

JOHN R. PERRY

University of Chicago

Introduction

THE “IRANIAN AREA” IS geographically cohesive, though its exact boundaries are rendered fuzzy by history and ethnology; conceptually, the term is vaguer, yet better merited. The highlands stretching across the Iranian plateau from the Zagros and the Caucasus to the Pamirs knot (spreading into the Hindu Kush, Karakorams, and Tien Shan), together with their alluvial plains (Mesopotamia, the Punjab, and especially the Oxus basin) have provided the grazing grounds of nomadic empires, the irrigated fields of city states, and above all the roads of merchants (traversed also by armies and refugees) linking Syria, India, Tibet, and China. The popular notion of the Silk Road is virtually synonymous with the Iranian area as a cultural vector. From ancient times the central third of this network of caravan routes was colonized by Iranian peoples (Medes, Persians, Bactrians, Sogdians, and others), whose descendants still populate the region. This traffic imported at least as many ethnic groups, myths, cults, customs, and stories as it exported, creating a sociocultural patchwork as variegated as the geography. In what sense, then, is this a cultural area?

Language is, as usual, one common denominator. From at least the thirteenth century into the nineteenth, Persian, the most successful of the Iranian languages, was not only the major native and contact vernacular of the area (though in growing competition with Turkic languages) but also the elite and interregional written language of choice. It replaced Arabic in the domain of Islam for all but scriptural and liturgical purposes; it provided a language of poetry and belles-lettres, as well as a universal administrative and diplomatic language, for Iran, Afghanistan, northern and central India, Central Asia, and (to varying extents) other Turcophone areas; and its literary

models and cultural ideals permeated the languages of Anatolia, the south Caucasus, the Persian Gulf, south India and southeast Asia.

This hegemony, however, has come and gone. Before the rise of New Persian (from the middle of the ninth century), genetically "Iranian" languages are a mere scholarly construct: for the most part unwritten (or if they were, in differing and user-unfriendly systems controlled by scribal elites), localized and mutually unintelligible. Exactly one millennium later, in the early modern period, Persian was stripped of most of its peripheral domains by Urdu and English in South Asia and by Turkish and Russian in Central Asia and the Caucasus. With the rise of nation states it was confined to Iran and (to a more limited extent) Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Today the Turks of Iranian Azerbaijan robustly defend their language against domination by Persian, yet are models of Iranian culture in almost every other respect. Clearly, language alone is insufficient to account for the explicit claims of Iranianness that are encountered in the pre-Persian centuries, and for the obvious survivals of not merely Persianate but palpably "Iranian" elements in modern non-Persian-speaking cultures of our area.

Sociopolitical structure and religion are likely to be key factors. It is well known that the Iranian "king of kings," Cyrus, founded one of the greatest empires of the ancient world, which ultimately fell wholesale to Alexander of Macedon, bringing East and West for a time into conscious cultural contact. Less fully appreciated is the series of religions established in and exported from the Iranian lands, from the old Indo-Aryan cults (that of Mithras being the most familiar western import) through Zoroaster's revision of these, Manes's metaphysical pictures and poetry (which spread to China, India, and the West, influencing both St. Augustine and the Albigensians), to Yezidism (see Arakelova) and Bahá'ism in more recent centuries. Whereas Semitic cults emphasized unity and law, the Hellenes and their successors, polytheism and poetry (before stepping aside for the philosophers), Iranian religions tended to weave mythical variations on the themes of duality and moral equilibrium: light and darkness, good and evil, spirit and matter, priest and king. If they were not so many and varied as the cults of India, those of Iran traveled farther (with the exception of Buddhism); and in return many Iranians proved receptive to immigrants and missionaries bearing intriguing novelties such as Judaism, Buddhism, shamanism, Islam (in several mutually antagonistic forms), and Marxism-Leninism. After the Arab invasion in the middle of the seventh century CE, Islam as a personal and institutional religion drove out Zoroastrianism virtually overnight; but the political and secular ideology of the second Iranian empire, of the defeated Sasanians, infiltrated Islam as a civilization to preserve and expand the Iranian cultural area.

