No Choice but to Travel

Safavid Travelogues Written in Persian

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Abstract This paper introduces twenty-two Persian travelogues dating from the Safavid era (1501–1722), which can roughly be divided into three categories; private travels, missions, and pilgrimages. It aims to show that Safavid travelogues, a hitherto somewhat neglected literary phenomenon, form part of a Persian travelogue tradition and that the accounts often comprise relevant autobiographical information. Since the travelogues' contents, tropes and forms are however partly a result of (evolving) literary standards of travel writing, it is often only through a close reading that we are able to uncover—or at least catch a glimpse of—the authors' *Selbstbilder*.

Keywords Safavids, Travelogue, Maṣnavī, Diplomatic Mission, Pilgrimage

Introduction

Persian historical travel accounts were often dictated to and/or mediated by scribes—and sometimes written down many years after the actual journeys took place, based on notes and (shifting) personal memories.[1] Furthermore, later copyists may have attributed or omitted sections. Not all travelogues report on 'physical' journeys, but some describe fictional, spiritual, or metaphysical travels; others, while claiming authenticity, are mere forgeries. Last but not least, travelogues reflect, reconstruct and contribute to existing *mentalités* and literary traditions (they actually have to in order to be understood)[2]. One may thus question whether travelogues, at least

1 This paper is dedicated to Susanne Enderwitz, my *rāhnamā* on a challenging journey.

2 Stagl 1995, 4–5. Losensky's argument about the Safavid-Mughal *ġazal* may be extended to other 'genres' and calls for prudence with regards to allegedly autobiographical statements (Losensky 1998, 70): "In a poetic genre as conventional and rule-governed as the

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early modern ones, reflect authentic *Selbstbilder* at all. But these aspects could also apply to many other (ego-)documents as well—even today, some 'autobiographies' are written by ghostwriters, and, of course, they are usually based on memories, modeled according to present-day concepts of the genre, and inevitably influenced by dominant mentalities.

Hence, though one has to approach the evidence provided with caution, non-fictional travelogues still address the self, encompass autobiographical information (framed and formed by existing models and discourses, of course) and usually report and reflect on a decisive time in the traveler's life.[3] In spite of the growing scholarly interest, Persian travelogues predating the Qajar era (1779–1925), with the exception of a few prominent examples[4], still remain understudied and often unedited. A number of articles, volumes, and monographs however provide overviews of Persian historical

Persian *ghazal*, each individual poem echoes others and partakes in complex systems of conventions that affect every aspect of the poem. [. . .] The personae or characters who speak in his [= Fighānī's; SK] poems are all established figures in Persian lyric poetry–almost any other poet in the tradition would share a substantial portion of Fighānī's 'inner biography', if we read the poems as personal confession."

3 This aspect is not as self-evident as it may seem. Lambton 1962, in her article on "Persian Biographical Literature", does not discuss travelogues. On p. 149, where she turns to autobiographies, she states: "Autobiographies earlier than those of the twentieth century [. . .] are few and relatively unimportant in that they seldom provide the historian with a detailed picture of the life and times of the author". A volume on *The Rhetoric of Biography* with a focus on pre-modern Persianate societies, published in 2011, tackles this view, since it considers both "the biographical and autobiographical literatures that have been composed in Persian [. . .]" (Marlow 2011, 1). On travelogues as documents on the self, see, for example, Fragner 1979, 1–12, 19–49, who considers travelogues as a subgenre of memoirs and, although he recognizes the further development of travelogues during the Qajar era, clearly states that especially early Qajar memoirs are strongly influenced by the existing tradition of travelogue writing. One should also recall that a number of autobiographies or memoirs were written at the time we are dealing with; next to Shah Ṭahmāsb's (Persian) *Taẕkira*, reference can be made to Bābur's *Bāburnāma* (in Turkī) and Ǧahāngīr's *Tuzuk-i Ǧahāngīrī* (in Persian). See also Ašraf 1388, 183. On the possibility of investigating travelogues with a narratological approach (based on Ricœur), see Conermann 2013.

4 Among the pre-Safavid Persian travelogues that have received scholarly attention one may mention, for instance, the famous travel account of Nāṣir Ḫusrau (d. 1088/1089) (see for example Hunsberger 2000), Ġiyāṯ ad-Dīn's (*fl.* 1419–1422) travelogue to China, commissioned by the Timurid prince Bāysunġur (1397–1433) (preserved in Ḥāfiẓ Abrū's *Zubdat at-tavārīḫ* and Kamāl ad-Dīn ʿAbd ar-Razzāq Samarqandī's *Maṭlaʿ-i saʿdain va maǧmaʿ-i bahrain*) (Mazahéri 1983, 25–80; Conermann 2005, 214–236; Kauz 2005, 136–141), and Ḫāqānī's (d. between 1186/87 and 1199) *Tuḥfat al-ʿIrāqain* (or *Ḫatm al-ġarāʾib*), a 'spiritual travelogue' describing the sun's journey to the holy sites of Islam (Beelaert 2000 and 2013).

travel literature, including pre- and early modern travelogues and pave the way for this area of study.[5]

Due to an existing variety in form and content, it has been argued that pre-Qajar descriptions of travel cannot be considered as a genre in its own right.[6] But, taking a closer look at those early Persian travel accounts, common narrative tropes are easily discernible (as are formal characteristics)[7]. It is not possible to offer a comprehensive analysis of Safavid (1501–1722) travelogues in the space available, so this paper will briefly introduce twenty-two Safavid travelogues and pursue a few aspects of selected accounts; the travelers' social background, motivations, and literary references.

The notion 'Safavid', for the purpose of this paper, serves as a temporal frame. Some writers lived in the Safavid realm, others not; some dedicated their travelogue to a Safavid shah, others did not. What marks the authors' common ground is that they were writing in Persian, drawing on and referring to a Persian literary (travelogue) tradition and that they were in some way affected by the social, religious and political environment of Safavid Iran.

Persian travelogues from the Safavid era

Persian travelogues may generally be grouped according to the purpose or reason for the journey. The late Iraj Afshar suggested the following typology of travelogues: 1) pilgrimage; 2) tourism; 3) state missions; 4) hunting

5 Rahimieh 2001; Afshar 2002; Karāčī 1381; Pūrgīv and ʿAbdallāhī 1383; Alam and Subrahmanyam 2007 (focus on 1400–1800); Micaleff and Sharma 2013 (focus on nineteenth and early-twentieth century travelogues); anthology comprising some excerpts of Persian travelogues: Khair, Leer, Edwards, and Ziadeh 2005; see also Hoffmann 2017, 313–321 and, for a more general study, Ḥāʾirī 1394. Unfortunately, I did not yet have access to a further publication: Muḥammad Šahrī, *Hampā-yi ǧahāngardān-i īrānī. Safarnāma-nivīsī dar Īrān. Barrisī-yi safarnāmahā-yi īrānī*, Mašhad, 1394/2015.

