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ILLUSTRATED EXEMPLARY TALES: A NINETEENTH  
CENTURY EDITION OF THE CLASSICAL PERSIAN  
PROVERB COLLECTION *JĀME<sup>c</sup> AL-TAMSIL*<sup>1</sup>

Anyone looking for reliable general information on Persian proverbs in the standard source of reference for matters concerning the world of Islam, the *Encyclopædia of Islam*, will doubtless gain the impression that even though the Persian language is "extremely rich in idioms and proverbial expressions", and Persian literature "abounds in proverbial material", neither the Persians themselves nor Western orientalist researchers have done much to explore, catalogue, systematize, or analyze the available material. The short article on Persian proverbs in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, just over one column in length<sup>2</sup> (as compared to more than two columns allotted for Turkish proverbs,<sup>3</sup> and almost twenty columns for Arabic proverbs<sup>4</sup>) is a cursory, though sympathetic survey containing all but commonplace statements and a moderate number of not altogether irrelevant bibliographical references.

Persian studies lack a dedicated proverb scholar like Rudolf Sellheim, who has developed the neighboring field of classical Arabic proverb-studies<sup>5</sup>. Moreover, western proverb scholars lack awareness of the large number of major efforts that have been conducted by Iranian scholars, both in the areas of literature and folklore.<sup>6</sup> Milestones of Iranian paremiological research include the learned °Ali-Akbar Dehkhodā's monumental compilation *Amsāl va hekām* (Proverbs and proverbial sayings), first published in Teheran 1304—1311/ 1925— 1932;<sup>7</sup> Amir-Qoli Amini's *Dāstānhā-ye amsāl* (The Stories of proverbs), a work whose publication due to political circumstances was delayed for 25 years before it eventually could be presented to the public in 1324/1945 (second edition 1333/1354, third enlarged edition 1351/1972); and Seyyid Abol-Qāsem Enjavi Shirāzi's *Tamsil va-masāl* (Proverbial expressions and proverbs), whose first volume, published in 1352/ 1973 (second enlarged printing 2537/ 1978), was later supplemented by a second volume com-

piled by one of Enjavi's former students, Seyyid Ahmad Vakiliyān (1366/ 1987). While Deh-khodā's compilation predominantly draws on literary sources with only secondary reference to popular literature and oral tradition, both the pioneer Amini's and the folklorist Enjavi's studies<sup>8</sup> are most profitable for appreciating the role and function of Persian proverbs in context: They supplement the bare mention of particular proverbs with tales which are connected with the genesis of or which are otherwise related to the proverb, thus in many cases explaining the indigenous interpretation of the proverb's actual use. Both, Enjavi and Vakiliyān profit from the texts available in the large folklore archive established by Enjavi,<sup>9</sup> which have been collected from contemporary oral tradition. In order to avoid overstressing individual interpretations, they even quote differing or competing versions of the proverbs and their tales, in addition to supplying full data on their origin. Some of the subsequent Persian publications followed Amini's lead, such as Mortazaviyān in *Dāstānhā-ye amṣāl* (The Stories of proverbs, Esfahan 1340/1961), Yahyā Borqā'i in *Kāveshi dar amṣāl va hekam-e fārsi* (An Investigation into Persian proverbs and wise sayings; Teheran 1351/1972) or Mehdi Partovi Amoli in *Rishehā-ye tārikhi-ye amṣāl va hekam* (The historical roots of proverbs and proverbial sayings; Teheran 1353/1974, second printing 1369/ 1990, prefaced by Enjavi). Most of the currently available publications, however, are mere alphabetical listings of proverbs, sometimes enhanced by short explanations, a type of dictionary for which Moḥammad °Ali Jamālzāde's *Farhang-e loḡhāt-e °ammīyāne* (A Dictionary of popular expressions; ed. by Moḥammad Ja°far Maḡjub, Teheran 1341/1962) and Amir-Qoli Amini's *Farhang-e °avāmm* (A Dictionary of the popular [language]; Teheran n. d.) paved the way. Extensive documentations of this type include Amir Mas°ud Khodāyār's *Andarzhā va maṣalḡhā-ye moṣṡalah dar zabān-e fārsi* (Wise counsels and idiomatic proverbs in the Persian language; Teheran 1364/1985), the social historian Ja°far Shahri's *Qand va namak: Zarbol-maṣalḡhā-ye tehrāni* (Sugar and salt: Proverbs from Teheran; Teheran 1370/1991), Raḡim °Afifi's *Maṣalḡhā va hekmathā dar āṣār-e shā°erān-e qarn-e sevvom tā yāzdahom-e hejri* (Proverbial expressions and wise sayings in Persian poetry of the tenth through eighteenth centuries; Teheran 1371/1992) and the Khorāṣāni folklorist Ebrāhīm Shakurzāde's *Da hezār maṣal-e fārsi* (Ten Thousand Persian proverbs; Mashhad 1372/1993). Besides, a large number of fairly uncritical listings of proverbs has been published in recent years, such as Ṣādeq Azimi's *Farhang-e maṣalḡhā va eṣṡelāḡāt-e motadāvel dar zabān-e fārsi* (A

Dictionary of proverbs and common expressions in the Persian language; London 1369/ 1990, second printing Teheran 1373/1994) or Mehdi Soheili's *Zarbol-maṣālahā-ye ma'ṛuf-e Irān* (Popular Persian proverbs; Teheran 1373/1994).

The large number of Persian monograph and article publications<sup>10</sup> in the field is sharply contrasted by the few publications in European languages. L. P. Elwell-Sutton's booklet *Persian Proverbs* (London 1954) is still very useful, all the more so since its author combined his folklorist expertise with a casually convincing introduction into the cultural background of the proverbs; besides, Khaleq Koroghly's Russian book *Persidskie posloviy, pogovorki i krylatye slova* (Persian proverbs, sayings, and proverbial expressions; second enlarged printing Moscow 1973) and Luigi Bonelli's *Deti proverbiali persiani* (Rome 1941) must be mentioned. As for books prepared by Persian publishers and scholars, S. Haïm's *Persian-English Proverbs* (Teheran 1956) has long remained standard. Recently, Ahmad Abrishami has presented a number of similar publications, devoting particular efforts to a comparative perspective.<sup>11</sup>

