

# An Inquiry into the Terms of *ádáb*, *ádīb*, *ádábīyāt* in the Preso-Arabic Languages

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## A foreword to the topic

A distinct characteristic of the gradual “Islamization” of Persia over the course of roughly one to two centuries and onward was that the Arabic language became the formal religious, historical and, to some degree, literary medium used by many Persian *men of pen* and scholars throughout the first centuries of the Islamic period in Iran.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, the Arabic language became a means of communication in the higher echelon of society, thus transference of aspects of culture in retrospect of (olden) Persian and the cultivation of Islamic *ádáb* culture,<sup>2</sup> and, for a period of time, even a vehicle for reviving a reaction to Arab domi-

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<sup>1</sup>Ázartāš Āzarnoš, *Ĉāloš-e Mīyān-e Fārsī va ‘Arabī, Sadehā-ye Nakost* (Tehran: Našr-e Nay 1385/2006), 90.

<sup>2</sup>Moḥammad Moḥammadī Malāyerī, *Al-tarjuma wa ‘l-naql ‘an al-Fārsīya*, vol. 1, *Kutub Tāj wa ‘l-Áin*, (Beirut: n.p., 1967).

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nance.<sup>3</sup> Simultaneous with the above process, Middle Persian (Pahlavi), which had been the formal language of the country in Sāsānian times (although to a limited degree among the populace<sup>4</sup>), gradually faded away, except among surviving Zoroastrian communities. In due course, with the rise of Persian dynasties in the Eastern lands of Persia proper, formal Arabic was replaced by Persian Darī, a language which enabled the Persian genres of *ádáb*, an epic of heritage and ethics to be transferred to the new society. Thus, the themes of older Persian literature endured and had a marked influence on the course of Arabic and Islamic literature. Themes such as the heroic epic that reappeared in the poetic works of the tenth and eleventh centuries CE, as well as the themes of polite, urban, and courtly literature of the *ádáb* genre, inspired and shaped Arabic literature and Perso-Arabic *mirrors of princes*.<sup>5</sup>

### Background of a debate

In the mid-1920s a Persian literary classical erudite, Moḥammad Moḥīt Ṭabāṭbāī, was closely following the debates among some Arab scholars for the possible root(s) and, from there, meaning(s) of the word *adab* (ádáb) in the Arabic language. He had some ideas that the root of this term might go back to Old or Middle-Persian. Eventually, in 1939, Moḥīt Ṭabāṭbāī wrote a Persian article, reviewing and summing up the debates of those various Arab scholars and expressed his own somewhat speculative opinion about roots of the term *adab* (ádáb) and *adabiyat* (ádábīyāt) in Perso-Turko-Arabic languages and literature. One should mention that Moḥīt Ṭabāṭbāī, a well-known Persian erudite, had met some of the Arab learned –whose names and occupation will be

<sup>3</sup>Hosain 'alī Momtāhen, "Ḥosain 'alī," in *Nehzat-e Ša' ūbīyye va natāyej-e sīyāsī va ejtemā'i-ye ān*, (Tehran: n.p., 1354/1975).

<sup>4</sup>There are indications in New-Persian classical literature that different dialects of Middle-Persian existed in some regions of Iran as early the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries. On at least three occasions, Ḥāfez refers in his *ġazals* to "*golbāng-e pahlavī*" being sung in Fārs. Yet, in this view, the *robāīyāt* of Bābā Tāher-e 'Uryān are in an older western Persian dialect. Thus, Aḥmad Kasravī has shown that in the mid-twentieth century there were villages high in the mountains of ĀzARBĀYJĀN who were speaking as a Āzarī dialect of Pahlavī, i.e., a dialect of Western Middle Persian.

<sup>5</sup>C.E. Bosworth, "The Heritage of Rulership in early Islamic Iran and the Search for Dynastic Connection with the Past," *IRAN* 11 (1973): 51.

mentioned in the context of this paper—in an international Oriental studies conference in Paris and had exchanged his opinions with a couple of them. The now historical article of M. M. Ṭabāṭbāī has re-appeared in a now-ended famous publication, *A Persian Journal of Iranian Studies, Āyandeh* (vol. 11, no. 1-3, 1985) with a new preface by the author. The “old” debate was rekindled following a publication of a presentation by a Japanese scholar of Perso-Arabic languages, Dyoji-Nai, in the Twenty-Fifth Congress of Japanese Orientalists in Tokyo in 1984 (the original article was published first in the University of Tokyo’s annual report in 1983) titled “From Middle-Persian Awēk to Arabic Adab.”

### **View and course of this paper**

Hence, in the twentieth century, the root of *ādāb* had to some degree been the subject of etymological debate and both literary and cultural conflict among Moslem and Christian Arab, European, and Persian scholars. After briefly considering various aspects of the debates, this essay will endeavor to reconcile the “problem.” Showing that that next to Arab and a few European scholars’ opinions, the beliefs of three Persian erudites, i.e., a classical literatus (M. M. Ṭabāṭbāī), a textual-linguistic historian of classical Persian and Arabic (Moḥammadī Malāyerī), and a literatus with linguistic background in old Persian languages (Ĵālāl Kḥāleqī Moṭlaq), despite their somewhat different views for the etymological roots of the term *ādāb*, from the view of this pen, socio-culturally, one can obtain a common conclusion from rather varying views. Thus, after a short cultural-literary background, it will first present and discuss the etymological background of the expression *ādāb* in the context of transforming cultures, both Persian and Arabic; then show the determining role, however brief, of three Persian *men of pen* in the service of the late Umayyad rulers in the course of this cultural transmission, reflecting root of the transformation of *ādāb* into “literary” concept in the emerging eclectic culture and eventually, in modern times, to “literature.”

### **A socio-literary background of the term(s)**

The writings which were translated, rendered or redacted in the early Islamic era, mainly from Persian into Arabic, were on the subjects of prac-

tical ethics, general *andarz* (counsel, wise wording), and a small number of philosophical themes. These writings were classified under headings such as *mau'iza* (preaching), *wasīyat* (testament), *ḥikmat* (wise sayings and, roughly, philosophy, not necessarily Greek peripatetic) and *ádáb*, which came to mean good breeding, good manners, and politeness (and later, letters and literature). These expressions were often recorded in their plural form: *mawā'iz* (مَوَاعِظ), *wasāyā* (وَصَايَا), *ḥikam* (حِكَم) and *ādāb* (آدَاب). The writings which were given these titles covered issues dealing with *tahdīb al-naḥs* (cultivation or refinement of the self), *tazkīyat al-rūḥ* (purification of the spirit) and the education or upbringing of pupils in the category of *ádáb*. All of this may be summarized as the virtues that an individual must cultivate, and which were termed *makārim al-aḳlāq* (مَكَارِمُ الْاِخْلَاقِ). *Mau'iza* and *wasīyat* closely corresponded to the Persian *andarz* and *pānd*, categories used in Sāsānian didactic literature. It is for this reason that those often-short Persian compositions, in their Arabic redactions, were called the *mawā'iz* of Āzarbād or Būzūrjmīhr (NP: Bozorgmehr) and the *wasāyā* of Anōshīrvān.<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, in the late first and second centuries of the Islamic era, transmission of *ádáb*, at least conceptually, from Sāsānian culture through the *translation process* of the motifs, could be attributed to two general categories: “high ethics,” or ideals and wisdom, and a discourse on issues including social ethics, good manners and behavior, speech and fine words. Later, from the second AH/ninth CE century the expression *ádáb* developed connotations, meaning, and gradually, branches.

