
Rashīd al-Dīn and the Shāhnāmeḥ

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Abstract

This paper explores some different, interrelated versions of the history of the Pīshdādiyān, the earliest dynasty represented in the Shāhnāmeḥ, especially the recently edited text of Rashīd al-Dīn's Jāmi' al-tawārīkh. This is compared with Bal'amī's Persian version of the History of al-Ṭabari and Qāḍī Baiḍāwī's Nizām al-tawārīkh, of which the latter is shown to provide much the closer basis for Rashīd al-Dīn's work — especially when confronted with the manuscripts of the Jāmi' al-tawārīkh contemporary with the life of Rashīd al-Dīn. Comparison with both the early Arabic and Persian witnesses of the work suggests that the printed edition does not represent Rashīd al-Dīn's original text, but later reworkings of his chronicle — such as that by the fifteenth-century historian, Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū — which draw more directly on the Shāhnāmeḥ. In so far as there is discernible subtext to Rashīd al-Dīn's coverage of these earliest periods of Iranian monarchical history, it is more to emphasise the didactic message of the Shāhnāmeḥ and the justice and constructive achievements of the first kings, than to follow Firdausī's narrative. Despite the potency of idea of the Shāhnāmeḥ as expressing Persian kingly traditions, it is suggested that perhaps it was only after the time of Rashīd al-Dīn and the Islamisation of the Mongol rulers that historians appreciated and emulated the literary and narrative aspects of the text for their own sake.

Introduction

Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* has received considerable attention as a source of primary importance for the history of the Mongol period in Iran and of the peoples with whom the Mongols came into contact in the course of their career of world conquest. Despite this, there is rather little notice of his history of the Islamic world and more specifically of Iran itself. One can readily suppose this neglect is because Rashīd al-Dīn is not himself an important primary source for the earlier history of Iran. Although sections on the Buyids, Samanids and Ghaznavids,¹ on the Saljuqs² and Isma'īlis also,³ have been available in print for some time, they are seldom cited for new information on these dynasties. The

¹ *Tārīkh-i Sāmāniyān va Būiyān va Ghaznaviyān*, (ed.) Ahmed Ateş (Ankara, 1957, reprint 1999); (ed.) M. Dabīrsiyāqī (Tehran, 1338/1959); (ed.) M. Raushan (Tehran, 1386/2007).

² *Tārīkh-i Āl-i Saljūq*, (ed.) Ahmed Ateş (Ankara, 1960, reprint 1999); (ed.) M. Raushan (Tehran, 1386/2007).

³ *Tārīkh-i Ismā'īliyān*, (ed.) M. T. Dānishpazhūh and M. Mudarrisī Zanġānī (Tehran, 1348/1969); (ed.) M. Raushan (Tehran, 1387/2008).

historiographical interest of Rashīd al-Dīn's compilation has of course been acknowledged, and his use of sources and the role his work has played in the transmission of texts has received some piecemeal attention, particularly for the Saljuq period that is itself rather deficient in historical literature.⁴

Nevertheless, it would not be wrong to say that the earlier periods of Islamic and Iranian history, including the pre-Islamic period, as recorded in Rashīd al-Dīn's work, have been neglected completely; until very recently, indeed, this was the one remaining part of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* that had not been edited or published. This omission has now been made good,⁵ but the recent edition of the text itself raises various questions, as we shall see shortly. The aim of this brief tribute to David Morgan and his long and fruitful career presiding over the Mongols is to discuss just one part of these early sections of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, specifically the passages concerned with the earliest rulers of Iran's mythical past, the so-called Pīshdādiyān.⁶

In Persian literary tradition, this period is particularly associated with Firdausī's *Shāhnāmeḥ*, the epic of the Persian kings completed in 1010 AD, that is, exactly 300 years before Rashīd al-Dīn was completing his universal history in 1310. One question that arises, therefore, is whether, and to what extent, Rashīd al-Dīn may have used the *Shāhnāmeḥ* directly as one of his sources. There is also an underlying question of broader interest, given the renewed enthusiasm for Firdausī's epic that was kindled in the Mongol period and the role played by this text in what might be called the Persianisation of the new dynasty. This is associated particularly with the Juvainī brothers in the period before Ghazan Khan's conversion to Islam in 1295. It is expressed through their patronage of scholars and historians and involvement with such projects as the development of Takht-i Sulaimān (probably started late in the reign of Hülegü Khan); not to forget 'Alā' al-Dīn Juvainī's extensive engagement with the *Shāhnāmeḥ* in his own history of the Mongols (1260).⁷ It is unlikely to be a coincidence that the tilework on the palace at Takht-i Sulaimān (dated 1271–1273, 1276), the composition of Qāḍī Baidāwī's *Nizām al-tawārīkh* (1275; dedicated to Shams al-Dīn Juvainī) and the date of the earliest known complete manuscript copy of the *Shāhnāmeḥ* (British Library Add. 21,103; dated 1276) all cluster around the same time.

It is therefore pertinent to examine how the revival of interest in the *Shāhnāmeḥ* and its appropriation by the Il-khans' courtiers and advisers as a vehicle for acculturating the Mongols to Iranian traditions and concepts of rulership, survived the Islamisation of the dynasty. In at least one respect, we can see that if anything, Firdausī's work enjoyed an ever-increasing popularity. Around the turn of the fourteenth century, illustrated copies of the *Shāhnāmeḥ* started to appear and mark the beginning of an enduring tradition in the arts

⁴See esp. *The Saljuq-nāma of Zahir al-Din Nishapuri*, (ed.) A. H. Morton (Gibb Memorial Trust, 2004), pp. 23–32; J. S. Mesiami, "Rulers and the writing of history", in *Writers and Rulers*, (ed.) B. Gruendler and L. Marlow (Wiesbaden, 2004), pp. 73–95; F. Daftary, "Persian historiography of the early Nizari Ismailis", *Iran* 30 (1992), pp. 91–97, at p. 95.

