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Beneath the Veil and Crown: The Poetry of Pādshāh Khātūn

Yasaman Arang*
Researcher and Scholar
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<https://poets.iranicaonline.org/scholar/yasaman-arang/>

*Yasaman Arang is a researcher and scholar specializing in women's poetry and Persian literary traditions. She holds a Ph.D. in Persian Language and Literature and has dedicated over two decades to the study of women's poetry, its evolution, and its sociocultural impact. Arang has authored several books, including *The Divan of Zhaleh Qaem-Maqami* (2010), *The Silent Awakening: A Critique of Zhaleh Qaem-Maqami's Poetry* (2014), and *From Spring to Sea: The Evolution of Women's Poetry from Rabia to Zhaleh* (2025). Her research extends to numerous scholarly articles, covering topics such as imagery, satire, and feminist aesthetics in Persian poetry. In addition to her academic contributions, Arang explores gender and language studies, addressing issues of linguistic bias and gendered discourse.

Introduction

The Mongol invasion of Iran in the thirteenth century brought an end to the rule of the Khwarazm'shahiyan dynasty, the central government of the time. Insecurity, famine, and widespread massacre engulfed the entire country. However, some regions such as Fars and Kerman were spared from devastation due to their rulers' prudent decision to pay tribute to the Mongols.

The province of Kerman, which had not known peace since the arrival of the Ghuzz until the decline of the Khwarazm'shahiyan dynasty, experienced a new set of circumstances with the Mongol invasion. During this tumultuous time, a man named Burāq, who held the position of chamberlain (hājib), managed to enter Sultān Muhammad Khwārazm'shāh's service as an envoy. After Sultān Muhammad's death around AH 617/1220 CE, Burāq, recognizing the weakness and decline of the Khwarazm'shahiyan, seized an opportunity and was able to overcome the governor of Kerman. He established a dynasty known as the Qarakhita'iyan or Qutlugh Khaniyah. By showing submission and obedience to the Mongol Khan, he secured the foundation for his own and his family's rule in Kerman.¹ This dynasty ruled over Kerman and its surrounding regions for nearly ninety years (AH 619–704/1222–1305 CE). The most illustrious period of this dynasty's reign was when two women ruled over Kerman and its surrounding regions. The first was Tarkān Khātūn, and

after her, her daughter, Pādshāh Khātūn, who ascended the throne as the seventh ruler.

Pādshāh Khātūn was a wise ruler who, like her mother, employed a unique approach to governance that ensured the security of the roads, thriving commerce, and fostered the prosperity and expansion of her domain. However, her significance extends beyond her political persona, as she was also a talented poet. Although only a few of her poems have survived, these limited examples demonstrate her skill, sensitivity, and depth of thought.

To date, several articles have been written about Pādshāh Khātūn, focusing on various aspects of her rule. Some biographical dictionaries, historical books, and literary histories have included her biography and a few of her verses, or have discussed the political climate of her time. Examples include *Tārīkh-i Kirmān* (The history of Kerman), *Habīb al-siyar* (The beloved of careers), *Natā'ij al-afkār* (Results of thoughts),² *Khayrāt-i hisān*³ and *Tārīkh-i shi'r-i zanān* (The history of women's poetry),⁴ among others. However, there has been no dedicated study of her character as a poet and analysis of her poetry. Abū al-Qāsim Hālat's article titled "Lālah Khātūn" discusses Pādshāh Khātūn's life, but it presents some information that diverges from historical records without citing sources and even fabricates narratives concerning the motivations behind Pādshāh Khātūn's poetry.⁵ Another article, "Safvah al-Dīn, bānū-yi tāj'dār va shā'irah-'i Kirmān"⁶ (Safvah al-Dīn: The crowned lady and poet of Kerman) by Nayyirah Aqdas-Sidqiyanī, provides insights into Pādshāh Khātūn's life and the meanings of her names and titles.

Pādshāh Khātūn's Family and Lineage

The *Samt al-'Alī* is a valuable source for understanding the history of the Qarakhita'i dynasty and is the first to quote poetry from Pādshāh Khātūn. Its author, Nāsir al-Dīn Munshī was born

¹Jamshīd Rūstā and Sahar Pūr'mahdī'zādah, "Tahlīlī pūrāmūn-i ruykard-i iqtisādī-yi zanān-i hākimah-'i Qarakhita'i Kirmān" [An analysis of the economic approach of the female rulers of the Qara Khita'i dynasty in Kerman], *Pazhūhish'nāmah-'i Tārīkh'hā-yi Mahallī-i Īrān* [The journal of local histories of Iran] 6, no. 2 (1397/2018): 150.

²Muhammad Qudrat-Allāh Gūpāmūy, *Tazkirah-'i Natā'ij al-afkār* (Qom: Majma'-i Zakhā'ir-i Islāmī-i Qūm, 1387/2009). A brief account of her life, along with six verses attributed to her, is provided under the entry for Lālah Khātūn of Kerman. See Gūpāmūy, *Tazkirah-'i Natā'ij al-afkār*, 646.

³Muhammad Hasan Khān Sanī' al-Dawlah, "Khayrāt-i hisān," Lithographed edition, 60. It provides a brief overview of her life, along with two verses attributed to her.

⁴Rūhangīz Karāchī, *Tārīkh-i shi'r-i zanān* (Tehran: Pazhūhish'gāh-'i 'Ulūm-i Insānī, 1394/2015), 1: 348–56. The book provides a detailed account of her life and includes her poems.

⁵Abū al-Qāsim Hālat, "Lālah Khātūn," *Nashriyah-'i Talāsh* 47 ([1353/1974]): 31.

⁶Nayyirah Aqdas-Sidqiyanī, "Safvah al-Dīn, bānū-yi tāj'dār va shā'irah-'i Kirmān" [Safvah al-Dīn: The crowned lady and poet of Kerman], in *Si guftār darbārah-'i Kirmān: Az majmū'ah-'i sukhānānī'hā-yi hashtumīn kungarah-'i tah-qīqāt-i Īrānī, Kirmān Shahrivar* 25–30, 1356 [Thirty speeches about Kerman: Speeches of the eighth congress on Iranian Studies], ed. Muhammad

Rasul Daryā'gashl (Kirmān: Ustāndārī-i Kirmān, 1356/1977), 93.

⁷Nāsir al-Dīn Munshī, *Simtu al-'ulā li-l-hazrat al-'ulyā dar tārikh-i Qarakhitā'iyān-i Kirmān*, ed. 'Abbās Iqbāl and supervised by the late Alāmah Muhammad Qazvīnī (Tehran: Asātūr, 1328/1949), d.

⁸Munshī, *Simtu al-'ulā*, 26.

⁹Anonymous, *Tārikh-i shāhī-i Qarakhitā'iyān*, ed. Muhammad Ibrāhīm Bāstānī Pārizī (Tehran: Bunyād-i Farhang-i Irān, 2535/1977), 49.

¹⁰Munshī, *Simtu al-'ulā*, 26.

¹¹Munshī, *Simtu al-'ulā*, b.

¹²Munshī, *Simtu al-'ulā*, 36.

¹³Jamshīd Rūstā and Sahar Pūrmahdī'zādah, "Tahlīlī tārikhī pīrāmūn-i shā'irān va maddāhān-i darbār-i Qarakhitā'iyān-i Kirmān" [A historical analysis of poets and eulogists at the court of the Khwarazmian dynasty in Kerman], *Nashriyah-i Adab va Zabān-i Dānishkadah-i Adabiyāt va 'Ulūm-i Insānī Dānishgāh-i Shahīd Bāhunar-i Kirmān* 19, no. 40 (Fall and Winter 1395/2016): 90.

around AH 668/1269–1270 CE. At approximately twenty-six years of age, he was appointed by Pādshāh Khātūn as the chief of Correspondence and Documentation (ra'īs-i rasā'il va inshā') in Kerman, gaining access to the Qarakhitā'i dynasty's court.⁷

He wrote that after Burāq's death (in AH 632/1235 CE), his nephew, Abū al-Fath Muhammad Qutb al-Dīn⁸ ascended to power. Four months later, he married Burāq's daughter⁹ who was later given the title Qutlugh Tarkān. Munshī describes Tarkān Khātūn as a unique and unparalleled match for the Sultān under the celestial dome, believing that every victory for Qutb al-Dīn, whether at home or abroad, was due to the queen's felicity of devotion and blessings of worship.¹⁰ After Qutb al-Dīn's death in AH 655/1257 CE,¹¹ the Turkic commanders and Kerman's nobles unanimously agreed on granting rulership to his wife, Qutlugh Tarkān. However, her governance was intended to be in the capacity of a regent for Qutb al-Dīn's son, Hajjāj Sultān.

