

Georg Leube\*

# Aqqyunlu Turkmen Rulers Facing the Ruins of Takht-i Jamshīd

<https://doi.org/10.1515/islam-2018-0031>

**Abstract:** This article investigates the ways in which Aqqyunlu rulers drew on the material remains of bygone dynasties by including ruins in their court ceremonial. Central for the investigation are two inscriptions left by the *majlis* or artistic assemblée of an Aqqyunlu prince on the ruins of one of the Achaemenid palaces at Persepolis or Takht-i Jamshīd in Iran. These important epigraphic sources are presented here in an improved critical edition and discussed in their social, architectural, and literary context. In musing over past glories, the prince and his retinue appropriated the heritage of bygone prophets and kings, framing their courtly representation as part of a continuous tradition of just rulers over southern Iran.

**Keywords:** Turkmen, Aqqyunlu, Iconography, Representation of Authority, Takht-i Jamshīd, Epigraphy.

## Bygone dynasties and the performativity of rulership

While much work has been done on the political history of the Turkmen entities known as the Qaraqyunlu and Aqqyunlu during the long 15th Century CE,<sup>1</sup> the delicate interplay of continuity, appropriation, and opposition with regard

---

<sup>1</sup> Woods 1999 is still the groundbreaking work on the political history of the Aqqyunlu. The main historical works composed under Aqqyunlu patronage are Abū Bakr-i Tihirānī, *Diwānbakriyyih* (1962 and 1964) and Faḍlallāh Rūzbihānī Khunjī, *Ālam-ārā* (2003). Quotations to the *Ālam-ārā* of Faḍlallāh will in the following refer to the most recent edition prepared by Muḥammad Akbar ‘Ashiq, rather than to the earlier edition edited by John E. Woods: Fadlullah b. Ruzbihan Khunji-Isfahani [sic], *Ālam-arā* (1992). See also al-Ghiyāth, *Tārīkh* (1970). All translations in this article are, where not otherwise indicated, the work of the author. Where in doubt, preference is arbitrarily given to an Arabic transliteration of words which could also be read as Persian.

---

**\*Corresponding author: Georg Leube**, Bayreuth University, Bayreuth, Germany, [Georg.Leube@uni-bayreuth.de](mailto:Georg.Leube@uni-bayreuth.de)

to prior traditions of rulership that characterizes the iconography representing rightful rule during this time remains a rather understudied field. This article aims to present a case-study of one example for such an enactment of rightful authority, combining a critical edition of the epigraphic evidence with an attempt to reconstruct the social and intertextual surroundings of the most curious courtly session held by the Aqquyunlu prince Khalil b. Uzun Ḥasan among the ruins of the Achaemenid palaces of Persepolis / Takht-i Jamshid in the fall of the year 1476 CE.

This investigation of the conscious appropriation of multiple traditions in the representation of rightful authority builds on studies in the material culture of the Islamic World. The modes in which ‘history’ could be codified, constructed, and functionalized for the deployment of a common tradition have been extensively studied in the context of the emergence of nation-states in the 19th and 20th centuries.<sup>2</sup> The ways in which recollections of past events were transmitted and continued to structure society have been analyzed as *Cultural Memories* regarding the influence of Ancient Egyptian and Biblical traditions on Modern Europe.<sup>3</sup> While both approaches serve as important theoretical starting points for the analysis of the material culture of historic Islamic societies, the conscious negotiation and appropriation of multiple memories or traditions in Islamic societies (and in Islamic court culture in particular) highlights the scope and the freedom in which this actualization of memories was deployed.<sup>4</sup>

In the representation of authority as performed by Aqquyunlu rulers, special importance was given to a certain set of *lieux de mémoire*, which were held to be intimately connected to the heritage of earlier rulers. By including these places or *topoi* of rulership in their court ceremonial, Aqquyunlu rulers were able to draw upon the heritage of earlier rulers over lands under their dominion to advance claims to authority of their own. This inclusion of the ruins of earlier dynasties’ supposed palaces in court ceremonial had already been established by prior rulers and can even be described as a ‘topos of lost places’ in historiographical accounts from the wider Iranian historiographical tradition.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> See Hobsbawm/Ranger 1983 and ANDERSON 1983.

<sup>3</sup> ASSMANN 1992.

<sup>4</sup> It is difficult to describe a canon of studies that prefigure this actualization of multiple traditions in Islamic material and written culture. While important groundwork has been laid in general studies of Islamic Art and Architecture (see, for instance, GRABAR 1987), the studies of REDFORD 1993 and HEIDEMANN 2013 focus more closely on material aspects of court culture at the “fringes” of the Iranian cultural sphere.

<sup>5</sup> The most famous occurrence of the topos of a ‘lost place’, whose former splendor as a seat of rightful authority can merely be sensed from the size of its ruins, probably lies in the verses spo-

As a manifest example erected during the time of the Īlkhānid rulers over Iran in the 14th century, one may refer to the building of a palace in the ensemble of earlier, particularly Sāsānian ruins in today's Western Iran, known today as Takht-i Sulaymān or *Throne of Salomo*. As Sulaymān had been a just ruler appointed to reign by God according to Qur'ānic precedent, whoever could sit on the *Throne of Sulaymān* would be able to perform a re-enactment of Sulaymān's reign, using the key *lieu de mémoire* connected with his Prophetical predecessor in popular imagination as a signifier of the soundness of his own claim to authority.

This Īlkhānid precedent was also followed by the Aqquyunlu, who in turn displayed the legitimacy of their authority by repairing the remains of Īlkhānid representational architecture. The most detailed narrative of such a restoration of the glory of a dilapidated palace's ruins in the official historiography produced at the Aqquyunlu court concerns the palace of Ūjān in the summer-pastures east of Tabriz in today's Western Iran:

The high-renowned court [left Tabriz and] turned towards the palace (*qaṣr*) of Ūjān. A year before, the aspiring mind [of the ruler] [...] had ordered the repair and reconstruction of the palace of Ūjān, which lies in the middle of the steppe of Ūjān. Its foundation rises up like a mighty mountain and the height of its buildings ashamed [the proverbial Pre-Islamic palaces of] Khavarnaq and Haramān. It is said that [the Īlkhānid ruler] sulṭān Ghāzān had erected this palace at the time when he founded Ūjān as a town.

Because the wear and tear of days and nights had left its traces on this edifice and the ceiling and walls were inclined to collapse, it had been ordered during the summer-pasture of 894 by the highest command to restore this palace to its original shape, nay, to embellish it even more and ever more perfectly! [...] At this time, when the auspicious court planned to settle at the steppe of Ūjān, the building of the palace had been completed. The pādishāh and Refuge of the World entered this high-ceilinged palace as the sun enters the peaks of heaven, followed by the army of the stars. [...]

The king climbed to the peak of the palace of Ūjān

And the palace of Ūjān became alike the turning of the heavens,

Recording the turning of the days

And the story of the seven heavens and Bahrām:

The seven arrows found their light from the king

As Bahrām hunted a hundred wild donkeys (*gūr*).<sup>6</sup>

The rebuilt palace is then used as the scene of a rendering of homage by courtiers and provincial authorities, who offer presents to the ruler and are given presents

---

ken by the Ottoman ruler Mehmed II after the conquest of Constantinople according to Ottoman historiographical accounts:

"The spider serves as gatekeeper in the Halls of Khosrau's dome / The owl plays martial music in the palace of Afrasiyab." See NĖCİPOĞLU 1991, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Faḍlallāh, *Tārīkh* (2003), 364–365.

in return. During the course of this performance of royal authority ordering the world as the sun orders the heavens, the setting of the assemblée at the site of bygone rulers' palaces serves to establish a tradition of righteous authority, which is returned to the palace of Ūjān by the Aqquyunlu ruler and in which the ruler inscribes himself by means of his restoration of the residence.

A second layer of meaning is introduced by the reference to the proverbial hunt of the pre-Islamic Persian king Bahrām Gūr in the last line. As the Aqquyunlu rulers also habitually hunted during their *yaylāq* or summer pasture,<sup>7</sup> by hunting in the vicinity of the rebuilt palace of Ūjān, the Aqquyunlu ruler Ya'qūb also performed a re-enactment of the rule of one of the righteous Pre-Islamic Persian kings. On a third level, the commemoration of these performances in the elaborate medium of cultured Persian prose and poetry firmly inscribed the Aqquyunlu court at Ūjān in the supra-dynastical matrix of Persianate traditions of canonical rulership.

