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Islamicated China: China's Participation in the Islamicate Book Culture during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

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Abstract

By the seventeenth century, Arabo-Persian scholarship in China had adopted elements from Muslim and Chinese book cultures and synthesized them into a new form of scholarship, attested by the hundreds of Arabo-Persian manuscripts extant in repositories in China and around the world and the hundred of copies of printed Chinese works on Islamic themes. This article surveys the history of Chinese participation in Muslim book culture, beginning with a review of the history and general features of texts, in terms of their language and period of composition. The second part of the article provides a more nuanced analysis of texts that circulated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries throughout China, on the study of Arabo-Persian languages. These linguistic aids and primers of Arabic and Persian highlight the way in which these texts were read and interpreted, in turn, providing meaningful insight into the foundation of China's intellectual engagement with the Islamicate world.

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Abbreviations:

JXXCP Zhao Can 趙燦. *Jingxue xichuanpu* 經學系傳譜 [The Genealogy of Classical Learning].

TFXL Liu Zhi 劉智. *Tianfang Dianli zeyao jie* 天方典禮擇要解 [An Annotated Selection of 'Islamic Ritual'].

TFDL Liu Zhi 劉智. *Tianfang Dianli zeyao jie* 天方典禮擇要解 [An Annotated Selection of 'Islamic Ritual'].

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Keywords

Muslims in China – history of printing – Arabic and Persian language aids

MS Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Persan 776 (Supplément 1306) includes the surprising combination of a Persian text with Chinese pagination.[1] The opening page of the main text in Persian identifies the work as *Ǧahāndāniš* (<Pers. "knowledge on the universe," a common term for "cosmology"), and a Persian colophon at the end of the manuscript dates the production of this specific copy to the year 739 AH (1338 CE), by the hand of the scribe Aḥmad b. ʿUṯmān b. Karīm al-Dīn al-Ǧawharī al-Harawī. Interestingly, at the margins of each folio we find the two Chinese characters, *tian* 天 (lit. "sky," which seems to stand here for "astronomy"[2]) and *zi* 字 (lit. "character," here "category"),[3] followed by the number of the respective folio.

Very little information is available regarding the way this 76-folio-long treatise on astronomical calculation, written in a colorful *nasḫ* script and containing numerous illustrations, arrived in the collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale. The unique format of pagination, as well as the binding of the book, suggests that the copy was at one point held in a Chinese depository.

Ǧahāndāniš is not an unknown work, and several copies of the Persian text are found in European depositories. The Persian version is a translation of an Arabic work, *al-Kifāya fī ʿilm al-hayʾa*, executed by its author, Šarīf al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Masʿūd al-Masʿūdī (fl. c. 672/1274).[4] Al-Masʿūdī was a contemporary, and arguably a colleague, of the famous astronomer Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, the chief astronomer at the Mongol court in Tabrīz and Marāġa.

Moreover, a reference to this work appears in a bibliographical list attached to an early eighteenth-century work, *Tianfang xingli* 天方性理 ("On the Principles of Nature in Islam," hereafter *TFXL*), written in Chinese, exploring Islamic cosmology.[5] This reference includes a transliterated version of the Persian title

1 The manuscript is mentioned in Leslie, *Islamic Literature*, p. 37.

2 An alternative interpretation of this term suggests that *tian* is an abbreviation of the term *Tianfang* 天方—a common term for Islam and Arabic. Hence the two-character compound *tian zi* 天字 can be translated as "the Islamic/Arabic category [of books]".

3 Blochet (*Catalogue*, vol. 2, p. 50) reads the second character as *xue* 學 ("field of study"), yet this alternative reading does not change the overall translation.

4 The seventeenth-century Ottoman bibliographer, Ḥāǧǧī Ḫalīfa (also known as Kâtıp Çelebi) explicitly links the Arabic and the Persian versions to the same Muḥammad b. Masʿūd al-Masʿūdī. See Ḥāǧǧī Ḫalīfa, *Kašf al-ẓunūn*, vol. 2, p. 1500.

5 This important work was completed and appeared in print around 1704 by one of the most

followed by an apparent translation of the theme of this work. The transliteration *zhe-han da-ni-shi* 哲罕打尼識 leaves little room for doubt that it refers to a non-Chinese work. The accompanying translation, *huanyu shujie* 寰宇述解 ("an annotated description of the universe"), suggests that it is indeed a work on cosmology. A work with a similarly transliterated title is also mentioned in the annals of Beijing's Niujie neighborhood, the centuries-long home of the capital's Muslim community, where it is also identified as a work of astronomy (*tianwen* 天文).[6]

The *Ǧahāndāniš* manuscript is a single reminder of the interaction between China and the Islamicate world that extended over many centuries. Beginning as early as the thirteenth century, a host of Arabic and Persian manuscripts found their way into China and became the object of scrutiny by communities of local scholars. Because its scholars used a shared canon[7] of Arabo-Persian texts, China was integrated into the broader Islamicate book culture of Asia.

The participation of China in the Islamicate book culture is a special case of an intersection between transnational intellectual engagement and a local intellectual environment. China has never been under Islamic rule, nor were Arabic or Persian the dominant languages of the empire. Until the twentieth century, China's dynastic legal system never formally recognized Islamic law or provided it a space in which to be implemented. Therefore, the widespread circulation of Arabo-Persian books, many of which are closely tied to socio-political and religious realities in other parts of the Islamicate world, is intriguing. From that perspective, the study of China's Arabo-Persian scholarship illuminates the relationship between the sites of knowledge production and satellite sites of knowledge consumption and integration.

Cultural exchange with China, in light of its (imagined?) geographical distance from the cultural hubs of Western and Central Asia, has long been treated historiographically as a marginal episode in the history of the Islamicate world. At the same time, the use of Arabo-Persian texts has been regarded as a minor and foreign component in the history of China's intellectual production. The

prolific Chinese scholars of Islamic studies in the late seventeenth and and early eighteenth centuries, Liu Zhi 劉智 (1660–1730). This book, as well as Liu's other important work *Tianfang dianli* 天方典禮 ("On the Rituals of Islam," hereafter TFDL), includes bibliographical lists of the Arabo-Persian texts that were apparently available to Liu Zhi.

6 *The Gazetteers of Beijing's Niujie Neighborhood* (known also as *Gangzhi* 岡志) is comprised of several texts, the earliest of which goes back to the mid-eighteenth century. On the dating of this text, see the introduction to the printed edition, *Gangzhi*, pp. 1–5.

7 Throughout this article the term "canon" is employed to denote the entire pool of Arabo-Persian texts that circulated in China. By no means does the term imply the existence of a single physical book that includes all of these texts.

"otherness" and "difference" of China's Arabo-Persian scholarship, which the two perspectives take pains to highlight, should instead be read as a contribution of this scholarship to both cultures, by importing and integrating new and outside ideas and perspectives.