Qutb al-Dīn had two sons, Hajjāj Sultān and Siyūr Ghatamish Sultān, and four daughters named Pādshāh Khātūn, Bībī Tarkān, Qutlugh Tarkān, and Yūl Qutlugh Khātūn, with the first two being more prominent.¹² Various opinions have been presented regarding this people's ethnicity. Qādī Minhāj Sirāj Jūzjānī and Fu'ād 'Abd al-'Alī al-Sayyād considered them as Turks, while European researchers such as René Grousset, Saunders, Maurice Perrin, and Bosworth believe this people to be Mongols.¹³

Cultural-Political Conditions Prior to Pādshāh Khātūn's Reign

Although the Mongols reduced Iran to ruins, they also introduced a tradition that emphasized the influence, significance, and power of women within the territories they conquered. This tradition evolved as it interacted with the culture and social structures of each region. After the dominance of Islam, women's influence and activities in various spheres had diminished. However, the rise of the Turkic peoples and later the Mongols,



who were nomadic by nature, paved the way for women to gain power.

The prevailing climate in the central regions of Iran at this time, with the spread of Islamic teachings, created an environment where the emphasis on women's chastity and virtue was of primary importance. Tarkān Khātūn's title was "chastity of the world and religion" (ʿismat al-dunyā va dīn),¹⁴ and Nāsir al-Dīn Munshī, before extolling the queen for her justice and noble character, described her as "the embodiment of chastity and the epitome of modesty." He considers the nobles of Kerman and Mongol rulers to have significant influence and authority in decision-making.¹⁵ It appears that the Mongols' open-mindedness in choosing a woman as ruler and the strictness of Kerman's people in emphasizing chastity for women in the figure of Tarkān Khātūn who embodies these qualities. Similarly, her daughter, Pādshāh Khātūn, as will be seen, was compelled to emphasize these values by choosing titles, a name, and composing a sonnet. Nevertheless, a prominent and influential cleric named Mawlānā Shihāb al-Dīn, a schoolmaster at a Qutbiyyah school, began to oppose Tarkān Khātūn's rule, and spoke out with accusations warranting punishment and censure.¹⁶ Subsequently, state officials imprisoned him, but after a few years, he was pardoned by Tarkān Khātūn and reinstated in his teaching position at the Qutbiyyah school.¹⁷ However, Shihāb al-Dīn's opposition and enmity as a powerful cleric with Tarkān Khātūn continued, and even her death, he issued a religious decree (fatvā) and managed to demolish her mosque and invalidate her endowment's. When Pādshāh Khātūn came to power, she removed Shihāb al-Dīn from the mosque's leadership and replaced him with his brother, Burhān al-Dīn Burhān Shāh.¹⁸

During her years of rule (AH 655–681/1257–1282 CE) over Kerman and its surrounding regions, Tarkān Khātūn made numerous contributions, the impact of which is still visible today. Her era can be considered the most prosperous period of Qarakhitā'i rule over Kerman.¹⁹ However, she faced constant chal-

¹⁴Munshī, *Simtu al-'ulá*, 37.

¹⁵Munshī, *Simtu al-'ulá*, 38.

¹⁶Munshī, *Simtu al-'ulá*, 43.

¹⁷Anonymous, *Tārikh-i shāhī-i Qarakhitā'iyān*, 53.

¹⁸Munshī, *Simtu al-'ulá*, 43.

¹⁹Munshī, *Simtu al-'ulá*, 50.

²⁰Munshī, *Simtu al-'ulá*, 48.

²¹Munshī, *Simtu al-'ulá*, 48.

²²Anonymous, *Tārīkh-i shāhī-i Qarakhitā'iyān*, 56.

lenges from various fronts. Hajjāj Sultān was always considered a formidable rival for Tarkān Khātūn, creating significant problems for her. Nāsir al-Dīn Munshī describes Tarkān Khātūn's reaction as maternal compassion and tolerance,²⁰ though he believed that some corrupt individuals on both sides were responsible for the major disputes between them.²¹

The Mongols consistently exploited their conflicts, and Tarkān Khātūn repeatedly sought assistance from Pādshāh Khātūn to resolve the issues. In one of these disputes, Tarkān Khātūn arranged for her daughter, Pādshāh Khātūn, to marry Abāqā Khān, son of Hūlākū Khān, to gain favor with the Mongol court. On another occasion, Tarkān Khātūn wrote to her daughter, Abāqā Khān's wife, urging her to intervene. Following Pādshāh Khātūn's intervention, Jalāl al-Dīn (Siyūr Ghatamish), and his companions were forced to leave Kerman and go to the Mongol court.²² Thus, even before ascending to power, Pādshāh Khātūn assisted her mother in resolving affairs.

Following Abāqā's death, one of Jalāl al-Dīn's allies devised a plan to remove Pādshāh Khātūn from Kerman. He orchestrated a scheme to marry her to Gaykhātū, Abāqā's son (and Pādshāh Khātūn's first husband), and arrange for her to be sent to Anatolia to be with her husband. He persistently urged the Qaghan (khāqān) to approve this plan. Eventually, his request was granted, and Pādshāh Khātūn was compelled to go to her husband, the ruler of Asia Minor.

Upon Abāqā Khān's death, Tarkān Khātūn, who was obliged to seek confirmation of her position at the court of Sultān Ahmad Tagūdār, was on her way when Jalāl al-Dīn arrived with a decree of her dismissal and read it to her. She was so overwhelmed with shock that she fainted and suffered a stroke. Jalāl al-Dīn ordered Kerman's nobles to cease their allegiance to Tarkān Khātūn, and they accompanied him on his journey toward Kerman. The ailing Tarkān Khātūn persisted in her efforts to obtain a decree, but her attempts proved futile. Overcome with sorrow,



she passed away in Tabriz. Pādshāh Khātūn's elder sister, Bībī Tarkān, who was at the camp, managed to obtain an order to take possession of the estates in Sirjan with Pādshāh Khātūn's assistance. She brought their mother's body to Kerman and buried it in the city's madrasah.²³

²³Anonymous, *Tārīkh-i shāhī-i Qarakhitā'iyān*, 73.

²⁴Bahrīyah Ūchūk, *Zanān-i farnān'raṣā dar dawlat'hā-yi Islāmī* [Women rulers in Islamic polities], trans. Muhammad-Taqī Imāmī (Tehran: Kūrush, 1374/1995), 187.

Jalāl al-Dīn, to strengthen his weak position, once again turned to Sultān Ahmad's camp. During this time, Arghūn overthrew Sultān Ahmad and took control. Jalāl al-Dīn sought to win Arghūn's favor to secure influence, but his efforts were unsuccessful due to the presence of individuals like Pādshāh Khātūn and Bībī Tarkān.

Pādshāh Khātūn's Rise to Power

The Turkish nobles residing in Kerman turned their attention towards Pādshāh Khātūn. Safvah al-Dīn Pādshāh Khātūn arrived in Kerman in Zū al-Qi'dah 691/October 1292 CE. She is the fifth Muslim queen to reign.²⁴

Feeling unsafe from her brother, she imprisoned Jalāl al-Dīn Siyūr Ghatamish in the city fortress. With the help of his wife, Kurdūjīn, daughter of Ābish Khātūn, the Atabeg of Fars (atābak-i Fārs), Siyūr Ghatamish managed to escape and seek refuge at the Mongol court. The nobles of Kerman pledged allegiance to Pādshāh Khātūn and, through conspiracy and intrigue, set the stage for Siyūr Ghatamish's murder. Pādshāh Khātūn wrote a letter requesting her brother's return, and Gaykhātū surrendered him and sent him to Kerman. There, he was imprisoned once again. After a while, Pādshāh Khātūn's sisterly affection compelled her to release her brother from prison and bring him to court with respect. However, after some time, a group of ill-wishers, fearing the unity of the siblings, began to spread slander and rumors, making the sister suspicious of her brother. It was said that Siyūr Ghatamish had an affair with one of Pādshāh Khātūn's maids and had incited her to poison Pādshāh Khātūn. For this reason, in Ramadān 693/August 1294, Siyūr

²⁵Anonymous, *Tārīkh-i shāhī-i Qarakhitā`iyān*, 13.

