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Citations of ‘Attār and the *Kanz al-Haqāyeq* in ‘Ali Akbar Khatāyi’s *Book of China*: A Sufi Path of Bureaucracy

‘Ali Akbar Khatāyi’s *Khatāynāmeḥ* (Book of China), a detailed description of state and society in Ming China written in 922/1516, includes citations from the *Kanz al-Haqāyeq* (attributed to Mahmud Shabestari) and ‘Attār’s *Elāhināmeḥ*. By citing these two texts at key points in his description of the Chinese government, Khatāyi articulates a radical political vision in which the civil officials, rather than the emperor, are the true rulers. Furthermore, by using the *Kanz al-Haqāyeq* as a portal text, and through frequent citations of other gnostic poetry, he crafts his own authorial presence by identifying his own text with *fotovvat* and gnosticism, and invokes a conceptual framework based on the thought of Ibn ‘Arabi epitomized in his intertexts.

Keywords: China; Sufism; political theory; Ottoman Empire; poetry; futuwwa; Attar; Mahmud Shabestari; messianism; Hurufism

“I’ve seen things you people wouldn’t believe. Attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion. I watched C-beams glitter in the dark near the Tannhäuser Gate. All those moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain.”¹

T. S. Eliot

Aside from a handful of valuable studies on the subject, the inclusion of brief passages of verse in prose texts has been the focus of few dedicated studies, in spite of its being a common feature of Islamicate belles-lettristic writing.² Prose writers used verse for a variety of purposes, from delivering a coded message to alert readers, to augmenting the dramatic or aesthetic qualities of a passage. Verse citations also have evidentiary value for the reception history of the cited texts, showing how they were understood, and what intellectual and social phenomena they were associated with. It is to these questions of reception and historical memory that the present article turns. The *Khatāynāmeḥ* (*Book of China*) of Sayyed ‘Ali Akbar Khatāyi is a description of China in

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twenty-one or twenty-two chapters.³ Written in Persian in 922/1516, it is the longest and most substantial such description in any western Afro-Eurasian language until similar descriptions of China were written in Spanish and Portuguese beginning in the 1570s; it also anticipates the later European Enlightenment image of China as an enlightened, limited despotism.⁴ Khatāyi's China is a magnificent, millennia-old empire governed by what is apparently a profane law (*qānun*) and run by civil officials (*amir*) analogous to Islamic scholar-bureaucrats; he claims that emperors who transgress the law are deposed peacefully ((31, 93). Description of the Chinese state and recent events including the supposed conversion to Islam of the Zhengde emperor (r. 1505-21) are interpreted through an explicitly millenarian frame.⁵ His highly unorthodox genealogy of the Chinese—as descendants of Cain—signifies that their civilization is artificial, a product of human invention.

We have no information about the author apart from a citation by Hājji Khalifa from outside the text of the *Khatāynāmeḥ*—which, however, abounds with forensic evidence. Hājji Khalifa's description of him as “one of the merchants” is both consistent with the text itself and what we know about the historical context of China and its trade with Central Asia in the early tenth/sixteenth century, and also with the authorial presence in the text which is manifested in part through his use of verse citations. The text is the product of circumstances peculiar to the early tenth/sixteenth century, following centuries of sustained commercial and other traffic between China and western Afro-Eurasia and widespread millenarian expectations across the Irano-Mediterranean macro-region. It was translated into Ottoman Turkish twice. The most prevalent translation⁶ can be dated to the 1580s. The other, attested only in Aya Sofya 3188, is of interest because the verse citations are also translated, whereas in the more common translation they are kept in the original Persian. The translator of AS3188 omitted certain key couplets and elaborated on remarks about the conversion of East Asians to Islam, which the more common translation, intriguingly, reproduces in the original Persian.⁷ The AS3188 translation thus appears to express a more conservatively pious sensibility. The translator's preface to the more common translation indicates that by the 1580s, the text was read as supporting “constitutionalism” in Ottoman political debates.⁸

The *Khatāynāmeḥ* is thus of particular interest for the reception history of the poetry of Farid al-Din 'Attār and theories of Ibn 'Arabī articulated in the *Secret Rosegarden* (*Golshan-e Rāz*) of Mahmud Shabestari. Khatāyi cites Shabestari as author of his main intertext, the *Kanz al-Haqāyeq*—however, its actual author was likely a wrestler-turned-saint, Pahlavān Mahmud, widely celebrated in *fotovvat* circles (25).⁹ Khatāyi's citations offer direct evidence for how these texts, and Akbarian theories of Oneness of Being and world-as-text, provided a frame for encountering social and material phenomena. One may speak of idols as emanations of the One, in the abstract, but here the theory of Oneness of Being (*vahdat-e vojūd*) comes before real “idols” and so-called idolaters, and a society and polity (China) that readers encountered or interacted with through trade and diplomacy.¹⁰ It may also show us how theories of world-as-text, foundational to the science of letters and the beliefs of Horufis and Noqtavis, were related to textual practices, both of individual authors and bureaucracies. From passages of 'Attār's *Elāhināmeḥ* and the *Kanz al-Haqāyeq*, Khatāyi derives a

novel and radical political theology in which the real rulers of the empire are the bureaucrats, with the emperor functioning as something between a bureaucratic manager and a figurehead. Khatāyi thus presents an alternative interpretation of Akbarian theories of saint-king as ruler of the cosmos, used by the Ottomans and other dynasties to justify an autocratic vision of messianic kingship: he formulates an equally millenarian, but anti-autocratic theory of bureaucracy and rule of law.

This article explicates the larger program and implications of Khatāyi's use of verse citations. His book is structurally aligned and thus partly consubstantial with its two chief intertexts, the *Kanz al-Haqāyeq* and 'Attār's *Elāhināmeḥ*. While any time one text cites another, both texts become consubstantial in a trivial sense, it will be argued here that Khatāyi's use of structurally aligned verse citations invites his readers to see a deeper, essential correspondence between text and intertexts. The text's illocutionary force emerges from the interplay of detailed description and verse interludes.¹¹ The verse citations, through their familiarity, connect the world of the reader to the new, unfamiliar phenomena of China, especially its political system. His intertexts make the political implications of Khatāyi's depiction of Chinese bureaucracy explicit by connecting it to eschatological visions of kingship and the imamate. They also articulate a social identity for the author as pious and un-erudite, with Sufi leanings. Finally, his reliance on canonical authors to express key ideas may serve as a mask under which he introduces a Horufi concept related to the transmigration of souls, here applied to the state rather than the enlightened soul or the Hidden Imam.

His program of verse citations is as follows: the *Kanz al-Haqāyeq* is used as a portal text—a textual mask for Khatāyi and his *Khatāynāmeḥ*. Long citations of the *Kanz* make up the greater part of the preface, and citations of that text, 'Attār's *Elāhināmeḥ*, and various other verses including some of his own occur throughout the book, often expressing an ethos of asceticism. The *Kanz* partly conceals his authorial face and identifies his own work with its mask, appropriating its qualities. These citations, along with various references to the mythic tyrant Shaddād (e.g. 45, 75), produce an authorial persona that identifies Khatāyi with voices critical of Ottoman imperial authority, emanating from a "ghazi-dervish" social milieu.¹² Since the text implicitly defends fiscal and political centralization—one of the principal goals of the Ottoman court and emperors—through the example of China, Khatāyi thus presents himself as a would-be critic won over to the imperial agenda. However, this rhetorical position becomes more complicated over the course of the book.

Through a combination of historical anecdotes, description, and verse citations, especially from 'Attār's *Elāhināmeḥ*, Khatāyi formulates a novel political vision of coercive legal constraints on the sovereign, including provisions for peaceful dethronement of emperors. The realm is governed by a bureaucracy, and the emperors are arch-bureaucrats, constrained by a law and system (*qānun*) to which *all* subjects are assiduously devoted. This view did reflect certain realities of Ming politics,¹³ but it was not a transcription of official Chinese political ideals. It was a view of Ming government filtered through memory of Ilkhanid rule and Islamicate ethnographic lore about Turks and Mongols, both peoples associated with China in Islamicate cultural geography.¹⁴ Khatāyi has, through his authority as a traveler and his juxtaposition of descriptive text

with verse citations, fashioned himself as a political actor and invoked a public that encompassed the personnel of the Ottoman state, but which, through both wider circulation of the text and his authorial self-characterization as a political outsider, may well have been more expansive.