6 "Travel narratives did not form one of the traditional genres of Persian prose writing at the beginning of the nineteenth century. A few earlier travelers had written accounts of their journeys [. . .], but there were not enough of these to conceive of them as a group and define as a recognizable genre"; Hanaway 2002, 249. Many of the 'generic markers' Hanaway identifies in nineteenth-century Persian travel accounts (e.g. form of a journal, didactic purpose, dynamic presentation of content, assertion of Persian cultural and religious values) (p. 265) can however be found in earlier accounts already.

7 We actually need further analysis of the travelogues' formal characteristics in order to understand what marks a Safavid travelogue; a recent, original example for this approach is Trausch 2015, who mapped out formal characteristics of sixteenth-century 'Safavid' courtly historiography.

and recreation; 5) education; 6) captivity and exile.[8] In a similar manner, Rūḥangīz Karāčī argues for 1) *siyāḥat* (trade / education / sport / tourism); 2) *maʾmūrīyat* (political / cultural / military); and 3) *ziyārat* (ʿAtabāt / Mecca and Medina / Mašhad / Qum).[9]

A few Persian travelogues dating from the days of the Safavids are known and have been studied for decades. In addition, during the past few years, a considerable number of travelogues, mostly dealing with the pilgrimage to Mecca, have been edited. The travelogues are sometimes written in prose, but mostly in the *maṣnavī* form (rhymed couplets; 'narrative poem'). They share "the dominance of travel as an organizing notion in the narrative"[10]. The accounts are typically narrated in the first person, often arranged chronologically[11] (thus the notion *rūznāmča*, "[little] diary"), and reflect the individual travel experience. Needless to say, many texts that cannot be considered as travelogues in this sense and have not been included in the list, comprise accounts of travels.[12] The following overview

8 Afshar 2002, 162 (based on Munzavī's *Fihrist*). He provides a glimpse into a great number of Persian travelogues he had been collecting for decades and introduces seven Safavid travelogues: *Futūḥ al-ḥaramain*, *Ḫiṭāynāma*, *Nūr al-mašriqain*, *Baḥr al-asrār fī manāqib al-aḫyār* (not included in our list, see n. 12), travelogue of Sāʿī Širvānī, *Anīs al-Ḥuǧǧāǧ*, *Safīna-yi Sulaimānī* (Afshar 2002, 146–148).

9 Karāčī 1381, 33. It has to be noted that Fragner (1979, 20–49) had earlier suggested the same typology for Qajar travelogues (*ziyārat*, *sifārat*, and private travel). In her encompassing study, which is accompanied by a catalogue of 692 Persian travelogues, Karāči (1381, 17) has identified thirteen travelogues dating from the Mongol through Afsharid eras, among which seven can be attributed to the Safavid era: *Mihmānnāma-yi Buḫārā*, *Nūr al-mašriqain*, *Anīs al-Ḥuǧǧāǧ*, *Safīna-yi Sulaimānī*, *Safarnāma-yi manẓūm-i Makka*, *Safarnāma-yi Makka*, and Lāhiǧī's *Tārīḫ-i aḥvāl* (see Table 1). The latter was, however, as well as the *Mihmānnāma-yi Buḫārā*, not included in our list, see n. 12.

10 Alam and Subrahmanyam 2007, 21.

11 This is due to the fact that they were mostly, as were their European counterparts, based on diaries; Stagl 1995, 50.

12 For example, the *Mihmānnāma-yi Buḫārā* by Faẓlallāh b. Rūzbihān Ḫunǧī (ed. Manūčihr Sitūda, Tehran, 2535); *Taẓkira-yi Ṣafavīya-yi Kirmān* by Mīr Muḥammad Saʿīd Mušīzī (ed. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Bāstānī Pārīzī, Tehran, 1369); Muṭribī Samarqandī's *Ḫāṭirāt* (ed. ʿAbdol Ghani Mirzoyef, Karachi, 1977); Maḥmūd b. Amīr Valī Balḫī's *Baḥr al-asrār fī manāqib al-aḫyār* (the travel section was edited by Riazul Islam, Karachi, 1980); the *Ǧāmiʿ-i Mufīdī* by Mīrzā Muḥammad Mufīd Bāfqī Yazdī (ed. Īraǧ Afšār, Tehran, 1340–1342); Nīk Rāy's *Taẓkira*; Muḥammad Ḥazīn Lāhiǧī's *Tārīḫ-i aḥvāl* (ed. Francis Belfour, London, 1831); the anonymous *Risāla dar ẓirāʿ-i Makka* (ed. Rasūl Ǧaʿfariyān 1395, 9–27) and *Faršī*'s *Ẓirāʿ-i Madīna* (ed. Ǧaʿfariyān 1395, 29–130); it appears that Ḥusain ʿAlī Ḫān Zangana, the son of the famous Šaiḫ ʿAlī Ḫān Zangana (d. 1101 / 1689), had also penned a pilgrimage travelogue, of which only the preface, written by Muḥammad Masīḥ Fasāʾī in 1091 / 1680–1681 survives (the latter was edited by Ǧaʿfariyān 1395, 131–139). On the mentioned accounts, see Foltz 1996; Afshar 2002, 148; Karāčī 1381, 17; Ǧaʿfariyān

is not extensive (Table 1), but brings together twenty-two Safavid travelogues that have hitherto come to my notice; some have already received some attention, others less so. At least fourteen of them are versified. It has been argued that especially Ḫāqānī's maṯnavī *Tuḥfat al-ʿIrāqain* ("A Gift from the Two Iraqs", 1157), written in the *hazaǧ* metre, served as a model for some later versified travelogues[13] (even if not necessarily reporting on a pilgrimage), in the manner of *istiqbāl*. In his *Tuḥfat*, a poem divided into 6 (or 7) chapters, Ḫāqānī describes himself as a prisoner unable to perform the pilgrimage by himself and thus asks the sun to travel there. Then the single stages of the journey are elaborated, and in the end Ḫāqānī appears to find relief (and an ideal master).[14]

In cases where I was unable to gather sufficient information about a text, I decided to include it in the list, although further investigation is needed to see whether the above-mentioned criteria apply to it. The identified travelogues can be grouped according to Karāčī's typology, albeit with sometimes overlapping categories. Eight accounts report on private travels, four on missions, and ten on pilgrimages. Next to pilgrimage sites, India was, of course, a common destination, but single (diplomatic and mercantile) travelers went as far east as China and west as Europe.

Private travels *(siyāḥat)*

As early as the time of Shah Ismāʿīl I (r. 1501–1524), ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī, probably a native of Transoxiana (maybe Buḫārā)[15], made his way to China. His travelogue, the *Ḫiṭāynāma*,[16] was, as a panegyric

1382, 133, 135–136; Alam and Subrahmanyam 2004; Alam and Subrahmanyam 2007, 120–128, 131–159, 179–221, 226–239; Babayan 2012, 30–32; McChesney 2012, 524–530; Subrahmanyam 2014. See also Maurice Herbette's document-based reconstruction of Muḥammad Riżā Bīg's 1715 visit to the court of Louis XIV (*Une ambassade persane sous Louis XVI d'après des documents inédits*, Paris, 1907) and Willem Floor's description of Mūsā Bīg's 1625 mission to Amsterdam (*Avvalīn sufarā-yi Īrān va Hulland*, Tehran, 1356). Sohrabi (2012, 13–14) convincingly argues that denoting a text as travelogue (or not) is currently based on our (normative) definitions rather than on the records themselves. This problematic aspect becomes quite clear when considering that for example Ḫunǧī (2535, 6) intended to name his *Mihmānnāma-yi Buḫārā* a *safarnāma*, although it lacks, from a present-day point of view, the centrality of travel. However, common characteristics of what we perceive here as travelogues cannot be overlooked either.