Medieval dictionaries list a considerable variety of meanings for the term *ádáb*. Some examples include “discipline of mind,” “good qualities and attributes of mind and soul,” and of course “good breeding.” Of these types of definitions, the latter corresponds to Persian social culture, particularly the upbringing of children of nobility in the literary bureaucratic level, of the talented youth of *dīwāniān* (scribes who, in the Islamic period, came to be called *kuttāb*). In that manner, the

<sup>6</sup>Moḥammad Moḥammadi Malāyerī, *Adab va Aḳlāq dar Ērān-e pīsh az Eslām - va čand Nemone az Āsār-e ān dar Adabīyāt-e 'Arabī va Eslāmī*, 1st ed. (Tehran: Entešārāt-e Yazdān 1372/1983); subsequent editions with different titles: Entešārāt-e Tus 1379/2010), 24-25.

later idea of “polite literature,” has its roots in the same background. Pellat observes that in ‘post-classical’ Arabic texts, *ádáb*, in its broadest sense, appears in three different spheres which are nevertheless related: moral, social and intellectual. “We may assume *ádáb* to be of three basic types according to whether it aims to instill ethical precepts, to provide its readers with a general education, or to lay down guiding principles for members of the various professions.”<sup>77</sup> However, as Bonebakker noted, “though these are not always easily distinguishable, the question of how the same term came to find a place in all three remains to be answered.”<sup>78</sup> The reason for such diverse definitions can be related to the philological and cultural roots of the idiom as it evolved from pre-Islamic civilizations such as Indians,<sup>9</sup>

<sup>77</sup>C. Pellat, “Al-Jāhīz”, *Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, CHAL (1990): 83; see also S.A. Bonebakker, “*Adab* and the Concept of *belles-lettres*,” *Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, CHAL, 17.

<sup>78</sup>Bonebakker, “*Adab* and the Concept of *belles-lettres*,” *Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, CHAL, 17. Regarding the “the medieval dictionaries” and, the assertion that “all three remains to be answered,” the late Iranian literatus and philologist, ‘Aliakbar Shahabi, has somewhat similar opinion of Bonebakker, particularly, concerning the possible roots of the “terminology” of *adab*; he states: “From the classical roots of the Arabic word *adab* (*ádáb*) three different meaning or concept are derived: one is ‘elegance’ and ‘cleanliness’, another one, ‘wonder’ and ‘surprise’, the other one, to call to festivity or get-together. The difficulty in tracing the Arabic vocabularies which have non-Arabic roots or background is that when those adapted to Arabic, their morphology changes thus sometimes drastically thus to decipher their roots are challenging at least. In the introduction type of some old Arabic lexicon/glossary it is stated that: هذا اللغة اعجميه فالعب بها ماشئت meaning: ‘this vocabulary is foreign play (deal) with it as you wish’; thus, only the classicist etymologist in the language could trace or speculate their origin of form(s) and meaning(s): شهرابي، (دكتور) على اكبر، فرهنگ: اشتقاقی عربی به فارسی، مقدمه، رويه هاي ص، ی، یا

(ص، ی، یا. ‘Aliakbar Shahābī, *The Etymological Lexicon of Arabic to Persian*, Introduction)

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<sup>9</sup>In old Indian language (Vedic), Indian writing (scripture) is called *Daevangari* (the writing or scripture of *Daeva* –Persian Dari: ‘*dīv-négāri*’). *Daeva* among old Indo-Iranian Aryans was a deity whom after ancestral separation, keeps a positive feature and in old Iranian mythology changes to a negative one as “un-Iranian” (اَئیرانی) and eventually *dīv* becomes equal to the devil (fiend) [In Sanskrit: *dēva*, in Middle-Persian: *dēv*, in Greek *duēs* (Zeus), in Latin: *divus*, in French: *dieu* (God)]. According to Avesta and *Shāh-nāme*, those are *daevas* while they had become captive to be freed teach the Iranians scripture. Henceforth, “Iranians” learn scripture from “natives,”

i.e., Sumerians in the north and Acadians in the south. In this manner they borrow words from former civilizations, however they are mutually influential as there are remaining words in Sumerian which have “Aryan”/Iranian origin, such as *ā(b)* (water) in Per. *āb*, or sea *āba* from the same root; *āmā* (mother) in Per. *mādar*; *gu* (caw) in Per. *gāv*.

Old Persian<sup>10</sup> and Greeks.<sup>11</sup> They each had deeply rooted religious, social, and philosophical cultures, including personal and social ethics of manners, “upbringing” and education. At any rate, one fundamental debate goes back to the philological and thus cultural roots of the term.

### **Ádáb in context and philological debts**

*Ádáb* was among the social, and literary terms that influenced the transfer of Old Persian cultural motifs into the Perso-Arabic genre of *mirror of princes* and “court literature.” The extended usage of this term was significant in carrying a qualitative aspect of pre-Islamic etiquette and didactic literature into the “translation movement” of late Umayyad by some scribes/men of pen and the early ‘Abbasid period in Baghdad (*Bayt al-Ḥikma/The House of Wisdom*) functioning as a “bureau of translation” by mixed Nestorian/Arab/Persians. Thus, another term, *ḥikma[t]* (roughly, “philosophy”) though not within the scope of this paper, was important for the formation of a “speculative” and “practical” philosophy which became both Persian and Arabic and from which primarily came the translation of Greek philosophy and science into Syriac and Arabic.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup>The root of the Old Persian (OP) words of *dip* and *dipi*, meaning scribe/letter and scripture/writing, by all probability, goes back to Sumerian inscripture. The Sumerian *dub* which meant letter and inscripture and, scribed tablet, appears later in Aramaic as *dup* but in Acadian as *duppu* (*/duppi*) as preserving the same meanings. Old Persian *dipi* in Middle Persian (MP) becomes *dipirih*; and in Sanskrit *dipi*, also meaning scribe/letter. Two derivatives of Sumerian *dub* are *dupsar* meaning “writer” and *eduba* as pupil/apprentice.

<sup>11</sup>“Apart from the decisive Iranian influence, at the same time or shortly afterward another mass of foreign books was translated and put at the disposal of a Muslim elite, namely Greek works which introduced the achievements of Hellenic thought, notably logic and methods of reasoning, but no literary texts.” Ch. Pellat, “Adab ii. Adab in Arabic Literature,” *Encyclopædia Iranica* 1, vol.4 :439-444; an updated version is available online at [www.iranicaonline.org/articles/adab-ii-arabic-lit](http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/adab-ii-arabic-lit). [See n. 29.]

<sup>12</sup>One indicative example in the category of “practical philosophy” (حِكْمَتِ عَمَلِيَّةٍ), which also reflected the influence of Persian motifs of *ádáb* and *ándārz* in its content, is *Ádáb al-Falāsifa* by Hunayn b. Ishāq (Abū Zayd Hunayn ibn Ishāq al-Abādī, 809-837 CE), an Assyrian Nestorian scholar, physician, and scientist, known for his work in translating Greek scientific and medical and works of Plato (Timaeus) and Aristotle (Metaphysics) into Syriac and Arabic. Hunayn had mastered four languages: Arabic, Syriac, Greek, and Persian.

