



Routledge Handbook of Ancient, Classical and Late Classical Persian Literature

Edited by Kamran Talattof

ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF ANCIENT, CLASSICAL AND LATE CLASSICAL PERSIAN LITERATURE

The *Routledge Handbook of Ancient, Classical, and Late Classical Persian Literature* contains scholarly essays and sample texts related to Persian literature from 650 BCE through the 16th century CE. It includes analyses of some seminal ancient texts and the works of numerous authors of the classical period.

The chapters apply a disciplinary or interdisciplinary approach to the many movements, genres, and works of the long and evolving body of Persian literature produced in the Persianate World. These collections of scholarly essays and samples of Persian literary texts provide facts (general information), instructions (ways to understand, analyze, and appreciate this body of works), and the field's state-of-the-art research (the problematics of the topics) regarding one of the most important and oldest literary traditions in the world.

Thus, the *Handbook's* chapters and related texts provide scholars, students, and admirers of Persian poetry and prose with practical and direct access to the intricacies of the Persian literary world through a chronological account of key moments in the formation of this enduring literary tradition.

The related *Handbook* (also edited by Kamran Talattof), *Routledge Handbook of Post Classical and Contemporary Persian Literature*, covers Persian literary works from the 17th century to the present.

Kamran Talattof is Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Chair in Persian and Iranian Studies and the Founding Chair of the Roshan Graduate Interdisciplinary Program in Persian and Iranian Studies at the University of Arizona, USA.



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK
OF ANCIENT, CLASSICAL
AND LATE CLASSICAL
PERSIAN LITERATURE

Edited by Kamran Talattof

Cover image: © Mohammad Javed Rakhshani

First published 2023

by Routledge

4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge

605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2023 selection and editorial matter, Kamran Talattof; individual chapters,
the contributors

The right of Kamran Talattof to be identified as the author of the editorial material,
and of the authors for their individual chapters, has been asserted in accordance with
sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised
in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or
hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information
storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered
trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent
to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-138-56724-5 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-032-45524-2 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-1-315-12421-6 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781315124216

Typeset in Bembo
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

CONTENTS

<i>List of Contributors</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>List of Tables</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>xii</i>
1 A Review of the History and Categories of Persian Literature: An Introduction <i>Kamran Talattof</i>	1
2 <i>Avesta</i> and Avestan Literature <i>Shima Jaafari-Dehaghi</i>	17
Sample Literature for Chapter 2	39
3 A Stylistic Shift in the Official Documents of Pre-Islamic Iran: The Semantics of Power to the Semantics of Politeness <i>Narges Nematollahi</i>	44
Sample Literature for Chapter 3	73
4 Genre in Classical Persian Poetry <i>Matthew Thomas Miller</i>	77
Sample Literature for Chapter 4	105
5 Rudaki: Father of Persian Poetry <i>Sassan Tabatabai</i>	122
Sample Literature for Chapter 5	137

Contents

6	The Shahnameh of Ferdowsi <i>Olga M. Davidson</i>	148
	Sample Literature for Chapter 6	182
7	Robā'īyāt of Omar Khayyām <i>Juan Cole</i>	187
	Sample Literature for Chapter 7	201
8	Ghazal: Form in Meaning <i>Alireza Korangy</i>	203
	Sample Literature for Chapter 8	234
9	Nizāmī Ganjavī: An Innovator of Persian Narrative Poetry <i>A. A. Seyyed-Gohrab</i>	245
	Sample Literature for Chapter 9	252
10	Geographical Space and Historical Time Layers in Nizami Ganjavi's Works <i>Hamlet Isaxanli</i>	257
	Sample Literature for Chapter 10	283
11	Erotic Narratives and 'Attār's Refashioning of the Didactic <i>Masnavi</i> <i>Austin O'Malley</i>	287
	Sample Literature for Chapter 11	310
12	Analysis of the Ratio of Poetry and Islamic Mysticism in the Formation of Rumi's Personality <i>Seyyed Ali Asghar Mirbagherifard</i>	313
	Sample Literature for Chapter 12	331
13	Poetry and Patronage: Persian Literature During the Mongol Empire <i>Kacey Evilsizor</i>	335
	Sample Literature for Chapter 13	341

Contents

14	Sa'di of Shiraz <i>Kourosh Kamali Sarvestani</i>	344
	Sample Literature for Chapter 14	366
15	Gendering Obeyd: Rereading Zakani's Sexual Satire <i>Mostafa Abedinifard</i>	369
	Sample Literature for Chapter 15	392
16	Congruity of Structure and Content in the Ghazals of Hafiz and Their Cultural and Historical Context <i>Manizheh Abdollahi</i>	395
	Sample Literature for Chapter 16	414
17	Non-Ideological or Bibliomantic Reading of Hafiz's Poetry <i>Saeedeh Shahmahpur</i>	417
	Sample Literature for Chapter 17	432
18	Jami: The Seal of the Great Poets or the Emblem of an Era? <i>Kamran Talattof</i>	434
	Sample Literature for Chapter 18	449
19	A Lost Literacy: Reading <i>Tadhkiras</i> of Persian Poets in the 21st Century <i>Kevin Schwartz</i>	455
	Sample Literature for Chapter 19	470
20	Persian-Language Anthological Manuscripts: Typologies and Terminologies <i>Denise-Marie Teece</i>	471
	Sample Literature for Chapter 20	492
21	The Grounds of Verse: A Geopolitical Turn in Early Modern Persian Literary Criticism <i>Jane Mikkelsen</i>	503
	Sample Literature for Chapter 21	521

Contents

22	Persian-Language Literature in Dagestan: The Poetry of Hasan Alqadari <i>Patimat Alibekova</i>	527
	Sample Literature for Chapter 22	532
23	Nizami Ganjavi and Georgian Literature of the 12th–18th Centuries <i>Gaga Lomidze</i>	534
	Sample Literature for Chapter 23	542
	<i>Bibliography</i>	543
	<i>Index</i>	576

CONTRIBUTORS

- Abdollahi, Manizheh** is currently at Shiraz University, Iran
- Abedinifard, Mostafa** is currently at University of British Columbia, Canada
- Alibekova, Patimat** is currently at G. Tsadasa Institute of Language, Dagestan
- Cole, Juan** is currently at University of Michigan, USA
- Davidson, Olga M.** is currently at Boston University, USA
- Evilsizor, Kacey** is currently at University of Arizona, USA
- Isaxanli, Hamlet** is currently at Khazar University, Azerbaijan
- Jaafari-Dehaghi, Shima** is currently at Velayat University, Iran
- Kamali Sarvestani, Kouros** is currently at Hafez University, Iran
- Korangy, Alireza** is currently at American University of Beirut, Lebanon
- Lomidze, Gaga** is currently a literary critic at Tbilisi, Georgia
- Mikkelson, Jane** is currently at University of Chicago, USA
- Miller, Matthew Thomas** is currently at University of Maryland, USA
- Mirbagherifard, Seyyed Ali Asghar** is currently at Tarbiat Modares, Iran
- Nematollahi, Narges** is currently at University of Arizona, USA
- O'Malley, Austin** is currently at University of Arizona, USA
- Schwartz, Kevin** is currently a Research Fellow at the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague

Contributors

Seyed-Gohrab, A. A. is currently at Utrecht University, the Netherlands

Shahnahpur, Saeedeh is currently at Leiden University, the Netherlands

Tabatabai, Sassan is currently at Boston University, USA

Talattof, Kamran is currently at University of Arizona, USA

Teece, Denise-Marie is currently at New York University, Abu Dhabi, UAE

TABLES

Letter 3.1	From superior to subordinate	47
Letter 3.2	From subordinate to superior: from the Jewish leaders of Elephantine to the governor of Judah	48
Letter 3.3	Letter of Antiochus I to Meleager, the governor of the Hellespontine satrapy	51
Letter 3.4	(Heliodoros letter): Letter of Seleucus IV to his minister, Heliodoros	52
Letter 3.5	The Parthian letter from Dura-Europos	54
Letter 3.6	A document of the cavalry	58
Letter 3.7	An announcement of the arrival of an official	59
Letter 3.8	An invoice letter from the Pahlavi Archive	63
Table 3.1	The layout of Aramaic letters according to the relevant rank of the sender and recipient	49
Table 3.2	The use of pronouns in official epistolary data of Aramaic, Greek, Parthian, and Middle Persian	66
Table 3.3	The format of praescriptio in Aramaic, Greek, Parthian, and Middle Persian letters	66
Table 3.4	The format of greeting sections in Aramaic, Greek, Parthian, and Middle Persian letters	67
Table 4.1	Key Arabic poetic forms adopted into Persian	79
Table 4.2	Key indigenous Persian poetic forms, meters, and features	80
Table 11.1	Number and lengths of anecdotes	291
Table 11.2	Number of anecdotes over forty verses and their lengths	292
Table 11.3	Amatory anecdotes	293
Appendix Table 11.A	Lengths of narratives in the <i>Fakhri-nāmeḥ</i>	301
Appendix Table 11.B	Lengths of narratives in the longer <i>Hadiqat</i>	302
Appendix Table 11.C	Lengths of narratives in the <i>Makhzan</i>	302

FIGURES

4.1	Distribution of MiM <i>qalandariyyāt</i> poems on basis of topic probability score of “qalandari topic”	90
4.2	Distribution of all MiM poems on basis of topic probability score of “qalandari topic”	91
19.1	Graph of <i>tadhkiras</i> according to method of organization and temporal focus	463

1

A REVIEW OF THE HISTORY AND CATEGORIES OF PERSIAN LITERATURE

An Introduction

Kamran Talattof

This collection of scholarly essays and samples of Persian literary texts provides facts (general information), instructions (ways to understand, analyze, and appreciate this body of work), and the field's state-of-the-art research (the problematics of the topics) regarding one of the most important and oldest literary traditions in the world. Persian literature is regularly featured in encyclopedias and anthologies worldwide. Its literary works are constantly translated into English and other languages. Courses on Persian literature are routinely offered in the most prominent universities in the United States, Europe, India, and East Asia. Khayyam's quatrains have become canonical and are quoted in music, films, and books; Nezami's romances have been imitated by tens of poets in several countries, Rumi has been a bestseller in the United States for decades. It has profoundly influenced the literatures of Ottoman Turkey, Muslim India, and Turkic Central Asia. It has been a source of inspiration for Goethe, Emerson, Matthew Arnold and Jorge Luis Borges among others, and has been praised by William Jones, Tagore, E.M. Forster, and many more.¹ Deservedly, Ehsan Yarshater initiated a comprehensive encyclopedic series on what is hoped to be the entirety of Persian literature, and numerous others have published monographs and edited volumes on a variety of literary subjects.

However, despite the significance of this body of literature and the attention it has received, no handbook has ever been published to provide practical and direct access to the intricacies of the Persian literary world. The *Routledge Handbook of Persian Literature* intends to fill this gap, offering facts, instructions, and insight into future studies of the field and its subjects. It includes new scholarships to shed light on some well-known and neglected areas of Persian literary studies, such as major poetic works or the problematics of genre and gender. The volumes contain scholarly works from established scholars as well as younger academics to provide a depth of knowledge, various insights, and the latest research. Of course, the books cannot be comprehensive due to the vastness of the field; however, they are designed around the best examples of subjects and authors and broad and specific themes to allow for the application of several methodological and theoretical approaches.

Despite multiple invasions and occupations of what was once the Persian Empire and the transformation and exile of its habitants, numerous Persian poets and writers have continued to preserve a national identity, a connection to the ancient Persian worldview, and a fascination with the Persian language. Many of them including Ferdowsi painstakingly used the surviving ancient texts and oral tales to weave their own masterpieces. My recent book, *Nezami Ganjavi and Classical Persian Poetry: Demystifying the Mystic*, argues that what connects Nezami's thematically various poems is his passion for words, literary creativity, and polymathic fluency with the art of rhetoric or Sakhon, which he enriches with themes and subjects such as love, religion, science, wine, and philosophy. All are rendered in an exclusive style and with intricate technique.² In fact, my conceptualization of Nezami's notion of Sakhon as literature and the *Nezamian pictorial allegory* will help to prove that his main concern was to weave poetry and not promote religiosity. In his poetry, he renders space and cosmic constellations, but it does not mean he was an astronomer; he writes on philosophy, but it does not mean he was a philosopher; he ponders justice, but it does not mean he was a scholar of law; he incorporates veganism in his romance, but it does not mean he was a vegan; he speaks of music, but it does not mean he was a musician. He regularly mentions gems such as rubies, emeralds, diamonds, garnets, and pearls as physical objects, adjectives, or metaphors, and that does not make him a gemologist either. When Nezami refers to and uses religious and mystic concepts, it does not mean he was a religious zealot or Sufi activist. An analysis of his poetry reveals that he was familiar with many subjects and sciences. Still, he used such materials as themes rather than including them in his verse to market any ideology.³ The possibilities offered by literary criticism might allow future studies to compliment, say, the numerous studies that have focused on Hakim Sanai's mysticism and religiosity by analyzing his innovative style, his poetic rendition of the concept of love, his dualistic approach to life and philosophy, and his shifting approach to religion. These Handbook's various literary approaches further help expand literary analysis of other Persian literary works beyond a mere religious reading that is often associated with denying any notion of national identity. They also confirm the validity of describing the vast body of classical Persian literature as a "shared heritage."

