
The Uses of Genealogy and Genealogical Information in Select Persianate and Bábí/Bahá'í Sources

A Preliminary Survey¹

Sholeh A. Quinn

I. Introduction

Genealogy has long been an important aspect of Middle Eastern societies. Indeed, in his article on genealogy (*nasab*) in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Franz Rosenthal considers genealogy to be “the most fundamental organising principle of Arab society.”² He goes on to say that “genealogy provides the historical validation of kinship and all that it involves. Kinship always dominated group life in human society and to a large extent still does today.”³ Although primarily discussing genealogy in relationship to the Arab world, much the same can be said about Persian and Turkish cultures as well. It should come as no surprise, then, that this fundamental component of the Middle East should find expression in historical writing and other texts. The purpose of this paper is to outline scholarship on the genealogy of Bahá'u'lláh, founder of the Bahá'í religion. Since genealogical issues appear in numerous Bahá'í scriptures and texts, including those written by the Central Figures, it is important to address the related scholarship. In order better to understand the context in which discussions and interest in this genealogy took place, I will (1) present a brief overview of the use of genealogy in Islamicate history before the 19th century, with special emphasis on the Safavid period, (2) summarize some of the scholarship surrounding Bahá'u'lláh's genealogy, and (3) offer some concluding remarks. I would like to state at the start that although one finds genealogies in a variety of Islamicate texts, including, for example, Sufi treatises, religious scripture, biographical compendiums, etc, I am going to focus my discussion here on primarily one category of source: Persian chronicles.

II. Uses of Genealogy in Islamicate History before the 19th Century

A growing number of scholars interested in the origins of Islamic historiography have pointed to the importance of genealogy in relationship to historical writing. These include Franz Rosenthal, Albrecht Noth, Tarif Khalidi, Fred Donner, and Julie Meisami, among others.⁴ Indeed, as Tarif Khalidi has noted, the practice of recording genealogies dates back to the earliest period of Islamic historiography, when early Arab historians used genealogies in order to stress their Arab identity as the early Islamic empire expanded and began to incorporate diverse peoples.⁵ In the Persian historiographical tradition, genealogies served numerous purposes. Here I will just touch on one of the most important: that of royal genealogies being used to promote the legitimacy of a particular ruling dynasty. This historiographical convention can be seen, for instance, during the Ilkhanid period of Mongol rule in Iran, when the great historian Rashid al-Din Faql Alláh compiled his *Shu'áb-i-Panjgáneh* (completed ca. 681-706/1282-1305-6), a detailed family tree depicting the many descendants of Chingis Khan. Rashid al-Din

also included genealogical information in his famous world history, the *Jámi' al-tavárikh*. After Ilkhanid rule in Iran came to an end, Timurid historians, like their Mongol predecessors, also showed interest in genealogy. The 15th century anonymous Timurid work, the *Mu'izz al-ansáb* (completed 830/1426) both reproduces and extends Rashíd al-Dín's *Shu'áb-i-Panjánah* into the Timurid period, with important variations and digressions.⁶ Furthermore, several Timurid historians, such as Ḥafīẓ Abrú and Sharaf al-Dín 'Alí Yazdí, included versions of Timur's genealogy in their chronicles. In an article analyzing Timur's genealogy, John Woods has shown how these chroniclers invoked Timur's presumably fictitious genealogy in order to legitimize the warlord's rule.⁷

After the breakdown of Timurid rule, Iran witnessed a period of decentralization, ruled by various Turko-Mongol, Persian, and other small dynasties. The region did not witness centralized rule until the Safavids came to power, and Shah Ismá'íl, the first Safavid king, declared Twelver (*ithná 'ashara*) Shi'ism as the official state religion of Iran (imposing it upon a country whose population was primarily Sunni). Safavid historians, like their Timurid and Mongol predecessors, also played a significant role in the production and dissemination of their dynasty's family tree. The whole issue of the Safavid genealogy and its various versions has been the subject of a number of articles and monographs, which have primarily focused on the 14th century hagiography, the *Şafvat al-Şafá*, which records the miracles and accomplishments of Shaykh Şafí al-Dín (650-735/1252-1334), founder of the Safavid Sufi order. (The Safavid dynasty actually started out as a Sufi order in the Ardabil region of northern Iran). A number of scholars, including Aḥmad Kasraví, have noted how earlier versions of the Safavid genealogy trace Shaykh Şafí's genealogy back seven generations to a certain Pírúz al-Kurdí al-Sanjání, later known as Firúz Sháh "Zarrín Kuláh, whereas later versions were revised (19 generations) to indicate descent from the Seventh Imam of the Twelver Shi'ah, Musa al-Kazim."⁸ The discussion mainly involves the *Şafvat al-Şafá* and its two principal versions: the original written by Ibn Bazzáz in ca. 751/1350 with a genealogy not showing the Safavids as *sayyids*, and a later "updated" version undertaken by Abú al-Faṭḥ al-Ḥusaynî in 940/1533, presumably at the command of Shah Tahmásb, which alters the genealogy in various ways. This command to revise the *Şafvat al-Şafá* reflects the Safavids' preoccupation with their earlier history and legitimizing principles.

