

## Metaphors of Authorship in Medieval Persian Prose: A Preliminary Study

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### Abstract

This article examines some strategies in the formation of the authorial personal voice in medieval Persian prose until the second half of the 7th/13th century. It studies four metaphors found in the prefaces to a range of prose compositions. The metaphors include a widely spread 'a book as a bride' simile; book as merchandise, book as a garden, as well as likening a book to a newborn. The subtle images of embellishing, cherishing, and procreation suggest the process of 'bringing forth one's own' and thus legitimize the authors' ownership of their works.

### Introduction

The poetics of authorship—that is, the emergence of the authorial self and the evolution of means for conceptualizing the author—have long become pivotal issues in the study of medieval European, both Latin and vernacular, literatures.<sup>1</sup> In the domain of Islamic literature, notably medieval Persian prose, however, no scholarly attempts at reconstructing the main historical stages in the formation of the personal authorial voice have yet been made. An essential and most promising direction in this sort of inquiry would appear to be the exploration of strategies for authorial self-presentation in texts. These comprise diverse ways of personal identification through self-naming, genealogy, geographical, communal, religious and other affiliations, as well as such seemingly autobiographical elements as personal accounts of the circumstances surrounding the composition of a book. To these one might add linguistic means of self-reference such as forms of personal pronouns and euphemistic lexical substitutes (e.g. *bandah* ['slave'='I']); it would also be rewarding to explore the syntactic–semantic category of passive versus active voice, for this is a significant marker signalling the writer's choice of a certain stylistic mode (the neutral mode, the modesty and self-belittlement mode, and the like).

Germane to elucidating the idea of medieval authorship is also inquiry into a range of topoi and metaphors used by authors to describe both the process of creation and the product itself. To consider the metaphors of authorship I shall draw on evidence that came to light as a result of examining a wide range of prefaced primary sources from the

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4th/10th centuries to the 7th/13th centuries. Indeed, it is prefatory writing where the authorial voice finds most conspicuous expression. The preface and, for this purpose, also the ‘postface’, the epilogue (*ḏibāchah* and *khātimah*, respectively, as far as medieval Persian prose is concerned) belong to the domain of what Gérard Genette has termed paratexts; that is, those practices and conventions that accompany the text and mediate it to the reader.<sup>2</sup> Allowing myself a slight incursion into the terminology of the exact sciences, I shall describe the preface as an interface between audience and text. In this capacity the preface serves an instrument of authorial control; it provides the author’s statement of intent and suggests to the reader a certain interpretative approach. The study of prefatory writing therefore offers a vantage point for delving into a range of important issues of literary history and criticism, first and foremost author–reader relations, text reception and, most notably, the concept of authorship.

In the present paper I shall examine four concrete metaphors that appear to me instrumental in providing a clue to the self-positioning of a medieval author with respect to his work.

### **Book as a Bride (‘*Arūs*), Author as a Bride-dresser (*Mashshāṭah*)**

In all probability originating in Arabic poetics,<sup>3</sup> the most widely used metaphor by far is that of ‘bride’ and ‘bride-dresser’. It is based on the anthropomorphic likening of a book to an unadorned ‘bride’ (‘*arūs*), who is being adorned and embellished by the author acting in this case as a *mashshāṭah* (a ‘bride-dresser’). In a most curious and informative preface to the *Rauḍat al-‘uqūl* (compiled 598/1201–2) that represents an early 7th/13th-century reworking of the 4th/10th-century *Marzbān-nāmah*, the author, Muḥammad-i Ghāzī-yi Malat̄yavī, ponders the aim of his work in the following manner:

I said to myself: ‘It is expedient to beautify this beauty and to perfect this perfection, for the delicacy of such a bride is in need of a befitting gem-encrusted girdle and the loveliness of this beloved calls for becoming earrings. (*guftam in jamāl-rā tajmīl-i bāyad dād va in kamāl-rā takmīl-i arzānī dāsht az ān kih malāḥat-i chunīn ‘arūs-rā vishāḥ-i bāyad lāyiq va ḥusn-i in shāhid-jān-rā shanf-i bāyad muvāfiq.*)<sup>4</sup>