Basic Definitions

Persian is the official language of Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan, and it is spoken in many other communities in Central, South Asia, and Western Asia. It is a branch of the Indo-European languages, and its grammar resembles that of some European languages.

Persian literature consists of a body of poetry, prose, and belles lettres produced mainly in Iran, Afghanistan, Caucasia, the Indian subcontinent, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey, and in contemporary times in Europe and the United States. This literature has appeared in a different writing system and various forms since the ancient times when the literary/religious works were written in Old or Middle Persian (Pahlavi) languages in use between 650 BCE (Cyrus the Great was born in 590 BC) and 650 CE.

Therefore, these volumes touch upon literature produced in different eras and numerous parts of the Persian world. Persia covered a vast number of territories beyond what is contemporary Iran. Numerous scholars refer to this entity as the Persianate world.⁴ In many of these communities and nations, from Eastern Europe to China and from northern Russia to the Indian subcontinent, Persian was the court's dialect, the official language of the government, and the language which poets used when writing and reciting poetry: a lingua franca indeed.⁵ Nearly 80 poets from various parts of this world, for example, imitated the 12th-century Persian poet Nezami Ganjavi.

The massive amount of literary works produced over such an extended period in the pre-Islamic and Islamic periods holds universal appeal. Persian literature was dominated by poetry for more than a millennium, and Persian poetry has been translated into numerous languages.

Some of the translated works, such as the works of Rumi and Khayyam, have become canonical in their host languages. In addition, since the beginning of the 20th century, new genres such as the short story and the novel have been added to this repertoire.

Problematics of Categorization

Periodization or classification of the long and vast classical Persian literature is problematic, particularly if it is based on the dynasties or ideological representations. Contemporary Persian literature, on the other hand, has been highly influenced by its contextual social discourses. Nevertheless, after the pioneering literary historiographies by scholars such as Carl Hermann Ethé, E. G. Brown, M. H. Forughī, A. Qazvini, A. E. Ashiani, Foruzanfar, Jan Rypka, Shibli Nomani, and S. Nafisi, two significant works were published after the 1940s. Zabihollah Safa published his influential, comprehensive, multivolume *Tarikh Adabiyyat dar Iran (Literary History in Iran 1953–1988)*, categorizing the literary products of an extended period based mostly on the historical dynasties of Persia and Iran, starting with the classical period in the period after the fall of last Persian empire.⁶ The work became a textbook and a significant source. Second, M. S. Bahar published *Sabk Shenasi ya Tarikh-e Tatavor-e She'r-e Farsi (The Study of Styles and Development of Persian Poetry)*, which argued for the existence of a few distinct styles of poetry in the classical period. Such efforts have not stopped; others have published newer literary history books focusing on a particular era or genre. As mentioned, Ehsan Yarshater's project to publish significant historiography is of immense importance.⁷

It is equally problematic to delineate the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, or the pre- and postmodern eras. When I wrote about the conceptualization of contemporary Persian literature, I was able to explain the changes in that body of literature in the episodic literary movement. However, this project is not historiography; instead, it is a collection of analytical chapters addressing a consequential author, a significant text, or a shifting literary event. Furthermore, the entire history of Persian literature from the beginning to the contemporary period is too long and too vast, with too many paradigmatic and discursive shifts, to lend itself easily to one analytical model. I have selected the following four categories to grasp and understand numerous important texts and authors in terms of social context, literary discourse, and poetic styles. The categories also allow us to discuss literature anachronistically and synchronically. It is, of course, impossible for a handbook to cover all texts, events, and authors of a period that extends back to at least 2,600 years – and much longer, according to many other estimates. However, a brief description might be beneficial. For this project, I chose to divide the history/types of Persian literature into the following four periods/categories.⁸

Still, even such a scheme of Persian literary history based on historical context, genre, and themes cannot be comprehensive. It can only show where in the past, the authors, books, and literary samples presented in this volume can be located. It is chronological, but it has also delineated and categorized the history based on period, genre, and thematic as well as stylistic changes. It includes the names of significant authors (some of whom are discussed in the chapters) of each category, accompanied by some brief, basic information about each category, period, or school of poetry.

This scheme includes two hiatuses during which Persian authors either could not write, wrote minor works, or had to write their highly essential books in a foreign language. The first one began in the aftermath of the Macedonian Alexander's invasion and destruction of Persia and during the Hellenistic Period. The second one began after the Arab Muslim invasion and occupation of the country in the 7th century AD, with lasting effects for about two centuries.

Please note that some poets and authors lived in two different centuries. In such cases, they are listed under the century in which they were most productive.

Ancient Literature

1 **The historical context of this category/period:**

During the Persian Empires (Medes, Achaemenid, Parthian Empire a.k.a. Arsacid Empire, and Sasanian), inspired by ancient Persian religions such as Mithraism and Zoroastrianism, literature was composed mostly of poetry and some prose, all mostly religious or philosophical works produced in the ancient forms of the Persian language, Old Persian and Middle Persian or Pahlavi. This period of literary production, which began with oral literature and inscriptions, could have started around the 11th century BC and lasted until the end of the Persian Empire in the 7th century AD.

2 **Examples of texts and books written in this category, some of which are addressed in the chapters of these volumes, include:**

Inscriptions including Persian (Old Persian, Pahlavi) poetry, *Avesta* and all related texts, Ghasas, *Arda Viraf* (Arda Viraz Nameh), the Kartir (the Mobad of Hormozd), Middle Ancient Literature or Pahlavi, Zabur Pahlavi, Saghodi and Manavi literatures, *Yasht*, *Yasna*, The *Gahan* and *Haftha*, and a few tablets and inscriptions.

3 **Recurrent literary genres and themes/subjects in this period/category include:**

Poetry, hymns, religious texts, books of philosophy, tablets, and inscriptions
Legends, histories, kings, advice, religious songs, love, and Scythian tales.

4 **The presumed school or style:**

Ancient forms.

5 **Regions well known for poetic productivity:**

At times, the Persian Empire stretched from the Balkans and Eastern Europe to the Indus Valley, making it the largest empire in history.