The first two chroniclers of the Safavid dynasty, Ibráhím Amíní Haraví, author of the *Futúḥát-i-sháhí* and Ghiyás al-Dín Khvándmír, author of the *Ḥabíb al-siyar*, writing in the early 16th century during the reign of Shah Ismá'íl, both included genealogies in their texts, tracing Shaykh Şafí's ancestry back to Músá al-Kázim. Thus, by 926/1520, when Ibráhím Amíní started composing his *Futúḥát-i-sháhí*, the "extended" Safavid genealogy going back to Músá al-Kázim formed part of the official narrative of the early Safavids, and continued into the reign of Shah 'Abbas I and beyond.

Political legitimacy and claims of rival dynasties help explain this emphasis on genealogy. At the same time that the Safavids were presenting themselves and their ancestors as sayyids, 'Alids, and Shi'is, their neighboring rival dynasties to the East and West of the Safavid Empire, the Ottomans and the Mughals, respectively, were making their own genealogical claims. Thus, when placed in the greater context of the competing Islamic empires, the emphasis on genealogy becomes understandable. Under the Mughals, Abú al-Faḍl (not to be confused with the Bahá'í scholar Mírzá Abú'l Faḍl Gulpaygání) historian to the emperor Akbar (r. 963-1014/1556-1605), a contemporary of Shah 'Abbas, traced Akbar's genealogy back to Adam through Humáyún, Bábur, Timur, and Alanqo'a, Chingis Khan's mother. Similarly, genealogy was also an important component of Ottoman chronicles. In the Ottoman historiographical tradition,

chroniclers initially traced the genealogy of Osman “Ghazi” (680-ca. 724/1281-ca. 1324), founder of the Ottoman dynasty and contemporary of Shaykh Šafí, back to Oghuz Khan, the great and legendary Turkish ruler.

III. Safavid Genealogies and Dream Narratives

We see genealogical information appearing not only in the form of a list of ancestors in the beginning of the Safavid chronicles, but also embedded in other aspects of the histories, most notably in dream narratives. Scholars have long been aware of the importance of dreams in Islamic history, and have outlined the many religious and political functions of dream episodes in historical and philosophical texts.⁹

Although space does not permit an extensive discussion of the pre-Islamic roots of dream narratives, it is important to note that Zoroastrian/Pahlavi texts contain such accounts. The dream sequences are all somewhat similar, and generally begin with an ancestor of the ruling house having a dream which most often includes visions of the sun, stars, and other celestial phenomena. Upon awakening, the individual relates the dream to a close relative or religious figure such as a shaykh, who interprets it as a sign of future greatness and sovereignty for either a later ruler or the entire dynastic house. This historiographical practice goes back at least to the 9th century Iranian Buyid and Tahirid dynasties, where dreams of sovereignty are found in various histories, and continues through the Ghaznavid period, when poet and historian Firdawsí in his *Sháhnámah*, relates a dream he had of Sultan Mahmud.¹⁰

The historian Ibráhím Amíní stresses genealogical descent in a dream narrative of Shaykh Šafí al-Dín. Amíní draws his account from the earlier *Šafvat al-Šafá*, which contains the original version of the dream, which goes something like this: Shaykh Šafí sees himself seated on top of Qaf mountain with a sable hat (*kuláh-i-samúr*) on his head and a sword at his waist. He tries to draw the sword to no avail, and then attempts to lift the hat off his head. When he does so, a sun shines from his head lighting up the entire world. When he places the hat on his head the sun becomes concealed. He does this three times with the same results. Shaykh Šafí asks Shaykh Záhíd, his “spiritual guide” (*pír* or *muríd*), to interpret this dream, and Shaykh Záhíd tells him that the sword represents the “mandate of sovereignty” (*ḥukm-i-viláyat*) and the sun stands for the “light of sainthood” (*núr-i-viláyat*).¹¹

After recounting this dream, Amíní follows with his own lengthy interpretation, which reflects the growing importance of genealogy in terms of legitimizing forces at the time of Shah Ismá‘íl. Amíní makes three main points in his discussion. For our purposes here, the third point is the most significant—namely, the importance of heredity. He states that

the light of the true prophet (núr-i-nabí-i-vafá) [i.e., Muḥammad] was shining from the descendents of the pure Adam (ádam-i-šafí) [i.e., Shaykh Šafí] such that it caused the angels to prostrate . . . were you to recognize the truth of heredity, and not scatter the seeds of doubt upon the grounds of thought, nor scratch the face of certainty with the nail of suspicion, [you shall know] that the children of Adam have been endowed with Safavid primacy (šafvat-i-šafaví), nor would you doubt that the offsprings of the pride of the world [i.e., Muḥammad], have inherited and passed down perfections and stations [even as it says:] ‘we each have our appointed place.’ [Q, 38: 164].¹²

