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Anūshīrvān and Buzurgmihr — the Just Ruler and the Wise Counselor: Two Figures of Persian Traditional Moral Literature

The sources of Persian traditional moral literature were diverse and numerous both Islamic and non-Islamic. The various influences from non-Islamic cultures originated from the Indian, the Greek, the Christian, e.g., that of the Persio-Nestorians, the Judaic, the Egyptian, e.g., those attributed to Hermes, and the Babylonian traditions. Influences from the Islamic tradition originated with the rise of the new Islamic religious tradition, e.g., some moral traditions found in traditional Persian moral literature are attributed to ʻAlī and Muḥammad.[1] An interesting feature of this literature is the possibility of tracing one of its sources — specific types of moral writtings — back to its indegenous background, e.g., the pre-Islamic and Zoroastrian milieu of the Iranian territories. The main purpose of this type of pre-Islamic and mostly Zoroastrian literature was to offer advice, or counsels (*pand* or *naṣīḥa*) and moral teachings (*andarz*) which were primarily edifying in character.

This paper will, first, briefly discuss the characteristics and the purpose of Persian traditional moral literature as it was transmitted to the Persian as well as the Arabic literary traditions. However, since Anūshīrvān and Buzurgmihr are two prominent figures often depicted in this type of Persian traditional moral literature, this paper briefly discusses the origins of the identification of Anūshīrvān and Buzurgmihr with the figures of the "just ruler" and the "wise counselor". The equation of Anūshīrvān with that of the just ruler was later adopted by the Islamic tradition and attempts were made to link this figure with that of the caliph;

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[1] De Fouchécour's extensive work on the Iranian moral (*akhlāqīya*) tradition of the 9th to the 13th century is an indispensable work on the subject, see Charles-Henri de Fouchécour, *Moralia. Les notions morales dans la littérature persane, du 3e/9e au 7e/13e siècle*, Recherche sur les civilisations, Paris 1986.

whereas, it was never equated with the one of the vizier, nonetheless, the figure of the wise counselor, shared great affinities with that of the former. And finally, a look at two works of Persian traditional moral literature, one in Arabic and another in Persian, will offer a glimpse into the transmission of the prototypes of the just ruler and the wise counselor of pre-Islamic times into the 10th and 11th century, Arabic as well as Persian moral literature.

Characteristics and Purpose of Persian Traditional Moral Literature

The basic feature of Persian traditional moral literature is its structure: it was mainly a literature of compilation. In its primitive form, it consisted of an arrangement of collections of advice or moral teachings dating back to a pre-Islamic period which often proceeded with questions being asked by a king or a prince and answers being given by a sage, a counselor or a philosopher. These compilations and collections produced a type of literary genre that is often referred to as the *Pandnāma* [*Book of Advises* or of *Counsels*] genre or, less frequently, as the *Andarznāma* [*Book of Teachings*] genre. The origin of this literature goes back to the last century of the Sasanid period, to a period when there existed such a Pahlavi literary genre that emphasized moral instruction.[2]

The *pand* or *andarz* writings were originally found in Pahlavi. They consisted mainly of collections of simple sentences, usually reflecting a practical outlook on human experiences. Some of these texts sprang out from the Zoroastrian class of the priests, and their content was highly moral in character. The main subject of this literature is usually the practical wisdom of wise men. Wisdom (*khirad*) represents man's best guide for action. These sayings and counsels are often anonymous; others are most likely to be pseudepigraphic, attributing various sayings to wise men, sages, kings, counselors, Greek philosophers or, quite often, to Sasanian kings.[3] Like many old literary texts which have survived from the Sasanid period (theological, historical, etc.), they are were often written in post-Sasanian Pahlavi.[4] This can serve as an indication that even after the downfall of the Sasanid Empire, the old languages — and likewise, some of the old institutions, e.g., the minting of coins or the institution of the *dīwān* — were not abolished all at once but disappeared only gradually or were transformed into Islamic institutions. They survived, at least for a while, during the early period of the Islamic rule over these territories. The genre of the moral writings found its way into

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[2] Ibid., 38; Arthur Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, 2nd ed., Ejnar Munksgaard, Copenhague, 1944, p. 57; Mario Grignaschi, *Quelques spécimens de la littérature sassanide* "Journal Asiatique" 254 (1966), pp. 1–142.

[3] Mary Boyce, *Middle Persian Literature* in Bartold Spuler, ed., *Handbuch der Orientalistik — IV, 2 — Iranistik, Literature*, E. J. Brill, Leiden-Köln 1968, p. 53.

[4] Ibid., 51; cf. Christensen, op. cit., pp. 55, 57, 58.

Arabic literature through translations made in the early centuries of the Islamic period, and it was to become a new literary genre within Arabic literature. This literary tradition also found its was, a century or two later, into Persian by way of some translations made from the original Pahlavi texts. Ironically, some Persian versions were sometimes derived from the Arabic, or Arabic together with Pahlavi, versions.[5] However, it must be remembered that Pahlavi was slowly giving way to "Middle Persian," the language of the new Arabo-Islamic leaders of the beginning of 10th century. A new local Persian literary tradition was taking shape.

In the Islamic period, Persian *pand* literature re-emerged within the circles of the literati, i.e., the circles of the courts and of the scribes attached to the different local centers of power where the new Persian language was emerging as a literary language, capable of equalling the Arabic language. This moral literature usually consisted of an ensemble of suggestions and methods addressed to the ruler for the administration and the governance of his empire. The political principles reflected by this literature, especially in its later development, were elaborated and inspired from the rules of the different Sasanid Kings.[6] Although they centered on precepts of wisdom and on rules of behavior generally attributed to historical individuals, they were most often attributed to mythologized historical characters.[7] These *Books of Counsels* generally did not incorporate any speculative elements, since they were mostly of practical — often of a political — nature. In general, this literary genre, belonging to *adab* literature, often had a strong popular flavour.[8]

Books of Counsels were primarily intended as guides for the regulation of the political and administrative life of the empire. Some were to be the models for the ideal and benevolent form of government as well as the models for the prototype of the benevolent ruler. The subject matter of this *pand* literature consisted mostly of practical advice. Its appeal resided in the fact that it was pragmatic in essence: it proposed what was considered the best *pand* or *andarz* to obtain the most effective rule. Moreover, philosophical elements were slight in this type of wisdom literature, which is distinct from the religious *andarz*. This literature, as testified by its popular flavour, also served a didactic purpose, especially with the use of vivid imagery and repetitive style in which it was written. This literary genre was to survive both in Arabic and in Persian works.

Emergence of an Arabic and Persian Moral Literature

Persian traditional moral literature found its way into Arabic literature through both its form and its content. One example of the influence it had on the

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[5] De Fouchécour, *Moralia*, p. 42.
[6] Jan Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature*, ed. Karl John, D. Reidel, Dordrecht 1968, p. 57.
[7] Christensen, op. cit., p. 57.
[8] Rypka, op. cit., pp. 129, 662.

development of a specific literary form is the emergence of a new literary genre called the *Mirrors for Princes* genre. In these *Fürstenspiegel*, Anūshīrvān is often a central figure; furthermore, they have affinites with *pand* and *andarz* literature.[9] One of the earliest Arabic *Fürstenspiegel* is a work by Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ (720–757 or 724–759), himself a Persian, who was at first a secretary attached to the services of the Umayyad governors of Kirmān and who then succeeded in becoming attached to the court of Al-Manṣūr (r. 754–775) in Baghdad.[10] He mentions, in his *Al-Adab al-kabīr* [*The Greater Manners*], that be relies on some older traditions of moral writings,[11] perhaps Pahlavi versions or even older Sasanian texts. This work shares many features with another of his works *Kalīla wa-Dimna* [*The Book of Kalila and Dimna*], a collection of edifying fables and maximes translated and adopted from Indian tales, previously translated into Pahlavi.[12] Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ was, in part, responsible for what Gabrieli acknowledges to be the “transmission to the Arabs of the epic, history and institutions of Iran” as well as being “a precursor of the *Shu‘ūbiyya*” movement.[13]

A few words must be said on the *Shu‘ūbīya* movement which was one of the major factors which contributed to the revival of some of the older Pahlavi literary traditions. This movement originated with the increasing importance that non-Arabs acquired at the courts and in the entourage of the caliphs. It has been characterized as an “assertive movement” of the late 8th and 9th century on the part of the *mawālī* (non-Arab Muslim clients of an Arab tribe) vis-à-vis their Arab counterparts. It was a movement with socio-political stands that often expressed

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[9] De Fouchécour, *Moralia*, p. 38.