Classical Literature

1 **The historical context of this category/period:**

Following two or so centuries in which Iranians wrote highly consequential books in Arabic and to a limited extent in Pahlavi or local Persian dialects, thousands of poets and prose writers appeared in the next several centuries known as the classical period. This category's (spanning approximately the 7th to 15th centuries) features include transformation from Pahlavi to Dari Persian, the influence of Arabic poetry, changes in the Persian language and its writing system, the beginning of classical Persian literature, the slow rise of a new literature, and new genres. Classical literature began to flourish under such dynasties as the Samanids and the Ghaznavids (whose territories are now partly located in Tajikistan and Afghanistan), and later the Seljuks (part of whose territory is now Republic of Azerbaijan).

I propose dividing the Classical period (after the fall of the Persian Empire) into three categories/periods. First, the 7th to 9th centuries, in which, despite being dubbed two centuries of silence, Iranians tried to preserve their identity and language while being forced or encouraged to write in Arabic. Some also produced works in a variety of Persian form and genres which become known as *Fahalaviat*, *Khosravani*, and the *Siavah* Eulogy (in oral form). Second, the 9th to 11th centuries, in which issues related to identity, preservation of ancient and Zoroastrian culture and heritage, adjustment to the foreign religion of Islam, and accumulation of new knowledge gained significance. These literary interests in the past heritage could also be observed in other social trends and art forms. Third, from the 12th to 14th centuries, other subjects including those related to spirituality and mysticism, entered literature.

However, the forms, the high quality of poetry and prose, and the underlying Persian features remained the same.

- 2 **Recurrent literary genres and themes/subjects in this period/category include:** Elegies, odes, epics, couplet poems, romances, quatrains, lyrics, prose, rhymed prose, travelogues, legends, histories, books of kings, love stories, and later spiritual and religious themes.
- 3 **The presumed school or style:** The birth of court poetry: A simple encounter between Yaqub Lays and Mohamadd Yasif Khorasani style.
- 4 **Regions well known for poetic productivity:** The greater Khorasan, Central Asia, Azerbaijan and the Caucasia, Pars/Arak-e Ajam, Indian subcontinent.
- 5 **Examples of the significant poets and authors belonging to this category, some of whom are addressed in these volumes, include the following.**

7th–8th Centuries

Poetry

Persians wrote mostly in other languages or in other alphabets because writing in Persian was forbidden.

Abu'l-Abbas Marwazi is believed to have been the first to write a poem in Persian.

Prose

Iranians authored pioneering books of Arabic grammar, Arabic fiction, and scientific texts and translated works from Pahlavi to other languages or other alphabets.

9th Century

Poetry

Rudaki
Mansur Al-Hallaj

Shahid Balkhi
Abu Hafz Sughadi

Prose (Writers and Texts)

Hafz Bin Mansur Marwazi (*Taxes of Khurasan* book)
Kalileh o Demneh
Khwatāy-nāmak

Tabari history
Farabi
Razi

10th Century

Poetry

Ferdowsi
Abusaeid Abolkheir
Abu Mansur Daqiqi
Mansur Al-Hallaj

Rabi'a Balkhi
Aşjadi
Farrukhi Sistani
Kisai Marvazi
Abu Shakur Balkhi

Onsuri
Abu-Sa'id Abul-Khayr (967–1049)

Prose

Bal'ami history	Abdullah al-Kukhari (<i>History of Bukhara</i>)
<i>History of the Rulers of Khurasan</i> by Abul Husain Ali b. Ahmad Sallami	Tarikh-e Sistan (early Ghaznavids)
Zain ol Akhbar by Gardezi	Qabus ibn Wushmagir (d.1012)
Tarikh-e Kamel by Ibn al-Ashir	Khwaja Abdullah Ansari
	Avicenna's writings

11th Century

Poetry

Fakhruddin As'ad Gurgani	Rabi'ah Quzdari
Omar Khayyam (1048–1131)	Masud Sa'd Salman
Sanai (1080–1131/1141)	Qatran Tabrizi
Manuchihri	Asadi Tusi
Baba Tahir Oryan	

Prose

Bayhaqi (Author of <i>Bayhaqi History</i>)	<i>Siyasat Nameh</i> by Khajeh Nezam al-Mulk
Naser Khosrow	
Nizami Arudhi Samarqandi	Abu Hamed Muhammad Ghazali (1058–1111)
Imam Muhammad Ghazali	
Qabus Nameh by Kaykabus (c. 1080 AD)	Farsnameh

12th Century (Thematic Changes Occur)

Poetry

Suzani Samarqandi	Sheikh Ahmad Jami
Adib Sabir	Falaki Shirvani
Am'aq	Sanai Ghaznavi, poet
Anvari	Mu'izzi
Farid al-Din Attatr (1130–1220)	Ibn Balkhi
Nizami (1140–1203)	Mahsati Ganjavi, poet
Sheikh Ruzbehan	Rashid al-Din Muhammad al-Umari Vatvat
Khaqani Shirvani	
Sanaayi	

Prose (Writer or Texts)

<i>Tarjoman al-Balaghe</i> by Raduyani	<i>Asrar al-Tohid</i>
<i>Kalileh o Demneh</i> of Bahram Shah	<i>Samak Ayyar</i>
<i>Maqamat-e Hamidi</i>	<i>Sohrevari's writing</i>
Chahar Maqaleh by Nizami Aruzi	<i>Tazkareh al-Olia</i>

13th Century

Poetry

Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi, poet (1207–1273)	Khawaju Kermani
	Mahmoud Shabestari
Sultan Walad	Najmeddin Razi
Saadi, poet (1184–1283/1291?)	Muhammad Afi
Rashid-al-Din Hamadani (1247–1318)	Qazi Beiza'i
	Awhadi Maraghai
Shams Tabrizi	Auhaduddin Kermani
Sheikh Ruzbehan	Ghiyas al-Din ibn Rashid al-Din
Zahed Gilani	Ata-Malik Juvayni

Prose (Writers or Texts)

Marezban Nameh	<i>Tabarestan History</i>
Muhammad Afi (Lubab al Albab)	

14th Century

Poetry

Amir Khosrow Dehlavi	Nasimi
Ghiyas al-Din ibn Rashid al-Din	Qasem Anvar
Hafez	Shah Nimatullah Wali
Junayd Shirazi	Shahin Shirazi
Kamal Khojandi	Ubayd Zakani

Prose Writers

Fazl al-Allah Ruzbahan
Hafez Abru

Late Classical Literature

1 **The historical context of this category/period:**

Conceptualizing the literary works produced between the 15th and 17th centuries better helps us understand the nature of these works and the literature produced after that (which I conceptualize as post-classical literature). The rise of Shiism to state ideology during the Safavid Dynasty in Iran ruled by such kings as Shah Abbas, the opportunity for writers to benefit from their religious affiliations, the migration of poets to India ruled by the Moghuls and kings such as Akbar Shah and the Delhi sultans, and the centrality of Herat (now in Afghanistan) to literary and artistic activities were factors in shaping social ideas and literary themes.

