An Unexpected Romance:
Reevaluating the Authorship of the *Khosrow-nāma**

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Abstract

This article examines the authorship of the Khosrow-nāma, *a Perso-Hellenic romance traditionally attributed to ʿAṭṭār. Forty years ago, Shafiʿi-Kadkani laid out a complex argument against ʿAṭṭār's authorship. He claimed that the attribution was a result of a later forgery, basing his argument on internal chronological evidence, religious and stylistic markers, and the manuscript tradition. The present article systematically evaluates this argument, showing it to be less persuasive than it first appears. First, I introduce new manuscript evidence to demonstrate that the poem was circulating under ʿAṭṭār's name already before the time of the alleged forgery. I then reassess the internal evidence to show that the* Khosrow-nāma *could, in fact, fit into a plausible chronology of ʿAṭṭār's oeuvre. Next, I critique the stylistic and religious arguments against ʿAṭṭār's authorship, arguing that the romance does not deviate from ʿAṭṭār's undisputed works nearly as much as is often supposed. I conclude by suggesting that the available data are explained more easily by accepting ʿAṭṭār's authorship than by adopting the theory of a later forgery.*

F ew poets have had as far-reaching an influence as Farid al-Din ʿAṭṭār (d. ca. 618/1221). The author of the famous *Manṭeq al-ṭayr* and several other important works, he is remembered both within the tradition and outside it as a critical figure in the development of Persian mystical poetry.[1] As is the case with many premodern Persian poets, as

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1. Moḥammad Reżā Shafiʿi-Kadkani, introduction to *Manṭeq al-ṭayr*, by Farid al-Din ʿAṭṭār, 2nd ed. (Tehran: Sokhan, 1387/[2008–9]), 38–50; Julian Baldick, "Persian Ṣūfī Poetry up to the Fifteenth Century," in *History of Persian Literature: From the Beginning of the Islamic Period to the Present Day*, ed. George Morrison (Leiden: Brill, 1981); Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Some Observations on the Place of ʿAṭṭār within the Sufi Tradition," in *Colloquio italo-iraniano sul poeta mistico Fariduddin ʿAṭṭār (Roma, 24–25 Marzo 1977)* (Rome: Accademia

his fame grew spurious works began to circulate under his name. With ʿAṭṭār, however, the number of spurious attributions is staggering: by the eleventh/seventeenth century, he was said to have composed a total of 114 works, equal to the number of *sura*s in the Quran.[2] Given the sacral significance of the number, it cannot be taken as an accurate count of all attributions, but it testifies to the scale of his supposed output. According to ʿAli Miranṣāri, who has produced a bibliographical survey of ʿAṭṭār's works, at least fifty-nine independent titles, many of them still extant, have at some point been attributed to him.[3] Some of these works were composed by other poets who went by the name of ʿAṭṭār, and their poems were inadvertently absorbed into the oeuvre of their more famous predecessor.[4] Others, however, were deliberate forgeries: the *Lesān al-ghayb* and the *Maẓhar al-ʿajāʾeb*, for instance, were written by a ninth/fifteenth-century Shiʿi poet, ʿAṭṭār-e Tuni, who purposely presented himself as Farid al-Din ʿAṭṭār, the author of the *Manṭeq al-ṭayr*.[5]

In the twentieth century, with the advancement of textual criticism, scholars such as Qazvini, Sherani, Nafisi, and Ritter began to methodically whittle away at these spurious accretions to ʿAṭṭār's oeuvre.[6] Through their work, a stable scholarly consensus emerged: ʿAṭṭār was thought to have written four mystical-didactic *masnavi*s (the *Elāhi-nāma*, the *Manṭeq al-ṭayr*, the *Asrār-nāma*, and the *Moṣibat-nāma*), a *divān*, a collection of quatrains (the *Mokhtār-nāma*), and a prose hagiography (*Taẕkerat al-awliā*). These scholars also accepted as authentic a *masnavi* romance that was commonly attributed to ʿAṭṭār and known as the *Khosrow-nāma*. Unlike ʿAṭṭār's mystical-didactic *masnavi*s, which comprise short anecdotes and homiletic exhortations, the *Khosrow-nāma* recounts the story of two royal lovers, tragically separated, as they seek to reunite; it is thus reminiscent of Greek novels and Perso-Hellenic romances such as *Varqa o Golshāh* and *Vis o Rāmin*. The work is a clear generic outlier in ʿAṭṭār's oeuvre; nevertheless, because ʿAṭṭār includes the title *Khosrow-nāma* in a list of his works, and because the author of the *Khosrow-nāma* identifies himself as ʿAṭṭār and as the author of the *Manṭeq al-ṭayr*, the abovementioned scholars accepted the poem as genuine.

Nazionale dei Lincei, 1978), 12–13; Husayn Ilahi-Gomeshei, "Of Scent and Sweetness: ʿAṭṭār's Legacy in Rūmī, Shabistarī, and Ḥāfiẓ," in *ʿAṭṭār and the Persian Sufi Tradition: The Art of Spiritual Flight*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn and Christopher Shackle (London: I. B. Tauris and Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2006).

2. Sayyed Nurallāh Shushtari, *Majāles al-moʾmenin* (Tehran: Ketāb-forushi-ye Eslāmiya, 1365/[1986–87]), 99.

3. ʿAli Miranṣāri, *Ketāb-shenāsi-ye Shaykh Farid al-Din ʿAṭṭār-e Nayshāburi* (Tehran: Anjoman-e Āṣār va Mafākhar-e Farhangi, 1384/[2005–6]), 7–16.

4. Mirzā Moḥammad Qazvini, introduction to *Taẕkerat al-awliā*, by Farid al-Din ʿAṭṭār, ed. Reynold Nicholson (London: Luzac, 1905), 1:14; Hellmut Ritter, "Philologika X: Farīdaddīn ʿAṭṭār," *Der Islam* 25 (1939): 157.

5. ʿAbduʾl-Ḳādir Sarfarāz, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Arabic, Persian and Urdu Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Bombay* (Bombay: University of Bombay, 1935), 60–65; Saʿid Nafisi, *Jostoju dar aḥvāl va āṣār-e Farid al-Din ʿAṭṭār-e Nayshāburi* (Tehran: Eqbāl, 1320/[1941]), 147–54; Hellmut Ritter, "Philologika XIV: Farīduddīn ʿAṭṭār II," *Oriens* 11, no. 1/2 (1958): 3–4.

6. Qazvini, introduction to *Taẕkerat al-awliā*, 1:14; Sarfarāz, *Descriptive Catalogue*, 60–65; Nafisi, *Jostoju*, 70–73, 145–67; Hellmut Ritter, "ʿAṭṭār," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., ed. P. Bearman et al. (Leiden: Brill Online), posted 2012, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0074; Ritter, "Philologika X," 156–60; Ritter, "Philologika XIV," 1–8.

In 1979, however, the poet and scholar Shafiʿi-Kadkani laid out an erudite, intricate argument claiming that the *Khosrow-nāma* was a spurious attribution and that its preface, in which the poem's author identifies himself as ʿAṭṭār, was the work of a ninth/fifteenth-century forger.[7] This influential argument is now almost universally accepted, and it has conditioned nearly all of the major work on ʿAṭṭār produced since its publication. Leonard Lewison and Christopher Shackle, in their edited volume on ʿAṭṭār, deem Shafiʿi-Kadkani's rejection of the *Khosrow-nāma* definitive.[8] Newer reference works and editions, including the third edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, repeat Shafiʿi-Kadkani's conclusions.[9] Of the two most recent monographs on ʿAṭṭār, by Navid Kermani and Claudia Yaghoobi, the former dismisses the *Khosrow-nāma* with a citation to Shafiʿi-Kadkani, and the latter fails to mention it at all.[10] As far as the scholarship seems to be concerned, the case is closed: the *Khosrow-nāma* is spurious, and it has thus justly disappeared from the arena of ʿAṭṭār studies.

Shafiʿi-Kadkani's argument, however, although frequently cited as settled fact, has not been systematically evaluated.[11] In the present article, I will problematize Shafiʿi-Kadkani's analysis and propose a more plausible scenario, in which the *Khosrow-nāma* is indeed an authentic work by ʿAṭṭār. Although there can be no doubting Shafiʿi-Kadkani's brilliance, his argument is, as a whole, less convincing than the sum of its parts: he seems to have begun with the assumption that the *Khosrow-nāma* was forged, and then worked backward to determine how that could have been the case. As we shall see, his conclusions are not justified by the stylistic, religious, manuscript, and internal chronological evidence he provides. Ultimately, it is much easier to accept the *Khosrow-nāma* as an authentic work of ʿAṭṭār's than to imagine it was the product of a complex literary conspiracy, as Shafiʿi-Kadkani proposes.

If the romance were to be accepted as an authentic work, much of the scholarship on ʿAṭṭār's life and his place in literary history would need to rethought. One of the difficulties for ʿAṭṭār scholarship has been the dearth of biographical information, both within his

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7. Moḥammad Reżā Shafiʿi-Kadkani, introduction to *Mokhtār-nāma*, by Farid al-Din ʿAṭṭār, 2nd ed. (Tehran: Sokhan, 1389/[2010–11]), 33–59.

8. Leonard Lewisohn and Christopher Shackle, editors' introduction to Lewisohn and Shackle, *Spiritual Flight*, xviii. See also Hermann Landolt, "ʿAṭṭār, Sufism, and Ismailism," in Lewisohn and Shackle, *Spiritual Flight*, 3.

9. Moḥammad Esteʿlāmi, introduction to *Tažkerat al-awliā*, by Farid al-Din ʿAṭṭār, rev. ed. (Tehran: Zavvār, 1383/[2004–5]), xxv; Miranṣāri, *Ketāb-shenāsi*, 75, 232; Omid Safi, "ʿAṭṭār, Farīd al-Dīn," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd ed., ed. Kate Fleet et al. (Leiden: Brill Online), posted 2016, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_23976.

10. Navid Kermani, *The Terror of God: Attar, Job and the Metaphysical Revolt*, trans. Wieland Hoban (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), 30; Claudia Yaghoobi, *Subjectivity in ʿAṭṭār, Persian Sufism, and European Mysticism* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2017).

11. ʿAbd al-Ḥosayn Zarrinkub agrees with Shafiʿi-Kadkani's conclusion that the *Khosrow-nāma* is spurious, but he criticizes some of the latter's specific arguments in a scattered fashion: *Ṣedā-ye bāl-e simorgh* (Tehran: Sokhan, 1386/[2007–8]), 69; *Ḥekāyat hamchonān bāqi* (Tehran: Sokhan, 1376/[1997–98]), 170–88. Cf. Shafiʿi-Kadkani's response in *Zabur-e pārsi: Negāhi be zendegi va ghazal-hā-ye ʿAṭṭār* (Tehran: Āgāh, 1378/[1999]), 84–90.

works and in the external sources. While the *Khosrow-nāma* is hardly effusive on the matter, it does provide some important biographical data not found in his other works, including an account of his mother's death and some information on the chronological order of his oeuvre. Especially interesting is ʿAṭṭār's praise of one Ebn al-Rabib as his formal spiritual guide, which challenges the current consensus that ʿAṭṭār was "more of an empathetic observer of Sufism than an active exponent."[12] By raising the possibility of the *Khosrow-nāma*'s authenticity, the present article aims to encourage scholars to take a fresh look at such issues, which have not been seriously reconsidered for a generation.

