Lingwood, Chad G.
Politics, Poetry, and Sufism in Medieval Iran: New Perspectives on Jāmī's Salāmān va Absāl.

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In his engaging and insightful reappraisal of Jāmī's allegorical romance *Salāmān va Absāl*, Chad Lingwood offers a contextualised interpretation and translation of this enigmatic tale, which on its surface concerns the amorous relationship between a young prince and his wet-nurse. Previous studies have concentrated on the mystical dimension of the romance. Lingwood's study, however, portrays *Salāmān va Absāl* as a mirror for princes, imbued with a symbolism that operates on three distinct yet interrelated levels of meaning: an ethical-political level, a mystical level and a historical level. Notwithstanding Jāmī's residence in Timurid Herat, Lingwood relates the themes and protagonists of *Salāmān va Absāl* to particular individuals and events at the Aqquyunlu court of Yaʿqūb b. Ūzūn Ḥasan in Tabriz, the Aqquyunlu capital since 873/1468. This approach yields, among other insights, a revised dating for the text's composition: whereas earlier studies have taken *Salāmān va Absāl* to represent Jāmī's gift to Yaʿqūb, to whom it is dedicated, on the occasion of the ruler's coronation in 885/1480, Lingwood argues persuasively for its composition between 893/1488, the year of Yaʿqūb's repentance of his addiction to wine and his public commitment to abstinence, and 895/1490, the year of the ruler's death.

The book consists of an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion and two appendices. The first chapter presents Lingwood's leading primary sources. Lingwood provides a synopsis of *Salāmān va Absāl*, discusses the story's provenance, and traces the appearances of its two major protagonists, Salāmān and Absāl, in earlier literature, notably in the writings of Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Ṭufayl. The second part of the chapter addresses the principal literary materials that provide the context for Lingwood's analysis of *Salāmān va Absāl*. He introduces, on the one hand, the Persian genre of the mirror for princes, with particular reference to examples that reflect a Sufi orientation; and on the other hand, the historiographical sources relevant to the reign of Yaʿqūb. It is chiefly within the frameworks of these two bodies of literature that Lingwood interprets Jāmī's romance in his subsequent chapters.

The second chapter identifies a number of ideas characteristic of Persian mirrors for princes and situates *Salāmān va Absāl* within this literary genre. Particularly relevant in this regard are the *Aḫlāq-i Jalālī* of Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī, composed in an Aqquyunlu context, and the writings of Ḥusayn Vāʿiẓ Kāšifī, especially his *Aḫlāq-i Muḥsinī*, dedicated to the Timurid Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bāyqarā and his son Abū l-Muḥsin Mīrzā on the occasion of the latter's repentance from the drinking of wine in Herat. By reference to these writings, Lingwood evokes a literary-cultural context for Jāmī's composition, in which he demonstrates the intersection of the Persian mirror literature and the mystical language characteristic of Sufi writings; for example, he identifies the allegorical appearance in *Salāmān va Absāl* of essential components of the mystical path, such as repentance (*tawba*) and the subjugation of the carnal soul (*nafs*).

The third chapter addresses the religious and political influences of Sufis at the Aqquyunlu courts of Ūzūn Ḥasan and Yaʿqūb, with particular attention to Khalvati and Naqshbandi figures. With reference to literary and historical materials, Lingwood likens the relationship between Jāmī and Yaʿqūb to that of *pīr* and *murīd*. As Yaʿqūb's father Ūzūn Ḥasan had supported mystics of various allegiances in his cultivation of the image of a worthy ruler, Yaʿqūb too projected his associations with dervishes in laying claim to political legitimacy. Lingwood finds that while the Khalvati order retained its established prominence during the reign of Yaʿqūb, individual members of the Naqshbandi order, pre-eminent in the Timurid domains by the second half of the fifteenth century, also possessed considerable authority at the Aqquyunlu court. A number of Naqshbandi teachers resided in Tabriz for certain periods, and the Naqshbandi ʿAbd al-Vahhāb held the office of Yaʿqūb's *šayḫ al-Islām*. When in 891/1486 Yaʿqūb, in a moment of drunken anger, instigated the killing of Darvīš Qāsim, a prominent Naqshbandi, he substantially alienated the people of Tabriz, a rupture resolved only with Yaʿqūb's public repentance from wine and his prohibition of its consumption among the city's residents. This episode provided the setting for Yaʿqūb's correspondence with Jāmī, who, in offering Yaʿqūb advice, refrained from addressing the Aqquyunlu ruler with the conventional string of praiseworthy epithets that he had employed in his correspondence with his father Ūzūn Ḥasan.