Nonetheless, regarding the root of the term *ádáb*, Professor Moḥammadī Malāyerī states that there is “no reason for the usage” of the term *ádáb* and its derivatives in the pre-Islamic Jāhili Arabic literature, at least not within literature whose authenticity we can trust.<sup>13</sup> Nor does it appear in the Qurān.<sup>14</sup> However, on at least one occasion, a form of the term *ádáb* was apparently used by a pre-Islamic Jāhili poet. In al-Divān, Ṭurfa, a Jāhili poet, uses a derivative of *ádáb* from “*tādīb* (to educate or teach [manners]) in the form of “*addab walīdaka...*” (Teach [manners to] your child...).<sup>15</sup> It appears that some Arabists post-Carlo A. Nallino,<sup>16</sup> not having found a root for the term in classical Arabic, have accepted that this term derives from *ádáb*, “the plural” of *dāb*, which means habit, state, manner, or behavior --though originally it conveyed a sense of way, path or track, as the term *sunna* (and then, as *Sunnah*, tradition,

<sup>13</sup>Moḥammad Moḥammadī Malāyerī, *Farhang-e Ērānī pīš az Eslām va Āsār-e ān dar Tamaddon-e Eslāmī va Adabīyāt-e ‘Arabī*, n.p., 1374/1995), 304.

<sup>14</sup>A passage in Qur’an that conveys a context of behavior prescribed Islamic etiquette as good manner or decorum is expressed in the *sura 3, ayat 134*: “When a (courteous) greeting is offered you, meet it with a greeting still more courteous, or (at least) of equal courtesy. Allah takes careful account of all things.” Professor Hāmid Algār, some years ago at UC Berkeley, in a conversation, stated that some of the derivatives of the term *adab* (*ádáb*) had entered the Ḥadis tradition, for example: “*addabanī rabbī fa-aḥsana ta ībī*.” Thus, a Sunni Ḥadis: Abu ‘Amr ash-Shaybānī said, “The owner of this house (and he pointed at the house of ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ūd) said, ‘I asked the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, which action Allah loves best.’ He replied, ‘Prayer at its proper time.’ ‘Then what?’ I asked. He said, ‘Then kindness to parents.’ I asked, ‘Then what?’ He replied, ‘Then jihad in the Way of Allah.’” He added, “He told me about these things. If I had asked him to tell me more, he would have told me more.”

*Kitab Al Adab Al Muḥadḍ*, 29, <http://qahwama.com/islamic-manners/>.

<sup>15</sup>‘Abd al-Raḥmān Yūsif al-Sāyī’, *Mu’jam luḡat dawāwin šu‘arā’ al-mu‘alliqāt al-‘ashar*, Maktaba Lobnān Nāšarūn (Bayrut [Beirut]: n.p., n.d.), 92.

<sup>16</sup>Carlo A. Nallino, *Tāriḡ al-adab al-Arabīyah min al-jāhiliyyah hattā ‘aṣr banī Ummayyah* (nuss al-muḥadḍarāti alqaha bi-al-jāmaiah al-Misriyah sanat 1910-1911), Taqdim Taha Ḥusayn, al-Tabah 2, Misr, Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1970; C.A. Nallino, *La letteratura araba degli inizi all’epoca della dinastia umayyade* (leçons professées en arabe a l’université du Caire), Rome: n.p., 1948; *La Literature arabe des origins à l’époque de la dynastie Umayyad*, trans. Charles Pellat d’après la version italienne de Maria Nallino, G. P. Maisonneuve, Paris, 1950; S. A. Bonebakker, “Adab and the Concept of Belles-Letters,” in *Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: ‘Abbasid Belles-Letters*, ed. Julia Ashtiany (Cambridge: Cambridge University of Press, 1990); F. Gabrieli, “Adab,” *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entrie/encyclopedia-of-islam-2/adab-SIM\\_0293?s.num=0&s.2\\_present=s.f.book.encyclopedia-of-islam-2&s.q=adab](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entrie/encyclopedia-of-islam-2/adab-SIM_0293?s.num=0&s.2_present=s.f.book.encyclopedia-of-islam-2&s.q=adab).

and the sayings of prophet Muḥammad) also originally meant road or path. However, Sunnah came to be used for religious purposes, while dāb retained its figurative sense of manner or conditions and ádáw was reserved for something similar to the meaning of sunna but in a secular context.<sup>17</sup> Despite these assertions, Šahāb al-Dīn Aḥmad Kaḫāǰi, an Arab scholar and philologist from the eleventh century A.H., followed an earlier prominent Arab philologist, Imām Maṭraẓi, in regarding the term as an “intruder” (dakhīla) in the Arabic language, meaning that it does not come from an Arabic root, and was adapted from another language.<sup>18</sup> A contemporary Arab scholar, Taha Ḥusayn, believes that the term has entered Arabic from another language finding no trace of this term in the confirmed Jāhīlī Arabic or Semitic languages –including Hebrew– and suggest that there is a chance that the term existed in one of the ancient dialects of the Arabic language, leaving no trace today of its origin.<sup>19</sup> Others assumed that the term was an adaptation from Greek<sup>20</sup> or, derived from Persian.<sup>21</sup> Among the Persian scholars who believed that the term ádáw evolved essentially from Old/Middle-Persian, the case made by the late M. Moḥīṭ Ṭabāṭabāi –to whom we referred

<sup>17</sup>Charles Pellat, “Adab in Arabic Literature,” *EI*: I: 439.

<sup>18</sup>Regarding the latter’s statement, Malāyerī following Moḥīṭ Ṭabāṭabāi [see n. 6.], states Kaḫāǰi’s opinion in the *šafā al-qalīl* briefly. The full passage of Kaḫāǰi’s statement follows: “What in the beginning the Arab knew from the [term] *adab* was as [conveying] ‘good manners’ and ‘good behavior’, gradually after the advent of Islam, people began to use the [term] *adīb* in referring to the ‘poet’ and called the Arabic science *adab*. [Therefore,] the attribution of the [term] *adab* upon them (i.e., to the Arabs) is a created one.”

<sup>19</sup>M. Moḥammadī Malāyerī, *Farhang*, 304.

<sup>20</sup>Joel L. Kramer states: “In Arabic translation from Greek the word *adab* is often used to render the term *Paideia*,” *The Culture Bearers of Humanism in Islam* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1984), 5. Malāyerī, regarding the opinion of the adaptation of the term *adab* from Greek, cites the belief of Anestās Karmali, “a Baḡdādian Arab philologist” who believe that *adab* has derived from *Edupeis* (meaning one with fine speech), which is comprised of two parts: *edus* meaning “pleasing” or “delicious”, and *epos*, “speech” or “utterance.” Malāyerī, *Farhang*, 304.

<sup>21</sup>Several prominent Persian literary historians/literatus such as Malek ul-Sho ‘arā-ye Bahār and Zabīḥullāh-e Šafā have argued in favor of a Persian origin for *adab*, as has also been suggested by Richard Frye and Clifford E. Bosworth. More recently, Ĵalāl Kaḫāleǰi Moṭlaq, in an article in *Encyclopedia Iranica* I, 431-439, which is discussed in part in the present paper, has stated his opinion that the term ádáw derived from the Middle-Persian word *fārhāng* (فَرهنگ), challenging the belief of the few others that *adab* was a derivation from the term *āin* (آئین).

earlier in this paper—seems most convincing, although not definite.

Moḥiṭ Ṭabāṭabāī's article<sup>22</sup> is also noted by Professor M. Malāyerī,<sup>23</sup> in a succinct, but detailed discussion of his points. Here, we take on his assertion that *ádáb* most likely evolved from the [root *db* +OP *dipa*+] *dip*, conveying the meaning of “writing.” This word appears in King Darius's inscription and in Sāsānīán times as *dapira* conveying the meaning of “writer.” If it is true that *ádáb* was derived from the root *dáb*, it is also true that—as a firm analogy in Persian—from *rām*, *ārām* developed and from *sā*, *āsā*, thus, just as a prefixed <*a*> in the case of *aviza* was added to *viza*, an <*a*> was also affixed to the root *db* and *dīb*, and *ádáb* and *ádīb* were derived. Hence, *ádīb* has evolved to mean a teacher or writer bearing literature and culture.