²⁶Anonymous, *Tārīkh-i shāhī-i Qarakhitā`iyān*, 61.

²⁷Rüstā and Pūrmahdīzādah, "Tahlīlī pīrāmūn-i rūykard-i iqtisādī-yi zanān-i hākimah-'i Qarakhitā`i Kirmān," 160.

²⁸Rüstā and Pūr'mahdī'zādah, "Tahlīlī pīrāmūn-i rūykard-i iqtisādī-yi zanān-i hākimah-'i Qarakhitā`i Kirmān," 160.

Ghatamish was smothered to death, with rumors spreading that he had committed suicide by stabbing himself.²⁵

Following this event, Pādshāh Khātūn took measures to revitalize Kerman's trade. First, after stabilizing the political situation, she conducted military expeditions into the surrounding regions, expanding her dominion. With the approval of her husband, Gaykhātū Khān, the Ilkhanid ruler, she secured control over Yazd and Shabānkarah. In addition to these two regions, she successfully seized the strategically important areas of Kish and Bahrain.²⁶ These two regions, besides being major exporters of pearls, were also prosperous and fertile in terms of agriculture. Moreover, Pādshāh Khātūn controlled the important commercial area of Hormuz, which had been one of the world's most credible trading centers and the largest trade hub between coasts of Iran, Arabia, and India since the early Mongol era. Under her rule, Kerman became one of the centers for issuing paper money.²⁷

Another significant initiative by Pādshāh Khātūn in the realm of commerce was her attention to public welfare. To maintain and ensure the safety and security of trade routes, which were vital to the economy, she established charitable endowments. She ordered people to be stationed along the caravan routes to escort the caravanners and decreed that each of these individuals should receive an annual allowance of two thousand maunds of grain as their wages.²⁸

In Nawrūz, in the year AH 694/1295 CE, Bāydū, Siyūr Ghatamish's son-in-law, rebelled in Baghdad. The arrival of his envoys to Pādshāh Khātūn's opponents in Kerman, along with the betrayal of some of her commanders, and the uprising of Siyūr Ghatamish's supporters, made her position increasingly difficult. Kurdūjīn (Siyūr Ghatamish's wife and Bāydū's mother-in-law) fueled this turmoil. The situation was chaotic, and while Pādshāh Khātūn was seeking assistance from the Mongol court in Khurasan, some of her own emirs, such as Nusrat al-



Mulk (governor of Yazd) and ‘Alī al-Mulk (emir of Shabankar-ah), turned their backs to her.²⁹ Soon after defeating Gaykhātū, Bāydū sent a message to Pādshāh Khātūn, inviting her to participate in his coronation ceremony. Kurdūjīn and the treacherous emirs began making their way toward Pādshāh Khātūn. Upon hearing the news, Pādshāh Khātūn summoned her emirs and sought their advice. The judge of Khvāf suggested that she go to Ghāzān Khān, but shortsighted advisers deemed staying in the fortress safer for Pādshāh Khātūn. However, soon after, troops under Princess Khānum Kurdūjīn’s command reached the vicinity of the city and besieged it for several days. Division within the court worked in favor of Kurdūjīn, and several prominent figures joined her side. Realizing that resistance would be futile, Pādshāh Khātūn reluctantly sent the keys to the city gates to Kurdūjīn, saying:

How long should I endure for fear of life?

I surrender, bowing my head to fate³⁰

The opposing army seized the city, imprisoned the ministers and emirs loyal to Pādshāh Khātūn, and dragged her from her palace with humiliation. They looted her treasury and possessions. Kurdūjīn, taking the spoils, set off to Bāydū’s court, with Pādshāh Khātūn in tow. Kurdūjīn ascended the throne,³¹ and Bāydū’s order for Pādshāh Khātūn’s execution arrived in the Golder Palace. The assassins came to Pādshāh Khātūn’s tent, and strangled her, thus ending her reign. After, Bāydū, her killer, met the same fate shortly after, Ghāzān Khān entrusted the governorship of Kerman to the son of Hajjāj Sultān, Pādshāh Khātūn’s elder brother. He retrieved his aunt, Pādshāh Khātūn’s body from a village called Mishkīn and buried her next to her mother, Tarkān Khātūn. Today, nothing remains of the madrasah, mosque, and tomb, except for a small area enclosing a grave with a thick marble stone lying on it.³²

With Pādshāh Khātūn’s assassination in AH 694/1295 CE, the

²⁹Rawzat al-safā describes him as a man who was a habitual drunkard and corrupt, with his emirs awaiting the time for revenge against him. Muhammad ibn Khāvand’s shāh ibn Mahmūd (Mīr Khwānd), *Tārīkh-i rawzat al-safā*, ed. Jāmshīd Kī ānfār (Tehrān: Asātīr, 1380/2001), 5:4194.

³⁰Ūchūk, *Zanān-i farmān-ravā*, 204. تا چند ز بیم جان مدارا کردن/تسلیم شدم بهم قضا را گردن

³¹Although she sat on the throne, she did not become a queen.

³²Anonymous, *Tārīkh-i shāhī-i Qarakhitā ‘iyān*, 75.

³³Rüstā and Pūrmaḥdīzādah, “Tahlīlī pīrāmūn-i rūykar-d-i iqtisādi-yi zanān-i ḥākīmāh-i Qarakhitā’i-yi Kirmān,” 163.

³⁴Munshī, *Simtu al-’ulā*, 6.

³⁵Munshī, *Simtu al-’ulā*, 70.

³⁶In the “Tārīkh-i shāhī-i Qarakhitā’iyān” (History of the Qarakhitā’i kings), 14 verses of poetry are included. See, Anonymous, *Tārīkh-i shāhī-i Qarakhitā’iyān*, 60–61.

³⁷Rüstā and Pūrmaḥdīzādah, “Tahlīlī pīrāmūn-i rūykar-d-i iqtisādi-yi zanān-i ḥākīmāh-i Qarakhitā’i-yi Kirmān,” 75.

situation in Kerman became highly chaotic. The incompetence of the rulers during this period paved the way for increased intervention by the Mongol Ilkhans in Kerman, which led to economic turmoil. During the reign of Qutb al-Dīn Shāh Jahān, the last Qarakhitā’i ruler, most roads were closed, and the movement of merchants came to a halt.³³

The Literary and Artistic Character of Pādshāh Khātūn

Nāsir al-Dīn Munshī describes Pādshāh Khātūn, the cultured and art-loving ruler who was herself both a poet and calligrapher, with titles such as “the learned, ruling, martyred, and gracious lady.”³⁴ She was not only a woman of power and majesty but also a queen who cherished culture and nurtured literature. Munshī notes that many copies of the Qur’ān and books written in her own hand were found in Kerman and other provinces. He praises her for her knowledge, abundance of virtues, and profound scholarship.³⁵ Munshī also quotes eleven verses of poetry from Pādshāh Khātūn.³⁶

After Rābi’ah Balkhī and Mahsatī Ganjavī, Pādshāh Khātūn can be considered the third prominent female poet whose individuality shines through even in the limited number of verses that have survived. It is said that she had a collection of poems (dīvān)³⁷ containing five thousand verses, but fewer than twenty (nineteen) couplets remain extant today. These verses, free from verbosity and artificiality, are filled with subtlety, poetic harmony, and literary distinction. The poet herself is vividly present in the lines—a poet who still writes from a distinctly feminine standpoint, fully aware of her gender. She is the first known poet to begin a poem with the line “I am that woman.” In this way, her poetry reflects an image of women in the 7th/13th century Iran, particularly in central regions.