2 **Recurrent literary genres and themes/subjects in this period/category include:**

Odes, epics, lyrics, Masnavi, Quatrain, prose writing, religious texts, popularity of Tazkareh (bibliographical books of who's who in poetry), Safineh (poetry compendiums which could contain a broader literary corpus), dictionary, humor tales, popular literature, animal

allegory, histories, spiritual and Sufi poetry, Shiite-inspired writings, wine and wine drinking, riddles, biographies, letters, grammar.

3 **The presumed school or style:**

Occurrence (Simplicity) School and Indian Style.

4 **Regions well known for poetic productivity:**

India, Iran, Ottoman Empire, Central Asia, Transoxiana, Caucasia.

5 **Examples of the significant poets and authors belonging to this category, some of whom are addressed in these volumes, include the following.**

15th Century

Poetry

Abd al-Rahman Jami
Badriddin Hilali
Fuzuli

Imrani
Mir Ali Shir Nava'i

Prose

Abd al-Rahman Jami
Dowlatshah Samarqandi
Mir Khaand (Khund)

Sultan Husayn Mirza Bayqara
Va'ez Khashefi

16th Century

Poetry

Mohtesham Kashani
Nahapet Kuchak
Sultan Selim

Tahmuras Khan
Vahshi Bafeqi
Zolali Khansari

Prose

Orfi, Sheikh Bahaii

An Outline of Post-Classical and Contemporary Persian Literature⁹

Post-Classical Literature

1 **The historical context of this category/period:**

Even though they might overlap with the previous and following categories, the literary works produced in the period of the 17th to 19th centuries also exhibit common features, which allows me the conceptualization of the Post-Classical Literature.

This post-Safavid body of work is also conceptualized as the Persian Literary Return Movement. They were written from the Zands and Afsharid dynasties to the middle Qajar period. Issues critical to the study of this movement include how poets could use the Khoransani and Araqi Styles to address issues of their day such as reforms during Naser al-Din Shah's reign; the rise of national literatures; and the end of Persian in India (following the English Education Act of 1835, when Persian lost its significance to English and Hindi/Urdu).

- 2 **Recurrent literary genres and themes/subjects in this period/category include:**
Imitations or modifications of classical genres and forms, odes, elegies, popular storytelling, travelogues, journalistic writing, histories, letters, later prose with some modern features, riddles, dramas
Praise, biographies, histories, advice, religion, eulogies, military, travelogues.
- 3 **The presumed school or style:**
School of Literary Return (to classical period)
- 4 **Regions well known for poetic productivity:**
Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India and Indian subcontinent, Ottoman Empire.
- 5 **Examples of the significant poets and authors belonging to this category, some of whom are addressed in these volumes, include the following.**

17th Century

Poetry

Abul Ma'āni Abdul Qader Bedil	Kalim Kashani
Bhai Nand Lal	Saeb Tabrizi
Brahman Lahuri	Sarmad Kashani
Gani Kashmiri	Taleb Amoli
Guru Gobind Singh	Zeb-un-Nissa Makhfi

Prose (Religion, Philosophy, Science, or Encyclopedic Works)

Abiverdi	Hakim Shafai
Beha al-Din Ameli	Mirfendereski
Bidel Dehlavi	Mohammad Baqir Majlesi
Borhane Qate'	Mola Sadra
Brahman	Molla Fathollah Kashani
Fakhri Heravi	Sayed Hasan Astarabadi
Farhang Jahangiri	Shah Taher Dakani
Farhang Sarvari	Shaykh Bahani
Farhang-e Rashidi	Sheikh Bahaii
Fayz Kashani	

18th–Early 19th Century

Poetry

Abbas Foroughi Bastami	Hazin Lahiji
Hatef Esfehani	Razi Artimani
Mirza A. Ghalib (19th century but classical)	Saba Kashani
Moshtaq Isfahani	Vesal Shirazi

Prose

Abd al-Salam Dehati	Jafar Mohmmad
Abdollah Rahman	Jalil Zaland
Abdollah Sobhan, Parisa	Khushal Khattak

Abdul Latif Pedram
Ali-Shir Nava'i
Asad Golzadeh Bokharai
Azar Bigdeli
Chah Abi
Delshadeh
Elyas Alavi
Habib Yusofi
Hayat Ne'mat

Lahuti
Mohammad Jan Rahimi
Pari Hesari
Parwin Malaal
Payman
Payrov Soleimani
Qahar Asi
Rahman Baba
Shakila Azizzadeh

Contemporary Literature

- 1 **The historical and social contexts of this category/period:**
The end of the 18th century witnessed a movement in Persia which was later labeled *Baz-gasht-e Adabi* (Return Movement, which wished for a return to the classical period or the revival of the literary tradition of the magnificent poets, the last of whom was Jami, thus "the seal of the poets" designation). Scholars, critics, and journalists have understood the movement as a rejection of the stylistic and thematic forms and norms of the post-classical period. The movement for the most part failed and opened a path for what critics called Modern Persian literature. Hafez Isfahani and Azar Bigdeli are examples of poets who belonged to this movement. Since the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, Persian-speaking nations and communities have produced a vast amount of literary works in modern forms and genres. Social reforms, experiencing modernity, constitutional movements, the rise of national literature in Persian-speaking countries, ideological and discursive changes, and continued social upheaval have marked this period.
- 2 **Recurrent literary genres and themes/subjects in this period/category include:**
New genres, travelogues, short stories, novels, dramas, romances, humor, journalism, classical and free styles of poetry, modernity, military, translations, modern ideas, the question of the west, justice, revolution, love and gender.
- 3 **The presumed school or style:**
Modern fiction and modern poetry.
- 4 **Regions well known for poetic productivity:**
Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, diaspora, and other Persian-speaking communities.
- 5 **Examples of the significant poets and authors belonging to this category, some of whom are addressed in these volumes, include the following.**

19th Century

Poetry

Aref Qazvini	Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib
Farrokhi Yazdi	Mirzadeh Eshghi
Hamza H. Niyazi	Qa'ani
Hassan Roshdieh	Sheyda Gerashi
Iraj Mirza	Tahirih Qorrat al-'Ayn