Muḥammad-i Ghāzī continues his musings as to the best way to deal with this not so young bride of 300 years. Like an experienced *mashshāṭah*, he asks himself:

... which appearance would purify this bride from the freckles (or: blemishes) of old-maidenhood and what attire would bring the delicacy of this confined houri to perfection? (*tā kudām ziyy in ‘arūs-rā az kalaf-i ‘unūs pāk gardānad va kudām ḥilyat in ḥūr-i maḥṣūr-rā malāḥat bi-kamāl rasānad.*)<sup>5</sup>

The same topos of the ‘confined and unclaimed bride’ is employed by Sa’d al-Dīn Varāvīnī in the preface to his adaptation of the *Marzbān-nāmah*, compiled sometime between 607–622/1210–1225.<sup>6</sup> Pronouncing a harsh judgment on the old version of the ‘Book of Marzbān’, written in the Ṭabarī language, Sa’d al-Dīn Varāvīnī says:

You would think that this is a beautiful bride who remained behind the curtain of obscurity (*in ‘arūs-i zibā kih az darūm-i pardah-i khumūl bimānd*). Unlike

other damsels of compositions it did not traverse land and sea and did not win a due reputation, for the reason that because it did not have an arrayed (*ārāstah*) appearance, claims of desire did not rise from within the readers to accept this contestant ...<sup>7</sup>

In the eyes of these and many other medieval authors who use the ‘bride’ metaphor,<sup>8</sup> it is an act of *mashshātagī* —‘ornamentation’ or ‘decoration’—alone that can grant their compositions general acceptance among the public and, to use the wording of Abū al-Ma‘ālī Naṣrallāh Munshī, the author of the *Kaḥilah va Dimnah*, make them ‘win all the climes and realms of the Earth in no time’ (*dar muddat-i andak tamāmī-yi aqālīm-i zamīn-u bilād bigīrad*).<sup>9</sup> It is noteworthy that in most cases we have here works that represent translation-cum-reworking of much older originals. The aspirations of the authors to ‘array’ the ‘body of a bride’ (i.e. the old content) with a proper ‘garb’ (i.e. an appropriate form) reveal the authors’ conscientious attitude towards the dominant literary norm of their time, which of all the textual functions emphasized the ornamental lingua-stylistic one.<sup>10</sup> The preoccupation with form, so characteristic of the second half of the 6th/12th century onwards and which is sometimes perceived by scholars as derogatory towards the content, may be better interpreted as the first buds indicating the development of a conscious authorial self in terms of productive and creative force. For the awareness of authorship evolves through the awareness of form.<sup>11</sup>

This connection is finely expressed in the intensification of meaning which the ‘*arūs–mashshātah*’ metaphor undergoes in some authors. In as much as an obligatory component of the metaphor comprises the unveiling of the bride, ‘drawing her out of the curtain of obscurity’ and putting her on display for appraisal, the act of *mashshātagī* in fact causes a shift in the bride’s state, depriving her of virginity. Thus, Sa’d al-Dīn Varāvinī employs the most explicit erotic language when speaking of his hesitation to start the work. The ‘inner claimants’ that directed him towards the composing of the book urge him as follows:

Unless you do not aspire (i.e., to rework the ‘Book of Marzbān’), [your] virility is impotent; in the name of God, make yourself busy with depriving this virgin of virginity and do not let any excuse [penetrate] your mind. (*agar īn ārzū tu-rā nah, shahvat īnnūn-ast. Bism illāh bi-iftiqād-i īn ‘udhrat mashghūl bāsh va hīch ‘udhr pīsh-i khāṭir nanih.*)<sup>12</sup>

In another passage the same author describes the process of his work as *iftirā‘-i īn bīkr-i āmadah-i ghayb*, ‘depriving this otherworldly virgin of virginity’,<sup>13</sup> thus metamorphosing from a *mashshātah* into a bridegroom of sorts. The eroticism of the metaphor brings to the fore the author’s proprietary claims for his own work in the most forceful and vivid manner. At the same time, the ownership is almost inevitably a partial one, for it should be shared or even transferred to his patron, dedicatee of the book. Zāhīrī-yi Samarqandī, after having performed his function of a *mashshātah*, dispatches his ornamented virgin-bride (*bīkr-i dūshūzah*) (i.e. the *Sindbād-nāmah*) to the harem of his patron: ‘I sent [the book] to the highest residence and to the generous harem of the Master of the World’ (*bi-shabistān-i ‘ālī va ḥaram-i karam-i khudhāvand-i ‘alam firistādham*).<sup>14</sup>

The ambiguity in the rights of ownership, embodied in particular in the ‘author–patron’ axis, is expressed in the metaphor—the second one I would like to consider

here—of a book as ‘merchandise’ (*matāʿ*) offered for purchase to a benevolent purchaser (*kharīdār*) by the author who acts as a ‘merchant’ or ‘trader’.