By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, both the Chinese and the Muslim worlds had developed rich and dynamic literary environments. These two environments, however, differed in some of their defining features. The Chinese fostered a multifaceted and active print culture, yet at the same time they were reluctant to accommodate "foreign" knowledge. The Muslim world, on the other hand, exhibited a remarkable inclusiveness, characterized by insightful views of language and its functions and enthusiasm towards the development of scientific methods, yet still maintaining a stubborn adherence to a handwritten manuscript culture and a teacher-disciple form of knowledge transmission. Arabo-Persian scholarship in China selectively adopted specific elements from the two cultures—Muslim and Chinese—and synthesized them into a new form of scholarship, which simultaneously engaged with the local and transnational intellectual arenas, constituting new chapters in the intellectual histories of both worlds.

The spatial dimension of Arabo-Persian scholarship in China during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries brought under a single umbrella the cultural hubs and numerous local communities in all four corners of the Chinese empire. Participants with different socio-economic backgrounds shared a common archive, and read and wrote its texts. The hundreds of Arabo-Persian manuscripts that still exist in repositories in China and around the world, and the hundreds of copies of printed Chinese works on Islamic themes attest to the broad scope of Arabo-Persian scholarship in China. These numbers call for a historiographical re-evaluation of China's position within the Muslim world, as well as the role of Arabo-Persian scholarship in China's intellectual history.

The historical trajectory of China's accommodation of Arabo-Persian texts includes a constant negotiation between what was perceived as the Arabo-Persian textual tradition and cultural developments in China. This negotiation produced localized forms of annotation, commentary, and glossing, as well as new aesthetic properties of Arabo-Persian manuscripts. In addition, pioneering movements of vernacularization[8] and printing of Arabo-Persian texts were established.[9]

8 The use of Classical Chinese for translating Arabo-Persian texts as well as for composing original works on Islam positions the Chinese language, together with Persian, Ottoman Turkish, and Eastern Turkish, as one of the few languages through which Arabo-Persian knowledge was transmitted.

9 Around the year 1631, a printed publication titled *Ke-li-mo jie qimeng qianshuo* 克理默解啓

For historians of the Muslim world, the history of the Arabo-Persian canon in China provides historical information on the popularity of certain fields and specific works, and on the patterns of transmission and the major hubs and agents that participated in it. In addition, it provides invaluable information on works described in Chinese sources that have vanished from Arabo-Persian collections in other parts of the Muslim world, some of which are still extant in depositories in China.

A new movement that emerged in the mid-seventeenth century provides historians with a window into Chinese-Muslim scholarship of that era as well as the scope of circulation of Arabo-Persian works in China of the period. The emergence of the movement is well embedded in the evolving intellectual setting of the period, amid Chinese intellectuals' negotiation with their classical heritage and the pressures of modernity. Included in the works of that movement is a rather generous amount of information on the circulation of Arabo-Persian texts, which provides us with a suitable platform from which to examine the scope, patterns, and characteristics of Chinese participation in Muslim book culture.

What follows is a survey of the history of Chinese participation in Muslim book culture. It consists of two parts. The first reviews the history and general features of texts in terms of their language and period of composition. The second part provides a more nuanced analysis of texts that circulated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries throughout China on the study of Arabo-Persian languages. These linguistic aids and primers of Arabic and Persian highlight the fashion in which Arabo-Persian texts were read and interpreted. This, in turn, provides meaningful insight into the foundation of China's intellectual engagement with the Islamicate world.

蒙淺說 ("A Preliminary Introduction to the Interpretation of *Kalām* [i.e. Islamic theology]") was published in the city of Suzhou 蘇州. This short work was attributed to a certain Zhang Zhong 張中 and consisted of two volumes (*juan* 卷). This seems to be the first case of a printed work on an Islamic theme produced by scholars of Islam for the use students of Islam. Although Islamic works had been printed in Europe prior to the seventeenth century, those printed works were made by non-Muslim Europeans and seem not to have circulated among Muslims.

A Short History of the Intellectual Exchanges between China and the Muslim World up to the Nineteenth Century

Movements of people, texts, techniques, and ideas across Asia had begun long before the thirteenth century, but it was the Mongol conquest of China and the subsequent incorporation of China into the empire that ushered in a new era of intellectual exchange between China and its western neighbors.[10] For the first time in its history, China was part of a single political and cultural entity with its neighbors to the West. The mobilization of bureaucrats, soldiers, experts, and merchants between the Mongol *ulus* and the Yuan court (1279–1368) brought a significant number of texts in Persian and Arabic to China. The widespread use of Persian across the Mongol empire, as well as developed scientific discourses in the Muslim world, accorded a special status to Persian (and Arabic) at the Yuan court and encouraged the importation of texts in these two languages. An official memorial to the Yuan emperor, dating to the tenth year of the Zhiyuan 至元 period (1273), includes an inventory of books held by the Northern Astronomical Observatory (*Bei sitian tai* 北司天臺) under the Imperial Directorate of Astronomy (*Sitian jian* 司天監), and attests to the scope of textual exchanges under the Yuan. The memorial, which survives in the chronicles *Mishu jianzhi* 秘書監志 ("The Chronicles of the Imperial Archive"), provides an inventory list of 23 titles of Arabo-Persian works, which are said to be divided into 242 parts (*bu* 部) and were available at the observatory's library.

The fall of the Yuan in the second half of the fourteenth century and the rise of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) signaled the withdrawal of China from the wider Asian context. This transition, however, did not completely put an end to the importation of Arabo-Persian texts. A number of Arabic and Persian texts were translated into Chinese during the early years of the Ming dynasty and attest to continued intellectual interest in Arabo-Persian knowledge.[11] It should be noted that, in contrast to the Yuan era, when people with fluency in Persian and Arabic seem to have been sufficiently available, at the Ming court Arabo-Persian texts had to be translated before they could be used.

10 On the movements of people, material culture and texts across the Mongol empire and their effect in bringing China into a cross-Asian community, see Allsen, *Commodity*; idem, *Culture*; Dardess, "Did the Mongols Matter?".

11 The translation into Chinese of the Kūšyār b. Labbān's (Chinese, *Kuo-shi-ya-er* 闊識牙耳, fl. 10th century) *Kitāb al-Mudḫal fī ṣināʿat aḥkām al-nuǧūm* by the order of the first emperor of the Ming demonstrates this. On the original work and its Chinese translation, see Yano, *Kūšyār Ibn Labbān's Introduction to Astrology*.

A second wave of interest in Arabo-Persian texts took place around the mid-sixteenth century. Hu Dengzhou 胡登州 (1522–1597) embarked on a search for available Arabo-Persian manuscripts around China, compiling them to create an educational program for a school in his hometown of Xianyang 咸陽, in Northern China. Hu and his successors successfully created a network of Chinese-Muslim schools, which were responsible for the circulation of available Arabo-Persian texts and the importation of new texts throughout communities of Chinese readers. Arabo-Persian manuscripts were purchased and copied by members of this network in Northern and North-Western China, some of them brought to China by visitors to Xinjiang and Central Asia, and by foreign visitors who came to China.[12]

A third wave took place during the mid-seventeenth century onwards, amid the turmoil of the last several decades of the Ming and the rise of the new Qing dynasty (1644–1911), when an unfamiliar body of literature emerged in China's metropolises. Tens of works in Chinese on Islamic theology, dogma, and practice, were printed and distributed throughout China. The making of this new literature was grounded in the rediscovery in libraries around China of Arabo-Persian texts on Islamic themes but also on the sciences. While many were elaborated translations into Chinese of available Arabo-Persian works, others were original works composed by contemporary Chinese scholars of Islamic fields of study. The authors of these works, such as Liu Zhi 劉智 (1660–1730), a prolific scholar, whose writings include a considerable amount of information on the Arabo-Persian texts of his time, as well as the associated publishers, printers, and contributors of prefaces, came from the major cities of the time: from Beijing and Shandong in the north and north-east, Nanjing and Hangzhou in the prosperous Jiangnan region, and Kunming in the south. The extensive information we have on these Chinese works brings to light the centuries-long engagement of China with Arabo-Persian scholarship as well as the significant number of Arabo-Persian works that circulated in China during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—a period that is known to be China's first negotiation with the West and the concept of modernity. Thus, these works position the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries as a useful point in time to survey the scope of China's participation in Muslim book culture.

