

Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī as Depicted in Early Historical Sources

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Abstract

Starting his intellectual life as a precociously young medical practitioner, Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī (634-710 A.H.) was compelled to wander far and wide in his quest for knowledge. Recognized and admired as a savant, and enjoying the patronage of key political figures of his era, Shīrāzī's activities as a scholar continued even during his appointment as judge in Rūm, and while serving as ambassador on behalf of his Ilkhan patrons. This paper examines a number of early chronicles in order to shed more light on Shīrāzī's itinerant life as a well-known intellectual luminary of the period.

Keywords: Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī; *al-Tuḥfa al-Sa'dīya*; Ibn al-Fuwaṭī; al-Dhahabī; al-Sallāmī

Introduction

Described as “one of the greatest Persian scientists of all times,” and “one of the foremost thinkers and scholars of Islam,” Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī (630-710 A.H.) was an Ilkhanid-era savant who wrote on astronomy, philosophy, theology, and medicine (Sarton, p. 1017; Nasr, p. 217). He is often remembered today for his commentary on the *Hikmat al-Ishrāq* (“Philosophy of Illumination”) by Shahāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī (549-587 A.H.; see Walbridge). A large encyclopedic work of Shīrāzī, *Durrat al-Tāj li-Ghurrat al-Dubāj* or the *Pearl in the Crown for the Brow of al-Dubāj* (henceforth *Durrat al-Tāj*) is also well known (Walbridge, p. 176). The dearth of modern editions of Shīrāzī's many works, noted by Nasr in 1976, is strangely at odds with Shīrāzī's reputation and has not improved substantially since this observation was originally made (Nasr, *ibid*).

A survey of the biographical information that has reached us in regard to Shīrāzī appears in two publications in Persian: An article by M. Minovi in *Yādnāmeḥ-i Irāni-i Minorsky*, and a biography by M. Mir. The most comprehensive collection of bibliographical information on Shīrāzī in English appears in Walbridge's *The Science of Mystic Lights*. The sources for this paper include, as well, Shīrāzī's autobiographical notes in his *al-Tuḥfa al-Saḍīya*, and the information appearing in the works by Ibn al-Fuwaṭī (642-723 A.H./1244-1323 C.E.), al-Dhahabī (673-748 A.H./1274-1348 C.E.), al-Sallāmī (d. 774 A.H./1372 C.E.), and Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (773-852 A.H./1372-1449 C.E.).

Shīrāzī's Autobiographical information in the *al-Tuḥfa al-Saḍīya*

Shīrāzī's *al-Tuḥfa al-Saḍīya* is a commentary on the first book of Avicenna's *Canon of Medicine* (Walbridge, p. 186). It is the only known work of Shīrāzī that has a biographical introduction, and it is thus likely that Shīrāzī considered it his major work. Shīrāzī's introduction to his commentary has been reproduced nearly in its entirety in M. Mishkat's edition of the *Durrat al-Tāj*, MS Majlis 3904 was used for the translations below.

Shīrāzī begins by giving a brief account of his family members and their experience in medicine:

I was from a household that was famed in this art ... By virtue of my family's success in the treatment and the correction of the complexions with Jesus-like breathes and Moses-like hands, I too rejoiced, in the bloom of my youth, in attaining and comprehending it both in detail and in summary. And I engaged in all that was associated with medicine and with ophthalmology as far as the manual techniques such as bleedings, extractions ...

And all of this I did beside my father, Imam Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Mas'ūd Ibn al-Muṣliḥ al-Kāzirūnī ... who was considered to be the Hippocrates of his age and the Galen of his day. (Shīrāzī, *al-Tuḥfa al-Sa'īya*, MS Majlis 3904, folio 2r)

At his father's death, Shīrāzī who was still an adolescent was promoted to take his place:

And since I had developed a reputation as one with a good instinct and acumen, I was made a physician and ophthalmologist in the Muẓaffarī hospital in Shīrāz after the death of my father, when I was fourteen years old. And I stayed there for ten years as one of the doctors who did not desist from studies except to provide treatment ... for the reason that my soul was not satisfied with that which my contemporaries were content ... rather it drove me to exert my utmost in it so that I would attain the highest level of achievement. (ibid)

It was at this early stage of Shīrāzī's career that he initiated a project that was to preoccupy him for the rest of his life, the study of Avicenna's *Canon of Medicine*.

