

# SOME NOTES ON THE EARLY HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE SALJŪQID PERIOD IN IRĀN

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An attempt is made in these notes, which are the result of my research<sup>195</sup> on the subject at Tehrān University, to introduce and analyse the works of Anūshīrvān b. Khālid and Abū Ṭāhir Khātūnī, two remarkable historians, men of letters and active politicians of the Saljūqid period. These works are among the most important lost sources of Saljūq history in Irān.

The earliest of these works is the memoirs of Anūshīrvān b. Khālid (d. 532/1138)<sup>196</sup>, entitled *Nafsat al-Mašdūr fī Ṣudūr Zamān al-Futūr wa Futūr Zamān al-Ṣudūr*. 'Imād al-Dīn Kātib al-Iṣfahānī translated the memoirs into Arabic,<sup>197</sup> and they are also available in an abridged edition by Abū al-Fataḥ al-

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<sup>195</sup> Affān Saljūq, *Naqd wa Barras'i Manabi'i Tārīkh-i Saljūqiyān Arabī wa Fars!* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Tehrān University, Tehrān, 1970).

<sup>196</sup> For a detailed study of Anūshīrvān's life and times, see 'Abbās Iqbal, *Wizārat dar Ahd-i-Salāṭīn-i Buzurg-i Saljūqī* (Tehrān: University of Tehrān Publication No. 560, 1338 A.H.S.), pp. 183-85. Cf. also A.K.S. Lambton, *E.I.*, II, 522-23.

<sup>197</sup> 'Imād al-Dīn's Arabic translation entitled *Nuṣrat al-Fatraḥ* is not yet published. It is preserved in Bibl. Nat. Paris Mas. Arabe 2145.

Bundārī under the title *Zubdat al-Nuṣrah*.<sup>198</sup> A careful examination of the material compiled in this work, as transmitted to us through the Arabic translation of 'Imād al-Dīn, reveals the significant role it has played in influencing contemporary and later historiography. It has been used by later Persian and Arab historians alike, as the following corresponding passages will show. We shall first narrate an incident and then quote the relevant passages from *Zubdat al-Nuṣrah* and works of other contemporary and later historians.

## I

On the day of 'Īd, Chagribeg wanted to plunder the city of Nīshāpūr. Tugrilbeg stopped him from doing that. Chagribeg got annoyed, pulled out a knife and said, "If you do not allow me to plunder, I shall commit suicide." Tugrilbeg pacified him, by paying him an amount of forty thousand *dīnārs*.

*Zubdat al-Nuṣrah* (p. 7)

ولما كان يوم العيد اجتمعوا من القريب والبعيد وهم بالنهب فركب طغلبك  
لنعهم وجد في ردعهم و قال الان قد جائ كتاب الخليفة المفترض الطاعة على الخليفة و  
قد خضنا من توليته ايانا بالحق والحقيقة فلع عليه اخوه جغرى بك داود و اخرج سكينه و

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<sup>198</sup> Abū al-Fatah al-Bundārī, *Zubdat al-Nus'rah wa Nakhbat al-Usrah*, ed. M. Th. Houstsma in his series *Recueil de texts relatifs a l'histoire des Seldjoucides* (Leyden: E. J. Brill, 1889, Vol. II).

قالان ترکتنی ولاقتلت نفس بیدی فرق له و نکته و اراه ان منکنه و ارضاه بمبلغ اربعون  
الف دینار قسطه

*Saljūq Namā* (p. 18)<sup>199</sup>

روز عید قصد غارت نیشا پور کردند طغرل بک گفت روز عید است مسلمانان را  
نشاید رنجانیدن جغریک تیرگی نمود و کاردبکشید که اگر نگذاری که بغارتیم کارد  
بخود زخم و خود بکشم طغل بک تواضع و موصلت نمود و بیچهل هزار دینار قسط او را  
راضی کرد.

## II

He said: "The condition of a sick person is like that of a goat. When her legs are tied up to obtain wool, she thinks that she is going to be slaughtered. After some time, she gets habituated to this procedure. At last, one day when her legs are tied up, she thinks that it is for the wool, but gets slaughtered. Whenever a person gets ill, he thinks that he will be cured. At last, he falls ill and hopes to recover, but dies."

*Zubdat al-Nuṣrah* (p. 27)

قال انما مثلی فی مرض شاة تشد قوائمها لجز الصوف فتظن انها تذبح فتضطرب حتی  
اذا طلقت تفرح ثم تشد قوائمها للذبح انها لجز الصوف و تسکن و تذبح.

*Saljūq Nāma* (p. 22)

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<sup>199</sup> Zahir al-Dīn Nīshāpūri, *Saljūq Nāma*, ed. Isma'il Khān Afshār (Tehran: Kalaleh Khāwar, 1332 A. H. S.).