## The inclusion of Takht-i Jamshīd in Aqquyunlu court ceremonial

Another instance of the conscious inclusion of the locality of a residence of long-elapsed rulership in the representation of Aqquyunlu authority, which transcends the post-Mongol frame of Īlkhānid and Turkmen Ūjān, is reported from southern Iran during the occasion of a provincial review held in the plain adjacent to the ruins of the Achaemenid residence of Takht-i Jamshīd. These ruins, parts of which were visible over ground even before the modern excavation and reconstruction, had been inscribed by local rulers at least since the Sāsānian period and continue to serve as the site for inscriptions until modern times.<sup>8</sup> The remains of the Achaemenid residence known today as the Palace of Darius or *Tachara* in particular, located near the edge of the huge artificial terrace of Takht-i Jamshīd, formed a monumental palimpsest accessible and readable to travellers:

And these silent ruins tell their story by means of innumerable inscriptions [...]. At the beginning, there are mysterious cuneiform characters, that formed part of the initial ornamentation [...]. And then, randomly spread, there are reflections of all those that came,

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Abū Bakr-i Tihirānī, *Diyārbakriyyih* (1962–1964), 1, 96, where the *yaylāq* of Mingöl or Bingöl in today's Eastern Turkey is praised due to its isolation from human settlement and corresponding wealth in game.

<sup>8</sup> A catalogue of the inscriptions is given by MUSTAFAVĪ 1343/1965 and SĀMĪ 1348/1971. The Buyid inscriptions in particular are also treated by DONOHUE 1983.

across the ages, drawn here by the great name of Persepolis; simple notes, or even sentences, ancient poems on the vanity of the things of this world, in Greek, in Kūfī, in Syriac, in Persian, in Hindustānī, or even in Chinese. “*Where are the rulers who ruled in this palace until the day when death invited them to drink from his cup? How many towns were built in the morning, that fell in ruin in the evening?*”, wrote there, in Arabic, about three centuries ago, a passing poet, signing: “*Alī, son of sulṭān Khaled...*”<sup>9</sup>

While the romantic enthusiasm of Pierre LOTI illustrates the durability and continued accessibility of the Aqqyunlu inscription discussed as *Inscription A* in this article, his attribution of the verses (and, presumably, of the calligraphy) to the personal sentiment of “a passing artist” is rather unprecise. By contrast, the inscription very consciously commemorates the session of the Aqqyunlu court held among the ruins in 881/1476 with a specific selection of verses lamenting the lost glory of earlier rulers. The calligraphies of these verses inscribed in the stone of the ruins had been composed during the royal visit to Takht-i Jamshīd by ‘Alī, a son of the Aqqyunlu prince Khalīl. They form a crucial source for the positioning of the Aqqyunlu rulers vis-à-vis earlier traditions of rulership and will accordingly be discussed at length in this article.



**Fig. 1:** The remains of the Palace of Darius known as the Tachara, author's photograph.

---

<sup>9</sup> LOTI 1988, 126.

The military and civil review of 881/1476, as well as the courtly session preceding the review proper, during which the inscriptions were composed, is described in great detail in a short contemporary treatise in elaborate prose, composed by the philosopher and scholar Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Dāwānī. In this so-called *‘Arznāmih* or *Account of the Parade*, a prominent place is given to the content and the circumstances of the calligraphies inscribed into the ruins, before the actual review is described. The occasion of the courtly session at Takht-i Jamshīd is presented by Dāwānī as follows:

[Sulṭān Khalīl, the son of the Aqquyunlu ruler Uzun Ḥasan, decided to hold a general review near the Band-i Mīr in the plain adjacent to Takht-i Jamshīd in the fall of 881 AH.] When the victorious flags reached Iṣṭakhr-i Fārs [...], they remained for one day at this place of strange ruins to regard those astonishing images. [...] Some histories mention that this place was called *Thousand Columns* in the time of the Persian kings (*mulūk al-‘ajam*). [...]

In short, when this place was lit up by the sunshine of the overcoming flag and the Little Moon of the auspicious banner, the locality was reminded of [the pre-Islamic Persian king and eponymous founder of Takht-i Jamshīd] Jamshīd in a way to make Jamshīd forgotten. [...] The sleepy fortune of the residents of this throneroom (*takhtgāh*), which had been trampled under the foot of events since the time of [the mythical king] Jam, woke up. The hopeful eye of the servants of this residence, which had waited for countless centuries, was opened by the dust raised by the victorious retinue. [...]

His highness, of Sulaymān’s rank (*ḥaẓrat-i sulaymān makānī*), deigned to remain at this place together with his personal entourage (*khawāṣṣ-i khuddām*) for one day. During this time, some verses which the late [Timūrid] prince [...] Sulṭān Ibrāhīm had written with his own hand in some parts of this place came to the notice of the ruler. It was seen as appropriate [...] that his highness the prince [...] Abū l-Ma‘ālī Sulṭān ‘Alī Mīrzā, who, notwithstanding his youth [...], had made great progress in the art of calligraphy [...], give an example of his art. Vis-à-vis of those lines [of Sulṭān Ibrāhīm], he wrote some appropriate verses with his [...] pen.

His highness, the prince [...], chose some verses of [...] the Commander of the Faithful [...] ‘Alī. [Here Dāwānī quotes the verses of the first inscription, which will be discussed as *Inscription A* below.]

Afterwards, he wrote the following verses of Nīzāmī [...]: [Here the verses of the second inscription or *Inscription B* are quoted.]

After the most august name and the date of the inscription, the following verses were improvised by the [...] Ṣadr [Mawlānā ‘Alī Bayhaqī], alluding to the young age of the [...] prince: [The verses are also still extant directly following the verses by Nīzāmī and the date: All are included in the following edition of *Inscription B*.]<sup>10</sup>

The report of Dāwānī continues with the description of the great review at the Band-i Mīr. The inscriptions at Takht-i Jamshīd, which he mentions, are still

<sup>10</sup> Dāwānī, “*‘Arznāmih*” (1331/1913) 287–289.

extant and are edited in full in an appendix to this article together with the readings given in earlier editions.

## References to Sulaymān and the pre-Islamic Persian kings connected to the site of Takht-i Jamshīd

In his account of the artistic session in the ruins of Takht-i Jamshīd, Dāwānī carefully depicts the dimensions of royal glory which establish the ruins of the Achaemenid residence as a key *lieu de mémoire* for later dynasties, such as his Aqqyunlu patrons. During this exploration of the use of the material heritage of earlier rulers in Aqqyunlu court ceremonial, I will draw attention mainly to the 'political' aspects of the inscriptions at Takht-i Jamshīd. MELIKIAN-CHIRVANI has already discussed the mystical connotations of the concept of a transcendental *realm of Sulaymān*, or *mulk-i Sulaymān*, as represented in Islamic inscriptions at Pasargād and Takht-i Jamshīd. This realm was, according to MELIKIAN-CHIRVANI, seen as the paradigmatic unification of political-worldly and mystical-transcendental authority and actualized as a source of authority by rulers over Southern Iran in particular.<sup>11</sup> In the course of his argument stressing the mystical character of references to Sulaymān as voiced in epigraphy from the time of the Salghurids onwards, MELIKIAN-CHIRVANI, however, argues against the specific politico-geographical relevance of such references.<sup>12</sup> Even though the author does later, in his discussion of the Aqqyunlu inscriptions, admit a geographical connection between references to Sulaymān and the region of Fārs, ruled by Khalīl b. Uzun Ḥasan, the father of the calligrapher prince 'Alī,<sup>13</sup> he is mainly interested in demonstrating the mystical character of references to the Qur'ānic prophet, who, in his line of argument, stands for the mystical preceptor.<sup>14</sup> With the mystical layer of allusions established by MELIKIAN-CHIRVANI, I would like to turn to the dimensions in which political rule over Takht-i Jamshīd and the surrounding region of Fārs was conceptualized in Aqqyunlu times.

In his *Arz-nāmiḥ*, Dāwānī contrasts the Aqqyunlu courtly session held among the ruins of the Achaemenid palaces with a vivid description of ceremo-

---

<sup>11</sup> MELIKIAN-CHIRVANI 1971.

<sup>12</sup> MELIKIAN-CHIRVANI 1971, 16.

<sup>13</sup> MELIKIAN-CHIRVANI 1971, 26.

<sup>14</sup> MELIKIAN-CHIRVANI 1971, 31–32.

nies held during the original foundation of Takht-i Jamshīd. As Dāwānī's account of the court of the mythical king of Jam/Sulaymān forms a central foil to the court ceremonial performed by his Aqquyunlu patrons, the passage in question will be translated in full.

