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*An Analytical Survey of Persian Works  
on Indian Learned Traditions*

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## AN ANALYTICAL SURVEY OF PERSIAN WORKS ON INDIAN LEARNED TRADITIONS

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## *Zubdat al-tawārīḥ*

The *Zubdat al-tawārīḥ* is a historical work written in Iran in the early 14th century that includes a chapter on Indian history and religion. Its author, Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Ṭāhir al-Qāšānī, was a historian at the courts of the Ilkhanid rulers Ġāzān (r. 1295-1304) and Öljaitü (r. 1304-1316). He also had close connections with the viziers Rašīd al-Dīn Hamadānī (d. 718/1318) and Tāj al-Dīn ‘Alī-Šāh (d. 724/1324). His dates of birth and death are unknown. As Hindū-Šāh (d. 730/1330 ca) wished him longevity in his *Tajārib al-salaf*, composed in 724/1323-24, it can be inferred that Qāšānī died subsequently. In this work, Qāšānī was praised as “a king of learned men, a model of historians” (*malik al-afāḍil, qudwat al-mu’arriḥīn*) (Hindū-Šāh 1357š/1978-79, p. 325). Because he came from the Abū Ṭāhir family of potters (on this family, see Watson 1985), Qāšānī had a thorough knowledge of this craft and wrote a short treatise on ceramic manufacture (*ṣan’at-i kāšī-garī*), which is included in his *‘Arā’is al-jawāhir*; he also claimed to be a mathematician (*ḥāsib*) (Qāšānī, *‘Arā’is al-jawāhir*, Ms. Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Ayasofya 3613, f. 2b). Qāšānī is particularly known as the author of three works composed at the Ilkhanid court: (i) *‘Arā’is al-jawāhir*, a book on mineralogy, composed in 700/1300-01 and initially dedicated to Rašīd al-Dīn Hamadānī, before being re-dedicated to Tāj al-Dīn ‘Alī-Šāh; (ii) *Zubdat al-tawārīḥ*, a general history that was commissioned by Ġāzān in 700/1300-01 and initially dedicated to him, before being re-dedicated to Öljaitü; and (iii) *Tārīḥ-i Ūljāytü*, a chronology of the reign of Öljaitü, composed the year after Öljaitü’s death (Soucek 1985; Otsuka 2018, pp. 124-125).

Of the works of Qāšānī, the full texts of the *‘Arā’is al-jawāhir* and the *Tārīḥ-i Ūljāytü* have been published (Qāšānī 1386š/2007-08; Parvisi-Berger 1968; Qāšānī 1384š/2005-06). Only two chapters of the *Zubdat al-tawārīḥ* have been printed (i.e. “History of the Saljūqids”, Qāšānī 1332š/1953, and “History of the Fāṭimids and

Ismā‘īlīs”, Qāšānī 1366š/1987-88) while the rest of the text has remained unknown to scholars. As a result, earlier studies have assumed that Qāšānī was an assistant of Rašīd al-Dīn Hamadānī and that the *Zubdat al-tawārīḥ* was copied from Rašīd al-Dīn Hamadānī’s *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīḥ* (q.v.), a historical work of which the second volume, on the history of the people of the world, includes a chapter on India (Afšār 1312š/1933, pp. 28-29; Bregel 1972, pp. 321-322). However, recent studies have revealed that the *Zubdat al-tawārīḥ* was compiled by order of Ġāzān in 700/1300-01 and that a first version was apparently completed by 703/1303-04 while Ġāzān was still alive (see Otsuka 2018). In the *‘Arā’is al-jawāhir*, Qāšānī writes, “when the author of this book was ordered to collect the histories of the world by the king of justice, Ġāzān Ḥān, I found about the history of India as follows: [...]” which showed that he started to write a world history, including the history of Indians, during the reign of Ġāzān (Qāšānī, *‘Arā’is al-jawāhir*, Ms. Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Ayasofya 3613, ff. 50b-51a). In addition, three dates of composition are given for the chapter on Indians in the Tehran manuscript of the *Zubdat al-tawārīḥ*, 700/1300-01, 702/1302-03 and 703/1303-04, which makes it likely that this section was written gradually and took four years to complete (Ms. Tehran, Dānišgāh-i Tihṙān, 9067, ff. 335b, 351a, 347a). In 700/1300-01, Qāšānī composed his *‘Arā’is al-jawāhir* in the Ilkhanid capital, Tabriz (Qāšānī 1386š/2007-08, p. 348) and is possible that Qāšānī wrote his historical work in this city.