One of the rare attempts to explore the historical depth of Persian proverb lore is the bibliographical survey appended to Ḥamid Izadpanāh's regional survey *Dāstānha va zabānzadhā-ye lori* (Tales and colloquial phrases from Lorestan; Teheran 1362/ 1983), in which the author lists some 60 works of varying relevance for proverb studies compiled from the thirteenth century up to his day. The fifth and sixth items in his list mention two proverb collections by a certain Moḥammad °Ali Hablerudi.<sup>12</sup> This early seventeenth century author, who is disregarded by most surveys of Persian literature,<sup>13</sup> deserves more than a cursory mention. As a matter of fact, he is credited with compiling the major classical collection of Persian proverbs and thus inaugurating the discipline of Persian paremiological research at a comparatively early date. About Hablerudi's life and circumstances little more is known than that he probably originated from Māzanderān, a region in Northern Iran.<sup>14</sup> Similar to other compatriots, as a mature man he appears to have been attracted by the contemporary Muslim Indian civilization, in which Persian was the language of court and literature. Hablerudi himself mentions that he compiled his books during the reign of the ruler °Abdallāh Quṭbshāh (ruled 1035/ 1626— 1083/ 1674) while residing in the Deccan kingdom of Golkondā, which was situated in the vicinity of the present South Indian city of Haiderabad.

Hablerudi's first collection, *Majma' al-amṣāl* (A collection of proverbs) was compiled in 1049/1639. The work has been edited by Ṣādeq Kiyā (Teheran 1344/1965) and in fact up to the present day constitutes the only available critical edition of a proverb compilation from classical Persian literature. As the author states in his preface, he owes the idea of compiling a proverb collection to participating in a learned conversation in which mention was made of the fact that the Safavid ruler Shāh °Abbās (who was of Turkish origin) had given order to compile a collection of Turkish proverbs. When the host of the literary assembly in which the discussion was held, the vazir Moḥammad al-Khātun, observed that Persian proverbs should also be compiled, Hablerudi volunteered to comply with his request. Being the first scholar to do so, he assembled as many proverbs as available to him and eventually compiled them in an alphabetically arranged collection. In this way he prepared his first work, which in Kiyā's edition lists close to 2,100 proverbs (taking into account variant readings and additions from different manuscripts examined).

Hablerudi himself must already have been aware of the fact that the task of mere documentation was only a first step, since many of the proverbs without further explanation were hard to understand and were likely to become altogether unintelligible with the passing of time. Accordingly, his next step was to elaborate and expand on his first work, adding to many proverbs the stories which were connected with their use. The ensuing work, now entitled *Jāme' al-tamṣil* or *Majma' al-tamāsil* (both titles mean more or less "A collection of proverbs"), was achieved in 1054/1644. Though the book, according to Kiyā's enthusiastic assessment, probably constitutes the most often printed book in the Persian language,<sup>15</sup> no reliable modern print nor critical edition are available. Manuscripts of both works are numerous, the eldest one dating from the seventeenth century,<sup>16</sup> yet the *Jāme' al-tamṣil* still today is primarily available in the cheap and uncritical prints produced for the offer of Bazaar bookstalls, sidewalk peddlers and itinerant merchants.<sup>17</sup> As for the large number of prints mentioned by Kiyā, it must be kept in mind that printing in Iran was only introduced in the first half of the nineteenth century<sup>18</sup> and that after a short period of printing in movable type most books well into the twentieth century were produced in lithograph technique.<sup>19</sup> Most references mention the first print of the *Jāme' al-tamṣil* as dating from the year 1278/1861,<sup>20</sup> but already the comprehensive bibliography of Persian printed books compiled by Khānbābā Moshār quotes an edition published two years earlier in

1276/1859.<sup>21</sup> At this point, it might also be useful to mention that the bibliographical documentation of early nineteenth century printed books in Iran still today is in a highly unsatisfactory stage, and probably will remain so, since many of the books produced then are not available any more. Many books, and especially those of an entertaining character, did not belong to the range of topics normally collected in the libraries of scholars or institutions; others were simply enjoyed and read until they literally fell apart and were eventually disposed of. In any case, lithograph editions would ordinarily produce only between 300 to 500 copies before the etchings on the stone surface wore out. Considering these facts, the status of some rare lithograph editions comes close to that of a manuscript. At any rate, the present author has succeeded in tracing at least three editions prior to the one mentioned by Moshār, the earliest one—which most probably constitutes the *editio princeps*—dating from the year 1269/1852<sup>22</sup> (later editions dated 1273/1856<sup>23</sup> and 1275/1858<sup>24</sup>).

As a matter of fact, the *Jāme<sup>c</sup> al-tamṣil* is more than just an elaborated version of the previous *Majma<sup>c</sup> al-amṣāl*. Actually, it must be regarded as an altogether different work, even though its initial idea originated from the previous study. In contrast to the additive technique of the *Majma<sup>c</sup> al-amṣāl*, the *Jāme<sup>c</sup> al-tamṣil* does not simply add stories to the proverbs wherever feasible, but only offers a choice of proverbs. These are arranged alphabetically in 28 chapters (*bāb*),<sup>25</sup> while specific topics are dealt with more extensively in separate paragraphs (*faṣl*). These elaborations (on *bokhl*/stinginess, *tavakkol*/trust in God, *ṣavāb*/religious reward etc.) stress the essential moral quality of Hablerudi's work, which is further underlined by the interpretative summaries added to many stories, expressly reading "I have quoted this proverb in order to make you [the reader] understand that ...". Within this framework, somewhat reminiscent of the European catalogues of virtues and vices, Hablerudi quotes a large number of stories of folklorist relevance,<sup>26</sup> such as the Oriental versions of the king for a year who provides for the future (Mot. J 711.3; pp. 14—16),<sup>27</sup> or of the man in the pit surrounded by perils who is consoled by a trifle (Mot. J 861.1; 41—42), both known from the stock of wisdom literature popular in the West under the name of *Barlaam and Josaphat*.<sup>28</sup>

Besides a large number of moralizing or edifying stories taken from Persian or Arabic literature, internationally documented tales of the *Jāme<sup>c</sup> al-tamṣil* comprise AT 976: *Which Was the Noblest Act?* (49—55),<sup>29</sup> AT 960 A: *The Cranes of Ibykus* (56—57),<sup>30</sup> Mot.