[Some histories mention that this place was called *Thousand Columns* in the time of the Persian kings (*mulūk al-ʿajam*), see above.] And it was built during the time of Jamshīd, who is Sulaymān according to some historians.<sup>15</sup> In these histories it is reported that, when the works had been completed, Jamshīd ordered his subjects to gather at the foot of this hill on the day of Nawrūz. A throne of red gold encrusted with sparkling jewels had been erected on these columns, while Jamshīd had a crown of gold on his head and, wearing gold-embroidered robes, sat on this throne. When the sun rose, he ordered his throne to be pulled forward to face the sunlight. The rays of the sun were reflected by him and all onlookers were dazzled. When his subjects saw him in this state, they exclaimed: Today two suns have risen for us, one from heaven and one from earth! And all of them fell down in worship. Afterwards, Jamshīd asked them to rise, complimented them in calling: May God the Highest have mercy with you!, and ordered them to clean and equip themselves every year on this day. After this day, they called him Jamshīd, as he had been called Jam and *shīd* means sunlight in their language. Because of this, they included the sunlight in his name.<sup>16</sup>

While the equation of the Persian king Jam, “who was king before al-Ḍaḥḥāk”, with the Qurʾānic prophet Sulaymān is already mentioned some 500 years before the Aqquyunlu in the geographical work of al-Iṣṭakhrī as “the opinion of people among the Persians who do not bother with documentation”,<sup>17</sup> the manner in which Persianate and Prophetical heritage are reconciled in Dāwānī's account is highly significant. While Jam/Sulaymān is credited with a dazzling performance of royal splendor, he piously objects to his subjects' attempts to worship him as their second sun. Instead, he asks God – addressed in Jamshīd's words in the quoted text above as *allāhu taʿālā* or *God, be He exalted*, a classical Arabic/Islamic mode of formulaic praise of God – for forgiveness for his people and their mistaken veneration of his royal pomp. Accordingly, the pre-Islamic annual festivity of Nawrūz, widely celebrated across what Bert FRAGNER aptly framed as

<sup>15</sup> While Kilisli Rifat in his edition of Dāwānī, “Arznāmih” (1331/1913) sets the Persian word *ast*, translated here as *is*, in quotation marks, Afshār in his edition of Dāwānī, “Arż-i sipāh-i Ūzūn Ḥasan” (1335/1956) gives *Sulaymānast*, [he] *is Sulaymān*, in one word without quotation marks. As it is quite improbable that this *copula* should have been emphasized in the original Persian of the manuscripts, the quotation marks probably form an editorial addition by Kilisli Rifat and are therefore left out in the translation.

<sup>16</sup> Translated after Dāwānī, “Arznāmih” (1331/1913), 286, corresponding with minor variations to Dāwānī, “Arż-i sipāh-i Ūzūn Ḥasan” (1335 h.š./1956), 41–42.

<sup>17</sup> Al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Masālik* (1927), 123.



the geographical dispersion of the *Persophonie*,<sup>18</sup> is rooted in this account of an amalgamated Prophetic/royal Persian historical perspective as a day of atonement, which is celebrated with the ritual cleaning established by Jam/Sulaymān.

Prophetic and royal authority are in this account conceptualized as non-opposed entities jointly serving to establish righteous precedent. Specifically, they even appear to be entwined in the person of the just ruler in a way that is parallel to the entwined actualization of the authority of Islamic piety and the authority of military-ceremonial splendor encountered in the depiction of Aqquyunlu rulers sketched above. In this way, the site of Takht-i Jamshīd becomes a key *lieu de mémoire* of just rulership, jointly supported by 'political' and 'religious' authority.

The region of Fārs, which encompasses Takht-i Jamshīd and other *lieux de mémoire* of Salomonic precedent, is frequently connected in its entirety to Sulaymān and pre-Islamic Persian rulers considered paragons of divinely supported kings in the Aqquyunlu historiography. Abū Bakr-i Tihirānī styles his patron Uzun Hasan *Sulaymān-i zamān* or *the Sulaymān of our times*, during his expedition to Fārs and Shirāz,<sup>19</sup> while the town of Iṣṭakhr adjacent to Takht-i Jamshīd is called the *high throne of the Persian kings* at the occasion of the Qaraqayunlu ruler Jahānshāh's march to Fārs.<sup>20</sup> In a similar vein, Faḍlallāh calls Fārs *mulk-i Sulaymān*, or *kingdom of Sulaymān*, at the occasion of some disturbances in this province.<sup>21</sup> In another instance, he designates the town of Shirāz, which he describes as the pre-eminent town in the province of Fārs, *takht-i Sulaymān*, or *throne of Sulaymān*.<sup>22</sup> Especially significant is his complementation of the phrase *mulk-i Sulaymānī*, or *Salomonic kingdom*, in a rhyming phrase together with *ṭilsam-i Khusrawānī*, or *talisman of [the pre-Islamic Persian king] Khusraw* when referring to some events located in the province of Fārs.<sup>23</sup> Here, religious and royal authority are constructed in a marked chiasmus with the prophet Sulaymān referenced for his kingdom and Khusraw, the paradigmatic pre-Islamic Persian king, framed in the guise of a maker of talismans drawing on otherworldly powers.

That the association of the site of Takht-i Jamshīd and the province of Fārs with the prophetic reign of Sulaymān was indeed, as already claimed for his own contemporaries by the geographer al-Iṣṭakhri in the account quoted above, by no means limited to the literary handicraft of the highest echelons of courtly patronage during the time of the Aqquyunlu, is also attested from a somewhat

18 FRAGNER 1999, 107.

19 Abū Bakr-i Tihirānī, *Diwānbakriyyih* (1962 and 1964), 527–528.

20 Abū Bakr-i Tihirānī, *Diwānbakriyyih* (1962 and 1964), 335.

21 Faḍlallāh Rūzbihānī Khunji, *Ālam-ārā* (2003), 165.

22 Faḍlallāh Rūzbihānī Khunji, *Ālam-ārā* (2003), 209.

23 Faḍlallāh Rūzbihānī Khunji, *Ālam-ārā* (2003), 193.

unexpected source. In the report of his travels written for the official use of the republic of Venice, Giosafat Barabaro mentions Salomon/Sulaymān as the key figure of the site of Takht-i Jamshīd, whom he reports to have not only built the famous bridge of the Band-i Mīr, the site of the parade held after the courtly sessions of the Aqquyunlu princes at Takht-i Jamshīd, but also to be depicted among the ruins of the Achaemenid palace designated by him as the *Chihil Minār* or *Fourty Columns*.<sup>24</sup>

The designation of the site of Takht-i Jamshīd as *Hizār Sutūn*, or *Thousand Columns*, in the account of Dāwānī,<sup>25</sup> and *Chihil Minār*, or *Fourty Columns*, by Josaphat Barabaro,<sup>26</sup> also points to another way of including references to the ideal prophetic-royal rulership of Sulaymān and the pre-Islamic Persian kings in court ceremonial. In this way, the reference was established not via the *lieu de mémoire* of Takht-i Jamshīd itself, but rather by the reconstruction of what was seen as the central element of Takht-i Jamshīd in the context of the respective ruler's residence. Such monumental audience halls, which drew on the model of Takht-i Jamshīd by means of their large number of great columns and their official designation as *Chihil Sutūn*, were constructed repeatedly over the Persianate world from India to Central Asia and have been studied by Ebba KOCH.<sup>27</sup> KOCH convincingly argues for a conscious actualization of the heritage of earlier just rulers, like Sulaymān and the pre-Islamic Persian kings, by means of courtly architecture and ceremonial. As the earliest example of a pillared hall designated *Chihil Sutūn*, she cites the example of a building erected by the Tīmūrid Ulugh Beg at Samargand in the first half of the fifteenth century.<sup>28</sup>

It is now time to turn to the context of the verses chosen for the inscription by the young princely calligrapher, 'Alī b. Khalīl b. Uzun Ḥasan.

<sup>24</sup> Barabaro 1973, 149.

<sup>25</sup> Dāwānī, “‘Arznāmih” (1331/1913), 286, corresponding to Dāwānī, “‘Arz-i sipāh-i Ūzūn Ḥasan” (1335 h.š./1956), 41.

<sup>26</sup> Barabaro 1973, 149.

<sup>27</sup> KOCH 1994.

<sup>28</sup> KOCH 1994, 148.

## The original context of the verses used in the inscriptions

According to Dāwānī's report, the Aqquyunlu prince Khalil himself was moved to contemplate the transient nature of worldly splendor when he read some verses inscribed to the ruins of Takht-i Jamshīd by the Tīmūrid prince Ibrāhīm b. Shāh-rukh "in his own writing".<sup>29</sup> As the verses used in these Tīmūrid inscriptions still extant at the site consist of one inscription featuring Arabic and another one featuring Persian verses, it is tempting to consider this Tīmūrid alignment of Arabic and Persian poetry as the immediate source for the Aqquyunlu combination of Arabic verses in Inscription A and Persian verses in Inscription B. While the calligraphy of Ibrāhīm b. Shāhrukh rendered verses in Arabic by the poet al-Mutanabbī and Persian verses by Sa'dī,<sup>30</sup> the Arabic verses of the Turkmen Inscription A are attributed to the caliph 'Alī, while the Persian lines of Inscription B derive from the *Makhzan al-Asrār*, or *Store of Secrets*, of Nizāmī.