In patriarchal societies, women often introduce themselves through the lens of others, unlike men see and define themselves through the broader lens of humanity. The phrase “I am



that woman” suggests that women—who consciously acknowledge their gender—emerge from a gendered culture. However, in a society with less gender discrimination and segregation, such distinctions are less imposed on women and are less likely to appear in their language. For instance, Mahsatī, who lived freely and wrote on diverse themes, delved into deep philosophical and social issues without being confined by the constraints of gendered expectations.³⁸ In societies where women were often required to justify their artistic and intellectual pursuits with secondary qualifications such as notions of modesty and chastity, Ganjavī was able to express herself purely through her poetry and intellectual exploration, free from the constraints of gendered limitations.

³⁸Mahsatī has several philosophical quatrains, some of which are attributed to her and to Khayyām.

The political and cultural conditions of Pādshāh Khātūn’s time reveal the extent to which prejudice and rigid gender norms prevailed, highlighting the contrast between her environment and that of the two renowned poets before her, Rābi‘ah and Mahsatī. However, the period between Pādshāh Khātūn’s life and theirs witnessed significant events in Iranian society, as well as important developments in Persian poetry, especially regarding women’s poetry.

Cultural Transformation in Iran in the 6th/12th Century and the Changing Approach of Female Poets

The late 5th and 6th centuries AH/late 11th and 12th centuries CE were influential not only for Persian literature and women’s poetry but also for the overall intellectual and cultural fabric due to the events that occurred. It was during this time that the Nizāmiyyah schools were established throughout the Saljuq empire, from Baghdad and Isfahan to Balkh and Nishapur. These institutions taught subjects such as jurisprudence (fiqh), prophetic accounts (sg. hadīth), Qur’anic exegesis (tafsīr), literary sciences, and philosophy under the influence of conservative figures like Khvājah Nizām al-Mulk, Ghazālī, and Fakhr-i Rāzī. Consequently, their teachings, grounded in the determin-

³⁹Muhammad-'Alī Tavānā, Muhammad Kāmkārī va Siyyid Muhammad Javād Mustafavī Muntazirī, "Naqsh va jāyghā-i siyāsī-i zan dar Siyāsāt'nāmah-i Khvājah Nizām al-Mulk Tūsī: Taqābul-i dīdgāh-i tahrīm va tajvīz-i mushārat-i siyāsī-i zanān dar 'asr-i Saljūqī" [The role and political status of women in Khvājah Nizām al-Mulk Tūsī's Siyāsāt'nāmah: The dichotomy between prohibition and endorsement of women's political participation in the Seljuk era], *Islām va 'Ulūm-i Ijtimā'ī* 12, no. 24 (1399/2020): 281.

istic theology of Ash'arī thought, spread throughout the Islamic realm. The forceful rhetoric of these scholars and their policies on the limits of freedom, rights, and roles of women undoubtedly contributed to the retreat of women into the private sphere in the ensuing decades and centuries.

Khvājah Nizām al-Mulk articulated his views on the prohibition of women's political participation in his *Siyāsāt'nāmah* (Book of governance), where he argued that women not only held an inferior position to men but were also a disruptive force in political affairs.³⁹

The reinforcement of the subordinate position of women was further achieved through the composition of ethical treatises in the 5th and 6th/11th and 12th centuries. During this period, authors with significant political power and high social standing wrote works such as *Qābūs'nāmah* (The book of Qabus), in addition to the *Kīmīyā-yi sa'ādat* (The alchemy of felicity). These texts extensively addressed the roles and restrictions placed on women. The boundaries set by these works, as ethical and legal codes, became deeply ingrained in the cultural fabric of Iranian society. Consequently, women began to compose poetry focused on chastity, modesty, and self-concealment to align themselves with the dominant discourse of the time. By doing so, they distanced themselves from the more liberated verses and lifestyles of previous female poets. In turn, they confined their poetry to the parameters defined by men, staying within the limits that this prevailing narrative demanded.

Another important point is the shift in the centers of poetry from the northern and eastern regions of Iran to central cities like Shiraz and Kerman, which influenced the transition from the *Khurāsānī* to the 'Irāqī style of poetry. In northern cities such as Ganjah and Samarqand, which had greater cultural exchange with neighboring regions, women poets enjoyed more freedom to express themselves. However, with the establishment of new policies and the rise of conservatism and misogyny, both the



content and the literary techniques of women's poetry became more formulaic. While male poets in this period embraced metaphor and ambiguity, female poets, including Pādshāh Khātūn, continued to rely heavily on simile. Women who wrote poetry within the bounds of social, moral, and religious norms faced harsh criticism from narrow-minded men. As a result, before their poetry could be censored or approved by cultural arbiters, women engaged in self-censorship. This is why individuality in women's poetry becomes less pronounced, stripping women of the opportunity to express pure, innovative thought and creativity. Although more poems by women from the 7th/13th century onward have survived due to women's self-censorship and their integration into the dominant poetic style, this contrasts with earlier centuries. Rābi'ah's poems were deliberately destroyed, and Mahsatī's collection of poetry is said to have vanished during the Uzbek invasions, and despite their remarkable poetic talent, few verses remain from other women poets of that era.

Pādshāh Khātūn, The Poet

With a clear understanding of the social and cultural conditions of her time, Pādshāh Khātūn, initially resorted to the strategy of writing poetry centered on chastity to silence the critics and narrow-minded detractors. The focus on chastity was a reflection of the fanatical era in which Pādshāh Khātūn lived. Unlike Rābi'ah and Mahsatī Ganjavī, who felt no need to write about and proclaim their chastity and purity, and who boldly expressed their emotions in poetry, Pādshāh Khātūn used chaste poetry as a way to secure and affirm her place as a poet. It is recorded that she wrote poetry under the pen name 'Iffatī, which signifies chastity.⁴⁰ This marks the first time a woman chose a pen name based on chastity, and subsequently, many other female poets, driven by the pressures of patriarchal culture, either adopted similar pen names or had them imposed upon them.⁴¹ Unlike some female poets whose works have survived without pen names or titles, this ruler-poet, perhaps due to her political status, has several pen names and titles mentioned biographical

⁴⁰Anonymous, *Tārīkh-i shāhī-i Qarakhitā'iyān*, 59.

⁴¹One of Fath-'Alī Shāh's wives bore the pen name Mastūrah. Mahmūd Mīrzā, the author of *Tazkirah-'i nuql-i majlis* reportedly bestowed this poetic title upon the poet. 'Alī-Akbar Mushīr-i Salīmī, *Zanān-i sukhanvar* [Eloquent women] (Tehran: 'Ilmī, 1335/1956), 2:174.

⁴²Anonymous, *Tārīkh-i shāhī-i Qarakhitā'iyān*, 327.

⁴³After analyzing the titles attributed to Pādshāh Khātūn, Aqdas-Sidqiyanī argues that Lālah Khātūn is unlikely to have been her name, as it seems implausible for a child of Turkish origin to be named thus, and the title Pādshāh would not typically be given to a newborn. Instead, Aqdas-Sidqiyanī suggests that her name might have been Khātūn, as it is a common element shared by both titles, Lālah Khātūn and Pādshāh Khātūn. See, Aqdas-Sidqiyanī, "Safvah al-Dīn," 94. However, it seems more likely that designations such as bī-bī, khātūn, bigum were not original names but honorifics appended to the names of noblewomen. Therefore, her actual name remains unknown.

⁴⁴Üchük, *Zanān-i farmān' ravā*, 209.

⁴⁵Mahastī Ganjavī, *Dīvān*, ed. Tāhirī Shahāb (3rd reprint ed., Tehran: Ibn Sīnā, 1347/1968), 20.

