than it is, perhaps by paraphrasing the entirety of Ibn Khaldun's discussion of the phenomenon, to which he briefly alludes. It would also have been helpful if he included a fuller account of the terms "hermetic" and "occult philosophy." Finally, the idea that this book may be used primarily as a reference work is also partly due to Binbaş' discussion of Timurid historiography. This subject is not discussed in either the Introduction or the Epilogue and seems almost disconnected from the theme of informal networks, for Yazdī's occult interests do not seem to have noticeably influenced his historical writings. Binbaş' discussion of historiography is nonetheless valuable as it deals with the lesser-known texts of the early Timurid era and is characterized by the same precise textual analysis he brings to his descriptions of Yazdī's informal networks. The historiographical section is, however, often presented as a summary of various modern scholars' research on histories of the era, and, as such, much of it seems more appropriate for a scholarly article than for this monograph.

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Iran Without Borders: Towards a Critique of the Postcolonial Nation, Hamid Dabashi, London and New York: Verso, 2016, ISBN-13 978-1-7847-8068-5 (hbk), 978-1-7847-8069-2 (US ebk), 978-1-7847-8070-8 (UK ebk), 256 pp.

In the present age of seemingly rising tribalism and nineteenth-century style nationalism Hamid Dabashi's *Iran without Borders* is an excellent and timely contribution in two distinct and relevant ways. On the one hand, it challenges the Eurocentric notion of cosmopolitanism and implicitly questions the widely believed assumption of the decline of cosmopolitan culture and multiculturalism. On the other hand, it provides a powerful response to reductionist and orientalist readings of Iranian culture and politics. Since Khomeini loyalist militant Islamists came to power in the aftermath of the 1979 Iranian Revolution, the country has been the subject of relentless negative coverage in the press and public debates in Western Europe and even more so in the US. In these venues Iran is predominantly reduced to Islamism, Ayatollahs, and terrorism. *Iran without Borders* is an exceptional intellectual contribution that succeeds at presenting a radically different and nuanced examination of Iranian intellectual history that dismantles the racist and Islamophobic reading of the Iranian people.

Surveying a wide range of past and contemporary intellectual works and artistic achievements, *Iran without Borders* illustrates how generations of Iranian thinkers and public intellectuals (inside and outside of its fictive colonial and postcolonial frontiers) from the eighteenth century onward constructed what the author calls a

culture of *cosmopolitan worldliness*. Dabashi's vast historical and theoretical knowledge about Iran and beyond allows him to depict the dynamic development of a democratic, multicultural, and multilingual public sphere constituted by generations of Iranian poets, writers, filmmakers, intellectual activists, and songwriters in their contentious interactions with both colonial powers and postcolonial authoritarian nation-states.

As a scholar who penned numerous groundbreaking works on intellectual history, cultural sociology, and postcolonial studies such as *Persophilia: Persian Culture on the Global Scene* (Harvard University Press, 2015); *Can Non-Europeans Think?* (Zed Books, 2015); *Post-Orientalism: Knowledge and Power in a Time of Terror* (Transaction Publishers, 2015); and *Brown Skin, White Masks* (Pluto Press, 2011), Dabashi is a well-qualified scholar on the subject he is discussing in this book. This is unquestionably a major and transformative addition to postcolonial studies in general and to Iranian studies in particular. In ten coherent chapters (including one longer introduction and a shorter conclusion), the author meticulously depicts over 200 years of cultural life of Iranian public intellectuals and their deep involvement in the formation of a growing alternative world of knowledge against the "waning" western orientalist world of knowledge that claims modernity, Enlightenment, and cosmopolitanism as its exclusive monopoly.

By analyzing original works by a variety of Iranian thinkers, *Iran without Borders* traces the local and global roots of a cosmopolitan culture that has been formed in locations as diverse as Tehran, Cairo, Istanbul, Berlin, Paris, Calcutta, London, and New York to present a nuanced narrative of over two centuries of Iranian intellectual history. The objective is to go beyond what he calls "fetishized borders, fictive frontiers, and violently ethnicized identity" to show that Iranian national identity "since the sudden decline and final demise of the Qajar dynasty (1785-1925), beginning early in the nineteenth century, has been accompanied by the eventual rise of a public sphere that accommodated the emergence of the Iranian public intellectuals ... From the very beginning, that process was perforce cosmopolitan, non-sectarian, non-denominational, gender and class conscious, and above all transnational and worldly in its character and culture" (p. 8).