Intertexts and Authorial Voice

The verse interludes in historical chronicles are a useful comparand to the *Khatāynameh*. Soundings of historical chronicles show variety and clear intentionality in their authors' approaches. For example, in the first volume of the *Habib al-Seyar*, which discusses the creation and pre-history of humanity, the verses cited are generally from canonical authors such as Ferdowsi and Nezāmi, whereas in the fourth and last volume, which discusses recent events and contemporary personalities, the verse citations are never from such canonical authors—they may be Khvāndamir's own. Other histories, such as Sharaf al-Din 'Ali Yazdi's *Zafarnāmeḥ*, the *Tāriḫ-e Pasandideh* (an abridgment of Yazdi's *Zafarnāmeḥ*), and Fazlollāh Ruzbehān Khonji Esfahāni's *Tāriḫ-e 'Alam-Ārā-ye Amini*, have many verses that seem to be largely the authors' own compositions. A survey of verse citations in *enshā* manuals would also be of value. The *Enshā-ye 'Alām-ārā*, a Nurbakhshi epistolary manual produced in Isfahan during the reign of Shah Tahmasb (r. 1524-76), mostly contains verses by the author or his contemporaries, but also includes citations of Hāfez, Anvari, Khayyām, Rumi, Nezāmi, and occasionally Jāmi, and two folios that conclude the extant manuscript contain verses by "various poets including Shāh Ne'mat-Allāh Vali, Showkat Bokhārā'i, and Imam 'Ali b. Abu Tāleb."¹⁵

While the epic poetry of Nezāmi and Ferdowsi was often cited in chronicles, Khatāyi tended to cite gnostic poetry: most of his citations are from a few *masnavi*s that address a collection of basic doctrinal, spiritual, or ethical questions. Shabestari's *Golshan-e Rāz* was ostensibly written for Sufi novices and used as a handbook.¹⁶ The *Kanz al-Haqāyeq*, which he cites more than any other text (25-6, 28, 79, 101, 112, 120, 123), is written in very simple language and combines an "Islamic catechism" with a series of chapters on the End Time.¹⁷ The *Kanz* has content similar to *fotovatnāmeḥ*'s; its chapters include "praise of God," praise of Muhammad, "praise of commander of the faithful, 'Ali," "on the truth of Islam, truth, purity, prayer, almsgiving, fasting, pilgrimage, the world and its meaning, several sections on the lower soul (*nafs*), Satan and Moses' debate with him, "the world as prison for the believer," heaven and hell, the Dajjāl (Antichrist), several sections on the Mahdi, the "balance" (*mizān*), the Resurrection (*qiyām-e qiyāmat*), "the path" (*sirat*), "the gathering" (*nashr*) (an eschatological Qur'anic term), and "evil deeds" (*jazā-ye 'amal*).¹⁸ 'Attār's *Elāḫināmeḥ* is a much longer work, didactic in a similar way, organized within a frame tale of six princes who each tell their father the one thing in the world they most want; the father then explains why each of these things is unnecessary.¹⁹ Other intertexts include 'Attār's *Manteq al-Tayr* (44, 46), Rumi's *Mathnavi* (45), a *ghazal* of Salmān Sāvaji attributed to 'Erāqi (88), and Amīr Khosrow's *Daryā-ye Abrār* (87),

as well as unattributed couplets scattered throughout the text. Khatāyī's other citations and his own verses are also, as a rule, of an 'erfāni (gnostic) and didactic character. His citations of these texts are well-tailored to their contexts and often convey precise meanings. So, he must have had a substantial knowledge of gnostic literature.²⁰

This knowledge is consistent with his having modest origins. As a merchant, he probably attended primary school and may also have attended poetic gatherings at mosques or Sufi lodges. He was, like many contemporaries, aware of courtly and academic culture.²¹ By the fifteenth century, what could be called "courtly" Persian poetry had "spread throughout all the urban classes of society, from wealthy merchants to lowly craftsmen," and a number of poets came from non-elite backgrounds.²² Limited formal education would have exposed him to some *akhlāq* and advice literature, such as the *Qābusnāmeḥ*. He likely also witnessed storytelling (*qesseḥ-khvāni*), which was not only a source of entertainment, but a vector for political propaganda including Shāh Esmā'il's poetry.²³

His choice of citations thus aligns him with Sufi gnosticism ('erfān) and with *fotoḡvat*—which is both a discourse of ethics that cut across lines of social class, and a tradition of urban mobilization that served as the public face of Sufism²⁴—and together with his relatively simple, even awkward syntax, renders his authorial voice pointedly un-courtly and un-erudite, connecting him to critics of Ottoman imperialism. At the same time, the Akbarian theories—especially the concept of the Axis Mundi (*qotb*)—expressed by Shabestari, and in the *Kanz*,²⁵ justified and were associated with ideologies of messianic kingship that had originated with figures such as Mohammad Nurbakhsh, whose intellectual influence extended through Lāhiji, the most famous commentator on Shabestari, and via Nurbakhshi disciple Hosām al-Din 'Ali to his son, Edris Bedlisi, court historian of Selim I.²⁶ Such Akbarian theories would soon become cornerstones of Ottoman imperial ideology, symbolized by the "No'mānian Tree" attributed to Ibn 'Arabī—literally enshrined by Selim through renovation of his tomb after the conquest of Damascus.²⁷ Messianic kingship, as exemplified some decades later by Akbar I, exalted the saint-king as having a personal, intuitive connection to the divine—tantamount to divine status—that transcended sectarian divisions.²⁸

But certain elements of Khatāyī's message are inconsistent with his authorial voice. A major site of contention around the turn of the tenth/sixteenth century especially relevant to the content of the *Khatāynāmeḥ* were Ottoman policies of fiscal and political centralization. Late in his reign, Mehmed confiscated *waqf* revenues from, and otherwise marginalized the descendants of dervishes who had played an important part in the frontier warfare (*ghazā*) through which the early Ottoman polity was built; by the late ninth/fifteenth century, these dervishes were being supplanted by *madrasa*-trained ulama.²⁹ Dervishes' views are reflected in anonymous historical texts that portrayed Ottoman rulers as abandoning the simplicity and purity of the early *ghāzi* days for the corrupt, sophisticated practices of Persian ulama. A common motif in such texts was the figure of Solomon.³⁰ His building an idolatrous temple for his beloved Belqis, among other features of his legend, made references to him an implicit indictment of Ottoman imperial ambitions. Such critiques continued to shape the contours of debate over Ottoman policies in the tenth/sixteenth century.

Policies that strengthened the central government were cast as tyrannical. For Khatāyi to speak (deliberately or not) in such an un-erudite, gnosticism-inflected voice, comparing Chinese imperial authority to Solomon, Jamshid, and even Shaddād, while acclaiming the authority of Chinese law over the emperors, was thus to speak with the voice of critics of Ottoman policies of bureaucratization and centralization. At the same time, he praised Chinese fiscal and political centralization that in the Ottoman context were targets of criticism (75-97).

Book of China as *Apocalyptic Treasure*

Khatāyi's deployment of the *Kanz al-Haqāyeq* as the portal text for his own book corresponds rather neatly to Kenneth Burke's theory of rhetoric as identification—as striving to “identify” rhetor with audience, to make them “consubstantial.”³¹ The preface of the *Khatāynāmeḥ* consists in large part of lengthy citations of the *Kanz*, in positions in Khatāyi's text that exactly match their places in the original text. So, the first line of the *Khatāynāmeḥ* quotes the Qur'an, and introduces the *Kanz* as the work of Mahmud Shabestari. Following the first line are the second through sixth couplets of the *Kanz*, which praise God. These are followed by additional couplets from the section in praise of Muhammad. Later citations of the *Kanz* are generally, though not without exception, presented in the same order that they occur in the original text, as if Khatāyi were leafing through the *Kanz* while he wrote. While the *Elā-hināmeḥ* lacks a clearly defined mid-point, the two long citations from that text are also positioned roughly corresponding to their original locations—near the middle and near the end. The *Khatāynāmeḥ* begins:

The totality of things, of the particles of the earth and heaven, testify to the Truth, “nothing is, that does not proclaim His praise”³² [as] celebrated by words from the master of the rosegarden [i.e. Shabestari]:³³

“The flawless, utterly pure creator
 who caused the world to bear witness from obscurity!
 Anything that you can attribute to *sharī'at*
 know its other side to be in the path (*tariqat*),
 a trail can be blazed through His attributes
 but you can never reach His essence.
 Someone said, they do not know His attributes
 who are as fools about His essence.
 Even if they read sciences for a thousand ages
 they won't properly know His attributes.
 They won't find a path to His attributes from His essence
 if they rush headlong for His essence.” (25)³⁴

Since this citation comprises the second through sixth out of sixteen couplets of the *Kanz*, the two texts are largely consubstantial up to this point, differing by

only one line. After skipping eight lines in which Puryā-ye Vali expresses that he is uninterested in “the misguided man,”³⁵ Khatāyi picks up again at the beginning of the section on praise of Muhammad. Here, the last four (of eleven) couplets do not correspond to published versions of the *Kanz* and may represent a different version.