A clue to the workings of this fluid syncretism is provided by Nawruz “new day,” the Iranian celebration of the beginning of the annual cycle on the vernal equinox (21 March). This spring holiday is a natural and widespread phenomenon, noting the return of warmth and light, greenery and newborn life, and marking the start of the agricultural year with spring sowing. It lends itself to myth and metaphor and is readily borrowed and adapted. As the most important Iranian festival, however, it retains a remarkable transparency and directness, and is indisputably a prime index of identity for all who regard themselves as ethnically or culturally Iranian (though not necessarily Persian- or even Iranian-speaking: Kurds, Azerbaijanis, Pashtuns, Uzbeks, and Kashmiris escort the sun into Aries with similar joyous solemnity). Unlike Easter, Nawruz has not been appropriated by religion. Though included among Zoroastrian festivals (BOYCE 1999, 543–44) it surely preceded Zoroaster, and in its pan-Iranian function has shed any overt Mazdean association. Today it does not entail a religious ritual among the Muslims, Christians, and Jews who celebrate it in nearly identical ways. When the Soviet campaign for atheism banned it in Central Asia together with most other “relics of religion,” Tajik journalists rolled their eyes and knuckled under for a few years, before defying censorship and issuing special Nawruz numbers of their publications from 1964 on (BERDIEVA 1991). During the 1990s in Afghanistan, the Tālibān banned it as un-Islamic. In the post-Soviet search for national identities, it has been zealously adopted by the newly independent Turkic states, and even claimed as an invention of nomadic Turks celebrating the lambing season. In the face of all these contradictory claims and charges, Nawruz remains pure folklore, and will doubtless outlast many other linguistic and religious phases of Iranian behavior.

History is another indispensable parameter of ethnic and areal identity. The Iranian national legend is a wondrous composite, built up of Indo-Aryan mythology (the Iranian analogues of the Indian gods appear as primeval kings and culture-heroes), ancient tribal and regional politics (Rostam of Sistān and other “knights of the round table” serve a divinely-ordained, though all-too-human, monarch; cf. Omid-salar) and dynastic chronicle leavened with legend (Ardashir, founder of the Sasanian dynasty in 224 CE, disguises himself as a merchant to slay a dragon; see Márkus-Takeshita). All this finds its literary apotheosis in the *Shahnama* (*šāh-nāma* “book of kings”), a verse epic of over 50,000 couplets completed by the Persian poet Abu’l-Qāsem Ferdawsi about the year 1010 of our era. The literary epic in turn has generated oral sagas and folktales (Omid-salar, Rahmonī).

Iranian identity appeals more to areal and elective affinity than genetics. Alexander of Macedon is portrayed by Ferdawsi as the unwitting half-

brother of Darius, the last of the Achaemenid shahs whom he overthrew. Conversely, the Turkish Illek Khanid dynasty of twelfth-century Kashgar (who supplanted Ferdawsi's earlier Persian patrons in Bukhara) were proud to call themselves *Āl-e Afrāsyāb* "the lineage of Afrasiyab," attributing their ancestry to the legendary monarch of Turan, the hereditary enemy of Iran in the *Shahnama*. The other Alexander legend, derived from Pseudo-Callisthenes and also familiar in the West, finds its place in Persian popular romances; the same dog-headed Cynocephali and strap-legged Himatopodes (Pers. *davāl-pā*) who fascinated Pliny and tormented Sindbad the Sailor are lurking in Rostam's path in a vernacular version of a *Shahnama* tale (Omidshah). The writing of the *Shahnama* itself was grudgingly sponsored by a Persianized Turk, the redoubtable Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna in Afghanistan, convinced by a tactful minister that patronage is the path to immortality. Mahmud's other path led to India, which his and later armies plundered and Persianized.