Even more significantly for our understanding of literary history, the *Khosrow-nāma* shows that ʿAṭṭār positioned himself against a wider range of poetic models than is usually thought. In contemporary scholarship, ʿAṭṭār is almost always seen as a stepping stone between Sanāʾi and Rumi; this teleological reading is particularly common in the literary criticism of Shafiʿi-Kadkani himself.[13] The composition of the *Khosrow-nāma*, however, complicates this picture and suggests he was working not just against Sanāʾi but also against versifiers of romantic tales such as Gorgāni, ʿAyyuqi, and even Neẓāmi. Indeed, if the *Khosrow-nāma* is authentic, then ʿAṭṭār composed five *masnavi*s, perhaps the earliest imitation of the *khamsa*.[14] The investigation into possible intertextual linkages between ʿAṭṭār and Neẓāmi has only barely begun, and I hope that this article will set the stage for wider-ranging analysis of ʿAṭṭār's literary models and his relationship to the romantic tradition.[15] Finally, ʿAṭṭār's authorship of the *Khosrow-nāma* troubles reductive notions of "mystical poetry" and "mystical poets," essentializing categories that have come to dominate discussions of ʿAṭṭār and that likely motivated the excision of the *Khosrow-nāma* from his oeuvre in the first place.

A Little Romance

The romance in question is most commonly known as the *Khosrow-nāma*, but it also circulated under the titles *Gol o Khosrow*, *Gol o Hermez*, and *Hermez o Golrokh*, in reference to the tale's two principal lovers—Gol also being known as Golrokh, and Hermez being the name given to Khosrow by his foster parents.[16] Although his name is often voweled as Hormoz in modern scholarship, it frequently rhymes with words such as *hargez* and *ʿājez*, meaning that its final vowel must be "e."[17] Shafiʿi-Kadkani further suggests that the

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12. Kermani, *Terror of God*, 26.

13. Shafiʿi-Kadkani, introduction to *Manṭeq al-ṭayr*, 38; Shafiʿi-Kadkani, *Zabur*, 19–20.

14. ʿAṭṭār wrote *masnavi*s only in the *hazaj* and *ramal* meters, so his five works, unlike later formal imitations, do not metrically match those of Neẓāmi.

15. Barāt Zanjāni, "Ḥakim Neẓāmi-ye Ganjavi va Shaykh Farid al-Din ʿAṭṭār," *Āyanda* 2, no. 9 (Ordibehesht 1362/[April–May 1983]): 106–14.

16. Titles of this format (*X and Y*) are common for the romance genre: see Cameron Cross, "The Poetics of Romantic Love in *Vis & Rāmin*" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2015), 104.

17. Farid al-Din ʿAṭṭār (attrib.), *Khosrow-nāma*, ed. Aḥmad Sohayli-Khwānsāri (Tehran: Anjoman-e Āsār-e Melli, 1339/[1961–62]), lines 1057, 1317. All references to the printed edition of the *Khosrow-nāma* are to Sohayli-Khwānsāri's edition.

name should be fully voweled as Hermez, which he links to the Greek name Hermes. This reading would be consistent with the Hellenistic roots of the romance genre as well as the geography of the story, which shifts between Constantinople and Khuzestān.[18] (One should note, however, that the name Hermes is usually transliterated with an "s," not a "z," in medieval Arabic and Persian).

The *Khosrow-nāma* trades in narrative structures and topoi that are characteristic of a group of fifth/eleventh-century Persian verse romances—including *Varqa o Golshāh*, *Vis o Rāmin*, and *Vāmeq o ʿAẕrā*—and that bear a striking resemblance to the Greek novels of the early Common Era. Both traditions can be traced back to the syncretic literary milieu of the eastern Mediterranean during the Achaemenid and Hellenistic periods, which was characterized by a cross-fertilization of stories, narremes, and tropes between Greek and Persian literary cultures. In general, the heroes and heroines of these romances (whether written in Greek or in Persian) are young, of noble lineage, and hopelessly in love. They are separated by force or chance, and the bulk of the story is devoted to their quest to reunite and (especially in the woman's case) to maintain their chastity. Once reunited, they marry and live out the rest of their lives in happiness. Within this basic plot, numerous topoi and narrative structures reappear. The story often begins with the protagonists' conception; as youths they fall in love at first sight; they are afflicted by shipwrecks, imprisonment, and bandits; the woman, and sometimes also the man, is repeatedly propositioned and/ or threatened by sexual violence but escapes with chastity intact; to evade danger, they often disguise themselves, and readers are treated to numerous scenes involving failed recognition and revelation. The lovers' peregrinations take them all over the eastern Mediterranean, reflecting the cultural heterogeneity and literary syncretism of the genre's origins.[19]

The *Khosrow-nāma* fits very comfortably into this generic model. The story begins with the Qayṣar (Caesar) of Rum, who has great wealth and power but no son. He owns a beautiful slave girl, and after a tryst she becomes pregnant, but Qayṣar must leave to fight invaders immediately after their encounter, so he does not learn of her pregnancy. The baby, who is born while the king is away, is named Khosrow; or, to be more exact, "They gave that heart-stealer a name in Greek [*rumi*] / Which in the Persian [*pārsi*] language is 'Khosrow-shāh.'"[20] The infant is then spirited out of the country to Khuzestān by a loyal servant to protect him from a cabal. He is raised by the king of Khuzestān's gardener, who gives him the name Hermez. He grows up to be a strapping young man, an expert in all realms of knowledge and skilled in the arts of war. One day, Gol, the princess of Khuzestān, is strolling on the roof of the palace, and she catches sight of Hermez napping in the garden and immediately falls in love. But she has already been promised in marriage to the king of Isfahan, and when she

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18. Shafiʿi-Kadkani, *Zabur*, 101. *Vāmeq o ʿAẕrā* also includes Greek names that were transliterated into the Perso-Arabic script: see Bo Utas, "Did ʿAdhrā Remain a Virgin?," *Orientalia Suecana* 3335 (1984–86): 429–41.

19. Dick Davis, *Panthea's Children: Hellenistic Novels and Medieval Persian Romances* (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 2002); Cross, "Poetics of Romantic Love," 94–135; Tomas Hägg, "The Oriental Reception of Greek Novels: A Survey with Some Preliminary Considerations," *Symbolae Osloenses* 61, no. 1 (1986): 99–131.

20. ʿAṭṭār (attrib.), *Khosrow-nāma*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Supplément persan 1434 (hereafter cited as BnF 1434), fol. 28v. Cf. Sohayli-Khwānsāri's printed edition, line 882.

has her father call off the marriage, the former raises an army to take her by force. Thus begins a long set of adventures featuring cannibals, bandits, disguises, cross-dressing, love triangles, betrayal, shipwrecks, and daring escapes. Although Gol and Khosrow are reunited at several points, circumstances always conspire to quickly separate them again. When Khosrow finally manages to defeat the king of Isfahan at the end of the story, the lovers are married in Constantinople along with several other couples of supporting characters who variously aided (and sometimes opposed) them during their trials, and they live happily for thirty more years until their deaths.[21]

ʿAṭṭār lists a work titled *Khosrow-nāma* as one of his own in the preface to the *Mokhtār-nāma*, and the author of the *Khosrow-nāma* identifies himself as ʿAṭṭār in the preface to the romance. However, Shafiʿi-Kadkani claims that the romance's preface is a ninth/fifteenth-century forgery that was fraudulently attached to the poem. He points out that just as the *Mokhtār-nāma*'s preface refers to the *Khosrow-nāma* as a completed work, so too does the *Khosrow-nāma*'s preface refer to the *Mokhtār-nāma* as a completed work. This fact leads to a chicken-and-egg problem that, according to Shafiʿi-Kadkani, no possible chronology could plausibly explain. On the basis of stylistic, religious, and manuscript evidence, he further argues for a ninth/fifteenth-century provenance for the poem and its allegedly forged preface. As for ʿAṭṭār's inclusion of the *Khosrow-nāma* in his list of previous titles, Shafiʿi-Kadkani reasons that the mention refers not to the romance in question but to the *Elāhi-nāma*, the authorship of which is not in doubt. He suggests that this mystical-didactic *masnavi* was originally known as the *Khosrow-nāma* and only later came to circulate under its present title.

Shafiʿi-Kadkani first advanced his argument in 1979 in the introduction to his edition of the *Mokhtār-nāma*. Since then, he has introduced several complicating lines of argumentation, first in 1999 in *Zabur-e pārsi* and more recently in 2008 in his introduction to his edition of the *Elāhi-nāma*.[22] These later additions and revisions are less systematic than the original argument, however, and it is not always clear how they are meant to be integrated into his previous claims. The 1979 version of his argument remains the most comprehensive and the most widely cited, so we must deal with its claims directly. Over the course of the following discussion, however, I will also mention the later variations and conclusions wherever relevant.

Manuscript Evidence

Many of ʿAṭṭār's authentic works exist in manuscripts dated as early as the end of the seventh/thirteenth century. According to Shafiʿi-Kadkani, however, the earliest manuscripts of the *Khosrow-nāma* do not appear until the ninth/fifteenth century, suggesting a much later composition; he further argues that this is consistent with the romance's stylistic and

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21. For a detailed summary of the entire tale, see Sohayli-Khwānsāri's introduction to the *Khosrow-nāma*, v–xxv; Ritter, "Philologika X," 161–71.

22. Shafiʿi-Kadkani, *Zabur*, 96–101; Moḥammad Reżā Shafiʿi-Kadkani, introduction to *Elāhi-nāma*, by Farid al-Din ʿAṭṭār, 2nd ed. (Tehran: Sokhan, 1388/[2009–10]), 48–63.

religious content, which also point to a ninth/fifteenth-century provenance.[23] The allegedly late appearance of the *Khosrow-nāma* relative to ʿAṭṭār's other works does seem a strong reason to be suspicious of its authenticity. But Shafiʿi-Kadkani's reading of the manuscript evidence is incomplete. In particular, he overlooks an early manuscript of the *Khosrow-nāma* held by the Bibliothèque nationale de France, which bears a colophon stating that it was completed on 29 Shawwāl 696/August 27, 1297, in line with the earliest manuscripts of ʿAṭṭār's undisputed works.[24] Shafiʿi-Kadkani cites only the handlist of Aḥmad Monzavi for his information on these manuscripts, and Monzavi does not include this early copy.[25] Nevertheless, it is surprising that Shafiʿi-Kadkani was not aware of it, since it served, along with the 1878 Lucknow lithograph, as the basis for Ritter's discussion of the poem in his seminal 1939 article on ʿAṭṭār.[26]

Written in a rough but legible *naskh*, this modest manuscript was likely produced for sale or for a minor collector, not a royal patron. It displays the archaic spellings that one would expect from a manuscript of this age, such as *ki* for *ke*, and it does not distinguish between the letters *be* and *pe*, *jim* and *che*, or *kāf* and *gāf*. Final *yay* is written with two points above the letter. The postvocalic *ẕāl*, which was fading over the course of the seventh/thirteenth century, has not been retained.[27] The text is framed by a rule-border of double red lines. According to Blochet's handlist, several of its folios were redone in the nineteenth century, and a dozen of its folios do seem to have been written in a different, and likely much later, hand; they are fully pointed and lack the rule-border.[28] The first three folios also appear to have been rewritten at some point. Although they more closely resemble the original in terms of style, they are much sloppier, and the rule-border seems to have been drawn freely without the aid of a straightedge.[29] Finally, a pair of folios closer to the end of the manuscript were written in yet another hand. They lack the rule-border, and the hemistichs are separated by (usually) three red marks.[30] The Arabic colophon appears to be written in the same hand as the original folios, with its distinctive ligatures between *yay* and *nun* and slating points, although it is more compact than the surrounding Persian text. The scribe may, therefore, have recut the pen before writing the colophon, or he may have focused more intently on his work as he switched from Persian to Arabic and from text to paratext.

