines by Hāfez and by ‘Erāqi show.⁷

As to the other lines the authors consider as referring to the Iraqi style, I will shortly consider only those taken from Nezāmi’s poems. The first one is from *Khosrow va Shirin*. In one of the introductory chapters of the poem, one of his friends says to the poet:

چرا گشتی درین بیغوله پابست چنین نقد عراقی بر کف دست
رکاب از شهر بند گنجه بگشای [عنان] شیر داری پنجه بگشای

cherā gashti dar in bighule pā-bast / chenīn naqd-e ‘erāqi bar kaf-e dast?

rekāb az shahr-band-e Ganje bogshāy / [‘enān]-e shir dāri, panje bogshāy!

“Why have you become fettered in this corner (of the world), though having those coins of great value (i.e. your poetry) in your hand?

Unfasten your horse and gallop away from the prison of Ganje. You can overcome a lion, open your claws!”⁸

Here, Nezāmi’s friend is urging the poet to leave the prison of Ganje, as he had the *naqd-e ‘erāqi* in his hands. Commentators say that *naqd-e ‘erāqi* indicates a particular coin, famous for the purity of its alloy and its value.⁹ Therefore *naqd-e ‘erāqi* is a metaphor referring to Nezāmi’s poetic art, equated to the value of Iraqi coins, and has no reference to the Iraqi style of Persian poetry.¹⁰

The other quotation about an alleged statement by Nezāmi that his poetry pertains to the Iraqi style, is from *Makhzan al-asrār*, in the last chapter of the poem:

گنجه گره کرده گریبان من بی گرهی گنج عراق آن من

Ganje gereh karde garibān-e man / bi gereh-i ganj-e ‘erāq ān-e man

“Ganje has tied my neck with a knot (suffocating me with many troubles); without this knot, the treasure of Iraq could have been mine.”¹¹

Here too the poet is simply speaking of his desire to leave the prison of Ganje to attain, at last, the appreciation and the reward (the “treasure of Iraq”) he deserved.¹²

For the purpose of dismissing the idea—already voiced by Stalin—that Nezāmi had been obliged to abstain from using, in his works, his own native Turkish language, Lornejad and Doostzadeh quote and translate the entire chapter on the “Reasons for composing the work” in the poem *Leyli va Majnun*, whence—from an erroneous interpretation of some lines—such an idea probably arose, and show that Nezāmi did not say anything of the kind (pp. 49–57); on the interpretation of these lines I will dwell more extensively below. The authors of the book recall the fact that in Nezāmi’s times “there was neither tradition of Turkish epic poetry nor Turkish literary tradition at all in the Caucasus. ... There is not even a single verse of Turkish poetry from the Caucasus during the life-time of Nezāmi” (pp. 57–8). Nezāmi

himself did not write a single line in Turkish, not even for the various Turkish dynasties to which he dedicated his poems.

In Part III (pp. 85–142), Lornejad and Doostzadeh discuss the Turkish nationalist viewpoint about Nezāmi. Indeed, probably even before the creation of an “Azerbaijani”—i.e. implicitly Turkish—identity for Nezāmi, pan-Turkish authors had claimed that Nezāmi was of Turkish origin. The question of the existence of a Turkish *divān* by Nezāmi is easily rejected: what was supposed to be Nezāmi’s Turkish *divān* is the *divān* of a homonymous poet, Nezāmi of Konya (d. between 1469 and 1473¹³), who wrote in Turkish, Persian and Arabic (p. 93). The authors of the book also discuss a counterfeit line taken from a certain, not identifiable, manuscript in the Aya Sofya library of Istanbul, in which Nezāmi would assert his Turkish descent: *pedar bar pedar mar ma-rā tork bud / be farzānegi har yek-i gorg bud*, “Father upon father of mine were Turks; each of them in wisdom was like a wolf” (p. 91). They demonstrate that this line is a forgery: the wolf has not such a positive value in Nezāmi’s work and, moreover, a poet like Nezāmi would not have made *tork* rhyme with *gorg*, an incorrect rhyme given the different final consonants of the two words.

In order to reject the contention that there are many Turkish words in Nezāmi’s work, Lornejad and Doostzadeh offer a valuable analysis of the Turkish loanwords in Nezāmi’s poems, including his *divān* (pp. 93–108). After discussing and excluding from analysis twenty-three words (lexical items or types) which have sometimes been considered Turkish, but (on the basis of Doerfer’s study¹⁴) the authors of the book do not consider as such, and after sorting out all Turkish proper names and titles (about twelve items, corresponding to sixty-eight actual occurrences), they recognize in the entire corpus of Nezāmi’s work only twenty-six words of Turkish origin, corresponding to about 181 actual occurrences. Even duplicating these numbers to ensure as much accuracy as possible, their percentage in the whole lexical corpus of Nezāmi’s work is very low (about 6 percent of total occurrences, and less than 1 percent if we take into account only the lexical items or types). Lornejad and Doostzadeh show that it is the same ratio of Turkish loanwords present in the works by other authors of the same period; and show—making use of Dehkhodā’s *Loghatnāme* and of the databases of Persian poetry available online (mainly the “Ganjoor” and other databases, whose website address is given in note 23, pp. 8–9)—that the twenty-six Turkish words used by Nezāmi are common to other Persian classical poets and writers too. Apart from this study of the Turkish borrowings stabilized in the Persian language, Lornejad and Doostzadeh also offer an interesting view of the usage of Turkish words and phrases in macharonic poems by authors such as Suzani, Shāh Ne’matollāh Vali, Rumi and Khāqāni (pp. 95–8).