India and the other fringes of the Iranian area constantly leaked through its porous confines. In tales of the Sasanian monarchs are encapsulated the advent and Indian etiology of the gypsies, of the game of chess, of the fables of Bidpay (or Pilpay, Baydaba, etc., better known to the world by the names of its sub-frame-story protagonists, the jackals Kalila and Dimna). The nucleus of the tales of *The Arabian Nights* followed the same route, while other story cycles (such as Sindbad) came across the Arabian Sea and up the Persian Gulf. Such Indian products journeyed on beyond Iran, pervading the early Islamic ecumene and adjacent Europe.

Before they settled on the plateau, the Iranians were pastoral nomads (as many still are), like their neighbors and successors the Turks, Mongols, and other northern steppe peoples. It is thus unsurprising that they share many cultural traits. Among these are ritual wrestling (see Rahmonī) and ritualized calisthenics (*zur-xāna*, practiced in Iranian gymnasia to the beat of drums and recital of the *Shahnama*); and a wild team sport on horseback, known in northern Afghanistan as *boz-kaši*, "goat-grabbing." In this the contestants try, by fair means or foul, to gain possession of the body of a decapitated goat or calf and deposit it at a goal. A more decorous relative of this game, polo, may have evolved in Iran, where it was a sport of the ruling elite from at least the tenth until the seventeenth century. Thereafter it was preserved in the remote mountain areas of Hunza and Baltistan (where it is still popular, though it must sometimes share its field with the local soccer team).

In these “hill stations” it was adopted by the British, who popularized it in the rest of northern India early in the twentieth century, whence it spread among the horse-riding classes of the world as far as Argentina and was re-introduced into Iran.

With the Arab Muslim invasions, the ghouls and jinn of Arabia migrated to the plateau and assimilated with the demons (*dēv*, *div*) and fairies (*pari*) of Iran, sometimes absorbing elements of an even older identity (Degener). In oral *maḡāzi* (“conquest”) tales performed by itinerant storytellers in the park in Kabul, early heroes of Islam such as the Prophet’s uncle Hamza and his cousin ‘Ali take on the superheroic qualities of Rostam (or even Hercules), strangling serpents in their cradles and being catapulted over the walls of Khaybar to capture the city single-handed. The Arabic element in the subsequent culture of Iran and other Persianate societies was superficially immediate and all-embracing, comprising the writing system, onomastics, and an enormous vocabulary of loanwords. However, just as Arabic titles conceal many literary works written in Persian (and later Turkish), the underlying culture changed at its own pace and by its own rules.

The vast steppes of Iran’s northern and eastern frontiers were the least sharply delineated, fading imperceptibly into the lands of the Turks, the Mongols, and ultimately China. In Classical Persian, *Čin* seems mostly to refer to eastern Turkestan and Mongolia; *Mā-čin* “ultra-China” was China and the Far East. “Chinese” slave girls and the “Chinese garden” (*bahār-e čin*, properly a Buddhist *vihara* or monastery) became bywords for beauty. Two splendid tales of evident Persian origin (though one is in Arabic, the other in Turkish), through their inclusion of the generic “princess of China,” have acquired in their Western versions a totally Chinese setting. One, “Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp” (a late stowaway in *The Thousand and One Nights*), arbitrarily sets the princess Badr al-budūr (Arab. “moon of moons”), and her father the sultan, in China, which has colored subsequent adaptations from the time of Galland’s French translation of 1704 up until the modern British pantomime version. The other, “Prince Calaf and the Princess of China,” from a collection of Turkish tales (under the Arabic title of *al-Faraj ba’d al-šidda*, “joy after hardship”) was freely translated into French in 1710 by the royal dragoman and pioneer orientalist François Pétis de la Croix, who claimed to have collected it orally in Isfahan. It was then adapted as a play by Carlo Gozzi in 1762 (as also by Friedrich Schiller), and culminated as Puccini’s last opera, *Turandot*, in 1924 (SEBAG 2000). The originally anonymous Chinese princess (a mere cliché for exotic beauty) acquired her Persian name *Turān-doxt* “daughter of Turan” courtesy of Pétis (“Turandoct”), and retains it in the otherwise stage-sinified libretto of the opera. The convention of the irresistible princess of China, often coupled

with potentially fatal challenges to unwanted suitors, remains alive in folktales told in the Iranian area today (Mills, second tale).

