Taken for Wonder
Nineteenth-Century Travel Accounts from Iran to Europe

Naghmeh Sohrabi
To Mehrab, Sedi, Navid, Negin, and Cyrus
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NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION

This dissertation uses the IJMES transliteration system for Persian without diacritical marks except for ‘ayn and hamza. Other than for historical figures, I have adhered to the most common spellings of proper names when possible.
Taken for Wonder
CHAPTER 1

Writing Travel, Making Genre

You must know that at present I cannot speak knowingly to you of the manners and customs of the Europeans, for I myself have but the slightest idea of them and so far have had time only to be astonished.¹

—Letter xxiv, Rica to Ibben, at Smyrna

In May 1809, a handsome thirty-three-year-old envoy set off on a diplomatic journey from Persia to England. Officially given the title of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the court of King George III, Mirza Abul Hasan Khan Ilchi Shirazi recorded “the strange events and the reports of the incidents of the sea and land” in a book titled Hayratnamah, or Book of Wonder.² In 1897, a curmudgeonly merchant by the name of Ibrahim Sahhaftashi boarded a ship from the port city of Anzali heading for Europe and the United States in an attempt to sell some jewels. He recorded his daily observations since “most of my compatriots [hamvatanan] who went to Europe [farang] return with only praise and are ashamed to write of the prices, but I will write all the prices.”³ In the ninety years that separates our two travelers, an increasingly larger number of travelers from Iran traversed the globe for a variety of reasons. Until the mid-nineteenth century the majority set out for diplomatic, educational, and pilgrimage purposes, by the end of the century the reasons extended to medical purposes, trade, sightseeing, and for one, Hajj Sayyah, running away from marrying his cousin.⁴ Whether all of these travelers recorded their journeys or sent letters (and later telegraphs) from abroad, we will never know, but their footprints remain in the writings of the smaller number of travelers whose travelogues have been preserved in various archives. The number of known accounts of travels by Iranians in the Qajar period (1794–1925) is by one account 283, with more than 50 percent of
them written in the latter half of the nineteenth century during the reign of Nasir al-Din Shah (see chapter 4).5

Accounts of travel to far-flung places have deservedly gripped the imagination of readers, both in their own times and beyond. On the most basic level, they serve as records of their author’s often unfamiliar observations to places often familiar to readers today. As such, travel literature as a source of history for the study of the Middle East is not new, though the focus has until recently mostly been on the writings of Europeans traveling to Persia and/or the Ottoman Empire. The works of travelers as varied as Chardin, Lady Montague, Lane (both Edward and Sophia), Slade, Flaubert, and E. G. Browne, to name but the most famous few, have been and still are utilized as sources of information about the “Orient.”6 Conversely, they also form the basis for Edward Said’s Orientalism, which links the knowledge produced by such writers to the larger project of imperialism.7 More recently, the prominence of “world history” in the field of historical studies expanded this interest to travel literatures of the non-Western world. Moving away from a civilization model for understanding global history, scholars have focused on the intersection of cultures, empires, and civilizations as transparent and deeply rich points for historical analysis, using travel literature as reflections of these encounters. This has meant an interest not only in travel accounts from the region to Europe but also within the region and looking eastward toward India.8

This book is a series of historiographic essays that examines a small number of travel accounts written by Iranians traveling from Qajar lands to Europe in the nineteenth century. Using texts that correspond to four monarchical orders in this period—Fath ‘Ali Shah (r. 1797–1834), Muhammad Shah (r. 1834–1848), Nasir al-Din Shah (r. 1848–1896), and Muzaffar al-Din Shah (r. 1896–1907)—it argues that Qajar travel writing as a historical source can be made to say much more than only descriptions of its destination, in this case that of Europe. Specifically, it posits these texts can expand on our understanding of Qajar Iran if we shift our framework of analysis from the act of travel to that of writing travel. This shift allows for a delineation of the process by which travel writing became institutionalized and developed into a tool of “state propaganda,”9 aimed at both the local and European audiences. In the process, this book reexamines the notion that modernity—used here as “shorthand for broad social, economic, and cultural transformations”9a—in Iran was the chief outcome of Iranians traveling to and writing about Europe.

As a result, this book situates itself in studies of Qajar Iran, world history, and travel writing. It demonstrates the ways in which travel writings to Europe were used to position Qajar Iran within a global context, that is, narration of travel to Europe was also narrating the power of the Qajar court even when political events were tipped against it; and related to that, how both travel to Europe and also translations of travel narratives into Persian should be included in our understanding of the importance of geography and mapping to the Qajars, especially during the latter half of the nineteenth century. More broadly, this book argues for a new way of interpreting travel accounts, one that moves away from an overemphasis on the destinations of travel (particularly in cases where the destination, like Europe, signifies larger meanings such as modernity) and that historicizes the travelogue itself as a rhetorical text in the service of its origin’s concerns and developments.

Travelogues are undoubtedly texts of place, but that place is not just the destination. The final product that is handed down to us, the readers, is a product of multiple places. Travelers setting out from their point of origin toward their destination—some with the intention of writing from the beginning, others arriving at the idea of writing down their observations later—traverse wide spaces and long periods of time before their thoughts are translated into a concrete object, that is, a travelogue. As such, there is a need to distinguish between traveling itself and the travelogue at hand, keeping in mind that the final product of the journey, is not only a product of the destination (in this case Europe), but also of the author’s origins, that is, Qajar Iran. This distinction also allows us to bring to the fore an obvious though rarely considered fact: Neither the Iran from where a traveler set off nor the Europe that she or he eventually reached remained the same throughout the nineteenth century—both the origins and destinations were moving targets. As such, throughout this book, I will demonstrate how these travelogues to Europe through narrating the glory of the Qajar king abroad to their audiences at home, functioned as imperial and kingly texts. This approach also elucidates how a new geographic interest became incorporated into travel accounts, which is one of the factors that accounts for the fascinating ways in which by the end of the nineteenth century, contrary to popular belief, the lines between travelogues, geographies, histories, and memoirs remained blurred even as they took on new forms and meanings.

The framework within which Taken for Wonder operates is one that contextualizes travel accounts to Europe on two levels. First, on the level of meaning, connected to the identity of the traveler, his or her reasons for travel, and the period in which travel occurred. Closely connected to this level of contextualization is an interpretive framework that focuses on what the travelogues say about Europe but, perhaps more important, on the role they perform in the cultural milieu from which they came. Taking these texts as moving targets, this book argues that their meanings depended not only on the specificity of travel and Europe at any given moment but also
on that of writing itself. The second level of contextualization occurs on the level of genre. The question raised, implicitly and explicitly, throughout this book is what constituted a safarnamah (travelogue) during the Qajar period and how our contemporary understandings of travelogues have informed our reading of Qajar history. It thus brings to the fore the issue of narrative and the development of the aesthetics of this particular genre over the century, and its place within the writing culture of its own time.

In sum, while acknowledging the utility of reading travelogues of Europe vertically and in comparison to one another over the long nineteenth century, this book argues that they should also be read horizontally and in relation to the genres and narratives in which they were produced. Susan Noakes suggests that "travel narratives may profitably be examined, not as objective reports of places and peoples, but rather as works of rhetoric about places and peoples."11 If we therefore extend our understanding of "places and peoples" to both the destination of the travel and its origins, then what new understandings does Qajar travel literature to Europe present to us?

TRAVEL WRITING AND QAJAR HISTORIOGRAPHY

Iran’s long nineteenth century was dominated by the Qajar dynasty (1794–1925), which ruled over a complex and crucial period in the history of modern Iran.12 The "central controversy" that John Foran raises in regard to Qajar economic history can easily be extended to the general history of the dynasty as well: Was this an era of decline or the beginnings of modernization?13 The rule of the Qajars, who were "a Turkish-speaking people originally from Central Asia,"14 was noteworthy for, among many things, establishing a continuous and elaborate courtly presence in Iran after more than a century of instability;15 and, subsequently, the flourishing of various aspects of Iranian society, culture, and politics. It was in this period that Iran experienced the world, particularly Europe, in ways that were new and that paved the way for what scholars see as the beginning of Iranian modernity and modernization by the beginning of the twentieth century. These changes in the military, educational, judicial, state, and bureaucratic structures of the empire along with new cultural and social processes such as rising notions of nationalism, citizenship, and changes in sexuality facilitated Iran’s entry into the modern period and its eventual transformation into a nation-state. The Qajar era is also known for crushing defeats in the 1804–1813 and 1826–1828 wars against Russia, which resulted in loss of land and substantial indemnities, a burgeoning deficit by the end of the century, and a general sense of decline and mismanagement.16 In December

1906, after decades of agitation and calls by reformers for the rule of law, the ailing monarch Muzafar al-Din Shah (r. 1896–1907) signed the constitution drawn up by Iran’s first parliament, thus transforming the country into a constitutional monarchy. The Constitutional Revolution of 1906, almost twenty years before the overthrow of the last Qajar monarch, Ahmad Shah (r. 1909–1925), was thus the culmination of both many of the transformations and grievances outlined above.17

The Constitutional Revolution provided a powerful analytical window through which to examine and evaluate the century that came before it. Constructing the Constitutional Revolution as the beginning of Iranian "awakening" and "enlightenment," historians (at times echoing their sources) have until recently portrayed the period preceding it, the nineteenth century, as a period of decline, of continual struggles for reform and modernity, and of the failure of these struggles. This has in turn contributed to a historiography whereby in reading backward in time to identify concepts and processes that the historical actors of the nineteenth century could not have foreseen, historians then write history forward, establishing the Qajar period as containing the roots of, and causes for, watershed moments in the modern history of Iran. The resulting historiography of Qajar Iran thus examines events and characters in light of the presumed inevitability of the Constitutional Revolution and examines texts not necessarily in relation to the cultural productions of their own period, but rather for hints and glimpses of what was to come in 1906 and beyond. While this historiography illuminates certain aspects of the period (for example, the development of modern political concepts, the formation of public opinion, and mass mobilization), it has also resulted in the marginalization and misrepresentation of other aspects of nineteenth-century Iran, when it did not ignore them completely.

The effects of this type of historiography extend to our definitions of texts and to the meanings we assign to those texts. The very act of archival discovery; the editing of historical texts (which itself embraces questions of annotation and the choice of titles for often nameless texts); and the canonization of certain texts versus the dismissal of others as historically insignificant are all linked to historians’ search for harbingers of the values of the constitutional period in the nineteenth century.18 With regard to the study of Qajar travelogues, the overall effect of this type of history—in which the scholars’ concerns have been shaped by the inevitability of later events—has been the creation of a canon of travel accounts that privilege the concerns of the constitutional period, for example reform of political institutions, over those that reflect concerns of their own times.

Starting from at least the mid-twentieth century, Qajar travelogues of Europe have been examined with respect to a central theme in the study of
modernity in non-Western societies: the role of encounters with Europe in the borrowing and dissemination of Enlightenment ideas among Iranian elites. The subsequent designation of these travel accounts by contemporary historians as texts of "reform," texts of "decline," texts of "alterity," or texts of "Empowerology," as we shall see shortly, reflects important debates over the process of modernity in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Iran. Yet, paradoxically, despite the central role they have played in scholars' understanding of modernity in Iran, these travelogues as texts of Europe more often than not have let contemporary historians down: whereas certain travelogues are examined and reexamined for the information they provide regarding Iranian perceptions of Europe (and of Western progress), those that do not are ignored—or, even worse, condemned—for not providing the kind of information later historians expect them to provide. Two general analytical frameworks for the study of travelogues to Europe can be detected in Qajar historiography: first-generation or "whiggish" historiography, and second-generation or "representational" historiography.19

First-Generation Historiography

In the 1950s, there was an explosion of scholarship in Iran in general readership periodicals such as Yasghma and Yadigar that began to show interest in travelogues written during the Qajar period. These included articles on the first and second group of students sent to Europe in the nineteenth century, descriptions of Muzaffar al-Din Shah's first European trip, and Hajji Pirzadah Na'ini's "Paris poem."20 These articles began to identify travelogues to Europe during the Qajar period as both transmitters of knowledge about Europe and reflections of stylistic changes in writing in that era. Scholars such as Bahar, Afsar, and Khanlari noted the shift from flowery to simple literary style (sadah nivis) in the nineteenth century and attributed it to the influence of translation from European languages in this period, with travelers to Europe acting as conduits of both foreign words and of ideas. For example, in discussing the literary styles of Nasir al-Din Shah's period, Iraj Afsar quoted from the monarch's account of his second trip to Europe, noting that the king's unadorned language was not due to his illiteracy (a major misconception to this day) but was a stylistic choice.21 Similarly, Bahar in his Sabkshinasi, which served as a university-level textbook for doctorates in literature, directly linked the creation of a "simple prose" (nask-i sadah) to relations to Europe,22 singling out Nasir al-Din Shah, among others, for writing in this style in his travelogues.23

For this generation of scholars, Iran's progress, equated with the Constitutional Revolution, was in many ways part and parcel of a general trend in "the world," that is, Europe: "One can say that in the trajectory of historical change, the nineteenth century is the era of the victory of Freedom and Sovereignty."24 In this framework, travelers to Europe and specifically students sent to Europe, stood at the forefront: "According to our research, [students sent to England by Abbas Mirza] were the first Iranians to become familiar with the call for freedom [azadi khvahi] and the principles of national governance [hukumat-i milli]."25 Similarly, as modernization "means the adaptation and application of modern Western civilization to traditional Persian-Islamic society,"26 it stood to reason that "one of the significant channels of ma'rifat-i jadid, 'the new culture' was the travel memoir."

Within this historiographic strand, the sending of Iranian students abroad on the heel of Iran's first two major defeats at the hands of the Russians in 1813 and 1828 constituted a turning point in nineteenth-century Iranian-European contact and by extension, Iranian modernity.28 Historical actors such as Crown Prince Abbas Mirza (d. 1833), and Prime Minister Amir Kabir (d. 1852), are considered heroes of modernization, battling the forces of tradition and locating modernity in both military and technological might brought to Iran from Europe. While neither of these two figures traveled to Europe themselves, their exalted status in the "whiggish" historical narratives is linked to their having sent students to study in Europe and their subsequent use of the students' knowledge.

The works of this generation of scholars have been crucial to the study of Qajar travelogues for three reasons: Their interest in travel accounts led to the identification of these texts in the archives (both personal and public) and their subsequent publication. This in turn led to the creation of a canon of texts where none existed before. And last, their writings introduced to the field of Qajar studies travel accounts as possible sources for the writing of history.29

Nonetheless, this approach has some drawbacks, namely since for these scholars the significance of travelogues to Europe is directly related to their larger framework for Iran's progress, not every visit to Europe and not every observation about those visits was important: what matters is what is done back "home" once the traveler returns. This had real ramifications, as we will see in the next chapters, for the archival retrieval of these travel accounts. Travelogues with descriptions of "modern" institutions such as the newspaper and parliament took on a central role (both in terms of publication and also integration into the larger historical narrative), while those that either ignored or derided these institutions were deemed at the very least insignificant and nonactors in the inevitable move forward toward the 1906 Revolution.
Second-Generation Historiography

In the aftermath of the 1979 Revolution, at the analytical intersection of Al-i Ahmad's *Gharbzadaghi* [Westoxification] and Edward Said's *Orientalism*, a new generation of scholars turned their attention to Qajar travelogues to Europe for their representational value (of relations to the West). Specifically, they examined the ways in which travelogues to Europe became the site at which the "self" became defined in relation to the "Western other." A variety of questions engaged this "second" or "representational" generation. They ranged from tracing the historical and literary roots of Iran's postrevolutionary antagonism toward the West, to the use of travelogues as sites of a multifaceted representation of the West, and to the identification of these texts as accounts of "the quest and an implicit comparison and exploration of Iran's deficiency." Their analytical shift often questioned the previous generation's acceptance of their sources' intentions regarding the benefits of Westernization to Iran's progress. In this way, they problematized the use of travelogues as purely depositories of knowledge about Europe and brought to light the ambiguities that lay at the heart of encounters with the West at a time of Qajar anxieties about its own decline.

There are two interconnected problems with this historiographic strand. First, in focusing on the sense of deficiency reflected in Qajar travelogues, it does not take into account the notion of imperial decline itself as a historically specific concept that changed as the century progressed. The court of Fath 'Ali Shah, for example, particularly before the second Perso-Russian war (1826–1827), had no reason to and did not see itself as an empire in decline. While the first Perso-Russian war (1804–1813) was more protracted, and the signing of the Gulistan treaty in 1813 may have been a traumatic moment of loss of land and indemnities for Iran, the Qajar court did not see it as a definitive defeat. In fact, there was a sense in 1813 that territory would be returned to Iran. The military reform and buildup, the diplomatic activities particularly the sending of Mirza Abul Hasan Ilich to Russia in 1814, and eventual full-scale attack on the Russians in 1826 demonstrate the evolution of a mentality of defeat on the part of the Qajar court. In this sense, a reading of early nineteenth-century travel literature as a "means of exploring the reasons behind this disparity [in power], and as a means of evaluating possible ways of correcting it" is questioned by the historical record.

Second, despite being a necessary corrective, the representational strand with some exceptions still operates within a positivist notion of historical change. This strand at times repeats the value-laden process of evaluating travel accounts from the first generation: Since travelogues reveal the travelers' fascination with Western technology and compare "Western progress in social, economic, and technological matters" with "the stagnant conditions in Iran," accounts that don't reflect this fascination are at times ignored or dismissed as reflecting the author's character deficiency.

A small but important number of scholars within this strand have demonstrated that the travelers were neither passive recipients of modernity, nor of the European's curious "gaze," but rather engaged in "Persianate Eurotology." Whereas European modernity actively suppressed the heterotopic context of its emergence, Persianate modernity celebrated its transformative conversation with Europeans. This active remembrance of the creative process of cultural hybridization and diversification is often misunderstood by the historians of modern Iran as an undifferentiated process of Westernization.

In this reading of the travel literature, "Persianate travelers were not gaping at an advanced culture. As keen observers, they were endowed with a critical 'double-consciousness.'" In this sense, they were not only reformers, or enunciators of their own deficiency, but rather anthropologists and Eurologists. This notion of travelers as anthropologists is an invaluable interjection into the study of travelogues, particularly in the ways in which it imbues the travel writer with agency and highlights how these travelogues "grew out of the same historical conditions as those that produced its [European] counterparts." Nonetheless, it operates on two problematic assumptions: First, by picking and choosing information about Europe (Eurotology), this approach necessitates discarding or ignoring the rest of these travelogues that treated more "familiar territory"—inside Iran, for example—with the same descriptive eye. Second, by designating these travel writers as anthropologists and ethnographers, it elevates experiential knowledge at the cost of other forms of knowledge that were as valid at the time as "seeing with one's own eyes."

The various historiographic strands noted above have not only brought travel literature into the study of nineteenth-century Iran but have also elucidated important connections between travel and modernity. Put together, these scholars' works have effectively reflected both the excitement that Europe elicited in nineteenth-century travelers and the anxieties expressed among some, but not all of them. But the problem remains that interpreting them as texts of *Europe*, regardless of the analytical lens used, does not yield satisfactory answers to some crucial questions that arise from even a cursory reading of the travelogues: What to do with travelogues that don't reflect the sense of awe that later historians have assumed early contact with Europe created in non-Western travelers? Why were all these travel writers almost equally interested in writing about places within the geographical
boundaries of nineteenth-century Iran as they were about Europe? And more important, how is one to read the almost mind-numbing (and often repetitive) amount of descriptions of landscape, daily routines, and people that occupied the bulk of these texts? In order to reach a different interpretive framework that can provide answers, three basic assumptions about Qajar travel writing to Europe need to be examined: First, that the historical significance of travel to Europe is the same as that of writing about travel to Europe; second, that each account is written in the same genre of writing, that is, travelogues, or safarnamah; and third, that travel provided the primary site of observing and writing about Europe.

Travelers or Travel Writers?

That there were more Qajar travelers to Europe than there are travelogues is an obvious fact. Chronicles and histories of Qajar Iran are replete with mentions of various students, merchants, and court officials who traveled to Europe during the nineteenth century, only a handful of whom have left behind records of their travels. For example, in 1808, a year before the arrival of Mirza Abu al-Hasan Khan Ilchi to England (the subject of chapter 2), Askar Khan Afshar, Iran’s ambassador, arrived in France. What we know about his stay has been reconstructed by several scholars through French newspapers and later Qajar chronicles, but there is no indication that he has left an account of his journey. If the impetus behind writing a travelogue is only to record the experience of the novel, here Europe, then why does Ilchi, traveling to farang (Europe) around the same time as his counterpart, Askar Khan Afshar, choose to record his particular journey when Afshar did not?

Mirza Salih Shirazi’s account of his travels to and stay in England is one of the best-known and most celebrated accounts by later scholars, and presents a different case of the confluence of travel with travel writing.45 In “The Forces of Modernization in Nineteenth-Century Iran,” Farman Farmayan provides an account of the early students who traveled to Europe, estimating that between 1811 and 1853 a total of twenty-nine students were sent to study in Europe.46 Among this group of twenty-nine, only one travelogue, that of Mirza Salih, is known by historians. Sent to England in 1815 for four years of study, Mirza Salih published in 1837 what is considered to be the first Qajar newspaper Kaghaiz-i akhbar [literally, paper of news].47 Even though Bert Fragner catalogues this travelogue under “memoirs,” most of his analysis is in relation to travelogues that came before and after it. For example, he suggests that Mirza Salih’s Safarnamah, which he believes was much imitated in style by later travelers, is the beginning of a “new” style of “travel writing and memoirs.” Fragner bases his argument on both Mirza Salih’s style of writing and the link between his “simple” style and “the personal and intimate expression of its contents.” And while Fragner’s assessment of Mirza Salih’s writing is more stylistic, a whole array of scholars have celebrated his travelogue for signaling the “beginning of Iranians’ familiarity with the idea of freedom, modes of Western governance and observation of new advances of Europe.”

Despite all the contemporary celebrations of Mirza Salih’s travelogue, one cannot but wonder to what degree this celebration is connected to the ways in which Mirza Salih himself fits into a historiographic paradigm that celebrates signifiers of “modernity” such as the creation of a newspaper or the printing press. This is not to say that Mirza Salih was not a “technological middleman” who played a crucial role in the transfer of print technology to Iran as persuasively argued by Nile Green.48 Nor that his travel account is not an “incomparable firsthand account” of this transfer.49 Rather that the celebration of Mirza Salih as a travel writer has been conflated. His having been one of many students who traveled to Europe at the behest of Qajar “modernizers” and who returned performing a “modern” role within the court apparatus.

Defining Genre

The difference in meaning between writing about the world and traveling in it raises the question of genre and the significance of contemporary historians’ categorization of various texts as “travelogues,” “memoirs,” “geographies,” “chronicles,” and so forth. The relationship between “narrative” and “content” has most famously and persuasively been argued by Hayden White. White begins by stating, “[T]o raise the question of the nature of the narrative is to invite reflection on the very nature of culture and even on the nature of humanity itself.” Specifically, White’s work when applied to Qajar travel literature raises the question not only of what constitutes a safarnamah but even more important, what historiographic work have contemporary definitions of a particular set of texts as travelogues performed? In other words, to what degree is our notion of what constitutes a travelogue (about Europe) in the Qajar era a product of historiography more than anything else?

The essays collected in Aspects of Genre and Type in Pre-Modern Literary Cultures not only provide some guidelines for answering these questions, but also bring to light the extent to which historians and literary critics in other fields have already identified the problematic of constructing and utilizing contemporary genres in interpreting historical texts. In “a personal essay and a plea,” Anda Schippers lays down the “basic problem"
as such: "Historical genres cannot be grasped by modern definitions."\textsuperscript{58} This incongruence leads to three complications: First, the procedure of defining genres is akin to taking "a basket full of eggs" and on that basis defining what "an egg" is and subsequently throwing away "a number of eggs." In other words, "we try to adapt the material to the definition, and not the other way around."\textsuperscript{59} Second, "definitions of genres tend to be normative."\textsuperscript{60} Consciously or not, historians often have "a vision of the ideal form" of what constitutes a travelogue and use that ideal form (that is often derived from the historiographical narratives outlined in this chapter) to make judgments regarding individual texts. Third, Schippers points to the ways in which scholars often discard "historical definitions" of a certain genre for lacking "modern precision." "Is it not an obvious procedure," Schippers asks, "to use historical definitions of a genre when studying historical genres?"\textsuperscript{61}

The labor put into the defining and delineating genres of writing attests to the inadequacy of our own notions of genre when applied to historical texts. Current scholarship, starting with the classification of texts under various headings in archives, to the naming of texts (is it a history, geography, or travelogue?) for their publication, to eventually the reading/understanding/contextualization of historical texts, is deeply invested in its own understandings and definitions of genres and hierarchies of knowledge. This has tangible effects in the creation of canons, the centrality of certain texts to these canons, and the dismissal of those that do not fit into our anachronistic classifications. What constitutes specific genres, their characteristics, and their central (but also outstanding) texts are crucial issues not only for historiography and periodization, but also to the historical meanings given to these texts. In other words, silences (and meanings) enter "the process of historical production" not only at the level of the making of sources, archives, narratives, and history, as noted by Trouillot, but also at the level of genre.\textsuperscript{62} The question is thus what is at stake for scholars, for example, in categorizing certain types of knowledge such as geographical and historical as "scientific" versus those such as 'aja'ib as mostly serving the purposes of entertainment? (See chapter 2.)

To free ourselves from the "straightjacket"\textsuperscript{63} that our understanding of genres has forced upon the meanings of Qajar texts, it is thus necessary to look at the ways in which the historiography has worked together with modern definitions of genre to create a larger narrative that in many ways predetermined the meanings and significance of these Qajar travelogues. It is obvious that nineteenth-century genres of writing do not necessarily correspond to our own contemporary ones. What is less obvious is the evolution of the cultural and political role that seemingly familiar genres of writing performed in their own times.

Europe in the Text

Questions of genre prompt us to address the third assumption often made in regard to Qajar travelogues to Europe: travelogues to Europe were primarily sites of production of knowledge about Europe. This link among travel, experience of the new, and transmission of knowledge is of course not unique to Qajar Iran. In the case of Europe, the formation of the notion of the "Grand Tour," which began in the eighteenth century, was predicated on the idea that "knowledge is rooted in experience and nowhere else . . . Following the great Renaissance age of colonial exploration and expansion, an articulated, systematic empiricism made traveling about the world and seeing the new and different 'something like an obligation for the person conscientious about developing the mind and accumulating knowledge.'\textsuperscript{64}

In a similar vein, the historiography of Qajar travel literature has focused on the meaning and significance of travel to the development of Qajar modernity partly by identifying travelogues as transmitters of "new scientific, cultural, and even political concepts."\textsuperscript{65} While undoubtedly travel accounts played an important role, particularly in the early parts of the century, in transmitting new concepts to Iran, they were not the only venue for knowledge about Europe nor were they solely venues for the transmission of knowledge about Europe in Qajar Iran. Knowing Europe occurred through a multiplicity of routes, such as "missionaries, physicians, military instructors, envoys,"\textsuperscript{66} and even, as chapter 4 demonstrates, translated texts, some of which affected our travelers’ worldviews even before they set off on their long journeys. This is not to say that scholars do not know this obvious fact but rather that in reading travelogues to Europe this idea has rarely informed their analysis. Instead, assuming the singular importance of "experience" as the form of knowledge has led to a one-to-one link between seeing Europe and knowing it, which in turn has blinded scholars to other nonexperiential and equally valid forms of knowledge that informed many of these "texts of Europe."

The connection among three texts, two regarded today as travelogues and one as a book of geography, from the early nineteenth century Persionate world serves as a fascinating example of the circulation of knowledge about Europe at the time. \textit{Iraj Afshar} in designating travelogues as transmitters of knowledge about Europe, mentions first and foremost Mir 'Abd al-Latif Shushhtari's \textit{Tuhfat al-alam},\textsuperscript{67} a book written in 1800–1801 that describes itself as a local history of Shushhtar.\textsuperscript{68} Nonetheless, \textit{Tuhfat al-alam} includes chapters on the history and customs of the Europeans, which is preceded by a description of "the wonders of islands and strangeness of seas ['aja'ib-i jazayir va ghara'ib-i bihar']" and succeeded by sections on India. Shushhtari did travel but never to Europe; rather, he collected information,
it seems, from books, from travelers to Europe, and from various Europeans whom he met during his long residence in India. One such source of information was Mirza ‘Abu Talib Khan Isfahani, born and raised in Lucknow and the author of Masir-i Talibi from whom Shushtari received a letter written from farang, announcing “his arrival in England, and how he was treated by the king and notables.” Masir-i Talibi is partly an account of Mirza ‘Abu Talib’s two-year-long travel to and residence in England beginning in 1799, and partly a description of English customs and institutions. In this book, Mirza ‘Abu Talib provides a detailed biography of Shushtari and his various travels and informs the reader that he had spent much time with Shushtari until he left for his European trip. Shushtari also appears in Bustan al-siyahah, written in 1831 by the Sufi master Hajjī Zayn al-Abīdīn Shirvānī, who spent most of his life in “forced exile” and who recorded “his adventures and journeys through and views on most of the Islamic world from North Africa to Bengal” in three different books. Bustan al-siyahah is both a work of geography and a “book of travel,” where each entry is a compendium of Shirvani’s own observations from his travels, his conversations with various people, and information gleaned from books. One of these books is Tuhfat al-‘alam, which Shirvani quotes at the start of his entry on “farang”: “The author of Tuhfat al-‘alam has said that the word farang was originally fransis, which due to its frequent and uneducated use by the masses [awam], became farang.” In every entry related to Europe (England, France, Austria, and farang) and “the New World,” Shirvani emphasizes that he has not been to farang himself but has spoken to many knowledgeable people. In his entry on Austria (namsa), Shirvani explains why he did not feel the need to travel there in order to write about it. While stating that Austria is the “best” of the European lands, he explains that during his time in “Constantinople” he was invited by the Austrian ambassador to visit his country, but since “there was not much other-worldly gain to be made from traveling to that land,” he declined.

METHODOLOGY OF TAKEN FOR WONDER

As noted earlier, this book is a series of case studies that uses a handful of known travel accounts to test out the proposed framework of analysis laid forth in this chapter. The chosen texts, while occupying either a marginal or forgotten place in Qajar historiography, were nonetheless an important part of their own period’s political or cultural milieu. As such, this book is not a comprehensive analysis of all known travelogues from Iran to Europe. This type of “vertical” interpretation of travelogues, while undoubtedly valuable to the study of Qajar Iran, has both been done in much of the scholarship discussed earlier and also runs counter to the type of analysis suggested in this book. Instead, Taken for Wonder focuses on a “horizontal reading” of a limited number of texts to illustrate the ways in which they were connected to developments specific to their own times that included but went beyond discovery of or fascination with Europe.

Chapter 2, “The Reluctant Tourist: Mirza Abul Hasan Khan and His ‘Book of Wonder,’” examines Hayratnamah or Book of Wonder by Mirza Abul Hasan Khan Ilchi, Ambassador Extraordinaire from the court of Fath ‘Ali Shah, the second Qajar monarch, to that of King George III, in 1809. This travelogue thus reflects a Qajar court that at the turn of the nineteenth century and at the start of British interest in Persia as a buffer state had confidence in its dealings with the British, a confidence that is conveyed through Ilchi’s narrative of Europe for the Qajar king and his court. The rhetorical work of Hayratnamah is thus utilizing the wonder evoked by Ilchi, as an extension of the Qajar king in Europe, to establish for its readers back home the glory of the Qajar court at a transitional moment in Iran-British relations.

Chapter 3, “Long Day’s Journey into Night: Mirza Fattah Khan Garmrudi’s Accounts of Europe,” deals with the multiple texts that form Mirza Fattah Khan Garmrudi’s narrative of the failed diplomatic mission sent by Muhammad Shah, the third Qajar monarch, to the court of Queen Victoria in 1838. Garmrudi’s texts demonstrate an early attempt at incorporating new geographical concepts into a travel account, while at the same time adhering to older models of writing, such as Hayratnamah. The differences between these two texts, both diplomatic travel accounts, in terms of receptions of their respective missions highlight the shifts in power and the nature of the court from the time of Fath ‘Ali Shah to that of Muhammad Shah. Traveling before the Gulistan (1813) and Turkmenchay (1828) treaties, and courted by the British before a shift in Britain’s imperial policy, Ilchi described an England that was eager to wine and dine the Ambassador Extraordinaire, and by close association, the monarch. With Garmrudi’s account, even as the importance of maintaining the power and dignity of the court informed the narrative, there is an attempt to incorporate “new geography” in the writing of travel. Garmrudi consciously and explicitly included in his account demographic and geographic information gleaned from his own travels, his conversations with other travelers, and more important from a book titled “The Geography of the World,” which he appended to his travelogue.

Chapter 4, “The Traveling King: Nasir al-Din Shah and His Books of Travel,” argues how new technologies, such as the railways, print, and telegraph, allowed not only for the fourth Qajar king, Nasir al-Din Shah to become the first Iranian monarch to travel to Europe, but also how he
used the constant narration of his travels to establish his presence at home and project his powers to his subjects during his long absences. It was also in the Nasiri period that geographical information become interwoven into travel accounts, and appendices such as “The Geography of the World” all but disappeared from the texts of travel themselves. Alongside this, we see the proliferation and centralization of the translation of geographical and exploration texts through the creation and support of the Royal House of Translation.

While the previous chapters center on travelogues written by and for members of the court, the last chapter, “A Dervish and a Merchant Walk into Europe: The Popularization of Travel Writing,” explores the opening up of travel to other segments of Qajar society and the proliferation of travel accounts at the end of the nineteenth century. Specifically, it argues that the loosening of the close relationship between the court, as the presumed center of power, and the travelers to Europe (in the form of non-court travelers) allowed for the emergence of multiple narratives of Europe, which simultaneously carried within them traces of what had come before.

In 1920, when T. S. Eliot wrote the poem “Gerontion,” he was contemplating a notion of history as “the devastating, indefinable, almost mystical force driving Europe toward cultural dissolution and moral despair.” Gerontion, “an old man in a dry month/Being read to by a boy, waiting for rain,” contemplates a world in which “historical knowledge has destroyed the capacity for wonder and illusion.” In this world, Eliot wrote, “signs are taken for wonders.” The world of our nineteenth-century travelers had not reached the devastation felt by Gerontion in his old age. Nonetheless, the signs they had left in their travel accounts of the world they came from were more often than not taken as wonders of the world they traveled to. This book asks what happens to the history of nineteenth-century Iran when signs are no longer taken as wonder.
CHAPTER 2

The Reluctant Tourist

Mirza Abul Hasan Khan and His "Book of Wonder"

He prepared the canvas and drew my likeness of the day I was in the King's presence and also the King's likeness, and the way I presented the letter to the King, and the way the King took the letter from my hand so pleasantly that I was astonished [hayran] by that artful master's expertise.

In the Asian and African Studies reading room of the British Library, next to a portrait of the second Qajar monarch, Fath'Ali Shah (r. 1797–1834), hangs another portrait of a bearded Persian: that of Mirza Abul Hasan Khan Ilchi Shirazi (referred to as Ilchi [ambassador] hereafter), Envoy Extraordinaire and Plenipotentiary from the court of Fath'Ali Shah to that of King George III (r. 1760–1820) from 1809–1810. The painting shows the ambassador dressed in full Qajar garb: a gold brocaded tunic, vest, turban, and green slippers. He is standing in front of a window with a view of the English sky and trees in the distance: by all accounts, a sight to behold in early nineteenth-century England.

The case of Mirza Abul Hasan Khan Ilchi and his travel account to England from 1809 titled Hayratnamah, or The Book of Wonder, serve as a fascinating starting point for our exploration of travel writing about Europe in Qajar Iran. Ilchi was an early traveler to Europe (first in 1809 and again in 1818), Iran's second minister of foreign affairs, and a statesman with acute instincts for self-preservation, who survived the wrath of two different monarchs as well as benefiting from their munificence. In addition to Hayratnamah, written by Ilchi himself, he has left behind an account of his
three-year residence in Russia in 1815, written by a scribe. Yet despite clearly being an important figure in the history of the early Qajar era and known for having written an early travel account from Qajar Iran to Europe in the nineteenth century, both Hayratnamah and its author have until quite recently been ignored and derided for a variety of reasons. While contemporary sources in both Persian and English are brimming with references to Ilchi, later scholars have dismissed him for his “egotistic and hedonistic character” and his “limited vision of the West.” Relatedly, Hayratnamah was dismissed for not containing “anything that is worth mentioning,” for “being devoid of the intense curiosity that characterizes the commentary of many other writers of travel diaries before or after him,” and for advising Iranians on a “blind imitation of the West” in his descriptions of Europe’s progress.

Part of the problem is that there is a gap between the expectations of modern readers of Ilchi and the “mundane” and “trivial” information his Book of Wonder often delivers. With a title like Hayratnamah, it is understandable that interpretations of it became framed by the “wonder” in the title of the travelogue. Was he “reporting on strange and astonishing customs or objects” for his readers’ entertainment? Was he marveling “at the amenities of modern western life”? Or was it the Europeans themselves whom he had found “wondrous enough to title the report of his 1809–10 travel "The Book of Wonders"."? In framing Hayratnamah as a book of wonder toward European customs, its amenities, and Europeans themselves, scholars have been hard pressed to explain why it is replete with descriptions of official banquets, ceremonies, protocols, and scenery, both inside and outside Iran’s boundaries, leading to either a selective reading of the travelogue or to the dismissal of it and its author as mentioned above.