[10] Dominique Sourdel, *La biographie d’Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ d’après les sources anciennes*, “Arabica” 1, 1954, pp. 307–323.

[11] Ibn al-Muqaffa‘, *Al-Adab al-kabīr* in *Rasā’il al-bulaghā’*, ed. Muḥammad Kurd ‘Alī, 4th ed., Lajnat at-Ta’lif wa-at-Tarjama wa-an-Nashr, Cairo 1954, pp. 40–41 and *Al-Adab aṣ-ṣaghīr*, in *Rasā’il al-bulaghā’*, p. 8; cf. P. Charles-Dominique, *Le système éthique d’Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ d’après ses deux épîtres dites «al-ṣaghīr» et «al-kabīr»*, “Arabica” 12, 1965, pp. 45–66.

[12] F. Gabrieli, *Ibn al-Mukaffa’*, Encyclopedia of Islam, 2nd ed. E. J. Brill, Leiden 1971, vol. III, 884b. A translation is also attributed to Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ of the Sasanian *Khvatāynāmak* (*Khudāynāma*) [*Book of Kings*] (ca. 757, but now lost) that was to form the basis of Firdawsī’s (d. 1025) great epic, the *Shāhnāma* [*The Book of Kings*], as well as Ath-Tha‘ālibī’s (d. 1037 or 1038) *Ghurar akhbār mulūk al-Furs* [*Highlights of the History of the Persian Kings*], see A. J. Arberry, *Persian Literature* chap. in Idem, *The Legacy of Persia*, 3rd ed., Clarendon Press, Oxford 1968, pp. 200, 222; cf. George Morrison, ed., *History of Persian Literature From the Beginning of the Islamic Period to the Present Day*, E. J. Brill, Leiden-Köln 1981, pp. 22, 22 n.90; cf. Grignaschi, *Quelques spécimens*, pp. 2–3.

[13] His love for the Arabic language sets him apart from the proponents of the *Shu‘ūbīya* movement, see Gabrieli, *Ibn al-Mukaffa‘*, pp. 884a and 885a, respectively. He is said to have defended the bedouin Arabs, the tent-dwellers, the men of great hospitality, chosen by God to proclaim Islam and to institute the caliphate, see H. T. Norris, Shu‘ūbiyyah *in Arabic Literature* in Julia Ashtiany et als., eds., *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature (‘Abbasid belles-lettres)* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1990, pp. 31–47, esp. 36.

themselves in literary forms. This movement was not an essentially nationalist movement, e.g., the expression of a Persian nationalism; rather, it would seem to have consisted of a widespread movement (new middle class of mixed race and influential government secretaries) whose goals were the reshaping of the institutions — social and political — modelled after some Sasanian institutions as well as values.[14] However, it can not be denied that this movement was often associated with the emergence of national feelings, especially Iranian national (*īrān zamīn*) sentiments, although, as Mottahedeh has pointed out, "the central issues for the *shu'ūbīs* were not overtly political".[15]

This assertive movement brought about the beginning of a period which nurished itself on other literary traditions and introduced new themes and ideas into Arabic literature. The first literary encounters are said to have occurred during the Umayyad rule, i.e., during the reign of Hishām (724–43), at a time when occured an increase in "the influence of Persian books and stories extracted from the history of ancient Persia which were already in fashion."[16] However, it is during the period of the 'Abbāsids, i.e., after the mid-8th century, that the increasing presence of the predominantly Persian or of Persian descent *mawālī* was felt. The powerful members of the Barmakide family (ex-*mawālī*), were the most influential representatives, especially during the reigns of Al-Manṣūr, of Al-Maḥdī (r. 775–785) and of Hārūn ar-Rashīd (r. 786–809). The Persian influence was made possible primarily as a consequence of the lasting influence of the institution of the secretaries (*kuttāb*) on the affairs of the state.

The general views upheld by the proponents of this assertive movement centered around the fact that the Arabs, although they might be considered supreme among the nations, were neither better nor worse than any other nation and, more importantly for the subject at hand, that the Arabs were surpassed by other nations in virtues and abilities.[17] In the 8th century the Islamic world was getting more and more acquainted with the profane and rational traditions of all kinds, whether they be from the Greek, the Hindu or the Persian traditions, e.g., medicine and philosophy were primarily Greek and Syriac, while mathematics and astrology were both Greek and Indian. One of the new genres introduced in Arabic literature at the hands of prominent and skillful *kūttab*, usually *mawālī* or ex-*mawālī*, was Persian traditional moral literature, i.e., anthologies of wise sayings, or *Andarznāma* and *Pandnāma*, which was characterized by its "a-temporal" feature.[18]

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[14] Ibid., 31.

[15] Roy P. Mottahedeh, *The Shu'ûbîyah Controversy and the Social History of Early Islamic Iran*, "International Journal of Middle East Studies", 7, 1976, pp. 161–182, esp. 161–162; cf. H. A. R. Gibb, *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, Beacon Press, Boston 1962, pp. 66, 67, 71.

[16] Norris, op. cit., p. 33.

[17] Ibid., 36–39.

[18] For Arkoun, *ḥadīth* literature can be considered as a kind of anthology genre, as well as "temporal" histories of historians such as Ibn Miskawayh who made use of a style characterized

The universal character of such literature constitutes its distincive feature, and it is one of the factors that facilitated its introduction into the Islamic culture. The same holds true for some historical works written about pre-Islamic times, e.g., the historical work of Ibn Miskawayh (d. 1030), the *Tajārib al-Umam* [*The Experiences of Nations*], a work in which biographies of famous Iranian and pre-Islamic kings such as Ardashīr, Anūshīrvān, Kisrā (Khusrūw) are used to "flatter the Iranian national pride while seeking to consolidate the Muslim *Polis* [Cité]".[19] In the same work, Miskawayh uses some passages of the *Kitāb al-kārnāma fī sīrat Anūshīrvān* [*The Book of Deeds about the Life of Anūshīrvān*] to illustrate principles of government and to describe its ideal system.[20] The *Al-Ḥikma al-khālida* [*The Perennial Wisdom*], another of his works, is an anthology of moral literatures characterized by the same universalist concerns which, in this case, are those of the universal aspect of wisdom.[21] In addition, the Zoroastrian background which characterized the pre-Islamic society was aseptisized in this work; hence, all non-Islamic elements were eliminated and the pre-Islamic character of the original accounts was rendered Islamic. In this case, the work is not just a compilation of older histories, but a reinterpretation of the past in light of the present Islamic culture and its heritage. The process of appropriation, or better still, of re-appropriation of the past is undertaken, and it involves the occultation of most of its non-Islamic features.

Persian traditional moral literature did not find its way only into Arabic literature; in addition, it was to become one of the features of new Persian literature. It should not be forgotten that in the 10th century, Iranian territories, especially Khurāsān and the territories extending to the East, were still under the influences of the Pahlavi language, the Zoroastrian religion, and Sasanian traditions. What helped to foster the emergence of a New Persian literary activity was the quasi-total independence of these local kingdoms which were giving only a nominal allegiance to Baghdad. In addition, a significant administrative development occurred at the courts of the Sāmānids, one of the local ruling dynasties in Khurāsān. Persian was to become the "official language," replacing Arabic for all state affairs at the courts of the Sāmānids. It was probably during the reign of Naṣr Ibn Aḥmad (875–892), or during the reign of his son Ismā'īl Ibn Aḥmad (892–907), that Persian was officially introduced as the language of the court.[22]

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by its a-temporal — universal — features, see Mohammad Arkoun, *Contribution à l'étude de l'humanisme arabe au IV^e/X^e siècle: Miskawayh philosophe et historien*, J. Vrin, Paris 1970, p. 335.

[19] Ibid., 335; cf. Grignaschi, op. cit., p. 1–67.

[20] These *tajārib*, or attempts (whether good or bad), were those of previous rulers from which mankind should learn from, Arkoun, see *Contribution*, p. 336.