### Book as ‘Merchandise’ (*Matāʿ*), Author as ‘Merchant’

The metaphor, seemingly plain and straightforward, possesses a double-edged meaning. On the one hand, the author is striving to command a market for his work, and in effect transfers his proprietorship to a purchaser. Thus, for example, Shams al-Dīn Daqāyiqī-yi Marvazī (end of the 6th/12th century—beginning of the 7th/13th century) cannot refrain from expressing his joy at procuring a buyer (in other words, a patron) for his *Rāḥat al-arvāḥ*. Using a characteristic topos of self-belittlement, he exclaims:

Praise be to God that on the latitudes of the fifth clime there appeared a buyer for our (i.e., my) slack (stagnant) merchandise and (there happened) a market-day for our sluggish commodity. (*al-ḥamd li-llāh kih dar ʿarḍah-i aqlīm-i panjum īn matāʿ-i kāsid-i mā-rā kharīdār-ī āmadah va īn biḍāʿat-i muʿaṭṭal-i mā-rā rūz-i bāzār.*)<sup>15</sup>

On the other hand, however, the metaphor enables an author to position himself as an original creator who not only disposes of his ‘merchandise’ at will, but also produces his work exclusively from his own—authorial—materials. For instance, in his *Maqāmāt* (compiled in 551/1156–57), Ḥamīd al-Dīn-i Balkhī, while remaining in the same semantic field of commercial terminology, is forthright enough in his negative attitude towards poetic borrowing in a prose text:

Compose with your own materials; like ungifted ones, / do not borrow the capital from others. (*bā māyah-i khud bi-sāz chun biḥunarān / sar-māyah bi-ʿariyyat makhāh az ḡigārān.*)<sup>16</sup>

In the same vein, Saʿd al-Dīn Varāvīnī takes an independent authorial stance and vigorously defends his artistry:

The knower of the seen and the unseen (i.e., God) is aware that I did not load any merchandise from the treasury of the thought of any word-master (*az nihān-khānah-i fikrat-i hīch šāḥib-sukhan matāʿ-ī dar bār-i khud nabastam*); I considered nakedness worthier for myself than borrowed clothes. Each and every pearl which I set onto the pocket of my thought and into the collar of my expression, I took from the casket (chest; *durj*) of my own thinking and each and every coral which I scattered from the sleeve of my mind and soul, I drew out from the store-house (*khazānah*) of my own memory . . . In front of me there were no verse-collections and notebooks / Nor did Jesus have aromatic roots and mortar (*nah pīsh-i man davāvīn būd-u daftar / nah ʿisā-rā ʿaqāqīr-ast-u hāvan*).<sup>17</sup>

A similar twofold signification is found in another—third—metaphor employed by medieval prose authors in prefaces to their works. It is founded on the comparing of a book with a garden (*bāgh*, *gulshan*), the author thus functioning as a gardener (*bāghbān*).

**Book as a Garden (*Bāgh*, *Gulshan*), Author as a Gardener (*Bāghbān*)**

While connected to the idea of cultivating the garden for the sake of a patron—‘I ... decorated the outskirts of this garden (*gulshan*); from it I brought a flower to the Master ... and sent a fruit to his park’, as Daqāyiqī-yi Marvazī puts it<sup>18</sup>—the metaphor is also employed to accentuate the freshness of the author’s talent and his freedom from the influence of others: ‘It was only rarely that I smelled (i.e., made use of) the flowers which have been previously sniffed and touched upon (*gul-hā-yi būyidah va dast-mālidah-i dīgarān*)’,<sup>19</sup> asserts the author of the *Marzbān-nāmāh* in referring to verses that he wove into his composition.