Khatāyi’s text then merges with the *Kanz* again, a citation that concludes with a different, dialectical formulation of the relationship between *haqiqat*, *tariqat*, and *shar‘iat*:

[He] read out the book of the world and man / he gathered meanings and then orated
 [He] spoke in outward meanings and hid inner ones / though he truly meant both
 [He] made the *shar‘iat* a solid redoubt (*rebāt*) / and the *tariqat* an entry (*madgham*) into it
 [He] placed *haqiqat* between those two / like a fire between flint and steel. (26)

Khatāyi has thus identified his own book with the *Kanz*, but has excluded the disavowal of interest in the affairs of “the misguided man,” something which Khatāyi pointedly *is* interested in—as the political culture of China is portrayed as disconnected from divine guidance.

After encomia to Selim and Süleyman (the latter likely added by a copyist)³⁶ (26-7), the last lengthy verse citation in the preface is again from the *Kanz*, and praises humanity in very strong, universal terms. The verse’s narrative is about the legendary grail of Jamshid (*jām-e jam*), a cup the mythic ruler Jamshid could gaze into and see anything he wanted; this grail was an important Sufi symbol.³⁷ For Khatāyi’s near-contemporary ‘Abd al-Rahmān Jāmi (d. 898/1492) and for other Sufis, these themes were closely related to the Akbarian notion of the “Fully Human” or “Perfect Man” (*ensān-e kāmél*).³⁸ The grail is discussed by various experts and revealed to be “nothing other than a knowing soul (*nafs-e dānā*)” (28). The verse continues: “When a person (*ensān*) brightens their dark soul / it immediately reveals the horizons. When a person is perfected in their soul / (s)he encompasses all existents (*shavad bar koll-e mowjudāt shāmel*).”³⁹ Khatāyi’s citation carries this humanism even further than the original text. He concludes thus: “The sons of Adam are a very noble lot / noble and subtle and fine.” The next line of the *Kanz*, which he omits, differentiates the “sons of Adam” from “[just] any base person” (*har khasisi*); Khatāyi’s citation is thus even more strongly universalistic than the original text.⁴⁰ In the “conservative” translation, the last line in his citation is omitted, reversing his modification by repeating the same move.⁴¹ Khatāyi’s emphasis on Adam here, and especially his claim that the Chinese are descended from Cain (144, 169)—which implicitly emphasizes Adam as the origin of universal human virtue—may have been seen as resembling Horufi and Noqtavi doctrines, which gave great importance to Adam.⁴² Horufi thought circulated throughout the Persianate world and was especially embraced by the Bektāši dervish order that coalesced in the early tenth/sixteenth century, and was closely associated with the Janissaries.⁴³

While Khatāyi attributes authorship of the *Kanz* to Shabestari, it was in fact most likely written by Pahlavān Mahmud Puryā-ye Vali (d. 722/1322-23), a wrestler-turned-saint celebrated in *fotovvat* circles. *Fotovvat*, a tradition of spiritual chivalry and urban mobilization that was prevalent throughout the Persianate world, was historically connected with Sufism and *ghazā*.⁴⁴ The *Kanz* is attributed to Pahlavān Mahmud in the *Kashf al-Zonun* and in the *Majāles al-‘Oshshāq*, a history of saints and kings produced in late ninth/fifteenth-century Herat which devotes a sizeable chapter to him.⁴⁵ Several manuscripts of the *Kanz* attribute it to ‘Attār; the attribution to Shabestari occurs in other manuscripts and in later print and lithograph editions.⁴⁶ Pahlavān Mahmud was not an obscure figure, but details of his biography are nebulous. The *Rawzāt al-Jenān* implicitly identifies him as a *Malāmātī*.⁴⁷ Mausoleums of Pahlavān Mahmud now exist in Khiva and Khuy—a city which Khatāyi likely passed through on his way from Tabriz to Istanbul.⁴⁸ If the gravesite in Khuy was a Safavid-era fabrication, that act nonetheless suggests he had been famous for some time.

To attribute the *Kanz* to Shabestari was not to dissociate it from *fotovvat* which, in the understanding of major Sufi figures in this period, functioned as the popular face of Sufism.⁴⁹ Though the *Kanz* was not explicitly labelled a *fotovvatnāmeḥ*, its contents resembled Sufi *fotovvatnāmeḥs*, which provided an analysis of *fotovvat* doctrine as a facet of Sufism, and discussed virtues such as generosity and modesty.⁵⁰ *Fotovvat* addressed city-dwellers of all social classes, but especially concerned practitioners of trades. The early tenth/sixteenth-century *Fotovvatnāmeḥ-ye Soltāni*, attributed to the prolific intellectual, Hosayn Vā‘ez-e Kāshefi, addressed a seemingly exhaustive range of urban professions including street performers.⁵¹ Many briefer *fotovvatnāmeḥs* addressed practitioners of one particular trade.⁵² Vā‘ez-e Kāshefi, and others articulated the spiritual genealogy of different trades, tracing their rituals and techniques back to Adam through Seth—bearer of divine deputyship and thus antithesis of Cain.⁵³ The *Kanz*’s association with the figure of Pahlavān Mahmud would further ensure that readers associated it with *fotovvat* regardless of Khatāyi’s intent—not to mention that the verses he cites evoke clash and struggle: “the *sharī‘at* a solid redoubt, the *tariqat* an entry into it,” “*haqiqat* ... like a fire between flint and steel.” This theme, though common in Sufi writings, is redolent of the venerable connection of Sufism with *ghazā* and *fotovvat*.

Fotovvat functioned as a political discourse in Khatāyi’s time, as Shāh Esmā‘il would call on “heroes and braves” (*akhi*) to support him.⁵⁴ The political role of such organizations in the eighth/fourteenth century, when Akhis and craftsmen known as Sarbedārs helped found a short-lived polity, and a group of craftsmen (Akhijuk) attained power in Tabriz for a brief period of three years—not to mention the authority of Akhis in Anatolia attested by Ibn Battuta—likewise persisted in historical memory.⁵⁵ *Fotovvat* could thus be associated with *self-directed* mobilization of urban populations, whom official ideologies would rather see as passive subjects.⁵⁶

Then, what are we to make of this strong form of intertextuality, or *consubstantiality* resulting from Khatāyi’s unusual use of a portal text? First, this formal device has a striking resemblance to the belief in metempsychosis or transmigration of souls

(*tanāsokh*, which literally means *transcription*), a belief common to *ghuluww* (“exaggerated”) Shi’ism. Metempsychosis *per se* was rejected by most Muslims; however if we take *tanāsokh* as the far end of a spectrum of beliefs, related ideas appear to have been relatively common around the turn of the tenth/sixteenth century, as attested in the poetry of Shāh Esmā’il, Horufi texts, and accounts of Noqtavis, as well as among other messianic movements.⁵⁷ Horufi texts including a fragment of the *Jāvedānnāmeḥ* of Fazlallāh Astarābādi articulates a doctrine of metempsychosis defined in terms of apperception (*edrākāt*), shapes (*ashkāl*, sg. *shakl*), and marks (*noqush*, sg. *naqsh*).⁵⁸ Mir-Kasimov suggests that these last two terms may refer to the bodily form of the next birth; *naqsh* is a key word that we will encounter in verse citations below. While none of the above-mentioned groups describe their beliefs as *tanāsokh* or *transcription*, Horufi texts nonetheless explain the concept using terms related to writing (*shakl*, *naqsh*), and for both Horufis and Noqtavis, as well as earlier Shi’is, it was specifically the Hidden Imam or perfectly enlightened individual who would be reincarnated. I would suggest that the relevant phenomenon here is not so much a specific doctrine of metempsychosis passed on between self-contained sects, as it was a broader *doxa*, that past forms can in some sense be reconstituted. Such a *doxa* would ground both Khatāyi’s *transcription* of the *Kanz* as a meaningful, symbolic act, and the belief that a figure like Shāh Esmā’il, or for that matter Süleyman I, could possess the same essence as Alexander or the original Solomon. For Khatāyi, an eternal form (*naqsh-e jāvedān*) is achieved not by an enlightened soul, but by the bureaucratic state.