The gap between the text and later expectations of it has had a real effect on the publication history of Hayratnamah. While contemporary or slightly earlier travelogues such as Shigurfnamah (1785) and Masir-i Talibi (1812) were published in their own times and translated into English within years of their original publication, Hayratnamah has languished in Iranian, Indian, and British archives in manuscript form and has not, even to this day, been fully published in any language. In 1988, Margaret Cloake translated select sections of the travelogue under the title A Persian at the Court of King George 1809–1810. Her manuscript belonged to a direct descendant of Ilchi and her translation is a selection of various entries in Europe, which only begins with his arrival at Plymouth, thus leaving out six months of the travelogue that recounted the overland trip to Istanbul and the three-month voyage at sea. In 1986, Hasan Mursilvand also published an abbreviated version of Hayratnamah, which not only had sections deleted for being “inappropriate” (pages of descriptions of various parties and
dalliances with women) but also had a running commentary throughout the text on Ilich's perceived treason, calling him in his introduction a slave of the English (ghulam-i halqah bi gush). His censoring of passages that deal with wine and women created the impression that the omitted sections were far more fascinating than the benign descriptions that manuscript copies reveal them to be. Abbas Amanat points to the treatment of Hayratnamah by its editor, Hasan Mursilvand, as an instance of "disturbing examples of bigotry" that "are not rare in the confusion of present day book market" in Iran. This particular type of "bigotry" was partly possible because the image it presented of Ilich fit into the place he already occupied in the historiography of the Qajar era. By not describing precisely what the nature of Ilich's decadence was, Mursilvand was able to present Hayratnamah, a Qajar courtier's descriptions of London's high life, as the tawdry writings of an ignorant pleasure seeker, similar to James Morier's fictional descriptions of Mirza Firooz in England.

The archival silencing of Hayratnamah was not due to ignorance of different copies of the manuscript itself, which by all accounts were known to various scholars. Mahmud Mahmud, for example, the author of an eight-volume history of British-Iranian relations in the nineteenth century, writes in a footnote: "Mirza Abul Hasan Khan Shirazi in this book has described his travels specially his travels to London. Even though it is a thick and detailed book, I have read it carefully in the hopes that I find in it something that would have historical authenticity [sanadiyat] but I must say frankly that from the beginning to the end one did not see in that book anything that is worth mentioning." One interpretation of this omission may be that as a political historian, Mahmud may indeed not have found much that was useful in Hayratnamah, which as we will see shortly is mostly a record of official banquets and ceremonies and rarely reveals details of the negotiations that took place between him and British officials. As such, the dominance of a particular kind of political history in Iranian historiography is certainly a significant factor in explaining Hayratnamah's cold reception by contemporary historians. Yet it falls short of explaining why Mahmud, in a rather bizarre move, treats James Morier's accounts of the same events as having "historical authenticity," noting only Morier's "sarcasm" as the sole drawback.

If the travel account of Iran's ambassador to England in 1809 carried significant meaning for readers of that period, as it clearly did based on the plethora of contemporary references to it, and if that meaning has been lost to later generations, the onus falls on the historian to make the text legible as opposed to simply discarding it. In the case of Hayratnamah, new interpretations are opened up once the travel account is placed in the larger milieu in which it was written, particularly that of Fath 'Ali Shah's court and its maneuverings for a place on the global stage. In order to do this, this chapter first provides biographical background to establish the significance of Ilich as a Qajar statesman. In the second section, it examines Hayratnamah's use of "wonder" in the context of earlier genres of "books of wonder" and the internal logic of the text itself. The final section demonstrates how a refocusing of our analysis of Hayratnamah away from Europe and toward Qajar Iran can provide an alternative understanding of this travelogue and its significance.

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF MIRZA ABDUL HASAN KHAN

Mirza Abul Hasan Khan Ilich was born in 1776 in the southeast city of Shiraz. His father, Mirza Muhammad 'Alkhan, was a scribe to Nadir Shah (r. 1736–1747) and narrowly escaped death when Nadir Shah himself was assassinated. He wrote a letter to the British lieutenant that was to be carried also. Ilich's uncle and father-in-law was Hajji Ibrahim Shirazi (Ttimad al-Dawlah), a grand vizier (sad' azam) to both Agha Muhammad Khan Qajar (1742–1797), the founder of the Qajar dynasty, and to his nephew and successor, Fath 'Ali Shah. In 1801, when according to the chronicles, Hajji Ibrahim began to pose a threat to Fath 'Ali Shah's rule, he was blinded and killed on the order of the king, and the family was disgraced. As a result, Ilich, who was then governor of the southern town of Shushtar, fled Iran and traveled first to Mecca (where he did the pilgrimage) and from there to India, where he remained for two and a half years before being forgiven by the king and allowed to return to Iran.

In the first decade of the nineteenth century, Fath 'Ali Shah had already sent two ambassadorial missions to India to discuss the possibility of an alliance with the British to counter the Russians against whom the Qajars had clashed in frontier disputes in the Caucasus. After a decade of musical-chair treaties among the Qajars, the Ottomans, the French, and the British, by 1809 the Qajars and the British turned to each other in order to protect their respective interests in the region. The British, as was often the case, were motivated by fears of Napoleonic expansions in India. The Qajars, weary of continuous conflict with the Russians, were fearful that the French were not going to support them despite the guarantees in the 1807 Treaty of Finkeinstein (also spelled Finkenstein). All of this led to the creation and signing of the "Preliminary Treaty of Friendship and Alliance" between the two governments in 1809, which Ilich was sent to England to finalize.

Not surprisingly, various authors have given different reasons why Ilich was chosen to be the Persian envoy. Sir Harford Jones, who was at the time the Crown's envoy to Persia, referring to Ilich's two-and-a-half-year residence in India, writes in his memoirs:
The Persian appointment became matter of intrigue at the Persian court, and, like all other things there, would have become matter of pecuniary speculation, if I had not interfered, and put an end to it, by insisting that Meereza Abdul Hassan [sic], who had joined me at Khona Khowra, and who from a residence at Calcutta and in India, was in some measure acquainted with our manners and customs, should be nominated to accompany Mr. Morier.20

On the other hand, some twentieth-century sources claim that he received this appointment as a result of his connections with high-ranking courtiers,21 or quoting British sources claim that he got the job because no one wanted to go to the court of an “infidel.”22

In May 1809, Ilchi, along with James Justinian Morier, who had first arrived in Persia in 1808 as the private secretary of Sir Harford Jones, began their journey. The mission set off by land to England, traveling westward from Tehran, through Anatolia to Istanbul, before embarking on a boat in Smyrna. On November 25, 1809, Ilchi and his retinue landed in Plymouth and proceeded to London, where they spent seven months before returning to Iran by sea in July 1810.

During his time in London, where he shared a house with Morier,23 Ilchi became the talk of high society, his every movement and words reported in newspapers and private letters as far away as the United States.24 At this point, the East India Company began to pay him an annual salary of one thousand rupees, which continued until his death and is seen by later historians as a sign of his treachery25 or at the very least that he was a “staunch supporter of the British.”26 Being on the East India Company’s payroll in the context of the fidelity asked and given by the modern nation-state to its citizens can of course be understood as Ilchi’s loyalty having been bought by the British. But it is important to keep in mind that fidelity to the state had different meanings in the context of early nineteenth-century Iran. The money given to Ilchi was public knowledge in the Qajar court,27 and there is no evidence that it brought under question Ilchi’s loyalty to Fath ‘Ali Shah at any point. In fact, archival evidence shows that contrary to being a good “servant,” in 1834, in his capacity as foreign minister, Ilchi tried to get Sir John Campbell, the rather incompetent “Consul General and Plenipotentiary” to the Persian court, fired.28

On his return to Iran, Ilchi was in the company of not only Morier, but also the new British ambassador to Persia, Sir Gore Ouseley,29 with the ambassador’s wife and daughter, and his brother (and private secretary), William Ouseley. The trip back to Persia took nearly nine months due to bad weather, which led to a detour to Rio de Janeiro30 and eventually continued on to India, finally arriving in the southern port city of Bushir on March 1, 1811.31 According to William Ouseley, during the trip his brother, Sir Gore Ouseley, “discovered and frustrated, at this place [Cazereen], a plot devised for the assassination of Abul Hassan Khan, the Persian ambassador to England. Jealousy of his supposed wealth and influence was the cause—having returned in Sir Gore’s suite from this country.”32

Ilchi remained active in the court of Fath ‘Ali Shah and is the Persian signatory on the (in)famous Gulistan Treaty of 1813 that ceded parts of the Qajar empire to Russia on the tail end of the first Perso-Russian wars of 1804–1812. He was subsequently sent to Russia, where he resided for three years, to finalize the treaty but was unable to get the Russian court to budge from its position and return some of the territory to Iran. He was then sent on another public European diplomatic journey in 1818–1819 with, among others, the task of purchasing weapons in Austria, and was asked by Abbas Mirza, the heir to the crown, to accompany back to Iran the students who had been sent to England in 1815.33 During one of his two trips to England, rumors claim Ilchi became a Freemason.34

It is clear that his appointment as Minister of Foreign States in 1824 was due to his familiarity with various European governments.35 For example, in the chronicle Nasikh Al-Tawarikh, the news of his appointment is preceded by his efforts to negotiate a settlement with the Russians in the presence of Abbas Mirza, which highlighted Ilchi’s experience in the field.36 Ironically, in the same year of his appointment, Morier, Ilchi’s former travel companion and housemate, anonymously published The Adventures of Hajji Baba in Ispahan.37 This fictionalized memoir of Hajji Baba, the son of a barber from Isfahan, became an instant hit in England and was immediately translated into German and French, and later into Russian.38 The novel’s character Mirza Firouz, the bumbling Persian ambassador with whom Hajji Baba travels to England39 and who was clearly based on Ilchi, very quickly eclipsed that of its real-life counterpart.40

Ilchi was one of a handful of courtiers who were against the second round of Perso-Russian wars (1826–1827) that ended in the 1828 Turkmanchay Treaty,41 which twentieth-century historians have seen as a symbol of the failure of the Qajar state to protect Iran’s interests.42 In 1834, he was one of several courtiers who “sowed the seed of dissent” in the war of succession that broke out after Fath ‘Ali Shah’s death and delayed the move of his appointed successor, Muhammad Shah (r. 1834–1848), to the capital.43 Zill al-Sultan, the challenger, was worried that his rule would not be supported by foreign states:

At this time Mirza Abul Hasan Khan the minister of foreign states [mazir-i dawlat-i kharjih] who was in fear of Mirza ‘Abul Qasim Qa’im Maqam, and as a result shunned the reign of the conquering king [shahanshah ghazi, meaning Muhammad Shah Qajar] said that “answering foreign states is my responsibility [bar zimmat-i man aṣl],” and
brought out a book that [said] "among the foreign states and the nobles of Europe it is customary that the will of a deceased king in determining a successor depends on the assent of the populace, if the people are not pleased with the rule of the crown prince [vali'ash], it is possible to change it." This book [nizamah] strengthened many people and some of the princes and noblemen who were in Tehran...

Ilchi's support for Zill al-Sultan, who was(roundly defeated after forty days, forced him to seek sanctuary at a shrine for fear of reprisal from Qa'im Maqam, the new king's prime minister. But shortly after coming to power, Qa'im Maqam was replaced by Hajji Mirza Aqasi, the king's former teacher. Aqasi promptly forgave Ilchi, and he returned to the court, where he once again became the Minister for Foreign States. According to the London Medical Gazette, he, along with several other British and Persian dignitaries, died in the cholera epidemic of 1846. Quite remarkably for a man who from the vantage point of later historians was on the losing end of many of his negotiations and activities, Ilchi had a long and prosperous career.

MIRZA ABUL HASAN KHAN'S BOOK OF WONDER,
BEWILDERMENT, AND AMAZEMENT

Hayratnamah is a daily chronicle of Ilchi's first journey to Europe, beginning with the departure from Tehran and ending with the return to Iran via Rio de Janeiro and Mumbai and Ilchi's (along with his retinue and that of Sir Gore Ouseley's) disembarking in Bushihr. It is unclear whether all the entries were written during his travels or compiled upon his return to Iran (or both). Each entry designates a day, the date almost always given in the lunar Islamic calendar. The first section of the book (the journey to London) recounts events and scenes from various places, including inside Iran and the Ottoman Empire; the second section, which encompasses the unexpected seven-month-long stay in London (unexpected as negotiations took longer than had been planned) is mostly descriptions of dinner parties, meetings with dignitaries, and various aspects surrounding the negotiations. The tone of the writings changes markedly once Ilchi settles in London, giving the impression that a journal was kept at the time the events were recorded. The last section of Hayratnamah chronicles their return and at times becomes a daily recording of the weather and the ship's movement, reinforcing the notion that the account was written during the time of Ilchi's journey.

The assumption that one of our earliest records of Iranian-European contact in the nineteenth century would be replete with wonder and amazement is a logical one, especially when the record itself is titled Book of Wonder. Yet a closer look at Hayratnamah reveals the ways in which the hayrat (wonder) of the title and the various uses of it throughout the book function as tropes and rhetorical devices aimed at clarification, in addition to mere reflections of astonishment. This does not mean that the author lacked any sense of wonder in seeing and recording the trip. Considering the means of his travels (ship and carriage, both new experiences), the distances he traveled (from Tehran and eventually to Rio de Janeiro), and his destination (London in the early nineteenth century), Ilchi had much to marvel at, and he did. But to reach an interpretive framework that includes the logic of the text as a whole (and not only sections that one assumes are reflections of the experience of the new) it is necessary to distinguish the multiple ways in which "wonder" functioned as a familiar rhetorical tool in Hayratnamah.

To get at these various meanings, one must first place Hayratnamah within the literary and historical tradition from which it arises. Ilchi introduces Hayratnamah as follows:

May it not be hidden from the explorers of the age [sayyahan-i razigur] and the experienced world observers [jahan didigan-i tajrubah kar] that the humble [author] full of faults [haqir-i sarapa taqir], Abul Hasan, the son of the deceased Mirza Muhammad Ali Shirazi . . . went as an Ambassador to the land of farang through Anatolia [Rumi]. . . . The strange events and the reports of the incidents of the sea and the above mentioned land which were seen with my own eyes and received, from the date of my departure from the seat of rule in Tehran, have been recorded as a chronicle, may it would be useful for the searchers of this path after me. Since many strange things [ghara'iy] and innumerable new things [baday'] were seen and recorded in this journal, of course it created unlimited amazement [najah] and bewilderman [tahayjur] in its listeners and readers. Thus this text [nizah] was named Hayratnamah-i safara.

As already noted by Tavakoli-Targhi, Hayratnamah is similar both in title and introduction to a late eighteenth-century travel account. In 1767, a Bengali-born Muslim scribe (munshi), Mirza I'tisam al-Din, set sail on a French ship to England on an ultimately failed assignment from the Mughal emperor to assist his envoy Captain Archibald Stewert. The record of his two-year, nine-month trip, Shigurfnamah-i vilayat (The Wonders of Vilayat), was written in Persian in 1785 and an abridged English/Urdu translation appeared in 1827. The Persian manuscript begins:

May it not be hidden from the explorers of the age [sayyahan-i razigur] and experienced travelers [jahan didigan-i tajrubah kar] that this decrepit, on the necessity of making a
Written during the waning years of the Mughal Empire, *Shigurfnamah* reads less as a daily chronicle of a Bengali traveler to Europe and more like the previously discussed *Tuḥfat al-ʿalam* (1802), which presented knowledge about *farang* and its people in an almost encyclopedic fashion, based on information gathered by its author during his house arrest in Hyderabad. *Hayratnamah*, on the other hand, is very distinctly a daily chronicle, and the majority of it is given to recording the author’s encounters with various dignitaries in London. Yet the authors of *Hayratnamah* and *Shigurfnamah* both begin by directly addressing fellow travelers, and each justifies the act of writing by means of an invocation of a series of set and established literary tropes: the strange/rare events of sea and land and the wonder/astonishment that they create in the spectator and, by implication or explicitly, in the reader/hearer.

The similarity in title and self-proclaimed raison d’être of these two books highlights the “circulation of Persianate elites.” In 1800, Ilchi’s family fell into disfavor of the king, and Ilchi himself ended up in Calcutta and Hyderabad, where he lived before returning to Iran. While *Shigurfnamah* could quite possibly have been read among the Qajar courtiers, Ilchi’s presence in Hyderabad during the early years of the nineteenth century increases the chances that he, in particular, was familiar with the cultural milieu of which Shushtari, Mirza Abu Talib Khan, and I’tisam al-Din were a part.

Many of these complications in reading *Hayratnamah* that were noted earlier rely on two related assumptions: that *Hayratnamah* is a “first” of a kind, and that it is a record of the “wonders” observed (and experienced) by its author. Historical evidence and the logic of the text itself, however, allow for other intersecting readings. *Hayratnamah* is not the first in the modern genre of travel writing but is rather written in a more traditional literary style, one that as the nineteenth century progressed, became less and less used. As such, it reflects the sensibilities of the early nineteenth-century Qajar court, in addition to those of the Zand court, where Ilchi undoubtedly received his early education, in addition to the cultural milieu of the “Persianate world” as demonstrated above. It borrows not only from books of advice such as *Siyyar al-muluk* (as suggested by William Hanaway) but also from cosmographies and geographies, in addition to the classical Arabic travel literature of riḥla. As a result, it becomes necessary to delineate the ways in which historians have come to define these genres in order to demonstrate the ways in which *Hayratnamah* functions as a text embedded in the writing culture of its own time.

Books of ‘aja’ib, or marvels, is a genre of medieval Islamic literature. According to Maxime Rodinson, “the word ‘aja’ib expresses wonderment—with an emphasis on the gaze—provoked by the marvelous object, with the connotation of pleasure and admiration, notably sensual pleasure, and desire.” It is included in the works of geographers and travelers, yet it seems to have never been the heading under which a travelogue itself was organized. The most famous of these, Qazvini’s *Aja’ib al-makhluqat*, is a fourteenth-century book of cosmography concerned with the sentiment of wonder itself and its location within this world and the other. The genre finds the wondrous in nature (e.g., celestial bodies) and also in stories emanating from popular imagination.

The historiography of Islamic geography and travel places cosmography at the tail end of medieval Islam’s era of geographical grandeur. The *Encyclopedia of Islam* (EI2)’s entry on geography (*diqghafya*) stands for a good précis of this historiography. The entry is divided into five sections, starting with pre-Islamic notions of geography and ending with “the Ottoman Geographers.” In between, two distinct phases are outlined: “The Classical Period (3rd–8th/9th–11th centuries)” and “The Period of Consolidation (6th–12th–10th/16th centuries).” The former marks the height of the production of “scientific” works of geography (including noted works of travel/ geography such as al-Maṣ’udi’s *Murasj al-dhahab wa ma‘ad al-jawhar*, written in 943 A.D.) while the latter is thought to display “continuous signs of decline” in the production of geography. It is within this latter section that cosmographical works are included: “The tendency to produce such works was mainly due to the decline in education and learning which affected the progress of geographical knowledge.” The idea that cosmographies such as Qazvini’s *Aja’ib al-makhluqat*, which used “wonders” as a critical category for the ordering and subsequent understanding of the world, were the result of the decline of Arab interest in “serious” geography is repeated in the EI2’s entry for ‘aja’ib. In it, C. E. Dubler repeats the notion that the ‘aja’ib genre developed as a result of a decrease in “scientific interest” and increase in “popular interest in amusing literature.”

The point is not so much to argue for/against the importance of the ‘aja’ib genre as “serious” works of scholarship, as it is to demonstrate the hierarchies of knowledge set up by contemporary scholars in their attempts to define and shape medieval genres of writing such as “histories,” “geographies,” “cosmographies,” and “riḥlas.” In reading through the classical works of scholars such as Franz Rosenthal, André Miquel, and H. A. R. Gibb and the authors of the second edition of *Encyclopedia of Islam*, one is struck by the ways in which their attempts to tease out the various strands of writing
in exquisitely uncategorizable medieval texts such as Mas'udi's *Murasj al-dhahab* led to the creation of hierarchies of knowledge anachronistic to the periods in which such knowledge was produced.

This concern over genre also affects the definitions of the *rihla*. Much has been written about the justifications of travel in the Islamic world; it is believed that one often traveled for the acquisition of knowledge and also for the purposes of pilgrimage. The medieval Islamic world's most celebrated travelers, Ibn Jubayr and Ibn Battuta, are both thought to have set off on their long travels initially for purposes of the *Hajj*, while their writings also encompassed a search for "knowledge" and in the case of Ibn Battuta, a "basic wanderlust." But even in the context of these two travelers (and most writings on the *rihla* have a tendency to focus on them), scholars have been at pains to separate notions of travel for "pleasure" from that of the pursuit of (geographical) knowledge.

One of the earliest of such writings is H. A. R. Gibb's introduction to his translation of Ibn Battuta's *rihla*. In it, Gibb believes that no evaluation of Ibn Battuta is complete without bearing in mind that "it [the *rihla*] is first and foremost a human diary, in which the tale of facts is subordinated to the interests and preoccupations of the diarist and his audience." Within this framework (which shifts the debate away from the question of the veracity and thus usefulness of Ibn Battuta's travelogue as a source for social history), Gibb says he had selected certain passages from the travel account and translated them anew so that "Ibn Battuta is treated as a traveler, and not a writer of geography."

The link between the act of travel itself and the writings of geographical texts is one that has been recognized and discussed by various historians of medieval Islam. For example, in *A History of Muslim Historiography*, Rosenthal states:

> The historian and geographer al-Ya'qubi describes how he collected material for his geographical work. He traveled extensively and asked everybody he met for information about his particular country. . . . Other contemporary authors of geographical works, under the continued influence of the spirit of the classical Antiquity, no doubt proceeded similarly in the collection of material which they were not able to find in the written sources.

Similarly, Ma'asudi is believed to represent "the finest spirit of exploration of his time."

Yet while scholars acknowledge the importance of travel to the canons of medieval geographical texts, they have gone to some length in disassociating geography from the genre of travel writing itself. Netton goes so far as to say that Ibn Battuta "contributed nothing to its ["scientific geography"]

development though he assuredly profited from its knowledge." One reason may lie in the inclusion of wondrous tales in the *rihla* literature. "It [rihla literature] is an art form which encapsulates the believable and the incredible, embraces the niceties of everyday life as well as the 'a'jib or marvels, and whose value as a geographical and historical source must, in consequence, be treated with caution."

In all these genres—*rihla*, cosmography, and geography—travel and the knowledge that came from it have a didactic purpose. Even the Persian word *tamaša*, which means observation, sightseeing, and/or spectacle, also meant "to glance at something with delight or to learn a lesson from." It is within these literary and historical traditions that Iltchi's use of *hayrat* (wonder), *a'jib* (the wondrous), and *gharib* (strange) and the ways in which Europe was considered wondrous to him should be analyzed. In order to avoid the pitfalls of earlier readings of Hayratnamah, we need to undo the burden of this earlier historiographic tradition so that Iltchi's "wonder" is understood in terms of concepts and sentiments that connected these webs of knowing rather than dissecting them into distinct categories of genre that exist within a modern construction of hierarchies of knowledge.

There is much validity to looking at Europe as a geographical "cabinet of wonders." From paved roads, banking, the parliamentary system (in the case of England), the press, to later nineteenth-century developments such as the Haussmanization of Paris, panoramas, museums, and even the world fairs, Europe provided plenty of "wonders" to be observed, recorded, and envied. But this focus on Europe's wondrous and often importable objects rarely provides insight into the framework within which the Qajar travelers observed Europe and transferred these observations to Qajar society. It tells us little we would not know if we never read these travelogues. It primarily reinforces our own notions of Qajar-European contact and what we assume it entailed based on our own current notions of modernity and its unfolding.

Nonetheless, there has been a tendency to mine Hayratnamah and other travelogues about Europe for instances of "wonders." With the benefit of historical hindsight, our starting assumption has often been that travelers to Europe saw sights previously unseen and responded to them in awe and astonishment. Intertwined with this has been the idea that being in awe of Europe automatically led to a sense of inadequacy in the traveler. This becomes the source of nineteenth-century decline discourse: contact with the spectacles of Europe led to the belief that reform of one's own society was a necessity. While there is no doubt that both sentiments presented themselves in this era, there is little indication that they are as intricately linked as modern scholars have made them out to be.
Moving away from the commonly used framework described above requires a shift away from a framework of analysis that focuses on "wonders" such as new objects or spectacles, toward one that incorporates "wonder" as a sentiment/rhetorical device in narrating travel. Applying this methodological shift to Hayratnamah allows for an understanding of the specific cultural context in which Ilchi wrote his account of travel to Europe. Within this framework "wonder" (in keeping with the logic of the text, I am using words such as 'ajib, gharib, hayrat, and even the less frequently used badi' [novel], interchangeably) has three different uses: it is most commonly used to express pleasure or discomfort in an experience; it is used in the medieval sense of the word in reference to the natural world and natural beauty; and it is used in reference to new objects as a means for explication.

The Wonders of Pleasure and Discomfort

In Hayratnamah, expressions of wonder are commonly used to indicate pleasure (and sometimes discomfort) at a sight or an event. Be it toward the throngs of people coming to welcome him to England, the smoothness of the road to London, or the beautiful ladies and youths he encounters at various London gatherings, Ilchi shows his delight by stating his wonder (or his "wonder upon wonder"). To read this as an expression of mere astonishment (and as has been the case, a reflection of Ilchi's simplicity in the face of European grandeur) is to ignore the fact that many of these "wondrous" cases repeat themselves throughout his trip yet his reaction to them does not change.

The beauty of nature or that of a young man or a woman evokes pleasure in Ilchi and becomes cause for wonder. Thus in entry after entry during his long extended stay in London, he describes instances of seeing beautiful women and young men who caused him to "bite his finger in wonder" or "sink" into even more wonder; In these cases, obviously, the wonder works not as an indication of astonishment at something new, but rather as a literary device.

More interesting are examples in which Ilchi expresses wonder in reference to instances of displeasure or discomfort. Ilchi, whom we have to remember was an emissary of the Qajar monarch, criticizes the Ottoman Empire by stating that it is "strange and astonishing" (ghara'ib va 'aja'ib), that despite all its power and size, the Ottoman Empire has not been able to create "any kind of order [nazn] in that land." As a member of the Qajar court, Ilchi presents a not so subtle criticism of the supposed chaotic state of the Ottoman Empire (one which he documents as he travels through Anatolia) by characterizing it as instances of "strangeness and astonishment."

Similarly, on board the England-bound ship, in his typically diplomatic tone, Ilchi shows his disgust at the food eaten by the predominantly English passengers. He notes that "[t]he food for the entire group is salted beef and pork cured in salt for seven years." He then continues, "God protect us from this food, how they manage to stay alive is truly a cause for wonder and astonishment."
and multitude of mosques and churches, Ilchi twice shows his skepticism by denying responsibility for the veracity of the information he is offering. He has "heard" (masmu') that in Istanbul there are eighty neighborhoods, each containing 2,000 to 3,000 houses, but "knowledge lies with God." He was also told that the "Sultans of Rum" had created 3,000 mosques and schools in Istanbul but "the responsibility [for the truth of what he has relayed] lies on the narrator." On his way back to Istanbul, upon reaching a beautiful spot "with grand channels and pools, and marble waterfalls," Ilchi first compares it to Isfahan and then states that it was "verily very wondrous and strange." Again wonder acts not as a marker of never-before-seen sights but almost the opposite: a natural beauty comparable to what he (and presumably his readers) had seen before.

The Wonders of Explanation

One of the most common uses of hayrat in Hayratnamah is to indicate a transition in the narrative from a personal tale to an explanation of either an object or a phenomenon. His expression of wonder/astonishment is sometimes in response to something he already knows but explicates for his readers, or a newly confronted object/experience. In both of these cases, he uses his wonder as the reason for asking a question and receiving an answer.

In August of 1809, Ilchi enters Izmir, where he was met by a group of "farang's nobility." At some point in the evening he is overcome with such a degree of ghurbat (sense of alienation/homesickness) that "the farangis realized the change in me [taghayyur] and took me to the sea shore for a stroll [tajfarruj]." There, Ilchi is so "astonished" (mutthayyir) by the order of the European ships and their "colorful sails" that "the homeland was forgotten." It is at this point that he asks Morier about the "truth of the situation of Europe." He informs his readers that he recorded Morier's answer so that it "is cause for the admonition of the explorers of the age and from it they sink from wonder into wonder." The information provided by Morier is a particularly British account of various European countries' geography, their capitals, and includes many asides about the French in the context of British-French animosity in this period. What Morier told Ilchi about Europe was readily available in books such as Tuhfat al-alam and Shigurfnamah, and within the cultural milieu of which Ilchi and his readers were a part. As a result, there is no reason to assume that Ilchi's telling of the history of Europe was intended to cause his audience to "sink from wonder into wonder." The use of hayrat here establishes a transition in the narrative, an indication that there is a shift from Ilchi's personal account of ghurbat to a narrative of a certain phenomenon, in this case various European countries and their politics. Ilchi's retelling of this information, more important, establishes him as a reliable authority, conferring upon him status as one who knows Europe.

In a similar fashion, during a stroll with Sir Gore Ouseley, Ilchi expresses astonishment at the Westminster Bridge. He had seen the bridge before during one of his earlier walks through London and had introduced it to his readers as such: "When we got to the center of the city, a bridge of large stones appeared over a river like the Baghdad River but the pen is incapable of describing that bridge." The next day, upon seeing the bridge again and noting the fact that he had given "a detailed description of it previously," he still states, "I was astonished by the way that bridge was built" and thus uses his expression of astonishment to ask Sir Ouseley how the bridge was made.

There are also instances of wonder in Ilchi's text in which he does not offer an explanation but merely describes the phenomena. These instances occur solely during the journey to England, not during his stay there, and in keeping with the medieval uses of wonder, refer to wondrous qualities of objects. On board the ship to Plymouth, Ilchi states: "And of the strange and wondrous objects, I saw a stone used for cooking fuel that whenever they wanted to light it, the stone would light and they use its flame for cooking and when they want to turn it off, the flame subsides; mines for that stone can be found in England and other farang countries." This use of wonder in Hayratnamah evokes Ivet Todorov's definition of and criteria for the fantastic. At the heart of Todorov's argument lies the notion of "hesitation." When confronted with the unexplainable in a story, the character (and the reader) experiences a moment of hesitation. The ways in which the hesitation is resolved is what makes a story either uncanny (when the laws of reality suffice to explain the phenomena) or marvelous (when new laws are need for a sufficient explanation). Ilchi's reactions to the sights of London and his use of wonder to explicate sights unseen to his readers are variations on Todorov's idea, or at least they share certain elements with it. Through his use of "wonder," Ilchi is at once evoking a well-known trope in Islamic cosmography while presenting an explanation for the object of wonder itself. In Aj'a'ib al-makhluqat, Qazvini defines the feeling of ta'ajub (the state of feeling wonder) as what one feels "from seeing something but not seeing the reason for it and thus is astonished before one knows the reason." Similarly, Motahedeh notes that the defining characteristics of the ajib (the wondrous) in the Islamic wonder literature are that it is out of the ordinary, its cause is unknown to the observer, and it is more than merely a visual experience; the ajib affects the soul. Ilchi's use of wonder places itself squarely between these distinctly different definitions of the fantastic and the wondrous, reflecting clearly
Hayratnamah's status as an in-between text itself: In Ilchi's text, the 'ajib or the hayrat is directly linked to the fact that he actually does know the cause for his wonder.

One of the defining characteristics of Qajar travelogues about Europe over the course of the nineteenth century was this shift from the use of wonder in describing natural phenomena to that of cultural and social spectacles. This shift went hand in hand with the injection of expository narrative into the text. In other words, while earlier notions of wonder were meant to signal the unknowable to the author (and reader), by the end of the nineteenth century it no longer only signified the unknown. Rather it worked to mark the author as the possessor of knowledge about Europe. Ilchi's Hayratnamah thus reflects a transitory moment in early Qajar history, standing with each foot firmly planted on either side of the divide—the one side thoroughly steeped in 'ajib traditions before it and the other, heralding the changing sensibilities of the Qajars.

WHY WONDER?

The ways in which Ilchi deals with the newspaper highlight the importance of examining Hayratnamah and its instances of wonder within the framework of the text itself. It also provides insight into why the travelogue of a Qajar courtier, a man who later became the foreign minister, and who was the first high-ranking official from the Qajar court to travel to England and to record it, has been at best ignored and at worst misread.

While waiting on the ship in Plymouth for four days in quarantine, Ilchi was introduced to the newspaper—or "news," as he calls it. He first relates a story about a woman in whose teeth twenty-eight needles were found. In response, he says to the English captain who had brought him the newspaper: "Praise be to God! You consider the "news" from France lies but have no idea what your own news is like." After the captain explains that those stories were meant for his amusement, Ilchi gives a more detailed explanation of what a newspaper is, its dimensions, and its dissemination. He then proceeds to say, "stranger still [gharib-tar], today's news is no good tomorrow such that today's news is only useful as toilet paper the next day."

It is not while presenting the newspaper but while discussing its fleeting quality that Ilchi uses the expression gharibtar. The expression no doubt conveys the newness of the experience at hand but the question is not so much if it is new (Ilchi is undoubtedly seeing a newspaper and its uses for the first time) but rather what happens when he is confronted with it. Abd al-Hadi Ha'iri in particular seems incensed by Ilchi's descriptions of the newspaper.

Ilchi notes one of the most important and useful organs of democracy, i.e. the press known as "the fourth column of constitutionalism" and in describing it, he takes up more than a page of his Hayratnamah, but he never discusses the real importance of the press and the fundamental role played by newspapers in increasing the public's awareness.

This type of criticism is informed both by later theories exalting the role of the press in the creation of public space and relatedly, that Mirza Salih Shirazi, Ilchi's contemporary, returned from his journey to England to start the first newspaper in Iran using the printing press he brought back with him. In this context, Ilchi's supposed dismissal of the newspaper only reafirms the image of him as a bumbling ignoramus.

A reading of Hayratnamah that takes into account the framework within which it was written presents another explanation for Ilchi's "peculiar" characterization of the press. Throughout his time in London, Ilchi was the focus of intense press attention, akin to that of modern-day paparazzi, from England all the way to the United States. Various reports are scattered in the press spread a whole array of rumors about him that more often than not led to Ilchi's frustration at the "news" and "people of the news." On January 3, 1810, overcome by one of his soon-to-be recurring depressions brought on by the gloomy London weather, Ilchi is informed by Sir Gore Ouseley that the newspapers had reported that Ilchi had been to a party at the home of the librarian of the East India Company along with Ouseley himself and another friend. Angered by this, Ilchi responds: "Praise be to God! You know that I did not go out. This news in the newspaper is a strange thing." In the published Persian manuscript, the event is resolved when Morier writes a reply to the newspaper, setting the record straight. In Cloake's translated edition, Ilchi states that "the last time the newspaper made a mistake we let it pass without correction." In a footnote, Cloake suggests that Ilchi may be referring to an article in The Times written on December 15, "which stated that the Persian Ambassador had sixty-three children." Cloake's suggestion fits well with another report, which serves as a correction to what must have been a rumor circulating in London at the time regarding Ilchi's multiple wives and children.

Less than a month later, on January 22, Ilchi is informed of yet another rumor circulating about him. On that morning, Sir Gore Ouseley informs him that an Englishman is interested in selling him two "idols" (in Persian, also "statues") in the belief that "we Iranians are Zoroastrians and [they] call us fire-worshippers." Ilchi responds by offering what eventually becomes his stock answer to questions about his being a fire-worshipper (he was constantly asked this question during his time in London): "I told him they were wrong but that in London I would be a sun-worshipper if
the sun were not as invisible as the fabulous phoenix." He continues, "Maybe my idolatry is due to the people of the news and their intent is to ridicule me." These types of rumors in the press did not subside. On April 17, The Morning Post reported that "[t]he Persian Ambassador was on horseback with his attendants, and two Ladies dressed in Persian costume. They attracted much notice." The next day, upon returning from a stroll in the King's Garden, Ilchi is informed of the news report. He responds to Sir Gore Ouseley that "[w]hat is this buffoonery? There isn't a single true word in your newspapers." Reading all these instances of Ilchi's contact with newspapers leaves little doubt as to why he reacted to the newspaper as he did. As the target of so much ridicule in the London press, Ilchi saw little value in it: instead of being an "organ of democracy," the press was a dispenser of rumors. Ilchi certainly did express wonder at the press, but his wonder stemmed from his dislike of an invention that presented itself to him as detrimental to society. Ilchi's experience with newspapers as sources of lies and rumors, coupled with what was undoubtedly the high price of paper in Iran (too high to be used for something so valueless and ephemeral as a newspaper), explains his writings on the press far better than the assumption of his ignorance or nihilism. This stands in striking contrast to the experience of Mirza Salih with the printing press, who even apprenticed himself to a printer during his time in England. The difference between Ilchi and Mirza Salih thus lies not in the difference in character but rather the ways in which the differences in their experience with newspapers (based to a large degree on the different reasons for their travels and the differences in their reception in English society) determined their respective understanding of its utility.

REINTERPRETING HAYRATNAMA

If we step back from the assumption that Hayratnامah was a reflection of Europe, itself assumed to be a repository of wonder, then what other interpretive possibilities open up to the historian? To answer that, let us turn to a well-known episode, reported in Hayratnامah, in James Morier’s travelogue that included an account of Ilchi’s trip to England, and the fictional Hajji Baba in England: Ilchi’s trip from Plymouth to London.