The nineteenth century ushered in a new phase in the history of East-West relations. The rise of printed Islamic literature in the West, as well as the studies

12 Numerous accounts on the arrival of specific texts are included in the seventeenth-century chronicles of the Chinese-Muslim education network. See *JXXCP* and note 19.—On the Chinese-Muslim education network, see Ben-Dor Benite, *Dao*.

of Chinese in Egypt from the second half of the nineteenth century and through the twentieth century, introduced China to the contemporary scholarship of al-Azhar and other centers in North Africa and West Asia and and brought China's Muslim community to the attention of the Muslim authorities in Egypt and Istanbul. As a result, new texts, almost entirely in Arabic and not necessarily of the Ḥanafī school with which China was traditionally affiliated, arrived in China and created a new extended body of Islamic texts in the country. While contextually relevant, this article, however, will not address these post-nineteenth century developments and will take the eighteenth century as its chronological limit.

General Features of the Canon of Arabo-Persian Texts Circulating in China during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

References to Arabic and Persian works appear in *passim* in Chinese works, bibliographical lists, and mosque steles, and provide us with invaluable information regarding the actual Arabo-Persian texts that reached China during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Apart from demonstrating the common intellectual interests of China and its western neighbors, analysis of this pool of texts can provide clues to the journeys these texts made en route to China, and can also shed light on the scope and quality of China's engagement with the Muslim world.[13]

At the heart of the analysis of this canon stands the exacting task of identifying the original Arabo-Persian titles. Many of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century sources are in Chinese and include arbitrarily transliterated forms of the Arabo-Persian titles. Deciphering these transliterations always leaves room for doubt as to whether the identification is correct. In addition, many of the titles referred to are not extant today in their original form or are not mentioned in any bibliographical dictionaries. Many works are known by multiple titles, or by alternative titles in the West. Other works are known in the West only through the Arabic version, while in China it was a Persian translation that cir-

13 For the purpose of investigating the Arabo-Persian works that are said to have circulated in China during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, I have surveyed Chinese works and mosque steles for titles, which were then checked against later sources in order to identify the texts. The database I have created consists of 152 titles and will serve in this article as a representative sample of the larger corpus of Arabic and Persian texts. Part of this database is based on surveys of texts carried out in other works, such as Kuroiwa, "A Study of China's Old Sect"; Leslie and Wassel, "Arabic and Persian Sources".

culated. As a result, a considerable number of titles are not fully identified, or their identification is debatable. In order to arrive at the best approximation, however, the titles of works in the pool analyzed here were compared with titles of works that have circulated in China since the late nineteenth century, as well as with lists of school curricula and book endowments from other parts of the Muslim world.

Overall, the canon of Arabo-Persian texts that circulated in China during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was very similar to the curricula of Islamic *madrasa*s in other parts of Asia. Both the Chinese canon and the *madrasa* curricula include texts that focus on Islamic theology and jurisprudence, Arabic grammar, rhetoric, and logic. Even so, a significant number of texts reported to have been present in China during that period were works on the natural sciences and astronomy, as well as works on Islamic mysticism. These types of works were in most cases excluded from *madrasa* curricula in other parts of the Muslim world.[14]

Interestingly, many of the Arabo-Persian texts that circulated in China during the seventeenth and eighteenth century continued to be used and reproduced well into the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Copies of many of these texts are still available in libraries, museums, and mosques throughout China.[15]

The Linguistic Component—Arabic or Persian

Despite the dominance of Persian in the areas bordering China, an almost equal ratio of Arabic and Persian works seem to have circulated in China during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, suggesting that a certain level of literacy in both languages existed during that period. This division may go back to some of the inherent features of the Arabo-Persian corpus in China, such as the genre of works and their period of composition. Earlier works, and works

14 On that issue see Makdisi, "The Rise of Colleges", p. 75–80; Robinson "Ottomans, Safavids, Mughals," p. 155.

15 Several surveys of Chinese mosques and libraries have demonstrated that collections surviving today bear a close resemblance to the canon of Arabo-Persian texts that circulated during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For the surveys of Arabic and Persian works in China, see Afšār, "Ǧung-i Čīnī," pp. 479–493, 568–574; al-ʿAlawī, "al-Maḫṭūṭāt"; Bakhtyar, "China"; Blodget, "Arabs in Peking", pp. xxif.; D'Ollone, *Recherches*; Dānišpažūh "Nigāhī"; Hayward, "Chinese-Moslem Literature"; Satūdah, "Čand nusḫa-yi ḫaṭṭī-yi fārsī"; Šarīʿat, "Nusaḫ".

of the Classical era, are more likely to be composed in Arabic. In addition, some themes and genres, such as treatises on Arabic grammar and rhetoric, Islamic law, Qurʾānic exegesis, and theology favor Arabic over any other language, including Persian. Leslie and Wassel, in their analysis of the sixty-eight titles listed in Liu Zhi's two bibliographies,[16] found more Persian works than Arabic.[17] They suggest that most of the Arabic titles refer to texts of the Ḥanafī school on Islamic jurisprudence and that the Persian ones are mostly works on Islamic mysticism.[18] Although Leslie and Wassel's explanation of topic division can be applied as well to the entire pool of texts used in this analysis, it seems that their finding regarding the ratio between Arabic and Persian works is a unique case of Liu Zhi's works and his personal inclination towards cosmology (many works on which are in Persian). The large number of works on grammar, *balāġa* (rhetoric) and *kalām* (rational theology), which are recorded in *JXXCP*[19] as well as the classical works on *fiqh* that circulated in China significantly increased the number of Arabic texts circulating in China during that period.

The canon of Arabo-Persian texts exhibits an interesting division between Persian and Arabic works on Islamic jurisprudence. While the classical manuals of Islamic law, such as Burhān al-Dīn ʿAlī b. Abī Bakr al-Marġīnānī's (d. 593/1196) widely circulated work, *al-Hidāya fī šarḥ al-bidāya* (completed 573/1178 in Samarqand) and its commentaries and abbreviated versions are in Arabic, collections of *fatāwā*, such as *Maǧmūʿ-i ḫānī* by the Indian jurist Kamāl Karīm Nāgawrī (b. 1000/1592) are in Persian. Similarly, most *kalām* works that circulated in China are in Arabic, with the exception of a text circulating under the title *Ḫayālī*, which seems to refer to Aḥmad b. Mūsā al-Ḫayālī's (d. 862/1457) super-commentary on another influential work of theology that circulated in China as well—Masʿūd b. ʿUmar Taftāzānī's (d. 792/1390) *Šarḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*.

