Chapter 6

Omar Khayyam's *Ruba'iyat* and Rumi's *Masnavi* Interpreted. The Politics and Scholarship of Translating Persian Poetry

1 Truth and Poetry of Two Persian Poets

In 1072, the young philosopher Omar Khayyam entered the Central Asian capital of scholarship Samarkand. As he walked through the city, he found a mob assaulting a student of the great philosopher Ibn Sina (Avicenna). Khayyam intervened to save the student. But his reputation as a philosopher and poet of heretic materialist verses had preceded Khayyam and when the crowd discovered who he was, they turned on him and roughed him up. Khayyam was then brought before Samarkand's leading qadi (judge/magistrate), Abu Taher. Instead of condemning the philosopher, who challenged the strictures of orthodox theology, Abu Taher recognised his intellect, but warned Khayyam of uttering his critical poetry openly. The qadi handed the philosopher a beautiful notebook into which he should write his witty and thought-provoking quatrains, instead of speaking his poems openly and thereby endangering his own safety. This notebook was to become the manuscript that marked the beginning of the *Ruba'iyat* of Omar Khayyam, which would gain global fame in the nineteenth century and become for decades the second most printed book in the English speaking world after the Bible.

This is how Amin Maalouf has it in the opening of his historic fiction novel *Samarcande*. In a review a few years later, Rashid noted that "Omar Khayyam is treated like a medieval Salman Rushdie", only that back in the Middle Ages, during the days of glorious scientific Islam, he was not condemned to death by the orthodoxy but protected by an Islamic jurist. The almost simultaneous publication of *Samarcande* and Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* in 1988 preclude Maalouf from having been influenced by Khomeini's infamous fatwa against the British Indian author a year later, but Rashid's commentary points to the rise of political Islam and its growing intolerance of contrarian views in the 1980s, which had also seen the ban of Khayyam's *Ruba'iyat* in Iran after the revolution in 1979. Maa-

¹ Amin Maalouf, Samarcande (Paris: Jean-Claude Lattès, 1988), 4-17.

² Ahmed Rashid, "Poetry Lovers Tricked by a Drowned Manuscript: Samarkand – Amin Maalouf," *The Independent*, 21 September 1992.

³ The ban was largely lifted under Khatami (1997–2005). In the early 2000s Khayyam was portrayed by the Iranian state as a religious figure who fought against superstition, ignorance

louf's hero Omar Khayyam in contrast stood for an epoch in which Islam was synonymous with science, poetry, and when a measure of protection of literary freedom existed.

Maalouf's story of Khavyam and the Ruba'iyat is skilfully narrated and his portrayal is accurate in three regards: 1) the life dates of the philosopher Khayyam and his period of study in Samarkand under the protection of Abu Taher; 2) the portrayal of Khayyam as a philosopher in the tradition of Ibn Sina; 3) the intellectual appeal and aversion to orthodoxy in the vexing quatrains. But the beginnings of the manuscript of the Ruba'ivat that Maalouf crafts never were. It is, in fact, very unlikely that the historic Omar Khayyam, the renowned philosopher, astronomer and algebraist, ever was the poet and author of a significant corpus of poetry, not to speak of the over one thousand quatrains, which brought him posthumous global fame. The fusion of the Ruba'iyat attributed to Khayyam and the actually proven philosophical tracts of Khayyam in Samarcande is emblematic of many artistic reproductions and some of the non-fiction reception of Khayyam as a philosopher-poet since the nineteenth century.4 The witty and contemplative Ruba'iyat in conjunction with the evocative life and work of the eleventh to twelfth century mathematician-philosopher have been offering rich material to be incorporated into new, contemporary narratives. The most important modern embedding of Khayyam occured when in 1859, the Englishman Edward FitzGerald published his interpretation of the Ruba'iyat as an exotic Epicurean escape from stifling Victorian ennui, which gave rise to a global following of those afflicted with fin de siècle decadence and cynicism. The popularity of the *Ruba'iyat* and their mysterious and contested origins also attracted scholarly attention and debate and Friedrich Rosen's presentation in Copenhagen on Omar Khayyam's worldview in 1908 reflected the prominence Khayyam had gained in academic research.

Rosen's translation of the Ruba'iyat into Die Sinnsprüche Omars des Zeltmachers was one among hundreds. But Rosen's direct and largely faithful translation from Persian to German, accompanied by a comprehensive introduction to the times, life and philosophy of Omar Khayyam, was the most significant for popularising the *Ruba'iyat* for a German-reading audience and remains the can-

and spiritual darkness. "Ayatollah Sentences Author to Death," BBC, 14 February 1989; Peter Murtagh, "Rushdie in Hiding After Ayatollah's Death Threat," Guardian, 15 February 1989; Jos Coumans, The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám. An Updated Bibliography (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2010), 16.

⁴ Michael Hamilton Morgan, Lost History. The Enduring Legacy of Muslim Scientists, Thinkers and Artists (Washington: National Geographic, 2007), 107-10; Gerhard Schweizer, Der unbekannte Islam. Sufismus – die religiöse Herausforderung (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2007), 133.

onical translation today. Rosen, his *Sinnsprüche* and their popularity in German lands have so far been neglected in Western scholarly debates about the global resonance of the *Ruba'iyat* and Khayyam. Beyond remedying this black hole in German literary studies that arose out of the adverse circumstances of the Nazi and post-war periods, Rosen's knowledge production speaks to a larger history of German Persophilia, as formulated by Dabashi. Enabled and influenced by his movement and encounters along the arteries of the British Empire, his diplomatic career and his experience of messy German Weltpolitik, Rosen embedded his *Sinnsprüche* in a cultural reading of the Persianate and the wider Islamicate world with which he intended to portray a Middle East full of different intellectual currents between free-thinking and oppression that were reflective of the human condition and in the shape of Khayyam's *Ruba'iyat* part of world literature.

Although Khayyam was recognised as a philosopher and the *Ruba'iyat* well-liked among Persian speakers, before the *Ruba'iyat* developed a mass following in the West through FitzGeraldian popularisation Khayyam was traditionally not considered one of the most important Persian poets. A poet central to the canon of Persian literature, philosophy, spirituality and religion, also before his de-Islamicisation in Western translations in the twentieth century, was Jalal ed-Din Muhammad Rumi.⁶ Along with two other updated republications of his father on Persian language and literature from the mid-nineteenth century, in 1913 Rosen re-issued Georg Rosen's 1849 translation of Rumi's *Masnavi*, an extensive mystical poem of 26,000 double verses considered a cornerstone of Sufi Islam.⁷ Friedrich Rosen introduced his father's German translation with a lengthy de-

⁵ Sol Gittleman, "The Reception of Edward FitzGerald's Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam in England and Germany," (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1961); Joachim Wohlleben, "Die Rubajat des Omar Chajjam und die deutsche Literatur. Eine glücklose Begegnung," *Literaturwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch* 12 (1971–1903): 43–96; Mehdi Aminrazavi, *The Wine of Wisdom. The Life, Poetry and Philosophy of Omar Khayyam* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2005); Jos Coumans, "An 'Umar Khayyām Database," in *The Great 'Umar Khayyām. A Global Reception of the Rubáiyát*, A.A. Seyed-Gohrab (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2012), 245–52; Jos Biegstraaten, "Khayyam, Omar Xiv. Impact on Literature and Society in the West," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, 15 December 2008. http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/khayyam-omar-impact-west; Sayed Fayruz Abadi, "Iranology in Germany [in Persian]," *Bukhara Arts and Culture Journal*, 2020/May 2011, 160–75; Dabashi, *Persophilia*, 141–47.

⁶ Annemarie Schimmel, *Maulāna Dschelāladdin Rūmī*. *Aus dem Diwan* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2015), 5; Rasmus Elling, "Taking the Islam Out of It," *Naqd. Tisdsskrift for Mellemøstenes Litteratur* 5 (2003): 24–50; Rozina Ali, "The Erasure of Islam from the Poetry of Rumi," *New Yorker*, 5 January 2017.

⁷ Sari Abdallah Efendi, *Tuti-Nameh*; Georg Rosen, *Elementa Persica*; Rosen and Rosen, *Elementa Persica*.

scription of the mystical poetry of the Sufi Rumi, based on his own studies and encounters in Iran, India, Turkey and Berlin, Complementary to Rosen's Khayyam, his Rumi provides a reading that was more central to Rosen's understanding of the Islamicate world, his political actions and his personal affinities. Sufi Islam, Rosen posited, had been maligned and overlooked in Europe but by necessity stood at the centre of organic development in the Muslim world.

In both cases straddling the line between domesticating and foreignising Khayyam and Rumi, Rosen attempted to familiarise his German audience with the culture and historical context around the source texts, while seeking to render into German the rhythm and idiosyncracies of the original poetry.8 What follows then is an analysis of these paratexts of Rosen's translated publications of Khayyam and Rumi. Rosen's Khayyam is analysed in political and scholarly context. Why did Rosen translate the Ruba'iyat? Who was his Khayyam and what ideas permeated in his Sinnsprüche? This is situated in how Rosen's work in politics shaped and influenced his translation of poetry and which scholarly inputs and other sources he drew on since he first came upon the Ruba'ivat in India. The discussion of Rosen's Rumi focuses on Rosen's programmatic foreword and what political message he aimed to deliver through this poetic work.

2 Omar Khayyam's Life and Scholarship

Ghiyath ad-Din Abu'l Fath Omar ibn Ibrahim Khayyam was born in the city of Nishapur in Khurasan on 18 May 1048 (439 AH). Although from a poor family, Khayyam became a pupil at the city's madrasa (school), where he studied amongst others the works of Ibn Sina (980 - 1037). In Nishapur, Khayyam was acquainted with theologist, philosopher and mystic Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazali (1058-1111), and became known as a religious authority and leader in prayer in the city, carrying the honorific title of imam. It has been suggested that al-Ghazali studied with Khayyam and Aminrazavi speculates that al-Ghazali's landmark *The Incoherence of the Philosophers* is in part a response to Khayyam's philosophising. 10

⁸ Nina Zandjani, "Saadi's Perception of the West and German Translators' Perception of Iran in Saadi's Gulistan (The Rose Garden)," in Iran and the West. Cultural Perceptions from the Sasanian Empire to the Islamic Republic, Margaux Whiskin and David Bagot (London: IB Tauris, 2018), 75. 9 A.A. Seyed-Gohrab, "Khayyām's Universal Appeal: Man, Wine and the Hereafter in the Quatrains," in The Great 'Umar Khayyām. A Global Reception of the Rubáiyát, A.A. Seyed-Gohrab (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2012), 11.

¹⁰ Aminrazavi, Wine of Wisdom, 19-23.

A legend that found much resonance was Khayyam having gone to school with Hassan Tusi, who would later become the Nizam al-Mulk (governor) of Iran, and Hassan Sabah, the founder of the Hashashin (the assassins of the Nizari Isma'ili sect). In Iranian nationalist circles the notion is entertained that the three fought an Iranian war of resistance together against the Seljuk Turks as a tricolour of politics, military, and scholarship. In fact, the Persian Nizam al-Mulk was instrumental in the expansion of the Turkic Seljuk Empire, bringing Perso-Turkish culture to the borders of China and the Byzantine Empire. Khayyam and Nizam al-Mulk were close and it was on the Nizam al-Mulk's behest that Khayyam travelled to Isfahan, where he took up teaching at the Nizamiyyah, one of a series of institutes of higher learning set up under the Nizam al-Mulk.¹² After Sultan Alp Arslan's death in 1072, his successor Jalal ed-Din Malik Shah asked Khayyam to calculate a new calendar. The calendar, based on astronomical observations in Isfahan and Mary, was known for its accuracy and remained in use until the first half of the twentieth century. At Isfahan Khayyam studied Euclid, Apollonius and other Greek philosophers. When his protectors Nizam al-Mulk and Sultan Jalal ed-Din Malik Shah died one after the other in 1092, the infighting of successors destabilised the Seljuk Empire. Khayyam went on the hajj to Mecca. It has been suggested that some contemporaries accused Khayyam of heresy and questioned his faith on account of his philosophical studies, prompting his pilgrimage amid the loss of his protectors. Later years saw Khayyam in Marv under the protection of Sultan Sanjar and back in Nishapur, where he worked on mathematical and philosophical questions until his death on 4 December 1131.¹³

Khayyam wrote fourteen treatises. These included – thematically as dates are uncertain - works on mathematical relationships within musical notes, mathematical problems following Euclid, algebra (resulting in an important primer for centuries), and weighing alloys of different precious metals. In the following centuries recognition of Khayyam's scientific work in the Islamic world spread, with the historian Ibn Khaldun in the fourteenth century praising him as the greatest geometrician in history. Although the algebraist Khayyam was known in Europe by 1742, he was overshadowed by Latin translations of

¹¹ Christian H. Rempis, Neue Beiträge zur Chajjām-Forschung (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1943), 3.

¹² C. Edmund Bosworth, "Nizāmiyya," in Encyclopaedia of Islam, P. Bearman et al. (2012); Jan Rypka, "History of Persian Literature up to the Beginning of the 20th Century," in History of Iranian Literature, Jan Rypka et al. (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1968), 183.

¹³ S. Frederick Starr, Lost Enlightenment. Central Asia's Golden Age from the Arab Conquest to Tamerlane. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 395-407; Seyed-Gohrab, "Khayyām's Universal Appeal," 11.

Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi, incidentally translated by Friedrich Rosen's uncle Friedrich August Rosen in 1831. Khayyam's mathematical works only became available in Europe in French translation by Franz Woepcke in 1851.¹⁴

A translation of Ibn Sina's Lucid Discourse on Unity from Arabic to Persian set off his philosophical works that follow the peripatetic (Aristotelian) philosophical tradition. Khavyam centred on questions of being and necessity (What is? What is it? Why is it?), the necessity of contradiction in the world, as well as determinism and subsistence. These philosophical deliberations had theological implications, as Khayyam posited that merciful God could not be the source of evil, but that in a monotheistic world there were no other beings from which evil could emanate (the question of theodicy). Khayyam grappled with determinism and free will, problems of unity and multiplicity, and whether existence or essence came first. In a treatise on the question of *Universal Knowl*edge, also known as Treatise on Transcendence in Existence, Khayyam categorised the different seekers for truth, indicating that he found the methods applied by the Sufis most promising, in comparison to those of the theologians, the philosophers and the Isma'ili sect. 15

3 Poetic Form and Themes of the Ruba'iyat

What are the *Ruba'iyat* and what is a ruba'i? A ruba'i, from the Arabic four, is a short poem in quatrain form (German: Vierzeiler) pioneered in medieval Iran and common in Persian, Arabic and Urdu. In comparison to the more complex ghazal (typically a love poem), qasida (an elegy or ode), mathnawi (human or divine romance), the ruba'i is characterised by its brevity and simplicity. The Khayyami Ruba'iyat are typically written in aaba rhyme form, sometimes in aaaa. A ruba'i is "graphically arranged in two columns and separated by a visual caesura", usually comes in a 13-syllable (but also 12-, 11- or 10-syllable) with the meter usually looking like this:

¹⁴ Daoud S. Kasir, The Algebra of Omar Khayyam (New York: Bureau of Publications Teachers College, 1931), 3-6; Muhammad Ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi, The Algebra of Mohammed Ben Musa, trans. and ed. Frederic Rosen, (London: Oriental Translation Fund, 1831); 'Umar b. Ibrahim al-Khayyami, Risāla fī sharh mā ashkala min muṣādarāt kitāb Uglīdis [in Arabic], 1218/1219 [615 AH], 75a-100b, Leiden codex Or. 199 (8), UBL.

¹⁵ Mehdi Aminrazavi and Glen Van Brummelen, "Umar Khayyam," in The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Edward N. Zalta (2017). https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2017/entries/ umar-khayyam/.

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The Khayyami *Ruba'iyat* distinguish themselves by their pugnacity, expressed in short poetic form. Wohlleben explains:

Line one opens with a statement, expanded upon in line two, forming a doublet, which finds expression in a rhyme pair [a-a]. The poem is halfway there. In line three a thought enters that betrays knowledge of the preceding doublet, but attempting to deny or challenge the previous statement it offers a counter-thesis [ending on b]. This challenge is a powerful tool to further develop the poem into a direction that the initial premise had not foreseen. The unsuspected and audacious appearance in line three relentlessly exposes the dangerous, destructive, senseless, ridiculous or sad content of the opening statement. The exposure becomes inescapable, as line four [ending on a] then re-establishes the direct reference to the apparently abandoned initial premise [in a-a]... The recurring rhyme of line four [a] creates a surprise, as it disappoints the expectation of the continuation of the rhyme of line three [b] and... through the resounding harmony of this re-appearance [a again after b, connecting with the initial a-a] forces a shocking realisation of a deeper rooted incongruence of the nature of things. Tone and sense of the words are antagonistic, and this is intentional with Omar Khayyam¹⁷

For example:

Zuerst hatt' ich mein Ich noch nicht erkannt, Zuletzt zerschneid'st Du des Bewusstseins Band. Da dies von Anfang Deine Absicht war, Was macht'st Du mich erst mit mir selbst bekannt?¹⁸

At first I had not recognised myself, At last you cut up the cord of consciousness. Since this was your intention all along, why do you make me know myself at all?"