Significantly, the *bāgh*–*bāghbān* metaphor implies the idea of growth and cherishing; of cultivating a garden that would surpass those of others in every aspect. Thus in his *khātimah*, Sa’d al-Dīn Varāvīnī, while recognizing the stylistic merits of earlier works in Persian, above all the legendary *Kalīlah va Dimnah*, advocates the excellence and superiority of his own ‘garden’.

... [All these books] resemble a garden (*ḥaḍīqah*) which, although sweet for the palates and acceptable for the spirits, contain but one kind of fruit (*yak mīvāh*); they resemble an orchard (*bustān*) which, although it exhales fragrance for the senses and keeps noses perfumed, the morning breeze brings from it but one kind of aromatic scent (*yak rīḥān*). However, the creation of this slave (*sākhtah-i īn bandah*) comprises several varieties of styles of verbal ornamentation in such a way that it resembles the Garden of Paradise, full of colourful flowers of meaning, various scents of words, assorted fruits of aphorisms and different crops of allusions ...’ (*va īn bi-jamāt-i mānad pur az alvān-i azāhīr-i ma’nī va ashkāl-i rayāḥīn-i alfāz va ajnās-i favākih-i nukat va arvā’-i thimār-i ishārāt ...*)<sup>20</sup>

Together with the element of comparison, essential for the self-image of the author, what is peculiar and almost emblematic in the above extensive metaphor is the choice of wording: *sākhtah* (‘created’) and *jamāt* (the ‘Garden of Paradise’), which evokes God’s creation. The allusion is enhanced by the depiction of a perfect harmony of senses—olfactory, gustatory and visual—thus giving an impression of the creative potency of the author himself.

Finally, the metaphor of a garden, which, as I have said, implies the idea of cherishing, of nursing a sapling (*nahāl*) into a full-grown tree, leads to our fourth metaphor—the metaphor of parenthood or fatherhood.

**Book as a Child (*Farzand*, *Maulūd*, *Tifl*), Author as a Parent/Tutor (*Pidar*/*Mu’allim*)**

As a gardener nurtures a sapling, so the author in his parental capacity gives birth to a child, strengthening his bond with the new-born by giving him a name (i.e. title). In the case of a re-worked book, the naming or, more precisely the re-naming, carries a special significance, establishing the ultimate degree of authorship. Thus, Daqāyiqī-yi Marvazī declares:

... It is not praiseworthy [to leave] a new-born (*maulūd*) without a name and wine without a bowl. Although originally the name of this book was

*Bakhtiyār-nāmah*, when the wood gets hollowed, it is named a casket (*ḥuqqah*) and when gold is made round it is named a ring (*ḥalqah*). As soon as the material takes a new form, it accepts a new name (*māddah chun šūrat-i nau gīrad nām-i nau padhīrad*). [That is why] I named this collection *Rāḥat al-arwāḥ fi surūr al-mifrāḥ*.<sup>21</sup>

The metaphor of parenthood may evolve into a more sophisticated metaphor of discipleship, when the author in the capacity of tutor gives a nick-name (*laqab*) to his gifted disciple. As Muḥammad-i Ghāzī al-Malaṭyavī asserts it:

There is an ancient custom and an established rule, to wit: when a child (*farzand*) comes into being, his father bestows a name on him. When he grows up, [the father] hands him over to a teacher (*mu‘allim*) to refine his virtues (*shamā’il*) and train his excellencies (*faḍā’il*). The teacher, having discerned the perfect intellect and the comprehensive cleverness [of the child], would not contend with the name that [the child’s] father had given him. He would bestow a nick-name (*laqab*) on him, in order that under this nick-name he would become renowned in all parts of the world and amidst the elected. When I came across the *Marzbān-nāmah*, with all its delicate meanings and noble foundations, but bare of the ornamentation of expression and destitute of the decoration of attractiveness, I bedecked it in such a way that as long as the world exists it will remain safe from wearing out and it will be protected from shabbiness (*chundān-kih ‘umr-i ‘ālam-ast az badhādhat īman bāshad va az rathāthat musallam*). For this reason I nick-named it *Rauḍat al-‘uqūl*.<sup>22</sup>

