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Šabānkāra`i Moḥammad

Denise Aigle

Persian chronicler, panegyrist, and the author of *Majma` al-ansāb fi`l-tawāriq*.

ŠABĀNKĀRA`I, Moḥammad b. `Ali (d. after 1343), Persian chronicler, panegyrist, and the author of *Majma` al-ansāb fi`l-tawāriq*, a general history, from the earliest time to the Il-Khanids (q.v.).

The life of Moḥammad b. `Ali b. Moḥammad b. Ḥosayn b. Abi Bakr Šabānkāra`i is only known to us through the prefaces of his book, the *Majma` al-ansāb fi`l-tawāriq* (ed. Moḥaddet, 1984, p. 5-6; Aubin, 1981, p. 213-24; idem, 2018, p. 143-54; Ja`fari Maḍhab, p. 249-50). He was born in Šabānkāra in Fārs around 693/1294 (Ja`fari Maḍhab, p. 250) or 697/1297-98 (Eqbāl Āštiāni, p. 521). During the reign of the Il-Khanid Abu Sa`id Bahādor Khan (q.v.), he belonged to, or sought to become part of, the entourage of the vizier Ġiāt-al-Din Moḥammad (q.v.), the son of Rašid-al-Din Fażl-Allāh Hamadāni, but he very likely did not reside at the Mongol court (Aubin, 1981, p. 216; 2018, p. 146). On Abu Sa`id's death in 736/1335, Šabānkāra`i was living in Šabānkāra and probably frequented the court of the last princes of Šabānkāra, whose dynasty managed to survive until the 1340s, despite the internal intrigues and difficulties inherent in the Mongol era.

Šabānkāra`i was known for his talents as a panegyrist (Eqbāl Āštiāni, p. 521; Aubin, 1981, p. 217; idem, 2018, p.147). Each year, he addressed a *qaṣida* to Ġiāt-al-Din Moḥammad. Of his poetic productions, only verses transcribed in the *Majma` al-ansāb* remain, notably the *qaṣida* addressed to the dedicatees of the work. In 733/1332-33, aged about forty, he embarked on his vocation as a chronicler. In the introduction to the *Majma` al-ansāb*, he says: "I endeavored to establish a useful compendium in the science of chronologies and genealogies, the mention of the prophets, and the history of past kings" (ed. Moḥaddet, 2002, p. 15; Aubin, 1981, p. 217; idem, 2018, p.147).

The *Majma` al-ansāb* has two parts. The first is a cosmography in which Šabānkāra`i describes the four elements (fire, air, water, earth), the seven seas, the seven climes, and various human races (Arabs, Chinese, Greeks, Ethiopians, Indians, Turks). The second part is devoted to the history of the prophets, from Adam to Moḥammad, pre-Islamic rulers, caliphs, and the Muslim dynasties of Iran (Saffarids, Samanids, Ghaznavids, Deylamites, Seljuks, Ghurids, Isma`ilis, Khwarazmshahs, Mongols, Il-Khanids). The *Majma` al-ansāb* also has a section on the dynasties of southern Persia, the rulers of Fārs, Kerman, Šabānkāra, and the Atābakān-e Lorestān, the Atābakān-e Yazd (qq.v.), and the princes of Hormuz. In 1984, Mir

Hāšem Moḥaddeṭ edited the second half of *Majma' al-ansāb*, covering the Saffarids to the Mongols, and in 2002 the earlier part, dealing with the cosmography and the history of the pre-Islamic rulers, the rise of Islam, and the caliphs.

As a contemporary witness to the great social upheaval caused by Mongol domination and the ensuing political crisis, Šabānkāra'i left a testimony on this period where the moral teaching underscores the richness of the factual information, to the transmission of which Šabānkāra'i, who was convinced of his mission as a historian, devoted himself tenaciously (Aubin, 1981, p. 217-18; 2018, p. 147-48). His records on the princes of Šabānkāra are the most detailed available, in particular on the ruling class and society, archaic and patriarchal (ed. Moḥaddeṭ, pp. 151-181). These data were partially transmitted by Mo'in-al-Din Naṭanzi (*Montakab al-tawāriḳ*, p. 2-10).

Undertaken from 733/1332-33, the first draft of the *Majma' al-ansāb* was sent to Ġiāt-al-Din Moḥammad in 736/1335 to be presented to Abu Sa'id. But the Il-Khanid ruler died on 13 Rabi' II 736/30 November 1335 before the *Majma' al-ansāb* was presented to him. A few months later, on 21 Ramadan 736/3 May 1336, Ġiāt-al-Din Moḥammad was executed. The manuscript was lost in the looting of the minister's house (Aubin, 1981, p. 218; idem, 2018, p. 148). Šabānkāra'i decided to start over from the draft of his first text. He reproduced the preface of the first edition, with the two *qaṣidas* in praise of Abu Sa'id and Ġiāt-al-Din Moḥammad. Šabānkāra'i mentions at the end of the chapter on the princes of Hormuz that he had completed this second redaction on 22 Jumādā I 738/17 December 1337. He left blank the names of the dedicatees, the future Il-Khanid ruler and his minister, to whom this new version of his work would be offered. Three manuscripts from this second edition are preserved: Leningrad, Istanbul, and Tehran (Aubin, 1981, p. 219; idem, 2018, p. 149).