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23. Shafiʿi-Kadkani, introduction to *Mokhtār-nāma*, 55–56.

24. BnF 1434, fol. 233r. I have examined the manuscript in digital reproduction, which can be accessed online at http://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc1006349.

25. Aḥmad Monzavi, *Fehrest-e noskha-hā-ye fārsi-ye khaṭṭi* (Tehran: Moʾassasa-ye Farhangi-ye Manṭeqa, 1348–51/[1969–72]), 4:3084–85.

26. Ritter, "Philologika X," 144–46. Ritter treats the manuscript as an authentic early copy, although he hedges somewhat by initially introducing it as "supposedly (*angeblich*) written in 696 h" (145).

27. Ludwig Paul, "Persian Language i. Early New Persian," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online ed., ed. Ehsan Yarshater, updated November 19, 2013, http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/persian-language-1-early-new-persian.

28. E. Blochet, *Catalogue des manuscrits persans* (Paris: Réunion des bibliothèques nationales, 1905–34), 3:87–88; BnF 1434, fols. 80r–91v.

29. BnF 1434, fols. 1r–3v.

30. Ibid., fols. 186r–187v.

In any case, there is no indication that the colophon has been altered, and the original folios are stylistically consistent with a late seventh/thirteenth-century provenance (fig. 1).
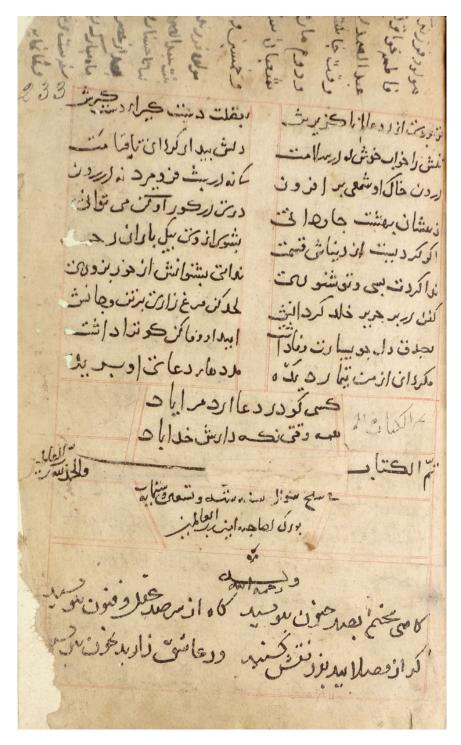

Figure 1. Conclusion and colophon of BnF 1434, fol. 233r.
Image courtesy of Bibliothèque nationale de France.

ʿAli Miranṣāri, who accepts the argument for the *Khosrow-nāma*'s spuriousness, lists this manuscript in his bibliographical survey of ʿAṭṭār's works but quotes Blochet's comment that some of its folios were rewritten in the nineteenth century. He claims, on this basis, that the alleged date of composition is not trustworthy.[31] These later folios, however, are clearly identifiable, and the vast majority of the manuscript appears original and unaltered, including the preface (with the exception of the title page and the first two folios) and the final page with the colophon.

On its own, of course, the existence of this manuscript does not prove that the *Khosrow-nāma* was composed by ʿAṭṭār. Likewise, we should note that for most of ʿAṭṭār's undisputed works, several manuscripts exist from the seventh/thirteenth and eighth/fourteenth centuries, whereas the *Khosrow-nāma* is attested only by this single copy.[32] Nevertheless, the Bibliothèque nationale manuscript shows that the *Khosrow-nāma* cannot be a product of the ninth/fifteenth century, as Shafiʿi-Kadkani claims in the 1979 version of his argument, since it was already circulating in the seventh/thirteenth century. In 1999, by contrast, Shafiʿi-Kadkani allowed that the romance may have been composed as early as the seventh/thirteenth century, but he still insisted that the work's preface was a later forgery attached to the poem during the eighth/fourteenth or ninth/fifteenth century.[33] However, this chronology, too, is disproved by the BnF manuscript, since it shows that the complete preface was already attached to the poem by the end of the seventh/thirteenth century. The BnF manuscript thus brings ʿAṭṭār's authorship back into the realm of possibility, at least from a chronological perspective.

Even though the romance and its preface were circulating in the late seventh/thirteenth century, their attribution to ʿAṭṭār may still very well be spurious. And even though this manuscript shows that Shafiʿi-Kadkani's dating of the poem and its preface to the ninth/fifteenth century on the basis of stylistic and religious evidence was incorrect, there may still be good reasons to dismiss the attribution to ʿAṭṭār on such grounds. We must therefore carefully consider the stylistic and religious evidence, along with the alleged "contradictions" in the *Khosrow-nāma*'s preface.

An Ouroboric Oeuvre

Ironically, one of the main points adduced by Shafiʿi-Kadkani to prove the *Khosrow-nāma*'s spuriousness is one that led Ritter to believe that the work was authentic: it references ʿAṭṭār's undisputed works, and it is referenced by those undisputed works in turn. More specifically, in the introduction to his collection of quatrains, the *Mokhtār-nāma*, ʿAṭṭār enumerates his works and includes the title *Khosrow-nāma* in the list; likewise, the author of the *Khosrow-nāma* provides a similar enumeration in the preface to the romance, claiming the *Mokhtār-nāma* and other authentic works of ʿAṭṭār as his own. As Shafiʿi-Kadkani points out, however, acceptance of these statements at face value creates a chicken-and-egg problem that plagues any attempt to reconstruct the chronology of

31. Miranṣāri, *Ketāb-shenāsi*, 234.

32. Shafiʿi-Kadkani, introduction to *Mokhtār-nāma*, 55.

33. Shafiʿi-Kadkani, *Zabur*, 99–100.

ʿAṭṭār's oeuvre. If ʿAṭṭār finished the *Khosrow-nāma* before the *Mokhtār-nāma*, how could he reference the latter? And if he finished it after the *Mokhtār-nāma*, how could he mention it in the latter as a completed and disseminated poem? Shafiʿi-Kadkani concludes that this "contradiction between the two introductions shows that the existing *Khosrow-nāma . . .* cannot be the *Khosrow-nāma* mentioned in the *Mokhtār-nāma*."[34] This circular situation, however, can also be explained by the fact that medieval authors would often disseminate multiple versions of their poems, revising and rewriting them even after their initial "publication." Such a solution was briefly proposed by Ritter in 1939, and, as I will argue here, it provides a more likely explanation for this literary ouroboros than does the theory of a later forgery.[35]

The *Khosrow-nāma*'s preface mentions the *Mokhtār-nāma* twice while recounting its own two-stage composition. According to an introductory section entitled "On the Reason for the Expounding of the Story" (*Dar sabab-e sharḥ dādan-e qeṣṣa*), the author was persuaded to compose the romance one spring night while sitting with a group of friends.[36] As the author tells it, one of his companions that night was something of a fanatic for his poetry; whenever the companion heard one of his verses, he would swoon or dance in ecstatic bewilderment as he contemplated its meaning.[37] This friend had memorized more than one hundred of his *qaṣida*s as well as nearly one thousand *ghazal*s and *qeṭʿa*s, and he was constantly quoting the *Javāher-nāma* and *Sharḥ al-qalb*. Most relevant for our present purposes, he had also memorized "the entire *Mokhtār-nāma* of quatrains."[38] These titles, of course, support the conclusion that the author who is speaking is Farid al-Din ʿAṭṭār, as does the fact that he explicitly calls himself "ʿAṭṭār" at various points in the poem.[39] On that night, this particular friend allegedly implored ʿAṭṭār, who had apparently taken a three-year hiatus from versifying, to start composing poetry again.[40] More specifically, he recommended that ʿAṭṭār versify a prose romance from one Badr-e Ahvāzi.[41] Dehkhoda speculates that this may be the same Ahvāzi mentioned by Nāṣer-e Khosrow, who compares this Ahvāzi unfavorably with himself, insinuating that the former's poetry is devoid of religious wisdom.[42] In any case, since much of the *Khosrow-nāma*'s action takes place in Khuzestān, it makes sense that its source would be associated with Ahvāz, a major city in the region. ʿAṭṭār reports that his friend urged him to versify the story and thus make it new: "String the pearls of this speech beautifully on the thread / Make this old soul new

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34. Shafiʿi-Kadkani, introduction to *Mokhtār-nāma*, 39.

35. Ritter, "Philologika X," 155.

36. BnF 1434, fol. 20r. In the printed edition, the heading reads "The Reason for the Versification of the Book" (*Sabab-e naẓm-e ketāb*); ʿAṭṭār, *Khosrow-nāma*, 28.

37. ʿAṭṭār, *Khosrow-nāma*, lines 601–2.

38. Ibid., lines 603.

39. Ibid., lines 2261, 5349, 6069, 8260, 8267.

40. Ibid., line 614.

41. Ibid., line 617.

42. ʿAli Akbar Dehkhodā, *Loghat-nāma-ye Dehkhodā*, ed. Moḥammad Moʿin and Jaʿfar Shahidi (Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Dāneshgāh-e Tehrān, 1373/[1993–94]), s.v. "Ahvāzi."

with meaning."[43] He immediately saw the wisdom in his friend's request and began setting verses down on paper.

But this was only the first stage of the poem's composition. The next section of the introduction, entitled "The Extraction of the Tale" (*entekhāb kardan-e dāstān*) details events that took place an indeterminate amount of time later, when some version of the *Khosrow-nāma* was already circulating.[44] According to the author, he was approached by a friend (whether this is the same friend who initially suggested the project is unclear) who criticized the poem for its excessive length and because it shared some of its homiletic content with the *Asrār-nāma*:

> I had a friend, to whom had accrued many benefits
> Of the soul; he was devoted to my verse.
> He said to me: "The *Khosrow-nāma* is, today,
> Endowed with a heart-illuminating, royal brilliance.
> Although the story is delightful—
> What can I say: shorter is better; it's long!
> If you would abbreviate this story,
> No thorn would remain in this garden.
> On the path, husks and kernels are two obstacles;
> If you would choose just the essential oils, it would be better.
> The *tawḥīd*, praise, wisdom, and proverbs
> That were first found in the *Khosrow-nāma*
> You have placed in the *Asrār-nāma* as well,
> So you have begun the same thing in two places!"