Moreover, the chapter on the “history of Kašmīr” of the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīḥ* - which has no equivalent in the *Zubdat al-tawārīḥ* - mentions the year 705/1305-06 which indicates that it was written after the *Zubdat al-tawārīḥ* (Rašīd al-Dīn 1384š/2005, p. 73). This suggests that the *Zubdat al-tawārīḥ* was used for the writing of the second volume of the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīḥ* and not vice versa. Around 715/1315-16, a revised version of the *Zubdat al-tawārīḥ* was dedicated to Öljaitü (Otsuka 2018, p. 131, 138-139). Qāšānī’s interest in India is reflected in another of his historical works, *Tārīḥ-i Ūljāytū* (History of Ūljāytū), in which the history of Indians begins with the events occurring during the reign of the second ruler of the Mongol Empire Ögedei (r. 1229-1241). Here digressing from his main topic, he discusses the geography and the history of India (Qāšānī 1384š/2005-06, pp. 179-194). It is likely that this account of the Indians was based on a revised version of the chapter in the *Zubdat al-tawārīḥ*.

No complete manuscript copies of the *Zubdat al-tawārīḥ* have been found so far. The chapter on the Indians is preserved in only one manuscript copied in 989/1581

and kept at the University of Tehran, with lacunas at both the beginning and the end of the chapter (Ms. Tehran, Dānišgāh-i Tihṙān, 9067, ff. 329a-354b). On the basis of the Tehran manuscript, the contents of the *Zubdat al-tawārīḥ* can be reconstructed, as follows: (i) general preface (preserved in Ms. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Minutoli 237, and Ms. Hyderabad, Telangana State Archives and Research Institute, 121); (ii) creation; (iii) pre-Islamic history; (iv) Islamic history; (v) Muslim dynasties during and after the Abbasid period (some of these chapters are not present in the *Jāmi' al-tawārīḥ*); (vi) Oğuz Turks; (vii) Chinese; (viii) Jews; (ix) Franks; and (x) Indians (*hunūd*) (for further details, see Otsuka 2018, pp. 127, 142).

Despite some differences, the *Zubdat al-tawārīḥ* and the second volume of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīḥ* are closely related (on the differences between the two texts, see Morton 2010, Ḥāfīz Abrū 1364š/1985-86, pp. 61-103, Otsuka 2018, p. 143). The chapter on the Indians in the *Zubdat al-tawārīḥ* is not numbered, in contrast to the corresponding chapter on the Indians in the *Jāmi' al-tawārīḥ* which is divided into two subchapters (*qism*), consisting respectively of ten and twenty sections (*faṣl*). The contents of Indian history in the *Zubdat al-tawārīḥ* can be outlined as follows: (i) introduction (Ms. Tehran, Dānišgāh-i Tihṙān, 9067, f. 329a, some pages at the beginning are missing); (ii) preface (*muqaddima*), which discusses the geography of India (ff. 329a-334a); (iii) a subchapter (*faṣl*) that discusses the Indian calendar (ff. 334a-336a); and (iv) the main text (*maqāla*), which is divided into two parts (*qism*), the first about the kings of India (ff. 336a-346a), and the second about the life of the Buddha (ff. 346a-354b, some pages at the end are missing).

Qāšānī begins the first part of the main text of the chapter on the Indians by describing the kings of India who reigned during the four ancient Indian epochs (*yuga*) (Ms. Tehran, Dānišgāh-i Tihṙān, 9067, ff. 336a-341a); this corresponds to sections seven to ten of the first subchapter of the chapter on India of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīḥ* (Rašīd al-Dīn 1384š/2005, pp. 75-100) (see the article on the *Jāmi' al-tawārīḥ* q.v., for a more detailed description of the contents of the first subchapter and the history of Indian kings). This is followed by a short description of the ancient kings of Delhi, beginning with Vāsudeva (*Bāsdīw* in Persian script), and by a history of Muslim kings from the Ghaznavid period until the late years of the reign of the ruler of the Delhi sultanate 'Alā al-Dīn Ḥaljī (r. 1296-1316) (Ms. Tehran, Dānišgāh-i Tihṙān, 9067, ff. 341a-346a). This part corresponds to section five of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīḥ* (Rašīd al-Dīn 1384š/2005, pp. 53-67). However, the *Zubdat al-tawārīḥ* contains accounts on

the period 409/1018-19 to 614/1217-18, which are not cited in the *Jāmi' al-tawārīḥ*. The latter half of this information about the Delhi sultanate (Ms. Tehran, Dānišgāh-i Tih-rān, 9067, ff. 342b-344a) is likely to have been abridged from Ḥasan Niẓāmī's historical work *Tāj al-ma'āẓir* composed in 602/1205-06 and re-edited in 614/1217-18 (Ḥasan Niẓāmī 1391š/2012-13, pp. 273-1045).