L 315.5: *Lark Causes Elephant to Fall over Precipice* (89—91), AT 888 A\*: *The Basket-maker* (132—140),<sup>31</sup> AT 1286 A: *Fatal Killing of the Insect* (177—179),<sup>32</sup> AT 155: *The Ungrateful Serpent Returned to Captivity* (179—183), AT 1510: *The Matron of Ephesus (Vidua)* (201—203), Mot. J 1152: *Witness Cannot Speak Language of Accusation: Discredited* (214—217), AT 881: *Oft-proved Fidelity* (218—228), AT 150: *Advice of the Fox [Bird]* (281—284),<sup>33</sup> Mot. J 816.1: *King Brought to Sense of Duty by Feigned Conversation of Birds* (290—291),<sup>34</sup> AT 567: *The Magic Bird-heart* (329—334), AT 934 A: *Predestined Death* (339), AT 1525 K: *Ubiquitous Beggar* (341—350),<sup>35</sup> AT 1351: *The Silence Wager* (359—363),<sup>36</sup> AT 2031 C: *The Man Seeks the Greatest Being as a Husband for His Daughter* (377—379), AT 916 (c): *The Falcon (Horse) and the Poisoned Water* (413),<sup>37</sup> AT 178 A: *Llewellyn and His Dog (The Brahman and the Mongoose)* (415—416).<sup>38</sup> The link between a story and a specific proverb or proverbial expression is not always a close one. Often, and increasingly so towards the latter half of the book, the author quotes stories in connection with a certain range of proverbs or a specific theme. In this way, the *Jāme<sup>c</sup> al-tamsil* not only constitutes a unique indigenous compilation, but also an important document for the international dissemination of popular tales.

The above mentioned arguments predominantly serve as a short introduction to an important proverb study for scholars not commanding its original language. However, the main intention of this essay lies in presenting a specific edition of the book under consideration, an edition that not only combines proverbs with tales but also adds illustrations.

Most of the Iranian (as opposed to the Indian) prints of the *Jāme<sup>c</sup> al-tamsil* are illustrated, containing a minimum of 8 illustrations (editions dated 1321/1903 and 1333/1914). While lithograph printing in Iran was primarily employed to reproduce texts in a manner close to the handwriting of a manuscript, publishers had soon become aware of the possibility to combine writing and illustration. As of 1259/1843, the date of the first illustrated Persian lithographed book, a large number of literary works incorporating illustrations was produced. Most of these books contained highly appreciated popular reading matter, such as the Persian classics by Ferdousi, Nezāmi, or Saʿdī, the epics on Alexander (*Eskandar-nāme*) or his Islamic equivalent Ḥamza (*Ḥamze-nāme*); besides, narratives of the chapbook variety or those treating the religious tragedies of early Islamic days were published.<sup>39</sup> Judging from the large

number of lithograph prints documented, the *Jāme° al-tam̄sil* in the nineteenth century certainly constituted a widely read book, though it probably did not exceed the popularity of the Persian national epic, Ferdousi's *Shāhnāme* (of which about 30 different lithographed editions were published).

Lithograph printing enabled publishers to produce books at comparatively reasonable prices, as compared to the costly and often extremely precious manuscripts commissioned by the royal family or other wealthy patrons. In contrast, lithograph books were of a modest quality. Moreover, the more books were sold, the sooner they were produced again to satisfy demand, and the more their quality decreased. In a retrospect view, this mechanism elucidates why the earliest known print of the *Jāme° al-tam̄sil* (1269/ 1852) at the same time contains both the largest amount of illustrations in all known editions (numbering altogether 33 items), as well as the highest quality of illustration in terms of thematic range and care of execution. As in the majority of lithograph illustrations, the artist responsible for executing most of the illustrations remains obscure: Only one illustration is signed by a certain Maḥmud Khvānsāri (no. 9),<sup>40</sup> yet the style of this particular illustration is only encountered in one other item (no. 6) and differs so much from most of the other items as to make it seem unlikely that this artist produced more than a few of the illustrations (probably also nos. 2 and 3). It is a well known phenomenon that often more than one artist participated in the illustration of a specific book. In this case, various criteria of style and details of execution serve as indications that the vast majority of illustrations was executed by the master lithograph illustrator Mirzā °Ali-Qoli Khu'i, who is known to have been active between 1263/1847 and 1271/1855.<sup>41</sup>

The following is a complete listing of the 33 illustrations in the 1269/1852 edition of the *Jāme° al-tam̄sil*:<sup>42</sup>

1) **jt126901** fol. 30 a (10.1 x 8.6 cm): A young man hiding in the safety of a tree watches a lion devour the robber who came after him. In the far left, a young woman whom the robber had held captive is watching, touching her lips with the fingers of her left hand in an expression of bewilderment.<sup>43</sup> The relevant story illustrates the proverb *avval rafiq, ākhar tariq*, "First a friend [to keep you company], then the [travel on your] way" (printed edition, pp. 57—61).

2) **jt126902** fol. 37 a (10.1 x 10.4 cm): Waylaying brigands attack the king of Balkh and his army. The relevant story is that of "Zenhār's ring" (*angoshtar-e Zenhār*): Zenhār is the clever son of

the vazir of the king of Fārs. As the kingdom is threatened to be invaded by the king of Balkh, Zenhār agrees to scout the situation. The king is so much delighted about his clever plan that he agrees to give him his daughter after his successful return, and as a token of this promise hands him a precious ring. On the way, Zenhār's caravan is attacked and plundered by waylaying robbers. Zenhār himself manages to escape harm since he has disguised himself as a wandering dervish. He presents himself as a former robber who has been reformed through admonition by the holy Khadir.<sup>44</sup> In order to prove his story, he shows the ring which he claims to have received as a token from Khadir. The chief of the robbers is so overwhelmed by Zenhār's story that he agrees to help him and is given his ring. Later, Zenhār tricks the enemy king into attacking the robbers who have been forewarned by him. The band of robbers kills the enemy army and Zenhār's kingdom remains safe (68—74).<sup>45</sup>

3) **jt126903** fol. 45 a (10.1 x 8.7 cm): The elephant who had threatened to destroy the bird's net by rubbing his back against the tree, is attacked and blinded by an army of mosquitoes. The frogs to the left by their croaking will eventually mislead the blinded elephant to fall down the precipice in the upper left. The proverbial hemistich *pashe chu por shod, bezanad pil-rā*, "gnats, when great in numbers, [even] beat the elephant", expresses the idea that even the weak, when clever, can become extremely dangerous enemies (89—91).<sup>46</sup>

4) **jt126904** fol. 48 a (10.0 x 7.7 cm): The king while out hunting in the wilderness finds the abandoned daughter of the stingy man who has severed her hand in punishment for her giving alms. Contrary to the story, which makes a point of the right hand being cut off, the artist in this illustration portrays the left hand as missing. The story serves to elaborate on the vice of stinginess (*bokhl*) and the virtue of giving alms: The young woman is eventually married to the king's son and her hand is miraculously restored (95—99).