[21] There are other such anthologies of moral literature in Arabic, such as the *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, of Al-Ghazālī (d. 1111).

[22] Richard N. Frye, *The Sāmānids* in R. N. Frye, ed., *The Cambridge History of Iran* (7 vols.)

From that time on, the Sāmānid bureaucracy became, to a certain extent, bilingual. Previously, it had been exclusively poetic works which had been written in Persian, mostly by court panagerists (sometimes in Persian together with Arabic); however, it was soon to be followed by prose.[23] The first and still extent work in prose, for example, is the history of Aṭ-Ṭabarī translated by the Sāmānid vizier Abū 'Alī Muḥammad Bal'amī (started in 963–4) soon to be followed by the translation of Aṭ-Ṭabarī's *Tarjama-yi Tafsīr-i Ṭabarī* [*Commentary of the Coran*].[24] In light of these developments, the Sāmānids are considered to be the first to have actually attempted to gradually Persianized the institutions of the state.[25] Pursuing the initiatives started by the Sāmānids, the Ghaznavids, former governors of the Sāmānids, established their own rule (end of the 10th, beginning of the 11th century) to the East of the Sāmānid kingdom. Persian, the official language of the Ghaznavid state, played a similar, if not a greater, role that the one it had played during the Sāmānid rule as the language of poetry, literature, philosophy, science and, along with Arabic, of religious sciences.[26] This brief account of the emergence of a New Persian language was to serve as an introduction to the factors that led to a revival of Persian traditional moral literature in which both Anūshīrvān and Buzurgmihr will come to occupy.

Anūshīrvān and Buzurgmihr: Historical Figures

In Persian traditional moral literature, there are two figures, amongst many, to whom these *pand* or *andarz* were attributed: Anūshīrvān and Buzurgmihr.

— vol. IV — *The Period from the Arab Invasion to the Seljuqs* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1975, p. 146.

[23] Gilbert Lazard, *La langue des plus anciens monuments de la prose persane* Librairie C. Klincksieck, Paris 1963; cf. Idem, *Les premiers poètes persans (IX^{e}–X^{e} siècles)*, 2 vols., ed. and trans. G. Lazard, Adrien Maisonneuve, Paris–Tehran 1964; cf. Idem, *The Rise of the New Persian Language* in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, IV, 595–632; cf. Edward G. Browne, ed., *A Literary History of Persia*, 4th ed. (4 vols.) — vol. I — *From the Earliest Times until Firdawsi* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1951.

[24] Frye, *Sāmānid*, p. 154.

[25] Richard N. Frye, *Bukhara. The Medieval Achievement* University of Oklahoma Press, Norman 1965, p. 104.

[26] Clifford E. Bosworth, *The Early Ghaznavids* in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, IV, pp. 162–197. In 1014, a minister of Maḥmūd al-Ghaznā, attempted to replace Persian with Arabic but faced much public discontent; he was forced to give up his efforts, and this, in spite of the fact that Arabic was still in use along with Persian, see Frye, *Bukhara*, p. 173. There are other anthologies of moral literature in Persian, such as the *Qābusnāma* [*Book of Qābus*], which was written by Kay Kāvās (who succeded his father in 1049) in 1082, or the *Marzbānnāma* [*Book of Marzbān*], in Sa'd ad-Dīn Varāvinī's version, who was secretary to the vizier of Musaffar ad-Dīn Özebek (r. 1210–1225), or the *Rāḥat aṣ-ṣudūr* written by Ar-Rawandī (finished before 1204), the well-known historian of the Seljuqs. There is now a French translation of this text by C.-H. de Fouchécour.

Both of them were historical figures. The first one, Anūshīrvān which literally means "the one who possessed an immortal" or "sweet soul", died in 578–9, and was known as Khusrūw I. The one who possessed an immortal soul was Khusrūw I Anūshīrvān, a Sāsānid ruler of the 6th century who reigned from 531 to 578–9.[27] He is said to have been the founder of the famous college of physicians in Gundīshāpūr. It is reported that it was during his reign and at his court that some persecuted Greek philosophers of the West found refuge, and might have studied and taught in this college.[28] In addition, Anūshīrvān is often associated with *andarz* literature, e.g., there exists a Pahlavi account of *andarz* attributed to him,[29] moreover, there are many Arabic moral writtings which mention his name. There still exists an early Persian text, the *Khiradnāma* [*Book of Wisdom*] containing the beginning of a *Pandnāma* [*Book of Counsels*] attributed to Nūshīrvān the Just.[30] A similar text is also included in Ibn Miskawayh's anthology, although of a possible later date.[31]

The other name often mentioned in *pand* literature is that of Buzurgmihr, another historical figure, perhaps the son of Bukhtar, or Bukhtakān.[32] His name is often associated with the name of Anūshīrvān and symbolizes the figure of the wise counselor. In fact, it is not clear to which historical figure the "mythologized" Buzurgmihr might correspond. According to Nöldeke, the historical Buzurgmihr was probably a certain Borzōe (or Perzoes),[33] a knowledgeable man and confident of Khusrūw I Anūshīrvān,[34] however, according to Christensen, he may have been a certain physician named Borzōe, the secretary who was put to death by Hurmuz IV, son of Khusrūw I,[35] but then again, according to Motlagh,

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[27] C. Elgood, *Persian Science* in A. J. Arberry, *The Legacy of Persia*, 3rd ed., Clarendon Press, Oxford 1968, p. 310. Nushervān, Nushin-Ravān.

[28] Rypka, op. cit., p. 56; cf. Soheil Afnan, *Philosophical Terminology in Arabic and Persian* E. J. Brill, Leiden 1964, p. 56.

[29] It is entitled *Andarz-i Khusruw-i Qubādān*, see de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, pp. 38 n. 34.

[30] See *Ṣifat-i pandnāmah-i Nūshīrwān-i 'ādil* [*Characteristics from the Book of Wisdom of Anushirvan the Just*], but also *Ṣifat-i Manādiyān-i Nūshīrwān-i 'ādil* [*Characteristics of the Proclamations of Anushirvan the Just*] chaps. in *Khiradnāma*, ed. Manṣūr Tharwat, Amīr Kabīr, Tehran 1367/1947, p. 62–64.

[31] The title of the text is *From the Wise Sayings of Krusrūw Qubādh* found in Ibn Miskawayh's *Al-Ḥikma al-khālida*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥman Badawī, 3rd ed. Dār al-Andalus, Beirut 1983, pp. 41–45.

[32] Rypka, op. cit., p. 55; cf. de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, 58; cf. Mas'ūdī, *Les Prairies d'Or*, trans. Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille, rev. and corrected Charles Pellat, Société asiatique, Paris 1962, vol. I, p. 235 no. 628.

[33] See the index found in Arberry, *The Legacy of Persia*, p. 403.

[34] Arthur Christensen, *La légende du sage Bozurgmihr* "Acta Orientalia" 8 (1930), pp. 106 ff., 114.

[35] Ibid., 100–111. Firdawsī was the one who mentioned that he would have been put to death by Anūshīrvān's son, see de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, pp. 30 n.11.

he might correspond to someone other than this latter physician.[36] In any case, Borzōe is usually considered the author of the Pahlavi translation of a collection of edifying tales, *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. Furthermore, the introduction written for this work and which is sometimes attributed to Borzōe presents certain difficulties since parts of it are also claimed to have been written by Ibn al-Muqaffa‘.[37] Nonetheless, Borzōe was an author whose works were known to Ibn an-Nadīm who, in his *Fihrist* (completed in 987), attributes to him the authorship of two other works (now lost).[38] There exists an interesting short Persian text, which is said to be the first one to mention Buzurgmihr. It is the same *Khiradnāma* already mentioned and for which there exists an Arabic translation.[39]

Anūshīrvān and Buzurgmihr: Epitomes of the Just Ruler and the Wise Counselor

In Persian as well as in Arabic traditional moral literature, Anūshīrvān became the epitome of the just ruler. The historical Anūshīrvān was overshadowed by the mythologized figure. There exists, for instance, some *pand* or *andarz* texts generally ascribed to Khusrūw I Anūshīrvān, but which sometimes actually refer to the reign of Khusrūw II Parvīz, the Sāsānid ruler of the beginning of the 7th century (who ruled between 589–590 and 591–628).[40] Such an attribution is spurious and difficult to rely on for the study of the historical Anūshīrvān. Another work of this sort is a translation from Pahlavi to Arabic attributed to Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ by Ibn an-Nadīm in his *Fihrist*: the *Tājnāma* [*Book*

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[36] Djalāl Khāleghi Motlagh, *Bozorgmehr-e Boḵtagān*, *Encyclopaedia Iranica* Mazda Publishers, California 1989, IV, p. 428b. According to Barthold, he would have been a military commander, as well as head of the civil administration, a position that was later on abolished or, as Christensen proposed, whose importance was reduced to insignificance, see S. D. Goiten, *The Origin of the Vizierate* chap. in Idem, *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions* E. J. Brill, Leiden 1968, p. 169; cf. with what Goiten writes, "Buzurgmihr, the prototype of the Sassanian vizier in Muslim literature, does not appear as a military commander", see ibid., 187.