In the appendix to his Second Journey through Persia, Morier gives an account of Ilchi’s behavior in the carriage as they moved from Bath toward London. Ilchi, Morier writes “grew very anxious as we proceeded, and seemed to be looking for an Istakball [sic], or a deputation headed by some man of distinction, which, after the manner of his own country, he expected would be sent to meet him.” He then goes on to say that all their attempts to assure Ilchi that things were done differently in England was in vain and that this only “seemed to grieve him the more.” The interesting part of Morier’s account comes here: “and although to a foreigner the interest of the road greatly increased as we approached the city, yet he requested to have both the glasses of the carriage drawn up, for he said that he did not understand the nature of such an entry, which appeared to him more like smuggling a bale of goods into town, than the reception of a public envoy.” Morier’s obvious displeasure at Ilchi’s behavior is such that he uses this scene almost verbatim in Hajji Baba in England, though this time the scene is narrated by the “Persian” Hajji Baba about the “fictional” Persian ambassador to England, Mirza Firouz. Here, Morier sets up the scene by describing the great care Mirza Firouz and his companions took of their appearance as they anticipated the great reception they would receive as they approached London: They wore their nicest clothes and even took “care to curl the zulfi behind our ears.” Hajji Baba continues by explaining to the reader “in what a different manner Persians approach a city, on occasions of ceremony, to what appeared to be usual here. It was the custom amongst us, we assured them [the English] to move very slow.” On the contrary, though “the infidels who were driving our carriage galloped their horses more like cavalry making a charge against an enemy, than like men conducting the representative of the shadow of Allah upon earth.” As the carriages approached London, “the ambassador began to look about him for the grand deputation. We perceived no troops, nor any horsemen running to and fro with anxious looks . . . And this is the custom of your country,” exclaimed Mirza Firouz, “to smuggle an ambassador into the seat of your government, as if he were a bale of prohibited goods.” Morier’s account of the approach to London is used to present certain characteristics and failings of Ilchi. The paragraphs following the ones quoted above make clear that despite the elaborate lodgings provided for Ilchi in London, he could not get over his disappointment over his entrance to the city. Additionally, he is a man for whom a “grand deputation” is far more important than seeing “the interest of the road,” something every foreigner would and apparently should appreciate. In Hajji Baba in England, Morier expands on this portrayal by transferring both the descriptions and also Morier’s own interpretation of the scenes to that of Hajji Baba himself. Significantly, while the expression “like a bale of goods” is Morier’s description of what Ilchi was thinking, in the fictionalized account, it is the envoy, Mirza Firouz, himself who utters these words. Additionally, the juxtaposition of the speed of the carriage (which is referred to in both texts) with the “out of place” desire of the Persians to slowly approach London works to
mark the Persians as unwilling to let go of their pointless and traditional rituals (the Istikbal) for what is obviously modern and thus superior (the speed of the carriage and the sights of the grand imperial capital). It is these characterizations of Ilchi and the Persians that have seeped into both the history and the historiography of the period.

But the inclusion of Ilchi’s own narrative of the same scene opens up another interpretive possibility. Throughout Hayratnamah, Ilchi describes in sometimes boring detail all instances when the British government created any kind of ceremony around his public appearances. For example, upon leaving the boat after four days of quarantine in Plymouth, Ilchi writes that “ships fired their cannons; and the soldiers and civilians lined up on all sides, ceremonially putting their hands to their brows—their customary way of showing respect. . . . At the moment of our arrival on shore, the soldiers lowered their flags, and I asked Mr. Morier for the reason. He explained that when members of the Royal Family visit the port the flags are lowered as a sign of respect; and the like honor was due to the high rank of the Envoy of the Padishah of Iran.”116 Ilchi’s attention to spectacle is not limited to his encounters in Europe: Even as they travel by land through Anatolia, Ilchi’s royal retinue served as a reminder of the power of the Qajar monarch, distributing tributes to various tribal chiefs in Anatolia and criticizing the state of the Ottoman Empire both implicitly and explicitly.

Within this context, Morier’s amusing “bale of goods” story takes on a different significance. In Hayratnamah, Ilchi sets the exact scene by describing how they left Bath in a carriage that moved “with the speed of lightning towards London.”117 His description of the “scenic route” includes his delight at the countryside and the sight of a river (presumably the Thames) “greater even than the Shatt al-Arab.”118 He then writes that as they approached London, the skies darkened with such rain that as a result “no one was able to move from his place.” Who this “no one” is becomes clearer after Ilchi describes the glorious lodgings provided for him in London. “Even though I was grieved by the lack of Istikbal on the part of the people of the city due to heavy rain,” he writes, the beauty of the table set for him was such that “the pain and the sadness left my heart completely and the night passed in happiness.”119

Ilchi’s 1809 trip and the treaty he was sent to finalize marks a turn in Qajar foreign affairs whereby Iran—before the back-to-back defeats at the hands of the Russians—was confident in its value as a “buffer state” in the Great Game. As a result, the Qajar crown saw itself as a powerful negotiating partner, and Ilchi’s insistence on pomp and circumstance that later historians have read as his frivolity was precisely one way to demonstrate that confidence. If anything, it was Britain that needed to fall into Iran’s good graces as a way of stopping Napoleon’s sphere of influence and guarding its interests in India. A letter from Fath ‘Ali Shah to Napoleon, written June 6, 1809, after Ilchi had already set off for England, points to the possibility that Ilchi’s mission initially was meant to stall the British as Iran desperately tried to get Napoleon’s attention and make France abide by the Treaty of Finckenstein. In the letter, Fath ‘Ali Shah writes: “It is advisable for us to treat the English emissaries with courtesy, while we are still waiting for news from that excellent brother . . . if we have been talking with others, it has been merely because it is a favorable opportunity.”120

Ilchi’s insistence on protocols stemmed from his position as the representative of Fath ‘Ali Shah such that a slight to him would have been seen as a slight to that of the figure of the king. This continued even to Ilchi’s second journey to England in 1819–1820 despite the fact that by 1819 Britain was not interested in Persia with the same urgency it had during the Napoleonic wars. For example, in an 1819 letter from James Morier to Joseph Planta regarding Ilchi’s reception at the Prince Regent’s residence and his offering of Fath ‘Ali Shah’s presents121, Morier writes that Ilchi was insistent on receiving the exact same courtesies that he had been paid the first time he had traveled to England. “He then distinctly stated,” Morier says, “that if he was not taken to his audience of the Prince Regent with the same honors and distinctions which he had occurred at other European courts, so that all the world might be apprised of the distinction with which the Representative of his sovereign was treated, he would accept of no ceremonial whatsoever, but in his private carriage, dressed in his usual every day Costume, he would proceed to Carlton house, deliver the letter with which he was charged from the Shah to the Prince Regent, and then return home.”122

Morier, like many after him, never seemed to understand this crucial characteristic of the Qajar court and judged Ilchi’s actions based on what he (and we) assume a foreigner in Europe must do—a “dictatorship of spectacle” if you will, as if one must, if not from England, gaze at its glories and be in wonder of it. But for Ilchi, an envoy from Fath ‘Ali Shah’s court, the spectacle meant nothing if he himself was not observed. His assessment of his ability to project his own power, and by extension the power of the Qajar throne, came precisely from the ability to create and to be a spectacle among the English. Ilchi sought out and enjoyed the prospect of being the “stocking gaze of multitudes” because it was precisely through his being a spectacle that the power of his mission could be played out and it was by narrating that spectacle back home that it could be justified.133

It is crucial to keep in mind the interconnectivity of “ceremony and politics”124 in the Qajar court when interpreting Hayratnamah. The pomp and circumstance that Ilchi sought out were not merely ceremonial rituals and symbols of monarchy stripped of political meaning. They were, in and of themselves, a form of practicing politics, both domestically and abroad.
This is demonstrated in a slight difference in Ilchi and Morier’s tales of the approach to London. In Morier’s accounts, the envoy’s emphasis on a grand reception, juxtaposed against the “speed of the carriage” and the “interest of the road” work to highlight the “backwardness” of the Persians. The reason he gives Ilchi for the absence of such a deputation again works to draw another sharp distinction between him and the English: Things were done differently there. Ilchi, in contrast, both mentions the speed of the carriage and the splendors of the route to London, but more important, he explains the lack of a “proper” reception not in terms of difference but in terms of rain, a natural phenomenon that could not be prevented. The substitution of a “natural” as opposed to “cultural” explanation for his arrival in London points to how intricately linked the rituals of power were to power itself, such that only something as uncontrollable as the weather could prevent the grand reception befitting the king’s envoy.

This chapter has argued that Hayratnamah is not only a record of Europe, as it has been assumed, but is also a narrative record of the splendors of the Qajar court reaching as far as European shores, written for courtly consumption. This allows for an understanding of Hayratnamah that is similar to what Layla Diba has argued persuasively regarding early Qajar paintings—particularly those of Fath ‘Ali Shah—namely that they “played an integral role in the nineteenth-century exercise of power, both at home and abroad.”125 Additionally, she notes: “ceremonious veneration of the ruler extended to events, and attributes, even distantly associated with the shah.”126 In this context, Hayratnamah can be read as a narrative exercise of power, much in line with Saba’s Shahanshahnamah,127 which set in verse the glory of Fath ‘Ali Shah and his overreaching power.

In this context, the title of Book of Wonder takes on multiple meanings, not only signifying a sense of wonder at the “many strange and innumerable new things seen and recorded”128 but also drawing attention to the sense of “wonder” that its author created during his travels. As such, the “wonder” in Hayratnamah is not just a reference to the “wonders of Europe” but a reference to Ilchi himself as the representative of Fath ‘Ali Shah in Europe whose presence caused great “wonder” among the Europeans. This meaning of Hayratnamah was not lost on its English audience: In 1819, on the occasion of Ilchi’s second trip to England, one observer noted that “he [Ilchi] has written an extensive narrative of his travels in India, Turkey, Russia, and England, to which the King of Persia has given the pompous title Hairatnamah (book of wonder).”129

To return to the painting that began it all, at first glance, Sir William Beechey’s depiction of the envoy merely shows Ilchi, the exotic Persian, against an English landscape. In Hayratnamah, though, Ilchi gives us clues to his pose in the picture. He writes: “[William Beechey, the painter] prepared the canvas and drew a portrait of me on the day I met the king, and also the portrait of the king. In a pleasant way, he drew the way the letter was presented to the king and the way the king of London took the letter from me. . . .”130 And if you look carefully, it is there—a small detail in the painting—resting firmly under the envoy’s right hand: the letter from the Qajar monarch to the English king and the raison d’être for Ilchi’s adventures in England.
CHAPTER 3

Long Day’s Journey into Night

Mirza Fattah Khan Garmrudi’s Accounts of Europe

As the people of Europe are clever and alert, and are always in pursuit of [explaining] the conditions of the whole world and establishing its details big and small, therefore for a long time, they put effort and attention into sending knowledgeable people to the ends of the world, who recorded the actual conditions of the dominions of the world, and collected it in this book of geography.¹

In 1838, the third Qajar monarch, Muhammad Shah (r. 1834–1848) sent a year-long diplomatic mission to Austria, France, and Britain to convey Iran’s grievances against the British Minister in Iran, John McNeill. The mission was to also rally support for the Qajar crown’s longstanding claim to Herat (made urgent by the signing of the Turkmanchay Treaty), and to protest British occupation of Iran in response to the Herat campaign in 1837. The mission was headed by Husayn Khan Ajudanbashi Muqaddam (hereafter referred to as Ajudanbashi), who was a veteran of Iran’s two series of wars with Russia and who had participated in the 1837 Herat campaign.² In addition to heading the European mission, he was appointed governor of Yazd in 1842–1843, and of Fars in 1844³ until the premiership of Amir Kabir in 1848, who then stripped him of his governorship. He is believed to have died in the 1860s.⁴ Ajudanbashi traveled to Europe in the company of Mirza Fattah Khan Garmrudi, his deputy who had been a scribe to the crown prince, Abbas Mirza, and who in that capacity had taken part in negotiations at the end of the second Perso-Russian war.⁵ After the latter’s death in 1833, Garmrudi became
the “revenue officer-secretary to the army”\(^6\) (lashkar’ nivis) to the court of Muhammad Shah Qajar\(^7\) and was eventually assigned to the 1838 mission to Europe.\(^8\) After returning from the 1838–1839 European mission, Garimrudi accompanied Ajudanbashi to both Yazd and Fars. He was appointed as Ajudanbashi’s delegate to the Kuhgiluyah and Mamasani areas\(^9\) and died in 1848.\(^10\)

This chapter focuses on Garimrudi’s travel account of the 1838–1839 mission to Europe titled Safarnamah-i Mirza Fattah Khan Garimrudi bih Urupa nawsum bih Chaharfasl (The Travelogue of Mirza Fattah Khan Garimrudi to Europe, known as Chaharfasl).\(^1^1\) To understand how a text like Chaharfasl engages with the (writing) culture of its time, it is critical to understand the whole of the text, the logic of its organization, the rhetoric of its narrative, and its relation to writing as a cultural phenomenon that—like any other cultural institution—evolved over the course of the century.

This chapter, rather than undertake the proverbial peeling of the onion layers, will attempt to put back on layers stripped off by later readers of this text. In doing so, one can see that Garimrudi’s description of Europe was fragmented, each part of the text written for different rhetorical purposes and aimed at different yet intersecting audiences. Reading Garimrudi’s multiple texts together shows his attempts to introduce new geography into what was essentially a diplomatic text, foreshadowing the explosion of travel and geographical writing in the Nasiri period (the focus of the next chapter.) What remains from this historical reconstruction is a travel account that in its rejection of our labels of genre presents a window into a much-ignored period of Iranian history.

**THE HERAT CAMPAIGN AND AJUDANBASHI’S MISSION TO EUROPE**

At this time, even though three English ambassadors in three separate treaties had written that the government of England will not interfere in Afghanistan’s affairs, a declaration of war arrived saying that your war in Herat will lead to the ruination of England’s rule in India and animosity with us. Their war ships came to our land on the island of Kharg [warning us] that if you do not turn back on Herat, we will lead troops into Fars and Kirman. We believed in the security of the ports and Fars from the same official treaty and assumed that treaty to be stronger than a 100 forts and cannons that we could build in the ports. Now, our troops have been on the move for two years in the war with the Amirs and the Uzbeks who have been helping them. We did not see fit to engage in war with the government of England, which is a great state [buzurg], and thus have retreated. The people of Iran should not imagine that I have tired of travel and of war.\(^1^2\)

Thus Muhammad Shah Qajar, in a proclamation read out loud to his army, announced his retreat from Herat in the summer of 1838. The initial invasion of Afghan land two years earlier had resulted in the British occupation of the southern ports of Iran and the dramatic breakup of, and turning point in, relations between Iran and Britain. The British reaction to the Iranian invasion of Herat was fueled first and foremost by strategic concerns over Russian access to India via Afghan lands. To this end, they accused the Iranians of allowing Russian advisors among their troops, claiming that the invasion had occurred with Russian encouragement and support.\(^1^3\)

At the center of the Herat affair stood John McNeill, the British Minister in Iran. He was accused of disregarding the 1814 Treaty of Tehran, which stipulated that Britain would not “intervene in any hostilities between Persia and Afghanistan unless requested by both parties to mediate.”\(^1^4\) For this and for his constant demand for both a withdrawal from Herat and also a royal apology for the arrest of “a Persian messenger in the service of the British Mission”\(^1^5\) among other things, McNeill was seen as the main culprit responsible for the Qajar crown’s eventual “humiliation and defeat.”\(^1^6\)

The degree of anger and indignation felt toward the British at this time is most fully captured in ‘Aliquli Mirza I’{tizad al-Saltanah’s Ikst al-Tawarikh, a chronicle of the Qajar monarchs from the beginning to 1842. According to the author, it was during the siege of Herat in 1837 that Muhammad Shah commissioned I’{tizad al-Saltanah to write a monarchical history: “I made haste in writing this book. Now that it is the year 1257, it has been a little less than five years that I have toiled and suffered day and night from writing and recording [tahrir va tajri] [this book].”\(^1^7\)

I’{tizad al-Saltanah’s account of Muhammad Shah’s withdrawal from Herat begins with a “history” of the English people from the time of Jesus, and includes discussions on the British conquest of India, the rise of Napoleon, up to the signing of the 1809 treaty between Iran and Britain.\(^1^8\) It was McNeill, according to I’{tizad al-Saltanah, whose counsel led to the breaking of that treaty between the two nations, an act for which the author quotes the verse 27 of the Quranic chapter, “The Cow,” branding as “corrupters of the earth” those who break their promises, and the first verse of the Quranic chapter, “The Hypocrites,” which attested to the lying nature of “hypocrites.”\(^1^9\) Citing the broken promises of the English and their occupation of the Island of Kharg in southern Iran, I’{tizad al-Saltanah explains Muhammad Shah’s decision to withdraw from Herat as such: “[the king] saw that repelling the sedition [fitna] of the English was more necessary than the conquest of the city of Herat” and thus ordered a retreat on September 6, 1838.\(^2^0\)
Muhammad Shah's retreat had not come about before some attempts at a diplomatic solution. On the occasion of Queen Victoria's ascension to the throne in 1837, Muhammad Shah decided in the summer of 1838 to send a diplomatic mission to Europe in the hope that the mission would make the case for the Qajar crown's claim to Herat in Austria and France, congratulate Queen Victoria, and convey Iran's grievances against John McNeill. His decree to his emissary Husayn Khan Aju- danbashi (who was given the title Nizam al-Dawlah upon his return from Europe to Iran) on June 8, 1838 (15 Rabi' al-avval, 1254), clearly reflects the frustration and the indignation he felt, not just in the face of McNeill's demands but also in regard to the accusation that Iran was in cahoots with the Russians against the English:

We're a sovereign state ourselves; we're neither the subjects of the Russians nor the English. There are hundreds of plans we have with the English, why would we travel to Herat to deal a blow to them? What are these accusations raised by McNeill.... The fact that I want to take what's rightfully mine from Herat, what does that have to do with the Russians and the English?.... The English nonsense [nazaragh] has crossed the line.... Anyway, when you're there tell them this: We have friendship in mind with the English. Why does this sort of useless behavior, all to bother us, come from their ambassador? What animosity do we have with the English? Still, there is no way I will negotiate with McNeill or even see his face. We have seen so many ambassadors, never seen a person so vulgar as he. I've summarized the case, but there are many more arguments that you can find in the letter that Mirza Ali has written in response to McNeill and to use them to make a reasonable case.

Two months later, Aju’danbashi set off from Tabriz for Europe. By the time the Iranian mission reached Istanbul, the British ambassador already had orders to inform them that unless Iran withdrew from Herat and reaccepted McNeill as the British representative to Iran, and apologized to England for their mistreatment of him, the mission would not be received in London. These demands were repeated when the mission reached Vienna. Nonetheless, Aju’danbashi and his retinue traveled on to Paris, and it was there that it was finally decided that facing Palmerston's refusal to meet with them and accept the letter they carried from Muhammad Shah, Aju’danbashi would travel to England as a private individual.

Palmerston met with Aju’danbashi twice in London, reiterating the British government's refusal to budge from its position. Finally, in a letter dated September 14, 1839, Haji Mirza Aqasi, the prime minister, ordered Aju’danbashi to accept Britain's demands:

I wrote the apology in the manner requested by Lord Palmerston. Apparently, there's no other way but to accept this.... The troops, due to delay in receipt of their wages, have become disorderly.... In order to make peace with our neighbors, we have to accept their demands and think about order inside the country. What other option is there?

Not surprisingly, none of this anger and humiliation, expressed in private letters between various Qajar functionaries, reflected itself in their formal communications with the British. The official letter to the British embassy, addressed to Lord Palmerston and mentioned in the above quote, begins with Iran's desire to maintain "the old friendship" that it had with the British government and ends with the hope that Iran's act of friendship would be accepted by the British leading to their evacuation of Kharg Island.

Many of these negotiations between the Qajar and European courts are chronicled in Garmrudi's travel account Chaharfasl, which has the distinction of being the only Qajar travelogue to have been published in the twentieth century by not one but two editors, and to have gone through more than one edition. It has constantly been cited by both its contemporaries in various Qajar chronicles and also by modern historians almost exclusively in the context of Qajar-Iran-British relations.

The popularity of the travel account stands in contrast to the paucity of scholarship on Muhammad Shah Qajar's rule. Sandwiched between the rules of Fath 'Ali Shah and Nasir al-Din Shah (r. 1848-1896), both of whom had much longer reigns, this period has been either discussed in the context of the war of succession preceding Muhammad Shah's reign or analyzed for Muhammad Shah's relation to his prime minister Haji Mirza Aqasi, a Sufi, and the 'ulama-state relations in this period. Of the two printed versions, one was published in 1968 by Fath al-Din Fattali, a descendant of Garmrudi, and was based on a manuscript in Garmrudi's handwriting. The second was also first published in 1968 and edited by Muhammad Mushiri, who states in the second printing of the book in 1977 that he used the manuscript housed in the senate (Majlis-i Sina) in Iran. While the latter has only used the Majlis manuscript, the former includes the variations between Garmrudi's manuscript and that of the Majlis.

The latter book is a straightforward annotated publication of Garmrudi's travelogue about Europe with a lengthy introduction explaining the Herat war, its main players, and the events that led to it. The former version, at 1,182 pages, reads almost as a hypertext. It begins with an annotated list of secondary sources that mentioned Aju’danbashi's trip and Garmrudi's travelogue, and for the first 726 pages discusses topics as varied as biographies of the two men, details of the Herat war, and in a curious section titled "The Execution of a Group of Prisoners," a long digression on how the Iranian element through its intelligence, deliberation, ingenuity, and genius has
always overcome obstacles and problems.”31 The rest of the book contains not only the Garmrudi’s travelogue about Europe but also an appendix to the travelogue titled “A Translation of the World’s Geography,” in addition to a description of “the conditions of [England] and its people”32 called the “Night Letter” or Shabnamah, and Garmrudi’s record of his stay in the southern region of Mamasani.

A comparison between the two published versions is telling: Mushiri’s more popular version is a record of a failed diplomatic mission to Europe in 1838, and as such it contains detailed descriptions of negotiations between various diplomats, interspersed with what seems like almost cliché vignettes of the spectacles of Europe. Unlike Ilchi’s Hayratnamah, which straddled the more traditional genre of the book of wonders and later genres of travel writing, Garmrudi’s account in this edition seems less excitingly, an embassy report aimed at relaying to Muhammad Shah’s court the attempts to rectify the crisis that had arisen out of the Herat affair. On the other hand, the almost forgotten version by Fattahi, by reproducing the Europe travel account alongside Garmrudi’s other writings, highlights how modern historians’ reading of travelogues about Europe, with their emphasis on descriptions of “wonder,” has missed the place of these travelogues in the larger context of Qajar history. This relates not only to the paring down and reshaping of Qajar texts, but also to the significance of renaming these texts: While Fattahi’s version retained the title Chaharfasl (whose significance I will come to shortly), Mushiri’s multiple versions shifted the authorship and meaning of the text to that of “The Description of Ajudanbashi’s Mission” (Sharh-i ma’muriyyat-i Ajudanbashi).

Bert Fragner links Chaharfasl to the account of Khursuw Mirza’s ambassadorial trip to Russia in 1829,33 noting that “public enthusiasm for Mirza Mustafa’s account caused succeeding delegations abroad to write similar works. One of the most important embassy accounts [sifaratumah] that has been written in a style similar to Mirza Mustafa’s is the travelogue of Mirza ‘Abd al-Fattah Garmrudi.”34 Garmrudi’s Chaharfasl, similarly, is noted in all the secondary sources in connection to Ajudanbashi’s embassy, the information provided in it used to discuss the state of Qajar Iran and Britain’s relation at the time. Mahmud Mahmud’s multivolume account of Iran and England’s relationship in the nineteenth century devotes a chapter of his second volume to “Mirza Husayn Khan Ajudanbashi’s journey to the courts of Austria, France, and England.”35 Despite first mistakenly identifying the author of the travelogue as Ajudanbashi,36 Mahmud quotes extensively from Chaharfasl, focusing on the mission’s reception by European courts and reproducing texts of the letters exchanged between England and Ajudanbashi verbatim from the travelogue itself.

In an article titled “Muhammad Husayn Khan Muqaddam: Ambassador Extraordinaire to the Courts of Europe,” Muhammad Ali Qavi also identifies Chaharfasl as “a description of the journey, the initiatives and negotiations of this political delegation during their stay in Europe.”37 Before once again quoting extensively from the travelogue, the author notes that “the fluent, simple, and unfurnished prose of this travelogue introduces Mirza ‘Abd al-Fattah as one of the superior and unique writers of that period.” He then goes on to say that his style of writing had no similarities to “the writers of Muhammad Shah’s period and not even to those of the Nasiri period and is more similar to the writings of the Constitutional period.”38 The differences from title to text between the two published versions, along with the popularity of Mushiri’s edition, has thus had real effects on how Garmrudi’s European travel account has been read and understood by later scholars.

LONG DAY’S JOURNEY: SAFARNAMAH-I MIRZA FATTAH KHAN GARMRUDI BIH URUPA MAWSUM BIH CHAHARFASL

Undoubtedly, due to the amount of detailed diplomatic negotiations between the various actors in Garmrudi’s Chaharfasl, scholars are correct in their assessments of the text as a source for Qajar political history. Yet, a detailed look at the introduction and the organization of information in the text presents us with another significant and ignored aspect of the travelogue: Chaharfasl, when read along with its auxiliary texts, becomes an attempt to write a new type of geographical text in addition to being another narration of the Qajar court’s imperial power, in a vein similar to Hayratnamah.40

Chaharfasl begins with an invocation of the creator, his prophet, and the Qajar monarch, Muhammad Shah, intertwined with lines of poetry and Quranic verses. In a move familiar to his contemporary readers, Garmrudi sets out to explain the contents of the travelogue and the reasons for its name:

In 1254 [1838] … Husayn Khan Ajudanbashi … was appointed to the embassy to the three states of Austria, England, and France. This humble servant, ‘Abd al-Fattah Garmrudi who for long has been in the service of this everlasting state [duwalat-i jand ayati-abad muddat], appointed as his deputy, has recorded the daily events both to and from [Europe], with a summary of the conditions of the inhabited quarter of the world [rub’ maskun] and of the situation of the states of the entire world, land and sea, and has described it in this manuscript, which is named Chaharfasl [Four Chapters/Seasons] and is arranged into an introduction, four chapters, and a conclusion.”44
The introduction, the shortest of the sections, establishes the exact date the mission left Tabriz as September 13, 1838, and ends eight days later when they reach the Ottoman lands. The first chapter chronicles events as the delegation moves through the Ottoman Empire, including their stay in Istanbul. The second chapter begins with Ajudanbashi and his companions embarking on a ship to Austria. The third chapter chronicles the mission's stay in Paris and their reception by King Louis Phillippe (r. 1830–1848). The fourth chapter covers the mission's stay in London; their return to Paris after forty-one days; and the journey home in the company of the new French ambassador, Comte de Sercey, and several military experts who accompanied him to Iran. The travelogue ends somewhat abruptly by mentioning that the mission entered Tabriz on February 9, 1840.

There is little record of time and movement in space in Chaharfasl. The entries are rarely delineated by days, and the travelogue jumps from one place to another without giving the reader a clear sense of the movement of the mission. In the earlier and later accounts of Qajar diplomats to Europe—Hayratnamah (1809) and Makhzan al-vaqayi' ("Reperatory of Events," 1856). The travelogues of the Nasiri period that followed—movement through geographical space (both inside Iran and outside) was carefully recorded on a nearly daily basis. In Chaharfasl the emphasis is on large urban spaces and more specifically, seats of power, as can be seen in the way in which the four sections of the travelogue are divided. Each chapter—Istanbul, Vienna, Paris, and London—is given encyclopedic entries that include information such as the number of ships, population, area, and at times taxes and governmental debt.

The clue to a reevaluation of Garmrudi’s travel narrative lies in the link between the title and Garmrudi’s introduction. In the last paragraph of the introduction to Chaharfasl, Garmrudi makes clear that while the purpose of the journey was to Austria, England, and France, the purpose of the travelogue was not only the recording of daily events but also “a summary of the conditions of the inhabited quarters of the world [rub‘i maskan] and of the situation of the provinces of the entire world, land and sea.” Garmrudi then writes that he named his book “Chaharfasl, and arranged [it] into an introduction, four chapters, and a conclusion.” Chahar is the number four in Persian, and fasl means both “chapters” and also “seasons.” At first glance, the book is titled both “Four Chapters,” symbolizing the four sections of the travelogue, and “Four Seasons,” alluding to the length of the mission, which was approximately a year. The prologue also states that in addition to having an introduction (which sets up the reasons for writing the book and the mission's departure) and four chapters, the book contains a conclusion. Yet Mushiri’s printed edition ends with the mission’s entry into Tabriz in 1840, leaving the reader wondering as to whether one has missed the “conclusion.” But in the edition based on a manuscript written in Garmrudi’s handwriting, the editor Fattahi notes that upon the completion of the travelogue, Garmrudi added “a separate section on world geography” titled simply, “A Translation of the World’s Geography.” As will be demonstrated shortly, this ignored section has to be Garmrudi’s stated conclusion, and its inclusion is essential to our understanding of Chaharfasl.

This “conclusion” begins with Garmrudi stating that during his stay in Paris he asked whether “there is a book that contains the conditions of the provinces of the inhabited quarters of the entire world” so that he could “record in these pages a summary of the particulars of each.” It quickly becomes clear that the text was translated after the journey was over and that the translation is but a summary of the French book at hand since Garmrudi appeals to the monarch to order the translation of the book of geography into Persian so that it benefits the state and the nation of Islam.

“A Translation of the World’s Geography” identifies neither the title of the original book on which it was based nor its author. Additionally, it is clear that rather than being a mere translation, the text benefits from Garmrudi’s own additions. For example, in the entry for Awadh/Oudh, Garmrudi states that it is in the province of “Navvab Iqbal al-Dawlah Nasyaburab’s ancestors, who for a long time resided in London and traveled in other countries of farangistan, and who in 1255 [1839] traveled to Karbala through Iran.” Garmrudi met Iqbal al-Dawlah, a fellow Shi’a, in Paris who, as we shall see later in the chapter, played a pivotal role in Garmrudi’s multiple narratives of Europe.

“A Translation of the World’s Geography” begins by stating, “the wise men of farang have divided the world into four sections.” In what seems to be a commentary by Garmrudi or the translator, it continues that some people of farangistan have counted “the new island of Holland [Indonesia] and some islands of the southern ocean” as a separate section and have thus “divided the globe into five sections.” The four sections included in the translation are Europe, Asia, Arabia and some parts of Hindustan, and the New World, which “is called Amrika by the farangis.”

Each section is divided into the countries contained in it, and each country division includes information such as the area of the country, its population, taxes, governmental debt, standing army, ports, types of war ships and commercial ships, and a description of its borders. The geographical division of the world into four sections as laid out in “A Translation of the World’s Geography” thus expands our understanding of Chaharfasl as the title for the travelogue with the four fasls not only referring to the one-year length of the mission and to the four chapters of the book but also the four divisions of the world.
This "conclusion" and the "main" text are explicitly linked through the structure of the travelogue and its "inter-textuality" with the translated geographical "conclusion." Within the body of the travelogue itself, upon describing the mission's comings and goings and various meetings with dignitaries, Garmrudi pauses to give information about the main countries visited. For example, in Chapter One (fasi-i avval), section three (bab-i siv-nam), after stating that the British ambassador to Constantinople, Lord Ponsonby, had informed Ajudanbashi that he would only be welcome in London if he was traveling there as a tourist, Garmrudi breaks the narrative. He presents information on the Ottoman Empire that includes the area of the state, its population, taxes and income, standing army, the population of Istanbul, and the number and descriptions of war and commercial ships. He repeats this in the sections for Austria, France, and England.

Without the benefit of a complete text (e.g. Mushiri's edition, which does not include the world geography text), one can read into these descriptions a non-European diplomatic mission's interest in Europe's modernizing characteristics such as the strength of its military and government. The quantitative aspects of these sections can be interpreted in the same vein: Contact with Europe had led to a "scientification" of knowledge as expressed in Garmrudi's travelogue. Yet the inclusion of "A Translation of the World's Geography" allows us to take a different and more interesting interpretation of the text: The above mentioned information had been copied from the translation of the book of geography (the conclusion) into the body of the travelogue itself. In other words, Garmrudi has inserted portions of a geographical text into his so-called embassy report or travelogue, questioning its character as a "record" of its author's European experience.

Kamran Rastegar in *Literary Modernity* notes a similar phenomenon in Mirza Salih Shirazi's *Safarnamah* and Rifa'a al-Tahtawi's *Takhlis al-ibriz*. Rastegar argues that "the transactional nature of these texts arises in part from their willful appropriation of textual materials from other social contexts, often through direct or approximate translation." In particular, he points to Tahtawi's inclusion in his travel account of his translation into Arabic of *Charte Constitutionelle*. He quite correctly suggests that "an examination of these early nineteenth-century travelogues, particularly with a focus on the presence of textual material reproduced in them, may open the door to a consideration of transactional textual circulation between, for example, Arabic and French, or Persian and English texts within the genre."

Garmrudi's use of "A Translation of the World's Geography," while intersecting in some ways with the above analysis, differs from it in two ways. First, as noted above, Garmrudi was, in the process of translating the text from French, also altering it by interjecting his own experiences, for example with Iqbal al-Dawlah, into it. This has the unique effect of mooring the authority of the text both in its source as a French geographic text and in Garmrudi himself as the traveler and carrier of the text. In this sense, the relationship between the body of *Chaharfasâl* and the translated geographic text is similar to the use of both firsthand and secondhand knowledge about Europe in earlier texts such as *Tuhfat al-âlam* and *Bustan al-siyahah* discussed in Chapter I. Second, as will be demonstrated below and in the next chapter, while from a literary perspective these texts may be "formally conservative," in the context of the development of travel writing and its connection to geography in the Qajar period, the transformation of "the content of travel writing to include materials that had never been part of the genre in earlier periods" is crucial.

What is this geography, and what is its significance in our reading of Qajar travelogues? To answer this question, it is necessary to take a glimpse at the development of geographical writing in Europe during this period. In his *Précis de la géographie universelle*, Conrad Malte-Brun begins by stating:

The design of the present Work is to bring together in a series of historical discourses, the whole of Ancient and Modern Geography, in such a manner as to leave in the mind of every attentive reader a lively picture of the whole terraqueous globe, with all its different countries—the memorable places which they contain—the tribes of men by which they have been successfully peopled, and those which at the present moment are its inhabitants. Malte-Brun's ideas of geography fell in line with "the age of Humboldt," in which the amount of geographical data available from the increase in explorations and voyages of discovery led to an emphasis on descriptive geography rather than on cartography. Malte-Brun, along with John Pinkerton, the British geographer and author of *Modern Geography*, believed that it was "the duty of the geographer to compile a description of the whole world and everything worth in it to comment." His *Précis* begins with an extensive discussion of the "Theory of Geography," beginning with astronomy; the construction of the globe; its interior and substances; and including sections on theories of the construction of maps, geology, vegetation, zoology, and "Principles of Political Geography."

In the latter book, Malte-Brun lays out the importance of political geography to descriptions of the world: "It is a matter of much greater importance to ascertain the material resources of the state.... The results, however, of this science must have a place in the descriptions of political geography." Of the various material sources that must be included in geographical descriptions, Malte-Brun mentions the number of coasts, the nature of a country's ports, the states of its roads, the population, which "is the foundation of every good system of finance," the number of war ships, and the national debt.
Malte-Brun’s notions of geography were influential and popular in its time. He was one of the founders of “Europe’s first geographical society,” the Société de Géographie, in 1821, and by mid-nineteenth century, his Précis had already gone through several editions, abridgements, and translations. In fact, he makes several appearances in Rifâ’a al-Tahtawi’s account of his travels to and stay in Paris between 1826 and 1831 as a student sent by Muhammad ‘Ali Pasha of Egypt. Tahtawi’s studies included various geographic books by Malte-Brun, and his final exam in Paris included a translation of “an extract from the book by Malte-Brun on geography.”

While the numbers presented in Garmrudi do not match the numbers given for various populations in the Précis, thus ruling out that his “A Translation of the World’s Geography” is directly taken from it, there is no doubt that the original was written in the geographical school advanced by Malte-Brun. The categories in the travelogue (taken from “A Translation of the World’s Geography”) closely match those presented by Malte-Brun in his discussion on political geography. Additionally, the fact that Rifâ’a al-Tahtawi, who traveled to France between 1826 and 1831, translated Malte-Brun around the same time that Garmrudi traveled to Paris highlights the influence of this geographical text and others similar to it in the cultural milieu of the time.

The title of Garmrudi’s travelogue, its introduction, the contents of the chapters, the information presented on the countries traveled to, the mirroring of that information in “A Translation of the World’s Geography,” the inclusion of that translated text in the travelogue itself, and the type of geographical works that influenced the travelogue point to a decision on Garmrudi’s part to construct Chaharfasl as a work of geography similar to what he understood to be important at this time. Additionally, Chaharfasl is clearly not narrated as a daily chronicle with the delegation’s movements charted from one place to the next, and yet even though the travelogue jumps both in terms of time and space, Garmrudi still provides his readers information on the distances between various places in his travels. For example, Garmrudi notes that the distance between Trabzon and Istanbul is 160 parasangs (farsang or farsakh), which is between three and four miles and that the distance between Strasbourg and Paris is 120 farsangs, though he provides little else about how the delegation traveled between these two cities.

