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978-1-107-05424-0 - Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran: Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī and the Islamicate Republic of Letters

İlker Evrim Binbaş

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Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran

By focusing on the works and intellectual network of the Timurid historian Sharaf al Dīn 'Alī Yazdī (d. 1454), this book presents a holistic view of intellectual life in fifteenth-century Iran. İlker Evrim Binbaş argues that the intellectuals in this period developed informal networks which transcended political and linguistic boundaries, and spanned an area from the western fringes of the Ottoman state to bustling late medieval metropolises such as Cairo, Shiraz, and Samarkand. Among many others, the network included an Ottoman revolutionary, a Mamluk prophet, a Timurid occultist, as well as physicians, astronomers, devotees of the secret sciences, and those political figures who believed that the network was a force to be taken seriously. Also discussing the formation of an early modern Islamicate republic of letters, this book offers fresh insights into the study of intellectual history beyond the limitations imposed by nationalist methodologies, established genres, and recognized literary traditions.

İlker Evrim Binbaş is a lecturer in Early Modern Asian Empires in the Department of History at Royal Holloway, University of London.

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Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī and the Islamic Republic of Letters

İLKER EVRİM BINBAŞ

Royal Holloway, University of London



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xii Acknowledgments

say, I alone bear all the responsibility for the arguments advanced in this book. My special thanks go to William Hammell, Maria Marsh, and Sarah Green of Cambridge University Press for their encouragement and help in seeing this book into print. Isla Rosser-Owen’s hand and keen eye gave the final touch to the manuscript. Eleri Pipien saw the book through the production process. It was a tremendous pleasure working with them.

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Notes on transcription

For Arabic, Persian, and the Ottoman Turkish transliterations, I have followed the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* guidelines. The solar Islamic calendar used in modern Iran are indicated with “H.sh.,” which stands for *Hijrī shamsī*. The lunar dates (*Hijrī qamarī*) are separated from Julian dates with an oblique, but they are left unmarked throughout the text. Place names that are well-known or easily accessible are not transliterated.

The term Yazdī means “pertaining to Yazd” or “a person from Yazd” in general, but more specifically it refers to Sharaf al-Dīn ‘Alī Yazdī whenever it appears on its own.

In calculation of the dates found in some verses and inscriptions, the following isopsephic table is used:

ن	م	ل	ک	ی	ط	ح	ز	و	ه	د	ج	ب	ا
50	40	30	20	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
غ	ظ	ض	ذ	خ	ث	ت	ش	ر	ق	ص	ف	ع	س
1000	900	800	700	600	500	400	300	200	100	90	80	70	60

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Chronology of events

725/1324–5	The Madrasa-yi Rashīdiyya in Yazd is finished by Majd al-Dīn Ḥusayn and Shams al-Dīn Abū Bakr.
<i>ca.</i> 770s/1370s	Yazdī is born in the villagae of Taft, near Yazd.
789–95/1387–93	The rule of the Muẓaffarid Shāh Yaḥyā in Yazd, for whom Yazdī writes poetry.
789/1387	Timur conquers Isfahan and deports Şā‘in al-Dīn Turka to Samarkand.
795/1392–3	Şā‘in al-Dīn Turka begins his travels.
796/1393–4	Pīr Muḥammad b. ‘Umar-Shaykh is named governor of Fars after the death of his father.
799/1397	Sayyid Ḥusayn Akhlāṭī dies in Cairo.
802/1399–1400	Rustam b. ‘Umar-Shaykh replaces Pīr Muḥammad as governor of Fars.
804/1402	Timur defeats Bayezid I at the Battle of Ankara.
806/1404	Iskandar b. ‘Umar-Shaykh is given Hamadan, Burujird, Nahavand, and Lur-i Kūchak.
807/1405	Timur dies in Otrar.
809/1407	Iskandar attacks Kirman without the consent of his brother Pīr Muḥammad.
812/1409	6 Muḥarram: Pīr Muḥammad b. ‘Umar-Shaykh is killed.
815/1412	Iskandar’s questionnaire is sent to Sayyid Sharīf-i Jurjānī and Shāh Nī‘matullāh Valī.
815/1412–13	Iskandar’s letter is sent to Qivām al-Dīn Yazdī.