مثل مردم بیمار مثال هم چون گوسفند است که ستها و پاهاى وى مى بندند  
تاپشم اورا ببرند گوسفندپ ندارد اورا خواهند کشتن اضطراب نماید چون بگشایند  
شاد شود تا چند کورت ابن معنی اورا عادت شود تانا گاه مى بندند و مى کشند  
*Akhhār al-Dawlat al-Saljūqiyyah* (p. 23)<sup>200</sup>

انما مثلى فى مرض مثل شاة تشد قوائمهالجز الصوف فتظن انها تدبج فتضطرب  
حتى اذا طلقت تفرح ثم تشد للذبج فتظن انهاالجز الصوف و تسكن و تدبج  
*Al-Muntazim fi Tārīkh āi-Mulūk wa al-Imam* (vol. 8, p. 189)<sup>201</sup>

ولما حضرته الوفاه قال انما مثلى مثل شاة تشد قوائمهالجز الصوف فتظن انها  
تذبج فتضطرب حتى اذا طلقت تفرح ثم تشد للذبج فتظن انهاالجز الصوف فتسكن  
لتذبج.

### III

Tugrilbeg said that during the beginning of his reign, he dreamt that he had been taken to the skies and there asked about his wishes. Tugril wished for a long life. He was informed that he would

live for seventy years.

*Zubdat al-Nusrah* (p. 28)

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<sup>200</sup> Ṣadr al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥassawn al-Ḥusaynī, *Akhhār al-Dawlat al-Saljūqiyyah*, ed. M. Iqbāl (Lahore: Punjab University Press, 1933).

<sup>201</sup> *Ibn al-Jawzī al-Muntazim fi Tārīkh al-Mulūk wa al-Umam* (Hyderabad, Deccan: Da'irat al-Mu'arif, Osmania University, 1938).

قال وحكى عميد الملك ان طغرلبك قال له رايت في منامى مبتداء امرى بخراسان  
كانى رفعت الى السماء و قيل لى سل حاجتك لتقض فقلت ما شئى. احب الى من طول  
العمر فقتيل عمرک سبعون

*Saljūq Nāma (p. 22)*

طغرلبک بخواب دیده بود که او را باآسمان برده بودند و پرسیدند که چه میخواهی  
گفت عمر دراز گفتند ترا هفتاد سال عمر است

*Akhbār ul-Dawlat al-Saljūqiyyah (p. 22)*

و نقل من القاضى ابى بكر النشيبورى (قال) قالى لبس عميد الملك الكندرى (قال)  
قال لى السلطان الب ارسلان فى ابتداء مر مبخراسان كانى رفعت السماء.... و كانى  
انادى سل حاجتك لتقض فقلت ماشى احوالى من طول العمر فقتيل لى عمرک سبعون  
سنه.

*Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh (vol. 8, p. 19)*<sup>202</sup>

حكى عنه الكندرى انه قال رايت وانا بخراسان فى المنام كانى رفعت الى السماء ...  
فاسال حاجته لتقض فقلت فى نفسى اسال طول العمر فقتيل لك سبعون سنه..

*Wafayāt al-AWin (vol. 4, p. 158)*<sup>203</sup>

وحكى و زيره محمد ابن منصور الكندرى المقدم ذكره انه قال رايت وانا بخراسان  
فى المنام كانى رفعت الى السماء ... فاسال حاجتك لتقض فقلت فى نفسى اسال طول

<sup>202</sup> Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh* (Cairo: Matba'at al-Istiḳāmah, 1348 A. H.).

<sup>203</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A'yān* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahdat al-Miṣriyah, 1949).

#### IV

Sultān Tugril came to Bāb al-Nawbī and sat in the place of the Hājib. When the Caliph came, Tugril got up from his seat, caught the reins of his (Tugril's) horse and conducted him to the Bāb al-Hujrah.

*Zubdat al-Nuṣrah* (p. 17)

فلما اصبح السلطان الى باب النوبى و جلس بمكان الحاجب قلما قرب خليفة قام  
واخذ لجام بغلته ومش في خدمته الى باب الحجره

*Saljūq Nāma* (p. 20)

و سلطان بقدمه بيامد و بياب النوئى بجائى حاجب بنشست چون خليفه رسيد  
سلطان لگام اسب او گرفته تادر حجره برد.

*Al-Kāmil fī al-Thrīkh* (vol. 8, p. 86)

و تقدم السلطان فى المسيره و صل الى بغداد و جلس فى باب ال نوبى مكان  
الحاجب و وصل الخليفة فقام طغربك و اخذ بلجام بغلته حتى صار على باب الحجره.