Unlike poetry, where the concept of authorship evolved at quite an early stage, in medieval Persian prose the self-conscious attitude of the author to his work as his own creation matured very gradually, ensuing from the author’s attention to formal elements, for it is there that he could display his artistry in the strict framework of the given contents.<sup>23</sup> In this regard one should point to the possible impact of poetry on the patterns of authorizing prose works by means of metaphors. Indeed, it is in poetic compositions that the ‘garden metaphor’ was first used to convey the idea of cultivating the poet’s own talent, a *qaṣīdah* by Nāṣir-i Khusrau (d. c.481/1088–9) being just one example:

... In the garden and meadow (*bāgh-u rāgh*) of the book of my writings, / I will plant hyacinth and sweet herbs of prose and poetry (*az nazm-u nathr sumbul-u rayḥān kunam*); I shall make fruits and flowers of themes (*mīvah-vu gul az ma‘ānī sāzam hamah*), / And trees of choice expressions (*khūb dirakhtān*); As the clouds make the surface of the desert a garden (*bustān*), / I shall also make the surface of my notebook a garden (*bustān*); In a gathering of the wise I will scatter clever thoughts like flowers; If the dust of error should fall on those flowers, / There I will wash them bright with commentary.<sup>24</sup>

Together with the ‘garden metaphor’, the metaphors of craft—kindred to the metaphors of merchandise in our examples—are widely used in poetic compositions to convey the essence of poetic art. As Jerome W. Clinton has aptly shown, poets not infrequently make use of the metaphors referring to the field of handicrafts, such as

weaving, jewellery manufacture, painting and the like, in order to describe how they have constructed their poems.<sup>25</sup> Thus, in his famous ode, starting with a *maṭlaʿ*: *bā kārvān-i ḥullah bi-raftam zi-Sistān / bā ḥullah-i tanūdah zi-dīl bāftah zi-jān*,<sup>26</sup> Farrukhī (d. 429/1037–38) employs the expanded metaphor of embroidering a robe (*ḥullah*) (i.e. his poem), into which he, as ‘designer’ (*naqqāsh*), ‘put both his hand and heart’.<sup>27</sup> A similar range of craft-metaphors is found in Shams-i Qays-i Rāzī’s manual for poetry *al-Muʿjam fi maʿāyir ashʿār al-ʿAjam* (composed 630/1232–33), where he likens a poet to a skilful painter, a master jeweller, an artisan who is dexterous in his profession.<sup>28</sup> Echoes of this metaphoric field are current in the texts I have examined above. Thus, Muḥammad-i Ghāzī-yi Malāṭyavī, in addition to taking upon himself the function of *mashshāṭah*, also implies the work of a jeweller in his desire to create a gem-encrusted girdle and earrings for his ‘beloved’; similarly, Saʿd al-Dīn Varāwīnī employs the imagery of jewellery manufacture, such as the pearls, coral and casket, in which the precious stones are to be stored in order to be polished and turned into valuable ornaments.<sup>29</sup> In the same vein, Daqāyiqī-yi Marvazī evokes the image of a carver manufacturing a wine-bowl and a casket (*ḥuqqah*) and, again, of a gold-smith making a ring (*ḥalqah*).<sup>30</sup> However, it seems that, as opposed to poetry, these craft images in prose writings never turned into expanded metaphors and were not used by authors to convey the idea of ownership of their works. Even so, the interaction of these metaphoric fields in poetry and prose deserves separate examination, a task that exceeds the scope of the present paper.

To conclude, the imagery discussed above brings to the fore a new approach to the idea of literature. It came to be realized, that, to quote Michel Foucault, ‘discourse that possesses an author’s name is not to be immediately consumed and forgotten; neither is it accorded the momentary attention given to ordinary, fleeting words’.<sup>31</sup> The idea of authorship thus correlates with the concept of *yādgar* (‘remembrance’), the perpetuation of the author’s memory by his work: ‘it’s worthwhile that discourse would remain a memory from us / we shall pass away, but it will remain firm’ (*sukhan bih ki mānad zi-mā yādgar/kih mā bar-gudhārim-u ū pāydār*), as Ṣāḥibī-yi Samarqandī puts it.<sup>32</sup>