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Chronology of events

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- 816/1413 21 Rabī I: Shāhrukh enters Mazandaran; 10 Jumāda II: Qara Yūsuf enters Tabriz.
- 817/1415 Shāhrukh appoints his son, Ibrāhīm-Sultān, as governor of Fars.
- 818/1415 The death of Iskandar b. ʿUmar-Shaykh.
- 819/1416 Shaykh Bedreddīn's rebellion.
- 821/1418 Shawwāl 821/October–November 1418: the proposed date of the earliest recorded *Zafarnāma* manuscript.
- 822/1419–20 **Yazdī enters the service of Ibrāhīm-Sultān b. Shāhrukh to supervise the composition of a chronicle on the life of Timur.**
- 823/1420 Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū completes his work on geography.
- 828/1424 **The *Dibācha* of the **Fathnāma-yi Şāhibqirānī* is written.**¹
- 829/1425–6 Şā'in al-Dīn Turka is interrogated in Herat, and the composition of the *Nafsat al-maşdur-i avval* is completed on 8 Rajab 829/16 May 1426.
- 830/1426–7 Shujā', the author of the *Anīs al-nās*, reports that Yazdī is working on a work entitled the **Fathnāma-yi Sultānī*.
- 830/1427 Aḥmad-i Lur attempts to kill Shāhrukh in Herat on 23 Rabī II 830/21 February 1427.
- 830/1427 Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū composes the *Majma' al-tavārikh*.
- 831/1427–8 Yazdī is still working on the **Tārikh-i Jahāngīr*.
- 831/1427–8 Zayn al-Dīn Khvāfi composes the *Manhaj al-rashād*.
- 832/1429 The Battle of Salmās takes place on 18 Dhū al-Ḥijja 832/18 September 1429.
- 832/1429 **Yazdī writes the *Ḥulal-i mutarraz* in Shiraz after the Battle of Salmās.**
- 834/1431 Shāh Ni'matullāh Valī dies.
- 835/1432 Şā'in al-Dīn Turka dies.

¹ The asterisk sign at the beginning of a book title indicates that the work is either a hypothetical source or one that was projected but not entirely completed. These are discussed in Chapter 6.

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xvi Chronology of events

- 838/1435 Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān dies, 4 Shawwāl 838/3 May 1435.
- 839/1435–6 The 1436 *Zafarnāma* is completed.
- 847/1443 Sulṭān-Muḥammad b. Bāysunghur is appointed to western Iran on 1 Muḥarram 847/1 May 1443.
- 847/1443 **Yazdī goes to Herat to deliver the cover of the Kaaba.**
- 850/1446 Sulṭān-Muḥammad captures Isfahan, 5 Şafar 850/2 May 1446.
- 850/1447 Shāhrukh dies on 25 Dhū al-Ḥijja 850/13 March 1447.
- ca. 850/1446–7 **Yazdī dedicates the *Second Maqāla*, *Sharḥ-i Qaṣīda-yi burda*, and *al-Manāẓir* to Sulṭān-Muḥammad.**
- 853/1449 Ulugh Beg dies on 8 Ramaḍān 853/25 October 1449.
- 858/1454 **After spending the last years of his life in Taft, Yazdī dies and is buried in Yazd.**

Abbreviations

AJY	Aḥmad b. Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī Kātib, <i>Tārīkh-i jadīd-i Yazd</i>
DJI	<i>Dānishnāma-yi jahān-i Islām</i>
EP ²	<i>Encyclopedia of Islam</i> , 2nd edition
EIr	<i>Encyclopaedia Iranica</i>
GAL	Carl Brockelmann, <i>Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur</i>
HAB	Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, <i>Zubdat al-tavārikh</i>
HAI	Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, <i>Jughrāfiyā-yi Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū</i>
JTK	Ja‘farī, <i>Tārīkh-i kabīr</i>
JTY	Ja‘farī, <i>Tārīkh-i Yazd</i>
PL ²	C. A. Storey and Y. E. Bregel, <i>Persidskaia Literatura</i>
SIr	<i>Studia Iranica</i>
SMS	‘Abd al-Razzāq Samarqandī, <i>Maṭla‘-i Sa‘dayn va majma‘-i bahrayn</i>
TDVIA	<i>Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi</i>
TMEN	G. Doerfer, <i>Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen</i>
YDSb	Yazdī, <i>Dīvān-i Sharaf</i>
YHul	Yazdī, <i>Ḥulal-i mutarraz</i>
YMN	Yazdī, <i>Munsha‘āt</i> (eds. Afshār and Mahrizī)
YMNz	Yazdī, <i>Manẓūmāt</i>
YMuHul	Yazdī, <i>Muntakhab-i Ḥulal-i mutarraz</i> (Ms. Ayasofya 4841)