The verses of Inscription A are attributed to 'Alī, the cousin and son-in-law of Muḥammad, in the inscription itself. As the eloquence of 'Alī is generally considered exemplary and praiseworthy, it is not surprising to find a variety of verses ascribed to him as well. Due to the political importance of 'Alī to the early Islamic community, however, his *dīwān* or collection of poetical works continues to exist in a variety of versions displaying some variance.<sup>31</sup> The significance attached to 'Alī's *dīwān* during the time of the Aqquyunlu in southern Iran is illustrated by an encyclopedic commentary counting precisely 800 pages in its modern edition,<sup>32</sup> which was composed in 1485 CE by the Aqquyunlu statesman and philosopher Qāḍī Ḥusayn Maybudī.<sup>33</sup> Maybudī deals with the differing certainty of the attribution of individual verses to 'Alī by introducing the whole *dīwān* as *mansūb*, or *attributed*, in his title and discussing the question of authorship in his commentary on certain verses.<sup>34</sup> His general attitude to this question is formulated in his introduction as follows:

<sup>29</sup> See the above translation of Dāwānī, "Arznāmih" (1331/1913), 287.

<sup>30</sup> See MELIKIAN-CHIRVANI 1971, 24–25.

<sup>31</sup> See the difference between the Būlāq-edition of 1251 *hijri* and the Iranian lithographic edition dated 1281 described by MELIKIAN-CHIRVANI 1971, 33, in note 68.

<sup>32</sup> Maybudī, *Sharḥ* (1379/2001).

<sup>33</sup> See the book by Alexandra Whelan DUNIETZ on Qāḍī Ḥusayn Maybudī: DUNIETZ 2016, the dating of the *sharḥ* is discussed on page 51.

<sup>34</sup> See DUNIETZ 2016, 96–99, on Qāḍī Ḥusayn Maybudī's approach to the question of the authenticity of attribution of the *dīwān* to 'Alī.

As far as it is unknown to which extent this sea [the *dīwān* of ‘Alī] is contaminated [...], I will be content in this world and the next if one verse belongs to a poem by him.<sup>35</sup>

In contrast, Majīda ḤAMŪD proposed in the introduction to her recent edition of the *dīwān* to distinguish between poems by ‘Alī himself and those that are ascribed to him.<sup>36</sup> This is not the place to discuss the grounds on which certain poems can be regarded as “truly” composed by ‘Alī himself, while others are considered as “ascribed”. In the context of Inscription A itself, the selected verses are introduced explicitly as composed by ‘Alī himself in line 2.

It would be highly relevant to the present article if some sort of a causal connection could be established between the verses of ‘Alī inscribed in the ruins of Takht-i Jamshīd and the most influential contemporary commentary of ‘Alī’s *dīwān*, which was completed some nine years later by Maybudī. However, neither does Maybudī allude to the inscription in his *commentary* or, for that matter, in his *munsha’āt* or *collected correspondence*,<sup>37</sup> nor does Dāwānī, the chronicler of the event, refer to his pupil Maybudī’s work. Maybudī’s physical presence is neither mentioned during the Aqquyunlu courtly session, during which the calligraphies were composed, nor during the subsequent review of the military and civil personnel of the Aqquyunlu prince Khalil at the Band-i Mīr.

A further argument against Maybudī’s closer involvement in or even awareness of the selection of these particular verses is furnished by a story told in his commentary, narrating the circumstances of the verses. According to this story, ‘Alī wrote the verses underneath the petition of a person who had asked him to attest to the lawful possession of a house in Kūfa. Accordingly, ‘Alī attested to the possession of a house “bordered on one side by death, on the other by the grave, on the third by judgement, and the fourth by either heaven or hell”.<sup>38</sup> It is difficult to see how such a skeptical view on any worldly possessions could be integrated in the festive celebration of courtly culture among the ruins of Takht-i Jamshīd, which Dāwānī describes. Accordingly, it seems that the close temporal proximity between the inscriptions containing verses by ‘Alī at Takht-i Jamshīd and the date of Maybudī’s commentary on ‘Alī’s *dīwān* is coincidental, even though attesting to a shared awareness of the importance of ‘Alī’s poetry in the Aqquyunlu realms.

In Maybudī’s commentary, the verses selected for Inscription A are given and paraphrased as the fourth and eighth verse of a poem included in the chapter on

<sup>35</sup> Maybudī, *Sharḥ* (1379/2001), 6.

<sup>36</sup> ‘Alī, *Dīwān* (2007), 27.

<sup>37</sup> Maybudī, *Munsha’āt* (1376/1998).

<sup>38</sup> Maybudī, *Sharḥ* (1379/2001), 789.

verses by ‘Alī rhyming on the letter *Yā*.<sup>39</sup> By contrast, in Ḥamūd’s edition of the *dīwān*, they form the fourth and sixth verse of a poem included in the chapter on *Attributed Verses of ‘Alī Rhyming on the Letter Hā*.<sup>40</sup> The differing opinion on the original placement of the verse selected for lines 5 and 6 of the inscription at Takht-i Jamshīd results from Maybudī’s giving the seventh and eighth verse of Ḥamūd as verses five and six.

While there are a number of minor variations between the text of the poem as given by Maybudī and edited by Ḥamūd and the reading of the epigraphic rendering of the text proposed above,<sup>41</sup> the main intervention rendering the verses suitable to the context of the Aqquyunlu court’s session held among the ruins of Takht-i Jamshīd lay in the selection of the verses included in the inscription from the whole poem ascribed to ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. In selecting the verses to be inscribed at Takht-i Jamshīd, the opening three verses preceding the lines chosen for the inscription, which dealt with the necessity to build an eternal abode during one’s lifetime, and lines 6 and 7 of Maybudī,<sup>42</sup> corresponding to lines 7 and 8 of Ḥamūd’s edition,<sup>43</sup> which are returning to the theme of spiritual salvation, were left out. Especially significant, however, is the ellipsis of another verse immediately preceding the verse chosen for lines 6 and 7 of the inscription. This runs as follows:

أموالنا لنوي الميراث نجتمعها      ودورنا لخراب الأهر ننبهها

We collect our wealth for those who inherit / And build our houses to be destroyed by time.<sup>44</sup>

The omission of this verse, which is by its verbal forms clearly identified as the speech of someone bemoaning the futility of constructive efforts in this world, serves to historicize the remaining verses. Had the omitted verse been included in the inscription, the verses would have been addressed by the founders of Takht-i Jamshīd to posterity. By selecting solely the two verses surrounding the omitted

<sup>39</sup> Maybudī, *Sharḥ* (1379/2001), 788–789.

<sup>40</sup> ‘Alī, *Dīwān* (2007), 171. This is confirmed by MINORSKY, who states that they formed the fourth and sixth verse of the edition of ‘Alī’s *dīwān* printed in Būlāq in 1251 *hijrī*: MINORSKY 1939, 152.

<sup>41</sup> As noted in the critical edition below, Maybudī gives *wa-dāna l-mawt* instead of *wa-dāra l-mawt* proposed for line 6 of the inscription, otherwise his text offers no variations to our readings. The variations between Ḥamūd’s edition of ‘Alī, *Dīwān* (2007), 171, and the text of the inscription at Takht-i Jamshīd are the following: *Musaltanatan* instead of *musallaṭan* in line 3 and *wa-dāna l-mawt dāniyahā* instead of *wa-dāra l-mawt ahliyahā* in line 6.

<sup>42</sup> Maybudī, *Sharḥ* (1379/2001), 788.

<sup>43</sup> ‘Alī, *Dīwān* (2007), 171.

<sup>44</sup> Maybudī, *Sharḥ* (1379/2001), 788, corresponding to ‘Alī, *Dīwān* (2007), 171.

verse, the inscription gains its eerie character of a distanced description of ruin, voiced by ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib in his verses and actualized in the context of Aqqyunlu court ceremonial, by means of its calligraphic rendering reproduced epigraphically on the ruins of the Achaemenid palace.

An even stronger intervention has been applied to the Persian verses drawn from Niẓāmī’s didactic poem *Makhzan al-Asrār*, or *Store of Secrets*, which were selected for Inscription B.<sup>45</sup> Here, the verses selected for the inscription were drawn from two adjacent parts, entitled *The Story of Nūshirwān and his Wazīr*<sup>46</sup> and *The Third Discourse of Events on Earth*.<sup>47</sup> As the parts of Niẓāmī’s work do not adhere to a single rhyme, unlike the poem of ‘Alī from which the verses of Inscription A were drawn, the compiler of the text for Inscription B was free to proceed with great liberty in selecting and re-arranging verses from two different parts for Inscription B. Therefore, the inscription draws on *The Story of Nūshirwān* for lines 4, 7, and 8 and combines these verses, none of which are adjacent in Niẓāmī’s original poem, with lines 2, 3, 5, and 6 drawn from *The Third Discourse*.