In historical reality, the age of most direct and continuous contact between Iran and China was the century or more of the Mongol empire (ca. 1260–1380). At least one Iranian general served the Mongols as far away as Korea, and Chinese (or at least Uighur) officials attended the Il-khanid court at Tabriz. The Il-khans of Iran and the khans of the Golden Horde in Russia owed allegiance to the Great Khan at Khanbalig only up until their conversion to Islam in 1295 and 1341 respectively, but cultural and economic ties continued for some generations. Under the Timurid and other Chingizid rulers of Inner Asia until at least the sixteenth century, Turco-Perso-Islamic culture infiltrated Tibet and struck deep roots in northern India.

A striking index of the extent of the Turco-Mongol legacy is the universality of the *tuḡ* in name and function. Formerly as a military standard, and up until today as a religious standard in Shi'i and Buddhist processions, this pole and cross-piece hung with tassels of yak's hair, horse hair, or silk can be found everywhere from Korea and Mongolia to *gompas* in Ladakh, *hosayniyas* (centers of Shi'i ritual) in Iran and India, and museums in Germany (as war booty taken from the Ottomans).

One micro-folkloric curiosity stemming probably from this period is the sudden appearance in Indo-Persian dictionaries from ca. 1600 (*Farhang-e Jahāngiri* and *Borhān-e qāte'*, various editions) of the *joftak* "pair-bird." The male of this legendary species has a wing on one side of his body and a bony hook on the other; the female has a wing on the corresponding side and a bony ring on her other flank. While on the ground they forage separately, but in order to fly must literally couple up. This fantastic fowl is known in Chinese lore under various names, e.g., the *bi-yi niao*, "conjoined bird," (比翼鳥) mentioned in the Chinese classic, the *Shan Hai Jing* (see MATHIEU 1983, 1078). The creature's pictorial, symbolic and moral potential is not developed further, at least in Iran; it remains, in the appropriate terminology of evolutionary biology, an isolated "hopeful monster" without issue.

More lasting Far Eastern influences on the culture of the Iranian area are evident in the foodways. This is the zone where bread and rice (and, from a later age, potatoes and noodles) are equally at home. Roasted meats (constrained by Islamic dietary laws) attest to the tastes of the steppe nomads, even linguistically: noun phrases for such dishes in Persian tend to follow left-branching Turkish syntactic rules, even where the constituents are lexically Persian. Such are *juje kabāb* "barbecued chicken" (modifier + head), vs. *čelaw(-e) morḡ* "[boiled] chicken with rice" (head + modifier), which obeys right-branching Persian rules (PERRY 1990). Pasta and stuffed dumplings (*mantu*), and pilaw (rice cooked together with meat and vegeta-

bles, traditionally a man's task) are more typical of the north and Central Asia, while stews (*āš*) and dishes on rice (*čelaw*) characterize the south (see further details in FRAGNER 1987).



The political history of the past five centuries has ensured that the country of Iran (so called under the Mongol Il-khans, and definitively a state in modern terms from the establishment of the Safavid dynasty exactly five hundred years ago) is in most respects the cultural center of gravity of the Iranian area, or at least of its Persophone sector. Of the national characteristics that have evolved in recent centuries, the most visible and durable is adherence to the Imami Shi'i sect of Islam (institutionalized since 1501). A simultaneous revival of the imperial cult of the *šāhanšāh*, "king of kings," came increasingly into conflict with the cult of the Shi'a, and was decisively defeated by the latter in the revolution of 1979. The religious background is hence the most salient aspect of most folklore in present-day Iran, except for basic traditional tales.