⁴⁶Abū al-Qāsim Hālat in his article on Lālah Khātūn published in *Nashriyah-'i Talāsh*, narrates a story regarding the creation of two of Pādshāh Khātūn's rubā'ī (quatrains). He tells how greatly Pādshāh Khātūn loved her husband, Gaykhātū, and composed the quatrain "On the day they showed her in the beginning..." in his presence. When Gaykhātū embraced her, kissed her, and gave her an apple to eat, she spontaneously recited this quatrain with a slightly

anthologies. In addition to Safvat al-Dīn, some sources refer to her by the masculine name Hasan Shāh.⁴² Some sources, like Ātashkadah-'i Āzar (Azar's fire temple) refer to her as Lālah Khātūn, while others, such as Shams al-Dīn Sāmī and Muhammad Zihnī treat Pādshāh⁴³ and Lālah Khātūn⁴⁴ as two distinct poets. In any case, we are dealing with a poet who, according to historical records and her surviving works, was a powerful politician before and beyond being a poet and literary figure, which increased her need to conform and harmonize with the dominant trends.

Pādshāh Khātūn composed her poetry during a pivotal era of transformation and transition in women's poetry, marking the shift from the early periods to an age characterized by indirect and allusive expression. This transformation is vividly reflected in her work. It was a time when women began to craft their verses with ambiguity, veiled allusions. The individuality of the poet, and even that of her beloved, gradually recede into obscurity, as love itself transforms into a concealed and enigmatic sentiment. If Mahsatī wrote, "These handsome young men whose origins are from Chigil / Glorified be God, from what clay are they molded,"⁴⁵ and openly expressed love for young men or mentioned her beloved, Tāj al-Dīn Ahmad, in her poetry and addressed him directly, the romantic imagery that Pādshāh Khātūn creates, employing words such as "secretly" (*nihānī*), demonstrates a marked transformation compared to the preceding era:

The apple that secretly reaches me from your hand⁴⁶

Brings with it the scent of eternal life⁴⁷

In Pādshāh Khātūn's poetry, we see for the first time in women's poetry a condensed metaphor like "the veil of chastity."⁴⁸

Genitive similes with themes of chastity and modesty also appear in the poetry of Zīb al-Nisā' (AH 11th/17th century) in the



tradition of Pādshāh Khātūn's poetry, including "veil of chastity," "kohl of modesty," and "skirt of chastity."⁴⁹

The trend of chaste poetry that began with Pādshāh Khātūn extends to the poetry of contemporary innovative women, as exemplified by Zhālah Qā'im-Maqāmī (SH 1262–1325/1883–1946 CE), who, in several of her poems, alludes to and takes pride in her own purity:

Thanks be to God that with a spirit like a flower,

I shall be laid to rest in the earth, with my chastity intact.⁵⁰

Pādshāh Khātūn, adopting the pen name 'Iffatī, is the first to take pride in her chastity, inaccessibility, veiling, and beauty. This reveals that the value of feminine identity has now become entwined with such qualities. While women previously composed poetry more freely, with their works esteemed primarily for their artistic merit, the female poet now bows before a patriarchal world, recognizing her transformed position. Even before composing, which is a form of self-revelation, the poet reveals her certificate of captivity. This certificate shows she has written the verses while the oppressive weight of patriarchy pressed upon her feelings and individuality. It demonstrates, as Simone de Beauvoir would say, that she has "become a woman,"⁵¹ transformed, and a version created by men.

Pādshāh Khātūn composed the first poem beginning with "I am that woman," verses that not only submit to but also take pride in the prevailing ideals for women such as chastity and veiling, while emphasizing her feminine identity. Another lyrical poem following this celebrated poem by Pādshāh Khātūn, is by Mastūrah Kurdistānī, beginning with:

I am that woman who in the kingdom of chastity holds the highest seat

different version: "The apple that reached my mouth from your hand / From it, I reach the scent of eternal life."

However, just a few lines later, Hālat contradicts this narrative, stating that Lālah Khātūn, during the three years of her marriage to this corrupt young man, endured the utmost suffering and hardship. See Hālat, "Lālah Khātūn," 33.

⁴⁷Anonymous, Tārīkh-i shāhī-i Qarakhitā'iyān, 61. سببی که ز دست تو نهانی رسدم ز بوی حیات جاودانی رسدم

⁴⁸Amīr-Khusraw Dihlavī (AH 651–725/1253–1325) who was a contemporary of Pādshāh Khātūn and passed away 31 years after her, included this simile in his Matla' al-Anvār, an advice to his daughter, Mastūrah, and other young women: "Due to the impurities, the veil of chastity becomes weakened through indulgence." Amīr-Khusraw Dihlavī, Kham-sah, ed. Amīr-Ahmad Ashrafi (Tehran: Shaqā'iq, 1362/1983), 135.

⁴⁹Zīb al-Nisā Baygum, Dīvān-i Makhfi (Zīb al-Nisā Baygum), ed. Ahmad Karīmī (Tehran: Mā, 1362/1983). "Veil of chastity," Dīvān, 82; "Kohl of modesty," Dīvān, 50, 274; "Skirt of chastity," Dīvān, 211.

⁵⁰Zhālah Qā'im-Maqāmī, Dīvān, ed. Yāsaman Ārang (Isfahan: Adab-i Imrūz, 1389/2010), 93.

⁵¹Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 301.

⁵²Māh'sharaf Kurdistānī, *Dīvān-i Māh'sharaf Khānum Kurdistānī*(Mastūrah), ed. Yahyā Ma'rifat (Tehran: Shawravī, 1304/1925), 55. من آن زنم که به ملک عفاف صدگرزینم ز خیل پردگیان نیست در زمانه قرینم

⁵³Malūlī Shīrāzī, *Dīvān-i Malūlī-i Shīrāzī, Shā'ir-i zan-i dawrah'i Qājār*, ed. Ruqīyyah Farāhānī (Qom: Majma'-i Zakhā'ir-i Islāmī, 1389/2010), 172.

⁵⁴Aqdas-Sidqiyānī, "Safvah al-Dīn," 96.

Among the veiled ones, there is no equal to me in this world⁵²

We can also find a similar sentiment in the following verse by the Qajar poet, Malūlī:

I am the woman who has been behind the curtain all my life,

I have never been with anyone except my husband.

I am the woman who saw no man except my husband.

I have always been a secret among the people of my time.⁵³

As Aqdas-Sadqiyānī writes, "A more detailed version of this poetic composition in ten verses and with further variations, under the title of *Dar iltizām-i miqna'ah* (In commitment to the veil) has found its way into the Tehran lithograph edition of *Zahīr Fāryābī* and is attributed to *Zahīr*."⁵⁴

In the annotations of *Tārīkh-i Kirmān* (The history of Kerman), we find the following note:

a

Ibn Isfandiyyār *Tārīkh-i Tabaristān* (History of Tabaristan) includes a verse praising a woman, which reads as follows:

Far better than the hat of many men without modesty

Is the humblest veil adorned with loyalty

It is likely that it should follow the same verse about the veil. A verse with the same meter has also been quoted from *Zahīr Fāryābī*:

A thousand veils are better than a single hat



For hat and veil aren't for humiliation or disgrace⁵⁵

The editor suggests that either two individuals composed the poetic compositions in this meter, or one may have drawn inspiration from the other. In any case, this excerpt by Pādshāh Khātūn, due to its fame and significance, has also been welcomed and imitated by other poets.

The selection of pen names with meanings related to chastity for women, such as 'Iffatī (chaste), Nihānī (hidden), Makhfī (concealed), Mastūrah (veiled), and others, begins with Pādshāh Khātūn. She declares her position as a woman to be within the veil of chastity, which serves as her support, place of comfort, tranquility, and stability. It is her seat, her point of reliance, her backing, and shelter.⁵⁶ By being placed there, women achieve power, stability, and constancy. The support and shelter of a woman has become being behind a veil and cover, specifically the veil of chastity. Chastity is defined as guarding oneself from sin, maintaining purity, piety, virtue, and self-control. It refers to a purity that spans from the beginning of existence to the end of life, free from major sins, particularly fornication.⁵⁷ Although Pādshāh Khātūn and her mother, Tarkān Khātūn, could not take a step without being granted permission by chastity and purity, Tarkān Khātūn, despite her devotion and worship, was subject to criticism from the influential cleric, Shihāb al-Dīn. Pādshāh Khātūn introduces herself as veiled but crowned and regal:

I am that woman whose every deed is virtue

Beneath my veil lies much authority

Through the veil of chastity, my place of rest

Even the morning breeze passes with difficulty

I withhold the beauty of my countenance

⁵⁵Ahmad-'Alī Khān Vazīrī, *Tārīkh-i Kirmān*, edited and annotated by Bāstānī Pārizī (Tehran: 'Ilmī, 1374/1996), 460. هزار مقنعه باشد به از کلاه از آنک کلاه و مقنعه ز بهر ذلت و خواری است

⁵⁶Alī-Akbar Dihkhudā, *Lughat'nāmah-'i Dihkhudā* (Tehran: Nashr va Chāp-i Dānishgāh-i Tih-rān, 1377/1998), 5:6921.