This aaba rhyme form, relayed here in Rosen's translation, is typical in the Khayyami *Ruba'iyat*. The third line ends in b and creates a new angle or impetus of the poem's content. This is then continued, culminated and concluded in line four, despite the rhyme form tying line four back to the outset of the poem, and thus creating a tension and release that is usually thought-provoking or humor-

¹⁶ F.D. Lewis, "Rubā'ī," in The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, 4, Roland Greene et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 1227.

¹⁷ Joachim Wohlleben, Omar Chajjam, das Rubai und die deutsche Literatur. Ein Fall von glückloser Begegnung, 1968, corrected manuscript, 149/1136, GSA, 12-13.

¹⁸ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 44; Wohlleben, Chajjam, corrected manuscript, 12.

istic. A Khayyami ruba'i is thus a very short form of poetry of not unsurmountable complexity, not entirely uniform in style, but easily recognisable in junction with its built-in disaccord.

In the Khayyami Ruba'iyat – in that vast corpus of all Persian quatrains attributed to Omar Khayyam – eight general topics, based loosely on the categories of Aminrazavi and Van Brummelen, are contemplated: 1) the impermanence of life; 2) the quest for the meaning of life; 3) how there can be evil in a world created by God, who is supposed to be good; 4) fate and free will; 5) the here and now and wine and love; 6) learning, knowledge and wisdom; 7) God and belief; and 8) the afterlife. Life of fleeting impermanence and the afterlife uncertain, the Ruba'iyat ponder the reasons of life and what it all means. As fate mostly prevails and all is coming from and given to God, including all evil, we grapple and contend with this simultaneous originator, interlocutor and judge. Yet, there is also learning and wisdom, even if it remains limited and not always relevant. And there is wine, joy and love, the ultimate meaning and sense, even if contradictory to the word of God; the literal nature of these words not being clear. For after all, God has made evil, sin, learning, wine, and amid the inescapable fate of death and the penultimate uncertainty over what comes then, it is in the joys of love and the moment that meaning is to be found. Joy can also be found in wisdom, love in God, and while birth and death are certain fates, action is not entirely fated.

Wine and the pot from which it is drunk lend themselves to interpretations that go vastly beyond Epicurean notions of carpe diem into a mystical approach to God and his creation. It is not necessarily God that is challenged in the Ruba'iyat, but the strictures that faith and scholars of faith prescribe. As Aminrazavi and Van Brummelen note, "Khirad (wisdom) is the type of wisdom that brings about a rapprochement between the poetic and discursive modes of thought, one that sees the fundamental irony in what appears to be a senseless human existence within an orderly and complex physical universe."19 Specific Ruba'iyat usually deal with two to four of the aforementioned concepts, as they tend to overlap in the author's thought. As poems are open to interpretation, the concrete categorisation and labelling of contents is to a degree arbitrary. Specific phrasings can be read in differing ways, making the arguably Epicurean a matter of belief or wisdom (take wine for example). Rypka found in the Ruba'iyat a "Proteus-like diversity in ideas". 20 In their brevity the *Ruba'iyat* spark doubt, question and sat-

¹⁹ Aminrazavi and Van Brummelen, "Umar Khayyam."

²⁰ Aminrazavi and Van Brummelen, "Umar Khayyam"; Rypka, "Persian Literature up to the 20th Century," 192.

irise, offering at once an alleviating smirk. This can also infuse the *Ruba'iyat* with a rebellious trait. As Aminrazavi notes, Khayyam cannot just be read as "a frustrated poet expressing his bewilderment with the riddles of life, but as a form of resistance expressed philosophically and poetically against the forces of darkness who were intent on imposing their version of religion."²¹

4 Ruba'iyat Into the World and Back

By the time Friedrich Rosen left the Middle East and returned to Germany in 1900, the Khayyami Ruba'iyat had already transcended the realms of the Persianate world. With European scholars collecting manuscripts, where empire brought them, a Shiraz compilation of 158 Khayyami Ruba'iyat from 1460 found its way to the Bodleian Library at Oxford in 1844. From this manuscript and another manuscript of Khayyami Ruba'iyat discovered in the library of the Asiatic Society in Calcutta the professor of Persian, Sanskrit and English at Oxford and Calcutta Edward Byles Cowell made copies for his friend Edward Fitz-Gerald (1809 – 1883), who lived in the English province of Suffolk. Born into a wealthy Anglo-Irish family, FitzGerald was a bit of a recluse, in the habit of reading historic correspondences, and never travelled further east than Paris. During a period of personal crisis the study of foreign literatures with his friend Cowell gave FitzGerald a respite, and he found solace in translating the Ruba'iyat. 22 In 1859 he published seventy-five translated Ruba'iyat under the title Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyám – at first to little success in a period of utilitarian optimism. Only some members of the pre-Raphaelite group took a liking to FitzGerald's Ruba'iyat, reading it "as a reaction against the scientific spirit". Widespread acclaim brought about a first republication in an extended form (110 quatrains) only a decade later. Further reworked editions of 101 quatrains appeared until a last posthumous publication in 1889. Twenty more editions were published by 1900.23

²¹ Mehdi Aminrazavi, "Reading the Rubā'iyyāt as 'Resistance Literature'," in *The Great 'Umar Khayyām. A Global Reception of the Rubáiyát*, A.A. Seyed-Gohrab (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2012), 51.

²² Dick Davis, "FitzGerald, Edward," *Encyclopædia Iranica* X, no. 1 (31 December 2015 2012): 8–12.

²³ Esmail Z. Behtash, "The Reception of FitzGerald's Rubáiyát of 'Umar Khayyám by the Victorians," in *The Great 'Umar Khayyām. A Global Reception of the Rubáiyát*, A.A. Seyed-Gohrab (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2012), 205; Arthur J. Arberry, *Omar Khayyám. A New Version Based upon Recent Discoveries* (London: John Murray, 1952), 7.

Khayyam and Persian were a passing infatuation for FitzGerald and he saw the *Ruba'iyat* as a source text to be artistically interpreted, rather than accurately translated. While maintaining the aaba rhyme form of the Persian original, Fitz-Gerald strung the thematically unsorted quatrains into a narrative series of quatrains along "the day of a quietist sceptic whose solace for the sorrows of the world is the *carpe diem* pleasures of drinking and like-minded companionship", as Davis noted. Maintaining much of the content of the original *Ruba'iyat* manuscripts in general, FitzGerald was rather liberal when it came to single quatrains, often fusing ideas from different poems, cutting out parcels of meaning, or including content for stylistic effect, to make "composite quatrains" more exotic, priggish, comprehensible, or fitting to the overall narrative.²⁴ In the later editions some quatrains were entirely of FitzGerald's making, but it can be argued that they were inspired by the Khayyami *Ruba'iyat*.

FitzGerald had not been the only or first to translate Khayyami *Ruba'iyat* to a European language. The prosaic rendering in *Les Quatrains de Khayam* by Jean-Baptiste Nicolas, who had served as dragoman to the French legation in Tehran and as consul in Resht in the 1860s, offers a notable contrast to FitzGerald's poem. Published in 1863 as a selection of 50 quatrains, Nicolas' *Quatrains de Khayam* was in 1867 expanded to 464 quatrains in French and Persian side-by-side.²⁵ Not approaching in artistic quality to FitzGerald's work, Nicolas offered a less intently curated and more content-rich collection. Unlike FitzGerald Nicolas did not make Khayyam a blanket sceptic of religion or rejecting all notions of Sufism or spirituality. It fell to this bilingual copy by Nicolas to provide the source text of many new translations of the *Ruba'iyat* into various European languages, although the translations were often from Nicolas' French rather than from the Persian.

While the translation of the Frenchman found a readership, FitzGerald's shorter selection – an art work in its own right and included in the canon of English literature – saw the vastest proliferation of the *Ruba'iyat*. Although at first ignored, the "distinctive and paradoxical" sense of inescapability and exoticism in FitzGerald's work, celebrating the "absolute conviction that no convictions can be absolute", fascinated Victorian fin de siècle Great Britain. At the turn of the century technological advances in the printing industry saw the large scale introduction of colour-illustrated books at affordable prices, enabling the

²⁴ Davis, "FitzGerald, Edward"; Edward FitzGerald, Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám (Edinburgh: T.N. Foulis, 1905); Gittleman, "FitzGerald's Rubaiyat and Germany," 10.

²⁵ Jean-Baptiste Nicolas, *Les quatrains de Khayam* (Paris: Benjamin Duprat, 1863); Jean-Baptiste Nicolas, *Les quatrains de Khayam* (Paris: L'Imprimerie Impériale, 1867).

²⁶ Davis, "FitzGerald, Edward."

art of the gift book to flourish. This further promoted the spread of FitzGerald's *Ruba'iyat* in various colourised editions with miniature paintings – at first in the Great Britain, but also in the United States and India.²⁷

Khayyam became a global brand. The *Ruba'ivat* inspired spin-offs like *The* Golfer's Rubáiját, Rubáiját of a Motor Car or Rubaiyyat of a Persian Kitten. There were hedonist Omar Khayyam clubs, serving "poulet Omar" to elites in London and Boston and the imperialist FitzGerald was celebrated for conquering the effeminate Oriental Khayyam. Broad-sheet advertisements for Shakespeare-Omar 2-in-1 deals were printed in high-brow US magazines and from Madras pirated copies of FitzGeraldian Ruba'iyat circulated in India. Khayyam was used by a New York liquor store to ridicule Alcoholics Anonymous, on "chocolate, parfume, facial cream, fountain pens, letter paper, tomb stone inscriptions etc. etc.", and in Egypt the Gianaclis winery emblazoned its bobal and sultanine blanche varieties with the poet-philosopher. ²⁸ Beyond the popular and mundane the Ruba'iyat in the guise of FitzGerald also came to influence poets, authors and singers such as Mark Twain, Ezra Pound, Oscar Wilde, T.S. Elliot, Jack Kerouac, Umm Kulthum, Muhammad Abd al Wahhab and Charles Aznavour. The adaptation of the original aaba rhyme caused a proliferation of the ruba'i form in English poetry, finding reflection for instance in Robert Frost's 1922 Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening, which the reporter Sid Davis would later read in his radio coverage of the aftermath of John F. Kennedy's assassination.²⁹

²⁷ William H. Martin and Sandra Mason, "The Illustration of FitzGerald's *Rubâiyát* and Its Contribution to Enduring Popularity," in *FitzGerald*'s Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám. *Popularity and Neglect*, Adrian Poole, Christine van Ruymbeke, and William H. Martin, Sandra Mason (London: Anthem Press, 2011), 235–43.

²⁸ Michelle Kaiserlian, "The Imagined Elites of the Omar Khayyám Club," in *FitzGerald's* Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám. *Popularity and Neglect*, Adrian Poole et al. (London: Anthem Press, 2011), 147–55; Wohlleben, Chajjam, corrected manuscript, 7; S.R. Graham and Geoffrey T. Hellman, "Promotion," *New Yorker*, 27 August 1949, 17. Christian H. Rempis, *Die Vierzeiler 'Omar Chajjāms in der Auswahl und Anordnung Edward FitzGeralds aus dem Persischen verdeutscht* (Tübingen: Verlag der Deutschen Chajjām-Gesellschaft, 1933), 10; "Omar Khayyam White," in *Drinkies. The Beverage Shop.* http://drinkies.net/Drinkies-Products/Drinkies-Wine/Drinkies-White/Drinkies-Omar-Khayyam-White.aspx.

²⁹ Marta Simidchieva, "Fitzgerald's *Rubáiyát* and Agnosticism," in *FitzGerald's* Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám. *Popularity and Neglect*, Adrian Poole et al. (London: Anthem Press, 2011), 56–67; Lillian Ross, "The Face of Anybody," *New Yorker*, 6 April 1963, 33; Seyed-Gohrab, "Khayyām's Universal Appeal," 31; Lesley Lawton, "Fixed Forms," in *An Introduction to Poetry in English*, Éric Doumerc and Wendy Harding (Toulouse: Presse universitaires du Mirail, 2007), 34–35; "2 Reporters Recall the Assassination That Shocked the World," *National Public Radio*, 22 November 2013.

Until this global popularisation in the first half of the twentieth century "Khavyām was known in Persia as a minor poet but a major scientist, but the worldwide recognition of the *Rubáiyát*, increased his popularity as a poet in Persia", observes Seyed-Gohrab.³⁰ The re-popularisation of the Khayyami Ruba'iyat in Iran experienced a strong push by the modernist Iranian author Sadeq Hedayat (1903 – 1951), who thought, in the words of Valling Pedersen, that "life is essentially empty and meaningless. There is no God or transcendental system to fill the void". As Khazrai notes, Hedayat's "highest inspiration from Khayyam was... the view that 'life is a cruel joke'". ³¹ Hedayyat published a version of the Taranye-Hay Khayyam (Songs of Khayyam) in Persian in 1934, for which FitzGerald's poem was a source of inspiration and in which Hedayat sought to present European studies of Khayyam to an Iranian public. Contrary to the carpe diem world of Victorian England though, for the avant-gardist Hedayat, whose 1936 masterpiece The Blind Owl combines "folkloristic echoes" of the Ruba'iyat and the "social dissent" of Omar Khayyam, the medieval poet-philosopher described a cruel world. On the ruins of its ridiculous and redundant traditions, Hedayat thought, something new should be built. Dabashi goes so far in arguing that Hedayat was quintessentially influenced by Khayyam's nihilism, embedded in Islamophobia and notions of dissidence found in the Ruba'iyat, which would in turn come to form the elements that informed the anti-Islamic Pahlavi regime and the nihilism of Khomeini's Islamic revolution, but constituted also the "seeds of defiant hope" found in the cinema of the late Abbas Kiarostami.³² Next to a re-introduction to Iran, the Khayyami *Ruba'iyat* were also popularised in Anglo-Indian circles through such figures as the Celtologist Whitley Stokes. However, as Cole demonstrates, the Ruba'iyat had enjoyed popularity in India at the Mogul courts since the fifteenth century and continued to be published

³⁰ Seyed-Gohrab, "Khayyām's Universal Appeal," 12.

³¹ Claus Valling Pedersen, *World View in Pre-Revolutionary Iran. Literary Analysis of Five Iranian Authors in the Context of the History of Ideas* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002), 103; Firoozeh Khazrai, "Satire in *Hajji Aqa*," in *Sadeq Hedayat. His Work and His Wondrous World*, Homa Katouzian (London: Routledge, 2008), 103.

³² Sadek Hedayat, *Taranye-hay Khayyam [in Persian]* (Tehran: Darmatabai Roshnaii, 1934); Sadek Hedayat, *Die blinde Eule*, trans. Gerd Henninger (Bonn: Goethe & Hafis, 2016); Coumans, *Rubâiyât Bibliography*, 16; Marta Simidchieva, "Sadeq Hedayat and the Classics. The Case of *The Blind Owl*," in *Sadeq Hedayat*. *His Work and His Wondrous World*, Homa Katouzian (London: Routledge, 2008), 22; Nasrin Rahimieh, "Hedayat's Translations of Kafka and the Logic of Iranian Modernity," in *Sadeq Hedayat*. *His Work and His Wondrous World*, Homa Katouzian (London: Routledge, 2008), 133; Dabashi, *Persophilia*, 141–47; Abbas Kiarostami, *The Wind Will Carry Us [Bād Mā Rā Khāhad Bord]*, Behzad Dorani (1999).

well into the second half of the nineteenth century in Lucknow, independent from the proliferation of the FitzGeraldian *Ruba'iyat*.³³

In a time that saw, as the mid-twentieth century Khayyam-scholar Arthur Arberry observed, Europe "[adopting] a somewhat colonial attitude to Oriental writing", FitzGerald was entirely ignorant of Persia and sacrificed "Moslemic theology and mysticism" in the *Ruba'iyat* for the creation of a modern poem. A corpus of folkloristic medieval poetry had been transformed and now, in the words of Gittleman, "spoke to a generation of modern problems, conflicts, doubts and perplexities."³⁴ Despite these distortions, shortcomings, and imprecisions Fitz-Gerald is generally recognised for his artistic rendering, which portrays the spirit of the *Ruba'iyat*, and for its contribution to the popularisation of the Persian language and Persian culture in the English-speaking world – which due to its popularity in turn re-focussed attention on Khayyam and the *Ruba'iyat* in Iran and the larger Persianate world. ³⁵ In a blink of Foucauldian heterotopia, W.G. Sebald found FitzGerald's English verses to

...radiate with a pure, seemingly unselfconscious beauty, feign an anonymity that disdains even the last claim to authorship, and draw us, word by word, to an invisible point where the medieval orient and the fading occident can come together in a way never allowed them by the calamitous course of history. For in and out, above, about, below/ 'Tis nothing but a Magic Shadow-Show,/ Play'd in a Box whose Candle is the Sun,/ Round which the Phantom Figures come and go.³⁶

5 Khayyam and the Ruba'iyat in Scholarship

At a lecture in St. Petersburg in 1895, the Russian Orientalist Valentin Zhukovskii explained that he had found quatrains in Omar Khayyam's *Ruba'iyat* that could also be found in the œuvres of other Persian poets – he called these poems "wandering quatrains". Since then the authenticity of the poems that became

³³ Juan Cole, "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam and Muslim Secularism," *Studies in People's History* 3, no. 2 (2016): 138 – 50.