[37] De Fouchécour, *Moralia*, pp. 58, 59 n. 127; cf. Motlagh, op. cit., p. 428b; cf. Gabrieli, op. cit., pp. 883b–884a; cf. Christensen, *L'Iran*, pp. 57–58.

[38] Ibn an-Nadīm, *The "Fihrist" of al-Nadīm. A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture*, ed. and trans. Bayard Dodge, 2 vols., Columbia University Press, Columbia 1970, II, pp. 641, 739.

[39] De Fouchécour, *Moralia*, pp. 59–60; see *Guftār-i Buzurgmihr-i Ḥakīm* [*Sayings of the Wise Buzurgmihr*], and *Guftār andar su'ālhā'-yi Nūshīrvān-i 'ādil az Buzurgmihr-i Ḥakīm* [*Sayings about the Questions of Anushirvan the Just to the Wise Buzurgmihr*], and *Ṣifat-i Pandnāmah-i Buzurgmihr-i Ḥakīm* [*Characteristics of the Book of Wisdom of the Wise Buzurgmihr*], chaps in Tharwat, *Khiradnāma*, p. 50–51, 51–59 and 62–65 respectively; cf. Miskawayh, *Al-Ḥikma al-khālida*, pp. 29–41 and 45–48.

[40] Rypka, op. cit., p. 56.

of Kings; litt. of *Crowns*].[41] Extracts from this work — which are supposed to concern Khusrūw I Anūshīrvān — actually talk about Khusrūw II Parvīz.[42]

By the 9th century Khusrūw — either Khusrūw I or Khusrūw II — had also become a mythologized character to whom were attributed edifying tales, proverbs and advice in the Arabic as well as in Persian literature.[43] Indication of his great wisdom was alluded to by his alledged ability to read Plato, Aristotle, Thucydides and Demosthenes in their own language.[44] By the 11th century, accounts of the spiritual will Anūshīrvān was supposed to have left, along with stories related to the quest and the discovery of his tomb and a collection of his *andarz*, had flourished. However, these later reworkings of *andarz* literature differed from the Pahlavi versions. The transformation of an historical character into a fictionalized figure had taken place. Anūshīrvān had come to personify Sāsānid royalty. Great worldliness was attributed to this figure and to his reign by Arab translators. For the Arab conquerors, Anūshīrvān symbolized the Sāsānid high culture of pre-Islamic kingdoms. The Arabic literati managed to incorporate this vision into their own new world views; whereas, fot the Iranians, who also gave great importance to Anūshīrvān, this figure came to represent, in contradistinction to the Arab's representation of the pre-Islamic past, the symbol of the past glories of their lost high culture.[45]

The fictionalized character of the Persian ruler progressively overshadowed the historical one. In fact, the real Anūshīrvān, the Sāsānian king had been a ruthless monarch, as many rulers had been before him. According to Procopius, who wrote about Sāsānid rule for the Byzantines, Anūshīrvān is depicted as the ruthless leader who had people impaled. One might argue against the objectivity of Procopius, a subject of the Byzantine Empire, and wish to consider him less than a reliable source. However, other accounts originating from the East also depict the historical Anūshīrvān in not a quite so idealized manner. He is said to have refused once to hear any discussion about his new tax policy and had one of his scribes, who had dared to voice his opinion, killed. He is also said to have had one of his brothers, who was aspiring to the throne, put to death; still another was eliminated before he was able to lead an insurrection. In the end, all his brothers, their sons and his own grandfather were eventually eliminated in fear that they might one day, claim the throne. And finally, his own son, who had led an insurrection, was blinded, at that time, a sure method to prevent the ascension

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[41] Grignaschi, *Quelques spécimens*, pp. 3–5, 103–110, 129–135.
[42] Gabrieli, op. cit., p. 884a.
[43] M. Morony, *Kisrā*, *E.I.*, 2nd ed. (1986), V, p. 184a.
[44] To be more accurate, it should be added that the writings of these Greek philosophers were probably translated in Pahlavi or in Syriac, which one of his physicians could have read for him, for it is recorded that he participated in philosophical discussions, e.g., on the nature of the soul, see Afnan, op. cit., pp. 56–57.
[45] Gabrieli, op. cit., p. 884a.

of a direct heir of the throne.[46] As is the case in the mythologization process of any historical figure, a selective operation was undertaken, perhaps very early in time. This resulted in the suppression of any negative and prejudicial elements — such as the ruthlessness of Anūshīrvān — from depictions of his character, in spite of the fact that history recorded it otherwise.

The same holds true for Buzurgmihr, a figure that became an epitome of the wise counselor. The same type of erroneous attributions that occurred with the historical Anūshīrvān, took place with the historical Buzurgmihr who is sometimes wrongly identified as the minister of Khusrūw II Parvīz, instead of Khusrūw I Anūshīrvān.[47] By the 10th or 11th century, Buzurgmihr was no longer a historical figure. In different places of the *Khiradnāma*, he is represented as a physician, or an adviser to the king or, in other places, the author of a "moral or spiritual will."[48] The developments that made Buzurgmihr a legendary character might have originated not long after the death of the historical figure in the 6th century, at a time when his name was used to propagate maxims and teachings. However, he was not the only one to which such maxims or counsels were attributed, e.g., the wise counselor is Aristotle, the philosopher-minister.[49]

The creation of an epitome of the wise counselor might have been the result of the influence of Pahlavi (Zoroastrian) *pand* or *andarz* literature. Opinions, maxims and eventually different fictionalized accounts were attributed to Buzurgmihr, the historical court figure. Originally, these opinions and maxims were attributed to a certain Burzmihr. According to Christensen, Burzmihr was the name from which Buzurgmihr was derived, or transformed as a result of translations from Pahlavi to Arabic. Burzmihr, which literally meant the one which has Mithra (as his protector), corresponded to the full name of Borzōe.[50] In addition, the title *Buzurdiframadār Ibn Bakhtakān*, which meant the "Greatest of those who obey," was used by a prime minister at the Sāsānid court, but somehow got to be associated with the figure of Burzmihr.[51] Moreover, in some instances, this title was attributed to important court figures.[52] Therefore, such elements might account

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[46] Christensen, *L'Iran*, pp. 378, 381–383.

[47] Motlagh, op. cit., p. 428b.

[48] De Fouchécour, *Moralia*, p. 59.

[49] For example, the *Su'ālhā-yi Iskandar az Arisṭāṭālīs* [*Alexander's Questions to the Wise Aristotle*] chap. in the *Khiradnāma*, pp. 65–72. The use of his name was mostly pseudepigraphic, e.g., the *Nuktahā az Maqālat-i Arisṭāṭālīs-i Ḥakīm* [*Elements from the Treaty of the Wise Aristotle*], chap. in Ibid., 93; cf. de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, p. 34.

[50] Christensen, *La légende*, p. 108; cf. Motlagh, op. cit., p. 428a–b.

[51] Twelve of his advice are mentioned by Al-Mas'ūdī (d. ca. 956) in his *Le livre de l'avertissement et de la révision* (written before 956), cited in de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, 58; cf. with Ibn an-Nadīm, op. cit., II: 739. The original Persian name was *Mihazargushnasp al-Farmānbardār*; the second term meant "the one who obeys command, the servitor", see Ibid., 739 n. 44; cf. with Motlagh, op. cit., p. 428a–b.