Elsewhere in the Iranian area other religious traditions hold sway: Isma'ili Islam in the Pamirs and Karakorams; Sunni Islam among the Kurds, Baluch, Turkmen, and most Afghans; and Christianity among the Armenians and "Assyrians" (i.e., neo-Aramaic-speakers). Most large cities of Iran once had important Jewish communities (Cyrus the Great is credited with having freed the Judeans from their Babylonian captivity in 539 BCE), and Bukhara was a famous Jewish center. In modern times, however, emigration has virtually wiped out these populations. The few indigenous Zoroastrian communities, preservers of much pre-Islamic lore (collected notably by Mary Boyce), are concentrated in the east of Iran, around Yazd. Most of their ancestors emigrated to India soon after the Arab invasion of Iran; as Gujarati-speaking "Parsees" they preserve their ancient faith (and publish a good deal of philology and exegesis) in and around Bombay.

The widespread syncretism in religious and spiritual life of the area is best represented by the personage known as Khezzr or Khezzr-Elias (*xezr-elyās*, Arab. *al-xaḍīr*, *al-xidr* "the green [man]"). A wandering prophet without a country, a saint with hundreds of shrines, this ahistorical patron of wanderers, seafarers, and young women is venerated in a variety of rituals and anecdotes within the Iranian area and its penumbra, from Anatolia and Iraq to Tajikistan and India. He is the guardian of, and guide to, the fountain of life; he appears to those lost in the desert or in the wasteland of the mind, to lead them back to health. Though patently an old fertility figure,

the god of plants and waters, known also to Christians and Jews of the region, he has been Islamized by the Koranic commentators, who identify him arbitrarily as Moses' unnamed mentor in the mystical parable told in Sura 18: 65–82 (AARNE-THOMPSON Tale Type 759, Divine Justice). Inevitably, he has also been politicized. According to an Intourist guide in 1980s Tashkent, Khezr one night found the beheaded victims of brigands who had massacred a caravan and, taking pity on them, replaced the heads on the bodies and sprinkled on each a few drops from the flask of the Water of Life that he carried with him. At once they were revived. Unfortunately, in the dark he had placed the women's heads on the men's bodies and vice versa, which explains the occasional anomaly of garrulous men and taciturn women—their descendants. When I ran this by the turbaned guardian of a derelict mosque that was Khezr's unofficial local shrine, he snorted that it was nonsense, implying that the tale was a Soviet concoction to ridicule the saint.



The collection and study of folklore in this area has a respectable though uneven history. Native antiquarians and amateurs of vernacular culture appear as early as about 1000 CE with the polymath Abu'l-Rayhān Biruni (a contemporary of Ferdawsi), who clinically described the religions and folklore of both Iran and India from personal observation. In the Safavid period, the versatile Hosayn Vā'ez-e Kāšefi (d. ca. 1504) furnished in his *Fotovvat-nāma-ye soltāni* an account of the folk propagandists of Shi'ism and their opponents, and Āqā Jamāl X'ānsāri produced in *Kolsum nane* (late 1600s) a treatise on women's customs, beliefs, and games. These works (prime sources for later folklorists) are the more remarkable for being products of a classically-oriented literary intelligentsia that generally disdained vernacular culture. The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries brought European amateurs, mainly diplomat-scholars such as Aleksander Chodźko (see Wilks), Basil Nikitin, Arthur Christensen, and David Lorimer, for whom folklore was an offshoot of linguistic, religious or historical studies. Their pioneering work was extended by dedicated fieldwork beginning with Bess Donaldson (*The Wild Rue*, on popular magic) and Henri Massé (*Croyances et coutumes persanes*), both published in 1938.

By this time Iran, under the centralizing and modernizing dictatorship of Reza Shah, was treading the path of competitive national self-identification as already well-worn in central Europe: not only linguistics and historiography, but the study of popular culture, too, was grist to the nationalist and

nativist mills. Iranian scholars and writers such as ‘Ali-akbar Dehxodā and Sādeq Hedāyat (both more celebrated in other fields) laid the foundations of a vigorous native tradition of modern folklore studies in Iran that continued under Reza Shah’s son and successor. An international conference on popular culture was held under royal patronage at Isfahan in 1977. Thanks chiefly to the systematic collection and publication of folktales and proverbs by Abu’l-Qāsem Enjavi-Širāzi between the 1960s and 1980s, Iran amassed an archive of regional folklore unparalleled in the Middle East. Since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, work has continued, though the shift of ideology privileges different kinds of lore and research is more centralized and bureaucratized (see MARZOLPH 2001).