At the same time, the figurative field of the metaphors reflects the fractured literary reality of medieval Persian prose. The necessarily inferior position of the author towards the Creator on the one hand, and the intricate relations between the author and his patron who is supposed to be the ultimate owner of the final product on the other, put medieval writers in a delicate situation, and might have placed a constraint on the development of authorial self-consciousness. To mitigate the contradiction, doxology and dedication became obligatory and integral parts of the preface. Moreover, the idea of ‘remembrance’ came frequently to be bestowed by the author on a dedicatee, to immortalize the latter’s name in the enduring monument of the word.<sup>33</sup> Consideration of the metaphors conveying the authorial stance is a first step towards comprehending the poetics of authorship in the Persian prose of the Middle Ages. It should be buttressed with cross-genre study of the exposition of the aesthetic principles guiding the authors, their self-definition *vis-à-vis* the literary tradition, and other means of authorial self-referentiality by which medieval prose writers empowered themselves and their works.

## Notes

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1. See, for instance, S. Coxon, *The Presentation of Authorship in Medieval German Narrative Literature 1220–1290* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), Oxford Modern Languages and Literature Monographs; A. Berthelot, *Figures et fonctions de l'écrivain au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Montréal: Institut d'études médiévales, Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1991), Université de Montréal. Publications de l'Institut d'études médiévales XXV; B. Richardson, 'Inscribed Meanings: Authorial Self-Fashioning and Readers' Annotations in Sixteenth-Century Italian Printed Books', in *Reading and Literacy in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. I. F. Moulton (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 85–104, Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance 8; and R. Sturges, 'Medieval Authorship and the Polyphonic Text: From Manuscript Commentary to the Modern Novel', in *Bakhtin and Medieval Voices*, ed. Th. J. Farrell (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995), 122–37.
2. See G. Genette, *Seuils* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1987), 150–270; for English translation, G. Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. J.E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 161–293.
3. See A.F. Kilito, 'Sur le métalangage métaphorique des poéticiens arabes', *Poétique* 38 (1979): 173–4.
4. Muḥammad-i Ghāzī-yi Malāṭyavī, *Rauḍat al-'uqūl*, ed. Muḥammad Raushan and Abū al-Qāsim Jalīlpūr (Tīhrān, Gurūh-i nashr-i āthār, Farhangistān-i zabān-u adab-i fārsī 14, 1383/2004), 21.
5. Malāṭyavī, *Rauḍat al-'uqūl*, p. 22.
6. The two authors worked independently of each other. On the dissimilarities of the two compilations see the introduction of Muḥammad Raushan to his edition of the *Rauḍat al-'uqūl* (Malāṭyavī, *Rauḍat al-'uqūl*, xiv–xv).
7. Sa'd al-Dīn Varāvinī, *Marzbān-nāmah, A Book of Fables Originally Compiled in the Dialect of Tabaristān, and Translated into Persian by Sa'du 'd-dīn-i Warāvinī*, ed. M.M. Qazvinī (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1909); the Persian text edited by Mīrzā Muḥammad Ibn 'Abdu 'l-Wahhāb of Qazwīn (Leiden, 1909), 6.
8. See, for example, Ḥamīd al-Dīn Abū Bakr 'Umar b. Maḥmūdī-yi Balkhī, *Maqāmāt-i Ḥamūdī*, ed. R. Inzābī-nizhād (Tīhrān: Markaz-i nashr-i dānishgāhī, Adabiyāt-i fārsī 5, 1372/1993), 20, 22; Abū al-Ma'ālī Naṣr Allāh Munshī, *Tarjumah-i Kalīlah va Dimnah*, ed. M. Minuvi Tīhrānī (Tīhrān: Amīr Kabīr, Intishārāt-i dānishgāh-i Tīhrān 925, 1385/2006), 420; Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Daqāyiqī-yi Marvazī, *Rāḥat al-arvāḥ fi suwūr al-mifrāḥ. Bakhtiyār-nāmah*, ed. Dh. Šafā (Tīhrān: Intishārāt-i dānishgāh-i Tīhrān, 1345/1966), 8; Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Zahīrī al-Samarqandī, *Sindbād-nāmah*, ed. A. Ataš (Istanbul, 1948), 23, 25 and 30; Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Zahīrī al-Samarqandī, *Aghraḍ al-siyāsah fi a'rāḍ al-riyāsah*, ed. Dj. Shi'ār (Tīhrān: Intishārāt-i dānishgāh-i Tīhrān, Ganjīnah-i mutūn-i Irānī 68, 1349/1970), 15; Abū al-Sharaf Naṣīb b. Zafar Djurfādiqānī, *Tarjumah-i Tarīkh-i Yamīnī*, ed. Dj. Shi'ār (Tīhrān: Bungāh-i tarjumah va nashr-i kitāb, 1345/1966), 8; Sharaf al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh Ḥusaynī Qazvinī, *Al-Mu'jam fi āthār mulūk al-'Ajam*, ed. Aḥmad Futūḥī-nasab (Tīhrān: Anjuman-i āthār va mafākhir-i farhangī, 1383/2004), 15, 17 and 30.
9. Abū al-Ma'ālī Naṣrallāh Munshī, *Kalīlah va Dimnah*, 420.
10. On this see J. Rubanovich, 'Literary Canon and Patterns of Evaluation in Persian Prose on the Eve of the Mongol Invasion', *Studia Iranica* 32, no. 1 (2003): 54–63.
11. Cf. M.I. Steblin-Kamenskij, 'Fol'klor i literatura i problema literaturnogo progressa', in *Istoricheskaja poetika* (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Leningradskogo Universiteta, 1978), 140–2; M.I. Steblin-Kamenskij, *The Saga Mind*, trans. Kenneth H. Ober (Odense: Odense University Press, 1973), 49–64 and 75–6. In his works, Steblin-Kamenskij discusses the emergence of the concept of conscious authorship in connection with Icelandic sagas and skaldic poetry. Although the material he works with is widely divergent from that examined in the present article, his insights nonetheless possess theoretical aspects useful for our purpose.
12. Sa'd al-Dīn Varāvinī, *Marzbān-nāmah*, 6.
13. Ibid, 9.
14. al-Zahīrī al-Samarqandī, *Sindbād-nāmah*, 30. For further examples, see Ḥusaynī Qazvinī, *al-Mu'jam fi āthār mulūk al-'Ajam*, 17.
15. Daqāyiqī-yi Marvazī, *Rāḥat al-arvāḥ*, 224. For additional examples, see Djurfādiqānī, *Tarjumah-i Tarīkh-i Yamīnī*, 8; and Ḥusaynī Qazvinī, *al-Mu'jam fi āthār mulūk al-'Ajam*, 30.
16. Balkhī, *Maqāmāt-i Ḥamūdī*, 22.
17. Sa'd al-Dīn Varāvinī, *Marzbān-nāmah*, 7. The verse cited by Varāvinī to stress his originality is, ironically, not by himself, but a citation—albeit slightly changed and possibly quoted from memory—from a *qaṣidah* by Khāqānī-yi Shirvānī. See Afḍal al-Dīn Bidīl b. 'Alī Najjār Khāqānī-yi Shirvānī,