So I started the study of the principles of the *Canon* with my paternal uncle, the king of scientists ... Kamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Khayr Ibn al-Muṣliḥ-i Kāzirūnī, and with ... Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥakīm al-Kīshī, then with the savant of the age, Sharaf al-Dīn Zakī al-Būshkānī, since they were famous for the teaching of this work and the distinguishing of the chaff from the grain, while having a clear view to the solution of its problems and the uncovering of its complexities. May the Lord bless them ... Yet, by virtue of this book being the most difficult composed in this art as far as comprehension, and the most straitened in terms of its course, this due to the inclusion of philosophical remarks, precise scientific formulations and wondrous points and extraordinary mysteries, the minds of our contemporaries were perplexed ... for the ideas included therein are the limits of the viewpoints of the foremost of the ancients and the extreme thoughts of the moderns, not one of them was capable of treating the book sufficiently, and therefore I despaired of them and likewise of the commentaries that I had encountered. (ibid)

Despondent over the state of the commentaries on Avicenna's *Canon* Shīrāzī journeys to meet the illustrious savant Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī:

[So] I turned my attention to that city of knowledge and that face of the *ka'aba* of wisdom; the high, precious, holy, splendid presence and the elevated, immaculate, masterly and

philosophical threshold ... of [Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī] may the Lord sanctify his soul and embalm his tomb, [so that] some of the obscure points were clarified with others remaining obscure, since a mastery of the principles of theory is not sufficient for the comprehension of this book. Rather it is necessary, in addition, for the person to be a practiced physician with experience in the principles of treatment via the equilibration of the complexions. (Idem, folio 2v)

It is worth noting that Ṭūsī was by this point in the service of Hulāgū (c. 613-663 A.H.), and Shīrāzī's tutelage under him would of necessity have been at Marāgha. Shīrāzī tells us that the subsequent stage of his project with respect to the *Canon* was to embark on an extended journey and thus to cast his net further for information pertaining to the *Canon*.

I then travelled to Khurāsān and from there to the cities of the 'Irāq-i 'Ajam then to 'Irāq-i 'Arab, Bagdad and its environs and from there to Rūm and I engaged in discussions with the scientists of these realms and the physicians of these parts and I asked them of the truths of these difficulties, and I benefitted from what they possessed as far as detailed knowledge so that I had amassed what no one had amassed... Yet, despite all of this effort and peregrinations even to Rūm, what was hidden in the book remained more than what was apparent. (ibid)

The subsequent episode that Shīrāzī includes in his autobiography is his service as Takūdār Aḥmad's ambassador to the Mamluk court, in 681 A.H. (Dhahabī, vol. LIV, p. 101). In his decades-long zeal for unlocking the mysteries of the *Canon*, Shīrāzī was apparently able to benefit from this diplomatic mission by obtaining new commentaries for the *Canon* in Cairo. At long last these manuscripts enabled Shīrāzī to author his own commentary of the *Canon*:

There I succeeded in obtaining three of the comprehensive commentaries on the *kulliyāt*: one from the ... philosopher 'Alā al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī Ibn Abū al-Ḥazm al-Qurashī who is known as Ibn al-Nafīs, and the second from ... Ya'qūb Ibn Ishaq al-Sāmīrī al-Mutaṭabbib and the third the physician Abū al-Faraj Ya'qūb Ishaq al-Mutaṭabbib al-Masīḥī known as Ibn al-Quff and I succeeded in obtaining the responses of al-Sāmīrī to the questions of the physician Najm al-Miftāḥ on some of the viewpoints of the book, [obtaining as well] a recension of the *Canon* by Hibbatallah Ibn Jamī' al-Yahūdī al-Miṣrī in which he refuted the Sheikh [i.e., Avicenna], and in addition some of the ... notes written by Amīn al-Dawla ibn Tilmīdh on the margins of the book, [obtaining as well] the book of ... the Imām 'Abd al-

Laṭīf Ibn Yūsuf Ibn Muḥammad al-Baghdādī in which he refuted Ibn Jamīl. When I studied these commentaries and others which I had obtained, the remainder of the book became clear such that there did not remain within it obscurity or difficulty nor was there left room for disputation. And since I had collected what no person had collected in regard to the knowledge of the decipherment of this book and of the separation of what within it is as the chaff to the grain, I saw fit to write a commentary upon it so as to reduce the difficulty of the words, and to remove from the face of their meanings the mask of obscurity. (ibid)

Indeed, Shīrāzī's tells us that the success of his commentary on the principles of the *Canon* was such that he was approached and asked repeatedly to complete his commentary (presumably for the remaining portions of the *Canon*). The subsequent section of Shīrāzī's narrative is remarkable and striking. He tells us that among his reasons for refusing these requests were:

a continuous string of cataclysms afflicting learned men [one following the other] until they had effaced the worksites of religion and until the pillars of religious law had weakened utterly, oppressing knowledge and its [practitioners] and obstructing from all directions its [valued offerings, so that] its minaret lay in ruins and all traces of it were obliterated. (Idem, folio 3r)