³⁴ Gittleman, "FitzGerald's Rubaiyat and Germany," 13; Arberry, Omar Khayyám, 22-25.

³⁵ Gittleman, "FitzGerald's Rubaiyat and Germany," 11; Arberry, *Omar Khayyám*, 22–23; Juan Cole, "Did Medieval Muslims Invent Modern Secularism? The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam Was Embraced by Many Western Intellectuals as an Aid to Their Own Secularization," *The Nation*, 7 November; François de Blois, *Poetry of the Pre-Mongol Period*, 5, Persian Literature. A Bio-Bibliographical Survey (Routledge, 2006), 34–35.

³⁶ W.G. Sebald, *The Rings of Saturn*, trans. Michael Hulse (New York: New Directions, 1995), 200 – 201.

known as the *Ruba'iyat* of Omar Khayyam have been in discussion.³⁷ Popularised in academic circles between 1895 and the early 1900s by Zhukovskii, the British Orientalists Edward Denison Ross and Edward Granville Browne, Arthur Christensen and Friedrich Rosen, there are in simplified terms and historically flattened (there has not been much decisive development) two sides to the debate: one argues that the historic Omar Khayyam was not a poet and the quatrains were only attributed to him after his death. Not a single quatrain can be safely said to have been authored by Khayyam, although he likely wrote some Arabic poetry and five quatrains, later called Khayyami, have been dated back to his life time. The first larger collections of Khayyami quatrains are found no less than two hundred years after his death. In-between had been the Mongol invasions, a time of great tumult, suffering and upheaval, explaining the focus on the impermanence of life in the Ruba'ivat. 38 The Ilkhanate Mongols (thirteenth to fourteenth century) also had a penchant for feasting, pointing to the origin of the frequent mention of wine and terrestrial pleasures.

As de Blois explains, "in light of the general stereotyped view in the Islamic world of the philosopher as the enemy of religion and morals 'Umar could very conveniently have been built up into an atheistic bogey." Rather than risking one's own neck, or uttering a frustrated quatrain anonymously to diminished publicity, Khayyam was likely used as a cover name under which grievances of various sorts could be aired in an ascribed tradition of the philosopher. So much so that by the Mongol period Omar Khayyam was, in the words of de Blois, "no longer a historical person but a genre" developing a life of its own in later centuries amid the tides of political, social, economic and intellectual currents of the dynasties following the Mongols.³⁹ Representatives of this line of argumentation are most notably Helmut von Ritter, Hans Heinrich Schaeder, Francois de Blois and recently Juan Cole.40

The other side, notably represented by 'Ali Dashti, Mohammad Foroughi, Arthur Arberry, Mehdi Aminrazvi and to a lesser degree by Swami Govinda Tirtha, Christensen, Christian Herrnhold Rempis and Rosen, concedes that certainly not

³⁷ Valentin Zhukovskii, "Omar Chajjam i'stranstvujuščija četverostišija [in Russian]," in Al-Muzaffariya (Festschrift for Victor Rosen) (St. Petersburg, 1897); Abdullaeva, "Zhukovskii."

³⁸ Hans Heinrich Schaeder, "Der geschichtliche und der mythische Omar Chajjam," ZDMG 88 (1934): 26.

³⁹ de Blois, Poetry of the Pre-Mongol Period, 305; Cole, "Rubaiyat Muslim Secularism."

⁴⁰ Schaeder, "Der geschichtliche und der mythische Omar Chajjam."

all of the over 1,400 quatrains originated with the philosopher himself. ⁴¹ They focus on finding new ancient manuscripts of Khavyam and a close reading of the oldest known manuscripts. To this side, Khayyami quatrains appear as possibly passed down by students of Khayyam and only put into writing a few generations after the philosopher's death. 42 This also explains the divergence of content in the oldest manuscripts, as each student transmitted a different corpus. This side agrees that the number of quatrains only began to grow in later centuries to over a thousand, but sees the newer quatrains as written in the tradition of the original quatrains, which go back to the astronomer-philosopher. The spirit of Khayyam is thus found in the quatrains, and seen as paralleled in part in the philosophical treatise of Khayyam, with his emphasis on theodicy, fate and scholarship. The non-connection side disputes this line of reading, and argues that there is no congruence in Khayyam's scholarly philosophy and in the philosophy of the quatrains. The side that sees a connection Khayyam-Ruba'iyat has had to struggle with being duped by forgeries and in some instances stood accused by the other side of lacking an adequately critical approach.

Another question in debate is whether Khayyam's quatrains were Sufi in character or not, often decisively influenced by the selection of quatrains drawn on as evidence. On this question Khayyam's philosophical treatise have had to answer as well, either confirming or disproving the question. Modernists, who thought Sufism degenerative, found Khayyam to be a rationalist only. Others, among them Sufi representatives, argued that Khayyam was not anti-Sufi. FitzGerald translated the *Ruba'iyat* as non-Sufi, whereas Nicolas read a spiritual dimension in the quatrains together with his philosophical works. Rempis followed Nicolas, whereas Rempis' doctoral supervisor Schaeder saw no Sufi-spirituality in the *Ruba'iyat*, dating the genesis of the quatrains to a period in which Sufi Islam was weak in Iran. But Ritter thought that sceptical and even blasphemous verses could co-exist. Ross also perceived of Omar as rather un-Islamic, but Sufi still. Edward Heron-Allen called his work *The Sufistic Quatrains of Omar Khayyam*. Syed Omar Ali-Shah went so far as to forge a manuscript to support the argument that Khayyam was Sufi.⁴³

⁴¹ Ali Dashti, *In Search of Omar Khayyam*, trans. L.P. Elwell-Sutton (London: Routledge, 2011); Swāmī Govinda Tírtha, *The Nectar of Grace. Omar Khayyam's Life and Works* (Allahabad: Kitabistan, 1941).

⁴² Christian H. Rempis, Die Vierzeiler 'Omar Chajjāms, 15.

⁴³ Schaeder, "Der geschichtliche und der mythische Omar Chajjam," 28; Christian H. Rempis, *Die Vierzeiler 'Omar Chajjāms*, 18; Wohlleben, Chajjam, corrected manuscript, 16; E. Denison Ross, "Some Side-Lights upon Edward FitzGerald's Poem, 'the Ruba'iyat of Omar Khayyam.' Being the Substance of a Lecture Delivered at the Grosvenor Crescent Club and Women's Insti-

These debates, which started with a few Orientalists in the meticulous philological tradition of needing to know what is truly authentic and what is not. spiralled out of academia and can be found in recurring discussions between literature, religion, philosophy and the contemporary descendants of "Oriental Studies" around the world. To popularise scholarship and upgrade the mass product intellectually for a bourgeois audience, FitzGeraldian and other translations and interpretations often come with an introduction to the Ruba'ivat and the life, times and philosophy of Omar Khayyam. These drew particularly in the first half of the twentieth century on recent academic findings of manuscripts and scholarly interpretations, thus underpinning the popular discourse academically. Literary reproductions, such as Maalouf's Samarcande or Mathias Énard's recent Boussole, similarly integrated this scholarly study of the Ruba'iyat and Persian history into their narratives of Khayyam as stylistic elements. 44 Equally, a fair bit of literary quality is found when reading some of the academic studies on Khayyam.

On the occasion of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of FitzGerald's Ruba'iyat in 2009, festivities and academic conventions were held in Cambridge and Leiden. The doubt in the authorship of the historic Omar Khayyam of the Khayyami *Ruba'iyat* has solidified, but the academic community, now increasingly international, is still divided and discusses a wide range of questions concerning Khayyam and the Ruba'iyat. Coumans recently published a bibliography of the Ruba'iyat and other Khayyam publications from around the world, runs four extremely content-rich Omar Khayyam-Ruba'iyat websites and is setting up a database to chronicle Khayyam's global reception. In 1971 'Ali Dashti counted over 2,000 books written about Khayyam. More recently Coumans found over 1,500 scholarly works in North America and Europe alone, 200 musical pieces set to Omar Khayyam, at least five films (the latest in 2005), and translations into 67 languages by 421 translators. 45 These productions are linked, as Coumans describes, "...to various religions, philosophies and individual beliefs. There are Sufi-oriented translations, humanist editions, spiritual, mystical and psychological interpretations. Anyone can use the text as [s/he] pleases and we have reached the point where the rubaiyat have entered the private domain, where

tute," lecture, Grosvenor Crescent Club (London, 1898); Robert Amot and Edward Heron-Allen, eds., The Sufistic Quatrains of Omar Khayyam, trans. Edward Fitzgerald, Edward Henry Whinfield, and J. B. Nicolas (New York: M. Walter Dunner, 1903); Syed Omar Ali-Shah, The Authentic Rubaiyyat of Omar Khayaam. A New Translation with Critical Commentaries, 3 (Berlin: Peacock,

⁴⁴ Mathias Énard, Boussole (Arles: Actes Sud, 2015).

⁴⁵ Coumans, Rubáiyát Bibliography, 13, 21-46; Coumans, "Database," 245-52.

the individual feels free to become an Omar Khayyam... Closely linked to this is the commercial domain, where you can find all sorts of artefacts, paraphernalia and useless products." In parallel, the "idolatrous worship of Omar that was witnessed in the first decades of the previous century has changed into a more deliberate, critical approach."⁴⁶ The story of the *Ruba'iyat* and Omar Khayyam continues to reverberate in the academic community, with more recent works focusing on material histories of Omar gadgets, the *Ruba'iyat* in global reception, or the rebellious poet-philosopher read as a figure of resistance against the "powers of darkness". Discussing the elites in the Omar Khayyam clubs of the 1890s, Kaiserlian concludes that the poetry of the *Ruba'iyat* can be "infinitely transformed to suit one's desires."⁴⁷

6 Rosen's Tentmaker of Poetic Iranian Philosophy

Friedrich Rosen and his 1909 Die Sinnsprüche Omars des Zeltmachers are as much illustrative of the adaptability of the Ruba'iyat to serve the desires of the author, as they shall serve here to shed a light on how Rosen's time spent in the German diplomatic service in Iran and subsequent career in the German foreign service influenced the production of "this modest bouquet of blossoms of the scent of the garden, in which I lingered for so long", which he intended "to bring back home to gain some new friends in the lands of the German tongue for the great thinker Omar Khayyam." What were Rosen's Ruba'iyat, with which he aimed at a "faithful rendition" from the Persian?⁴⁸ Who is Rosen's Khayyam, the maker of philosophical tents, whose "philosophical depth... constitutes the main appeal of [his] verses"?⁴⁹ In order to understand the form and contents in Rosen's Sinnsprüche, these "verdeutschte" (germanised) Ruba'iyat need to be situated in the context of their genesis. Rosen's encounters with Khayyam and the *Ruba'iyat* in Iran and British circles were constitutive, but also triggers related to German diplomacy, Orientalist academia and personal life in the 1900s. The structural limitations of the acquisition and translation of knowledge

⁴⁶ Coumans, Rubáiyát Bibliography, 16 – 22.

⁴⁷ Kaiserlian, "Elites of the Omar Khayyam Club," 172.

⁴⁸ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 15.

⁴⁹ The "legend" Rosen relays is that Omar's father was a tentmaker. In self-irony Omar took el-Khayyami, meaning tentmaker, as a penname: a tentmaker who sewed "tents of philosophy". Friedrich Rosen, *Sinnsprüche*, 14, 96; Wilhelm Litten, *Was bedeutet Chäjjam? Warum hat Omar Chäjjam, der Verfasser der berühmten persischen Vierzeiler, gerade diesen Dichternamen gewählt?* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1930), 7.

that this analysis raises, are complemented by the systemic restraints imposed on the author Rosen, whose diplomatic vocation and career ambition give rise to the questions: Why publish? Why poetry? Why Khayyam?

In a short note preceding his translations of the quatrains Rosen explains the poetic form of Khayyam's Ruba'iyat in five simple sentences with the key definition that "the ruba'i expresses in epigrammatic shortness a unique thought, in a way that the fourth line brings with the returning rhyme the final chord, often with an unexpected twist." In the 93 quatrains that Rosen presented in his initial 1909 publication, Wohlleben's characterisation of the typical Khayyami Ruba'iyat form (aaba) is followed with some flexibility. Some of the quatrains are almost slavishly imitating the original style, such as:

Die Großen, die die Ämter all gepachtet Und vor Begier nach Geld und Ehr' verschmachtet. Die sehen den kaum als 'nen Menschen an, Der nicht, wie sie, nach Geld und Titeln trachtet.50

The big ones, who have leased all the positions, and Amid their desire for money and honour sweltered. They hardly regard as human, Who does not strive for money and titles.

Others are less pointedly refined in translation, less thematically rich or more repetitive:

Kaaba und Götzenhaus bedeuten Knechtung, Der Christen Glocken, hört, sie läuten Knechtung. Kirche und heil'ge Schnur und Rosenkranz und Kreuz Wahrlich, sie alle nur bedeuten Knechtung.51

Ka'ba and idol house mean subjugation, The bells of the Christians, hear, they ring subjugation. Church and holy cord and rosary and cross Truly, they all mean subjugation.

The thrice repetition of a word, here "Knechtung" ندگیات (alternatively translatable as piety or devotion), to signify the end rhyme, is reflective of the Persian original.52

⁵⁰ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 53.

⁵¹ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 63.

⁵² Friedrich Rosen to Ignaz Goldziher, August 1908, GIL/36/06/04, OC - MTA.

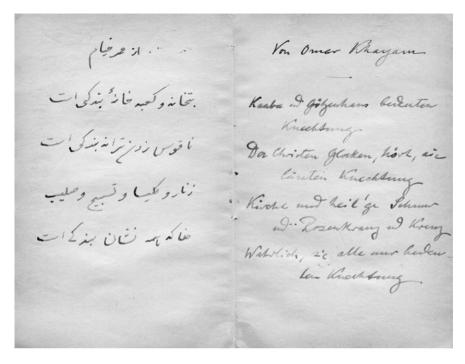


Fig. 6.1. From Friedrich Rosen's poetry notebook.

However, Rosen does not always follow the original pattern in the German translation. A Persian ruba'i ending in lines 1, 2 and 4 on 乏, sounding like the *coo* of the pigeon, meaning in English "where" and in German "wo", is translated as:

War einst ein Schloß, das bis zum Himmel ragte, Vor dessen Mauern Königsstolz verzagte, Auf dessen Trümmern klagt jetzt des Täubchens Ruf, Der klingt, als ob's nur wo, wo? wo, wo? fragte.⁵³

Was once a castle, that reached into the skies, Whose walls let the pride of kings despair, On its rubble now wails the call of the dove, It sounds, as if it only asked where, where? where, where?

Rosen tells his reader that the original usually is in aaba rhyme, but notes that aaaa rhymes are also common, finding reflection in his own translations:

⁵³ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 29.

Ein Vogel saß einst auf dem Wall von Tûs, Vor ihm der Schädel Königs Keikawûs Und klagte immerfort: "Afssûs, afssûs! Wo bleibt der Glocken und der Pauken Gruß?⁵⁴

"A bird once sat on the wall of Tus [city in Khorasan], In front of it the skull of king Keikawus [6th century], And complained evermore: Afsuss, afsuss [regret]! Where is the bells' and the drums' salute?"

In most instances Rosen is careful to keep a consistent meter in each quatrain. In the preceding quatrains this is at either ten or eleven syllables. Other quatrains follow a meter of eight, nine or twelve syllables. In rare cases Rosen breaks the at the end of کو meter to accommodate content. In the quatrain which had three the lines originally, his German version counts four "wo?" in one line to preserve a ten syllable meter. The form that Rosen gives single quatrains is thus by and large representative of the original structure, but since the Sinnsprüche often do not precisely replicate the number of syllables found in the source Ruba'iyat also the original meter cannot be maintained. Whenever Rosen cannot find a translation that captures both content and form, he chooses to keep the one he deems more important. Content tends to trump form. As such die Sinnsprüche approach the original Ruba'ivat in style and expressiveness, to the extent that Wohlleben, a scholar of Iranian literature and linguistics, used in his Omar Chajjam, das Rubai und die Deutsche Literatur Rosen's translations of the quatrain as the standard along which to explain the original: "The pattern is well represented here, despite Rosen's somewhat sober expression."55

Despite his awareness of the proliferation of the *Ruba'iyat* in German primarily in Rosen's version, Wohlleben analyses every German language author, who has translated Khayyam or written a ruba'i, from Hammer-Purgstall to Bodenstedt, de Lagarde and Nordmeyer and those who may have been influenced by the *Ruba'iyat*, but this one sentence is curiously Wohlleben's only analysis of Rosen's translation. Gittleman, who offers a sociological reading of literature history and less textual analysis, looks at the *Reception of Edward FitzGerald's Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam in England and Germany* and with a cursory reading of the *Sinnsprüche* concludes that "there can be no question that Rosen relied exclusively on the Persian for his translation, but the spirit and form can be traced to FitzGerald." Gittleman is correct in reading Rosen's *Sinnsprüche* as closer in

⁵⁴ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 29.