According to Amíní, then, Shah Ismá‘íl earned legitimate political authority because of his accomplishments in *ghaza*, or holy war, and *inherited* spiritual authority because he was a descendent of Shaykh Šafí and the Prophet Muḥammad. This descent that Amíní refers to in the dream narrative was legitimized in the form of the Safavid genealogy found earlier in his

chronicle. This whole notion of inherited authority being used as a basis for ruling legitimacy actually seems to have been an unacceptable claim within the doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism. Although the Safavids had, even as a Sufi order, long been claiming descent from Músá al-Kázim, it was not until the reign of Shah Ismá'íl that they used their genealogy as a means of legitimizing rule over a state in which Twelver Shi'ism was the official religion. Moojan Momen suggests that in the absence of being able to claim designation (*naşş*) as a way of legitimizing their rule, the Safavids instead promoted claims of descent from Músá al-Kázim in order to disguise the fact that such claims were irrelevant.¹³

Although the focus of my discussion here has been genealogies in historical sources, I cannot resist mentioning one source of interesting Safavid genealogical notions appearing in Safavid non-historical texts—namely, the poetry of Shah Ismá'íl. Shah Ismá'íl's poetic corpus, written in a Turkish dialect under the pen-name Khatá'í, is one of the most important sources for our knowledge of early Safavid religious beliefs. Khatá'í (Shah Ismá'íl) writes:

My name is Shah Ismá'íl (adlm Shah Ismá'íl). I am God's mystery. I am the leader of all these ghazis.

My mother is Fatima (anam dur Fatimah), my father is 'Alí (atam 'Alí dur); and eke I am the Pir of the Twelve Imams . . .

I am the living Khiḍr and Jesus, son of Mary (Khizr zindah ilah 'Isa Maryam)

My sire is Şafi, my father Haydar. Truly I am the Ja'far of the audacious . . .

*I am a Husaynid and have curses for Yazid.*¹⁴

Elsewhere in his *divan*, he states:

Today I have come to the world as a Master. Know truly that I am Haydar's son.

*I am Faridun, Khosrau, Jamshid, and Zohak. I am Zal's son (Rustam) and Alexander (Firaydun Khusraw ve Jamshid ve Zahhak kih ibn Zal ham Iskandaram man).*¹⁵

Here, genealogical information imbedded in the poem is different from the genealogy appearing in the chronicles in the form of a long string of names, i.e. so-and-so ibn so-and-so ibn so-and-so, etc. Instead, Ismá'íl is appealing to his early Qizilbash supporters who were not orthodox Twelver Shi'is, but adhered to a type of belief known as *ghulúww*, or exaggerationism. These followers would not have been particularly interested or impressed with Shah Ismá'íl's later genealogical claims linking him back to Músá al-Kázim.

VI. Mughal Genealogies

Mughal genealogical accounts share similar motifs and themes with Safavid and earlier Timurid narratives. The *Akbarnámah* was just one of many works composed by one of Akbar's most prolific writers, Abú al-Faḍl, who was commissioned by the emperor Akbar to write an official history of the Mughal dynasty from its origins, which he continued working on until his death in (1011/1602).¹⁶

Included in Abú al-Faḍl's chapter on miracles are approximately eight dream narratives. The third dream narrative that Abú al-Faḍl relates is in response to a dream that originally appears in the introduction (*muqaddimah*) to Sharaf al-Dín 'Alí Yazdí's *Zafarnámah*, a major Timurid chronicle. Woods translates the dream of Qachulay, an ancestor of Timur whose father, Tumanay Khan, was also a direct ancestor of Chingiz Khan:

One night, Qachulay dreamed that he saw four stars ascend successively from the breast (jayb) of his brother Qabul. The last of these filled the entire world with its brilliance, diffusing light to other bodies which sprang forth from the fourth star and continued to glow

*even after it had set. He then saw seven stars rise one after another from his own breast followed by an eighth, a great star which cast its light everywhere and from which emanated lesser bodies, each illuminating a different region.*¹⁷

Qachulay then relates the dreams to his father, who interprets the first as foretelling “the initial paramountcy of the issue of Qabul” which includes most importantly Qabul’s great-grandson, Chingiz Khan. His father interprets the second dream as portending a world-conqueror in the eighth generation of Qachulay’s descendents, presumably Timur. Yazdí narrates this account in order to show that by virtue of Chingiz Khan and Timur’s common ancestry—the twin brothers Qachulay and Qabul—both were destined to rule.¹⁸

In his *Akbarnámah*, Abú al-Faḍl rewrote and reinterpreted Qachulay’s dream. He states that Yazdí was wrong and had “taken a superficial view of things.”¹⁹ According to Abú al-Faḍl, the true meaning of this dream, and in particular the eighth star, was not Timur, but “the auspicious Akbar.” He continues to explain that even though there were fifteen generations between Qachulay and Akbar, “among those [ancestors] there are seven stars of the zodiacal sign of greatness and having the light of this world-illuminating king of kings emblazoned on the foreheads of their biographies.”²⁰ Abú al-Faḍl does not state who, however, among the fifteen individuals are the seven great ancestors.