<div dir="rtl">

بجان در کار من بسته دلی داشت   رفیقی داشتم کو حاصلی داشت

فروغی خسروی دارد دلفروز   مرا گفتا چو خسرونامه امروز

چگویم قصه کوته به درازیست   اگر چه قصه‌ای بس دلنواز است

نماند هیچ خار این بوستان را   اگر موجز کنی این داستان را

همه روغن گزینی نغز باشد   دو بند راه قشر و مغز باشد

که خسرونامه را بود اول حال   دگر توحید و نعت و پند و امثال

دو موضع کرده‌ای یک چیز آغاز[45]   چو در اسرارنامه گفته‌ای باز

</div>

In other words, the *Khosrow-nāma* was too long, and some of the proverbs, religious praise, and homiletic material that it originally contained were later reused in the *Asrār-nāma*. The passage can even be read as implying that some of the romance's verses were repeated verbatim in the later didactic *masnavi*, perhaps in its opening doxology, which is conventionally dominated by this kind of content. Since the two poems share the same meter, it would have been easy to recycle lines from the former into the latter.

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43. ʿAṭṭār, *Khosrow-nāma*, line 626.

44. BnF 1434, fol. 22r. In the printed edition, the section is titled "On the Completion of the Story" (*Dar pardākhtan-e in dāstān*); ʿAṭṭār, *Khosrow-nāma*, 32.

45. BnF 1434, fol. 22v; cf. ʿAṭṭār, *Khosrow-nāma*, lines 650–56.

The author of the *Khosrow-nāma* took this call for revision to heart, extracting a section (*bāb*) from each chapter (*faṣl*) and then stringing these "pearls of wisdom" together from the beginning with a new introductory doxology:

> Because he spoke the truth of this story beautifully,
> I did, in short, just what he said.
> I extracted a selection from over here,
> I removed a section from every chapter.
> I composed separate verses of *tawḥid* and praise,
> And then I strung the pearls of wisdom from the beginning.
> If there was any defect in its brocade,
> I repaired it from that state.
> Some verses that were renowned like gold
> I melted down in the furnace for golden ink.

<div dir="rtl">

چنان کردم همی القصه کو گفت   چو او این قصّه را الحق نکو گفت

بر آوردم ز یک یک فصل بابی   برون کردم از اینجا انتخابی

ز سردر درّ حکمت نیز سفتم   جدا نعتی و توحیدی بگفتم

بگردانیدم از طرزی که آن داشت   وگر چیزی طرازش را زیان داشت

در آتش بردمش تا آب زر شد[46]   سخن بعضی که چون زر نامور شد

</div>

Although more thorough philological work needs to be done, all known manuscripts of the *Khosrow-nāma* seem to reflect these revisions; the earlier version of the poem does not appear to have been preserved, or at least it has not yet been identified.[47] It thus probably did not enjoy wide circulation, since otherwise the author could not have suppressed it so completely. Although he claims that some of the verses in the first version of the *Khosrow-nāma* had gained wide currency before he set about revising the poem ("some verses… were renowned like gold"), the actual text was likely circulating only within a small community of his associates.

Finally, at the end of the section, the author again mentions his various other poems, including the *Mokhtār-nāma.* Such enumerations served an important function by informing readers about the author's other works and encouraging them to seek them out—a manuscript version of the "also by this author" page found at the back of many mass-market paperbacks:

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46. BnF 1434, fol. 22v; cf. ʿAṭṭār, *Khosrow-nāma*, lines 661–65.

47. B. Reinert, "ʿAṭṭār, Farīd-al-Dīn," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online ed., ed. Ehsan Yarshater, updated August 17, 2011, http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/attar-farid-al-din-poet; Ritter, "Philologika X," 144–46; François de Blois and C.A. Storey, *Persian Literature: A Bio-Bibliographical Survey* (London: Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1992–94), 5.2:276. Several catalogers note highly abridged versions of the romance, but they are all quite late, and those that Ritter has examined all contain the same two-part story of the poem's composition. He thus believes that these abridgments reflect later editorial undertakings and do not represent an authorial version. Compare, for example, BnF 1434 with the later (and shorter) recension of the poem contained in BnF Supplément persan 811 (dated 1013/1605). Also see Bodleian, Elliott 204, and Asiatic Society of Bengal, 477, manuscripts that contain both the full *Khosrow-nāma* as it exists today and a much shorter précis.

The *Moṣibat-nāma* is the sorrow of the world,
The *Elāhi-nāma*'s secrets are manifest.
I began both of them in the apothecary,
And—what can I say—I finished both quickly.
There were five hundred patients in the apothecary,
Every day, for me to take their pulse.
Among all the things that I've heard and said,
I've seen no speech better than this.
If there is any fault, cover it up;
If you won't praise me, at least stay silent.
Through the *Moṣibat-nāma*, atoms are animated,
The *Elāhi-nāma* is the treasure of kings.
The *Asrār-nāma* is the world of gnosis,
The *Mokhtār-nāma* is paradise for the people of the heart.
And as for the *Maqāmāt-e ṭoyur* [i.e., *Manṭeq al-ṭayr*], it is like
An ascension of the soul for the bird of love.
Because the *Khosrow-nāma* has a wondrous nature,
Both the noble and the common have a share in it.

<div dir="rtl">

الهینامه کاسرارش عیان است   مصیبتنامه کاندوه جهان است

چگویم زود رستم زان و زین باز   بداروخانه کردم هر دو آغاز

که در هر روز نبضم می نمودند   بداروخانه پانصد شخص بودند

سخن را به ازین رویی ندیدم   میان آن همه گفت و شنیدم

چو تحسین نکنیم باری خموشی   اگر عیبی بود گر عیب پوشی

الهینامه گنج خسروان است   مصیبتنامه را ذرّه روان است

بهشت اهل دل مختارنامهست   جهان معرفت اسرارنامهست

که مرغ عشق را معراج جان است   مقامات طیور اما چنان است

ز طرز او که و مه را نصیب است⁴⁸   چو خسرونامه را طرزی عجیب است

</div>

We thus have a situation in which the *Khosrow-nāma* references the *Mokhtār-nāma* twice by name as a finished work, just as the *Mokhtār-nāma* cites the *Khosrow-nāma* as a finished work; this leads to a "contradiction" that, according to Shafiʿi-Kadkani, indicates the latter's spuriousness as a work by ʿAṭṭār. These circular cross-references, however, are not necessarily a sign of the *Khosrow-nāma*'s forgery; they can also be explained by the complex, multi-staged process in which works of the manuscript age were revised and circulated in new forms. Sanāʾi, for instance, circulated multiple drafts of his *Ḥadiqa*, and Najm al-Din Dāya revised, retitled, and repackaged his *Merṣād al-ʿebād* for a new patron.⁴⁹ Most significantly for our purposes, ʿAṭṭār himself testifies in the introduction to

48. BnF 1434, fols. 22v–23r; cf. ʿAṭṭār, *Khosrow-nāma*, lines 266–74.

49. J. T. P. de Bruijn, *Of Piety and Poetry: The Interaction of Religion and Literature in the Life and Works of Ḥakīm Sanāʾī of Ghazna* (Leiden: Brill, 1983), 119–39; Barbara Flemming, "From Archetype to Oral Tradition: Editing Persian and Turkish Literary Texts," *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 3 (1998): 7–11; Franklin Lewis, "The Modes of Literary Production: Remarks on the Composition, Revision and 'Publication' of Persian Texts in the

the *Mokhtār-nāma* that he altered several of his works after their initial "publication." For example, he explains that his *divān* originally contained three thousand quatrains, but at the urging of his friends, he created a new recension from which he removed all but five hundred. Of the excised quatrains, he organized two thousand in the *Mokhtār-nāma* and destroyed five hundred that "were not fit for this world."[50] Similarly, ʿAṭṭār refers to his *Javāher-nāma* and *Sharḥ al-qalb* as completed works in the *Taẕkerat al-awliā*, directing readers to them for further commentary on the sayings of the saints.[51] In the *Mokhtār-nāma*, however, we learn that ʿAṭṭār destroyed these two poems at some later point.[52] Thus, in the cases of the *divān*, the *Sharḥ al-qalb*, and the *Javāher-nāma*, ʿAṭṭār circulated finished works within his textual community in Nishapur before making further revisions or suppressing them entirely. The fact that ʿAṭṭār was able to control "published" texts in this way testifies to their limited circulation, the small size of his textual community, and the influence that ʿAṭṭār likely held as a spiritual leader. Given this background, the account of the *Khosrow-nāma*'s two-staged composition no longer seems illogical, contradictory, or far-fetched. The request from a friend is a common topos that need not be taken literally, but the preface's description of initial circulation followed by revision and a second "publication" not only is possible but also accords well with what we know of ʿAṭṭār's literary habits from his other works.

On the basis of ʿAṭṭār's testimony and literary cross-references, one can even construct a relative chronology for his oeuvre that would explain how the present versions of the *Mokhtār-nāma* and the *Khosrow-nāma* both came to cite each other as finished works. Ritter proposed one such possible chronology in 1939; I offer a similar one here that incorporates data from the *Taẕkerat al-awliā*:[53]

1. *Divān* [first recension], *Sharḥ al-qalb*, *Javāher-nāma*
2. *Khosrow-nāma* [first recension]
3. *Manṭeq al-ṭayr*, *Moṣibat-nāma*, *Asrār-nāma*[54]

Medieval Period," *Persica* 17 (2001): 69–83.

50. Farid al-Din ʿAṭṭār, *Mokhtār-nāma*, ed. Moḥammad Reżā Shafiʿi-Kadkani, 2nd ed. (Tehran: Sokhan, 1389/ [2010–11]), 71. On the composition of the *Mokhtār-nāma*, see Austin O'Malley, "Poetry and Pedagogy: The Homiletic Verse of Farid al-Din ʿAṭṭâr" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2017), 58–68. It should be noted that none of the existing manuscripts of the *divān* contain anything near five hundred quatrains, and most contain none at all. ʿAṭṭār's second authorial recension thus must have undergone further revisions, either by ʿAṭṭār or at the hands of later scribes.

51. Farid al-Din ʿAṭṭār, *Taẕkerat al-awliā*, ed. Moḥammad Esteʿlāmi, rev. ed. (Tehran: Zavvār, 1383/[2004–5]), 4, 466.

52. ʿAṭṭār, *Mokhtār-nāma*, 70.