It is interesting to note that one of Shīrāzī's concerns in regard to the detrimental effect of the mayhem unleashed by the Fates, was its effect on his acumen and judgement:

Some learned men do not issue fatwas on Saturday and Wednesday and claim [as their excuse] that holidays on Friday and Tuesday weaken understanding ... and if holidays are a single day ... so what then would you think of a twenty year long hiatus, without debates, study, [scholarly] work, and disputation. (ibid)

We should note here that the period leading to 682 A.H. appears to have been particularly productive with respect to publications: In addition to the first edition of his commentary on the *Canon*, Shīrāzī's wrote several other works, including the *Nihāyat al-Idrāk fī Dirāyat al-Aflāk* ("The Limits of Attainment in the Understanding of the Heavens," henceforth the *Nihāyat al-idrāk*), and the *Ikhtiyārāt-i Muẓaffarī*, both on *hay'ā*.

From Shīrāzī's point of view the "string of cataclysms" continued unbroken:

...until the Lord brought forth victory and triumph and provided the Muslims with strength and power, and the star of Islam appeared and the government of [Ghāzān] rose as the Sun upon the sleepers, may his elevated threshold be ever surrounded by the swords of victory, etc. (ibid)

The cataclysms are then dated to the period subsequent to Shīrāzī's trip to Cairo (in 681 A.H.) and the accession of Ghāzān in 694 A.H. Presumably the execution of Shīrāzī's patron, Shams al-Dīn Juwaynī on the 4th of Sha'abān, 683 A.H., was among the earliest of the cataclysms that Shīrāzī alludes to.

Biographical information in Ibn al-Fuwaṭī's *Majma' al-Ādāb fī Mu'jam al-Alqāb*

As the librarian of the observatory at Marāgha Ibn al-Fuwaṭī apparently knew Shīrāzī personally. Regrettably, Ibn al-Fuwaṭī's original work has been lost, and what has survived is merely an abridgment of the original. This is especially unfortunate because Ibn al-Fuwaṭī begins his biography of Shīrāzī by describing him as: "A learned man, whom, were I to commence in describing, I would [in so doing] require an entire volume by itself." (Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, III, p. 440). As it is, the surviving text by Ibn al-Fuwaṭī only touches on two of the main episodes of Shīrāzī's life. The first is his trip to Marāgha seeking Ṭūsī's tutelage, for which Ibn al-Fuwaṭī supplies the date 658 A.H. (i.e. 1259-60 C.E.). In describing this trip to Marāgha Ibn al-Fuwaṭī lists two of Shīrāzī's other teachers, as well:

[Shīrāzī] studied with Najm al-Dīn al-Kātibī al-Qazwīnī that which he had composed on logic and with Mu'ayyad al-Dīn al-'Urḍī that which he had composed in astronomy and geometry and he wrote with his fine and comely hand all that he had studied and had achieved and he exerted himself in his studies night and day. (ibid)

In addition to Ṭūsī, Mu'ayyad al-Dīn al-'Urḍī (d. 1266 C.E.) and Najm al-Dīn al-Kātibī (d. 675 A.H./1276 C.E.) were two of the key scientists working at Marāgha (see Mohaghegh; Hebraeus, p. 151; Walbridge, p. 11; Mudarris Razavī, p. 130), both of whose contributions were acknowledged by name in the planetary table compiled at Marāgha, the *Zīj-i Ilkhānī* (Mudarris Razavī, ibid).

The other episode that is captured in Ibn al-Fuwaṭī's surviving text is one on which Shīrāzī is silent, i.e., the episode involving his appointment as judge in Sivas: "and he was appointed judge in Rūm and lived in Sivas for a while then returned to Adharbāijān and became

a resident of Tabrīz.” (Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, III, p. 441) As we will see this appointment would have preceded Shīrāzī's role as ambassador to Cairo. In his opening Ibn al-Fuwaṭī describes Shīrāzī as possessing “a prophetic disposition, divine knowledge, a noble soul, a towering mind, generosity and beneficence” (ibid). He concludes by noting that, upon his return from Cairo, Shīrāzī “busied himself with writing and research and his presence became the gathering place for the wise and learned men. And he was mild-tempered and witty in discussions. He was also intimate with sultans and viziers. He was born in 630 A.H. and he died in Tabrīz in the year 710 A.H. and was buried in the Jarandāb (Chanrandāb) [cemetery].” (ibid).