On the other hand, as the bureau of letters and correspondence in Persian was called *dīvān*, and also served to educate youth the profession of *dāpiri* (NP: *dābīrī*), the place of education came to be called *dābistān* (*dābestān*) and *dābīrestān* which in turn are reminiscent of *herbādestān*, a place of education in ancient times—albeit mainly a religious one. Extending this to the fact that in the very early Islamic period, for a long time after the conquest of Iranian lands, the Muslim Arabs, not having had any state bureaucracy of finance or administration (except in Susestan/Hira—roughly present Iraq) let the old Persian *dīvān* function and run their affairs. Additionally, when later Persian Muslim scribes recreated the old offices, they would also have patterned the places of training and education of *dābīr* after *dīvān*. Similarly, though called *maktāb* and *kuttāb* in Arabic, teacher came to be called *ádīb* and *mu`dāb*, and the profession was called *ādīb*.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Moḥammad Moḥiṭ Ṭabāṭabāī, *Āmozeš va Parvareš* 9, no. 1.

<sup>23</sup>M. Moḥammadī Malāyerī, *Farhang*, 317-318.

<sup>24</sup>What is interesting, as professor Malāyerī brings to our attention, is that around the late Umayyad and early Abbasid periods, for the term “teacher” we find two different words conveying two different levels of social and cultural status. One is *mu`alim* and the other *mū`dāb*. The former meant common teacher, educating “middle class” children and the latter the “elite.” The schools were also called *maktāb* and *kuttāb*, the former as a common or “public school” and the latter more restricted and socially selective. The difference between *mu`alim* and *mū`dāb* on the one hand and *maktāb* and *kuttāb* on the other was mainly related to the content of discourse and education. In

Somewhat apart from its etymological origin and cultural background as being synonymous to Sunnah, it is likely that the word *ádáb* was adapted as the equivalent of the Persian term *ā'īn* (*/āyīn*) (both Old and New Persian meanings: custom, manner, formality, rite). Thus, Djalāl K̄āleqī Moṭlaq makes a different assertion regarding the cultural root of the term *ádáb*: “*Adab* is the equivalent of the Middle Persian *fráháng* and New Persian *farhang*.”<sup>25</sup> He continues that “it is also very close to another Pahlavī word *ēwēn*, [New-] Persian *āyīn* (*ā'īn*), meaning custom, rule, correct manner, and its plural *ādāb*, or *rásm* and its plural *rosūm*; but sometimes the original word, in its Persian form *āyīn* is retained.”<sup>26</sup> Despite the opinion of scholars such as A. Christensen,<sup>27</sup> *ádáb* cannot be considered exactly equivalent to *ēwēn* (*/āyīn*). According to the assertions of K̄āleqī Moṭlaq, *Á'īn-nāmá* (*-hā*), (books of customs and protocols and ceremonies of the Sāsānian time,) which show *ā'īn* to correspond closely in meaning to *ádáb* as well as to the nearly synonymous Arabic term *rásm*. To prove the affinity in meaning, in an early classic Persian Darī dictionary of the fifth/eleventh century, *Luġat-e Furs*<sup>28</sup> of Asadī-ye Tūsī, *defines* *ā'īn* as *rásm*, and in Modern Persian,

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the first category, the instructor would teach the children primarily reading, writing and some religious matters, but in the second, the instructor would also educate the students in social manners, discourse, etiquette, and the diverse literature and skills of the scribeship for those brought up to be in the service of state and court. In another word, they were learning *ádáb*. One can trace the same criteria, without a definite model, in the Sāsānian time, which was well attested as a highly “class-oriented” society. Otherwise, the pre-Islamic, mainly Bedouin society and naturally relatively simple context of a single text in the first few decades of the Arab conquest were far from an elite type of education; yet, education in general, and thus reading and writing, was looked down upon, since the Arab life was mainly a tribal, protective, warrior one.

<sup>25</sup>T. Noldeke, “Geschichte des Artaschiri-I Pāpakān aus dem Pahlavi übersetzt mit Erluterungen und einer Einleitung versehen,” *Bazzenberger's Beitrge zur Kunde der indogermanischen Sprach* 4, (1879): 38. Note 3, H.S. Neyberg, *Hilfsbuch des Pehlavi*, Uppsala II (1931): 70, as cited by Professor K̄āleqī Moṭlaq, *Elr.* 1, 432.

<sup>26</sup>K̄hāleqī Moṭlaq Jālāl, “ADAB IN IRAN,” *Elr.* 1, 432-439.

<sup>27</sup>Arthur Christensen, *Les gestes des rois dans les traditions de l'Iran antique* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1936), 102; G. Richter, *Studien zur Geschichte der alteren arabischen Fürstenspiegel* (Leipzig: Heinrichs, 1932), Repr. 1968, 41, as cited by K̄hāleqī Moṭlaq, *Elr.* 1, 432. See also 'Abbās Eqbāl, *al-Adab al-wajīz*, ed. Ğ. Ğ. Āhanī (Isfahān (/Esfahān): n.p., 1340/1961).

<sup>28</sup>Abū Mansūr Aḥmad b. 'Alī Asadī-ye Tūsī, *Luġat-e Furs* (Loġat-e Darī), ed. F. Mojtabāi (Tehrān: n.p., 1365/1976), 199.

the two words are used to form the expression *râsm-o â`în*, which implies that in meaning they are related terms.

In the belief of this *pen* and/or the view of this essay, regarding the “roots” or the background of the term/expression *ádáb*, the opinion of K̄āleqi Moṭlaq -maybe more so culturally- compliments the analogical verbal assertion of M. Moḥiṭ Ṭabāṭabāi’s and the philological derivations of M. Malāyerī. Nevertheless, in the assessment of this *pen*, the social and the political grounds of the cultural transformation of the second half of first and the second centuries of the advent of Islam have had a determining role in the [re-]emergence and development of the multi-layered meaning and usage of *ádáb*. Furthermore, the usage of this expression itself was in debt to the “translation process” of the Persian cultural motifs and more indirectly from some selected Greek “philosophical” texts.

### **The social evolution of the term *ádáb* with the translation process or “movement”**

The source from which the term *ádáb* may have been derived or evolved, its expression and wide-ranging and far-reaching usage began mainly with translations made of Sāsānián *ándārz* literature, the “mirror for princes.” One important clarification to be made here is that the meaning of the word has changed considerably over time. Today, *ádáb*, together with its Arabic plural, *ādāb*, conveys the meaning of “literature,” which in Persian is called *ádābiyāt* (Turkish: *edebiyāt*). However, during the first phase of the *translation process* from the early second century A.H. (eighth century CE), it referred to what may be called “practical literature,” the aim of which was to promote elegance, learning, refinement, urbanity, and skill in the art (*â`în*) of speech; in short, everything associated with breeding and education. This reflected the elite culture of the Sāsānián as well as the aspects of the ideals of Greek philosophy.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>It was at the time of Abbasid caliph al-Ma`mun (r. 197-217 AH/813-833 CE), whose mother evidently was from Persian stock, where for a period of time his court affairs were run by the renowned family of Iranian Barmakids. The Bayt al-Hikma, “The Bureau of Knowledge [The House of Wis-