13 Cf. Beelaert 2000, 12 n. 53; Beelaert 2013; Afshar 2002, 147; Babayan 2012, 32.

14 Beelaert 2000 and 2013. She regards the poem as a *ḥabsīya* ("prison poem").

15 Mazahéri 1983, 85.

16 Mazahéri 1983, 83–283 (annotated French translation); Afshar 2002, 146; Kauz 2011.

Table 1 Persian travelogues written in the Safavid era.

Author	Title	Travel year/ composition	Additional information	Edition
Muḥyī ad-Dīn Lārī	*Futūḥ al-ḥaramain / Asrār al-ḥaǧǧ*	Written in 911 / 1505–1506	Pilgrimage; maṣnavī; dedicated to Muẓaffar Šāh (II?)	ed. ʿAlī Muḥaddiṯ, Tehran, 1366. ed. Rasūl Ǧaʿfariyān, Qum, 1373.
ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī	*Ḫiṭāynāma*	Written in 922 / 1516	Trip to China, account offered to Sultan Selim I	ed. Īraǧ Afšār, Tehran, 1357.
	[Safarnāma-yi Baġdād]	Written in 941 / 1534–1535	Military campaign to Baghdad; maṣnavī	unpublished
Aḥmad Miskīn	*Ḥaǧǧnāma*	Written in 955 / 1548–1549	Pilgrimage; maṣnavī	partly ed. Rasūl Ǧaʿfariyān, Qum, 1374 [96–106].
Faiżī (Dakanī)	*[Safarnāma-yi ḥaǧǧ]*	Journey 986–987 / 1578–1579	Pilgrimage	unpublished?
Uruch Beg / Don Juan	*Relaciones*	Journey 1007–1010 / 1599–1602 published in 1604	Diplomatic mission to Europe	ed. 1604, Valladolid. ed. Alonso Cortés, Madrid, 1946. transl. Guy Le Strange, New York, 1926.
Malik Šāh Ḥusain Sīstānī	*Tuḥfat al-ḥaramain*	Journey 1017 / 1608–1609	Pilgrimage to Mecca; maṣnavī	unpublished
Šaraf ad-Dīn Šafāʾī	*Maṭlaʿ al-anvār / Maǧmaʿ al-baḥrain*	Lived 966–1037 / 1558/9–1627	Pilgrimage; maṣnavī	unpublished
Munīr Lāhūrī	*Maẓhar-i gul*	Written in 1049 / 1640	Journey to Bengal; maṣnavī	ed. Farīd Akram, Tehran, 1388.
Sāʾī Širvānī	*Mirʾāt aṭ-ṭarīq [Siyāḥatnāma-yi Sāʾī]*	Journey 1050–1058 / 1640–1648	Private travel? Journey from Širvān to Iṣfahān and India; maṣnavī	unpublished
Sālik Qazvīnī	*Muḥīṭ al-kaunain*	Written in 1061 / 1650	Journey to India; maṣnavī	ed.(?) ʿAbd aṣ-Ṣamad Ḥaqīqat, Tehran, 1372.[1]

1 I was unable to access this publication, and thus I am unaware if it includes the *Muḥīṭ al-kaunain.*

Table 1 *(continuation)*

Author	Title	Travel year/ composition	Additional information	Edition
ʿAbdallāh Bihištī Haravī	*Nūr al-mašriqain*	Surviving copy dates from 1067/1657	Private travel Persian cities (Qum, Mašhad), India, Kashmir; maṣnavī dedicated to Shah ʿAbbās II	ed. N. Māyil Haravī, Mašhad, 1988.
Abū l-Baqā Kanǧāhī	*Čahār faṣl-i Kābul*	During the reign of Aurangzeb	From India(?) to Herat	unpublished
Ṣafī b. Valī Qazvīnī	*Anīs al-Ḥuǧǧāǧ*	1087/1676–1677	Pilgrimage to Mecca (from India)	unpublished
Muḥammad Rabīʿ	*Safīna-yi Sulaimānī*	Journey 1096–1099/ 1685–1688	Diplomatic mission to Siam	ed. ʿAbbās Fārūqī, Tehran, 2536. transl. John O'Kane, London, 1972.
Wife of Mīrzā Ḫalīl	*[Safarnāma-yi manẓūm-i ḥaǧǧ/ Makka]*	Manuscript dated 1104/1692–1693	Pilgrimage; maṣnavī	ed. Rasūl Ǧaʿfariyān, Qum, 1374.
Allāh Yār Ṣūfī (Naqšbandī Samarqandī)	*Ḥaǧǧnāma*	d. 1133/1720–1721	Pilgrimage; maṣnavī	ed. Rasūl Ǧaʿfariyān, Qum, 1394 and 1395, 141–155.
Muḥammad [b.] Dāvud Iṣfahānī	*Safarnāma-yi manẓūm[-i Mašhad]*	d. 1133/1720–1721	Trip from Iṣfahān to Mašhad; maṣnavī	unpublished
Żiyāʾ ad-Dīn Āl-i Kaivān Qārī	*Safarnāma-yi Makka*	Written in 1129/1716–1717	Pilgrimage	unpublished
Ḥasrat Mašhadī	*[Safar ba Hind]* and *[Pilgrimage maṣnavī]*	Autograph written in 1144/1731–1732	Two maṣnavīs; one on his travel to Jerusalem(?), the other on his journey to India	unpublished
A Safavid vizier	*Safarnāma-yi Ḫurāsān*	?	Journey to Ḫurāsān	unpublished

suggests, dedicated to the Ottoman Sultan Selim I (r. 1512–1520).[17] Although ʿAbdallāh Bihištī Haravī's (1597–1659) maṣnavī, *Nūr al-mašriqain*—initially written for the Mughal prince Murād Baḫš, but later dedicated to Shah ʿAbbās II (r. 1642–1666)—was modeled after Ḫāqānī's *Tuḥfat al-ʿIrāqain*, it is not limited to the description of pilgrimage sites but also portrays the author's journeys to Iran and India.[18] The seventeenth / eighteenth-century poet Ḥasrat Mašhadī, who had been born in India, and later returned to Iran with his family, wrote a maṣnavī on a journey to the subcontinent.[19]