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xviii Chronology of events

YNKT	Yazdī, <i>Nikāt-i kalimāt al-tawhīd fī al-Qur’ān</i>
YZN/ <i>Mash</i>	Yazdī, <i>Zafarnāma-Second Maqāla</i>
YZN/ <i>Muq</i>	Yazdī, <i>Muqaddima</i>
YZN/ <i>Tash</i>	<i>Muqaddima</i> and <i>Zafarnāma</i> (Tashkent Ms. 4472)
YZN/ <i>Teh</i>	Yazdī, <i>Zafarnāma</i> (eds. Şādiq and Navāī)

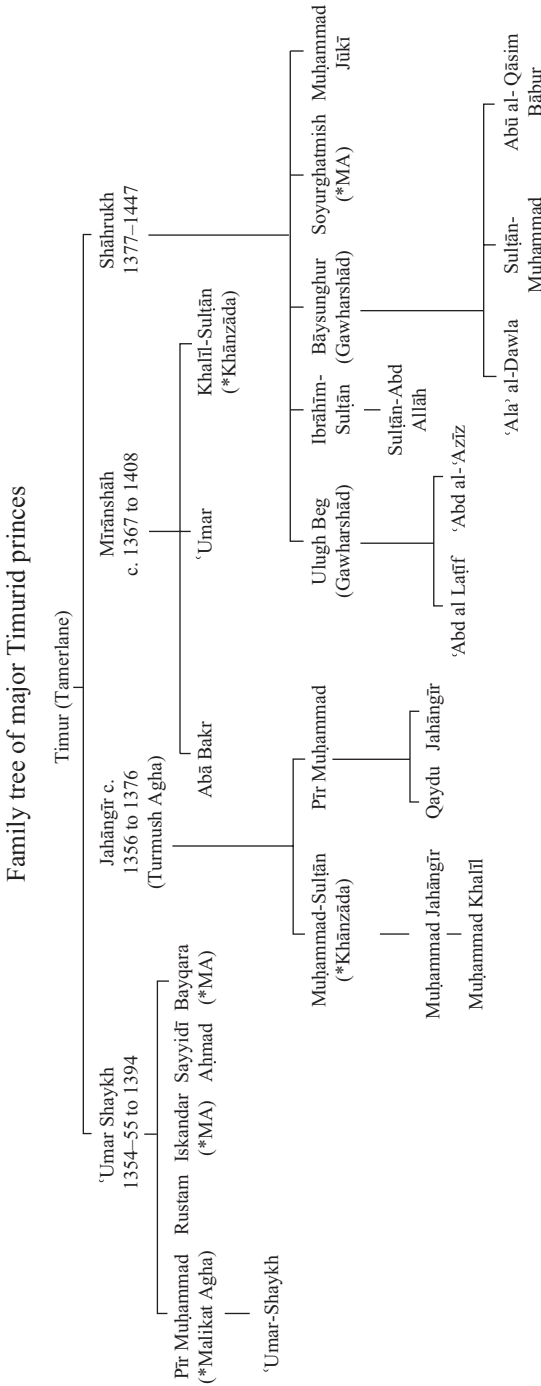


FIGURE: Members of the Timurid royal family.
 Note: The names of mothers mentioned in the text are given in parenthesis below the name of their sons. Malikat Agha's name is abbreviated after the first use. Asterisk before a mother's name denotes a woman of Chinggisid descent. The genealogical table is adapted from *Power, Politics, and Religion in Timurid Iran* (2007) with the kind permission of its author, Beatrice F. Manz.

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MAP: The central Islamic lands in the age of Timur.

Source: The map is adapted from *Power, Politics, and Religion in Timurid Iran* (2007) with the kind permission of its author, Beatrice F. Manz.

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