The survey of manuscripts that were available in Chinese mosques during the late nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century, as well as those that are currently held by different depositories in China, reveal a significant number of originally Arabic works in Persian translation. This might suggest that although many of the works that circulated in China were originally written in Arabic, their locally read version was Persian. An example for such

16 See above, note 5.

17 Leslie and Wassel, "Arabic and Persian Sources," p. 104.

18 Leslie and Wassel, "Arabic and Persian Sources," p. 104.

19 The work *Jingxue xichuan pu* 經學系傳譜 ("The Transmission Lineage of Classical Learning") is a collection of essays, composed by a certain Zhao Can 趙燦 towards the end of the seventeenth century. The collection includes essays on individual masters and their methodologies. On the work, see Ben-Dor Benite, *Dao*, pp. 30–35 and *passim*.

a case can be seen in some of the *ḥadīṯ* collections that appear to have been in use in China in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Selections from Tāǧ al-Dīn Ḥāfizī Buḫārī's *Ḫuṭab al-Rasūl*, also known as *Arbaʿīn*, were translated into Persian by a certain Ḥusām al-Dīn b. ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Nūǧābādī in the year 835/1431 and found their way into China.[20] Similarly, Persian translations of Šāh Walī al-Dīn Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḫaṭīb al-Tabrīzī's (d. 741/1340) *ḥadīṯ* collection *Miškāt al-maṣābīḥ* are reported to have been present in China at the time.[21]

In addition, extant manuscripts, as will be discussed below, include layers of commentary and glosses, many of which are in Persian. This feature, of course, complicates the discussion, as it suggests that Arabic texts, in some cases, were copied and circulated, yet not understood without the Persian commentary.[22]

Most Persian works that circulated in China during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were composed after the fourteenth century, while earlier works are predominantly in Arabic. This might indicate that the fourteenth century serves, in the context of Chinese Muslim scholarship, as the border between an Arabic-dominated classical period and a more recent Persian-dominant period. This shift can be traced to the historical processes that emerged following the Mongol invasion, such as the shifts of the cultural centers of the Muslim world from Arabic-speaking Western Asia towards Central Asia and India and the maturation of vernacular Muslim scholarship in these areas. In addition, it might signify the gradually increasing distance between China and the Arabic-speaking world after the fall of the Yuan.

Period of Composition

Available evidence suggests that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Chinese scholars based much of their studies on centuries-old classical Arabo-Persian works, rather than on contemporary ones. While the texts stud-

20 Afšār, "Ǧung-i Čīnī," p. 474.

21 The title *Tarǧumat al-Maṣābīḥ* appears in the Xian Inscription. It is not clear whether this is a reference to a Persian translation of *Miškāt al-maṣābīḥ*. See *Inscription V* in Huart, "Inscriptions Arabes et Persanes des Mosquées Chinoises," pp. 295–313. The Bukharan endowment includes a translation of the *Miškāt* into Persian by a certain Mullā Nāṣir Bāy; see Liechti, *Books*, p. 328 and *passim*.

22 A peculiar phenomenon of nineteenth-century manuscripts is the interlinear Persian glossing of the *basmala* (an opening salutation in many Arabo-Persian works, i.e. "In the name of God the Most Gracious and Merciful"). Although it might well derive from aesthetic consideration, it seems to point to a certain preference for Persian over Arabic.

ied were mostly drawn from the period between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, this does not imply that their date of entry into China predated their use by hundreds of years. Rather, it demonstrates the non-chronological integration of knowledge.

About half of the identified texts in the Arabo-Persian canon of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were composed before the fourteenth century, and more than a third during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[23] This might suggest that Chinese scholars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries based much of their scholarship on several centuries-old classical works rather than on contemporary ones. The majority of texts in this group are works on *fiqh*, which also constitutes the largest genre in the entire canon.

Among the identified works in the Arabo-Persian canon, the earliest two works seem to go back to the pen of a single author—the Ḥanafī jurist Naṣr b. Muḥammad Abū l-Layṯ al-Samarqandī (d. 373/983). One work is al-Samarqandī's *Ḫazīnat* (or *Ḫizānat*) *al-fiqh*, written in Arabic. The transliterated title of this work appears in the early-eighteenth-century work *TFDL* as *He-za-yi-na fei-ge-he* 劾咱宜訥飛胣合 (<Ar. *Ḫazāʾin al-fiqh*, "Depositories of Islamic Law") with the accompanying translation *Jiaoli baoqie* 教禮寶篋 ("Caskets of Religious Rituals").[24] A second work, *Tanbīh al-ġāfilīn* ("The Awakening of the Heedless"), appears as well in the same list in Liu Zhi's *TFDL*, under the transliterated title *tan-bi-he* 探秘合, and the accompanying translation *xing-shi-lu* 醒世錄 ("A Record of Awakening of the Common People").[25]

Among the works that go back to the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries is a visible cluster of texts on Islamic mysticism. The intensification of activities of Ṣūfī Naqšbandī preachers in Northern and North-Western China from the sixteenth century onwards, and the rise in pilgrimage of Chinese to Mecca and Medina had their impact on the Arabo-Persian canon.

23 A considerable number of texts are yet to be fully identified and are excluded from the statistics.

24 This identification was first established by Kuwata and accepted by Leslie and Wassel. See Kuwata, "Regarding Liu Zhi's Bibliographical Lists," p. 341; Leslie and Wassel, "Arabic and Persian Sources," p. 99. A work by the name *Ḫazīnat al-fiqh* is mentioned in the lists of Muslim works found in China by Hartmann. It is also mentioned by Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr., who visited North-West China during the 1920s–1930s; see Bouvat, "Littérature," p. 519; *Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr. Collection*, p. 304.

25 The identification of the second work was established by D'Ollone. See D'Ollone, *Recherches*, p. 377. Kuwata and Leslie and Wassel accepted this identification; cf. Kuwata, "Regarding Liu Zhi's Bibliographical Lists," p. 345; Leslie and Wassel, "Arabic and Persian Sources," p. 100.

Several Persian treatises on mysticism, such as Nūr al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ǧāmī's (d. 897/1492) *Ašiʿat al-lamaʿāt* and *Lawāʾiḥ*,[26] gained wide popularity among Chinese scholars and were even included as central pieces in the curricula of the Chinese-Muslim schools. Pilgrimage trips of Chinese during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries brought to China additional works on Islamic mysticism, most of which were in Arabic. Ma Laichi 馬來遲 (1681–1766), the founder of the *Huasi* order (Chin. *Huasi menhuan* 花寺門宦 "The 'Flowery Mosque' Order") of the Naqšbandī Ḫufīyya school (Chin. *Hu-fu-ye* 虎夫耶), brought back from his pilgrimage to Mecca and a sojourn in Yemen several books, including the Arabic treatise titled *Mawlid* (<Ar. "Birth," Chin. *Mao-lu-ti* 卯路提), attributed to the Yemeni Naqšbandī master, Muḥammad ʿAqīl al-Makkī or Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿAqīla (d. 1150/1737).[27] Similarly, Ma Mingxin 馬明心 (also 馬明新 and Ma Mingqin 馬明親, 1719–1781), the founder of the Ǧahriyya school (Chin. *Zhe-he-ren-ye* 哲合忍耶), brought from his pilgrimage Šayḫ Muḥammad Tabādkānī Ṭūsī Ḫurāsānī's (d. 891/1486) *Muḫammas* (Chin. *Mu-han-mai-si* 穆罕麥斯) and Ǧāmī's *Madāʾiḥ muḫammas*.