Five further travelogues are provisionally listed here, yet need further study: Sāʿī Širvānī traveled from Širvān to the court of ʿAbbās II, and later to India, and his travelogue too is modeled on Ḫāqānī's *Tuḥfat al-ʿIrāqain*.[20] The same applies to Sālik Qazvīnī's (seventeenth century) travelogue, an author who traveled to India, where he met Bihištī Haravī.[21] Another traveler, Abū l-Baqā Kanǧāhī, possibly of Indian origin, made his way to Herat during the days of Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707).[22] A Safavid vizier recorded his (diplomatic?) journey to Ḫurāsān.[23] The seventeenth-century Indian poet Munīr Lāhūrī devoted his Persian travelogue, a maṣnavī, to the description of Bengal.[24]

The many instances of people traveling between India and Iran within this category illustrate that a great number of Iranians during the Safavid

17 ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī 1357, 26–27. There is some confusion in terms of whom the travelogue was dedicated to. It appears in some manuscripts, the panegyric addresses Suleiman I (r. 1520–1566). Afshar (in ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī 1357, 22), pointing to the fact that Suleiman was not called Sulaimān Šāh (as appears in the text), convincingly suggests a simple misspelling (*Sulaimān-šāh* instead of *Sulaimān-šaʾn*; thus, Selim is being compared to the prophet Sulaimān). See also Kauz 2011. Kahle (1934, 94) proposes that the travelogue was initially dedicated to Selim and that his name, after his death, was replaced (see also Mazahéri 1983, 95; Mazahéri asks if the author initially might have wanted to dedicate the travelogue to Shah Ismāʿīl I; Mazahéri 1983, 94). It has also been doubted if the author ever traveled to China (Liu 1983, 58–59, 75–77); but Kahle states (1934, 96): "Es unterliegt gar keinem Zweifel, daß der Verfasser im wesentlichen berichtet, was er selber gesehen, oder was er an Ort und Stelle in Erfahrung gebracht hat." Yazici (1985) does not consider the book a travelogue, "since it gives no indications of the author's routes."

18 Afshar 2002, 147; Karāčī 1381, 17; Alam and Subrahmanyam 2007, 221–226; Babayan 2012, 32–33; Mancini-Lander 2012; Beelaert 2013.

19 Munzavī 1374, 88; Yalamahā 1391, 133.

20 Munzavī 1374, 138; Beelaert 2000, 12 n. 53. As I have not seen the manuscript, I am not completely sure whether his travel can be classified as 'private'.

21 Munzavī 1374, 148; Iqbāl Šāhid 1378. Since he also visited holy places of Islam, his travelogue could also be grouped under "Pilgrimage."

22 Munzavī 1374, 74.

23 Munzavī 1374, 106.

24 Munzavī 1374, 153.

era left their homeland in search of a better life (mostly in India);[25] some of them—or even their descendants—however, returned to pay their former homeland a visit, or resettle there.

Missions *(maʾmūrīyat)*

One of the most prominent examples within this category is Don Juan of Persia / Uruch (Uluġ) Beg (1560–1604), who was sent on a diplomatic mission to Europe, initially guided by Sir Anthony Sherley (1565–1635), during the days of Shah ʿAbbās I (r. 1588–1629). He set off from Iṣfahān in 1599 and arrived in Spain in 1601. His travelogue, the *Relaciones*, based on Uruch Beg's daily notes in Persian ("a careful diary"), was written down in Castilian by his friend Alfonso Rémon, published in Valladolid in 1604, and more than three centuries later was translated into English by Guy Le Strange.[26]

Another well-known travelogue, mostly in rhymed prose, the *Safīna-yi Sulaimānī*, describes a diplomatic mission to Siam / Thailand in 1685, dispatched by Shah Sulaimān (r. 1666–1694).[27]

Muḥammad [b.?] Dāvud Iṣfahānī's (d. 1720 or 1721) journey from Iṣfahān to Mašhad cannot strictly be considered a mission. He went to the city because he was appointed the governor *(vālī)* of Mašhad and recorded his trip in form of a maṣnavī, using the pen-name ʿIšq.[28] The *Safarnāma-yi Baġdād* (actually *Safar-i farḫunda-aṣar-i hażrat-i pādišāh-i ʿālam* [. . .] *ba-Baġdād* [. . .]), being inspired by Firdausī's *Šāhnāma*, reports on Sultan Selim I and his war against Ṭahmāsb (r. 1524–1576), leading to the Ottoman capture of Baghdad (1534).[29] Hence, this account focuses rather on a military campaign and warfare than a journey *strictu sensu*.

25 Cf. Haneda 1997, 134–135 who distinguishes two types—forced and voluntary—of migration from Safavid Iran to India.

26 Uruch Beg 1926, v, 299; see Rahimieh 2001, 21–38. It appears that in general, ambassadors were not tasked with writing their travel down and the fewer of them decided to do so self-motivated; Matthee 1998, 242.

27 This travelogue has built the fundament of several studies on the Persian community in Siam in the seventeenth century; see for example Marcinkowski 2000; 2002; 2003 (esp. 18–43); 2006. See also Afshar 2002, 147; Alam and Subrahmanyam 2007, 159–171.

28 Munzavī 1353, 4033; Munzavī 1374, 123; Mahallati 2011, 834–835.

29 Ṣafā 1371, vol. 5 / 1, 577; Munzavī 1374, 99.

Pilgrimage *(ḥağğ, ziyārat)*

A large number of Safavid travelogues are devoted to the pilgrimage to the holy sites of Islam.[30] A famous example is the widow of Mīrzā Ḫalīl, the *raqamnivīs* in the Dīvān-i Aʿlā of Shah Sulaimān. This is probably the first Persian travelogue ever written by a woman—"a rare feminine voice within a masculine domain of representation and travel."[31] It takes the form of a maṣnavī comprising about 1200 couplets.[32]

Other travelogue writers who reported on their pilgrimage are Muḥyī ad-Dīn Lārī (d. 1526/7; maṣnavī, probably dedicated to the ruler in Gujarat, Muẓaffar Šāh [II?; d. 1526])[33]—whose *Futūḥ al-ḥaramain*, maybe due to the redactions it underwent, displays elements of a manual—Żiyāʾ ad-Dīn Āl-i Kaivān Qārī,[34] Ṣafī b. Valī Qazvīnī (journey to Mecca and Medina in 1087/1676–1677),[35] Faiżī (Dakanī; 1547–1595; trip to Mecca from 986–987/1578–1579; maṣnavī?),[36] and Ḥasrat Mašhadī (seventeenth and eighteenth century; maṣnavī)[37]. Malik Šāh Ḥusain Sīstānī (b. 1579/80), author of the *Iḥyāʾ al-mulūk*, composed a maṣnavī, modeled after Ḫāqānī's *Tuḥfat al-ʿIrāqain*, on his journey to Mecca.[38]

Aḥmad Miskīn's (sixteenth century) maṣnavī, the *Ḥağğnāma*, is based on the author's own pilgrimage, but might also have served as a manual, as he often directly addresses his reader. Miskīn possibly lived in the Ottoman realm.[39] A Sufi from Transoxiana, Allāh Yār Ṣūfī Naqšbandī Samarqandī (d. 1720/21)[40], wrote a further versified *Ḥağğnāma*; as the author repeatedly asks the future pilgrim to pray for him during the journey, it is not completely clear whether the account is based on his personal experience, or whether our Sufi asks his addressee to go there instead of himself.