⁵⁵ Wohlleben, Chajjam, corrected manuscript, 12.

⁵⁶ Gittleman, "FitzGerald's Rubaiyat and Germany," 179.

style to the poetic FitzGerald than to the prosaic Nicolas translation, as Rosen followed FitzGerald in recreating the aaba rhyme. But the supposition that Rosen's rhyme form is an imitation of FitzGerald rather than from original Ruba'iyat is unsubstantiated. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but as some of the above quatrains show, Wohlleben's description of Rosen's translation as "sober" is not entirely off the mark for some of the Sinnsprüche. Other Rosen quatrains reverberate in their simplicity:

Als ich noch in der goldnen Jugend stand, Schien mir des Daseins Rätsel fast bekannt. Doch jetzt, am Schluß des Lebens, seh' ich wohl, Daß ich von allem nicht ein Wort verstand.⁵⁷

When I still stood in golden youth, Existence's riddle seemed almost known to me, But now, at the end of life, I see, That I have not understood a word of it.

In the note on the form of the Ruba'iyat at the outset of the Sinnsprüche Rosen emphasises:

"Each Rubā'ī is an independent poem. The ostensible coherence in this here following array does not correspond to the Persian original, in which the Rubā'ijāt are sorted following an alphabetical system without regard for the meaning."58

Gittleman says that Rosen follows FitzGerald's cue when ordering the quatrains thematically into "transience" (Vergänglichkeit) "mystery of the world" (Welträtsel) "wine and love" (Wein und Liebe) "teachings/apprenticeship" (Lehre) and "final words" (Schlussworte).⁵⁹ This is not entirely convincing, as FitzGerald produced one long in itself conclusive poem with single quatrains strung along a narrative that contain these themes. In Rosen's Sinnsprüche there is no narrative.

In any case Rosen's categories of transience contain 27, world riddle 18, teachings 28, wine and love 18, and final words 2 quatrains. As with the original Ruba'iyat the thematic contents of these poems can overlap and contain more than one meaning:

Des Lebens Karawane zieht mit Macht Dahin, und jeder Tag, den du verbracht

⁵⁷ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 39.

⁵⁸ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 19.

⁵⁹ Gittleman, "FitzGerald's Rubaiyat and Germany," 176.

Ohne Genuß, ist ewiger Verlust. Schenk ein, Saki! Es schwindet schon die Nacht.60

Life's caravan with might moves On, and every day that you have passed Without pleasure, is eternal loss. Pour another one, bar tender! The night already fades away.

This very first quatrain opens the section on transience, but could with its last two lines and particularly the exclamation "Schenk ein, Saki!" be as much about wine and its allegory wisdom and seeking for knowledge and truth. In applying the above elaborated categories of thematic contents of the Khayyami Ruba'iyat to the Sinnsprüche with a modest consideration for allegorical speech, the following quantitative break-up is produced: 1) the impermanence of life figures 27 times, though not exclusively in Rosen's section on transience (18 times); 2) the quest for the meaning of life can be read in 11 poems; 3) the question of how a supposedly good God has created evil in the world is touched upon 17 times; 4) fate and free will, often expressed as Fortuna's "Weltenrad" (wheel of the world), is considered in 19 quatrains; 5) the here and now and wine and love are thematised 44 times (18 times in Rosen's "wine and love"); 6) learning, knowledge and wisdom and their limits are contemplated in 28 quatrains (7 times only in Rosen's section on "teachings"; 7) God, questions of belief and religion are pondered in 36 quatrains; and 8) the afterlife is topic 23 times.

The eight themes thus show up together 205 times in Rosen's 93 Sinnsprüche, attesting to the double and triple contents of single quatrains. This goes some of the way in explaining some of the discrepancies between Rosen's categories and the categories here proposed. Further explanation can be found in the title of Rosen's Ruba'iyat: Sinnsprüche which are epigrams, meant to deliver meaning. Thus, in "teachings" we find poems that in the categories above fall primarily into 3) evil 4) fate and 7) God, such as:

Als Gott einst meinen Brei zurechtgegossen, Ist Gut' und Böses mit hineingeflossen. Drum kann ich wahrlich auch nicht besser sein, Als er mich selbst einst in die Form gegossen.⁶¹

When God once cast my pulp together, Good and evil flowed into me. Thus, I can truly not be better, Than he himself cast me once into form.

⁶⁰ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 23.

⁶¹ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 51.

For Rosen this is a teaching expressed in epigrammatic form. Similarly, other quatrains can be sorted into one meaning or another, and at the end of the day, literary discussions could certainly then say that the moral to be learned should be in another category. What should, however, be clear, is that Rosen's Sinnsprüche reflect what are generally regarded as the contents of the Khayyami Ruba'ivat.

The most prevalent categories are 5) the here and now, often symbolised by wine, love and pleasure, although love can also at times be read spiritually and wine for wisdom, and 7) God and questions of faith and religion, often rather critical of God or religion. This prevalence can be read as circumstantial or accidental, but some of these verses speak directly to the arguable contradiction of these two themes, such as:

Ich trinke nicht aus bloßer Lust am Zechen, Noch um des Korans Lehre zu durchbrechen, Nur um des Nichtsseins kurze Illusion! Das ist der Grund, aus dem die Weisen zechen.⁶²

"I don't drink out of mere lust for boozing, Nor to break the teachings of the Quran, Only for nonbeing's short illusion! That is the reason why the wise booze."

Rather than cultivating the supposed contradiction of belief in God, pleasure and knowledge, the quatrain Rosen selected here defuses the tension by explaining that it is not the Epicurean pleasure of carousing, nor an intended heresy, but that the goal of drinking is the illusion of not-being, a transcendental state, that is mirrored in the Sufi practice of seeking fana, a state of spiritual self-annihilation and unity with God. This Rosen qualified as the practice of the wisespiritual retreat of those knowing of the inadequacies of life. It is particularly in this regard of allowing for a religious spirituality that Rosen diverges drastically from FitzGerald, whose Ruba'ivat are materialist and atheist, and is closer to Nicolas, who sees in Khayyam "a mystic poet, a philosopher at once sceptic and fatalist, a Sufi in one word like most Oriental poets."63

Wisdom is then also not necessarily equated with knowledge and studying. In several quatrains knowledge is belittled as eventually futile amid the certainty of death, the inequities of life and oppression by the power-holders of politics and religion:

⁶² Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 70.

⁶³ Jean-Baptiste Nicolas, Quatrains de Khayam, 3-4.

Die einen streiten viel um Glauben und Bekenntnis, Die andern grübeln tief nach Wissen und Erkenntnis; So wird es gehn, bis einst der Ruf sie schreckt: Es fehlt so euch wie euch zur Wahrheit das Verständnis.⁶⁴

Some quarrel much about belief and creed, Others brood deeply after knowledge and enlightenment; Thus it will continue, until one day the call daunts them: You and you lack the understanding for truth.

In other poems the reader finds orthodox religion and religious knowledge condemned. Some quatrains Rosen chooses are rather blasphemous:

Solche Verbote, wo es ausgeschlossen, Daß man sie einhält, sind denn das nicht Possen? Ist das nicht so, als riefst Du: "Umgedreht Den vollen Becher, doch nichts ausgegossen?⁶⁵

Those prohibitions, that are impossible To observe, are those not a farce? Is that not, as if you called: "Upside down The full glass, but nothing spilled?"

And while this may certainly be interpreted as contrary to some strict interpretations of Islam, the majority of the poems that Rosen selects do not propose an anti-Islamic sentiment, as they are couched in a language of all religions being equally wrong, regardless if Islam, Christianity or Judaism, when they become too strict and its official representatives oppressive:

In Kirchen und Moscheen und Synagogen Wird man um seiner Seele Ruh' betrogen. Doch dem, der der Natur Geheimnis ahnt, Wird keine Angst vorm Jenseits vorgelogen.⁶⁶

In churches and mosques and synagogues You are cheated of your peace of mind. But to him, who senses nature's secret, No lies of fearing the afterlife are told.

Rosen is not shy to build in anachronisms, when he has Khayyam advise a sanctimonious hypocrite, who scolds him for his crooked path, to buy glasses so that

⁶⁴ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 46.

⁶⁵ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 55.

⁶⁶ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 62.

he can see his path is straight. Rosen also includes a number of original terms in Persian, as the above noted "Saki" (bartender) "Afssûs" (expression of regret), and figures of the Quran (Joseph) and Persia (Keiwakuss, Jamshid, Cyrus). In the book Rosen explains these terms, the anachronism, uncommon historical figures or religious episodes in endnotes following the translated quatrains. After all, even though Rosen wrote for a popular audience, he saw his readers as critical and seeking knowledge, who would want to learn more about Khayyam, his life, times and worldview. In this Rosen is similar to FitzGerald, who though at times inaccurately stylising his poems with exotic words presupposes an educated reader interested in the foreign. To this end of educating an interested readership, Rosen provides evidence, argument and background to several dozen of the quatrains.⁶⁷ The Ruba'iyat were to be accessible for the uninitiated, while their foreignness were not to be levelled.

Before pointing at the very end of the booklet to further notable scholarship on Khayyam, Rosen concludes the quatrains themselves with describing the time of Omar Khayyam and facts known about his life, followed by an essay on the philosopher's "Weltanschauung". This sketch, arising out of his lecture in Copenhagen in 1908, is another seventy pages long. The arguments Rosen presented are clearly attributable to scholarly sources or original manuscripts. A number of key elements in Rosen's Khayyam reading distinguish the Sinnsprüche from other Ruba'iyat interpretations at the time. Perhaps most importantly and in contrast to FitzGerald and many Ruba'iyat editions, Rosen's Omar Khayyam and his Sinnsprüche were not primarily Epicurean, cynical or escapist and intended for assuaging a tortured soul. Rather, Rosen situated his selection of Ruba'ivat in a reading of several layers of Iranian medieval history, in which the author Omar Khayyam lived and for whom Rosen found nothing but praise. While his discussion was intended as a guide to the Sinnsprüche, Rosen's thick explanation also serves to lay before his readership a part of Persia that he felt attached to and found presentable for a German audience. Through Khayyam Rosen presented his personal view on Persia, which was like Christensen's description, also meant to be a representation of the "Volkscharakter" (folk character) of the Persian people. 68 Rosen locates Omar Khayyam in the time of the "highest blossoming of Islamic culture" which he characterises as a "first renaissance... that provided fertile soil for nearly all of the intellectual life of the middle ages .. until the great second renaissance brought forth the powerful progress in all areas of

⁶⁷ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 149 – 52.

⁶⁸ Martin Hartmann, "Christensen, Arthur. Omar Khajjâms Rubâijât," Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 17 (1903): 366; Christensen, Khajjâms Rubâijât.

knowledge and art, the blessings of which still gratify humanity today". For Rosen the Persians were the main source of this revival that recovered elements of Greek culture: "Despite the rigidity of Muslim orthodoxy, Persian scholars ventured – even if in Arabic language and form – to give significance to the teachings of Plato, Aristotle, Euclid, Hippocrate, Galeus, Pythagoran and above all new-Platonism. It was Arvan spirit in a Semitic vest. The scholars drew on movements, which in part had their origins in Islam itself".69

Rosen's characterisation of the period was contradictory. Is the Aryan the Greek and thus the knowledge that has travelled? Or is the Aryan the Persian and thus only the receptacle in form of the spirit? If the Aryan spirit is the Greek knowledge, and the Semitic vest Islamic but itself in part originator - if an "external" originator - then the Persian would not be the receptacle, but rather a fusion, or layering of Aryan and Semitic. In itself the Persian would be nothing. In invoking the image of the vest, Rosen enfolds Rodinson's characterisation of the anti-clerical opinionators in the vein of Voltaire:

[They] worshipped Hellenism, as a civilization founded on the freedom of the spirit, the worship of reason and beauty, and inspired by the same Aryan spirit as the Vedas, the source of European greatness. In opposition to this, they envisioned a Semitic spirit of intolerance, scholastic dogmatism, fanatical and blind reliance on faith alone, a debilitating fatalism... Attributed to this spirit were all the misdeeds associated with Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.70

Rosen notes that Khayyam lived at the time after the Mu'tazilites (eighth to tenth century), who were grappling with notions of predestination and free will. It was seen as incompatible with divine benevolence that man should be punished for the mistakes, that without any of his fault had been "written on his head by the dame deity". Answers to questions on determinism and free will were sought in neo-Platonic works, first among the Qadarites (seventh century) and Mu'tazilites, and then, Rosen maintains, especially among Sufis. Here the Aryan-Semitic duality loses pertinence as Rosen relates the Sufis to Indian and Central Asian Buddhist asceticism, and explains their belief in the oneness of God, "tawhid", as a spiritual dimension that was also pondered philosophically,⁷¹ Rosen describes a religious reaction to Greek and sceptic ideas among Sufis, after the orthodoxy had assimilated Greek dialectics, at the time of al-Ghazali. Rosen contrasts al-

⁶⁹ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 84-85.

⁷⁰ Maxime Rodinson, Europe and the Mystique of Islam, trans. Roger Veinus (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 67.

⁷¹ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 86–89.

Ghazali, whom he sees as only assimilating the method of Greek thought but not the freedom of its contemplation, to previous scholars such as Avicenna and the Ikwhan as-Safa in Basra (the brothers of sincerity, a secret society of philosophers in the eighth or tenth century), who searched for an accommodation of Greek philosophy and Islamic belief.⁷²

Rosen noted the doubt over the authorship of the *Ruba'iyat* by Khayyam, but attaches little significance to the matter and thinks it possible that some of Khayyam's quatrains were meant to attack these orthodox tendencies of al-Ghazali and others. But unlike Rodinson's observation that interconnections of "Volksgeister" were entirely language based, Rosen complicated Khayyam and the *Ruba'iyat* by then enumerating a series of other influences at work in Iran or brought in through trade and migration, analy Nestorian Christians (fifth century and after), Zoroastrianism, Sunnis, Shi'ites, Isma'ilis, Jews, Manichaeans, Buddhism and Hinduism:

All these manifold and varied – contradictory and intertwined among themselves – intellectual currents (Geistesströmungen) of this great century need to be kept in mind, when trying to picture this wonderful man, who knew them and in his short sentences bespoke them all. Yet, who stood much above them as he stood above his time.⁷⁵

Based on the research of his day Rosen's biography of Khayyam was historically accurate. On the point of the question of Khayyam's belief Rosen followed Christensen, who noted that the philosopher went on the hajj to demonstrate his piety. Rosen wondered, "or was he really becoming pious? The soul of the Persian is so polymorphic." To support this speculation, Rosen proposed a reading of a text by the contemporary of Khayyam, Nizami 'Aruzi, who witnessed Khayyam's death in Nishapur after having completed his study of Avicenna's "God and the world". According to 'Aruzi Khayyam prayed, "O lord, truly, I have tried to know you, as much as it was in my powers. Thus forgive me. My knowledge of you may be my intercessor with you." To Rosen this disproves the notion of those who have claimed that Khayyam was "a disastrous philosopher, an atheist and a materialist." He should rather be seen as someone grappling with God and understanding the world.

⁷² Friedrich Rosen, *Sinnsprüche*, 90 – 91.

⁷³ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 109.

⁷⁴ Rodinson, Europe and the Mystique of Islam, 61.

⁷⁵ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 92-95.

⁷⁶ Christensen, Omar Khajjâms Rubâijât, 44; Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 106.

In describing Omar Khayyam's "Weltanschauung", Rosen echoes modern Iranian nationalist positions in postulating:

In the great, the only and eternal culture clash, which man has always fought, the fight between the seekers and those, who believe to have found, he embodies the direction restlessly striving for knowledge (Erkenntnis). Omar Khayyam is the Aryan, who does not want to go under in the dogma and the tradition of Arabianess so prevalent in his country at the time. 400 years of Islam's rule had not sufficed to eradicate the Indo-German spirit of Persianness.77

What Rosen only hints at in describing the times of Khayyam is here more pronounced, even if the contradictions of Rosen's thought persist. In one sentence he equates Arabs and Islam, but then a page later writes that "Arabic culture is nothing else than the continuing life of Greek scholarship under the into Islam dissolved Arabianess and Persians and their thought." Of Turkish influences during the period of the Seljuks there is no mention.⁷⁸

The role of wine is central to Rosen's reading of the Ruba'ivat. Far from lending the grape an Epicurean or physically intoxicating dimension, it symbolises to Rosen first and foremost "independent thinking", something he saw in connection to Sufism and the at the time still common practice of pre-Islamic Zoroastrians. Similar notions of Zoroastrian continuity, the practice of magi and winedrinking are prevalent in Christensen's thought and Goldziher had in a lecture on "Islamisme et Parsisme" at the Congress of the History of Religions in Paris in 1900 argued that the Prophet Mohammad had been influenced by Zoroastrianism.⁷⁹ Rosen does not provide much evidence or elaborate further on Zoroastrian belief systems, nor does this unsubstantiated assertion of "Aryan independent thinking" explain the Greek and Indian influences, or the Islamic and Arabic influences on the Persian spirit found in Khayyam.