53. Ritter, "Philologika X," 151–52.

54. Some manuscripts of the *Manṭeq al-ṭayr* contain a verse claiming that the poem was completed in the late sixth/twelfth century. The verse does not appear in most manuscripts, however, including the earliest ones, and the actual date given in the manuscripts varies from 570/1174–75 to 583/1187–88. Most scholars therefore reject it as an interpolation. (On the other hand, it is difficult to see what would motivate a scribe to insert such a line.) See De Blois and Storey, *Persian Literature*, 5.2:281; Badiʿ al-Zamān Foruzānfar, *Sharḥ-e aḥvāl va naqd va taḥlil-e āṯār-e Shaykh Farid al-Din Moḥammad ʿAṭṭār-e Nayshāburi* (Tehran: Chāp-khāna-ye Dāneshgāh,

4. *Taẕkerat al-awliā*[55]
5. Destruction of the *Sharḥ al-qalb* and the *Javāher-nāma*
6. Revision of the *divān* and compilation of the *Mokhtār-nāma*
7. *Elāhi-nāma*
8. Revision of the *Khosrow-nāma*

The first recension of the *Khosrow-nāma* was allegedly composed at the instigation of a friend who often quoted the *Sharḥ al-qalb* and the *Javāher-nāma*, and who had memorized a large number of poems from the *divān* and all of the quatrains of the *Mokhtār-nāma*. The *Sharḥ al-qalb* and *Javāher-nāma* must therefore have already been written, and likely some textual version of the *divān* had been, too. The reference to the *Mokhtār-nāma* is more problematic because, at this point, the quatrains did not yet exist as a separate work outside of the *divān*. As Ritter suggests, however, there is a plausible explanation: if we accept the author's account of his revisions to the *Khosrow-nāma*, the reference to the *Mokhtār-nāma* could have been inserted during that process (indeed, the entire preface may have been reworked at that time) as a way of referring to the quatrains as a totality.[56] The aforementioned friend does not seem to have been familiar with ʿAṭṭār's mystical-didactic *maṣnavi*s, so they were likely written after the first version of the *Khosrow-nāma*. The *Taẕkerat al-awliā* is also difficult to place relative to the other works, but because it cites the *Sharḥ al-qalb* as if the latter still existed, it must have been compiled before that work's destruction. The *Mokhtār-nāma*, on the other hand, mentions the suppression of the *Sharḥ al-qalb* and the *Javāher-nāma*, so it must have been compiled after the *Taẕkerat al-awliā*. According to the *Mokhtār-nāma*'s preface, it was produced simultaneously with a new textual recension of the *divān*, and it references the *Khosrow-nāma* (which would have still been in its unrevised form), the *Manṭeq al-ṭayr*, the *Moṣibat-nāma*, and the *Asrār-nāma* as completed works. ʿAṭṭār then produced the *Elāhi-nāma*, which is not mentioned in the *Mokhtār-nāma*, before revising the *Khosrow-nāma*, in which he names the *Mokhtār-nāma* and all of the completed ethical-didactic *maṣnavi*s.

Such a career arc is consistent with the practices of poets with whom we are more familiar. Generally speaking, premodern Persian poets tend to begin with the monorhyme forms, which they continue to compose throughout their careers, and later in life turn to *maṣnavi*s along with the curation of earlier output.[57] ʿAṭṭār may have even anticipated that his reworking of the *Khosrow-nāma* would be his final work, and this fact (along with issues of genre) may explain why he was more willing to mention his previous titles in this poem

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1339/[1960–61]; repr., Tehran: Āsim, 1389/[2010–11]), 61–63; Ritter, "Philologika XIV," 50–56; Shafiʿi-Kadkani, introduction to *Manṭeq al-ṭayr*, 74.

55. It is also possible that the *Taẕkerat al-awliā* was compiled before the *Asrār-nāma*, the *Moṣibat-nāma*, and the *Manṭeq al-ṭayr*, or even before the first recension of the *Khosrow-nāma*. All that is certain is that it must have been compiled after the composition of the *Sharḥ al-qalb*, but before its destruction.

56. Ritter, "Philologika X," 151–52.

57. Such a career trajectory is also consistent with Shafiʿi-Kadkani's dating of the *maṣnavi*s—he argues that the they were written after ʿAwfi's visit to Nishapur in 1206–7, when, by his reckoning, ʿAṭṭār had likely already entered late middle age. See Shafiʿi-Kadkani, introduction to *Manṭeq al-ṭayr*, 72–74.

than he had been in his other *maṣnavi*s: at the end of his literary (and earthly) career, he felt the need to lay out his literary estate.[58]

It is thus chronologically possible for ʿAṭṭār to have written the *Khosrow-nāma*, both in terms of the manuscript tradition and in view of the development of his own oeuvre. Nevertheless, we may still be compelled to dismiss the traditional attribution for other reasons. In particular, Shafiʿi-Kadkani argues that the *Khosrow-nāma*'s literary style and religious outlook are inconsistent with ʿAṭṭār's literary and religious habits as known from his undisputed works. As we shall see, however, these arguments are also less convincing than they first appear.

Religious Reasons

According to Shafiʿi-Kadkani, the introduction to the *Khosrow-nāma* contains terms and concepts derived from Ebn ʿArabi's mysticism that are characteristic of a later period of Persian literary history; this, he argues, proves the introduction's ninth/fifteenth-century provenance and thus its spuriousness. However, although Ebn ʿArabi is often thought to mark a sharp dividing line in the history of mystical thought, he did not arise in a vacuum, and the terms and concepts that he developed were already percolating in the preceding centuries. Indeed, many of the ostensibly Akbarian terms and concepts identified by Shafiʿi-Kadkani in the *Khosrow-nāma* are, in fact, present in ʿAṭṭār's undisputed works as well. Their presence, as we shall see, is consistent with ʿAṭṭār's own style and religious outlook and thus does not necessitate a later provenance.

There are several passages in the *Khosrow-nāma* that allegedly exemplify the Islamic philosophical-mystical concept of "the unity of being" (*waḥdat al-wojud*); although Ebn ʿArabi himself never uses this term, he is seen as the intellectual fountainhead of the idea that it represents—namely, that divine unity underlies all creation.[59] Such an attitude is certainly evident in some of the verses in the *Khosrow-nāma*, although we must note that, as far as these things go, the verses in question are rather tame. The following is perhaps the most direct example:

> Of the unity of the two worlds there is no doubt,
> Since the true being is only one.
> There is God, and creation is but the light of God,
> But His light is never separate from Him.
> There is God and the light of God. What else is there?
> We must say God; besides God who could there be?
> Behind the curtain there is only one idol-image,
> Even if the light has a thousand forms.

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58. Although he does not mention his other titles in his ethical-didactic *maṣnavi*s, ʿAṭṭār has no problem discussing his output in his prose introductions to the *Taẕkerat al-awliā* and the *Mokhtār-nāma*.

59. William Chittick, "Rumi and *Waḥdat al-wujūd*," in *Poetry and Mysticism in Islam: The Heritage of Rumi*, ed. Amin Banani, Richard G. Hovannisian, and Georges Sabagh (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 62.

<div dir="rtl">

که موجود حقیقی جز یکی نیست   در آن وحدت دو عالم را شکی نیست

ولی زو نور او هرگز جدا نیست   خداست و خلق جز نور خدا نیست

بباید گفت حق جز حق دگر کیست   حقست و نور حق چیزی دگر چیست

ولی در پرده یک صورت نگارست⁶⁰   اگر آن نور را صورت هزارست

</div>

These verses explain worldly multiplicity as a manifestation of divine unity, a conceptualization that Shafiʿi-Kadkani considers foreign to the work of ʿAṭṭār, who, in his view, maintains a sharp separation between creator and creation.[60] Although the "unity of being" is certainly not the dominant metaphysics of ʿAṭṭār's works, he does, in fact, often meditate on the fundamental unity of all existence. For example, compare the above passage with the following quotation from the *Manṭeq al-ṭayr*'s doxology:

> Look, this world and that world are Him;
> There is nothing other than Him, and if there were, it would be Him!
> Everything is one essence, just elaborated;
> Everything is one word with different vocalizations.

<div dir="rtl">

نیست غیر او وگر هست آن هم اوست   در نگر کاین عالم و آن عالم اوست

جمله یک حرف و عبارت مختلف⁶²   جمله یک ذات است اما متّصف

</div>

There are several other instances in ʿAṭṭār's undisputed works in which he treats this allegedly Akbarian theme of God's coextension with His creation.[62]

Shafiʿi-Kadkani further argues that the author of the *Khosrow-nāma* uses specific terms derived from Ebn ʿArabi's metaphysics of divine names, in particular "the named" (*mosammā*) and "the names" (*asmā*), indicating God's essence and its refraction in the world.[63] But these terms, too, appear several times in ʿAṭṭār's undisputed works with similar metaphysical significance.[64] This is not to suggest that ʿAṭṭār read Ebn ʿArabi, who composed his major works after ʿAṭṭār's probable death date.[65] Rather, it is another indication that many of the ideas and terms that we have come to associate with Ebn ʿArabi were already in the air as Sufi thinkers engaged and reworked the earlier tradition. Formulations that recall Ebn ʿArabi's teachings can be found in the works of several of his predecessors and

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60. Shafiʿi-Kadkani, introduction to *Mokhtār-nāma*, 48–49.

61. Farid al-Din ʿAṭṭār, *Manṭeq al-ṭayr*, ed. Moḥammad Reżā Shafiʿi-Kadkani, 2nd ed. (Tehran: Sokhan, 1387/[2008–9]), lines 62–63.

62. Ibid., lines 1124–28.

63. Shafiʿi-Kadkani, introduction to *Mokhtār-nāma*, 49–50.

64. Farid al-Din ʿAṭṭār, *Divān-e ʿAṭṭār-e Nayshābūri*, ed. Mahdi Madāyini and Mehrān Afshāri (Tehran: Charkh, 1392/[2013–14]), *ghazal* 362, *qaṣida* 10; Farid al-Din ʿAṭṭār, *Moṣibat-nāma*, ed. Moḥammad Reżā Shafiʿi-Kadkani, 2nd ed. (Tehran: Sokhan, 1388/[2009–10]), lines 418, 5085–87; Farid al-Din ʿAṭṭār, *Asrār-nāma*, ed. Moḥammad Reżā Shafiʿi-Kadkani, 2nd ed. (Tehran: Sokhan, 1388/[2009–10]), lines 696–98.

65. Ahmed Ateş, "Ibn al-ʿArabī," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., ed. P. Bearman et al. (Leiden: Brill Online), posted 2012, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0316. On ʿAṭṭār's death date, see O'Malley, "Poetry and Pedagogy," 32–34.

contemporaries, including Ebn al-Fāreż, Aḥmad-e Ghazzāli, ʿAṭṭār, and even Rumi, but these isomorphic parallelisms do not necessarily indicate any direct influence.[66]

More serious is Shafiʿi-Kadkani's claim that the *Khosrow-nāma* contains a *tażmin* (exact quotation of one author by another) from the *Golshan-e rāz* of Shabestari (d. 1340), a mystical poet who helped popularize Ebn ʿArabi in the Persian-speaking world. The verse in question justifies Ḥallāj's famous utterance "I am the Truth" by likening him to the burning bush through which God spoke to Moses:

> If "Verily, I am God" is allowed from a bush,
> Then why is it not allowed from a fortunate one?

<div dir="rtl">

چرا نبود روا از نیـک بختی[68]   رواست انی انـا الله از درختی

</div>

Obviously, if the author of the *Khosrow-nāma* copied this line from the *Golshan-e rāz*, he could not have been ʿAṭṭār, who had died more than a century earlier. This verse, however, is not found in the oldest manuscripts of the *Golshan-e rāz* or in the critical edition by Ṣamad Movaḥḥed, who traces it to the later commentary by Lāhiji.[68] It is thus entirely possible that the line actually originated with ʿAṭṭār and was later assimilated into the textual legacy of Shabestari, who was a self-confessed ʿAṭṭār superfan.[69] This scenario is made more likely by the fact that the line is found in the BnF manuscript of the *Khosrow-nāma*, which was copied before the *Golshan-e rāz* was even written. Furthermore, ʿAṭṭār's *Tazkera* contains a line of prose that makes exactly the same point with the same vocabulary: "[If] it is allowed [*ravā*] that the cry of 'Verily, I am God' [*enni anā allāh*] emerge from a bush [*darakhti*]—without the bush intervening—then why is it not allowed [*ravā*] for 'I am the Truth' to emerge from Ḥosayn [Ḥallāj]?"[70] Prose material included in the *Tazkera* is often found in poetic form in ʿAṭṭār's *masnavi*s, and this appears to be classic case of such transference.

