ophy distinguishes itself by relying on anything supra-rational in its intellectual endeavor, it should not be called "philosophy" properly speaking, unless one finds a way of attributing that dependence on the supra-rational to a rhetorical strategy employed by authors like Avicenna or his illuminative successors. This strategy could have been in the service of some specific end—for instance, something akin to Strauss's claim about the prudential aspects of the religious rhetoric of other non-religious philosophers (e.g. Alfarabi and Maimonides in Islam and Judaism, Plato and Aristotle among the ancients, Thomas Hobbes and John Locke in Christianity). How fruitful this approach is remains an open question, but the fundamental question is: how philosophical is post-classical Islamic philosophy, and what is its relationship with Islam?

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The War between the Turks and the Persians: Conflict and Religion in the Safavid and Ottoman Worlds, Giovanni-Tomasso Minadoi, Translation (in 1595) by Abraham Hartwell. London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2019, ISBN: 978-1-7807-6952-3; hardback, xiv + 273 pp.

This book is an edition of the 1595 English translation by Abraham Hartwell of Giovanni-Tomasso Minadoi's expanded *Historia della Guerra fra Turchi et Persiani*, published in Venice (and Turin) in 1588 and reprinted with additions in 1594. Beyond an eloquent eight-page introduction by Rudi Matthee, the volume provides no scholarly apparatus. It includes neither a rendering of Hartwell's title page nor the map of the "countries of the Turk and of the Persian … " provided in the 1588 and 1594 Italian editions and the 1595 translation. Because the provenance of the edition employed for this new version is not provided, one has to assume that these omissions were an editorial decision. Given the very limited number of sixteenth century sources available in English translation on the Safavid realm, this volume will prove useful in undergraduate and graduate classes dealing with early modern Eurasia, trans-regional travel, and the complex interrelations among the Muslim and Christian kingdoms (and their communities) reaching from Iran to England. Minadoi is also an important source

for ongoing scholarly conversations on the evolution of cross-cultural narrative; the dissemination of print; the nature of translation; and the production of spatial imagination in the early modern Afro-Eurasian world.

Matthee's introduction provides bibliographic information on Minadoi and Hartwell and discusses the various editions (including a shorter, earlier version) of the *Historia*. It sets Minadoi's work in the contexts of Ottoman–Safavid relations and the literary construction of Ottoman–Safavid space that was ongoing in the Christian kingdoms of Europe in the later sixteenth century. Both Minadoi and Hartwell served as conduits for the transmission of a knowledge-picture of Iran and "Turchia" for audiences in those kingdoms. Matthee points out that "Minadoi never visited Persia itself" (p. x). His history derived from a combination of narratives, documents, personal experience, and informants or witnesses. That 'distance' between the author and the lands of the Persians highlights the significance of Aleppo, Minadoi's base, as an information center for the creation of European visions of Persia which then proved influential in the development of diplomacy, foreign policy, historiography, and religious thinking. That centrality of Aleppo for witnessing Persia is reflected almost a century later in the narrative of another traveler, Ambrosio Bembo, who was, like Minadoi, associated with the Venetian consuls in Aleppo.[1] Once Minadoi's history was printed, like other works of the era, it was quickly reproduced and pirated. World Cat counts fifty-four editions "published between 1587 and 1996 in 5 languages."[2] Matthee notes that Richard Knolles, among others, copied parts of Minadoi's work for his 1603–4 *Generall Historie of the Turkes*. He reminds us that "The information offered by Minadoi thus long reverberated, helping to shape and solidify opinions about Persia and its inhabitants, separately and in relation with the Ottomans, that would have enormous staying power" (p. xii).

Giovanni-Tomasso Minadoi was a physician and author who journeyed to Syria in 1576, to serve two Venetian consuls (Teodoro Balbi and Giovanni Michele) in Aleppo. During at least seven years in that city, which was both a major trading entrepôt and an outpost of Ottoman authority, Minadoi plied his trade and assembled various of the materials that would provide the basis for the *Historia*. After his return to Italy in 1586, he published a preliminary version, in four books, in Rome, in 1587; the expanded version, in nine books, appeared in 1588. The contents of that second *Historia* include a title page; a dedication; a note from the author to his readers; and a table of names and words used in the *Historia* with their contemporary and "antique" variants. The rest of the volume consists of the nine chapters, or "Bookes," followed by Minadoi's "Letter to the Worshipful Signor Mario Corrado" in which he argues (wrongly according to Matthee, p. xi) that the city of Tabriz is the ancient Ecbathana of the Medes. Each of the "Bookes" begins with a list of topics and events covered. Hartwell's translation follows this scheme. But while Minadoi's

[1]Bembo, *Il viaggio in Asia (1671–1675)*. Bembo, however, did travel to Iran. See also Eldem, Goffman, and Masters, *The Ottoman City*.

[2]http://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-nr92015880/ (accessed August 30, 2019).

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dedication was to Pope Sixtus V (r. 1585–90), Hartwell's was to his patron, Archbishop of Canterbury John Whitgift, whom he served as secretary (p. viii).