Afghanistan’s similar efforts at nation-building produced a parallel interest in folklore from the 1930s on, which was skewed toward the politically dominant Pashtun ethnoses. The country is considerably more varied ethnically and culturally than Iran, with two official languages and a dozen other tongues. Successive experiments in political centralization and universal education have proved illusory. Literacy remains low, and “in a predominantly oral environment...the domain of ‘folklore’ becomes nearly coextensive with ‘culture’ or ‘knowledge’ itself” (MILLS and AHRARY 2001, 76). The Pashtun cultural domain (and that of other minor languages) extends into Pakistan, where a variety of material is also published.

In Tajikistan, as in Afghanistan, a tradition evolved of vernacular genres parallel to Persian or Turco-Persian literary genres (verse epigrams, games and riddles, ballads, sagas, and romances). Again, fieldwork came in the wake of empire: Russian scholars were trekking the Pamirs in quest of Tajik dialects and folktales by 1898, thirty years after the occupation of Bukhara (SEMIONOV 1900). The nationalistic impetus toward the glorification of popular culture was thrust on the region abruptly and selectively, after the Bolshevik revolution, by the creation of ethnolinguistic Soviet republics in 1925. Under the initial policy of *korenizaciia* (the fostering of a native Communist intelligentsia and bureaucracy) stories, riddles (*čiston* “what-is-it”), and other literary arts, artifacts, and craft terms were collected by Russian and Tajik scholars at the national branch of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. When Stalin’s policy switched to integration and Russianization, folklore research continued sporadically and covertly, under the guise of rooting out superstition and relics of religion—or was sanitized and Sovietized, just as the traditional stringed instruments of each Central Asian republic were mass-produced in the appropriate range of sizes and corralled into copies of the balalaika band. Since perestroika and independence, Tajik folklore studies are once again unabashedly in the ascendant as one factor in building a separate Iranian identity vis-à-vis Russia and Uzbekistan (cf. Rahmonī).

Theoretical and analytical studies of folklore (in particular of the folk-tale, having its roots in the comparative mythology of the nineteenth century) are no recent development in respect of our area; *The Arabian Nights*, after all, was available as a literary corpus in Europe a century before the tales of the Brothers Grimm. The classic taxonomies of Aarne and Thompson are widely applied (Ulrich Marzolph's *Typologie des persischen Volksmärchens* of 1984 appeared in a Persian translation in 1992). As fieldwork has progressed in range and rigor, questioning its own techniques and preconceptions as much as its target material, scholars in recent years have applied new analytical tools, such as gender theory (cf. Mills) to bear on newly discovered versions of the same old stories.



Iranians, like most peoples with a memory of empire and a continuing tradition of high literature, can be good-natured snobs. Outside academe, educated city-dwellers tend to disparage provincial dialects (many of which are the Persianized remnants of distinct Iranian languages, not varieties of Persian as they are supposed), and tell demeaning "ethnic" jokes about Iranians of other cities and regions. Yet they revel in their differences as much as in their national identity, and continue to live their folklore in the face of national leveling and global homogenization. They will readily absorb, but are reluctant to be absorbed. Though adopting "Western" technology with alacrity, and priding themselves on their hospitality and adaptability, they have been (and continue to be) unwilling to sacrifice their cultural privileges and markers of identity to any excessive alien influence. This trait has been expressed politically in popular uprisings of the past century under three regimes (in each of Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan), in the face of varieties of enforced Westernization and Islamization.