Rosen's main thesis boils down to Khayyam not having belonged to any school. To him Khayyam was not "purely materialist-atheist, nor following the traditional-church direction" and while levelling his main criticism against dogma and orthodoxy, he saw no religion than Islam as any better. Rosen allows for a Sufi dimension, but rejects Nicolas' and Friedrich von Bodenstedt's assertions that Khayyam was first and foremost a spiritual Sufi poet. Rather Rosen

⁷⁷ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 107-8.

⁷⁸ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 109.

⁷⁹ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 117; Hedemand Søltoft, Christensen, 45; P. Oktor Skjærvø, "Goldziher and Iranian Elements in Islam," in Goldziher Memorial Conference, June 21-22, 2000, Budapest. Oriental Collection. Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Éva Apor and István Ormos (Budapest: MTAK, 2005), 245-49.

sees the Ruba'ivat in light of Ketman, "between pretense and art of disguise", while pursuing philosophy in the sense of searching for the meaning of existence. To illustrate this Rosen notes that when he translated a word in his Sinnsprüche as "subjugation", its meaning could also be "piety" or "devotion", which would then be religiously acceptable. This reflected foremost Rosen's own belief that dogmatic religion was oppressive and disallowing of a more open approach to faith.⁸⁰ Coming back to the notions of philosophy and critical thought, Rosen perceives in Khayyam the "Aryan striving for independent thinking and free searching for truth, in opposition to the rigid dogmatic walls, erected by Arabianism", which Rosen reads in parallel to the only constant in Khayyam's thought being the notion of "unity of existence" (wahdat alwujud).⁸¹ If we were now to pin Rosen's Khayyam to three words, the philosopher-poet would have to be a "complex Sufi Aryan". But as Rosen made an effort to show the multifaceted character of Khayyam and contradicts himself in the process so consequently this does him injustice.

Rosen made an effort to situate the Ruba'iyat in the context of Omar Khayyam's life, his other writings and his time. However, without allowing for the possibility of the quatrains having been written by various authors over the duration of centuries and thus under the influence of various spatial and temporal influences, it was this very analysis that made Rosen grapple with a time-flattened reading of the Ruba'ivat, looking for and finding explanations that are in a few cases unlikely and taken together incoherent. As such he portrayed the same time-flattening and search of the Persian folk spirit that Hartmann and Christensen put on display in arguing that the Sassanian Iranian spirit did not perish after Iran's Islamisation but "daß Chaijams Geist der persichen Geist selber ist, wie er im Mittelalter war und in allem Wesentlichen noch heutzutage ist".82

Rosen does not push the "Sufi Aryan", nor does he define what that Aryan is supposed to be beyond the spirit of free-thinking and knowledge-seeking, but rather ascertains that the historical material at the reader's and his disposal is not sufficient to adequately define Khayyam and the Ruba'iyat. Like Immanuel Kant, Rosen noted, Khayyam did not write down everything he thought, making

⁸⁰ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 113-16.

⁸¹ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 118, 129.

^{82 &}quot;That Khayyam's spirit is the Persian spirit itself, as it was in the Middle Ages and is by and large still today." Christensen, Khajjâms Rubâijât, 103; Martin Hartmann, "Christensen - Rubâijât," 370.

him impossible to grasp fully. Rosen concludes with his own belief that Khayyam stood above theories, and his contradictions gave rise to his thought and writing: "Ich möchte gerade darin, daß Omar alle die verschlungenen Pfade des Denkens andeutet und sich doch in keiner Sackgasse verrennt, als das für ihn Charakteristische bezeichnen. Nicht orthodox, nicht irreligiös-materialistisch, nicht durchweg sufisch-mystisch ist seine Weltanschauung."83

Together with his "consummate form" this puts Khavyam among the "greatest and best that have reached immortality in the memory of terrestrials".84 This praise and returning comparisons with the grandees of European and German thought, taken together with Rosen's admittance that he does not propose to finally define Khayyam and the Ruba'iyat, but rather present them as long meandering account of the colourful, constrastful and intriguing Persian past, eventually point to Rosen's opening remark at the outset - "to gain some new friends in the lands of the German tongue for the great thinker Omar Khayyam". 85

7 Confluences of Scholarship and Politics in Poetic **Translation**

Similar to other translations and interpretations of Omar Khayyam, Rosen's Ruba'iyat were a product of disposition, circumstance, chance and intent. Resulting from specific encounters, triggers, influences and restrictions, the Sinnsprüche are traceable to Rosens's diplomatic career, scholarly interactions and private life. Omar Khayyam only appeared in Rosen's public life by the summer of 1908, when he announced to the International Orientalist Congress in Copenhagen that he would speak about Omar Khayyam's "Weltanschauung".86 His Sprachführer from 1890 and the reworked English Colloquial Grammar from 1898 made no reference to Omar Khayyam or Persian poetry. The main sources of Persian study with his father Georg Rosen had been Sa'di's Gulistan, Rumi, Hafez and the Elementa Persica.87 Rosen encountered Khayyam in India and probably on his way back via Iran in 1886 – 7, but the Ruba'iyat did not leave a

^{83 &}quot;That Omar hints at all the entwined paths of thinking but does not come to a deadlock, I would describe as what characterises him. Not orthodox, not irreligious-materialist, not thoroughly Sufi-mystic is his worldview." Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 146.

⁸⁴ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 147.

⁸⁵ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 15.

⁸⁶ Christian Sarauw to Friedrich Rosen, 4 August 1908, ASWPC.

⁸⁷ Friedrich Rosen, 1926, Hinterlassene Manuskripte I, 6 NL Müller-Werth, PA AA, 31.

strong, immediate impression on him.⁸⁸ After the Persian self-study books for beginners, Rosen's second Iranian study interest was the history of Islamic Iran. This focus prevailed in Baghdad, where the reading of history was the best remedy for Rosen's boredom. Yet, along the years in Iran and Iraq Rosen read Khayyam with his teacher Sheikh Hassan and there were instances where he would cite a Khayyami ruba'i in a letter to his brother Hareth or pen down a few verses in his notebooks.⁸⁹ The idea of publishing a German translation of the Persian *Ruba'iyat* only came into Rosen's focus through the interplay of his private dabbling in Persian poetry in Tehran and the increasing popularity of Omar in the Anglophone world at the turn of the century.

By the late nineteenth century the FitzGerald-Khayyam frenzy reached British circles in India and Iran. Through mingling with the Persian poetry enthusiasts Dufferin in Shimla in 1886/7 and Bell in Tehran in 1892 Rosen became aware of the popularity of Khayyam in the English-speaking world through the peripheries of the British Empire. When Rosen was preparing his Colloquial Grammar publication in London in 1897, Edward Denison Ross, who helped Rosen with the publication, was in parallel translating Valentin Zhukovskii's essay on the wandering quatrains. Ross was holding talks about Khayyam as a scholar in London at the same time and the ground-breaking findings made for a good topic of conversation for the two friends on the sidelines of a rather sober language guide production. 90 Friends in Germany, to whom Rosen had shown translations of his Persian poems, encouraged him to publish the poems by the Persian sage. Another motivation was that Khayyam enjoyed worldwide success in English, while he was virtually unknown in Germany still.⁹¹ Overshadowed by Goethe's "twin in spirit" Hafez, and the ghazel rhyme form popularised by Hammer-Purgstall and Rückert, the German translations of the Ruba'iyat were either re-translations from the FitzGerald or the Nicolas translations without consultation of Persian language Ruba'ivat, or they were like those of Friedrich Bodenstedt not in line with the original rhyme forms.⁹²

⁸⁸ Frederick Hamilton-Temple-Blackwood, Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyam.

⁸⁹ Gertrude Bell, *Persian Pictures*, 95–104; Friedrich Rosen, 1898, Hinterlassene Manuskripte II, 7 NL Müller-Werth, PA AA, 150; Friedrich Rosen, Persische Gedichte, 1890s, notebook, ASWPC; Friedrich Rosen, رباعيات عمر خيام, ASWPC.

⁹⁰ Abdullaeva, "Zhukovskii"; Friedrich Rosen, *Modern Persian Colloquial Grammar*, VIII; E. Denison Ross, "Side-Lights upon Edward FitzGerald's Poem".

⁹¹ Remy, "India and Persia on the Poetry of Germany," 76, 82; Friedrich Rosen, *Sinnsprüche*, 12–15; Gittleman, "FitzGerald's Rubaiyat and Germany," 165.

⁹² Friedrich Bodenstedt, *Die Lieder und Sprüche des Omar Chajjam* (Breslau: Schletter'sche Buchhandlung, 1881); Ambrose George Potter, *A Bibliography of the Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyam.* Together with Kindred Matter in Prose and Verse Pertaining Thereto (London: Ingpen and Grant,

According to Rosen's memories it was on a hunting trip in Azerbaijan that he decided he would translate Omar Khayyam to German. Night fell and he came across the ruins of a caravanserai, in which a group of men from the Shahsevenn tribe had made camp, the eldest reading from a manuscript of Firdowsi's Shahnameh to the men huddled around a fire. Speaking with the men, Rosen learned that the caravanserai stemmed from the days of Khayyam's protector Sultan Malik-Shah, Khayyam himself could have stayed there, Rosen thought, sparking the desire to translate the *Ruba'iyat* to German.⁹³ This pretty story is possible, even if one would think that this may have rather sparked a translation of the Shahnameh, which was written not much earlier in the early eleventh century. In any case, this undated event would not have been the first encounter with Khayyam.

Already when staying at the court of the Indian viceroy in 1886-7, Rosen had studied Persian poetry with his employer and family friend Lord Dufferin. Dufferin studied Persian to use the language for viceregal business and to enjoy its poetry in his leisure hours. 94 By the time Rosen left Shimla in the spring of 1887, Dufferin self-published a transliteration of 110 Khayyami Ruba'iyat in an edition of twenty copies. Had the "Persian story-teller in India" to whom Rosen and Dufferin had listened in the evening hours recited Khayyam? On request of the two Persian students with their interest sparked by FitzGerald, as a simple example of Persian poetry, or because listening to a few lines of Khayyam for digestion had also been practice at the Mughal courts, which the British replaced? Dufferin's Ruba'iyat provides no further detail.95 Another British connection of Rosen to the Ruba'ivat was Gertrude Bell, Bell, who had come to Tehran in 1892, studied Khayyami Ruba'iyat with Sheikh Hassan, who was also a teacher of Rosen. Like Dufferin in Shimla, Bell was tied into an English social world in which the FitzGeraldian popularisation of Khayyam was dominant.

The global demand of the Ruba'iyat also began to raise the profile of Khayyam as a secular or Sufi poet in Iran, where he had before shone more as

^{1929), 142;} Wohlleben, Chajjam, corrected manuscript, 28-39; Remy, "India and Persia on the Poetry of Germany," 66.

⁹³ Friedrich Rosen, Oriental Memories, 166–67.

⁹⁴ Frederick Hamilton-Temple-Blackwood to Friedrich Rosen, 7 October 1887, F130 - 26, BL EM -Dufferin Collection; Friedrich Rosen, Modern Persian Colloquial Grammar, VII; Potter, Bibliography of the Rubaiyat, 104.

⁹⁵ Friedrich Rosen, Modern Persian Colloquial Grammar, VII; John R. Perry, "Language Planning in Iran and Tajikistan," 155; Cole, "Rubaiyat and Muslim Secularism."

a mathematical genius. 96 Rosen's poetry notebooks and loose papers from the 1890s show that he was without much categorical structure gathering and translating poems that his eye fell on, or that were supplied to him by his Iranian friends. There was Khayyam, Sa'di, Hafez, Rumi and unattributed poems and folk songs. 97 This was not a work of scholarship aimed at publication. In his own words: "My Persian studies, however, always remained a secondary occupation. I resorted to them only in my leisure hours."98 It was a way for Rosen to practice and improve his Persian skills, to immerse himself into the high culture of the country in which he resided, a hobby that he shared with British and Iranian friends.

Translating select poems to German also allowed to show a snapshot of literary Iran to friends and family in Europe. Rosen had known the Persian language since his youth. But this had been a dry Persian, a language studied in a chamber of the parental home in provincial Detmold, as alive as the Latin of Horace or the Greek of Homer. As German dragoman in Iran Persian came alive as a language of friendship, suffering, struggle, faith, knowledge and love. As he practiced the language in everyday life his vocabulary expanded and he gained a more acute understanding of nuances of meaning of single words and expressions. Everyday Iranian life was naturally that of the German diplomat in Tehran during the tumultuous 1890s of Qajar Iran. This context of the diplomatic role of Rosen and the socio-political events in Iran framed Rosen's view of Iran, its history, its culture, its everyday life.

Even though Rosen's translation of the Khayyami Ruba'iyat was primarily a hobby, it was one that arose out of the necessity of learning Persian. Knowing and practicing the poetic qualities of the language was beneficial for the forming and cultivation of social bonds with a number of highly placed officials and nobles at the Qajar court. Standing at the outset of Rosen's translation of the Ruba'iyat were the romantic Persophile FitzGerald escaping prude England, pastime poetry reading at the British viceregal court in India, the religious lower class Persian teacher Sheikh Hassan in Tehran, and a chance encounter with a Turkic tribe in the steppes of northern Iran.

The text sources Rosen used for his Sinnsprüche were not uniform either. The quatrains in his notebooks, that may have originated from Sheikh Hassan, his friend Zahir ed-Dowleh, other non-written sources, letters or short excerpts of Persian poetry manuscripts were complemented by an extensively marked

⁹⁶ Friedrich Rosen, "Bell, Persian Pictures"; Gertrude Bell, Persian Pictures, 97-101; Cole, "Rubaiyat of Omar Khavyam and Muslim Secularism," 148.

⁹⁷ Friedrich Rosen, Persische Gedichte, 1890s, notebook, ASWPC.

⁹⁸ Friedrich Rosen, Oriental Memories, 169.

up version of E.H. Whinfield's bi-lingual English-Persian *Ruba'iyat* in his collection. Rosen's scribble in the book corrected Whinfield's Persian spelling and English translations and added his own translations of verses in the margins. In pencil Rosen slated single quatrains for "new translation" to German: "نو ترجه". In a letter to Hartmann, Christensen noted that he had found many of Rosen's *Sinnsprüche* in Whinfield's publication. 99 Nicolas' bi-lingual collection was another source of the *Sinnsprüche*, leading Andreas to inquire whether Rosen had not simply taken all Persian *Ruba'iyat* from that collection. Rosen denied the charge: "Many of them I have found in Oriental editions, that are nowhere listed in European works." One of these manuscripts was a rather expensively decorated in blue-gold patterns, which served for the illustration of the third edition of the *Sinnsprüche*, a limited edition deluxe of 300 copies. Its ornamentation was taken from a "manuscript in possession of the translator." 101

Rosen consulted Nicolas, FitzGerald, Whinfield and others to compare his interpretations and poetic form. Rosen knew FitzGerald's poem, and recognised its aaba rhyme form, but had Rosen imitated FitzGerald rather than the original? It is more likely that FitzGerald's success with the introduction of this new rhyme form in English encouraged Rosen to try the same in German. It was then also not an unmitigated immediacy of the source in form of a physical manuscript that Rosen could point to as added value of his *Sinnsprüche*. Rather, it was the immediate translation of a specimen of poetry from Persian, by someone who was familiar with the language, people, culture and history of Iran and the Persianate world that Rosen took pride in. Thus, characteristically for the historical development of the *Ruba'iyat*, Rosen's *Sinnsprüche* are a melange of new, copy and original, with lines of transmission not always clear, but where visible, pointing all over.

Particularly for his retrospective discussion of some of the *Ruba'iyat* as speaking to Sufi concepts of unity (tawhid) and wujud (existence), Rosen's induction in the Safi 'Ali Shah circle and encounters with derwishes was formative. Sufism had for Rosen become a way to cope with life in Iran, but also a social space that was not removed from the world, but rather part of the highest eche-

⁹⁹ E.H. Whinfield, *The Quatrains of Omar Khayyam* (London: Trübner & Co, 1883), 23; Arthur Christensen to Martin Hartmann, 10 July 1909, copy, I 1 Utilg. 578, KB – HA.