⁵⁷Dihkhudā, *Lughat'nāmah-'i Dihkhudā*, 1:5962.

⁵⁸Anonymous, *Tārīkh-i shāhī-i Qarakhitā`iyān*, 60.

⁵⁹Ilāhah Shahrād, “Khātūn`hā-yi Shāh`nāmāh-`i Buzurg-i Mughūlī (Tahlīl-i naqsh va jāyghāh-i zanān dar Shāh`nāmāh-`i Buzurg-i Mughūlī bā rüykar-d-i bāztāb)” [The queens of the Great Mongol Shāh`nāmāh (An analysis of the role and status of women in the Great Mongol Shāh`nāmāh with a reflective approach)], *Majallah-`i Zan dar Farhang va Hunar* 6, no. 3 (Autumn 1393/2014): 391.

⁶⁰Shahrād, “Khātūn`hā-yi Shāh`nāmāh-`i Buzurg-i Mughūlī,” 397.

From the sun, that common wanderer of the markets⁵⁸

Pādshāh Khātūn, with all her regal glory and splendor, ruler of significant regions of Iran, from Greater Kerman and Yazd to the territories of Hormuz, Kish, and Bahrain, proudly celebrates her inaccessibility to others, even to the morning breeze and the wandering sun. She takes pride in her concealment, dismissing the sun as a common, readily available entity. This perspective reflects a shift in values for women, where certain traits have become as integral to their identity and worth as life itself. It is likely that during this period, women, particularly those from royal and aristocratic families, were not permitted the freedom to leave their homes unaccompanied, a reality more vividly evident in the poetry of later poets like Jahān Malak Khātūn. Such a portrayal of the sun and the breeze in literature, if not entirely unprecedented, remains exceptionally rare.

What was the nature of the veil during the time of Pādshāh Khātūn? Fortunately, in the Great Mongol Shāh`nāmāh manuscripts that have survived, there are illustrations of women and men with their distinctive forms of dress from this period. It can be said that “with the arrival of the Mongols (the Ilkhanids) in Iran, the art of manuscript illustration officially took shape. The great Mongol Shāh`nāmāh (Demotte), a masterpiece of Ilkhanid era painting, was illustrated in Tabriz during the reign of Abū Sa`īd Bahādur Khān as the first illustrated courtly manuscript, and after that, other illustrated Shāh`nāmāh gradually emerged.”⁵⁹ Since women were esteemed and held in high regard among the Mongols, they have a prominent presence in the images as well. Women and men are depicted in nearly identical forms in the illustrations, making it difficult for researchers to discern gender. As Shahrād notes, “Generally, young women and men without beards do not differ much. Physical distinctions were not emphasized, and their identical attire, men’s long hair, and their use of jewelry like earrings make identification even more difficult.”⁶⁰ However, one of the helpful factors in this regard is “the depiction of women’s faces, which are por-



trayed as somewhat more delicate and rounder than those of men, and the other is the type of their headgear. The specific headscarf and veil-like glass covering, which in some illustrations envelop the head and shoulders of the women, are distinguishing features.⁶¹ These head coverings are like “a delicate piece of sheer silk that is transparent and does not serve the purpose of a veil or full coverage. As all the details of the head and body are visible beneath it, only the edges and borders of this fabric, placed on the head, define its identity.”⁶² It seems that the covering was to a thin headpiece, with a ceremonial aspect rather than one intended for full concealment. This headpiece distinguishes women and men from each other, but it does not necessarily aim to conceal the hair. Visually, the women in the Great Mongol Shāh’nāmāh can be categorized into three groups. The first group, which includes most women in the illustrations, are women with glass-like headbands, who are generally present in court settings. The second group features women resembling Chinese women in kimonos, drawn without veils, their hair braided and gathered into a ring on top of their heads. The third group, depicted in only one illustration, shows a woman from the common class, dressed simply, with a plain white cotton headscarf.⁶³

In the poetry of this period, including Pādshāh Khātūn, not only are women’s bodies erased from the poem, but in a complete reversal of the previous era, their concealment and inaccessibility are also acknowledged and praised. It can be said that “bodies are socially and culturally constructed.”⁶⁴ As the French anthropologist Jean-Marie Brohm states, “Any political order enforces itself with violence, compulsion, and restriction of the body.” Therefore, every political system is accompanied by bodily regulation, since the human condition is fundamentally a bodily condition.⁶⁵ The poetry of this period, under patriarchal dominance, deviates from its authenticity.

On the other hand, beauty was considered one of the most important attributes for women and was typically one of the first

⁶¹Shahrād, “Khātūn’hā-yi Shāh’nāmāh-i Buzurg-i Mughūlī,” 397.

⁶²Shahrād, “Khātūn’hā-yi Shāh’nāmāh-i Buzurg-i Mughūlī,” 397.

⁶³Shahrād, “Khātūn’hā-yi Shāh’nāmāh-i Buzurg-i Mughūlī,” 397.

⁶⁴Mahdī Zarqānī and Gurūh-i Nivīsandīgān, Tārīkh-i badan dar adabiyāt [The history of the body in literature] (Tehran: Sukhan, 1398/2019), 32.

⁶⁵Quoted by Muhammad-‘Alī Tavānā and Mahmūd ‘Alīpūr, “Badan, sūzshah, va tiknuluzhī’hā-yi khvud: Dars’hā-yi az rāh-i hall-i Fūkūyī barā-yi jāmi’ah-i imrūz,” [Body, subject, and technologies of the self: Lessons from Foucault’s solution for today’s society], Gharb’shināsi-yi Bunīyādī, Pizhūhishgāh-i ‘Ulūm-i Insānī va Mutāla‘āt-i Farhangī 6, no. 2, 1394/2015): 3.

⁶⁶Shams al-Dīn Muhammad Hāfiz, *Dīvān*, ed. Khalīl Khattīb'rahbar (38th reprint ed., Tehran: Safti-'Alī'shāh, 1382/2003), 238. نه هر که سر بپراشد قلندری داند

⁶⁷Munshī, *Simtu al-'ulá*, 71. نه هر زنی به دو گز مقنعه است کدبانو نه هر سری به کلاهی سزای سرداری است به هر که مقنعه ای بخشم از سرم گوید چه جای مقنعه تاج هزار دیناری است

qualities listed for women, even for female poets. Pādshāh Khātūn also refers to the beauty of her own face.

In this passage, Pādshāh Khātūn offers a perspective on women, stating that simply wearing one or two layers of covering and a veil does not make a woman a true lady or matron. Womanhood, she argues, involves many subtle and intricate qualities, just as wearing a crown or a regal hat does not necessarily make someone fit for rulership. Beyond appearances, there are many spiritual and moral conditions that are crucial for this distinction. As Hafiz says, "Not every man who shaves his head knows the ways of the dervish."⁶⁶ Shaving one's head was one of the principles of dervishhood, just as wearing a veil or being beneath it has become inherently tied to the concept of womanhood. The poet's thoughtful and discerning attention to the expectations placed upon women reflects the changing position of women in society, influenced by religious zealots and politicians whose bigotry and misogyny shaped their actions. This shift signifies their success in transforming cultural values.

Not every woman in two meters of veil

Is a noblewoman, despite the tale.

Not every head with a regal hat holds worth,

To lead the land or claim the earth.