With the same aim of rejecting some false statements about Nezāmi, Lornejad and Doostzadeh take up again the studies already conducted by various scholars on the imagery and clichés based on the names of different peoples (*tork*, *hendū*, *rumi*, *zangi*, *habashi*) in Persian poetry and provide a great number of examples from Nezāmi’s poems, discussing their interpretation (pp. 109–27). This part is preliminary to the translation and interpretation of many lines from one of the introductory chap-

ters of the poem *Haft peykar*, “In praise of the word (*sokhan*)” (pp. 127–38), which contains another line misinterpreted by politicized authors:

ترکیم را در این حبش نخزند لاجرم دوغبای خوش نخورند
torki-yam-rā dar in Habash nakharand / lā-jaram dughbā-ye khwash nakhwarand
 “In this country (inhabited by unreligious people) like Habash, they do not appreciate (lit. buy) my poetry (*torki-yam*), and therefore they do not eat good and tasty *dughbā* (a Turkish food).¹⁵

The authors of the book under review are right that here *torki-yam* does not mean “my being Turkish,” precisely as Nezāmi had never sold *dughbā* in Ethiopia (Habash). However, *torki-yam* seems better interpreted as “my poetry, my being a poet, my selling beautiful and deceitful words” than as “the luminous (symbolized by the non-ethnic imagery *Tork*) moral and spiritual advices he is imparting in the section ‘In praise of rhetoric, wisdom and advice’ [of the poem *Haft peykar*],” as Lornejad and Doostzadeh have it (p. 136). Nezāmi here seems to be complaining about the little favor his poetry—and not only his moral advice, as stated by the authors of the book—enjoyed in his country. Though this complaint may be a cliché, many lines in the same section “In praise of the word” of Nezāmi’s poem *Haft peykar* seem to be dictated by a painful personal experience,¹⁶ and allude to precise facts and persons we are unable to understand.¹⁷

Lornejad and Doostzadeh’s statement: “In reality, the actual poetry of Nezāmi was widely acclaimed and praised during his time” (p. 136), seems to be in contrast with what Nezāmi himself says in the lines immediately following the line just quoted: he had had success—says the poet—only when he was young and his poetry still immature; but once he had become a mature poet, he had to suffer—like ripe grapes pricked by bees—criticism and attacks by other poets and critics.¹⁸ Actually, Nezāmi often refers to the envy his work elicited;¹⁹ and refers to a poet who was copying or tried to copy his work,²⁰ and to rivals of no value, who were appreciated more than they deserved.²¹ Lornejad and Doostzadeh’s statement that Nezāmi’s poetry was highly appreciated in his time should be somewhat rectified, at least if we give credit to what Nezāmi himself writes in his work: he was not so appreciated, at least in his own country.

A last section of Part III follows, which dismisses the statements made by pan-Turkish authors that Turkish phrases and proverbs are the origin of Nezāmi’s expressions. Lornejad and Doostzadeh show that Nezāmi’s “Turkish expressions” are popular sayings widely circulating among peoples of the Middle East, in any language (pp. 138–42).

In Part IV (pp. 143–88) Lornejad and Doostzadeh give an ample and interesting reconstruction of the ethnic and linguistic situation of Azerbaijan (proper) and Eastern Transcaucasia in the twelfth century, and discuss the Persian literature of the area. It is a particularly valuable study, based on sources in some cases still little known and little studied. The authors of the book start from the evidence of what

Arabic authors of the tenth century—such as Mas‘udi, Ibn Hawqal, Istakhri and Muqaddasi—say about the linguistic situation of these regions. They attest to the usage of the Persian language (“Dari-Persian”: Mas‘udi) as well as other Iranian languages (*Fahlavi* and *Āzari*, i.e. the ancient Iranian dialect) in this area in the tenth century, and bear witness to a significant presence of Iranian people, especially in the towns—a presence confirmed by the chronicle of the Armenian historian Kirakos Gandzakets‘i, i.e. from Ganje (d. 1271). The authors of the book also show that the “Arranian” language spoken in Barda‘, mentioned by Istakhri, has to be considered an Iranian language (pp. 147–8).

In this context, Lornejad and Doostzadeh analyze the anthology *Nozhat al-Majāles* by Jamāl al-Din Khalil Sharvāni, a collection of about 4,100 quatrains written by some 300 different poets living from the eleventh to the first half of the thirteenth century and dedicated to the Sharvānshāh Fariborz III (r. 1225–51), for information on the linguistic and literary situation in this area. Of the approximately 300 Persian poets whose quatrains are included in the anthology, 115 are from Arrān, Sharvān and Azerbaijan, and twenty-four are from Ganje. None of these Persian poets bears a Turkish name. As the quatrain represents a “popular” genre, not bound to courts, these quatrains would indicate that Persian was the everyday language of population and not only the literary language of élites. Another work which sheds some light on the Iranian languages and dialects spoken in this area is the *Safine-ye Tabriz* by Abo ‘l-Majd Mohammad b. Mas‘ud Tabrizi (fourteenth century), where a whole poem is also quoted in the “language of Tabriz,” probably a northwestern Iranian dialect.