Prose

Reza Qoli Khan Hedayat, Maraghei, Talbof

20th Century

Poetry

Abdumalik Bahori, Tajik poet	Mohammad Reza Shafiei-Kadkani
Abolghasem Lahouti	Nadia Anjoman
Ahmad Shamlou	Nima Yushij
Allama Muhammad Iqbal	Parvin E'tesami
Aref Qazvini,	Sadr al-Din Ayni
Fereidoon Tavallali	Sadriddin Ayni, Tajik
Fereydoun Moshiri	Siavash Kasraie
Forough Farrokhzad	Simin Behbahani
Gulnazar Keldi, Tajik	Sipandi Samarkandi, Tajik
Iraj Mirza, poet	Sohrab Sepehri, poet and painter
Mehdi Akhavan-Sales	Syed Abid Ali Abid, poet and author
Mirzadeh Eshghi	Syed Waheed Ashraf, poet, Sufi, critic
Mirzo Tursunzoda, Tajik	Temur Zulfiqorov

Prose

Ahmad Kasravi	Ebrahim Poordavood, Avesta expert
Ahmad Mahmud	Ghazaleh Alizadeh, novelist
Ali Akbar Dehkhoda, scholar, also linguist	Gholam Hossein Saedi, writer
Ali Mohammad Afghani, writer	Houshang Golshiri
Bahram Bayzai, playwright	Iraj Pezeshkzad, novelist
Bozorg Alavi	Jalal Al-e-Ahmad
Ebrahim Nabavi, satirist	Mahmoud Dowlatabadi
Mohammad Ali Jamalzadeh, writer	Marjane Satrapi, graphic novelist
Roya Hakakian, poet, writer	Samad Behrangi, writer
Sadegh Choubak, writer	Shahrnush Parsipur, novelist
Sadeq Hedayat	Simin Daneshvar, writer
	Zoya Pirzad, novelist

Other Subjects Related to Persian Literary Studies

Persian oral and folk literature
Amir Arsalan Namdar, Reciting Book of Kings, Samak Ayar, Tuti Nameh, stories, lullabies, proverbs, and so on
Persian literary criticism and the use of literature in other subjects
M. A. Dastghayb
Mohammad Reza Shafiei-Kadkani
Mohammad-Taghi Bahar, poet
Reza Baraheni, poet and critic
Saeed Nafisi, scholar, poet and writer
Sirus Tahbaz

These categories are discussed by studying poets, authors, or literary works representing their era and genre. As such, the chapters cover several essential and prolific poets and prose writers, the crucial

characteristics of Persian literature, literary changes, literary genres, critical literary events, and to some extent, criticism.¹⁰ In addition to this chronological scheme, the handbook touches upon Persian oral and folk literature and Persian literature in several different regions. This division avoids the unsettled debates about periodization, poetic styles, and the diversity of genres by encompassing them all.

While Persian-speaking communities worldwide may consider the ancient and classical products a common heritage, the last two categories, consisting of works produced since the 17th century in Iran; the Ottoman Empire; Tajikistan; Afghanistan; India; and other places in Central Asia, Caucasus, and the Indian subcontinent, are sometimes marked with a national identity and specific national characteristics.

The ancient or pre-Islamic Persian literature written in Old Persian or Pahlavi consists of the *Gathas* (divine songs), the ancient and sacred Zoroastrian (ancient Persian religion) writings collectively called the *Avesta*, the Middle Persian texts of *Avesta*, and a few ancient epics. In classical literature alone, there seem to have been 12,000 poets, of whom 800 were women. Only a few verses remain from some of these poets, while others have left us with volumes of work. Historians believe frequent invasions from nearby countries over the centuries explain the loss of these works.

Persian literary output includes religious texts and hymns; epics; lyrics; fables; numerous types of poetry; advice literature; mystical writings; biographical anthologies (*tazkereh*, compendia); genres; travelogues; treaties; essays; and, in recent centuries, free verse poetry, short stories, novels, prison writings, memoirs, and plays.

Contents

The chapters of this handbook cover not all but numerous authors and their work. The sections are also followed by a related and representative sample text. Through a close reading of poetry or prose texts, biographical stories, and historical documents, the contributing authors provide a view of the literary, generic, and discursive movement of Persian literature over an extended period, all the while keeping in mind the influence of social contexts that often changed dramatically.

After this introduction (1), the chapters will cover many aspects and areas listed in the previous literary categories, with analysis and a sample text following.

Chapters on Ancient, Classical, and Late Classical Persian Literature

The literary works belonging to these categories will be covered in the *Routledge Handbook of Ancient, Classical, and Late Classical Persian Literature*, with the following chapters that appear after this introduction.

- 2 Shima Jaafari-Dehaghi, in “*Avesta* and Avestan Literature,” does a comprehensive examination of the *Avesta*, the holy book of the Zoroastrians and the only text that remains in the Avestan language. The chapter begins with the origins of the *Avesta*, broadens to include the various sections that make up the text, and concludes with a history of Western scholarship on the text.
- 3 Narges Nematollahi, in the chapter “A Stylistic Shift in the Official Documents of Pre-Islamic Iran: The Semantics of Power to the Semantics of Politeness,” studies the style of the official letters that survived from the Achaemenid Empire (550–320 BCE), the Seleucids (320–129 BCE), the Arsacids (129 BCE–224 CE) and the Sasanids (224–650 CE) and traces the

stylistic shifts that happened in this genre over time. She argues that the official letters show-case a semantic shift from the semantics of power under the Achaemenids to the semantics of politeness under the Sasanids.