*Divān-i Khāqānī-yi Shīrīnānī*, ed. Dīyā al-Dīn Sajjādī (Tīhrān: Zuvvār, 1338/1959), 319, l. 3. In the original the first *miṣrāʿ* reads *nah pīsh-i man davāvin-ast-u ashʿār*, while in some MSS an alternative reading *daftār* is registered instead of *ashʿār* (see idem, footnote 1). This verse, as well as the one by Ḥamid al-Dīn-i Balkhī above (see p. 7 and note 16), reflect the topos of originality in verse insertions, widely used by medieval prose writers. Cf., for example, Saʿdī's statement at the end of his *Gulistān*: '... in conformity with the custom of authors, there has been (in my book) no borrowing from the poetry of my predecessors: "Patching your own shabby garment / is better than pleading for borrowed clothes"' (*chunān kih rasm-i mu'allifān-ast az shi'r-i mutaqaḍḍimān bi-tariq-i isti'arat talfiq-i naraft: kuhan khirgah-i kh'ish pīrastan / bih az jāmah-i 'ariyyat kh'astan*); see Saʿdī, *Gulistān-i Saʿdī*, ed. R.M. Aliev (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo vostochnoj literatury, 1959), 484. It seems, however, that this topos is largely of a prescriptive, declarative nature, for in his poetic insertions Saʿdī did indeed draw on the reservoir of the poetic tradition. I am indebted to Anna-Livia Beelaert for drawing my attention to the points above.