V. Afsharid Genealogies

In 1148/1736, some fourteen years after invading Iran, a new conqueror, Nádir, was crowned king. Nádir Shah (r. 1148-1160/1736-1747) had his start as a chieftan of the Afshars, one of the Qizilbash tribes that originally put Shah Ismá’íl in power. Ernest Tucker has analyzed historical writing under the reign of Nádir Shah, and pointed to the main concerns of Afsharid historians, namely Nádir’s relationship with the Safavid dynasty and his own political legitimacy.²¹ Mírzá Muḥammad Kázim Marvī, Nádir’s financial accountant, was author of the *‘Álam-ará-yi Nádirí* (1160/1747). Marvī devotes his first chapter to an explanation of the birth of Nadir Shah. Here, Marvī includes a dream narrative in which Imam Quli Beg, Nadir’s father, dreams of a sun rising from his neck. The rays of that sun lit the whole world, east and west. Imam Quli Beg related the dream to his brother, Bektash, who also coincidentally had the same dream. For several days later, Imam Quli Beg continued to have the same dream. The brothers related their experience to a poor mulla who was skilled in astrology. The mulla interpreted the dream to mean that a child would soon appear from the line of Imam Quli Beg who would conquer the whole world . . . Shortly after this, Nadir was born.²²

Genealogical manipulations also took place in the Qajar period—as seen in the case of Náṣir al-Dín Shah, whose temporary wife Jayran became a permanent wife in connection with a plot hatched in order to legitimize the succession of her son, Amír Qásim.²³ In order to accomplish this, in the face of “general ridicule” of the marriage with Jayran, a court chronicler, whom Abbas Amanat suggests was Riḍá Qulí Khán Hidáyat, was commissioned to construct a genealogy for Jayran’s father. Amanat states

*the pedigree that was made up traced the descent of the Tajrishi peasant back to the Sasanian monarchy and through them to the legendary Kayanid kings. Genghis Khan, too, may have been brought into the genealogical tree to make it sufficiently Turco-Mongolian, and thus Qajar, to make Jayran’s son an heir and to ensure her father and brother a place among the court dignitaries.*²⁴

VI. A Summary of Select Scholarship on Bahá'u'lláh's Genealogy

The purpose of this rather lengthy discussion is to show how prevalent genealogy was in the

consciousness of Persianate writers, and to demonstrate some of the forms in which genealogical information appeared. Thus in turn helps us to understand the cultural context for 19th century discussions of Bahá'u'lláh's genealogy. Given this history, it should come as no surprise that this subject would be of interest and concern both during Bahá'u'lláh's lifetime and after. Although Bahá'u'lláh Himself did not prepare a genealogy of his ancestors, and His claims were on theophanological lines as opposed to historiographically oriented writings, a number of individuals have written about various aspects of Bahá'u'lláh's family tree, including Mírzá Abú al-Faḍl Gulpaygání, Shoghi Effendi, Muḥammad 'Alí Malik Kusraví (Núrí), and Hasan Balyuzi. More recently, other important references and discussions about the genealogy have been made by Stephen Lambden and Shahriyar Razavi. What follows is only a very brief overview summarizing various aspects of scholarship on Bahá'u'lláh's genealogy. I must state at the outset that what I am presenting here are extremely tentative notes and comments, based only on a preliminary review of select sources.

Questions and scholarship surrounding Bahá'u'lláh's genealogy have served numerous purposes, depending on the interests and aims of the individual posing the question or writing the essay. In general, these purposes can be put into four categories: (1) Questions posed by Zoroastrians regarding Bahá'u'lláh's descent from Sassanian kings, (2) comments made by 'Abdu'l Bahá and Shoghi Effendi regarding Bahá'u'lláh's descent, and (3) interest on the part of Bahá'í writers from the Nur region.

1) Zoroastrian Questions

Hasan Balyuzi has neatly summarized the context of Zoroastrians questions regarding Bahá'u'lláh's genealogy.²⁵ The initial query was posed to Bahá'u'lláh himself by a Zoroastrian convert named Ustád Javánmard.²⁶ Ustád Javánmard asked Bahá'u'lláh a total of seven questions, and in response, Bahá'u'lláh composed the *Lawḥ-i-Haft Pursish* (Tablet of the Seven Questions) (*Lawḥ-i-Javánmard*). This Tablet was translated by Shahriar Razavi, with additional comments by Stephen Lambden, in the *Bahá'í Studies Bulletin* (1993). The original text of Ustád Javánmard's questions appears to be lost, but we may gather that the seventh question was regarding Bahá'u'lláh's genealogy. Bahá'u'lláh in response refers Ustád Javánmard to Mírzá Abú'l Faḍl Gulpaygání, who had already put together a text in connection with the genealogy. The treatise by Mírzá Abú'l Faḍl, referred to by Bahá'u'lláh, also regrettably appears to be lost. However, after providing this reference, Bahá'u'lláh then tells Javánmard that if he could "obtain and peruse the *Súrah-yi Ra'ís* and the *Súrah-yi Mulúk*," he would no longer be in need of what he asked about "and would arise to render service to the Cause of God."²⁷