The second part of the *Zubdat al-tawārīḥ* is an account of the life of the Buddha and corresponds to sections one to eighteen of the second subchapter of the chapter on the Indians of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīḥ* (Rašīd al-Dīn 1384š/2005, pp. 101-160). Even though sections in the second part of the *Zubdat al-tawārīḥ* are not numbered, it is possible to divide its contents as follows: (i) prophets of India (Ms. Tehran, Dānišgāh-i Tih-rān, 9067, ff. 346a-347a); (ii) birth of the Buddha (ff. 347a-348a); (iii) the virtues (*siyar*) of the Buddha (f. 348a); (iv) the asceticism (*riyāzat*) of the Buddha (ff. 348a-348b); (v) the abandonment of asceticism by the Buddha (ff. 348b-349b); (vi) the circumstances of the life of the Buddha and his sayings (349b-350b); (vii) reincarnation of the Buddha in different manifestations (f. 350b); (viii) the four Indian epochs (*yuga*) (ff. 350b-351a); (ix) terms applied to God (*ḥaqq*) (f. 351a); (x) the number of hells (f. 351a); (xi) a dialogue with the Buddha (ff. 351a-352a); (xii) list of deeds by which a human can be reborn as a demon (ff. 352a-352b); (xiii) list of deeds by which a human can be reborn as an animal (f. 352b); (xiv) list of deeds by which a human can be reborn as a human (ff. 352b-353a); (xv) the stage between men and angels (f. 353a); (xvi) a dialogue between the Buddha and an angel (ff. 353a-353b); (xvii) the appearance of Maitreya (ff. 353b-354b); and (xviii) stages of men, rewards and punishment (f. 354b).

The main source of Qāšānī's information on India was the Kashmiri monk Kamālaśrī Baḥšī (on Kamālaśrī, see the article on the *Jāmi' al-tawārīḥ* q.v.). Qāšānī certainly met with Kamālaśrī and worked with him in writing the chapter on Indian history. This monk has also been considered one of the most important of Rašīd al-Dīn's informants on India and different hypotheses have been proposed about his identity and place of residence (Barthold 1992, p. 45; Jahn 1965, p. xxxii; Yoeli-Tlalim 2013, pp. 201-204). On twelve occasions, Qāšānī mentions Kamālaśrī as the direct source of materials related in the *Zubdat al-tawārīḥ* (Ms. Tehran, Dānišgāh-i Tih-rān, 9067, ff. 329a, 330b, 334b (twice), 335a, 336a, 337a, 339b, 346b, 347a, 348a, 352b). Qāšānī writes in the preface that Kamālaśrī Baḥšī and his servants had a thorough knowledge of Indian history, based on both written and oral sources (Ms. Tehran,

Dānišgāh-i Tihṙān, 9067, f. 329a). On the other hand, Rašīd al-Dīn mentions Kamālaśrī nine times in the *Jāmi' al-tawārīh* (Rašīd al-Dīn 1384š/2005, pp. 2, 6, 7, 75, 81, 92, 93, 101, 105). A comparison between two passages of the *Zubdat al-tawārīh* and the *Jāmi' al-tawārīh*, whose informant is Kamālaśrī, may help to understand more clearly Qāšānī's relationship with Kamālaśrī. In the *Zubdat al-tawārīh*, Qāšānī writes, "I asked Kamālaśrī Baḥšī" (*īn bīčāra az Kamālaśrī Baḥšī pursīd*), indicating that the author's writing was based on a direct oral interaction with the Indian scholar Kamālaśrī (Ms. Tehran, Dānišgāh-i Tihṙān, 9067, f. 339b). On the other hand, in the *Jāmi' al-tawārīh* this passage has been rendered with "someone asked Kamālaśrī Baḥšī" (*šahsī az Kamālaśrī Baḥšī su'āl kard*) which would rather suggest that the transfer of knowledge between Kamālaśrī and Rašīd al-Dīn was mediated by another person (Rašīd al-Dīn 1384š/2005, p. 93).