In time, Persian concepts of public behavior and private life style were introduced via scribes and *escritores* and translated materials to sectors of society below the ruling class and elite.<sup>30</sup> By the third AH / ninth century CE, they had come to influence mainly the learned classes in the central and eastern parts of the Islamic world, people who had access to literature and education of any kind.<sup>31</sup> All of this resulted in a synthesis, furnishing the background for the intellectual debates that took place, particularly at the court of al-Ma'mun. This "process" was due to the presence in Baġdād (MP: *bāġá-dátá*) of a mixed population of Persian Muslims and Zoroastrians, Manicheans, Nestorian Christians from Syria, Nabateans from central-southern Iraq, and Muslim Arabs. A point that can be made here is that the term "high culture" comes close to what we consider the original meaning of *ādāb*, especially in Persian. This is suggested by the nature of the literature that Ebn-e

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dom]" was established, as were selective works of Greek philosophy (including Aristotelian), translated from Syriac by Christians scholars and others into Arabic. For the report and assessment see for example, Dimiri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbasid Society* (2nd-4th/8th-10th centuries) (London: Routledge, 1998), 20-60; also, the transmission of Greek knowledge into Arabic has been presented in some detail by Joel L. Kraemer, "Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam: A Preliminary Study," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 104 (1984): 135-64. However, as we know now and as Johannes Pedersen, *The Arabic Book*, trans. Geoffrey French (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) also states that al-Ma'mun was not the first caliph to establish a center/library of translation; the son of an Umayyad caliph, Kālid b. Yazīd b. Mu'awiya, preceded al-Ma'mun in this endeavor. Kālid b. Yazīd b. Mu'awiya became famous for inviting Greek philosophers from Egypt and commissioning them to translate books from Greek and Coptic into Arabic. He was also a "scholar" who was interested in medicine and astronomy, as well as being a renowned poet. One must assert that, on the other hand, the early Persian influence on Umayyad court life became evident and increased sharply during the brief reign of Yazīd III (d. 720) whose mother was Persian.

<sup>30</sup>The emergence of new literate/elite with cultural roots in the Sāsānian period but cultivating a synthesis with Islam and using Arabic as its mode of expression/writing for a period, was and is an important occurrence that the effect of which could be traced culturally, literally, politically and even psychologically throughout the social history of Iran. Although, "Islamization" of "Iran proper" and change of majority Sunni to Shi'a in the Safavid period was and is a historical and social fact, nevertheless, internalization of Islam and then majority becoming Shi'a – with "Persian" coloring – consciously and/or sub-consciously kept 'Iranian-Islamic' identity obdurately separate from "Arab-Islamic," basically, Sunni identity.

<sup>31</sup>C.E. Bosworth, "The Persian Impact on Arabic Literature" in *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 490.

Muqaffa' (Ibn al-Muqaffa') was translating in the early second century A.H., which was designated as *ādāb*. This genre was not limited to Ebn-e Muqaffa's translations; there were other general titles such as *Ādāb al-Furs*, or specific ones such as *Ādāb Būzurjmīhr* in Arabic or *Ayādgār ī Wuzurgmīhr* in Middle Persian. The heritage of this genre is further reflected in a more mixed Arabo-Islamic literature under general titles such as *Adab al-'Arab wa'l Furs*, *Adab al-mulūk*, or, specific ones such as *Kitāb al-Tāj fī aklāq al-mulūk* attributed to Jāhiz<sup>32</sup> and *Sirāj al-mulūk* of Ṭartūsī.<sup>33</sup> In this latter work, the author specifies in chapter sixty-three that he has utilized parts of the Persian book *Jāwīdān K̄erad* (*Eternal-Wisdom/ Inner-Wisdom*) in his book. Of the original version from the redaction of the text from the Sāsānian times, like so many others, we do not have much knowledge, aside from some anecdotes from the period of caliph al-Ma'mun. However, since Moškōye Rāzī (Ibn al-Miskawayh/Ebn-e Meskawayh) (320-421 AH / 932 [940]-1030 CE) titled one of his famous books by the name *Kitāb al-ḥekma al-kāli-da* (*Book of Eternal Wisdom*) in Arabic – and provided information about its old content, it became well known. Regarding the parts and context of Moškōye's version of *Jāwīdān K̄erad*, Walter Bruno Henning (Middle Iranian languages scholar, 1908-1967) believed that the Persian parts were translations or derivations from the "original," Middle-Persian. Unfortunately, Moškōye does not specify his source(s), except that he had obtained it from a Maubed-e Maubedān (/Mobed-e Mobedān,

<sup>32</sup> Umar b. al-Baḥr Jāhiz [Abū Ṭmān], (160-255 H.) in the introduction of *Kitāb al-tāj fī aklāq al-mulūk* (Cairo: n.p., 1980), states that the reason for the composition of his book was that although many of the commoners (*awām*) and some of the elite (*kawāy*) behave according to the rule of obedience [to the caliphate], [they] are not aware of their duties (manner) in relation to the rulers; thus, I have gathered the *ādāb* of the kings in this book, for the people to have an example/model for [their] deeds of *ādāb* (2). Jāhiz, foremost starts, from the "Kings of Persia, since they were the forerunners in the matter, thus, I have obtained their etiquettes, the rules of running the land (country), the order or places of commoners and elite, how to coddle the obedient and setting standards to rights of classes." (23).

<sup>33</sup> Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Walīd al-Ṭartūshī (Ṭartūsī) (also, Abū Bakr Al-Ṭortuchi) (أبو بكر محمد) (بن الوليد الطرطوشي) from Maghrib /Andalusia, traveled for knowledge, seeking to educate himself on various scholars in different parts of the Muslim world and went as far east as Baghdad. On his way, he also stopped at Damascus, Aleppo, Cairo, and Alexandria. In Alexandria, Egypt, he taught at a school. His most famous work is *Sirāj al-mulūk* (سراج الملوك).

a chief Mazdaean/Zoroastrian Priest) in Fārs (one of the old strongholds of the Zoroastrian faith well into the 5/11 century and after, albeit gradually declining); therefore, it is not evident in what exact Persian language it was written.<sup>34</sup> Moškōye only explains that his redaction and composition is a collection similar to the *ándārz* literature. Moškōye also says, in addition to Persians, such different peoples as Arabs, Indians and Greeks yet, their “sayings” did not precede [the “original”] *Ĵāvīdān K̄erad*. The reason for this is that sources for his *Ĵāvīdān K̄erad* included the words of Hošang (a legendary ancient Persian king) to his son or vice throne. Moškōye explains:

I was aiming to write these precious sayings of Hošang and to collect whatever I could find from the utterances and their didactic teachings of Persians, Indians, Arabs, and Greeks, then add the former ones to the latter. The primary intention of this endeavor was for youth to know how to act [live] and for people of knowledge to become aware of the wise literature of the people who preceded them. Also, it is intended for the people who come after us, so they may benefit from ‘cultivation of ethics,’ ‘refinement of self’ and ‘strengthening of the personality.’

He continues:

Since I have established the principles and foundation of ethics in my book *Taḥḍīb al-Aḳlāq* (*The Cultivation or Refinement of Ethics*), there is no need to repeat them here. Our intention in this book is to represent the expressions and principles of good deeds and sayings of wise persons of different people with different beliefs, and in this part, I follow the style of the authors of *Ĵāvīdān K̄erad*, as I had promised.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup>Moškōye (Ibn Miskawayh) may have been a Mazdaean convert to Islam, but it seems more likely that it was one of his ancestors who converted; in either case, most probably, if he was not fluent in Middle Persian, was familiar with it, thus he, very much likely, had translated the text of *Ĵāvīdān K̄erad* that he had obtained from a chief Zoroastrian priest in Fārs.

<sup>35</sup>Abū ‘Alī Moškōye Rāzī (ابوعلی مشکویه رازی) (Arabic: ابن مسكويه), *Ĵāvīdān K̄erad* (Persian ed. Emām ‘Alī Šūštārī.), the “Introduction.” For information regarding Moškōye’s works and style of historiography, see *Tajārib al-Umam* (Experiences of the Nations), Persian ed. A.