Interest in this question did not disappear, however. In 1320/1902-1903, again a question regarding Bahá'u'lláh's genealogy was posed to local Bahá'ís by Áqá Khusraw Bimán, a Zoroastrian Bahá'í visiting the Holy Land. The question related to some lines of poetry by Abí Ja'far Muḥammad ibn 'Alí al-Shalmaghání (322/934) that were being debated at the time.²⁸ 'Abdu'l Bahá, to whom the question was ultimately referred, like His father, also referred Bimán to Mírzá Abú'l Faḍl, who was in New York at the time. By this time, Abú'l Faḍl was no longer in possession of his original treatise, but instead provided Bimán a summary of that original essay, in which he explained the circumstances under which he came to compose it. This is the text which has survived today, and known by the title, "*Sharḥ-i-shajara-yi jamál-i-mubárah*."²⁹ In this tract, which Hasan Balyuzi almost completely translated in his book, *Eminent Bahá'ís in the Time of Bahá'u'lláh*, Abú'l Faḍl explains that he came to research Bahá'u'lláh's genealogy as a result of the discussion surrounding a 10th century poem, and also some prophecies in the text *Dasátír* and other Parsi writings. He came to the conclusion that Bahá'u'lláh's family traced its descent back to the "ancient dynasties of Iran." He then lists a

number of dynasties that ruled in Tabaristan over the centuries and mentions some of the more well known poets and significant individuals from that region.³⁰ Realizing that he had uncovered a rich tradition of local historiography, Abu'l Faḍl thought that he could in all probability discover Bahá'u'lláh's genealogy. In this published treatise he provides two main sources of evidence for Bahá'u'lláh's descent. The first is a statement by 19th century historiographer Riḍá Qulí Khán Hidáyat, author of the well-known Qajar chronicle, the *Rawzat al-Ṣafá-yi Náṣirí* and a genealogical work entitled the *Nizhádnámah*. In the latter work, Hidáyat states that the "descent of the House of Nuris goes back to the just king, Anushirvan [i.e. Khusro I, r. 531-579]."³¹ At the same time, Gulpaygani met Ḥajjī Mírzá Riḍá Qulí, a half-brother of Bahá'u'lláh, who told them that copies of a Núrí family genealogical table were in the possession of various members of the family and this genealogy traced the family's ancestors back to Yazdigird, son of Shahriyar [i.e. Yazdigird III, son of Shahriyar, r. 632-651, last Sasanian monarch].³² When he presented this evidence to Bahá'u'lláh, He sent him a Tablet stating in part "O Abu'l Faḍl! Verily thou has spoken the truth . . ." ³³

2) Shoghi Effendi's Research

In the early 1930's, Shoghi Effendi published a facsimile of Bahá'u'lláh's genealogy in the form of a family tree in volume 5 of the *Bahá'í World*, covering the years 1932-1934.³⁴ The chart is similar in format to Shoghi Effendi genealogical chart of the Báb, also placed in the same issue of the *Bahá'í World* but originally appearing in Shoghi Effendi's translation and interpretation of Nabíl's history, known in English as the *Dawnbreakers*, published in 1932. Interestingly, in this case, Shoghi Effendi seems to set aside issues of Bahá'u'lláh's descent from Sassanian kings and instead, traces his ancestors back only as far as the 17th century, to a certain Áqá Fakhr, son of Shahriyár Ḥasan, with a date of ca. 1028/1618-1619. This situates Bahá'u'lláh's earliest traced ancestors back to the Safavid period. I have not yet been able to discover from where, specifically, Shoghi Effendi obtained this information, how he went about doing the research for this family tree, or what were the circumstances of its publication.

In contrast to Shoghi Effendi's genealogical chart, his history of the first hundred years of the Bahá'í religion, entitled *God Passes By*, originally published in 1944, does not have an elaborate chart or even a list of Bahá'u'lláh's ancestors, but it does contain genealogical statements. The most important passage for our purposes is as follows:

*He derived His descent, on the one hand, from Abraham (the Father of the Faithful) through his wife Katúrah, and on the other from Zoroaster, as well as from Yazdigird, the last king of the Sasanian dynasty. He was moreover a descendant of Jesse, and belonged, through His father, Mírzá 'Abbás, better known as Mírzá Buzurg—a nobleman closely associated with the ministerial circles of the Court of Fatḥ-'Alí Sháh—to one of the most ancient and renowned families of Mazindaran.*³⁵

Although to some extent this passage echoes some of the comments made by Mírzá Abú'l Faḍl in his treatise, the genealogical claims in it are much more extensive than those made by Mírzá Abú'l Faḍl. Here, Shoghi Effendi presents aspects of Bahá'u'lláh's genealogy that, to the best of my knowledge, we do not see elsewhere, or at least we do not see commonly elsewhere. For example, whereas Mírzá Abú'l Faḍl states that Bahá'u'lláh was descended from Sasanian monarchs, Shoghi Effendi repeats that information yet adds that he was also descended from Zoroaster (and others). This quotation appears in a section of *God Passes By* where Shoghi Effendi explains how Bahá'u'lláh fulfilled the messianic expectations of several religious traditions, and refers to prophecies from the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and Zoroastrian, Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic writings.³⁶