[52] It was later replaced by *dabīrpat* or "chief scribe", see A. J. Arberry, *Persia and the Arabs* chap. in Idem, *The Legacy of Persia*, p. 69.

for the existence in *pand* literature, issued from the pre-Islamic Sāsānid period, of two figures sharing a quite similar name and background in the Arabic as well as in the Persian versions of moral writtings. As for the Borzōe who is said to have made a translation of Indian tales into Pahlavi, nothing is known about his birth, his life or his death.[53] Furthermore, the three major episodes of the life of Buzurgmihr bear the trace of a mythical construction. Christensen has retraced different episodes attributed to Buzurgmihr to similar episodes existing in much older sources, such as the legend of Ahigar, the wise man, which is found in an Aramaic text dating back to the 5th century B.C. as well as in an Arabic translation.[54] Christensen's main conclusion, regarding the historical Buzurgmihr, is that although he was most probably a certain Borzōe that lived at the time of Khusrūw I Anūshīrvān, Buzurgmihr belongs to the realm of legendary figures.[55]

In summary, both Anūshīrvān (Khusrūw I) and Buzurgmihr (Borzōe), are important pre-Islamic figures that have found their place in the moral writings of the Arab and Iranian Islamic culture, after a more or less complex process of mythologization. Such works were inevitably subject to constant evolution owing to their ecclectic nature and their anthology format. In addition, different versions of the same text were often in circulation. In these circumstance, it was inevitable that interpolations, additions of similar accounts or reworking of these collections of *andarz* should have occurred.[56] In *pand* or *andarz* literature of the post-Sāsānian period, Anūshīrvān and Buzurgmihr both came to embody the figures of the just ruler and the wise counselor. They both came to personify high virtues to be praised and extolled by all.

The Caliph as the Just Ruler

The figures of Anūshīrvan and Buzurgmihr often found in older traditional moral writtings succeeded in crossing cultural boundaries and were integrated

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[53] Later biographies of this Iranian court figure, such as those written by Firdawsi in his *Shāhnāma* and by Ath-Tha'ālibī in his *Ghurar Akhbār*, are not more informative; these biographies only repeat existing biographical data, see de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, p. 58.

[54] Christensen, *La légende*, p. 103; cf. Idem, *L'Iran*, p. 57.

[55] The following discussion on the mythologization of the historical Buzurgmihr follows closely Christensen's article, from which Massé's own article is evidently indebted. For a comprehensive study on Buzurgmihr as a legendary figure, see Christensen, *La légende*, pp. 81–128, esp. 100–111; cf. Henri Massé, *Buzurjmihr* in *E.I.*, 2nd ed. (1960), I, pp. 1358b–1359b; cf. Motlagh, op. cit., pp. 427a–429a.

[56] The same process occurred for other type of Sāsānian works, see Mario Grignaschi, *La Nihāyatu-l-'Arab fī Akhbāri-l-Furs wa-l-'Arab* (*première partie*) *Bulletin d'études orientales* 22 (1969), pp. 15–67 and Idem, *La Nīhāyatu-l-'Arab fī Akhbāri-l-Furs wa-l-'Arab et les Siyaru Mulūki-l-'Ajam du ps. Ibn-al-Muqaffa'* "Bulletin d'études orientales" 26 (1974), 83–184, esp. 104–105.

within the new emerging Islamic culture. The *pand* and *andarz* literature were considered to represent more than mere wise sayings of mythologized historical figures who were regarded, at times, as an embodiment of a perennial wisdom coming from the dawn of time. Indeed, they were appropriated by and incorporated into the literary output fostered by the new rulers. The perennial wisdom embodied by this traditional moral literature did appeal to universal principles, even if it was almost exclusively to principles of a practical nature. Therefore, it is no wonder that the *Sophia perennis* of Persia could easily be incorporated into the Islamic cultural and intellectual *Weltanschaung*. Islam which claimed itself to be of a universal character made possible this appropriation of older material.

During the 'Abbāsid period, works began to be written that embodied the manner in which this perennial wisdom was passed on, preserved and, to a certain extent, almost revived. This was to take place under the symbolic auspices of well-known caliphs, at times Al-Ma'mūn, at others Hārūn ar-Rashīd. The caliph Al-Ma'mūn (r. 813–833) was legendary for his role in the fostering of intellectual endeavors, e.g., the setting up of the *Bayt al-Ḥikma*. In some Persian versions, it is him who rediscovers the spiritual will (*waṣīya*) of Anūshīrvān and, by the same token, becomes his spiritual heir.[57] De Fouchécour has reviewed different versions of the account surrounding the discovery of the tomb of Anūshīrvān by Al-Ma'mūn. He notes that in the Persian *Qūbūsnāma* [*The Book of Counsels for Qābūs*] (written in 1082–83) of Kay Kāvūs Ibn Iskandar, himself an Iranian prince from a long line of Ṭabaristān kings:

> "[...] the author says that he has read in the Annales of the Caliphs that the caliph al-Ma'mūn (d. 218/833) went to visit the tomb of Anushirvan, «and it is a long story», a story which was therefore known to Kay Kāvūs, but which he does not repeat. The caliph entered the tomb and saw Pahlavi inscriptions on the wall above the ceremonial bed. He had them translated in Arabic and they became known in Iran. An introduction presented the counsels as a way for Anushirvan to continue, after his death and for the benefit of his guests, the ministry of justice which he had excercised during his lifetime. The second part of the text, consisting of the chapter VIII of the *Qābusnāmah*, is the collection of the announced counsels."[58]

The Persian versions, such as the *Qābusnāmah*, are not the only accounts of the story of the discovery of the tomb of Anūshīrvān by Al-Ma'mūn. Some Arabic anthologies of moral teachings also mention it. The *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* [*Advice for Kings*] of Al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), written shortly before 1106, is such a work. Al-Ghazālī's work draws much of its material from previous anthologies. In this work, a short passage retells the story of the visit of Al-Ma'mūn to Anūshīrvān's tomb. Quite simply, this story reoccurs through the centuries and avoids oblivion. The reworking of older material, whether Persian, Pahlavi, or Arabic, within the

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[57] De Fouchécour, *Le testament moral*, pp. 427–428. De Fouchécour notes that there exists another work with a similar structure but which replaces the spiritual will of Anūshīrvān with the discovery of the books of Aristotle and Hermes by the caliph Al-Mu'taṣim, see ibid., 427, 427 n. 30.

[58] Ibid., 421.

new cultural context guaranteed the preservation of the older and often foreign elements in Islamic moral literature. In the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, the following story is reported:

> "Impressed by a teaching which had been given to Anushirvan by the mobads [Zoroastrian religious class], the caliph set out to search for the tomb of the King; discovered it as well as the remains [of Anushirvan] still clothed of his ceremonial dress; he, in fact, discovered a maxim written on the bezel of the royal ring, «It is the man of good who is great, it is not the great who is good» (*beh meh na meh beh*). Thereafter, a servant of Al-Ma'mūn stole the ring; the caliph became aware of it, had it replace to the finger of the deceased, and blamed the shameful act.»[59]

Another, albeit more elaborated, version of Al-Ma'mūn's visit to the tomb of Anūshīrvān is found in the *'Ajā'ib al-makhlūqāt* [*The Wonders of Creation*] of Muḥammad Ibn Maḥmūd Ibn Aḥmad Ṭūsī, a work completed after 1167. Ṭūsī's account, more elaborated than the preceeding ones, goes as follows:

> "The caliph, amazed by the palace at Ctesiphon, is led to the tomb of the one who had it built; this tomb of Anushirvan was built at the top of a hill with a difficult access; it was a cave converted into a dwelling containing a golden throne on which was laid the remains of the embalmed king, wearing a crown. On the headband covering the forehead of the late king a saying was written regarding the briefness of life; on the ring, a similar saying [was written], followed by the prediction that a king would come to visit the tomb and that he would be accompanied by a servant who would commit a offense; indeed, al-Ma'mūn later discovers that one of his servants has stolen the ring. On it [ring], he reads this saying, «whoever does not possess money will not be successful; whoever does not have a wife is not the master of his house; whoever has no children is not happy; whoever has nothing of all this will have no grief».»[60]