Second, the term *kanz* signifies apocalyptic treasure, so to make the *Khatāynāmeḥ* consubstantial with the *Kanz al-Haqāyeq* was to claim that status for his own book—an *identification* of his text with the *Kanz* and related intertexts. The *Khatāynāmeḥ* is organized according to categories used in some *akhlāq* (“practical ethics,” i.e. statecraft and political theory) literature—most notably the *Qābusnāmeḥ*.⁵⁹ Akhlāq presented a public transcript of the court and political elites, justifying their political practices with philosophical reasoning and tradition. *Fotovat* presented a public counter-transcript of ordinary subjects, articulating a code of ethics applicable to all social classes, and legitimizing their diverse trades and professions with a spiritual genealogy that connects them to figures of sacred history, such as ‘Ali or Seth. The *Khatāynāmeḥ* is thus identified with a discourse of socio-political ethics that was, at the very least, not confined to elite classes.

Yet there is a dramatic arc over the course of the text: a gradual transition from this public transcript of piety and wonder to a hidden transcript of *raison d’état*, culminating in the conclusion. There, he declares that the Chinese are descended from Cain, and depicts their inexorable territorial expansion into the land of the rustic Mongols (*qalmāq*). The implicit parallel between the Mongols and the Anatolian *ghāzīs* is made explicit when he notes that these are the only two places he has seen people eat jerked meat (*qadid*), a food associated with the Prophet, connoting rustic simplicity ((171). This mythic genealogy confirms what Khatāyi has suggested throughout the text. The Chinese *qānun* is the invention of an essentially ordinary people, not a chosen people, and not connected to the divine deputyship (*khelāfat*) invested in Seth; and

yet it is still in some sense salvific, protecting China from the Deluge, civil wars, and other calamities. The consubstantiality of the *Khatāynāmeḥ* and its intertexts identifies the author as in essence a member of the public, a political outsider, and authorizes him to advance his own religio-political ideas based on what he has seen in China. The remainder of this paper will follow the development of his ideas through his use of verse citations over the course of the book.

After the series of verse citations in the preface ends, Khatāyi states the following:

It is said that Ulugh Beg, the deceased sultan, sent ‘Ali Qushchi Shiri [*sic.*] to China and told his men, write down everything you see and learn, for all the circumstances of that dominion are wondrous. “If you fall in with the unbelievers of China (*chin va māchin*) / better than with this spite-filled soul.” “Reporting unbelief is not unbelief.” [This] Qalandar reports what he has seen. Verily it is wondrous. This weakling bird has been endowed with speech for the revivification of the Solomon of the age.

Oh you, concealing the banquet-table of China from the one who is asking you, [in the Cairo MS: Oh you, holding close the missive/mission of the Khān of China]⁶⁰

begging for blessings and in hope of generosity:
since your heart encompasses the locus of the realm’s justice,
it would be a shame to read a line/hair of that face in/as error!
[or, implicitly: read the designs of the Fully Human as error!]

(*Ay kardeh nehān ze-sā’elat khān-e khatā* [or: *resālat-e khān-e khatā*]
dar vizeh-ye ehsān-o tamanā-ye ‘atā
chun hast delat beh markaz-e ‘adl mohit,
zān surat hayf rā khatti khvānd khatā.)

The quatrain is, depending on whether a given manuscript has “*ze-sā’elat*” or “*resālet*,” a plea for the patron (i.e. the Ottoman sultan and court) to be generous to the author, calling on the reader to read the text carefully, or an exhortation by the author to himself and, perhaps, intermediaries in the court (his readers being the ones who now hold the “missive/mission of the Khān of China”) not to misrepresent the truth to please others. The discrepancy between the manuscripts suggests that the meaning of the quatrain was confusing to readers, and perhaps not of great interest. It is also possible that the ambiguity was perceived as intentional—a paranomasia (*tajnis*). This ambiguity would conflate the sultan, author, and readers, resonating with his theory of bureaucracy, expressed in a citation of ‘Attār discussed below.

This whole passage, particularly the quatrain, situates the text in the conceptual framework of the *Golshan-e Rāz* of Mahmud Shabestari.⁶¹ The terms *locus* (*markaz*) and *mohit* (“the realm” or “encompassing”) refer to the revolution of the heavens around a point, thus implying a pole (*qotb*).⁶² So, for readers sufficiently familiar with the *Golshan*, this refers to the *qotb*, and thus the *insān-e kāmel* (“Fully Human” or

“Perfect Man”). *Surat* is a common term in gnostic writings and in Persian poetry more generally, signifying *form*, in the sense of that which belongs to the phenomenal world (*molk*, or God’s *dominion*) as opposed to *meaning* or *essence* (*mā’ni*)—so it refers especially to the material world as encountered through the senses. *Surat* as *face*, *form*, or *image* can also refer to idols, which were associated with beauty and also with China. *Khatt* means *line*, or *the down of the face*; also *writing* or *a document*—Khatāyi makes abundant use the phrase “issue documents” (*khatt nevisa(n)d*) describing the activity of the Chinese bureaucracy, from palace to prisons to postal stations ((51-9, 77-110). In the *Golsban*, *khatt* takes on a more specific meaning: the contemplation of multiplicity within Unity,⁶³ and also the closest degree of proximity to the face of the Beloved.⁶⁴ Thus it would be a shame to reject or turn away from what the author reveals about China, no matter how strange, shocking, or “misguided” it may seem.

The larger sense emerging from this configuration of polysemic terms, and from other verses in the preface, is an empiricist interpretation of Oneness of Being and theories of the Fully Human. The word *surat* signifies phenomenality or superficiality—*forms* which both conceal and provide access to inner meanings (*mā’āni*).⁶⁵ Other words that signify “face”—*rokh* and (especially) *vajh*—have loftier meanings, even indicating the divine essence itself.⁶⁶ Khatāyi thus emphasizes the proximity of the divine essence to the phenomenal world, and the importance of knowing and investigating the material world; to know China (as *artificial* civilization) is to know the Fully Human.

This ethos of empiricism is reinforced by the earlier *omission* of the lines from the *Kanz* disavowing interest in “the misguided man” mentioned above, and by a later verse written by Khatāyi himself that mirrors a citation of ‘Attār. In this pair of verses, near the end of chapter 2 “On their various religions,” Khatāyi describes different creeds—philosophy (*hekmat*), juristic imitation (*taqlid*), idolatry—and castigates each for claiming to be the sole path to truth. This verse is appended to the beginning of ‘Attār’s verse *lauding* the different possible approaches to truth((49-50). Khatāyi’s verse, part of a chapter that exalts religious tolerance, reaffirms his goal of mapping out the lower realm of error.