3) Writers from Núr

Some thirty years after Shoghi Effendi's genealogical chart was published, in 1962, Muḥammad 'Alí Malikí-Kusraví published his historical work entitled the *Iqlím-i-Núr*. This work contains historical information about the Nur region in Mazandaran and genealogical material on Bahá'u'lláh's family.³⁷ The author states in his introductory notes that he wrote this book in order to correct certain mistakes on specific pages of 'Abdu'l Ḥusayn Áyátí Áváríh's historical work, the *Kavákibu'd Durriyah*, and other various errors.³⁸ The specific sections in *Kavákibu'd Durriyah* that Malikí-Kusraví mentions deal directly with Bahá'u'lláh's genealogy.³⁹ The author also lists his sources at the beginning of his work, which include a rather large number of items including various writings of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Nabil, the *Zuhúr al-Ḥaqq* vol. 3, the writings of Ishráq Khávarí, Shoghi Effendi's genealogical chart in the *Bahá'í World*, the copy of Bahá'u'lláh's marriage certificate in the same volume, and various papers and documents in the possession of his wife's family.⁴⁰ Obviously, time does not permit me to sort out the historiography that went into producing this volume. This is a complicated task, for aside from his introductory list of sources, the author does not cite his sources in the rest of his work, so it is impossible to know what information comes from where. For our purposes here, we can note that there are some differences from Malikí-Kusraví's genealogical chart at the end of his book and Shoghi Effendi's.⁴¹

Finally, in addition to the research of Malikí-Kusraví, the late Nusratulláh Majzub did a great deal of historical research on Bahá'u'lláh's genealogy, and composed a book manuscript on the subject, which has not yet been published.⁴² It should be noted that the sources I have mentioned here are not exhaustive. Other materials compiled and researched by various individuals that have not yet been published may certainly come to light. Here I have only mentioned those writings and texts which have been available to me.

Conclusion

I would like to make just a few points by way of conclusion, most of which relate to future research that needs to be done on this topic.

- 1) Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l Bahá and Shoghi Effendi all commented in some way on their family's genealogy. Bahá'u'lláh, while writing to Javánmard that the question of his ancestors was not particularly important, nevertheless indirectly answered the question by referring Javánmard to Mírzá Abú'l Faḍl. Similarly, 'Abdu'l Bahá referred another individual, Bimán, also to Abú'l Faḍl. Thus, in these two cases, neither Bahá'u'lláh nor 'Abdu'l Bahá provided specific answers of Their own to genealogical questions. Shoghi Effendi, on the other hand, made a variety of genealogical statements and we may therefore assume that he did have an interest in the question. What remains to be done in this connection is finding all of the genealogical statements made by Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l Bahá, and Shoghi Effendi, and examining the specific contexts in which they were made.
- 2) We know that genealogies have been invoked and used throughout Iranian history for a variety of purposes. The fact that different aspects of Bahá'u'lláh's genealogy were stressed by different individuals at different times is a continuation of that tradition, albeit in modified form.
- 3) Much of the historiography still needs to be sorted out. This cannot be done, however, until more material is uncovered and made more readily accessible to scholars and researchers, in particular family histories and documents.

Notes

I am grateful to Dr. Stephen N. Lambden and Dr. Iraj Ayman for their many valuable suggestions, comments, and assistance on this paper. I take full responsibility, of course, for all errors.