The story of the discovery of the tomb of Anūshīrvān is a recurent theme within the *andarz* genre which somehow never lost its appeal. A later account is found in the work of Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ibn Ḥajjī Shams al-Dīn, in his abridge version of Ibn Miskawayh's *Jāvīdān khirad* (probably from Taqī al-Dīn Muḥammad Shushtarī's translation).[61] This abridged version was written in 1654, at the court of the Mughul emperor Nūr ad-Dīn Muḥammad Jahāngīr Ghazī (r. 1605–1627) — son of Jalāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad Akbar Shāh (r. 1556–1605). In addition to repeating the same events, this account adds more ancien Pahlavi elements. These added details share similar features with *riwāyāt* literature that subsists among the Parsis.[62] For example, in one of these *riwāyāt*, it is Hārūn ar-Rashīd who discovers the tomb of Anūshīrvān. De Fouchécour, summarizing the story attributed to Hārūn ar-Rashīd, reports that:

> "[...] 1) at Madā'in, the caliph meets three old men; the cause of their more or less youthful looks: their wives; the grains of wheat that grow at Madā'in are reminescent of Anushirvan's justice; an old man describes the virtues of An. 2) The caliph goes to the tomb of An.; the description of the tomb; the three counsels on

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[59] Ibid., 422. In an other account, Anūshīrvān possesses a big golden table with inscriptions, and four seals each containing a motto, cf. Mas'ūdī, op. cit., p. 234 no. 626.
[60] De Fouchécour, *Le testament moral*, pp. 424–425.
[61] Miskawayh, *Jāvīdān Khirad*, trans. Taqī al- Dīn Muḥammad Shushtarī, ed. Bihrūz Tharwatiyān, Institute of Islamic Studies (McGill U.), Tehran Branch, Tehran 1976.
[62] De Fouchécour, *Le testament moral*, p. 425. These *riwāyāt* existed in both Pahlavi and later Persian, cf. Boyce, op. cit., p. 46.

> the crown, about the precarity of the world; three counsels written on the ring, «do not cause any harm, be patient, choose to act good because, even if the world is subjugated, in the end death comes». 3) Prediction of the arrival of the caliph at the tomb and of the offense of the servant who will steal the ring; discovery of thirty treasures; on a slate, the same maxims as mentioned *supra* in the *'Ajā'ib al-makhlūqāt*; two maxims written on a silver platter. 4) Counsels written on a golden millstone, the shorter version of the Counsels of the Crown..."[63]

The three passages quoted above all point to a process of reappropriation of Persian traditional moral literature. Kay Kāvūs, Al-Ghazālī and Ṭūsī, all of Persian background, managed to perpetrate *andarz* literature through their writtings. Nonetheless, a new element was introduced. A new myth in the form of a new literary fiction was fabricated. It is the caliph, often Al-Ma'mūn — but at times, Hārūn ar-Rashīd — who becomes the depository of this perennial wisdom previously possessed by Anūshīrvān. Hence, such attributions to particular caliphs were essentially pseudepigraphic. In addition, there was a genuine concern to legitimize any import of foreign elements into the Islamic milieu.[64] As a result, the accounts possess a new Islamic character and exhibit a sensitivity for the culture for which it was destined and intended. It is clear that the taste of the times accounted for most of the reworking of the more indigeneous material. The introduction of many ancient Iranian moral traditions into Arabic and Persian Islamic anthologies and their subsequent legitimization was guaranteed by a process of reappropriation of the spiritual legacy by an appeal to the 'Abbāsid caliph who, by the same token, symbolically became the spiritual heir and a disciple of Anūshīrvān.

Nonetheless, although this phenomena was taking place in the 11th and 12th centuries, the tales relating the transmission of this ancient wisdom were not limited to these works. There exists still another tradition, dating back to the 10th century, which points to another kind of development. It is found in the Firdawsī's Persian *Shāhnāma* which, according to de Fouchécour, might rely on much older and more accurate sources than the passages mentioned above. For instance, the account of Anūshīrvān's spiritual will reoccurs in Fridawsī's work but, in the latter's account, there is no trace of Al-Ma'mūn. Instead, the spiritual will of Anūshīrvān is dedicated to his son. For the most part, the numerous kings of the *Shāhnāma* dedicated a spiritual will to their sons. Furthermore, there even exists a Pahlavi version of this story in which the spiritual will of Anūshīrvān is intended, more generally, for all men.[65]

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[63] De Fouchécour, *Le testament moral*, p. 426.

[64] De Fouchécour has skillfully showed that the Persian elaboration and the exposition surrounding the account of the discovery of the spiritual will of Anūshīrvān, e.g., in the already mentioned 12th century *'Ajā'ib al-makhlūqāt*, was the result of two different traditions, one of these versions resulted from the introduction of added elements from Parsis *riwāyāt* literature, while another version could be traced back to the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* of Al-Ghazālī.

[65] De Fouchécour, *Le testament moral*, p. 421.

The Vizier as the Wise Counselor

Buzurgmihr, the epitome of the counselor found its way, like Anūshīrvān, into Islamic culture. On the one hand, Buzurgmihr became a fictionalized character quite early and lost much of his historical features, as it was mentioned earlier. The origin of the vizierate, or government by deputy, on the other hand, has often been attributed to the perpetration of an old Iranian institution, i.e., that of the counselor of the King — a function similar to the one which Buzurgmihr enjoyed as the wise counselor of Anūshīrvān (Christensen and Nöldeke). However, this pre-Islamic origin of the institution of the vizierate has not been without its critics (Barthold, Sprengling, Goiten and von Grunenbaum). In Sourdel's magisterial work in which he analyzes the problems raised by the supposed Sāssānian origin of the vizierate, he has shown that this claim can not be convincingly substantiated, either philological or historical.[66]

It seems difficult to argue convincingly for the Sāssānian origin of the vizierate, since its first record can only be traced back to late Umayyad period, during which time it had appeared as a title — *wazīr* — for a government official and not as a fully developped institution.[67] Furthermore, there are some indications that some propagandists of the 'Abbāsid movement were designated as viziers.[68] Both usage of the title *wazīr* alluded to the general meaning of "helper" rather than to a representative of a distinctive institution, e.g., of the vizierate. The first individual to have been named a "Helper (*wazīr*) of the House of Muḥammad" seems to have been Al-Mukhtār, the leader of a Shī'ī revolt in Al-Kūfa that was put down in 687, more than half a century before the downfall of the Umayyads.[69] After him, the title was attributed to Abū Salama, head of the Shī'ī group in Iraq who was later eliminated by Al-'Abbās when the latter came to power.[70] The successor to Al-Mukhtār, Ya'qūb Ibn Da'ūd, then bore officially the title of vizier during the time of Al-Maḥdī, the third 'Abbāsid caliph.[71]

The development of the institution of the vizierate was gradual, and it is only during the 'Abbāsid period that is took shape. Ibn al-Muqaffa' can be viewed as an early typification of the counselor, fulfilling all at once the role of the

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[66] See Dominique Sourdel, *Le problème des origines du vizirat* ch. in idem, *Le vizirat 'abbāside de 749 à 936 (132 à 324 de l'Hégire)*, 2 vols., Institut français de Damas, Damas 1959–60, I, pp. 41–61, esp. 48, 50.

[67] For e.g., 'Abd al-Hāmī (in 749), see Ibid., I, 55, 60.

[68] Ibid., I, 55.

[69] According to Baladhūrī's *Ansāb al-ashraf*, see the Goiten's Appendix to his article on *The Origin of the Vizierate*, p. 195. In this article, he also points out the religious connotations that were associated with such a claim; furthermore, some parallels can be found in the *Qur'ān*, 25: 35, with Aaron as the helper of Moses but also of 'Alī as the helper of the Prophet.

[70] For Abū Salāma, see Sourdel, op. cit., I, pp. 65–70.