This chapter is followed by some notes on Nezāmi’s biography taken from Nezāmi’s poems, starting from the famous introductory chapter of *Leyli va Majnun* where the poet speaks of his family (pp. 168–172). Regarding Nezāmi’s date of birth, the authors of the book under review accept Barāt Zanjāni’s hypothesis, according to which Nezāmi’s birth should be before 533/1139, the date of the famous earthquake of Ganja, which the poet—though very young—would have experienced as an eyewitness. Zanjāni also asserts—on the basis of some lines from *Makhzan al-asrār*²²—that the poet was approaching the age of forty when he was composing this poem. As *Makhzan al-asrār*, Nezāmi’s first poem, was probably composed—according to both François de Blois and Barāt Zanjāni himself—in 561/1165,²³ Nezāmi’s birth should be fixed between 522/1127 and 526/1131. Other scholars, however, have expressed a different view. For example, Renate Würsch notes that the poet could have described the destruction caused by the earthquake without having been an eyewitness of such a terrible event, since the memory of the earthquake could have been kept in the area for many years following this catastrophe. As to the lines from *Makhzan al-asrār*, she thinks that they have no reference to Nezāmi’s age.²⁴

In any case, even if the lines in question do refer to the poet’s age, what Nezāmi actually says is that at the time of the composition of the poem, probably about 561/1165, he was still young and far from the age of forty, as he writes:

درس چهل سالگی اکنون بخوان

dars-e chehel-sālegi aknun makhwān! “do not learn now the lesson for a forty-year old!”²⁵

Rather, it is probable that Nezāmi was about forty years old in 571/1176, when the Saljuq Sultan Toghrul III b. Arslān ascended the throne and Nezāmi began composing his second poem, *Khosrow va Shirin*. Indeed, in an introductory chapter of the poem, the poet says that his friend had at first criticized him for composing a love poem saying:

پس از پنجه چهله در چهل سال مزن پنجه درین حرف ورق مال

pas az panjah chehelle dar chehel sāl / mazan panje dar in harf-e varaq-māl

“After having accomplished fifty periods of continence in forty years, do not begin a book treating this blameworthy story.”²⁶

Here, though the period of forty years of continence may be a religious topic, the allusion to the age of the poet, about forty years old at the time of beginning the composition of the poem, seems clear.

At the end of Part IV, Lornejad and Doostzadeh discuss Nafisi’s opinion that Āfāq was not the name of Nezāmi’s beloved wife: in the passage of *Khosrow va Shirin* at the end of the episode of Shirin’s death,²⁷ *āfāq-e man* would mean “my horizon, my world,” in its literal sense (pp. 173–5).

Finally, the authors of the book deal with two issues which—they say—prove that Nezāmi was of Persian origin. The first one is represented by the term *tork-zād* which Nezāmi calls Mohammad, the son he had from his Kipchak wife known to scholars as Āfāq.²⁸ According to Lornejad and Doostzadeh, *tork-zād* does not mean only “son of a Turkish mother,” but rather more precisely “son of a Turkish mother and an Iranian father”; indeed it is an epithet used in reference to Hormoz IV, the son of Khosrow Anushirvan and a Turkish princess, in Ferdowsi’s *Shahname* (pp. 175–8).

The second proof of Nezāmi’s Persian descent would be found in one of the introductory formulas especially frequent at the beginning of chapters of the poem *Leyli va Majnun*. At the beginning of the chapter relating the visit of Majnun’s father to his son in the desert, Nezāmi writes:

دهقان فصیح پارسی زاد از حال عرب چنین کند یاد

dehqān-e fasih-e pārsi-zād / az hāl-e ‘arab chonin konad yād

“the eloquent *dehqān* of Persian origin, thus recounts the story of the Arab people.”²⁹

Lornejad and Doostzadeh think that by “*dehqān* of Persian origin” Nezāmi refers to himself and take this line as evidence of Nezāmi being a Persian *dehqān* “landowner” (pp. 178–83). The formula “*dehqān* of Persian origin,” however, resembles so closely analogous formulas in Ferdowsi’s *Shahname* (as for example *sakhon-guy dehqān che*

guyad nokhost, “What says the eloquent *dehqān* at first” at the very beginning of the narration³⁰), that one can suppose that, after Ferdowsi, these *incipits* had become a customary and standardized way of introducing a new narrative by referring the story to an authoritative ancient author. Of course, Nezāmi may have been a Persian landowner, but, in the line in question, *dehqān-e fasih-e pārsi-zād*, “the eloquent *dehqān* of Persian origin”—like other analogous introductory formulas—should better be considered a traditional image or a cliché. It seems to refer to Nezāmi only in a generic way, in the same way that, for example, the formula which introduces the preceding chapter: *مشاطه این عروس نو عهد mashshāte-ye in ‘arus-e now-‘ahd*, “the hairdresser of this newly-wed (i.e. the poem)” cannot be considered a realistic definition referring to Nezāmi or to his sources.³¹

Some Remarks on the Problem of Nationalisms

I hope I have been able to show the richness of the matters dealt with in the book, as well as Lornejad and Doostzadeh’s methodology: every assertion by politicized authors is discussed in detail and refuted on the basis of meticulous references to the sources and a careful reading and interpretation of copious verses by Nezāmi and other Persian poets.

