The Making of Persianate Modernity

From the ninth to the nineteenth centuries, Persian was the preeminent language of learning far beyond Iran, stretching from the Balkans to China. In this book, Alexander Jabbari explores what became of this vast Persian literary heritage in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Iran and South Asia, as nationalism took hold and the Persianate world fractured into nation-states. He shows how Iranians and South Asians drew from their shared past to produce a “Persianate modernity” and create a modern genre: literary history. Drawing from both Persian and Urdu sources, Jabbari reveals the important role that South Asian Muslims played in developing Iranian intellectual and literary trends. Highlighting cultural exchange in the region and the agency of Asian modernizers, Jabbari charts a new way forward for area studies and opens exciting possibilities for thinking about language and literature.

Alexander Jabbari is Assistant Professor in the Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Minnesota. He is a literary historian working on the literature, history, and philology of the Middle East and South Asia. His research has been published in Iranian Studies, Journal of Middle East Women’s Studies, Journal of Persianate Studies, International Journal of Islam in Asia, Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, and elsewhere.
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The Making of Persianate Modernity
Language and Literary History between Iran and India

ALEXANDER JABBARI
University of Minnesota
For my parents.
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I wrote this book in a time of historic disruptions and uncertainty, when it was often difficult to remember why such
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Note on Transliteration and Dates

When I have occasionally made use of an English translation, I have cited both the original and the translation; otherwise, all translations are my own.

I have followed the International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES) transliteration scheme, without diacritics, when transliterating Persian, Arabic, and Ottoman Turkish sources. I have also adapted the IJMES scheme to the extent possible when transliterating Urdu while striving to remain faithful to Urdu phonology; as a consequence, the izafah has been rendered differently in Urdu than in Persian (e.g., *taranah-i hindi* in Urdu but *taranah-yi hindi* in Persian).

I distinguish between Gregorian calendar dates (CE, common era), Islamic lunar calendar (AH, for anno hegridae), and Islamic solar calendar (HS, for hijri shamsi) when necessary. Because the Gregorian and Islamic calendars do not line up evenly, Gregorian dates are provided as ranges. For example, the year 1300 HS corresponds to 1921–2 CE, depending on the month of the original date. When I was able to ascertain the month of Islamic calendar dates and, therefore, perform a more precise conversion, I have given the exact year on the Gregorian calendar rather than a range. When only one date is given, it should be assumed to be Gregorian.
Key Figures and Texts

Siraj al-Din ʿAli Khan-i Arzu (1689–1756). Indian Muslim litterateur, poet, and scholar. His important works discussed in this book include Musmir (Fruitful, n.d.), a philological treatise that addressed the historical development of the Persian language; a substantial tazkirah (biographical anthology) titled Majmaʿ al-Nafaʾis (Assembly of Subtleties, 1751), which was an early source of Persian literary criticism; and Tanbih al-Ghafilin (Admonition to the Heedless, ca. 1744), a polemic work of poetic criticism.

Sadid al-Din Muhammad ʿAwfi (fl. 1204–58). Born in Bukhara and studied there before settling in Sindh, where he compiled his Persian-language Lubab al-Albab (The Piths of Intellects, 1221). This is the earliest extant tazkirah, and it served as an important model and reference for later texts.


Muhammad Husayn Azad (1830–1910). Indian scholar whose Ab-i Hayat, or Water of Life (1880), was an influential study of Urdu literature and important transitional text between the tazkirah genre and modern literary history. Other relevant works include Sayr-i Iran (Travels in Iran, 1886); a collection of lectures on Persian philology, Sukhandan-i Fars ([On the] Poets of Persia, 1907); and Nigaristan-i Fars (Picture-Gallery of Persia, 1922), on Persian poetry. No relation to Abu’l Kalam Azad.

was commissioned as a textbook for the University of Tehran's inaugural doctoral program in Persian literature.

Edward Granville Browne, also referred to as E. G. Browne (1862–1926). British Orientalist, professor at the University of Cambridge, supporter of Iran's Constitutional Revolution. His *Literary History of Persia* was published in four volumes between 1902 to 1924 and covers Persian literary history from 226 to 1924.

Dawlatshah Samarqandi (ca. 1438–94 or 1507). Timurid poet and litterateur. His Persian *Tazkirat al-Shu’ara’* (*Memorial of the Poets*, 1487) is the second earliest surviving *tazkirah* and, as such, is highly influential. Dawlatshah was unaware of ʿAwfi’s *Lubab al-Albab*.


Muhammad-Husayn Furugi “Zuka’ al-Mulk” (1839–1907). Iranian litterateur and journalist who taught Persian literature at Tehran's School of Political Science. Father of Muhammad-ʿAli Furughi. His untitled lecture notes were completed posthumously by his sons and lithographed in 1917.

Badiʿ al-Zaman Furuzanfar (1903–70). Iranian literary scholar who taught at some of Iran's first modern institutions of higher learning, including the Dar al-Funun and later the University of Tehran. His literary histories include *Sukhan va Sukhanvaran* (*Poetry and Poets*, 1933) and *Tarikh-i Adabiyat-i Iran* (*History of Iranian Literature*, 1938).

Riza-Quli Khan Hidayat (1800–71). Poet, administrator, and man of letters in the Qajar court. His *Majmaʿ al-Fusahaʿ* (*Assembly of the Eloquent*, 1871) was produced at Iran's first modern educational institution, the Dar al-Funun in Tehran. It was a comprehensive,
universal *tazkirah* that served as an important source for modern literary histories.


Sir Muhammad *Iqbal* (1877–1938). Indian Muslim thinker and poet in Persian and Urdu. Considered Pakistan’s national poet, he was an important philosopher of Islamic modernity and became a symbol of Indo-Muslim identity.

Muhammad *Shibli Nu`mani* (1857–1914). Indian Muslim scholar, educator, and reformer who taught at various institutions in India. His Urdu-language *Shi`r al-ʿAjam* (*Poetry of the Persians*), published in volumes between 1908 and 1918, was an influential work of Persian literary history.