The *Zubdat al-tawārīh* is a key source for understanding the assimilation of materials dealing with Indian history and religion in the Persian textual culture of early 14th century Iran. In particular, Qāšānī's text provides a more precise view of the process of compilation of Rašīd al-Dīn's major work, the *Jāmi' al-tawārīh*. Although the second volume of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīh* seems to have been largely based on the *Zubdat al-tawārīh*, there are some important differences between the two works. With regard to the language of the texts, this is particularly evident in the use of verbs. With respect to the overall structure, during the compilation process Rašīd al-Dīn omitted certain sections and made additions to the text of the *Zubdat al-tawārīh*. On certain issues, Rašīd al-Dīn has relied on the *Kitāb fī taḥqīq mā li-al-Hind* by Abū Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī (d. after 442/1050) in addition to Kamālaśrī (Rašīd al-Dīn 1384š/2005, pp. 5, 6, 7, 8, 15, 17, 27, 51). Rašīd al-Dīn certainly paid more attention to al-Bīrūnī than did Qāšānī who mentioned al-Bīrūnī only twice in the chapter on the history of Indians (Ms. Tehran, Dānišgāh-i Tihṙān, 9067, ff. 334b, 335a). Therefore, Kamālaśrī's accounts in the *Zubdat al-tawārīh* have been adapted and reedited in the chapter structure of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīh*. However, only one manuscript of the *Zubdat al-tawārīh* that includes Indian history has been found so far and later scholars do not appear to have made direct mention of this chapter. As a matter of fact, it was chiefly through Rašīd al-Dīn's adaptation and other authors' writings based on Rašīd al-Dīn's work that Qāšānī's Indian history was subsequently transmitted within Persianate societies.

**Manuscript:** Tehran, Dānišgāh-i Tihrān, 9067, ff. 329a-354b, **ii)** *muḥarram* 989/  
February 1581-March 1581, **viii)** Dānišpažūh 1364š/1985, pp. 284-285.

Legend: i) Place of copying; ii) Period of copying; iii) Copyist; iv) Commissioner; v) Information on colophon; vi) Description of miniatures/illustrations; vii) Other remarks; viii) Information on catalogue(s)

**Secondary sources bibliography:** Afšār, Isma‘īl Ḥān, 1312š/1933, “*Saljūq-nāma-yi Zāhīrī-yi Nīšābūrī wa Rāḥat al-ṣudūr-i Rāwandī*”, *Majalla-yi mihr*, 2/1, pp. 26-30. **Barthold**, Wilhelm, 1992, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, New Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal (1st ed. London, 1928). **Bregel**, Yuri. E., 1972, *Persidskaia Literatura*, Moscow, Central Department of Oriental Literature, vol. 1. **Dānišpažūh**, Muḥammad Taqī., 1364š/1985, *Fihrist-i nuṣṣahā-yi ḥaṭṭī-yi kitābhāna-yi markazī wa markaz-i asnād-i Dānišgāh-i Tihrān*, Tehran, Intiṣārāt wa Čāp-i Dānišgāh-i Tihrān, vol. 17. **Ḥāfiẓ Abrū**, 1364š/1985-86, *Majma‘ al-tawārīḥ al-sultānīya*, Muḥammad Mudarrisī Zanjānī, ed., Tehran, Intiṣārāt-i Ittīlā‘āt. **Ḥasan Niẓāmī**, Ṣadr al-Dīn Nīšābūrī, 1391š/2012-13, *Tāj al-ma‘ātir*, Maḥdī Fāmūrī - ‘Alī Rizā Ṣādārām, eds., Yasuj, Dānišgāh-i Āzād-i Islāmī. **Hindū-Šāh**, ibn Sanjar ibn ‘Abd Allāh Ṣāhibī Nahjīwānī, 1357š/1978-79, *Tajārib al-salaf dar tawārīḥ-i ḥulafā wa wuzarā-yi īšān*, ‘Abbās Iqbāl, ed., Tehran, Kitābhāna-yi Ṭahūrī. **Jahn**, Karl, 1965, *Rashīd al-Dīn’s History of India: Collected Essays with Facsimiles and Indices*, London - The Hague - Paris, Mouton & Co. **Morton**, Alexander H., 2010, “Qashani and Rashid al-Din on the Seljuqs of Iran”, in: Yasir Suleiman, ed., *Living Islamic History: Studies in Honour of Professor Carole Hillenbrand*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, pp. 166-177. **Otsuka**, Osamu, 2018, “Qāshānī, the First World Historian: Research on His Uninvestigated Persian General History, *Zubdat al-tawārīḥ*”, *Studia Iranica*, 47/1, pp. 119-149. **Parvisi-Berger**, Maryam, 1968, *Die Chronik des Qāshānī über den Ilchan Ölgäitü*, Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Göttingen. **Qāshānī**, Abū al-Qāsim, ‘*Arā’is al-jawāhir*, Ms. Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Ayasofya 3613. **Qāshānī**, Abū al-Qāsim, 1386š/2007-08, ‘*Arā’is al-jawāhir*, Īraj Afšār, ed., Tehran, Intiṣārāt-i Alma‘ī. **Qāshānī**, Abū al-Qāsim, 1384š/2005-06, *Tārīḥ-i Ūljāytū*, M. Hamblī, ed., Tehran, Širkat-i Intiṣārāt-i ‘Ilmī wa Farhangī. **Qāshānī**, Abū al-Qāsim, *Zubdat al-tawārīḥ*, Ms. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Minutoli 237. **Qāshānī**, Abū al-Qāsim, *Zubdat*

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