To whom I gift my veil from my head, they say,

"What need for a veil when a crown worth a thousand dinars is there instead?"⁶⁷

In this passage, Pādshāh Khātūn seeks to de-genderize leadership, asserting that a woman under a veil can also possess a head worthy of a thousand-dinar crown. She emphasizes that wearing a crown does not contradict womanhood, and no one



should be excluded from leadership simply because of their gender. Nor should every man who wears a crown automatically be deemed fit for leadership. In the final lines, she prays for the head of a woman to forever remain under a veil woven with chastity and virtue. The fact that such statements come from a royal woman reflects the immense pressure on female poets of the time. These women, who previously wrote on a wide range of philosophical, emotional, social, political topics, and pure maternal and feminine feelings, found themselves gradually retreating into a narrower, more unified lyrical expression. This poem by Pādshāh Khātūn marks a critical turning point in this shift. It illustrates the beginning of a period where women's poetry stagnated, becoming repetitive and artificial, and was deprived of expressing genuine feminine emotions until the early Qajar period.

In this significant sonnet, the frequency of key words is as follows:

- The words “woman” and “matron” are repeated four times, highlighting the central theme of the poem, and they are accompanied by the word “virtue,” appears twice.
- Words and expressions related to chastity include “veil” (used five times), “purity” (used two times), “within the veil,” and “passing with difficulty”.
- Words in contrast to chastity include “town wanderer” and “marketgoer”.

It is clear that the poem revolves around women and chastity. The two rarely used words “town wanderer” and “marketgoer” are placed in contrast with “within the veil of purity” and “leaning on it,” and calling the sun as a “town wanderer” greatly exaggerates her own chastity, reluctance, and distance from it.

“Beauty of countenance” is another noteworthy expression. The two qualities for which women are praised are chastity and beauty. In this sonnet, Pādshāh Khātūn refers to both of these

⁶⁸Munshī, *Simtu al-'ulá*, 71.

⁶⁹Qiyās al-Dīn Khvāndamīr, *Habīb al-siyar*, ed. Muhammad Dabīr'sīyāqī (Tehran: Khayyām, 1333/1954), 3:271.

من آن شهیم ز نژاد شهان العسلطان ز ما
برند اگر در جهان جهانانداری است جمال
طلعت خود را دریغ می دارم ز آفتاب که
آن شهرگرد و بازاری است همیشه باد سر
زن به زیر مقنعه ای که تار و پود وی از
عصمت و نکوکاری است

⁷⁰Aqdas-Sidqiyānī has suggested that this quatrain might have been created later, as the word *tarkān* should be read with either a *kasrah* (short "i" sound) or *fathah* (short vowel "a") (depending on the context), but in this case, it must be pronounced with a *dhammah* (short "u" sound) due to the reference to the Sultān. She wrote that it is unlikely Pādshāh Khātūn would mispronounce her mother's name. However, the pronunciation of *tarkān* with either a *fathah* or *kasrah* does not disrupt the rhyme's requirements, as the rhyme syllables *tānam*, *kānam*, *yānam* are sufficient for the verse. "Safvah al-Dīn," 99.

⁷¹Munshī, *Simtu al-'ulá*, 70. هر
چند که فرزند العسلطانم یا میوه بیستان دل
ترکانم می خندم از اقبال و سعادت لیکن
می گریم ازین غربت بی پایانم

attributes. A woman, as a sexual object, must be beautiful and alluring. Some female poets have referred to their own beauty or even praised it in line with the prevailing cultural system.

Subsequently, after Pādshāh Khātūn asserts that gender does not conflict with kingship, and aligns herself with common beliefs with the approval of female chastity, her statement evolves from "I am that woman" to "I am that king." She now presents herself with royal pride as a queen:

I am that sovereign from the exalted Sultan's line,

Rulership in the world, through us, does shine.⁶⁸

I guard the beauty of my face, concealed,

From the sun, that town-wanderer, revealed.

Let a woman's head forever be veiled,

Woven of chastity, where virtue prevailed.⁶⁹

In another poem, she alludes to her illustrious parents, and some of her verses, unlike those of many of her contemporaries, bear traces of her own identity and the events of her life. It seems that the following quatrain was composed during her time away from Kerman, while residing in Anatolia with her husband, Gaykhātū:

Though born of the exalted Sultan's grace,⁷⁰

A fruit of Tarkān's heart's orchard, I find my place.

I laugh because my fortune and prosperity's glow,

Yet I weep for the endless exile I know.⁷¹



Pādshāh Khātūn's words are fluent, eloquent, and articulate. The phrase "child of the exalted Sultan" specifically refers to her paternal lineage, while the "fruit of Tarkān's heart's orchard" simultaneously alludes to her emotional bond with her mother. The juxtaposition of "I laugh," representing happiness, with "I weep," underscoring her sorrow, creates a striking contrast. "Endless exile" is another poignant and evocative phrase that powerfully conveys the deep sadness and longing she feels from being separated from her homeland.

The surviving verses of Pādshāh Khātūn reveal her as a skilled poet adept in literary techniques and devices. She presents delightful and occasional novel themes in an ornate and polished style. The artistic value of even these few remaining verses could merit a separate study. Her mastery lies in adhering to the principles of eloquence and rhetoric. She pays equal attention to innovative themes and the music of language, skillfully employing literary and rhetorical embellishments to enhance the harmony between content and form. For example, in the first verse of her ghazal about the veil, which is essentially a proud self-introduction, the repetition of the long vowels "ā" and "ī" seven times evokes a sense of grandeur. Additionally, the repetition of the word "man" (I) three times and "kār" (deed) twice emphasizes her pride in claiming that all her deeds are virtuous. She asserts that even under a veil, she is worthy of wearing a crown.

The next verse features the genitive simile "the veil of chastity" (pardah-'i 'ismat) and the metaphorical genitive construction "travelers of the morning breeze"⁷² (musāfirān-i sabā), creating a brilliant couplet. In the second distich, her pride in being unattainable is highlighted through six elongated vowels, while the euphony is enhanced by the repetition of six instances of the consonant "r" and four instances of "s."

In the third distich, Pādshāh Khātūn uses a declarative statement:

⁷²The phrase "travelers of the east wind" (musāfirān-i sabā) also appears in the ode of Mujir al-Dīn Baylaqānī (d. AH 586/1197): "Know this: until the glad tidings of fulfillment reach no one / the travelers of the east wind sit in seclusion." Mujir al-Dīn Baylaqānī, *Divān*, ed. Muhammad Ābādī (Tabriz: Nashr-i Dānishgāh-i Tabrīz, 1358/1979), 14.

⁷³The vowel “ā” signifies power and pride. Mahvash Qavīmī, *Āvā va ilqā: Rahyāfī bih shī'r-i Akhavān Sālis* [Sound and suggestion: An approach to the poetry of Akhavan-Sales] (Tehran, Hirnis, 1383/2004), 31.

Nah har zanī bih dū gaz miqna‘ah ast kadbānū (Not every woman in two meters of veil is a noblewoman)

Nah har sarī bih kulāhī sazā-yi sardārī-st (Not every head with a regal hat holds worth to lead the land)...

Here, she balances lines to deliver a decisive judgment about women and men. The repetition of the sound “s” five times and the recurrence of the words sar (head) and sardārī (leadership) add to the rhythm and musicality of her verse.

The rhetorical device of repetition is the foundation of Pādshāh Khātūn’s verses. In the fourth distich, the word miqna‘ah (veil) is repeated twice. In the fifth distich, the repetition of the word shāh (king) in shāham (I am sovereign) and shahān (kings), along with the sound “zh,” further highlights her pride and grandeur. Additionally, the use of the word man (I) at the beginning of the first hemistich and mā (we) in zi mā barand (literally, “they rise from us”) emphasize her sense of pride. This is perfectly coordinated with the nine repetitions of the long vowels “ā” and “ī,” which enhance the overall rhythm and melody of the verse.⁷³

In the sixth distich, Pādshāh Khātūn employs remarkable personification and hyperbole by describing the sun as a “town-wanderer” and “marketgoer.” The blending of several rhetorical devices in a single hemistich is a hallmark of Pādshāh Khātūn’s surviving poetry. An example:

Ān rūz kih dar azal nishānash kardand

Āsāyish-i jān-i bī-dilānash kardand

Da‘vā-yi lab chūn shakarat kard nabāt

Dar Misr sih sīkh dar dahānash kardand



On the day⁷⁴ when fate marked it in eternity

Your lips became the solace of anguished lovers' hearts

Once a plant dared claim to surpass your sweet lips

In Egypt, they pierced its mouth with three spikes⁷⁵

The quatrain employs several rhetorical devices simultaneously:

Personification (*tashkhīs*): Plant is personified as a claimant.