While selecting verses very much appropriate for the epigraphic context of the ruins of Takht-i Jamshīd, the approach of the compiler is well illustrated by observing that lines 2, 5, and 6 follow immediately upon another in their original context in *The Third Discourse*.<sup>48</sup> While recognizing the adaptability of this group of three verses for the inscription, the compiler decided to separate line 2 from its immediate successors by inserting lines 3 and 4, before continuing with lines 5 and 6. In so doing, line 2, containing the general admonition not to search for worldly gain, was followed by lines 3 and 4 containing references to the Kingdom of Sulaymān and its splendor, which are most appropriate for the symbolic significance attached to the ruins of Takht-i Jamshīd in the episode of the veneration of Sulaymān/Jamshīd reported by Dāwānī in his narrative framing of the courtly sessions held there by the Aqqyunlu entourage.

Equally significant to the substantial re-ordering of Niẓāmī’s text are the variations introduced to his verses. While the substitution of *dunyā*, or world, in

<sup>45</sup> I have used the edition of Niẓāmī, *Kulliyāt* (1344b/1966), where no individual editor is given on the title page, and compared its text with the the edition of the Niẓāmī, *Makhzan al-Asrār* (1344a/1966), edited by ‘Alī Ḥuşūrī.

<sup>46</sup> *Ḥikāyat-i Nūshirwān bā wazīr-i khūd*, Niẓāmī, *Kulliyāt* (1344b/1966), 56–58, corresponding to Niẓāmī, *Makhzan al-Asrār* (1344a/1966), 43–45 of the separate edition of the *Makhzan al-Asrār*.

<sup>47</sup> *Maqālat-i sivum dar ḥawādith-i ‘ālam*, Niẓāmī, *Kulliyāt* (1344b/1966), 58–60, corresponding to Niẓāmī, *Makhzan al-Asrār* (1344a/1966), 45–47.

<sup>48</sup> Niẓāmī, *Kulliyāt* (1344b/1966), 58, corresponding to Niẓāmī, *Makhzan al-Asrār* (1344a/1966), 45.

line 2 for the original *gītī*,<sup>49</sup> which also may be translated as world, found in the modern editions of Nizāmī may perhaps be explained as a minor variation caused by stylistic or calligraphic concerns, the substitution of the Persian mythic kings of *Farīdūn*<sup>50</sup> or *Narīmān*<sup>51</sup> with the metrically equivalent name of *Sulaymān* in line 4 as the ruler named alongside the Persian mythic king Sām as *One Who Could Not Take His Treasures Along* is most significant. On the internal level of the text established for Inscription B, this change serves to tie line 4 to the preceding line, which already describes the ruin of the Kingdom of Sulaymān in Nizāmī's original text, and thereby establishes the forceful coherence characterizing the text of Inscription B.

Even more significant in the context of this article is the parallelism established by this adaptation of Nizāmī's line between the heritage of Persianate and Prophetic rulers. This textual parallelization of Persianate and Prophetic heritage, which enforces the parallelism of both traditions emerging from the survey of the significance of the site of Takht-i Jamshīd in sources dating from the 15th century CE, emphasizes the message proclaimed by the inscription of the calligraphic verses on the ruins in the course of the courtly session held there by the Aqquyunlu. A tentative interpretation of the message proclaimed by both inscriptions will be proposed in the following conclusion.

## Conclusion: a tentative interpretation of the inscriptions

In the preceding two chapters, it has been argued that the tradition of the pre-Islamic Persian kings was parallelized with the heritage of the Islamic Prophecy of Sulaymān both on the level of the site of Takht-i Jamshīd and in the verses which were chosen for the Aqquyunlu inscriptions supposedly designed by the Aqquyunlu prince 'Alī. How then can we reconstruct the "message" contained in this performance of rightful authority, which was proclaimed by the celebration of a courtly session of Turkmen rulers among the Achaemenid ruins and inscribed for posterity in the stones of the Tachara?

---

<sup>49</sup> Nizāmī, *Kulliyāt* (1344b/1966), 58, corresponding to Nizāmī, *Makhzan al-Asrār* (1344a/1966), 45.

<sup>50</sup> Nizāmī, *Kulliyāt* (1344b/1966), 57.

<sup>51</sup> Nizāmī, *Makhzan al-Asrār* (1344a/1966), 44.

In his seminal article, MELIKIAN-CHIRVANI has argued for the relevance of the concept of a “Sufi-King” for the interpretation of the intertextual relation between the corpus of Islamic inscriptions at Pasargād and Takht-i Jamshīd. As established by MELIKIAN-CHIRVANI, this concept was personified in the figure of Sulaymān as a Prophetical ruler, governing the province of Fārs and the spiritual realms of Islamic mysticism alike.<sup>52</sup> In the context of the Aqquyunlu inscriptions discussed in this article, however, the concept of a personal access of the ruler to spiritual knowledge proclaimed in his supposed inheritance of the Kingdom of Sulaymān does not describe all of the levels on which authority was asserted by means of the performance of a courtly session among the ruins of the Achaemenid palaces. Rather than seeking an exhaustive enumeration of levels on which the extraordinary history of the inscriptions and their composition may be understood, I would like to point out two salient features characterizing the performance of legitimate rule over the province of Fārs by the Aqquyunlu, which inform the inscriptions.

The first element of the inscriptions, which will be discussed in this context, concerns the verse in line 11), following the lines of Nizāmī and concluding Inscription B, according to which *It is one of the favors of Truth / That I am writing like this when I am nine years old*. These verses are attributed to the *ṣadr* by Dāwānī’s report,<sup>53</sup> an office that was held during the time of the subsequent review by Mawlānā ‘Alā al-Dīn ‘Alī Bayhaqī.<sup>54</sup> While on a literal level expressing the divine support maintaining the royal splendor of the Aqquyunlu, this verse assumes a pronounced tone of princely competitiveness when intertextually connected with the verses which the Tīmūrid prince Ibrāhīm b. Shāhrukh had calligraphically rendered in his earlier inscription at the same place. The resulting message derides the Aqquyunlu’s Tīmūrid predecessors along the following lines: *While calligraphy composed by grown up Tīmūrids is nice and well, Aqquyunlu princes are sustained by divine truth and are therefore able to compose masterful calligraphy at the tender age of nine*.

Second, the materiality of the inscriptions emerges as an important element of the conceptualization of Aqquyunlu authority celebrated in the courtly performance, in the composition of calligraphy, and in the reappropriation of extant poetry by means of its inscription into the stones of Takht-i Jamshīd. By their deliberate omission of verses spoken in the First Person and the careful adaptation of the verses to minutely parallelize Persianate and Prophetical heritage, the

---

<sup>52</sup> MELIKIAN-CHIRVANI 1971.

<sup>53</sup> Dāwānī, “‘Arznāmih” (1331/1913), 289.

<sup>54</sup> For him see MINORSKY 1939, 150 and 175–176.



text of the Aqquyunlu inscriptions professes a pronounced concern to be as universally applicable as possible. This attempt to free the poetic voice inscribed on the ruins of Takht-i Jamshīd from the temporal constraints of the circumstances of its production is probably due to a concern to ensure the permanent validity of the verses, which is also paralleled on a textual level by the subject matter of the verses selected for the inscription, dealing with permanency or *baqā*'. By paralleling this concern for permanency professed in the verses written in the calligraphies composed by the royal prince during the performance of Aqquyunlu authority among the ruins of Takht-i Jamshīd with the materiality of the stones of the Achaemenid palace, which were chosen as the medium in which the verses were rendered, the Aqquyunlu court ensured the permanency of its claim to lawful inheritance of all traditions of earlier authority over Fārs to this day.

## Appendix: A critical edition of the two Aqquyunlu inscriptions at Takht-i Jamshīd

As mentioned above, the Aqquyunlu inscriptions at Takht-i Jamshīd are quoted in the contemporary account of Dāwānī, continue to be highly visible and have accordingly been published several times. Due to the careful adaptation and selection of the verses rendered in the calligraphies by 'Alī b. Khalīl (which, as described above, in parts very consciously depart from the 'standard reading' established for the context of the 'original' poems of Nizāmī and 'Alī) and also due to the partial deterioration of the stones bearing the inscriptions over the half-millennium separating the various 'editions', the text offered by the different readings varies considerably. The different variants proposed in turn offer valuable insights in how these particular inscriptions have been read over the five centuries since their composition during the Aqquyunlu review. This appendix accordingly offers not only another attempt to edit the inscriptions from photographs taken at Takht-i Jamshīd in 2015, but also includes the earlier readings of the text, as far as they have been accessible to the author, and discusses the implications of the respective variants for the interpretation of the inscriptions.

Dāwānī's account of the courtly session at Takht-i Jamshīd and in the adjoining plain was first edited in 1913 by Kilisli Muallim Rifat,<sup>55</sup> based on a manuscript dated 898 AH contained in the Hamidiye library in Istanbul.<sup>56</sup> This edition of Kilisli

---

<sup>55</sup> Dāwānī, "'Arznāmih" (1331/1913).

<sup>56</sup> Dāwānī, "'Arznāmih" (1331/1913), 273.