Biographical information in al-Dhahabī's *Tārīkh al-Islām*

Al-Dhahabī's biography of Shīrāzī as it appears in his monumental *Tārīkh al-Islām*, provides several additional details in regard to Shīrāzī's education and life. For instance al-Dhahabī lists ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Abū Bakr al-Ṭā’ūsī as having taught *fiqh*, or jurisprudence, to Shīrāzī, though this episode is apparently of a later period, when Shīrāzī had left Shiraz and was in Qazwīn (Walbridge, p. 12).¹ Minovi writes of Shīrāzī meeting with a certain Ḍiā’ al-Dīn Ṭūsī in Qazwīn. Shīrāzī relates the reason for his residence to Ḍiā’ al-Dīn who reports it in turn: “He said I was engaged in the practice of medicine, but I left the [practice] and started traveling and learned theology (*‘ilm al-kalām*) and the other intellectual sciences (*al-ma’qūlāt*), but I was ever yearning and my soul would not be content. Yet, I had no knowledge of the transmitted sciences (*al-manqūlāt*) and especially of jurisprudence (*fiqh*). It is for this reason that I study with Sheikh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn.” (Minovi, p. 169)²

In his article al-Dhahabī briefly describes Shīrāzī's early career as a teenage physician and his trip to Marāgha: “and he was made a physician in the hospital while he was young, and he travelled to Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī and [joined his retinue] and studied under him his commentary on *al-Ishārāt* and mathematics and *hay’ā* and he [excelled in these].” (al-Dhahabī, LIV, p. 101] Of interest is the fact that al-Dhahabī lists Ṭūsī as having taught *hay’ā* to the young Shīrāzī (recall that in his autobiographical material Shīrāzī's states that his purpose for seeking Ṭūsī was his desire to acquire medical knowledge). The

1. I gratefully acknowledge Professor Walbridge for drawing my attention to al-Dhahabī's entry on Shīrāzī.

2. Walbridge identifies Ḍiā’ al-Dīn as a grandson of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī. See Walbridge, p. 12, and Mudarris Razavī, pp. 40-42.

commentary in question here is the one that Ṭūsī wrote on Avicenna's *al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbīhāt*, or “Remarks and Admonitions.” (ibid) The subsequent portion of al-Dhahabī's biography deals with Shīrāzī's appointment as judge in Anatolia and his mission to Cairo:

He then went to Rūm and *Barwānāh* honored him and appointed him as the judge of Sivas and Malaṭiyya. And he went to Syria as the ambassador of [Takūdār] Aḥmad and when Aḥmad was murdered Shīrāzī went back to court and Arghūn honored him. (ibid)

The *Barwānāh* (or, more properly, Ṣāhib Parvāna) in question is Mu'īn al-Dīn, the administrator appointed by the Mongols for Anatolia on the eve of Hulāgū's campaigns in Persia (Cahen, pp. 273-276). In Rabī' al-awwal, 676 A.H., Mu'īn al-Dīn payed with his life for allegedly intriguing with the Mamluk ruler Baybars (ibid, 276-291). If, therefore, al-Dhahabī is correct in claiming that Shīrāzī's residence in Anatolia was at the behest of the Parvāna, this would date Shīrāzī's appointment as judge to the period prior to 676 A.H. (1277 C.E.) and, likely, before 673 A.H. which was the beginning of Baybars's adventure in Anatolia (ibid, 286). It should be noted here that Shīrāzī's translation into Persian of Ṭūsī's *Taḥrīr-i Uqlīdis* (*Recension of [the Elements of] Euclid*) is dedicated to Mu'īn al-Dīn, and so likely belongs to the period of Shīrāzī's stay in Sivas (Mir, 69).

At some point after his return from Cairo, though al-Dhahabī does not make clear exactly when, Shīrāzī appears to have settled in Tabrīz and focused on the study of ḥadīth literature. As Wiedemann suggests this could very well refer to the end of Shīrāzī's life (al-Dhahabī, ibid; also see Wiedemann). Al-Dhahabī also lists here four of Shīrāzī's works: “and he is the author of books, among them the *Ghurrat al-Tāj* [sic] on philosophy and a commentary on *al-Asrār* [sic] by the murdered al-Suhrawardī, and a commentary on the *Kulliyāt* and a commentary on *al-Mukhtaṣar* by Ibn al-Ḥājib.” (Dhahabī, ibid). *Ghurrat al-Tāj* is clearly the *Durrat al-Tāj*. Suhrawardī's work is the *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq*, the renowned text on illuminationist philosophy. The *Kulliyāt* is clearly Avicenna's *Canon* (for which Shīrāzī wrote his commentary). *Al-Mukhtaṣar* appears to refer to the abridgment by Ibn Ḥājib of his own *Muntahā al-Suḥūl wa al-Amal fī 'Ilm al-Uṣūl wa al-Jadal*” (see Fleisch; Walbridge, 189).