Among the latter works that circulated in China during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are a number of Indian works, which might suggest an Indian-Chinese transmission. The work *Fawāʾiḥ*, an abridged form of the title *Kitāb Lawāʾiḥ wa-fawāʾiḥ*, attributed to the Indian Ḫwāǧa Ḫurd (b. 1010/1601) is mentioned in the late seventeenth-century work *JXXCP* together with the teaching of Ǧāmī's Ṣūfī treatise *Lawāʾiḥ*.[28] Similarly, Muḥammad Amīn b. ʿAbd Allah Muʾmin Ābādī Buḫārī's (fl. 10th/16th century) *al-Fatāwā al-amīniyya* is said to have been composed in Balḫ or in Mughal India in 937/1570 and is listed in Liu Zhi's *TFDL* under the transliterated form *E-mi-ni-ye* 額米你葉 and the accompanying translation *zuxinpian* 足信編 ("A compilation of the Trustworthy").[29]

26 Both of these titles have multiple references in *TFDL*, *TFXL*, *JXXCP*, and in the eighteenth-century Persian work *Reshehaer* 熱什哈爾 (only the Chinese translation of that work is available).

27 Fletcher, "The Naqshbandiyya," pp. 16 f. and *passim*.

28 A work by the title *Fawāʾiḥ* was seen by both Blodget and Šarīʿat: Blodget, "Arabs in Peking," p. xxii; Šarīʿat, "Nusaḫ," p. 589.

29 The proper name Amīn (<Ar. "Trustworthy"), the author's first name, is translated here literally as *zuxin* 足信.

Reading the Arabo-Persian Text in China

The Arabo-Persian canon of texts that circulated in China during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries encompasses a wide range of fields, including Qurʾānic exegesis, poetry, logic, theology, mysticism, history, *ḥadīṯ* literature, Arabic and Persian grammar, Islamic jurisprudence, cosmology, natural sciences, and others. Among these different fields, the four major clusters of the texts are on Islamic jurisprudence, theology (*kalām*), and the science of language.

By definition, the most notable aspect of the Arabo-Persian canon is its linguistic feature, namely the use of the Arabic and Persian languages. Whereas scholars in other parts of the Muslim world used Arabic and/or Persian for their daily communications and thus can be assumed to have held a certain level of fluency in these languages prior to their formal education, in China the use of Arabo-Persian texts required a special investment. A considerable number of texts on Arabic and Persian grammar, rhetoric, and logic circulated in China and were used for the acquisition of literacy in Arabic and Persian and were also used as aids for reading and interpreting other Arabo-Persian texts.

An anecdote recorded in *JXXCP* tells of a meeting between a Chinese scholar, Master Chang Yunhua (常蘊華, known also by the names Chang Zhimei 常志美 and Muḥammad b. al-Ḥakīm al-Zināmī al-Šandūnī al-Ṣīnī, fl. 11th/17th century), and a certain turbaned foreigner named *Ji-liao-li* 極料理 (probably Ǧilālī). The two carried on a conversation on Naǧm al-Dīn al-Rāzī's (d. 654/1256) mystical work *Mirṣād al-ʿibād* and how to interpret it. At one point, Master Yunhua "ordered to bring out the scrolls and unfolded it. Then, he asked to analyze the *naḥw* (<Ar. "syntax"), *manṭiq* (<Ar. "logic, argumentation"), and *balāġa* (<Ar. "rhetoric") of the text."[30] The foreigner could not come up with prompt answers, and instead took out of his sack a book wrapped in a purple silk pouch. He suggested that that book, which he called *Furs*, could assist in analyzing the words (Chin. *po cijing ziyi* 破此經字義) of the scripture.

The Arabo-Persian text, as is suggested by this anecdote, was seen by the Chinese reader as a semantic space whose interpretation required several layers of analysis. The first step to reading an Arabo-Persian text was to examine its grammatical structures. Syntax (Ar. *naḥw*, Chin. *ziyi* [*bianhua*] 字義[變化] lit. "the [transformation of] meaning of words") and morphological inflections (Ar. *ṣarf*) were seen as the building blocks of the text, and understanding its meaning was intimately bound to mastery of these blocks. The second level of

30 *JXXCP*, 20:54.

analysis involved an examination of the text's logic (Ar. *manṭiq*, Chin. *mingli* 名理 lit. "the principles of logic") and rhetoric (Ar. *balāġa*, Chin. *wenfeng* 文風 lit. "style of writing"). The centrality of these different layers of analysis to the Chinese reader of Arabo-Persian texts is well accentuated in the curricula of the Chinese-Muslim education centers, as well as in the considerable number of Arabo-Persian works on the sciences of language that circulated in China.

Works on Grammar

The language training of a Chinese scholar included a number of texts on grammar as well as other Arabo-Persian texts selected according to their level of difficulty. Several examples for such curricula are recorded in *JXXCP*. The curriculum set by Master She Yunshan (舍蘊善, known also as She Qiling 舍起灵, fl. 17th century) began with the teaching of a text called *Fa-si-li* 法斯黎 (<Ar. *faṣl* "chapter"[31]), then continued with the work *Mu-xing-ma-te* 母興麻忒 (<Ar. *muhimmāt* "requirements"),[32] and then the first half of a work called *An-te* 闇特 (<Ar. *ʿumda*, "pillar").[33] After that, the student was to begin learning the three types of *sai-er-fu* 塞而夫 (<Ar. *ṣarf* "[Arabic] grammatical inflection (morphology)")[34] and the works *Mi-si-ba-ha* 米斯巴哈 (<Ar. *miṣbāḥ*, "luminary, lamp")[35] and *Huai-zuo-yi-fu* 懷昨倚夫 (<Ar. *waẓāʾif* "tasks").[36] Some

31 The identification of this work is unclear. Ben-Dor suggests that it refers to a work on mysticism by the title *Čahār faṣl* (<Pers. "Four Chapters"), later translated into Chinese with the title *Sipian yaodao* 四篇要道 ("Four Chapters on the Crucial Way"). See Ben-Dor Benite, *Dao*, p. 94.

32 This text seems to be a Persian manual of Islamic substantive law *Muhimmāt al-muslimīn* ("The Tasks of Muslims"). Several copies of this work are extant in mosques and libraries in Northern China.