A comparative study of the above passages suggests that it is the *ṢudūrZamān al-Futūr* which is the source of the similarity in the Persian and Arabic texts. In support of this hypothesis, the following points merit consideration:

- 1) A comparative study of the relevant passages from the

*Saljūq Nāma* and the *Zubdat al Nuṣrah* clearly indicates the presence of one single source. The original text of *Ṣudūr Zamān al-Futūr* not being available today, we cannot compare the text of the *Saljūq Nāma* with Anūshīrvān's work, but the Arabic translation by 'Imād al-Dīn can be used in place of the original Persian text. We can see that not only are the accounts the same, but even the language and the way of presentation are common to the Persian and Arabic texts. Since the *Zubdat al-Nuṣrah* is a translations of the *Ṣudūr Zamān al-Futūr*, it is reasonable to presume that the passages cited in both the sources originated from Anūshīrvān's work.

2) It seems that in the group of Persian histories, only Zāhīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī has used Anūshīrvān's work, because the other important history, the *Rāḥ at al-Ṣudūr*, whose author, Rāwandī, lived during the reign of the Saljūqs, does not contain any of the accounts cited above. From this we can draw the conclusion that Zāhīr al-Dīn has used the *Sudūr Zamān al-Futūr* directly, whereas the Arab historians had access to it through 'Imād al-Dīn's Arabic translation.

3) The order of the accounts in the *Zubdāt al-Nuṣrah* is followed by the *Saljūq Nāma* and the Arabic sources mentioned. This also supports our claim.

As a matter of fact, the *Ṣudūr Zamān al-Futūr* serves as a bridge between the Arabic and the Persian historians. Professor Claude Cahen, however, does not seem to believe this to be the case. He says, "As far as Saljūq history is concerned, we have the impression that Zāhīr al-Dīn and his epiques knew nothing of the Arabic group of sources, even the Irānian ones, and that, in short, there are two families of historians, each ignorant of

the other, separated by a cleavage of language."<sup>204</sup> The passages cited above do not bear out Professor Cahen's point of view. The fact is that there has been a very close contact between Arab and Persian historians. Had this not been the case, the harmony of subject and presentation in these passages would never have been possible. There are scores of other parallel passages, suggestive, though not so trenchantly, of a common source.

While discussing this point, we should not forget that the scholars and men of letters of that time were bilingual; they had both the Persian and the Arabic sources at their disposal, no matter which of the two languages they chose as their medium of expression. For example, the author of *Akhbār* has mentioned the name of Abū al-Faḍl Bayhaqī in connection with his recording of the events which occurred during the consolidation of the Saljūq power.<sup>205</sup>

The other book with which we are concerned is the *Tārīkh-i Al-i Saljūq* by Abū Tāhir Khātūnī. Zahīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī and Rāwandī, authors of the *Saljūq Māma* and the *Raḥ at al-Sudūr* respectively, have given an account of Sultān Malik Shāh's

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<sup>204</sup> Claude Cahen, *Historiography of the Saljūqid Period in Historians of the Middle East*, ed. Bernard Lewis and P. M. Holt (London: London University Press, 1962), p. 75.

<sup>205</sup> Al-Husayni, *Akhbār*, p. 29,



hunting on the authority of Khātūnī.<sup>206</sup> On the same page, Rāwandī informs us about a book, the *Shikār Nāma*, by him. No reference is made to Khātūnī's history of the Saljūqs in the works mentioned above. It is only Dawlat Shāh who has quoted Khātūnī's history of the Saljūqs and has noted down a number of short accounts and anecdotes from him.<sup>207</sup>

We are not sufficiently informed about the life and activities of Khātūnī. He was born in the middle of the fifth century A.H., probably at Sāvah in Irān. The only reference we find to his career is that he was the custodian of the estates of Gawhar Khātūm, the beloved wife of Sulṭān Muhammad (498/1104-511/1117).<sup>208</sup>

It seems that Khātūnī was a well-known personality of his time, especially in literary circles. His couplets are cited in

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<sup>206</sup> *Saljūq Nāma*. p. 32: Mohammad b. 'Alī b. Sulaymān al-Rawāndī, *Rāhat Sitar fī Ayāt al-Surūr*, ed. M. Iqbāl (London: Gibb Memorial Series, 1921), p. 131.

<sup>207</sup> Dawlat Shāh Samarqandī, *Tadhkirat al-Shu'arā*, ed. Mohammad 'Abbāsī (Tehrān: Intishārat-i Ketāb Furūshī-e Barānī, 1337 A. H. S.), pp. 73, 74, 86, 93.

<sup>208</sup> *Zubdat al-Nusrah*, p. 106.