30 Not only those travelogues written in Persian which are considered here survive, but also a number of Arabic ones. A systematic comparison of these Persian and Arabic pilgrimage travelogues has yet to be undertaken.

31 Babayan 2012, 27. There were, of course, Iranian women who had traveled, even as far as Europe, before; see Tavakoli-Targhi 1993, 74.

32 Introduced and/or discussed in Afshar 2002, 161; Karāčī 1381, 56–58, 64–66; Alam and Subrahmanyam 2007, 24–42; Huseynova 2010; Mahallati 2011, 834–838; Babayan 2012, 27–30.

33 Muḥyī ad-Dīn Lārī 1366, 2; Afshar 2002, 146.

34 Munzavī 1353, 4031; Munzavī 1374, 124; Karāčī 1381, 17.

35 Storey 1953, 1141–1142 (no. 1592); Munzavī 1353, 3992; Karāčī 1381, 17; Afshar 2002, 147.

36 Storey 1953, 1141 (no. 1590); Munzavī 1374, 104, on Faiżī, see Ṣafā 1371, vol. 5/2, 838–857.

37 Yalamahā 1391, 133.

38 Ṣafā 1371, vol. 5/3, 1725 n. 2; Beelaert 2000, 12 n. 53; Beelaert 2013.

39 Ğaʿfariyān 1374, 96.

40 For further information on the author, see Ğaʿfariyān 1395, 143–144.

A further maṣnavī, modeled on Ḫāqānī's *Tuḥfat al-ʿIrāqain* and possibly a travelogue, must be mentioned here. It was penned by Šaraf ad-Dīn Ḥasan Šafāʾī/Šifāʾī (1558/9–1627), the physician of Shah ʿAbbās I.[41] As might be expected, it is (just like his three other maṣnavīs) not included in the edited *Dīvān*. As far as we know, the only extended trip he undertook brought him to Ḫurāsān, where he paid a visit to Mašhad.[42] Should the maṣnavī mentioned be a travelogue, we will have to expect that it deals with this journey. According to an existing (very brief) description, in this maṣnavī, nature and objects are addressed and the poet lays down his points of view.[43]

In the following section, I focus on five travelogues belonging to different categories, authored by ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī (private travel), Uruch Beg and Muḥammad Rabīʿ (diplomatic missions), the wife of Mīrzā Ḫalīl and Muḥyī ad-Dīn Lārī (pilgrimage trips).

Social background

Most of the authors were part of the social elite, "a literate minority in an ocean of illiteracy"[44] able to afford travel. Two of our five writers were in government service; another was the well-off widow of a court secretary. Of the two remaining authors, one may have been a merchant while the other is probably an example of a less wealthy traveler.

Ralph Kauz, pointing to the fact that ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī repeatedly refers to himself as *qalandar*, suggests that "this might be more to stress his humbleness than to show an affiliation to any dervish order".[45] What we know is that he was a Sunni from Transoxiana, somehow inclined to (Naqšbandī?)[46] Sufi thought.[47] Aly Mazahéri states that ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī might have been born in Buḫārā and suggests he spent several years of his youth in China (and the rest of it in Samarqand), and that he was a merchant.[48] Afshar calls his poems "weak";[49] Mazahéri thinks that the author has only had an

41 Rypka 1968, 300; Šafāʾī 1362, cxxxvi–cxxxvii; Ṣafā 1371, vol. 5/2, 1079; Beelaert 2000, 12 n. 53; Beelaert 2013.
42 Šafāʾī 1362, xlv.
43 Šafīʿīyūn 1388, 125.
44 Melville 2012, 64.
45 Kauz 2011.
46 Mazahéri 1983, 86–87.
47 ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī 1357, 6.
48 Mazahéri 1983, 85.
49 ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī 1357, 6.

elementary education and considers him a "homme pratique" and "homme du peuple".[50]

Uruch Beg belonged to the Bayāt clan and served as a leading army member. He further informs us that he had "studied somewhat in the Arabic and Turkish tongues, learning the principles too of the Alcoran".[51] As he also offers a detailed account of the Safavid dynasty, we may assume that he had also received some lessons in history. His father was Sulṭān ʿAlī Big Bayāt who had been a noble at the court of Shah Muḥammad Ḫudābanda (r. 1578–1587).[52] When Sulṭān ʿAlī Big Bayāt died in a battle against the Turks, Muḥammad Ḫudābanda "who had indeed loved" him, "ordered a picture to be painted [. . .] and the picture still may be seen placed above the door of one of the Mosques of Tabriz [. . .]."[53]

Uruch Beg tells us that the members of the embassy to Europe he was part of "were all grandees of his court, of high rank".[54] He penned his account "in order to give an account thereof later to the king of Persia"—but after converting, he decided to offer it to his new sovereign King Philipp III instead. Thus, it appears that Shah ʿAbbās I asked him—an army member appointed the First secretary to the Persian ambassador Ḥusain ʿAlī Big (see Fig. 1)—to take notes and give a detailed account of his trip.

Uruch Beg shares some characteristics with Muḥammad Rabīʿ, who belonged to the royal *ḫāṣṣa*. After the religious part of the introduction, he introduces himself as Ibn Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Muḥammad Rabīʿ, "muḥarrir-i sarkār-i tufangčiyān" (scribe to the contingent of royal musketeers).[55] He was chosen as the official scribe of an embassy led by Muḥammad Ḥusain Big (the officer of the *ḫāṣṣa*) and which consisted of "Qūrchīs, Ghulāms, Tūpchīs and Tufan[g]chīs."[56] John O´Kane calls him a "small man in a big bureaucracy"[57] who tries "to convey the image of the scribe as a man of letters, endowed with balanced views on everyday morality and generosity."[58] He further elaborates that "the author's metaphors derive from many different fields of Muslim letters and science such as medicine, theology, and

50 Mazahéri 1983, 90.
51 Uruch Beg 1926, 35.
52 Uruch Beg 1926, 3, 158 ff.
53 Uruch Beg 1926, 193.
54 Uruch Beg 1926, 234.
55 Muḥammad Rabīʿ 2536, 4 (transl. Muḥammad Rabīʿ 1972, 17).
56 Muḥammad Rabīʿ 2536, 8 (transl. Muḥammad Rabīʿ 1972, 20).
57 Muḥammad Rabīʿ 1972, 6.
58 Muḥammad Rabīʿ 1972, 12.

