

Monograph Synopsis and Research Interests

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To the kind attention of the Selection Board of the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Postdoctoral Fellowship in Iranian Studies,

In my doctoral dissertation, *Nel ventre della giara. Il Libro del coppiere di Ẓohuri Toršizi (1537 ca. – 1616) e le configurazioni poliglote del genere sāqināme tra sedicesimo e diciassettesimo secolo* (*In the Belly of the Jar: The Book of the Cupbearer by Ẓohuri Toršizi (c. 1537–1616) and the Multilingual Configurations of the Sāqināme Genre between the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*), I explored the intricate and non-linear history of the poetic genre *sāqināme*, with particular attention to the influence of ‘Abd on-Nabi Faxr oz-Zamāni Qazvini’s *Mayxāne*, a *taḍkere* completed in 1619.

My research focused on the techniques employed by ‘Abd on-Nabi in shaping the *Mayxāne* and on how he programmatically reconstructed *sāqināme* poems attributed to renowned poets—Neẓāmi, Amir Xosrow, Jāmi, and Hātefi—though not originally composed by them. A central argument of my work is that ‘Abd on-Nabi built a *sāqināme* prototype around a philological reconstruction of several *maṭnavis* by Ḥāfeẓ. Moreover, the *Mayxāne* establishes a formal hierarchy, privileging the *maṭnavi* over other poetic structures such as *tarji’ band* and *tarkib band*. This model, set forth in the early seventeenth century, has largely remained the reference point for defining the *sāqināme*, despite substantial gaps in ‘Abd on-Nabi’s historical framework.

Yet, his account leaves two fundamental questions unanswered:

1. If Ḥāfeẓ indeed established the *sāqināme* prototype, why did prominent poets such as Jāmi and Hātefi not compose poems following his model?
2. If Ḥāfeẓ’s *maṭnavi* was truly the genre’s foundational work, why does the first imitation of his supposed model appear only a century and a half later, authored by Partovi Širāzi?

My research shows that Ḥāfeẓ composed four *maṭnavis* in the *motaqāreb-e moṭamman-e maḥḍuf* meter, none of which were designated as *sāqināme* in manuscript sources. In the *Mayxāne*, ‘Abd on-Nabi merges these texts, reorders the verses, and presents the resulting

composition as the prototype *sāqināme*. Consequently, the attribution of the title *sāqināme* to Ḥāfeẓ's poem must be considered a seventeenth-century philological construct rather than an original designation. This re-evaluation is crucial, as several scholars still regard Ḥāfeẓ as the first composer of a *maṭnavi sāqināme*, unaware of the composite and retrospective nature of this attribution.

The act of titling is, in fact, central to understanding when and how the *sāqināme* came to be perceived as an independent genre. While the *Divān* of Ḥāfeẓ (as compiled by Moḥammad Golandām) and various anthologies of his verses circulated widely in the fifteenth century, *sāqināme* compositions of the type showcased in the *Mayxāne* are absent in this period.

I posit that Turcographic compositions in both *maṭnavi* and *tarji* *band* forms—particularly those by ‘Alī Šir Navā’i, a leading figure in the literary use of Eastern Turki (Čağatay)—functioned as early prototypes for the dissemination of the *sāqināme* genre in the Persographic sphere. Although it remains unclear whether Navā’i titled these compositions *sāqināme*, his *divāns* include poems that share structural and thematic features with works by ‘Erāqi (thirteenth century) and Partovi Širāzi (sixteenth century). This suggests that the *maṭnavi sāqināme* in *motaqāreb-e moṭamman-e maḥḍuf* meter may have first emerged in Eastern Turki in the latter half of the fifteenth century.

It is further hypothesized that Ottoman literati—well acquainted with Navā’i's works—recognized these compositions as *sāqināme*s and, in their commentaries on Ḥāfeẓ's *Divān*, began to distinguish between *sāqināme* and *moğannināme*. This classification may have reached Shiraz, where Jalāl od-Din Davāni (d. 1502)—a distinguished philosopher, early commentator of Ḥāfeẓ's *gazals*, and teacher of both early Persian *sāqināme* composers Partovi Širāzi and Omidi Rāzi—was educating Turkman, Persian, and Ottoman elites. These new hypotheses reveal a significant limitation of the *Mayxāne*: its exclusive focus on Persian *sāqināme*s, overlooking Turcographic contributions to the genre's development.

Another limitation lies in the formal model of the *sāqināme* proposed by ‘Abd on-Nabi. His conception does not account for the elaboration and expansion achieved by poets such as Zohuri Toršizi, whose *Sāqināme* consists of 4606 verses. My research addresses this evolution through the first complete Italian translation of Zohuri's *Sāqināme*, based on the critical edition by Bābāsālār and Daryābāri (University of Tehran, 2015).

Building upon this foundation, I intend to pursue a postdoctoral project structured around the following lines of inquiry:

- Collaborative research with scholars of Čağatay and Ottoman literary cultures to substantiate the role of Turcographic literati in shaping the *sāqināme* genre;
- A study of the reception of Ḥāfeẓ's *Divān* in both Turcographic and Persographic literary milieus from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries;
- An investigation into the contribution of Fożuli Bağdādi to the consolidation of the *sāqināme* genre;
- An analysis of *sāqināme* articulations in poets preceding (Šarafjahān Qazvini, Tanā'i Mašhadi), contemporary with (Zolāli X^wānsāri), and succeeding (Toğrā Mašhadi) ẖohuri Toršizi.