5) **jt126905** fol. 49 a (10.1 x 7.8 cm) belongs to the same story: The young woman in the presence of her bridegroom laments to God about the loss of her hand.

6) **jt126906** fol. 58 b (10.0 x 8.8 cm): The pious bridegroom and the father of the bride meet the bride, who (intending an allegoric expression) has been described as lame, deaf and dumb to her future husband. The story illustrates piety and the religious virtue (*savāb*) of pious behavior (117—118).



7) **jt126907** fol. 60 a (10.7 x 7.0 cm): The young woman threatens the shopkeeper, whom she has tricked into her house, to fulfill her desires. He refrains, eventually manages to escape, and is miraculously rewarded with his body emanating sweet fragrance ever since (118—119).

8) **jt126908** fol. 63 b (10.0 x 6.1 cm): The young robbers ask the advice of the old robber who has renounced his profession. The story follows another robber-tale that illustrates the virtue of hospitality by elaborating on the proverb *jā'i ke namak khvordi, namak-dān ma-shekan* "In a place where you have eaten salt [= enjoyed hospitality], do not break the salt-cellar [= do not be ungrateful]" (125—128).<sup>47</sup>

9) **jt126909** fol. 64 b (10.1 x 8.0 cm) illustrates the end of the same story: The thief has noticed that the owner of the caravanserai is being accused of having stolen the goods that he himself carried away. Being an "honest thief" (in accordance with the quoted proverb *dozd bāsh va mard bāsh* "Be a thief, [but at the same time also] be a [righteous] man"),<sup>48</sup> the thief wants to avoid innocent people being punished. He discloses his identity, confesses his deed to the king and proposes to restore the stolen goods, which he pretends to be hidden in a deep well inside the fortified caravanserai: He manages to escape through an underground tunnel.

10) **jt126910** fol. 69 a (10.6 x 5.2 cm): The prince, who is being held captive in an underground vault, is about to have his head cut off by the criminal Jewish butcher. He saves his life by professing to be a Jew himself,<sup>49</sup> and furthermore by demonstrating his skillfulness in weaving mats—the profession which he has learnt: *herfat-e mard zinat-e mard ast* "A man's profession is his decoration" (132—140).<sup>50</sup>

11) **jt126911** fol. 70 b (10.1 x 6.8 cm): illustrates the outcome of the same story: The prince has been found and released. While in the presence of the calif, the Jew and his two black slaves are about to be executed.

12) **jt126912** fol. 75 b (10.0 x 8.1 cm): A prince has been taught the virtues of silence (*khamushi*): When out hunting, a parrot is caught because it did not keep silence (proverbial hemistich: *tuti ze zabān-e khvish dar band oftād* "The parrot was caught because of its own voice").<sup>51</sup> After many days of silence, the prince finally speaks up (144—150, especially 147—148).

13) **jt126913** fol. 90 a (10.0 x 5.2 cm): A king possesses a monkey whom he has trained to keep watch while he and his wife are sleeping. One night, the monkey sees a venomous lizard drop on the

king's breast and rushes to kill the lizard with his dagger. A thief, who was watching the sleeping couple, intervenes. He explains to the king that *doshman-e dānā beh az nādān-dust* "A clever enemy is better than a stupid friend" (177—179).<sup>52</sup>

14) **jt126914** fol. 92 a (10.0 x 8.6 cm): A Beduin saves a snake from perishing in a fire by rescuing it in a small bag and subsequently transporting it to a safe place hidden in his clothing. When he offers to set it free, the snake wants to kill him, arguing that enemies will never become friends. In order to mediate, they both ask advice from a cow, who supports the snake's argument that the human species rewards good deeds with ungratefulness (*sazā-ye niki badist* "The reward for a good deed is an evil one").<sup>53</sup> The fox, when asked for his opinion, refuses to believe that such a large snake ever could have fitted into such a small bag. In order to prove this, the snake crawls into the bag. As soon as the snake is trapped again, the Beduin throws the bag into a fire. The full version of the proverb concerned reads *doshman har gez dust nagardad, choghondar har gez gusht* "An enemy will never become a friend, nor will a beet become meat" (179—183).<sup>54</sup>

15) **jt126915** fol. 95 a (10.0 x 7.0 cm): A thief overhears the weaver of a precious brocade admonish himself to keep his tongue. Wondering about the weaver's worries, he secretly accompanies him the next day, when the weaver presents the brocade to the king. Asked for which purpose the brocade suits best, the weaver proposes to use it as a cover for the king's bier. When the enraged king threatens to punish the weaver severely, the thief intervenes. The story illustrates the proverb *zabān-e sorkh sar-e sabz midehad bebād* "The red [= hot, fast] tongue leads the green [= fertile, productive] head to destruction" (198—201).<sup>55</sup>

16) **jt126916** fol. 102 a (10.0 x 6.8 cm): A watchman in the city of Esfahān is made to guard the body of a famous robber at the gallows for three consecutive nights, on the condition that he himself be hanged if the body is stolen. When in the first night the body is stolen, the watchman desperately runs away, only to find a woman wailing her recently deceased husband. Consoling the beautiful young woman, he convinces her to consider a second marriage.

17) **jt126917** fol. 102 b (10.1 x 6.1 cm): Same story continued: In order to save the guard's life, the young widow proposes to dig up her dead husband and hang him instead of the robber. She even shaves her dead husband's beard<sup>56</sup> in order to make him beardless like the robber was. When the situation is over, the wife's faithlessness is severely punished by the very same person she rescued: He

exposes her to the wild animals of the desert, bound, naked, and without food. The misogynous proverb connected to the story is *zan-e pārsā dar jahān nāder ast* "A chaste woman is extremely rare in the world" (201—203).<sup>57</sup>

18) **jt126918** fol. 108 b (10.8 x 6.7 cm): A Turkish slave whose advances have been rejected by the merchant's chaste wife has taught the merchant's two parrots two sentences calumniating the wife. Since neither the merchant nor his wife understand Turkish ("the language of Balkh"), the conversation of the parrots is only revealed when the merchant is visited by a group of merchants from Balkh. Though at first the merchant in a rash mood threatens to kill his wife, he follows her advice to see whether the parrots truly speak Turkish. Since they do not, the slave's ruse becomes obvious. When the slave again testifies that he himself witnessed the wife's adultery, the falcon he is holding picks out his eyes by divine order. The story is presented in the context of other tales about chaste wives (214—217).