- 4 Matthew Thomas Miller, in the chapter “Genre in Classical Persian Poetry,” establishes the nuanced role that genre plays within literary traditions not only as categories for similar literary works but also as socio-political and historical constructs and guides for writers and readers. He focuses on genre in New Persian literature, which has changed over its long history and as it interacted first with genre systems from Arabic literature and later on with European ones. The chapter focuses on the genre system of classical Persian poetry, which developed from the 10th to the 15th centuries, and shows how the creation of this system relied on themes found within poetry as much as their various forms.
- 5 Sassan Tabatabai, in the chapter “Rudaki: The Father of Persian Poetry,” writes on the life of Rudaki and how he seized the opportunity to carve a dominant niche for himself in the history of Persian literature. When the Samanids came to power, they provided a fertile ground for a renaissance of Persian literature by sponsoring and drawing literary talent to their court. Rudaki established himself as a prominent poet of the Samanid court and subsequently as a cornerstone of the Persian literary genius to unfold over the following centuries.
- 6 Olga M. Davidson, in “The Shahnameh of Ferdowsi,” writes on the Persian Book of Kings, which is commonly described today as the national epic of Iranians. This chapter addresses the historical circumstances surrounding not only the composing of the Shahnameh by Ferdowsi the poet but also the traditions involved in the performing of such poetry by the poet himself in the presence of different audiences who typified different potential patrons. In so doing, the chapter follows the textual history of the Shahnameh and discusses the reception that Ferdowsi received for it in his lifetime.
- 7 In his chapter, “Robā’īyāt of Omar Khayyām,” Juan Cole discusses Omarian poetry, the poetry attributed to Omar Khayyām (d.1131) throughout the history of classical Persian poetry. However, Cole discusses the strong possibility that Khayyām is a frame author and that Omarian poetry is not poetry written by him but rather a genre of poetry written during the centuries following his life.
- 8 In his chapter, “Ghazal: Form in Meaning,” Alireza Korangy explores and offers a macro-study of ghazal (lyric poetry) as a genre in Persian literature. It will show that although ghazal as a concept (conceit) far pre-dates Persian poetry, it in fact reaches its zenith within the Persian-speaking world, as will be examined under the rubric of the works of some of ghazal’s most impactful poets. This chapter’s tracing of the development of ghazal shows that ghazal has been, and is, far more a conceit than it is a content form, even when the content form is well established in the late 12th century.
- 9 In “Nizāmī Ganjavī: An Innovator of Persian Narrative Poetry,” A. A. Seyed-Gohrab explores the life and impact of the great poet Nizami Ganjavi. Beginning with a brief biography of the poet, Seyed-Gohrab discusses the impact that Nizami’s work has had not only on poetry but on other forms of visual arts that have rendered his work into other media. He then discusses each of Nizami’s five narrative poems as well as traditions of translation and emulation and concludes with Nizami’s poetic organization and style.

I have written extensively on the poetry of Nezami Ganjavi, who lived in a part of Iran which is now the Republic of Azerbaijan. Like several other Persian authors of Iran, the designation of his nationality has become problematic due to the modern redrawing of the national borders. Numerous scholars in the west and elsewhere have pointed out verses

and documents in which Nezami identified himself as a Persian-speaking Iranian.¹¹ Two chapters add valuable perspectives from Azerbaijan. In fact, the second chapter on Nezami sheds light on the category allocated to Persian literature of other contemporary nations, and that is why it is presented later in this book, where the necessity for understanding what is conceptualized as “the common heritage” becomes most apparent.

- 10 Hamlet Isaxanli, in the chapter “Geographical Space and Historical Time Layers in Nizami Ganjavi’s Works,” also pays tribute to the great poet Nizami but this time through his extensive worldview and philosophy of life and his knowledge of sciences, history, and geography and the exceptional role they played in his descriptions of geographical space and historical time in all his five poems united under the name “Khamṣa.” This chapter attempts to answer questions like: What is the known world for Nizami’s favorite heroes? How did Nizami use historical sources? Why did Nizami allow historical anachronisms? How does the history of Iskender, Nizami’s favorite hero, differ from that of Alexander the Great?
- 11 Austin O’Malley, in the chapter “Erotic Narratives and ‘Attār’s Refashioning of the Didactic *Masnavi*,” focuses on frame-tales, in which a series of narratives are uttered by characters in an overarching story, and which were often used by medieval Persian poets and authors to organize their works. Although various texts structured by this device have been studied in isolation, there has been no attempt to trace its development within the Persian literary tradition or delineate the various functions it performs. This chapter will thus overview the historical development of the frame-tale device with an eye to its form and function, including discussions of *Kalila va Demna*, *Sendbâd-nâma*, *Tuḡi-nâma*, *Haft Paykar*, and especially the *maṣnavis* of ‘Attâr.
- 12 Seyyed Ali Asghar Mirbagherifard, in his chapter, “Analysis of the Ratio of Poetry and Islamic Mysticism in the Formation of Rumi’s Personality,” examines the life of Rumi and the impact of his works on both mysticism and poetry. This chapter offers a discussion of Rumi’s position and innovations within mysticism. According to the chapter, Rumi belonged to an earlier tradition of Sufism, but he also founded his own influential mystic approach. The author covers the essential literary aspects of Rumi’s work, albeit briefly.
- 13 Kacey Evilsizor, in the chapter “Poetry and Patronage: Persian Literature During the Mongol Empire,” discusses the Ilkhanate period of Persian literary history, during which the Mongols ruled Persia. There are two components of this chapter: placing Persian poetry of this era within the context that came before, as well as discussing the Mongols’ contribution to the tradition as patrons.
- 14 In his chapter “Sa’di of Shiraz,” Kourosh Kamali Sarvestani explores the life and work of Sa’di Shirazi, the great 13th-century Iranian poet. The author discusses the veracity of Sa’di’s travels, his patronage relationships, his poetic prowess, his extant collections, and his common themes, as well as his influence both in the present day and on other parts of the world.
- 15 Mostafa Abedinifard, in the chapter “Gendering Obeyd: Rereading Zakani’s Sexual Satire,” writes that despite the 14th-century poet Obayd Zakani’s celebrated reputation as a satirist, much of his work features sexuality but has not been viewed through the lens of gender. This chapter rereads Zakani’s sexual humor, with particular attention to its recurrent phallocentric rhetoric as a winning argument, in an attempt to map and reconstruct the gender order of the audience to whom the poet is attempting to convey his humor.
- 16 Manizheh Abdollahi, in the chapter “Congruity of Structure and Content in Ghazals of Hafiz and Their Cultural and Historical Context,” discusses Hafiz as a representative of the leading literary and intellectual currents of his time. The intention of this chapter is to show that the seemingly discrete themes of Hafiz’s poems are a reflection of the turbulent intellectual and political time in which he lived.