As the nature of literature in general is humanistic, thus both profane and sacred (in our terms today), it appears that the pluralistic nature of *ândārz* and *ádáb* literature was also manifested from Sāsānian times to the first few centuries of the Islamic world. This was made possible when an “open-minded” ruler or whole dynasty such as [Āl-e] Būyed (Buwayhid) (320-454/932-1063) was in power and depended on its cultural background. Among the Būyed rulers, this was under ‘Azdud Daulah (338/934), who had gathered one the most impressive libraries of its time in the city of Ray (‘Rayy’), from which a range of erudite individuals like Moškōye Rāzī (who for a time worked as chief librarian there) could benefit. Consequently, what was understood as *ádáb* in this genre came from texts inherited from a selective cultural background and thus reflected as *mirrors of princes*.

### Three exemplars of transmitters of *ádáb* literature

After the Arab conquest of Iranian lands and during the early times of the formation of Islamic culture, there came to be three pioneering personae for the establishment of the *ádáb* genre. The best known among them is Ebn-e Muqaffa ‘ (originally named Rōzbeh Dādōye or Dādūyá, he inherited this epithet from his father’s soubriquet). Before Ebn-e Muqaffa ‘, no books in the Arabic language were known under the title of *ádáb* or *ādāb*. However, he had a couple of forerunners, *men of pen*, who had worked as translators and adaptors of “ancient literature,” and who laid the ground for the *ádáb* genre.

### Abū’l-‘Alā Sālim (Salim Abū’l-‘Alā)

Although the establishment of fresh criteria and style for prose related to *ádáb*, was accomplished by ‘Abd al-Hamīd, the primers go back, to his forerunner Abū’l-‘alā Sālim (“Ērānī”) who was *mawlī* and a *Kātib* of Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik the Umayyad Caliph (r. 724-743 CE). Abū’l-‘Alā Sālim was not only a *Kātib* for the Caliph but also a transla-

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Emāmī, vol. I, “Introduction.” For a recent edition of *Tahdīb al-Aklāq*, see Ibn Miskawayh, *Tahdīb al-akhlāq (Cultivation of Morals)*, ed. C. Zurayk (Beirut: American University of Beirut Centennial Publication), 1966; trans. C. Zurayk, *The Refinement of Character* (Beirut: American University of Beirut), 1968.

tor of Sāsānīān Middle-Persian literature into Arabic; it is likely that he was the translator of the famous Sāsānīān book of pictures and biographies of Persian kings commissioned by Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik.<sup>36</sup> Besides Ebn-e Nadim’s (Ibn al-Nadim) mention in *Al-Fihrist*,<sup>37</sup> Mas‘ūdī in *al-Tanbīh wa’l-Ashrāf* also talks about this well-known chronological book of kings<sup>38</sup> In *Al-Fihrist*, it is reported that he as a “transmitter” (نقله), he had rendered some portion of the (apocryphal) epistles of Aristotle (on government) to Alexander<sup>39</sup> and had corrected some others that were translated for him.<sup>40</sup> Also, *Al-Fihrist* reports that he had *writings* (مَسَائِل) of his own roughly one hundred folios. Thus, it has been suggested that ‘Salim Abū’l-‘Alā’ as the chancellery secretary of Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik, had some compositions in the genre of *ádáb*. But, although he did have a somewhat pioneering role in the infusion of this type of literature into the Arabic language and literature, it was more as *transmitter* than an innovator himself.

#### ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Yahyā al-Kātib

Abū Halāl ‘Askarī mentions in his well-known classical tome *al-Sanā‘atayn* (الصناعتين) the influence of Persian epistolary on the writings of the famous ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib (d.132 /750).<sup>41</sup> ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd was a great prose stylist, whose example was imitated by those who follow him. He was the first to be credited with elongating epistles in Arabic. However, Victor Danner observes that “on closer examination, there is more to his distinction than that.” He continues:

<sup>36</sup>Hosayn (Housin) Kaṭībī, *Tārīkh-e Taṭṭavvor-e Nasr-e Fannī* (Tehrān: n.p., 1345/1967), 33.

<sup>37</sup>Abū’l-Faraj Muḥammad ibn Ishāq al-Nadīm, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm (Al-Fihrist)*, ed. and trans. Bayard Dodge (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970); *Dehkhoda Dictionary Encyclopedia*, vol. 9 (Loghat Nameh Dehkhoda) (Tehrān: University of Tehran, 1958), 13346.

<sup>38</sup>Abū’l-Hasan Mas‘ūdī, *Al-Tanbīh w’al-Ashrāf*, (Persian version:) trans. A. PāyandeŠh, (*Šerkat-e Entešārāt-e ‘Elmī va Farhangī*) (Tehrān: n.p.,1986), 99-101.

<sup>39</sup>M. Grignaschi, “Les Rasa’il Aristatalisa ‘ala-l-Iskandar de Salim Abu-l-‘Ala” et l’activité culturelle à l’époque omayyade,” *Bulletin d’Études Orientales* 19 (1965–66): 7–83.

<sup>40</sup>This collection forms the nucleus of the most famous among the mirrors for princes, the *Sirr al-asrar*, known in the Latin Middle Ages and early modern times as the *Secretum secretorum*. M. Grignaschi, “Le roman épistolaire classique conservé dans la version arabe de Salim Abu-l-‘Ala,” *Le Muséon* 80 (1967): 211–64.

<sup>41</sup>M. Moḥammadī Malāyerī, *Adab va Aḳlāq*, 123.

His epistolary style breathes the influence of Persian culture within an Islamic context. Some of his epistles, moreover, show Persian influence in their contents, as when he counsels rulers on how to govern, how to conduct themselves in court, which are old Persian themes...However, in no epistle, does this subtle influence of his Persian background stand forth with more evidence than in his epistle to the scribe, wherein the ancient dignity of the scribal profession is reaffirmed within an Islamic framework. It is no accident that this famous epistle was composed in the last days of the Umayyad regime, for the scribes, with their eminent positions of power and diversified culture, was then coming into real prominence, and were ready to influence the patterns and style of Islamic civilization on the basis of the essentially Semitic contents of the Qur'ān.<sup>42</sup>

It was toward the end of the Umayyad period that a new style of Arabic composition and style was developed. This technique was attributed to 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib. He was recognized as a master of *balāḡa* (eloquence or rhetoric, which in Persian is called *soḡanvarī*), and *fasāa* (clear language or articulate) and the power of his utterance became a proverb: "*Futihat (or: bada'at) al-rasā'il bi 'Abd al-Ḥamīd wa ḡutimat bi ibn al-'Amīd*"<sup>43</sup> (The commencement of the epistolary was with 'Abd al-Ḥamīd and the ending (i.e., "the perfection") with *ibn al-'Amīd*). Aḡmad Amīn, an Arab scholar and author in the 20th century, remarks that there is clear evidence of the influence of Persian belles-lettres on Arabic literature contained in Abū Halāl 'Askarī's statement in *Dīwān al-M'aānī*: (ديوان المعاني) "Whoever has learned eloquence in one language and then learns another language, can utilize the same science in the new language."<sup>44</sup>

<sup>42</sup>Victor Danner, "Arabic Literature in Iran", *C.H.I.*, vol.4, 576-77.

<sup>43</sup>Jalāl d.-Dīn Homāi, *Tārīkh-e Adabiyāt-e Ērān* (Tehrān:n.p., 1366/1978), 317.