Probably the book could have taken advantage of a greater formal accuracy; for example, a study by ‘Abbās Zaryāb Kho’i amply quoted (pp. 67–8) is not included in the Bibliography. Some repetitions can be attributed to a lack of co-ordination between the two authors, and the English rendering of Persian words is not always appropriate. For example, Persian *sokhan/sokhon* is always translated as “rhetoric,” which in Persian is more exactly *balāghat*. Of course, this is a difficult term to translate; “poetical word,” or “sapiential word,” “(poetic) discourse,” or Greek *logos* could have been better renderings. However, the breadth of the subjects dealt with and the passion one feels behind their argument makes the reader forget any formal defect. The authors of the book do not hold academic positions and have worked—carrying on their everyday lives and occupations—with much passion, only urged on by love for their culture and literature.

On the thorny problem dealt with in the book, that of nationalities within historical (greater) Iran and modern nationalisms, the authors have an overall well-balanced attitude. Their assertions regarding the unacceptable politicization of Nezāmi are absolutely correct and well documented. Only in Part II do they seem to yield to (or they do not distance themselves from) an attitude expressed by some scholars, which is somewhat questionable. As it seems to me that it originates in a not completely correct interpretation of a line in the chapter on the “Reasons for composing the work” in the poem *Leyli va Majnun*, which Lornejad and Doostzadeh (pp. 50–6) give in full and translate from Zanjāni’s edition (1990), I will address it in some detail.

At the beginning of the chapter Nezāmi describes a happy period of his life, when he was spending his time writing his *divān* or, perhaps, had just finished its collection.

According to both the Vahid Dastgerdi,³² and the Zanjāni edition followed by the authors, Nezāmi thus praises his verses:

بر اوج سخن علم کشیده در درج هنر قلم کشیده
bar owj-e sokhan 'alam kashide / dar dorj-e honar qalam kashide,
 which the authors of the book translate as: "I was carrying my standard to the Apex of Rhetoric / In the Jewel-box of Art I had my pen. (p. 50)"

For the second half-verse, a better interpretation could be: "I had introduced many innovations into the poetic art (the casket of art), surpassing and obliterating (*qalam kashidan*, 'to delete, cross out; to obliterate') the old poets."³³ For this difficult line the Sarvatiyān edition gives a different reading, taken from the manuscript chosen as basis of the edition (Paris, *Supplément persan* 1817, dated 763/1362):

بر اوج سخن علم کشیده در دهنم قلم کشیده
bar owj-e sokhan 'alam kashide / dorr-e dahan-am qalam kashide
 "I had set up the standard on the highest point of poetry, (my) pen (*qalam*) had thread (*kashide*) the pearls of my mouth (*dorr-e dahan-am*)."³⁴

This seems to be a *lectio facilior*, as *dor(r) kashidan*, "to thread pearls" is a very common metaphor for "composing poetry"; it wipes out the parallelism of the two half-verses and merely anticipates the concept expressed in the following line, which reads:

منقار قلم به لعل سفتن دراج زبان به نکته گفتن
menqār-e qalam be la'l softan / dorrāj-e zabān be نکته goftan
 "the beak of (my) pen was/had been piercing rubies, the francolin of (my) tongue was/had been saying subtle conceits."³⁵

At this point the poet says that he was aware it was time to give up his *otia*: *vaqt-e kār-ast*, "It's time to set to work!" (l. 8); and he expresses a desire:

هان دولت اگر بزرگواری کردی ز من التماس کاری
*hān dowlat agar bozorgvār-i / kard-i ze man eltemās-e kār-i!*³⁶

which should not be translated, as the authors of the book do, as: "Oh Fortune, *if you are gracious* / You would beg me to do something."³⁷ but rather: "Oh fortune! (how nice would it be) if a powerful person advanced a request from me to accomplish a work!" This is an elliptic phrase expressing a wish, and not a conditional phrase with "Fortune" as its subject. Moreover, if *-i* at the end of the first half-verse is interpreted as the second singular person of the verb "to be," it could not rhyme with the indefinite *-i* of *kār-i*, which was long *-e* in Classical Persian.³⁸

The poet then says that, as he was seeking his fortune (*qor'e zadan*) by expressing this desire, a star passed in the sky: his wish will be granted. At that very moment a

messenger from the king (*hazrat-e shāh*) arrived, delivering to the poet a letter whose content—of course retold in poetry and poetically re-invented by Nezāmi—is given in the text.³⁹ The King of Sharvān (*Sharvānshāh*) Akhsetān b. Manuchehr (d. between 584/1188 and 590/1194⁴⁰) wants the poet to compose a love poem (*'eshq-nāme*) on Leyli and Majnun's story. This is a request that causes some (at least affected) bewilderment to the poet, because—as he says further on in this chapter—the location of the story in the arid Arabian desert, as well as its sad subject, were not suited for a beautiful poem. In Nezāmi's words the king—according to the Sarvatiyān edition and my translation—says:

بالای هزار عشق نامه آراسته شد به نوک خامه
شاه همه نامه ها ست این حرف شاید که در او سخن کنی صرف
در زیور پارسی و تازی این تازه عروس را طرازی

[28] *bālā-ye hezār 'eshq-nāme / ārāste shod be nuk-e khāme*

[29] *shāh-e hame nāme-hā-st in harf / shāyad ke dar-u sokhan koni sarf*

[30] *dar zivar-e pārsi yo tāzi / in tāze 'arus-rā terāzi*

[28] “More than a hundred poems of love have been embellished with the tip of the pen.