The above-mentioned terms were part of a discourse rooted in Ibn ‘Arabī’s thought that had wide currency among Khatāyi’s contemporaries in Anatolia and Iran, and in the Persianate world more generally, both inside and outside of official ideologies, from leading intellectuals of the Ottoman and Safavid domains to groups such as the Bektāşis and Bayrami-Melamis. Lāhiji, commentator on the *Golsban*, understood the doctrines of the Fully Human in terms of man-as-microcosm, and interprets a passage which states that the universe has its own individual character, just as human beings do, indicating the ubiquity of the Fully Human throughout creation.⁶⁷ The *Kanz* connects the *nafs* to the “world-spirit” or “most great spirit,” and also, as seen above, employs the concept of world-as-text (*ketāb-e ‘ālam*, “book of the world”).⁶⁸ This term grounds the Akbarian theories of the *qotb* and *valāyat* in *writing* (*khatt*) as the privileged medium connecting God with the phenomenal world, and further evokes the role of occult sciences in ideologies of sacral or

millennial kingship prevalent throughout the Islamic world during the tenth/sixteenth century.⁶⁹ Selim and Suleyman's extensive deployment of astrology, geomancy, and the science of letters as part of their imperial project shows us that sultan's sainthood was not invested merely in the royal body and soul, but was actualized through the agency of experts.⁷⁰ Shabestari's *Golsban* also held great importance for the Bayrami-Melamis, who interpreted *vahdat-e vojud* in a strongly pantheistic way, and claimed the status of *qotb* for their own members—a claim which threatened imperial authority.⁷¹ Akbarian theories of the Oneness of Being and the Fully Human thus marked out the field of social action—a contest over the means and sites of sainthood—within which Khatāyi's description of China was to operate.

Although the terms *markaz*, *mohit*, and *surat* are not repeated throughout the text, the intellectual framework invoked here is connected to that of the *Kanz* through its mis-attribution to Shabestari, and thus reinforced by *Kanz* citations throughout the text. Khatāyi's mediation of these Akbarian concepts through this intertext that was even more accessible than the *Golsban*, because written in a more pedestrian register, advertised the accessibility of this body of thought to semi- and sub-elite social strata. His use of such an authorial voice, and language evocative of *fotovvat* and thus historical memory of popular mobilization, resonates with perhaps the most shocking political implication of his description of Chinese governance: that the real rulers were the personnel of the state, rather than the emperor.

A Millenarian Theory of Bureaucracy

In an account of the Tumu Crisis, an event which, in point of fact, was the political crisis that shifted the balance of power in the Chinese court in favor of the civil officials and away from the emperors,⁷² Khatāyi repeats (with small discrepancies) highly polysemic verses that had recently been inscribed on the ruins of Persepolis by an Aq Qoyunlu scion, and thus identifies the Chinese civil officials as, in essence, the true Solomon of the realm.⁷³ The two Persepolis verses are followed by a citation from Abu Sa'id b. Abu'l-Khayr that inveighs against putting reliance on the material world, but omits a line that compares doing so to building one's house on a floodplain—Khatāyi is dead serious about China's immunity to the Deluge ((70-71). According to Chinese sources, the events of the Tumu Crisis are as follows: a Chinese emperor undertook an ill-conceived expedition against the Mongol ruler Esen Tayisi, and was captured. Esen married the emperor to his daughter and demanded that he be returned to his throne; the court, having placed a new emperor on the throne, replied to Esen that it was the altars of earth and grain that were important, and not individual emperors. In Khatāyi's account, the civil officials refuse Esen's demand, remove the newly enthroned emperor from the scene by telling him of a splendid garden in the palace, in which they trap him by propping the throne against the door and sealing it with molten lead—making a hole to pass him plates of food. The first Persepolis verse then rhetorically asks who has seen the design (*naqsh*) on Solomon's seal; the second reads: "Seek not Solomon's domin-

ion (*molk*), it's all hot air (*havā*) / The kingdom's there, where now is Solomon?" (70). This verse is one of the few omitted from the "conservative" translation.⁷⁴ The bureaucrats here are analogous to Solomon, the *qānun* to Solomon's seal and its design (*naqsh*), and the emperor to demons that Solomon imprisoned under seals of lead.⁷⁵

This imprisonment of an emperor sets the stage for the lengthy verse citation from 'Attār's *Elāhināmeḥ* that opens chapter 6 on the palace—looking backwards, the emperor's imprisonment now becomes a parody of the occultations that end the stories of mythic heroes such as Bahrām Gur and Kaykhosrow. Cited in its entirety by Khatāyi, 'Attār's story is a retelling of the occultation of Kaykhosrow, an episode in the *Shāhnāmeḥ* in which that supremely virtuous king abdicates. In 'Attār's telling, he disappears into a cave on a snowy mountaintop, taking the grail of Jamshid with him, to escape the temptations of power that caused Jamshid's fall. It should be noted that Jamshid was considered analogous to—even conflated with—Solomon, who was invoked both to legitimize and to criticize Ottoman centralization policies.⁷⁶ The narrative begins with Kaykhosrow peering into the grail of Jamshid, looking for *the grail itself*. When he is unable to see the grail, he realizes that *he* is insignificant and should seek annihilation in God, for "even if our essence were reduced to an atom / that atom would become proud of itself"; "If you want your role (*naqsh*) to be eternal (*jāvedān*) / know your death to be life's completion! If you want an everlasting role (*naqsh-e jāvedān*) / do so by having no designs/role (*naqsh*) at all" (76).⁷⁷ This use of the terms *naqsh* and *jāvedān* is suggestive of Horufi theories of transmigration, noted above. *Naqsh* can also mean face (*surat*, *vajh*), drawing, or idol, which connects this term and the question of the mortality of the sovereign to the Akbarian theory of the Fully Human alluded to in the quatrain discussed above.

Julie Meisami's observations about Bahrām Gur in Nezāmi's *Haft Paykar* are applicable to Kaykhosrow here.⁷⁸ Meisami argues that his disappearance into a cave, and subsequent apotheosis, marks the culmination of his personal growth over the course of the epic; and, politically, signifies his transition from "kingship by will" to "kingship by law," and "lifts Nezāmi's romance from the status of a versified mirror for princes to that of an eschatological vision of kingship" by associating Bahrām with the Hidden Imam and the Mahdī, "and their precursor the Zoroastrian Saoshyant."⁷⁹ 'Attār's phrase "eternal role" evokes the Zoroastrian mythology of Kaykhosrow in which he is one of a number of "immortal heroes" who have resided in a hidden city since their disappearance, and will re-appear in the End Time to aid the Saoshyant in liberating the world.⁸⁰ In the vision of eschatological kingship invoked by Nezāmi and 'Attār, just rule results from *moral perfection* manifested as complete suppression of the king's individual will, *symbolized* by confinement and apotheosis in the cave. For Khatāyi, suppression of individual will, and the preservation of an eternal form for the sovereign, is *achieved* by legally binding the emperor with the *qānun*, symbolized by the officials' Solomonic confinement of the emperor in the garden.

Over the course of the chapter, this vision of eschatological kingship is given concrete form. The imperial palace is depicted as a bureaucratic complex staffed by thousands of eunuchs, "respected expert palace women" (79), and officials, through which

massive quantities of paper documents (*khatt*) circulate, presided over by an emperor who *cannot* waste his time hunting and drinking in Bahrām-like fashion because of explicit rules mandating that emperors who do not appear in court at the appropriate times be deposed (87, 93). The emperor, we are told, passes his days reviewing documents compiled by bureaucrats that summarize cases brought to the court, and decides whether to stamp each one with his seal of approval (78). It is noted later on that fiscal centralization and respect for the *qānun* deprive *amirs* of any means of rebellion (86).

Mid-way through the chapter comes another lengthy citation of the *Kanz* that discusses the Mahdi, based on Ibn ‘Arabī’s chapter on the Mahdi in the *Futūhāt*:⁸¹

In your very soul, be a seeker on the path of faith
 if it’s not here, go off to the land of China.
 Illumine your eyes with the Christ-light knowledge
 for as long as it’s there, then you yourself can see.
 If you always sit in your own ignorance
 [even] when the Mahdi is right in front of you, you still won’t see [him].
 The Antichrist’s donkey and Jesus are naught but one and the same.
 Know of a certainty there is no doubt about this.

...

When the soul shows the sign of Christ-speech,
 the soul gains eternal life from knowledge.
 When you know with certainty Christ and Antichrist,
 the signs of this state come from the path of knowledge.