⁵*Tārīkh-i Irān va Islām*, (ed.) M. Raushan, 3 vols. (Tehran, 1392/2013). I am most grateful to Ms. Shiva Mihan for bringing a copy of this for me in Tehran, and later reporting information from Dr Raushan that a fourth volume is in preparation with details of the editorial method, personal communication, November 2014.

⁶The first draft of this paper was presented at the Shahnama Millennial conference in Cambridge in December 2010.

⁷See e.g. A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, "Le Livre des Rois, miroir du destin. II – Takht-e Soleymān et la symbolique du Shāh-Nāme", *Studia Iranica* 20 (1991), pp. 33–148, esp. pp. 54–74.

of the book.⁸ This reached its first climax, in the late Il-khanid period, with the so-called “Great Mongol” *Shāhnāmah*, generally taken to have been produced under the patronage of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad, the son of Rashīd al-Dīn, in the dying years of the sultanate of Abū Sa‘īd (1317–1335).⁹ Not long beforehand, Rashīd al-Dīn himself supervised the production of illustrated copies of his own work, the *Jāmi‘al-tawārīkh*, or ‘Compendium of histories’, including those early sections dealing with the pre-Islamic history of Iran. There is clearly some scope, therefore, for exploring the connections between both the texts and the illustrations of these two works in the ideological context in which they were produced.

This is a large topic and here I wish simply to consider some of the historiographical aspects of Rashīd al-Dīn’s text: that is, his use of sources and the question of whether, and how, the *Shāhnāmah* is present in this part of the *Jāmi‘al-tawārīkh*. This might take different forms, ranging from the appropriation of Firdausī’s narrative of the history of pre-Islamic Iran, to alluding to the kings and heroes of the *Shāhnāmah* as a rhetorical tool, to the direct quotation of verses or the emulation of Firdausī’s poetic diction and imagery. Here, I wish to continue a line of investigation regarding Rashīd al-Dīn’s use of two earlier Persian ‘universal histories’ of very different scale and scope, namely Bal‘amī’s *Tārīkh-nāmah-yi Ṭabarī* (c. 963) and Qāḍī Baiḍāwī’s *Niẓām al-tawārīkh*.¹⁰ Before turning to this, it is necessary to review the details of Rashīd al-Dīn’s own coverage of the period in question and the text on which this initial study is based.

Rashīd al-Dīn’s history of pre-Islamic Iran

With the conversion of Ghazan Khan in 1295 and the patronage of the new chief vizier, Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb Hamadānī, the work of recording the history of the Mongols and their empire received a great impetus.¹¹ As is well known, the first part of the *Jāmi‘al-tawārīkh* covers the history of the Mongols up to the reign of Ghazan Khan (1295–1304), for whom it was written. Ghazan’s successor, Sultan Öljeitü (1304–1316), instructed the vizier to supplement the chronicle with the history of the peoples encountered by the Mongols. This second division of the *Jāmi‘al-tawārīkh* opens with a chapter on the ante-diluvian Prophets and the first kings of the Persians (*‘ajam*), the latter being our focus here.¹²

Unlike the Mongol history (*Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghāzānī*), which survives in a single contemporary manuscript, the ‘universal’ division of the *Jāmi‘al-tawārīkh* exists in several copies from the author’s lifetime, including the earliest surviving witness to the text, dating from 1307–1314, which is divided between Edinburgh University Library (Ms. Arab 20) and the Nasser D. Khalili Collection (MSS727). It is the Edinburgh half that is of interest

⁸For an example of the extensive literature on this, see A.T. Adamova, *Medieval Persian Painting: The Evolution of an Artistic Vision*, translated and edited by J. M. Rogers (New York, 2008), pp. 1–29.

⁹See further, R. Hillenbrand, “The arts of the book in Ilkhanid Iran”, in *The Legacy of Genghis Khan. Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256–1353*, (ed.) L. Komaroff and S. Carboni (New Haven and London, 2002), pp. 134–167, esp. 155–167, and its references.

¹⁰C. Melville, “The royal image in Mongol Iran”, in *Every Inch a King*, (ed.) L. Mitchell and C. Melville (Leiden, 2013), pp. 343–369, esp. 351–359 and n. 49.

¹¹See e.g., Thomas T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 83–102.

¹²See “*Jāme‘al-tawārīkh*”, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* XIV/5 (2008), pp. 462–468, for a general introduction.

here and although it has not been given the same detailed attention as the other half,¹³ its paintings at least have been well documented and often published.¹⁴ Being the Arabic version of the text, it is not immediately comparable with the wording of the Persian sources on which the author may have relied, although confronting the Arabic and Persian versions shows that they are rather close, as we shall note below.

The Persian version of the text of this part of Rashīd al-Dīn only exists in a few early mss, of which I have only been able to see briefly a microfilm of the Topkapi Ms. H. 1653 (dated 1314), the so-called ‘replacement’ copy completed by Ḥāfiz-i Abrū in the early fifteenth century; in this manuscript, the section on the pre-Islamic rulers of Iran is the composition of Ḥāfiz-i Abrū, rather than Rashīd al-Dīn’s original text.¹⁵

So far I have been unable to see the other early copy, also in the Topkapi, Ms. H. 1654 (dated 1317), which can be assumed to preserve the original Persian version of Rashīd al-Dīn’s text.¹⁶ Although there has been plenty of discussion of the illustrations of these three productions contemporary with Rashīd al-Dīn (d. 1318), and indeed of the fifteenth-century copies of the Mongol history,¹⁷ little close attention has been paid to their texts (particularly therefore, the relationship between Rashīd al-Dīn’s ‘original’ and Ḥāfiz-i Abrū’s version).¹⁸ This calls for more detailed investigation. Although parts of the texts of H. 1653 and H. 1654 have been reproduced in facsimile in several volumes prepared by Karl Jahn,¹⁹ these did not include the section on the pre-Islamic kings of Iran.

A copy nearer home is housed at the British Library, Ms. Add. 7628, undated but once belonging to the library of Shāh Rukh (r. 1405–1447) and probably involving his refined son Bāysunghur Mīrẓā (d. 1433). It has recently been made accessible online as part of the BL’s digitisation project.²⁰ This volume was noted by E. G. Browne as a superior copy and

¹³Basil Gray, *The World History of Rashid al-Din. A Study of the Royal Asiatic Society Manuscript* (London, 1978); Sheila S. Blair, *A Compendium of Chronicles. Rashid al-Din’s Illustrated History of the World*. The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, XXVII (London and Oxford, 1995).