Each chapter of the book is dedicated to a specific group of public intellectuals within a period of Iranian history. In chapter one, *Iran without Borders* presents the two earliest encounters of Iranian intellectuals with European colonial modernity during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Ironically, the first encounter takes place in India and not Europe. Utilizing the at the time popular genre of travel narratives, ʿAbd al-Latif Khān Shushtari (1758-1805) describes in his *Tohfat al-ʿĀlam* (1788-1804) the British presence in India. Fascinated by the rise of European powers, the globalized British Empire, and European institutions and ideas, he demands constitutional rights, civil liberties, and the separation of political and religious authorities, and criticizes the political conditions in his home country. Examining these earliest accounts of encounters with European colonial modernity, Dabashi traces the historic and global roots of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution that emerged a hundred years later—an initially successful revolution that utterly

reduced the unlimited power of the Qajar monarch and introduced parliamentary democracy to Iran.

The next impressive and more important encounter *Iran without Borders* relates is the travel narrative of Hājj Mohammad ʿAli Mahallāti (1836-1925), known as Hājj Sayyāh (the Traveler). Hājj Sayyāh's narrative of his lifelong journey around the world from the Caucasus region, to Japan, China, India, and across Europe is based on his systematic visits of factories, schools, churches, and other institutions—and is perhaps the first fieldwork ever conducted by an Iranian intellectual about other nations in modern times. Armed with profound comparative knowledge of social and political conditions around the world, Hājj Sayyāh emerges as a radical advocate of liberty, progress, and the rule of law. By contrasting progress in Europe and North America with the "backwardness" and repressive politics in his country and by presenting his own unreserved attacks against the corrupt monarchy in Iran, he plays a crucial role in the preparation of the Constitutional Revolution of 1906. Though critical of European colonial intervention around the globe, both aforementioned public intellectuals admired the ideas of freedom and constitutional democracy that emerged in Europe and firmly believed Europe could not progress without the demise of Papal power and the independence of political institutions from the authority of the Vatican.

Chapter two investigates the roles of reformist individuals within the Qajar Dynasty and revolutionary intellectuals critical of the conditions of their country. Dabashi suggests that as the worldly awareness of Iranian intellectuals rose and their interactions with the world outside of the fictive colonial boundaries of their country intensified, their demands for more profound reforms radicalized and culminated in the Constitutional Revolution. As the first half the nineteenth century is defined by such reformists as Mirzā Taqi Khān Amir Kabir (1807-52), the second half of the century was shaped by more radical thinkers and writers like Mirzā Āqā Khān Kermāni (1854-97), Sayyed Jamāl al-Din al-Afghāni (1838-97), and Zayn al-ʿĀbedin Marāgheh'i (1840-1910), who the author believes are the most influential thinkers of this period. The sharply critical account of these radical intellectuals on the socio-political conditions in Iran under the Qajar and their works on European modernity, nationalism, and colonialism profoundly impacted the rise of the Constitutional Revolution and the formation of a cosmopolitan culture and national identity.

Amir Kabir's transformative reform agenda includes the foundation of Dār al-Fonun polytechnic, the first institution of higher education, the establishment of the national newspaper *Vaqāyeʿ Ettefāqiyeh*, and the modernization of the Iranian military. Although these reforms transformed the Qajar dynasty and made it aware of its surrounding world, the anti-reformist forces within the Qajar establishment unintentionally opened the door for more revolutionary demands by rejecting reformist initiatives.

In chapter three Dabashi discusses several Iranian periodicals, mostly published abroad, that contributed significantly to the rise of a transnational public sphere which impacted the emergence, trajectory, and outcome of the Constitutional Revolution in 1906 and the postrevolutionary events. Distributed during the late

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Calcutta, Tehran, Berlin, and London, periodicals such as *Qānun*, or Law (London, 1889-1906), *Sur-e Esrāfil* (Tehran, 1907-9), and *Kāveh* (Berlin, 1916-22) were instrumental in transmitting the ideas of the French and Russian Revolutions to a Persian-speaking audience. Consequently, both the constitutional and socialist revolutionary paradigms moved to the center of revolutionary politics and have been affecting the trajectories of events in Iran ever since. One of the most influential periodicals was *Kāveh*, published in Berlin. Led by Hasan Taqizādeh, who had a strong command of French and English in addition to Persian and Arabic, together with other periodicals also read widely inside Iran *Kaveh* created an important body of knowledge about European Enlightenment, progress, and revolutions, and was tremendously effective in the shaping of political events and the further development of a transnational culture and identity in the country.