¹⁰⁰ Friedrich Rosen to F. C. Andreas, 20 October 1912, 361 1 Cod. Ms. F. C. Andreas, SUBG. **101** This manuscript was likely among the twelve coloured Persian manuscripts that perished when the Rosen house in Berlin was bombed out in 1945. Friedrich Rosen, *Rubaijat-i-Omari-Khajjam. Die Sinnsprüche Omars des Zeltmachers*, 3 (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1914); Nina Rosen, Haus Bingerstr. 28, Berlin-Wilmersdorf. Liste der verbrannten Gegenstände. Anlage zum Antrag auf Entschädigung nach der Kriegsschäden V.O, 1945, ASWPC.

lons of Iranian society and a place of reading, studying, discussion, refined manners, friendship and verses. The Sufi order that framed Rosen's reading of Persian poetry, rooted in its Ni'matullahi past between Iran and India, struggled with western hegemony in philosophy, religion and the arts and was under its guide Safi 'Ali Shah itself a product of an Indo-Iranian modernity. The religious tolerance hallmarked by Zahir ed-Dowleh opened a forum, albeit hidden in the libraries or studies of only a few men of independent means, in which exchange could take place and where poetry was read together. While this background allowed Rosen to identify certain aspects in the *Ruba'iyat* that were reflective of Sufi practices and beliefs, this also had him dismiss notions of limiting Khayyam to being a Sufi. Only wishful reading, he thought, let some of the *Ruba'iyat* appear as neatly bringing together knowledge and faith, the factual and the spiritual worlds. In a letter to Oskar Mann he distanced himself from Nicolas' purely Sufi interpretation – "alles sufisch!" (everything Sufistic) – which had found much traction in other European translations. 102

Another angle traceable to 1890s Iran in Rosen's Sinnsprüche is the Khayyam who has faith and struggles with God, but is dismissive of orthodox religion, hypocritical clergy, legalistic prescriptions and everything that clashed with fact and science-based modernity. Already in little Suleiman's Jerusalem years, religion was the violence of the Christian churches at the Holy Sepulchre and the "weltfremd" and needlessly authoritarian clergyman from Mecklenburg, who had been charged with his education. In Tehran Rosen's aversion to the clergy was in parts rooted in the Sufi orders in Qajar era Iran standing in continuous conflict with the Shi'ite 'ulema. 103 Further aggravating was the outbreak of the cholera, that Rosen saw spread and intensify due to the population not being educated in health and hygiene due to the clergy's control of education. As Tehran and most of Iran shut down, one third of the inhabitants of his village Dezashub died. Rosen saw religious fatalism at fault. 104 The reports that Rosen sent to Berlin also often narrated conflicts in a triangle of Europeans, Shah's court and Shi'ite clergy, but Rosen's critique was not so much categorically anti-religious, as it was specific. In his reading Russian infiltration and stifling of development was as much at fault for the demise of late Qajar Iran as the Shah's oppression, the princes' corruption and the clergy's recalcitrance. In Rosen's mind the *Ruba'iyat* and Khayyam spoke to these afflictions of Iran.

¹⁰² Friedrich Rosen to Oskar Mann, 16 May 1909, 10, 1888 Darmstaedter 2b, StaBiB.

¹⁰³ Bayat, "Anti-Sufism."

¹⁰⁴ Friedrich Rosen, *Oriental Memories*, 171–72.

1890s Iran, caught between extravagant Qajar court rule, failing public finances, foreign encroachment, the beginnings of western education and largescale infrastructure projects, and often unclear political allegiances and shifting coalitions became for Rosen a society in which the practice of Ketman was central for artistic and philosophical expression – and for survival. This practice of religiously permissible dissimulation "in cases of constraint and when there is a possibility of harm" was an element in much of Persian religious poetry and Rosen found it in the Ruba'iyat. In his lectures during the 1900s Goldziher described a destructive influence of al-Ghazali's attacks on the peripatetic traditions of Avicenna on the "free spirits" of Sufi Islam. Goldziher excused al-Ghazali as someone fighting against nihilist tendencies in a bid to renew and reform Islam, integrating Sufi and legal notions into an "inner experience" of religion. Having read Goldziher, Rosen placed. Khayyam into a period of growing orthodox dominance amid al-Ghazali and his followers, when the philosopher lost the patronage of Malik Shah and Nizam al-Mulk. Rosen saw Khayyam adapting his quatrains to the insecure circumstances and hiding criticism and frustration behind allegory. 105 As Cole outlines, it is more plausible that this dissimulation of criticism in the Ruba'ivat stems from the aftermath of the Mongol invasions several hundred years after the life of Khayyam, and then later from the crackdown on liberties in the Safavid dynasty, and in the context of Khayyam's popularity at the Mughal courts in India. 106 Ketman was also dominant in Christensen's analysis, and was informed by the generalising and essentialist description of Ármin Vámbéry: "Ketman (the art of dissimulation allowed by Islam) is a gift well known and diligently cultivated by Orientals". 107 Speaking to the lack of engagement with Shi'a Islam, neither Rosen nor any of these Orientalists placed Ketman in the context of its genesis in the history of Islam, as a defensive tool for the followers of the Twelve Imams to evade persecution. For Rosen, under the impression of the daily court struggles in 1890s Tehran, the technique was something typical for the Iranian nation. 108

"Diplomacy is a complex art that involves the mixing of political acumen, cultural finesse, language abilities and conversation skills to wield the power

¹⁰⁵ R. Strothmann and Moktar Djebli, "Takiyya," in Encyclopaedia of Islam, P. Bearman, et al. (2012). R. and Bausani Blachère, A., "Ghazal," in Encyclopaedia of Islam, P. Bearman, et al.; Ignaz Goldziher, Vorlesungen über den Islam (Heidelberg: Carl Winter's Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1910), 172-79; Georg Rosen and Friedrich Rosen, Mesnevi, 19.

¹⁰⁶ Cole, "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam and Muslim Secularism."

¹⁰⁷ Hedemand Søltoft, Christensen, 48; Arminius Vambery, The Life and Adventures of Arminius Vambery (Delhi: Asian Education Services, 1998), 282.

¹⁰⁸ Strothmann and Diebli, "Takivva,"

of persuasion", as the diplomat-poet Kumar notes. "Generally conducted in short sentences which reveal as much as much they hide" for Rosen poetic dissimulation worked well in the trade of diplomacy. 109 By the time of his publication of the *Sinnsprüche* in 1909 Rosen's struggles as a diplomat representing the German Kaiserreich in Morocco elucidated for him on a personal level the limits of the sayable. Presenting a number of *Sinnsprüche* critical of political elites and their disregard of common people and facts, Rosen's selection also lends itself as hidden critique of the Kaiserreich of Wilhelm II and its noble power-holders that branded the bourgeois Rosen with his contrarian views as tactless and careerist.

In his socio-literary comparison of the appeal of the Ruba'iyat in England and Germany, Gittleman argued that only downtrodden Weimar Republic Germany with its "Kulturpessimismus" became as receptive to Khayyam's notions of impermanence and transience as decadent fin de siècle Victorian England had been. During imperial times, Gittleman argued, the Ruba'iyat were in Germany "psychologically and intellectually inaccessible" amid a belief in national greatness, expansionism, adulation of the Kyffhäuser myth and Wagnerian opera. 110 Gittleman was right in that the popularity of Khayyam in Germany was largest during the Weimar Republic. The initial year of publication of Rosen's Sinnsprüche was however 1909, and the publication was met with immediate wide appeal. In the third edition before the war the publishing house noted in 1914 that "the deep and idiosyncratic proverbial wisdom of Omar Khayyam has quickly gained currency (eingebürgert) in our literature". 111 This was not a period of withering, ennui and downfall, but saw a growing, rambunctious, strong, megalomaniac pre-war Germany, even as there were warning signs of imperial overstretch. In a retroactive heroic interpretation Rosen's inclusion of a large number of transience themed quatrains as a warning against what was to come would figure well. However, apart from the Khayyami Ruba'iyat in the original simply holding quite a number of quatrains that are dealing with the definiteness of life, Rosen's emphasis made him neither furnace of national society nor augur of its demise.

The appeal of the transient quatrains for Rosen rather stemmed from his personal "wandering" life, the diplomat arriving in a city to depart several months or years later, leaving behind a house that had become home, friends, an entire world filled with routines, memorable events and moments of happiness and

¹⁰⁹ Abhay Kumar, "Two Shades of Passion," Kathmandu Post, 4 November 2012.

¹¹⁰ Gittleman, "FitzGerald's Rubaiyat and Germany," 156, 132.

¹¹¹ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche, 38.

sadness, and cultures in all their wonders and horrors, "Is the life of the diplomat a constant leave-taking". Rosen wrote in his memoirs. 112 Impermanent was also what he saw in cities and societies he knew. Rosen witnessed the disruptive qualities modernisation brought to culture and tradition in India in the mid-1880s. Once proud Iran was but a shadow of its former self in the midst of Russia's and Great Britain's Great Game, and the Constitutional Revolution (1905 -1911) brought about further social and political upheavals. Old ways were disappearing in the Jerusalem which had in his youth been his Biblical classroom, riding on the side of his father and in caravans down to the Dead Sea. The new German consulate was located in the rapidly expanding western Jerusalem, outside the Seljuk era city walls. Railways and mass tourism à la Baedecker and Thomas Cook were replacing the donkeys and the jinns of his childhood. And as he saw the erstwhile centre of Islamic learning Fez decompose, then in the summer of 1907 his son Oscar died in an accident aged twelve. On Oscar's tombstone in Berlin's Apostel graveyard was engraved a couplet:

Alack - this conversation became in the blink of an eye the last. I had not seen his blossoming's countenance enough and yet it was the last spring.¹¹³

Sitting there in Morocco in a political position he sought to escape, pursuing a politics he thought futile and his son dead, translating these Khayyami poems of impermanence, love, wisdom and beauty, was diversion and solace. Or as Rosen told Wilhelm II, when receiving him in a train wagon on the Belgian-Dutch border in November 1918, "also for Your Majesty solemn work will be balsam."114

As already noted, the academic Orientalist discourse in Europe played a significant role in shaping Rosen's Sinnsprüche. This discourse was pertinent mostly in the essay on Omar Khayyam's life, times and Weltanschauung. Rosen had been aware in Iran of the influence of Greek philosophy on the Islamic golden age through the Beit al-Hikma under Harun al-Rashid and al-Ma'mun (ninth century). Sheikh Hassan studied Aristotle at madrasa in Tehran, 'Emad ed-Dowleh's work on Molla Sadra had him grapple with Aristotelian and neo-Platonic meta-

¹¹² Friedrich Rosen, Aus einem diplomatischen Wanderleben. Bukarest. Lissabon (Berlin: Transmare, 1932), 24.

¹¹³ Family Photographs, ASWPC; Dickens, Mumsey's Recollections, 51; Nina Rosen to F. C. Andreas and Lou Andreas-Salomé, Autumn 1907, 362 1 Cod. Ms. F. C. Andreas, SUBG.

¹¹⁴ Friedrich Rosen, Ende des Kaiserreichs. Weimarer Republik, 221.

physics and it is safe to assume that Rosen's other close intellectual sparring partner Zahir ed-Dowleh was no stranger to such ideas and concepts either.¹¹⁵ Text-immanent indication of this Greek dimension was the connection of Khayyam's biography with Ibn Sina (Avicenna), who drew on neo-Platonic and Aristotelian thought. The most profound influence was, however, a much discussed lecture on the neo-Platonic and gnostic elements in the Hadith by Goldziher at Copenhagen's Orientalists Congress in 1908. Goldziher had talked just before Rosen began discussing Khayyam's worldview. 116 Particularly the conception of "oneness" in neo-Platonic works appeared compatible to Rosen's Sufi "tawhid" interpretation of some of the Ruba'iyat, and the dialectical inquisitiveness of Aristotelian philosophy Rosen saw mirrored in the philosophical works of Khayyam. Still during the congress Goldziher took an interest in Rosen's translations and Rosen sent him several Ruba'iyat in Persian next to his German translation and Goldziher suggested that Rosen should read more about the history surrounding the life of Khayyam. In the following years Rosen showed himself indebted to Goldziher for his "Förderung und Belehrung". 117

Missing from Rosen's translations of the *Ruba'iyat* themselves, the interpretation of Aryan superiority over Arabic Islam in the section on Khayyam's Weltanschauung equally may have originated in 1890s Tehran. Employed by the French legation in Tehran in the 1860s, Arthur de Gobineau introduced scholarly circles in Iran to critical rationalism in Descartes' *Discours de la méthode* and his ideas in *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* on the pure Aryan race and its superior character being submerged and degenerating by mixing with other races also penetrated Iranian circles, as Mohammad Qazvini suggested in his commentary on "Gobinism" in Germany in 1934. Also via the Russian ruled Caucasus the anti-Arabism in the writings of Mirza Fath'ali Akhundzadeh (1812–1878) and Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani (1853–96) in Iran began to function like Europe's antisemitism against Jews. *They* were devious, inhuman and had subverted and degenerated the pristine body and spirit of the Aryan nation. At fault for the demise of Iran, its backwardness, underdevelopment and corruption were the lizard eat-

¹¹⁵ Gertrude Bell, Persian Pictures, 100.

¹¹⁶ Actes du Quinzième Congrès des orientalistes, 67-69.

¹¹⁷ Friedrich Rosen to Ignaz Goldziher, 9 July 1909, GIL/36/06/03, OC – MTA; Friedrich Rosen to Ignaz Goldziher, August 1908, GIL/36/06/04, OC – MTA; Friedrich Rosen to Ignaz Goldziher, 21 November 1910, GIL/36/06/02, OC – MTA.

¹¹⁸ Seidel, *Kant in Iran*, 46–48; Motadel, "Iran and the Aryan," 123; de Gobineau, *L'inégalité des races humaines*; Aqa Mirza Mohammad Khan Qazwini, *A Biographical Sketch of Late Professor E. G. Browne. With Persian Text, English Translation & Notes by K. M. Maitra*. (Lahore: Behari Lal. 1934), 39–40.

ing Arabs who had benighted the Iranian nation with their religion Islam. Iran needed to cleanse itself of all foreign elements and return to its pre-Islamic enlightened Aryan culture. 119

While these currents were gaining traction in Iran in the 1890s, Rosen's closest Iranian relations in Tehran were not known for entertaining such ideas. The Aryan angle in the Sinnsprüche was, thus, directly linked to scholarship Rosen came in contact with at the Orientalist Congress in Copenhagen. One of the discussants in the Islamic section was Edward Granville Browne, who in the second volume of his Literary History of Persia from 1906 discussed the "popular view, that Súfism is essentially an Aryan reaction against the cold formalism of a Semitic religion", which he found "tenable". Several pages later he revoked the notion as "a view which... cannot be maintained" as "two of the greatest mystics of Islám [al-'Arabi and Ibn al-Farid] were of non-Aryan origin." In his discussion of Khayyam, Browne did not bring up the Aryan angle. 120 Another discussant did though: Arthur Christensen. In his doctoral thesis on the Ruba'iyat in 1903 Christensen categorised the poetry and philosophy of Omar Khayyam as Aryan, which he connected in other writings to the legend of Rustam and Sohrab, the Shahnameh epic of Firdowsi, Zarathustra as a poet and the folk tales of the Iranian people. 121 Christensen mirrored some of the conceptions of Ernest Renan and Theodor Nöldeke, who believed that Arabs had made no contribution to science, but that Islamic science was a product of Aryan Persians, who brought Greek philosophy into Islam.122

Christensen and Rosen had discussed the *Ruba'iyat* and the latest scholarly developments in the field, ranging from the question of the wandering and authentic quatrains to the national character of the Iranian people.¹²³ Both students of Andreas, they agreed with their teacher that it was after millennia of migrations, trade, and wars no longer possible to describe the Iranians as an Aryan race – something that Andreas had prominently disputed in the case of Cyrus back in Hamburg in 1902.¹²⁴ However, these anti-Arab and anti-Islamic tenden-

¹¹⁹ Ali M. Ansari, *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 30; Reza Zia-Ebrahimi, "'Arab Invasion' and Decline, or the Import of European Racial Thought by Iranian Nationalists," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 37, no. 6 (2014): 1045–46; Zia-Ebrahimi, *Emergence of Iranian Nationalism*, 100–102, 155.

¹²⁰ Edward Granville Browne, *A Literary History of Persia. From Firdawsi to Sa'di* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 246–59, 489–505; *Actes du quinzième Congrès des orientalistes*. 69.

¹²¹ Martin Hartmann, "Christensen - Rubâijât," 369; Hedemand Søltoft, Christensen, 96, 130.

¹²² Zia-Ebrahimi, "Arab Invasion," 1050 – 51; Zia-Ebrahimi, Emergence of Iranian Nationalism.

¹²³ Arthur Christensen, Brevkopibog 1909, I 1 Utilg. 578, KB - HA.

