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THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF IRAN

IN SEVEN VOLUMES

Volume 6

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THE CAMBRIDGE
HISTORY OF
IRAN

Volume 6

THE TIMURID AND
SAFAVID PERIODS

edited by

PETER JACKSON

*Lecturer in History,
University of Keele*

AND

the late LAURENCE LOCKHART



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PREFACE

The period of Iranian history from the death of the last important Īl-Khān, Abū Sa'īd, in 1335 down to the mid 18th century has scarcely received adequate notice from western historians. Since this volume was first conceived, the void has been filled partially by two works in English, *The Aqquyunlu* by J. E. Woods (1976) and R. M. Savory's *Iran under the Safavids* (1980). But there is as yet no authoritative monograph on Tīmūr or the Timurids (with the qualified exception of Barthold's work on Ulugh Beg and on the court of Ḥusain Bāīqarā); and the standard work on the Qarā Quyūnlū is in Turkish. It is not the least merit of Professor Roemer's first four chapters, therefore, to make the pre-Safavid era as a whole accessible and intelligible to the Western reader.

The relative neglect from which late medieval and early modern Iran has suffered is all the more remarkable when it is borne in mind that this period witnessed the first emergence of Iran as a "national" state enjoying a recognisable continuity with the present day. To a large extent this was of course fortuitous rather than a matter of conscious policy on the part of the Safavid rulers. The defeat at Chāldirān ensured that the Safavids would not extend their power into Anatolia, just as the simultaneous rise of the Uzbeks and of the Mughal empire curtailed attempts to enter into the Timurid political legacy in the east. Yet the fact remains that under the Safavid dynasty, which contrived to last longer than any of its predecessors since the Islamic conquest, Iran came to constitute a single political entity roughly within its present-day boundaries. The part played in this process by the adoption of Shī'a Islam as the state religion; the reshaping of the Persian monarchic ideal; the need to resolve the conflicts inherent in Iranian society, as for instance between tribal and non-tribal elements – all these are problems which merit detailed investigation.

The period has other fascinations for Western Europe. If diplomatic contact between Iran and the West had begun under the Īl-Khāns, it had nevertheless been shortlived. Not until the late 15th century, in the time of the Āq Quyūnlū, did such exchanges become a regular phenomenon, fortified under both Uzun Ḥasan and his Safavid heirs by the common hostility of the parties concerned towards the Ottoman empire. These contacts, and the growing attractiveness of Iran also to Western merchants in search of manufactures and raw materials,

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endow the Safavid period especially with a wealth of European travellers' reports which are among our principal sources for the country's political, economic and social history.

This volume was first planned in 1961, when Laurence Lockhart was appointed editor, and invitations to most of the contributors had been sent out by the end of 1963. Several chapters were as yet unfinished or awaited translation into English at the time of Lockhart's death in 1976. Professor J. A. Boyle, who had produced the fifth volume in this series, then took over the editorship of volume 6, but had been able to do very little when he in turn died two years later. It has fallen to me, as editor since the autumn of 1979, to receive the chapters still outstanding, to edit and prepare the entire manuscript for the press. Some of the contributors – Professor Savory, Dr Hillenbrand and Mr Gray – have revised their chapters within the last few years; and we are indebted to Professor Schimmel and Professor Yarshater for adding, at somewhat short notice, two valuable chapters to the literature section of the volume. The remaining chapters were drafted earlier, and consequently the most recent research has not been taken into account. For this, of course, the authors themselves are not to blame. It should also be mentioned that the maps and genealogical tables were drafted by me and not by the authors of the chapters within which they are located.

Every effort has been made to achieve a high degree of standardisation throughout the volume. I have adhered, on the whole, to the system of transliteration followed in volume 4 and to the practice adopted there of using italics only for the first appearance of technical terms, and roman characters thereafter, within each chapter. A major difficulty has arisen from the fact that, even in the period covered by this volume, Arabic names and terms are by no means totally eclipsed by Persian ones, and that it is necessary to employ different transcriptions (Arabic *th*, *dh*, *d*, and *w* for Persian *ṯ*, *ḏ*, *ḏ* and *v*). The results may occasionally seem startling, as when the convention is applied to the titles of books written by the same author but in different languages; or in the case of the Islamic months and of religious and philosophical terminology, which have been given in their Arabic form (thus *qādi* rather than *qāḏī*, except where part of a proper name, as in Qāzī Burhān al-Dīn). The ligature used in previous volumes, indicating that the roman letters concerned represent a single consonant in the Arabo-Persian alphabet, has been discarded. Diacritical marks are also omit-

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ted, for example, in the names of dynasties where these are anglicised (thus Şafaviyya, but Safavids) and in such titles as shah unless an integral part of a proper name (thus Jahān Shāh, Shāh Jahān; but Shah ‘Abbās). For Turkish and Mongol words and names I have slightly modified the system of transcription found in volume 5; and in any case those dynasties which held extensive sway over Iranian territory, as did the later Qarā Quyūnlū and Āq Quyūnlū rulers, have been treated as if they were Persian. It is hoped that the adoption of these admittedly complex principles will have proved more vexatious to the editor than to the reader.

It remains to thank those who contributed to the completion of this volume. Hubert Darke, the Editorial Secretary for the Cambridge History of Iran, has been of considerable assistance with the bibliography, plates and figures. I have benefited also from the help of Iain White, who sub-edited the manuscript. My colleagues and friends at Keele have had to live with me while I wrestled with editorial tasks; I should like finally to thank them for their patience and good humour.

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PETER JACKSON

Keele, April 1985