[71] Goiten, op. cit., p. 181.

counselor and of the assistant attached to the services of the court (as a secretary), especially as regards his literary production. However, he can not be considered to partake in any of the same functions or powers that the Barmakids will later come to possess.[72] It is only during the reign of Al-Manṣūr that the vizierate will firmly be established. The caliph Al-Manṣūr named experienced individuals — the Barmakids — to supervise the education of his sons and made them their tutors. They were to become, upon his death, vice-regents fulfilling the task of prime ministers. The caliph had named Yaḥyā al-Barmakī as the tutor of Hārūn ar-Rashīd who, in turn, later nominated him vizier. He was to become, although a *mawlā*, one of the most powerful individuals that the entourage of the caliph had ever seen. Later, his son Ja'far will also be nominated vizier, until his demise (along with his brother Al-Faḍl) in 803; at which time, Al-Faḍl Ibn Sahl took over the position of vizier. This practice was continued during the reigns of many of Hārūn ar-Rashīd's successors whose heirs were often too young to rule.

The powers of the viziers, although tremendous were not absolute.[73] At times, these natural prime ministers with extensive powers were replaced, as the caliphs often preferred to rely on family rule. Furthermore, the caliphs always retained the supreme position of authority. The apogee of the vizierate was to come during the later periods of the Turkish and Mongol conquerors who relied on this institution to rule with greater efficiency. A case in point is Niẓām al-Mulk, the most outstanding of these figures who rose to the prestigious and influential position of vizier during the reigns of Alp-Arslan (1063–72) and of Malik Shāh (1072–92).[74] In such circumstances, it is no wonder that the practice of naming tutors who often became powerful viziers helped the institutionalization of the vizierate. This would most probably account for the origin of the vizierate, since, in general, this institution can not be accounted for by a direct imitation of any previously fixed and well-defined institution, e.g., from the Sāsānians.[75]

In short, previous studies regarding its origin can not serve to subtantiate the claim that such Sāsānian figures, e.g., Buzurgmihr, were the models for Islamic viziers. Nonetheless, parallels between the vizier and the Sāsānian figure have often been suggested and perpetuated. However, the works of traditional moral Persian literature do not establish such parallels or, for that matter, try to attribute to Buzurgmihr the legacy of the institution of the vizierate in the same way as Anūshīrvān's legacy was carried on by the caliphs. In such works as the Persian *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* of Al-Ghazālī, in which there is a whole section devoted to the vizier counselor of the prince, nowhere are any type of parallels

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[72] Sourdel, op. cit., I, pp. 56–57.

[73] Yaḥyā al-Barmakī was the first vizier to be made an *Amīr*, see Goiten, op. cit., p. 183; cf. Sourdel, op. cit., pp., I, 41–61.

[74] Goiten, op. cit., pp. 191–193.

[75] Sourdel, op. cit., p. 50; Ibid., II, 718; cf. Goiten, op. cit., pp. 169, 193.

made between the vizier and Buzurgmihr. Furthermore, in another section of the same work concerning perennial wisdom and wise men, some eighteen counsels attributed to Buzurgmihr are recorded without any mention or allusions to the viziers.[76] In yet another work, i.e., Firdawsī's *Shāhnāma*, Buzurgmihr becomes the ideal type for the wise man as well as the most perfect counselor attached to the services of Anūshīrvān.[77]

In spite of all that has been previously mentioned, the possibility of Iranian influences on some of the later depictions of the vizierate can not be dismissed. Its development occurred at a time when the institution of the secretaries (*kuttāb*) within the structure of the state had become quite important. Their presence served to foster the introduction of increasingly Iranian and Oriental influences, e.g., most of *andarz* and *pand* literature. Furthermore, once in office, some of the viziers seem to have surrounded themselves with a pomp modelled on ancient Sāsānian traditions.[78] The new administrative elite at the 'Abbāsid courts, intent on bringing their own cultural heritage within the general framework of Islamic culture, could all too naturally be fascinated by ancient models of the ideal counselor, in a period when numerous works relating to Buzurgmihr's wise counsels were in circulation.

However, it must have been the office of such great viziers as the one of the Barmakids — Yaḥyā and his sons — or that of Niẓām al-Mulk that represented the models for the figure of the wise vizier instead of the figure of Buzurgmihr.[79] Nonetheless, the appropriation of the figure of Buzurgmihr by the Islamic tradition in the later period, e.g. in the works of Bayhaqī, shows indications of an ongoing process of islamization as was the case with most ancient figures of pre-Islamic period. In this work, Buzurgmihr converts to Christianity and predicts the coming of Muḥammad; this leads to his imprisonment and his execution by Anūshīrvān, in addition to having left some sort of book of wisdom.[80] More significant, seems to be the existence of a "normative" role that resulted

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[76] Al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Humāyī, 4th ed. Nashr-i Humā, Tehran 1367, pp. 175–185 and 221–245; cf. de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, pp. 404–406, 408. Al-Ghazālī's work was written for the Seljuq Malik Shāh (d. 1092). In the Arabic translation added to the edition of Humāyī, Buzurgmihr is, in one instance, in the entourage of the Sultan, see Al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, 224, while, in an other instance, he sends a messenger to enquire about the second caliph 'Umar, see Ibid., 398. In another Arabic translation of the 12th century, it is Qayṣar Malik al-Rūm who sends a messenger to enquire about the caliph 'Umar, see Al-Ghazālī, *At-Tibr al-masbūk fī naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Aḥmad Damaj, Al-Mu'assasa al-Jāmi'īya li-ad-Dirāsāt wa-an-Nashr wa-at-Tawzi', Beirut 1987, pp. 116–117.

[77] Charles-Henri de Fouchécour, *Une lecture du* Livre des Rois *de Ferdowsi*, "Studia Iranica" 5 (1976), pp. 171–202, esp. 192–194 for Buzurgmihr and pp. 191–199 for Anūshīrvān.

[78] Sourdel, op. cit., I, p. 59 and II, 718; cf. Goiten, op. cit., p. 193.

[79] Pointed out by the late Russian Orientalist W. Barthold, see Goiten, op. cit., p. 169.

[80] De Fouchécour, *Moralia*, p. 59 n. 128.

from the fostering of a Persian literary heritage, such as works of traditional morals.[81]

The *Al-Ḥikma al-khālida*, An Arabic Collection of Moral Literature

The *Al-Ḥikma al-khālida* [*The Perennial Wisdom*] is, among the many works of the philosopher-historian Ibn Miskawayh (d. 1030), a work which exemplifies the important place that collections of moral literature occupied in the literary and intellectual life of the time. The first part of this work concerns the ancient wisdom of Persia. It consists of an Arabic translation of a lost Persian text, the *Jāvīdān khirad*. This work of Ibn Miskawayh and, in general, anthologies (or literature) of this sort that rely on older material present certain philological difficulties pertaining to the language of the original sources. In the case of Ibn Miskawayh's work, problems remain as to the language in which were written the original texts of these collections of maxims, sayings, exhortations and proverbs which found their way into Arabic (around the late 7th century to the 10th century) and Persian (around the 10th century onwards). Badawī, in the introduction of his edition of the Arabic text, points out the difficulties he encountered while completing this work in the absence of the original Pahlavi texts. The *Al-Ḥikma al-khālida* probably depended on texts that were written during the Sāsāniad period, since there seems to exist a Pahlavi version that would dates back to an earlier Islamic period.[82] Although he does not conclude anything regarding the language of the original text — whether Arabic or Pahlavi — Henning in his review of the latter's edition argues for the Pahlavi origin of the Arabic translation which was probably the work of Ḥasan Ibn Sahl, the brother of Al-Faḍl Ibn Sahl, vizir of Al-Ma'mūn who might have relied on an older work on Hūshang.[83]

In his work, Ibn Miskawayh mentions that he found a book entitled the *Jāvīdān khirad* in Fārs in the possession of the Mūbidhān Mūbadh (the High Zoroastian Priest). It consisted of the spiritual will of Ūshhanj (Arabic spelling) to his son and to all the kings that will come after him. Ibn Miskawayh's version is a much reworked version of the Pahlavi text.[84] In addition, other spiritual wills and *adāb* texts are included with the *Jāvīdān khirad*, and which belong to the

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[81] Said Amir Arjomand, *'Abd Allah Ibn al-Muqaffa' and the 'Abbasid Revolution* "Iranian Studies" 27 (1994), pp. 12–16.

[82] In Badawī's introduction, see Ibn Miskawayh, *Al-Ḥikma al-khālida (Jāvīdān Khirad)*, ed. and intro. 'Abd al-Raḥman Badawī, 3rd ed., Dār al-Andalus, Beirut 1983, p. 32; cf. Arkoun, *Contribution*, p. 147 and 147 n. 2.