¹²⁴ Hedemand Søltoft, Christensen, 43.

cies tied to a supposed retardation of science and progress en vogue both in Orientalist studies and in Iranian nationalist circles found their way into Rosen's *Sinnsprüche* in the form of the "Geist". In his review of Christensen's dissertation Hartmann agreed that the *Ruba'iyat* expressed the Persian "Volksgeist" (spirit of the people), but unlike Rosen, who dreamt of the *Ruba'iyat* finding their place in a pan-human literary canon, Hartmann thought of the *Ruba'iyat* as a weapon:

Und hier haben wir es mit einem Volke zu tun, in welchem trotz der Blutmischung allzeit eine Potenz lebte, die hoch über der der benachbarten Semiten, freilich noch weit höher über der der andern Nachbarn, der Türken, steht, und dessen Einfluß auf ganz Asien nicht hoch genug eingeschätzt werden kann... Das Rubā'i ist ein nicht geringes Moment in dem Wege, den der persische Siegeslauf genommen hat, eine seiner schärfsten Waffen.¹²⁵

For Christensen and Rosen, in contrast, Khayyam represented a Persian spirit that was a treasure of humanity – in the words of Christensen:

[N]ämlich dass alle Fälschungen sich dem Khajjām'schen Geist so genau anschmiegen, dass wir eben den Beweis haben, wie treu die Rubāijāt von Omar Khajjām dem vielseitigen persischen Geist entsprechen... und [etwas] persisches und Gemeinmenschliches[sind]; [die Rubāijāt] sind, wie Sie in Ihrer Darstellung sagen, ein 'Beitrag zum Geistesschatz der Menschheit.' 126

The collaboration with Christensen also offers an insight into Rosen's historical flattening of Khayyam and the *Ruba'iyat*. Khayyam and the *Ruba'iyat* were animated by a Persian spirit that was – unlike race, which had deteriorated – continuous from the Middle Ages since when the Persian language had supposedly not evolved. Without much evidence, Christensen postulated "that Khayyam's spirit is the Persian spirit itself, as it had been in the Middle Ages and as it is

^{125 &}quot;And here we are dealing with a people, in which, despite the blood mixing, always lived a potency, that stands highly elevated above the neighbouring Semites, and of course even higher above the other neighbours, the Turks, and whose influence on all of Asia cannot be judged highly enough... The ruba'i is a not minor moment in the path that the Persian course of victory has taken, one of its sharpest weapons." Martin Hartmann, "Christensen – Rubâijât," 374.

¹²⁶ "Namely, that all forgeries cling to the Khayyami spirit so accurately, that we have there the evidence how loyally the *Ruba'iyat* of Omar Khayyam reflect the versatile Persian spirit... something Persian and all-human; the *Ruba'iyat* are, as you say in your portrayal, a 'contribution to the intellectual treasure of mankind." Arthur Christensen to Friedrich Rosen, 1 July 1909, I 1 Utilg. 578, KB – HA.

¹²⁷ Monika Gronke, *Geschichte Irans. Von der Islamisierung bis zur Gegenwart*, 2 (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2006), 31–37.

essentially still today". The origins of this spirit were in the pre-Islamic Sasanian Empire. 128

Christensen's continuous national spirit since time immemorial was for Rosen the original spirit, untouched by the destruction of European modernity. Just like Rosen had learned about Biblical Israel while living in 1860s Palestine and had ahistorically linked Bedouin hospitality to the New Testament, he had studied medieval Iran in 1890s Tehran and found a multifarious national history he saw reach from Omar Khayyam to his horseback journeys in the Iranian countryside. Rosen's analysis permeated the idea that he could transport the still real and original spirit of a place and a people, before the advent of European machinery would squash everything into one grey mass. Even as it was influenced by concocted ideas that were historically inaccurate and would later become seamlessly incorporated in all sorts of murderous bigotry, the Aryan-Persian spirit Rosen saw in Khayyam in 1909 was a language based spirit, an aspect of Persian high culture. Condensed in an appealing poetic form in German, there was a good chance a larger German readership would take heed, and learn something new about a place far away, often disparaged but supposedly connected through Indo-European language and a common ancestry.

For publishing anything Rosen needed the approval Auswärtiges Amt. A volume of poetry widely popular in other European countries was unsuspicious and if the German envoy in testy Morocco was associated with less compromising news than with the usual bickering this was also suitable. Chancellor Bülow granted Rosen's request for publication with "großen Genuß" (great pleasure) in early 1909 shortly before resigning his post. Reading Rosen's *Sinnsprüche* several days after his resignation on the ship to his holiday home on the North Sea island Norderney, Bülow found solace in its poetry emphasising the transience of life and the irrelevance of political posts. Some weeks later a journalist of the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* found on the desk of the "poet-prince-chancellor" Bülow:

ein Manuskript, in duftiges Saffianleder gebunden. Der Fürst ladet mich ein, es in näheren Augenschein zu nehmen. 'Es ist', sagt er, 'ein Geschenk unseres Gesandten in Marokko, Dr. Rosen, der vor wenigen Tagen bei uns hier gewesen, an meine Frau. Es sind Dichtungen. Die Rubaiat von Omar mit dem Beinamen Khajjam … Dieser war einer der bedeutensten As-

¹²⁸ Christensen, Khajjâms Rubâijât, 103.

¹²⁹ Friedrich Rosen to Bernhard von Bülow, 28 December 1908, 2072, Personalakten 12573, PA AA; Bernhard von Bülow to Friedrich Rosen, 6 January 1909, 2073, Personalakten 12573, PA AA

¹³⁰ In his memoirs Bülow found Khayyam's "eternal wisdom" in the calm political thinking of Bismarck. von Bülow, *Weltkrieg und Zusammenbruch*, 8–9.

tronomen des Mittelalters und lebte im elften Jahrhundert in Tus in Ostpersien, und unser Dr. Rosen, der ein hervorrangeder Kenner des Orients und der orientalischen Sprachen ist, hat diese Dichtungen aus dem Persischen übersetzt.' Ich blättere in der Handschrift. Diese Dichtungen handeln von der Vergänglichkeit, den Welträtseln, der Lehre und dem Wein und der Liebe. Diese östliche Weisheit hat etwas tief Ergreifendes. Die feinste Lebenskunst und die tiefste Skepsis spricht aus diesen Versen. Omar, der Zeltmacher, singt einmal:

Von allen, die auf Erden ich gekannt, Ich nur zwei Arten Menschen glücklich fand: Den, der der Welt Geheimnis tief erforscht, Und den, der nicht ein Wort davon verstand.¹³¹

This was a pretty good advertisement, as the poet shone in the light of the prince and the German Empire shone in the light of Eastern wisdom. In another review the liberal *Leipziger Tageblatt* lauded Rosen's inclusion of the essay on Khayyam's time, life and worldview, serving "the creation of a bridge of understanding and removing every external inhibition on the way to 'the poet's land'". Rosen's claim to scholarly accuracy had Oskar Mann positively discuss the *Sinnsprüche* in literary magazines. Hartmann and Goldziher equally found the translation worthy, but Goldziher disagreed with Hartmann and found no reason why Khayyam should connect with a larger audience. Goldziher used Rosen's *Ruba'iyat* translation as an authoritative representation in his scholarly works and Andreas employed Rosen's German *Sinnsprüche* next to the Persian original as practice for his students in university seminars at Göttingen – mirroring the practice of Sheikh Hassan in Tehran. 133

^{131 &}quot;a manuscript, bound in scented Morocco leather. The prince invites me to inspect it more closely. "It is", he says, "a gift of our envoy in Morocco, Dr. Rosen, who was here a few days ago, to my wife. It's poetry. The *Ruba'iyat* of Omar with the surname Khayyam... He was an important astronomer of the Middle Ages and lived in the 11th century in Tus in Eastern Persia, and our Dr. Rosen, who is an extraordinary expert of the Orient and the Oriental languages, has translated these poems from Persian." I leaved through the manuscript. These poems deal with transience, the mystery of the world, scholarship and wine and love. This Eastern wisdom has something deeply gripping. The finest art of life and the deepest skepticism speaks out of these verses. Omar, the tentmaker, once sings: Of all that I have known on earth, I only knew two types of happy men: He, who had deeply delved into the secret of the world, and he, who did not understand a word of it." "Beim Reichskanzler in Norderney," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* 994 (23 November 1908): 1–2; *Berlin und die Berliner. Leute. Dinge. Sitten. Winke.* (Karlsruhe: J. Bielefelds, 1905), 65.

^{132 &}quot;Die Sinnsprüche Omars des Zeltmachers," Leipziger Tageblatt, 30 May 1910.

¹³³ Friedrich Rosen to Oskar Mann, 1 July 1912, 13, 1888 Darmstaedter 2b, StaBiB; Friedrich Rosen to Oskar Mann, 11 September 1912, 15, 1888 Darmstaedter 2b, StaBiB; L. Hanisch, *Goldziher und Hartmann*, 367; Friedrich Rosen to F. C. Andreas, 20 October 1912, 361 1 Cod. Ms. F. C. Andreas, SUBG; Ignaz Goldziher, *Mohammed and Islam*, trans. Kate Chambers Seelye (New Haven:

Published with the reputable Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, the Sinnsprüche appeared "in three series at the cost of five, six, and ten marks. The last was a semi-delux leather-bound volume." As the translation was promptly "received very favorably by critics", the publishers asked Rosen to expand his selection for a new edition. 134 In the meantime posted as envoy to Bucharest, Rosen cultivated good relations with the Romanian King Karol and the versifying Queen Elisabeth, who was in Germany widely known under her literary pseudonym Carmen Sylva. 135 Sharing romantic ideals, the experience of a recently lost a child, which she tried to overcome through poetry, and the ambition to create understanding between her German culture and the Oriental culture she found in Romania, Elisabeth assisted Rosen with bringing some of the quatrains for the expanded new edition into melodious form. 136 The thematic break-up and interpretation of the Sinnsprüche remained the same, and although Rosen entertained relations with the Persian envoy in Bucharest, the source of the added Persian quatrains was more likely a European print edition or a manuscript in Rosen's possession than a poetic encounter in the Romanian capital. In 1912 the editors introduced the now 152 quatrain strong Sinnsprüche as "perfectly structured" and in high demand. Just before the outbreak of the war, the composer Hans Hermann, known for his cheerful and vivacious compositions, set Rosen's Sinnsprüche to music for piano and bass voice. A deluxe edition published in 1914 in the design of the renowned book artist Paul Haustein came at the astronomical price of 150 Marks, and by the end of the war the third edition was republished in an enlarged print.137 Though in a newly tailored garb, Rosen's Sinnsprüche had brought the Khayyami Ruba'iyat to German lands. When Andreas held seminar

Yale University Press, 1917), 184; Ignaz Goldziher, *Le dogme et la loi de l'Islam. Histoire du développement dogmatique et juridique de la religion musulmane*, trans. Félix Arin (Paris: Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1920), 277; Friedrich Rosen to F. C. Andreas, 25 May 1909, 361 1 Cod. Ms. F. C. Andreas, SUBG.

¹³⁴ Gittleman, "FitzGerald's Rubaiyat and Germany," 174, 180.

¹³⁵ Karol of Romania to Friedrich Rosen, 2 January 1913, 1538, Personalakten 12569, PA AA; Elisabeth of Romania to Friedrich Rosen, 1 January 1914, 1538, Personalakten 12569, PA AA; Friedrich Rosen, *Bukarest. Lissabon*, 29 – 34.

¹³⁶ Zimmermann, *Dichtende Königin*, 3–38; Friedrich Rosen, *Die Sinnsprüche Omars des Zeltmachers. Rubaijat-i-Omar-i-Khajjam*, 5 (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1922), 110; Friedrich Rosen, *Bukarest. Lissabon*, 30; Bunsen, *Welt in der ich lebte*, 218–30.

¹³⁷ Ali Mohammad to Friedrich Rosen, 1911, Zettelkiste, ASWPC; Gittleman, "FitzGerald's Rubaiyat and Germany," 177, 184; Hans Hermann, *Sinnsprüche des Omar Khajjam. Deutsch von Friedrich Rosen. Für eine tiefe Stimme mit Klavier komponiert* (Berlin: Albert Stahl, 1914); Friedrich Rosen, *Die Sinnsprüche Omars des Zeltmachers. Rubaijat-i-Omar-i-Khajjam*, 4 (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1919).

in his Göttingen study¹³⁸ until dawn and had exhausted his and his students' capacity for grammar, sound and declination rules of the Iranian languages, he would read Rosen's *Sinnsprüche*, evoking in the words of his students "Oriental wisdom... serene intellectuality and a singular subtlety." ¹³⁹

8 Interpreting Sufi Islam in Rumi's Masnavi

In the first half of the 1910s Rosen republished three books his father Georg had brought out in the mid-nineteenth century. Most closely related to German Oriental studies was a reworked version of his father's 1843 *Elementa Persica* that had been used as a Persian language textbook at the university of Leipzig. Reflecting the transition from Latin to German as language of scholarship and the Iranisation of Persian, as the language contracted from pan-Asian lingua franca, the new edition was Germanised and replaced "Indianisms" with text samples common in turn of the century Iran. His friends Hubert Jansen, Andreas, and the Iranian envoy to Germany, Hovhannes Khan, assisted Rosen in revamping his father's work. 1440

Serving the commemoration of his father was the republication of *Tuti-Nameh*. *Das Papageienbuch*, a collection of moralising tales told by a parrot to an abandoned wife. Signed with the initials of his nom de plume Suleiman Wardi (S.W.), Rosen attached a lengthy biographical sketch of his father to this new edition, published with the literary publishing house Insel-Verlag. The original Sanskrit *Sukasaptati* (70 tales of the parrot) from twelfth century India, the fourteenth century Persian physician Ziya' ad-Din Nakhshabi translated in a selection of 52 stories as the *Tuti-Nameh* (book of the parrot). Nakhshabi's translation travelled across the Persianate world. In the seventeenth century Sari 'Abdullah Efendi translated 30 of these tales to Ottoman Turkish. Georg Rosen

¹³⁸ Friedrich Rosen, Sinnsprüche.

¹³⁹ Lou Andreas-Salomé, *Lebensrückblick. Eine Autobiographie*, Ernst Pfeiffer and Karl-Maria Guth (Berlin: Hofenberg, 2016), 137.

¹⁴⁰ Georg Rosen, *Elementa Persica*; Hartmut Walravens, *Wilhelm Schott (1802–1889)*. *Leben und Wirken des Orientalisten* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001), 101; *Fleischer, Heinrich Leberecht. Historische Vorlesungszverzeichnisse der Universität Leipzig*, Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig (2008–12). http://histvv.uni-leipzig.de/dozenten/fleischer_hl.html; Rosen and Rosen, *Elementa Persica*, III – VI; Hubert Jansen to F. C. Andreas, 29 December 1914, 206 1 Cod. Ms. F. C. Andreas, SUBG; Hubert Jansen to F. C. Andreas, 29 January 1915, 206 1 Cod. Ms. F. C. Andreas, SUBG; Richard Hartmann, "Rosen, Georg: Elementa Persica," *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 2 (1920): 121.

came across Sari 'Abdullah's version when he was a dragoman in the Ottoman Empire and published his German translation in 1858.¹⁴¹

Similarly reflective of the role the lingua franca Persian played across Asia was the source text of the third Rosen republication, the Masnavi of Jalal ed-Din Muhammad Rumi. Born in Balkh in Khorasan (Afghanistan) in 1207, the theologian and teacher of Islam Rumi had migrated to the Arab world and eventually to Konya in the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum in central Anatolia, where he became a disciple of the mystic Shams-e Tabrizi. In the last two decades of his life he wrote a large corpus of spiritual poems in Persian: the Masnavi. After his death in 1273 his followers founded the Mewlewi Sufi order that practiced Rumi's spiritual teachings, and Rumi's poetic oeuvre proliferated across the Persianate world. In subsequent centuries Rumi's mystical poetry came to play a central role in cultural and social life and Sufi orders that drew on the teachings of Rumi became deeply embedded in "the interests and politics in the Ottoman state". Georg Rosen's translation of an excerpt of Rumi's Masnavi as the Mesnevi oder Doppelverse des Scheich Mewlānā Dschelāl ed dīn Rūmi sought to relay the mystical aspects of this culture. In his opinion the dominance of mysticism in Ottoman politics was characteristic of the "moral and physical atony" he had witnessed.142

Unlike his father, Friedrich Rosen had encountered Rumi and Sufi Islam in a different time and place and the 1913 republication of his father's *Mesnevi* served a different purpose. Rosen followed a similar technique to the *Sinnsprüche* in presenting translated Persian poetry alongside an introduction to the contents of the poetry, the "Weltanschauung" of the author Rumi, and the historical context. Aside from memorialising his father, Rosen's goal was, "das uns vielfach so seltsam und befremdend anmutende Werk des großen orientalischen Mystikers einzureihen in das ununterbrochene Kettengewebe der menschlichen Geistesarbeit aller der Völker, welche von der Bildung des klassischen Altertums beherrscht waren." 143

¹⁴¹ Sari Abdallah Efendi, Tuti-Nameh.