Giving distances between places traveled was not new. Travelers as far back as al-Istakhri in the tenth century and Ibn Battuta in the fourteenth century would often provide distances between cities. Even Ilchih in Hayrat-namah provides some distances, though not as regularly as Garmrudi. What is striking about Chaharfasl is how geographical information took a central role in the text, information that is “remembered” by later chronicles, and which highlights the importance that came to be attached to this type of geographical information in the second half of the nineteenth century. Of all the characteristics of earlier geographical texts and travelogues, it is the distances between cities, be it inside Iran, in surrounding areas, or Europe, that is retained by late-nineteenth-century travelers, to the extent that it becomes one of the few unique markers that separated travelogues from memoirs.

One example of such remembering is the chronicle Nasikh al-tavarikh, which Sipîrî first began writing during the Muhammad Shah period. Nasikh al-tavarikh provides one of the most extensive accounts of the Ajudanbashi mission, freely reproducing information provided by Garmrudi in the travelogue. In addition to a repetition of the mission’s itinerary and accounts of its negotiations, Nasikh al-tavarikh repeats the distances that Garmrudi recorded in Chaharfasl, including the distance between Strasburg and Paris and between Paris and Calais. More interesting, in the chronicle Rawzat al-safa-yi Nasiri, written and compiled in the latter part of the nineteenth century, Hidayat, almost completely dispenses with the diplomatic information provided in Chaharfasl: Without a hint of the bitterness seen in chronicles such as Iklîr al-tavarikh, Hidayat states that a mission was sent by Muhammad Shah to Austria, then Paris, and then England but “since Mirza ‘Abd al-Fattah Garmrudi has written the details of Ajudanbashi’s embassy in a treatise [risâlah],” he will not repeat it. When Hidayat does come back to the mission in a later section, he begins by providing the family background to Ajudanbashi. He then presents relates the events leading up to the mission (“corruptors [mufsidan] were determined to sour and corrupt relations between the exalted state and the glorious [bahiyyah] state of England, which was one of complete unity”), and then gives an account of the physical movement of the mission from Iran to England and back.

What Hidayat chooses to repeat from Garmrudi’s travelogue for the most part are geographical descriptions, repeated almost verbatim from the text. For example, he writes: “On the twenty seventh of the month, the mentioned ambassador [Ajudanbashi] came to Kamshikhana, which is an area that has thirty five silver mines and lies at the beginning of the land of Trabzon.” Echoing Garmrudi’s fascination with the steamship, Hidayat, rather than discuss the mission’s negotiations in Istanbul, repeats Garmrudi’s description of the steamship since “it is one of the new inventions and of most of the creatures of the lands [ghalib-i khalaqiy-i barri] have no information about it.” The information he provides is the speed of the steamship (“it travels between Trabzon and Istanbul between fifty-one and sixty hours”), and the price of travel on it. This shift from descriptions of Ajudanbashi’s mission in Nasikh al-tavarikh to the geographical information
repeated in the later chronicle of Rawzat al-safa, is a reflection of the intense interest of the Qajar court in acquiring geographical knowledge over the course of the second half of nineteenth century.

Chaharafsí points to the beginnings of an intricate link between travel and geography in Qajar Iran. But it was also written to describe to Muhammad Shah and his court not just the details of the negotiations—which was regularly reported to the court via letters—but also like Hayratnámah to narrate the power of the Qajar king against the backdrop of Europe. As is expected from a record of a diplomatic mission, Chaharafsí is replete with conversations between various dignitaries and Ajudanbashi, for most of which Garmrudi was present. In his chapter on England, Garmrudi presents in great detail both texts of official correspondence with Lord Palmerston and also elaborate accounts of the two meetings with him. It also reproduces Palmerston’s demands on the Iranian court and Ajudanbashi’s careful analysis and response to those demands. He also includes letters Palmerston responded to, those he didn’t, what was or was not achieved during the two visits, and the text of the Duke of Wellington’s speech to the parliament in which, according to Garmrudi’s reprint, the Duke of Wellington came down on the side of Iran.36

These correspondences are all prefaced by Garmrudi as such:

Since the details of the events that had occurred between the exalted public functionaries of Iran [umānay-i dawlat-i ‘ilmiyya-i Iran], and the Ministers of the glorious state of England [dawlat-i bihīyya] were not revealed to the people of England and the Parliamentary deputies, as had actually happened [hasb al-vaq‘], and since Mr. McNeill wrote contrary to what happened and whatever he wanted and printed it in London, therefore, Ajudanbashi in addition to the above-mentioned affairs, has written and recorded [tabī‘īn ya taqrir] in the English language some of the events that occurred during the stay in London between [hum aul] Lord Palmerston … for the ambassadors of other states, the ministers of England and Parliament.37

In other words, quite aware of the impact of print (he begins by stating McNeill published lies), Ajudanbashi and his retinue fight back in kind: writing (and presumably printing) in English their version of events. This episode, seemingly trivial and transitory, is echoed in another text of the time, Ikšir al-tawārikh. After repeating the reasons for Muhammad Shah’s defeat, I‘tīdāl al-Saltanah relates how Mirza Salih Shirazi was given orders to print the “breaking of the treaty by the English” and to send it to “twenty eight powerful kings [quraf] and sultans around the world so that the perceptive rulers know that the promises of that nation, like the winter’s sun and the summer’s cloud, is without credibility.”38

In the context of Garmrudi’s Chaharafsí, more important than the use of newspapers and print to argue Iran’s case is the mission’s attempts to exercise the royal power of the Iranian court through protocols and gifts. In 1809, Ilchi’s reception in London and his narration of it reflected Iran’s self-confidence vis-à-vis England, turning Hayratnámah into yet another “monument” to the power of Fath ‘Ali Shah beyond Iran’s borders. In Chaharafsí, it is clear the extent to which the Qajar court and its ability to project its power in Europe had changed and even become weaker. As a result, adherence to protocol, and more important, the exchange of gifts and portraits, rise even more in prominence in the travelogue.

The memory of Ilchi’s visit to Europe hung heavily over Ajudanbashi’s mission and informed their expectations of their reception in Europe. In Hayratnámah, Ilchi devotes page after page to parties thrown in honor of him and the ways in which the English court and society honored him and by extension, Fath ‘Ali Shah. In Garmrudi’s travelogue, Ajudanbashi and his group of companions were, to say the least, barely acknowledged both in the Ottoman Empire and in Europe, a great cause for consternation. Upon entering Austria, Garmrudi states:

It is tradition in farangistan that each time the ambassador of a state reaches the port, he must show his government’s emblem. Thus Ajudanbashi out of respect for this [tradition] at the time of our arrival pulled out the flag and presented the symbol of the lion and the sun, which is specific to the exalted Iranian state … At the time, the ruler of that port upon seeing the flag should have immediately fired the canons but he didn’t.39

As a result, Ajudanbashi, who in Garmrudi’s text comes across as a man deeply devoted to form and protocol, refuses to see the Austrian representatives, citing that since “at the beginning they showed no respect to our government and our monarch, therefore it is my responsibility and obligation to not meet with them.”40

Despite Ajudanbashi’s appeal to Prince Metternich to rectify the situation, the delegation’s dissatisfaction continued throughout their journey. When the mission reached Vienna, a representative from the Prussian king and Prince Metternich explained the dissonance between what the Iranian delegates expected and what they actually saw in terms of reception: “It has been several years in all of farangistan that some official forms of reception, from choice of residence to budgets for ambassadors, have been stopped. Ambassadors from each country must pay for their own expenses and lodgings but state respect will be offered in line with the new forms of reception.”41 Ajudanbashi’s response, as always, is to declare the Iranian delegation’s lack of need for any such help, though later in the travelogue it
becomes clear that the delegation lacked the necessary funds for the trip and eventually needed to borrow money in order to return from London to Paris.87

The 1838 mission's consciousness of the difference between their reception and Ilich's was shared by Palmerston who, referring to Ilich's second official visit to England in 1819, noted that "these days nothing of the kind can be done. The Persian ambassador must be Europeanised... the ambassador, when he is received will be received like any and every other ambassador... I do not see what the Shah of Persia has done for England that should entice him to quarter upon the people of England an ambassador whom we did not ask nor wish him to send."88

The details of the exchanges between Palmerston and Ajudanbashi, be it from British records or Garmrudi's detailed retellings, reveals the extent to which Ajudanbashi and by extension, Muhammad Shah, was humiliated by Palmerston, since all of Iran's demands were rejected on the excuse that Persia needed Britain more than Britain needed her.89

Despite (or perhaps because of) the obvious disappointment on the part of the 1838 mission and the difference in their reception by the European states with Ilich's trip thirty years earlier, there is a clear emphasis in Chaharfasi on the importance of protocol and gifts as ways of displaying and exercising the power of the Iranian monarch abroad.90 Hayratnamah functions as a text that narrates royal power through Ilich's narration of his experience with farang. Even more than Hayratnamah and as a means of compensating for the actual impotence of Ajudanbashi's mission, Garmrudi's travelogue is replete with sequences in which the exchange of the portrait of the Iranian monarch, Muhammad Shah, acts as a representation and exercise of his royal power. This narration of the exchange of pictures takes on a more layered meaning when we remember that it is not so much Ajudanbashi who is relating this but Garmrudi, his narrative having the double duty of not only justifying Ajudanbashi's trip but also his own position within that mission. He is no mere scribe and is constantly injecting himself into the story.

Beginning in Istanbul, where once again Garmrudi complains about the lack of appropriate respect during his visit with the Ottoman Sultan, he writes:

After being given permission to leave... the Sultan sent someone and asked for the royal portrait [surati humayun] from Ajudanbashi so that he can see it. Ajudanbashi obeyed and once again we returned to the foyer [itaq-i ma bayn] until the same person brought the royal portrait and said that his highness, the Sultan said that I have brother,91

In France, upon meeting King Louis Phillippe, Garmrudi notes that the portrait of the Qajar monarch is once again displayed such that "the king himself and the royal family and all the nobles of the court [buzurg-i nizam] looked at and visited the blessed portrait [surati mubarak].92" He then states that the French monarch asked that Muhammad Shah's and the late Abbas Mirza's portraits be sent to him upon the mission's return to Iran so that he could be "happy from seeing and visiting [the portrait]."93 During a subsequent visit with the French monarch, Garmrudi states that when King Louis Phillippe asked Ajudanbashi to pick a present from various jewels, swords, and daggers, Ajudanbashi responded, "I very much request [your] blessed image since all these things have been made available through [your] presence." After this the king sent a portrait of himself, his wife, his children, and his grandchildren engraved on a plate of gold.94 The exchange of pictures was not an afterthought on the part of the mission, as they had set out from Iran with portraits of Muhammad Shah: "In Tabriz, the painter Lal Afsar had drawn the blessed image in the clothes of peace on a large canvas and quite well. It was very similar. In Vienna we made a very nice gold frame and sewed a nice firman cover for it."95

The emphasis on the Qajar monarch, and by extension, the glory of Iran, is not limited to images of the monarch. All nineteenth-century travelers to Europe were conscious of symbols of "Iran," be it the symbol of the lion and the sun, or their own physical appearance. This manifested itself in different ways that depended on the traveler's position vis-à-vis the court and the period in which they traveled. Ilich revealed in his status as a "Persian in the Court of King George" as evidenced by his travelogue and his multiple portraits drawn during his stay in Europe. Mirza Salih Shirazi, who traveled to London less than ten years later, chose to wear European clothes to simplify his increasingly complicated status as an Iranian student in England.96 For Ajudanbashi and his companions, the goal seemed to be, as stated above, to increase the court's, and their own, visibility in every possible way, as if to compensate for their lack of official recognition. For example, while in London, Ajudanbashi and Garmrudi were invited to the opening of the new railway. When the conductor asked them as nobles to take the first ride in the "steam carriage," the crowd of women and men reacted to their approach, which Garmrudi recounts:

Astonished and jeering [az rahi ta'ajab va 'ustahza] [the crowd] raised their voices. Ajudanbashi made haste to acknowledge them first, so they also took off their hats and it all passed well. If there had been the slightest neglect, things would have ended badly. The truth is that they had a right [to be astonished] since our appearance, in regard to clothing, etc., in their eyes was the height of strangeness [gharibkhane], especially the dyed beard which is rare in farangistan.97
Ajudanbashi's mission was not just concerned with the physical presence of the Qajar crown in farang but also, in what departs from Iliche's narrative, a stated concern with the presence of "Iran." In Vienna the delegation, on the order of the Emperor, "visited all the artillery [tap-khanah], armory [qur-khanah], arsenal [jubah-khanah], school of engineering [muhanadis-khanah], library, and other manufacturing/artisanal workshops [karkhantijat-i san'iät]."98

One day we went to visit the printing press [chap-khana]. On display there were old and new weapons from all states except from the exalted state of Iran [dawlat-i 'illiyah-i Iran]. Upon returning home, Ajudanbashi sent an Indian sword to the arsenal [jubah-khanah] along with a letter addressed to the person in charge, saying that this is one of the tools of war in Iran. Let it be placed there as a souvenir. Another day when we went to see the treasury [khazinah], there were coins from all the sultans in the world, except for the blessed imperial coin, upon returning, he sent several silver and gold coins along with a well written letter to the treasury along with a ruby ring that while not very precious, had an old design and writing engraved on it. These three things, after having been presented to the Emperor were accepted and recorded in the treasury.99

The above paragraph lacks descriptions of the various objects that the mission saw and instead focuses on what was not represented: Iranian weapons of war and royal coins. Here, Garmrudi is not so much conveying information about Europe to his readers as much as presenting his mission's role in putting Iran on Europe's map so to speak. The emphasis in Garmrudi's text on representations of Iran (through weapons, coins, flags), does not figure as strongly in Iliche's text. This reflects both the relative distance of each traveler from the center of power and the changes in the nature of kingship from Fath 'Ali Shah to Mohammad Shah. It is clear from Hayratnamah and its contemporaneous texts that Iliche was a walking embodiment of Fath 'Ali Shah's sovereignty in Europe. Ajudanbashi's mission was more removed from Mohammad Shah despite being an ambassador from him. One can speculate that by this point, a distinction between king and state was beginning to be understood in the Qajar court. As such, the delegation conducted itself as both representatives of king and of the state of Iran (dawlati I Iran).

What stands out here is not just the actual use of texts, portraits, and objects in the 1838 delegation's exercise of the Qajar court's royal power in Europe, but Garmrudi's constant narration of it in his travelogue. In other words, in Chaharfasl Garmrudi's experience of Europe is mediated through this narration of Qajar power, a point not lost on later chroniclers. For example in Nasikh al-tavarikh, Sipilir, without ever mentioning Garmrudi or his travelogue, relates almost verbatim the Ottoman Sultan's desire to see

Muhammad Shah Qajar's portrait, the exchange of gifts with King Louis Philippe of France, and the Duke of Wellington's speech, which "was elegantly printed and spread throughout London."101

JOURNEY INTO NIGHT: MIRZA FATTAH KHAN GARMRUDI'S SHABNAMAH

In his 1968 edition of Safarnamah-i Mirza Fattah Khan Garmrudi bih Urupa, Fath al-Din Fattahi included a short text titled Shabnamah, or Night Letter. Unlike the "main travelogue" (meaning Chaharfasl), of which there are multiple copies, Fattahi noted that there are only two of Shabnamah: one in the editor's family library and another in the Library of the National Consultative Assembly (Majlis-i shuwa-r-i mili). The manuscript in the Majlis library, according to the editor, matches the handwriting, size, and cover decorations of the Chaharfasl manuscript housed in the Tarbiyat Library of Tabriz, both of which used to belong to his father, Mirza Fattah Khan Garmrudi's grandson.

The previous pages have argued that the logic of Garmrudi's travel account necessitates the inclusion of "A Translation of the World's Geography" into the interpretative framework of Chaharfasl. This section argues that Garmrudi's Shabnamah, or Night Letter, which presents vignettes from the exact same journey, is part and parcel of Chaharfasl despite seemingly being a separate account (and even bound separately) and despite being left out of Mushiri's published versions. The inclusion of Shabnamah in interpreting Chaharfasl once again questions the assumption that travelogues are solely reflections of a singular experience (in this case of Europe) in favor for the treatment of travelogues as rhetorical texts, the shape and content of which changed according to the function it served for its readers at home. This undoubtedly has important repercussions for our understanding of not only how genres of writing are constituted (and later edited and published) but also the different roles of writing and texts in narrations of Europe in Qajar Iran.

Shabnamah, unlike Chaharfasl, does not begin with any invocation, reasons for its title, or the date it was written. According to Fattahi, the first page of his personal copy has the date the manuscript was copied, 1842, a year after McNeill finally returned to Iran and a treaty of commerce was concluded between the two countries.102 Additionally, nowhere in the text does Garmrudi mention the title Shabnamah or reasons for calling it such. However, Fattahi's reprint of the first page of the manuscript in the Majlis library reveals how the title was written on each side of the first line of the manuscript.103
Kitab-i Shabnamah is an account of the manners and customs of the British both as observed by Garmrudi himself during his stay in England and as told to him by Iqbal al-Dawlah, whom he had met in Paris. Here, he begins with pornographic descriptions of English women and their sexual relations with men and even dogs, interspersed with stories based on his own experiences with English women. He then moves to descriptions of various forms of entertainment, including the theater and magic shows, and uses them to highlight the naivety, stupidity, and cuckoldry of the British. The book also includes a lengthy discussion on Freemasonry lodges, a bit of English history, tales of British merchants’ dishonesty, and the oft-repeated point in Chaharfasl that the men of a great state do not “treat their friends with such broken promises and treaties and do not in futility give their government such a bad name in the world.” This was an obvious reference to both the Qajar state’s and Ajudanbash’s mission’s treatment at the hands of the British.

In modern Persian, ruznamah has come to mean “newspaper,” but in Qajar Iran it also meant “daily chronicle” (ruz, meaning day), a generic name used in reference to both memoirs and travelogues that recorded in a sequential manner the life and times of the author. The opposite of ruz is shab (night), positing Garmrudi’s travelogue (that is, Chaharfasl), which he refers to as Kitab-i Rusznamah (“the book of the daily chronicle”) as a complementary text to Kitab-i Shabnamah (“the book of the nightly chronicle”). Additionally, the use of shabnamah (which in modern times has come to mean samizdat) to describe a more “bawdy” account implies a less official text than the ruznamah, and which, as argued below, most likely shared the same readers but had a different rhetorical purpose from its “diplomatic” counterpart. The link between the texts goes beyond their titles in two inter connected ways: first, in Garmrudi’s use of Iqbal al-Dawlah as a source of information in both texts; and second in his assumption that either the readership of the two texts are the same or that they have access to and/or are familiar with both texts.

First, Iqbal al-Dawlah looms also large in both of Garmrudi’s narratives both as a source of money (the mission borrows money from him in Paris) and as a source of stories about Europeans. In Chaharfasl, Garmrudi begins his long description of freemasonry in England by explaining that he was presenting a summary of the information provided to him by the “people of Hindustan” (ahali-yi Hindustan), and in particular, “Nawab Iqbal al-Dawlah in whose truthfulness [sidqi gaw] and good understanding [husn-i fahm] the people of Hindustan have faith.” Despite his important role as a source of information, the explanation of who Iqbal al-Dawlah is does not come until later near the end of their stay in London. In Shabnamah, on the other hand, Garmrudi begins by providing a detailed biography of Iqbal al-Dawlah, who “due to the broken promises, oppression, and tyranny of the English government has been wandering and staying from his familiar vatan, home, and life, and who has been in London for a year and a half with his relatives and followers [man taba]” so that they may bring their affairs to a conclusion.”

Unlike Chaharfasl, which, as discussed earlier, at least has been explored in the context of Iranian-British relations in the nineteenth century or as examples of Qajar embassy reports, very little attention has been paid to Shabnamah. The available scholarship has emphasized the gendered nature of Garmrudi’s critique. For example, Shabnamah is seen as “the prototype of a new erotic literature that constituted the uninhibited women of Europe as the locus of male sexual fantasies and arousal,” and Garmrudi is considered amongst “the originators of such a Europhobic discourse, a discourse in which the political threat of Europe was connected to the sexual debauchery of European women.” While this reading of Shabnamah has much validity, it is important to note that Garmrudi’s tale of the depravity of European women actually is preceded by his deflecting of the veracity of these stories on to Iqbal al-Dawlah (much like he did with his description of the Freemasons in Chaharfasl). From the start, Garmrudi writes that that Iqbal al-Dawlah had traveled around the land of England. He then states that “he gave a brief summary of some of the conditions and characteristics of women—the responsibility lies with the narrator. After which he launches into descriptions of English women’s debauchery. Garmrudi’s weaving together of Iqbal al-Dawlah’s and his own voice in and out of his narrative is an essential characteristic of all his texts, highlighting that the texts together were not reflections of one particular discourse (for example, a Qajar countermodern one) but a multiplicity of voices born out of different experiences and used for different rhetorical purposes. Garmrudi’s Shabnamah was thus partly born out of the experiences of Iqbal al-Dawlah, who is most probably the author of Iqbal-i Farang, an 1834 tract on the superiority of the British and who by 1838 had fallen out of favor with the British to become Garmrudi’s supplier of tales of English debauchery and corruption.

Second, like the relationship between Chaharfasl and its geographical appendix, the relationship between the Ruaznamah and Shabnamah is one of interconnectivity based on the assumption that the readers of the one are also familiar with the other. For example, in Shabnamah, rather than explain theaters in Europe, Garmrudi refers his reader to his Kitab-i Ruaznamah, where he says he has provided a detailed description, including a physical description of the building, the protocol of going to the theater, and some of the shows performed there. Additionally, there are many shared yet slightly altered stories between Chaharfasl and Shabnamah. For example, Garmrudi tells the story of someone (in Shabnamah, he states that he is a Frenchman) who takes out an advertisement in newspapers saying that he has arranged the most “wondrous and strange” thing and that “in the entire
countries of farangistan, no one has seen such a strange thing.” Crowds of people gather at the building where this wondrous event is to be unveiled, for a price. The someone/Frenchman tells the crowd that he has worked hard to put this together and is afraid that others might steal it, so he makes them pledge on “the pure spirit of Jesus” that they will not reveal his secret. After paying the entry fee and promising secrecy, people are led into the building, where they are then told that there is nothing to see and that the organizer has nothing in mind other than to make money off of them. The crowd, “without having seen anything strange,” leaves the building disappointed, and to anyone who asks them about what they have seen, they respond by saying: “[U]ntil you see it with your own eyes, you won’t understand.”

While the story is retold almost verbatim from text to text, the context and meaning of the story differs. In Chaharfasl, the story is told on the heels of Garmrudi’s description of Freemason lodges, a story as noted above, he says he heard from “the people of Hindustan.” Garmrudi explains that when he inquired about Freemasons from people “who had gone there and seen its conditions,” they would respond that “one cannot talk about the conditions there.” After narrating the story of the conman in his travelogue, Garmrudi goes back to the Freemasons, drawing a parallel between the two and wondering about the point of something about which no one could talk.

In his Shabnamah, the story is told in the exact same way but the context has changed: The story of the conman is prefaced by “another tale about [the English’s] stupidity and silliness.” There is undoubtedly a striking difference in tone between Chaharfasl and Shabnamah. Most important, the former is devoid of the types of critique that fill up the pages of the latter. For example, the story written above, places the responsibility for his clearly disdainful description of Freemasonry (and by extension the con story) on Iqbal al-Dawlah. In Shabnamah, the authorial deflection is still there, but the ridiculing of the English is not only direct, it is given an added twist by identifying the conman as French.

Do Garmrudi’s accounts of Europe reveal a diplomat traveler and admirer of Europe, who like those before him recorded his observations for the instruction and entertainment of the king and the court? Or do they show him to be, for reasons to do with the background of his travels, a harsh critic of Europe, a critique which is most explicitly reflected in his pornographic descriptions of English women? It is important to remind ourselves that Garmrudi was not only narrating a Qajar court different from that of Hayratnamah’s Fath ‘Ali Shah, but also a different Britain, traveling not as an “ambassador extraordinaire” but as part of a delegation rejected by the British, forced to accept almost to a word Britain’s terms in the matter of Herat.

This may help explain the fragmented nature of Garmrudi’s European narrative. A manuscript copy of the report of the mission, Chaharfasl, was dedicated and presumably given to the battle-fatigued king. As such, and within the larger framework discussed earlier, it followed a particular form of writing meant to reinforce for the court the presence of the king and Iran inside Europe despite of all its geopolitical weaknesses. It was thus not solely a reflection of Garmrudi or Ajudanbashi’s European experiences, whatever they may have been. Shabnamah, on the other hand, seems to be directed to an at least intersecting readership but with the purpose of amusement of its reader, while simultaneously belittling the British. It was a text of the Qajar court but decidedly not an imperial one.

As discussed in chapter 1, a de-essentialization of the genre of Safarnamah requires a shift from this vertical reading of texts (all descriptions of travel to Europe throughout the nineteenth century constituting one genre), to a horizontal one that places texts within the written cultural milieu of their own periods. In the case of Garmrudi, scholars have repeatedly ignored the textual references between his three texts, choosing instead to separate them into distinct genres. Our understanding of all of Garmrudi’s narratives of Europe changes once we perform this interpretive shift.

The case of Garmrudi’s Safarnamah is an important example of the ways in which questions of genre become central to our understanding of the texts. Reading Chaharfasl on its own, and with preconceived notions of what an embassy report should and did contain, scholars have mined it for the information it contains regarding the question of Herat and Iranian-British relations. But the designation of Chaharfasl as an embassy report is in addition to the primacy given by contemporary historians to “original texts” versus “translated texts” has led to a complete omission of “A Translation of the World’s Geography,” a text that, as demonstrated, was crucial to the composition of Chaharfasl itself. Its inclusion would shift the nature of Chaharfasl from our notion of travelogues as “autobiographical texts” to that of a compilation, much in keeping with the writing culture of the time. On the other hand, reading Shabnamah not as a text independent of the other two but in conjunction with them allows us to move away from a bifurcation of the discourse of Europe into Europhilic and Europhobic.

By the time Garmrudi began writing his experience there existed among the Qajar elite an expectation of narrative and style for travel accounts, and Chaharfasl undoubtedly fit that expectation. As such, Chaharfasl, with its emphasis on protocols, meetings with various dignitaries, copies of negotiations and treaties, and the abundance of geographical information, was not meant to embody the totality of Garmrudi’s European experience but to tell the tale of the Qajar king’s power through the movement of his delegation in the lands of Europe. Garmrudi’s writing of Shabnamah, with its language of
debuchery and critical view of the British in particular, can aim at another (if we take "night letter" to represent a less imperial form of writing than "day letter") literary style that was on the one hand "critical" and on the other "entertaining." In this way, the fragmentation of Garmrudi's European experience into letters of night and day furthers the argument set up in the previous chapter on the link of travel writing about Europe and the narrations of imperial power. Additionally, Chaharfasl and its close intertwining with geographical texts of its time foreshadows the type of geographical mapping that came to the forefront of travel and travel writing in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and which is the subject of the next chapter.
CHAPTER 4

The Traveling King

Nasir al-Din Shah and His Books of Travel

It has now been a year of planning for the journey to farangistan. So it's obvious what we've seen and endured in terms of the chatter of the public and the andarun, inside the harem, the women's quarters and the men's, both inside and outside up to now when we must put on our boots and set off.¹

On a cold evening in 1891, the meticulous diarist 'Ayn al-Saltanah settled down, an hour and a half past sunset, with his book. The book, he writes, is the king's latest account of his travels to Europe, which was just recently brought to him: "I've been reading it for a few nights. He has done a good amount of sight-seeing [siyahat]. I'm now reading the descriptions of the Paris exposition and the Eiffel Tower. The countries of Europe are something else and there's no comparison with the East." One can almost hear 'Ayn al-Saltanah's sigh as he ends the entry by wondering if he can ever go himself.² More than a hundred years later, scholars would more often than not dismiss the king's multiple accounts of Europe for being merely "replete with description of train travel, dinner parties, ballets, theater, operas, and the variety of animal species found in the zoo. Only occasional and vague reference is given to the serious diplomatic negotiations, however, and introspection and analysis are singularly absent."³

The king in question is Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar, who ruled from 1848 to 1896, making him the longest reigning monarch in recent history of Iran. Nasir al-Din Shah traveled to Europe three times during his long reign and has left five volumes of his accounts of travel to Europe in addition to numerous other accounts of travels throughout Iran. The king's itinerary in 1873, his first voyage to Europe, included land travel to the
province of Gilan, by ship to the Caucasus, Russia, Germany, Belgium, England, France, Switzerland, Austria, through the Ottoman Empire to Istanbul, back up to the Caucasus and from there to the port of Anzali on the Caspian sea in Iran. Most of the voyage occurred by train or boat. In 1878, the monarch decided to take the land route to the Caucasus instead, visiting the same European countries as the previous trip with the exception of England, which he skipped. This visit, the shortest of the three (four months), seems to have been centered on the Paris Exposition of 1878 in which Iran had a pavilion. The third trip, the account of which was divided into three “books” by Nasir al-Din Shah, follows more or less the itinerary of the first trip, except for the land route taken from Iran to the Caucasus.

The length of Nasir al-Din Shah’s rule, the importance of his period at the tail end of the nineteenth century, and his uniqueness as not only a traveling monarch but also as a meticulous travel writer, all point to the significance of his travel accounts. Yet scholars who have written about Nasir al-Din Shah’s European travelogues have used them predominantly to discuss either their literary influence or in the more recent context, Europeanized reforms. In the first instance, as mentioned in chapter 1, the unadorned language of the travelogues has been directly linked to the shift from flowery and elaborate prose to sadah nivisi (simple prose) in the second half of the nineteenth century. Nasir al-Din Shah’s travelogues have also been read and often rejected in the context of reform through contact with Europe. This reading of the travelogues stem from two interrelated assumptions on the part of the scholars: first and as discussed earlier, the value of the European travels and, by extension, the travel accounts lie in what was achieved upon the monarch’s return. Since the consensus is that nothing of substance was gained from the king’s travels, then, the thinking goes, the accounts reveal nothing of substance. Second, these travelogues are assumed to primarily be sites of “personal impressions and opinions” as opposed to, for example, detailed political analysis. This, in turn, renders them useless as historical documents.

In the more than hundred years that have passed from the evening when ‘Ayn al-Saltanah settled in to read Nasir al-Din Shah’s travel account until today, something has been lost in our ability to understand the multilayered meanings of these travel accounts, particularly for its own contemporary readership, and the role that they played in their own time. Until now, assessments of Nasir al-Din Shah’s travel accounts have conflated his act of traveling to Europe with the writing of these travels. The main question here is not why did Nasir al-Din Shah travel to Europe—the Ottoman sultan ‘Abdul ‘Aziz had already traveled to Europe in 1867—but why did he so meticulously write accounts of all three trips, despite the many reiterations and overlaps from account to account? The answer lies in the relationship of Nasir al-Din Shah’s travel accounts both internally and externally. The depth and breadth of information on Europe already available to Nasir al-Din Shah before his travels, coupled with the contextualization of the European trips in the larger writing culture of his time reveal the European travelogues to have meanings that go beyond a simple reflection of European progress, and arguments of Self/Othering. Similar to that of his internal travelogues, the European travel accounts of Nasir al-Din Shah convey geographical information of the places visited, particularly the lay of the land and distances. They are also imperial self-narrations for internal and external audiences, and reveal the ways in which the Nasiri court navigated Iran’s position on the European and global stage. Relatedly, in their reception and consumption both in Europe and domestically, the travelogues were tools of diplomacy and kingly rule.

NASIR AL-DIN SHAH’S TRAVEL ITINERARIES AND ACCOUNTS

Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar, took the throne in 1848 after the death of his father, Muhammad Shah, and ruled over Iran until 1896, when he was assassinated at the age of sixty-five. Iranian popular culture is replete with disparaging stories about the monarch, portraying him as a man who, in an effort to satisfy his appetite for food, women, and hunting, sold the country to foreigners. While there is some overlap between the king’s image in popular culture and Qajar historiography, it is clear that his reign was one that was characterized by “stop and go” reforms, attempts at centralization, and modernization projects such as the telegraph and railroads. For the purposes of this study, Nasir al-Din Shah’s reign can be divided into four phases.

Phase one, from 1848 to 1852, was defined by the Bab’s revolt and the Davelu revolt in Khurasan, both of which “brought Qajar rule to the verge of collapse” and both of which were brought under control (the former more violently than the latter) by the much revered reformist prime minister, Amir Kabir. Phase two, from 1852 to 1861, began with the execution of Amir Kabir on the order of Nasir al-Din. During these years Nasir al-Din Shah dealt with two important territorial expeditions: the first being the 1856–1857
expedition to the much coveted Herat. This last Qajar attempt at reclaiming Herat once again led to a withdrawal in response to immediate British military response, and the signing of the Treaty of Paris, restricting "Iran from all interference whatsoever in the internal affairs of Herat." In 1860–1861, Nasir al-Din Shah led another expedition, this time against the Turkomans of Mary, which again resulted in Iran's defeat.

The lessons learned from the early struggles and defeats of his reign fully shaped the contours of Nasir al-Din Shah's later imperial rule, leading to the third phase between 1861 and 1891, and the focus of this chapter, which by all accounts was one of "relative tranquility." There was a marked shift in policy whereby, "for the rest of his reign Nasir al-Din Shah did not engage in any major diplomatic or military wrangles with the neighboring powers, nor did he wage wars for territorial gain," substituting diplomacy for warfare. This was a major achievement and a break from a tradition of rule, which, since the fall of Safavids, had been based on military expeditions and battles.

Writing from Tabriz in 1895, Reverend S. G. Wilson, who resided there for fourteen years, wrote that "the shah has steered the ship of state in comparatively peaceful waters. While neighboring countries have been convulsed with great wars, Persia has been slightly disturbed." He goes on to mention Nasir al-Din Shah's early struggles in Herat, with the British, Kurds, and Turkomans, and the Babi insurrection, noting that "the definite settlement of the boundaries has tended greatly to preserve peace." Commenting on the internal situation, E. G. Browne—who by his own admission was biased against Nasir al-Din Shah due to his sympathy for the Babi movement—confirms the relative tranquility and peace of the Nasiri period:

It must also be admitted that, apart from the severities practiced against the Babis..., his rule has been on the whole, mild, and comparatively free from the cruelties which mar nearly every page of Persian history. During the latter part of his reign, especially, executions and cruel punishments, formerly of almost daily occurrence, have become very rare.

It is during this period that much of the Nasiri attempts at reforming the system and the flourishing of various cultural spheres took shape. It is also this peace that made it possible for Nasir al-Din Shah to travel so far away from the center of his rule without threatening uprisings or disturbances in his absence.

The fourth and last phase of the Nasiri period began with the Tobacco Revoltsions of 1891, ending with the king's assassination at the hands of Mirza Riza Kirmani, a follower of Seyyed Jamal al-Din al-Afghani in 1896. It is then that Nasir al-Din Shah "began to show signs of disappointment, disheartening, the linking of the Tobacco Rebellion to the granting of a constitution by Nasir al-Din Shah's son and successor, Muzaffar al-Din Shah (c. 1896–1907), and the importance of the Constitutional period worked to the Nasir al-Din Shah's historiographically shift scholarly focus to this last phase of Nasir al-Din Shah's rule such that, as astutely noted by Yarshater, it is the Nasir al-Din Shah of this period who "is most frequently remembered in the histories and popular culture."

Nasir al-Din Shah's love of travel is well documented. The courtier, chronicler, and minister of press and publication, I'timad al-Saltanah, listed every travel undertaken by the king in his celebration of Nasir al-Din Shah's forty years of rule, Kitab al-ma'asir va al-asar, which by 1886 totaled twenty-four official trips. I'timad al-Saltanah also included itineraries of every journey undertaken by Nasir al-Din Shah in his Tarikh-i muntazam-i Nasiri, a compilation of world events beginning in 622 A.D. (the first year of the Islamic calendar) and ending in 1883, as do other chronicles of the time, such as Fasa'i's Farsnamah-i Nasiri.

The mere fact of Nasir al-Din Shah's mobility and his travels was not unique: Qajar kings were famously nomadic, spending much of their rule outside the capital on various hunts, wintering (qishlaq) and summing (yaylaq), and on military expeditions. For example, Fath 'Ali Shah traveled to Mazandaran in 1818/1233 for amusement (tafarraj), a province that in February boasted "good weather, abundance of water, density of trees, and numerous meadows." During his time there, the king hunted waterfowl (murgab) during the day and watched the reflection of candles, lights, and fireworks on the Caspian sea at night. Nearly five months after his return to the capital, the king once again headed for the road, this time in order to quell a rebellion in the northeast province of Khurasan. In fact, the chronicle Rawzat al-safa (along with other chronicles such as Nasik al-tavarih) is replete with descriptions of both Fath 'Ali Shah and Muhammad Shah's safar (travel), urdu (camp), 'azimat (setting off), harikat (movement toward), and similar terms of mobility.

For anyone familiar with Qajar history, there is of course a palpable sense of difference between Nasir al-Din Shah's travels and those of his predecessors. This difference, aside from the longer distances he traveled, rises out of the instrumental use that he made of travel and travel writing in terms of establishing his sovereignty over "troubled" areas, using his travels as tools of diplomacy, and as a way of inventorizing and mapping the lay of the land. Nasir al-Din Shah did not write a travelogue before 1867, almost twenty years into his rule and six years after his last major military expedition in Mary, even though he had already embarked on twelve other travels within Iran (including to the Caspian sea and Isfahan) before his first self-recorded trip to Khurasan. He traveled to the holy city of Qum in 1850 and again
year later, but did not personally record the journeys. In fact, in his travelogue to Qum, written in April 1888, he states that, "in the beginning of Mirza Taqi Khan's government, we came to Qum and set up camp for a week. I remembered that at the time, I drew a picture of the pole in my book of daily chronicle but I tore that book up later." It is not until his fourth visit to Qum in January 1868 and shortly after his Khurasan trip that he begins to record his travels to Qum. Once he began writing, he continued recording all of his major travels except for the yearly yajilag and qishlaq, and one trip to the Caspian undertaken in 1872 shortly before his first European trip.