The fourth chapter relates *Salāmān va Absāl* to the Persianate literary milieu of fifteenth-century Tabriz, and links it with the poetry of Ahlī Šīrāzī, Bābā Fiġānī and other poets who enjoyed the patronage of Yaʿqūb and his vizier Qāżī ʿĪsā Sāvajī. Lingwood's point of departure in this chapter is the supposition that Yaʿqūb's murder of Darvīš Qāsim demonstrated

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his need for self-restraint, and that when Jāmī's *Salāmān va Absāl* arrived at the Aqquyunlu court, it is likely to have been perceived as a mirror for princes designed for Yaʿqūb's edification. Lingwood traces correspondences between the major protagonists in *Salāmān va Absāl* and historical individuals at Yaʿqūb's court: Salāmān represents Yaʿqūb, wine is personified in Absāl, the king of Greece represents the ideal of kingship, the sage represents Qāżī ʿĪsā Sāvajī. He further proposes that members of the Aqquyunlu royal household would have interpreted Jāmī's depiction of the forbidden relationship between Salāmān and his wet-nurse, Absāl, as an allusion to the politically unacceptable relationship between Qāżī ʿĪsā and Yaʿqūb's sister. With reference to several other poetic works written for Yaʿqūb, Lingwood suggests the particular meanings likely to have adhered to terms and phrases in Jāmī's allegory in the context of the Aqquyunlu court at this time.

The fifth chapter offers a theosophical interpretation of *Salāmān va Absāl*. In Lingwood's interpretation, Salāmān embodies the union of the opposed forces of reason and love: he undergoes a transformation from carnal to spiritual, a process that culminates in his inheritance, after Absāl's death, of his father's throne. Throughout his book, Lingwood alerts his readers to Jāmī's echoing of Rūmī's *Maṯnavī*, the metre of which the later poet adopted in *Salāmān va Absāl*. In this chapter, Lingwood explores this inter-textuality in greater detail; he traces Jāmī's numerous allusions to Rūmī's poetry, and explores the correspondences between the *Maṯnavī*'s opening tale and *Salāmān va Absāl*. He also discerns allusions in *Salāmān va Absāl* to Ibn al-ʿArabī's explication of three kinds of love. From this discussion *Salāmān va Absāl* appears as an 'allegory of ideas', in which Jāmī alludes to distinctive Naqshbandi doctrines and techniques, such as silent *ẕikr*, the practice of fixing the image of the shaykh in the heart, and the shaykh's ability to concentrate and deploy his spiritual energy (*himmat*). At the same time, *Salāmān va Absāl* is, as Lingwood argues further, a 'historical allegory', in which the characters and their actions represent specific historical figures and events.

The first appendix that follows Lingwood's multi-faceted study is a translation of Jāmī's epistolary reply to Yaʿqūb. The second appendix consists of a translation of *Salāmān va Absāl*, which runs to 1,130 couplets. Lingwood's translation possesses the virtues of clarity, consistency and accessibility, and conveys the instructive tone of Jāmī's narratives. Readily comprehensible to the reader who lacks access to the Persian text, the translation remains recognisable to the reader who knows Persian and wishes to gain an impression of the original.

In places, the book possesses a slightly diffuse quality that is perhaps inevitable in a study of a text that integrates several levels of meaning and employs simultaneously a plurality of symbolic systems. It is challenging to divide, for purposes of explication and analysis, materials that are presented as a complex interrelated organic unity. The repetition of certain points and the treatment of parts of a theme across several different chapters make it somewhat more difficult for the reader to grasp their full significance at any given point. Readers will benefit, however, from the excellent and detailed index, which greatly enhances the book's usefulness to a broad audience.

In short, Lingwood's study of *Salāmān va Absāl* represents a valuable and significant contribution to many areas of scholarly interest. In *Politics, Poetry, and Sufism* he develops the approach of Maria Eva Subtelny, whose studies of Kāšifī's *Aḫlāq-i Muḥsinī* have similarly demonstrated a complex interplay of ethical-political, mystical and historical meanings. Indeed, Lingwood adds to the growing number of studies that demonstrate the specificity of mirrors for princes, notwithstanding the camouflage within which they often appear. By reference to contemporary and near-contemporary writings in various genres, he shows by the example of *Salāmān va Absāl* the precise meanings that mirrors carried for their audiences, regardless of the timeless and universal appearance of many of the materials deployed in their presentation. By means of a thorough, careful and thoughtful study of an important work of Persian poetry, Lingwood sheds light on numerous aspects of the milieu for which it was written.

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