[29] This is the queen of all stories: it is worthy that you spend your words on it,

[30] (and) that you adorn this new bride (i.e. the story) of Arabic and Persian ornaments,”⁴¹

with the last verse alluding, as rightly pointed out by the authors of the book (pp. 58–64), to the ornaments of the Arabic tradition (probably in reference to the sources of the story) united with the Persian poetical and narrative tradition. In the Vahid Dastgerdi and Zanjāni editions, instead, the first line is given as follows:

بالای هزار عشقنامه آراسته کن به نوک خامه
*bālā-ye hezār 'eshq-nāme / ārāste kon be nuk-e khāme.*⁴²

Lornejad and Doostzadeh translation is: “Above a thousand books of love / adorn this story with your pen,” with “this story” added to complete the phrase offered by the Zanjāni and Vahid Dastgerdi editions. The reading given by Sarvatiyān—always taken from the Paris manuscript—seems to be preferable, and, if accepted, would also represent an important historic-literary statement: many (lit. “more than a thousand”) poems of love have been composed until now: it is time that you narrate the story of Leyli and Majnun, the most beautiful of all love stories. Indeed, this story of Arabic origin, though well-known to Persian poets and often referred to in their lyrical verses, had not been the subject of any poem in Persian literature until Nezāmi's time, as the poet himself states further on in the same chapter.⁴³

The final lines of the king's letter follow (which I give according to the edition by Sarvatiyān, here coinciding with Vahid Dastgerdi's):

دانی که من آن سخن شناسم	کابیات نو از کهن شناسم
تا ده دهی غرایب هست	ده پنج زنی رها کن از دست
بنگر که ز حقّه تفکر	در مرسله که می کشی در
ترکی صفت وفای ما نیست	ترکانه سخن سزای ما نیست
آنک از نسب بلند زاید	او را سخن بلند باید

[31] *dāni ke man ān sokhan-shenās-am / k-abyāt-e now az kohan shenāsam*

[32] *tā dah-dahi-ye gharāyeb-at hast / dah-panj-zani rahā kon az dast*

[33] *bengar ke ze hoqqe-ye tafakkor / dar morsale-ye ke mikashi dorr*

[34] *torki sefat-e vafā-ye mā nist / torkāne sokhan sezā-ye mā nist*

[35] *ān-k-az nasab-e boland zāyad / u-rā sokhan-e boland bāyad*

My translation is as follows:

[31] "You know that I am such a poetry connoisseur / to be able to distinguish new from old verses.

[32] As you possess the golden coins of your wonderful art, / give up minting coins of little value!

[33] Do consider, from the casket of your mind, / in whose necklace you are going to thread the pearls (of your poetry).

[34] 'Turkish' is not an epithet of our loyalty. / To speak like Turks (i.e. in a deceitful and disloyal way, as Sultan Mahmud did with Ferdowsi) is not suitable for us (i.e. we will not do this).

[35] He who is born from a high lineage / deserves high poetry."⁴⁴

The interpretation of the first lines of this passage does not raise doubts. The king boasts about his knowledge of poetry: he is able to distinguish good and new from bad and old poetry, and urges the poet to give up writing texts of little (economic?) value—a possible allusion to Nezāmi's *divān*—and to begin writing something suited and equal to a king such as himself.

In his request, the king also praises himself as a good and loyal commissioner: he will not behave like a Turk (l. 34). As rightly recognized by Vahid Dastgerdi, here Nezāmi alludes to Soltan Mahmud of Ghazna, who is famous in Persian literature for not having rewarded Ferdowsi as he had promised to do. What the king is saying is: I will not behave like Soltan Mahmud; I will keep my promise and will reward you. The general meaning of the first half-verse therefore is: our loyalty is not the "loyalty" which is typical of Turks, as the authors rightly recognize. But in my interpretation *torki* is an adjective (*sefat*), and not a noun meaning *tork budan* "to be, or to act as a Turk," as stressed by the authors of the book.⁴⁵

In the second half-verse, however, my interpretation is different from both Vahid Dastgerdi's: "that type of discourse *which is suited for Turkish kings* is not suited for us,"⁴⁶ and from Lornejad and Doostzadeh's: "Torkāneh-Sokhan (literally Turkish-mannered rhetoric and in the context of the poem meaning *vulgarity/lampoon*) is not what we deserve." Here سزای ما نیست *sezā-ye mā nist*, "is not suitable for us," does not mean—I think—"is not what we deserve," but rather means "is not what we are used to do, does not become us." The king is simply saying that he is not

used to speaking like Turks, thus referring to the well-known cliché in Persian literature according to which Turks are considered unfaithful and deceitful. The second half-verse of line 34, therefore, only confirms and retells in other words what the king had been saying in the first half-verse: “Turkish” is not an adjective of Our loyalty, i.e. I will be loyal.