Something had happened in the years leading up to 1867 that led Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh to transform a traditional kingly act—travel—into something unique to his own reign—travel writing. The timing of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh's travel accounts all fall within the third phase of his reign, a phase that, as mentioned earlier, was characterized by relative calm and almost no internal or external military conflicts. He traveled to the northeastern province of Khurasan in April 1867 and stayed for six months; was in the northern province of Gilan in January and February 1870; visited the holy cities of Karbala and Najaf (then under Ottoman rule) in September 1870 and was there for more than five months. He traveled to Europe in April 1873, returning after five months; traveled to the northern province of Mazandaran in September 1875 and stayed for less than three months. He went to Europe again in 1878; to the province of Khurasan in June 1883 for four months; made an unfinished trip to Gilan (he and his retinue returned shortly due to inclement weather) in February 1887; went to Europe for the third time in 1889; and visited the central provinces of Iran, 'Araq-i 'ājan, in 1892 and stayed there for three months.

Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh's travel destinations were chosen for their geopolitical significance. He never went farther south than Isfahan and central Iran, choosing instead to travel several times to areas such as Khurasan, Mazandaran, and Gilan. The importance of Khurasan was several fold: It housed the important Shi'i shrine of Riza, the eighth Imam; it was in close proximity to Afghanistan, which despite the 1857 defeat remained a "security threat" for Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh. It was also close to Marv, the site of the last Nāṣirī military expedition and defeat. According to an 1862 letter, Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh had intended to travel to Khurasan in order "to restore the dignity and authority of the state which had been lost in the Marv incident," a trip that was finally undertaken in 1867.

Gilan and Mazandaran also held great geopolitical importance because of their close proximity to Russia. Russian expansion into Central Asia from the 1860s onward caused alarm in the Qajar state, and the two provinces together played an important role in its struggle for territorial integrity. The worry over the loss of these provinces to the Russians prompted Malkam Khan to state in 1874: "The provinces of Mazandaran and Gilan, so marvelously gifted by nature; these provinces that one Russian diplomat calls in his secret reports, the new India placed at the gate of Russia, are evidently destined to be swallowed by our redoubtable neighbor." Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh's pilgrimage to the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala provide a similarly interesting case: They were not only two of the most holy Shi'i shrines, they were also located inside Ottoman lands. Accordingly, Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh's pilgrimage there in September 1870 was celebrated for precisely its geopolitical importance, while also marking the first time that a monarch traveled to lands outside of his kingdom in time of peace. Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh's imperial procession across Iran and into Ottoman lands was recorded in great detail in the king's travelogue, down to the names of the Ottoman officials who met him across the border and his constant evaluations of Ottoman buildings and roads, which he found to be appallingly dusty at times.

Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh's non-European travelogues have been understood in three interrelated contexts: legitimacy, diplomacy, and knowledge production. The first is within the context of the "Shah's personal legitimacy," that is, that the physical presence of the king conferred on the land dignity and in return conferred on his rule legitimacy. Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh's choice of Khurasan as a travel destination was connected to his desire to make up for the devastation brought about by the Marv expedition. In this sense, one can also understand his choice of Mazandaran as a site to visit and revisit as the province where the bloody Babi revolt began in the early years of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh's reign. Clearly there was an element of anxiety (either toward external or internal threats) in both the king's relationship to the lands he chose to travel in and the population's relationship to his rule, an anxiety that must have been exacerbated by the fact that Khurasan in particular had proved to be a hot spot and a tumultuous destination even for Fath 'Ali Shah, his grandfather.

The second context is connected to the tranquility of the period between 1860 and 1890 and the substitution of military expeditions for diplomacy. As noted by Amanat, "[Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh's] chief achievement was his often unappreciated diplomatic skill which helped in preserving Persia's sovereignty and territorial integrity in an age of imperial threat." Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh broke from the traditional reasons of travel (hunt, military expeditions) and used the spectacle of his presence as an indication of the government's peaceful intentions. There is a small but significant difference between the first and the second contexts in which these travels occurred. As indicated by Shiekholeslami, the king's visits to the various troubled areas in his kingdom often included displays of the central state's military might, the sight of which would be instrumental in restoring/maintaining
order by “bringing the government to the people.” In the second instance the actual traveling of the monarch in a time of peace is what itself signifies the intentions of the state to the population. This is reflected in the chronicler Fasali’s retelling of Nasir al-Din Shah’s travels to Ottoman Iraq in 1870, who noted that: “The kings of the lands of Iran have only traveled to Iraq, which is part of Ottoman lands [mamalik-i rum], only in times of hostility and war with the Ottoman sultans. The first monarch [shahryar] to have entered Iraq in order to visit the radiant graves of the Imams [a’imah huda] with pure and peaceful intentions and without the purpose of conquering it is... Nasir al-Din Shah-i Qajar.” 

Itimad al-Saltanah takes this one step further by describing the 1870 trip as the first time that a king of Iran had left “his own land” for peaceful purposes.

Third, the meanings of these travels are connected to the significance of knowledge production, and specifically geographical knowledge during the Nasiri period. As convincingly argued by Kashani-Sabet, the military defeats of both Nasir al-Din Shah and his predecessors resulted in “a transition from a cosmographic vision of the earth (and the nation) to a cartographic one.” This transition meant a surge of interest in “new geography” whereby “Qajar diplomats, encouraged by the government studied cartography as a way to participate in shaping the contours of the nation. Armed with geographical knowledge, Iran’s emissaries hoped to be more successful in advancing the country’s territorial objectives.”

The geographical knowledge was collected through a variety of means, including “travel and the writing of travelogues,” often commissioned and disseminated not just by the government but also by the monarch, Nasir al-Din Shah, himself who “in fulfilling his kingly responsibilities, and in the hope of integrating the country... recognized the necessity of acquiring firsthand knowledge about the mamalik he sought to protect.”

Taking the argument one step further, the travelogues of Nasir al-Din Shah were not just any kind of “first hand” knowledge but were privileged information—that of a king written about his land—and as such occupied a privileged place in the hierarchy of knowledge.

For example, on December 29, 1877, the first item of news printed on the first page of the official gazette, Iran, reported that:

The excellent book of the royal travels [kitab-i mustatab-i safarnamah humayuni], the description of the Mazandaran journey...has been published with the utmost accuracy and discernment in the personal [khassah] and illustrious [sharifah] printing house and by decree of [the king]... several copies of it have been given to the great ministers [vuzara-yi izzam] and honorable princes [shahzadigan-i fakhkham] and the governors of the provinces.

It continues that the rest of the copies are being given for free to those who receive the newspaper Iran. The announcement—which as we will see is not a one-time event—presents Nasir al-Din Shah’s travels as more than just the need for the monarch to gain firsthand knowledge of his lands. The meanings for these travels are closely connected to both his personal recording of his travels and their distribution to members of government.

While Nasir al-Din Shah’s internal travelogues (along with that of the Atabat), have been read in the trifecta of legitimacy, diplomacy, and geographical knowledge production, his European travelogues, if mentioned, have been singularly read as reflections of the monarch’s understanding/lack of understanding of Europe. The assumption that travelogues reflected a particular understanding of Europe that in turn should have resulted in Europeanized reforms restricts our readings of Nasir al-Din Shah’s European travelogues. The secondary literature’s treatment of Nasir al-Din Shah’s European travel accounts is rooted in two assumptions about accounts of travel to Europe discussed in chapter 1: that travel accounts are reflections of the purpose of travel, and not rhetorical texts and narratives that may serve other functions both politically and socially; and that to know Europe is to see Europe, marking travel literature exclusively as transmitters of knowledge about Europe.

First, in discussing the European travelogues, contemporary scholars have evaluated these texts’ historical value based on a later expectation of what a nineteenth-century traveler to Europe must contain. As discussed in chapter 1, the deficiency model for reading the nineteenth century leaves us with an inflexible dichotomy in which those who meet “our” contemporary expectations of reform (or rejection of reform, the other side of the coin) are held up as heroes, and those who do not are rejected as incapable of seeing what they should have. This reading of the European travelogues stems from a linking of European travel, to seeing the advances of Europe, and to implementing those elements of advance in Iran. As such the significance of the travelogues is assumed to depend on the end result of the travel, that is, reform projects.

Nasir al-Din Shah’s first travel in 1873 is a good example of this reading: Contemporary historians seem to be in accordance that the visit occurred at the behest of his “reform minded” prime minister (sad-i azam), Mirza Husayn Khan Sipahsalar (Mushir al-Dawlah), who had spent some time in France as part of his early education, and had held posts in Bombay and Istanbul. In a letter to the shah he wrote: “The value and meaning of this royal trip has not been sufficiently explained to the majority of our intelligentsia [‘uqala]. This royal effort is not merely for tourism; it is a great main road [shahrrah, literally the road of the king] that will lead to Iran’s progress.” Yet, as Adamiyat writes, “The European trip did not fulfill any of Mirza Husayn Khan’s expectations. It produced no change in the mindset...
of the travelers, nor did it make them believe in the nation’s [need for] pro- 
gress, nor did it affect their political behavior. Its immediate result was the 
loss of his [Mirza Husayn Khan’s] premiership and crisis for reforms.53

Second, the emphasis on the European destination of these travel- 
oures isolate Nasir al-Din Shah’s accounts of Europe from both his other travel- 
oures and also from the general writing milieu of the time, which had a 
strong hand in forming. In other words, due to the place of Europe in the 
formulation of Iranian modernity by later historians, there has been a re- 
ification of these travel accounts placing them exclusively in the discourse of 
Europe as opposed to the larger developments of the period such as the 
geographical interest mentioned above.

Even though the king’s travel accounts were privileged texts, bibli- 
ographic data reveals the wide range of traveloures that were available to the 
court throughout Nasir al-Din Shah’s reign. In his essay on Persian travel- 
oures up to the Constitutional Revolution, Iraj Afshar estimates the exis- 
tence of nearly five hundred traveloures in various archives.54 The exact 
number of traveloures written during the Nasiri period, however, is impos- 
sible to ascertain with any accuracy. Barring an eyewitness count of each 
and every manuscript in libraries from India to Europe, one possible 
method is through an examination of existing manuscript and print cata- 
logues, as mentioned by Afshar. Unfortunately, this method has three prob- 
lems: First, it does not take into account manuscripts in private collections. 
Second, some of the entries do not have dates or have incorrect dates, 
making it impossible to determine the time period in which they fall. Addi- 
tionally, there are multiple copies of different manuscripts, sometimes 
excerpts under a different name and entry (such as Hadiqah-’i fasahat [The 
Garden of Eloquence], a selection of Nasir al-Din Shah’s travels to Europe, 
which itself is a separate entry in the catalogue).55 Third, this method is 
dependent on current categories of writing, which often do not have one- 
to-one correspondence to Qajar categories. Specifically with traveloures 
during the Nasiri period, while there is no doubt regarding the large number 
of these traveloures compared to periods before it, the genre of travel 
writing very often intersects with other categories such as works of history, 
geoigraphy, and most important, memoirs. For example, The Geography of 
Gilan, Mazandaran, and Astarabad, a book of travel by an engineer who 
traveled to those regions by order of Nasir al-Din Shah, is catalogued by 
Munzavi under geography and not traveloures.56 The intersection of these 
different types of writing is also crucial to our reading of the European travel- 
uoures, as we will shortly see.

Within the limitations described above, a detailed look at Munzavi’s 
travel and by extension, geographical discovery in the Nasiri period. Munzavi 
catalogues between 270 and 280 Nasiri traveloures.57 About 37 percent of 
them are travels inside Iran; 4 percent travels about India; 13.5 percent travels about neighboring areas, including the Ottoman Empire, Iraq (Baghdad, the holy cities of Karbala and Najaf), the Caucasus, 
Khwarazm and Khivah, and Herat and Afghanistan; 5.5 percent travels about Europe; 8.8 percent travels about Mecca; and 31 percent trans- 
lated travels. There were also a few entries that did not fit into any of 
these categories.58

What is notable about these manuscripts is not just how many they are 
but also what they are. The fact that a majority of these traveloures were 
written about Iran is not surprising given what we know about the interest in 
boundaries and mapping during the period in light of Kashani-Sabet’s Frontier 
Fictions. There are at least five traveloures (and the case of the Geography 
of Gilan shows that there are most likely many more that have been cata- 
logued differently) in which the purpose of writing the traveloure had to do 
with the railroad and the telegraph. The Safarnamah of Shahrd, Tehran, Tis, 
for example, was written by an unknown person who traveled to the region 
for two hundred days in 1876 in order to put down telegraph wires.59 In 
Najm al-Mulk’s Safarnamah-’i Khuzestan, the author was sent by Nasir al- 
Din Shah to inspect the Ahvaz dam,59 and Safarnamah-’i Shiraz is Rukan al- 
Dawlah’s inspection of railway conditions.60 Additionally, contained in the 
archives are “reports,” a word that seems to have appeared during the Nasiri 
period—for instance, Report of an Excursion to the Mountains of Qazvin- 
Gilan, by Suleiman the Engineer, who in May 1881 was sent to the area to 
select the path for gravelled roads (rahi-shusah) going through that area.61

The largest number of Nasiri traveloures after internal ones are trans- 
lated texts. They include translations from a variety of languages, mostly 
European but also Ottoman. For example, Safarnamah-’yi Khivah (Khivah) 
is “an [English] account of the Russian military expedition to Khivah,” 
which was translated from Ahmet Efendi’s Ottoman translation into Per- 
sian by Nasir al-Din Shah’s translators,62 and Misbah al-sari wa nuzhat al- 
gari’, which is a translation of a traveloure to “Egypt, Syria, and Europe,” 
written by Ibrahim Efendi.63 The translated traveloures also include a large 
number of traveloures to Iran (about one-third of the total), some of which 
were accounts by figures such as Lord Curzon64 and Jane Dieulafoy, which 
had been initially serialized in Tour du Monde, itself another staple of trans- 
lated texts during the Nasiri period.65 Some of the books were sent by the 
authors to Nasir al-Din Shah, who then would ask for their translation, such 
as the Siyutatnamah-’yi Iran, which was written by a “Russian traveler” who 
met with Nasir al-Din Shah during his travels in 1887.66 From these descrip- 
tions a picture thus emerges of a court and a king, aware of those traveling 
through its land and curious as to the picture they were painting of it.
Significantly, the majority of the translated travelogues are of nineteenth-century geographical expeditions. There are three separate accounts of North Pole expeditions, translated at different times and by different translators. One, translated from French on the order of the crown prince Muzaffar al-Din Mirza, purports to be a travelogue by John Ross, Edward Parry, and Sir John Franklin. There are also six different works all by the same name: "Travelogue of Stanley." While Murnavati seems to think they are versions of the same text, they actually seem to be different accounts by the same nineteenth-century explorer, including Stanley’s "Emin Pasha Relief Expedition," translated in 1890, and Stanley’s account of Livingston’s rescue, also dating to 1890.68 There are also travelogues by Sir William Conway about the Alps;69 Jules Crevaux’s Voyages dans L’Amérique du Sud (published in Paris in 1883 and translated on Nasir al-Din Shah’s order the same year); Queen Victoria’s travelogues to Scotland,70 which she gave to Nasir al-Din Shah during one of his visits;71 and a large number of "travelogues" translated from issues of the French exploration journal Tour du Monde.72

The range and types of the translated travelogues clearly demonstrates the shift to a geographic and cartographic notion of not only the Iranian nation, but also of the world. Kashani-Sabet’s argument in Frontier Fictions addresses and explains the high level of interest in travelogues within Iran, but what is the significance of the translated travelogues about Europe’s geographical exploration? There is, of course, little question as to why these European travelogues were written in the first place. There is a large body of literature that identifies nineteenth-century European geographical expeditions as part and parcel of the expansion of capitalism and imperialism. Specifically Britain’s and France’s expanding colonial interests, hand in hand with rising notions of “scientific” exploration (as opposed to missionary travels, for example), led to the creation of a “culture of exploration.”74 If we accept this significance of geographical knowledge in the nineteenth century, there is no reason to exclude from it “translated knowledge.” Awareness of the geographical literature being produced in the West allowed the Qajar court and its monarch to participate in the “culture of exploration” that defined the period in which they lived.

Even before the creation of the Royal House of Translation (dar al-tarjumah) in the Nasiri period, there was a tradition of translating geographical works and histories. According to Kianfar, some of the earliest translated Qajar texts were histories of kings such as Napoleon, Peter the Great, and Charles XII. Additionally, he notes that during Muhammad Shah’s time, a book titled Jahannuma y-i jadid ya jughrafiyy-i kurah was translated first into Turkish and then Persian.75 But the sheer number and variety of works translated in the Nasiri period demonstrate how far the Qajar court had come from 1838 when Garmrudi called for a full translation of the geographical text he had brought with him from France.

The number of translated travelogues also reveals the extent to which information about Europe and the rest of the world was available to the reading public in Qajar Iran. Many of the travelogues were commissioned by Nasir al-Din Shah himself and translated in the Dar al-tarjumah of the Qajar court. Tīmūd al-Saltanah in his dual role as the head of Dar al-tarjumah and also the official gazette, Iran, continuously serialized travelogues on the bottom of the front page of the newspaper. This constituted a separate section in the newspaper from “News from Abroad,” which provided news and anecdotes collected from non-Iranian newspapers. These newspapers themselves were numerous, extending from the travel magazine Tour du Monde to The Standard, L’indépendance (Belgium), L’illustration, The Times, and Daily Telegraph, not to mention a variety of newspapers from Turkey, Russia, Egypt, and India.76

The abundance of information about Europe provided in these translated texts breaks the (often assumed but never proven) monopoly of foreigners and travelers as disseminators of knowledge about the world beyond Iran’s borders. Iraj Afshar is correct in stating that the significance of Qajar travelogues is “not only in geographical, civil, and anthropological descriptions, or the presentations of historical facts and personal details. Many of the travelogues were the transmitters and vessels of new scientific, cultural, and even political concepts.”77 But it is equally important to identify and integrate other sources of such knowledge.

ʿAyn al-Saltanah again provides us with insight into the reading life of Qajar courtiers. It is very clear from his diary entries that he was burning with a desire to go to Europe such that when he is part of the retinue that sees the king off on his third European trip, he leaves in a foul mood. Nonetheless, in his diary he presents himself as a man knowledgeable about Europe despite not having ever traveled there. When a telegraph arrives from Nasir al-Din Shah from Bradford, England, ‘Ayn al-Saltanah does not hesitate to jot down a couple of sentences about the town: “Bradford is a famous town that produces a lot of wool and has many factories. It is located in England.” And despite never having been there, he can provide hotel recommendations: “It has a hotel that cost 130 thousand Liras to build.” ‘Ayn al-Saltanah also mentions the various sources of his information on Europe: diary entries record the books he ordered from various travelers to Europe, newspapers such as L’illustration that he had access to, and the fact that he practiced reading English using, among other texts, and the fact that he practiced reading English using, among other
That “reading” was an established way of learning about Europe, perhaps on a par with “seeing,” can be seen in a fascinating sentence in the travel account of Nasir al-Din Shah’s half brother, prince ‘Abd al-Samad Mirza Salur Izz al-Dawlah. Izz al-Dawlah accompanied Nasir al-Din Shah on his first trip to Europe in 1873. His travel account is a mixture of the prince’s own writing and that of his scribe Mirza ‘Ali Khan, each with his own distinctive voice. Early in the travels, while the king’s entourage is near Frankfurt, the prince begins extolling the beauties of the areas along the Rhine river, calling it “the heaven of Europe and Europe is the heaven of the world.” The site is “heavenly” because of the green mountains flanking the two sides of the river, and the orchards of apples and pears about which “if anyone wanted to write, it would become a big book but what can I write when the Europeans themselves have written about it better than anyone else? If anyone wants to be informed, one can read [about it] or must see it.” Izz al-Dawlah’s comment that one can learn about Europe by either reading about it or seeing it fits in well with what we know about the kind of books that were acquired and whose translations were commissioned by the Nasiri court. Considering the difficulties of travel, it makes sense that other forms of knowledge acquisition, other than “seeing with one’s own eyes,” would exist and be accepted in the court.

Nasir al-Din Shah himself was well read and informed about Europe even before he traveled there for the first time in 1873. In *Pivot of the Universe*, Amanat lays out in great detail Nasir al-Din Shah’s early education both in traditional texts and also in history and geography, including it seems, some of the earliest translated texts from the Muhammad Shah period. In his memoir, *Khātitat va Khatarat*, Hidayat reminisces about Nasir al-Din Shah’s knowledge of history and geography:

Nasir al-Din Shah knew history and geography well. At lunchtime, Muhammad Hasan Khan l’timad al-Saltanah would translate from foreign newspapers and sometimes the doctor Tholozan, who was present at lunch, would talk about the news. They would translate the travelogues for the king and they would be read. ‘Ali Khan Nazim al-Ulm, son of paternal sister, translated Télaème, Riza Quli Khan, son of the paternal brother, translated Stanley’s travelogue. At nights, in his private quarters, they would read books for him.

In the early parts of his 1873 travels, Nasir al-Din Shah writes about reading a “European book” (*kitab-i farangi*) again with Tholozan. This bookish knowledge is then incorporated into his travel account to show that some of what the monarch was seeing for the first time was actually not unfamiliar to him. For example, on June 2, 1873, the king, during a visit to the zoo in Prussia, is in awe of the many different kinds of animals on display, writing that “the figures I had seen in books, I saw them alive here.” His pleasure thus comes from seeing in flesh that which he had read about and not just from the act of seeing something new.

**READING NASIR AL-DIN SHAH’S TRAVELOGUES TO EUROPE**

A different interpretation of Nasir al-Din Shah’s European travelogues begins within a larger framework that takes into account geopolitical concerns of the Qajar state. There was a multiplicity of factors that went into the decision for Nasir al-Din Shah to travel to Europe in 1873, for example. In his travel account, Nasir al-Din Shah is silent about those reasons, writing only that the European trip had been one year in the making. But less than a month before the journey began, on March 30, 1873, Mirza Malik Khan visited William Taylour Thomson, the British minister in Iran, to explain “the spirit in which the Shah’s journey had been planned.” This “spirit” as understood by Thomson was to correct a “grave mistake” that had been made in the conduct of Iran’s “external relations,” namely, treating all foreigners (i.e., Russians and the British) as one and as a result, not “sufficiently cultivating the friendship of Great Britain.” On the one hand, it is obvious that the “spirit” of the visit would be explained to the British minister as that of “cultivating friendship” and thus should not be taken as the “real” reason behind Nasir al-Din Shah’s visit to England. But if we go back to his internal travels and the geopolitical significance in his choice of travel destinations, Malkam’s reasoning becomes more than mere rhetoric.

By the time of the first European travel, seventeen years had passed from the Anglo-Persian War of 1856–1857. Nonetheless, relations with the British were anything but settled, and one can speculate that the memory of the 1856 defeat still loomed large in both the Persian and the British minds. As such, Nasir al-Din Shah’s 1873 travel, during which his visit to England occupied a central role, was akin to his travels to Mazandaran and Gilan: his presence was meant to reveal the normalcy of the political situation and work as a gesture of peace. It stands to reason that if Nasir al-Din Shah’s work as a gesture of peace. It stands to reason that if Nasir al-Din Shah’s much shorter journey to the ‘Atabat was celebrated for being the first instance of a king traveling to Ottoman lands in time of peace, that his European travels could also be understood as both reflecting the stability of Iran and also his desire to extend peaceful intentions to what was in recent history, a military enemy, not to mention an imperial force. This was not lost on many European commentators, who would often begin writing about on many European commentators, who would often begin writing about 1878, Nasir al-Din Shah enumerated two reasons behind his 1873 travels:
First, meeting various monarchs of Europe and becoming personally acquainted with them so that he could “convey to them [his] good intentions and excellent relations [muravudat-i hasanah]” so that their cooperation and friendship would lead to good results for my state [dawlat] and nation [millat]. The second reason he gives is to gain “complete knowledge [inilat-i kamli]” about among many other things, the “industries, customs, good traditions, laws, military methods” and so that it benefits “the state and nation of Iran.” The first goal, he accomplished, but the second, he believes, he didn’t because of “continuous invitations from the exalted kings for get-togethers, etc. which were accepted with happiness and pleasure.” Since at every point in history, knowledge lay with a different group of people, and since now, “it is obvious to all that this progress and order is found in European countries,” then, Nasir al-Din Shah argues to his people, he is going back to Europe, but this time without any pomp and circumstance. His second visit in 1878 was stripped of much of the ceremonial aspects of the first one as a result and in contrast to the first trip, did not even include a visit to England, with the excuse that the royal family was in mourning due to the death of the Prince of Hanover.

As is clear from his public explanation, Nasir al-Din Shah expressed the political aspects of his 1873 travel as both the primary one and as the one that he had successfully accomplished. In the context of the concerns of this chapter, namely uncovering lost meanings in his European travelogues, the dual purpose of his travel—gathering knowledge and being presented to the “kings of Europe”—is highly significant, and opens up, as we shall shortly see, the possibility of interpreting these texts as narratives of Qajar monarchical power and royal grandeur. As such, his travelogues of Europe become attempts at recasting monarchical power through the medium of the written narrative. The travelogues then become part of a larger cultural phenomenon in the Nasiri period, whereby through the “use of public ceremonies, rituals, and festivals,” Nasir al-Din Shah “sought to project a new public image of monarchy in Iran.”

The notion of the “constant picturing” of the king as a way of exerting power, recalls Fath ‘Ali Shah and his use of portraiture, rock reliefs, and even ambassadors such as Mirza Abul Hasan Khan Ilchi as a way of “propping the Shah’s position” and establishing “his power as leader of the Shi‘ite community, mediator between social orders, and heir to the ancient traditions of Persian kingship.” Nasir al-Din Shah, whose educational background made him quite familiar with the mechanics of his great-grandfather’s imperial power, “proved highly receptive in outlook and language to a cultural milieu that first flourished in the early decades of the nineteenth century.” By the time of Nasir al-Din Shah’s rule, the disjointed iconographic representations of Fath ‘Ali Shah’s period (i.e. his singularly placed portraits and rock reliefs) slowly began to be complemented by the possibility of a sustained and more easily disseminated narration that writing and also photography (of which the monarch was an avid fan) allowed. While the significance of monument building and large portraiture remained, the second half of the nineteenth century saw a more “mobile” and more easily disseminated expression of power in the form of imperial travelogues.

As already described, in the first half of the nineteenth century, Ilchi and Garmrudi, representatives of the Qajar kings, repeatedly narrated the presence (and thus importance) of the monarch’s portraits in the European courts. Ilchi narrated how one such portrait was hanging in the library of the East India Company and the level of respect that was addressed to it. Garmrudi, in a further development, shows the care with which Ajudanbashi’s mission created and carried portraits of Muhammad Shah to the Ottoman and European courts, and describes the exchange of the portraits and their receptions by various foreign monarchs. Fifty years later, the monarch Nasir al-Din Shah could demonstrate the extent of his power—to his own people and to Europe—through actualizing the potential for movement, travel, and geographical discovery. By the 1870s, to the pictorial representation of the king in the European courts was added not just the king himself but also a narrative representation of him to audiences at home and abroad.

This reading of the travelogues as imperial narratives of stability and power does not necessarily exclude an understanding of them as texts of European customs, since observing Europe was indeed one of his stated reasons for traveling. Rather that as narratives of the king himself, these travelogues filtered Europe through his eyes and words, and gave the king’s image of it a privileged place in the hierarchy of knowledge about Europe in the latter part of the nineteenth century. This interpretation of the texts presents Mushir al-Dawlah’s comment about the 1873 European trip constituting a shahrah to Iranian progress in a slightly different light: It opened the door for the king’s vision of Europe to be integrated into the burgeoning discussions on progress, which as almost literally, the “road of the king,” that is, shahrah, was weighted more heavily than other visions. This, in turn, shifts our framework of understanding Iranian modernity away from how Nasir al-Din Shah did not understand Europe and all it had to offer, toward how his particular view of Europe crucially shaped the discourse around Europe after his travels.

**Narrating Europe**

By the time Nasir al-Din Shah set out on his first trip to Europe, he was a seasoned travel writer with three travelogues under his belt, and so he begins his fourth by stating: "I have already written in detail about Tehran
until Anzali in the Gilan trip, and so now, I won't describe it other than leaving Tehran and events that happen on the way on the way to Anzali.\(^{76}\)

The sentence at first seems paradoxical: Will he or won't he write about the trip from Tehran to Anzali? The entries that immediately follow this paragraph make it clear that Nasir al-Din Shah makes a distinction between writing about "a place" and "events of his life," between a travelogue and a daily diary. He assumes his readers are already familiar with the travelogue, that is, his account of Tehran to Gilan, and by doing so he marks his European travelogue as a continuation, not the beginning, of his narratives.

Counterintuitively and contrary to popular belief, the Nasiri period did not necessarily see the congealing of travel writing as a completely separate genre, but rather its further integration into other forms of writing. The lines between works of geography, memoirs, chronicles and travelogues in this period were blurred to the extent that memoirs often contained descriptions of travels undertaken by the authors, and accounts of travel were structured like geographies and contained enormous amounts of geographical information. Not to mention the fact that the results of many geographical expeditions were presented in the form of travelogues and/or "reports." The lines between these texts are further eroded when one considers how in the case of travel literature, the traditional invocations of the prophet and the king, along with the description of the reasons for travel and the destinations of travel, not to mention titles such as Hayratnamah or Chaharfasl all but disappeared by the Nasiri period. More often than not, a travelogue, like a diary, began with the day the author decided to record the events leading up to or during the travel.

The Nasiri period saw such an increase in memoir writing that I'timad al-Saltanaah begins his memoirs by stating, "In order to begin one's daily chronicle, it is not necessary to wait for a particular time like the beginning of the year or after an important event or the beginning of a long trip. Whenever you start, it's good."\(^{107}\) This attitude finds its purest form in 'Ayn al-Saltanaah, who began his ten-volume published memoir at the age of eleven. During this time, both travelogues and memoirs often contained the word *ruznamah* (daily letter), as in *ruznamah-i safar* (chronicle of the journey) or *ruznamah-i khatirat* (chronicle of memories). They also have stylistic similarities: While earlier travel accounts (both Indo-Persian ones such as Mirza Abu Talib's and Qajar ones such as Mirza Salih Shirazi's) had more of a narrative quality to them, parts of which read as if they were written after the trip, the Nasiri travelogues, like the memoirs of the time, read as daily chronicles (even though at times the author would make it clear that the diary entry either conflated several dates or was written at a later date).

As mentioned above, Nasir al-Din Shah begins his 1873 travelogue directly and by drawing attention to the fact that his account was both an account of geography (like that of Gilan) and a memoir (by still writing about Tehran to Gilan). In his second book, which chronicled the 1878 journey, Nasir al-Din Shah begins by explaining how he came to go on his journey: On the first of the month of Ramadan 1294 (September 8, 1877), the king consulted the Quran for an augury (*sikhtarah*) to go to Europe, and it turned out good. "Around this time, the Ottoman-Russian war was at its height and most people including [representatives of] foreign states tried to dissuade us from going." But, since the Quran had given a good sign, "nothing could stop [me] and in the winter Russia soundly defeated the Ottomans in Europe and Asia, as is known, and Russian forces reach Istanbul." On the last day of Rabi' al-avval of 1295 (April 2, 1878), his journey and his entries in his travel diary officially begin.

By 1889, and his third travel, Nasir al-Din Shah has almost completely shifted to diary writing:

Since the daily diary, dated from the beginning of Muharram 1306 to 13 Rajab 1306 [March 15, 1889], ended in Tehran, from that date until now which is six months and thirteen days later, thank God, has been passed in health and goodness . . . Today which is the evening of the 14th of Rajab, an hour or so after night fall, and three days left to the new year [‘ulad-i nowruz] . . . I am beginning this new booklet. Bashi is holding the ink. Akbari Lalah [amin khahari], is holding the old diary booklet in his hand and is ready to start this [new] one, I'timad al-Saltanaah is ready to read the European newspapers, and Mirza Muhammad Khan is holding the light for him.\(^{108}\)

In fact, by the time he writes the above pages until the time he actually sets off, roughly a month passes, during which he complains several times that too much is being made of his going to Europe this time, from his wives, to courtiers, to the ordinary people. This account also does not, unlike his other travelogues, end with the end of the journey, making it even more as a personal daily diary. Perhaps it is for this reason that it gives no reason for why the king decided to travel for a third time to Europe (despite everyone's complaints) and why its tone is markedly different in its weariness than the other two.

This "blurring of genres" applies to another *ruznamah*, that of the official gazette of the Nasiri period, which was compiled and written by I'timad al-Saltanaah. *Iran* shares many characteristics with *safarnamahs*, *khatirats*, *tarikhs* (histories/chronicles), and books of geography.\(^{108}\) It contains news from the court—including announcements of the king's future travels, reprints of decrees and royal telegraphs, serialized translations of foreign
books such as *The Swiss Family Robinson* and the *Travels of Ibn Battuta*, and
news from the world and from various provinces in the Qajar Empire. Even
a superficial reading of the structure of *Iran* reveals the similarity of style
between the newspaper and T`imad al-Saltanah's work of geography, *Mura`
al-Buldan,* and his work of history, *Tarikh-i Muntazam-i Nasiri*. The inter-
section of these types of narratives is made crystal clear in an announce-
ment (`il`an) in *Iran*, where T`imad al-Saltanah, upon advertising the
progress of the fourth volume of his *Mura` al-Buldan*, a book that "contains
a geographical description of the Protected Domains [mamalik-i mahr-
sals], along with their histories [tawarikh]; this can also be translated as "dates"]... to every place and neighborhood," requests his readers to send
him information they have "about any road and path [rah va tarikh] of
various lands, towns, villages, mountains, hills, and rivers of the Protected
Domains" to be used in his book and be given its proper credit.\textsuperscript{111}

One of the defining characteristics of a travelogue by the Nasiri period
remained the inclusion of geographical information into travel writing. A
good traveler, no matter where he or she went, had to include this type of
information as a way of establishing his or her credentials.\textsuperscript{112} Geography
figured into the travel accounts of Nasir al-Din Shah to Europe in two inter-
related forms: detailed and often repetitive descriptions of landscape and
scenery, and distances from place to place, all within Iran and in Europe.