Besides the alleged influence of Shabestari and Ebn ʿArabi, Shafiʿi-Kadkani also argues that the romance's praise of Saʿd al-Din b. al-Rabib, who seems to have been the author's

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66. Nasrallāh Purjavādi, *Solṭān-e ṭariqat: Savāneḥ, zendegi, va sharḥ-e āsār-e Khwāja Aḥmad-e Ghazzāli* (Tehran: Āgāh, 1358/[1979]), 104–7; Chittick, "Rumi and *Waḥdat al-wujūd*," 70–71, 91–97, 101–4; Th. Emil Homerin, ed. and trans., *ʿUmar Ibn al-Fāriḍ: Sufi Verse, Saintly Life* (New York: Paulist Press, 2001), 34–35. In his chapter's appendix, Chittick facetiously argues that ʿAṭṭār was influenced by Ebn ʿArabi. His purpose is to show that general formulations of the "unity of being" are common in the Persian poetical tradition, and if one believes that they are necessarily indicative of influence from Ebn ʿArabi, one must concede that even a poet like ʿAṭṭār, who died before Ebn ʿArabi's most important works were written, was somehow influenced by him.

67. BnF 1434, fol. 5r; cf. ʿAṭṭār, *Khosrow-nāma*, line 141.

68. Maḥmud Shabestari, *Majmuʿa-ye āsār-e Shaykh Maḥmud Shabestari*, ed. Ṣamad Movaḥḥed (Tehran: Ṭahuri, 1365/[1986–87]), 135. The *Khosrow-nāma* also puns on the letter *mim* that separates Aḥmad (Muhammad) from Aḥad (God), and Shafiʿi-Kadkani argues that this punning is a direct response to a couple of lines in Shabestari. In this case, too, however, the most salient line is missing from the critical edition of the *Golshan-e rāz*, while such punning is well attested in ʿAṭṭār's undisputed works. See Shafiʿi-Kadkani, introduction to *Mokhtār-nāma*, 46–47; Shabestari, *Āsār-e Shabestari*, 67, 123; ʿAṭṭār, *Khosrow-nāma*, lines 332–35; ʿAṭṭār, *Moṣibat-nāma*, ed. Shafiʿi-Kadkani, lines 339–41, 440–41.

69. Shabestari, *Āsār-e Shabestari*, 69.

70. ʿAṭṭār, *Tazkerat al-awliā*, 510.

spiritual guide, contains terminology that was not applied to religious figures until the eighth/fourteenth century: specifically, the title *khwāja* and the honorific *qoṭb-e awliā* (pole of the saints).[71] Contrary to this claim, however, the term *khwāja* is attested in sixth/twelfth- and seventh/thirteenth-century texts—in fact, it is even used by ʿAṭṭār himself in his undisputed *maṣnavi*s in reference to religious leaders. In the *Elāhi-nāma*, two anecdotes are attributed to Abu ʿAli Farmādi, a mystical preacher from the fifth/eleventh century, who is referred to in the text as Khwāja Bu ʿAli.[72] We also find references to Khwāja Akkāfi, a Nayshāburi religious figure from the generation prior to ʿAṭṭār, and a story featuring Khwāja Bu ʿAli Daqqāq, the famed teacher of Qoshayri.[73] The title also appears in ʿAṭṭār's *Taẕkera*—not in the chapter headings, but within the anecdotes themselves, where students routinely call their teachers by this title. And in at least one case, the titled is affixed to a proper name (Khwāja ʿAli Sirgāni).[74]

ʿAṭṭār uses the term *qoṭb* relatively frequently as well, especially in the rhyming prose introductions to the biographies in the *Taẕkera*. Saints are often described as the axial pole (*qoṭb al-madār*), the axis of the age (*qoṭb-e vaqt*), the axis of the world (*qoṭb-e ʿālam*), and the axis of religion (*qoṭb-e din*).[75] Shafiʿi-Kadkani is correct that the specific compound *qoṭb-e awliā* does not appear, but I am reluctant to banish the *Khosrow-nāma* as spurious on the basis of this single unique phrase not found in other works of the corpus.[76]

Matters of Style

The *Khosrow-nāma* allegedly deviates from ʿAṭṭār's undisputed works in terms of style and literary norms, too. According to this argument, the *Khosrow-nāma* exhibits excessive repetition (*eltezām*) that is more consistent with the literary tastes of the ninth/fifteenth century than with those of the sixth/twelfth or seventh/thirteenth. More specifically, Shafiʿi-Kadkani points to a thirty-verse passage in the poem's opening praise of Muhammad that, in some manuscripts, contains more than sixty instances of the word "stone."[77] This passage, which begins with a divine voice addressing Muhammad, references the battle of Uḥud, during which several of the Prophet's teeth were allegedly knocked out by a

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71. Shafiʿi-Kadkani, introduction to *Mokhtār-nāma*, 51–52; ʿAṭṭār, *Khosrow-nāma*, lines 540–60.

72. Farid al-Din ʿAṭṭār, *Elāhi-nāma*, ed. Mohammad Reżā Shafiʿi-Kadkani, 2nd ed. (Tehran: Sokhan, 1388/[2009–10]), lines 2660, 6180.

73. ʿAṭṭār, *Moṣibat-nāma*, ed. Shafiʿi-Kadkani, lines 2071, 3823, 4613.

74. ʿAṭṭār, *Taẕkerat al-awliā*, 332.

75. Ibid., 118, 138, 248, 459.

76. Although *qoṭb-e awliā* appears only once, other distinctive words are found across the corpus. Particularly interesting is *chekāda*, an unusual variant of *chekād*, indicating the crown of the head. The word is found in the *Khosrow-nāma* (line 5801), as well as the *Elāhi-nāma* (line 1307) and the *divān*; see Farid al-Din ʿAṭṭār, *Divān-e ʿAṭṭār*, ed. Taqi Tafażżoli (Tehran: Enteshārāt-e ʿElmi va Farhangi, 1386/[2007]), *ghazal* 367. A search of ganjoor.net, the popular online database of Persian poetry, reveals no other instances of the word's use by poets other than ʿAṭṭār. Likewise, although *chekāda* is defined in the major Mughal-era and contemporary dictionaries (*Farhang-e Jahāngiri*, *Farhang-e Rashidi*, *Loghat-nāma-ye Dehkhodā*, *Farhang-e Sokhan*), these give no attestations of the word outside of ʿAṭṭār's oeuvre.

77. Shafiʿi-Kadkani, introduction to *Mokhtār-nāma*, 44–45.

rock.[78] Such repetition, which many modern critics find poetically unpleasing, is allegedly foreign to the style of ʿAṭṭār and his contemporaries. It is not confined to the doxology, either; the *Khosrow-nāma* contains several examples of the device throughout its eight thousand verses, which is one of the reasons that Shafiʿi-Kadkani, in the 1979 version of his argument, attributes the poem as a whole, and not just its introduction, to the ninth/ fifteenth century.[79]

The point is not especially convincing, however, because a close inspection of ʿAṭṭār's undisputed works shows similar instances of protracted repetition. For example, the famous Shaykh Ṣanʿān story from the *Manṭeq al-ṭayr* features a cluster of twenty verses that almost all contain some variation on the word "night."[80] The *Asrār-nāma*'s praise of the Prophet boasts a spectacular forty-line passage in which every verse contains one—and sometimes two—instances of the word "finger" (*angosht*) or closely related terms such as "ring" (*angoshtari*), "thimble" (*angoshtvāna*), or "charcoal" (*angesht*).[81] There are also several extended sections of anaphora (repetition at the beginning of the line) in the *Moṣibat-nāma*'s doxology, including a hundred verses that each ask "What is (*chist*) . . . ?" and then define a different religious concept.[82] According to Bürgel, who has identified a number of additional examples, anaphora and repetition are prominent features of ʿAṭṭār's work.[83] Given ʿAṭṭār's fondness for such devices in his undisputed works, the *Khosrow-nāma*'s use of repetition does not seem particularly unusual.[84]

The second point relates not to style but to ʿAṭṭār's broader literary habits. The *Khosrow-nāma* contains a line that, in Shafiʿi-Kadkani's reading, suggests the poem was titled in honor of a temporal ruler, which would seem to be at odds with the condemnation of

78. ʿAṭṭār, *Khosrow-nāma*, lines 258–61.

79. Shafiʿi-Kadkani, introduction to *Mokhtār-nāma*, 45.

80. ʿAṭṭār, *Manṭeq al-ṭayr*, lines 1246–65.

81. ʿAṭṭār, *Asrār-nāma*, lines 200–41. See the translation in J. Christoph Bürgel, "Some Remarks on Forms and Functions of Repetitive Structures in the Epic Poetry of ʿAṭṭār," in Lewisohn and Shackle, *Spiritual Flight*, 208–11.

82. Farid al-Din ʿAṭṭār, *Moṣibat-nāma*, ed. Nurāni Veṣāl (Tehran: Zavvār, 1373/[1994]), 41–46. Shafiʿi-Kadkani, in his edition, expresses doubt that these passages are authentic. Although they are found in all known manuscripts of the poem, the hundred lines repeating "What is . . . ?" are crossed out in one of the earliest copies, where a marginal note claims that they were taken from the *Oshtor-nāma* (a likely spurious work attributed to ʿAṭṭār). See his introduction to the *Moṣibat-nāma*, 105, 112.

83. Bürgel, "Repetitive Structures in ʿAṭṭār."

84. Shafiʿi-Kadkani makes another argument in this section regarding a line in the *Khosrow-nāma*'s introduction that puns on the titles of Ebn Sinā's books: "Although medicine is found in the *Canon* (*Qānun*) / *Pointers* (*Eshārāt*) are found in poetry and riddles (*moʿammā*)" (line 615). According to Shafiʿi-Kadkani, such punning was not a common literary trope until the eighth/fourteenth century. Furthermore, Shafiʿi-Kadkani argues that riddles became a serious literary genre that could be reasonably paired with "poetry" only in the ninth/fifteenth century. However, ʿAṭṭār also puns on the titles of Ebn Sinā's books in his undisputed works, and the term "riddles" here seems to refer not so much to a fixed genre as to the spiritual secrets that ʿAṭṭār purports to explore through speech. See Shafiʿi-Kadkani, introduction to *Mokhtār-nāma*, 45–46; ʿAṭṭār, *Moṣibat-nāma*, ed. Shafiʿi-Kadkani, line 865.

panegyric found in ʿAṭṭār's undisputed works. This anti-panegyric sentiment finds its strongest expression in the conclusion to the *Manṭeq al-ṭayr*:

> Thank God that I am no courtier,
> That I am unbound to any reprobate.
> Why should I bind my heart to anyone,
> And take the name of some degenerate as lord?
> I have not eaten the victuals of a tyrant,
> Nor have I closed a book with a patron's name.
> My high aspiration suffices for my patron;
> Sustenance of body and power of spirit are enough for me.

<div dir="rtl">

بستهٔ هر ناسزاواری نیَم   شکر ایزد را که درباری نیَم

نامِ هر دون را خداوندی نهم   من ز کس بر دل کجا بندی نهم

نـه کتابی را تخلّص کردهام   نـه طعامِ هیچ ظالم خوردهام

قوتِ جسم و قوّتِ روحم بس است[86]   همّتِ عالیم ممدوحم بس است

</div>

ʿAṭṭār represents himself as untainted by participation in the patronage economy: he has not attached himself to the court, he has not dedicated a book to any patron, and he has received no reward for his verse.