¹⁴D. Talbot Rice, *The Illustrations to the ‘World History’ of Rashid al-Din*, (ed.) B. Gray (Edinburgh, 1976).

¹⁵R. Ettinghausen, “An illuminated manuscript of Ḥāfiz-i Abrū in Istanbul. Part I.”, *Kunst des Orients*, 2 (1955), pp. 30–44. Thanks to Sheila Blair for the loan of the microfilm, which I passed on to Stefan Kamola before fully exploiting it.

¹⁶I am grateful to Professor Dr Zeren Tanımdı for a handlist of the paintings it contains.

¹⁷See in addition, Sara Güner Inal, “The Fourteenth-Century Miniatures of the *Jāmi’ al-tavārīkh* in the Topkapi Museum in Istanbul, Hazine Library no. 1653”, PhD dissertation (University of Michigan, 1965); Sara Güner Inal, “Some miniatures of the *Jāmi’ al-tavārīkh* in the Istanbul, Topkapi Museum, Hazine Library no. 1654”, *Ars Orientalis* 5 (1963), pp. 163–175; Sara Güner Inal, “Miniatures in historical manuscripts from the time of Shahrūkh in the Topkapi Palace Museum”, in *Timurid Art and Culture: Iran and Central Asia in the Fifteenth Century*, (ed.) L. Golombek and M. Subtelny (Leiden, 1992), pp. 106–115; F. Richard, “Un des peintres du manuscrit *Supplément persan 1113* de l’Histoire des Mongols de Rašīd al-Dīn identifié”, in *L’Iran face à la domination mongole*, (ed.) D. Aigle (Teheran–Paris, 1997), pp. 307–320.

¹⁸With the notable exception of a series of studies by Felix Tauer.

¹⁹H. 1653: K. Jahn, *Die Chinageschichte des Rašīd ad-Din* (Vienna, 1971); *Die Frankengeschichte des Rašīd ad-Din* (Vienna, 1977). H. 1654: *Die Geschichte der Kinder Israels des Rašīd ad-Din* (Vienna, 1973); *Die Indiangeschichte des Rašīd ad-Din* (Vienna, 1980). Idem, *Die Geschichte der Öguzen des Rašīd ad-Din* (Vienna, 1969), is based on Istanbul, Süleimaniye Ms. Bagdat 282.

²⁰Accessible at: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_7628. I am most grateful to Dr Bruno de Nicola for drawing attention to this Ms. at the study day at the British Library on 30 October 2014 and illustrating the note on the calligraphy of Bāysunghur (fol. 410v). Although I had long been aware of it, I had never seen the manuscript and overlooked it when I started work on this paper.

described in detail by Rieu.²¹ Another manuscript is recorded at the John Rylands Library at the University of Manchester, Ms. 406: a later, but undated, copy. Although catalogued as the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, and of some interest in its own right (as indeed, is almost any medieval manuscript), this must be discarded as a useful witness to the text; already on folio 2v there is a reference to the *Rauḍat al-ṣafā*, making it a late fifteenth-century compilation at the very earliest; the Ms. is certainly much later. Otherwise, however, it does share many features with the printed edition of the text.²²

My preliminary investigations into this section of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* thus rested on rather inadequate foundations, making the recent publication by Muhammad Raushan particularly welcome if my research was to progress.

This edition, despite its usefulness, nevertheless raises various difficulties. In the first place, the basis for the text is not entirely clear. In his brief introduction, the editor states that work initially completed in collaboration with Mustafā Musavi, who was producing the typescript, was interrupted by the latter's heart attack and the text became scattered and divided. Resuming his task, Raushan consulted a microfilm of the Damad Ibrahim Pasha Ms. 919 of 885/1480 in the Süleimaniye Library in Istanbul and compared it with the *matn-i chāpī* ('printed text'). This is one of the few manuscripts of the complete work, although based on the earlier fifteenth-century compilation by Ḥāfiz-i Abrū contained in the Istanbul Ms. Bagdat 282.²³ However, it is not the base text, which elsewhere, in the substantial volume of textual variants, is again said to be the *matn-i chāpī*.²⁴ This possibly refers to the typed version previously prepared. Another text, in the Gulistan Palace (Tehran) is mentioned in the section of textual variants, similarly not otherwise identified.²⁵ The editor also mentions the Topkapı Mss. Ahmed III 2935, H. 1653 and H. 1654, without further discussion, for which one must revert to his introductions to earlier volumes of his complete edition of the work.²⁶ Neither H. 1653 nor H. 1654 (which are not given a *siglum* in this edition) is used in the critical apparatus in volume 3, at least not for the section of interest here; the implication may be that one of them (presumably H. 1653 – the Ḥāfiz-i Abrū text) forms the underlying basis for the edition.

In short, the Tehran edition appears to rest on a 'printed text' that I am currently unable to identify, supplemented by the substantial variants noted in the Süleimaniye Ms. Damad Ibrahim Pasha 919.²⁷

²¹E. G. Browne, "Suggestions for a complete edition of the Jami'u'tawarikh of Rashidu'd-Din Fadlu'llah", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (January 1908), pp. 17-37, at p. 18; C. Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, I (London, 1879), pp. 74-78.

²²See below.

²³Felix Tauer, "Les manuscrits persans historiques des bibliothèques de Stamboul: I", *Archiv Orientalni*, 3 (1931), pp. 87-118, at pp. 97-98. Raushan used it for his edition of the Mongol history (4 vols., Tehran, 1373/1994), IV, p. 2974; in his edition of the section on the Khwarazmshahs, *Tārīkh-i salāṭīn-i Khwārazm* (Tehran, 1389/2010), pp. sīzdah-pānzdah, he recognises it to be an element of the *Majma' al-tawārīkh-i sulṭāniyeh* by Ḥāfiz-i Abrū, a later recension of his *Majmū'eh*; cf. J. E. Woods, "The rise of Timūrid historiography", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 46/2 (1987), pp. 81-108, at p. 97; M. E. Subtelny and C. Melville, "Ḥāfez-e Abrū", in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* XI/5 (2002), pp. 507-509.