The boring and repetitive descriptions of landscapes (both urban and
rural), which scholars have lamented, was one of the defining characteris-
tics of the Nasir al-Din Shah's travelogues. The entry on May 29, 1873,
typical of many entries, states:

Today, God willing, we must go to Germany and Prussia, via Vilna. The Russian
Emperor, along with the Crown Prince, his wife, and others are going to Europe
tomorrow. I woke up in the morning. We waited a long time until the Emperor arrived.
We said goodbye and went to ride on an open carriage, myself and the Emperor together.
There were a lot of people lined up on both sides, saying Hurrah... All the fields were
green and pleasant, forests of fern and pine, etc., we crossed several bridges and rivers.
There are many villages in this road and the more we rode, the warmer it got. The trees
have many blossoms and leaves.\textsuperscript{113}

Traveling from Germany to France in 1878, Nasir al-Din Shah similarly lays
out a picture of the land through his detailed descriptions:

We set off [to Paris by train]. It takes four hours to the border between France and
Germany, meaning the new border that has been decided on in the last war, which is
Avricourt. It is a big village, which if you walk one thousand or so steps you are in
Prussian soil, and from there you reach a station which is French soil. We went on,
everywhere were meadows, greens, flowers, forest, rivers, and water. It was very pleasant
although there were less and less forests of pine and cypresses and more of other trees.\textsuperscript{114}

Nasir al-Din Shah, whose rule had been so sharply shaped by border dis-
putes with the Ottomans to the West, Russians to the North, and British to the
East, was deeply sensitive to the arbitrary lines that separate nations
from one another. As his train goes from Germany to Belgium, the king
exclaims, "it seems that the border between Germany and Belgium is this
river, but the mind is astonished by how God has separated tribes and coun-
tries. In a moment suddenly humans, language, religion, conditions of land
and water, mountains, and earth changed such that it had no similarity to
Germany."\textsuperscript{115} On his third trip and upon his entry to France, he notes,

'It's so strange that despite the fact that the nations of France and England are practically
connected to each other, aside from a small sea dividing them in the middle, upon
entering the land of France, in one moment the conditions, habits, customs, language,
the faces of peasant men and women, and cavalry, mountains, plains, trees, and nature
change."\textsuperscript{116}

Nasir al-Din Shah uses his telling and retelling of his travels as a way of
not only verbally drawing a map of both Iran and Europe but also correct-
ing the information he had provided from one travelogue to another. On
Friday the 4th of Rabi` al-Awal, 1290 (May 1, 1873), almost two weeks
after the start of his travels (April 19), Nasir al-Din Shah writes that the
journey from Gazursang to Abdalbad was five farsakhs (or farsang, which
is between three and four miles.).\textsuperscript{117} The next day, he begins by giving the
distance to the next stop, Qazvin (another five farsakhs).\textsuperscript{118} By his second
travel, he actually begins his trip by skipping the distances between Tehran
and Qazvin, beginning his writing in Qazvin itself.\textsuperscript{119} Several days later on
April 16, 1878, the entry begins: "Today we must go to Zanjan. From Sul-
taniyah to Zanjan is four and a half farsangs."\textsuperscript{120} On his first trip, Nasir al-Din
Shah had taken a different route, but by retracing his steps from his second
to his third trip, he was able to correct his previous numbers, and as a result
the distances that he gives in his travel account change from journey to
journey. So that in April 1889, at the start of his third trip, he writes: "Today
we must go to the city of Zanjan. When we rode from Sultaniyah to Zanjan,
it was exactly six farsangs."\textsuperscript{121}

It is clear from his travel accounts that Nasir al-Din Shah not only remem-
bered his own accounts but also expected his readers to carry over their
knowledge from one trip to the next. In his third travel going from Cher-
bourgh to Paris, he writes: "I wrote about the conditions from Cherbourgh
to Paris in the first travel account [ruznamah] from 16 years ago when I came
here. I wrote from Cherbourg to Paris in detail and gave descriptions of the conditions of the land, plains, and everything as it was. In this account, this much is enough.”122 Again, what he doesn’t mind repeating is the distance, this time changing, fascinatingly enough, because of the changes in the speed of the train. While in 1873, he gave the distance between these two French cities as being “by rail eight hours which makes it 90 farsangs,”123 in 1889 he says that it took them seven hours by train, “and since the train travels 10 farsaks per hour, it is overall seventy farsangs.”124

The first travelogue, more than the other two, describes the sights and sounds of Europe’s main “attractions.” This comparison becomes abundantly clear when he reaches Paris, which reads almost as a guidebook to the city. Arriving in Paris on July 7, the king visits the Champs Élysées, Place de La Concorde, Place Vendome, and the Tuileries, after which he comments on the mood of the city: “Today I saw the French in a strange mood. First of all, they still have that feeling of mourning after the war with Germany, and in general, from young and old, they are sad.”125 He also slyly notes that the Arc de Triomphe had been hit during the war (the Franco-Prussian war of 1870–71), but “they had hidden the ruined sections with screens so that they couldn’t be seen.” He finds Paris a beautiful and pleasant city, one with nice weather, clear skies, with gaslights everywhere, people in carriages and in cafes, wide avenues, and public bathrooms such that “the odor of piss can be smelled in all the alleys.”126 And while in the first visit he comments on the similarity between the weather in Tehran and in Paris, he takes his descriptions several steps further by the third visit:

The men and women of Paris are completely similar to Iranians, their behavior, their coloring, their condition, their bodies, everything is like Iran . . . Before this, I was told Iran is the France of the East. I didn’t investigate this at all but in this trip I saw that this was indeed the case, they’re very similar to Iran.127

Taking all three European travels together, there is definitely a learning curve from the first trip to the third, the most obvious of which is the vocabulary used in the journals. For example, when in Paris the first time, Nasir al-Din Shah describes the panorama that he is seeing for the first time. First he provides the English word and says that it means “durrama, which is a science and technology that is a very astonishing thing [chiz-i ‘ajibi] and its inventor is from Yangi Dunya [New World.]”128 When he sees a panorama in his third trip, he is still amazed by it, but merely translates the word: “A major thing I saw in the exposition and that I forgot to write about is a transatlantic panorama, which is big steam ships that takes people from Europe [Farang] to America [Amerik] and from Amerik to Farang.” Not only is a panorama assumed to be familiar to his readers but also by 1889, America is no longer called by its Turkish name, Yangi Dunya, but by its Latinized form.

It’s not just that Nasir al-Din Shah was more familiar with Europe by 1889 (while on the first trip he draws attention to how his handwriting changes when he writes in the train, by the second, he barely notices it), but that he uses every opportunity to demonstrate his familiarity for his readers. On June 3, 1878, in Berlin, Nasir al-Din Shah writes: “We went to the aquarium, which we had gone to on the first trip, and I have written about it in the previous Farang journal. It is a place where they keep live birds, fish, snakes, and animals. It doesn’t need a new description. Actually, it seemed much better last time than this time.”129 On his third trip to Versailles, the king writes, “After lunch, we came down and got into the carriage and rode to the building [imarat]. . . I gave a description of the building and the paintings in my first trip; there is no need to write it again, still, it is necessary to give a summary.”130

Nasir al-Din Shah’s minute and detailed descriptions were not limited to landscapes and physical geography. Armed with a witty sense of humor, he verbally drew funny caricatures of various statesmen in his travels. On his third visit to France, the king describes the President of France, Marie François Sadi Carnot (written in his travelogue with an ‘a’ to make it look like the name of the thirteenth-century Persian poet, Sa’di) in the following way:

Sadi Carnot himself is of medium height, thin, black hair and eyes, thin black eyebrows . . . a nice thin moustache, black beard, and pleasantly shaped eyes131 . . . Sadi Carnot looks like the deceased Hishmat al-Dawlah, he’s very delicate, his beard doesn’t look like his but the look of his eyes are very similar to Hishmat al-Dawlah’s. He also looks a lot like the Imam of the takyah. One’s a bit big and the other delicate. He also looks like Amin al-Sultan’s doctor. [The doctor’s] eyes and coloring, its shape, everything about them, their head and beard, one is bigger and the other small and more delicate.132

And earlier, on the same trip in St. Petersburg, the king comments on the Empress: “The Empress looks older than the last time I saw her, her teeth have turned yellow, she has a skinny face . . .”133 He is kinder to Queen Victoria in his first trip, describing her as “having fifty years or more. She still wears black for her husband but she is of a robust frame, fat, and red and white [i.e., healthy looking]. You can’t tell she’s this old. There is nothing wrong with her teeth, she is short, and has a short thick neck. She’s very jolly, and good looking, and polite.”134

A useful way of understanding the repetitive nature of these travelogues is through the concept of hypotypsis, which Umberto Eco calls “one of the least precise and least analyzed of rhetorical figures.” Hypotypsis, according to Eco, is “a way of lingering in the text, and of ‘wasting’ time, so as to
NASIR AL-DIN SHAH’S NARRATIONS OF WORLD FAIRS

Nasir al-Din Shah’s awareness of the image of Iran (and himself) in the European scene can be clearly seen in his descriptions of the expositions or world fairs in his European safarnamahs. Created at the end of the eighteenth century, expositions became a common fixture on the world stage from the second half of the nineteenth century. By the 1867 Paris Exposition and the creation of the national pavilions where the countries of the world were assigned a specific space in the fairs, the expositions became visual presentations of the European (and colonial) ordering of the globe, a function that they carry forth even to this day.

For Nasir al-Din Shah, these fairs also became yet another venue on which to situate and narrate imperial power in his travel accounts. The importance of being represented on the global stage of world fairs for the Egyptians, Ottomans, and the Qajars has been noted extensively before. The juxtaposition of what we know about these world fairs and Nasir al-Din Shah’s descriptions in his books of travel, descriptions that were aimed at his audience at home, bring to the fore the cultural work that his narratives accomplished.

Each of Nasir al-Din Shah’s European travels coincided with a world fair—Vienna in 1873, Paris in 1878 and 1889. The descriptions of the world fairs differ from one another, depending on the extent of Iran’s presence and the context in which Nasir al-Din Shah was narrating it. Yet what is constant, and what needs to be kept in mind, is the way in which the king’s presence itself acted as an additional representation of Iran—like the carpets and pottery on display—on the global stage that were the expositions. As such, the scenes of the world fairs in each travel account operate on three representational levels: on the level of the Iran booth or pavilion; on the level of the Iranian king, himself an embodiment of his dawlat and melat, walking through the Iran section; and on the level of the kingly narrative, and his creation of a textual image for his audience home and, as we will see, abroad.

On August 1, 1873, a cool day in Vienna, the king sets out toward the exposition, the first of its kind he has ever seen. As he approaches the grounds, traveling through Vienna, the king notes that because of the cholera epidemic, “the hot weather and the dirtiness of the city,” noteworthy people have all left for their summer homes. Bereft of “beautiful women,” the city is full of men, women, and children, who are all “dirty, pale, and most of whom have leprosy [baras va juzam], [are] mostly poor, and seem emaciated [khamsah] like the people of Zanjan.” Seamless from this picture of disease and poverty Nasir al-Din Shah enters his description of the emperor’s pavilion, where he has lunch with the emperor and proceeds from there to visit the exposition. Nasir al-Din Shah here describes the building of the fair using almost exclusively familiar architectural terms for his readers: The exposition is like the chahar su or the cross-road Persian markets, it has a large dome (gonbad), and is full of bazaars all moving out from the great dome. Underneath the dome is a hawa (basin of water typical to Persian courtyards) and a fountain built by the French.

Nasir al-Din Shah explains what was contained in the fair: Every state (dawlat) has a special place to display its wares. In addition to some of the “grand” states, such as Russia, England, Germany (France notably is not counted as one of the grand states), there were wares from “the Ottoman state, Egypt, Greece, Japan, China, etc.” When it comes to the pavilions, Nasir al-Din Shah mentions those of Egypt, the Ottoman Empire, and Iran, claiming that “other than these, I didn’t see pavilions from other states.” Nasir al-Din Shah doesn’t give much description of the physical structure of the Iranian pavilion, which was a “two-story exhibition hall on a residential scale.” Instead, he explains to his readers that this “building of mirror work” was the product of only three months work by an architect named “Ustad Isma’ili” and a carpenter, the former of which had managed to learn German during his three-month stay. Nasir al-Din Shah again repeats how astonished he was at the job well done in just three months, and notes that a lot of money had been spent on the pavilion. He then sits in the building with the head of the exposition, has some ice cream and smokes a water pipe, and leaves.

Reading the descriptions of the Vienna Exposition in the context of the disease-ravaged city raises the question of how much the king’s impressions of the city fed into his (and his readers’) opinion of the exposition as the
site of European progress. Neither science nor advances in technology were able to prevent Vienna from becoming a ghost city full of emaciated people and lepers, a scene that Nasir al-Din Shah observes and records on the heel of his first entrance into the world fair. As such, it makes sense that his impression of it was both tempered and yet highlighted Iranian achievement in its midst.

As mentioned earlier, Nasir al-Din Shah’s second European trip seems to have been planned around his visit to the Paris Exposition, in which Iran also had a pavilion. In the margins of his entry for June 4, 1878, when he is still in Prussia, he writes: “On the night of the 25th of April, when I was in Qurachaman of Azerbaijan writing in my journal... I said that in these pages I will write about the Paris Exposition, God willing.” On June 9 (8th of Jumadi al-Thani), Nasir al-Din Shah and his retinue enter Paris early morning, before light, when Paris was “dead, [and] not a sound could be heard.” He checks into the Grand Hotel, where “all the monarchs who come to Paris stay,” and tries to get some sleep but can’t. So he orders the carriage to be brought “since we must go quickly to the exhibition.” Eventually after some delay they set off from Trocadero to the exhibition gate, a long distance, he notes, as if from “the Qajar palace to the Tehran gate.” The exhibition building, he states “is made of steel and crystal from every nation [milat] and state [dawl] and land [mulk] there are commodities [mat] and people [adam].” This time, the king seems much more excited about the exhibition, which he describes as being so vast and so full of the wondrous and strange manufactured goods (sanayi ajab va gharebeh) that “if I wanted to describe it, I would have to take a book as big as the Shahnamah and for the duration of the exposition, write about it every day and night.” Until one sees it with one’s own eyes, he continues, “it would be impossible to imagine such a thing in one’s own mind.”

Despite using the above-mentioned tropes, he does describe the exposition, beginning with a detailed description of Iran’s pavilion: “I went to Iran’s pavilion which had been built very very well. The Egyptian, Tunisian, Chinese, and Japanese pavilions are near Iran’s but in truth, Iran’s was better than the rest.” The pavilion included a marble fountain, and a room with mirror-work, with “windows and doors that had all been made in Iran... Many people come to see it.” After going through the pavilions, he sets out toward the booths: “We went past the sections for England, France, China, Japan, Russia, Austria, Germany, the New World, Italy, the small states of the New World, etc. until we got to Iran’s section. We sat there, it had good commodities.” He then gives more details of the kinds of wares on sale, including “cloth from Yazd and Kashan” and high-quality carpets, noting that “Iranian goods sell at a high price here with ten times the profit.”

The pride of place Nasir al-Din Shah gives to the Iran pavilion underscores the importance of narrating to his readers the place Iran occupies on the world stage as represented by Iran’s participation in the 1878 exposition. He conveys this not just in terms of the details he provides (he merely mentions the other pavilions by name) but also in the familiarity of the description for the readers: His (Iranian) readers see themselves represented in the global scene that is the world fairs and are also made aware of the material value put upon this representation.

Conversely, while the presence of the Persia pavilion is stressed, so is the absence of Iran’s neighboring and rival empire: “The Ottoman state, due to war and troubles has sent neither commodities nor a representative” is how he ends this section. What he stresses in this one sentence is not just that the Ottomans are absent, but that they are absent “due to war and troubles.” Iran’s existence and representation in the exposition universelle becomes for the Iranian monarch a symbol of Iran’s stability, one that he takes time to visualize for his readers back home. This stability was only reinforced by the fact that Iran could not only represent itself on the global stage but could also send its greatest representative of itself—the Pivot of the Universe—onto the stage. The dual presence of Iran and the absence of its regional rival, the Ottoman Empire was thus described by one contemporary observer:

The absence of Turkey and Egypt has been already noted,—the burden of the Orient, remaining, lying literally upon Persia, which showed herself quite capable of bearing it, in shawls, rugs, carpets, and other fabrics, of silk, wool and cotton; showing the warmth of her sun in colors and the corresponding warmth of the taste of her people. It need not be said that these were only part of a collection really very complete though in small space,—and that the Persian decorations, having the Shah in view, were very rich and elaborate.

By 1889, Nasir al-Din Shah’s weariness shines through in his travel account. There is none of the curiosity of the 1873 description or the enthusiasm from 1878. Additionally, in 1889, the Iranian presence in the exposition was orchestrated by a “farangi,” a European who had asked permission to display Persian wares, and “Monsieur Richard,” who had come to Iran “forty years ago,” converted to Islam, married, and had a son in Tehran. While Nasir al-Din Shah approves of “Iranian wares such as good carpets” on display, he also notes that the “old china, ancient tiles from the shrines, broken tiles from the city of Ray, old coins, old paintings” collected by Richard over the past forty years for which he had “not even paid one thousand tomans,” had been bought by the “London Museum” for “eight thousand Lira which is thirty thousand tomans.”
Despite the difference in Iran’s participation in each fair, what mattered, given that Nasir al-Din Shah’s first visit out of multiple visits each time concentrated on the Persian pavilions and booths, was that Iran was present. While there is undoubtedly much truth to interpretations of world fairs as colonial orderings of the world (with all that it entails) and questions of power and representation, Nasir al-Din Shah’s retelling of the expositions reveals that it is not the whole story. I’timad al-Saltanah, who had accompanied the king to Europe in 1889, attests to the meaning this carried for the Iranian delegation when he writes “the state of the Republic of the New World [the United States], which doesn’t even have much of a population, has spent 40-50 thousand tomans, has sent wares and constructed an excellent building in order to preserve their honour [naimas]. Our infelicitous dawlat has been humiliated in front of everyone [rusay-i khas va ‘am] because of the 10-15,000 toman cost and lack of manpower.” To not appear said something about the relative strength and stability of a nation, as the king takes pains to point out in regard to the Ottomans and the Egyptians. And to be present, as a sovereign state, was to have the means (financially and politically) to participate on a costly global stage.

NASIR AL-DIN SHAH’S TRAVELOGUES AS OBJECTS FOR IMPERIAL RULE

In a letter sent from Tehran, dated April 22, 1873, William Taylor Thomson informed the 2nd Earl Granville (1815–1891), then foreign secretary, that according to the mission agent in Shiraz “fears are entertained there [Shiraz] of additional disturbances occurring in Fars when the Shah proceeds to Europe.” As a result, a firman (decrees) from Nasir al-Din Shah, written to his son, the governor of Fars, “was publicly read in that city also having references to his majesty’s journey.” According to the translation of the mission agent’s letter, J. Ibrahim, in this letter Nasir al-Din Shah informed his son (and the restless population of Fars) that while he is traveling to Europe in the company of the sadr-i ‘azam (prime minister), the affairs of the country were fully in the hands of Mu’tamid al-Dawlah, to whom all the governors of provinces are to give their obeisance as if his orders were those of the king’s. The mission agent continues that “the inhabitants of Persia are not to imagine that the Shah’s absence will cause any disturbance in the state affairs, for should anything go wrong, H.M. can return from any spot in Europe to Persia in 15 days.” Another letter from J. Ibrahim leads us to the ways in which Nasir al-Din Shah was able to fill the void and allay the anxieties felt by his absence. Writing this time from the northern town of Astrabad, he writes:

“The Traveling King”

On the 5th July a telegram was received from Tehran announcing the gracious reception of the Shah in England the reviews which have taken place both by sea and by land.” He goes on to say that the telegram was then written out and read out loud to the summoned “military and civil authorities.”

The use of the telegram as the means by which to announce the movements of the king and his reception in Europe, all through Nasir al-Din Shah’s own words, was a tool by which he was able to maintain stability and peace during his long absence abroad and undoubtedly to justify his travels to his population. Nasir al-Din Shah clearly articulated his intentions in the decree he issued at the beginning of his second European travel: “Using the telegraph which is spread to all of the land of Iran, every day events in every country of Europe, etc. can be conveyed at any moment and a response received. Also, if there are any orders [lando], they will be sent by the telegraph every day from the king to the great ministers and princes.” He continues that there will be large encampments in various provinces that will receive orders from Europe, assuring people that those in charge in his absence will not rest from their duties “even for a minute.”

Telegrams fed into the gazette Iran to provide not necessarily up-to-date, but regular announcements of Nasir al-Din Shah’s whereabouts during his travels both inside and abroad. Iran is full of reports from April to August 1878, for example, following the trail of the traveling king, from his entry into Azerbaijan (April 22, 1878), to that of Vienna (July 18, 1878), and his heading back home (July 29, 1878). During his third visit in 1889, similarly, the public could keep track of the king through regular telegraph reports such that on August 27, 1889, Iran as its first item of news reported that “according to the telegraph news, the [king’s] retinue entered the seat of rule [dar al-khalifah] of Vienna, the capital of the glorious state of Austria, where the utmost reception and honors deserving of His Majesty were bestowed.” Redhouse, the translator of the king’s first book of travel highlighted this in the introduction to his translation, noting that “the contents of the present Diary, were communicated to the Persian public in the official part of the Tehran Gazette, and are therefore more or less of the nature of what we daily read at home in the ‘Court Circular.’”

Once the king returned his travelogues were then made available for the public. For example, on April 13, 1874, less than a year after returning from his first European visit, an announcement appeared on the pages of Iran:

The book of travels [kitab-i safarnamah] of his Highness... which has been printed on the newly bought machine [charuk] from Europe [farangistan] and which contains daily
events of that trip, from the day of the Royal departure from the seat of rule [dar al-khilafah] to entry into [the port of] Anzali and the geography of the lands of farang, has been bound in the royal printing house and is on sale for twelve qirans.

And while there is no information on who actually bought the travelogues, based on their repetition in court chronicles and entries such as that of 'Ayn al-Dawlah's from the beginning of this chapter, it is clear that at least members of the court, if not beyond, read the final product.

Print also gave Nasir al-Din Shah a way to use the travelogue as an object in service of imperial power and its related protocols abroad. While Garmsrudi and Ajudanbashi in 1838 carried with them portraits of Muhammad Shah painted in Iran and framed in Vienna, Nasir al-Din Shah, through the distribution of his travelogues to foreign sovereigns and dignitaries, in one stroke presented a portrait of himself and that of Europe as narrated by him. On the first page of the November 16, 1874, issue of Iran, under the heading “Internal News” (akhbar-i dakhilak), it is stated that on the November 8 [27 Ramizan 1291], the court received a letter from the Crown Prince of England thanking Nasir al-Din Shah for the travelogue that he had written while in farangistan and “had sent as a souvenir to the Crown Prince.” The news item also states that “England’s translators had translated it to English.” In the same issue, it is also written that the French minister came to Nasir al-Din Shah to thank him for sending Marshall McMahon, president of the Republic, a copy of his travelogue.

Apparently the French were not as impressed with the king’s travelogue since a French translation never appeared. Nonetheless, the gifting of his travel accounts to European ambassadors and the subsequent appearance of the English translations demonstrates the ways in which Nasir al-Din Shah conducted a prototype of image control: He interjected his narrative of himself and his journey into what the British public read, while at the same time exercising his royal prerogative and power by presenting an ever-powerful Europe a Persian mirror of itself.

The ways in which the Nasiri court used new technologies such as telegraph, printing, and photography to change the nature of its role is a crucial topic that remains to be examined. Too often, discussions of reform in the Nasir al-Din Shah period have focused on its success or failure based on a particular notion of change advocated by those in opposition to the state (crystallized later on in the constitutionalists’ demands). But it is very clear that through the use of technology, Nasir al-Din Shah was able to significantly change the ways in which kingly sovereignty was exercised in Iran. Whether in the form of a telegraph or a book, Nasir al-Din Shah’s constant narration of his travels filled the gap created by his physical absence and was astutely used as a tool for governance. One can speculate that the king’s textual presence was one of the reasons why there were no destabilizing uprisings during Nasir al-Din Shah’s long and far absence. It also stands as a testament to the effectiveness of his use of writing as a way of placing himself inside Iran during those absences. Going back to Eco’s use of hypotyposis, the everyday repetitive quality of the travelogues, and his “lingering narrative,” put the absent king, not to mention a geographical map of Iran and the place it occupies in the world, in front of their readers’ eyes “as if we could see it.”\textsuperscript{173}
CHAPTER 5

A Dervish and a Merchant Walk into Europe

The Popularization of Travel Writing

I have traveled throughout the world and haven’t seen anywhere that had Iran’s climate and bounty. It is a jewel wrapped up in a rag cloth. 

The travelogues discussed in the previous chapters were written by various court members, or in the case of Nasir al-Din Shah, the monarch himself, on official missions to Europe. Additionally, many of the travel accounts of the Nasiri period, whether internal or external, were either commissioned loosely by the court or the travels themselves were initiated by members of the Qajar elite (such as Zill al-Sultan, the eldest living son of Nasir al-Din Shah and governor of Isfahan). This link (though tenuous at times) between centers of rule and writing travel allowed us to examine the ways in which the Qajars used the medium of the travelogue, against the background of Europe, to articulate and project their understanding of their place in the world. In the case of Nasir al-Din Shah, it also allowed us to examine the ways in which the king adroitly used writing and new technologies that allowed for its dissemination to reassure its millat, or nation, both of the stability of Iran but also of the glory of Iran beyond its borders.

The new technologies of the mid-to late-nineteenth century also served to “popularize” long-distance travel or at least make it more of a possibility for a wider segment of societies, bringing Europe and the Middle East physically and culturally closer to one another. Thus, the tail end of the nineteenth century in Iran saw an increase in the number of people traveling
and, more important, the diversity of the people who had the means to travel the long distances that a journey to Europe (and eventually the United States and East Asia) required. Technological advances provided relatively safer means of travel such as better road conditions, faster carriages, and trains, as opposed to travel by ship, which caused many jitters in our Qajar travelers.

Safer means of travel were coupled with cheaper prices, which provided opportunities for travelers not directly linked to the centers of power to travel longer distances. As a result, travelers who were not necessarily on diplomatic missions or connected directly to the Qajar court began to travel as far as the United States, and more important for our purposes, began writing down their accounts. In this period, the formation of the cultural milieu of travel writing allowed for the production of multiple travel accounts, aimed at what one can speculate to be a more diverse community of readers. Whereby in the previous decades there was a direct link between the court, travel, and the integration of travel accounts into other cultural productions (which were also sanctioned and directed by the court), the changing conditions of travel—and by the end of the nineteenth century, printing—allowed for “meandering” texts that did not have the kind of central home (at the court) that similar texts previously did.

This chapter tests the interpretative framework laid out in Taken for Wonder by focusing on late-nineteenth-century nonofficial travelogues whose purpose was seemingly not to address the concerns of the Qajar state, to report back on missions, to narrate the power of the Qajar kings back home, or to participate in the geographical discourse that was ongoing in the Nasiri court. This chapter asks if not for these reasons, then for what other purposes did travelers write their accounts and to what extent if any were these texts embedded in the travel writing milieu of their times?

Of the nonofficial travel writers to Europe, three are the most well known and published. The first is Hajj Sayyah Mahallati, who left Iran in the early 1860s to escape marriage to his cousin, and traveled for eighteen years, by his own count, before finally returning to Iran. In addition to his travels, he is best known for his association with Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and with Mirza Riza Kirmani, Nasr al-Din Shah’s assassin, with whom he shared a prison cell for a brief period. Hajj Sayyah’s “travel account” is by far one of the most popular Qajar travelogues published in Persian. But ironically, Hajj Sayyah, who undoubtedly defined himself as a traveler (thus the moniker of sayyah, or well-traveled), did not necessarily produce what constituted a travelogue in the 1860s when he traveled. Rather, what was published as his safarnamah in 1894, almost twenty years after the publication of his Khatirat, seems more to have been designated as a travelogue by its late twentieth-century editor. This is reflected in the fact that “except for his [Hajj Sayyah’s] departure from home, no dates are given. Only implicit information like an epidemic of cholera in Istanbul or the world exhibition in Paris may lead to an approximate dating.” This is not to imply, counter to the arguments of this book, that a clear genre of travelogues existed in the nineteenth century that separated it from other types of writing, such as the memoir. On the contrary, the placing of Hajj Sayyah’s account as a “travelogue” in the canon of nineteenth-century Qajar travel literature to Europe seems to stem more from the destination of the author’s travel (Europe) and the date of his travels (1860s) rather than from the internal logic of the text. His account not only lacks any dates, but it is also clear to any reader of Hajj Sayyah’s safarnamah that his text was edited and compiled probably sometime after 1909, much later than the time of his travels.

The second is Hajji Pirzadah Na’ini, whose safarnamah chronicles the author’s three-year-long journey in 1886 to Europe. Third is Ibrahim Sahafibashi, a merchant who traveled to Europe and the United States in 1896–1897 to sell jewels abroad.

The travelogues of Hajji Pirzadah, the main focus of this chapter, and that of Ibrahim Sahafibashi, serve as illuminating points of comparison with previous chapters. Neither was officially a member of the court nor was his travel to Europe part of any official visit, even though in the case of the former, before and during the journey he was in close contact with many members of the Nasiri court. Nonetheless, reading these travelogues together allow us to look at how an account of a nonofficial journey to Europe was similar to and different from those that were produced for official purposes and readerships. This also in turn opens up the possibility of identifying different types of readerships for what we have assumed were similar types of texts—the safarnamahs.

THE ACCIDENTAL TRAVELER

Haji Mirza Muhammad ‘Ali Na’ini (Hajji Pirzadah) was born in 1835/1251 in the town of Na’in and died in 1903/1321. According to the Sufi biographical dictionary, Tara’iq al-haqa’iq, a minister from Isfahan gave his daughter to Pirzadah’s father, Aqa Muhammad Isma’il, who was a man of “abundant spirituality [isti’at an na’i’in]”. From Tara’iq’s account it is clear that what he calls the “envy,” from which people began spreading rumors about him, was his identity as a Sufi in the early nineteenth century, to the point where an order of apostasy (kufr) was decreed against him and his killing declared a duty. As a result, Aqa Isma’il went into hiding (while his marriage was annulled and his wife was married off to another man) until Muhammad Shah Qajar came into power, after which he returned to
Nai’in. Following the death of his father, Haji Pirzadah traveled to Tehran, where he fell in with “other mystics [‘urafa’] of his age,” particularly that of Ustad Ghaffar Najjar. Ustad Najjar, who had been a carpenter before joining a Sufi order, was illiterate though he had “eloquence” in interpreting poetry (ash‘ar golshan).

Haji Pirzadah, though not officially a member of the court, had very close connections to it, and in what was typical of the Nasiri period, moved fluidly in and out of the court circle. He received his title from another dervish, Haji Mirza Safa, to whom he was devoted, with whom he most likely traveled to Mecca and for whom he created the Bagh Safa ‘iyah, where they are both buried. Haji Mirza Safa had a close relationship to the then ambassador to the Sublime Porte, Mushir al-Dawlah, and was also by all accounts well traveled, not just to Mecca and Medina but also to Egypt, the Sudan, Syria, and Europe. Pirzadah returned to Iran in the company of Haji Mirza Safa when Mushir al-Dawlah returned to Iran from Istanbul and became the prime minister. He was known to be close to Amin al-Sultan, court minister in the late Nasiri period, and after his death, the pension he was receiving from Muzaffar al-Din Shah was transferred to his sons. Haji Pirzadah was held in high regard among the Qajar nobility, both in terms of his personality and also the fact that he was known to have “wandered [gardish]” most of Asia and Europe.

In his 1886 travel account, he briefly mentions his earlier travels, which included Istanbul, pilgrimage to Mecca, and Europe, and that by his own account had occurred between 1863 and 1868.

Haji Pirzadah was an accidental traveler to Europe. In 1886, shortly before setting out for Taqibabad to visit his mother and brother, he went to the shrine of Shah ‘Abd al-Azm, where he ran into Mu‘ayyid al-Mulk. Mirza Ahmad Khan Mu‘ayyid al-Mulk was the son of Mirza Muhammad Khan Biglarbeygi, who had gone to Shiraz shortly after the death of his brother to take over his post as the head of the municipality. After a stint as the military scribe (lashkar nivist) in Azerbaijan, he returned to Shiraz.

The time in Shiraz is spent visiting with various local notables and writing some of them. They enter Shiraz, the hometown of Mu‘ayyid al-Mulk on July 5, 1886 (3 Shavval, 1303), where he stays in Mu‘ayyid al-Mulk’s house.

His time in Shiraz is spent visiting with various local notables and writing about Shiraz, its weather, architecture, and people, including descriptions of the weddings of several Shirazi families. Pirzadah’s attention to the local customs of the city (and many other destinations he wrote about) is noteworthy: in Shiraz he writes that “most people's clothes are still long,” he comments on the high prices of goods (which had resulted in a popular uprising in Shiraz), and describes how they make ice.

Without much explanation as to why, Pirzadah decides to accompany Mu‘ayyid al-Mulk to Europe, on October 21, 1886 (23rd of Muharram 1304) from Shiraz. They set off from Shiraz with the purpose of seeking treatment for Mu‘ayyid al-Mulk’s general disposition and nervous pains (mizaj va dard-i asabani). As a dervish with apparently little money, Pirzadah borrows money from Mu‘ayyid al-Mulk to send to his family in Tehran. Additionally, both Mu‘ayyid al-Mulk’s wife and others from Shiraz and surroundings gave him money and food for his travels.

Pirzadah’s journey to Europe was a long and circuitous route that lasted roughly from May 1886 to January 1889. The itinerary included stops in Masqat, Karachi, Bombay, and several other places within India; Egypt (Suez, Cairo, and Alexandria), Italy; Paris; London; Berlin; Vienna; and returns to Istanbul and Egypt, Beirut, Damascus, Baghdad; and several other destinations inside Iraq, including Karbala and Najaf, and return to Iran through Basra and up to Isfahan. As such, when I’timad al-Saltanah writes that Pirzadah “had wandered [gardish]” most of Asia and Europe, he marks Pirzadah’s journey as something altogether different than the safar or siyahat of travelers before him. Similarly, the traveling merchant Sahafshahshahi, whose 1897 journey took him all around the world, uses the word gardish to demonstrate the extent of his wanderings throughout the world.

Both safar and siyahat in the nineteenth century meant travel, with connotations of a pilgrimage or journey built into the meaning of travel itself. But gardish was a new concept in some ways: its most common use, often as a compound word, was that of turning or revolution such as gardish-i asman, or revolution of the heavens, but it also carried the meaning of wandering and vagrancy. I’timad al-Saltanah’s usage of it to describe Pirzadah’s travels works to place his experience in a category different than that of safar, or travel, which as we saw, had by the late Nasiri period become a tool of governance. Pirzadah’s meandering journey to Europe and back, on the other hand, was more of a slow-paced wandering as opposed to a deliberately targeted (and often preorchestrated trip) to Europe. Yet he chooses to record his travels the second time around (and not the first time in the 1860s). This confirms how by the 1880s the two separate acts of traveling
and travel writing had become more intricately linked than in the previous
decades. By the end of the Nasiri period, writing a travelogue was one
development that has become a ritual act on the part of some segments of Iran's
society, one that conferred a status symbol on its author. Going back to
Pirzadah's description of Tehran to Shiraz, it is clear that it was not the pros-
pect of travel to the "exotic" Europe that prompted his detailed travel
writing but merely the promise of travel itself.

The institutionalization of travel writing by the end of the Nasiri period
also extended to the type of information provided in the travelogues.
Pirzadah's travelogue is a rich text that is nonetheless difficult to place in
the larger milieu of travel writing. According to Afshar, Pirzadah's son had
told him of a manuscript copy in Pirzadah's handwriting that had been
lost, and one other copy in the Majlis library, copied for Husayn Ali Khan
Mukhbir al-Dawlah, in 1903/1904, on which the printed version is based.
If we take the isolation of the manuscript copy and its lack of
reproduction as an indication of its limited readership (both in terms of
numbers and the influence of its readership), it is striking that Pirzadah's
entire travelogue constantly provides distances of town within Iran in
farshaks, and more often than not in Europe in terms of hours. For example,
early in the travelogue, he gives the distance from the village of Ispadu to
Zarqan as seven farshaks. On the train going from Italy to France, he
gives the distance from the city of Brindisi (in Apulia, Italy) to Turin, and
from there to Paris as four hundred farshaks, noting that "every one or two
farshaks [the train] passes by a town or large village." Alternatively, when
he does not give distances in farshaks, he gives them in terms of hours.
Leaving Paris on October 19, 1887 (2 Safar, 1305) for Berlin, by train
through Belgium, Pirzadah notes that "the distance between Paris and
Berlin is twenty three hours."

In a different twist, Pirzadah, when relating the visits of other Iranians to
Europe during his time there, makes sure to give the route by which they
came. When Mu'avin al-Mulk comes to Paris to treat his blind brother,
Pirzadah writes that he came via "Mazandaran, Moscow, St. Petersburg,
and Berlin." When Hisam al-Saltanah is sent to participate in Queen Victo-
ria's fiftieth jubilee, "he left Tehran and entered Paris from Rasht, Baku,
Istanbul, and Vienna." The consistent incorporation of distances in travel
accounts, this book argues, can be understood within the context of the
concerns of the Qajar state, such as mapping, borders, and the use of geog-
raphy as part of the larger imperial narrative. As a result, by the late Nasiri
period, one of the most identifiable signifiers of a travel account, separating
it from the very similarly looking memoir, was the use of distances to mark
breaks in the narrative (as opposed to dates that were more commonly used
in memoirs such as those of Ayn al-Saltanah and I'timad al-Saltanah).

The fact that a wandering dervish, whose account as far as we can tell was
not written for any direct court use, incorporates these same elements into
his text, demonstrates how recording distances became a trope of the genre
of travel writing. While Pirzadah's travelogue seems to have been written
during his trip, it is, importantly, not a daily chronicle of events. In Paris, for
example, because of a lack of meat and oils in his diet, "and uncommon
fooods," he gets constipation and eventually hemorrhoids. "From the be-
inning of the twelfth of Jamadi al-Thani (March 7, 1887) when I was
stricken with hemorrhoids until now which is the fifteenth of Ramazan
(June 7) . . . I have tried many cures and medicines yet have seen no im-
provement." The absence of daily recordings and the presence of detailed
architectural descriptions throughout the text are reminiscent of Garmrudi-
di's Chaharfasl, where the daily movement of the group mattered less than
the geographical information and details of the mission's diplomatic nego-
tiations. In the case of Hajji Pirzadah, while geographical knowledge is still
impacted in bits and pieces, and dates are given here and there, what stands
out are the details of monuments, buildings, and cultural practices of the
places he visits.

What is particularly absent in his travel account is any sense of Pirzad-
ah himself as he moved through his objects of descriptions. The travel-
ogue, unlike those discussed earlier, has almost no description of how the
Europeans reacted to him and his group of Iranians. Unlike other travelers
whose travelogue entries would begin by "today I/we went to" the opera/ballet/exposition, Pirzadah merely begins descriptions of these various
sights. His eye, rather than being a subjective instrument for description,
is a photographic one, giving a sense that he was floating above the scenes
he describes rather than walking among them. This also explains
another curious aspect of Pirzadah's travelogue: The reader never gets a
sense that Pirzadah was ever a spectator in Europe, that he was ever an
object of curiosity, or that he was ever gazed upon. This aspect of the travel
account is undoubtedly connected to the difference in purpose of his
travels versus that of official Qajar travelers: whether Pirzadah was a
spectacle or not in Europe carried no rhetorical meaning as it did, for ex-
ample, for Iltchi, whose narrative of his own spectacle in Europe signified
the visibility of the Iranian state.

Pirzadah's photographic eye keenly counted and recorded the number of
Iranian merchants and some of their names throughout his travels. In Cairo,
for example, he notes that there are four hundred Iranian merchants, some
of whom live in the 'Abbasiyyah neighborhood of Shubra. In Alexandria,
he mentions that there are many Iranian merchants "who are involved in
different kinds of trade," in particular the trade of Persian rugs that were
traded at high prices. And again in Paris, he states that "in Paris there are
not that many people from Iran other than those traveling for trade purposes.” Pirzadah’s interest in the merchants of the cities he visits is partly rooted in the unofficial nature of his visit. Official travelers to Europe, be they from the Fath ‘Ali Shah period or Nasir al-Din Shah himself, were almost always accompanied by mihmandars, or “minders,” of a sort who functioned as intermediaries between the travelers and the place of travel itself. Pirzadah and Mu‘ayyid al-Mulk, on the other hand, were on a medical visit, and as such their places of residence and their itineraries during their travels were not determined beforehand. Nonetheless, they sought and were sought after by the merchants, travelers, and diplomats who constituted the Iranian community abroad and whose presence is dutifully recorded by Pirzadah. In fact, individuals in Pirzadah’s text are more often than not Iranians both those residing in various cities outside of Iran and those in transit. As such, from an informational standpoint, Pirzadah’s travel account provides valuable insight into the kinds of Iranians who traveled to Europe, their reasons for travel, and how they navigated their residence there.