What they are defending cannot readily be pinned down, but is always recognizable. Somewhere on the outskirts of Shiraz, Yerevan, Dushanbe or Srinagar one may happen upon a secluded valley fringed with cottonwoods, deodars or cypresses, and on the banks of a rushing stream a family or a gathering of friends with a certain shape of face (a woman perhaps with heavy, arched eyebrows that meet each other), lounging on rugs of a familiar pattern, picnicking on a *sofre*, a napkin spread with a characteristic array of delicacies. The scene (in reality, or in a Persian miniature whether classic or kitsch) will be framed with mountains of a certain shape and suffused with a particular light that are somehow, indefinably, Iranian. The participant observer will find his attempts at scientific detachment hindered, if not

by wine or vodka, certainly by poetry of well-loved forms and themes, recited from memory or even extemporized; or by humorous parables attributed to that wise fool Mollā Nasr ed-din. If he or she perseveres, however, a definition of part of this complex syndrome may emerge, as in the essays that follow.



A note on transcription and transliteration is in order. We have agreed upon a common and self-evident system of representing standard and Classical Persian—and Arabic—with as little recourse to diacritics or digraphs as possible. However, these are not the only languages from which names, terms, and occasional phrases will need to be cited; and with original alphabets ranging through adaptations of Aramaic, Arabic, Latin, and Cyrillic, it will be appreciated that any attempt to impose universal consistency could create more problems than it would solve. Turkish is represented in the modern orthography, and will be recognized by the incidence of *â*, *ç*, *ğ*, and *ş* instead of *ā*, *č*, *g̃*, and *š*. In Persian, there is some leeway as between final *-a* and *-e*, with sociolinguistic connotations for those familiar with the language. The few transcriptions from less familiar languages will be noted *ad hoc*.

I extend my thanks for the opportunity to host this *sofīe* to *AFS* and its editor, and to the contributors, several of whom rendered assistance above and beyond that of penning their articles and adhering to deadlines. A special acknowledgement is due Kinga Márkus-Takeshita, who initiated the idea of this special issue. To our readers—*nuš-e jān* “bon appétit”!

REFERENCES CITED

- BERDIEVA, Buriniso
 1991 “Hama rostī jūyu mardonagi” [Strive ever after honesty and courage; a quotation from the *Shahnama*]. In *Darsi xeštānšinosī II*, eds. A. Mahmādnazar and Qodiri Rustam, 328–33. Dushanbe: Irfon. (Reprinted from *Omūzgor*, 25 July 1989)
- BOYCE, Mary
 1999 Festivals. i. Zoroastrian. In *Encyclopædia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater, IX, 543–46. New York: Bibliotheca Persica Press.
- FRAGNER, Bert
 1987 Āšpazī, cookery. 2. In *Encyclopædia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater, II, 789–90. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- MARZOLPH, Ulrich
 2001 Folklore studies. i. Of Persia. In *Encyclopædia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater, X, 71–75. New York: Bibliotheca Persica Press.
- MATHIEU, Rémi
 1983 *Etude sur la mythologie et l'ethnologie de la Chine ancienne*. Mémoires de l'Institut des hautes études chinoises 22, 2 vols. Paris: Collège de France.

- MILLS, Margaret A. and Abdul Ali AHRARY
2001 Folklore studies. ii. Of Afghanistan. In *Encyclopædia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater, X, 75–78. New York: Bibliotheca Persica Press.
- PERRY, John R.
1990 *Mirza, Mashti and Juja Kabab: Some cases of anomalous noun phrase word order in Persian*. In *Pembroke Persian papers, 1: Persian and Islamic studies in honour of P W Avery*, ed. Charles Melville, 213–28. Cambridge: Cambridge University, Centre of Middle Eastern Studies.
- SEBAG, Paul, ed.
2000 *F. Pétis de la Croix. Histoire du prince Calaf et de la princesse de la Chine. Texte établi avec une introduction et un dossier*. Paris: LHarmattan.
- SEMIONOV, A.
1900 *Materialy dlia izučeniia narečiiia gornyx Tadžikov central'noi Azii. Čast' I* [Materials for the study of the dialects of the Mountain Tajiks of Central Asia. Part I]. Moscow: O. O. Gerbek.