²⁴RJT, III, p. 1556. The majority of variants are marked with the *siglum* sl (Süleimaniye).

²⁵RJT, III, p. 1525.

²⁶See e.g. *Sāmāniyān*, pp. shānzdah-bīst-o chahār; *Salāṭīn-i Khwārazm*, pp. nuh-sīzdah.

²⁷The currently unidentified Gulistan Palace Ms. proves from the variants cited in vol. III to be closer to the 'original' Persian text than Damad Ibrahim Pasha 919.

The present discussion of Rashīd al-Dīn's treatment of the Pīshdādiyān engages with Dr Raushan's printed edition (hereafter RJT), compared, as appropriate, with the Edinburgh Arabic version (Ms. Arab 20) and the British Library Persian version (Ms. Add. 7628), to explore his interactions with the *Shāhnāmeḥ*. I shall also refer to Bal'amī's *Tārīkhnāma-yi Ṭabarī* (hereafter BTT) and Baiḍāwī's *Niẓām al-tawārīkh* (hereafter BNT) for the discussion of Rashīd al-Dīn's sources.

Rashīd al-Dīn and the *Shāhnāmeḥ*

Starting with the latter point, it is generally received wisdom that Rashīd al-Dīn's main source for early Islamic history was Bal'amī's 'translation' of Ṭabarī.²⁸ In reality, the situation is more complicated. In the printed edition (RJT, p. 69), Rashīd al-Dīn introduces the ten members of the dynasty of the Pīshdādiyān before opening the reign of the first king, Gayumars, with five lines of verse that are not found in the *Shāhnāmeḥ*. The verses are not included in the accounts of Bal'amī or Baiḍāwī (neither of which in fact are prosimetric texts).²⁹ All three works include a differently worded discussion of Gayumars' name, its meaning and the disputes surrounding his lineage. It is here that we immediately notice a reflection of Baiḍāwī's work, for both authors refer to the authority of Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī's *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* for the opinion that Gayumars was the brother of Sheth, while others say he was one of the sons of Noah.³⁰

This is soon followed, however, by the long story of Hushang and his death at the hands of demons (*dīvs*) and Gayumars' revenge — which closely follows the narrative in Bal'amī. Maria Subtelny has recently examined this episode in the course of an investigation of the undervalued pre-Islamic sections of Bal'amī's History, which could be seen as a parallel concern to my own.³¹ There are other elements in the long account by Bal'amī that make clear Rashīd al-Dīn's substantial dependency on this text, despite the fact that the ordering of material and much of the language differ somewhat. There is no need to pursue a full comparison of the stories, which are clearly related: but we may note, first, that these accounts are far more detailed and complex than Firdausī's brief narrative of the reign of Gayumars. This largely concerns the efforts of his son, Siyamak, to fight the demons — by whom he is killed. Gayumars' grief for Siyamak echoes the grief of Gayumars for Hushang, whose mourning was also brought to an end by a message from the angel Soroush as narrated by Bal'amī. In Firdausī's much simpler version (written about half a century after Bal'amī), Hushang is identified as Siyamak's son, who defeats the demons.³² Baiḍāwī's account is even

²⁸Raushan, RJT, intro. p. *bīst-o yek*; Raushan also edited the BTT, *Tārīkhnāmeḥ-yi Ṭabarī*, 5 vols. (Tehran, 1378/1999).

²⁹They are, however, in the Manchester Ms. 406, f. 2v, with variations. Ms. 406 mainly mirrors Raushan's text in this respect.

³⁰BNT, pp. 14–15; RJT, pp. 69–70.

³¹Maria Subtelny, "Between Persian legend and Samanid orthodoxy: accounts about Gayumarth in Bal'amī's *Tārīkhnāma*", in *Ferdowsi, the Mongols and the History of Iran. Art, Literature and Culture from Early Islam to Qajar Persia*, (eds) R. Hillenbrand, A.C.S. Peacock and F. Abdullaeva (London, 2013), pp. 33–45, at pp. 38–39. The parallel contexts are the appropriation of Persian (and Islamic) traditions for the Samanid regime and the repackaging of the same for the new Mongol power about 350 years later. We may also note the 'coincidence' that the earliest surviving complete text of Bal'amī including the pre-Islamic sections is dated 702/1302; *ibid.*, p. 34.

³²Firdausī, *Shāhnāmeḥ*, (ed.) Dj. Khaleghi-Motlagh, I (New York, 1987), p. 24 (hereafter SN).

briefly, and transposes onto Tahmuras avenging of the death of Hushang son of Gayumars, killed at the hands of the *dēvs* while prostrated in prayer.³³

Secondly, Rashīd al-Dīn intersperses his account with a considerable amount of poetry, especially towards the closing passages of Gayumars' reign. None of this is from the *Shāhnāmah*, though much of it is in the same metre and idiom as Firdausī's epic. The verses are unlikely to be Rashīd al-Dīn's own composition.³⁴ The same is true of the immediately following account of the reign of Hushang, which opens with four verses in imitation of the *Shāhnāmah*, though as in the earlier examples, the ready use of Arabic words betrays their origin.³⁵

Thirdly, the text of the printed edition differs dramatically from the version preserved in the British Library Ms;³⁶ we may question, indeed, whether Raushan's text can really be Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* at all. This sets a pattern for the accounts of these first kings.