19) **jt126919** fol. 111 b (10.7 x 7.9 cm): Story about an often-calumniated chaste wife. While her husband is on pilgrimage, her brother-in-law desires the beautiful and pious wife, and when she refuses to comply with his advances calumniates her. Since he (through bribery) is able to procure four witnesses, she is condemned to being stoned. Though she is buried in the ground up to her waist, an angel protects her from any harm. Later she is rescued by a Beduin who brings her to his home (218—228).

20) **jt126920** fol. 114 a (10.2 x 6.9 cm): Continuation of the same story. After a number of other refuted attempts at seduction, the chaste wife reaches Basra on board of a deserted ship. The king sends his courtiers to inquire about her affairs. Eventually, her husband returns, finds out about her situation, and both are reunited.

21) **jt126921** fol. 139 a (10.0 x 7.8 cm): A stingy king has issued orders not to give alms to anybody in his city. A pious woman disobeys the order and out of compassion hands two loaves of bread to a poor man. The king has both her hands cut off and abandons the woman together with her infant in the wilderness. Both are saved by two angels, her personified alms, who also miraculously restore her hands. The story elaborates on the virtue of *ṣadaqe* "almsgiving" (274—275).

22) **jt126922** fol. 142 b (10.1 x 6.2 cm): The youth catches the nightingale that proudly had boasted never to fall into his trap. After being captured, the clever bird secures its freedom by promising

three pieces of advice. The story illustrates the vice of *tama'* "greed" (281—284).

23) **jt126923** fol. 144 b (10.1 x 8.2 cm): Soltān Mahmud-e Ghaznavi has lost his way while hunting and reaches the tent of an old woman, whose cow produces miraculous quantities of milk. However, when the covetous king threatens to take the cow for himself, her production ceases. The theme of the story is *zolm* "injustice, oppression" (285—289).

24) **jt126924** fol. 165 a (10.1 x 6.9 cm): A wandering dervish who ponders about how to earn his living watches a falcon feed a blind and motherless crow. The scene makes him understand that God provides for everyone, and that it is his duty to be content with whatever God will give (virtue of *qanā'at*; 326—327).

25) **jt126925** fol. 177 a (10.0 x 7.9 cm): The threefold death prophecy (elaborating on *qazā va qadar* "fate"): On his fifteenth birthday, the prince climbs a tree in order to catch young birds from their nest. He is bitten by a snake, falls to his death, and drowns in the pool (339).

26) **jt126926** fol. 179 a (10.2 x 7.0 cm): A young merchant falls in love with a beautiful beggar girl. He learns that her father is °Abbās-e Dous, the beggar-king of Eṣfahān, who is extremely rich and proud of his profession. The girl will only be allowed to marry him if he also takes up begging. Since his love is strong, the young man does so and eventually becomes as professional as to even outwit his father-in-law. The scene illustrates the young man and the old beggar being entertained by the girl. The relevant paragraph treats the phenomenon of *gedā* "beggar" (341—350).

27) **jt126927** fol. 182 a (9.8 x 6.2 cm): Latter half of the same story: The young man and his newly wed wife are about to consummate their marriage.

28) **jt126928** fol. 185 a (10.2 x 6.0 cm): The story tells about a simpleton who skins his dead donkey and later pretends that the mischievous donkey has "farted into the privy" (*guz be-pāgāh dād*), jumped out of his skin and is still alive. As a proof he quotes the fact that nobody in his village has heard any news of his donkey being dead. The scene illustrates the simpleton showing the donkey's skin in front of the judge (*qāzi*), who eventually after a surprising exchange of arguments is forced to give the simpleton a new donkey (353—356).

29) **jt126929** fol. 188 b (10.1 x 5.8 cm): The story elaborates on the wiles of women (*makr-e zanān*) being so numerous that counting them would amount to "catching water in a sieve": The wily

woman has hidden her potential lover in the chest. She presents the key to her husband, and while he is ready to open the chest, she reminds him of a wager they had agreed upon.<sup>58</sup> The husband is upset about losing the wager and gets distracted. While his wife consoles him, the young man manages to escape (359—363).

30) **jt126930** fol. 200 b (10.1 x 6.7 cm): A picture of the fabulous bird °Anqā, who was created by God during the time of Moses but later, due to the intercession of the prophet Khālid b. Safwān became extinct. This is linked to a proverb denoting a thing that cannot be found as compared to *vojud-e °Anqā* "the existence of the bird °Anqā" (385—386).

31) **jt126931** fol. 214 a (10.1 x 8.6 cm): The king while hunting is warned by his clever falcon not to taste the liquid he intends to drink. Only after killing the apparently obstinate falcon in a rash mood does the king find out that the liquid is the venom of a dead snake rotting on top of a rock. This and the following story illustrate the praise of patience, as articulated in the proverb *yek šabr kon va hezār afsus makhvor* "Be patient for a moment and spare yourself a thousand sorrows" (413).<sup>59</sup>

32) **jt126932** fol. 215 a (10.0 x 7.5 cm): The domesticated monkey kills the snake as it is about to bite the child sleeping in the cradle. When the father awakes, he misinterprets the scene and rashly kills the monkey, whom he suspects of having killed the child (415—416).

33) **jt126933** fol. 222 a (10.4 x 7.0 cm): The son of the wise Loqmān sleeps under a tree while his elderly companion guarding him kills a snake with his club. The scene belongs to a lengthy tale elaborating on the proverbial wise sayings of Loqmān (427—432).

For the sake of clarity, in the following Mirzā °Ali-Qoli Khu'i is assumed to be the dominant artist illustrating the *Jāme° al-tamsil*. He has chosen a total of 27 stories for illustration, six of which are adorned with two illustrations each (4 and 5, 8 and 9, 10 and 11, 16 and 17, 19 and 20, 26 and 27). It is difficult, if not impossible, to discern a master-plan which the artist might have followed in deciding which story or scene to illustrate. He appears to have had a certain liking for tales with a clear and strong moral expression—but then again this is a characteristic applying to most of the stories in the collection, and so many other examples might have been as deserving of illustration as those chosen. Also, the distribution of illustrations throughout the collection seems fairly even with no discernible concentration in any specific range. If Mirzā °Ali-

Qoli Khu'i was the artist, however, then this illustrated book had a different impact on the subsequent tradition of illustration than other books of his production: Books illustrated by °Ali-Qoli such as the *Shāhnāme* (1265—67/1848—50), the *Khamse* by Nezāmi (1264/1848) or his *Arabian Nights* (*Alf leila* 1272/1856) clearly set the style for subsequent editions, which to a large extent would follow both, the thematic range of illustrations as well as the way the scenes and objects were depicted. As for the *Jāme° al-tamsil*, though this is only a first impression which would have to be verified by detailed research, it seems as though subsequent editions did not rely so much on °Ali-Qoli's example but rather on the later edition (1273/1857) illustrated in the style of °Ali-Qoli's student Mirzā Hasan. The love scene in no. 27 is a case in point: Whereas the artist here in a charming and sensitive way portrays the lover's intimacies, all subsequent editions vary the theme of explicit sexual intercourse (notably with both persons in almost the same positions).