Rifat was translated into English and commented upon by Vladimir MINORSKY in 1939.<sup>57</sup> His work also compared the text edited by Kilisli Rifat with an account of the inscriptions based on investigation *in situ*, which had been composed by the Danish traveller Carsten Niebuhr and further been improved by emendations and remarks of Silvestre de Sacy.<sup>58</sup> A second edition of Dāwānī's treatise was prepared by Īrāj Afshār in 1956,<sup>59</sup> which is based on three manuscripts held in Tehran, copied in 939 AH, sometime before 948 AH, and towards the end of the 11th Century AH, respectively.<sup>60</sup>

In the biography of the Aqquyunlu prince 'Alī b. Khalīl b. Uzun Ḥasan, who signs as the calligrapher of the inscriptions at Takht-i Jamshīd, contained in his *Gulistān-i Hunar* or *Rose Garden of Art*, the Ṣafavid courtier Qāḍī Aḥmad also gave a version of Inscription B.<sup>61</sup> As the edition of Aḥmad Suhaylī Khvānsārī offers a number of readings encountered neither in the extant text of the inscription, nor in the abovementioned editions of Dāwānī's *Arznāmih*, the question of whether Qāḍī Aḥmad quoted a version of Dāwānī's *Arznāmih* which has not yet been edited, or reported the inscription based on a personal reading of the text inscribed on the ruins of Takht-i Jamshīd, cannot yet be answered. Qāḍī Aḥmad's statement that the calligraphies were executed *munāsib-i aḥwāl*,<sup>62</sup> a phrase understood to mean something like *in an appropriate fashion*, can possibly be taken as an indication that he saw the verses *in situ*.

The text of the inscriptions was also included by Sayyid Muḥammad Taqī MUṢṬAFAVĪ in his description of the *Country of Pars*<sup>63</sup> and by 'Alī SĀMĪ in his monumental work on the *Capitals of the Achaemenid Kings of Kings*.<sup>64</sup> Both editions are presumably based on the extant text in Takht-i Jamshīd. SĀMĪ also included a Persian translation of MINORSKY's remarks on the inscriptions,<sup>65</sup> without, however, mentioning the edition of Dāwānī's treatise prepared by Īrāj Afshār. Finally, Assadullah Souren MELIKIAN-CHIRVANI included the inscriptions in his discussion of "Le Royaume de Salomon" as represented in Islamic inscriptions at Takht-i Jamshīd and Pasargād, and also published a photograph of the inscrip-

57 MINORSKY 1939 in the bibliography at the end of this article.

58 MINORSKY 1939, 177–178.

59 Dāwānī, "'Arż-i sipāh-i Ūzūn Ḥasan" (1335 h.š./1956) in the bibliography at the end of this article.

60 Dāwānī, "'Arż-i sipāh-i Ūzūn Ḥasan" (1335 h.š./1956), 26.

61 Qāḍī Aḥmad, *Gulistān* (1366/1987) in the bibliography at the end of this article.

62 Qāḍī Aḥmad, *Gulistān* (1366/1987), 31.

63 MUṢṬAFAVĪ, *Iqlīm-i Pārs* (1343/1965), 339–340.

64 SĀMĪ 1348/1971, 251. See the excellent study MANOUKIAN 2012, especially 27–32 for the context of MUṢṬAFAVĪ's and SĀMĪ's work.

65 SĀMĪ 1348/1971, 261–263.

tion referred to below as *Inscription B*.<sup>66</sup> An edition of the inscriptions based on “squeezes, drawings, or photographs” of the “whole set of the later inscriptions at Persepolis” is mentioned by Ernst HERZFELD in a *Post Scriptum* to MINORSKY’s article.<sup>67</sup> I have not, however, been able to find any further trace of this work.

Thanks to the kindness of M.A. Shahrām Rahbar, supervisor of the site of Takht-i Jamshīd, I was able to examine the inscriptions *in situ* in October 2015 and take a number of pictures, which allows for a precise edition of the text and its vocalization exactly as they appear in the extant lines of the inscriptions. Accordingly, I will give my reading of the inscriptions together with pictures of the text. The readings of the two editions of Dāwānī prepared by Kilisli Rıfat and Afshār, as well as those proposed by Qāḍī Aḥmad, MINORSKY, MUŞTAFAVĪ, SĀMĪ and MELIKIAN-CHIRVANI are included in the critical apparatus only as far as they do not conform to my own reading as based on the photographs. The *sigla* used in the resulting apparatus refer to the following works:

QA: Qāḍī Aḥmad, *Gulistān* (1366/1987), 31–32.

KR: Dāwānī, “Arznāmih” (1331/1913), edited by Kilisli Rıfat, 288–289.

VM: MINORSKY 1939, 151–152 and 177–178.

IA: Dāwānī, “Arz-i sipāh” (1335 h.š./1956), edited by Īrāj Afshār, 44–45.

MM: MUŞTAFAVĪ 1343/1965, 339–340.

AS: SĀMĪ 1348/1971, 251.

MC: MELIKIAN-CHIRVANI 1971, 33–35.

The numbers given on the right-hand side of the edition identify the line of the inscriptions the apparatus is referring to. Arabic numerals are represented in their European form. As none of the works quoted systematically includes the vocalization given in the original, only variants in the unvocalized text are included in the apparatus. Variants in the spacing of words, especially single-lettered ones, are also not included in the apparatus. Inscription A contains the verses of ‘Alī as written by ‘Alī b. Khalīl b. Uzun Ḥasan.

### Inscription A:

1 اللَّهُ الْبَاقِي  
2 الْأَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَى كَرَمِ اللَّهِ وَجْهَهُ  
3 أَيْنَ الْمُلُوكِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ مُسَلْطَةً

<sup>66</sup> MELIKIAN-CHIRVANI 1971, 1–41.

<sup>67</sup> MINORSKY 1939, 178.

- 4 حَتَّى سَقَاهَا بِكَاسِ الْمَوْتِ سَقَائِهَا  
 5 وَكَمْ مِنْ مَدَائِنٍ فِي الْأَفَاقِ قَدْ بُنِيَتْ  
 6 امْسَتْ خَرَابًا وَدَارَ الْمَوْتِ أَهْلِهَا  
 7 حَرَّرَهُ عَلَى بْنِ سُلْطَانِ خَلِيلِ بْنِ سُلْطَانِ حَسَنِ وَهُوَ ابْنُ تِسْعِ سِنِينَ  
 8 [هُوَ] الْبَاقِيُ وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ  
 9 \*قَطْ بِمَدَةِ كَمَرَسِ أَصْفَرِينَ\* حَسِينَ غَلامِ حَضْرَتِ شَاهَزَادَةِ عَالَمِيَانِ عَلَى مِيرْزَا فِي 188

### Apparatus Criticus:

A 1–2: Omm. KR, VM, IA. 1: الباقي [الباقِي] MM, AS. 2: لَامِير [الأمير] MM, AS, MC; كَرَمَ KR, VM, MM, AS, MC. 3: أَيْنَ KR, IA, MM, AS. 4: سَقَاهَا MC; بَكَاس KR, VM, MM, MC. 5: كَمْ KR, VM, IA, MM, AS, MC; مَدَائِن IA, MM, MC. Both a *hamza* and the two dots of the *yā'* are clearly visible in the inscription. Due to typographical difficulties, the dots under the *yā'* are omitted in the rendering above. فِي KR, VM, MM, AS, MC; الْأَفَاق VM, MM, AS, MC; بُنِيَتْ KR, VM, IA. 6: وَدَارَ KR, VM, IA. 7–9: Omm. KR, IA. 7: حَرَّرَهُ MM, MC, [ابْنُ تِسْعِ سِنِينَ] *tis'-wa-sittin-wa-thamāni-mi'a* [sic] VM, سنة تسع و تسعين وثمان مائه AS. 8–9: Om. MC. 8: [هُوَ] here a piece of rock has split off; الباقي [الباقِي] MM; شَيْءٍ MM. 9: \*حَسِينَ\* AS. خط بنده کمترين احمد بن حسن, *khaṭṭ-ast?* VM, خط بنده کمترين احمد بن حسن, MM.

### Translation:

- 1 [Only] God is eternal.  
 2 [The following were composed by] the Commander of the Faithful 'Alī, may God honor his face.  
 3 Where are the kings who used to rule,  
 4 Until the bearer of the cup of death gave them to drink?  
 5 And how many towns have been built in the world?  
 6 They were afflicted by ruin and death came over their people.  
 7 This was written by 'Alī, son of sulṭān Khalīl, son of sulṭān Ḥasan, when he was nine years old.  
 8 [He] is eternal while every thing perishes.  
 9 [This inscription was supervised by?] Ḥusayn, the servant of his Highness, the Prince of mankind, 'Alī Mīrzā, in 881.

### Commentary:

In the following commentary, I discuss the instances in which variations between earlier editions of the text and the reading given above cannot be explained as mere typographical variation or error and affect the meaning of the line in question.