Book 1 details the wars between the Ottomans and Safavids beginning with the death of Shah Tahmasp in 1576. Book 2 begins with the Prophet Muhammad, the origin of "Persian and Turkish sects," and the meaning of the shah's designation of "Soffi," or Sufi. It then proceeds to more strategic information: the geography, history, officers, army, revenues, and expenses of the Safavid empire. Book 3 launches Minadoi's evaluation of the Ottoman–Persian wars (1578–90), beginning with the Ottomans' Georgian campaign in 1578 and the conquest of Tiflis. Beyond that campaign, this book addresses military and diplomatic affairs along with notable events. Chapters 4–6 continue in that vein with particular attention to prominent Ottoman pashas, acts of military rebellion, Safavid power struggles, and the periodic reference to Minadoi himself as physician or traveler. Book 7 focuses on Cairo, Ibrahim Pasha, and the "Drusians," in Syria whom he identifies as apostate "French-men" by origin (p. 185). Minadoi refers to this chapter as a "digression," from "the affairs of Persia" (p. 202). Book 8 details Osman Pasha's conquest of Tabriz; and Book 9 continues with the ongoing struggles for Tabriz; alliances with the "Turcomans"; and the difficulties involved in controlling military forces. Few dates are marked in this work's narrative, although there is an occasional allusion to the year. The book ends with events in the year 1586. Throughout, Minadoi incorporates a discussion of events in Syria, the territory closest to his own sphere of activity. He takes great pains to identify the places mentioned and to provide alternative place names.

The *Historia*'s expansive commentary demonstrates the vagaries of narrative when Safavid rule is visualized through an interwoven set of sources. Minadoi reminds his readers that there are multiple versions of events. For example, the *Historia* details the execution of Khair al-Nisa Begum, wife of Shah Muhammad Khudabanda (r. 1578–88) in 1579. This is the Khair al-Nisa whose murder was immortalized in a miniature in the lavish 1584 royal version of the Ottoman historian Mustafa Ali's *Nusretname* (Book of Victory), which detailed the same Georgian wars treated by Minadoi.[3] In Hartwell's *Historia*, Khair al-Nisa (embodiment of the trope of the politically aggressive Safavid palace woman) is rumored to be a "shameless Begum [who] had participated her bed & herself with the Tartarian prisoner," the Crimean prince Adil Giray (p. 77). Minadoi, via Hartwell, seems to suggest that the affair did occur, but argues that the subsequent execution of the lovers was politically motivated. What actually happened, he writes, "they know best, that have had the means to insinuate themselves into the innermost places of the Realm" (p. 78). Similarly, he notes on the murder of Prince Hamza Mirza, purportedly by a eunuch, in 1586, that "divers & sundry are the opinions of men" (p. 248). But his own gloss on the succession struggle between

[3]Uluç, "The Representation of the Execution of the Safavid Begum." Mustafa Ali's sojourn in Aleppo, where he completed the first version of the *Nusretname* (c. 1580–81), coincided with Minadoi's service there (p. 769).

Hamza Mirza and Abbas is not dispassionate as he calls the former "the most resplendent and bright shining lamp that ever was in Persia" (p. 247).

Matthee (pp. xi–xiii) argues that Minadoi's tale is pragmatic; less preoccupied with ancient antecedents than earlier works; more preoccupied with topography and geography; and particularly dogged in seeking out the "truth" of events. Early modern narrators are inclined to elaborate truth claims regarding their access to authoritative information; but from his long-term base in Aleppo, as Matthee points out, Minadoi had access to several highly valuable and well-placed witnesses, including Maqsud Khan, one-time Safavid ambassador and governor of Tabriz (p. xiii). Numerous other authorities (both ancient and more contemporary) are mentioned, including, for example, Strabo and the physician and historian Paolo Giovo (1483–1552). For contemporary informants, Minadoi notes that he carefully sought out men of great authority, who were believed not to be liars and who were involved in the events narrated.

Hartwell, in his English dedication, notes that originally he had planned to elaborate on his translation of Minadoi's history by adding material from ancient and modern writers, but that the project grew too burdensome. His translation, he says, while it cannot match Minadoi's eloquence, is "truly and faithfully done in as plain and significant terms as I could [manage]" (p. xv). What constitutes "faithful" translation is, of course, a vexed question. And while Hartwell follows the original; a cursory examination suggests that there are multiple instances in which one could quibble with his renderings of certain words or phrases and with minor additions or subtractions. That said, Minadoi's *Historia* and Hartwell's English version provide us with an opportunity to revisit questions of the channels and vagaries of translation. Minadoi combined the resources of scholarship, official capacity, and eye-witness authority to tell a story of Safavid and Ottoman lands that goes well beyond the standard framing rhetoric of Christian vs. Muslim objectives. He viewed those lands through a Venetian and Ottoman prism, from one of the limit points of the Ottoman realm—once-removed from Persia, but not very far away.

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