- 17 In her chapter, “Non-Ideological or Bibliomantic Readings of Hafiz’s Poetry,” Saeedeh Shahnahpur seeks to shed light on the history of divination in Iranian society and examine the characteristics of Hafiz’s poetry that led to its widespread use as a divining tool. By studying non-ideological interpretations of some of Hafiz’s poems, this chapter illustrates their capacity to provide a message that corresponds to the diviners’ stations in life and their knowledge of certain elements employed in their divination.
- 18 In the chapter, “Jami: The Seal of the Great Poets or the Emblem of an Era?,” We will look at some of the works of the 15th-century poet and author Abd al-Rahman Jami (1414–1492), often referred to as the last great poet of Persian classical tradition. In it, he argues that in his numerous books, including his romances, which are largely rewriting of the works of other poets, including Nezami Ganjavi, Jami presents a biased characterization of women that is rooted in his ideological philosophy and the dominant mystic religiosity of his time. Such a bias discourages the reading of his love poetry within the romance genre, which otherwise could shed light on similar works such as those of Nezami Ganjavi. Jami’s ideological views simply weigh centrally in his entire corpus of narrative works.
- 19 In “A Lost Literacy: Reading *Tadhkiras* of Persian Poets in the 21st Century,” Kevin Schwartz investigates the broad-ranging genre of *tadhkiras*, sometimes translated as “biographical anthology” or “biographical dictionary.” These texts often take on a tripartite structure of an introduction, a biographical entry about a poet, and finally an afterword. Through an analysis of how individual *tadhkiras* are constructed according to organizational templates, temporal focus, and compilatory practices, this chapter proposes a model for understanding the development of *tadhkiras* over time.
- 20 Denise-Marie Teece, in the chapter “Persian-Language Anthological Manuscripts: Typologies and Terminology,” discusses the proliferation of manuscripts of Persian-language anthologies since the 15th century. Teece argues that whether the large numbers of remaining anthologies are due to a rise in literacy or a Persian fascination with the idea of collecting in many forms, these manuscripts are intrinsically beautiful and worthy of study.
- 21 Departing from the debate on the “Indian style” (*sabk-e hendī*) of Persian poetry, Jane Mikkelson examines *tazkeres* (biographical compendia) composed both by Indian intellectuals (Gholām ‘Alī Āzād Belgrāmī’s *Imperial Treasury*, 1762/3 and Sher ‘Alī Khān Lodī’s *Mirror of the Imaginary*, ca.1690) and Iranian authors (Tāher Naṣrābādī’s *Biographical Compendium*, 1672/3 and ‘Abd al-Nabī Fakhr al-Zamānī Qazvīnī’s *Compendium of the Wine-Tavern*, 1618), arguing that they attest to a shift in the 17th century towards a geographically inflected mode of literary criticism: in increasingly self-conscious ways, conceptions of style, canonicity, and periodization became explicitly entwined with geography, politics, and interregional tensions.
- 22 Patimat Alibekova, in the chapter “Persian Language and Literature in Dagestan: Stages of Origin and Development,” discusses the penetration of Persian book culture into Dagestan and argues that the sources of written culture in the Persian language that have survived to this day are a vivid confirmation of the importance and demand for the Persian language and literature in Dagestan. Knowledge of the Persian language and literature in medieval Dagestan was considered a measure of education.
- 23 Gaga Lomidze, in the chapter “Nizami Ganjavi and Georgian Literature of the 12th–18th Centuries,” studies the influence of Persian literature, specifically Nizami Ganjavi, on the Georgian literary tradition. Georgia long had contact with Persian-language folklore and literature, and many of these works were translated into Georgian and became integrated with Georgian literature.

Post-Classical and Contemporary Persian Literature

The second part of this handbook, entitled *Routledge Handbook of Post Classical and Contemporary Persian Literature*, will cover the literary works belonging to these categories, following the same methodology in presenting discussions and samples of Persian literary poetry and prose. That volume also includes chapters on theory, music, teaching Persian literary narrative, and translation, focusing on *Kelileh o Demneh*. Some of these chapters also cover some classical materials.

Thus, in addition to general information and analysis of well-known Persian literary works, the volumes introduce and discuss some of the lesser-known issues related to Persian literary studies, often in comparative contexts. Hopefully, this handbook of Persian literature will foster further scholarship and debates on the critical issues raised by the contributors. I am thankful to Yaseen Noorani, Austin O'Malley, and Kacey Evilsizor for their comments on the proposal and help.

Notes

- 1 Charles Melville, ed., *Persian Historiography* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012).
- 2 Kamran Talattof, *Nezami Ganjavi and Classical Persian Poetry: Demystifying the Mystic* (London, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022).
- 3 *Ibid.*, viii.
- 4 Richard Eaton, *India in the Persianate Age: 1000–1765* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019); Nile Green, *The Persianate World* (Oakland: University of California, 2019); Abbas Amanat, Assef Ashraf, *The Persianate World: Rethinking a Shared Sphere* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).
- 5 This language has always been known as Persian. In English, it is called Persian. In French, it is persan, in German it is Persisch, in Spanish it is pérsico, in Italian it is persiano, and so on. However, in recent decades, new immigrants, some second-generation Iranians, some reporters, and some Hollywood films use the word *Farsi*, which has been increasingly used to replace Persian. In Afghanistan and Tajikistan, the terms *Dari* and *Tajik* have been used instead of Farsi. In this work, Persian includes all these dialects and more. In an article, I have explained why such a substitution happens, who does it, and, finally, what the negative aspects of this replacement are. See Kamran Talattof, “Social Causes and Cultural Consequences of Replacing Persian with Farsi: What’s in a Name?,” in *Persian Language, Literature and Culture: New Leaves, Fresh Looks*, ed. Kamran Talattof (London: Routledge, 2015).
- 6 See, Zabihollah Safa, *Tarikh-e Adabiat dar Iran*, vol. 1 (Tehran: Amir Kabir Publishing Corp., 1977); Jan Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature* (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1968); Richard Frye, “Development of Persian Literature under the Samanids and Qarakhanids,” in *Islamic Iran and Central Asia (7th-12th Centuries)* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1979); E. G. Browne, *Literary History of Persia* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1951–1956).
- 7 For example, one of the volumes is titled *Persian Prose: A History of Persian Literature*, vol. V, August 12, 2021, ed. Bo Utas.
- 8 For this purpose, several sources have been consulted: Safa, *Tarikh-e Adabiat dar Iran*; Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature*; Frye, “Development of Persian Literature”; Browne, *Literary History of Persia*; Encyclopaedia Iranica; and the *Cambridge History of Iran*.
- 9 Chapters that cover these categories will appear in the next volume under the same title.
- 10 The first category is the least-covered section in these volumes because, among other reasons, they are written in older forms of Persian that are not comprehensible to contemporary readers. Such texts include the Zoroastrian texts of Avesta, Gathas, Pahlavi narratives and songs, *Minuye Kherad* (Spirit of Reasoning), and *Matigan-e Hezar Datistan* (Book of a Thousand Judgements).
- 11 For the debate over the nationality and the occasional misrepresentation of the native language of Nezami, see Siavash Lornejad and Ali Doostzadeh, *On the Modern Politicization of the Persian Poet Nezami Ganjavi* (Yerevan: Caucasian Centre for Iranian Studies, 2012) and the informed review of the book by Paola Orsatti, “Nationalistic Distortions and Modern Nationalisms,” *Iranian Studies*, 48, no. 4 (2015): 611–627. Nezami lived when parts of Iran under the Seljuk Empire and other areas between the Mediterranean and Central Asia enjoyed a period of cultural efflorescence.