[83] Walter Bruno Henning's review article *Eine arabische Version Mittelpersischer Weisheitsschriften* "Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft" 106 (1956), pp. 73–74.

[84] Henning, op. cit., p. 74.

Persian, the Hindu, the Arab and the Greek traditions.[85] The text might have been written between 986 and 992, most probably published after 992, date on which Al-'Āmirī (who is also included in the work) passed away.[86] It has been noted that the text dealing with the perennial wisdom of Persia is more eloquent than the original Pahlavi. Furthermore, it is devoid of any elements that might offend a Muslim reader.[87] As for Anūshīrvān and Buzurgmihr, they appear quite often in the section on the *adāb* of Persia, in such works as the *Spiritual Will of Buzurgmihr to Kisrā*, the *Sayings of Anūshīrvān*, the *Sayings of Buzurgmihr* and the *Wisdoms of Kisrā Qabād*.

There exists another Arabic work, attributed to Ibn al-Muqaffa' (d. ca. 756), and containing a *Counsels of Hushang* similar to the one found in the work of Ibn Miskawayh.[88] Furthermore, there exists a Persian work which contains a text which is also found in the work of Ibn Miskawayh. This text found in both works is the Persian *Khiradnāma*. Ibn Miskawayh's text, according to de Fouchécour, appears to be more complete than the Persian version; most probably, the former's text is a more elaborated version than the one on which relied the *Khiradnāma*.[89] There probably existed an earlier and more expanded Arabic version which was used by Ibn Miskawayh; however, Ḥasan Ibn Sahl, the first translator of the text, is said to have had only a short version of the text, perhaps the one on which the Persian *Khiradnāma* relied.[90] It is only quite late, i.e., during the Mughal period in the Subcontinent, that the Arabic *Al-Ḥikma al-khālida* will be translated into Persian. It will be during the 17th century that a translation will be made by Mawlānā Taqī ad-Dīn Muḥammad Arrajā Shushtarī.[91] A second translation, but this time an abridged version, will be written by Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ibn Ḥajjī Shams ad-Dīn Darvīsh in 1654–5[92] based on an earlier translation of the *Jāvīdān khirad* which had been

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[85] Ibn Miskawayh, *Al-Ḥikma al-khālida*, pp. 5–6. According to the Avesta tradition, Hūshang is the first king of the world, but the second King according to the tradition reported by Firdawsī.

[86] Ibn Miskawayh would have been about sixty years old at that time, see Arkoun, *Contribution*, pp. 117–120; cf. idem, *Introduction à la lecture du Kitāb Jāvīdān Khirad*, in Ibn-i Miskawayh, *Jāvīdān Khirad*, trans. T. M. Shushtarī, ed. B. Tharvatiyān and introduction M. Arkoun, Institute of Islamic Studies (McGill U.), Tehran Branch, Tehran 1976, pp. 1–24.

[87] Henning, op. cit., p. 76.

[88] De Fouchécour, *Moralia*, pp. 35–36. However, a positive attribution of this work — the *Yatīmat as-sulṭan* (pp. 146–172) to Ibn al-Muqaffa' is not possible, see Muḥammad Kurd 'Ali, *Rasā'il al-bulaghā'*, 145.

[89] Furthermore, some advice — possibly authentic — are not found in the Persian text (no. 16, 17, 18), see de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, pp. 36–37.

[90] Ibid., 37.

[91] In B. Tharvatiyān's introduction, this work was requested by Jahāngīr, sometime after the death of his father Akbar (d. 1605), see ibid., 37, 37 n. 27. Shushtarī also wrote a prose version of Firdawsī's *Shāhnāma* for Akbar, see Ibn Miskawayh, *Jāvīdān Khirad*, p. 45.

[92] For the different editions, see de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, p. 37 n. 28.

written at the court of Jahāngīr (r. 1605–1627), and which was most probably the one made earlier by Shushtarī.[93]

The *Khiradnāma*, A Collection of Persian *Andarz* and *Pand* Literature

Both figures of the just ruler and the wise counselor are found in what is thought to be one of the earliest Persian example of this traditional moral literature, the *Khiradnāma az maqālat-i ḥukamā* [the *Book of Wisdom from the Sayings of Wise Men*].[94] The importance of this work lies in the fact that it is perhaps one of the earliest Persian texts dealing with *andarz* and *pand* literature. The manuscript used for the Persian edition (the only existing one) dates back to the 12th century. Its prose, however, according to de Fouchécour, can be ascribed to the 11th century; however, some of the fragments collected in this *Book of Wisdom* could rely, according to Minovi, on earlier texts, e.g., perhaps as early as the end of the 10th century. Most probably, this collection of texts depends on a much earlier Sāsānian text originally written in Pahlavi.[95]

In this collection of texts, with the exception of the *Nuktihā-i kitāb-i jāvīdān khirad* [*The Book Concerning the Perennial Wisdom*], none have yet been traced to any known or existing Arabic text.[96] The *Nuktihā-i kitāb-i jāvīdān khirad* would be based on the Pahlavi *Pandnāma* of Buzurgmihr;[97] moreover, it is a less elaborated form of the Arabic text found in Ibn Miskawayh's *Al-Ḥikma al-khālida* which is said to be based on an older Arabic translation, probably from an ancient Pahlavi text. Another indication of the possible ancient Pahlavi origin of the *Khiradnāma* is further attested by the fact that it does not make any direct reference to Islam, except where it mentions only incidentally the names of some individuals such as Muḥammad.[98] The *Khiradnāma* consists of a collection of 17 discussions, varying in length from one to nineteen pages. It is a pseudepigraphic work, where each text can be identified by such figures as Shāpūr, Alexander, Aristotle, Hippocrates, wise men as well as Buzurgmihr and Anūshīrvān.

The importance of the *Khiradnāma* lies in the fact that it is one of the first texts of Persian moral literature, some of its parts going back as early as the 11th century, perhaps even the end of the 10th century. This would make it contem-

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[93] In Tharvatiyān's introduction, see Ibn Miskawayh, *Jāvīdān Khirad*, p. 45.
[94] For a translation, cf. Roxanne Marcotte, *An Early Anonymous Persian Moral Text: The Jāvīdān Khirad*, "Islamic Studies" 36 (1997), pp. 77–87.
[95] De Fouchécour, *Moralia*, pp. 20, 24–25. The colophon of the copy is dated 574/1178–1179 or 595/1197, see Ibid., 24: cf. Tharwat, *Khidarnāma*, p. 19.
[96] De Fouchécour, *Moralia*, p. 22.
[97] Christensen, *La légende*, pp. 98–99.
[98] De Fouchécour, *Moralia*, p. 25.

porary to the *Qābusnāma* of Kay Kāvūs (dated 1082).[99] Another interesting feature of the *Khiradnāma*, as mentioned by de Fouchécour, is the fact that the first part of this work, or the text of which it is an account, corresponds to the one used for the *Qābusnāma*.[100] Furthermore, parts of the *Khiradnāma*, seem to have been one of the sources for the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* of Al-Ghazālī (ca. 1106).[101]

In summary, this text offers a good example of how ancient edifying and moral works were transmitted from the Sāsānid period into the Islamic milieu that was still, in the 10th century, integrating and reappropriating elements of an ancient cultural heritage, e.g., *andarz* literature. This literary genre, especially widespread during the Sāsānid Empire, was able to survive, on the one hand, through the Arabic translations, mostly Islamicized works which were quite often devoid of any references to the ancient Zoroastrian religion as well as, on the other hand, through the Persian versions, at times less inclined to add Islamic elements or accomodate Islamic sensitivities. This literary genre was to become a witness to the rich cultural heritage to which the Islamic tradition is indebted.[102]

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[99] Ibid., 176, 180. A poem from Abū Shakūr's *Āfarīnnāma* (written in 336/947–948) and one from the *Rāḥat al-insān* are found in the *Qābusnāma*, see ibid., 182.

[100] Ibid., 22, 26, 175 as well as 179–223.

[101] Ibid., 22, 28.

[102] Richard N. Fry, *The Golden Age of Persia. The Arabs in the East* Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London 1975, 154.