¹⁴² Georg Rosen and Friedrich Rosen, *Mesnevi*; Reynold A. Nicholson, *The Mathnawi of Jalálu'ddin Rúmi. Edited from the Oldest Manuscripts Available: With Critical Notes, Translation, & Commentary.* (London: Luzac, 1926), xiv; Refika Sariönder, "Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi and Hacı Bektaş Veli: Two Faces of Turkish Islam. Encounters, Orders, Politics," in *On Archaeology of Sainthood and Local Spirituality in Islam. Past and Present Crossroads of Events and Ideas*, Georg Stauth (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2004), 66; Schimmel, *Rumi. Diwan*, 5–11; Jawid Mojaddedi, "Rumi, Jalāl-al-Din Iv. Rumi's Teachings," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, 8 September 2014. http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/rumi-jalal-al-din-04-teachings.

¹⁴³ "to have the often for us so odd and strange seeming work of the great Oriental mystic join the ranks in the uninterrupted tapestry of chains of human intellectual labour of all peoples,

The interpretation of Rumi and the role of Sufi mysticism in the Islamic world in Rosen's introduction to the *Mesnevi* complemented and updated his deliberations on Omar Khayyam and the Ruba'iyat from a few years earlier. Similar to Rosen's Khayyam analysis was the identification of neo-Platonic and other Greek philosophical influences in the Masnavi:

Im Mineralreich fing die Menschheit an Und ging zum Pflanzenreich über dann. Dort lebte sie Äonen ungemessen Und hat den Mineralzustand vergessen. Als sie ins Tierreich dann den Weg gefunden. Da war das Pflanzenreich ihr auch entschwunden,

Doch aus der Tierheit zog zu seiner Zeit Der Schöpfer sie empor zur Menschlichkeit. So stieg sie langsam auf von Art zu Art, Bis sie vernunftbegabt und weise ward; Vom Geisteszustand in den früh'ren Leben Weiß sie sich keine Rechenschaft zu geben.

In the mineral kingdom began humanity And then passed over into the plant kingdom. There it lived for aeons unmeasured And forgot the mineral state. When it found its way into the animal kingdom, Vanished from it was the plant kingdom

But from bestiality in his time pulled The creator it up to humanity. Thus it ascended from species to species, Until it became endowed with reason and wise; Of the intellectual state of former lives It knows not to render account.

Rosen traced the developmental stages in this poem back to the development theory of Aristotle. In the same breath he suggested to the reader that the nineteenth century European natural scientists Ernst Haeckel and Charles Darwin were not so innovative with their development theories after all.¹⁴⁴ In Rosen's interpretation the Sufi connects this natural development with a last stage, the "return to the state of fana, of non-existence, that is the merging in the soul of the

which were governed by the education of classical antiquity." Georg Rosen and Friedrich Rosen, Mesnevi, 28.

¹⁴⁴ Georg Rosen and Friedrich Rosen, Mesnevi, 17–18.

world". Drawing on what Goldziher said in his lectures on Islam about Indian influences in Sufism, Rosen notes that this state of fana or annihilation is similar to Indian nirwana and the Buddhist stages of awareness, but differentiates fana as more positive in that it is a state that is reachable before death – an "eternal life in annihilation", a state of exhilaration. This self-annihilation leads into a state of non-existence, which Rosen traces back to Plato's contemplations on existence and non-existence.¹⁴⁵

There were two notable contrasts to Rosen's Khayyam interpretation. First, reference to anything Aryan was entirely absent. In the draft of the book Rosen had explained why:

Es ist besonders durch Goldziher schlagend nachgewiesen worden, dass unter dem ältesten Vortreten des Sufismus im Islam gewiss ebenso viele Araber wie Perser sich finden. Wir gewinnen dadurch den Eindruck, dass der Sufismus im Islam selbst, und nicht nothwendiger Weise in der arischen Volkszugehörigkeit der Perser seine Wurzeln hat.

In the draft Rosen followed this up with a description of how intensive the connections between Mesopotamia, Iran and India had been already before Islam. The continuous "Wechselwirkungen" of trade, culture and religion that touched upon all peoples led him to note that "el qulūb tatagārab – die Herzen borgen gegenseitig von einander" (hearts converge/approximate/borrow from one another). 146 For whatever reason, this section was not included in the actual publication. Secondly, in contrast to the Ruba'ivat Rosen read Rumi's Masnavi as a deeply Islamic text, intimately and primarily tied to the Quran and the prophet Muhammad. To Rosen this was no longer only the Arabic Quran of the seventh century, but one that had become finer, more allegorical and mystical, comparing Rumi's Quran conception to Philo of Alexandria's Old Testament interpretation in Greek, the Jewish Kabbalah and scholastic Christianity. Not dissimilar to Safi 'Ali Shah's Quran interpretation in Rumi-inspired Masnavi style, Rosen concluded that "Sufism rescues the Quran." Another concept in the Sufism of Rumi that Rosen connected to Greek philosophy was that of tawhid or unity. But rather than going into detail as to this connection, it served him as a smokescreen to cite at length a ghazal from Rumi's Divan in which the narrator

¹⁴⁵ Georg Rosen and Friedrich Rosen, Mesnevi, 19; Goldziher, Vorlesungen, 161-65.

¹⁴⁶ "Especially by Goldziher it has strikingly been proven, that among the oldest appearance of Sufism in Islam certainly as many Arabs as Persians are found. We thus win the impression that Sufism is Islam itself and has not necessarily its roots in the Aryan ethnic affiliation." Friedrich Rosen, Entwurf zu Mesnevi, 1912, ASWPC, 123–125, 156.

¹⁴⁷ Georg Rosen and Friedrich Rosen, Mesnevi, 8.

sheds all forms of religion ("no Jew, no Christian, no Parsi, no Muslim"), origin ("not from Orient, Occident, land or sea…not from India, China, Turkestan, Iraq or Khorassan"), and form ("not of earth, air, fire or water… not from Adam and Eve and not from time or eternity"). As "no attribute shall be my attribute" and without "body or spirit" he belongs "only to His spirit". In this ghazal Rosen found the unity that he had found in the derwish order of Safi 'Ali Shah several years earlier.¹⁴⁸

Rosen offered a personal philosophical-religious reading of Rumi and Sufi Islam and did not attempt, as he noted, to formulate a full system of Sufi beliefs and practices. He provided a "condensation of my long life among Persian dervishes", as he wrote to Littmann. Emphasising his close-up relations with dervishes was certainly good marketing to those into exotic mysticism. But in listing those derwishes as Hajji Mirza Hassan aka Safi 'Ali Shah, his friend Zahir ed-Dowleh, the scholar of Molla Sadra 'Emad ed-Dowleh, the Iranian envoy to Berlin Mahmud Khan Qajar Ehtesham al-Saltaneh and Mirza Ali Muhammad Khan Muaddil es-Saltaneh from Shiraz, Rosen's motivation was also to exhibit his loyalty to his teachers and to demonstrate the chains of transmission (silsila) of his mystical knowledge. Theirs was the Sufism he had gotten to know and practice, and it was his personal "Vertiefung" (immersion) in the *Masnavi* and the lessons he learned from these "silk Sufis" connected to the Qajar court of Iran that he intended to bring to an "educated German reading world". To that reading world he meant to impart this Sufi way:

Wer in religiöse Verzückung gerät, der hat die Vereinigung mit Gott erlangt. Sein Glaube hat ihm geholfen. Der Weg war sein Ziel. Subjektiv Erlebtes ist für das Subjekt Wahrheit. Einen Beweis dafür ist man niemanden schuldig. Nur wenn man andere an dem selbst Erlebten teilnehmen lassen will, dann muss man eine Methode, einen Weg haben, auf dem die anderen zu demselben Ziele gelangen können.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ Rosen had first heard the ghazal recited by his Afghan servant in Shimla in 1886. Georg Rosen and Friedrich Rosen, *Mesnevi*, 21; Goldziher, *Vorlesungen*, 171.

¹⁴⁹ Friedrich Rosen to Enno Littmann, 25 March 1914, 4, 28 NL 245 EL, StaBiB.

¹⁵⁰ Rosen's relations with the Ni'matollahi order in Iran, hierarchies, silsila and mystic practices were more detailed in the draft. Friedrich Rosen, Entwurf zu Mesnevi, 1912, ASWPC, 86, 145–147.

¹⁵¹ Georg Rosen and Friedrich Rosen, Mesnevi, 6-7.

¹⁵² "Who falls into ecstasy, has reached unity with God. His belief has helped him. The path was his goal. The subjectively lived through is for the subject truth. Proof one owes to no one. Only when one wants to let others take part in the lived through, one must find a method, have a path, on which others can reach the same goal." Georg Rosen and Friedrich Rosen, *Mesnevi*, 1–2.

This method was for Rosen encapsulated in the derwish orders that follow tariqat (method/ways) under the leadership of a pir (guide) seeking "Erkenntnis" or "'erfan" that went beyond materialist knowledge in a manifestation of and unity with God.

These were neither the observations of an anthropologist, nor were they dusty book knowledge, but rather a fusion of reading Rumi and influences he picked up in Tehran. In deliberating on the Greek and Jewish influences on Rumi's *Masnavi* in a letter to Andreas, Rosen enthused: "Ich habe bei diesem Studium so viel Schönes und Eigenartiges gefunden, dass ich wirklich hoffe man wird sich einmal dem Studium der persischen Literatur zuwenden und zwar nicht nur vom Standpunkte der Sprachforschung, sondern auch von dem der Philosophie aus." Hoping to introduce these facets of Oriental life to his German audience, Rosen drew on a belief that he had shared and would come to embrace again more fully in his older days – despite sharing with his father the view that this introspection and self-annihilation was potentially inhibitive to social development.

For Rosen these mystical practices were the crystallised driving forces of the Islamic world. Reflective of the structure of the Sufi order he had been a part of under the leadership of Safi 'Ali Shah, he found an authoritarian principle in the set-up of the Sufi orders that follow a guide. This Rosen connected to Semitic religions in general, tending to follow prophets and demi-Gods, and had not been perfused with "light and air" through renaissance and enlightenment, as had happened in the Occident.¹⁵⁴ In the derwish's attempt to reach unity with God in a state of exhilarating self-annihilation, he enters a state of non-existence. Rosen identified this practice of ritualised self-annihilation and departure from existence as central to the tenets of Sufi Islam. The Platonic idea of non-existence, which he saw in the Occident only as a "spirited game", he experienced as all-pervasive in Iran at the time: "Die ganze Welt der Erscheinungen ist ein vorübergehendes Trugbild, während das wirklich Existierende seit aller Ewigkeit in der transzendenten Welt der Ideen, der vollkommenen Urbegriffe ruht." In the mind of Rosen, the "typical Muslim thinker is this Sufi", who looks inwards,

¹⁵³ "I have in these studies found so much beautiful and idiosyncratic, that I really hope one will one day turn to the study of Persian literature and at that not only from the approach of linguistics, but from that of philosophy." Friedrich Rosen to F. C. Andreas, 20 October 1912, 361 1 Cod. Ms. F. C. Andreas, SUBG.

¹⁵⁴ Georg Rosen and Friedrich Rosen, Mesnevi, 14.

¹⁵⁵ "The entire world of the appearances is a transient illusion, while the truly existing rests since all eternity in the transcendental world of the ideas, in the consummate first principles." Georg Rosen and Friedrich Rosen, *Mesnevi*, 12.

and not outwards into the physical world. The ability to develop is thus inhibited, as all there is to know is already known. To illustrate this "swamping" of the intellect, Rosen recounted a visit to the tomb of Rumi in Konya in 1904, where only one of the Mevlevi order derwishes knew Persian, while all others had only memorised a few verses. He was shocked to find all ritual empty and as he thought without meaning. The backstory was that derwish orders came under sustained attack across the Middle East for their supposed backwardness and hysterical practice of religion. Sufi orders suffered from bureaucratic centralisation, and saw their social function decline amid the spread of modern forms of entertainment and the rise of secular organisations. But Rosen did not perceive of these socio-political circumstances that likely impeded on the Sufi practices he found in Konya - rather for him the fossilised and formulaic ritual stood at the long end of the development internal to derwishdom. ¹⁵⁶ Comparing Rumi's thought to Christian ethics Rosen found in it a similar sense of responsibility for one's deeds and virtue - notably similar to Safi 'Ali Shah's teachings of progress and self-improvement. This measure of free will Rosen saw, however, hedged in acquiescence of one's fate, preventing the industriousness he found rooted in Christian ethics. Rosen concluded that "'Islam' means 'devotion', and Rumi's ethics does not transcend devotion."157

Into the last page of the introduction Rosen tucked his central argument. If the European historian and statesman ever intended to understand "the Orient from its inner life", he could not dispense of a study of Sufi mysticism. This would be of overwhelming importance, Rosen posited, as Sufism contained the "driving and hemming ideas and forces" of Islamic communities. Only by grasping Sufism was it possible to think of ways for the Islamic world to develop organically from within and not be continuously accosted with counterproductive modernisation from outside. Like his father, Rosen interpreted Sufi mysticism to be of central importance for the Islamic world and seventy years after the original publication he shared his father's view that the energies of Sufism had weakened. Neither of them grasped the larger forces of modernity at play in the Islamic world, but shaped by his interactions with the Ni'matollahi order of Safi

¹⁵⁶ Georg Rosen and Friedrich Rosen, *Mesnevi*, 23–25; "Bericht über die Mitgliederversammlung der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft im Generalkonzilsaal der Universität Berlin am 14. November 1931 (19 Uhr)," *ZDMG* 85 (10) (1931): 68; Michael Gilsenan, "Some Factors in the Decline of the Sufi Orders in Modern Egypt," *The Muslim World* 57, no. 1 (January 1967): 11–12; Bayat, "Anti-Sufism"; Kasravi, "Extracts from Sufism"; Lloyd Ridgeon, *Sufi Castigator: Ahmad Kasravi and the Iranian Mystical Tradition* (London: Routledge, 2006).

¹⁵⁷ Georg Rosen and Friedrich Rosen, Mesnevi, 27-28; Nile Green, "Safi 'Ali Shah," 101.

¹⁵⁸ Georg Rosen and Friedrich Rosen, Mesnevi, 29.

'Ali Shah and the experience of the inhibitive consequences of European interference, Friedrich Rosen assigned to that very Sufi Islam the ability to become the motor for the organic development of the Islamic world. Had it been with Khayyam the "Aryan spirit in Semitic vest" that signified the independent value of Khayyam and the Persian culture, with Rumi Rosen followed the by then accepted discourse of Orientalist scholarship and shed the Aryan myth. Free thought and regard for the external material world, supposedly enabling development and modernisation, could also be found in a Sufi spirit that prefigured much of European high culture and civilisation. It only needed to be activated and Europe would need to leave the Islamic world alone.

At a time when the Aryan myth had gained traction in popular society across Europe, Rosen no longer offered an Aryan bridge of kinship but emphasised to a German audience his own lived experience of Sufi Islam, with his authority as "Orientkenner" implied. Conforming with the academic consensus that the Aryan as an analytical category was nonsensical, Rosen's Mesnevi republication was positively received in scholarly circles, but did not evoke the same popular response as the *Sinnsprüche*. ¹⁵⁹ Both of these publications of Islamic-Persian poetry and culture were composite creations, part European scholarly discourse, part translation of Persian texts, part lived experience in the Persianate world. Although not knowledge productions of the purely imagined Orient, Rosen's Persian poetry interpretations spoke to an internationalised European knowledge system and were framed by his encounters in the Persianate world at the time of European high imperialism. Shaped by these political and scholarly influences and believing that his own lived experience of the Islamic world enabled him to present a faithful and sympathetic rendition of its culture, Rosen found in Rumi's *Masnavi* and the Khayyami *Ruba'iyat* the intellectual and artistic material to convey an image of a great Islamic-Persian culture to his German audience that in its otherness ought to be understood to grasp the interwoven and unified human spirit of all peoples that descended from classical antiquity. Opposing Europe's superiority claims and civilising mission, the German diplomat Rosen cloaked his political dissent in the translation of Persian poetry.

¹⁵⁹ Friedrich Rosen to Enno Littmann, 18 February 1914, 2, 28 NL 245 EL, StaBiB; Friedrich Rosen to F. C. Andreas, 2 October 1927, 361 1 Cod. Ms. F. C. Andreas, SUBG; Goldziher and Chambers Seelye, Mohammed and Islam, 184; Johannes Pedersen, August Fischer, and Friedrich Rosen, "Islam," in Textbuch zur Religionsgeschichte, Edvard Lehmann and Hans Haas (Leipzig: A. Deichertsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1922), 341-82; Nicholson, Mathnawí of Rúmí, xiv; Poliakoy, Mythe arven, 290, 358-64; Motadel, "Iran and the Arvan," 124.