Figure 1 Portrait of Ḥusain ʿAlī Big. By Aegidius Sadeler, Prague, 1601 (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Object number RP-P-1941-285).

alchemy [. . .]. The overall effect which it is aimed at is to appear elegant, clever and somewhat learned and above all, worldly."[59]

Muḥyī ad-Dīn Lārī (d. 1526/7), a student of Ǧalāl ad-Dīn Davānī, was a Sunni poet inclined to Sufi thought. He spent some time in Fārs, and probably dwelled in Tabrīz for a couple of years. After having performed the *ḥaǧǧ*, he went to Gujarat, maybe because of the pressure Sunnis were exposed to after the advent of Shah Ismāʿīl I.[60] Our anonymous Iṣfahānī

59 Muḥammad Rabīʿ 1972, 12.

60 Muḥyī ad-Dīn Lārī 1366, 1–2, 16.

traveler was, as mentioned, the educated widow of a *raqamnivīs*, and "must have belonged to a privileged family".[61] We are aware of an Iṣfahānī circle of learned women and respective "female networks of learning", where women taught other women. In the late seventeenth century, as Devin Stewart has shown on basis of a biographical dictionary, these sessions took place in the home of the descendents of a vizier—Ḫalīfa Sulṭān (d. 1064 / 1653–54)[62]—and it may well be assumed that the nameless widow had benefitted from this kind of higher learning.

Motives

Kathryn Babayan writes:

> Never far from the mind of the author / audience is the realization that destiny determines every traveler's fate, and hesitation is a necessary stage before a male or female traveler can embark on an adventurous journey toward discovery, fortune, calamity, or, perhaps, death.[63]

What were then the travelers' motives for setting out on a dangerous journey? It will become obvious that generally speaking, in the Safavid era travel could not yet "be legitimized as a goal in itself"[64]; travelers had to have socially accepted motives. Among these figure social prestige (in case of diplomatic missions), the accomplishment of religious duties, and economic incentives. This does not, on the other hand, necessarily imply that other motives, such as pure curiosity or *Wanderlust*, did not play any role.[65] On the contrary, socially accepted motives could in some instances serve as a smokescreen for more personal ones.

It was probably considered a great honour to be selected a member of an embassy; Muḥammad Rabīʿ states that he had long dreamed of gaining his king's "special affections".[66] The report makes quite clear that he was an

61 Alam and Subrahmanyam 2007, 25; see also Bānūyī Iṣfahānī 1374, introduction p. 10.

62 Stewart 2011, 119.

63 Babayan 2012, 25.

64 Stagl 1995, 11.

65 Stagl 1995; Netton 1986, 37–38. Netton argues that at least Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's fourteenth-century *Riḥla* implies a "pilgrim paradigm", comprising not only of the search for knowledge, recognition, and a "religious geography", but also of the "satisfaction of a basic wanderlust".

66 Muḥammad Rabīʿ 2536, 8 (transl. Muḥammad Rabīʿ 1972, 20–21).

ambitious individual who hoped for promotion. When several of the embassy members, including the ambassador, died, Muḥammad Rabīʿ "was only spared by the heat of these hardships in order to render this account to our awesome king".[67] Muḥammad Rabīʿ hoped to be chosen as the new ambassador, saying "I myself would be best suited to perform the presentation", but the remaining embassy members opted for Ibrāhīm Big instead, a *ġulām* (slave) of the *ḫāṣṣa*.[68]

Apart from those sent on a diplomatic mission, a personal crisis—often linked with the symbolic age of 40—seems to have been an incentive. Many travelers suffered from a kind of melancholy, had lost an important person, or were unsatisfied with their jobs in the bureaucratic apparatus. These motives can already be observed in pre-Safavid travelogues: Nāṣir Ḫusrau had had a dream in which he was told to do the pilgrimage after forty years of "sleep" and quit his job.[69] Ḫāqānī's case is similar—in a kind of vision, Ḫiżr warned him not to waste his talent on secular poetry and panegyrics, but to praise God alone with his verses.[70] Among our Safavid travelers too, some longed to change their lives, such as the Iṣfahānī widow.[71] In the beginning of her account, she writes:

> When the deceitful, turning sky slashed my liver,/ snatching off my friend, my life's breath [yār-i damsāz],/ restful sleep was outlawed from my bed,/ and no other salve came to my mind but travel [nadīdam čāraʾī ġair az siyāḥat]./ I had neither sleep at night, nor peace by day,/ until I readied myself for circling the Kaʿaba [sic].[72]

It was suggested that the Iṣfahānī widow might have undertaken the pilgrimage to Mecca to get around "the objections of interfering relatives"[73] and could have wanted to flee Iṣfahān and her (husband's) family for a while. Also, except for her initial visit to her husband's grave ("gulzār-i Ḫalīl"), he is not mentioned much in the text. Instead, the traveler chooses a route that allows her to visit an old friend *(rafīq, yār)*, a woman whom she knew from Iṣfahān and who now lived in the author's birth-place of Urdūbād. One cannot fail to note how she couches the relationship between

67 Muḥammad Rabīʿ 2536, 41 (transl. Muḥammad Rabīʿ 1972, 48).
68 Muḥammad Rabīʿ 2536, 53 (transl. Muḥammad Rabīʿ 1972, 58).
69 Nāṣir Ḫusrau 1375, 2.
70 Ḫāqānī 1357, 54–69.
71 Babayan 2012, 30. Ǧaʿfariyān calls her "saḫt afsurda" (deeply depressed); Bānūyī Iṣfahānī 1374, introduction p. 10.
72 Bānūyī Iṣfahānī 1374, 23; transl. Alam and Subrahmanyam 2007, 26.
73 Alam and Subrahmanyam 2007, 25.

the two in sufiesque vocabulary, displaying a motif of separation and union *(firāq, hiǧrān, vaṣl)*. The 22-day-long stay in the house of the unnamed friend seems to have been the longest stop in the whole journey.[74] There is another hint the widow offers; before she leaves, she girds her waist ("kamar bar-bastam"). Though this could be considered a mere metaphor, it again takes us to the world of mysticism and sufiesque *futuvvat* (spiritual chivalry), where the belt is a symbol for the (of course, usually male) novice's initiation. Indeed, the similarity to Kāšifī Sabzivārī's (d. 1504) wording in *Futuvvatnāma-yi sulṭānī* is striking; when he talks about the importance of travel, he states: "ādamī-rā az safar čāra nīst" (Man has no choice but to travel).[75] Is our widow thus a traveler on the path of Sufism?