The *Khosrow-nāma*, however, contains the following line in its preface, according to which the poem's title honors the "king of the face of the earth":

> In the name of the king (*khosrow*) of the face of the earth,
> I have named this the *Khosrow-nāma*.

<div dir="rtl">

نهادم نـام خسرونامه این را[86]   بـه نـام خسرو روی زمین را

</div>

According to Shafiʿi-Kadkani, such a line could not have been written by ʿAṭṭār given his strong denunciations of panegyric.[87] It is not immediately clear to me, however, that this "*khosrow*" necessarily refers to a historical potentate. The *khosrow* in question is not named, and he is praised only with a vague allusion to the universal scope of his rule. If this were intended as praise for an actual patron, one would expect something a bit more specific and extensive. It thus seems more likely that the *khosrow* referred to here is not a temporal ruler but the protagonist of the poem, who, as the emperor of Rum and Iran, can be appropriately styled the "king of the face of the earth."[88]

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85. ʿAṭṭār, *Manṭeq al-ṭayr*, lines 4601–4.

86. ʿAṭṭār, *Khosrow-nāma*, line 586.

87. Shafiʿi-Kadkani, introduction to *Mokhtār-nāma*, 40–41.

88. The passage continues with a vocative address to some "lord" (*khodāvandā*), enjoining him to keep the *Khosrow-nāma* illuminated by the eyes of the people of wisdom and protected from the malevolence of the ignorant (lines 587–91). Although one could also read this passage as an address to the patron, one can just as easily see it as a prayer to God to protect ʿAṭṭār's literary legacy.

In any case, even if this verse were intended to refer to a particular king, it would hardly disprove ʿAṭṭār's authorship. Such an argument assumes a stark binary between panegyric and non-panegyric verse, in which an allusive reference to an unnamed temporal ruler automatically qualifies as full-blown praise poetry (*madḥ*). But it is not at all clear that ʿAṭṭār would have accepted this characterization. He may have included the line to honor a prince for whom he felt some particular gratitude, but unless he had contacts in the court to introduce him into courtly literary circles, it is unlikely that he could have ever derived monetary benefit from a single verse.[89] Moreover, ʿAṭṭār's rhetorical condemnations of panegyric poetry should not be taken to mean that he never composed a single verse at any point in his life in praise of a political ruler. His condemnations are idealized projections, not statements of fact. Solṭān Valad, Rumi's son and successor, condemned "the poetry of professional poets" (*sheʿr-e shāʿer*) but still composed a number of panegyric poems in a classical vein.[90] Sanāʾi, too, pursued patronage relationships with political and religious authorities even as he criticized panegyric in much the same language as ʿAṭṭār.[91] If these poets entered into formal patronage relationships despite their criticism of the practice, I see no reason to assume that ʿAṭṭār could not have written the occasional verse that *evokes* panegyric poetry.[92]

Ultimately, the recent scholarly resistance to the authenticity of the *Khosrow-nāma* seems to be rooted in the assumption that a spiritually inclined writer like ʿAṭṭār would

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89. On the importance of having an introduction to the court—in a variety of periods—see Jerome Clinton, *The Divan of Manūchihrī Dāmghānī: A Critical Study* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1972), 29–44; Franklin Lewis, "Reading, Writing, and Recitation: Sanāʾi and the Origins of the Persian Ghazal" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1995), 165–68; E. M. Subtelny, "Scenes from the Literary Life of Tīmūrid Herāt," in *Logos Islamikos: Studia Islamica in Honorem Georgii Michaelis Wickens*, ed. Roger Savory and Dionisius Agius (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1984).

90. Franklin Lewis, "Solṭân Valad and the Political Order: Framing the Ethos and Praxis of Poetry in the Mevlevi Tradition after Rumi," in *Persian Language, Literature and Culture: New Leaves, Fresh Looks*, ed. Kamran Talattof (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2015), 24–25.

91. Lewis, "Reading, Writing, and Recitation," 124–25, 176–78; J. T. P. de Bruijn, "Comparative Notes on Sanāʾī and ʿAṭṭār," in *Classical Persian Sufism from Its Origins to Rumi*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn (London: Khaniqahi Nimatullahi Publications, 1993), 362–63, 375–77.

92. There are several verses attributed to ʿAṭṭār that seem to have been dedicated to royal patrons. Shafiʿi-Kadkani argues that they cannot, for this reason, be authentic. In Tafażżoli's edition of the *divān*, the poems in question are *qaṣida*s 3, 9, 14, 15, and 27, and *ghazal*s 201 and 307. The ghazals are not included in Madāyeni and Afshāri's more recent edition, but two of the *qaṣida*s are reproduced in its appendix of doubtful attributions, where they are numbered 1 and 3. Furthermore, the rhetorical manual of Shams-e Qays attributes to ʿAṭṭār a verse that praises the Khwārazm-Shāh Moḥammad b. Tekish by name. This verse is not found in ʿAṭṭār's *divān*, but *qaṣida* 15 in Tafażżoli's edition is in the same rhyme and meter. Shafiʿi-Kadkani thus speculates that this verse was originally part of that poem, and that it was composed by a different ʿAṭṭār who was working as a panegyrist in the Khwārazm-Shāh's court. Furthermore, because the *qaṣida* in question contains some extended repetition, and the romance *Khosrow-nāma* contains extended repetition, he claims they are by one and the same poet. Needless to say, the argument is rather speculative. See Shafiʿi-Kadkani, *Zabur*, 95–99; Shams-e Qays, *al-Moʿjam fī maʿāyir ashʿār al-ʿajam*, ed. Sirus Shamisā (Tehran: Entesharāt-e Dāneshgāh-e Tehrān, 1373/[1994–95]), 276.

never write a "love story without the slightest relation to Sufism."[93] Such an attitude reductively draws a sharp, artificial border between the "secular" and the "mystical" and expects a uniformity of output from poets who were, after all, human beings endowed with multifaceted personalities. And the *Khosrow-nāma*, although a love story, does in fact display mystical and religious sensibilities, especially in its moralizing passages on the inevitability of death, the evils of material wealth, and the necessity of detachment from the world. Further, ʿAṭṭār's authentic "mystical" works also show an interest in romance narratives. The *Elāhi-nāma*, for instance, contains the tragic love story of Bektash and Rābeʿa, the daughter of Kaʿb.[94] Even more salient is the tale of Marḥuma, also from the *Elāhi-nāma*, which clearly recalls the narrative structures of Hellenistic romances. It relates the adventures of a woman who must preserve her chastity after being separated from her husband, and it includes familiar topoi such as a lustful male protector, mendacious accusations of infidelity, multiple instances of love at first sight, a sea voyage, a false death, and a failure of recognition before a final revelation.[95] Especially interesting is a scene in which Marḥuma, after a sea voyage, dons men's clothes in order to pass as a young man and thereby discourage further male suitors and assailants; in the *Khosrow-nāma*, Gol employs the exact same stratagem after she is shipwrecked in China.[96] In any case, ʿAṭṭār clearly displays an interest in long romantic stories in his authentic works, and the *Khosrow-nāma* could have easily emerged from the same set of authorial preoccupations.

Shifting Titles and Changing Claims

Let us presume, for a moment, that the *Khosrow-nāma* was not a product of ʿAṭṭār's pen. Why, then, does ʿAṭṭār list the poem as one of his own in the preface to the *Mokhtār-nāma*, which is generally considered an authentic work? Shafiʿi-Kadkani has an ingenious (but ultimately unsatisfying) answer to this knotty problem. Because the *Mokhtār-nāma* does not include the *Elāhi-nāma* in its enumeration of ʿAṭṭār's previous works, he postulates that its mention of the *Khosrow-nāma* refers not to the romance *Gol o Hermez*, but to that otherwise unmentioned *maṣnavi*.[97] According to Shafiʿi-Kadkani, the title "*Khosrow-nāma*" (literally "Book of the king") would actually be an appropriate name for the *Elāhi-nāma* because it recounts the pedagogical discussions of six princes with their wise royal father

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93. Shafiʿi-Kadkani, introduction to *Mokhtār-nāma*, 35–36; Zarrinkub, *Ṣedā-ye bāl-e simorgh*, 69.

94. ʿAṭṭār, *Elāhi-nāma*, lines 371–86.

95. Ibid., lines 484–792. The tale has been translated by Lewis as "Tale of the Righteous Woman (Whose Husband Had Gone on a Journey)," in *Converging Zones: Persian Literary Tradition and the Writing of History*, ed. Wali Ahmad (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 2012). Also see Franklin Lewis, "One Chaste Muslim Maiden and a Persian in a Pear Tree: Analogues of Boccaccio and Chaucer in Four Earlier Arabic and Persian Tales," in *Metaphors and Imagery: Studies in Classical Persian Poetry*, ed. Asghar Seyed-Gohrab (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 164–87; Davis, *Panthea's Children*, 105–9.

96. ʿAṭṭār, *Khosrow-nāma*, lines 6483–818.

97. My alternative explanation for this silence is that the *Elāhi-nāma* was composed after the compilation of the *Mokhtār-nāma*.

(who is referred to within the poem as a caliph [*khalifa*]).[98] He thus speculates that the poem was originally entitled the *Khosrow-nāma*, but that over time its title shifted to the more generic *Elāhi-nāma*.[99] This name change may have even been instigated by the same forger or forgers who repackaged the romance *Gol o Hermez* as the *Khosrow-nāma* of ʿAṭṭār.[100]

As Shafiʿi-Kadkani rightly observes, premodern titles display a remarkable fluidity. Even many of ʿAṭṭār's undisputed works have been known by multiple names: some manuscripts of the *Moṣibat-nāma* bear the title *Javāb-nāma*; the *Asrār-nāma* is occasionally labeled *Ramz-nāma*;[101] and ʿAṭṭār himself refers to the *Manṭeq al-ṭayr* not only by that name, but also as the *Maqāmāt-e ṭoyur* and the *Ṭoyur-nāma*.[102] Nevertheless, even though multiple titles are often attested for premodern *maṡnavi*s, there is no solid evidence that the *Elāhi-nāma* was ever known as the *Khosrow-nāma*. The latter title is not found at the head of any of manuscripts of the poem, and no later anthologists or bibliographers discuss it under that name. ʿAṭṭār makes no mention of such a title in the poem itself, even though he often explains the titles of his other works. If the *Elāhi-nāma* were originally known as the *Khosrow-nāma*, one would expect that some trace of the original name would remain, either in the manuscript paratexts, in the biographical tradition, or in the poem itself. The only major piece of evidence that Shafiʿi-Kadkani provides, however, is an early manuscript of ʿAṭṭār's collected works whose calligraphic frontispiece lists, in addition to the rest of ʿAṭṭār's titles, both the *Elāhi-nāma* and the *Khosrow-nāma*, even though it does not contain the text of the latter.[103] According to Shafiʿi-Kadkani, this discrepancy shows that the poem now known as the *Elāhi-nāma* was also known as the *Khosrow-nāma* when the manuscript was copied, but the scribe mistakenly thought each name referred to a separate work, so he listed them separately on the frontispiece.[104] But it is far from obvious how the mismatch between the frontispiece and the contents of the manuscript should be interpreted—it could have resulted from any number of confusions or miscommunications. Perhaps the scribe originally intended to include *Khosrow-nāma*, but then dropped it on the basis that it did not fit generically with the other works.[105]

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98. Shafiʿi-Kadkani, introduction to *Mokhtār-nāma*, 57–58; Shafiʿi-Kadkani, *Zabur*, 86–88; ʿAṭṭār, *Elāhi-nāma*, line 465.