Simple simile (*tashbīh-i sādah*): The lips are compared or likened to sugar.

Preferential simile (*tashbīh-i tafzīl*): The beloved's lips are deemed superior to plant (sugarcane).

Poetic etiology (*husn-i ta'līl*): The physical shape of the plant is a symbol of its punishment.

Alliteration (*vāj-ārāyī*): The consonant “d” is repeated thirteen times, “r” ten times, and “n” eleven times.

Another intriguing aspect is the reference to “three spikes in the mouth” or “to pierce with four spears,” which refers to a method of execution by impalement. This method involved inserting a long spear through the body of the condemned, leaving them to die in agony. This metaphor, tied to governance and politics, aligns with Pādshāh Khātūn's position as a ruler. Egypt's historical reputation for sugar exports further showcases Pādshāh Khātūn's extensive knowledge, even in the limited number of her surviving verses. Additionally, reference switching (*iltifāt*) is evident in the transition from the third person in the first distich to second person in the second.⁷⁶

Sībī kih zi dast-i tū nihānī rasadam

Z-ū bū-yi hayāt-i jāvidānī rasadam

Chūn nār-i dilam bikhāndad az shādī-i ān

⁷⁴Nayyirah Aqdas-Sidqiyānī without providing any justification has written about this quatrain that it is not a good poem. See Sidqiyānī, “Safvah al-Dīn,” 98.

⁷⁵Munshī, *Simtu al-'ulá*, 70. آن روز که در ازل نشانش کردند آسایش جان بیدلانش کردند دعوی لب چون شکر ت کرد نبات در مصر سه سیخ در دهانش کردند

⁷⁶Nayyirah Aqdas-Sidqiyānī without providing any justification has written about this quatrain that it is not a good poem. See Sidqiyānī, “Safvah al-Dīn,” 98.

⁷⁷Anonymous, *Tārīkh-i shāhī-i Qarakhitā`iyān*, 61. سیبى كه
 ز دست تو نهانى رسدم زو بوى حیات
 جاودانى رسدم چون نار دلم بختدد از
 شادى آن كز دست وكف تو دوستگانی
 رسدم

K-az dast-ū kaf-i tū dūstgānī rasadam⁷⁷

An apple that secretly reaches me from your hand

Brings with it the fragrance of eternal life

Like a pomegranate, my heart bursts into joyful laughter

When a gift of friendship comes from your gracious palm

The verses demonstrate:

Congruity (tanāsub): Between apple and pomegranate.

Derivation (ishtiqaq): In dast (hand) and dūst (friend).

Poetic etiology: Attributing the pomegranate's split to laughter and joy.

Allusion (talmīh): To the story of Adam, Eve, the apple and immortality.

Alliteration: The letter "s" is repeated seven times, all align with the concealed reception of the apple from the beloved, evoking a sense of silence and a hushed whisper.

Metaphor (isti'ārah) The heart is likened to a split pomegranate, a subtle and artistic image that reflects the poet's creative sensibility.

Another quatrain:

Bar la`l kih dīd hargiz az mushk raqam?

Yā ghāliyah bar nūsh kujā kard sitam?

Jānā asar-i khāl-i siyāh bar lab-i tū

Tārikī va āb-i zindagānī-st bih ham

Who has ever seen a ruby marked with the scent of musk?

Or where has perfume ever wronged the sweetness of honey?



Beloved, the black mole upon your lips

Is darkness and the water of life combined

The beloved's black mole above her lip forms three similes in the first, second, and fourth hemistichs. In fact, this quatrain contains three compound similes, each of which serves as the tenor of the third line. This type of simile, where multiple tenors are brought together for a single vehicle is known as a "singular to plural simile" (*tashbīh-i jam'*).⁷⁸ In the first distich, uses the rhetorical question "Who has ever seen?" to introduce a riddle while simultaneously employing metaphors like "ruby" and "musk" to enhance the imagery. Suddenly, in the second distich, the reader is surprised when the beloved is addressed with the deeply emotional word *jānā* (beloved, literally "O soul"), unveiling the riddle of the previous distich. With the delightful contrast between "darkness" and the "water of life," and the construction of an allusion, the third compound simile is smoothly introduced in the final line. In the *Rasā'il al-'ushshāq* (Epistles of lovers), there is an old quatrain that seems to have inspired Pādshāh Khātūn's final line:

They say that just as the beloved's lips are (sweet)

The fresh hyacinth suffers injustice beside them.

I say, what sorrow is there in this tale?

For darkness and the water of life are intertwined.⁷⁹

Pādshāh Khātūn's quatrain not only excels in its intertwined rhetorical devices and subtlety of meaning but also surpasses her previous quatrain in terms of psychological depth, rhythm, melody, and the absence of any interruption or pause.

In another distich, Pādshāh Khātūn uses repetition effectively. The triple repetition of the syllable *tū* (you) in *tawbah va tū*

⁷⁸Sīrūs Shāmisā, *Bayān va ma'ānī* [Expression and meaning] (Tehran: Firdaws, 1379/2000), 48.

⁷⁹Alī bin Ahmad Sayfī *Nīshābūrī, Rasā'il al-'ushshāq va vasā'il al-mushtāq* (Tehran: Sukhan, 1399/2020), 346. گویند از آن سان که لب آن صنم است زآن سنبل نورسته بدو بر، ستم است گویم که ازین حدیث چه جای غم است تاریکی و آب زندگانی به هم است

⁸⁰Khvāndamīr, *Habīb al-siyar*, 271. من اگر توبه ز می کرده‌ام ای سرو سہی تو خود این توبہ نکردی کہ بہ من می ندھی

⁸¹Khvāndamīr, *Habīb al-siyar*, 271. بس غصہ کہ از چشمہ نوش تو رسید. تادست من امروز بہ دوش تو رسید

(repentance and you) and the repeated pairing of man va may (I and wine) created auditory harmony that aligns with the meaning of reproach and direct address (“you,”), enhancing both its impact and charm:

Had I repented from wine, O tall cypress

It is you who have not repented, for withholding it from me⁸⁰

Her metaphors are vibrant and evocative:

So much sorrow reached me from the spring of your nectar
Until today, my hands reached to rest upon your shoulders⁸¹

However, she places greater emphasis on similes than metaphors. Her use of similes outnumbered metaphors twofold.

Conclusion

A few poetic compositions by Pādshāh Khātūn, the ruler of Kerman, have been transmitted in historical books, amounting to a total of nineteen distichs. Pādshāh Khātūn composed her poetry during a transitional period when women’s poetry shifted from an era of bold and direct expression to a more veiled and subtle form of speech. Her poetry vividly reflects this transformation. It was a time when women began to write with ambiguity, metaphor, and allusion, and the individuality of the poet, as well as that of her beloved, gradually became obscured. For the first time in women’s poetry, expressions like “the veil of chastity” appeared, and pen names such as ‘Iffatī (chaste) began to emerge among female poets. Pādshāh Khātūn was a skilled poet in the use of literary devices. The core of her artistry lies in her rhetorical creativity, employing repetition of sounds and words, and in her metaphorical innovations. The vocabulary that finds its way into her poetry often has a literary or historical background and is chosen based on aesthetic principles. Pādshāh Khātūn places great importance on the harmony of words and



the melody of letters, as the musicality of sounds and her strong imagination intertwine the words in each verse like a chain. Her significance as a ruler and her influential political personality would have been enough for her to be remembered in Iranian history, even if only this small body of poetry had been preserved. In her important and artistic poems, she adhered to the principles of eloquence and rhetoric, capturing the unseen face of the Iranian woman in her era. Thus, she remains one of the most important female poets in Persian literature.