18. Daqāyiqi-yi Marvazī, *Rāḥat al-arvāḥ*, 8–9.
19. Saʿd al-Dīn Varāvinī, *Marzbān-nāmah*, 296.
20. Ibid. For further examples, see al-Zahīrī al-Samarqandī, *Sindbād-nāmah*, 23; and Ḥusaynī Qazvinī, *al-Muʿjam fi āthār mulūk al-ʿAjam*, 16.
21. Daqāyiqi-yi Marvazī, *Rāḥat al-arvāḥ*, 9. For additional examples, see Ibid., 222–3; and Ḥusaynī Qazvinī, *al-Muʿjam fi āthār mulūk al-ʿAjam*, 15 and 16.
22. Malaṭyavī, *Rauḍat al-ʿuqūl*, 26.
23. This is not to state that prose works that were written in a simple, unadorned style (*nathr-i sādah*), therefore foregrounding a communicative function instead of the lingua-stylistic one, were devoid of any markers of authorial presence. Thus, for instance, Shahmardān b. Abī al-Khayr al-Rāzī, the author of an astrological treatise *Rauḍat al-munajjimīn* (composed 466/1073–74) or ʿUnṣur al-Maʿālī Kay Kāvūs in his *Qābūs-nāmah* (written 475/1082–3) do display a certain degree of authorial consciousness, either in introducing their works in the first person or in taking pains to explicate the reasons for composing them. See, respectively, Shahmardān b. Abī al-Khayr al-Rāzī, *Rauḍat al-munajjimīn*, ed. Jalīl Akhavan Zinjānī (Tīhrān: Mīrāth-i maktūb, 1382/2003), 1–3; and ʿUnṣur al-Maʿālī Kay Kāvūs, *Qābūs-nāmah*, ed. Ghulām Ḥusayn Yūsufī (Tīhrān: Shirkat-i intishārāt-i ʿilmī va farhangī, 1375/1996), 3–6 and 262–4). At the same time, however, these authors are guided first and foremost by pragmatic–didactic considerations and do not perceive their works as artistic objects. They do not emphasize in any way their own creative power of composition, nor do they make any explicit attempt to establish their ownership of the texts.
24. The translation is by Clinton; see J.W. Clinton, 'Esthetics by Implication: What Metaphors of Craft Tell us about the "Unity" of the Persian Qasida', *Edebiyāt* 4, no. 1 (1979): 84–5. For the original, see Naṣīr b. Khusrāu Qubādīyānī, *Divān-i ashʿār*, ed. Mahdī-yi Suhaylī (Tīhrān: Amir Kabīr, 1335/1956–57), 303–5.
25. See Clinton, 'Esthetics by Implication', 79–84. In his examination Clinton is mostly concerned with the question of a poem's unity, as it finds its expression through the metaphors of craft.
26. Farrukhī-yi Sistānī, *Divān*, ed. Muḥammad Dabīr-Siyāqī (Tīhrān: Zuvvār, 1371/1992), 329–31.
27. For analysis, see Clinton, 'Esthetics by Implication', 83–4 and 86.
28. For examples, see ibid., 78–82.
29. See above, p. 128 and p. 130, respectively.
30. See above, p. 132.
31. M. Foucault, 'What is an Author?', in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. and intro. D.F. Bouchard, trans. D.F. Bouchard and Sh. Simon (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 123.
32. al-Zahīrī al-Samarqandī, *Sindbād-nāmah*, 29. For additional examples employing the concept of *yādgār*, see Balkhī, *Maqāmāt-i Ḥamīdī*, 21; Abū al-Maʿālī Naṣr Allāh Munshī, *Kalīlah va Dimnah*, 420–2; al-Zahīrī al-Samarqandī, *Aghrāḍ al-siyāsah*, 13 and 15; and Ḥusaynī Qazvinī, *al-Muʿjam fi āthār mulūk al-ʿAjam*, 30–1.
33. See also Djurfādiqānī, *Tarjūmah-i Tārīkh-i Yamīnī*, 8–9.