99. On *Elāhi-nāma* as a generic title, see de Bruijn, *Piety and Poetry*, 128.

100. Shafiʿi-Kadkani, introduction to *Elāhi-nāma*, 51, 55.

101. Manuscripts bearing these alternate titles are listed in Ritter, "Philologika XIV," 10, 58.

102. ʿAṭṭār, *Mokhtār-nāma*, 70, 72; ʿAṭṭār, *Manṭeq al-ṭayr*, line 4487.

103. Ketāb-khāna-ye Salṭanati 327; see the descriptions in Badri Ātābāy, *Fehrest-e divān-hā-ye khaṭṭi-ye Ketāb-khāna-ye Salṭanati* (Tehran: Chāp-khāna-ye Zibā, 2535 sh./[1976]), 799–804; Mahdi Bayāni, *Fehrest-e nā-tamām-e teʿdādi az kotob-e Ketāb-khāna-ye Salṭanati* (Tehran: Chāp-khāna-ye Bānk-e Melli-ye Irān, 1970), 92–97.

104. Shafiʿi-Kadkani, introduction to *Mokhtār-nāma*, 56.

105. Shafiʿi-Kadkani also adduces two even more ambiguous pieces of evidence. First, Aḥmad Rāzi's *Haft eqlim* lists the *Khosrow-nāma*, the *Gol o Hermez*, and the *Elāhi-nāma* as three separate works, which, according to Shafiʿi-Kadkani, shows that throughout the tenth/sixteenth century there was still a memory of the *Khosrow-nāma* (i.e., the *Elāhi-nāma*) and the *Gol o Hermez* as different poems. To my mind, however, this mention is easily explained by the bibliographers' habit of treating variant titles as independent works; I do

It is not, moreover, readily apparent why someone would forge an elaborate introduction to attribute this particular romance to ʿAṭṭār. It is true that many spurious poems were attributed to him, sometimes through deliberate forgery. ʿAṭṭār-e Tuni, for instance, composed the *Lesān al-ghayb* and the *Maẓhar al-ʿajāʾeb* in the ninth/fifteenth century and falsely attributed them to ʿAṭṭār-e Nayshāburi. But by the time ʿAṭṭār-e Tuni was writing, ʿAṭṭār's reputation as a saintly poet was firmly established; Tuni seems to have been motivated by a desire to attract a wider audience for his own religio-didactic *maṣnavi*s, and perhaps also to co-opt the famed ʿAṭṭār as a Shiʿi poet.[106] It is difficult to see, however, what a forger could gain in the case of the *Khosrow-nāma*. The romance does not bolster or accord with ʿAṭṭār's saintly image among later generations, so it is unlikely that a devotee or a spiritual follower of ʿAṭṭār would have constructed the introduction. Likewise, if the author of the *Gol o Hermez* or one of his fans wanted to boost that poem's circulation, it would not make much sense to attribute it to ʿAṭṭār, who was celebrated not for romances, but for his didactic *maṣnavi*s.[107]

In the introduction to his 2008 edition of the *Elāhi-nāma*, Shafiʿi-Kadkani added a new, complicating layer to the argument: he suggested that parts of the *Khosrow-nāma*'s conclusion and some of its doxology may actually be authentic to ʿAṭṭār. According to this hypothesis, a group of forgers wanted to attribute the romance *Gol o Hermez* to ʿAṭṭār-e Nayshāburi; they thus prefaced the romance with a fake account of the work's composition, and to give this forged introduction an air of authenticity, they extracted part of ʿAṭṭār's genuine doxology from the poem now known as the *Elāhi-nāma*—including its opening praise of God and the Prophet—and attached it to the romance.[108] To make the forgery even more convincing, they also attached much of the *Elāhi-nāma*'s original conclusion to the *Khosrow-nāma*.[109] These forgers then replaced the *Elāhi-nāma*'s "missing" doxology with a set of forged lines and verses taken from ʿAṭṭār's *Asrār-nāma* and other parts of the *Elāhi-nāma*.[110]

Shafiʿi-Kadkani does not fully spell out the reasoning behind this new claim—the only concrete evidence he offers has to do with the relative lengths of the various doxologies and conclusions—but the argument as a whole seems to be motivated by his discomfort with the

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not see how it supports Shafiʿi-Kadkani's claim. Second, Shafiʿi-Kadkani also writes that the title page of the 1295/1878 Lucknow lithograph reads "*Hormoz o Golrokh*, famous as the *Elāhi-nāma*," but in my copy of the text I find only "*Hormoz o Golrokh*, famous as the *Khosrow-nāma*." It is possible, of course, that other title pages were produced, but in any case the evidence is rather late and likely not very reliable. See Shafiʿi-Kadkani, introduction to *Mokhtār-nāma*, 58–59.

106. Many pre-Safavid Persian poets were later "claimed" as Shiʿis; see, for example, the case of Sanāʾi, discussed in de Bruijn, *Piety and Poetry*, 13, 73–74; cf. Lewis, "Reading, Writing, and Recitation," 183–85.

107. At one point, Shafiʿi-Kadkani suggests that literary agents collecting manuscripts for court libraries were behind the forgery, as it allowed them to collect fees for two manuscripts in place of one (introduction to *Elāhi-nāma*, 61). It is still not clear, however, why they would have attached the poem specifically to ʿAṭṭār, especially given the massive amount of work involved (see below).

108. Shafiʿi-Kadkani, introduction to *Elāhi-nāma*, 56–63.

109. Ibid., 59–60.

110. Ibid., 58, 69–71.

textual messiness of the *Elāhi-nāma*'s current doxology, whose multiple recensions cannot be easily reconciled into a single "authentic" authorial version.[111] Although he does not discuss the stylistic particulars, we should also note that the *Khosrow-nāma*'s conclusion exhibits striking similarities with the concluding sections of ʿAṭṭār's undisputed works. The speaker begins with self-praise regarding the beauty of his verses and their spiritual value and then shifts to self-criticism and confessions of hypocrisy, before concluding with a prayer for himself and his deceased mother, which recalls ʿAṭṭār's lament for his father at the end of the *Asrār-nāma*.[112] In any case, whereas previously Shafiʿi-Kadkani argued on the basis of stylistic and religious evidence that the entire doxology of the *Khosrow-nāma* was fabricated, he now suggests that much of it may be authentic, although he maintains that the lines he earlier identified as problematic are still later interpolations.[113] Furthermore, the new argument presupposes that the alleged forgery must have taken place before all extant copies of the *Elāhi-nāma* were transcribed, meaning before 729/1328–1329; he thus seems to have abandoned the claim that the poem is a Timurid-era forgery, although he does not make this explicit.[114]

However, the proposed forgery would have necessitated a literary conspiracy of truly epic proportions. Certainly we must acknowledge the philological messiness of the *Elāhi-nāma*'s introduction, but it is difficult to believe that the poem's original doxology can now be found in *Khosrow-nāma*, where it was transferred on a line-by-line basis by a group of later forgers. How could such a forgery have been perpetrated in the manuscript age on two circulating texts, one of which must have enjoyed some popularity, so completely that no trace of their original forms remains? No manuscript of the *Khosrow-nāma* has come to light without its allegedly forged preface, nor is there any extant manuscript of the *Elāhi-nāma* that retains its allegedly original title or doxology. I do not see how a group of forgers could have accomplished this feat without identifying, gathering, doctoring, and recirculating the majority of existing manuscripts of both poems across the Iranian world. And for such a project to have been worth undertaking, ʿAṭṭār must have been a well-known and desirable poet—in which case a great number of manuscripts of his *Elāhi-nāma* would presumably have been in existence, making the endeavor even more difficult.

Conclusion

Shafiʿi-Kadkani's argument for the spuriousness of the *Khosrow-nāma*'s attribution to ʿAṭṭār has, over the past forty years, exerted considerable influence on scholarship. Nevertheless, even though it is often cited and widely accepted, it has a number of weak points. First, the list of manuscripts used by Shafiʿi-Kadkani to argue for a later provenance is incomplete; he does not include the early Bibliothèque nationale manuscript, which was transcribed in the late seventh/thirteenth century and thus contradicts a ninth/fifteenth-century dating. Next, the circular cross-references that he identifies as contradictory could

111. Ibid., 60–61, 63–67; Zarrinkub, *Ṣedā-ye bāl-e simorgh*, 70.

112. ʿAṭṭār, *Khosrow-nāma*, lines 8338–64; ʿAṭṭār, *Asrār-nāma*, lines 3282–301.

113. Shafiʿi-Kadkani, introduction to *Elāhi-nāma*, 64, 68.

114. Ritter, "Philologika XIV," 47.

easily have resulted from a process of authorial revision; in fact, the *Khosrow-nāma*'s introduction describes just such a process. Further, Shafiʿi-Kadkani asserts that the poem (and especially its preface) diverges from ʿAṭṭār's undisputed works in terms of style and religious terminology, but I have shown that these divergences are exaggerated. Finally, if the romance is forged, one must explain how ʿAṭṭār came to mention it in the *Mokhtār-nāma*, and the theory of a title shift, although possible in the abstract, is not supported by any evidence in this specific case.

In short, although Shafiʿi-Kadkani's argument is erudite and complex, its version of events is ultimately less likely than a much simpler alternative: namely, that ʿAṭṭār actually did write the *Khosrow-nāma*. Certainly, this explanation is not without its own peculiarities. It means that ʿAṭṭār tried his hand at the romance genre, and that he composed one version of the poem before the *Mokhtār-nāma*, only to revise it later. But this version of events is much easier to imagine than is a literary conspiracy in which forgers changed the titles of two poems, constructed a false preface attributing the *Khosrow-nāma* to ʿAṭṭār, transferred the *Elāhi-nāma*'s doxology to the *Khosrow-nāma*, and then successfully suppressed the previous forms of both poems, all without any clear motivation. Unless new, contrary evidence surfaces, the most reasonable attitude toward the question of the *Khosrow-nāma*'s authenticity is thus one of circumspect acceptance.

The impact of Shafiʿi-Kadkani's argument is difficult to overstate. Nearly all scholarly work on ʿAṭṭār, for almost the past half century, has discounted the *Khosrow-nāma* on the premise that it is a spurious attribution. But as I have shown, the argument for its spuriousness is shaky at best. I thus hope that this article will spur scholars to reconsider their understanding of ʿAṭṭār and his place in literary history given the likelihood that the *Khosrow-nāma* is, in fact, authentic. In particular, further investigations into ʿAṭṭār's biography and authorial development that take the *Khosrow-nāma* into account are needed, as are reevaluations of conclusions about his relationship to Sufism, the scope of his poetic models, and possible intertextual ties with authors in the romantic tradition. More than this, however, the above examination testifies to the importance of continuing scholarly evaluation of basic, field-shaping arguments. Conclusions about attribution have the potential to shape generations of scholarship, and they thus must not be simply treated as "one and done." Rather, they must be carefully checked and rechecked, even when proposed by respected scholars and involving rather unglamorous, nitty-gritty philological work. Otherwise, through widespread citation, potentially misleading conclusions are easily canonized as accepted knowledge and scholarly consensus.

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