Šabānkāra'i witnessed the chaos that reigned after 1336 in Fārs where the Injuids and Chobanids clashed in fratricidal struggles to control the province (Aigle, 2005, p. 174-82). He then set about writing a third version of the *Majma' al-ansāb*. It is dedicated to 'Alā'-al-Din Pir Ḥosayn Noyan b. Maḥmud b. Čobān, who had for a time imposed his rule on Shiraz (741-43/1340-42) (Aigle, 2005, p. 174-78). His minister, Šams-al-Din Maḥmud Šā'en, an important figure in the province, had a *qaṣida* dedicated to him in the new preface (on him, see Aubin, 1977, p. 289; idem, 2018, p. 52). According to Jean Aubin, Šabānkāra'i completed his work between 19 Ramadan and 29 Du'l-ḥejja 743, that is, between 15 February and 25 May 1343. Two manuscripts transmit the text of this third version: one is kept at the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris, and the other in Tabriz (Aubin, 1981, p. 219; idem, 2018, p. 149). The manuscript in the British Library represents a fourth redaction of the *Majma' al-ansāb*, of which the largest number of copies is preserved. It was for a long time the only known manuscript. It is an abridged version of the third edition of 1343, which dispenses with

most of the original chapters. The dry nomenclatures of this short version correspond, in the long version of 1343, to more developed chapters. This version led Charles Rieu (I, p. 83) to form a negative judgment about Šabānkāra`i's chronicle.

The *Majma` al-ansāb* is a text of capital importance for the light it sheds on the crisis of the Mongol regime, but even more so for the historical information it provides regarding the history of southern Iran. Šabānkāra`i is the first Persian chronicler to include general historical chapters on the local princes of his province. Waṣṣāf (fl. 1265-1328), another Persian historian of the Il-Khanids and a native of Fārs, had sprinkled his chronicle, *Tāriḵ-e Waṣṣāf*, with passages on the principalities of southern Iran, but in a much less systematic way. Provincial in outlook, Šabānkāra`i sees the politics of the Il-Khanids through the prism of Šabānkāra, Fārs, Kerman or Hormuz. His testimony is of the first order even if he does not display the same open-mindedness as Waṣṣāf.

Prior to the publication of the latter part of the *Majma` al-ansāb*, the text had long aroused the interest of historians. They had access to the data of Šabānkāra`i through more than a dozen manuscripts preserved in Oriental and European libraries. In a list of desiderata, Moḥammad Qazvini (p. 344) mentioned the *Majma` al-ansāb* as one of the significant texts that needed to be edited. Vladimir Minorsky used the Royal Asiatic Society manuscript of the *Majma` al-ansāb* as a source for his article on the "Lur-i Buzurg" in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. In his history of Mongol Iran, `Abbās Eqbāl Āštiāni (q.v.) used a manuscript kept in Iran for his references from *Majma` al-ansāb*. Jean Aubin relied on data from Šabānkāra`i for his study of Hormuz. He published the chapter in question from the London manuscript and that of the Sa`id Nafisi collection (Aubin, 1953, pp. 77-138). Muḥammad Nāẓim was the first to point out that the Persian Supplement 1278 of the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris contained material not found in the other manuscripts, namely a history of the reigns of the first Ghaznavids. Nāẓim integrated these unpublished elements into his thesis (1931), and in 1933 he published the *Pand-nāma* of Sebüktegin (d. 387/997), the text of which has been preserved only in Šabānkāra`i's work. Erdoğan Merçil also provided a critical edition of this text (1975a, p. 203-32), but he did not take advantage of the *Majma` al-ansāb* in his monograph on the Salghurid rulers of Fārs (1975b). Clifford Edmund Bosworth made use of the *Majma` al-ansāb* for his research on the Ghaznavids (1963a, p. 18-20; 1963b). It had escaped the attention of Charles Rieu (I, p. 83), Charles Ambrose Storey (II/1, no. 112, pp. 84-85), and Yuri Bregel (I, no. 246, p. 334-37) that we have different redactions of the text.

Around 1382, the reading of the *Majma` al-ansāb* prompted Ġiāṭ-al-Din b. `Ali Nāyeb-e Faryumadi to narrate contemporary local events. He added to Šabānkāra`i's *Majma` al-ansāb* a supplement (*Dayl*) that is of the greatest value for the study of post-Mongol Iran. In the *Dayl-e Majma` al-ansāb*, Faryumadi provides information on the events that took place in

Khorasan after the death of Abu Sa'īd and the rivalries between amirs and rulers to impose their rule in Iran. The testimony of Faryumadī is particularly valuable for the history of the Sarbedārs (see Aubin, 1974, pp. 95-118; idem, 2018, pp. 311-30). According to Moḥsen Ja'fari Maḡhab (p. 254) the *Dayl-e Majma' al-ansāb* has forty-two leaves, but only thirteen of them have been edited by Moḡaddet following the *Majma' al-ansāb* (1984, pp. 339-49).

As Jean Aubin has noted, “the *Majma' al-ansāb* is not simply a collection of unpublished or rare data ... but what Šabānkāra'i selected and thought worthy of study. From this perspective, there is an area of cultural history to explore, which has not yet been” (Aubin, 1981, p. 224; idem, 2018, p. 153).

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