The *Kanz*, channeling Ibn ‘Arabī, turns the promise of Messianic deliverance back to the individual. Ibn ‘Arabī’s chapter discusses the Mahdi’s helpers (*wuzarā’*). Each individual soul who receives the guidance necessary to manifest the helpers’ spiritual qualities is *al-mahdi*, and he states: “the (responsibility of) the Imamate extends to *absolutely all* human beings, and that status applies to every single (human being) insofar as they are Imam.”⁸² This verse recalls the occultation of Kaykhosrow that opened the chapter, and the earlier *Kanz* verse on the grail, which exalted *all* humankind. Given Khatāyi’s depiction of the palace, these lines could certainly be taken as entreating readers to enlighten themselves by learning about China. However, considering the full context of the citation, it is clear that the enlightenment signified by the terms “Christ-light knowledge,” “Christ-speech,” and “knowledge” granting “eternal life” is an “enlightenment” of the state through the circulation of documents (*khatt*), which are the sole means of communication between emperor and officials outside the palace (92), through which they manage the domain of China at the tip of the pen (142). The Messianic promise of “the ‘Imamate’ of every soul” is realized in the earthly domain of politics.⁸³

It was shown above that Khatāyi’s citation of ‘Attār identified the Chinese *qānun* with the *naqsh*, which he may or may not have known was one of Astarābādi’s key terms related to metempsychosis, indicating the *form* that is reconstituted. If this specific concept is what Khatāyi had in mind, or if readers recognized it, then the

qānun is identified with the principle of the Hidden Imām's cyclical reappearance. While he deploys no explicitly letterist discourse or *abjad* numerology, his bureaucratic formulation of enlightenment resonates with both high letterist and Horufi-Noqtavi theories, and also with a broader ninth/fifteenth-century textual turn, privileging writing over speech.⁸⁴ The unique station of the letter as *coincidentia oppositorum*, a key concept for ninth/fifteenth-century champion of the science of letters, Ibn Turka, is achieved here through its mundane function as medium of bureaucratic communication—it is in the bureaucratic heart of the state that tyranny and justice, Jamshid/Solomon and Shaddād, “Christ-speech” and ignorance, Christ and Antichrist, are unified. While the disembodiedness of this paper-based bureaucracy is rather at odds with Horufi sacralization of the human body, the association between Christ, speech, writing, and the End Time, together with the above-mentioned emphasis on Adam, recalls statements in Fazlallāh Astarābādi's *Jāvedānnāmeḥ*: “The divine word manifested in Adam was also Jesus, for he said, ‘... I will come back at the end of time in order to reveal the original nature of Adam's face, which contains the science of the divine Word.’” The same passage states that Jesus the Messiah would alleviate “the divergence of languages.”⁸⁵ Khatāyi's first description of court ceremonial states:

each group has come from a [different] country and each group wears a different kind of clothing and speaks a different language, and they speak in seventy-two languages in China, and nothing compares to how limitless and plentiful those languages are; we know many tongues with different pronunciations not one of which is like those of Anatolia. (89)

He does not discuss the Chinese writing system—one wonders if he knew that the elementary units of Chinese characters are strokes—that is, lines (*khatt*). The theme of transcending divisions of language and religion is reminiscent of the concept of universal harmony (*solh-e koll*) attested in later accounts of Noqtavi thought.⁸⁶ The eternal form (*naqsh-e jāvedān*) from 'Attār's verse, and the Horufi theory of restoration of one's bodily form (*naqsh, shakl*) after death, contingent on “perfect knowledge of the innermost meaning of the human form,” are physically manifest in the bureaucratic form of the Chinese state—it is the state whose *naqsh*, the *qānun*, is eternal.⁸⁷ For Khatāyi, enlightenment and immortality are not individual possibilities, but political ones.

Thus, despite his Messianic imagery, Khatāyi does not promise the divine authority of an autocratic saint-king; he offers, instead, a millenarian theory of bureaucracy. Readers familiar with the *Kanz* may have recalled a statement about the Resurrection (*qiyāmat*): “Neither sultan will there be, nor king / no command will there be but the divine.”⁸⁸ This apparition of government by officials who must be “an 'ālem in their own religion” and whose emperor must be the most learned in all sciences (47) thus anticipates the much later development of the anti-autocratic doctrine of the viceregency of the jurisconsults (*velāyat-e faqih*).

The political message established so clearly in the chapter on the palace bureaucracy warrants attention to some subtler points in passages discussed above. First, the paronomasia in the quatrain “Oh you who concealed ...” creating ambiguity between the ruler, court, public, and author resonates with this theory of the Mahdi. Second, in ‘Attār’s story, Kaykhosrow looks for *the grail* in the grail, rather than looking for *himself* in the grail. Far from kingship encompassing all other professions, the king *cannot see his own organ of sight*—a king’s organs of sight are, of course, his personnel. And, any reader who thought much about the author’s choice of ‘Attār would likely recall his more famous work, the *Conference of the Birds*, and its revelation of the identity of the birds’ king.

A Poetics of Pantheistic Political Theory

Readers attuned to Khatāyi’s more overt message would perceive a specifically political meaning in what are otherwise gnostic-ascetic verses in later chapters. At the end of chapter 9 “on the twelve provinces of China,” which describes their prosperity and in some cases names their export goods, the citation from the *Kanz* exhorting the reader to look beyond the phenomenal world to its source points not only to God but to *good governance* as the source of China’s wealth ((121-2). A second long citation of the *Elābināmeb* immediately before the conclusion, and shortly after a chapter describing how the *qānun* makes possible the use of paper money (although in fact the Ming had not issued paper money since a century earlier), tells the story of how Plato produced the elixir that transmuted copper into gold, and thus had so much gold that it became cheap ((164-6). Khatāyi has in mind actual money—the *qānun* is to paper money as the elixir is to gold. That ‘Attār advises rejecting the elixir does not obviate the value of what Khatāyi has shown us throughout his book. Here we should recall his earlier suggestions about the scope of his own work: while the *Kanz* would not discuss “the misguided man” and ‘Attār’s verse described the multiplicity of paths to God, Khatāyi is mapping out the lower world of error and imperfection. The scope of political writing for Khatāyi is what can be accomplished through the fallible, finite capacity of human actors. Building a prosperous, imperishable state may not by itself bring one face-to-face with the Beloved, but that does n’t mean it is not a good idea.

Khatāyi’s verse citations invert the semiotic relationships of the original poems. Whereas the poet normally uses concrete or familiar symbols to give readers access to esoteric truths, Khatāyi uses *familiar* gnostic poetry to comment on an unfamiliar material reality; the illocutionary force of citations in context concerns the material reality (*molk*) that they portray. The meaning of the verses thus regresses to the literal sense of the words: the dominion (*molk*) of Solomon is not just the world around us (all once ruled by Solomon), it now is *there* in the form of China—a “Solomonic dominion” (75). The moral of Kaykhosrow’s occultation in the mountain—if you want “an eternal role/form” (*naqsh-e jāvedān*), then “have no role/form (*naqsh*) at all” (76)—signifies the elimination of emperors’ political role by means of their con-

finement within the bureaucratic system. Even the description of the palace bureaucracy is tinged with bathos: the heart of the eternal empire is a bureaucracy staffed by thousands of eunuchs, and whose opposite-unifying power is signified by Jesus and the Antichrist's donkey. The face of the Fully Human that Khatāyi saw in China was *artifice*—the fundamentally artificial (in all senses) nature of human perfection, made manifest in the *immortal form* of the Ming bureaucratic state.

This materialist semiotics is suggestive of pantheism (*vahdat-e मौjud*) associated with Şeyh Bedreddin and the Bayrami-Melamis, as well as the “anthropocentric materialism” and political millenarianism of the Noqtavis, which sought to bring about a “Utopia free from the concealment of the *bātin* or the auspices of the hidden or revealed Imam,” bearing in mind that Khatāyi seems to have been wholly uninterested in promises of divinity being realized at the level of individual souls.⁸⁹ It is thus noteworthy that the very first citation of the *Kanz*, which establishes it as the portal text, mirrors Hacı Bayram Veli's formulation of *vahdat-e मौjud*: “Whoever knows His acts / He found the Attributes / There he found the Essence / You know yourself, you know yourself.”⁹⁰ Khatāyi's citation, in contrast, emphasizes the difficulty of attaining God's essence and attributes—the implicit solution being to turn to the *molk* (in both senses) of China. It is also possible he intended to hide Horufi ideas in plain sight by conveying a key term, *naqsh*, through citations of the *Elāhināmeḥ* and the Persepolis verses. His authorial voice is initially cautious and pious, because his message is radical—one reason he may have knowingly mis-attributed the eschatologically oriented *Kanz* to Shabestari, a more authoritative source than Pahlavān Mahmud. Khatāyi's masking of Pahlavān Mahmud by “the master of the *Rosegarden*” might have come across (to those who caught it) as unintentional and thus gauche, but we may also wonder if readers did not perceive this masking, that of Horufi ideas by 'Attār's and others' verses, and of the *Khatāyīnāmeḥ* by the *Kanz*, as a set of stylistically related gestures. To perceive such a multiple masking would be to share a secret with the author, to become a co-conspirator through recognition of a fundamental consistency, or consubstantiality these diverse texts, and the arbitrariness of the social positions associated with them.