The way in which the artist has captured the essence of the relevant story in the illustrations varies. Only very few illustrations are so unspecific that they might as well serve to represent other stories than the ones they are connected with here. Thus, item no. 2 might denote a random battle scene, item no. 6 any meeting such as could be imagined in similar contexts. The vast majority of the illustrations, however, contain one or more clues to link them with their specific stories in a unique and non-interchangeable way, even if those clues are discernible only to those possessing an intimate knowledge of the relevant story. This applies to two different categories of illustrations: On the one hand, a large amount of the illustrations pictures a significant point of the story (items no. 9, 15, 17, 19 etc.) which, though the previous or following parts of the story are not included, allow an unambiguous identification. On the other hand, an equally large percentage of illustrations summarizes the events in such a perfect way as to convey immediate evidence concerning the related story. This effect is partly due to the structure of those stories, which possess specific scenes incorporating all essential elements previously mentioned. Fine examples of this type of illustration include nos. 3, 13, 14, 18, 23—25, 27, 28, and 31.

In no. 3, for instance, the action pictured concerns the gnats blinding the elephant. The artist has chosen to represent both the reason sparking this aggression as well as the further consequences: The bird and its nest within the tree govern the upper middle of the picture, while the frogs and the precipice their croaking will direct

the elephant to, loom at the outer left range. Contrary to the detailed and comprehensive illustration in the *editio princeps*, all illustrations of this scene in subsequent editions omit the frogs and the precipice as well as other details. At first, later editions show the elephant aggressively approaching the tree (editions of 1273/1856, 1276/1859) while later ones reduce the scene even further to the elephant being attacked by gnats (1293/1876) or to the elephant meeting the bird in an open scenery (1321/1903, 1333/1914).

While it may be questioned whether the artist has in all cases managed to capture the essential scenes of the tales illustrated, the style of his illustrations contains a particular appeal. It is both naive and highly reductionist. At the same time, he demonstrates a particular care for details, such as flowers, carpet designs, and iconographical representation of specific gestures (such as the above mentioned "finger of bewilderment"). The artist concentrates on essentials while consciously disregarding additional embellishments which might distract the viewer's attention from conceiving the dominant message of the illustration. In this way, the lithograph illustrations of Persian lithographed prints are not unlike medieval European woodcuts, and in fact some of the nineteenth century catalogues in European libraries mention these books as being illustrated with "charming woodcuts" (or, sometimes, "copper engravings"). As for the proverb-tales illustrated in the *Jāme' al-tamṣil*, this style seems particular appropriate. The lithographed illustrations practice a similar kind of reductionist technique as embodied in the related proverbs: Both aim at conveying a message "in a nutshell", and both focus on exemplary tales. However, the present essay has only outlined some of the implications connected with the particular style of lithograph illustration. In order to fully appreciate the intricacies of the lithographed illustrations, a detailed discussion would have to consider their historical background as well as the related material culture, mental concepts, religious values and techniques of production—all of which have contributed to the formation of this particular style of narrative illustration.



*jt126901*



*jt126902*



*jt126903*



*jt126904*



*jt126905*



*jt126906*





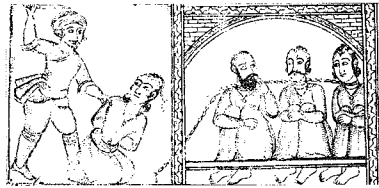
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*jt126908*



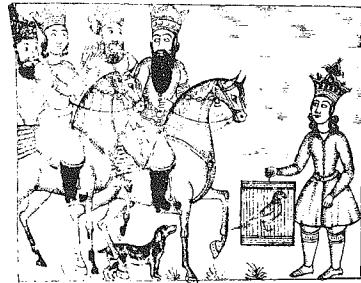
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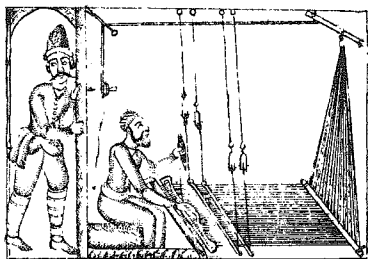
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*jt126911*

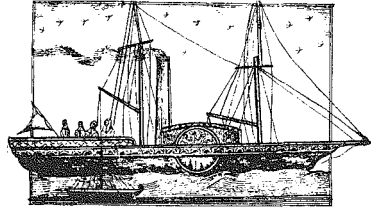


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*jt126913**jt126914**jt126915**jt126916**jt126917**jt126918*



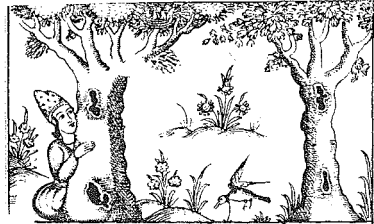
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*jt126920*



*jt126921*



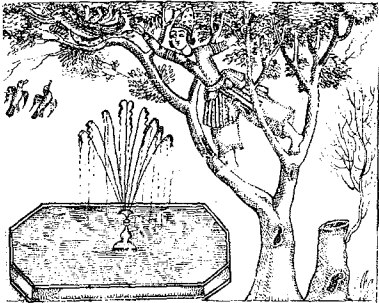
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*jt126926*



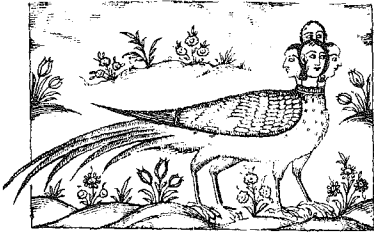
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*jt126928*



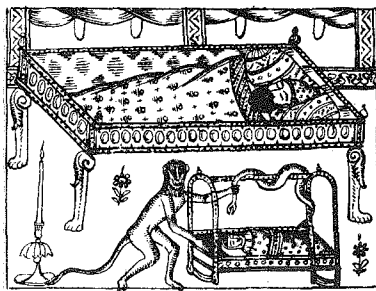
*jt126929*



*jt126930*



*jt126931*



*jt126932*



*jt126933*

## Notes

1. In order to facilitate typesetting, a simplified system of diacritical signs distinguishing consonants in the transcription of Persian and Arabic terms has been employed. The Persian vowels are rendered as a, ā, e, i, o, u.