The reign of Hushang

The long account of Hushang's reign that follows in the printed edition (RJT, pp. 85–95) owes little to Bal'amī, who restricts his information to a couple of paragraphs, which Rashīd al-Dīn incorporates at the end of his own account – concerning the origin of mining for ores and precious metals in his time, the use of skins of foxes and sables and the founding of towns such as Susa, Shushtar and Kufa.³⁷ Much of this material in Bal'amī is echoed in the *Shāhnāmah*, which records Hushang's efforts at irrigation, cultivation and the spread of justice.³⁸ Baiḏāwī, too, makes a brief reference to Hushang's extraction of ore and the founding of cities (notably Istakhr and Babul), but it is rather another aspect of the *Niẓām al-tawārīkh* that Rashīd al-Dīn adopts: he opens his account with an expanded version of Baiḏāwī's information that Hushang had a book of wisdom (the *Jāvīdān-khirad*, 'Eternal wisdom'), which was translated into Arabic by Ḥasan b. Sahl, the vizier of the caliph al-Ma'mūn, and in turn was incorporated into Miskawaihī's *Kitāb ādāb al-'arab wa'l-furs*.³⁹ According to the historians,⁴⁰ therefore, Hushang is the first to give advice (*pandiyāt*), and a substantial section of text that follows, separating Baiḏāwī's account at the outset from Bal'amī's at the end, is taken up with relaying this wisdom and various political precepts (*vaṣāyā*), concluding with a lengthy passage of verse.⁴¹

The didactic and ethical lessons to be drawn from the *Shāhnāmah*, concerning the foundations of just rule and the harnessing of the earth's animal and mineral resources, are thus present in Rashīd al-Dīn's history, at second hand, but the emphasis is on 'advice to kings', as also presented earlier in the so-called *khuṭba* of Gayumars (who is also a giver

³³BNT, p. 16.

³⁴E.g. RJT, pp. 82–84.

³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 85; Manchester Ms. 406, ff. 3v–4r.

³⁶Add. 7628, ff. 5r–v.

³⁷BTT, p. 88.

³⁸SN, p. 41.

³⁹BNT, p. 16; RJT, p. 86.

⁴⁰RJT earlier, p. 85, refers also to the *Tārīkh-i 'ajam*.

⁴¹RJT, pp. 87–95.

of *pand*, advice).⁴² It is interesting, nevertheless, that neither Rashīd al-Dīn nor these two earlier sources mention the thing for which Hushang is most particularly celebrated in the Persian tradition, namely the discovery of fire and establishing the feast of *Sadeh*.⁴³

Once more, the printed edition is a faint echo of the British Library Ms, which covers the reign of Hushang in five lines of text that are close to the passage at the end of Raushan's edition, mentioning among other things: "[...] the book *Jāvidān khirad* of practical wisdom is attributed to him. He was called Pīshdād – that is, the first to provide justice. [...] The Persians say he was a prophet (*paighambar*)".⁴⁴

We may note the close verbal parallels with the brief text in Baiḍāwī, and once more the absence of any of the poetry found in the printed text. The contemporary Arabic version in the Edinburgh Ms. Arab 20 (fol. 4r-v) is to all intents and purposes identical.

The reign of Tahmuras

A similar pattern emerges in the discussion of the next reign, of Tahmuras nicknamed '*dīv-band*'; the Persians (*fārsiyyān*) also call him '*zīnāvand*' (perfectly armed).⁴⁵ In the printed edition (RJT, pp. 96–103), Rashīd al-Dīn starts his account, once more, with seven verses in imitation of the *Shāhnāmeh* and a brief reference to justice in the phrase '*adl va inṣāf*, which is a leitmotif running through Baiḍāwī's History. There follows, however, another long passage concerning Tahmuras and the discussions with his wise vizier, Ādharbān, on dealing with lies and calumnies and the conduct of warfare against rebels and dissidents to maintain the security of the kingdom.⁴⁶

In the British Library Ms., on the other hand, the brief treatment of the reign of Tahmuras is rather different.⁴⁷ We read that he ruled 30 years. He built Kuhandiz [Ar. Kahardar] in Marv and two towns in Isfahan, Mīhrin and Saduyeh [Ar. *recte*, Saruyah]; Mīhrin is now a village known by another name and Hay (= Jay) is now on the site of Saduyeh; some say he built Nishapur and Fars.⁴⁸ Idol worship appeared in his time; many people were killed in a great epidemic (*vabā'*) that occurred and anyone who had lost a dear one made an effigy of him and soothed themselves by visiting it. In time this became a custom and led to the worship of idols (*ṣanam parastī*). Fasting came into existence also in his time: the reason being that many of the poor dervishes were unable to find nourishment and did not eat anything in the day and only broke their fast (*iftār*) at night, and they became content with that. After a while they also made that a custom. Those people (*qaum*) were called Kaldāniyān (Chaldaeans), and when Islam appeared, they called themselves *ṣāyim* (fasters) [Ar: *Ṣābba*,

⁴²RJT, pp. 75–76; cf. BTT, p. 84.

⁴³SN, p. 29 and the variants on p. 30, which suggest that the establishment of *Sadeh* is a later accretion.

⁴⁴Add. 7628, f. 5v.

⁴⁵RJT, p. 96.

⁴⁶RJT, pp. 96–101.

⁴⁷Ms. Add. 7628, ff. 5v–6r. Discrepancies with the Arabic text in the Edinburgh Ms. Arab 20, f. 4v, are noted [in brackets].

⁴⁸Presumably Bishapur in Fars; cf. the variants in BNT, p. 17, n. 1. The localities is Isfahan – Jay, Mīhrin, Saruyeh – are all mentioned in the historical geographies of the city, e.g. Muḥammad Mihdī, *Niṣf-i jahān fi ta'rif al-Isfahān*, (ed.) M. Sutudeh (Tehran, 1368/1989), pp. 139–141. See also the *Mujmal al-tawārīkh wa'l-qīṣaṣ*, (ed.) M. Bahar (Tehran, 1318/1939), p. 39, for an earlier account.

Sabians]. Some say that in the days of Tahmuras⁴⁹ there was drought and he ordered the well-off to be satisfied with one meal in the evening and to give their morning meals to the poor; gradually the custom of fasting appeared. He was called Tahmuras *Zīnāvand*, meaning ‘perfect in weaponry’.⁵⁰ It was also he who used to say that every group rejoices in its own beliefs and faiths and there is no need to oppose anyone standing by his own form of belief and worship. This custom still prevails in India.