The remainder of al-Dhahabī's article describes the personal characteristics of Shīrāzī, mentioning especially his intellectual brilliance, his generosity, and his piety, but mentioning as well Shīrāzī's irreverence, his ability to play music on the rubāb, his fondness for

wine. Al-Dhahabī also adds that Shīrāzī continued to teach “*al-Kashshāf*, *al-Qānūn*, *al-Shifāʾ*”, and the ancient (*awāʾil*) sciences.” (ibid) Here, by *al-Kashshāf* al-Dhahabī is referring to *al-Kashshāf ʿan Ḥaqāʾiq al-Tanzīl*, “Unveiler of the Realities of Revelations,” the renowned Quranic commentary by Zamakhsharī (467-538 A.H./1075-1144 C.E.; see Versteegh; Walbridge, p. 188). *Al-Qānūn* is Avicenna's *Canon* to which we have made numerous references in this paper. Al-Dhahabī concludes his article on Shīrāzī by stating:

And he possessed excellent qualities, virtue, and [upstanding] morals. May the Lord [forgive his sins and ours]. Amen! For he was a sea of knowledge and a possessor of acumen and his best field was mathematics. I have witnessed his students honor him greatly. (al-Dhahabī, ibid, p. 102)

Biographical information in al-Sallāmī's *Tārīkh ʿUlamāʾ Baghdād*

In his article al-Sallāmī starts off the biography of Shīrāzī by rendering his life up to shortly before Ṭūsī's death as we have seen it before, with some minor modifications:

He worked under his father and his paternal uncle and under al-Shams al-Kutubī and Zakī al-Barsakānī. And when his father died he was 14 years old and he was appointed to his father's position in the Muḏaffarī hospital in Shiraz, then he travelled when he was twenty something, heading for Naṣīr al-Dīn and accompanied him and studied his philosophical works and *hayʾa* and he excelled in these [so that Ṭūsī would call him] the “pole of the sphere of existence” and he travelled with him to Khurāsān and then he returned to Baghdād and lived in the Niḏāmīya and the Ṣāḥib Dīwān [i.e., Shams al-Dīn Juwaynī] honored him and he consorted with Hulāgū and Abāqā. (Sallāmī, p. 177)

That the erroneous rendition of Shīrāzī's early teachers is similar to al-Dhahabī's is not surprising as al-Sallāmī expressly cites al-Dhahabī and Ibn al-Fuwaṭī as his sources for Shīrāzī's biography (Sallāmī, pp. 177, 179). The information seen here that is missing in al-Dhahabī (and the likely source of which, therefore, is Ibn al-Fuwaṭī's lost work) is Ṭūsī's characterization of the young Shīrāzī, which contains a pun on Quṭb al-Dīn's name; Quṭb being the word for pole in Arabic. This speaks of Ṭūsī's affection and esteem, and is a possible explanation for Quṭb al-Dīn's name. In addition, the account of Shīrāzī's stay at the Niḏāmīya in Baghdad, and the patronage of Shams al-Dīn Juwaynī is also the earliest surviving account of this phase of Shīrāzī's life.

The account of Shīrāzī's relocation to Anatolia appears as follows in al-Sallāmī, in what is the only surviving text that mentions anything about Shīrāzī's children:

So he went to Rūm and “The Eagle” honored him and ... appointed him as judge of Sivas and Malaṭīyya and he went with his children to Rūm. And Ibn al-Fuwaṭī relates that he was always deep in thought and engaged in writing and his hand was never devoid of a pen. And people would gather to him and benefit from his company. And he was good-humored and witty and generous. (ibid)

Based on the parallel account in al-Dhahabī, the character referred to as “The Eagle” is likely Mu‘īn al-Dīn (i.e., the Parvāna) himself, though the epithet does not appear, to my knowledge, in other sources.¹