Khatāyi's interpretation of gnostic poetry was clearly political and social. One question the present study raises is how typical his interpretations were: to what extent was Oneness of Being already a universalist-egalitarian doctrine? To what extent did millenarian theories of the letter derive their potency from administrative uses of the written word, and vice versa—were they *already* bureaucratic theories? Was Khatāyi's use of verse citations determined by how they were conventionally interpreted, or heavily shaped by his circumstances? It is worth noting here a similar argument made about Karl Marx's *Capital*: that he organized the first volume according to the levels of hell in Dante's *Divine Comedy*—a descent into the inferno of capitalism.⁹¹ This reading of *Capital* against its intertext not only reveals aspects of Marx's rhetorical strategy, it also throws into relief *Capital*'s under-appreciated radical-republican *political*-theoretical dimension. Perhaps Khatāyi, like Marx, intuited that since political theory must succeed as rhetoric, it has its own poetics; that a poet was needed to guide us through the wasteland.

On the other hand, among the evidence that Khatāyi's interpretations were *not* unconventional is that he was in tune with the times. His book presciently anticipated future Ottoman political developments: the expansion of the bureaucracy and the changes in the political structure of the empire, which would greatly reduce the real power of the sultans and increase that of jurists and other elements of the Ottoman state, as well as parallel developments in the Safavid and Mughal domains. His identification of the *qānun* and bureaucracy with the immortal form (*naqsh*) that transcends individual death, and thus with the Hidden Imam, anticipates Süleyman's messianic embrace of the *qānun* in the late 1530s and 1540s.⁹² Khatāyi's China is in certain respects a blueprint for the "second Ottoman Empire" of the eleventh/seventeenth century.⁹³ Intriguingly, his emphasis on the universal nobility of "Adam's tribe," when put in the context of his favorable account of rule by scholar-bureaucrats and his insight into the Chinese political system, is evocative of the neo-Confucian doctrine of the universal perfectibility of human beings through education. Then, we may also look in the other direction—back in time—to consider how the thought of figures such as 'Attār, Fazlallāh Astarābādi, Mahmud Shabestari, and Pahlavān Mahmud was shaped by economic and cultural contact with East Asia. It was, after all, the *Kanz al-Haqāyeq* that instructed readers, apropos discussion of the Mahdi, to seek the "path of faith" in China.

Notes

1. The epigraph, which is of course not from T. S. Eliot, but the replicant's famous monologue from *Blade Runner*, has been chosen partly for its considerable thematic relevance (authenticity, artificiality and the notion of the fully human/perfect man whose form is written in the stars; Tannahüser's escape to the fairy-land; its Saidian view of exile and insight), but also as a demonstration of the jarring *aesthetic* effect of a mis-attributed quotation.
2. See Meisami, "Mixed Prose and Verse"; Heinrichs, "Prosimetrical Genres"; Rubanovich, "Aspects of Medieval Intertextuality."
3. Khatā'i, *Khatāynāmeḥ*. Henceforth, references to this source will appear as page numbers in parentheses in the body of the article.
4. E.g. Mendoza, *The History of the Great and Mighty Kingdom of China*; on Enlightenment views of China, see Jacobsen, "Limits to Despotism."
5. For a discussion of the text, its message, millenarian claims, and possible role as a link between parallel developments in the Ming and Ottoman empires, see Hemmat, "Children of Cain in the Land of Error."
6. See e.g. EE 1852 and 1853.
7. AS3188 5a (couplet missing from citation on grail of Jamshid), 28b-29a (speculation about China's conversion to Islam), 48a (couplet omitted from verse by 'Attār—the second hemistich, "enlightening the world by the light of the mind" (*ḥayyān al-ʿālam az-zamīr*), which could be read as a reference to Shi'i messianism, seems to have been the target), and 52b (see below).
8. On the *Khatāynāmeḥ*'s use for supporting "constitutionalist positions" see Tezcan. "Law in China or Conquest in the Americas."
9. There are several variants of Pahlavān Mahmud's title; "Puryā-ye Vali" will be used here for simplicity; see Piemontese, "La Leggenda del Santa-Lottatore," 168-75. The *Kanz al-Haqāyeq* was most likely the work of Pahlavān Mahmud; the question of Khatāyi's awareness of its authorship will be discussed below.

10. On the subject of idols sharing the divine essence, see Lewisohn, "The Transcendental Unity of Polytheism and Monotheism."
11. My analysis of Khatāyi's writing as a social act is broadly informed by Quentin Skinner's discussion of the relationship between meaning and intention in "On Performing and Explaining Linguistic Actions."
12. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, especially 97-110; Yerasimos, *La fondation de Constantinople* presents a similar picture of texts critical of Ottoman imperialism.
13. Cf. Pines, "Contested Sovereignty," 96-8.
14. Ibn Battutah tells of one of the Chinggisid rulers of China being deposed by his generals (*amirs*) for violating the *yāsā*, however this anecdote appears to be apocryphal, as the reigning Yuan emperor at the time of his supposed visit (1347) had taken the throne in 1333 and continued to reign until the end of the dynasty, 1368. There are instances mentioned in Natanzi's history, of what might be called chieftains being deposed through the *yāsā* ("beh *yāsā* *āvardand*"). Yule and Cordier, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, vol. 4, 141-2; Natanzi, *Montakhab al-tavārikh-e mo'ini*, 32.
15. Mitchell, "Persian Rhetoric in the Safavid Context," 199, 201-3.
16. Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, 96.
17. Piemontese, "La Leggenda del Santa-Lottatore," 206.
18. For a comparison of the *Kanz* with *fotovvat*-related texts, see Hamid, *Zendagi va ruzgār*, 157-67.
19. Khatāyi's citations are from the third and sixth sections, on the grail of Jamshid and the philosopher's stone. Attār, *Elāhināme*, 26, 70, 112, 159, 195, 236.
20. On the *Golshan-e rāz* and commentaries on it, see Lewisohn, "The Transcendental Unity of Polytheism and Monotheism," 379-82.
21. Landau, "Kuttāb."
22. Losensky, *Welcoming Fighānī*, 136-8.
23. Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, 31.
24. I use the term "gnosticism" here to distinguish the ethos and beliefs signified by terms such as *mā'refat* and *'erfān* from the social institutions of "organized" Sufism.
25. Hamid, *Zendagi va ruzgār*, 153, and infra.
26. Binbas, "Timurid Experimentation," 289-99; Bashir, *Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions*, 91-105, 185; Markiewicz, "The Crisis of Rule in Late Medieval Islam," 22, 25-36.
27. Chodkiewicz, "La Réception de la doctrine d'Ibn 'Arabīottomane," 103-7; Gril, "L'Enigme de la Šāghara al-nu'maniyya."
28. Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*, 141-62.
29. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 97-110.
30. For a translation of one of these texts and analysis of the figure of Solomon and the building of temples, see Yerasimos, *La fondation de Constantinople*.
31. Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, 21.
32. Qur'an 17:44.
33. I.e. the author of the *Golshan-e rāz*, Mahmud-e Shabestari.
34. Cf. Shabestari [sic.], *Resāleh-ye kanz al-haqāyeq*, 4-5; Hamid, *Zendagi va ruzgār*, 192-94, 208.
35. Hamid, *Zendagi va ruzgār*, 192.
36. Kauz, "KETĀY-NĀMA." The encomium to Süleyman has a very different feel from Khatāyi's own prose and verse, being marked by a more elevated register and overt *literarité*.
37. For example, Awhadi, a contemporary of Shabestari and Pahlavān Mahmud, wrote a *masnavi* entitled *Jām-e Jam*.
38. Chittick, "The Perfect Man as the Prototype of the Self," 63-79.
39. Cf. Nesimi, *Nesimi Divani*, 3-4.
40. Cf. Shabestari [sic.], *Resāleh-ye kanz al-haqāyeq*, 21-2.
41. AS3188 f4b.
42. Mir-Kasimov, *Words of Power*, e.g. 95-110, 217-36.
43. Algar. "The Hurufi Influence on Bektashism," 50.
44. On the connection between Sufism, *fotovvat*, and *ghazā*, see Tor, *Violent Order*, 229-49.