REMEMBERING THE TRAVELED

It is clear that by the end of the nineteenth century, whether in the Middle East, South Asia, or Europe, there were no “virgin” travelers anymore: ordinary travelers heading out to faraway destinations already had their itineraries and sites “worth” seeing influenced by the wealth of traveler’s tales, geographies, and in the case of the Europeans, guidebooks. Studies of nineteenth-century European travels emphasize the importance of guidebooks, especially those of John Murray III and Karl Baedeker, in shaping the ways in which ordinary Europeans began traveling the globe. Specifically, these books “naturalized the separation of tourist attractions (‘Culture’) from mundane continuous life (anthropological ‘culture’).” Similarly, the case of several Bengali travel- loughes about Europe “establishes decisively that our tourists had internalized not just histories and geographies written by Europeans (which formed part of the school curriculum in British Bengal), but also much of contemporary Anglo-Saxon writing on travel.”

For Pirzadah (and Ibrahim Sjahafbashi as we shall see shortly), traveling four decades into the Nasiri development of travel writing, what was internalized were not histories and geographies of Europeans. While the vast number of translated travelogues from Europe undoubtedly influenced the seeing eye of any Qajar traveler familiar with the literature of the time, by 1886, when Pirzadah traveled, there were already other homegrown models for emulation or for revision. In these travelogues, the familiarity with and at times incorporation of knowledge of Europe produced by the Nasiri at times incorporation of knowledge of Europe produced by the Nasiri

A DERVISH AND A MERCHANT WALK INTO EUROPE

A Dervish and a Merchant Walk into Europe

at times incorporation of knowledge of Europe produced by the Nasiri

in the court point to a more porous border between the court and, at the very least, the literate noncourtiers than had been previously assumed. In particular, the literate noncourtiers were more often than not, the Nasiri interest in travel and geography, and the resulting knowledge had seeped into the writing culture of its time and informed how travelers outside of the court constructed their accounts.

Despite the fact that, as we shall see, Pirzadah gives hints that he was aware of other travelers’ accounts by the time he himself wrote his, his travelogue often assumes no prior knowledge of Europe on the part of his readers. For example, his descriptions of Europe’s theaters, circus, expositions, and landmarks—all of which had been written about extensively by travelers before him—begin by transliterations of the word followed by lengthy descriptions as if this would be new knowledge on the part of his readers. This is particularly striking when it comes to his account of the Paris Exposition, a topic as we know, was well covered by previous travelers and discussed in detail in the gazette Iran. Pirzadah’s spelling of it, with an ‘a and divided into two words (‘aks [picture] puzisiun), as opposed to the common spelling with a hamza (‘aks puzisiun), is peculiar, as is his definition of it: “What is meant by the ‘aks puzišun building is that it is a place for the presentation of every kind of commodity, goods, grains, wild animals, and bird. Anyone who can raise their commodity and goods to an advanced level, be it plant or animal, once a year presents it in that building. They are then compared to one another to see which is better and how much have they advanced.” Further reading of his account, with its emphasis on the fruits and animals presented, along with a discussion of agriculture in Paris, reveals how by “exposition,” Pirzadah did not mean the exposition universelle but rather a local market or fair, perhaps held on the previous exposition’s grounds.

This stands in contrast, for example, to the travel account of Ibrahim Sjahafbashi, who consciously sets up his travelogue as a corrective text to what was already known about Europe. The contour of Sjahafbashi’s life is both better known and lesser known. He has been remembered in Qajar history for opening one of the first “public” cinemas in Iran in 1905. Inside his antique store in Lalahzar Street, Sjahafbashi, the story goes, would project short films on the cinematograph he had brought with him from Europe and hold forth on his constitutionalist ideas. But little is known of his life before his travel in 1897.
When this merchant of jewels, who embarked on a six-month journey of Europe, America, and the Far East, leaves the port of Anzali on the Caspian for Russia on May 12, 1897, he begins his travelogues by saying that he is going to "record daily, without any bias, everything I see, hear, and understand." The bias he has in mind is a particular one: "Most of the compatriots who went to Europe return with only praise and are ashamed to write of the prices, but I will write all the prices." In contrast to Pirzadah's travelogue, Sahafabashi's assumes extensive knowledge on the part of his readers. He uses terms such as "exposition,"47 and "theater,"48 and even names of streets such as the Champs-Élysées49 and monuments such as the Eiffel Tower,50 as if they were fully known to his readers. Instead, he concentrates on painting a picture of Europe as an expensive place that was not necessarily worth spending money in. After finishing up a meal in Paris of meat and potatoes, and paying "three tomons and eight qirans" for it, Sahafabashi writes: "It's hard for the freeloading Iranian [to pay] these high prices."51 In fact, Sahafabashi is unique in that he reveals a consciousness of the accumulated body of travelogues to Europe before his, squarely making his argument about the undesirability of Europe in the context of what was said about it before:

Anyone who writes a travelogue [about Europe] had nothing but praise and anyone who heard it was tempted to see it but there is not much to Europe other than its pleasant lights and streets. Its houses are like cages, without air, their food is bad and expensive. Anyone who wants to see Europe can just turn on a lot of lights and rent plenty of wares [zaraf]. See the panorama [duruma] behind a magnifying glass, and put the rest of his money in his pocket; it's as if he has seen Europe. Me, if I weren't to make money, I'd never come to Europe so as to eat dog meat, spend two–three thousand tomons, and wander about the city like a porter.52

If one characteristic of a genre is to represent a "canonized cultural tradition,"53 then Sahafabashi's travelogue in both its expectations of particular types of knowledge on the part of his readers (by rarely explaining concepts repeated in previous travelogues) and in its defiance of genre expectations (he never gives distances between cities and focuses on prices), implicitly demonstrates the contours of the cultural tradition of travel writing that had become canonized by the end of the nineteenth century.

Pirzadah, on the other hand, due to his particular trajectory as a dervish with ties to the court, wrote for what seems to have been a readership unfamiliar with Europe using two established genres: the Sufi genre of travelogue as a path for self-discovery and the Nasiri travelogue.

At one point in Shiraz, Pirzadah takes a break from describing the prominent families of Shiraz to describe a moment of deep sadness and longing for vatan (home, or place of abode).54 For Pirzadah, vatan means "my kin, mother, wife, and children," whose presence he sorely misses. This in turn gets him thinking about "my life that has past" and the regrets he felt in that regard. Pirzadah conveys a mystic sense of losing one's way in these passages, writing that "I wasted my life and spent my dear time in futility and folly [bulhawasi] ... and in order to please superficial friend and meaningless people, I used up my essence [hajiqat] and my zawq." The meaning of the last word, zawq can be interpreted in two ways. It means joys, pleasures, and taste in a worldly sense. But also, in Sufi literature it means the distinguishing of "truth and falsehood by the light of divine grace."55 He then finds a place near a creek and begins to cry uncontrollably. It is only when he visits with another dervish, who had met Pirzadah's spiritual guide, Haji Mirza Safa, several times, and begins reminiscing with him about his dearly departed Sufi guide [murshid], that he begins to calm down.56

This passage, with its use of a well-known trope of tears and repentance, sets up Haji Pirzadah's identity as a dervish, interlinks his long journey-to-come with a spiritual journey, and interjects the tropes of Sufi literature into that of Qajar travel writing. Travel or journey, as we know, is a common metaphor for describing the Sufi quest for God, the first stage of which is repentance, or tawbah.57 As this story comes shortly before the revelation that he is to travel to Europe, it stands to speculation that he linked his long and meandering physical travel with the more traditional spiritual journey.

Pirzadah stresses this particular link again during his audience with William Gladstone in London. Perhaps because of his connection to both Mushir al-Dawlah (and his companionship with Mu'ayyid al-Mulk, Pirzadah's stay in London and Paris was interlinked with the two ambassadors' social circles, Mulk Khan (Nazim al-Dawlah) and Nazar Aqa, respectively.58 In London, Mulk Khan invites these Iranian travelers to his house one night for a gathering that included Gladstone, then prime minister of England. Pirzadah mentions the presence also of Nubar Pasha, the Egyptian prime minister and Sir Henry Rawlinson. At some point in the evening, he is introduced to Gladstone, who asks him about dervishes: "The Prime Minister first asked, the sect that is fighting with us in the Sudan,59 they say we are dervishes, what kind of dervishes are they, from what sect? If they are dervishes, why are they fighting and killing people?" Pirzadah responds: "Some dervishes call for jihad and the spreading of their sect, others are solitary and remain in prayer, and others are travelers [sayyah] and world wanderers [durma gard]."60

In his travel account, Haji Pirzadah links himself to another traveling dervish, Haji Mirza Safa, who seems to have directly influenced Pirzadah's itinerary at least in one particular instance. While in Versailles, he writes:

When the late Haji Mirza Safa came to Paris, the late Farrokh Khan Amin al-Dawlah61 had told him that you must indeed go see the gardens and palace of Versailles. This...
humble self when I left Istanbul in the year of 1280 [1863] for travel to Europe, as I was taking my leave from the late Haji Mirza Safa, he said when you go to Paris, of course you must go see the palace and gardens of Versailles and so in that trip I visited and saw that Palace. In this trip along with Mu'ayyid al-Mulk and Nazar Asa, the ambassador, we specifically made a day trip to Versailles.\(^{52}\)

The chain of knowledge (isnād) laid out here—from a diplomat of the Nasiri court and travel writer himself, to Pirzadah's master, to him—gives insight as to how information about Europe made its way out of the court.

Yet interestingly enough, while Haji Mirza Safa makes this singular appearance as a reference point in Pirzadah's travels, it is Nasir al-Din Shah and his second travels to Europe that Pirzadah keeps coming back to. Pirzadah's references to Nasir al-Din Shah's second travels occurs predominantly in the context of his writings on Paris, which itself comprises the bulk of Pirzadah's European experience. He mentions Nasir al-Din Shah's travels outside of Paris only once when in Najaf, writing that when Nasir al-Din Shah visited the shrine of the first Shi'a imam, they opened the tightly secure safe that holds previous jewels in the shrine and allowed the king to see them.\(^{60}\) Pirzadah brings Nasir al-Din Shah into his descriptions of Paris several times, making it clear that he had either read the king's second book of travels, followed the travels closely as reported in Iran, or had been told about it, though the details of the descriptions make the last option less likely.

In his description of the Place de la Concorde, for example, he writes that on the western side of the square are "two very distinguished palaces" where Nasir al-Din Shah stayed when he came to Paris:\(^{54}\) "The Grand Hotel is one of the most famous hotels of Paris where Nasir al-Din Shah stayed during his second trip, along with all his companions and people who were in his retinue. The rooms and furniture of the Grand Hotel is completely royal and excellent."\(^{65}\) Even though Pirzadah was staying in a furnished flat rented by Mu'ayyid al-Mulk on rue Newton, Avenue de Marceau (in the sixteenth arrondissement),\(^{66}\) he gives a very detailed description of what a hotel is, even noting that one should tip the cleaning lady when leaving the hotel.\(^{57}\) In Versailles, again his description of the palace is linked to the fact that a reception was held for the king there.\(^{58}\) And when he visits Madame Tussaud's wax museum, he comments on how the king's statue looked nothing like him and was rather "dark colored and small in stature."\(^{69}\)

LOVING EUROPE, HATING EUROPE

One particularly tragic story Pirzadah tells of Iranians abroad is that of Baqir Khan, the nephew of Mukhibir al-Dawlah, who had been sent to Paris by Amin-al-Sultan, the prime minister, carrying some dirt they had found outside of Tehran that they wanted to test to see if it was appropriate for making porcelain.\(^{70}\) Baqir Khan had studied chemistry in Dar-al-Fanun and knew porcelain. When he gets off his train carriage on the way to Paris in order to urinate, the train pulls out of the station, taking with it all of his belongings. When Pirzadah visits him in his hotel in Paris, he writes of how Baqir Khan kept drinking as he ate his lunch, becoming drunker and drunker, and expressing "great hatred of coming to Paris" and regret.\(^{71}\) Despite complaining from severe diarrhea, Baqir Khan does not stop drinking. When Pirzadah goes to visit him one day, he finds out that he had been dead in his room for three days before his body was discovered. They find a Muslim section in a cemetery and bury him. Pirzadah thus writes, "god have mercy and forbid that a Muslim die here where it is impure and unclean [najis va napa]."\(^{72}\)

Pirzadah's tale of Baqir Khan's demise may have been told as a warning lesson (dars-i 'ibrat) to Iranians in Europe since much earlier in the travel account he launches into a nasty critique of Europe that seems to have specifically addressed the Iranian diaspora community. This first instance of criticism of Europe in the text comes at the tail end of his detailed description of "theaters, circuses, and cafes,"\(^{73}\) which he notes, people waste their time with. There is no religion in Paris, he laments, and even if people go to church, "it is out of custom and not worship."\(^{74}\) From here though, he launches into a lament about "some of the youth of our Iran who come to these places and to Paris, and see the superficial ornamentation of Paris, and suddenly lose themselves . . . They think if they drink wine, eat pig or lobster, not do their ablutions or pray, and not tell the truth, they will become fortunate and virtuous [sahib-i dulat va mikan] like the Europeans. God curse these kinds of people since just one of these Iranians in Europe give a bad name to an entire nation [yik millat]."\(^{75}\)

Sahhabashi also uses his criticism of Europe as a way of criticizing Iranian "national culture." Specifically going back to his comment on the high prices of food in Paris, Sahhabashi, as noted before, ends his entry by writing: "it is hard for the freeloading Iranian [to pay] these prices." This jab at the laziness of Iranians as a whole fits into other implicit and explicit comparisons scattered throughout his text. In Japan, for example, Sahhabashi writes that when he was in America, he saw that "women, men, and children, ride bicycles together," so in Yokohama, he buys a bike to try it out, only to immediately fall off of it so that "for ten days I've been limping."\(^{76}\) He then continues, "poor us stupid people. We think that men are preferable over women and we look down on all the women of the world with disdain. So I thought if a woman can ride a bike, I can also do it on the first try. But action ['mal], science ['ilm], and art [iunar] has not been created for an indulgent and lazy people."\(^{77}\)
In Pirzadah’s case, because of his praise of Europe and Paris (as expressed, for example, in his ode to Paris), and simultaneously, his harsh critiques, one can read the travelogue as being “ambivalent” toward Europe. What is read as ambivalence toward Europe in Pirzadah is a division between Europe as a physical entity with clean streets, order, and lights (an aspect often commented upon by travelers) and Europe as a cultural entity that for Pirzadah created anxiety over its influence on Iranians as can be seen from the above quote. What is striking about Pirzadah’s anxiety though is how his worry lies in how the actions of Iranians abroad reflects on “an entire nation” as opposed to an absolute moral stance or fears of loss of an authentic identity.

It is important to make a distinction here between Pirzadah’s comments on Paris on the one hand and on Europe, or *farang*, on the other. While he traveled to London, Vienna, and Berlin, in addition to Paris, and while he often directs his comments toward *farang*, it is for Paris that he reserves the majority of his praise and the bulk of his displeasure. His descriptions of London, for example, his visit to which coincided with the fiftieth jubilee of Queen Victoria, lack the kind of attention to detail—both to the city and also to their customs and cultures—that he directs toward Paris. Here, in addition to descriptions of his meeting with Gladstone and E. G. Browne (whom he calls Mr. Brownie), he discusses the postal service, Hyde Park, Albert Hall, and several other monuments, and dedicates another poem to both London and the Iranian ambassador, Malkam Khan.

His descriptions of Paris, even his descriptions of Parisian customs, give the city a museum-like quality, a descriptive device that works well as a distancing device for Pirzadah. Individual Parisians almost don’t figure into his account at all. Rather, he gives a picture of Paris that is full of details of the city architecturally, almost photographic descriptions of buildings and streets, and at times it feels as if Paris is more a museum than a living breathing city. Relatedly, Pirzadah almost never mentions the “crowd,” especially in Paris, which occupies a large segment of the European part of his travel account. This stands in stark contrast to other travelers of his time, who constantly noted the push and pull of the urban crowds, their reactions to the “Oriental” traveler, and conversations they with various Parisians. For example, the crowd plays a significant role in Nasir al-Din Shah’s travelogues, about which he often felt ambivalent. On the one hand their presence was a necessary part of official protocol of reception (as we know also from Iliche’s lament over their absence), and on the other, he felt consistently strained and harassed by their presence. In Pirzadah’s account, Paris is crowded by buildings that seems eerily absent of people.

In formulating his critique of Parisians, Pirzadah, not surprisingly, uses women and gender roles as the central rhetorical device with which to express his vitriol. Unlike Nasir al-Din Shah, who seemed to always be on the lookout for beautiful women and who constantly commented on the beauty or lack thereof of Europeans, for Pirzadah, what mattered most was how gender roles were defined and enacted. He criticized the notion of “freedom,” stating that:

The common meaning of “freedom” that is used in the countries of Europe especially in Paris, is the freedom of women with men so that anyone can do what they want and no one will object. The essence of this freedom is no honor [hadis namus] and shamelessness [hadis inadah] such that no one in this city controls his woman . . . otherwise in Europe people aren’t free and in control at all. For example if someone in the streets walks too fast, the police arrests him for walking too fast and if someone walks slowly, the police says why do you go slowly?

He goes on to mention that this lack of freedom extends to how you eat: If you don’t sit and use a knife in the right hand a fork in the left, it is disgraceful [’ayb].

Similarly, near the end of the journey, while traveling on an East India Company ship from Basra to Bushehr, Pirzadah describes the behavior of the captain of the ship, who does not allow them to lie down since the ship was filled to the brim with horses being taken to India. The problem, Pirzadah believes, is that the captain is an orphan and had never experienced the love of a father or mother: “It is appropriate to write the following here: Nowadays in Europe because of the ease of work and the tools of comfort [rahat] and self-indulgence, most of the people don’t have houses, homes, and stability.” He then continues, claiming that Europeans sleep in hotels and eat in restaurants, and whenever they feel like having a woman, they go to a brothel and if the prostitute gets pregnant she either has the child or takes medicine to abort it (man’ hamli) and that most of the nobility and elite of Europe, and the men of government, including military generals are orphans and have been raised in state schools.

Pirzadah also extends his disapproval to the republican nature of Paris, which he gets to see celebrate when he returns to Paris from London in time for Bastille Day. On July 14, 1887, Pirzadah leaves London for Paris, with E. G. Browne seeing him and his entourage off. Here, for the first time, he gives a sense of the crowds that had filled up the streets in celebration, but again he uses this as another attack on the French noting that “the Republican nation that does not believe in monarchy and king has been strengthened in France.” He goes on, fascinatingly to describe not what “republic” means but what a “republican parliament” means: It is a very big
building with a dome-like structure that seats nearly 700 chairs and all the sages (‘uqala) of the country of France and the city of Paris gather here and sit on the chairs.”

He goes on to say if anyone in any of the provinces wants to appoint or dismiss anyone, everyone must vote, “and it is with such unity that they conduct the affairs of the country.” Nonetheless, “there are still in Paris and all of France many people who want monarchy and king, and want Napoleon’s descendants and family to rule. But they haven’t gained strength yet. People say that soon it is inevitable that the government of France eventually prefers a king and monarchy or else they will lose their country and cannot prevail over the enemies without a king.”

By the time they leave Paris on October 20, 1887, he feels that the city of Paris for him had become “like a prison full of snakes and scorpions.”

Pirzadah’s discourse on Europe is reminiscent of Garmrudi’s Shabnamah, if not in the sense of the latter’s pornographic details, then in its use of gender roles and sexuality in marking aspects of Europe’s undesirability. Here, the notion that there was a continuum in the “Europobia” of the “counter-modernist” discourse would seem plausible. But there are important differences in the texts that at the very least question this linear reading of “anti-European” strain in Iranian modernity. First is the distinction made by each author between Europe (farang), England, and France. In the case of Garmrudi, Shabnamah was undeniably an attack on the English and not Europe as a repository of debauchery. In fact, as discussed in chapter 3, Garmrudi changes the identity of the conqueror who tricks Londoners from a general person in his Chaharfasl to a Frenchman in Shabnamah, revealing his own understanding of the hostility between these two states and smartly using it as a rhetorical tool in his diatribe against the English. In Pirzadah, the roles are reversed. Except in the end, when he explains the behavior of the East India Company ship captain in the terms of his being an orphan, the entirety of his criticism is aimed at the French and the Parisians in particular.

Second, the difference lies in the provenance of their observations on Europe. Garmrudi is careful to state clearly at the beginning of his text that what he is writing is what he has heard from “the people of Hindustan,” even though in the course of writing, he draws on his and Ajudanbashi’s own experience. And while he is adroit at using English women’s sexual appetites and the men’s cuckoldry to attack the English, his critique is never meant to undermine concepts such as “freedom” or “progress,” but to demonstrate English “stupidity and foolishness.” This comes out of the particular historical circumstances and the differences between the sociocultural milieu of Iran in 1838 and the late 1880s when Pirzadah wrote vehemently against European notions of freedom. To create a link between late-nineteenth-century anxieties over the “idealization of Europe” as in the case of Pirzadah, and Garmrudi’s “Europobic discourse,” is to read history backward. Garmrudi’s anxieties, as they were, were political ones, a direct result of the frustration of a diplomat confronted with an inflexible England. Pirzadah’s anxieties on the other hand, as seen in his comments on Iranians in Paris, was a distinctly late nineteenth-century fear, rooted in the changing nature of Iranian diaspora and notions of national belonging.

The evolution of the travelogue as part of the oppositional discourse is crystallized in Siyahatnamah-i Ibrâhim Bayg, a relentless critique of Iran—socially, politically, and culturally—in 1895, which was published in Cairo and, according to some accounts, smuggled into Iran and read in “pre-constitutional circles.” The book is a fictional travel account of a young Iranian man born in Egypt who decides to make a pilgrimage to the holy city of Mashhad in northeastern Iran, travel around his father’s country of birth, and write about his observations. The book is framed with the author’s (Zayn al-Din Maraghabi) story of his acquaintance with Ibrahim Bayg, both before and after his travels, and presents Ibrahim Bayg’s travel account to readers as he himself begins to read it. While not a travelogue of Europe, Siyahatnamah-i Ibrâhim Bayg, in its form as a travelogue, its timing at the end of the century, and its content as a critique of Qajar Iran, serves as another strong indication of the way in which travel writing by the end of the nineteenth century became a powerful and identifiable tool through which the Qajar state narrated its power, both political and geographical. Siyahatnamah-i Ibrâhim Bayg can thus be read as a mirror image of the rhetorical work of the Qajar European travelogues, imperial narration, and geographical mappings, by taking a form familiar to Qajar readers and turning it on its head.

In the prelude to the travelogue, Maraghabi begins by providing background information on Ibrahim Bayg so that his readers “become sufficiently informed of his reasons for travel.” This background information begins significantly with Ibrahim Bayg’s father, who “fifty years ago came to Egypt for business,” decided to stay, and “in a short time acquired much wealth.” Maraghabi established Ibrahim Bayg’s father’s patriotic credentials in two ways: He notes that not only did he not speak a word of Arabic for years, “he didn’t even want to learn it.” Additionally, this unnamed rich patriot limited social conversations at his home to “reading books on the history of Iran and tales of the kings of yore [sarguzasht-i padisihan-i pishtan].” These books included the chronicles Nasir-al-tavarikh and Tarikh-i Nadiri, which narrates the grandeur of Nadir Shah (the Afsharid ruler of Iran, 1736–1747).

The spirit of his father not only informs the educational background of Ibrahim Bayg but also his reasons for supposedly writing his travelogue. When he returns from Iran and dejected from the state of affairs, the narrator
tells him: "I knew that you would not return from this trip happy, but tell me what you saw on this trip, it will not do any harm." Ibrahim Bayg responds that despite the unpleasantness of his journey he had written down everything since his father had advised him to "write down your observations in every country you go to, it may be of use one day."6

The advice Ibrahim Bayg receives from his father regarding travel is significant in that travel accounts from the first half of the nineteenth century, such as Hayratnامah, Chaharfasli, Shahnamah, and Makhzan al-vagayr, all began with justifications for the writing down of their travels, using established forms of writing to justify a type of travel and narrative that was both old and new. By the time of Nasir al-Din Shah and the proliferation of travel writing, both to Iran and abroad, these introductions had all but disappeared, demonstrating the proliferation and congealing of the safarnamah as a writing style. The establishment of the genre by the end of the nineteenth century and its familiarity to the reading elite is precisely why Maragahi can use it for fictional and critical purposes. It is his deviation from these established uses of the travelogue that makes it necessary for him to begin his own with a justification for its writing. Aware that he was linking a familiar form (travelogues) to content unfamiliar to it (critique of the state), Maragahi "popularizes" the genre, claiming that all travel should be written down, pleasant or unpleasant, as "it may be of use one day."

Maragahi's subversion of the Nasiri form of the safarnamah also occurs in the omissions of his narrative. Ibrahim Bayg's travel account, unlike its nonfictional counterparts, is left temporally ambiguous. It begins by stating: "On the eighteenth of such a month [mah-i fulan] ... we set off for a pilgrimage to the holy city of Mashhad and travel [siyaha] to Iran," and nowhere in the text does he provide any sense of the passage of time, of distance, or any of the geographic/demographic information that had become staples of the safarnamah genre. His movement through the land is punctuated by space—Mashhad, Qazvin, Tabriz, Tehran—but the reader never gets a sense of the time and distances traveled. This runs counter to a practice whereupon, beginning with Garmrudi and fully established by the Nasiri period, travel accounts consistently provided their readers with distances between towns and cities visited, sometimes, as in the case of Nasir al-Din Shah, retracing their steps in later travelogues and providing newer measurements.

Maragahi addresses these omissions, and characteristically uses them as yet another venue for the critique of the state of Qajar Iran. Upon the end of his travel account, Ibrahim Bayg states:

Whenever one of the readers of this travelogue criticizes me as to why you haven't determined the population of these cities in Iran and written them down, in response I...
Conclusion

Signs are taken for wonders. “We would see a sign!”
—T. S. Eliot, “Gerontion”

The question that remains to be answered is, to put it rather bluntly, “so what?” Even assuming the persuasiveness of the arguments made in this book regarding Qajar travel literature to Europe, what broader historical understanding does this interpretive framework provide historians and scholars? Part of the problem with answering this question is that this book is attempting to dislodge a boulder with a toothpick: It uses a small number of texts to demonstrate the limitations of the larger historiographic framework within which we historians of the Qajar period operate.

As noted in the introduction, for over a century the history of the nineteenth century has been read and reread through the lens of the 1906 Constitutional Revolution. This teleological reading of the nineteenth century has put into place several powerful characterizations of the Qajar era. In terms of periodization, the more than a century of Qajar rule has been practically divided into the “preconstitutional” time (1794–1905), and the “postconstitutional” years (1911–1925). In the middle, the constitutional years dangle in a timeless space, caused by what came before it, and the root of all that came after it.

Hand in hand with this periodization is a historiography in which the early part of the nineteenth century is mostly ignored, except for diplomatic histories outlining Iran’s relationships to Russia, England, France, and the role it played in the Great Game. The period of the second monarch, Mohammad Shah, from 1834 to 1848, is by and large brushed over, while the fifty-year reign of Nasir al-Din Shah (1848–1896), the fourth Qajar
monarch, is mostly mined for the ways in which it contributed to the Constitutional Revolution. Even within the Nasiri period, it is important to note that certain occurrences, such as the premiership of Amir Kabir and his assassination, or the Tobacco Regie as "prelude to the revolution," have been visited and revisited constantly, while others, even those that can be linked to the constitutional period such as the assassination of Nasir al-Din Shah in 1896, are mentioned in passing. In the words of Kashani-Sabet, "the crucial interval between Nasir al-Din's murder and the Constitutional Revolution—a time of activism in Iranian politics—has been treated as a footnote to the formation of the parliament (majlis)." The overall effect has been that of a bottom-heavy historiography where most of the historical and bibliographic analysis is focused at the tail end of the nineteenth century and shaped by the concerns of that period, much of which is then projected backwards, treating the early Qajar period as a waiting room for Iran's inevitable entry into the modern world through its Constitutional evolution. This, in no shape or form, means that the entirety of Qajar scholarship operates within this historiographic framework, nor does it mean that the scholarship that does has not illuminated important aspects of this crucial period. Clearly the arguments put forth in this book have been built on the building blocks of a wide range of previous scholars who in their own ways have worked to dislodge the boulder in question here.

The introduction to this book asked three central questions: What should we do with travelogues that don't reflect the sense of awe that later historians have assumed early contact with Europe created in non-Western travelers? Why were all these travel writers almost equally interested in writing about places within the geographical boundaries of nineteenth-century Iran as they were about Europe? And how is one to read the large amount of descriptions of landscape, daily routines, and people that occupied the bulk of these texts? The answers to these questions within the historiographic framework outlined above are easy to ascertain: Travelogues that don't reflect awe at Europe should be ignored; travelers' interest in writing about Iran as they traveled through it were just following conventions of a genre and little can be understood from these sometimes inaccurate descriptions; and the mundane details reflect the superficial concerns of these travelers and as such should be ignored in favor of the "big ideas" of Europe presented in them.

But if we step outside that framework, and if, to borrow from Quentin Skinner, we examine not just what texts say but also what texts do, a different series of answers emerge. Specifically, by using the travel writings to Europe of some of the "lost" figures of Qajar historiography this book has demonstrated that travel narratives of Europe were used by the Qajar court to narrate its power both domestically and internationally, map Iran's territorial integrity, and establish royal sovereignty on the global stage. While the connection between the rise of geography during the Qajar era and the continuous anxieties over Iran's border disputes during this period have been persuasively argued before, narratives of Europe have been left out, relegating them to contemporary arguments over modernity and change. This book has thus argued that travel narratives to Europe, along with translations of European travels around the globe, be incorporated into our understandings of the ways in which the Qajar state increasingly resorted to a "geopolitical" identity as the century wore on. This reading is predicated on the simple proposition that the political-cultural milieu of the origin of travel and the reasons for writing the travelogue are as important for understanding these texts as their point of destination, namely Europe.

In shifting our interpretive emphasis—from the destination of travelogues to their origins—this book has also attempted to answer the elusive question of readership in nineteenth-century Iran. In the absence of systematic studies of manuscripts and later on book circulation and readership in the Qajar empire, examining the link between travelogues and other texts circulating during its time has allowed us to trace where and what information was read and repeated. For example, in the case of Hayratnamah, its textual similarities to Shigurfnamah and its appearance in manuscript form in Patna, India, undoubtedly reinforces the notion of "Persianate" texts that circulated across the geopolitical borders of Iran and India. But the Patna version does not repeat the long ode to the power of Fath 'Ali Shah that begins the Iranian and British versions. Rather it immediately jumps into the reasons for Ilchi's travel. If the reason for writing Hayratnamah was only, as has been repeatedly assumed, to reflect the "wonders" of Europe, and if the readership of these texts were Persian speakers regardless of their geographic locations, then the differences between the various manuscripts could not be sufficiently explained. In the framework suggested by this book though, the existence of a Persianate milieu explains their presence in Iranian and Indian archives. But their nature as rhetorical texts engaged with the specific concerns of different readerships—the Qajar court and the Indian elite for example—accounts for the differences in the manuscripts themselves.

In Garmrudi's Chaharfasl, the narrative of Europe is divided into "day" and "night" letters, but the bifurcation seems to be less about different readings or even the emergence of an antimodernist strain of thought in Qajar Iran than about different rhetorical functions. As argued in the book, Garmrudi assumes that readers of his Shabnamah are familiar with his Ruznamah, and uses that familiarity to critique not Europe but the British who had, in contrast to Ilchi's time thirty years earlier, humiliated and defeated the Qajar mission.
Never before had Europe been so "known" as it was during the Nasiri period. Not only were there more Europeans physically inside Iran, but also there was a plethora of written material on Europe commissioned and translated on the orders of Nasir al-Din Shah himself, not to mention his own multivolume narratives of his travels. Looking at the examples of Haji Pirzadeh Na'ini, Ibrahim Sahafabashi, and even Maraghali, and their familiarity with other travelers' accounts, it is clear that the readership of these texts went beyond that of the immediate Qajar court. It also suggests that what we think of as the Qajar court was actually much broader and more amorphous than previously assumed. Here, the assumption that experiential knowledge was more valid than mediated knowledge is questioned by the seamless weaving of "heard," "read," "translated," and "experienced" knowledge throughout nineteenth-century travelogues. To quote Izz al-Dawlah from chapter 4, "If anyone wants to be informed [about Europe], one can read [about it] or must see it."

By the end of the Nasiri period, geographical information had become interwoven into the fabric of travel accounts to the extent that appendices such as "The Geography of the World" all but disappear from the texts of travel themselves. Connectedly, there was an explosion of translation of similar types of texts commissioned and executed by the court itself, specifically through the creation and support of the Royal House of Translation. This is not to say that interest in translating geographical works was specific to Nasir al-Din Shah's reign. But it was precisely during Nasir al-Din Shah's reign that the scattered project of commissioning and translating texts was centralized in one place, that of the Royal House of Translation. The similarity in form among geographies, chronicles, travelogues, and even the official gazette, *Iran*; the importance of travel writing, both as geographical mappings and as imperial narrative as embodied by the monarch's travelogues; and the institutionalization of geographical exploration and translation all point to the ways in which the Qajar court both produced this discourse and also consumed it. As such, by the end of the nineteenth century, travel writing had gone through a process of "state" institutionalization, whereby the language and act of travel writing became yet another venue for the various projects of centralization, reform, and by extension, the critique of the Qajar state. Thus, *Siyahhatnamah-i Ibrahim Bagh's success as an oppositional text (seen in its ban inside Iran at the time of its publication) occurs on the level of both content and form bringing to full circle the arguments of this book regarding the importance of the study of Qajar travelogues to Europe for not only their observations of Europe but also their development as a variety of genres nestled in the writing culture of their particular time.

NOTES

CHAPTER 1


9. The debates over the meaning of "state" and their applicability to Qajar Iran are an important topic that is unfortunately beyond the scope of this book. Throughout this book, I use the term "state" to loosely mean "institutions of governance" with full knowledge that these institutions and their functions in society changed over the course of the long Qajar century.


15. Ibid.


18. Like all such categorizations of the historiography, these divisions are meant to be broad brushstrokes aimed at drawing the outlines of the historiography. Needless to say these categories at times overlap.


24. Ibid., 24.


is an insightful contribution to the literature on this topic. By questioning nationalistic assumptions made about the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, it argues "that the portment (adab), was the basis of conceptions of self and community" in India and Iran.

Kia, iii.


35. The notion of decline of empires is not unique to Qajar studies, but unlike Ottoman studies, for example, which have systematically problematized this notion, the idea of decline with a few exceptions, still holds strong in Qajar historiography. For an important work on Ottoman decline, see Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1995). Abbas Amuzi’s biography of the Qajar king Nasir al-Din Shah implicitly questions the decline paradigm by demonstrating the Qajar state’s achievements in creating a stable empire in the latter half of the nineteenth century. See *Pivot of the Universe: Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar and the Iranian Monarchy, 1831–1896* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1997). War and Peace in Qajar Iran (see fn. 16), which is explicitly a revisionist reading of the Qajar period, also emphasizes Iran’s stability despite the turmoil around it.

36. For a history of these two wars from both the Russian and Iranian perspective, see Muni Atkins, *Russia and Iran 1780–1828* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1980).


38. The most prominent exception here is Mohammad Tavakoli-Targhi’s *Refiction Iran,* which challenges “the conventional national histories of Iran, which often depict modernity as an historical epoch inaugurated by ‘Westernizing’ and state-centralizing reforms,” and suggests the inclusion of “Persianate texts,” i.e., writings in Persian that originated outside of Iran’s borders but which were part of the era’s writing and reading culture, into studies of Iranian modernity. Tavakoli-Targhi’s questioning of the dominant positivism in Qajar history, along with his identifying “a large corpus of texts made homeless with the emergence of history of borders, a convention that confined historical writing to the borders of modern nation-states,” is undoubtedly an important intervention in the study of both Qajar Iran and travelogues from the period. But the argument that the same conditions that came to be seen as European modernity already existed in the homeless Persianate texts of the seventeenth century is problematic. Specifically, as this book would demonstrate, in discussions of Iranian modernity, questions of origins of text are less crucial than determining to what extent these texts were integrated into particular intellectual movements at the time. It is not so much the origins that matter as the middle, the time and the place where these specific texts and kinds of knowledge became cultural factors in Iran's transformation. In other words, it is not just the production of knowledge that matters but also its consumption.