The first point to note is of course that none of the lengthy passages on Tahmuras’ exchanges with his vizier (or the poetry) reproduced in the printed edition is found in the Persian ‘original’ version of the text. The emphasis on the continuation of fasting into the Islamic period is worth noting as is the interesting aside on the acceptable plurality of religious worship in India. There are various clear verbal and topical parallels with the very brief account by Baiḏāwī (BNT, p. 17), but it is also apparent that Rashīd al-Dīn’s original version owes nothing to the *Shāhnāmah*, which memorialises Tahmuras as the *dīv-band* (demon-tamer).

Returning to the printed Persian text (RJT, p. 101), Rashīd al-Dīn continues with a somewhat expanded version of the passage translated above, beginning with the account of the famine, as a result of which, fasting became the custom (*sunnat*) of Tahmuras and became an obligation (*farḍ*) in the time of the Prophet.

Rashīd al-Dīn then briefly mentions his epithet of *dīv-band*, due to his conquering the demons (*jinn*) in his kingdom. This is followed by his last testimony (*vaṣīyyat-hā-yi pādshāhāneh*) to his brother and heir apparent Jamshid, to the effect that if he wanted to be an effective and admired ruler, he should follow the legacy of Hushang, summed up in the saying “The justice of a just king is better than worship [of God]”.⁵¹

The Persian text continues (RJT, p. 103) with a long final passage enumerating his virtues and achievements: Tahmuras brought the animals in from the plains and separated (i.e. categorised) them;⁵² he was the first person to write Persian and he is supposed to have founded several towns [...]. In Isfahan, he established a house of worship on the mountain by the Zarrineh-rud and later placed idols there that remained until the time of Gushtasp, who ordered his son Isfandiyar to clear them away and establish a fire temple.

Rashīd al-Dīn then discusses the question of idol worship in similar terms to those given above. The passage concludes with a statement that the Sabians are thought to have appeared in his time, that his kingship lasted 30 years, and with a mixed message in verse:

If you hear advice (*paṇḍ*) from a wise man, consider the case of Tahmuras *dīv-band*
 Who made the branches of the tree of faithfulness (*vaḡā*) green, dug up the root of tyranny (*jaḡā*)
 from the horizons
 He went unfulfilled (*nā-kām*) and all his trouble (*raṇj*) brought no benefit at the time of his going.

On this basis, therefore, the printed version of Rashīd al-Dīn’s account of the reign of Tahmuras is a much longer and more complex composition than is found in the exactly

⁴⁹Text: *bi-farmān*; correctly in the Gulistan Palace Ms. (cited in the variants in JRT, III, p. 1563) and the Arabic version, Arab 20, f. 4v.

⁵⁰Cf. BTT, p. 86, applied to Hushang. The variants (see n. 49) again provide some better readings.

⁵¹RJT, p. 102.

⁵²An attribute also of Hushang, SN, p. 31.

contemporary Arabic translation of the work and the Persian text that echoes it. Even in the passages where the subject matter is the same, the level of detail and the order in which the topics are treated differs.

Bal'ami's account is much shorter and very different: Tahmuras was said to have been an idol-worshipper, "but this is a lie" — he worshipped God Almighty, following the religion of Idris! God gave him such strength that he was able to force the demons and Iblis (the Devil) to obey him and go out from among the people, sending them [the demons] away from the cultivated regions, to the deserts and the seas. He initiated the use of kingly adornments and riding on a horse with a saddle. The mating of the donkey and the horse to produce a mule occurred in his time. He taught the camel to bear loads and the cheetah to hunt. He was the first to sit on a throne and first to write in Persian.⁵³

There is almost no correspondence here with the text of Rashīd al-Dīn, except for the statement that Tahmuras was the first to write Persian and the general information about his domestication of animals. By contrast, the equivalence between Baiḏāwī's text (see above) and Rashīd al-Dīn's is sufficiently close to make it clear that the *Niẓām al-tawārīkh* was used as a source for the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*.

Turning to the *Shāhnāme*,⁵⁴ Firdausī's account is relatively detailed and after settling Tahmuras on the throne, describes how the shah used the wool of sheep and goats for weaving, domesticated animals and chose wild cats for hunting, and trained birds also for various roles. Firdausī makes only a brief allusion to fasting, introduced by the wise vizier, here called Shahrasb, who fasted by day and prayed by night. Whereas Bal'amī mentions only that Tahmuras was the first to ride a horse, Firdausī described how the shah subdued and rode around on the devil Ahriman. Seeing this, the demons rebelled but were crushed by Tahmuras, who spared their lives in exchange for their secret knowledge of writing: and they taught the shah to write not only Rumi (Byzantine), Arabic and Persian script, but also Soghdian, Chinese and Pahlavi. After 30 years he died, and

He went and his time came to an end; all his trouble (*ranj*) remained as his memorial
Do not nourish the world when you will bid it farewell; what use is your nourishing when you
are leaving?⁵⁵

Although Rashīd al-Dīn's closing verses (quoted above) are clearly a reflection of these lines, their sense is different. Similarly, although Firdausī's verses on the continuing differentiation and domestication of animals could be seen as an elaboration of Bal'amī's brief text, and his account of learning the (devilish) skill of writing likewise, neither Baiḏāwī nor Rashīd al-Dīn pick up on these details. For his part, Firdausī has nothing to say about the epidemics and the consequent rise of idol worship, and essentially nothing about fasting, or its link with the scarcity that caused it.

So far as this goes, therefore, it is very difficult to conclude that Rashīd al-Dīn was making any serious use of the *Shāhnāme* for his own history. We could leave the discussion at this point, except that with the reign of Jamshid there is a further development.

⁵³BTT, p. 89.

⁵⁴SN, pp. 35-37.

⁵⁵SN, p. 37, vv. 46-47.