Another episode for which there is no surviving account prior to its appearance in al-Sallāmī's work is Shīrāzī's residence in Juwayn (Joveyn), the hometown of Shams al-Dīn and ‘Alā’ al-Dīn: “And he left Adharbāyjān and resided for a spell in the school which Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Juwaynī had built in Juwayn – having conferred the responsibilities of its teaching program upon Najm al-Dīn al-Kātibī al-Qazwīnī. And Quṭb al-Dīn was the assistant in his teaching.” (Idem, p. 178) Recall that according to the surviving biography of Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, al-Kātibī was Shīrāzī's teacher of logic at Marāgha. The dates for this episode are unknown. What can be said with reasonable certainty is that it was before Shīrāzī's residence in Anatolia. Shīrāzī tells us that by 673 A.H. (1274 C.E.) he was in Konya studying ḥadīth and other topics with Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī (Walbridge, p. 14). In this case the period between c. 667 A.H. (c. 1269 C.E., i.e., the end of Shīrāzī's trip to Khurāsān with Ṭūsī) and 673 A.H. would have seen Shīrāzī in Juwayn serving as assistant to Kātibī, as well as in Baghdad at the Niẓāmīya. The dates of Shīrāzī's study with Ṭā’ūsī in Qazwīn are not known, but since it is hardly conceivable that he would have done this after his appointment as judge by Mu‘īn al-Dīn (if we are to believe al-Dhahabī), then Shīrāzī's Qazwīn episode and the other two belong to the period of roughly 667 A.H. to 673 A.H. If Shīrāzī's ordering of events is accurate this would mean that he spent the period prior to 673 A.H. in Marāgha, Khurāsān, Qazwīn, and Bagdad, before traveling to Anatolia and settling in Konya. The appointment as judge in Sivas would have been before 676 A.H. and Shīrāzī may very well have remained in Sivas until

1. It should be noted that in Arabic “Eagle” and “Vulture” are designated by the same word, *al-nasr*.

680 A.H. when he completed the *Ikhtiyārāt-i Muẓaffarī*, his Persian work on *hayʾa*.¹

Al-Sallāmī's description of Shīrāzī's trip to Anatolia is unfortunately muddled, however, by the existence of second account of what appears to be the same event. Immediately after the Juwayn episode al-Sallāmī has the following:

And Shams al-Dīn appointed him as judge in Anatolia so he [went there] and took up residence in Sivas and the seekers of knowledge enjoyed and benefitted from his presence and he wrote [there] on the principles of *fiqh* and a commentary on Ibn al-Ḥājib's book and authored the *Ikhtiyārāt al-Muẓaffariyya* [sic] and the commentary on the *Miftāḥ* of Sakkāki and a commentary on the *kulliyāt* [of the Canon] by Avicenna and he wrote the book *Tuḥfa* on the science of *hayʾa* as well as other treatises and books. (ibid)

Though it is not clear what to make of the apparently conflicting account of who appointed Shīrāzī as judge in Sivas, it should be noted here that as a vassal state with what was effectively an Ilkhan-appointed viceroy in the person of Muʿīn al-Dīn, the Seljuks were ultimately under the control of the Mongol Ilkhans. That Shams al-Dīn alone was responsible for Shīrāzī's appointment and that he did this after the death of the Muʿīn al-Dīn (i.e., sometime after 676 A.H.), is within the realm of possibility, though this would render al-Dhahabī's account as completely wrong. A more plausible narrative would have had both administrators, one belonging to the ruling state and one to the vassal, as having effected Shīrāzī's appointment in Sivas. Melville includes a telling detail about the Seljuk monuments in Sivas in his "Cambridge History of Turkey" article on Anatolia under Mongol rule: While the Çifte Minare Medresesi (i.e., the "Madrasa of the Twin Minarets") was founded by Shams al-Dīn in 672 A.H., the inscriptions on this monument do not include the names of either the Mongol or the Seljuk ruler. This fact emphasizes both Shams al-Dīn Juwaynī's personal interest in Sivas, as well as the extent of his power and prestige there (Melville, I, p. 73). Given the contradictory accounts of Shīrāzī's appointment, the best we can do now is to assume that both administrators – Shams al-Dīn from the ruling state and Muʿīn al-Dīn from the vassal state – were in some form involved in appointing Shīrāzī to judge in Sivas, some time before 676 A.H.

1. I would like to gratefully acknowledge A. Gamini for drawing my attention to *Ikhtiyārāt-i Muẓaffarī*, MS Milli Library 31402, which indicates that the work was completed in Sivas, and includes the date of completion: the 9th of Dhū al-Hijja, 680 A.H.

Of the books listed above several are known to have been completed while Shīrāzī was in Sivas. These include the *Ikhtiyārāt-i Muẓaffarī*, as we have said, the commentary on the *kullīyāt*, and *al-Tuḥfa al-Shāhīya*. According to Minovi, Shīrāzī's commentary of Ibn al-Ḥājjib was dedicated to Shams al-Dīn Juwaynī and so must predate this statesman's execution in 683 A.H. It is therefore plausible that the commentary on Ibn al-Ḥājjib's book was also written in Sivas. According to Walbridge, the commentary on the *Key [to the sciences]* of Sakkākī, is dedicated to the dedicatee of the *Durrat al-Tāj* and so likely belongs to the same period as that work. If so, this commentary would have been completed after Shīrāzī had settled in Tabrīz, since the *Durrat al-Tāj* belongs to the last decade of Shīrāzī's life (Walbridge, 190).