The interpretation “a poetry which would be fit for Turkish sovereigns is not suited to us” could only represent a secondary intended meaning; and the allusion to Ferdowsi’s satire against Soltan Mahmud can better be seen in what the king says in the following line: he is not, like Soltan Mahmud, a king unable to appreciate good poetry; he came from a family of ancient lineage, claiming to descend from Bahrām Gur,⁴⁷ and was a patron of poetry (*sokhan-navāz*⁴⁸). High poetry, not satire, befits him.

Lornejad and Doostzadeh are absolutely right that the intention here is not a discourse about languages, as maintained by politicized authors; the king is not saying that he does not want Nezāmi to compose his poem in Turkish. However, too many authors, both pro- and anti-Turkish, have interpreted these lines as dictated by a wish of “taunting Turks” on the part of Nezāmi, or by a true racist attitude on the poet’s part (p. 82), which is absolutely not the case. In Nezāmi’s times modern nationalism had not yet exerted its polluting effect. In line 34 the King of Sharvān is neither declining the use of the Turkish language for the poem he is commissioning, nor rejecting any poetry fitting for Turkish sovereigns: he is only saying that he will keep his promise.

Conclusions

That Nezāmi was of Persian origin (or Iranian: his mother was Kurdish), and not of Turkish origin, is probable, because in the first half of the twelfth century, when Nezāmi was born, the Turkization of northwestern Iran and Transcaucasia had just begun, and Lornejad and Doostzadeh show that this process was a gradual one (Part IV).

Nezāmi’s mother was a *ra’ise-ye kord*,⁴⁹ a Kurdish noblewoman—though Ra’ise could also be her name. Before the Ildegozids took control over Arrān, the region had been ruled by the Shaddadid dynasty of Kurdish origin, which ruled over Arrān from about 950 to 1075.⁵⁰ From his mother’s side, therefore, Nezāmi could have been a descendant of the famous Amir Abo ’l-Asvār Shāvor b. al-Fazl (d. 1067), the Shaddadid ruler who gave hospitality to Key Kā’us b. Eskandar at his court in Ganje, and of whom Key Kā’us speaks in the seventh chapter of his *Qābus-nāme*: a severe ruler of great authority, generous, just, learned, pious and with little inclination to joke.⁵¹ Of course, this is only a hypothesis.

What is less acceptable is to infer Nezāmi’s ethnic origin from the content of his poems: “If he [Nezāmi] was of non-Iranian background as claimed by Stalin, he would gravitate towards composing the national history of other cultures” (p. 31). This is to downplay the supranational value of Persian culture and literature.

Turkish dynasties were soon Persianized and patronized Persian literature;⁵² and it is important to recall the role that they had in spreading the Persian language and culture in Central Asia and India. Amir Khosrow of Delhi (d. 1325), who responded to Nezāmi's five poems, was born to a Turkish father and an Indian mother.

Notes

1. Official digitized version by Victoria Arakelova, accessible on the internet: https://archive.org/stream/OnTheModernPoliticizationOfThePersianPoetNezamiGanjavi_251/nezami_digital_version_final_2012#page/n13/mode/2up.
2. Gnoli, *The Idea of Iran*.
3. Hāfez, *Divān*, ed. Khānlari, vol. I, no. 138, 9, 292.
4. Hāfez de Chiraz, *Le Divān*, 434; Heravi, *Sharh-e ghazalḥā-ye Hāfez*, vol. I, 589–590.
5. Hāfez, *Divān*, ed. Khānlari, vol. I, no. 138, 8, 292.
6. Sa'di, *Kolliyyāt: Molamma'āt*, 512.
7. Heravi, *Sharh-e ghazalḥā-ye Hāfez*, vol. I, 590.
8. Nezāmi, *Khosrow va Shirin*, ed. Sarvatiyān, chap. 12, 29–30.
9. See Dehkhodā, *Loghatnāme*, under another entry 'erāqi "a coin circulating in Iraq."
10. Nezāmi often compares his poetry to a good coin. See for example Nezāmi, *Leyli va Majnun*, ed. Sarvatiyān, chap. 5, 32.
11. Nezāmi, *Makhzan al-asrār*, ed. Sarvatiyān, chap. 59, 21.
12. On the question of Nezāmi's relationship to Iraq see Vahid Dastgerdi, *Ganjine-ye Ganjavi*, 12–14, who supposes—not very convincingly, however—that Nezāmi's disaffection towards Ganje and his insistence on 'Erāq indicate that he or his family came from Persian Iraq. On this topic, see also Zanjāni, *Ahvāl va āsār-e Nezāmi*, 8–10.
13. See Özgüdenli, "Nezāmi Qunavi."
14. Doerfer, *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente*.
15. I quote and translate this line from Nezāmi, *Haft peykar*, ed. Sarvatiyān, chap. 7, 110. The Vahid Dastgerdi edition, quoted by the authors of the book, reads: *torkiy-am-rā dar in Habash nakharand / lā-jaram dughbā-ye khwash nakharand*.
16. Nezāmi, *Haft peykar*, ed. Sarvatiyān, chap. 7, 95–97.
17. Nezāmi, *Haft peykar*, ed. Sarvatiyān, chap. 7, 106–109 and 124–126.
18. Nezāmi, *Haft peykar*, ed. Sarvatiyān, chap. 7, 111–113.
19. Nezāmi, *Haft peykar*, ed. Sarvatiyān, chap. 7, 146–148.
20. Nezāmi, *Leyli va Majnun*, ed. Sarvatiyān, chap. 9; Nezāmi, *Sharaf-nāme*, ed. Sarvatiyān, chap. 5, 30–36.
21. Nezāmi, *Haft peykar*, ed. Sarvatiyān, chap. 6, 41–46 and 7, 120–123.
22. Corresponding to chap. 15, 29–31 in Nezāmi, *Makhzan al-asrār*, ed. Sarvatiyān.
23. De Blois, *Persian Literature*, vol. V, pt. 2, 439; Zanjāni, *Ahvāl va āsār va sharh-e Makhzan-al-asrār*, 13.
24. Würsch, *Nizāmi's Schatzkammer der Geheimnisse*, 2–3 and 6 note 35.
25. Nezāmi, *Makhzan al-asrār*, ed. Sarvatiyān, chap. 15, 31b. In this poem Nezāmi, seemingly still young, complains about an old critic or an aged rival who criticized the young poet (*maqāle* 15, chap. 47, 12–26). For an analysis of this passage see Würsch, *Nizāmi's Schatzkammer der Geheimnisse*, 8–13.
26. Nezāmi, *Khosrow va Shirin*, ed. Sarvatiyān, chap. 12, 9. On the meaning of the difficult compound *varaḡ-māl* ("that wipes out the good deeds from the book of your life"), see Dehkhodā, *Loghatnāme*, s.v.
27. Nezāmi, *Khosrow va Shirin*, ed. Sarvatiyān, chap. 94, 129.
28. Nezāmi, *Khosrow va Shirin*, ed. Sarvatiyān, chap. 96, 134.
29. Nezāmi, *Leyli va Majnun*, ed. Sarvatiyān, chap. 36, 1.