In chapters four through eight Dabashi explores the indispensable contribution of a group of highly influential contemporary intellectual activists whose essays, poetry, film, and music since the 1950s have been instrumental in facilitating a transnational public sphere and new political discourse beyond the Islamist, nationalist, and socialist ideologies operating in the Iranian political sphere. *Iran without Borders* pays special attention to the roles played by Iranian poets from ʿĀref Qazvini (1882-1932) in the early twentieth century to the Iranian poet Esmāʿil Khoʾi currently based in London.

Chief among these poets is Ahmad Shāmlu, whose translations of poets like García Lorca, Pablo Neruda, and Langston Hughes into Persian connected the Iranian poetic world to major revolutionary poets around the world and created an emotive universe that categorically changed what it meant to be an Iranian (p. 94). In the beautiful journey through the exciting, lively, and rich itineraries of Iranian intellectuals, Dabashi takes his readers further into the world of an innovative and radical generation of thinkers that emerged in the 1950s and 1960s, such as the anti-imperialist essayist Jalāl Āl-e Ahmad and the revolutionary writer and orator Ali Shariʿati.

As poets like Ahmad Shāmlu, Forugh Farrokhzād, Sohrāb Sepehri, and Esmāʿil Khoʾi linked the Iranian poetic sphere to a global poetic public sphere, Āl-e Ahmad and particularly Shariʿati, who was based in Paris (1960-64) and heavily influenced by intellectuals like Frantz Fanon, wed Iranian revolutionary movements with the transnational and revolutionary politics of Europe, Africa, and Latin America. Witnessing and participating in the solidarity actions and events with Cuban, Algerian, and other revolutionary struggles around the world that were displayed on the streets of Paris transforms Sharʿati into the firebrand orator and architect of the Iranian revolutionary movement in 1977-79. "Through such seminal figures as Farrokhzād, Āl-e Ahmad, and Shariʿati," Dabashi argues, "the poetics and politics of the anticolonial struggles around the globe were brought home to Iran—domesticated, normalized, and made into the fabric of the worldly consciousness of the nation" (p. 114).

The book's strength—in being ambitious and wide-ranging—is also perhaps its weakness. Although the author's intention is to be wide-ranging, readers may feel challenged by his decision to cover so much ground in each relatively short chapter. In order to achieve breadth, the author moves quickly through his analysis of the

works of many canonical intellectuals who shaped what he calls the transnational and cosmopolitan Iranian culture across two centuries. Readers may have been able to gain a better understanding of the topics discussed if the author had cast his net less wide, limiting his focus to fewer intellectuals and situating them more deeply in their historical context.

The concluding part reinforces the central idea of the book, namely that the transnational, multilingual, and multicultural features are inseparable qualities of Iranian national consciousness and political culture. Furthermore, the author proposes that no single state, political actor, or ideology can claim to be the sole representative of Iran and its people. More precisely, Dabashi explains throughout the book that any ideological and reductionist interpretation of Iranian national identity is in fact colonial.

Iran Without Borders is a welcome addition to both graduate and undergraduate courses on postcolonial studies, modern Iran, and cultural studies as well as to the general readers interested in these fields.

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The Monetary History of Iran: From the Safavids to the Qajars, Rudi Matthee, Willem Floor, and Patrick Clawson, London: I. B. Tauris, 2013, ISBN 978-1-78076-079-7 (hardback), vii + 290 pp.

The interest in numismatics is nothing new. Coinage has long been studied as a marker of regnal chronology and heraldic emblems. Coins also serve as a means to trace shifting borders on the periphery of imperial rule, since minting by tributary princes was traditionally one of the two signifiers of submission and allegiance. To art historians the iconography of coins and seals is an important indicator of stylistic changes in artistic creation. In sum, the study of coins in the Iranian world has focused on a host of issues that are extraneous to the primary purpose of minting metal as a monetary instrument for administrative and commercial use. A comprehensive history of the financial role of coins and money in Iran has long been overdue, so a book that finally tackles that issue will find its rightful place alongside similar studies devoted to Iran's neighbors, specifically India, the Ottoman Empire and Russia.

The Monetary History of Iran, a joint effort by Rudi Matthee, Willem Floor, and Patrick Clawson, addresses the history of money in Iran from the rise of the Safavids to the fall of the Qajars, with brief references to the Mongol/Ilkhanid era as a precedent for specific monetary features transmitted to subsequent dynasties. The authors deserve praise for casting their net wide enough to cover the flow of specie