Muḥyī ad-Dīn Lārī, too, may have experienced some discontent with his life (the political disruption could have played some role). He writes that his heart suddenly fell in unrest ("dar dilam uftād yakī iẓṭirāb") and that the wish to visit the *ḥaram* overwhelmed him ("šauq-i ḥaram dar dil-i man ǧūš zad").[76] ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī's motives for traveling remain opaque; it has been argued that he was a merchant und thus possibly went to China for business, which could explain why he traveled for a comparatively short period of time (ca. 100 days, of which he spent twenty-six in prison).[77] Mazahéri suggests that ʿAlī Akbar was actually part of an embassy from Transoxiana.[78] The author does not indicate this (he may of course have omitted the respective sections after fleeing Tabriz and dedicating the travelogue to the Ottoman sultan), but only says that he went, along with twelve others, as an *īlčī* to see the Chinese emperor.[79] Would the Chinese emperor receive simple merchants, providing them with a festive meal and honors? Would he have, on the other hand, all twelve ambassadors imprisoned, although only one of them had committed a crime (but they were treated comparatively mildly)? Be that as it may, in the *ḫuṭba* to his travelogue, he states that he wanted, as was customary, to offer a strange or marvelous gift *(tuḥfa)* to Sultan Selim

74 Bānūyī Iṣfahānī 1374, 41–42.

75 Kāšifī 1350, 241. Here I have been inspired by a passage of Babayan's study (2002, 202), where she gives Kāšifī's thoughts about traveling in translation: "Know that man has no choice but to travel, for from the time that he was a sperm *[nutfah]* he was traveling and shall travel to the end. His first house was the loins *[sulb]* of his father, and then he traveled to the womb of his mother, until he arrived at the third stage, which is this world, and here he shall travel forty stages *[manzīl]* until he travels toward eternity."

76 Muḥyī ad-Dīn Lārī 1366, 35.

77 ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī 1357, 3. However, Mazahéri (1983, 88–89) argues that the author might have traveled to China several times.

78 Mazahéri 1983, 85.

79 ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī 1357, 100.

and thus decided to offer an account of the 'strange' customs of China to him.[80] As we will see, this gift included much didactic advice. Only a little later in the text, ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī elaborates that the Timurid ruler Uluġ Big had commissioned a travelogue on China—maybe to convince Selim that his account is valuable and should be rewarded?[81]

In spite of differing motives, a journey could also provoke a crisis—Uruch Beg, who had left his family behind in Iran, converted to Christianity (as did several of his traveling companions) and turned his back on his home country. Once baptized a Roman Catholic in Spain, he received his new name, Don Juan.[82] Initially, he had planned to return to Persia and bring his wife and son to Spain, but in the end he decided to stay in Spain, because the Persian ambassador understood that he had converted and would ask for his punishment once back home.[83]

Others, for instance the Iṣfahānī widow, find relief in Mecca ("sabuk šud puštam az ṣiql-i gunāhān"; "ġam va dard va alam faramūš kardam")[84]; after having offered a sacrifice she finally has "the sense of receiving the 'letter of freedom from the hell-fire'."[85] This calm is a typical feature of pilgrimage accounts; once in Mecca, the pain is relieved, the heart starts to fly and the pilgrims finds a new reason to live.[86] However, the Iṣfahānī widow's relief does not last for long, because leaving Mecca is painful for her ("ǧudā har ʿużv-i man āmad ba faryād ki az hiǧrān-i Kaʿba dād-i bī-dād").[87] Just like her, Muḥyī ad-Dīn Lārī also experiences a state of unification *(viṣāl)* with God.[88]

Reference and audience

Persian travelogues in the first instance addressed, of course, a Persian speaking, learned elite audience, although we "have little idea of how these texts were read."[89] In the case of those travelogues commissioned by a ruler,

80 ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī 1357, 27. This *tuḥfa* motif reminds of Ḫāqānī, who offered his gift from the "two Iraqs", thus his travelogue, to Ǧamāl ad-Dīn Mausilī.
81 ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī 1357, 28.
82 Uruch Beg 1926, 299–302.
83 Uruch Beg 1926, 303–305.
84 Bānūyī Iṣfahānī 1374, 76.
85 Alam and Subrahmanyam 2007, 40; Bānūyī Iṣfahānī 1374, 78.
86 See also Muḥyī ad-Dīn Lārī 1366, 41–43.
87 Bānūyī Iṣfahānī 1374, 81.
88 Muḥyī ad-Dīn Lārī 1366, 48–49.
89 Cole 1992, 16.

we may expect that the respective king hoped for some useful information—probably military and economic. Travel routes and distances may have been an issue as well. These commissioned accounts served as source of knowledge for diplomacy and future travelers. But at the same time, the travelers could use their accounts, at least when reading between the lines, as a means of criticism and advise.

Uruch Beg clearly states that from the very beginning of his travels, he had the intention "to see everything I could and to set down in writing all I saw on the journey, in order later to publish the same in Persia."[90] As mentioned before, he was probably commissioned by Shah ʿAbbās I to do so—or had at least tried to write a report with information useful and pleasing to the king. The existing, modified, and mediated account does not reveal much about military issues (abroad). But the fact that a member of the army was asked to write down an account of his travels, might reveal some of the king's motives and it is interesting that many army officers were also part of the embassy to Siam.[91] Muḥammad Rabīʿ, in the first place, clearly addresses his king (and the courtly society) with a didactic purpose, i.e. by mirroring him as an 'enlightened' ruler in search of harmony for his own society and its relation with other countries.[92] As a (potential) merchant, ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī reports on the Chinese monetary system, commodities, and agricultural products. But he also elaborates, for instance, on the organization of the Chinese army (pointing to the fact that when not exercising, they do construction in the cities, concluding "dar hīč ḥāl Ḫiṭāʾīyān bī-kār nabāšand").[93] Apparently, he did not have a merely mercantile audience in mind, but actually focuses on topics as diverse as legislation, administrative divisions, and the court. Throughout his report, he pictures China as

90 Uruch Beg 1926, 294.

91 Muḥammad Rabīʿ, in several instances, reports on fortresses and military issues. For example, about Chinapatan, he relates that "the Franks maintain a high standard of discipline and are very cautious when it comes to manning their forts and protecting their cities. Night and day the artillerymen and the musketeers are at their stations on the towers. The wicks are lit and the cannons are loaded and ready to fire. They do not neglect their watch or other duties for a single moment"; Muḥammad Rabīʿ 2536, 24 (transl. Muḥammad Rabīʿ 1972, 36). Description of the war and conflict between Siam and Paigū (Muḥammad Rabīʿ 2536, 86–92); description of the palace guards (93–95); Iranian guards (98); ranks and titles (136–137). The author even suspects that the Siamese king thought the Iranian embassy was part of a plan to push him out of power, because "the whole world knows of Iran's military exploits, and has good cause to fear the glorious Qizilbāsh who are so fierce in battle." (Muḥammad Rabīʿ 2536, 54; transl. Muḥammad Rabīʿ 1972, 59–60).

92 Muḥammad Rabīʿ 2536, 7.

93 "The Chinese never have nothing to do"; ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī 1357, 60–72 (quotation: p. 62).

a model to follow. At some point he remarks that the good state of the Chinese is due to their law *(qānūn)*, which even the *ḫāqān* (Emperor) has to comply with;[94] there is clearly a didactic impetus in this, addressed to the (Iranian or Ottoman) ruler. This is a result of the unstable political conditions the author had experienced in his home country, as becomes obvious in a passage where he states that the Chinese army is not hungry for war (and, as said, has enough to do with building and construction) and the Chinese do not want to conquer others' territories ("ṭamaʿ ba mulk-i kas nadārand").[95]

The audience for pilgrimage accounts differs. Some of them, albeit based on the authors' journey, were also meant to serve future pilgrims as manuals and instruct them where exactly to go and what to do. This aspect becomes quite clear in Muḥyī ad-Dīn Lārī's account, who reports on his own experiences time and again, but elsewhere instructs his recipients where they shall go, and actually recommends them to do the pilgrimage.[96] For example, he elaborately explains how to reach the state of *iḥrām* and how to perform the circumambulation correctly.[97] These explanations were probably unnecessary for his immediate learned *readers*; but they could have been of some use for people his account was read out for. He also records how he sat down one night and thought about many things, when suddenly he was (divinely?) inspired to write down his account, which, like the pilgrimage, "conquered" his heart and soul and he named *Futūḥ al-ḥaramain*.[98] This statement could be directed at a Sufi audience (though the dream trope can appear in virtually every kind of Persian literature and is found in other travelogues, too; see above) and provide his account with some additional legitimacy.