33 This text appears to be a Persian manual of Islamic substantive law, titled *ʿUmdat al-islām* ("The Pillar of Islam"), attributed to Abū Ṭāhir Mūltānī. The work is reported to have been found in Dongsi Mosque in Beijing as well as in other mosques and libraries in Northern China. See Afšār, "Ǧung-i Čīnī," p. 484.

34 Although it is not stated, it is possible that the three types of inflection refer to three temporal conjugations of Arabic verbs, i.e. *al-māḍī* ("past tense"), *al-muḍāriʿ* ("present/future tense") and the present participles (*ism al-fāʿil* and *ism al-mafʿūl*). Another possibility would be that it refers here to Persian verbal inflections rather than to Arabic.

35 The grammatical treatise, *al-Miṣbāḥ fī naḥw* ("The Luminary of Grammar"), attributed to Abū Ṭāhir Mūltānī, circulated in China. A copy of this work dated to 997/1588 was seen in Dongsi Mosque in Beijing. See al-ʿAlawī, "al-Maḫṭūṭāt," p. 489.

36 Šams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Mūsa al-Maġribī's (d. 683/1284) *al-Waẓāʾif fī l-manṭiq* ("The

students would then study *Sao-wu* 騷烏 (<Ar. *ḍawʾ* "light"),[37] while others *Tai-pu-sui-er* 太蒲碎爾 (<Ar. *tabṣīr* "realization" or *tabaṣṣur* "reflection").[38] The next stage includes the reading of a text called *Man-liao* 滿僚 (<Ar. *mawlā* "the master"),[39] and a text called *Ma-a-ne bai-ya* (<Ar. *Maʿānī* [*wa-*]*bayān* "meanings and elucidation").[40] This series of works, according to the *JXXCP*, "concentrate[d] on the meanings of words and styles of writing" (*zhuanlun ziyi wenfeng* 專論字義文風), and those who study them are "able to comprehend the meanings of Arabic texts" (*nengtong tianfang zhi wenyi* 能通天房之文義).[41]

By far the most popular primer on Arabic grammar in China was Nāṣir b. ʿAbd al-Sayyid Muṭarrizī's (d. 610/1213) *al-Miṣbāḥ fī l-naḥw* ("The Torch of Grammar," transliterated into Chinese as *Mi-si-ba-ha* 米斯巴哈). In its five chapters, Muṭarrizī presents a taxonomy of the parts of speech as well as a discussion of their functions on meaning. Several commentaries of Muṭarrizī's work circulated in China, including Tāǧ al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Isfarāyīnī's (d. 684/1285) *Ḍawʾ al-Miṣbāḥ* ("Light of the of Torch," transliterated in Chinese as *Sao-wu* 騷烏).

Lessons in Logic") is mentioned in *JXXCP* and *TFXL*. In the latter it is accompanied by the Chinese translation *liushi lin* 六十廩 (<Chin. "sixty caches").

37 Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Isfarāyīnī's (d. 610/1213) commentary on *al-Miṣbāḥ fī naḥw*, known by the title *Ḍawʾ al-miṣbāḥ*.

38 This unknown work might be the same as the one listed in the bibliographic list attached to Liu Zhi's *TFDL*. In Liu Zhi's work the transliteration to Chinese is *Te-bu-sui-er* 特卜綏爾, and the given translation of the title is *Daguan jing* 大觀經 ("The Classic of the Great Sight"). A Persian manuscript by this title is found in Ningxia Museum. This text might be related somehow to another text listed in the same bibliography, viz. *Tafsīr-i baṣāʾir* by the twelfth-century scholar Muʿīn al-Dīn Abū Ǧaʿfar Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd Nīšāpūrī. The title of this latter work is given in Chinese as "*Daguan zhenjing zhu*" 大觀真經注 ("The Great Sight Commentary on the Qurʾān"), and hence Leslie's assumption. See Leslie and Wassel, "Arabic and Persian Sources," p. 96.

39 Nūr al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ǧāmī's (d. 897/1492) commentary on Ibn Ḥāǧib's (d. 647/1249) *al-Kāfiyya fī l-naḥw*, known also *al-Fawāʾid al-ḍiwāʾiyya*.

40 The two terms, *maʿānī* (sing. *maʿnā*, "meaning") and *bayān* ("imagery; manifestation"), are used to denote categories of traditional Arabic literary theory. More specifically, *ʿilm al-maʿnā* ("science of illustration") and *ʿilm al-bayān* ("science of imagery") are sub-fields in the science of rhetoric in al-Ḫaṭīb al-Qazwīnī's (d. 739/1338) work, *Talḫīṣ al-miftāḥ* ("Summary of the 'Key'"), a summary of al-Sakkākī's *Miftāḥ al-ʿulūm*. The first involves investigation of meanings, while the latter deals with similes and figurative usages in the Qurʾān. See Meisami and Starkey, *Encyclopedia*, p. 661. Al-Qazwīnī's *Talḫīṣ al-miftāḥ* was reportedly found in Dongsi mosque in 1863 in Beijing. See: Blodget, "Arabs in Peking," p. xxii; al-ʿAlawī, "al-Maḫṭūṭāt," p. 479.

41 *JXXCP*, 20:19a.

Works on Logic

Rules of argumentation and logic were an integral part of the study of language in China. Several primers of *manṭiq* circulated in China during that period, including ʿAlī b. ʿUmar al-Qazwīnī's (d. 675/1277) *al-Risāla al-šamsiyya fī l-qawāʿid al-manṭiqiyya* ("A Treatise [dedicated to] Šams al-Dīn on the foundations of Logic") is listed in *TFXL* under the transliterated title *Shan-xi-ye* 閃冼葉 (<Ar. *Šamsiyya*) and the accompanying translation *mingli zhenzong* 名理真宗 ("The Veritable Foundation of the Principles of Logic"). This treatise has been a common textbook for the science of logic in Muslim schools outside China, and seems to have been incorporated into the Chinese curricula. Another work, Šams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Maġribī's (d. 683/1284) *al-Waẓāʾif fī l-manṭiq* ("The Lessons in Logic") is mentioned in *TFXL*, transliterated as *Wo-za-yi-fu* 斡咱一福 (<Ar. *waẓāʾif*, "tasks, lesson") with the accompanying translation *liushi bing* 六十稟 ("Sixty Caches").[42] Porphyry of Tyre's (d. 305) introduction to Aristotle's *Categories*, known as *Isagoge*, whose commentaries in Arabic circulated throughout Muslim Asia, appears as well in *TFXL*. The work is transliterated as *Ye-che-wu-zhi* 葉撤五枝 (<Ar. *Īsāġūǧī*) and includes the translation *mingli jie* 名理解 ("A Commentary on Logic").[43]

Works on Rhetoric

The third element in the study of Arabo-Persian texts in China was the study of rhetoric. This field aimed at providing scholars with the tools to evaluate good usage of language as well as with methods to clarify and embellish their written ideas. Traditionally, the study of rhetoric (Ar. *ʿilm al-balāġa*) was comprised of three fields: the study of meanings (Ar. *ʿilm al-maʿānī*) focused on evaluation of syntactical structures; the study of elucidation (Ar. *ʿilm al-bayān*) concentrated on eloquence and clear expression; and, the study of metaphors (Ar. *ʿilm al-badīʿ*) aimed at the practical application of figures of speech such as metaphors. The study of rhetoric in China, however, as seen from the texts which circulated locally, seems to have focused more on the first two fields.