The reign of Jamshid

Rashīd al-Dīn's account of Jamshid, in the printed edition (RJT, pp. 103–115), once more starts with five verses that are not found elsewhere.⁵⁶ He continues with a debate on the meaning of Jamshid's name and pedigree, which he resolves by explicit reference to the *Shāhnāme*, and then quotes the first two verses of Firdausī's account of Jamshid:⁵⁷

The noble Jamshid, his son, bound his waist and of one mind, full of his advice (*panā*)
Came to the throne of his auspicious father, the golden crown on his head according to Kayanian
custom

Rashīd al-Dīn continues to follow the *Shāhnāme* closely, both in its account of the general welfare enjoyed by the people under Jamshid's guidance, and by a prolific quotation of Firdausī's verse. Thus, as in the *Shāhnāme*, Jamshid is said to have spent the first 50 years of his reign making weapons;⁵⁸ another 50 producing garments, with the introduction of silk (*qaz*).⁵⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn interrupts this exposition with a reference back to the wise vizier Shahrāsab, who encouraged justice and spent the nights in prayer – noting that some say he was vizier of Jamshid's father Tahmuras (see above), again quoting explicitly from Firdausī in the *Shāhnāme*.⁶⁰ Shahrāsab was responsible for Jamshid's success in war through wearing armour; and the capital was moved from Sistan to Fars, where Jamshid constructed the great city of Istakhr, extending from Khafrak to Ramjird,⁶¹ and erected magnificent buildings that dwarfed those of his ancestors. Today, continues Rashīd al-Dīn, the visible traces of these ruins and columns of houses are called Chehel Minar ('40 columns') — a clear reference to Persepolis or Takht-i Jamshid.

This latter passage is taken almost verbatim from Baiḍāwī's *Niẓām al-tawārīkh* and is found in both the contemporary Arabic and Persian manuscript versions of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* — which follow Baiḍāwī very closely in both their contents and their brevity, compared with this lengthy treatment of Jamshid's reign in the printed text.⁶²

This continues with the defeat of the demons,⁶³ and after completing the development of Istakhr in 316 years, Jamshid started on the division of society into four groups — the 'ulama; the amirs, vizier and scribes; the military and the cultivators and other subjects.⁶⁴ We may note that the order here differs from that in Firdausī, and is also considerably fuller than the text in Bal'amī, though the material is substantially the same.⁶⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn's narrative introduces a novel element with the account of Jamshid's four seal rings, each inscribed with a different motto: one concerning warfare, one concerning cultivation and taxation; one

⁵⁶These are however, as usual, in the Manchester Ms. 406, f. 6v.

⁵⁷SN, p. 41, vv. 3–4.

⁵⁸SN, pp. 41–42, vv. 10–13.

⁵⁹SN, p. 42, vv. 14–19, omitting v. 17.

⁶⁰SN, p. 36, vv. 20–23, with variants.

⁶¹For these locations, see Ḥamd-Allāh Mustaufī, *Nuzhat al-qulūb*, (ed.) M. Dabīr-Siyāqī (Tehran, 1378/2000), p. 177; there was a dam on the river Kur at Ramjird, *ibid.*, p. 181.

⁶²BNT, pp. 17–18; Ms. Arab 20, ff. 4v–5r; BL. Add. 7628, f. 6r; a close copy of the 1317 Persian text in Ms. H. 1654, ff. 4v–5r: cf. Inal, "Miniatures in historical manuscripts", pp. 103–104, Fig. 2.

⁶³SN, p. 43, vv. 35–42, omitting vv. 39, 41.

⁶⁴RJT, pp. 107–108.

⁶⁵BTT, pp. 90–91.

for messengers and postal officials (*barīdān*), and one for the exercise of justice and hearing petitions.⁶⁶

The printed text of Rashīd al-Dīn continues in this manner for the rest of the account of Jamshid, treating at some length his establishment of Nauruz and the continuing 300 years of prosperity, until after 616 years of his reign had passed and his gratitude to God became corrupted: some say that his magic cup (*the Jam-i Jamshid*) and its powers were what turned his head. At all events, he summoned the people and told them to worship him; he made idols in his image and sent them out to the lands,⁶⁷ from which point his *farr* and his glory (*shukūh*) disappeared. Rashīd al-Dīn once more quotes Firdausī,⁶⁸ and again for the Iranians seeking out Zahhak, who had killed his father and seized the kingdom.⁶⁹ After 100 years of warfare, first against his own brother, Asfarivard, Jamshid fled and was eventually killed. Recounting various versions of his death, Rashīd al-Dīn mentions that he was sawn in two by Zahhak (as in the *Shāhnāme*). Interestingly, he also recounts another tale, that Jamshid wandered the world incognito for some time, and ended up marrying a girl from Sistan, from which union Garshasp was descended, and also Rustam. This information is taken from the *Garshāspnāme*, several verses of which are quoted.⁷⁰

Rashīd al-Dīn's account then reverts to detailing some of Jamshid's other attributes and events with which his formative reign is associated, namely the development of medicine, and a long story about the introduction of wine drinking, its being banned under Kay Qubad and its later reinstatement — the latter episodes clearly reflecting the story of Kairuy and of the tipsy shoemaker taming an escaped lion associated with the reign of Bahram Gur in the *Shāhnāme*.⁷¹ In the final paragraphs, the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* ends with a brief and largely repetitive statement about Jamshid's construction works, notably Ctesiphon in Mada'in and the stone bridge over the Tigris that was destroyed by Iskandar and which Ardashir was unable to repair; the latter detail is also in the early manuscript witnesses of the text.⁷²

As noted by Maria Subtelny in her discussion of Bal'amī's account of Gayumars, this narrative of the reign of Jamshid is clearly a patchwork drawn from several different sources, with no real effort to integrate them into a single coherent text.⁷³ Bal'amī's account provides comparable material only for part of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, on Jamshid's development of the army, introducing weaving, harnessing the *dīvs* to building works, discovering musk and camphor and other scents, and dividing society into four classes. Apart from detailing Jamshid's fall (in very different terms, invoking the intervention of the devil Iblis), Bal'amī also, under the subsequent 'reign' of Bivarasp, mentions the alternative stories of Jamshid's death and the full lineage of his descendants from the ruler of Sistan, through Garshasp to

⁶⁶RJT, p. 109.

⁶⁷Closely echoing BNT, p. 18 and Arab 20, f. 5r; H. 1654, f. 5r and Add. 7628, f. 6r.