In regard to Shīrāzī's embassy to Cairo al-Sallāmī states:

He then returned to the presence of the Sultan Abāqā and when Sultan Aḥmad Takūdār followed immediately in the footsteps of Abāqā he could not find anyone worthy of being sent to Egypt and Syria except for [Shīrāzī], who went accompanied by a letter in the year [6]81 A.H. to [Sultan Qalāwūn] and he returned to Adharbāyjān and we heard [!] the [contents of the letter] in his own words and most of it had been composed by him. And when Mawlānā Quṭb al-Dīn came and delivered the message [of Qalāwūn?] to the Sultan [i.e., Aḥmad], casting finally his walking staff to the ground in Tabrīz [i.e., ending his journeys there]. (Sallāmī, *ibid*)

Al-Sallāmī's account here is slightly more detailed than al-Dhahabī's in regard to Shīrāzī's whereabouts immediately prior to his ambassadorship to Cairo. As we have said, the *Ikhtiyārāt-i Muẓaffarī* was completed on the ninth of Dhū al-Ḥijja, 680 A.H. in Sivas. According to Rashīd al-Dīn Takūdār's enthronement did not happen until the 13th of Rabīʿ al-Awwal of 681. (Rashīd al-Dīn, p. 785) Assuming that Shīrāzī was dispatched to Cairo from the court at Tabrīz, it is possible that he moved from Sivas to Tabrīz shortly after the completion of the *Ikhtiyārāt-i Muẓaffarī*, for a brief period before being sent to Cairo shortly after Takūdār's accession.

We do know that Shīrāzī was back in Sivas by Jumādā al-Awwal of 684 A.H., because this is the date for *al-Tuḥfa al-Shāhīya*, which was completed in Sivas. The period preceding the completion of *al-Tuḥfa al-Shāhīya* would have been particularly strife-ridden as it saw the revolt of Arghūn and the ensuing death of Takūdār as well as the death of both Shams al-Dīn Juwaynī and his brother 'Alā' al-Dīn, the renowned historian. Indeed, if we are to believe Shīrāzī's autobiography his mission to Cairo would have occurred shortly before the onset of

what he termed “a string of calamities.” Though details are lacking in regard to the calamities to which Shīrāzī refers, it should be noted here, that any professional setbacks to Shīrāzī as a courtier would likely have occurred during the reign of Gaykhātū (690-694 A.H.), whose name, along with that of short-reigned Bāydū (694 A.H.), does not appear in any biographical texts related to Shīrāzī.

The remainder of al-Sallāmī's biography describes Shīrāzī's work habits, his piety, and his disregard for worldly things. As al-Sallāmī himself states much of this is taken from al-Dhahabī and Ibn al-Fuwaṭī. The new bits of information that appear in the remainder of al-Sallāmī's article may again have been taken from the lost work of Ibn al-Fuwaṭī. In regard to Shīrāzī's compositions al-Sallāmī states:

And he was dedicated to composition and writing and [study] and he composed the book *Durrat al-Taḥ* for the Malik Dūbāj the king of Gīlān ... as well as other works in the intelligible and transmissible arts. (Sallāmī, *ibid*)

Al-Sallāmī also states that Shīrāzī's students composed poems in his honor and that these were collected in a book (*ibid*, 179).

Biographical information in al-‘Asqalānī's *al-Durar al-Kāmina*

Al-‘Asqalānī provides two bits of information that do not appear in the previous histories examined for this paper. The first is his statement that the title by which Shīrāzī is known by the cognoscenti is al-shāriḥ al-‘allāma, or “the Commentator Savant.” (Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, v, p. 109) This title underscores the great prestige with which Shīrāzī was held in his own lifetime.

The second new piece of information by al-‘Asqalānī is included in the following statement:

And when Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Muṭrib [i.e., Ṣafī al-Dīn the minstrel] went to him, he gave him two thousand dirhams, and he taught *al-Kashshāf*, the *Canon*, *al-Shifā'* and other books in Damascus. (*ibid*)

This statement is problematic, however, as the only other records of Shīrāzī being in Damascus refer to the trip undertaken as a member of Sultan Takūdār Aḥmad's embassy. The Mamluk historian al-Zāhir who was a courtier in Cairo, states emphatically, however, that the Sultan asked his deputies to make sure that “no one sees [the Ilkhan contingent] or associates with them, nor should anyone speak a word with them, and that they should travel only at night” (Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, pp. 2, 6) al-Zāhir also states that on the return trip the same security measures were taken “so that no one associated with them, or

glanced at them, or saw them” (ibid, pp. 2, 16) Given this, it is difficult to see how Shīrāzī would have been allowed to lecture or to teach during this trip. Since Al-‘Asqalānī’s statement is the only surviving reference to this teaching, his insertion of Damascus in the account (that appears with some variation in al-Dhahabī though with nary a mention of Damascus) is most likely in error.