In line 6, MELIKIAN-CHIRVANI,<sup>68</sup> following MINORSKY,<sup>69</sup> proposes to correct the Arabic verb *dāra*, translated here as *to come over* into *dāna*, *to judge*, for which he refers to the Būlāq edition of ‘Alī’s *diwān*. While this reading makes the verse easier to understand, the inscription itself is fairly unambiguous. In the contemporary commentary on the *diwān* of ‘Alī, composed by the Aqqyunlu judge and statesman, Qāḍī Ḥusayn Maybudī, the verb in question is also rendered as *dāna*, while the Persian ‘literal translation’<sup>70</sup> given by him is sufficiently open to allow for both readings.<sup>71</sup> Because my aim is to render the text of the inscriptions as precise as possible and to give the shapes of the letters as they appear in my photographs, I abstain from following MINORSKY’s and MELIKIAN-CHIRVANI’s emendation in the above edition.

In his discussion of line 7, MINORSKY already suggested that the year 869, reported by Niebuhr and also read by SĀMĪ,<sup>72</sup> was “entirely impossible”.<sup>73</sup> My reading of the words in question as “when he was nine years old” follows MELIKIAN-CHIRVANI’s reading, as it is fully corroborated by the photographs of the inscription.<sup>74</sup>

The beginning of line 9 is unreadable to me. While MINORSKY’s suggestion that this may be the signature of the engraver seems probable,<sup>75</sup> SĀMĪ’s suggestion to read the words in question as Persian and translate them as “this is the writing of the most insignificant servant Aḥmad b. Ḥasan”<sup>76</sup> is quite certainly incorrect. The dots of the *yā’* of *Ḥusayn* are clearly visible on the photograph, while it is by no means clear why a particular servant, or *ghulām*, should identify himself by means of his descent. Furthermore, the word *kamtārīn*, translated here as *most insignificant*, can only be read by assuming a substantial deviation of the script of this word alone from the script used in the rest of the inscription.

<sup>68</sup> MELIKIAN-CHIRVANI 1971, 33.

<sup>69</sup> MINORSKY 1939, 152.

<sup>70</sup> Maybudī, *Sharḥ* (1379/2001), 211.

<sup>71</sup> Maybudī, *Sharḥ* (1379/2001), 789.

<sup>72</sup> SĀMĪ 1348/1971, 251.

<sup>73</sup> MINORSKY 1939, 177.

<sup>74</sup> MELIKIAN-CHIRVANI 1971, 33.

<sup>75</sup> MINORSKY 1939, 178.

<sup>76</sup> SĀMĪ 1348/1971, 251.

While the words *shāhzādiḥ-i ‘ālamīyān*, or *Prince of earthly beings*, and *mīrzā* at the end of the line are certainly Persian, I would hesitate to interpret this shift in language as encompassing the whole line. Comparison with the rendering of titles of non-Arabic origin in other Arabic texts composed in the realm of the Aqquyunlu rather suggests the incorporation of Persian titles into Arabic in the form of an isolated *laqab* or *sobriquet*, which is embedded into the matrix of Arabic syntax and treated like an untranslated name. Instances of such a treatment of titles as *sobriquets* include *shāhzādiḥ*,<sup>77</sup> or *prince*, and *khwājah*,<sup>78</sup> or *master*, in the history of al-Ghiyath. It is also attested to in the extant Aqquyunlu epigraphy, for example in the Central Asian title *bahādur* or *hero*, in the building inscription of Uzun Ḥasan at Isfahan,<sup>79</sup> or the equally Central Asian title *khān*, which is mentioned in the Arabic part of the inscription of Uzun Ḥasan at Ushturjan.<sup>80</sup> In none of these cases does the appearance of non-Arabic titles lead to a shift of the linguistic matrix in the immediate vicinity of the non-Arabic words in question away from Arabic. Accordingly, I suggest that a reconstruction of the words in the beginning of line 9 should depart from the assumption that the linguistic matrix of this line, as of the rest of Inscription A, is Arabic and not, as SĀMĪ suggested, Persian.

Inscription B contains a number of verses by Niẓāmī.

#### Inscription B:

1	آنکه پابنده و باقیست خُدا خَواهد بُوَد
2	صُحْبَتِ دُنْیا که تَمَنّا کند
3	مَلِکِ سُلَیْمَانِ مَطْلُبِ کَانَ هِیَاسِت
4	زین کهر و کُنْجِ که نَتوان شُمُرد
5	خَاکِ شُدِ آنکس که دَرین خَاکِ زیست
6	هَر وَرَقِی چهرهء آزاده ایست
7	عُمَرِ بَخْشَنُودِی دِلها کذار
8	هَر کِه بَنیکِی عَمَلِ آغاز کرد
9	حَرَرهٔ عَلِی بن سُلطان خَلیل بن سُلطان حَسَن اَصْلَحِ اللّٰه شانهم
10	فِی شَهْوَ سَنَةِ اِحْدِی وَثَمَانِینِ وَثَمَانِائِه
11	بِکِی اَز عِنایاتِ حَقْسَتْ اِین
	بَا که وَفا کرد کِه بَا ما کند
	مُلْکِ هَمَانَسِت سُلَیْمَانِ کُجَاسِت
	سَامِ چِه بَرْدَسِت سُلَیْمَانِ چِه بَرْد
	خَاکِ چِه دَانَد که دَرین خَاکِ چِیست
	هَر قَدَمِی فَرَقِ مَلِکِ رَاذِه اِیست
	تَا ز تُو خُشَنُود بُوَد کَرْدکار
	نِیکِی او رُوِی بُوَ باز کرد
	که نُه سَالِهَم می نَوِیسم چنین

77 E. g. al-Ghiyath, *Tārīkh* (1970), 1: *Shāhzādiḥ* shaykh ‘Alī.

78 E. g. al-Ghiyath, *Tārīkh* (1970), 1: *Bayramkhwājah*.

79 See LEUBE 2015a.

80 See LEUBE 2015b.



**Fig. 2:** Inscription A at Takht-i Jamshīd, author's photograph.





### Commentary:

In line 1, MELIKIAN-CHIRVANIAN makes a strong argument for reading *pāyandih-i waqtast bā khudā*, corresponding to *The permanent of time will be with God* instead of *pāyandih wa-bāqīst khudā*, as given here.<sup>81</sup> His argument rests on the assertion that it would be astonishing to speak of God in the future tense. However, his suggestion also does not quite fit – I at least am quite ignorant of who or what should be “the permanent of time”. While the inscription can certainly be read in both ways, I retain the reading *bāqī*, or *eternal*, also given by SĀMĪ,<sup>82</sup> due to the calligraphy of *allāh al-bāqī*, translated as [only] *God is eternal*, introducing inscription A. In this way, the dominant theme of *baqā’* or *permanence*, which emerges from the text of the verses chosen for the two calligraphies, stands in a marked parallelism at the beginning of both inscriptions left by the Aqquyunlu rulers on the ruins of Takht-i Jamshīd.

Kilisli Rifat reads *Narīmān* instead of *Sulaymān* in line 4 as the name of the bygone ruler chosen as an example of the transience of worldly glory alongside of the mythical Persian hero Sam. This corresponds to the text as given in one of the two editions of Niẓāmī’s *Makhzan al-Asrār* used in this article.<sup>83</sup> However, this reading is untenable when compared to the letters as shown in the inscription, where the text has evidently been adapted on purpose, integrating the Pre-Islamic prophet Sulaymān, already mentioned in the verse chosen for the preceding line 3, ever more firmly in the framework of the mythical past evoked in the inscription. This important adaptation of the verse will be discussed below.

For the second hemistich of line 11, MINORSKY reports Niebuhr to have read *kih bar sang ḥarfī nivishtam chinīn*, or *That I wrote letters on the stone like this*.<sup>84</sup> With reference to the edition of Dāwānī prepared by Kilisli Rifat, in which he also gives the verses as rendered above, MINORSKY described this version of the text as “altered”. The extant state of the inscription clearly shows Niebuhr’s reading to be impossible.

<sup>81</sup> MELIKIAN-CHIRVANI 1971, 34.

<sup>82</sup> SĀMĪ 1348/1971, 251.

<sup>83</sup> Niẓāmī, *Makhzan al-Asrār* (1344a/1966), 44. By contrast, the other edition used in the preparation of this article, Niẓāmī, *Kulliyāt* (1344b/1966), 57, gives the name of another Persian mythic ruler, Farīdūn.

<sup>84</sup> MINORSKY 1939, 178.