39. Ghanoonparvar, 35.
CHAPTER 2

1. Hayrmatnamah Persian, 182.
5. Ghanoospoovan, 21.
9. Tarakoli-Targhi, Refashioning Iran, 42-43.
14. For example, Mirza Firouz exclaims on the day that he finally goes to the English court: "Oh such women... I was in love with them all; they were all unequiled; I saw much flesh whiter than snow; eyes that killed; and teeth which smiled delight." James Justinian Morier, The Adventures of Hajj Baba of Isphahan in England: Revised, Corrected, and Illustrated with Notes and an Appendix by the Author (London: Bentley, 1850), 142.
15. Mahmud Mahmud, Tarikh-i rasavi-i siyasi 1-90.
16. Ibid., 91. The dismissal of Iliki's own narrative in favor of Morier's was common. The only biography of Iliki, written by the highly unreliable Ismail Ra'mi, freely uses Morier's fictional accounts as a biographical source especially in a chapter devoted to the Iliki's "love-making." See Ismail Ra'mi, Mirza Abu'l Hasan Khan Iliki (Tehran: Jadid, 1357/1978), 37-43.
17. The Persian chronicle Ikshir i-taravir claims that Hajji Ibrahim Khan began to say "baseless and inappropriate words" regarding Fath 'Ali Shah's actions and as a result was killed: 'Aliqi Mirza i-tzad al-Saltanah, Ikshir i-taravir: Tarikh-i Qajar-i qahza ta 1259 H., ed. Janshieh Kianfar (Tehran: Vismay, 1370/1991), 56.
18. These details are repeated in various sources including Morier's A Journey through Persia, Armenia, and Asia Minor to Constantinople, in the Years 1808 and 1809 (London: Longman, Hurst et al., 1812), 220-23, and various Persian chronicles.
19. There is a vast literature on this subject, most of which operate on the popular belief that (1) Iranians were duped in their relations with the French, British, and Russians, and (2) at the heart of these alliances and treaties lay the protection of British interests in India. See, for example, Sajjad Guliujzad Razi, Qajar-siyasi, Ingiliztan va qarudad-ha-yi isti'mar (Tehran: Markaz-i asnad-i Injilabi-i Islami, 1380/2001); R. K. Ramazani, The Foreign Policy of Iran, a Developing Nation in World Affairs 1500-1914 (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1966); Iradj Amini, Napoleon et la Perse; and Edward...

Harford Jones Bridges, An Account of the Transactions of His Majesty's Mission to the Court of Persia, in the Years 1807–11: To Which Is Appended, a Brief History of the Waubasy (London: J. Bohn, 1834), 228.

Mihdi Bamdad, Tarikhi-i Rijal-i Iran (1347/1968), 35.

James Braille Fraser, quoted in Isma'il Ra'īn, Mirza Abu al-Hasan Khan Ilchi.


Newspapers on the U.S. Eastern Seaboard replicated the English fascination with the Persian envoy, reporting his every move, albeit with more of a delay. For example, page 3 of The New York Spectator of August 25, 1810, quoted “London papers” of June 29 that “His Majesties Lord Board on the Lion man of war, at Portsmouth, on his return to Persia.”

Bamdad, 36.


For example, in describing a conversation between the Qajar representative Adjudanbashi and Lord Palmerston regarding Russia’s buying the loyalty of Qajar statesmen in 1838, Garmrudi (the subject of chapter 3), writes, “[1]t’s been more than twenty years that the glorious state of England pays a salary to the ex-minister of foreign affairs, Mirza Abu Hasan Khan, and to this day no other state has raised objection to this.” Sharh-i ma'arifat-i Adjudanbashi Husayn Khan Nizam al-Dawlah, 2nd ed., ed. Muhammad Mushiri (Tehran: Ashrafi, 2536/1977), 418.

My knowledge of this affair is based on a collection of letters housed in Mr. Farhad Hakimzadeh’s private library in London. These letters include a translation of Ilchi’s letter, Sir John Campbell’s defense of his conduct (including an attack in Ilchi’s character), and several other letters of support.


The reasons for the detour to Brazil have been often understood as the ship’s getting lost due to continuous bad weather. In “Die Brasilienreise” Kamran Ekbal argues that it was a deliberate ploy by the British to jump-start Perso-Portuguese relations as a way of combating Napoleon’s expanding domains. The complete version of Hayrtnamam, which includes the return trip from London to Iran, including the trip to Brazil, neither confirms nor rejects Ekbal’s theory. According to this version, the ship did encounter storms, rains, and many a windless days were spent on the equator. But also, there is no sense of surprise over landing in Brazil or the subsequent meeting with the Portuguese king. See Hajat Nama-i Safar, Patna, India, Khuda Baksh Library, Per MS HL-271 (hereafter, Hayrtnamam, Patna). My utmost gratitude to Mana Kia for obtaining a copy for me.

James Justinian Morier, A Second Journey through Persia, Armenia, and Asia Minor to Constantinople between the Years 1810 and 1816 (London: Longman, Hurst et al., 1818), 37.

William Ouseley, "Sir William Ouseley’s Travels to the East," Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine (April 1819), 531. I have not been able to verify this claim in any Persian sources.

Ilchi did not write an account of his second journey to Europe, but his visit was well documented in European newspapers at the time. One of the only English-language articles that deals with Ilchi’s second visit to England is Manuelchev M. Esakandari-Qajar, “The Story of the ‘Fair Circassian’ and Mirza Abu Hassan Khan Shirazi’s ‘Expo Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary’ of Fath Ali Shah Qajar to the Court of St. James’ Qajar Studies, Journal of the International Qajar Studies Association: Travellers and Diplomats in the Qajar Era” (2007): 61–78.


Haji Baba was translated into Russian by Osip Senkovski in the early 1830s. For more information on the impact of the novels in Russia and specifically on the “Oriental” writings of Pushkin, see Rachel Polonsky, "Haji Baba in St. Petersburg: James Morier, Osip Senkovski, and Pushkin’s Literary Diplomacy between East and West," Journal of European Studies 35, no. 3 (2005): 253–70.

While in The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Isfahan the character of Mirza Firouz is only introduced near the end, Morier brings him to the fore and fleshes out the similarities between him and Ilchi in the subsequent volume. See James Morier, The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Isfahan in England (London: John Murray, 1828). In this chapter, all references to this book are made to the 1850 edition.


According to Nasikh al-tavarikh, the second Perso-Russian wars were instigated by various religious figures who declared in a fatwa that “anyone who avoids a jihad with the Russians has disobeyed God and obeyed Satan.” Accordingly, upon hearing Ilchi and others’ objection, they “sent stern letters and said to them[,] you have weakened in your beliefs and in your religion or else would you disapprove of jihad against the infidels?” 236–66.

Both treaties stand in contemporary Iranian historiography as watershed moments where the shock of the loss of land, the heavy monetary burden they brought on, and the capitulations the treaties carried are seen as the impetus to modernize Iran, militarily and educationally. For a discussion of these treaties through the writings of a contemporary politician, see Abbas Amanat, “Russian Intrusion into the Guarded Domain: Reflections of a Qajar Statesman on European Expansion,” Journal of the American Oriental Society 113, no. 1 (1993): 35–56. For a more detailed discussion of boundary disputes in Qajar Iran, see Firoozeh Khamshani-Sabet, Frontier Fictions: Shaping the Iranian Nation, 1804–1946 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), 15–47.


Sipih, Nasikh al-Tavarikh, 2:601.
45. While it follows that lichi would have been scarred of reprisals from Qa'im Maqam for picking the wrong side, Siphr's paragraph seems to imply that lichi chose to side with Zill al-Sultan precisely because of his problems with Qa'im Maqam. One can speculate that the root of the disagreement lay in the opposing sides taken by the two statesmen over the renewal of hostilities with the Russians at the start of the second Perso-Russian war. For an examination of Qa'im Maqam's changing position vis-à-vis Russia, see 


47. Most manuscript copies of Hayratunamah end either before lichi's departure from London with Sir Gore Ouseley and his family from London or in the middle of their long and arduous trip back. However, is the beginning of all the copies of Hayratunamah, lichi states that the return from England was "by way of sea and land to dunya-yi nawa' [the New World] which in Turkish is called yingi dunya and in Farangi, America, and to the port of Bombay, which is one of India's ports and five years before this I had seen it while returning from the Bengal trip" (Hayratunamah Persian, 1). Hayratunamah, Patna, which is the most complete manuscript I have seen, confirms this.


49. Tavakoli-Targhi, Refashioning Iran, 42-43.


51. Mirza l'tsiam al-Din, Shuhuratamah-i vilayat, British Library Or 200.


53. This particular milieu has been described in more detail by Gulshan Khan, Indian Muslim Perceptions of the West during the Eighteenth Century (Kolkata: Oxford University Press, 1998).


56. C. E. Dubler, EI² s.v. "Aja'ib."

57. For more detailed accounts of Arab and Islamic geography in this period, see André Miquel, La géographie humaine du monde musulman jusqu'au milieu du 11e siècle: les travaux de Maqil Ahmad, Histoire d'Arab-Islamic Geography: 9th-16th Century A.D. (Maqriz Jordon: al-Bayt University, 1995); Kenneth Michael Barbour, The Geographical Knowledge of the Medieval Islamic World (London: Dept. of Geography, University College, 1973).


59. EI², s.v. "Aja'ib."


61. ibid, 79.

62. ibid, 81.

63. ibid, 90.

64. This was of particular interest to lichi because the entire journey had been set off by the French failure to uphold their alliance with the Qajars.
93. Ibid., 121.
94. Cloake translates it as: “How extraordinary that today’s newspaper will have no value tomorrow—except as toilet paper.” Hayruntunamah English, 26.
95. Ha‘iri, 288.
96. Hayruntunamah Persian, 147.
97. Hayruntunamah English, 83.
98. Ibid.
99. “His excellency has not availed himself of the Mussulman privilege which allows a plurality of wives…he has (we understand from good authority) but one wife and by her but one child.” Quoted in Tavakoli-Targhi, Refashioning Iran, 42.
100. Hayruntunamah English, 109; Hayruntunamah Persian 172.
101. Hayruntunamah English, 109; the Persian published version reports the same with insignificant variation.
102. Hayruntunamah Persian 172; not included in English translation.
103. Hayruntunamah English, 206.
104. Bu al-Ajab literally means “father of wonder.” According to Steingass it also means a buffoon or fool.
105. Hayruntunamah Persian, 266.
106. During this period, paper was being imported into Qajar Iran from India. Yves Portier, Painters, Paintings, and Books: An Essay on Indo-Persian Technical Literature, 12th–19th Centuries, trans. S. Butani (New Delhi: Centre for Human Sciences, 1994), 17.
107. Nile Green does a meticulous job of laying out in detail Mirza Salih’s gradual appreciation for the power of printing over the four years of his residence in England in “Journeymen, Middlemen.”
109. Ibid.
111. Ibid., 85.
112. Ibid.
113. Ibid., 86.
115. Ibid., English, 35; Ibid., Persian, 128.
116. Ibid.
117. Ibid.
118. Muhammad Hasan Kasravi, aql and Husain Ahmed eda, Asnadi az raavi n-i Iran va Far,tmilali, 1376/1997), 150–51.
119. Najmabadi notes that these presents also two poems composed by Fath ‘Ali Shah himself, Hasan Khan: “The head of the wise envoy that is, Abu al-Hasan Khan/Will touch the edge envoy to London/Thus he bestowed glory and victory upon the king of Christians.”
119. PRO, Letter from James Morier to Joseph Planta, May 1819, FO 60/15.
120. Tavakoli-Targhi, Refashioning Iran 41. Tavakoli-Targhi has a different take on Hayruntunamah: “Whereas in Europe Mirza Abu al-Hasan was taken as evidence of exotic Persia, back in Iran his eyewitness report became evidence of self-experience in Europe. The exotic Persian of London became the narrator of the tales of the exotic Farang.”
123. Ibid., 30.
127. Hayruntunamah Persian, 182.

CHAPTER 3

2. Ibid., 491.
4. Biographical information on Ajdandabhi is available in Qajar chronicles such as Naskh al-tavarikh and Tarikh-i muntazam-i Nasiri, in addition to the introductions of the published versions of Garmrudi’s travelogue later in this chapter. The Encyclopedia Iranica’s entry “Hosayn Khan Ajdandabhi” does a succinct job of pulling together these sources. Husayn Khan also plays a starring role in the case of Hajji ‘Abd al-Karim, a wealthy merchant who had lent money to Husayn Khan in 1847, and whose attempt to get repayment of his money led to the death of A. K. S. Lambton in “The Case of Hajji ‘Abd al-Karim: with interest has been examined by A. K. S. Lambton in The Study on the Role of the Merchant in Mid-nineteenth-century Persia,” Iran and Islam: In Memory of the Late Vladimir Minorsky, ed. C. E. Bosworth (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1971), 331–61.
5. Encyclopedia Iranica, s.v. “‘Abd-al-Fattah Garmrudi.”
7. Ibid.
9. Garmrudi recorded his administration of these areas in Safarnamah-i Masamani dar zamani-Muhammad Shah Qajar, Garmrudi op. cit.
10. Encyclopedia Iranica, s.v. “‘Abd-al-Fattah Garmrudi.”
11. All three texts—Chaharfasl, Geography, and Shahnsahnam—have been published in the above-cited collection. From here on forth, I will refer to them by their individual titles in the above-cited collection. From here on forth, I will refer to them by their individual titles in the above-cited collection.
13. Huma Natiq, Iran dar rah yabi farhangi 1834-1848 [The title on the back of the book: Fragner, Kathirat' inisil, 41-42; Wright, Persians, 103; Sipirh, Nasikh al-tavarih, 174].

14. Wright, Persians, 103.

15. Ibid, 102; Wright describes McNeill as "the leading protagonist of the anti-Russians in school," 103.

16. Ibid, 104. See pp. 102-10 for more details from the perspective of the British.


18. See chapter 2 for more information on the signing of the treaty.


20. Ibid. 498.


23. Wright, 106.


28. There is one book that studies the Muhammad Shah period as a whole: Huma Natiq, Iran dar rah yabi. Contemporary narratives about the period are scattered among various (Tehran: Pirut, 1334/1955); and Maqalat- i tariikh, Mahmud Mahmud, Tariikh- i ravabat- i san'at, A. K. S. Lampton, Encyclopaedia Iranica, s.v. "Muhammad Shah." Garmrudi, Safarnamah, 17.


30. Garmrudi, Safarnamah, 593.


32. In response to the murder of the Russian ambassador to Iran, Alexander Griboyedov in behalf of the Qajars. An account of that mission was recorded by Khissar Mirza's scribe 1829, Fath 'Ali Shah sent the prince Khissar Mirza to St. Petersburg to apologize on

60. I have used the English translation, Conrad Malte-Brun, A System of Universal Geography, or a Description of all the Parts of the World, on a New Plan, According to the Great Natural Divisions of the Globe, Accompanied with Analytical, Synopsis, and Elementary Tables, ed. James G. Percival, 3 vols. (Boston: Samuel Walker, 1834), 1:3.


63. Malte-Brun, 1:208.

64. Ibid., 1:209.

65. Ibid.


70. Rifā'ī al-Tahtawi, trans., al-Jughrasya al-tamumiyah (Bulaq: s.n., 1834 or 1838). The book begins with a short invocation of God and praise for the Egyptian sultan and states that it is a translation of The General Geography (al-Jughrasya al-tamumya), "which is famous in all the lands of the farang." While it is believed that Tahtawi translated four volumes, only volumes one and three have been published. In his travel account, Tahtawi reproduces a letter from Joseph-Iossaint Renaud (a pupil of De Sacy's) that inquires about the progress Tahtawi was making in his translation of the first volume of the Precis. Newman, 287 fns. 2–3.

71. Garmrudi, Safarnamah, 745, 795.

72. Shipheh, Nasikh al-tavarih, 96. This information is provided in Mush希ri, Sharh, 375.

73. Hidayat, Rawzat al-Safa, 15:8259.

74. Ibid., 15:8305.

75. Ibid., 15:8306.

76. Garmrudi, Safarnamah, 745.

77. Hidayat, Rawzat al-safa, 15:8307.

78. Ibid.


80. Garmrudi Safarnamah, 868.

81. Ibid., 836.

82. l'tizad al-Saltanah, Ikhar, 498–99.

83. Garmrudi, Safarnamah, 769.

84. Ibid., 770.

85. There is a discrepancy in the manuscripts. According to the editor, in the version that belongs to the Garmrudi family, Garmrudi writes that "it has been four years," but in the manuscript in the Majlis library, he states it has been several years.

86. Ibid., 776.

87. According to Huma Natiq, it was because of the debt incurred by the mission in Paris and not its failure that upon his return to Iran, Ajaldanbashi was punished by Muhammad Shah: Natiq, Iran dar ruyab, 91. Comte de Sercy, the French ambassador to Iran during Muhammad Shah's period writes in his memoirs that he had "heard" about Ajaldanbashi's bastardino although he draws no link between his punishment and the mission: Comte de Sercy, Une ambassade extraordinaire, 250–51.

88. Wright, Persians, 105.

89. See, for example, "Communications with Hossein Khan," which is the British scribe's account of the meeting between Ajaldanbashi and Palmerston. PRO, Memorandum of a Conference between the Right Honorable Viscount Palmerston and Hossein Khan, held in Stanhope Street, June 19, 1839, FO 881/746.

90. For a historical examination of the various meanings of private and public gift giving in Iran, see Ann Lambton, "Peshkash: Present or Tribute?" Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London 57, no. 1 (1994): 145–58. Lambton's article does not discuss the importance of gift exchanges as part of the diplomatic protocol during the Qajar period.

91. Garmrudi, Safarnamah, 749.

92. Ibid., 814.

93. Ibid. The expressions used in relation to the portrait are mulukkah and tamaqsha and are coupled with ziyarat—a word that is often used in relation to holy or sacred places.


95. Garmrudi, Safarnamah, 814.


97. There is a slight variation between the two texts. See Mush希ri, Sharh, 385; Garmrudi, Safarnamah, 826.

98. Mush希ri, Sharh, 332.

99. Ibid., 333. This entire entry is missing completely from Garmrudi's family manuscript and also that of the Majlis.

100. Shipheh, Nasikh al-tavarih, 73.

101. Ibid., 96.

102. Ibid., 98.

103. Garmrudi, Safarnamah, 943.


105. See Garmrudi, Safarnamah, 418–29, for an explanation of both the manuscript and the repre- sentation of Shohbahnah in addition to Fattahi's reprints of his own manuscript. He reproduces the Majlis manuscript on p. 948.

106. Ibid., 948–49.

107. Ismail Rahin quotes Garmrudi quite extensively in his two-volume book on freemasonry

108. Garmrudi, Safarnamah, 865.


110. Ibid.

111. Ibid., 465–66.

112. Garmrudi, Safarnamah, 949.
CHAPTER 4


4. In the beginning of his article on Nasir al-Din Shah in Germany in 1873, David Motevald shows how historians until recently have resisted using Nasir al-Din Shah's travels as sources for history focusing instead on their literary qualities. Using Nasir al-Din Shah's travels in Germany, Motevald then reads them from a historical perspective, concentrating on questions of alterity and gender. See David Motevald, "The German Other," 54–55.


7. Husayn Ladsump in his popular perspective: “It was in [Nasir al-Din Shah’s] time that the West’s colonial policies in Iran took root. Women, money and corruption—the main elements of colonialism—spread like a cancer among the ruling class.” Qiblah-i Islam: zindagi-i khvans-i Nasir al-Din Shah, 2nd ed. (Tehran: Dunya-yi Kitab, 1371/1992), 3. For cinematic examples, see Mohsen Makhmalbaf's Once Upon a Time, Cinema (1992), which looks at the assassination of the highly revered prime minister Amir Kabir; on the order of Nasir al-Din Shah, the monarchs (anachronistic) seduction by cinema. The popular television series, Sultan—i saltannameh (1976), by the late Ali Hatami also placed at its center Amir Kabir’s execution.


11. For more information, see Amatn, Pivot, 108–17. See also Amadis Yat, Amir Kha’ir.


15. Ibid., 409.

16. For a revisiion history of the Qajars from this perspective, see War and Peace in Qajar Persia.


18. Edward Granville Browne, A Year Amongst the Persians, 110. Browne goes on to speculate whether the mildness of Nasir al-Din Shah’s period was due to the pressures of European public opinion.

19. See, for example, Marashi’s chapter on the development of ceremonial practices during the Nasiri period, Marashi, Culturalizing Iran, 15–48. For a rare glimpse into popular books during the Qajar period, see Ulrich Marzelph, "Persian Popular Literature in the Qajar Period," Asian Folklore Studies 60, no. 2 (2001): 215–36. The images and articles in Royal Persian Paintings: The Qajar Epoch 1785–1925 reveal the richness of Qajar paintings both before and during the Nasiri period.


21. See also Encyclopedia Iranica, 6x, ‘Nasir al-Din Shah.’

22. Ezathar, Observations, 11.


24. See Encyclopedia Iranica, 6x, "Etehad al-Saltana, Mohammad Hasan Khan Moqaddam.


29. Ibid., 14, 7730.

30. Ibid., 14, 7741–744.


32. Ibid.


34. Amanat, Pivot, 418.


36. As quoted in Kashani-Sabet, Frontier Fictions, 38.

37. For a study of Najaf and Karbala during this period, see Meir Litvak, Shi'a Scholars of the Nineteenth Century: The Ulama of Najaf and Karbala (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Pages 170–73 discuss Nasir al-Din Shah's interactions with the Ulama during his 1870 visit.


39. Ibid., 11.

40. Sheikholeslami, 83–84.


42. Encyclopaedia Iranica, sv. "Nasir al-Din Shah."

43. Sheikholeslami, 83.

44. Pasai, Farsnamah, 835.

45. l'timad al-Saltanah, Kitab alma'sar va al-asar, 134.

46. Kashani-Sabet, Frontier Fictions, 73.

47. Ibid., 48.

48. Ibid., 63.

49. Ibid., 62.

Munzavi, Fihristvarah, 1:100.

Ibid., 1:136.

I have not found any French travelogues by the three British men nor any evidence that they made an expedition to the North Pole together. John Ross’s nephew, Sir John Clark Ross, served on an expedition with Edward Parry between 1819 and 1822, and John Ross was on one of the forty expeditions to find John Franklin in 1850 after his entire crew disappeared in 1847.


Munzavi, Fihristvarah, 1:135.


Le Tour du Monde was a popular French travel magazine published from 1860–1914.


Kianfar claims that the first book of geography to be translated during the Qajar period was the account of an 1816 mission from England to China that was translated in 1262/1846. We know that Garmrudi translated the geography book which he brought with him from Paris shortly after his return and included it in his account of travel. If Kianfar’s account is correct, it must mean that Garmrudi’s text was considered to be part of his travel account and not a separate work of translation, Jamshid Kianfar, “Tarjumah dar ‘ahd-i Nasiri,” Nashir-i dastan, 10, 1 (1386/1987), 23–28.


Ahsan, “Persian Travelogues,” 149.

“A‘yan al-Saltanah, 1:204.

Ibid., 1:216.

Ibid., 1:280.


Ibid., 194.

See chapter 2.

This is a translation of François de Salignac de la Mothe Fénélon’s roman a clef, Les aventures de Télémaque, written in 1699. According to Munzavi, there are two different periods. Munzavi, Fihristvarah, 1:302–3. According to Johann Strauss, Télémaque was well point of literary translation in Turkey. He also notes that it was serialized and translated in What in the Ottoman Empire (19th and 20th Centuries) “Arabic and Middle Eastern Lit-


Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar, Safar-i avval, 9.

Ibid., 90.

Ibid., 1.

PRO, William Taylour Thomson dispatch no. 8, April 17, 1873, FO 60/358.

Ibid.


The Cyclopedic Review of Current History, for example, prefaces Nasir al-Din Shah’s visit to England by noting that “after the treaty of peace in 1856, the Shah took a friendly attitude toward England and always maintained it, remaining neutral toward England and Russia.” Cyclopedic Review of Current History, ed. Alfred S. Johnson (Buffalo, N: Garretson, Cox & Co., 1897), 6:452.

According to Steingass’s Persian-English Dictionary, “mawadah dashtan” also means to “do commercial business.”

Nasir al-Din Shah, Safar-i avval, 12.

Ibid., Itmad al-Saltanah repeats these reasons for the king’s 1873 trip, writing that “in the year 1873, the prime minister [Mushtir al-Dawlah] in order to strengthen the foundation of unity between Iran and other states, saw it fit that [Nasir al-Din Shah] as part of his tour of Europe, go to European countries, take note of some of their customs so that more than Europe, go to European countries, take note of some of their customs so that more than Europe, etc.”}

90. Amanat, Pivot, 64.

Nasir al-Din Shah is widely believed to be one of the earliest Iranian photographers whose

91. Nasir al-Din Shah mentions hearing about the death of the Prince of Hanover when in Paris in Safar-i duvnam, 158.

92. Marashi, Nationalizing Iran, 12.


95. Diba, “Images of Power,” 44.

96. Amanat, Pivot, 64.

Nasir al-Din Shah is widely believed to be one of the earliest Iranian photographers whose


101. Hayatnamah English, 75.


104. Muhammad Hassan Khan Itimoal al-Saltanah, Ruznamah-e khatriat va Itimoal al-Saltanah,


107. According to Najmabadi, the Nasir court’s first gazette “was published as Ruznamah-i

108. According to Najmabadi, the Nasir court’s first gazette “was published as Ruznamah-i

109. According to Najmabadi, the Nasir court’s first gazette “was published as Ruznamah-i
changed to Raznamah-i vaqay'i-i ittifaqiyah, later renamed Raznamah-i dawlat-i 'aliya-i Iran, and finally just Iran, and Iran-i sultan." Women with Mustaches, 339.

110. Iran, 11 Zilqä'dah 1296/October 28, 1871.

112. Nasir al-Din Shah, Safar-i avval, 75.
117. Ibid, 10.
119. Ibid, 9.
121. Ibid, 2:179.
132. Ibid, 141.
135. Ibid.
137. For an analysis of the reasons why Iran did not erect a pavilion, despite its participation "lack through a combination of pressure by the umma on Nasir al-Din Shah for fear of the influence of the West on him," and the pro-British feelings of ministers in the Naqsh cabinet that did not encourage participation in a French exposition. Marashi mentions how "Mirza Hoseyn Khan and other reformers" pressed Nasir al-Din Shah to accept Napoleon III's invitation (which had prompted the Ottoman Sultan 'Abd al-Aziz to go to Europe) in the belief that "seen Paris would give the shah the necessary perspective to contrast Iran's position with that of the putatively more advanced West" but doesn't get into the details of why the king waited until 1873 to travel. Marashi, Nationalizing Iran, 21–22.
139. In the edited version of the text, the sentence is: "mis-id al-haliy-i shah-i Zanjan khamsh bis nazar aminad." Khamsh with a sin as is written in the text means "fifth" and as such the sentence would make no sense. Most likely what is meant here is khamsh with a sad, which means emancipated.
140. Ibid, 298.
141. Ibid, 299.
142. Ibid.
144. Celik, Displaying the Orient, 119.
147. Nasir al-Din Shah, Safar-i duvuum, 150.
148. Ibid, 151.
149. Ibid.
150. Ibid, 152.
151. Ibid.
152. Ibid, 154.
153. Ibid.
154. Ibid, 155.
155. Ibid.
156. Ibid.
158. Selim Deringil writes that the "occasion of the opening of the 1889 Paris Exposition was something of an embarrassment for the powers centenary of the French revolution was something of an embarrassment for the powers...still ruled by monarchies" to the extent that the Ottoman ambassador to Paris had instructed "to absent himself from the ceremonies. The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1768–1909 (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), 155.
160. Ibid. In the brief passage discussed above lies a tremendous amount of information in the terms of the relative evaluation of antiquity and the "privatization" of Iran's presence in the 1889 exhibition. A more detailed analysis is out of the purview of this book.
161. 'Itimad al-Saltanah, Raznamah-i khatirat, 750.
162. This was not limited to the nineteenth century. Most recently in an article in Slate on the Shanghai World Expo in 2010, Fred Bernstein asked, "So what is the United States planning for Shanghai at a time when the American image abroad needs all the help it can get?"
“The World without Us: The United States Can’t Afford to Snub the 2010 World Expo,”
163. PRO, W. Taylour Thomson to the Right Honorable Earl Granville, K. G., April 22, 1873,
FO 60/358.
164. Ibid.
165. PRO, Astrabad agent to Mr. Taylour Thomson, August 3, 1873, FO 60/358.
166. Nasir al-Din Shah, Safarnamah-i Haft Payarsh, 293.
167. It is crucial to keep in mind that the dates of the newspaper do not correspond to Nasir
al-Din Shah’s actual travel dates for the obvious reason that the newspaper was not pub-
lished daily but at approximately eleven-day intervals.
168. Nasir al-Din Shah, The Diary of His Majesty the Shah of Persia during His Tour through
Europe in A.D. 1873, trans. J. W. Redhouse (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street,
1874), vi.
169. Clearly, the notion of who/what is the “public” is an important question that needs
deliberate consideration. Here “public” is used simply to denote the audience of the
Iranian newspapers, which included the court, the reading public (who intersected with the
court), and, since some of these pronouncements were read aloud, an illiterate noncourtly
audience.
170. The first few travel accounts were published in English within a year of Nasir al-Din Shah’s
visits. See Redhouse’s The Diary of His Majesty, and A Diary Kept by His Majesty the
Shah of Persia during His Journey to Europe in 1878, trans. Albert Houtum Schnider and Baron
Louis de Norman (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1879). This translation specifically
indicates on the title page that it was translated from Persian “by special permission of
His Majesty.”
harvard.edu/pds/view/665028), for example, contains photographs he took as governor
of Maragha in 1879 and which he used to illustrate his diplomatic reports back to
Tehran. According to the album’s curator notes, this was encouraged by Nasir al-Din Shah.
172. Eco, Six Wicks, 61.

CHAPTER 5
1. Ibrahim Sahabzadi Tehrani, Safarnamah-i Ibrahim Sahabzad-i, ed. Muhammad Moshin
(Tehran: Tishk-i ma’alman va mutarjam-i Iran, 1357/1978), 96.
2. For a comprehensive study of Zill al-Sultan, see Heidi Walcher, In the Shadow of the King:
Zill al-Sultan and Isfahan under the Qajar (London: I. B. Tauris, 2008) and Abi al-Mahi
Raja, Tarikh-i taimiya-i Isfahan dar asr-i Zill al-Sultan, az ngibi-i raqmam-i-farangi-i Isfahan,
Isfahan: Davisheh-i Isfahan, 1338/2004). Zill al-Sultan has left behind a diary/travelogue
University Press, 1983) remains a classic meditation on how the technological and cul-
tural changes in Europe changed one’s understanding of time and space in this period.
For there seems to be a dearth of scholarship on the specific ways in which technological
on a cultural level. For a recent monograph on time and globalization, see Vanessa Ogle,
5. Muhammad Ali Mahallati (Hajj Sayyah), Khattat-i Hajj Sayyih ya damrah-ye khawaf va
Sayyih and His Travel Writing,” in Narrated Space in the Literature of the Islamic World,
ed. Roxane Haag-Hughesi and Christina Szyszka (Wienbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2001),
151.
8. See fn. 1.
192. The italics in Tarikh-i Na’in overlap with Tarik-4 al-haq-i (see next fn.) and repeats
verbatim the short paragraph l’imad al-Saltana wrote on Pirzadah in al-Masir.
10. Iran Afshari’s introduction to the two-volume travelogue in addition to following on these
texts also includes conversations with the Hajj’s son, Nayar al-Din Pirzadah. See Pirzadah,
Safarnamah, one sixty-two. There is also a short entry on him in Encyclopedia Iranica,
sa’d al-Hajj Pirzadah.”
14. Pirzadah, Safarnamah, 1:14. See also Mabudi Bedar, Saihd i rudaqul-Iran: dar grandma
12 va 13 va 14 hijri (Tehran: Zavvar, 1363/1984), 1:14-15 and Khan Malak Sasan,
17. ‘Imad al-Saltana, al-Masir, 203.
18. Fasi, Farnamah-i Na’in, 2:995.
19. Pirzadah, Safarnamah, 1:3.
21. Mu’ayyid al-Mulk was one of the few Shirazi families who replaced the traditional wooden
roof of his house with iron as was the custom in Europe. Fasi, Farnamah-i Na’in, 2:910.
22. Ibid., 1:33–38.
23. Ibid., 1:85.
24. Pirzadah’s accompanying of Mu’ayyid al-Mulk to Europe seems to follow the familiar pat-
ttern of Saihd i rudaqul-Iran, or “formal friendship” and that of the rajab, whereby “people
had a deep sense of belonging to a group, large or small but each individual traveler was
specifically referred to in groups, large or small but each individual traveler was
participants in a larger whole the responsibility that the relationship was
with another one by far-reaching bonds of mutual responsibility” Shalom
1971, 487. Many thanks can be traced to Manu die for
drawing my attention to this.
25. Sahabzadi, 96.
26. Steingass, A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary ed. to his father Aliquai Khan, whom
27. According to Bedar, Husayn Qoli Khan became deputy to his father Aliquai Khan, who
29. Ibid., 1:28.
30. Ibid., 1:181.
31. Ibid., 2:42.
32. Ibid., 1:281.
33. Ibid., 1:282.
34. Ibid., 1:280.
35. Ibid., 1:281.
36. Ibid., 1:168.
37. Ibid., 1:171.
38. Ibid., 1:187.
41. Amanat, Pivot of the Universe, 430.
44. It seems Ibrahim Sahaibashi had been confused with another Sahaibashi, who, according to Hidayar, had been sent to Europe to study during Nasir al-Din Shah’s time and who had returned “speaking Persian with a French accent.” This latter Sahaibashi was banished by l’u’zad al-Saltanah so as to speak correctly. Hidayar, Khatrav va khatarat, 53-54. In the introduction to Ibrahim Sahaibashi’s travelogue, Mushtari quite rightly notes that most likely this was another character as Ibrahim Sahaibashi in his travels expresses frustration at not knowing French. Sahaibashi, Safarnamah, 9-10.
45. Sahaibashi, 21.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid., 37.
48. Ibid., 42.
49. Ibid., 46.
50. Ibid., 48.
51. Ibid., 46.
52. Ibid., 48.
54. The various meanings and changes in meanings of &vam have been amply described in the context of the development of the nation in turn of the century Iran. See, for example, Afshan Najmabadi, “Vatan the Beloved; Vatan the Mother,” in Women with Mustaches.
58. Both of Nasir al-Din Shah’s ambassadors were non-Muslim. Malkam Khan was Armenian then in St. Petersburg where he was in the service of the Iranian ambassador to Russia, Paris, and in 1873, he became the chargé d’affaires in Baku, Rijal-i Iran, 4:387-90.
59. A reference to the Mahdist state in Sudan (1881-1898) and the Anglo-Sudan war that led to the victory of the British in the hands of Herbert Kitchener. The Mahdist forces at this time were also known as the Dervishes. See P. M. Holt, The Mahdist State in the Sudan, 1881-1898: A Study of Its Origins, Development, and Overthrow (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).
60. Pirzadah, Safarnamah, 1:295.
61. Author of the travelogue recording the 1856 diplomatic mission to Europe, Makhzan al-vasayi.
63. Ibid., 2:340.
64. Ibid., 1:198.
65. Ibid., 1:206.
66. Ibid., 1:182.
67. This issue of tipping the cleaning staff comes up again in l’u’zad al-Saltanah’s Sadr al-tavarikh when he writes that during Nasir al-Din Shah’s 1878 trip, when Mushtari al-Dal- wah collected money from Nasir al-Din Shah’s retinue to tip the hotel staff, he would pocket half of it, giving the staff the other half. Sadr al-tavarikh, 275.
68. Pirzadah, Safarnamah, 1:259.
69. Ibid., 1:315.
70. The creation of porcelain factories was one of the modernization projects of the court (as seen in the example of Bajir Khan being sent by the prime minister, Amin al-Sultan) and merchants such as Hajji Muhammad Hasan Amin al-Zarb. Amin al-Zarb’s success is visible in Europe during Pirzadah’s time there to negotiate the purchase of a railway in Iran. According to Pirzadah, he had set off from Iran with al-Afghani, whom he had left in Russia, and had gone to Belgium to find investors in the railway. His negotiation had fallen through, and he had arrived in Paris. Pirzadah in his travels devotes a poem to Amin al-Zarb, singing the merchant’s praise and noting that “if he builds an chemin de fer in Iran/all of Iran would benefit.” Pirzadah, 2:12 and 2:38-39. For a biography of Amin al-Zarb, see Shireen Mahdavi, For God, Mammon, and Country: A Nineteenth Century Persian Merchant, Haj Muhammad Hassan Amin al-Zarb (1834-1898), (Boulder, Co: Westview Press, 1999).
72. Ibid., 2:29.
73. Ibid., 1:247.
74. Ibid., 1:249.
75. Ibid.
76. Sahaibashi, 89.
77. Ibid.
78. Iran Afshar, "Edward Browne va Hajj Pirzadah-1 Na’imi."
79. Ghanoooparvar, In a Persian Mirror, 29.
80. On the topic of gender and Qajar travelers to Europe, see the works of Mohammad Tavakoli-Targhi and Afshan Najmabadi. Specifically, for the former, "Eroticizing Europe," koli-Targhi and Afshan Najmabadi, Women of the West Imagined: The Farangi Other and the Emergence of the Women “Women of the West Imagined: The Farangi Other and the Emergence of the Women, Women with Mustaches, especially chapter two, 98-120. For the latter, see Afshari, Women with Mustaches, especially chapter two, 98-120.
81. Pirzadah, Safarnamah, 1:286.
82. Ibid., 2:405.
83. Ibid., 2:4.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid., 2:5.
CONCLUSION

2. Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, Frontier Fictions, 85.
4. Ulrich Marzolph’s frustration in 2001 about the lack of “bibliographical information” regarding book production in the Qajar era still holds. Marzolph, 220.

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