*Rāḥat al-Ṣudūr*<sup>209</sup> and are repeated in *Jami' al-Tawārikh*.<sup>210</sup> Anūshīrvān notes a number of couplets from him.<sup>211</sup>

The author of the *Saljūq Nāma* and the *Rāḥat al-Ṣudūr* have not mentioned Khātūnī's history, but a comparative study of corresponding passages from these two books with the *Tadhkīrah* of Dawlat Shāh Samarqandī, which has been taken from Khātūnī's lost history, clearly indicates that the *Tārīkh-i Al-i Saljūq* has furnished the *Saljūq Nāma* and the *Rāḥat al-Ṣudūr* with valuable historical information; but, unlike *Dawlat Shāh*, *Nīshāpūrī* and *Rāwandī* have made no reference to Khātūnī's history. The fact that Khātūnī's history was preserved as late as Dawlat Shāh's period makes it reasonable to assume that this work was available during the time of the two earlier authors. A comparative study of some relevant passages is made here to illustrate this point.

*Tadhkirat al-Shu'arā*

در عهد او جامه ابریشمی بهای تمام

*Saljūq Nāma*

لباسهای فاخر و کسوت‌های متلون و زر

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<sup>209</sup> p. 136.

<sup>210</sup> Rashid al-Dīn Fazlullāh. *Jāmi' al-Tawārikh*, ed. Ahmed Ates (Ankara, 1960).

<sup>211</sup> The couplets of Khātūnī which have appeared on p. 105 & 106 of the *Zubdat al-Nuṣrah* are an Arabic translation of the original Persian verses by 'Imad al-Dīn. Bundārī states (p. 105):

و عبث ابوا طاهر الخاتونی فی البیات فرسیه قل الامام عماد الدین و عربت بعضها و

قلت

<p>یافت p.93</p> <p>گگوید چهار صد بوز داشته مجموعی</p> <p>باقلا ده زر وجل سقرلاط p. 93</p>	<p>کشید های مغول و ختای در عهد</p> <p>اوقیمت گرفت p.74</p> <p>آورده اند چهار صد شکاری باقلا بدم</p> <p>زر مرضع ولبر های ابریشمی وجلهای</p> <p>زر بفت داشت p.53</p>
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Professor Claude Cahen is of the view that Khātūnī's work was based on popular anecdotes and folktales relating to the Saljūq Sulṭāns <sup>212</sup>It seems that he does not concede any historical significance to it. A careful examination of the nature of the information compiled in Khātūnī's work and transmitted to us through the courtesy of Dawlat Shāh convinces us that this work was not wholly based on anecdotes and folk-tales. The references to the reign of Sulṭāns Sanjar (511/1117-552/1157) and Arsalān made by Khātūnī which have been quoted in the *Tadhkirah* prove the personal presence of the author during that time.

Dawlat Shāh mentions that Abū Ṭāhir Khātūnī has said in his *Tārīkh-i Al-i Saljūq* that he had been in the service of Sulṭān Sanjar in Rādḡān. There he saw that a bird had made her nest and had laid eggs on the roof of the royal tent. When the Sulṭān wanted to leave the place he appointed one of his servants to look after the bird and to wait till the young ones grew up and

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<sup>212</sup> Cahen, *The Historiography*, p. 67.

learnt how to fly. The tent was kept as it was so that its removal might not hurt the young ones.<sup>213</sup>

Another account is related to the reign of Sultān Arsalān b. Tughril (555/1160-571/1175). Khātūnī says that on the day of ʿĪd he was present in Hamadān and saw the procession of Sultān Arsalān going to offer his Id prayers. According to him, seven thousand slaves clad in satin and brocade uniforms were present in that procession.<sup>214</sup>

The references made to the two Saljūqid Sultāns by Khātūnī indicate that he was an eye-witness to these events. Attributing the material compiled in his book to a collection of unimportant anecdotes and folk tales does not seem to be correct. As already mentioned, Khātūnī was a well-known literary figure of his time. Anūshīrvān b. Khālīd has paid most glowing tributes to him and a number of his couplets are quoted in his work. Keeping these points in mind and going through the material found in Dawlat Shāh's work, one finds it difficult to accept Professor Cahen's view.

From this brief survey it must be clear that the two works in question are very important for Saljūqid historiography. Anūshīrvān's memoirs not only provided valuable and interesting material for his contemporaries, but connected Arab historiography with the Persian. The Persian and Arab

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<sup>213</sup> Samarqandi, *Tadhkīrah*, p. 74.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

historians were never by any means ignorant of one another. Unfortunately, while we have a version of the *Şudūr Zamān al-Futūr*, we do not have one of Khātūni's history. We only have the four accounts quoted by Dawlat Shāh.