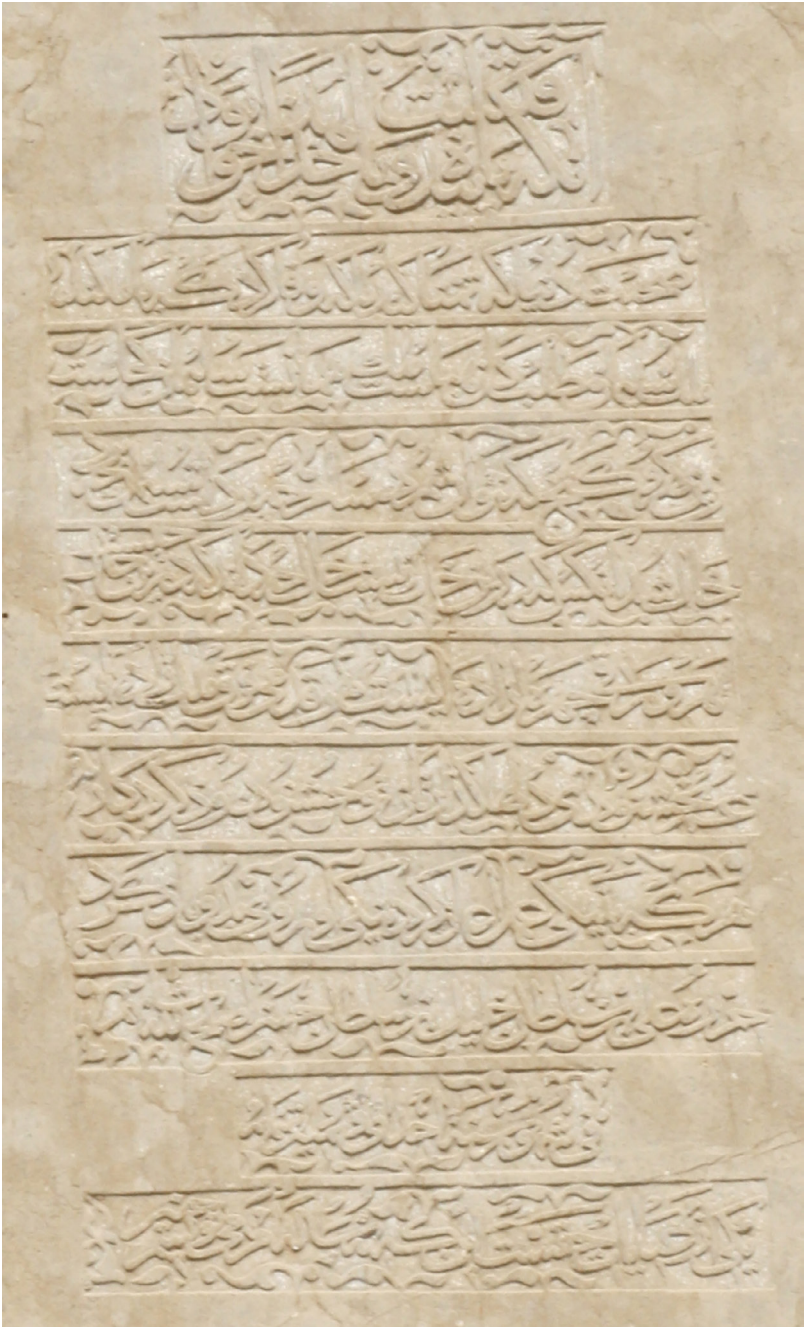


Fig. 3: Inscription B at Takht-i Jamshid, author's photograph.

## Bibliography

- Abū Bakr-i Tihṛānī (1962–1964), *Kitāb-i Diyārbakriyyih*, ed. Necati Lugal and Faruk Sümer, 2 vols., Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi.
- ‘Alī (2007), *Dīwān Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī*, ed. Mājida Ḥamūd, Damascus: Dār wa-Mu’assasa Ruslān.
- ANDERSON, Benedict (1983), *Imagined Communities*, London: Verso.
- ASSMANN, Jan (1992), *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, München: Beck.
- Barbaro, Giosafat (1973), in: *I viaggi in Persia degli ambasciatori veneti Barbaro e Contarini*, edited by Laurence Lockhart, Raimondo Morozzo della Rocca and Maria F. Tiepolo, Rome: Istituto Poligrafico dello stato.
- Dāwānī, Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad (1331/1913), “Arz-nāmih”, ed. Kilisli Muallim Rifat, *Millî tettebbular mecmûası*, 2, 5, 273–305 and 385–385.
- (1335 h.š./1956), “Arz-i sipāh-i Ūzūn Ḥasan”, ed. Irāj Afshār, *Majallih-i dānishkadih-i adabiyyāt-i dānishgāh-i Tihṛān*, 3, 26–66.
- DONOHUE, John J. (1983), “Three Buwayhid Inscriptions”, *Arabica* 20, 1, 74–80.
- DUNIETZ, Alexandra Whelan (2016), *The Cosmic Perils of Qādī Ḥusayn Maybudī in Fifteenth-Century Iran*, Leiden: Brill.
- Faḍlallāh Rūzbihānī Khunjī (1992), *Tārīkh-i Ālam-ārā-yi Amīnī*, ed. John E. Woods, including an abridged translation by Vladimir F. Minorsky, London: Royal Asiatic Society.
- (2003), *Tārīkh-i Ālam-ārā-yi Amīnī*, ed. by Muḥammad Akbar ‘Ashiq, Tehrān: Mīrāth-i maktūb.
- FRAGNER, Bert (1999), *Die “Persophonie”*, Berlin: Das Arabische Buch.
- Al-Ghiyāth, ‘Abdallāh b. Faṭḥallāh al-Baghdādī (1970), *Tārīkh al-Ghiyāth*, edited and translated by Marianne Schmidt-Dumont, Freiburg: Klaus Schwarz Verlag.
- GRABAR, Oleg (1987), *The Formation of Islamic Art*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- HEIDEMANN, Stefan (2013), “Memories of the Past? The ‘Classical’ or ‘Sunni Revival’ in Architecture and Art in Syria Between the Mediterranean and Iran in the 12th and 13th Centuries”, in: Halit Eren, ed., *Proceedings of the International Conference on Islamic Civilisation in the Mediterranean*. Nicosia, 1–4 December 2010, Istanbul: Birmat Matbaacılık, 9–22.
- Hobsbawm, Eric / Ranger, Terence, eds. (1983), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- al-Iṣṭakhrī (1927), *Masālik al-Mamālik*, ed. M. J. de Goeje, Leiden: Brill.
- Koch, Ebba (1994), “Dīwān-i ‘Amm and Chihil Sutun: The Audience Halls of Shah Jahan”, *Muqarnas*, 11, 143–165.
- LEUBE, Georg (2015a), *Uzun Ḥasan in Iṣfahān*. <http://dyntran.hypotheses.org/259> (accessed Apr. 13, 2017).
- (2015b), *Uzun Ḥasan at Ushṭurjān*. <http://dyntran.hypotheses.org/259> (accessed Apr. 13, 2017).
- LOTI, Pierre (1988), *Vers Ispahan*, Saint-Cyr-sur-Loire: Piroit.
- MANOUKIAN, Setrag (2012), *City of Knowledge in Twentieth Century Iran: Shīrāz, history and poetry*, New York: Routledge.
- Maybudī, Qādī Kamāl al-Dīn Mīr Ḥusayn b. Mu‘īn al-Dīn (1376/1998), *Munsha’āt-i Maybudī*, ed. Nuṣṣratallāh Furūhar, Tehrān: Mīrāth-i Maktūb.
- (1379/2001), *Sharḥ-i Dīwān-i mansūb bih Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib*, edited by Ḥasan Raḥmānī and Sayyid Ibrāhīm Ashkshīrīn, Tehrān: Mīrāth-i Maktūb.
- MELIKIAN-CHIRVANI, Assadullah Souren (1971), “Le Royaume de Salomon: Les inscriptions Persanes de sites Achéménides”, *Le monde Iranien et l’Islam, Tome I*, 1–41.

- MINORSKY, Vladimir F. (1939), "A Civil and Military Revue in Fārs in 881/1476", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, 10, 1, 141–178.
- MUŞTAFAVĪ, Sayyid Muḥammad Taqī (1343/1965), *Iqlīm-i Pārs*, Tehran: Intishārāt-i Anjuman-i Āthār-i Millī.
- NECIPOĞLU, Gülrü (1991), *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- NİZĀMĪ (1344a/1966), *Makhzan al-Asrār*, ed. 'Alī Ḥuşūri, Tehran: Kitābkhānih-i Ṭahūrī.
- (1344b/1966), *Kulliyāt*, no editor given, Tehran: Chāp-i Bānk-i Bāzargānī-yi Īrān.
- QĀDĪ Aḥmad (1336/1987), *Gulistān-i Hunar*, ed. Aḥmad Suhaylī Khvānsārī, Tehran: Kitābkhānih-i Mānūchihri.
- REDFORD, Scott (1993), "The Seljuqs of Rum and the Antique", *Muqarnas* 10, 148–156.
- SĀMĪ, 'Alī (1348/1971), *Pāytakhtā-yi Shāhanshāhān-i Hakhāmanashī*, Shīrāz: Dānishgāh-i Pahlavī.
- WOODS, John E. (1999), *The Aqquyunlu*, 2. edition, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.