<sup>44</sup>Aḡmad Amīn, *Fajr al-Islam* (فجر الإسلام ١٢٣), quoted by Ḥosain 'alī Momtaḡen in *Nehzat-e Ša'ubīyye va natāyej-e sīyāsī va ejetemā'ī-ye ān*, part 3, 30. The above statement continues: "Abd al-ḡamīd, [was] a famous writer who had established the science of composition [and] transmitted [that learning] to Arabic." Curiously enough, Abū Halāl 'Askarī also states that: "There is another reason, which is that Persian utterance is similar to Arabic speech although Persian expression is more elegant than Arabic."

‘Abd al-Ḥamīd’s “new style,” the simplification of *balāğat* (eloquence), was characterized by the expression that he “untangled the knots” of *balāğat*. Despite the Arabs’ attachment to laconicism or brevity in expression and prose, the distinctive inimitability of the Qur’ān, *i jāz* (miracle) (عجاز), and its *tjāz* (succinctness) (ایجاز) on the other hand, ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd’s *itnāb* (amplification of discourse or prolixity) gradually gained the approval and admiration of Arab writers.<sup>45</sup> They started imitating his style.<sup>46</sup> It seems that its most important characteristic was the exposition and expression of meanings in an amplified discursive manner which did not previously exist in Arabic. This was the beginning of artistic writing, particularly in epistle and essay, genres of writing which tend to include a title, an “introduction,” and an exposition of the subject according to the content or intention, wrapped up with a “conclusion.” ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd also categorized epistles based upon the position of the *Kuttāb* and their responsibilities, as reflected in the Epistle to the scribes or secretaries. This type of knowledge existed in the Middle-Persian era, used by the Sāsānīān *dīvān*<sup>47</sup> as the knowledge of literate composition: *dabīrī* or scribeship. The importance of *dabīrī* and the high standing of *dabīrs* (secretaries) in the Sāsānīān period and their continuing elevated status through the Islamic period has been studied by Christensen.<sup>48</sup>

‘Abd al-Ḥamīd represented the second generation of those *divāniān* who, after the advent of Islam, knew Pahlavī (MP) and were familiar with the prose writing of their bureaucracy. Unfortunately, out of the large body of epistles credited to him (Ebn-e Nadīm in *al-Fihrist*

<sup>45</sup>Among many, one could mention the poets Baḥtair Ibn Rūmī and Abū Ishāq Šabī.

<sup>46</sup>Hosayn (Housain) Kaṭībī, *Tārīḳ-e Taṭṭavvor-e Nasr-e Fannī*, 34.

<sup>47</sup>In addition to the references found in *al-Bayān wa-’l-Tabayin* of Jāḥiẓ and indications of Pahlāvī (Middle Persian) style contained in Arabic translations, we have a text in Pahlāvī with the title of *abar ewenag nābesisnīh* (the customs or style of letter writing). This is a short text with examples of different kinds of letters, both social and personal. The Pahlāvī text of this work with transliteration and Persian translation is available in *Motūn-e Pahlavī*, Gozāresh-e Sa’id ‘Oryān (Tehran: n.p., 1371/1992). I am in debt to my colleague Dr. Siyāmak Adhamī, an erudite in Pahlāvī (MP) language and texts, for making me aware of this text.

<sup>48</sup>A. Christensen, *Sassanid Persia (Iran dar Zamān-e Sāsānīān)*, tr. Rashid Yasemi in *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 12 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939), 132.

--377/987-88- credited him with a tome of a “thousand folios”) merely a handful has survived which were regarded as worthy of inclusion in anthologies or citation in dictionaries. For this, our greatest debt is to Ibn al-Ṭayfūr (204-80/819-93), author of a *Kitāb al-Manthūr wa-l-Manzūm* (*The Book of Prose and Poetry*), for it is in the extant parts of this anthology that we find the core of all that is known to survive of ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd’s work, the nucleus of which comprises his best-known compositions, the *Risālah ilā l-kuttāb* (*Epistles to the Secretaries*)<sup>49</sup> and an epistolary manual of guidance addressed to Marwān’s son and heir. In addition, this same source has preserved for us epistles on friendship, the permissibility of chess, and a hunting scene<sup>50</sup> which were in the category of old Persian *ādāb*. Certainly, a perceptive reader cannot fail to detect a marked relationship to the *Fürstenspiegel* or Mirror for Princes type of literature.<sup>51</sup> ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd was from Anbār,<sup>52</sup> a previously Sāsānian town near Ctesiphon (Madā’in). His full name given by Ibn Ḳallikān was Abū Ghānīb ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Yaḥya b. Sa’d.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>49</sup>...*resāla*... which is a remarkable literary and socio-cultural document. The introduction to it attempts to blend Islamic teachings with Iranian traditions on court etiquette, which is a notable feature of early *adab* literature. As a rule, the substance of ‘Abd-al-Ḥamīd’s writings comes from Iranian sources, and it is aimed in general at molding the soul and mind of prominent people such as rulers, and powerful civil servants like *kuttāb*.” Ch. Pellat, “Adab ii. Adab in Arabic Literature,” *Encyclopædia Iranica*, I, no. 4 (n.d.): 439-444; an updated version is available online at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/adab-ii-arabic-lit>.

<sup>50</sup>J. D. Latham, “The Beginning of Arabic Prose Literature: The Epistolary Genre,” *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 166.

<sup>51</sup>Latham, “The Beginning of Arabic Prose Literature,” 168.

<sup>52</sup>Anbār (meaning place of “storage” in Persian) –still a strategic town in western Iraq– was a frontier garrison town/region for the Sāsānian, with a large stock of armaments for defense or attack against the Byzantine Empire, which also had its own officialdom.

<sup>53</sup>It is said that he became a *mawlā* (a client) of the Qurashite clan of ‘Mir b. Lu’ayy. At the beginning of his career he became a teacher of children and later, because of his erudition in belles-lettres, he became chief secretary to Marwān, the last Umayyad caliph, at whose order, according to one source, he was killed. Another report indicates that he died side by side with Marwān’s entourage at Būs’ir in 132/750. In addition, it is said that he escaped to Jazīrah where he went to *Ebn-e Moqaffa*’s house, the latter giving him refuge. He stayed there until his whereabouts became known and when the deputies of al-Saffāh poured into the house and asked, “which one of you is ‘Abd al-ḥamīd?”; both the comrades responded: “I!” According to Ibn Ḳallikān’s report, after the death of Marwān II, a certain ‘Abd al-Jabbār by order of al-Saffāh, kept a large jar of glowing charcoal on top of his head until he died, naturally with much suffering (d.132 H.).