42 Al-ʿAlawī ("al-Maḫṭūṭāt," p. 479) saw a work by that name in Dongsi mosque, with the subtitle *Muqaddamāt manṭiqiyya* ("Introduction to Logic"). Ḥāǧǧī Ḫalīfa mentions (*Kašf al-ẓunūn*, vol. 2, p. 2015) that the work is comprised of sixty-six lessons.

43 Al-ʿAlawī ("al-Maḫṭūṭāt," p. 479) reports seeing an Arabic work by that title in the Dongsi Mosque.

Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf b. Abī Bakr al-Sakkākī's (d. 626/1229) *Miftāḥ al-ʿulūm* ("The Key to [Literary] Sciences") reached China via Xinjiang at the turn of the seventeenth century.[44] This compendium covers different aspects of the sciences of language and literature and is divided into three parts: morphology, syntax, and rhetoric, with appendices on argumentation and prosody.[45] The work is listed in TFXL under the transliterated form *Mi-fu-ta-he ou-lu-mi* 米幅他合歐魯密 and with the accompanying translation *wenyao* 文鑰 ("the key to rhetoric"). In addition, texts by the titles of *Mo-a-ni* 默阿呢 (<Ar. *maʿānī*, "meanings") and *Bai-yang* 白映 (<Ar. *bayān*, "elucidation") are mentioned in *JXXCP* as part of the curricula in several Chinese schools. It seems that these texts are two sections from the *Miftāḥ* that served as primers in the study of rhetoric. Ǧalāl al-Dīn Qazwīnī's (d. 739/1338) abridged version of the *Miftāḥ*, titled *Talḫīṣ al-Miftāḥ* ("An Abridgment of the Key") arrived in China at one point and became the popular primer for the study of rhetoric.[46]

Other Linguistic Aids

Dictionaries and lexicographies were available to aid the Chinese reader in reading and writing Arabic and Persian. The TFXL and TFDL list Ismāʿīl b. Ḥammād al-Ǧawharī al-Fārābī's (d. 393/1002) *al-Ṣiḥāḥ* (*fī l-luġa*) ("The Rectifier [of Language]"), listed under its transliterated form *Su-ha-he* 索哈合 with the accompanying translation *zizheng* 字正 ("Rectifier of Words").[47] In addition, the bibliographical list of *TFDL* includes an entry on a work transliterated as *Mu-ge-di-mo e-de-bi* 母格底墨額得壁 (<Pers. *Muqaddima-yi adabī* "Literary Introduction"), accompanied by the Chinese translation *ziyi leibian* 字義

44 *JXXCP*, 20:30. The story is also quoted in Ben-Dor Benite, *Dao*, pp. 82–84.

45 Meisami and Starkey, *Encyclopedia*, p. 656.

46 This work is mentioned by Yang Huaizhong as one of the thirteen constitutive works studied in the Chinese-Muslim schools, referred to by Yang as *Sai-bai-ga* 賽拜嘎 (<Ar. *sābiqa* "The Preliminary [Texts]") or *Shisan bu* 十三部 ("The Thirteen Works"). Nevertheless, it seems that Yang's essay is based mainly on twentieth-century information and might not be relevant to the period discussed in this essay. See Yang and Yu, *Yisilan yu Zhongguo wenhua*, p. 368.

47 Al-ʿAlawī reports ("al-Maḫṭūṭāt," p. 477) that he saw a work on the Arabic language titled *Ǧawāhir al-luġāt muḫtaṣar li-Ṣaḥḥaḥ al-Ǧawharī* ("Gems of the Language—Summary of al-Ǧawharī's Ṣaḥḥāḥ"). The work was attributed to Abū Muḥammad b. ʿUmar b. Ḫālid, known also as Ǧamāl al-Qirsī. Šarīʿat ("Nusaḫ," p. 70) mentions copies of *al-Ṣiḥāḥ* in Dongsi mosque.

類編 ("Compilation of Semantic Categories"). The entry seems to refer to Abū l-Muẓaffar ʾĀtsiz b. Ḫwārazm Šāh's *Muqaddima min al-luġa wa-l-adab* ("Introduction to Language and Literature").[48]

The Chinese Contribution to Muslim Book Culture

The centuries-long Chinese engagement with Muslim book culture took different forms of participation through its course. Works moved across Asia, connecting geographically remote communities of readers through the written word in Arabic or Persian and a shared appreciation of manuscript culture. The available information suggests that China, as a whole, was mainly a recipient of texts in Arabic and Persian, and to a lesser degree a producer. Yet, in terms of development of calligraphic styles, page formats, methods of glossing, and even the introduction of print, it can be argued that China actively participated in the advancement of Muslim book culture, from its glory days under the Mongols and their successors and well into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Despite the widespread use of printing in China beginning at least as early as the eleventh century, Arabo-Persian texts appear to have kept their manuscript-based form well into the seventeenth century.[49] Similar to trends in other parts of the Muslim world, pedagogical and religious concerns hindered the use of printing for Arabo-Persian texts in China up to the mid-seventeenth century.[50] However, a shift in views regarding the target audience and a re-evaluation of the efficiency of printing in disseminating ideas to a broader audience encouraged a number of Arabo-Persian scholars to adopt printing.

48 Al-ʿAlawī reports ("al-Maḫṭūṭāt," p. 477) having seen *Muqaddima fī l-luġa wa-l-adab* by Abū l-Muẓaffar. Ḥāǧǧī Ḫalīfa lists a work titled *Muqaddimat al-adab fī l-luġa*, attributed to Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar al-Zamaḫšarī (d. 538/1144), written at the request of Abū l-Muẓaffar Ātsiz b. Ḫwārazm Šāh. Ḥāǧǧī Ḫalīfa (*Kašf al-ẓunūn*, vol. 2, p. 1798) describes the five parts of the work: on nouns, verbs, letters, nominal inflection, and verbal inflection.

49 Beginning in the seventeenth century, Islamic works written in Chinese began to circulate in print, introducing Arabo-Persian works to a wider Chinese audience.

50 Such reasons are displayed in the preface to the first printed edition of the Qurʾān in China, entitled *Baoming zhenjing* 寶命真經 ("The Heavenly-decreed Veritable Scriptures"), which came out in 1895. The preface mentions that traditionally, it was required that every reader make his own copy of the text and keep it in a safe place, "in order to protect against the denigration and desecration by ignorants." See *Baoming zhenjing*, p. 5.

The copying of existing manuscripts was in and of itself an act of production. Extant manuscripts demonstrate the wide scope of adaptation and modification, a process inherent to the copying of manuscripts by hand. The physical features of Arabo-Persian manuscripts in China included, in many cases, a new calligraphic style known as *Ṣīnī* (<Ar. “Chinese”), which resembles older versions of the *nasẖ* style of Transoxiana.[51] Similarly, the use of double-layered Chinese paper[52] and the binding of the manuscripts, as well as the format of a cover page accommodated features from the local Chinese book culture.