30. Ferdowsi, *Shahname*, vol. I, 21 (*Gayumart*, l. 1). Here *sakhon-guy dehqān* probably refers to the author of Ferdowsi's main source, the prose *Shahname* gathered by Abu Mansur b. 'Abd al-Razzāq, whom the poet, in the introductory part of the poem, alludes to by saying: *yek-i pahlavān bud dehqān-nezhād*, "there was a hero of a family of *dehqāns*" (Ferdowsi, *Shahname*, vol. I, 12, *Dibāche*, l. 117). On this line, see Khaleghi Motlagh, *Notes on the Shahnameh*, vol. I, 1, 23.
31. Afsahzod (*Dostoni*, 89) links the presence of such conventional formulas, especially frequent in the poem *Leyli va Majnun*, to the style of the *naqqāls*, "professional story-tellers."
32. For the Vahid Dastgerdi edition, I refer to the revised edition by Hamidiyān (Nezāmi, *Leyli va Majnun*, ed. Vahid Dastgerdi/Hamidiyān, 24).
33. This interpretation has been suggested to me by Dr Iman Mansoob Basiri, whom I wish to thank also for having discussed with me many questions dealt with in this article.
34. Nezāmi, *Leyli va Majnun*, ed. Sarvatiyān, chap. 5, 6.
35. Nezāmi, *Leyli va Majnun*, ed. Sarvatiyān, chap. 5, 7.
36. Nezāmi, *Leyli va Majnun*, ed. Sarvatiyān, chap. 5, 16; ed. Vahid Dastgerdi/Hamidiyān, 24.
37. This is the interpretation also given for this line by Vahid Dastgerdi (see Nezāmi, *Leyli va Majnun*, ed. Vahid Dastgerdi/Hamidiyān, 24).
38. See Meier, "Aussprachefragen des älteren Neupersisch," 127–156.
39. Nezāmi, *Leyli va Majnun*, ed. Sarvatiyān, chap. 5, 22–35.
40. De Blois, *Persian Literature*, vol. V, pt. 3, 590.
41. Nezāmi, *Leyli va Majnun*, ed. Sarvatiyān, chap. 5, 28–30. For *bālā-ye* in the meaning of *bishtar az*, "more than," see Dehkhodā, *Loghatnāme*, s.v. *bālā*.
42. Nezāmi, *Leyli va Majnun*, ed. Vahid Dastgerdi/Hamidiyān, 25.
43. Nezāmi, *Leyli va Majnun*, ed. Sarvatiyān, chap. 5, 61–62.
44. Nezāmi, *Leyli va Majnun*, ed. Sarvatiyān, chap. 5, 31–35; ed. Vahid Dastgerdi/Hamidiyān, 25–26.
45. The reading given by Zanjāni does not change the general meaning, but only affects the syntax of the line, as it takes *vafā-ye mā* as the subject of the phrase: تر کانه صفت وفای ما نیست *torkāne-sefat vafā-ye mā nist*, "Our loyalty is not Turkish-like."
46. Nezāmi, *Leyli va Majnun*, ed. Vahid Dastgerdi/Hamidiyān, 26.
47. Nezāmi, *Leyli va Majnun*, ed. Sarvatiyān, chap. 6, 9.
48. Nezāmi, *Leyli va Majnun*, ed. Sarvatiyān, chap. 5, 47.
49. Nezāmi, *Leyli va Majnun*, ed. Sarvatiyān, chap. 11, 16.
50. See Peacock, "Shaddadids." On the political situation of Ganje before and during Nezāmi's life see also Würsch, *Nizāmi's Schatzkammer der Geheimnisse*, 7.
51. Key Kā'us b. Eskandar, *Qābus-nāme*, 41–42.
52. See recently Yarshater, "Iran: Iranian History. (2) Islamic Period," also quoted by the authors (p. 122).