Biographical information from Shīrāzī’s *Durrat al-Tāj*: Shīrāzī and Sufism

In *Durrat al-Tāj* Shīrāzī states that he received a *khirqa* of “blessing” (i.e., *tabarruk*) from his father, and that he received a *khirqa* of “devotion” (i.e., *irādat*) from “the hands of the Sheikh Najīb al-Dīn ‘Alī Ibn Buzghush al-Shīrāzī, may the Lord sanctify his soul”, and he [in turn] received it “from the sheikh of sheikhs Shahāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī, may the Lord rest his soul” (Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī, *Durrat al-Tāj*, MS Majlis 4720, Tehran, folio 603r-603v; Mir, p. 19; Walbridge, p. 10). In describing the difference between the two Shīrāzī states:

know that there are two types of *khirqa*, one the *khirqa* of devotion, and that ... it is appropriately obtained from one sheikh only, and the other is the *khirqa* of blessing and that can be obtained from many sheikhs for the purpose of obtaining blessing. And the Lord is the [best] Guide. (ibid)

It is clear, then, that as Walbridge has stated, a *khirqa* given “in blessing” implied that it was given as a sign of favor, and that the *khirqa* of devotion was a formal signifier of Shīrāzī having been inducted into Sufism (ibid).

Al-Dhahabī writes:

And he was one of the smartest men of the age, and was witty and sharp and did not carry concerns of the [impermanent] world with him. And he wore the garbs of the sufis. (LIV, p. 102)

al-‘Asqalānī writes:

And he consorted frequently and freely with kings, and was witty, and bright, and did not carry any concerns, and did not [ever] alter his sufi garb. (V, 108)

al-Sallāmī does not include a reference to Shīrāzī’s sufi garbs, but says instead:

he was not concerned with his clothes and he did not [claim the seat of honor] in gatherings. (179)

It is reasonably clear from these words that Shīrāzī was a sufi for all of his adult life. It is in view of this information that his somewhat unorthodox personal habits with respect to music, and alcohol, and his apparent disregard for worldly pomp should be understood (see Amiati).

Conclusion

A comparative study of the works of Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, al-Dhahabī, al-Sallāmī, and al-‘Asqalānī together with Shīrāzī's autobiographical notes allows us to roughly track the course of Shīrāzī's whereabouts through his life as a scholar. This trajectory would have taken Shīrāzī from his birthplace to Marāgha in 658 A.H. (1259-1260 C.E.), and then to Juwayn, Qazwīn, and Bagdad in the subsequent period of a little over a decade. Shīrāzī appears to have then moved to Anatolia, for he tells us of his residence in Konya in 673 A.H. The historical accounts reviewed in this paper suggest that his appointment as judge in Sivas would have occurred shortly after 673, since one of his important patrons (who appears responsible for the appointment), Mu‘īn al-Dīn was executed in 676 A.H. Shīrāzī would presumably have stayed in Sivas at least until the completion of *Ikhtiyārāt-i Muẓaffarī*, in 680 A.H.

The ensuing period appears to have been particularly hectic. In particular Shīrāzī may have left Sivas for Tabrīz, perhaps upon the death of Abāqā, in Muḥarram of 681 A.H., and shortly thereafter went on his embassy to Cairo Jumāda al-Awwal Shawwāl 681 A.H. Yet, by the middle of 684 A.H., Shīrāzī was back in Sivas where he completed *al-Tuḥfa al-Shāhiyya*. It is possible that the events surrounding the death of Takūdār Aḥmad in the middle of 683 A.H. and especially the execution of Shīrāzī's benefactor Shams al-Dīn Juwaynī in Sha‘bān of 683 were at least partly responsible for this. In the absence of other historical data we may reasonably wonder if the account of Shīrāzī's meeting with Arghūn in Anatolia c. Rabī‘ al-Thanī, 689 A.H. (Rashīd al-Dīn, pp. 822-823) does not in some form signify his coming back into favor at the court in Tabrīz. Whatever the case may have been, the sources that we have looked at are unanimous in stating that Shīrāzī spent the last decades of his life in Tabrīz, and that he was buried there. Based on the information from Shīrāzī's autobiography, the period following Ghāzān's accession in 694 was a particularly stable one for him. The historical narratives we have studied suggest that he resumed his scholarly activities in earnest during this period. Several of his books including the *Durrat al-Tāj* are the fruits of this late period in Shīrāzī's life.

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