45. Gāzargāhi and Majd, *Majāles al-'Oshbhāq*, 196, 199; Piemontese, "La Leggenda del Santa-Lottatore," 204 n. 135.
46. Piemontese, "La Leggenda del Santa-Lottatore," 199 n. 119, 201 n. 127.
47. Hamid, *Zendagi va ruzgār*, 154.
48. Jāmi, *Nafahāt al-Uns*, 503; Bokhari et al., *Anis al-Talebin*, 189-90; Alvānsāz Khuyi, *Mazārāt-e Khoy*, 89-93.
49. Nafisi, *Sarcheshmeh-ye taṣavvof dar irān*, 132; Ridgeon, *Jawanmardi*, 5-12; Sobhāni, "Negāhi beh fotovvat."
50. Gevorgyan, "Futuwwa Varieties and the Futuwwat-nāma Literature," 9; Hamid, *Zendagi va ruzgār*, 157-67.
51. Loewen, "Proper Conduct (Adab) Is Everything," 564.
52. Afshāri, *Si fotovvat nāmeb-'e digar*; Gevorgyan, "Futuwwa Varieties and the Futuwwat-nāma Literature," 6-8.
53. On the importance of Seth see Loewen, "Proper Conduct (Adab) Is Everything," 569.
54. Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*, 174.
55. *Ibid.*, 173; Arnakis, "Futuwwa Traditions in the Ottoman Empire," 233-5; Taeschner, "Akhi"; Taeschner, "Futuwwa."
56. James C. Scott discusses how "unauthorized public gathering of subordinates is ... commonly seen as an implicit threat to domination," *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 46, 63.
57. For examples of metempsychosis and similar beliefs, see Amanat, "The Nuqtavi Movement of Mahmud Pasikhani," 73; Bashir, "The Imam's Return," 25; Minorsky and Shāh Esmā'il I, "The Poetry of Shāh Ismā'il I," 1046a-1047a; Mir-Kasimov, *Words of Power*, 419-26.
58. Mir-Kasimov, *Words of Power*, 419-22.
59. On the *Qābusnāmeb*, see de Bruijn, "KAYKĀVUS B. ESKANDAR."
60. All MSS used by Afshār have "resālat"; all others have "ze-sā'elat," including the translation Süleymaniyye Küttüphanesi manuscript Ayasofya 3188.
61. Cf. lines 94-5 of the *Golsban* on "the reason for composing the book": "I did not rebuff the query of one who seeks for faith. The parrot of my speech, to make this mystery more manifest, did then burst forth in discourse." Cited in Lewisohn, *Beyond Faith and Infidelity*, 24.
62. Cf. Shabestari, *Majmu'eh-ye āsār*, lines 212-15: "See straight ahead to the lofty canopy itself / how it encircled both worlds.... What relation does it have with the human heart, / why are they both in motion, forever / that they don't take a moment's rest? But the heart is the locus of far-flung canopy / one like a point, the other an encompassing arc."
63. Lāhiji cited in Lewisohn, *Beyond Faith and Infidelity*, 197, 214 n. 708.
64. Lāhiji gives this interpretation of Shabestari's words, cited in Lewisohn, *Beyond Faith and Infidelity*, 196, 213 n. 701.
65. Cf. Ibn 'Arabi, *The Ringstones of Wisdom*, 68-9, n. 9.
66. On Ibn 'Arabi see Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 280; on Lāhiji and Shabestari see Lewisohn, *Beyond Faith and Infidelity*, 159-63, 171 n. 587; Bashier, "Radical Vision and Unified Religion," 25.
67. Cf. Shabestari, *Golsban*, line 650, in which he states "Like you, the cosmos is a creature, a person, individual, distinct of feature." Lāhiji's exegesis interprets this verse to signify the presence of the Fully Human throughout the cosmos. Lewisohn, *Beyond Faith and Infidelity*, 159-63.
68. The *Kanz* states, in a section entitled "Discovery of the Lower Soul (*naḥs*) and its Attributes," that "From the reflection (*aks*) of His light came the source (*asl*) of the world / which the philosophers call the greatest spirit (*ruh-i a'zam*)," Shabestari [sic.], *Resāleh-ye kanz*, 29. Hamid's text has "spirit (*ruh*) instead of "source"—hence, "world spirit." *Zendagi va ruzgār*, 168-70. Lāhiji explains that "true perfection in the world is generated by man" and quoting Ibn 'Arabi, "the [divine] Command required [by its very nature] the reflective characteristic of the mirror of the Cosmos, and Adam was the very principle of reflection for that mirror and the spirit of that form." Lewisohn, *Beyond Faith and Infidelity*, 160.
69. Mitchell, *Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, 38-9, 100-1; Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*; Melvin-Koushki, "Of Islamic Grammatology," 61-6.

70. Fleischer, "Ancient Wisdom and New Sciences," 235-7, 239-41; for focused treatment of this subject see Melvin-Koushki, "Astrology, Lettrism, Geomancy"; and Melvin-Koushki, "Powers of One," 150-4.
71. Ocak, "Les réactions socio-religieuses," 76; Ocak, "Les Melâmî-Bayrâmî (Hamzavî)"; On Süleyman's messianic ambitions, see Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah; on Bektashis' adoption of these ideas see Algar, "The Hurufî Influence on Bektashism," 50; Yavuz, "The Making of a Sufi Order," 66-7.
72. Robinson, *Martial Spectacles of the Ming Court*, 85.
73. On the Persepolis verses, see Sâmi, "Yâdbud-e didâr-e pâdeshâhân"; Melikian-Chirvani, "Le Livre des rois, miroir du destin. II."
74. AS3188, 52b.
75. For discussion of the historical event, see Hemmat, "Children of Cain in the Land of Error," 443.
76. Yerasimos, *La fondation de Constantinople*; on Solomon-Jamshid analogies see Brookshaw, "Mytho-Political Remakings"; Melikian-Chirvani, "Le Livre des rois, miroir du destin. II."
77. Cf. Attâr, *Elâhinâme*, 258.
78. The *Haft paykar* is political in its aims, according to the author's own statement early in the epic. Nezâmi, *Hafti Paykar* (6: 35-40) cited in Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry*, 199-200.
79. Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry*, 233-4.
80. Vakili, *Ostureh'shenâsi-ye pahlavânân-e irâni*, 120.
81. This chapter interpreted in Morris, "Ibn 'Arabi's Messianic Secret."
82. Cited in *ibid*, 8, 16-17.
83. Ibn 'Arabi emphasizes the making-manifest by introducing the word "zâhir." *Ibid*, 14-16.
84. Cf. Melvin-Koushki, "Of Islamic Grammatology", 68-85.
85. Mir-Kasimov, *Words of Power*, 377-8.
86. Amanat, "The Nuqtavi Movement of Mahmud Pasikhani," 86.
87. Mir-Kasimov, *Words of Power*, 421; see also Amanat, "The Nuqtavi Movement of Mahmud Pasikhani." It is also striking that Nuqtavi and Hurufî understandings of transmigration are based on a theory of the food chain: entities ascend the chain of being by being consumed by higher forms. What could be higher up the food chain than the state?
88. Shabestari [sic.], *Resâleh-ye kanz*, 65.
89. Ocak, *Osmanlı toplumunda zındıklar ve mülbidler*, 305; Ocak, "Les Melâmî-Bayrâmî (Hamzavî)"; Yavuz "The Making of a Sufi Order," 39-46, 112-13; Amanat, "The Nuqtavi Movement of Mahmud Pasikhani," 80-1, 89.
90. Yavuz, "The Making of a Sufi Order," 65.
91. Roberts, *Marx's Inferno*.
92. Fleischer, "Lawgiver as Messiah," 167-9.
93. On these changes, see Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, 49.

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