Stylistic beauty and intertextuality (as well as *imitatio*/ *istiqbāl*) were also issues, not only in the case of travelogues written in maṣnavī. The authors wanted to display their education to other educated readers. Thus, they do not only cite the Qurʾān, but also refer to a number of scholarly authorities, historians and poets, among them Faḫr ad-Dīn Rāzī, Ġazālī, ʿAṭṭār, Saʿdī, Mīrḫvānd, Ḥamdallāh Mustaufī, Bīrūnī, Anaxagoras, Democritus, Socrates,

94 ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī 1357, 32. To quote but one instance of many: "Az ǧahat-i nigāh-dāšt-i qānūn ast ki mamlikat-i īšān čandīn hizār sāl ast ḫarābī nadīda ast va har rūz dar ziyāda šudan ast" (ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī 1357, 97).

95 ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī 1357, 66.

96 Muḥyī ad-Dīn Lārī 1366, 35.

97 Muḥyī ad-Dīn Lārī 1366, 39–40, 56–60.

98 Muḥyī ad-Dīn Lārī 1366, 34.

Plato.[99] ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī quotes, among others, Sanāʾī, Saʿdī, ʿAṭṭār, Rūmī, Salmān Sāvaǧī, Maḥmūd Šabistarī and Niẓāmī.[100] The Iṣfahānī widow's style is influenced by Niẓāmī who is cited and mentioned in her account.[101] Muḥyī ad-Dīn Lārī, too, was inspired by Niẓāmī and modeled his travelogue after his *Maḫzan al-asrār*.[102] He also quotes Ǧāmī and a poet called Ġiyāṣ ad-Dīn.[103]

A number of authors, either indirectly or directly, point to travelogues they were acquainted with and thus contextualize their account within a Persian travelogue tradition: Muḥammad Rabīʿ, for example, had read Ġiyāṣ ad-Dīn Naqqāš Samarqandī's travel report on China.[104] ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī refers to a (lost?) travelogue on China by the astronomer Maulānā ʿAlī Qūšǧī [Qūščī] [Šīrī], commissioned by Uluġ Big;[105] and maybe he "had recource [sic] to Islamic works or to a book or travel report written in the Mongol period, and also to the books of Ġīāṯ-al-dīn Naqqāš and the merchant Solaymān, who had been sent to China by the Timurid Uluḡ Beg."[106] The Iṣfahānī widow was probably acquainted with Lārī's *Futūḥ al-ḥaramain*.[107] And, as stated above already, many authors of versified travelogues had read or at least heard about Ḫāqānī's *Tuḥfat* and took it as a (formal) model.

Last but not least, travelogues should also be pleasant for their readers. They usually comprise sections elaborating on obstacles that had to be overcome (a trope as old as travelogue writing). Although these obstacles were, under the conditions of travel at the time, quite real, they also form a narrative element and create tension. The audience probably expected some hardship such as crossing the desert or the sea.[108] All of these aspects

99 Muḥammad Rabīʿ 2536, 26, 73, 81, 109; ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī 1357, 6; Yazici 1985.

100 ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī 1357, 31–32, 44, 45, 46, 50, 63–64, 70, 75–76, 88, 112 etc.

101 Bānūyī Iṣfahānī 1374, introduction pp. 19–20, 68, 75; Alam and Subrahmanyam 2007, 25; Babayan 2012, 27.

102 Muḥyī ad-Dīn Lārī 1366, 1, 2.

103 Muḥyī ad-Dīn Lārī 1366, 3, 46–48, 60–61, 97–98, 98–99, 102–103.

104 Muḥammad Rabīʿ 2536, 74.

105 ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī 1357, 28.

106 Yazici 1985.

107 Mahallati 2011, 834; Babayan 2012, 27.

108 "It is a well-known fact that traversing the desert is a major moment in travel narratives in medieval Islam. Its fears are often expressed as a reflection of the sea, and vise [sic] versa" (Touati 2010, 250); Muḥammad Rabīʿ's descriptions of the dangers on sea are vivid; see, for example Muḥammad Rabīʿ 2536, 10–15, 17–19. The Iṣfahānī widow elaborates on different illnesses she suffered from during the journey; see Alam and Subrahmanyam 2007, 29, 32.

mentioned are but preliminary threads which deserve to be followed up more thoroughly in the future. Furthermore, it would be interesting to see how the travelogues discussed were received; this, however, also goes beyond the scope of this article.[109]

Conclusion

Our five investigated travelogues display a microcosm of the larger early modern travelogue environment. Safavid accounts of travel, as twenty-two hitherto identified examples show, clearly form part of a Persian literary travelogue tradition. This tradition is mainly, but not exclusively, an elitist one, simply because in the early modern era, both traveling and writing were more common in well-off and educated circles. As with other genres, readers expected to find literary codes in these texts, for example, references to acknowledged literature. At the same time, for the sake of "making genre" (Sohrabi), reference was made to earlier travelogues. In many instances, writers—as common in Persian literary tradition–payed homage to predecessors and their works, modeled their own accounts after them, and probably also tried to surpass their literary model. In this light, we may consider many of our Safavid travelogue writers the heirs of Ḫāqānī (who is, however, but one node in a large net of references). Given the literary-cultural framework—which even predefines a set of socially accepted motives—our travelers still make clear that they do have personal ambitions, motivations, fears and hopes. Be it that they wanted to search for relief (and union), like the Iṣfahānī widow did. Be it that they wanted to make use of the experiences they had gained abroad and claim for the rule of law, as the example of ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī has shown. It is in this sense that autobiographical experiences even beyond the journey itself clearly unfold in travelogues.

109 For example, ʿAlī Akbar Ḫiṭāʾī's travelogue was translated into Ottoman Turkish in 1582 (Kahle 1934, 92) and served as an important source for "the Ottoman knowledge on China" (Kauz 2011, cf. Hagen 2003). Kauz (2013) further elaborates that "astonishingly the Ottoman empire [. . .] figured rather prominently in Chinese sources after a first embassy arrived in Beijing in 1524 [. . .]. The year 1524, only a few years after the work was finished, could indicate a direct influence on Ottoman diplomacy and commerce toward Central Asia and China by ʿAlī Akbar and his book". See also Kahle 1956, 324.

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