- 1) F. Rosenthal, *EI2*, s.v. "nasab."
- 2) Rosenthal, *EI2*, s.v. "nasab."
- 3) See, for example, Fred M. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing*, (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1998); Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Albrecht Noth, *Quellenkritische Studien zu Themen, Formen und Tendenzen frühislamischer Geschichtsüberlieferung*, trans. by Michael Bonner as *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition: A Source-Critical Study*, 2nd ed., in collaboration with Lawrence I. Conrad (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1994); and Julie Meisami, *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999).
- 4) Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 50.
- 5) See Sholeh A. Quinn, "The *Mu'izz al-Ansab* and *Shu'ab-i-Panjganeh* as Sources for the Chaghatayid Period of History: A Comparative Analysis," *Central Asiatic Journal* 33 (1990), 229-253.
- 6) See John E. Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," in *Intellectual Studies on Islam: Essays Written in Honor of Martin B. Dickson*, ed. Michel M. Mazzaoui and Vera B. Moreen, 85-125, (Utah: University of Utah Press, 1990).
- 7) See, for instance, Ahmad Kasravi, *Shaykh Safi va tabarash* (Tehran: Nashr va Pakhsh-i-Kitáb, 2535 [1976]); A. Z. V. Togan, "Sur l'origine des Safavides," in *Mélanges Louis Massignon III*, 3 vols. (Damas: Institut Français de Damas, 1957), 345-357, and Michel Mazzaoui, *The Origins of the Safawids* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1972), 46-51.
- 8) Of the various types of dream narratives that Von Grunebaum outlines, the dream as political prophecy is the most relevant in the study of Shaykh Safi al-Din's dreams. See, for instance, G. E. Von Grunebaum, "The Cultural Function of the Dream as Illustrated by Classical Islam," in *The Dream and Human Societies*, ed. G. E. Von Grunebaum and Roger Caillois (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), 3-21. See also *EnIr*, s.v. "Dreams and Dream Interpretation," by Hossein Ziai.
- 9) See Roy Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 69-72. Julie Meisami discusses Firdawsi's dream of Sultan Mahmud in the *Shahnamah*. See Julie Meisami, "The Past in Service of the Present: Two Views of History in Medieval Persia," *Poetics Today* (14): 1993, 247-275. For the actual account of the dream in the *Shahnamah*, see Firdawsi, *Shahnamah*, ed. Jalal Khaliqi Mutlaq, 6 vols. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1978), 1: 16-17.
- 10) Tavakkul ibn Ismá'il ibn Bazzáz, *Šafvat al-Šafá*, ed. Ghulám Riḍá Tabátábá'i Majd ([Tabriz: G. Tabátábá'i Majd, 1373 [1994]] 87-88.
- 11) Šadr al-Dín Sultán Ibráhím Amíní Haraví, "Futuḥát-i-sháhi," Ms., Dushanbe I, folio 246a.
- 12) "It was clearly impossible for the Safavids to claim designation [*nass*] (except in visions of the Hidden Imam) and the great stress in their propaganda on their descent from the Imams can only be seen as a smokescreen to hide the fact that this was an irrelevance." Momen, *Introduction*, 108. As already mentioned, there is a pre-Islamic precedent for such genealogical dream narratives. For a detailed discussion of Persian pre-Islamic influences on notions of kingship, see Said Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 89-95. In this connection it is interesting to note that the first section of the Pahlavi text known as the *Kárnámak-i-Ardashir-i-Pápakán* contains several dream narratives, one of which states that "Papak one night saw in a dream how the sun shone from the head of Sasan and made the whole world bright." The dream interpreters said "He who was seen in the dream, either he or one of his children will come to sovereignty over the world, since the sun and the white and caparisoned elephant [the elephant refers to another dream] are (a sign of) mastery and riches and victory." Quoted in Said Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 92, and *EnIr*, s.v. "Dreams and Dream Interpretation," by Hossein Ziai. For the full translation, see H. W. Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems in the Ninth-Century Books* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1943; repr., 1971), 59-60. For the original text in Pahlavi, with a transcription and translation into modern Persian, see *Kárnámah-i-Ardashir-i-Bábakán*, ed. Muḥammad Javád Mashkúr ([Tehran]: Dunyá-yi Kitáb, 1369 [1990]), 44-45 (Pahlavi text); 116-118 (Persian transcription); and 176-177 (Persian translation). This dream narrative is repeated in the *Sháhnámah* in modified form.
- 13) V. Minorsky, "The Poetry of Shah Ismá'il I," *BSOAS* 10 (1942), 1007-1053. See poem no. 15, 1042a-1043a.
- 14) Minorsky, "Poetry of Shah Ismá'il," poem no. 195, 1047a.
- 15) *EnIr*, s.v., "Akbarnamah."
- 16) Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," 91.
- 17) See Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," 91.
- 18) Abú al-Faḍl, *Akbarnámah*, ed. Ghulám Riḍá Tabátábá'i Majd (Tehran, 1372 (1993): 31-32; translated by H.