2. Wickens, G. M.: *Mathal*. 2. In Persian. In: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 6, Leiden 1991, 825 b—826 a, quotations 825 b.

3. Boratav, P. N.: *Mathal*. 3. In Turkish. *ibid.*, 826 a—827 a.

4. Sellheim, R.: *Mathal*. 1. In Arabic. *ibid.*, 815 b—825 b. The article is extensively supplemented by Sellheim, R.: *Eine fünfte Miszelle zur arabischen Sprichwörterkunde*. In: *Oriens* 32 (1990) 463—475.

5. Sellheim, R.: *Die klassisch-arabischen Sprichwörtersammlungen, insbesondere die des Abū 'Ubaid*. 's-Gravenhage 1954 (revised Arabic translation by Ramadān 'Abdattawāb entitled *Al-amthāl al-'arabiya al-gadīma*. Third printing Beirut 1404/1984).

6. See the introductory survey in MacKenzie, D.N.: *Matalūna*. In: *Monumentum Georg Morgenstierne* 2. Leiden 1982, 15—45, at 15.

7. Sa'idi Sirjani, 'A.-A.: *Dehkodā*. In: *Encyclopaedia Iranica* 7,2. Costa Mesa, Ca. 1994, 216 b—220 a.

8. On Enjavi see Marzolph, U.: *Enjavi Shirazi*. *ibid.* 8,5 (1998) 452b—453a.

9. Marzolph, U.: *Folk Narrative and Folk Narrative Research in Post-Revolutionary Iran*. In: *Middle East and South Asia Folklore Bulletin* 12,1 (1994) 8—12; *id.*: *Seyyid Abolqāsem Enḡavi Širāzi (1921—1993) und das iranische Volkskundearchiv*. In: *Fabula* 35 (1994) 118—124.

10. For articles in Persian prior to 1979 see Zamāni, Maḥmud: *Ketābshenāsi-ye farhang-e 'ämme va mardom-shenāsi-ye Irān* (Bibliographical index to Persian folklore and ethnography). Teheran 1350/1971, 43—47; *Fehrest-e maqālāt-e mardomshenāsi* (Bibliography of ethnographical articles) 1. Teheran 2536/1977, 630—650.

11. Abrishami, Ahmad: *A Comparative Dictionary of 920 Persian Proverbs & Dictums, with English French, German & Spanish Equivalents*. Teheran 1996; *id.*: *A Dictionary of Persian-English Proverbs*. Teheran 1997. I owe these references to Wolfgang Mieder, who kindly also pointed out to me Abrishami's *Farhang-e novin-e gozide-ye mašālha-ye fārsi* (A modern dictionary of selected Persian proverbs). Teheran 1997. M. H. Rezvanian has published a number of essays on Persian proverbs (in French), such as "L'Humour dans les proverbes persans". In: *Proverbium* 14 (1969) 399—407; "Quelques Aspects de la psychologie des Iraniens à travers leurs proverbes". In: *Revue de psychologie des peuples* 24 (1969) 47—63; "Quelques Notes sur l'origine et la structure des proverbes anecdotiques persans". In: *Proverbium* 15 (1970) 516—517.

12. The author's last name is often misspelled, variant readings including Hilerudi, Hāblerudi and Jabalrudi; see, e.g. Rieu, Ch.: *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 2. London 1881 (reprint 1966), 773 b (Or. 1613); Arberry, A. J.: *Catalogue of the Library of the India Office*. vol. 2,6: *Persian books*. London 1937, 230; Shcheglova, O. P.: *Katalog litografirovannykh knig na persidskom jazyke v sobranii Leningradskogo otdeleniya Instituta vostokovedeniya AN SSR* (A Catalogue of the Lithographed Books in the Persian Language Preserved at the Leningrad [now: St. Petersburg] Branch of the Oriental Institute of the Soviet [now: Russian] Academy of Sciences), vol. 2. Moscow 1975, no. 1491.

13. Not mentioned in Browne, E. G.: *A Literary History of Persia*, vol. 4: *Modern Times (1500—1924)*. Cambridge 1959; Rypka, J.: *History of Iranian Literature*. Dordrecht 1968; Schimmel, A.: *Islamic Literatures of India*. Wiesbaden 1973; Bahār, M. T.: *Sabk-shenāsi*, vol. 1—3, Teheran 2nd ed. 1337/1958; Nafisi, S.: *Tārikh-e nazm va naṣr dar Irān va dar zabān-e fārsi (A History of Poetry and Prose in Persia and in the Persian Language)*, vol. 1—2. Teheran 1343/ 1964. Mentioned by Ethé, H.: *Neupersische Literatur*. In: Geiger, W./Kuhn, E. (edd.): *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, vol. 2. Strassburg 1896—1904, 212—368, bier 351; Šafā, Z.: *Tārikh-e adabiyāt dar Irān va dar qalamrou-e zāban-e fārsi (A History of Literature in Iran and in the Persian Language Area)*, vol. 5.3. Teheran 2nd ed. 1371/1992, 1497—1498.

14. cf. Moḥammad ʿAli Hablerudi: *Majmaʿ al-amsāl*, ed. Š. Kiyā. Teheran 1344/1965, 2—3; the denomination "Hable-rudi" is said to refer to the river (rud) Hable, which originates from the Firuz Mountain in Māzanderān.

15. *ibid.*, 1.

16. see Monzavi, A.: *Fehrest-e noskhehā-ye khattī-ye fārsi (A Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts)*, vol. 5, Teheran 1349/1970, 3549, nos. 38420— 38438.

17. see Marzolph, U.: *Dāstānhā-ye širin. Fünzig persische Volksbüchlein aus der zweiten Hälfte des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts*. Wiesbaden 1994, no. XVII (32).

18. Floor, W.: Čāp. In: *Encyclopaedia Iranica* 4, Costa Mesa 1990, 760—764; *id.*: Maṭbaʿa. 3. In *Persia*. In: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 6, Leiden 1991, 803—804.

19. Scheglova, O. P.: *Iranskaya litografirovannaya kniga (Iranian Lithographed Books)*. Moscow 1979.

20. see Rieu (as in note 12); Šafā (as in note 13).

21. Moshār, Khānbāba: *Fehrest-e ketābhā-ye chāpi-ye fārsi (A Catalogue of Printed Persian Books)*, vol. 2, 2nd ed. Teheran 1351/1972, 1488—1489; see also *Fehrest-e ketābhā-ye chāpi-ye fārsi az āghāz tā ākhar-e sāl 1345 (A Catalogue of Printed Persian Books up to the End of the Year 1956)*. ed. E. Yārshāter, vol. 1. Teheran 1352, 988—989.

22. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, shelfmark Zv 1675/120.

23. *Catalogue de la Bibliothèque Orientale de feu Charles Schefer. Vente Ernest Leroux*. Paris 1899, no. 782 (= *Library of the École des langues orientales*, shelfmark QR II 1).

24. copy in private collection.

25. Of the 32 letters of the Persian alphabet, four are additional to the Arabic alphabet. Of these, zh is not treated in the *Jāmeʿ al-tamsil*, while b and p, j and ch, k and g respectively are treated together in common chapters.

26. Page references in the following refer to the edition published by Moḥammad Hasan ʿElmi, 2nd ed., Teheran 1373 q/1952 [436 pp.]; cf. Marzolph (as in note 17).

27. Thompson, S.: *Motiv-Index of Folk-Literature*, vols. 1—6. Copenhagen 1955—1958 (henceforth = Mot.); Gier, A.: *Jahreskönig*. In: *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* (henceforth = EM) 7. Berlin/New York 1993, 426—439.

28. cf. Lackner, I.: Barlaam and Josaphat. In: EM 1 (1977) 1243—1252.

29. Aarne, A., Thompson, S.: *The Types of the Folktale. Classification and Bibliography*. Second Revision. Helsinki 3/1973 (henceforth = AT).

30. Schmitt, C.: Kraniche des Ibykus. In: EM 8 (1996) 331—334.

31. see Marzolph, U.: *Typologie des persischen Volksmärchens* [henceforth = Persian oicotype]. Beirut 1984, \*888 B.
32. cf. Uther, H.-J.: *Fliege auf des Richters Nase*. In: EM 4 (1984) 1284—1290.
33. Marzolph, U.: *Lehren: Die drei L. des Vogels*. In: EM 8 (1996) 883—889.
34. See Marzolph, U.: *Arabia ridens. Die humoristische Kurzprosa der frühen Abbasidenzeit im internationalen Traditionsgeflecht*, vols. 1—2. Frankfurt 1992, vol. 2, no. 414.
35. Persian oicotype \*<sup>Λ</sup>525 K.
36. Persian oicotype \*<sup>Λ</sup>351 B.
37. Persian oicotype \*<sup>Λ</sup>78 C; see also Marzolph, U.: *Die Vierzig Papageien. Das persische Volksbuch Cehel Tuti*. Walldoff 1979, 21—22.
38. Schmitt, J.-C.: *Hundes Unschuld*. In: EM 6 (1990) 1362—1368.
39. see Marzolph, U.: *Bahram Gūr's spectacular marksmanship and the art of illustration in Qājār lithographed books*. In: *Festschrift E. Bosworth*. ed. C. Hillenbrand. Leiden (in print).
40. see Karimzāde Tabrizi, M. °A.: *Aḥvāl va āsar-e naqqāshān-e qadim-e Irān [...] (The Lives and Art of Old Painters of Iran [...])*, vol. 3. London 1991, 1133, no. 1185. Reference is made to Mahmud Khvānsāri as an artist during the period of Moẓaffar al-din Shāh (reigned 1313/1896—1324/1907); the quoted evidence, however, lacks details for verification. On the other hand, Basil Robinson ("The Tehran Nizami of 1848 & other Qajar Lithographed Books". In: *Islam in the Balkans/Persian Art and Culture in the 18th and 19th Centuries*. ed. J. M. Scarce. Edinburgh 1979, 61—74, here 68) mentions an illustrated lithographed copy dated 1273/1857 containing the stories of Salomo and Moses respectively, and bearing the signature of Mirzā Mahmud Khvānsāri.
41. For a detailed argument see Marzolph, U.: *Mirzā °Ali-Qoli Khu'i, Master of Persian Lithograph Illustration*. In: *Annali del Istituto Orientale di Napoli* (in print).
42. The illustrations are appended to this essay. The slightly cryptical denomination of the illustrations results from the way the author's computerized archive is organized. The first two digits contain a two-letter mnemonic for the work under consideration (in this case j ), the third to sixth digits mention the year of publication (in this case "1269" of the Iranian solar calendar), the seventh and eighth digits number the arrangement of the illustrations in chronological order.
43. The so-called *angosht-e tahayyor* "finger of bewilderment" is also pictured in nos. 10, 18, 23, 24, and 31.
44. Fauth, W.: *Chadir*. In: EM 2 (1979) 1206—1210.
45. Dehkhodā, °A.-A.: *Amsāl va ḥekam*. 3rd ed. Teheran 1352/ 1973, vol. 1, 307—308. The word *zenhār* in Persian means "protection", and Dehkhodā refers to an alleged ancient custom of handing a ring to a person enjoying a powerful individual's personal protection.
46. Dehkhodā (as in note 45) vol. 1, 509; Haïm, S.: *Persian-English Proverbs*. Teheran 1956, 95.
47. Dehkhodā (as in note 45) vol. 2, 579; Haïm (as in note 46) 128.
48. Haïm (as in note 46) 201.
49. The conscientious denial of one's true creed in times of imminent personal danger (*taqiyya*) is deemed a permissible act in Shi'ite Islam.
50. Haïm (as in note 46) 152.



51. Dehkhodā (as in note 45) vol.2, 1077.  
 52. Dehkhodā (as in note 45) vol. 2, 814; Haïm (as in note 46) 208; °Afifi, R.: *Maḡalhā va ḡekmathā dar āsar-e shā°erān* [...]. Teheran 1371/1992, 377.  
 53. Haïm (as in note 46) 259.  
 54. Dehkhodā (as in note 45) vol. 2, 814.  
 55. Dehkhodā (as in note 45) vol. 2, 893; Haïm (as in note 46) 243.  
 56. Respectlessness towards a man's beard in Muslim Persian culture is deemed a major offence.  
 57. Dehkhodā (as in note 45) vol. 2, 922.  
 58. cf. Phillot, D.: Some Current Persian Tales, Collected in the South of Persia from Professional Story-tellers. In: *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 1, 18 (1906) 375—412, here 376: "In the Persian [...] philopena, the merry thought of a bird is broken at a meal by the two players, as a sign that the bargain is concluded. [...] After this the first player that receives any article whatever from the hand of the other, has to pay a forfeit. The winner, as soon as the article is taken, must say, *Marā yād turā farāmūsh*, 'I remember, thou hast forgotten'; or simply *Yād ast*, 'It is remembered.'"  
 59. Haïm (as in note 46) 453.

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