⁶⁸SN, p. 45, vv. 73 (very different) and 74.

⁶⁹SN, p. 51, vv. 174–182, omitting vv. 176, 179 and 182.

⁷⁰RJT, pp. 112–13; verses not traced so far in Asadī Tūsī, *Garshāspnāme*, (ed.) H. Yaghmā'ī (Tehran, 1317/1939).

⁷¹SN, VI, (ed.) Dj. Khaleghi-Motlagh and M. Omidisalar (New York, 2005), pp. 440–445.

⁷²RJT, pp. 113–15; for the bridge, Arab 20, f. 5r; H. 1654, f. 5r; BL. Add. 7628, f. 6r; none of which, however, mention Ardashir; neither does *Mujmal al-tawārīkh*, p. 40. Earlier accounts of many of the details associated here with Jamshid, including his ring and the invention of wine, are noted in "Jamshid I. Myth of Jamshid", and "II. Jamshid in Persian literature", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, XIV/5 (New York, 2008), pp. 501–522 (P.O. Skjaervo) and 522–528 (M. Omidisalar), esp. pp. 504–505, 509, 523–526.

⁷³Subtelny, p. 36.

Rustam and Faramarz – as narrated, at great length, according to Bal'amī, in the *Shāhnāmeh* of Abu'l-Mu'ayyad Balkhī.⁷⁴

On the other hand, for the first time, we find a considerable reliance on the *Shāhnāmeh* of Firdausī, not for all the material mentioned, but for a large part of it, and not only in terms of the subject matter, but with direct quotations from the epic. This continues in the rest of this section of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, though peaking in the reign of Zahhak before reducing again in the subsequent reigns of Faridun and Manuchihr.⁷⁵ Space does not permit the pursuit of this investigation into these reigns, which would for the most part merely reinforce the observations already made.

Conclusions

In short, our discussion has suggested (1) that the recent printed edition of Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* does not represent the earliest known witnesses to the text, but later reworkings and enlargements associated with the work of Ḥāfīz-i Abrū. (2) For the reign of Jamshid onwards, at least, this expanded text refers frequently to the *Shāhnāmeh*, including the citation of Firdausī's verses. (3) The earliest versions of this section of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* show signs of a heavy dependency on Baiḍāwī's *Niẓām al-tawārīkh*, both verbally and in terms of content.

This latter point further helps to distinguish the original text of Rashīd al-Dīn from the later reworkings. In M. Raushan's printed edition, the structural arrangement of the text also follows the lead of Baiḍāwī's work, in that the history of the Pishdādiyān kings is treated in a single chapter, distinct from the history of the ante-diluvian prophets that precedes it. The contents of printed text echo precisely the contents of the first part of Ḥāfīz-i Abrū's *Majma' al-tawārīkh*.⁷⁶ In the earlier witnesses of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, however, the history of the kings and prophets are amalgamated into what aimed to be a single chronological sequence; this structure is closer to Bal'amī's work, in which the reigns of Jamshid and Bivarasp are followed by an account of Noah. The reigns of Zahhak and Faridun are then followed by an account of Nimrud, Hud and 'Ad, and so on. In the Edinburgh Ms. Arab 20, the reigns of Jamshid and Zahhak are followed by the account of Ibrahim (Abraham), Faridun is followed by Yusuf (Joseph), etcetera.⁷⁷ The Ṭabarī/Bal'amī arrangement certainly has the effect of reducing the focus on the Persian imperial traditions, often referring to the monarchs as ruling at the time of the different prophets. By contrast, the organisation of material by Baiḍāwī and Ḥāfīz-i Abrū emphasises the secular rather than the religious framework for history.

In his Mongol history, Rashīd al-Dīn's engagement with the *Shāhnāmeh* — citation of verses and the use of epithets ("Jamshid-like", etc.) — is generally taken straight from his

⁷⁴BTT, p. 93. See further, Marjolijn van Zutphen, *Farāmarz the Sīstāni Hero. Texts and Traditions of the Farāmarznāme and the Persian Epic Cycle* (Leiden, 2014), esp. pp. 24–25, 91–91.

⁷⁵JT, pp. 116–118, 120–124.

⁷⁶See Kh. Bayani's thorough introduction to his second edition of Ḥāfīz-i Abrū's *Zail-i Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* (Tehran, 1350/1971), pp. 29–35. The similarity extends to the preliminary passages on the uses of history, in RJT, pp. 10–23, composed by Ḥāfīz-i Abrū and not present in the contemporary mss. of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*.

⁷⁷Cf. Add. 7628, ff. 6v–8r.

source, Juvainī's *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā*, a highly literary work written in the period before the Il-Khans embraced Islam. Juvainī had used the *Shāhnāme* as an affirmation of Iranian identity in the face of the Mongol threat. By contrast, in his history of the pre-Islamic history of Iran Rashīd al-Dīn makes no direct reference to the *Shāhnāme*, while nevertheless emphasising the continuity of Iranian kingship and especially the ethics of good government and urban construction; hence also a series of enthroned monarchs to illustrate the work. It was the message, rather than the text, of the *Shāhnāme* that he absorbed, largely from Baiḏāwī's *Niẓām al-tawārīkh*, while drawing attention to continuities with Islamic practices such as fasting.

On the other hand, Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, the continuator of Rashīd al-Dīn, who incorporated the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* into his own universal chronicles, inserted much more of the *Shāhnāme* in to his work, not least in the tangible form of poetic quotations. As he also mentions incorporating Bal'amī's *Tarjumeh-yi Tārīkh-i Ṭabarī* into his narrative, this further confirms that Bal'amī was not much used by Rashīd al-Dīn himself: and this accounts for some of the additional material found in Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū's text. This turns the focus of attention to the question of Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū's relationship to the *Shāhnāme* as well as to the text of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, which needs further investigation. With the increasing Islamisation of the Mongol court in Timurid Herat under his patron, Shāhrukh, a century later, the *Shāhnāme* could perhaps appreciated once more for its literary and cultural value rather than as a blueprint for imperial rule. <cpm1000@cam.ac.uk>

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