- Beveridge as *The Akbar nama of Abu'l-Faḍl*. 3 Vols. Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1989), 47.
- 19) *Akbarnámah*, 32; Beveridge, 48. For more information on the genealogy, see Beveridge, 143-145, 205-206.
 - 20) Ernest Tucker, "Explaining Nadir Shah: Kingship and Royal Legitimacy in Muhammad Kazim Marvi's *Tarikh-i-'alam-ara-yi Nadiri*," *Iranian Studies* 26 (1993), 95-117. See esp. pg. 115
 - 21) *'Álam-ará-yi Nádirí*, 6-7; Tucker, "Explaining Nadir Shah," 103.
 - 22) See Abbas Amanat, *Pivot of the Universe: Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar and the Iranian Monarchy, 1831-1896* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 323-324.
 - 23) Abbas Amanat, *Pivot of the Universe*, 324.
 - 24) See Hasan Balyuzi, *Eminent Bahá'ís in the Time of Bahá'u'lláh, with Some Historical Background*, (Oxford: George Ronald, 1985), 309-313.
 - 25) See Shahriar Razavi, "The Tablet of the Seven Questions of Bahá'u'lláh (*Lawh-i-haft pursish*): An Introductory Note and Provisional Translation," *Bahá'í Studies Bulletin* 7: 3-4 (1993), 47-59. See also in the same issue, Stephen Lambden, "Appendix One: A Few Expository Notes on the Lawh-i-haft pursish." 60-68.
 - 26) Razavi trans., 52.
 - 27) Lambden has translated the poem as follows: "O claimant (*tálib[an]*) from the Hashimite house/And disclaimer (*jáhíd[an]*) from the house of Chosroes/Assuredly was he hidden in a non-Arab lineage/One Persian, of noble, agreeable descent." Lambden, "Appendix," 65.
 - 28) The summary was published in Bombay and also appears in R. Mehrábkháni's *Rasá'il va Raqá'im-i-Abú al-Fazá'il* (Tehran: BPT, 135/1978), 41-47.
 - 29) These include Kay Kábús of the *Kábúsnámah* and the poet Manúchihri. See Gulpaygani, 43-44 and the translation in Balyuzi, *Eminent Bahá'ís*, 311-312.
 - 30) Balyuzi, *Eminent Bahá'ís*, 312; Gulpaygani states, "*Riḍá Qulíkhán mulaqqab bi-Amí al-Shu'ará dar kitáb-i-Nizhád'námah mazkúr dáshtah kih silsilah-i-'aliyyah'-i-Núriyyah bi-malik-i-'ádil Núshiraván muntahá mishavad . . .*" 44-45.
 - 31) Balyuzi, *Eminent Bahá'ís*, 312-313. See also Appendix 3 in Richard Frye, *The Heritage of Persia*, (New York: Mentor Books, 1963), 320.
 - 32) Balyuzi, 312; Gulpaygani, quoting Bahá'u'lláh: "*yá Abu'l-Faḍl, qad nataqta bi-al-ḥaqq wa aẓharta má kána mastúran fi kalimátihi*." 46.
 - 33) See *The Bahá'í World: a Biennial International Record*, vol. 5 [89 and 90 of the Bahá'í Era April 1932-1934 A.D.] (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1936), insert between pp. 204-205.
 - 34) Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1944), 94.
 - 35) In this regard it is interesting to note that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had earlier alluded to His father's Abrahamic descent, when He stated the following: "The Blessed Beauty is also a lineal descendant of Abraham, for Abraham had other sons besides Ishmael and Isaac who in those days migrated to the lands of Persia and Afghanistan, and the Blessed Beauty is one of their descendants." 'Abdu'l Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, trans. Laura Clifford Barney (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1981 [originally 1930]), 213.
 - 36) Notes on Mazandaran from EI2: province to the south of Caspian sea bounded on west by Gilan and east by Astarabad (formerly Gurgan). Now, Mazandaran and Gurgan form modern province of Mazandaran. Arabs know the region only as Tabaristan. The name Mazandaran only reappears in Seljuk times. See EI2, s.v. "Mazandaran," V. Minorsky [C. E. Bosworth].
 - 37) These consist of pages 253-254 of volume one, and page 4 of volume two. See Muḥammad 'Alí Malikí-Kusraví *Iqlím-i-Núr*, (Tehran, 1962), "dal."
 - 38) See Avarih, *Kavákibu'd Durriyah*, 2 vols. (Cairo: Matba'at as-Sa'adah, 1923-1924), vol. 1, pg. 253-54; vol. 2, pg. 4. Reprinted East Lansing, Mi.: H-Bahai, 1999-2000 and available at: www2.h-net.msu.edu/bahai/areprint/vol4/kd/kd.htm.
 - 39) Specifically, these items are as follows: (1) various writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdul-Bahá, (2) Nabíl, (3) Fázil Mazandarání's *Zuhúr al-Ḥaqq* vol. 3, and (4) Ishráq Khávarí's *Rahiq-i-Makhtúm*. To this list he also adds the following: (1) the genealogical work of Mírzá Faḍl Alláh "Nizám al-Mamálik" (a companion of Bahá'u'lláh), (2) Shoghi Effendi's genealogical chart in the *Bahá'í World*, (3) the copy of Bahá'u'lláh's marriage certificate in the same volume, (4) the newspaper *Rúznámah-i-vaqáyi-i-ittifáqiyah* and some other documents from national archives (5) the memoirs of Nizám al-Mamálik and his Tablets in Nur, (6) family papers from the Bihzád clan from the author's mother's side of the family, and (7) the authors personal papers. *Iqlím-i-Núr*, "vav."
 - 40) One interesting difference is that Malikí Kusraví adds a generation between Áqá Fakhr and Hájji Muḥammad Riḍá Beg, namely Áqá Muḥammad 'Alí, known as (*ma'rúf bih*) Áqá'í. See *Iqlím-i-Núr*, genealogical tree at the end. It should also be noted that Malikí Kusraví had greatly expanded on his work and produced a large wall chart on this genealogy, documenting its sources at each point. Regretfully, his documents and other materials were confiscated during the Iranian Revolution of 1978-79. Personal communication, Iraj Ayman, February 24, 2003.
 - 41) Iraj Ayman, personal communication, February 24, 2003.