Bibliography

- Afsahzod, A'lohon. *Dostoni "Layli va Majnun"-i Abdurrahmoni Jomi*. Dushanbe: Našrijoti Doniś, 1970.
- De Blois, François. *Persian Literature: A Bio-bibliographical Survey*. Begun by the late C. A. Storey. Vol. V, part 2: *Poetry ca. A.D. 1100 to 1225*. London: The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1994.
- De Blois, François. *Persian Literature: A Bio-bibliographical Survey*. Begun by the late C. A. Storey. Vol. V, part 3: *Appendix II–IV, Addenda and Corrigenda, Indexes*. London: The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1997.
- Dehkhodā, A. 'A. *Loghatnāme*. 40 vols. Tehrān: Dāneshgāh-e Tehrān. Sāzmān-e loghatnāme, 1325–1358/1946–1979.
- Doerfer, Gerhard. *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen*. 4 vols. Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1963–1975.

- Ferdowsi, Abo'l-Qāsem. *Shāhnāme*. Ed. Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh. 8 vols. New York: Persian Heritage Foundation, 1988–2008 (Persian Text Series).
- Gnoli, Gherardo. *The Idea of Iran: An Essay on its Origin*. Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1989 (Serie Orientale Roma, LXII).
- Hāfez. *Divān*. Ed. Parviz Nātel Khānlari. 2nd rev. ed. 2 vols. Tehrān: Enteshārāt-e Khwārazmi, 1362/1983.
- Hāfez de Chiraz, *Le Divān*. Introduction, traduction du persan et commentaires par C. H. de Fouchécour. s.l.: Éditions Verdier, 2006.
- Heravi, Hoseyn 'Ali. *Sharh-e ghazalāh-ye Hāfez*. 4 vols. Tehrān: Nashr-e now, 1367/1988.
- Key Kā'us b. Eskandar. *Qābus-nāme*. Ed. Gholām-Hoseyn Yusefi. Tehrān: Bongāh-e tarjome va nashr-e ketāb, 1345/1967.
- Khaleghi Motlagh, D. *Notes on the Shahnameh*. 4 vols. New York: Persian Heritage Foundation, 2001–2009 (Persian Text Series).
- Meier, F. "Aussprachefragen des älteren neupersisch." *Oriens* 27–28 (1981): 70–176.
- Nezāmi. *Haft peykar*. Ed. Behruz Sarvatiyān. Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Amir Kabir, 1389²/2010 (1st ed. Tehrān: Enteshārāt-e Tus, 1377/1989).
- Nezāmi. *Khosrow va Shirin*. Ed. Behruz Sarvatiyān. Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Tus, 1366/1987.
- Nezāmi. *Leyli va Majnun*. Ed. Behruz Sarvatiyān. Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Tus, 1364/1985.
- Nezāmi. *Leyli va Majnun*. Ed. Barāt Zanjāni. Tehrān: Enteshārāt-e Dāneshgāh, 1369/1990.
- Nezāmi. *Leyli va Majnun*. Ed. Hasan Vahid Dastgerdi. Reprinted with a preface by Sa'id Hamidiyān. Tehran: Nashr-e Qatre, 1376/1997.
- Nezāmi. *Makbzan al-asrār*. Ed. Behruz Sarvatiyān. Tehrān: Enteshārāt-e Tus, 1363/1984.
- Nezāmi. *Sharaf-nāme*. Ed. Behruz Sarvatiyān. Tehrān: Enteshārāt-e Tus, 1368/1989.
- Özgüdenli, Osman G. "Nezāmi Qunavi." *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition. Accessed November 29, 2013. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/nezami-qunavi>
- Peacock, Andrew. "Shaddadids." *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition. Accessed December 5, 2013. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/shaddadids>
- Sa'di. *Kollīyyāt*. Ed. M. 'A. Forughī. Tehrān: Sāzmān-e enteshārāt-e jāvidān, 1328/1949.
- Vahid Dastgerdi, Hasan. *Ganjine-ye Ganjavi*. Tehrān: Ketābforushi-e Ebn-e Sinā, 1335²/1956 (1st ed. 1318/1939).
- Würsch, Renate. *Nizāmi's Schatzkammer der Geheimnisse. Eine Untersuchung zu Makbzan al-asrār*. Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2005.
- Yarshater, Ehsan. "Iran. Iranian History. (2) Islamic Period." *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. Vol. 13: 230–231.
- Zanjāni, Barāt. *Ahvāl va āsār va sharh-e Makbzan-al-asrār-e Nezāmi-ye Ganjavi*. Tehrān: Dāneshgāh-e Tehrān, 1387⁸/2008 (1st ed. 1378/1999).