Extant manuscripts display multiple systems of annotation and glossing, which seem to be an integral part of Arabo-Persian manuscripts throughout the late imperial period.[53] In general, we can list four different forms of annotation: (1) the most common form of annotation is interlinear Persian or Arabic glossing. This type of annotation includes word-for-word or phrase-by-phrase translations written below the main texts. Interestingly, in many manuscripts this type of annotation became so natural that even fixed and widely used set-phrases such as the *basmala* <Ar. “in the name of God,” the general opening phrase of most texts, which reads in its Arabic version: *bi-smi llāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*, and includes an interlinear translation to Persian: *be nām-i ẖudā-yi baẖšāyanda-yi mehrabān*); (2) interlinear glossing and interpretation in Chinese written in modified Arabic letters. This system is commonly known by the term *xiaoerjing* 小兒經 (<Chin. “secondary texts,” sometimes called *xiao'erjin* 小兒錦);[54] (3) grammatical marking—abbreviated grammatical markers are added below the main text to assist the reader. These markers include an indication of the subject of the sentence, a phrase, or a conjugated verb, pointers to complicated verb conjugations, singular/plural noun forms, and so forth; (4) marginal interpretations—these are mainly classical commentaries (Ar. *šarḥ*),

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51 Afšār, “Ǧung-i Čīnī,” p. 484; Bakhtyar, “China,” pp. 72 f.

52 Afšār, “Ǧung-i Čīnī,” p. 484; Bakhtyar, “China,” p. 72.

53 On the types of annotation and glossing, see Afšār, “Ǧung-i Čīnī,” p. 484; Bakhtyar, “China,” pp. 71 f.

54 Feng, “A Preliminary Study of ‘Xiaoerjin’”; Zavyalova, “Sino-Islamic Language Contacts”; Bakhtyar, “China,” pp. 71 f. I use here the uncommon translation of *xiao'erjing* as “secondary text”. The spelling and the meaning of this term, which reflects a vernacular use and pronunciation of the North-Chinese dialect, have been the subject of scholarly debate. Additional spellings include *xiao'erjin* 小兒錦, *xiaojing* 小經, and *xiaojin* 小錦. Some read the term as a vernacular pronunciation of *xuejing* 學經 (“Study of the scriptures”); other readings include “small classic script,” “little brocade script,” “little children script”. I prefer to translate it as “secondary text,” taking *xiao'er* 小兒 to mean “minor, secondary”. On this term, see Han Zhongyi, “Xiaojing pinxie tixi ji qi liupai chutan”; Sobieroj, “Arabic Manuscripts,” p. 103.

which are copied as a secondary layer of the manuscript, often in the margins of the main texts and in a cursive script. Many of these commentaries are in Persian; (5) rarely seen are glosses or interpretations in Chinese characters.[55]

Translations of Arabo-Persian texts into Chinese, as well as the development of a vernacular Islamic literature, changed the face of Arabo-Persian scholarship in China.[56] By the mid-seventeenth century, a movement among Chinese scholars of Islamic studies attempted to widen the audience of Arabo-Persian texts through translation of works into Chinese.[57] Texts on Islamic theology, jurisprudence, and mysticism, were translated into Chinese, including Nūr al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ǧāmī's (d. 898/1492) *Ašiʿat al-lamaʿāt*, Naǧm al-Dīn al-Rāzī's (d. 654/1256) *Mirṣād al-ʿIbād*, and Saʿīd al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Masʿūd b. Muḥammad al-Kāzarūnī's (d. 758/1357) *Tarǧama-yi mawlūd-i Muṣṭafā*.[58] Others, such as Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Qudūrī's (d. 428/1037) *Muḫtaṣar* and Ṣadr al-Šarīʿa al-Ṯānī Maḥmūd b. ʿUbayd Allāh b. Masʿūd b. Tāǧ al-Šarīʿa al-Maḥbūbī's (d. 745/1344) *Šarḥ Wiqāyat al-riwāya fī masāʾil al-hidāya*, were partially translated, quoted, or paraphrased in original works on the Islamic sciences written in Chinese.

The introduction of printing to Arabo-Persian scholarship in China during the first half of the seventeenth century sets a precedent in the Muslim world. Around the year 1631, a printed publication titled *Ke-li-mo jie qimeng qianshuo* 克理默解啓蒙淺說 ("A Preliminary Introduction to the Interpretation of *kalām* [i.e. Islamic theology]") was published by the Chinese scholar Zhang Shizhong 張時中. This seems to be the earliest case of a printed work on an Islamic theme written by a scholar of Islam for the use students of Islam.[59] Tens of works in Chinese, and later, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, also in Arabic and Persian, on Arabo-Persian themes were published and circulated throughout China.

55 For an example of such glosses, see Sobieroj, "Arabic Manuscripts," p. 107.

56 Murata trumpets the Chinese translation movement, and suggests that "The Chinese writings represent the first instance in which Muslims wrote major treatises in the language of one of the great, pre-existing intellectual traditions" (Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, p. 5).

57 On that movement, see Ben-Dor Benite, *Dao*, pp. 5–12 and *passim*; Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, pp. 4–10 and *passim*; Murata et al., *The Sage*, pp. 3–10 and *passim*.

58 On the translation into Chinese of these texts, see Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, pp. 13–19 and *passim*; Frankel, *Rectifying*, pp. 26–39; Petersen, "Understanding".

59 Although Islamic works had been printed in Europe prior to the seventeenth century, they were made by non-Muslim Europeans and seem not to have been circulated among Muslims. In the Chinese case, printing was used to enhance the circulation of Arabo-Persian works among those interested in Islamic studies.

When taken out of the simplistic historiographical dichotomy of center versus margins, and viewed as an integral part of the Muslim and Chinese literary cultures, the development of China's Arabo-Persian scholarship can be seen as pioneering in the advancement of the Arabo-Persian book culture. Its contribution can be seen in light of its application of print, vernacular language, and systems of annotation in writing on Muslim themes, as well as in its introduction of grammatical, logical, and rhetorical analytical frameworks to Chinese readers.

Conclusions

Beginning at least as early as the thirteenth century, a host of Arabic and Persian manuscripts found their way into China and became objects of scrutiny by communities of local scholars. By using a shared canon of Arabo-Persian texts, China was integrated into the broader Muslim book culture of Asia.

The participation of China in Muslim book culture is a special case of transnational intellectual engagement. It sheds light on the relationship between the sites of knowledge production and satellite sites of knowledge consumption and integration, as well as on the negotiation between what was perceived as the Arabo-Persian textual tradition and local cultural tendencies. This negotiation produced localized forms of Arabo-Persian manuscript culture, including unique annotation systems and new aesthetic properties of Arabo-Persian manuscripts. Moreover, the introduction of Arabo-Persian texts to translation and print are precedents in the Muslim world.

The study of the Arabo-Persian canon in China provides insight into the patterns of transmission and integration of Arabo-Persian knowledge. Moreover, an analysis of texts on Arabic and Persian grammar, rhetoric, and logic, which circulated in China and were used for the acquisition of literacy in these languages, reveals the ways in which Arabo-Persian texts were read and interpreted at the margins of the Muslim world and the mechanism behind the dissemination of Arabo-Persian knowledge.

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