## Ebn-e Moqaffa' (Arabic: 'Abd-Allāh Ibn al- Muqaffa' /Persian: Rōzbeh (Rūzbeh) pour-e Dādūyá)

The rightful disciple and comrade of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd was Ebn-e Moqaffa' (139 AH /756–757 AD). The term *ádáb* as used by Ebn-e Moqaffa' has the general sense of the cultivation and refinement of practical ethics, personal and social manners and etiquette. On a social level, it also reveals the intention of training rulers and high officials. He includes the word *ádáb* in the titles of two of his books *al-Adab 'l-kabīr* and *al-Adab 'l-ṣaghīr*; although, it is now largely accepted that the second one, *al-Adab 'l-Ṣaghīr*, is not his own composition.<sup>54</sup> Both books deal with personal and social ethics and “politics.” Any author dealing with such topics functions as a teacher of practical ethics and conduct of “correct” deeds, espousing (particular) criteria. The criteria and method followed by Ebn-e Moqaffa' are derived more from wisdom and intellect rather than from religion. For him, *ádáb* or ethics are a group of concerns which before anything else are related to the intellect, and the intellect normatively distinguishes -in classical binary - between “beauty” and “unsightliness.” His works contain essentially rules of conduct for an ordinary or outstanding man. He distinguishes three aspects of *ádáb*: (1) ethics turned either inward or outward; (2) vocational training limited to rulers and high officials; and (3) culture and education insofar as historical data, etiquette, good manners are concerned.<sup>55</sup>

Ebn-e Moqaffa' in *al-Adab 'l-Kabīr* [and the author(s) of *al-Adab 'l-*

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<sup>54</sup>“Recent discoveries tend to confirm the opinion of scholars such as G. Richter, F. Gabrieli and 'A. Eqbāl compared to M. Ġafrānī, *'Abdallāh Ebn al-Moqaffa'* (Cairo: n.p., n.d., 127). They held that the book of this name is not by Ebn al-Moqaffa' or, at least, that the extant form of it might not be the same book mentioned by Ebn al-Nadīm, because there are no citations in the sources to prove this attribution. Now it has been fully ascertained that the book we have is not an anthology of wise sayings selected at random by a certain compiler, as the introduction of the book tries to suggest, but is mainly based on the translation of two Persian texts, the arrangement of which is carefully preserved.” I' Abbās, “Adab Al-Sagir,” *Encyclopædia Iranica* I, vol. 4: 446-447; an updated version is available online at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/adab-al-sagir>.

<sup>55</sup>Ch. Pellat, “Adab ii. Adam in Arabic Literature,” *Encyclopædia Iranica* I, vol. 4: 439-444; an updated version is available online at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/adab-ii-arabic-lit>.

[*Ṣaghīr*] is both translator and author. He is a translator because he insists on quoting and utilizing many Old Persian epigrams, bons mots, and maxims, introducing them in such way as: “listen to this saying of a sage...” or “I have heard from a wise-man who said...” or, “It has been said...” He is an author for the reason that he scrutinizes other writers’ views and expresses his own opinion about them. In the beginning of *al-Adab al-kabīr*, he states:

I have never seen a subject matter missed by some ancient scholar concerning which there were not able writers or rhetoricians to add something new to what has already been said...I bequeath *latā’if* (fine points) of my own which include, [apparently] trivial points but have been nourished by the wise sayings and mottos of my predecessors. Therefore, parts of what I have expressed are useful for the people.

In the introductory lines to *Adab al-ṣagīr*, which has the same tone as that of *al-Adab al-kabīr*, (the author or compiler) remarks that: “... in these books I have related sayings of people that augment calmness of mind, enlighten hearts, and illumine the heart’s eye; they enliven thought, elevate intellect and prudence, and guide fairness of ethics.”<sup>56</sup> Both books contain many different maxims and sayings collected from various sources, mainly Persian, then Greek and Indian with Islamic influence. Although they may not appear to be related to each other, they may be categorized together as dealing with practical ethics using a constant flavor of *ádáb*.

## Conclusion

Considering the foregoing debates –reflected in the context of this paper, among Arab scholars and assertions by Persian literates that there is no trace of usage of the term or expression of *ádáb* in pre-Islamic Arabic literature, except maybe one derivative in a *jāhli* verse, a plausible, if not definite, possible root of *ádáb* that goes back to Old-Persian and from there to Akkadian and Sumerian languages. Thus, the early concept of the term and its usage emerges in the late first and early second centuries

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<sup>56</sup> Abd al-Hādī Hā’rī, *Ebn-e Moqaffā’* (Ibn al-Muqaffā’) (Tehrān: n.p., 1341/1962), 29-30.

of the Islamic era via, mainly, the early or “first” phase of the “translation movement” or process of aspects of Middle-Persian “literature” particularly by Ebn-e Moqaffa’. And it is from that “process” that the concept *ádáb* evolved and later conveyed literature. Hence, is manifest that Persian secular motifs of pre-Islamic, chiefly Middle-Persian literature, were transmitted into the Perso-Arabic *mirror of princes* and *ádáb* literature, although perhaps not as first-hand translations, and every so often in Islamic disguise. Also, it is evident that the term *ádáb* emerged as a social and literary expression toward the end of the Umayyad period but especially with early Abbasid rulers after the first one (al-Saffah), whose court protocols (as their bureaucracy) were derived in large part from Sāsānían practice. Models were provided through the translation and imitation of works of the *mirror for princes* type, manuals of statecraft which had formed an important genre of Sāsānían prose literature, by secretaries and scribes who were themselves often of Iranian/Persian origin.<sup>57</sup> ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd and Ebn-e Moqaffa’ represent an early peak in the evolution of *ádáb* literature, and one does not find other salient representatives of the genre during the first half of the 2nd/8th century. These men played influential cultural roles in establishing *ádáb* and its derivatives in the high culture of a newly emerging society. In the process, the role of these terms and expressions in conveying the older concepts, and as a precept, their motifs and themes coming from primarily Persian sources, in time became as lively as the starring role of these *men of pen* themselves in a socio-cultural expansion of the era. All of these cultural interactions, from personal endeavors to social manifestations, become for us a means to trace, decipher, and perhaps intellectually dispute the heritage of cultural interaction themselves.<sup>58</sup> Nonetheless, it is as likely in our time as it was in that of ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd and Ebn-e Moqaffa’,<sup>59</sup> to

<sup>57</sup>Julia Scott Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1987), 5.

<sup>58</sup>For a noteworthy caveat contrary to viewing such interactions either in terms of “influence” or of culturally background self-assertion, see M.G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol.1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 40-45; but also 239-280-84 and Michael G. Morony, *Iraq After the Muslim Conquest* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 27-89.

<sup>59</sup>At the beginning of “‘Abbāsīd revolution,” after the overthrow of the Umayyad dynasty, unlike some of his other colleagues, Ebn-e Moqaffa’ escaped persecutions at the hands of Al-Saffah, the

become politically or intellectually critical of non-democratic rulership and risk one's livelihood and/or means of expression by way of the "pen."

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first 'Abbāsīd Caliph (d. 754). Ebn-e Moqaffā' divided the best years of his life between Basra and Kūfā, the *misrāni* of Irāk, before the founding of Baghdād, and frequented the society of men of letters and wits such as Muti' b. 'Iyās, Wāliba b. Hubāb, Hammād 'Adirad, Bashār b. Burd and still others, all persons of "loose morals" and suspected of *zandaqa*. Later, Ebn-e Moqaffā' returned to Basra and served as a secretary under 'Isā b. 'Alī and Sulaymān b. 'Alī, the uncles of the second 'Abbāsīd caliph Abū Ja'far Al-Mansur (r. 754–775 CE). After a third uncle, 'Abdallāh b. 'Ali made an abortive bid for the caliphate, Ebn-e Moqaffā's chiefs asked him to write a letter to the Caliph begging him to not retaliate against his uncle and to pardon him. Evidently, he was executed, due to the caliph's resentment of the terms and language that Ebn-e Moqaffā' used in drawing up a guarantee of safe passage for the Caliph's rebellious uncle, 'Abdallah b. 'Ali (who was defeated and imprisoned and was killed in 764). Ebn-e Moqaffā' was put to death in Basra by Sufyān b. Mu'awiyah, who took his revenge which was not already in terms with this daring *kātib*, nevertheless, already suspicious of "heresy." See F. "Gabrieli," IBN MUKAFFA', *Encyclopedia Iranica*, 2, vol. III, 883. Also see Mohammad Taqī Danešpažūh, Introduction to *Al-Mantiq li Ibn al-Muqaffā* (Tehran: n.p., 1357/1978), 63.